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Impact of Increased Formal Training
on Army National Guard Retention

Volume # 1
Master Report

Submitted to:

Chief
Enlisted Branch
Army Personnel Division
National Guard Bureau
Room 2C431, The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310-2500

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In response to:

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Study on the Impact of Lengthened AIT Courses on ARNG Readiness

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<p>A survey of 3,000 enlisted ARNG personnel found many soldiers nearly at their limit for devoting time to the Guard. Family and employer obligations conflict with increases in formal (full time) training requirements. Such requirements should offer flexible reserve component options to avoid driving out large numbers (up to 29%) of Guardsmen.</p> <p>To permit more flexibility, there is a need also to reduce training policy complexity. Standardized training and skill progression patterns, centralized data at National Guard Bureau level, and option guides at unit level would be useful tools for this. Ultimately, automation should be made an integral and effective aid for training management.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Keywords:</p>			
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**Impact of Increased Formal Training
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May 27, 1988

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Study on the Impact of Lengthened AIT Courses on ARNG Readiness**

The views, opinions, and findings contained in this report are those of the author(s) and should not be construed as an official Department of Defense position, policy, or decision, unless so designated by other official documentation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Concerned with the potential impact of formal training increases on retention and the strength element of ARNG readiness, the National Guard Bureau contracted Strategy Corporation to:

- ** Survey troop attitudes on the impact of increased formal training requirements on retention rates;
- ** Array all available data on current strength and training courses by MOS; and
- ** Develop an optimum training model for each MOS.

The following conclusions are drawn from the data gathered during this effort:

- ** The willingness to perform more formal training is directly dependent upon family and employer support.
- ** Increased full time training requirements could more than double reenlistment losses -- to as much as a 47% attrition rate.
- ** Maximum availability of Reserved Component Configured Courseware could reduce three quarters of this attrition.
- ** The limitation of SOJT as a reclassification tool is not supported by the troops or commanders.
- ** Split training option use will be fundamentally altered by any AIT length increases.
- ** The Data Array provides a tool that assists balancing the training seat needs of the Army and ARNG with the assets available.
- ** The Training Options Guide provides an MOS progression road map for both individual soldiers and small unit supervisors.

Overall, ARNG soldiers are proud of their participation in the "Total Force" but express concern over continued increases in time required by each level of the chain of command. The cost of lost time with their families and civilian careers is not offset by the benefits received. However, efforts to make formal training easier to schedule for soldiers are likely to make it more difficult to manage for NGB planners.



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While there are specific mission areas in which the role for reserve components can be expanded, we need to exercise care to avoid fundamentally altering the nature of service in the reserves.

National Security Strategy
of the United States

The President's Report to Congress, January 1988

INTRODUCTION

Increased emphasis on the reserve components calls for higher Army National Guard (ARNG) readiness to satisfy Total Force Policy requirements. One way to improve overall readiness should be by adding updated equipment. But newer equipment may demand higher strength and training levels, and unless these personnel needs can be met readiness will fall.

Guard soldiers must divide their time between military and civilian commitments; they may not accept Army policies "fundamentally altering the nature of service" for part time soldiers. The Guard needs to balance the needs of higher training readiness with the concerns of part time soldiers. This is the fundamental problem addressed by this report.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

Work was performed by Strategy Corporation under contract for the Enlisted Branch, Army Personnel Division, National Guard Bureau (NGB). A Study Advisory Group headed by Brigadier General William A. Navas, Jr. periodically reviewed the project's progress and provided guidance. The Government's technical monitor and Contracting Officer's Representative was Sergeant Major Thomas McNamara.

The purposes of the project were to:

- Survey Guard soldiers' attitudes on three specific training issues and related matters, namely:
 - 1) The impact on split training enlistment of lengthening Advanced Individual Training (AIT);
 - 2) The impact on retention and prior service accessions of replacing Supervised on the Job Training (SOJT) with formal school training; and
 - 3) The impact on retention of increasing Non-Commissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) training requirements.

- Compile a Data Array of current ARNG strength and course data by Military Occupational Specialty (MOS).

- Suggest a model or optimum training program for accomplishing training objectives. As results emerged, the NGB further specified this as a model format showing the flow of training requirements through all enlisted skill levels, with a detailed "Training Options Guide" (TOG) in this format for each MOS.

- Analyze and report on the survey and other data.

Thousands of pages of questionnaires and other raw data were obtained, and these remain on file at Strategy Corporation. The Survey, Data Array, and Model (TOG) data were analyzed and

documented in three detailed reports delivered separately to the National Guard Bureau. This document summarizes that information and draws further insights, as shown in Figure 1.

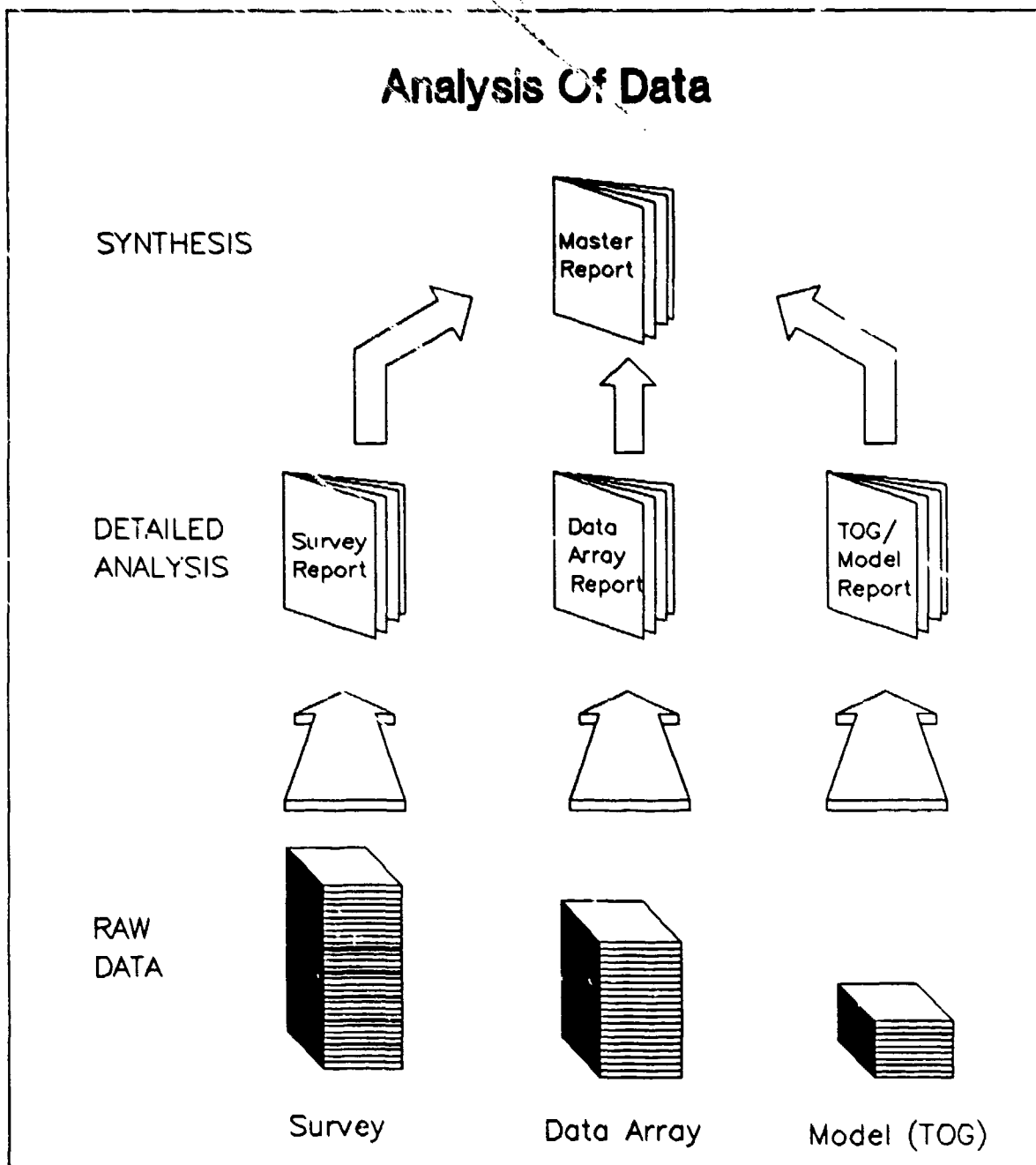


Figure 1

This report is intended for the general reader who is interested in the study topic, but whose time is limited. Greater detail is available in the three backup volumes delivered.

Interested primarily in the manpower element of overall Guard readiness, this study does not directly address readiness, though inferences can be drawn based on the role of manpower in the overall readiness equation.

One aspect of the study -- the survey -- developed a predictive tool to measure the impact of increased Guard time on recruitment and retention of enlisted personnel. The second aspect -- the Data Array and Training Options Guide -- created management tools to assist the NGB in allocating training seats and informing the individual soldier of required training.

