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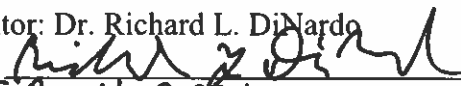
**Aligning the Stars:
The Air Force's Best Leaders are Already Amongst Its Ranks**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

AUTHOR: Anthony M. Peplinski, Major, Air National Guard

AY 2020-21

MMS Mentor: Dr. Richard L. DiNardo

Approved: 

Date: 15 April 2021

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Thesis: A diverse and inclusive military organizational culture will enable the United States to employ an adaptive, agile, and creative force better designed to protect American interests and values throughout the world.

Discussion: In 2021, America's social and political landscapes are ones where diversity and inclusion are not asked for but demanded. The United States Air Force (USAF) and the Air National Guard (ANG) has worked diligently to progress toward a diverse and inclusive service in the decade previous. While their efforts and progress are commendable, what exists is an organization where diversity and inclusion initiatives remain largely unapplied within the highest of ranks of the USAF and the ANG officer corps – namely the General Officer corps.

When it comes to the rank of Brigadier General and above in the ANG, 59 (30.9%) GOs are non-rated, whereas 132 (69.1%) are rated. A more significant disparity is apparent when looking at AFSC in that 69.1% of the entire ANG GO corps is derived from a mere 24% of the entire ANG officer corps. Given this metric, by largely placing rated officers in GO billets, the ANG eliminates potential candidates who are competently better, those who have the education, background, and likely a career's worth of experience regarding the AFSC the General Officer will command and lead. The inevitable conclusion is that the ANG's best leaders are already within its ranks – only to be dismissed based largely on their AFSC.

This thesis gives a perspective of how it came to pass that the fighter pilot commands most ANG leadership positions. The research provides a statistical analysis of the ANG's current 191 GOs and will show an embedded inequality between rated and non-rated officers. Finally, this thesis will show by flipping the paradigm of organizational culture will lead to a diverse and inclusive GO corps and why doing so is key to the greater organizational success of the ANG.

Research has found that organizations make better decisions when diverse frames inform their thinking. Diversity will encourage individual contribution and responsibility within all service members, thus creating a more effective service. Inclusion promotes belonging, purpose, and well-being, while diversity ignites creativity, problem solving, and innovation. By promoting our officers with diversity in mind, differences in education, training, job experiences, morals, race, and sex remove bias from the otherwise like-minded group of people while providing different perspectives in problem solving, leadership, and management of processes.

Since the ANG's inception in 1947, it has mainly been led by those who project ANG combat power over the skies of war, the pilot. This construct has served the ANG well. However, as the landscape of war evolves away from the physical conflict in land, air, and sea to one in cyberspace, should the ANG adhere to its traditional command philosophy, it will be irrelevant on tomorrow's battlefield. As such, Senior USAF and ANG leadership face a real challenge: how do they better use our entire officer corps to be ready and prepared for future war? The answer is the ANG need not look beyond their own organization. Embedded within the ANG are the skillset, knowledge, and expertise already within their own ranks; the ANG just needs to use them effectively.

Conclusion: Previous diversity and inclusion efforts failed to reach the USAF and ANG GO Corps as leadership did not adequately prioritize and execute the action. Moreover, the accepted and known practice of “ducks picking ducks” must be eliminated to diversify the ANG GO Corps.

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Preface

For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to be in the military. The poster in my recruiter's office said, "be all that you can be." The United States Army only reinforced my notions that I was destined for greatness! Given that promise, very early in my career, I realized that if you want to reach the highest of ranks within the military, it makes sense to have the experience, training, and a background commensurate with the nature of a given service. A pilot will lead the Air Force, and an Infantryman will lead the Army. Today, no longer in the Army and having completed 20 years of active service in the Air National Guard, I remain just as passionate about my country as that day in my recruiter's office. During my career, I have developed a thirst for knowledge in leadership and an understanding of the importance of preparing the leaders of tomorrow today through pointed and purposeful mentorship.

We, as an Air Force, are not perfect. As an Air Force, we recognize this and are continually seeking ways we can improve. This research endeavor is my suggestion on how we as a service can remedy one of our shortcomings; a lack of diversity and inclusion in the white, male, fighter pilot dominated General Officer ranks of the ANG. I humbly submit that the Air Force and the Air National Guard are failing to take advantage of the very best leaders already within its ranks simply because they are not aviators. Diversity and inclusion must be a priority for leadership, and I suggest the scope of who is considered to command and lead at the highest levels of the Air Force and the Air National Guard be broadened to consider not just some but all promotable officers. It is this broadening of consideration that will make our Air Force and Air National Guard 1) more diverse and inclusive, and 2) ultimately more ready than ever to fight the United States wars of the 21st century - at home and abroad.

Today I find myself living my ideal life. I don the cloth of my country, and in return, my government has given my family and me an opportunity in life that few will ever experience. For that, I owe more than I can fathom. I will, however, do my very best to repay in kind the debt to

my country, for which I am forever grateful and to those who have supported me by being the very best husband, father, and Officer I can be. I am not where I am today on my own accord, but I have reached for the stars by standing upon the shoulders of many.

First and foremost, I wish to express my love and gratitude to my wife, Katrina. Thank you for everything - without your support and commitment, I would not be here. To my family and friends, Owen, Dilynne, Dad, Dan, Kate, and Chris; professional mentors, Lt Gen Kirk Pierce, Brig Rolf Mammen, Col David Spehar, and Mr. Alan Parks; and MMS Mentors Dr. Richard DiNardo and Dr. Lauren Mackenzie thank you for your guidance, patience, and encouragement.

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In 2021, America's social and political landscapes are ones where diversity and inclusion are celebrated for but demanded. The United States Air Force and the Air National Guard (ANG) has worked diligently to progress toward a diverse and inclusive service in the decades previous. While their efforts and progress are commendable, what exists is an organization where diversity and inclusion initiatives remain largely unapplied within the highest of ranks of the USAF and the ANG officer corps - namely the General Officer corps. When it comes to the rank of Brigadier General and above in the ANG, 80 (50.6%) OCs are recruited, whereas 132 (86.7%) are rated. A more significant disparity is apparent when looking at AFMPC in that 80.7% of the entire ANG OC corps is derived from a mere 24% of the entire ANG officer corps. Given this reality, by largely placing rated officers in OC labels, the ANG eliminates potential candidates who are completely viable. Those who have the education, background, and likely a career's worth of experience regarding the AFMPC for General Officers will command and lead. The inevitable conclusion is that the ANG's best leaders are already within its ranks - only to be discarded toward largely on their AFMPC. This thesis gives a perspective of how it came to pass that the fighter pilot community used ANG leadership positions. The research provides a statistical analysis of the ANG's current 181 OCs and will show an embedded inequality between rated and non-rated officers. Finally, this thesis will show by flipping the paradigm of organizational culture will lead to a diverse and inclusive OC corps and rely doing so solely to the greater organizational success of the ANG.					
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Introduction

We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

- The Constitution

In 2021 America's social and political landscapes are ones where diversity and inclusion are not asked for but demanded. The United States Air Force (USAF) and the Air National Guard (ANG) have worked diligently to progress toward a diverse and inclusive service in the decade previous. In fact, the Department of Defense (DoD) and the USAF have commissioned several studies to assist in the execution of diversity and inclusion initiatives, and Air Force Instruction has been drafted. Even diversity and inclusion departments have been formed within the respective services to carry out such endeavors. While commendable, what exists is an organization where diversity and inclusion initiatives remain largely unapplied within the highest of ranks of the USAF and the ANG officer corps – namely the General Officer (GO) corps.

