CAP Preparation Guide

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July 2021

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Fellow Army Leaders,

The Army's Command Assessment Programs (CAP) mark a bold step forward to ensure that our most talented leaders are selected for command and primary general staff billets. The Chief of Staff of the Army has clearly articulated that CAP is how we select our future commanders, command sergeants major, and strategic leaders. It currently consists of the following programs: the Colonels Command Assessment Program (CCAP), the Battalion Commander Assessment Program (BCAP), the Acquisition Leader Assessment Program (ALAP), the Medical Command Assessment Program (MCAP), the Division Chaplain Assessment Program (DCHAP), and the Sergeant Major Assessment Program (SMAP).

This guide will assist candidates in their preparation for the CAP and help units integrate activities into their leader development program that will broadly develop their leaders. What CAP measures is largely an open book test based on attributes and competencies articulated in the Army Leadership Requirements Model found in ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession*. Thus, most events are executed with full transparency and clear standards such as the physical fitness, written communication, verbal communication, and peer/subordinate assessments. However, a few CAP events are opaque in order to preserve the long-term integrity of the assessments so that CAP continues to select our most talented leaders to lead our Soldiers and Civilians.

For participating leaders, we encourage you to prepare for CAP. We have designed this preparation guide to help you achieve that end. As a foundation, you should arrive at your CAP event well rested, clear-headed, focused, and ready to perform your best on a series of events that span a number of days. CAP is designed to allow you to showcase your many strengths, and as such, the only person you are competing against is yourself. Regardless of the outcome from your participation in CAP, you will emerge a more insightful, self-aware, and better leader.

We recommend Army leaders and units develop all leaders, including CAP candidates, to assume leadership positions through their traditional LPD system and modeling a positive, high standards command climate. We recommend against providing unit level CAP-specific preparation or rehearsal events, as this effort may inadvertently steer candidates away from being their best and true self at CAP. This guide has some suggested activities to incorporate into your LPD programs.

Please take the time to review this guide to assist in your preparation. If you have any additional questions, do not hesitate to contact the Army Talent Management Task Force. Your primary POCs are COL Bob O'Brien, robert.a.obrien12.mil@mail.mil, and COL Townley Hedrick, townley.r.hedrick.mil@mail.mil.

Talent Wins!

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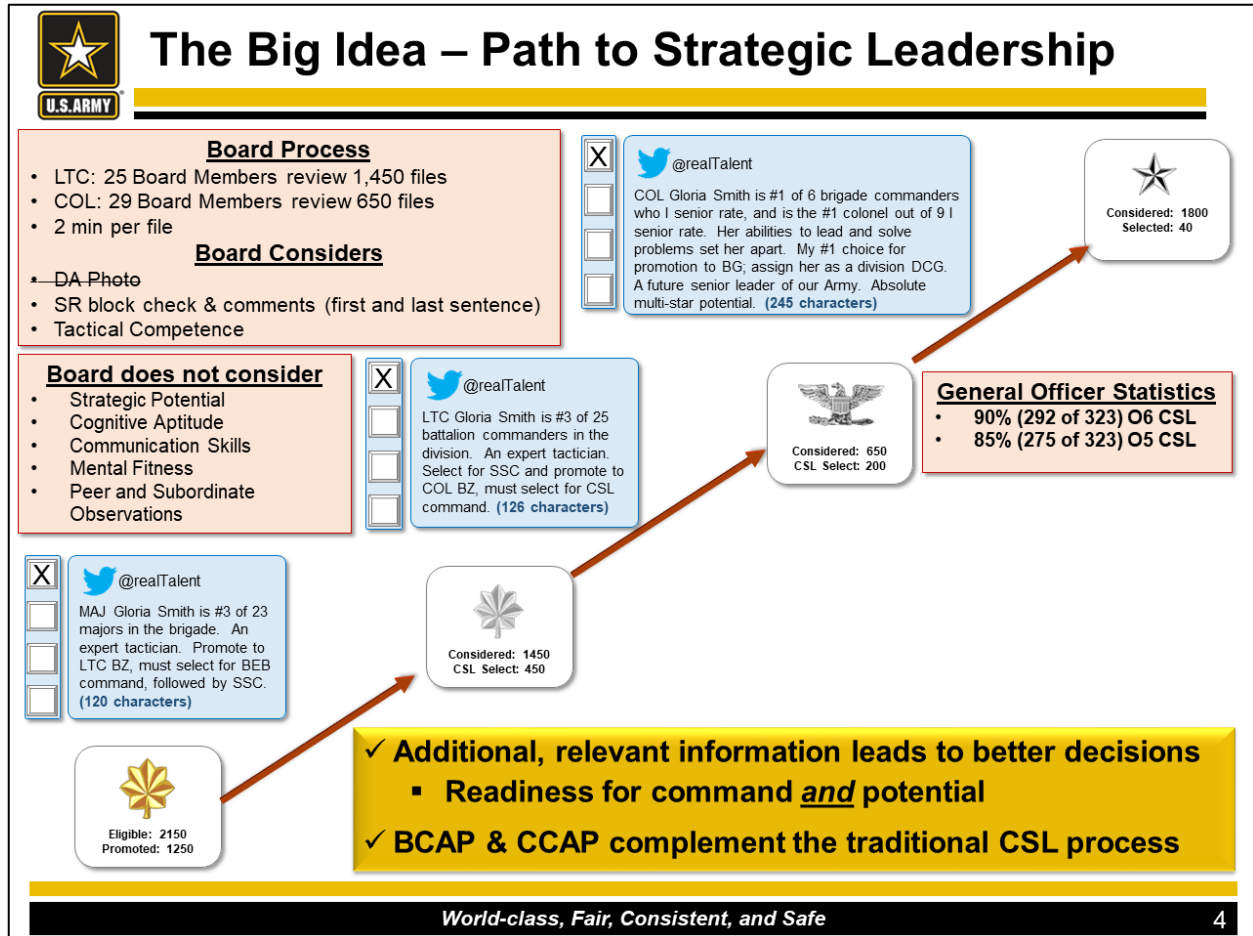
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Why?

The Army adopted the Centralized Selection List (CSL) process in 1975 to address the challenge of selecting the best officers to command our battalion- and brigade-level formations. It was designed to ensure fairness and meritocracy during these critical personnel decisions. The CSL process is a good system that has served the Army well for decades. However, with the rise of great power competitors that are eroding our economic and technological advantages, good is no longer good enough. We must ensure that we select the *best* leaders for our most significant leadership positions, and since the path to senior leadership commonly passes through battalion and brigade-level CSL positions, we must select leaders who also possess strong strategic potential.

In early 2019, the Chief of Staff of the Army asked the Army Talent Management Task Force (ATMTF) whether there was a better way to select battalion commanders. The ATMTF sought out the best ideas on leader selection from the military, industry, and academia, and used them to design a comprehensive assessment program to select battalion commanders, arguably the most consequential leaders in the Army. Their experience, placement, and influence give them an out-sized ability to shape the future service of the Soldiers they lead. They train and develop our young Soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and officers and have more impact on their decisions to continue serving (or not) than any other leadership position. In short, battalion commanders are critical to the accomplishment of the Army's mission.

