PREDICTING LEADERSHIP:
West Point's Civil War Legacy

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Executive Summary

Good leadership enhances the collective activities of an organization while bad leadership causes harm. Therefore, the selection of leaders is important and various prediction methods have been used to select future commanders. For 175 years, graduates of West Point have been quantitatively ranked at the Academy and future promotions were largely determined by this ranking. In peacetime too few rise to general rank to sufficiently critique the selection method. In wartime there may be too many battlefield variables to adequately compare performance. The American Civil War provided a large number of commanders and reasonable comparability between combat situations. Extraordinary interest in the event and quantified college performance data allow *post hoc* analysis of performance at school and in combat. A method dubbed "Data Unearthing" is used to create data from vignettes about ranked generals. The results do not support a predictive relationship between the two ratings.

Prediction of leadership capability is of interest because leaders direct the future success or failure of businesses, non-profits, churches, clubs, sports, politics, and the armed forces. Each of these areas has leadership jobs that vary widely. The military has a particular and peculiar requirement for effective combat commanders during warfare. America's founding fathers understood the special and unique requirement for specifically educated and trained officers to lead the warriors that would protect and preserve the fledgling nation. To meet this need, Thomas Jefferson established the United States Military Academy, at West Point, in 1802.

One of the extraordinary leadership roles that West Point graduates assume is combat command. Other military jobs are important to victory but this paper will deal with battlefield performance. This restriction is important because experience shows few if any men or women are *universally* outstanding. Most leaders do not excel everywhere. In this essay we will be discussing prediction so it is necessary to focus on a circumscribed job function, as leadership jobs are many and varied. Non-combat positions will just be introduced to emphasize various points.

Civilian universities also prepare future leaders for other types of leadership positions but lessons learned from the following analysis of Civil War generals are transferrable to other domains, at least metaphorically. In both military and civilian areas, the reputation of the educational institution, academic achievement, sports letters, plus evaluations by peers and superiors combine to influence future advancement on the road to the top. Impressions of a person's worth are often forged while at college and his or her future career trajectory is established while an undergraduate student. By using independently derived data gathered on performance for each individual at sequential times it is possible to emulate a naturally occurring longitudinal experiment.

At West Point a formalized composite ranking, called General Order of Merit, that includes academics, athletics, and bearing was generated and published for each graduate, for 175 years, until 1977. These years included the American Civil War where an extraordinary number of generals was required — including those that were less auspicious performers at the Academy. The inclusion of research subjects that would normally be omitted by a selection criterion lends itself to a more unbiased statistical analysis. When a portion of a population is preselected out of a study, the results are biased because the sample variance is truncated.

Educational Accomplishment and Professional Competence

West Point's predetermined real-time quantitative rank of its alumni allows for a "post hoc simulated longitudinal analysis" of alumni after they led troops in combat. Each general's independently evaluated school performance can be related to historians' evaluations of future competence and incompetence as field commanders.

Longitudinal analyses usually requires following subjects through the passage of real time. In this situation, much of the experimenter's bias was minimized because a formally developed ranking is compared to actual independent assessments of performance in a distant past .

An advantage of this post hoc longitudinal analysis using the Civil War is the event occurred almost a century and a half ago. Time passage lends credence to the leadership evaluation because a historical perspective decreases political and personal defenses and criticisms. As a result there is reasonable agreement on the strengths and weaknesses of Civil War commanding generals' battlefield performances. The importance of having this time distance is apparent when, for example, one considers present-day evaluations of Republicans and Democrats by each party's political partisans.

Educational institutions generally tout their programs as preparatory for a future leader's success. An Illustration is a 2008 letter posted on the U. S. Military Academy's Web site where its Superintendent said the football team will reflect West Point's winning attitude of the school that "translates into victory on our nation's battlefields." Based upon this stated aim of victory, battlefield performance is a fair way to evaluate graduates.

If higher educational institutions' claims have merit their boasts should be borne out by subsequent performance of their alumni. Military leaders are especially subject to being evaluated on their unique mission where battles are won and lost. As the Academy has produced generals with a range of performance in combat we have an opportunity to compare their precursors to command. Notably, the Civil War provided sufficient numbers of generals to support statistical inferences.

Predicting and Evaluating Leadership

Winners and losers in combat and sport are evident, but there are sometimes extenuating circumstances. For example, Robert E. Lee's excellence in command was demonstrated in the many battles he led before meeting up with the indomitable Ulysses S. Grant. From the perspective of intense interest in the Civil War and time lapsed there is agreement on the superior relative worth of these two top commanders and many other generals who led troops in combat.

