

D. Description of Officer Career Management Systems of the Military Departments

General Observations

Both the OPA in 1947 and DOPMA in 1980 sought to increase standardization regarding personnel policies of the military services. While there may be more standardization now, many differences remain in the way the military services operate their personnel systems. Each seems driven by its own need for officers with differing skills and experience. This section addresses the officer career management system of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. The Air Force system is provided in the most detail to illustrate the many interrelated issues that underlay officer career management. For the other services, we provide shorter descriptions of their flow systems and the procedures used for the various personnel management functions.

Since World War II, all of the military services have used an “up-or-out” flow system, but some have used it more religiously than others. Each system also has been responsive to different challenges. The Army system has responded to dramatic shifts in size and composition of its officer corps and to the effect of a changing environment. The Navy system has responded to the concerns of sea duty and its inherent rotational problems and of keeping balance among the different line communities (air, surface, and submarine) and the other support communities. The Air Force system has focused on pilots, the problems associated with flight status, and perceived inequity of those not on flight status.

The officer management systems currently in use by the military services have been shaped and molded by dynamic interactions among changes in external requirements and controls, internal service needs and concerns, and a continued, overriding requirement to “get the job done” in varied circumstances. Certain factors and events created the current systems. The factor with perhaps the greatest effect has turned out to be the absence of a stable planning horizon and of a stable force for which to implement personnel policy. The decision after World War II to maintain a standing military was based principally upon the realization that mobilizations of the magnitude required for that war would not be feasible in the future. Reservations about a larger standing military became muted when hostilities erupted in Korea. From 1950 to the present, officer

management has been required to respond to dramatic and rapid changes in internal planning factors and external events that determined national security objectives.

The Effect of Instability. The Air Force¹ projected a total active end strength of 400,000 with an officer corps of 60,000 when it gained autonomy in 1947. During 1950 because of budgetary constraints it was required to involuntarily separate (RIF) some 5,000 officers before the North Korean attack on June 25. Within a year, it had doubled its officer corps to over 110,000. Though most planning changes have not been this dramatic, the cyclic nature of officer strength is apparent in Figure D.1.

Annual Air Force pilot production over the same period (Figure D.2) exhibits cycles with even greater change. These changes measure the underlying turmoil associated with ramping up or cutting down the required infrastructure for essential training programs in response to changes in national security needs and goals. Peaks and valleys in training production are often different from peaks and valleys in strength because of the long lead time required for pilot training.

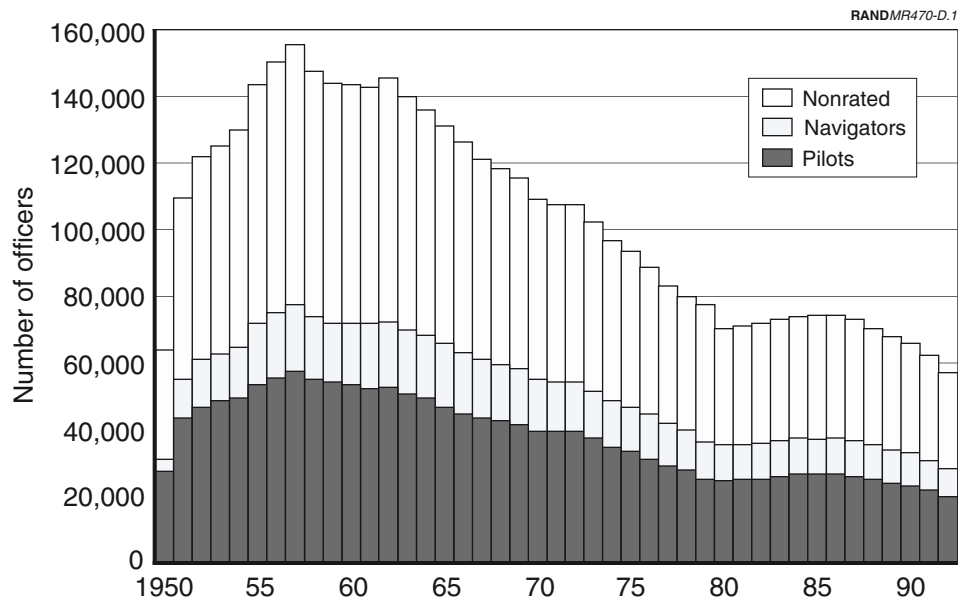


Figure D.1—Air Force Officer Strength 1950–1992

¹To provide consistency in this development, we will concentrate on data from a single service, comparing and contrasting the other services as necessary. The availability of primary sources such as *The USAF Personnel Plan, Volume II, Officer Structure (TOPLINE)*, June 6, 1975, and Vance O. Mitchell, *The First Generation: A Policy History of the Air Force Officer Corps, 1944–1973*, Office of Air Force History, 1991, make it convenient to deal primarily with the Air Force.

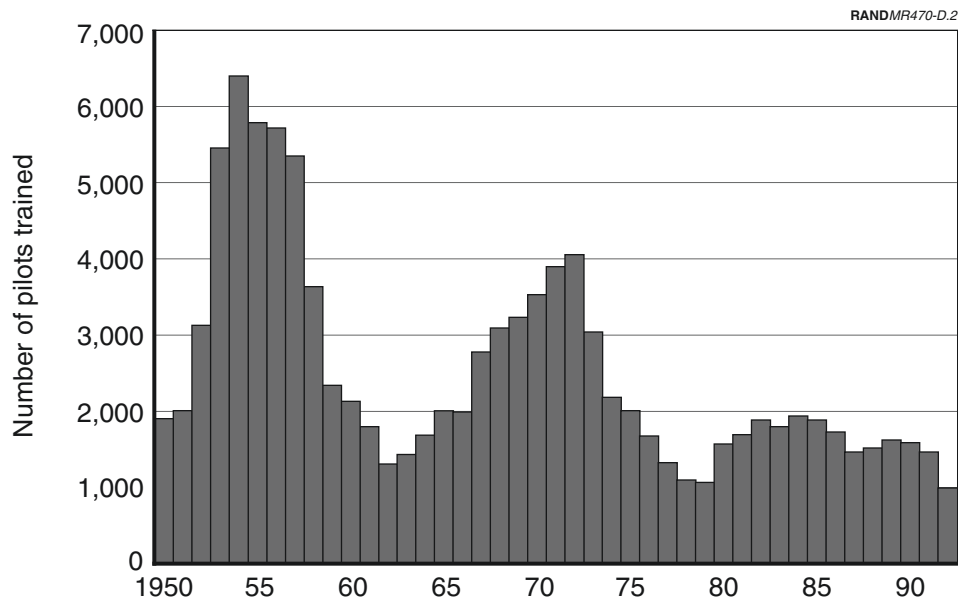


Figure D.2—Air Force Undergraduate Pilot Training 1950–1992

These cycles led the Air Force to develop a short-lead-time commissioning program, called Officer Training School (OTS), in the late 1950s to augment the traditional service academy² and ROTC commissioning programs. Its purpose was to provide flexibility so that planners could deal with dramatic changes in officer requirements. The OTS program was patterned on a successful Navy program. The Army also preceded the Air Force in developing similar short-term programs.

The capability to cope with the absence of a stable planning horizon is extremely important in evaluating any officer management system for two reasons. First of all, it is confirmed by historical experience. Secondly, it is precisely on this issue that DOPMA has been faulted. It was judged a failure due to its lack of flexibility to successfully manage either the officer growth of the early 1980s or the strength reductions later in that decade.³

At no time since well before World War II has there been a period of stable military size. Although the Cold War may have provided the fundamental framework for national policy for some 40 years (1948–1988), collateral or ancillary events have ensured that changes occur often enough in response to

²Although the Air Force Academy did not graduate its first class until 1959, up to 25 percent of each West Point and Annapolis class could opt for Air Force commissions throughout the 1950s.

³Rostker et al., *The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act of 1980*, op. cit., p. 29.

Cold War events to preclude stable planning periods of even 10 years duration. Referring again to Figure D.1, one can readily trace these factors by the timing of the officer end-strength fluctuations. The absolute decision to maintain forces in being following the Korean War is mitigated by the Eisenhower policy of massive retaliation in 1957, which led to force reductions (accomplished through sizable RIFs) from 1958 through 1961. The underlying turmoil during this period shows up in Figure D.2, where pilot production peaks in 1954 (a year after cessation of hostilities), drops slightly to projected steady-state levels for the next three years, then drops precipitously (almost 60 percent in two years) in 1958–1959 and continues to drop another 45 percent over the next three years (1960–1962). Starting in 1961, the Berlin Wall and the Cuban Missile Crisis yield slight temporary force increases followed by immediate reductions until the Southeast Asia buildup begins in 1966 and reaches its peak in 1968. Underlying this, Figure D.2 reveals a 10 year period (1963–1972) of steady increase in pilot production, resulting in a total increase of 267 percent.

The post-Vietnam drawdown, initiated under President Johnson in 1968 and continued throughout the Nixon period and into the Carter administration until 1978, provides the longest period without a trend reversal seen during the timeline depicted in Figure D.1. Again, Figure D.2 shows the turmoil associated with this period; pilot production was cut by almost 50 percent in just two years (1973–1974) to adjust to the force reductions. This represented the second sharpest drop in Air Force history, trailing only the Eisenhower cuts in the late 1950s, and was followed by a dark period of seriously low morale known as the “captain’s revolt” of 1977 through 1979, which represented the period of lowest voluntary retention ever for Air Force officers. Force reductions seem to be the most difficult trends to manage, especially when they become protracted or the cuts go very deep. Planners would universally prefer to deal with stable end strengths, allowing for slight growth if changes are necessary.

The Reagan buildup actually began for the Air Force under President Carter in 1978 in response to a host of external factors.⁴ Figure D.1 shows that growth during this period was the greatest since the Korean War, but the turmoil reflected by changing pilot production rates (Figure D.2) was far less than that of the buildup for Southeast Asia. Similarly, it is clear that the post–Cold War drawdown is not yet as large as the drawdown following Vietnam. Thus one can see that the force level changes in the 1980s, which confirmed DOPMA’s failure, were certainly no worse for the Air Force than corresponding changes that

⁴These included problems in North Korea, Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan, Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East, South and Central America, China and Taiwan, the Philippines, Japan, and elsewhere.

occurred in each of the decades defined by the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. DOPMA's steady-state prescriptions and its resultant lack of flexibility could have easily caused its failure in any decade since World War II.

The Effect of the Up-or-Out Policy Prescription. While both OPA and DOPMA supposedly imposed up-or-out constraints on military promotions, neither of these milestones in officer management ever had much effect on Air Force officer separations. When OPA (which constrained only the permanent promotions for regular officers) went into effect in 1947, 95 percent of Air Force line officers and 85 percent of its regular officers had less than five years commissioned service, so it did not provide a true constraint initially. The Air Force used a "fully qualified" promotion system for selection to permanent major and permanent lieutenant colonel until 1959, when constraints implemented under the Officer Grade Limitation Act (OGLA) of 1954 started to take effect. Even after these permanent promotions transitioned to a "best-qualified" system, generous promotion opportunities (85–95 percent) were used to preclude mandatory separations.

To understand the effect of OGLA on the Air Force, it is instructive to look at the 1954 Air Force officer experience distribution by years of service (Figure D.3). The "humps" created by the World War II and Korean War cohorts completely dominate the distribution. As a result Congress set the field-grade constraints for the Air Force at levels that could cope only with temporary promotions for the World War II hump but not with the hump from Korea. Though Congress promised to provide relief from these constraints when it was needed, such relief was piecemeal and inadequate to support both temporary promotions and the lenient permanent promotion system.

In 1961 when up-or-out provisions were extended to nonregular officers twice deferred for temporary major or lieutenant colonel, a significant crisis resulted, which was only resolved by implementing the continued captains' program. This allowed captains who were regarded as fully qualified for promotion, but who had not been selected because of OGLA constraints, to continue on active duty. Though the continuations were for four year periods, the intent always was to allow the continued officers to reach retirement eligibility. This program eventually was formally codified under DOPMA, and the Air Force used it regularly until post-Cold War drawdown RIFs were required.

The resulting effect of this policy was that the Air Force separated only officers who were regarded as truly not fully qualified for promotion. Those regarded as fully qualified, but deferred because of OGLA constraints, were given the opportunity to continue on active duty until retirement eligibility.

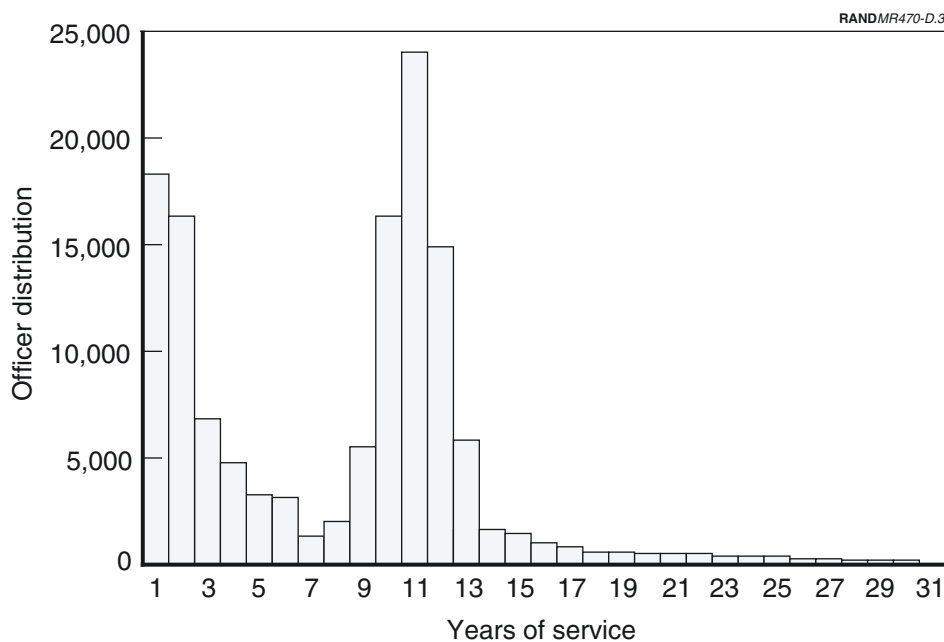


Figure D.3—Air Force Officer Distribution by Year of Service 1954

Unfortunately, disagreements over OGLA completely dominated Air Force personnel policy issues through two full decades in the 1960s and 1970s, and they drained significant levels of staff effort and generated continuing distrust within the Air Force of both Congress and Office of the Secretary of Defense.

The Army, in contrast, embraced the up-or-out policy provisions and aggressively used them to provide quality control within its officer corps. The Air Force separated only those clearly unqualified for promotion, however, and relied on mandatory retirement at the 20 year point for quality control of those who were deferred to major⁵ or failed augmentation to regular. The Navy (together with the Marine Corps) has historically had higher natural attrition among its company-grade officers and has taken a position between its sister services in pushing the “out” aspects of up-or-out policies.

The Effect of the Uniformity Policy Prescription. The implementation of DOPMA appears to have curtailed Air Force officer career tenure, especially among senior officers. The pre-DOPMA Air Force, for example, typically denied voluntary retirement requests from regular officers short of their OPA mandatory retirement points (except in unusual circumstances), though this

⁵Though tenure was shortened for those deferred to lieutenant colonel, no service ever separated these officers prior to retirement eligibility.

policy was relaxed somewhat in the 1960s and early 1970s to speed the exit of the World War II and Korean War humps, respectively. Perhaps even more significant, though, was the policy for selected general officers to serve multiple tours (sometimes three or four) as Major Air Commanders in positions generally seen as four star billets. The other services also had senior leaders (e.g., Douglas MacArthur) remain on active duty for far longer periods than are feasible under the 35 year tenure constraint imposed by DOPMA.

An interesting feature is the distinction apparent in the individual services' implementation of DOPMA legislation expressly designed to ensure uniformity. Service differences in proportions of officers by year of service result from pre- and post-DOPMA era retention rates.⁶ The data, highlighted in Figure D.4, show that the Air Force has the highest proportion of officers continuing to serve from year to year in the preretirement field-grade years (years of service 12 through 20), while the Navy has the lowest. The Army's aggressive approach to up-or-out is also evident in the large drop in proportion of officers continuing to serve from years of service 11 to 12.

