

AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

THE EXPERIMENT IS OVER,
THE TIME HAS COME TO REORGANIZE THE
116TH AIR CONTROL WING
INTO AN ACTIVE ASSOCIATE UNIT

By

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Introduction

On Saturday June 22nd, 2002 two B-1 Lancers from the Georgia Air National Guard's (GA ANG) 116th Bomb Wing (BW) taxied off the runway at Robins AFB, GA and parked nose-to-nose on the Air National Guard (ANG) B-1 ramp culminating the end of one era and the beginning of a new association with the United States Air Force's (USAF) Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) weapons system, a low-density high-demand (LD/HD) asset which provides critical Command and Control Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C²ISR) to battlefield commanders. "For the 50-year-old Air Guard unit, this event marked the passing of ... a long and illustrious heritage."¹ The transformation to a new organization commenced on "Monday, September 30, 2002, [when] the 116th Bomb Wing and the 93rd Air Control Wing ... [began] anew as the Air Force's first combined wing -- the 116th Air Control Wing (ACW) -- in a special activation ceremony attended by Air Force Secretary James Roche."² This new ANG and active duty regular Air Force organization would be the first-ever "blended,"³ or one of a kind unit in the Air Force.

The "blended" concept was the brainchild of James Roche, the Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF), in response to one wing involuntarily losing its assets and wanting a replacement, and another weapon system (JSTARS) in a buildup of personnel and equipment. It was further envisioned to be "a template for the entire Air Force [under]

¹ "116th Flies Last Lancer Mission", <http://www.dod.state.ga.us/archives/air/finalb1.html>, accessed 7 Nov 2008.

² "116th Completes Historic Merger: Converts to JSTARS Mission", <http://www.dod.state.ga.us/archives/air/>, accessed 7 Nov 2008.

³ "The Blended Wing Goes to War", Air Force Magazine Archives, <http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2003/October%202003/1003blend.aspx>, accessed 15 Oct 2008.

the Future Total Force”⁴ concept. However after six years this “one of a kind” uniquely independent unit still does not fit into any recognized and accepted Air Force organizational configuration. Recently mandated Air Force (active duty/ANG/Air Reserve Component (ARC)) organizational changes resulting from the Congressionally approved 2005 Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations, to comply with “innovative organizational and basing solutions,”⁵ have given the 116th ACW a window of opportunity to capitalize on the 2007 Total Force Initiative (TFI) and completely redefine its organizational structure to align itself into an AF sanctioned organizational system all agencies understand.

This research project will recommend the 116th ACW reorganize into a TFI organizational construct to include: what it will look like; what it will improve, and how it will operate. In order to accomplish the fine grain analysis of this new organizational setup, I will first explain the background on how the “blended” 116th Air Control Wing organization was established and why, how the marriage is working with both the successes and challenges, explain the AF Total Force Integration (TFI) concept, then illustrate the recommended 116th ACW TFI Active Associate organization model, and lastly provide a conclusion. Organizations typically resist change but since inception the 116th ACW has only known change. Until the 116th ACW reflects an organizational construct recognized by the entire AF it will continue to search for its own identity.

⁴ Mr James G. Roche, SECAF, to The Honorable Clarence Saxby Chambliss, letter, 17 Oct 2001

⁵ “Department of the Air Force Analysis and Recommendations BRAC 2005 (Volume V, Part 1 of 2),” Department of Defense Report To The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, page ii, May 2005, <http://www.defenselink.mil/brac>, accessed 10 Nov, 2008.

Marshaling

The Quadrennial Defense Review

Under the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Donald Rumsfeld's tutelage, the Quadrennial Defense Review Report (QDR), dated September 30, 2001 was a dictum for change and transformation across the entire Department of Defense (DoD). For the Air Reserve Component (ARC) forces, which include ANG and Air Force Reserve (AFR) personnel, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Hugh Shelton, eloquently summarized efforts outside what was published by saying, "[a]dditional work beyond the QDR is required in several areas...the role of the Reserve Components...demands attention and will lead to decisions on Reserve and Guard transformation."⁶

Congress

Even though this statement was made in the fall of 2001, the demands of change for Georgia's 116th BW (ANG) had already begun early in the summer of 2001. On July 25, 2001, the Honorable Clarence Saxby Chambliss, an elected republican from Georgia in the United States (U.S.) House of Representatives (HOR), submitted House Concurrent Resolution number 200 in the first session of the 107th Congress, HOR, for referral to the Committee on Armed Services in "...opposition to the retirement of 33 B-1 Lancer aircraft as proposed by the Air Force."⁷ This Concurrent Resolution expressed extreme displeasure in the Air Force Program Budget Decision (PBD) 824's plan to reduce the B-1 bomber fleet from 93 to 60 by retiring 33 aircraft and consolidating the

⁶ 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review Report, United States of America Department of Defense, 30 September 2001, pg 69

⁷ "Expressing the sense of Congress in opposition to the retirement of 33 B-1 Lancer aircraft as proposed by the Air Force," House Concurrent Resolution 200, U.S. House of Representatives, 107th Congress, 1st Session, 25 July 2001

remainder of the fleet without Congressional review, without consulting the ANG, and making a “decision...without any strategic planning or in the context of a larger force structure review; and [w]hereas Congress needs time to review and determine what the proper number of B-1 aircraft is.”⁸ The Honorable Chambliss explained further dismay at the Air Force rebuff of the ANG’s contributions, and now elimination, as a “participant in the ‘total force’ concept.”⁹ Another glaring concern for Georgia’s elected officials and the GA ANG was the Air Force’s failure to identify a follow-on mission or plan. “Air National Guard units and members who will be affected by the decision, although thousands of Air National Guard members with years of experience operating the B-1 combat system will have to be retrained for other missions and many of those personnel will simply lose their jobs.”¹⁰ The House Concurrent Resolution 200 wanted the AF’s PBD 824 bomber “proposed retirement and consolidation...deferred during fiscal year 2002 while Congress review[ed] the proposed retirement and consolidation.”¹¹ Further,