Evaluating leaders, however, is retrospective and selecting leaders prospective. Foretelling is based upon present knowledge to determine who can best lead in an uncertain future. To evaluate, a procedure will be shown that correlates generally accepted data used for prediction versus eventual performance after the fact. Fortunately, for our purposes herein, we know status at graduation remains unchanged after an alumnus has had the later opportunity to show his mettle.

Systematic prediction methods are based upon quantitative indicators and not qualitative assessments based on hunches or by relating similarities to past successful commanders. Wars are not won by clones of heroic figures as new battles are not fought under the same conditions. Character, aptitude, and ability are considered because the future is uncertain and leaders need to perform appropriately under new circumstances. Heroes of the past can give guidance to new officers but it is the person that determines how to use the resources available in the situation and social environment existing at their time.

Conventionally, we have a belief that college accomplishments predict future worth. Consider the present-day claims and counterclaims made about favorable and unfavorable politicians based upon their perceived intelligence and schools attended. Rhodes scholarships increase their allure. Military organizations had formalized rating of the conventional wisdom about school performance. This provides useful data that can support or refute commonly held beliefs about the underpinnings of leadership when a statistically viable situation arises. Because the Civil War required many officers that did not meet the cutoffs used in peacetime, a full range of West Point Academy performers is available that can be compared to actual performance on the battlefield.

General Order of Merit and Future Success

Believing success in future wars is related to cadet's performance at West Point, the Academy ranked graduates by a General Order of Merit,[1] from 1802 until 1977. The GOM integrated student's academic and athletic success, combined with impressions made on peers and regular officers. The ranking was instrumental in future promotions leading to general. If only a few generals are needed, a graduate's GOM predominated in influencing their career path. Selective inclusion results in little opportunity to compare the lesser rated cadets against career performance. Lower rated graduates systematically had their professional careers cut short. The American Civil War required so many generals on both sides that a substantial range of Academy ranking versus combat leadership can be evaluated.

The Civil War was fought with 359 generals who graduated from West Point. They served on both sides, 217 for the Union and 142 for the Confederacy. An extraordinary number of officers was required as victory was elusive for so long that normal promotion channels were circumvented. These similarly educated and trained men provide a unique opportunity to study combat leadership versus their achievement as cadets at the United States Military Academy.

With so many of its graduates being promoted to general and fighting on both sides in a war fought on similar terrain, comparisons can be made between the commanders. It is harder to compare accomplishment in World War II, for example, because the great campaigns were conducted worldwide on land, in the air, and at sea; in Atlantic and Pacific theaters; on the continents of Europe, Africa, and Asia; in jungles, deserts, plains, and forests. Success and failure of generals during the Civil War are less based upon extraneous variables than their leadership in battlefield command across similar habitat.

Many of the generals excelled and others stumbled in non-combat military and civilian endeavors, which was *unrelated* to their success or failure as warriors. The fact that leadership is *situation specific* is often overlooked in business and the military. Too often we return to the great man theory where one person was considered to be capable of leading everywhere. This viewpoint stemmed from Thomas Carlysle's definition of history as "nothing but the biographies of a few great men." Often not appreciated is Carlysle's vista of infallible leaders was based on divinely inspired royalty that had an unwavering entourage showing fidelity to absolute power. In reality, research has shown that combat colonels have different personality profiles than support colonels. Nevertheless, in practice, officers are shuttled back and forth between line and staff positions.

An element reflected in the GOM is a commonly held belief that college performance foretells leadership capability. To test this assumption, the Civil War provided an opportunity to compare *relative* school accomplishment of West Point graduates across-the-board with performance in leading combat operations. Whatever the intellectual requirements to enter the U. S. Military

Academy there is a relative achievement against cohorts measured while a cadet competed against similar peers. Thus, we are limited to rankings of individuals who chose to be prepared for warfare. Research with limited populations is not that unusual in social science studies. Much of what we know about human behavior was conducted on freshmen and sophomores in psychology courses.

The Civil War was long and bloody and pitted family members against each other. Fought on American soil it has fascinated schoolchildren and scholars for almost a century and a half. Historians have micro-studied conditions and battles extensively providing some consensus on the good, the bad, and the mediocre generals. One author, Michael Lanning,[2] had the boldness to rank a hundred Civil War events, including 31 generals and the president of the Confederacy who graduated West Point. These graduates form the basis for introducing a post hoc statistical analysis method that can be useful in many areas where anecdotes can be transformed to data.