ATTITUDE SURVEY

Objectives and Theory

The survey probed attitudes of enlisted personnel to determine the impact of increased formal training requirements on retention.

Soldiers join the Guard knowing they will be required to devote a substantial amount of time to unit assemblies and training. Time requirements increase with rank and position. Even though Guard service is part time, many soldiers dedicate to their military duties up to one-third of the time contributed by active component counterparts. The "Miller" Line (Figure 2) was proposed as a graphic time line showing how the yearly time requirements of the M-day ARNG soldier (basically, 39 days) are creeping upwards toward the requirement zone of a full time active component soldier (about 230 days). The ARNG, in its need for additional training time to meet mission requirements and convert to new equipment, is faced with a policy dilemma between training demands on one hand and retention needs on the other.

The "Miller" Line

More ARNG training time pushes time commitment closer and closer to the actual active component time commitment.

Continuing increases transform ARNG soldiers into full time soldiers.

Guard service becomes more difficult as ARNG time demands increase.

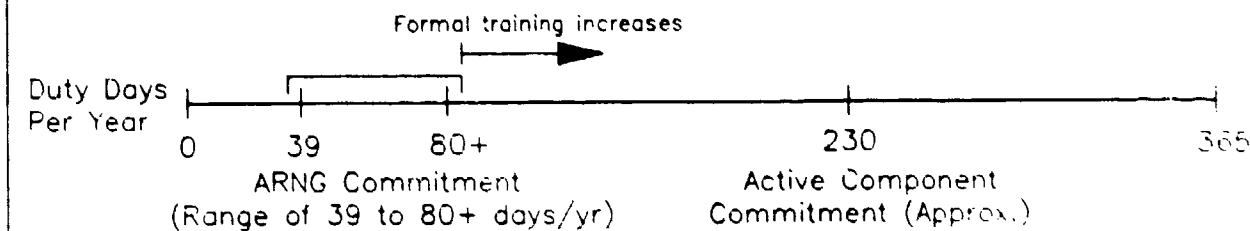


Figure 2 ¹

When these demands become severe enough, soldiers often reevaluate their continued participation. As the required time goes up and other factors (i.e. job satisfaction, benefits, transferrable skills) remain constant, there is a reduction in the ability of the benefits of membership to offset this growing cost of time. Logically, at some point the benefits can no longer fully offset these personal costs; continuation of Guard service is questioned. The survey was designed to test this

¹ The name "Miller" Line' was coined after Strategy Corporation consultant John Miller detailed the time line idea.

theory, to determine the significance of this time problem, and identify those whom it most acutely affects.

Calculation of benefits and costs goes on continually (if subconsciously) in soldiers' minds. Despite the subtleties of personal value, utility, and priorities, it is possible to devise a model that measures and predicts aggregate Guard behavior in the face of new formal training requirements and additional time commitments.

The survey's main attitudinal model was applied to the NCOES and SOJT policies. A separate model was needed to explore the issue of split training usage.

The NCOES/SOJT model measured retention attitudes as the willingness to reenlist (or join). It postulated that a reenlistment decision results from balancing personal perceptions of external, civilian benefits and burdens of Guard service against perceptions of internal Guard satisfactions. The model assumed these perceptions varied in priority and strength among soldiers.

Changing formal training requirements (or any other input factor), would alter the calculation of the value a soldier derives from Guard service. Depending on the individual and the proposed change, this could be enough to reverse a decision to reenlist. (See Figure 3) Enough such decisions to not reenlist could, over time, seriously affect Guard strength levels.

Prior service accessions can easily be seen as the other side of the retention coin. The same factors that prompt a Guard soldier to separate also work to preclude a veteran from joining the ARNG.

Survey questions were framed to probe willingness to reenlist (rather than intent to leave or quit the Guard) since this avoided negative connotations and evasive answers. Since willingness to reenlist can be assumed to relate directly to future retention levels, the impact of formal training increases on retention was measured by the changes in reenlistment attitudes resulting from such increases.

NCOES and SOJT Attitudinal Model

Formal training changes impact on both external and internal factors. Different situational groups tend to react differently. An individual's "calculation" of attitudes is mental, but the results can be measured.

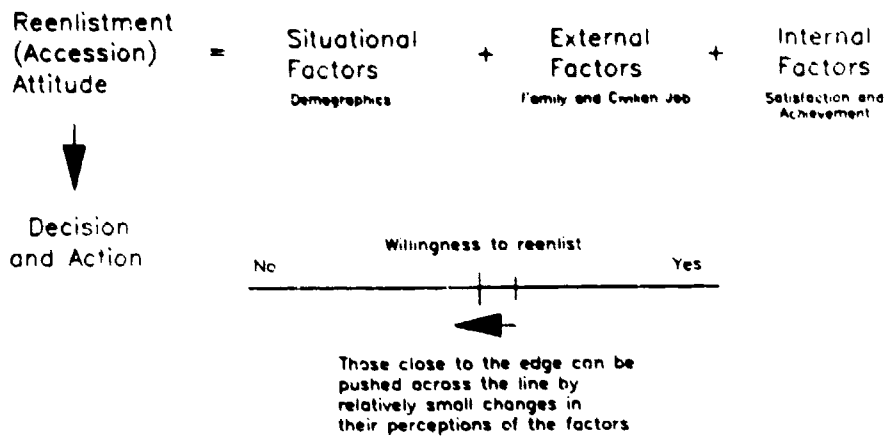


Figure 3

The key attitudinal change comes from the soldier's need to commit additional time to fulfill increased training requirements. This new time burden affects the soldier's civilian life and perception of the value of being in the Guard. If high enough, that effect could cause the soldier to separate (not reenlist). By probing the soldiers' perceptions of burden, the survey examined expressed attitudes and thus derived the mental calculus at work and the predicted effect of increased time demands on retention.

One such impact could come from increasing the requirements of current NCOES courses. Another could be prompted by reducing the allowability of SOJT (which is not formal training, but has

traditionally been used for MOS reclassification or enhancement) and requiring formal, school-based training instead. Questions explored attitudes on these issues in general. Other questions asked for views on reserve component training options employing inactive duty training with a minimal amount of active duty training time.

The split training model is different in concept. It focuses not on the general issue of enlistment and AIT length, but on narrower attitudes of split training enlistment effects if there are changes in the length of AIT. It is assumed that students are attracted to the Guard if their Basic Training (BT) and AIT courses (required upon enlistment) can be completed during available time between school terms. An option to "split" initial formal training between two summers attracts those who otherwise would find the Guard's formal training requirements too long.

Findings From Past Studies

Past studies on ARNG retention were reviewed for the applicability of their findings to this study. This outlined the state of knowledge on the subject, and helped guide survey applications for increasing that state of knowledge. Although there is little data regarding the impact of NGB policy changes on retention, past studies shaped the design of this study in examining external (civilian) influences on the attitudes of soldiers.

Research Design

A statistically valid sample of enlisted ARNG soldiers was surveyed to build a database on attitudes towards training and time requirements. The sample's representativeness was built by a stratification of soldiers based on location and type of Guard unit. Varied location of units was necessary for full regional representation and the unit type stratification (Combat Arms, Combat Support, and Combat Service Support) was necessary to ensure that the selection of units matched the ARNG structure.

The target population, enlisted personnel, did not include senior NCOs (E8-E9) who would not be affected by the changes under consideration in this study. Senior NCOs and officers were queried only on training impacts and attitudes. It was also recognized that the ranks surveyed (E1-E7) also varied in their experience with individual training programs, so they were segregated into two groups (E1-E4 and E5-E7) for separate probing.

The surveying was divided into three complementary parts. The main survey used multiple choice questions to collect the largest amount of information in an easily quantified form. Two different questionnaire versions were distributed and completed under the direct supervision of survey team members. One form focused on AIT and split training and was given only to E1-E4s. The other focused on NCOES and was given only to E5-E7s. In addition to the specialized questions, both forms had a common section of questions for demographics, general issues and MOS reclassification. A supplement was given to all recently reclassified soldiers (E1-E7) to elicit attitudes on SOJT and reclassification training. All respondents were encouraged to write in additional narrative comments to highlight issues they thought to be important.

A second kind of survey was focus group interviews with a randomly selected group of soldiers from each unit. These were free flowing discussions of the questionnaire issues. Focus groups were designed to gather anecdotal information to supplement and sharpen the quantitative data and were led by survey team members who also took notes.

The third part of the survey was a command group survey distributed to company officers and senior NCOs for narrative comments on the issues. Command group surveys were left at the units for later completion and return by mail.

Taken together, the three survey parts generated a large and varied database about training and time attitudes of enlisted ARNG personnel. This database allowed for statistical analysis and comparison of the quantitative data with the qualitative

data. The breadth and depth of inputs added flavor and substance beyond what a quantified project alone could achieve.

