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Supply Chain Management/ Strategic Acquisition: The Case for Professional Pay in the Army Acquisition Corps

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This article assesses the opinions of Army Acquisition Workforce members who will serve in or are competing for program manager/command, or other leadership positions within the Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) on the subject of professional pay. A survey by the author determined: (a) whether professional pay would reduce loss of Army officers at the LTC/20-year point, with a lesser emphasis on COL/26-year point; (b) whether it would incentivize career civilians to compete for board select product/ program management positions; and (c) whether it would help keep both labor pools in the AAC past retirement eligibility. The author concludes that professional pay is an attractive incentive to further professionalize the AAC, and also formalize its professionalization throughout the Army.

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As a career senior Army Acquisition officer, I have always wondered why Army Acquisition “professionals” do not receive “professional” or incentive pay similar to that which is given to aviators, doctors, attorneys, linguists, and other recognized professionals. This naturally leads to the very question of our professionalism and whether or not we are in fact professionals. My intent is to explore that issue through interviews, an Army Acquisition Corps (AAC)-wide survey targeting officers in the grade of captain (O-3) through colonel (O-6) and civilians that are GS14 to GS15-equivalent, contrast the respondents’ opinions with relevant retirement data, and then compare Army management of this dilemma to U.S. Air Force (USAF) issues and methods.

My motivation to do this is based on the unique sacrifices, requirements, and challenges of competing to become an AAC officer or civilian, which the operational Army generally misunderstands; and why the AAC senior leadership does not advocate this incentive in spite of known, time-proven, human capital shortfalls. Although I am not advocating money as the only answer to such a multivariate problem, it is—and necessarily so—a major component that, if overlooked, can exacerbate existing problems or trends.

My goal ultimately is to bring to fruition some form of professional pay for certain AAC members that will lessen the human capital shortfalls, increase Corps competitiveness, incite more civilians to compete for key positions, and better utilize senior corps members vs. losing them to industry or early retirement. This article is one attempt to address an issue that, at least within the Army acquisition community, has been taboo; and through my attendance at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, I hope to bring it to light.

Last, the data contained herein primarily end in 2009, but where obtainable, 2010 data are also incorporated.

The research portion of this article was primarily conducted from August to December 2010, and the survey results from which the bulk of the article is contingent upon, were tabulated in January 2011. All sources are provided and can be confirmed.

Background of the Army Acquisition Corps

The AAC is currently comprised of 42,182 civilians, 1,432 officers, and approximately 197 Noncommissioned Officers (NCO). The officer and civilian totals reflect 18 general officers and 116 Senior Executive Service (SES) civilians.¹ The AAC derives its military workforce from two primary sources: the AAC Career Field Designation Board (90 percent) and the Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program for the bulk of the remaining 10 percent.² The civilians are hired as Department of the Army employees.

FIGURE 1. MILITARY ACCESSION DATA FROM 2005-2009

FY	Authorizations	Available Officers	Delta	Cumulative Strength
2005	1,543	1,454	-89	-89
2006	1,485	1,528	+43	-46
2007	1,528	1,483	-45	-91
2008	1,448	1,574	+126	+35
2009	1,575	1,456	-119	-84

With respect to the military accession process, the AAC has fared okay—meaning it has largely met its accession goals. Figure 1 shows accession data from 2005 through 2009:³ Although the shortage in 2009 is the largest of the years compared, it does not appear problematic in and of itself until compared to the retirement rates and trends by Fiscal Year (FY) depicted in the figures accompanying the “Army Attrition Rates” discussion that follows. Additionally, whether or not the authorization numbers are high enough to meet mission requirements must also be asked. This will be explored in later discussion as well.

Taking a look at the AAC military manning broken out by rank for FY 10 (Figure 2) illustrates a different picture. Although the illusion of looking at the situation in aggregate (Figure 1) does not seem that bad, one must conclude that the fill rate of captains (O-3), majors (O-4), and lieutenant colonels (O-5) is not satisfactory, and that these shortages will only exacerbate existing problems or trends unless addressed. Note that strength figures for AAC lieutenants (O-1/2) are not depicted (Figure 3) because the Army does not place officers into the AAC until they are captains (O-3) (typically mid-grade).

FIGURE 2. AAC MILITARY MANNING BROKEN OUT BY RANK FOR FY 10

Authorizations

GRADE	CMF	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10
02	11	1589	1676	1717	1821	1839
03		1215	1215	1247	1261	1265
04		375	393	406	401	360
05		280	281	292	251	235
06		71	71	53	50	44
02	19	902	878	902	920	951
03		657	632	603	627	607
04		263	249	239	232	201
05		120	114	92	88	80
06		22	18	18	19	18
03	49	123	117	117	0	0
04		220	225	239	241	249
05		136	136	138	143	146
06		33	36	37	38	38
03	51	268	260	282	252	244
04		634	616	605	702	701
05		468	456	468	509	508
06		162	164	173	177	177
03	MC	126	125	108	107	100
04		1293	1255	1301	1172	1195
05		1511	1473	1447	1570	1557
06		867	841	845	884	885

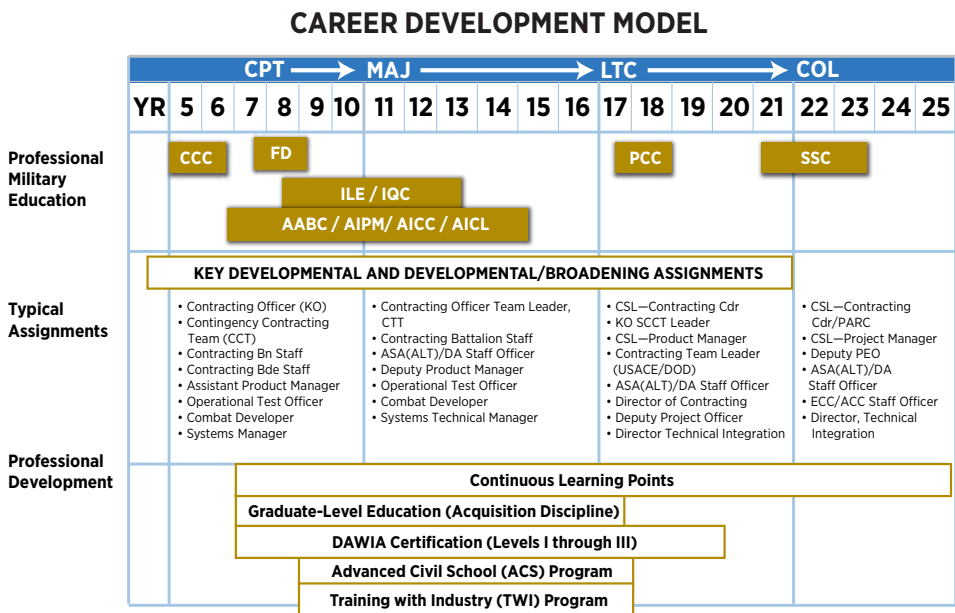
FIGURE 2. AAC MILITARY MANNING BROKEN OUT BY RANK FOR FY 10

Operating Strength

FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10
2408	269	2768	2712	2774
1758	1819	1739	1816	1766
825	826	825	840	891
527	556	540	545	546
274	288	318	305	318
1304	1402	1393	1353	1340
1112	1133	1111	1121	1038
541	532	521	518	547
262	278	283	303	321
129	137	143	141	144
56	47	69	41	76
242	224	213	211	220
170	180	180	161	164
52	53	60	57	56
314	186	278	281	202
919	871	829	791	811
465	482	481	498	500
165	163	176	181	185
1808	1801	1802	1843	1810
1300	1280	1306	1293	1265
659	697	711	692	675
492	506	503	533	536

Additionally, the cumulative data between the two figures generated by the AAC (Figure 1) and Army G-1 (Figure 2) do not match exactly, and in the case of the G-1 data (Figure 2) do not account for separations, retirements, and schools (Trainees, Transients, Holdees, and Students) account variables from 2006–2010. Nevertheless, its trends are very similar and exemplify the same conclusion. The purpose of inclusion of

FIGURE 3. U.S. ARMY OFFICER CAREER DEVELOPMENT MODEL



Note. Adapted from U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center website. AABC = Army Acquisition Basic Course; ACC = U.S. Army Contracting Command; AICC = Army Intermediate Contracting Course; AICL = Army Intermediate Contracting Laboratory; AIPM = Acquisition Intermediate Program Management; ASA(ALT) = Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology; CCC = Captains Career Course; Cdr = Commander; CSL = Command Select List; DA = Department of the Army; DAWIA = Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act; ECC = U.S. Army Expeditionary Contracting Command; FD = Force Designation; ILE = Intermediate Level Education; IQC = Intermediate Qualification Course; PARC = Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting; PCC = PreCommand Course; PEO = Program Executive Officer; SSC = Senior Service College; SCCT = Senior Contingency Contracting Team; USACE = U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

these two figures is to demonstrate how painfully difficult it is to obtain accurate Army personnel information. No single source consulted had the same data as the others.

