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THE EFFECTS OF DEPLOYMENTS ON RETENTION:  
TAKING THE PULSE OF USAF SECURITY FORCES POST 9/11

by

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## *Preface*

Although some Air Force specialties have experienced higher deployment rates, operations tempo, and personnel tempo since 9/11 than members in the AF Security Forces (SF) specialty, I chose to take a closer look at SF members because of their longer deployments compared to most other AF specialties, their large population, their evolving missions in deployed locations, and their importance in the global war on terrorism. Members in other AF specialties may make the argument that their contributions to this war are more critical, but Security Forces are absolutely vital to the US military's success in every location 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Without a secure environment in which to live and work, the remaining missions simply cannot be accomplished. Although the retention of members in a variety of other AF enlisted specialties is critical as well, especially high-demand/low-density (HD/LD) assets, I limited my research to Security Forces due to time and resource constraints. I hope this glimpse into the effects of deployments on the retention of SF members will be a springboard for future research efforts covering Security Forces and other specialties throughout the Air Force and other services.

I would like to thank my research advisors, Lt Col Joyce Guthrie and Maj John Sotham, for their advice and support. In addition, I would like to acknowledge the SF Career Field Manager, CMSgt Levi Scott, as well as the MAJCOM Functional Managers and other key points of contact for their support and assistance in notifying AF SF members worldwide about this survey. Finally, I would like to thank the Air Force Occupational Measurement Squadron, Randolph AFB TX, for providing me examples of survey questions and responses related to retention and deployments and information concerning the SF population.

### *Abstract*

Airmen in the US Air Force Security Forces specialty have had to make significant adjustments since the global war on terrorism began, ranging from new force protection missions to longer deployments and more demanding workloads. Their success is critical to the success of the global war on terrorism, and retaining well-trained, motivated troops is key to their success. Although retention goals in the Air Force since 9/11 have been met, this cannot be taken for granted as the stress and strain on Airmen and their families continue. Stretching deployments from 90 or 120 days to 179 days or more for Security Forces (SF) members may negatively affect their retention. This revised AEF rotation policy allows greater continuity for expeditionary commanders, but it may not be worth the potential effects on the SF community.

A survey was administered to 2,824 SF Airmen in March 2005 to collect data on their intentions to reenlist in, separate from, or retire from the Air Force and to determine the effects of deployments on their decisions. Although the data collected does not represent the entire SF population, the information provides insight into the reasons many of the SF troops may decide to separate rather than reenlist and the reasons others may decide to reenlist or serve 20 or more years in the Air Force. While previous research presents factors influencing retention decisions from the military drawdown following the Cold War to the Gulf War and the global war on terrorism, this research expands on those factors while zeroing in on enlisted Security Forces members throughout the Air Force and shedding light on the effects of deployments since 9/11.

## Introduction

*We are at war today...Every Airman must be focused on our national commitment to the Global War on Terrorism. Our job is to deploy and deal with terrorists in the world so we never again have to deal with them on our soil. You will be the difference between our success and failure in this vital cause.*<sup>1</sup>

–Gen John P. Jumper,  
Air Force Chief of Staff

Security Forces (SF) operations superintendents Air Force Master Sergeant Joseph Ramos and Technical Sergeant Earl Rogers, 455<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron (ESFS), Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, spend long days training their Airmen in new combat-related missions critical to the success of the global war on terrorism. In addition to providing installation security, their troops secure convoy operations in the combat zone while their newly created tactical security elements protect Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI) agents conducting counter-intelligence missions and weapons searches and apprehending suspected insurgents. Enthusiasm, motivation, and gratification are high for their entire ESFS team. “Everyone that is part of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM is proud,” MSgt Ramos states emphatically, “I have been told by Airmen on numerous occasions that they are glad to be here...One of them told me that the reason he enlisted was to do his part in the global war on terrorism.”<sup>2</sup> But how long will this enthusiasm last? How long will these troops endure the 179-day deployments before deciding that the personal cost exceeds the national benefit? Will these highly tasked Airmen decide to reenlist in the Air Force when eligible or will they choose instead to separate? And why will those who reenlist or separate do so? Will deployments affect their decisions or will other factors play a more significant role in their decisions? These questions are at the heart of the retention issue and are addressed in this research.

## **A Military in Transition**

At the end of the Cold War, US active duty (AD) military strength stood at 2.1 million troops.<sup>3</sup> Deployments were rare as forward-based troops provided the security needed to deal with anticipated threats. Between 1986 and 2000, however, overseas bases were cut by more than two-thirds their level at the height of the Cold War and AD military strength levels decreased significantly to 1.4 million troops while deployments increased at least 300 percent due to escalating demands worldwide.<sup>4</sup> The US national strategy of selective engagement to deal with those demands resulted in interrelated personnel and readiness problems for the Air Force.<sup>5</sup> AF leadership recognized the need to better utilize its most important resource – its people – by addressing imbalanced operations tempo (op tempo) and personnel tempo (perstempo) throughout the service, recreating an expeditionary culture, ensuring more reserve component (RC) participation in daily operations, providing more structure to increase predictability and stability for AF members and their families, and addressing retention issues.<sup>6</sup>

Retention issues are wrapped up in many other issues – op tempo, perstempo, RC participation, and aerospace expeditionary force (AEF) structure. To better understand the retention issue, it is important to know which factors influence enlisted members facing a reenlistment decision. Results from the 2000 Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) USAF Careers and New Directions Survey indicate that members consider many factors when making career decisions and often arrive at their decisions a year or more before their projected separation dates.<sup>7</sup> Longitudinal tracking from 1989 to 2000 of members who have separated or decided to make the Air Force a career demonstrated that the vast majority follow through with their stated intentions. Eighty percent of the members who reported they would remain in the Air Force at least 20 years did so, while at least 70 percent of the members who indicated they would be separating from the Air Force did so.<sup>8</sup> There is reason to believe that career intentions reported

today will have a similarly high likelihood of occurring when the final decision is made, as evidence from AFPC's study suggests that members rarely change their minds once they decide to separate. The Airmen who are undecided about reenlisting, however, may still be influenced, and AF leadership should be aware of this opportunity.

Leadership and personnel officials plan for specific AD reenlistment rates each fiscal year (FY) for first-term, second-term, and career Airmen (typically 55 percent, 75 percent, and 95 percent, respectively). Falling short of the goals can result in additional problems that take many years to resolve. Shortages within specialties in high demand for the global war on terrorism are particularly challenging to overcome. Leadership may be able to avoid or at least minimize potential retention problems by learning which factors are the most influential for the Airmen choosing to reenlist in or separate from the Air Force. Forty-two months into the global war on terrorism, SF leadership may be wondering which factors are keeping their Airmen in the Air Force, which factors are pushing their troops out of the Air Force, and which factors will potentially influence undecided members. A critical question in today's Air Force is whether deployments are tipping the scales one way or the other when SF members reach the crossroads in their decision to reenlist.

### **Retention Concerns**

Over the past 15 years, influences on retention have included personnel drawdown programs of the early 1990s, an emphasis on retention in the late 1990s, the economic climate, job prospects in the civilian sector, public support for the military, op tempo, and perstempo.<sup>9</sup> Leading up to 9/11, leadership expressed concerns about the military's op tempo and perstempo. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in June 2001, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld expressed his concerns, saying that "op tempo has been a problem. And that is part of

morale and it's part of quality of life.”<sup>10</sup> In July 2001, Rumsfeld candidly stated in an interview with the *Washington Post*, “We’ve got an op tempo problem....It’s difficult for families. And I darn well intend to do something about it.”<sup>11</sup> Then 9/11 happened, increasing op tempo and perstempo even more.

Despite the surge in patriotism following the tragic events of 9/11, retention in the US military remains a significant concern from the highest levels of government down to military units across the United States and abroad. The Air Force has implemented several programs in an effort to address this concern and to maximize previous Department of Defense (DoD) resources, including force shaping to rebalance the force through retraining and Palace Chase, as well as the civilianization of certain jobs within specialties and the increased use of technology to free up military members for other taskings. Although these programs may sound promising to senior AF leaders as they attempt to reach the FY05 mandated end strength while also addressing retention concerns, they may adversely affect retention in critical specialties.

### **Force Shaping - Rebalancing the Force**

In 2002 and 2003, the military exceeded its mandated AD end strength of 359,000.<sup>12</sup> By the end of FY05, the Air Force is required to reduce the size of its active force by 16,000 people. This will be accomplished through force shaping, a program designed to reduce overall manning while correcting personnel imbalances by moving members in overmanned specialties into undermanned specialties. Enlisted members who want to reenlist are no longer guaranteed the opportunity to do so unless they are in one of the 30 or so specialties in the career job reservation program, such as air traffic control, combat control, pararescue, or linguist, or they will have to retrain in order to reenlist.<sup>13</sup> In addition, on 17 March 2005, HQ USAF/DP announced a sharp reduction in the number of specialties offering selective reenlistment bonuses (SRBs). Effective

23 April 2005, certain members in 32 specialties with manning shortages and/or those with critical skills will be eligible for bonuses when they reenlist. The Security Forces specialty is among 31 specialties no longer eligible to receive SRBs. What effect will this have on retention?

The force shaping program may appear to be a relatively straight-forward numbers game to effectively reduce the force while repairing the manning problems in stressed and critical specialties. This effort, however, is complicated by limitations in training facilities and capacities as well as the inherent difficulties of replacing mid-level, experienced noncommissioned officers (NCOs) with “unseasoned” Airmen who have not been out of technical training school many years.<sup>14</sup> Although experienced 5- and 7-level members can be retrained and moved into the undermanned or critical specialties, this effort comes with a price. If the Airmen they are supervising and leading do not deem the NCOs credible, this may have a cascading effect on the reenlistment decisions of the less experienced troops.

### **Force Shaping - Palace Chase**

Another piece of the force shaping program involves Palace Chase, a program in which AD AF members may transfer to the Air National Guard (ANG) or AF Reserve to serve twice the number of years remaining in their enlistment. Although this may be an attractive program for some AD members who want to continue to serve while allowing time to pursue other interests, members who may be influenced to separate for personal reasons, such as a desire to spend more time with their families or to further their education, may not be enticed by RC benefits if they expect a similarly high op tempo or perstempo.

According to the DoD, “the ‘steady state’ over the next three to five years will likely require the contribution of 100,000 to 150,000 Guardsmen and Reservists, with activations of a year or more being the norm.”<sup>15</sup> Recent data indicate that AD members separating from the

military are less likely to transfer into the RC which does not bode well for the ANG and AF Reserve since they traditionally receive about 25 percent of their members from the AD component.<sup>16</sup> And while RC retention has exceeded expectations, the high op tempo and perstempo across the three components have lawmakers, defense analysts, and leadership concerned. Although “the sky is not falling,” states Lt Gen H. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, he is concerned about the potential for higher losses if leadership does not address the factors influencing members to leave the military altogether.<sup>17</sup> How will fewer RC accessions from the AD force affect the SF community?

### **Civilianization and Technology**

DoD is attempting to alleviate manning problems in some specialties by hiring more civilians and contractors to allow military members to focus on military duties and by investing in technology to perform tasks previously performed by humans.<sup>18</sup> But these efforts may also have negative effects on retention for certain specialties. Between July and October 2004, the Air Force planned to hire 495 civilians to perform SF jobs to decrease the strain on the SF community.<sup>19</sup> Brig Gen James Shames, AF Director of Security Forces, revealed that explosive detection equipment and automated identification checks at installation gates will be used to reduce the manpower burden and increase efficiencies.<sup>20</sup> The cost and military manpower savings cannot be disputed, but will these efforts affect SF retention in unintended ways?

