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for the Behavioral and Social Sciences**

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**An Examination of Advanced Individual Training
Platoon Sergeant Training and Experiences**

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May 2012

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**U.S. Army Research Institute
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AN EXAMINATION OF ADVANCED INDIVIDUAL TRAINING PLATOON SERGEANT TRAINING AND EXPERIENCES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research Requirement:

The Deputy Commanding General for Initial Military Training (DCG-IMT) requested that ARI conduct research to identify and examine factors impacting Advanced Individual Training (AIT) Platoon Sergeant (PSG) and Squad Leader (SL) performance and motivation to (a) better understand the PSG and SL unique duty expectations and how to optimize training for their new positions and responsibilities, (b) define the stressors affecting AIT PSGs' and SLs' performance and identify strategies/tools to reduce their impact on PSGs' and SLs' effectiveness and motivation, and (c) examine the support and resourcing provided to PSGs and SLs to perform their duties in order to identify best practices that could be applied across AIT. The findings from this effort will provide critical information to commanders, decision makers, and training designers regarding the effectiveness of the AIT Platoon Sergeants Course and unit certification programs, and will identify practices that can enhance AIT PSG and SL performance and motivation.

Procedure:

Following approval of the initial research proposal and identification of participating locations by DCG-IMT (23 Nov 10), preliminary interviews and discussions were held with AIT PSG training cadre at Victory University (VU; 9-10 Dec 10), Fort Jackson, in order to gain a clear understanding of desired training outcomes and AIT PSG duty requirements prior to installation visits. Working with DCG-IMT staff, ARI refined plans, questionnaires, and interview protocols for on-site visits to AIT units at Forts Huachuca, Sam Houston, Eustis, and Lee. These visits were to interview and survey (a) AIT PSGs, (b) course trainers/instructors serving as AIT SLs, (c) company command teams, and (d) AIT trainers and course leaders/managers not serving as SLs or in any AIT unit leadership positions.

Findings:

Our analyses indicated that the majority of the 123 personnel interviewed believed that Victory University was doing an effective job of preparing noncommissioned officers (NCOs) for AIT PSG duties. Many also recommended that the training program at Fort Jackson be expanded in several areas.

The findings also indicated that many participating AIT units had intervened to reduce or lower the impact of many sources of stress and obstacles to performance. However, interventions did not often have the desired effect, primarily due to high Soldier to PSG ratios and to expanding workloads. For unit command teams, the situation is further complicated because SLs are full-time instructors assigned to a different command chain. Having dual command chains made it difficult to integrate SLs into the AIT units in order to achieve an

effective unity of effort. In addition to these findings, workload (imbalance between work and personal life), ambiguity of duties and responsibilities (especially in regards to SLs), perceptions of powerlessness (perceived inability to influence work environment), and isolation (perceived lack of social support, connection, and communication) were found to be significant sources of stress for AIT PSGs and SLs.

Based on our findings and the identified best practices from participating units, we provide recommendations for expanding the current AIT PSG course at Fort Jackson and reducing the impact of stress associated with current workloads on AIT PSG and SL performance. These include, among other recommendations: (a) to clarify lines of command, (b) to have a policy statement in place regarding requirements and expectations for PSGs and SLs, (c) to maintain full manning of AIT PSG positions, and (d) to actively promote opportunities for AIT PSGs and SLs to provide input on policy decisions. Additionally, recommendations to clarify command chain requirements, duties, and responsibilities, and reduce perceptions of powerlessness and isolation among AIT PSGs and SLs are discussed.

Utilization and Dissemination of Findings:

Preliminary results of this effort were reviewed with Victory University (VU), Fort Jackson on 3 Nov 11. A written summary of findings and recommendations was also provided to DCG-IMT on 9 Nov 11, as requested.

AN EXAMINATION OF ADVANCED INDIVIDUAL TRAINING PLATOON SERGEANT
TRAINING AND EXPERIENCES

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An Examination of Advanced Individual Training Platoon Sergeant Training and Experiences

Introduction

In June 2007, the Commanding General (CG), United States Army Accessions Command, issued a decision memorandum and command implementation plan for replacing Drill Sergeants (DSs) with Platoon Sergeants (PSGs) in all Advanced Individual Training (AIT) units (Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), 2007a, 2007b). The CG intended to replace AIT DSs with PSGs to create a learning environment that encouraged AIT Soldiers' maturity by requiring them to assume greater responsibility for their actions and duties. It was further emphasized that AIT units would provide a professional military school environment and not merely continue the total control found in Basic Combat Training (BCT). As of 1 January 2008, no new DSs were to be assigned to AIT units. Based on this implementation plan and the executive agency for AIT PSG training at Fort Jackson, the duties of an AIT PSG included (see TRADOC, 2007b, and TRADOC DCG-IMT, 2010):

- Organizing and controlling the platoon
- Teaching individual and Soldierization¹ skills and tasks
- Receiving squad leaders' requests for supplies; working with the Company First Sergeant or Executive Officer to request resupply; directing the routing of supplies and mail
- Maintaining platoon strength information and receiving/orienting replacements
- Monitoring the morale, discipline, and health of platoon members
- Conducting Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills (WTBD) training
- Providing counseling, mentoring, and training feedback to squad leaders, team leaders, and Soldiers
- Continuing the Soldierization process started at BCT
- Leading daily physical readiness training (PRT)

In accordance with the implementation plan, the Human Resources Command (HRC) began a selection process to identify noncommissioned officers (NCOs) to fill the roles of the AIT PSGs. In order to ensure that AIT PSGs had a background and experience level commensurate with their new duties and responsibilities, selection criteria specified each AIT PSG be: (a) a promotable² Staff Sergeant (SSG) or Sergeant First Class (SFC), (b) display good military bearing, (c) have no court martial convictions and no record of disciplinary action in the previous five years, (d) be deployable, and be able to (e) pass the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) without alternate events as well as (f) successfully complete the HRC DS background check (TRADOC, 2007b).

In 2006, a training course was established to prepare each NCO for duty as an AIT PSG. The original three-week course, which ended in 2009, was conducted at multiple installations. In

¹ Soldierization is a term that refers to the physical, social, moral/ethical, and psychological development process of a civilian becoming a Soldier, which occurs during Basic Combat Training.

² In 2010, the selection criteria were changed to include nonpromotable SSGs who had a minimum of two years time-in-grade and who were graduates of the Advanced Leader Course (waivered by HRC only).

January 2010, however, it was reduced to two weeks and consolidated at Ft. Jackson. In September 2009, a two-week Master Resiliency Training (MRT) Course taught at the University of Pennsylvania was added. AIT PSGs were required to attend the MRT immediately after graduating the AIT PSG course. Beginning in March 2010, MRT was scheduled and conducted at Fort Jackson, eliminating the need to send AIT PSG Course graduates for training at the University of Pennsylvania.

Additionally, the implementation plan (see TRADOC, 2007b) specified that AIT units would select NCOs from their instructor populations to serve as AIT Squad Leaders (SLs). The SLs would work with the AIT PSGs to create a training environment that would replicate an operational unit's command and control structure, although this would be an additional duty for them. According to this plan, AIT SL duties included:

- Performing duties as an AIT instructor
- Training the squad on individual and collective tasks, to include the WTBDs necessary for maintaining combat effectiveness
- Managing the logistical and administrative needs of the squad
- Maintaining accountability of Soldiers and equipment
- Submitting requests for awards and decorations
- Directing the maintenance of the squad's weapons and equipment
- Inspecting the condition of Soldiers' weapons, clothing, and equipment
- Ensuring materials and supplies are distributed to the Soldiers in the squad
- Keeping the AIT PSG informed on squad supply status and requirements
- Ensuring supplies and equipment are internally cross-leveled within the squad

Problem Definition

The intent of this research was to examine factors impacting AIT PSG and SL performance by identifying best training practices in preparing these NCOs for their duties and developing and/or identifying strategies to reduce the impact of stressors on their effectiveness and motivation. The objectives of this project were to:

- Better understand the unique duty expectations and how to optimize the training of NCOs for their new positions and responsibilities
- Define the stressors affecting AIT PSG and SL performance and identify strategies/tools to reduce their impact on AIT PSGs' and SLs' effectiveness and motivation
- Examine the support and resourcing provided to AIT PSGs and their SLs to perform their duties in order to identify best practices that could be applied across AIT

Method

This research involved administering questionnaires to and conducting focus group interviews with AIT PSGs, AIT SLs, and their Company command teams—including the Company Commanding Officer (CO) and First Sergeant (1SG)—at four Army AIT installations. A copy of the questionnaires used for the data collections are included in Appendix A, and the protocol for the focus group interviews in Appendix B.

Participants

The TRADOC DCG-IMT selected four AIT installations for this research effort: Forts. Eustis and Lee, VA; Fort Huachuca, AZ; and Fort Sam Houston, TX. Since these installations are home to multiple schools responsible for training a variety of AIT courses, the researchers worked directly with TRADOC DCG-IMT to narrow the population, while still maintaining a representative sample of the AIT training taking place. This process included selecting the most appropriate schools at each location to sample the widest range of military occupational specialties (MOSs) possible, identifying the AIT courses conducted by each school, selecting the specific AIT courses to be targeted, and identifying the training staff and cadre to participate.

Based on inputs from TRADOC DCG-IMT and Victory University (VU), Fort Jackson, SC—the executive agency responsible for AIT PSG training—it was determined that including courses with different lengths and technical content would make the sample more representative of the various duties and challenges that arise across Army AITs. The process of selecting the sample was designed to produce a mixture of courses in which AIT PSG and SL duties varied enough to permit a comparative analysis and identification of best practices. Table 1 provides a complete list of the AIT courses selected by installation and school.

Table 1
AIT Course Selection by Installation and School

Installation	School	Course	Length	
Fort Eustis	U.S. Army Aviation Logistics School	15S10	13 weeks	1 day
		15T10	14 weeks	3 days
		15G10	14 weeks	10 days
		15U10	17 weeks	
		15F10	18 weeks	4 days
		15Y10	23 weeks	
		15J10	25 weeks	2 days
		15N10	28 weeks	
Fort Huachuca	U.S. Army Military Intelligence Center of Excellence	09L10	7 weeks	3 days
		35F10	16 weeks	3 days
		35M10	18 weeks	3 days
		35G10	24 weeks	
		35T10	44 weeks	2 days
	Unmanned Aircraft System School	15W and ASI E1	25 weeks	2 days
		15E and ASI U2	20 weeks	
Fort Lee	Ordnance School	91D10	11 weeks	2 days
		91W10	14 weeks	
		91K10	20 weeks	4 days
	Quartermaster School	92M10	7 weeks	4 days
		92G10	8 weeks	2 days
		92A10	9 weeks	2 days
		92L10	10 weeks	4 days
		92R10	11 weeks	
		92W10	13 weeks	1 day

Table 1

AIT Course Selection by Installation and School (Continued)

Installation	School	Course	Length
Fort Sam Houston	U.S. Army Medical Department	68J10	6 weeks
		68G10	6 weeks 3 days
		68M10	7 weeks
		68S10	15 weeks
		68W10	16 weeks
		68P10	24 weeks
		68K10	26 weeks
		68V20	28 weeks
		68A10	41 weeks

Our data collection sessions were limited to 1 hour with Company Command Teams (COs and 1SGs), and 1.5 hours with PSGs and SLs. Questionnaires were administered to and semi-structured focus group interviews were conducted with COs, 1SGs, AIT PSGs, and SLs from each approved installation and AIT course. Thirteen (n=13) command teams (CO and 1SG), 37 PSGs, and 60 SLs were selected from training companies responsible for instructing multiple courses within the respective MOSs. Table 2 describes participants by installation and group.

Table 2

Number of Participants by Installation and Group

Installation	AIT SL	AIT PSG	CO	1SG
Fort Eustis	16	9	3	3
Fort Huachuca	8	7**	3	3
Fort Lee	19**	12*	4	4
Fort Sam Houston	17**	9**	3	3
Total	60	37	13	13

*One PSG completed the questionnaire, but did not participate in the interview session.

**Two SLs and two PSGs completed only one portion of the questionnaire (an obstacle table) due to late arrival.

Soldiers ranging from Sergeant (SGT/E-5) to Captain (CPT/O-3) participated, for a total $N = 123$. The numbers varied by group based on availability of participants and training schedules. The numbers of SLs differed from what we had initially projected (i.e., $n=72$) because the pool of instructors acting as SLs at Fort Huachuca also included government contractors, who were restricted to technical instruction and did not perform SL duties.

In the interviews, we talked to NCOs who, in the judgment of our subject matter experts (SMEs), had sufficient time and experience performing their duties at the installation to provide an informed discussion. We needed an experienced sample to create as complete a picture as possible of the AIT PSG program and the associated duties and responsibilities of PSGs and SLs. Working with the unit points of contact (POCs), we identified participants within the selected AIT courses who had a minimum of six months experience serving as part of a command team or acting as a PSG or SL. Participating COs had an average of 11 months in position, with a range of 2-weeks to 22-months, while their 1SGs averaged 12 months in position, with a range of one to 24-months. More extensive background information was collected on the participating

PSGs and SLs than on their command teams (see Tables in Appendix C). Table 3 summarizes the rank, time in service (TIS), time in position, and gender of the PSGs and SLs who participated in this research.

Table 3
AIT PSG and SL Background Information Summary

	AIT PSG (<i>n</i> =34-37)	AIT SL (<i>n</i> =57-60)
Rank		
	<i>SGT</i>	0
	<i>SSG</i>	14
	<i>SFC</i>	21
	<i>MSG</i>	1
	(Missing=4)	5
		43
		8
		1
Time in Service	<i>M</i> = 13.7 years (<i>R</i> = 5 to 21 years)	<i>M</i> = 13.4 years (<i>R</i> = 7 to 24 years)
Time in position AIT PSG	<i>M</i> = 1 year (<i>R</i> = 1 month to 2 years)	
Time in position (AIT SL)	<i>M</i> = 1.6 years (<i>R</i> = 3 months to 4.2 years)	
Gender		
	<i>Male</i>	69%
	<i>Female</i>	31%
		83%
		17%

Note: Figures are +/- 1% due to rounding. Detailed command team demographics were not collected due to limited time to interview Command Teams (60 minutes). Variations in *n* for the respective groups were due to some AIT PSGs and SLs participating in the interviews, but not filling out the questionnaire, or vice versa.

In general, participating PSGs were predominantly SFCs with an average of 13.7 years TIS and one year experience in their assigned positions. However, the SLs were predominantly SSGs with an average of 13.4 years TIS and 1.6 years experience carrying out SL duties.

Data Collection Instruments

A review of published literature was conducted to establish a historical perspective of the AIT PSG course and AIT PSG duties and responsibilities. Only two references focused specifically on the AIT PSG position, likely due to the position being a relatively new Army requirement, having been established in 2007. These references are TRADOC Regulation 350-6 (2010) and the Advanced Individual Training Platoon Sergeant Handbook (2010). These publications provided the initial foundation for framing our questionnaires and interviews.

During the development of instruments to identify and assess sources and levels of stress experienced by PSGs and SLs in the AIT environment, we identified an AIT PSG online forum where current AIT PSGs routinely posted comments and engaged in discussions describing

stressors that they had encountered.³ The discussion on this site, in addition to published research, provided the critical duty descriptions and performance insights that were used to develop and refine a list of stressors, tailored questionnaires, and focus group interview protocols for AIT PSGs and SLs. The instruments and protocols were further refined by the research team using input from AIT PSG Course cadre and VU SMEs at Fort Jackson, SC. The final questionnaires and interview protocols, as well as a truncated questionnaire and focus group interview protocol for the Company command teams, are provided in Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.

AIT PSG and SL Questionnaires

These questionnaires focused on four key areas: background information, experience, leadership history, and training history. Background information was collected identifying each participant's duty position, rank, TIS, MOS, and gender. Additionally, each participating PSG and SL was asked to identify the highest level of Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) and civilian education they had completed, as well as to indicate when they had completed the AIT PSG Course, Cadre Training Course (CTC), and MRT.

Questions related to the NCOs' experience, leadership, and training history focused on identifying knowledge, skills, and abilities required to interact with and train AIT Soldiers according to established TRADOC guidance. For example, TRADOC Regulation 350-6 states that Soldiers attending an AIT lasting 23 weeks or longer must requalify with the M16 rifle (Headquarters, TRADOC, 2010, p. 21). Subsequently, the AIT PSGs and SLs must arrive at their duty locations with the skills needed to operate a range training facility and teach basic rifle marksmanship, or they must quickly acquire those skills at the AIT installation through local instructor development and certification programs.

The type and frequency of stressors/obstacles were identified based on multiple sources. Bartone's (2006) research on sources of stress in military operations was modified to focus on the AIT training environment. This was done by comparing Bartone's model to trends noted in the online NCO discussion groups that focused on the stresses and challenges of AIT PSG duty. We further sought feedback for the model we developed from VU AIT PSG Course cadre and SMEs.

Our approach to measuring key stressors was modeled on the classic Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale (1967), except that our scale focused on events specific to the AIT training context rather than general life events. Using the AIT Stressors/Obstacles Questionnaire (Appendix C), NCOs were asked to rate how often (i.e. frequency) they experienced each identified source of stress on a five point sliding scale (0 = Never, 1 = Almost Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Fairly Often, 4 = Very Often) and to indicate whether (i.e. Yes or No) each source of stress was an obstacle that disrupted or hindered their performance as an AIT PSG or SL. With permission of the author, Bartone's (2010) measure of dispositional hardiness-resiliency, the *Dispositional Resiliency Scale-15* (DRS-15), was included to determine the relationship between the

³ The online discussion group can be accessed at:
<http://community.armystudyguide.com/groupee/forums/a/tpc/f/1841031931/m/2691020092/p/1>

participants' hardiness-resiliency attitudes and the degree to which their performance was hindered by identified sources of stress.

Focus Group Interview Protocol

Interview protocols were developed for two groups: Company command teams and AIT PSGs/SLs. Protocols varied in length and content based on interview procedures. Command team interviews were conducted as a stand-alone session, while AIT PSG/SL interviews were conducted in focus groups immediately after participants completed their questionnaires.

The company command team interview protocol was organized into seven sections. Section I consisted of administrative questions to be completed by the interviewer. Section II contained seven questions focused on AIT company structure, size, organization, and number of Soldiers assigned. Section III consisted of ten questions related to personnel resources available versus number of personnel authorized. Section IV consisted of eleven questions about AIT PSGs' and SLs' duties and responsibilities. Section V consisted of five questions concerning unit certifications and training programs. Section VI consisted of two questions related to stressors and utilized the stressor table from the AIT PSG/SL questionnaire. Section VII consisted of six questions related to institutional training and preparation and utilized the AIT PSG Course map as a point of reference for discussion. The questions were prioritized by section and within each section to ensure both that sufficient data points were collected to address the key objectives of the project and to allow the collection to conform to the allotted interview time.

The AIT PSG/SL interview protocol was similar in content to that used with the command teams, organized into six sections, since questions relating to company structure were not relevant to these participants. Section I contained one question regarding MOS specific and WTBD training resources. Section II consisted of nine questions focused on unit certification and training programs. Section III consisted of twelve questions about their duties and responsibilities. Section IV consisted of one question on significant stressors and required the interviewer to determine the most common stressors reported in the completed questionnaires and to ask the participants to expound on their responses. Section V consisted of six questions relating to institutional training and preparation. Again, the sections and questions were prioritized to ensure key research objectives were addressed and to fit within the allotted time.

Procedures

Unit POCs were established at participating AIT training Brigades or Battalions to coordinate the research effort. The number and MOSs of participants along with a tentative schedule were submitted to the POCs for dissemination to the supporting AIT Companies. Participants were identified by groups (AIT SLs, PSGs, and command teams) and scheduled for sessions. Each session was conducted with peer groups—consisting only of command teams (CO and 1SG), PSGs, or SLs—to ensure favorable settings for information sharing.