A review of Figure 2 allows comparison of the Infantry, Armor, Operations Research Systems Analyst (ORSA), and Medical Corps branches and/or functional areas (FA) to the AAC with respect to operating strength vs. authorizations by FY and their associated training costs incurred by the Army.⁴

Table 1 depicts costs by career management field to achieve professional standards as required by that branch or FA (i.e., level III certification standards for acquisition program management officers and medical degrees for doctors).⁵

TABLE 1. COSTS BY CAREER MANAGEMENT FIELD TO ACHIEVE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AS REQUIRED BY BRANCH OR FUNCTIONAL AREA

			FY 10 \$
11	Infantry	=	\$15,226
19	Armor	=	\$15,226
49	ORSA	=	\$34,565
51	Acquisition Corps	=	\$55,344 (indicates 51A career track)
MC	Medical Corps	=	\$270,000

Note. Costs can be calculated several different ways, with the above figures (in FY 10 dollars) attempting to exemplify branch or FA averages without accounting for subspecialties. For example, AAC contracting officers take several different courses than program managers, making their total cost slightly different. Similarly, medical subspecialty education presents an even greater cost range.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the data in Table 1. First, with respect to training requirements and all else being equal, it costs the Army more than three times as much to grow an acquisition lieutenant colonel (O-5) than it does an armor or infantryman of equivalent rank. Therefore, each AAC lieutenant colonel (O-5) that separates early or at the 20-year mark is a greater institutional loss. Additionally, although the production of a qualified medical doctor presents an exorbitant cost, these costs go unquestioned because of the obvious need for these professionals. In other words, the Army and public at large understand the value of their contribution. However, the same cannot be said for the AAC’s contributions despite the fact that we have the best equipped, capable, and combat-proven land force the world has ever seen.



Moreover, several perspectives must be acknowledged when comparing the data in Table 1. First, from a Force Management viewpoint, you could conclude that we need far fewer officers in any career field than we generally have on hand. However, this view discounts the tremendous Army need for branch immaterial positions (O1A), notwithstanding the fact that the AAC does not send its officers to O1As despite several recommendations over the years to do so.⁶ The most recent re-greening recommendation came from the Decker/Wagner Report (Secretary of the Army, 2011, p. 24). Moreover, personnel managers could dispute the narrow focus portrayed therein, which does not account for branch transferability of officers to level skills or recalling retired officers if and when necessary to accommodate for shortfalls, although historically unlikely.⁷

Acquisition Corps Authority

To conduct an analysis on the AAC's ability to meet its mission, one must first identify the authority authorizing it to do so. "There are two principal sources of authority. First, public law (legal basis) and second, executive direction" (Brown, 2010, pp. 6-7). Some of the most prominent Congressional statutory authority is derived from the following (Brown, 2010, pp. 6-7):

- Small Business Act (1963), as amended
- Competition in Contracting Act (1984)
- DoD Reorganization Act of 1986 (Goldwater-Nichols)
- Government Performance and Results Act (1993)
- Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994
- Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act of 2009
- Annual authorization and appropriations legislation

Prominent examples of Executive Direction (Brown, 2010, pp. 6-7) are:

- Executive Order 12352 (1982)
- Federal Acquisition Regulation (19840)
- National Security Decision Directive 219 (19860)
- Executive Order 13101 (1998)
- Office of Management and Budget Circular A-11

As the political leadership has generally found fault with the Services' ability to conduct acquisition management, they have provided many additional forms of assistance over the years to combat this perception (Brown, 2010):

The one initiative most likely to provide tangible results was the April 2009 Acquisition Workforce Enhancement Strategy announced by the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) promulgating an increase in workforce size by 20,000 not later than 2015. This has been recognized as the most significant workforce initiative in the history of the federal government and is a part of the DoD's High Priority Performance Goals included in the president's FY 11 Budget. (p. 13)

The dilemma from an Army-centric perspective is cultural. Since my accession into the AAC in 1997, the Army has never really accepted what the AAC provides toward its materiel development process. Seemingly, if it was not mandated by statute to maintain an AAC, the Army would probably disband it entirely. The U.S. Army is unquestionably regarded as the best equipped and most lethal and survivable land force in the world, yet those responsible for making that possible are routinely discounted by their own Services. The cost of this is higher attrition rates of some of the most senior acquisition personnel at the very point where they are most useful to the government. Once this population becomes certified as Acquisition Category Level III, with commensurate demonstrated performance, they become critically valuable to industry as well. The four base cases I examine in this article are lieutenant colonel (O-5)/GS-14 and colonel (O-6)/GS-15 postcommand attrition rates at the at the 20- and 26-year service points respectively.⁸



What does it actually take to become, for example, an AAC product or program manager (PM), a Defense Contract Management Agency director, or a test center commander? These positions generally require approximately 17–18 years of preliminary developmental and broadening assignments just to become competitive. And because of the nature of the up-or-out promotion system for Army officers, such assignments are critical to securing retirement benefits at the 20-year point. This is not to say that you can't make it to a secure 20-year retirement without selection to one of these positions. However, selection for such positions is career-enhancing and ensures competitiveness at the next level should the servicemember decide to continue to press forward in a military acquisition career. Note that one of the main differences between the Army and U.S. Air Force (USAF) acquisition models is that the Army requires officers to serve in developmental troop leading positions for 6–10 years prior to accession, whereas the USAF model is generally only 2–3 years. Figure 3 depicts this Army officer career development model:

Therefore, in order for the AAC to build and maintain its bench of officers and civilians, it has to assess the right number at the beginning of its human capital supply chain, then provide them with adequate experience, education, mentoring, and training. Ultimately, the career development model must include a career progression structure in place for Acquisition Corps officers and civilians to progress to the upper reaches of the pyramid. This is easier said than done for many reasons, and in the case of civilians—oftentimes referred to as “Post Utilization” is a strategic human capital challenge. Recognizing this challenge, the Army did form a taskforce in 2002–2003 entitled “The Jehan Post Utilization Taskforce,” but few if any of its recommendations were implemented.⁹

An additional quirk in the system is the requirement for Army officers to compete head to head with Department of the Army (DA) civilians for key command positions. The Acquisition Corps is the only branch in the Army that has such intra-Service competition, and although some positions are coded military only, most of them are advertised as “most qualified.” This presents unique risks and challenges to uniformed Acquisition Corps members because of the stringent timeline by which they are managed, whereas civilian workforce members can choose if and when to compete, without risk to their careers. This systemic pressure has many positive attributes, but a few bad ones as well. Most importantly, it oftentimes forces or strongly encourages officers to com-

pete at a time when it may be most disadvantageous to them (children's schooling, spousal employment factors, Exceptional Family Member Program considerations, detrimental financial consequences associated with Permanent Change of Station moves, etc.), for which if they are not ready, can set both the officer and the Army up for less than optimal results. Officers must contend with reduced chances for selection in every year that passes, while civilian workforce members do not.

Army Attrition Rates

This section will emphasize and highlight the differences in retention and attrition of AAC lieutenant colonels (O-5), colonels (O-6), and their Army regular line officer counterparts at the 20- and 26-year points, respectively. Figures 4 and 5 demonstrate loss rates of these four groups (designated "All" and "AC" on the legend for each figure) from FY 2000-2010. Note that I did not include the previous decade's data from the AAC's formal inception to 2000. This data, in my opinion, was too far back and had little relevance due to the tumultuous changes in the Army since 2000, largely as a result of 9/11. Moreover, I did not pursue specific retirement data on the civilian GS14/15 population because of the inherent differences in the DA civilian retirement system compared to that of the Army. In essence, direct comparisons cannot be made.

**FIGURE 4. ATTRITION RATE FOR LIEUTENANT COLONEL (O-5)
ARMY OFFICERS AT 20-YEAR POINT OF SERVICE (FY00-FY10)**

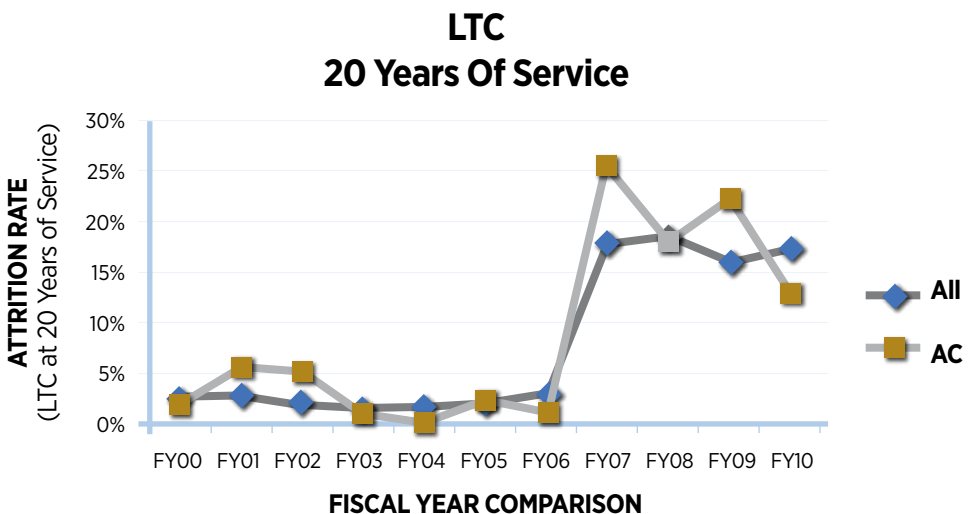
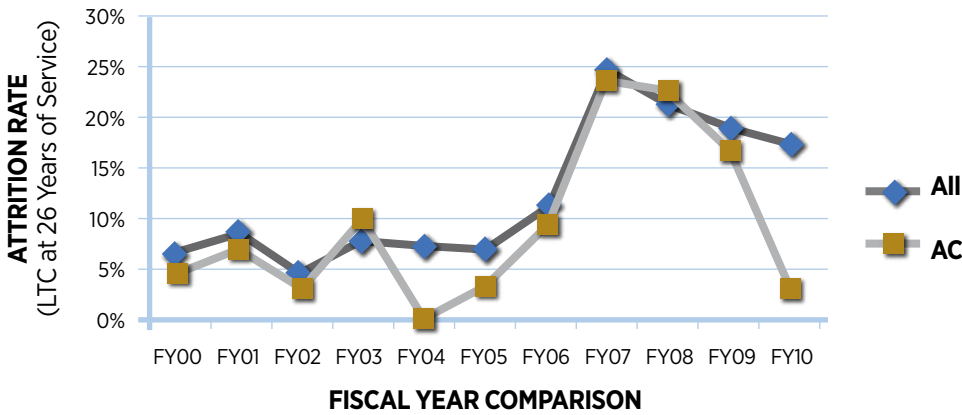