Team members were rigorously trained in controlling survey procedures and moderating focus groups. Initially, a series of test surveys were conducted at units in the Washington area to evaluate the vehicles and procedures to be used. All E1-E7 personnel present for duty in each surveyed unit were assembled and surveyed under the direction of the team members. Stringent control measures were taken to ensure that surveys were accurately distributed and filled out. Care was taken by team moderators to remain neutral during focus group discussions. At all phases, strict confidentiality was observed.

Survey Respondents

The NGB directed that units be sampled nationwide, and chose eleven cities in ten states as shown in Figure 4. The states were separated geographically and diverse in demographic make-up. Of the 52 units surveyed, 16 were combat arms, 12 combat support and 24 combat service support. This matched ARNG proportions.

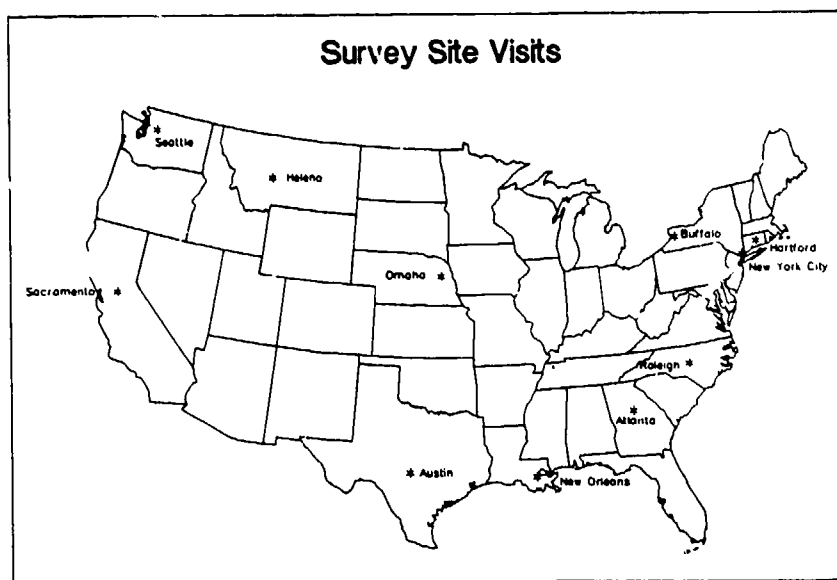


Figure 4

A total of 3003 valid surveys were obtained, about 53% from the lower grades (E1-E4) and 47% from NCO's (E5-E7). This level clearly satisfied constraints for significance and validity. Figure 5 shows respondents by type of unit and grade. Narrative comments were entered on some 230 of the questionnaires.

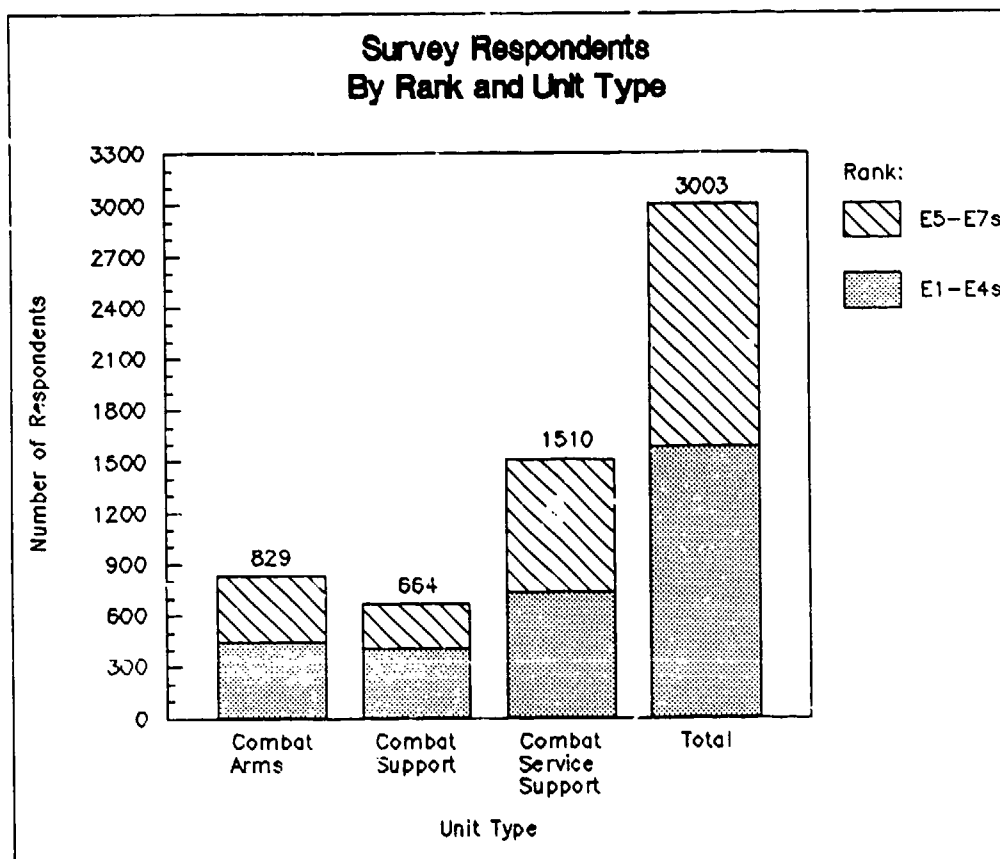


Figure 5

Focus group participants, randomly selected, averaged from 10% to 20% of a unit's enlisted personnel taking the written survey. All told, some 450 of the 3003 survey takers also participated in the focus groups.

Command group surveys were provided for officers and senior NCOs in the unit chain of command. Eighty-seven (87) of these surveys (30% of those distributed) were completed and returned.

ANALYSIS FINDINGS

Questionnaire responses provided a mass of quantitative data that was analyzed using advanced statistical techniques. Profiling and sensitivity analysis supported by covariation analysis determined significant trends on time, training and retention attitudes. Similarities of outlook were identified for various groups of soldiers. Written comments were analyzed for common themes which were then compared with results obtained from the quantitative analysis.

Initial analysis of soldier attitudes and motivations compared actual correlations against expected patterns. Preliminary theories of the relationships between training policy and soldier attitudes could be tested, and then used or modified to predict likely future effects.

Baseline Attitudes

As an initial baseline assessment, general satisfaction with the Guard and willingness to reenlist were probed. Of the individuals surveyed, seventy-three percent (73%) stated they were satisfied or very satisfied with Guard service. This satisfaction was positively related to the soldiers' perception of family and employer support, and of the importance of their job in the Guard. Satisfaction also correlated with demographic factors of age (positively) and education (negatively). As Figure 6 shows, when taken together such factors can be strong predictors of satisfaction levels.

Willingness to reenlist was similarly high, with only 18% of soldiers indicating that they were currently planning to get out when their present term ends. This was against 49% who were planning to reenlist and 33% currently undecided.

One of the strongest factors in reenlistment attitudes was rank. Only 34% of lower grade enlisted (E1-E4) vs. 66% of NCO's (E5-E7) currently planned to reenlist. Twenty-five percent of E1-E4s vs. 10% of E5-E7s planned not to reenlist. Other demographics that relate to rank, such as age, time in service,

marital status, and education, also correlated positively with reenlistment willingness.

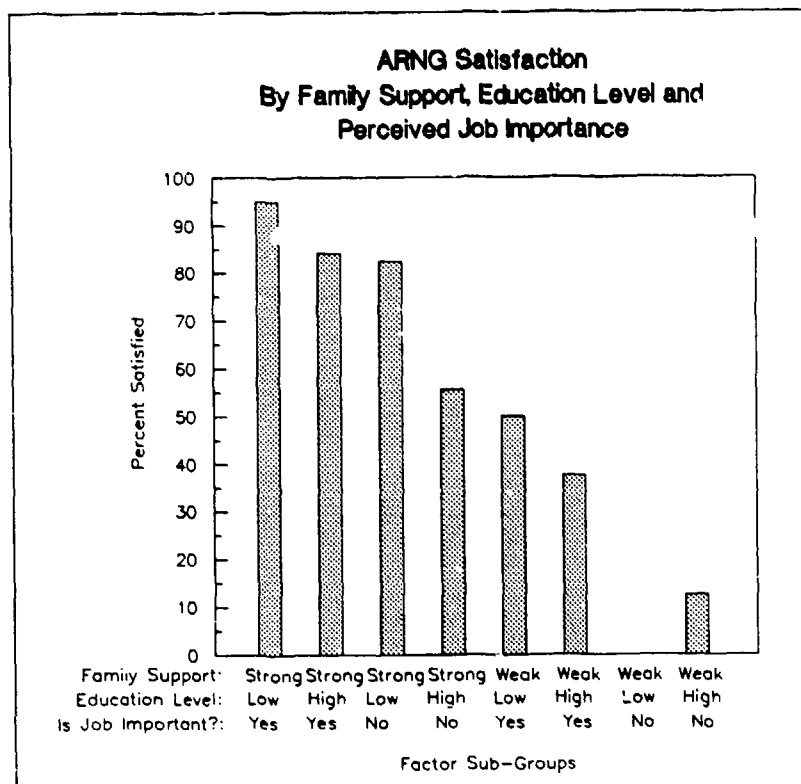


Figure 6

Besides rank, willingness to reenlist was related closely to satisfaction factors. In fact, for E5-E7s, when family and employer support were strong and satisfaction high, 95% reported that they would reenlist. For E1-E4s with low support and satisfaction in their Guard service, 85% reported that they would not reenlist. (See Figure 7) Correlation analysis confirms this with a regression coefficient (r^2) of .350. These factors provide a solid basis for understanding reenlistment attitudes, are good predictors about future retention, and offer a useful point of departure for studying the impact of increased formal training requirements.

