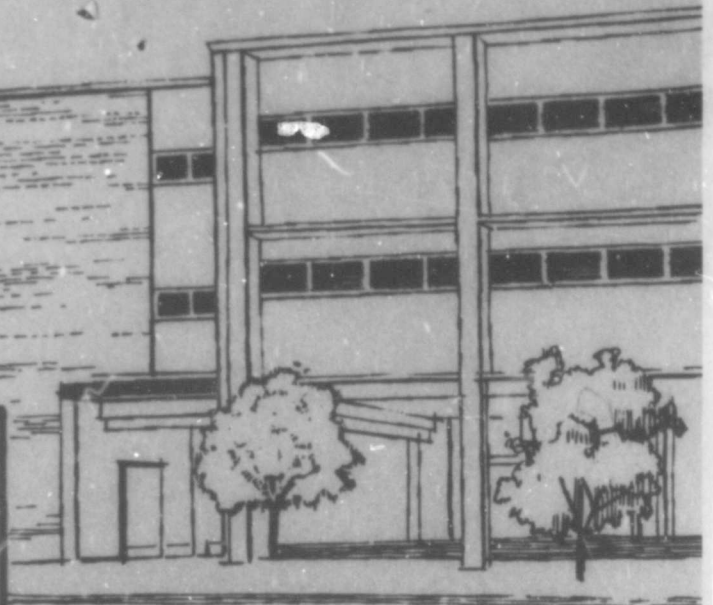


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**the effects of  
basic military training  
on the attitude  
of  
Air Force enlistees**

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FRED D. HARBURG  
 Cadet First Class

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THE EFFECTS OF BASIC MILITARY TRAINING  
ON THE  
ATTITUDE OF AIR FORCE ENLISTEES

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JULY 1971

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**THE EFFECTS OF BASIC MILITARY TRAINING ON THE  
ATTITUDE OF AIR FORCE ENLISTEES**

<b>I. Introduction.</b>	i
<b>II. Strengths and Weaknesses</b>	1
<b>A. Objectives</b>	
1. Present Objectives	
2. Desired Objectives	
a. Sense of Purpose as an Airman	
b. Meaningful Challenge	
c. Adaptation to Military Discipline and Customs	
d. Awareness of Opportunities for Improvement of Human Value	
e. Motivation to Perform	
f. Goal Setting	
g. Pride, Confidence, Poise	
<b>B. Administrative Detail</b>	9
1. Time	
2. Expenditure	
3. Conditions for Training Instructors	
4. Teaching and Testing Methods	
a. Differing Educational Backgrounds	
b. Performance Testing Vs. Paper and Pencil Testing on Subject Matter	

5.	Individual Career Desire Vs. Air Force Needs	
C.	Socio-Cultural Framework	
1.	Permissive Upbringing	
2.	Cultural, Educational, and Ethnic Diversity of Entrants	
3.	Changing Values of Enlistee's Society	
4.	Anti-Military Sentiment	
5.	Zero Draft Environment	
III.	Existing Studies Done in BMT Area	22
A.	Office of Naval Research	
B.	HumRRO	
C.	Personnel Division of AF Human Resources Laboratory	
D.	BMT Evaluation Division, Air Training Command, Lackland AFB	
IV.	Conclusions and Recommendations	37
V.	Appendix A, Course Chart of BMT	
VI.	Bibliography of References	45

## I. INTRODUCTION

America's Military Forces are presently facing a challenge in their attempt to attract intelligent young men into the enlisted ranks. The recent developments in the changing image of the United States military services have interested this researcher in the effects that basic military training may have on the young enlisted man's attitude toward a military career and his motivation to become a member of today's military organization. This paper is the result of six weeks of independent research addressing these problems. It has been accomplished for the Dean of Faculty of the United States Air Force Academy under the direction of the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, Air Force Systems Command, USAF, July 1971. The paper is a condensation and interpretation of research work done by authorities in areas related to motivation and attitude effects of basic training. While this paper represents six weeks of effort, and interviews with professionals in the field, the scope of this inquiry is necessarily limited by time and other factors. Hence it may be considered a preliminary view of a large and complex subject, and much worthy research in the field remains to be considered.

This report is presented in an informal and narrative form. However, it is based on the findings of many qualified research investigators whose

studies were of a thoroughly scientific nature. The paper attempts to portray the behavior and attitudes of the new generation of young men coming into basic military training today. I have written the report as a member of that generation as well as the Air Force, and as one concerned about the future of the US Air Force. It may have some value if it is accepted as a view of the complex training task that we are now facing as seen by one Air Force partisan. I hope that this study will be applicable to all of the services of the US military, as ideas have been borrowed from each, but emphasis has been given to the Air Force basic training program because that is the focus of my professional interest.

The problems in Basic Military Training with which I am concerned fall in three categories. The first area of concern is the broad objectives of basic training. The second area of difficulty is the administrative domain. The changing socio-cultural environment from which basic trainees are drawn is the third source of complexity. In discussing these problems, I realize that basic training is under a constant barrage of internal and external criticism. The dedicated individuals who compose the training and evaluation staffs deserve credit for the outstanding job they are doing. While their program is good, the changing national

character demands a changing military as well. Identification of problems that I see and reference to the work of researchers in the fields of motivation, training, education, and attitude have enabled me to offer possible approaches to improve the Air Force Basic Training Program.

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## II. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

### A. Objectives

An examination of Air Force Basic Training should begin with consideration of the objectives of the training program. What is it that we hope to impart to a new recruit in the six weeks that serve as his introduction to the Air Force? Air Force Regulation 50-42, as amended 30 April 1971, states:

1. Personnel to be Trained. All airmen (male and female) of the Regular Air Force, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard undergo BMT if they have had no previous military service.
2. BMT Objectives:
  - a. To provide an orderly transition from civilian to military life.
  - b. To provide initial records preparation, classification, and assignment.
  - c. To evaluate and discharge airmen (male and female) who fail to meet minimum standards for retention in the Air Force.
  - d. To issue initial clothing and related items.
  - e. To provide the essential military knowledges and skill requisite to initial duty in the Air Force.
  - f. To develop in each student the concept that Air Force mission accomplishment depends on the effective performance of its individual members.

g. To help each student to understand, accept, and support the Air Force mission, organization, traditions, customs, and courtesies.

h. To develop high standards of conduct, morals, and integrity in each student.