FIGURE 5. ATTRITION RATE FOR COLONEL (O-6) ARMY OFFICERS AT 26-YEAR POINT OF SERVICE (FY00-FY10)



Note: Adapted from data tables obtained from the Army Human Resources Directorate.¹⁷

Interestingly enough, the data in Figures 4 and 5 depict what you would expect after taking into account the availability figures previously discussed for officer strength (Figure 1). Precisely, that lieutenant colonel (O-5) attrition rates among AAC officers are generally higher than their line officer peers, and colonel (O-6) AAC attrition rates are either in line with or less than their field grade officer peer group. In my opinion, several reasons account for this. Foremost among them is their professional certifications and educational levels—both highly prized by industry and most easily transferrable. For example, a firm looking to hire a PM knows exactly what value a level III-certified AAC officer brings, whereas an infantry or armor officer competing for the same position, who ostensibly has superior leadership skills, leaves a question mark with respect to technical skills. In essence, industry knows what they are getting with respect to technical skills from Acquisition Corps officers, in addition to leadership and organizational skills embodied by the officer corps at large.

Figures 4 and 5 depict attrition rates of AAC officers in comparison to the rest of their Army-wide cohort for each of the FYs shown for lieutenant colonels (O-5) and colonels (O-6).

Among the trends depicted in Figures 4 and 5, the most important is that over time AAC lieutenant colonels (O-5) retire at higher rates than their peers, thus further exacerbating the AAC shortages for critical acquisition positions. Furthermore, although the colonel (O-6) data

represent a reduced separation rate of AAC colonels (O-6) vs. their peers, it does not demonstrate the overall shortage the AAC experiences in its bench. This is one of the supporting exigencies for professional pay between the major (O-4)—colonel (O-6)/GS15 population. (See overall net shortage [-84 for 2009] depicted in Figure 1.)

Workforce Survey

The AAC workforce survey targeted 8,005 captain (O-3) — through colonel (O-6) and GS 14 and 15 DA civilian workforce members in the 51 A/C/R/S and Z career tracks.¹² The survey ran from December 29, 2010 — January 18, 2011, and received 1,447 completed responses, equaling a response rate of 18.07 percent, which is statistically significant, or valid enough from which to draw conclusions.¹³ In other words, and using survey question 6 in the next section as an example, if the entire population were surveyed, one could conclude that 75 percent of the entire AAC population would respond similarly within a percentage point or two at 95 percent confidence.

The survey was developed by the author with help from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) faculty and administered to the workforce through the Army Acquisition Support Center, located at Fort Belvoir, VA. All results were captured by the Web SURVEYOR program at ICAF, with the resulting report analysis compiled by ICAF staff as well. Questions 10 and 13 were corrupted in the survey link somehow, resulting in no data capture from either of them. General officers and SES civilians were intentionally excluded from the survey population.

A description of each question and its results are depicted below, followed by a survey summary at the end of this section. The rationale for each question is also included, and select figures demonstrating the most compelling findings are also shown. (Those not shown directly in the article can be provided by the author. This format was chosen to reduce the overall size of the article.)

No. 1: What is your rank or grade?

Rationale: Critical demographic question to ensure targeting of the desired population.

Comments: Twenty-two respondents were captains (O-3); 73 were majors (O-4); 142 were lieutenant colonels (O-5); 78 were colonels (O-6); 610 were GS-14s; and 498 were GS-15s.

No. 2: What year were you commissioned or what year did you begin your federal employment?

Rationale: Demographic question designed to demonstrate the maturity of the workforce and respondents.

Comments: The bulk of respondents began their government employment between 1983 – 1990.

No. 3: Do you have prior military service?

Rationale: Demographic question intended to illustrate the well-roundedness and military experience level of the population.

Comments: Forty-one percent of respondents were either military or had military experience at some time in their career. Although one would expect the preponderance of respondents to have no military experience in any typical workforce (industry, academia, etc.), 41 percent in fact did, which may indicate a higher level of commitment of this workforce's general population to the AAC mission, as well as the Army itself. In-depth analysis of the composition of the AAC workforce in comparison to others would have to be done to validate this assumption. I simply wanted to see what percentage of the total AAC workforce the military component (defined as "served at some time in their career") comprised.

No. 4: How long have you been a member of the Army Acquisition Corps?

Rationale: To demonstrate the experience level of those responding to the survey.

No. 5: I view myself as an acquisition professional.

Rationale: To demonstrate the general view of respondents as to whether or not they saw themselves as professionals similar to other designated professionals of unquestioned credentials (i.e., medical, law, etc.).

Comments: There is no doubt that military officers serving in the AAC or the Army at large as well as their civilian counterparts meet the base criteria agreed upon by most experts as being ascribed to professionals. "However, there is some disagreement as to whether or not Noncommissioned Officers fit into this category as well. The generally agreed-upon characteristics for a profession are as follows" (Nielson & Snider, 2009, pp. 197-198):

1. The profession determines its own standards of education and training.
2. The student professional goes through a more far-reaching adult socialization experience than the learner in other occupations.
3. Professional practice is often legally recognized by some form of licensure.
4. Members of the profession run their own licensing and admission boards.
5. The profession shapes most legislation concerned with that profession.
6. The occupation gains in income, power, and prestige, and draws high-caliber students.
7. The practitioner is relatively autonomous from outside control.
8. Members demonstrate very strong identification and affiliation with their professions—more so than others with their occupations.
9. The profession is more likely to be a lifelong career or terminal occupation (i.e., members do not care to leave it, and most assert that if they had to do it over again, they would again choose that type of work).

However, two of the above characteristics are directly relevant to the topic of this article—6 and 9. First, with regard to characteristic 6, it highlights the very essence of the subject. AAC professionals are not compensated additionally for their extra and unique skill-set. This is more than a trivial matter; if professional pay were instituted, it would directly impact the numbers of people competing for AAC positions. Similarly, professional pay would increase the overall quality that the AAC could take from the Army at large, with a direct impact over time on the overall level of professionalism of the AAC itself. The snowball

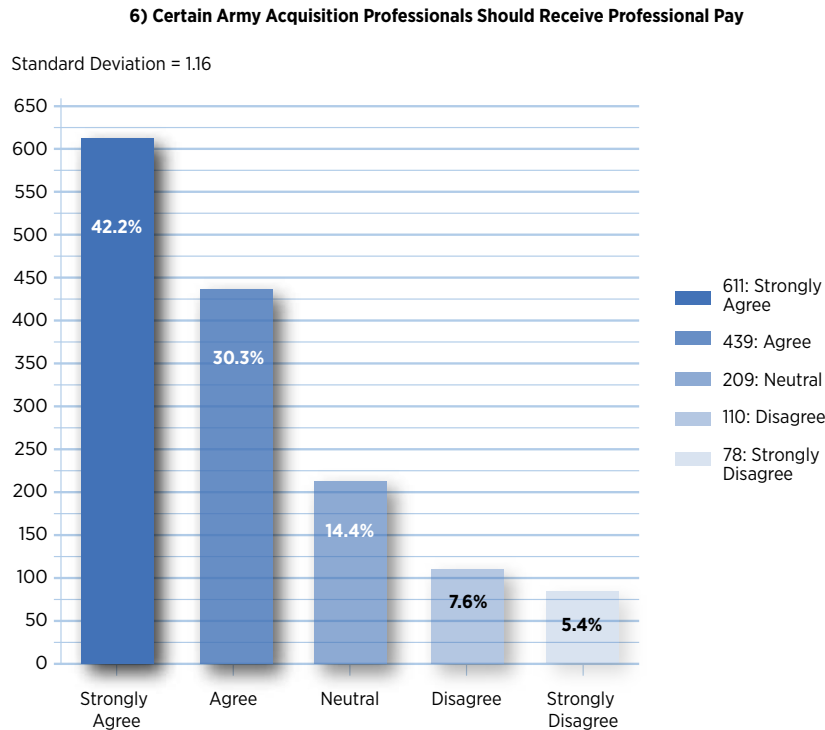
effect of beneficial externalities that this could create would allow the AAC to raise its entry and qualification standards across the board—even if doing so required changes to current law or policy.