We the People are three words that all Americans are familiar with. These three words begin the preamble of the Constitution. They set the stage and establishes a framework for which a Nation allows its citizens an opportunity to “form a more perfect union, provide for a common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.”¹ This statement, however, does not include *all* people. Nor was the inalienable right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” as described in the Declaration of Independence equally applied to *all* people given consideration of race, sex, social status, and the like.

To summarize, these notions excluded some while affording protection for others. Over time the Constitution and American society have evolved to be more inclusive: 1865, the abolishment of slavery; 1920 voting equality; 1960's civil rights; 2010's LGBTQ rights. In the 230 years since the Constitution was written, society has evolved. However, as a nation, America has a long way to go.

¹ The Constitution of the United States

In parallel with these evolutionary points in America's history, the US military services often change prior to the society they defend and protect. In 1948, President Harry Truman signed executive order 9968 to end racial segregation in the military.² The government did not legally desegregate American society until the 1960s. In 2012 the USAF sought to expunge the service of discriminatory practices. Then USAF, Chief of Staff, Gen Mark Welch, envisioned an Air Force where discriminatory practices have zero-tolerance. Within three years, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter paved the way for equality of gay and lesbian service members so they, and their dependents, would be afforded equal rights under the military's equal opportunity policy.³ With diversity and inclusion a priority, the USAF and ANG were poised to be stronger than ever.

With the USAF and the ANG having initiatives to promote diversity of gender, race, religion, background, morals, values, training, and education among all its ranks for a decade, progress toward such initiatives remains out of balance within specific key leadership roles. Today's promotion process, specifically among GOs, has created an organizational hierarchy that underrepresents minorities, women, and diversity of background, training, and AFSCs. Although progress has been made in achieving such initiatives service wide, one sector remains relatively unchanged. A majority of the ANG's GO corps remains comprised of white, male, fighter pilots.⁴ This thesis contends that the ANG must change its culture to facilitate an environment where diversity and inclusion are a top priority across all ranks. When the entire pool of promotable Airmen are considered for GO positions, ANG leadership will represent the service as the whole, resulting in a more rounded, successful, and lethal service.

In the pages ahead, this thesis gives a perspective of how it came to pass that the fighter pilot commands a majority of leadership positions throughout the ANG. The research provides a statistical analysis of the ANG's current 191 GOs and will show an embedded inequality between

² AFI 36-7001, 4.

³ AFI 36-7001, 4.

⁴ Refer to the statistical analysis Table 1. *General Officer Demographics*.

rated and non-rated officers. Finally, this thesis will show by changing the paradigm of organizational culture will lead to a more diverse and inclusive GO corps and why doing so is key to the greater organizational success of the ANG.

For the ANG to find resolve, maybe not entirely but certainly in part, it need not look beyond the confines of their own organization. Currently, the ANG is comprised of 108,100 Airmen, and 19,010 (17.6%) are Commissioned Officers divided into two distinct sectors: 4,700 (24.6%) rated officers (Pilots, Combat Systems Officers, and Air Battle Managers) and 14,300 (75.3%) non-rated officers.⁵ An assumption of this research is predicated on anecdotal evidence that the lower rank structure, O-1 thru O-6, of rated and non-rated officers are proportionally distributed across the ANG. Therefore, the focus of research is on the GO ranks, specifically within the ANG. When it comes to the upper rank structure, O-7 thru O-10, in the ANG 59 GOs (30.9%)⁶ are non-rated, whereas 132 (69.1%)⁷ are rated. When connecting these statistics, a significant disparity is apparent regarding AFSC in that 69.1% of the ANG GO corps is derived from a mere 24.7% of the ANG officer corps. Given this metric, by placing rated officers in specific GO billets, the ANG eliminates potential candidates who are competently better-those who have a specific education, background, and likely a career of experience within the very AFSC the GO will command and lead. This leads to the inevitable conclusion that the best leaders within the ANG are already within its ranks – only not to be considered for command given their AFSC.

While previously published RAND corporation studies analyze the best path to becoming a GO within each active duty service, they do not include an assessment of the ANG.⁸ Therefore, this particular study intends to discover what characteristics and experiences of ANG GOs resulting

⁵ Reference Table 2, ANG Manpower breakout as of Dec 2020; all numbers are rounded to the nearest .1%.

⁶ 132 ANG GOs are rated: 119 Pilots, 9 Navigators, and 4 Air Battle Managers.

⁷ 59 ANG GOs are non-rated: 10 JAG, 9 Aircraft Maintenance, 8 Cyberspace, 7 Intel, 5 Personnel, 3 Civil Engineers, 3 Flight Surgeons, 3 Logistics, 2 Communications, 4 Medical, 2 Missile, 2 Space Operations, 1 Chaplain, 1 Combat Controller, 1 Emergency Management, 1 Finance, 1 Security Forces, 1 Supply, 1 Transportation.

⁸ Kimberly Jackson et al., (2020). *Raising the Flag: Implications of the US Military Approaches to General and Flag Officer Development*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 127.

from military service's approaches to, among other factors, personnel management and how these approaches might influence how the GOs lead, manage, and advise within the ANG.⁹ This report also aims to analyze career characteristics such as time in grade, time in service, AFSC, and specific job opportunities (deployments, training, and various commands/assignments).

The research method for this thesis was traditional in nature. Conventional research from periodicals, databases, and peer-reviewed articles on organizational diversity, leadership, and workplace culture focused the statistical analysis of all ANG GOs as of December 2020 and their careers. This research's statistical analysis database comprises 9400 points of data assessing 191 Generals using publicly available information sourced from their respective biographies.¹⁰ Where information was lacking, the GO's staff may have been contacted for clarification, but at no point was the GO interviewed.

The ANG is an organization steeped in a rich heritage and tradition. Since the ANG's inception in 1947, it has mainly been led by those who project combat power over the skies of war, the pilot. This construct has served the ANG well. However, as the landscape of war evolves away from the physical conflict in land, air, and sea to one in space and cyberspace, should the ANG adhere to its traditional command philosophy, it will be irrelevant on tomorrow's battlefield. As such, Senior USAF and ANG leadership face a very real challenge: how do they better use our entire officer corps to be ready and prepared for future war? The answer is the ANG need not look beyond their own organization. Embedded within the ANG are the skillset, knowledge, and expertise already within their own ranks; the ANG just needs to use them effectively. Specifically, when promoting our officers with diversity in mind, differences in education, training, job experiences, morals, race, and sex remove bias from an otherwise like-minded group of people while providing different perspectives in problem solving, leadership, and management of processes.

⁹ Approach of Kimberly Jackson et al., (2020). *Raising the Flag* preface is the inspirational basis of *Aligning the Stars: The Air Force's Best Leaders are Already Amongst Its Ranks*.

¹⁰ GO biographies are managed and published by the General Officer Management Office, Pentagon.

Further diversification of the ANG GO corps is a concept that will take time, likely a generation change, to become institutionalized. Society cannot expect the ANG, nor demand, to diversify overnight. Diversification will likely evolve through the attrition of the ANG's current GO Corps. Concept transforms into reality by directly educating Airmen of all professions and ranks within the ANG about diversity and the organizational advantages it brings. In doing so, diversity and inclusion will become a personal priority of Airmen to implement as they build and facilitate the ANG of the future. This education will unlock the talent, resources, and skills of arguably the best Airmen of the ANG. Ultimately, a more diverse and inclusive military organizational culture will enable the United States to employ an adaptive, agile, and creative force better designed to protect American interests and values throughout the world.