Prediction

Scientific research is usually based upon hypotheses about predictive relationships. Statistical methods are then used to support or refute these educated guesses. An unfortunate fact of academic life is scholars usually report supportive studies, rather that unsupported relationships. We would be better informed if refuted commonly accepted erroneous beliefs were readily published. In this vein, the following analysis will challenge an elitist impression in society that equates college academic, athletic, and extracurricular accomplishment with impressions made on peers and superior officers while at school with leadership.

The Civil War provided reasonably valid data that ranks West Point performance against combat command performances that lends itself to post hoc analysis. Properly organized and transformed rankings and ratings can show there is no statistical relationship between leading troops in combat and Academy accomplishment. Other functions that officers perform may lend themself to academic, athletic, and social prowess, but the focus herein in on showing *leadership specificity. One-size-fits-all does not work when choosing a leader.*

Military academies are in the business of preparing young men and women to fight wars. Therefore, combat command is a fair comparison. Other organizations will need to determine relationships suitable for their best and brightest.

Civil War Legacy

A recent book by Michael Lee Lanning, *The Civil War 100*,[2] ranks events, causes, and people that influenced the societal transformations brought about by America's great cataclysm. Thirty-one of Lanning's vignettes deal with notable generals, serving both North and South, who attended West Point. Part of each thumbnail sketch was their graduation year from the U. S. Military Academy, position in the graduating class, and how many cadets graduated.

The selected Civil War generals provide useful illustrations of competence and incompetence in specific command situations. Leadership is hard to define, but from the perspective of almost a century and a half and over seventy thousand books, the military historian Lanning described 32 West Point graduates whom he felt left a lasting legacy. This group includes generals who excelled and others who failed as combat commanders.

Lanning provided a useful ranking to illustrate a post hoc statistical process. It is conceivable that other historians may disagree with his listing. The approach that will be explained can accommodate the relative merit inputs of others. It could be useful if Civil War buffs became motivated to evaluate all generals, one against the other. Then, new and more data can be readily fed into this analysis.

Lanning did not make a connection between relative performance at the Academy and combat leadership. Nonetheless, he consistently gave the data that motivated me to see if there was a relationship. Even though he did not use the ranking for his purpose, the author was including information from a cultural phenomenon that was formally dropped by West Point in 1977. One wonders if implied GOMs are still part of the promotion system in a less formal manner. Another case where score is supposedly not kept it some children's sports. Nevertheless, children who take part in un-scored sporting events know who won.

In any case, Lanning's work provides an opportunity to demonstrate the use of descriptive and mathematical statistics derived from anecdotes and wartime performance ranking to consolidate data and to show relationships.

DATA UNEARTHING

Data unearthing is coined to represent extracting meaning from unobtrusive information. It recognizes quantifiable facts that may be obscure and converts them to statistically analyzable forms. Unlike data mining,[3] it is not limited to large datasets. This article illustrate the following process:

- **Recognition that a Dataset exists,**
- **Organization of the data into a usable form,**
- **Generation of elucidating descriptive statistics,**
- **Mathematical support for observations, and**
- **Relating observations to a useful theory or hypothesis.**

An intimate knowledgeable of the field being considered is desirable for this type of analysis; which in this case the subject is leadership. Data unearthing is primarily a thinking and not a rote analytical process. One needs the ability to infer relationships from obscure data. One also needs an understanding of statistical concepts beyond the capability to perform rote mathematical calculations or to plug data unwaringly into sophisticated statistical analysis programs.

The following example makes use of a rare event that had useful data embedded in a series of vignettes about Civil War generals. The sheer enormousness of the conflict required activating many West Point graduates that had resigned their commission or would not have achieved such a high rank in normal times. Commanders were needed on both sides and it was unusual that they were trained at the same military academy. To meet the extraordinary demand for combat leaders, both sides reached down to the lower rated performers, whose career would have lagged in peacetime.

Organizing the Data

Lanning provided the names, side they fought on, and a vignette about each general. This prose presentation was organized into Table 1 that lists the ranking and name of each selectee, his year of graduation from West Point, their position in the graduating class *that is converted to a percentile,* and whether they fought for the North or South. Jefferson Davis is a unique case because he was President of the Confederacy and not a field officer. Of the remaining 31 combat commanders, 14 fought for the Confederacy and 17 fought for the Union. Of course, they all were once part of the U. S. Army and the southerners had to resign their commission.