Although some view financial compensation of lesser importance in their decision process, it is nevertheless a critical one. When one’s professional aspirations align with income expectations, the equation is balanced; however, as is often the case, one side—for a myriad of reasons—gets weighted heavier than the other, thereby creating a disproportionate level of importance to the decision maker. Where this happens and compensation becomes more important than the next most critical factor, it can skew the decision in a different direction; it’s at this intersection where the AAC is suboptimized for both military and civilians.

No. 6: Certain Army acquisition professionals should receive professional pay.

Rationale: To demonstrate what the average Acquisition Corps workforce member thinks about professional pay with respect to the acquisition profession.

FIGURE 6. WORKFORCE SURVEY QUESTION NO. 6



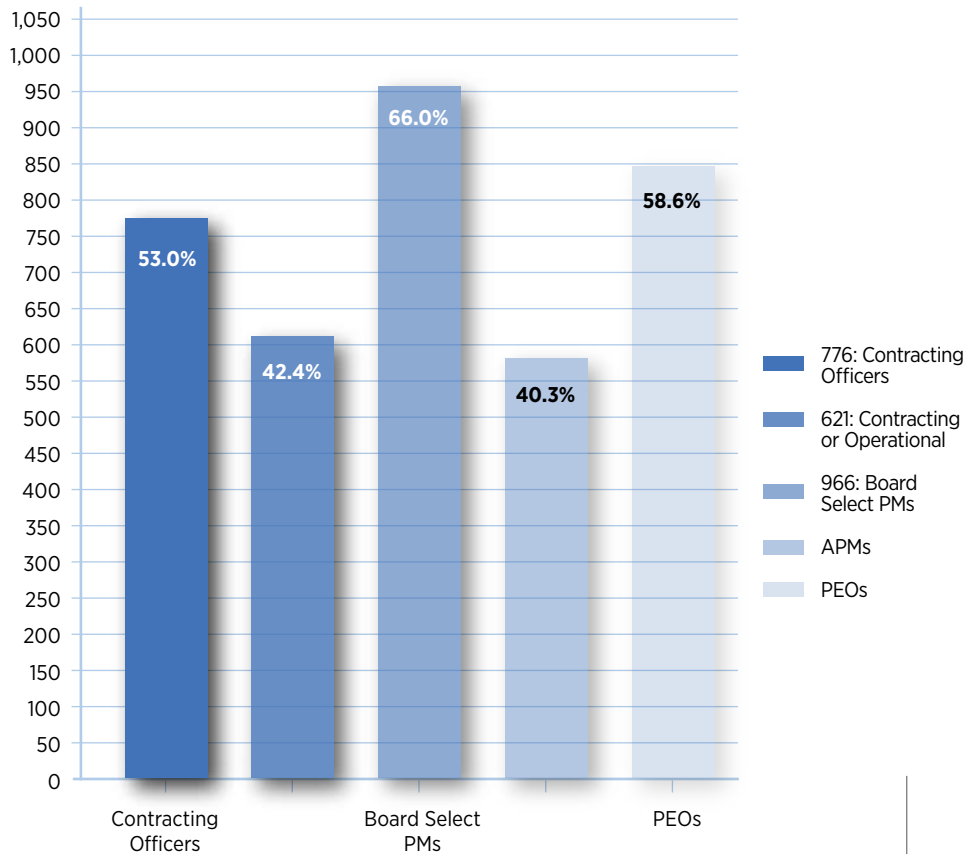
No. 7: The following positions should receive professional pay (check all that apply).

Rationale: To demonstrate which positions respondents favoring professional pay believed worthy to receive it.

Comments: Note that the numbers shown in Figure 7 add up to more than the number of total respondents to the survey, because each one was asked to check all that apply. Not surprising, although the majority of respondents indicated some type of professional pay should be initiated, they differed greatly in their opinions of which positions warranted it. Although the scope of this article is to improve retention of AAC workforce personnel through institution of professional pay, a follow-on AAC taskforce would need to be formed to adjudicate how the incentive was implemented and to whom.

FIGURE 7. WORKFORCE SURVEY QUESTION NO. 7

7) The Following Positions Should Receive Professional Pay



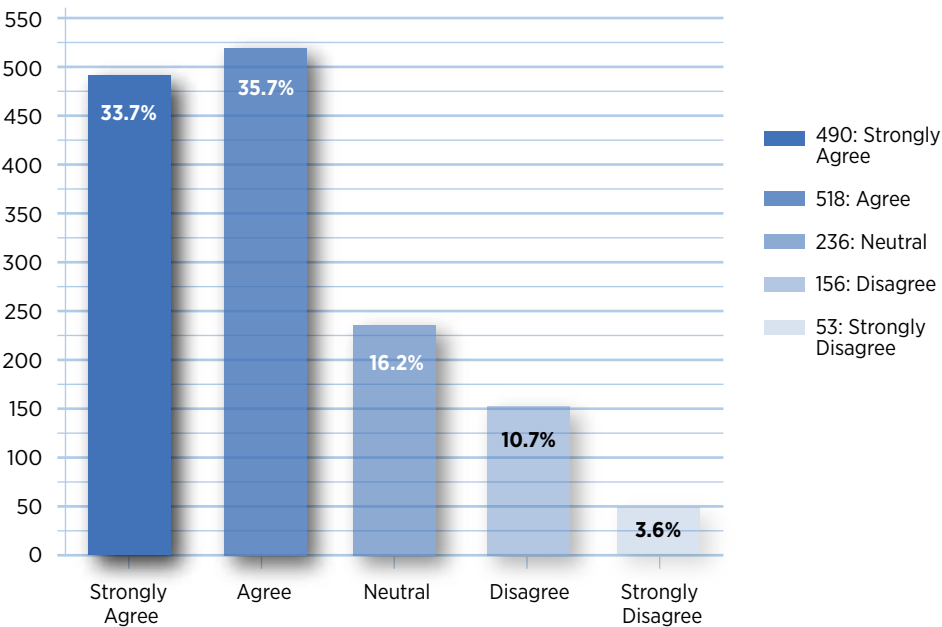
No. 8: I believe instituting professional pay for acquisition professionals would help retain them beyond initial retirement eligibility.

Rationale: The intent of this question was to directly gauge the views and perspectives of the Acquisition Corps workforce on the impact of not having professional pay. In other words, would its implementation help displace the historical shortage trend?

FIGURE 8. WORKFORCE SURVEY QUESTION NO. 8

8) I Believe Instituting Professional Pay For Acquisition Professionals Would Help Retain Them Beyond Init...

Standard Deviation = 1.11



No. 9 (Figure 9): I would be more likely to remain on active duty/federal service beyond initial retirement eligibility if professional pay were initiated.

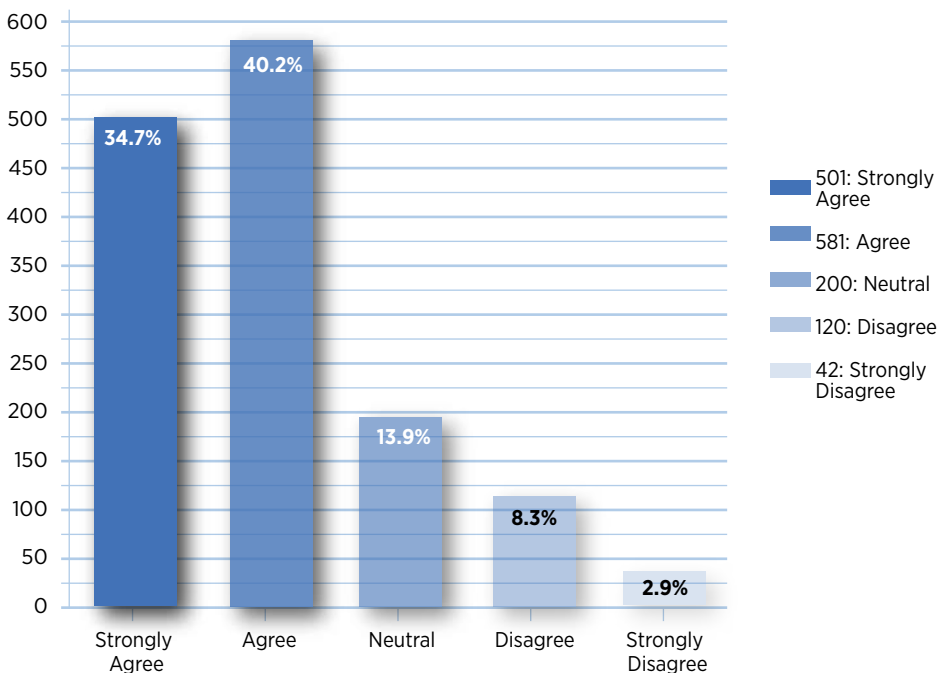
Rationale: This question was designed to capture the thoughts of the Acquisition Corps workforce on the career field as a whole from the individual member's perspective.