The premise of BCAP is that the addition of new, relevant information allows the Army to make better decisions. Rather than relying solely on the evaluations provided by senior raters looking at past performance, BCAP added objective assessments that address both readiness for command and potential. This allows the Army to take into consideration readiness not only for the next assignment – command / general staff – but also for future assignments.

In June and July 2019, the Army invited 26 infantry and armor alternate CSL selects (three requested to be removed from command consideration and did not participate) and four principal CSL selects to participate in a BCAP pilot. The participants conducted a series of cognitive, non-cognitive, physical, written, and verbal assessments; an interview with a specially trained operational psychologist; and a panel interview with a group of senior Army leaders. After compiling the pilot, the average change for an officer's position on the order of merit list (OML), either up or down, was eight positions, or 35%. The lowest alternate moved from worst to first (23rd to 1st), and eight of the officers invited (30%) were found to be *Not Yet Ready for Command* or had requested to be removed from consideration for command.

The Big Idea – Path to Strategic Leadership

Board Process
- LTC: 25 Board Members review 1,450 files
- COL: 29 Board Members review 650 files
- 2 min per file

Board Considers
- ~~DA Photo~~
- SR block check & comments (first and last sentence)
- Tactical Competence

Board does not consider
- Strategic Potential
- Cognitive Aptitude
- Communication Skills
- Mental Fitness
- Peer and Subordinate Observations

@realTalent — COL Gloria Smith is #1 of 6 brigade commanders who I senior rate, and is the #1 colonel out of 9 I senior rate. Her abilities to lead and solve problems set her apart. My #1 choice for promotion to BG; assign her as a division DCG. A future senior leader of our Army. Absolute multi-star potential. **(245 characters)**

@realTalent — LTC Gloria Smith is #3 of 25 battalion commanders in the division. An expert tactician. Select for SSC and promote to COL BZ, must select for CSL command. **(126 characters)**

@realTalent — MAJ Gloria Smith is #3 of 23 majors in the brigade. An expert tactician. Promote to LTC BZ, must select for BEB command, followed by SSC. **(120 characters)**

Considered: 1800
Selected: 40

Considered: 650
CSL Select: 200

General Officer Statistics
- 90% (292 of 323) O6 CSL
- 85% (275 of 323) O5 CSL

Considered: 1450
CSL Select: 450

Eligible: 2150
Promoted: 1250

✓ Additional, relevant information leads to better decisions
- Readiness for command _and_ potential

✓ BCAP & CCAP complement the traditional CSL process

World-class, Fair, Consistent, and Safe

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Battalion Commander Assessment Program

Given the compelling results from the pilot, the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) directed the implementation of BCAP for those officers competing for Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Army Competitive Category (ACC) Centralized Selection List (CSL) Command/Key Billets in October 2019 at the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) conference. The Army inserted BCAP between the legacy CSL Board, which selected and ranked the officers who would participate in the inaugural BCAP, and the standard Human Resources Command (HRC) slating process. Rather than replacing the legacy CSL process, BCAP complemented it.

The FY21 LTC ACC CSL Command/Key Billet Boards selected 816 officers to attend the inaugural BCAP, which occurred in January and February 2020. Out of these 816 officers, 750 attended the four-day BCAP at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Of these 750, the panels selected 436 CSL principals, 224 CSL alternates, and 90 received *Not Yet Ready for Command* notification, including 25 who would have been legacy CSL principals.

After releasing these results, the Army asked all 750 participants for their comments regarding BCAP's effectiveness. Despite 12% of officers having been found as *Not Yet Ready for Command* and numerous others who likely believed they had been legacy principals but were now BCAP alternates, 94% of the BCAP 21 participants believed that BCAP is a better way to select battalion commanders than the legacy board process alone, and 97% believed that the Army should continue BCAP. Separately, 95% of the panel members believed that BCAP is a better way and 100% believed the Army should continue BCAP.
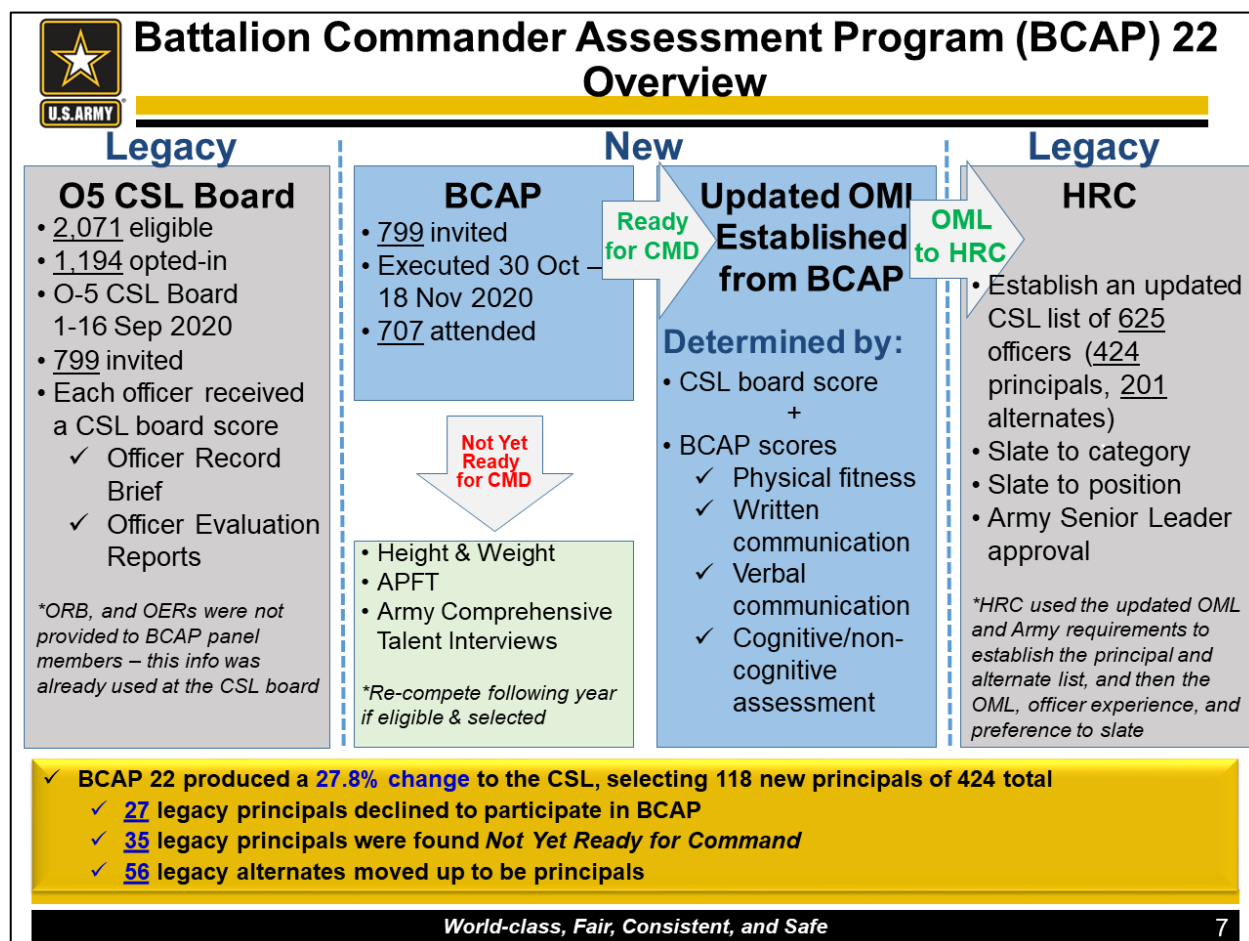
Command Assessment Program Expansion