“[i]t is the sense of Congress that all procurement and research and development funds for the B-1 aircraft program in the President’s fiscal year 2002 budget for the Department of Defense should be reallocated to the Operations and Maintenance account for the Air National Guard, to be available for continued operations of the 33 B-1 bomber aircraft proposed to be retired in Air Force Program Budget Decision 824.17”¹²

The Air Force

The AF rush to execute a major change in force structure prior to any advance study or official experimentation was dealt with harshly in congressional prose. Inside HAF Colonel Keith “Alf” Jones, then AF/XOC Chief Air to Ground Air Battle

⁸ Ibid., 2

⁹ Ibid., 1

¹⁰ Ibid., 2

¹¹ Ibid., 3

¹² Ibid., 3

Management in the C2 division, perception of the forces acting within HAF involved an “emphasis from SECDEF and the President to increase inter-service, active-duty, ANG, and reserve integration and cooperation for 21st century transformation.”¹³

Additionally, Congress had recently provided the AF three additional JSTARS airframes without funding the additional manning and support. This left a plans and programs dilemma to provide the manning and support from existing resources within the AF. Both these events helped leverage the obvious expedient solution to utilize the ANG manpower to fulfill the six active duty crew equivalents for the three added JSTARS tails.¹⁴ According to Maj Gen Paul Weaver, then Director of the Air National Guard, “Air Force Secretary James G. Roche came up with the idea of the blended wing...to benefit the AF and make good use of the leverage provided by the Air National Guard.”¹⁵ SECAF’s decision certainly made up for the AF failure to provide satisfactory coordination and congressional support to transition the 116th Bomb Wing out of the B-1. “The blended wing came into being as a political expedient.”¹⁶ This desire stopped any exploration of other potential organizational solutions and essentially led to creating a “unique USAF experiment in managing its force.”¹⁷ The AF’s first Future Total Force (FTF) experiment had begun.

The Blend

The efforts to merge the two wings began in response to the perfect storm in the

¹³ Colonel Keith Jones, former 116th Deputy, Operations Group Commander, interview by author, 3 Oct 2008

¹⁴ Mr James G. Roche, SECAF, to The Honorable Clarence Saxby Chambliss, letter, 17 Oct 2001

¹⁵ “The Blended Wing Goes to War”, Air Force Magazine Archives, <http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2003/October%202003/1003blend.aspx>, accessed 15 Oct 2008

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

AF's lack of planning for retiring ARC B-1 bombers and the continuing operational fielding of JSTARS aircraft and personnel thereby necessitating the politically expedient decision to "blend" the two organizations together. Shortly after the decision to blend a SECAF letter dated 17 October 2001 directed the 116th Bomb Wing (ANG) to transition to the JSTARS mission with the direction to Air Combat Command (ACC) to work the merger details.¹⁸ According to Brigadier General James J. Jones, then acting 93rd Operations Group Commander (OG/CC) followed by the first 116th ACW OG/CC and later first active duty Wing Commander (WG/CC), the "initial conception was to stand up the 116th ACW parallel to the 93rd ACW and combine efforts where it made sense like Operations Group Standardization/Evaluation (OGV), Safety (SE), and support. Then merge down the road."¹⁹ Gen Jones said, "Major General Thomas Lynn, the first 116 ACW Commander, analyzed the transition best when he said, 'this is like taking off a band-aid, slow or fast it's gonna hurt.'"²⁰ After a General Officer Steering Group meeting, the parallel wing structure concept was abandoned and the organizational merger was accelerated to October 2002. A slow organizational transition to combine two independent yet parallel organizations, the 116th ACW and 93rd ACW, was overwhelmed by the desire to expedite the transformation process. Therefore, the methodical blending of the Wings was never realized in favor of a more immediate, get it done, work the kinks, and react to the problems as they arise approach.²¹ In October of 2002, both active duty and ANG began working side by side in the first-ever Total Force "blended" organization.

¹⁸ Mr James G. Roche, SECAF, to The Honorable Clarence Saxby Chambliss, letter, 17 Oct 2001

¹⁹ General James J. Jones, former 116th Operations Group and first active duty 116th Wing Commander, interview by author, 20 Nov 2008

²⁰ Ibid, interview by author, 20 Nov 2008

²¹ Ibid, interview by author, 20 Nov 2008

The Merge

The Air National Guard and Active duty have a long history of working side by side. On 1 October 2002 the 116th Bomb Wing (ANG) and the 93rd Air Control Wing (active duty) deactivated their organizations to “create the first ever ‘blended wing,’ a mixture of both ANG and active duty personnel under one commander.”²² This new organizational construct would be a first to “blend” two separate types of personnel (active duty/ANG) under one commander when existing laws considered both disparate.

