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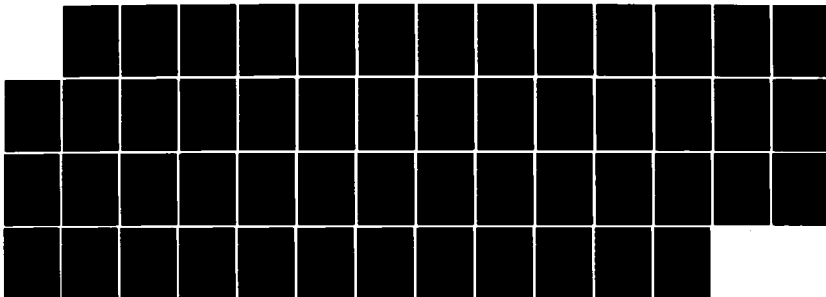
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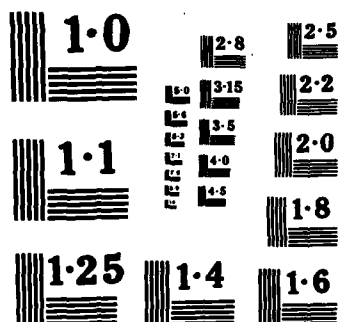
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STUDENT REPORT

ONE COMMANDER'S GUIDE TO
PILOT ASSIGNMENTS

BY COLONEL G. TAYLOR 85-2680

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TITLE **OSA COMMANDER'S GUIDE TO
PILOT ASSIGNMENTS**

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PREFACE

After the May 1983 T-39 Commanders Conference at Scott AFB, Illinois several commanders asked if the personnel community could publish the basic "ground rules" relative to T-39/Operational Support Airlift (OSA) pilot assignments. Because the program of absorbing first assignment pilots into the T-39 was a new program with few of the follow-on assignment policies firmly formulated, a comprehensive publication at that point in time was not feasible. By June, 1984 the personnel community had detailed most of the policies governing T-39 assignments. An informal telephone survey of several T-39/OA (C-12/C-21, T-39 replacement aircraft) commanders indicated that commanders were still interested in a publication of basic assignment policies relative to this group of pilots.

This publication is a consolidation of numerous regulations, policies, and documents which pertain to rated officer assignments. It is tailored to specifically address Operational Support Airlift pilot personnel actions.

The purpose of this guide is twofold. First, it is an historical source document which outlines the tremendous evolution that has occurred in OSA since 1981. At that time the OSA (T-39) force mostly consisted of experienced attached pilots who flew missions on a part time basis. Since 1981 the OSA attached pilot force has dwindled to an insignificant number and has been replaced with a permanently assigned force consisting mainly of "first assignment pilots" recently graduated from Undergraduate Pilot Training (UPT). This document discusses the rationale for the pilot force conversion and provides an historical written basis for the actions taken in the OSA pilot conversion. Secondly, this guide provides generalized and specific pilot assignment information for OSA commanders. Because of the large numbers of UPT inputs to OSA since 1981 and the lack of institutional practices, the personnel community established many new policies and assignment guidelines between 1981 and 1984. While most policies are based on Air Force personnel regulations, many are less formalized and directed toward the uniqueness of OSA pilots. Many view an individual's commander as the primary source of career counselling; hopefully this document will make it easier for commanders to provide that guidance.

CONTINUED

One word of caution-- since the Air Force personnel system's primary obligation is to meet the needs of the Air Force, and over time needs change, so, too, do assignment policies change. While this guide provides current information and gives a basis for understanding the assignment process, it is always wise for individuals to periodically update their specific status with their HQ AFMPC and HQ MAC resource advisors. Hopefully readers will find this document easy to digest and more convenient than extracting data from the numerous regulations and directives which cover the subject of rated officer assignments.

The author gratefully acknowledges Colonel Charles G. Thomas the 375 AAW Vice Commander for sponsoring this project, and is extremely appreciative for the assistance from Major Joseph Henderson, and Captain Robert S. (Scott) Satre HQ AFMPC/ROR4 and Captain Mike Daggitt HQ MAC/DPROA.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Lawrence J. Taylor graduated from Auburn University, Alabama in 1972 with a BA in history and political science. He received his commission from Officer Training School that same year and was assigned to Laughlin AFB, Texas for Undergraduate Pilot Training. Upon completion of pilot training in 1973, Major Taylor was assigned to Norton AFB, California flying the C-141.

In 1979 Major Taylor was in the first group of officers selected for duty at HQ MAC under the "Volant Spotlight" program. His initial assignment at the MAC staff was in HQ MAC/XPQ where he served as program officer for many future MAC programs--one of which was the replacement aircraft for the T-39. While on the MAC staff Major Taylor flew the T-39 in an attached status. In late 1979 he was selected to be CINCMAC's assistant executive officer under General Huyser, and he served in that capacity until 1981.

In April of 1981 Major Taylor was selected to be the Chief of Special Airlift Assignments at Hq AFMPC. He was responsible for all aspects of assignments and manning for the T-39, the C-9, the C-140, the W/C-135, as well as the new OSA program. While in this position, Major Taylor developed the assignment structure plans for the high absorption levels of first assignment pilots to the T-39/OSA. In May of 1983 Major Taylor became the Chief of C-141 assignments and served in that position until July, 1984 when he was assigned as a course officer at Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

Major Taylor holds a masters degree in human relations and has completed Squadron Officers School by correspondence and residence. He has also completed Air Command and Staff College by seminar.

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CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY of T-39/OSA
UPT ABSORPTION

CONTENTS:

BACKGROUND

THE C-5 ISSUE

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY OF T-39/D8A UPT ABSORPTION

BACKGROUND

Between 1977 and 1980 the Air Force experienced its worst pilot retention problem in its history. Pilot separation rates in the six to eleven year group ranged from 40% to 80% depending on major weapon system category. The Air Force in turn increased pilot production from 1047 a year in 1978 to an estimated target of 2000 a year by 1982. (actual 1982 production was 1875) The Air Force also returned rated officers from the rated supplement to rated duties. The supplement stood at approximately 7700 rated officers in 1977 and bottomed out at about 1484 by 1981.

Increased pilot production, however, created a great problem for the Air Force. The influx of large numbers of newly trained flyers brought down experience levels since the flying hour program was not increased. The impact on the airlift community meant that the balance between copilots and aircraft commanders would become tilted in favor of copilots, creating a shortage in aircraft commanders. In short the airlift community could not absorb the large numbers of UPTs that the increases in pilot production called for because there were insufficient flying hours to upgrade these new pilots in a reasonable time period. Yet to keep sufficient aircraft commanders within an organization and to still absorb the new pilots meant that every flying unit would become overmanned. Since flying hours were fixed, over-manning meant that the same number of hours would have to be shared by more pilots--hence each pilot would get fewer hours and take longer to upgrade. It was critical, then that individual flying units were maintained somewhere around the 100% manning line to avoid dilution of flying hours. For each new pilot assigned, someone within the unit would have to be reassigned. When gates were considered (and part of the formula was to ensure that all pilots would be able to meet their gate requirements) the only pilots available to be reassigned were the experienced flyers that the units really needed. The two goals --rebuilding pilot strength and maintaining pilot experience levels-- seemed diametrically opposed.

The T-39 offered a partial solution. It could serve as a safety valve by absorbing some of the UPTs designated for other airlift aircraft systems and relieve some of the pressures on pilot experience levels for those respective systems. In 1980 HQ MAC diverted 15 UPTs from the C-141 to the T-39 as an experiment, and real UPT absorption into the T-39 was born.