The questionnaire and interview sessions at each of the four installations spanned three days. Sessions for the AIT PSGs/SLs were approximately 1.5 hours and command team sessions

were scheduled for 1 hour, although a few participants extended sessions past the first hour. Three to four sessions were conducted each day, with two to six participants per session. Each session began with the administrative requirements for data collection (introduction, privacy act information, and informed consent). Following that, the questionnaires were administered to the AIT PSG and SL participants, but not to the Command Teams. The session ended with a focus group interview. The research team consisted of two researchers with sessions facilitated by one team member and notes taken by the other.

During each AIT PSG and SL focus group session, the note taker tabulated the participants' responses to the stressors questionnaire to identify common sources of stress. The most common stressors/obstacles to performance were identified by tabulating the PSGs' and SLs' responses. Items that were emphasized by a majority of participants were provided to the lead interviewer to be brought up for discussion during the focus group interview. This technique allowed the discussion to focus on the primary stressors and stress reduction techniques or programs. All individual responses were kept anonymous.

Recognizing time limits, the lead interviewer worked from a prioritized list of questions, as described earlier. Given that the questions were prioritized by sections, and within sections, not all sections or all questions within each of the sections were addressed during every interview session. The primary focus of the interviews remained on identifying the actual duties and responsibilities of the AIT PSG and SL, the stressors that had emerged while assigned to their positions, the programs in place to reduce or mitigate stressors, the adequacy of the AIT PSG Course, and the availability of resources to provide assistance to PSGs accomplishing their assigned duties.

Command team sessions began with the focus group interview, immediately after the administrative requirements were completed. Once again, not all sections or questions within sections of the protocol were addressed during every session. At the beginning of the interview, participants were asked to describe their organizational structure and the command relationship between the AIT PSGs and the SLs within their units. The stressors/obstacles questionnaire was administered at the midpoint of the command team sessions, as the instrument was designed to focus on sources of stress that had disrupted performance for PSGs and SLs within the past year (see Appendix A). During these interviews, the note taker collated responses to identify which were common between the COs and 1SGs, while the lead interviewer continued the discussion on stress reduction techniques and programs. As in other focus group interviews, this quick assessment of shared perspectives was used to expand the discussion of lessons learned and best practices.

Results

Data were collected to examine factors affecting AIT PSG and SL performance and to identify best training practices for preparing NCOs for their duties, and developing or identifying strategies to reduce the impact of stressors on their effectiveness and motivation. We shaped our analytic approach to address the following:

- To better understand the unique duty expectations for AIT PSGs and how to optimize the training of NCOs for their new positions and responsibilities,
- To determine the significant stressors affecting AIT PSG and SL performance and identify strategies/tools to reduce their impact on AIT PSGs' and SLs' effectiveness and motivation, and
- To examine the support and resourcing provided to AIT PSGs and their SLs to perform their duties in order to identify best practices that could be applied across AIT.

Analytic Approach

During the focus group sessions, researchers took notes on the discussion. The notes were transcribed and consolidated with the lead interviewer. The lead interviewer developed a preliminary set of themes based on the transcribed notes. These themes were then reviewed by other members of the research team to verify accuracy and comprehensiveness. During the discussions that followed, the research team distilled the themes into essential points that described similarities and differences among the respective units from which participants were sampled. The qualitative data allowed us to determine how the training provided to the participants addressed the unique duty expectations for AIT PSGs and SLs and informed recommendations concerning how to enhance the training of NCOs for their new positions and responsibilities. In addition, it provided a rich perspective to identify strategies and tools that could reduce the impact of stressors and obstacles on AIT PSGs' and SLs' effectiveness and motivation.

Quantitative data from the demographic inventory and the stressors/obstacles questionnaire were entered in an interface designed to streamline the data entry and to catch common data entry errors, such as out of range values due to typos, etc. The completed data entries were reviewed by two members of the research team and then transferred to the IBM SPSS Statistics program (v 19; 2010) for statistical analyses. In SPSS, data were further checked for outliers and other types of anomalous responding before formal analyses were performed.

Once the data were cleaned and reviewed, basic descriptive statistics were calculated using the participants' responses from the stressors/obstacles questionnaire to better understand what sources of stress/obstacles most often reported by the participants. The mean values for each item were rank ordered. Subsequent comparisons among AIT PSGs, SLs, and command teams were made using rank ordered lists of stressors/obstacles.

Following this, individual items were combined into factors based on the model adapted from Bartone (2006), to which additional factors were added to account for the differences in sources of stress encountered in training versus operational contexts. As detailed later in this report, various statistical tests were used to identify significant differences among the PSGs, SLs, and command teams. This allowed us to define the general types of stressors/obstacles affecting AIT PSG and SL performance, as well as identifying the degree to which they perceived how these stressors/obstacles affected their ability to fulfill their training roles and/or accomplish their AIT missions.

Finally, data from the DRS-15 (Bartone, 2010) was used to examine PSGs' and SLs' hardiness/resilience in responding to sources of AIT stressors/obstacles. These data were collected to provide insights into the effectiveness of MRT on PSGs' and SLs' performance and resilience.

Interview Themes and Findings

Common themes were identified regarding organizational structure, general training environment, AIT PSG training, unit best practices, stress reducers, and command team expectations from the qualitative data collected during our focus group interviews. The following section summarizes the points of view emphasized across the AITs and across the Command Teams, PSGs, and instructors/SLs we interviewed.

AIT PSG Training

Most COs, 1SGs, PSGs, and SLs we interviewed felt that VU does a very good job preparing PSGs for their new assignments, given their existing resource and time constraints. An area they felt could be improved was in preparing PSGs for the numbers of Soldiers and very tight timelines they will encounter on the job, e.g., 5-week AIT with hundreds of Soldiers. They indicated that improving the training on time-management and including best practices/lessons learned would help alleviate this concern.

Other areas for which participants recommended additional emphasis in the AIT PSG Course included: bus driver licensing, additional practice training and leading PRT, greater instruction on how to develop and conduct profile PRT sessions, completing Combatives levels 1 and 2 certifications, including more information about National Guard and USA Reserves procedures and policies, and more Company level Drill and Ceremony training (as most Platoons are in fact the size of Companies). They also identified a need for in-depth training on administrative policies for UCMJ, especially nonjudicial punishment procedures (Manual for Courts-Martial, Part V), suspension of favorable actions (AR 600-8-2), and enlisted administrative separation actions (AR 635-200 chapters 11, 13, and 14). Finally, the participants expressed their hopes that it would be possible to increase the opportunities to conduct scenario based training for Soldier administrative issues and to turtle⁴ with an experienced AIT PSG (perhaps at Fort Jackson) to better understand the scope of duties for the position before reporting to their assigned unit.

With respect to scheduling of NCOs to take the AIT PSG Course, those we interviewed strongly recommended that all NCOs should attend the course prior to arrival at the duty station. In some cases, participating NCOs were on station for six months before attending the course. During that period, they were able to turtle with assigned AIT PSGs. However, they were unable to provide full support to execute the unit's mission. These turtling experiences did enhance the NCOs' ability to comprehend many of the key objectives covered during AIT PSG training.

⁴ To "turtle" is a military colloquialism for a situation in which a trainee accompanies assigned personnel to observe what they do during the performance of their duties. In a turtling situation, the Soldier being trained is limited to observation only and does not interact with trainees in the role of trainer or supervisor.

With respect to the Master Resiliency Course, the command teams we interviewed had the impression that all AIT PSGs must be MRT certified and that there is a requirement to send non MRT certified PSGs to obtain MRT certification prior to allowing them to operate as AIT PSGs. They noted that “there is no time or installation course to certify” those currently not meeting the requirement. In the interest of the tight schedules and resource constraints at the AIT units, all PSGs should attend MRT before reporting for duty at the unit.

Training Environment

One issue commonly mentioned among the AIT units was a high student to PSG ratio. The ratios reported during our interviews at times ranged from 1/40 to 1/100, depending on the MOS being trained. In order to meet mission requirements, PSGs often asked SLs to assist them outside of the SLs’ regular program of instruction (POI) time. While helping alleviate one training problem, this arrangement also reduced the amount of time SLs had to prepare for and complete their primary instructor duties.

Another factor contributing to high PSG to student ratios was the lack of intermediate leaders, i.e., ‘squad leaders,’ in the true sense of the term. For the most part, the PSGs and SLs we interviewed were unclear on how the duties and responsibilities of an ‘instructor as a squad leader’ were being defined at their unit. There seemed to be few or no command policies specified or enforced regarding specific SL duties and their limitations. In a few cases, the level of actual interactions between PSGs and SLs was described as limited or nonexistent. This situation minimized opportunities for NCOs to coordinate their mutual work. Frequently, there were no clearly delineated command relationships established to help resolve emerging issues or to define lines of authority when serving as a SL. Among the units we interviewed, one Battalion (BN) (Ordnance) had a clearly defined command policy and the relationships among all three groups—Command Teams, PSGs, and SLs—were reported to be good, with little confusion described or negative comments given by the participants.

Among the NCOs we interviewed, a lack of clearly defined command relationships frequently left some AIT Trainees unsure who their immediate supervisor is and to whom they should go when in need of help or guidance. Students are often tasked with student leadership roles (i.e., student 1SG), to offset the impact of limited or over tasked PSG and SL presence. However, this arrangement occasionally caused problems, as one PSG noted, ‘sometimes you need a real NCO to help handle your problem.’

Taking on a training position in the Army is viewed by some as an opportunity for Officers/NCOs to take time away from the stresses of multiple deployments in order to address career advancement, personal, and Family concerns. Many PSGs we interviewed emphasized, however, that working in an AIT environment is not ‘taking a knee.’ They noted that the operational tempo (OPTEMPO) can be higher than that of a deployment, and the OPTEMPO must be sustained for two years. One PSG likened it to ‘being deployed in garrison.’ Often, there is little or no cycle break between classes, e.g., one organization graduates classes every week, which minimizes or eliminates time to recharge, to take care of professional and personal issues, or to enhance the quality of life for their Families.

Table 4 summarizes the typical duty day and responsibilities (without shifts; 5 day work week) the PSGs and SLs described to us during our interviews.

Table 4

Comparison of PSGs' and SLs' Normal Duty Day (Without Shifts; 5-Day Work Week)

	0500 – 0830	0830 – 1230	1330 – 1700	1700-1830	1830 – 2030	2030 – Lights Out
PSG	PRT/Barracks Inspections/ Mvmt to DFAC	Soldier admin. requirements	Soldier admin. requirements	Mvmt to DFAC	Soldier admin./ training requirements	Soldier admin./training requirements
SL	PRT or MOS Remedial Study Hall (2 days a week either am or pm)	MOS POI Instruction	MOS POI Instruction	MOS Remedial Study Hall (2 days a week either am or pm)		

Comparing the two schedules, a PSGs' normal duty day can extend to 15 or 16 hours, whereas SLs' typically lasts 12 to 14 hours. As expected, much of a PSGs' duty day is focused on handling Soldier administrative requirements, such as inprocessing/outprocessing, finance, immigration, mental health, Family care plan, divorce, Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP), Soldier issues and appointments. In addition, the PSGs inspect barracks, address Soldiers' questions, conduct training, and take care of any unexpected problems that emerge throughout the day. Their training responsibilities include phase (bluebook) testing, WTBD, Combatives, Drill and Ceremony, etc. One point emphasized by those we interviewed is that these training duties cannot overlap with POI time. PSGs must conduct these training duties when Soldiers are not in class. Whatever training PSGs cannot accomplish during evening hours following the completion of scheduled POI events must be conducted on weekends.

With respect to the overall training environment or climate, some participants indicated they believed they operated in a zero-tolerance command environment. As a result, they felt they were in a very precarious position when disciplining Soldiers since a 'Soldier's word is taken over the NCO's word' if any issue arises after the fact. This increased their concerns about NCOs being at risk of suffering disciplinary action as a result of enforcing unit discipline.

Finally, a number of participants reported that the PSG wellness program⁵ was only sporadically implemented at their installation based on the number of on-hand PSGs. Too few PSGs combined with a high number of students placed a heavy burden on the remaining PSGs, who would be on duty while or if other PSGs were on leave or off-duty. Such circumstances undermine unit leaders' ability to take advantage of these programs to the benefit of their NCOs.

Organizational Structure

During the transition to AIT PSGs, it was directed that AIT units must be organized in a way that reflects the command and control structure of an operational unit (cf. TR 350-6, App M,

⁵ The AITPSG Wellness Program was modeled after the Drill Sergeant Wellness Program described in TR 350-16 (2008). TR 350-37, AIT PSG Program, released in 2011, provides details on the AIT PSG Resilience Program. This program is intended to provide all mid-tour and third-year AIT PSGs the opportunity to spend quality time with their Families, attend various classes, update personal information and records, and undergo dental, medical, and mental evaluations.

p. 130). For the AIT units we visited in this research effort, the command and control structure, particularly between PSGs and SLs, did not reflect that of an operational unit. Figure 1 illustrates the organizational structure commonly described by the participants in this research.

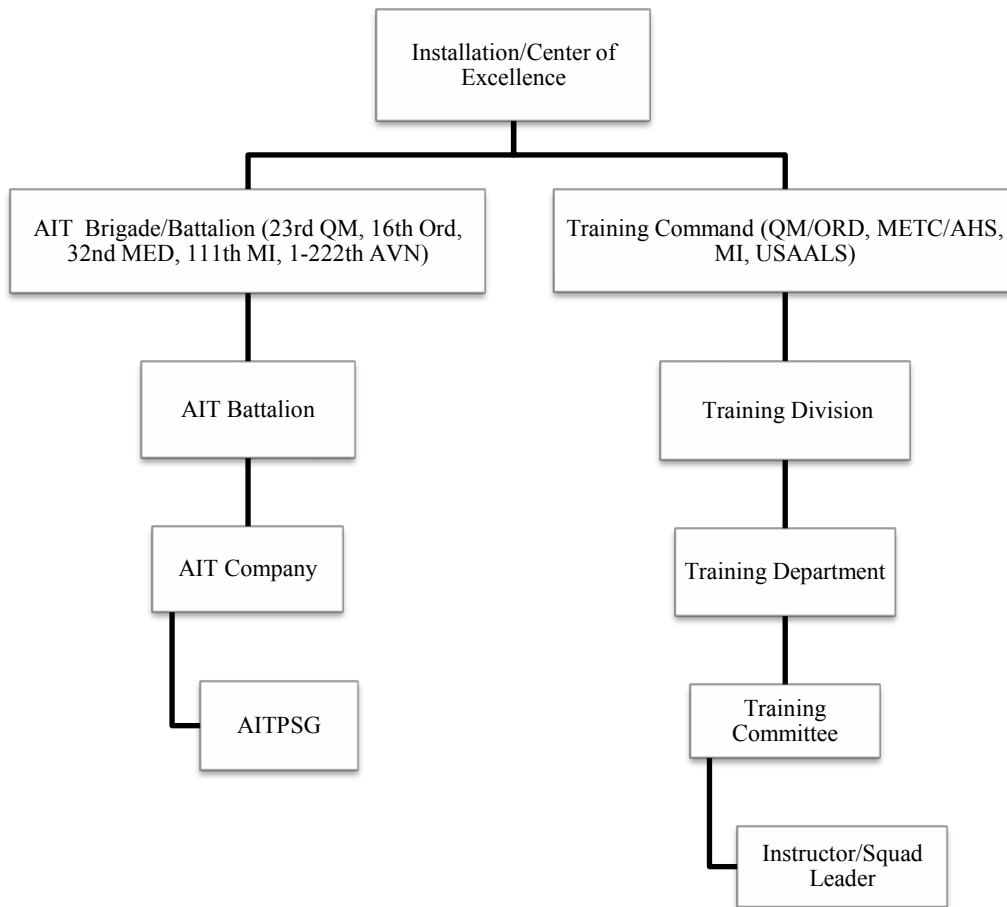


Figure 1. Common AIT Organizational Structure

As reflected in Figure 1, most of the participants we interviewed were operating with a split command structure: AIT PSGs were under an AIT BDE/BN and SLs were under a Training Command department (School House). The 213th Unmanned Aircraft Systems Training Battalion (UASTB) was an exception to this organizational structure, as they placed instructors (i.e. potential SLs), AIT PSGs, and Soldiers within the same BN. However, even within this BN, there was some separation, with SLs and AIT PSGs assigned to different companies.

A variety of issues were associated with an organizational structure that places AIT PSGs and SLs under separate command chains. First, participants described the structure as limiting unity of effort and cooperation among AIT PSGs and SLs, as well as between training divisions/departments and the AIT Companies. Second, the NCOs we interviewed emphasized how this structure can increase problems related to a lack of communication between AIT Companies and training departments. In an effort to build better communication with their training counterparts, several participants described how their AIT Companies were attempting

to coordinate directly with training committees or departments, without BN or BDE being centrally involved.

Finally, the command and coordination issues emerging from a split structure were seen as greatly increasing the competing demands being placed on instructors/SLs. For example, the SLs we interviewed described how they routinely received competing and often incompatible demands from the Company to which they were assigned, the training department to which they were attached, and the AIT Company that they supported. In such situations, the SL found himself/herself in a compromising situation, as responding appropriately to one set of demands was sure to limit the ability to fulfill another. As one SL noted, it is a situation where there are “too many chiefs imposing their own requirements.”

Command Team Expectations

The command teams participating in this research identified a number of expectations they had for new PSGs. During the interviews, we asked them to elaborate on such qualities as leadership skills, administrative skills, MOS proficiency, BRM/ARM proficiency, combatives, and tactical proficiency, especially in Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills.

With respect to leadership skills, the command teams we interviewed indicated they expected PSGs to arrive with previous experience holding other leadership positions. As one CPT noted, “we need a leader who can manage up to 180 Soldiers—sometimes over 220.” Other expectations these teams identified included an ability to instill discipline, act as a role model, have maturity (based on TIS, 10-15 years is good), demonstrate an extraverted personality style, and hold the same MOS as the Soldiers being trained. While having the same MOS as their Soldiers is not essential, these command teams felt it helps in bonding with the Soldiers, engaging them with informal shop talk, and enhancing the PSG’s credibility from the Soldiers’ perspective. However, the command teams also reported they expected the newly arrived PSGs to be proficient at Skill Level 3 or 4 tasks in his/her own MOS, regardless.

With respect to administrative skills, these command teams noted that they need NCOs who know how to counsel Soldiers and are very familiar with UCMJ and Soldier separation actions (AR 635-200). Newly arrived PSGs need to be well organized, able to write proficiently and clearly, and have basic computer skills, especially with software such as Microsoft Office.

Additionally, most of the command teams we interviewed indicated new PSGs should have the same marksmanship proficiency levels as a Drill Sergeant and be able to conduct preliminary marksmanship instruction (PMI) without extensive oversight and guidance. These command teams also noted that being Combatives Level 1 certified is very desirable, as is being able to properly train and evaluate all Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills (WTBD).

Some expectations were strongly emphasized during our discussion, but varied across the individual command teams we interviewed. These expectations included being intimately familiar with TRADOC Regulation 350-6 and able to perform drill and ceremonies training at Squad, Platoon, and Company levels. Also, new PSGs were expected, to varying degrees, to

arrive physically fit (without profiles), be an expert in PRT, be comfortable speaking and communicating with large groups of Soldiers, and be Combat Life Saver certified.

Are PSGs Meeting Expectations?