### **Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF) Structure**

The Expeditionary Aerospace Force (EAF) concept introduced in the mid 1990s and implemented through the AEF structure in 1998 was designed to address two serious concerns in the military: (1) impaired readiness due to the overuse of resources and personnel in support of humanitarian, peacekeeping, and hostile operations and (2) inadequate recruiting and retention

due to the high op tempo and perstempo and a booming economy.<sup>21</sup> The AEF cycle improved both of these concerns by assigning units to specific cycles for rotation, thereby adding predictability to the deployment process, but the AEF process has been turned on end for some specialties since 9/11. While personnel associated with high-demand/low-density (HD/LD) assets have been most affected, SF Airmen have had to bear a significant burden.

In March 2004, more than 2,000 AF members had to be extended at their deployment locations because of critical shortages in some skills. Extensions beyond the standard 90-day AEF deployment in support of war fighter requirements hit the SF community hard as their standard deployments were stretched to 179 days. In some cases, SF deployments were extended beyond 6 months due to mission requirements, and because of specialized training for new missions, the desired 16-month break between deployments could no longer be met.<sup>22</sup> What effect will this have on retention?

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Gen John P. Jumper, Air Force chief of staff, "Chief's Sight Picture: Adapting the AEF – Longer Deployment, More Forces," n.p., on-line, Internet, 6 July 2004, available from [http://www.af.mil/media/viewpoints/adapting\\_aef.html](http://www.af.mil/media/viewpoints/adapting_aef.html).

<sup>2</sup> "Security Forces Help Keep Convoys Safe in Afghanistan," *American Forces Press Service*, 26 May 2004, n.p., on-line, Internet, available from [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/May2004/n05262004\\_200405264.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/May2004/n05262004_200405264.html).

<sup>3</sup> "Average Military Strength," Washington Headquarters Services Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, on-line, Internet, 6 July 2004, available from <http://www.militaryworld.com/reference/2000almanac/>.

<sup>4</sup> Ronald D. Fricker, Jr., *The Effects of Perstempo on Officer Retention in the U.S. Military*, RAND Report MR-1556-OSD (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2002), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Richard G. Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force* (Washington, DC: USAF History and Museums Program, 2003), 26.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 27. According to the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2001 (NDAA 2001), operations tempo (op tempo) is defined as the rate at which units of the armed forces are involved in contingency operations, exercises, and training deployments, while personnel tempo (perstempo) is defined as the amount of time military members are engaged in their official duties. National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2001, Section 586, on-line, Internet, available from <https://www.perscom.army.mil/perstempo/law/law2001.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> Charles H. Hamilton and Louis M. Datko, "Report on Career Decisions in the Air Force: Results of the 2000 USAF Careers and New Directions Surveys," Randolph AFB, TX: Air Force Personnel Center, 30 November 2000, 3, on-line, Internet, available from

## Notes

<https://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/surveys/Reports/2000%20Retention%20Survey%20Report.doc>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, secretary of defense, testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Defense Strategy Review, 21 June 2001, on-line, Internet, available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2001/s20010621-secdef2.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, secretary of defense, interview with *Washington Post*, 22 July 2001, as quoted in “Military Personnel Human Resources Strategic Plan,” Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, 58, on-line, Internet, available from [http://www.defenselink.mil/prhome/docs/military\\_hr\\_stratplan2.pdf](http://www.defenselink.mil/prhome/docs/military_hr_stratplan2.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Gen John P. Jumper, Air Force chief of staff, “Chief’s Sight Picture: Shaping the Force,” n.p., on-line, Internet, 29 January 2004, available from [http://www.af.mil/media/viewpoints/shaping\\_force.html](http://www.af.mil/media/viewpoints/shaping_force.html).

<sup>13</sup> Bruce D. Callander, “Force Shaping,” *Air Force Magazine*, July 2004, 60.

<sup>14</sup> Jumper, “Shaping the Force.”

<sup>15</sup> James Kitfield, “Guard and Reserve in a Time of War,” *Air Force Magazine*, July 2004, 24.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Gen T. Michael Moseley, Senate, Statement of the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Senate Armed Services Committee, Readiness Subcommittee, 9 March 2004, 18, on-line, Internet, available from <http://www.senate.gov/~armed-services/statemnt/2004/March/Moseley.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Adam J. Hebert, ed., “USAF Hires Civilians for Security,” *Air Force Magazine*, May 2004, 16-17.

<sup>20</sup> “Air Force Plans to Solve Manpower Shortfall in Security with Volunteers, Technology,” *State News Service*, 27 January 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Davis, 11.

<sup>22</sup> Brig Gen Steve Hoog, “AEF Tempo: Commander’s Compass,” *AEF Center Newsletter*, December 2004, n.p., on-line, Internet, available from [https://www.my.af.mil/USAF/AFP40/Attachment/20041229/AEF\\_Tempo.pdf](https://www.my.af.mil/USAF/AFP40/Attachment/20041229/AEF_Tempo.pdf).

# **Security Forces Survey**

## **Methodology**

The SF survey was developed and administered in March 2005 to enlisted SF members in all three AF components to elicit their retention plans and determine the effects of deployments on their plans. Although the study focused on SF members who deployed since 9/11, members who had not deployed were also surveyed. The SF Career Field Manager supported this research effort and expressed interest in gaining valuable information about the SF community.

Many of the 22 survey questions (Appendix A) were taken from a standard Air Force Occupational Measurement Squadron survey administered to members in enlisted specialties every 3 years. Questions covering the influence of deployments on their reenlistment decision were added and tailored based on RAND and Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) research. In the key survey question, respondents were asked to indicate their intention to reenlist at the end of their current enlistment. Based on the response to this question, each SF member was grouped into one of three categories (reenlist, separate, or serve 20 or more years) to examine the reasons influencing their decision and the amount of each factor's influence on their decision. In addition, those who had deployed since 9/11 were asked to select the deployment-related factors influencing their decision and to indicate the amount of influence for each selected factor.

At the end of the survey, respondents were given an opportunity to add factors not listed and to expand on the reasons for their decisions. These comments provide insight into the reasons SF members are choosing to reenlist in, separate from, or serve 20 or more years in the Air Force. Many of the 717 comments received are included in this report to expand on the

survey data and to better describe the respondents' sentiments regarding reenlistment. These sentiments would, in all likelihood, have remained known only to the individuals without this venue to express their retention intentions and other comments.

## **Administration**

The survey was hosted on a civilian web site ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from 3 to 31 March 2005. Because multiple SF members used the same computer to take the survey and because of the author's desire to maintain anonymity for each respondent, identification was not requested. Although a more controlled administration may have yielded results representative of the entire specialty, time and resource constraints limited administration to a 4-week period with no requirement for a particular response rate from each AF component, MAJCOM, paygrade, skill level, or term of enlistment. It is important to note that the retention intentions indicated by these SF members are just that...*intentions* to reenlist in, separate from, or serve 20 or more years in the Air Force. The data may or may not represent actual decisions made at the end of current enlistments.

## **Demographics**

A total of 2,824 SF members – 2,520 AD, 61 ANG, and 243 AFRC members – took the survey and were included in the final sample. Tables B1 – B4 display AF status, paygrades, percentages of deployments completed since 9/11, and percentages of SF members planning to reenlist in, separate from, and serve 20 or more years in the Air Force. The inherent difficulty of receiving input from RC members is evident in their low totals. As a result, detailed comparisons between the three components are not feasible. Although the final sample is a relatively small percentage of the total SF population throughout the Air Force, the data still provide leadership and the SF community with a valuable glimpse into the retention intentions of

these 2,824 members. Data in this report does not represent the entire SF population.

## **Results**

The percentages of SF members planning to reenlist in or separate from the Air Force at the end of their current enlistment is evenly balanced with 37.5 percent planning to reenlist and 37.0 percent planning to separate. The remaining 25.5 percent plan to retire with 20 or more years of service. Analysis of the data was conducted by grouping respondents based on responses to the retention question as well as by grouping those deployed and those not deployed since 9/11. By comparing data from the deployed groups to the nondeployed groups, the effects of deployments on the decision to reenlist can be seen.

### **Reasons for Reenlisting in the Air Force**

The top factors influencing the decision to reenlist for SF members who have deployed since 9/11 include medical and dental care for themselves and their family members, retirement benefits, and job security. These factors closely mirror the most influential reasons cited by enlisted personnel in the 1989 AF Quality of Life Survey and in AFPC's Careers and New Directions Surveys in 1996, 1999, and 2000. Whether or not Airmen have deployed since 9/11, they seem to be influenced to reenlist by the same factors, with the top 12 reasons for reenlisting being the same for both deployed members (Table C1) and nondeployed members (Table C4) although in a slightly different order. For example, members not deployed are most influenced to reenlist by job security, while job security is the #2 reason for deployed members.

### **Deployments**

More than 50 percent of the respondents who have deployed since 9/11 indicated that their decision to reenlist is unrelated to deployments (Table C2). Just over 25 percent said that

deployments have had a slight or moderate influence on their decision. Almost 20 percent reported that deployments have had a strong or very strong influence on their decision.

Deployments appear to be less influential for the SF members who have not deployed since 9/11 (ranked #25 out of 34 factors for nondeployed Airmen versus #15 of 34 for deployed Airmen). Contrasting messages about deployments were included in the comments by those who have not deployed but plan to reenlist. Several troops stated that they want to deploy and have requested deployment but have not been allowed to or are assigned to bases or installations where this is not possible, such as in Air Force Space Command. According to one Airman, “I joined the military with the intent of deploying. However, I have been stuck on the PRP train, and all bases that I go to will not deploy me. I fear that this will affect whether I reenlist because my peers will be able to put together better promotion packets than I will be able to.” Another expressed frustration for SF members who cannot deploy due to their nuclear-related duties: “They never deploy yet have the highest separation rate. They spend 180 days away from their families and never get noticed.” A reservist who has asked to deploy wrote, “One of the deciding factors in my decision to reenlist would be the opportunity to deploy and do my part in this war on terrorism.” Such comments highlight the fact that some members who have not had the opportunity to deploy since 9/11 feel they are missing out, while comments revealed later in this report by those who have deployed feel the taskings have been unequal across the specialty. The impossibility of making everyone happy is evident.

### **Patriotism**

When those who have deployed since 9/11 were asked which deployment-related factors contributed most to their decision to reenlist, almost 60 percent of the SF troops reported that the desire to continue serving their country was their strongest influence (Table C3). “Patriotism” has consistently been selected as the first or second most influential factor since 1989.<sup>23</sup> The

overwhelming feeling expressed by SF Airmen who plan to reenlist was one of an appreciation for the military benefits and a desire to continue serving their country. One Airman stated, “I reenlisted because I want to serve my country like my father did....The pay and benefits are a big plus, no matter when or where or for how long I have to deploy. It’s loving your country and making it a better place for all human beings.” An AD member who has deployed since 9/11 wrote, “I’m reenlisting because there must be men and women willing to defend our way of life, and I feel a sense of duty to my country.” A deployed AF Reserve troop echoed this sentiment by saying, “My duty is to my country. That is why I serve.” One SF troop wrote, “The desire to serve my country and patriotism have a strong influence on my decision to reenlist and serve beyond 20 years.” Another stated, “The job isn’t easy and sometimes it isn’t safe either, but I’m proud to be a part of it, just as I’m proud to be an American. This lifestyle isn’t for everybody. Deployments cause people to question their lives, their future, and their choices. I keep a strong mind, and I choose to make a difference in this world, not watch it happen.” One Airman said that deployments have not been the deciding factor in the decision to reenlist and that he/she loves the SF specialty and would not trade it for any other. Such comments were not limited to deployed members as one member who has not deployed stated, “I want to reenlist because I love what I do, and I love doing it for my country.”

