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**RE-EMPHASIZING THE PROFESSION OF ARMS:
IMPLICATIONS ON THE CONTRACTING CAREER FIELD**

by

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The profession of arms is an essential social institution offering an orderly way of life, set a little apart, not without elegance. 'The performance of public duty is not the whole of what makes a good life,' said Bertrand Russell, in language that would have pleased Cicero; 'there is also the pursuit of private excellence.' Both are to be found in military life. It gives much and takes more, enriching freely anyone prepared to give more than he gets. It will remain with us for as long as man continues to be what he is, too clever and not good enough. This looks like being a long time yet.¹

General Sir John Hackett

The Air Force is the most technological of the services, and thus the most specialized. Technology and specialization bring strengths, but also problems. Its people become entrenched in their occupational specialties and identify with them strongly. Over the years, for example, Air Force officers have evolved into some 40 occupational "tribes." They tend to define themselves by their specialty first: fighter pilot, maintenance officer, navigator, personnel officer, and so on.²

John T. Correll, Editor in Chief, AFA

During recent years the validity of officer development within the United States Air Force has been questioned as to our preparation of senior leaders. Based on the assumption that as an institution the Air Force needs to improve the development of future Air Force leaders, this paper will narrowly focus on the contracting career field and provide recommendations to bring these officers into the fold and vision of our future Air Force. The competencies required of our senior leaders are broad and complex, however our initial training programs and early officer

development focus have largely failed in the fostering and development of officers into what is referred to as the “Profession of Arms.” To begin this paper, a discussion of the “Profession of Arms” will be accomplished first in an attempt to define this term. A brief discussion of the “Developing Aerospace Leaders” initiative provides a backdrop confirming my underlying assumption. Further background information is provided on the military contracting officer in the Air Force. This paper then explores the current contracting officer career development paths of the Air Force and sister services. Synthesizing the basic tenants of the “Profession of Arms” with practices by our sister services, a new USAF professional development model is postulated.

At present, Brigadier General Darryl A. Scott, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Contracting, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, has assigned a team to review the complete military force in the contracting career field inclusive of officer development. Correspondence has been carried out with the team as they progress in redefining the present contracting officer career path guide and include their findings as appendices to this paper. Based on the assumption that the identified characteristics of future leaders includes technical breadth and a broad air and space knowledge coupled with experience, this paper attempts to propose a revised career ladder to transition Contracting Officers to future Air and Space leaders. Final products of this paper include a recommendation for revisions to the current contracting officer development requirements as cited in the current *Officer Career Path Guide* and corresponding changes to the Contracting Officer’s Career Pyramid. The proposition of this paper is that the days of specializing in one career field are no longer a commodity we can afford as a military institution and that self-references to a career field profession needs to be reduces in stature below what is truly our role in society, the “Profession of Arms.”

Notes

¹ General Sir John Winthrop Hackett, *The Profession of Arms*, New York: Macmillan, 1983. pg 214.

Notes

² John T. Correll, "Developing Aerospace Leaders," *Air Force Magazine*, December 2001, Vol 84: No. 12, Online Version: <http://www.afa.org/magazine/Dec2001/1201leaders.html>. 6 September 2002.

Chapter 2

The Profession of Arms

We believe that the Air Force stands at the threshold of a new era. Whereas in the past it has been largely a corps of flying men, in the future, certainly, ten to fifteen years from now, it will be more nearly a corps of technicians and scientists.³

Lt Gen Ira C. Eaker, 1947

The United States Air Force's Officer's Career Path Guide cites 47 different careers paths that an officer can pursue covering a vast array of specialty occupations required to support the ultimate mission of the Air Force.⁴ As officers progress up the chain of command, the demands placed on them change and their knowledge base is required to expand beyond that of their native specialty. However, the Air Force born from technology and dedicated to the pursuit and exploitation of it has evolved an officer development process that puts greater emphasis on individual specialization skills and expertise than on the future broad development of our senior leaders. The effect of this long-term policy is the creation of senior officers with highly specialized skills in a specific occupation yet lacking the true knowledge and skills in our real profession, the "Profession of Arms." The contracting career field is a prime example of what many refer to as a stove-piped specialty in which officers enter as lieutenants and stay until completion of their Air Force career; many never venturing far away from their home career field.

At present, the first priority for all officers is to master their individual technical skills. No doubt, the Air Force has some of the brightest and best technical professionals in the world,

however this has led to a “rise in occupationalism that has negatively affected the broader focus on teamwork and unification to accomplish the mission,” resulting in the de-emphasis of our primary warrior profession.⁵ To ensure we properly develop future senior military leaders, we must re-emphasize our true profession and ensure it is that profession that is foremost during our time in the United State Air Force.

Defining the “Profession of Arms”

After scanning many books, articles, and other reference material, I could not find one over encompassing definition on what “The Profession of Arms” really means. Over the centuries, many authors refer to it but none provides a complete explanation for this abstract term. Before we can evaluate what is or is not lacking concerning the Air Force’s development of leaders, it is essential that an understanding of the “Profession of Arms” is defined first. The Online Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary defines a profession as “a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation.”⁶ General Sir John Hackett, previous Commander-in-Chief of the British Army of the Rhine and noted writer, defines a profession in much more detail in his book entitled *The Profession of Arms*;

1. Distinguishable corpus of specific technical knowledge
2. Doctrine
3. More or less group coherence
4. Complex of Institutions peculiar to itself
5. Educational pattern adapted to its own specific need
6. Career structure of its own
7. Distinct place in society⁷

Alan Hawke, Secretary, Australia’s Department of Defence, in a speech to the Royal United Services Institute in 2001 further added to this description the unique aspect of public service.

Finally, there is a touchstone of the true profession and the truly professional life. For a calling to be a profession, it must have an unselfish aspect of public service. To be a professional, one must be governed by moving considerations other than

those of personal advantage. The soldier, sailor, airman, and woman and public servant share this quality. The main purpose of their calling is not themselves or their pay.⁸

Previous Chief of Staff for the Air Force, General Ronald R. Fogleman summed up what the “unselfish aspect” of the military profession is;

As members of the joint team, we airmen are part of a unique profession that is founded on the premise of service before self. We are *not* engaged in just another job; we are practitioners of the profession of arms. We are entrusted with the security of our nation, the protection of its citizens, and the preservation of its way of life. In this capacity, we serve as guardians of America’s future. By its very nature, this responsibility requires us to place the needs of our service and our country before personal concerns.⁹

Elbridge Colby, author of a book also entitled *Profession of Arms*, states that the military is a “serious profession, not merely taking a job” with specific knowledge required.¹⁰ The intense study of the science and art of war is required inclusive of: principles of war and their application with technology, military history, and military theory.¹¹

Ramsey Withers in his article entitled “Review of the Undergraduate Program at the Royal Military College of Canada,” additionally added to General Hackett’s definition of specific knowledge by describing it as;

The expertise in question demands both a broad liberal education and a body of more esoteric, often technical knowledge necessary to effectively apply military force in an ordered manner. A broad liberal education is also necessary to ensure the professional officer responds naturally to political and societal norms and goals which ultimately control his conduct. Social responsibility involves incorporating ethical standards and practices which no matter how they are modified to accommodate the unique nature of the military profession – must reflect the society in which that profession is embedded. These responsibilities are contained in the body of knowledge making up the officer’s expertise.¹²

In his book, *Profession of Arms*, General Hackett recognized public service but was adamant that the military profession goes beyond the normal public servant. General Hackett’s most famous and repeated quote delineating the most definable part of the definition of the

“Profession of Arms” was stated as, “The essential basis of military life is the ordered application of force under an unlimited liability. It is the unlimited liability which sets the man who embraces this life somewhat apart. He will be (or should be) always a citizen. So long as he serves, he will never be a civilian.”¹³ General Fogleman described what is meant by the term “unlimited liability” in his article entitled “Profession of Arms”.

No other profession expects its members to lay down their lives for their friends, families, or freedoms. But our profession readily expects its members to willingly risk their lives in performing their professional duties. By voluntarily serving in the military profession, we accept unique responsibilities. In today’s world, service to country requires not only a high degree of skill but a willingness to make personal sacrifices.¹⁴

However, General Hackett also realized the human reality of men in what he termed as “the pursuit of private excellence” cited in the opening quotation of this paper.¹⁵ This brings in the notion that individual desires are as much a part of a professional group as their unique group identity. Why should we encourage such development? General Hackett explains that such pursuits enhance skills that are important to the armed forces, they develop mental, moral, and physical qualities required of a fighting man, and lastly they improve quality of life and make the military an attractive way of life.¹⁶

For an airman, exactly what is the specific technical knowledge required? TSgt Alfredo T. Rabina, Office of the Strategic and Special Studies, Philippine Air Force, provided an excellent definition of required knowledge from an airman’s perspective in his March 2000 essay entitled “The Air Power Doctrines and Components.”

The professional approach is to understand the instruments of air power and comprehend the environment in which they are applied- at an appropriate level. For the military professional this means duality of professions--intertwining specialization that develop together. The one demands a technical knowledge; the other a military knowledge as part of the profession of arms. The latter demands an understanding of air power at successively higher levels, culminating in the strategic level expertise of senior officers. The professional airman is not just an

aviator, logistician, administrator or engineer, but also a member of the profession of arms. Experience and knowledge in air power first, and then in a chosen specialization, epitomizes the professional airman.¹⁷

Carl H. Builder in his book, *The Icarus Syndrome*, relates a definition of the “Profession of Arms” directly to the overriding mission of the Air Force;

It may be sufficient to separate the profession of arms from other professions on but one aspect: on the unreserved commitment to a lawfully assigned mission, even at the risk of deliberate giving and taking human life. Even those in the military whose lives are not directly at risk in hazardous or combat operations, but who support those who are at risk, should be professionals at arm, for their actions too, ultimately may lead to the deliberate giving and taking of human lives. Given that awesome responsibility, the true professional of arms, regardless of position or specialization, regardless of proximity to the hazards, cannot be deflected from the commitment to mission above all else-if necessary, even above personal safety, career, and associations.¹⁸

Assimilating the above, a definition for the “Profession of Arms” can be stated to include certain characteristics; a calling, broad liberal education coupled with specialized technical knowledge peculiar to the military mission (understanding of air power first, then technical specialty), group corporateness, the existence of special institutions, educational growth for its members in the art and science of war, a specific career structure inclusive of promotions and rank, public service, “pursuit of private excellence,” commitment to the mission, and last and most important, the acceptance of “unlimited liability” by all military professionals. With these basic concepts in mind, the Air Force must evaluate whether the “Profession of Arms” is our first and only profession or has it been put aside for the individual pursuit of technical professions that in some cases ignore the true traits of a military professional.