What is diversity and inclusion?

There is no doubt that the USAF is both firm and deliberate in defining diversity and inclusion. Per AFI 36-7001, "...diversity as a composite of individual characteristics, experiences, and abilities consistent with the Air Force Core Values and the Air Force Mission" and "Air Force diversity includes but is not limited to: personal life experiences, geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds, cultural knowledge, educational background, work experience, language abilities, physical abilities, philosophical and spiritual perspectives, age, race, ethnicity, and gender."¹¹ Inclusion is "the process of creating a culture where all members of an organization are free to make their fullest contributions to the success of the group, and where there are no unnecessary barriers to success."¹² Acceptance of differences at the GO level will foster trust and respect within the entire ANG - thus creating a cohesive and unified service. It is diversity and inclusion that collectively allows for differences among people to be embraced as strengths.

¹¹ AFI 36-7001, 3.

¹² AFI 36-7001, 7.

Although these definitions apply to the service writ large, in application, they are applicable to most Airmen but certainly not to all. In narrowing the scope of ANG Officer assessment to just the GO Corps, it is challenging to find a real application of diversity and inclusion. Anecdotally, the ANG Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (SNCO) corps is quite diverse in AFSC, race, gender, etc.¹³ While an interesting comparison of the SNCO corps will validate that diversity is and can be applied in the armed services, the comparison simply is beyond this paper's scope. However straightforward the definition of diversity is, organizational-wide implementation is a challenge that is overcome only by changing the ANG's organizational culture.

Research from across the social sciences has found that organizations make better decisions when diverse frames inform their thinking.¹⁴ Diversity affords a broader understanding to ANG GOs of what their Airmen need as individuals and in the performance of their jobs, thus creating a more efficient service. Diversity will encourage individual contribution and responsibility within all service members, thus creating a more effective service. Inclusion promotes belonging, purpose, and well-being, while diversity ignites creativity, problem solving, and innovation.

How this situation came to pass

Since its inception in 1947, the USAF and the ANG have promoted pilot officers to higher ranks than their contemporaries. USAF Col (Ret) Mike Worden, authored *Rise of the Fighter Generals: The Problem of Air Force Leadership 1945 – 1982*, brought to light an Air Force whose GO corps is dominated almost exclusively by rated officers, namely pilots.¹⁵ Worden's conclusion of the USAF culture is twofold: 1) only fighter pilots can lead the USAF, and 2) fighter pilots must command all levels of the USAF. In either case, Worden's assessments form a story of the "haves

¹³ cursory research of 90 ANG Wing's CCMSgts, shows a far wider spectrum of AFSC than the ANG GO Corps; 90 Wings have 28 different AFSC's possessed by the CCMSgt suggesting competency based placement.

¹⁴ Scott Page, *The Model Thinker*. New York: Basic Books, 2018, n.p.

¹⁵ Michael Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals: The Problem of Air Force Leadership 1945-1982*. Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 1998, ix-x.

and the have nots” as organizational construct creates an aristocracy of sorts that supports, fosters, and lifts the pilot, while systematically marginalizing all other officers.

Col Worden also cautioned against the danger associated with parochialism and bias in a military that is too homogenous in its senior leadership and culture.¹⁶ “This organizational condition lends to myopia, and monistic thinking-often manifests in a consuming focus on a purpose or mission that favors the dominant culture.”¹⁷ Nearly 25 years after Worden’s assessment remains a political and organizational culture within the USAF and ANG that continues to hold the pilot in the highest regard.

A recent RAND Corporation study, *Raising the Flag: Implications of the US Military Approaches to General and Flag Officer Development*, finds the archetypical USAF GO is a pilot, and most frequently, a fighter pilot.¹⁸ RAND further contends, “the USAF’s official leadership development goals place a premium on technical mastery, strategic analysis, and developing its personnel.”¹⁹ Thus, disproportionate opportunities are afforded for command, education, and experience to the rated officer. It is inferred, given the USAF mission and culture, the ability to master an aircraft directly correlates to possessing an ability to master anything or opportunity placed before a rated officer that makes them the best suited person to command and lead within their respective service.

When looking beyond the USAF and ANG uniformed leaders to civilian-military leaders, the requirements to lead, direct, and oversee a service are not commensurate with military training but based upon a competency to serve within a given position. For example, President Joe Biden, Commander in Chief of the military, has never been in the military himself or has the Air Force's current Secretary. These military leaders were placed into positions of great power and responsibility based on their ability to serve and lead the organization. Conversely, when looking

¹⁶ Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 238

¹⁷ Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 238

¹⁸ Kimberly Jackson et al., *Raising the Flag*, 226.

¹⁹ Kimberly Jackson et al., *Raising the Flag*, 228.

solely at GOs, there is often a particular, almost unwavering, requirement that needs to be met to Command such organizations – be a rated officer.

Further assurance of the rated officer's progression is by Air Force Instruction 51-509 as only a rated officer can command a Wing whose primary mission is to fly aircraft.²⁰ With 87 of the 90 ANG Wings across the US possessing a flying mission, non-flying officers in the ANG are virtually ineligible to assume Wing Command. Although it is possible to have a non-rated officer command a “flying” Wing, historically, this is the exception as the very prospect requires a waiver to be approved by leadership within the Pentagon.²¹ Restrictions such as those in AFI 51-509 systematically marginalize the non-rated officer and force the placement of high-level leaders based not on competency but based mainly upon an AFSC.

Former CJCS, Admiral Mike Mullen offers a particularly good reason why the GO corps are not diversified. Adm Mullen described a known and accepted institutional bias within the military as “ducks pick ducks.”²² His thought is that “when you have White guys pickin’, they pick other White guys.”²³ Admiral Mullen contends this is the very bias that leadership must break up moving forward. RAND found promotion boards tend to select officers for promotion whose career experiences and backgrounds are comparable to their own.²⁴ The notion of “ducks picking ducks” serves to reinforce service culture by perpetuating the selection of officers who similarly reflect service goals and preferences.²⁵ However, RAND contends this observation does not mean that the officers selected for promotion by similar, more senior officers are necessarily less qualified; it is

²⁰ See AFI 51-509, Pg 18, Para 10–“Command of flying Units – Any unit that has flying, planning and directing the employment of manned and remotely piloted aircraft as its primary mission is a flying unit. Para 10.1 Only Line of the Air Force officers with and aeronautical rating, as defined by AFI 11-402, Aviation and Parachutists Service, Aeronautical Ratings and Aviation Badges (except flight surgeons) may command flying units.”

²¹ Based upon the recent change of command at the 106th Rescue Wing. Col Shawn Fitzgerald made history as he was the first Combat Rescue Officer to command the Wing, and also the first non-pilot to do so.

²² Mike Mullen, interview by David Martin, *60 Minutes*, CBS News, 21 Mar, 2021.

²³ Mike Mullen, *60 Minutes*, CBS News, 21 Mar, 2021.

²⁴ Kimberly Jackson et al., *Raising the Flag*, 14.

²⁵ Kimberly Jackson et al., *Raising the Flag*, 14.

possible that the selection tendency in some cases occurs because promotion boards comprised of well-qualified officers are selecting for other well-qualified officers.²⁶

The Embedded Inequality

Explanation as to why there are socially organized differences closely correlated with a service member's education, job, gender, and position within their service is partly the basis of this thesis. The central question being is there, in fact, a categorical inequality exclusivity associated with being a pilot in the ANG compared to the non-rated line officer? To be more specific, does a pilot make for a better GO than the non-pilot officer? In the mid-1990s, Dr. Charles Tilly, a scientific philosopher at the University of Michigan, authored *The Durable Inequality*. Tilly sought to answer the questions, "how, why, and with consequences do long-lasting, systematic inequalities in life chances distinguish members of different socially defined categories of persons, and how do categorical inequalities form, change, and disappear?"²⁷ This subject matter not only parallels the research project within but defines it.

