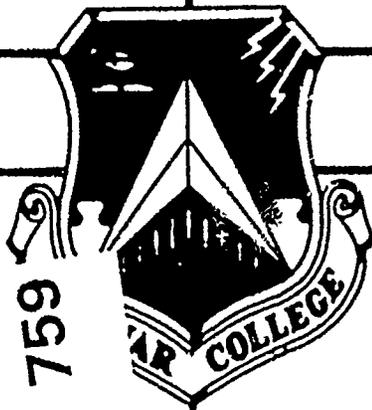


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RESEARCH REPORT

SQUADRON COMMANDER INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

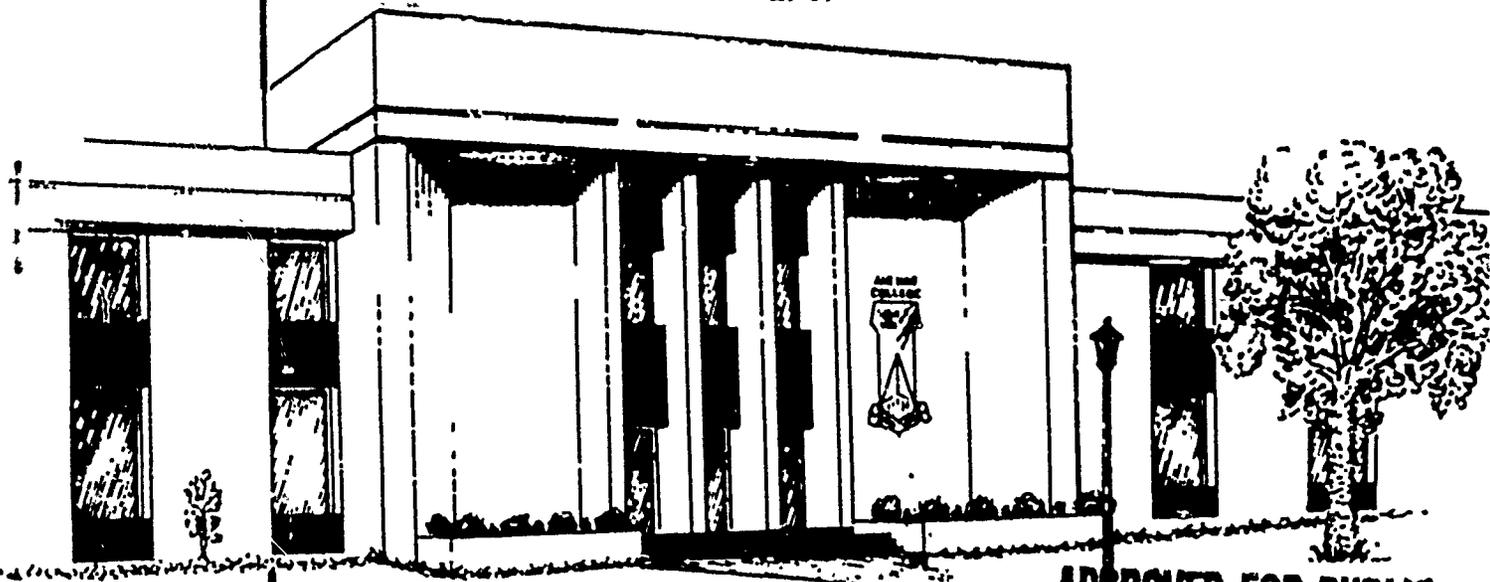
LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILLIAM HARRIS

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JON A. MILLER

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SQUADRON COMMANDER INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

by

William R. Harris
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

Jon A. Miller
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM
REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Colonel Charles J. Jernigan III

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

May 1989

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Squadron Commander Involvement Program

AUTHORS: William R. Harris, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF and
Jon A. Miller, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

An indepth analysis of the literature that deals with the role of the squadron commander in helping his or her officers with their assignments leads to the conclusion that there is a need in officer professional development for close career guidance and career counseling by the squadron commander. The draft Air Force Regulation 36-23 provides the very basics to establish a program that requires squadron commander involvement in the officer evaluation system, the preparation of the Officer Assignment Worksheet, AF Form 90, and the counseling sessions that are required in both of these areas. There is evidence by both the declining rated retention and the dissatisfiers cited in studies that indicate that squadron commanders have to play an important part in officer assignments and professional development.



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel William R. Harris (Bachelor of Industrial Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology; M.S. Facilities Management, Air Force Institute of Technology) served as an aerial port squadron commander at Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea, Division Chief and Executive Officer to the DCS/Air Transportation, Headquarters Military Airlift Command, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, and flight examiner aircraft commander in the C-141B aircraft. He flew as a Forward Air Controller in the O-2A aircraft in the Republic of South Vietnam in 1970 and holds the Distinguished Flying Cross (1 OLC), Air Medal (7 OLC), and Meritorious Service Medal (3 OLC). He is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1989.

Lieutenant Colonel Jon A. Miller (B.S., Wisconsin State University-Platteville; M.A., Pacific Lutheran University) has performed duty as a C-141B squadron commander at Norton Air Force Base, California, Director Command Secretariat, Military Airlift Command Headquarters, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, and in the logistics career field as base transportation officer. He served as a Forward Air Controller in Southeast Asia in 1970 and holds the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal (10 OLC). He is a graduate of Squadron Officer School, the Air Command and Staff College, and the Air War College, class of 1989.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

We need to take the secrets out of an officer's professional development and show our people the system will take care of them as long as they concentrate on doing their jobs.¹

General Larry D. Welch
Air Force Chief of Staff

Professional development of officers continues to be a major effort at all levels. One aspect of this effort is the Squadron Commander Involvement Program (SCIP). This is a Military Airlift Command (MAC) acronym that is used to involve and legitimize the process in which the squadron commander is the "linch pin." He or she is the daily contact, the role model, the teacher of officership, the one person that is responsible for the professional development of the officers assigned to his or her unit.