The command teams we interviewed indicated that most PSGs are meeting their expectations; giving subjective estimates that ranged from 50% to 90% of new PSGs arriving ready to train. Most command teams indicated they felt they had “impressive NCOs” working as PSGs for the unit. Some teams noted, however, that fewer and fewer new PSGs are meeting expectations and therefore require considerably more training to acquire the necessary skills to meet the duty requirements of an AIT PSG. According to these teams, the most common problems seem to result from new PSGs not adapting to the different operating environments that exist between TRADOC and Forces Command units.⁶

When PSGs Don’t Meet Expectations

When we asked the command teams to identify where the responsibility lies to fix areas where PSGs are not meeting expectations, they had a number of comments. With respect to Department of Army selection criteria, “selecting the top 10% with only technical skills does not translate to a leader in this environment.” They noted that PSGs need to have had successful troop leading time (rated time⁷) at some point in their career before reporting to duty in AIT. With respect to VU, they questioned, “why change the course from 9 weeks to 2 weeks, when the job hasn’t changed,” and remarked that “NCOs are not getting the basics in 2 weeks,” and “VU cannot fix issues within a 2-week course.” Finally, with respect to the unit, these command teams reported that they can only certify individuals on installation specific requirements, noting that “we need a unit/installation local orientation course.” They also noted that, “NCOs must hit the ground running, as we do not have time to get them up to speed.” Personnel, equipment, and other resources are always at a premium in fulfilling mission requirements, so it can be a challenge to get new personnel up to speed.

Resources: Personnel

Table 5 summarizes the PSG manning for the Companies and Platoons participating in this research effort.

⁶ Further discussion on this point revealed that PSGs who have recently arrived from a deployable (FORSCOM) unit were having difficulty adjusting to the more restrictive rules found in an initial entry training (TRADOC) organization.

⁷ NCOs who are assigned to a leadership position receive an official evaluation (Noncommissioned officer Evaluation Report) of their performance that is maintained in their official military personal file and can be reviewed for assignment selection.

Table 5
PSG Manning for Participating Companies and Platoons

Location	PSGs		Company Size	Platoon Size
	Authorized	On-Hand		
<u>Fort Lee</u>				
Company 1	6	5	320-340	70-80
Company 2	8	7	320	60-120
Company 3	6	8	200-400	70
Company 4	10	6	265-337	80-85
<u>Fort Sam Houston</u>				
Company 1	6	6	160-200	70
Company 2	6	6	148	40-65
Company 3	10	10	350	70-75
<u>Fort Huachuca</u>				
Company 1	8	8	613-700	18-30*
Company 2	7	4	150-250	65-70
Company 3	6	6	275	90-180
<u>Fort Eustis</u>				
Company 1	8	8	340	150-205
Company 2	8	6	250	110
Company 3	6	8	266	70-130

*Note: One Platoon equals one class; PSGs are responsible for 6 classes.

The size of the PSGs' platoons tended to vary by MOS, shift versus non-shift schedules, and the number of PSGs available during the day. In addition, one platoon was typically designated for hold-overs and hold-unders,⁸ which required constant supervision from at least one PSG. This further stressed the Company's available manning by removing the hold-over/under PSG from duties with the other platoons.

As is typical in nearly every Army unit, the daily availability of PSGs was affected by leave, passes, and professional development schools (functional), NCOES, and certification training. In addition, BDE and BN staff duty and Company directed 24-hour Charge of Quarters/Night PSG duty impacted the availability of PSGs for the next day's schedule. Shift duty also frequently affected the availability of PSGs, as having a PSG on night duty for 7 days effectively eliminated them from daily platoon contact, except for morning PRT.

Resources: Equipment

Specific equipment shortfalls varied across the units we interviewed. For example, PSGs at Fort Sam Houston, TX, reported a lack of PRT specific equipment, such as kettle balls. While at Fort Eustis, a variety of resource needs were described, including the continued need to

⁸ A hold-under is an Army term for a Soldier who is waiting for a slot to go into training. A hold-over is a Soldier who for medical, or other, reasons is unable to continue training, or who has completed training but is waiting to be transferred to another unit or school.

require NCOs to share computers and to use outdated 5 year-old laptops that limited access to digital publications. Other concerns included available training aids not adequately replicating actual aircraft and the need to continually use old tools and equipment during training. For example, aircraft used in training tended to have old wiring that did not reflect current standards and bolts stripped from the equipment repeatedly being taken apart and reassembled. Moreover, the hangar environment used for testing and training Soldiers had reached temperatures as high as 120 degrees F, making the computerized trainers ineffective, in addition to the impact high temperatures had on Soldiers' performance.

Questionnaire Results

We rank ordered responses to the questionnaires on AIT training unit stressors and obstacles for AIT PSGs, SLs, and command teams. For AIT PSGs and SLs, the questionnaires were designed to identify key issues that frequently arose for them within the past year, as well as those issues that obstructed their ability to perform their jobs as Army trainers. We designed the questionnaire in this way on the assumption that an issue's frequency does not tell us whether it is perceived to be obstructive to AIT PSGs' and SLs' performance. The command teams were asked to rate only obstacles to performance encountered by their AIT PSGs during the past year.

AIT PSGs

AIT PSGs were administered a 39-item questionnaire (see Appendix C) that listed various sources of stress/obstacles to work performance. They were asked to rate each stressor/obstacle item in terms of how frequently they had experienced it during the past year: 0=Never; 1=Almost Never; 2=Sometimes; 3=Fairly Often; 4=Often. They were also asked to rate whether the identified source of stress had affected their ability to do their job as AIT trainers within the past the year. This called for a 'Yes' or 'No' response.

The top 5 most frequent sources of stress identified by AIT PSGs in the past year were associated with having too much work and too little time in which to complete it. The top ranked stressor was "Long work hours and/or days in the training cycle" ($M=3.43$). Following this was "Lack of Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP)" ($M=3.33$). Based on our interviews, we concluded SDAP stress related to the AIT PSG job requirements being similar to that of a Drill Sergeant—hard work, long hours—but without including the same level of acknowledgement and special duty pay to compensate for the additional duty requirements and help offset costs, such as daycare, resulting from extended duty days. Appendix D contains a comparison of duties for three groups of NCOs (Drill Sergeants, Warrior Transition Unit NCOs, and AIT PSGs) two of which currently receive SDAP and one that does not. The third highest ranked item was "Long work hours/days before/after the training cycle" ($M=3.27$); the fourth, "Lack of quality Family time" ($M=3.11$); and fifth, "Lack of personal time (for appointments, etc.)" ($M=2.57$).

The top 5 most disruptive sources of stress, those that were seen as adversely impacting the performance of AIT PSGs during the past year, were very similar to those that were most frequent. "Lack of quality Family time" was the most disruptive source of stress for AIT PSGs, with 73% indicating that it had affected their performance in the past year. The second most

disruptive source of stress, which 70% of AIT PSGs indicated, was “Lack of special duty assignment pay.” Third was “Long work hours/days during the training cycle (68% of AIT PSGs); fourth, “Long work hours before/after the training cycle” (62%); and fifth, “Lack of personal time (for appointments, etc.; 57%).

AIT SLs/Instructors

SLs/Instructors were administered a 38-Item questionnaire, that mirrored the instrument administered to AIT PSGs, excluding the question concerning special duty assignment pay. Response options were the same as on the questionnaire for AIT PSGs, and concerned the frequency of stressors and the disruptiveness of stressors (as obstacles to performance).

Compared to AIT PSGs, there was less consistency in the top 5 most frequent stressors indicated by SLs. The top ranked stressor was “Lack of communication between AIT command teams and PSGs/SLs” ($M=2.6$). Following this was “Long work hours/days during the training cycle” ($M=2.45$), similar to that found for AIT PSGs. The stressor ranking third for SLs was “Limited support structure (no or too few SLs)” ($M=2.27$). Fourth, the SLs indicated “Lack of quality Family time” ($M=2.05$), which was also in the top 5 for AIT PSGs. Finally, “Long periods of repetitive work activities without variety” ($M=1.95$) was the fifth ranked stressor for SLs.

Concerning stressors that actually became obstacles to their work performance as trainers, SLs rated highest “Lack of communication between AIT command teams and PSGs/SLs” (67%). Note that for SLs this is both the top ranked stressor in terms of frequency and disruptiveness. Second, the SLs indicated “Long work hours/days during the training cycle” (52%) was the next most disruptive source of stress. Following this, the third ranked obstacle to performance was “Supervisor’s knowledge, skills, and abilities” (50%). Fourth ranked was “Unclear or changing mission” (47%); and fifth, “Student to PSG/SL ratio” (47%).

Command Teams

Command teams were asked to rate each of the items from the AIT PSG and SL questionnaires in terms of whether or not the item identified an obstacle to work performance for PSGs or SLs during the past year. The researchers had an hour to interview and administer questionnaires to the command teams. Therefore, they were not asked to indicate the frequency for each of the items, focusing only on those that they perceived to have disrupted performance of PSGs and SLs.

First Sergeants’ Responses. Four items were identified by 100% ($n=13$) of the 1SGs as obstacles to performance during the past year. These were: “Lack of personal time,” “Lack of quality Family time,” “Long work hours/days before/after training cycle,” and “Long hours/days during the training cycle.” Following these four obstacles, 92% of 1SGs indicated “Lack of special duty assignment pay” as an obstacle to performance.

Company Commanders’ Responses. The top ranked obstacle perceived by COs was “Long hours/days during the training cycle” (100%; $N=13$). This was followed by “Lack of

quality Family time” (92%). Finally, 85% of COs indicated that “Lack of special duty assignment pay,” “Student-to-PSG/SL ratio,” and “Long work hours before/after the training cycle” as obstacles to performance.

Sources of AIT Trainer Stress/Obstacles to Performance

Adapting Bartone’s (2006) classification system to the AIT training context, the items related to sources of AIT trainer stress/obstacles were grouped into 8 categories,. These 8 categories of stressors, ranked in order of their overall frequency, are as follows: (a) Workload, (b) Lack of Recognition, (c) Ambiguity, (d) Isolation, (e) Powerlessness, (f) Boredom, (g) Individual Competencies, and (h) Danger/Threat.

Workload

Workload was defined as the degree to which schedule of duties and tasks was perceived to overwhelm an individual’s ability to balance work and personal life. Table 6 presents the items related to workload from the questionnaires. Seven items were combined to measure the Workload factor (inter-item reliability $\alpha=0.86$).

Table 6

Workload by AIT Position (Rank Ordered by AIT PSG Frequency Responses)

Items	Frequency Mean (SD)		% Indicating Disruption of Performance		
	PSG (n=37)	SL (n=60)	PSG	SL	CO & 1SG (n=26*)
Long work hours and/or days during the training cycle	3.43 (0.99)	2.45 (1.41)	68%	52%	100%
Long work hours and/or days in periods before and after the training cycle	3.27 (1.10)	1.88 (1.52)	62%	37%	92%
Lack of quality Family time	3.11 (1.05)	2.05 (1.55)	73%	40%	96%
Lack of personal time (time for appointments, etc)	2.57 (1.28)	1.77 (1.47)	57%	33%	88.5%
Student-to-PSG/SL Ratio	2.43 (1.46)	1.62 (1.50)	51%	47%	85%
Additional Duties (CQ, Staff Duty, Master Driver, Weight Control, etc)	1.97 (1.40)	1.71 (1.59)	43%	37%	58%
Potential to lose leave time	1.59 (1.50)	0.85 (1.27)	35%	17%	35%
Workload Total (Mean)	2.49 (0.87)	1.64 (1.08)	56%	37%	79%

*Note: There were n=13 COs and n=13 1SGs/Acting 1SGs in the command teams. Command teams were not asked to rate items related to frequency. Frequency was rated in terms of: 0=Never; 1=Almost Never; 2=Sometimes; 3=Fairly Often; 4=Often. Disruption of performance was rated as ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ with respect to impact to job performance in the past year.

Workload was the most frequent source of AIT trainer stress overall across both PSG and SL ratings ($M=1.97$; $SD=1.08$). It was also the most disruptive source of stress, with 51% of

respondents on average indicating that stressors related to Workload had adversely impacted AIT trainer job performance in the past year.

Lack of Recognition

Lack of Recognition was defined as the degree to which an individual perceives a lack of respect and/or acknowledgement for his or her efforts. Table 7 presents the related items and means/percentages for Lack of Recognition. This factor was measured using 3 items. The reliability was $\alpha=.43$ (PSGs only), a low reliability that was likely due to having only 3 items. In Table 7, the missing data for SLs are items that were PSG specific and were not presented to SLs.

Table 7

Lack of Recognition by AIT Position (Rank Ordered by AIT PSG Frequency Responses)

Items	Frequency Mean (SD)		% Indicating Disruption of Performance		
	PSG (n=37)	SL (n=60)	PSG	SL	CO & 1SG (n=26*)
Lack of Special Duty Assignment Pay	3.33 (1.22)	--	70%	--	88.5%
Lack of AIT PSG Badge	2.11 (1.63)	--	43%	--	61.5%
NCOER part III duty description for AIT PSG & SL	0.86 (1.27)	1.34 (1.60)	24%	20%	15%
Lack of Recognition Total (Mean)	2.10 (0.95)	--	46%	--	55%

*Note: There were n=13 COs and n=13 1SGs/Acting 1SGs in the command teams. Command teams were not asked to rate items related to frequency. Two items were not presented to SLs, as they were only appropriate for PSGs and command teams; these items are indicated by '--'. Frequency was rated in terms of: 0=Never; 1=Almost Never; 2=Sometimes; 3=Fairly Often; 4=Often. Disruption of performance was rated as 'Yes' or 'No' with respect to impact to job performance in the past year.

Lack of Recognition focused primarily on PSGs. The average rating of frequency was $M=1.63$ ($SD=1.43$), second in the ranking for frequency. However, it is important to qualify that SLs were asked to rate only a single item for this factor. The rating by PSGs was $M=2.10$ ($SD=0.95$). With respect to impact on performance, Lack of Recognition ranked fifth among the eight sources of AIT trainer stress/obstacles to performance.

Ambiguity

Ambiguity was defined as the respondents' perceived inability to predict and plan day-to-day work. This factor was measured using 7 items, and had a reliability of $\alpha=0.83$. Table 8 presents the related items and means/percentages for Ambiguity.

Table 8

Ambiguity by AIT Position (Rank Ordered by AIT PSG Frequency Responses)

Items	Frequency Mean (SD)		% Indicating Disruption of Performance		
	PSG (n=37)	SL (n=60)	PSG	SL	CO & 1SG (n=26*)
Norms or standards of behavior inconsistently applied to Soldiers within AIT	1.86 (1.46)	1.90 (1.43)	38%	45%	46%
Unclear mission or changing mission	1.65 (1.25)	1.83 (1.40)	40.5%	47%	19%
Unclear policies (internal/external, local/HQDA, changes in duties with change in command team)	1.62 (1.28)	1.60 (1.45)	38%	42%	50%
Ambiguous lines of authority (PSGs and SLs assigned to different units)	1.59 (1.48)	1.86 (1.58)	27%	35%	61.5%
Peer knowledge, skills, and abilities (e.g. D&C, WTBD, taking care of Soldier skills, etc)	1.43 (1.34)	1.65 (1.22)	27%	33%	27%
Supervisors' knowledge, skills, and abilities (training management, taking care of Soldier skills)	1.30 (1.37)	1.90 (1.31)	32%	50%	--
Role confusion (what is my job?)	0.70 (1.10)	1.50 (1.48)	16%	37%	58%
Ambiguity Total (Mean)	1.45 (0.89)	1.67 (0.96)	27%	38%	33%

*Note: There were n=13 COs and n=13 ISGs/Acting ISGs in the command teams. Command teams were not asked to rate items related to frequency. Frequency was rated in terms of: 0=Never; 1=Almost Never; 2=Sometimes; 3=Fairly Often; 4=Often. Disruption of performance was rated as 'Yes' or 'No' with respect to impact to job performance in the past year.

Ambiguity was the third most frequent source of AIT trainer stress overall across both PSG and SL ratings ($M=1.59$; $SD=0.94$). It was also the second most disruptive source of stress, with 33.5% of respondents on average indicating that stressors related to Ambiguity had negatively impacted AIT trainer job performance in the past year.

Isolation

Isolation was defined as the respondents' perceived lack of social support, connection, and communication within the AIT environment. This factor was measured using 6 items and had a reliability of $\alpha=0.54$. This low reliability was likely due to the items measuring slightly different constructs (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).⁹ Table 9 presents the related items and means/percentages for Isolation.

⁹ When the 'Installation Location' item was deleted, the reliability coefficient increased to $\alpha=.60$ (5 items), the minimum accepted in applied research. Dropping this item should be considered in future administrations of the instrument.

Table 9

Isolation by AIT Position (Rank Ordered by AIT PSG Frequency Responses)

Items	Frequency Mean (SD)		% Indicating Disruption of Performance		
	PSG (n=37)	SL (n=60)	PSG	SL	CO & 1SG (n=26*)
Limited support structure (no or too few Squad Leaders)	2.57 (1.42)	2.27 (1.30)	51%	47%	77%
Lack of communication in general between AIT command teams and PSGs/SLs	1.73 (1.33)	2.60 (1.21)	43%	67%	46%
Peers (unreliable, unsupportive)	1.70 (1.22)	1.48 (1.03)	38%	27%	35%
No Family support group	1.16 (1.68)	0.98 (1.49)	24%	23%	42%
Installation Location	0.97 (1.38)	0.63 (1.01)	13.5%	7%	19%
New organization, do not know coworkers	0.81 (1.08)	0.93 (0.98)	11%	18%	46%
Isolation Total (Mean)	1.50 (0.87)	1.48 (0.61)	26%	27%	38%

*Note: There were n=13 COs and n=13 1SGs/Acting 1SGs in the command teams. Command teams were not asked to rate items related to frequency. Frequency was rated in terms of: 0=Never; 1=Almost Never; 2=Sometimes; 3=Fairly Often; 4=Often. Disruption of performance was rated as 'Yes' or 'No' with respect to impact to job performance in the past year.

Overall, Isolation was the fourth most frequent AIT trainer stressor ($M=1.49$; $SD=0.72$). It was also rated, on average, as the fourth most disruptive source of stress impacting AIT trainers' performance in the past year (29%).

Powerlessness

Powerlessness was defined as the respondents' perceived inability to influence the work environment. This factor was measured using 6 items and had a reliability of $\alpha=0.75$. Table 10 presents the items and means/percentages for Powerlessness.

Table 10

Powerlessness by AIT Position (Rank Ordered by AIT PSG Frequency Responses)

Items	Frequency Mean (SD)		% Indicating Disruption of Performance		
	PSG (n=37)	SL (n=60)	PSG	SL	CO & 1SG (n=26*)
Differing standards or accepted behavior for different units (CO/BN/BDE)	2.19 (1.47)	1.58 (1.32)	51%	40%	69%
Unresponsive supply chain—trouble getting needed supplies and repair parts	1.70 (1.33)	1.37 (1.36)	49%	30%	31%
Conflicting or competing immediate chains of command for PSG & SL	1.41 (1.42)	1.49 (1.45)	30%	40%	46%
Unresponsive Chain of Command – trouble getting support (resources - military vehicles, training aids, time)	1.11 (1.05)	1.37 (1.36)	35%	22%	27%
Lack of command support for decisions and actions regarding Soldier behavior and discipline	1.05 (1.37)	1.58 (1.42)	32%	33%	11.5%
PSG outranked by Squad Leader	0.53 (1.08)	--	8%	--	8%
Powerlessness Total (Mean)	1.34 (0.86)	1.44 (0.98)	34%	27.5%	32%

*Note: There were n=13 COs and n=13 1SGs/Acting 1SGs in the command teams. Command teams were not asked to rate items related to frequency. One item was not presented to SLs, as it was only appropriate for PSGs and command teams; this item is indicated by '--'. Frequency was rated in terms of: 0=Never; 1=Almost Never; 2=Sometimes; 3=Fairly Often; 4=Often. Disruption of performance was rated as 'Yes' or 'No' with respect to impact to job performance in the past year.

Powerlessness was the fifth most frequent source of AIT trainer stress out of the eight factors. The overall mean frequency rating was $M=1.40$ ($SD=0.94$). However, it was the third most disruptive source of stress/obstacle that impacted AIT trainers' performance. The average rating across PSGs, SLs, and command teams was 30%.

Boredom

Boredom was defined as diminished personal investment in work and/or mission. This factor was measured with 3 items, and had a reliability of $\alpha=.65$. Table 11 presents the items and means/percentages for Boredom.

