



Career Development

AIR FORCE ACQUISITION OFFICERS CHALLENGED TO SEEK COMMAND OPPORTUNITY

Air Force Lt. Gen. Donald J. Hoffman, military deputy, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, encourages field grade officers to accept the challenge and reap the rewards of being a commander. Command opportunities in Air Force acquisition career fields have increased measurably, he noted in a July 13, 2006, memorandum. Read Hoffman's memorandum in its entirety at <<https://www.safaq.hq.af.mil/mil/career/documents/Importance%20of%20Command.pdf>>.

COMMENTARY (AUG. 25, 2006) ENLISTED AND OFFICER FORCE SHAPING PART OF AIR FORCE LANDSCAPE

Lt. Col. Scott M. Katz, USAF

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio—Air Force fiscal 2007 force-shaping programs for active-duty members were recently announced. If you are eligible for or supervise someone subject to force shaping, you really need to know about these programs.

Affected airmen, supervisors, and commanders need to be aware of all aspects of force shaping and prepared to participate in the process. Why? Force shaping will involve difficult decisions for airmen and leaders at all levels, but it's critical we mentor our people as we continue to balance the right set of skills and experiences throughout our Air Force, reduce end strength, and recapitalize.

If you didn't have the opportunity to attend one of the mass briefings that explained the fiscal 2007 programs, here are some highlights.

First, we'll have a more restrictive career job reservation program for first-term airmen this year. It's going to be harder for our first-term airmen in overage career fields to get that job reservation to continue in their present Air Force specialty code. Some airmen not offered a career job reservation may be able to retrain, some may be able to get a special duty assignment, and others will be separated at the end of their enlistment. Additionally, more than 1,200 enlisted members will be retrained into critically manned career fields. Overall, the Air Force is planning to reduce the enlisted force by 31,500 members by fiscal 2011.

The officer corps will draw down more than 9,000 members by fiscal 2011 as well. The Air Force Personnel Center will conduct a force shaping board in March 2007 for lieutenants in the 2004 year group in overage career fields. Some lieutenants in the 2003 year group in overage career fields who were not considered by a force shaping board last year will be considered this year.

The AFPC Force Shaping Web site and matrix are the best sources of information. The matrix on the Web site gives officers an idea of where their career field stands. The additional information due out in the fall will be posted on the AFPC Web site as well. Visit <<http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil>>. The Voluntary Separation Pay program is offering a cash incentive to separate between Oct. 1 and Sept. 29, 2007, for some officers who have six to 12 years' total service. The VSP program is limited to officers in certain overage career fields. Under this program, an eligible captain with eight years' total military service would receive a little more than \$90,000 to separate. The separation incentive is a lump sum payment that is subject to income tax withholding. As with the force shaping board, the AFPC Web site is the prime resource for information on VSP.

The Air Force is also planning to conduct a Selective Early Retirement Board this year for line, chaplain, and judge advocate officers in the grades of lieutenant colonel and colonel. The board will consider lieutenant colonels who have been passed over twice for promotion and colonels with four years' time in grade.

A detailed briefing on these programs and instructions for submitting a VSP application are available at <<https://88mss.wpafb.af.mil>>. Air Force Personnel Center's Force Shaping Web site at <<http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil>> is a "must visit" for additional information on force shaping.

Katz is the commander, 88th Mission Support Squadron at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

AIR FORCE PRINT NEWS (SEPT. 6, 2006) OFFICER PROMOTION BOARD CHANGES TAKE EFFECT JAN. 1

Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez, USAF

WASHINGTON—The secretary of the Air Force has approved changes to the format of these



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election brief presented to officer promotion boards to begin Jan. 1, 2007.

Air Force officials will implement three changes to officer selection briefs, or OSBs; two changes deal with presentation of data related to developmental education, while a third change deals with deployment history.

The OSB is a single sheet of paper that summarizes an officer's career. It is an important document in an officer selection record, or OSR. The OSR is presented to a selection board when an officer is being reviewed for promotion.

The OSR contains, in addition to the OSB, such items as performance reports, training reports, decorations, and a promotion recommendation form. The OSB is intended to be an overview of what is inside the OSR, said Col. Philip Odom, the chief of Air Force Military Force Shaping Policy.

"It is essentially a summary of an officer's career—some would call it a snapshot—in a format that is quickly reviewed by a board member," Odom said. "A board member can look at the OSB and get an idea of where an officer's career is by looking at their job titles and duty descriptions, and whether or not they have completed developmental education."

Beginning in January, OSBs will no longer list the name of a school an officer attended as part of their developmental education. Instead, under the education heading, the brief will indicate only the level of education attained along with its completion date.