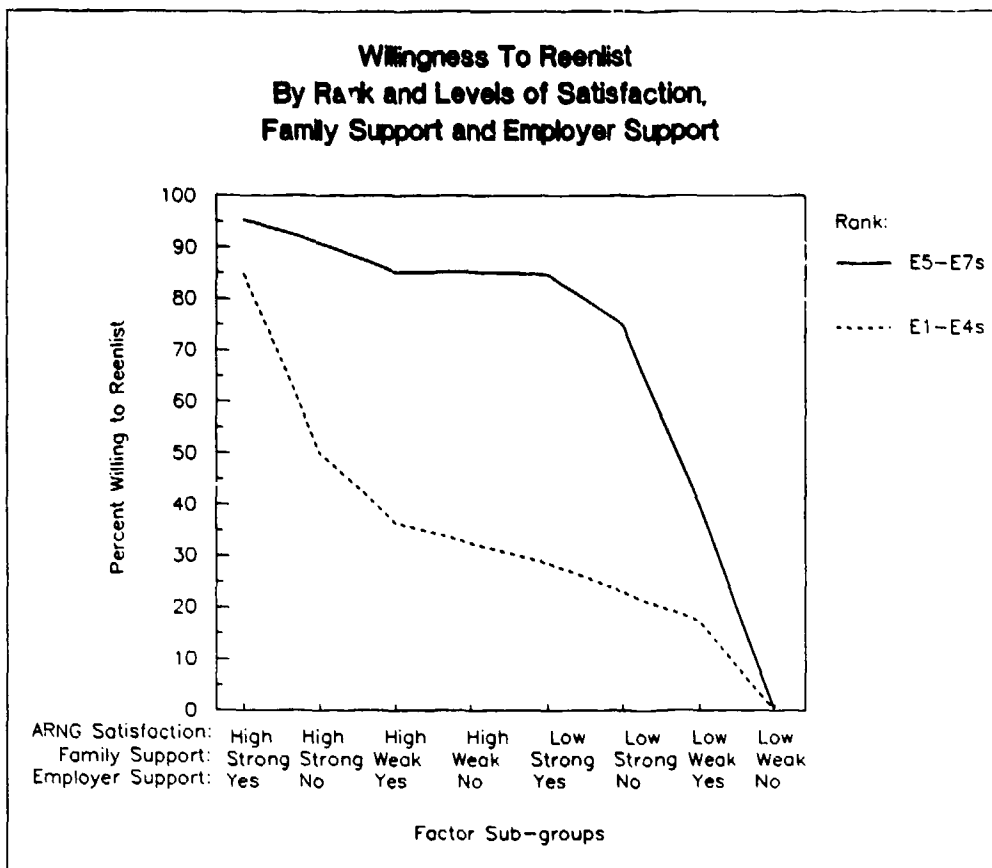


Figure 7

Results reflected in Figure 7 show that a demarcation point in attitudes occurred after the period associated with moving up to E5. What seems to be at work is that many soldiers join simply for one term and have no intention of remaining beyond that period. These soldiers may have joined for educational benefits or enlistment bonuses, as a short term work experience, or simply to try out the Guard. In general, these short service soldiers reflect lower satisfactions and willingness to reenlist.

On the other hand, it appears that younger soldiers who decide to go through NCOES and be promoted to E5 and above are mentally prepared to make a long term commitment to the Guard. This group remains less likely to leave after that point, and reflects more positive attitudes of the Guard.

Less than one-fifth of all soldiers plan to leave the Guard. It is likely that, of the 82% who otherwise would or might stay in, many could be driven out by new or increased formal training requirements. The rest of the analysis, therefore, focuses on the impact on this 82% of policies that increase formal training.

Attitudes on NCOES

The NGB rationale for NCOES increases is to enhance soldiers' MOS technical skills by including more formal training in the NCOES program of instruction. For the NCOES program, the most significant increase explored in the survey required a period of full time training at an active component school to complete any NCOES course. Another increase called for longer formal training periods, but at reserve component schools.

Questions on NCOES were presented only to E5-E7s. As Figure 8 shows, NCOs most preferred to attend NCOES at their State Military Academy and least preferred NCOES at United States Army (USA) schools. Of NCOs considering reenlisting, 44% reported that an active component NCOES would have no effect on their decision to reenlist. Of these, 40% were from the group that preferred a USA school for NCOES. (The remaining 60% may for various reasons be relatively indifferent to NCOES requirements.)

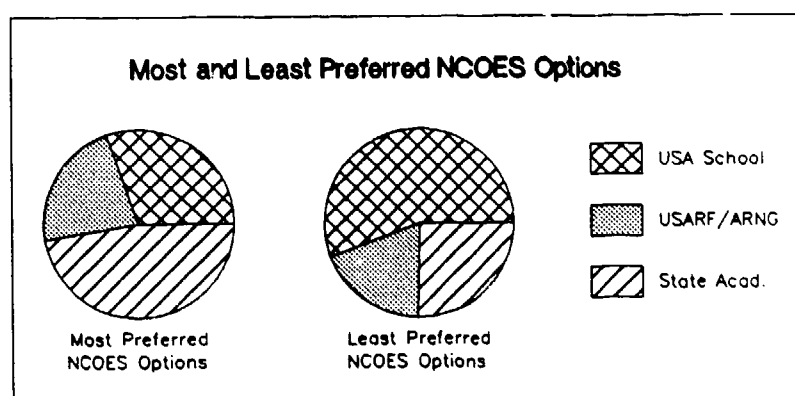


Figure 8

Fifty-six percent of NCOs answered that an active component requirement for NCOES would or might detract from their decision to reenlist. The driving concern for soldiers appears to be one of time. Seventy-four percent of soldiers with time available for full time training did not mind an active component NCOES, while 61% of those without the time available did mind. Even higher predictive values for reenlistment can be achieved when family and work/school problems were considered. When such problems exist and time was limited, 37% of those expressing definite opinions reported that an active component NCOES requirement would affect their decision to reenlist. When these problems were absent, 81% of NCO's reported that the NCOES requirement would have no effect.

As an alternative to NCOES requirements for active component courses, the Army is developing a new set of Reserve Component Configured Courseware (RC³), with common leadership training (Phase I), and MOS skill training (Phase II). These courses provide both NCOES and additional MOS-specific technical skills training through inactive duty training and minimal (2 weeks) active duty training. These courses could be offered in two forms: training in lieu of normal drilling with the unit, or training in addition to normal unit attendance (requiring two weekends of training each month.) In some instances, a second two week period of active duty training would also be required.

Of NCOs planning to reenlist, 77% reported that at least one or both of these RC³ NCOES alternatives would be acceptable. In addition, 73% of the NCOs who reported that an active component NCOES requirement would affect their decision to reenlist also reported that they would be willing to attend an RC³ NCOES course. The RC³ option was a more acceptable alternative to them than an active component requirement because it better addresses concerns about time demands on families and civilian jobs.

Still 15% of NCOs were unwilling to accept increased training through either the RC³ option or active component NCOES. Of these, 71% preferred to do NCOES at their State Military

Academy -- the highest such preference for the State Academies among any group. These NCOs may simply like the current system and feel any increase in NCOES may be too much. Figure 9 shows the breakdown of NCOs by their attitudes on both active component and reserve component NCOES.