### **Time Invested**

Some of the SF members planning to reenlist, however, are not as pleased with deployments but feel they have too much time invested in the Air Force to separate. A respondent indicated, “I’m only continuing my career because I’ve got a little over 10 years vested. If I had less, I’d definitely not reenlist. The benefits of staying in do not match the time spent away from home. Benefits without family to share them with isn’t worth much.” According to another SF member planning to reenlist, “The growing need to deploy for Security

Forces has increased daily. I feel as though the leadership is not aware of the stress that is being placed on our families. The increase in length of deployment from 4 to 6 months is going to place a great hardship on trying to convince young Airmen to remain in today's Air Force."

### **Cross-training Opportunities**

While many SF troops expressed love for their specialty, others planning to reenlist revealed that the opportunity to cross-train into another specialty was or will be the determining factor in their decision. Cross-training or retraining was not listed as a potential factor in the survey, but if it had been, many of the respondents would have selected it based on their comments. "I was one of the fortunate to be approved to cross-train out of Security Forces," wrote one Airman who plans to reenlist. Another wrote, "I have been approved for retraining into a new job in the Air Force so I can have some time at home and find out what the regular Air Force is like. If it wasn't for that, I would probably get out...so I could have a more stable life." An AD member who has deployed stated, "I had applied for retraining to get away from the constant 12-hour shifts and 6 and 6 deployments that SF faces...My application was denied, and I am currently awaiting the results of special duty for recruiting."

### **Deployment Lengths**

Several Airmen who plan to reenlist voiced their concerns regarding the impact of lengthy deployments. One SF troop indicated that "deployments are becoming excessive...We are too short in people to keep this up. I would separate all the way until my 17<sup>th</sup> year of service if things do not get better. I enlisted to do police work, not infantry skills. We are headed towards infantry skills only. If that happens, I'm retraining or gone." An operations superintendent summed up similar concerns about deployments: "The deployment pace is having a detrimental effect on our troops from a reenlistment/motivation perspective. When you

have to keep deploying 50 folks each time, there are always a core group of folks who keep deploying time after time....While desirable to keep sending out folks who haven't been deployed recently, it just isn't possible at times and I see it in the faces of troops every time we pick a team for deployment....Lots of good troops are getting out because of deployments, not any other major factor.”

### **Reasons for Separating from the Air Force**

The top reasons influencing deployed SF Airmen to separate are their amount of personal/family time, deployments, work schedule, unit manning, esprit de corps/morale, leadership at the unit level, personal workload, and recognition of efforts. (Table C5 shows the amount of influence for each of the 35 factors for those who have deployed since 9/11 and intend to separate.) Unlike similarities in the top reasons for the groups of AD, ANG, and AFRC members planning to reenlist, the most influential factors for those intending to separate across the three AF components are noticeably different. For example, senior AF leadership and the reenlistment bonus are the top two reasons ANG members who have deployed since 9/11 are planning to separate, while unit-level leadership is the most influential reason for AF Reserve members intending to separate.

While the top reasons for reenlisting have remained fairly consistent over the past 9 years, the top reasons for separating from the Air Force have fluctuated since 1996, depending on a variety of conditions, such as the economy, AF retirement programs, and leadership. According to AFPC's Careers and New Directions Survey in 2000 when the US economy was strong, the #1 reason AF enlisted members were choosing to separate was civilian job opportunities, but civilian job opportunities was the #9 reason cited by SF members in 2005.

Four of the top seven factors selected in the SF survey by members planning to separate

– amount of personal/family time, deployments, esprit de corps/morale, and personal workload – were not included in the 2000 AFPC Careers and New Directions Survey. These factors have taken on new meaning since 9/11 and are especially influential for SF Airmen who have been more heavily tasked over the past 42 months compared to most AF specialties.

Over 54 percent of members deployed since 9/11 said deployments had a strong or very strong influence on their plans to separate from the Air Force, with a much higher percentage of AD members being influenced by deployments compared to RC members (Table C6). Only 22 percent of the members deployed since 9/11 indicated their decision to separate is unrelated to deployments. The results are even more noteworthy when the data are compared to DMDC’s joint-service survey conducted just 5 years earlier in which less than 8 percent of the enlisted members surveyed indicated that their #1 or #2 reason for separating was deployments.<sup>24</sup>

The most influential deployment-related reasons selected in the 2005 SF Survey include the length and frequency of deployments, uncertainty about future deployments, burden on spouses, and difficulty continuing their education (Table C7). In addition, several ANG and AFRC members indicated that RC-specific reasons, such as loss of income and an increase in employer problems, played a part in their decision to separate. An AFRC member planning to separate wrote, “A person can’t really plan a future to have a family or excel in a career path because you never know if tomorrow everything that you worked for will be taken away from you with a lengthy deployment. An employer finds it hard to rely on you because he never knows if you can handle the job responsibilities when he can hire someone else that seems more secure.”

Findings from the 2005 SF Survey are similar to the results of DMDC’s 2000 survey in which the most serious problems RC members experienced were loss of income and burdens on their spouse.<sup>25</sup> Four years later in another DMDC survey, RC members expressed lower

retention intentions due to increased op tempo and perstempo. Between May 2003 and May 2004, 54 percent of OIF participants reported a desire to continue their military service, down 13 percent from the previous year.<sup>26</sup> In addition, spouse/significant other and family support decreased approximately 15 percent between May 2003 and May 2004, perhaps influencing some RC members to separate or retire.<sup>27</sup>

### **Deployment Length and Frequency**

In September 2004, AEF deployments changed from 90 days to 120 days due to the increasing AF rotational requirement to support the global war on terrorism. Gen Jumper said, “Many people in the stressed and critical fields are staying 120 days, and some of them more. It’s going to help us overall with our tempo...and quite frankly, I think it’s going to make it easier on families rather than harder.”<sup>28</sup> But is this true for one of the most heavily tasked AF specialties since 9/11 or have the 6-month deployments resulted in a higher percentage of SF troops opting to separate from the Air Force rather than reenlist?

One AD Airman wrote, “I enjoy the military life. I have a great deal of pride in serving my country. If my deployments were only 3 months, I would have no problem, [but] I cannot ignore my responsibility to raise my family....Being gone for over a year and a half out of the past three and a half years is no way to participate in a family of four....If we could have normal deployments, I wouldn’t be separating from the Air Force.” Another SF member expressed his love for the Air Force but had decided to separate due to deployments and the workload: “Deployments played a pivotal role in my decision to separate....12-hour shifts and 6+ months for deployments every 1.5 years is too much for me.” One Airman believes that “the place where the leadership will see the burden will be after this TDY cycle [because] there will be a huge mass exodus of mid-level (SSgt – TSgt) leadership due to the fact that there are more of us with families that can no longer bear the burden of 6+ months TDY, 6 or less months at home.”

This reaction to deployments since 9/11 is in sharp contrast to the effects of deployments a decade earlier during Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM. In 2000, RAND analyzed 1991/1992 survey data to determine the effects of RC mobilizations and found that the opportunity of being mobilized positively affected retention, leading the researchers to postulate that “reservists welcomed the opportunity to put their skills and training into practice in real-world deployments.”<sup>29</sup> Based on RAND’s study of the relationship between perstempo and reenlistment in the early and mid 1990s, researchers concluded that long separations from home station or exposure to hostile conditions actually improve retention. However, they cautioned that too much separation or exposure may hurt retention.<sup>30</sup> RAND recommended the Pentagon spread the burden of lengthy deployments and hostile duty across the forces, increase the predictability of taskings, and forewarn service members early in their careers so that they fully expect to be deployed.<sup>31</sup>

Many of the comments received concerning the impact of the 179-day deployment length on the decision to separate indicated that a decrease to 90 or 120 days would be enough to keep them in the Air Force. Would these members be more appreciative of a 179-day deployment if SF deployments had initially increased from 90 or 120 days to 270 or 365 days and then reduced to 179 days or would any length over 120 days be too long for most SF members? If so, will the 179-day deployment length negatively affect SF member retention to a point that takes years from which to recover?

### **Manning, Workload, and Perceived Inequities**

Many comments received from Airmen deployed since 9/11 mention the impact of long deployments on their families, and they feel that manning problems are contributing to this. “Manning in the SF career field is horrible. Retention is going to be a huge problem in the future...because a lot of families are broken during these times. The Airmen carry the burden of

deploying a lot more than senior leadership does; therefore, they see it more. I will be getting out at my 13-year mark. Some people say I am crazy, but keeping my family together means more to me!," stated one respondent. Another troop wrote, "Since I've come into the AF, my duties have increased while manning continues to drop everyday leading to Security Forces working longer days, deploying longer, and putting in more off-duty hours than ever before. We need more SF!! Retention is going to become nonexistent as soon as people realize that manning is getting no better." One troop challenged leadership to address the manning issue and to find a way to "get a large number of resources/personnel into the service...[because] we need more people to share the load." Another added, "The length of deployments is getting out of hand. We say 6 months is the average, yet once the troops are out the door, we leave them out there longer or keep dropping hints they may be extended. That is no way for a person to live their life."

Perceived deployment inequities are also affecting the decision to separate. One member wrote, "Often times, the young troops are left to carry the load for more seasoned veterans who have yet to deploy in almost 3 years, and when that young troop complains or gripes just a little, the ones that don't deploy tell them to suck it up and press on...great advice from people that never deploy." Another echoed his sentiments by saying, "I am tired of constantly being sent overseas while seeing others never deploy and then seeing those same people get rewarded for it." An SF troop wrote, "If we could have the manning to work 8-hour shifts again, I might consider staying the full 20 years," while another SF member stated, "My decision to separate is based on the Air Force's answer to the manning crisis in Security Forces" and the feeling that SF troops are treated unfairly due to longer deployments and a much more demanding workload compared to the other AF specialties. One Airman stated, "When we are not TDY, we are working 14- to 16-hour shifts....I love my job, I love what I get out of it every day. All I would

like is a fair playing field.” Several others mentioned not being allowed to take leave due to low manning and getting “burned out” because of the high perstempo. Although many expressed their affection for the Air Force and the SF specialty, this perceived disparity between specialties and within the SF specialty is the cause of frustration and may be leading them to separate, especially with no end in sight for their 6-month deployments and long shifts.

### **Impact on Marriages and Families**

Comments related to the impact of lengthy deployments and work shifts on marriages and families were provided by many Airmen. According to one, “My wife has threatened divorce since I am never home. I work 16-hour days when I am here, and I am gone for over half of the year....The only thing saving my marriage is the fact that I only have a year left and promised my wife I would not stay in.” Yet another indicated she enjoys deploying and the job but may decide to separate if 6-month deployments continue. She stated, “I do not want to get out. I love deploying, but 6 months every year is a lot to put on my children and my husband....If the deployments go back to 4 or even 3 months, I will stay in.” An A1C added, “3-month deployments were perfect, not too long, and it gave enough time for a team to help with getting a mission done....If it weren’t for these deployments, I’d probably be considering reenlistment.”

### **Recognition of Effort and Morale**

Recognition of efforts has consistently been ranked among the top five reasons influencing Airmen to separate from the Air Force going back to AFPC’s 1996, 1999, and 2000 surveys. Comments regarding a lack of recognition and low morale were prevalent from those who have and those who have not deployed since 9/11. Esprit de corps/morale and recognition of efforts were ranked #5 and #8, respectively, among the most influential reasons for separating.