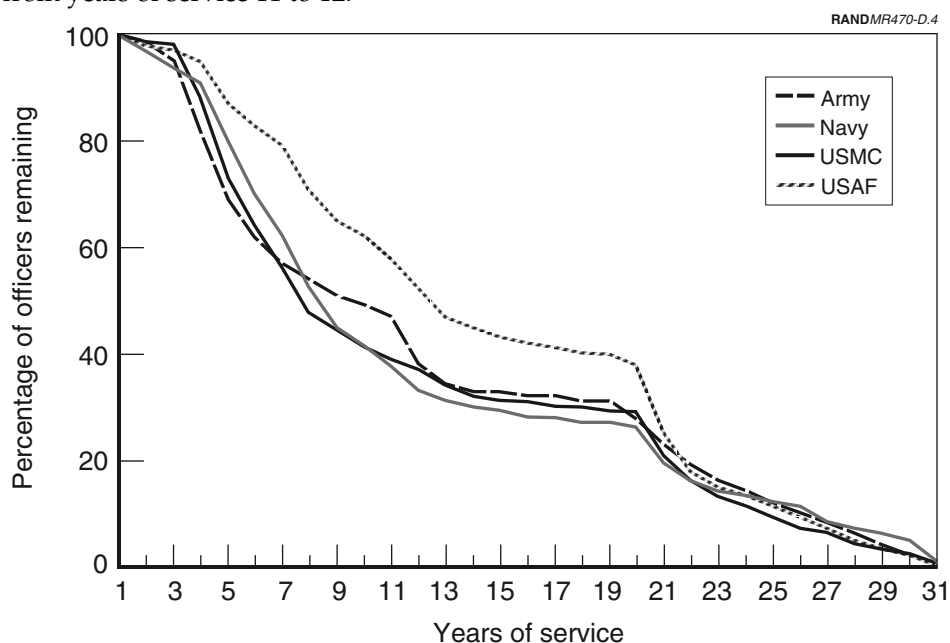


Figure D.4 —Proportion of Entering Officers Remaining at Each Year of Service

⁶These retention rates represent average behavior for line officers over the period from 1987 through 1989. Data are from the QFAX database maintained by the Defense Manpower Data Center. This period was selected because it provided the most recent data that were not corrupted by stop-loss programs implemented to support Operation Desert Shield/Storm or by voluntary separation programs supporting the current drawdown in forces.

Figures D.5 to D.7 examine this same data by career segment.⁷ In these figures, a career is divided into three segments of 10 years each. The figures now show the proportion of a group that remains at the end of each year and restarts the new career segment at 100 percent. This approach shows that Navy and Marine Corps retention in years of service 12 through 20 is as good as any service. The reason for the lower continuation of officers in these years in Figure D.4 is due to losses before 10 years of service.

As shown in Figures D.6 and D.7, officers in the Navy who reach 10 years of service stay at a greater rate beyond that than either Air Force or Army officers, both of whom stayed in higher proportions until 10 years. (The separation of Army officers between 11 and 12 years is again observable.) In the third segment of a career (Figure D.7), Navy and Army officers stay to 30 years more than Air Force or Marine Corps officers.

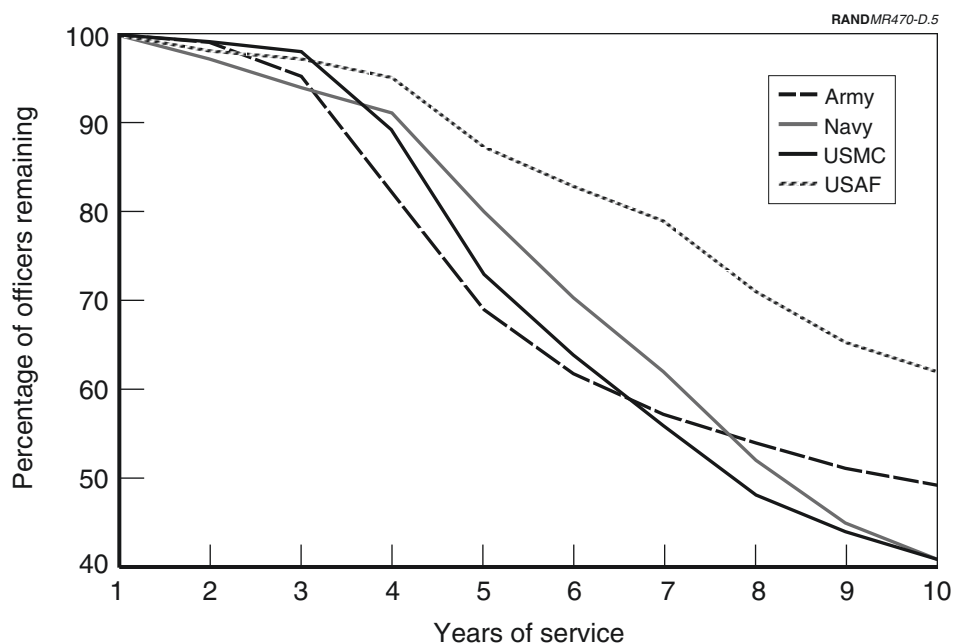


Figure D.5—Proportion of Entering Officers Remaining at the End of Each Year of Service in Career Segment 1

⁷To counter the scale compression occurring in the later years of service, it is useful to examine the same data rescaled to unity at years of service 1, 11, and 21.

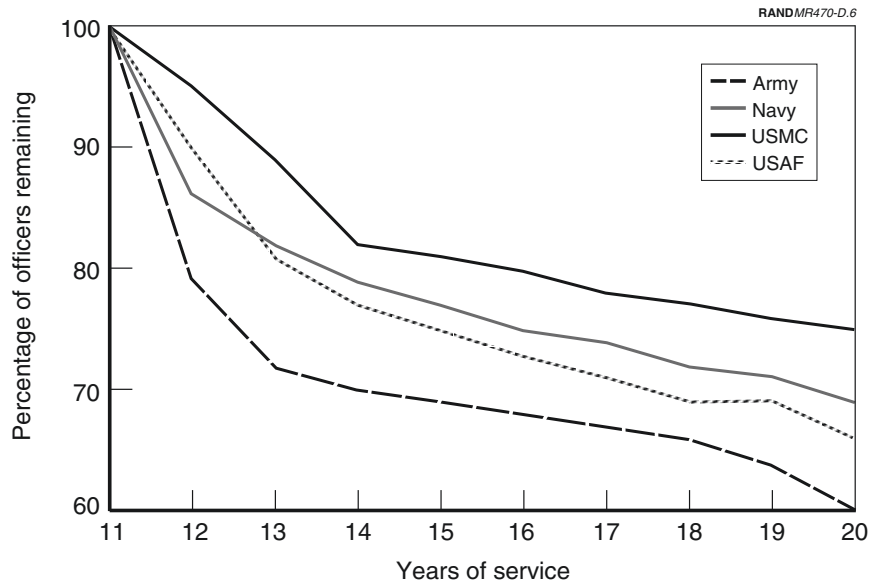


Figure D.6—Proportion of Officers Entering Career Segment 2 Remaining at the End of Each Year of Service

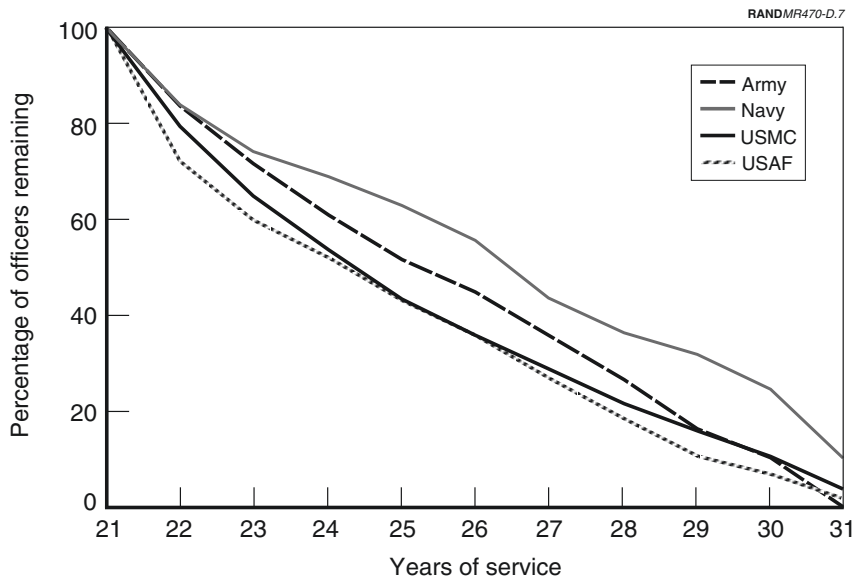


Figure D.7—Proportion of Officers Entering Career Segment 3 Remaining at the End of Each Year of Service

There are other useful comparisons that can be made from these and similar data, but the key point is that each service has retained its individuality under DOPMA, despite the explicit goal of uniformity. There are sensible reasons for this, and replacement management systems should provide at least this much flexibility.

Department of the Air Force

Introduction. The current Air Force officer management system incorporates factors derived from sometimes intense experiences, and its evolution has been shaped by several enduring issues. They include

- the precise role and appropriate proportions of flying and nonflying officers
- the absence of a stable, consistent planning horizon, causing a continual surge-RIF-surge-RIF wave pattern for manpower planners from World War II until the present
- reactive officer force structure levels, distributed (in terms of grade and experience) far from any equilibrium condition and creating unstable accession, promotion, and retention patterns
- an early concern over the professionalism and image of the officer corps
- prolonged uncertainty regarding the role of the Air Reserve Component (including the vast number of reserve officers serving on active duty)
- a growing distrust occasioned by recurrent perceived adversarial relationships with Congress or the DoD.

Career Flow Structure. Although the Air Force officer management system in its current form can best be classified as a nominal up-or-out system, its historical evolution has more closely resembled fill-then-cut. While the absence of a suitable planning horizon had a continuing effect on this, other factors such as flying/nonflying issues and use of Reserve officers also contributed significantly to the turbulent planning process, especially in the formative years. The resulting tendency has been for the Air Force to attempt to keep its officers (especially fliers) during any period in which cuts were not being forced upon it. This provided a hedge against further fluctuations that seemed to always occur. Full acceptance of the up-or-out concept is a relatively recent practice.

In the early years, entry into the Air Service or Air Corps literally meant becoming a pilot. When the Army officially recognized aviation as a military specialty in 1926, this notion was codified into laws that required that all general officers and flying unit commanders in the Air Corps had to be rated pilots. These laws also required that pilots compose at least 90 percent of all remaining Air Corps officers.⁸ Since external support (such as munitions and

⁸The Army Reorganization Act (1920) and the National Defense Act (1926).

supply) from other Army branches was essential for effective combat operations, the necessary functions were consolidated into the Army Air Forces (AAF) in 1941, and the laws were suspended in 1942 as part of the transition into World War II.⁹

The surge during World War II brought a capability to train 100,000 pilots per year (all of whom became officers after successful completion of this training). The same surge effort created an additional 159,000 nonrated line officers by 1945, accounting for over 40 percent of AAF officers at the height of the war effort.¹⁰ This surge was the result of a crash procurement effort, which can be regarded as the first (and largest) fill cycle in the evolution of Air Force officer management. Postwar planning problems would begin as early as 1944.

General Henry H. Arnold, Commanding General of the AAF, working with Theodore Von Karman, Director of its Scientific Advisory Group, on future weapons and requirements, developed a plan, submitted in 1944 to General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, for a postwar standing Air Force of 1,000,000 men (with at least 150,000 officers, based on wartime ratios). General Marshall, acutely aware of public aversion to a standing Army at the end of World War I, rejected the concept and directed a target force of 120,000 total for AAF planning. Though the AAF had scaled its requirement to 650,000 in May and to 550,000 in August, this impasse still existed when the war ended abruptly in August of 1945 (even optimistic planners had assumed two to three additional years would be required to mount a successful invasion of Japan), and demobilization began in earnest.¹¹

This introduced the initial effort to keep officers on board. Only 3,000 regular officers and 10,000 reserve and National Guard officers held commissions that retained peacetime significance (the remaining 360,000 officers in the AAF at war's end held temporary commissions, which expired six months after the end of hostilities). Largely through significant personal effort on the part of General Arnold and General Dwight D. Eisenhower, General Marshall's successor as Army Chief of Staff, the AAF retained over 40,000 officers when it passed through its minimum officer strength level in May 1947.¹² Poised on the brink of

⁹Mitchell, *The First Generation*, op. cit.

¹⁰The United States Air Force Statistical Digest indicates that there were 153,200 pilots and 69,000 other-rated personnel in addition to the 159,000 nonrated personnel on board in 1945. The other-rated category refers to nonpilot officers who performed such flight crew duties as observer, navigator, or bombardier. These duties were later consolidated in the navigator rating.

¹¹Mitchell, *The First Generation*, op. cit., pp. 12–20.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 55–66.

autonomy, AAF planners looked confidently toward a nominal active strength of 400,000 with some 60,000 officers.

OPA and Autonomy. The OPA of 1947 became law on August 10, 1947. One of its major provisions was to “change from a seniority to a competitive up-or-out promotion system.”¹³ Indeed it provided for regular officers twice deferred for promotion to major to be separated (at the 15th year of service) while those twice deferred to lieutenant colonel to be retired (at the 22d year). It further provided for mandatory retirement for majors (at 22 years), lieutenant colonels (at 28 years), and colonels (at 30 years).

The Air Force became an autonomous service on September 18, 1947, and a major rejoinder to the Army’s Corps system was to lump all officers (except medical personnel, lawyers, and chaplains) together as line officers for promotion purposes. At that time, 95 percent of its line officers and 85 percent of its regular officers had fewer than five years of actual commissioned service.¹⁴ OPA never really served as a constraint on the fledgling Air Force.

After a token effort at a best-qualified, permanent promotion system, the Air Force reverted to a fully qualified system for promotions to major and lieutenant colonel in 1951. From 1951 to 1958 over 13,000 officers were considered for permanent promotions to these grades under the provisions of OPA, and 396 (about 3 percent) were once deferred while 150 (about 1 percent) were twice deferred and actually separated or retired.¹⁵

As a further example of the historical tendency for the Air Force to keep its officers, requests for voluntary retirement from regular officers who were short of mandatory OPA retirement were normally denied except in unusual circumstances, such as the congressional exclusion for those who had served in both world wars.¹⁶ This policy continued until the World War II hump¹⁷ reached retirement eligibility in the 1960s. Even then some voluntary retirement

¹³Rostker et al., *The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act of 1980*, op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁴Some received credit for additional years as part of the “adjustments” associated with the regular officer selection processes of 1946.

¹⁵Mitchell, *The First Generation*, op. cit., p. 288.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 409–418.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 282–283, 453. The World War II hump continued to dominate the Air Force officer distribution throughout this period. This is illustrated by several facts: (1) In 1954, 50 percent of the officer force (regular and reserve) was officially clumped in the World War II cohorts from 1942 to 1945 (and this despite the fact that at war’s end many officers received additional official credit for years of service based on age or other experience); (2) by 1959, the hump contained over 54,000 officers, now with 14 to 17 years of service; (3) in 1963, over half of the pilots on active duty had received their wings during World War II.

requests (especially for regular pilots) were denied because of the war in Southeast Asia.

There were significant positive aspects in the OPA/autonomy era. The rules were clear and stability seemed to be just around the corner. The success of the Berlin Air Lift in 1948 bolstered morale and helped motivate 10,000 badly needed reserve officers to return voluntarily to active duty.

The Continuing Surge-RIF Saga. The first involuntary postwar RIF to hit the officer corps was the result of budgetary constraints. It occurred in 1949, just as the Soviet Union was exploding its first nuclear bomb four years ahead of existing intelligence estimates.¹⁸ Despite National Security Council recommendations to the contrary, the force reductions continued until North Koreans crossed the 38th parallel on June 25, 1950. The resulting Korean War surge doubled the size of the officer force in two years, but it was followed by another RIF in 1953–1954.

Plagued by retention problems and unable to train new pilots to meet required sustainment levels in the mid-1950s, the Air Force pushed for a series of retention initiatives to correct problems with inadequate operational facilities,¹⁹ family housing options,²⁰ and military compensation.²¹ The modest success of these initiatives was followed by more RIFs, resulting from major force reductions stretching over the period from 1957 to 1960. This experience suggested that retention initiatives could be meaningful only in a stable planning environment where those who are retained voluntarily do not have to fear being separated involuntarily for reasons that appear arbitrary and artificial to them. Although these RIFs affected reserve officers only, it is important to recognize that the regular officer quotas had been filled immediately after World War II. Thus, with the exception of a trickle of West Point graduates plus an additional augmentation in 1949, all postwar entries retained reserve commissions. The

¹⁸Ibid., p. 160.