Table 11

Boredom by AIT Position (Rank Ordered by AIT PSG Frequency Responses)

Items	Frequency Mean (SD)		% Indicating Disruption of Performance		
	PSG (n=37)	SL (n=60)	PSG	SL	CO & 1SG (n=26*)
Long periods of repetitive work activities without variety	2.03 (1.46)	1.95 (1.37)	32%	37%	65%
Lack of work that can be construed as meaningful or important	1.22 (1.29)	1.10 (1.12)	16%	15%	8%
Overall mission or purpose not understood as worthwhile or important	0.86 (1.25)	0.76 (1.00)	22%	15%	15%
Boredom Total (Mean)	1.37 (1.05)	1.28 (0.89)	23%	22%	29%

*Note: There were n=13 COs and n=13 1SGs/Acting 1SGs in the command teams. Command teams were not asked to rate items related to frequency. Frequency was rated in terms of: 0=Never; 1=Almost Never; 2=Sometimes; 3=Fairly Often; 4=Often. Disruption of performance was rated as ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ with respect to impact to job performance in the past year.

Boredom was ranked sixth out of the eight sources of AIT trainer stress ($M=1.31$; $SD=0.95$). It was also ranked as the sixth most disruptive source of AIT trainer stress/obstacle to performance, with a 24% average rating across the three groups.

Individual Competencies

Individual Competencies was defined in terms of how an individual perceives his/her level of knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform in his/her work environment. This factor was measured with 3 items for PSGs and had a reliability of $\alpha=.91$, and with 4 items for SLs, with a reliability of $\alpha=.86$. Table 12 presents the items and means/percentages for Individual Competencies.

Table 12

Individual Competencies by AIT Position (Rank Ordered by AIT PSG Frequency Responses)

Items	Frequency Mean (SD)		% Indicating Disruption of Performance		
	PSG (n=36)	SL (n=60)	PSG	SL	CO & 1SG (n=26*)
Individual knowledge (e.g. D&C, WTBD)	0.75 (0.94)	1.38 (1.60)	19%	10%	42%
Individual skills (e.g. teaching, counseling, etc)	0.69 (1.19)	1.07 (1.35)	13.5%	20%	46%
Individual abilities (e.g. performance of Skill Level 1 tasks, taking care of Soldiers)	0.63 (1.13)	0.90 (1.31)	13.5%	10%	46%
Maintaining Currency in MOS Technical Skills and Equipment	--	0.69 (1.07)	--	25%	--
Ind. Competencies Total (Mean)	0.69 (1.00)	1.02 (1.18)	11.5%	16%	34%

*Note: There were n=13 COs and n=13 1SGs/Acting 1SGs in the command teams. Command teams were not asked to rate items related to frequency. Frequency was rated in terms of: 0=Never; 1=Almost Never; 2=Sometimes; 3=Fairly Often; 4=Often. Disruption of performance was rated as 'Yes' or 'No' with respect to impact to job performance in the past year.

Individual Competencies were ranked as the seventh most frequent source of AIT trainer stress ($M=0.90$; $SD=1.12$). It was ranked eighth (last) in terms of disrupting the on the job performance of AIT trainers, with only 18.5% on average indicating it had been an issue in the past year.

Danger/Threat

Danger/Threat was defined as perceived potential for harm to career and/or to self that is attributable to the work environment and/or position. Danger/Threat was measured using 4 items, which had a reliability of $\alpha=.71$. Table 13 presents the items and means/percentages for Danger/Threat.

Table 13

Danger/Threat by AIT Position (Rank Ordered by AIT PSG Frequency Responses)

Items	Frequency Mean (SD)		% Indicating Disruption of Performance		
	PSG (n=36)	SL (n=60)	PSG	SL	CO & 1SG (n=26*)
Career damaging assignment	1.08 (1.44)	0.83 (1.40)	30%	20%	27%
Potentially compromising environment (Integrity, morally, ethically)	1.03 (1.42)	0.97 (1.26)	22%	28%	42%
Potential to fall behind peers (Due to: duty assignments, NCOES opportunities, or promotion potential)	0.76 (1.09)	1.22 (1.42)	19%	27%	23%
Real risk of serious injury or death, from negligent discharge, Convoy Live Fire Exercise, Qualification Range, or accidents, including crushing injuries, loss of limb, etc.	0.19 (0.70)	0.32 (0.75)	3%	2%	4%
Danger/Threat Total (Mean)	0.76 (0.90)	0.84 (0.90)	18%	19%	24%

*Note: There were n=13 COs and n=13 1SGs/Acting 1SGs in the command teams. Command teams were not asked to rate items related to frequency. Frequency was rated in terms of: 0=Never; 1=Almost Never; 2=Sometimes; 3=Fairly Often; 4=Often. Disruption of performance was rated as 'Yes' or 'No' with respect to impact to job performance in the past year.

Danger/Threat was the least frequent source of AIT trainer stress out of the 8 factors ($M=0.81$; $SD=0.90$). In terms of its impact on AIT trainers' performance in the past year, it was ranked seventh, with 20% of respondents on average indicating Danger/Threat as an issue.

Comparing Rated Sources of AIT Trainer Stress

Frequent Sources of AIT Trainer Stress

For each of the factors, we conducted a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with Bonferroni post-hoc tests to analyze for statistically significant differences between PSGs and SLs with respect to the frequency measures. Two significant differences were found between the PSGs and SLs. The first concerned Workload, with PSGs ($M=2.49$; $SD=0.87$) reporting this factor as a more frequent source of stress than SLs ($M=1.64$; $SD=1.08$), $F(1,92) = 13.9$, $p=.000$, $\eta_p^2=0.13$. The second statistically significant difference concerned Lack of Recognition, with PSGs ($M=2.10$; $SD=0.95$) reporting this factor as a more frequent source of stress than SLs ($M=1.34$; $SD=1.60$), $F(1,92) = 6.64$, $p=.012$, $\eta_p^2=0.067$.¹⁰ There were no other statistically significant differences between PSGs and SLs. Command teams were not included in this analysis as no frequency data were collected from them. Figure 2 depicts the sources of AIT trainer stress by training role, comparing PSGs and SLs

¹⁰ This finding should be qualified by the different numbers of items used to calculate Lack of Recognition between PSGs and SLs, with PSGs rating a larger pool of items than SLs.

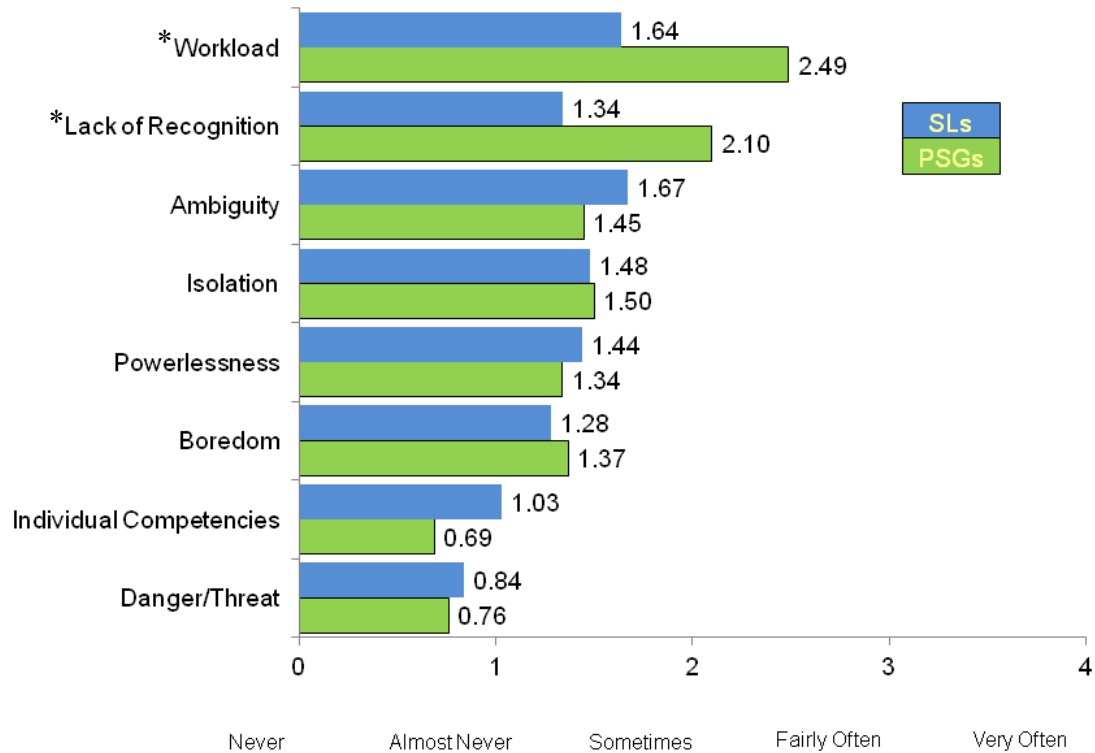


Figure 2. Frequent Sources of AIT Trainer Stress by Training Role (PSG v. SL). Note: ‘*’ indicates a statistically significant difference between PSGs and SLs.

Disruptive Sources of AIT Trainer Stress

Factor scores were calculated by averaging the percentage of affirmative responses across items composing each factor, similar to the way a teacher might calculate a class average for a test. Since these data violate normality assumptions, a Kruskal-Wallis *H* test was conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences among the groups—PSGs versus SLs versus command teams—for each of the sources of AIT trainer stress. This analysis focused on the sources of trainer stress that were indicated as having negatively impacted job performance in the past year.

The Kruskal-Wallis test identified significant differences among the groups for Isolation, Workload, Individual Competencies, and Lack of Recognition. Table 14 presents the significance tests.

Table 14

Significant Differences among PSGs, SLs, and Command Team Ratings of Disruptive Sources of AIT Trainer Stress

Factor	χ^2	df	Sig.
Isolation	7.01	2, N=123	.030
Workload	22.66	2, N=123	.000
Individual Competencies	7.93	2, N=123	.019
Lack of Recognition	54.66	2, N=123	.000

Note: Test was conducted using the Kruskal-Wallis H

Post-hoc tests with Bonferonni adjustment were conducted to identify differences among the respective groups. For Isolation, Command Teams (38%) on average rated the factor to be more disruptive to PSG/SL performance than did PSGs (26%) and SLs (27%). There were no significant differences between PSGs and SLs. Command Teams (79%) also tended to view the Workload factor as more disruptive to performance than both PSGs (56%) and SLs (37%); however, the difference between PSGs and SLs was not significant. With respect to Individual Competencies as a source of trainer stress impacting performance, Command Teams (34%) and PSGs (11%) differed significantly, but SLs (16%) did not significantly differ from either Command Teams or PSGs. Finally, Command Teams (55%) and PSGs (46%) did not differ significantly with respect to Lack of Recognition as a source of AIT trainer stress impacting performance, but both groups did differ significantly from SLs (7%).¹¹ Figure 3 compares average ratings of AIT trainer stressors that disrupt on the job performance.

¹¹ Percentages are reported here to ease interpretation of the results, as Kruskal-Wallis H uses ranked sums to make comparisons among groups.

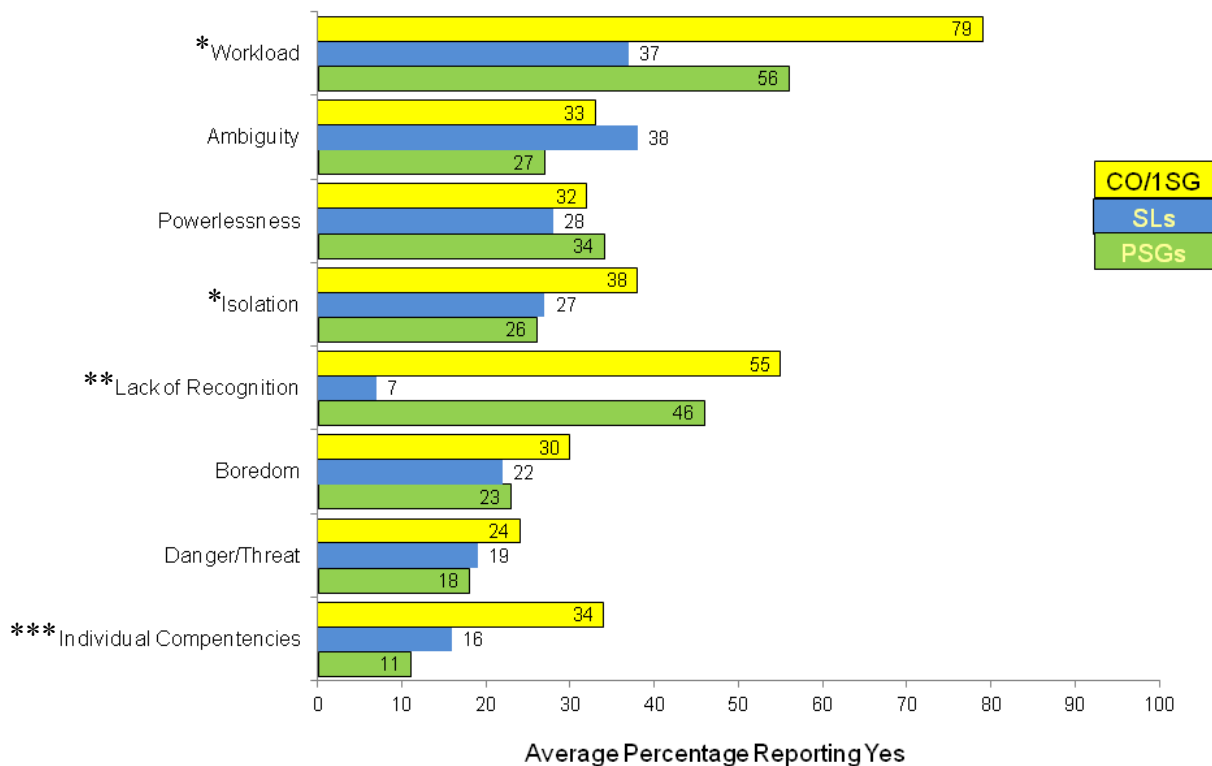


Figure 3. Average Ratings of Disruptive Sources of AIT Trainer Stress by AIT Training Role. Note: ‘*’ indicates statistically significant difference between Command Teams and PSGs/SLs. ‘**’ indicates statistically significant difference between SLs and Command Teams/PSGs. ‘***’ indicates statistically significant difference between Command Teams and PSGs, but not SLs.

AITPSG Master Resiliency Training

Part of the training that AIT PSGs receive prior to or during their assignment to an AIT unit is the Master Resiliency Course. The course is intended to help PSGs to be effective at handling sources of on-the-job stress, and to provide tools to counsel AIT Soldiers effectively. Within the Army, “resilience is the ability to grow and thrive in the face of challenges and bounce back from adversity” (Comprehensive Soldier Fitness, PSB02010/1, 10 February 2010). In the scientific literature, resilience is often combined with a related concept, hardiness. Hardiness-Resilience is defined as ‘an individual tendency to view stressful and painful experiences as a normal part of life, which overall is interesting and meaningful to the person’ (Bartone, 1995).

Among the PSGs we interviewed, 11 completed Master Resiliency Training immediately after AIT PSG training at Victory University, 8 after assuming PSG duties, and 15 still needed to attend the course. Only 3 of 60 SLs had completed any version of Master Resiliency Training at any point.

Despite very limited data, we sought to evaluate whether the Master Resiliency Training received by PSGs may have had identifiable effects on their ability to handle stressors arising in the AIT training environment and/or was related to developing the three components of

hardiness-resiliency, identified in the literature as commitment, control, and challenge (Bartone, 2006; 2010). For this analysis, we used Bartone’s (2010) Dispositional Resiliency Scale (DRS-15), a 15-item measure designed to provide an overall Hardiness-Resiliency score as well as subscores for components related to commitment, control, and challenge.¹² In previous research, higher scores have been associated with increased performance under stressful conditions (Bartone, 2006). Table 15 presents the DRS-15 scores for AIT PSGs and SLs; the scale was not administered to Company command teams.

Table 15
Mean and SD on the DRS-15 by AIT Training Role

Factor	AIT PSG Mean (SD)	SL Mean (SD)	Norms* Mean
Commitment	11.2 (1.90)	11.1 (2.44)	10.2
Control	12.4 (2.35)	11.9 (2.34)	10.3
Challenge	8.9 (2.56)	8.8 (2.81)	9.9
Hardiness-Resiliency Total Score	32.6 (4.01)	31.8 (5.21)	30.4

Note: Commitment is defined as a tendency to see the world as interesting and meaningful; control, as a belief that one can control or influence events; challenge, as seeing change and new experience as an opportunity to learn and develop (Bartone, 2006). *Norms were based on the Norwegian Health Survey (2007).

We used an independent *t*-test to examine whether there were significant differences between PSGs and SLs on the DRS-15 scales. No significant differences were identified between PSGs and SLs.

Next, we tested whether there were significant differences between the PSGs who had taken MRT and those who had not. There were no significant differences found between PSGs who had taken the MRT course and those who had not.

We then compared PSGs’ and SLs’ DRS-15 scores with the normative data for the scale. Normative data collected from $N=7,281$ adults who participated in the Norwegian Health Survey (2007). Both groups were above the median for the normative group, with an overall Hardiness-Resiliency score at the 65th percentile. PSGs and SLs tended to score higher than the norm group for Commitment and Control, but lower for Challenge.

Factors from the AIT Trainer Stressor/Obstacles inventory developed for this effort were correlated with the DRS-15 results. For PSGs, lower DRS-15 Control scores on the DRS-15 were associated with increased concerns related to Boredom ($r=-.46, p=.005$) and Workload ($r=-.45, p=.007$). In addition, for SLs, lower DRS-15 Control scores were associated with increased concerns related to Danger/Threat ($r=-.26, p=.05$). Surprisingly, there was no significant relationship found between higher DRS-15 Control scores and Powerlessness ratings for either PSGs or SLs.

¹² Observed reliability for the DRS-15 scale was $\alpha=.62$ (15 items).

Discussion

This research was conducted to identify and examine factors affecting AIT PSGs and SLs performance and motivation, in particular to (a) understand their unique duty expectations and how to optimize training for their new positions and responsibilities, (b) define the stressors/obstacles affecting AIT PSGs' and SLs' performance and identify strategies/tools to reduce the impact of these stressors/obstacles on their effectiveness and motivation, and (c) examine the support and resourcing provided to PSGs and SLs to perform their duties in order to identify best practices that could be applied across AIT.

Our research indicated that the duty requirements of AIT PSGs and SLs are complex and seem at times contradictory. Our data analysis and findings provide a clearer understanding of the uniqueness of these duty assignments. In addition, a number of factors were identified that present challenges to AIT PSGs, SLs, and their Command Teams. In this research, leaders reported that newly assigned PSGs are meeting their basic expectations, yet they also expressed concern about preparing and sustaining PSGs for all the proficiencies and skills needed to fulfill continually increasing duty requirements.

As workload demands increase, stress factors coupled with limited resources may lead to an increasingly stretched capability for PSGs, SLs, and Command Teams to meet all of the mission requirements for successful AIT Soldier education, training, and integration with the operational Army. While not entirely surprising, given the increased demands placed on nearly every unit and NCO throughout the Army during this time of conflict, the PSGs participating in this research were increasingly hard-pressed to meet the demands of their high workloads. Large PSG to student ratios (ranging from 1/40 to 1/100) and overlapping classes have created conditions where few opportunities exist for PSGs to recharge, to address Family, personal, and professional development needs, or to reset between training cycles and plan for the next training cycle. Further complicating the situation are numerous additional duties and outside taskings that go beyond primary duty requirements and that take time and resources away from the unit's primary mission. This combination of factors leads to a greatly extended duty day.¹³

The picture presented by SLs appeared even more constrained. Since SLs are typically selected from the local instructor population, the duties they perform as subordinate leaders within AIT units are seen as additional to their primary instructor responsibilities. So while critical to the unit's mission, these duties depend upon SLs' initiative and creativity in balancing their primary instructor duties with at times vague or inconsistent SL duty requirements. Frequently, these secondary duties depend on skills and expertise they were not trained for or that have not been reinforced with in-depth preparation. Each time a PSG is removed from the schedule for any reason—e.g., leave, sickness, other duty requirements—a part-time SL may be required to lead Soldiers in training and/or to complete duty requirements. These SLs must rely only on skills previously learned as well as their individual NCO skills and strengths.