The impact of leadership on these factors cannot be overlooked. As one Airman who has deployed since 9/11 put it, “I don’t feel as though the Air Force leadership is interested in us....They don’t want to know how we’re really doing. We have troops deploying and returning from overseas all the time, and I never see them at the airport sending them off or there to say thank you and shake their hands on their return.” An AD SF member with 4 years in the Air Force added, “I have seen little of the four things to help motivate troops – ROAR: responsibility, opportunity, appreciation, and recognition. With better leadership exercising ROAR, good changes can be made to keep the fire in young Airmen.” A military working dog handler who has supported the Army in the area of responsibility (AOR) since 9/11 stated, “I think leadership is more worried [about]...if they get promoted instead of ensuring their young troops have good morale....We are doing too much work and never receive at least a pat on the back or a good job....I reenlisted in the AOR because I felt like I was getting recognized for my work. My morale was at an all-time high....I am currently 3 months into my new term and regret it every day....Our leadership needs to start recognizing our young troops and young NCOs for the work they do. At least a simple good job once a month for a few individuals would make a great difference.”

These feelings are not just being experienced by those who deploy. An Airman who has not deployed since 9/11 wrote, “We are the first line of defense and yet we get treated like the stepchildren of the Air Force. I feel like I am wasting my time here because no one appreciates what we do, not even our own leadership. If I had to do it all over again, SF would not have been an option....I cannot be an effective defender feeling the way I do about my job. As soon as I can get out, I’m gone.” Another troop added, “The threat of making this field into a permanent deployment status field and the low morale of the troops at the base I work at was enough to make me realize that this is not what I would like to do for another enlistment.”

## **Changing SF Roles and Responsibilities**

Additional factors not listed in the survey were received by a large number of Airmen planning to separate. Many SF troops expressed frustration with the emerging roles and responsibilities of their specialty, the training received, and the direction they perceive the specialty is heading due to the threats now faced. An Airman wrote, “The Air Force I joined is not the same. My career field is changing into more of an Army unit, and if I wanted that, I would have joined the Army.” Another said, “Many Security Forces members joined with hopes of gaining law enforcement experience; however, it is a rude awakening when you find out your position as a cop is turning into the position of an infantryman which is something we are poorly trained and equipped for.” One member voiced concern about the SF “identity crisis” and the expectation of performing “numerous duties in a wide spectrum of categories with limited training in any particular field.” Similarly, an Airman stated that the specialty is focused on trying to accomplish too many varied tasks while not giving any one area, security or law enforcement, “enough attention to make troops proficient in either.” A troop planning to separate from the Air Force wrote, “I should not spend my predeployment training time learning how to call in artillery and how to conduct assaults and ambushes on enemy forces....We need to be experts at conducting convoys, experts at dealing with angry crowds, and experts with our weapons....We need to take a serious look at what our job really is.”

A senior SF officer on a MAJCOM staff contacted the author to express similar concerns about inadequate training received by SF troops being deployed and stated that SF Airmen are “ill trained for the environment in which we place them....Their self-confidence is low [and] they also know the person next to them is equally deficient. This does not make for good team cohesion and esprit de corps, the two elements essential to effective military units.” An enlisted member added, “Our lack of training should be addressed because we are not prepared to face

the type of enemy that we are dealing with.” One SF member planning to separate based his/her decision on training received for deployments. “We have no continuity with ground combat skills training....The hands-on training we receive while at home is just not sufficient or helpful....First-term Airmen are not receiving life-like and regimented training at Lackland AFB, and it definitely shows when they get to their first duty station....Most likely the supervisor that needs to mentor and teach these troops right from wrong and up from down will not deploy with these kids, which seriously degrades morale and esprit de corps, causing a myriad of problems for first-term Airmen.” A troop who has spent more than 440 days deployed since 9/11 reported, “I enjoy deploying and that is what I joined to do. But I am scared to death that the AF is going to get me and my fellow SF members in a life or death situation that we can’t get ourselves out of alive. If they think a 3-day MOUT [military operations in urban terrain] course or 3 weeks at ground combat school is going to prepare us for what they are getting us into, then they are dead wrong and need to reanalyze our entire training. It’s true when they say you train like you fight and fight like you train.”

### **Civilianization of Security Forces**

The civilianization of the SF specialty has also frustrated many Airmen due to a lack of job enrichment and career progression opportunities. According to one AD member planning to separate, “The biggest reason I have decided to separate is the direction the career field is going. First, we merged LE and security. Now, the home-station LE mission is being turned over to civilian personnel. All back-office positions will also be filled by civilians. The opportunity to do something other than train for deployment or be on a deployment will be nonexistent. What motivation is there when I will be doing the same job as a MSgt or SMSgt as I did as an A1C?” Another troop echoed these concerns: “Our career field as we know it will not exist soon. At my base, more positions go from military members to civilians daily it seems....Since these

positions are going to civilians now, I have no future in our career field. I separate in September.” An AD member contemplating the reenlistment decision is torn due to the direction he/she perceives the SF specialty is heading. “I do not want to separate from the military. I love the military. But I do not like the direction my career field is going. Many active duty military jobs are being replaced with civilians. It leaves nowhere for the active duty member to progress. We will be limited to the job we can perform.”

### **Selective Reenlistment Bonus and Hazardous Duty Pay**

Other SF members voiced their frustrations with the SRB being eliminated, the perceived inequity of new enlistees receiving bonuses, and the lack of hazardous duty pay for SF members. “New enlistees getting two stripes and a large bonus is demoralizing to the Airmen who enlisted around 9/11 and received nothing,” wrote one troop, while another added, “Due to the reenlistment bonus being axed, I will be departing the Air Force....Due to the new force shaping program, it is forcing Security Forces to deploy not only more but for longer durations. The change is in the wind. Without a bonus, retention of Security Forces members will be nonexistent.” An AD member who has deployed since 9/11 stated, “I feel it is a farce that the Fire Department now gets an extra \$150 a month for ‘hazardous duty pay.’...Security Forces works the longest and hardest hours and still nothing....with no SRB, I am wondering how we are going to get these young troops who can earn just as much money in the outside world to stay in. With manning as low as it is, I just don’t see it getting any better in the future.” Two others wrote, “No reenlistment bonus? I hope this changes in 6 months. Maybe I would reconsider my decision,” and “I believe that reenlistment bonuses should increase instead of decrease. Manning issues in our squadron are just horrible. People can’t take leave if they need it....Morale is down, down, down!” The final comment sums up the sentiments about several of the issues detailed above: “The biggest problem to date is senior leadership not filtering down accurate

information about the future of the career field or when the tempo will let up....We are going to get the job done, but do not ask us to get the job done [and] then cut the reenlistment bonuses and feed us with good jobs and thanks. We are going to do the job either way, with or without the praise, so thank us by increasing reenlistment bonuses and manning.”

### **Cross-training Opportunities**

Many of the SF Airmen expressed a desire to cross-train into another specialty to avoid 6-month deployments while continuing to serve in the Air Force, but they were not optimistic about their chances to cross-train and said they would separate if their requests were denied. One Airman stated, “Most of my decision to separate was the denial of my retraining after being preached about guarantees as a first-termer.” Another SF troop wrote, “My decision to leave the Air Force has to do with the chances of me retraining [being] slim to none. They say you have a chance, but everyone I know that put in for a cross-train got denied.”

### **Reasons for Serving 20 or More Years in the Air Force**

Although this study primarily focuses on the reasons for reenlisting in or separating from the Air Force, data and comments received from the senior NCOs planning to serve 20 or more years in the Air Force are a valuable piece of the puzzle because of their experiences and insight into the retention issue. The top reasons influencing their decision are similar to the top reasons influencing members to reenlist with varying degrees of influence: job security, medical and dental care for family members, medical and dental care for the SF member, and retirement pay and benefits. Job security was more influential for the members choosing to serve 20 or more years than for those at earlier stages in their careers. (Table C9 reveals the amount of influence for each of the 35 factors for deployed members.)

Over 60 percent of the senior enlisted members who have deployed since 9/11 indicated

that their decision to serve 20 or more years was unrelated to deployments (Table C10). Slightly more than 20 percent said deployments had a strong or very strong influence on their decision. Based on comments received from some senior NCOs, however, the data could be misleading. It is impossible to determine if deployment experiences prompted them to stay in the Air Force longer or if their experiences convinced them to retire at a certain point rather than serve longer.

Almost 50 percent of the members who have deployed since 9/11 indicated that their decision to serve 20 or more years in the Air Force was influenced by their desire to continue serving their country (Table C11). In addition, they are strongly influenced by the support they receive from their spouse/significant other or children, also a strong influencing factor in the decision to reenlist. Airmen whose support from their family is decreasing may be swayed to retire earlier than originally planned or to separate rather than reenlist.

The most influential reasons the deployed senior enlisted SF members plan to serve 20 or more years was very similar to the most influential reasons listed by the members who have not deployed since 9/11 with the exception of deployments (Tables C9 and C12). Deployments were more influential for the senior NCOs who have deployed than for the members who have not deployed since 9/11 (#12 of 34 for deployed versus #21 of 34, respectively). Again, it is difficult to determine the exact effect deployments have had on their decision to serve 20 or more years in the Air Force because of the question's wording. Comments received from this group described both positive and negative effects of deployments on their decision.

### **Patriotism versus Deployments**

Several SF members expressed pride for the jobs they have performed and their strong commitment to the military. However, many of the Airmen in their final enlistment indicated that they would choose to separate from the Air Force due to the high perstempo and deployment lengths if they did not have the number of years invested in the military. One SF member stated,

“I am retiring sooner than planned due to the deployments, long work days, [and] low Manning.” Another echoed these concerns by writing, “Even though I am planning on staying in for 20, I am very concerned about the number and length of deployments. If I wasn’t so close to retirement, I’d get out due to the number and length of deployments.” An AD senior NCO summed up his sentiments about the perceived direction SF specialty is going and its influence on what may be a retirement earlier than originally planned: “I’m really glad someone is doing a survey on Security Forces. I feel the SF career is going to hell in a hand basket....The SF career field is slitting their own throats...and won’t see the results until it’s too late. I’ve seen several E-6s with 12-14 years service just drop the whole thing and get out when their enlistments are up. I love the military and think the Air Force is definitely the way to go, but if I don’t see a marked improvement, I’m outta here at the end of my enlistment.”

### **Manning**

Manning issues were mentioned by several of the senior enlisted members. “The Manning drain on the SF career field will cause Manning shortages even greater than we are experiencing now. Retention of second-term Airmen will take a dive before the end of this year,” wrote one SF member. Another Airman stated, “I believe that the Air Force has missed the boat by structuring day-to-day Manning based on home-station requirements, and since half the unit is deployed at any given time, the remaining home-station troops are left holding the bag to maintain programs and staff work at full throttle!...I loved the Air Force. Now, I’m out at 20!”

### **Impact of Family Support**

The importance of the support received from the SF members’ spouses/significant others is evident through the ratings and the write-in comments. A senior NCO pointed out, however, that “many of the things that have kept me around as long as I’ve stayed is because it’s provided

a stable foundation and basic needs for my family; now, family is the very thing being taken away with the current ops tempo.” Others reported their concern for the younger SF troops and the impact of longer deployments on marriages and retention. A SF member wrote, “Family time needs to be focused on a lot more in our career field. All other career fields allow their members to spend quality time with their families prior to and after deployments. Our career field, on the other hand, does not. Focus on the family and you will improve the morale of SF members all around.”

