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MISSION SUPPORT SQUADRONS: A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

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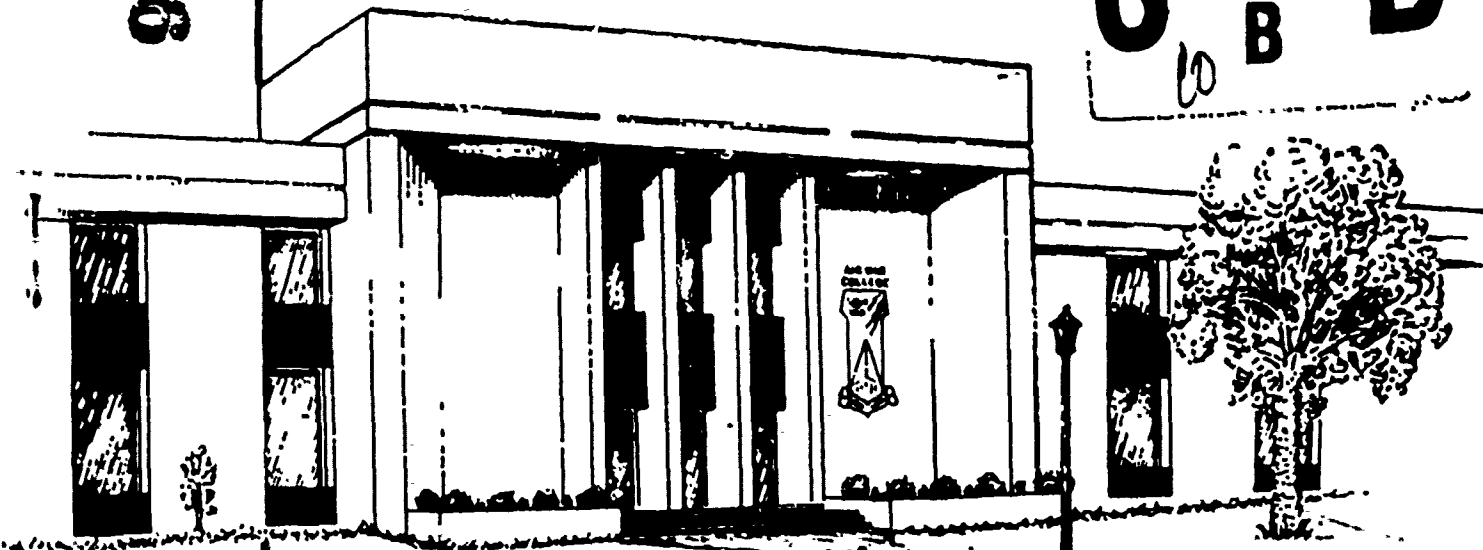LIEUTENANT COLONEL DONALD K. GRANDIA

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MISSION SUPPORT SQUADRONS: A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Mission Support Squadron: A Look Into the Future

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A review of the Mission Support Squadron (MSSQ) test program introduces a discussion of the impact on professional development, technical training, and the administration, personnel, and social actions fields. A review of the professional education courses in the affected fields leads to suggestions for the curriculum. The MSSQ squadron is seen as driving a number of changes in the future. Several recommendations are made as a result. A sample course of instruction and a sample MSSQ course outline are included.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Lieutenant Colonel (Colonel Select) Wanda C. Wood (M.S., Sul Ross State University) is a career personnel officer and has held the positions of CBPO Chief and Director of Personnel at base level. Prior to the Air War College, she was a Personnel Advisor and Board Member, Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council. A joint specialty officer, she has completed Squadron Officer School in residence, Air Command and Staff College by correspondence, Armed Forces Staff College, the National Security Management Seminar by correspondence, and Air War College by correspondence. Lieutenant Colonel Wood is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1989.

Lieutenant Colonel Donald K. Grandia (M.B.A., University of Wyoming) has held command and staff positions in Air Training Command, Air University, and Tactical Air Command. Prior to his assignment to the Air War College, he was the Commander, 836 Mission Support Squadron, Davis Monthan A.F.B., Az. He was one of 19 Mission Support Squadron Commanders to test this new concept for the Air Force from 1986-1988. He has completed Squadron Officer School and Air Command and Staff College in residence, and the National Security Management Seminar by correspondence. Lieutenant Colonel Grandia is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1989.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Today, perhaps more than ever before, the Air Force (AF) must have a well trained, organized, and effective work force to accomplish its assigned roles and missions to help provide for the nation's security. As the AF approaches severe budget and manpower constraints, a highly professional, well organized officer corps is critical to its success. Numerous organizational initiatives have surfaced in recent years to meet the challenges of the future more effectively. One such initiative involved three career fields in the AF: administration, personnel, and social actions. [AFR 36-23, dated 1 January 1989, changed the name of the career field from administration to information management. For purposes of this paper, the authors will use administration and information management interchangably since administration is more widely recognized throughout the AF.] Recently, Headquarters Air Force Military Personnel Center (HQ AFMPC) and the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force (SAF/AA) completed a detailed test of 19 Mission Support Squadrons (MSSQs) and have recommended this new organizational structure for AF-wide adoption.