Based on the success of BCAP 21, the Army expanded it into the Command Assessment Program (CAP). In Spring 2020, the CSA directed the implementation of the Colonels Command Assessment Program (CCAP) to assess and select Army Competitive Category (ACC) Colonels for command and primary general staff billets. Additionally, the Secretary of the Army directed implementation of the Acquisition Leader Assessment Program (ALAP), which for FY22, selected Colonels for Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) commands and key billets. The reason for expanding to the Colonel-level was that these leaders play a crucial role in developing and enabling battalion commanders, they ensure the mission success of their units, and they comprise the primary source of future general officers and strategic leaders. Therefore, the Army must select adaptive and innovative leaders who can both lead the Army enterprise and generate results within Joint and Interagency environments. The CSA directed that all Special Mission Unit (SMU) candidates complete CAP as well.

In Summer 2020, the Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA) directed execution of a Sergeants Major Assessment Program (SMAP) prototype. Like their command team counterparts, Command Sergeants Major are critical to the accomplishment of the Army's mission and play a crucial role in retaining our finest Soldiers.

During Fall 2020, the Army conducted CAP 22 which included: BCAP 22, CCAP 22, ALAP 22, and SMAP 22. With CAP 22, the Army saw similar results to BCAP 21. For CCAP 22, there were 532 officers eligible to compete for CSL. All eligible officers who opted-in to compete for CSL were invited, resulting in 352 invitations. Three hundred and nineteen (319) officers attended CCAP, which determined 288 as *Ready for Command*, from which 180 were principal CSL selects. CCAP 22 resulted in a 26% change to the principal CSL list: Three (3) legacy principals declined to participate, eleven (11) legacy principals were determined *Not Yet Ready for Command*, and 33 alternates moved up to become principals. For BCAP 22, there were 2,071 eligible officers, and 1,194 opted-in to compete. After the CSL board, 799 were invited to BCAP 22, which 707 attended. Six hundred and twenty-five (625) were determined *Ready for Command*, from which 424 were principal CSL selects. BCAP 22 resulted in a 28% change to the principal CSL list: Twenty-seven (27) legacy principals declined to

participate, 35 legacy principals were determined *Not Yet Ready for Command*, and 56 legacy alternates moved up to become principals. Below is a graphic that depicts the full CSL board, CAP, and slating process using BCAP 22 as the example.

Battalion Commander Assessment Program (BCAP) 22 Overview

Legacy

O5 CSL Board
- 2,071 eligible
- 1,194 opted-in
- O-5 CSL Board 1-16 Sep 2020
- 799 invited
- Each officer received a CSL board score
  - ✓ Officer Record Brief
  - ✓ Officer Evaluation Reports

ORB, and OERs were not provided to BCAP panel members – this info was already used at the CSL board

New

BCAP
- 799 invited
- Executed 30 Oct – 18 Nov 2020
- 707 attended

Not Yet Ready for CMD
- Height & Weight
- APFT
- Army Comprehensive Talent Interviews

Re-compete following year if eligible & selected

Ready for CMD

Updated OML Established from BCAP

Determined by:
- CSL board score
  +
- BCAP scores
  - ✓ Physical fitness
  - ✓ Written communication
  - ✓ Verbal communication
  - ✓ Cognitive/non-cognitive assessment

OML to HRC

Legacy

HRC
- Establish an updated CSL list of 625 officers (424 principals, 201 alternates)
- Slate to category
- Slate to position
- Army Senior Leader approval

HRC used the updated OML and Army requirements to establish the principal and alternate list, and then the OML, officer experience, and preference to slate

✓ **BCAP 22 produced a 27.8% change to the CSL, selecting 118 new principals of 424 total**
  ✓ **27 legacy principals declined to participate in BCAP**
  ✓ **35 legacy principals were found *Not Yet Ready for Command***
  ✓ **56 legacy alternates moved up to be principals**

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With the completion of CAP 22 (and within thirteen (13) months of the CSA's announcement of BCAP 21 at the 2019 AUSA), the Army has assessed nearly 1,750 officers to make 1,040 selection decisions using the CAP assessment and selection methodology, adopting a bold change to select the best possible leaders for our Soldiers and Civilians.

For CAP 23, in addition to BCAP and CCAP, the CSA made the decision to incorporate the Medical Command Assessment Program (MCAP), which will be used in to select Colonels for FY23 Army Medical Department (AMEDD) commands and key billets; ALAP will expand and select LTC/GS-14s and COL/GS-15s for AAC commands and key billets; and SMAP will assess and select FY23 Brigade Command Sergeants Major. Additionally, the Chief of Chaplains will leverage CAP to select division chaplains with the Division Chaplain Assessment Program (DCHAP). Lastly, the CSA directed that all officers must be determined *Ready* before assuming their CSL position.

Methodology

CAP provides additional, relevant information for the Army to make the best possible selection decisions for command, primary general staff, command sergeant major, and strategic leader positions. Woven throughout execution of CAP is a process designed to create a holistic picture of one's leadership readiness and potential, while collecting this information in a bias-reduced manner. Thus, CAP uses a multitude of objective assessments to measure cognitive and non-cognitive abilities, written and verbal communications, physical fitness, leadership effectiveness, and counterproductive leadership frequency. The culminating assessment is the Army Comprehensive Talent Interview (ACTI), where senior Army leaders have the opportunity to fuse together all of this additional, relevant information to make a decision on whether a CAP candidate is *Ready* or *Not Yet Ready* for the selected position.

<u>World-class, fair, consistent, and safe</u>.

The standard for CAP is an event that is world-class, fair, consistent, and safe. In being **world-class** (but not gold-plated), CAP will be the best assessment and selection program of its size possible. CAP epitomizes professionalism and prioritizes the candidate experience, all the way from the initial contact with the welcome letter through departure. For example, sponsor teams are assigned to every cohort to ensure candidates are informed in a timely manner of when and where to be for all events, and to assist with any issues that might detract from a candidate's experience. This allows all candidates to focus solely on putting their best foot forward and showcasing their many talents.