### **SF Roles and Responsibilities**

Finally, several senior enlisted SF members expressed concern about evolving SF roles and responsibilities also voiced by Airmen electing to separate from or reenlist in the Air Force. One senior SF member said, “Security Forces’ overall mission is unattainable based on the dual traditional law enforcement and base defense missions, not to mention the wartime skill requirements. Separate the career field into two and concentrate on success in that particular area. We cannot serve two masters effectively. We are losing good troops to other units due to our own inability to have a clearly defined and more importantly attainable mission.” Yet another indicated a possible change of plans about serving 20 or more years because of the 6-month deployments and changes to the specialty: “We are changing from a police and security force to a ground combat force. Our training and equipment are not meeting the requirements.”

### **Notes**

<sup>23</sup> Hamilton, 8.

<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth C. Hoover et al., *Overview of the 2000 Military Exit Survey*, DMDC Report 2001-001 (Arlington, VA: Defense Manpower Data Center, March 2001), 13.

<sup>25</sup> Paul F. Hogan and Brian E. Simonson, *Overview of the 2000 Survey of Reserve Component Personnel*, DMDC Report 2002-032 (Arlington, VA: Defense Manpower Data Center, July 2002), 38.

<sup>26</sup> *May 2004 Status of Forces Survey of Reserve Component Members: Leading Indicators*, DMDC Note 2004-010 (Arlington, VA: Defense Manpower Data Center, 26 July 2004), 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

## Notes

<sup>28</sup> TSgt Matt Summers, “Jumper Shares View on AEF Cycle Length Extension,” *Air Force Print News*, on-line, Internet, 8 June 2004, available from [http://www.af.mil/news/story\\_print.asp?storyID=123007905](http://www.af.mil/news/story_print.asp?storyID=123007905).

<sup>29</sup> Sheila Nataraj Kirby and Scott Naftel, “The Impact of Deployment on the Retention of Military Reservists,” *Armed Forces and Society* 26, no. 2 (Winter 2000): 273.

<sup>30</sup> James Hosek and Mark Totten, *Does Perstempo Hurt Reenlistment? The Effect of Long or Hostile Perstempo on Reenlistment*, RAND Report MR-990-OSD (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1998), xvii.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

## Conclusion

Technical Sergeant Aaron Otte and Staff Sergeant Ron Beard, SF members from Hill AFB UT who are currently deployed to an air base in Uzbekistan, are enthusiastic about their deployments in support of OIF. In March 2005, Sgt Beard, whose job is to protect aircrew and airplanes on fly-away security missions as he did in Iraq, said, "I believe we have accomplished great heights during OIF that have echoed democracy throughout the Middle East."<sup>32</sup> He added that the SF field has evolved to a versatile force, going "outside the wire" and taking on an offensive role.<sup>33</sup> Sgt Otte's job satisfaction and motivation remain high as he explains, "We are doing missions we never expected to do. We also are called upon to do this with more scrutiny than ever imagined. We now have the opportunity to show ourselves and the world why we are the best and most professional military force in the world. Operation IRAQI FREEDOM taught me that, and I carry it with me on this deployment and anywhere else I go to support the global war on terrorism."<sup>34</sup> These Airmen are performing jobs that clearly demonstrate the evolution of the SF specialty, a community now conducting joint patrols with the other US military services and host-nation military personnel, providing security escorts for special missions, and providing fly-away security for friendly aircraft flying into hostile territory rather than focusing on air base defense roles.<sup>35</sup> Maintaining their motivation is important because their mission of ensuring the delivery of cargo and people to military operations in forward-deployed areas is crucial to the success of the global war on terrorism.

As the threat to US national security changes, so too do the missions and responsibilities of the nation's military services. The Security Forces specialty may very well be the Air Force specialty that has had to make the most adjustments since 9/11, from longer deployments and

longer shifts to evolving missions and a truly expeditionary mindset. SF members expressed tremendous pride in serving their country in support of the global war on terrorism, but they appear to be caught in the middle of the specialty they joined and the global war on terrorism. The lack of personal/family time, demanding work schedules, longer and more frequent deployments, inadequate training and resources for the emerging and sometimes ill-defined missions, a lack of opportunities to cross-train, and inadequate or poorly managed unit manning are pushing many SF troops to separate from the Air Force at the end of their current enlistment.

It would be easy to sweep their troubling comments under the rug and say that the SF community does not need the Airmen who complain about deployments, their workload, inadequate manning, recognition of efforts, and morale. After all, the Air Force does not want or need to keep everyone. Again, the retention goals are only about 55 percent and 75 percent for first- and second-term Airmen, respectively, but the SF members who voiced their concerns may be the very troops the SF community needs to retain. They may be the ones who have reached the boiling point and simply taken advantage of expressing their intentions to a third party with hopes of improvements for their specialty.

Although 37 percent of the SF Airmen who participated in this study plan to separate, many of those may actually be undecided, just waiting for signs that improvements are on the horizon. At the very least, they appear to be seeking appreciation for the jobs they perform, a simple thank you, some time off to spend with their families as they recharge their batteries. Efforts to retain the SF Airmen in the Air Force today will be a lot less costly than retraining troops from other specialties or recruiting more Security Forces members. Although the Air Force has reached its retention goals since 9/11, SF leadership should not overlook the issues facing this specialty. The dismissal of these issues could result in lower than desired reenlistment rates and an even heavier burden on the Airmen who remain.

Based on the survey data and the comments received from these SF Airmen, the overwhelming conclusion is that deployments are indeed affecting retention and will continue to do so until or unless deployment lengths and frequencies are reduced. Op tempo and perstempo are definite causes for concern with potentially lower retention rates in the coming years, the sources of which can more than likely be traced to the concerns revealed in this survey. A close look at these concerns today, if properly addressed, may sway the decisions of those undecided Airmen when it comes time to reenlist. This glimpse into the intentions of these 2,824 SF members may be the first step in the process of addressing these concerns as leadership now has a better picture of the potential effects of deployments since 9/11 on the SF community. Many of the SF Airmen surveyed expressed their appreciation at having an avenue to express their concerns and hoped leadership would take notice.

#### **Notes**

<sup>32</sup> TSgt Scott T. Sturkol, "Iraqi Freedom Deployments Help Airmen Understand War," *Air Force News Service*, 30 March 2005, n.p., on-line, Internet, available from <https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af/afp40/USAF/ep/contentView.do?pageTypeId=9374&programId=556129&contentType=EDITORIAL&contentId=1074300311>.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **SECURITY FORCES Retention and Deployments Survey**

**This introduction has been  
incorporated into the first page of the**

MEMORANDUM FOR AIR FORCE SECURITY FORCES MEMBERS

FROM: ACSC/SEMINAR 29 (Ms. Kimberly Williams)  
225 Chennault Circle  
Maxwell AFB AL 36112-6426

SUBJECT: Security Forces Retention and Deployments Survey (OSSN 2650)

1. As a student at Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB AL, I am conducting research to determine the effects of deployments on reenlistment and retirement decisions of AF security forces (SF) members. This is a high-interest area for top military leadership, including the SF career field manager at the Pentagon. Although the Air Force Personnel Center and other agencies conduct research concerning retention of military members, they do not focus on the responses by members of specific AF specialties. I am particularly interested in examining the reenlistment and retirement intentions of SF members because of your extremely high personnel tempo and deployment rates since 9/11.
2. As part of my research, I'm administering a short survey to as many SF members as possible and would like you to take the time to complete the survey accurately. It should only take you about 10 minutes to complete a maximum of 13 questions. All responses will be confidential, and the data will be presented strictly as group data.
3. For your data to be included in my report, I need you to complete the survey by 21 Mar 05. I truly appreciate you taking time out of your hectic schedule to complete the survey! If you have any questions, please E-mail me at [kimberly.williams@maxwell.af.mil](mailto:kimberly.williams@maxwell.af.mil). Thanks in advance for your help.

KIMBERLY WILLIAMS, GS-13, DAF  
Student, Air Command and Staff College

## ABOUT THIS SURVEY

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS SURVEY?

This survey asks you about your attitudes and opinions on personnel issues in the Air Force, including your intention to reenlist or retire and your deployment experiences. This survey will be used to examine issues affecting Security Forces (SF) members and their families as part of a HQ AF/DP study and a student's official research project for Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB AL.

### WHY ME?

You have been selected to be part of a sample of AF Security Forces members who are either currently deployed or have been deployed since 9/11. Based on your responses and the responses of other SF members, conclusions may be drawn about the views and experiences of SF members overall and those of demographic subgroups. The validity of these conclusions depends, in part, on receiving enough completed surveys from individuals like you. The survey results will not be valid if you allow someone else to fill out the survey for you.

### WILL MY SURVEY RESPONSES BE KEPT PRIVATE?

**Yes. Under no circumstances will any information about identifiable individuals be released.** Your responses will be combined with information from many other members to represent the views and experiences of groups of members. Do not use any personal names, unit names, or classified information anywhere in this survey.

## PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

In accordance with AFI 33-332, the following information is provided as required by the Privacy Act of 1974.

**AUTHORITY:** 10 U.S.C. 8012, *Secretary of the Air Force, Powers and Duties, Delegation by Compensation*, and AFI 36-2601, *Air Force Personnel Survey Program*.

**PRINCIPAL PURPOSE:** To sample Air Force opinions in an area of interest to the Air Force.

**ROUTINE USES:** To provide data for a HQ AF/DP study and to fulfill requirements for a student's Air Command and Staff College graduation requirement. The report will be provided to HQ USAF/XOS-F, HQ AFRC/DPXX, and AFPC/DPFRS and may be provided to other AF offices as requested. In no case will the data be reported or used for identifiable individuals. Only group statistics will be reported.

**DISCLOSURE:** Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. Respondents cannot be identified. No adverse action may be taken against any individual who does not participate in any part or all of this survey.

*Security Forces Survey – Effects of Deployments on Retention*

1. Indicate your current Air Force status. Please read all responses before selecting the most appropriate response for your current situation. Select only one.

Active Duty member	Traditional Reserve member
Traditional Guard member	Air Reserve Technician (ART) member
Air Guard Technician member	Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) member
Active Reserve member	Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA)

2. Indicate your current paygrade. Select only one.

E-1	E-6
E-2	E-7
E-3	E-8
E-4	E-9
E-5	

3. Indicate which Air Force component you were a member of during your most recent deployment since 9/11. Select only one.

I have not deployed since 9/11 ⇒ skip to #7

Active Duty  
Guard  
Reserve

4. Indicate which operation(s) you supported in your deployment(s) since 9/11. Select only one.

Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) only  
Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) only  
Both OEF and OIF  
Other (please specify)

5. Indicate the total number of deployments you have **completed** since 9/11. Select only one.

None, my current deployment is my only deployment	4 deployments
1 deployment	5 deployments
2 deployments	6 deployments or more
3 deployments	

6. Indicate the total length of your deployment(s) from 9/11 to today. Select only one.

Less than 120 days  
121 – 179 days  
180 – 270 days  
271 days or more

7. Indicate your intention to reenlist at the end of your current enlistment. Please read all responses before selecting the most appropriate response for your situation. Select only one.