Tilly contends humans invented the categorical inequality millennia ago and have applied it to a wide range of social situations... [and] people establish systems of categorical inequality, however inadvertently, chiefly by means of these two causal mechanisms:²⁸

Exploitation - which operates when powerful, connected people command resources from which they draw significantly increased returns by coordinating the effort of outsiders whom they exclude from the full value added by that effort.²⁹

Opportunity hoarding - which operates when members of a categorically bounded network acquire access to a resource that is valuable, renewable, subject to monopoly, supportive of network activities, and enhanced by the network's modus operandi. The two mechanisms obviously parallel each other, but people who lack great power can pursue the second if encouraged, tolerated, or ignored by the powerful. Often the two parties gain complementary, if unequal, benefits from jointly excluding others.³⁰

²⁶ Kimberly Jackson et al., *Raising the Flag*, 226.

²⁷ Charles Tilly, *Durable Inequality*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. Accessed December 14, 2020. ProQuest eBook Central, 24

²⁸ Charles Tilly, *Durable Inequality*, 27.

²⁹ Charles Tilly, *Durable Inequality*, 28.

³⁰ Charles Tilly, *Durable Inequality*, 29.

Two further mechanisms cement such arrangements in place: emulation, the copying of established organizational models and/or the transplanting of existing social relations from one setting to another; and adaptation, the elaboration of daily routines such as mutual aid, political influence, courtship, and information gathering on the basis of categorically unequal structures. Exploitation and opportunity hoarding favor the installation of categorical inequality, while emulation and adaptation generalize its influence. A certain kind of inequality therefore becomes prevalent over a large population in two complementary ways.”³¹

Tilly’s explanation above offers insight as to why the ANG finds itself with a categorical inequality among its rated and non-rated officer corps. However, in a case of a military organization, this explanation does not address how long-term consequences of the categorical inequality that may result in the advancement of one member of the pair (rated officers) in question and the other’s systematic marginalization (non-rated officer).

The long-term consequence of the purposeful marginalization of one group at the expense of the other is the degradation of the organization’s effectiveness and utility. An example of marginalization is found in the trend that many rated officers will gain a particular secondary AFSC during their career. For GOs in the ANG, space officers tend to pick up a cyber secondary AFSC; JAG tends to remain JAG, Logisticians remain Logisticians, etc. When assessing rated officers, an interesting trend emerges that 69.4% of the ANG’s rated officers with a secondary AFSC is Aircraft Maintenance (21A).³² Based upon publicly available biographies of ANG GOs, only 26.8% of those with the maintenance AFSC stayed in the career field (based on assignment) long enough to earn a 21A3 rating.³³

For example, one rated officer with no aircraft maintenance experience was assigned as a Maintenance Group Commander for 13 months. Once in Command, he attained the 21A AFSC, but in this same time, deployed as an expeditionary ‘flying’ Squadron Commander for 60 days. Pilots are also often allowed to remain ‘current’ in their flying status while simultaneously occupying a

³¹ Charles Tilly, *Durable Inequality*, 29.

³² 49 rated GOs w/ secondary AFSCs, 34 are Aircraft Maintenance. The remaining 15 others have 11 different AFSCs

³³ As shown by completing career field training post initial AFSC granting school and having 24 months in service to the career field school before moving on to their next assignment.

Command billet. Although this duality is advantageous to the ANG to maintain a high number of combat ready aviators, it is reasonable to assess multiple mission sets detract from this Commander's focus. Arguably, dedicating time to multiple items shifts full focus away from a single item. The rated officer now commands with limited basic knowledge of the organization function only to move out of the command position for the next higher opportunity within 18 months - often before attaining a 3 Level within the AFSC.³⁴ This scenario very much limits the upward mobility of many non-rated officers within their primary career fields as command opportunities are often reserved for the rated officer's career broadening opportunity.

What qualifies certain AFSCs to lead the ANG more so than others?

The key to wisdom is this – constant and frequent questioning, for by doubting we are led to question. By questioning, we arrive at the truth.

- Peter Abelard

The Department of Defense and RAND have suggested that an officer's primary career field is a significant factor in their pathway to GO.³⁵ This suggestion is due, in part, to the experience required or traditionally desired of GO positions within a given service. Because the services are organizations whose fundamental mission is preparing for and executing certain warfighting responsibilities, operations-focused career fields then have a propensity to otherwise dominate their GO ranks.³⁶ Both the rated and the non-rated officer spend most of their early career learning to master their primary AFSC. The aviator learns to master flying, while the maintainer learns logistics. There are exceptions, but there will come a time when most all aviators no longer fly or maintainers no longer work with aircraft and simply transition to a largely administrative role of command and leadership. Therefore, non-rated officers are no less competent to command when

³⁴ Research based upon publicly available information of GO biographies show an average of 29.3 months outside of primary AFSC, before moving on to a command command or position where OJT no longer counts toward AFSC advancement beyond 3 Level and careers field training is further diminished in secondary AFSC as rated officers often concurrently fly to maintain deployability certifications.

³⁵ Kimberly Jackson et al., *Raising the Flag*, 27

³⁶ Kimberly Jackson et al., *Raising the Flag*, 27

compared to a rated officer given like command experience at varying levels at the ANG, joint service experience, in-residence developmental education, and deployment experience.

Still, it is the unique political and social landscape of 2020 in the United States that will facilitate a permanent change among the officer corps as opposed to the mere pacification of diversity and inclusion endeavors associated with the temporary appointment of a minority, woman, or non-rated AFSC. Research to find comparisons of best practices within the civilian sector, like fortune 500 companies, would provide perspective to the ANG but is beyond this thesis's scope. These agencies have addressed and are likely much further ahead in the diversity and inclusion endeavor than our US military – particularly the USAF and the ANG.

Since the inception of the USAF and the ANG to the present day, rated officers, particularly fighter pilots, claim lineage to virtually all of the most influential USAF and ANG senior officer positions. This historical reference fuels a sense of predominance that can be viewed negatively by the rated officer's fellow officers in non-rated career fields.³⁷ As the ANG evolves as a service, where space and cyber continue to grow, the sustained emphasis on advancing the careers of rated officers further exacerbates the inevitable mismatch in the skills of the Air Force's most senior leaders and the organizations they lead.³⁸ Yet, when statistically analyzing the GOs of the ANG attainment of General remains strongly correlated with being a white (91.1%), male (89.1%), who is a rated officer (65.8%).³⁹ The strongest indicator, beyond demographics, remains AFSC in *the* pathway to GO because the USAF and ANG are organizations whose fundamental mission is to prepare for and execute warfighting responsibilities largely within the skies of battle.⁴⁰

Many diversity and inclusion consultants support hiring the right talent into the right role through competency based hiring.⁴¹ Much like a civilian-based organization, the ANG is an

³⁷ Kimberly Jackson. et al., *Raising the Flag*, 27.

³⁸ Kimberly Jackson. et al., *Raising the Flag*, 27.

³⁹ Refer to Table 2 and Table 3.