The most obviously missing elements of the objective statement are those that deal with the man's attitude. The 30 April 1971 addition of the words "accept, and support the Air Force mission, . . ." represents a move in the right direction. Basic training, as the young enlisted man's introduction to the Air Force, provides the unique opportunity to turn on the young man to the possibilities of a satisfying existence in the organization he has chosen to join. In a time of political and military uncertainty it is important that we not forget the primary objective of basic training, to offer the young man a sense of purpose and positive direction into which he may channel his efforts.

The trainee must be able to understand and accept the larger picture of what it is that he is training for. If his purpose as an Air Force member is not truthfully and satisfactorily defined for him at the outset of his training, we cannot hope for him to be highly motivated toward his career in the Air Force. During the second World War there were several highly

educated individuals who were needed to accomplish unskilled labor tasks. Those individuals worked long hours in what might be considered boring jobs and yet they found job satisfaction because they had an understanding of the mission for which they were working and they believed in that mission. It is clear to me that the airmen I have interviewed lack feeling for the mission of the Air Force today. We are now finishing a period of undeclared war. While that war was not a conventional one in terms of objectives and employment of military capabilities, it was nonetheless the ultimate mission for which much of the basic training was done. In spite of this fact, the trainees stated that there was little mention ever made of the Vietnamese conflict during their basic training. This paper is not intended as a critique of training for our South East Asian effort. The point I wish to make is that the enlistee should receive a factual presentation of why he is needed for the defense of our nation. It may be argued that a sense of mission should come from some advanced training school, yet it does not.

A second desirable objective of BMT should be to provide a meaningful challenge to the recruit. An often used expression by airmen in describing BMT was "Mickey Mouse". Most airmen seemed to feel that basic was much too easy. The training instructors were in agreement with this

feeling as well. In numerous interviews with young airmen, they stated that as trainees they "learned to laugh at basic training". When asked what they thought of training at Lackland once they were away from it, many replied that "It was a joke." That attitude seem to indicate that the training is not perceived to be relevant, important, nor serious. That perception is strengthened by the emphasis given to harassment and triviality in inspection criterion. The basics described this as a tactic to "see how much we could take", or "ridiculous stuff you've got to put up with". The perception that basic is not a serious matter and that the training is largely unimportant, deserves thoughtful consideration. Whether or not this situation is in fact pictured accurately is not the most important factor in dealing with attitude. The training may be very important but if the men perceive it to be unimportant, then for them it becomes unimportant and they conduct themselves accordingly. If trainees at Lackland perceive the training to be a joke and the trainers to be insincere, much of the value of basic training will be lost. Physical, mental, and emotional challenges of a strenuous nature are being called for by the young airmen. My interviews have shown that trainees do not want easy treatment. They want to feel like men who can handle adversity. We would commit a mistake by pampering a young man who

has come by choice to an organization distinguished as a source of national defense. Most of those interviewed stated that the quality of their training instructor was the most important aspect of BMT. Those with favorable responses for their training instructors said that he was hard and demanding but fair and intelligent in his enforcement of standards.

An objective which is closely related to meaningful challenge is adaptation to military discipline and customs. There was a surprisingly favorable response to questions concerning drill and marching. Although most of the men could offer no relevance for marching to a career in the Air Force, they pointed out that marching offered the only opportunity during training to work together with their fellow airmen. Many of them mentioned pride in their unit and in themselves when they spoke of the parade. Those who had less favorable comments concerning drill mentioned that while it was unpleasant, it was an experience shared with their contemporaries. While they saw marching as a senseless activity in and of itself, they gained from it some feeling for one another. The more positive airmen labeled this feeling of commonalty "esprit".

Those who seemed to have favorable attitudes toward military traditions and discipline said that customs of the Air Force had been explained

as courtesies not as obligations and that discipline had been explained as necessary for efficient operation rather than as dogmatic behavior.

Another important objective of BMT should be the awareness of the opportunities for the improvement of one's human value. The idea that an airman has traded his freedoms and enjoyments for a uniform must not be implanted at basic training. The educational, recreational, religious, and cultural opportunities in the Air Force are vast indeed. The facilities at different bases, the travel opportunities, and the fine people in the Air Force offer a unique opportunity for an enjoyable life, yet most airmen do not take advantage of these aspects of service life and many complain that there is nothing for them to do. Again much of the fault lies at the base where an airman is assigned, but let us not miss the opportunity to encourage the airmen to actively pursue this important part of service life. We have the film making ability to prepare a factual and highly motivational motion picture depicting the possibilities of such a life, but the alternative low morale life-style should be presented in the same movie. The opportunity for advancement, special training, career progression, and satisfying extra-curricular activities must be pursued by the airmen and we should encourage him, from his first day in the Air Force, to seek such a life.

High morale does not come to the airman without effort on his part.

At basic training we can stimulate that attitude. Training instructors with such records are a critical addition to such a program.

A recognized objective of basic training is an appreciation for how one may be rewarded for performing his job in a superior manner. The explanation of the W. A. P. program is one way that this is being done at the present time. A further explanation of bonuses and the new benefits that are becoming available to airmen who are willing to do good work should be made. A good effort is presently being made in this area although some commanders insist that airmen are not informed nor interested.

An objective of BMT which deserves consideration is the setting of goals by the individuals. While time restrictions prohibit the training staff from giving personal counseling to each of the more than 100,000 men who pass through BMT yearly, more individual counseling should be offered. The peculiar position of evaluator and immediate superior held by the training instructor makes it difficult for the basic to bring his problems to this person. An outside counselor would be a much preferable alternative. While some informal discussion takes place at basic training,

a more structured "rap session" with the flights by their training instructors has proven to be productive and informative. Those training instructors who were willing to take the time to lead such a session, discussing their own goals and career progression, have had a favorable effect on the recruits.

The final area in which I believe the objectives of BMT should be bolstered is the very vague and abstract area of pride, confidence, and poise. Too often it seems that airmen are ashamed of the fact that they are in the Air Force. Previous studies have shown that attitudes in this area have increased slightly during BMT. With almost no exceptions, the airmen interviewed stated that they enjoyed the confidence course. The comment was often made that it was too easy. The reason for enjoyment again was that the course offered a challenge. Those airmen who felt that they had gained poise from their training experience stated that their training instructor was demanding of their performance of drill and customs, but that he was never seriously insulting or degrading to them. This final objective again realizes the necessity to treat the recruit with firmness but fairness giving him his due respect as a human being and encouraging pride in himself and in his organization.

The objectives I have discussed are probably acceptable to the reader of this paper, but he may be asking how these problems may be resolved. A pragmatic point of view would force one to say that there are many things we would like instilled within the basic, but time restraints prevent us from doing so. Because the man's performance is directly effected by his attitude toward his work, and because the objectives I have discussed deal with improving the airman's attitude, I maintain that they represent the most critical objectives of the training program. I have mentioned some ideas for the implementation of these objectives and more have been made by the seasoned researchers to whom I will later appeal.