In March 1981 the personnel community began to implement the combined AF/XOO, AFMPC, and HQ MAC decision to absorb UPTs into the T-39. At that time the T-39 force consisted of a .5 crew ratio (about 100 pilots) with the remainder of the missions being flown by attached staff pilots who generally were very experienced and flew on a part time basis. To avoid any increase in programmed flying hours the T-39 absorption plan called for the virtual elimination of the attached flying force as more and more UPTs were brought into the flying units. The rated management community set crew ratios to accommodate new pilot inputs as follows:

FY 82 - .83	RPI 1
FY 83 - .95	RPI 1
FY 84 - 1.13	RPI 1

However, the Air Staff programmed an entitled crew ratio for FY 84 and beyond at 1.5 for all CONUS T-39 units to ensure sufficient experience levels. Although the 1.5 crew ratio actually constituted higher manning levels than 100%, planners determined there was sufficient flying time to support a reasonable upgrade program. Still, individual units would have to carefully manage the flying hour program to ensure all pilots got their fair share of the flying time.

The implementation concept was one of "slow growth" of UPT inputs over a three year period and "slow reduction" of the attached force at the same time. The eventual profile of the force would be a ratio of about 75% UPT assignees, 25% prior qualified pilot assignees, and perhaps ten to twenty attached pilots by the end of FY 84, and it would stabilize at that level for the foreseeable future. AF/XOO directed the following UPT inputs for the T-39:

FY 81 - 17	FY 84 - 80
FY 82 - 75	FY 85 - 67
FY 83 - 75	FY 86 - 69

Although this diversion of UPT inputs into the T-39 did not eliminate absorption problems for other airlift, tanker, and bomber systems, it did provide a great deal of relief from the pressures of high absorption levels.

THE C-5 ISSUE

MAC saw a side benefit in absorbing UPTs in the T-39. Not only did this absorption relieve experience pressures from its C-130 and C-141 force, but it also was a cost-effective means of producing future C-5 pilots. In 1981 MAC forecast a potential problem in C-5 pilot manning for the 1986 time frame. By then many of the current C-5 pilots would be retirement eligible with many more becoming so in the 1987 and 1988 period. Compounding that problem was the Congressional approval to purchase 50 new C-5s beginning in 1986 and the corresponding need to increase C-5 pilot assets for the planned inventory increase.

MAC's position on C-5 pilot inputs is that a pilot must have at least 1300 hours to be assigned. The traditional input sources were Air Training Command First Assignment Instructor Pilots (FAIPs) and experienced C-141 pilots. However, the C-141's experience levels were declining with its absorption of UPTs and could no longer afford to release 1300 hour pilots without degrading mission capability. It was also possible there could be insufficient numbers of 1300 hour FAIPs to fill all of the C-5's programmed needs. Although greatly debated, the T-39 offered an ideal pilot source for the C-5. All T-39 pilots would have more than 1300 hours at the end of their tours.

The T-39 offered advantages to the C-5 that were lacking in the traditional avenue of pilot inputs. First, it was cost effective, enjoying a 6:1 ratio over the C-141 in terms of operating expenses. Second, the quality of flying time was excellent. Unlike the C-141's standard mission profile which often consists of long duration straight and level flight, the T-39 offered "hands on" (no autopilot) experience with mission profiles consisting of numerous takeoffs and landings into many military as well as civilian airfields. Third, the T-39 operated under many of the same MAC regulations with which the C-5 was operated. Finally, the planned flying time profiles for the UPT inputs ensured that each pilot would have between 1300 and 1500 hours at the end of his/her T-39 tour. These factors made the T-39 attractive to planners who foresaw the need to increase C-5 pilot sources. The same advantages of cost, quality of flying time, common regulations, and programmed flying hours hold true for the C-21/C-12 currently replacing the T-39 and hereafter referred to as Operational Support Airlift (OSA).

It appears that the active Air Force may not see a net increase of 50 C-5s because some C-5s may be reassigned to Air National Guard or Reserve units. Still, the C-141 cannot support many inputs to the C-5 to replace retiring pilots and/or supplement net gains in aircraft. OSA will remain one

of the primary sources for C-5 inputs. During the March 1984 Rated Management Conference decision makers coded the T-39/OSA into the Strategic Airlift category making OSA pilots eligible in most cases for direct entry into primarily the C-5 and the C-141 with a few to the C-130.

This is the history of the T-39/OSA's evolution from an aircraft system consisting mostly of staff flyers to the "Training Ground" of MAC. With this background we can look at assignment policies that affect OSA pilots remembering that there is a fairly defined plan for this group.

CHAPTER TWO

GENERAL ASSIGNMENT
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CHAPTER TWO

GENERAL ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION

This chapter discusses the general factors comprising the rated officer assignment process. It addresses the priorities of assignments, the Rated Officer Review Board (RORB) process, the gate system, the Form 90, time on station requirements, and the general areas to which a rated officer can be assigned.

PRIORITIES OF CONSIDERATION

The Air Force is very pragmatic in the manner in which it prioritizes assignment actions. AFR 36-20 lists the order of importance. The first priority of all assignment actions is filling the needs of the Air Force's mission. It is the primary obligation of the personnel community to meet the needs of the Air Force by filling manpower requirements with the most qualified and eligible officers available. However, the needs of the Air Force are ever changing, and, therefore personnel policies must change along with those needs. Career development is the second priority in an assignment action. The Air Force is a unique institution and cannot hire its middle and senior leadership from other sources as can corporations and the business community. Rather, the Air Force must internally develop its officers to assume the positions of responsibility as an individual's career progresses. It is essential for the Air Force to prepare qualified and competent personnel for future leadership roles. Career development is a closely linked need of the Air Force. Personal desires are a lower priority than needs and career development. Although assignment officers always consider an individual's desires in an assignment action, needs of the Air Force and career development are the overriding considerations. The personnel community tries to match all three priorities but, of course, cannot always accommodate personal desires. Needs, career development, and desires, in that order of priority, are the primary factors considered in an assignment action.

THE RORB PROCESS

The Rated Officer Review Board (RORB) process is the manner in which HQ AFMPC reviews all rated officers scheduled for reassignment. Approximately nine months prior to the

month of reassignment, AFMPC computers generate Officer Career Briefs on all individuals scheduled to move. The career briefs are subdivided into major weapon system category and are matched with each officer's assignment folder. This folder contains the officer's Form 90, any correspondence from the officer, and previous assignment actions. The folders are placed into packages by weapon system (eg strategic airlift, bomber, tanker) and the review phase begins. Several offices within the AFMPC assignment structure review each folder. The rated supplement assignment officers look for unique talents such as engineering or computer skills/experience and make a written recommendation on the back of the career brief. In the same fashion the Joint/Departmental (joint assignments and Air Staff) review the package and make a recommendation. Finally, the rated assignment team reviews each officer's folder and makes a recommendation. Important factors are the manning/experience levels of the respective weapon system, an individual's gate status, and the desires of any appropriate MAJCOMs. In all cases throughout the review process the officer's Form 90 receives great consideration, and normally assignment officers have discussed options with the individual on the telephone. After all interested offices have made their inputs, the folder is presented in package form to the Chief of Rated Officer Assignments for final determination as to what the assignment will be. The assignment teams try to have each package completed with final approval about four to six months prior to an officer's mandatory move. The personnel community bases each assignment on an individual's desires relative to needs of the Air Force and career considerations.

The RORB process is slow but fair. It takes months to complete, often with individuals becoming impatient with the length of time it takes to receive final determination on their respective assignments. On the other hand the RORB process benefits from the experience and expertise of many assignment officers rather than the opinion of just one. The process also explores options and possible assignments outside the realm of just one area. Overall, it is a fair system even though it literally takes months to receive final assignment action.

THE FORM 90

The Form 90 is an essential part of the assignment process. Most officers on controlled tours know when their tour will be completed, and local CBPOs should normally remind individuals twelve months in advance of tour completion to update the Form 90. It's essential that the updated Form 90 is in the officer's assignment folder at least nine months prior to reassignment to coincide with the

RORB process. Often, especially during the summer move cycle, individual assignment officers are working hundreds of assignments and don't have time nor always autovon access to track down officers to ascertain desires. It's both helpful and prudent to have an updated Form 90. Even if an officer's desires have not changed since he/she last submitted a dreamsheets, it's best to change the date to let the respective assignment officer(s) know these are the current desires. The Form 90 is an individual's chance to express himself/herself to the system.