⁴⁰ Jackson. et al., *Raising the Flag*, 27

⁴¹ Collective opinion of McKinsey & Co, a Global Management Consulting Firm and MIT Lincoln Laboratory

organization that is diverse in technology, capability, and skillset. What uniquely qualifies the pilot to be the best suited officer to lead at the GO level is strongly correlated to an officer's career specialty, not competency. Perhaps the thought process might be that anyone can learn to operate successfully within a given environment over time, but this is akin to saying the best emergency room doctor should run the hospital, or the best professor should run the university. There is no logical connection in saying because you are a great pilot, you will be a great leader capable of leading the organization – these are two vastly different skillsets.

Case in point, the typical resume of a rated GO will involve a career broadening opportunity. Although statistical analysis is yet to afford a specific metric, anecdotally, the majorities of such opportunities for an ANG General who is rated takes command of an Aircraft Maintenance Squadron or Group.⁴² Why Aircraft Maintenance and not Security Forces, personnel, or finance? Logically, it seems that aircraft maintenance is most closely related to the operator profession. However, being technically proficient at flying an aircraft does not translate into being a great maintenance officer.

Perhaps detrimental to this approach in the strategic placement of leadership, the question should be asked: “in what profession would you give a practitioner such a high level of responsibility at such a low level of comparable competence to lead?” In this instance, if a pilot is assigned as a J-2 (Intelligence Directorate) Director working for a Combatant Commander, the Director is quite likely the singular voice in the war room consulting that General who is waging war. Working as a director in a combatant command is an excellent opportunity to expand one's horizons and knowledge. However, as a potential singular council to a Combatant Commander, are they the most beneficial counsel, or is a seasoned, experienced intelligence office of like rank be the better person for this combatant staff?

⁴² For all rated General Officers, whose primary AFSC is in a flying capacity, career broadening opportunities place them in a 21 series secondary AFSC (example: Aircraft / Munitions Maintenance).

Flip the paradigm for organizational culture change!

Innovation is more than the incorporation of equipment and technical change into doctrine, practices, and tactics. Innovation in tactics and operational concepts can prove as important on the battlefield as changes in equipment. In most cases, such innovation is evolutionary (a gradual development of something) rather than revolutionary (a complete and total change) in nature.⁴³

- Williamson Murray

Organizational cultural change does not happen overnight. This cultural change suggested within the ANG is likely a generational change that requires an old way of thinking to be ushered out of the ANG mindset, through retirement, and through attrition of those supporting the old way of thinking. There are certain positions in the GO ranks that warrant the rated experience, such as the CSAF and Combatant Commanders. However, what is suggested by this thesis is that those chosen few that rise through a given career field and are considered for GO are considered based on competency and not flying experience. Thus, meritocracy is the foundation upon which Airmen of today will rise through the ranks on their quest for GO.

A senior ANG Officer often referred to the aviator wings as “the universal management badge.”⁴⁴ He, himself a mobility pilot, described his career path as limited by 1) location, 2) timing, and 3) he was not a fighter pilot. He elaborated by saying that staying within a particular State instead of relocating to the National Capitol Region, perhaps an aspect of chance is simply timing, and fighter pilots tend to promote faster than other pilots will limit your upward mobility. Conversely, he stated because of his AFSC there were far more “senior” opportunities for him as a rated officer than the non-rated officer. He summarized this “glass ceiling” was in place because “a pilot can command anybody, but not just anybody can command a pilot.”⁴⁵

The desired paradigm shift described seeks to do away with old ways of thinking, facilitate a fundamental change in approach or underlying assumptions is the goal of diversity and inclusion.

⁴³ Williamson Murray, “Military Innovation in the Interwar Period”, Essay “Innovation: Past and Future” New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 306.

⁴⁴ Personal maxims gleaned from of an Air National Guard General Officer.

⁴⁵ Personal maxims gleaned from of an Air National Guard General Officer.

Just because the old way of thinking has succeeded in the past does not mean continued success is guaranteed. The DoD, USAF, and ANG cannot be reactive when addressing the lack of diversity and inclusion; they must be proactive. Yes, the DoD, USAF, and ANG are beginning to diversify, especially considering society's post-civil disturbance environment of the United States during the Summer of 2020. However, what seems to be a wave of diverse and inclusive changes in civilian and military leadership, these moves have only happened within the last six months.

- CSAF C.Q. Brown (Black, Male, Fighter Pilot, USAFA Grad); Appointed Aug 2020
1st African American Service Chief
Replaced Gen David Goldfien (White, Male, Fighter Pilot, USAFA Grad)
- CCMSgt JoAnne S. Bass, Appointed Aug 2020
1st Female Senior Enlisted Advisor, and 1st Asian American, Senior Enlisted Advisor in ANY service
Replaced CCMSgt Kaleth O. Wright (Black, Male, Dental Assistant)
- Vice President Kamala D. Harris, sworn in Jan 2021
1st Female Vice President
Replaced Vice President Michael R. Pence (White Male)
- Gen (ret) Lloyd J. Austin III, (Black, Male) appointed Jan 2021
1st African American Secretary of Defense
Replaced Secretary of Defense Mark S. Esper (White, Male, resigned Nov 2020)

Although these new appointments offer diversity and inclusivity for our nation's government and military, it remains to be seen if this is simply a response to societal demand or the beginning of a fundamental shift. Regardless, in all cases, these appointments are steps in the right direction.

A common thread found in virtually all research directly addressing diversity and inclusion acknowledges the subject is quite complex in nature. Whether addressing military or civilian, black or white, female or male, the conversation is predicated on logical conversation but stirs emotion for all involved. The challenges are many, and solutions are few; however, it does not mean the pursuit of change is futile. Resolution is found through the organizational change process, mentorship, personnel leadership training, and cultural awareness to create a more diverse and inclusive landscape within the ANG. This resolution allows the service to best take on the political and warfare environments in the 21st Century. It is imperative that ANG leadership foster an

environment where diversity and inclusion genuinely are priorities and not just initiatives that are lost as other tasks take a higher priority or as leadership changes within the organization.

Where there is instability, there is opportunity. Leadership is not exclusive to the senior ranks or a particular AFSC but is inclusive of all levels. Leadership is inclusive to all who are willing to participate.⁴⁶ Efforts to truly provide a successful pathway from which the ANG's diversity and inclusion initiatives can flourish start with leadership acknowledging a systematic problem in which no sector of the organization is exempt. This acknowledgment will build and instill trust within the lower levels and facilitate the change.

Why is diversity key to military success?

The lack of diversity among the GO corps is rooted in the Air Force's organizational culture, yet the current political and social landscapes of the past have not been conducive to such change. When comparing the ANG to large corporations of America who have faced the same problem set and ultimately overcome similar diversity and inclusion problems further validate the ANG has a self-imposed lack of diversity at the most senior officer ranks. As a result, the ANG has much room for improvement as a military service.

From a human capital perspective, diversity in the ANG operates as a sustained competitive advantage. Once implemented, it will undoubtedly create value that is both difficult to imitate and rare due to its subjectivity, complex ambiguity, and creativity.⁴⁷ The DOD has developed a central hub for diversity and inclusion efforts by creating The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) to facilitate such benefits. DEOMI describes the advantages and efficiencies afforded to an organization whose leadership construct has a more diverse source of information consistently generates better ideas. According to the *American Sociological Association*, having

⁴⁶ Scott Swift (Adm Ret.), "Lessons learned from former U.S. 7th Fleet Commander", Video Chat, Event from San Diego, 13 Nov, 2020.