¹⁹Most existing Air Force bases had been hurriedly constructed in response to World War II in locations where land and airspace were readily available. A quick check of the 1992 *USAF Almanac* reveals that of 64 installations in the Continental United States with operational flying missions in 1954, some 46 (73 percent) were activated between 1940 and 1945 in places like Del Rio, TX; Mountain Home, ID; Victorville, CA; and Dover, DE. Fourteen (22 percent) had been built by the Army Air Corps prior to World War II, while only three (3 percent) had been activated after Air Force autonomy in 1947 (and these were at Grand Forks, ND; Limestone, ME; and Wichita, KS).

²⁰Adequate housing was a problem everywhere after World War II, and initial efforts to provide government housing on or near Air Force installations had been only partially funded and had to be completed as self help projects. Even so, military family housing was available to less than 20 percent of those married officers requiring it, and the Wherry Housing authorization of 1949 never kept pace with the influx of officers for the Korean War. Mitchell, *The First Generation*, op. cit., pp. 383–385.

²¹Ibid., p. 386. Between 1939 and 1955 the Consumer Price Index doubled and industrial wages more than tripled, but military officers' pay increased by only 59 percent.

issue of the lack of legal status of reserve officers had significant consequences in such functions as promotions, retention, and development as well.

The 1960s initially brought small buildups when the Berlin Wall went up in 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred in 1962. This was followed in 1964 by another reduction, but no involuntary RIF, before the forces were required to surge again in response to events in Southeast Asia.²² The Southeast Asia surge continued throughout the 1960s, but a protracted reduction began in 1970 and continued until the Reagan buildup in the 1980s. That buildup ended in 1986, and the present drawdown, which began with the end of the Cold War in 1988, led to the resumption of an involuntary RIF for Air Force Officers for the first time since 1960.

Initiating Up-or-Out Policies. The up-or-out provisions of OPA had very little effect on the Air Force in the early years, since they provided no constraints initially and the Air Force relied on a “fully qualified” permanent promotion system to major and lieutenant colonel throughout the 1950s. Temporary promotions were unaffected by OPA, but they were constrained by the OGLA of 1954. It was not until the OGLA constraints started having a significant effect that the Air Force looked to promotion deferment as a means of forcing officers out of the service. By this point poor management of officer promotion and quality control issues on the part of the Air Force had combined with the unstable planning environment to generate an untenable situation.

As members of the World War II hump began to reach the 14 year point in 1956, they continued to be promoted to permanent major on a fully qualified basis. By 1958 it became clear that the OGLA restrictions were in direct conflict with this policy. Continuing it through 1959 would fill the OGLA limits completely with permanent grades and end temporary promotions in the field-grade ranks entirely. Since temporary promotions were the only ones available to reserve officers on active duty and provided the functional promotion system for regular officers as well, the crisis was legitimate.

Provisions for quality control in the officer force were developed during the war, formally codified after autonomy, and revised and streamlined during several periods of emphasis during the 1950s. Air Force commanders, however, never fully embraced these measures, and separations under them remained negligible despite the impending crisis. With promotion boards annually screening some

²²Ibid., p. 364.

15,000 officers, however, up-or-out policies eventually evolved as methods to achieve the necessary quality control.²³

The up-or-out provisions nominally began in 1959 when permanent promotions returned to a best-qualified system for major and lieutenant colonel.²⁴ They were not severely tested, however, until 1961 when the temporary promotion system was revised to embody separation provisions for officers twice deferred to temporary major or lieutenant colonel. Since regular officers were protected by OPA, however, these provisions applied only to active-duty reserve officers. This system, though, was flawed from the beginning because it relied on piecemeal congressional relief from OGLA in order to provide any promotions at all. The first of these, granted in 1959, was to expire in 1961. The 1961 boards, gambling that additional relief could be obtained from Congress, selected three times as many temporary majors as there were available billets and over four times as many temporary lieutenant colonels. By 1963 temporary boards were selecting numbers that were 10 times the available billets, and the experiment with up-or-out was abandoned. Reserve majors twice deferred for temporary lieutenant colonel were allowed to retire after 20 years as before, and the continued captains program was implemented, enabling a selected number of twice deferred reserve captains to continue on active duty with a 4 year contract. The only "out" provision remaining applied to twice deferred captains not selected for continuation, and this group was restricted to those individuals who clearly fell short of desired performance standards. The end result was that, wherever practical, those regarded as "fully qualified," but not selected, for promotion were offered the opportunity to continue.²⁵

This procedure was also applied to regular captains twice deferred for permanent promotion, and it was in fact formally codified in DOPMA. Though the proportion selected to continue fluctuated with demand, the continued captains program remained viable in the Air Force until the current post-Cold War drawdown was well under way. It becomes apparent that the Air Force has historically restricted the "out" provision of up-or-out conditions to apply subsequent to attaining retirement eligibility for anyone who appeared to be

²³Ibid., pp. 266–271. The year 1957 may have been typical. After two years of emphasis by General Nathan F. Twining, the Air Force Chief of Staff and then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 199 (of more than 120,000) officers were identified as substandard. Most remained on active duty with no additional action taken; 33 were demoted, and 14 were actually separated.

²⁴The 1959 permanent major's board promoted 97 percent of those eligible, and the permanent lieutenant colonel's board promoted 83 percent. These rates projected, based on two deferrals, to a 2 percent separation rate for majors and a 9 percent retirement rate for lieutenant colonels. They would clearly have little effect on the basic problem. A more realistic purpose probably was to appease Congress in order to obtain temporary relief from the OGLA ceilings. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 370–375.

fully qualified (at least for promotion to major). Moreover the system functioned so that those forced to retire at 20 years of service were either reserve officers or remained in the grade of major or below. Air Force concerns about officership and the professional nature of its officer corps dictated that these officers had failed a selection process for either promotion or augmentation (or both).²⁶

Officership Issues. The Air Force historically has had difficulty dealing with officership on two levels. At the fundamental level is a continuing debate regarding the relative roles for rated versus nonrated officers. At a level below this has been a recurring concern over a perceived need to improve the overall quality and professionalism of its officer corps. While the latter difficulty shares its source with the problem of establishing quantitative as well as qualitative measures of officer quality, the former difficulty arises as an essential element in the concept of air combat. Policy decisions during the transition to Air Force autonomy left the two issues inextricably intertwined for several decades.

The Debate over Nonrated Officers. General Arnold had clearly articulated the contribution of and requirement for nonrated officers during World War II. The Air Force deliberately rejected the Army's corps concept in favor of what it called the team concept when it excluded from line officer designation only those (e.g., doctors, lawyers, chaplains) felt not to belong. Yet there still persisted the notion that the combat arm of any Air Force consisted entirely of aviators who held aeronautical ratings. This created dual-track decision processes; the official policy decision process adamantly insisted that nonrated and rated were all team members, and no one would receive preferential treatment, while the underlying reality always seemed to yield policy decisions that stressed the importance of pilots in particular and rated officers in general over nonaviators. All officers were not created equal, and actual, if not policy, management of them would be different. There is significant evidence to support this perception, even beyond the fact that it had been codified into law by Congress in the National Defense Act of 1926. West Point graduates, for example, could enter neither the Air Service nor the Air Corps without first successfully completing pilot training. Those who were eliminated were reassigned to other branches of the Army, where they presumably could make a greater contribution than remaining nonrated in the Air Corps. General Arnold twice attempted to change this rule to enable Military Academy graduates to enter the AAF as nonrated regular

²⁶The period of continuation has remained unspecified under all of the continued captains programs, but the intent has always been to ensure retirement eligibility. The only DOPMA constraint was that captains could not be continued beyond 20 years of total active federal *commissioned* service (TAFCS). It is also worth noting that regular commissions were constrained in a manner similar to grade limitations. Thus, failure for selection for a regular commission usually meant failure for promotion to major or lieutenant colonel as well.

officers. The first request was never acted upon during wartime, and the second, made after the war's end, was expressly denied by General Eisenhower.²⁷

Although fully 40 percent of line officers in the AAF at the height of the war effort were not rated and postwar studies indicated that only 38 percent of essential line officer billets actually required rated expertise, a 70 percent proportion was arbitrarily chosen at war's end as the rated requirement for the officer corps of the new Air Force. This *70-30 ratio*, as it was called, would continue to affect the Air Force for a significant number of years, even though it could never be justified and was soon discredited. At least the process that confirmed the 70-30 ratio canonized for the first time a positive requirement for nonrated officers in the AAF and, also for the first time, established their qualification to command certain types of units or installations.²⁸

The 70-30 ratio was eventually discredited in the budgetary process. In response to congressional concern, the AAF acknowledged in 1947 that the only acceptable approach to determining rated officer needs was to validate rated requirements billet by billet. The 70-30 effect, however, would be apparent in the distribution of rated officers among Air Force leadership for a significant number of years. This effect was amplified by intentional inequality for nonrated officers in certain operational commands and poor personnel management policies for nonrated officers in critical technical skills.²⁹ Thus, when it became time to implement OPA in 1948, the newly autonomous Air Force found itself with less than 20,000 regular officers, over 80 percent of whom were rated.

To fill the permanent field-grade billets specified in OPA required 8,000 officers with between 15 and 30 years of service. The Air Force, at the end of 1947, had only 1,200 regular officers on active duty with that much service. The solution was the "one shot" promotion program of 1948.³⁰ This program provided a one-time opportunity for regular officers to be promoted to permanent grades well in advance of the corresponding years of service specified in OPA. The officers selected for one-shot promotions dominated Air Force senior leadership for over a quarter of a century. And the regular officer mix and selection rules ensured that almost all of them were rated.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 14, 26–27.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 30, 55–64.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 131–142. The Strategic Air Command deliberately drove out almost a third of its nonrated officers in a single fiscal year, 1947, and the acknowledged mismanagement of scientifically qualified officers in the postwar period led to the creation of the Air Research and Development Command in 1950.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 82–93.

The end result has been that the Air Force, like the Air Corps and AAF before it, has always relied on rated officers to provide its senior leadership as well as the professional core of its officer corps.

Quality and Professionalism in the Air Force Officer Corps. The Air Force has always been concerned about officership and professionalism in its officer corps. Though it is difficult to distinguish between concern generated by the an actual lack of quality and concern generated by the cosmetics of coping with potential external perceptions of an inadequate professional image, it is clear that the concern was real, and at least for a period of time, policy decisions indicate that the Air Force was genuinely worried that its officer corps did not measure up to required standards. A major source for this concern apparently developed from the disparity the Air Force perceived between desired and actual educational achievements of its officers. This problem originated with officer accession programs developed to meet wartime needs for pilots, and it forced the Air Force eventually to face distinctions between officership and aviator skills.

The proportion of regular officers with college degrees, for example, dropped from 78 percent in 1946 to 35 percent in 1948. This was the direct result of postwar policy decisions that ensured that pilots received the vast majority of regular commissions coupled with the fact that all nonregular pilots trained during the war were accessed via an Aviation Cadet program with no formal education prerequisites. The corresponding proportions for the Army and Navy were 63 percent and 75 percent, respectively, and their proportion with no college whatsoever was only 10 percent compared with 23 percent for the Air Force. Another factor that clouded the image for the Air Force was that the proportion among lieutenants was much worse, and these represented over one-half of the regular officers before the one-shot promotions were awarded.³¹

Several policy decisions exhibit the concern felt by the Air Force regarding its perceived education shortfalls. In August of 1948, for example, an annual production rate of 12,500 new officers was established as a goal for the newly reinstated Air Force ROTC (AFROTC) program.³² It was felt that AFROTC was the only available source that could produce college graduates in appreciable

³¹Ibid., pp. 92–97. Though there was a nominal requirement for aviation cadets to have a high school diploma, those who successfully completed the written examinations could easily have the requirement waived, since passing the exams provided de facto evidence that they possessed adequate achievement and aptitude levels. A random sample of lieutenants competing for regular commissions in the 1948 augmentation showed that 5 percent were college graduates and 41 percent had no college at all.

³²Ibid., pp. 105–106. The Air Corps had terminated its ROTC program in 1933 because it felt it had no use for an accession program that produced nonrated officers; it was not reinstated until 1946.

numbers, and this figure represented 85 percent of all active and reserve component requirements. The lack of success in getting this program implemented would only fuel the lack-of-quality issue over the next few years, however. Their share of the West Point class of 1947 was increased to 200 of approximately 500 total graduates (51 of whom went to nonrated billets for the first time in history), and the Army agreed to continue to provide 40 percent of future West Point classes to the Air Force.³³

A related issue was the youth of the officer corps during this period. Many were commissioned as teenagers, and the one-shot promotions increased their rank well beyond the levels normally corresponding to their actual years of experience. Thus, the Air Force had to deal with prevailing perceptions that they were inexperienced, immature, and irresponsible as well as young. This perception was much more pronounced as applied to rated officers, since most nonrated officers were now being commissioned through Officer Candidate School (OCS), which took in highly qualified enlisted personnel and trained them to become officers. These individuals possessed the experience and maturity that others might lack; indeed half of them were college graduates. Their number (about 500 annually), like those of the West Pointers, was too small to have a rapid effect, so two additional policy decisions were implemented in 1948 to assist in the transition to a fundamental reliance on AFROTC. The first of these was to open OCS to qualified civilians with college degrees, and the second was to increase the proportion of college graduates entering the Aviation Cadet Program. Thus, recruiting teams were sent to college campuses throughout the country to implement these policy decisions. The first effort was an unqualified success, inasmuch as over two-thirds of officer candidates were accessed as civilians by 1950 and most had college degrees. The second was a complete failure, inasmuch as only two percent of those commissioned via aviation cadets in 1948 and 1949 had college degrees.³⁴

³³Ibid., pp. 98–114. Their effort to negotiate a similar arrangement for Annapolis graduates (which numbered about 1,000 per year) met with considerable resistance. First the Navy reneged on an agreement to allow 7 percent of the class of 1948 to volunteer to go Air Force, and then it refused to negotiate further until a compromise was directed by the Service Academy Board, an inter-service panel empowered by Secretary of Defense James Forrestal. The compromise provided that up to 25 percent of each West Point and Annapolis class could opt to transfer to the Air Force. In an interesting bracket of the 70-30 ratio, the Air Force wanted 83 percent of these officers to be qualified for flying training, while the Army insisted that this proportion not exceed 63 percent. The Navy, which had its own flight training programs to fill, held out for 50 percent. From 1950, when the agreement went into effect, until 1959, when the first class graduated from the Air Force Academy, some 3200 service academy graduates received Air Force commissions.

³⁴The policy of accepting civilians into OTS was discontinued in early 1951, however, when large numbers of college graduates were enlisting in the Air Force to escape the draft, thus ensuring adequate numbers of qualified military candidates to meet OCS quotas.

The propensity for qualified college graduates to opt for OCS and nonrated duties while the principal commissioning program for rated officers continued to attract only lower academic achievers would remain a major concern for the Air Force. This same propensity was a major factor in the failure of the effort to make ROTC the primary commissioning source for all officers. The AFROTC program had been terminated by the Air Corps in 1933, and it was not reinstated until 1946. The termination of wartime emergency conditions meant that ROTC graduates, like all reserve officers, could be called to active duty only voluntarily. The result was a meager response from the first two AFROTC classes; 125 of 2,200 AFROTC graduates selected active duty in 1948, and 650 of 3,300 made that choice in 1949. Moreover, an Air Force study of these classes indicated that no more than 10 percent of the graduates were interested in entering flying training programs.³⁵ The return to wartime emergency status for the Korean War would resolve the former problem, but difficulties in using AFROTC as an accession source for rated officers would prove remarkably persistent. In the Korean War years of 1951 through 1953 only 15.5 percent of 24,500 AFROTC graduates volunteered for flying training compared with an explicit Air Force goal of 60 percent.³⁶ This problem generated serious doubts regarding the officership and professional dedication of the individuals who refused to enter flying training and led, in turn, to wartime policy decisions that would further exacerbate officer quality and professionalism issues.

In order to meet the Korean War needs for fliers, the Air Force was forced to increase its supply of Aviation Cadet Program candidates. Recent age and educational requirements (which had been imposed specifically to counter the problems of perceived immaturity and inexperience) were rescinded, and minimum test score requirements were reduced significantly. It also recalled (some voluntarily, but many involuntarily) to active duty a large number of aviators who had been trained during World War II.³⁷

While the Air Force acknowledged that there was a distinction between aviator skills and officer skills, it recognized that both were required to enable its officers to make accurate decisions regarding the dramatic technological developments and employment tactics that defined modern airpower. Aviator skills were absolutely necessary in this effort, but it was rapidly becoming apparent that they were not sufficient to provide the knowledge and experience required for

³⁵Mitchell, *The First Generation*, op. cit., pp. 95–104, 107–109.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 228–230. The breakout was 2,400 of 16,400 (14.6 percent) in 1951 and 1952, while 1,400 of 8,100 (17.3 percent) volunteered in 1953.