Second, it will be **fair**. The experience and assessments will neither advantage nor disadvantage any candidates based on their past experiences or current assignment. This is because all assessments are based on foundational Army leadership requirements found in the Army's doctrine. Examples of ensuring fairness includes authorizing OCONUS candidates to arrive early to acclimate, providing different reference articles for the argumentative essay, and changing the questions used for the Army Comprehensive Talent Interview (ACTI) to ensure that later cohorts do not gain advantage over early cohorts.

Third, it will be **consistent**. The CAP experience and assessments are all conducted to the exact same standard and under the same conditions from the very first cohort through the last cohort. For example, all standard cadre-candidate interactions are scripted to ensure consistency. The APFT is administered indoors so that it is executed under the same conditions for all candidates and uses the same graders. Additionally, these graders conduct hundreds of rehearsals to ensure tight calibration, which includes cross-checking video recordings of all pushups events.

Lastly, considering the ongoing global pandemic, it will be ***safe***. The cadre will employ the latest best practices from the CDC and Army Public Health to implement and enforce mitigation measures against COVID-19 transmission, ensuring that cadre, candidates, and their families will be safe. CAP 22 was executed with zero transmission cases at the height of the pandemic due to following these best practices.
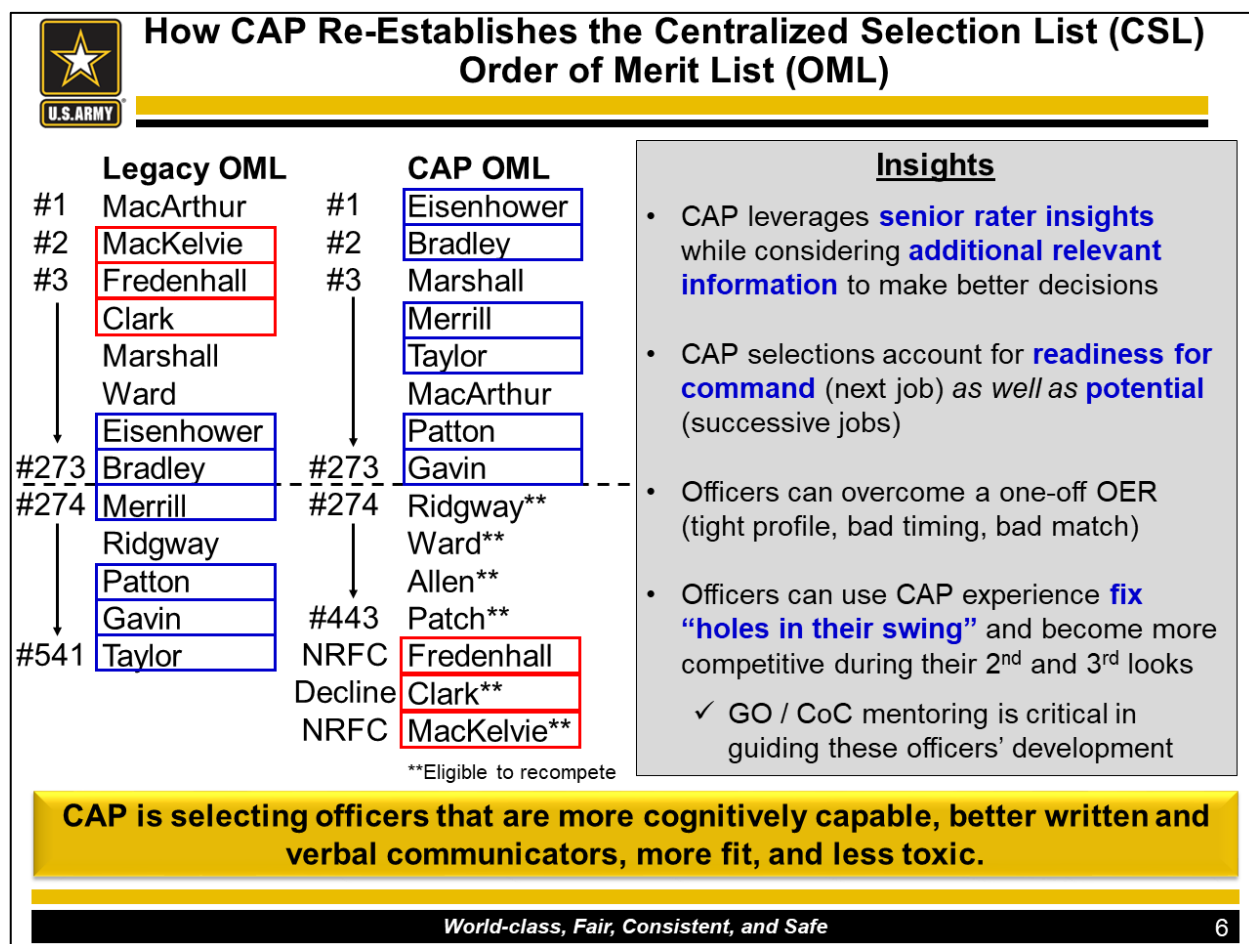
Army Comprehensive Talent Interview.

The last assessment at CAP is the Army Comprehensive Talent Interview (ACTI), where a panel of senior Army leaders interviews all CAP candidates and consider all of the CAP assessment data. Because performance data found in candidate evaluation reports and record brief is already used during the CSL board to create the CSL board score, this information is not made available for reuse at CAP – only assessments executed at CAP and the peer-subordinate assessments are used. The panel members are responsible for two things: First, they score a candidate's verbal communication talents using the rubric found in this guide. Second, each panel member makes an independent determination of whether the candidate is *Ready* or *Not Yet Ready* this year for a CSL position.

Crucial to the execution of the ACTI are all of the bias mitigation measures implemented to ensure a fair and consistent interview; measures are based on decades of research and practice throughout academia, industry, and the military. This includes the use of a screen between the candidate and panel to create a "double blind" interview where the candidate cannot see the panel members and the panel members cannot see the candidate. This focuses the panel on listening to the candidate's verbal communication and leadership experiences and prevents them from making decisions based on tabs, badges, combat patches, or appearance. Additionally, all information presented is anonymized – no names or units. The panel members also receive anti-bias training prior to panel operations and conduct a daily refresher. Finally, panel members use rubrics to further increase the consistency and reliability of their decisions.

Re-ordering the Centralized Selection List (CSL).

CAP adds additional, relevant information to the selection process for the Army's CSL positions. It does so by adding objective assessments that form a more holistic picture of a leader's readiness, as well as potential, supplementing the critical insights captured by raters and senior raters on a leader's evaluation report. The evaluation report and past performance, represented by the CSL board-calculated order of merit list (OML) score remains the foundation of this process. As such, the CSL OML score serves as the most heavily weighted component of selection. All leaders determined to *Ready* for the CSL then have all of their scores combined to form a revised OML,

allowing the Human Resources Command to determine principal and alternate selects. The following graphic provides a visualization of the reordering process.