The couple of inconsistencies in the data provided by Lanning, such as number of graduates, are maintained because they do not change the lessons of the following analysis. The number in Robert E. Lee's graduating class was not given so his classmate Joseph Johnson's was used. The rankings are also available from *General Cullum's Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy, 1802-1872.*[4] This tome has been reproduced by Google books.

Table 1. Civil War Generals who Graduated from West Point that are Cited in Lanning's Book

No.	Book Rank	Common Name(s)	Surname	Class of	Pos.	Class Size	Percentile	North/South
1	3	Ulysses Simpson	**Grant**	1843	21	39	46	Union
2	5	Robert Edward	**Lee**	1829	2	47	96	Confederate
3	6	William Tecumsch	**Sherman**	1840	6	42	86	Union
4	8	Philip Henry	**Sheridan**	1853	34	52	35	Union
5	9	Jefferson	**Davis**	1828	23	33	30	*CSA President*
6	11	George Henry	**Thomas**	1840	12	42	71	Union
7	13	James	**Longstreet**	1842	54	62	13	Confederate
8	17	Joseph Eggleston	**Johnston**	1829	13	47	72	Confederate
9	19	Jubal Anderson	**Early**	1837	18	50	64	Confederate
10	23	James Ewell Brown (J.E.B.)	**Stuart**	1854	13	46	72	Confederate
11	24	George Gordon	**Meade**	1835	19	56	66	Union
12	26	Ambrose Powell	**Hill**	1847	15	38	61	Confederate
13	33	Edmund Kirby	**Smith**	1845	19	37	49	Confederate
14	36	Thomas Johnathan "Stonewall"	**Jackson**	1846	17	59	71	Confederate
15	39	John	**Sedgwick**	1837	24	50	52	Union
16	43	Pierre Gustav Toutant	**Beauregard**	1838	2	45	96	Confederate
17	45	John Bell	**Hood**	1853	44	52	15	Confederate
18	48	Joseph	**Hooker**	1837	29	50	42	Union
19	51	George Brinton	**McClellan**	1846	2	59	97	Union
20	52	George Armstrong	**Custer**	1861	34	34	0	Union
21	55	Winfield Scott	**Hancock**	1844	18	25	28	Union
22	57	Ambrose Everett	**Burnside**	1847	18	38	53	Union
23	60	Braxton	**Bragg**	1837	5	50	90	Confederate
24	63	Henry Wagner	**Halleck**	1839	3	31	90	Union
25	64	James Harrison	**Wilson**	1860	6	41	85	Union
26	77	Joseph	**Wheeler**	1859	19	22	14	Confederate
27	80	Irwin	**McDowell**	1838	23	45	49	Union
28	85	Albert Sidney	**Johnston**	1826	8	41	80	Confederate
29	86	John	**Pope**	1842	17	**6**	70	Union
30	89	George	**Stoneman**	1846	33	59	44	Union
31	93	George Edward	**Pickett**	1846	59	59	0	Confederate
32	95	Hugh Judson	**Kilpatrick**	1861	17	45	62	Union

Extracting and sorting data from Table 1 provides material for Figure 1 that illustrates the graduation years of selected graduates, their percentile (*pct*), and wartime military affiliation. The distribution of graduating classes was spread out over 36 years. So, the general's ages ranged from their twenties through fifties. The 32 West Point generals recognized in Lanning's book came from nineteen classes over the years 1826 to 1861; where two classes produced four and seven classes produced two of those cited. Completing this distribution, ten classes provided only one future general considered sufficiently influential to make the list of 100. Thus, significant commanders were reasonably well distributed over 36 years of Academy classes. Obviously, they were all men.

