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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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CHANGING THE DEFENSE OFFICER PERSONNEL SYSTEM: AN EXPERIENCE-BASED  
APPROACH TO HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

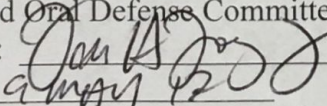
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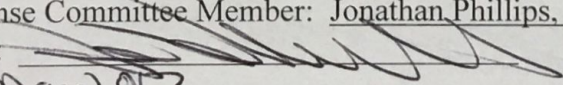
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## Executive Summary

Title: Flexible Military Officer Talent Management

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Thesis: The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA)'s constraints and structure should be changed to leverage a variety of personnel flow structures, align accessions and requirements, utilize experience-based promotions, and modify assignments to deliberately develop officer experience profiles.

Discussion: Changes to the military personnel system should leverage a composite system of flow structures, including lateral entry of personnel, to produce the greatest flexibility in managing officers. Depending on service and specialty requirements, the flow of personnel through the careers could change to balance inventory and requirements to keep officer specialties sustainable. The inability of the services to leverage personnel systems to effectively manage the last bust cycle has led to shortages in multiple specialties across the services. Some of the more notable instances of shortage are Air Force fighter pilots, Navy Surface Warfare Officers, Army Foreign Area Officers, and Marine field grade officers. Increased flexibility in management of officer experience, as well as varied career models for officers of different specialties could be controlled through accession, assignment, and promotion law and policy. This paper presents a concept of changes to accession, assignment, and promotion structures and policies that could enable effective officer management based on experience.

Conclusion: Flexibility in officer management will be desired as long as missions and year-to-year funding remains dynamic. The current personnel system is faced with the reality of external market pressures on the officer experience pool. The DOPMA flow structure uses a closed, up-or-out system with rigid, time-based flow from accession, promotion, assignment, and separation or retirement. Leveraging a hybrid of up-or-out, up-and-stay, and lateral entry structures would allow officer specialties to develop experience based on need rather than arbitrary cohort movement without regard to specialty differences. Changes to the personnel system should focus on building agility to match the ever-changing demands placed on the military officers.

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## *Preface*

Although my experience with officer management began when I was a Second Lieutenant running officer promotions, the basis for my interest began long before. I grew up hearing the stories of career personnel officers during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. These stories involved “seeing eye Captains,” smoke filled office spaces, and the behind the scenes details of Senior Officer Management. The average exposure to officer management is much more of a cloak and dagger experience.

When I became a Recorder in the USAF Selection Board Secretariat, the access to people, documents, and concepts was unparalleled. The organization links personnel policy and execution in a manner that impacts every officer in the Air Force. Development of policy that could be executed within the confines of DOPMA and Goldwater-Nichols while balancing the needs of the Air Force and the service members was and continues to be a challenge.

None of the problems the Air Force or the Department of Defense faces in managing officers are new. The continued pursuit of understanding and improvement are critical to effective officer management concepts, now and into the future.

Attending USMC Command and Staff College has enabled an analytical look at the need for change. It has also afforded me the opportunity to research the old stories and understand how officer management has evolved. My effort has benefitted from numerous long conversations with my father, Colonel (Ret) Randy Tillery. His mentorship continues to be important to my development as a personnel officer. Many thanks also go to my mentor here at school, Dr. James Joyner, who provided the right mixture of guidance and challenge throughout the writing process.

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## **Introduction**

The military personnel system in place today is the result of evolutionary changes since World War II. It is based in the need to meet the challenges of a large military force during the Cold War. The main objectives of officer management were uniformity amongst the services and a youthful demographic.<sup>1</sup> These objectives created a common officer career length across the services and provided for movement up and out through the system. The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) of 1980 continued these objectives and added high fixed promotion opportunities as a goal.<sup>2</sup> This served to move officers through the personnel system while retaining experience needed to fill the services' requirements. It also created the expectation of a typical officer career lasting closer to 30 years of service below general and flag officer. Modifications to this system since have been added piecemeal to address specific issues as they have arisen. DOPMA served the needs for the services reasonably well, emphasizing the Cold War requirements of instantaneous nuclear readiness, large amounts of forwards deployed forces in Europe and Northeast Asia, and reinforcements ready to deploy from home.

It is clear that today's national security considerations are considerably different. Now the strategy supports creating and maintaining stability to allow democracy and economic growth while remaining ready to protect U.S. interests and allies on short notice.<sup>3</sup> There is a general sense that the officer personnel management system will fail to meet the requirements of future operating environments. Its up-or-out personnel structure mixed with rigid, time-based laws and policies drive decisions about accessions, assignments, and promotions that limit officer career paths and experience profiles.

Many of the emerging ideas in the Services' human capital strategies focus on knowledge, skills, and abilities as the foundation for officer management. A shift to managing

officer experience or competencies would require a system with greater flexibility to appoint, assign, and promote officers and enable the desired mix of competency, development, and movement. This same flexibility would enable the military to quickly meet inventory requirements for emerging officer specialties, like cyber operations, that have civilian equivalents, or execute programs to retain officers with specific specialty requirements. A flexible personnel structure that enables effective talent management could mitigate the impacts of changing missions and force structure to effectively match officer experience profiles with national military policy requirements.

Criticism of the current time-based personnel system often falls short in understanding the makeup of the service personnel systems and the procedures DOPMA provides to manage officers at various milestones in their careers. DOPMA and service policy act both complementarily and independently throughout an officer's career. The most common critical argument is the failure of DOPMA to provide for effective talent management.

For this discussion, "flexible talent management" describes the structure and concepts to manage accession, promotion, and assignment of officers while managing inventories of critical specialties and experience profiles within the codified force structure caps. Through this lens of talent management, DOPMA and the services' personnel systems must be able to appoint, promote, and assign (manage) the right officers (skills, abilities, experience) to fill programmed requirements (billets or spaces). DOPMA's constraints and structure should be changed to leverage a variety of personnel flow structures, align accessions and requirements, utilize experience-based promotions, and modify assignments to deliberately develop officer experience profiles. The resulting flexibility would enable varied career emphasis and outcomes to allow

officer specialties to establish desired experience, career path, and officer inventory to meet mission needs.

The DOPMA flow structure uses a closed, up-or-out system with rigid, time-based flow from accession, promotion, assignment, and separation or retirement. Leveraging a hybrid of up-or-out, up-and-stay, and lateral entry structures would allow officer specialties to develop experience based on need rather than arbitrary cohort movement without regard to specialty differences.

