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FROM TRAVIS TO TODAY: AN ANALYSIS OF RACIAL
PROGRESS IN THE US AIR FORCE OFFICER CORPS SINCE 1971

by

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14. ABSTRACT

The US population is expected to become majority-minority over the next few decades. This tanning of America highlights the urgent need for more diversity amongst its officer corps.¹ This paper calls attention to this trend in much the same manner as those who attempted to bring awareness of the growing cultural bias and discrimination that fed discontent in the ranks and resulted in the racial violence that erupted throughout the US military during the late 1960s and early-1970s. At that time, the Armed Services leaders were largely unaware and unconcerned with the issues of their growing Black enlisted populations but were eventually shocked into action when this disgruntlement turned into protest. A similar, but perhaps more profound cultural shift may occur within the US Air Force as it is expected that its newest enlistees in just over the next decade will be majority-minority. Yet, as was the case over 40 years ago, the Air Force is not developing its officer corps to be representative of the wider society. Moreover, those within its ranks are unaware of the necessity for cross-cultural mentorship so they might comfortably foster professional relationships to both develop and recognize the concerns issues of the more diverse Americans they will lead. Consequently, this trend of an increasingly culturally isolated officer corps foretells of two serious risks facing the Air Force in the next decade: daunting officer recruiting and retention challenges and potential conflicts between majority White senior officers and majority-minority junior officers/enlisted members. This research suggests a major limiting factor to enabling improved diversity of the US Air Force officer corps is the inconsistent and delayed mentorship that many Black (and other minority) officers receive. Despite similar capabilities, motivation, and aptitude, these officers experience fewer professional development opportunities because of their limited access to critical informal mentor relationships early in their military careers. Without adequate and continual mentorship, large proportions of minority officers suffer difficulties in receiving career-enhancing assignments, resulting in less competitive records and consequently lower promotion rates. This dilemma in disproportionately fewer promotions for African-American, Hispanic, and Asian officers not only results in underrepresentation of these officers in the services senior ranks, but signals that only a small proportion will remain in Air Force uniform as the US population becomes increasingly more majority-minority. Thus, in order for the service improve diversity amongst the ranks, it must focus on addressing officer mentorship.

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Preface

With the exception of a few iconic African-American military leaders, discussion of Black military officers is largely absent from contemporary discourse. In fact, attention to racial issues in the US Armed Services almost exclusively centers on Black enlisted personnel, most notably the decreasing numbers of African-Americans enlisting. Since the beginning of the all-volunteer force, most significant discussions regarding Black military personnel dealt with their overrepresentation in the enlisted corps in comparison to their proportion of US society.

Despite their roles commanding the services' enlisted and civilian personnel and advising national and international leaders, considerations of Black officer demographics and challenges are unmentioned in military or civilian media. Even though Black officers share the same African-American heritage as their enlisted cohorts, their professional career developmental concerns and challenges are unique and requires exploration and discussion. This is particularly so as the Air Force continues to fall behind in recruiting and retaining the same proportions of minority officers as are represented by their composition of total college graduates in US society.

For these reasons, as US society becomes considerably more multi-ethnic/racial over the next few decades, it is imperative that the US Air Force take action to ensure its officer corps improves its diversity, actively recruiting and retaining the 'best and brightest' from all groups. This analytical history of the career progression of Black Air Force officers since 1971 reveals that although the service made extensive efforts to improve their recruitment and retention through the 1980s. Since the 1990s, many of these gains in improving diversity amongst its

officers are now reversing. Accordingly, as the composition of US society becomes more pluralistic, it is critical that the US Air Force take immediate action to alter this trend by refocusing its recruiting efforts and mentoring those within the ranks to ensure they enjoy similar opportunities to attain the highest grades of leadership. This study of the history and challenges of African-American Air Force officers addresses this matter and prescribes a means for the service to improve its diversity record and the career development of its officers...regardless of race or ethnic background.

Abstract

The US population is expected to become ‘majority-minority’ over the next few decades. This “tanning of America” highlights the urgent need for more diversity amongst its officer corps.¹ This paper calls attention to this trend in much the same manner as those who attempted to bring awareness of the growing cultural bias and discrimination that fed discontent in the ranks and resulted in the racial violence that erupted throughout the US military during the late-1960s and early-1970s. At that time, the Armed Services’ leaders were largely unaware and unconcerned with the issues of their growing Black enlisted populations but were eventually shocked into action when this disgruntlement turned into protest.

A similar, but perhaps more profound cultural shift may occur within the US Air Force as it is expected that its newest enlistees in just over the next decade will be ‘majority-minority.’ Yet, as was the case over 40 years ago, the Air Force is not developing its officer corps to be representative of the wider society. Moreover, those within its ranks are unaware of the necessity for cross-cultural mentorship so they might comfortably foster professional relationships to both develop and recognize the concerns issues of the more diverse Americans they will lead. Consequently, this trend of an increasingly culturally isolated officer corps foretells of two serious risks facing the Air Force in the next decade—daunting officer recruiting and retention challenges and potential conflicts between majority White senior officers and ‘majority-minority’ junior officers/enlisted members.

This research suggests a major limiting factor to enabling improved diversity of the US Air Force officer corps is the inconsistent and delayed mentorship that many Black (and other minority) officers receive. Despite similar capabilities, motivation, and aptitude, these officers experience fewer professional development opportunities because of their limited access to critical informal mentor relationships early in their military careers. Without adequate and continual mentorship, large proportions of minority officers suffer difficulties in receiving career-enhancing assignments, resulting in less competitive records and consequently lower promotion rates. This dilemma in disproportionately fewer promotions for African-American, Hispanic, and Asian officers not only results in underrepresentation of these officers in the service's senior ranks, but signals that only a small proportion will remain in Air Force uniform as the US population becomes increasingly more 'majority-minority.' Thus, in order for the service improve diversity amongst the ranks, it must focus on addressing officer mentorship.

Organization and Methodology

This is an analysis of the historical career progression of active duty US Air Force African-American commissioned officers since the end of the Vietnam War to assess potential discrepancies concerning their recruitment, promotion, and retention. Composing 17% of the entire active duty military force, and 8.5% of the officer corps, Blacks remain the largest minority group in the US military.² Therefore, addressing the concerns and inequities faced by them can have implications for understanding similar under-representation and differentiations in career development for other minority groups. As a result, this analysis of the US Air Force's efforts addressing discrepancies in the career progression of Black officers since 1971 offers a prescription for guidance and action as the adjusts to the reality of a more racially and ethnically diverse society resulting from the "tanning of America" over the next decade.

One critical point of clarification is this paper's intentional focuses on diversity instead of either equal opportunity or affirmative action. 'Equal opportunity' and 'affirmative action' generally relate to regulatory policies and guidance enacted to counter discriminatory practices (usually individual) by increasing the "representation of women and minorities in areas of employment, education, and business from which they have been historically excluded."³ The US Air Force's equal opportunity program serves this purpose, "ensuring Airmen are treated fairly and work in an environment free from harassment and discrimination."⁴ Instead of the compliance orientation of affirmative action and equal opportunity efforts, this report focuses more broadly on the subject of 'diversity.' The key distinction is focusing on achieving increasingly diverse and culturally representative workforces to "add organizational value and

enhance mission accomplishment.”⁵ More specifically, as Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz explained, “diversity provides [the] Air Force with an aggregation of strengths, perspectives, and capabilities that transcends individual contributions.”⁶

Organization

This paper begins in 1971 because it was after racial violence rocked various Air Force installations, most notably the four-day riot at Travis AFB that same year, that its leaders took an active and progressive role in improving the conditions under which Blacks served, as well as the retention and development of its personnel. This period is also important due to it being the start of the all-volunteer military. President Richard M. Nixon’s Commission on an All-Volunteer Force, established the recruitment and retention system the US Armed Forces employs to this day. It assessed the utility of providing economic incentives (i.e., higher base salaries, improved quality of life, special allowances) to induce a broader cross-section of US society to join the military.⁷ Improved race relations were integral to ensuring increased overall Black representation in the Air Force. Therefore, when the all-volunteer force began in 1973, the US Air Force fully committed to expanding the representation of Blacks within its officer ranks.

The paper begins with a brief history of African-American officers in the Air Force to provide context of the military’s racial policies at the start of the all-volunteer force. This follows with an analysis of Black officer progression from 1971 to 1991. Since almost another 20 years has passed after the end of the Cold War, the next section assesses changes that transpired since 1991 to determine how well the Air Force may have maintained indicators of continued diversity. The paper’s final section ends with recommendations offered based on this analysis.

Methodology

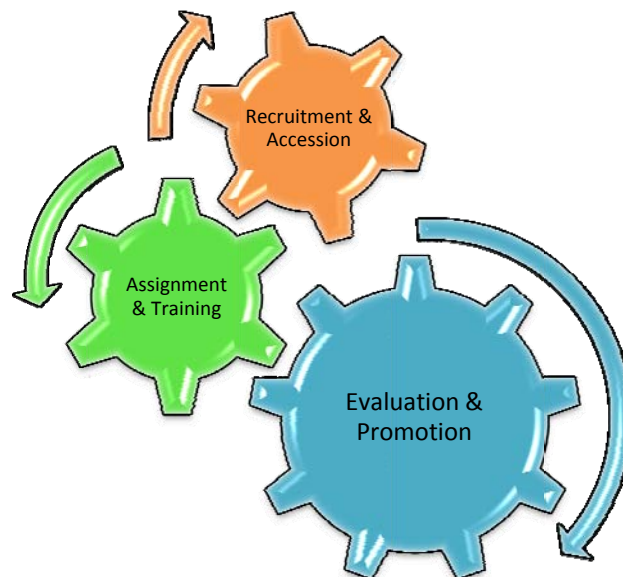
This essay analyzes the recruitment, assignment, and promotion rates of African-American officers in comparison to US Air Force officer corps averages to describe potential variances in overall officer retention and progression. Additionally, this paper highlights the proportion of Black officers in the other Armed Services in comparison to the US Air Force. Based on this assessment and the respective accession/promotion criteria in the military services, the paper will assess Black officer career development in the Air Force and its sister services. Although correlation may not exactly indicate causation, the historical focus of this research offers significant inferences as to likely reasons for the underrepresentation of Black Air Force officers and implications of these concerns in the future.

The data analyzed in this document primarily came from on-line data retrieval sources provided by the Air Force Personnel Center, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, Department of Defense, Government Accountability Office, and US Census Bureau. Reliance on public web retrieval mechanisms to access demographic information inhibited the ability to track certain data consistently over extended periods, as well as the in-depth research of some causal links between data sets and career developmental factors. Despite these limitations, this paper employs the best data available to highlights patterns of variances in Black officer development and makes recommendations in correcting them.

Deficiencies in relevant statistical information are due to difficulties encountered with certain US Air Force sources. Some agencies claimed they did not track racial demographic data until very recently and others indicated they would only release requested material under the Freedom of Information Act. Additionally, some sources provided information that proved not especially useful for either analysis or compilation because the demographic data was

incomplete, duplicative, and/or corrupted. Such hindrances may hint at future dilemmas in addressing overall disparities in officer career development. Similarly, this is a significant area for improvement for remedying inconsistencies in tracking demographic information and making this information more readily available to service members and researchers alike.

Figure 1. Officer Development and Retention Model



The key conceptual framework of this essay is the Officer Development and Retention Model. It serves as the structure for assessing US Air Force Black officer progression. This conceptual outline fuses similar concepts drawn from career progression references in three sources: (1) *President's Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Armed Forces: Equality of Treatment and Opportunity for Negro Military Personnel Stationed Within the United States (Initial Report)* (1963), (2) *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers* (1999), and (3) *Managing Diversity in the Military* (2001).⁸

Unlike civilian industry, progression within the military's line officer corps is almost exclusively through advancement from the lowest grade—second lieutenant (O-1). Therefore, progression is dependent upon time in service, assignments, and performance evaluations. For

an officer to attain the rank of colonel or general, requires approximately 21 to 26 years respectively. Recruitment and accession is the period in which future line officers generally start their careers via one of the three officer commissioning sources: Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC), Officer Training School (OTS), and US Air Force Academy (USAFA). Officer accession is a highly competitive and rigorous process with a four-year degree from an accredited college or university as a basic requirement.