⁴⁷ Orlando Richard and Carliss Miller, "Considering Diversity as a Source of Competitive Advantage in Organizations." in *The Oxford Handbook of Diversity and Work*, ed. Quinetta M. Roberson. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012, 224-25

prolonged interactions or relationships with people who look at the world differently from ours leads to challenging assumptions and de-stabilizing typical cultural schemas.⁴⁸ Over time, this increases cognitive flexibility, divergent thinking, and idea generation abilities. In basic terms, the idea is that intercultural interactions help broaden an individual's repertoire of ideas to choose from when problem-solving. Individuals with intercultural experiences are 1) advantaged as leaders when making connections between disparate ideas originating from different cultural sources, given their extensive knowledge of other cultures, 2) extensive intercultural experience makes potential contradictory perspectives available, and 3) it helps leaders to overcome cognitive fixedness, break away from structured and routine ways of approaching problems, and to inspire creative thinking.⁴⁹

The Fix

The USAF and the ANG sought to facilitate change across the organization in 2011. Yet, diversity and inclusion initiatives remain largely unapplied at the highest levels of leadership ten years later. Multiple sources from Gallup polls to Forbes Magazine and the Harvard Business Review states that change initiatives' success rates are relatively low, given as many as 70% of all change initiatives fail.⁵⁰ The top reasons for failure are 1) there are too many change initiatives without prioritization, 2) communication without leadership's appropriate engagement, and 3) CEO and top leadership team are dictating what should change without changing themselves, leading to failure of change initiatives within an organization.⁵¹

Often leadership will tout an initiative as vital to the continued success or growth of a company. Leaders may set a goal and expect resolution without further engagement, or worse yet,

⁴⁸ Contention of the American Sociological Association Fallin-Hunzaker, M.B. and Lauren Valentino. "Mapping Cultural Schema: From Theory to Method," American Sociological Review, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0003122419875638>

⁴⁹ Chi-Ying Cheng and Wen Tan Yi, *Intercultural experience and creativity*. International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication. (Y.Y. Kim & K. McKay-Semmler, eds). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. 1298-1308. 2017.

⁵⁰ A Google search yielded multiple articles from Gallup polls, Harvard Business Review and Forbes Magazine all stating a statistic first presented in 1993 and continually confirmed through 2017.

⁵¹ John Kotter, "Leading Change – Why transformation efforts fail" Harvard Business Review March April 1995. https://usmc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01USMCU_INST/1n6cq95/proquest227795565

not prioritize the initiative. In such cases, it is easy for employees who disagree with the change initiative to simply slow the implementation process or avoid the change by waiting for a leadership change. Without prioritization, everything can be viewed as important, and if everything is important, nothing is important.

Leadership may fail to communicate the vision adequately or what the desired outcome is. Communication is one thing, but it is not the same as engaging in the change process. Leadership must have an appropriate and proven approach to facilitate, manage, and lead change within an organization. If not, the end goal is not achieved. Time, money, and resources are wasted, and organizational morale tends to plummet in the process.

Change initiatives fail because there is a belief that small incremental changes such as increased communication, changes in reward systems, and training are enough to move an organization to a new place – and they are not. A multi-faceted approach in the facilitation of organizational change is critical to the success of the change management program that addresses both formal and informal aspects of the organization. Most change programs deal effectively with formal elements of an organization: processes, decision rights, organizational structure, systems management, etc. However, should organizational leaders fail to address the organizational culture aspects when facilitating change, the desired change will not be achieved. Broadly speaking, culture is how things really get done in a company, and the formal aspects as much influence culture as the informal aspects-how someone thinks, acts, and feels.

Changing the culture of an organization is to change both the hearts and minds of its members. Programs and procedures are tangible, but culture is a conceptual aspect of a company. To succeed in organizational change, to implement sweeping change, leadership must mobilize the entire organization. Leaders need to find the cultural strengths; what is in the culture that can help organization members feel proud of what they are doing. The organization needs to gain the power and support of the informal leaders. People who may not be management or supervision, but those

people that are trusted, motivate, and instill pride in the organization. Leadership must also create an environment organization wide where anything communicated, whether it is an email, a message from a manager, or a town hall communicates the same message. That way, the workers say, “I get it! I know what I need to do to make this happen,” and no one is sending a message to the contrary.

The GOs and their executive management team need to understand the program, and they need to be the change. They are exhibiting a change in a way that is very visible to the rest of the organization. Address the middle ranks of supervision, and the respected middle managers need to show that they too are on board. They need to set the example of “I will do this before I ever ask my team to do it.” Credibility is fostered by walking the walk and talking the talk. Engage the front lines-the team members, supervisors the boot on the ground as they are essential to the change team. Lastly, the executive teams can consider counsel from the culture and change experts as they are there to give the expert advice and make sure the change happens.

Culture is certainly something that can vary between organizations, but overall, it represents the organization’s beliefs, values, processes, and expectations. A concept involving so many components can be abstract, and mismanagement can have tangible consequences. The ANG must maintain situational awareness, and in doing so, is paramount to the successes and failures inherent to culture change.⁵² Organizational culture change does not happen overnight, and to suggest this as a solution to a problem requires time. For the ANG, this change is likely a generational change that requires that old way of thinking to be ushered out of the organization through retirement and attrition of current GOs and decision makers.

In any change endeavor, communication is critical before, during, and after the change process. Those in positions of leadership must continuously assess if milestones are being met, continually communicate expectations, and celebrate the small victories along the way. Typical

⁵² Andrew Sumitani, “How to Change Org Culture: A 10-Step Checklist.”, *Tiny Pulse* (Blog), Published 23 Oct, 2019, <https://www.tinypulse.com/blog/how-to-change-org-culture-a-10-step-checklist>.

organizational inertia may be the largest proponent against change, and it must be proactively combated; if it is not, it is considerably easier for the organization to fall back upon the status quo. To go with what works or the way it has always been done can very easily stall the change effort.

John Kotter contends that the celebration of a premature victory is, ironically, a combination of change indicators and change resistors.⁵³ Change indicators go overboard with enthusiasm abounds as clear signs of progress present, and change resistors are quick to stop organizational change given the progress. “After the celebration is over, the resistors point to the victory as a sign that the war has been won and the troops should be sent home. Weary troops allow themselves to be convinced that they won. Once home, the foot soldiers are reluctant to climb back on the ships.”⁵⁴ The desired change then soon comes to a grinding halt, while tradition soon replaces change. Unfortunately, regression is perhaps an inevitable hurdle to the successful, long term implementation of diversity and inclusion initiatives within the ANG.

At the highest levels of command, leadership's understanding of the organization can be described as broad in nature but rarely deep. By virtue of separation, both geographic and hierarchical, it is challenging for a GO to truly have their finger on the pulse on the lowest levels of the organization they command. However, in the case of the Director of the Air National Guard or any GO, it is imperative that they foster an environment where diversity and inclusion truly is a priority and not just an initiative that is lost as other tasks take a higher priority. GOs must also surround themselves with the right staff—a diverse staff—which is especially important in the current social and political environment.

Potential solutions to the problems within are many. The few strategies to follow are not exhaustive, but they do serve as a springboard for continued discussion beyond this thesis:

⁵³ John Kotter, “Leading Change – Why transformation efforts fail” Harvard Business Review March-April 1995. https://usmc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01USMCU_INST/1n6cq95/proquest227795565

⁵⁴ John Kotter, *Leading Change*, n.p.

- 1) Establish an attainable and reasonable, competency-based promotion process of the ANG GO corps where race, gender, and AFSC inequalities are directly addressed.
- 2) The few ANG officers that rise through a given career field and are considered for promotion to GO are considered based on competency and not flying experience.
- 3) Establish diversity and inclusion as a priority across all ranks and organizations within the USAF and ANG that will transcend changes in USAF and ANG Leadership.

Counterargument

A counterargument to the need for diversification of the GO Corps is that the initiative is discriminatory toward the rated officers of the ANG. Diversification initiatives of the GO corps can suppress the career progression, education, and promotion of the rated officer. Further, retention of rated officers could plummet given the rated community's disdain for their respective short-term and long-term prospects within the military. This culture and concern have been captured repeatedly over the last four decades throughout the USAF and ANG by way of the "Dear Boss" letters submitted to USAF senior leadership by anonymous authors.

The rated community argues their service lacks a platform upon which the ANG and the USAF can anchor its warfighters under a shared mission.⁵⁵ As the service has slowly transitioned away from a specialized warfighting focus and taken on an infinite number of other missions, elitism becomes egalitarianism. This erosion of the Air Force's combat culture is the real reason pilots are leaving.

The rated officer's AFSC is without a doubt a demanding, dangerous, and uncompromising career field. Rated officers are not successful by happenstance; they must be well versed in weapon systems, technical data, threat information, tactics and recall them under pressure at a moment's notice.⁵⁶ Much like executive leadership, a rated officer's cognitive demands to operate at such

⁵⁵ Mike Benitez, "Air Force in Crisis, Part III: Dear Boss, It's All About The Culture." War on the Rocks. Mach 15, 2018, Accessed 10 Nov, 2020. <https://warontherocks.com/2018/03/air-force-in-crisis-part-iii-dear-boss-its-all-about-the-culture/>

⁵⁶ Mike Benitez, *Air Force in Crisis*, n.p.

levels are high. The consequence of failure in flight could not be more substantial for themselves or the boots of ground they support. The rated officer is part of an elite group for good reason.

Should the Air Force's cultural shift away from the elitist mentality to a more bureaucratic organizational approach, the pilot will feel increasingly alienated. They will be less driven to want to belong to an organization where they are no longer identified as an elite aviator but simply an ANG Officer who happens to fly. Now, more than ever, the pilot feels the decision to leave their service is quite straightforward as membership within the USAF and the ANG of today is not worth the associated mediocrity the service is driving toward.⁵⁷

There is also credence to the idea that anyone can learn to operate successfully within a given environment. Anyone can learn a new skill set like human relations, force protection, or intelligence. Far and away, the most money invested in the training and readiness of a single Airman is the pilot given a college education through a service academy or ROTC, initial pilot training, and continued training which can exceed \$25,000 per flying hour.⁵⁸ Another cost to consider is an aviator's monthly flight pay, a retention bonus' that in 2021 can be \$420,000, and the skills inherent of a pilot best suits them for senior leadership.⁵⁹ Perhaps the ANG truly is implementing competency based hiring practices, but then again, the ANG could be ensuring a return on an investment.

The USAF and the ANG have a growing pilot retention issue. In 2020 the USAF and ANG needed 21,000 pilots to carry out missions identified in the National Defense Strategy, and they only had 18,900 pilots.⁶⁰ Generationally, nearly 65% of pilots are required to reach 20 years of service to meet institutional requirements and mission capabilities; however, the USAF claims when active

⁵⁷ Mike Benitez, *Air Force in Crisis, Part III*, n.p.

⁵⁸ John Tirpak, "Kelly Worries F-35 Flying Costs Wont Hit Target, and That China May Get NGAD First", Published 26 Feb, 2021, <https://www.airforcemag.com/kelly-worries-f-35-flying-costs-wont-hit-target-and-that-china-may-get-ngad-first/>

⁵⁹ See Table 1: 2021 Monthly Flight Incentive for USAF (\$1000 for 12< 22 yrs of service) and Brian Everstine, "Pilots Could Be Eligible for Up to \$420K to Stay in Service", *Air Force Magazine*, Published 15 Mar, 2021, <https://www.airforcemag.com/pilots-could-be-eligible-for-up-to-420k-to-stay-in-service/#:~:text=The%20Air%20Force%20is%20offering,and%20the%20COVID%2D19%20pandemic.>

⁶⁰ Tobias Switzer, "The Air Force Pilot Retention Crisis Is Not Over," *War On The Rocks* (blog), 20 Oct, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/10/the-air-force-pilot-retention-crisis-is-not-over/>

duty pilots are eligible to separate only 34% remain.⁶¹ The ANG and USAF have been trying to solve the retention problem of rated officers for decades, yet statistically, retention continues in its downward trend. Diminishing numbers may give credence to the arguments listed above, and pilot retention numbers alone give a reason not to diversify. Perhaps the solution is to protect the rated officer's elite status and not diminish their career progression by affording line officers' promotion in the name of diversity. Without pilots to fly the planes, at least modern-day, an Air Force would cease to exist.

Conclusion

Military members serve in an organization whose culture is one of strong conviction. Today's USAF and ANG culture is tied directly to the dominance of the air domain, and at no point is failure ever an option.⁶² The Air Force's Ethos is to fly, fight and win. Members of the ANG are linked together by two critical elements: capability and conviction.⁶³ Capability can be measured through aptitude, training, and success and failures in real-world scenarios. Conviction, on the other hand, cannot be measured. Conviction is an internal drive, or competition not with their fellow Airman but with themselves, where a personal standard is almost unattainable. For the ANG, good is not good enough if it can be better, and better is not better if it can be the best.⁶⁴

Change does not happen without challenges, and a significant hurdle to long-term change sustainability in the military is that leadership changes quite often. The USAF and ANG must ensure the priority, the vector of change, is not lost with new Command and leadership. Inevitably, with new leadership, comes organizational change, and with it changes in unit priorities and expectations. The Trump administration took many steps to change how the US interacted globally from 2016-2020. In the first 48 hours of office, President Biden signed 17 executive orders undoing the Trump legacy, such as the US re-entering the Paris climate, remaining a member of the United Nations, and

⁶¹ Switzer, "The Air Force Pilot Retention Crisis is Not Over." n.p.

⁶² Benitez, "Air Force in Crisis." *War on the Rocks*. n.p.

⁶³ Benitez, "Air Force in Crisis." *War on the Rocks*. n.p.

⁶⁴ Rigsby, Rick, *Lessons from a Third Grade Dropout* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 2006).

rejoining the World Health Organization. Like diversity and inclusion initiatives, long term changes are only possible if they transcend organizational leadership changes.

A secondary hurdle to sustainability is not only how leadership implements a solution but who implements the change. Should the leaders of diversity and inclusion change be part of the minority demographic of an organization, the initiative is better received. Possible prior attempts by the USAF for diversity and inclusion failed, in part, because they were championed by the majority demographic of the USAF and not the minority demographic.

A more diverse and inclusive military and organizational culture will enable the United States to employ an adaptive, agile, and creative force better designed to protect American interests and values throughout the world. Change is a good thing, and change is inevitable. There is undoubtedly a component within the ANG that would likely argue nothing is wrong with the current construct of leadership as it is quite successful. How the ANG prepares and mentors future leaders must work given the ANG's long track record of success both on and off the battlefield. A call for diversity and inclusion across the service is not saying those affected by the change are less than. A call for diversity is a necessary deterrent of organizational stagnation. Change keeps an organization relevant while diversity and inclusion usher success in an ever-changing world.

Undoubtedly, the battlespace of tomorrow is changing. The physical battlefield becomes a conceptual battlefield where air operations are more autonomous with the rise of the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), and battles are fought behind a keyboard and not in a cockpit. Should the ANG maintain the current ways of how they promote Officers and who they promote, the ANG's effectiveness on the battlefield will diminish, and our methods will slowly be rendered ineffective.

Tables

Data analysis was conducted by a STEM certified, Michigan State University statistical analysis graduate program alumni, Capt Christopher Manley, MI ANG. The purpose of statistical analysis (SA) is to identify patterns and report trends within the data set, remove bias, and offer a path from which an informed and educated decision can be made. SA involves five steps.⁶⁵

- 1) A description for the nature by which the data is to be analyzed.
- 2) Exploration of the relation of the data to the underlying population.
- 3) Creates a model to summarize how the data relates to the underlying population.
- 4) Prove (or disprove) the validity of the model.
- 5) Employ predictive analytics to anticipate future trends.

Through statistical interference, hypotheses are tested, and conclusions are drawn from the data. Backed by numbers, the analysis may also uncover patterns and trends within the GO Corps that were otherwise not readily apparent.

TABLE 1: Monthly Air Force Aviation Incentive Pay Rates (Effective October 1, 2017)

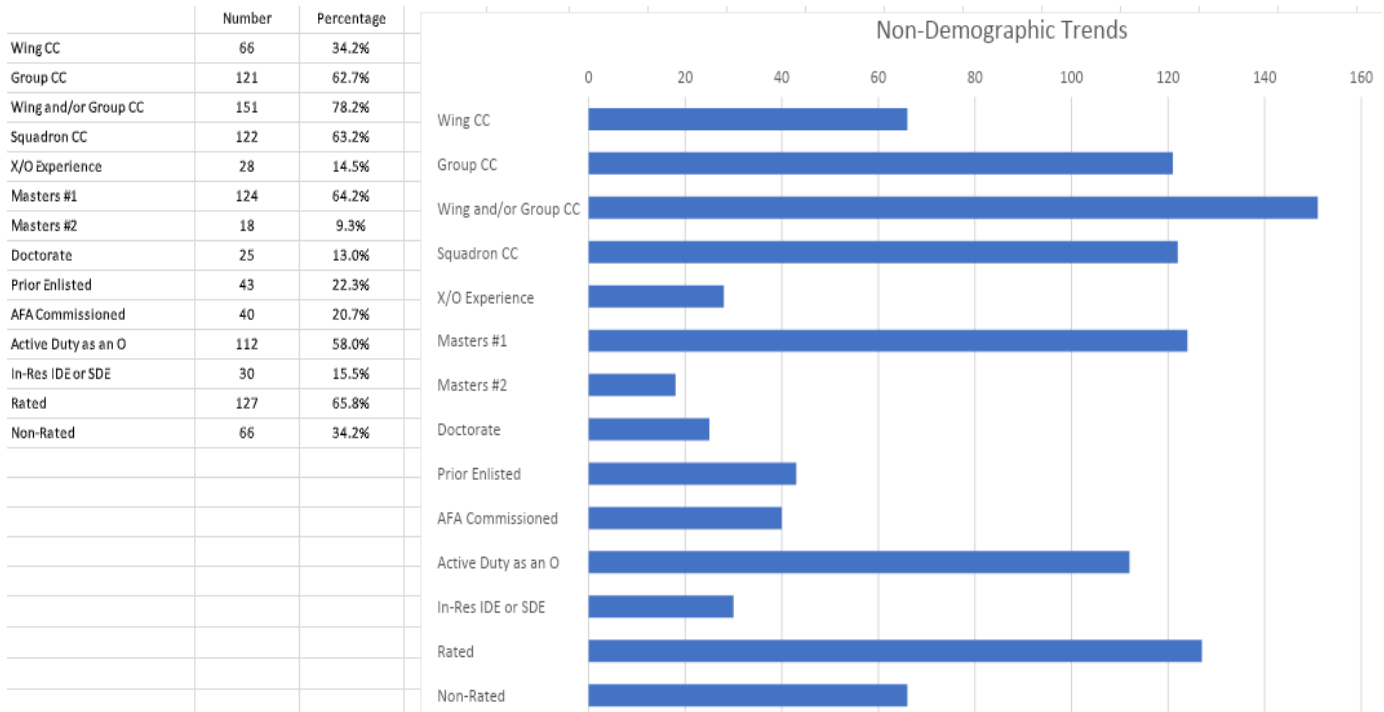
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Years of Aviation Service	Monthly Rate
2 or less	\$150
Over 2	250
Over 6	700
Over 12	1,000
Over 22	700
Over 24	450

Source: <https://www.dfas.mil/militarymembers/payentitlements/Pay-Tables/AVIP5/>

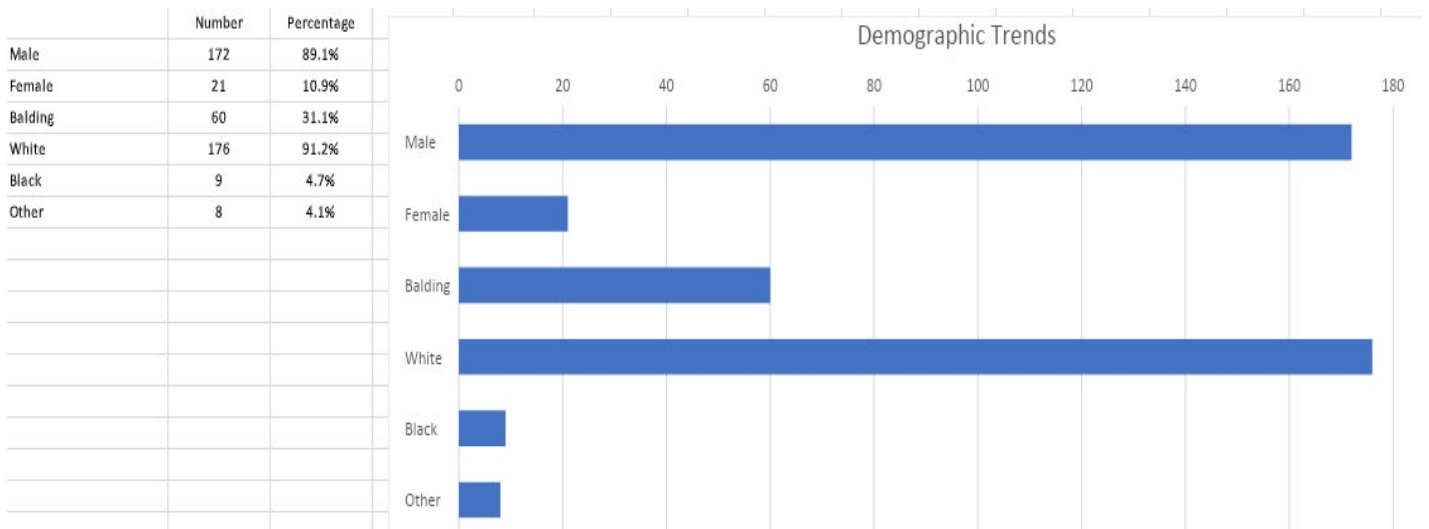
⁶⁵ Chad Brooks, "What is Statistical Analysis?". Accessed 13 Dec, 2020. A previous definition of SA provided this author with specific analytical process direction and clarity that guided the study of the ANG GOs. <https://businessnewsdaily.com/6000-statistical-analysis.html>

TABLE 2: Non-Demographics of ANG GOs as a percentage to all showing trend analysis.



Graphic Credit: Capt Christopher E. Manley, MSBA

TABLE 3: Demographics of ANG GOs as a percentage to all showing trend analysis.



Graphic Credit: Capt Christopher E. Manley, MSBA

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