How CAP Re-Establishes the Centralized Selection List (CSL) Order of Merit List (OML)

Legacy OML		CAP OML		Insights
#1	MacArthur	#1	Eisenhower	• CAP leverages **senior rater insights** while considering **additional relevant information** to make better decisions
#2	MacKelvie	#2	Bradley	
#3	Fredenhall	#3	Marshall	
	Clark		Merrill	• CAP selections account for **readiness for command** (next job) *as well as* **potential** (successive jobs)
	Marshall		Taylor	
	Ward		MacArthur	
	Eisenhower		Patton	
#273	Bradley	#273	Gavin	
#274	Merrill	#274	Ridgway**	• Officers can overcome a one-off OER (tight profile, bad timing, bad match)
	Ridgway		Ward**	
	Patton		Allen**	• Officers can use CAP experience **fix "holes in their swing"** and become more competitive during their 2nd and 3rd looks
	Gavin	#443	Patch**	
#541	Taylor	NRFC	Fredenhall	
		Decline	Clark**	✓ GO / CoC mentoring is critical in guiding these officers' development
		NRFC	MacKelvie**	

**Eligible to recompete

CAP is selecting officers that are more cognitively capable, better written and verbal communicators, more fit, and less toxic.

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<u>Growth and Development</u>.

The guidance from the CSA is clear about CAP; it should be a redemptive process that allows a leader to identify "holes in their swing" then return in subsequent years, if eligible to compete, having had an opportunity to develop from the experience. For example, during BCAP 22, over half of the officers who had been determined *Not Yet Ready for Command* (NFRC) during BCAP 21 were determined *Ready for Command* (RFC).

While the primary purpose of CAP is for selection, the Army has worked hard to take advantage of the available developmental opportunities that would not compromise the long-term integrity of the assessments. CAP provides candidates a chance for self-reflection during preparation for, execution, and following CAP. Candidates have an opportunity to participate in a 20-30 minute developmental outbrief with a trained operational psychologist who provides the candidate with a holistic review of their

leadership strengths and developmental needs using all of the information gathered for CAP. Candidates are allowed to take detailed notes during this outbrief. Candidates in CAP23 will have an opportunity to participate in a 10-15 minute panel member outbrief with a member of their voting panel. Again, candidates are allowed to take detailed notes during this outbrief. This senior Army leader will provide the candidate with some strengths and developmental needs from the perspective of the panel; this is a new addition for CAP 23. Candidates will be provided with some limited data from their assessments several weeks following the completion of CAP 23 through a hard copy report. This data will provide some general information about their strengths and developmental needs as well as information on how they performed against themselves on the scored assessments; this is also a new addition for CAP 23. All candidates are offered the opportunity for confidential, professional coaching. CAP will not provide any data to the coaches, but leaders may pass on any data they have received and will have the opportunity to take the Emotional Quotient Inventory 2.0, or EQI-2.0, that provides assessment data similar to some of the CAP assessments. Lastly, any candidate that is determined *Not Yet Ready* will be notified by the first flag officer in their chain of command of this outcome and then offered follow-on mentoring.

The Army will continue to seek to leverage potential developmental opportunities. However, in keeping with the primary purpose of using CAP for selection and not compromising the long-term integrity of the assessment instruments, candidates will not be provided with specific, granular information from several instruments. This includes the peer and subordinate assessment (e.g., comments, number of assessors, number of yes/no recommendations) to maintain the anonymity of assessors and protect their input, the Cognitive/Non-Cognitive Assessment (CNCA) (the SMAP equivalent is the Sergeant Major Assessment Battery, or SGM-AB), and the psychometrics. This will not prevent leaders from receiving relevant, general insights gained from these assessments.

Building a Culture of Assessments.

The CAP events are capstone assessments in the broader context of a 21st Century Army Talent Management System. The Army is implementing a talent maximization structure that is implementing a culture of assessments throughout a leader's career in the Army. While the initial CAP cohorts' first experience with assessments will be CAP, TRADOC is leading efforts through Project Athena to build of culture of assessments at all professional military education (PME) venues. Project Athena assessment give leaders an opportunity to complete assessments and receive feedback for which the primary purpose is developmental - to enable leaders to develop across the competencies and attributes of the Army Leadership Requirements Model - the areas that CAP assesses. For example, officers commissioned this year will have completed assessments at BOLC, CCC, and CGSC before competing at CAP over a decade and a half from now.

Benefits of CAP

The implementation of CAP is yielding several benefits for the Army. CAP selects leaders for command, general staff, and critical positions with measurable leadership quality provided to our Soldiers and Civilians. The data from CAP programs have identified that selected, versus unselected, leaders are more cognitively capable, communicate better both in the written form and verbally, are more physically fit, and demonstrate counterproductive leadership less often.

Because the programs assess potential in addition to readiness for command, they ensure that those leaders on the path to strategic leadership also possess the requisite talents to be both successful field grade leaders and strategic leaders.

Leaders who participate become more self-aware. In fact, the most important insight gained thus far from CAP is that self-awareness is strongly correlated with increased leader effectiveness and less frequently exhibiting counterproductive leadership behavior. While CAP was designed as an assessment and selection program (as opposed to a developmental program), several CAP events provide opportunities to reflect deeply on past experiences and grow in substantial ways. Additionally, the developmental outbrief (and now the additional panel member outbrief) provides feedback tailored for each candidate that officers can use for further reflection and self-improvement. Lastly, a professional coaching opportunity is provided to all leaders attending a CAP.

The data collected during CAP allows the Army to improve the management and development of its leader cohorts. This data can be analyzed to identify cohort-wide trends or specific branch trends to drive changes to the programs of instruction (POIs) at professional military education venues. For example, the School for Command Preparation is now using select information from an officer's CAP performance to create tailored developmental opportunities for officers attending the Pre-Command Courses (PCCs).

Lastly, the CAP is already driving positive behaviors in our officer corps. Just as Army leaders as a whole can largely outperform their civilian counterparts in two minutes of push-ups, two minutes of sit-ups, and a two-mile run for time – the APFT – so too will the existence of CAP drive behavior. The inclusion of the peer and subordinate feedback influences leaders to follow the Army's leadership doctrine (ADP 6-22) while striving to treat all with dignity and respect. We are now seeing individual leaders and units training on verbal and written communication skills, which are integral components of effective leadership.

How to Prepare

There are multiple assessments administered at CAP. Preparation, though not required, may assist a leader perform to his or her highest potential. Both individual leaders and units can create development plans, ideally as part of the overall leader development plan, to improve one's performance at CAP.

Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). The APFT served as the physical fitness assessment at BCAP 21, BCAP22, and CAP 22. The Secretary of the Army has approved an exception to policy for CAP to continue using the APFT as the physical fitness assessment at CAP 23. Once the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) is validated for use, expect the ACFT to be the physical assessment instrument at CAP. Until that time, the APFT will be administered IAW the 2012 version of FM 7-22. Note: the sit-up event will use bars to secure a tester's feet for COVID-19 mitigation, as well as fairness/consistency. Graders strictly adhere to event grading standards. Graders go through rigorous validation procedures to ensure they are grading events fairly and consistently. Graders also frequently refresh their consistency with calibration testing. Graders video every candidate's performance on each event to check consistency and give candidates the opportunity to fairly challenge the results of failing an event. Based on this, we recommend:

Leaders

- Accurately assess where you are physically and set challenging goals. An example goal could be to meet the Army Physical Fitness Badge standard with 10 points to spare.
- When training, ensure that you complete the full range of motion for all push-up and sit-up repetitions.
- Work with a no-nonsense grader who will correct your form and periodically film your repetitions so you can check your form.
- Run timed intervals (1200m, 800m, and 400m) with a disciplined partner.
- Set monthly goals and check your progress with full diagnostic APFTs.

Units

- Train your graders on the movement/range of motion standards articulated in FM 7-22, to include the 2012 version that articulates the APFT standards.
- Ensure graders enforce these standards during the execution of the APFT so that CAP candidates have an accurate assessment on their current level of fitness.
- Film the pushup and sit-up events and visually instruct leaders on correct form (as required) so it meets standards.

Links

- Field Manual 7-22, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN30964-FM_7-22-001-WEB-4.pdf
- https://www.army.mil/acft/
- *Army Combat Fitness Test, Initial Operation Capability, 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2020*, https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/acft/acft_ioc.pdf

Psychometrics and Cognitive, Non-cognitive Assessment (CNCA). Practice taking timed conceptual assessments of any type to improve your ability to focus on one task. Develop your ability to concentrate on a specific mental task and resist the temptations to think about other things, such as checking your phone or a challenge you are experiencing at work. Ensure that you are well-rested, engaging in balanced nutrition, and hydrated before and during your attendance at CAP.

Leadership Reaction Exercise (LRE – LTC CAP and SMAP) and Strategic Leader Exercise (SLE – COL CAP). Practice taking timed assessments of any type to improve your ability to focus on one task. Ensure that you are well-rested, engaging in balanced nutrition, and hydrated before and during your attendance at CAP. Additionally, for the SLE, review Chapter 10, "Strategic Leadership," ADP 6-22.

Peer/Subordinate Assessment. CAP uses three different instruments to collect peer and subordinate assessments. The **Army Commander Evaluation Tool (ACET)** is the instrument for the CCAP and BCAP populations. The ACET is slightly different instrument for each population, so it is tailored to the unique demands and challenges of battalion- and brigade-level leadership. The **Army Leader Assessment Tool (ALAT)** is the instrument for branches in the CCAP and BCAP population that compete for only primary general staff and key billet positions, as well as for the ALAP, MCAP, and DCHAP populations. The **Enlisted Leader Evaluation Tool (ELET)** is the instrument for the SMAP population. All three of these instruments provide an opportunity for peers and subordinates to provide assessments about you based on observable leadership behaviors. All three instruments provide a more complete understanding of your capabilities relative to the demands of command and key positions from those who have unique insight into your leadership effectiveness. These behaviors are grouped by leader attributes and competencies found in FM 6-22, *Leader Development,* (as well as on the OER and NCOER support forms). You will also contribute a self-assessment. While these instruments – the ACET, ALAT, and ELET – focus on capturing positive aspects of your leadership, they also assess the frequency with which you engage in counterproductive leadership. We recommend:

Leaders

- Read FM 6-22, *Leader Development*. Reflect and assess your leadership in comparison to the Army Leadership Requirements Model (LRM). Think of experiences over the past several years that give insight into your strengths and developmental needs—maybe a critical decision, an important task you led or were a part of, or a significant personal interaction.
- Sincerely ask your peers and subordinates to tell you about your leadership strengths and developmental needs. Use the LRM to facilitate the conversation, if necessary. Do not just seek out peers and subordinates whom you perceive will provide positive feedback. Cast your net widely so you can get tough but useful feedback. This can help identify strengths and developmental needs that went unnoticed or that you have been reluctant to acknowledge. One technique is to ask subordinates at the end of a counseling session about what you can do personally to help improve their performance. It might invite a conversation that identifies that you are not, for example, communicating effectively or similarly not meeting their developmental needs.
- Initiate a Social Awareness & Influence Assessment (SAIA) at this link: https://aeas.army.mil/program/TokenAccess.aspx?code=7642xBD371B. The SAIA provides an opportunity to assess your self-awareness and ability to influence others. Social awareness is the process leaders follow to perceive, analyze, and evaluate social interactions. Self-awareness entails monitoring yourself, others, and situations. Influence is how leaders shape what others think and do. Leaders use influence to energize others and accomplish tasks through others. Both self-awareness and influence are essential skills for leaders to master. The assessment takes approximately ten minutes to complete. This assessment is for self-development only and your report is confidential. You own this feedback and can share it with whomever you think may assist with your development (e.g., a coach, counselor, trusted peer, etc.). You are not required to share this feedback with anyone.

Units

- Create a unit-level leader professional development program (LPD) that incorporates the LRM and counterproductive leadership. Potential strategies and plans are in FM 6-22, Chapter 2.
- Work with units across your installation to combine efforts and provide unbiased feedback and assessment of your officers.
- Set up an anonymous, developmental peer and subordinate feedback system in your unit and have your leaders take it at least yearly and

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following major training events. Ensure the chain of command does not have access to this data – for the program to be effective, all must know that the data will only be seen and given directly to the subjects by a confidential facilitator.

Written Communication. Written communication assessment is critical to ensure that leaders can concisely and effectively communicate intent, orders, guidance, and feedback. CAP assesses written communication using two instruments. The Written Communication Competence (WCC) instrument assesses a candidate's facility with English, including grammar, punctuation, and comprehension (i.e. ability to interpret intended meaning). For BCAP, other LTC CAP, and SMAP, the Argumentative Writing Exercise (AWE) assesses your ability to both formulate an argument and effectively communicate this argument to others; for CCAP and other COL CAP, the Strategic Writing Exercise (SWE) assesses the same qualities while also assessing a candidate's capacity for strategic thinking. We recommend the following preparation:

Leaders

- Read professional journal articles across a variety of disciplines. Identify best practices in organizing and communicating an effective argument. Seek out arguments that challenge your current thinking and think carefully about those arguments' construction. What was/wasn't persuasive? How did the author organize his or her evidence and analysis? What techniques did the author use to help you follow his or her logic?
- Assess your job-related writing using the written communication scoring rubric in this guide. Consider all job-related writing, including emails, to practice for the written communication assessment.
- Practice writing an argumentative essay monthly. Read a professional journal article for 45 minutes. As you read, take notes on the central thesis and lines of argument, paying careful attention to how the author uses evidence to make his or her argument. Practice identifying claims, conclusions, and hypotheses and consider how they develop from the author's use of evidence. Then, take 45 minutes to write your own argument in response: select one of the claims, conclusions, or hypotheses you've identified and EITHER support it using different evidence or logic than the original argument OR refute it using evidence and logic from within or outside of the article itself. After taking a break, evaluate your argumentative essay using the written communication scoring rubric in this guide.
- After practicing on your own, ask a strong writer to assess your writing using the written communication scoring rubric in this guide. Have them

pick a professional article, develop an argument for you to make, and then assess your work. Discuss areas to improve during the next iteration.