Assignment and training are key determining factors in the progression of officers since certain occupational specialties are significantly more representative in the colonel and general grades. Assignments are made within defined specialties based on college major, cadet class standing, demonstrated aptitude for a given specialty based on standardized or physical test results, and needs of the service.⁹ Training occurs throughout an officer's career from basic technical skills training through graduate-level, senior professional military education (PME).

Finally, promotions are based on officer performance evaluations, assignment history and promotion recommendations. Evaluations are the single most important factor in officer promotion. Officers' supervisors (or raters) document their respective achievements during the reporting period. Raters suggest officers next assignments and ranking amongst peers. As officers progress, the weight of each evaluation increases in correlation to the growing opportunities for increased responsibility. Evaluation records are used to decide future assignments and specialized schooling. This developmental education is fundamental to selection boards' determination of officers' potential to serve in the next higher grade.

Due to the military's 'up or out' system of promotion, US Air Force officers are in-the-promotion-zone (IPZ) promotion eligible: 2 years to first lieutenant (O-2), 4 years to captain (O-3), 9-11 years for major (O-4), 15-17 for lieutenant colonel (O-5), and 21-23 for colonel (O-6).¹⁰

The variation is based primarily on service board cycle scheduling. Promotion boards competitively select officers for O-3 and each of the 'field grade' ranks—O-4, O-5, and O-6. Officers are selected automatically for promotion to O-2 barring significant disciplinary issues.

Notes

¹A McKinsey Of Pop Culture? Steve Stoute is Making Hot Sellers Out of Cold Brands by Turning Execs on to "The Tanning of America," *BusinessWeek*, 26 Mar 2007, http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/07_13/b4027062.htm?chan=top+news_top+news+index_companies (Accessed 9 February 2009). Term "Tanning of America" drawn from Steve Stoute's marketing plan make brands appear to attract growing multi-cultural US society.

² Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard FY 2007*, 4.

³ Stanford University, "Affirmative Action," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/affirmative-action/> (Accessed 22 March 2009).

⁴ Air Force Strategic Diversity Office, *Diversity and Equal Opportunity in Our Air Force*, 8 min., 58 sec., US Air Force Television Office, <http://www.af.mil/tv/index.asp?showid=6970> (Accessed 24 Mar 2009)

⁵ Lt Col Anthony D. Reyes, *Strategic Options for Managing Diversity in the U.S. Army*, (Washington DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, June 2006), *ixi-x*.

⁶ Tech Sgt Amaani Lyle, "Senior Leaders Speak Out on Diversity, Equal Opportunity," *Air Force Link*, 23 March 2009, <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123140370> (Accessed 24 March 2009).

⁷LT Roy L. Nixon, "Defense Downsizing and Blacks in the Military" master's thesis, (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 1993), 6.

⁸ *President's Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Armed Forces: Equality of Treatment and Opportunity for Negro Military Personnel Stationed Within the United States (Initial Report)* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office. June 1963), 8-15, US Department of Defense, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, (Washington DC: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel Readiness, November 1999), 2-3, and Mickey R. Dansby, James B. Stewart, and Schuyler C. Webb, eds., *Managing Diversity in the Military: Research Perspectives from the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001), 222.

⁹ US Department of Defense, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, 43.

¹⁰ Bernard D. Rostker, Harry J. Thie, James L. Lacy, Jennifer H. Kawata, Susanna W. Purnell, *The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act of 1980: A Retrospective Assessment*, (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1993), 14.

Part 1

Brief History of Black Officers in the US Air Force from 1940 to 1970

Americans of African heritage served faithfully and honorably in defense of the United States in all the nation's wars since the American Revolution. Although Blacks bled and died for the freedoms of their compatriots, the ability of Blacks to lead and command troops under the banner of their nation was restricted until the Civil War. During that war, approximately 75 to 100 Blacks served as officers in the US Army, although they were restricted to units commanded by White officers.¹ After the Civil War, not until World War I were significant numbers of Blacks again commissioned officers in the US Army.

During and after World War I, the US Army Air Corps and US Marine Corps refused to accept any African-Americans at all.² In the interwar years, the Army largely removed Blacks from front-line combat units and relegated them primarily to combat support units (i.e., cooks, stewards, and drivers). By 1940, Black officer strength stood at five on active duty in the entire US military: three chaplains, Brigadier General Benjamin Davis, Sr., and his son Captain Benjamin Davis Jr. (a drop from 1,408—0.7% of the US Army's officers in World War I).³

Air Force—Separate but Equal?

Despite vehement objections from Army Air Corps leaders, President Franklin D. Roosevelt directed them to accept African-American personnel into their ranks. This led to the creation of the 'Tuskegee Airmen' of the 99th Fighter Squadron, 332nd Fighter Group, and 477th Bomber Group. Subsequently, Black participation in the Army Air Forces mushroomed from

zero in 1940 to 138,903 in 1945 (of whom 1,559 were officers).⁴ During the war, the “Red Tailed Angels” or “Lonely Eagles,” as they were called, of the 332nd Fighter Group downed over 400 enemy aircraft, earned numerous combat citations (including 95 Distinguished Flying Crosses), and gained the respect of the bomber crews they valiantly escorted on missions in Germany and southern Europe. Of the 993 pilots who graduated from the Tuskegee program, 450 fought in the European theater and 66 died in combat.⁵ Despite the accolades, Black officer upward mobility war was stunted due to Army Air Forces policies mandating segregated units, training, and forbidding African-American officers from commanding White officers.

When the US Air Force formed in 1947, Blacks made up 6.1% of its personnel strength, but only 0.6% of its officer corps.⁶ The small fraction of Black officers was not due to lack of quality or quantity of available Black aviators. Rather, it resulted from the Air Force’s arbitrary limitation of their numbers to approximately 500. Air Force support of strict segregation and quotas remained in place despite post-war recommendations suggesting the granting of commissions to qualified personnel regardless of race.⁷

In 1948, President Harry S. Truman acting on the recommendations of his President’s Committee on Civil Rights, issued Executive Order 9981, which declared “equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.”⁸ President Truman then created the President’s Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Forces, which abolished quota systems and started integrating training programs.⁹ Primarily due to concerns in the waste in human capital and inefficiencies created in preserving two segregated air forces, Secretary of the Air Force Stuart Symington deactivated the 332nd Fighter Group and integrated its personnel into previously all-white organizations. According to Lt. Col. Charles Francis, formerly of the 332nd Fighter Group:

The integration program progressed beyond the hope of the most optimistic exponent of integration. To a large extent, those who were reassigned to white units were received at their new bases as American soldiers and given assignments according to their abilities. Black officers and enlisted men were given the same privileges as whites and treated as individuals rather than as a race.¹⁰

Personnel demands of the Korean War and the exemplary performance of Blacks in integrated units debunked many misperceptions, so that by 1956 the remnants of the overt 'Jim Crow' segregation had effectively disappeared from the US military.¹¹ Yet although the military was legally desegregated, difficulties continued. African-Americans could now serve throughout the Air Force but the phenomenon later known as institutional racism remained as pervasive as ever. As a result, overt racial prejudice and unofficial racial discrimination continued. Few Black officers were recruited or promoted and consequently, by 1964 even though the proportion of Air Force Black enlisted personnel grew to 10%, but the population of Black officers only increased to 1.5%.¹²

Gesell Committee to Travis Riot

The Kennedy administration took action to improve the civil/human rights of Blacks. In 1962, President John F. Kennedy re-established the President's Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Armed Forces, led by Judge Gerhard Gesell, to help remedy the on and off-base racial discrimination facing Black service members.¹³ Despite Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's mandate, individual services ignored the Gesell Committee's recommendations.¹⁴ Commanders relied on voluntary compliance with anti-discrimination laws and regulations, ignored court martial and promotion rate disparities, and refused to confront local businesses and law enforcement officials when service members complained of off-base prejudice.¹⁵

Another cause of the racial divide was the ineffective leadership and discipline provided to soldiers by junior officers and non-commissioned officers.¹⁶ The few Black officers in

uniform had neither the numbers nor influence within their services to alter the spiral of racial unrest occurring worldwide starting in the late-1960s. Additionally, many White senior leaders were either unaware of or uninterested in, complaints of prejudice raised by their Black subordinates. Consequently, racially charged incidents flared at dozens of installations in all military branches between 1968 and 1973, with even greater magnitude, damage, and casualties. The US Air Force was shocked by its largest race riot, at Travis Air Force Base beginning on May 22, 1971, during which violence between several hundred airmen raged for two days.¹⁷

Equal Opportunity Begins and Race Riots End

Now aware of its failings and the need for reform, combined with the necessity to recruit and retain capable and qualified troops for the transition to an all-volunteer military force, the Defense Department took aggressive actions to resolve the major issues faced by Black service personnel. In 1971, the Air Force conducted its own study on racism at its training bases and found, “unequal treatment is manifested in unequal punishment, offensive and inflammatory language, prejudice in the assignment of details, lack of products for [B]lacks in the BX (base exchange), harassment by security policemen under orders to break up five or more [B]lacks in a group, double standards in enforcement of regulations.”¹⁸

In the early-1970s, the US Armed Services conducted the most comprehensive research on race relations in US history. One committee with lasting impact on the future of racial tolerance in the US military was the Inter-service Task Force on Education in Race Relations.¹⁹ Programs recommended by this commission and others included: formation of the Defense Race Relations Institute (now Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute—DEOMI), creating equal opportunity offices reporting directly to installation commanders, mandatory multicultural

training, direct action against off-base agencies discriminating against military personnel, and promotion evaluation system changes to eliminate bias.

Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird promised to eliminate “every vestige of discrimination” from the military and Air Force Chief of Staff General John Ryan required all commanders to support the “Equal Opportunity and Race Relations Education program with the same vigor and enthusiasm as that given the flying mission.”²⁰ With forceful and focused support from leaders at each echelon, implementation of these initiatives produced an end to the violent and costly racial conflict that risked erosion of the discipline and trust that is essential to the Armed Forces. By the late 1970s, the Air Force substantially eliminated overt racial bias.

Notes

¹ Henry E. Dabbs, *Black Brass: Black Generals and Admirals in the Armed Forces of the United States*, (New Jersey: Afro-American Heritage House Publishers, 1984), 35.

² L. D. Reddick, “The Negro Policy of the United States Army, 1775-1945,” *Journal of Negro History*, January 1949, 22.

³ Reddick, 22 and Bernard C. Nalty, *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 136.

⁴ Alan M. Osur, “Black-White Relations in the U.S. Military, 1940-1972.” *Air University Review*, 27 July 1998, <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/aureview/1981/nov-dec/osur.htm> and US Department of Defense, *Black Americans in Defense of Our Nation*, (Washington DC: Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy/Equal Opportunity, 1991), 119.

⁵ Vance O. Mitchell, *Air Force Officers Personnel Policy Development, 1944-1974*, (Washington DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1996), 326 and US Department of Defense, *Black Americans in Defense of Our Nation*, 71, 92.

⁶ William Bowman, Roger Little, and G. Thomas Sicilia, *The All Volunteer Force After a Decade*, (McLean, VA: Pergamon-Brassey’s International Defense Publishers, 1986), 75.

⁷ *Ibid*, 328.

⁸ Osur.

⁹ Osur and Charles C. Moskos, Jr., “Racial Integration in the Armed Forces,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, September 1966, 134-5.

¹⁰ US Department of Defense, *Black Americans in Defense of Our Nation*, 75.

¹¹ Moskos, 147-8.

¹² William Bowman, Roger Little, and G. Thomas Sicilia, *The All Volunteer Force After a Decade*, (McLean, VA: Pergamon-Brassey’s International Defense Publishers, 1986), 75.

¹³ Nalty, 282-4.

¹⁴ Osur and Charles Moskos Jr., *Public Opinion and the Military Establishment*, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1971), 149-79.

¹⁵ Nalty, 290-302.

¹⁶ Ronald H. Spector, *After Tet: The Bloodiest Year in Vietnam*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 247-9.

¹⁷ *Facts on File*, “Disorders Erupt at Coast Base,” Thursday, 20 May-Wednesday, 26 May, 1971, 388.

¹⁸ Richard Halloran. “Air Force Racism Charged in Study.” *The New York Times*, 3 November 1967, 1, 23.

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¹⁹ James B. Stewart, “The Effects of Racial Incidents on Satisfaction with Military Life: Evidence from the Armed Forces Equal Opportunity Survey,” (Patrick AFB, FL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, 2001), 2.