“Title 10/Title 32: Title 10, United States Code governs the Armed Forces of the United States, including the Regular AF (active duty), the Air Force Reserve, and the Air National Guard of the United States when called to active duty. The President is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States. The Air National Guard (ANG) trains in state status for its Federal mission, under Title 32, United States Code, state constitutions, and state statutory law. The Governor is the Commander-in-Chief of each state’s National Guard members unless they are in federal active duty status. The ANG can also be mobilized in Title 32 status for certain Home Land Defense (HLD) missions and continues to report through the governor. This offers more flexibility for the ANG to respond to domestic contingencies.”²³

The “blend” would prove to be a challenge. According to the law, active duty personnel fall under Title 10 of the U.S. Code²⁴ and all ANG personnel fall under Title 32 unless federally activated or called to active duty. So, depending upon their status, the ANG work for either the President or the Governor. According to the Commanders Integration Guide, ANG personnel typically fall into one of three general categories:

“Active Guard Reserve (AGR) ANG: Title 32 Air Reserve Component full time military members who organize, recruit, instruct, administer and train the ANG. AGRs are on full-time National Guard duty (FTNGD) in Title 32 status and receive the same pay and benefits, including retirement,

²² “116th Air Control Wing History”, <http://www.garobi.ang.af.mil/History/tabid/94/Default.aspx>, accessed 7 Nov 08.

²³ *Commanders Integration Guide*, AF/A8F, May 2007, p 17.

²⁴ *Commanders Integration Guide*, AF/A8F, May 2007, p 78.

as Regular AF members under Title 10.”²⁵

“Air National Guard Technicians: Title 32 federal civilian employees who are required to be members of the Air National Guard as a condition of their employment, and are required to wear their military uniform while on duty.”²⁶

“Air National Guard Traditional Guardsmen: Part-time military members, both enlisted and officer, who are members of both a state Air National Guard (ANG) and the reserve component of the Air Force, the Air National Guard of the United States (ANGUS) when in federal service. Often referred to as “traditional” Guardsmen, they perform Inactive Duty Training (IDT) during a Unit Training Assembly (UTA), which consists of at least 4 hours duty, and complete 4 UTAs during a typical “drill weekend” once a month. Traditional Guardsmen normally perform 48 Unit Training Assembly (UTAs) and two weeks of active duty annual training (AT) each year while members of their state ANG units. Duty under Title 32 is primarily for training.”²⁷

These Title 32 and Title 10 personnel merged into one independent organizational command and control chain of command in the 116th ACW. This organizational transformation ensured the 116th ACW was “...the first ever U.S. Air Force Wing to activate under the Air Force’s Future Total Force (FTF) concept, which will eventually combine U.S. Air Force active-duty and reserve components world wide.”²⁸

Future Total Force?

This transformation not only marked a date in history for the 116th ACW, it was also “a harbinger of things to come”²⁹ in establishing a baseline for FTF integration. The AF, ANG, the State of Georgia, and its Representatives were enamored with the establishment of the 116th ACW “blended” organization. In the U.S. Congressional

²⁵ *Commanders Integration Guide*, AF/A8F, May 2007, p 79.

²⁶ *IBID*, p 79.

²⁷ *Commanders Integration Guide*, AF/A8F, May 2007, p 78.

²⁸ “116th Air Control Wing History”, <http://www.garobi.ang.af.mil/History/tabid/94/Default.aspx>, p 1, accessed 7 Nov 08.

²⁹ “Blended, not Stirred”, *Airman Magazine*, Fall 2005, <http://www.af.mil/news/airman/1005/exclusives2.shtml>, accessed 17 Nov 2008

House, The Honorable Congressman Chambliss, expressed his “support on the...transformation initiatives our military is undertaking. Through the vision and leadership of Secretary Roche and General Jumper, the Air Force has been a leading proponent of transformation.”³⁰ He further acknowledged that, “developing a blended unit has proven to be [a] daunting task.”³¹ Even more importantly, Congressman Chambliss expressed the SECAF’s concern, “Secretary Roche stated that ‘[o]utdated laws and policies would have to change in... fiscal, and personnel issues,’ and he was right.”³² For the 116th ACW there wasn’t a “[standard organizational] template”³³ to take off-the-shelf and execute. In fact, it could have easily been a failure if it were not for the leadership, personal efforts, culture, and determination of the individuals who worked through the challenges and ensured mission success. However, as the honeymoon faded away the AF moved on to more appealing organizational constructs leaving the “blended” 116th ACW on its own to operate an independent, unique and unrecognized AF organization wrought with personnel issues, which could only be resolved by changing existing laws.

Marriage

Would it Work?

Time is the only constant that can decide whether a marriage survives, thrives, or fails. Lt Gen David Poythress, the Adjutant General of Georgia, explained, “[w]hen Air Force Secretary James Roche came to Robins for the formal activation of the wing last

³⁰ “116 Air Control Wing”, Honorable Clarence Saxby Chambliss of Georgia, U.S. House of Representatives Congressional Record Extension of Remarks, 30 September 2002, pg E1698

³¹ Ibid, pg E1698

³² Ibid, pg E1698

³³ “First Future Total Force Wing Proves Successful”, 116th Air Control Wing Public Affairs, July 28, 2005, <http://www.dod.state.ga.us/airguard/airgrdpages/jstarsstoryfromaimpoints.html>, accessed 8 Nov 2008

October, he and I talked about when we would know if this blended--wing concept would work. The answer was we would know the first time they deployed to an actual combat theater."³⁴ The 116th ACW "...in existence only three months when it went off to take part in Operation Iraqi Freedom"³⁵ exceeded expectations. As a result of being tasked above their capability, and then continuing to increase their footprint in-theater, the successes of the 116th ACW have been incredible. Since February 2004, the 116th ACW continues to operate in the Southwest Asia (SWA) Area of Operations (AOR) at a manning and operational level "beyond maximum surge capacity"³⁶ providing critical C²ISR to battlefield commanders. The warrior commitment and professionalism toward accomplishing the mission is not a surprise to anyone in the organization.

