

AU/ACSC/AY2016

AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

AIR FORCE RESERVE AT RISK WITH THE NEW INSPECTION SYSTEM

by

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A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty
In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduate Requirements

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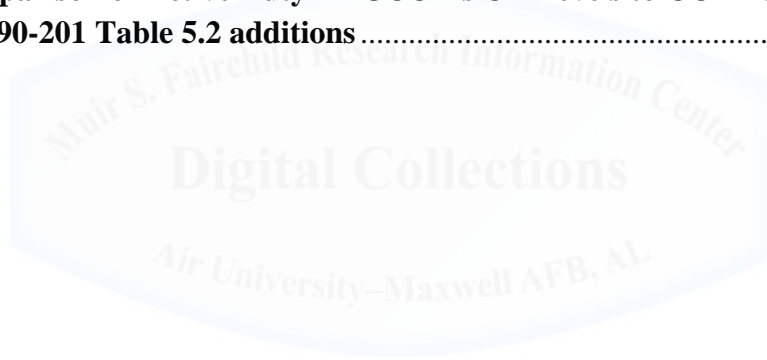


TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISCLAIMER	ii
FIGURES	iv
PREFACE	v
ABBREVIATIONS	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION	1
SECTION 2: BACKGROUND	5
Problem Background and Significance	5
Air Force Reserve Command Uniqueness	9
Overview of the Legacy Inspections Process.....	13
Overview of the New Air Force Inspection System	15
SECTION 3: EVALUATION RESEARCH CRITERIA	17
Research Criteria.....	17
SECTION 4: ANALYSIS OF CHANGES AND EFFECTIVENESS FOR AFRC COMPARED TO ACTIVE DUTY MAJCOMS	18
Shortening the Inspection Interval.	18
Reducing the Footprint.....	19
Increase Self-Inspection and Self-Reporting.....	19
Lower Cost of Inspections and Fully Embrace MICT	22
Readiness, Compliance, and UEI/CCIP Effectiveness	23
SECTION 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE PLANS FOR AFIS	26
Addressing the Manning Problem.....	27
Addressing Self-Assessment Challenges	29
Dealing With Non-Standard CCIP Programs.....	30
SECTION 6: CONCLUSIONS	31
Notes	32
Bibliography	35

FIGURES

Figure 1: AFRC by Category	9
Figure 2: Wings per MAJCOM	11
Figure 3: MAJCOM Manning Levels	11
Figure 4: MAJCOM Inspector Staff	11
Figure 5: Inspector Certification Requirements	12
Figure 6: Active Duty Wing IG Structure.	12
Figure 7: AFRC IG manning construct	13
Figure 8: Legacy Inspection Cycle	15
Figure 9: UEI Inspection Cycle	16
Figure 10: CCIP Events Over Time	20
Figure 11: CCIP average per wing by MAJCOM	21
Figure 12: AFRC open deficiencies by quarter.	22
Figure 13: Comparison of AFRC UEI levels to CCIP levels.	24
Figure 14: Comparison of Active Duty MAJCOMs UEI levels to CCIP levels.	25
Figure 15: AFI 90-201 Table 5.2 additions	26



PREFACE

As a member of the Air Force Reserve for over twenty years, I have experienced many programs that were designed around the manning levels of the active duty force. I was the director of inspections for two separate Air Force Reserve wings leading the transition into this new Air Force Inspection System. I witnessed first-hand the struggles to comply with the instruction and the compromise with other programs as the result. This paper is the investigation into these issues in an effort to provide Reserve key leaders the information and understanding they need to improve this program.

I want to first thank my wife. She helped with my share of the housework, listened to me complain about having to miss watching football on TV, and even read through my paper, helping correct my terrible spelling and grammar. I would also like to thank my instructor and research advisor Dr. Gregory Intoccia for his help and guidance throughout this project. Finally, to all the classmates that provided feedback, I know first-hand how hard it is to spend time helping others when we have so much work to do on our own research, and I express my sincerest appreciation.

ABBREVIATIONS

AFI	Air Force Instruction
AFIA	Air Force Inspection Agency
AFIS	Air Force Inspection System
AFRC	Air Force Reserve Command
AGR	Active Guard Reserve
AOCI	Airfield Operations Compliance Inspection
ART	Air Reserve Technician
ART	AEF UTC Reporting Tool
ASEV	Aircrew Standardization/Evaluation Visit
ATSO	Ability to Survive and Operate
CAP	Corrective Action Plan
CCIP	Commanders Inspection Program
CCIR	Commander's Inspection Report
CSAF	Chief of Staff of the Air Force
DRRS	Defense Readiness Reporting System
HAF	Headquarters Air Force
HSI	Health Services Inspection
IG	Inspector General
IGEMS	Inspector General Evaluation Management Systems
IMA	Individual Mobilization Augmentee
LCAP	Logistics Compliance Assessment Program
MAJCOM	Major Command
MGA	Major Graded Areas
MI	Management Inspection
MICT	Management Internal Control Toolset
NAF	Numbered Air Force
NSI	Nuclear Surety Inspection
ORI	Operation Readiness Inspection
SAC	Self-Assessment Checklists
SAF	Secretary of the Air Force
SDB	Social Desirability Bias
SEPWO	Standardization Evaluation Program Weather Operations
SORT	Status of Resources and Training System
TR	Traditional Reservist
UCI	Unit Compliance Inspection
UEI	Unit Effectiveness Inspection

ABSTRACT

The Air Force Inspection System (AFI 90-201) transitioned in 2013 from large-scale external Unit Compliance Inspections and Operational Readiness Inspections to a system of majority self-reporting for all Active Duty, Guard and Reserve units. The purpose of this research is to evaluate whether the new Air Force Inspection System (AFIS) is adequate for Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) to measure readiness and compliance with self-assessments and internal wing inspectors. By using the evaluation methodology, this paper analyzes AFRC data from inspection performances, self-assessment completion, and compares it to the other nine Air Force Major Commands (MAJCOMs) in order to determine the effectiveness of the system within AFRC.

Key findings of the paper include: since 2013, AFRC wings have completed far fewer self-inspections and exercises on average than wings within the other nine MAJCOMs; AFRC headquarters inspectors cannot give continual guidance to wing inspectors or complete Unit Effectiveness Inspections (UEI) as frequently as the other MAJCOMs, and the risk of non-compliance or lack of readiness is greater in AFRC. The paper concludes that AFRC has accepted too much risk under the construct of the new Air Force Inspection System, which relies too much on self-assessments and self-reporting. It recommends that AFRC consider going back to in-depth MAJCOM inspections and exercises or develop a specialized traveling Inspector General (IG) team made up of multiple wing level IG personnel from various wings to perform inspections that rotate throughout the various wings in AFRC.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Brief Description of the Problem

The Air Force significantly changed the readiness and compliance inspection process in 2013. Revisions to Air Force Instruction (AFI) 90-201, *The Air Force Inspection System*, removed requirements for wings to undergo large-scale external Unit Compliance Inspections (UCI) and Operational Readiness Inspections (ORI). The revised AFI directed unit commanders at all levels to perform their own inspections, stating, “Commanders are responsible for ensuring compliance within their units.”¹ As a way for commanders to do more with less, the AFI gives commanders the flexibility to choose the programs most important to them, and focus their energy, manning, and resources on those areas to ensure compliance. Following the commander’s intent, the Wing Inspector General (IG) then prioritizes those areas for inspections, exercises, and reports, because as is written in the AFI, “Inspections should be prioritized based on Commander’s priorities.”² The intent of Air Force leadership in making these changes was to allow operational Wings to focus on daily missions, to continually improve from feedback, and maintain a steady level of readiness without creating extra work solely for the purposes of facilitating an inspection.³

Under the new Air Force Inspection System (AFIS), low prioritization of fabricated inspections is encouraged but instead placing priorities on assessing mission critical tasks. To help automate the self-assessment documentation and virtual inspection capability, a new management internal control toolset (MICT) software system was implemented allowing members to complete checklists online, provide status updates of their programs and identify non-compliance areas. AFI 90-201 directs Headquarters Air Force (HAF) and Major Command (MAJCOM) functional area managers to create properly worded checklists for all Air Force

Instructions.⁴ Now three years into AFIS implementation and according to Secretary of the Air Force (SAF) IG, only about half of all AFI's have corresponding checklists.⁵ The SAF IG also indicated a proposed change to shorten the time-consuming, detailed checklists in MICT.⁶ There is debate amongst IGs about the need for detailed checklist questions for all mission related AFI's, which will be analyzed later in the paper. However, "MICT is the Air Force program of record to communicate a unit's current status"⁷ When MICT data is accurate and current, MAJCOM and wing inspectors can perform virtual inspections without having to visit with the program owner in person.