In the civilian world, colleges and universities often make a determination about the caliber of applicants before accepting them as students. Applicants who are accepted to the most prestigious schools, and who later graduate, are often looked upon more favorably than those who graduated from lesser-known schools.

In the Air Force, however, officers selected for developmental education have little input into the school they attend. Often their schools and the coursework they will participate in are chosen for them.

By eliminating school names from the developmental education portion of the OSB, the Air Force hopes to change a culture that in the past has put too much emphasis on the school attended rather than the fact the

officer completed the appropriate level of professional military education.

"This gets into the issue of getting away from the pedigree of the school attended," Odom said. "Historical experiences are that officers that go in residence to a better-known school—such as the National Defense University or the Naval Postgraduate School—that those schools represent a quality cut of the officer. This is an attempt to move away from that mindset. If an officer is selected for senior developmental education, wherever they go, that is significant. You have to change the established mindset of the force."

A second change to the OSB, also related to developmental education, is the addition of the "declined with prejudice" statement. That statement will display on an OSB if an officer has declined to attend developmental education in their last year of eligibility (if they were a select).

"When you are identified and designated to go do developmental education, the Air Force is saying we need you to go do that education, because in the future we need the skill sets you are going to acquire," Odom said. "By declining to attend, you are telling the Air Force you don't want to participate anymore, that you are not really a team player any longer. It is important for a selection board to know an individual has elected not to play."

In April, the Air Force began asking officers to sign a letter when they declined an opportunity to attend developmental education. Since that time, the letter of declination has been included in an officer's OSR. But the OSB has not reflected the declination. Instead, the OSB continued to say the officer had been selected for developmental education. Changes to the OSB will rectify the disparity.

Odom said officers who cannot attend developmental education due to operational reasons will not see "declined with prejudice" on their OSBs. Rather, their OSB will identify them as being "operationally deferred."

The final change to the OSB involves an officer's deployment history. Under the deployment history heading, the OSB will now reflect the location of an officer's contingency and exercise deployments. In the past, only the date and level of command during a CED deployment were displayed.



The OSB will now indicate if the deployment was overseas or in the United States. Location will be indicated with either an “OS” or a “US” designator to protect against revealing the location of classified deployment locations.

Changes to the OSB will not necessarily affect promotion numbers, because selection board members will continue to closely review records as they have in the past to make promotion decisions.

Lopez is on the staff of Air Force Print News.

SPECIAL RELEASE FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (SEPT. 12, 2006) **DOD ANNOUNCES COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF MILITARY AWARDS**

WASHINGTON—The Department of Defense has begun a comprehensive review of military awards and decorations in order to ensure policies are consistent with the evolving nature of warfare.

This comprehensive review will lead to an administrative revision of the Department of Defense Instruction 1348.33-M, Manual of Military Decorations and Awards.

A working group consisting of representatives from each Service, the Joint Staff, and the Institute of Heraldry will form the core of the comprehensive review effort.

This comprehensive review of military awards is expected to continue over the next six to eight months and will involve but not be limited to the following:

- Honor and valor awards with particular focus on clarity of criteria and processes
- The “V” device and the Purple Heart medals in eliminating disparate qualification criteria among the military services
- Expeditionary medals in regard to how the theater of operations is defined
- Iraqi and Afghanistan campaign medals with regard to subsequent awards of these campaign medals, with a goal of appropriately recognizing service over multiple tours in those theatres of operations.

“The evolving nature of warfare demands that we review policies; for example, in the case of expeditionary medals, we must review how we define the operating ‘box’—whether it is the theater of direct action, or whether it might extend far beyond,” said David Chu, under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness. “For example, we must consider whether air support originat-

ing at great distances or different continents indeed represents expeditionary service for purposes of those awards.

“When it comes to valor awards, we must clarify criteria, including a review of boundaries that increasingly extend far beyond a particular combat zone, yet involve direct threats to American lives” said Chu.

AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER NEWS SERVICE (SEPT. 14, 2006) SELECTIVE EARLY RETIREMENT BOARD TO CONVENE JAN. 8, 2007

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas—In an effort to shape the force to support core and emerging missions, Air Force officials will convene a Selective Early Retirement Board Jan. 8 to balance the excess of officers in the colonel and lieutenant colonel ranks.

The SERB will evaluate the line of Air Force and chaplain colonels and lieutenant colonels who meet the following criteria: colonels with four years’ time in grade and lieutenant colonels who have been non-selected for promotion to colonel at least twice will be considered by the board for early retirement. Judge advocates will not meet the board.

The 2007A SERB is scheduled to convene at the Air Force Personnel Center. Officers selected by the SERB for early retirement must apply for a voluntary retirement date of no later than Sept. 1, 2007.