The SCIP program needs to be refined, improved, and put in a usable format for the squadron commander to use as soon as possible after he or she assumes command. This program needs to be adaptable to the non-rated officers as well as rated officers. There has been no effort to include support officers in this program, and they should have the same support from their squadron commander as the rated officers.

MAC has been using this concept for the past four to five years in one form or another and has had some success in

helping squadron commanders counsel and advise their officers in professional development and the assignment process. Strategic Air Command (SAC) has a program called the Commander Involvement Program (CIP) in which they send out a newsletter with all known assignments on a quarterly basis and a monthly update on assignments. Tactical Air Command had a similar program, but due to the constraints on their pilot resources, the program has not been actively pursued.

Air Training Command does not have an active program to date at the squadron level, but has recently done away with Air Force Military Personnel Center (AFMPC) holding the Major Weapon System board for their instructors. The assignments for their instructors are done by the wing commanders which provides commander involvement.

The draft Air Force (AF) Regulation 36-23 has guidance that will insure that the squadron commander has an input into the assignment process for his or her officers. This draft regulation is moving in the right direction to make the squadron commander an integral part of the assignment process. The commanders will not only review the officer's Form 90, but will be required to make comments on the form before it is sent to AFMPC. This regulation should be published and in the field in the spring of 1989. It will give the major commands guidance in developing a program that involves the squadron commanders in the assignment process. It will also stress other officership areas that

need attention in the "care and feeding" of the officer corps to further their professional development.

The purpose of this research project was generated by the Director of Assignments at Headquarters Military Airlift Command who asked for assistance in refining the SCIP program and developing a pamphlet that could be given to all new squadron commanders to prepare them to deal with all facets of the assignments process and with some of the officership challenges that they will face during their command. This paper will examine all of the data that has been produced to date that has anything to do with the squadron commander's involvement in his or her officer assignments and the many areas of professional development.

The authors assume that the readers are familiar with basic Air Force personnel management concepts and the need for further refinement to help in any way possible to improve officer retention, particularly rated officer retention which is a very large problem area in the Air Force at this time. The retention of non-rated officers is not a problem at this time, but they should also be considered in this program.

CHAPTER II

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In a 28 November 1988 letter distributed to all Air Force officers, Air Force Chief of Staff General Larry D. Welch discussed the steps being taken to redefine "the continuous process of increasing the professional competence of all Air Force officers in their current jobs and of preparing officers for increased future responsibility." According to General Welch, the redefined process encompasses major areas of officer personnel management to include performance evaluations, assignment policies, professional military education, and commander/supervisor involvement in the process. An attachment to the letter explains that a revision to AFR 36-23 will change the focus from career development to professional development.¹

A review of the draft regulation reveals that the changes go much deeper than the change in name from Officer Career Development to Officer Professional Development. The updated version of the regulation clarifies the philosophy of officer professional development and provides the structure for taking the actions necessary to "support the Air Force mission and to provide the professional growth our officers expect."²

The professional development program consists of three main elements. First, a career pattern for each Air

Force specialty guides the officer into developing depth of expertise early in his or her service and branching out later to develop breadth of expertise. Second, a training and education program follows the career pattern by focusing the officer's efforts toward professional military education and advanced degrees at appropriate points commensurate with the need to develop depth or breadth of expertise. Third, the program establishes formal counseling by the commander or supervisor to provide the officer feedback on his or her performance and counseling on his or her professional development. The commander and supervisor are the "linch pins" of the officer professional development program through the evaluation of performance, professional development counseling, and involvement in the assignment process. The commander makes recommendations to AFMPC as a result of his or her assessment of the individual officer's qualifications, needs, and aspirations. AFMPC uses the commander's recommendation along with other considerations to make the assignment to meet Air Force needs.³