Accession of officers should be based on validated requirements derived from mission sets and capable of sustaining officer specialties. The current system of officer management has fallen short in aligning valid requirements and experience of officers upon entry into service. Few career fields have mandatory education requirements and most are only guided by desired education degrees. The experience gap created requires training to develop baseline competency. The current personnel system provides the means to manage the accession of officers through cohorts, groupings originally determined by the year of commissioning, during times of growth. These cohorts move through careers competing for promotions and assignments, against peers at set years-of-service milestones. It has fallen short however, during periods of drawdown. Additionally, DOPMA grade tables cap inventory without consideration to sustainment, requirements, missions, or policy. Finally, changes to officer accession are needed to align and assess experience of officers to feed sustainment of inventory and experience as officers move through the personnel flow structure.

The statutory framework for promotion provided in DOPMA provides an interface with the assignment system and forces up-or-out actions based on seniority. The current system evaluates performance and potential, but often at the expense of experience. Adopting an

experience-based promotion system would ensure experiences are developed by using them to drive eligibility. Additionally, with changes to promotion timing, officer specialties could manage movement based on desired experience profiles. The services could then avoid tradeoffs between promotion and experience, especially amongst the highest performing officers.

Finally, assignments should be linked to knowledge, skills, and abilities to deliberately develop experience profiles. Along with the linkage, the ability to assess experience outcomes would ensure that officers were developed commensurate with an assignment and grade. The current system forces trade offs between breadth and depth of officer experience. Through changes to assignment and career length, this tradeoff could be mitigated to focus on development.

## **Background**

In order to understand potential changes to DOPMA structures, a review of the path to the current structure is useful. As previously mentioned, the DOPMA structure has been a series of evolutionary changes. Many of the laws and policies that govern officer career management were in place from legislation passed at the end of World War II and reflected lessons learned from struggling through personnel management during the Cold War. Officer accession, promotion, tenure, composition, and discharge have been recurring sources of policy dispute. At various points, the Army and Navy Departments and Congress have imparted management philosophies. Congress has argued that the issue of officer management is too important to be left to the executive branch, pointing out that “throughout the long history of the United States, the officer corps of the armed forces as a whole has been unready for combat at the time war

commenced.”<sup>4</sup> The following section provides a brief history of the evolution of the officer personnel system.

The passage of the Officer Personnel Act (OPA) in 1947 emphasized uniformity, youth and vigor, and remobilization capacity. These challenges stemmed from the small size of the interwar military and different career expectations of officers in the services. Promotions were slow and irregular prior, but rapid and a combination of permanent and temporary during World War II. OPA consolidated separate Department of War and Department of Navy legislation into a single Act reflecting the struggle to establish a single military establishment during this timeframe. OPA emphasized youth and vigor by adopting the Navy’s up-or-out promotion system, capping the tenure of successful regular officers below O-6 at 30 years, and establishing voluntary retirement at 20 years of commissioned service. Remobilization was enabled through the retention of the largest number of middle-ranking officers in order to expand the force in the event of another large war.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately OPA was intended to service three purposes: provide an adequate number of officers in the proper grades and of the proper ages to meet the needs of the services; authorize grade distribution that would provide a sufficiently attractive career so that high-caliber people would serve; and eliminate weak officers as early in their careers as possible.<sup>6</sup> It also identified the need to carry thousands of temporary officers who would fill needed organize, train, and equip functions, but would be subject to funding impacts on force structure without the tenure expectation. Thus the act imposed statutory ceilings on the number of regular officers for each service along with a percentage system for distribution into the grades on a permanent basis. The grade tables controlled regular officers, but left the authority for temporary promotions to the Secretary of Defense when the number of officers was below authorized and when Congress approved an increase in end strength.<sup>7</sup> This authority allowed the

services flexibility to provide permanent career plans for Regular officers while providing the authority to retain temporary officers to meet manning goals.

OPA also included provisions impacting promotion and retention. The Army ended commissioning of officers by branches and began appointing and promoting in the Regular Army. Additionally, the Army adopted a version of the up-or-out promotion system and provided a means to move officers through the system in cohort groups while making cuts to unqualified officers. Thru OPA, Congress imposed tight controls on permanent promotion, but offered little to control temporary promotions. By 1953 Congress was making annual adjustments to temporary promotions through budget amendments. The annual adjustments made officer management difficult and inconsistent. In 1954, Congress passed the Officer Grade Limitation Act (OGLA) imposing statutory limits to regular and reserve officers above O-4 for line officers, but did so without repeal of the OPA provisions creating a dual promotion system. Also of note, OGLA eliminated limits on voluntary retirements at the 20-year point (at half pay and roughly age 42) that had been set by a Defense Appropriations Act amendment in 1954. The services incorrectly predicted that most successful officers would pursue a full 30-year career. In reality, the average retirement age was then and continues to be 46 with 24 years of service.<sup>8</sup> As Anna Parcell discusses in her historical review of personnel policy, OGLA also fell short in managing grade structure across the services. This resulted in adjustments to Air Force grade limits between 1959 and 1966, then extended to 1974 allowing an increase in promotions to lieutenant colonel and colonel as officers commissioned during the increased accession years during WWII and the Korean War progressed through the field grades.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, because of the increasing need of officers in all services during the Vietnam War, the limits of OPA on regular officers led to extensive use of reserve officers serving on active duty for career terms.

In 1960, the Department of Defense (DoD) impaneled the Ad Hoc Committee to Study and Revise the Officer Personnel Act, (the Bolte Committee) to recommend a new system to achieve department uniformity in officer career management whenever possible.<sup>10</sup> The issues stemmed from grade limitations established through budget amendments and the passage of OGLA that imposed limitations on the numbers of regular and reserve officers in the field grades. The committee recommended uniformly applied controls for field grade inventory based on percentages of regular officers, time-in-grade requirements as the driver for eligibility for promotion, and developed the rule set for what would become selective continuation.<sup>11</sup> The DoD submitted the recommendations to Congress, but no action was taken. By 1972, faced with the Vietnam bubble of officers, Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to submit inputs to establish new permanent grade limitations. The resulting “Report on Officer Grade Limitations,” according to Rostker, would be the basis of the provisions found in DOPMA.

DOPMA faced a protracted approval path, passing the House in 1976 and 1978, but failing to be passed in the Senate due to differing approaches to officer force structure. The full-Senate approved version of DOPMA was ushered by a Senate and House Armed Services Committees compromise that led up-or-out to continue, but reformed active and reserve officer commissions and grade controls. This compromise led to passage in November 1980. It was intended to reform and refine earlier legislation incorporating lessons learned from WWII as well as addresses problems encountered later. DOPMA’s general goals and specific provisions of law focus on three interrelated themes that reflect how policy-makers and military leadership believed the officer corps should be managed. These are grade structure, flow through this structure, and uniformity amongst the services. According to Rostker, DOPMA continued up-or-out, but reformed commissioning system and grade controls that were intended to temporarily

address a peacetime military that was larger than the historical norm.<sup>12</sup> At the same time it served as a compromise between the Senate, who sought to decrease the officer corps, and the DoD-backed House, that sought to preserve the current end strength.