Senior raters will write retention recommendation forms, or RRFs, on their eligible officers to provide retain or retire recommendations. The officer’s senior rater is determined based on the unit the officer is assigned to by Sept. 15. SERB-eligible officers should receive a copy of the RRF no later than 30 days before the board. They are responsible to ensure the accuracy of the RRF, performance reports, decorations, and the data on their pre-selection brief prior to the board date.

To preclude SERB consideration, SERB-eligible officers must submit a retirement application and have it approved by Jan. 1. Officers should submit their applications by Dec. 15 to ensure approval by the deadline. The requested retirement date must be on or before Sept. 1, 2007.

Officers with an approved voluntary retirement, those already selected for promotion or scheduled for manda-



tory retirement in fiscal 2007 or 2008 will not meet the board.

By law, the Air Force may select up to 30 percent of the eligible officers in each grade and competitive category for early retirement. The SERB will closely mirror the central selection board process for promotions and will consider the member's decorations, RRF, training and performance reports, and officer selection brief.

For more information about the SERB and volunteer separation opportunities, visit the AFPC Web site at <<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/retsep/forceshaping/CURRENT/SERB07.htm>> or call the Air Force Contact Center at 800-616-3775.

AIR FORCE MATERIEL COMMAND (SEPT. 27, 2006)

AFMC VICE COMMANDER TESTIFIES ON NEW PERSONNEL SYSTEM

Kathleen A.K. Lopez

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio—Lt. Gen. Terry Gabreski, Air Force Materiel Command vice commander, spoke before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Sept. 20, addressing the recent implementation of the National Security Personnel System Spiral 1.1, at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.

It was the third hearing examining the design and implementation of NSPS, a revised pay-for-performance system, which is the most radical change in general schedule pay for government employees since its inception in 1949. Specifically, NSPS provides the Defense Department a more flexible and responsive civilian personnel system for its non-bargaining unit employees. The system rewards high-performing employees, links performance objectives to organizational goals, and increases individual accountability.

Prior to her current assignment, Gabreski was commander of the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center at Tinker AFB, which was the first Air Force installation to implement NSPS. Gabreski shared in her testimony the tools used by Tinker AFB for successful conversion of more than 2,400 non-bargaining unit employees in April 2006, and the command's ongoing efforts to prepare their remaining installations for conversion in October 2006 and January 2007.

"We worked extremely hard during the planning phases of NSPS to be sure we emphasized training, as well as

communication," she told members of the panel, which included U.S. Senator George V. Voinovich, R-Ohio, and Senate Homeland Security Committee Chairwoman Susan Collins, R-Maine. "We continue to work these two specific areas, and we think those investments are paying off."

Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England also addressed the panel as a witness.

The general equated NSPS training for civilian and military personnel to that of an operational mission, stressing successful execution of the mission must be equaled by preparation. Education of both employees and management is vital, she said.

The general cited specific examples used at Tinker in both the preparatory and executory phases.

Tinker's communication strategy established information flow by developing an NSPS Web site, conducting town hall meetings and commanders' calls, using marquee, and publishing (base) newspaper articles.

"By quickly and efficiently disseminating information, we equipped our workforce with the tools necessary for transition to NSPS, engaged their participation, and encouraged feedback on their questions and concerns," she said.

The base placed a strong emphasis on training employees and managers, both civilian and military. "All employees who were deploying into NSPS received approximately eight hours of soft skills' training covering change-management, as well as eight hours of NSPS specifics," she said.

Housing 34 percent of the Air Force's civilian population, the general stressed to the panel AFMC's commitment to the NSPS transition.

"Such a large civilian population warrants our best effort in implementing NSPS, and that is exactly what we have endeavored to do in AFMC.

"The key message is that NSPS is much more than a new personnel system," she said. "It is a commander's responsibility and must be led from the top. Our four-star commander has relayed the importance of NSPS to installation commanders and individual employees."



She explained how general officers from each Air Force major command traveled to installations in their commands, giving “spread-the-word” briefings, which underscored the importance of NSPS.

Although the first performance cycle for Tinker’s first NSPS employees won’t close out until October 31, with payout results from the cycle occurring in January 2007, Gabreski said the base is already realizing the benefits from the NSPS.

“I have visited Tinker and have spoken with both employees and managers,” she said. “They have told me they feel a stronger link to the mission.”

The general said NSPS deployment hasn’t been without its challenges, which include comparison to the “old way” of doing things.

“Despite these challenges, the Tinker implementation has shown the tremendous potential and benefits of NSPS, which strengthens our commitment to successfully implement across the command,” she said.

Between October 2006 and January 2007, AFMC’s other nine bases will deploy NSPS to more than 10,000 non-bargaining unit employees.

Lopez is with Air Force Materiel Command Public Affairs.