Based on the ability to inspect remotely, the Air Force has gone from large, well-experienced MAJCOM inspection teams of 70-100-plus inspectors performing rigorous, detailed reviews to only 30-40 external inspectors for the capstone validation events that validate units' self-assessments. These smaller MAJCOM teams in the new construct complete minimal inspections and focus mainly on validating the internal wing inspection reports and data.

Research Question

Has the Air Force Reserve accepted too much risk under the construct of the new Air Force Inspection System by relying too much on self-assessments and an undersized internal-group of wing inspectors to evaluate wing readiness and compliance?

Thesis Statement

The Air Force Reserve has accepted too much risk of undetected noncompliance that will lead to an inability to provide Air Force Reserve mission capabilities in the long run.

Summary Argument

The previous method of inspecting a wing's readiness and compliance was through an external cadre of highly experienced inspectors with a variety of specialty skills. Internal wing IG team members cannot replicate the in-depth review of the inspectors who would conduct in-person audits at the unit level every other year. Not only do internal inspectors lack experience in conducting inspections, they also generally do not possess the necessary depth or breadth of subject matter expertise on the program they are inspecting.

Despite the motivation to save money and other resources, such as manpower, commanders at all levels must ensure they are capable of performing the missions they are responsible for in compliance with laws, regulations, and policies that govern our actions. According to attachment three, table 3.1 of AFI 90-201, there are over 500 inspection areas “that, according to the HAF Functional staff, indicate areas of highest risk where undetected non-compliance puts Airmen, the commander, the Service or our nation at significant risk.”⁸ However, the new AFIS does not provide sufficient resources to ensure that such comprehensive compliance is achieved. Unlike the MAJCOM inspection teams of the past, a normal Air Force Reserve wing inspection team may have the capability to inspect less than one-fifth of the inspection areas per inspection cycle.

Many wing commanders embrace the changes that the new AFIS has brought, in that it provides flexibility and allows them to choose which exercises and inspections are important and discard others that are overly burdensome, or that they feel are unrealistic. However, although commanders can choose to spend more time on their top priorities, if many of the commander's programs are not consistently exercised or inspected, the question that still needs to be answered

is: “Will wings ultimately lose skills that are not practiced or checked against the standard due to the lack of time, manning, funding, and poor prioritization?” As a result, AFRC as a whole could face dire consequences should those unpracticed, uninspected skills become necessary.

The Air Force Reserve will not be able to perform the same quantity or quality of inspections as an active duty wing. A reserve wing cannot perform all the same compliance and readiness inspections with one-fourth the manpower. A reserve wing performing fewer inspections or less quality inspections will put a wing at risk for noncompliance in daily operations. Noncompliance can put wings at great risk for failure to be able to provide Air Force capabilities when required. In an attempt to comply with this operations tempo, Reserve commanders frequently struggle to balance priorities and delay tasks until necessary. In some instances, they simply do not have time to accomplish all that is required. According to the 2015 Total Force Climate Survey topic of resources, unit members feel that they do not have "enough time to accomplish the daily workload during duty hours".⁹ In 2012, only 65 percent felt that had enough time, whereas in 2015 the number had dropped to 63 percent.¹⁰

Framework and Methodology

This research will utilize the evaluation framework to assess objectively whether the new Air Force Inspection System (AFIS) is adequate for Air Force Reserve Command to measure readiness and compliance. The research will start by highlighting the background of the previous inspection metrics and benchmarks. Then, the research evaluates the tenets of the new Air Force Inspection System against the published goals of AFIS. The research will look at metrics from past inspections from the Air Force Inspection Agency (AFIA), staff meeting notes, and slides of Major Commands and various unit commanders.

Finally, I will take into consideration the input of various wing directors of inspections and Airmen, taking into account their experiences in dealing with the legacy system and current AFIS requirements and outputs. Based on the analysis of the evaluation findings, this study will offer alternate solutions for the problems identified and provide recommendations accordingly. This research will not cover implementation of AFIS into the nuclear surety or nuclear mission inspections. Although similar in principle, the classification of the data prevents proper analysis as well as sharing portions of the findings.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

Problem Background and Significance

At the core of any inspection system is a set of criteria, a group of unbiased inspectors, and a thorough inspection with feedback on areas for improvement. A commander of an Air Force Reserve squadron normally has only a very small fraction of his members available full-time to complete the same daily operational tasks and continuity requirements that are performed by an active duty squadron, yet is given no time or additional manpower with which to complete them. Rather, all required items must be accomplished through the traditional part-time Reserve construct.

The AFIS as implemented has moved away from large scale external Unit Compliance Inspections and Operational Readiness Inspections. Instead, unit level commanders are directed to perform inspections in accordance with guidance specifying that “Commanders have the legal authority and responsibility to inspect their subordinates and subordinate units.”¹¹ Also, commanders are free to choose which areas are most important to them and focus on those areas.

The Wing Inspector General (IG) will then prioritize those areas for inspections or exercises. As written in AFI 90-201, “Inspections should be prioritized based on Commander’s priorities.”¹²

The intent of the change was to allow squadrons to focus on daily missions, continually improve based on feedback received on those missions and to keep a steady level of readiness without creating an extra simulated mission or task just for inspection purposes.

The impetus for these changes stemmed from the fact that Air Force squadrons have been constantly deploying and performing real-life missions for over a decade. Having wings simulate deployments was seen as a waste of money that also adversely affected the morale of Airmen, given that wings were spending large amounts of time and money preparing for an inspection only because everyone knew the importance in receiving a high inspection grade. The revised AFI recognizes this when it states, “Inspection preparation is inherently wasteful if not directly aligned with mission readiness.”¹³

As part of the plan of implementing the new AFIS, wing commanders were directed to “...critically assess their Unit Manning Document (UMD) and re-purpose billets as necessary to ensure appropriate Wing IG manning.”¹⁴ For the Active Duty, the manning template allocates six full-time personnel in host base wings and four full-time personnel for tenant units. AFRC, however, did not authorize that essential staffing for Reserve wings, instead giving a template for one full-time officer and five part-time Traditional Reserve authorizations.

A commander of an Air Force Reserve squadron normally has a very small fraction of his members available full-time to complete the daily operational tasks and continuity requirements that are performed by an active duty squadron, thus nearly all items have to be accomplished with part-time Reserve manpower. However, in an attempt to keep up with a high operations

tempo, Reserve commanders occasionally delay some tasks not contributing to immediate needs of mission execution until absolutely necessary. These commanders frequently struggle to balance priorities against manpower and funding availability. In some instances, they simply do not have what they need to accomplish all that is required. In fact, according to the 2015 unit climate survey topic, unit members feel that they do not have time to do their job well and do it during duty hours. In both questions the percentage dropped two percent from 2012 to 2015.¹⁵ Under the new Air Force Inspection System (AFIS), Commanders are allowed to focus their units on select priorities as long as explanations are provided to ensure that priority is being placed on the most mission critical tasks.

