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Background Paper
on
A Chronology of Events Effecting the Air Force First Sergeant

Management of the first sergeant career field has been one of the most controversial issues faced by commanders, senior enlisted advisors, Personnel, Inspector General teams, and first sergeants themselves since the inception of the Air Force in 1947. The first sergeant got off to a relatively good start in the new Air Force, with a fairly clear definition of his job and being the senior enlisted person in the squadron. Changes to the AFSC and the introduction of the supergrades, SMSgt (E-8) and CMSgt (E-9), in 1958 quickly complicated the first sergeant's life and, to some degree, still haunt the "Top Kick." The following is a chronological replay of some of the events that have shaped the first sergeant career field of today.

12 December 1949: Shortly after the inception of the Air Force, AFSC 99910, "First Sergeant", was established in Air Force Letter 35-499 (later changed to AF Regulation 35-499 on 1 Jan 51). The role of the first sergeant was outlined as follows:

1. **JOB SUMMARY.** Supervises activities of squadron pertaining to personnel, maintenance of discipline, promotion of welfare and morale, and coordination of squadron functions.

2. **JOB DESCRIPTION.**

a. **Duties and Tasks.**

(1) Manages squadron activities. Plans, schedules, and coordinates work, leave, and passes of airmen assigned to squadron. Provides for use and control of time, space, equipment, and personnel. Develops organizational chart for squadron headquarters indicating authority and specific responsibilities for performance of assigned duties for each airman. Keeps commanding officer informed of state of military courtesy, dress, discipline, welfare and morale of personnel assigned and attached to squadron.

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Recommends airmen for promotion, reduction, classification, or reclassification. Enforces discipline prescribed by commanding officer for delinquent airmen.

(2) Promotes welfare and morale. Orients newly assigned personnel. Advises individual of place within unit, mission of organization and policies and regulations such as passes and leaves, work schedules, local uniform regulations, inspections, parades, and drill. Acquaints personnel of location and availability of messing and recreational facilities such as mess hall, mail room, chapel, theater, hobby shop and post exchange. Makes frequent visits to work areas, and counsels on personal problems, complaints, and requests of airman. Refers more complex problems to commanding officer, chaplain, or air inspector. Obtains audience with commanding officer for airmen when situation warrants. Promotes welfare and morale of airmen. Makes arrangements for procurement of recreational supplies and facilities. Supervises care and upkeep of day room and squadron area. Advises as to self-study facilities for airmen to increase proficiency in AFS.

(3) Instructs airmen in military subjects. Plans and conducts such courses as simulated or actual firing exercises for familiarization or qualification purposes, parades and inspections, and classes or lectures in military courtesy, dress, discipline and customs of the service.

(4) Engages in squadron activities. Inspects barracks and squadron area for sanitation. Reviews preparation of duty rosters, reports, and correspondence. Forms airmen for parades, inspections, and other formations, and marches airmen to prescribed area. Acts as liaison between commanding officer and airmen. On maneuvers, locates camp sites assigned to units, supervises erection of tents, construction of disposal pits and air raid shelters.

b. Supervision.

(1) Supervision exercised: Exercises general supervision over personnel assigned or attached to squadron.

(2) Supervision received: Receives general supervision from commanding officer and/or adjutant.

(1:26)

May 1955: When the Air Force made its break away from the Army Air Corp, new stripes were designed for the distinctive Air Force uniform. For whatever reason, the first sergeant "diamond" did not

make the transition to the new uniform until the return to the distinctive insignia for top kicks was okayed early in 1955. At the time the article "Delay Halts Topkicks' Diamonds" appeared in Air Force Times, the wear of the diamond had been approved by headquarters but was not available for issue. (9:21)

31 January 1959: The Air Force wants first sergeants considered for promotion to senior master sergeant (E-8) only if they are well rounded personnel men. Here is where history gets a little confusing. The first sergeant started in 1949 with the AFSC of 99910 but somewhere along the line ended up with the AFSC 73170, the same as the Personnel Chief. "This is the gist of a message passed to the field this week. It makes these two points: (1) Airmen from other fields who are working as first sergeants should be screened more closely for their skill in the personnel field before they are given the 73170 as a primary AFSC; and (2) those with 73170 primaries should be considered for the E-8 hikes only if they have the full qualifications of superintendents in the personnel ladder. Where a man carries another seven level in the maintenance, supply or similar field and is doubling as a first sergeant in his unit, the message says the command should decide under which AFSC to consider him as a SMSgt candidate. If he is not skilled in the broad personnel job, it suggests, he should be put in the running under his other skill and returned to duty in it later when the opportunity arises." (11:37)