Comments: This question seeks to directly ask all members about the impact such an initiative would have on them personally. What it indicates is that there is a slightly lower individual motivation to stay beyond initial retirement eligibility based solely on professional pay. This lesser motivation is most likely attributable to the number of people already past their initial eligibility or already committed to reaching the 20-year point for military, where it would be foolish to separate regardless of policy changes. Therefore, institution of a professional pay incentive would have no bearing on their decision. Similarly, it indicates that compensation alone is not the sole determinant of retention; many other factors are involved in an individual's decision process to continue to serve or separate. Again as a reminder, the scope of this research was to determine if incentive pay was a motivating factor or not. If implementation of incentive pay is initiated, the same taskforce recommendation previously discussed would apply to this issue.

FIGURE 9. WORKFORCE SURVEY QUESTION NO. 9

I Believe Initiating Professional Pay Would Incentivize More Civilian AAC Members To Compete For Board...

Standard Deviation = 1.04



No. 10: For those AAC professionals who serve in colonel (O-6)/PM/contracting/operational test center command positions, I believe professional pay would help retain such professionals after command tour completion.

Rationale: The purpose of this question was to determine what the workforce thought about continuing to serve, assuming they were receiving additional compensation for their value to the Army, after colonel (O-6)/GS15 command tour completion, which is historically a major attrition point for both populations (civilian and military). I then wanted to compare this to the results generated in the Army-sponsored 2003-2004 “Jehan Post Utilization Taskforce Findings.” However, the survey link for this question was corrupted and all responses were lost.

Comments: Several free-hand comments were generated by the civilian workforce regarding this question, indicating the frustration level experienced by senior civilians at this point in their careers. For those that do compete for command positions, they are subject to a system that does not utilize their expertise very well in contrast to the military human capital model, which still places considerable emphasis on placing colonels (O-6) in productive, career-enhancing jobs postcommand. Unfortunately, as much as a source of frustration this has been and continues to be, it has been largely ignored to the detriment of the Army. Further analysis would need to be done to capture the extent to which this aspect of the AAC human capital process forces civilian workforce members to separate or forego competition for future command positions due to disgust with the management process.

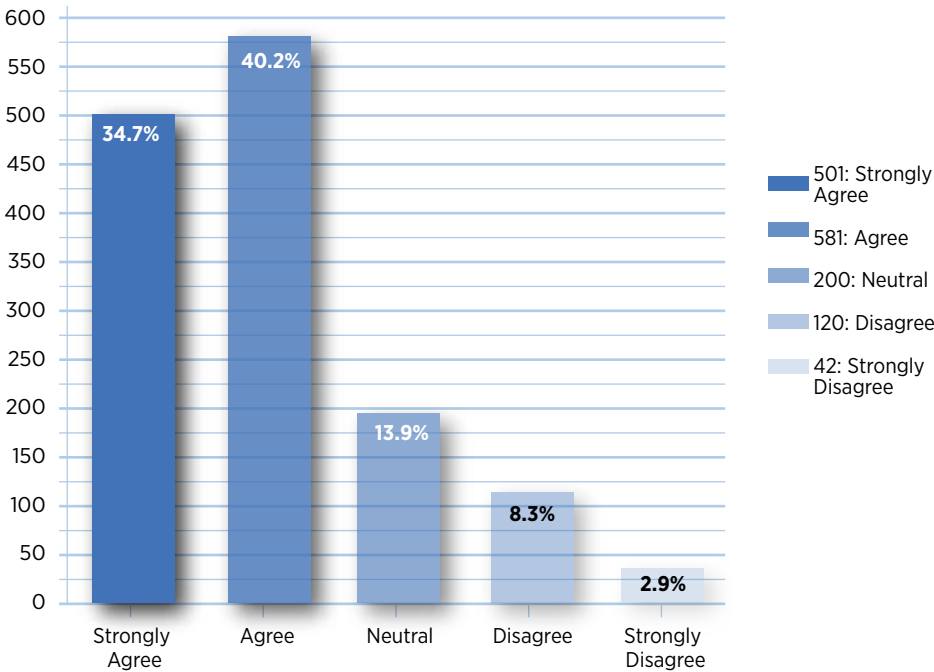
No. 11: I believe initiating professional pay would incentivize more civilian AAC members to compete for board-select positions.

Rationale: Since the civilian compensation package is structured so differently than that of the military, I thought it was imperative to measure the Acquisition Corps civilian workforce’s impression of whether or not professional pay would incentivize more civilians to compete for these key critical positions. Historically, although civilians can choose if and when to compete, they typically do so in extremely low numbers in proportion to their overall strength in the workforce.

FIGURE 10. WORKFORCE SURVEY QUESTION NO. 11

11) I Believe Initiating Professional Pay Would Incentivize More Civilian AAC Members To Compete For Board...

Standard Deviation = 1.04

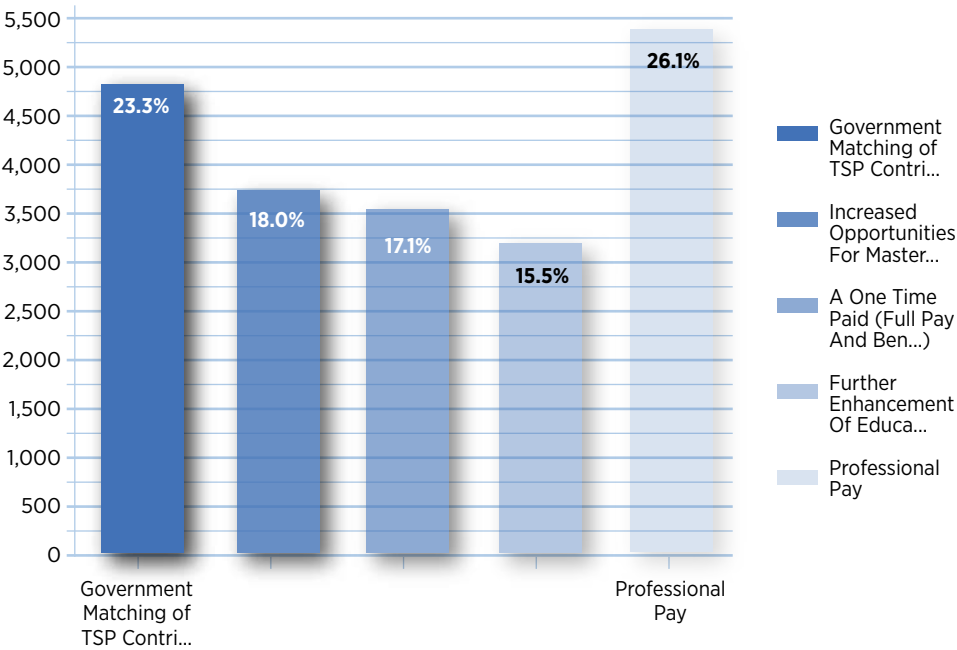


No. 12 (Figure 11): Please rank-order the below options, in order of priority, based on their impact on your desire to stay in the Service longer.

Rationale: This question sought to explore how important professional pay was to the workforce relevant to other options that do not exist. The other options presented were not all-inclusive of the multitude the Army has been surveying over the years. I simply wanted to evaluate whether or not professional pay could compete with other incentives.

FIGURE 11. WORKFORCE SURVEY QUESTION NO. 12

12) Please Rank Order The Below Options, In Order Of Priority, Based On Their Impact On Your Desire To Sta...



Note. TSP = Thrift Savings Plan.

No. 13: The Army Acquisition Executive (AAE) should be advocating for professional pay.

Rationale: This was a direct question on how the workforce viewed the AAE’s role as an advocate of professional pay, independent of whether or not the AAE has assumed that role. Unfortunately, the responses to this question were also corrupted, and none were saved by the program.

Overall Analysis of Survey

The most pressing aspect of this survey is whether or not its results are statistically significant. Without statistical significance, the results are meaningless and therefore cannot be used to derive valid conclusions or recommendations. As previously mentioned, the survey was successful in that its results were statistically significant.

A few factors that would have made the results even stronger, independent of indicated trends, would have been:

- a. Administer the survey to the entire workforce.
- b. Administer the survey either in the fall or spring when you are apt to get exposure to more of your target audience because fewer will be on leave or away from work. (This survey was administered in late December through early January because its formulation and approval process was tied in part to academic requirements at ICAF based on the university calendar, which due to the holiday season, is probably the worst time of the year, quickly followed by the summer months of July and August.)
- c. Expand the survey to capture more data.
- d. Include in the population of survey respondents the propensity officers of each of the AAC subcareer fields as well as senior civilian AAC workforce representation to ensure optimization of design.
- e. Expressly define professional pay—who will receive it and how it will be administered.

Because I chose to simply explore the views and perspectives of the workforce on professional/incentive pay in general, I had to pick and choose, based on time constraints, between many aspects of the issue. This, however, does leave the door open for the formation of a follow-on taskforce to determine an exact course of action (COA) should the Army leadership decide to explore the results contained herein. Additionally, a significant portion of the survey's value can be derived from its free-hand comments.