The purpose of this study is to review the results of the MSSQ test, assess its impact on professional development, technical training, and the career fields of affected personnel, and recommend changes which would increase the effectiveness of the MSSQ and future commanders. Even though the MSSQ will cause many changes that will affect officer and enlisted personnel, the authors will address the MSSQ from the officer viewpoint only. They will examine the impact on professional development of personnel in the administration, personnel, and social actions fields and review the related professional education courses. The authors will discuss several recommendations and will present a sample MSSQ course outline and a sample block of instruction. Chapter II will trace the development of the new MSSQ concept.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

In late 1984, the MSSQ concept was developed by Air Staff personnel from the administration and personnel communities. Initially referred to as a Human Resources Squadron, the proposal called for consolidating all of the base Director of Personnel (DP) functions, Social Actions (SL), Base Administration (DA), and the Family Support Center (FSC) into a single squadron. The Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) function was also an initial member of the MSSQ concept. (1:1)

This concept grew out of the perceived need within the AF to move toward a more generalist versus specialist orientation. The intent was to develop an optimum organizational structure for both administration and personnel career fields to meet their peacetime as well as their warfighting mission requirements. (2:5) By combining like support and service functions, the primary objective was to determine if efficiency and productivity could be enhanced by this new organizational structure. Related to this idea was the realization that AF budget cuts would force the support community to organize in such a way as to do more with less.

Two test squadrons were activated in 1985 under the Model Installation Program (MIP) and data collection began at that time. In a phased approach, 17 additional test squadrons were added to the test plan with the last two squadrons coming on line in November 1986. (2:5,8) A total of 19 bases from seven major commands (MAJCOMs) participated in the test. Three additional MSSQs were organized after the beginning of the test, but no data was collected from these bases as a part of the original test. Data from the test bases was collected through December 1987. The MSSQ test consisted of a core or standard configuration at all 19 test squadrons. It included the following:

- a MSSQ commander

- first sergeant and orderly room

- base administration

- social actions

- military personnel

- civilian personnel

- education services

- professional military education (PME)

The DP authorization was used for the MSSQ commander position and the first sergeant and orderly room personnel were obtained from the previous wing and group headquarters squadron sections (CCQ). Within the core configuration, three variations were tested:

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The DP authorization was used for the MSSQ commander position and the first sergeant and orderly room personnel were obtained from the previous wing and group headquarters squadron sections (CCQ). Within the core configuration, three variations were tested:

- Variation A included the CCQ commander (14 test
squadrons)

- Variation B realigned the FSC from the base commander
to the MSSQ Commander (MSSQ/CC) (9 test squadrons)

- Variation C realigned the MWR function into the MSSQ
(3 test squadrons) (2:7-8)

In addition to these three test variations, one base did not
include FME and two bases had only satellite civilian
personnel functions.

Guidelines for the test squadrons were as follows:

- For the MAJCOMs with ten or more AF installations,
AFMPC requested they test a minimum of two
squadrons.

(There were no restrictions on MAJCOMs with less
than ten installations.)

- AFMPC requested the core squadron configuration
with Variation C be tested at two squadrons.
(Variation A and B could also be tested at these
locations.)

- Administration (70XX) and personnel/social actions
(73XX)officers were to be MSSQ/CCs and each Air
Force Speciality Code (AFSC) was to be tested at no
fewer than three locations.

- The test phase for each squadron was to be at least 12
months. (2:8)

As previously stated, all MSSQ/CCs were selected from the personnel/social actions or administration career fields. Initially there were more 73XX commanders due to base level grade differences, but as the test progressed additional administration officers were assigned to command MSSQs. (Due to PCS, promotion, etc., ten of the test squadrons had two or more commanders during their test period.)

Data collection from the 19 squadrons was done through several methods including assessment surveys, functional surveys, and narrative data. Assessment surveys were developed and administered at the end of the test with one survey for commanders (air division, wing, base, squadron) and the other survey for branch chiefs within the MSSQ. Both surveys focused on seven test goals as well as additional interest items. Functional surveys were specific to functional areas (DA, SL, DPM, etc) and consisted of both quantitative measures and subjective inputs. Narrative data came from squadron quarterly feedback reports and included comments from MSSQ commanders and branch chiefs concerning problems encountered, benefits realized, and any special interest items concerning the overall test. (2:1)

Analysis of the 64,000 plus data items was done at AFMPC with the help of the Director of Information Management and Administration (SAF/AAD). (2:1) A discussion of the test goals and results follows.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF TEST RESULTS

AFMPC published the final report on the MSSQ test in September 1988. There were problems and changes, but the test proved that the MSSQ would work and should be implemented. Senior commanders, MSSQ commanders, and all the involved agency personnel agreed that the test was positive and enhanced the organization. (2:2)

The test had seven goals. These goals were 1) reduce the base commander's span of control, 2) enhance the responsiveness and accountability of base-level administration and personnel activities, 3) improve customer service, 4) improve efficiencies within base-level administration, personnel, and the other functional branches, 5) emphasize leadership versus management, 6) enhance morale of squadron members, and 7) improve the training and placement of administrative personnel across the base. In addition to these goals, two benefits became apparent during the test: the enhanced readiness posture for base-level administration and personnel activities and the improved working relationships among all elements of the squadron. (2:2)

Addressing each goal, the first one was to reduce the span of control of the base commander. The test did