¹³ These findings were echoed in a NCO Journal article by Jennifer Mattson (September 2011) that highlighted the training, roles, responsibilities, and work experiences of AIT PSGs. While the article focused primarily on the training AIT PSGs received at in the AIT PSG Course, it highlighted a number of issues faced by AIT PSGs on the job, including challenges such as heavy workload and overlapping training cycles.

Comparing the duties and responsibilities reported by AIT PSGs and SLs in this research to those stipulated in TR 350-6, Enlisted Initial Entry Training Policies and Administration, may better illustrate the current duty demands place on each position and lend support for some of the concerns identified in this effort. Tables 16 and 17 describe the relationship between the duties and responsibilities stipulated in TR 350-6 and the duties and responsibilities described to us by PSGs and Instructors/SLs.

Table 16

TR 350-6 AIT PSG Responsibilities Compared to PSG and SL Described Responsibilities

TR 350-6 AIT PSG Responsibilities	PSG	Instructor (Squad Leader)
a. Lead their platoon.	Primary responsibility	No responsibility
b. Health and welfare of all Soldiers assigned to the platoon.	Primary responsibility	No responsibility
c. Utilize available squad leaders as first line supervisors for squads.	SLs not used as first line supervisors	No responsibility
d. Organization and control of the platoon.	Primary responsibility	No responsibility
e. Reinforcement of values, skills, and tasks.	Primary responsibility	Classroom only
f. Reinforcement of WTBDs.	Secondary responsibility, not involved as a trainer in FTX	Primary Responsibility during FTX only
g. Personal, professional, and academic counseling.	Personal and professional only	Academic only
h. PRT.	Both primary and secondary based on unit	Both primary and secondary based on unit
i. Hold formations and maintain accountability.	Primary responsibility	Limited responsibility in classroom
j. Management of logistical and administration requirements.	Primary responsibility	No responsibility
k. Monitor morale, discipline, and motivation.	Primary in company area	Primary in classroom
l. Provide guidance and instructions to squad leaders, instructors, and other cadre.	No responsibility	No responsibility
m. Provide all necessary support to Soldiers' issues (such as finance, personal, legal, professional, etc.)	Primary responsibility	No responsibility

Table 17

TR 350-6 Squad Leader Responsibilities Compared to PSG and Instructor/SL Duties and Responsibilities

TR 350-6 Squad Leader Responsibilities	PSG	Instructor (Squad Leader)
a. Trains squad on individual and collective tasks.	Limited to FTX train-up	Only during FTX
b. Manages logistical and administrative needs of the squad.	Primary responsibility	No responsibility
c. Inspects condition of Soldiers' weapons, clothing, and equipment.	Primary responsibility	Only during FTX
d. Maintains accountability of Soldiers and equipment.	Primary responsibility	Only tracks missed POI time
e. Submits requests for awards and decorations.	Primary responsibility	No responsibility
f. Ensures material and supplies are distributed to Soldiers in squad.	Primary responsibility	No responsibility
g. Keeps PSG informed on squad status and requirements.	N/A	No responsibility
h. Assists PSG in the execution of APRT.	N/A	Sporadically
i. Conducts performance counseling for his/her squad.	Primary responsibility	Only academic counseling

Further complicating the situation for unit command teams is the fact that their instructors/SLs are assigned to a different command chain. Multiple chains of command were perceived as undermining efforts to smoothly integrate SLs into the training units in order to achieve an effective unity of effort. This, combined with a lack of consistently clear, documented sets of responsibilities and expectations for SLs, has led to competing and conflicting demands being placed on SLs and greater confusion among PSGs about the role, function, and dependability of the SLs in their units. Additionally, a potentially alarming trend was identified as emerging from this situation. Soldiers in training were often confused about who their immediate supervisor is, and to whom they should go to for particular types of problems: their PSG or their instructor/SL.

Given demanding workloads, extended duty days, and, at times, lack of clear guidance, it is not surprising that our analyses indicated workload (imbalance between work and personal life), ambiguity of duties and responsibilities (especially in regards to SLs), and perceptions of powerlessness (perceived inability to influence work environment) and isolation (perceived lack of social support, connection, and communication) were significant sources of stress for AIT PSGs and SLs. With these nearly constant stress producers, it was expected that the established wellness programs should be critical assets to AIT command teams. However, our data revealed a very different picture.

We found that there was only sporadic implementation of AIT PSG Wellness Programs, as mandated by TRADOC, among the units supporting this research. Based on our data, in some cases it was simply a matter of a robust program not being in place and well supported by leadership with the resources it needed. In other cases, it was more a matter of manning, as the

unit simply could not fulfill the program's requirements and meet their mission needs due to high PSG to student ratios without compromising some training events or duty requirements. While delaying some of the hard-earned rewards identified by the program offered some units a viable alternative, even these efforts were overwhelmed by class schedules that provided no or inadequate cycle breaks.

Unit Interventions and Best Practices

The command teams and units participating in this effort were commendably creative and resilient in their efforts to alleviate the work demands and associated stress routinely placed on their PSGs. In addition to well-known stress reduction practices, such as encouraging their PSGs to pursue regular physical fitness activities and to discuss frustrations openly with peers and spouses, units described a number of strategies that they indicated were helping them address these critical issues. Given the reported effectiveness of many of these practices, they are certainly worth greater consideration across IMT.

Our research indicated that heavy workload and ambiguity in duties and requirements were significant sources of stress/obstacles to performance for PSGs and SLs. In an effort to reduce administrative demands and issues, some units reported creating a shared continuity book for their PSGs and SLs. The key to the success of the books was that they contained current and updated examples of administrative paperwork required for different types of situations the PSGs routinely encountered in the performance of their duties. For example, a PSG, or a SL, could refer to the book to get needed information, forms, and completed sanitized examples to work through pay problems or assist a Soldier with the naturalization process.

Another effective practice implemented by a unit was to task an operations NCO to routinely collect paperwork from their PSGs and take it to the appropriate agencies on the installation. This resulted in great time savings for the PSGs and allowed them to use time they would have spent processing administrative paperwork to instead work with their Soldiers.

One effective way of helping PSGs have a better work/life balance for several units was by altering their approach to scheduling. In our sample, some units were running schedules in shifts, with each shift lasting 12 hours. These shifts are conducted for 7 days straight, e.g. Wednesday to Wednesday. A night shift was followed by 4 days (Thursday through Sunday) to allow the PSG to reset his/her biological clock before starting back on the day shift the following Monday. These shifts were often organized in the following way: Day (0500 to 1700), Mid (0900 to 2100), and Night (2000 to 0800). This type of predictable scheduling allowed PSGs to better plan their time with their Families.

Another way that units sought to increase schedule predictability for their PSGs was to plan, resource, and lock in a schedule for two months at a time. This allowed PSGs to better plan vacations, take time-off, and cover each others' duties when needed. According to these units, this improved their PSGs' general morale by permitting them to make long-range plans and commitments.

As expected, many units focused on ensuring their PSGs' non-duty hours were actively protected by Company leaders. Some implemented liberal leave and pass policies to the extent unit manning permitted. These leave and pass policies included allowing PSGs to take leave as needed and not tie it to Exodus and providing one four day pass per quarter for each PSG. On a more routine level, one 1SG required his PSGs to send him an email as they were completing their scheduled duty day. If the 1SG had not heard from the PSGs by the designated time, he would track them down and ensure they went home. Some command teams also focused on protecting PSGs' weekends from BDE and BN mandated events, as well as not scheduling Company team-building events that required PSGs to return to post during their weekend hours. Finally, participants from one unit reported that they had a BN Resiliency Program in place that, similar to the AIT PSG Resilience Program (TR 350-37, 2011, cf. Appendix B within TR), mandated 10 days off for every 24 months of duty, a half-day schedule for appointments and classes, and one 4-day pass per quarter (i.e., four 4-day passes per year).

One effective practice to enhance communication between AIT companies and the training departments was including a senior instructor/training department head in the weekly Company training meetings. This seemed to improve their ability to coordinate and thereby improve the unity of effort between PSGs and SLs, as well as enhancing their ability to identify and resolve inconsistencies within or competing prioritizations of SL duties and expectations. It also provided the departments an opportunity to gain a better appreciation for the activities and duty commitments their instructors/SLs were engaged in on a routine basis.

Recommendations

Although this effort represents an initial, limited examination of issues that have emerged within AIT since the transition from DSs to PSGs in 2007, the consistency of the issues identified in this research across a functionally varied set of units warrant greater consideration of their impact. Based on the best practices identified in this effort and relevant published literature, we offer the following recommendations as initial steps to addressing these challenges.

Expand AIT PSG Training at Victory University

As discussed earlier, our results indicate that Victory University is seen as being generally effective in preparing AIT PSGs to meet initial command expectations and the demands of the AIT training environment within the time and resources they have been provided. However, our findings also provided notable support for expanding the current 2-week program.

First, it is recommended that VU strengthen their efforts to ensure that new AIT PSGs clearly understand their assigned unit's work requirements, particularly with respect to the number of Soldiers they will be training and the training timelines. VU's mission is focused on providing a foundation of knowledge and skills applicable across all AITs within IMT. One way to support this mission would be to create a virtual network of mentors who can provide direct and current assessments of working conditions at assigned AITs, as well as answer specific questions new PSGs may have. An alternative that places fewer burdens on PSG volunteers and

reduces the need to establish mentoring relationships would be to establish an AIT PSG blog where PSGs across AIT would be encouraged to log-on and discuss emerging issues and challenges, as well as offer potential solutions and share lessons learned from their experiences at specific units. Based on similar blogs currently employed in civilian organizations, a VU SME should be tasked with monitoring the discussions to exert a degree of quality control by correcting misperceptions of directed, regulatory requirements, offering “schoolhouse” perspectives, and ensuring proper decorum and mutual respect are maintained.

Second, adjust and expand PRT training time to ensure PSGs have multiple opportunities to actually lead PRT sessions and practice company level drill and ceremony. Additionally, new PSGs should be provided and given opportunities to develop and practice alternative strategies for planning and conducting profile PRT sessions. Many of the PSGs we interviewed felt that they did not have nearly enough experience leading PRT to prepare them for the numbers of Soldiers they would be leading in AIT, and the diverse problems that would arise due to profiles, etc. Similarly, our findings indicated a greater review of company level drill and ceremony would benefit new PSGs, as they are frequently expected to lead company, rather than platoon, sized groups of Soldiers at their assigned units.

Third, explore whether it is feasible to provide Combatives Level 1 and 2 certifications at VU. Having skilled combatives trainers at the AIT units was a need expressed by many participants. Lacking a certified instructor, PSGs reported that their units would bring in outside expertise, if available, to help train up their Soldiers. Having appropriately certified personnel within their units would greatly enhance their scheduling flexibility and capability to provide ongoing reinforcement and remedial combatives training.

Fourth, expand training on three unique challenges PSGs identified during this research. First, provide training on the unique regulations for National Guard/United States Army Reserve (NG/USAR) Soldiers. Many PSGs expressed concern that they were unfamiliar with NG/USAR challenges and issues when they arrived at their assigned units, while their command teams expressed strong concerns about their knowledge of Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) processes and procedures. Second, provide guides or tools incorporating the best practices of time management processes experienced AIT PSGs and SLs are utilizing. Time management continues to be an issue caused by the high instructor to student ratios, overlapping classes, and duty responsibilities. Lastly, more instruction on the UCMJ administrative processes is required. We recommend that greater attention be specifically paid to: nonjudicial punishment procedures (Manual for Courts-Martial, Part V), suspension of favorable actions (AR 600-8-2), and enlisted administrative separation actions (AR 635-200 chapters 11, 13, and 14).

Actively Address Workload Challenges and Reduce Role Ambiguity

Our research indicated that workload and ambiguity of duties and responsibilities are significant sources of stress negatively impacting AIT PSG and SL performance. Having a policy statement in place clearly delineating AIT PSG and SL duties and responsibilities is a great initial step to reducing the negative impact of these issues on performance. While TRADOC requirements will be central to this statement, local command teams (training Companies and training departments), PSGs, and SLs must have an avenue to influence more

installation and unit centric requirements and expectations. This would likely enhance each stakeholder's sense of investment and commitment to ensuring the requirements are fulfilled at the highest level possible, and would also reduce the likelihood that these requirements could be perceived as detached from the reality of the training environment. Regardless, unit leaders must actively ensure all PSGs, SLs, and Company command teams have ready access to the documented policies, have a clear understanding of its requirements, and that the policies are regularly reviewed and updated as required.

Such a dialogue in the development of the policy statement would also provide an opportunity for Company command teams to clearly identify to their senior leaders any resource issues and gaps potentially hindering the fulfillment of responsibilities identified in the policy statement. Unit leaders must ensure that any training and resources needed to support these requirements is available and completed before their assigned employment or execution. This is especially critical for SLs, given that no consistent, systematic training program exists across AIT to ensure they are capable of leading or adequately assisting PSGs in leading Soldiers to meet these requirements.

Unit leaders must clarify lines of command and authority for SLs, whether this is combined with the process of distinguishing and defining AIT PSG and SL roles and responsibilities, or is addressed in a separate forum. Since our findings indicated that SLs are normally NCO instructors assigned to separate training departments who volunteer or are selected to support training company PSGs, it is imperative that all command issues are resolved as quickly and clearly as possible. Based on our findings, key concerns are minimizing or establishing practical criteria for resolving conflicting or overlapping taskings, refining reporting chains, establishing recognition and accountability for assigned SL duties and responsibilities, and delineating the lines of authority for all student issues. Communication and coordination mechanisms between AIT Companies and training departments must be refined to ensure performance expectations placed upon SLs remain realistic and are appropriately balanced with their primary instructor duties and responsibilities, both inside and outside the classroom. These same mechanisms should ensure that instructor/SLs are appropriately recognized for their dedication and performance, as well as being accurately held accountable for fulfilling their defined responsibilities.

Our results indicate that maintaining full manning of AIT PSG positions IAW established Soldier ratios would be beneficial in reducing the existing workload. Senior leaders may actively support efforts to minimize external taskings and additional duties placed on AIT PSGs and SLs in order to optimize the training units' manning flexibility and predictability. It is critical that leaders are perceived as recognizing the extended duty day expected of AIT PSGs and SLs and fostering an environment that ensures an equitable opportunity for all PSGs to take advantage of designated recovery times.

Earlier noted in this report, a shift schedule may be an effective means of allowing PSGs to accomplish their duties, while also limiting the length or expansion of their work day. Consider the schedule described in Table 18, which presents the normal duty day timeline (with shifts) for PSGs and SLs. Based on our findings, units effectively employing a shift schedule typically divided the day into three shifts, consisting of the Day Shift (0500-1700; 5 days a

week), Night Shift (0900-2100; 5 days a week), and the Graveyard Shift (1800-0630; 7 days, from Wednesday to Wednesday).

Table 18
Comparison of PSG and SL Schedules on a Shift Schedule

Shift	Hours				
Day	0500–0830	0830–1230	1330–1700	1700–1830	
PSG	PRT for Day students/Barracks Inspections/Mvmt to DFAC	Soldier administrative requirements	Soldier administrative requirements	Mvmt to DFAC/Battle handoff to Night PSG	
SL	PRT or MOS Remedial Study Hall (2 days a week either am or pm)	MOS POI Instruction	MOS POI Instruction	MOS Remedial Study Hall (2 days a week either am or pm)	
Night	0900-1030	1130-1500	1545-1700	1700-1830	1830-2100
PSG	PRT for Night and Graveyard Students/Mvmt to DFAC	Soldier administrative requirements	Mvmt to classroom/pic k-up day shift students	Mvmt to DFAC/ Soldier administrative /training requirements	Soldier administrative / training requirements/ Battle handoff with Graveyard PSG
SL			MOS POI Instruction from 1600 – 2400 →		
Graveyard	1800 - 0430	0430 - 0630			
PSG	Coordinate with Night PSG/Soldier administrative /training requirements	PRT/Barracks Inspection/Battle handoff with Day PSG			
SL	MOS POI Instruction from 0100 - 0900				

Comparing the hours work for PSGs and SLs on a shift schedule, PSGs work a 12 to 13 hour day when on the Day Shift and SLs work a 12 to 14 hour day. On the Night Shift, PSGs work 12 to 13 hours and SLs 8 to 10 hours. On the Graveyard Shift, PSGs work 12 to 13 hours and SLs 8 to 10 hours. In this way, a shift schedule appears to result in reduced duty hours for PSGs and no significant change in the normal duty hours for SLs.

Reduce Perceptions of Powerlessness and Isolation

Powerlessness and isolation were perceived as significant sources of stress having a negative impact on AIT PSG and SL performance. One way to reduce these perceptions is to actively promote opportunities for including PSG and SL inputs on policy decisions directly impacting their work environments and requirements. Additionally, clarifying lines of authority, strengthening visible support for PSG decisions, and developing a command climate supporting PSG authority regarding Soldier behavior will help to empower PSGs in their role as leaders and trainers. Such empowerment is important to increasing the trust between followers and their leaders, while reducing their perceptions of being powerless and isolated when taking appropriate disciplinary actions.

Table 19 provides additional insights and recommendations highlighted by comparing the VU/PSG Handbook, MRT, the scientific literature, and unit interventions to address issues related to Workload, Ambiguity, Powerlessness, and Isolation.

Table 19

Summary of Recommendations from Various Sources to Address Stressors/Obstacles Impacting the Performance of AIT PSGs

Issue	VU/PSG Handbook	MRT	Scientific Literature	Unit Interventions
Workload	Sets PSGs expectations; highlights significance of time management; rotate Sunday duty; use early/late person schedule	Actively manage sleep/work schedule	Interventions re workload and work pace; aligning jobs with capabilities, allowing for recovery time	Planning unit schedules and vacations 2 months out; ensure PSGs leave at their assigned times; provide/protect recovery time for night shift duties; control rate of additional taskings from higher authorities; increase schedule predictability
Ambiguity	Addresses role of tng PSG—unlike operational units, SLs/instructors are not subordinate leaders	Communication styles; assertive communication; focus on different perceptions; perspective taking	Focus on team-building and the social environment; clarify duties and mutual expectations for each position	Relies on NCO to NCO exchanges and communication to resolve PSG and SL issues and clarify expectations

Table 19

Summary of Recommendations from Various Sources to Address Stressors/Obstacles Impacting the Performance of AIT PSGs(Continued)

Issue	VU/PSG Handbook	MRT	Scientific Literature	Unit Interventions
Powerlessness	Not directly addressed	Focus on the controllable parts of a situation and work on those; adjust how you react to things you can't control	Encourage PSGs/SLs to participate in the management process; increase leadership responsiveness to needs on the ground	None noted
Isolation	Delegate/trade-off tasks when possible; give good back brief before/after duties/tasks	Focus on teamwork; ask for help when it is needed	Increase communication; create opportunities for social interaction	Coordination meetings between PSGs and SLs; coordination/support at higher level between respective commands

Conclusions

This research allowed us to identify critical areas of intervention to help decrease sources of stress and obstacles to performance for PSGs and SLs working in the AIT environment. While we recognize that many different factors contribute to the concerns that Command Teams, PSGs, and SLs identified, we hope that by presenting unit-level best practices and interventions culled from the scientific literature, Victory University will be supported in its mission to prepare PSGs for their duties and that the Army can continue to improve AIT, a training venue that is critical to the overall success of all Army missions.