Some comments were very emotional both for and against the implementation of professional pay for AAC personnel; however, most compelling was that the great majority thought the AAC should receive some type of professional/incentive pay (approximately 75 percent for, 13 percent against, and 14 percent neutral). If the percentage of neutral

respondents were split, it would yield approximately 82 percent for and 20 percent against. Additionally, many expressed that they thought the exploration of this topic was long overdue.

In the words of one senior official I interviewed, the fact that the Army would never question the provision of professional pay to doctors, attorneys, and aviators, yet refuse to even explore it for AAC personnel, while simultaneously increasing the level of oversight and bureaucracy as the answer to the AAC's professional shortfalls vs. investment in its people, was indicative of the Service's overall shortsightedness with respect to its Acquisition Corps human capital retention model.¹⁴ Generationally, today's acquisition professionals receive considerably less professional education and or training than those of a generation ago. This translates to more expensive mistakes and longer program schedules.¹⁵ The development of human capital across all professions has the following in common: the need for education, training, mentorship, experience, and appropriate compensation. When any of these components are shorted, the results are never good for that professional body as an institution.

Extracts of some of the survey free-hand comments follow. Note that I chose four comments supporting professional pay and one against, in line with the general findings that 80 percent or four-fifths of survey participants responded positively to the idea, whereas 20 percent or one-fifth did not. In all, there were approximately 500 or so comments submitted (approximately one-third of respondents), which means most respondents did not take the time to use the free comment option. The breakdown of comments received is as follows: 227 favored some type of professional/incentive pay, 128 responded that it was either not the right time or were against it, and 134 were unrelated rants of unquantifiable value to the survey. A sampling of the respondents' comments follows:

A professional cadre requires many things, which include financial and educational rewards.

Professional pay also helps compensate for accepting the responsibility of possible personal financial risk as a PM.

I believe the Army needs to commit to more PhD opportunities via sabbaticals, etc., that will enhance the professionalism of the AC [Acquisition Corps].

Our profession should be no different than that of JAG [Judge Advocate General] and medical/dental. The educational and DAWIA [Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act] requirements alone make the acquisition officer a 'hot' commodity in the civilian sector, equal to that of lawyers, doctors, and dentists. Professional pay for acquisition officers should be commensurate with the other professional pay currently given to JAG and medical/dental professionals.

In my humble experience, most of our ACQ [Acquisition] members do not deserve professional pay since they are not performing at that level. Given the problems many (most of our programs) have, how do you justify they are performing at the professional level?

An additional key comment not related to the issue of professional pay touches the civilian AAC workforce. To date, this is, regrettably, a well-known, well-documented, unaddressed human capital retention issue:

AAC needs to have a succession plan for civilians selected for CSL [Centrally Selected List] PMs after their successful tour of 3 or 4 years is completed

Army Conclusions

Although the scope of the survey was aggressive, my intent was to bring to light the two most compelling issues I perceived within the AAC since my first assignment in 1997: lack of professional pay and poor utilization of civilian AAC members, especially those who fall into the Post Utilization category of having completed colonel (O-6)/GS15-level PM or command-equivalent jobs. Refusal to adequately address these issues will continue to exacerbate the suboptimization of the AAC as a system and, as a result, the level of professionalism and competitiveness for the best and brightest Army minds. This inevitably plays into the hands

of critics, regardless of type or source, that the answer to Army and/or military acquisition systemic problems is more strangulating regulation, audits, and bureaucracy.

Similarly, although not the main intent of this survey, some survey respondents did reference the Army-wide misunderstanding of professional value the AAC contributes, as noted by the following anonymous quote:

I did retire because of the lack of recognition of acquisition expertise. I am currently working as a retired annuitant because I believe in the need of the programs I support. I am well compensated, but in no way equivalent to the education and training I have acquired during my career. Management of acquisition civilians has been latent since the beginning, and developmental placements limited and disappointing. Recommend the AAE take a very hard look at professional pay and developmental advancements for all AAC members.

Additionally, although many people provided me personal information and views—even with permission to quote and disclose their names—on why and how we as an integral part of the Army were getting it wrong with respect to accessing, training, retaining, and recognizing AAC talent, I chose not to. Why? I ultimately decided not to attribute anything I have written to those sources to provide them the anonymity they deserve. My main reason for this—although providing names in many cases would have made my argument stronger—is because of the lack of control I will have over where this information goes and who sees it after it is submitted for review.

Last, I would be remiss if I failed to mention the incentive pay bonus initiative the Army has undertaken for its NCO contracting personnel (see Appendix). Although far short of the recognition of the remainder of the AAC, this is nevertheless a positive step in the right direction. Further, if this article educates and spurs enough AAC workforce and leadership interest to establish follow-on efforts of in-depth analysis, it has been successful. However, regardless of the level of traction this article may engender, no amount of effort can surmount the typical cultural unwillingness to acknowledge and act on problems upon which the Army often defaults.¹⁶ Ultimately, if the AAC used the USAF strategy discussed in the following section, and adapted it to its 51 series for select

military and civilian personnel, the associated cost would be relatively insignificant in comparison to the potential gains institution of this strategy would generate.

USAF Professional Pay/Comparison

I found that the USAF has a decidedly different approach to human capital acquisition and retention, especially in areas where the Service has experienced critical skill shortfalls. Additionally, I found throughout my research that the USAF Acquisition Corps is considered to be a value-added contributor to the Service's goals, roles, and missions, whereas the Army's Acquisition Corps is viewed as a hindrance to mission accomplishment among the operational career fields [author's opinion]. Interestingly enough, the USAF's approximate overall personnel size as of July 2010 was approximately 508,000 as compared to that of the Army at slightly under 1.2 million.¹⁷

However, the USAF's uniformed Acquisition Corps, at 8,861,¹⁸ is several times larger than the size of the Army's, which is between 1,400 — 1,600, depending on the source, and just under 44,000 (both officers and civilians); whereas the USAF's civilian Acquisition Corps workforce comes in at about 22,537, with a total size of 31,398.¹⁹ Many conclusions can be drawn from these numbers; however, I believe the most pressing is Service-level commitment to the value added provided by a professionalized, uniformed Acquisition Corps. The USAF in aggregate is essentially one-half the size of the Army, yet its uniformed Acquisition Corps is roughly five times larger. Although one could argue the level of technical complexity with respect to USAF systems and platforms may necessitate the disparity in force structure size in comparison to the Army, I can only conclude that it involves more than that. The Army also builds technical systems and platforms.

Precisely, the USAF derives value added by having more uniformed Acquisition Corps officers working on its programs, perhaps because they are less expensive than government civilians, or the higher numbers might even be demonstrative of other uniquely USAF parameters that I as an Army officer may not value or understand. Regardless, a higher level of commitment characterizes Acquisition Corps uniformed personnel in the USAF when compared to the Army. And ultimately, although not

supported by analysis, a contributing factor to this trend may be that the USAF does not harbor an anti-intellectual bias like the Army toward attainment of higher education degrees and certifications.

The USAF Approach

My general observations, although admittedly limited, are that the USAF takes a much more disciplined approach to its Acquisition Corps human capital model, especially as it pertains to developing and keeping talent. The USAF has conducted multiple Critical Skills Designation for Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB) studies and seems to initialize them much quicker than the Army. Or, in other words, they are much more adept at retaining talent by realizing there is generally a cost associated with doing so—at least within their Acquisition Corps. Table 2, provided by the USAF, depicts FY 2002 cost data and is a typical representation of the USAF approach.²⁰

**TABLE 2. CSRB INVESTMENT SAVINGS
INVESTMENT IN A 4 YEAR ENGINEER IS APPROXIMATELY:**

Education	
BS	\$40,000
Master's	\$ 15,000
Training	\$5,000
Total Composite Rate	\$284,500
TOTAL	\$344,546

Maximum CSRB costs for 220 engineers x (\$10K per engineer/yr) = \$2,200,000

- If 100 accept bonus, then the actual cost is: (100 x \$10,000) = \$1,000,000
- If 100 engineers are lost, the investment loss = \$100 x \$344,546 = \$34,454,600 plus 4 years lost per individual
- The next year's replacement cost then becomes 100 x (Composite 2Lt rate + education) = \$64,550 + 40,000 = \$10,455,000

•Therefore, giving a \$10K bonus yields a return on investment (ROI) of 10.455 to 1
In simple terms, an expenditure of \$1,000,000 saves \$10,455,000 and 400 years of experience.

Although the conclusion shown in Table 2 could be insignificant with respect to cost savings (\$10.4 million), I don't think anyone would disagree that the loss of 400 years of experience is inconsequential, especially when it takes so long to develop a senior Acquisition Corps leader, regardless of Service model.

Therefore, the key that I want to illustrate is that this type of simple, yet hard-hitting analysis seemed to pervade the USAF, yet was difficult if not altogether impossible to find for the Army.