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reduce the span of control by allowing the base commander to deal directly with the MSSQ commander instead of several staff agency heads. The test allowed the base commander to spend more time on other areas such as labor relations, community relations, and discipline problems basewide. In addition to reducing the number of people the base commander dealt with, the test showed an improvement in the quality of the staff work. Having a seasoned officer as the MSSQ commander made the difference in the review of the staff papers before going to the base commander. (2:16-17)

There were two other advantages in the reduction of the span of control of the base commander. First, the branch chiefs felt they had better and more accessibility to the MSSQ commander than they previously had to the base commander, and, second, the MSSQ commander took on the functional advocacy role. The MSSQ commander had more time for the branch chiefs and more clout to use when negotiating with the other organizations for monies and resources. (2:25)

The main problem with the test arose in the alignment of MWR. The senior commanders felt that MWR should stay directly under their control. Subordinating MWR to the MSSQ commander widened the span of control and took it too far away from the base commander. (2:24,85)

The second goal was to enhance the responsiveness and accountability of base-level administration and personnel activities. The test results indicated that responsiveness and accountability were improved. The test provided ". . . a single point of contact for most people oriented functions. . . . " (2:31) This single point of contact made it easy for one commander and other base personnel when they had a problem or question. There was no doubt about the parent organization of the different branches. The other distinct reason that responsiveness and accountability improved was that the previous staff chief, now a squadron commander, had the same kinds of problems as the rest of the commanders. He or she now had a squadron commander's point of view in addition to the view of a staff agency head. (2:31)

The third goal was to improve customer service. The survey showed that improvements were made in customer service. Senior commanders and other squadron commanders in particular were vocal about the noted improvements. The SL personnel expressed concern that there would be a loss in customer service support because of their subordination to the MSSQ; however, the test failed to show any degradation in the social actions area. (2:39-40, 44)

The fourth goal of the test was to improve efficiencies within base-level administration, personnel,

and the other functional branches. The results of this goal were mixed. The majority of the comments on the survey were positive, but some noted that efficiency had deteriorated. Senior commanders felt that efficiency had improved. Staff work improved and problems were solved at lower levels. However, base DAs felt that efficiency had deteriorated because they could no longer sign some of their paperwork, since DA was downgraded to a branch from a division. (2:47-54)

The fifth goal emphasized leadership versus management. The consensus of the survey results was that the very essence of adding the command function made leadership more viable. The survey comments noted that this goal was difficult to measure, but all agreed that the command opportunity made leadership emphasis easier. (2:59-60)

The sixth goal of the test was to improve the morale of the squadron members. The survey revealed that the majority of senior commanders and MSSQ commanders agreed that the morale of the squadron members improved. "The common thread was the significance of squadron identity." (2:62) The mere fact of belonging to a squadron and having the outward identity of hats, sports teams, etc., made a difference in the way members perceived their worth and the squadron's worth to the organization. (2:61-62)

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The last goal was to improve the placement and training of administration personnel across the base. This goal was met by implementing new programs or transferring responsibilities from one agency to another. These two actions resulted in personalized training in many instances and improved the capability of the administration personnel. (2:67)

There were two additional benefits derived from the test: enhanced readiness capabilities and enhanced working relationships. The majority of the MSSQs noted gains in readiness, which included improved training, elimination of duplicate taskings, better distribution of wartime taskings, and better communications. Also, this effort resulted in better inspection ratings. The grouping of all these agencies into the MSSQ increased the communication among them and improved the working relationships of all the offices. The agencies reported that problems were resolved at lower levels with less emotionalism and more discussion on the issues. (2:69,73)

There was one additional problem that arose in the test, and that was the impact of consolidating the wing and group orderly room functions. The high numbers of people in the squadrons, where the consolidation was done, made management difficult. To solve this problem, AFMPC proposed two configurations - one for large and one for

small bases.   At the large locations, the orderly room functions would be separate, whereas, they would be combined at the smaller bases. (2:3-4)

The test proved that the MSSQ is an effective organization and that it can be a real asset to a wing.   It also proved that the best commander is one with some functional expertise going into the job.   Otherwise, there is some non-effective time for the commander while learning the basics of the functional areas.   This test was a success and was approved for implementation by the commands as applicable to their missions. (2:4)

CHAPTER IV

ASSUMPTIONS

This paper will contain several assumptions. The first is that the DP Course taught by the Ira C. Eaker Center for Professional Development (CPD) will be replaced by the MSSQ Commanders' Course. Currently, the DP Course is two weeks long, taught twice a year for personnel selected to go into a DP job or who are currently serving in DP positions. Since the DP authorization is the one being used for the MSSQ position, this course should not be needed.

The second assumption is that MWR will not be included in MSSQs. The locations in the test where MWR was in the MSSQ had problems in this area, and they proved to be so large and numerous that MWR was not recommended for inclusion in future MSSQs.

The third assumption is that MSSQ commanders will be former 73XX or 70XX officers. The test showed that the person with functional expertise had the edge with very little learning curve. Selecting as commander a rated officer or someone without the support background could cause severe problems. The fourth assumption is that the new AFSC will be A7696 for MSSQ commanders. There was much discussion between the personnel and administration communities about the AFSC of the job.

The next chapter will discuss the technical
expertise needed to be a MSSQ commander. It will also
discuss the impact of MSSQs on related technical training.