DOPMA attempts to provide the desired officer force and experience profile in what Rostker calls an “ideal steady state career.” Officers are augmented as regular by the 10-year point, effectively vesting officers in the retirement system and setting conditions to serve the maximum years of commissioned service that their achieved grade enables.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, the model for the career sustainment of each officer specialty does not vary greatly despite very different attributes and requirements. Furthermore, there are five main features that provide a framework to achieve management goals. These are the use of a closed system without mid-career starts or lateral entry, a pyramid structure, a competitive up-or-out career flow, seniority-based promotion timing, and uniformity across services. Each of these features impact talent management of the officer corps that aligns with the intent of the law. DOPMA provided the answer for a steady state officer structure rather than a flexible tool by which to manage officers in periods of growth or reductions.

According to Harry Thie of the RAND Corporation, DOPMA began to show difficulty in managing officer force structure as early as the Reagan build up which added tens of thousands of personnel across the services from 1980 to 1986. DOPMA provided multiple tools to increase the force, but lacked checks to control growth such as proportion of officers in the force or constraining the opportunity and timing of officer promotions, which was written as a guarantee.<sup>14</sup> Only three years removed from end-strength increases, the cold war came to a close. Because few tools were available to decrease the force, new voluntary and involuntary programs were developed to accomplish the post-Cold War force reductions. Congress provided

flexibility, but disregarded major tenets on DOPMA impacting career tenure and promotion opportunity.

More recent challenges to managing the officer force have stemmed from boom and bust cycles and emerging missions. A gradual reduction in end strength across the services in the late 1990s was derailed by the 2001 terror attacks. The boom cycle that ended in 2005 for the Navy and Air Force continued for the Army until 2010.<sup>15</sup> The bust cycle that followed saw expanded authorities to conduct enhanced Reductions in Force (RIF), Selective Early Retirement Boards (SERBs), and Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA). Additionally, officer accessions were controlled starting in 2005 through reductions in enlisted-to-officer commissioning sources that provided instantaneous adjustment in the FY program and delays in entrance to active duty across commissioning sources. Additionally, new incentive programs for voluntary losses, an end to tenure protections previously provided for officers with regular commissions, grade table relief based on specialty, and selective continuation of officers twice non-selected to O-4 was limited to certain specialties. The inability of the personnel system to effectively manage the last bust cycle has led to shortages in multiple specialties across the services. Some of the more notable instances of shortage are Air Force fighter pilots, Navy Surface Warfare Officers, Army Foreign Area Officers, and Marine field grade officers. The services are also facing challenges in management of cyber operations officers.

Although the officer personnel system, codified in DOPMA, has reasonably provided a structure to manage officers, it has fallen short of the needed talent management. The closed, up-or-out structure provides only one entry path and flows officers through the system at similar rates without much regard for specialty. Peter Shirmer of the RAND Corporation in exploring alternative career paths for field grade officers discusses, in recent years, DoD has increasingly

focused on creating a more strategic, modernized, and flexible officer personnel system that will leverage human capital to improve organizational effectiveness while improving quality of life.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, the implementation of Goldwater-Nichols Act significantly increased emphasis on developing joint qualified officers. With the expanded joint requirement placed on top of the continuing need for service specific experience to make meaningful joint contributions, often too many experience requirements are imposed on too few career phases. DOPMA exacerbates this dilemma because it limits officer career length.

These issues and stresses on officer careers and the services build the case for change. The importance of an officer management system capable of meeting the changing needs of the services is critical. A new approach to the personnel structures, accession programs, promotion timing and eligibility, and development of officer experience through assignments is necessary and arguably overdue.

### **Career Flow Structures**

The DoD officer personnel system attempts to meet contradictory objectives. The institution values experience profiles based on a rigid time-based, closed model for progression. National security strategy and force structure changes do little more than acknowledge the rigidity of this development and actually require maximum flexibility to manage the entry, development, and exit of personnel in the system. The means of entry and attrition determine the career flow structure in the organization. Career flow structures have an important effect on the experience profiles and lifecycle of careers, more so than other functions, like assignment or training, in the personnel system. Career flow structures affect organizational culture and commitment by influencing career expectations. The structure also affects work force

experience, culture, and the interpersonal networks that effectively bind the various pieces of an organization. The selection of a career flow structure described in law imposes constraints on policies for each personnel function. In order to advocate for a change to the current personnel structure, a review of alternatives is relevant.

There are four comparable career flow structures that are commonly used to manage personnel systems: up-or-out, up-and-stay, lateral entry, and hybrids that combine the former three types. The U.S. military currently uses an up-or-out model. Up-and-stay is often used by foreign militaries as well as private and public sector organizations. Lateral entry, or in-and-out, systems are commonly used by private and public sectors. Hybrid systems utilize combinations of the other career structures for segments of careers. Each of the systems is designed to accomplish specific objectives within the workforce and value specific attributes in the experience profiles.

The up-or-out system provides incentives, in the form of promotion and pay, based on performance, and allows the services to retain the best performers. Through forced attrition, executed through various separation and retirement laws and policies, the services can manage movement through the system within the guidance of DOPMA. In the current system, DOPMA describes the promotion phase points as windows that the services follow. This requires the promotion opportunity to remain within five percent of year groups over a five year period regardless of competitive category. This serves to move very different officer specialties through the system at roughly the same speed without regard for differences in experience and education requirements. The closed nature of the system supports the organizational culture, but the forced separation and retirement mechanisms negatively impact long-term investment. For example, an Air Force pilot that separates from the service at 12 years, is a loss of 12 years of training and

experience that depending on accession year group size, may or may not be replaced for another 12 years. The same scenario holds true in regards to retirement as well. An O-5 who retires at 20 years, the minimum vesting time, not only takes experience, but depending on service commitments, leaves with years of available service at that grade.

This system was deliberately chosen for its emphasis on youth and vigor. It ensures this through the exit points exerted on the officer population through promotion opportunity. As mentioned above, the military also uses various retirement programs to force and control exits at retirement eligible grades.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, the military has the unique characteristic of being the only institution in which the profession of being an officer can be practiced. There is no personal portability within the system of military service. In the absence of service policies to enable more effective management, involuntary exit terminates participation in the system.