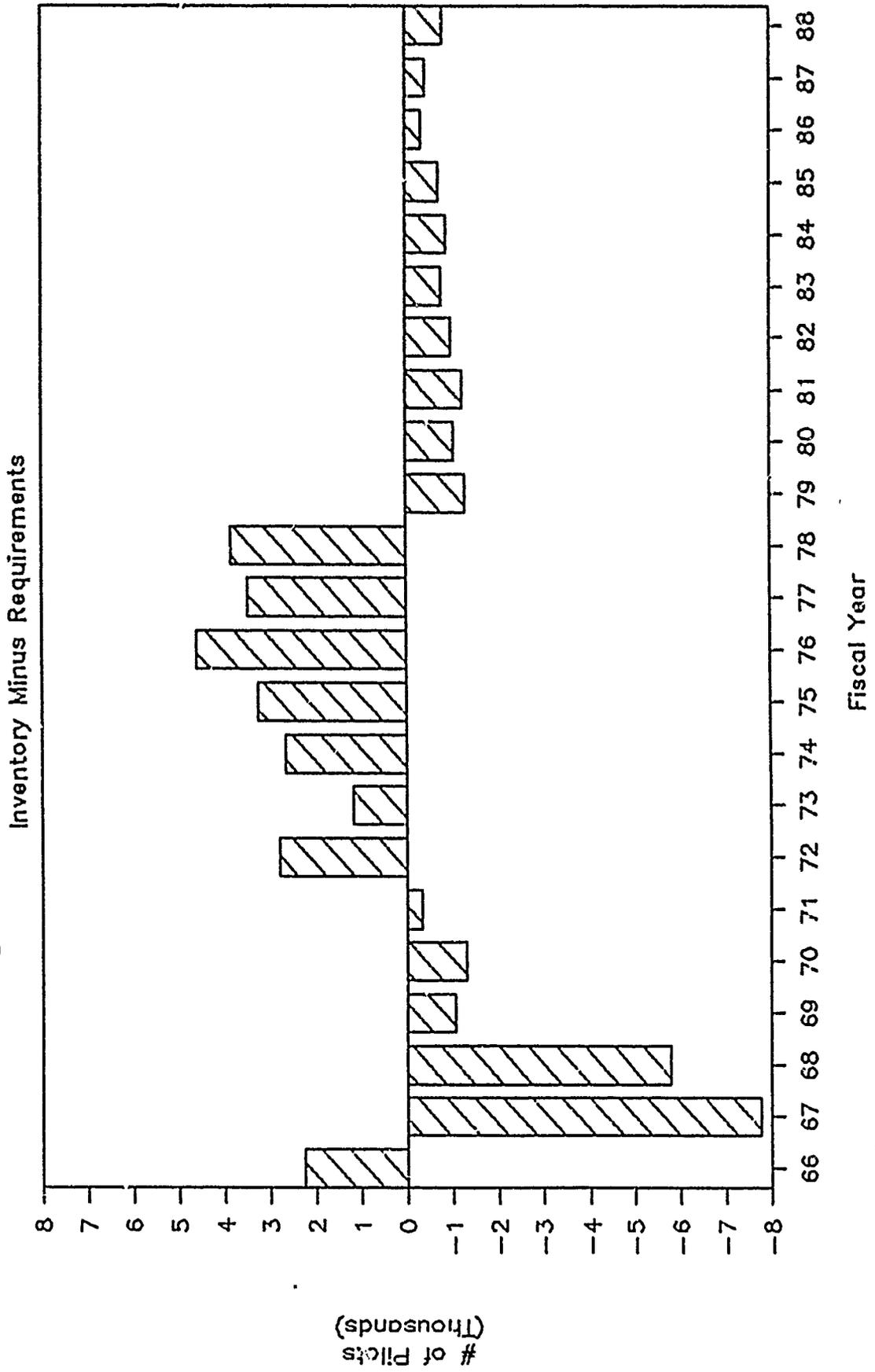
Reemphasizing the commander as a key player in the assignment process was one of several actions taken in an effort to reverse unfavorable pilot retention rates. Likewise, the redefinition of the process of officer professional development represents a culminating effort by Air Force senior leaders to control through a broad range of management actions the fluctuating but seriously declining pilot retention rates over the past twenty years.

Retention, a complex and dynamic problem, has been a subject of numerous studies. A full review of the literature examining all the factors which researchers have identified as influencing retention is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a review of selected studies focusing on the role of assignment policies on retention will help place the current squadron commander's involvement program in a historical perspective. Data on pilot inventory versus requirements will introduce the literature review.

Figure 2-1 depicts the magnitude of pilot shortages and overages (pilot inventory minus requirements) for FY 66 through FY 89. Severe pilot shortages occurred during two time periods: FY 67-71 and FY 79-88. The shortages during the earlier period resulted from increased cockpit requirements for the Southeast Asia conflict and increasing separations. Dramatic increases in pilot training production and the decrease in Southeast Asia cockpit requirements beginning in 1969 quickly corrected the pilot shortage problem.⁴

One study conducted in 1968 analyzed the Air Force assignment system as it stood then and discussed the reasons for centralizing the assignment process at the AFMPC. The author noted that officers were citing lack of assignment choice and poor assignments among their reasons for separating from the Air Force.⁵

Figure 2-1. Pilot Shortages
Inventory Minus Requirements



A 1969 study analyzed the responses of 72 young officers at one base to survey questions relating to their opinions as to the advantages and disadvantages of an Air Force career. These officers listed lack of say about assignments as one of the disadvantages of an Air Force career. The author recommended increased control by the individual over his or her future assignments as a way to improve retention.⁶

A study published in 1971 focused on the structure of the Air Force career development program and the importance of sound career counseling on retention decisions. The author commented positively on the establishment of the Career Development Center at AFMPC to provide direct contact between individual officers and the assignment staff at AFMPC rather than through the commander. He believed officers would prefer to receive assignment information from AFMPC based on their inputs via the AF Form 90, Career Objective Statement, and their letters or telephone calls to their AFMPC career development counselors.⁷