The way in which the AFIS ensures compliance is through a self-assessment and virtual inspection process. To automate this process, Headquarters Air Force directed use of a new Management Internal Control Toolset (MICT) software system in 2012. Although MICT was first developed and used by AFRC in 2009, “The AFRC MICT program transition[ed] to an Air Force MICT program [in] fiscal year 2012.”¹⁶ The new MICT system allows members to complete checklists online and provides status updates for their programs, identifying non-compliance areas. Program Action Directive 13-01 signed in June 2013, directed that “all AFIs directing Wing*-level compliance [must be] included in a relevant, accurate, tiered Self-Assessment Checklist (SAC) and published in MICT” not later than October 1, 2014.¹⁷ However, a few years into AFIS implementation and according to Secretary of the Air Force (SAF) IG staff at the 2015 worldwide inspector conference, only about half of all AFIs have corresponding MICT checklists. As a result, the SAF IG staff has indicated they are looking to move away from detailed checklists that are time-consuming to work in MICT, switching to

broad and generic checklists providing high-level indications of whether an area is in compliance in that self-assessment.

The weaknesses of MICT can be shown through this example. From 2012-2015, several Reserve squadron MICT administrators from the 507th Air Refueling Wing were documented completing MICT system requirements on behalf of the program owners on over half of the assigned checklists. When questioned why the program managers did not complete their assigned checklist, they stated system limitations and access problems. Limited Reserve manning made it easier to update the system based on verbal communication or general awareness with the program under review. These limitations have led some Reserve squadron commanders to use the same person to answer most checklists based on their opinion or general awareness. This pattern defeats the purpose of MICT as a communicator tool relying on those familiar with the detailed intimacies of a program to the squadron commander and further up the chain of command.

Although many Reserve commanders are relieved they no longer need to prepare for an inspection, the reality is the Air Force Reserve manning levels for operations and inspections does not allow all units the ability to stay ready on every assigned task. Reserve wings have staffed their inspection office with a single full-time person with little experience as an inspector. Thus, the Air Force Reserve has gone from large, well-experienced MAJCOM inspection teams of 50-70 members to relying on a wing commander's less experienced IG staff of one full-time member. It is quite possible under this state of affairs that a less than accurate inspection report and inadequate feedback will be presented to the Wing Commander on which he will base operational decisions, resulting in possible failure.

Air Force Reserve Command Uniqueness

Originally designed only for emergencies in 1948, the Air Force Reserve was created by President Harry S. Truman. Over time, the Air Force Reserve has gradually developed into a Major Command of the Active Duty Air Force. Current estimates show that Air Reserve Forces perform 20 percent of the work of the Air Force¹⁸. The Air Force Reserve provides a cost-effective solution to provide air power with the majority of Citizen Airmen serving part time. Therefore, a Reserve Airmen costs the Air Force about one third of an active duty Airman.¹⁹

Airmen in the ready reserve can be categorized into four distinct groups, Active Guard Reserve (AGR), Air Reserve Technician (ART), Traditional Reservist (TR), and Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA). Pay status and participation requirements are the main differentiators between categories of reservist. Regardless of the category, operational execution is almost impossible to distinguish between Citizen Airmen and Regular Air Force Airmen; because both accomplish training to the same standard with the same mission: “to fly, fight and win in air, space and cyberspace”.²⁰

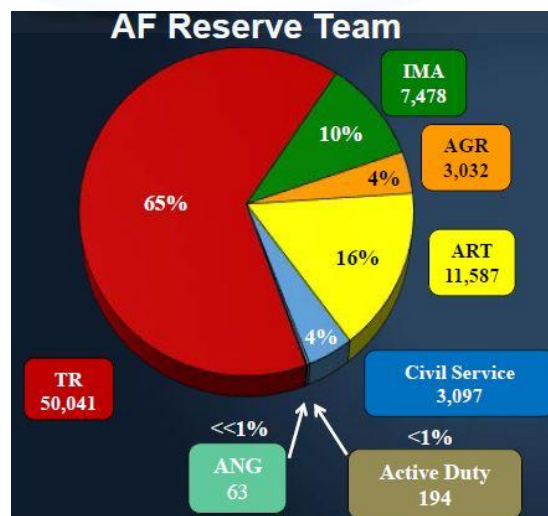


Figure 1: AFRC by Category²¹

Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs) make up 10 percent of the Air Force Reserve, and do not belong to a reserve unit. They are typically assigned to active duty Air Force organizations, combat support agencies, Unified Combatant Commands or the Joint Staff to do jobs that are essential in contingency operations, but do not require full-time manning during times of peace.²²

Accounting for 65 percent of the select reserve population, most reserve Airmen are traditional reservists assigned to a specific reserve unit.²³ They perform military duty only one weekend a month and two weeks a year. ARTs make up 16 percent of the Air Force Reserve. There are over 11,000 ARTs currently serving in the Air Force Reserve. They complete the day to day operations of their traditional Reserve units as both federal civilian employees and reservists. AGRs make up four percent of the Air Force Reserve. Unlike ARTs, AGRs are full-time positions without any ties to federal civilian status. Their benefits and pay are nearly identical to active duty Airmen.²⁴

In addition to general population differences in the command, there are specific differences between MAJCOM IG and wing IG offices within AFRC and those within other MAJCOMs and wings. To begin, of the ten MAJCOMs the number of operational wings in AFRC is the highest by far. AFRC has 50 wings or groups considered wing equivalents. All other MAJCOMs have far fewer wings, as listed in Figure 2.

MAJCOM	WG/WG-Equivalents Total (Host/Tenant)
ACC	29 (13/16)
AETC	18 (10/8)
AFGSC	9 (8/1)
AFMC	14 (8/6)
AFRC	50 (11/39)
AFSOC	7 (2/5)
AFSPC	8 (6/2)
AMC	20 (11/9)
PACAF	10 (10/0)
USAFE	8 (7/1)
ANG	See note below
TOTAL	173 (86/87)

Figure 2: Wings per MAJCOM²⁵

Figure 3 shows the average number of personnel assigned per MAJCOM over a four-year period. Despite having twice as many wings and essentially the same manning as the largest MAJCOMs, the AFRC MAJCOM staff is the smallest of all the MAJCOM IG staffs. Figure 4 shows the comparison of assigned and certified inspectors per MAJCOM staff. Although AFRC is authorized 27 inspectors on staff, as of Dec 2015, only 22 have been hired, with only 18 of them certified.²⁶

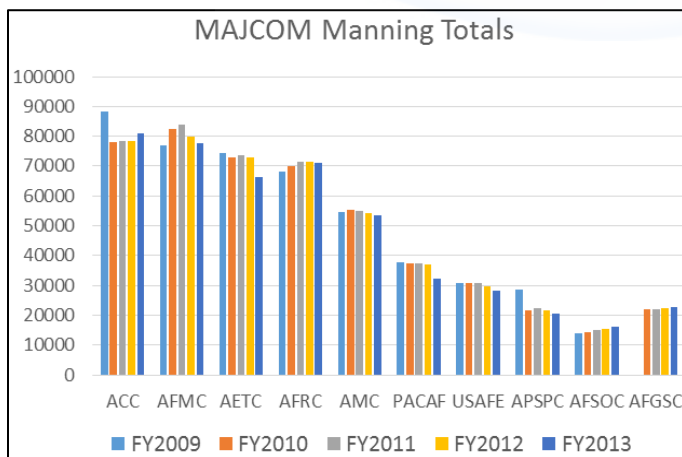


Figure 3: MAJCOM Manning Levels²⁷

MAJCOM	CY 15 (Jul - Dec 2015)		
	Number of Inspectors		
	Certified	Assigned	Auth
ACC	118	122	168
AFIA	86	89	108
AFGSC	69	76	94
AMC	64	73	77
AFMC	46	55	60
AFSPC	43	46	50
PACAF	33	33	36
USAFE	32	36	35
AETC	24	27	29
AFSOC	20	20	20
AFRC	18	22	27
SAF/IG	8	8	8
AFOSI	3	3	4
TOTAL	564	610	716

Figure 4: MAJCOM Inspector Staff²⁸

It is possible to have an inspector assigned to staff, who is not currently certified. When hiring an inspector, if they are not already certified, they must go through a series of steps to complete the process. Figure 5 shows the requirements for certification based on the level of assignment at which the inspector is performing IG duties.