Up-and-stay structure is characterized by entry into the military at the start of the career and service at the will of the individual, provided satisfactory performance, for a full career without dependence on advancement. In the current system, the military uses “continuation” in particular career fields where there are shortages. These officers are offered “continued” service for a designated period of time, usually to retirement eligibility, contingent on meeting standards of performance. This selective continuation occurs upon a second non-selection for promotion to the next grade where the officer is not eligible for retirement. As currently used, it applies to roughly O-4s in specific career fields who are in the bottom 25 percent of eligible officers and qualify through specialty for possible continued service.

The up-and-stay structure provides career stability and predictability. Additionally, promotion and separation decisions are mutually exclusive. Less turnover occurs than in the up-or-out system, with the organization needing only as many new accessions as separations and

retirements. This system supports strong culture with reinforcing actions occurring by offering tenure to those who accept and adapt to the cultural norms. In up-and-stay structures, people may reach a plateau at a particular grade and increased compensation comes from longevity at the rank instead of from promotion. Performance motivations will stem from sources other than promotion. Through the use of special pays, bonuses, allowance, and years of service factors, the 7th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation recognized that the military compensation system could sometimes overemphasize the longevity component instead of the promotion component favoring retention in an up-and-stay structure in specific scenarios based on position and location.<sup>18</sup>

Lateral entry structures have entry and exit points at multiple points in career. Entry does not have to occur at the beginning of a career with experienced people being replaced with new people with required knowledge, skills, and abilities. For the military example, officers could enter laterally from civilian life, another component, or another service. Attrition could be forced or naturally occurring with various forcing functions controlling personnel movement. Lateral entry structures are often utilized in organizations where occupational identity is independent from employment in the specific company or institution. This system allows organizations to recruit specific skills at any point in an experience profile with minimal training requirements. It also enables organizational change by allowing control of culture and technical expertise in order to quickly meet personnel specialty and experience requirements.

Despite the inherent organizational flexibility this structure offers, the need for military knowledge and experience has curtailed the use of this structure to mainly professional career fields like doctors, dentists, nurses, and lawyers. Through a mixture of law and service policy, these groups are able to enter into the military personnel system at various points, but then

progress in accordance with normal time-in-grade phase points. The system enables change at the individual level by valuing technical experience rather than institutional experience and culture.

As Thie et al discuss, the key to leveraging a lateral entry structure is to identify the requirement for institutional knowledge.<sup>19</sup> For officers, this requirement varies by specialty but questions the need of organizational familiarity developed from entry-level positions. It is possible that a pilot with 5 years of air transport pilot rating flight time may have considerably more multi-engine experience than an equivalent O-3. Although there would be a need for military and airframe specific training, lateral entry forgoes the cost, time, and training pipeline capacity of undergraduate pilot training. This officer would have roughly three years, one assignment, before he would be eligible for promotion to O-4 in the current system.

Organizations with strong culture may resist using this structure until there is no other alternative. The U.S. military used this structure to meet rapid and massive requirements for personnel during World War II. The targeted use of this structure has inherent benefits to meeting instantaneous changes to force structure and corresponding experience profiles within the limitations of the DOPMA force structure caps.

### **Managing Experience with Officer Accessions**

Although the personnel systems in all of the services provide frameworks for accession of officers based on established requirements, it does not provide the flexibility to align Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP) manpower requirements, national military strategy, or force structure guidance with entry education requirements. The driving factor for the Department of Defense's officer structure and management relies on officer requirements. These requirements

are developed using broad policy guidance issued by the DoD. Generally, across the services, officer requirements are identified and resources are subsequently allocated to man peacetime and wartime missions. Programmed manpower is a large part of the services' annual budgets. Congress controls manpower levels by authorizing and funding military end strengths, establishing military grade distributions, and directing human capital resources and programs through legislation. The congressionally-imposed grade limits in DOPMA, that are directed at the service-level total officer inventory, indirectly affect the grade aspect of officer requirements, forcing periodic grade reviews to reconcile positions and grade with force structure limitations. Officer requirements, depending on service, are not managed centrally, are not validated or linked to FYDP programs of record, and do not have a direct relationship with the DOPMA grade ceilings. Requirements and authorizations may be linked or paid by a program and used in another.

Required capabilities and forces direct the numbers and types of officers by service, grade, and skill. Additionally, they also direct the numbers of major combat forces for contingency and organize, train, and equip operations. This is the driver for the officer accession systems. The impact from the DOPMA grade tables occurs when managing the proportions of junior officers, which are not specific in law, with a model for progression to the field grades, which are specified by law. As previously mentioned, the DOPMA grade table represents the legal guidance to be met rather than the necessity to meet the requirements of any capability.

DOPMA does not enable a way to deliberately manage the officer force due to the instantaneous and independent nature of the grade tables. When Congress adjusts force structure, it is changing the "steady state" model of cohorts with ripples through all of the junior ranks. By limiting the service end strength, the DOPMA grade tables prescribe a cap on the field

grade ranks. The services are then left to manage reductions in the field grade ranks while also making reductions in lower grades proportionate to retention models. The result is the reduction of field grades to meet the DOPMA limits and the creation of relatively permanent bathtubs in cohort accession groups that are difficult to recover from if Congress adjusts the force structure with increases. This difficulty resides in the time in service method that the system develops and manages cohort groups.

The services should be forced to validate their officer requirements based on FYDP programs of record. Currently, services push this responsibility down as far as the installation-level resulting in cross flows of funded officer positions between programs within Major Force Programs. This would affect the accession system to deliberately manage numbers of officers in a given specialty at the entry point. This change could however be affected by external influences that affect retention, but would allow the accession systems to be based on the actual needs of the services. Force structure reductions should be made with regards to requirements and authorizations instead of a notional end strength number that gives no direction to requirements or authorizations. The grade tables should be reflective of service requirements. If this relationship was established, it could be proposed that Congress could provide officer authorizations through funding the requirements laid out by the services instead of the proportional to end strength numbers described in the grade tables.

DOPMA does provide some flexibility in the management of the accession of officers. As Rostker discusses, DOPMA offers some officers regular commissions and others are offered reserve commissions.<sup>20</sup> Starting in 2005, all officers were retroactively augmented with regular commissions only to be subjected to reduction programs as if they were non-augmented reserve officers. DOPMA ushered in a single promotion system with an all-regular career officer corps,

eliminating the temporary and permanent promotion systems. This provided for managing tenure promises to officers at certain milestones, namely the 11th year of service and promotion to O-4. Below the grade of O-4, the law provides different tenure rights. Regular officers are probationary for the first five years of service and reserve officers serve at the pleasure of their service.<sup>21</sup>

This flexibility has been used on varying sides of the spectrum since the early 1990s. With the large drawdowns throughout the 1990s, regular commissions were the exception rather than the rule to facilitate methods for drawdown and effectively manage the career tenure promise. Since 2003, the services questioned the distinction of regular and reserve officers. In 2005, all officer accessions onto the Active Duty List retroactively received regular commissions. This change allowed the officer reductions in 2007-2012 to value the best-qualified officers instead of officers in a particular status. The services did this at the expense of the tenure promise. Historically, officers with regular commissions could anticipate serving at least 20 years. DOPMA and Congress had originally set up the regular commissions to coincide with career commitment and up to 30 years of service.