Figure 1. Distribution of Generals Recognized in Lanning's Book

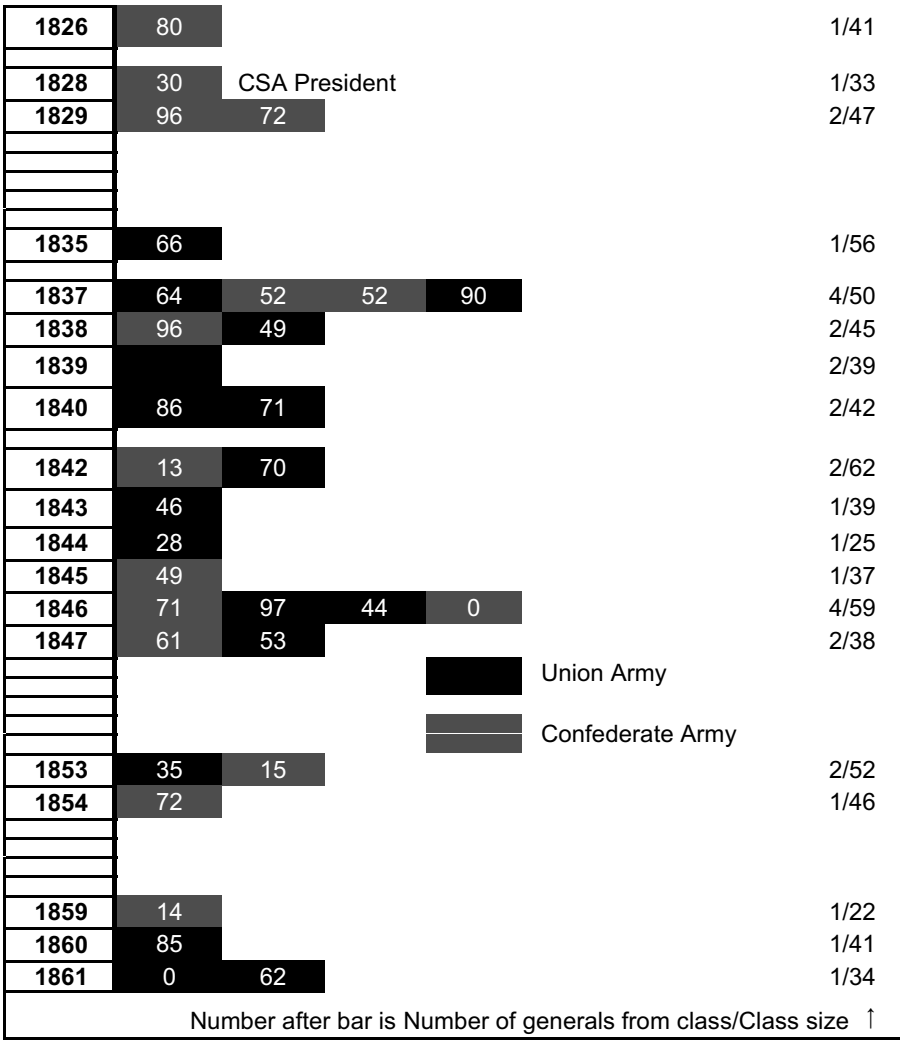
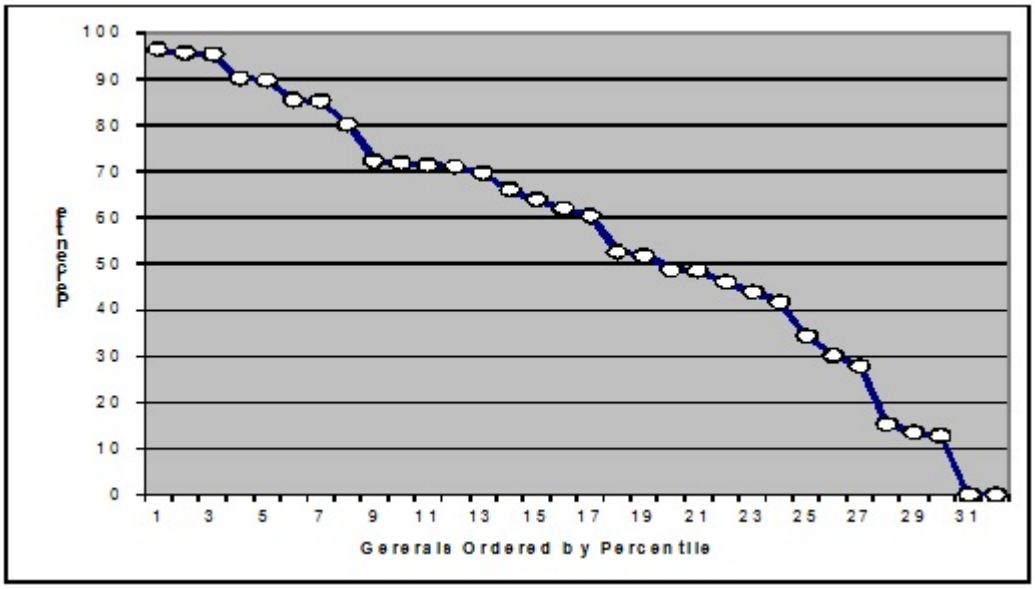


