



Leadership Burnout

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What is ARMA leadership burnout?

This is a situation where one finds themselves in a position that they feel overworked, short-handed, stressed and are getting little pleasure in but feel duty bound to remain in their situation because their replacement alternatives seem to be less acceptable or they don't exist at all.

Have you or your colleagues been there, done that? You are not alone.

In small chapters this unfortunately is not an uncommon situation. ARMA chapters typically have 4 – 10 or more leadership volunteers each year. Depending on a chapter's bylaws, new officers are elected every year or two. It is not uncommon for former chapter board members to continue to work on a task or committee after their terms and eventually resume their board positions. Or they lurk in the background pulling the strings of their disciples.

How did you get there?

In baseball, a good hitter or pitcher will often win games with little help from their teammates. However, a winning team needs a good cast of members to win a championship. Some teams have won championships without any outstanding players.

In an organization like a local ARMA chapter, the situation is very much the same. An enthusiastic leader can handle many routine chapter tasks all by themselves and get a lot of pleasure at attaining success. However, the thrill will taper off over time. Without proper planning the leader may find themselves stuck in their role, believing that their replacements are either not forthcoming or are inadequate.

I don't think anyone really wants to be burnt out. It's not a sought after situation. In fact, someone who is experiencing burnout may be doing more harm than good for the chapter's future.

How to minimize burnout

The recruitment of board member replacements should be given a very high priority, perhaps higher than the program to attract new members. Current board members should always be on the lookout for members who show good potential for leadership roles.

Without a good dynamic leadership team, interest in chapter activities will wane and members will leave.

Solicit board trainees' / committee member from the membership. Include incentives like discounts for chapter events. Design a trainee job description that details the scope of the commitment, including time. Trainees should have the option of participating in all board meetings and decisions.

Board members want to be appreciated for their accomplishments. They should be formally recognized for their participation at a chapter event. Ideally, this will include some prize



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which does not have to have significant monetary value. The recognition ceremony will also encourage members to volunteer their services in the future.