Moreover, as the USAF experiences problems among its Acquisition Corps career fields, the Service recognizes that their people are a critical asset that must be taken into consideration, particularly in an all-volunteer system. As they have experienced retention problems, I found a trend of analysis, action, and continual reassessment. Although the Army does this as well, it is much slower on the decisive-action part of the equation. Another key attribute I found endemic to the USAF was their survey methodology where, again, they seemed to act upon results. Although the Army administers surveys routinely, the AAC does not act on them in whole or in part with respect to the topics of this research.

In their "Caring for People: 2008 Quality of Life Assessment Survey" (Department of the Air Force, 2009, p. 3), the USAF randomly queried some of their officer contracting personnel (64P) to determine what factors would drive their decision to separate from the USAF or continue service. Interestingly enough, the top four factors were:

1. Deployment frequency
2. Deployment length
3. Operations tempo
4. Adequacy of pay and benefits

An additional key extract from this study was that there was a statistically significant difference between USAF 64P officers and USAF officers in general regarding income, standard of living, and quality of life. This was attributed to the lucrative job opportunities a level II (and beyond) contracting officer could secure in the civilian job market. Additionally, exit interviews conducted at operational squadrons indicated 49

percent of separating personnel cited operations tempo as their highest factor leading to separation, while 12 percent cited higher pay (Department of the Air Force, 2009, pp. 3–4).

These factors led the USAF to act and subsequently implement the CSRB. They targeted 64P officers with 6-14 calendar years of service (CYOS) and assumed an acceptance or “take” rate of no more than 85 percent. The financial incentive was \$80,000 (in annual \$20K increments) per eligible officer, producing an ROI of 8.57 to 1, with 8 years of continued service that would be required to receive the incentive. Additionally, the ROI increases with years of experience up to 15.94 to 1 for a 64P with 14 years of experience. Moreover, the USAF leveraged industry best practices in development of this strategy, which they determined to be comparable to journeyman-level experience. Ultimately, similar industry jobs paid an average of almost \$17K more than the composite pay for 64P officers (Department of the Air Force, 2009, p. 5).

The USAF estimated prior to implementation that the probability of officers with 8 CYOS reaching 20 CYOS would be 57.7 percent if offered the incentive, whereas it would be only 39 percent for those who were not (Department of the Air Force, 2009, p. 5). Then, on June 1, 2009, the USAF implemented the CSRB (Department of Defense, 2009) and experienced a take rate of 82 percent in FY 09, followed by a take rate of 90 percent in FY 10.²¹ Through the implementation of their CSRB, they harvested a cost avoidance savings of both the time and money required to grow a proficient, certified contracting professional—\$845K and 8 years respectively per person.²² Additional data reinforcing their decision to implement this COA were provided in their military vs. industry base salary assessment for targeted captains (O-3) and majors (O-4) using FY 09 data:²³

TABLE 3. MILITARY VS. INDUSTRY BASE SALARY ASSESSMENT FOR TARGETED CAPTAINS (O-3) AND MAJORS (O-4) USING FY 09 DATA

Military		Industry [mean base salary (salary.com)]	
Captain (O-3) at 8-year point :	\$60,026	7-8 years of experience:	\$83,042
Major (O-4) at 10-year point:	\$69,588	8-10 years of experience:	\$90,517
Total Compensation:			

Military		Industry [mean base salary (salary.com)]	
Captain (O-3) at 8-year point:	\$81,620	7-8 years of experience:	\$100,293
Major (O-4) at 10-year point:	\$94,360	8-10 years of experience:	\$111,524

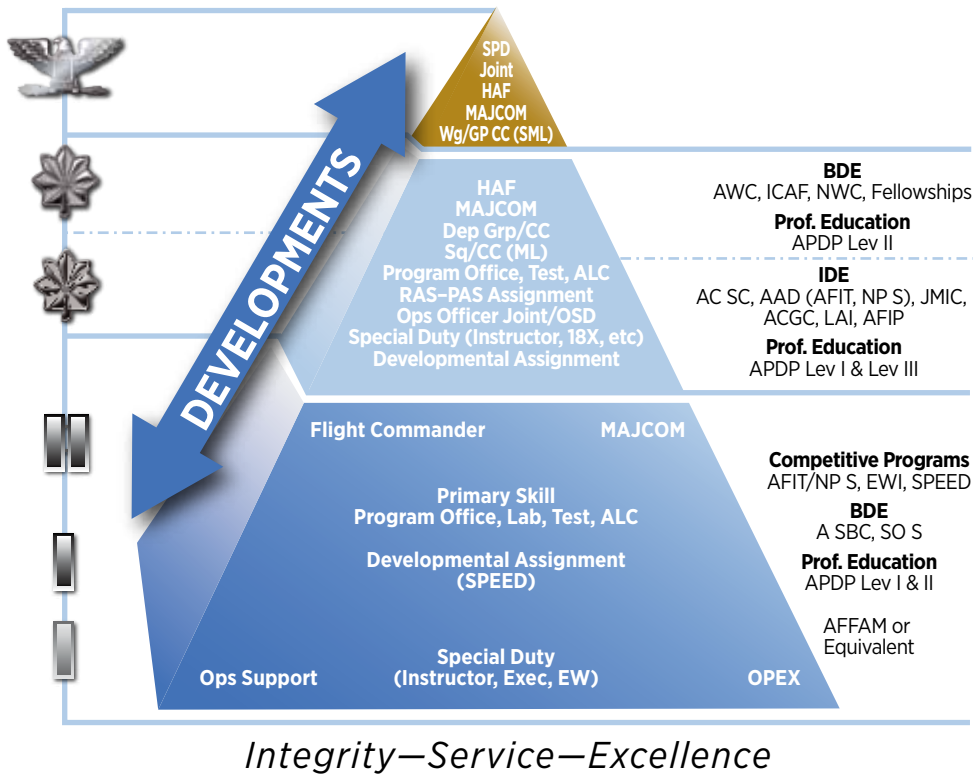
USAF Conclusions

Clearly, the USAF acquisition community takes a markedly different approach to retaining its personnel than does the Army. As I have illustrated in this article, they have implemented two separate initiatives in the last 10 years to stem the loss of potential personnel whose training and contributions they value. In doing so, they ultimately provide a much smoother sine wave of stability to their human capital acquisition accession, training, and retention model (Figure 12). The Army could learn from their approach.

FIGURE 12. USAF ACQUISITION CORPS PROGRAM MANAGER CAREER MANAGEMENT MODEL



63A Career Pyramid
Career Planning Diagram (CPD)



Note. USAF Career Field Management Office for Scientists and Engineers, SAF/AQR.
Received March 14, 2011, via e-mail.

Moreover, what impresses me most about the USAF methodology is their willingness to quickly recognize problems, conduct thorough business case analyses, and then take action. This evidently resonates with their personnel. In the words of an anonymous USAF acquisition workforce member, “We try to do something extra for every career field

and are pretty good at it.” The context of the statement pertained to recognition of sacrifice through better financial incentives, although financial incentives were not the only tool they use.

A summary of one of the many USAF data sets I reviewed puts the preceding quotation in better context:

Taking the difference between industry and military into consideration, and the current strain on our workforce caused by the current PERSTEMPO & OPTEMPO [Personnel Tempo & Operations Tempo] and the arduous duties we require of our military personnel, I believe that \$20,000/year for 4 years is an attractive offer to our active duty personnel in return for a 4 year service obligation.²⁴

As a Service, the USAF seems to value its total workforce (officer, enlisted, and civilian) more in comparison to the Army, and although this was not factually determinable within the scope of this research initiative, I am comfortable making that value judgment. However, I hope to personally bring some of the USAF lessons learned during this endeavor to the Army. Whether or not I will be successful is a different story, and whether or not the cultural gap will even allow for simple consideration is yet again another question.

Overall Conclusions

This initiative was undertaken because it was something I had been waiting for senior leaders to accomplish in hopeful anticipation of making the AAC a better, more professional organization. Over time, I realized that would never happen because the topic is controversial. For this reason, I took it upon myself to try to improve the AAC; this article is a first step in a direction few within the Corps would oppose, but most would never undertake or discuss. An interesting synopsis of the situation came through as a free-hand comment from a senior AAC civilian who has been around since the Corps’ inception, where he stated: “The original intent was to incentivize and professionalize with professional pay; however, we got the stick and not the carrot.”

As previously stated, the effort to provide AAC contracting NCOs incentive pay is a great step in the right direction, but leaves out the rest of the Corps. AAC officers and civilians encumber multiple unique sacrifices for which they bear all the risk without any additional professional compensation such as, but not limited to:

1. Required disclosure of their and their spouses' and children's personal assets and income sources to their chain of command where the requirement exists to file the federal OGE 450 Conflict of Interest Disclosure—a necessary precaution, but nevertheless an invasion of privacy not required of the average officer (including doctors and attorneys).
2. Potential forced liquidation of personal assets to avoid potential conflicts of interest, as determined by the legal review process, regardless of how or when those assets were acquired. Although typical sources of asset accumulation like inheritance, individual purchase from earned income, or the gifting process are perfectly legal, you have no control over two of the three. Therefore, assets you accumulate over your entire life can be determined to be in conflict with the responsibilities of any particular position, thereby necessitating immediate divestiture or declining the position and facing the professional repercussions that doing so may create. Additionally, if the federal employee decides to liquidate any particular asset to satisfy the conflict of interest, it may occur at a time that may be of terrible consequence to that person due to tax implications, personal financial health, and family planning goals, etc. I have met many members of the AAC who do not own a single share of stock in any company because of this aspect of the federal reporting requirements. This potential personal investment limitation process is definitely one with which the average military officer or federal civilian does not have to contend.
3. The greater overall risk to one's career of being labeled as a homesteader, because the preponderance of AAC jobs are located in three main hubs: (a) Washington, DC/Northern VA and MD; (b) Warren, MI; and (c) Huntsville, AL. The operational Army does not bear this exposure.

4. Legal requirements for increased command tours at the lieutenant colonel (O-5)/GS14 and colonel (O-6)/GS15 levels of 3 years and 4 years or a major milestone respectively, vs. 2 years for battalion and brigade command. Adding a third or fourth year to a command tour is an incredible hardship not only on individuals, but their family as well. Few outside the AAC understand this aspect of our professional requirements or the hardships resulting from it.
5. Nearly constant temporary duty requirements, keeping many AAC members away from home even when not deployed.
6. The trade-off of potentially lucrative commercial employment offers, which become sharper and more difficult to put aside, especially at the 20-year mark and lieutenant colonel (O-5)/GS14 postcommand completion.
7. For uniformed AAC officers, the unique, Army-specific policy of competing directly for command positions with civilians. This is a higher level of competitiveness that officers in the rest of the Army are not faced with. Additionally, civilians are not harmed by the same up-or-out pressure with which uniformed officers must cope. Civilians can choose when and if to compete without affecting their careers. Such choices can significantly (and detrimentally so) impact the promotion potential for officers as well as their command opportunities, which they must have for advancement. Essentially, every civilian that is selected for lieutenant colonel (O-5)/GS14 command has blocked an officer from doing so, thereby essentially ending a potentially promising career. This is a good thing for overall competitiveness; however, the risk and burden are shouldered by the military AAC members.

In addition to the above risks, the investment loss to the Army of each AAC lieutenant colonel (O-5) that separates at the 20-year point, in addition to those majors (O-4) and lieutenant colonels (O-5) who separate prior to 20 years, is considerable. For some reason, we have organizational inertia that causes us not to question medical, dental, law, and aviation incentive programs. This inertia inevitably leads us to conclude

that although we are AAC professionals, we do not offer anything special or worthy of additional compensation. Or, perhaps the current state of the national economy provides a convenient rationale for not seriously evaluating such a suggestion.

Similarly, failure to do so will continue to result in the manning of an AAC that is short of its goals from accessions through colonel (O-6) retirement at 26 years, thus emplacing an ever greater burden on those remaining to their and the Army's ultimate detriment in the form of overwork, burnout, and lowered efficiency. Further, continued refusal to address issues specific to the civilian workforce like enhanced utilization via meaningful progressive assignments for those who shoulder the burden of colonel (O-6)/GS15 command. This will continue to act as a forcing function in two ways. First, it will incentivize many to either retire or leave federal service; secondly, it will inhibit many competent, capable civilians from competing for colonel (O-6)/GS15 command positions because they know, regardless of how well they do, that little of progressive importance in the way of assignments is available for them postcommand.

Recommendations

No better way exists to demonstrate commitment to a professional body than through pay and incentive programs through which the formalization of professionalization is recognized. The AAC lacks this, and does so to its own detriment. The AAE should implement an AAC-wide taskforce, led by a general officer, to determine the amount of professional pay that is generally deemed adequate and the positions such pay should be allocated to and when. The taskforce must also tackle the problem of civilian GS15 postcommand utilization. This aspect is in line with the much broader scope of general military/federal compensation reforms highlighted by the legislative agenda of the Military Officer Association of America (MOAA), where MOAA recognizes that, "There must be broader considerations in assessing changes to military career-compensation programs than mere budget savings" (Strobridge & Odom, 2011, p. 108).

This does not mean AAC officers and civilians are not worthy of professional pay. If it did, the USAF, for example, would not use it as a retention and recognition tool.

Similarly, if one is to assume that there is no issue with respect to officer retention in the AAC, I would merely defer to the various figures and tables illustrated throughout this article. Moreover, if we don't learn from history that unacceptable retention and readiness rates are consequences of shortsighted budget decisions, inevitably causing servicemembers to believe their commitment to the service of their nation is poorly reciprocated, we will have an increasingly more difficult time manning the all-volunteer force, including subspecialties, one of course being the AAC (Strobridge & Odom, 2011). Additionally, the fact that the "requirements and acquisition workforce is neither resourced nor valued sufficiently by the Army" (Secretary of the Army, 2011, p. 8) as stated in the Decker/Wagner report must be accepted by the AAC senior leadership and no longer ignored. This requires direct head-to-head general officer, SES, and AAE continuous engagement. The Army operational leadership understands the value of its medical doctors and attorneys because that message is clearly articulated. As well, the Army aviation community is incentivized through flight pay. That community's leadership has never wavered in its commitment to its members on the importance of that benefit with respect to communicating their contribution to the overall Army mission.

Finally, when the sacrifices of servicemembers and their families are taken for granted by assuming they will continue to serve and endure regardless of significant (impending) changes in their career incentive package, the subsequent manning problems, which will inevitably surface, should not be surprising (Strobridge & Odom, 2011, p. 108). If the Army wants to make the AAC the career of choice, doing so requires implementation of professional pay. The cost of not doing so is the unending "do loop" of an undermanned bench, which when extrapolated throughout the Army, stimulates unknowable increased costs to the whole system and all of its platforms, equipment, and information systems, etc. Moreover, the Army could learn from the U.S. Department of State where employees earning the "Program Management Professional" (PMP) designation can earn as much as a 15 percent base salary bonus.²⁵ The AAC does not incentivize this at all. And, in light of the argument against a professional pay initiative because of the nation's macroeconomic circumstances, my argument is perhaps surprisingly simplistic:

There is no better time to initiate AAC professional pay because of the needed stability it will provide to the Army's single largest body of professionals—men and women who steward a major segment of the Army's budget on behalf of the U.S. taxpayer.

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Endnotes

1. Data extracted from U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center Career Acquisition Personnel & Position Management Information System (CAPP MIS) as of 1 July 2010.
2. Ibid. Update briefed to the Army Acquisition Executive, Summer 2010.
3. Ibid., p. 2, chart 1.
4. Ibid, April 2011.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid, March 31, 2011.
7. U.S. Army G-1, received via e-mail March 31, 2011
8. Note that although the GS 14s and 15s serve in commensurate lieutenant colonel (O-5) and colonel (O-6) command positions, there is no direct link to their retirement eligibility as with officers at the 20- and 26-year points.
9. The author, then-MAJ John Lemondes, USA, co-led this taskforce with another Department of the Army colleague, Mr. Ross Guckert.
10. Army Human Resources Command, LTC Ken Letcher, USA, Chief of Plans and Policy, Operations and Plans Division, Officer Personnel Management Directorate, Attn: AHRC-OPD-P, Fort Knox, KY 40122, December 16, 2011.
11. Ibid.
12. Career tracks are defined as follows: A = Program Management; C = Contracting; R = Information Technology; S = SPRDE (Systems Planning, Research Development and Engineering); and Z = General Acquisition Positions. Source: Military Acquisition Position List, June 2010, <http://asc.army.mil>.
13. Constant Contact Resource Center, January 23, 2011, http://constantcontact.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/constantcontact.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=2965.
14. Anonymous.
15. Paraphrase of comments made by then-Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Ashton Carter to Industrial College of the Armed Forces acquisition student body, Fall 2010, Fort McNair, Washington, DC.
16. The basis of this comes from the author's personal opinion of the Army's willingness to acknowledge problems and act on its own or not. The preeminent example was the 2009 mandatory suicide prevention training that the Army had to be told to conduct where we (oftentimes) were killing more of our own via suicide than we were losing in combat operations.
17. Information obtained from GlobalSecurity.org (Military) website at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/end-strength.htm>, July 2010.
18. USAF Career Field Management Office for Scientists and Engineers, SAF/AQR, March 1, 2011.
19. Ibid.
20. Information obtained from Office of the Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition (SAF/AQC), Deputy Career Field Management Office for Scientists and Engineers, FY 2002 (November 2001), Pentagon, Washington, DC.
21. USAF Career Field Management Office for Program Managers, SAF/AQH extract from e-mail dated November 17, 2010.
22. USAF Career Field Management Office for Scientists and Engineers, SAF/AQR. Received March 1, 2011. Briefing to ACQ Bonus Review Board, July 24, 2009, p. 9.

23. USAF Total Compensation Comparisons, Military and Industry, USAF Career Field Management Office for Scientists and Engineers, SAF/AQR. Received March 1, 2011. Briefing to ACQ Bonus Review Board, July 24, 2009. Back-up charts (unknown if they were briefed).
24. USAF Career Field Management Office for Scientists and Engineers, SAF/AQR. Received March 14, 2011, via e-mail, p. 6.
25. E-mail. U.S. State Department employee on pay incentive programs, April 1, 2011.