CHAPTER V

EXPERTISE AND TECHNICAL TRAINING

The technical expertise needed to do the job as a MSSQ commander and to ensure success in the job is similar. The test resulted in the following recommendation, "Recommend both AFSC 70XX, Administration Officers (to include executive support and administration management officers) and 73XX Personnel Officers (to include military personnel and social actions officers) fill Mission Support Squadron commander requirements." (2:90) The test data showed a need for functional and some technical expertise. (2:90) Being the commander of a squadron containing personnel, social actions, and administration, etc., would necessitate knowing at least superficially what the people do, what actions they are responsible for, and how to respond to questions. Personnel is a particularly difficult area because of its range of responsibilities, such as retirements, performance reports, assignments, promotions, casualty affairs, promotion testing, civilian personnel job classification, off-duty education, suggestions, NCO PME, etc. As a MSSQ commander, the officer would be expected to respond to questions on these topics and others from the squadron branches.

The expertise in the branches could come from previous work experience in each branch. However, for MSSQ commanders in the near future, there is not time to gain experience in each branch. Current AF rules do not allow officers to move back and forth easily between career fields. Because of specific AFSC technical training for each field, officers are trained to be specialists, not generalists. The MSSQ will impact existing technical training for the Personnel, Administration, and Social Actions specialties. As the MSSQ comes to fruition, the officers to be affected in the future should have some knowledge about the MSSQ. As a result, a block of instruction should be added to the five technical training courses that are vital to the MSSQ: the Base Personnel Programs Officer Course, the CBPO Chief Course, the Administration Officer Course, the Administration Management Officer Course, and the Social Actions Chief's Orientation Course. The same, or a very similar, block of instruction could be used for all the above courses. Each course will be addressed individually to include course content and possible changes.

First, the Base Personnel Programs Officer Course currently covers personnel policies, military personnel data systems, advanced personnel data system (APDS) management products, management principles, management of CBPO work

centers, classification policy, training programs, officer
career progression, promotions and demotions, separations,
retirements, airman career assistance, evaluation of
performance, special actions, assignment policies, officer
career development, manning control, personnel reliability
program, personnel readiness unit, civilian personnel
management, CBPO administration section, customer
assistance, and INTRO. The course is currently twenty-six
training days long. (3:1)

Near the end of the course is a block on management.
The MSSQ could be covered in this block as it will
definitely change the way a personnel office runs. With a
MSSQ commander instead of a DP, the personnel operation will
be more autonomous. The CBPO chief will be the personnel
expert when the MSSQ commander's background is in
administration, social actions, or another field.
Instruction should be added about the role of the MSSQ and
how the officer relates to the squadron and instruction on
how the position of the MSSQ commander fits into the career
progression of affected officers.

Second, the CBPO Chief Course covers CBPO resources
management, budgeting, personnel organization, data
accuracy, customer awareness, work center functions,
management products from the computer system, executive
stress, in-house training, inspections, problem resolution,

and contingency operations. The course is currently three weeks long. (4:1)

The CBPO Chief Course is designed to evaluate current problems experienced by CBPOs and provide a system of management to identify, forecast, and solve problems at the CBPO level. One of the problems to be faced is the heavier workload of the CBPO chief caused by having a MSSQ commander instead of a DP. The new CBPO chief needs to know how the MSSQ commander position will affect the CBPO chief's position and time. The role of the MSSQ should be discussed and how the commander will interface with the rest of the wing and the CBPO. The organizational block should be revised to include details on the MSSQ. Similar adjustments are recommended in the following two technical training courses for administrators.

The administration career field is divided into the Administration Management and the Executive Support areas. Officers are trained first in administration and then get experience in executive support. During a career, an administration officer must qualify and gain experience in both areas. For this reason, all administration officers need to understand how they may be used in a MSSQ. Within the MSSQ, the base DA works for the MSSQ/CC and must understand the procedural aspects of working for an intermediate commander as opposed to the base commander.

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More importantly, administration officers need to understand 70XX professional development that could have them working as a personnel officer in a career broadening assignment, ultimately preparing them for a possible MSSQ command position. (5:169)

The first technical training an officer in the 70XX career field will attend is the Administration Officer Course. This course is designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to perform successfully the many and varied duties of administration officers. As the entry level course, its primary function is to prepare new officers for their first assignment. It includes the following areas of instruction: functions and responsibilities of AF administration, AF initiatives, administrative communications, security, publications and forms, reprographics and records management, command and management, unit administration, protocol and executive support, personnel and training programs, and inspections. Currently the course is 25 training days long. (6:1-7)

Presently the Administration Officer Course also includes a three-hour period of instruction dealing with AF initiatives and includes such topics as Personal Computer (PC) III, MSSQ, MIP, and role contingencies. This instruction period is taught in the beginning of the course and is primarily designed to familiarize the officers with

these initiatives in a very superficial manner. This block could be expanded to include more information on the MSSQ and how it will affect administration officers. In addition, a 23-hour section later in the course concentrates on personnel and training programs. One key area of instruction in this section, career progression, may require additional attention. (6:7)

Not all administration officers will be assigned to MSSQs; in fact, some MAJCOMs will probably not have MSSQs. Presently, Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC), Air Force Systems Command (AFSC), and perhaps others may request a deviation from AFR 26-2 because of their unique organizational differences. (7) In addition, in commands with MSSQs, some entry-level officers will be assigned to executive support positions. Consequently, many 70XX officers will not be assigned to MSSQs immediately, but they should understand the MSSQ from an officer professional development standpoint.