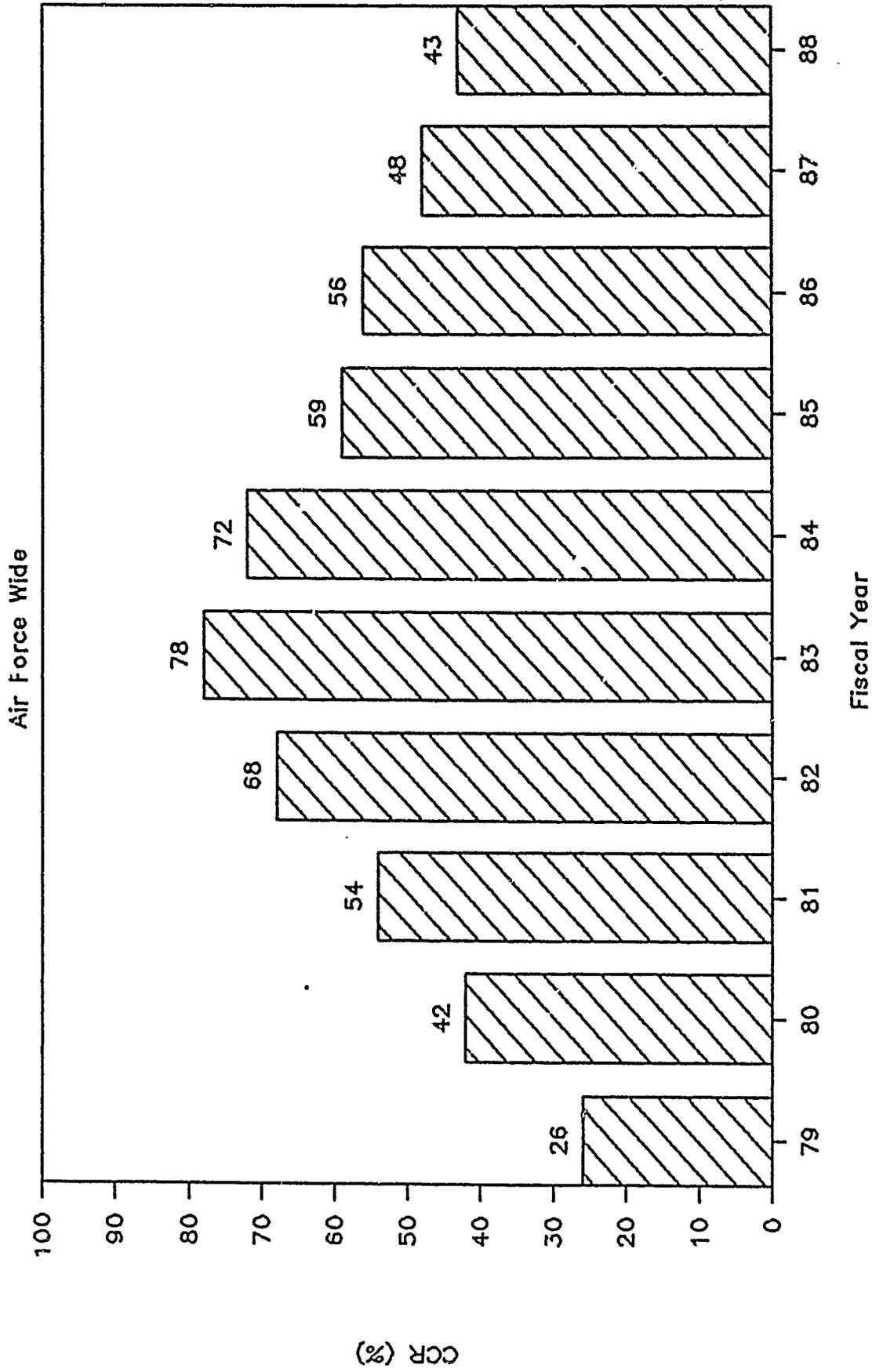
In another 1971 study, the author hypothesized that declining retention rates during the late 1960s reflected that young officers based their career decisions on factors other than money. He characterized these factors as "management factors" since they were under the control of Air Force officials. He concluded that Air Force officers were separating from the service because they were dissatisfied with several management factors to include assignment

policies. His recommendations to improve retention included more career broadening assignments for rated officers and more effective education for these officers on the workings of the assignment system through direct contact between AFMPC and the rated officer corps.⁸

In 1972, a study of Air Force junior officer retention linked retention problems to the rise of antimilitary sentiments in the United States and to the upcoming implementation of the all-volunteer force. The study also analyzed the motivational factors identified in the Air Force New View study of officer motivation in terms of Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory. The author also discussed the role of personnel programs to include assignment policies as dissatisfiers which influenced officers to separate from the Air Force.⁹

After several years of favorable retention rates, the Air Force experienced serious declines in retention rates beginning in FY 79. Both of these phenomena are easily observed in Figure 2-1. By this time, the Air Force had developed a more descriptive measure of retention called the cumulative continuation rate (CCR). The CCR predicts the percentage of pilots entering their sixth year who would complete the eleventh year, assuming current retention rates. Figure 2-2 graphically displays CCRs for FY 79 through FY 88.¹⁰ In this relatively short period, CCRs fluctuated widely, generating considerable concern for broad-based actions to stabilize retention at acceptable rates.

Figure 2-2. Cum Continuation Rate (CCR)



CCR (%)

Several studies addressed the dynamics of pilot retention during this period.

A study completed in 1982 examined the flying squadron commander's role in rated officer retention. As background, the author listed career influences identified by the Air Force Retention Group and Air Force major commands from a series of exit interviews with separating pilots and from conferences with aircrew members. A recurring theme on the negative side was dissatisfaction with the assignment process and the individual's lack of input to it. The author recommended an increased role for the squadron commander to address the retention problem and officers' concerns with negative career influences such as assignment policies.¹¹

A 1984 study looked at the impact of institutional and occupational values on retention. The author's models lumped factors such as assignment policies in a category called job satisfaction. He concluded that "satisfied people are more likely to be retained than dissatisfied people" and cited effective assignment policies as an avenue toward increased job satisfaction.¹²

A 1986 study examined the retention of six-to-eleven year group fighter pilots and discussed the reasons many of them were giving for separating from the Air Force. Among other factors, the author reported that these pilots perceived the assignment process as being arbitrary and unresponsive to individual inputs. He recommended greater involvement by the squadron commander in the assignment

process and better education on the way the assignment system operates.¹³

Another study completed in 1986 analyzed retention from a historical perspective using the concept of "push" and "pull" factors. The author defined "push" factors as those internal to the Air Force which create dissatisfaction and tend to influence officers to separate from the Air Force. "Pull" factors are external to the Air Force and tend to attract officers to leave the Air Force for a civilian career, principally with the commercial airlines. He identified the "lack of individual influence on the assignment process" as a common career irritant and a "push" factor which negatively influences retention.¹⁴

A third study conducted in 1986 compared the retention problem in 1986 with the retention problem in 1979 and concluded that the reasons for low retention rates in both years were the same. The author cited an AFMPC issue paper as identifying assignment policies as one of the major push factors which were key to future retention rates.¹⁵

A study published in 1987 analyzed the ability of flying squadron commanders to perform their roles as career counselors and assignment selection and notification officials under the SCIP. The authors surveyed all Air Force flying squadron commanders and concluded that squadron commander involvement in the assignment process was working but needed improvement. Specifically, squadron commanders

needed additional preparation to effectively serve as key members in the professional development process.¹⁶

The literature review reveals a consistent influence of assignment policies on retention rates. The review also documents a decided shift in attitudes toward the squadron commander's role in the assignment process and in attacking the retention problem. Until the revision of AFR 36-23, however, only minor changes have been made to the assignment process which evolved in the late 1960s. The SCIP represents a concrete expression of the renewed interest in using the squadron commander as the point man between individual officers and the Air Force in matters relating to professional development. The following chapters of this paper hopefully will provide squadron commanders with information which will make them more effective players in the assignment process and the SCIP. This information may also help the SCIF become a more meaningful way to solve the retention problem.