³⁷*The USAF Personnel Plan*, op. cit., Annex A, p. A-3. The total number of officers recalled exceeded 63,000. While most, indeed possibly all, of these may be assumed to have been rated, the exact proportion was not preserved. Mitchell, *The First Generation*, op. cit., pp. 168–172, 204–206.

future leadership positions. Air Force leaders knew that they required a reliable source to provide sufficient numbers of individuals with the background necessary to develop requisite officer skills and technical knowledge in addition to a thorough understanding of air combat. They had service academy graduates and had implemented baccalaureate programs through the Air Force Institute of Technology to educate selected aviators, but the number of qualified people they produced could not nearly match the projected requirements for staff and supervisory positions now required in far greater proportions than ever before.

The Air Force implemented several policy options to deal directly with its perceived deficiencies in quality and professionalism. These included the efforts to increase the numbers of baccalaureate degree holders among its officers (e. g., obtaining a larger share of service academy graduates, attempts to increase reliance on the AFROTC program as an officer source, and various active-duty education programs) as well as several quality screening programs to review overall officer quality and to ground subpar aviators in the proficiency flying programs.³⁸ Most of these efforts were numerically negligible, however, in a officer corps that averaged over 130,000 (with just over 50 percent rated) over the period in question.³⁹

A qualitative policy to maintain consistency and stability in its very senior leadership may have been more beneficial in the long run. Many senior Air Force generals held multiple major air command (MAJCOM) command positions during that period. General Curtis E. Lemay, for example, commanded the U.S. Air Forces in Europe in 1947–1948 before taking over Strategic Air Command (SAC). After commanding SAC for nearly nine years, he served as Vice Chief of Staff for four years and finally Chief of Staff for three and a half, before retiring in 1965. He accumulated over 17 years in very senior leadership positions in the process, a circumstance that would be rare indeed under current policies where MAJCOM commanders typically retire after a single tour at the four-star level unless immediately selected to become the Chief of Staff. General Lemay established remarkable standards for professionalism in SAC and then challenged other officers to meet the same standards. Other four-star generals who served multiple tours as MAJCOM commanders during the 1950s, without

³⁸Mitchell, *The First Generation*, op. cit., pp. 266–271, 337–342.

³⁹From the Korean buildup in 1951 until the World War II “hump” was completely gone in 1966, officer strength averaged 131,500, with a high of 142,073 in 1956 and a low of 107,099 in 1951. The average proportion of rated officers was 52.3 percent, with a high of 55.9 percent in 1958 and a low of 47.2 percent in 1952. The proportion of pilots averaged 38.5 percent, with a high of 41.4 percent in 1960 and a low of 34.2 percent in 1966. *The USAF Personnel Plan*, op. cit., pp. A-10, A-11.

becoming Chief of Staff, include Earle E. Partridge, Laurence S. Kuter, Otto P. Weyland, and John K. Cannon.⁴⁰

As a result of its prolonged anxiety over officer quality and professionalism, the Air Force eventually took action to ensure that only college graduates could become commissioned officers. Though several factors helped to speed the transition to a college educated force, a major element was the implementation of up-or-out policies for temporary promotions of reserve officers to field-grade ranks. As documented earlier, the OGLA-grade constraints combined with Air Force mismanagement of permanent promotions created dramatic problems in temporary promotion opportunities to major from 1961 through 1963. Though many of the nonselects were kept (under the “continued captains” program), large numbers of reserve officers were trimmed in this process.

Natural attrition also played a fundamental role, and several policy decisions were incorporated to enhance its effect. Retention was a problem area, so natural attrition was high, and the protracted RIF in 1958–1960 had provided a limited opportunity for quality control. The regular officer force size was doubled with the massive augmentation of 1958, and the selection process was patterned on temporary promotion procedures, which credited formal education as a distinct advantage.⁴¹ All reserve officers competing for temporary major in 1961–1963 formed a narrow grouping; they had survived the RIF but failed to compete successfully in the selection process for regular. Thus, the Air Force could now achieve essential quality control without experiencing the trauma of actually exercising the system. The “continued captain” option even enabled them to play the role of benefactor while still identifying a large group whose tenure was limited to 20 years. Moreover the 20-10 program, which had allowed certain reserve officers with 20 years of service, at least 10 of which were commissioned, to extend on active duty for 3 years, was rescinded. Now all reserve officers faced mandatory retirement at 20 years of service, so the large numbers commissioned officers during World War II who had not been augmented into the regular force also attrited naturally (as retirees) in the early 1960s. Provisions were also implemented to permit involuntary early retirement of selected regular officers from the World War II cohorts during the early 1960s.⁴²

⁴⁰Tour lengths for MAJCOM commanders have recently run from one to five years. Every Chief of Staff since 1973 headed a MAJCOM immediately before assuming the Chief’s duties. *USAF Almanac, Air Force Magazine*, May 1993, pp. 49–51.

⁴¹The limit on regular officers was increased from 27,500 to 54,000. This provided the first opportunity for reserve officers to obtain regular commissions since 1948. The process also provided a reasonable opportunity to nonrated officers, which was quite different from the previous augmentation. Mitchell, *The First Generation*, op. cit., pp. 247–256.

⁴²*Ibid.*, pp. 409–417. The 20-10 program had been implemented because of the meager numbers of officers with over 20 years of service (2,500 in 1956, for example).

By some unspecified point in time in the 1960s, the Air Force apparently had terminated official concern that its officer corps quality was below par, and policy decisions moved more toward supporting social actions that would contribute to the performance of a well-trained team rather than stressing individual skills required to develop the “whole man.” Continuing concern over maintaining standards and enduring external perceptions, however, has ensured that overall standards for personal behavior among officers have continually improved.

Accession Sources. The decision to transition to a college-educated officer corps required major revisions to Air Force commissioning programs. The decision to force the AFROTC class of 1954 to fly to be commissioned ended the numerical dominance of the aviation cadet programs as officer accession sources and marked the beginning of the transition process. A separate Air Force Academy was authorized by Congress in 1954 and admitted its first class in 1955. Also by 1955, reliance on OCS and the aviation cadet programs (the only two officer sources not requiring degrees) as commissioning sources was dwindling.⁴³ OCS had its origin during the Air Corps days, and the cadet programs were created to meet World War II requirements for aviators. Actual termination of these programs, however, was delayed when the intended plan to use AFROTC as the primary commissioning source in terms of numbers encountered several problems.

Air Force ROTC. The Air Force did not consider its ROTC program as a truly viable source for active-duty officers until the Korean War. This was the first time that it could bring AFROTC graduates involuntarily to active duty. The wartime emergency authority was codified permanently in 1952 when Secretary of Defense Robert A. Lovett, responding to public criticism concerning draft deferments, implemented a policy that all ROTC graduates, regardless of service, would incur an active-duty service obligation of at least two years (unless they had already served on active duty).⁴⁴ The Air Force, with its treatment of the class of 1954, clearly demonstrated it that regarded this as a one-sided obligation, and it felt no obligation to commission everyone who completed the program.

To improve the efficiency of AFROTC as a commissioning program, the Air Force recommended in 1953 that the least productive detachments be closed. This recommendation was referred for review to a panel of distinguished civilian educators in 1954, which supported the Air Force position that required a unit to

⁴³Ibid., p. 402.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 226–241. Recall that the Air Corps shut down its ROTC program in 1933 and did not reinstate it until 1946.

be able to produce 25 graduates each year (physically qualified for flight training) to remain open. Some 28 detachments were identified in 1955 for termination. Many of the affected institutions protested that their lack of graduates was the fault of the Air Force, and they should share no blame. They argued that the Air Force had not only betrayed their students by denying commissions to qualified graduates, but it also conducted a closed program whose curriculum was not subject to university review and whose instructors did not meet university standards. The Air Force relented in 1956 and agreed to close only detachments where the host institution actually wanted them closed. Only nine institutions concurred, and the Air Force eventually implemented policy changes that addressed all three of these complaints.⁴⁵

The Ascendancy of the Officer Training School Program. The dramatic changes in officer requirements that characterized the 1950s convinced the Air Force that responsiveness in the form of a short lead time was an absolutely essential property in its principal source for officer accessions. The solution, announced in 1958 and called Officer Training School (OTS), which the Air Force developed to meet its short-term officer accession requirements, provided OCS-like training to college graduates only. Precedence was handy in two successful Navy programs⁴⁶ plus the experience gained in its OCS program. To enhance flexibility, the Air Force adopted a single program, only three months long, to train rated and nonrated officers alike. Flying training would follow the commissioning program, and the decision regarding numbers to train as pilots or navigators in each class could be delayed until outputs from the long lead AFROTC and service academy programs was already known. Thus, by scaling AFROTC output to lower levels than those projected to meet requirements, OTS would provide a buffer to cope with the dynamics of changing requirements.

The beginning of OTS signaled the decline of the Air Force commissioning programs that did not require college degrees. By 1963 OTS would surpass all other accession sources combined in terms of numbers of officers commissioned per year (though AFROTC would again challenge for numerical supremacy as its enrollment increased during the war in Southeast Asia). The Aviation Cadet Program produced its last pilot in 1961, though it continued to provide a trickle

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 327–333. The ROTC contract wording was changed in 1957 to guarantee *commissioning*, but it omitted any assurance of bringing graduates on *active duty*. The Air Force has retained control of the curriculum, but it has consistently worked to improve it and make it more relevant. Academic credentials for ROTC instructors have also received continuing attention, and advanced degrees became mandatory for these assignments in the 1960s.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 334. The Navy had established the Officer Candidate Program in 1951 and the Aviation Officer Candidate Program in 1955.

of navigators (most with college degrees) until 1965. The OCS granted its last commission in 1962.⁴⁷

Since the OCS program (despite its brief excursion into recruiting civilians just prior to the Korean War) had historically provided the only commissioning source for active-duty enlisted personnel, it was the only program whose termination generated any real concern among Air Force leadership. Its intended replacement, the Airman Education and Commissioning Program (AECF), would generate a distinct type of officer, however, from those traditionally produced by OCS. OCS had provided the opportunity for individuals with exceptional military skills in an identified occupational area (e.g., personnel, administration, supply, aircraft maintenance, etc.) to receive a commission quickly and return as an officer to apply those skills in the same occupational area.

This opportunity to “come up through the ranks” had been inherited from the Army via the Air Service and Air Corps and indeed had supplied the only source of nonrated officers prior to World War II. AECF, on the other hand, stressed academic skills and provided provisions for entry into flying training programs upon completion. Its underlying precept was to take academically qualified airmen, send them to school full time (at normal pay and at Air Force expense) to complete their degree, and then send them through the newly formed OTS program, where they could compete for available flying slots. The original intent was to accept individuals who could finish their degrees in two years maximum, but difficulties filling early quotas reduced the specific prior college requirement to two years. This, coupled with the requirement that those not attending flying training receive directed duty assignments in billets that specified a need for their particular academic degree, markedly extended the time required to complete the degree. The reason for this was that the vast majority of billets specifying baccalaureate degrees were for engineers, physicists, or operations analysts, so that typical AECF candidates had to be able to enter (or reenter) in midstream an undergraduate program with very specific mathematical and technical requirements in the first two years, which may also have been designed originally as a five year course of study. This not only extended the modal degree completion point to three years, it also put potential candidates at risk to never obtain a degree. Thus, the selection process became even more stringent, and most successful candidates needed to take review or remedial academic coursework on active duty prior to submitting AECF applications. The

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 463. Over one-half of the cohort entering navigator aviation cadet training in 1962 had college degrees. The proportion increased to over 95 percent by the final year of the program.

combination of requirements for prior college, an exceptional military record, and remedial coursework on active duty, coupled with the three-year modal degree completion period also prevented most AECP candidates from meeting age requirements for flying training. Thus, AECP graduates filled a very specialized technical requirement in the officer corps, whereas the OCS graduates had filled centrist requirements more closely related to the officer corps mainstream.⁴⁸

By the early 1960s, the Air Force had fixed its accession sources essentially as they remain today. Several of these accession sources would encounter problems during the intervening years. The ROTC program would face massive demonstrations, turmoil, and overtly hostile activity as antidraft and antiwar fervor developed on many campuses. Many programs experienced faculty as well as student opposition, and a number of them had to be canceled or reduced. Despite the turmoil, however, ROTC began to meet its commissioning quotas in 1966 through 1969, something it had been unable to accomplish since the mid-1950s.⁴⁹ The Air Force Academy was forced, as a cost cutting measure, to almost double the size of incoming classes during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Subsequent studies revealed that the additional appointments in each case significantly lowered class entry performance indicator distributions.⁵⁰ The academy also endured a major cheating scandal in which a number of cadets criminally abused privileges generated by their own honor system. Subsequent investigations by the White Committee (chaired by former Chief of Staff Thomas D. White) led to essential changes and continuing review.⁵¹ The OTS program had to cope with the growing pains associated with a tenfold increase in officer production in less than two years. And quality issues were raised in the 1960s when pilot training attrition rates for OTS graduates rose to nearly 50 percent, twice the overall pilot training attrition for all sources.⁵² Despite these problems, however, officer accession programs were on the verge of achieving a degree of stability unprecedented in previous Air Force experience.

Striving for Stability. At the height of its effort in Southeast Asia, the second major buildup in less than 20 years, the Air Force recognized the need to develop

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 491. Flying training entrants cannot have completed their 27th birthday.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 547–558. The one bright spot in this was that mandatory ROTC programs were terminated at most of the nearly 100 schools that had imposed them.

⁵⁰Entry performance indicators represent a composite of high school grade point average and class standing compared with class size, SAT and other written examination scores, plus extra-curricular and leadership experience. The study was initiated by personnel from the Department of Mathematics in 1970 under the leadership of Major Paul Ruud. West Point underwent essentially the same experience. Annapolis already was at the larger size.

⁵¹Mitchell, *The First Generation*, op. cit., pp. 463–475.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 483–490.

methods that would provide essential stability in officer accessions while still meeting rapidly changing annual requirements. Satisfied conceptually with its existing accession programs, where the short lead time OTS program buffered fluctuations in the long lead time ROTC and academy programs and both fliers and nonfliers came from all three sources, the Air Force turned its attention to defining total objectives for its personnel categories. The result for line officers was called TOPLINE, an acronym for Total Objective Plan for LINE officers. It was part of the USAF Personnel Plan, first published in 1969, and its stated purpose was to stabilize accessions, as well as to provide year group management, fixed promotion opportunity, and stable promotion phase points. It also codified a baccalaureate degree as an essential characteristic of an officer.⁵³

TOPLINE's major contribution to accession policy planning was its effort to smooth annual rated production over a five year period. The TOPLINE projection model confirmed Air Force officer accession policies that had evolved earlier. Annual accessions from the Air Force Academy and ROTC were fixed as an input to the model. OTS accessions were then allowed to float to meet end strength constraints.⁵⁴ Flying training production was similarly managed, except that rated requirements determined the numbers of OTS graduates entering flying training.

A major feature of TOPLINE was that its "introduction . . . in 1969 provided managers a template against which the impact of policy decisions could be measured, both in the near term and long range."⁵⁵ Its effect on grade limitations and promotions will be addressed in a later subsection. It also helped to mitigate the bitter rated management battles that transpired throughout the 1960s between the Air Force and OSD.

Rated Management Issues. Though these issues were broad based, the fundamental problem that drove the questions surrounding proficiency flying and flight pay eligibility was an acknowledged inability on the part of the Air Force to accurately validate its requirements for rated officers. Pressure from Congress and OSD led to efforts in 1953 and 1957 to develop accurate validation procedures. A major problem was that requirements were validated solely by

⁵³Officer management was augmented by the TOPCHAP and TOPMED programs for chaplains and medical officers, respectively. Initially judge advocate general (JAG) officers were managed together with the line officers, but TOPJAG was introduced later. Supporting programs included TOPCAP for enlisted personnel, TOPREP for Air National Guard (ANG) and AF reserve forces, and TOPIC for civilians. The 1975 version was the first to incorporate the Rated Distribution and Training Management (RDTM) and DOPMA studies as well as the ACIP program. *The USAF Personnel Plan*, op. cit., Volume I and II, pp. 1-2, 3-1, and 3-13.

⁵⁴OTS classes were constrained to a *minimum* input (2,000 per year in 1974), however, to provide stability in that training program as well. *The USAF Personnel Plan*, op. cit., p. C-1.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 2-9.

commanders, who were often influenced more by incumbent qualifications than by objective criteria; and force reductions during the period increased the proportion of rated officers to all-time highs (55–56 percent in 1957–1961), thus increasing the likelihood that the incumbent was rated. The Air Force admitted that “the rated officer requirements validation system had failed”⁵⁶ by 1961.