Officer accession is inevitably shaped to feed the movement of officers through the personnel system in cohort groups. An important, although not statutory issue, worth addressing is the impact of the accession of talent into specialties aligned with education. Generally, all officer specialties have targeted education goals, but are used only as goals for specialty accession. This education requirement becomes more important when a move towards knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) or experience based model for promotion is envisioned. Harrington, in her RAND study on Air Force Officer Accession Planning, reflected the need to

manage academic degree requirements for accessions in order to place the corresponding qualifications and talent into corresponding career fields.<sup>22</sup>

In the experienced-based system, accession drives career specialty sustainment. As will be discussed in the promotion section, a vacancy based promotion movement must balance inventory at a current grade with demand at the next higher grade. As missions or programming change, accession goals would need to change to ensure the sustainable populations of officers. In some officer specialties with small populations, accessions might need to be significantly reduced to avoid stagnation.

In the current system, officer accession is the only entry point for the closed, line-officer system and serves to sustain specialties across the services. With the lengthening of careers and time-in-grade, some specialties could see reduced accessions. Utilizing talent management in regards to accessions requires that pre-entry KSAs are identified and drive entry in an associated field. Without that alignment, the services inherit an immediate talent shortfall. Properly managing officer requirements is critical to officer accession targets. Legislative changes impact to the services are instantaneous and the DOPMA construct struggles to provide the DoD the means to grow or reduce officers with specific experience in deliberate ways as missions and funding changes. The DOPMA grade tables pose arbitrary structural limitations that should be controlled by missions, requirements, and funding.

### **Experience-Based Officer Management**

Talent management serves to link mission and goals of experience-based personnel management. Flexibility in officer career management, specifically a hybrid personnel flow structure incorporating up-or-out, up-and-stay, and lateral entry, with changes to assignments,

longer careers, and variable promotion timing, is desirable, but faces challenges to implementation. As Schirmer points out, the Air Force and Navy have made progress in linking KSAs to individual officer billets to form the basis for shaping career paths and individual development plans.<sup>23</sup> This approach is embraced by the services and has been included in human capital strategic plans and efforts to develop personnel systems that are less prescriptive and develop varying career paths across a range of specialties.

When officer specialties require longer or more assignments to develop breadth and depth, KSAs are often developed at the cost of competitiveness in promotion. The current web of laws and policies do not facilitate longer, varied careers, especially within the same competitive category. Although the services control which officer fills an assignment and which is promoted, the personnel structure controls the promotion timing. Additionally, service length manages exits to occur at similar times.

The current DoD structure utilizes a closed system of development. The DOPMA up-or-out officer promotion framework, based on time-in-grade, should be replaced with an experience based system to manage timing and opportunity for promotion while providing more flexible talent management. Mr. Rostker from the RAND Corporation may have put it best in his testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee on reforming the officer personnel system when he said that the “favorite villain in this story is the so-called up-or-out promotion system.”<sup>24</sup> As previously discussed, the up-or-out system injected a much needed youth and vitality aspect to a rather stagnant system characterized by a stay-then-up model. Although the framework of an up-or-out system is needed to maintain a youthful officer corps, the driver of eligibility for each career milestone is rigid and forces experienced officers out, limiting return of investment from assignments, education, and training. There are service requirements that drive

personnel inventory needs to fulfill mission requirements. Despite equal opportunities for promotion consideration, equal opportunity to fill key development positions does not exist. Because of the bureaucratic nature of officer management, promotion boards may place more value on performance in positions that do not develop technical competency and leadership, but produce high-level praise.

An experience-based promotion system could replace the time-in-grade system by controlling eligibility criteria. Although the change would undoubtedly force friction at the cultural level in all of the services, it essentially accomplishes the same objectives as rigid career milestones. It would require institutional efforts to map the knowledge, skills, and abilities for specific positions. This would align institutionally valued experience with officer career continuums. In an experience-based system defined positions such as command, service staff, and joint duty would serve as the triggering points to eligibility windows. This experience-based system meets the same goals as the seniority based system used today. Joint experience is currently used to qualify O-6s who are eligible for promotion to O-7. The requirement for promotion to O-7 requires the O-6 to be a Joint Qualified Officer by the time the board is convened unless the Secretary of Defense approves a waiver.<sup>25</sup> With eligibility and timing rigidly controlled, field grade officers have limited time to gain service staff, joint, command, and developmental education experience and requirements. This limited time is condensed further with the highest performing officers who may be selected below the promotion zone with time to the next eligibility window shortened by up to two years. The current system essentially rewards high performance with promotion, while limiting experience at the same time.

## **Managing Officers with Promotion**

The personnel system currently controls the phase points of promotion through minimum time-in-grade (TIG) requirements for promotion eligibility and timing based on commissioned military service plus all entry grade credit. It is designed around fixed, short tenures, promotion timing, and promotion opportunity. The system provides uniformity across services, competitive categories, and specialties. Schirmer highlights that the “desired outcomes of a future officer management system differ from the outcomes the current system can deliver.”<sup>26</sup> This is managed using the roughly year-group cohorts. DOPMA outlines the minimums as 3 years TIG for O3 through O5 and 1 year for O6 and O7, but identifies that the Service Secretaries may prescribe longer TIG or may waive TIG requirements for officers in grade O3 to O5.<sup>27</sup> This illustrates the capacity to handle growth, but aids little with management of varied experience.

Fixed TIG requirements for promotion forces a balance between depth of experience and breadth of experience of officers. As discussed previously, the time available for officers to obtain the knowledge, skills, and abilities in certain positions is limited by the promotion eligibility windows coming into competition with length of assignment and number of assignments. According to Schirmer, extending overall career length would allow the ability to widen promotion zones and allow officers to gain eligibility according to competencies and qualifications instead of by timing.<sup>28</sup>

The current personnel system uses seniority to determine eligibility, but statutory promotion boards make selections using best-qualified criteria. Boards examine how demonstrated performance, leadership, and specific achievement generate potential for officers to serve successfully in the next higher grade.<sup>29</sup> In an experience-driven promotion, the same characteristics could be utilized to determine selection with experience determining eligibility.

Although none of the services have lists of assignments required for promotion, officer career paths are well established. Services prescribe career paths at the specialty level, or in the case of the Marine Corps, at the service level. The notional career paths are not used as references in promotion boards and an officer specialty may not even be represented to directly apply their knowledge of the path.

