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RESEARCH REPORT

A STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT OF CAPTAINS WITH PRIOR SERVICE ON FIELD GRADE OFFICER SHORTFALLS IN CRITICALLY MANNED MISSION SUPPORT CAREER FIELDS

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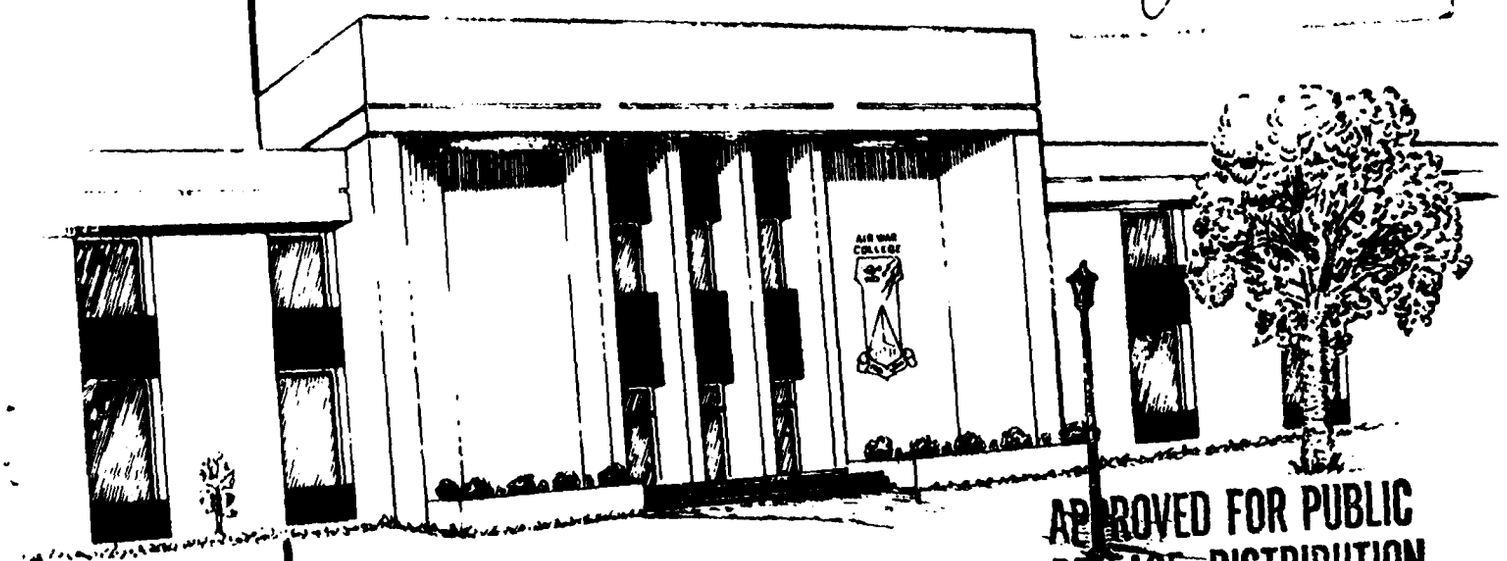

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A STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF VOLUNTARY RETIREMENTS OF CAPTAINS WITH PRIOR SERVICE ON FIELD GRADE OFFICER SHORTFALLS IN CRITICALLY MANNED MISSION SUPPORT CAREER FIELDS

by

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A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM

REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Colonel Frederick M. Beatty

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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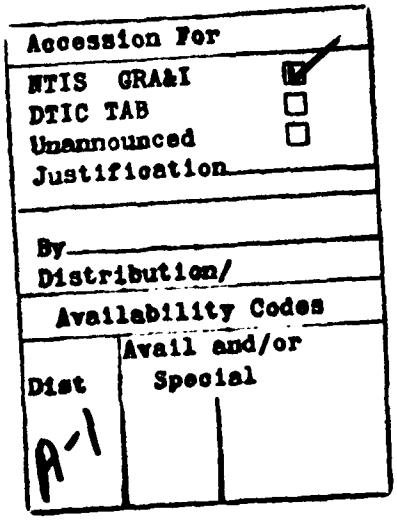


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is a history of field grade manning shortages in mission support career fields. As of August 1988, field grade manning in all mission support career fields was 74 percent--the lowest this decade. The authors of this study believe the early retirement of prior service officers adversely effects this field grade manning posture, particularly in those career fields which are critically manned.

To investigate this belief, the authors worked with HQ AFMPC to identify the AFSCs that were critically manned at the field grade level. Of the 10 identified by HQ AFMPC, 4 (Developmental Engineering, Aircraft Maintenance, Communication-Computer SYstems, and Intelligence) were selected for in-depth analysis to determine the impact of prior service losses on field grade manning. The analysis led to the following conclusions:

- There is a direct relationship between the years of prior service and continuation rates.

- Continuation rates of prior service personnel in critically manned AFSCs do not differ significantly from continuation rates for those in other mission support AFSCs.

- Retirements of company grade prior service officers has an adverse effect on field grade manning. The

crux of the problem is centered on officers with eight or more years of prior service.

- Field grade shortfalls in critically manned AFSCs will not be improved noticeably in the near future without change.

From the analysis of conclusions, it became obvious that the number of prior service officers who retire at the first opportunity contribute significantly to the shortage of field grade officers in many of the critically manned career fields. After looking at several possible solutions, it was recommended that the Air Force adopt a policy of limiting prior service commissioning to individuals with less than eight years of total military service.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel David P. Csintyan (MA, Public Administration, Central Michigan University) became interested in the retention of officers with prior service while assigned to the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center (AFMPC) in 1980. This interest continued throughout his later assignments. He served as the Chief, Maintenance Occupational Analysis Team and as the Executive Officer to the Director of Assignments while at the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center. After his AFMPC assignments, he served as the 8th CRS and 8th EMS commander at Kunsan AB, Korea. As the Chief, Maintenance Policy and Procedures Branch and as Chief, Maintenance Management Division at Headquarters Air Training Command he developed an in-depth appreciation for the problems which the voluntary separation of Captains with prior service create within the overall maintenance community. Lieutenant Colonel Csintyan is a graduate of Squadron Officers School in 1975, Naval Command and Staff College in 1984, and Air War College in 1989.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel Charles K. Leonard (MBA, Personnel Administration, Troy State University) was involved in managing the careers of several prior service officers while serving as a Career Management Staff Officer at the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center between 1979 and 1982. In this regard, he gained an appreciation for the impact of voluntary separation of prior service officers on career field management. He has served in various positions in the Personnel and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Career areas. He also served as a Squadron Section Commander at Headquarters Pacific Air Forces. Lieutenant Colonel Leonard is a graduate of Squadron Officers School in 1975, Air Command and Staff College in 1983, and Air War College in 1989.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel Aaron "Buck" Rogers, Jr. (MS, Guidance and Counseling, Troy State University) is a career personnel officer who had $4\frac{1}{2}$ years prior service before commissioning in 1974. He served as Chief, Utilization Policy Operations and as Chief of CONUS and Overseas Assignment Policy at the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center. He has served as CBPO Chief and Director of Personnel at Tyndall AFB, FL. He has also served in several key Air Staff positions including as the Deputy Military Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. Lieutenant Colonel Rogers is a graduate of Squadron Officers School in 1977 and Air War College in 1989.

The authors became acquainted in 1980 while assigned at the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center. All have a professional interest in the topic and each brings a different perspective to the study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The authors of this paper believe the retirement timing of prior service commissioned officers has an adverse effect on mission support career fields, particularly those which are critically manned at field grade (Lieutenant Colonel and Major) levels. More precisely, this study focuses on prior service captains who opt to retire prior to reaching or accepting their majority. In many career fields, prior service officers comprise a significant percent of the yearly Air Force accessions. This study ties the loss of these officers during the 10 to 13 year commissioned service period to vacancies which in turn often dictate crossflow or rated supplement backfill actions, just to maintain the status quo. Taken from a more personal perspective, one of the authors experienced a situation wherein the personnel system was unable to nominate qualified individuals to fill two key squadron commander positions in major support organizations. After six months, the positions were filled with rated supplement officers.

The question this scenario begs is to what extent did prior service retirements contribute to this situation? With the support of the Air Staff and Headquarters, Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center (HQ AFMPC), the authors went about attempting to glean an answer.

Overview

In sizing this question, HQ AFMPC provided a listing of Air Force Speciality Codes (AFSCs) which they classified as critically manned at the field grade level. Ten AFSCs were selected which met their parameters. Of those 10, the authors chose 4 for in-depth analysis. The remainder are included in the report and are worthy of consideration for applying conclusions similar to those of the AFSC's studied in detail.

In gathering the data, the authors had to deal with a myriad of definitional issues, as well as a clear cut need to specify key assumptions and qualifiers. These are covered in the body of the report. The research was accomplished through the use of historical and current prior service officer accession policy and retention data. Assumptions and data points are covered in Chapter II and accession policies are included in Chapter III of this study.

The analysis portion, Chapter IV, provides a quantitative assessment of the impact mid-commissioned

career retirements have on the selected career fields, an assessment which, as previously mentioned, is transportable to the other AFSC's listed in the analysis which fit the critically manned definition. Additionally, conclusions drawn from this undertaking, as summarized in Chapter V, can logically be applied to AFSC's possessing healthier field grade authorized/assigned percentages.

The recommendations made in Chapter VI reflect the authors' contention that the manpower and personnel communities, working in conjunction with the functional Offices of Primary Responsibility (OPRs) can, as a minimum, raise the level of consciousness regarding this phenomena with respect to select AFSCs. Additionally, specific policy amendment considerations are offered to moderate the impact of these losses at commissioned career points when the Air Force can least afford them.