CHAPTER III

THE SCIP/RATED

The Air Force has formalized the fact that the squadron commander has an invaluable effect on his or her officer corps and their professional development. This can be seen in the new Officer Evaluation System (OES), the new AF Form 90, and the whole assignment process. All of these programs have put more emphasis on the squadron commander to become more involved in matching the right officer with the right assignment and in recording the officer's primary duty performance. Counseling occurs every time an AF Form 90 is produced or the officer becomes available for reassignment¹ and when an officer performance report is written.² This program should provide big dividends in the pilot retention situation that the Air Force is currently experiencing.

The SCIP needs to be more than another opportunity for the squadron commander to meet with his or her officers. He or she must use this time to learn more about each and every officer under his or her command, their likes/dislikes, ambitions, career goals, families, and anything else that helps him or her understand them as much as possible. This session can also be used to explain the assignment process, promotion criteria, OES program, local squadron policies, and any unique situation that exists in the squadron. The session should not be a "hard sell" session, but a time for information flow in both directions. It should be conducted

informally with the officer being put in a relaxed atmosphere and as open a manner as possible. It is important that the spouse is also involved and given the opportunity to attend the informal session to ensure that he or she feels a part of this process.

Not every squadron commander will feel comfortable conducting this kind of session, but must be a good listener, be honest, show empathy, be considerate, be positive, measure what he says and how he says it, not lecture, and not force responses.³ The squadron commander must keep all of these sessions and the information given by the officer as privileged information and not use any of the information in any prejudicial way.⁴ If the officer does not feel comfortable in the squadron commander's office, maybe an alternative location should be chosen. The main factor involved in this process is that the squadron commander must make this program work and give every one of his or her officers the opportunity to participate in the assignment process and their professional development.

There is no empirical data available at any level that quantifies the number of rated officers that the SCIP program has helped retain in the Air Force. The Director of Assignments at Headquarters Military Airlift Command, Colonel James H. White, who worked C-141/C-5 pilot assignments at AFMPC from 1977-1979 during the last pilot retention problem, states:

Importantly, commanders now determine who goes where, not personnel bureaucrats in their air conditioned offices. I'm convinced that our currently poor retention rates would be significantly worse if it were not for SCIP. Further, the numerous professional development changes that we're now pushing forward with will fail if we don't continue strong emphasis on SCIP.⁵

He believes that the program is so successful that he has asked for this research effort to be conducted to see if the other commands can benefit from the program.

The SCIP program must not be a one-way flow of communication, but has to have the full support of the major commands and the Air Force Military Personnel Center. The squadron commander must be given the hard data and facts that are available to pass to his or her officers. The available assignments must flow to the squadrons in a timely manner to give the commander as much time as possible to work with his or her officers. This information can flow in any manner that is easily understood and gives the criteria that are required for each position. Both MAC and SAC provide this information every month. This document could also include retention issues and facts, any assignment changes that are new, and any new command personnel policies.

The SCIP program does not start with the squadron commander, rather it starts with the MAJCOM personnel directorate. The MAJCOM must select the most capable officers to be their squadron commanders, give them the tools with which to work and support them when they make recommendations for assignments of their officers. The squadron commander must then execute the program with vigor

and support his or her officers to the best of his or her abilities. The squadron commander must be held accountable in the administration of this program and the MAJCOM must keep statistics to show how effectively the program is working. If the program is working, the officers should be more satisfied that they are indeed involved in their assignments and professional development. As a retired MAC Major General said some 10 years ago, "It is time we stop whispering in their ears and peeing on their legs."

CHAPTER IV

THE SCIP/SUPPORT SQUADRONS

Commanders of support squadrons play an important role in the professional development of their officers as do commanders of flying squadrons. MAC recognized the importance of this role by including support squadrons in the SCIP test. However, the SCIP for support squadrons operated differently than for flying squadrons. The MAC Support Officer Assignment Division exercised the SCIP by sending support squadron commanders messages informing them of assignments MAC or AFMPC was proposing for their officers and asking for the commanders' comments. MAC considered the commanders' comments in the decision process and either notified the officer being reassigned through personnel channels when the assignment was approved or conducted another round of assignment negotiations if the assignment was not finalized. The Assignment Division also sent a monthly message to the field listing assignment vacancies for the coming months by Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC), grade, and duty location. Commanders had the option of nominating their officers for appropriate assignments on the list of vacancies.

MAC implemented the SCIP for support specialties without modification from the test configuration. Support

squadron commanders and officers generally expressed satisfaction with the way the SCIP worked during the test.¹

In addition, other factors influenced the decision to implement the SCIP differently for support units than for rated units:

a. Support specialties represent a wide variety of disciplines which call for uniquely qualified individuals to meet technical and operational requirements. Considerable study would be necessary to design a detailed SCIP implementation which would work for each specialty.

b. The structure and populations of the support specialties lend themselves toward centralized management of assignments by AFMPC. First, most support specialties are not command-unique as are pilot weapons systems. AFMPC can best manage intercommand transfers of support officers to meet assignment requirements. Second, the small numbers of officers assigned to many support specialties make decentralized management by major command highly inefficient if not unworkable. Finally, the total number of officers in a specific support specialty assigned to a particular base frequently is small. Allocating assignments to a base to fill as is done for pilot assignments could generate assignment inequities by bypassing the fair assignment policies AFMPC strives to maintain.

The decision on how to structure the SCIP for the different support specialties should be made by AFMPC with the overall goals of the professional development system in

mind. In addition, the commander needs to have at his or her disposal the right approach to use to ensure the retention of the best qualified officers. The results attained will depend on the quality of communication and coordination among the individual officers, their squadron commanders, major command functional managers and personnel officers, and AFMPC.