Limitations and Future Research

Every piece of research has limitations. Future research should attempt to address these issues and refine its instruments and methodologies accordingly. This research was admittedly limited in scope as a result of available resources and command prerogatives. A more comprehensive effort should be made to expand the number and variability of AIT units participating in research building upon this foundation. Additionally, our measures, with a few exceptions, were self-reported, either by responding to a questionnaire or in interviews. While this is common in training research, and provided multiple sources for our data, it would be desirable to have more objective indices of training effectiveness that could be examined to better assess the impact of the issues and practices we identified. Such indices, or at least measures from other collaborating sources, would help further address concerns about biases arising from using the same or similar methods to collect observations/data. Finally, it would be highly desirable to test the employment of recommendations and best practices offered in this report in units with similar issues but lacking such policies, procedures, or practices.

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Acronyms

1SG	First Sergeant (E-8)
α	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (Reliability Measure)
AIT	Advanced Individual Training
AIT PSG	Advanced Individual Training Platoon Sergeant
APFT	Army Physical Fitness Test
APRT	Army Physical Readiness Test
AR	Army Regulation
ARI	U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences
BCT	Basic Combat Training
BDE	Brigade
BN	Battalion
BRM/ARM	Basic Rifle Marksmanship/Advanced Rifle Marksmanship
CDR	Commander
CG	Commanding General
CPT	Captain (O-3)
CTC	Cadre Training Course
DCG-IMT	Deputy Commanding General for Initial Military Training
<i>df</i>	Degrees of Freedom (Statistical)
DS	Drill Sergeant
DRS-15	Dispositional Resiliency Scale (15 Item Version)
EFMP	Exceptional Family Member Program
FTX	Field Training Exercise
HRC	Human Resources Command
IMT	Initial Military Training
M	Mean (Statistical Average)
MANOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Variance
MRT	Master Resiliency Training
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
N	Number (in Sample)
NCO	Noncommissioned Officer
NCOES	Noncommissioned Officer Education System
NG/USAR	National Guard/United States Army Reserve
OPTEMPO	Operational Tempo

PMI	Preliminary Marksmanship Instruction
POI	Program of Instruction
PSG	Platoon Sergeant
POCs	Points of Contact
PRT	Physical Readiness Training
<i>r</i>	Pearson's Correlation
SD	Standard Deviation
SDAP	Special Duty Assignment Pay
SFC	Sergeant First Class (E-7)
SGT	Sergeant (E-5)
SL	Squad Leader
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSG	Staff Sergeant (E-6)
TIS	Time in Service
TR	TRADOC Regulation
TRADOC	U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command
USA	United States Army
USAALS	United States Army Aviation Logistics School
UASTB	Unmanned Aircraft Systems Training Battalion
UCMJ	Uniform Code of Military Justice
VU	Victory University
WTBD	Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills
χ^2	Chi-Square Statistic

APPENDIX A

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND
OBSTACLES QUESTIONNAIRES**

AIT SL Questionnaire Background Information

Please write-in, circle, or mark the circle (O) for each question. Where **“Other”** and a blank space are located, please write-in any training or certifications that apply (e.g. MRAP Rollover Trainer Certification) and mark the circle.

1. Current Duty Position	_____ AITPSG _____ AIT SL/Instructor		
2. Rank (circle one)	SGT	SSG	SFC
	Years		Months
3. Current Time in Service			
4. Time as an AIT PSG/SL			
5. Primary MOS			
6. Gender (circle one)	Male		Female
7. NCOES (circle <u>highest</u> level of completion)	PLDC/WLC	BNCOC/ALC	ANCOC/SLC
8. Civilian Education Level (circle <u>highest</u> level of education)	Non HSG	GED	HS Diploma
	Some College (no degree)	Graduate Work	Master's Degree
9. Completion of CTC (circle one)	Prior to assuming SL duties		After assuming SL duties
10. Completion of MRT Course (circle one)	Yes No	If yes, when? _____ (mm/yy)	

Experience

11. Demonstrated Proficiency of Individual and Collective Tasks (mark (O) all that apply and the calendar year you completed the event)

	Never	2009 or earlier	2010	2011
a. Army Warrior Training (formerly known as Common Task Testing (CTT))	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Theater Specific Individual Readiness Training (TSIRT)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Rifle Qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Advanced Rifle Marksmanship (live-fire training)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Leadership History

12. Last 2 Duty Positions held before becoming an Instructor/Squad Leader (e.g. BN NCOER Clerk, BDE NCOER NCOIC)

13. Number of Soldiers you supervised in the duty positions from the previous question. (mark (○) the number that applies to each position)

	0	1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15	16 – 20	more than 20
Duty Position a	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Duty Position b	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. In the 2 years prior to becoming an Instructor/Squad Leader, how often did you perform each activity? (mark ONE rating for each item)

	Never	Once a Year	A few times a year	About once a month	A few times a month	A few times a week	Daily
a. Provide performance feedback to subordinates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Establish goals or other incentives to motivate subordinates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Correct unacceptable conduct of a subordinate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Conduct formal inspection of subordinates completed work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Counsel subordinates regarding career planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Counsel subordinates with disciplinary problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Serve as a member of a unit advisory council or committee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Apply and supervised all 8-steps of the Troop Leading Procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Training History

15. Certification/Training Program Completed during Current Assignment	Yes	No
a. Range safety certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Bus driver's license	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Mail handlers' card	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Unit Victim Advocate Training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Installation Supporting Agency Briefings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. APFT	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Weapon Qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. CLS certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Engagement Skills Trainer (EST) 2000 certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. ARM certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Combatives certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Convoy training certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Convoy Live Fire Exercise Certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. Urban operations training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. Army Basic Instructor Course (ABIC)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. Unit Prevention Leader (UPL)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q. Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
r. Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. In the 2 years prior to becoming an Instructor/Squad Leader, how often did you perform each activity? (mark ONE rating for each item)

	Never	Once a Year	A few time a year	About once a month	A few times a month	A few times a week	Daily
Conduct preliminary marksmanship instruction (PMI)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lead an organized physical training session for a platoon sized element or larger	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conduct individual task evaluations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conduct collective task evaluations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Obstacles

Please identify which of the following, if any, have emerged as a source of stress for you within the past year using the following frequency scale:

0 = Never, 1 = Almost Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Fairly Often, 4 = Very Often

Then, for every stressor you identified (1-4) indicate if you feel this stressor disrupted or hindered your performance as an AIT SL (put a check mark to indicate a “yes” response).

Examples:

Lack of Family quality time

Long periods of repetitive work activities without variety

Frequency

Yes/No

0

2

No

		<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Yes/No</u>
1	Limited support structure (no or too few Squad Leaders)		
2	New organization, do not know coworkers		
3	No Family support group		
4	Peers (unreliable, unsupportive)		
5	Installation Location		
6	Lack of communication in general between AIT command teams and PSGs/SLs		
7	Unclear mission or changing mission		
8	Unclear policies (internal/external, local/HQDA, changes in duties with change in command team,)		
9	Ambiguous lines of authority (PSGs and SLs assigned to different units)		
10	Role confusion (what is my job?)		
11	Norms or standards of behavior inconsistently applied to Soldiers within AIT		
12	Peer knowledge, skills, and abilities (e.g. D&C, WTBD, taking care of Soldier skills, etc)		
13	PSG's knowledge, skills, and abilities (training management, taking care of Soldier skills)		
14	PSG outranked by Squad Leader		

		Frequency	Yes/No
15	Unresponsive supply chain—trouble getting needed supplies and repair parts		
16	Differing standards or accepted behavior for different units (CO/BN/BDE)		
17	Unresponsive Chain of Command – trouble getting support (resources - military vehicles, training aids, time)		
18	Conflicting or competing immediate chains of command for PSG & SL		
19	Lack of command support for decisions and actions regarding Soldier behavior and discipline		
20	Long periods of repetitive work activities without variety		
21	Lack of work that can be construed as meaningful or important		
22	Overall mission or purpose not understood as worthwhile or important		
23	Real risk of serious injury or death, from negligent discharge, Convoy Live Fire Exercise, Qualification Range, or accidents, including crushing injuries, loss of limb, etc.		
24	Career damaging assignment		
25	Potential to fall behind peers (Due to: duty assignments, NCOES opportunities, or promotion potential)		
26	Potentially compromising environment (Integrity, morally, ethically)		
27	Long work hours and/or days during the training cycle		
28	Long work hours and/or days in periods before and after the training cycle		
29	Overall mission or purpose not understood as worthwhile or important		
30	Potential to lose leave time		
31	Student-to-PSG/SL Ratio		
32	Additional Duties (CQ, Staff Duty, Master Driver, Weight Control, etc)		
33	Lack of quality Family time		
34	Lack of personal time (time for appointments, etc)		

		Frequency	Yes/No
35	Individual knowledge (e.g. D&C, WTBD, training standards)	_____	_____
36	Individual skills (e.g. teaching, counseling, etc)	_____	_____
37	Individual abilities (e.g. performance of Skill Level 1 tasks, taking care of Soldiers)	_____	_____
38	Maintaining currency in MOS technical skills and equipment	_____	_____
39	NCOER part III duty description for AIT PSG & SL	_____	_____

Beliefs

Below are statements about life that people often feel differently about. Please show how much you think each one is true for you. Give your own honest opinions . . . There are no right or wrong answers.

Response options are:

0 = *not at all true*; 1 = *a little true*; 2 = *quite true*; and 3 = *completely true*.

KEY ITEM	Response
1. Most of my life gets spent doing things that are meaningful.	_____
2. By working hard you can nearly always achieve your goals.	_____
3. I don't like to make changes in my regular activities.	_____
4. I feel that my life is somewhat empty of meaning.	_____
5. Changes in routine are interesting to me.	_____
6. How things go in my life depends on my own actions.	_____
7. I really look forward to my work activities.	_____
8. I don't think there is much I can do to influence my own future.	_____
9. I enjoy the challenge when I have to do more than one thing at a time.	_____
10. Most days, life is really interesting and exciting for me.	_____
11. It bothers me when my daily routine gets interrupted.	_____
12. It is up to me to decide how the rest of my life will be.	_____
13. Life in general is boring for me.	_____
14. I like having a daily schedule that doesn't change very much.	_____
15. My choices make a real difference in how things turn out in the end.	_____

Dispositional Resilience Scale (Bartone, 2010) adapted for use with permission of author.

This completes the questionnaire portion of this session; we will continue with a focus group interview session

AITPSG Questionnaire Background Information

Please write-in, circle, or mark the circle (O) for each question. Where **“Other”** and a blank space are located, please write-in any training or certifications that apply (e.g. MRAP Rollover Trainer Certification) and mark the circle.

1. Current Duty Position	_____ AITPSG _____ AIT SL/Instructor		
2. Rank (circle one)	SSG	SFC	MSG
	Years		Months
3. Current Time in Service			
4. Time as an AIT PSG/SL			
5. Primary MOS			
6. Gender (circle one)	Male		Female
7. NCOES (circle <u>highest</u> level of completion)	PLDC/WLC	BNCOC/ALC	ANCOC/SLC
8. Civilian Education Level (circle <u>highest</u> level of education)	Non HSG	GED	HS Diploma
	Some College (no degree)	Graduate Work	Master's Degree
9. Completion of AITPSG Course (circle one)	Prior to assuming PSG duties		After assuming PSG duties
10. Completion of MRT Course (circle one)	Immediately upon completion of AITPSG Course	After assuming PSG duties	Have never attended the MRT course

Experience

11. Demonstrated Proficiency of Individual and Collective Tasks

(mark (O) all that apply and the calendar year you completed the event)

	Never	2009 or earlier	2010	2011
a. Army Warrior Training (formerly known as Common Task Testing (CTT))	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Theater Specific Individual Readiness Training (TSIRT)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Rifle Qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Advanced Rifle Marksmanship (live-fire training)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Leadership History

12. Last 2 Duty Positions held before attending the AITPSG Course (e.g. BN NCOER Clerk, BDE NCOER NCOIC)

a _____
b _____

**13. Number of Soldiers you supervised in the duty positions from the previous question.
 (check (○) the number that applies to each position)**

	0	1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15	16 – 20	more than 20
Duty Position <i>a</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Duty Position <i>b</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**14. In the 2 years prior to attending the AITPSG Course, how often did you perform each activity?
 (indicate ONE rating for each item)**

	Never	Once a Year	A few times a year	About once a month	A few times a month	A few times a week	Daily
a. Provide performance feedback to subordinates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Establish goals or other incentives to motivate subordinates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Correct unacceptable conduct of a subordinate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Conduct formal inspection of subordinates completed work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Counsel subordinates regarding career planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Counsel subordinates with disciplinary problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Serve as a member of a unit advisory council or committee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Apply and supervised all 8-steps of the Troop Leading Procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Training History

15. Certification/Training Program Completed during Current Assignment	Yes	No
a. Range safety certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Bus driver's license	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Mail handlers' card	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Unit Victim Advocate Training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Installation Supporting Agency Briefings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. APFT	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Weapon Qualification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. CLS certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Engagement Skills Trainer (EST) 2000 certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. ARM certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Combatives certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Convoy training certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Convoy Live Fire Exercise Certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. Urban operations training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. Unit Prevention Leader (UPL)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. Army Basic Instructor Course (ABIC)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q. Others: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
r. Others: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. In the 2 years prior to attending the AITPSG Course, how often did you perform each activity? (Indicate ONE rating for each item)

	Never	Once a Year	A few time a year	About once a month	A few times a month	A few times a week	Daily
Conduct preliminary marksmanship instruction (PMI)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lead an organized physical training session for a platoon sized element or larger	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conduct individual task evaluations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conduct collective task evaluations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Obstacles

Please identify which of the following, if any, have emerged as a source of stress for you within the past year using the following frequency scale:

0 = Never, 1 = Almost Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Fairly Often, 4 = Very Often

Then, for every stressor you identified (1-4) indicate if you feel this stressor disrupted or hindered your performance as an AITPSG (put a check mark to indicate a “yes” response).

Examples:

Lack of Family quality time

Frequency Yes/No

0

Long periods of repetitive work activities without variety

2

No

		<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Yes/No</u>
1	Limited support structure (no or too few Squad Leaders)	_____	_____
2	New organization, do not know coworkers	_____	_____
3	No Family support group	_____	_____
4	Peers (unreliable, unsupportive)	_____	_____
5	Installation Location	_____	_____
6	Lack of communication in general between AIT command teams and PSGs/SLs	_____	_____
7	Unclear mission or changing mission	_____	_____
8	Unclear policies (internal/external, local/HQDA, changes in duties with change in command team)	_____	_____
9	Ambiguous lines of authority (PSGs and SLs assigned to different units)	_____	_____
10	Role confusion (what is my job?)	_____	_____
11	Norms or standards of behavior inconsistently applied to Soldiers within AIT	_____	_____
12	Peer knowledge, skills, and abilities (e.g. D&C, WTBD, taking care of Soldier skills, etc)	_____	_____
13	Supervisors' knowledge, skills, and abilities (training management, taking care of Soldier skills)	_____	_____

		<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Yes/No</u>
14	Unresponsive supply chain—trouble getting needed supplies and repair parts		
15	Differing standards or accepted behavior for different units (CO/BN/BDE)		
16	Unresponsive Chain of Command – trouble getting support (resources - military vehicles, training aids, time)		
17	Conflicting or competing immediate chains of command for PSG & SL		
18	Lack of command support for decisions and actions regarding Soldier behavior and discipline		
19	PSG outranked by Squad Leader		
20	Long periods of repetitive work activities without variety		
21	Lack of work that can be construed as meaningful or important		
22	Overall mission or purpose not understood as worthwhile or important		
23	Real risk of serious injury or death, from negligent discharge, Convoy Live Fire Exercise, Qualification Range, or accidents, including crushing injuries, loss of limb, etc.		
24	Career damaging assignment		
25	Potential to fall behind peers (Due to: duty assignments, NCOES opportunities, or promotion potential)		
26	Potentially compromising environment (Integrity, morally, ethically)		
27	Long work hours and/or days during the training cycle		
28	Long work hours and/or days in periods before and after the training cycle		
29	Potential to lose leave time		
30	Student-to-PSG/SL Ratio		
31	Additional Duties (CQ, Staff Duty, Master Driver, Weight Control, etc)		
32	Lack of quality Family time		
33	Lack of personal time (time for appointments, etc)		

		Frequency	Yes/No
34	Individual knowledge (e.g. D&C, WTBD)	_____	_____
35	Individual skills (e.g. teaching, counseling, etc)	_____	_____
36	Individual abilities (e.g. performance of Skill Level 1 tasks, taking care of Soldiers)	_____	_____
37	NCOER part III duty description for AIT PSG & SL	_____	_____
38	Lack of Special Duty Assignment Pay	_____	_____
39	Lack of AIT PSG Badge	_____	_____

Beliefs

Below are statements about life that people often feel differently about. Please show how much you think each one is true for you. Give your own honest opinions . . . There are no right or wrong answers.

Response options are:

0 = not at all true; 1 = a little true; 2 = quite true; and 3 = completely true

	KEY ITEM	Response
1.	Most of my life gets spent doing things that are meaningful.	_____
2.	By working hard you can nearly always achieve your goals.	_____
3.	I don't like to make changes in my regular activities.	_____
4.	I feel that my life is somewhat empty of meaning.	_____
5.	Changes in routine are interesting to me.	_____
6.	How things go in my life depends on my own actions.	_____
7.	I really look forward to my work activities.	_____
8.	I don't think there is much I can do to influence my own future.	_____
9.	I enjoy the challenge when I have to do more than one thing at a time.	_____
10.	Most days, life is really interesting and exciting for me.	_____
11.	It bothers me when my daily routine gets interrupted.	_____
12.	It is up to me to decide how the rest of my life will be.	_____
13.	Life in general is boring for me.	_____
14.	I like having a daily schedule that doesn't change very much.	_____
15.	My choices make a real difference in how things turn out in the end.	_____

Dispositional Resilience Scale (Bartone, 2010) adapted for use with permission of author.

This completes the questionnaire portion of this session; we will continue with a focus group interview session next.

APPENDIX B
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Questions for Company Command Team Focus Group Interviews

Instructions

- This guide structures the interviews with the Company Commander and the 1SG.
- In preparation for the interview:
 - Read and take along for reference:
 - AITPSG Handbook.
 - Appendix M TR 350-6
- Explain the purpose of the session:
 - Gather input for an ARI research effort examining Advanced Individual Training (AIT) Platoon Sergeant (PSG) duties, resourcing, and training.
- Record information in the Administrative Data section on the next page.
- Use Appendices A, B, and C to facilitate questions with lists and selections.
- Lead the participant(s) through the questions in dialogue fashion. Work through as many questions as time allows.
- Capitalize on the interests and strengths of the individual.
- Keep an eye on the clock so you can end on time.
- Within 2 working days, compile your notes in a Word file for entry into a centralized database and storage at the Northrop Grumman office in Columbus, GA.

Administrative Data

Date & Time _____ Installation _____

Facilitator _____ Note Taker _____

Duty Position

Commander How long in Position? _____

1SG How long in Position? _____

Other _____ How long in Position? _____

Avg Company Size _____ Avg Platoon Size _____ Avg Squad Size _____

Company Structure

Priority 1

1. How are the platoons organized?
 - a. By course start and end dates?
 - b. By number of Soldiers assigned (evenly distributed)?
 - c. Strictly by Military Occupational Specialty?
 - d. By number of PSGs assigned?
2. How many Soldiers do you normally have in hold-under or hold-over status?
3. Who is responsible for monitoring these Soldiers?

Priority 2

4. How many platoons are in your company (currently)?
5. How often does this number fluctuate throughout the year?
 - a. What causes the fluctuation?
6. What MOSs are you responsible for training?