Successes

The bright shining beacon and underlying success of the 116th ACW has and will continue to be the outstanding professionals, both active duty and ANG, both officer and enlisted, and both civilian and contractor, who exceed every unfathomable organizational obstacle to ensure mission success every day. The ANG "typically has veterans with long experience, while the active element has many junior airmen"³⁷ eager to contribute and learn. In the 116th ACW, the ANG aircrew seniority and experience, some with multiple AF weapons systems and civilian airline experience, provides an airmanship and experience factor not found in many active organizations.

³⁴ "Iraq conflict provides test for new 'blended wing' concept", National Guard Association, Apr 2003, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3731/is_/ai_n9235507, accessed 8 Nov 2008

³⁵ "The Blended Wing Goes to War", Air Force Magazine, p 26

³⁶ Colonel William Welsh, 116th Operations Group Commander, interview by author, 7 Nov 2008

³⁷ "The Blended Wing Goes to War", Air Force Magazine, pg 31

Aircrew and Maintenance Standard Operating Procedures

In the operation of any weapon system the one consistent variable for crewmembers and maintainers is the adherence to operational and maintenance standard operating procedures (SOPs) as defined in the aircraft Operators Manual, or Dash One, and Maintenance Manuals. These SOPs ensure organizational equilibrium, predictability and compliance. Within the 116th Operations Group it is almost impossible to discern any differences between active duty or ANG crewmembers while flying training missions or operational missions in peacetime or combat. These aircrew members may be “totally unfamiliar with each other’s experience and technical capabilities”³⁸ but they operate seamlessly in the way they execute airborne operations by adhering to SOPs. “Excellent and satisfactory” ratings in aircrew evaluations during the 116th ACW’s first ever 8AF Standardization and Evaluation Formal Visit in May, 2005 underscored “mission readiness and compliance with Air Force and MAJCOM directives...despite the heavy operations tempo (OPSTEMPO).”³⁹ This evaluation proved 116th ACW crewmembers had in-fact achieved organizational equilibrium while assimilating into one seamless flying organization.

GA ANG Deployment Volunteerism

ANG volunteerism for deployments has exceeded expectations. Sporadic mobilization or partial mobilization orders were pursued for some Air National Guardsman to ensure deployment with their respective operational and maintenance squadrons. A small number of guardsmen in critically manned specialties, like flight

³⁸ *Flight Discipline*, Tony Kern, p 231

³⁹ Formal Visit Report 116 ACW, HQ 8AF (ACC) Standardization/Evaluation Division, 2-6 May 2005, pg 6

engineers (FE), have also voluntarily deployed in excess of 180 days in a 365-day period. This was a direct result of Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center's (AFMPC) inability to fully equip the 116th Operations Group at 100 percent FE manning for more than eighteen months. The ANG fulfilled the FE shortfall without utilizing mobilization orders. The outstanding support of the GA ANG has allowed the 116th Air Control Wing to continue to meet its deployment tasking in a low-density high-demand (LD/HD) ISR platform. These efforts have been recognized, rewarded, and appreciated.

Accolades

The 116th ACW continues to receive awards and decorations for the tremendous effort in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. In fact, since 9/11 the 116th ACW has been "the most heavily mobilized unit in the Air National Guard."⁴⁰ It has been the recipient of the Air Force Association's Airborne Battle Management Crew of the Year Award every year since the blend except 2003.⁴¹ In the last three years a 116th ACW ANG crewmember has won the National Guard Bureau's (NGB) Red Erwin Outstanding Enlisted Aircrew Member of the year award. This enlisted aircrew award "...recognizes career enlisted aviators for outstanding job accomplishments, demonstration of leadership and sustained self-improvements in support of the operations career field."⁴² The 116th ACW has also been awarded four Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards since the "blend."

⁴⁰ "Integrated Total Force", Air Force Magazine.com, March 2008, <http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2008/March%202008/0308integrated.aspx>, accessed 1 Nov 2008

⁴¹ "AFA National 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 Convention", Air Force Magazine.com Archives, <http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/default.aspx>, accessed 29 Nov 2008

⁴² "330th CTS troop selected for Red Erwin award", 116 ACW, <http://www.116acw.acc.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123078357>, accessed 29 Nov 2008

The Organizational Challenges of the “Blend”

Guidance

Leadership attention was required to address the organizational challenges of “blending” to achieve success. Failure was not an option.⁴³ The 116th ACW did not have an Air Force Instruction (AFI) template to pull off the shelf on execute so the wing established its own organizational parameters as it proceeded forward. Since HAF, HQ ACC, and NGB staffs were not merged many AFIs and Supplements were in conflict so, in order to ensure compliance, both organizational AFIs were followed to the maximum extent possible. This proved a zero sum game as the wing exceeded desired compliance. Until NGB and HAF operate as one staff these AFI inefficiencies will continue. For the 116th an MOU between HAF and NGB would certainly achieve one pure construct for the organization and resolve these types of issues, but as of this writing “it still has not been signed.”⁴⁴

Command

Command relationships were an area that also required attention. The current 116th ACW organizational construct completely separates Title 10 and Title 32, active duty and ANG, chains of command for command and discipline. However, once Title 32 Guardsmen are activated for deployment on Title 10 orders an active duty (Title 10) Commander can proffer command and control and administer punishment. Until a federal law changes the Title 10/32 relationships the only option allowed under the law is to maintain a separate and independent chain of command. In a “blended” organization

⁴³ “Blended, not Stirred”, Airman Magazine, Fall 2005,
<http://www.af.mil/news/airman/1005/exclusives2.shtml>, accessed 17 Nov 2008

⁴⁴ Colonel Dominick Eanniello, 116th Vice Wing Commander, interview by author, 7 Nov 2008

this is a challenge since any squadron, as in the 330th Combat Training Squadron, may contain a 50 percent active duty and a 50 percent ANG workforce.

Performance Reports

As a “blended” organization the squadrons seamlessly combined active duty and ANG professionals. In the beginning active duty and ANG Officer Performance Reports (OPR) and Enlisted Performance Report (EPR) raters and additional raters followed existing squadron organizational constructs. This allowed the next in the chain regardless of affiliation to rate on the subordinate. In 2005 it changed yet again to ensure active duty personnel rated active duty and ANG personnel rated ANG personnel. Since the AF and ANG personnel systems are not combined, document standards and parental organization procedures make seamless active duty/ANG administration processes difficult. Within the wing it required two independent review chains just to ensure compliance. In 2006, stratifications for all ANG officers were terminated. Previous to 2006, all active duty and ANG personnel were racked and stacked and stratified together.

Workweek

Organizational workweek issues were another area the 116th ACW spent an inordinate amount of effort on. Every senior leadership change offered an opportunity to readdress a four or five day workweek. The 116th BW had worked a four-day workweek prior to the “blend.” That workweek policy was continued after the “blend.” Later, the WG/CC delegated it to each Group to establish and negotiate through the civilian ANG technician union. Any proposed deviations had to be renegotiated with the union leadership of civilian Title 32 employees. The 116th ACW experimented with both four

and five day workweeks but ultimately settled with one established by each Group. The Operations Group and Maintenance Group active duty personnel worked a five-day workweek while the ANG personnel worked a four-day workweek. The Mission Support Group, predominantly ANG also worked a four-day workweek.

Where are the others?

As time went on active duty members of the 116th ACW discerned there were fissures in the HAF senior leadership's acceptance of the "blended" organization. Amazingly, the AF Chief of Staff, Gen John P. Jumper, never visited the 116th ACW at Robins AFB to address the troops on their contribution to the FTF construct, although he did highlight their successful mission accomplishments in Operation Iraqi Freedom. "Joint STARS performance during the dust storms proved to be "a major turning point" in the war, according to Air Force Chief of Staff Gen John P. Jumper."⁴⁵ Regardless, according to Lt Gen Joseph Wehrle Jr., the assistant Vice Chief of Staff, "the senior leadership has kept a close eye on Robins but maintains a hands-off approach."⁴⁶ During the first few years of the "blend" the 116th ACW set precedent "entertaining a steady stream of visitors, not only from the media but from other Guard units,"⁴⁷ examining the organization and lessons learned. Interestingly, representatives from NGB, Air Combat Command and the 192nd Fighter Wing (F-16s) ANG from Richmond, Virginia examined the 116th ACW in 2004. The 192nd FW would later be deactivated at Richmond on October 1, 2007 and reactivated under the new AF Total Force Integration (TFI) initiatives as a Classic Associate merger with the 1st Fighter Wing (F-22s) at Langley

⁴⁵ "The Blended Wing Goes to War", Air Force Magazine, Oct 2003, pg 28

⁴⁶ Ibid, pg 31

⁴⁷ Ibid, pg 31

AFB Virginia on October 13, 2007.⁴⁸ As the JSTARS organization anxiously awaited other units to mirror the 116th ACW, further AF transformation efforts toward a Future Total Force organizational “blended” construct never materialized. To date no other unit has adopted the same “blended” organizational structure nor have any units been identified for future blending.⁴⁹ By 2005, the AF “blended” experiment conclusions were written and delivered to Congress while the 116th ACW continued to remain organizationally independent, unique, and disparate from any existing AF model. New TFI models would become a catalyst for change in response to external forces and lessons learned.

Total Force Integration

The perfect storm of an ongoing Global War on Terrorism, the 2005 QDR, the 2005 BRAC, the effort to recapitalize the force, and the AF 2025 Roadmap, were a catalyst for AF organizational change more rapidly than originally anticipated. SECAF Michael W. Wynne visiting Ramstein AFB, Germany said it best, “[w]e used to talk about the future total force. I think we need to stop that. The total force is now.”⁵⁰ Lessons from the 116th ACW total force “blend” would prove extremely valuable. In April 2005, the Air Force Report to Congress on the Blended Wing Concept, “provided insight to the tremendous operational success of the integrated units during war. It also provided [the AF] with valuable information on how to fine-tune the associate model to best perform

⁴⁸ “192nd FW activates at Langley”, 192nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs, Oct 15, 2007, <http://www.langley.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123071913>, accessed 1 Nov 2008

⁴⁹ Mr Ron Sweet, HQ AFRC/A8PP, “AFRC/A8 Monthly Update 10 Jan 07” briefing, Jan 2007, slide 4.

⁵⁰ “Wynne: more integrated operations in Air Force’s future”, December 29, 2005, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2005/12/mil-051228-afpn04.htm>, accessed 1 Nov 2008

the missions of the 21st century.”⁵¹ Less than two years later Total Force Integration (TFI) would become the key to ensuring a more rapid transformation of the AF. On September 13, 2007, at Maxwell AFB Alabama, General T. Michael Moseley, USAF Chief of Staff, announced a new total force integration effort to “cement more than 680,000 active duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve airman and civilian employees into an even more capable and efficient Air Force.”⁵² The new TFI initiative had in fact been initiated five years earlier when FTF was born with the 116th ACW. But as the 116th ACW had quickly learned in the “blended” construct, legal command restrictions between Title 10 and Title 32 personnel ensured an incomplete organization “blend.” In 2006, Gen John D.W. Corley, AF vice chief of staff said, “[c]urrent law ‘limits effective use of our Guard and Reserve...components,’ [and] it also ‘limits “dual-hat authority for commanders of multicomponent units,’ such as the 116th ACW.”⁵³ The hard lessons learned about merging two unique organizations without changes to Federal Law and policies on personnel, as SECAF Roche had warned, ensured this new organizational approach to integrating forces. Therefore, the only solution for the major organizational TFI changes desired necessitated functionally separating the AF and ANG personnel to ensure clear lines of command and control in an organization.

Responsibilities

In May 2007, the CSAF Gen Moseley signed AFI 90-1001, Total Force Integration Responsibilities. Interestingly enough, but not surprising based on previous

⁵¹ “Advance Questions for General T. Michael Moseley,” Confirmation hearings, May 2005, www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/congress/2005_hr/050629-moseley.pdf, accessed 6 Dec 2008

⁵² “Chief of staff announces major total force integration steps”, September 14, 2007, <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123068130>, accessed 1 Nov 2008

⁵³ “The Totally Integrated Air Force”, Air Force Magazine Archives, <http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2006/June%202006/0606integrated.aspx>, accessed 15 Oct 2008

history, the new TFI constructs and guidance failed to mention anything about a “blended” organization like the 116th ACW. Units around the country would use and are currently using the organizational constructs and templates to functionally integrate active duty, ANG, and Reserve organizations to comply with this transformational effort.

Goal

“The goal of Total Force Integration is to provide the Air Force and the Combatant Commanders the best possible capabilities with fewer physical resources by leveraging the combined human resources of the Regular, Guard, and Reserve members, Air Force civilian employees, and Air Force contractors. Recapitalizing our force structure and transforming our organizational constructs in this way helps preserve combat capability....”⁵⁴

Constructs

AFI 90-1001 defined three distinct organizational constructs:

“Classic Associate. An integration model in which a Regular Air Force component unit retains principal responsibility for a weapon system or systems, which it shares with one or more reserve component units. Regular and reserve component units retain command authority of their own forces, separate organizational structures (to include UMDs), and chains of command. ANG units may also be tasked by the governor of their state/territory and must be allowed to fulfill those taskings consistent with provisions of public law.”⁵⁵

“Active Associate. An integration model in which a reserve component (Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve) unit retains principal responsibility for a weapon system or systems, which it shares with one or more regular Air Force units. Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve and Regular Air Force units retain command of their own forces and separate organizational structures.”⁵⁶

“Air Reserve Components (ARC) Associate. An integration model in which two or more Guard or Reserve units integrate with one retaining principal responsibility for a weapon system or systems, which are shared by all. Each unit retains command of its own forces and separate organizational structures.”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ “Integration Objective”, Guidance, and Categories, AFI 90-1001, para 1.1. p3

⁵⁵ “Classic Associate”, Guidance, and Categories, AFI 90-1001, para 1.6.1. p5

⁵⁶ “Active Associate”, Guidance, and Categories, AFI 90-1001, para 1.6.2. p5

⁵⁷ “Air Reserve Components (ARC) Associate”, Guidance, and Categories, AFI 90-1001, para 1.6.3. p6

Recommended Way Ahead

The 116th Active Associate Organization Model

Since the current 116th ACW organization still remains unique with the TFI constructs, the time has come to formally restructure the organization into an Active Associate construct in accordance with (IAW) AFI 90-1001. This would reverse the 116th ACW “blended” experiment started in 2002 and establish the organization in synchronization with an established organizational construct sanctioned and approved by the Air Force. The bottom line is that this proposed reorganization recommendation will be a minor adjustment to adapt to the existing ever changing environment resulting from the culmination of outstanding and unresolved issues based primarily on federal law. And frankly, it reinforces the necessity to change an organization since this “one of a kind” unit requires extra effort to sustain in an external AF environment that is continually changing. Ultimately, this reorganization will reposition the 116th ACW and its personnel to better utilize experience and capabilities in a recognized twenty-first century organizational posture without decreasing combat capability.

Some internal organizational processes and restructuring have already occurred during the last few years in order to streamline internal processes and follow the law. Further organizational transformation will need to occur to achieve true Active Associate status.

Capitalize on Previous Initiatives

In March of 2006, the Adjutant General (TAG), GA ANG, tasked the 116th ACW/CC who in turn tasked the 116th Group Commanders, to explore internal

reorganization alternatives. The initiative was to simply consolidate some ANG positions to streamline ANG administration, command and control, and explore organizational alternatives. Acting 116th ACW OG/CC, Colonel William Welsh, called all OG Squadron Commanders to review/chop on the proposed “way ahead” briefing built by a select team. Two distinct Courses of Action (COA) resulted. COA 1: stay organizationally “blended” or: COA 2: consolidate to two active duty squadrons, one ANG squadron, and continue the 50/50 split of active duty/ANG in the Operational Support Squadron (OSS) and the 330th Combat Training Squadron (CTS).⁵⁸ The OG/CC recommended COA 2 to the 116th WG/CC. The 116th ACW began HQ GA ANG “administrative change requests (ACR) and organizational change requests (OCR) to move manning positions and personnel to satisfy consolidation in the fall of 2006.”⁵⁹ Manpower movements to change the population of the 128th Airborne Command and Control Squadron (ACCS) back into an all ANG squadron began in earnest late 2007 through the formal OG Aircrew Management Board (ACMB) process. A one-year transition was required to ensure adequate and qualified force structure existed in the 128th ACCS. Active duty and ANG members were swapped out at a one-to-one ratio. In July 2008, this process was only half complete toward a fully populated 128th ACCS containing five fully capable combat mission crews. Continuing to capitalize on the Operations Group prescience of internal organization changes that separate the active duty and ANG crewmembers into specific organizational squadrons is the first logical step to realigning and transitioning the 116th ACW to an AF recognized Active Associate model.

⁵⁸ 116th OG Way Ahead Briefing, Mar 2006, authors file

⁵⁹ Lt Col Jeff Thetford, 116th Deputy, Operations Group Commander, interview by author, 7 Nov 2008

Obtain Approval for TFI

The Active Associate is the fastest, cheapest and best organizational fit for transforming the 116th ACW into current AFI TFI compliance. The next step for the 116th ACW is to obtain HAF and NGB approval to transform into an Active Associate. Both active duty and ANG organizational chains of command must be presented with a proposal to “gain support for converting the existing 116th ACW’s [organizational] structure to an Active Associate model.”⁶⁰ The active duty review, coordination, and approval process will require briefings to 8AF/CC, ACC/A5, ACC/CC, AF/A8, and the CSAF who “is the final approval authority for all integration initiatives.”⁶¹ If the active duty leadership determines this proposed organizational construct is not appropriate the initiative will stop. However, if the initiative is approved the review, coordination, and approval process will need to proceed to the HQ GA ANG. The Georgia Adjutant General (TAG), ANG TAG (ATAG), the Governor of Georgia, and the Acting Director ANG at NGB will also have to approve this initiative in order to move forward with an Active Associate organization. If all approve the next step in the process will require ACC and NGB to conduct site visits with a follow-on NGB Site Activation/Alteration Task Force (SATAF). Next, a legal review by the HAF/Judge Advocate (JA) must be prepared. After these critical steps are completed, a draft Integration Plan and Memorandum of Understanding will require appropriate staffing, approval, and signatures by the ANG and HAF.⁶² This process should take no longer than one year. In order to capitalize upon the numerous TFI initiatives occurring all across the AF, the

⁶⁰ Brigadier General Moore 116th ACW/CC and Col Dom Eanniello 116th ACW/CV, “Robins Active Association Concept Brief”, Nov 2008

⁶¹ “Integration Objective”, Guidance, and Categories, AFI 90-1001, para 1.1. p3

⁶² Brigadier General Moore 116th ACW/CC and Col Dom Eanniello 116th ACW/CV, “Robins Active Association Concept Brief”, Nov 2008

116th ACW requires an aggressive staffing, coordination and approval process to expedite planned implementation. While this approval process progresses, the 116th ACW should preposition the organization to execute once approved.

Don't Transfer the Iron

The ANG should continue to retain and maintain ownership of the weapon system, which forgoes a large debit to the ACC fiscal budget. This will provide a long-term continuity to ensure future health of the weapon system the active duty AF currently cannot match. ANG ownership has certainly provided an umbrella of protection for the airframe and future modifications. As it stands right now the JSTARS is the largest single Program Element (PE) in the ANG with an unclassified expenditure of \$260M for FY09 and climbing to well over \$350M by FY2015.”⁶³ Additionally, the 116th ACW is “one of the biggest programs with the largest percentage of full-time manpower.”⁶⁴ The political protection of the ANG will continue to provide a certain degree of defense for future re-engine modernization and mission radar upgrades. It is speculative to conclude JSTARS modernization would have been in jeopardy had ACC been the bill payer.

Group Reorganization

As of October 20, 2008 the 116th ACW had 1,307 active duty and 1,016 ANG personnel (2323 total). The operations group contains forty percent of the total wing population. It also contains the biggest percentage of active duty 116th ACW personnel of any group at eighty percent and, forty percent of the entire active duty population. The

⁶³ Maj Tony Miranda, JSTARS Program Element Monitor, NGB/A8PC, to the author, e-mail, 4 December 2008

⁶⁴ Maj Tony Miranda, JSTARS Program Element Monitor, NGB/A8PC, to the author, e-mail, 4 December 2008

maintenance group contains thirty six percent of the wing total population. Its active duty manning is at fifty-one percent the second largest active duty contingent in the wing.

⁶⁵ These two groups (operations and maintenance) will see the biggest organizational changes under the proposed active associate re-organization.

Operations Group

The operations group transition began in 2006 without any premonition a future proposal to migrate away from the “blended” construct would follow. The Operations Group should continue to reorganize the operational 128th ACCS into an all ANG squadron. This streamlines the operational 12th and 16th ACCS into all active duty manned squadrons. This leaves the reapportionment of active duty and ANG personnel within the Communications Support Squadron (CSS), the OSS, and the 330th CTS. This proposal releases the OSS to the ANG while the CTS should discontinue the current 50/50 active duty/ANG manpower mix and transition to 100 percent active duty personnel. The CSS should migrate to an active duty squadron and return ANG members to the 116 ACW Communications Squadron (CS). This will assure clear delineated lines of command within the operations group’s squadrons. Additionally, this will allow the current deputy Operations Group Commander, an active duty Colonel, to assume the Operations Group Commander position in the Active Associate. This total redistribution of personnel within the operations group will significantly streamline command and control while alleviating the PERSTEMPO of ANG personnel. Active duty personnel will see PERSTEMPO increase marginally.

⁶⁵ Mr Mike Besemer, 116th WG/MO, to the author, e-mail October 23, 2008

Maintenance Group

The Maintenance Group (MXG) currently contains three squadrons, an Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (AMXS), Maintenance Operations Squadron (MOS) and a Maintenance Squadron (MXS). Since active duty personnel is fifty-one percent of the MXG population and equally distributed throughout, the easiest solution is to put all the active duty personnel into the AMXS with responsibilities of flightline maintenance. This also makes sense to the ANG as they have an older population of ranking personnel with more experience and expertise always in demand in MXS and the MOS. This reorganizational change will significantly improve the administration of personnel documents, performance reporting and supervision. A timeline for complete transformation would take at least a year.

Wing Staff and Mission Support Group

The Mission Support Group (MSG) contains an active duty population of sixteen percent while the wing staff contains less than four percent.⁶⁶ MSG personnel can easily be assigned into two flights (logistics readiness and civil engineering) inside the MSG or transferred to the 78th Air Base Wing (ABW) on Robins AFB. The active duty personnel on the wing staff personnel can be released to support the Active Associate (active duty) wing staff. This new organization will need additional manning to support new parallel Group Staffs for the OG, MXG, and Wing. This “overhead” will amount to approximately twenty personnel.

⁶⁶ Mr Mike Besemer, 116th WG/MO, to the author, e-mail October 23, 2008

Memorandums of Understanding (MOU)

MOUs will also need to be readdressed within the active associate reorganization. These mandatory MOUs should delineate how offices like Safety, the Inspector General, Protocol, Plans and Programs, Public Affairs, and the Historian operate within and across the entire wing and with the host 78 ABW. Additionally, there are twenty-seven⁶⁷ Civilian personnel currently funded by ACC.⁶⁸ These positions will have to be redistributed with the associated MOU. “The recent departure and closing of the 19th Air Refueling Group opens an opportunity to acquire their previously owned operations and maintenance buildings now owned by the 78th ABW.”⁶⁹ The acquisition of these empty buildings will require negotiation and another MOU.

Bottom Line

The 116th ACW Active Associate will operate just like it has operated in the last six years. Tasking will continue to be received from NGB in coordination with HAF to fulfill taskings. This Active Associate will continue the “supporting” responsibility since the ANG is the parent wing owner. Two independent organizations operating in parallel under the Active Associate construct is absolutely the best solution for this LD/HD asset. This also postures both the active duty and ANG for the long-term. Should a future weapon system alteration be made for either the active duty or ANG the 116th ACW TFI construct will enable the easiest organizational transition. “The JSTARS is the most expensive Program Element in the ANG budget.”⁷⁰ Even if the Active Associate

⁶⁷ Mr Mike Besemer, 116th WG/MO, to the author, e-mail October 23, 2008

⁶⁸ Colonel Dominick Eanniello, 116th Vice Wing Commander, interview by author, 7 Nov 2008

⁶⁹ Ibid, interview by author, 7 Nov 2008

⁷⁰ Maj Tony Miranda, JSTARS Program Element Monitor, NGB/A8PC, to the author, e-mail, 4 December 2008

construct were approved right now it would take a year to de-“blend” since the wing is so intertwined. What will be found is there are shortages in particular areas such as maintenance and operations where personnel depth is shallow. In order to achieve this construct active duty and ANG personnel will have to be trained or retrained to fill vacancies. This is easily achieved but generates required resources in order to reorganize in areas that are currently covered with expertise. The 116th ACW’s internal environment has also changed significantly since the original “blend.” Numerous leadership changes, personnel changes, and time have all advanced. The initial “blend” individuals worked extremely hard to ensure success in the new 116th ACW organization. Now, six years later some of the work-arounds are no longer palatable. As an organization’s “...environment changes to the point where some of its assumptions are no longer valid, leadership comes into play...to start [an] evolutionary change.”⁷¹

Conclusion

The 116th ACW is a one of a kind organization. The “blended” Wing was born in the perfect storm of SECDEF’s plan for modernization, the AF plan to reduce the B-1 bomber fleet described in PBD 824 without identifying a follow-on mission for the GA ANG, and the necessity of operationally fielding JSTARS aircraft and personnel. The SECAF firmly believed this new “blended” “organization has the potential of setting a new and higher standard for Future Total Force Organization.”⁷² However, six years after the “blend” the expected AF Future Total Force changes were abandoned; the necessary Title 32 federal law changes identified early in the process have never been passed in Congress, the MOU between the active duty and ANG has never been approved

⁷¹ Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Second Edition (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 2

⁷² Mr James G. Roche, SECAF, to The Honorable Clarence Saxby Chambliss, letter, 17 Oct 2001

or signed, and the 116th ACW “blended” construct has not been replicated by any other organization. Had the Congressional changes to the law governing ANG personnel recommended by the SECAF materialized, one can imagine every unit currently under transformation would have been “blended” like the 116th ACW. Meanwhile, the 116th ACW has continued to operate as a totally unique, independent, and unrecognized organization within the AF. Military units are not used to operating outside “standard” organizational constructs. In fact, our entire AF organization is built upon adherence to AFIs, organizational rank, structure, and standards. The juxtaposed analysis ensures an organization in constant search of its identity.

The time has come to reorganize the 116th ACW into an AF TFI Active Associate organizational structure the entire AF recognizes. The evolution to TFI makes sense, regardless of the outstanding successes of the 116th ACW “blended” organization. The quickest and easiest organizational transition is to build upon recent squadron personnel changes and smoothly transition the other groups in the wing to an Active Associate.

Until the 116th moves from a “one of a kind” organization its internal progression will be stifled with continuous vacillation on how it should look, operate, and best take care of its personnel (active duty/ANG). The 116th ACW “...has experienced ‘growing pains with the cultures...,’”⁷³ and it “is not going to be copied elsewhere for now—associate units work better with less ambiguity of command—but will be ‘something we learn from.’”⁷⁴ This “USAF experiment in managing its force”⁷⁵ is over.

⁷³ “Integrated Total Force”, Air Force Magazine.com, March 2008, <http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2008/March%202008/0308integrated.aspx> , internet accessed 1 Nov 2008

⁷⁴ “Integrated Total Force”, Air Force Magazine.com, March 2008, <http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2008/March%202008/0308integrated.aspx> , internet accessed 1 Nov 2008

⁷⁵ “The Blended Wing Goes to War”, Air Force Magazine, pg 26

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