Promotions. We have already examined promotion policies with respect to the historical reluctance of the Air Force to separate officers who were deemed “fully qualified” in a certain context before they reached retirement eligibility. While this attitude continued to influence up-or-out policy implementation until the post-Cold War drawdown, it is also clear that the Air Force used promotions, together with related policies, to achieve quality control within its officer force. The consequences of failing to exercise restraint in officer promotions during a force buildup under DOPMA are documented elsewhere.⁵⁷ An additional perspective on officer promotions that has had a significant effect on current officer management was generated by a protracted battle over officer-grade limits.

The Officer Grade Limitation Act (OGLA) of 1954. It can easily be argued that no single issue has created more grief for the Air Force throughout its history than OGLA. It was enacted by Congress to constrain at the field-grade level the proliferation of temporary promotions, which resumed during the Korean War (as provided for by OPA) under the management of the service secretaries. Since the Air Force and its officer corps were quite youthful relative to the Army and Navy, its field-grade limits were set notably lower. The congressional committees responsible for the legislation used World War II proportions as a guide for grade distributions for large force sizes and acknowledged that periodic adjustments would be required to provide Air Force promotion opportunities comparable to those of the other services.⁵⁸

Ironically, many of the temporary promotions awarded by the Air Force during Korea were to rectify injustices created in the recall of reserve forces. Reservists returning voluntarily to active duty could not return in a higher rank than they held on active duty, while those recalled involuntarily were given their current reserve rank, which could include reserve promotions plus any “terminal leave” or other cosmetic promotions received as part of the World War II demobilization process. Thus, returning reservists were screened for promotion

⁵⁶Ibid., p. A-3.

⁵⁷Rostker et. al., *The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act of 1980*, op. cit.

⁵⁸*The USAF Personnel Plan*, op. cit., p. 2-5. Mitchell, *The First Generation*, op. cit., pp. 271–295.

after only six months on active duty. From 1952 until the augmentation effort in 1958 approximately 80 percent of the officer corps held reserve commissions.⁵⁹

To understand the full effect of OGLA, it is instructive to examine the experience distribution of the Air Force officer corps in 1954. Of almost 130,000 officers on active duty, 40,000 had 3 years of service or less (and defined the Korean War hump), while some 60,000 had between 8 and 12 years of service (and formed the World War II hump). (See Figure D.3.) OGLA grade limits were developed for conventionally shaped force distributions in steady-state, or equilibrium, conditions, not for such an acutely bi-modal distribution. The Air Force estimated that meeting OGLA limits, even after they were modified for an aging force, would require at least 1,700 annual involuntary separations from the World War II hump cohorts.⁶⁰ The Air Force, concerned with retention in any case, was unwilling to take this action.

Although temporary promotion authority would remain in effect indefinitely after Korea (it provided the only promotion system for reserve officers on active duty), OGLA generated several improvements in the way the Air Force administered the system. Unit vacancy promotions were eliminated, and promotion procedures were centralized under the Air Staff and (except for SAC's "spot" promotions) removed from Major Air Command control. The "best-qualified" method had always applied to temporary promotions, but the centralization served to standardize expectations across command boundaries. These factors, however, could never mitigate the exasperation that was imminent.⁶¹

The Air Force initiated its first request for OGLA relief in 1958. Its original proposal requested a sufficient increase "to provide . . . officers with field grade promotion opportunities equal to those of the other . . . services."⁶² OSD, however, embroiled in budget problems and a major force reduction and under pressure from Congress to reduce officer/enlisted ratios in all of the services implored the Air Force to withdraw its request to prevent generating additional problems with Congress. The Air Force resisted, insisting that it could live with lower ratios much more readily than it could without grade relief. A compromise was reached in which the Air Force requested 5,000 additional

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 174–179. Thus, a volunteer could be two ranks below a recalled contemporary. Accepting the "terminal leave" promotions had been part of the recruiting program implemented by the reserves after World War II. Almost a third of the 300,000 AAF officers returning to civilian life received such promotions.

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 271–296.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 278–295.

⁶²Ibid., p. 295.

majors, enough only to delay an immediate crisis rather than provide a solution. When Congress received the request in 1959, it reduced the 5,000 additional majors to 3,000 and made the legislation temporary for two years.⁶³

When the temporary grade relief expired in 1961, the Air Force put forth a request for an increased authorization of 6,585 lieutenant colonels. The center of the World War II hump was at the 17 year point, so the lieutenant colonel authorizations now required attention. Majors were no longer a problem because the required slots would be created by promoting majors. The request again ran into problems at OSD, and again it was budgetary pressure that caused them. OSD would agree to only 3,000 additional authorizations. This time Congress increased the request and authorized 4,000 additional lieutenant colonels. Since everyone was hopeful that the Bolte Committee efforts would soon provide permanent resolution, the increase again was good for only two years. With the Bolte Committee legislation still pending in 1963, OSD pressured the Air Force to agree to extending the 4,000 lieutenant colonel authorizations for two more years. The Air Force reluctantly agreed to avoid jeopardizing Bolte, but it felt that it was falling significantly behind the other services in field-grade promotion opportunity by this point. The Air Force had attempted to supply some stability for its officers by holding promotion boards each year and hoping that OGLA relief would occur in time for the actual “pin ons.” The piecemeal support and inadequate temporary relief, however, caused certain numbers of selectees to be “carried over” each year until the next authorizations became valid. By the time the most recent temporary authority expired in 1965, there were over 5,000 officers in “carry-over” status, and some would remain so for over two years.⁶⁴

Another area of concern for the Air Force was the newly implemented up-or-out provisions for temporary promotions for reserve officers, which took effect in 1961. Though the “continued captains” program started in 1963, the ability to continue to retirement in a special category without further promotion was significantly different from being given an adequate opportunity for promotion in the first place. Thus, in March of 1965, the Air Force proposed to OSD that the relief package include 1,500 additional colonel authorizations (the center of the World War II hump reached 21 years) and 6,000 lieutenant colonels and be extended for three years. OSD reduced the request to 1,100 colonels and 5,500 lieutenant colonels for one year in hopes that Bolte might still survive. Congress accepted the OSD reduction. The Air Force then withdrew support for Bolte the

⁶³Ibid., pp. 292–295. *The USAF Personnel Plan*, op. cit., p. 2-5.

⁶⁴*The USAF Personnel Plan*, op. cit., pp. 2-5 and 2-6. Mitchell, *The First Generation*, op. cit., pp. 365-370.

following year and proposed unilateral legislation to finally resolve the problem of inadequate grade authorizations. The result in 1966 was PL 89-606, which provided for the first time in almost a decade the authorizations required for Air Force officers to compete equitably for field-grade promotions. By this time the “due-course” point for their promotion to major was over three years behind their contemporaries in the other services. The bill retained the 1,100 colonel and 5,500 lieutenant colonel authorizations, but even more importantly, it accommodated the Korean War hump by providing temporary authority to exceed OGLA limits while the hump passed through the entire range of field-grade ranks. The bill’s provisions were limited to six years by the Senate.⁶⁵

The Senate then amended the 1972 extension of PL 89-606 to direct the Secretary of Defense to initiate the study that eventually became DOPMA. The major problems that OGLA generated for the Air Force had little to do with the promotion delays and inequities that it created. The problems did not really involve the vast number of man-years of effort that had to be devoted to coping with these promotion difficulties. The problems came instead from the tremendous anguish that the effort generated in the Air Staff and the resulting distress and deterioration of relationships of the Air Force leadership with OSD and with Congress. The required renewals always presented an ongoing forum for antimilitary sentiment, which would question the need for temporary promotions or, indeed, for any promotions within the Air force. The bitter battles also clouded the issue of what is meant by officer management and left many thinking that it has nothing to do with accomplishing national security objectives and everything to do with promotions and grade constraints.

The Effort for Stability in Promotions. Air Force promotion systems have changed almost as radically as its force levels throughout its history. As we have seen, the permanent promotion system specified in OPA was essentially a nonfactor to a fledgling Air Force with 95 percent of its officer force with less than five years of service. The “one shot” promotions in 1948 were of far greater import to the regular officers, and the 30,000+ reserve officers who remained on or returned to active duty in the 1940s apparently had no promotion alternatives at all without making regular.⁶⁶ When temporary promotions were reinstated as a wartime contingency in December of 1950, promotion authority to all grades below colonel was delegated to the Major Air Commands where promotions were used primarily to fill unit vacancies, to redress inequities, or to entice people to take jobs that they might not have taken otherwise. Individuals could

⁶⁵*The USAF Personnel Plan*, op. cit., pp. 2-5, 2-6. Mitchell, *The First Generation*, op. cit., pp. 367-369.

⁶⁶This option ended in 1948 and did not recur until 1958.

be “screened” for promotion whenever necessary in combat and periodically based on the MAJCOM’s “fair share” of temporary billets during peacetime.

Starting in 1949, General Curtis E. Lemay used “spot” promotions to attempt to motivate people and rekindle pride in an extremely dispirited Strategic Air Command. The effort is generally regarded as a successful one, though few would claim that its success was largely due to “spot” promotions that were awarded only to members of select bomber crews for exhibiting exceptional combat capability in peacetime. Many would agree, though, that the “spot” system generated a great deal of controversy over how to evaluate this capability.

A positive contribution from OGLA was the centralization and standardization of promotion procedures to all officer grades. The selection process for promotion boards became standardized quickly and seems to have worked effectively, even for selecting those to receive regular commissions in the massive augmentation in 1958. This was a vast improvement over the attempts to make similar selections for regular 10 years before. Unfortunately, OGLA also prevented any opportunity to stabilize promotion phase points or to fix consistent promotion opportunities. The experience distribution of the early Air Force officer corps was so far from equilibrium that there would have been promotion problems even without OGLA and without Korea. A study completed the day after hostilities began in Korea revealed that the regular officer World War II hump would require three times the published OPA limit for lieutenant colonels as it reached 21 years of service.⁶⁷

The problems generated by OGLA also motivated the Air Force to look strongly at stable phase points and fixed promotion opportunity as part of its TOPLINE study in the late 1960s. The Air Force proposals, with minor modifications, were adopted in DOPMA. The most significant changes that were required of the Air Force to incorporate the DOPMA philosophy into its objective force models were to reduce retention and accelerate promotions in its static model in order to correspond to experience in the other services. A slight adjustment in tenure was also required.⁶⁸

Department of the Army

Introduction. When military historians discuss activities of Army officers in the 1930s, they frequently mention the dull life, the poor equipment with little

⁶⁷Mitchell, *The First Generation*, op. cit., pp. 273–275.

⁶⁸The tenure change was for lieutenant colonels from 28 to 26 years. *The USAF Personnel Plan*, op. cit., p. 3-3.

opportunity for training, and the absence of promotion. Some also note in retrospect how important the development, military schooling, and leadership training during this period were in preparing company- and field-grade officers (such as Eisenhower, Patton, and Bradley) for later, rapid promotion and the broad responsibilities they faced in meeting the major challenges of World War II.⁶⁹

That small, but experienced, officer corps (excluding the Army Air Corps) expanded rapidly during World War II from 17,563 officers in 1940 to 835,400 at the peak in 1945.⁷⁰ There was not much officer management during this time: It was essentially identify and commission officers, provide them minimum essential training, and then send them off to war. Creating new units and keeping the two overseas theaters filled with officers provided little time for development. By 1948, demobilization had reduced the Army officer corps to 64,000.⁷¹ At the same time, the Army was preparing to meet the challenges of the nuclear age and the communist threat in a postwar environment.

To support the Korean War, officer strength nearly doubled to a peak of 133,900 in 1952. However, postwar demobilization quickly reduced the officer corps to near prewar levels when a large number of officers left the Army through a RIF or by reverting to enlisted status. During this period, development for the officer corps was again limited to that which directly supported the war effort.

Flexibility in meeting officer increases to support the Vietnam War was affected by the one year tour in Vietnam and the decision not to mobilize the reserve component. OCS was a major source of junior officers, and while the ROTC contribution of active-duty officers was initially expanded, the antiwar movements on many campuses caused several ROTC programs to be reduced in scope or terminated.⁷² Concurrently, transition to the All-Volunteer Force and the elimination of the draft reduced interest in ROTC.⁷³

In some ways, however, the Vietnam conflict had little effect on officer career activities, such as civilian schooling and development, which were often just delayed (or interrupted) by a one year tour in Vietnam. The gradual reduction

⁶⁹Until 1942 there was little centralized management of officers; rather, the branch chiefs (infantry, cavalry, coast artillery, and field artillery) handled all aspects of career management for combat officers as well as developing doctrine and equipping their forces. George R. Iverson, "Officer Personnel Management: 'A Historical Perspective.'" Defense Technical Information Center, May 1978, p. iii.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 10.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 12.

⁷²Headquarters, Department of the Army, "Army Historical Summary, 1 July 1972 to 30 June 1973," p. 33.

⁷³Ibid.

of the war effort together with the departure of some Korean War veterans eased somewhat the trauma of the postwar drawdown of officers from a peak of 172,600 in 1969 to about 97,700 in 1977. (These strengths include warrant officers.) Nonetheless, a RIF was required in 1974, and mostly company-grades officers left the Army involuntarily.

Army end strength (and officer levels) remained stable throughout the late 1970s. While the Reagan buildup (of the early 1980s) increased the overall size of the other services, the Army active-duty end strength remained at 781,000 during this period. Nonetheless the size of the officer corps grew from 98,340 in 1980 to 110,005 in 1986, an increase in officers as large as that of any other service.

There was general recognition (by Congress, DoD, and the military services) during the Vietnam era that major changes to officer personnel management were required. Ultimately that led to DOPMA. The Army, however, took interim action; it recognized the need to improve internal officer management and conducted the first of two major studies—the Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) of 1971. The purpose of the study was to develop a “new concept of officer personnel management”⁷⁴ that would “establish the professional and personal standards and goals required for the Officers Corps of the Modern Volunteer Army.”⁷⁵ The guiding philosophy of OPMS was to

- improve the professional climate of the officer corps
- identify early and develop carefully officers most qualified for command
- allow for specialization in some technical areas without undue restriction on promotion and schooling opportunities
- provide a satisfying career for that large segment of the officer corps who are neither commanders nor specialists.⁷⁶

The changes resulting from this study (and follow-on studies in 1976 and 1983) have shaped Army officer management as it exists today.

Career Flow Structure. Like the other services, the Army’s career flow structure is generally up or out. The Army force structure requires a larger percentage of junior-grade officers; these accessions are based on both vacancies and end-strength limitations. Normal attrition has generally not been adequate to balance officer requirements with the decreasing need for higher grades, so a “best-

⁷⁴Department of the Army, “Officer Personnel Management System,” 1971, p. 1.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. A-1.

⁷⁶Iverson, “Officer Personnel Management,” op. cit., p. 43.

qualified" promotion system is used beyond captain. Those not selected for promotion (they normally have more than one opportunity) are involuntarily separated.

Personnel Functions. According to Army regulations, its personnel management system mission has four elements:

- Procure and designate officers in the right skills to satisfy Army requirements
- Develop the professional capacities of officers through planned schooling and progressive assignments
- Assign officers to meet Army requirements
- Separate officers to meet individual and Army needs.⁷⁷

Accessions. Since World War II, the Army has used three primary sources for accessions (other than doctors and lawyers): the United States Military Academy, Reserve Officer Training Corps, and Officer Candidate Schools. The relative proportion from each source has shifted over time.

Before the size of all of the service academies was increased to 4,400 cadets in 1964,⁷⁸ average accessions from West Point were 564 officers annually (between 1961–1967), all of which went into one of five combat arms branches. During the 1970s and 1980s, not only did the size of each graduating class increase to 981 graduates (in the 1980s), but cadets were allowed to go to other than combat arms, women were admitted (the first women graduated in 1980), and for a period of time cadets were allowed to go directly to graduate or medical school. In 1992, Congress directed a reduction in the size of the academies (to 4,000 cadets by 1996) that will reduce average accessions to about 850 beginning in 1996.

The ROTC program has provided officers to both the active Army and the reserve component through several full and partial scholarship programs. ROTC accessions into the active Army since 1980 have averaged 3,715 (1,875 of whom had scholarships) with a range of 2,864 to 5,065. The OCS program, averaging 620) has contributed the remainder of the officer accessions (with a range of 268 to 830). Although OCS provides only a relatively small number of officers, it has the important ability to surge quickly. Doctors, lawyers, chaplains, and other

⁷⁷Department of the Army, "Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Utilization," Pam 600-3, 17 September 1990.