CHAPTER II

FOCUSING THE RESEARCH

Prior to committing to this study, the authors ensured no similar efforts had been undertaken in recent history. Dialogue with HQ AFMPC revealed that this was a timely and pertinent research effort. More precisely, it was already on AFMPC's list to be accomplished; however, present workloads precluded beginning the effort. Likewise, the authors undertook an exhaustive review of prior Air University research efforts and none were accomplished on this specific topic. The enthusiastic and timely support of various offices at AFMPC and HQ USAF were indispensible in accurately focusing the direction, and hopefully the benefit, of this research.

It is appropriate at this juncture to lay out some key criteria underpinning the AFSC's studied and the assumptions surrounding the same. An essential question asked of AFMPC was to define critically manned, non-rated AFSC's at the field grade level. Prior to initiation of this study, there was no single, objective criterion for defining an AFSC as critically manned. It is, practically speaking, a subjective decision based on a number of factors: Lieutenant Colonel/Major manning; Captain manning (since good, experienced captains can be grade substituted in certain instances); and projected authorization

growth/reductions--just to name a few. (1:1) With respect to authorizations, the Mission Support officer force has historically lived with field grade shortfalls. In recent history, overall field grade manning has steadily declined for several reasons. The key ones being Lieutenant Colonel/Major authorization growth and the small mid-70's accession year groups which led, and will lead, to below average field grade manning from the mid-80's to the mid-90's.

In light of the historic shortfalls, HQ AFMPC offered the assumption (for the purpose of this research) that: critically manned fields might logically be defined as those AFSC's manned not only below the Mission Support average but also in the bottom 25 percent of all Mission Support career fields. Based on August 1988 manning figures, there were 16 fields manned at or below the Mission Support average (74 percent) and 10 (25 percent of the Mission Support AFSCs) manned below 70 percent. (1:A2-1) Manning for these 10 career fields will be discussed in Chapter IV. After a review of the 10 candidate AFSCs, 4 were settled on for in-depth analysis: 28XX, Environmental Engineering; 40XX, Aircraft Maintenance and Munitions; 49XX, Communications and Computer Systems; and 80XX, Intelligence. The balance, while excellent candidates for this research, had significantly lower yearly accessions and prior service numbers which could skew any conclusions drawn on an

individual basis. These AFSC's are also talked to in Chapter IV and, while not in the mainstream of the study, certainly fit all key parameters for extrapolating conclusions and recommendations made based on the primary career fields considered.

In addition to prior service officer retention patterns and their potential for exacerbating field grade shortages, it should also be recognized that several other variables also impact on field grade manning postures. Significant authorization growths for field grade officers over the years have precipitated large variances in the quantity of yearly accessions, variances which differ substantially from career field to career field. (1:1) These amount to the perennial AFSC authorized/assigned "Christmas Trees" which often times resemble a tree in name only. In reaction to these yearly variances is the crossflow of officers between career fields, at times unplanned and unconstrained, which further clouds the issue. Lastly, one final, real time caveat which must be weighed in assessing this research. During July and August of 1988, 188 Mission Support field grade authorizations were deleted from the manning documents. Several hundred more losses over the next couple months can be expected as the Air Force strives to meet its congressionally mandated 2255 FY 88 officer authorization reduction. (1:2) Pulling in an opposite direction to authorization growths, these space

cuts are being accomplished without regard to specific AFSC manning shortfalls. Thus, some critically manned career fields may well appear to be healing but, in fact, not as a function of the personnel community's ability to place more officers.

After defining the AFSCs to be included in the study, AFMPC was asked to provide prior service officer accession and retention data as far back as reasonably possible. The data provided goes back to 1975, is AFSC specific, and forms the core data base for the analysis of the respective AFSCs. It is important at this point to talk to the amount of prior service used in the analysis and to the formulation and use of continuation rates. Prior service data provided by AFMPC with respect to continuation rates was broken down as follows: 1 to 4 years, 5 to 7 years, 8 to 10 years, and 11 plus years prior to commissioning. It was a fairly clear assumption that those officers in the latter two categories (eight plus years) would have the latitude of voluntarily retiring as captains before being considered for promotion to Major in the primary promotion zone. One may question the 8 year prior service officer and the necessity to serve 12 years TAFCS to retire. These individuals have the opportunity to submit their retirement paperwork at the 11 year point, thereby, most likely eliminating their consideration for promotion to Major by the central selection board. The 5-7 year

grouping, as the reader will note in the AFSC analysis, account for a significant retention decrement at the 20 year point. However, profiling this group is clouded by several factors. First, they will meet a central selection board for promotion to the grade of major and it is reasonable to assume many of the retirements are driven by non-selection and the ensuing selective continuation to the 20 year point. Likewise, for those with just five years of prior service, a fair portion may well have retired as majors and thus, fall outside the purview of this study. Consequently, this group can be looked at as a retention debit, but with a degree of analytical skepticism. With respect to continuation rates, the 8-10 year and 11 plus year populations were grouped together and their respective continuation rates were computed based on the prior service population of each group, thereby arriving at a single weighted rate. It was also assumed that since this rate represents a snapshot in time (Fiscal Year 1988) it is no more or less valid than any other base year and is therefore used as a predictor of future losses. It should be noted that the rates computed using Fiscal Year 1988 as the base year are similar to the rates realized over the last five years.

One final area is worthy of mention. Over the years, and for a variety of reasons, the rated supplement has been used as an effective "shock absorber" to shore up Mission Support AFSC field grade shortfalls. Because the

rated supplement is used to offset field grade shortages in many mission support AFSCs, existing and forecasted supplement presence have been included in the research.

As has already been noted, there are numerous variables effecting current field grade manning postures in the Mission Support arena. Nonetheless, the bottom line is the overall authorized/assigned profiles equate to severe shortfalls. These shortfalls show up in the Air Force's struggle to consistently provide properly qualified officers for the right jobs at the right time in these career fields. Having hypothesized this, a significant step toward reversing this trend is to take on an issue, such as prior service retirements, quantify its effects, and offer some recommendations. This is the *crux* of this study. By doing this, the study provides the basis for starting to untangle the multi-faceted network of issues which continues to stifle the personnel community's ability to fill valid field grade requirements.

CHAPTER III

POLICIES GOVERNING ENLISTED COMMISSIONING OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout its history, the Air Force has offered commissioning opportunities to carefully screened, careerminded airmen. Presently, all precommissioning programs are open to enlisted personnel. These programs include: Officer Training School (OTS), Airmen Education and Commissioning Program (AECP), Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC), USAF Academy Prep School (USAFA) and direct appointment as a health professional, lawyer, or chaplain. (2:1) The programs are described below:

USAF COMMISSIONING PROGRAMS

(Source: AF/DPXOA)

Officer Training School (OTS)

OTS is a three-month training program leading to a commission as a second lieutenant. Active duty airmen who have an undergraduate degree and who meet certain eligibility criteria may apply for selection for OTS. OTS opportunities are considerably enhanced by a degree in a technical specialty. (AFR 53-27 provides guidance for the application process.)

Airman Education and Commissioning Program (AECP)

AECP is a program for qualified enlisted personnel to attend college full-time to obtain a degree required by the Air Force. This is followed by commissioning through OTS. The disciplines available for study are primarily in technical areas such as engineering, computer science, and meteorology. In the AECP, the Air Force pays all college tuition expenses and fees, and the student draws minimum pay as a staff sergeant while attending school full-time. (AFR 53-20 provides guidance for the application process.)

AFROTC Airman Scholarship and Commissioning Program (AFROTC-ASCP)

ACSP offers regular airmen on active duty the opportunity to earn Air Force commissions while completing requirements for undergraduate college degrees as Air Force ROTC cadets. Applicants must meet AFROTC scholarship eligibility criteria and have at least one year on extended active duty to apply. If accepted, the airman is discharged from active duty and is enlisted in the Reserves. Scholarships pay full tuition, laboratory fees, textbooks allowance, some incidental costs, and a $100 monthly subsistence allowance. The subsistence is paid while the airmen are actually in school, up to ten months a year. (AFR 53-20 provides guidance for the application process.)

AFROTC Professional Officer Course (POC) Program

This airmen early release program allows airmen on active duty to request voluntary separation to enter an AFROTC program. If fully qualified and selected for AFROTC contract status, they may enter a four-year degree granting educational institution of their choice, if it offers a four-year AFROTC program. Selected applicants must be able to complete all degree and commissioning requirements within two academic years. Selected airmen are discharged from active duty and enlisted in the Air Force Reserve. Participants draws $100 monthly nontaxable subsistence allowance while in school. On completion of degree and AFROTC requirements, participants are tendered Reserve commissions in the Air Force. (AFR 53-20 provides guidance for the application process.)

USAF Academy Prep School

This provides nine months of intensive instruction to assist airmen to qualify for the Academy. A limited number of Academy appointments are available to enlisted members of the Air Force, a member may also be appointed by their respective representative or senator. Unlike the other programs, applicants for the Academy or the Prep School must be single.

Judge Advocate Direct Appointment Program

Qualified airmen may apply for direct appointment with duty as judge advocates. Details are in AFRs 36-7 and 36-15.

Medical Service Direct Appointment Program

Qualified airmen may apply for direct appointment with duty in the medical specialities. Details are in AFR 36-15.