Priority 3

7. What is the primary reason for Soldiers to be in this status?
 - a. Hold-under
 - b. Hold-over

Resources

Priority 1

8. Number of PSGs authorized _____ Number Assigned _____
9. Are these numbers typical for your company? If not, what is “normal” strength?
10. Number of Squad Leaders Authorized _____ Number Assigned _____
11. Are these numbers typical for your company? If not, what is “normal” strength?
12. Are the Instructor/Squad Leaders assigned to the Company, Battalion, Brigade, or outside of Brigade Chain of Command?

Priority 2

13. Does your PSG strength reflect the TDA manning requirements?
 - a. By Numbers
 - b. By Rank
 - c. By MOS
 - d. By Additional Skill Identifier (ASI)
 - e. By Skill Qualification Identifier (SQI)
14. Are you missing PSGs with specific MOSs or ASIs that would better suit the company’s requirement?
 - a. What MOS or ASI
 - b. What Rank
15. Are you missing SLs with specific MOSs or ASIs that would better suit the company’s requirement?
 - a. What MOS or ASI
 - b. What Rank

Priority 3

16. Does your SL strength reflect the TDA manning requirement?
 - a. By Numbers
 - b. By Rank
 - c. By MOS
 - d. By ASI
 - e. By SQI

17. What equipment are you missing that would make training more efficient?
- a. MOS specific
 - b. WTBD specific

Duties and Responsibilities

Priority 1

18. What do you expect of a newly assigned AIT PSG?
- a. Leadership skills
 - b. Administrative Skills
 - c. MOS Proficiency
 - d. BRM/ARM Proficiency
 - e. Combatives
 - f. Tactical Proficiency
 - g. Other areas
19. To what level are new Platoon Sergeants meeting your expectations?
- a. If they are not meeting your expectations, where does the responsibility lay to fix it?
 - i. NCO responsibility
 - ii. Unit Responsibility
 - iii. Victory University responsibility
 - iv. Department of the Army selection criteria
 - v. Other _____
20. What are the inherent duties and responsibilities of the AIT PSGs within your company?
- a. Physical Training
 - b. Transportation
 - i. Marching
 - ii. Buses
 - c. MOS instruction
 - i. Platform (formal)
 - ii. Remedial/retraining (informal)
 - d. WTBD instruction
 - i. Individual training and evaluation
 - 1. BRM and ARM
 - 2. Combatives
 - ii. Collective training and evaluation
 - 1. Convoy Live Fire Exercise
 - 2. Culminating event
 - e. Administrative
 - i. Sickcall
 - ii. Counseling

- iii. Appointments
- f. Logistics
- g. Charge of Quarters/Staff Duty NCO

21. What are the inherent duties and responsibilities of the SLs within your company (Use this list to generate discussion)?

- a. Physical Training
- b. Transportation
 - i. Marching
 - ii. Buses
- c. MOS instruction
 - i. Platform (formal)
 - ii. Remedial/retraining (informal)
- d. WTBD instruction
 - i. Individual training and evaluation
 - 1. BRM and ARM
 - 2. Combatives
 - ii. Collective training and evaluation
 - 1. Convoy Live Fire Exercise
 - 2. Culminating event
- e. Administrative
 - i. Sickcall
 - ii. Counseling
 - iii. Appointments
- f. Logistics
- g. Charge of Quarters/Staff Duty

22. Are there specific policies regarding AIT PSG and SL duties and responsibilities?

- a. At what level do these policies exist (circle any that apply)?
 - i. Battalion
 - ii. Brigade
 - iii. Installation

23. How often have these policies changed within the last 12 months?

Priority 2

24. What are the additional duties assigned to the PSGs within your company?

- a. EO
- b. Weight Control
- c. Physical Security
- d. Safety

25. In an average workday (0530 – 2100), approximately how much time do your PSGs spend with their Soldiers?
 - a. Does this amount of time fluctuate with different phases of AIT?
26. What additional duties are typically assigned to the SLs within your company?
27. In an average workday (0530 – 2100), approximately how much time do your SLs spend with their Soldiers?
 - a. Does this time fluctuate with the different phases of AIT?
28. Is there a dedicated cadre (committee group) responsible for training, assessing and retraining the Soldiers during the culminating event?

Unit Certifications / Training Programs

Priority 1

29. Which subjects or skills are included in the certification /training program? (Use Appendix A to facilitate a response.)

Priority 2

30. Are there certification/training programs in place to better prepare the PSG upon arrival at the company? What level?
31. Are there any MOS re-certification programs the NCO must complete prior to assuming duties as a PSG?
32. How are instructors or other personnel selected to become Squad Leaders?
33. Are all Squad Leaders “green suiters”? (To what extent are training positions civilianized [contractor or GS]?)

Action: Distribute Obstacle table for completion (distribute appendix B)

Obstacles

Priority 1

34. What obstacles can you identify that are sources of stress for PSGs and SLs? Use the tables in Appendix B (Y/N response to each of the identified stressors)
35. What systems or programs have you put in place to relieve the PSG/SL stress (circle each that applies)?
- AIT PSG/SL wellness program (see Appendix F TR 350-16 for DS wellness program)
 - Liberal leave and pass policy
 - Civilian education incentive program
 - Organized athletics program
 - Family Readiness Groups

Action: Distribute AITPSG Course Map or List of Lessons (distribute Appendix C)

Institutional Training and Preparations

Priority 3

(No Priority 1 or 2 in this section)

36. On the whole, how well does Victory University training address knowledge, skills, and abilities important to the job performance of an AITPSG?
- Consider:
- Knowledge – IET policies, military law, TRADOC initiatives, etc.
 - Skills – planning, communicating, troop leading, training Soldiers, etc.
 - Abilities – confidence, physical fitness, initiative, accountability, etc.
37. Which blocks of training or lessons should receive more time in the AITPSG course? [Guide the group to produce a list with recommendations for amount of increase.]
38. Which blocks of training or lessons should receive less time in the AITPSG course? [Guide the group to produce a list with recommendations for amount of decrease.]
39. What important topics or tasks appear to be missing in the AITPSG course? [Guide the group to produce a prioritized list with reasons.]

40. How do you provide feedback to Victory University? How frequently have you provided them feedback?

41. What WTBD are required training at this installation?

- a. Who trains these subjects?
- b. When do they train them?
- c. Who verifies Soldier performance standards?

Training Certifications

Please indicate the certifications or training required and frequency. Enter a check mark in the appropriate box. If none required, leave blank.

<i>Certification/Training Program</i>	<i>Upon Arrival</i>	<i>Semi-Annually</i>	<i>Annually</i>
a. Range safety	—	—	—
b. Bus driver's license	—	—	—
c. Mail handlers' card	—	—	—
d. Unit Victim Advocate Training	—	—	—
e. Installation Supporting Agency Briefings	—	—	—
f. APFT	—	—	—
g. Weapons Qualification	—	—	—
h. CLS certification	—	—	—
i. Engagement Skills Trainer (EST) 2000 certification	—	—	—
j. ARM certification	—	—	—
k. Combatives certification	—	—	—
l. Convoy training certification	—	—	—
m. Convoy Live Fire Exercise Certification	—	—	—
n. Urban operations training	—	—	—
o. Unit Prevention Leader (UPL)	—	—	—
p. Cadre Training Course (CTC)	—	—	—
q. Army Basic Instructor Course (ABIC)	—	—	—
r. Others:	—	—	—
s. Others:	—	—	—

Command Team Identified Obstacles for AIT Platoon Sergeants

Please identify which of the following, if any, have emerged as sources of stress for AITPSGs and SLs in general in the past year.

		Yes/No
1.	Limited support structure for AIT PSGs (no or too few Squad Leaders)	_____
2.	No AIT PSG/SL reception and integration program	_____
3.	No Family support groups for AIT PSGs/SLs	_____
4.	Unreliable or unsupportive peers among AIT PSGs/SLs	_____
5.	Installation Location	_____
6.	Lack of communication in general between AIT command teams and PSGs/SLs	_____
7.	Unclear mission or changing mission	_____
8.	Unclear policies impacting AIT PSGs/SLs (internal/external, local/HQDA, changes in duties with change in command team.)	_____
9.	Ambiguous lines of authority (PSGs and SLs assigned to different units)	_____
10.	Confusion among AIT PSGs/SLs about their roles and responsibilities	_____
11.	Norms or standards of behavior inconsistently applied to Soldiers within AIT	_____
12.	AIT PSG/SL supervisors' knowledge, skills, and abilities (training management, taking care of Soldier skills)	_____
13.	Unresponsive supply chain—trouble getting needed supplies and repair parts	_____
14.	Differing standards or accepted behavior for different units (CO/BN/BDE)	_____
15.	Unresponsive Chain of Command – trouble getting support (resources - military vehicles, training aids, time)	_____
16.	Conflicting or competing immediate chains of command for PSG & SL	_____
17.	Lack of command support for AIT PSGs/SLs decisions and actions regarding Soldier behavior and discipline	_____
18.	PSG outranked by Squad Leader	_____

19.	Long periods of repetitive work activities without variety	_____
20.	Lack of work that can be construed as meaningful or important	_____
21.	Overall mission or purpose not understood as worthwhile or important	_____
22.	Real risk of serious injury or death, from negligent discharge, Convoy Live Fire Exercise, Qualification Range, or accidents, including crushing injuries, loss of limb, etc.	_____
23.	Career damaging assignment for AIT PSG/SL	_____
24.	Potential for AIT PSG/SL to fall behind peers (Due to: duty assignments, NCOES opportunities, or promotion potential)	_____
25.	Potentially compromising environment for AIT PSGs/SLs (Integrity, morally, ethically)	_____
26.	Long work hours and/or days during the training cycle	_____
27.	Long work hours and/or days in periods before and after the training cycle	_____
28.	Potential for AIT PSGs/SLs to lose leave time	_____
29.	Student-to-PSG/SL Ratio	_____
30.	AIT PSG/SL Additional Duties (CQ, Staff Duty, Master Driver, Weight Control, etc)	_____
31.	Lack of quality Family time for AIT PSGs/SLs	_____
32.	Lack of personal time for AIT PSGs/SLs (time for appointments, etc)	_____
33.	AIT PSGs'/SLs' individual knowledge (e.g. D&C, WTBD)	_____
34.	AIT PSGs'/SLs' individual skills (e.g. teaching, counseling, etc)	_____
35.	AIT PSGs'/SLs' individual abilities (e.g. performance of Skill Level 1 tasks, taking care of Soldiers)	_____
36.	NCOER part III duty description for AIT PSG & SL	_____
37.	Lack of Special Duty Assignment Pay	_____
38.	Lack of AIT PSG Badge	_____

Questions for the Platoon Sergeant and Squad Leader Interviews

Instructions

- This guide structures the interviews for the PSGs and SLs.
- In preparation for the interview:
 - Read and take along for reference:
 - AITPSG Handbook.
 - AITPSG Course Map.
 - AITPSG Questionnaire.
- Explain the purpose of the session:
 - Gather input for an ARI research project that is examining Advanced Individual Training (AIT) Platoon Sergeant (PSG) duties, resourcing, and training.
- Record information in the Administrative Data section on the next page.
- Lead the participant(s) through the questions in dialogue fashion. Work through as many questions as time allows.
- Capitalize on the interests and strengths of the individual.
- Keep an eye on the clock so you can end on time.
- Within 2 working days, compile your notes in a Word file for entry into a centralized database and storage at the Northrop Grumman office in Columbus, GA.

Administrative Data

Date & Time _____ Installation _____

Facilitator _____ Note Taker _____

Duty Positions _____

Duties and Responsibilities

Priority 1

1. What are your inherent duties and responsibilities? (Use this list to generate discussion)
 - a. Accountability
 - b. Physical Training
 - c. Transportation
 - i. Marching
 - ii. Buses
 - d. MOS instruction
 - i. Platform (formal)
 - ii. Remedial/retraining (informal)
 - e. ASI/SQI Training
 - i. Platform (formal)
 - ii. Remedial/retraining (informal)
 - f. WTBD instruction
 - i. Individual training and evaluation
 1. BRM and ARM
 2. Combatives
 - ii. Collective training and evaluation
 1. Convoy Live Fire Exercise
 2. Culminating event
 - g. Administrative (Soldier actions)
 - i. Sickcall
 - ii. Counseling
 - iii. Appointments
 - h. Logistics
 - i. Provides counseling, mentoring, and training feedback to Squad Leaders

2. On average, how much time do you spend with the Soldiers conducting:

<i>Duty</i>	<i>Hours Per Day</i>
Physical Training	_____
MOS instruction	_____
WTBD instruction	_____
Administrative	_____
Counseling	_____

*NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: AVERAGE HOURS PER DAY BY MOS.

3. **(AITPSG ONLY)** What are the additional duties assigned to the PSGs within your company?

Priority 2

4. How many different Military Occupational Specialties do you have in each platoon?
5. Does your MOS match the Soldiers MOSs?
6. In addition to counseling, what other administrative tasks typically occur in your duty day?
7. Are there specific policies regarding AITPSG and SL duties and responsibilities?
 - a. At what level do these policies exist (circle any that apply)?
 - i. Battalion
 - ii. Brigade
 - iii. Installation
8. How often have these policies changed within the last 12 months?

Priority 3

9. What are the typical duties and responsibilities of the SLs within your company? (Use this list to generate discussion)
 - a. Squad Leader is an additional duty
 - b. Perform primary duties as AIT Instructor
 - c. Trains his squad on the individual and collective tasks
 - d. Manages the logistical and administrative needs of the squad
 - e. Maintains accountability of Soldiers and equipment
 - f. Submits requests for awards and decorations
 - g. Directs the maintenance of the squad's weapons and equipment
 - h. Inspects the condition of Soldier's weapons, clothing and equipment
 - i. Ensures material and supplies are distributed to the Soldiers in the squad
 - j. Keeps the platoon sergeant informed on squad supply status and squad requirements
 - k. Ensures supplies and equipment are internally cross-leveled within the squad

10. (SL ONLY) What additional duties are typically assigned to the SLs within your company?

Action: Review the completed AITPSG questionnaires to identify the most common sources of stress indicated by the group.

NOTE: COMMON STRESSOR = YES FROM 3 OF 3 PSGs OR YES FROM 3 OF 3 SL GROUPS

The following question requires the group to expound on their selections.

Obstacles

11. You've indicated that _____ is a common source of stress for the group.
- a. Why is this such a source of stress for you?
 - b. How do you cope with and reduce the this sources of stress to allow you to continue your duties?
 - i. Techniques
 - ii. Strategies
 - iii. Tools
 - c. Does the chain of command have programs in place to help reduce or manage stress?

Institutional Training and Preparations

Questions 12 through 17 apply to AITPSG Interviews only

Action: Distribute AITPSG Course Map or List of Lessons

Priority 1

12. On the whole, how well does Victory University training address knowledge, skills, and abilities important to the job performance of an AITPSG? Consider:
- a. Knowledge – IET policies, military law, TRADOC initiatives, etc.
 - b. Skills – planning, communicating, troop leading, training Soldiers, etc.
 - c. Abilities – confidence, physical fitness, initiative, accountability, etc.
13. What important topics or tasks were missing in the AITPSG course? [Guide the group to produce a prioritized list with reasons.]

Priority 2

14. Which blocks of training or lessons should receive more time in the AITPSG course? [Guide the group to produce a list with recommendations for amount of increase.]
15. Which blocks of training or lessons should receive less time in the AITPSG course? [Guide the group to produce a list with recommendations for amount of decrease.]
16. What topics/tasks should be deleted from the AITPSG course? Why?

Priority 3

17. How do you provide feedback to Victory University? How frequently have you provided them feedback?

Question 18 applies to AIT SL Interviews only

18. If you were advising commanders on how best to prepare Soldiers/instructors to be AIT SLs, what would you recommend be at the core of this training?

Resources

19. Do you have adequate resources to perform/carry out your responsibilities? If not, what resources are lacking and hinder you in doing your job?
 - a. MOS specific
 - b. WTBD specific

Unit Certifications / Training Programs

Action: Refer the interviewees to the list of certifications in the questionnaire.

Priority 1

20. Do the installation/Unit certification programs prepare you for the unit specific requirements?
 - a. What is missing?

This completes the session. Thank you for your participation.

No Priority

21. What certification requirements are outdated or not necessary for your current duties?
22. What certification programs should be more robust?
23. What certification or training programs would you like to see instituted?
24. Are there any MOS re-certification programs that you must complete prior to assuming duties as a PSG or SL?
25. How are the instructors selected to become Squad Leaders?
26. What certification programs are the Squad Leaders completing before interaction with the Soldiers?
 - a. Instructor Specific
 - b. Soldier Specific
27. Are the Squad Leaders responsible to more than one platoon?
28. **(AITPSG ONLY)** What are your responsibilities pertaining to the Squad Leader selection and certification?
29. Who certifies the Squad Leader?

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AITPSG Course Map

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Week 1					
Enrollment Validation 3.0	PRT (MS) 1.5	PRT (ME) 1.5	PRT (CD3) 1.5	PRT (STC) 1.5	PRT (Student Led) 1.5
Course introduction 1.5	BCT Overview 1.0	Review Blackboard Homework 1.0	Review Blackboard Homework 1.0	Health and Nutrition 2.0	TR 350-6 Exam 2.0
Millennial Overview 1.5	AIT Overview 3.0	Military Law 1.5	Training Records 1.0	Injury Prevention 1.0	Counseling 1.0
Role of the AIT PSG 2.0	Counseling Requirements in AIT 1.0	Prohibited Practices and Illegal Associations 1.0	BRM Strategy 1.0	EO .5	FTX Planning and Preparation 2.0
Intro to PRT 1.5	Teaching Army Values Part #1 1.0	CID/SHARP 1.5	CRM 1.0	ACE for Leaders 1.5	
Conduct Unit Formation/D&C 1.0	Reserve Component Overview .5	Prohibited Practices/Trainee Abuse 2.0	Planning a Foot March 1.0	Families in IET 1.0	
	Conduct an AAR 1.0	WTBD Student Led 1.0	Family Advocacy .5	TR 350-6 Review 1.0	
	WTBD 1.0		WTBD Student Led 1.0		
Week 2					
FTX/WTBD Training 12.5	FTX/WTBD Training 12.5	FTX/WTBD Training 6.5	PRT Student Evals 3.0	PRT Student Evals 3.0	
		FJ CG and Post CSM 1.0	General Subjects Exam 2.0	Course AAR 1.0	
		FTX Recovery 1.5	BRM/ARM at EST 2000 1.5	Graduation 1.0	
		Counseling 2.0	Teaching Army Values Part #2 1.0	ASU Issue	
			ASAP .5		
			AIT PSG Panel 1.0		

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire Response Tables

Appendix C
Questionnaire Response Tables

Table C.1 (questions 7 – 10)
Education and Training Summary

Education	AIT PSG (n = 33-35)	AIT SL (n = 53-59)
Highest NCOES level complete		
<i>WLC</i>	6%	2%
<i>ALC</i>	37%	81%
<i>SLC</i>	57%	17%
Highest Civilian Education completed		
<i>Non HSG</i>	0%	0%
<i>GED</i>	3%	0%
<i>HS Diploma</i>	0%	7%
<i>Some College</i>	57%	54%
<i>Associates Degree</i>	26%	25%
<i>Bachelors Degree</i>	11%	12%
<i>Graduate Work</i>	3%	2%
<i>Master's Degree</i>	0%	0%
Completion of AITPSG Course		
<i>Prior to assuming PSG duties</i>	97%	n/a
<i>After assuming PSG duties</i>	3%	n/a
Completion of MRT Course		
<i>Immediately upon completion of AITPSG Course</i>	31%	n/a
<i>After assuming PSG duties</i>	26%	n/a
<i>Have never attended the MRT course</i>	43%	n/a
SL Completion of CTC Course		
<i>Prior to assuming SL duties</i>	n/a	92%
<i>After assuming SL duties</i>	n/a	8%
SL Completion of MRT Course		
<i>Yes</i>	n/a	5%
<i>No</i>	n/a	95%

Table C.2 (question 11)

Demonstrated proficiency of individual and collective tasks

<i>PSG (n = 35)</i> <i>SL (n = 58-59)</i>	Never		2009 or earlier		2010		2011	
	PSG	SL	PSG	SL	PSG	SL	PSG	SL
Army Warrior Training (formerly known as Common Task Testing (CTT))	9%	3%	37%	59%	14%	24%	40%	14%
Theater Specific Individual Readiness Training (TSIRT)	29%	28%	60%	62%	9%	7%	3%	3%
Rifle Qualification	9%	0%	34%	58%	34%	19%	23%	24%
Advanced Rifle Marksmanship (live-fire training)	11%	3%	63%	69%	11%	19%	14%	8%

Table C.3 (question 13)

Average number of Soldiers supervised in previous two duty positions prior to becoming an AIT PSG or SL.