⁷⁸Headquarters, Department of the Army, "Army Historical Summary," op. cit., p. 37.

professionals enter the Army through special accession programs based on requirements in each specialty. Many enter at higher grades based on professional experience and skill.

Future accessions (beginning in 1996) are projected to remain stable at 3,600 with 850 from West Point, 2,450 from ROTC (another 1,250 ROTC cadets will go to the reserve component), and 300 from OCS. The projection for a stable force structure, and thus stable accessions into the 21st century, may be suspect since history suggests there will be considerable turbulence in the size of the Army's officer corps. While the surge strategy is to increase OCS and divert ROTC graduates from reserve to active component, the recent shortage of qualified OCS candidates is troublesome.

Under the DOPMA and its congressionally mandated officer ceilings, accessions and separations are closely interrelated. In the mid-1980s, the Army was forced to reduce accessions to satisfy end-strength limits.⁷⁹ By the early 1990s, the combination of a reduced force structure and smaller-than-expected voluntary retirements led to extraordinary measures: RIFs, selected early retirement boards (SERBs), and voluntary separation programs with bonuses.

Targeting accessions is also an important issue. The Army has goals for different academic disciplines that are based on the skills required by the branches and specialties: 30 percent business, 20 percent engineering, 20 percent physical science, 20 percent social science, and 10 percent other.⁸⁰ Historically, the Army has had difficulty accessing from the engineering and physical science disciplines. While ROTC scholarships have targeted those areas, shortages remain, and social science majors are substituted. The Army also targets minorities and women in its accession programs at West Point, ROTC, and OCS.

In addition, there have always been "inverted authorization pyramids," in which some branches or specialties need a large number of junior officers and a relatively small number of senior officers while others need fewer junior officers and more senior officers. This problem (and the solution) is discussed in the development subsection. The uncertainty about the size of the Army together with a shifting accession pattern and separation profile have also created cohort sizes (year groups) of dramatically different sizes. This has created problems in maintaining fair, equitable promotion and appropriate assignment patterns.

⁷⁹Department of the Army, "OPMS Study Group Report," 1983, p. ix.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. III-1-A.

Development. While many officers consider development an individual responsibility, decisions regarding reassignment, schooling, and other professional activities are centrally managed by the Army headquarters in Washington, D.C.⁸¹ The management process and structure for development and officer career management have changed in response to the shifting requirements and environment.

The 1960s and 1970s spawned a whole host of officer specialties, such as operations research/systems analysis (ORSA), acquisition, automation, and foreign area specialist; each required special training, unique assignment patterns, and special career development. There was also criticism at the time regarding promotion and command selection. These types of problems, along with other concerns, led to the Officer Personnel Management System study in 1971. The study was to evaluate the situation and develop a new career management system that would “provide, consistent with the needs of the [Army], for the optimum development and utilization of individual aptitudes, skills, interests and desires and to provide a competitive environment which gives equitable recognition to individual development and accomplishment.”⁸²

The assignment process is guided by requirements documents that describe qualifications for different officer positions by branch, specialty, grade, and other qualifications, such as whether graduation from a command and staff college or a degree in nuclear engineering is required. Frequently, the document also specifies types and amounts of experience. These requirements data also guide promotion boards and separation actions. Since requirements for officers exceed availability, the Army assignment process is frequently in the business of “allocating shortages.” To give some priority, both in terms of numbers and officer quality, units are categorized relative to the fill percentage (e.g., 95 percent of requirements) and the percentage of officers of the highest quality.

The first OPMS (1971) was also “challenged to design an officer management system to accommodate an Army structure in which some branches and career fields had inverted authorization pyramids,” which resulted in the Army accessing 57 percent into combat arms when less than 25 percent of the colonel billets required combat arms officers. The solution was for all officers to have two specialties—a primary combat arms specialty into which they were accessed

⁸¹According to Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, officer development is the combined responsibility of the individual, the commander, the career field proponent, and the personnel command.

⁸²Department of the Army, “Officer Personnel Management System,” 1971, p. C-1-1.

and in which they served their early assignments and a secondary specialty that was selected after several years of service.⁸³

Most officers select their secondary specialty by the 7th year of service and then receive an assignment in that area. The goal is that by the 11th or 12th year of service each officer is “branch qualified” in both specialties; officers then “dual track” and alternate assignments between specialties based on the Army’s needs. While the Army still wants “generalists” with broad experience under the dual track system, they at the same time are requiring each officer to achieve a higher level of competency in two specialties. With longer assignments and more overseas tours, it is difficult for officers to remain qualified in both specialties, attend appropriate military schools, obtain an advanced degree, and meet other requirements. The Army, recognizing this situation, introduced primacy, which allows officers to emphasize career development in one area. Typically, officers change primacy from an entry branch to a functional area in midcareer when a branch-related assignment becomes less likely. In some cases, officers have a single specialty; few of these single-track officers are in the combat arms because most do not have a sufficiently broad pyramid.

The new system implemented following the OPMS study also increased the competencies and branch composition of the organizational staffs. For example, whereas previously all members of a field artillery battalion staff were field artillery officers, the new system provided a signal officer to be battalion communications officer and an ordnance officer to be battalion motor officer.⁸⁴

In reality, dual tracking causes problems. Officers, feeling pressure to remain qualified in both specialties, seek a specific type of assignment in order to strengthen competencies in their weakest specialty, only to be assigned somewhere else based on the Army’s requirements. In a practical sense there are other problems since the individual officer has three advisors at the headquarters personnel office: one from each specialty and one for career development.⁸⁵ Occasionally an officer receives conflicting advice or becomes a pawn in a struggle between assignment officers representing the two specialties (requirements).

The resulting officer turbulence has operational effects as well. An Army study on the lack of stability said: “The ‘hard charging’ segment of the officers . . . come to the staffs to touch base with a development requirement and depart for

⁸³Department of the Army, “OPMS Study Group Report,” op. cit. p. vi.

⁸⁴Department of the Army, “Officer Personnel Management System,” op. cit. p. C-3-1.

⁸⁵Department of the Army, “OPMS Study Group Report,” op. cit.

command, school or nominative assignments. This constant change . . . causes inefficiencies because officers are constantly in a learning mode with few teachers.”⁸⁶

The Army has always placed considerable emphasis on command at every level from platoon through brigade. In fact, officers are not normally considered qualified in their basic branch until they command at the company level (i.e., a company, battery, or troop). Until the mid-1970s, assignment of command positions through battalion (and in some theaters through brigade) was decentralized to the division commander.⁸⁷ The concern over “ticket punching” and the tales of marginally qualified officers receiving a Vietnam command as reward for loyal staff work, while not fully accurate, caused the Army concern. As a result, beginning in 1974, all battalion and brigade command positions⁸⁸ were centrally selected and assigned.⁸⁹ Surveys of both senior commanders and officers indicate the process is working well. There is some concern that command tours (typically 24 months) should be longer. Since then, other “command-equivalent” positions for colonels and lieutenant colonels (such as engineer districts, depot commanders, program managers, and, recently, installation commanders) have also become centrally selected and assigned.

While command is a critical part of officer development,⁹⁰ it must be recognized that command opportunities are limited, particularly for field-grade officers. Overall, only about 25 percent of the Army’s lieutenant colonels and 20 percent of the colonels will command, and those percentages vary considerably by branch.⁹¹ Table D.1 shows command selection rates (percentage) since 1987; most officers are considered for command position for two to three years.

Over the years, the Army has made several efforts to define certain positions as “equivalent to command.”⁹² For example, the OPMS-71 study proposed designating officers as commanders or staff officers when majors and giving them appropriate follow-on assignment patterns. Other efforts to give recognition to certain types of assignments (advisors in Vietnam, advisors to reserve component, recruiting duty) have not succeeded despite specific guidance to promotion boards of equivalence.

⁸⁶Department of the Army, “OPMS Study Group Report,” op. cit., p. V-3-B.

⁸⁷Department of the Army, “Annual Historical Summary,” op. cit.

⁸⁸The Army has very few commands for majors. Company-grade command positions remain decentralized

⁸⁹Department of the Army, “Army Historical Summary,” op. cit., pp. 48-49.

⁹⁰Department of the Army, “OPMS Study Group Report,” op. cit., p. ix.

⁹¹Ibid., p. ix.

⁹²Ibid., p. C-5-1.

Table D.1
Army Command Selection Opportunity

Year	Percentage Selected	
	To O-5	To O-6
1987	5.3	8.7
1988	7.6	8.5
1989	N/A	9.7
1990	N/A	8.5
1991	10.6	8.4
1992	9.8	7.1
1993	12.9	8.3
1994	11.9	9.0

To meet the career management approach that included dual tracks and centrally selected command positions, the Military Personnel Center was initially organized in 1973 to manage field-grade officers by “grade and specialty” rather than by branch.⁹³ A subsequent reorganization of the Army’s Officer Personnel Management Directorate in 1978 created three vertically structured career management divisions—combat arms, combat support arms, and combat service support arms) to perform officer management through the grade of lieutenant colonel. Thus, each officer would be managed by the same organization from commissioning through selection for colonel.

Career management, already complicated by the need to provide officers with assignments that increase their experience in two specialties and attend required schooling, was further complicated recently when Congress established specific guidelines for joint service officers and those in the acquisition corps. In some cases it is simply not possible to meet all of the requirements for development in a particular specialty and grade within the time normally allowed or expected.

Education. The Army has always considered military education and civilian schooling important elements of development. All officers attend a basic branch course (16 to 22 weeks) soon after commissioning. After four or five years of service (one or two assignments) they attend a one-year branch advanced course. After the next assignment, frequently a command position, they attend the nine-week resident phase of the Combined Arms and Services Staff College (CAS3). All officers promoted to captain attend both the advanced course and CAS3.⁹⁴

⁹³Ibid., p. vii.

⁹⁴ DA Pamphlet 600-3, September 17, 1990, p. 103

Field-grade officers also receive military education. Of those selected for promotion to major, 40–50 percent will attend the one-year Command and Staff College (CSC), and another 30–40 percent receive the nonresidence course. Of those selected for promotion to lieutenant colonel, about 30 percent will attend senior service college (SSC).

Each year about 500 officers are selected to attend graduate school for one or two years and receive a masters degree; a small number work toward a doctorate. Most officers receive a utilization tour after civilian schooling. Many officers not attending a full-time graduate program obtain an advanced degree by attending night school, often in conjunction with attendance at CSC or SSC. Currently over 99 percent of all officers have a baccalaureate degree, and 66 percent of field-grade officers have a masters degree or higher.

Officers also may attend a variety of other training/education programs based on their specialties and assignments: precommand courses, Professional Military Comptroller Course (comptroller specialty), Program Management Course (acquisition corps), and an advanced management program at a private institution (Harvard, Stanford).

As a result, an officer who attends the above-mentioned schooling (officer basic course (OBC) (1/2 year), advanced officer course (AOC) (1 year), CAS3 (1/2 year), CSC (1 year), SSC (1 year), civilian school (1 year)) would spend at least 5 years in school during the first 20 years of service. With so many competing requirements for developmental assignments and education, it is becoming increasingly difficult for an officer to find time in his or her career for the 3 to 5 years for a fully funded graduate program and utilization tour.

Promotion. The Army's up-or-out promotion system is essentially "fully qualified" promotion to captain and "best-qualified" thereafter. Promotion opportunities in the Army (as outlined in DA Pam 600-3) follow DOPMA guidelines. Promotion to first lieutenant and captain is on a fully qualified basis (95 percent selection rate to captain). Beyond captain, promotion is on a best-qualified basis with goals of 80 percent to major, 70 percent to lieutenant colonel, and 50 percent to colonel.

In 1973, the Army moved to a single promotion system that eliminated the concept of permanent and temporary grade structure and led to an all-regular force after 11 years of service.⁹⁵ At the same time mandatory retirement points were established of "20, 26, and 30 years for major, lieutenant colonel, and

⁹⁵Department of the Army, "Army Historical Summary," op. cit., p. 42

colonel," respectively, and selective continuation for officers failing promotion twice above major.⁹⁶

Selection for promotion is made by boards operating with detailed guidance on both process and outcomes. With the proliferation of specialties and the Army's commitment to increase diversity and promote equal opportunity, each board has floors and ceilings for promotions in many different categories. When these "requirements" are compared with the available supply, which is itself skewed by different sized cohorts and promotion pyramids, the result is considerable inconsistency in both opportunity and outcome for promotion by both specialty and rank. Changing force structure resulting from new structure (aviation brigade) and new weapons systems (Patriot) causes a shifting requirement for officers in different grades and specialties.

Each promotion board considers three specific groups of officers: those previously considered but not selected (above the zone), those being considered for the first time (primary zone), and those eligible for early promotion (below the zone). The board selects a relatively small number (1 to 2 percent) from above the zone; selection from below the zone has varied more widely (up to 15 percent) depending on the Army's needs and the relative emphasis on increasing upward mobility.

At one time, the headquarters personnel offices did a preliminary screen and established a priority list of officers by branch or specialty and provided that information to the promotion board. That process was discontinued in the mid-1970s.⁹⁷

The Army centrally selects and promotes all officers, captain and above. Overall selection rates during the past 20 years have varied; within the different specialties there has also been considerable variation. The selection rates for captain, major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel are shown in Table D.2.

Officers are normally considered for promotion to each rank at least two times. If they are not selected, their disposition depends upon their length of service and eligibility to retire. "Under DOPMA the involuntary separation of career officers before retirement eligibility at 20 years of service is very difficult."⁹⁸ Thus, while majors not selected for promotion twice may be separated, most are retained on active duty until 20 years of service is completed. Normal mandatory retirement

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 43.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 47.

⁹⁸Rostker et al., *The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act of 1980*, op. cit., p. 19.

Table D.2
Army Promotion Rate

Year	Captain	Major	Lt. Colonel	Colonel
Goal	95.0	80.0	70.0	50.0
1987		72.4 ^a	69.5 ^a	45.0 ^a
1988	84.6 ^a	64.8 ^a	65.0 ^a	39.6 ^a
1989	82.9 ^a	68.7 ^a	61.4 ^a	40.5 ^a
1990	87.0 ^a	73.3	70.0	44.0
1991	95.2	71.3	69.9	46.6
1992	96.7	80.1	70.2	50.4
1993	79.3	N/A	69.4	N/A

^aSelection rate for first time considered.

for officers is 20 years for majors, 28 years for lieutenant colonels, and 30 years for colonels.

Because of the importance of command, and its effect on promotion, there has been considerable competition among branches for command billets. Changes to the force structure, such as the addition of an aviation brigade to each division (a colonel-level command for aviation branch) or Patriot battalions (a lieutenant colonel command for air defense artillery), added command positions. Commanders and branch proponents have worked behind the scenes to increase the command opportunities within their branches; for example, there are now finance commands for colonels, and engineer districts and supply depots are also considered commands. Within the acquisition corps (a single-track specialty), project and program managers are now centrally selected using procedures similar to the command selection process. The overall result has been disproportionate command opportunities in different branches and specialties.

Since the outcomes of the promotion process influence so many things in an officer's career, the results are carefully studied in an effort to identify trends and prepare for the future. Before choosing a secondary specialty, officers look at promotion results in that specialty. Career patterns of promoted officers are studied to identify the type of assignments that are prevalent. If certain types of assignment (duty with the reserves, recruiting assignments, ROTC duty, teaching at service schools, etc.) are common among selected officers, the type of assignment is considered "career enhancing." The converse is also true. This behavior enhances the perception of ticket punching and of careerists whose behavior is focused on self-aggrandizement rather than service to the Army.

Until the early 1970s the Army also had temporary and permanent promotions that caused unnecessary animosity between active-duty officers with regular

Army commissions and those with reserve commissions. At that time, Title 10 USC fixed the number of regular officers at 49,500 while the structure required 95,000 officers.⁹⁹ It was perceived that regular officers were promoted more quickly and in greater numbers, and the data seem to support that conclusion.¹⁰⁰ While most of these distinctions have been eliminated, the problems resulting from having different groupings need to be remembered when considering a system with these characteristics (for example, separate career management for line and staff).

Separation. To maintain flow in the system, there must be regular voluntary departures in addition to separations based on completion of service or failure for promotion. These departures are difficult to predict. With congressional ceilings on officer strengths, lack of departures can limit ability to access young officers. This is particularly important for the Army because the force structure requires a higher percentage of junior officers.

Until recent legislation (1992 Defense Authorization Act, October 1991) allowing more frequent SERBs and providing incentives for early departure, separations were influenced by promotion policies and rates. On occasion, RIFs have been required to reduce specific career groups or cohorts that were out of balance. Until 1991, officers could be subjected to a SERB only once within a five year period. With the new authority and the pressure to reduce the size of the officer corps, particularly at the higher ranks, the Army conducted SERBs in 1992 and 1993. In 1992, the Army retired 315 colonels, 1,146 lieutenant colonels, 180 majors, and 8 captains under the SERB; in 1993, the SERB resulted in 179 colonels, 143 lieutenant colonels, and 60 majors being involuntarily retired.