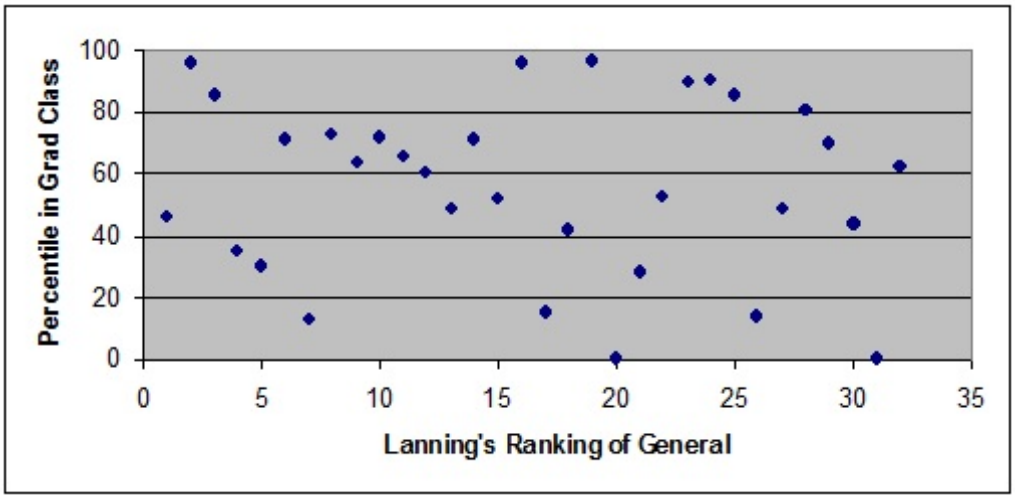
Figure 2 depicts the general's percentiles ranging from 97 (George Brinton McClelland) down to zero (George Armstrong Custer and George Edward Pickett). Robert Edward Lee, at percentile 96, outmaneuvered McClelland. Eventually, Ulysses Simpson Grant, with percentile 46, defeated Lee and accepted his unconditional surrender. Pickett's unfortunate charge of the center line at Gettysburg resulted from Lee's misjudgement and direct orders from James Longstreet, who graduated at percentile 13. Longstreet, however, was an accomplished second in command to Lee and Lanning described him as the best tactical commander on either side.

Figure 2.
Positions of Civil War Generals in Their West Point Graduating Class



Anecdotal stories about individual generals make a point that is insufficient to show a statistical pattern. Figure 3 shows the scatter plot of Lanning's ranking of the generals versus their graduation position. Judging by individual general's battlefield performance, there does not appear to be a relationship to their academy academic performance; at least for this select group that went to West Point before the Civil War. As combat leadership is an important function performed by military officers, prediction of competence in that specific function is a useful consideration. It also lets us consider one of many means of prediction used to promote leaders of hierarchical meritocractic organizations that is not just limited to the military.

Figure 3. Graduation Percentile Rating vs Lanning's Ranking of Civil War Generals



Descriptive and Mathematical Statistics

The above table and figures organize information that Lanning presented in prose. He did not draw any relationships between the academic data and future battlefield performance of the generals. Herein, the figures are recast into depictions that may clarify important relationships among variables.

Analysis of this sort is relatively easy with computer spreadsheets (I used Excel®). Sophisticated statistical packages are not needed (I use Minitab®). Once it is recognizes that possibly useful data is embedded in the presentation, it needs to be extracted, organized, and mathematically analyzed. Comparable statistics may need to be generated. For example, as there are various size classes, position in class and number of graduates can be compared by calculating a percentile. All other data in Table 1 is directly reproduced from the vignettes.

Figure 1 pictorially represents the distribution of classes that provided the selected generals. Except for showing a fairly broad distribution of graduation years there is little additional edification from the bar graph. The addition of number of graduates North and South and total, graduating class size, and percentiles busies up the chart and might not be desirable if the histogram was significantly informative to perform an analysis. There is little value to pointing out that it is bimodal, and calculating its range, mean, median, and modes; (which are incidentally 36 years, 1843.28, 1842.5, and 1837 & 1846, respectively). Beyond teaching concepts to a freshman statistic class there is little analytical meaning derived from to calculating these average numbers, *in this example*. The point is, being able to calculate a numerical statistic does not bestow upon it practical meaning.