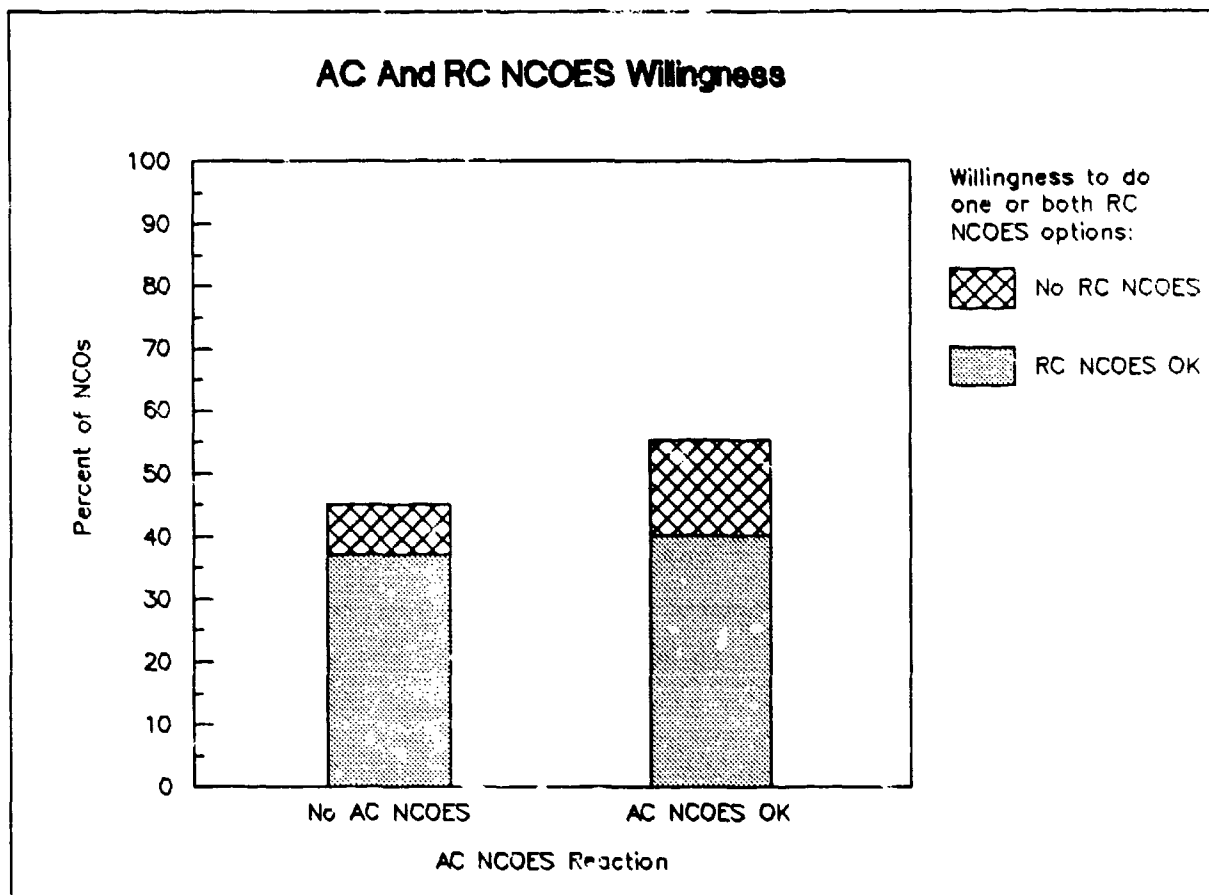


Figure 9

Comments tended to support this assessment of NCOs' motivations. The qualitative data showed that NCOs generally thought NCOES training produces better leaders and that units benefit as well. NCOs prefer attending NCOES at their State Military Academy, claiming that USA schools harassed ARNG soldiers and that the training was not always relevant to the Guard. In

addition, the State Academy training better addressed concerns about time and family separation.

Time for NCOES was a major concern, and the qualitative comments focused somewhat more on employer demands than on family problems. Comments often expressed a willingness and desire to go to NCOES training, but also fear of repercussions at work from unsympathetic employers. Many commented that it would help if the Guard would categorize the training as mandatory and cut orders for the soldiers to present to the employer. As increasing NCOES time requirements discourage many candidates from applying, soldiers begin to ask "Who's getting sent to NCOES, the most qualified or just the most available?"

NCOs also strongly felt that the RC³ options are workable alternatives for NCOES. They praised the less stringent time demands, but were cognizant of potential difficulties in retaining information between monthly inactive duty training sessions. Some cited potential problems at the unit if too many NCOs were attending NCOES and unavailable during normal drill. But most felt the long term improvement in leadership offset the short term inconvenience.

Measurement of the impact of increased NCOES training on retention is somewhat indirect because NCOES training is voluntary, though required for NCO promotions. NCOs satisfied with their current grade may not care much about NCOES requirements. Conversely there can be frustration for NCOs who wish promotion but feel they are being held back by training requirements beyond their reach.

Up to 56% of all NCOs report that an active component NCOES requirement -- which they can not easily fulfill because of other demands on their time -- would lead them to reevaluate their commitment to the Guard. Obviously, not all would follow through with separation, and the availability of RC³ NCOES options would cut losses significantly.

Attitudes on SOJT and Reclassification

As is the case for NCOES, formal training requirements for MOS reclassification at all levels can take two general forms, full time or RC³. These formal training options for reclassification would in many cases replace SOJT as the primary means of reclassification training.

Reclassification questions were put to all survey respondents. Of five MOS training options, the soldiers reported that they both most preferred and least preferred MOS training at USA schools. (The responses were from different groups of soldiers.) SOJT was the second most preferred option.

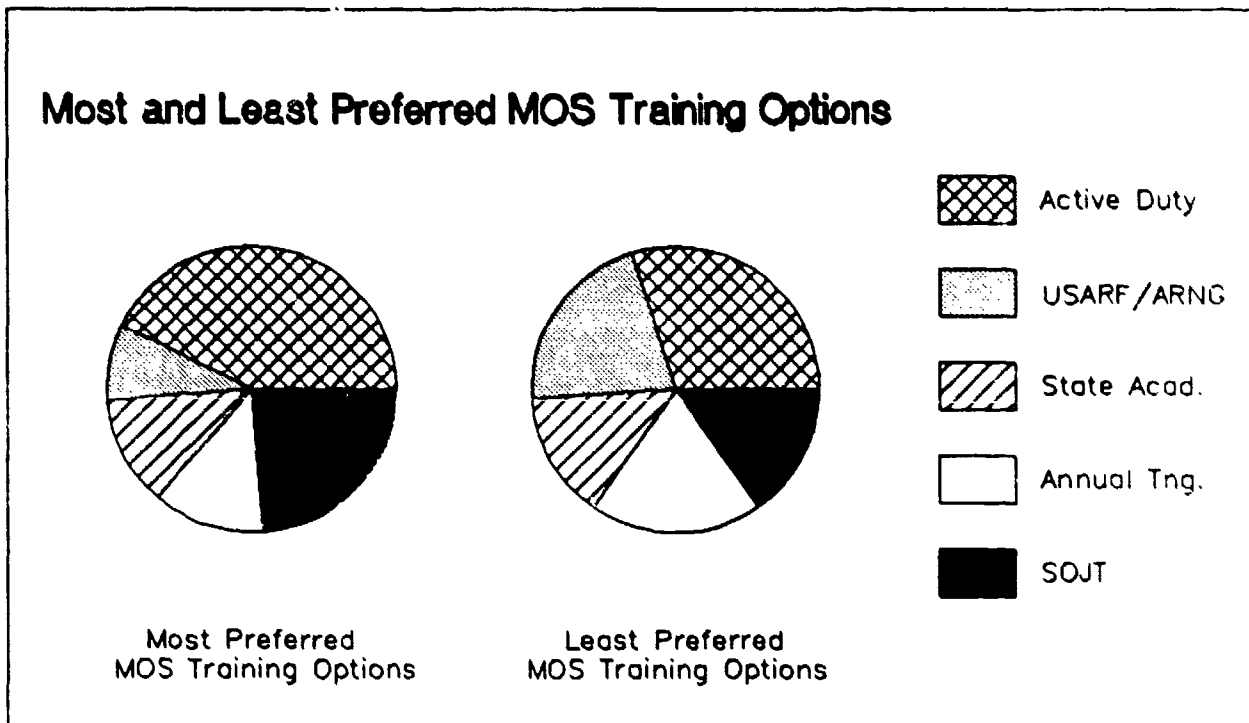


Figure 10

Of the key group reporting a willingness to reenlist, only 64% would attend active duty formal training if reclassified. The other 36% would leave the Guard or seek to transfer to other Guard units to avoid being reclassified (and likely end their participation in the Guard if transfer is not possible).

Figure 11 reflects soldiers' willingness to attend active duty MOS retraining. Responses were separated into eight groups representing different combinations of MOS retraining preferences, full time availability, and family support. For example, data at the left of the figure (for soldiers who prefer MOS training at a USA school and have the time available and strong family support) shows that 84% would attend active duty reclassification training and only 6% would leave the Guard. Reactions of other groups to the right of the chart become progressively less favorable.