October 1960: According to the article, "Changes in First Sergeant Status Not Expected for Several Months", published in Air Force Times on 8 Oct 60, "Air Force's decision on a major change in the job and skill of first sergeant is still some weeks away, officials have said. The change, which AF sent to commands for comment last summer, involves the present first sergeant AFSC (73170). The proposed plan is to eliminate this skill and convert the airmen holding it to (1) the parallel personnel skill 73270, (2) their former or additional AFSCs or (3) a new ladder where they would retrain to a completely new AFSC. While the first sergeant specialty would thus be wiped out, the first sergeant job would remain intact. Units would be allowed to fill it with any qualified NCO in the MSgt or higher AFSC. Chief reason for the push to make a change now has been the growing difficulty of using MSgts in the first sergeant job where other airmen can rank them by one or more grades but are technically under the top kick's supervision. The addition of the SMSgt and CMSgt grades has forced AF to find some solution to this problem and Headquarters would like it settled before too many more airmen are raised to these grades." (7:4)

31 March 1961: First sergeants, who have been in danger for some months of losing their AFSC, not only have lost it this week but got their own private career field with a nine level skill and a grade ceiling of CMSgt. Beginning on March 31, first sergeants will be in the newly created 01 field with a single specialty code (01090) carrying a grade spread from MSgt thru CMSgt. (TSgt and up for WAF). Present firsts (73170) will convert directly to the new AFSC and not need to pass a supervisory exam. (20:1)

10 April 1962: In a Command Policy Letter Number 39-1, subject "Utilization of Sergeants Major and First Sergeants", Col O.F. Lassiter published a specific policy for the utilization of Sergeants Major and First Sergeants to assure that his non-commissioned officers discharge their inherent responsibilities as outlined in 39-6. As commander of the 801st Air Division, Col Lassiter charged Sergeants Major and First Sergeants with the following responsibilities:

- a. To develop, coordinate and exchange opinions and ideas related to all areas of effective troop management.
- b. To make frequent visits to all units/ sections in their respective organizations, establish working liaisons with the various supervisors, and familiarize themselves with the status of discipline, morale, welfare and personal appearance of airmen personnel.
- c. To observe and evaluate the effectiveness of non-commissioned officers, and submit recommendations to their respective commanders on the reduction, replacement or other disposition of those considered substandard.
- d. To conduct regularly scheduled meetings of senior non-commissioned officer supervisors to discuss and implement plans aimed at improved NCO leadership and management.
- e. To advise and assist NCO Advisory Councils, NCO Academy Graduates Association and similar activities in achieving their primary objectives.
- f. To keep their respective commanders properly informed on all matters related to the above. (19:1)

February 1965: Bruce Callander's article in the 17 Feb 65 Air Force Times, "The First Shirt's Place: Still Not in Sharp Focus," contends that "Many top kicks do not like what they have become, the ranks they are authorized, and the promotion chances they face. Many airmen, not in the 01090 skill, don't think much of those who hold it, and some think the "firsts" already have more rank than they deserve."

The article points out numerous problems that have been aggravating First Sergeants: (1) The First Sergeant had been placed in the personnel field (73) and was in direct competition for any E-8 stripes with the personnel superintendent. The personnel superintendent generally had an edge on getting the stripe. This was later fixed when the Air Force set up a separate field with one AFSC. Input to the 01090 skill can be from any field. (2) Most First Sergeants were not happy initially with the conversion to 01090 because the field was overmanned. At the time of the article, of the 2200 slots authorized, only 2100 were filled. (4:18)

18 March 1966: "The Air Force Needs More First Sergeants", TIG Brief. Worldwide manning projections indicate that the Air Force needs about 25% more first sergeants than are now qualified or trained for these positions. Because this scarcity can be remedied only through on-the-job training of NCOs now in other skill areas, the Military Personnel Center has advised commands to make a thorough screening of their own resources, particularly of airmen in the "overage" skills, identify suitable candidates, and require retraining authority under AFR 39-8. (2:5)

1 January 1967: Reference the shortage of first sergeants cited above. Bruce Callander announces, "First Shirt Jobs Open to Techs", in Air Force Times, 7 Dec 66. Beginning 1 Jan 67, male airmen in grades as low as technical sergeant can become first sergeants. Until now, male airmen have been allowed the first sergeant AFSC (01090) only if they were master sergeants or above. The only TSgt "first soldiers" were the handful of WAF holding that post in all-WAF units. Headquarters advertised a shortage of some 400 MSgt first sergeants and urged commands to recruit for them. (5:1,16)