Development of Aerospace Leaders Initiative

To employ these aerospace capabilities effectively, we'll continue to develop commanders who think in terms of exploiting the whole aerospace continuum—leaders able to employ forces that produce the desired effects, regardless of where platforms reside, fly, or orbit. These leaders with experience and cross-competence in the increasingly complex range of military disciplines will lead aerospace and joint forces to victory for the nation.¹⁹

Air Force Vision 2020

Over the years the Air Force has previously identified the need to improve the preparation of our future senior Air Force leaders on multiple occasions beginning in the 1980's with several internal reports and a noted RAND study entitled the "Icarus Syndrome."²⁰ Several initiatives have been put forward in an attempt to re-institutionalize the "Profession of Arms" in the United States Air Force the latest being the formal establishment of a program office entitled "Developing Aerospace Leaders (DAL)" in 2000. This office was renamed the Force Development Division in 2002 under the Air Force Senior Leader Management Office. It's charter remains the same today;

By charter, the office is to examine and recommend actions necessary to prepare the USAF Total Force for leadership into the 21st century. The Air Force must develop leaders who arrive with credibility in and an intuitive understanding of our unique aerospace capabilities and how to best employ them throughout the spectrum of operations.²¹

Former Chief of Staff, General Michael Ryan, looking into the future generation of leaders questioned whether current Air Force leadership training was adequate to address the "need to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, flexibility, and clarity of its force-development process."²² To address this issue the "Developing Aerospace Leaders" initiative was created to "identify and modify counterproductive policies, practices, and procedures as well as explore and recommend processes to support and make the best practices routine."²³ The concentration of

this effort would cross all officer career fields in the hope of producing a more capable senior leadership corps. The basic learning objectives established for a leader were to:

1. Understand national security interests and fully exploit the aerospace domain to support national objectives.
2. Develop, cultivate, and maintain operational competence in the medium of aerospace.
3. Envision, develop, acquire, sustain, support, and employ capabilities that exploit the aerospace domain to create military effects.
4. Communicate the absolute and relative value of aerospace capabilities to the American people and their representatives.²⁴

For fifty years the Air Force produced some of the greatest leaders in the military.

So why did we worry about the future, surely it would be in good hands? CSAF General Ryan advocated strongly for the creation of the DAL office. Other senior officers also supported this initiative such as Generals Dixon, Hosmer, and Boyles.²⁵ Their rationale, “the Air Force needs DAL because of the lack of a unifying vision, the growth of occupationalism within the officer corps, the loss of heart and soul, and the need for cultivating a healthier mind-set.”²⁶ Although the DAL initiative has lost some steam in the last year, nevertheless it is clear that the contracting officer career field built on occupationalism, supported by extreme functional professionalism, and the greater institutional failure to cultivate Air Force officers in the broad sense, is ripe for a complete overhaul on how our officers are developed. Before we continue with a comparison of contracting officer development paths, the next chapter provides a brief background on Air Force military contracting officers.

Notes

³ Carl H. Builder, *The Icarus Syndrome: The role of air power theory in the evolution and fate of the U.S. Air Force*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, c1994, pg 104.

⁴ Officer Career Path Guide, Table of Contents. Available on the Internet: http://afas.afpc.randolph.af.mil/ofcr-cpguide/New_Folder/Career%20Path%20Guide.doc. 15 September 2002.

⁵ Mike Thirtle, “Developing Aerospace Leaders for the Twenty-First Century,” *Aerospace Power Journal*, Summer 2001, pg 55. Available Online: <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/apj/apj01/sum01/thirtle.pdf>. 6 September 2002.

⁶ Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, Online: <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>. 2 November 2002.

⁷ General Sir John Winthrop Hackett, *The Profession of Arms*, New York: Macmillan, 1983, pg 9.

Notes

- ⁸ Alan Hawke, "The Profession of Arms-People Initiatives," address to Royal United Services Institute-NSW, Australia, 28 August 2001. Mr. Hawke is the SECDEF in Australia. Available on the Internet: <http://www.defence.gov.au/media/2001/ACF3A2.doc>. 15 October 2002.
- ⁹ General Ronald R. Fogleman, "The Profession of Arms," *Air Power Journal*, Fall 1995. Available on the Internet: <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/apj/fogleman.pdf>. 25 October 2002.
- ¹⁰ Elbridge Colby, Ph. D, *The Profession of Arms*, New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1924, pg 19.
- ¹¹ Elbridge Colby, Ph. D, pg 19.
- ¹² Ramsey Withers, "Review of the Undergraduate Program at the Royal Military College of Canada," Defence Association National Network, Vol 5: No. 3, Winter 1998. Available on the Internet: http://www.sfu.ca/~dann/Backissuse/nn5-3_5.htm. 1 November 2002.
- ¹³ General Sir John Winthrop Hackett, pg 202.
- ¹⁴ General Ronald R. Fogleman, "The Profession of Arms,"
- ¹⁵ General Sir John Winthrop Hackett, pg 214.
- ¹⁶ General Sir John Winthrop Hackett, pg 211.
- ¹⁷ TSg Alfredo T. Rabina, "The Air Power Doctrines and Components," Office of Special Studies Digest, Vol 5.1, Jan-Mar 2000. Available on the Internet: http://www.paf.mil.ph/digest/d51/d51_4.htm. 26 October 2002.
- ¹⁸ Carl H. Builder, pg 282.
- ¹⁹ Air Force Vision 2020, Available on the Internet: <http://www.af.mil/vision/vision.pdf>. 10 October 2002.
- ²⁰ Bruce D. Callander, "To Be an American," *Air Force Magazine Online*, October 1999, Vol 82: No. 10. Available Online: <http://www.afa.org/magazine/Oct1999/1099airman.html>. 21 October 2002.
- ²¹ Force Development Website, <http://www.dal.af.mil/home.htm>. 5 September 2002.
- ²² Mike Thirtle, pg 53.
- ²³ Mike Thirtle, pg 53.
- ²⁴ Mike Thirtle, pg 54.
- ²⁵ Mike Thirtle, pg 54.
- ²⁶ Mike Thirtle, pg 54.

Chapter 3

Air Force Contracting Officers

Designation of Positions

The designation of military essential positions within DOD has been a question of relevance for many years because of the civilian-military mixed workforce. Historically, certain positions within DOD have been set-aside purposely for military officers. The Navy Acquisition Contracting Officer Internet homepage provided this short historical reference concerning military officers in procurement,

In 1965, the secretary of defense established a joint military study group to make recommendations to fill DOD's key military procurement positions. One of the primary recommendations of the study group was that each military department should insure that its career development programs provide for the establishment of a broader base of procurement billets in the grades of 0-2 and 0-3 to assure an adequate flow of junior officers into the field at an early date.²⁷

There are various DOD directives issued concerning designation and use of military positions. One directive of primary importance is DOD Directive 1100.9 issued in 1971 concerning Military-Civilian Staffing in Support Activities which states,

Military personnel normally will be assigned to management positions when required by law, when the position requires skills and knowledge acquired primarily through military training and experience, and when experience in the position is essential to enable the officer personnel to assume responsibilities necessary to maintain combat-related support and proper career development.²⁸

For the reasons stated above, especially to “maintain combat-related support,” military officers are presently assigned to numerous designated positions within the acquisition career fields inclusive of program management; communication-computer systems; contracting (including

contracting for construction); purchasing and procurement technician; industrial and/or contract property management; business, cost estimating and financial management (BCE&FM); auditing; manufacturing and production; quality assurance (QA); acquisition logistics; systems planning, research, development and engineering (SPRDE); test and evaluation (T&E); program management oversight; education, training, and career development; and Defense Contract Management Agency multifunction management.²⁹

USAF Contracting Career Field

The contracting career field within the Air Force is largely a civilian workforce. At present there are approximately 1,000 officers and 5,600 civilians assigned to the core contracting career field.³⁰ Additionally, an equally large number of enlisted personnel serve in contracting positions. Officers serve in various positions as contract managers, contracting officers, first-level supervisors, senior leaders, and commanders in all aspects of Air Force contracting.³¹ The Air Force's Military Contracting Review Team (MCRT) initiated by SAF/AQC in July 2002 provided some background information concerning the use of the military within the contracting career field. The team identified two distinctive purposes for assignment of military personnel within this career field: support AEF or contingency deployments and fulfill authorized command billets.

The successful support of the Air Expeditionary Force concept along with other worldwide deployments/exercises requires the immediate availability of a highly trained and capable warranted military contracting officer. It should be noted that roughly 90% of all DOD-wide contingency contracting support is provided by the Air Force, specifically the enlisted contracting corps. Officers presently provide about 5% of this DOD support.³² The officers and enlisted members garner their experience by working side by side with civilian counterparts at

their home stations. Deployed warranted contracting officers are normally sent early during deployments to ensure the set-up and sustainment of an AEF base of operations, thus they immediately incur the “unlimited liability” claim for those who practice the “Profession of Arms.”

Opportunity for command by officers is limited and well sought out. Approximately 110 Air Force command billets are required to be filled at installations and defense contract offices worldwide.³³ The military officer brings unique experience to each of the command positions inclusive of breadth of experience and differing operational mission perspectives.³⁴ The variety of assignments and levels thereof, coupled with phased professional military education, provides the commanding officers with a unique and valuable insight into our Air Force and DOD. Additionally, many contracting officers possess operational experience in other Air Force specialties, thus, enhancing not only others on such knowledge, but also possessing the ability to directly relate to everyday operational mission requirements.³⁵

Professional Standing

For years the contracting career field, as well as other acquisition fields, has attempted to professionalize itself. Professional organizations such as the National Contract Management Association and the Institute for Supply Management have evolved to profess the professionalization of the contracting career field. In 1990 the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) (Title 10 U.S.C. 1701-1764) was passed. The act “established education, training and experience requirements for entry and advancement in the acquisition career field within the DOD” with a goal to improve the overall acquisition process.³⁶ DAWIA requires the establishment of formal career paths for those people who want to pursue careers in acquisition. DOD has accomplished this by dividing acquisition career field into narrow

professions and establishing a formal certification process as detailed in DOD Manual 5000.52-M entitled “Acquisition Career Development Program.” The program’s purpose is to “establish experience, education, and training standards for specific acquisition workforce position categories and career fields, provide for certification guidelines of acquisition workforce members, and provide career paths for the acquisition workforce.”³⁷ The program mandates minimal experience, education, and training levels for professional certifications as well as qualifications for senior acquisition positions within DOD (Appendix A). Career development of both civilian and military contracting personnel follow directly in accordance with this manual.

Because of the inherently high educational and experience standards, the time needed to proficiently train an officer in this career field is long and arduous. The inherent requirements may have a negative affect on military officers which must “choose early in their careers whether to proceed as warfighting warriors or as acquisition warriors, because the training and experience necessary to do both successfully is simply too extensive. DAWIA encourages such an early decision toward a career in acquisition by requiring that paths be identified for officers to progress from entry level all the way to the most senior acquisition positions.”³⁸ Thus, it is only logical and reasonable that officers who enter this career field are closely tracked and scrutinized concerning assignments outside their officer specialty. Accession of Air Force officers for the contracting career field normally occurs either immediately upon entrance into the Air Force or after initial tours of duty in other career fields such as missile operations. This career field, like others, is also tapped to provide a standard quota of officers for special duty positions within the Air Force and DOD; a situation and practice most likely to continue. The Air Force uses a

simplified model of professional development for all officers that is more anecdotal guidance than a true foundation for all to begin from.

Notes

²⁷ “What is a NACO,” As quoted on Internet Homepage of the Navy Acquisition Contracting Officer, <http://www.contracts.hq.navsea.navy.mil/naco/naco-definition.html>. 28 October 2002.