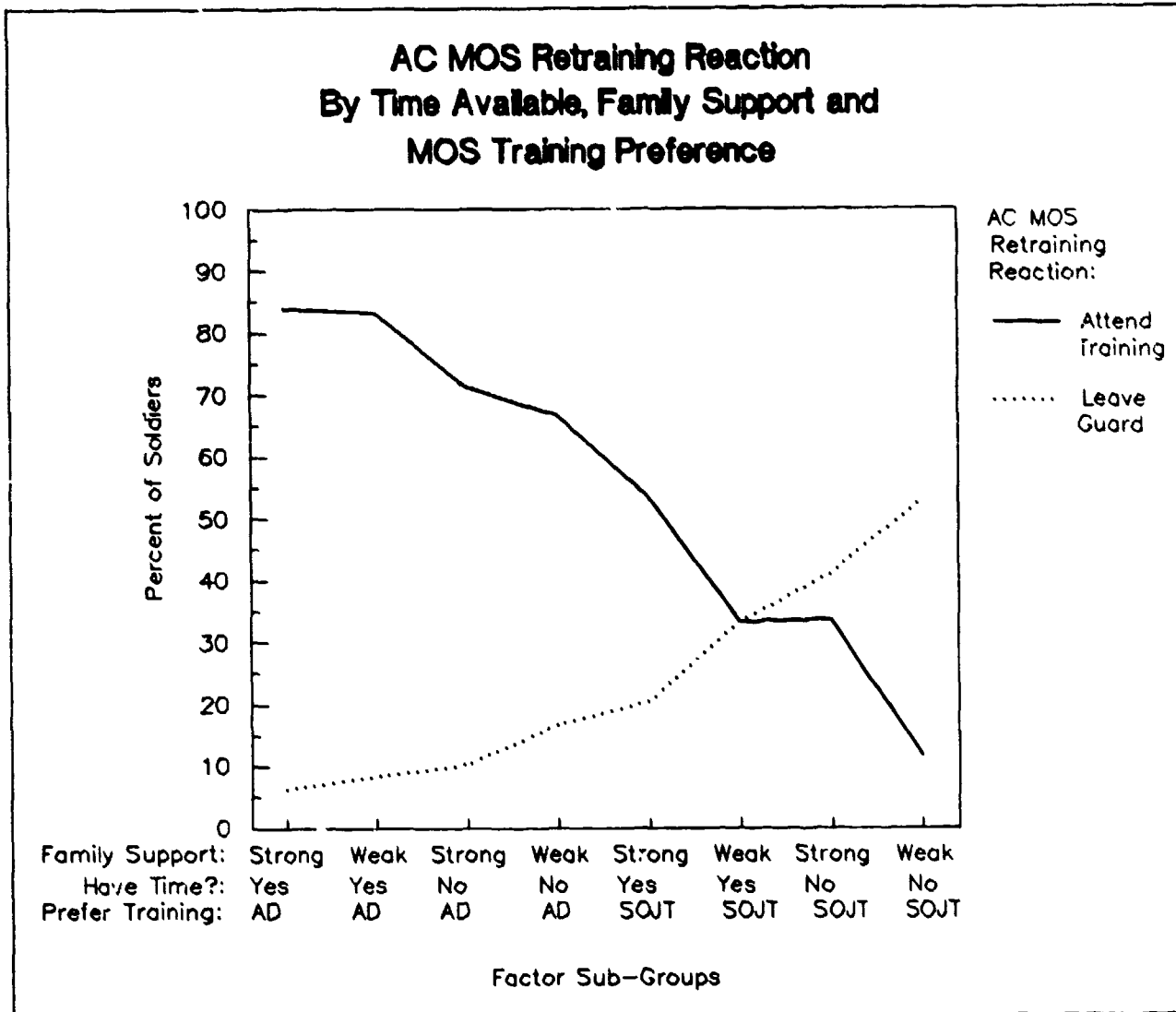


Figure 11

Some 40% of soldiers reported that full time retraining has a negative impact on their willingness to reenlist. Clearly, such reactions to reclassification training requirements would also have an impact on willingness to join a Guard unit if they were transferring to other units, states or components. Trends shown by the analysis and in Figure 11 are similar to those from the previous section where 95% of those with no time for full time training and weak family and employer support report that full time training affects (negatively) their willingness to reenlist.

The Army is making RC³ MOS training packages available for selected MOSS. This addresses concerns of reclassified NCOs about returning to AIT for retraining. Three options were offered for MOS retraining: AIT, an NCO only AIT-equivalent course or RC³. Of NCOs considering reenlistment, 52% identified the RC³ option as the preferred means of retraining, while 24% preferred the NCO-only AIT and 24% preferred regular AIT. Additionally, of those choosing to leave the Guard or to transfer instead of attending active duty MOS retraining, 79% preferred something other than regular AIT.

Policies on allowing the use of SOJT for reclassification training were the most energizing of subjects in focus group discussions. Most comments objected to the idea of reducing or eliminating the availability of SOJT. Although soldiers recognized unit limitations for training in some very technical areas, and appreciated the quality of training at USA schools, most felt their units were fully capable of running SOJT programs satisfactorily for reclassification training.

Additionally, many soldiers reported they just could not get time off for an 8 or 10 week AIT course. Comments stressed that SOJT, even if a poor second choice from a quality point of view, must be made available for reclassification to avoid extensive separations. Such contentions of the impact of SOJT policy were supported by the perceptions of unit commanders and senior NCOs.

Conclusions on NCOES and SOJT

Impacts of training policies are significant but should be kept in perspective. Today most Guard participants are satisfied, with only 18% reporting that they do not plan to reenlist (a figure close to traditional levels). Over half of all soldiers intend to reenlist, even if severe training requirements are imposed.

Of the soldiers who have not expressed a clear intent to separate from the Guard, 36% (29% of the total population) say they would leave the service in lieu of accepting significant increases in their active duty training commitments.² This 29%, when added to the 18% who will leave in any case, results in a potential 47% attrition rate -- more than double the historical ARNG pattern. A similar escalation in recruiting losses might be expected for prior service candidates reluctant to return to active duty for training.

However, availability of RC³ options for both NCOES and MOS retraining might reduce those potential losses by up to three quarters. In the end, because soldiers recognize formal training value, the policy issue is not so much training time as it is one of control over time.

If soldiers can find ways to schedule formal training, then they will do so, but many will leave if unable to strike a reasonable balance between part time military and other commitments. As Figure 12 shows, when family and employer support were low and time was unavailable, the percentage of those affected went up.

There are two other points regarding this assessment of impacts. First, impacts and projections of formal training increases were evaluated in an environment where all other ARNG policies were held constant. For example, it might be theoretically possible to offset the costs of additional time demands with new benefits for soldiers to keep the benefit/cost balance

² This number comes from the MOS reclassification section of the questionnaire and is seen to be a more secure behavioral forecast than attitudinal responses generated in the NCOES section.

stable. However, it seems that for many soldiers the issue of full time training is independent of other issues and is non-negotiable.

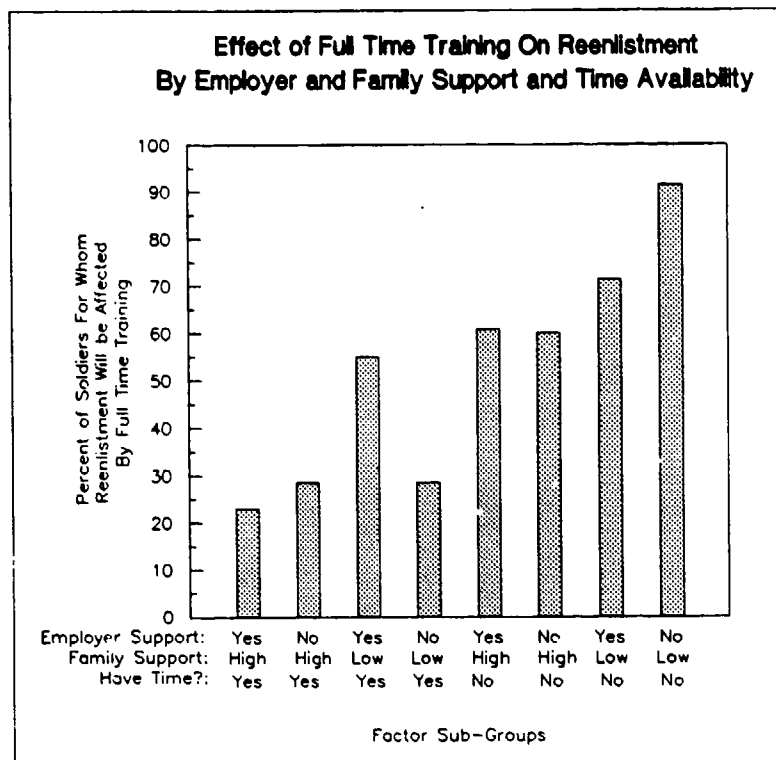


Figure 12

Secondly, and perhaps more surprisingly, this study found that many of the factors normally expected to influence a soldier's perceptions (i.e. type of unit, time in service, regions of the country) did not do so. Time in service was a significant factor only when the soldier was approaching retirement; other soldiers, regardless of years of service, still expressed a willingness to separate if time demands exceed that point where benefits and costs are balanced. Even basic demographic factors showed few strong correlations with impact, indicating that time problems are more a function of an individual's unique personal circumstances than his general conditions.

Attitudes on Split Training

The survey also addressed issues of whether split training recruitment levels would be affected by changed AIT lengths, and whether different individuals would elect to use the split training option. Questions were designed to confirm whether preferences for split training depended on a match between training length and summer vacation time of students.

Split training is an enlistment option in all MOSs, however, enlistees in eleven MOSs (primarily Combat Arms) account for the majority of recruits using the option. The survey identified 97 respondents (of E1-E4 rank) who had taken the split training option for initial qualification. As split training is directed generally at students, educational levels of those choosing split training is significantly higher than for the general recruit population.