Units

- Develop a formal writing program that focuses on grammar and well-constructed arguments.
- Provide feedback on job-related writing. Identify effective writing as well as writing that needs development.
- Conduct an argumentative essay assessment/LPD session.
    - Assign a strong writer from your unit to select a professional article to read. Align the topic to your LDP.
    - Provide 45 minutes to your leaders to read, and then provide them a prompt to develop an argumentative essay over an additional time period.
    - Have candidates self-assess and then turn-in the essays to the strong writer, who will later provide an independent assessment using the written communication scoring rubric in this guide.
    - Discuss potential arguments as a group. Choose one or two arguments. For each, develop a thesis, lines of argumentation, and then discuss potential evidence and analysis that would support the thesis. Develop an outline that uses the discussion points.
    - Schedule a follow-up session where the strong writer provides several anonymized essays as examples for group discussion on what is and isn't effective in argumentative essays, and why.
    - Repeat regularly.

The Army Comprehensive Talent Interview (ACTI). The ACTI is a structured, behavior-based interview conducted by a panel of senior Army leaders. A behavior-based interview uses past behavior to project how someone will behave in the future; this contrasts with hypotheticals that are not necessarily grounded in past behavior. The interview is double blind, meaning that neither you nor the panel members see each other. Additionally, all information that the panel sees is anonymous – they only see your roster number. The panel will know nothing about your branch, past experiences, former units, etc. The interview process and questions are consistent across all candidates to ensure a fair experience. The panel assesses your verbal communication using the rubric included in this guide. The double blind interview technique focuses the panel on your verbal communication talents. Your non-verbal communication is not assessed. After reviewing all of the CAP assessment results and the interview, each voting panel member makes an independent determination on whether you are *Ready* or *Not Yet Ready*. Candidates will have thirty seconds after the panel moderator or panel member asks the question to formulate a response. At the conclusion of the thirty seconds, the person who asked the question will restate the question before asking for

a response. To help prepare for the verbal communication assessment that is part of the ACTI, we recommend:

Leaders

- Review the verbal communication rubric provided with this guide.
- Practice interviewing and answering behavior-based questions with another person. Use the rubric to assess whether you provide a complete answer (argument) and do so concisely. If helpful, you may use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to ensure you provide a complete response. Note that the STAR method is not required to provide an excellent response. Record all interviews so you have the ability to watch and self-assess. To focus solely on your verbal communication (as opposed to your verbal and non-verbal communication), either erect a screen or conduct the interview via phone or an online platform with the video muted.
- Ask for feedback on your verbal communication skills. Provide the rubric to colleagues and ask them to comment on your strengths and developmental needs for verbal communication.
- Create a plan to work on your development needs. Periodically ask those same colleagues (and others) for feedback on your progress. Review Chapter 7 in FM 6-22 which gives specific suggestions on how to improve your communication skills (paragraphs 7-33 through 7-39).

Units

- Develop an interview training plan.
  - Conduct mock interviews for leaders using behavior-based questions that explore leadership experiences (Note: The ACTI is not a knowledge-based quiz of doctrine or tactics).
  - Score the interviews using the verbal communication rubric in this guide.
  - Record these mock interviews and provide them to candidates so they can compare how the panel scored the interview versus their own self-assessment.
  - Go beyond scoring the interview's verbal communication by discussing the leadership lessons available from the interview conversation.
- Provide feedback on verbal communication regularly using standard meetings and interactions. Use the rubric to articulate strengths and development needs.
- Integrate behavior-based interviewing techniques for your assignment marketplace interviews.

Links

- FM 6-22, Leader Development, https://caccapl.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/web/repository/doctrine/fm-6-22.pdf
- Candidate STAR training video: https://talent.army.mil/ccap
- Individual and unit leadership development: https://www.capl.army.mil

SUGGESTED REFERENCES

Articles

"Reinventing the Leader Selection Process"
https://hbr.org/2020/11/reinventing-the-leader-selection-process

"Battalion Commanders Are the Seed Corn of the Army"
https://warontherocks.com/2019/12/battalion-commanders-are-the-seed-corn-of-the-army/

"The Army's NFL Combine: The Battalion Commander Assessment Program"
https://mwi.usma.edu/armys-nfl-combine-battalion-commander-assessment-program/

Podcasts

"The Battalion Commander Assessment Program Results Explained"
https://fromthegreennotebook.com/2021/01/21/season-2-ep-4-major-general-jp-mcgee-the-battalion-commander-assessment-program-results-explained/

"The CAP Experience: Preparing for CAP"
https://talent.army.mil/podcast/episode-1/

"The CAP Experience: Feedback, Reflection, and Army Coaching"
https://talent.army.mil/podcast/episode-2/

Videos

Battalion Commander Assessment Program (8 minutes):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TY8yRyhlYS4

Inaugural Battalion Commander Assessment Program Results (3 minutes):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMYfdnPTOJU

Paving the Way: The BCAP Experience (4 minutes)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svX_eFzrUS8

BCAP Documentary (30 minutes)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUWncCpSQF0

Articles from BCAP Candidates

"What I Learned from the Army's New Battalion Commander Assessment Program"
https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2020/02/10/what-i-learned-from-the-armys-new-battalion-commander-assessment-program/

"I Took Part in the Army's New Battalion Commander Assessment Program: Here's What I Learned"
https://mwi.usma.edu/took-part-armys-new-battalion-commander-assessment-program-heres-learned/

"The Hidden Benefit of the Army's New Commander Assessment Program"
https://fromthegreennotebook.com/2020/11/10/the-hidden-benefit-of-the-armys-new-commander-assessment-program/

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION RUBRIC

The Army assesses an officer's written communication during CAP. Part of the written communication assessment will involve officers constructing an essay in response to an article and prompt. Grader assess essays using the rubric outlined; there is only one difference between the LTC/CSM/GS-14 and COL/GS-15 rubrics, which is highlighted below. CAP will not release specific scores and weights for this assessment.

Substance:

A. Does the essay advance a compelling and clear thesis that answers the prompt?

B. Does the essay effectively incorporate evidence, logic, and reasoning that supports its claims?

C. Overall, does the essay demonstrate insight and/or originality?

D. (**COL/GS-15 CAP only**) Does the essay demonstrate comprehension of strategic issues and clear, effective deployment of strategic thinking?