The 1992 Defense Authorization Act also provided for increased voluntary separations by using financial incentives. There were two options, a Voluntary Separation Incentive (VSI), which provided an annuity, and Special Separation Bonus (SSB), which offered a lump sum. During the first year (1992), 5,215 officers took advantage of these programs; in 1993, 1,810 officers took a VSI or SSB. The Army was generally pleased with these programs, although lack of voluntary retirements in one year group did necessitate a RIF in 1993.

⁹⁹Department of the Army, "OPMS Study Group Report," op. cit., pp. B-4-1, 2.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. B-4-1 to B-4-10.

Department of the Navy

The Navy groups its officers and officer billets into general categories: unrestricted line, restricted line, staff corps, limited duty (line and staff) and chief warrant (line and staff).¹⁰¹ These categories are generally identified by a “designator” reflective of the specialty qualifications of the individual (or qualifications needed for the billet). Each designator has a flag officer advisor who is a principal official, chief of a bureau, or systems command commander.¹⁰² The Navy’s equivalent to company-grade and field-grade officers are “junior” and “senior” officers; unlike the other services, the Navy considers O-4 and below to be junior officers, O-5/O-6 to be senior. While there are a few “sea” commands for junior officers, initial command in the Navy usually occurs at the O-5 (commander) level.

The Navy and Marine Corps are unique for having limited duty officers (LDOs). LDOs are technical managers of the line and staff corps and serve afloat and ashore in billets from division officer through commanding officer. They perform duties in specific occupational fields that require authority equivalent to other officers, but greater than a chief warrant officer; that require strong managerial skills; and that require extensive technical training or extensive on-the-job training.¹⁰³ LDOs and chief warrant officers have diverse designators encompassing most of the URL, RL, and staff corps designators reflective of their previous technical experience and expertise. Bandmaster (6430) and legal paralegal (6550) are the only two LDO designators for which there is no comparable warrant, URL/RL, or staff corps equivalent.

Accessions. The primary accession sources are the Naval Academy and Navy ROTC (NROTC). In FY 1994, Annapolis will graduate approximately 800 ensigns, a reduction of roughly 12 percent since FY 1990. NROTC will provide approximately 1,100 graduates, a reduction of approximately 22 percent since FY

¹⁰¹The unrestricted line (URL) includes surface warfare officers, submariners, naval aviators, special warfare officers (SEAL/UDT), special operations officers (EOD, diving & salvage, etc.) and general unrestricted line officers. The restricted line (RL) are “restricted” by having been designated for engineering duty, aeronautical engineering duty, or special duty. Cryptology, intelligence, oceanography, and public affairs are special duties. The eight staff corps are medical, dental, nurse, medical service, judge advocate general’s, chaplain, supply, and civil engineer (SEABEE). Limited duty and chief warrant officers are assigned to the broad occupational category indicated by their previous experience. Of historical interest, in 1785, the Continental Congress established warrant officer grades for surgeons, chaplains, boatswains, carpenters, and other specialists to serve in tasks vital to establishing and maintaining a fleet.

¹⁰²Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, “Manual of Navy Total Force Manpower Policies and Procedures,” OPNAVINST 1000.16 series, p. D-7.

¹⁰³“The Naval Officer’s Career Planning Handbook,” NAVPERS 15605, 1990 edition, pp. 104–105.

1990. NROTC also has been reduced both in the number of scholarships¹⁰⁴ and in the number of host universities. Officer Candidate School¹⁰⁵ (OCS) will provide approximately 400 officers. The Navy has five different enlisted commissioning programs whereby personnel complete degree requirements and receive officer training through an NROTC unit or OCS, as appropriate to the program. The enlisted commissioning programs provide approximately 1000 officers,¹⁰⁶ nominally constant since FY 1990. The health professions will provide approximately 400¹⁰⁷ new healthcare officers.

Many of the restricted line and staff corps access, at least in part, through lateral transfer. Thus, engineering duty officers (who basically work in shipyards and the Naval Sea Systems Command) access surface warfare officers with an engineering background who have or are capable of completing a masters program in engineering.

The Navy and Marine Corps have a unique officer accession program tailored to assist economically or educationally disadvantaged enlisted people obtain a commission—Broadened Opportunity for Officer Selection and Training (BOOST). Candidates are selected by an administrative board that considers educational/economic background, motivation, and potential for success as an officer. Selected candidates receive one (academic) year of college-prep instruction prior to attending a university under a full (four year) NROTC scholarship. During the college-prep period, they are on active duty, retaining their enlisted rate. Upon activation of their scholarship, they are separated from active-duty status (though still obligated for a period of time) and sworn in as midshipmen. Upon commissioning, their obligated service is the same as their cohorts. If they fail to obtain a commission, they revert to active-duty (enlisted) status to serve the remainder of their obligated service; or (if their obligated service is expired), they are handled the same as any other scholarship attrite.

Education. Most newly commissioned officers, general unrestricted line officers being the exception, receive initial skill training. While this training averages 103

¹⁰⁴The Navy is currently authorized 5,226 scholarships but is only able to fund 5,174. This may reflect the high cost of private colleges in the NROTC program, which has been addressed by the Headquarters Area Command as a matter of concern.

¹⁰⁵Aviation Officer Candidate School (AOCS) and OCS will be consolidated in Pensacola, FL. The first 13-week class began in April 1994. Both aviation and nonaviation officer candidates will now attend OCS in Pensacola, saving about \$1.9 million annually. Currently, the location of AOCS is Pensacola. OCS will be relocating from Newport, RI. Both schools utilized about 25 percent capacity at each location. The school will operate with 39 staff members consisting of four Marine drill instructors, eight senior Navy enlisted personnel, and 27 Navy officers as instructors and staff personnel. Navy News Service, October 20, 1993, NAVNEWS.

¹⁰⁶Department of Defense, "Military Manpower Training Report," FY 1994, p. 31.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, p. 32.

days,¹⁰⁸ certain exceptions are worth highlighting. Submariners attend nuclear power school, nuclear prototype training, and submarine school, which represents 18 months. Pilots take upward of 30 months to complete flight training and the fleet aircraft training required prior to reporting to their first squadron. Even LDOs and chief warrant officers receive approximately six weeks of officer indoctrination training.¹⁰⁹ The Navy's functional training differs significantly from the other services and can be characterized as the type of training that can be conducted while the ship is in port. Over 1,500 courses averaging three days' duration are offered.

Skill progression training is for officers with several years of experience. This type of training is typically provided officers en route to a sea-duty billet following a shore tour. For example, surface warfare officers attend a five month department head school before returning to sea after their first shore tour. Submariners (nuclear power) receive a 22-week submarine officer advanced course. The Navy has 149 courses of this type averaging 49 days in length.¹¹⁰

The Navy's intermediate service school is the College of Naval Command and Staff in Newport, Rhode Island. Historically, Navy officer attendance at service schools has been proportionally the lowest of all the services by a significant margin. The Navy selects officers to attend service schools by a reconstituted selection board that reconvenes after the O-4 board for intermediate school, and after the O-5 board for senior service school. Selection for service school is historically high, and officers go into a pool of eligible attendees. This results in the assignment process in essence acting as a selection board when and if the officer is ordered to a school. A special panel on military education chaired by Representative Ike Skelton of the House Armed Services Committee was critical, of, among other things, the low attendance by Navy officers and of the de facto policy of attending at most one service school in a career.¹¹¹ Attendance at service colleges has been increased dramatically recently, primarily because of the need perceived by officers to have a joint tour.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁰⁹Frequently referred to as "knife-and-fork" school.

¹¹⁰Department of Defense, "Military Manpower Training Report," op. cit., p. 43.

¹¹¹In academic year 1987-1988, 215 Navy officers attended intermediate service school (97 at the College of Naval Command and Staff); representing 1.6 percent of eligible officers. The Marine Corps, Army, and Air Force sent 6.5 percent, 6.0 percent, and 3.0 percent, respectively. The panel was also critical of the "one-level" nature of professional military education caused by the Naval War College providing essentially the same course at both levels. Only about 8 percent of Navy officers attend both an intermediate and a senior-level school. House of Representatives, "Report of the Panel on Military Education of the One Hundredth Congress of the Committee on Armed Services," First Session, April 21, 1989, p. 144 and 184.

¹¹²The Navy is currently sending 500 officers annually to service schools. Discussion with Joint Officer Policy Head at the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

The Navy identifies and tracks graduate education and follow-on experience through “subspecialty” codes. In the Navy’s scheme of assignments, shore tours afford an opportunity to develop officer professional skills in areas other than the “at sea” specialty. Approximately 1,400 officers are enrolled in funded postgraduate education programs; primarily at the Naval Postgraduate School.¹¹³ An additional 400 are enrolled in advanced programs in the health care professions. Postgraduate education is frequently part of the “career track” for many restricted line and staff corps communities. Promotion rates are generally higher for officers with a masters or above.

Educational levels of all officers, including LDOs and warrant officers, are depicted in Table D.3.

Assignment. “Sea duty” drives the assignment and career management processes for most Navy officers. Time at sea, underway, is essential to developing shipboard as well as Naval experience in future commanding officers of ships (and embarked aircraft squadrons). Prior to initial command at sea, officers are provided with three sea tours representing at least nine years of sea duty. Two or three shore tours of 2–3 years¹¹⁴ duration are used to increase professional knowledge, provide the opportunity to instruct, and/or pursue an advanced degree. Assignments after initial command, reflect whether the officer is on an “operators” track, with continued assignments, primarily at sea, in command positions and operational staffs or on a subspecialty track with similar assignments ashore. Key milestones for this typical aviator, submariner, and

Table D.3
Educational Level of Navy Officers (as of September 30, 1992)

	Officer	Warrant	Total
Non HS Grad	0	0	0
HS Grad	1,025	477	1,502
Some college	964	278	1,242
Bachelors	38,004	191	38,195
Masters	19,182	35	19,217
Ph.D.	419	0	419
Total	59,594	981	60,575

NOTE: 1993 *Uniformed Services Almanac*, p. 227.

¹¹³Department of Defense, “Military Manpower Training Report,” op. cit., p. 42.

¹¹⁴Nuclear-power-qualified (junior) officers rarely spend more than two years ashore; the need to remain current in the operation of a nuclear reactor is frequently cited as the reason for short shore tours.

surface warrior path is qualifying in the warfare specialty (e.g., “earning your dolphins,” etc.), being screened by a board for department head, and being screened by a board for command.

Each officer designator has a designator advisor,¹¹⁵ an officer community manager for formulating and recommending policy affecting that specific designator, and a “detailer.”¹¹⁶ Professional development paths are formulated and published for each community. They depict a typical career path, with the types of assignments one could expect at any point in a career. Career paths both develop the officer and provide ample opportunity for the officer to apply the knowledge or experience gained. Thus, the amount of sea-duty time varies as a function of the need for the specific skills at sea. JAG Corps officers (lawyers) have relatively little sea duty, reflective of where their services are both needed and refined.

Detailers assign officers to specific billets in specific units. Most billets have a training track associated, and newly reporting officers receive training en route to their next assignment. Commanding officers have the option to assign officers wherever needed, but specialized training requirements sometimes minimize job shifts inside the unit.

Promotion. The Navy was generally the fastest promoting service for officers in 1992.¹¹⁷ Promotion opportunity has been reduced 10 percent for O-4 and 5 percent for O-5 in FY 1994 to maintain flow point. See Tables D-4 and D-5.

Separation. The drawdown strategy adopted by the Navy was to attempt to retain high-quality people and to not involuntarily separate individuals prior to retirement eligibility. Reduced career opportunity for reserve officers and selective early retirement of retirement-eligible O-5s and O-6s were the primary elements used initially. Subsequently, the size and timing of the reductions have forced the Navy to use a variety of programs to remain within controls while shaping and maintaining the viability of the officer corps during the drawdown.

Selective early retirement (SER) initially targeted senior O-5s and O-6s; 442 were retired in 1991. Voluntary retirements in 1992, in part a response to the concern about being forced out, reduced the SER from 400 to approximately 225—again at the O-5 and O-6 levels. In 1993, the eligibility zone was expanded, including retirement-eligible LDOs and warrant officers, as well as by reducing the time in

¹¹⁵A flag officer who is an OPNAV principal official, chief of a bureau, or systems command commander.

¹¹⁶Assignment officer.

¹¹⁷“Navy Promotions on Fastest Track,” *Navy Times*, April 19, 1993, p. 3.

Table D.4
Actual and Planned Promotion Opportunity, FY 1989–1994 (in percentage)—Navy

Year	O-6 DOPMA=50%	O-5 DOPMA=70%	O-4 DOPMA=80%
1989	55	70	80
1990	55	70	80
1991	55	70	80
1992	55	70	80
1993	55	70	80
1994 ^a	55	65	70

^aPlanned percentages.

Table D.5
Promotion Timing, FY 1989–1992 (in years and months)—Navy

Year	O-6 DOPMA=22	O-5 DOPMA=16	O-4 DOPMA=10
1989	22-5	15-11	9-10
1990	22-3	16-6	10-5
1991	22-1	16-4	10-8
1992	21-11	16-0	10-8
Goal	20-0	15-0	10-0

grade for O-5s and O-6s. Of the 400 officers selected for early retirement, 36 were LDOs and 37 were chief warrant officers. Initially planning for a 400 SER, a 3 billion dollar budget decrement in February 1993 expanded the need to retire officers. Current estimates for the 1994 board are between 550 to 600—400 O-5s and O-6s, and 150–200 LDO lieutenant commanders and chief warrant officers.¹¹⁸

VSI/SSB was initially offered to officers in FY 1993, with 700 officers electing to separate. The incentives were offered again with a goal of 763¹¹⁹ officers to separate in FY 1994; 690 applications were approved, and the Navy may make another limited offer for FY 1994. The Navy used that Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA) to ask twice failed, select lieutenant commanders (and several other small groups of officers) to retire in FY 1994. Additionally, the Navy offered early retirement to other groups of officers on a voluntary basis with some early success.¹²⁰ For the first time ever, O-2 officers who failed

¹¹⁸CNO Naval Administrative message of August 13, 1993, FY-94 Selective Early Retirement (SER).

¹¹⁹CNO Naval Administrative message of May 10, 1993, Manpower and Personnel Update.

¹²⁰290 officer applications had been approved by November 1, 1993. CNO Naval Administrative message of November 1, 1993, Manpower and Personnel Update.

selection to lieutenant in this year's board will be released from active duty by March 1994.¹²¹

Marine Corps

The Marines are frequently portrayed as "lean and mean"; the relative smallness (and closeness) of their officer corps characterizes the corps' approach to officer management. The Marine Corps uses only two officer categories—unrestricted and restricted. Unrestricted officers are eligible to command and are sometimes further identified as "ground" or "air." Restricted officers are LDOs (and warrant officers—WOs). Military Occupation Specialty (MOS)¹²² codes are used to identify skills of both billets and personnel. Unrestricted officers include traditional military skill groupings—infantry, field artillery, pilot, logistics, etc. Navy health care officers and Navy chaplains serve with and service the Marine Corps. However, lawyers are unrestricted Marine officers, serve in nontraditional positions, and are eligible to command. LDOs provide management expertise in technical areas. Most LDO MOSs are shared with the warrant officer community with the exception of ordnance officer, electronics maintenance officer (ground and aviation), and the director, U.S. Marine Band.

A comprehensive, two year review of Marine officer billets was completed by an Officer Force Management Review Panel (OFMRP) in December 1989, the first such study since 1976. The OFMRP reviewed, among other things, all officer requirements with an eye toward reducing overall growth and grade creep, especially in the field grades. LDO billets were reduced by 925 (a 62 percent reduction); unrestricted officer billets grew by 36 (after 109 LDO billet conversions); overall, 780 officer billets were eliminated. Most (732) of the officer billets that were eliminated were converted to warrant officer positions; a total of 134 LDO/WO positions were eliminated. Fifty-nine LDO and 116 unrestricted officer field-grade positions were eliminated or reduced to company grade.¹²³

¹²¹Don Ward, "Promotion Rate Holds Steady for Lieutenants," *Navy Times*, September 27, 1993, p. 4.