Some support specialties are best managed centrally. Others may allow some flexibility in establishing a less centralized SCIP. For example, some aspects of the missile operations specialty are similar to the pilot specialty. Missile operations officers serve on crews and face long crew duty days, scheduling problems, alerts, weapon system qualification programs, proficiency training, standardization evaluations, and time away from home. Missile operations squadrons also consist of large numbers of officers similar to flying squadrons. However, unlike their pilot counterparts, missile operations officers face fewer reassignments within the missile operations specialty. Most reassignments are to positions outside the field and generally outside the squadron commander's area of expertise. The commander's detailed involvement in the assignment process could be of help for the officer trying to cope with an unfamiliar assignment. On the other hand, the commander could face heavy tasking in an unfamiliar area, making him or her contribute less effectively to the SCIP.

Centralized management of assignments does not necessarily preclude the implementation of a viable SCIP in support specialties as the MAC test demonstrated. AFMPC has the option to tailor the SCIP to meet the requirements of each functional area. The squadron commander can still have a direct input into the assignment process via contact with command functional managers and personnel officers as well as AFMPC. Support squadron commanders perform their most valuable service in the SCIP by counseling their officers face-to-face regarding their professional development requirements, the assignment process, and the needs of the Air Force.

The pamphlet in the attachment should be useful to squadron commanders as a guide to counseling their officers under the officer professional development (OPD) program, regardless of the level of their involvement in the SCIP. The assignment process is only one facet of OPD; professional development counseling is a key commander responsibility which the guidelines in the pamphlet will greatly facilitate.

CHAPTER V
RECOMMENDATIONS

The authors believe that the SCIP is working today in MJC and should be adopted by the Air Force. The SCIP puts the emphasis and the authority where it should be--on the squadron commander. He or she is the person that is most knowledgeable of the officer's talent and potential. He or she is the one that can talk "eye-ball to eye-ball" and know what the officer thinks about his or her future and what the spouse thinks.

MAJCOMS should establish an avenue of easy access to the personnel officer to allow squadron commanders the ability to work assignments for their officers. There are many times that the personnel officer is not able to be reached because the phone is busy. This could be managed by having a call waiting feature on his number, installing more numbers, or establishing set times that he will be free from other duties.

Junior officers should never be allowed to talk to the personnel officer at the MAJCOM or AFMPC. They should work through the squadron commander only and let him or her work with assignments personnel. This in itself may help the personnel officers' access and the telephone problem. The squadron commander should be the broker for all assignments for his or her officers.

Rated assignments should flow to the squadron commander as early as possible, divided into "soft assignments" and "hard assignments." The "soft assignments" are those that are available for anyone with the applicable AFSC, and the "hard assignments" are those that have been allocated to that wing to fill. This will allow a fair and equitable distribution of assignments across the command. It will also allow the squadron commander to advertise the assignments to all of his or her officers and allow time for individual counseling.

The squadron commander should set up a system that is easy and provides all the information that he or she needs in an organized format. This can be done by following the guidelines found in the pamphlet (Attachment 1). This approach sets up a procedure that allows for accomplishing initial and recurring counseling sessions and a convenient format that is not cumbersome. It should have basic information on the spouse and children as well as detailed information on the officer. If possible there should be a work number for the spouse in case there is an emergency and the spouse needs to be reached.

The base Director of Personnel should establish a program that would give ample time for all new squadron commanders to interface with base functions that they will deal with as commanders. This would last from one to two weeks and include time with: Staff Judge Advocate, Social Actions, Chief of Security Police, Installation Chaplain,

Chief of the Office of Special Investigation, Chief of the Family Support Center, Chief of Correctional Custody, and any other function that the Director of Personnel deems appropriate. This program would give the new squadron commander a chance for face-to-face contact, and information on what each function can offer when he needs support.

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APPENDIX I
SQUADRON COMMANDER PAMPHLET

Squadron
Commander
Involvement
Program

A Working Guide for the
Squadron Commander

WORKING GUIDE FOR THE
SQUADRON COMMANDER

This space should have a message from the MAJCOM commander that expresses his thoughts on command and responsibilities of a squadron commander. He should also give support to the SCIP program and his philosophy on the assignment process.

GETTING STARTED

You must first do some homework before you even start to think about setting up your first session. Start by reviewing the records of your officers. This should be done by breaking your officers up into groups that can be easily reviewed in a relatively short time. As you review the records use the officer worksheet to take notes that will be important when you conduct your interview. These worksheets become very important when there is a promotion board coming up that will require a Promotion Recommendation Form (PRF) and when the officer's Officer Performance Report (OPR) is required. Take the worksheet and start a notebook that has the latest SCIP letter, retention fact sheets, computer runs that give date arrived station, overseas return date, promotion criteria, and any personnel policy letters either local or from the MAJCOM.

Now that you have gotten a start on knowing your officers, you can start by sending a short letter to all the officers in your squadron explaining that you will have a meeting with all of them in the near future. If you want them to bring a draft Form 90 with them, put that requirement in the letter.

For the newcomers in the squadron, make sure that they receive a copy of a welcome letter for their spouse, if married, from the orderly room that gives basic facts about

the squadron and some common definitions. Then set up a meeting of your choice to meet the newcomer and his or her spouse to get acquainted and answer any questions that either of them have. A luncheon at the club or a dinner at your house works very nicely and it is a more relaxed atmosphere for a small group of your new people. They get to meet you and your spouse and some of the other new people in the squadron and they all feel like they are welcome and a part of the new family.

Some of the most important items to cover on the initial meeting with the officer during the counseling session are:

1. Professional development--the most important indicator of potential of the officer is his or her daily performance. The progression in crew position, job responsibility, and the quality in which he or she does the job relates directly to promotion.