#### B. Administrative Detail

The second major area of examination in the search for a better BMT program is the administrative realm. I wish to discuss briefly this aspect of the program since the efficiency of BMT has a direct effect upon the attitude of the enlistee.

There is much debate concerning the time period for BMT. While most training instructors feel that six weeks is not long enough to accomplish the existing objectives of the program, some point out that what is actually accomplished could be done in three weeks rather than six. The

six week period appears to be a result of economic rather than academic constraints. While the six week time period remains constant, the monthly load of trainees is variable. Increased loads of trainees put tremendous strain on the messing facilities, dormitory spaces, instruction personnel, and training space. Ideally a variable time scale would be suited for this task. If a man could satisfactorily demonstrate mastery of the essential elements of basic training in three weeks rather than six it would offer a great aid to the overtaxed staff to graduate him at that time. If a man were slower to learn and needed longer to accomplish the same amount of material he might be retained for nine weeks. While such a program seems idealistic, a program capable of meeting this goal has been successfully implemented by the HumRRO Laboratories in Monterey, California, in an Army Field Wireman's Course. An individually paced training program has also been designed for Army basic training and is being evaluated as a part of the current Army Project VOLAR (Volunteer Army).<sup>7</sup>

The second administrative problem area is the financial. It is, of course, true that the Congress is always looking for ways to cut the military budget. The cost figure given to me for one year's operation of the Lackland BMT school is \$145 million.<sup>4</sup> This figure includes the

cost of transportation for the recruit to training, his clothing cost, his pay, the Training Instructor's pay, food costs, and the operation and maintenance of the base. It is actually quite amazing that this figure is as low as it is. \$1,450 per student is a relative low cost figure for six weeks of training, but even so, such a large expenditure would prompt the examination of every facet of the training program to see what is essential. The firing of the M-16 rifle offers such an example. It has recently been argued by Viet Nameese commanders that American airmen are not receiving enough M-16 training; however, the number of trainees who ever have the opportunity to use an M-16 is slight compared to the number of airmen who fire 100 rounds at basic training. Should not more extensive training be given to those who will use the weapon before they enter conflict? It has further been argued that every service man should receive arms training. This raises an interesting point in the discussion of attitude effect of training. Most airmen interviewed mentioned that they thoroughly enjoyed M-16 training. In fact, most complained that they did not have more time to fire the weapon. When further questioned, many mentioned not only disappointment that BMT was so easy, but also that there was not more combat type training. While no rationale was offered by these individuals for their feelings, it was evident that many

of them were frustrated because they did not have the opportunity to play the role of a soldier. The airman's place as a non-combatant technical specialist is not made clear to him before he enters training, nor is it clarified during his BMT. The result, I believe, is a feeling that training was too easy. Perhaps training is too easy, but the trainers and the trainees are speaking of different things when they use this common expression.

Another administrative problem is the treatment and selection of the Training Instructors. It is a self-evident truth that the training instructor has the best opportunity to influence the attitudes of the trainee. If the instructor has a bad attitude, then a large amount of implanting of his negative feelings may be transferred to the recruit during BMT. If the selection process of training instructors is a good one, the training program will be directly benefited. For these reasons the training instructor position must be an attractive one. The addition of a pro pay to his salary is long overdue. The necessity of his marching and the weather conditions create a real laundry problem for him. He should receive free laundry service, if possible. The promotion scale for training instructors should be slightly better than other career fields. The training instructor should not be promoted out of his job if he is doing well. A senior master

sergeant probably has great competence in leading men on the squadron level. We should not restrict him from doing so because of his high rank. More Air Force wide recognition of the excellent work being done by some of the training instructors should be given to these men. The feeling that training instructors have no input into policy making should be eliminated. A training instructor should have the opportunity to leave Lackland after his tour; he should never feel trapped or forced to stay against his will. Such an attitude permeates the lowest ranks when it is present. The training instructors should receive as much education as possible in leadership and the behavioral aspects of group work. The attempt should be made to screen applicants for training instructor positions, a man who has demonstrated the ability to earn the respect of his subordinates and his superiors should be the primary target of a selection process. Some researchers have suggested personality testing, but at present, there are few reliable indicators of the qualities needed by a training instructor.

Another administrative difficulty appears in the teaching and testing methods presently used in the BMT program. Many of the airmen interviewed complained that the classes contained important material, but that there was so much that it was difficult to discern what was essential

for the completion of BMT. This complaint is one common to any high school or university student and well it might be. The traditional lecture, demonstration testing paradigm is one of the least effective ways to transfer knowledge from a teacher to an average or lower ability student. A rather extensive body of work has been done on this subject by the HumRRO laboratory in Monterey, California. I will describe the HumRRO/Army alternative to the present method in a later part of this paper. A lengthy discussion with the NCOs in charge of measurement and testing revealed that even the staff feels that the 28th day evaluation test is a poor indication of mastery of the essential knowledge that a basic trainee should acquire. In many cases a young man who has some familiarity with military customs and courtesies can pass the examination before going through basic training. This examination is intended to identify a man as being qualified for entrance into the Air Force, yet I am sure that we hope he has retained more of his training than the tests indicate. The HumRRO project deals with this problem by making the testing operational and behavioral rather than subject matter oriented. Some subjects such as pay and allowances or military law do not lend themselves to such a performance testing procedure but many do. Examples of subjects that could be performance tested are NBC Warfare and Defense, Customs and

Courtesies, Drill and Ceremonies, and First Aid. The HumRRO-devised testing program also demands complete mastery of the required behavior and nothing less than 100% performance of the standard is accepted.

The final administrative problem revealed by my interviews with young airmen concerns their career selections. One of the individuals with whom I spoke was a college graduate with a bachelor's degree in history; he had been assigned as a cook for his first tour of duty. After speaking to his commanding officer, we were able to identify the problem as an oversight. Unfortunately such examples are not as rare as we would like for them to be. Effort is presently being made to guarantee assignments to airmen with special skills before they come to basic, such a program would give more time to the basic training program since time would not be spent in placement testing while a man was at Lackland. It would also give the young man a sense of the positive direction in which he was moving.

It is reasonable to assume that the needs of the service must come first in career assignments, but a pre-entrance testing and computer assisted assignment program before entrance would act to streamline the basic training--first assignment transition and would substantially raise the morale of the enlistee.

The administrative difficulties in BMT are complex, but their relationship to the attitude of the basic trainee is real. Much of the existing research on BMT has been concerned with this area.