I plan to reenlist ⇒ skip to #13  
I plan to separate  
I will retire with 20 or more years of service ⇒ skip to #18

*Security Forces Survey – Effects of Deployments on Retention*

*Questions for those intending to separate from the Air Force.*

8. Examine each factor listed below and determine whether it influenced your decision to separate. Rate each factor that has influenced your decision to separate. Skip factors or select “N/A” for those having no influence on your decision.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic pay and allowances</li> <li>Retirement pay</li> <li>Special or incentive pay</li> <li>Reenlistment bonus</li> <li>Retirement benefits</li> <li>Military-related education and training opportunities</li> <li>Off-duty education and training opportunities</li> <li>Medical care for you</li> <li>Dental care for you</li> <li>Medical care for your family members</li> <li>Dental care for your family members</li> <li>Military housing</li> <li>Base services</li> <li>Childcare needs</li> <li>Military family support programs</li> <li>Spouse's employment and career opportunities</li> <li>Civilian job opportunities for you</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deployments</li> <li>Military way of life</li> <li>Work schedule</li> <li>Personal workload</li> <li>Amount of personal/family time</li> <li>Additional duties</li> <li>Job security</li> <li>Promotion opportunities</li> <li>Training/experience of unit personnel</li> <li>Unit manning</li> <li>Unit resources</li> <li>Unit readiness</li> <li>Recognition of efforts</li> <li>Esprit de corps/morale</li> <li>Leadership of immediate supervisor</li> <li>Leadership at unit level</li> <li>Senior Air Force leadership</li> <li>Other (Please enter any additional factors on the comments screen at the end of this survey and rate the factors on that screen.)</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

**Scale –**  
 Slight influence  
 Moderate influence  
 Strong influence

9. Select the Top 5 factors having the most influence on your decision to separate using a “1” to “5” scale with "1" being the most influence and "5" being the least influence of the five factors you select.

You will only be allowed to select 5!

Skip factors not in your Top 5. You may select “N/A” to de-select a factor if you change your mind.

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic pay and allowances</li> <li>Retirement pay</li> <li>Special or incentive pay</li> <li>Reenlistment bonus</li> <li>Retirement benefits</li> <li>Military-related education and training opportunities</li> <li>Off-duty education and training opportunities</li> <li>Medical care for you</li> <li>Dental care for you</li> <li>Medical care for your family members</li> <li>Dental care for your family members</li> <li>Military housing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Base services</li> <li>Childcare needs</li> <li>Military family support programs</li> <li>Spouse's employment and career opportunities</li> <li>Civilian job opportunities for you</li> <li>Deployments</li> <li>Military way of life</li> <li>Work schedule</li> <li>Personal workload</li> <li>Amount of personal/family time</li> <li>Additional duties</li> <li>Job security</li> <li>Promotion opportunities</li> <li>Training/experience of unit personnel</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unit manning</li> <li>Unit resources</li> <li>Unit readiness</li> <li>Recognition of efforts</li> <li>Esprit de corps/morale</li> <li>Leadership of immediate supervisor</li> <li>Leadership at unit level</li> <li>Senior Air Force leadership</li> <li>Other (On the comments screen at the end of this survey, please enter any additional factors <b>only</b> if they are part of your Top 5 factors.)</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|

*Security Forces Survey – Effects of Deployments on Retention*

10. Indicate the amount of influence your deployment(s) since 9/11 have had on your decision to separate. Select only one.

- I have not deployed since 9/11 ⇒ skip to #12
- None; my decision to separate is unrelated to my deployment(s) ⇒ skip to #12
- Slight influence
- Moderate influence
- Strong influence
- Very strong influence

11. Examine each factor listed below and determine whether it influenced your decision to separate based on your deployments since 9/11. Rate each factor that has influenced your decision to separate. Skip factors or select “N/A” for those having no influence on your decision.

- Length of deployment(s)
- Frequency of deployments
- Uncertainty about future deployments
- Burden on spouse
- Problems for children, such as emotional or behavioral problems
- Lack of support from spouse/significant other or children
- Lack of support from family, other than spouse/significant other or children
- Child care issues
- Marital/relationship problems
- Overall increase in family problems
- Difficulty continuing your education
- Loss of civilian health benefits (ARC members only)
- Loss of income (ARC members only)
- Loss of seniority/promotion opportunities in civilian job (ARC members only)
- Lack of support from civilian employer (ARC members only)
- Problems returning to same job (ARC members only)
- Employer problems after returning to civilian job (ARC members only)
- Overall increase in employer problems (ARC members only)
- Other (Please enter any additional factors on the comments screen following this question and indicate the amount of each factor’s influence on your decision to separate.)

<b>Scale –</b> Slight influence Moderate influence Strong influence
--

12. Please enter any other comments you would like to concerning your decision to separate from the Air Force.

If you selected “Other” in the questions that asked about factors influencing your decision to separate from the Air Force, please list those factors, indicate the amount of influence those factors have on your decision (slight, moderate, or strong), and indicate whether those factors are among your Top 5 factors influencing your decision to separate from the Air Force (i.e., #1, #2, etc).

If you selected “Other” in the question that asked about factors influencing your decision to separate from the Air Force based on your deployments since 9/11, please list those factors and indicate the amount of influence those factors have on your decision to separate from the Air Force.

*[Member can enter other factors/comments and will then skip to “Thank You” note on last screen.]*

*Security Forces Survey – Effects of Deployments on Retention*

*Questions for those intending to reenlist in the Air Force.*

13. Examine each factor listed below and determine whether it influenced your decision to reenlist. Rate each factor that has influenced your decision to reenlist. Skip factors or select “N/A” for those having no influence on your decision.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic pay and allowances</li> <li>Retirement pay</li> <li>Special or incentive pay</li> <li>Reenlistment bonus</li> <li>Retirement benefits</li> <li>Military-related education and training opportunities</li> <li>Off-duty education and training opportunities</li> <li>Medical care for you</li> <li>Dental care for you</li> <li>Medical care for your family members</li> <li>Dental care for your family members</li> <li>Military housing</li> <li>Base services</li> <li>Childcare needs</li> <li>Military family support programs</li> <li>Spouse's employment and career opportunities</li> <li>Civilian job opportunities for you</li> <li>Deployments</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Military way of life</li> <li>Work schedule</li> <li>Personal workload</li> <li>Amount of personal/family time</li> <li>Additional duties</li> <li>Job security</li> <li>Promotion opportunities</li> <li>Training/experience of unit personnel</li> <li>Unit manning</li> <li>Unit resources</li> <li>Unit readiness</li> <li>Recognition of efforts</li> <li>Esprit de corps/morale</li> <li>Leadership of immediate supervisor</li> <li>Leadership at unit level</li> <li>Senior Air Force leadership</li> <li>Desire to continue serving my country</li> <li>Other (Please enter any additional factors on the comments screen at the end of this survey and rate the factors on that screen.)</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

**Scale –**  
 Slight influence  
 Moderate influence  
 Strong influence

14. Select the Top 5 factors having the most influence on your decision to reenlist using a “1” to “5” scale with "1" being the most influence and "5" being the least influence of the five factors you select.

You will only be allowed to select 5!

Skip factors not in your Top 5. You may select “N/A” to de-select a factor if you change your mind.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic pay and allowances</li> <li>Retirement pay</li> <li>Special or incentive pay</li> <li>Reenlistment bonus</li> <li>Retirement benefits</li> <li>Military-related education and training opportunities</li> <li>Off-duty education and training opportunities</li> <li>Medical care for you</li> <li>Dental care for you</li> <li>Medical care for your family members</li> <li>Dental care for your family members</li> <li>Military housing</li> <li>Base services</li> <li>Childcare needs</li> <li>Military family support programs</li> <li>Spouse's employment and career opportunities</li> <li>Civilian job opportunities for you</li> <li>Deployments</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Military way of life</li> <li>Work schedule</li> <li>Personal workload</li> <li>Amount of personal/family time</li> <li>Additional duties</li> <li>Job security</li> <li>Promotion opportunities</li> <li>Training/experience of unit personnel</li> <li>Unit manning</li> <li>Unit resources</li> <li>Unit readiness</li> <li>Recognition of efforts</li> <li>Esprit de corps/morale</li> <li>Leadership of immediate supervisor</li> <li>Leadership at unit level</li> <li>Senior Air Force leadership</li> <li>Desire to continue serving my country</li> <li>Other (On the comments screen at the end of this survey, please enter any additional factors <b>only</b> if they are part of your Top 5 factors.)</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

*Security Forces Survey – Effects of Deployments on Retention*

15. Indicate the amount of influence your deployment(s) since 9/11 have had on your decision to reenlist. Select only one.

- I have not deployed since 9/11 ⇒ *skip to #17*
- None; my decision to reenlist is unrelated to my deployment(s) ⇒ *skip to #17*
- Slight influence
- Moderate influence
- Strong influence
- Very strong influence

16. Examine each factor listed below and determine whether it influenced your decision to reenlist based on your deployments since 9/11. Rate each factor that has influenced your decision to reenlist. Skip factors or select “N/A” for those having no influence on your decision.

- Predictability about future deployments with AEF rotations
- Support from spouse/significant other or children
- Support from family, other than spouse/significant other or children
- Desire to continue serving my country
- Better health benefits for me through military
- More income through military than in civilian job
- Support from civilian employer (ARC members only)
- Other (Please enter any additional factors on the comments screen following this question and indicate the amount of each factor’s influence on your decision to reenlist.)

<b>Scale –</b> Slight influence Moderate influence Strong influence
--

17. Please enter any other comments you would like to concerning your decision to reenlist in the Air Force.

If you selected “Other” in the questions that asked about factors influencing your decision to reenlist in the Air Force, please list those factors, indicate the amount of influence those factors have on your decision (slight, moderate, or strong), and indicate whether those factors are among your Top 5 factors influencing your decision to reenlist in the Air Force (i.e., #1, #2, etc).

If you selected “Other” in the question that asked about factors influencing your decision to reenlist in the Air Force based on your deployments since 9/11, please list those factors and indicate the amount of influence those factors have on your decision to reenlist in the Air Force.

*[Member can enter other factors/comments and will then skip to “Thank You” note on last screen.]*

*Security Forces Survey – Effects of Deployments on Retention*

*Questions for those intending to retire from the Air Force with 20 or more years of service.*

18. Examine each factor listed below and determine whether it influenced your decision to serve 20 or more years in the Air Force. Rate each factor that has influenced your decision. Skip factors or select “N/A” for those having no influence on your decision.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic pay and allowances</li> <li>Retirement pay</li> <li>Special or incentive pay</li> <li>Reenlistment bonus</li> <li>Retirement benefits</li> <li>Military-related education and training opportunities</li> <li>Off-duty education and training opportunities</li> <li>Medical care for you</li> <li>Dental care for you</li> <li>Medical care for your family members</li> <li>Dental care for your family members</li> <li>Military housing</li> <li>Base services</li> <li>Childcare needs</li> <li>Military family support programs</li> <li>Spouse's employment and career opportunities</li> <li>Civilian job opportunities for you</li> <li>Deployments</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Military way of life</li> <li>Work schedule</li> <li>Personal workload</li> <li>Amount of personal/family time</li> <li>Additional duties</li> <li>Job security</li> <li>Promotion opportunities</li> <li>Training/experience of unit personnel</li> <li>Unit manning</li> <li>Unit resources</li> <li>Unit readiness</li> <li>Recognition of efforts</li> <li>Esprit de corps/morale</li> <li>Leadership of immediate supervisor</li> <li>Leadership at unit level</li> <li>Senior Air Force leadership</li> <li>Desire to continue serving my country</li> <li>Other (Please enter any additional factors on the comments screen at the end of this survey and rate the factors on that screen.)</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

**Scale –**  
 Slight influence  
 Moderate influence  
 Strong influence

19. Select the Top 5 factors having the most influence on your decision to serve 20 or more years in the Air Force using a “1” to “5” scale with “1” being the most influence and “5” being the least influence of the five factors you select.

You will only be allowed to select 5!