¹²²There are 36 basic MOSs: personnel and administration; intelligence; infantry; logistics; field artillery; utilities (WO only); engineer, construction and equipment; printing and reproduction (WO only); tank and assault amphibian; ordnance (LDO/WO only); ammunition and explosive ordnance disposal (LDO/WO only); operational communications; signals intelligence/ground electronic warfare; data/communications maintenance (LDO/WO only); supply administration and operations; traffic management (LDO/WO only); food service (LDO/WO only); auditing, finance, and accounting; motor transport; data systems; Marine Corps exchange (LDO/WO only); public affairs; legal services; training and visual information support (LDO/WO only); music (LDO/WO only); nuclear, biological, and chemical (WO only); military police and corrections; electronics maintenance (LDO/WO only); aircraft maintenance; avionics (LDO/WO only); aviation ordnance (LDO/WO only); weather service (LDO/WO only); airfield services (WO only); air control/air support/antiair warfare; air traffic control; and pilots/naval flight officers.

¹²³Department of Defense, "Military Manpower Training Report," op. cit., 1991, p. V-35.

However, additional field-grade authorizations were sought for FY 1994 from the Congress over those provided initially in DOPMA and later in 1986.

In 1991 the Commandant of the Marine Corps convened a force structure planning group to develop a force structure plan for the future. This plan, "USMC 2001 Force Structure Implementation Plan" (or "USMC 2001"), has been used as the road map for the drawdown.

Accessions. Unrestricted Marine officers are accessed through the Naval Academy and NROTC program, through the only "off campus commissioning program" used by any of the services (platoon leaders class (PLC)), and through OCS. Approximately 50 percent of accessions come from the Naval Academy and NROTC and 50 percent from PLC/OCS.¹²⁴ No more than one-sixth of Naval Academy and NROTC graduates may be commissioned in the Marine Corps. The marine enlisted commissioning education program (MECEP) provides opportunity for enlisted personnel to gain a commission; the program is administered at NROTC units. Additionally, the Marine Corps accesses through the BOOST¹²⁵ program for educationally and economically deprived enlisted people.

The Naval Academy, NROTC, MECEP, and PLC paths are long-lead-time programs; leaving only OCS as a short-lead-time program responsive to fluctuations in officer accession requirements in the near term. However, the "length" of the lead time is less for the Marine Corps than for other services because selection for the marine option usually occurs after at least one year of academic instruction. (There are a few Marine Corps NROTC scholarship winners who enter at the freshman level). The marines use a "try before buy" approach in all of their officer accession programs. Prospective academy and NROTC candidates must successfully complete "bulldog," a physically demanding and mentally challenging six-week course in the summer before their senior year. This contrasts markedly with their "Navy option" classmates who go on a summer "cruise" designed to gain experience but rarely used to screen out future officers. PLC candidates participate in either two 6-week or one 10-week program (depending on when in their undergraduate careers they were recruited as a PLC). OCS is 10 weeks long. Both PLC and OCS training incorporate most of the elements of bulldog.

¹²⁴Ibid., August 1993, pp. 28-29.

¹²⁵See explanation under Navy Accessions subsection.

Accessions have been constrained¹²⁶ by 350 (± 50) during the drawdown. A steady-state accession of approximately 1,380 is required to support an officer corps of the size anticipated after the drawdown.¹²⁷ Shortages of junior officers (O-2)¹²⁸ are being observed in the operating forces, and current planning, in light of the Bottom-Up Review, is to access to the steady-state level.

Education. All newly commissioned Marine officers, regardless of commissioning source, attend the six-month basic school. Upon completion, the officer proceeds to initial skill training; 53 initial skill training courses (averaging 84 days in length) are provided by the corps;¹²⁹ other services training¹³⁰ is also used; and all flight training is conducted (jointly) with the Navy.

Skill progression training is provided through 264 courses (averaging 25 days in length) offered by the corps, as well as courses offered by the other services.¹³¹ Like the Air Force's squadron officer school, the Marine Corps conducts career officer professional courses of a broad nature at its amphibious warfare school (AWS). AWS prepares captains for duties in battalion or squadron command or on regimental staffs. The course length is 39 weeks,¹³² and approximately 30 percent of eligible officers attend.

The Marine Corps' intermediate service school is the Command and Staff College (C&SC) at Quantico, Virginia.¹³³ Marine Corps policy is that all officers will participate in professional military education (PME), either through resident or self-study programs;¹³⁴ approximately 20 percent, 250 annually, of eligible officers attend resident courses. Selection for attendance is made by assignment officers.¹³⁵ A special panel on military education chaired by Representative Ike Skelton of the House Armed Services Committee was critical of, among other things, the apparent substitution of AWS for intermediate service college (only 14

¹²⁶Department of Defense, "Military Manpower Training Report," op. cit., June 1993, p. V-18.

¹²⁷An officer end strength of approximately 18,125 was used to establish the accession steady-state figure.

¹²⁸Rostker et al., *The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act of 1980*, op. cit., p. 104, Figure C-2. The figure graphically portrays a "valley" in fiscal year 1993 for marine officers with less than three years of service.

¹²⁹Department of Defense, "Military Manpower Training Report," op. cit., p. 42.

¹³⁰For example, artillery officer school at the Army's Fort Sill.

¹³¹Department of Defense, "Military Manpower Training Report," op. cit., p. 44.

¹³²*Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹³³While the Marine Corps C&SC has been in existence for some time, only recently has the Marine Corps University been established, of which the C&SC is a component.

¹³⁴MCO P1553.4

¹³⁵Referred to as "monitors" in the Marine Corps. The selections made by the monitors are approved by a general officer.

percent of applicable field-grade officers had attended both AWS and an intermediate service school).¹³⁶

Senior service college selection is by board action with approximately 60 per year attending. Until the recent establishment of the Marine University and the Marine War College, the Marine Corps did not have its own senior service college. The University is subordinate to the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), which speaks well of the importance placed by the corps on the schools composing the university.

In response to the drawdown and the increasing importance of PME to joint officer and acquisition professional career management, the Marine Corps established annual attendance levels for each PME school consistent with Military Education Policy Document¹³⁷ standards where applicable.

Approximately 150 officers are enrolled in funded postgraduate education programs; primarily at the Naval Postgraduate School.¹³⁸ Educational levels of all officers, including LDOs and warrant officers, are depicted in Table D.6.

Assignment. Career progression is a blend of tours in operational units, staffs, training, and professional education. From an operational standpoint, the Marine Corps maintains embarked forces in amphibious readiness groups and forces overseas in Okinawa and Japan. Tours are generically of three years' duration. The Marine Corps is completing two personnel assignment programs¹³⁹ that reduce personnel turbulence and improve unit cohesion and

Table D.6
Educational Level of Marine Officers (as of September 30, 1992)

	Officer	Warrant	Total
Non HS Grad	0	2	2
HS Grad	567	1,248	1,815
Some college	116	197	313
Bachelors	13,415	204	13,619
Masters	2,682	32	2,714
Ph.D.	58	0	58
Total	16,838	1,683	18,521

SOURCE: 1993 *Uniformed Services Almanac*, p. 227.

¹³⁶Report of the Panel on Military Education of the 100th Congress of the Committee on Armed Services," op. cit, p. 154.

¹³⁷The CJCS Military Education Policy Document, CM-1618-93.

¹³⁸Department of Defense, "Military Manpower Training Report," op. cit., p. 42.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, pp. V-19 and V-20.

readiness. The “accompanied tours WestPac program” converted one-year unaccompanied tours into three-year accompanied tours. The unit deployment program provides virtually all of the combat and combat support forces to WestPac on a six-month rotation from units home ported either in the Continental United States or Hawaii. Assignment to operational units results in deployment or embarkation nominally 6 months out of every 24. The Marine Corps is predicting longer deployments resulting from reductions in end strength without corresponding decreases in operational commitments.¹⁴⁰

Only recently has the Marine Corps adopted a command selection board process for lieutenant colonel and colonel commanding officer billets. Previously, the relative smallness of the corps and an officer’s professional reputation were sufficient to identify officers on the “fast track.” Officers are frequently assigned to the major headquarters in a location and then reassigned by that headquarters to a specific unit and billet. A philosophy of officer management whereby all billets of a certain grade are equally in need of being filled by the very best, and all officers in a certain grade will do their very best manifests itself as a “quality spread”; monitors ensure that a cross section (based on performance) of officers is assigned to a specific MOS or type of unit.

Promotion. The Marine Corps has sought legislative relief from the DOPMA grade tables to increase O-4 and O-5 authorizations¹⁴¹ and bring promotion timing and promotion opportunity at the O-4 and O-5 levels in line with DOPMA guidelines. The problem arose primarily because of large year groups in the mid-1980s. In addition to increased accession, augmentation, and retention, requirements for field-grade officers have increased. The drawdown has exacerbated the problem and the corps has over 700 field-grade billets that are either unfilled or being filled with company-grade officers.¹⁴²

The USMC states that its various billet and structure studies shows a higher requirement for field grades than the number of field grades authorized. In many respects, the history of the increase in the USMC field-grade tables during the DOPMA era mirrors the Air Force experience in the OGLA era. Additional authorizations are sought to maintain promotion opportunity and timing as

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. V-10.

¹⁴¹The original DOPMA grade table for the Marine Corps (10 USC 523 (a)(1)), for an officer strength of 17,500, included 2,936 majors, 1,579 ltcols, and 633 cols. The current table (amended in the FY 86 DoD Authorization) for 17,500 is 3,085 majors (+149, +5 percent), 1,579 ltcols (0), and 633 cols (0). The most recent proposal for 17,500 end strength would be for 3,656 majors (+571, +18.5 percent), 1,815 ltcols (+236, +15 percent), and 633 cols (0). The increases would be offset by decreases in company-grade authorizations. If approved, the increases would be phased in over a four year period.

¹⁴²Gregory, “Why Is it Taking Longer to Get Promoted?” op. cit., pp. 36–38.

cohorts “age” over time. As shown in Figure D.8, O-4 authorizations were increased by the Congress in 1986 (current) over those initially contained in DOPMA (original). For FY 1994, the Congress ratified temporary USMC-proposed increases in authorizations for O-4 and O-5.

The net effect of this can be seen in Figure D.9. The USMC, with its proposed increases to the grade table, will have the “richest” grade table—proportionally more field-grade officers—of any service. The “lean and mean” service with much support provided by other services will have proportionally more authorization for the most senior officers.

The Marine Corps has not been able to remain within DOPMA promotion timing or opportunity guidelines.

Separation. The drawdown strategy employed by the Marine Corps was to reduce accessions, encourage voluntary retirements, restrict augmentation of reserve officers, and selectively early retire career O-5s and O-6s who have at least twice been considered for promotion.

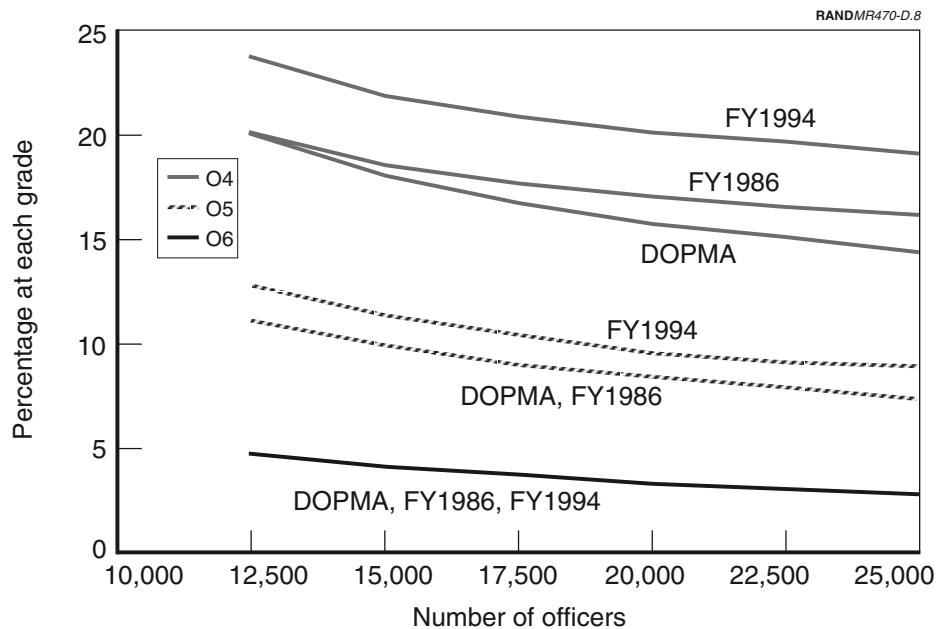


Figure D.8—Change in USMC Field-Grade Table Since DOPMA

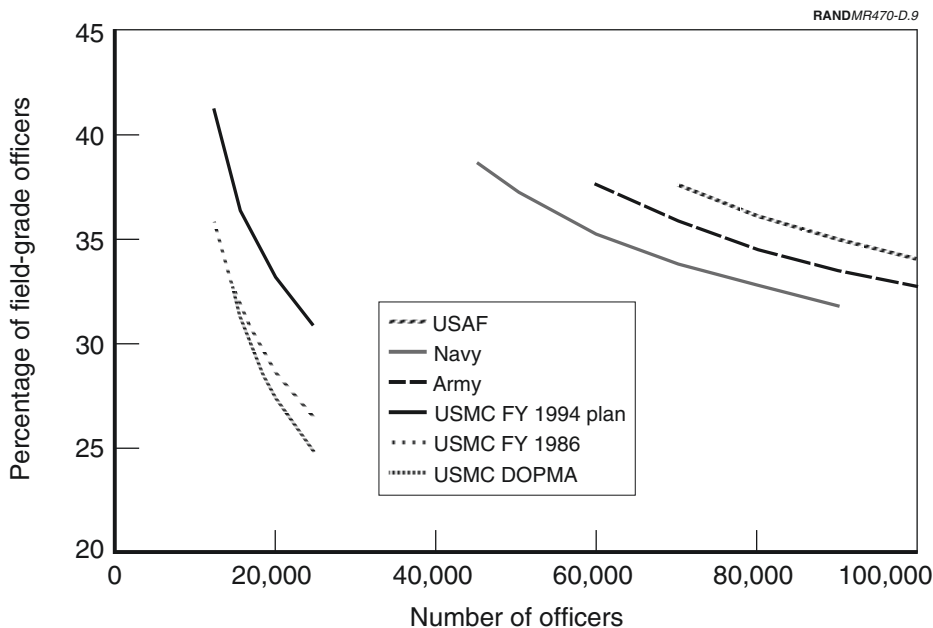


Figure D.9—Pictorial Representation of the Sliding-Scale Grade Table

Table D.7
Actual and Planned Promotion Opportunity, FY 1989–1994 (in percentage)—Marine Corps

Year	O-6 DOPMA=50%	O-5 DOPMA=70%	O-4 DOPMA=80%
1989	50	65	75
1990	50	65	70
1991	50	65	70
1992	50	65	70
1993	50	60	70
1994	45	60	70

NOTE: Captain opportunity is at 90 percent (5 percent below DOPMA guidelines).

SOURCE: Gregory, "Why Is it Taking Longer to Get Promoted?" op. cit., pp. 37–38.

An unintended drawdown strategy has been the reductions in promotion opportunity discussed previously (see Tables D-7 and D-8). In FY 1993, as many as 54 O-2s and 73 O-3s were separated because the Marine Corps was unable to promote to DOPMA guidelines.¹⁴³ In FY 1992, 50 O-6s and 75 O-5s and in

¹⁴³Department of Defense, "Military Manpower Training Report," op. cit., FY 1994, *Officer Flow Annex*, June 1993, p. 41.

FY 1993, 16 O-6s and 62 O-5s were selected for early retirement. Augmentation of reserve officers was constrained by approximately 100 annually. The Bottom-Up Review supported a Marine Corps end strength of 174,000, which is an increase over the previous administration. If approved, Marine Corps manpower officials will not need to selectively early retire any O-6s. Other reductions will be less severe than currently planned.

Table D.8
Actual and Planned Promotion Timing, FY 1989-1997 (in years and months)—Marine Corps

Year	O-6 DOPMA=22	O-5 DOPMA=16	O-4 DOPMA=10
1989	21-10	16-10	12-3
1990	21-9	16-10	12-1
1991	21-11	17-3	12-3
1992	22-0	17-3	12-2
1993 ^a	22-2	18-3	12-6
1994	22-4	18-8	12-8
1995	22-7	19-2	13-0
1996	23-0	19-3	13-1
1997	23-3	19-6	13-2
Goal	20-0	15-0	10-0

NOTE: Marine Corps proposal for change to grade table.

^aThese are Marine Corps estimates for promotion timing based on current field-grade authorizations. If the additional field grades are approved, promotion timing improves (dramatically in the case of O-4s); in FY 1997, promotion timing with the additional authorizations would be 11-4, 17-0, and 22-9 for O-4/O-5/O-6, respectively.