The second technical training course for 70XX officers, the Administration Management Officer Course, is primarily intended for those staff officers responsible for base level administration and MAJCOM administration staff officers. The course of instruction includes the role of administration management officers, administration organization, base level administration operations,

management of administration personnel, contracting out, industrial and production management principles, budgeting and managing fiscal resources. A separate block concerns office automation and includes micro and mini computers, information flow, systems design, micrographics and information resources management. The course is 22 academic days. (8:1-2)

This Administration Management Officer Course is primarily for first lieutenants, captains and some majors, who are more likely to be involved in MSSQs. The 15.5 hours of instruction dealing with management of administration personnel is where the MSSQ operation could be addressed. Base DAs and squadron section commanders must be encouraged to work closely with the other MSSQ officers, primarily the personnel officers, to provide the best level of customer support in areas such as orders processing, assignment out-processing, and all future PC III applications. (8:2)

In the social actions area, the chiefs go through an orientation course at Lackland AFB. This course is the Social Actions Chief's Orientation Course and is two weeks long. It covers basic programs, policies, procedures, SL administration management, equal opportunity and treatment (EOT), drug and alcohol program responsibilities, SL education responsibilities, support systems development, contemporary problems, SL interface, resource management,

staff assistance visits, team building, and local program briefings. (9:3-72) The MSSQ organization could be inserted into the SL interface portion. The SL chiefs need to know how they relate to base organizations and how the MSSQ affects their position.

Chapter VI will examine the impact of the MSSQ on professional development of the administration, personnel, and social actions fields. The chapter includes proposed MSSQ commander selection criteria, recommends formulation of a MSSQ commander course, and reviews related professional education courses.

CHAPTER VI

IMPACT ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development in the AF officer corps is essential to carrying out the AF mission. The senior leadership has focused a great deal of attention recently on the critical need for the professional development of young officers to ensure the proper leadership for the Air Force of the 21st century. The new AF Regulation 36-23 states,

> Officer professional development is essential to
> support the Air Force mission and to provide the
> professional growth our officers expect. The
> officer who is most effective at carrying out the
> mission is one who is professionally prepared to
> assume the responsibilities that go with a particular
> grade. . . . The individual's aspirations and long term
> professional development are most likely to be
> realized when they are in harmony with long term
> Air Force Requirements. . . . Professional development
> includes those actions and experiences that enhance
> an officer's ability to perform his or her job and
> thereby contribute to the mission of the Air Force
> as level of responsibility increases. (5:8)

The MSSQ will impact the professional development of officers in the three affected career fields. For personnel officers, the MSSQ takes away one progression step, the DP job, but adds one, the MSSQ/CC, with the associated command responsibilities. For administration and social actions officers, the MSSQ adds another higher-level position at each base. The AF has always considered command as important in the professional development of officers, regardless of the career field. In the flying community,

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command of a flying squadron will generally yield promotion
to colonel. As a result, for all three fields, the MSSQ is
a significant addition to their career ladders. Thus, the
potential for command leads to specific requirements to be
met by officers desiring MSSQ/CC positions.

This paper makes the assumption that the MSSQ/CC
AFSC will be A7696, denoting the command function. [This
AFSC resulted from a working session at AFMPC as a
compromise for an AFSC that is not related to any one
field.] (10:3)   According to the authors, the specific
requirements for eligibility should include a 70XX or 73XX
AFSC, a demonstrated high level of performance in current
field, recommendation by current supervisor and wing
commander, and attainment of or selection for a specific
grade. There could be others as determined by the
participating MAJCOMs. The MSSQ test recommended that
"... eligible 70XX and 73XX officers meet commander selection
criteria to determine 'best qualified' commander candidates
(e.g., compete in MAJCOM squadron commanders'
boards/selection procedures/etc.)" (2:90) After selection
by the process, the individuals would still have to be
chosen for a specific position by a wing and/or group
commander.

Once the selection process is completed, the new
MSSQ/CC needs to be educated on the roles and missions, MSSQ

responsibilities, and its organization. This requirement suggests the need for a formal MSSQ/CC course.

The authors, working with personnel from the CFD at Air University, discussed the need for and requirements of a MSSQ course. In addition, the authors met with and discussed MSSQ issues with three MSSQ/CCs attending the Professional Manpower and Personnel Management Course (PMPMC). All agreed that a formal course was needed to prepare MSSQ/CCs for their new responsibilities as well as a formal block of instruction in higher level courses to educate senior officers affected by this new organization. (11) A sample course outline is provided at Appendix A.

Previously mentioned as an assumption, the DP course taught by CFD will be replaced by the MSSQ course. AFMPC has requested CFD review the curriculum that will be affected by the addition of the MSSQ. (12:1) Since the majority of DP jobs will be eliminated as a result of MSSQ implementation, this course should be a requirement for all projected and new MSSQ/CCs, with less than one year in the position.

There were several working sessions with the faculty of the PMPMC course, Major Diane Fox in particular. She took the DP course and revised it to have an idea of what the MSSQ course should look like. Many of the following ideas, as referenced, are hers.