Skip factors not in your Top 5. You may select “N/A” to de-select a factor if you change your mind.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic pay and allowances</li> <li>Retirement pay</li> <li>Special or incentive pay</li> <li>Reenlistment bonus</li> <li>Retirement benefits</li> <li>Military-related education and training opportunities</li> <li>Off-duty education and training opportunities</li> <li>Medical care for you</li> <li>Dental care for you</li> <li>Medical care for your family members</li> <li>Dental care for your family members</li> <li>Military housing</li> <li>Base services</li> <li>Childcare needs</li> <li>Military family support programs</li> <li>Spouse's employment and career opportunities</li> <li>Civilian job opportunities for you</li> <li>Deployments</li> <li>Military way of life</li> <li>Work schedule</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal workload</li> <li>Amount of personal/family time</li> <li>Additional duties</li> <li>Job security</li> <li>Promotion opportunities</li> <li>Training/experience of unit personnel</li> <li>Unit manning</li> <li>Unit resources</li> <li>Unit readiness</li> <li>Recognition of efforts</li> <li>Esprit de corps/morale</li> <li>Leadership of immediate supervisor</li> <li>Leadership at unit level</li> <li>Senior Air Force leadership</li> <li>Desire to continue serving my country</li> <li>Other (On the comments screen at the end of this survey, please enter any additional factors <b>only</b> if they are part of your Top 5 factors. Also, indicate whether each one is your #1, #2, #3, #4, or #5 factor.)</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

*Security Forces Survey – Effects of Deployments on Retention*

20. Indicate the amount of influence your deployment(s) since 9/11 have had on your decision to serve 20 or more years in the Air Force. Select only one.

I have not deployed since 9/11 ⇒ *skip to #22*

None; my decision to serve 20 or more years in the Air Force is unrelated to my deployment(s) ⇒ *skip to #22*

Slight influence

Moderate influence

Strong influence

Very strong influence

21. Examine each factor listed below and determine whether it influenced your decision to serve 20 or more years in the Air Force based on your deployments since 9/11. Rate each factor that has influenced your decision. Skip factors or select “N/A” for those having no influence on your decision.

Predictability about future deployments with AEF rotations

Support from spouse/significant other or children

Support from family, other than spouse/significant other or children

Desire to continue serving my country

Better health benefits for me through military

More income through military than in civilian job

Support from civilian employer (ARC members only)

Other (Please enter any additional factors on the comments screen following this question and indicate the amount of each factor’s influence on your decision to serve 20 or more years in the Air Force.)

Scale –

Slight influence

Moderate influence

Strong influence

22. Please enter any other comments you would like to concerning your decision to serve 20 or more years in the Air Force.

If you selected “Other” in the questions that asked about factors influencing your decision to serve 20 or more years in the Air Force, please list those factors, indicate the amount of influence those factors have on your decision (slight, moderate, or strong), and indicate whether those factors are among your Top 5 factors influencing your decision to serve 20 or more years in the Air Force (i.e., #1, #2, etc).

If you selected “Other” in the question that asked about factors influencing your decision to serve 20 or more years in the Air Force based on your deployments since 9/11, please indicate the amount of influence those factors have on your decision to serve 20 or more years in the Air Force.

*[Member can enter other comments and will then skip to “Thank You” note on last screen.]*

Thank you!

I appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey. Your input will contribute significantly to the validity of my research. I wish you the very best!

## **APPENDIX B**

### **SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS**

**Table B 1. Current AF Status**

<b>Current AF Status</b>	<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>% Respondents</b>
Active Duty member	2,520	89.2%
Traditional Guard member	12	0.4%
Air Guard Technician member	3	0.1%
Active Reserve member	67	2.4%
Traditional Reserve member	52	1.8%
Air Reserve Technician (ART) member	79	2.8%
Active Guard Reserve (AGR) member	46	1.6%
Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA)	45	1.6%

**Table B 2. Current Paygrade**

<b>Current Paygrade</b>	<b>% Respondents</b>	<b>% Total SF in AF</b>
<b>E-1</b>	0.1%	2.8%
<b>E-2</b>	1.3%	3.8%
<b>E-3</b>	9.0%	19.6%
<b>E-4</b>	18.9%	24.6%
<b>E-5</b>	36.4%	26.6%
<b>E-6</b>	18.6%	13.0%
<b>E-7</b>	10.9%	7.3%
<b>E-8</b>	2.9%	1.5%
<b>E-9</b>	1.8%	0.8%

**Table B 3. Total Number of Deployments Completed**

<b>Total Number of Deployments Completed</b>	<b>% Respondents</b>
None, current deployment is only deployment	8.8%
1 deployment	40.1%
2 deployments	30.7%
3 deployments	12.2%
4 deployments	4.1%
5 deployments	1.3%
6 or more deployments	2.8%

**Table B 4. Reenlistment Intentions at End of Current Enlistment**

<b>Reenlistment Intentions</b>	<b>% Respondents</b>
Plan to reenlist	37.5%
Plan to separate	37.0%
Will retire with 20 or more years of service	25.5%

## **APPENDIX C**

### **SURVEY DATA**

**Table C 1. Influences on Decision to Reenlist for Members Deployed Since 9/11**

Factors Influencing Decision to Reenlist	TOTAL [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=717		AD [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=610		ANG [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=23		AFRC [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=84	
	Medical care for your family members	1	52%	1	55%	2	65%	9
Job security	2	51%	3	52%	3	65%	4	40%
Medical care for you	3	51%	2	53%	4	61%	7	33%
Retirement benefits	4	49%	6	48%	1	70%	1	51%
Dental care for you	5	49%	4	51%	9	43%	8	33%
Dental care for your family members	6	48%	5	50%	8	48%	10	31%
Retirement pay	7	46%	7	45%	5	61%	2	49%
Promotion opportunities	8	36%	8	36%	18	26%	5	40%
Military way of life	9	32%	11	30%	7	57%	6	38%
Military-related education and training opportunities	10	31%	9	31%	12	35%	11	31%
Basic pay and allowances	11	29%	12	29%	11	39%	12	30%
Off-duty education and training opportunities	12	29%	10	31%	24	17%	16	24%
Esprit de corps/morale	13	24%	13	21%	6	61%	3	42%
Training/experience of unit personnel	14	22%	16	20%	17	30%	14	29%
Deployments	15	21%	14	21%	13	35%	20	19%
Leadership of immediate supervisor	16	21%	18	19%	14	35%	13	29%
Amount of personal/family time	17	21%	17	20%	10	43%	19	19%
Reenlistment bonus	18	20%	15	21%	26	13%	27	11%
Leadership at unit level	19	18%	20	16%	15	35%	15	27%
Civilian job opportunities for you	20	17%	19	17%	27	13%	18	20%
Work schedule	21	17%	21	16%	16	35%	21	19%
Recognition of efforts	22	15%	24	13%	25	17%	17	24%
Special or incentive pay	23	14%	22	14%	28	13%	29	7%
Personal workload	24	13%	25	13%	21	22%	24	13%
Military housing	25	13%	23	14%	33	0%	34	4%
Senior Air Force leadership	26	12%	29	11%	29	13%	22	19%
Unit readiness	27	12%	28	11%	19	26%	23	18%
Unit manning	28	11%	32	10%	22	22%	26	12%
Base services	29	11%	26	12%	34	0%	28	8%
Additional duties	30	11%	30	11%	20	26%	30	6%
Childcare needs	31	11%	27	12%	30	4%	31	5%
Unit resources	32	10%	34	9%	23	22%	25	13%
Spouse's employment and career opportunities	33	10%	31	11%	31	4%	33	4%
Military family support programs	34	9%	33	10%	32	4%	32	5%

**Table C 2. Influence of Deployments on Decision to Reenlist for Members Deployed Since 9/11**

	TOTAL	AD	ANG	AFRC
None, decision is unrelated to deployments	54.4%	53.4%	36.8%	66.2%
Slight/moderate influence	26.5%	27.9%	26.3%	16.2%
Strong/very strong influence	19.1%	18.7%	36.9%	17.6%

**Table C 3. Deployment-Related Factors Influencing Decision to Reenlist  
[% Selecting “Strong” Influence]**

<b>Factors Influencing Decision to Reenlist</b>	<b>TOTAL N=271</b>	<b>AD N=234</b>	<b>ANG N=12</b>	<b>AFRC N=25</b>
Desire to continue serving my country	58%	56%	67%	72%
Support from spouse/significant other or children	39%	39%	33%	44%
Better health benefits for me through military	37%	38%	50%	20%
Support from family other than spouse/significant other or children	28%	27%	42%	24%
Predictability about future deployments with AEF rotations	24%	25%	8%	24%
More income through military than in civilian job	16%	15%	17%	24%
Support from civilian employer (ARC members only)	4%		0%	16%

**Table C 4. Influences on Decision to Reenlist for Members Not Deployed Since 9/11**

<b>Factors Influencing Decision to Reenlist</b>	<b>TOTAL [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=241</b>	<b>AD [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=241</b>	<b>ANG [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=0</b>	<b>AFRC [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=0</b>
Job security		1 58%		
Medical care for you		2 56%		
Dental care for you		3 55%		
Medical care for your family members		4 54%		
Dental care for your family members		5 51%		
Retirement benefits		6 48%		
Retirement pay		7 46%		
Promotion opportunities		8 39%		
Military-related education and training opportunities		9 35%		
Basic pay and allowances		10 32%		
Off-duty education and training opportunities		11 32%		
Military way of life		12 31%		
Reenlistment bonus		13 25%		
Leadership of immediate supervisor		14 25%		
Training/experience of unit personnel		15 24%		
Esprit de corps/morale		16 23%		
Civilian job opportunities for you		17 22%		
Leadership at unit level		18 22%		
Amount of personal/family time		19 19%		
Recognition of efforts		20 19%		
Special or incentive pay		21 19%		
Military housing		22 18%		
Senior Air Force leadership		23 16%		
Spouse's employment and career opportunities		24 16%		
Deployments		25 16%		
Work schedule		26 13%		
Base services		27 12%		
Additional duties		28 12%		
Childcare needs		29 12%		
Personal workload		30 11%		
Military family support programs		31 11%		
Unit readiness		32 10%		
Unit resources		33 10%		
Unit manning		34 9%		

**Table C 5. Influences on Decision to Separate for Members Deployed Since 9/11**

Factors Influencing Decision to Separate	TOTAL [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=718		AD [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=696		ANG [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=7		AFRC [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=15	
	Amount of personal/family time	1	69%	1	69%	9	43%	2
Deployments	2	64%	2	65%	11	29%	10	53%
Work schedule	3	60%	3	60%	3	57%	5	60%
Unit manning	4	52%	4	53%	12	29%	16	40%
Esprit de corps/morale	5	49%	5	49%	13	29%	3	67%
Leadership at unit level	6	49%	6	48%	4	57%	1	73%
Personal workload	7	45%	7	46%	14	29%	19	33%
Recognition of efforts	8	45%	8	45%	5	57%	7	53%
Civilian job opportunities for you	9	44%	9	44%	6	57%	8	53%
Unit resources	10	42%	10	41%	15	29%	6	60%
Additional duties	11	41%	11	41%	16	29%	20	33%
Military way of life	12	37%	12	37%	17	29%	23	27%
Senior Air Force leadership	13	37%	13	36%	1	71%	13	47%
Reenlistment bonus	14	35%	14	34%	2	71%	4	60%
Unit readiness	15	32%	15	31%	18	29%	11	53%
Off-duty education and training opportunities	16	30%	16	30%	19	29%	24	27%
Leadership of immediate supervisor	17	29%	17	29%	10	43%	15	40%
Training/experience of unit personnel	18	28%	18	28%	20	29%	12	53%
Basic pay and allowances	19	22%	19	21%	25	14%	17	40%
Promotion opportunities	20	20%	20	19%	7	57%	9	53%
Special or incentive pay	21	19%	21	18%	8	57%	14	47%
Spouse's employment and career opportunities	22	17%	22	16%	26	14%	18	40%
Dental care for your family members	23	16%	23	15%	21	29%	25	27%
Military-related education and training opportunities	24	15%	24	15%	29	0%	28	27%
Medical care for your family members	25	15%	25	14%	22	29%	26	27%
Medical care for you	26	13%	26	13%	27	14%	34	7%
Childcare needs	27	13%	27	13%	30	0%	29	27%
Dental care for you	28	12%	28	12%	28	14%	33	13%
Military housing	29	12%	29	12%	31	0%	30	20%
Job security	30	12%	30	12%	32	0%	31	20%
Retirement pay	31	11%	31	11%	23	29%	21	33%
Retirement benefits	32	11%	32	10%	24	29%	27	27%
Base services	33	9%	33	8%	33	0%	22	33%
Military family support programs	34	7%	34	7%	34	0%	32	20%