By establishing experience requirements, combinations of assignments would make officers effective, credible, and competitive for promotion. With considerations for future requirements, an example of an experience combination for promotion to O-5 or O-6 would include a combination of in-residence school, command track position, headquarters staff, and joint duty. Schirmer compiled several previous RAND research works to reflect notional career paths across the services. Figure 1 illustrates how experience-based eligibility criteria could be applied to different specialties and services.

**Figure 1: Promotion Eligibility Criteria in a Competency-Based System<sup>30</sup>**

<b>Army Infantry Officers</b>	
To O-5	1. PME + (XO or S-3) + (CTC observer/controller or joint job) or 2. Any three O-4 jobs
To O-6	1. PME + CO + (division G-3 or O-5 joint job [if not "jointed" as O-4]) or 2. Any three O-5 jobs
<b>Navy Surface Warfare Officers</b>	
To O-5	1. PME + XO + (afloat staff or major staff or joint job) or 2. Any three O-4 jobs
To O-6	1. PME + CO + (O-5 afloat staff or major staff or joint job [if not "jointed" as O-4]) or 2. Any three O-5 jobs
<b>Air Force Space and Missile Operations Officers</b>	
To O-5	1. PME + squadron DO + (MAJCOM staff or acquisition or joint job) or 2. PME + MAJCOM staff + (acquisition job or joint job) or 3. Any three O-4 jobs
To O-6	1. PME + squadron CC + (O-4 or O-5 MAJCOM staff) + (O-4 or O-5 acquisition or joint job) or 2. O-4 MAJCOM staff + O-5 MAJCOM staff + O-4 or O-5 acquisition job + O-4 or O-5 joint job or 3. Any three O-5 jobs
<b>Marine Corps Ground MOS</b>	
To O-5	1. PME + (XO or CO) + (HQMC staff or career-enhancing B-billet job or additional FMF job or joint job) or 2. Any three O-4 jobs
To O-6	1. PME + (O-5 XO or CO) + additional O5 FMF job or 2. PME + (O-5 CO or [O-4 CO + O-5 XO or RSCO]) + (O-5 HQMC staff or O-4 or O-5 joint job) or 3. Any three O-5 jobs

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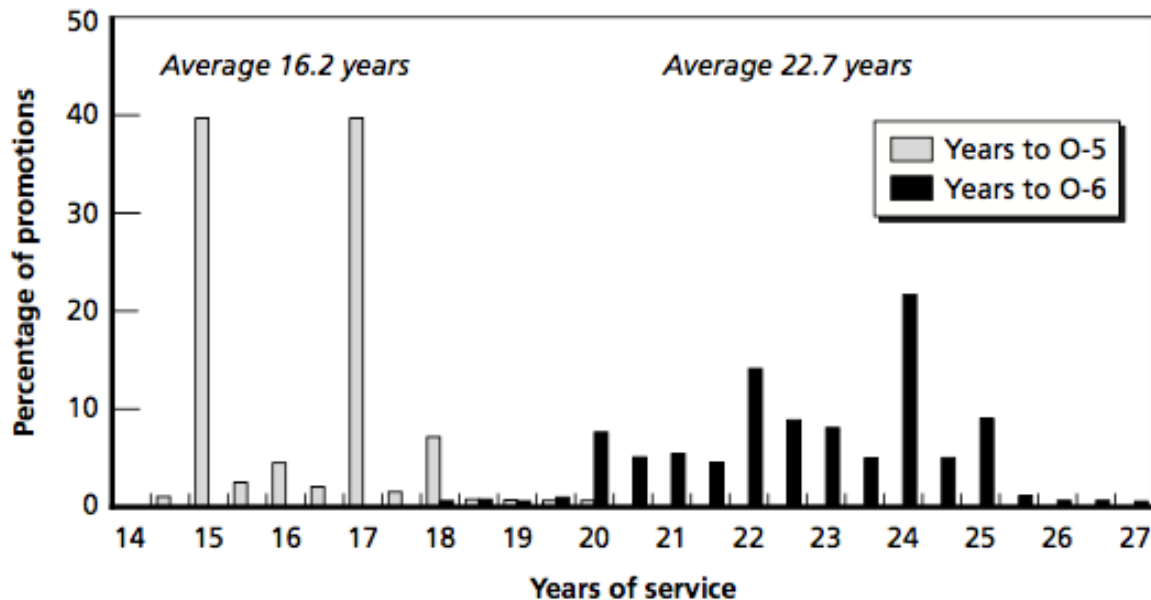
NOTES: CC = commander; DO = director of operations; MOS = Military Occupational Specialty; RSCO = reserve station commanding officer.

The models above are in line with the attributes that promotion boards have historically used to make best-qualified determinations. The model instead moves the experience to eligibility and forces performance to be the basis of assessment. This model also highlights the differences in experience profiles. Officers who have collected school and command experience as well as a record of excellent performance are more likely to be promoted. Promotion quotas directed below-the-promotion-zone (BPZ), provide a vehicle to promote officers who have excelled in challenging positions. Schirmer argues that an experienced-based system provides rationale for faster promotion paths while considering less experienced officers and eliminating

arbitrarily controlled BPZ allocations. Higher performing, more desirably experienced officers would simply be more probable to be promoted to a vacancy.

Taking into consideration the experience-based eligibility requirements from Figure 1, cohort officers will become eligible for promotion at different times. Officers with the same number of assignments would become eligible at different time based on assignment length. Conversely, officers with different numbers of assignments could become eligible at the same time. With officers becoming eligible at different points, the primary promotion zone construct is traded for a wider zone or varied progression. Officers would gain experience, be considered for promotion, then promote with a rate affected by promotion and separation outflows from a particular rank. Forcing eligibility with an established number of assignments at the current rank becomes important as well. This serves as a hedge against stagnation in a grade that would affect the outflow. This is the solution for using smaller competitive categories that, in the current time-based system, force diminishing opportunity when career exits become the driver for opportunity. In the experience-based system, promotions would occur over multiple years and even overlap with the timing of following grades based on the original cohort group. Figure 2 illustrates the overlap of O-5 promotions later in the cycle with earlier promotions to O-6.

**Figure 2: AF Officer Promotion Timing in an Experience-Based System<sup>31</sup>**



The effect of this varying of promotion points, allows for flexibility across various career fields. This flexibility allows for management of officers through multiple programs to develop specific experience without adversely impacting competitiveness for promotion relative to their peers. To this end, the services could allow officers to pursue education programs, out-of-core assignments, geographic preference, or career intermission programs while preserving experience and preventing promotion consideration until fully-qualified. The intrinsic compensation value could become a more important factor to retention than extrinsic benefits or bonuses. This model places increased emphasis on the assignment process to align officer into billets generating desired experience.

The main differences between the current time-based system and the experience-based system are the rules that govern promotion eligibility. Experience accumulated through assignments, education, and training makes officers eligible for promotion. This system also sheds the seniority-based zones with officer specialty communities managing the specific KSAs

that would lead to eligibility. Officer cohorts would potentially see promotions distributed over multiple years in an effectively widened zone. Ultimately this would produce greater variety of individual outcomes for officers in the same specialty. The experienced-based system can accommodate changes to assignment length, but if assignments are lengthened to develop depth, a longer career must also be used to capitalize on promotions moving later into the officer's career. An experience-based eligibility for promotion provides much more flexible management of officer experience, but is a significant departure from DOPMA's promotion zones.<sup>32</sup> Services would bear the main burden of a system change. The system would be less directive, but management of individuals as they move through the system would likely be more complex as it would balance supply of experience in the current grade and demand of experience from positions in the next higher grade.

### **Developing Officer Experience Profiles**

The DoD and services' human capital strategies recognize the need to properly align missions and goals with the development of officer careers. The planning efforts to create alternatives focus on lengthening officer careers by way of assignments to fit into an experience driven career flow structure. Assignments changes and promotion eligibility must be synchronized with assignment policy to produce officers with the desired KSAs at the desired equilibrium to maintain the system. In a hybrid system of up-or-out in the company grade ranks and up-and-stay in the field grades, assignments manage experience profiles with much greater impact at the individual-level directing which officer has access to which position. Schirmer states it plainly that "assignments both lead to, and result from, promotion."<sup>33</sup> Changes to assignments must balance depth with breadth of experience in a career specialty. Longer

assignments that are deliberately managed, along with longer careers, drive the experience-based promotion system in the modified personnel flow structure.

DOPMA's time-based management necessitates tradeoffs between length and number of assignments that control depth and breadth. If officers have longer assignments, they will have fewer assignments within the fixed time-based phase points of promotion. In order to generate more depth and breadth, officer careers must be lengthened along with longer assignments. As Schirmer points out, unless promotion timing changes, lengthening careers only provides more time in the grade in which the officer separates or retires.<sup>34</sup> Officers will need to develop breadth through control of promotion timing. Under DOPMA, promotion timing is controlled without specific consideration to service or specialty. In a more flexible experience-based system, longer careers would have longer assignment lengths and wider promotion zones. This allows the system to manage careers based on accumulated competencies instead of trading off competencies for time.

Changing assignment structure is not just a change to policy. Officer specialty communities would need to identify KSAs that are prerequisites or conferred by specific assignments. This would include schools and trainings that may fall outside of normal assignment management as well. It should be considered as well, that officers might develop KSAs outside of those inherent to a particular job based on diversity of experience. This also has applicability when considering lateral entry programs that could bring experienced officers in at the 5 or 10-year points. Schirmer explores the idea that KSA outcomes could vary by individual capacity, assignment length, or collective experience.<sup>35</sup> This poses the need for a possible assessment structure to determine actual competencies.

A hybrid career flow structure has distinct effects on assignments. In the first six years of service, an up-or-out system could align development with requirements. As officers move to a career tenure point, assignments start to lengthen to develop specific competencies.

Additionally, This discusses that as the system changes to an up-and-stay structure, officers would look forward to greater stability in assignments, additional assignments in their career path, and to more education opportunities.<sup>36</sup> The promotion system would continue to advance the highest performers, but longer assignments and wider zones would provide for longer periods of performance to be evaluated for promotion.

In an experience-based system, the importance of assignments is critical to both development and progression. Services communities would define the desired experience, but there are external factors as well. The Goldwater-Nichols Act established rules for management of joint assignments. The Act had two impacts important to this discussion. First, it made a joint assignment a requirement for promotion to general or flag officer. Second, it set minimum assignment length in order to become a Joint Qualified Officer.<sup>37</sup> The services were then forced to fit joint assignments into the careers of mid-level officers who would continue to be promoted at 16 and 22 years of service or sooner with below the promotion zone selections. Schirmer contends that the services' response was to shorten some assignments and eliminate others.<sup>38</sup>

Recognizing the joint requirement, officer careers need more time to address experience requirements. Extending length, however, only provides for additional assignments at the end of the officer's career when less development effort is being expended. With this in mind, more time in the middle of a career for longer or additional assignments would meet requirements and allow time for desired experiences without trade offs. For example, as illustrated in Figure 1, the services all highly value a combination of PME, command track, headquarters, and joint

experience for promotion to O-5 and O-6. Without variation in promotion timing, O-4s pinning at 10 years commissioned service, do not complete even a year of PME before 2 below the promotion zone eligibility to O-5. A 2 or 3-year assignment will follow with 2 of the assignments complete before pinning O-5 early or in the promotion zone. The fast track or on-time officer has little of the desired experience for O-5. The needed experience for O-6 then drives trade offs. The officer will require another round of PME and assignment experience with a required 36 months of joint time. All of the assignments are limited in number, so service headquarters competencies are traded for joint experience. The end result is that officers who are promoted fastest have the least amount of institutionally-valued experience.

An experience-based system would manage assignments to develop the desired experience to drive promotion instead of time in grade. This would allow specialty communities to manage not only the experience profile, but also the movement through the system. Officers could have any mixture of all or some of the desired assignments. This could be a controlled tiered effect with performance judged at the promotion board producing the order of merit in the career specialty. Inevitably, officers with PME, command track, and joint or service headquarters experience would be the fastest movers through the system. Conversely, officers without any of those assignments might be non-selected and become due-course officers.

In an experience-based personnel system, assignments shape experience-profiles through depth and breadth. Along with controlling officer experience profiles, they become central to promotion eligibility and probability. This influence, especially on probability, effectively controls officer exits from the personnel structure. Modifications to assignments and their management have benefits, but also have complexities that require implementation to fully understand. Lengthening assignments increases depth, but at the cost of breadth. This tradeoff

in an experience-based system limits the number of officers with the experience and could limit subsequent assignments that build on the experience. Linking KSAs to assignments seems straightforward, but also daunting and continually changing. Additionally, a means of assessment would have to be designed to confirm KSAs. This assessment does have utility in leveraging lateral entry for certain specialties at certain career points. Finally, assignments could play a larger role in retention by increasing stability and development for officers. Individual choice and control could be provided without impact to promotion competitiveness.