Organization:

A. Does the essay employ an organizational pattern/structure that is coherent and systematically developed?

B. Are transitions between arguments/elements/paragraphs of the essay evident?

C. Does the essay end with a conclusion/statement that reinforces the thesis?

Style and Mechanics:

A. Does the essay demonstrate economy and clarity of language?

B. Does the essay demonstrate facility with conventional writing with respect to grammar and mechanics, to include spelling, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, etc.?

VERBAL COMMUNICATION RUBRIC

CAP includes the Army Comprehensive Talent Interview (ACTI), where a panel of senior Army leaders interviews candidates. The panel assesses a leader's verbal communication skills and overall readiness for command. Panel members will use the following rubric to assess each candidate's verbal communication. CAP will not release specific scores and weights for this assessment.

Key Behaviors	Ineffective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Exceptional
*Clearly communicates thoughts and ideas to others	Thoughts and ideas lack coherence to each other and are disorganized or random; difficult to follow answer or train of thought.	Thoughts and ideas are listed or ordered without clear structure; wandering at times.	Thoughts and ideas are connected.	Thoughts and ideas flow logically from one to another; building cohesive answers.
*Uses logic, relevant facts, and examples in dialogue; expresses well-organized ideas	Rationale for positions or courses of action are unclear, disorganized, or missing; points, decisions, and conclusions left unsupported.	Argument for positions or courses of action lack sufficient detail, relevance, or feasibility; points and conclusions supported with examples, which may or may not be pertinent.	Singular or limited argument made to support position or course of action; points and conclusions often supported with relevant examples, analogies, vignettes, etc.	Builds sound arguments for position or course of action; points and conclusions enhanced and/or clarified by germane examples, analogies, vignettes, etc.
*Avoids miscommunication; verifies shared understanding	Follow-up responses negate or contradict prior statements or arguments.	Follow-up responses repeat previous statements or arguments; misses opportunities to clarify and extend shared understanding.	Follow-up responses provide new insights and further clarity to earlier points.	Follow-up responses extend shared understanding by expounding upon previous statements and reframing ideas to better reach diverse audiences.
*Communicates articulately and with confidence	Verbal disfluencies and/or use of fillers (e.g., hmm, ah, huh, er, etc.) render the message ineffective. Speaks hesitantly or stutters, insecure in delivery of answer.	Verbal disfluencies and/or use of fillers (e.g., hmm, ah, huh, er, etc.) limit understanding and/or creditability. Stumbles in delivery.	Speaks with confidence and composure; message is understandable.	Articulate; speaks with confidence and enthusiasm, maintaining listener interest.

STAR Method

S - Situation   T - Task

A - Action   R - Result

Situation – Briefly describe the specific Situation you experienced. Seek relatively recent situations.

Task – Briefly describe the Task you needed to accomplish. It should be work-related.

Action – Describe the Action you took. If it was a team environment, it is important to describe your specific role and actions - describe what you, not the team, did.

Result – Describe the Results. How does the story end? Did you accomplish the goal?

Examples of Behavior-based Interview Questions

1. Describe a situation where your initial assumptions about a task turned out to be wrong.

2. Tell us about a leadership decision where you had to consider serious risks.

3. Describe a situation where you were in a leadership position and had to put your views aside to help your team complete an assignment.

4. Give us an example where your listening skills proved important to an outcome.

5. Most assignments are fast paced. Provide an example of when you were in a leadership position and managed to "get everything done" in a very busy time.

6. Tell us about a time when you set a goal to improve your professional performance.

7. Describe a time when were in a leadership position and you developed and implemented a vision.

8. Tell us what you have done recently to stay on top of professional trends and issues.

ARMY LEADERSHIP REQUIREMENTS MODEL (LRM), FM 6-22, *Leader Development*

BE

CHARACTER—
Army Values,
Empathy,
Warrior Ethos/
Service Ethos,
Discipline,
Humility

PRESENCE—
Military bearing/
Professional
bearing, Fitness,
Confidence,
Resilience

ATTRIBUTES

COMPETENCIES

LEADS—
Leads others,
Builds trust,
Extends influence,
Leads by example,
Communicates

INTELLECT—
Mental agility,
Judgment,
Innovation,
Interpersonal tact,
Expertise

DEVELOPS—
Prepares self,
Creates a positive
environment,
Develops others,
Stewards the profession

ACHIEVES—
Gets results: anticipates,
integrates tasks, roles,
resources, and priorities;
improves performance;
gives feedback;
executes; adapts

KNOW

DO

Counterproductive Leadership

ADP 6-22 defines counterproductive leadership as "the demonstration of leader behaviors that violate one or more of the Army's core leader competencies or Army Values, preventing a climate conducive to mission accomplishment" and states that it generally leaves organizations in a worse condition than when the leader arrived and has a long-term effect on morale and readiness. All leaders are susceptible to demonstrating counterproductive leadership, and so it is a continuum based on frequency. All leaders can have a bad day, and so it is not about whether someone has a bad day in the TOC, but whether every day in the TOC with that leader is a bad day.

There are multiple categories of behaviors that are counterproductive, some of which would fall into the "toxic" leadership classification, while others may be more benign but have the same effect and would fall into an "ineffective" leadership classification. The categories include:

- Abusive. Includes behaviors that involve a leader exceeding the boundaries of their authority by being abusive, cruel, or degrading others. Specific examples include, but are not limited to, bullying, berating others for mistakes, creating conflict, ridiculing others, domineering, showing little or no respect to others, insulting or belittling individuals, condescending or talking down to others, or retaliating for perceived slights or disagreements.
- Self-serving. Includes behaviors that result from self-centered motivations on the part of the leader, where they act in ways that seek primarily to accomplish their own goals and needs before those of others. Specific examples include, but are not limited to, displaying arrogance, lacking concern or empathy for others, taking credit for others' work, insisting on having their way, distorting information to favor own ideas, exaggerating accomplishments or abilities, putting own work and accomplishments ahead of others' and the mission, displaying narcissistic tendencies, or exhibiting a sense of entitlement.
- Erratic. Includes behaviors related to poor self-control or volatility that drive the leader to act erratically or unpredictably. Specific examples include, but are not limited to, blaming others, deflecting responsibility, losing temper at the slightest provocation, behaving inconsistently in words and actions, insecurity, or being unapproachable.
- Incompetence. Includes ineffective leadership behaviors that result from a lack of experience or willful neglect. Specific examples include, but are not limited to, unengaged leadership, being passive or reactionary, neglecting leadership responsibilities, displaying poor judgment, poorly motivating others, withholding encouragement, failing to clearly communicate expectations, or refusing to listen to subordinates.
- Corrupt. Includes behaviors that violate explicit Army standards, regulations, or policies. Specific examples include, but are not limited to, dishonesty, misusing government resources or time, creating a hostile work environment, EEO/SHARP violations, or violating UCMJ.

CAP APFT Push-up Event

CAP Computer-based Assessment Session

CAP Candidate View of ACTI

CAP Panel Members