²⁸ DOD Directive 1100.9, *Military-Civilian Staffing of Management Positions in Support Activities*, 8 September 1971. Available on the Internet: http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/d11009_090871/d11009p.pdf. 3 November 2002.

²⁹ DOD Manual 5000.52-M, *Acquisition Career Development Program*, November 1995, paragraph DL 1.1.8. Available on the Internet: http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/500052mwch1_1195/p500052m.pdf. 3 November 2002.

³⁰ Air Force Contracting Summary, Annual Report for FY 2000, pg II.a-6. Available on the Internet: <http://www.safaq.hq.af.mil/contracting/workforce/bluebook01/powerpoint/IIa6-20.ppt>. 23 November 2002.

³¹ Military Contracting Review Team Guidance Document, Draft, 8 July 2002.

³² Ibid

³³ Tom Wells, “Air Force’s Military Contracting Review Team,” Briefing to SAF/AQC, 11 October 2002.

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Military Contracting Review Team Guidance Document, Draft, 8 July 2002.

³⁶ Office of Federal Procurement Policy Letter 97-01, *Procurement System Education, Training and Experience Requirements for Acquisition Personnel*, 12 September 1997. Available on the Internet: <http://www.arnet.gov/Library/OFPP/PolicyLetters/Letters/PL97-01.html>. 3 November 2002.

³⁷ DOD Manual 5000.52-M, *Acquisition Career Development Program*, November 1995, paragraph C1.1.2.

³⁸ Keith F. Snider, “DAWIA and the Price of Professionalism”, *Acquisition Review Quarterly*, Fall 1996, pg 100.

Chapter 4

Career Development of Contracting Officers

Air Force Contracting Officers

Officer Professional Development (OPD) in the Air Force is documented in Air Force Instruction 36-2611 and is based on three elements: assignments, training/education, and counseling.³⁹ The overall goal of OPD is stated as development of a “well-rounded, professionally competent officer corps to meet current and future mission requirements. The officer’s aspirations, preferences, and long-term professional development goals will most likely be realized when in harmony with long-term Air Force requirements.”⁴⁰

Note the emphasis on “individual desires” versus “institutional needs.” Training includes planning “career specific training, PME, and advanced academic degrees.”⁴¹ Counseling provides feedback on performance, training, and future assignments. The importance of making proper assignments that provide depth and breadth and improve performance are more fully covered in the informal *Officer Career Path Guide* (Appendix B).

The contracting career field path is directly related to the requirements of DAWIA and has previously been represented in the form of a pyramid and backed up by narrative contained in the current *Officer Career Path Guide* (Appendix B).⁴² Emphasis on the achievement of certification levels under the Acquisition Professional Development Program (detailed and mandated DAWIA requirements) provides the framework for attainment of training and educational objectives. The guide leans extremely toward development of contracting officers

within the limits of the various positions available in the contracting career field with minor exceptions for opportunities outside the designated field. The guide's first line is "Future Air Force leaders will be comprised of those officers who demonstrate breadth and depth in their career field, show the ability to perform in high level staff jobs, to include joint positions, and prove their ability to lead."⁴³ Career progression involves four mission elements: operational, systems, laboratory, and logistics support. The guide, although not directive in nature, has produced some of the best specialists in the contracting discipline for the Air Force and DOD. The recently initiated Military Contracting Review Team (MCRT) replaced the pyramid with a newly illustrated guide (Appendix C). The new guide clearly describes a military contracting officer career path with specific goals aimed at posturing the force for the future beyond cold war assumptions and commencing the embankment on an Air Force Procurement Transformation Vision.⁴⁴ Additionally, the recently approved Air Force wing restructure, which places the contracting squadrons under the new Mission Support Group, also played a part in the structuring of the new illustrated guide.

The presently stated vision of the MCRT includes an in-depth look at eight specific areas in the contracting career field: recruiting plan, retention plan, professional development plan, educational transformation plan, service delivery plan, strategic sourcing plan, procurement information systems migration plan, and a customer communication plan.⁴⁵ The new illustrated career path guide now emphasizes two distinct but related career paths; one emphasizing mission support and the other emphasizing systems acquisition. At present the revised language to back up the illustrated guide for insertion in the Officer Career Path Guide is in draft form and not yet approved (Appendix D). The draft includes additional language that begins to support the attainment of a more diverse career approach such as, "They will also have "broadened"

themselves to become aerospace leaders, beyond contracting, by concentrating on key elements of systems acquisition management and/or installation-level mission support functions.”⁴⁶ The draft document states the expectations of career broadening tours and recommends the attainment of additional acquisition professional certifications in either program management or acquisition logistics.⁴⁷ The draft document is a clear shift in the approach to develop and train future contracting leaders in the Air Force. The final analysis of this paper will include some proposed revisions to both the illustrated guide and draft development document. A review of how our sister services, the Army and Navy, is appropriate to glean any possible improvements they may have concerning the development of future contracting officers in the Air Force.

Contracting Officer Development in the United States Navy

Unlike the Air Force, the Army and Navy have taken a different approach to the development of their military contracting officers. They do abide by the overarching DOD guidance of DOD Manual 5000.52-M but differ on the early development of their officers. The Air Force is noted for the highly specialized experienced contracting officers who have grown up as an officer with a very thorough and in-depth knowledge of the DOD acquisition process. For the Army and Navy, it is not unusual for officers assigned to acquisition programs to have extensive combat arms experience (e.g., pilots, ship captains, armor commanders) but with much shallower depth and experience in the acquisition career field.⁴⁸ This difference has both a positive and negative side. On the positive side it provides a more definitive operational approach to the handling of acquisition tasks and provides a vital link to the warrior in the field. Second, it requires development of the “Profession of Arms” first prior to advancing to a second profession, acquisition. On the negative side, the vast knowledge, education, and experience needed to address and properly manage some of the most complex DOD procurement programs

may be lacking in comparison with the Air Force individual. The sheer amount of procurement dollars spent each year is significant enough that all services must ensure monies are spent wisely and judiciously.

The United States Navy develops their contracting leaders through the Navy Supply Corps. NAVSUP Publication 552, *It's Your Career*, states “the primary mission of the Supply Corps is to provide expertise to the Navy and other DOD operations in logistics, acquisition, and financial management.”⁴⁹ They are referred to as the “Navy business managers” connected to the “essential operation of the Navy’s modern ships, submarines, aircraft, and facilities.”⁵⁰ Although the career field is very fluid concerning how an officer progresses with his or her career, the publication goes on to describe “Three Pillars to a Career” for which each officer should attain. The first pillar is referred to as “Qualification” which is described as,

While at sea, whether in a ship, submarine, or aviation squadron, a Supply Corps officer has the opportunity to participate in a Supply Corps warfare specialty program. These programs enhance our knowledge and understanding of weapons platforms while also contributing to a more credible relationship with our line counterparts.⁵¹

The second pillar, “Assignments,” is described as professional development in multiple functional areas through different duty assignments, job rotation and formal training. The importance of achieving dual specialties is cited in the publication, “Diversity in geographic location, warfare and functional expertise provides officers with the skills to fulfill roles that benefit the Navy and their careers.”⁵² One of the Navy’s functional areas is acquisition and contract management. The third and last pillar is “Education” which includes various functional area internships, postgraduate education, and service colleges. These three pillars provide a basic framework for officers to both plan and carry out individual career plans in the interests of the Navy.

The recommended and suggested officer career progression begins with their first assignment afloat followed by shore duty and then back afloat again. This cycle continues throughout the naval career of an officer. Time ashore allows officers to sub-specialize into specific fields such as acquisition/contract management. Publication 552 specifically cites this additional training as secondary to the Naval Officer Corps.

Sea duty is vital in the development and future effectiveness of Supply Corps officers. One must not lose sight that Supply Corps officers are foremost and always naval officers. The Supply Corps is a seagoing Corps and approximately one-third of the total Corps is always assigned afloat. Superior service to the fleet is the primary goal of the Supply Corps. Responsive support to the fleet is dependent upon understanding the responsibilities and needs of the line community and the technical, operational, and maintenance characteristics of installed systems.⁵³

Note that there is a specific and purposeful connection of an officer's duties to the operational level of the Navy throughout the career of a supply corps officer. Entry into a sub-specialization during shore duty is completed through developmental tours.

Supply Corps Internship programs are available and provide "exceptional formal and on-the-job training in various areas of acquisition management."⁵⁴ These programs such as the Navy Acquisition Contracting Officer internship provide the initial training and experience necessary to achieve level II APDP certification in the contracting career field.⁵⁵ As a Navy officer progresses in their career, an opportunity is provided to join the "Acquisition Professional Community (APC)."

The APC consists of a select group of highly skilled military acquisition professionals who meet specific education, training and experience requirements. APC membership is a prerequisite for assignment to approximately 100 Supply Corps Critical Acquisition Positions (CAPs) at the O-5 level or above unless the requirement is waived before the individual enters the CAP.⁵⁶

Membership is further restricted to those at the 0-4 grade, attainment of minimal DAWIA requirements, and certification at level II or III in an acquisition career field.⁵⁷ There are

normally two APC selection boards held annually. The United States Army has a similar career path to develop future leaders for their acquisition community.

Contracting Officer Development in the United States Army

Leadership development is a generic process for all Army officers with the use of three pillars: institutional training, operational assignments, and self-development.⁵⁸ These pillars “define and engage a continuous cycle of selection, education, training, experience, assessment, feedback, reinforcement, and evaluation.”⁵⁹ The cycle is repeated over and over again during an officer’s career. The purpose of this deliberate method is stated in DA Pamphlet 600-3;

The over-arching priority of the leader development process is to develop leaders of character and competence who act to achieve excellence and who understand and are able to exploit the full potential of current and future Army doctrine.

All Army officers are accessed into one of fifteen branches of the operational force of the Army. For approximately five to eight years, officers “develop basic branch skills, achieve company grade branch qualification, and develop a firm base of war-fighting knowledge.”⁶⁰ At this time officers are selected and designated into a functional area for further development such as the Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) Functional Area. The initial years spent in a basic branch serve as a basic Army foundation as expressed in DAP 600-3.

It is important for officers to have experience with soldiers and systems, and with equipment they will eventually develop and acquire for the Army. This phase precedes development of AAC skills and is fundamental to the success of Acquisition officers.⁶¹

After entrance into AAC, an officer enters what is termed the acquisition developmental years. The officer is given multiple acquisition assignments as Captain and Major along with required DAWIA training resulting in achievement of specialty certifications. DAP 600-3 also recommends that officers obtain APDP certification in two areas of concentration (AOC); level

III in a primary AOC and level II in a secondary AOC.⁶² Obtainment of multiple certifications provides the best background to fill critical acquisition positions later in an officer's career. Officers are also encouraged to pursue an advanced degree in their prescribed area. It should also be noted that it is during these years (8-14) that APDP certified officers are expected to deploy as contingency contracting officers (CCOs) in support of forces in the field. Unlike the Air Force, all CCOs in the Army hold officer commissions.

All AAC officers are encouraged to attend the Advanced Program Management Course at the Defense Systems Management College between their 15th and 17th years of service. Upon promotion to lieutenant colonel, officers are selected into the DOD Critical Acquisition Corps and are available to compete for critical command positions within the DOD acquisition community. Except for the initial Army branch assignments, most AAC members remain in the acquisition functional area until the completion of their careers unlike the Navy that promotes rotational supply assignments afloat after each shore duty. With a definition of the "Profession of Arms" and completion of a brief review for differing officer development paths, what changes should be considered for the Air Force's *Officer Career Path Guide* concerning Contracting Officers?

Chapter 5

New Officer Professional Development Model

Proposed Construct for Contracting Officers

Based on the above discussions concerning how the services develop leaders, I propose a common professional development model for all USAF officers based on four pillars of development and in direct relations with the “Profession of Arms.” The pillars include: professional military education, specialized training, leadership development, and private expertise (termed by Gen Hackett).

Professional Military Education (PME)

This pillar encompasses the completion of appropriate military courses at specified time periods of an officer’s career. This pillar is the common link between the pilot and the support officer providing an opportunity for both to sit side by side and discuss military issues. It includes the existing Air & Space Basic Course, Squadron Officer College, Air Command & Staff College (Intermediate Service School), and Air War College (Senior Service School).

Officer PME is presently established in multiple courses of varying length purposely timed over the normal career. The first course is the “Air & Space Basic Course” scheduled for all officers either prior to reporting to their first duty station or soon thereafter. It provides the foundation for our role as airmen. The course concentrates on the USAF core values, USAF core competencies, and introduces air and space doctrine.⁶³ Squadron Officer School is the next level

offered between four and seven years of service. This course addresses education on Leadership & Management, Military Studies, Communication Studies, and what is referred to as Profession of Arms Studies.⁶⁴ The total focus of the Profession of Arms Studies area focuses on the distinctive knowledge of the airman concerning war-fighting strategies, tactics, and doctrine in relation to achieving victory.⁶⁵ The Profession of Arms Studies instruction in SOS should be standard in all PME curriculums to serve as a reminder of who we are—airman. The next level of PME is focused at the 0-4 grade, Air Command & Staff College. A much longer and in-depth program than ASBC and SOS, it covers multiple areas from National Security Strategy to Joint Campaign Planning. The last PME course is Air War College that provides an emphasis on “strategic leadership” and the opportunity to study multiple military and national subjects of interest in more depth. No doubt, the PME system is very sound, methodical, and purposely attempts to educate and remind officers who and what they are. Officers should strive for attendance by residence if at all possible. The experience, education, and time, are all valuable investments into the future of our profession. Outside the normal PME courses, the Company Grade Professional Officer Development Program, now a local wing initiative, needs to be instituted as an Air Force wide standard course providing an operational level link between ASBC and SOS.

Specialized Training

In order to accomplish the Air Force mission, there is a requirement to train officers in multiple operational and support occupations. Initial training time varies by discipline, however follow-on formal and informal training is also used extensively to both upgrade skills and expand knowledge. The contracting career field has numerous courses to educate, tone, and refine

required skills of its profession. Certain specialties, such as contracting, also provide an opportunity to earn graduate degrees through service sponsorship.

Specialized Training is built into the contracting officer career field via the DAWIA requirements for training and certification (Appendix A). Courses can be completed through various means such as residence, on-line, and on-site instruction. Contracting officers should set a goal to attain level II certification in contracting after two years in the career and level III no later than their promotion to major. Upon attainment of level II certification, officers should seek out a contracting warrant to begin exercising their new contracting expertise. Dual certification as recommended in the Army and Navy provides both depth and breadth in the field of acquisition. USAF Officers should obtain level II certification in a second acquisition discipline such as program management or acquisition logistics. Specialized training occurs over the whole career of an officer. In addition, many acquisition organizations including squadrons normally offer many locally developed courses or workshops and on occasion training provided by other government agencies. These alternate training sources provide an invaluable amount of practical information. Officers should also seek out opportunities to attain a Master's degree from the Air Force Institute of Technology to further their contracting and acquisition knowledge.

Leadership Development

The development of officer leadership is a career long process for all officers. PME and specialized training normally devote some portion of their curriculum to the topic of leadership. Unlike the Army, opportunities to lead in the Air Force do not begin upon initial entry into the service. As company grade officers (CGOs), contracting officers should seek leadership positions as early as possible after their basic contracting training is complete. Some other

officer specialties will have an inherently difficult time in finding such positions in their career field. After attainment of level II APDP certification, company grade officers should be given opportunities to lead as flight commanders within squadrons or as negotiation leads in major system acquisitions. AEF deployments provide an excellent opportunity for CGOs to lead as contingency contracting officers serving with well-trained and seasoned enlisted personnel.

As field grade officers, various command opportunities at the squadron level and within the Defense Contract Management Command are available for select officers with proven records of leadership. The major Air Force system centers also offer similar positions such as branch chiefs, deputy directors, and in some cases directors. Assignments to MAJCOMs and Air Staff as action officers provide individuals with the opportunity to not only learn about policy-making but also affect future policy. All of these positions offer the opportunity to practice one's specialty and organizational leadership skills. What positions should an officer pursue? Although no one path of assignments guarantees success, it is important for officers to be mentored by senior officers as to their career development.

The officer mentorship program now included, as AFI 36-34 needs to be instituted widely and practiced aggressively to aid in the preparation of officers for more senior positions. Mentoring is not just a commander or supervisor responsibility; it is a responsibility all officers owe to our younger officers. All officers should be encouraged strongly to attach onto a mentor(s) early in their career to share and provide advice not just on contracting or advancement, but on all Air Force issues and concerns. The creation and use of individual development plans for military officers as discussed in the next section would provide an excellent basis for these initial discussions.

Private Expertise

This pillar encompasses all the self-development tools available to enhance the skills and knowledge of our officers. It is not just concerned with military subjects but also those in each of our own private lives. This pillar provides the balance to the other three and compliments the achievement of the “whole person concept.”

Education and learning are continuous cycles. Attainment of higher education degrees is strongly encouraged not just for the sake of a degree but to attain additional skills in critical thinking and to exercise the mind. The degree completed should be one that will compliment and enhance an officer’s personal value and that of their “Profession of Arms.” Additionally, the CSAF Reading list provides an excellent reference of books related to the “Profession of Arms” that should not just be encouraged but mandated as “must reads” for all officers. The receipt of industry professional certifications and participation in their associations provides for the informal interaction between members of the “Profession of Arms” and civilian counterparts. Other activities such as academic published articles and attendance at professional seminars also provide means for improving oneself. The attainment of additional foreign language skills is now considered more important than ever especially with the increasing AEF deployments.⁶⁶ Officers should be encouraged to learn and practice a second language and thus become bilingual at a minimum. Officers should be encouraged to broaden their horizons, challenge their minds, and constantly strive to improve themselves.

All pillars carry equal weight, however, in order to be a value to the “Profession of Arms” community at large, an Air Force officer must first and foremost understand what we bring to the fight. I am not referencing just platforms, I am referring to our air and space doctrine and how its use can provide the exploitation and necessary support to assist any

combatant commander's in their quest for victory on the battlefield. So exactly how can we put together a planning document that would assist us in the attainment of the four pillars for the "Profession of Arms?"

Individual Development Plans

Planning is an essential feature of the military and is also something missing from the existing Air Force officer development program. Civilians in other government agencies such as NASA and NOAA as well as the U.S. Navy all use a tool referred to as an "Individual Development Plan (IDP)" to stipulate near and long-term career goals with education and training intertwined to achieve their goals.⁶⁷ The United States Coast Guard uses a similar tool for all its members, civilian and military alike. They define an IDP as,

A tool to help individuals reach career goals within the context of organizational objectives. It is a developmental "action" plan to move members/employees from where they are to where they want to go. It provides the systematic steps to build on strengths and overcome weaknesses as individuals improve job performance and pursue career goals.⁶⁸

The guide goes on further to state that the objectives for such a plan are: to learn new skills to improve current job performance, maximize current performance in support of organizational requirements, increase interest, challenges, and satisfaction in current position, obtain competencies necessary for a promotion or change in grade, series, or field.⁶⁹

Every Air Force officer should prepare such a tool with the help of a mentor upon their accession into the officer corps with periodic updates as one progresses in the "Profession of Arms." This tool would provide a viable career map to begin developing our senior leaders. An important element for this tool will involve the aggressive use of our USAF mentoring program. The use of a military IDP is the beginning of re-looking at the career guidance now given to our contracting officers.

Notes

- ³⁹ Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2611, *Officer Professional Development*, 1 April 1996. Available on the Internet: <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/pubfiles/af/36/afi36-2611/afi36-2611.pdf>. 15 September 2002.
- ⁴⁰ Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2611Ibid
- ⁴¹ Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2611Ibid
- ⁴² Officer Career Path Guide, Chapter 4.12, Contracting Career Path. Available on the Internet: http://afas.afpc.randolph.af.mil/ofcr-cpguide/New_Folder/Career%20Path%20Guide.doc. 15 September 2002.
- ⁴³ Officer Career Path Guide, paragraph 4.12.
- ⁴⁴ Brigadier General Darryl A. Scott, Deputy Assistant Secretary (Contracting), Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, "Air Force Contracting, View from the Top," presented at the 2002 Worldwide Contracting Training Conference, Norfolk, VA, 8 October 2002. Briefing referenced as SAF/AQC Perspective and available on the Internet: <http://www.safaq.hq.af.mil/contracting/conferences/worldwide2002/briefs/tues.html>. 2 November 2002.
- ⁴⁵ Brigadier General Darryl A. Scott
- ⁴⁶ "DRAFT Contracting Career Development for Military Officers" dated 24 September 2002, AF Military Contracting Review Team. Presented at the 2002 Worldwide Contracting Training Conference. Available on the Internet: <http://www.safaq.hq.af.mil/contracting/conferences/worldwide2002/files/OfficerCareerGuide24Sep02.doc>. 11 November 2002. Appendix D to this paper.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid
- ⁴⁸ Keith F. Snider, "DAWIA and the Price of Professionalism", *Acquisition Review Quarterly*, Fall 1996, pg 100.
- ⁴⁹ NAVSUP Publication 552, *It's Your Career*, 30 August 1999, pg 1. Available on the Internet: http://www.navsupsupply.mil/supply_corps/officers/fy99officeritsy.doc. 3 November 2002.
- ⁵⁰ NAVSUP Publication 552 Ibid
- ⁵¹ NAVSUP Publication 552, pg 18.
- ⁵² NAVSUP Publication 552, pg 36.
- ⁵³ NAVSUP Publication 552, pg 15.
- ⁵⁴ NAVSUP Publication 552, pg. 15.
- ⁵⁵ "What is a NACO," Navy Acquisition Contracting Officer Homepage, Available on the Internet: <http://www.contracts.hq.navsea.navy.mil/naco/naco-definition.html>. 28 October 2002.
- ⁵⁶ NAVSUP Publication 552, *It's Your Career*, 30 August 1999, pg. 27.
- ⁵⁷ NAVSUP Publication 552Ibid
- ⁵⁸ Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Development and Career Management*, 1 October 1998, pg 3. Available on the Internet: <http://www.nd.edu/~bhenness/DAPAM6003.pdf>. 15 September 2002.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid
- ⁶⁰ Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, pg 272.
- ⁶¹ Ibid
- ⁶² Ibid
- ⁶³ Air & Space Basic Course Web Page, ASBC Curriculum. <http://abc.maxwell.af.mil/curriculum.htm>. 30 October 2002.
- ⁶⁴ Squadron Officer School Web Page, <http://sos.maxwell.af.mil/curriculum.htm>. 30 October 2002.
- ⁶⁵ Squadron Officer School Web Page Ibid
- ⁶⁶ MSgt Ron Tull, "CSAF Encourages Foreign Language, Area Studies," Air Force Print News, Washington D.C., 11 September 2002. Comments by General John P. Jumper, CSAF. Available on the Internet: <http://www.af.mil/news/Sep2002/91102285.shtml>. 15 September 2002.
- ⁶⁷ "Civilian Steps to Planning Your Acquisition Career," Army Acquisition Support Center, paragraph 5, On the Internet: <http://dacm.rdaisa.army.mil/civiliansteps.htm>. 9 November 2002.
- ⁶⁸ IDP Guide, United States Coast Guard, pg 2. Available on the Internet: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wt/g-wt/idp/idp.pdf>. 30 October 2002.
- ⁶⁹ IDP Guide, United States Coast Guard, pg 3.

Chapter 6

Revisions to the Contracting Officer Career Guide

Now that an operational definition of the “Profession of Arms” has been established and a review of our sister services leadership development process has been completed, this chapter provides recommended revisions to the Contracting Officer Guide. Revisions will be made in direct references to the four pillars of OPD previously discussed in this paper (PME, specialized training, leadership development, and private expertise. Incorporation of the revisions will be applied to the present guide (Appendix B) and the current draft guide (Appendix D) resulting in a new proposed guide included as Appendix E to this paper.

The first notable revision is to the opening paragraph with a renewed emphasis on the “Profession of Arms” as the first profession of an officer and reference of identity not as a contracting officer but as an Air Force officer. The new opening sentence serves as a constant reminder of who we really are and what we are really about; all in the context of the profession we serve. The body of the guide has been revised to reflect the four pillars of the “Profession of Arms” construct model to both plan and evaluate one’s career development. Based on the review of our sister services, the following recommendations are made to the draft guide.

The draft guide presently addresses and encourages dual certifications of different functions within the acquisition career field. Previously this was not written into the guidance. Attainment of a secondary certification at level II should become a goal for every contracting officer. The receipt of such certification enhances the officer and the Air Force. However, officers will also have assignment opportunities outside their core specialty.

It is a fact that the Army trains soldiers first and the Navy trains seamen first. The Air Force presently trains specialists first then attempts to develop airmen over the course of a career. Career broadening assignments provide an excellent opportunity for officers to gain more breadth and possible depth into the other mission areas of the Air Force. With the continued shortages of rated officers, support officers will continue to fill many positions previously reserved for the rated force. The down side is the removal of an officer from his functional specialty for three to four years. However, the up side far outweighs the drawbacks as an officer increases his overall value to the service by gaining a second specialty. Notwithstanding the fact that the Air Force is unique in our mission and how we fight, initial assignment of all new officers to wing level organizations would begin a vital needed link to the operational Air Force. Deliberate planning of future assignments should ensure that contracting officers are cross-flowed between the operational part of the Air Force and the systems acquisition side of the service. The draft-illustrated guide supports this assumption.

Both the Navy and Army bring current operational officers into the acquisition career field through the use of selection and screening boards. This alternative should be considered by the Air Force through the creation of an Air Force Acquisition Corps. Accession of officers at the Captain rank through an Air Force level screening board could be instituted. Such use of a board would provide advantages. To understand the multiple internal Air Force customers, officers must be able to identify themselves with the operational aspects of the force first. By accessing officers after their initial tours, the contracting career field is enhanced by the versatility and enhanced operational knowledge brought in by officers in other specialties. Officers would have already attained one specialty before entering the contracting field. An alternative approach to this recommendation is the creation and standardization of a contracting officer cross-flow

program that would include assignment of young officers to other organizations on a base for short periods of time. The local contracting squadron commanders could manage such a program. Although secondary AFSCs would not be possible, the experience gained from seeing things from the customer's side will provide a life long appreciation for day-to-day contracting customers.

The last recommendation for improving the development of contracting officers is the institution and usage of a military individual development program to both plan and track an officer's career. It is imperative though that a strong mentoring program be established and formally used by all officers to help guide officers not just to their next assignment but to the one after that and the one after that. The senior officers in contracting need to take the responsibility to institute this program deeply into the career field. Although commanders and supervisors are already designated mentors, officers should be encouraged to engage in communications with other senior officers outside their chain of command. The mentor-protégé relationships built should not be just for the short term but life-long.

Appendix E and F include recommended changes to the draft language and the illustrated guide based on the above with inclusion of the "Profession of Arms" construct model presented in this paper.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

*America needs and deserves the best airman we can create.
Our Air Force needs and deserves the best leaders we can
develop.⁷⁰*

CSAF General Michael E. Ryan

The development of future Air Force leaders is an investment into ourselves both as an institution and a profession. Our profession is not that of technical specialists but that of the “Profession of Arms.” By re-emphasizing our first and true profession, we can overcome the “occupationalism” within our officer ranks. Contracting officers can no longer live and breathe one specialty for their entire careers, they must garner additional skills that will not only enhance their ability to perform but that of the Air Force to complete its mission. The MCRT chartered by General Darryl A. Scott this past summer has gotten off to quick start evaluating future contracting officer development within the Air Force. Their initial work was used a catalyst for the research presented in this paper.

The “Profession of Arms” motto is used extensively in military literature and this paper attempted to define the abstract term in relatable words and concepts using various descriptions from military and civilian sources. To incorporate this concept into USAF officer development, a review of officer development in the Air Force, Army and Navy was completed. Based on the developed definition of the “Profession of Arms” and development practices of the other services, a construct model has been presented in this paper consisting of four pillars (PME, Specialized Training, Leadership Development, and Private Expertise). The pillars have been

defined and represent different areas within our profession that require our utmost attention during our military careers. Success measured by the attainment of each pillar will be that of a better-prepared capable senior leader in the United States Air Force.

Using the defined pillars, recommended revisions to the present and draft contracting officer career path guide have been presented in an updated guide attached to this paper (Appendices E and F). An additional recommendation was made concerning the possible establishment of an Air Force Acquisition Corps, similar to our sister services that would assess officers into the contracting career field at the Captain rank.

Although there is no single path to a successful career in the contracting function, the re-emphasis of the “Profession of Arms” into the development of senior leaders will ultimately produce better and more capable officers who may one day be called upon to lead our future United States Air Force.

Notes

⁷⁰ General Michael E. Ryan, Commander’s Notice to Airman (NOTAM) 01-02, “Developing Aerospace Leaders,” 22 March 2001.

Appendix A

Contracting Certification Requirements

- ❑ **LEVEL I**
 - **EDUCATION**
 - Baccalaureate degree
 - At least 24 semester hours among accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management
 - **EXPERIENCE**
 - 1 year of contracting experience
 - **TRAINING**
 - CON 100 Shaping Smart Business Arrangements [JHE]
 - CON 101 Basics of Contracting [BDQ]
 - CON 104 Principles of Contract Pricing [BDR]
 - (Desired) CON 237 Simplified Acquisition Procedures [PAS]
- ❑ **LEVEL II**
 - **EDUCATION**
 - Baccalaureate degree
 - At least 24 semester hours among accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management
 - (Desired) Graduate studies in business administration or procurement
 - **EXPERIENCE**
 - 2 years of contracting experience
 - (Desired) An additional 2 years of contracting experience
 - **TRAINING**
 - CON 202 Intermediate Contracting [PGE]
 - CON 204 Intermediate Contract Pricing [BU6]
 - CON 210 Government Contract Law [BDP]
- ❑ **LEVEL III**
 - **EDUCATION**
 - Baccalaureate degree*
 - At least 24 semester hours among accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management
 - (Desired) Master's degree in business administration or procurement
 - **EXPERIENCE**
 - 4 years of contracting experience
 - (Desired) An additional 4 years of contracting experience
 - **TRAINING**
 - CON 301 Executive Contracting [BB3]
 - CON 333 Management for Contracting Supervisors [BU7]
 - (Desired) 2 weeks of management and leadership training
(Not currently provided by DAU. See your local training support office.)

Source: DAU 2003 Catalog⁷¹

Notes

⁷¹ DAU 2003 Catalog, Appendix B, "Contracting." Available on the Internet: <http://www.dau.mil/catalog/cat2003/AppendixB.pdf>. 15 October 2002.

Appendix B

Career Path Guide (Contracting)

4.12. Contracting Career Path. Future Air Force leaders will be comprised of those officers who demonstrate breadth and depth in their career field, show the ability to perform in high-level staff jobs, to include joint positions, and prove their ability to lead. Your development as a future Air Force leader is an on-going process, and decisions made today will impact your future. It is imperative you work with your peers, supervisor, and most importantly your commander to get the best possible advice. The Air Force Assignment System gives you freedom in planning your future, but also the responsibility to balance Air Force needs with personal desires. Every person's career takes unique twists and turns, and there's no "school-approved solution." The key to what you'll see below--"bloom where you are planted." Do the best you can with each and every endeavor you take on, and the rest should fall into place.

4.12.1. Your commander or supervisor is available to guide and counsel you, but ultimately you must make the decisions. This career path guide should help you with those decisions. Figure 4.12 is the 64PX pyramid which shows you the type of opportunities available in your career field.

4.12.2. When initially assigned to contracting you are expected to build depth through technical experience within the career field. The contracting career field has three technical areas of emphasis: Pre-award, post-award, and pricing. Pre-award includes acquisition planning, analysis of purchase requests and technical documents for suitability, and determining the proper contracting method and type. Further, it encompasses solicitation, evaluation of offers, including cost and price analysis, contractor responsibility and responsiveness, selection of contract source, contract assembly and award. Post-award entails administration of contracts to ensure contract compliance, modification negotiation, and termination actions for convenience of the government or for default. Pricing includes in-depth cost and price analysis, evaluation of offers and support for source selections and contract award, as well as support for logistics and modification.

4.12.2.1. There are four mission elements which have unique requirements: Operational, systems, laboratory, (or research and development), and logistics support. Operational contracting includes the maintenance and support of all Air Force installations worldwide. Systems contracting encompasses the acquisition and support of air, space, missile, and electronic systems throughout the Air Force. Laboratory contracting involves state-of-the-art research and development on past, present and future Air Force programs. Logistics contracting supports delivered systems by maintaining and equipping personnel and providing maintenance and spare parts.

4.12.2.2. These technical areas and mission elements are accomplished through various commands and agencies. All Air Force commands include the full spectrum of operational contracting which covers the pre-award and post-award technical areas. In addition to operational contracting, Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC) also includes systems, laboratory (research and development), and logistics support, which covers the pre-award and pricing technical areas. The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) includes logistics support and administration and covers the pre-award and post-award technical areas.

4.12.2.3. To experience the full breadth of these opportunities in sufficient depth a minimum of two, normally three, permanent change of station (PCS) moves are required. When contemplating such a move, keep in mind a balanced approach to professional development (i.e., if you spent the last assignment in a buying position, then seek opportunities on the contract administration side). *NOTE:* By law, certain contracting certifications must be attained at the appropriate time in order to hold acquisition positions.

4.12.3. The technical foundation you build early in your career pays great dividends as a staff officer. Staff billets above the wing level are prevalent in every major Air Force command and some joint agencies such as the DLA. Your attractiveness as a staff officer to a command will depend greatly on your experience and performance.

4.12.3.1. In addition to contracting staff positions, a limited number of staff billets can be found outside the career field. These opportunities include serving as an instructor in Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), Basic Military Training, Officer Training School (OTS), Squadron Officer School (SOS), recruiting service, or the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA).

4.12.3.2. Current trends in support officer assignments show that at some point in their career, officers may perform a career broadening assignment. These operations support and special duty assignments are opportunities for officers to expand their staff or command skills and build breadth to their career.

4.12.3.3. About 20 percent of those officers selected for major will be identified as candidates for resident Intermediate Service School (ISS). Many ISS students will go to a challenging joint-duty staff assignment, commander, MAJCOM, or Air Staff level job upon graduation. Officers not afforded the opportunity to attend Professional Military Education (PME) in residence should complete PME by correspondence or seminar to remain competitive in their Air Force career progression.

4.12.4. There are numerous opportunities for leadership within the contracting career field. Junior officers can be functional team leaders as procuring and administrative contracting officers. As senior captains and majors, officers can compete for operational contracting squadron commander billets. These positions provide excellent opportunities to manage and lead a unit. Within product centers, officers can be chiefs of contracting divisions in System Program Offices (SPO) supporting major systems procurement.

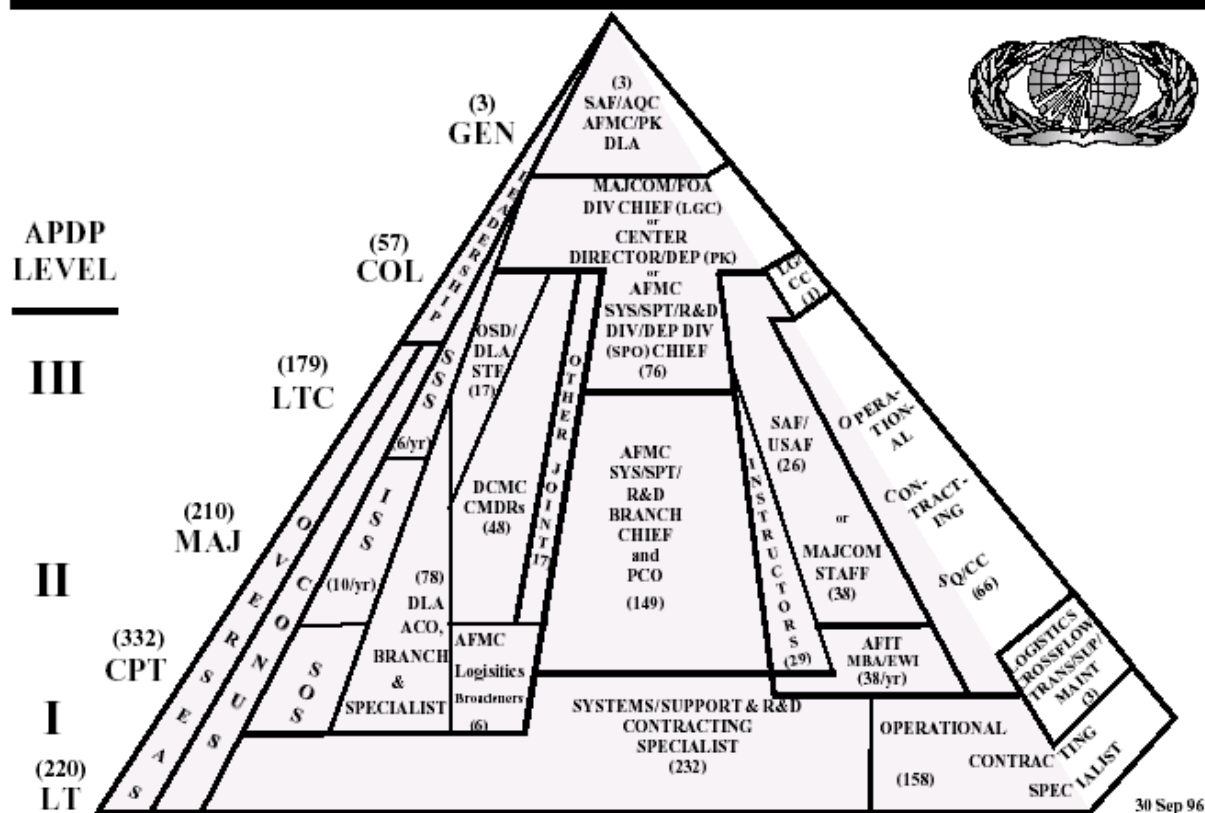
4.12.4.1. After successfully completing a leadership tour, officers selected for lieutenant colonel or colonel will have the opportunity to vie for in-residence attendance at Senior Service School (SSS). Upon graduation, many officers are assigned to the Air Staff or joint-duty billets. Senior positions like the director of contracting at major product centers or commander at a Defense Contract Management Command Office within DLA are available for a select group of senior officers.

4.12.4.2. This narrative does not suggest that all contracting officers should strive to be the next Deputy Assistant Secretary for Contracting, or that there is only one ideal path to that level. However, experience indicates that a successful Air Force contracting career normally includes a strong technical base, solid staff experience, and challenging leadership positions. Product center positions, squadron command, joint duty, and an Air Staff tour appear to be essential building blocks for promotion to senior contracting positions. Whatever your goals, the often-used phrase still holds true: How well you do in your current job is the most important factor in determining your future success.

Reproduced from Career Path Guide, paragraph 4.12⁷²

Notes

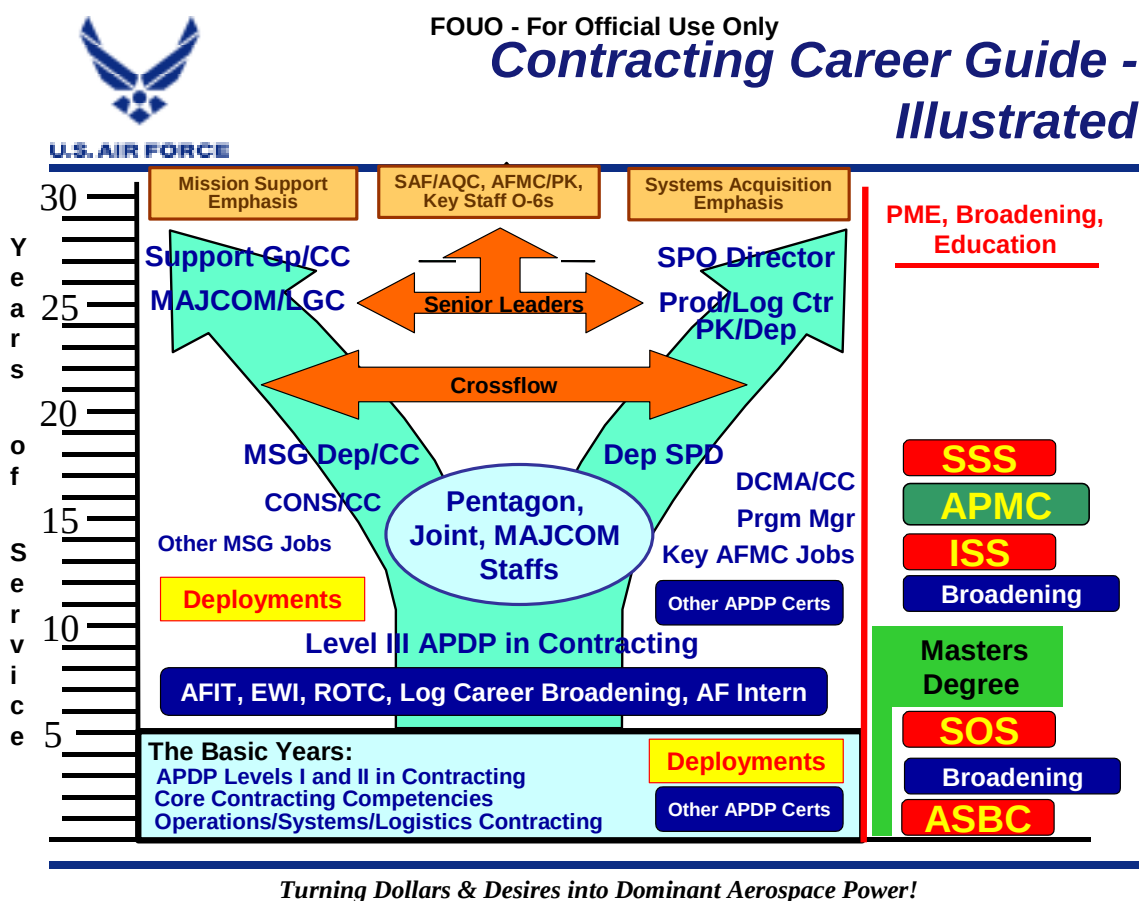
⁷² Officer Career Path Guide, Paragraph 4.12. Available on the Internet: <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>. 11 November 2002.

Reproduced from SAF/AQC Homepage⁷³

⁷³ Contracting Career Field: Career Path Pyramid. Available on the Internet: <http://www.safaq.hq.af.mil/contracting/workforce/militaryaffairs/officers/ktgpyr96.pdf>. 11 November 2002.

Appendix C

MCRT New Illustrated Guide for Contracting Officers



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Reproduced from AF Assignment Homepage⁷⁴

Notes

⁷⁴ "Contracting Career Guide – Illustrated," Military Assignments Homepage. Available on the Internet: <http://afas.afpc.randolph.af.mil/Acquis/64/64Frame.htm>. 11 November 2002.

Appendix D

Contracting Career Development Guide for Military Officers (DRAFT) ⁷⁵

The most successful contracting leaders in the future will be those officers who successfully demonstrate exceptional performance across the breadth and depth of the contracting career field. They will also have “broadened” themselves to become aerospace leaders, beyond contracting, by concentrating on key elements of systems acquisition management and/or installation-level mission support functions. This document accompanies the *Contracting Career Guide – Illustrated*, and is to be used as an initial reference guide. There is not one optimum path for a successful contracting career. Officers should seek counseling and mentorship from senior military officers and civilian leaders throughout their career.

During their initial assignments (first five years) officers should focus on obtaining competency in one or more contracting emphasis areas: operational, systems, or logistics contracting areas. Company grade officers should spend as much of their early careers as practicable in operational contracting. During these formative years, officers should master the contracting’s core competencies and obtain Acquisition Professional Development (Contracting) Level I & II certifications. Upon receiving Level II Certification, officers should expect to deploy one or more times in support of Air Expeditionary Forces or other worldwide contingency mission needs.

Officers should expect at least two tours outside the contracting career field during a twenty-year career in either a Career Broadening assignment focusing on Mission Support or Systems Acquisition, a Special Duty Assignment, or a combination of the two. These broadening assignments may occur at the company grade or field grade officer level. Career broadening is most beneficial if it aligns with one of the two emphasis areas described below. However, assignments outside these areas also contribute to a successful career by providing leadership opportunities and possibly opening alternative career paths.

There are two principal emphasis areas for military contracting officers, systems acquisition and mission support. Both are equally important. They are key to the success of the Air Force mission and help develop officers as future aerospace leaders. The duty positions at the company grade, field grade and senior leadership levels will differ, but each will support an officer’s career growth through increasing levels of responsibility.

Systems Acquisition: In the systems acquisition emphasis the officer will be guided toward contracting or program management leadership positions at the field grade level. This will be accomplished after obtaining core contracts knowledge as a company grade officer and possible experience as a program manager (63XX). The officer will compete for command at the major and lieutenant colonel levels along with those officers focusing on the mission support emphasis area. The ultimate senior officer positions in the systems acquisition emphasis area are Deputy SPO Director, SPO Director or DCMA Commander. Officers may also be selected to serve as an AFMC or AFSPC Contracting Division Chief or Center Deputy Director/ Director of Contracting.

Mission Support: In the Mission Support emphasis area, the officer’s path may include positions outside Contracting in Services, Mission Support, Logistics Readiness, or Communications-Information to broaden knowledge in other mission support career areas. Ultimately, this broad knowledge will help prepare the officer to become a Deputy Mission Support Group Commander, Mission Support Group Commander, MAJCOM/LGC, or DCMA Commander at the Senior Officer level.

Special Duty (Career Broadening) Assignments: Another option for “broadening” is a special duty assignment. Special duty assignments for contracting officers are those assignments in Reserve Officer

Training Corps (ROTC); Squadron Officer School (SOS); United States Air Force Academy (USAF), Basic Military Training, Officer Training School (OTS) Instructor, or other special duty assignments levied by the Air Force on the contracting career field outside the mission support or program management emphasis areas.

Air Force Institute of Technology: Some officers will be competitively selected to attend the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) to earn an advanced degree in Contract Management/Strategic Purchasing. All officers should pursue an advanced degree, preferably in current curriculum topic areas such as supply chain management, systems acquisition, business, or information systems. The advanced degree should be completed no later than one year prior to meeting the major's promotion selection board.

Education With Industry: Another opportunity for career broadening is the competitively selected Education With Industry (EWI) program. The Education With Industry program allows officers to spend approximately ten months at a contractor's facility exposed to the inner business processes of a commercial firm and brings the knowledge obtained back to the Air Force. The EWI experience will be most valuable to those officers focusing on the Systems Acquisition career track.

Deployments: Officers should expect to deploy on numerous occasions during a twenty-year career as both a company grade officer and field grade officer to meet the operational needs of the Air Force. During the deployment, most officers will be afforded the opportunity to receive a contracting officer warrant and lead a contracting team while working in a challenging contingency environment. Support to deployments is the utmost reason why there are uniformed military members in the Contracting Career Field.

Professional Military Education (PME): Completion of the appropriate PME within the timeframes recommended by the Air Force, whether by correspondence, seminar or in-residence, is a significant element of an officer's professional growth and is one of the key considerations in the promotion selection process. Approximately 20 percent of officers selected for major will be identified as candidates for in-residence Intermediate Service School (ISS). About 15-20 percent of officers selected for lieutenant colonel will be identified as in-residence candidates for Senior Service School (SSS). It is highly recommended that professional military education be completed as soon as an officer is eligible. It is also recommended that officers complete PME via seminar/correspondence even if selected to attend in-residence, since operational requirements of the Air Force may preclude them from attending in-residence.

Squadron Commander/Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) Commander: Squadron command positions are extremely valuable leadership opportunities within the contracting career field. Not all officers will be afforded the opportunity to command. Some officers may be given more than one opportunity to command at the squadron or DCMA level as a major, lieutenant colonel, or colonel. A Contracting Squadron Commander is responsible for the day-to-day operations of an Operational Contracting Squadron located on an Air Force base. Additionally, some officers may be selected to command a Defense Contract Management Agency office. DCMA Commanders are located either in major defense contractor facilities or in offices encompassing a geographical area overseeing numerous smaller defense contractors.

Staff Experience: As an officer progresses through his/her career, there will be opportunities for staff experience at the major command (MAJCOM), Air Staff, AF Secretariat, Joint and OSD levels. Staff experience helps broaden an officer's breadth of experience. Staff assignments are normally at the field grade level but may include senior Captains. Staff assignments help prepare officers for increasing levels of responsibility. A staff assignment could be completed in contracting, program management or in mission support areas.

Acquisition Professional Development Program (APDP): It is imperative that officers complete certification training in contracting as early as possible. Officers should obtain Levels I & II within their first five years in contracting. It is recommended 64xx officers attain APDP certification in Program

Management when afforded the opportunity. Officers may also try to obtain other certifications in areas such as acquisition logistics. Officers should obtain APDP Level III in Contracting upon making Major. Those with an emphasis in systems acquisition should pursue opportunities to obtain a Level III in Program Management if possible.

A balanced, flexible approach to professional development is one of the keys to a successful Air Force career. A combination of different jobs at different levels with increasing levels of responsibility, to include staff assignments, working in multiple MAJCOMs, completing professional military education and an advanced degree are all necessary for a successful career and development as future aerospace leaders.

However, the most important career development assignment an officer has is the job he/she is in right now! It cannot be over-emphasized how important it is for an officer to perform successfully in every assignment, especially their current assignment. Hard work, dedication, and job focus will help ensure an officer succeeds in their current jobs. Past performance is a key factor in the assignment process.

Notes

⁷⁵ “DRAFT Contracting Career Development for Military Officers” dated 24 September 2002, Presented at the 2002 Worldwide Contracting Training Conference. Available on the Internet: <http://www.safaq.hq.af.mil/contracting/conferences/worldwide2002/files/OfficerCareerGuide24Sep02.doc>. 11 November 2002.

Appendix E

Career Development Guide for Military Contracting Officers

4.12 The first profession of an officer is the “**Profession of Arms.**” We are Air Force officers first, each with a unique functional expert that contributes to the Air Force mission. Future contracting leaders will be those officers who have successfully demonstrate the breadth and depth in the contracting career field, and “broaden” themselves to become an air and space leader by concentrating on the key elements of systems acquisition management and/or installation-level mission support functions. This document accompanies the *Contracting Career Guide – Illustrated*, and is to be used as an initial reference guide. There is not one optimum path for a successful contracting career. Officers should seek counseling and mentorship from senior military officers and civilian leaders throughout their career.

4.12.1 A member of the “Profession of Arms” develops through the active pursuit of four pillars: Professional Military Education (PME), Specialized Training, Leadership, and Private Expertise. By focusing on each pillar simultaneously, an officer gradually becomes a valued member of the “Profession of Arms.”

4.12.1.1 PME: PME for officers is presently established in multiple courses in varying length purposely timed over the normal career of all officers. The first course offered is the “Air & Space Basic Course (ASBC)” which provides the foundation for our role as airmen. The goal is to send 100% of all new accessed officers to this course either before or during their first duty station. The course concentrates on the USAF core values, USAF core competencies, and introduces air and space doctrine. Squadron Officer School (SOS) is the next level offered between four and seven years of service. This course addresses Leadership & Management, Military Studies, Communication Studies, and what is referred to as Profession of Arms Studies. The next level of PME is focused at the O-4 grade, Air Command & Staff College. A much longer and in-depth program than ASBC and SOS, it covers multiple areas from National Security Strategy to Joint Campaign Planning. The last PME course for selected O-5 and O-6s is Air War College that provides an emphasis on “strategic leadership” and the opportunity to study multiple military/national subjects of interest in more depth. Outside the normal PME courses, the Company Grade Professional Officer Development Program is offered locally at the base level as a link between ASBC and SOS.

4.12.1.2 Specialized Training: Specialized Training is built into the contracting officer career field via the DAWIA requirements for training and certification. Courses can be completed through various means such as residence, on-line, and on-site instruction. Contracting officers should set a goal to attain level II certification in contracting after two years in the career and level III no later than their pin-on of major. Upon attainment of level II certification, officers should seek out a contracting warrant to begin exercising their new contracting expertise. Dual certification as recommended in other acquisition fields provides both depth and breadth in the field of acquisition. Officers should obtain level II certification in a second acquisition discipline. Specialized training occurs over the whole career of an officer. In addition, many acquisition organizations including squadrons normally offer many locally developed courses/workshops and on occasion training provided by other government agencies. These alternate training sources provide an invaluable amount of practical information. Officers should also seek out opportunities to attain a Master's degree from the Air Force Institute of Technology to further their contracting/acquisition knowledge.

4.12.1.3 Leadership: The development of officer leadership is a career long process for all officers. PME and specialized training normally devote some portion of their curriculum to the topic of leadership. As company grade officers (CGOs), contracting officers should seek leadership positions as early as possible after their basic contracting training is complete. After attainment of level II APDP certification, company grade officers should be given opportunities to lead as flight commanders within squadrons or

as negotiation leads in major system acquisitions. AEF deployments will be the norm over your career and provide an excellent opportunity for CGOs to lead as contingency contracting officers serving with well-trained and seasoned enlisted personnel. During your initial assignments as a CGO, you should focus on the core competencies in contracting in one or more either operational, systems, or logistics contracting areas. It is preferred that all officers spend part or most of their time in operational contracting.

4.12.1.3.1 Field Grade Officers: As field grade officers, various command opportunities at the squadron level and within the Defense Contract Management Command are available for select officers with proven records of leadership. The major Air Force system centers also offer similar positions such as branch chiefs, deputy directors, and in some cases directors. Assignments to MAJCOM and Air Staffs as action officers provide officers with the opportunity to not only learn about policy-making but also affect future policy. All of these positions offer the opportunity to practice one's specialty and organizational leadership skills.

4.12.1.1.3.2 Senior Officers: Senior Officer assignments may include such positions as Material Group Commander (Central USAF Group Commander Board), Mission Support Group Commander, Director of Contracting at Product or Logistics Center, or as a MAJCOM LGC.

4.12.1.4 Private Expertise: This pillar encompasses all the self-development tools available to enhance the skills and knowledge of our officers. It is not just concerned with military subjects but also those in each of our own private lives. This pillar provides the balance to the other three and compliments the achievement of the "whole person concept."

4.12.1.4.1 Education and learning are continuous cycles. Attainment of higher education degrees is strongly encouraged not just for the sake of a degree but to attain additional skills in critical thinking and to exercise the mind. The degree completed should be one that will compliment and enhance an officer's personal value and that of their "Profession of Arms." Additionally, the CSAF Reading list provides an excellent reference of books related to the "Profession of Arms" that should not just be encouraged but mandated as "must reads" for all officers. The receipt of industry professional certifications and participation in their associations provides for the informal interaction between members of the "Profession of Arms" and civilian counterparts. Other activities such as academic published articles and attendance at professional seminars also provide means for improving oneself. The attainment of additional foreign language skills is now considered more important than ever especially with the increasing AEF deployments. Officers should be encouraged to learn and practice a second language and thus become bilingual at a minimum. Officers are encouraged to broaden their horizons, challenge their minds, and to constantly strive to improve themselves.

4.12.2 Air Force Acquisition Corps: Developing future air and space leaders require that officers attain multiple specialties. The contracting officer career field is composed of selected officers who have attained a basic Air Force Specialty in any of the Mission Support AFSCs or Space Operations AFSC. This first specialty provides the basic wing operational experience necessary for an Air Force contracting officer and is a lasting link to the operational Air Force.

4.12.2.1 During the 4th through 7th years of service for an officer, a contracting officer career board will be held annually to select capable and proven Captains for entrance into the Air Force Contracting Corps. Upon entry, your primary career will be managed under the 64P officer management program. Criteria for selection includes the requirement to have at least 24 semester credit hours from among the following disciplines: accounting, business finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, organizations, and management.

4.12.3 Career Broadening: After attainment of attainment of Level II Certification, selected officers will have some unique opportunities for career broadening/training. They include the Logistics Career Broadening Program that specializes in acquisition logistics and life-cycle sustainment support. Eligibility is between the 6-11 years of time in service. Other program opportunities include the Air Force Internship, Education with Industry, Air Force Institute of Technology (Master's degree) and ROTC

assignments. Officers should expect to complete two tours outside the contracting career field during a twenty- year career in either a Career Broadening assignment focusing on the future Mission Support or Systems Acquisition career emphasis, a Special Duty Assignment, or a combination of the two. Career broadening assignments or special duty assignments may occur at the company grade or field grade officer level.

4.12.4 Career progression can take the shape of one of two-career area emphasis: The first is the systems acquisition career emphasis, and the second is the mission support career emphasis. Both are equally important and are key to the future of the Air Force mission, and developing you as a future aerospace leader. The positions at the Field Grade level and Senior Officer will differ, but each career emphasis contains the same building blocks that make all officers successful.

4.12.4.1 In the systems acquisition emphasis, the officer will be guided toward program management once obtaining the field grade level. This will be accomplished after obtaining core contracts knowledge as a company grade officer and also obtaining experience as a program manager. The officer will compete for command at the major and lieutenant colonel level along with those focusing on the mission support emphasis. The ultimate senior officer position will be a Deputy SPO Director, SPO Director or DCMA Commander.

4.12.4.2 In the Mission Support emphasis, the officer's path may include positions outside contracting in Services, Mission Support, Logistics Readiness, or Communications-Information to broaden knowledge in other mission support career areas and make you more competitive or Group Command at the senior officer level. Ultimately, this broad knowledge will help prepare the officer to become a Deputy Support Group Commander, Support Group Commander, MAJCOM/LGC, or DCMA Commander at the Senior Officer level.

4.12.5 Definitions:

4.12.5.1 Profession of Arms: The professional approach is to understand the instruments of air power and comprehend the environment in which they are applied- at an appropriate level. For the military professional this means duality of professions- intertwining specialization that develop together. The one demands a technical knowledge; the other a military knowledge as part of the profession of arms. The latter demands an understanding of air power at successively higher levels, culminating in the strategic level expertise of senior officers. The profession airman is not just an aviator, logistician, administrator or engineer, but also a member of the profession of arms. Experience and knowledge in air power first, and then in a chosen specialization, epitomizes the professional airman. (Definition by [TSg Alfredo T Rabina, PAF](#))

4.12.5.2 Special Duty (Career Broadening) Assignments: Another option for "broadening" is a special duty assignment. Special duty assignments for contracting will be those assignments considered as a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC); Squadron Officer School (SOS); United States Air Force Academy (USAF), Basic Military Training, Officer Training School (OTS) Instructor, or other special duty assignments levied by the Air Force on the contracting career field, not included in the mission support or program management career fields.

4.12.5.3 Air Force Institute of Technology: Some officers will be selected for the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) to receive an advanced degree. All officers should pursue an advanced degree preferably in supply chain management, systems acquisition, business, or information systems. The advanced degree should be completed one year prior to meeting your major's board.

4.12.5.4 Education With Industry: Another opportunity for career broadening is the competitively selected Education With Industry (EWI) program. The Education With Industry program allows officers to spend approximately six months at a contractor's facility and then bring the knowledge they obtained back to the Air Force.

4.12.5.5 Deployment: Officers should expect to deploy at least twice in a twenty-year career, once as a company grade officer and once as a field grade officer. During the deployment, officers most likely will be afforded the opportunity to receive a contracting officer warrant while working in the contingency environment.

4.12.5.6 Mentorship Program: Mentoring is not just a commander/supervisor responsibility; it is a responsibility all officers owe to our younger officers. All officers should be encouraged strongly to attach onto a mentor(s) early in their career to share and provide advice not just on contracting or advancement, but on all Air Force issues/concerns. The use of individual development plans for military officers provides an excellent basis for these initial discussions.

4.12.5.7 Professional Military Education (PME): Utmost in importance is completion of the appropriate PME within the timeframes allowed by the Air Force, whether by correspondence, seminar or in-residence. Approximately 20 percent of the officers selected for major will be identified as candidates for resident Intermediate Service School (ISS). About 15-20 percent of those officers selected for lieutenant colonel will be identified as candidates for Senior Service School (SSS). It is highly recommended that professional military education be completed as soon as an officer is eligible. Early completion of PME is recommended even if selected to attend in-residence, to preclude completing SOS, ISS and SSS with operational requirements of the Air Force.

4.12.5.8 Squadron Commander: Squadron command is a highly coveted position within the contracting community. Not all officers will be afforded the opportunity to command; and some highly successful commanders may be given more than one opportunity to command at the squadron or DCMA level as a major or lieutenant colonel. The Contracting Squadron Commander is responsible for the day-to-day operations of an Operational Contracting Squadron located on an Air Force base.

4.12.5.9 Staff Tours: As you progress through your career there will be opportunities for experience at the major command (MAJCOM), Air Staff, Joint and OSD levels. Staff experience prepares provides the breadth of experience necessary of all Air Force officers, and affords you the opportunity to develop and implement policies. A staff position could be completed in contracting, program management or other mission support areas.

4.12.5.10 Acquisition Professional Development Program (APDP): It is imperative that you complete your certification training in the contracting as soon as possible. You should obtain Levels II and I within your first three years of your career. If possible, it is recommended you complete Level I and II in Program Management as a company grade officer. You may also try to obtain other certifications in areas such as acquisition logistics. You will need to obtain your Level III in contracting upon making major. Those with an emphasis in systems acquisition must obtain a Level III in Program Management. All officers are encouraged to obtain Level II certification in a secondary area.

4.12.5.11 Joint Tours: During your career, there will be some opportunities to serve in positions designated as joint directly conversing and working with members of our sister services. If available, you are encouraged to seek out such an assignment after mastering the contracting discipline, further enhancing your military knowledge and contributing not only to the Air Force but also to the defense of our nation.

4.12.5.12 Logistics Career Broadening Program: The Air Force LCBP is a HQ USAF/IL sponsored three-year program that specializes in acquisition logistics and life-cycle sustainment support (wholesale logistics). It applies to officers in the following Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSCs): 21AX (Aircraft Maintenance), 21GX (Logistics Plans), 21MX (Munitions and Missile Maintenance), 21SX (Supply), 21TX (Transportation), 63AX (Acquisition Manager), 64PX (Contracting), and 65F3 (Financial Management). The intent of the LCBP Program is to broaden and expose selected officers to the wholesale logistics (depot) experience. Officers competitively selected for this program gain valuable knowledge and experience in managing the acquisition and sustainment aspects of the Air Force Logistics system--through rotational assignments in various functional areas of an Air Logistics Center

(ALC). All LCBP positions will be Acquisition Professional Development Program (APDP) coded to facilitate Level I certification. **AFI36-2111 1 OCTOBER 2000**

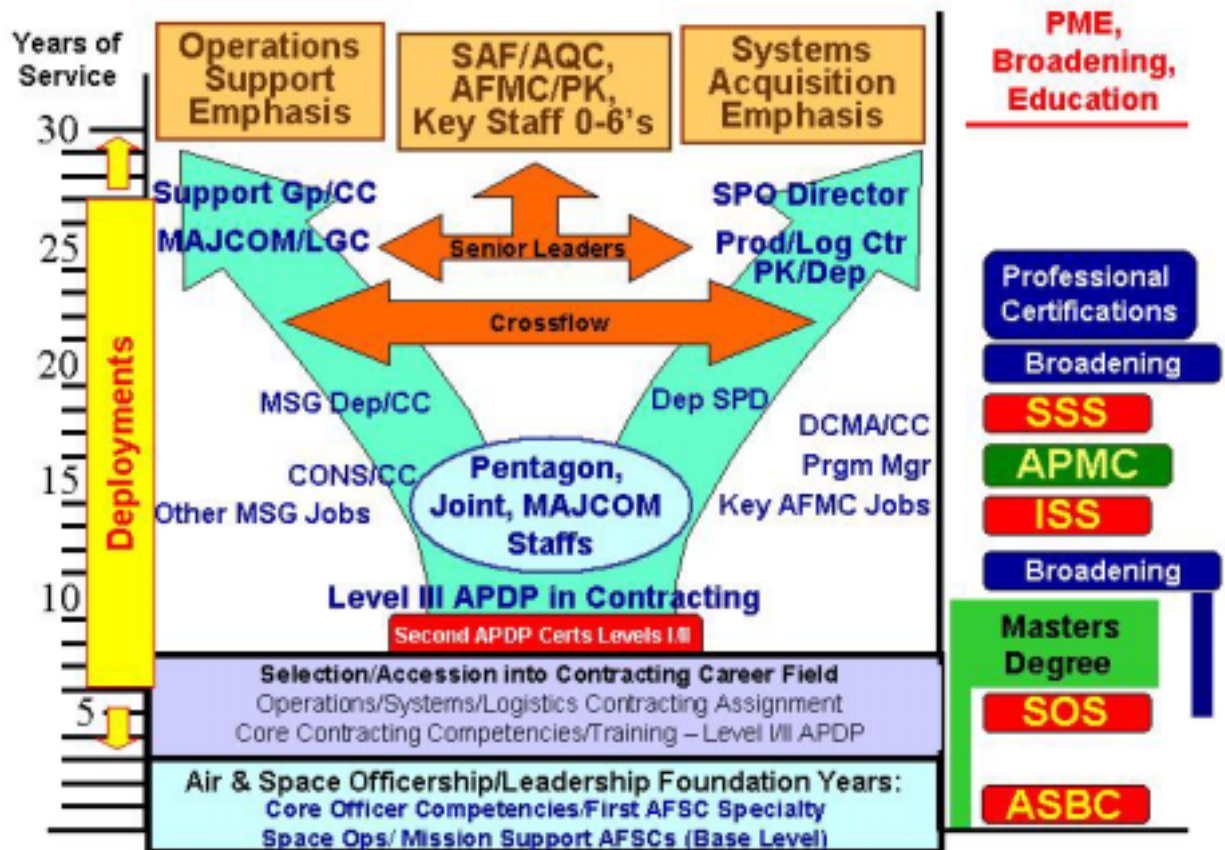
4.12.6 A balanced approach to professional development is the key to an Air Force officer career. A thorough understanding of the Air Force is essential inclusive of doctrine and history. Leadership development is a life long process commencing as you enter the Air Force at the operational level and culminating as a strategic senior leader. A combination of jobs at different levels, to include staff, working in different MAJCOMs, completing professional military education and an advanced degree are all necessary to a successful career and developing future aerospace leaders.

Appendix F

Illustrated Contracting Career Guide

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Contracting Career Guide - Illustrated



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