#### C. Socio-Cultural Framework

The final major category of problems facing the BMT program is today's socio-cultural environment. The factors which most directly affect the attitudes of today's enlistee are provided by the home, neighborhood, community and national situations. Expressions such as "generation gap" and the "new breed" are references to the changing life-style and changing values of the young men who are now entering the service.

The first area of interest is the permissive upbringing that most of these young men have experienced. A priori reasoning would lead one to believe that such an environment has led to the defiant behavior of many of today's young people. Some very interesting studies being done in this area at Wichita State University are suggesting that the uncertainty of such an upbringing has created a search for authority. Rebellious behavior may be a probe for that authority.

It is almost impossible to determine what the full effect of permissive home life has been on the entire population of young men since no two will have had the same environment. It is, however, certain that the

differences in the young men entering training will demand a different type of training from that which was appropriate for their predecessors. If we hope to obtain a graduate meeting similar standards, we must change the system by which he is trained.

The young man of high school age is certainly perplexed by the drug problem, the tense racial environment, and the demanding academic standards of his world. The diversity of backgrounds of the young men coming into the Air Force demands an updated appreciation for their cultural tastes and philosophies. The hope is to bring the commitment of the young man's convictions into the Air Force when he joins. If that hope for dedication is to succeed, it is important that the training staff be educated in what it is that is different about the new generation and why they are different. As long as there is a threatening atmosphere between the two groups, the problems can only be magnified, not resolved. This situation may be illustrated by a few quotes taken from my interviews with trainees and trainers. From a training instructor came the comment that "these young kids are harder than ever to train. They just don't have the respect for authority that they used to have." From a trainee came the comment, "I just don't understand why we should salute officers." When I asked if the trainees had received any

briefings concerning the Air Force stand on race relations, the response was negative. None of the black men I interviewed said they had ever been treated in a biased manner. I do not foresee the prevention of racial problems by the inclusion of a block of formal training, but a delicate and semi-informal discussion of this heretofore ignored topic could prove to be of great value. A direct preaching of equal opportunity does not have much appeal to young men who have grown up with television. The prior practice of demonstrating equal opportunity rather than talking about it, has had much merit, but these young men are much more verbally oriented than those who preceded them. I never had to draw out any of them in interviews. Almost without exception, they wished to talk more than I had time to listen.

On the topic of drugs, many stated that they had experimented with drugs and most laughed at the drug lectures that they had received in training. They expressed the feeling that drugs could be a source of real trouble, but they felt that they knew more about the subject than those giving the lectures.

Another area of sociological concern is the changing value system.

Money will always be a strong motivating factor in any job, but there is an increasing awareness on the part of the young that there is more to

life than job and salary. Young men of enlistment age are searching for ways to improve the quality of their lives. The assurance of self-value once they are on the job is becoming increasingly important to the enlistee. The opportunity to relate to his contemporaries in the civilian world in a pleasing manner is gaining added value. The young man is less rank conscious than his predecessors. While it would be dangerous to say that all of these young men feel this way, these attitudes are certainly affecting all of them to a greater or lesser degree.

A fourth sociological factor is the current anti-military sentiment of many of the enlistees' contemporaries. There is no reason for an enlistee to be ashamed of his membership in the military. The idea of taking pride in his organization and tolerance for the opinions of those whom he has joined the service to protect, should be emphasized in training. The trainee should not be filled with dogma or propaganda, but he should understand his mission well enough to recognize when he is being unjustly deprecated by people and organizations. His interest in the policies of his government should be encouraged lest he fail to perceive the importance of the service he is performing. A few of the airmen interviewed mentioned the lack of such a discussion in their basic training.

The zero draft environment is a fifth sociological factor affecting the young airman's attitude. The Air Force officers working on Project Volunteer gave me the figure 57.4% of all of those entering the Air Force are draft motivated.<sup>3</sup> With the programmed transition to an all volunteer force scheduled to take place on 1 July 1973, the problems of attracting intelligent young men into the Air Force are expected to increase. The May recruiting figure of 3,500 fell far short of the quota of 10,029 and the April enlistment of 938 with a desired quota of 9,507 is even less impressive. This situation makes a rather self-evident point. The lesson to be learned from this situation seems to be that the defense of the nation, a once highly respected profession, is now considered by many to be something that should be avoided. With the prospect of losing draft-motivated men in the Air Force pressing us, it seems that a fundamental question should be, do we want an individual who has been motivated to join the Air Force in order to avoid serving in the Army? Air Force personnel may, of course, pride themselves on the quality of life in the Air Force. Let it never be viewed as the lesser of evils. While this question is certainly beyond the scope of this paper, the attitude of the young men of draft age is sure to be affected. If we are in fact able to turn to an all volunteer force, the attitude of those who choose the Air Force as a career will certainly be improved

and the onus to insure that enlisted life is actually attractive to intelligent young men will rest with policy makers.

The socio-cultural environment of the draft age young man will have a decided effect on the young airman's attitude. If a young man cannot accept his role in the defense structure of the U. S. , perhaps it is best that he be allowed to leave the Air Force before more time and training dollars are spent on one who is relatively hostile to the organization in which he will work. My idea is not designed to cultivate a sub-culture of "right thinking" individuals. I only hope that we can attract intelligent young men, give them an objective view of their mission, explain the strengths and the imperfections of the system, and ask for and receive their dedicated support for the working of the Air Force. If that sounds idealistic, it is only because it is, yet I believe that it is worth working for.

Up to this point, this paper has largely reflected my personal opinions and perceptions formed through interviews and contact with basic trainees and trainers. I do not apologize for the very real lack of sensitivity that I have for the complexity of many of the problems I have mentioned. It should be understood that the people I am writing for, the young airmen, lack that same sensitivity. The remainder of this paper will deal with the existing studies done in the area of attitude effect of BMT.

### III. EXISTING STUDIES DONE IN BMT AREA

The Office of Naval Research was my first stop in data collection. The Navy is doing a number of studies related to the subject of this paper. One such study is a report on Attitudes and Values as Predictors of Military Performance. I have attempted to select those points in their findings which I believe most directly relate to my topic without taking them out of context.

The Navy Medical Neuropsychiatric Research Unit has cited an Army study of the attitudes of volunteers when they say, "... for if they (meaning Army volunteers) find the Army a situation in which a high premium is placed on docility, conformity and the ability to stay out of trouble, and if it is further a situation in which there is no significant reward for extra effort to acquire the really most important skills and knowledge of the soldier, then we believe they will truly become disillusioned. 11

The Naval report points out another interesting phenomenon which helps to explain the surprising disappointment airmen registered that discipline was not stricter at basic training.

"That adolescent males should like discipline would be too much to expect, even in less rebellious decades than ours, but it remains that adolescents may, as some clinical psychologists pointed out a decade ago, need limits. Perhaps it may be more accurate to say that adolescent males may feel a

valid sense of satisfaction at achievement of the group which is facilitated by the limitations on the individual in the group. Nearly every man who has gone successfully through military training has been aware of the sense of accomplishment of the training group he belongs to and the shining faces on graduation day testify to the sense. Marines appreciate the need for discipline - unit discipline and self discipline, and their attitudes toward discipline are positive." Later the report states that "We found that for the Marines, as Snyder had found for the Army, that the bulk of recruits thought that the training could have been tougher and they would still have made it."<sup>11</sup>

All of this is fascinatingly relevant to the area of my interest. In interviews I found the same things to be true for Air Force enlisted men. Many of them commented that discipline was not strict enough at basic training.

Another contact was made with the Navy program in the form of the Bureau of Personnel. Mr. Charles Hodge described a program called COMPASS (Computer Assistance to Assignment). The program is an attempt to put qualified men in vacancies of their preference. The program is not without problems, but there is no doubt that the choice of assignment has a large part to play in the attitude of a young airman.<sup>5</sup>

The Monterey, California, Division of Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) is handling the training aspect of project VOLAR (Volunteer Army). They have designed and are now testing a new basic training program which has been adopted from the HumRRO designed Field Wireman's course. The HumRRO designers have viewed traditional Army basic training to be partially ineffective. The greatest stumbling block that these human engineers have identified has been the lecture, demonstration, testing paradigm which has been accepted as the only method to teach a large mass of men with a small teaching staff. The HumRRO program breaks from this traditional approach making the training, operation oriented. The emphasis is on practice. It is as John Dewey said some fifty years ago; the best type of learning is learning by doing.<sup>7</sup> I know that this method of instruction is used to some extent in the basic training program at Lackland and I think it is used well. I believe that there are broader applications for this excellent training tool as Dr. Taylor and his HumRRO staff are finding in the new Army programs. One of the critical elements in the design of the new training is the examination of the value of every element of training and the examination of the training technique. More often than not a trainee seems to take the attitude that training cannot be very important

because every time he turns around someone is saying "this is the most important thing you will learn at basic training." The presentation seems to be made in a shotgun technique in which the trainee is flooded with new information and skills but there seems to be little expectation that he will actually retain much of this input and he is tested over a relatively small proportion of the material.

Dr. Taylor described another important part of the new training when he said, "it is critically important to find a way to treat each individual separately in training." It is easy to see that men come to basic training with widely varying backgrounds and abilities. If we have a standard which we expect all of the output (airmen) to meet but the input (basic trainees) are different, then the system (instruction method) must change or we will only accentuate the differences.<sup>2</sup> This statement seems to be verified by the memorandum for the Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army prepared by Under Secretary of the Army Stephen Ailes when he says, "In general, it is the men with the greatest potential who are least attracted to military service at the time they enter. What is even more significant is the fact that the higher potential men show, again on the average, the greater decline in favorability of attitude during basic training."<sup>15</sup>

In such a situation I can readily see application for the program developed by Dr. Howard McFann and his staff when they devised the Field Wireman's Course. His idea is supported by many of the finest minds in the training and education field. He has presented a program to deal with the varying abilities of basic trainees. His system allows for the fast and slow learners and utilizes the help of the fast learner in the training process itself. Dr. McFann's research has approached three aspects of the training problem, these are: (1) individual differences of the trainees, (2) content of training, and (3) the methods of instructional systems.

In the area of individual differences of the trainees he has found that the performance of the student depended upon the instructional technique. The gifted individual will learn in spite of a poor system, but a slower student's performance shows marked improvement when certain teaching techniques are used. The technique found to be most effective was a task oriented approach as opposed to a subject oriented approach. This may be illustrated by saying that a field wireman may be taught Ohm's law with success if it occurs in applied form in the wiring process, but the law simply explained and demonstrated in a class will not be retained for any length of time.

Concerning content of the training system, an attempt is made to insure that the material is actually critical. Elimination of all but the most important material takes place and that material is mastered by all of the trainees. The evaluation of the students is then an absolute process rather than a normative measure. Dr. McFann states that teaching the test is the right thing to do. The test should contain all of the required learning if it is really important material. This is a severe departure from the sample method of testing to which American educators are accustomed. In this system the testing is actually a mastery test and the student has, in a sense, moved from the position of an apprentice to a skilled craftsman.

Dr. McFann has also examined methods of instruction. This area is closely related to the other two areas but this is as it should be. In Dr. McFann's words, "Everything is related to everything else." Before a trainee begins any phase of his training, he has the opportunity to take an entry level test. If he scores high enough, because of prior education or training, to meet the terminal criterion for that phase of training, he is allowed to move to some other area of training or is excused from that phase of training. This may be the case for someone with medical training or a familiarity with Air Force customs. Dr.

McFann does not seem to believe that a basic trainee should be pampered. His program may be much more demanding than the present system. A trainee should feel that he can handle any situation and to obtain that end the emphasis is on his success, not his failures.

The final area of my discussion with Dr. McFann dealt with the overall effect of training on attitudes. It seems to be a relatively important thing to determine what the individual's expectations are when he enters training. The program cannot be changed for every individual, but he should know that some of his goals are important to his organization as well.<sup>7</sup>

The personnel in the measurement and testing division of BMT informed me that they believed such a system could be adapted for Lackland. They were not surprised by this approach to testing and teaching and in fact they believed it could be adopted on a large scale for all phases of BMT. They further stated that an excellent example of such a progressive school exists at the Ground Power School of Chanute AFB. The Air Crew Protection school is also of this design.

A HumRRO study, Task Transition (Feb 1963) focused on the recruit complaint that training was too easy. The study begins as we have previously indicated as follows: "In general it is the men with the

greatest potential who are least attracted to military service at the time they enter. What is even more significant is the fact that the higher potential men show, again on the average, the greater decline in favorability of attitude during basic training."

The study goes on to say:

"There are doubtless many factors - including deficiencies in leadership at the training unit level - which result in deterioration of recruit attitudes. However, an accumulation of evidence has served to focus attention on one problem above others. This is the problem that Basic Training, as now conducted, seems to lack meaningful challenge, especially for those men who have the greatest potential for effective service."<sup>15</sup>

Although this study was made for the Army, I believe that the implication to all basic training programs may clearly be seen. The Air Force has often prided itself on being the force "elite". Our enlisted men have always lead the four services in educational and technical ability. Our enlisted men have always been those "who have the greatest potential for effective service". There are certainly a number of sociological variables that enter into a recruit's attitude, and the present day anti-military sentiment of much of the nation's youth is surely one of these,

however, the low estimate of the AF that most enlisted men enter basic training with is only confirmed by that experience. The HumRRO study concludes that:

"The evidence is extremely strong that the real difficulty stems from the failure to make any thorough going effort to assess trainee's achievements in training. Since 'genuine mastery' is expected of him in only a few areas in the diffuse mass of new material presented, he concludes that much of the material to which he is exposed is really rather unimportant to the Army."<sup>15</sup>

The Department of the Army drew a number of conclusions from the HumRRO study, among them were the following:

There is a need to improve the quality of training as well as the image that the potential recruit has of the nature of basic training. Improvement in the conditions for the trainers and the trainees will provide an environment in which the trainees will be more receptive to the objectives of basic training. Respect for the dignity of the individual is essential if we expect him to perform to his best ability. It is important for the trainer to push the trainees to the limit of their mental and physical capabilities. Most recruits are receptive to challenge. The shortage of

qualified instructors has resulted in the use of committee type instruction. This approach has proven to be less than ideal in most cases. The loss of personal contact between trainee and trainer is a critical one.

The HumRRO studies have identified a number of the most critical areas in the problem of reaching the enlistee. An interesting comparison may be made between the HumRRO suggestions and the findings of the Air Force Human Resources Laboratory.

In a Human Resources Laboratory report on "why airmen enlist" these findings were given:

"The Air Force Questionnaire was administered to 41,098 newly enlisted airmen. One-way distributions were made of all responses, and the two-way distributional relationships were computed between reasons for enlistment and other selected variables. Educational opportunity was the reason most frequently given for Air Force enlistment, followed by wide choice of assignments and then opportunity to travel. Reasons for enlistment appear to be associated with various other variables, such as indications of the subject's attitude toward enlistment in the absence of a draft, his career intentions, his previous work experience, his race, his educational level, and his mental ability category."<sup>16</sup>

While the report states that educational opportunity was the reason most frequently given for enlistment, relatively no information is given during basic training about how educational opportunities may be pursued. The following two reasons, wide choice of assignments and opportunity to travel, receive even less emphasis during basic training. In another Human Resources Laboratory report a comparison of self-motivated Air Force enlistees with draft motivated enlistees is made. The results follow.

"Since World War II, the Air Force has relied upon voluntary enlistments to maintain its force structure. However, it is recognized that many airmen are motivated to enlist by the prospect of being drafted for the Army. As the services move toward an all-volunteer force, it is important to understand the impact of such a move on the characteristics of Air Force input. With this objective, two groups of basic trainees were defined in terms of their draft vulnerability at the time of enlistment and their stated attitude toward enlistment in the absence of a draft. These groups, identified as self-motivated and draft-motivated enlistees, were compared on a number of dimensions. From comparative data derived from the subjects' responses to a biographical survey and an attitude survey, statistically significant differences were found between

the two groups. Compared with the draft-motivated enlistees, the self-motivated enlistees were less well educated, came from a lower socioeconomic background, and performed less adequately on ability tests. They were generally attracted to service by the opportunity to learn a trade and were not firmly committed to a military career at time of initial entry to service. The data also suggested that military service can be made more attractive to draft-motivated enlistees by structuring the personnel system to allow the individual more control over his fate."<sup>13</sup>

The findings of this report coupled with the HumRRO finding that the higher ability recruits had the poorer attitude answers a question that I asked earlier in this paper. The answer to the question I posed concerning whether or not we wish to attract young men avoiding the draft is a definite yes. In the event of a no-draft environment, the quality of training and Air Force life must be of such a recognized high caliber as to attract the young man who is now a draft-motivated entrant into the Air Force.

A final report which is of value to this study is a Research Report titled "Effects of Basic Training on the Attitudes of Airmen", accomplished by the then Air Force Personnel and Training Research Center. While

the report was completed in 1955, there are some interesting insights into the attitude problem. The results of this study follow:

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIR FORCE

This Research Report presents results of an investigation which attempted to determine the effects of an eight-week basic military training course on attitudes of airmen, and to relate these effects to characteristics of tactical instructors and trainees.

Measurements were obtained of the attitudes of over 900 airmen (22 flights) at the beginning and end of the basic training program at Lackland Air Force Base. In addition, information was obtained on the intelligence, education, experience, and attitudes of the tactical instructor assigned to each of the selected flights.

The results indicated an over-all improvement among airmen during basic training in personal adjustment, in favorableness of attitude toward combat and in motivation to serve. One of the most frequent attitude changes occurring was increase in favorableness toward authoritarian leadership. On the other hand, there was an over-all decrease in expressed loyalty toward the flight and in regard for the tactical instructor's competence. It is hypothesized that the over-all decrease in loyalty

toward the flight may reflect the trainee's concern at the end of basic training to obtain his preferred assignment to technical training or other school courses.

The characteristics of tactical instructors found to be most highly related to attitude change were the estimated severity of the instructor in enforcing discipline and his attitude toward training objectives. Flights having tactical instructors who were rated "permissive" in methods of handling the flight tend to exhibit greater increments in motivation to serve than flights having instructors rated relatively "strict". In addition, instructors who report strong valuation of (emphasis upon) the objective of increasing the trainee's favorableness toward drill tend to have flights which exhibit greater increments in favorableness of attitude toward drill. The generality of the latter finding could not be determined from the present study since it was not possible to rank-order instructors with respect to their acceptance of other types of attitude change as objectives. It is speculated that instructors who try to influence the trainee to accept certain valuations will have more effect than instructors who do not try, and that special instructor training in discriminating attitudinal and behavioral characteristics which are considered to be the objectives of basic training will increase the effectiveness of the tactical instructor in modifying attitudes.

Predispositions of the trainee at the beginning of training also appear to be related to subsequent attitude change. Airmen initially favorable toward military discipline show the greatest increases in favorableness toward a career in the Air Force and the smallest decreases in regard for the competence of the tactical instructor. Airmen who are relatively high in intellectual ability tend to show greater improvement in personal adjustment than airmen of lower intellectual ability.<sup>14</sup>

The implications of this study may have limited bearing upon the current situation but it is reasonable to assume that many of the correlations of perception of instructors and attitudes of trainees remain true at the present time.

The final report to which I will refer reinforces these findings: The Training Evaluation Division of the Lackland AFB Basic Military Training School completed a study earlier this year to determine the attitude of basic military trainees during various stages of training. More specifically, trainees' attitudes concerning various facets of Air Force life were measured and compared. The conclusions and recommendations of this study are quoted as follows:

## IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### CONCLUSIONS

1. Upon entry into the service, both WAF and male airmen have a highly favorable general attitude toward the Air Force.
2. Both WAF and male airmen's attitudes toward the Air Force increase in favorableness by the end of basic training.
3. Airmen generally showed positive attitudes toward 17 of 20 items depicting specific areas of Air Force life.
4. Airmen generally showed negative attitudes toward three specific items: recruiters accurately describe Air Force life, desires to make Air Force career, and fair opportunity to choose a career field.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A pictorial brochure accurately depicting BMT and Air Force life should be developed for use at recruiting stations.
2. New classification and assignment procedures should be developed to afford the airman a choice of Air Force specialties based on knowledge of specific activities involved in the career specialty. Personal choice should be given priority consistent with Air Force needs. <sup>12</sup>

The testing for this study was accomplished on the 1st, 20th, and 28th day of the 30 day training program. It should be pointed out that one

would expect an increase in the favorableness of attitude if for no other reason than a sense of relief that training is over. The three items, out of the 20 tested, that produced negative results relate to important factors:

(1) The inaccuracy of a prior picture of Air Force life, (2) The desire not to make the Air Force a career, and (3) The feeling that there is not a fair opportunity to choose a career field. These are significant areas for concern and improvement. It seems quite possible that the retention problem which receives so much attention at the four year mark may be born at the beginning of an enlisted man's career. This comment is not meant to blame BMT for the retention problem. Just as the drug problem begins many years prior to a man's entrance into the service, so does his attitude toward the military begin to develop well before he is service age.

My review of research on basic military training has caused me to arrive at a number of conclusions and suggestions concerning the Air Force Basic Military Training Program. These suggestions represent personal opinions founded on my analysis of significant problems and relevant research.

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My review of research on basic military training has caused me to arrive at a number of conclusions and suggestions concerning the Air Force Basic Military Training Program. These suggestions represent personal opinions founded on my analysis of significant problems and relevant research.

As any researcher who values his scientific neck would say, there is a great need for more in-depth research in this very vital area. This statement is particularly relevant to BMT. Human attitudes are subtle and extremely complex at best.

The conclusions I can draw from my research are necessarily concentrated on the negative aspects of the BMT program. I have mentioned before that I have great respect for those in charge of the BMT program. The problems involved with BMT and its effects on trainee attitudes are subtle and complex at best. I have tried to register my perceptions as I have seen them in hope of helping constructive change. On the basis of the six weeks of interviews with BMT instructors, trainees, policy makers, and researchers, and with reference to all of the reports I was able to secure that directly apply to this topic, I have made the following conclusions.

(1) While the attitude of airmen toward the Air Force seems to become more favorable in general terms, BMT does not excite the airman concerning possibility of entering the Air Force.

(2) Airmen lack feeling for their value in the U.S. defense structure. The objectives of BMT as well as their roles in the Air Force are not

clearly distinguished from a preconceived picture of "boot camp" and a role as a combatant.

(3) The most resented aspect of BMT is the lack of future control one has upon leaving basic training.

(4) Enlistees consider training to lack hard, meaningful challenge.

(5) Relatively little awareness of the opportunity for a satisfying life is stimulated at BMT.

(6) There is very little done to compensate for individual differences in learning rates and prior backgrounds.

(7) The Training Instructor, whose influence is the most critical element in the forming of the trainee's attitude, is not receiving enough recognition nor compensation for the extremely important task that he is given.

(8) The presentation of academic material, while made by qualified and dedicated instructors is presented in less than optimal ways. The amount of material presented compared with the amount of material tested and retained is disproportionate.

(9) The training instructor is receiving very little information concerning the changing character of the enlistees. This lack of understanding of a new values system further complicates the training task.

(10) There is little done to clarify what the role of an airman entails to the enlistee. Little attempt is made to identify those who will not be able to accept such a life once training is over and the "real" airman's life begins.

(11) In many cases airmen enlist rather than going to college or getting a job. They do not perceive their time in the Air Force to be productive nor fulfilling.

(12) There is relatively little opportunity for feedback from the training and testing staff to bring about change in the training program.

In response to my conclusions I would make the following suggestions.

**Short term suggestions:**

(1) The training evaluation division of BMT should be an independent organization rather than under the direction of the BMT school.

(2) Modern communication media such as motion pictures should be utilized to present an objective view of the opportunities for a satisfying

life if pursued in the Air Force, emphasizing career progression and typical working conditions.

(3) A unit of instruction on the role of the airman in fulfilling the mission of the Air Force as a valuable part of the American defense force should be included.

(4) A unit of instruction on the educational, recreational, travel, and religious opportunities in the Air Force and how to obtain the same should be included.

(5) Toughening of physical training with the emphasis on fitness rather than combat should be accomplished. Perhaps the issue of a booklet for a continued fitness program after BMT and the encouragement to carry it on should be considered.

(6) The Training Instructors' position should be enhanced. An improved Air Force-wide selection process for training instructors is needed. The inclusion of training instructor pro-pay, better promotion structure, free laundry service and recognition throughout the Air Force should be evaluated. Continued schooling for the training instructor in behavioral aspects of training the changing generations and greater recognition and reward of outstanding training instructors are recommended.

(7) The curriculum should be screened for that information which is essential to a basic airman and mastery testing of that information should be accomplished in preference to the sample testing presently used.

(8) A continued search throughout the training staff for better ideas and training methods should be maintained.

Long term suggestions:

(1) Adopt a system of prior assignment. In such a situation an enlistee would take tests and know his assignment before reporting to basic training. Such a test would have to be administered much as the decentralized civil service tests are administered. A recruiting sergeant administered test would create difficulty if the sergeant had quotas to fill. The guaranteed prior assignment would facilitate the next suggestion.

(2) Provide for an individually paced training program. Such a program would allow the fast and slow learner to progress at their own rate. Knowing assignments would allow a highly motivated man to graduate early and receive leave before reporting for his first assignment. Such a scheme would act as an incentive for the airman to quickly and thoroughly ingest the essential knowledge and skills requisite for entrance into the Air Force.

(3) The use of peer instruction where possible much along the lines pioneered by the HumRRQ project at Monterey, California, is to be encouraged.

(4) Air Training Command should undertake small scale experiments of the proposed modifications described above.

The administrative problems in the adoption of such a system should not be under-estimated. But as the most progressive and forward looking military force, the Air Force can surely afford to experiment with new approaches to training our most important resource, our airmen.

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Also interviewed were over one hundred airmen at Lackland, McConnell, and Bolling Air Force Bases. Numerous Training Instructors and Evaluators were also of assistance.

CMSgt John Hutchenson of the Training Evaluation Division of Lackland BMT School was of particular aid and I am indebted to him for his help.

# Appendix A

COURSE CHART			
NUMBER <b>MABM/MGEM/MRBM99000</b>	PDS CODE	DATE <b>14 April 1971</b>	
OPR & APPROVAL DATE, ATC <b>ATTMS-M, 15 December 1969</b>		SUPERSEDES COURSE CHART <b>MABM/MGEM/MRBM99000</b>	
OPR, CENTER <b>3720 Basic Military School USAF</b>		<b>22 February 1971</b>	
TABLE I - COURSE DATA			
COURSE TITLE <b>Basic Military Training</b>		COURSE SECURITY CLASSIFICATION <b>UNCLASSIFIED</b>	
<b>MABM - USAF Male      MGEM - Air National Guard</b>			
<b>MRBM - Reserve</b>			
ORGANIZATION <b>Lackland Military Training Center</b>	COURSE NUMBER PREFIX EXPLANATION <b>M, Basic Military Training</b> <b>A, USAF Active Duty Airman</b> <b>G, ANG Airman Students</b> <b>R, Nonactive Duty Reserve Airman</b> <b>B, Basic Training</b> <b>M, ATC Military Training Activity</b>		
LOCATION OF COURSE <b>Lackland AFB, Texas</b>			
PROGRAMMED COURSE LENGTH			
ACADEMIC WEEKS/DAYS	<b>6/--</b>	ACADEMIC HOURS	<b>240</b>
		MID-COURSE LEAVE (Hours)	<b>---</b>
CALENDAR DAYS	<b>42</b>	TOTAL HOURS	<b>240</b>
SYSTEM OF INSTRUCTION <b>Group-pacing</b>			
APPLICABLE TRAINING STANDARD <b>CTS LA52-MABM/MGEM/MRBM/MWEM99000, 22 February 1971</b>			
REMARKS <b>NOTE 1: In addition to the 240 scheduled hours, Saturday morning is to be used for remedial or make-up training, American Spirit of Honor selection, etc.</b>  <b>NOTE 2: Deviations are authorized to allow for variations in processing requirements.</b>			
TABLE II - MAJOR ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT			

PREVIOUS EDITIONS OBSOLETE

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WEEK OF TRAINING	TABLE III - COURSE CONTENT - COURSE CHART <u>MAEM/MGEM/MREM99000</u>		HRS/DAY (FORMAL)
	NOTE: THIS DOCUMENTS ONLY FORMAL INSTRUCTION. ADDITIONAL TRAINING AND TRAINING-RELATED REQUIREMENTS (E.G., HOME STUDY ASSIGNMENTS, REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION, CONTINUATION MILITARY TRAINING, TRAFFIC SAFETY TRAINING, ETC) ARE ACCOMPLISHED OUTSIDE THIS SCHEDULE.		8
	<u>Course Material - UNCLASSIFIED</u>		<b>BLOCK I - 240 Hours</b>
	<u>MILITARY</u> (172 Hours)		
	Air Force Organization and History (5 hrs)		
	Basic Survival Training (9 hrs)		
1	Career Advancement (2 hrs)		
	Communicable Diseases (2 hrs)		
	Customs and Courtesies (9 hrs)		
	Drill (30 hrs)		
	Fundamental Rights, Freedoms & Responsibilities (4 hrs)		
	Ground Safety (1 hr)		
	Group Living and Teamwork (2 hrs)		
2	Illegal or Improper Use of Drugs (2 hrs)		
	Immediate First Aid (4 hrs)		
	Inspections (10 hrs)		
	Marksmanship (8 hrs)		
	Military Law (5 hrs)		
	Moral Lectures (7 hrs)		
	Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Warfare Survival (1 hr)		
3	Parades, Reviews, and Retreats* (7 hrs)		
	Personal Affairs (5 hrs)		
	Physical Conditioning (30 hrs)		
	Security (3 hrs)		
	Incoming Briefing (Commander) (2 hrs)		
	Departure Briefing (Commander) (1 hr)		
	Academic Orientation (1 hr)		
	Dormitory Arrangement (7 hrs)		
4	Academic Summary (2 hrs)		
	Evaluation and Critique (13 hrs)		
	Includes Physical Conditioning Performance (1 hr); Drill Performance (1 hr); Saluting Performance (1 hr); Reporting Performance (1 hr); First Aid Performance (2 hrs); Written Evaluation (2 hrs); Re-evaluation (2 hrs); Course Critique (1 hr); Test Critique (2 hrs)		
5			
	*Trainees participate in formal retreat ceremonies in addition to the regular 8 hour duty day.		
6			

WEEK OF TRAINING	TABLE III - COURSE CONTENT - COURSE CHART <u>MAEM/MDEM/MRBM99000</u>	HRS/DAY
	NOTE: THIS DOCUMENTS ONLY FORMAL INSTRUCTION. ADDITIONAL TRAINING AND TRAINING-RELATED REQUIREMENTS (E.G., HOME STUDY ASSIGNMENTS, REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION, CONTINUATION MILITARY TRAINING, TRAFFIC SAFETY TRAINING, ETC) ARE ACCOMPLISHED OUTSIDE THIS SCHEDULE.	(FORMAL) <u>8</u>
	<b>TRANSITION REQUIREMENTS (68 Hours)</b>	
1	In-Processing (16 hrs)** Haircuts (3 hrs) Linen Exchange (5 hrs) Immunizations (2 hrs) Student Time/Proficiency Reading Test (6 hrs)** Peer Rating and Trainee Orientation (1 hr)** Student Details (24 hrs) Out-Processing (5 hrs) American Cancer Society (Smoking) and Dental Care Films (1 hr) Experimental Testing/Remedial Training (4 hrs)** Alterations Pick-up (1 hr)	
2		
3	**Transition requirements for Air Force non-prior service airmen exceed those for Air National Guard and Reserve airmen by 11 hours: In-Processing (6 hrs more); Peer Rating (1 hr more); and Experimental Testing (4 hrs more). Those 11 hours are added as extra Student Time for the Air National Guard and Reserve airmen. The extra student time may be used at the discretion of the Squadron Commander.	
4		
5		
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ATC FORM 449 A AUG 70 PREVIOUS EDITIONS OBSOLETE.