2. Professional Military Education--should continue to build on the foundation laid down in the officer's pre-commissioning training and should be taken when the officer needs to improve the required skills--not a square filling move.

3. Advanced degrees--are important to the officer to support and strengthen his or her ability to deal with the more complex jobs as they move up in rank and responsibility.

4. Officer Evaluation System--a clear cut system that is designed to accurately provide feedback on job

performance. A thorough knowledge of AFR 36-10 is required to counsel your officers.

5. The promotion system--a fair and competitive process to advance the best qualified officers to positions of greater responsibilities.

6. AF Form 90--a worksheet that an officer can fill out to let AFMPC personnel officers know what their ambitions and career goals are during their career.

7. Assignment system--a process that matches officer's abilities and training to Air Force needs. An integral part of officer professional development and to increase rank and responsibility with an Air Force career.

8. Spouse employment--if desired, civil service gives credit toward placement in the civil service system for spouses of active duty military. The Family Support Center can also give assistance in obtaining employment in the local area.

There are many other areas that are unique to certain missions and areas that should be included in the counseling session and maintained in the notebook. This book will contain some very sensitive information and should be treated and protected with that in mind.

TO: Each New Spouse

On behalf of the men and women of the _____, I welcome you to _____ Base. My wife, _____, and I are sincerely interested in making your tour pleasant and enjoyable. We are available anytime to answer questions, discuss problems, or provide advice.

We have put together a package containing information on the local area, the base, and specifics about the squadron. We've also included an attachment that defines several of the terms you will hear you spouse talking about and provides answers to questions that may arise when he or she is gone on a trip.

There are many activities in the squadron and we encourage you to take an active role in as many as you can because we think they are fun and you will meet new and interesting friends. We like to think that we are one happy Air Force family.

Again, welcome to the _____ and (location). We are looking forward to meeting you, and if there is anything we can do to help you get settled, please let us know.

John Doe
Commander, _____

XXth SQUADRON

Welcome to the XXth MAS. We are glad you are joining our family and want you to feel at home here at (name of base). We know you have many questions, and we have tried to anticipate the most critical ones and provide you the answers in this package. If you have any other questions, please call _____ at (telephone number).

1. WHEN MY HUSBAND IS ON A TRIP, HOW CAN I FIND OUT WHERE HE IS AND WHEN HE MIGHT GET HOME?

You can call MISSION CONTROL any time (It's a 24-hour number), however, for the most recent update, call during normal duty hours (0730-1600, Monday through Friday). The duty officer can get the information much, much quicker if you know the name of the aircraft commander your husband is with. So it is a good idea for you to find that out before your husband leaves. Please don't feel insulted if you are asked to identify yourself. The squadron does not want to give out the information that your husband is out of town and won't be back for several days to anyone not authorized to know that. Be aware that changes in missions and delays do occur and your husband's trip may last several days longer than expected. We know that this can be discouraging and inconvenient at times (especially when you've lined up a sitter for the squadron party and he gets home two days later). We sympathize and hope it will not happen too often. You can call MISSION CONTROL by dialing (telephone number).

2. WE HAVE AN EMERGENCY (Baby is very sick, death in family, etc.). HOW CAN I REACH MY HUSBAND WHO IS ON A TRIP?

a. Call MISSION CONTROL (telephone number) or the Operations Officer (telephone number). Call the Chief Pilot, Chief Navigator, Operations Officer, or Commander.

b. The squadron wives are set up to help one another in emergencies, so please call the commander's wife (telephone number) and she'll make arrangements to help out until your husband gets home or things are back to normal.

3. I NEED TO ASK MY HUSBAND'S ADVICE ON SOMETHING WHILE HE IS OUT ON A TRIP. IT IS NOT REALLY AN EMERGENCY, BUT IT IS IMPORTANT. IS THERE ANY WAY I CAN GET IN TOUCH WITH HIM?

You cannot talk to your husband directly, but call MISSION CONTROL and the duty officer will relay the message to him. Be sure you tell the duty officer the name of the AIRCRAFT COMMANDER. It might take a while (10-12 hours at

mount, depending on the whereabouts of the mission, but you will get a message back.

4. HOW DO I KNOW EXACTLY HOW LONG MY HUSBAND WILL BE GONE?

Unfortunately, we can never be absolutely sure when a crew will return. However, each trip has a planned duration and about 50 percent of our trips are completed as expected; but, experience has shown that the other half are one to three days late. The entire MAC system is primed to assist crews who get stuck out beyond the FRT (FIRM RETURN TIME). Ask your husband what his FRT is and you can pretty well plan on him being home within 24 hours of his FRT.

5. WHAT ARE THE BASE NURSERY PROCEDURES?

You need to call for a reservation (telephone number) at least one week in advance, particularly in the summer. Additional space is provided for OWC luncheons and coffees, so call early (two weeks before the function, if possible) and state that you will be attending an OWC function.

6. AM I ELIGIBLE TO SEE A FLIGHT SURGEON? HOW DO I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT? ARE MY CHILDREN INCLUDED? ANY RESTRICTIONS?

Wives and children (6 years of age and older) of flying personnel can see a Flight Surgeon. Dependent's appointments can be made by calling (telephone number).

7. I WAS TOLD THAT THE BASE DOESN'T HAVE AN EMERGENCY ROOM. WHAT DO I DO IF MY CHILD GETS SICK, MY HUSBAND IS GONE, AND IT IS LATE AT NIGHT?

You may use the emergency facility at _____, or you may use the nearest civilian hospital for emergency care. If you use a civilian hospital for emergency care, it will be handled through the CHAMPUS program. Be sure you have your ID card with you to verify your right to treatment. Keep in mind that some charges may be incurred if you use a civilian facility. CHAMPUS pays 80% of the allowable charges after the deductible has been satisfied. You will be responsible for the first 20% of the charges. Everyone is advised to familiarize themselves with the clinic's policy before an emergency arises. Stop in at the clinic and pick up the necessary information.

