I. INTRODUCTION

First, I’d like to introduce myself. My name is . . . , I am a (insert your favorite disciplinary association here) with the RAND Corporation. RAND is a nonprofit research organization that serves as a federally funded research and development center of OSD, the Air Force, and the Army.

Q1: Have you been told anything about why you are here today?

As part of our work for OSD, we are studying the accession and career progression of minority and female officers. This research is supporting an officer pipeline study being conducted by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness at the request of Mr. Perry. Our study team has already talked to the headquarters offices responsible for officer management policy in all the services. We are also interviewing officers who have sat on promotion boards to get their views.

Our purpose in talking to you today is to further develop our understanding of the development of officer careers and to get your views on what steps an officer must take to be competitive for promotion to O-5 and O-6. I’m going to be asking you a series of questions about training, assignments, milestones, evaluations, and so forth. While I’ll occasionally ask questions directed at eliciting straightforward pieces of information about your career, most of my questions
will try to elicit your opinions and observations of how the process works.

Your participation in this discussion is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, you may leave. Also, please feel free to not answer any questions that you are uncomfortable with. We will keep everything you say confidential. We will not keep a list of your names. I will take notes during our discussion, but I will not insert your name into the notes. The notes will not be shown to anyone outside of RAND. Our report will include only a general description of the people who participated from all the services and a summary of the discussions from which the identity and views of the participants cannot be inferred.

Q2: Before we get started, do you have any [further] questions about us, RAND, or the purpose of this discussion or project?

Q3: Please tell me the basic information about your current position: Rank, YOS, Occupation, Commission Source

Q4: Tell me also about your civilian educational background: degrees, majors, schools

II. BACKGROUND

A. Current information

Q1: Rank, YOS, Occupation, Commission Source

B. Other background information

Q1: Civilian Education: degrees, majors and schools

III. BECOMING AN OFFICER (10)

A. Motivations

Q1: How did you come to be an officer: circumstances and motivations

Q2: Are you from a military family

Q3: Did you intend to serve for a career, or get out when finished your initial enlistment
B. Accession

Q1: Did you have a particular career field in mind when you joined
Q2: Did you know what your career field would be when you joined
Q3: How well prepared for military service were you
Q4: Did you think you have received advantages/disadvantages due to your commission source

IV. FIRST YEARS (15)

A. OCS/OTS/TBS

Q1: What was XXX like for you: particular successes/difficulties
Q2: How well did you do in XXX
Q3: Did you know others who had difficulty getting through XXX? What kind of difficulties

B. Occupational choice

Q1: How did you choose your occupation
Q2: Is the occupation you received the one you wanted
Q3: Did you get any advice on which occupations were the best to choose

C. First duty assignment

Q1: What was your first duty assignment
Q2: Was it the one you wanted, were you able to exert any influence in the assignment process
Q3: Did you get advice on which assignments were best
Q4: How did you do in your first assignment
Q5: Do you consider this assignment to have been a good first assignment
D. Occupational schooling

Q1: When did you attend your first occupational school

Q2: Did you have any difficulty during the program, how did you do in the program

Q3: Did you know others who had difficulties, what type of difficulties

E. Remaining assignments in first couple of years

Q1: What was the next assignment you had after . . .

Q2: How did you get this assignment

Q3: How did you do in this assignment

Q4: Do you believe that this was a good assignment to have

Q5: During this period did you receive any promotions or get augmented: Was this ahead of your peers, on par with your peers, behind your peers

F. Mentors

Q1: Were there individuals whom you would consider to have acted as mentor during these early years?

Q2: What did they provide: information, access, influence

G. Finding stride

Q1: How hard was it for you to find your stride as an officer: hit the ground running or slow starter

Q2: When you look back on this period, how did being a woman/minority color your experience: preparedness, cultural dissonance, peer relationships, supervisory relationships
V. BEYOND INITIAL OBLIGATION

A. Decision

Q1: When did you decide to continue on beyond your initial obligation

Q2: To what extent did this decision reflect an assessment of your chances to remain until retirement

B. Assignments

Q1: What kind of assignments did you have in this intermediate period: command responsibilities, joint duty

Q2: How much of a say did you have in which assignments you received

Q3: What drove your choice of assignments

C. Performance reviews

Q1: Have your performance reviews accurately reflected your performance

Q2: How would you characterize your performance reviews

Q3: Have you ever felt that you were being judged on more than your competence on the job, were there any situations where race/gender appeared to affect your evaluation (negative/positive)

D. Schooling

Q1: What type of schooling have you completed: residence or correspondence

Q2: Did you have any difficulties completing these courses

E. Augmentation

Q1: When did you apply for/receive augmentation, was this early/late/on time with your peers
F. Promotions

Q1: When did you receive promotions during this period, were any promotions above or below zone
Q2: Have you been passed over for any promotions

G. Mentors

Q1: Were there individuals whom you would consider to have acted as mentor during these intermediate years?
Q2: What did they provide: information, access, influence
Q3: How was their mentoring different than mentors you had in your early years

VI. O-5 AND BEYOND

A. Intentions

Q1: Are you interested in attaining rank of LTC/COL/GEN, What do you think your chances are

B. Career management

Q1: What are you doing to insure that you will be competitive for promotion
Q2: What assignment would you like to receive next
Q3: To what degree have you/can you consciously managed your career
Q4: How did you know what would be good career moves

C. Model officer

Q1: What does the model officer look like: social/cultural background, economic background, educational background, military family tradition, source of commission, occupation, marital status, interests and hobbies, tastes in music/art/fashion.
Q2: To what degree have you conformed to this image or diverged from it

Q3: Has this helped/hurt your career

VII. RACE AND GENDER ISSUES

A. Incidents

Q1: Do you find yourself/others guarded in interactions with officers of different race/gender: what types of situations, how does it affect interactions

Q2: Have you ever been in a situation where a misunderstanding or misperception arose due to your or another's race/gender, how was it resolved

Q3: Have there been any situations with those under your command where a misunderstanding/misperception arose. . . . How did the situation get resolved

Q4: Have you observed any situations in other settings. . . .

B. Effect on career

Q1: Do you feel that your race/gender has affected any aspects of your career to date, the next stages of your career: decisions made, paths pursued, guidance received, ratings received

C. Does race/gender still matter?

Q1: Does race/gender still matter? Justify your answer in light of the observed differences in promotion and separation