AIR FORCE PRINT NEWS (OCT. 14, 2006) **LOGISTICS OFFICERS GIVEN CHALLENGE AT CONFERENCE**

Will Daniel

SAN ANTONIO—The commander of the Air Force Materiel Command took the stage at the Logistics Officer Association National Conference Oct. 10 to tell 1,350 logistics officers to get lean and expect to be in a long war.

Gen. Bruce Carlson gave the officers an overview of the enemy and how it exploits Islam and uses terrorism as a means to an end. He said Islamic terrorists seek to overthrow and control moderate nations.

“If they are supported by just 1 percent of the Muslim population, that equates to over 13 million extremists,” he said.

Carlson said the U.S. strategy to win the war on terrorism is to prevent terrorist attacks before they occur, deny weapons to outlaw regimes and their terrorist allies, deny

radical groups the support and sanctuary of outlaw regimes, and deny the militants control of any nation and future recruits by advancing democracy and hope across the Middle East.

The general discussed the Air Force’s challenges as it transforms itself. He said the Service has flown 427,000 sorties since the start of operations. Nearly 180,000 Air Force members are involved in operations while humanitarian and relief efforts continue, and Air Mobility Command takes off every 90 seconds 24/7.

But the Air Force will be losing 57,500 members as a result of current transformation initiatives. It will be the smallest end strength since the post-World War II draw-down, he said.

Aging aircraft were also on the general’s agenda of Air Force challenges as he noted an average age of an Air Force aircraft is 23.5 years—and aging. The Air Force is recapitalizing its fighter fleet with F-22 Raptor and F-35 Lightning production, but he said officials recently announced plans for a new long-range, high-payload bomber.

“It’s a challenging environment, but the sky is not falling,” Carlson said. “The war on terrorism costs \$318 million a day, budgets are forecast to decline, and buying power is reduced by rising costs.

“We will win the war on terrorism, take care of our airmen, and recapitalize the Air Force. We will do this by becoming more efficient through Air Force-wide process improvements, reducing legacy systems and restoring a positive perception of the Air Force acquisition system.”

One Materiel Command

The general discussed his One Materiel Command concept. He said there will be more emphasis on seamless life-cycle management, integration of ongoing improvement initiatives across AFMC focusing on lasting change, and elimination of nonvalue-added processes.

“We will standardize AFMC processes and organizations, and collaborate with stakeholders on implementation,” he said. “I will work hard on this.

“How are you part of the solution?” the general asked the “loggies” in the audience. “Know your counterpart in the depot. Learn how to leverage shortages—fewer people, fewer supplies. Do you think every base needs



an engine shop, for example? You will have inputs into these questions.

“Are you ready to be a ‘materiel officer?’” he asked. “We are looking for people who can manage weapons systems in life-cycle terms.

“My hat’s off to you and what you do for DoD.”

Also speaking at the conference were Gen. Bill Looney, commander of the Air Education and Training Command, and Lt. Gen. Donald J. Wetekam, the Air Force deputy chief of staff for logistics, installations, and mission support.

Looney, whose command is headquartered at nearby Randolph Air Force Base, said the nation has a great challenge ahead with the global war on terrorism.

“We must meet it, and we must win,” he said. “The price will be high.”

The AETC commander said the four-star generals were asked to identify “those things that we can quit doing. The truth is there isn’t anything we can quit doing,” he said. “Whenever we’ve been asked to quit doing something, we started it back up again after a time.”

The general gave an example of how Lean Six Sigma is working within his command. He said at one AETC base it took 22 days to discharge an airman who was not going to continue his Air Force career.

“We cut that to 11 days using half the personnel,” he said. “And that is saving \$500,000 a year at that base alone.”

Wetekam said the Air Force’s priorities are winning the war on terrorism, developing and caring for airmen, and modernizing and recapitalizing aircraft and equipment. He said funding those priorities will come from organizational efficiencies brought about by restructuring and getting rid of redundant activities, process efficiencies, and by retiring aging weapon systems.

“We have other weapon systems coming on line that can do the job as good, or better, than some current systems,” he said.

Daniel is with Defense Supply Center Richmond Public Affairs.

OPM OFFERS NON-DOD AGENCIES DIRECT-HIRE AUTHORITY FOR HARD-TO-FILL ACQUISITION POSITIONS

For almost one year, non-Department of Defense agencies have been given a direct-hire authority to attract candidates “with unusually high qualifications.” The authority stems from regulations issued by the Office of Personnel Management and published in the *Federal Register*.

The direct-hire authority covers federal acquisition positions covered under title 41 of the United States Code when there is a severe shortage of well-qualified candidates, as defined in Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The direct-hire regulations are effective Oct. 12, 2006, and will expire Sept. 30, 2007. The regulations can be found at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/E6-15016.htm>.

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