In addition, several programs are available to assist enlisted members in obtaining their degrees: GI Bill, Veterans Education Assistance Program, tuition assistance, and bootstrap. The qualification criteria for these programs are structured within the actual or implied guidelines of public law and, therefore, are different for each program. (2:1)

> Age criteria are often the most limiting of the qualification prerequisites. Maximum age limitations for active duty line officer programs range from 22 years of age to enter the USAFA, to appointment prior to age 35 for OTS. (2:1)

As a matter of policy, the maximum age for commissioning through OTS and AECP (the two most popular enlisted programs) has risen from 28 and 30 years respectively in 1959 to the present day maximum of 35. The OTS and AECP maximum age criteria is driven by law (10 USC 8286) which specifies that officers must be able to complete 20 years of commissioned service prior to their 55th birthday to the eligible

for a regular appointment. Therefore, only officers appointed prior to age 35 are assured eligibility for a full career. (2:1)

It is important to note that although maximum age has always been a commissioning criteria, an upper limit on enlisted grade or time-in-service has never been an exclusionary condition for precommission programs. That is to say, from a regulatory standpoint, a Technical Sergeant (E-6) with 10 years active duty has the same commissioning opportunities as an Airman First Class (E-3) with three years of service.

Also very germane to this study of commissioning enlisted personnel are the requirements of 10 USC 8911. This law stipulates that to retire as an officer, an individual must complete not less than 20 years of active Federal service in the armed forces of the United States, at least 10 years of which must be active commissioned service.

The 10 year commissioned service requirement became effective with passage of the Army and Air Force Vitalization and Retirement Equalization Act of 1948. A review of the legislative history associated with this act (to include hearing, markup and committee reports) does not reveal Congressional intent in passing the 10 year commissioned service rule for retirement. Much of the Vitalization and Retirement Equalization Act of 1948 was intended to deal with a myriad of post World War II

personnel issues. With this in mind, many people feel the 10 year commissioned service rule was intended to address the retirement criteria for noncommissioned officers who received spot or battlefield promotions during WW II. Still others feel the 10 year rule is simply a common sense approach to officer retirement by specifying that at least half the career must be as an officer.

While the exact Congressional intent of the 10-year rule is not known, it has stood for over 40 years and was reviewed by the Congress as recently as 1988 with no changes recommended.

In summary, it is evident that the Air Force offers a variety of commissioning opportunities for qualified airmen. In addition, it appears that the two key statutes which govern enlisted commissioning and retirement programs (10 USC 8286 which drives commissioning by age 35, and 10 USC 8911 which requires a minimum of 10 years commissioned service for retirement) will not be changed by the Congress in the foreseeable future.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF SELECTED

MISSION SUPPORT CAREER FIELDS

There is a record of historic shortfalls in field grade manning within mission support career fields. As of August 1988, the average manning of authorized field grade positions within mission support career areas was 74 percent--the lowest in this decade. The average field grade manning levels have dropped consistently since 1980 when the average field grade manning was at 86 percent. The chart below reflects the trend in mission support career areas average field grade manning during the 1980s.

PERCENTAGE OF MAJORS/LT COL ASSIGNED AS COMPARED TO FIELD GRADE AUTHORIZATIONS FROM 1980-1988

Source: AFMPC/DPMRSS

As mentioned in Chapter II, in August 1988, there were 16 career fields manned at or below the mission support average (74 percent) and there were 10 career areas (25 percent of all Mission Support AFSCs) manned below 70 percent. Manning for these 10 career areas is shown in the table below:

MISSION SUPPORT OFFICER CAREER FIELDS
CRITICALLY MANNED AT FIELD GRADE
31 AUGUST 1988
(PERMANENT PARTY)

	LTC		MAJ		FIELD GRADE		
AFSC	AUTH	ASGN	AUTH	ASGN	AUTH	ASGN	%
28XX	471	339	997	645	1468	984	67
40XX	652	511	854	507	1506	1018	68
49XX	742	526	1335	830	2077	1356	65
64XX	202	144	356	208	558	352	63
66XX	166	155	413	220	579	375	65
67XX/ 0056	281	191	393	201	674	392	58
74XX	108	78	143	82	251	160	64
79XX	97	78	154	88	251	166	66
80XX	442	321	765	400	1207	721	60
82XX	62	69	124	56	186	125	67
TOTAL	7155	5671	9460	6579	16615	12250	74

Source: AFMPC/DPMRSS

The 10 mission support AFSCs listed in the table above have been labeled as "critically manned" fields. As a reminder, they are thus categorized because they are manned not only

below the Mission Support average but also in the bottom 25 percent of all career fields in field grade manning.

From 1975 through 1988, the number of accessions into Mission Support career fields totaled 38,006. Of this total, 11,883 had some prior service before commissioning. Therefore, over the past 14 years prior service accessions have accounted for 31 percent of the total mission support accession program. The number of accessions brought into mission support career areas has ranged from a low of 1,625 in 1975 to a high of 3,684 in 1979. The average number of accessions per year over the past 14 years is 2,715. During this period, 4,709 of the 38,006 accessions, or 12.4 percent, came into the officer corps with 8 or more years prior service. This is a significant number since these individuals have the opportunity to elect to retire as commissioned officers before they reach field grade rank.

A chart reflecting the yearly accessions flow into all mission support career fields from 1975 through 1988 is provided on the following page. The chart provides a breakout of both non-prior and prior service accessions and the percentage in each category brought into mission support communities over the last 14 years.

ACCESSION FLOW FOR ALL MISSION
SUPPORT AREAS FROM FY 75 THROUGH FY 88

FISCAL YEAR	AMOUNT OF PRIOR SERVICE				TOTAL
	NONE	1-3YRS	4-7YRS	8+YRS	
75	# 1089	183	162	191	1625
	% 67.02	11.26	9.97	11.75	
76	1317	156	164	154	1791
	% 73.53	8.71	9.16	8.60	
77	1589	157	166	171	2083
	% 76.28	7.54	7.97	8.21	
78	1515	246	176	247	2184
	% 69.37	11.26	8.06	11.31	
79	2488	392	380	424	3684
	% 67.54	10.64	10.31	11.51	
80	# 1789	293	292	418	2792
	% 64.08	10.49	10.46	14.97	
81	# 1813	205	353	493	2864
	% 63.30	7.16	12.33	17.21	
82	# 1871	203	306	403	2783
	% 67.23	7.29	11.00	14.48	
83	# 2336	333	454	534	3657
	% 63.88	9.11	12.41	14.60	
84	# 2786	316	429	452	3983
	% 69.95	7.93	10.77	11.35	
85	# 2664	333	422	415	3834
	% 69.48	8.69	11.01	10.82	
86	# 1770	204	293	384	2651
	% 66.77	7.70	11.05	14.49	
87	# 1647	84	207	261	2199
	% 74.90	3.82	9.41	11.87	
88	# 1449	79	186	162	1876
	% 77.24	4.21	9.91	8.64	
TOTAL	# 26123	3184	3990	4709	38006
	% 68.73	8.38	10.50	12.39	

Source: AFMPC/DPMYAF

KEY: # - Number of individuals accessed in each category by fiscal year

% - Percent of each year's accessions by category

Of all prior service accessions with 8 or more years enlisted service who entered mission support areas, only 28.9 percent remain on active duty beyond the 13 year point. Thus, approximately 71 percent separate before achieving field grade status. Another way of looking at the continuation rate of prior service officers is to look at the percentage who separate or retire after serving their initial commitment but before accepting majority. The chart below reflects the percentages for various category accessions.

PERCENT OF MISSION SUPPORT OFFICER ACCESSIONS THAT SEPARATE/RETIRE BETWEEN 4-14 YEARS

# YEARS PRIOR SERVICE	%
0	19
1-4	15
5-7	33
8-10	62
11 plus	77

Of the non-prior service accessions, 57.7 percent remain on active duty beyond the 13 year point. The significant difference (57.7 for non-prior and 28.9 for prior service with 8 or more years prior service) can be attributed primarily to the retirement of prior service officers upon initial eligibility to retire as officers. (Note: The above percentages do not equal 100 percent due

to the exclusion of those officers who separate after their initial commitment.)

The statistically verifiable propensity of prior service officers with eight or more years enlisted time to retire before achieving field grade status contributes to the field grade shortfall within mission support areas. In an attempt to quanti[illegible] evaluate the extent to which these retirements effect field grade manning in critically manned career fields, four AFSCs are analyzed below. They are Developmental Engineering (28XX), Aircraft Maintenance and Munitions (40XX), Communications- Computer Systems (49XX), and the Intelligence (80XX). These AFSCs were chosen primarily because they are the largest of the career areas categorized as critically manned.

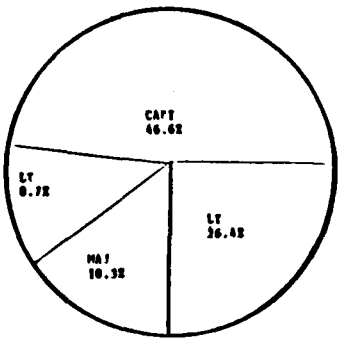
Analysis of the Developmental Engineering Career Field, AFSC 28XX

The Developmental Engineering career field was manned at only 67 percent of its authorized grade strength as of 31 August 1988. While there were 1468 field grade authorizations only 984 field graders were assigned. Field grade authorizations represent 27 percent of the total officers authorized. The fact that only 2150 Captains were available to fill the 2540 captain authorizations within the field makes grade substitution difficult. In fact, the career field was only manned at 90.2 percent overall. The

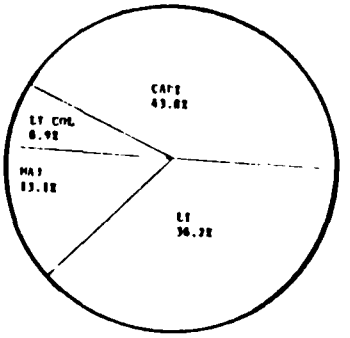
pie charts below depict the authorized and assigned manning percentages by grade within the career field as of 31 August 1988.

DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERING CAREER FIELD

AFSC 28XX



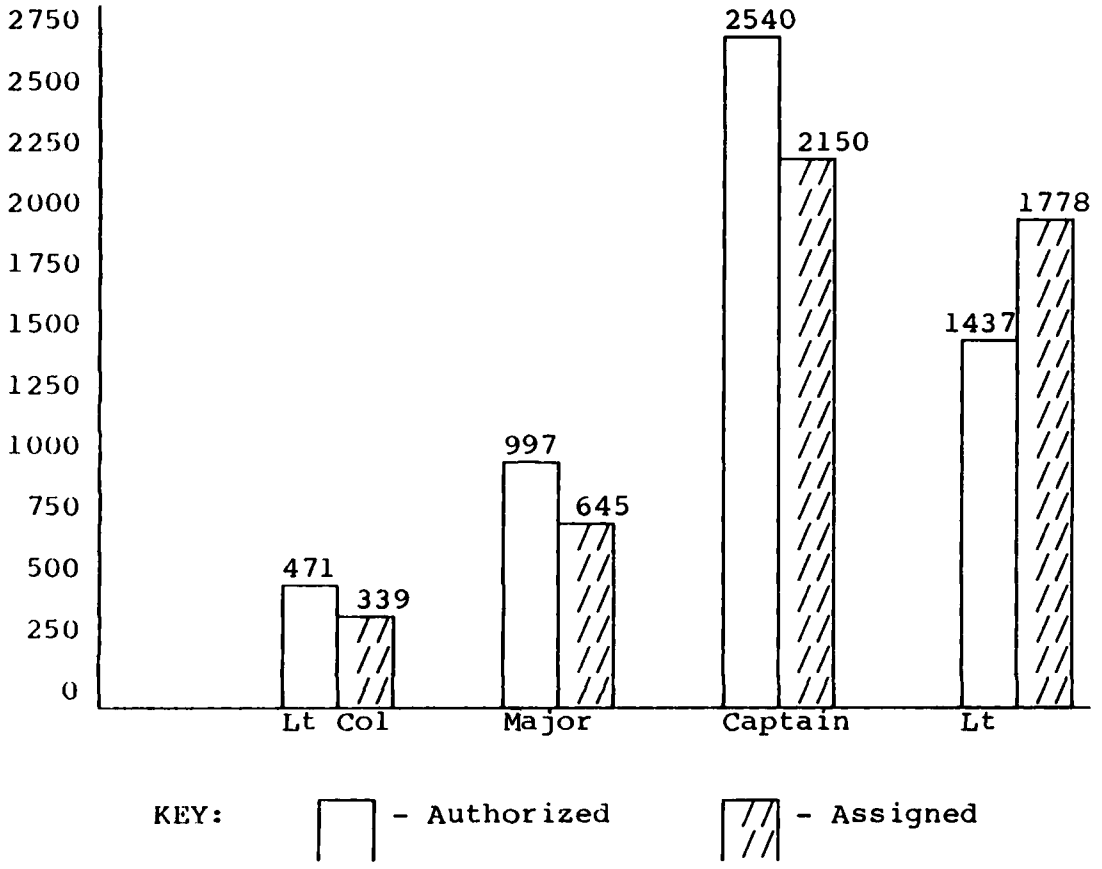
Authorized Manning
Percentage by Grade



Assigned Manning
Percentage by Grade

The assigned manning level of each grade as compared to authorized manning levels is shown through the use of the bar graphs provided on the following page.

AUTHORIZED VS. ASSIGNED MANNING BY GRADE
AFSC 28XX



Source: AFMPC/DPMRSS

From 1975 until 1988, a total of 6,375 accessions were brought into the 28XX career field. Accessions ranged from a low of 166 in 1975 to a high of 979 in 1984. The average number of accessions over the last 14 years is 455. Prior service accessions account for 32.1 percent of all accessions into the field during the period. In 1985, 52 percent of the 640 accessions had prior service. A chart

depicting the Developmental Engineering career field accessions by year from 1975 through 1988 is provided below.

28XX ACCESSION FLOW
AMOUNT OF PRIOR SERVICE

FISCAL YEAR		NONE	1-3YRS	4-7YRS	8+YRS	TOTAL
75	#	115	25	15	11	166
	%	69.28	15.06	9.04	6.63	
76	#	171	21	37	30	259
	%	66.02	8.11	14.29	11.58	
77	#	155	6	52	37	250
	%	62.00	2.40	20.80	14.80	
78	#	211	27	11	3	252
	%	83.73	10.71	4.37	1.19	
79	#	238	20	18	7	283
	%	84.10	7.07	6.36	2.47	
80	#	228	24	8	6	266
	%	85.71	9.02	3.01	2.26	
81	#	417	23	46	38	524
	%	79.58	4.39	8.78	7.25	
82	#	518	47	58	54	677
	%	76.51	6.94	8.57	7.98	
83	#	583	88	87	88	846
	%	68.91	10.40	10.28	10.40	
84	#	686	118	92	83	979
	%	70.07	12.05	9.40	8.48	
85	#	307	115	98	120	640
	%	47.97	17.97	15.31	18.75	
86	#	282	46	65	120	513
	%	54.97	8.97	12.67	23.39	
87	#	196	10	49	98	353
	%	55.52	2.83	13.88	27.76	
88	#	255	7	63	72	367
	%	61.31	1.91	17.17	19.62	
TOTAL	#	4332	577	699	767	6375
	%	67.95	9.05	10.96	12.04	

Source: AFMPC/DPMYAF

KEY: # - Number of individuals accessed in each category by fiscal year

% - Percent of each year's accessions by category

Since 1975, there have been 767 enlisted members with 8 or more years service who were commissioned and accessed into the Developmental Engineering career field. This group represents 12 percent of the total accessions into the career area. Of these accessions with more than 8 years prior service, experience indicates that only 18.7 percent remained on active duty long enough to become field grade officers. Over 95 percent of the prior service accessions with 8 or more years who enter the career field can be expected to remain beyond their initial 4 year commitment. However, 78 percent of those who remain on active duty will retire when eligible to do so as an officer. While the initial retention rate for prior service accessions with more than 8 years prior service is significantly higher than that of non-prior service accessions (95 percent versus 67 percent), it should be remembered that only 18 percent will remain on active duty long enough to be considered for promotion to major. As many as 41 percent of the non-prior service accessions in Developmental Engineering can be expected to remain on active duty beyond the 13 year commissioned service point. The percentage which can be expected to remain on active duty long enough to be considered for promotion to major in the promotion zone, broken down by amount of prior service, is shown on the following page.

DEVELOPMENTAL ENGINEER CAREER FIELD
CONTINUATION RATES BEYOND 13 YEARS

# OF YEARS PRIOR SERVICE	PERCENT
0	41
1-4	52
5-7	77
8-10	21
11+	17

Using the above continuation percentages computed from retention analysis data, it is easy to project the number of accessions from each year group which can be expected to retire or separate prior to being considered for promotion. To illustrate the severity of the loss of accessions with eight or more years prior service, the chart on the following page is provided.

28XX ACCESSIONS WITH EIGHT OR MORE YEARS PRIOR SERVICE

FISCAL YEAR ACCESSED	# ACCESSED	# EXPECTED TO SEPARATE/ RETIRE	# EXPECTED TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PROMOTION TO MAJOR
78	3	3	-
79	7	6	1
80	6	5	1
81	38	31	7
82	54	44	10
83	88	72	16
84	83	68	16
85	120	98	22
86	120	98	22
87	98	80	18
88	72	59	13
TOTAL	689	564	125

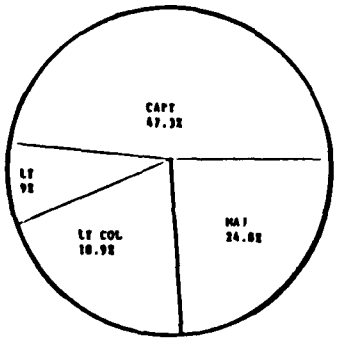
This shows that of the last 689 accessions with 8 or more years prior service, only 125 can be expected to be on active duty long enough to be considered for promotion to major. If these accessions continued on active duty at a continuation rate equal to non-prior service accessions, the number would more than double to a total of 282.

Analysis of Aircraft Maintenance and Munitions Career Field, AFSC 40XX

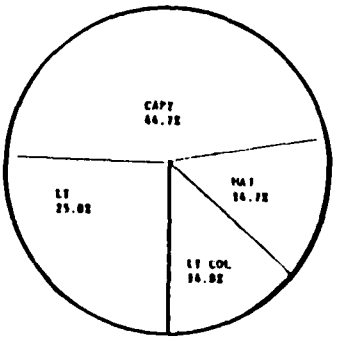
The Aircraft Maintenance and Munitions Career Field is another "critically manned" career area. With 1506 field grade authorizations, only 68 percent of the authorized field grade strength was available as of 31 August 1988. Only 511 of the 652 authorized Lieutenant Colonels and 507 of the 854 authorized Majors were available. In addition, the career field included 94.1 percent of the captains authorized. The overall career field was manned at just under 100 percent. The pie charts below depict the authorized and assigned manning percentages by grade in the 40XX career field as of 31 August 1988.

MAINTENANCE AND MUNITIONS CAREER FIELD

AFSC 40XX



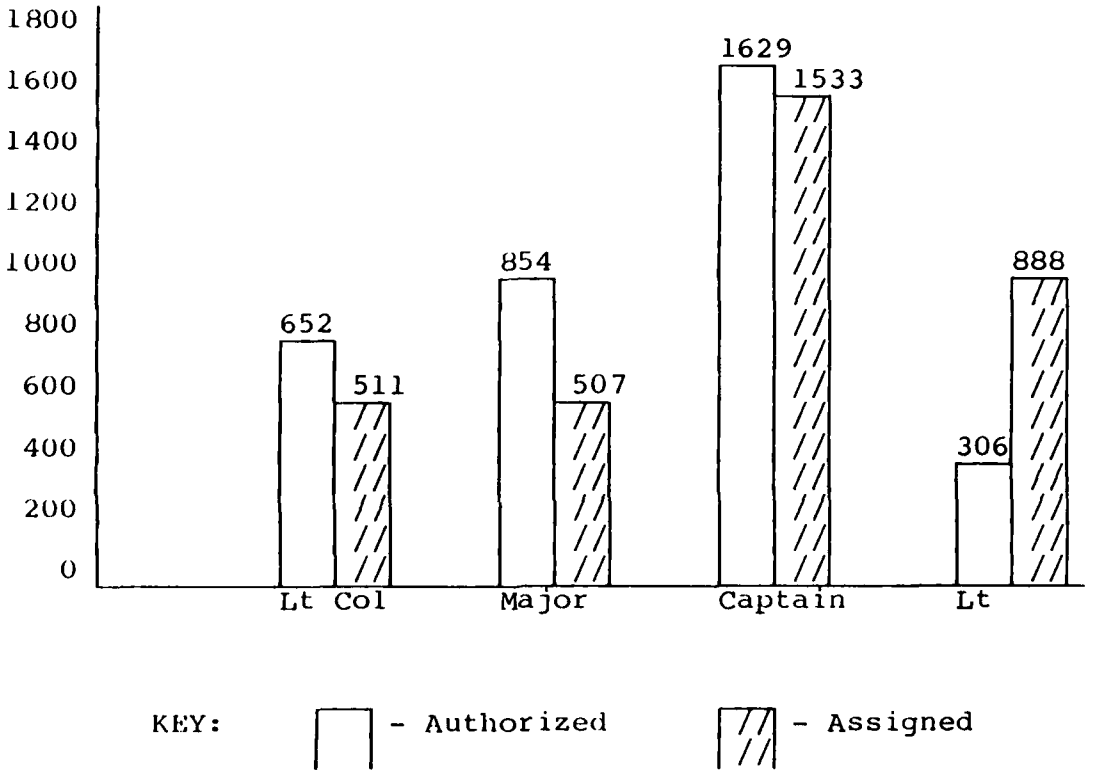
Authorized Manning
Percentage by Grade



Assigned Manning
Percentage by Grade

The assigned manning level of each grade as compared to authorized manning levels is shown through the use of the bar graphs provided below:

AUTHORIZED vs. ASSIGNED MANNING BY GRADE
AFSC 40XX



KEY: ⊓ - Authorized ⊓ - Assigned

Source: AFMPC/DPMRSS

From 1975 until 1988, a total of 3338 accessions were brought into the 40XX career field. The accessions ranged from a low of 136 in 1975 to a high of 429 in 1979. The average number of accessions per year over the last 14 years is 238. Prior service accessions account for 37.6 percent of all accessions into the field during the period. In 1981

and 1983, 56.3 and 55.0 percent of the total accessions into the career field had prior service. A chart showing the accessions flow into the Aircraft Maintenance and Munitions Career Field from 1975 through 1988 is provided below:

40XX ACCESSION FLOW
AMOUNT OF PRIOR SERVICE

FISCAL YEAR		NONE	1-3YRS	4-7YRS	8+YRS	TOTAL
75	#	102	6	13	15	136
	%	75.00	4.41	9.56	11.03	
76	#	146	16	15	25	202
	%	72.28	7.92	7.43	12.38	
77	#	177	30	16	26	249
	%	71.08	12.05	6.43	10.44	
78	#	164	31	26	51	272
	%	60.29	11.40	13.05	18.75	
79	#	271	45	56	57	429
	%	63.17	10.49	13.05	13.29	
80	#	139	31	37	54	261
	%	53.26	11.88	14.18	20.69	
81	#	100	18	36	75	229
	%	43.67	7.86	15.72	32.75	
82	#	81	12	22	29	144
	%	56.25	8.33	15.28	20.14	
83	#	116	15	48	79	258
	%	44.96	5.81	18.60	30.62	
84	#	119	18	44	56	237
	%	50.21	7.59	18.57	23.63	
85	#	172	18	42	52	284
	%	60.56	6.34	14.79	18.31	
86	#	162	22	39	28	251
	%	64.54	8.76	15.54	11.16	
87	#	179	12	17	8	216
	%	82.87	5.56	7.87	3.70	
88	#	154	8	4	4	170
	%	90.59	4.71	2.35	2.35	
TOTAL	#	2082	282	415	559	3338
	%	62.37	8.45	12.43	16.75	

Source: AFMPC/DPMYAF

KEY: # - Number of individuals accessed in each category by fiscal year

% - Percent of each year's accessions by category

Since 1975, there have been 559 enlisted members with 8 or more years service who were commissioned and accessed into the 40XX career field. This group represents almost 17 percent of the total accessions. In both 1981 and 1983, over 30 percent of the accessions had more than 8 years prior service upon entering the career field.

Of the accessions with more than 8 years prior service, the continuation rates for the 40XX career field indicate only 22.5 percent will remain on active duty long enough to become field grade officers. While almost 100 percent of these prior service accessions with 8 or more years will remain on active duty beyond their initial 4 years commitment, 77.5 percent of this group will separate or retire before completing 13 years of commissioned service. The percentage of accessions that can be expected to remain on active duty long enough to be considered for promotion to major in the promotion zone, broken down by amount of prior service, is shown below:

MAINTENANCE AND MUNITIONS CAREER FIELD CONTINUATION RATES BEYOND 13 YEARS

# OF YEARS PRIOR SERVICE	PERCENT
0	71
1-4	73
5-7	90
8-10	37
11+	11

Using the above continuation percentages computed from retention analysis data, it is possible to project the number of accessions from each year group which can be expected to retire or separate prior to being considered for promotion to Major. Likewise, it is easy to project how many will remain on active duty long enough to be considered. To illustrate the severity of the loss of accessions with eight or more years of prior service in the 40XX career area the following data is provided:

40XX ACCESSIONS WITH EIGHT OR MORE YEARS PRIOR SERVICE

FISCAL YEAR ACCESSED	# ACCESSED	# EXPECTED TO SEPARATE/ RETIRE	# EXPECTED TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PROMOTION TO MAJOR
78	51	39	12
79	57	44	13
80	54	42	12
81	75	58	17
82	29	22	7
83	79	61	18
84	56	43	13
85	52	40	12
86	28	22	6
87	8	6	2
88	4	3	1
TOTAL	493	380	113

A review of the above chart reflects that of the last 493 accessions with 8 or more years of prior service brought into the 40XX career area, only 113 can be expected to be considered for promotion to major. If the 40XX accessions with 8 or more years prior service had a continuation rate equal to that of non-prior service 40XX accessions, 348 of the 493 would remain on duty until considered for promotion to major. Thus, it could be concluded that retirements of this group for accessions will reduce the number of 40XX officers available for consideration to major by 235 over a 10 year period.

ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS--COMPUTER SYSTEMS CAREER FIELD, AFSC 49XX

The Communications-Computer Systems Career field was created when the Communications (30XX) and the Computer Systems (51XX) fields merged in 1985. For the purpose of this study, the accession data for the 49XX, 51XX, and 30XX AFSCs was added together to provide a true career field accession history for comparison analysis. Likewise, the retention data applies to a combination of all these AFSC's which are now included in the Communications-Computer Systems (49XX) career field.

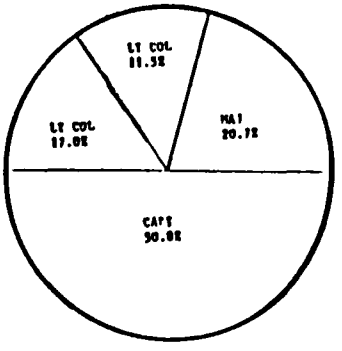
The Communications-Computer Systems career field has 2077 field grade authorizations as of 31 August 1988. Within the career field there were only 1356 field grade

personnel assigned. Thus, only 65 percent of the authorized number of field grade officers were available in the career field. A total of 742 Lieutenants Colonels and 1335 Majors were authorized, while only 526 Lieutenant Colonels and 830 Majors were assigned within the career field. Of 3274 Captains authorized there were 3006 assigned or 91.8 percent. The entire career field was manned at 93.6 percent with 6037 officers assigned and 6448 authorized.

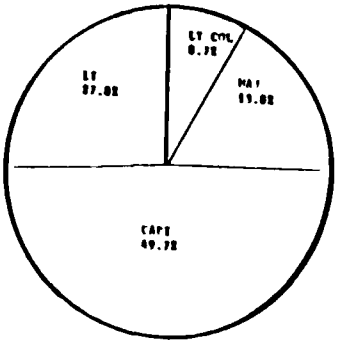
The pie charts provided below depict the authorized and assigned manning percentages by grade within the career field as of 31 August 1988.

COMMUNICATIONS-COMPUTER SYSTEMS

CAREER FIELD, AFSC 49XX



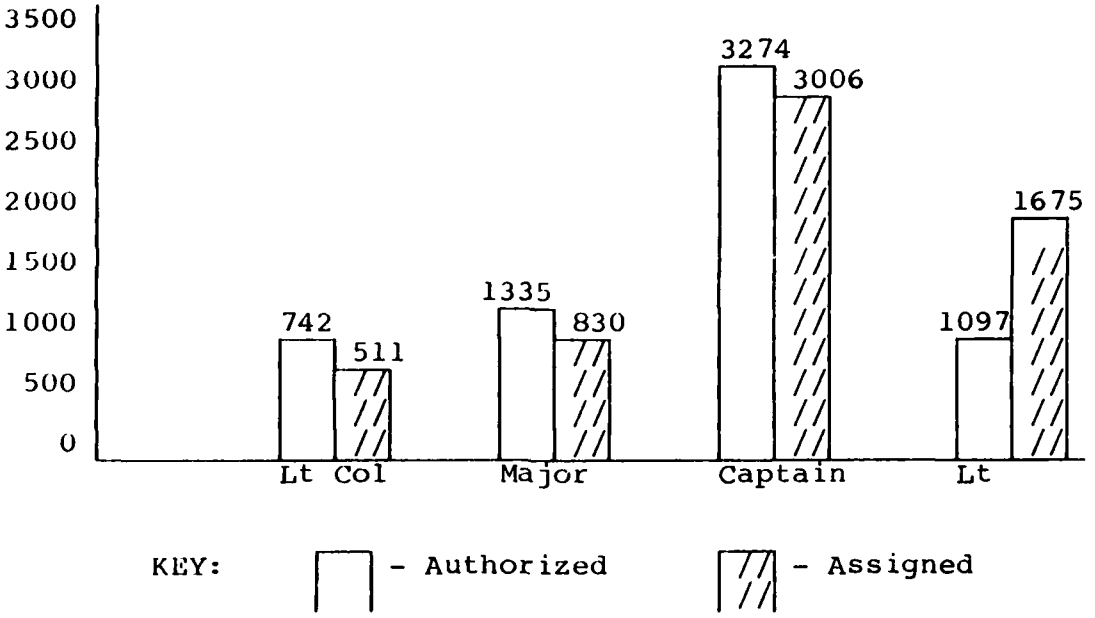
Authorized Manning
Percentage by Grade



Assigned Manning
Percentage by Grade

The assigned manning level of each grade as compared to authorized manning levels is shown through the use of the bar graphs provided on the following page:

AUTHORIZED vs. ASSIGNED MANNING
BY GRADE AFSC 49XX



Source: AFMPC/DPMRSS

From 1975 until 1988, 6963 accessions were brought into the new 49XX career field. Accessions ranged from a high of 798 in 1984 to a low of 296 in both 1976 and 1988. The average number of accessions per year over the last 14 years is 497. Prior service accessions account for 35.4 percent of all accessions into the career field since 1975. In 1981, 47.1 percent of all the accessions into the career field had prior service. A chart showing the accessions flow into the Communications-Computer Systems Career Field from 1975 through 1988 is provided on the following page:

49XX ACCESSION FLOW
AMOUNT OF PRIOR SERVICE

FISCAL YEAR		NONE	1-3YRS	4-7YRS	8+YRS	TOTAL
75	#	256	75	65	49	445
	%	57.53	16.85	14.61	11.01	
76	#	179	33	43	41	296
	%	60.47	11.15	14.53	13.85	
77	#	259	35	35	34	363
	%	71.35	9.64	9.64	9.37	
78	#	229	42	38	49	358
	%	63.97	11.73	10.61	13.69	
79	#	434	51	65	88	638
	%	68.03	7.99	10.19	13.79	
80	#	288	58	58	77	481
	%	59.88	12.06	12.06	16.00	
81	#	303	43	93	137	573
	%	52.88	7.50	16.22	23.90	
82	#	373	38	90	142	643
	%	58.01	5.91	14.00	22.08	
83	#	418	52	60	106	636
	%	65.72	8.18	9.43	16.67	
84	#	566	45	79	108	798
	%	70.93	5.64	9.90	13.53	
85	#	403	41	78	75	597
	%	67.50	6.87	13.07	12.56	
86	#	278	20	48	69	415
	%	66.99	4.82	11.57	16.62	
87	#	314	10	36	61	421
	%	74.58	2.38	8.55	14.49	
88	#	200	10	48	38	296
	%	67.57	3.38	16.22	12.83	
TOTAL	#	4500	553	836	1074	6963
	%	64.63	7.94	12.01	15.42	

Source: AFMPC/DPMYAF

KEY: # - Number of individuals accessed in each category by fiscal year

% - Percent of each year's accessions by category

Since 1975, there have been 1074 enlisted members with 8 or more years service who were commissioned and

accessed into the 49XX career area. This group represents 15.4 percent of the total accessions. In both 1981 and 1982, over 20 percent of the accessions had more than 8 years prior service upon entering the career field. Of the accessions with more than 8 years prior service upon commissioning who entered the 49XX career area, only 21.2 percent are expected to remain on active duty beyond 13 years commissioned service (long enough to reach majority). While most (96 percent) stay beyond their initial 4 year commitment, 76.9 percent of those which stay will separate or retire before completing 13 years of commissioned service. The percentage of accessions that can be expected to remain on active duty long enough to be considered for promotion to major in the promotion zone, broken down by amount of prior service is shown below:

COMMUNICATIONS-COMPUTER SYSTEMS CAREER FIELD
CONTINUATION RATES BEYOND 13 YEARS

# OF YEARS PRIOR SERVICE	PERCENT
0	50
1-4	61
5-7	70
8-10	20
11+	22

Using the above continuation percentages computed from retention analysis data, it is possible to project the

number of accessions from each year group which can be expected to retire or separate prior to being considered for promotion to Major. Likewise, it is possible to project how many accessions will remain on active duty long enough to be considered. To illustrate the severity of the loss of accessions with 8 or more years of prior service on the 49XX career area, the following data is provided:

49XX ACCESSIONS WITH EIGHT OR MORE YEARS PRIOR SERVICE

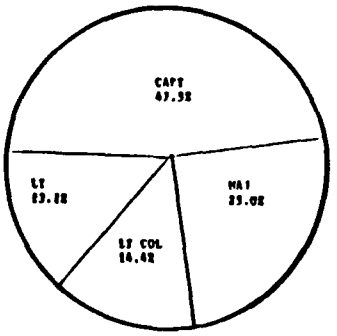
FISCAL YEAR ACCESSED	# ACCESSED	# EXPECTED TO SEPARATE/ RETIRE	# EXPECTED TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PROMOTION TO MAJOR
78	49	39	10
79	88	69	19
80	77	61	16
81	137	108	29
82	142	112	30
83	106	84	22
84	108	85	23
85	75	59	16
86	69	55	14
87	61	48	13
88	38	30	8
TOTAL	950	750	200

A review of the above data reflects that of the past 950 accessions with 8 or more years prior service brought into the 49XX career area, only 200 can be expected to be considered for promotion to field grade. If these accessions had a continuation rate equal to that of the non-prior service accessions brought into the 49XX career area, 425 would remain on duty to be considered for promotion to Major.

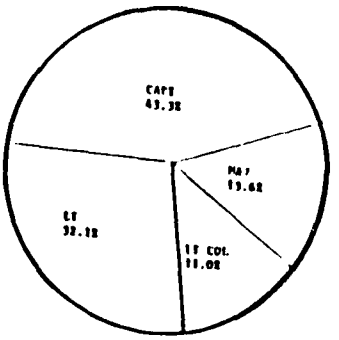
ANALYSIS OF THE INTELLIGENCE CAREER FIELD, AFSC 80XX

The intelligence career field, AFSC 80XX, is another of the areas identified as critically manned at the field grade level. The career field contains 3063 officer authorizations. Of the total authorizations, 1207 or 39.4 percent are field grade authorizations. There were only 721 field grade officers, or 60 percent of those authorized, assigned to the career area as of 31 August 1988. This field grade shortfall is compounded by the fact that only 87.2 percent of the authorized Captains were assigned in the intelligence career field as of 31 August 1988. With 1454 Captains authorized only 1268 were assigned. The pie charts on the following page depict the percentages of authorized manning and the assigned manning by grade within the intelligence career field as of 31 August 1988.

INTELLIGENCE CAREER FIELD
AFSC 80XX

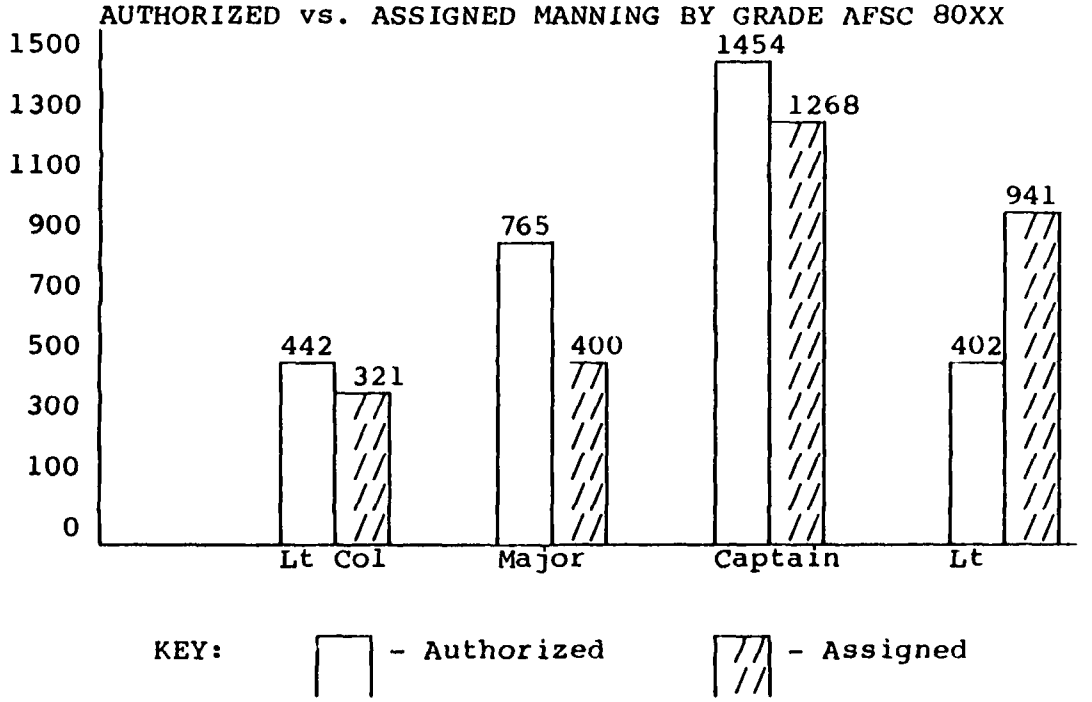


Authorized Manning
Percentage by Grade



Assigned Manning
Percentage by Grade

The manning of each grade is shown through the use of the bar graphs provided below:



Source: AFMPC/DPMRSS

From 1975 until 1988, the number of accessions taken into the 80XX career field varied from a low of 47 in 1975 to a high of 331 in 1986. The average number of accessions brought into the career field during the 14 year period is 198 per year. Prior service personnel accounted for almost 36 percent of all accessions during the period. A total of 103 prior service accessions came into the 80XX career field in 1980, representing just over 40 percent of the total 255 accessions in that year. A chart showing intelligence career field accessions by year from 1975 through 1988 is provided on the following page. The chart provides a breakdown of non-prior service accessions and prior service accessions by numbers of years of prior service. Also included are totals and percentages in each category:

80XX ACCESSION FLOW
AMOUNT OF PRIOR SERVICE

FISCAL YEAR		NONE	1-3YRS	4-7YRS	8+YRS	TOTAL
75	#	29	5	5	8	47
	%	61.70	10.64	10.64	17.02	
76	#	54	7	8	4	73
	%	73.97	9.59	10.96	5.48	
77	#	117	7	5	2	131
	%	89.31	5.34	3.82	1.53	
78	#	98	16	10	14	138
	%	71.01	11.59	7.25	10.14	
79	#	173	35	36	24	268
	%	64.55	13.06	13.43	8.96	
80	#	152	41	30	32	255
	%	59.61	16.08	11.76	12.55	
81	#	118	15	16	28	177
	%	66.67	8.47	9.04	15.82	
82	#	56	7	10	13	86
	%	65.12	8.14	11.63	15.12	
83	#	146	21	36	32	235
	%	62.13	8.94	15.32	13.62	
84	#	187	22	36	28	273
	%	68.50	8.06	13.19	10.26	
85	#	225	32	34	23	314
	%	71.66	10.19	10.83	7.32	
86	#	255	26	24	26	331
	%	77.04	7.85	7.25	7.85	
87	#	207	7	21	8	243
	%	85.19	2.88	8.64	3.29	
88	#	183	9	7	9	208
	%	87.98	4.33	3.37	4.33	
TOTAL	#	2000	250	278	251	2779
	%	71.97	9.00	10.00	9.03	

Source: AFMPC/DPMYAF

KEY: # - Number of individuals accessed in each category by fiscal year

% - Percent of each year's accessions by category

Since 1975, 251 noncommissioned personnel with 8 or more years service were commissioned and accessed into the intelligence career field. This group represents 9 percent

of the total career field accessions. Of the accessions with more than 8 years prior service upon commissioning who entered the 80XX career area, only 32.1 percent are expected to remain on active duty beyond 13 years commissioned service (long enough to reach majority). While most, 97 percent, stay beyond their initial 4 year commitment, 64.8 percent of those which stay will separate or retire before completing 13 years of commissioned service. The percentage of intelligence career field accessions that can be expected to remain on active duty long enough to be considered for promotion to major in the promotion zone, broken down by amount of prior service, is shown below:

INTELLIGENCE CAREER FIELD CONTINUATION RATES BEYOND 13 YEARS

# OF YEARS PRIOR SERVICE	PERCENT
0	54
1-4	67
5-7	53
8-10	42
11+	21

Using the above continuation percentages, computed from retention analysis data, it is possible to project the number of accessions from each year group which can be expected to retire or separate prior to being considered for promotion to Major. Likewise, it is possible to project how

many accessions will remain on active duty long enough to be considered. To illustrate the severity of the loss of accessions with 8 or more years of prior service on the 80XX career field, the following data is provided.

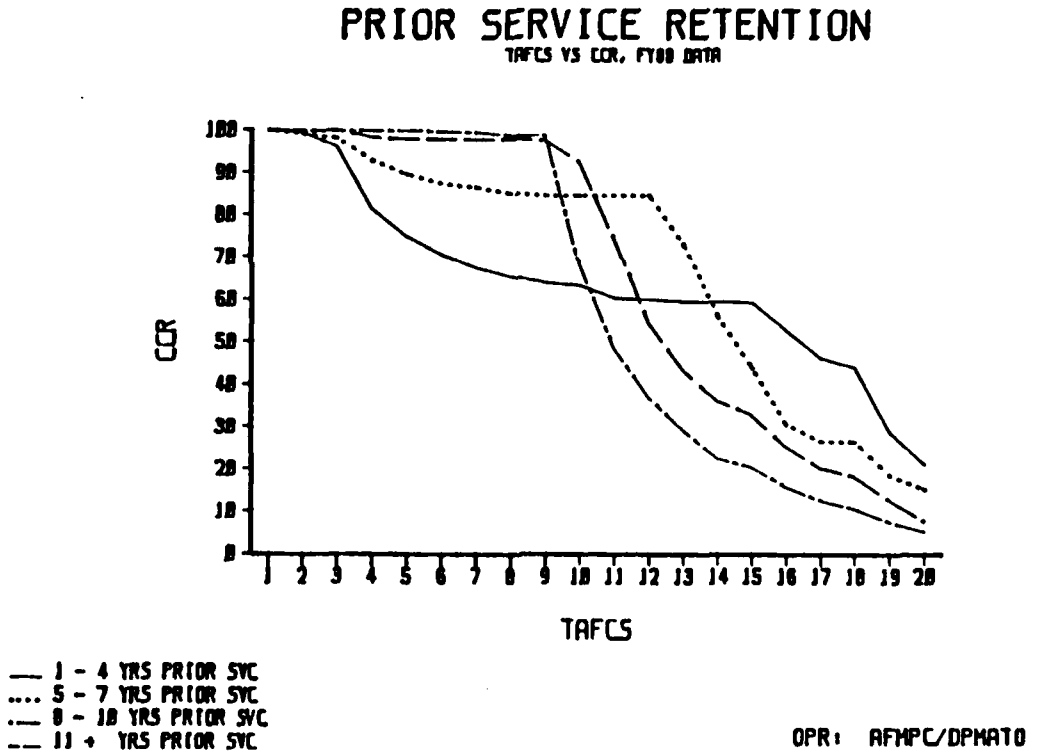
	80XX ACCESSIONS WITH EIGHT OR MORE YEARS PRIOR SERVICE		
FISCAL YEAR ACCESSED	# ACCESSED	# EXPECTED TO SEPARATE/ RETIRE	# EXPECTED TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PROMOTION TO MAJOR
78	14	10	4
79	24	16	8
80	32	22	10
81	28	19	9
82	13	9	4
83	32	22	10
84	28	19	9
85	23	16	7
86	26	18	8
87	8	6	2
88	9	6	3
TOTAL	237	163	74

A review of the above data reflects that of the last 237 accessions with 8 or more years of prior service brought into the 80XX career area, only 74 can be expected to be considered for promotion to field grade rank. If these

accessions had a continuation rate equal to that of the non-prior service accessions brought into the 80XX career area, 127 would remain on duty to be considered for promotion to Major.

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

The graph below reflects the cumulative continuation rates (CCR) for prior service accessions in mission support career fields:



From this graph it becomes evident that a large percentage of the accessions with eight or more years prior

service separate or retire prior to achieving majority. The continuation rates beyond 13 years commissioned service for accessions with 8 or more years of prior service in "critically manned" AFSCs are shown below:

CONTINUATION RATES FOR ACCESSIONS WITH EIGHT OR MORE YEARS OF PRIOR SERVICE

AFSC	CAREER AREA	% THAT STAY BEYOND 13 YEARS COMMISSIONED SERVICE
28XX	Developmental Engineering	18.70
40XX	Aircraft Maintenance & Munitions	22.52
49XX	Communications-Computer Systems	21.20
64XX	Supply Management	29.85
66XX	Logistics Plans & Programs	24.65
67XX	Financial	86.84
74XX	Manpower Management	51.43
79XX	Public Affairs	51.53
80XX	Intelligence	32.15
82XX	Special Investigations	45.50
	OVERALL MISSION SUPPORT	28.90

It should be noted that the continuation rates for 28XX, 40XX, 49XX, and 80XX AFSCs are considered the most accurate among the "critically manned" AFSCs. This is because of the number of accessions in these AFSCs as compared to much smaller numbers of accessions in many of the other "critically manned" AFSCs. For example, the 86.84

percent continuation rate in the 67XX drops to 39.45 percent when just 1 more year is added to the total years of commissioned service for the accessions in this AFSC (from 13 to 14 years commissioned service). Within the four AFSCs looked at in this chapter, there are significant differences in continuation rates based on the amount of prior service which accessions have upon commissioning. The chart below shows the continuation rates for various groups of accessions within each of the studied AFSCs.

CONTINUATION RATES/PERCENT BY # OF YEARS
PRIOR SERVICE WHO WILL STAY BEYOND 13 YEARS

# OF YEARS PRIOR SERVICE	AFSC 28XX	AFSC 40XX	AFSC 49XX	AFSC 80XX	MISSION SUPPORT
0	41	71	50	54	58
1-4	52	73	61	67	59
5-7	77	90	70	53	56
8-10	21	37	20	42	36
11+	17	11	22	21	23

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

From the analysis in Chapter IV, several conclusions can be drawn. From the data, it is evident that there is a direct relationship between the number of years of prior service and continuation rates. It can also be concluded that current retirement policy drives continuation rates for prior service personnel more than it does for non-prior service accessions. Said another way, prior service accessions have a higher retention rate after their initial commitment than do non-prior service accessions. This can be primarily attributed to the time these individuals have invested toward retirement when commissioned.

The analysis also revealed that the continuation rates within critically manned AFSC's do not differ significantly from other mission support AFSC continuation rates. Of the 10 critically manned AFSC's, only 4 had continuation rates lower than the mission support average. In fact, the trends in continuation rates apply across the entire mission support populace, not just to the 10 critically manned career fields.

From the manning data, it is obvious that there is a significant shortfall in field grade manning within many mission support AFSCs, particularly those classified as critically manned. The analysis of continuation rates of

prior service personnel reveals that retirement of company grade prior service officers has an adverse effect on field grade manning in mission support career fields. The analysis revealed the crux of the problem is centered on those officers commissioned with eight or more years of prior service.

The field grade shortfall in critically manned AFSCs will not improve noticeably in the near future without significant changes. The number expected to be retained will only offset the projected losses in each of the studied critically manned AFSCs. While prior service company grade retirements are not the only factor which influences the field grade shortfalls, there is a potential for improving field grade manning within mission support career areas through improvement in continuation rates among prior service officers. The following chart reflects the numbers of additional officers in each of the studied critically manned AFSCs who could be expected to remain on active duty as field graders if the continuation rate for prior service officers with eight plus years service was equal to non-prior service continuation rates.

PROJECTED AVERAGE NUMBER OF OFFICERS WITH 8+ YEARS PRIOR SERVICE CONSIDERED FOR PROMOTION TO MAJOR EACH YEAR

AFSC	AT CURRENT CONTINUATION RATE	AT NON-PRIOR SERVICE ACCESSION RATE	NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL OFFICERS WHO WOULD BE CONSIDERED
28XX	11	26	15
40XX	10	32	22
49XX	18	39	21
80XX	7	11	4

NOTE: Numbers based on 11 year averages and current continuation rates.

It is important that field grade shortfalls be improved within mission support career fields. The field grade shortfalls (current and projected) tend to drive reactive personnel policies such as involuntary crossflow actions, accession peaks and valleys, and use of the rated supplement. While there are many excellent motives for using the rated supplement, reaction to pressing shortfalls should not be one (reference the squadron commander scenarios mentioned in Chapter I). While the supplement has been used effectively in combating the shortfall problem in the past, this vehicle will not be as readily available to personnel managers in the future because the rated supplement is being steadily decreased due to rated retention problems. The rated supplement forecast provided below indicated the degree

to which the supplement will be drawn down within the critically manned AFSC's over the next five years.

RATED SUPPLEMENT FORECAST

AFSC	CURRENT	89	90	91	92	93
28XX	148	185	203	185	167	149
40XX	198	186	170	155	140	124
49XX	93	86	79	72	65	58
64XX	35	34	32	29	27	24
66XX	100	99	94	85	77	68
67XX	33	32	31	30	27	24
74XX	13	9	8	7	6	6
79XX	14	9	9	8	7	6
80XX	62	61	57	52	47	41
82XX	4	4	4	4	3	3

	CURRENT	89	90	91	92	93
MSN SPT	2344	2165	1986	1807	1629	1450

Source: AFMPC/DPMRSS

From this forecast it becomes evident that field grade shortfalls will become worse without some corrective action.

In addition to the rated supplement drawn down, there are several other factors which could compound the current problem. Playing against this entire scenario is current congressional dialogue which would reduce the 10 year commis-

sioned service requirement to 8 years for retirement purposes. If this were to be realized, the exodus currently being experienced in the 8+ grouping would be further accelerated.

Use of prior service officers with 8+ years of commissioned service provides solid, short-term expertise, assuming many of these accessions are commissioned in their same career field. However, the Air Force pays a continuing price when it comes to experienced, senior career field leadership. Put another way, this approach appears to insufficiently address long term career field management issues. It provides a 10 year fix to a 15-20 year problem. As a very minimum, the Air Force needs to grow more tenured majors out of the prior service pool.

Last but not least, field grade shortages are accentuated by the extremely high manning in Lieutenants in the company grade population as a whole. This, of course, does nothing but further accentuate the loss of experience at the other end of the spectrum.

Very obviously there are no easy answers. However, as stated early in the paper, if the personnel and functional communities can corporately work through some apparent counter productive policies and utilization issues such as this one, it could go a long way toward laying in the needed fixes for our successors. It is with this in mind, that the recommendations in the following chapter are made.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the analysis and conclusions, it becomes obvious that the number of prior services officers who retire at the first opportunity contribute significantly to the shortage of field grade officers in many of the critically manned career fields. The next issue which must be addressed is what can or should be done to eliminate or at least reduce the adverse effect such retirements have on field grade manning shortfalls in mission support career fields. This chapter provides a recommended course of action.

Prior service personnel make up a sizable portion of todays' officer force. Various studies have substantiated that prior service officers perform as well or better than their non-prior service counterparts. (5:1) In addition, the separation of prior service officers has been forecasted in officer end strength projections upon which several Air Force personnel programs are based. Therefore, it would be counter productive to propose elimination or significant reductions in the number of prior service accessions.

The analysis in Chapter IV reveals that prior service officers have a higher continuation rate after four years commissioned service than do non-prior service officers. Because these individuals have already served

several years as enlisted personnel they normally tend to be more career oriented. The continuation rates substantiate that the enlisted time invested by prior service officers is often a positive motivator for continuation until retirement eligibility.

The experience which prior service officers bring with them into the officer corps is valued by many career fields. For example, the maintenance career field has historically sought prior service officers with previous maintenance experience. Unfortunately, those same prior service officers who serve the Air Force so well have a propensity as a group to retire prior to reaching field grade rank. Therefore, the Air Force has lost the opportunity to have this precious commodity occupy key leadership positions in their respective career areas.

Prior to arriving at a preferred solution, several additional policy change options were studied by the authors. Several of these are listed below accompanied by the rationale which the author's believe mitigated against their implementation:

- Require prior service officers to serve at least 15 years of commissioned service in order to retire as an officer.

- Reduced the maximum commissioning age from 35 to 30 years of age.

- Establish limits on the numbers of officers with eight or more years prior service who can enter certain career fields.

Asking Congress to change the public law (10 USC 8911) to extend the amount of active commissioned service for retirement from 10 to 15 years would not be appropriate at this time. It was only last year we asked them to reduce the commissioned service requirements from 10 to 8 years to assist us with the officer strength prediction. To now ask for the commissioned service requirement to be raised, not lowered, would serve to make the staffers and members of the Armed Services Committees skeptical since it would appear that we don't know what we want in this area.

Likewise, lowering the maximum commissioning age from 35 to perhaps 30, would not guarantee a solution to the problem. An individual who enlisted at age 20 would have 10 years of prior service by commissioning at age 30.

Finally, although limiting the number of officers with eight or more years prior service who could be assigned to certain critically manned career fields would be a step in the right direction, there are associated problems. This tailoring approach would lead to barriers in effective resource management and possibly to assigning less qualified individuals to career fields as the accession pool dwindles in size.

Conversely, the recommended solution only requires a straight forward change in Air Force policy--more specifically the policy change is targeted directly at the group of prior service accessions that has the greatest impact on the existing field grade shortfall problems.

Because of policy restrictions which require prior service officers to serve at least 10 years commissioned service and 20 years total service before being eligible to retire as an officer, it is the retirement of those prior service officers with 8 or more years prior service which influence field grade shortfalls the most. It is with this in mind that the following recommendation is made. The recommendation, if adopted, will significantly reduce the impact which prior service officer retirements have on field grade manning in the critically manned mission support career fields.

Air Force policy should be revised to limit prior service commissioning to individuals with less than eight years total military service. This will ensure that the majority of these individuals will be considered for promotion to Major prior to being eligible for retirement as an officer. The continuation rates for prior service officers with less than eight years service compares favorably with non-prior service officers. The figures shown below for the four critically manned AFSCs which were

the focus of this study provide the statistical rationale for this recommendation.

CONTINUATION RATES BEYOND 13 YEARS COMMISSIONED SERVICE

AFSC	NO PRIOR SERVICE	1-4 YEARS PRIOR SERVICE	5-7 YEARS PRIOR SERVICE	8 OR MORE YEARS PRIOR SERVICE
28XX	41.05	51.75	77.30	18.70
40XX	70.54	72.88	90.00	22.52
49XX	50.48	60.70	69.82	21.20
80XX	53.51	67.41	53.29	28.90
OVERALL MISSION SUPPORT	57.73	59.27	55.65	28.90

Should the recommended policy change not be adopted, then as a minimum it is suggested that prior service accessions with eight or more years of prior service be channeled into specific career fields not defined as critically manned at the field grade level or where the percentage of field grade authorizations is low. Thus, prior service retirements will be a force balancer rather than a resource management problem.

In summary, the retirement of company grade prior service officers has a direct effect on field grade officer shortfalls in several mission support career areas. To reduce or eliminate the adverse effect will require changes in existing Air Force personnel policy. Without any changes in prior service accession/retirement policy and improved

resource management of prior service officers the existing field grade shortfall problems are not likely to improve.

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