	0	1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15	16 – 20	more than 20
<i>PSG (n = 34)</i>	4%	21%	21%	3%	9%	42%
<i>SL (n = 58)</i>	1%	23%	26%	16%	9%	26%

Table C.4 (question 14)

In the 2 years prior to attending the AITPSG Course, how often did you perform each activity?

PSG (<i>n</i> = 35) SL (<i>n</i> = 59-59)	Never (%)		Once, to a few times a Year (%)		Monthly to Daily (%)	
	PSG	SL	PSG	SL	PSG	SL
Provide performance feedback to subordinates	6	3	3	10	91	86
Establish goals or other incentives to motivate subordinates	6	0	3	8	91	92
Correct unacceptable conduct of a subordinate	3	2	6	3	91	95
Conduct formal inspection of subordinates completed work	6	2	0	7	94	92
Counsel subordinates regarding career planning	9	0	9	3	83	97
Counsel subordinates with disciplinary problems	6	3	17	22	77	75
Serve as a member of a unit advisory council or committee	63	54	23	25	14	20
Apply and supervised all 8-steps of the Troop Leading Procedures	11	10	11	21	77	69

Note: Responses were collapsed into three categories, rather than the original seven.

Table C.5 (**Rank ordered by PSG response**)

Certification/Training Program Completed during Current Assignment

PSG (<i>n</i> = 33-35) SL (<i>n</i> =55-59)	Yes (%)	
	PSG	SL
PRT	97	90
Mail handlers' card	80	10
Range safety certification	66	58
CLS certification	63	61
Bus driver's license	56	22
Installation Supporting Agency Briefings	56	21
Combatives certification	54	22
Weapon Qualification	49	58
Engagement Skills Trainer (EST) 2000	49	41
Unit Prevention Leader (UPL)	43	15
Urban operations training	42	27
Unit Victim Advocate Training	38	12
ARM certification	36	26
Convoy training certification	24	28
Convoy Live Fire Exercise Certification	21	21
Army Basic Instructor Course (ABIC)	9	93
Others*: SHARP, EO, SCTC, CNO, CAO, SGITC, SAT, ASIST		

*SHARP – Sexual Harassment Assault Response and Prevention, EO – Equal Opportunity, SCTC – Support Cadre Training Course, CNO – Casualty Notification Officer, CAO – Casualty Assistance Officer, SGITC – Small Group Instructor Training Course, SAT – Systems Approach to Training, ASIST – Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training.

Table C.6 (question 16)

In the 2 years prior to attending the AITPSG Course or becoming an Instructor/SL, how often did you perform each activity?

	Never (%)		Once, to a few times a Year (%)		Monthly to Daily (%)	
	PSG	SL	PSG	SL	PSG	SL
PSG (<i>n</i> = 35) SL (<i>n</i> = 59)						
Conduct preliminary marksmanship instruction (PMI)	6	7	60	71	34	22
Lead an organized physical training session for a platoon sized element or larger	3	0	0	8	97	92
Conduct individual task evaluations	9	2	26	31	66	68
Conduct collective task evaluations	9	3	23	34	69	63

Note: Responses have been collapsed into three categories from the original seven.

Command team identified obstacles for AIT Platoon Sergeants

Please identify which of the following, if any, have emerged as sources of stress for AITPSGs and SLs in general in the past year.

Command Team Responses by Emerged = Yes		CDR	1SG
1.	Limited support structure for AIT PSGs (no or too few Squad Leaders)	69%	85%
2.	No AIT PSG/SL reception and integration program	46%	46%
3.	No Family support groups for AIT PSGs/SLs	38%	46%
4.	Unreliable or unsupportive peers among AIT PSGs/SLs	31%	38%
5.	Installation Location	23%	15%
6.	Lack of communication in general between AIT command teams and PSGs/SLs	38%	54%
7.	Unclear mission or changing mission	15%	23%
8.	Unclear policies impacting AIT PSGs/SLs (internal/external, local/HQDA, changes in duties with change in command team.)	54%	46%
9.	Ambiguous lines of authority (PSGs and SLs assigned to different units)	85%	38%
10.	Confusion among AIT PSGs/SLs about their roles and responsibilities	54%	62%
11.	Norms or standards of behavior inconsistently applied to Soldiers within AIT	54%	38%
12.	AIT PSG/SL supervisors' knowledge, skills, and abilities (training management, taking care of Soldier skills)	15%	38%
13.	Unresponsive supply chain—trouble getting needed supplies and repair parts	38%	23%
14.	Differing standards or accepted behavior for different units (CO/BN/BDE)	77%	62%
15.	Unresponsive Chain of Command – trouble getting support (resources - military vehicles, training aids, time)	31%	23%
16.	Conflicting or competing immediate chains of command for PSG & SL	54%	42%
17.	Lack of command support for AIT PSGs/SLs decisions and actions regarding Soldier behavior and discipline	15%	8%
18.	PSG outranked by Squad Leader	8%	8%
19.	Long periods of repetitive work activities without variety	62%	69%
20.	Lack of work that can be construed as meaningful or important	0%	15%
21.	Overall mission or purpose not understood as worthwhile or important	23%	8%

Command Team Identified Obstacles (continued)

Command Team Responses by Emerged = Yes		CDR	1SG
22.	Real risk of serious injury or death, from negligent discharge, Convoy Live Fire Exercise, Qualification Range, or accidents, including crushing injuries, loss of limb, etc.	8%	0%
23.	Career damaging assignment for AIT PSG/SL	31%	23%
24.	Potential for AIT PSG/SL to fall behind peers (Due to: duty assignments, NCOES opportunities, or promotion potential)	31%	15%
25.	Potentially compromising environment for AIT PSGs/SLs (Integrity, morally, ethically)	23%	62%
26.	Long work hours and/or days during the training cycle	100%	100%
27.	Long work hours and/or days in periods before and after the training cycle	92%	100%
28.	Potential for AIT PSGs/SLs to lose leave time	38%	31%
29.	Student-to-PSG/SL Ratio	85%	85%
30.	AIT PSG/SL Additional Duties (CQ, Staff Duty, Master Driver, Weight Control, etc)	62%	54%
31.	Lack of quality Family time for AIT PSGs/SLs	92%	100%
32.	Lack of personal time for AIT PSGs/SLs (time for appointments, etc)	77%	100%
33.	AIT PSGs'/SLs' individual knowledge (e.g. D&C, WTBD)	38%	46%
34.	AIT PSGs'/SLs' individual skills (e.g. teaching, counseling, etc)	46%	46%
35.	AIT PSGs'/SLs' individual abilities (e.g. performance of Skill Level 1 tasks, taking care of Soldiers)	46%	46%
36.	NCOER part III duty description for AIT PSG & SL	8%	23%
37.	Lack of Special Duty Assignment Pay	85%	92%
38.	Lack of AIT PSG Badge	62%	62%

PSG Obstacle Results

Please identify which of the following, if any, have emerged as a source of stress for you within the past year using the following frequency scale:

0 = Never, 1 = Almost Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Fairly Often, 4 = Very Often

Then, for every stressor you identified (1-4) indicate if you feel this stressor disrupted or hindered your performance as an AITPSG (put a check mark to indicate a “yes” response).

PSG Responses by Frequency and Impact (Unsorted)		Frequency (% per response option)					Impact (%)	
		0	1	2	3	4	No	Yes
1	Limited support structure (no or too few Squad Leaders)	14	8	24	16	38	49	51
2	New organization, do not know coworkers	51	27	16	0	5	89	11
3	No Family support group	65	0	8	8	19	76	24
4	Peers (unreliable, unsupportive)	22	16	43	8	11	62	38
5	Installation Location	61	6	17	8	8	86.5	13.5
6	Lack of communication in general between AIT command teams and PSGs/SLs	22	24	27	14	14	57	43
7	Unclear mission or changing mission	27	14	32	22	5	59.5	40.5
8	Unclear policies (internal/external, local/HQDA, changes in duties with change in command team)	27	19	24	24	5	62	38
9	Ambiguous lines of authority (PSGs and SLs assigned to different units)	30	27	16	8	19	73	27
10	Role confusion (what is my job?)	59	24	8	3	5	84	16
11	Norms or standards of behavior inconsistently applied to Soldiers within AIT	27	11	30	14	19	62	38
12	Peer knowledge, skills, and abilities (e.g. D&C, WTBD, taking care of Soldier skills, etc)	38	11	30	14	8	73	27
13	Supervisors' knowledge, skills, and abilities (training management, taking care of Soldier skills)	41	19	22	8	11	68	32
14	Unresponsive supply chain—trouble getting needed supplies and repair parts	24	19	32	11	14	51	49
15	Differing standards or accepted behavior for different units (CO/BN/BDE)	22	8	24	22	24	51	49
16	Unresponsive Chain of Command – trouble getting support (resources - military vehicles, training aids, time)	35	30	27	5	3	65	35
17	Conflicting or competing immediate chains of command for PSG & SL	43	5	30	11	11	70	30

PSG Obstacle results (continued)

PSG Responses by Frequency and Impact (Unsorted) Frequency		PSG Responses (% per response option)					Impact (%)	
		0	1	2	3	4	No	Yes
18	Lack of command support for decisions and actions regarding Soldier behavior and discipline	51	19	14	5	11	68	32
19	PSG outranked by Squad Leader	72	17	3	3	6	92	8
20	Long periods of repetitive work activities without variety	19	24	14	22	22	68	32
21	Lack of work that can be construed as meaningful or important	41	22	22	8	8	84	16
22	Overall mission or purpose not understood as worthwhile or important	57	19	14	3	8	78	22
23	Real risk of serious injury or death, from negligent discharge, Convoy Live Fire Exercise, Qualification Range, or accidents, including crushing injuries, loss of limb, etc.	89	8	0	0	3	97	3
24	Career damaging assignment	54	16	8	11	11	70	30
25	Potential to fall behind peers (Due to: duty assignments, NCOES opportunities, or promotion potential)	62	8	24	3	3	81	19
26	Potentially compromising environment (Integrity, morally, ethically)	59	8	11	14	8	78	22
27	Long work hours and/or days during the training cycle	3	3	11	16	68	32	68
28	Long work hours and/or days in periods before and after the training cycle	3	5	16	14	62	38	62
29	Potential to lose leave time	32	22	19	8	19	65	35
30	Student-to-PSG/SL Ratio	16	8	27	14	35	49	51
31	Additional Duties (CQ, Staff Duty, Master Driver, Weight Control, etc)	22	16	22	24	16	57	43
32	Lack of quality Family time	3	3	24	22	49	27	73
33	Lack of personal time (time for appointments, etc)	11	8	22	32	27	43	57
34	Individual knowledge (e.g. D&C, WTBD)	47	39	8	3	3	81	19
35	Individual skills (e.g. teaching, counseling, etc)	64	22	0	8	6	86.5	13.5
36	Individual abilities (e.g. performance of Skill Level 1 tasks, taking care of Soldiers)	67	17	8	3	6	86.5	13.5
37	NCOER part III duty description for AIT PSG & SL	58	19	6	11	6	76	24
38	Lack of Special Duty Assignment Pay	8	0	11	11	69	30	70
39	Lack of AIT PSG Badge	28	8	22	8	33	57	43

Squad Leader Obstacles

Please identify which of the following, if any, have emerged as a source of stress for you within the past year using the following frequency scale:

0 = Never, 1 = Almost Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Fairly Often, 4 = Very Often

Then, for every stressor you identified (1-4) indicate if you feel this stressor disrupted or hindered your performance as an AITPSG (put a check mark to indicate a “yes” response).

Examples:	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Yes/No</u>
Lack of Family quality time	<u>0</u>	
Long periods of repetitive work activities without variety	<u>2</u>	<u>No</u>

Squad Leader Responses by Frequency and Impact (Unsorted)		Frequency					Impact	
		(% per response option)					(%)	
		0	1	2	3	4	No	Yes
1	Limited support structure (no or too few Squad Leaders)	15	8	29	29	19	53	47
2	New organization, do not know coworkers	42	29	24	3	2	54	46
3	No Family support group	61	14	7	3	15	77	23
4	Peers (unreliable, unsupportive)	20	28	38	10	3	73	27
5	Installation Location	65	15	13	5	2	93	7
6	Lack of communication in general between AIT command teams and PSGs/SLs	7	8	35	18	32	33	67
7	Unclear mission or changing mission	28	8	28	22	13	53	47
8	Unclear policies (internal/external, local/HQDA, changes in duties with change in command team,)	28	28	17	8	18	58	42
9	Ambiguous lines of authority (PSGs and SLs assigned to different units)	31	15	15	15	24	65	35
10	Role confusion (what is my job?)	38	15	20	12	15	63	37
11	Norms or standards of behavior inconsistently applied to Soldiers within AIT	22	22	22	15	20	55	45
12	Peer knowledge, skills, and abilities (e.g. D&C, WTBD, taking care of Soldier skills, etc)	18	30	32	8	12	67	33
13	PSG's knowledge, skills, and abilities (training management, taking care of Soldier skills)	23	8	35	22	12	50	50
14	PSG outranked by Squad Leader	52	12	20	7	10	87	13
15	Unresponsive supply chain—trouble getting needed supplies and repair parts	36	24	20	8	12	70	30
16	Differing standards or accepted behavior for different units (CO/BN/BDE)	25	30	17	18	10	60	40

Squad Leader Responses by Frequency and Impact (Unsorted)		Frequency (% per response option)					Impact (%)	
		0	1	2	3	4	No	Yes
17	Unresponsive Chain of Command – trouble getting support (resources - military vehicles, training aids, time)	44	19	24	10	3	78	22
18	Conflicting or competing immediate chains of command for PSG & SL	39	12	24	12	14	60	40
19	Lack of command support for decisions and actions regarding Soldier behavior and discipline	33	15	25	13	13	67	33
20	Long periods of repetitive work activities without variety	22	15	25	23	15	63	37
21	Lack of work that can be construed as meaningful or important	37	32	22	5	5	85	15
22	Overall mission or purpose not understood as worthwhile or important	53	29	10	7	2	85	15
23	Real risk of serious injury or death, from negligent discharge, Convoy Live Fire Exercise, Qualification Range, or accidents, including crushing injuries, loss of	78	17	2	2	2	98	2
24	Career damaging assignment	66	14	3	5	12	80	20
25	Potential to fall behind peers (Due to: duty assignments, NCOES opportunities, or promotion potential)	46	17	20	3	14	73	27
26	Potentially compromising environment (Integrity, morally, ethically)	55	13	17	10	5	72	28
27	Long work hours and/or days during the training cycle	13	15	15	27	30	48	52
28	Long work hours and/or days in periods before and after the training cycle	27	18	17	17	22	63	37
29	Overall mission or purpose not understood as worthwhile or important	64	14	15	3	3	85	15
30	Potential to lose leave time	60	15	13	3	8	83	17
31	Student-to-PSG/SL Ratio	38	7	25	15	15	53	47
32	Additional Duties (CQ, Staff Duty, Master Driver, Weight Control, etc)	36	14	17	12	22	63	37
33	Lack of quality Family time	27	8	25	13	27	60	40
34	Lack of personal time (time for appointments, etc)	30	13	23	17	17	67	33
35	Individual knowledge (e.g. D&C, WTBD, training standards)	59	24	10	2	5	90	10
36	Individual skills (e.g. teaching, counseling, etc)	48	25	8	8	10	80	20
37	Individual abilities (e.g. performance of Skill Level 1 tasks, taking care of Soldiers)	58	15	15	2	10	90	10
38	Maintaining currency in MOS technical skills and equipment	48	12	12	10	18	75	25
39	NCOER part III duty description for AIT PSG & SL	50	10	14	7	19	80	20

APPENDIX D

Special Duty Assignment Pay Tables

Special Duty Assignment Pay

Special duty assignment pay (SDAP) is a monetary incentive paid to enlisted Soldiers who qualify for and serve in designated special duty (SD) assignments that have extremely demanding duties requiring extraordinary effort for satisfactory performance or an unusual degree of responsibility (AR 614-200, RAR 11 Oct 2011).

Commanders may request that SDAP be authorized for designated positions (not currently authorized) in their commands when the duty position meets at least one of the following criteria:

- (1) Extremely demanding effort is necessary to ensure successful mission accomplishment.
- (2) A greater than normal degree of responsibility (heavy and personal burden to ensure successful accomplishment of duties) than what reasonably could be expected in a regular military assignment for a Soldier's grade and experience.
- (3) Requirement of special qualifications met through rigorous screening and special schooling other than (over and above) a brief orientation.

Comparable Positions

	Level of Pay	Selection Process	Assignment Process	Mandatory Schooling	Minimum length of Tour	TDA Position	Company Size	TDA Authorizations	NCO / Soldier Ratio
Drill Sergeant	SD-5 (\$375)	Yes	Yes	Yes	2 yrs	Yes	240	12 per company	1 to 20
Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) Platoon Sergeant / Squad Leader	SD-5 (\$375)	Yes	Yes	Yes	1 yr	Yes	200	PSG = 1:36 SL = 1:12	
AIT Platoon Sergeant	None	Yes	Yes	Yes	2 yrs	Yes	148 – 700	6 – 8 per company	1 to 40 – 1 to 100

Comparison of Drill Sergeant, WTU Squad Leader, and AIT Platoon Sergeant Duties

Drill Sergeant (Drill Sergeant Candidate Guide, 2011)	Warrior Transition Unit Cadre (WTU Consolidated Guidance, 2009)	AIT Platoon Sergeant (TR 350-6, 2010)
Responsible for training approximately 60 Initial Entry Training Soldiers every ten week cycle	(1) Provides direct C2 support for the WT. Ensures the Warrior is attending necessary medical and administrative appointments.	a. Lead their platoon.
Responsible for maintaining the highest level of military standards while teaching the basics of Soldiering	(2) Maintains accountability of his Soldiers and equipment.	b. Health and welfare of all Soldiers assigned to the platoon.
Developing discipline, and ensuring the good health and morale of assigned Soldiers	(3) Links WT to SFAC for administrative services and benefits	c. Utilize available squad leaders as first line supervisors for squads.
Conducts tactical and situational training during one, three, and seven day field exercises	(4) Submits requests for awards and decorations; ensures that the Warrior's records are transferred from losing unit to gaining unit.	d. Organization and control of the platoon.
Instills the Warrior Ethos, and produces Soldiers through innovative training	(5) Inspects the condition of Soldiers' billeting, clothing, and equipment.	e. Reinforcement of values, skills, and tasks.
Assists the Commander in the execution of training Required to teach: Human Relations, Leadership, Resiliency, Physical Readiness, Marksmanship, Drill and Ceremonies, Army Basic Instructor Course, IET Policies and Administration, Tactics, First Aid, U.S. Weapons, and Modern Army Combative Level 1	(6) Keeps the platoon sergeant/leader informed on squad's medical status and requirements.	f. Reinforcement of WTBDs.
		g. Personal, professional, and academic counseling.
		h. PRT.
		i. Hold formations and maintain accountability.
		j. Management of logistical and administration requirements.
		k. Monitor morale, discipline, and motivation.
		l. Provide guidance and instructions to squad leaders, instructors, and other cadre. m. Provide all necessary support to Soldiers' issues (such as finance, personal, legal, professional, etc.)