Another aspect of the Form 90 is that the front side information is stored in the personnel computer and is used to search for volunteers for a specific assignment. For example, an assignment officer can request the computer to list all C-141 pilots who are volunteers for a C-9 to Germany. The computer will review all form 90s and provide the names of pilots meeting that criteria. It's from data scans such as this that AFMPC will identify the most eligible volunteer. The assignment officer would then contact the most eligible volunteer to ascertain his/her desires. Policy is that an officer identified through a Form 90 scan is not obligated to take the assignment.

One should also realize that most officers volunteer for similar assignments. The best advice in formulating an individual's Form 90 is to be realistic and understand that not all officers can be assigned to Germany or Hawaii which are two of the more popular locations. An individual should request his/her true desires but should also consider the relative supply and demand of a location and his/her qualifications in terms of ability, gate status, career point, and eligibility. To do less often leads to disappointment. HQ AFMPC assignment officers can assist in preparing an officer's Form 90 and can discuss general assignment availability. AFR 36-23 also contains some very useful information and can be obtained through local CBPOs. The primary factor in FORM 90 preparation is to be realistic.

Some common Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSC) in the airlift arena include:

C-141	1045L	MC-130	1315B
C-5	1045N	C-12	1045P
C-130	1055B	General Staff	1495Z
C-21	1045Q	Strat Air Staff	1425J
AC-130	1315A		

For additional AFSC information one should refer to AFR 36-23

THE GATE SYSTEM

The Aviation Career Incentive Act of 1974 created utilization standards which require that flyers be assigned to operational flying duties for specific amounts of time by certain career checkpoints. The law establishes that an officer must perform at least 6 years of operational flying duty including flight training by the 12 year of aviation service to receive flight pay through the 18th year of service and 11 years of operational flying duty by the 18th year of aviation to get continuous flight pay through the 25th year. Simply stated the gates are as follows:

GATE		Completed By	Flight Pay Thru
First	6 years (72 months)	12th year	18th year
SECOND	9 years (108 months)	18th year	22nd year
THIRD	11 years (132 months)	18th year	25th year

Air Force policy requires a rated officer to remain in the cockpit until he/she completes the first gate even though an officer has through the 12th year to obtain that gate. Further, it is Air Force policy that as many rated officers as possible will complete the second gate. Waivers to the second gate have been few, and to obtain a waiver, the action must clearly be in the best interest of the Air Force mission. The Air Force has waived the third gate for many pilots, but pilot force manning must be sufficient to allow an officer an exception to the third gate and the action also must be in the best interest of the Air Force.

The gate system is a means of allowing officers to career broaden into nonflying duties without fear of losing flight pay. It is also an avenue to ensure the Air Force gets sufficient utilization from the flight training investment it has made in its rated officer force. An officer's gate status is one of the primary considerations in any assignment action.

TIME-ON-STATION (TOS) REQUIREMENTS

Time-on-station is another important factor in any assignment consideration. The Air Force established TOS requirements to stabilize the lives of Air Force members and to save PCS funds. Except in the case of controlled tours, TOS becomes the primary factor in deciding which officer will receive a specific assignment. If all other factors are the same between officers being considered, AFMPC will select the individual with the most TOS. TOS is computed from the month of arrival at present duty station. For example, two C-141

pilots are both volunteers for a C-21. Each officer meets the criteria for the job in terms of date of rank, flying ability, and overall quality. The officer with the greatest TOS will be selected. This example applies only to volunteer status for a CONUS to CONUS PCS. AFMPC selects overseas volunteers based not only on TOS but also on overseas volunteers status. Generally speaking, officers who volunteer for longer than normal overseas tour lengths receive priority regardless of TOS.

Time-on-station is also the major factor in identifying nonvolunteers. Again, TOS applies to those officers not on maximum controlled tours and only to CONUS to CONUS assignments. If, for example, HQ AFMPC cannot find a qualified volunteer for an open position, then the assignment officer will review qualified nonvolunteers and make the selection based on TOS. The officer who has been on station the longest will be selected.

AFR 36-20 lists a minimum of 36 months for an officer to be eligible for a PCS. This minimum applies to CONUS to CONUS uncontrolled tours. The exceptions to this rule are listed below:

- 1) Completing an oversea, CONUS-isolated, or CONUS maximum controlled tour.
- 2) Completion or withdrawal from training.
- 3) Reassignment from unit or base closures.
- 4) Reassigned from CONUS to overseas and having the following TOS:
 - a) Lieutenants: 12 months TOS
 - b) Captains and above (volunteers): 12 months TOS
 - c) Captains and above (nonvolunteers): 24 months TOS
- 5) Reassignment for join-spouse, CONUS assignment exchange, or permissive PCS, and have completed 12 months TOS.
- 6) Reassignment for humanitarian or Children Have A Potential (CHAP) reasons.
- 7) Reassignment for intermediate or senior service school and have 24 months TOS.
- 8) Reassignment from a long overseas tour to another oversea location-- must have 18 months TOS in the original oversea location.
- 9) Reassignment due to weapon system conversion.
- 10) Reassignment on a close-proximity move. For example, an officer could be assigned from one base in the local area to another in that same area.

These are the basic restrictions on TOS for any permanent change of station. They can be waived if a reassignment action is necessary to meet the needs of the Air Force, but any request for waiver must be reviewed and approved by HQ AFMPC and is usually difficult to obtain. The assignment officer requesting the waiver must show that there are no other

options available, and if the request is from a MAJCOM, it must have the coordination of the MAJCOM/DP. AFR 36-20 does not allow a qualified volunteer who does not meet time-on-station requirements to fill an assignment over an equally qualified nonvolunteer who does have sufficient TOS. A waiver request on behalf of the volunteer in this case could be deemed inappropriate.

In summary, time on station is a major consideration in the assignment selection of one qualified officer over an equally qualified individual. The basic rule for CONUS to CONUS PCS eligibility is 36 months. An officer can realistically volunteer for an overseas assignment after only 12 months on station and can be involuntarily assigned overseas after 24 months on station. The other exceptions to these general guidelines are listed above. Given all other factors between two or more individuals as being equal, time on station is the "tie breaker" in assignment selection. The longer an officer has been on station the higher the chances are for assignment selection as either a volunteer or nonvolunteer.

THE SEVEN DAY OPTION

An officer who receives a permanent change of station notification can elect to turn down the assignment and separate from the Air Force provided the active duty service commitment (ADSC) for the PCS would extend him/her past the point in time to which he/she is already committed. For example, an officer who is committed to the Air Force for one year receives an assignment to Germany. Since the tour length to Germany is three years and the commitment is three years, that officer can elect to turn down the assignment. Acceptance would force him/her beyond the one year he/she presently owes to the Air Force. This formal declination of assignment is called the "seven day option". If an officer has retainability for an assignment (the commitment for the assignment is less than the commitment already owed), the individual must accept the PCS. For example, a C-12 pilot who has three years remaining on his/her ADSC from UPT receives an assignment to a C-12 to Korea. The commitment for the PCS to Korea is one year reflecting the tour length to the area. In this example the individual must accept the assignment because his/her ADSC is three years and the ADSC for Korea is only one year; the assignment does not in any way force the officer to remain in the service longer than the original UPT commitment.

When AFMPC selects an officer for an assignment, the local CBPO receives notification through the personnel computer system. Once the CBPO has the formal computer notification from AFMPC, it notifies the respective officer.

It is from this point of formal notification that the officer has seven days to either accept the assignment or decline it if the individual has that option. For example, CBPO notifies an officer of an assignment on 10 June. The officer has until 17 June to make a decision. Should the individual fail to respond within the seven day time period, he/she has by default accepted the assignment and the associated ADSC. Normally, an officer will know of a pending assignment prior to the formal CBPO notification. If he/she is on a controlled tour or an overseas tour, then he/she would know the assignment completion date. If the officer is not on a controlled tour but has been identified against an assignment normally he/she will have been informally notified by his/her assignment officer via telephone prior to the assignment being formally sent to the local CBPO. An officer usually has more time than the seven days to make a decision.

An officer who elects to decline an assignment must separate at the end of the ADSC date or on the first day of the seventh month from declination whichever is greater. An additional seven day option period is given to an officer who has accepted an assignment if the end location is changed or if an additional ADSC is added to the assignment. Also, should an officer decline a PCS move, forcing someone less eligible to take the assignment, and then request withdrawal of his/her date of separation (DOS), then the officer will be given a similar assignment prior to approval of the DOS withdrawal. This policy is intended to protect against "gaming" the assignment process at the expense of others.

GENERAL ASSIGNMENT AREAS

In the case of rated officers there are three areas of assignment to which they can be assigned. The three areas are the cockpit, the rated staff, or the rated supplement. Many people are confused about the differences in these areas especially the difference between the rated staff and the rated supplement, however it is these three broad areas that drive the rated officer assignment process in terms of manning priorities.

The Cockpit (Forceline)

The cockpit assignments are the first priority in terms of rated management because they represent the mission capability of a given aircraft weapon system. One usually can associate the cockpit with RPI 1 squadron level assignments plus the commander, ops officer, and RPI 6 squadron level positions such as the stan/eval pilot. This group is referred to in rated management terms as the forceline. It is the goal of rated management to maintain

this area at at least 100% manning or above and to accommodate UPT absorption and the associated experience level of a given aircraft system.

The rated staff

Simply stated, the rated staff represents those positions throughout the Air Force that must be filled with a rated officer and are not associated with operational flying as that officer's primary duty. The staff position level ranges from Wing to MAJCOM and above and may involve flying in an attached status. The key to identifying rated staff positions is that they must be filled with a rated officer; there are no support officer counterparts to these positions. For example, a wing command post duty officer has no support counterpart in the Air Force and is therefore considered in the rated staff when assigned to the command post. The command post position must be filled with a rated officer. AFR 36-23 states that the rated staff constitutes 22% of all rated authorizations throughout the Air Force. The rated staff is subdivided into two categories-- the specific staff, and the general Ops staff.

Specific staff positions require experience in a particular aircraft system. Before an officer can be assigned he/she must be an expert in the aircraft system. For example, before an officer can even be considered to be a HQ MAC C-141 standardization officer he/she obviously must be qualified in the C-141 to competently fill the position. All specific rated staff slots have been designated as such, relative to a specific aircraft system or major weapon system family. In MAC the vast majority of the specific staff positions require C-141, C-130, or C-5 experience as these aircraft represent the primary mission of the command. Throughout the Air Force most rated staff positions are specific staff.

In addition to specific staff slots there are also general ops staff positions. These staff areas require a rated officer but do not require any specific background in an aircraft system. An example of the general staff would be a MAC C-141 pilot filling a TAC command post requirement. In this case the MAC pilot has no real experience in TAC, but because he/she is rated, he/she is qualified for the position. Most of the general ops staff slots are designated with the AFSC of 1495Z for pilots. These slots represent the minority of rated staff requirements throughout the Air Force.

One might consider specific and general staff positions the second order of manning priority. In the 1970s when the Air Force was experiencing shortages in pilot manning, it developed a concept called prioritization in which all staff

positions were reviewed and listed in order of importance. Those positions deemed less than essential were left unfilled so that the more important forceline cockpit slots would not go undermanned. This unusual action was in addition to returning pilots to rated positions from the rated supplement. As the pilot shortfall dwindled, so too did prioritization of the rated staff and the drawdown of the rated supplement.

The Rated Supplement

The rated supplement represents those areas to which a rated officer can be assigned in which there are support officer counterparts. There is no difference in the jobs themselves; there is only the difference that the same support position usually filled by a support officer is being filled by one who is rated. The Air Force designed the supplement to provide an available resource of active duty pilots and navigators to augment operational units in a contingency or to serve as buffer in the event of rated shortages. It is composed of lieutenant colonels and below.

An officer enters the supplement either through the RORB process or at the request of the support officer assignment branch. The individual's assignment officer reviews the request prior to any approval or disapproval. Such factors as an individual's gate status, time on station, Form 90 desires, and relative manning in the cockpit and rated staff areas, are important considerations. While the supplement is an excellent career broadening vehicle, assignment to support duties must not adversely impact more critical rated areas.

If rated manning is sufficient to allow an officer entry into the supplement, then normally the tour length to support duties is for three years. It is a three years well invested. Not only does the Air Force benefit by augmenting the support arena, the individual benefits by the expertise he/she develops in the respective career field. This expertise can pay dividends throughout the rest of his/her career. The supplement gives a rated officer flexibility in areas to which he/she can be assigned and therefore makes him/her a more valuable asset to the Air Force.

The cockpit, the rated staff, and the rated supplement are the three areas to which a rated officer can be assigned. Factors such as gate status, time on station, Form 90 desires, education, respective major weapon system manning, and most importantly the individual's performance and quality of record are the variables in determining which of these areas are available to an officer. A good rule of thumb for successful career planning is to alternate between the

and to get either the rated staff or the rated supplement.

COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITIES-QUALITY CONTROL

The personnel community needs the assistance of local commanders in quality control matters that might not be apparent to a higher headquarters making the assignment decisions. AFR 36-20 directs that commanders must take action to identify officers selected or nominated for reassignment who might not be capable of performing adequately in the new position. Some of the AFR 36-20 guidelines are listed below:

- 1) Marginal or substandard officers will not be reassigned.
- 2) Officers on control rosters may not be reassigned until final disposition of their cases. They can be reassigned PCA but must remain in the same MAJCOM.
- 3) On notification that an officer has been selected for reassignment, the immediate commander must review any Unfavorable Information File maintained by the CBPO and advise the assignment selection authority at MAJCOM or HQ AFMPC of any derogatory information on the respective officer.
- 4) Commanders must advise HQ AFMPC or the MAJCOM/DP of any criminal investigations or charges pending. Be discreet if disclosure might disrupt an investigation.
- 5) An officer on the Weight Management Program who is making unsatisfactory progress is ineligible for reassignment. Commanders must not certify these officers for PCS.

While one can obtain a waiver to these guidelines through HQ AFMPC, the intent of these rules is to avoid one commander dumping his problems on another through reassignment action. There are other avenues for dealing with the above circumstances besides PCS action. It is incumbent for all commanders to assist the personnel community by ensuring that individuals selected or nominated for an assignment will be able to perform at their new duty stations.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed some of the more general assignment policies that apply to all rated officers. It is a consolidation of several personnel regulations and provisions those areas which seem most appropriate for a General and commander to know, so that he might better and

more realistically discuss assignments with his subordinates. Chapter Two has addressed factors that are considered by the personnel community in all rated officer assignment actions. It has also discussed some of the general areas of assignments to which a rated officer might be placed and some of the responsibilities of individual commanders in the assignment process. Chapter Three will address the assignment structure relative to OSA assignments.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ASSIGNMENT STRUCTURE

CONTENTS:

THE ASSIGNMENT
OFFICER

AFMPC/HQ MAC
RELATIONSHIP

MAJOR WEAPON SYSTEM
CODING

CHAPTER THREE

THE ASSIGNMENT STRUCTURE

Building on Chapter One and Chapter Two as a foundation, Chapter Three begins to the basic assignment organization and introduces the reader to the AFMPC assignment officer, discusses the relationship between HQ AFMPC/ROR4 (Airlift Assignments) and HQ MAC/DPROA (MAC Rated Assignments), and adds to the manner in which all Air Force pilots are categorized relative to a major weapon system identity. While organizational structure and MAJCOM relations can change, most of the areas discussed in Chapter Three should stand the test of time.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT OFFICER

All assignment officers assigned to the Airlift Branch at HQ AFMPC are airlift crewmembers, not personnel officers per se. One has a great deal of experience in his/her respective weapon system and adds rated perspective to all aspects of the assignment process. The OSA assignment officer is functionally a part of the Strategic Airlift Assignment Team within which lies jurisdiction for all rated assignments in the C-141, C-5, C-9, C-140, C-135 (MAC), and OSA. The OSA assignment officer is not only responsible for C-12/C-21 positions but also all C-9, C-135, and C-140 positions in both the CONUS and overseas. He/she is also responsible for the 89th Military Airlift Wing pilot positions, Air Force Communications Command rated positions, and all Air Force pilots in the tanker, transport, bomber arena who do not possess a major weapon system or whose major weapon system has been deactivated such as C-124 or KB-57 pilots. The OSA positions in the 375 AAW represent about 25% of his/her assignment jurisdiction.

The OSA assignment officer stands ready to discuss any aspect of the assignment process. He/she speaks daily with commanders and crewmembers alike covering a gambit of subjects ranging from assisting individuals in Form 90 preparation to covering long range manning projections for specific units. The rated assignment officers at HQ AFMPC take a great deal of pride in being readily available to "walk-ins" and will stop almost any action they are working on to accommodate a crewmember who "drops by" in person. While it is best to call and make an appointment, unannounced visitors are not at all uncommon. Individuals can also contact rated assignment officers at HQ AFMPC by telephone. One should be

apprised, however, that due to limited autovon circuits at Randolph, it is sometimes difficult to get a call into the airlift assignment office. Overall, the Airlift Assignment officers highly encourage two way communication as an important aspect of the assignment process, so it is in one's best interest to try and either visit or call on the autovon even if it takes a few attempts.

HQ AFMPC/HQ MAC RELATIONSHIP

The HQ AFMPC Airlift Assignment Section (AFMPC/ROR4) has a different function than the rated assignment offices at HQ MAC. Both organizations operate under a renewable Memorandum of Agreement that subdivides areas of assignment jurisdiction and gives each certain decision authority under those areas. While formally these areas of responsibility are clearly defined, there is continuous telephone contact between the two offices and each assists the other. To the outsider this continuous coordination between the two agencies makes the areas of jurisdiction appear hazy and overlapping. Generally, they are as follows:

HQ AFMPC/ROR4 (in conjunction with other AFMPC offices)

- 1) All squadron/detachment level RPI 1 assignments associated with airlift aircraft systems
- 2) All airlift inputs to Air Training Command
- 3) All airlift inputs to the rated supplement
- 4) All airlift inputs into any rated staff position that requires a rated officer with airlift expertise
- 5) Entries into AFIT, ASTRA, PME for airlift coded rated officers
- 6) All airlift coded rated officer assignments for officers currently assigned outside MAC.

In nearly all of the above cases, AFMPC decisions are based on telephone coordination with HQ MAC. For officers currently in MAC and being considered by AFMPC for assignment outside of MAC, the MAJCOM's approval for release is required.

HQ MAC/DPROA

- 1) ALL staff positions at the MAJCOM
- 2) All staff positions at the numbered Air Forces
- 3) All staff positions at the Airlift Divisions
- 4) All overseas MAC wing staff positions
- 5) All unit commander selections
- 6) All instructor selections for the MAC flying training units such as at Altus AFB or Little Rock AFB

In all cases HQ AFMPC must levy the assignment because a MAJCOM does not have the authority to do so.

MAJOR WEAPON SYSTEM CODING

In the early 1970s the Air Force adopted a policy of coding pilots into a major weapon system category to which they would be assigned throughout their careers. This coding system was designed to allow HQ USAF a means to review rated requirements, quantity and distribute the available resource to various commands, and to define the necessary advanced training. The rationale behind this initiative was to try and reduce training costs by keeping as many pilots as possible in one aircraft system and benefit from the increased experience and cost reduction action would produce. In order to do this the Air Force divided all aircraft into major weapon system categories and assigned all crewmembers accordingly. The major weapon system families are: tactical fighter, tactical reconnaissance, interceptor, trainer, bomber, tanker, strategic airlift, tactical airlift, helicopter, and mission support. All Air Force pilots are coded into one of these groups and maintain their code regardless of where they are assigned unless they change major weapon systems. There are exceptions. For example, a C-141 copilot in Air Training Command would maintain his/her C-141 identity.

In March 1984 the 1-59/OSA had been coded into the tactical support area. The Rated Management Conference of 1984 decided to code the OSA into the strategic airlift area. Chapter Four will address the OSA entry into strategic airlift and some of the problems this change will present.

This is sufficient only for the purpose of this guide to understand that all Air Force pilots are coded to a major weapon system identity. It is this identity rather than a command or MACOM identity that determines assignment options for rated officers.

CONCLUSION

In this section we have discussed the assignment structure of rated officers. The HQ AFMPC assignment officers are responsible for crewmembers. It has looked at the OSA assignment process and the area for which he/she is responsible. It has also reviewed the relationship between HQ USAF/OSA and HQ MAC/DPRG. It lastly discussed the Air Force career coding system which identifies rated officers with a specific aircraft system. With this background Chapter Four will address specific assignment areas for first and second tour pilots.

CHAPTER FOUR

SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT INFO
FIRST ASSIGNMENT PILOTS

CONTENTS:

FACTORS OF
CONSIDERATION

COMMANDER'S ROLE

TOUR LENGTHS

THE OVERSEAS
LIST

MAJOR WEAPON
SYSTEM FOLLOW-ON

AIRCRAFT DISTRIBUTION

FINAL ASSIGNMENT
ACTION

CHAPTER FOUR

SPECIFIC OSA ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION FIRST ASSIGNMENT PILOTS

Fiscal year 1985 represented the first year that large numbers of first assignment OSA pilots were slated for reassignment. This was due to the high number of UPT assignees placed in the T-39/OSA in FY 82. The personnel community started assignment planning for this group in FY 82. Because first assignment pilots in such large numbers were a new situation for the T-39/OSA, AFMPC assignment officers, along with their counterparts at HQ MAC and the 375AAW staff formulated many policies relative to this group's follow-on assignments. Since this is a new program and precedents and institutionalism have not yet run their course, one can surmise that the OSA community will see an evolutionary process take place regarding assignments. There are several key factors, however, that will probably drive the assignment process for quite some time.

FACTORS OF OSA ASSIGNMENT CONSIDERATION

In the preceding chapters of this publication detailed much of the rationale regarding OSA follow-on assignments. The most important of the factors were:

1. That needs of the Air Force mission drive all assignment considerations.
2. That expanding airlift experienced pilot requirements especially in the C-5 made the T-39/OSA an ideal system to cost-effectively experience first assignment pilots with the intent of using the experience gained in OSA to benefit other more expensive major weapon systems.
3. That overmanning flying units dilutes individual flying hours and ultimately slows down "time to upgrade" which adversely impacts a unit's mission.
4. That first gate completion prior to assignment to confining duties is a strongly held Air Force policy.

With these factors as a starting point, Chapter Four describes assignment policies for the largest group now assigned to OSA-- the first assignment pilot hereafter referred to as UPTs. Chapter Four generalizes OSA UPT assignment policy so that commanders will have an idea of the future plans the Air Force has for OSA pilots. As always,

specific individual cases are best discussed with either the OSA AFMPC assignment officer or the USA HQ MAC resource manager.

COMMANDER'S ROLE

While the commander has certain assignment process responsibilities which are directed by AFR 36-20 and listed in Chapter Two, his more common function is to serve as career advisor to his people. This publication in no way intends to advocate that commanders agree or disagree with the policies outlined. Rather, its intention is to inform the commander of the rationale and regulations involved so that he, in turn, may discuss realistic career avenues. It is the commander to whom most subordinates turn in seeking trustworthy and credible career advice.

Another important commander role in the assignment process is to track his unit's flying hour program relative to UPT absorption. Chapter One explained that the OSA is absorbing more UPTs than the 1.13 authorized crew ratio. The reason this could be done was excess flying hours in terms of timely upgrade to aircraft commander. The plan calls for about one third of the UPTs and 93% of the prior qualified pilots (POP) to be aircraft commanders or higher at any given time. In order to achieve this goal, each UPT must fly approximately 37 to 40 hours a month. If a commander ascertains that his unit's flying hour program is insufficient to support that rate, it is imperative that he advise the OSA assignment officer, so that planned inbound UPTs can be assigned to units that do have sufficient flying hours. The Aging Rates are:

Pilot Aging Rates

1) UPT-- Copilot	40 hours a month
2) POP	30 hours a month
3) UPT -- Aircraft Commander	30 hours a month
4) Commander	20 hours a month
5) Ops Officer	20 hours a month
6) Attached	11 hours a month

While the formulas from which these figures were derived are inappropriate for this publication, they were validated by both HQ AFMPC/ROF and HQ MAC/DOT in 1981. Because they are based on a macro calculation of the 375 AAW, there could be minor deviations for individual units, but as a general rule of thumb they will ensure sufficient copilot/aircraft commander assets. The personnel community needs each commander's assistance in tracking flying hours relative to total pilots assigned to avoid any chance of throwing the copilot/aircraft commander ratio out of balance.

OSA TOUR LENGTHS

Tour lengths are planned for three years. This planning is based on the assumption that the flow into the OSA from OTC will be relatively stable at a rate of about 75 new pilots annually and that programmed flying hours will remain fairly constant. A change in either of these factors could cause a change in the tour length. FY 85 represented the point in time in which the OSA reached 100% manning relative to the entitled 1.5 crew ratio. That crew ratio represents the maximum absorption of pilots relative to programmed flying hours, and the total number of assigned pilots cannot exceed it. This means that for every new pilot assigned to an OSA unit, someone in the unit must depart or the unit will risk being overmanned, diluting flying hours, and slowing down the upgrade process. Therefore, the real answer to OSA tour lengths is relative to the number of inbound assignees a unit must absorb. The rated management community has planned on a three year tour for OSA pilots.

Another factor affecting the three year tour is the timing of follow-on major weapon system training. Chapter One explained that one of the primary functions of OSA UPT absorption was to prepare pilots for future C-141, C-130, and especially C-5 assignments. The training schedules for these systems are planned and published well in advance of the planned move dates for OSA pilots. Because of this advanced planning, training dates may not line up exactly with an individual's three year tour completion date and may even deviate by two or three months. Since training is planned to exactly the number that an assignment officer can justify, an unfilled training slot cannot be reclaimed at a later date. Therefore, it is mandatory that follow-on major weapon system training be filled regardless of deviation from planned tour length.

Generally, UPT inputs to the T-39/OSA have occurred on an orderly basis, evenly prorated throughout each year. Because of the manner in which the input flow occurred, it is reasonable to plan on a three year tour.

TOUR EXTENSIONS

Often, commanders want to "hang on" to their best people and request tour extensions. While the personnel community has not planned on tour extensions, they are possible. The greater need will dictate. Prior to requesting an extension a commander must ensure that his unit has sufficient flying hours to support his share of upcoming UPT inputs as well as the pilot for whom he is requesting extension. AFMFC on its

part must ensure that the extension would not adversely impact follow-on major weapon system training. Most importantly, the reason for the extension must outweigh and override the Air Force policy for major weapon system input. In short, an extension request must show that the commander's mission capability will be adversely impacted if the request is not granted. For its part, the personnel community would prefer to keep tour extensions to a minimum because of the limited weapon system training for OSA pilots, as well as, the need for OSA pilots in the C-141, C-130, and C-5.

THE OVERSEAS LIST

All officers in the Air Force are vulnerable for overseas duty relative to their qualifications and overseas return date. In the case of rated officers, assignment officers determine the vulnerability by overseas return date relative to major weapon system. In other words, there are actually several different overseas lists. For example, all C-130 pilots are on one list, all bomber pilots on another, and all strategic airlift pilots are on another. First assignment OSA pilots are on the strategic airlift list which also includes all C-141, C-5, C-9, C-140, and C-135/137 (MAC) pilots.

Because the vast majority of strategic airlift assets are based in the CONUS, the historical draw for strategic airlift pilots to overseas locations has been small. There are some requirements for strategic airlift officers in MAC overseas command posts, MAC enroute overseas support locations, and a few staff functions in areas such as USAFE, PACAF, Alaskan Air Command and SOUTHCOM.

In the specific case of first assignment OSA pilots, the chance of being involuntarily assigned overseas are slight given a peacetime environment. First, because there are relatively few strategic airlift pilot requirements the odds for any strategic airlift pilots being sent overseas are small. Second, because the overseas return date is the measure used in selecting nonvolunteers for overseas duty, the relatively low return date for most first assignment pilots makes the odds of being sent small. The overseas return date is the date of service entry adjusted for overseas TDY if an officer has never been assigned to an overseas location. Third, because first assignment OSA pilots were placed into the OSA to build future experienced pilots for the C-130, C-141, and C-5, it would be somewhat self defeating to send OSA pilots to an overseas location rather than have the follow-on major weapon system training. Fourth, it has been a long standing personnel community unwritten policy that officers will not be assigned to non-flying duties until they have completed their first gate (six

years operational flying). Unless an overseas assignment involved operational flying it would violate existing gate policies. Unless there is a dramatic change in policy, first assignment OSA pilots will not be assigned to overseas locations following their OSA tours but will be assigned to an airlift frontline major weapon system. The overseas assignment situation for prior qualified OSA pilots will be discussed in Chapter Five.

MAJOR WEAPON SYSTEM FOLLOW-ON

Many OSA pilots often ask, "why do I need to go to the C-5 or C-141. Why can't I remain in OSA for my career?" It's a fair question and one that deserves some exploration. While there are many opinions, the answer expressed below is the opinion of the writer and is by no means the opinion shared by all.

Career Patterns

It's a good general rule of thumb for rated officers to be involved in the mainstream mission of whatever major command they are assigned. In the case of MAC the primary mission of the MAJCOM focuses around the C-130, C-141 and C-5. Consequently, the majority of rated staff positions require a background in these aircraft for an officer to be assigned. While there is no rule that prohibits assigning a rated officer to many of these slots, historically the prime input has been from one of these aircraft. For example, it makes good sense to assign someone who has expertise in the C-141 if the job entails proposing C-141 war plans. Since a Numbered Air Force or MAJCOM staff tour seems to be one of the ingredients in a successful career pattern, then it becomes an officer to be as competitive as possible for the staff. Being involved in the MAJCOM's primary mission is one of those factors.

Deference

The primary goal of the Air Force is to prevent a war, but if that fails to win that war. While the competition focuses on airlift capability, one doubts that he is actually covered by the OSA portion of US airlift. Philosophically and pragmatically it seems a good idea to train all pilots in a combat system. While it is true, OSA does have a wartime mission, the more pilots we can train in the C-130, C-141, C-5 adds flexibility in carrying out many different mission possibilities. This is one reason all Air Force pilots carry a major weapon system code. They can be located through the personnel system's computers and recalled to their combat systems, if needed, regardless of where they appear to be assigned. There may not be time to train additional pilots during a conflict, and therefore it is wise to train as many as possible in peacetime. The fact that the

Air Force can quickly complement its existing force with pilots from some staff, supplement, and drawdown cockpit positions may be a deterrent in itself.

Equitability

If Form 90 data truly reflects the real desires of airlift pilots, then the OSA aircraft must be among the most requested assignments. The only way to accommodate other airlift pilots is to create flow patterns that allow some officers the opportunity to have OSA assignments. It would be unfair to the whole airlift community to not allow such crossflow. In order to accomplish this crossflow, those pilots already on an OSA assignment must be reassigned elsewhere. In other words, we need to share the wealth and let as many of our pilots as possible have the opportunity to experience a very popular system.

Absorption

One of the primary reasons OSA pilots cannot expect an entire career in OSA aircraft is the absorption of UPTs. One of the main purposes of OSA is to cost-effectively "age" pilots for future assignment to more expensively operated aircraft. If the current group in OSA were to remain, the programmed UPT inputs to the C-12/C-21 would have to be diverted into either the C-130 or C-141 both of which are currently having difficulty in timely upgrades to aircraft commander. OSA does two things to help with the experience problems in the C-130 and C-141. First, it provides experienced pilots who will upgrade quickly. But secondly and, perhaps more important, it provides a place to put first assignment pilots besides in the C-130 and C-141. Without OSA both of these systems would have to absorb an additional 75 to 90 UPTs a year which would compound their experience problems. Further, the C-5 must have a source of 1300 hour pilots from which to draw. This need stems from the expansion of the C-5 fleet and from the fact that many C-5 pilots are approaching retirement.

Career patterns, deterrence, equitability, and absorption are some of the factors that make major weapon system training imperative for OSA pilots. To be sure, the personnel community expects some exceptions, and can accommodate those exceptions if the total number is relatively small and the need is justified. For example, it is not unreasonable to assume that some OSA pilots will require a second tour in OSA to fill positions in the OSA training squadron at Scott AFB or possibly a few will be needed in some of the OSA overseas locations. But generally, it is important for the Air Force and the officer that he/she receive major weapon system training.

AIRCRAFT DISTRIBUTION

One needs to understand the relationship between aircraft distribution and the impact that distribution has on individual assignments. It is this division of major weapon system availability that determines what system a rated officer will receive.

Very simply, the Air Staff reviews its anticipated UFI population for a given fiscal year and divides those UFI students among the aircraft systems. It then reviews those pilots who are not UFIs but need major weapon system training. Such examples include first assignment J-1777 JF-17, C-130, C-141, C-5, as well as first assignment OSA pilots. The Air Staff subdivides these pilots into major weapon systems categories and allocates the number of prior qualified pilots to the individual MAJLUMs responsible for the respective weapon systems.

In the case of first assignment OSA pilots HQ MAC/DOT will receive the Air Staff input and divide the anticipated number of OSA pilots among the C-130, C-141, and C-5. Such factors as available training, experience levels, and anticipated total manning all are considered in the division of the weapon system division. HQ MAC/DOT then provides the division to the personnel community to execute the plan. For example, for FY 85 HQ MAC/DOT anticipated there would be 67 first assignment OSA pilots completing their three year tours and divided that population as follows:

- C-130 17 OSA pilot inputs
- C-141 17 OSA pilot inputs
- C-5 33 OSA pilot inputs

After the division HQ MAC/DOT passed the FY 85 distribution plan to HQ AFMPC and HQ AFMPC to assign OSA pilots to the divisions. The planning was done a year in advance of the starting entry year.

PILOT ASSIGNMENT ACTION

At the conclusion of the training prior to the end of each rating tour, HQ AFMPC will review each officer's upcoming assignment through the Rated Officer Review Board (RORB) Process (see Chapter Two) and determine to which general area he/she will be assigned (ie company, staff or supplement). Since most first assignment OSA pilots will not have completed their gates and none will have major weapon system training, the board expects the RORB will direct continuation of training either in a new weapon system. It will then be assigned to the next flight assignments office in continuation

with HQ MAC/DPROA to determine who goes to which major weapon system.

The problem that arises at this point is that the planned HQ MAC/DOT distribution may not match individual desires. In a June, 1984 computer survey of OSA Form 90s, AFMPC discovered the extent of the mismatch of planned inputs verses desires. Of the 67 pilots anticipated for major weapon system input for FY 85 AFMPC noted that 27 wanted the C-5, 35 wanted the C-141, 3 wanted the C-130, and 2 wanted other aircraft systems. **The point is, not everyone's personal desires can be accommodated in every assignment.** Further, it is going to be difficult for the personnel community to subjectively select which individuals go to which aircraft in a manner that will be perceived as fair.

At this writing the selection process is still evolving. One thing can be said -- the Form 90 will be the primary input in any decision. An accurate and logically developed Form 90 will be instrumental in the final determination.

OSA pilots must understand this imbalance between personal desires and available aircraft and be prepared to accept their second or even third choice. One must realize though, that all three weapon systems are great assignments that offer lots of choice in location and mission. There are many pilots throughout the Air Force that wish they faced such a situation.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed first assignment OSA pilots in detail and has attempted to tie Chapters One and Two into the process. It has looked at such things as the commander's role of career advisor, OSA tour lengths, the overseas list, and major weapon system training for OSA first assignment pilots. Since first assignment pilots constitute the majority of OSA operators, this chapter represents the most important area of this book. However, one must also remember the experienced pilots who are also assigned to OSA. Chapter Five will discuss the aspects of their assignments.

**SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT INFO
PRIOR QUALIFIED PILOTS**

CONTENTS:

**AIRCRAFT SYSTEM
CODING**

POP FOUR LENGTHS

UNUSUAL LIST

**FOLLOW-ON
ASSIGNMENTS**

**PHD/ADVANCED
DEGREE**

CHAPTER FIVE

SPECIFIC OSA ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION PRIOR QUALIFIED PILOTS (PQP)

This chapter addresses the assignment policies for pilots from four aircraft systems who are on loan to OSA. The personnel community refers to this group as prior qualified pilots (PQP). While the assignment policies for this group are generally the same as those discussed for first assignment OSA pilots, there are some differences addressed in this chapter. This Chapter investigates PQP aircraft system coding, tour lengths, standings on the overseas list, and opportunities for follow-on assignments.

PQPs represent 25% of the OSA assigned force at the current 1.5 entitled crew ratio. While the PQP population is smaller than the first assignment OSA pilots, its assignment policies are no less important. It is the PQPs that form the experience foundation for the OSA and serve as the "role models" for the younger first assignment group.

AIRCRAFT SYSTEM CODING

PQPs assigned to OSA come from some other aircraft system. One might think of PQPs as being on loan to OSA for a period of time. These pilots retain their previous weapon system code and are expected to return to that weapon system family upon completion of their OSA tour. For example, a KC-135 pilot who is currently assigned to OSA will return to the jurisdiction of the tanker assignment officers on completion of his/her OSA tour. This is not to say that the KC-135 pilot will necessarily return to tanker duties (he/she could be assigned to a staff position in SAC) but the jurisdiction returns to the KC-135 assignment officers.

The rationale for this coding system is to maintain the ability to broaden pilots of other systems without losing the expensive investment the Air Force has made in their weapon system training. Most weapon system training is vastly more expensive than OSA training, and the intent is to recover pilots who have had the training and experience in a large weapon system to recoup the investment. It is also probably in the officer's best interest to maintain his/her weapon system identity for career purposes. (see Chapter Four discussion of weapon system coding) Further, it is in

the best interest of the OSA to continue this system, because other weapon systems are more willing to loan their good pilots knowing they will return to the weapon system at the end of their OSA tours. The coding system makes sense to the Air Force and the officer, but sometimes individuals have trouble accepting the rationale and attempt to stay in the OSA for the remainder of their careers.

There are exceptions to the weapon system coding system. Occasionally one will find an OSA pilot who has never had any major weapon system training and is deemed too senior to invest the funds for that training. In this case he/she will remain coded to OSA. There are also pilots who have been out of their major weapon system for such a long time that it would not be in their's or the Air Force's best interest to return to the weapon system. HQ AFMPC in conjunction with the MAJCOM can decide to recode such a pilot into OSA and forego that pilot's weapon system identity. A third case can arise when a pilot's talents are better utilized somewhere else in the Air Force besides primary cockpit duties. For example, a KC-135 pilot who has been working on lasers with Air Force Systems Command needs to return to flying for his/her next gate. AFMPC can decide that it is more cost-effective and in the best interest of the Air Force and the individual to train him/her in OSA and return this pilot to engineering duties as soon as his/her next gate has been completed. Recoding a pilot in this case could make a lot of sense. Overall exceptions to the coding system are subjective, must be decided relative to need, and clearly be in the best interest of the Air Force.

PQPs will usually maintain their previous aircraft system coding and revert to the jurisdiction of the respective system's assignment officer at the end of the OSA tour.

PQP TOUR LENGTH

The OSA assignment officer plans for three year PQP tours. When a PQP initially volunteers for OSA duty, the OSA assignment officer must decide whether the PQP meets certain flying hour and quality standards. If he/she is acceptable then he/she must be released by the respective weapon system assignment officer and MAJCOM. At the time of release the losing weapon system assignment officer agrees to the tour length. Such factors as long range forecast need, and the respective weapon system requalification training are determiners in how long the PQP can remain in OSA. Normally the OSA assignment officer will not accept a tour less than three years. The intent of this process is to recoup investment of OSA training while at the same time try to avoid expensive weapon system requalification training for the PQP when he/she returns to his/her aircraft system upon

OSA tour completion. All weapon systems have a maximum period in which a pilot can be noncurrent and still not be required to attend expensive formal requalification training.

At the end of the OSA tour AFMPC assignment officers review options for the individual through the RORB process. The options include return to his/her respective major weapon system, extension in OSA, or perhaps a staff or supplement opportunity. The officer's Form 90 preferences are a great consideration. In the case of an extension, the officer's weapon system assignment officer must have sufficient manning in the respective aircraft system to forestall his/her return, and the OSA assignment officer must determine if he needs to keep the PQP in OSA. This need is usually conveyed by the individual's commander to the OSA assignment officer. PQP four year tour lengths have not been uncommon, but four years is the usual limit.

OVERSEAS LIST

The overseas list works the same as that for first tour OSA pilots discussed in Chapter Four. The great difference is that PQPs are more senior than the first tour pilots and are more vulnerable for overseas duty. The primary lesson to remember with PQPs is that since they are still coded to their primary weapon system, that system's overseas list will determine their vulnerability--not the OSA overseas list. For example, a C-141 and C-130 pilot are both currently assigned to OSA and both have the same overseas return date (the date used to determine overseas vulnerability). However, each would have to check his/her respective weapon system overseas list to determine how vulnerable he/she had become.

It is wise for OSA PQPs to periodically call their weapon system assignment officer at HQ AFMPC to ascertain where they stand on the overseas list. If they feel as if they are vulnerable, it is far better to volunteer for something in which they might be interested, rather than being selected as a number to a slot for which no one else would volunteer.

PQP FOLLOW-ON ASSIGNMENTS

At the end of the OSA tour a PQP's respective weapon system assignment officer has jurisdiction over the follow-on assignment. That assignment officer sometimes has a problem with the follow-on. Normally a PQP is at about that point in his/her career to which a staff or supplement assignment would be most beneficial. However, because he/she is at least three years noncurrent in his/her weapon system,

assignment to the rated staff becomes difficult. Since most rated staff positions require currency in the respective major weapon system, PQPs have difficulty in being competitive with their contemporaries who are current. Also, one of the responsibilities of the assignment officer is to minimize training costs. All weapon systems have a time limit in which a pilot can go noncurrent before being required to return to formal requal training. While the time limit varies from weapon system to weapon system, an OSA PQP who had completed an OSA tour and then was assigned to another three year staff or supplement tour would in all likelihood be required to return to formal requal training. Assignment officers try to avoid action that creates unnecessary requalification expenditure if at all possible.

Although weapon system currency can reduce the flexibility of assignment action for a PQP, there are other factors that do not automatically require the PQP to go back to his/her major weapon system. First, the overall manning (need) of the respective weapon system is an important variable. If the PQP is not needed for the time being, it makes no sense to return him/her to the cockpit. Other factors include an individual's gate status relative to other pilots who might need to fly if there is a shortage of cockpit opportunities, an opportunity to attend Professional Military Education (PME) in residence, the overseas list, and the other possible options being offered (a PQP might have an Air Staff or AFIT slot offered). These kinds of factors can justify an assignment officer's decision to forego return to the weapon system thereby accepting the dollar cost of requalification training in the future. The decision must ultimately be in the best interest of the Air Force mission.

PME/ADVANCED DEGREE

Most Air Force officers recognize the importance of Professional Military Education and an advanced degree not only in terms of personal development and career enhancement but also in follow-on assignments. The only point here is to stress the good opportunity PQP's have to complete either. The relative stable scheduling of OSA provides a good opportunity to obtain off duty education especially when compared to many other aircraft systems.

SUMMARY

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SUMMARY

This guide has attempted to add structure to a very subjective area. The assignment business is seldomly black and white and is difficult to tangibly describe except in generalities. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the assignment process is that its primary function is to fill the needs of the Air Force mission. Because the needs constantly change, the assignment process changes to meet those needs. It is, therefore, impossible to establish rules and policies that will forever be applicable to all individuals. One of the most important aspects of the entire process is that it is individually oriented. The personnel community bases any assignment decision on the individual person relative to his/her abilities in filling an Air Force need.

In the case of OSA some factors are clear. The high absorption of first assignment pilots caused a restructuring of the personnel process for this group. The T-39/OSA has evolved from a system of mostly experienced attached pilots to one that consists of approximately 75% first assignment pilots and 25% prior qualified pilots (PQPs). By looking at these two groups separately one can at least establish some basic tenants that should be fairly accurate in predicting the assignment future for OSA pilots.

FIRST ASSIGNMENT OSA PILOTS

The rated management community decided in the early 1980s to assign UPT graduates in large numbers to the T-39/OSA. The intent was to cost-effectively prepare this group for future assignment to larger more expensive major weapon systems after their OSA tour. We plan on a three year tour for this group, but factors such as major weapon system training availability could change the tour length by a few months. In March, 1984 the rated management community coded the T-39/OSA into the strategic airlift category. Because of this coding, one could reasonably expect that most of these pilots would receive assignments to the strategic airlift major weapon system family. However, there is room some time in the future to assign these pilots to other aircraft systems if the needs dictate. This group will be an important asset to whatever aircraft system they are assigned, because of the flying experience they have gained in the T-39/OSA.

PRIOR QUALIFIED PILOTS (PQP)

The most important aspect to remember about this group is that they have experience in some other aircraft system besides the T-39/OSA and are in reality on loan from that system to OSA. Their previous weapon system assignment officer will have jurisdiction for their follow-on from OSA. Since this is typically a more senior group than the first assignment pilots, it is wise for them to stay in contact with their previous assignment officer concerning the overseas list. Depending on which weapon system they came from, overseas could be a factor at the end of their tour. Other factors their assignment officer must consider are an individual's gate status, his/her time away from the respective major weapon system, the need for experienced pilots in that weapon system at the time of OSA tour completion, and the individual's desires. All of these things come together at assignment time and are the determiners in the process.

STAY IN CONTACT

One of the best things an individual can do is to talk to his assignment officer at HQ AFMPC and at HQ MAC. The OSA assignment officer is always available to discuss current trends and assignment opportunities. Since an officer's review for reassignment starts nine months prior to the actual reassignment date, contact during that phase is especially important. An officer can either call via autovon or visit HQ AFMPC or HQ MAC in person. Commander inputs on behalf of individual officers are also very welcomed and appreciated.

The Form 90 is also equally important. A realistic understanding of the current trends coupled with a Form 90 reflecting those trends is the best means to assignment satisfaction. Because of changing Air Force needs, changing assignment policies follow. An officer who is willing to keep apprised of those changes will be far less likely to be disappointed at assignment time.

The HQ AFMPC and HQ MAC address and phone numbers for airlift assignments are listed below:

HQ AFMPC/ROR4K
RANDOLPH AFB, TX
78148

AV 487 6831/6818

HQ MAC/DPROA
SCOTT AFB, IL
62225

AV 638 2267/4874

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