8. Soon your husband will be speaking a new language and to help you understand what in the world he is talking about, we are providing you with the attached list.

AN EASY GUIDE TO SPEAKING IAC

ASET - Aircrew Standardization and Evaluation Team--a MAC headquarters staff visit to see if our crews are fully qualified. Tests are administered, and they fly with our crews. You'll find this a tense period for your spouse.

ALERT TIME - Three hours and 15 minutes before takeoff. The squadron will phone to "alert" you husband for his mission. He then has one hour to report to the squadron.

SHOWTIME - One hour after alert, or two hours and 15 minutes before takeoff. This is the time the crew reports to the squadron to start preparing for the mission.

CREW REST - There are three types:

a. Pre-Departure Crew Rest - Not scheduled for any flying duties for the 24-hour period before show time. Your husband may be scheduled for office projects or additional duties for the first 12 hours of this period, but he can't be scheduled for anything the last 12 hours.

b. En-Route Crew Rest - While on a mission the crew is given at least 15 hours and 15 minutes to eat, shop or whatever, and sleep before taking off again.

c. Post Mission Crew Rest - If your husband is away from (name of base) more than 16 hours, he has free time when he returns. He gets one hour off for each three hours he was away up to a maximum of three days. Most crews get two to three days off when they get home.

CREW POSITIONS:

Aircraft Commander (AC) - The pilot in command of the crew and responsible for the safe and timely operation of the mission.

First Pilot (FP) - A more experienced pilot who is nearly ready to be an aircraft commander.

Copilot (CP) - A pilot who assists the aircraft commander.

Navigator (N) - The officer crewmember responsible for the aircraft position and timing for specialized missions.

Flight Engineer (FE) - Enlisted crewmember (E) who operate the aircraft systems, i.e. fuel, electrical, etc. The technical experts on aircraft systems.

Loadmaster (LM) - Crewmember responsible for the loading and unloading of cargo and ensures that it is safe to carry.

Instructor - An expert at his crew position, pilot, navigator, engineer, or loadmaster, who instructs new crewmembers in their duties.

Flight Examiner (FE) - Responsible for evaluating the performance of a crewmember. There are, again, pilot, navigator, engineer, and loadmaster flight examiners. This is the ultimate qualification a crewmember can attain.

DNIF - Duty not including flying--this means that your husband may have a cold, broken arm, or an illness as determined by the flight surgeon which would preclude him from flying. You will probably see a lot of him if he is DNIF!

MISSION CONTROL - The squadron command post. It is a squadron office that is manned 24 hours a day and is the office which alerts your husband for his missions and the office that you call anytime to find out where he is and when he will be home. If you need to contact your husband, call mission control and they will put him in touch with you or pass along a message to him. Keep their phone number handy: (telephone number).

ORI - Operational Readiness Inspection. An inspection by HQ MAC to determine the wing's ability to do its primary job: airlift/airdrop men and material under wartime conditions. You will find this another tense period for your husband.

STAGE - A way to get the aircraft back to its base quickly--unfortunately, it means that the crew is out longer. For example, your husband will fly the aircraft to Hawaii where it is on the ground three hours and another crew takes it to Guam. The original crew goes into crew rest at Hawaii and picks up the next airplane coming through. This continues throughout the system. It means that the aircraft returns to the base after about three days, but your husband may be gone for 10 days.

TYPES OF MISSIONS:

AR - Aerial refueling mission. A mission in which a C-141 takes on fuel from either a KC-135 or KC-10 tanker aircraft.

Airdrop - Formation flights of C-141s that usually airdrop troops or cargo. Most of these missions are training missions flown here at (name of base).

Down Under Mission - Missions to New Zealand and Australia.

Line Mission - Regularly scheduled cargo missions to the Pacific area. This is the most common mission flown from (name of base).

Local - A training flight in the (name of base) area, lasting approximately four and one-half hours.

SKE - Station Keeping Equipment--specially equipped aircraft that fly formation in clouds. Used on airdrop only.

WING STANDBY CREW - A backup crew that the wing maintains in case something happens to a mission crew. Your husband must be at home and available for a 12-hour period. He may get launched to go anywhere in the world. In addition, the wing may be tasked for a special alert crew by MAC headquarters. The procedures are the same as for the wing standby crew.

RON - Remain overnight. The crew finally gets some sleep.

As of:

MAJOR PROMOTION BOARD

1. Eligibility Zones:

a. Promotion Board:

b. Primary Zone cutoff:

c. BP Zone DOR:

2. MAJOR Eligibles

a. Above the Zone

PILOTS

DOR

NAVS

DOR

b. Primary Zone

c. Below the Zone

(1) One year below

(2) Two years below

(3) Outside BP Zone

As of:

LIEUTENANT COLONEL PROMOTION BOARD

1. Eligibility Zones:

a. Promotion Board:

b. Primary Zone DOR:

c. BP Zone DOR:

2. LT COL Eligibles

a. Above the Zone

PILOTS

DOR

NAVS

DOR

b. Primary Zone

c. Below the Zone

(1) One year below

(2) Two years below

(3) Outside BP Zone

As of:

COLONEL PROMOTION BOARD

1. Eligibility Zones:

a. Promotion Board:

b. Primary Zone DOR:

c. BP Zone DOR:

2. COLONEL Eligibles

a. Above the Zone

PILOTS

DOR

NAVS

DGR

b. Primary Zone

c. Below the Zone

(1) One year below

(2) Two years below

(3) Outside BP Zone

NAME: _____ DOR:
PHE:
RANK: _____ CIV:
DATE COMH:

DATE OF NEXT PROMO BOARD: _____

<u>LAST FIVE QPRS</u>	<u>CAREER</u>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
	6.
	7.
	8.

Where I think he should go:

Where he wants to go: When: AFSC:

PROBLEM AREAS: