

AFEHRI File 19-11-6

**Research Materials/Source Documents
PERSONNEL**

FILE TITLE: Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS)

Reviewed by:

AFEHRI Representative G.R. Akin date 4 Dec 97

EPC Representative V. R. Akin date 28 Jan 98

Scanner Operator S. R. Akin date 27 Feb 98

APPROVED BY:

Gary R. Akin

GARY R. AKIN, CMSgt, USAF

Director

Air Force Enlisted Heritage Research Institute

98 19-11-6
J.L.M.

BACKGROUND PAPER
ON
EVOLUTION OF THE AIR FORCE ENLISTED PROMOTION SYSTEM

During the waning days of World War II when the Air Force was still part of the Army Air Forces (AAF), enlisted personnel were normally promoted when a necessary wartime skill position became vacant. This type of promotion system, though necessary at the time, was very unpopular with AAF enlisted personnel because an enlisted member with the "wrong" skill could spend their whole career at the same rank with little chance of promotion. When the Air Force became a separate service in 1947, it continued to use the same AAF system. Again, it was extremely unpopular with enlisted members. In contrast, the promotion system Air Force enlisted personnel use today has changed dramatically from the promotion system used after World War II. To gain a greater perspective and understanding of how the enlisted promotion system has changed, this paper will outline the evolution of the Air Force enlisted promotion system and touch on the following points: (1) Promotion of enlisted in the Army Air Forces (AAF); (2) Promotion of enlisted in the "NEW" United States Air Force (USAF); (3) Promotion of Air Force enlisted in the 1950s and 1960s; (4) Introduction of the Weighted Airmen Promotion System (WAPS); (5) Promotion of enlisted personnel in the 1970s, and (6) How the Air Force strives to make this an equitable system for all enlisted personnel today. First of all, let's begin with a look at how enlisted personnel were promoted in the Army Air Forces.

The promotion policy of the Army Air Forces provided promotion for enlisted personnel in conformance with very detailed directives. Consider this quotation from AC&SS Pamphlet Number 2, "The Personnel Staff Officer," dated June 1943 which stated; "No enlisted personnel will be promoted to a grade higher than that provided for their respective MOS and job assignment by the Table of Organization, Table of Distribution, or exact Manning Table for the base or unit to which assigned." (1:9-6)

The MOS is the Military Occupational Specialty and relates to the now used Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC). Tables contained in **AAF Regulation 35-54A**, authorized organizations to have certain percentages of assigned airman with particular MOS's in any one grade. Even though these tables were intended as a "guide" there was a potential to limit the promotion opportunities applied to the careers of airmen. For example, any organization that had personnel with a MOS of "draftsman" (070) could have only one out of every three of its enlisted personnel with a grade of E4; one out of every two of its enlisted personnel with a grade of E5, and one out of every six of its enlisted personnel with a grade of E6. (3:4) Using these tables, it was conceivable that the airman could quickly reach the maximum grade authorized according to the MOS. If management did not take action to reclassify or cross-train the individual, the airman could spend the rest of his career at the same grade. Because of this type of personnel usage, allotment of enlisted grades never seemed to keep pace with the demand for them. A 1948 **AAF Training Command Unit History Report** stated; "The ever-increasing expansion and emphasis upon flexible gunnery training, for example, and the necessity, in the fall of 1943, of promoting large numbers of enlisted men at these schools to the grade of sergeant to act as flexible gunnery instructors, completely blocked the promotion of other enlisted men at those stations and created an extremely bad morale situation." (4:170)

Another problem with the promotion system was the frequent freezes that the higher echelon headquarters placed upon enlisted personnel when the Command was over-strength. As you can see by these examples, and according to historical data of the period, there was a lot of stagnation in enlisted grades and subsequently, morale was low. Early in 1944, promotions for AAF enlisted personnel were generally confined to vacancies in private first class, although there were a handful of vacancies in Master and Technical Sergeants. According to the AAF Training Command report; "The problem of providing enough grades in the right amount and at the right time seemed never to reach a solution." (4:170) After the end of the war and when the Air Force became a separate service in 1947, it had some problems of its own to deal with as a new service in a "peacetime" environment.

The newly formed United States Air Force had retained the same enlisted promotion system as the AAF, and soon realized the same inadequacies with the system. The promotion system did not meet certain requirements in a "peacetime" world. Major Jay Lee submitted a research paper to the Commandant, Air Command and Staff School, in December of 1948 titled, "**Promotion of Enlisted Personnel as an Air Force Instrument of Management**" that stated; "The underlying purpose of all promotion systems is to elevate the most competent individuals in an organization to positions of greatest responsibility. The fundamental reasons for a sound promotion policy are to: (a) Effect maximum utilization of an individual's skills and abilities, and (b) Provide an incentive which will motivate the individual to greater effort and increased efficiency, and (c) Invest the individual with the degree of authority necessary for the effective execution of his duties." (13:9) The Air Force soon discovered that its promotion system did not adequately meet these objectives because it did not maximize personnel skills, or provide an incentive for personnel to expand greater effort. For example, the Air Force at that time had a policy of granting former officers an automatic rating of Master Sergeant upon their enlistment as airmen. This policy created a large overage in MSgts and subsequently denied promotion to lower ranking individuals. Another poor feature of this policy was that in many cases, the former officers enlisted as MSgt were not "qualified" to hold the grade. This caused a lot of discontent among the airmen who worked for them. The research paper went on to say; "Flexibility of the existing system is not sufficient to enable the Air Force to realize the desired effects of promotion. Flexibility of a promotion program is that quality which the program possesses that allows easy change of either rank or pay or the substitution of one for the other. It also includes a pay plan that allows increase or decrease of pay easily and in such a manner that rapidly changing conditions can be met. The pay plan of the Air Force does not allow for this." (13:10) It was felt the Air Force did not give its members pay comparable to its civilian counterparts of the same rank, and as such, the Air Force did not provide its airmen the comforts of life that the people considered due them.

However, there were also some good items in the promotion system. For example, if the airman deserved promotion and **there were vacancies in the unit**, promotion could be attained very quickly. However, as shown earlier, the enlisted individual had to base his hopes of promotion largely upon the personnel above him in the unit and the particular MOS assigned. Major Lee's report also stated: "For the man interested in serving his country with little care for financial gain or comfort, the present policy seems adequate, but the number of people required by the Air Force exceeds the number of people of this type that are available." (13:11)

In a peacetime environment, the new Air Force realized it needed a better promotion system for its enlisted members. The Air Force still required enlisted "leaders", however, it also required "specialists" because of its complexity of weapon systems and equipment. Major Lee went on to say; "The Air Force cannot afford to be modern in its equipment and tactics, and old-fashioned in its concepts of the proper management of men who are to operate that equipment as the tactics require." (13:12) Economy and efficiency were needed attributes of any proposed promotion system. It was believed that a plan offering better pay and better promotion opportunities would prove more economical in the long run and that such a plan would not create a financial burden for the Air Force.

In 1953, Headquarters, Strategic Air Command (SAC) conducted surveys of airman discharges and found that lack of a standard promotion system ranked among the top ten reasons for airmen not re-enlisting in the Air Force. HQ SAC tasked the 38 Air Division to recommend a promotion system that could be utilized in SAC and/or USAF wide. The 38 Air Division report stated; "Generally, the current promotion program has been well accepted in preference to former methods. Previous methods of promotion, based strictly upon manning document vacancies, with authority to promote delegated to Base Commanders or a system whereby Senior Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCOs) are promoted at USAF level to fill command-wide vacancies were compared and the consensus of opinion discarded these systems in favor of the present one, since its application to the present day fluctuations of the Air Force provides equitable distribution of grade vacancies available.

It is felt that the present program affords a standard and uniform method of promotion.

Promotion quotas, including career field vacancies, permit the commander to promote where needed, thereby maintaining a normal level of grades consistent with command-wide requirements. It does not deprive any one individual from being promoted even though vacancies do not exist within his particular unit, but it does prevent promotion in fields where requirements do not exist." (9:3) This type of promotion system was favorably received by most personnel, however, the surveys revealed the system could be improved. Two recommendations that resulted from these surveys are as follows:

- Minimum Time In Grade (TIG) requirement of five years for promotion to Technical Sergeant.
- Minimum Time in Grade (TIG) requirement of seven years for promotion to Master Sergeant.
- Airman Third Class should be promoted to Airman Second Class upon successful completion lengthy technical schools regardless of promotion quotas.

The first two recommendations concerning time in grade requirements were based on experience levels. The promotion system of the 1950s allowed, in some cases, individuals to be promoted to the rank of Master Sergeant in as little as five years. It was generally felt that an individual could not completely qualify himself for promotion to such a high grade in his required specialty in such a short amount of time. The third recommendation of promoting airmen in long technical schools would eliminate them from "proving" their skill proficiency in the field and provide a more equitable system of promotion with airmen that attended shorter technical instruction who received their initial training "on-the-job." These recommendations were accepted and changes were implemented, however, new problems came to light in the early 1960s.

In early 1964, the Military Air Transport Service (MATs) prepared its periodic briefing to Headquarters, USAF to provide its current command status. In that report, MATs provided the Vice Chief of Staff for the Air Force a dissertation called; "**Morale Factors: Improved**

Promotion Opportunities-Airmen" that stated; "The Department of Defense (DOD) strength limitation of 59.2 percent for the Air Force in the top six enlisted grades was hurting MATs."

(6:381) This limitation was causing many airmen to remain in the same grade for long periods of

time which caused discontent among the enlisted force. MATS recommended that; (1) HQ USAF should work for an increase to the DOD limitation to 70.3 percent of enlisted personnel in the top six grades, and (2) implement a higher attrition rate of the top six grades of airmen with 20 or more years of service. The report stated that the recommendations submitted; "would provide more vacancies together with the opportunity to eliminate the non-productive personnel in those grades." (6:382)

In April 1964, HQ USAF established Project "**BLUE PHOENIX**" to revitalize the airmen force, and the project contained some implications pertaining to enlisted promotions. MATS stated in their report that; "the basic problem was not that of improper utilization of airmen but of an inadequate number of non-commissioned officers." (6:382) Another significant part of the **BLUE PHOENIX** initiative was to convert some officer duties to Senior NCO positions. Since officer grade limitations were based on total officer authorizations, MATS felt that this action would further complicate the officer promotion program. To highlight MATS overall feelings about the promotion system for airmen in the early 1960s, consider the following quote; "Such long odds (one out of seventeen for promotion to staff, tech, and master; and one out of eleven to senior and chief master) naturally would discourage any man who was good at his job and wanted to prove he could do still better. They also would discourage the young airman who was intelligent and ambitious but who could see little future in an Air Force career that offered such promotion opportunities." (6:383) The promotion system changed very little over the next five years, however, something was about to happen that would change the promotion system for Air Force enlisted forever; the Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS).

The Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS) was an outgrowth of several years of work and studies to devise an equitable promotion system that assured uniform application of promotion selection criteria on an Air Force wide basis. Ted R. Sturm wrote in a May 1969 **Airman Magazine** article; "To appreciate the advantages of the Weighted Airman Promotion System, you should understand the major difference between it and the system it's replacing.

This big difference is what the Personnel people call "visibility." (16:53) Mr. Sturm went on to say; "Visibility is what tells you why you didn't get promoted, lets you now where you stand by keeping you posted on each factor contributing to your total promotion score." (16:53) WAPS provides a certain amount of points for particular categories thereby eliminating almost all human subjectivity. Another "key" advantage of WAPS was that it let the enlisted airman know where he/she might be lacking. This also let the officers and NCOs they worked for know their promotion weaknesses (if any) so a plan could be established to make the airman "promotable." The new system did this by providing a promotion notice card to each airman who tested and gave them a notice by points, where they needed to "beef up" their promotion potential.

Another change implemented with WAPS was that airmen would be competing against other airmen in the same AFSC "Air Force-wide," not just in the same command. When airmen received their score card they knew where they stood in relation to their peers throughout the Air Force. At the time of WAPS implementation, the new Promotion Fitness Examination (PFE) was introduced and integrated so the airman would not only have to prove their knowledge in their career field, but also in other military subjects such as leadership, management, NCO responsibilities, etc.

The initial implementation schedule for the first promotions under WAPS was to be 1 April 1970 for E-8 and E-9, and 1 June 1970 for E4 through E7. The Airman Magazine article went on to say; "The Air Force had planned originally to promote several thousand eligible NCOs to the grades of E8 and E9 under the new program. However, a last minute decision to defer bringing those grades under WAPS was made to allow time for further study." (16:52) At the time of the article, a study was initiated to verify promotion factors and weights appropriate for selection of the "super grades" and was supposed to be completed in time for promotions to those grades in fiscal year 71. Let's look at how different bases implemented the change.

A 452 Strategic Wing (SAC) Unit History Report, dated 30 June 1969 talked about the implementation of the new WAPS promotion system. The report stated; "This program embodied three primary ingredients considered missing from previous systems: Quality, equity and visibility.

In short, the "quality" equated to the identification, verification and weighing of six primary factors (scores from SKT and PFE tests, time in service, time in grade, decorations, and Airman Performance Report ratings). Equity in the system was instilled by use of the aforementioned weighted factors, thereby removing the human element and the usual allegations of partiality." (11:41). The report identified how the wing had to identify the responsible agencies for establishing, publishing and ordering the materials necessary for studies and subsequent testing. The wing On-The-Job (OJT) section was assigned this responsibility.

Another example of the base implementation of WAPS can be found in the "History of the 3615 Pilot Training Wing," Unit History Report, dated 28 October 1989 which stated; "Among significant changes was the implementation of the Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS) testing program." (12:4) The report identified 333 airmen as eligible for testing in approximately 21 different AFSCs. No major problems were mentioned in the report. Although management had taken action to ensure that all eligible personnel under the new system were identified, there was still the enormous task to put out to the Air Force the massive amounts of study materiel that the airmen would need to become proficient for testing. The Extension Course Institute became a "key" player in this task.

In February 1969, the Extension Course Institute (ECI) was assigned the mission of supporting the new WAPS system by providing ECI course materials to all Air Force bases to be used as study reference material by eligible airmen. A 1971 ECI unit history report spoke about the task in this way; "The study materials were required prior to the first testing cycle beginning in September 1969. The project involved packaging and mailing over a hundred thousand course sets throughout the Air Force." (5:14) Supporting the new WAPS tasking created a multi-faceted problem for ECI. Since ECI did not receive its orders until February with the first WAPS testing cycle taking place in September, ECI only had seven months to plan and execute a program that would deliver WAPS study material into the hands of the enlisted airmen.

ECI, in coordination with Air University and HQ USAF, proposed a plan for supporting WAPS material requirements Air Force wide.

By the end of May 1969, as the reports states; "ECI had a "first" when it dispatched three van loads of material directly to Air Post Offices (APOs) on the East and West Coasts." (5:15) In coordination with the Post Office, ECI participated in "PROJECT LONG HAUL" that dispatched van loads of 1,333 bags and 2,666 boxes of course materials. To show the magnitude of ECI's task, two years after WAPS implementation ECI had distributed over 300,000 Career Development Courses (CDCs) to the field. Another element of the new WAPS program was to assign point values to the weighted measurements used in the system along with officially implementing the program.

On 25 November 1969 with an implementation date of 2 January 1970, the Department of the Air Force released a new Air Force Regulation 39-29, "Promotion of Airmen," that described the new weights and factors that were to be used with WAPS. The maximum allowable point values for each weighted measure were assigned as follows:

- Specialty Knowledge Test (SKT) Score - 95
- Promotion Fitness Examination (PFE) Score - 95
- Time in Service (TIS) - 40
- Time in Grade (TIG) - 60
- Decorations - 25
- Airman Performance Reports (APR) - 135
- TOTAL MAXIMUM POINTS POSSIBLE - 450

Furthermore, it designated that each airman eligible for promotion would take two tests; a Promotion Fitness Examination (PFE), and a Specialty Knowledge Test (SKT). It described how airmen would be aligned in priority order for promotion by grade, AFSC, and total weighted factor score. It also showed how airmen with the highest scores in each AFSC would be selected to fill vacancies forecast during the cycle and placed on a selected list.

The regulation stated; "The list will be published alphabetically, with promotion priority sequence numbers established by seniority." (2:4) As seen up to this point, implementation of WAPS using SKT and PFE type testing became an integral part of the system. However a new problem soon came to light because of the way these tests were being administered.

As important as the two tests are for promotion under WAPS, another problem soon surfaced which no one could foresee. Personnel eligible for testing were not showing up for testing at substantially high rates. A 1970 **2nd Bombardment Wing Unit History Report** stated; "An important part of the WAPS program was the SKT and PFE testing. And although steps were taken last quarter to reduce the high percentage of people failing to report for a test, the evidence this quarter showed only little improvement. For the June-July testing period for Sergeants, approximately 20 percent failed to report for testing. During August and September, the testing period for Staff and Technical Sergeants, 749 individuals were scheduled for testing and 88 failed to show up, an absentee rate of 11.8 percent." (8:9) It was soon discovered that the underlying problem was the two tests were being administered on two different days. The Wing Commander at the 2nd Bomb Wing established new rules which stated the tests would both be administered on the same day. On subsequent promotion testing days, the absentee rate dropped to zero. Changes to the system were relatively small over the next couple of years, with the greatest future impact to come for eligible E-8s and E-9s.

As it was eluded to earlier in this paper, E-8 and E-9 promotions were planned to be implemented into WAPS initially, however, it was felt that further study was needed to ensure the new supergrade WAPS would be equitable. Part of this study was for the Air Force to send out surveys to personnel in the top two grades asking them for suggestions of how to change the promotion system for the better. Prior to 1977, E-8 and E-9 promotions were achieved using a evaluation board only. Once the surveys were returned, the Air Force found that most personnel in the top two enlisted grades favored a WAPS-type system. This would allow individuals who did not get promoted to receive feedback so they could work on improving their chances in subsequent promotion cycles.

The Air Force favored the implementation of a supergrade WAPS type promotion system and scheduled implementation for the spring of 1977 with the first promotions under the new system effective 1 August 1977. The new selection process, which is the same one used today, encompassed two separate phases; WAPS testing (Phase I), and a central board evaluation (Phase II). Phase I consisted of a PFE type promotion test along with weighted factors such as; Time in Grade, Time in Service, Decorations, Performance Reports, etc., which would be scored the same way as in the lower grades. A possible 380 points could be received by the individual in this phase. Phase II consisted on a central promotion evaluation board who reviewed all records on eligible individuals using the "whole person" concept. A maximum score of 450 points could be received under this phase. The **376 Strategic Wing** summed up the changes to the supergrade promotion changes in one of their Unit History Reports which stated; "Overall, the new selection process was expected to increase the morale of personnel by providing all those eligible for promotion with a score card listing their relative standing within their AFSC. Those not selected would then be able to devote their energies to those areas in which weaknesses were indicated." (10:30) Once this new promotion system was implemented, the Air Force was moving more toward a policy that not only gave incentive to airman to get promoted, it was also looking at taking the stagnation out of the promotion system by forcing individuals who were not making contributions and getting promoted to move out. Dr. Robert Seamans, former Secretary of the Air Force, was asked how he felt about this policy during a Oral History interview in September 1973. In response, Dr Seamans stated; "I think you'd get a much more in-depth view from some of the military. I happen to like that form of organization. I think the civil service in the government could use an awful lot more. Having junior people come in and move along and those that are not cut out for the job or aren't too good at it, they move aside. It's a wonderful weeding-out process, so I'd say, as a general proposition, I support it fully." (15:480) During the middle part of the 1970s, other types of changes were surfacing that needed to be addressed. The first of these, was the E-8 and E-9 supplemental promotion policy.

Before 1971, supplemental board consideration was given to any airmen for **any** error that was located in their records. The Air Force soon discovered that people were taking advantage of this "too liberal" policy. This type of abuse is clearly indicated in a 1977 Directorate of Personnel Plans Unit History Report which stated; "Supplementals increased significantly (833 in 1970 vs 115 in 1968), and supplementals were enjoying a much higher selection rate." (7:184) The policy was subsequently changed in 1971 to only allow supplemental consideration to airmen who were not considered by the original board. If the airman had an error in their record, they would have to wait one year until the next regular promotion board. If they were selected under the new board for promotion, they could apply for a backdated date of rank and effective date. This type of wait did not sit well with promotion eligible E-8s and E-9s. Through further study, the Air Force found that the data system and centralized maintenance of senior NCO records at the Air Force Military Personnel Center (AFMPC) had greatly reduced the number of errors in the promotion system. The Directorate Personnel Plans report went on to say; "Airmen therefore found it unreasonable that they had to wait a full year to get "supplemental" consideration, particularly in those cases where it was reasonable to assume promotion would have occurred had the record been correct." (7:185) Based on this information, a new policy was implemented which deleted the one year wait requirement. In instances where an error occurred in the weighted factors such as TIS, TIG, Promotion Test, Decorations, etc., an adjustment would be made to the total score and if above the cutoff score for the airman's AFSC, the airman would be promoted. This change was placed in effect in fiscal year 1978 and become effective with the 1 August 1977 through 1 July 1978 promotion cycles. Because of the sweeping and dramatic changes that had taken place in the enlisted promotion system since the implementation of WAPS, an Airman Promotion Workshop was deemed necessary.

The Airman Promotion Workshop was held at AFMPC in late 1977. As stated in the Directorate of Personnel Plans report; "The topics/initiatives discussed at the workshop included: (1) promotion consideration of personnel in CONUS/Overseas imbalanced skills; (2) training status of individuals who were medically disqualified; (3) skill level requirements for promotion

eligibility; (4) promotion consideration to E-4; (5) method of assigning sequence numbers to selectees; (6) promotion authority for promotion to E-8 and E-9; (7) nine skill level for promotion eligibility to E-8; (8) status of HRL WAPS revalidation study; and (9) conditional promotion program." (7:187) Two of the topics this paper will touch on is the award of nine skill level and the E-8/E-9 promotion "Spike" issues.

There had been discussion to make the nine skill level a criteria for promotion to E-8 as early as March 1976. It was felt that more "meaningful" criteria was needed for the award of this level. With the number of Master Sergeant nine level positions being manned, there was no incentive for the MSgt to work for an upgrade to a nine skill level. There was also some "gaming" of the system because the promotion policy allowed E-7s to compete for E-8 without a nine skill level. Once the MSgt was promoted to SMSgt, the nine skill level was automatically awarded. During the workshop, the method of granting nine levels and implementing motivational factors was discussed. It was the consensus of the workshop that; "perhaps by requiring a nine skill level for promotion eligibility the desired result could be achieved." (7:190) As 1977 drew to a close, that initiative was still being discussed. At the same time, the Air Force was beginning to become concerned about the speed in which some enlisted personnel could get promotion under the current system.

The Chief of Staff of the Air Force, between February and June 1977, voiced his concern on numerous occasions that in some cases, the Air Force may be promoting too early to the E-8/E-9 supergrades. The Chief felt the need to assure that individuals selected for E-8 and E-9 had adequate supervisory experience. It was also his concern that NCOs were being selected for E-9 at a relatively early stage in their careers. Because of the Chief's concerns, the Directorate of Personnel Plans report stated; "an analysis was performed on E-8/9 promotions. In general, it was found that the average promotion phase points (spike) for both E-8s and E-9s had increased over the last four years, and those who were promoted early stayed with the Air Force as long as those who where promoted later." (7:191) Even though the spike evidence was inconclusive, promotion boards were briefed on supervisory requirements and experience as indicators of an

airman's readiness for supergrade promotion. For an overall perspective on the implementation of WAPS and the evolution of the enlisted promotion system, let's look at one of the former Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and his perspective on the system.

Former Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force McCoy reflected on the evolution of the promotion system as part of an oral history interview in 1982. When asked how he felt about if WAPS has worked, he said; "I think it has worked very well. I think it is probably the most well-understood promotion system that we have today--than we have ever had. It has visibility. People know where they stand. They know what they have to do to improve themselves."

(14:180) The Chief went on to say that from the reverse side, a couple of times, because of the lack of visibility of the promotion system before WAPS, he didn't know what made him stand out when he got promoted. This was another example of how the lack of visibility was evident in the promotion system prior to WAPS implementation. The Chief admitted he had not been promoted under WAPS, however, he understood the importance of the new system by saying; "When WAPS came on the line, you know, we went to equal opportunity promotion. Under WAPS everybody knows they are getting their fair share; then know where they stand. They know where they have to improve themselves, and they know more about the promotion system, probably, than about the history of the United States Air Force, even though the Air Force is a very young service." (14:180) Since WAPS came on line, all the weighted factors were visible to the airman eligible for promotion, however, there was and still is a mystery to most E-7s and E-8s trying to get promoted; the board score. The Chief voiced some of his reservations about going to a supergrade WAPS promotion system for E-8 and E-9. He clarified this point by saying; The reason I was afraid of that is, and of course the compromise that came out of it was satisfactory to some degree because there is still a board, but if you start promoting to the rank of chief master sergeant, which is 1 percent of the force, strictly by how an individual scores on a test, you are not taking anything into consideration." (14:181)

The Chief thought the Air Force was going to see more and more of this because the airmen coming up through the ranks at that time were promoted all the way to Master Sergeant using the

WAPS system. He felt there was an advocacy to do away with the boards altogether and go to a WAPS-only type system for promotion to E-8 and E-9. The Chief summed up his feelings on that point by saying; "I pray and hope the United States Air Force never does that." (14:182)

As you can see, the promotion system used today is vastly different from the system the Air Force inherited from the Army Air Forces. Up through to the present time, the Air Force continues to make adjustments to the promotion system by implementing or adjusting different factors such as: Airman Performance Reports to Enlisted Performance Reports (EPRs); the use of Senior Rater Endorsements, attendance at the NCO Academies as a prerequisite to wear certain rank, and many others. The underlying factor in all of these changes is to make the system equitable for all and to promote the "best" possible people into environments of increased responsibility and leadership. The system continues to evolve, and the need for that evolution will help our finest airmen strive for continued success and increased responsibility.

In summary, this paper has briefly outlined the evolution of the Air Force enlisted promotion system. The Army Air Forces used a promotion system that based advancement on filling necessary wartime skills and vacancies of unit slots. The Air Force adopted the AAF system when it became a separate service in 1947, and soon discovered it was not a good way to promote personnel in a peacetime environment. The lack of a standard promotion system was the number one complaint as to why airmen did not re-enlistment in the Air Force during the early 1950s. Major changes to the promotion system during the 1950s were increasing Time in Grade and Time in Service minimum requirements as a prerequisite for promotion. During the 1960s, some Major Commands felt that the Congress assigned maximum strength factor of enlisted force grades led to a lot of discontent in the enlisted force, because many airmen were forced to stay in the same grade for extended periods of time. There were just no vacancies to promote into. The Air Force implemented projects such as Blue Phoenix to give the promotion system a boost, however, the next real evolution of the promotion system for Air Force enlisted was the implementation of the Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS) in late 1969. WAPS, for the first time, gave all airmen the visibility to determine why they were not getting promoted. This

was something that was unknown up to this time and many airmen felt the prior-WAPS system was unfair. WAPS put equity and fairness back into the promotion system. Senior and Chief Master Sergeant promotions were originally scheduled to be included in the WAPS program, however, this was not actually placed into effect until 1977. E-8 and E-9 supplemental promotion policy changes; nine skill level assignment; the "spike" issue, and other types of factors all came into play in the late 1970s when the "supergrade" WAPS program became effective. The present-day promotion system for Air Force enlisted personnel is a process which has evolved over five decades. The system continues to grow, and growth is a needed attribute of any pliable promotion system. The Air Force continues to strive for an equal and fair promotion system for its enlisted members. As Air Force enlisted members, we need to make every effort to support and help make the enlisted promotion system the best it can be for our people to take with them into the next century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. AC&SS Pamphlet Number 2, The Personnel Staff Officer, HQ AAF, Washington DC, June 1943.
2. Air Force Regulation 39-29, Promotion of Airmen, Headquarters US Air Force, Washington DC, 25 November 1969.
3. Army Air Forces Regulation 35-54, Headquarters AAF, Washington DC, October 1944.
4. Army Air Forces Training Command, Unit History Report, July 1943 - December 1944, Headquarters AAF Training Command, Fort Worth, Texas, 1 August 1945.
5. Extension Course Institute, Unit History Report, Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition, Headquarters, Air University, 12 February 1971.
6. History of the Military Air Transport Service, Unit History Report, 1 January 1964 - 30 June 1964, Historical Services and Research Division, Directorate of Information, Headquarters MATS, June 1965.
7. History of Personnel Plans, Unit History Report, 1 July 1977 - 31 December 1977, Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel, Headquarters, USAF, February 1978.
8. History of the 2D Bombardment Wing, Unit History Report, July - September 1970, 19th Air Division, Second Air Force, Strategic Air Command, Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, 23 May 1979.
9. History of the 38th Air Division and 804th Air Base Group, Unit History Report, 1 through 30 November 1953, Second Air Force, Strategic Air Command, Hunter Air Force Base, 1 April 1980.
10. History of 376th Strategic Wing, Unit History Report, July - September 1976, 3d Air Division, Strategic Air Command, Kadena Air Base, Japan, 18 March 1977.
11. History of the 452D Strategic Wing, Unit History Report, 1 Apr - 30 June 1969, Strategic Air Command, December 1969.
12. History of the 3615th Pilot Training Wing, Unit History Report, 1 July 1969 - 30 September 1969, Air Training Command, United States Air Force, 9 January 1990.
13. Lee, Jay S., Major USAF, Promotion of Enlisted Personnel as an Air Force Instrument of Management, Research Paper, Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama, December 1948.

14. McCoy, J. M., Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force (Ret) Oral History Interview, Individual History, Omaha, Nebraska, 25 February 1982.
15. Seamans, Robert C., Dr., Secretary of the Air Force (Ret), Oral History Interview, September 1973.
16. Sturm, Ted R., "WAPS, Why WAPS?", Airman Magazine, May 1969.

File
19-11-4

Background Paper
on
The Weighted Airman Promotion System
by
SMSgt Bernhard Fritz

This background paper traces the evolution of the Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS). This evolution actually started in 1967 when, then Chairman of the House Armed Forces Committee, L. Mendel Rivers requested answers from the Air Force regarding the enlisted promotion system. His request was prompted by 15,000 to 20,000 letters from disgruntled Air Force members complaining about the enlisted promotion system. (6:87)

The advent of WAPS was the first major overhaul of the enlisted promotion system since the Air Force became a separate service in September 1947. The previous system, the promotion board system, was so ambiguous that a person being considered was never sure why they got promoted or didn't get promoted. Interviewed in February 1982, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James M. McCoy stated his views and support for the Weighted Airman Promotion System. He stated, "I think it is probably the most well-understood promotion system that we have today--than we have ever had. It has visibility. People know where they stand. They know what they have to do to improve themselves." (10:180) The visibility that WAPS brought to enlisted promotions also

reduced the number of complaints received by the House Armed Force Committee to about six or less per year. (6:87-88)

The WAPS program with its six very specific components; Skill Knowledge Test (SKT), Promotion Fitness Examination (PFE), Time in Service (TIS), Time in Grade (TIG), Decorations, and Airman Performance Reports (APR), and the resulting score notice, give each service member a very clear picture of standing within the Air Force enlisted promotion system. (11:56) The promotion board system, on the other hand, was very narrow in its scope in that a person only competed for promotion within their respective major commands. Also, the promotion board members had no concrete guidance how they should evaluate each candidate. (4:1-2) Certainly, each was charged to review and judge each person in specific areas, but each member could assign different levels of importance to each area. This contributed to the board's mystique and fostered misunderstandings and often anger among those contending for scarce promotions.

The Promotion Testing Program is further divided into two equally important components, the Specialty Knowledge Test (SKT) and the Promotion Fitness Examination (PFE). (3:40) The SKT was not new to the Air Force. It was first used in 1952 under the title "Airman Proficiency Tests" and was retitled "Specialty Knowledge Test" in 1961. This test was used strictly as a vehicle for skill upgrading until April 1969. The first WAPS application of this test was conducted in September 1969. (2:20-1) This time

frame also marked the first operational use of the Promotion Fitness Examination.

The Secretary of the Air Force approved WAPS as the promotion program for Air Force enlisted personnel in July 1968 after much prodding by Congress. However, the program was not used to select anyone for promotion until Jun 1970. (5-32) During the intervening years, the Air Force Human Resources Laboratory at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, prepared a number of field tests. The field test conducted by Janos B. Koplyay in May 1969 using airmen assigned to the Alaskan Air Command was intended to validate WAPS. The test occurred during the FY 69-B promotion cycle and included 2,290 promotion-eligible airmen in grades E-3 through E-7. The study determined that those individuals selected by promotion boards would also have been promoted under the weighted system. (1:iii) The question from those airmen not selected for promotion was not resolved by this study. The board system just did not address or concern itself with the task of informing those not selected for promotion where they could or needed to improve. However, WAPS was designed to fill that void. The weighted system gave each person the raw, impersonal data that each person could understand and apply to their circumstance.

Promotion to the enlisted "super grades", however, did not change as radically. The promotion authority was withdrawn from the major commanders and centralized at the Air Force Military Personnel Center, which insured equal promotion opportunity as with

the lower grades. These promotions are now a combination of WAPS and the "old" board system. But, with the exception of the board, each contender can still judge, by way of the weighted portion, how his/her promotion opportunity can be enhanced through the weighted factors which are; the supervisory examination, APR ratings, Professional Military Education, Decorations, TIG, and TIS points. This adjustment brought the "super grades" into the same visible program afforded the lower grades.

The Weighted Airman Promotion System has its staunch supports and those who decry it as a "test takers dream come true." However unfair this system is viewed, the comparison with the old system by those persons, most notably the former Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force, who know each system in-depth, WAPS is the most fair system the Air Force has ever had. (7-10:-) The best if for no other reason--it is very visible and easily understood.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Koplyay, Janos B., Field Test of the Weighted Airman Promotion System: Phase II. Validation of the System for Grades E-4 through E-7. Air Force Human Resources Laboratory, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, May 1969.
2. Department of the Air Force. AFR 35-8, Air Force Military Personnel Testing System, 31 December 1969.
3. Department of the Air Force. AFR 35-8, Air Force Military Personnel Testing System, 25 April 1983.
4. Department of the Air Force. AFR 39-29, Promotion of Airmen, 10 March 1967.
5. History of the 314th Air Division. (1 January - 30 June 1969)
6. Airey, Paul W., CSAF, USAF Ret. Interview with USAF Historical Research Center, 23-24 March 1981.
7. Gaylor, Robert D., CSAF, USAF Ret. Interview with USAF Historical Research Center, 16-17 January 1981.
8. Harlow, Donald L., CSAF, USAF Ret. Interview with USAF Historical Research Center, 9-10 December 1980.
9. Kisling, Richard D., CSAF, USAF Ret. Interview with USAF Historical Research Center, 14-15 December 1982, 13 June 1983, 11 September 1984, and 4 October 1984.
10. McCoy, James M., CSAF, USAF Ret. Interview with USAF Historical Research Center, 25-26 February 1982.
11. "Why WAPS." AIRMAN (May 1969), pp. 52-56.

Feb 9-11-92

TALKING PAPER
ON
THE HISTORY OF THE WEIGHTED AIRMAN PROMOTION SYSTEM

This background paper describes a brief history of the Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS). It first discusses why WAPS was instituted, then the transition into the first WAPS, and finally, the inclusion of the USAF Supervisory Examination (USAFSE) and a WAPS similar promotion for the top two grades.

There were many reasons why WAPS was instituted. The promotion system prior to 1970 was unfair and inconsistent. In the early days of the Air Force promotions were determined by central base promotion boards, where selections were often based on personalities. (5:93) Eligibles had to be known on the base before they stood a chance for selection. So if they were newly transferred into an organization and were unknown, they didn't stand a chance. It wasn't until someone on the base got to know them and became their sponsor did they stand a chance of getting promoted. (7:99) Additionally, the central base promotion board was riddled with favoritism. Though some individuals were selected because they were good at their jobs, many were selected solely on who they knew and their reputation on base. If the eligibles had established a good reputation on the base they had a good chance of getting promoted. Then of course, the rumors on the base had an impact on the selection process. If the base was small then everyone knew what everyone else was doing or thought they knew what everyone else was doing. With the rumor problem plus a small base population, promotion boards could be quite

vicious. An example of this is the following excerpt from CMSAF Kisling's USAF Oral History Interview: "I know I would have been selected by the board earlier for master sergeant when I was at Wheelus Field except they had an enlisted man serving on the board, and they asked this enlisted man who he would promote and he said, "I think you ought to promote him." "Is he a good friend of yours?" "Yes. We happen to be friends." "Okay, we will take the other guy." I know that for a fact." (7:171) This is but one example of the most qualified person not getting the promotion he or she deserved due to favoritism. Not only did the board members show favoritism toward individuals, certain Air Force Speciality Codes (AFSCs) were favored by commanders.

Some installation commanders would state what they wanted the board members to look for. Often commanders favored the flightline personnel and left the support personnel out. In the early 1950s, first sergeants could always be promoted no matter their qualifications. There was even a first sergeant promoted at Amarillo, Texas, while he was in the city jail on a driving while intoxicated charge. Unfortunately, that wasn't an isolated case, and similar things happened all the time. However, other installation commanders would want all AFSCs treated equal. (7:172) These inconsistencies from base to base added to the unfairness of the promotion system.

To improve the promotion system, command level promotion boards were used for a few years prior to WAPS. These boards were more fair, because they were at a level where most board members didn't personally know the eligibles. Promotions were based on reviewing individuals records, which were often very good. Most command board members devised a formula so many points for one

factor and so many points for another, so when they went through the records they would have a reasonable evaluation. (7:170) These promotion boards were quite honest, but they couldn't overcome the problem of promotion stagnation.

Promotions in some career fields were frozen year after year. (5:93) There were no projected vacancies in some specialties because of over manning. So, if eligibles were in frozen career fields, no matter how qualified they were, there wasn't any opportunities for them to get promoted. This was a serious morale problem and one of the most unfair aspects in the enlisted force. (5:93)

Overall, the early promotion system had no visibility. Eligibles had no idea how an individual got promoted. (8:180) Due to these problems, many airmen wrote letters to their Congressmen. Thus, Congress started demanding answers to the promotion problems. (5:91) John Ford, a professional staff member on the House Armed Services Committee talked with the Air Staff and said, "We are going to have to hold some hearings on that." (6:139) Air Staff had already had the Air Force Human Resources Laboratory (AFHRL) develop a new promotion system; WAPS, but had held it until Congress got real upset. After Air Staff told Congress that they had developed WAPS, Congress said, "You had better do something quick," and they did. (6:139)

Several things had to happen during the transition period before WAPS could be instituted throughout the Air Force in 1970. It was tested first in Alaska, then after some refinements, Congress directed it be used as the only Air Force promotion system. (6:139) Thus, the prior promotion boards disappeared for the enlisted grades in 1969 (7:170)

In early February 1969, while the system was being refined, the Extension Course Institute (ECI) was assigned the mission of providing course materials

to all enlisted members, prior to testing under WAPS to grades E-4 through E-7. Career Development Courses (CDCs) had to reach the eligibles so they could prepare to take the annual Promotion Fitness Examination (PFE) and the Speciality Knowledge Test (SKT), both of which were scoring elements in WAPS. These materials covered all career areas and included the non-CDC management course 0006 and Noncommissioned Officers (NCO) Courses 0007A and 007B. All the materials were required to reach the eligibles before the first testing cycle beginning in September 1969. Thus, ECI had only seven months to implement the WAPS program. To help meet this monumental task, priority reprinting of numerous CDCs was required by the Air University Field Printing Plant. At the end of May, three trucks of material were dispatched directly to APOs on the East and West Coasts. By participating in the Post Office Department's "Project Long Haul" the materials successfully arrived at the APOs for shipment of 1,333 bags and 2,666 boxes of course materials world-wide. Then by June, ECI was processing orders on the basis of one set of course materials to every five airmen eligible, which totaled over a 100,000 sets. (3:14-15)

As the materials were reaching their destinations, airmen were reading about the new promotion system in articles like "Why WAPS" in the May 1969, Airmen. (1:52-56) The article stated one of the primary purposes of WAPS was to give the eligibles who failed to get promoted a "why" for not making the list. Thus, they could take action to enhance their chances of making it next time. WAPS was devised as an equitable system that assured uniform application of promotion selection criteria. With articles like this one all eligibles knew well before WAPS was instituted, what factors they were going to be measured against. (1:52-53)

To help clarify the factors, Air Force Regulation 39-29, dated 25 November 1969, spelled them out and listed their point weight. There were six factors for promotion of E-4s, who were in the best qualified zone according to Air Force Manual 39-1, through E-7s. The SKT and PFE scores had a maximum weight of 95 points each and the actual percentile score received was used. The Time in Service (TIS) score had a maximum weight of 40 points and eligibles were awarded 2 points for each year in service up to 20 years. The Time in Grade (TIG) score had a maximum weight of 60 points and eligibles received a half a point for each month in grade up to 10 years. The decoration score had a maximum weight of 25 points and a decoration was considered under WAPS only if the effective date was on or before the eligibility cutoff date of the cycle. The Airmen Performance Reports (APR) score had a maximum weight of 135 points and the points were computed by finding the mean of the APRs for five years prior to the eligibility cutoff date, not to exceed 10 APRs, then multiplying it by 15. (2:3) With this information eligibles knew what WAPS was and could prepare for testing.

After the transition period, WAPS was instituted and the first selections were made centrally at HQ USAF, for the grades E-4 through E-7, on 1 June 1970. (2:4; 8:180) As a result of WAPS, the number of congressionals dropped dramatically. (5:138) WAPS proved it was an equal opportunity system; the fairest enlisted members eligible for E-4 through E-7 had had prior to 1970. (8:180)

For the supergrades it wasn't until the spring of 1977 that the USAFSE was introduced. Originally, eligible NCOs for the grades of E-8 and E-9 were also suppose to come under the WAPS program in 1970. However, the decision was deferred to allow time for further study to identify and verify weights

appropriate for the top two grades. (1:52) In 1970, selections were made by a promotion board comprised of commissioned officers above the rank of major, at HQ USAF. Board members were divided into panels of three members for each AFSC. Board members assessed each selection folder using the "whole man concept", considering manner of duty performance, experience, supervisory and leadership ability, seniority, education, professional development and favorable communications. Each panel member scored each selection folder using a scale of zero to ten with one half point increments. If the three scores varied by more than two points another panel scored the record or the board president and the original panel resolved the difference. After the scores were tallied, all eligibles were aligned in relative order of merit based on composite scores of zero through thirty points. Those with the highest scores were selected for promotion to fill projected vacancies in their AFSCs. (2:4) Though this promotion system was more fair and consistent eligibles wanted it improved.

To determine what the eligibles wanted an Air Force survey was conducted asking them for suggestions to improve the selection methods. Those that replied, wanted a WAPS type system so they would know which areas they could improve in order to enhance their chances for promotion. The result was on 1 October 1977, a new selection process that involved two phases was implemented. Under Phase I, all eligibles were scored under a point system for TIG, TIS, APRs, the USAFE, decorations and professional military education. Up to 380 points could be earned in this phase. Phase II was the central selection board evaluation of the "whole person concept" with up to 450 points earned in this phase. The points awarded in both phases were combined to compute an overall promotion score. Overall, the new selection process

increased the eligibles morale by providing them, for the first time, a score card listing of their relative standing within their AFSC. (4:29-30) With the institution of these two phases the supergrades also had a visible promotion system that was fair and consistent.

In 1970 and since, WAPS has proved it's visible, well understood, does show all members where they stand and what they have to do to improve themselves. Having WAPS as the enlisted member's primary promotion system has ensured that everyone has a fair and consistent opportunity for promotion. To date, it is by far the best promotion system in the history of the Air Force.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Airmen. May 1969, p 52-56.
2. Department of the Air Force. Air Force Regulation 39-29. 25 November 1969.
3. -----. History of Extension Course Institute, 1946-1971. Vol 1, pp 14-15.4. Maxwell AFB, Alabama: Air University History, 1971.
4. -----. History of 376 Strategic Wing, 1 July 1976 - 30 September 1976. Vol 1, pp. 28-30. Kadena Air Base, Japan, 1977.
5. -----. United States Air Force Oral History Interview, CMSAF Airey, 23-24 March 1981. Washington DC: Office of Air Force History, 1983.
6. -----. United States Air Force Oral History Interview, CMSAF Harlow, 9-10 December 1980. Washington DC: Office of Air Force History, 1982.
7. -----. United States Air Force Oral History Interview, CMSAF Kisling, 14-15 December 1982, 13 June 1983, 11 September 1984, 4 October 1984. Washington DC: Office of Air Force History, 1986.
8. -----. United States Air Force Oral History Interview, CMSAF McCoy, 25 26 February 1981. Washington DC: Office of Air Force History, 1983.

AIRMAN

MAY 1969

file 19-11-6
J.L.A.

THE MIGHT OF STRIKE

WAF Where the Action Is

THE JET SET

A BETTER LIFE

Three Miracles in One Day



WHY WAPS?

Quality, equity and visibility form the cornerstones of the new Weighted Airman Promotion System

About one year from now, lists of airmen selected for promotion to sergeant, staff, tech and master will be arriving at CBPOs throughout the Air Force. Some 380,000 NCOs will be sweating them out. They will represent the first promotions under the Weighted Airman Promotion System called WAPS.

According to the time schedule, which has been incredibly accurate so far, the first promotions to E-8 and E-9 will be on April 1, 1970; to E-4 through E-7 on June 1, 1970.

The Air Force had planned originally to promote several thousand eligible NCOs to the grades of E-8 and E-9 under the new program. However, a last-minute decision to defer bringing those grades under WAPS was made to allow time for further study. At this time it appears that the study, which will aim to identify and verify factors and weights appropriate to selection to E-8 and E-9, will be completed in time to permit promotions to those grades under WAPS during FY 71.

Meanwhile, WAPS is definitely in for the lower

grades, as the first WAPS promotions spread their inevitable joy throughout the Air Force.

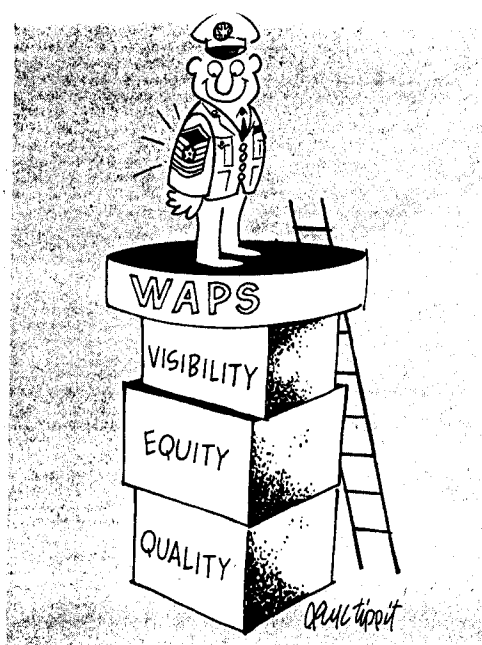
However, aside from the happy people who make it, there will be, as always, many who are not so happy — many who did not make it. But the lack of one major irritant will take much of the sting out of the disillusionment. That irritant, almost an ever-present one in previous promotion cycles, is the question: "Why didn't I get promoted?"

This time they will know why, because one of the primary purposes of the new program called WAPS is to allow those who fail to get their promotion when they think they should, to know why they missed the list. They can then take action to plug the gaps, to shore up their weak spots, so they can enhance their chances of making it the next time.

WAPS has other important purposes, of course. It is, in fact, an outgrowth of several years of work and study to devise an equitable promotion system that assures uniform application of promotion selection criteria

Under WAPS, those who missed the list can take action to plug the gaps, and shore up weak spots, so they can make it the next time.





on an Air Force-wide basis.

But to appreciate the advantages of the Weighted Airman Promotion System, you should understand the major difference between it and the system it's replacing. This big difference is what the Personnel people call "visibility." Visibility is what tells you why you didn't get promoted, lets you know where you stand by keeping you posted on each factor contributing to your total promotion score.

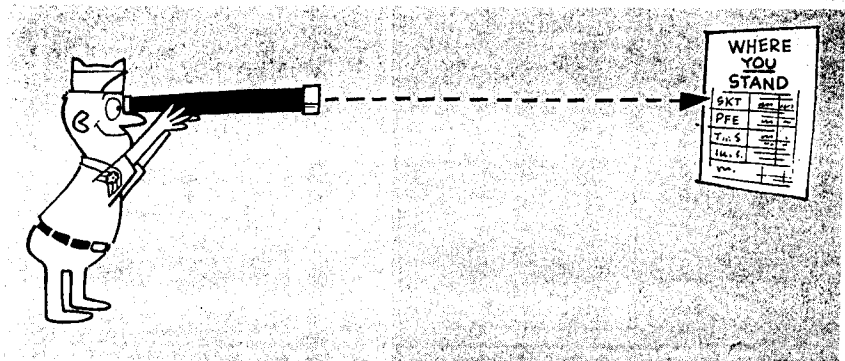
Another reason WAPS is so important is that with WAPS you attain greater objectivity. That is, since certain points are allowed for certain things, little is left to human interpretation, to subjective judgment.

Every factor on which an individual's eligibility and relative qualification is based is clearly defined and depends on a direct contribution by the individual himself. If you look closely at the accompanying chart, *Compute Your Own Score*, you will see why this is true. You might be a helluva nice guy, but if you don't hack the course—if you louse up the SKT, PFE, get low APRs

for one reason or another—you may just have to wait until the next go-around. *But because of visibility, you will know why.*

Moreover, not only are the factors that have a bearing on whether you get promoted or not visible to you—the man most concerned—they are also visible to others to whom your welfare is a responsibility; your officers, NCOs, and perhaps more importantly, the American people who have expressed their interest through their representatives in Congress. Congress has not been convinced in the past that the Air Force system was indeed "fair and equitable." That it lacked visibility, there was little doubt. When letters of complaint to Congressmen increased in volume, the Air Force and Congress went to work on the problem. WAPS is the answer they came up with.

Surprisingly, there are some people in the Air Force who still feel that WAPS isn't really all that necessary. "Wasn't 1968 a good year?" they ask. "And 1967?" They are right in that respect. Fiscal Year 1968 was



The big difference between WAPS and the system it's replacing is 'visibility'.



When the rains came,
they came in a cloudburst.

a vintage year as far as airmen promotions are concerned. Some 173,000 airmen sewed on new stripes. Likewise, although 1967 fell somewhat short of the totals attained in '68, it too was a good year when compared to the long drought through the first half of the sixties. Those were the lean years, the hard ones, the dry ones. And when the rains came, they came in a veritable cloudburst.

So why change the system? Isn't everybody happy now? Not everybody. Those who didn't get promoted still don't know why. They may never know. Maybe some who *did* get promoted really didn't deserve it. Let's be frank. Without visibility it's possible for a smooth operator to bluff his way up a notch or two. But who will ever know if a nondeserver was promoted over a deserver? These things shouldn't happen again. They won't under WAPS.

It is important to understand that WAPS will not necessarily mean *more* promotions. In fact, there may even be fewer, as far as overall totals go. Eventually it is

hoped, it will be possible to tell you fairly closely how long you will be in each grade. But that is quite a variable at this point in time.

Perhaps the main reason there may not be as many promotions under WAPS is because the enlisted force of the Air Force has reached the required level. This level calls for approximately 72 percent of all airmen to be in the grades of E-4 through E-9. We will be close to that point in FY 1970. Consequently, the numbers of people to be promoted in any particular AFSC will depend on attrition—separations, retirements, and so forth. Therefore, the selection objectives—that is, the numbers of people who can be promoted—will continue to vary from cycle to cycle. As a result, the minimum, or cut-off score within each AFSC will also vary from cycle to cycle. Everybody whose score is above the cut-off will get promoted. Those with scores below will have to wait for another cycle.

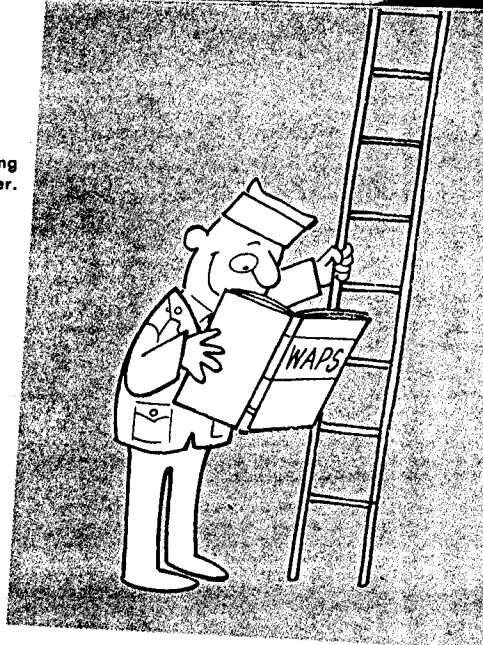
The obvious answer is to get the best scores. To *work* and *study* to make high scores. How do you know where

You will be competing Air Force-wide
within your own career field, instead
of within your own command.



AIRMAN

New airmen will enter the Air Force knowing what they must do to move up the ladder.



you're weak? Well, that's the beauty, or "visibility" of the system. You receive a promotion notice card that lists your points for each weighted factor, your total score, and the minimum score required for promotion within your AFSC during that specific cycle. Another thing. You will be competing Air Force-wide within your career field, instead of within your own command. When you find out your score, you will know where you stood in relation to the cutoff score in your career field for that promotion cycle—*Air Force-wide!*

Once WAPS was accepted as the answer to the shortcomings of the old system, it only had to be implemented. The word from the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel for Military Personnel, Maj. Gen. Robert J. Dixon was "to make it work—on schedule and right the first time."

So beginning last February, and continuing through to July, bases began gathering data on each person's APRs and decorations. These data, along with other, are being verified during this same period.

Along about July 20, bases will come up with a roster of eligibles for testing. The July date is for E-4 to E-7. Grades E-4 to E-7 will begin testing Sept. 1, 1969, and the period will continue through February 5, 1970. Two tests will be taken. One will be the new *Promotion Fitness Examination* (PFE) which measures your knowledge on military matters, including supervision techniques, management, military justice, safety and security. The other test is the familiar *Specialty Knowledge Test* (SKT).

There is little more to be said. There will perhaps be a bug or two to shake out or it may go smoothly the first time around. Some airmen may be chagrined at the system, most will be overjoyed with it. And as time moves on new airmen will enter the Air Force not knowing any other system. They will know right from the start what they must do to move up the ladder. When they get promoted it will be because they earned it — without any doubt on anyone's part. Is that any way to run an Air Force? You bet it is.

Compute your own score using the chart on Page 56. (Although E-8s and E-9s are included in the chart, they will not come under WAPS until at least 1971, and perhaps even later.)

COMPUTE YOUR OWN SCORE

This chart will help you get a pretty close idea of how you stack up for the first cycle under WAPS.

| Point Factors | Max. Points | How to Compute | Your Total |
|--|-------------|--|------------|
| SKT | 95 | Use actual percentile score obtained. | |
| PFE | 95 | Actual percentile score obtained. | |
| (E-8s and E-9s use score of Supervisor's Exam in lieu of SKT and PFE) | 95 | Actual score obtained. | |
| Time in Service ¹ | 40 | Years of active service times 2. Six months or less, one point. More than six months, two points. | |
| Time in Grade ² | 60 | One-half point per month. Drop 15 days or less. Count more than 15 days as month. | |
| Decorations ³ (Credit given regardless of service in which medal was awarded.) | 25 | Add point value of each decoration you have been awarded. (See footnote 3.) | |
| APRs | 135 | APRs have scores of 0 to 9. Add all APR scores of last five years, not to exceed 10 APRs. Divide the sum by number of APRs used. This is the APR mean. Multiply by 15. This is your APR score. | |

¹Time in service is credited through the last month and year of the promotion cycle for which airman is being considered. ²Time in grade is credited through first day of the last month and year of the promotion cycle for which airman is being considered. ³Decorations scored as follows: Medal of Honor, 15; Air Force Cross, Distinguished Service Cross and Distinguished Service Medal, 9 each; Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, 7 each; Airman's Medal, Soldier's Medal and Bronze Star, 5 each; Air Medal and Commendation Medal, 3 each; Purple Heart, 1.

Director
Aerospace Studies Inst
ATTN: Archives Branch
Maxwell AFB, Alabama 36112

10-52

| | |
|-----|-----|
| 1 | 7 |
| 2 | 8 |
| 3 | 9 |
| 4 | 10 |
| 5 | 11 |
| 6 | 12 |
| 7 | 13 |
| 8 | 14 |
| 9 | 15 |
| 10 | 16 |
| 11 | 17 |
| 12 | 18 |
| 13 | 19 |
| 14 | 20 |
| 15 | 21 |
| 16 | 22 |
| 17 | 23 |
| 18 | 24 |
| 19 | 25 |
| 20 | 26 |
| 21 | 27 |
| 22 | 28 |
| 23 | 29 |
| 24 | 30 |
| 25 | 31 |
| 26 | 32 |
| 27 | 33 |
| 28 | 34 |
| 29 | 35 |
| 30 | 36 |
| 31 | 37 |
| 32 | 38 |
| 33 | 39 |
| 34 | 40 |
| 35 | 41 |
| 36 | 42 |
| 37 | 43 |
| 38 | 44 |
| 39 | 45 |
| 40 | 46 |
| 41 | 47 |
| 42 | 48 |
| 43 | 49 |
| 44 | 50 |
| 45 | 51 |
| 46 | 52 |
| 47 | 53 |
| 48 | 54 |
| 49 | 55 |
| 50 | 56 |
| 51 | 57 |
| 52 | 58 |
| 53 | 59 |
| 54 | 60 |
| 55 | 61 |
| 56 | 62 |
| 57 | 63 |
| 58 | 64 |
| 59 | 65 |
| 60 | 66 |
| 61 | 67 |
| 62 | 68 |
| 63 | 69 |
| 64 | 70 |
| 65 | 71 |
| 66 | 72 |
| 67 | 73 |
| 68 | 74 |
| 69 | 75 |
| 70 | 76 |
| 71 | 77 |
| 72 | 78 |
| 73 | 79 |
| 74 | 80 |
| 75 | 81 |
| 76 | 82 |
| 77 | 83 |
| 78 | 84 |
| 79 | 85 |
| 80 | 86 |
| 81 | 87 |
| 82 | 88 |
| 83 | 89 |
| 84 | 90 |
| 85 | 91 |
| 86 | 92 |
| 87 | 93 |
| 88 | 94 |
| 89 | 95 |
| 90 | 96 |
| 91 | 97 |
| 92 | 98 |
| 93 | 99 |
| 94 | 100 |
| 95 | 101 |
| 96 | 102 |
| 97 | 103 |
| 98 | 104 |
| 99 | 105 |
| 100 | 106 |
| 101 | 107 |
| 102 | 108 |
| 103 | 109 |
| 104 | 110 |
| 105 | 111 |
| 106 | 112 |
| 107 | 113 |
| 108 | 114 |
| 109 | 115 |
| 110 | 116 |
| 111 | 117 |
| 112 | 118 |
| 113 | 119 |
| 114 | 120 |
| 115 | 121 |
| 116 | 122 |
| 117 | 123 |
| 118 | 124 |
| 119 | 125 |
| 120 | 126 |
| 121 | 127 |
| 122 | 128 |
| 123 | 129 |
| 124 | 130 |
| 125 | 131 |
| 126 | 132 |
| 127 | 133 |
| 128 | 134 |
| 129 | 135 |
| 130 | 136 |
| 131 | 137 |
| 132 | 138 |
| 133 | 139 |
| 134 | 140 |
| 135 | 141 |
| 136 | 142 |
| 137 | 143 |
| 138 | 144 |
| 139 | 145 |
| 140 | 146 |
| 141 | 147 |
| 142 | 148 |
| 143 | 149 |
| 144 | 150 |
| 145 | 151 |
| 146 | 152 |
| 147 | 153 |
| 148 | 154 |
| 149 | 155 |
| 150 | 156 |
| 151 | 157 |
| 152 | 158 |
| 153 | 159 |
| 154 | 160 |
| 155 | 161 |
| 156 | 162 |
| 157 | 163 |
| 158 | 164 |
| 159 | 165 |
| 160 | 166 |
| 161 | 167 |
| 162 | 168 |
| 163 | 169 |
| 164 | 170 |
| 165 | 171 |
| 166 | 172 |
| 167 | 173 |
| 168 | 174 |
| 169 | 175 |
| 170 | 176 |
| 171 | 177 |
| 172 | 178 |

30 Sep 90


(Unclassified Title)

PRG
Technically Classified

SECRET

Barksdale AFB, Louisiana

MAY 23 1979


SAMUEL E. DYKE
Colonel, USAF
Commander

Declassified in year 1988;
Not automatically declassified.

NO [REDACTED] information contained in this document will be disclosed to [REDACTED] their representatives.

Copy / of 4 copies

(This page is unclassified)

1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6

1-833-491-6

ment at Barksdale gave them time to look for a job while furthering their experience and training and, in addition, providing them with an income. However, if they were unable to find a job at the end of the 13-week period, they could extend their employment for another 13 weeks.¹⁷

(U) These people were assigned to Barksdale at no cost to the Air Force and accomplished tasks that would not otherwise have been accomplished. They did not substitute for the regular military and civilian manning authorizations.¹⁸

WAPS PROGRAM

(U) The Air Force's policy with regard to promotions was to provide airmen with an objective and visible promotion system. Objectivity assured airmen that they received equitable consideration for promotion, and visibility enabled airmen to determine the basis for any promotion actions.¹⁹

(U) The Weighted Airmen's Promotion System (WAPS) was established to carry out the Air Force's policy for airmen E-4 through E-7. Under this system, personnel data were converted into weighted factor scores for promotion purposes. The factors considered were Specialty Knowledge Test (SKT), Promotion Fitness Examination (PFE), time in grade, time in service, decorations, and Airmen Performance Reports.²⁰

17. See note above.

18. See note above.

19. AFR 39-29, "Promotion of Airmen," 25 Nov 69.

20. Ibid.

(U) An important part of the WAPS Program was the SKT and PFE testing. And although steps were taken last quarter to reduce the high percentage of people failing to report for a test, the evidence this quarter showed only little improvement. For the June-July testing period for Sergeants, approximately 20 per cent failed to report for testing. During August and September, the testing period for Staff and Technical Sergeants, 749 individuals were scheduled for testing and 88 failed to show up, an absentee rate of 11.8 per cent.²¹

(U) During September the wing commander established the policy that the PFE and SKT would be given to an individual on the same day. It was hoped that if the individual had only one appointment date to remember, the absentee rate would decline.²²

(U) The effect of this policy was indicated by the absentee rate during the last two weeks of September; 79 individuals were scheduled and no one failed to show.²³

21. Hist of 2BW, Apr-Jun 70, pp 6-7 (S/NF); and Working Papers, "WAPS Testing," maintained by MSgt G. L. Cooper, NCOIC, Classification and Testing.
22. Ltr, C to All Commanders and Chiefs of Staff Agencies "Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS) Testing," 14 Sep 70, Ex 23.
23. Working Papers, "WAPS Testing," maintained by MSgt G. L. Cooper, NCOIC, Classification and Testing.

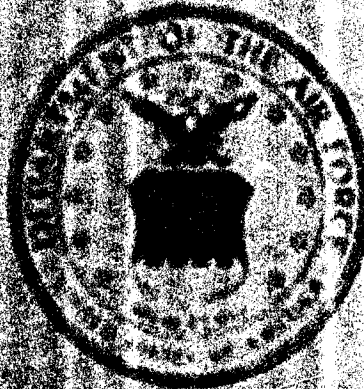
UNCLASSIFIED

**U.S. AIR FORCE
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

XXXX 0512-1267

Interview: Paul W. Airey

22-24 March 1983



**United States Air Force
Historical Research Center**

**Office of Air Force History
Headquarters USAF**

UNCLASSIFIED

216
19-11-1
B

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| K239.0512-1267 | C. 1 |
| P. 1 PN TO | |
| HQ. USAF/HRC | |
| MAXWELL AFB, AL 36422 | |
| 2 FEB 1988 | |

21056346

PA: Yes.

HA: Did anybody that you know do that at the time?

PA: Yes.

HA: Was it just simply a case of, "They recognize my skill and ability, why not"?

PA: The Army was taking in several from the OSI [Office of Special Investigations]. They needed people like that, and they took some personnel people, and they took some from other AFSCs [Air Force specialty code]. Yes, I personally knew of a few myself. There were many reasons. Number one, the Air Force had a very poor system of enlisted promotions. We had frozen career fields. We had people who were in grade 12, 13 years, had absolutely no chance of getting promoted, and they were stymied. This was something the Army offered. Take the OSI, we had enlisted agents, and they jumped from tech or master sergeant to warrant officer. This was quite an inducement.

HA: Did you personally ever look into this?

PA: No.

HA: The first one that did this was SSgt Loren A. Peterson. The article I read didn't note what particular skill or whatever it was that changed.

PA: Promotions are something I want to talk about it.

HA: Promotions are based against skills. The skill levels were frozen, you say?

PA: Various career skills were frozen. When I went on the job as Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, the two biggest problems I had--number one was promotions, and the second was assignments. Let's talk about promotions. We had frozen career fields. We had embittered people. This is one of the reasons Rivers got involved. We had enlisted personnel who were so embittered, and Rivers was the Chairman of the House Armed Forces Committee. He was receiving 15,000 to 20,000 letters a year from embittered enlisted personnel on promotions. The result is he formed a subcommittee to investigate the enlisted promotions in the Armed Forces.

HA: I have you testifying with the other chiefs in October 1967.

PA: Yes. The end result is the Air Force was severely criticized on their promotion system. At this time they brought some pretty smart people together, some full colonels, some chief master sergeants. I had a certain basic input. I don't want to put my input out of proportion to what it was worth. But the end result was they came out with a weighted airman promotion system, which today is still in effect and is by far the fairest, best, most equitable promotion system of any of the Armed Forces for the enlisted men. It was a year or two ago, and I was over in the House, and there is a man by the name of John Ford. He is a counselor to the House Armed Forces Committee. I said, "Mr. Ford, you remember how L. Mendel

Rivers was getting 15,000 to 20,000 letters a year on enlisted promotions?" He said, "I sure do, Paul." I said, "How many are you getting now from Air Force enlisted people?" He said, "We don't get half dozen or so a year." *80*
 Now this is success that the airman can see. In other words the biggest problem I faced was the promotion problem. The Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force job remains the same. Problems change. This is one problem none of them have had to face.

HA: Did the pressure for making this change have to come from Congress? Where was the Air Force at this time?

PA: Until they came out with that system of weighted airmen promotions?

HA: Did the pressure to make that change come from Congress?

PA: Yes.

HA: Where were the Air Force personnel people?

PA: I am sorry to say, I don't think they were facing the problem until ^{AF} they were forced into it. From what I can see now and when I look back in retrospect, it took a subcommittee hearing to get them moving on some type of more equitable and better promotion system.

HA: Were they aware of the problem?

PA: Sure they were. They had to be aware of it.

HA: Were they saying, "This is by law. We have to do it this way"?

PA: There are certain things by law. Public law says only 1 percent of your force can be chief master sergeants and 2 percent senior, and I think 12 percent master sergeants. The Air Force has long used their promotions as a form of incentive for retention and everything else. The career fields that had the biggest turnover got the most promotions. This would normally happen anyway, but there were some career fields that were getting nothing. I have seen many a man retired as a staff sergeant that should have been two stripes or more higher. It was wrong. Today, they get their report card. They know where they stand, and it is the best enlisted promotion system there is.

HA: This overselection thing started in SAC for enlisted----

PA: Brevet promotions?

HA: It used to be called the EWQ, exceptionally well qualified, promotion system. Apparently, SAC--it was overselection, leading contenders for promotion, and they were unpromotable because of the skill restrictions; yet, they were able to promote them. Were you familiar with that?

PA: I was familiar with it, yes.

HA: Was only SAC doing this?

PA: Only SAC, and SAC also had certain AFSCs, boom operators and a few others, that were wearing one stripe more on their arm than what they actually were, brevet promotions. SAC was the only one that had that.

HA: Was that unfair?

PA: Yes. I can't see any promotion system that goes by command. It has got to go for the whole Air Force.

HA: I want to ask you one more thing about testifying. Did you testify a lot over in Congress when you were Chief?

PA: No, not a lot.

HA: Were you free to testify? If you were called, did you just inform somebody, or did you have to check before you went over?

PA: I always received a good briefing to make sure I knew what I was talking about. I can honestly say, no one tried to put words in my mouth.

HA: I want to talk a little bit more about your selection as Chief. You went up there, and McConnell interviewed you for the job?

PA: Yes, and the Vice Chief was General Holloway.

HA: Did they talk to you and your wife or just you?

PA: Just me. The final three.

HA: Not all at the same time though?

PA: Oh, no.

HA: What were they interested in?

PA: That's getting to be a long time ago. It seemed to be in the general line of subjects. What would be expected of

you, and do you think you could handle it, et cetera? There was talk going around that General McConnell did not favor the position. I don't know really how strong he was for or against it. I do know this, after a few months in office, I could not have asked for a better supporter. He was great to me and was always easy to talk to and always put me in a position whereas I felt comfortable in his presence. General McConnell was a very strong-willed, outstanding individual who spoke his mind. He could be very profane even in front of the news media, such as being interviewed on national television. One of those interviews just prior to my going to Washington was a classic. It's my understanding that the mail came in hot and heavy, the overall majority of it in complete agreement with what he had to say and in the way he said it.

HA: Was this his nature, or was this a posture he would develop to--do you know if he was that way all the time?

PA: To the best of my knowledge, he was that way all the time.

HA: It was May 1967 that Mendel Rivers wanted answers to these airmen promotion problems. In June a special House Armed Services Subcommittee representative, Alton Lennon [Alton A., Dem-NC]--why is there such a disparity between the services on different policies? One of them was the enlisted promotion policy. You could get promoted faster in the Army than you could in the Air Force. How can that be when they are both in the same DOD?

PA: The answer is quite simple. The Army turnover is a hell of a lot higher. The turnover is such a degree that promotions are there.

HA: In other words you could break this out and show that all the men with 10 years in the Army, a certain percentage of them were higher rank than 10-year people in the Air Force. Were those kinds of figures available?

PA: That pretty well checks out. It was a well-known fact that promotions in the Army NCO grades were way ahead of us as far as time in service and time in grade were concerned. There are many factors to be considered, however. First of all, our people do stay on longer. In other words our retention rate was much better. In addition the casualties in the Air Force enlisted force due to action in the Vietnam conflict were far, far less than the Army's. All in all the Army's vast turnover of personnel gave them a decided edge on promotions. In a sense the Vietnam fight was borne by crewmembers for the most part. That is not to say that many of our people other than flying crews didn't see action also. My own son, Dale, flew several hundred sorties as a loadmaster, and I am very proud of him. He is now a senior master sergeant at Bergstrom AFB.

HA: What was he on, a C-130?

PA: No, C-123s.

HA: Were you able to present this kind of information to Congress. In this case, Lennon--"Yes, we know this exists, and this is one of the reasons." Would they accept that? Were they accepting that at the time?

PA: No, because regardless of the turnover, our promotion system was not good anyway. We could have had a better system than what we had. The fair-haired boy bit was involved a lot.

HA: In what sense?

PA: The commanders could promote whom they wanted.

HA: Was there a lot of that going on?

PA: Certainly, it went on. In the old days, sure.

HA: At every level now, you are saying, within the command?

PA: To some degree at all levels. Of course, the top two grades had to pass a supervisory exam in order to be considered, and airmen had to pass their AFSC exam. But there was too much left to personalities. The greatest fault in the whole system, however, was the frozen career fields. It was impossible to get promoted in some AFSCs for year after year. This was a most serious morale problem and was one of the most unfair things we had in the enlisted force.

HA: Now this WAPS [Weighted Airman Promotion System] has gotten rid of that, or can a general still come down and say----

PA: If they don't pass the test, they don't get promoted. No one can help them.

HA: It still fascinates me that the pressure for this had to come out of Congress. Why would the Air Force be reluctant to change it?

PA: That's difficult for me to answer. I do not believe it was a reluctance on the part of the Air Force to change. I think no one took the bull by the horns and tried to find a workable solution or system to the problem. You know, the

UNCLASSIFIED

**U. S. Air Force
Oral History Interview**

K239.0512-1260

CMSAF Donald L. Harlow

9-10 December 1980

72
19-11-4

K239.0512-1260

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| AFSHHC MAXWELL AFB AL 36112 | RETURN TO C.1 19 FEB 1988 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|



MICROFILMED BY TIM

ALBERT F. SIMPSON
HISTORICAL RESEARCH CENTER

OFFICE OF AIR FORCE HISTORY
Headquarters USAF

UNCLASSIFIED

01049795

"Let me take this up with the senior enlisted advisor here on the installation, or let me do this." This is the way we handled it.

No, I never turned them off and said, "We can't"-----

A: Would you ever go with him to his boss or anything? Did you ever play that role?

(End Tape 5, Side 2)

H: If you go to his boss or commander as the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, they immediately get the impression that if they do not respond or do something quick, you will go back and tell the chief. It is an undue type of pressure, so I never did that.

A: According to an interview you made in the Airman Magazine, it says, "The two most frequent gripes the enlisted men have are assignments and promotions." This was in 1969. After you served there and got out, did that still remain predominant?

H: It still is--well, promotions, of course, will always be.

A: Yes.

H: It's always a case that, "This guy is a drunk; he spends all his time at the club. He gets promoted, and I am working hard and doing my job, and I didn't get promoted." The other thing is the fact that they still think, to some degree, that the WAPS [Weighted Airman Promotion System] system is not the fairest system, but it is the best system we have ever come up with. The number of congressionals dropped dramatically once we went into that program.

A: Oh, is that right? Because I have some questions about that.

H: They dropped dramatically. They very seldom get any. What few they get today is insignificant, and it is usually a self-defense mechanism where, "I'm great and the other guy is lousy, and I should have been promoted."

A: Where did that WAPS develop?

H: That was developed in the Air Staff, and it was held in abeyance for some time until the Congress got real upset because of the number of congressionals that was coming in. John Ford, the professional staff member on the House Armed Services Committee, talked with the people in the Air Staff and said, "We are going to have to hold some hearings on that." At that time is when they told the Congress that they had developed the WAPS system, and the Congress said, "You had better do something quick," and they did.

A: It started out in Alaska first, is that correct?

H: Yes. They tried it out in one command first; then by direction of Congress, they decided to put it in, after some refinements. It has worked out extremely well.

A: Why was there a reluctance on the Air Force to originally implement it?

H: It is like any new program. People don't like change. They like what they know and they understand even though it is not the best. Something new adds to the problem. We also had another problem at that time. I remember in the Strategic Air Command, whenever the IG would come in, they would give tests

A: Those are such subjective terms. How do you determine whether this--do you just put him on the job and see if he can do it? Is that how you do that?

H: Well, not necessarily, because when you develop a study in humanities, you look at where the interests of the individual lies, where his capability is the greatest. He could probably be a manager down there, but he wouldn't be as effective as he would, perhaps, in the legislative liaison area or personnel or the area that he is familiar with and perhaps he has had some experience coming up through the grades from there where his capacity and ability could be utilized.

I have often said, even though I have never been in public affairs, I don't think I would have few problems going in and supervising public affairs, because it is handling people; it is dealing with people. I know I wouldn't have any problem in legislative liaison.

A: Of course, now, in effect, you had, even before you took this job, a modicum of appreciation of that and been involved and so forth.

H: Well, I think the greatest training, to me, was the 4 years in civilian life in the business world as I learned the hard knocks of business. I learned some of the methods of business, and I could see how it was so necessary to utilize some of those principles within our military.

A: In April 1969, they finally did away with promotion board for enlisted. Did you see that as a positive event?

H: It was good in a sense. There was no way you could convince

an individual that he wasn't being prejudiced when people were sitting on the board.

A: Screwed.

H: Somebody on that board screwed him. I got involved; even before then, I went to Randolph to actually see how the promotion board operated. The captain I went over to Morocco with was a full colonel, and he was in charge of the promotion board. I went through to see how the panel operated, how the records moved, how they were analyzed, and I obtained a real good insight into how much attention was given to the operation.

In other words, at the end of the day, they would have a computer run of how each member of the panel was scoring. Okay, today was the first day. Now the second morning at 10 o'clock they would run another listing, and they would find variations. They could tell who was out screwing around the night before and drinking. The same people would rate maybe three or four points lower on records that were equally as good. Then the colonel would go in to the general of the board, and the general would call the panel members together and say, "Hey, you are not doing it. Something is wrong here. We are going to go through these records again," but not the same ones. They would move the records to a different panel.

So the attention that was given to the fairness of those boards was outstanding, but you couldn't convince those people in the field. They got screwed.

I had one individual case that I took there because this

sergeant had quite a record, fantastic. He had all kinds of endorsements. I couldn't understand it. I said, "I have to find out why." The colonel who was down at Randolph is now a general officer. He said, "Now, you look at this record and compare it with this one." The records were both outstanding; there was no question about both of these individuals. But this one individual, probably, in 3 years time had 12 different jobs. He got a rating of outstanding in every job, but why did he keep moving around?

When you looked and actually read some of the statements in his record, then you found out why this sergeant was transitory. He was outstanding because he did something that made him outstanding; then he wanted to move to get somewhere else and get another outstanding report. He was designing his promotions. It was obvious.

A: This may be out of your realm of expertise or knowledge or anything, why have not the officer grades ever gone to what the airmen do now, the weighted----

H: Well, in the first place, how do you develop a test like that?

A: Do you mean a skill test?

H: Not only a skill test, because an officer's skill would have to be so broad in many senses, especially when you start going up to the major and lieutenant colonel level. It goes back to another experience I had in civilian life.

I worked for a business machine company and somebody came in and sold the company on the fact that they had a test like

UNCLASSIFIED

U. S. Air Force Oral History Interview

K239.0512-1303

CMSAF James M. McCoy

25-26 February 1982



ALBERT F. SIMPSON
HISTORICAL RESEARCH CENTER

OFFICE OF AIR FORCE HISTORY
Headquarters USAF

MICROFILMED BY TIM

UNCLASSIFIED

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| K239.0512-1303 | |
| 239.0512-1303 | |
| C4 2 | |
| RETURN TO | 22 FEB 1988 |
| AFSHRC | |
| MAXWELL AFB AL 36112 | |

U1052008

to keep the first sergeant where he is right now, then they are doing the right thing.

C: This is a beautiful lead-in to your reaction to the weighted airman promotion system [WAPS] that came out in June 1970. We know that the Air Force Human Resources Laboratory concocted this thing. I am just wondering, now that we have gotten it out of the laboratory in the last 10 years, how well has it worked?

M: I think it has worked very well. I think it is probably the most well-understood promotion system that we have today--than we have ever had. It has visibility. People know where they stand. They know what they have to do to improve themselves. My Lord, the complaints are down. All you have to do is go back and look at why we were directed into a weighted airman promotion system in the early 1970s. Nobody knew how an individual got promoted. I have to admit I did not get promoted under the weighted airman promotion system, and there was a couple of times I wondered how I got promoted, not, "Why didn't I get promoted?" I said, "How did I get promoted?" There was no visibility in the promotion system.

The frozen business that we went through. When WAPS came on the line, you know, we went to equal opportunity promotion. Under WAPS everybody knows they are getting their fair share; they know where they stand. They know where they have to improve themselves, and they know more about the promotion system, probably, than about the history of the United States Air Force, even though the Air Force is a very young service. That was probably one of the mysteries of--and I think to some degree, the officers probably still have that. But that

was a mystery, "I couldn't miss this time. What happened?"
No visibility.

Now, what we are finding is that people have difficulty, particularly E-8s and E-9s, accepting that. Okay, they got all their factors in the E-8s and E-9s right now, but yet there is another factor, and that is the Board score, three people sitting down and scoring them. What so many people don't understand is probably the easiest question in the world for us to answer to them, which I found I had to do on numerous occasions. "How could my Board score go down this year from last year?" "Very simple, Senior Master Sergeant Jones. First of all, you are competing with another group of eligibles; secondly, you have three different people looking at your records."

Ask me to reach into that guy's mind and say, "Why did he score you as a 7 when last year the guy before him scored you a 9? I can't tell you that. There is something that he sees. You can't even tell yourself that." I didn't have any trouble with that. I really, in some degree, was opposed to going to a super WAPS system for E-8s and E-9s. It happened before I became the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force so I didn't have a whole lot to say about it except my input from here at SAC.

The reason I was afraid of that is, and of course the compromise that came out of it was satisfactory to some degree because there is still a board, but if you start promoting to the rank of chief master sergeant, which is 1 percent of the force, strictly by how an individual scores on a test, you are not taking anything into consideration. In my opinion you are going to run into this more and more in the next 4 or

5 years because right now we are getting to that category of people who have been promoted all the way to master sergeant under WAPS. They are used to going in that testing room and taking tests and coming up with a relative score and getting on that promotion list. Now they have to compete with the Board. Now this is the first time that a Board is actually going to look at his or her supervisory abilities, and that is where the boards are saying, "Um, this guy has never done anything," or "She has never supervised people." They are not seeing the master sergeant material. They have trouble accepting that, and they are the ones that are advocating, "Do away with the boards. Go back to the straight WAPS system." I pray and hope that United States Air Force never does that.

C: How successful was the selected reenlistment program in retaining high quality airmen in critical career fields?

M: Oh, I think it has been very successful, especially as long as there are bonuses to go along with it. There has to be an incentive. As I said earlier, I think that is how we pay our propay. I would much rather see it paid at the beginning of enlistment for the next 4 years rather than see an individual paid in his monthly paycheck so he can compare it with--you know, that happens once whereas the paycheck with the propay comes 12 times a year--now 24 times a year. I think it has worked out well.

I think that one of the difficulties we have with the selected reenlistment program is--and this is the old supply and demand concept--if you pay people enough money, they are going to reenlist. Well, the reenlistment rates looked great so they chopped the money off. So you have it up and down.

K239.0512-1363
C, 1

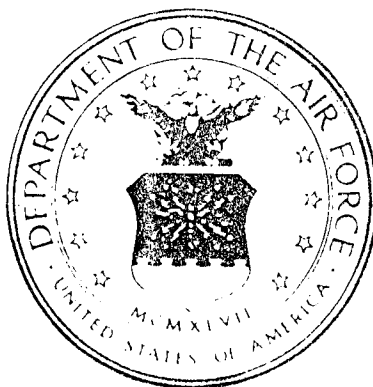
HEADQUARTERS
U.S. AIR FORCE
MAXWELL AFB, AL 36112

U.S. AIR FORCE ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

K239.0512-1363

CMSAF Richard D. Kisling

14-15 December 1982, 13 June 1983,
11 September 1984, 4 October 1984



MICROFILMED BY: JIM

United States Air Force
Historical Research Center

Office of Air Force History
Headquarters USAF

01070822

would try to get into it. By the time they moved, the field had closed up. (laughter)

Our promotion system was bad in those days, too.

A: How was it?

K: We had centralized base boards for promotion, and you had to be known on the base, really, before you stood a chance. So if you moved into an organization and they didn't know you, no matter how good you had been in the past, you were dead in the water until someone got to know you and you really had a sponsor. The system was very, very unfair.

A: On this proficiency pay, did they have skill testing in effect on that?

K: Yes. We had boards set up to check and see if they were proficient, but primarily you would have a technical representative on the board and you would have three or four other people to comprise the board, one of them being the personnel officer. Many times these people were working with classified materials that they could not discuss, so you had to leave it up to the technical advisor to say whether you were technical competent or not. It was a weird system.

A: Was it fair in the sense that those that were eligible for proficient pay, a good technician would be recognized, or could it still be that some deadbeat could beat them out within there?

K: Within, they got to the point where there was plenty of money to pay all of the people within those career areas. So what

K: No. That was a very, very poor move on the part of Air Force. All it did really was compound our problem. It increased the size of the NCO force, which made it less prestigious to be an NCO and it put people in there without really being qualified to do it. But it was done because we had a shortage of promotions. Promotions were stagnated then. It was a very political move to try to ease that promotion problem and psychologically tell people that they were something that they weren't really qualified for.

A: Promotion boards disappeared for the enlisted grades in 1969. Did you ever get involved in an input of they should go or they shouldn't go or your impression of how they worked?

K: No. I didn't get involved at that time with it because we didn't happen to be at a level where we had anything to say. We supported the initiation of the WAPS [Weighted Airman Promotion System] program. We thought that would be a good program particularly for the people of that command. I had been sitting on promotions boards it seemed like all my life but for a long, long time. On the command board, it really boiled down to looking for demotivaters for promotion when you reviewed the records because they were so good. Most of us would devise a formula--so many points for this and so many points for that--so we could go through these records and try to come up with a reasonable evaluation.

A: How honest were they in your mind, these promotion boards?

K: I think by this time the promotions boards we were having were quite honest, because they were at a level above where you knew most of the people individually. You had to know some individually. If you take it back to the old boards

that we used to have at the bases years ago, I would like to think that some of us were good at our jobs that got selected, but a lot of it was based on who you knew and how well your reputation was. If you established a good reputation on that base, you had a good chance of being promoted. But you could have been the best guy at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, and go to Wheelus Field, Tripoli, and until you established yourself on Wheelus, you didn't stand a chance of being promoted. So you were really starting at the bottom every time you made a move.

We would look at records and have good recommendations in the records and couldn't do anything with them because, well, "He hasn't been on the base long enough. I just don't know how well he is really going to do. I know this is what the colonel said at Minot, but he has to be here at Chaumont a little bit longer before we can promote him." That was a lot of it.

Then of course the rumors on a base. Bases that were fairly small bases, everyone knew what everyone else was doing, or they thought they knew what everyone else was doing. So promotion boards were really quite vicious in a way. I know I would have been selected a board earlier for master sergeant when I was at Wheelus Field except they had an enlisted man serving on the board, and they asked this enlisted man who he would promote, and he said, "I think you ought to promote him." "Is he a good friend of yours?" "Yes. We happen to be friends." "Okay, we will take this other guy." (laughter) I know that for a fact.

A: Yes. I have a note here that the selection process was different for each man.

K: It was. Commanders would say, "This is what I want you to look for. We have to promote the guys on the flightline. To hell with those guys that work over in supply." Then maybe the next place would say, "No. We have to treat them all equal. Let's look at all of our people." There was a time, Hugh--and this goes back to the early 1950s--when you could always promote a ~~first~~ sergeant. I am sure I told you earlier in my interview about the first sergeant we promoted at Amarillo, Texas, while he was in the city jail on a DWI charge.

A: Yes.

K: That is not an isolated case. These things happened all the time. So it was good, really, to get out of this and get into a board that was going to be more fair. I think the Weighted Airman Promotion System was a good move.

A: Of course I notice people still complain about that, too.

K: They still complain.

A: Every once in awhile there is a letter in the Air Force Times about that.

K: Yes. We have made some changes recently, too. We added some boards in. That wasn't really good. Everyone does not agree with what you are looking at for evaluation.

A: On a comparative basis, do you think WAPS is more fair and, let's say, the way an officer is--once again, in theory the officer is the generalist; you cannot test him.

K: You can't test, and by and large, they almost all meet their gates for selection. They have such a large select anyway, the large percentage. I think it is more fair, yes. I think the ~~Weighted Airman Promotion System is more fair~~. I do think we ought to have a way of testing officers.

A: Here is a note. In 1966 the Army was giving warrant officer commissions to NCOs from other services. Do you remember that?

K: Yes, I sure do. They were doing it earlier than that. They were doing it as early as 1963. I was at George Air Force Base in 1963, and we had some people at George that were getting ready to move over. We had quite a few that quit during that period to go take a warrant officer promotion in the Army.

A: Did this bother the Air Force?

K: It bothered the Air Force but not enough for them to really do anything about it. And the sad part about it was that it came back to bite some of these people when the Army actually phased down. Some of the people had no place to go. When the Army started deactivating units, they did it on a very impersonal basis, and there were many people that were just out of jobs and had no place to go and couldn't reenlist. So it didn't work out well for all of them.

A: Did you feel that the GI bill actually was something that really convinced people not to reenlist in the armed services?

K: To a degree if they wanted to get out and use it to go to school. It was a demotivater at that time. It was a

UNCLASSIFIED

U. S. Air Force Oral History Interview

K239.0512-1261

CMSAF Robert D. Gaylor

16-17 Jan 1981



ALBERT F. SIMPSON
HISTORICAL RESEARCH CENTER

OFFICE OF AIR FORCE HISTORY
Headquarters USAF

MICROFILMED BY TIM

UNCLASSIFIED

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| K239.0512-1261 | |
| C.L. | RETURN TO |
| AFSHRC | 19 FEB 1988 |
| MAXWELL AFB AL 36112 | |

01064319

the warrant officer. The Air Force chose to do away with the warrant officer--another controversial issue. In that first interview I did, they asked me if I thought the warrant officer rank should come back, and I said no. And it was probably a carryback of mine, that I didn't like the title Mister. [Laughter] You know, I can't imagine being called Mister. And I said, "No, the warrant officer, as far as the Air Force is concerned, is a dead issue." And I really got shot down. One guy wrote me from Wright-Pat. He said, "That's the dumbest comment I have heard come out of the Pentagon since Paul Airey tried to convince us that an airman first class should be a buck sergeant back in 1967." I still have that letter someplace. The guy really took me to task for that.

I still do not believe we should bring back the warrant officer program. I believe there's enough rank now, enough rank grades. We just now have to effectively utilize them. And I still believe there is an opportunity for that. There's enough work to be done. There are enough decisions to be made, if we can just properly delineate those. That almost has to be done at the work level. If you're a commander and I'm a chief, I'd get my delineation of authority from you. And if you refuse to give me any, then I either have to take it or complain that I don't have any. So it's got to be done right down at those levels where you say to me, "Gaylor, this is your responsibility and I will hold you accountable for it." That, to me, is what I think has got to happen. And when it does, it makes for a pretty good working relationship.

H: All right. The Weighted Airmen Promotion System, WAPS, was implemented in June 1970 after extensive research by the Air Force Human Resources Laboratory. From your own experience,

how successful has this program been?

G: Best promotion system ever devised, without question. And I've seen them all. When I came in, promotions were given to each squadron: "Okay. You can promote two corporals." And the squadron would set up a board, and they would pick. Now there are those would say, "Well, that's the best way to do it because those people know better than anyone else the job these airmen are doing. I know for a fact--I served on those boards for years--if a guy had orders to ship out, no matter how great he was, he didn't get promoted because you said, "We're throwing one of our quotas away. The guy'll take it, pin it on, and take it to Germany with him."

So it was an ^(BOARDS) unfair system. You weren't promoting Air Force best talent, you were promoting in a squadron. You didn't promote a new guy who just came in even if he had 6 years in grade! You said, "We've got to see what he can do here. We've got to make him prove himself." So any guy who was pending shipment, or who had just completed a shipment, was out of the cycle for months sometimes. Well, that's stupid. You were promoting only within your own little world, so it was a poor system. Meeting the board wasn't so bad, but it was the manner in which the board operated. You know, they said, "We're not going to kiss any stripes goodbye. This guy's got orders. We're not going to promote him, we're going to promote people who are going to stay here." So I saw that happen many times.

Okay. So then we tried some other systems. EWQ, Exceptionally Well Qualified; you could put so many people in "Exceptionally Well Qualified." Well, that was sort of like the old system. It was filled with favoritism. If I'm the boss and I happen to like Joe, I put him EWQ and he went in

under the 10 percent. The fairest system we've ever had is WAPS. No question about it, and here's why. It puts the pressure right where it should be, on the individual. There are six weighted factors. He takes two tests, one on his job and one on the Air Force in general which is called Personal Fitness Examination. And he's not graded on any curve, he's graded on the number correct: 100 questions, he gets 76 right, he's scored 76. So he's not being weighed against anyone else, he's being weighed on his own knowledge. He's graded on APRs, decorations and awards, time in service, time in grade. And those to me are six very fair factors. I don't know any better way to do it. But a guy says, "But I've got a lot more time in grade." "Well, you should do better on the test presumably. You've been around longer, surely you know more. Show us what you can do on the test." And the factors would balance each other.

Another thing that WAPS did, it took away frozen career fields. We promote equal percentage, across the board, regardless of career field. If food service gets 5.6 percent, the cops get 5.6 percent. And so that took out that frozen career field where you weren't being considered for 2 or 3 years because your field is not open. It's the best system ever designed. Flawless? Absolutely not. I don't know of any system that is flawless. But the best we've ever had, absolutely. Can it be improved? Probably, but I don't know how. I'm fully in support of it.

Now you get the guy who says--and this happens many times--"But I can't take a test. I freeze up. I open the book and I panic, I freeze. Just can't take a test. Other guys can take tests, I can't." I say, "There are courses available on how to take tests. Have you been to your education office? Have you visited the education experts?" "No."

"Well, the next move is yours, my friend." I had guys who wrote me letters, "Give me a waiver so I don't have to take the test." "No way." The minute you open the waiver, it's like getting a pickle out of a jar, they all come out; it's easy after that." So I said, "To me, it's the best system." And we talked about, you know, difficult decisions a while ago and I said, "taking a stand." That's sort of what I was talking about. Where you're apt to say, "Well, I don't believe we should bring the warrant officer program back." And then you knew you were going to get flak. "I don't believe the WAPS system should be changed." Well, you knew you were going to get flak. So you make your decisions based on what you feel is your stand and in your heart, and then you stick with it. And at the same time, if somebody can convince you that you're wrong, you at least listen to them.

I like WAPS. I really think it's a good program, even though I made chief before WAPS came out and I never participated. But I wouldn't have minded if you'd said to me, "Gaylor, you've got to take two tests," I'd have prepared myself for them. You know, once you know the rules of the game, you can play the game. If you choose, then, to fight the game, well, that's your--if you say, "I'm not going to study," I say, "fine." You know. Once you know the rules, you can play the game. But it's hard to play the game when you don't know the the rules and nobody will tell you what they are.

That's the way the promotion system used to be. A guy would ask, "What do I do to get promoted?" "Gee, I don't know. Joe got promoted; he had 26 ECI [Extension Course Institute] courses." "Oh, so I'll take 26 ECI courses." Then somebody will say, "You're wasting your time; you ought to be working. Why are you taking all those ECI courses?" It was a game of trying to guess, "What do I do to get promoted?" Now you

know. It's spelled out: six weighted factors. It's a good system.

H: What you sometimes see is that some people have a natural gift for taking examinations, and yet on the other hand, with practical skills using their hands, they're a living disaster. And yet, by virtue of the test, they're going to be promoted.

G: Yes. Unfortunately, there's a flaw, you see. The guy who can work with his hands and does a great job, that fact should be substantiated in the [REDACTED]. And the guy who's got the brain knowledge, but doesn't do too good on the job, should not get the same high ratings. Unfortunately, there is a weakness. Our APR system is overrated, overinflated. And, unfortunately, the guy who does a damn good job with his hands doesn't get any further credit than the guy who doesn't do it. And that's bad. And that's what happens when you bring people into a weighted system. They muddy the water. But you've got to bring people into it. So I agree, I agree. That's absolutely right. And it's not the system, it's the administration of the system. The system is valid. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] T [REDACTED] with it, till you [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] and tell him to make marks on it, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] new it up. So it's the same way. The system has been thought through. It appears to me to be valid, if it were just administered properly, and that's where you have to educate the people.

But any promotion system--and this is what I would stand on that stage at the Senior Academy at Maxwell and say, "In any promotion system, to me, the big question is: Are the right people getting promoted? Once the cycle is completed, you then ask yourself, Do we feel that the best people got

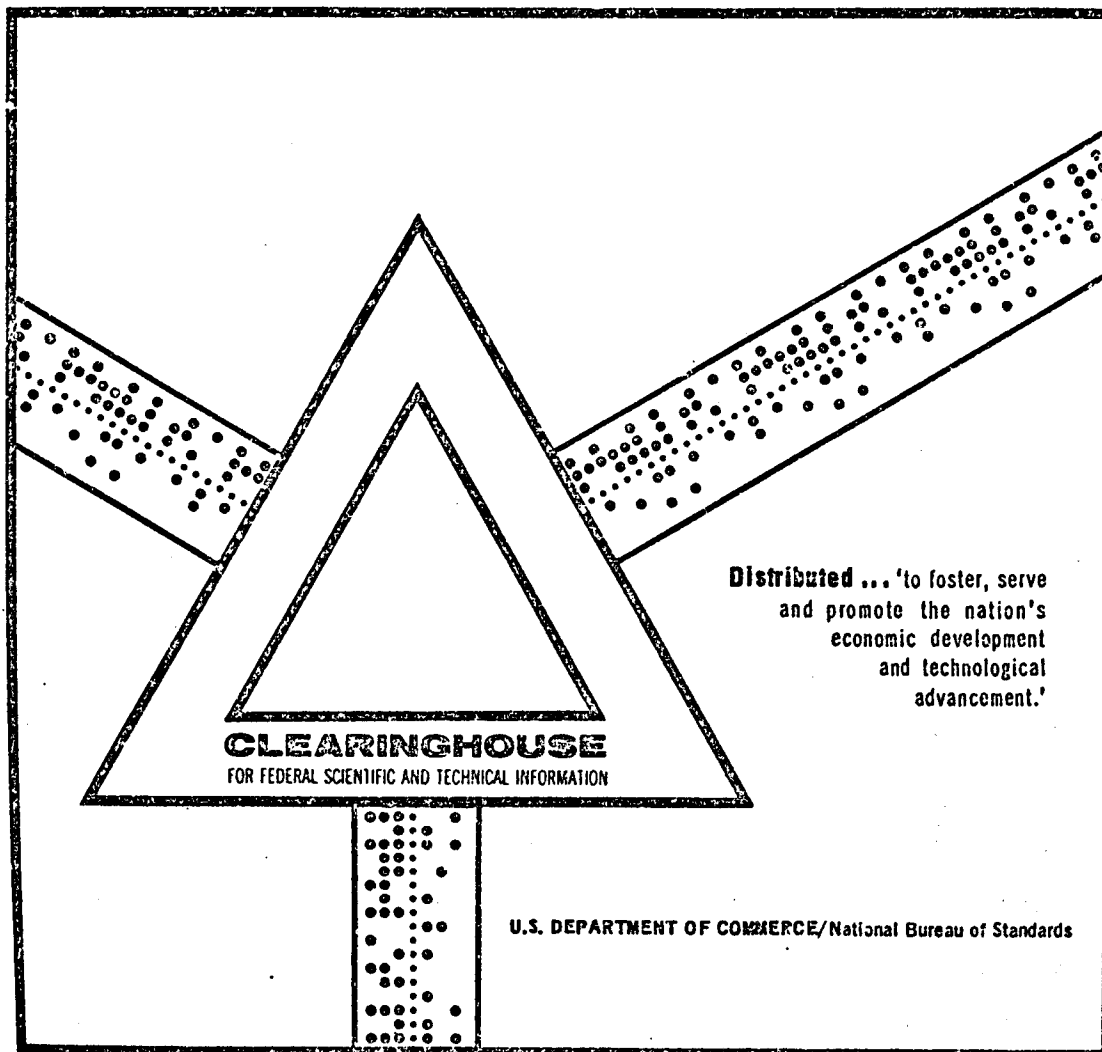
AD 697 798

FIELD TEST OF THE WEIGHTED AIRMAN PROMOTION
SYSTEM: PHASE II. VALIDATION OF THE SYSTEM FOR
GRADES E-4 THROUGH E-7

Janos B. Koplyay

Air Force Human Resources Laboratory
Lackland Air Force Base, Texas

May 1969



AFHRL-TR-69-102

May 1969

**FIELD TEST OF THE WEIGHTED AIRMAN PROMOTION SYSTEM:
PHASE II. VALIDATION OF THE SYSTEM FOR
GRADES E-4 THROUGH E-7**

**By
Janos B. Koplisy**

**This document has been approved for public release and sale;
its distribution is unlimited.**

**PERSONNEL RESEARCH DIVISION
AIR FORCE HUMAN RESOURCES LABORATORY
AIR FORCE SYSTEMS COMMAND
Lackland Air Force Base, Texas**

11-U 42583 no. 69-102

ABSTRACT

A weighted factors promotion system was field-tested and validated using data from the FY 69-B promotion cycle of the Alaskan Air Command. The final sample included 2,290 promotion-eligible airmen in grades E-3 through E-6. The weighted factors composite score excluding a promotion board component gave airmen the same relative rank within selected Air Force Specialties as did the promotion board evaluations under the present operational system. Overlaps between the two ranks imply promotion of the same individuals by both systems. However, inconsistencies and unexplainable discrepancies in the ranking by promotion board scores were found in some few instances. It was concluded that, within the specialties analyzed, practically all the individuals promoted by the board system would also have been promoted under the weighted factors system. If it can be assumed that the sample was representative of the Air Force-wide population of promotion-eligible airmen in grades E-3 through E-6, then it can be further assumed that the weighted factors system provides a valid airman promotion system in which the selection criteria are visible and equitable.

SUMMARY

Koplyay, J.B. *Field test of the weighted airman promotion system: Phase II. Validation of the system for grades E-4 through E-7.* AFHRL-TR-69-102. Lackland AFB, Tex.: Personnel Research Division, Air Force Human Resources Laboratory, May 1969.

Problem

In response to a research requirement levied by the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Headquarters, United States Air Force, the Personnel Research Division developed a model for a new airman promotion system. The purpose of this new promotion system was to provide more visibility to each airman in terms of numeric values on selected variables indicating their relative performance on these variables. This, in turn, provides visible evidence and information about the reasons for non-promotion in terms of easily interpretable scores.

The new promotion system (Weighted Airman Promotion System) was field-tested in the Alaskan Air Command (Koplyay, 1969). One of the major purposes of this field test was to obtain validation data. The operational definition of validation was assumed to be the relationship between the Weighted Airman Promotion System and the existing Promotion Board system in terms of the percentage of promotion-eligible individuals who would have been promoted by both systems.

Approach

To ascertain the predictive efficiency of the Weighted Airman Promotion System, a validity index was computed by identifying those individuals who would have been selected for promotion by both the Composite Score of the new system and the Board Score of the existing system. This validity index was computed for the entire sample of 2,290 airmen by grade (555 in grade E-3, 850 in grade E-4, 514 in grade E-5, and 371 in grade E-6), and was further analyzed by grade within selected specialties.

Results

The validity indices ranged from 43.5 percent (grade E-6) to 91.4 percent (grade E-3) for the entire sample. These results, however, are lower-limit estimates for the validity of the new system, since the existing promotion system operates on the basis of differential quotas assigned to the various specialties. The validity indices within grade and selected specialties ranged from 34 percent to 100 percent with two-thirds of the specialties analyzed having validity indices of 100 percent.

Conclusions

The Weighted Airman Promotion System gave most airmen the same relative ranking within their specialty as did the Promotion Board system. In other words, with a limited number of exceptions, the same individuals would have been promoted using either system.

If the sample in the study can be considered to be representative of the Air Force-wide population of airmen in grades E-3 through E-6, it can be further assumed that the Weighted Airman Promotion System is not only a visible system but it is valid in the sense of the operational definition of validity used in this study.

This summary was prepared by J.B. Koplyay, Statistical Analysis Branch, Personnel Research Division, Air Force Human Resources Laboratory.

**FIELD TEST OF THE WEIGHTED AIRMAN PROMOTION SYSTEM:
PHASE II. VALIDATION OF THE SYSTEM FOR
GRADES E-4 THROUGH E-7**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Weighted Airman Promotion System was developed, field-tested in the Alaskan Air Command, and evaluated in response to a research requirement levied by the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Headquarters, United States Air Force. Briefly, the system provides for selection of airmen for promotion to grades E-4 through E-7 on the basis of seven weighted factors designed to insure visibility and equitable application of the selection criteria. One of the seven factors is a promotion board evaluation. The extent to which inclusion of this board score as a component in the proposed system changed the relative standing of promotion-eligible individuals was discussed in the report of the first phase of this study (Koplyay, 1969). In general, the initial findings indicated that inclusion of the board component made only an insignificant difference in the ranking of airmen who were eligible for promotion. The seven factors and their computations or weights are shown in the appendix.

One of the major purposes of the Alaskan Air Command field test of the proposed weighted factors promotion system was to obtain validation data. Validation is a very general concept, and it can be interpreted in a variety of ways.

In this report, the operational definition of validation is assumed to be the relationship between the weighted factors composite score, excluding the average board score, and the actual promotion actions. Since promotions under the existing system are based on promotion board scores, validation of the weighted factors system dealt with analyses of relationships between the weighted factors system and the promotion board system. That is, if the same individuals were identified for promotion by the weighted factors system as were actually promoted under the existing system, then the weighted factors composite score can be considered a valid indicator (predictor) of promotion. In this context, it is always true that any unreliability in the criterion variable places an upper limit on the validity of any predictor. If the promotion board score has a less than perfect relationship with promotion actions, it is impossible to develop any

kind of system to duplicate it. In this report, two general indicators are used to express the validity of the proposed weighted factors system. One is the comparison of the weighted factors composite scores with actual promotion actions. The other reflects directly the relationship between the proposed system and the promotion board system.

This report focuses primarily on three specific areas:

1. The relationship between promotion board score and promotion action.
2. The agreement between rank standing on the weighted factors composite score excluding the board score and rank standing on the promotion board score for the total sample and for selected Control Air Force Specialties.
3. The analysis of groups with large discrepancies between rank on the weighted factors composite score and rank on the board score.

II. PROCEDURE

Description of the Sample

The Alaskan Air Command provided data for 2,835 airmen in grades E-3 through E-6 who were eligible for promotion in the FY 69-B cycle. All factors except the Promotion Fitness Examination Scores were provided on punched cards by Consolidated Base Personnel Offices at Elmendorf and Eielson Air Force Bases. The Promotion Fitness Examination was administered separately, and scores were added to the record of each airman in the sample. Promotion board scores were given in raw score form as the sum of the ratings of individual promotion board members. There were both three-man and five-man boards.

Treatment of the Data

A number of steps were taken to obtain usable and meaningful data for analysis.

1. Promotion Fitness Examination scores were added to the data tape containing the card images of punched cards provided by the Alaskan Air Command.

2. Records were excluded from further analyses if Specialty Knowledge Test scores or Promotion Fitness Examination scores were missing, or if non-matching and uncorrectable serial numbers and names were detected during the merging of input data tapes. As a result, 2,290 airmen (555 in grade E-3, 850 in grade E-4, 514 in grade E-5, and 371 in grade E-6) were retained in the study for further analyses.

3. Promotion board raw scores were converted to a scale, with a 100-point maximum score (see Appendix). Each raw score was divided by the appropriate number of board members, and the quotient was multiplied by 10. The resulting score gave an average board score for each airman. (Before adopting the procedure of generating the average board score, a preliminary analysis of the data had shown that the variability of the resulting scores would be approximately constant among grades.) In case of ties in average board scores, an attempt was made to break these ties by consideration of the Time-in-Grade, Airman Performance Report, and Decorations scores, in that order. (This was in accordance with the policy of the promotion board, but it did not eliminate ties altogether.) The average board score, then, was added to each airman's record. This score is referred to simply as the Board Score in the remainder of this report.

4. Time-in-Grade and Time-in-Service scores were recomputed using Date of Rank, Total Active Federal Military Service Date, and the date 1 January 1969 for airmen in grade E-3 and 1 May 1969 for airmen in grades E-4 through E-6. The recomputed values were distributed against those supplied by the Alaskan Air Command. With the exception of one case, which was correctable, the recomputed values agreed with the original values.

5. Total weighted factors composite scores were computed by adding the relevant factors (see Appendix) in two ways: (a) by excluding the average board score and (b) by including the average board score. Results of the Phase I analysis had indicated conclusively that inclusion of a board component in the weighted factors composite would introduce only trivial changes in a comparable composite which excluded a board component. Thus, the weighted factors composite scores including the board component were computed and recorded, but were not used in any of the analyses. The weighted factors composite score excluding the board component is referred to as the Composite Score in the remainder of this report.

6. Within each grade, airmen were ranked on both the Composite Score and the Board Score. These created ranks were added to each record on the data tape. In general, the higher the score on a particular variable, the lower the corresponding rank value. For example, a rank value of 1 was assigned to the individual who had the highest score. Thus, high Composite Scores and high Board Scores are reflected in low rank values.

7. During the analysis, a list was obtained of the promotion-eligible airmen who were actually promoted. This information was added to the data tape as an additional score of 1 if the airman was promoted and 0 if he was not. The variable thus created served as the indicator of promotion action.

8. Data available for the weighted factors promotion system were distributed by single factors and by combinations of several factors. From the distribution by Control Air Force Specialty Code, groups with sufficient frequencies were selected as subgroups for more detailed analysis.

9. Since one of the major factors in actual promotion is the quota allocated to a particular specialty, grouping of cases by specialties within grade seemed to be essential for meaningful analysis. Thus, airmen were re-ranked within their particular specialties and grade on both the Composite Score and the Board Score. These new ranks were used only when the groups were analyzed within specialties.

III. ANALYSES

Relationship Between Board Score and Promotion Action

Traditionally, promotions have been made primarily on the basis of promotion board scores; however, if the promotion quota is either very high or very low, the board score is less of a determining factor. When the quota is high, for example, eligible airmen within a wide range of board scores from high to low are selected. If the quota is low, eligible airmen with both high and low board scores are not selected, while only those with the very highest scores are selected. When many eligible airmen receive tied board scores, but the quota does not permit all such airmen to be promoted, a promotion/non-promotion decision must be made. Promotion boards have generally accomplished this by taking a "second look" at the selection folders of the airmen with tied board

scores to consider other criteria in making the selections. For these reasons, it was anticipated that the relationship might be less than perfect between average board scores and promotion/non-promotion actions. To obtain empirical evidence on this question, the relationship between the Board Score and the actual promotion action was determined within each of several specialties and for the four grade levels involved.

The most widely used technique to ascertain relationships is computation of a coefficient of correlation. Correlation coefficients, obtained as a by-product of the regression analyses performed and reported separately under Phase I of this study (Koplyay, 1969), are shown in Table 1. Interpreting correlation coefficients, particularly when the correlation is between a continuous variable (such as Board Score) and a binary variable (such as promotion/non-promotion), is extremely difficult because the correlation not only depends on the strength of the relationship between the two variables, but it is also affected by other factors such as the "split" on the binary variable (e.g., the proportion of promoted airmen to non-promoted airmen) and the number of unique values on the non dichotomized variable (e.g., the number of ties in Board Score). For example, in the case of grade E-3, specialty 702, it was known that 24 of the 25 eligible airmen were actually promoted. With the exception of one airmen in this grade and specialty, all eligible airmen were promoted regardless of their Board Score. Thus, the computed correlation indicates a weak relationship between Board Score and promotion action. The correlation coefficients indicated in Table 1, therefore, should be interpreted with caution and in light of any circumstances which might yield spurious results.

From Table 1, it is apparent that the Board Scores correlated less than perfectly with the actual promotions within grade. Correlations within grade by selected specialties ranged from .1989 to .8029, showing both relatively low and relatively high correlations. As already suggested, however, these correlations reflect a somewhat blurred picture of the precise relationship between the Board Score and actual promotion. The low values could be a result of any one or all of several reasons: (a) extreme split between promoted and non-promoted subgroups, (b) tied Board Scores among those competing for promotions, and (c) inversions in which eligible airmen with lower Board Scores were promoted over airmen with higher Board Scores. Further analysis of the data indicated that there were only two inversions; hence, this reason can be eliminated as a factor to account for the observed low correlations. There were, however, occasional extreme splits and a high incidence of ties in Board Score (as discussed in Phase I of this study), and apparently these are the major factors accounting for the low correlations which do exist.

There is one other possible explanation for the less than perfect relationship between Board Scores and the actual promotion actions. The results of Phase I of the study had revealed statistically significant differences between the means of the Board Scores for the two bases, Elmendorf and Eielson, for airmen in grade E-3. Since these differences only existed for grade E-3, and the promotion/non-promotion split for this grade was consistently extreme across specialties, it was felt that possible effects of differences in Board Score means (which generally were numerically small although statistically significant) could not have been completely separated from

Table 1. Correlations Between Board Score and Promotion Action Within Each Pay Grade for Total Sample and for Selected Specialties

| Pay Grade | Correlation by Pay Grade | Correlation by Specialty Subdivision | | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | 431 | 631 | 645 | 647 | 702 | 811 |
| E-3 | .4709 | .5145 | .4538 | .6563 | .6450 | .1989 | .5273 |
| E-4 | .5620 | .8029 | .5638 | .7124 | .5590 | .7259 | .5426 |
| E-5 | .5609 | .7101 | .3365 | .5469 | .7324 | .7016 | .7199 |
| E-6 | .5194 | .5675 | .6283 | .7495 | .7255 | .4879 | .3864 |

the adverse effect of the extreme splits on the correlation between Board Score and actual promotion action. Furthermore, subsequent analyses indicated that, with the exception of two inversions (i.e., cases in which airmen with lower Board Scores were promoted over airmen with higher Board Scores), all airmen who were promoted, regardless of their base of assignment, had Board Scores as high as or higher than those who were not promoted. This finding seemed to justify the conclusion that extreme promotion/non-promotion splits are mainly responsible for the less than perfect correlation between Board Score and promotion action as shown in this study.

Agreement Between Promotion Predictions and Actual Promotion Outcomes Within Pay Grades

Another phase of the analysis dealt with the validation of the Composite Score against actual selection, and then comparison of that relationship with the relationship between Board Score and promotion action. To appraise the validity of the proposed weighted factors composite score, it was assumed that the system had, in fact, been used as the basis for determining promotion/non-promotion decisions. The resulting outcomes derived from this hypothetical application of the system would then be considered "predictions" of the selection/non-selection outcomes as indicated by the actual promotion actions. Thus, if an eligible airman would have been promoted by the proposed system and was, in fact, promoted, then the proposed system provided a correct prediction of the promotion outcome. The validity of the proposed system is operationally defined for the purpose of this analysis in terms of the number of correct promotion predictions and the proportion of correct promotion predictions. Ranks on the

Composite Score were used as the basis for selecting individuals to receive hypothetical promotions under the proposed system.

To ascertain the predictive efficiency of the proposed system, a validity index was computed by identifying those individuals who would have been selected for promotion by both the Composite Score and the Board Score. The ratio of the number of such individuals to the actual number of promotions is operationally defined as promotion overlap. Table 2 summarizes the correct promotion predictions, or promotion overlap, for the Composite Score by pay grade.

An example drawn from the data in Table 2 will illustrate the predictive validation. For grade E-5, the number of correct promotion predictions of the proposed system was determined by distributing and ranking the Composite Scores of the 514 E-5 airmen. With a promotion quota of 89, the 89 airmen with the highest scores would presumably have been selected for promotion and the remaining 425 non-selected. Of the 514 airmen in grade E-5, 56 airmen were selected for promotion by both the Composite Score and the Board Score. This represents a promotion overlap of 62.9 percent (or 56/89). In other words, 62.9 percent of those airmen whose rank on the Board Score was better than or equal to the promotion quota of 89 were also ranked among the top 89 on the Composite Score. Although this does not mean that these 56 airmen received the same rank on both Composite Score and Promotion Score, the end result of promotion selection would be the same. That is, one airman could have been ranked 1 on the Composite Score and 89 on the Board Score; nevertheless, he would have been selected for promotion by either system since the quota was 89.

Table 2. Correct Promotion Predictions by Composite Score Within Each Pay Grade

| Pay Grade | Number Eligible | Number Promoted | Correct Predictions by Composite Score | Promotion Overlap | |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|--|---|-----------------------|
| | | | | Proportion of Correct Predictions to Promotions | Percentage of Overlap |
| E-3 | 555 | 478 | 437 | 437/478 | 91.4 |
| E-4 | 850 | 212 | 141 | 141/212 | 66.5 |
| E-5 | 514 | 89 | 56 | 56/89 | 63.9 |
| E-6 | 317 | 46 | 20 | 20/46 | 43.5 |

If there were one single promotion quota for each pay grade, rather than different quotas for different specialties as is the case, the data in Table 2 would adequately answer the question of validity of the proposed system. In general, the results in Table 2 indicate only a moderate level of validity of the system for actual promotion/non-promotion outcomes, with the percentage of correct promotion predictions ranging from 43.5 percent to 91.4 percent. Furthermore, this overlap in promotion predictions is less than 70 percent for three of the four grades in question. These results, however, should be considered as lower-limit estimates for the validity of the proposed system and should be interpreted with caution since the existing promotion system does operate on the basis of differential quotas. All the airmen within a pay grade are ranked on promotion board score, and then the quota for each specialty is filled going down the list from high score to low. Under this system, it is quite possible that airmen with high promotion board scores will not be promoted and airmen with lower board scores will be promoted.

To clarify this, let us assume that a particular airman ranks 10 on promotion board score, and five of his fellow airmen in the same specialty rank 9 or better on the board score. Suppose, further, that this particular specialty has a quota of four promotions. The airman in question will not be promoted since there are five persons in his specialty who rank better than he does on the board score. Now, let us assume that another airman, who is in the same pay grade as the first airman but in a different specialty, ranks 55 on the board score. Assuming, further, that this second airman's specialty has a quota of five promotions and that no other airman in his group has a rank better than 55 on the board score, this airman will be promoted since his board score rank is the highest within his specialty. The promotion outcome is favorable for the second airman and unfavorable for the first airman in spite of the fact that he had a better promotion board score in terms of the comparison across pay grade.

Agreement Between Promotion Predictions and Actual Promotion Outcomes Within Selected Specialties

Because of the differences by specialty, a further step was undertaken to analyze the relationship between the Composite Score and Board Score in terms of correct promotion predictions within particular specialties. Two new variables were created: rank on the Composite

Score and rank on the Board Score within specialties.

The distribution of airmen by Control Air Force Specialty Codes did not provide an adequate sample for all the specialties in the study. Most of the specialties did not have enough individuals within each pay grade to permit a meaningful analysis. It was possible, however, to select six specialties with a large enough sample within each pay grade for further analysis. The same procedures as used in the comparison for the total sample were used for the within-specialty analyses. The only exception was that each airman was re-ranked on the Composite Score and the Board Score within his specialty.

Table 3 summarizes the promotion predictions within grade and by selected specialties. These results clearly imply that there was a very high degree of agreement in promotion prediction between the Composite Score and the Board Score. The lowest promotion overlap was 83.33 percent, and in 16 out of the 24 specialty-by-grade combinations, the agreement was 100 percent. One must conclude that the Composite Score would have promoted the same individuals in the 16 specialties analyzed as did the Board Score. Within the remaining 8 specialties, the overlap of predicted promotions ranged from 83.33 percent to 96.84 percent.

Analysis of the specialties in which agreement fell short of 100 percent indicates that the policy used in breaking tied promotion board scores was not applied with complete consistency. This may account for a small number of cases which were predicted for promotion by the Board Score but not by the Composite Score, and vice versa. Also, it appears that in some few cases the board rated an individual high if his Airman Performance Report variable was high, regardless of low scores on other variables. In short, the same factors which contribute to the lack of complete visibility of the selection criteria under the promotion board system probably also account for the less than perfect relationship between the Composite Score and the Board Score.

Sample Cases of Inconsistencies Between Composite Scores and Board Scores

To illustrate the occasional inconsistencies of the promotion board scores in light of the components of the weighted factors system, the scores and ranks of four airmen in grade E-4 are compared in Table 4. It is apparent from the table that Airman A's performance was clearly much

Table 3. Correct Promotion Predictions by Composite Score
for Selected Specialties Within Each Pay Grade

| for Selected Specialties Within Downy | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|---|-----------------------|
| Specialty | Number Eligible | Number Promoted | Correct Predictions by Composite Score | Promotion Overlap | |
| | | | | Proportion of Correct Predictions to Promotions | Percentage of Overlap |
| Pay Grade E-3 | | | | | |
| 431 | 49 | 46 | 44 | 44/46 | 95.6 |
| 631 | 23 | 22 | 22 | 22/22 | 100.0 |
| 645 | 41 | 37 | 37 | 37/37 | 100.0 |
| 647 | 32 | 29 | 28 | 28/29 | 96.6 |
| 702 | 25 | 24 | 24 | 24/24 | 100.0 |
| 811 | 108 | 95 | 92 | 92/95 | 96.8 |
| Pay Grade E-4 | | | | | |
| 431 | 55 | 28 | 25 | 25/28 | 89.3 |
| 631 | 74 | 5 | 5 | 5/6 | 83.3 |
| 645 | 57 | 9 | 8 | 8/9 | 88.9 |
| 647 | 35 | 4 | 4 | 4/4 | 100.0 |
| 702 | 50 | 11 | 10 | 10/11 | 90.9 |
| 811 | 35 | 4 | 4 | 4/4 | 100.0 |
| Pay Grade E-5 | | | | | |
| 431 | 34 | 13 | 13 | 13/13 | 100.0 |
| 631 | 42 | 1 | 1 | 1/1 | 100.0 |
| 645 | 44 | 10 | 10 | 10/10 | 100.0 |
| 647 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 2/2 | 100.0 |
| 702 | 42 | 6 | 5 | 5/6 | 83.3 |
| 811 | 25 | 3 | 3 | 3/3 | 100.0 |
| Pay Grade E-6 | | | | | |
| 431 | 31 | 2 | 2 | 2/2 | 100.0 |
| 631 | 17 | 2 | 2 | 2/2 | 100.0 |
| 645 | 25 | 5 | 5 | 5/5 | 100.0 |
| 647 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 3/3 | 100.0 |
| 702 | 33 | 3 | 3 | 3/3 | 100.0 |
| 811 | 13 | 2 | 2 | 2/2 | 100.0 |

Table 4. Comparison of Composite Score and Board Score Variables for Four Sample Cases

| Variable | Sample Cases | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | Airman A | Airman B | Airman C | Airman D |
| Specialty Knowledge Test Score | 80 | 30 | 95 | 60 |
| Promotion Fitness Examination Score | 85 | 15 | 95 | 75 |
| Decorations Score | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Airman Performance Report Score | 125 | 128 | 135 | 135 |
| Time-in-Grade Score | 44 | 10 | 12 | 7 |
| Time-in-Service Score | 23 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| Composite Score Rank | 2 | 792 | 8 | 256 |
| Board Score Rank | 759 | 77 | 230 | 2 |
| Promotion Action | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

superior to Airman B's. In fact, Airman B scored very poorly in general. Yet, Airman A ranked 759 on the Board Score and was not promoted. Airman B, on the other hand, ranked 77 on the Board Score (792 on the Composite Score) and was promoted.

Airman C obtained scores far superior to those of Airman D. Although both were promoted, C ranked 230 on the Board Score (with superior performance on the Composite Score); D ranked 2 on the Board Score (with poor performance on the Composite Score).

The inconsistencies which are present in the sample indicate that the board must be evaluating some "invisible" additional factors besides those included in the weighted factors composite in these cases. Since rankings on the Board Score in the total sample within grade (across specialties) are not influenced by quotas assigned to the specialties, inferences about inconsistencies in Board Score rankings are valid. Although it is clear in these cases that the Board Score reflects a weighting of information from the selection folder which is not included in the Composite Score, it should be reemphasized that the actual promotion outcome is a function not only of the Board Score but also of the quota assigned to a specialty. Thus, while a low Board Score decreases the likelihood of promotion, and a high Board Score increases the likelihood of promotion, it does not necessarily follow that a high rank-value on the Board Score results in non-promotion and a low rank-value on the Board Score guarantees

promotion. That is, a rank (within grade) of 230 (Airman C in Table 4) could have represented a relative rank (within specialty) good enough to be promoted based on the quota for that specialty.

Analysis of Rank Discrepancies

The sample within each grade was divided into four mutually exclusive groups based on ranks on the Composite Score and the Board Score:

Group 1. Individuals whose ranks on both scores were less than or equal to the promotion quota.

Group 2. Individuals whose rank on the Composite Score was less than or equal to the promotion quota, and whose rank on the Board Score was greater than the promotion quota.

Group 3. Individuals whose rank on the Composite Score was greater than the promotion quota, and whose rank on the Board Score was less than or equal to the promotion quota.

Group 4. Individuals whose ranks on both scores were greater than the promotion quota.

Groups 1 and 4 are the "agreement" groups; groups 2 and 3 are the "discrepancy" groups. The latter groups, 2 and 3, were analyzed on the components of the weighted factors composite score. The results of these analyses are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Analysis of Weighted Factors for Discrepancy Groups in Which Composite Score and Board Score Ranks Were Not in Agreement on Promotion Action
(Significance of Difference Between Means of Weighted Factors)

| Discrepancy Group ^a | E-3 | | | | E-4 | | | | E-5 | | | | E-6 | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-------|------|--------------------|-----|-------|------|--------------------|-----|-------|------|--------------------|-----|-------|------|--------------------|
| | N | Mean | SD | Significance Level | N | Mean | SD | Significance Level | N | Mean | SD | Significance Level | N | Mean | SD | Significance Level |
| Specialty Knowledge Test Score | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 48 | 64.0 | 18.7 | .001 | 130 | 80.4 | 12.8 | .001 | 63 | 80.6 | 15.0 | .01 | 38 | 87.5 | 9.2 | .01 |
| 3 | 41 | 43.3 | 12.2 | | 146 | 59.6 | 19.0 | | 73 | 66.7 | 17.6 | | 34 | 67.9 | 18.9 | |
| Promotion Fitness Examination Score | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 48 | 57.4 | 25.5 | .001 | 130 | 78.1 | 17.6 | .001 | 63 | 82.1 | 13.4 | .001 | 38 | 82.1 | 13.7 | .01 |
| 3 | 41 | 12.9 | 12.2 | | 146 | 37.0 | 23.6 | | 73 | 47.8 | 25.4 | | 34 | 58.5 | 26.1 | |
| Decorations Score | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 48 | | | | 130 | | | | 63 | 5.2 | 7.0 | | 38 | 4.3 | 3.3 | |
| 3 | 41 | | | | 146 | | | | 73 | 3.2 | 0.7 | | 34 | 6.2 | 6.6 | |
| Airman Performance Report Score | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 48 | 98.3 | 15.3 | .001 | 130 | 123.7 | 10.3 | .01 | 63 | 125.1 | 7.9 | .01 | 38 | 130.7 | 5.5 | .01 |
| 3 | 41 | 117.0 | 14.6 | | 146 | 128.7 | 7.2 | | 73 | 131.3 | 3.4 | | 34 | 133.6 | 1.7 | |
| Time-in-Grade Score | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 48 | 8.1 | 1.6 | | 130 | 15.6 | 13.7 | .01 | 63 | 38.6 | 18.4 | .01 | 38 | 30.6 | 15.6 | .01 |
| 3 | 41 | 8.8 | 1.8 | | 146 | 11.4 | 6.3 | | 73 | 25.2 | 11.6 | | 34 | 18.2 | 6.9 | |
| Time-in-Service Score | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 48 | 5.1 | .5 | | 130 | 12.2 | 8.5 | .01 | 63 | 32.0 | 5.4 | .01 | 38 | 35.3 | 3.6 | .01 |
| 3 | 41 | 5.3 | .9 | | 146 | 9.1 | 4.3 | | 73 | 25.2 | 6.5 | | 34 | 32.0 | 5.8 | |

^aGroup 2: Composite Score rank \leq quota; Board Score rank $>$ quota.
Group 3: Composite Score rank $>$ quota; Board Score rank \leq quota.

Comparison of the groups in terms of the six components of the weighted factors composite score reveals the following findings.

1. *Specialty Knowledge Test Scores.* Group 2 (high Composite Scores but low Board Scores) was superior to group 3 (low Composite Scores but high Board Scores) in all grades. The means differed by more than 20 points except in grade E-5 where the difference was 13.9 points. In all cases, the differences were statistically significant.

2. *Promotion Fitness Examination Scores.* The means of group 2 were superior to the means of group 3 in all grades. The differences ranged from 23.6 points (E-6) to 44.5 points (E-3).

3. *Decorations Scores.* There were no statistically significant differences between the means of group 2 and group 3.

4. *Airman Performance Report Scores.* There was a statistically significant difference between means of group 2 and group 3 in favor of group 3 in all grades. These differences, however, were relatively small numerically (18.7 for E-3, 5.0 for E-4, 6.2 for E-5, and 2.9 for E-6).

5. *Time-in-Grade Scores.* With the exception of grade E-3, means of group 2 and group 3 differed significantly in favor of group 2 in all grades.

6. *Time-in-Service Scores.* Means of group 2 and group 3 differed significantly in favor of group 2 in all grades except grade E-3. The difference was relatively small but statistically significant.

With the exception of the Decorations factor, where the two discrepancy groups were comparable, and the Airman Performance Report factor, where a small but significant difference in favor of group 3 was found, group 2 was superior on all factors.

IV. SUMMARY

The weighted factors promotion system was field-tested with the cooperation of the Alaskan Air Command. From among 2,835 promotion-eligible airmen at Elmendorf and Eielson Air Force Bases, a final sample of 2,290 airmen in grades E-3 through E-6 was obtained. Data were analyzed to determine the relationship between the promotion board score (Board Score) and the weighted factors composite score excluding the board score (Composite Score). In addition, actual promotion actions were related to promotion board scores. Overlaps between rank on the Board Score and rank on the Composite Score

were analyzed for the entire sample within each grade and for selected specialties. Discrepancies in ranks for a few individual cases were further analyzed.

The results of the various analyses are summarized, and several conclusions are drawn regarding the relationship between the existing airman promotion system based on board evaluations and the weighted factors promotion system.

1. The relationship between the Board Score and actual promotion was less than perfect. Correlations ranged between .471 and .562 for the total sample. For selected specialties, the range was from .199 to .803. Although ties on the Board Scores may have been partially responsible for the observed low to moderate correlations, it is felt that the different promotion quotas for different specialties probably account for additional variability in the relationship between Board Score and actual promotion.

2. Promotion overlap between Composite Score and Board Score ranged from 43 percent for grade E-6 to 91 percent for grade E-3 for the total sample. Further analysis within specialties resulted in almost complete overlap. When airmen were re-ranked on the Composite Score and on the Board Score within their specialties, the overlap was 100 percent in 16 out of the 24 groups analyzed. The overlap ranged between 84 percent and 96 percent in the other eight groups. This does not necessarily imply that the ranks on Board Score and Composite Score were the same. It does imply, however, that when re-ranked within a particular specialty, practically the same airmen would have been selected for promotion by both the Board Score alone and the Composite Score excluding the Board Score. Thus, it is apparent that the proposed weighted factors promotion system is highly valid in the sense that it provides results which are in close agreement with the operational system.

3. Analyses of individual cases indicated occasional inconsistencies on the part of the promotion board in assigning Board Scores on the basis of the factors included in the weighted factors composite score. In some cases, airmen with superior scores on these factors were ranked lower by the board than others whose scores reflected poor performance.

4. Most airmen either ranked high on both the Board Score and the Composite Score, or they ranked low on both. A relatively small number of cases ranked high on the Composite Score and low on the Board Score, while another small number

ranked high on the Board Score and low on the Composite Score. Comparison of these rank-discrepancy groups revealed that, with the exception of the Airman Performance Report variable and the Decorations variable, the average score on each factor was higher for the group in which the rank discrepancy was in favor of the Composite Score than in the reverse discrepancy group. The Airman Performance Report mean was slightly higher in the group which ranked high on the Board Score and low on the Composite Score. However, the margin by which the Airman Performance Report factor was higher was relatively slight compared to the large differences on other factors revealed when the rank-discrepancy groups were analyzed. The Decorations factor was approximately equal in the two groups.

To summarize the overall findings, then, the weighted factors composite score excluding the average board score gave most airmen the same relative ranking within their specialty as did the promotion board score. In other words, the same individuals would have been promoted using either system. On the other hand, when all promotion-eligible airmen within a pay grade were compared with each other, there were indications of inconsistency in the promotion board's judgment of the relative merits of performance in arriving at the promotion/non-promotion decision. There was a definite lack of visibility of selection factors in a few cases where airmen with superior Composite

Scores were given low Board Scores. This does not imply that the promotion board had no valid reason for its judgment. It does suggest, however, that the reason would not be readily apparent to an airman under the current operational board process.

Validation of the weighted factors promotion system was accomplished by ranking the individuals on their Composite Scores and comparing these ranks to actual promotion outcomes. It was concluded from the results that the weighted factors promotion system would have promoted almost the same individuals within the specialties analyzed as were actually selected by the promotion boards. If the sample in the study can be considered to be representative of the Air Force-wide population of promotion-eligible airmen in grades E-3 through E-6, it can be further assumed that the weighted factors system provides a valid promotion system in which the selection criteria are visible.

REFERENCE

- Koplyay, J.B. *Field test of the weighted airman promotion system: Analysis of the promotion board component in the weighted factors system.* AFHRL-TR-69-101, AD-689 751. Lackland AFB, Tex.: Personnel Research Division, Air Force Human Resources Laboratory, April 1969.

APPENDIX: AIRMAN PROMOTION SELECTION FACTORS AND POINTS^a

Grades E-4 through E-7

| Selection Factor | Computation With Board Score | | Computation Without Board Score | |
|---|------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| | Maximum Points | Percentage | Maximum Points | Percentage |
| Specialty Knowledge Test (SKT) Score | 95 | 17 | 95 | 21 |
| Promotion Fitness Examination (PFE) Score | 95 | 17 | 95 | 21 |
| Time-In-Service (TIS) Score | 40 | 7 | 40 | 9 |
| Time-In-Grade (TIG) Score | 60 | 11 | 60 | 13 |
| Decoration Score | 25 | 5 | 25 | 6 |
| Airman Performance Reports (APR) | 135 | 25 | 135 | 30 |
| Board Evaluation | 100 | 18 | | |
| | 550 | 100 | 450 | 100 |

Explanation of Factors

The SKT and PFE will be administered annually.

Points for the SKT and PFE scores will be actual percentile scores obtained in these tests (in 5-point increments).

Time-in-Service will be computed by multiplying years of Total Active Federal Military Service by 2. Less than 6 months will count as 1 point; over 6 months will count a full year, 2 points. A cutoff score of 40 points, for 20 years TAFMS, has been established.

Time-in-Grade will be computed at the rate of ½ point per month up to a maximum of 120 months, 60 points; 15 days or less will be dropped, 16 or more will count as a full month.

Decorations will be assigned points according to their order of precedence. The maximum number of points attainable is 25. Decorations will count for promotion regardless of the military service in which they were earned.

The Airman Performance Report score is obtained by multiplying the overall evaluation mean by 15. The mean is based on reports for a 5-year period prior to the eligibility date, not to exceed ten reports.

The Board Score will be based on a review by the board that concentrates on those items not previously weighted; e.g., education level and efforts to improve self in terms of formal education, technical knowledge, etc. Reduced selection folder will consist of Category A favorable communications, APR word picture, and pages 2 and 4 of the Air Force Form 7.

^aFrom Koplyay, 1969, p. 11.

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM
AUTHORITY SECTION

7.6
19-11-6
AFM 35-8

A I R F O R C E M A N U A L

S1569 AFM 35-8

24 Sep 71

MILITARY PERSONNEL

AIR FORCE MILITARY PERSONNEL TESTING SYSTEM

31 DECEMBER 1969

TESTED
JAN 30
AUL

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PART FIVE

PERSONNEL PROMOTION TESTING PROGRAM

Chapter 20

PROMOTION TESTING

20-1. Promotion Testing Program. The promotion testing program is intended to support the Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS) by utilizing two test scores as an integral part of the weighted factor equation. The Specialty Knowledge Test (SKT) provides a measurement of an airman's comprehension of his job. The Promotion Fitness Examination (PFE) provides a measurement of his comprehension of the total Air Force. These two tests provide a current measure of areas covered in addition to their inclusion in the promotion score composite.

20-2. Purpose of the PFE. The PFE is designed to evaluate knowledge of general military areas. PFE scores will be used with all other pertinent information to assess the overall competence of airmen.

NOTE: This test was first operationally used on 1 September 1969.

20-3. Purpose of the SKT. The SKT is designed to evaluate an airman's current knowledge in his Air Force Specialty. SKT scores are used with all other pertinent information to assess the overall competence of airmen.

NOTE: When the SKT program originated in 1952, the 5- and 7-level tests were titled "Airman Proficiency Tests" (APTs). Since June 1961 these tests, known as Specialty Knowledge Tests (SKTs), were used in skill upgrading until 1 April 1969. SKTs under WAPS were used first on 1 September 1969.

20-4. Scope. The policies and procedures stated herein apply only to military personnel on active duty.

20-5. Description of the PFE. The PFE contains multiple-choice questions covering knowledge common to airmen performing duties within a specific grade. There are four forms of the test: E-4 (Sgt); E-5 (SSgt); E-6 (TSgt); E-7 (MSgt). The PFE normally contains about 115 questions and requires about 2 hours to complete.

20-6. Description of the SKT. The SKT contains multiple-choice questions covering knowledge common to all duties within the Air Force Specialty (AFS). When the AFS is shredded out, and the SKT is also developed for the shreds, the test is divided into two parts. The first part covers knowledge common to all shredouts and is taken by all airmen. The second part is shredded out with each airman taking only the portion covering his shredout. The SKT contains approximately 115 questions and takes about 2½ hours to administer.

20-7. Responsibilities:

a. **Major Commanders.** These commanders will insure the appointment of TCOs, the selection of qualified subject-matter specialists (SMSs), and the operational control of promotion tests at installations under their commands.

b. **Base Commanders.** These commanders will provide proper testing facilities, as specified in chapter 4.

c. **Test Control Officers.** These officers at all echelons will control and administer SKTs and PFEs as prescribed in this manual and AFR 205-13.

d. **Subject-Matter Specialists.** SMSs will prepare:

(1) PFEs for the appropriate grade levels; review pertinent directives and career development training materials for adequacy and currency; and participate in subsequent reviews of the PFEs for adequacy and currency.

(2) SKTs for their career ladders; review pertinent specialty descriptions, specialty training standards, and career development training materials for adequacy and currency, recommending changes to HQ USAF (AFPDPM); and participate in subsequent reviews of their career ladders SKTs for adequacy and currency.

e. **Test Development Agency.** The Personnel Research Division (AFHRL) will develop, review, and maintain PFEs and SKTs, under the direction of HQ USAF; and conduct research in support of the promotion testing program.

20-8. Personnel Tested:

a. **General.** Airmen will be tested and retested on PFEs and SKTs as prescribed in AFR 39-7. Airmen may not be retested solely to improve their scores.

b. **Airmen Away From Home Station.** Special instructions for testing airmen attached in tenant organizations or on temporary duty (TDY) are in AFR 39-7 and AFM 30-3.

20-9. **Scheduling and Testing Periods.** PFEs and SKTs will be administered, for every promotion cycle, to eligible airmen who do not have a current test score. (Normally, a test score will be considered current for two promotion cycles.) For the implementation of WAPS, airmen will be tested on a monthly basis, depending on their promotion AFSC, starting in September 69 (see AFR 39-7, table 1, 1 August 1969). After implementation, testing will be on a 2-month basis

depending on the promotion AFSC and grade for competition (see AFRs 39-7, table 2, and 39-29). Adherence to the established schedule is essential to insure equity in promotion opportunity within each career field, to spread the testing workload, and to meet the promotion selection requirements for collecting, scoring, and weighting test results. Testing other than within the established time periods is not authorized, except as provided in AFR 39-7.

20-10. **Authorized Off-Schedule Administration.** Airmen not tested during the scheduled testing period, due to extenuating circumstances beyond their control, may be authorized off-schedule testing as prescribed in AFR 39-7.

20-11. **Announcing Test Administration.** ALL-TCO letters, "Airman Specialty Evaluation Program Instructions," are published by the Personnel Research Division (AFHRL) and distributed to all TCOs. They are numbered by year of publication, followed by a series number (that is, 69-1, 69-2, 69-3, and 69-4). The ALL-TCO letters provide a current listing of tests authorized for administration.

20-12. Preparing Examinee Lists and Test Rosters for Permanent Party Airmen:

a. **Unit Lists.** CBPOs charged with maintaining AF Form 7 will compile lists of airmen to be tested, in accordance with AFM 30-3. Names will be listed alphabetically by the AFSC of the SKT to be administered. The unit commander or his authorized representative will sign the list to signify approval of testing for each person listed. (See AFM 30-3, volume II, chapter 7.)

b. **Test Roster (AFPT 237).** TCOs will schedule eligible airmen on the Test Roster. A single roster will cover the daily authorized administration and will consist of as many pages as necessary to include all sessions for that day. The test roster is largely self-explanatory and will be prepared in du-

plicate a Machine
thorized.
major c
AFPT 24
vided to
TCOs wil
recorded
essential
maries. T
USAFMP
78148, p
will be r
will be
scoring
airman te

20-13. Preparing Test Rosters for:

a. **TDY.** become el
TDY, an
(see AFF
CBPO or
obtained
This certi
and hand
requireme
on TDY
the author

b. **Airmen in Tenant Organizations.** Airmen in tenant organizations attached to the host organization will be tested on a monthly basis, depending on their promotion AFSC, starting in September 69 (see AFR 39-7, table 1, 1 August 1969). After implementation, testing will be on a 2-month basis

c. **All Airmen.** (AFPMC) airman's

20-14. **Admission to Testing.** SKTs must be administered under the control of AFPT 24 qualified personnel. Testing will be conducted in accordance with the following instructions:

AIR FORCE REGULATION
NO. 39-29

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
Washington, 10 March 1967
Effective 2 April 1967

5/5 by AFR 39-29, 19 Jan 68

Enlisted Personnel

PROMOTION OF AIRMEN

This regulation tells when, how, and by whom airmen on active duty with the Air Force are promoted. Command supplements to this regulation must be submitted to USAF MPC (AFPMABJ) Randolph AFB, Texas 78148 for approval before they are published.

SECTION A—GENERAL PROVISIONS

| | Paragraph |
|--|-----------|
| Promotion Objectives | 1 |
| Who May Promote Airmen | 2 |
| Ineligible Airmen | 3 |
| Determining Date of Rank (DOR) | 4 |
| How Promotions are Announced and Revoked | 5 |
| Required Records and Reporting | 6 |
| Retirement Restrictions | 7 |
| Promotion Inquiries | 8 |

SECTION B—PROMOTIONS CONTROLLED BY QUOTAS

| | |
|--|----|
| Promotion Cycles | 9 |
| Requirements for Promotion | 10 |
| Airman Eligibility Report Required (RCS: 1-HAF-P106) | 11 |
| Promotion Boards | 12 |
| When Quotas Are Allocated | 13 |
| Airman Promotion Management List | 14 |
| When Promotions Are Made | 15 |
| Promotion On Reassignment | 16 |
| When Quotas Are Adjusted | 17 |
| Selections to Grades E-8 and E-9 | 18 |
| Airman Promotion Report Required (RCS: 2-HAF-P106) | 19 |

SECTION C—PROMOTIONS NOT CONTROLLED BY QUOTAS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Promotion of Students | 20 |
| Promotion of Airmen Basic | 21 |
| Promotion of Officer Trainees | 22 |
| Posthumous Promotions | 23 |
| Replacement of Demoted Airmen | 24 |

SECTION A—GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Promotion Objectives:

a. Promotions are made to enable the Air Force to fill its requirements for specific grades and skills in each Air Force Specialty (AFS) within the limits established by annual grade ceilings. The Air Force seeks to advance to positions of leadership and responsibility in each AFS those airmen who

have demonstrated ability to assume such positions, particularly by their performance in current grade.

b. When evaluating airmen for promotion, promotion boards must apply the "whole man" concept. To do this the board member must learn everything about the airman that can be obtained from his record, such as his manner of duty performance, breadth of experience, supervisory and leadership ability,

This regulation supersedes AFR 39-29, 5 June 1964.

OPR: AFPMABJ

DISTRIBUTION: S

POSTED

APR 10 1967

AUL

AFR 39-29

seniority, education, favorable communications and decorations, and substantiated derogatory information. These factors, however, must *not* be given a predetermined score, such as 6 points for a high school education, 7 for one year of college, 8 for two years of college, 35 for time in grade, 40 for time in service, etc. Rather, the board member should consider all these factors together to arrive at a mental picture of the whole airman. Only then should he assess his record.

c. At least once a year unit commanders will brief airmen assigned to their units on the operation of the promotion program. CBPOs will assist commanders to prepare the briefings.

2. Who May Promote Airmen:

a. HQ USAF promotes airmen to grades E-8 and E-9.

See AU Sup 1
b. Within the limitations of this regulation, major commanders are authorized to promote airmen to grades below E-8. They may delegate this authority to commanders of any echelon of command (including detachments of squadrons and squadron sec-

tions). When a major commander receives a promotion quota which he considers too small for allocation to the lowest echelon to which he has delegated promotion authority, or if the number of eligible airmen in that unit is too small to insure a desirable degree of selectivity, he may retain such quota or allocate it only to intervening commanders. In such case, commanders allocated the quota may issue the orders promoting the selected airmen, or they may direct the subordinate promotion authorities to issue the orders. Quotas will not be allocated below the level which will preclude consideration of all eligible airmen. For example, if the quota received at group level is too small to permit distribution to each squadron, at least a portion of the quota will be retained at group level and squadrons not receiving a separate quota will be permitted to recommend airmen for consideration at group level.

c. HQ USAF promotes airmen in a missing in action or prisoner of war status who have been dropped from the rolls of the unit to which assigned when declared missing.

3. Ineligible Airmen. See table 1.

| TABLE 1 | |
|-------------------|---|
| INELIGIBLE AIRMEN | |
| L I N E | An airmen is ineligible for promotion if, on or after the appropriate cut-off date, he (note 1) |
| 1 | will not have and cannot extend or reenlist to acquire the minimum service required in the higher grade for voluntary retirement. Remaining service will be computed from the promotion date (note 2). |
| 2 | is being separated under AFM 39-10 or AFM 39-12, and HQ USAF has directed no reenlistment eligibility status entry in item 15, DD FORM 214. |
| 3 | is a career airman who declined to extend or reenlist to obtain service retainability for PCS. |
| 4 | has been considered under the Selective Reenlistment Program, but not selected (note 3). |
| 5 | is serving a court-martial sentence or is under a suspended sentence. (If the sentence includes forfeiture or detention of pay, he cannot be promoted until the day following the last day of the period of forfeiture or detention, provided the rest of the sentence is completely executed.) |
| 6 | is under a suspended punishment imposed under Article 15, UCMJ. (If the punishment includes forfeiture or detention of pay, he cannot be promoted until the day following the last day of the period of forfeiture or detention, provided the rest of the punishment is completely executed.) |
| 7 | is on a control roster under AFR 39-40. |
| 8 | has applied for retirement under AFM 35-7. |
| 9 | while serving on a second or subsequent term, has applied for voluntary separation (release or discharge) under any Air Force regulation, manual, or directive, except to reenlist. |

dent and the original panel. Airmen are aligned in a relative order of merit within each AFS, based on composite scores (0 through 30 points). Those airmen achieving the highest scores, within the allocated quota and the limits imposed by the Airman Promotion Management List, are selected for advancement.

f. and g. added (see AU Sup 1)
see AU Sup 1
13. When Quotas Are Allocated. Approximately six weeks before each promotion date in table 2, HQ USAF allocates quotas for appropriate grades to major commands. Unused quotas will be returned to USAF-MPC (AFPMABJ), Randolph AFB Tex 78148, not later than 10 days before the promotion date.

14. Airman Promotion Management List:

a. The purpose of this list is to control promotions to grades E-4 through E-7 within career field subdivisions/AFSCs. It is published in letter form approximately six weeks before each promotion date to inform major command promotion authorities and promotion board members of the limitations imposed upon each career field subdivision/AFSC.

see AU Sup 1
 b. A specified percentage is designated for all grades by career field subdivision/AFSC. This percentage, when applied to the number of eligible airmen assigned by CAFSC in the next lower grade in each career field subdivision/AFSC, indicates the maximum number of airmen who may be promoted from the lower grade. Major commands will impose the necessary controls to insure that the number of airmen promoted

in each grade within career field subdivision/AFSC does not exceed the limitations.

(1) and (2) added (see AU Sup 1)
 c. In computing the number to be promoted, only the major command may count all fractions as one.

14.1. See AU Sup 1

15. When Promotions Are Made. Unless otherwise directed by HQ USAF, promotions under this section are made as shown in table 2. Exception: If an airman selected for promotion is inadvertently not promoted on the established promotion date, he may be promoted off-cycle, provided quota and Airman Promotion Management List limitations are not exceeded.

16. Promotion On Reassignment. An eligible airman will not be denied consideration for promotion because of an impending reassignment. Table 5 tells who considers reassigned airmen and who promotes those selected. If, according to the table, an airman should be considered by an Aerial Port Squadron but his unit personnel record group has already been forwarded to the command to which he is being reassigned, the commander of the Aerial Port Squadron requests the gaining command to consider the airman for promotion.

16.1 and 16.2. See AU Sup 1

17. When Quotas Are Adjusted. HQ USAF must approve intercommand adjustment of quotas except in case of individual reassignment (see table 5), or reassignment of an entire organization. In the latter case, the losing major command transmits a proportionate share of its next promotion quota directly to the gaining major command.

TABLE 5

CONSIDERATION AND PROMOTION OF REASSIGNED AIRMEN

| R U L E | A | B | C |
|------------------|---|--|--------------------------|
| | If airman's EDCSA is | then he is considered for promotion by | then he is promoted by |
| 1 | on or before appropriate cut-off date in table 2 | gaining command | |
| 2 | after appropriate cut-off date in table 2 | losing command (notes 1 & 2) | |
| 3 | on or before appropriate promotion date in table 2 and he is selected for promotion | | gaining command (note 3) |
| 4 | after appropriate promotion date in table 2 and he is selected for promotion | | losing command |

25 April 1983

Military Personnel

AIR FORCE MILITARY PERSONNEL TESTING SYSTEM

This regulation sets up Air Force policy for all testing instruments used in the Air Force Military Personnel Testing System. It prescribes the methods, techniques, and procedures to administer, process, and control tests. It outlines and explains the purposes, responsibilities, tests, and uses of results in Air Force military testing programs. All components and constituent activities of the Air Force must use this system.

Proposed supplements that affect any military personnel function performed at major command (MAJCOM) level or below are processed as prescribed in AFR 5-13, Publications or Communications Affecting Personnel Functions Performed at MAJCOM Levels or Below.

This regulation is affected by the Privacy Act of 1974. The system of records required by this regulation is authorized by 10 U.S.C. 8012 and 44 U.S.C. 3101.

See attachment 3 for abbreviations used in this publication.

PART ONE--PERSONNEL TESTING PROCEDURES

| | Paragraph | Page |
|--|-----------|------|
| Chapter 1--Introduction | | |
| Need for Testing | 1-1 | 7 |
| Advantages of Testing | 1-2 | 7 |
| Air Force Military Personnel Testing System | 1-3 | 7 |
| A Word of Caution | 1-4 | 7 |
| Chapter 2--Air Force Military Personnel Testing System Responsibilities | | |
| HQ USAF Responsibilities | 2-1 | 8 |
| Major Command (MAJCOM) Responsibilities | 2-2 | 8 |
| Installation Commanders or Base Directors of Personnel (DPs) | 2-3 | 9 |
| Consolidated Base Personnel Office (CBPO) Responsibilities | 2-4 | 9 |
| Air National Guard (ANG) and Air Force Reserve (AFRes) CBPO Testing Program | 2-5 | 9 |
| Procedures for Requesting Additions or Changes to Air Force Military Personnel Testing Programs | 2-6 | 9 |
| Chapter 3--Test Control System and Operating Procedures | | |
| Definitions | 3-1 | 10 |
| Responsibilities Within the Test Control System | 3-2 | 10 |
| Establishing a Test Facility | 3-3 | 12 |
| Closing a Test Facility | 3-4 | 12 |
| Test Administration Personnel | 3-5 | 13 |
| Testing Support for Geographically Separated Units (GSUs) | 3-6 | 13 |
| CONTROLLED ITEM (Test Material) | 3-7 | 14 |
| Access to Test Material | 3-8 | 15 |
| Compromise or Loss of Test Material | 3-9 | 15 |
| Destruction or Transfer of Test Material | 3-10 | 15 |
| Test Security | 3-11 | 15 |

Supersedes AFR 35-8, 15 March 1978. (See signature page for summary of changes.)

No. of Printed Pages: 61

OPR: HQ AFMPC/MPCYPT (Maj J. R. Welsh)

Approved by: HQ AFMPC/MPCY (Col O. C. Patton)

Editor: G. Hale

Distribution: F

POSTED

MAY 4 3-6 REC'D

(11) The language and style of all questions are standard, simple, direct, concise, and precise.

14-6. Requisitioning Material for WAPS Review Reference Libraries:

a. The Air Force Extension Course Institute (ECI) establishes the ratio of WAPS packages to eligible examinees. Normally, a 1:5 ratio is used to project printing and packaging quantities for cycles occurring over a year into the future. Changes in the ratio will be coordinated with HQ AFMPC/MPCYPT and HQ AFMPC/MPCRTT. HQ AFMPC/MPCYPT and HQ AFMPC/MPCRTT determine the ratio of PFE review references, other than AFP 50-34, to eligible examinees for each WAPS cycle.

b. At least 120 days before the month scheduled for WAPS tests, ECI surveys all CBPOs for projected WAPS package requirements. At this time, CBPOs are provided with a listing of all material to be included in the package. CBPOs (OJT Units) must ensure that no larger quantities are ordered for WAPS libraries than are required. The requirements of each WAPS library should consider the number of individuals in possession of current WAPS material and current WAPS material available in the WAPS library. In general, one WAPS package should be available for every five eligibles (or portion thereof) within the unit served by the WAPS library.

c. If ECI, PDO, or other sources of references are unable to provide a publication, the CBPO OJT Unit must inform the MAJCOM OJT monitor and MAJCOM Promotions and Testing monitor. The MAJCOM OJT monitor verifies that the references are not available. Where possible, reference materials are redistributed to meet the need. If unable to resolve, the MAJCOM OJT monitor informs HQ AFMPC/MPCRTT, HQ AFMPC/MPCAWB, and USAFOMC that there is a referencing problem. The MAJCOM Promotion and Testing monitor identifies to HQ AFMPC/MPCAWB the specific test(s) and promotion cycle, and the name, grade, and SSN of the affected individual(s). HQ AFMPC/MPCRTT in conjunction with USAFOMC resolves the reference material problem. HQ AFMPC/MPCAWB advises the MAJCOM Promotions and Testing monitor of the specific testing actions to be taken and instructions to be given to the TCO or the individual(s) involved or both.

14-7. Who Will Test. The automated data system produces a list of airmen eligible for testing

(the Airman Test Requirements Roster) before each scheduled testing period. Every airman whose name appears on this list (AFM 30-130, volume I, chapter 15) should be scheduled for testing, unless the individual is definitely ineligible for testing or has a medical excuse (k below). If there is doubt about the validity of the listing, schedule the individual designated in the listing until the CBPO deletes that name from the list. Never delete or add a name to the listing without proper notification to the servicing CBPO.

a. Promotion Fitness Examinations (PFEs):

* (1) All airmen eligible for and desiring promotion to grades SSgt, TSgt, and MSgt must take the applicable edition of the PFE. Usually, results obtained on the PFE remain valid for 1 year for airmen in grades SSgt and TSgt. Airmen are administered the PFE according to AFPT 249, Instructions for Administering the SKT and PFE.

(2) The PFE, revised semiannually for airmen in grade of Sgt, is dated 1 April or 1 October. Both editions are valid for two consecutive testing cycles, and results usually are valid for two consecutive promotion cycles. The April PFEs are given with April SKTs and October PFEs are given with October SKTs. The PFE for airmen in grades SSgt and TSgt is revised once a year and dated 1 January.

(3) The reason a Sgt must take the PFE of the same date as the SKT is to avoid being scheduled for the SKT or PFE during every testing cycle. If SKTs are replaced after only one testing cycle, give new PFEs with the new SKTs.

(4) All Sgts who are not required to take SKTs (for example, retrainees and airmen in reporting identifiers) must take the 1 October edition of the PFE. This gives all SKT-exempt airmen comparable test scores. Regardless of when airmen enter SKT-exempt status, they must take the regular 1 October edition of the PFE.

b. Specialty Knowledge Tests (SKTs):

(1) Airmen eligible for promotion (under AFR 39-29) must take the SKT for the AF Specialty Code (AFSC) in which competing for promotion. They must take it as of the promotion eligibility cutoff date (PECD) for the cycle, unless specifically exempt (AFR 39-29, table 6). Airmen are administered the SKT according to AFPT 249.

(2) TSgt and MSgt SKTs are revised once a year and dated 1 January of each year. For SSgt SKTs, one-half of the AFSCs are dated 1 April and the other half are dated 1 October. SKT results usually are valid for 1 year for testing to grades TSgt or MSgt and for two consecutive promotion cycles for grade SSgt. When a new or revised SKT

is published, all eligible airmen must take the new SKT for their AFSC and the new PFE having the same edition date.

NOTE: Usually, SKTs and PFEs are valid for two consecutive SSgt promotion cycles and are used for competition in the appropriate grade and AFSC. However, this does not mean an airman will always receive the same test scores each cycle. Scores may change because obsolete or faulty questions are deleted from the master score key and are not considered in the promotion scoring process. When a test is used for two cycles, it is rescored before the second cycle, using the most current score key.

(3) Eligible airmen who are dually qualified (including imbalanced skills) must take the PFE and SKT for the AFSC and grade in which competing for promotion (AFR 39-29). Consider airmen assigned in reporting or special duty identifiers the same way as dually qualified personnel.

c. SKT Exemption. Airmen meeting the requirements in AFR 39-29, table 6, are exempt from taking the SKT for a maximum period of 1 year, provided they remain in a retraining or reclassified status. The 1-year exemption begins on the effective date of such a status. Entry into retraining or reclassified status must be effective on or before the PECD in order for the airman to be authorized an exemption from testing that cycle. Retrainees and reclassified airmen in grades SrA/Sgt through MSgt must compete for promotion without SKT scores. When the exemption period is over or on termination of retrainee or reclassified status, an eligible airman must take the SKT and PFE for the AFSC in which competing for promotion.

d. USAF Supervisory Examination (USAFSE):

(1) The USAFSE is administered to eligible master and senior master sergeants who want to compete for promotion to SMSgt and CMSgt. Those who do not desire to test may decline the opportunity and indicate that on the WAPS Testing Notification RIP.

(2) Schedule testing during the authorized testing cycle as shown in table 14-1. CBPO chief can authorize off-cycle testing as outlined in i below.

(3) Individuals will not be retested during the same promotion cycle. Any questions or problems in this area will be referred through the MAJCOM * TCO to HQ AFMPC/DPMAJW for resolution.

e. WAPS Testing Schedule. Schedule WAPS testing for each promotion cycle by grade as shown

in table 14-1. An airman may not test outside established time periods except as provided in i below. TCOs must schedule testing early in the test cycle until all testing is completed. The test cycles are sufficiently long enough to provide flexibility to cover unit contingencies, but testing late in the cycle should be the exception and not the rule. Delaying testing to afford additional study time is not authorized unless individuals did not have access to study reference materials at least 30 days prior to test date.

* **f. Coordination.** The CBPO promotions and testing unit must coordinate test schedules with the unit WAPS monitor or commander. The unit commander must notify and direct airmen to report for testing according to the schedule. Exceptions to this are medical excusal or removal from eligibility by a test declination statement (AF Form 1566).

g. Testing Personnel Who Are Selected for Permanent Change of Station (PCS) or TDY.

Usually airmen are notified of PCS moves at least 60 days in advance (AFR 39-11). This is sufficient leadtime to complete promotion testing requirements. The CBPO promotion and testing unit will counsel, in conjunction with the initial relocation interview, all promotion eligible personnel departing during a test cycle and schedule them for testing if applicable. Give individuals reasonable notice (at least 1 or 2 days) when scheduling them for testing.

(1) Personnel selected for PCS must test before departure if they are present at the losing installation for any portion of the testing period for their grade. Personnel selected for TDY that might extend to within the last week of or beyond the test cycle must be tested prior to departure if departure is within the test cycle.

* (2) For those personnel who cannot be tested before departing PCS (without TDY en route), the losing CBPO promotions and testing unit will provide an AF Form 1566 (complete parts I and II) or the RIP 1566 to the outbound assignments unit for inclusion on the AF Form 330, Records Transmittal/Request, to the gaining CBPO. For those who will be TDY (including TDY en route), the losing CBPO promotions and testing unit will send the AF Form 1566 or RIP 1566 to the TDY servicing CBPO to ensure timely testing of the individual. In the case of TDY en route, notify the gaining CBPO promotion and testing unit of actions taken.

h. Testing Personnel Who Are Selected for AFSC Change. When scheduling for promotion testing, the CBPO must ensure that airmen

Chapter 15

SPECIALTY KNOWLEDGE TEST (SKT) AND PROMOTION FITNESS EXAMINATION (PFE)

15-1. Purpose of the SKT and PFE. The SKT and PFE support the WAPS. These tests provide objective measurements of an individual's broad knowledge of the military and the specific requirements of his or her specialty. They are a means for assessing individual specialty or NCO knowledge at the time of promotion consideration to grades SSgt through MSgt. Promotion testing encourages and provides recognition of individual efforts toward self-improvement.

15-2. Description of the SKT and PFE. Both are 100-item, multiple-choice tests, requiring about 2 hours each to administer.

★a. The SKT is designed to sample an individual's knowledge of his or her entire AF specialty as defined by the corresponding specialty description in AFR 39-1 and the Specialty Training Standard (STS). The tests sample knowledge of STS subject-matter areas judged by test development team members to be most appropriate for promotion to higher grades.

b. The PFE assesses relative levels of supervisory NCO knowledge stated in the MTS as identified in AFR 50-44. Three levels of the PFE are written--for promotion to SSgt, TSgt, and MSgt. Test content is based mainly on AFP 50-34, volume I, although additional review references may be listed in AFP 39-8.

c. For AFSCs supported by CDCs, the CDC is usually the sole source for SKT content. The use of supplemental references is limited to the support of STS topics not fully discussed or updated in the CDC. The CDCs and supplemental references will be listed in AFP 39-8.

d. For AFSCs not supported by CDCs, AFP 39-8 lists references from which SKT questions are developed.

★e. Topics covered in SKTs are usually limited to those contained in the STS for each AFSC. References to support the SKT must be CDCs or other publications that are listed as training references on the STS and available to airmen preparing for an SKT. Publications that are listed on the STS but that are not published by the Air Force are not usually regarded as available references unless their availability have been substantiated by all applicable MAJCOMs and or HQ USAF functional and career managers.

f. The study reference lists (SRLs) contained in AFP 39-8, indicate all SKT and PFE references that airmen should use to prepare for promotion. AFP 39-8 is distributed well before the scheduled administration of tests. Chapter 14 specifies responsibilities of MAJCOMs/SOAs, bases, units, and individuals relative to publishing and distributing WAPS study references.

15-3. Responsibilities. Chapter 14 contains responsibilities for operational control and management of the SKT and PFE.

15-4. Administering and Scoring Procedures. Chapter 14 covers the administrative procedures for WAPS testing.

15-5. Scores Used in Reporting SKT and PFE Results. Scores are based on the percentage of questions answered correctly. There is no penalty for wrong answers or omitted questions.

15-6. Use of SKT and PFE Results. AFR 39-29 prescribes the use of scores derived from the SKT and PFE.