Of those who had taken split training, 64% reported that they would have delayed enlistment or not enlisted at all if the split training option had not been available to them. The reason for this was that split training offered 93% of the people who took it a better way to schedule their training around other school or seasonal commitments. Nearly two-thirds of those who used split training were not attracted by other enlistment options. Thus, reductions in its attractiveness would reduce recruitment of higher educated prospects and would be acutely felt in the eleven MOSs where split training is most common.

The survey looked at attitudes towards both lengthened and shortened AIT in split training, but the impacts were inconclusive. Of those who took split training, 33.0% and 28.7%, respectively, reported that a longer or shorter AIT would have negatively affected their decision. Conversely, slightly larger numbers of soldiers who did not take split training also reported that longer or shorter AIT courses might have altered their choice. The biggest problem of length changes is that, though split training usage might remain constant in numbers, the Guard could lose some desirable groups of recruits. Longer courses

could discourage up to 7% of the non-prior service recruits in the affected skills. Most of these losses would be students.

Focus groups had few split training participants but did conclude that additional AIT time would not significantly improve the quality of trainees returned to a unit. There was a strong feeling that currently allotted training time ought to be more effectively used before any new training time was assigned. However, it was suggested that if training time was to be increased, the additional time should concentrate on hands-on training on Guard-specific equipment and weapons. The general consensus was that if the Guard was determined to give soldiers more full time training, then AIT was the place to do it. Young recruits would be mentally prepared for active duty service and have fewer family or job demands on their time.

In conclusion, while many soldiers would opt out of split training because of changes in the length of AIT, others would opt in. It should be noted that longer AIT courses not only are likely to deter some recruits from selecting the split training option, but would also delay or deter their enlistment.

SURVEY INTERPRETATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study was commissioned to examine how much baseline retention and prior service accessions would suffer if selected formal training requirements were increased. The main thrust of the survey dealt with the impacts of NCOES and SOJT policies on retention and, by inference, prior service accessions.

The impact was found to be potentially very substantial in increasing attrition and reducing accessions. New full time training requirements were found to be too much of a "price" to "pay" for many soldiers because of conflicts between Guard and civilian time demands.

Soldiers most affected by full time NCOES requirements were largely the same ones affected by full time MOS reclassification requirements. Since not all soldiers face either or both NCOES training or MOS reclassification in any given year, additional attrition (up to 29%) is not likely to be felt all at once, but over time as reclassification and advancement opportunities cycle through the system. Additionally, the losses, especially involving MOS reclassification could easily be non-ETS (prior to end of enlistment) losses, instead of decisions to not reenlist if full time retraining is demanded.

The net impact of increasing active duty training requirement is to induce large numbers of soldiers who are otherwise satisfied with the Guard to reconsider their participation and possibly to leave the Guard. Figure 13 shows how big a swing this would be, with nearly half the current force gone by the time it takes the active duty requirement to work through the force structure -- presumably several years. Lesser training demands should produce correspondingly fewer, but likely still significant levels, of losses.

Stringent formal training increases are designed to increase readiness by increasing the level to which soldiers are trained. The survey's findings indicate that this approach may be counter-productive as increased formal training requirements could lead to lower strength levels. The implication may be that there is

an upper limit to the readiness level the ARNG can attain. For example, updating equipment to enhance readiness could cause manpower levels to drop as a result of new training demands. Though this relationship can not at present be defined, its existence would be consistent with the results of this study.

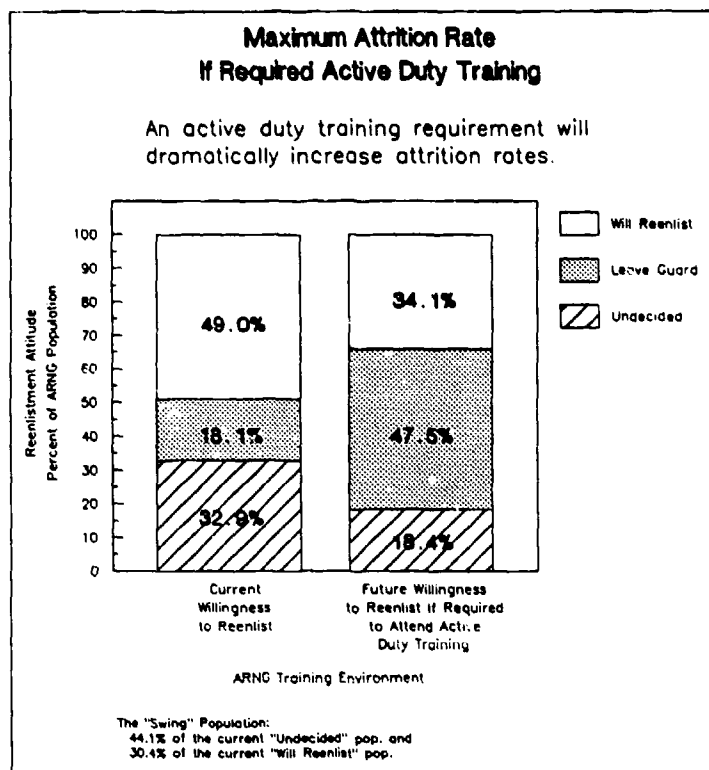


Figure 13

It is likely that the ARNG could not accept attrition rates 29% above the current rate. Even though only a projection, the potential cost of such losses overshadows potential individual readiness. It seems imperative that the Guard work to avoid such consequences. The following recommendations for Guard formal training policies are suggested by the data:

1) Minimize increases in formal training requirements:

Knowing that there could be a severe retention cost from formal training increases, the Guard should make every effort to avoid

increasing formal training requirements that substantially alter the manner of participation in the ARNG without a thorough reevaluation of potential results.

2) Allow SOJT to be used as an equal option for reclassification:

Knowing that formal training for reclassification imposes new time demands on soldiers, the Guard should reverse the trend toward mandatory active component training as the primary means of MOS reclassification. Training should be conducted by units utilizing proponent school programs. Periodic testing and final certification should be required, perhaps by Mobile Training Teams trained and/or provided by the next higher headquarters.

3) RC³ options need to be as widespread as possible:

Knowing that flexibility in options helps to ease time demands on soldiers, the Army should make every effort to provide the maximum availability of RC³ POIs for all MOSSs. Soldiers should be offered the opportunity to select inactive duty training either in lieu of normal training or as paid, additional assemblies. The Guard should also encourage both state academies and Army Reserve Forces schools to arrange for regional specialization in MOS skills training to assist in the distribution of courses.

4) Balance NCOES MOS training against probable attrition:

Knowing that increases in formal training requirements have significant negative effects on retention, the Guard should carefully weigh the value of additional MOS-specific NCOES training phases against the potential losses in strength.

5) Split training needs to be encouraged:

Knowing that the split training option provides the only means for the enlistment of some high quality recruits, the Guard should seek to expand the availability of split training to more MOSSs and not increase the length of the AIT portion of initial training beyond the common length for summer vacations.

MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING

Strategy Corporation was not tasked in this project to assess the overall ARNG training system or its management. Still, extensive insights were obtained during the course of working on the data array and model tasks and, to some extent, from the focus group and other comments received during the survey. Integrated insights from these sources are significant and useful for ARNG policy deliberations.

DATA COLLECTION AND ARRAY

The original intent of the data collection and array was to collect information previously dispersed in many sources to create a "snapshot" of how training plans match with actual personnel needs. It was hoped that by forecasting future needs for training slots of different types and levels, the array could help planners manage future training programs and training seat assignments. The array could be useful as an ongoing training management tool if continually or periodically updated to reflect changing conditions in the Guard.

A secondary intent of the data array was to determine precisely how difficult it was to assemble and format the information required. If the nature of the Guard MOS structure and formal training system proved too complex or the data proved too perishable and susceptible to frequent changes for easy and accurate compilation, then this knowledge itself would be an important finding for the Guard. It would tell the Guard that management of training policies and planning was being complicated by an inability to locate or process critical information.