Figure 2 depicts the distribution of graduation percentiles of the selected 32 West Point graduates. It shows the GOMs were reasonably distributed over the range. Figure 3 organized the data into a scatter diagram that shows little visible relationship between Lanning's rankings and graduation percentiles of the generals. As there is inadequate correlation (r = -0.117, p = 0.524) between ranking in Lanning's book and class rating the data does not lend itself to a useful regression equation. Nonetheless, the curve nicely illustrates that among the influential commanders there is a fairly uniform distribution from the 97th down to the 0th percentile (r = 0.982, p = 0.000).

The Civil War claimed the lives of over 615,000 soldiers on both sides. Of the many who lead them through this carnage, it appears that *some were the best but not the brightest.*

Analysis of the Data

The Civil War was an extraordinary event that because of its sheer prominence absorbed many West Pointers back into the service who had previously resigned their commission. If there were less consuming times the normal promotion program would have remained in place and classmates that did not make the promotion criteria would not have been part of the sample.

It is unusual to find a population that includes the full range of data. Often the theory or practice used for selection will assure that non-complying persons are omitted along the way. This contributes to biasing the final distribution in favor of the assessment criteria. With comprehensive data, this analysis challenges the conventional wisdom that college performance predicts competent combat leaders. The unfortunate result of much research is that it is plagued with self-fulfilling prophesy. Personal preference too often influences the questions asked and the research plan.

It is difficult to research leadership because there are so many variables. Bernard Bass, who authored *Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership*,[5] said "There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept." Abraham Lincoln

expected his leading generals to win battles and having done so to aggressively pursue the retreating enemy. Until he found Ulysses S. Grant (*pct*=46), he had tried Generals Irvin McDowell (*pct*=49), George McClellan (*pct*=97), Ambrose Burnside (*pct*=53), Joseph Hooker (*pct*=42), and George Meade (*pct*=66).

This analysis considered commanders directly participating in fighting the war. Results have limitations, so is necessary to understand assumptions underpinning the research. All jobs do not utilize the same attributes. There may be a relationship between academy performance and non-combat roles. Bernard Bass[6] reported combat officers had more charisma, rewarded performance, focused more on individuals, and intellectually stimulated more than combat support officers. For example, McClelland was excellent at logistics, training and organizing an army but was too cautious to effectively lead troops in combat. Having said that, high academic accomplishment does not preclude combat excellence, as illustrated by Robert E. Lee (*pct*=96).

Conversely, academic difficulty does not preclude outstanding combat leadership. For example, before his unfortunate demise at Little Big Horn, George Armstrong Custer was a bold and successful Civil War commander. He participated in most major battles. After a dismal academic and disciplinary record at West Point, he was made a general at 23. Although 11 horses were killed under him, he was only wounded once. Horsemanship was the only thing he excelled at while at the Academy. At the time of his graduation, he was still serving a detention.

Leadership Specificity and Leader Selection

Considering different needs, leaders should be selected for their demonstrated abilities to do the job at hand. This was something the leading American general in the Second World War understood. Peter Drucker[7] reported on effective leadership selection in this later war:

> When putting a man in as division commander during World War II, George Marshall always looked first at the nature of the assignment for the next 18 months or two years. To raise a division and train it is one assignment. To lead in combat is quite another. To take command of a division that has been badly mauled and restore its morale and fighting is another still.

This fundamental lesson is often ignored in the attempt to find quantitative ways to select leaders. Stephen Ambrose[8] credited success in the European Theater of Operations to assuring competence in command at all levels:

> Most of all, it was in North Africa that the U.S. Army gained invaluable experience, from the lowest private to the highest commander. Leaders emerged at the noncommissioned officer, junior officer, and general levels. *Incompetents were weeded out*, while men who would lead the drive in Europe were discovered—Eisenhower with his amazing ability to get men from different nations and traditions to pull together; Patton, with his swashbuckling style; and Bradley, quiet, competent, a "soldier's general." [Italics added]

Hogan and Kaiser[9] cite studies that managerial incompetence ranges from 30% to 75% in corporate life. Clearly leadership selection is a pressing subject and not everyone succeeds..

This analysis showed that we need to know more about predicting leadership. Unfortunately, there is too little data in this example to determine if academic achievement predicts success in adjutant management roles. A broad disclaimer about all forms of leadership cannot be made. McClelland was effective at administration and organizing but ineffective in combat. *Job requirements matter and have to be considered when selecting leaders.*

George Marshall knew this and evaluated the fit of the person for the job at hand. He and Dwight Eisenhower selected the best leaders to assist him in European campaigns. Knowing this, we have over half of out management positions staffed by incompetents. The knowledge is not new but our selection agents have not heeded what has been known and applied during World War II. As we may not yet be able to predict all leadership choices so we have to develop the fortitude to:

Cull Inadequate Managers Expeditiously

This analysis is limited to one military academy and a single war. The subjects were selected independently of the implied hypothesis that academic achievement would predict excellence in combat leadership. The sample was not randomly selected but Lanning's selection process was not influenced by this study, so there is no researcher induced selection bias. If he had any personal biases, they do not influence these conclusions.

Discussion

The lack of a relationship between school performance, as measured by the General Order of Merit, and ability to command an army in battle serves to remind us that popular selection criteria may not work. GOM is useful to illustrate the inadequacy of at least one popular theory for selecting leaders. The lack of predictability is illustrated in Figure 3 and supported by calculation. This being the case, inappropriate promotions can be made if school accomplishment is used as a gate.

Errors in appointment are understandable. Therefore, it behooves those who approve persons for positions need to be constantly monitoring and assessing performance while they are on the job. Abraham Lincoln illustrated this by replacing McDowell, McClellan, Burnside, Hooker, and Meade before he finally promoted Ulysses S. Grant. Circumstances drove Lincoln to replace commanders frequently in his search for competence. Perhaps because the war was in his backyard, so to speak, there was a sense of urgency that has not been consistently exhibited since World War II. In recent years boards, presidents, and the electorate have been remarkably tolerant of unsatisfactory incumbents in all areas, except for possibly professional sports.

Finally Lincoln had a general who could muster the superior human and material resources of the Union to defeat the until then better led Confederacy of Robert E. Lee. Determination, not academic or pre-war business acumen, served to motivate his men. Harry Levinson[10] described Grant's success:

> Consent by his followers constitutes much of the leader's power. He leads so long as he has followers. He has followers so long as he leads the group effectively toward solving their problem. In *A Stillness at Appomatox*, Bruce Catton describes with painful vividness the demoralized state of the Union armies in the middle of the American Civil War. As Grant took charge, his gradual tightening of controls communicated to the men that he meant business and that he really was going to fight a war. Through no one wanted to die in battle, the men did want to have the war over. If the only way to have it over was to do battle, and the leader proposed to do just that, enough of them were willing to follow him to put an end to the war.

Thus, Grant countered the reluctance of McClellan with purposefulness. His willing attributes were not reflected in his GOM nor his civilian endeavors between graduation and the war. His later performance as President of the United States has been debated.

McClellan has often been used to illustrate poor performance because he has been frequently assessed by historians. To use someone more current would be foolhardy because I have yet seen general agreement on more contemporary leaders. It seems fair to also mention his areas of exceptionally good performance. Lanning opened his vignette with: "In addition to being a brilliant organizer and administrator, George Brinton McClellan possessed strong personal magnetism that earned him the love and respect of his subordinates." Often impression management masks performance incompetence.

A post hoc method of statistical analysis was used to uncover relationships about leadership gleaned from the much studied American Civil War. From the perspective of the 21st century looking back at the 19th century event, it is possible to make statements about individuals without getting mired in personal defenses and politics. George B. McClellan area of competence and incompetence have been well covered and established by many historians.

As with contemporary failures, McClellan did not accept criticism and lashed out at critics, particularly President Lincoln. He went so far as to run for Commander in Chief in the 1864 presidential election. More recent failed leaders are no less self-aggrandizing. Their hubris is evidence from the many justification books written by ex-presidents, cabinet secretaries, retired generals, and derailed corporate executives.

One microcosm of the leadership prediction universe was addressed that cast doubt on the search for a single characteristic that predicts performance in all jobs, at all times, for every situation. The Civil War presented all the generals listed with the opportunity to show their mettle in similar wartime situations. Some excelled and others failed in the job of combat leader.

This article illustrates a post hoc analysis of a *naturally occurring* experimental design. It illustrated judicious use of organized data and descriptive statistics to tease out useful information from a well researched historical event.

Usually scholars present positive relationships between predictors and results. Academic careers are not usually built upon unsupported hypotheses. Nevertheless, I feel it is valuable to casts doubt on the search for a simple universal prediction variable, such as intelligence or conscientiousness, because when combat commanders are inadequate people die. The results in non-military organizations of poor leadership may not be fatal but, nonetheless, people suffer.

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