The primary focus of the MSSQ course will be to comprehend the roles and missions of the various MSSQ functional activities. The major area of concentration will be personnel, both military and civilian. This area will be key for those 70XX officers who have had little if any functional experience in base level personnel management. The civilian personnel operations (CPO) portion will cover civilian employment and cost management, position classification, base level staffing, validated selection procedures, promotion and placement referral system, employee-management relations, labor management relations, training and career development, and equal employment opportunity. The military personnel operations portion will include personnel plans and programs, the role of base level manpower, assignment issues, quality force management, casualty affairs, promotion programs, NCO PME, readiness, AF automated data systems and retirements and disabilities.

The administration portion of the MSSQ course will include the following topics: reprographics management, publications distribution, postal operations, records management, Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act, contracting out issues, office automation, orderly room functions and procedures, and executive support. (13:2-6)

The social actions portion will center on drug and alcohol abuse, EOT and human relations. However, a few hours

will be devoted to base education operations and the FSC,
including its relationship to other base organizations.
Finally, the course will address command roles and
responsibilities to include the first sergeant, the staff
judge advocate and area defense counsel and the
comptroller's assistance on resource management. (13:4,6)

In addition to the projected MSSQ/CC course, there
are several other courses in which information could be
included on this new squadron. The first is the
Professional Manpower and Personnel Management Course
(PMPMC). It contributes to the professional development of
senior manpower and personnel managers (both civilian and
military). It is the graduate education step in the
military career of manpower and personnel officers. Only
major selectees through colonel attend this five-week
course. (9:4-34)

PMPMC covers the broad aspects of current manpower,
military personnel, and civilian personnel policies,
programs and management concepts in the AF. (14:5,6,9) The
course also provides extensive instruction in the management
process, philosophy, human needs theory, human behavior,
labor management relations, and data systems management.
(9:4-34)

Changes in operating and functioning procedures
brought about by the MSSQ are important and should be

addressed in PMPMC. Some students will have been exposed
to a MSSQ already; they can assist in the discussion of the
roles, missions, and problems of a MSSQ. The civilian
personnel block could be shortened to reduce the time spent
on labor management relations and a block added on the MSSQ.
The manpower and personnel officers attending will not have
much need for labor relations as it is the domain of the
base commander. They need to know about labor relations,
but not in the detail currently taught.

Other graduate-level courses for senior officers are
the Base Commanders' Management Course and the Commanders'
Seminar. The Base Commanders' Management Course is for
newly assigned base or deputy base commanders or officers
who have assignments to one of the afore-mentioned
positions. It covers a wide variety of subjects to include
base-level personnel management; medical services; MWR and
its functions; the Office of Special Investigations (OSI)
and its functions; the staff judge advocate functions; the
courts-martial process, foreign and international law, drug
issues; anti-terrorism actions; nonjudicial punishment;
search and seizure; contemporary base problems; the civil
engineering functions; the services functions; family
housing; environmental problems; fire protection; media
relations; civilian personnel responsibilities; and the
Commissary Service. It also includes the functions of DA,

the chaplain, the Secretary of the AF Personnel Council
(SAF/MRC), contracting, the base exchange, the family
advocacy program, and security police. The On-Scene
Commanders' Course is presented at the end of the base
commanders' course to enable new and prospective commanders
to deal with emergencies at their bases. (15:1-7)

The Commanders' Seminar is for newly assigned wing,
vice, and other commanders as appropriate. It covers
contemporary military personnel issues, the base exchange
and the commander, installation excellence, legislative
liaison, issues in the medical service, engineering and
services, MWR, media relations, OSI, civilian personnel, the
SAF/MRC, commander common-interest items, and the law and
the commander. (16:1-6)

The functions of the MSSQ/CC could be added to both
of these curriculums. The wing, vice, base and deputy base
commander must know how the organization is structured,
since the MSSQ has changed the traditional combat support
group or air base group organizational structure. The role
of the MSSQ could be covered since the commanders and their
vices or deputies need to know how to use the MSSQ/CC and
how the squadron relates to the rest of the wing. The
information could be worked into the personnel and
administration area or a separate block added to the base
commander problems' block of the base commanders' course.

It could also be worked into the military personnel issues or the commander common-interest items for the Commanders' Seminar.

Another course which could benefit from information on the MSSQ is the Seminar for Civilian Personnel Officers (CPOs). The CPO course is designed to increase the skills of newly assigned CPOs by improving their knowledge of principles and practices of AF and federal civilian personnel programs, management principles, interpersonal relationships, communication techniques and stress management. It covers such topics as PC III for civilians, the base commander's perspective on the CPO job, Office of Personnel Management initiatives, legislation affecting the federal civil service, affirmative employment, employee management relations, labor-management, position classification, career programs, complaint systems, avoiding class action complaints, present realities and future visions, and current issues in work force effectiveness. (17:2) Since the DP position will be converted to the MSSQ commander position, the CPO will have to use the MSSQ commander as he or she previously used the DP. The CPO will need to know how he or she fits into the new organization and how the MSSQ commander affects the CPO. Information on the MSSQ could be inserted into the current issues in work force effectiveness block or the present realities and

future visions block.

The professional development of the MSSQ/CC position will require both formal and informal methods. The formal methods, as previously discussed, include converting the DP course into the MSSQ commander course and adding blocks of instruction into several formal courses, both technical training and professional development. Informal methods would consist of moving officers around from one job to another across AFSCs and staff lines as well as holding conferences and seminars for the crossflow of information.