²⁰ Osur.

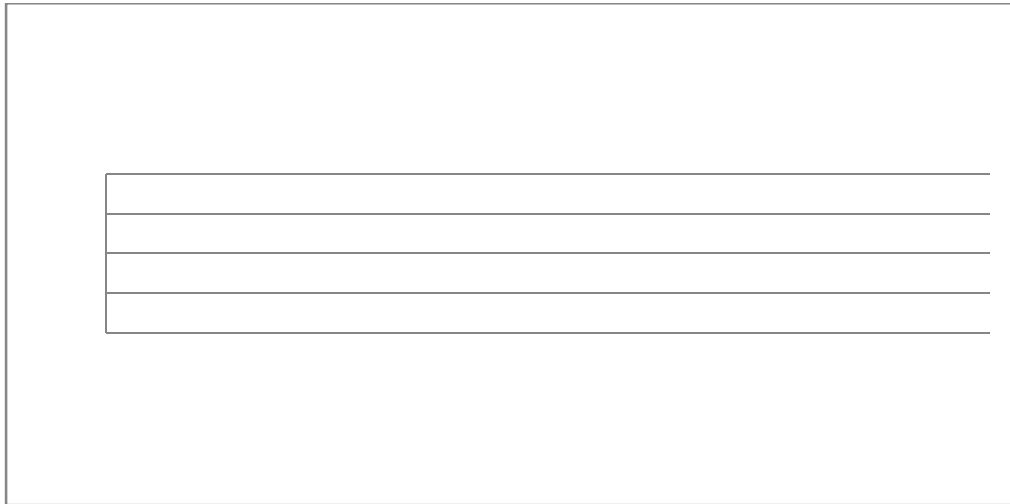
Part 2

A Period of Progress: Black Air Force Officers from 1971 to 1991

After the tumultuous period of racial conflict that racked the US military during the latter years of the Vietnam War, the Department of Defense instituted a variety of programs to finally deal with the blatant racial inequities and discrimination that plagued the services. This period of equal opportunity began with the Secretary of Defense's "Human Goals Charter," which was first issued in 1969. According to this charter, the DoD's goal was established to "provide everyone in the military the opportunity to rise to as high a level of responsibility as possible, based only on individual talent and diligence."¹

Taking its cue from the Defense Department efforts and in response to racial violence that struck installations worldwide, the Air Force sought to improve race relations. This proved most important as the US military transitioned to an all-volunteer military. Diversity and equal representation were integral to attracting and retaining new recruits from throughout US society. Chief among these improvements was increasing the number and proportion of Black officers within the ranks. Indeed, this had been the top recommendation of President Kennedy's 1963 Gesell Committee, which had noted that in 1962, only 1.2% of US Air Force officers were Black, although African-Americans made up 9.1% of its enlisted corps.² By 1971, this percentage inched to 1.7% despite the fact that 6.4% of all Black Americans possessed at least a four-year college education.³

Figure 2. Black College Graduate & US Armed Forces/Air Force Officer Populations⁴



Increased representation of Black officers within the service was imperative to improving overall race relations and success in this area relied heavily on commander involvement. The service's race riots of the early-1970s revealed that commanders and officers (who were almost exclusively White males), possessed limited sensitivity to and understanding of the plight of the increasing population of Black enlisted airmen. Improving diversity in the Air Force's officer corps therefore proved to be crucial to improving overall race relations.

In 1971, the US Air Force sought to attain the equal opportunity aims outlined earlier by the Gesell Committee and Defense Department and developed an initiative to recruit qualified Blacks into its officer corps.⁵ For the first time since being forced to admit African-Americans in 1940, the service "made it possible for [African-Americans] to enter upon a career of military service with assurance that his acceptance will be in no way impeded by reason of [their] color."⁶

The Gesell Committee had forecast the need for a more diverse officer corps and outlined various recommendations to increase the numbers of Black officers in the US military. These suggestions dealt with improving the methods for recruitment, assignment, and promotion of Blacks. These three areas form the Officer Development and Retention Model. Analyzing each

aspect of the model—recruitment/accesion, assignment/training, and evaluation/promotion, this section assesses the extent of progression of Black officers in the Air Force and its level of improvement to advance the diversity in the officer ranks from 1971 to 1991.

Recruitment and Accession

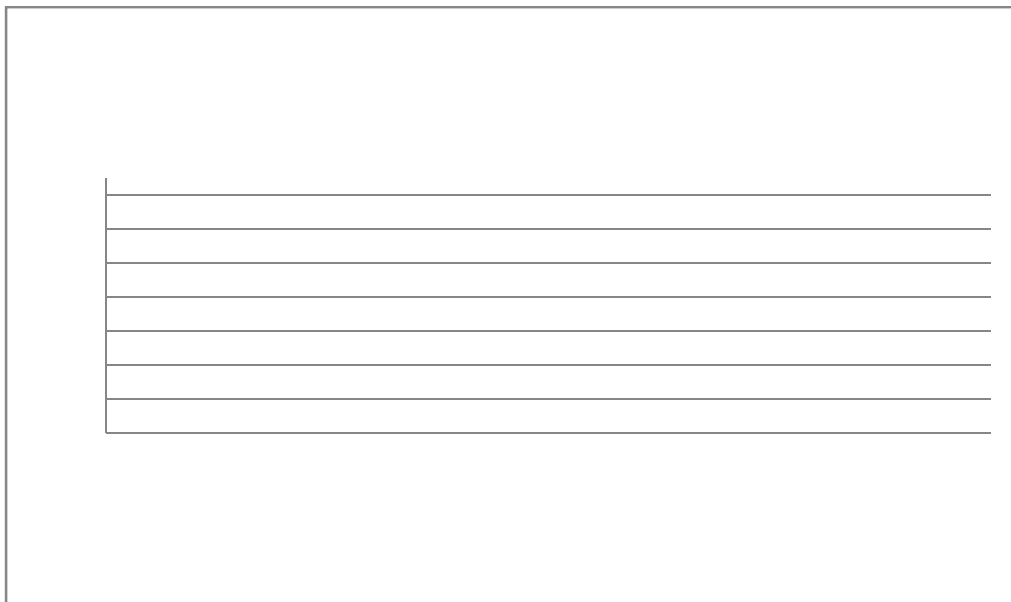
Within the first ten years of the implementation of the all-volunteer military, African-American representation in the Air Force officer corps tripled. During the 1970s, the numbers of Black officers increased in part due to Vietnam-era efforts to expand AFROTC presence at historically Black colleges and universities, as well as targeted recruitment by USAFA. This emphasis on recruitment of Black officers partially resulted from the antiwar backlash at predominately-White schools that reduced the numbers of White male volunteers.⁷ These focused initiatives significantly improved the diversity of the Air Force officer corps.

The US Air Force Academy class of 1963 was the first to graduate Blacks, with three earning degrees and commissions.⁸ For the next decade, of the thousands of cadets to attend, only a few were African-American, and no more than 33 graduated. The post-Vietnam War actions of Air Force leaders to recruit more USAFA Black cadets were augmented by the expansion of its preparatory school curriculum to provide remedial academic support to “assist otherwise qualified Black applicants to overcome minor education deficiencies.”⁹ This was necessary given the inferior educations that many African-Americans received due to residual segregationist policies in the ‘Jim Crow’ South and in urban areas elsewhere in the country. Consequently, it was not until 1973 that the Academy consistently graduated Blacks in each successive class.¹⁰ So successful were the Academy’s early efforts to recruit, develop, and provide equal treatment of Black students that in 1977, Cadet Edward A. Rice became the first Black designated as USAFA’s Cadet Wing Commander. (Cadet Rice eventually became a

decorated bomber pilot and three-star general.) USAFA progressively graduated more Black officers, with their percentages growing from 1.3% in 1971 to a high of 7.3% in 1986.¹¹

From the late 1970s into the first half of 1980s, the US Air Force leveraged the nation's precarious economic situation, which included skyrocketing inflation and persistent unemployment, to recruit new Black college graduates.¹² For most of the 10-year period from 1973 to 1983, the Air Force generally outperformed most of the sister services in this regard, recruiting the highest proportion of Blacks through its various accession programs.¹³ The military proved attractive to Blacks as it came to be widely recognized for its efforts to eliminate vestiges of overt racism. Due to these realities and the targeted recruitment of Black officers, their populations within AFROTC detachments also exploded during this period. In ten years, the percentage of Black AFROTC graduates climbed from 2.6% in 1972 to 13.8% in 1982.¹⁴

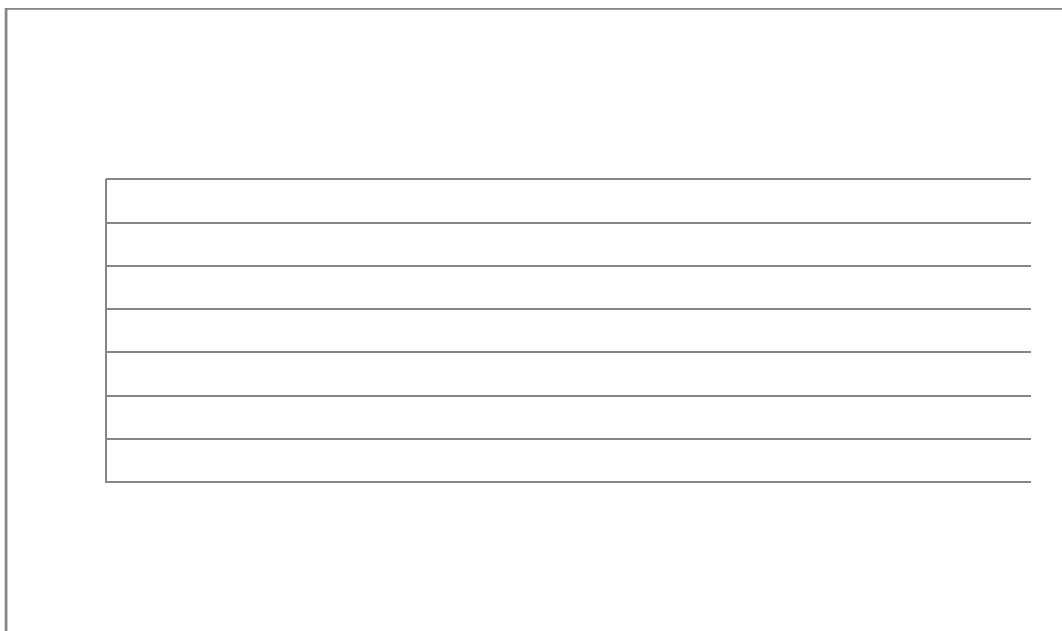
Figure 3. US Air Force Black Line Officer Accessions by Commission Source¹⁵



Over time, the focus of the US Air Force on recruiting qualified Black officers diminished. After the mid-1980s, the proportion of Blacks commissioned from either AFROTC

or USAFA shrank from their earlier highs. By 1991, the proportion of Black officers commissioned was only 6.2% of USAFA and 3.6% of AFROTC's second lieutenants—proportions not seen since 1983 and 1973 respectively.¹⁶ Evidence of increased African-American officer populations in other military branches compared to declining Black Air Force officer recruitment debunked the common misperception that the improved US economy drew qualified, college-educated Blacks into the civilian job sector. Black officer population growth in the US Army and US Navy from 1983 to 1991 (increased 2.2% and 1.2% respectively) suggests that, contrary to the widely held belief that Blacks who were educated declined to serve in the Armed Services, the more likely explanation is that the Air Force moved away from targeted recruitment of African-American officers.

Figure 4. Black Officer Population by Service w/ Civilian Comparison Group¹⁷



Alarmed by these negative trends, in 1993 Congress directed the General Accounting Office (GAO) to compile a report on gender and racial disparities at the USAFA. The report focused on three areas: differences in performance indicators, cadet and faculty perceptions of

fairness, and actions taken by the Academy's leadership to enhance the success of minorities and women. The GAO found that minorities had higher attrition rates, were subjected to proportionally more academic and honor reviews, and that proportionally fewer were represented in the top 50th or 15th percentiles of their graduating classes. Additionally, it was discovered that minority and White students possessed opposing views of equal treatment, with higher percentages of Whites viewing minorities as being treated better and equally large proportions of minorities perceiving worse treatment. Finally, the GAO found that although the USAFA's leadership was aware of many of the issues raised in the report, they did not analyze discrepancies in student performance, establish criteria to determine performance differences, or document actions taken or plans to implement in the future to improve equal opportunity.¹⁸

Assignment and Training

According to a Department of Defense study, key factors inhibiting the early development and advancement of Black officers included educational/pre-commissioning preparation, 'slow starts' in initial assignments, and limited access to peer and mentor networks.¹⁹ Weak or non-existent mentorship and peer networking proved detrimental because information important to career success is made available to junior officers only through networks comprised of more senior officers. The limited peer socialization of the small numbers of Black officers at Air Force installations, combined with lack of mentorship by senior White officer mentors precluded many young African-Americans from accessing important informal developmental associations. As a result, many Black junior officers missed important tutelage and insight necessary for their own career development.

Air Force officers' occupational specialties are determined by their performance during the commissioning accession process, the needs of the Air Force, demonstrated fitness for a

particular specialty based on standardized and physical test results, and the individual's desires. An officer's career field has a significant impact on opportunities for future progression in rank, since certain occupations enjoy higher promotion selection rates. Such undoubtedly was the case during the Cold War in the aviation-focused US Air Force, in which pilot predominance in the senior grades was overwhelming throughout the period of survey.

During the first several decades of the US Air Force's existence, policy decisions influencing assignments, command opportunities, and subsequent promotions favored pilots. Pilots were promoted disproportionately to their numbers in the officer corps. For instance, in 1970, while only 30% of all officers were pilots, 88% of all generals and 65% of all colonels were pilots, despite the fact that less than 25% of all colonel billets were specifically designated for pilots.²⁰ Although personnel policies slowly changed to allow more non-aviation officers to rise to the higher grades, the situation remained grim for mission support officers in the late-1980s. For example, in 1989 pilots were promoted at a significantly higher percentage (both in-the-promotion-zone and below-the-promotion-zone) than mission support officers: Colonel—IPZ (49.0% vs. 42.3%) and BPZ (4.7% vs. 1.9%), Lt Colonel—IPZ (67.3% vs. 65.1%) and BPZ (5.1% vs. 2.4%), Major—IPZ (93.1% vs. 81.3%) and BPZ (3.3% vs. 2.2%).²¹

Such disproportionate pilot promotion rates significantly affected the situation of Black officers because they were least concentrated in tactical operations career fields (i.e., pilot, navigator). In fact, the proportion of Blacks in this area never rose above 4.0% during the entire 20-year period and concentrated primarily in engineering/maintenance, supply, and administrative careers.²² Consequently, with promotion opportunities to the highest grades in the Air Force favoring pilots, it is clear that the underrepresentation of Black officers in tactical operations fields limited their promotion opportunities. A report conducted by the Office of the

Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness supports this assessment, revealing that the root cause of the limited numbers of minorities in aviation career fields was a general lack of recruitment and development by the Services' accession and training programs.²³

Figure 5. Air Force Black Officer (O-1 to O-3) Distribution by Career Group²⁴



Blacks who were selected for tactical operations career tracks tended to suffer higher attrition rates than their White peers despite similar qualifications. In 1984, Maj. James Powell of the US Air Force's Air Command and Staff College conducted an extensive study to determine possible factors influencing disproportionately high attrition rates of Black officers during undergraduate pilot training (UPT).²⁵ According to his data, from 1977 to 1983, the attrition rate for Blacks was as much as 27% higher than that of White males. Additionally, unlike their White counterparts, there was limited correlation between Black officer washout rates and Air Force Officer Qualifying Test scores. Moreover, Maj. Powell discovered that relatively few Blacks attended UPT compared to their overall representation in the Air Force

officer corps. This report concluded that the primary reasons Black underrepresentation in UPT was: limited number of role models, recruiters influencing them to apply for aviation training, and limited mentorship by other officers in preparation for and throughout UPT.

In addition to an officer's initial training selection, assignments influence overall career progression. Each Air Force occupational specialty possesses key developmental jobs/positions that serve as prerequisites for promotion. Traditionally, ROTC and recruiting assignments were not career enhancing or promotable jobs. Yet due to the service's efforts to attract minority officers into its ranks during the 1970s and 1980s, disproportionately large numbers of Black officers were selected for ROTC and recruiting assignments. In turn, Black officers serving in these jobs usually suffered stunted career trajectories.²⁶

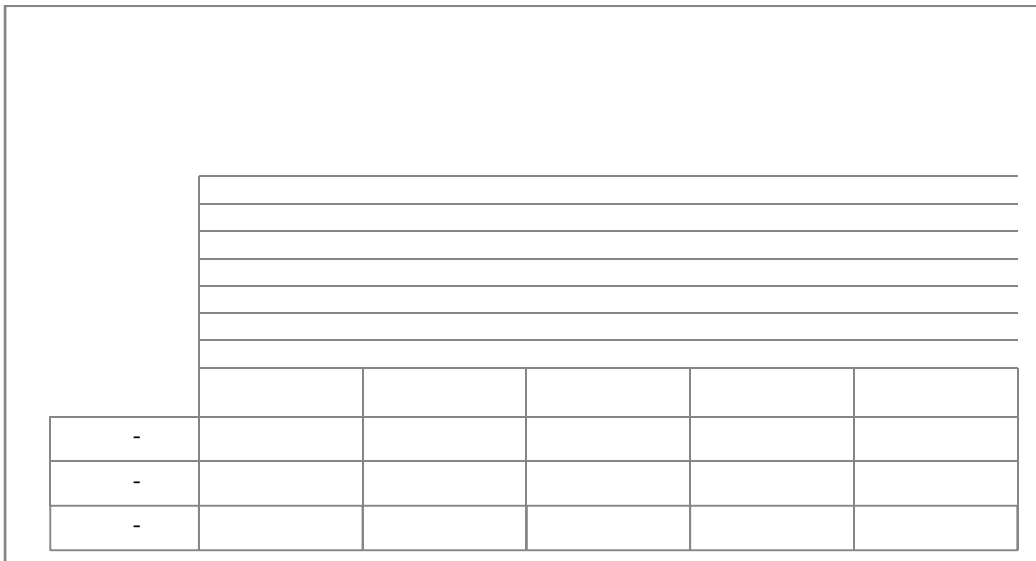
Evaluation and Promotion

Performance evaluations are the single most important factor in determining an officer's career progression. Promotion selection boards and assignment teams review the recommendations and recognition highlighted in these reports to select officers for progressive career opportunities and grade promotion. Specifically, two important career enhancing and extremely competitive assignments for line officers are in-residence professional military education and unit command. Selection boards choose a fraction of all eligible officers for these opportunities based almost entirely on each officer's assignment history and evaluations.

During the 1970s, the US Air Force made a concerted effort to promote outstanding senior Black leaders who were otherwise qualified to achieve the general officer ranks, but may not have been selected due to earlier institutional discrimination. Consequently, in 1978, 2.2% of all its general officers were African-American.²⁷ Moreover, from 1970 to 1990, 24 African-American Air Force officers attained general officer grades. Of these general officers, two were

promoted to four stars—Gen. Daniel “Chappie” James and Gen. Bernard Randolph, and the first Black female general officer was selected—Maj. Gen. Marcelite Jordan-Harris.²⁸ These officers were among those who came into the Air Force prior to the all-volunteer force.

Figure 6. USAF Black Officer Population by Grade Grouping (1962-2007)²⁹



The increased numbers of Blacks recruited through the Air Force’s officer accession programs in the early to mid-1970s met their field grade promotion boards in the late 1980s. Evidence shows that these officers experienced lower promotion rates than their White male peers. For example, in 1978 Blacks consisted of 4.7% of the Air Force’s company grade officers, but only 3.1% of its field grade officers in 1987.³⁰ A DEOMI report tracked the promotion rates of Black officers to each field grade rank from 1987 to 1991 and discovered that Air Force Black male officers were constantly under-promoted.³¹ Lt Col Barbara Sutton, an Air War College student, reviewed O-3 to O-6 promotion rates for 1984 to 1989 and found that with the exception of 2 of the 28 promotion boards, Black officers were more likely to be passed over, experiencing as much as a 19% difference in promotion selection rates.³²

Summary

Prior to the start of the all-volunteer military, promotion opportunities for Black officers were quite bleak. According to the report *Racism in the Military* issued by the newly established Congressional Black Caucus in 1972, “the military’s own data give ample evidence of the systematic exclusion of Blacks from promotion lists...One particular tactic often mentioned by Black officers is the practice of refusing to give them command level positions so necessary for advancement in the officer ranks.”³³ Undoubtedly, this resulted in fewer promotions for Blacks and limited numbers in the most senior grades of the Air Force when it transitioned into an all-volunteer force. Thus, it is unsurprising that Lt. Gen. Benjamin Davis, Jr. was still the sole Black general officer in the Air Force when he retired in 1970.

Because of the comprehensive efforts by the US Air Force’s leadership, 20 years later the proportion of Blacks in uniform grew over 300% to 5.7% in 1991. The increased representation of Black officers reflected positively on the changes in the service’s overall race relations culture. At the end of the Cold War, African-American officers were represented in significant numbers at every level of command throughout the Air Force. Moreover, racial conflict mostly disappeared due to the efforts of these officers to work with their comrades to eliminate vestiges of overt discrimination in recruitment, training, and promotion of military personnel.

Various surveys taken throughout the period indicated that more Black than White officers perceived subtle discrimination in each of the three areas of the Officer Development and Retention Model.³⁴ According to one DoD report surveying the career progression of women and minority officers, these individuals were more likely to report sentiments of being held to higher standards.³⁵ More specifically, some Black officers believed that their performance had to be twice as good as their peers in order to receive the same level of

recognition and achievement. Despite sharing these opinions, Black officers generally felt that any residual prejudice they perceived in the military, was the same or less than they believed existed in the civilian sector and they maintained a similar level of satisfaction with the military as their White counterparts.³⁶ Officers who acknowledged instances of discrimination did not attribute it to institutional racism. Instead, they believed that individuals committed such acts.³⁷

Despite the progress made evident by the increasing number of senior African-American officers and the growing proportion of the Air Force officers of African descent, various indications toward the end of the Cold War revealed that some progress made by Black officers over the previous two decades started to stagnate and even reverse. For instance, the attrition rates of Black junior officers once more began to surpass those of their White counterparts.³⁸

The Defense Department commissioned a study titled *Minority and Gender Differences in Officer Career Progression* that reviewed data on officers from 1967 to 1991. Regarding Black officers, it outlined several suggestions in order to improve diversity and representation within the officer corps: recruit into underrepresented occupations, better inform officers about career management policies, avoid atypical assignments as possible, apply occupational assignment criteria equally.³⁹ Addressing and implementing these suggestions requires improving each segment of the Officer Development and Retention Model from recruitment to assignments to evaluations. This in turn, requires effective officer mentorship in each area.

Air War College student, Lt Col Emerson A. Bascomb wrote an essay drawing upon a study of 16 private and public organizations highlighting six barriers to mentorship: “prejudice, poor career planning, poor working environment, lack of organizational savvy, greater comfort in dealing with one’s own kind, and difficulty balancing career and family responsibilities.”⁴⁰ In various studies since the 1970s, minority and female officers acknowledged invisible and

undisclosed cultural biases prevented them from receiving the same guidance and feedback as is readily provided to their White male peers. Black officers proved otherwise as capable and qualified as their White peers, yet lack of access to the integral link of mentorship led to disparities in promotion rates and selection for developmental education and consequently prevented disproportionately more of them from enjoying similarly promotable careers.

Notes

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² *President's Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Armed Forces*, 8-15.

³ Bowman, 75 and US Census Bureau, "Table A-2. Percent of People 25 Years and Over Who Have Completed High School or College, by Race, Hispanic Origin and Sex: Selected Years 1940 to 2007,"

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/educ-attn.html> (Accessed 25 January 2009).

⁴ Data from 1947, 1964, and 1968 provided independently because information on racial composition of USAF officer personnel prior to 1970 could be ascertained from available resources from these earlier dates. Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Race/Ethnic/Gender Profile by Service/Rank of the Department of Defense & U.S. Coast Guard, 2000*, (Patrick AFB, FL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute Research Directorate, September 2000); Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Race/Ethnic/Gender Profile by Service/Rank of the Department of Defense & U.S. Coast Guard, 2001*, (Patrick AFB, FL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute Research Directorate, September 2001), Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard, 2002*, (Patrick AFB, FL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute Research Directorate, September 2002), 8; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard, 2003*, (Patrick AFB, FL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute Research Directorate, September 2003), 8; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard, 2004*, (Patrick AFB, FL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute Research Directorate, September 2004), 8; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute. *Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard FY 2005*, (Patrick AFB, FL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute Research Directorate, September 2005), 8; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard FY 2006*, (Patrick AFB, FL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute Research Directorate, September 2006), 8; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard FY 2007*, (Patrick AFB, FL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute Research Directorate, September 2007), 8; US Department of Defense, *Population Representation in the Military Services, Fiscal Year 2000*, (Washington DC: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel Readiness, February 2002), <http://www.defenselink.mil/prhome/poprep2000/html/chapter8/chapter8.htm> (Accessed 18 January 2009), Table D-2; William, Bowman, Roger Little, and G. Thomas Sicilia, *The All Volunteer Force After a Decade*, (McLean, VA: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1986), 75

⁵ Mitchell, 336.

⁶ *President's Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Armed Forces*, 11.

⁷ Westheider, 111.

⁸ US General Accountability Office, *Air Force Academy: Gender and Racial Disparities*, (Publication No. GAO/NSAID-93-244), (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, September 1993), 2.

⁹ Mitchell, 336.

¹⁰ US Department of Defense, *Black Americans in Defense of Our Nation*, 267.

Notes

- ¹¹ Donald Giglio, AF Black Officer Accession Numbers 1971-1994: AFROTC, OTC, & USAFA, (Air University Holm Center. January 2009).
- ¹² Westheider, 111.
- ¹³ US Department of Defense, *Population Representation in the Military Services, Fiscal Year 2000*, Table D-22.
- ¹⁴ Giglio.
- ¹⁵ US Department of Defense, *Population Representation in the Military Services, Fiscal Year 2000*, Table D-22; Donald Giglio, "AF Black Officer Accession Numbers 1971-1994: AFROTC, OTC, & USAFA" Air University Holm Center. January 2009; and LT Jon E. Lux, "The Effects of the Military Drawdown on Recruiting Minority Officers." Master's thesis, (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 1995), 38-41.
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- ¹⁸ US General Accountability Office, *Air Force Academy*, 2-3.
- ¹⁹ US Department of Defense, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, viii.
- ²⁰ Mitchell, 356, 362.
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- ²⁴ Lux, 97-103.
- ²⁵ Powell, Maj James G., "Determining Factors Which Influence Black Attrition Rates in Undergraduate Pilot Training," (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air Command and Staff College, 1984), vii, 41, 49-50.
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- ³² Lt Col Barbara C. Sutton, "Promotions Among the Ranks: A Focus on Black Military Officer," (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air War College, 1995), 19.
- ³³ Westheider, 156.
- ³⁴ Bristow, ix.
- ³⁵ US Department of Defense, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, ix.
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- ³⁸ Dorn, Edwin, *Who Defends America? Race, Sex, and Class in the Armed Forces*, (Washington DC: Joint Center for Political Studies, Inc., 1989), 46.
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Part 3

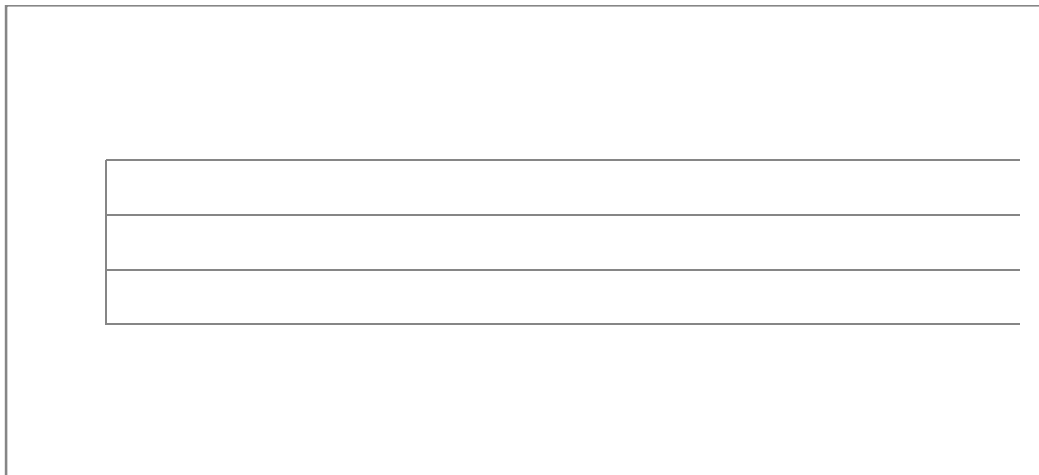
Post-Cold War and into the Future: Career Progression of Black Air Force Officers from 1991 Onward

With the passage of nearly two decades since 1991, it is essential to analyze further the career progression of African-American Air Force officers during this period to assess the service's ability to improve upon its levels of increasing diversity within the ranks. This is a critical era due to the challenges faced by military's massive force drawdown of the 1990s, followed by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan during the 2000s. Observing Black officer trends during this time frame also provides insight into the future diversity of the Air Force as the nation becomes more pluralistic, since the officers in uniform in the 2000s will be the service's senior leaders when its members are largely 'majority-minority' beginning in the 2020s.

Under the President George H. W. Bush administration, the president and Congress sought a 25% reduction-in-force of active duty force levels (from the 1987 baseline of 2,174,000 active duty personnel) by fiscal year 1997. In 1991, Congress amended the drawdown to 1,630,500 troops to end by 1995. President William J. Clinton's administration revised the reduction-in-force to shrink by another 200,000 active duty members by the end of fiscal year 1997.¹ Many of those recruited in the late 1970s and early 1980s were most vulnerable to the military's force reduction programs. Consequently, there was significant concern that these force drawdown efforts would send a disproportionate number of Black officers out of the service and thus reverse hard fought gains in career progression and achievement during the 20 years since the end of the beginning of the all-volunteer era.

Surprisingly, the proportion of Black officers in the US military increased overall by a full percent (6.5% to 7.5%) during this decade. Yet, of all service branches, the Air Force made the smallest gains, with an increase from 5.4% to 5.9%.² In fact, by 1997 African-American officer representation in both the US Navy and US Marine Corps improved enough to catch up to the Air Force levels. This is noteworthy because for most of the 20th century these two services commissioned fewer Blacks than the Air Force, and were much later in promoting Black flag officers. In addition, the percentage of Black female officers in the Air Force remained nearly unchanged at 11% despite their increased overall representation in the DoD (12.5% to 14%).³

Figure 7. Black Female College Graduate & Armed Forces/AF Officer Populations⁴



Since the drawdown, the proportion of Black Air Force officers gradually increased, but continues to lag behind the proportion of the US population of African heritage with college degrees (8.4% in 2007).⁵ Most alarming is that since 2002, the proportion of Black Air Force officers dropped nearly a full percent, to 6.1% in 2007.⁶ This trend appears to reverse many of the tremendous gains that the service made through the early 1980s in recruiting and retaining promising Black college graduates.

Recruitment and Accession

Stagnant growth in the representation of Black officers since the 1990s can be attributable to the end of targeted recruiting of eligible Black college students after 1983. Apparently, in the 1990s Air Force leadership observed the decline in African-American accessions and incorporated the “Gold Bar Program.”⁷ This program selected newly commissioned minority second lieutenants to serve as AFROTC recruiters. This served the dual benefit of providing youthful, energetic officers who could more easily relate with high school and college-age young adults and encourage them to consider serving as an officer in the Air Force. Additionally, unlike the earlier programs that took officers out of their career tracks to perform recruiting assignments, Gold Bar selected new officers to serve for no more than one year, therefore not affecting their overall career progression. This resurgence in targeted recruiting returned the Black accessions percentage to over 7% in 1996.⁸

Figure 8. Black Officer Accessions by Service w/ Civilian Comparison (1973-2000)⁹



Proportionally fewer Black officers earned their commissions via the USAFA or AFROTC scholarships. Instead, they were more likely to come through AFROTC as non-

scholarship students.¹⁰ According to the RAND study *Minority and Gender Differences in Officer Career Progression*, “the differences in pre-commissioning preparation were insufficient, in and of themselves to explain the racial differences in promotion chances.”¹¹ Despite results of a 1976 study highlighted in the DEOMI published book *Managing Diversity in the Military*, hinting that at that time, military service academy graduates were more likely to obtain more positive early evaluations; there has been little recent research to support any perception that USAFA graduates are more likely to be promoted than their AFROTC or OTS counterparts.¹² Any inferences drawn from the overrepresentation of USAFA graduates in the flag officer ranks should be attributed to the fact that most general officers are pilots and historically, largest number of pilot slots were offered to USAFA graduates and the fewest to OTS graduates. Since 1997, most of the distinctions between each commissioning source and perceived future promotion eligibility since disappeared.¹³

Assignment and Training

Even though there is little evidence to support any claim that the promotion potential of Black officers since 1991 has been hindered by commissioning sources, accession source may impact the officer’s career track (especially for those seeking aviation careers) because exposure and selection opportunities may be limited via either AFROTC or OTS. This proved to be the case because of significant cuts in pilot selection and training throughout the early to mid-1990s resulting from the force drawdown. In 1997, the Air Force began aviation and aerospace studies courses at historically Black colleges and universities in order to increase the recruitment of Blacks desiring careers in aviation and to impart the skills necessary to improve graduation rates in pilot training. As a result, their proportion of Air Force pilots increased to 5.7% and overall attrition rates declined for both pilot and navigator training by the late-1990s.¹⁴

Regardless of career track, an officer's career progression remains wedded to duty performance and assignment history. Individual performance factors in whether officers receive opportunities to attend PME in-residence. Selection for and subsequent completion of in-residence PME is perhaps the most significant discriminating factor in officer promotion. A review of promotion board results from 1989 to 2008 for each field grade rank discovered an enormous difference in promotion selection between those who completed PME in-residence or via correspondence—20.3% average difference for O-4, 34.5% average difference for O-5, and 50.6% difference for O-6.¹⁵ Selection for PME attendance is a competitive process and based on demonstrated performance throughout an officer's career. This indicates that the Air Force sends officers it intends to promote to PME in-residence. Individuals suffering 'slow starts' are often unable to overcome the inertia, resulting in failure to be selected for PME in-residence and increased difficulty in earning promotions.

Evaluation and Promotion

The proportionally large accession groups of Black officers throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s did not result in increased Black representation in the senior officer grades in the 1990s.¹⁶ A review of each promotion board since 1989 reveals that Blacks consistently underperformed the board average for each grade—6.6% less than the board average for O-4, 8.1% less than the board average for O-5, and 3% less than the board average for O-6.¹⁷ This is striking for two reasons: improved promotion rates for mission support officers since 2000 (in comparison to pilots) and high female promotion rates.

Blacks are more likely to remain in the service than are their White counterparts, but are less likely to be promoted within the field grade ranks.¹⁸ Even though Blacks continue to be concentrated primarily in mission support career fields, this did not translate into improved

promotion rates even when mission support officers began to achieve parity in promotion percentages with their pilot cohorts throughout the 2000s. In seven of eight O-5 promotion boards from 2001 to 2007 and five of six O-6 colonel promotion boards from 2003 to 2007, mission support officers outperformed even pilots. Yet Blacks underperformed board averages in all except three of fourteen promotion boards.¹⁹

Comparing the promotion rates of Blacks and women is useful for three reasons: women are also predominately concentrated in support career fields, their representation is also considered under equal opportunity programs, and their population numbers most closely compare with that of Blacks. There is a stark difference in the promotion grades of these two groups through the field grade ranks. Unlike Black officers who on average, were sorely underrepresented in promotion boards since 1989, women outperformed male promotion rates—by 2.2% to O-4, 4.1% to O-5, and 6.4% to O-6 during this same period.

One final area of consideration is below-the-promotion-zone (BPZ) promotions. At least one BPZ promotion is generally required for an officer to be competitive for promoted into the flag officer grades. Just as Black officers are not promoted at the same rate as their White peers IPZ, they also consistently suffered lagging BPZ promotions.²⁰ Consequently, it is improbable that they will achieve equal representation within the general officer grades.

Notes

¹ Nixon, 27.

² US Department of Defense, *Population Representation in the Military Services, Fiscal Year 2000*, Table D-22.

³ Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Twenty-Seven Year Demographic Trends: Active Duty Forces 1977-2004*, (Patrick AFB, FL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute Research Directorate, 2004), 62.

⁴ Data prior to 1985 not odd-year sequential because available information revealed relevant data from 1976, 1979, and 1982. Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Race/Ethnic/Gender Profile by Service/Rank of the Department of Defense & U.S. Coast Guard, 2000*; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Race/Ethnic/Gender Profile by Service/Rank of the Department of Defense & U.S. Coast Guard, 2001*; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard, 2002*, 8; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard, 2003*, 8; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast*

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⁵US Census Bureau, "Education Attainment in the United States: 2007,"

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/education/cps2007.html> (Accessed 1 February 2009).

⁶ Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard FY 2007, 28.*

⁷ US Department of Defense, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers, 42.*

⁸ US Department of Defense, *Population Representation in the Military Services, Fiscal Year 2000, Table D-22.*

⁹ US Department of Defense, *Population Representation in the Military Services, Fiscal Year 2000, (Washington DC: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel Readiness, February 2002),*

<http://www.defenselink.mil/prhome/poprep2000/html/chapter8/chapter8.htm> (Accessed 18 January 2009), Table D-22.

¹⁰ US Department of Defense, *Population Representation in the Military Services, Fiscal Year 2005, Table B-42.*

¹¹ Susan D. Hosek, *Minority and Gender Differences in Officer Career Progression, 72.*

¹² Dansby, Mickey R., James B. Stewart, and Schuyler C. Webb, eds., *Managing Diversity in the Military: Research Perspectives from the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001), 236.*

¹³ US Department of Defense, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers, 25.*

¹⁴ US Department of Defense, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers, 50-54.*

¹⁵ Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics, <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).

¹⁶ Dorn, 46.

¹⁷ Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical."

¹⁸ Susan D. Hosek, *Minority and Gender Differences in Officer Career Progression, xv.*

¹⁹ Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical."

²⁰ Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical."

Conclusion and Recommendations

Contemporary African-American officers continue to graduate successfully from the same accession sources and grow up in the same career fields, yet they suffer reduced opportunities for key developmental assignments, selection for in-residence PME, and ultimately future promotions. This research suggests that despite the fundamental nature of mentorship in “determining an individual’s success within an organization,” Black officers continue to face difficulty in cultivating peer and mentor relationships.¹ One likely reason for this is that despite the end of overt racial prejudice within the services, a certain degree of social segregation remains.² Although officers, regardless of race, agree that the promotion board process is fair, Blacks believe that consistent racial disparities in promotion results are attributable to limited mentorship, difficulties receiving career-enhancing assignments, and less competitive records.³

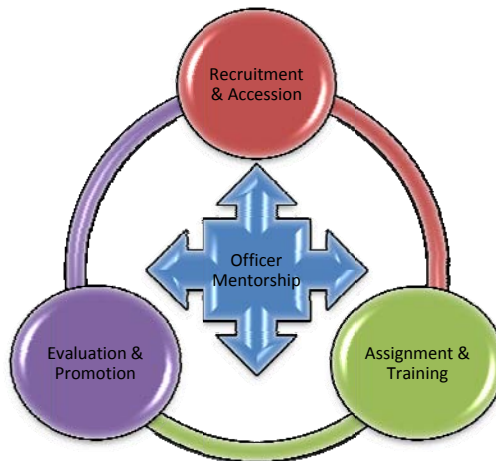
Mentorship is essential to the development and retention of all officers. There are three types of mentoring relationships: situational mentorship—information/advice provided to help protégé’s make near term decisions; informal—flexible, unstructured relationship in which the mentor provides insight as the need exists; and formal—a systematic, structured forum for mentors and protégés (usually organizationally sponsored).⁴ Informal mentorship is the most common form and because associations are generally based on an individual’s sense of familiarity, there is a tendency for individual bias in selecting potential protégés. This conclusion is supported by results of a 1998 survey of 885 military officers attending six of the military’s senior and intermediate service schools. Accordingly, 93% of the respondents mentored individuals of their same race and gender.⁵

According to a DoD report *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, minority officers may face invisible barriers that can be impediments to receiving mentorship.

One such obstacle takes the form of actions to test an individual. For example, during focus groups White officers generally expressed the belief that minorities generally possessed weak academic and military educational backgrounds, which led them to subject minority and female officers to intense scrutiny, generally at the beginning of an assignment.⁶ Another challenge is discomfort with individuals of different backgrounds. Consequently, White senior officers may not include junior ranking minorities in informal work or social activities.⁷ Failing to mentor others restricts diversity in professional relationships and stunts individual career progression.

Although significantly more Blacks were promoted to the service's senior grades after to the start of the all-volunteer military, the increase in their relative numbers in the service did not translate into proportional numbers of Black senior officers. It is important to revise the Officer Development and Retention Model to include mentorship to reflect accurately its integral role throughout every aspect of officer progression.

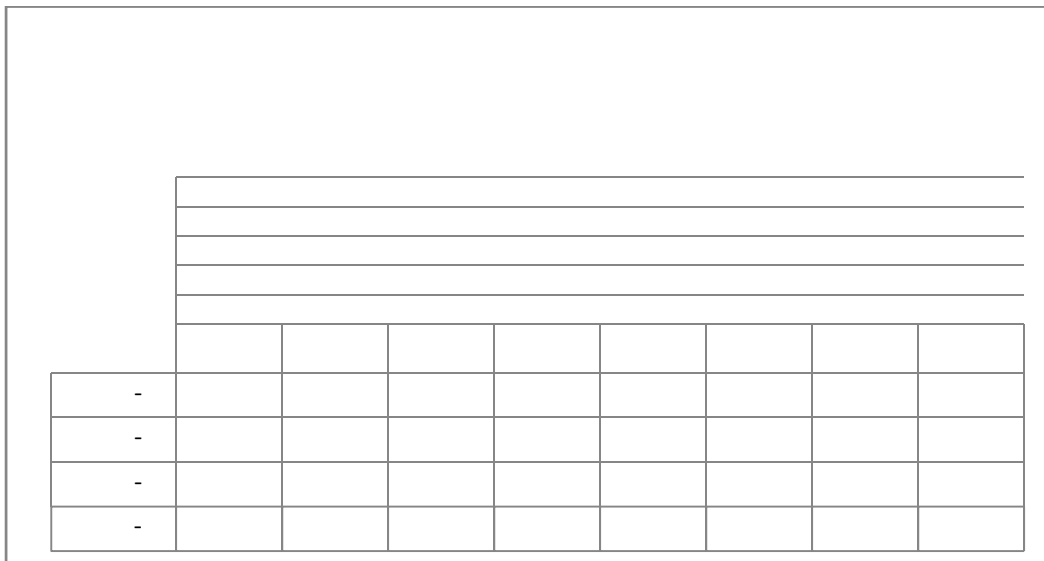
Figure 9. Officer Development & Retention Model—Revised



Integrated and focused mentorship not only provides benefit to the recipient, but also to the mentor. It behooves the service to target recruitment programs to draw more minority officers into the Air Force and to teach its officers to actively (and comfortably) mentor all

subordinates. A near term remedy requiring limited effort and providing long-term benefit would be to incorporate techniques on mentoring and cross-cultural communications into all levels of officer PME. This should not be labeled another “equal opportunity” training event, but as a commander/officer development activity. Additionally, the Air Force should expand the mentorship utility of its professional social networking communities of practice like “Commander’s Connection” and “Lieutenant’s Bar,” and require participation as mentors by officers attending in-residence PME. Given their propensity to use social networking websites, officers of the current and future generations are most prone to employ these “universal mentoring” forums for communication, networking, and advice. Consequently, leaders' participation will keep them in contact with junior officers, and further exploit cyber technology as a means to transcend normal 'stovepipe' organizational boundaries.⁸ More importantly, this enhances the likelihood that officers that are more senior will mentor others whom they might not necessarily interact.

Figure 10. US Air Force Black General Officer Population (2000-2007)⁹



In 2008, an Associated Press article, “After 60 Years, Black Officers Rare,” analyzed Defense Department data and interviews with Pentagon officials, highlighted the dearth of Black officers in high-ranking positions, and suggested that the cause was mostly lack of mentorship.¹⁰ Following on the contrails of this article was the 2009 National Defense Act establishing the Military Leadership Diversity Commission to “conduct a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of policies that provide opportunities for the promotion and advancement of minority members of the Armed Forces.”¹¹ This revealed Congress’ concerns regarding a lack of diversity in the leadership of the US military.

Addressing the issue of dwindling Black officer proportions and disparities in their promotion rates requires a long-term focus. To help advance this effort, the Air Force should consider taking a page from the Army’s book in addressing this concern. In 2005, the US Army created the Army Diversity Office to analyze steps the service is taking to improve diversity amongst its entire military/civilian workforce and identify areas for improvement. To work towards their aim of workforce diversity, the Army outlined five success factors: leadership commitment, strategic planning, accountability/assessment/evaluation, employment involvement, and mentoring.¹² Focused mentorship and development is the centerpiece of this program. Unsurprisingly, Black officer proportion increased from 11.4% in 2000 to 13.1% in 2007.¹³

The US Army can serve as a model for the US Air Force to follow because it took action after discovering stagnation in the progression of Black Army officers during the 1990s, when the proportion of Black officers bumped slightly from 11.2% in 1990 to 11.4% in 2000.¹⁴ While at Army War College in 1997, then-Lt Col Remo Butler studied this trend and wrote that for the US Army to improve the representation and career viability of Black officers, it must

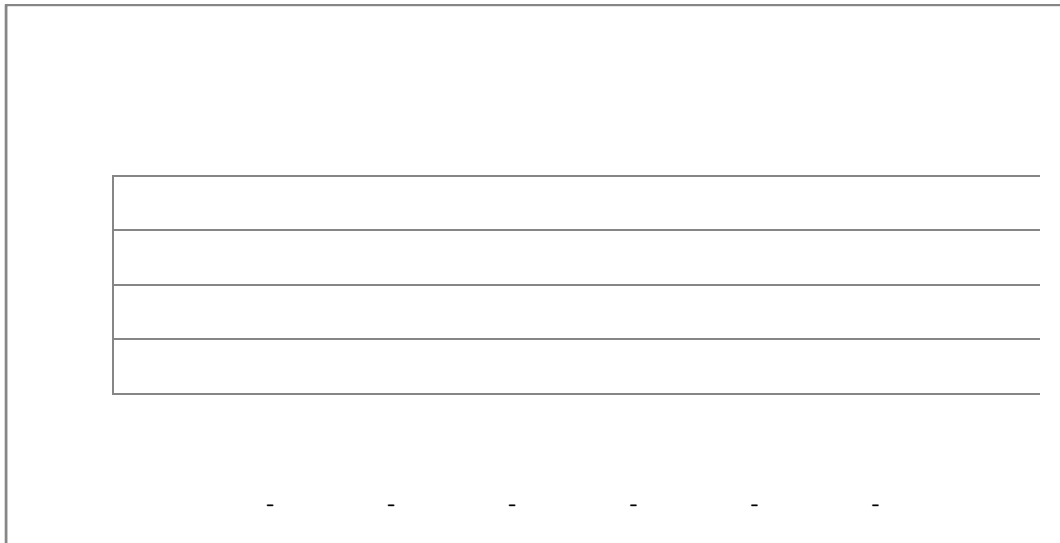
simultaneously make mentorship a central element at all levels of career development. It must simultaneously educate its personnel on real cultural awareness (instead of political correctness), thereby minimizing the impact of ‘the good old boy network.’¹⁵ It appears that the Army observed the trend, oriented its efforts, decided it needed to make a change, and took action to ensure it remains a first-choice profession for all of America’s young adults into the 21st century.

The US Air Force appears to have acknowledged its need to reverse the declining minority representation with the creation of the Air Force Personnel Center Diversity Council on February 26, 2009 to “raise awareness of diversity issues.”¹⁶ This appears to be a positive first step, yet based on available evidence and inconsistent strategic communications on diversity over the last decade, the Air Force still needs to enact immediate and far-reaching changes to correct negative patterns. Despite the obvious “tanning of America” and contrary to the trends of its sister services within the DoD, the US Air Force’s officer corps was less diverse in 2007 than it was in 1999. Moreover, the Air Force does not publish any targeted accession goals for minority officers. Nor is declining Black representation within the Air Force limited to just officers. In 2007, the African-American proportion of enlisted personnel shrank to 16.8%, the same percentage as 1993.¹⁷ What makes the situation for Black Air Force officers more alarming is the marked decline of their representation in the most junior officer grade—second lieutenant, dwindling from 7.9% to 3.8%.¹⁸ This precipitous drop, if not rectified immediately, bodes poorly for the service in the next two decades as the nation transitions from its historically binary approach to race (majority/minority) to a more pluralistic society.

The “tanning of America” is perhaps the most important reason for the US Air Force’s implementation of a comprehensive diversity effort. Blacks are not the only group woefully underrepresented in the Air Force’s officer corps. The other two large minority groups, Asians

and Hispanics maintain smaller proportions of Air Force officers in comparison to respective civilian population groups.¹⁹ The US Air Force must take immediate efforts to reverse these trends to ensure its senior leaders of tomorrow (today's junior officers) are neither culturally isolated nor uncomfortable with relating to and mentoring the more diverse airmen of the future.

Figure 11. US Air Force Black Officer Population by Grade (1994-2007)²⁰



For those who believe that this can be dealt with in the future, it must be mentioned that this “tanning of America” has already started. In metropolitan areas throughout the nation, children under age of five are already ‘majority-minority.’²¹ Consequently, when these children start joining the Armed Forces en masse by 2023, more than half of the US population under age 18 is projected to be ‘majority-minority.’²² If these trends continue unabated, this will be when today’s majority White male second lieutenants are majors and lieutenant colonels commanding tomorrow’s squadrons of racially and ethnically diverse airmen.

The single-most important ‘weapon system’ of the US Air Force is its personnel. Therefore, it is imperative that the service continue to make every effort to attract and retain the most talented and capable individuals embodying the nation’s more diverse citizenry. The result

of a less representative officer corps bodes the dire consequence of the Air Force losing its edge on recruiting the nation's 'best and brightest' because many of these young Americans may choose other, more diversely representative military branches or professions. Accordingly, its senior officers may become culturally isolated from the youth of America's more pluralistic society and consequently fail to address the chronic disparities in career progression between racial and ethnic groups. Perhaps a more ominous outcome of the future minority-White Air Force officer corps overseeing increasingly 'majority-minority' enlisted and junior officers is the potential for inter-cultural conflict. Such forecasts of crisis are increasingly likely if the Air Force does not act to improve diversity now...starting with officer mentorship throughout the Officer Development and Retention cycle.

Notes

¹ US Department of Defense, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, 84.

² Susan D. Hosek, *Minority and Gender Differences in Officer Career Progression*, 71-73.

³ US Department of Defense, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, 85.

⁴ Bascomb, 4.

⁵ Bascomb, 16-20.

⁶ US Department of Defense, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, 82-85.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Maj Darrell E. Adams, "Mentoring Women and Minority Officers in the US Military," (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air Command and Staff College, 1997), 32

⁹ Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Race/Ethnic/Gender Profile by Service/Rank of the Department of Defense & U.S. Coast Guard 2000*; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Race/Ethnic/Gender Profile by Service/Rank of the Department of Defense & U.S. Coast Guard 2001*; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard 2002*, 20; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard 2003*, 20; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Semi-Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard 2004*, 21; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute. *Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard FY 2005*, 21; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard FY 2006*, 28; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard FY 2007*, 28.

¹⁰ Baldor, Lolita. "After 60 Years, Black Officers Rare." *USA Today*, 23 June 2008.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/topstories/2008-07-23-4210460986_x.htm (Accessed 10 January 2009).

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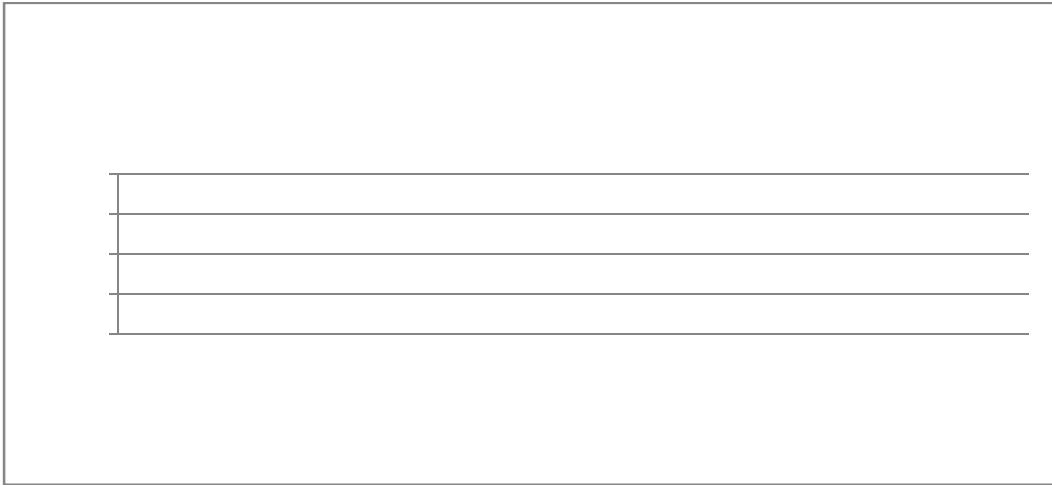
¹² Lt Col Anthony D. Reyes, *Strategic Options for Managing Diversity in the U.S. Army*, (Washington DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, June 2006), xi-xii.

Notes

- ¹³ Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard FY 2007*, 2.
- ¹⁴ US Department of Defense, *Population Representation in the Military Services, Fiscal Year 2000*, Table D-27.
- ¹⁵ Lt Col Remo Butler, "Why Black Officers Fail in the US Army," (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 1996), 23-25.
- ¹⁶ Air Force Personnel Center, "AFPC Establishes Diversity Council," *Air Force Print News Today*, http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/news/story_print.asp?id=123139871 (Accessed 22 March 2009).
- ¹⁷ Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Annual Demographic Profile of the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard FY 2007*, 28 and Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, *Twenty-Seven Year Demographic Trends: Active Duty Forces 1977-2004*, 23-4.
- ¹⁸ Air Force Personnel Center. "Regular Officer History FY94 – FY02." Air Force Personnel Center Statistics. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009) and Air Force Personnel Center. "Regular Officer History FY03 – FY07." Air Force Personnel Center Statistics. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).
- ¹⁹ US Department of Defense, *Population Representation in the Military Services, Fiscal Year 2005*, (Washington DC: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel Readiness, February 2007), 2.
- ²⁰ Air Force Personnel Center, "Regular Officer History FY76 - FY88." Air Force Personnel Center Statistics, <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009); Air Force Personnel Center. "Regular Officer History FY89 – FY93," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics, <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009); Air Force Personnel Center. "Regular Officer History FY94 – FY02," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics, <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009); Air Force Personnel Center, "Regular Officer History FY03 – FY07," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics, <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).
- ²¹ N. C. Aizenman, "In the Under-5 Set, Minority Becoming the Majority." (*Washington Post*, 7 August 2008), http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/06/AR2008080603683_pf.html (Accessed 4 January 2009).
- ²² N. C. Aizenman, "U.S. to Grow Grayer, More Diverse: Minorities Will Be Majority by 2042" (*Washington Post*, 14 August 2008), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/13/AR2008081303524.html> (Accessed 4 January 2009).

Appendix

Figure 12. USAF Line Officer Capt Promotion Rates (1984 - 1989)



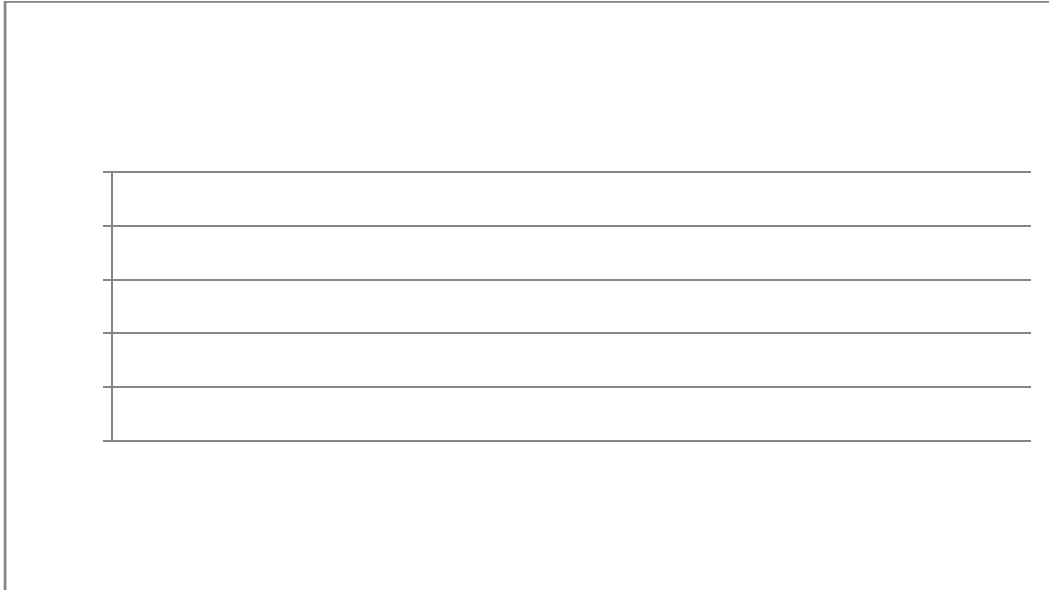
Source: Lt Col Barbara C. Sutton, "Promotions Among the Ranks: A Focus on Black Military Officer," (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air War College, 1995), 19. No data available from AFPC to track Black officer promotion rates after 1989.

Figure 13. USAF Line Officer Maj IPZ Promotion Rates (1984-2007)



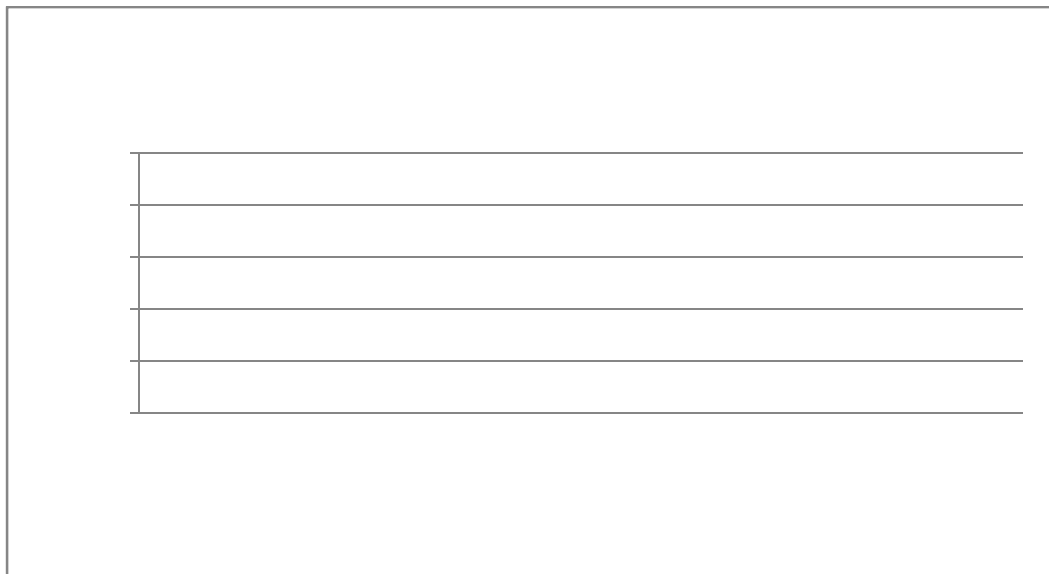
Source: Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).

Figure 14. USAF Line Officer Maj BPZ Promotion Rates (1989 - 1998)



Source: Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).

Figure 15. USAF Line Officer Lt Col IPZ Promotion Rates (1984-2007)



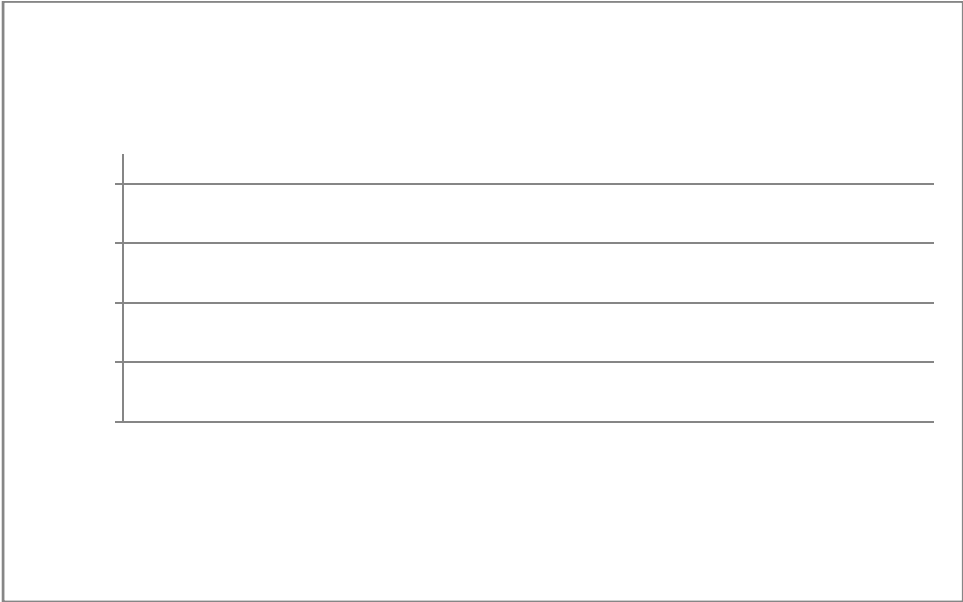
Source: Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).

Figure 16. USAF Line Officer Lt Col BPZ Promotion Rates (1989 - 2008)



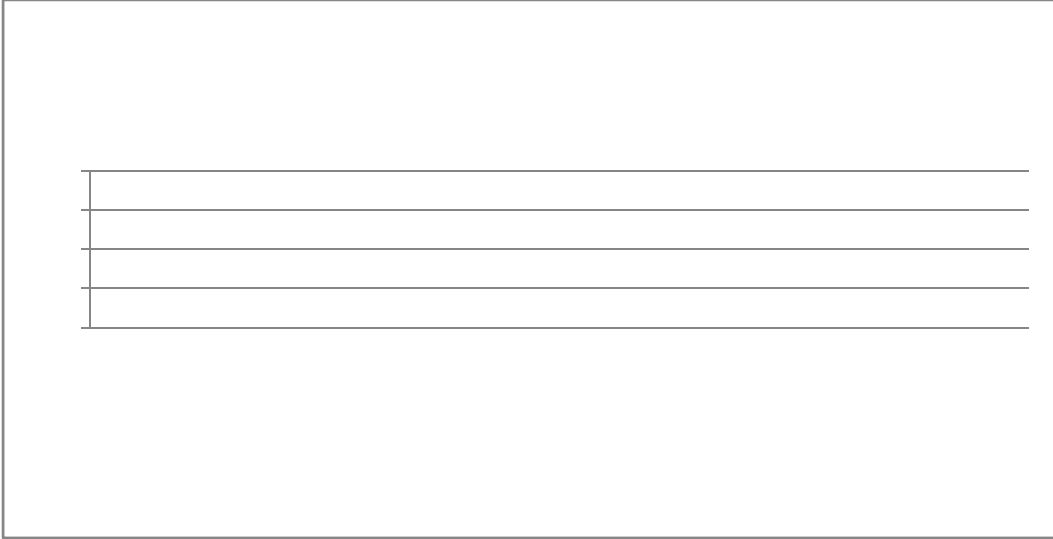
Source: Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).

Figure 17. USAF Line Officer Col IPZ Promotion Rates (1984-2008)



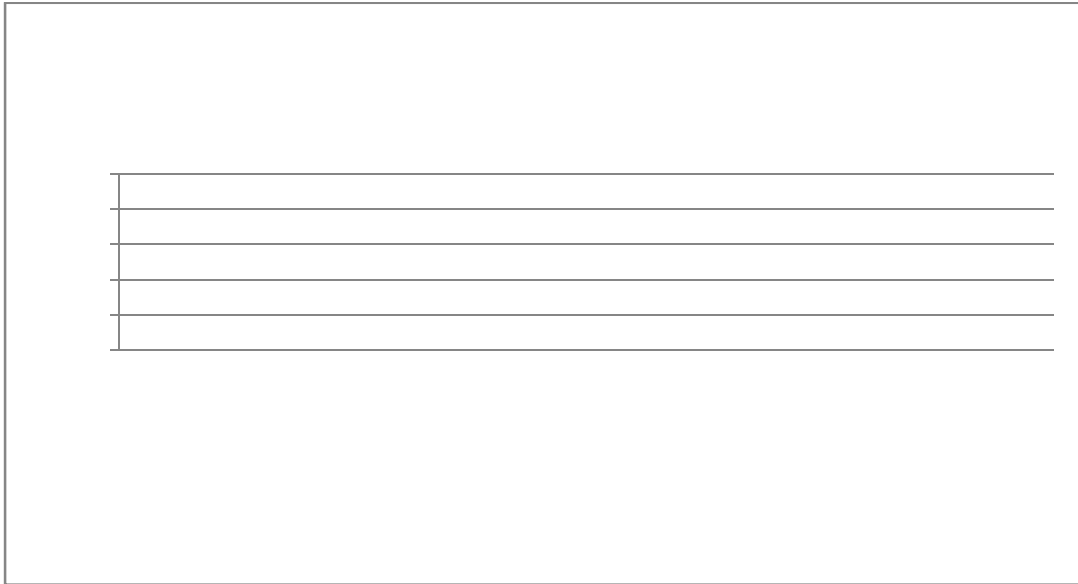
Source: Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).

Figure 18. USAF Line Officer Col BPZ Promotion Rates (1989 - 2008)



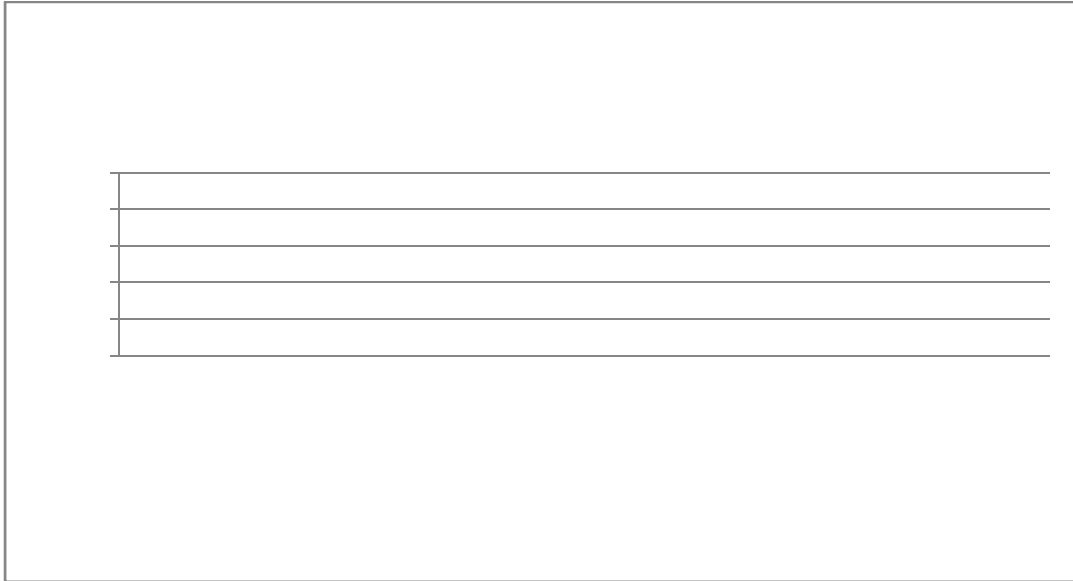
Source: Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).

Figure 19. LAF Major Selection Rate--SOS Res/Corr (1989-2007)



Source: Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).

Figure 20. LAF Lt Col Selection Rate--IDE Res/Corr (1989-2007)



Source: Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).

Figure 21. LAF Colonel Selection Rate--SDE Res/Corr (1989-2008)



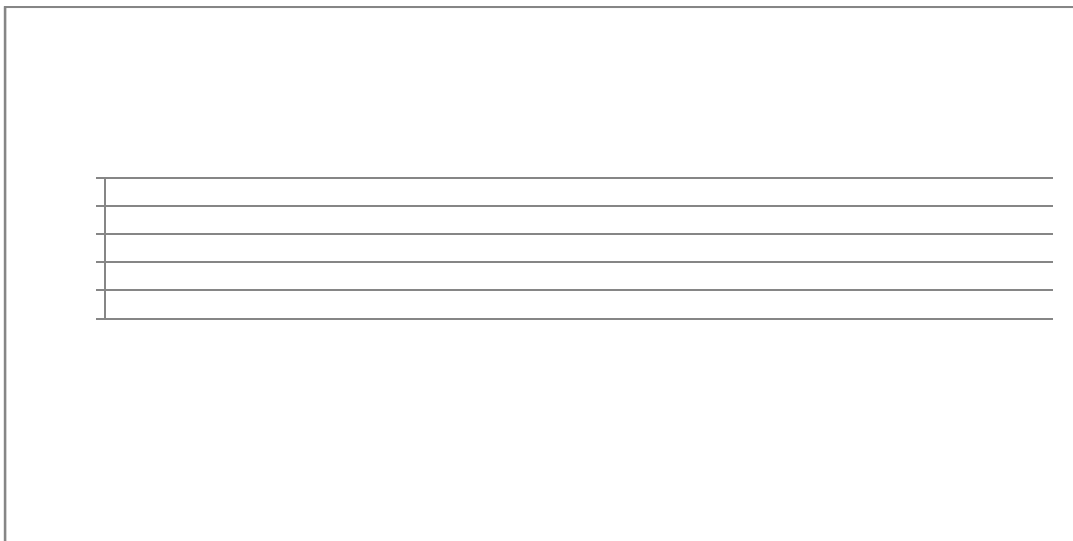
Source: Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).

Figure 22. LAF Gender Promotion Rate--Maj (1989-2007)



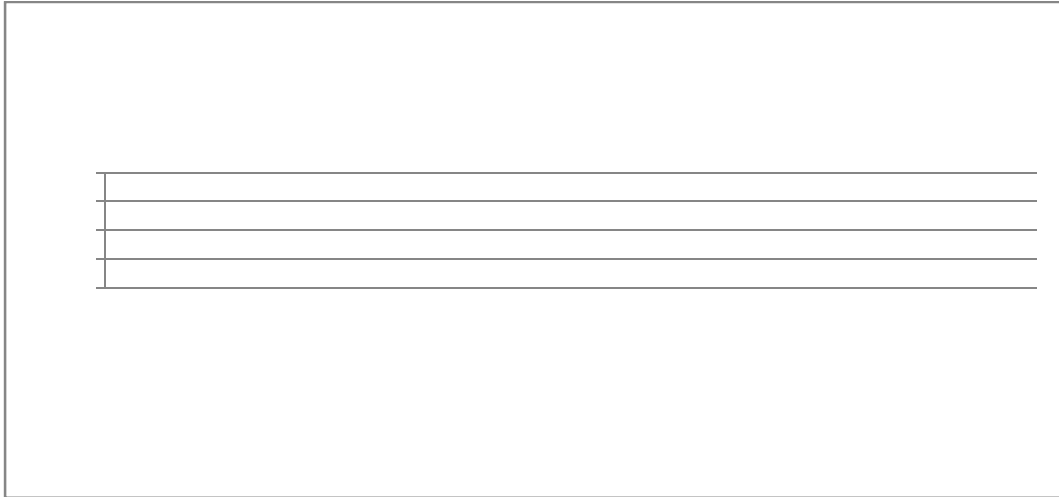
Source: Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).

Figure 23. LAF Gender Promotion Rate--LTC (1989-2007)



Source: Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).

Figure 24. LAF Gender Promotion Rate--COL (1989-2008)



Source: Air Force Personnel Center, "Active Duty Officer Promotions Line of the Air Force (LAF) Historical," Air Force Personnel Center Statistics. <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/ReportsSearch.asp> (Accessed 24 January 2009).

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