**Table C 6. Influence of Deployments on Decision to Separate for Members Deployed Since 9/11**

	TOTAL	AD	ANG	AFRC
None, decision is unrelated to deployments	22.2%	21.6%	28.6%	50.0%
Slight/moderate influence	23.7%	23.4%	42.9%	25.0%
Strong/very strong influence	54.1%	55.0%	28.5%	25.0%

**Table C 7. Deployment-Related Factors Influencing Decision to Separate**  
**[% Selecting “Strong” Influence]**

<b>Factors Influencing Decision to Separate</b>	<b>TOTAL N=480</b>	<b>AD N=470</b>	<b>ANG N=4</b>	<b>AFRC N=6</b>
Length of deployments	69%	70%	25%	67%
Frequency of deployments	69%	70%	25%	50%
Uncertainty about future deployments	69%	69%	25%	83%
Burden on spouse	60%	61%	25%	33%
Difficulty continuing your education	51%	51%	50%	67%
Marital/relationship problems	34%	34%	50%	33%
Problems for children such as emotional or behavioral problems	32%	32%	25%	33%
Overall increase in family problems	31%	31%	25%	50%
Child care issues	15%	15%	0%	33%
Lack of support from spouse/significant other or children	10%	11%	0%	0%
Lack of support from family other than spouse/significant other or children	8%	8%	0%	0%
Loss of civilian health benefits (ARC members only)	2%		25%	33%
Loss of income (ARC members only)	2%		25%	33%
Loss of seniority/promotion opportunities in civilian job (ARC members only)	2%		25%	33%
Lack of support from civilian employer (ARC members only)	2%		25%	33%
Problems returning to same job (ARC members only)	2%		25%	33%
Employer problems after returning to civilian job (ARC members only)	2%		25%	33%
Overall increase in employer problems (ARC members only)	2%		25%	33%

**Table C 8. Influences on Decision to Separate for Members Not Deployed Since 9/11**

Factors Influencing Decision to Separate	TOTAL [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=258		AD [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=255		ANG [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=0		AFRC [Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence] N=3	
	Amount of personal/family time	1	64%	1	64%			4
Work schedule	2	60%	2	61%			8	33%
Deployments	3	50%	3	50%			5	67%
Personal workload	4	48%	4	48%			9	33%
Esprit de corps/morale	5	48%	5	47%			1	100%
Unit manning	6	45%	6	44%			2	100%
Additional duties	7	44%	7	44%			10	33%
Recognition of efforts	8	41%	9	41%			12	33%
Leadership at unit level	9	41%	8	42%			11	33%
Civilian job opportunities for you	10	40%	10	40%			13	33%
Military way of life	11	38%	11	38%			14	33%
Reenlistment bonus	12	34%	12	34%			15	33%
Unit resources	13	33%	13	33%			3	100%
Senior Air Force leadership	14	32%	14	32%			16	33%
Leadership of immediate supervisor	15	28%	15	28%			23	0%
Off-duty education and training opportunities	16	27%	16	27%			17	33%
Unit readiness	17	25%	17	24%			6	67%
Promotion opportunities	18	23%	18	24%			24	0%
Training/experience of unit personnel	19	22%	19	22%			18	33%
Basic pay and allowances	20	20%	20	20%			19	33%
Special or incentive pay	21	19%	21	18%			20	33%
Childcare needs	22	18%	22	18%			25	0%
Military-related education and training opportunities	23	16%	23	15%			21	33%
Medical care for your family members	24	15%	24	15%			26	0%
Dental care for your family members	25	15%	25	15%			27	0%
Spouse's employment and career opportunities	26	15%	26	15%			28	0%
Medical care for you	27	14%	27	15%			29	0%
Job security	28	14%	28	15%			30	0%
Retirement pay	29	12%	32	11%			7	67%
Dental care for you	30	12%	29	12%			31	0%
Military housing	31	12%	30	12%			32	0%
Base services	32	12%	31	12%			33	0%
Retirement benefits	33	11%	33	11%			22	33%
Military family support programs	34	9%	34	9%			34	0%

**Table C 9. Influences on Decision to Serve 20 or More Years  
for Members Deployed Since 9/11**

<b>Factors Influencing Decision to Serve 20 or More Years</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>AD</b>		<b>ANG</b>		<b>AFRC</b>	
	<b>[Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence]</b>							
	<b>N=475</b>	<b>N=428</b>	<b>N=7</b>	<b>N=40</b>				
Job security	1	57%	1	58%	1	71%	4	48%
Medical care for your family members	2	54%	2	56%	10	29%	12	33%
Retirement benefits	3	52%	3	51%	2	57%	1	63%
Retirement pay	4	49%	6	49%	3	57%	2	53%
Medical care for you	5	49%	4	51%	4	43%	9	35%
Dental care for your family members	6	49%	5	51%	11	29%	13	33%
Dental care for you	7	47%	7	48%	5	43%	10	35%
Promotion opportunities	8	35%	8	33%	6	43%	3	53%
Military way of life	9	33%	9	33%	12	29%	7	43%
Esprit de corps/morale	10	31%	10	30%	14	14%	6	48%
Basic pay and allowances	11	27%	11	26%	15	14%	15	30%
Deployments	12	25%	15	23%	8	43%	5	48%
Military-related education and training opportunities	13	25%	12	25%	29	0%	20	28%
Amount of personal/family time	14	25%	14	24%	7	43%	11	35%
Off-duty education and training opportunities	15	24%	13	25%	16	14%	24	23%
Training/experience of unit personnel	16	24%	17	22%	18	14%	8	40%
Leadership of immediate supervisor	17	24%	16	23%	17	14%	14	33%
Civilian job opportunities for you	18	21%	18	20%	19	14%	16	30%
Leadership at unit level	19	20%	19	19%	20	14%	18	28%
Work schedule	20	18%	20	17%	9	43%	21	25%
Recognition of efforts	21	18%	21	17%	13	29%	23	23%
Personal workload	22	16%	22	15%	30	0%	26	23%
Unit manning	23	16%	23	15%	21	14%	25	23%
Additional duties	24	15%	24	15%	22	14%	28	15%
Unit readiness	25	13%	25	12%	23	14%	19	28%
Base services	26	12%	26	11%	24	14%	22	25%
Unit resources	27	12%	27	11%	31	0%	27	20%
Senior Air Force leadership	28	12%	28	11%	25	14%	17	30%
Reenlistment bonus	29	11%	29	11%	26	14%	29	15%
Special or incentive pay	30	10%	30	10%	27	14%	30	15%
Childcare needs	31	10%	31	10%	32	0%	32	5%
Spouse's employment and career opportunities	32	9%	32	10%	33	0%	33	5%
Military housing	33	8%	33	9%	28	14%	31	5%
Military family support programs	34	7%	34	8%	34	0%	34	5%

**Table C 10. Influences on Decision to Serve 20 or More Years  
for Members Deployed Since 9/11**

	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>AD</b>	<b>ANG</b>	<b>AFRC</b>
None, decision is unrelated to deployments	62.0%	61.7%	66.7%	64.1%
Slight/moderate influence	17.3%	16.3%	33.3%	25.7%
Strong/very strong influence	20.7%	22.0%	0%	10.2%

**Table C 11. Deployment-Related Factors Influencing Decision to Serve 20 or More Years  
[% Selecting “Strong” Influence]**

<b>Factors Influencing Decision to Serve 20 or More Years</b>	<b>TOTAL N=152</b>	<b>AD N=136</b>	<b>ANG N=2</b>	<b>AFRC N=14</b>
Desire to continue serving my country	49%	48%	50%	57%
Support from spouse/significant other or children	45%	45%	100%	43%
Predictability about future deployments with AEF rotations	38%	38%	100%	29%
Better health benefits for me through military	29%	31%	50%	7%
Support from family other than spouse/significant other or children	28%	26%	50%	43%
More income through military than in civilian job	16%	15%	0%	29%
Support from civilian employer (ARC members only)	3%		0%	21%

**Table C 12. Influences on Decision to Serve 20 or More Years  
for Members Not Deployed Since 9/11**

<b>Factors Influencing Decision to Serve 20 or More Years</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>AD</b>		<b>ANG</b>		<b>AFRC</b>	
	<b>[Rank/ % Selecting “Strong” Influence]</b>							
	<b>N=200</b>	<b>N=185</b>	<b>N=5</b>	<b>N=10</b>				
Medical care for your family members	1	55%	1	54%	1	100%	3	40%
Retirement pay	2	54%	2	54%	2	80%	4	40%
Job security	3	51%	3	51%	3	80%	11	30%
Retirement benefits	4	50%	5	49%	4	80%	5	40%
Medical care for you	5	49%	4	50%	5	60%	12	30%
Dental care for your family members	6	47%	6	46%	6	60%	6	40%
Dental care for you	7	45%	7	45%	7	60%	13	30%
Military way of life	8	36%	8	36%	14	20%	7	40%
Military-related education and training opportunities	9	32%	9	31%	9	40%	14	30%
Promotion opportunities	10	31%	10	31%	10	40%	15	30%
Esprit de corps/morale	11	31%	11	31%	15	20%	8	40%
Off-duty education and training opportunities	12	30%	12	30%	11	40%	16	30%
Basic pay and allowances	13	28%	13	28%	8	60%	22	10%
Training/experience of unit personnel	14	26%	14	25%	28	0%	2	50%
Civilian job opportunities for you	15	23%	15	22%	29	0%	10	40%
Leadership of immediate supervisor	16	23%	16	22%	12	40%	17	30%
Amount of personal/family time	17	21%	17	20%	13	40%	18	20%
Recognition of efforts	18	18%	18	16%	16	20%	9	40%
Leadership at unit level	19	17%	19	16%	17	20%	19	20%
Unit manning	20	15%	20	15%	18	20%	20	20%
Deployments	21	14%	21	14%	19	20%	23	10%
Military housing	22	13%	23	13%	20	20%	24	10%
Base services	23	13%	24	13%	21	20%	28	0%
Work schedule	24	13%	25	13%	22	20%	25	10%
Personal workload	25	13%	22	14%	30	0%	31	0%
Unit readiness	26	13%	27	11%	24	20%	1	50%
Unit resources	27	12%	28	11%	25	20%	21	20%
Senior Air Force leadership	28	12%	26	12%	23	20%	29	0%
Reenlistment bonus	29	11%	29	11%	31	0%	27	10%
Childcare needs	30	10%	31	10%	26	20%	30	0%
Military family support programs	31	10%	34	9%	27	20%	26	10%
Additional duties	32	10%	30	11%	32	0%	32	0%
Special or incentive pay	33	9%	32	10%	33	0%	33	0%
Spouse's employment and career opportunities	34	9%	33	10%	34	0%	34	0%

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