Staff movement has been covered briefly already, but expansion is warranted. Typically, the AF puts personnel officers through personnel school and administration officers through administration school, then assigns them to these AFSCs and keeps them there. Traditionally, there has been very limited crossflow of personnel between career fields. Now, with the MSSQ commander position, the AF will need officers who have gained functional experience in several specialties to assign to MSSQ commander jobs. The best way to ensure qualified officers are available for the MSSQ/CC position is to rotate them around at base level from personnel to administration to squadron section commander to social actions. (There are some implications for the social actions field that will be covered later.) Rotating officers around at the first lieutenant and captain level

will give them valuable functional experience and prepare
them for the leadership position of MSSQ commander.

MSSQ commander effectiveness can also be enhanced by
attending conferences and seminars to share experiences with
other MSSQ commanders. MAJCOMs typically hold DP
conferences once a year where DPs get together to meet each
other and the MAJCOM staffs, and share experiences and
problems. Instead of a DP conference, a MSSQ conference
could be held. The same applies to seminars which could be
held at the numbered air force level for a smaller group for
more interaction. All of these methods could be learning
tools for the new MSSQ commander.

CHAPTER VII

IMPACT ON CAREER FIELDS AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The MSSQ structure has some implications for the future which could completely change the way support operations look and function. It could cause some career field mergers and squadron internal restructuring. First are the career field mergers. The use of administration officers, personnel officers, and social actions officers as MSSQ commanders could lead the AF to look closely at merging these career fields. Social actions is already within the personnel AFSC; social actions is 7364 and personnel is 7324. Personnel is a large career field and could absorb social actions with minimal disruption. Personnel officers work closely with SL officers now and could run a SL office. There would be a learning curve, but it would be short and could be reduced with extra training at the entry level personnel course and the CBPO Chief Course. PMPMC already has a social actions block to educate the attending officers.

In addition to social actions, the administration career field could be combined with the personnel field. With the MSSQ a reality, now is the time to combine the career fields. Currently, there are two different schools for administration and personnel, but they could be merged.

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Administration duties and personnel duties are similar, but the personnel officer can crossflow into administration easier than the administration officer can crossflow into personnel. Personnel officers have a working knowledge of special orders, reprographics, word processors, etc., because of the way they affect personnel duties. Administration officers would have to learn the personnel issues, interfaces, and nuances since they have limited functional knowledge in personnel. Combining the fields would allow the schools to consolidate courses and teach all the officers the same information.

The administration career field would gain from the merger as there are more personnel positions which require higher rank. Career progression in personnel is possible to the lieutenant general rank; however, career progression in administration stops at colonel. The wing operation would be more flexible, because there would be more officers who could move from one position to another. There are CBPO jobs, the DA position, the SL position, and squadron section commander positions. Depending on the size of the base population, the authorizations would vary from five to eight with the same AFSC, except for squadron section commanders. With the career fields merged, these jobs would be easier to fill and easier to keep filled with the best people because of increased flexibility.

There are actions taking place currently which will change the social actions career field. SL is losing its officer authorizations in EOT and drug and alcohol rehabilitation. This action will reduce this small career field even further. Most wing officer authorizations in SL are being reduced from three to one. This action will force SL to cease being a separate career field as it cannot sustain the career life of its officers. One of the plans that is being pursued by both AFMPC and AF personnel planners is using SL as a career-broadening tour for senior captains and majors just as ROTC and Recruiting Service assignments are currently used. (18)

Another action that is being studied is the combining of SL and the FSC. The FSC staff does a large amount of counseling, just as the SL staff does. The SL duties could be folded into the FSC duties with perhaps a small manpower savings. Each base would have to be looked at individually a year or so after the merger. Experience in the combined operation would be essential to determine if there were manpower savings.

Still another action would take the SL EOT function and combine it with the EOT function in civilian personnel. Then the drug and alcohol rehabilitation responsibility could be put in the hospital with the mental health function. Both of these proposals would need the associated

manpower to go with the functions as neither civilian personnel nor mental health would have the manpower to handle the additional workload. These actions would mean dramatic changes in the operations of both offices.

Another restructuring action that would not directly affect the MSSQ would be to combine the education office and the base library. It would expand the control of the base education officer and, indirectly, the control of the MSSQ commander. The base education officer would have an assistant, and both staffs could be merged to the mutual benefit of the base.

As mentioned previously, some bases may not have MSSQs. AFLC and AFSC are two that specifically indicated they would not because of the large number of civilians assigned. However, as a restructuring action, the CPO could be realigned under the base commander, and a MSSQ could then be implemented. This action would allow the MSSQ to be established and preserve its integrity, while allowing the base commander to remain directly involved in civilian personnel matters. A deviation to organizational structure could be approved for affected MAJCOMs or bases.

CHAPTER VIII

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This paper reviewed the mission support squadron test, the results, the technical training required by future MSSQ commanders, and the impact of MSSQs on related technical training courses. It has also examined the implications of MSSQs for the administration, personnel, and social actions career fields. In addition, it proposed MSSQ commander selection criteria and the formulation of a MSSQ commander course. Also, the authors reviewed related professional education courses. The paper addressed the impact on the career fields and on organizational structure. Having discussed these areas, the authors proposed several recommendations.

First, the technical training and professional development courses discussed in Chapters V and VI should have a block of instruction added on the MSSQ and its organization, its function, and its interface within the wing structure.