In its present form, the data array provides information in a form not previously available for use as a historical assessment tool. Its most useful immediate function is to provide insight as to where training funds may need to be directed by highlighting MOSs with imbalances between training slots and recruiting or retention goals. (See Figure 14)

Data Array Sample Page

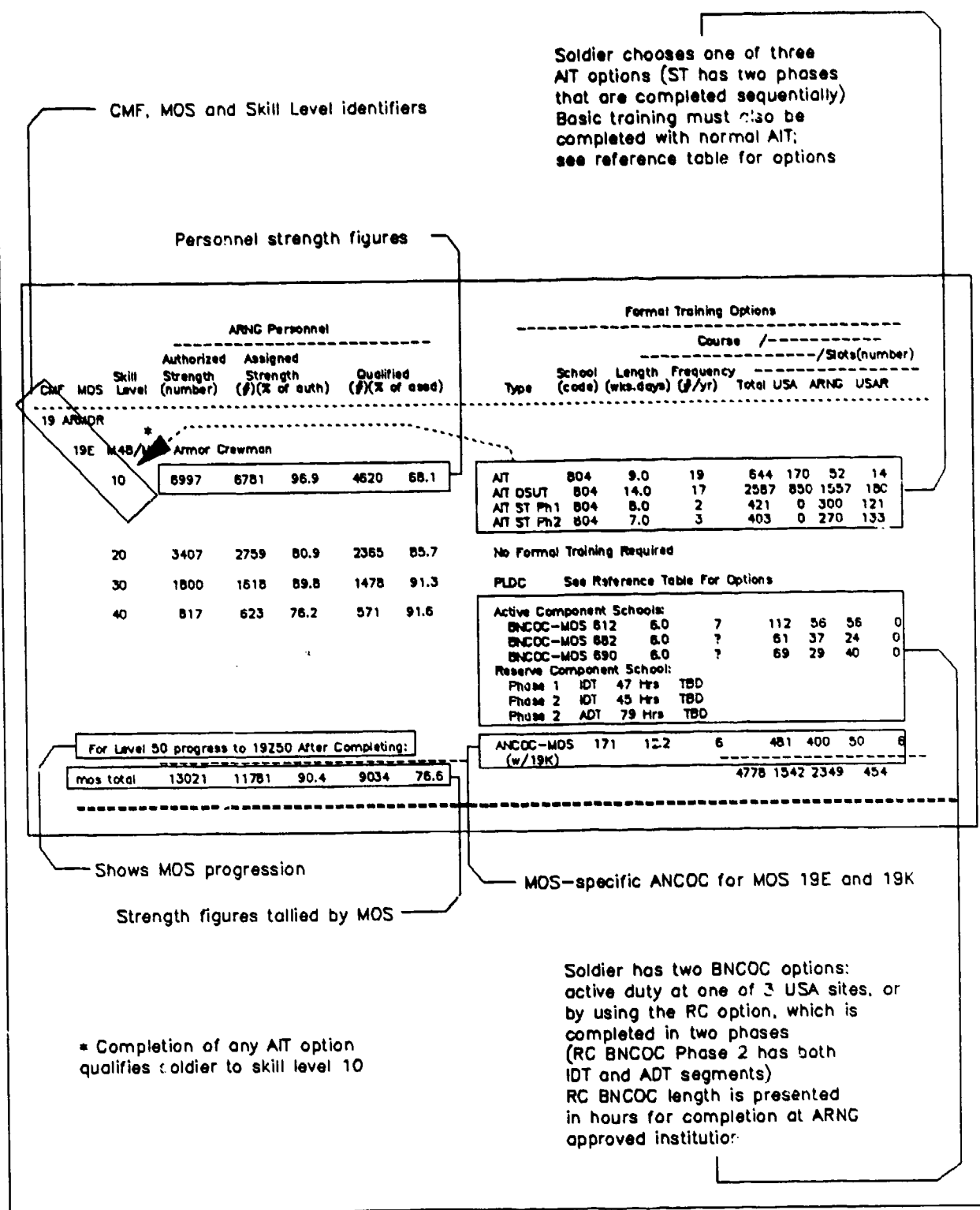


Figure 14

However, the research effort revealed that a compilation of a complete and current array was not feasible at reasonable cost at this time. Given 360 MOSSs, multi-level formal training structures and various training options, the current training management system is highly complex. Comprehensive data was difficult to obtain due to the decentralized nature of the Guard training system and the attendant dispersion of information where State Military Academies and USARF Schools operate in large respect independently. The third complication in compiling the Data Array was the current state of flux in force development planning.

All of this indicates that manual replication of this effort may not be efficient. Automated data processing is available to a limited degree via the Army Training Requirements and Resources System (ATRRS) but current reporting through this system is limited to active component schools. Advanced automation and centralized management is possible, but all such efforts would be greatly aided by and may depend on coordination of the formal training system. This process should be considerably easier in the planned Reserve Component Automation System (RCAS) environment of the future.

TRAINING OPTIONS GUIDE (TOG)

The Training Options Guide (TOG) is a companion task to and is drawn from the data array. The initial project requirement called for an optimization model that would allow the Guard to better manage the allocation of training resources. However, because of the difficulties described in compiling all essential information, the optimization model task was re-defined to provide a useful counseling aid for the unit level chain of command and individual troops.

A day to day tool, the TOG provides a career progression road map containing the formal training requirements, options, course locations and duration for every MOS in each skill level/rank currently authorized. The format allows for easy updating by replacing only affected pages as warranted. (See Figure 15)

Training Options Guide Sample Page

Military Occupational Specialty Number and Name **Career Management Field Identification**

71L - Administrative Specialist **ADMINISTRATION - CMF 71**

Type of Training Required	From Skill Level/Rank	Options for Required Training	Length of Training	Location of Training	Quality To Skill Level/Rank
No Formal schools reqd. Does NOT include SOJT or other unit training.	NPS Recruit	Basic Training PLUS Advanced Individual Training (AIT)	8 weeks	Various USA Sites	10/E4
	10/E4	No Formal Training Required	10 weeks 3 days	Fl. Jackson	20/E5
	20/E5	PLDC			30/E6
Entry point for merging MOS	30/E6	AC School	4 weeks	Various USA Sites	40/E7
	71C30	OR RC School	2 weeks	State Military Academy OR ARNG Reg. Acad. OR USARF Schools	
	71L30	BNCOC	1 week 2 days	Fl. Harrison	40/E7
		AC School OR RC School	47 hours IDT	State Military Academy OR ARNG Reg. Acad. OR USARF Schools	
Option for Active Comp. or Reserve Component School	40/E7	AC School	3 weeks 1 day	Fl. Harrison	50/EB
		OR RC School	47 hours IDT	State Military Academy OR ARNG Reg. Acad. OR USARF Schools	
	50/EB	ANCOC	13 weeks 4 days	Fl. Harrison	50/EB
MOSs available for transfer without retraining for this MOS no substitution exists	50/EB	AC School OR RC School	109 hours IDT	State Military Academy OR ARNG Reg. Acad. OR USARF Schools	50/E9
	50/E9	No Formal Training Required			Progress to 00Z50
Reserve Component Courseware available for this MOS	Substitutability: NA RC3 POI available for reclassification CASP (Civilian Acquired Skills Program) option available for MOSQ per NGR 600-200				
CASP may permit entry at higher grade or accelerated promotions. Refer to NGR 600-200.	Time required to complete training: 1 week 2 days for AC School, 109 hours Inactive Duty Training for RC School.				

Digible for grade upon completion of training and meeting time in service and time in grade requirements.

Active Component Post or Reserve Component Schools authorized to teach course.

Top level for this MOS. MOS for rank progression identified.

Figure 15

TRAINING SYSTEM INTERPRETATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Data Array and TOG efforts found that the training management system is extraordinarily complex and that this likely hinders efficient communication and management. This environment makes it more difficult to decide on and articulate to the soldiers training policy changes. Below are some suggestions for improving the current system.

1) Exercise the Data Array

Knowing that no such source of information currently exists in a single document, the Guard should apply the Data Array to projected training requirements, and evaluate the effectiveness of the document with consideration for periodic updates.

2) Implement the distribution of the TOG:

Knowing the current confusion that exists at the unit level regarding training options, the Guard should move to provide a TOG to every unit in the ARNG as a single source document of all formal training requirements and options. The TOG distributed to the unit should be tailored to include only the MOSs that are of specific interest in that unit.

3) Explore automation of the training system:

Knowing that training needs are becoming more complex, the Guard should examine a fully automated data processing network to serve its training and personnel management needs, perhaps along the lines of a major university course registration system. Automation will help to make centralized oversight and management easier by allowing assimilation of more information and greater accessibility. At its most advanced level a fully automated formal training management system could mimic a major university's student registration system in ready access, seat allocation, rapid managerial reaction to changed demand, and real time information feedback.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

The results of the survey indicate that the ARNG will need to continue to expand the flexibility of formal training options. However, this flexibility, while good for retention efforts, will only add to the training options and courses available for the hundreds of MOSs and skill levels. Although there is an idealized "clean" training track for MOS progression, the overall system will become even more complex to understand and cumbersome to manage. This complexity exists not only at the individual user level in choosing specific training options and courses and reserving training seats, but at the NGB level as well in deciding what options to make available, what seats to allocate and what resources to program.

Multiplication of the training system's flexibility and complexity can be alleviated by refinement of training management processes. These include efforts to improve simplicity and standardization of training patterns and options across MOSs, to rapidly disseminate training requirements and information to users and to collect and portray NGB-wide training data. Each of these processes can be implemented most effectively through an automated network for oversight and feedback purposes.

In the end, the soldiers' concerns of training time and the NGB's concerns about management come together in the structure and format of formal training requirements and options. Fortunately, both sets of concerns can be addressed through progressive steps already underway for an improved NGB training environment.