	IGTC	MAJCOM Training	IG-Exec Course	WG Training	Field Observation
SAF-IG	X		X		Recommended [†]
AFIA-inspector	X	X			X
MAJCOM-IG	X	X	X		X
MAJCOM-IG-deputy	X	X	Optional [†]		X
MAJCOM-IG-superintendent	X	X	Optional [†]		X
MAJCOM-Inspector-assigned-to-IG	X	X			X
WG/IG	X			X	X
WG/IG-deputy	X			X	X
WG-inspector-assigned-to-IG	X			X	X

Notes: X denotes requirement to attend training

Figure 5: Inspector Certification Requirements

At the wing level, there are many differences in IG manning between AFRC and other MAJCOM wings as well. Before implementation of the new AFIS, a study was conducted to establish manning requirements at the wings. When the execution plan was published, active duty wings were authorized four to six, full-time inspectors depending on host wing or tenant wing staff as seen in Figure 6.

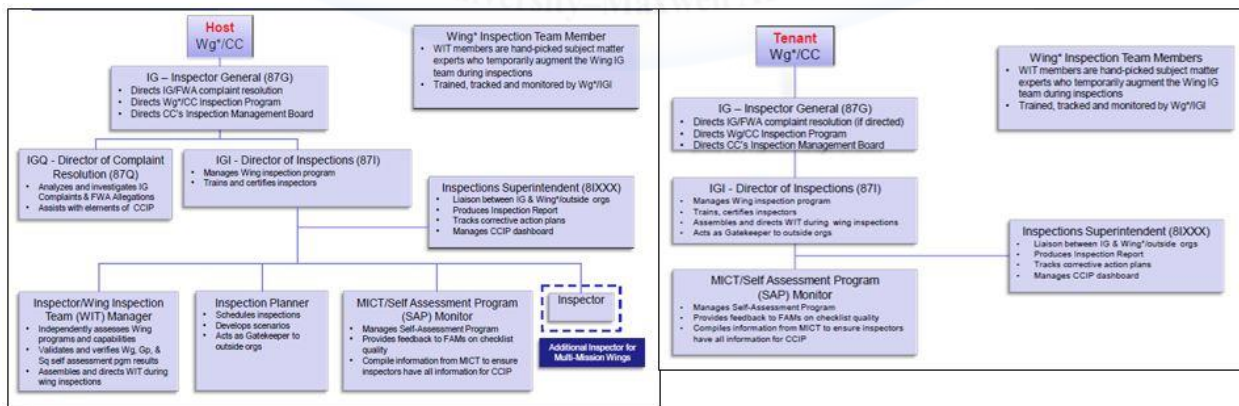


Figure 6: Active Duty Wing IG Structure.²⁹

By contrast, the AFRC execution plan specifically stated, “Manpower for implementing the new AFIS will remain status quo.”³⁰ However, AFRC understood the risk of this manning

plan by also stating, “Wing Commanders must be aware that full-time personnel may be required to establish key programs and processes in the near term. These programs and processes over time, will yield manpower requirements that will be handled in the normal corporate process in the long term beyond FY15.”³¹ Figure 7 shows the AFRC IG construct at implementation but has since added one full-time authorization to perform the superintendent duties, which approximately half of the AFRC wings have been able to fill. Air Force Reserve Command did not have funding to add new full-time positions at the wing, or available people to reallocate for the mission with the same flexibility of active duty.

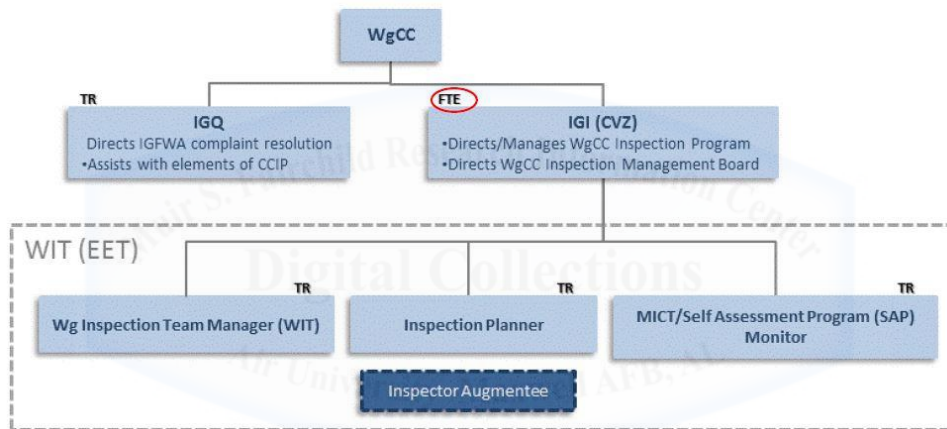


Figure 7: AFRC IG manning construct³²

Overview of the Legacy Inspections Process

Before consolidating everything in the new Air Force Inspection System, multiple inspection processes ensured compliance and readiness. The list includes, but is not limited to; the Unit Compliance Inspection (UCI), the Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI), the Health Services Inspection (HSI), the Logistics Compliance Assessment Program (LCAP), the Nuclear Surety Inspection (NSI), the Airfield Operations Compliance Inspection (AOCI), the

Standardization Evaluation Program Weather Operations (SEPWO), the Aircrew Standardization/Evaluation Visit (ASEV), and the Judge Advocate General Article 6 Inspection.

The two major inspections that a wing commander would prepare for were the UCI and ORI. Both of these inspections would be performed alternating every two years across a four-year cycle. A UCI would look at those wing programs mandated by law, as well as mission areas identified by senior Air Force and MAJCOM leadership as critical or important for assuring the health and performance of the organization.³³ The ORI graded the ability of units to execute their wartime, contingency, or force sustainment mission. The ORI evaluated the unit in four major areas: initial response, employment, mission support, and the ability to survive and operate (ATSO) in a hostile environment.³⁴ Nuclear Surety Inspections (NSIs) were “designed to evaluate a unit’s ability to manage nuclear resources while complying with all nuclear surety standards.”³⁵ Air Force Reserve Command performed a UCI inspection for a reserve wing. The gaining MAJCOM, most often either Air Mobility Command or Air Combat Command performs an ORI inspection for a reserve wing. Grades for the ORI and UCI were based on a five-tier system and could be; Outstanding, Excellent, Satisfactory, Marginal, or Unsatisfactory. The four-year cycle alternating between UCI and ORI is displayed in Figure 8.

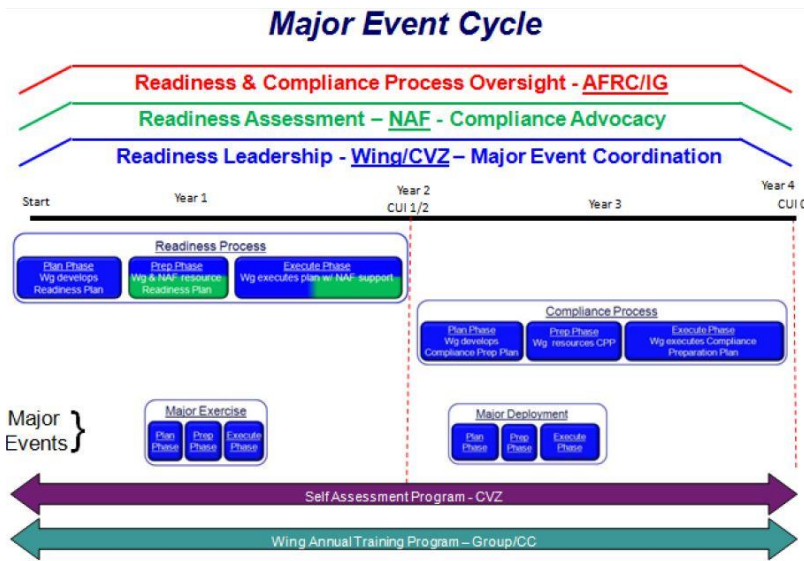


Figure 8: Legacy Inspection Cycle³⁶

Overview of the New Air Force Inspection System

The new AFIS is divided into four levels of inspection. Headquarters Air Force (HAF) conducts a Management Inspection (MI) on the MAJCOMs. A Unit Effectiveness Inspection (UEI), conducted by MAJCOMs, grades the Wings. The Commander's Inspection Program (CCIP) is the level at which wing inspectors grade and report squadron performance and compliance to the wing commander so that he can publish his annual self-assessment called the Commander's Inspection Report (CCIR). Below the CCIP level, the AFI highlights a concept called individual reporting. The goal at this level is to use "Every Airmen as a Sensor"³⁷ This report will focus on the UEI and CCIP implementation and shortfalls. An important intent of AFIS with regards to the UEI is, "The UEI is not focused on detecting shop-level non-compliance. Instead, the UEI is focused on identifying areas where the risks from undetected non-compliance are greatest."³⁸

A large part of the AFIS is to use technology to capture shop level concerns, weaknesses, strengths, and deficiencies. This is now accomplished in part through the Management Internal

Control Toolset (MICT). According to the AFI, “MICT provides supervisors and the command chain, from squadron commander to SecAF, tiered visibility into user-selected compliance reports and program status.”³⁹

The AFI directs that the CCIP process should be continual, with the purpose of constantly identifying problems and improving the unit. The UEI is based on a 24 to 30-month cycle as illustrated in Figure 9.

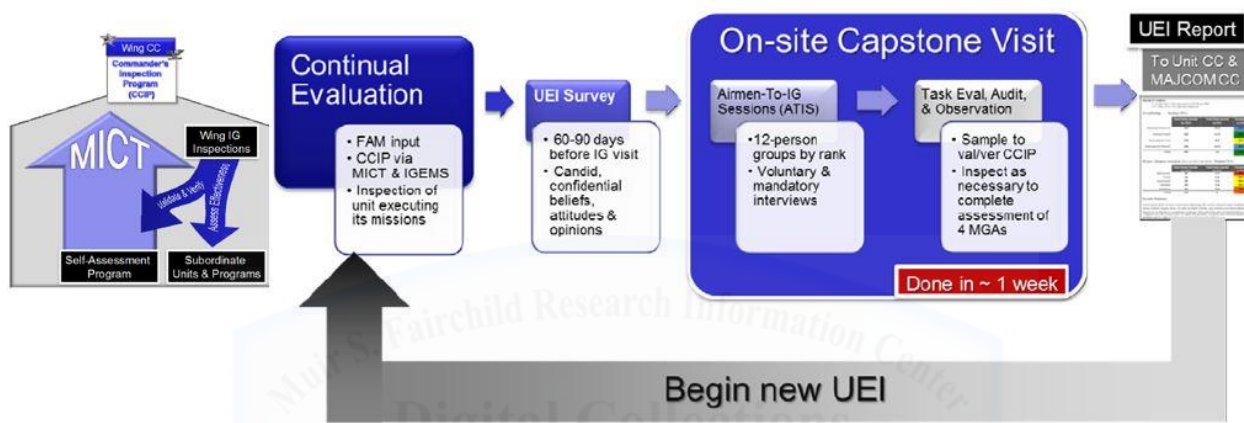


Figure 9: UEI Inspection Cycle⁴⁰

The general concept is that every year the commander submits his CCIR, and every other year the MAJCOM will validate the unit’s self-assessment using the CCIR as a comparison. The MAJCOM analyzes both the UEI and CCIP according to four Major Graded Areas (MGA): Managing Resources, Leading People, Improving the Unit and Executing the Mission. These MGAs, as well as numerous subareas, are derived directly from AFI 1-2, Air Force Culture, and Commander’s Responsibilities. Grading of the UEI and CCIP was initially a 4-tier system of Highly Effective, Effective, Marginally Effective, or Ineffective. Recently the AFI changed the rating to a 3-tier system with grades of; Outstanding, Effective, or Ineffective.⁴¹

SECTION 3: EVALUATION RESEARCH CRITERIA

Research Criteria

To understand the effectiveness of the new inspection system, a look at what was to be accomplished through the change is necessary. SAF IG sponsored and tasked the RAND Corporation to help “Air Force senior leadership through assessment of the readiness, efficiency, economy, and state of discipline of the Air Force by identifying options for enhancing its ability to meet those responsibilities.”⁴² The Air Force accepted the RAND paper which suggested the following changes for the Air Force Inspection system to be successful: shorten the inspection interval from five years to two years; reduce then number of inspectors present during a UCI; increase self-inspection and self-reporting; assess leadership and wing discipline: lower the cost of inspections and fully embrace MICT. The new AFIS will be evaluated to ascertain whether it has accomplished these goals. In addition to the RAND goals, Readiness, Compliance, and inspection data from Inspector General Evaluation Management System (IGEMS) and MICT will be analyzed.

When analyzing the CCIP inspections and UEI inspections, it is important for commanders to receive quality, accurate feedback on which to make to decisions. Are Reserve wing commanders receiving quality in-depth inspection reports that can be used to make quality decisions and improvements? Are minor deficiencies being corrected at lower levels before becoming significant or critical?

Lieutenant General Marc Rogers, former USAF IG that started AFIS, stated a good inspection system would evaluate seven major questions. Are units properly manned? Are units properly trained? Are units properly equipped? What’s the condition of unit equipment? Are

units ready and proficient? Is the leadership climate effective? Are units disciplined and compliant?

In addition to analyzing the proposed change effects from the study, it is important to compare Active Duty wings and Reserve wings to ensure they are inspecting the same items with the same frequency. MICT and IGEMS are the systems of record required for documenting self-assessments and IG inspections. Further data will be gathered from briefing slides and training material not available in IGEMS or MICT that has been received in emails, training classes, and the IG SharePoint sites.

SECTION 4: ANALYSIS OF CHANGES AND EFFECTIVENESS FOR AFRC COMPARED TO ACTIVE DUTY MAJCOMS

Shortening the Inspection Interval.

As mentioned in the RAND study, one of the success strategies for having smaller inspections was to complete them more frequently. To achieve this effect, AFIS suggested a target of 24 months for the duration of the UEI cycle. Due to limited headquarters AFRC/IG staff, AFRC targeted an extended cycle from 24-28 months. Unfortunately, AFRC/IG limitations are causing the interval to lengthen even more. The demands of conducting UEIs on 50 wings in a 24-28month cycle was not achievable, and the AFRC/IG inspection scheduler recently sent notifications to a few wings notifying them that they will not receive their next UEI feedback

until the 30-month mark. This is still shorter than a 5-year cycle; however, this highlights the difficulties in AFRC and their ability to properly execute AFIS.

Reducing the Footprint.

AFRC has been successful at reducing the inspection footprint. When polling most directors of inspection at Reserve wings, all noted the UEI inspection team is much smaller than inspection teams that used to complete the legacy compliance and readiness inspections. Analysis of UEI reports from IGEMS show the average team size in AFIS is about 25-40 inspectors compared to UCI and ORI IGEMS reports show that the team size varied from 50-60 for a UCI and 60-80 for an ORI.

In addition to fewer inspectors on an UEI, the long list of smaller inspections, which “had grown to over 97 types of inspections, assessments, and evaluations”⁴³, is no longer allowed under the AFIS concept. These constraints have significantly reduced the outside inspector footprint of a wing, therefore this objective of the change was met. Although smaller teams result in reduced costs due to less travel, lodging, and per diem requirements for the visiting team, smaller teams cannot inspect as many items. Therefore, much less feedback will be given to the unit to improve as will be discussed in a later section.

Increase Self-Inspection and Self-Reporting

The most critical concept for determining AFIS success is analyzing the effectiveness of the strong reliance on self-assessment and self-reporting of deficiencies. According to the AFI, a robust commander’s inspection program finds deficiencies and improves mission readiness. The AFI also describes how a key part of this effort must be a self-assessment program where individual Airmen report their compliance.⁴⁴ The AFI also mandates, that one of the ways to fail

a UEI inspection is by “the Wing have not embraced a culture of critical self-assessment. In this case, problems are not identified, commanders are not aware of issues, and solid corrective action plans are not in place.”⁴⁵

The self-assessment process is multilayered with the lowest layer being the Airman grading his or her own program. The next level involves the Wing IG inspecting those self-assessments in a CCIP inspections. This is the most crucial component of the self-assessment process, as a CCIP inspection should evaluate other factors of readiness and compliance in addition to validating self-assessment. “The CCIP should also be able to report the discipline of the force, effectiveness, efficiency, and readiness of the Wing.”⁴⁶ Also, after any inspection, “Inspectors will ensure that all validated findings will be documented in the IG’s report, and entered and assigned in IGEMS.”⁴⁷ However, according to Figure 10, there is a large disparity throughout AFRC with regards to how many CCIP inspections each wing is conducting. According to this data, over half of AFRC Wings are lacking guidance, training, or manpower to conduct CCIP inspections and document in IGEMS properly.

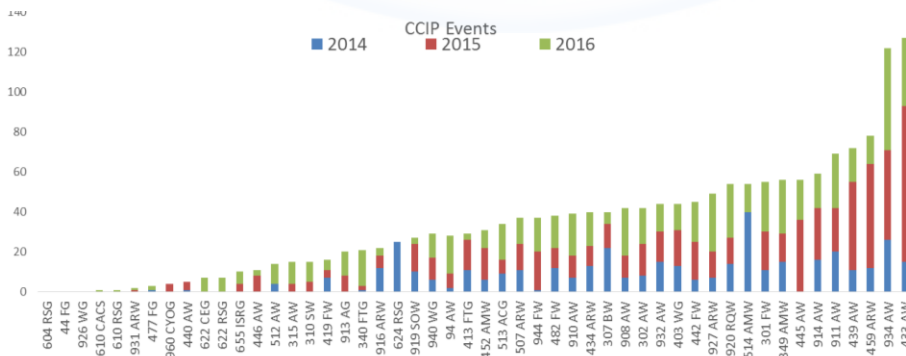


Figure 10: CCIP Events Over Time

When comparing AFRC to the other MAJCOMs, Figure 11 shows AFRC is far behind with respect to the number of yearly CCIP inspections performed per wing.

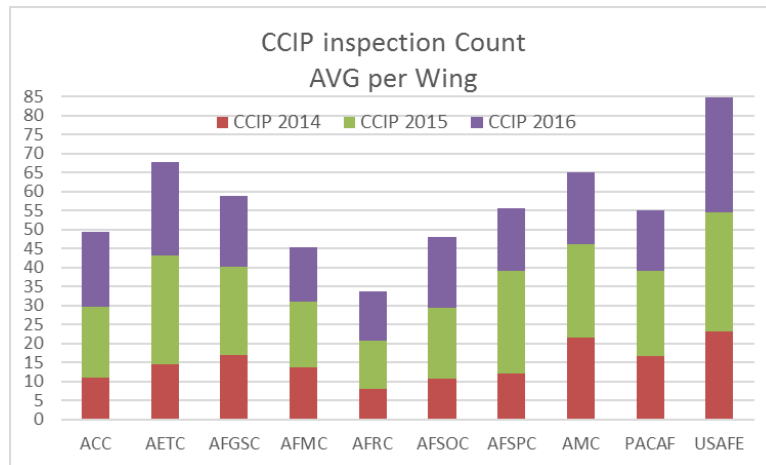


Figure 11: CCIP average per wing by MAJCOM⁴⁸

Although there are not a minimum number of required CCIP inspections per year, one could estimate from Figure 11, that most wings should complete between 15-20 CCIP inspections per year. Looking back at Figure 9 and using 45 inspections as a guide for success, 33 of 50 AFRC wings are below standard.

Assess Leadership and Wing Discipline

One way to assess leadership and wing discipline is to analyze a wing leadership’s ability or motivation to correct problems once they are found in the inspections. Although there will always be errors in a continual improvement process, the main concern would arise when a plethora of problems begins to accumulate. According to Figure 12, AFRC is accumulating open deficiencies faster than it can correct them. The regulation states “The inspected unit will provide associated corrective action plans (CAPs) to MAJCOM IGs not later than 45 days (90 days for ARC units).”⁴⁹ However the data shows AFRC wings are taking 159 days for CCIP criticals, 257

days for UEI criticals, 185 CCIP significants, and 257 UEI significants. Although closing deficiencies is not unique to the new AFIS system, the process is much different. In general the inspector that wrote up the deficiency is who closes it.

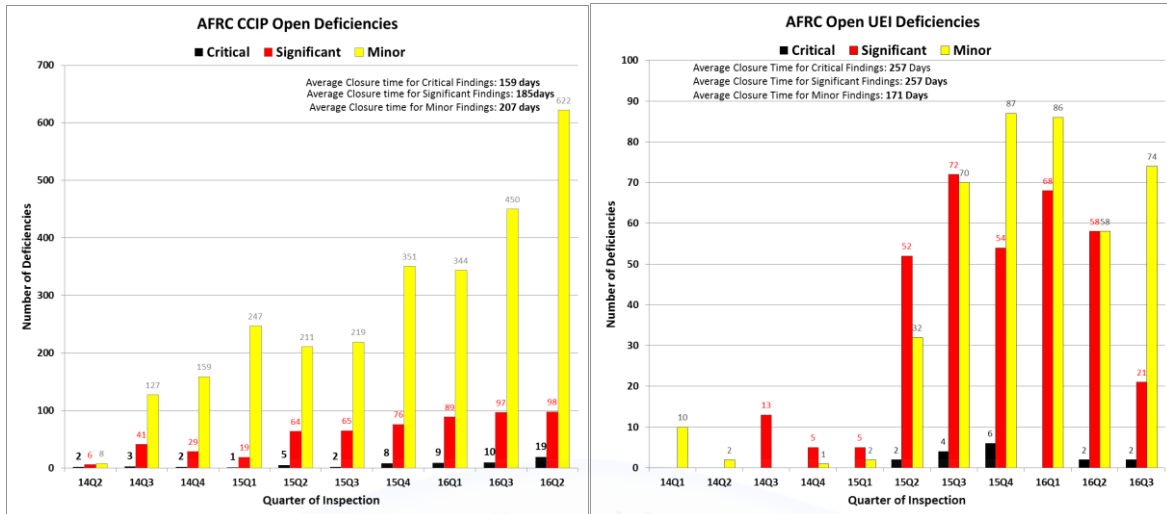


Figure 12: AFRC open deficiencies by quarter.

Lower Cost of Inspections and Fully Embrace MICT

The easiest method to lower cost inspections is to simply show a smaller inspection team costs less to transport, lodge, and pay per diem. However, to achieve quality inspections with fewer IG personnel on a site visit, full implementation of a new self-assessment system called MICT is necessary. MICT allows inspectors to remotely review AFI compliance through virtual inspections. Program owners complete their checklist and upload supporting documentation, showing how they comply with the AFI. Inspectors then review the checklist and supporting documentation for compliance. Unfortunately, According to the RAND study, “extensive experience in performance accountability systems reveals that the quality of data of this kind can easily be compromised by individuals who do not want external observers to see how they are actually doing”⁵⁰ The ideal would be for SAF or MAJCOM IGs to occasionally perform no

notice audits of wing compliance and use the data to support high level decisions, but rarely do wings receive feedback of this kind.

Even so, ensuring MICT is continually updated is essential in order to allow for accurate, virtual inspections accompanied by lower cost, smaller teams. Per AFIS, “Commanders have 30 days (2 UTA cycles for ARC) to assess new or updated Self-Assessment Checklists (SACs). SACs are used by commanders and policy makers to make real-time decisions.”⁵¹ In at least three questioned AFRC wings, the wing commander set the MICT completion requirement on a 6-month cycle due to time constraints and other mandatory reserve training. Even at the 6-month mark, many units have trouble completing all assigned checklists as required, leading to old data that may be inaccurate. In turn, operational decisions may be made in error without detailed and accurate assessments or inspection feedback, resulting in possible noncompliance and resultant failure.

Readiness, Compliance, and UEI/CCIP Effectiveness

Analyzing readiness and compliance is difficult in a system of heavy self-reporting. Self-inspections are not always reliable or valid. Professional survey researchers are aware of a phenomenon called Social Desirability Bias (SDB).⁵² Social desirability is the tendency of some respondents to report an answer in a way they feel to be more socially acceptable in order to avoid receiving negative evaluations, even if the answer they give is not true.⁵³ This bias is likely present when wing members complete self-assessment checklists. The focus groups in the RAND study suggested that wings would not be brutally honest with themselves.⁵⁴ Thus, there is a high probability that SDB is occurring on self-inspection checklists when wing members are attempting to gain the approval of a supervisor or avoid unwanted scrutiny. Additionally, SDB

could play a minor role when Wing Inspectors are finalizing CCIP reports for inspections completed on their own wing, and limited time prevents in-depth analysis. This compromises the validity of these self-assessments and makes them less valuable as a tool for the commander to use in making decisions.

Given the presence of this bias in self-assessments, it would be good to compare internal inspection findings to external inspection findings in order to validate or invalidate the self-assessments. Again, data from IGEMS should be used in this process, but instead of identifying select individuals or single organizations with a problem, a better comparison would be to compare trends throughout all of AFRC. When a wing inspector completes a CCIP inspection, all deficiencies are given a severity level of minor, significant or critical. If a CCIP is run effectively, the UEI should have similar findings. Data from Figure 13 shows the external UEI inspectors are more than twice as likely to grade a deficiency as significant. The data does not prove wing inspectors are purposefully hiding problems, but does give a strong indication that self-inspections in AFIS are affected by SDB.

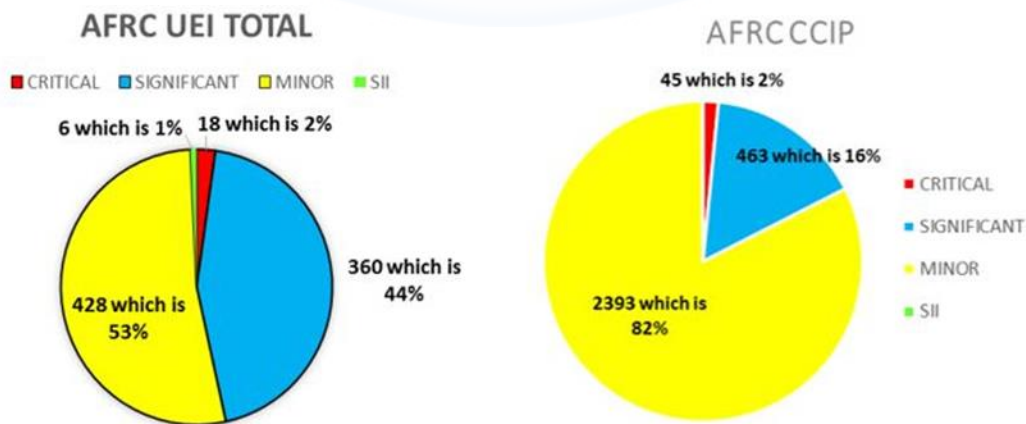


Figure 13: Comparison of AFRC UEI levels to CCIP levels.

How does AFRC compare to other MAJCOMs for the CCIP to UEI inspections grades. According to Figure 14, the active duty MAJCOM ratio of severity is nearly the same from CCIP wing self-inspections to external UEI inspections.

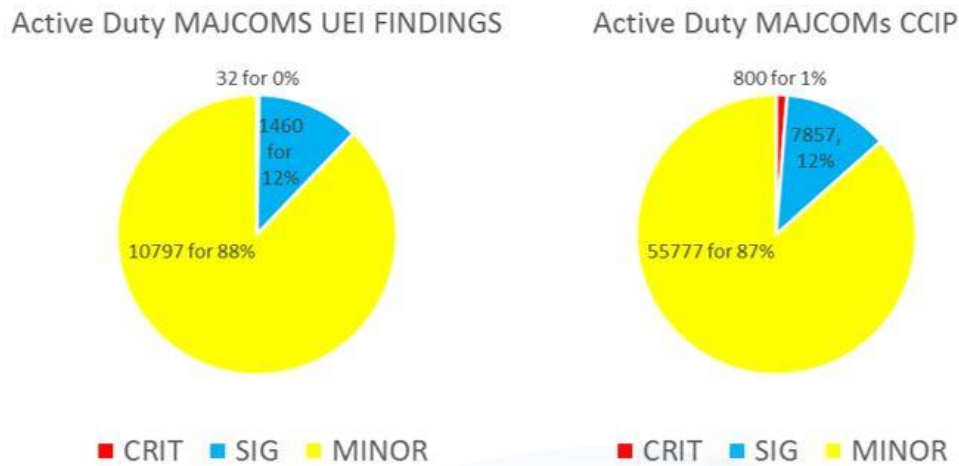


Figure 14: Comparison of Active Duty MAJCOMs UEI levels to CCIP levels.

In the legacy system, readiness was much easier to gauge and relied heavily on the ORI grade. The goal is to assess whether a unit can successfully fulfill its tasked mission. Readiness metrics are not currently being measured directly in AFIS. AFI 90-201 suggested wing inspectors “integrate and analyze multiple sources” to grade a wing to include Status of Resources and Training System (SORTS), AEF UTC Reporting Tool (ART) and Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS).” These systems have been used since long before the new AFIS role out. Although SORTS and ART are somewhat objective measurement of resources, the do not measure the ability to execute the mission. DRRS was developed to capture the unit’s ability to meet its mission, but relies on subjective opinion on the commander without actually going thru an exercise. In the recent revision of the AFI 90-201, on 27 September 2016 a Table shows mandatory exercises were added to address this problem shown in Figure 15.