### **Recommendations for Reform**

Changes to the military personnel system should leverage a composite system of flow structures to produce the greatest flexibility in managing officers. Matching officer candidate experience to the accession career field would produce increased inventories of specialties with desired experience profiles. In order to properly manage accession however, legislative changes should be enacted to allow DoD and the services to link mission and officer requirements to funding. With direct linkage, the arbitrary limits of the officer grade structure in the DOPMA grade tables could be set aside. Valid officer requirements could act as the demand signal to accession sources and deliberately control entry of officers into needed specialties with the appropriate pre-entry experience.

The use of a hybrid personnel flow structure could facilitate officer inventories throughout officer careers. Depending on service and specialty requirements, the flow could change from up-or-out to up-and-stay with lateral entry being used to balance inventory and requirements to keep officer specialties sustainable. Varied officer flows would require changes to the rigid DOPMA time-based phase points. Current law, policy, and practice have created an

inflexible system optimized around fixed tenures, promotion timing, and promotion opportunity. The outcomes of these drivers are standardized career length and flow without regard for specialty.

Replacing DOPMA's time-based promotion system would also enhance flexibility in managing officer careers. An experience-based promotion system would allow for variable pace in the development of officer knowledge, skills, and abilities. It would also allow individual, instead of group, management of officers while forcing experience to be the eligibility criteria for promotion. Combinations of desired experiences, coupled with deliberate assignment length management would enable experiences instead of forcing tradeoffs as officers are promoted. As individual progression becomes more varied, promotion zones widen. Exit forces could be managed to maintain a balance of demand from higher grades and the supply of experience from the current grade. Experience qualifications exist in the current system in the form of Joint Qualification before promotion to O-7. Additionally, this experience-based system can leverage some intrinsic benefits that stem from delaying eligibility while individually valued education, training, or geographic stability is pursued.

Managing experience profiles with assignments must be synchronized with the promotions system. It is important to remember that assignments both lead to and result from promotion. Assignments must balance depth and breadth, but this may look very different in each officer specialty or service. A time-based system forces tradeoffs, especially when the highest performers are promoted faster and have even less time to develop experience. Linking assignments with KSAs is critical to career field managers' ability to develop desired experience. Additionally, an assessment structure should be developed to credit accessions and lateral entries

as well as measure outcomes since all individuals may not have the same experience outcome from the same assignment.

Lengthening of assignments to more effectively manage experience will have impacts across the career continuum. It will impact career paths, accessions, promotion timing, separations, retirements, and overall career length. Management of experience-based assignments would likely be more complex than the current system, but would produce officers with deliberately planned experience profiles.

Personnel functions (accession, development, assignment, promotion, and exit) alone do not constitute a career management system. Together, along with many other functions join in a complex system to hire, manage, develop, pay, train, separate, and retire officers based on the needs of the services. All of the functions can be, and often are, managed independently without regard for the vast interdependency on each other, as well as legislation and policy, for implementation. Law and policy define career management systems and determine the shape of the organization's workforce. For the DoD, personnel policy is created at both the OSD and Service levels in order to achieve organizational objectives. The personnel functions will embody the policy decisions, usually with a quality control function.

## **Conclusion**

Personnel flow structures, accessions, promotions, and assignments are a small wedge of the greater personnel system currently sitting on the DOPMA framework. Changes to these pieces are just a starting point for creating a more flexible officer management system. The inflexibility of the DOPMA structure has been the subject of extensive study since the mid-1990s. The vast majority of research efforts and expertise sits with a relatively small cadre at

institutions like the RAND Corporation and the Center for Naval Analysis. The services have an ever-shrinking population of truly experience officers who have been developed to understand and manage the intricacies of the personnel system. Without service experience in the system structures and dependencies, policies are solely recommended by outside experts.

The personnel experience gap stems from factors associated with the bureaucratic nature of the military. In the competition for prioritization and funding, changes to personnel management programs and systems are often low on the list. Unlike industry, a lack of effective talent management does not impact the bottom line of the government. Return on investment from the programs, systems, and officers do not necessarily justify the expenditure in time, money, and people. Additionally, most of the indicators that sound any alarm for needed talent management or personnel system revision are lagging indicators that have perpetuated over multiple years or were self inflicted policy decisions.

The current climate is right for change. Just as in 1995, Congress, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the services have concerns that the demands of the future might require different objectives and practices for officer management than those of the past. Those concerns have generated the volumes of reports that have set the conditions for change. Flexibility in officer management will be desired as long as missions and year-to-year funding remains dynamic. The system is faced with the reality of external market pressures on the officer experience pool as well. Missions will continue to change, as will the needed experience of officers. Flexible structures for personnel management are needed to proactively address current and future challenges. Changes to the personnel system should focus on building agility to match the ever-changing demands placed on the military officers.

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- <sup>2</sup> Harry Thie et al, *A Future Career Management System: An Objectives-Based Design*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1994, p 1.
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- <sup>7</sup> Mitchell, *Air Force Officers*, 148.
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- <sup>17</sup> Title 10 US Code Subtitle A, Part 2, Chapter 36, Subchapter II, Section 638, Officer Continuation and Selective Early Retirement Boards.
- <sup>18</sup> Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management and Personnel), *The Report of the Seventh Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation*, Washington, D.C., August 21, 1992, D-1.
- <sup>19</sup> Thie, et al. *Future Career Management Systems*, 81.
- <sup>20</sup> Rostker, et al., *DOPMA Retrospective Assessment*, 10.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 10.
- <sup>22</sup> Lisa M. Harrington, Tara L. Terry. *Air Force Officer Accession Planning: Addressing Key Gaps in Meeting Career Field Academic Degree Requirements for Nonrated Officer*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2016, iii.
- <sup>23</sup> Schirmer, *Challenging Time in DOPMA*, 5.
- <sup>24</sup> Bernard D. Rostker, *Testimony before the committee on Armed Service United States Senate, Reforming the American Military Officer Personnel System*, Dec 2015.
- <sup>25</sup> 10 US Code Sub title A Part 2 Chapter 36 subchapter II sec 619a – Eligibility for consideration for promotion: designation as a joint qualified officer required before promotion to general or flag grade; exceptions.
- <sup>26</sup> Schirmer, *Challenging Time in DOPMA*, 2.
- <sup>27</sup> 10 USC Section 619 - Officer Promotions

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- <sup>28</sup> Schirmer, *Challenging Time*, xvi.
- <sup>29</sup> First day briefing slides, USAF Selection Board Secretariat, 2014.
- <sup>30</sup> Schirmer, *Challenging Time in DOPMA*, 34.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 38.
- <sup>32</sup> DOPMA, Title 10, Section 623.
- <sup>33</sup> Schirmer et al, *New Paths*, 12.
- <sup>34</sup> Schirmer et al, *Challenging Time in DOPMA*, xvi.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, xviii.
- <sup>36</sup> Thie et al, *Future Career Management*, 59.
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