Second, the personnel, administration, and social actions career fields should be combined. The AFSC designation should be the same for all three fields. The basic personnel officer course would have to be lengthened to add the administration management curriculum and some

facts about social actions: EOT, drug and alcohol, and the SL education responsibilities. This new course would prepare officers for jobs in CBPO, SL, DA, or squadron sections.

The merging of all three career fields is better than sustaining SL as a career-broadening assignment. As discussed in a previous chapter, the SL career field is changing because of reductions in authorizations. Growing personnel officers in the new career field would give social actions a basic pool of officers to choose from to fill the chief position. The career broadening option must depend on volunteers or draftees moving in for a specific time period and then moving back into their previous fields.

Third, all officers being assigned as MSSQ commanders should attend the MSSQ Commanders' Course. Whatever jobs the officers have been performing, this course would serve as orientation and education on MSSQs.

Fourth, all bases with DP positions should convert to MSSQ/CC positions. Unique situations should be covered by approved deviations. This conversion will provide command positions for senior personnel and administration officers.

In conclusion, this paper presented many aspects about the MSSQ and its impact on technical training restructuring. The recommendations should be studied by

AFMPC and SAF/AAD for future implementation. With the approval by the AF Chief of Staff, the MSSQ as an organization is here to stay. The addition of the MSSQ will force changes to the traditional wing structure. Budget restraints will be a powerful force to push changes, many very drastic, in the future.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE MISSION SUPPORT SQUADRON COURSE OUTLINE

1. MISSION: This course provides Mission Support Squadron Commanders with the necessary background to command a multi-functional squadron consisting of the following agencies: administration, military personnel, civilian personnel, and social actions. Within military personnel are education services and NCO PME. In addition, the role and responsibility of command are included.

2. OBJECTIVE: To prepare officers for their duties as Mission Support Squadron Commanders.

3. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION: Instructional methods include faculty and guest lecturers, panel discussions, case studies, and seminars designed to discuss "real world" base-level challenges MSSQ/CCs will experience.

4. COURSE OF STUDY:

Area 1 - Civilian Personnel Operations

    (1) Civilian Employment and Cost Management

    (2) Position Classification

    (3) Base Level Staffing

    (4) Validated Selection Procedures and the Promotion and Personnel Referral System

    (5) Employee - Management Relations

(6) Labor - Management Relations

(7) Training and Career Development

(8) Equal Employment Opportunity

(9) MSSQ/CC and the CPO

Area 2 - Military Personnel Operations

(1) Personnel Plans and Programs

(2) The Role of Base Level Manpower

(3) Assignment Issues

(4) Quality Force Management

(5) Casualty Affairs

(6) Promotion Programs

(7) Readiness

(8) AF Automated Data Systems

(9) Retirements and Disabilities

(10) Orderly Room Functions and Procedures

(11) Base Level NCO PME

(12) Base Level Education Services

Area 3 - Administration

(1) Reprographics Management

(2) Publications Distribution

(3) Postal Operations

(4) Records Management

(5) Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act

(6) Contracting Out

(7) Office Automation

(8) Orderly Room Functions and Procedures

(9) Executive Support

Area 4 - Social Actions

(1) Drug and Alcohol Abuse

(2) Equal Opportunity and Treatment/Human Relations

(3) The Role of the Social Actions Chief at Base Level

(4) Command Reporting of Investigations/Incidents

Area 5 - Command Roles and Responsibilities

(1) MSSQ/CC and the First Sergeant

(2) Staff Judge Advocate/Area Defense Counsel

(3) Resource Management

(4) Mobility/Readiness

SAMPLE BLOCK OF INSTRUCTION

MISSION SUPPORT SQUADRON (2 hours)

OBJECTIVE: To comprehend the organization, functions of the mission support squadron, its interface with wing agencies, and its impact on the base.

1. Organizational structure

    a. Commander

    b. Administration

    c. Social Actions

    d. Family Support Center

    e. First Sergeant and Unit Administration

    f. Military Personnel

    g. Civilian Personnel

    h. Education Services

    i. Professional Military Education

2. Functions

3. Interface with wing agencies

4. Impact

    a. Command versus staff relationship

    b. One boss for support organizations

    c. Streamlined squadron structure

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GLOSSARY

AF	Air Force
AFB	Air Force Base
AFLC	Air Force Logistics Command
AFR	Air Force Regulation
AFSC	Air Force Specialty Code
AFSC	Air Force Systems Command
APDS	Advanced Personnel Data System
CBPO	Consolidated Base Personnel Office
CPD	Ira C. Eaker Center for Professional Development
CPO	Civilian Personnel Office
CCQ	Headquarters Squadron Section
DA	Base Administration
DP	Director of Personnel
EOT	Equal Opportunity and Treatment
FSC	Family Support Center
HQ AFMPC	Headquarters Air Force Military Personnel Center
INTRO	Individual Newcomer's Treatment and Orientation Program
MAJCOM	Major Command
MIP	Model Installation Program
MSSQ	Mission Support Squadron
MSSQ/CC	Mission Support Squadron Commander
MWR	Morale, Welfare, and Recreation
NCO	Noncommissioned Officer

OSI	Office of Special Investigations
PC	Personal Computer
PCS	Permanent Change of Station
PME	Professional Military Education
PMPMC	Professional Manpower and Personnel Management Course
SAF/AA	Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force
SAF/AAD	Director of Information Management and Administration
SAF/MRC	Secretary of the Air Force Personnel Council
SL	Social Actions