Table 5.2. Air Force Installation Mission Assurance Exercise Requirements

(ADDED) Active Shooter Exercise	Twice a year	SECDEF memo, dated 2 Oct 15; focus on notification procedures specific to GSUs
(ADDED) Nuclear Generation	Annual	Exercise IAW Doc statement or Mission Directive; scope and scale as approved by MAJCOM/CC/CV (T-2)
(ADDED) Readiness Assessment	Annual	Exercise IAW Doc statement or Mission Directive; scope and scale as approved by MAJCOM/CC/CV (T-2)

Figure 15: AFI 90-201 Table 5.2 additions

The addition of these exercises and frequencies are a good first step to properly measuring a wings readiness to accomplish the mission but no data currently exists regarding the adequacies of the wing IG's will have enough experience, staff, and resources to conduct needed exercise.

SECTION 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE PLANS FOR AFIS

Although Active Duty wings are meeting the goals of a shortened interval, reduced inspection footprint, increased self-assessment effectiveness, and lower costs inspections; AFRC will need to continue to modify some requirements and request exceptions from Headquarters Air Force to succeed. AFRC has successfully had some reserve specifics added to supplement the AFI but will need to continue inserting improvements to handle the unique manning structure.

Addressing the Manning Problem

The biggest challenge for AFRC IG is manning. Manpower is needed to not only perform inspections, but give training, provide local user support and system administration for IGEMS and MICT, as well as data entry and report writing. In order to address this challenge, Headquarters Air Force should either reduce inspection requirements, bring Reserve IG offices up to the same level of full-time manning as Active Duty IG offices, or pool wing IG resources at AFRC headquarters.

Reducing inspection requirements would benefit AFRC by alleviating expectations that AFRC can achieve the same readiness levels as Active Duty MAJCOMs with only 35% of the full-time manning. Under the legacy inspection system, AFRC could let programs get behind and then throw a lot of manpower at the problem when necessary to prove they could be ready when needed. This worked well for the AFRC model of minimal full time manning and only bringing Airmen on duty when needed. By contrast, AFIS is predicated on continual readiness, and continual inspection, leading to continuous improvement. Active Duty MAJCOMs have a majority of their Airmen available at all times, therefore maintaining constant readiness in all areas is not unreasonable. However, AFRC does not; meaning that unless action is taken to reduce requirements, AFRC must make tough choices in deciding which programs or areas can be reduced and which must be continually ready even with minimal full-time manning.

The second recommendation to address manning requirements is to equalize full-time manning between AFRC MAJCOM IG staff and Wing IG offices and the MAJCOM and Wing IG offices of the other MAJCOMs. The first step to accomplishing this will be to calculate the man-hour differences between Active Duty and Reserve. An Active Duty IG person is available

for approximately 176 hours a month, whereas a Traditional Reservist is on duty 16 hours per month on a drill weekend. Currently most Active Duty wings have five full-time inspectors, while most AFRC wings have one full-time and four part-time (traditional reserve) inspectors. Thus, while an Active Duty IG office will be able to perform 880 man-hours of work per month, a Reserve wing will only be able to perform 256 man-hours of work per month cumulative from those five inspectors. AFRC has already realized this need, and has taken partial steps to remedy the situation by authorizing a change of one of the TR position to a full-time Reserve technician position. Although this is much better than 256 man-hours, being able to accomplish 432 man-hours of work per month is still half of that which can be accomplished by an Active Duty office. With half the amount of manpower of the Active Duty, Air Force leaders should only realistically expect about half as many inspections as the Active Duty to be completed by a Reserve IG office. When scaling the man-hour discrepancies throughout the lower level Self-Assessment monitors and associate inspectors, it is easy to understand the challenge of maintaining equal readiness and inspections.

The third recommended option to address manning requirements is to pool Wing IG personnel. About a year before AFIS was implemented, AFRC downsized all the Numbered Air Force (NAF) staffs, pushing the manning down to the operational wings. Before the reduction, NAF IG staff was responsible for preparing AFRC Wings for their Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) by conducting Operational Readiness Exercises (ORE). Because of the reduced staff, AFRC implemented a “pay-it-forward” concept to help conduct and grade wing OREs. The concept of the program entailed 10-12 wings sending a few inspectors or exercise experts to grade and help each wing execute their ORE. Although this concept only applied to readiness

exercises and not compliance inspections, it was short-lived due to the complete rewrite of AFI 90-201 and implementation of AFIS. Because this program seemed successful and was used to address a very similar AFRC-specific manpower problem, it should work with AFIS readiness and compliance inspection requirements. The two biggest benefits of this pay it forward in AFIS concept is that most inspectors will be external to the wing, thus allowing the wing to keep their experts around to perform the mission or to showcase their compliance.

Addressing Self-Assessment Challenges

The next challenge is a lack of comprehensive self-assessments. As discussed earlier, AFIS is reliant on the self-assessment process. The first recommendation to deal with this is to finish creating MICT checklists for all applicable AFIs and clearly direct who should be completing the assessments. Although AFRC has published a list of suggested checklists in MICT, there is little guidance on who should be tracking or completing that checklist. For example, the supervisor safety checklist might be tracked by every supervisor to ensure they all answer to and understand the AFI. However, most squadrons only have a safety representative answer for everyone, who would only be able to guess or assume everyone has taken all the steps required in the AFI. This pattern of assumptions will inadvertently lead to a relaxed attitude of keeping the checklist accurate, thus facilitating noncompliance. While noncompliance is a problem in itself, this also means that if external inspectors discover the noncompliance, the Airman completing the checklist in compliance is not held accountable, but rather the Airmen who did not see the checklist and probably did not know the requirements. Without clear detailed guidance from AFRC IG, undetected noncompliance increases.

The second recommendation for increasing accurate self-assessment data is to make the self-assessment process easier. A good way to make it easier for Airmen to complete the checklist is to maximize technology. Linking computer systems would allow MIC to auto-import data into applicable areas of checklist. The Airman could just accept the MICT import if accurate. If automated it would most likely be more accurate and easier. The biggest benefit of using online technology to track and report is instant access. Instant access leads to easier virtual inspections, increasing the quality of the CCIP process.

Dealing With Non-Standard CCIP Programs

Finally, to deal with nonstandard CCIP programs through AFRC, the strongest recommendation is to bring back external inspections. The two options are to increase AFRC IG staff or as discussed earlier, to create a pool of Wing IG in a pay it forward concept. To prevent huge costs, inspection teams should be kept small. Specialized teams can become very proficient at, not only knowing what to look for, but at generating the cumbersome IGEMS reports. Additionally, utilizing external inspectors allows for senior squadron members to execute an operational exercise as would happen in a real-world crisis.

Although there would be additional challenges created by implementing any of the above recommendations, the benefits would outweigh the costs.

SECTION 6: CONCLUSIONS

The new Air Force Inspection System was not a minor change. It required a complete culture shift. When Air Force leadership implemented most of the suggested changes from the RAND study, it did so in a hurry with the motto: “implement now, adjust later.”⁵⁵ Active Duty MAJCOMs have been able to complete inspections and grow their programs as required. However, because AFRC was already a lean organization, it did not have the luxury to shift duties around to make it work. Just because an AFRC wing cannot complete all the suggested CCIP inspections, this does not imply they could not accomplish their war-time tasking. Conversely, just because an AFRC wing has the best CCIP program does not indicate they will have no problems executing all taskings. Without accurate performance metrics or inspections, the risk of mission failure increases. As shown in the contents of this document, AFRC cannot complete the same CCIP programs as Active Duty MAJCOMs who provide AFRC their war taskings.

NOTES

(All notes appear in shortened form. For full details, see the appropriate entry in the bibliography.)

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