1 May 1967: SAC's Fifteenth Air Force is setting up at March AFB, California, what it believes is the first First Sergeant School in the Air Force. The school will train two classes of 40 NCOs each. Applicants may be either relatively new first sergeants (in the job less than 18 months) or NCOs (TSgt and above) who have the interest and potential for the duty as rated by the applicant's commander. Besides traditional military training, drill and ceremonies, the first shirt students will get extensive training in advanced management, personnel counselling, oral and written communications, and military justice. (15:5)

1970-1974: Comments by former Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James M. McCoy on the subject of first sergeants were recorded in an Air Force Oral History Interview on 25-26 February 1982. The former CMSAF had these reflections:

"You know, that is a subject that I feel -- there are a couple of subjects I really feel that to some degree I failed in. The first sergeant is probably one of them. I still am not convinced that we are selecting the right people to be first sergeants; even when I left office I was not convinced of that. The issue came up several years ago. It came up during AFMIG, "We need to revitalize the position of first sergeant." I formed a first sergeant's study group in SAC, and right after I came back from AFMIG we made some, I thought, sound recommendations. There was a Brigadier General McCarthy -- he was the commander of the air division at Blytheville in about 1975 or 1976 -- who also had a very strong interest in the first sergeant position. I think, unfortunately -- and I don't say this in any disrespect to the general -- if he had let the NCOs work it, we might have been able to get a little more of what we tried to accomplish."

"Anyway, I have always had a very special interest in first sergeants. I never wore the diamond. A lot of people say, "You can't speak about first sergeants unless you wore the diamond, unless you walked in their shoes," and that may be true, but I think I have been around enough of them and sat with them and listened to them that I have a pretty good feeling of it. Again, I go back to my early days. I guess the E-8s and E-9s really were the start of the downfall and the demise of the first sergeant, because in my early days, the first sergeant was the ranking master sergeant in the squadron and organization. If he wasn't the ranking master sergeant, as soon as he put that diamond on he was recognized as the ranking master sergeant. If the other master sergeants turned it down, then they were accepting the fact that this individual was going to be the first sergeant."

"A lot of things came to the Air Force from the Army organizations. That was how we developed them. When the E-8s and E-9s were developed, suddenly the first sergeant was starting to come down. Master sergeants were still first sergeants. I have always felt and always contended, and this came out of the study that we made for General Dougherty, that we weren't selecting the right people to be first sergeants. I say that because of the people who were in the positions who should never have been wearing diamonds, should never have been put in a position of a role of a model noncommissioned

officer, regardless of whether they had the rank or not. They didn't fit anywhere else. They may have been grounded; they didn't know what to do with them, so "let's make him a first sergeant." I saw too much of that. I saw first sergeants whose sole purpose was to continually complain and want more of this and want to build their own prestige, having somebody build it for them. They wanted this improvement, and they wanted that improvement, but they wanted somebody else to do it for them."

"I almost got down on first sergeants, I really did. I got to the point where I almost would not talk to them. When I went to Washington, I said, "Well, the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force has to be fully supportive of all ranks," so I did what I thought I could do to try to sway some decisions in the first sergeant area. I still contend, and I still believe, that if you as a commander of the MMS Squadron at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, or wherever you are, decide that Master Sergeant Jones should be your first sergeant, and you take it to your wing commander, and your wing commander says, "I agree with you. Master Sergeant Jones should be the first sergeant of the MMS Squadron," then that is where it should stop. The squadron commander with the approval of the wing commander at a local base should be the one, because they are in the best positions to see what kind of problems you are having as a squadron commander and who can help you with those problems, not some guy down in MPC who is watching books. I have fought that for 4 or 5 years, and I never won that one. I never won that one because they will not allow who you, as the squadron commander, or you, the wing commander, want to be the first sergeant."

"It is strange that on the other side of the coin they don't object when the wing commander says, "I want Captain Cleary to be my squadron commander," and to pull him off the crew force even though they have some difficulties with the missile fields. But by golly, when the wing commander says he wants a squadron commander, and he gets it approved by his division commander, that's it. Why can't we do that with first sergeants?"

"Until the day that that comes back and that prestige -- and that is where you are going to bring your prestige back -- you are going to continue to have the problems with the first sergeants as far as selection. I saw seven or eight names being put in by a squadron commander until he got the word,

"Okay, you can have him." That is totally wrong. If we want to keep the first sergeant where he is right now, then they are doing the right thing." (17:177-180)

1 April 1971: As a result of an analysis of the first sergeant specialty completed on 1 Apr 71, major commands recommended that first sergeant duties should be restricted to airmen serving in the top three enlisted grades. AFM 39-1 was subsequently changed to require the removal of all TSgt incumbents by 1 Apr 73. (12:1)

February 1972: A Career Development Course (CDC) was published for the first sergeant specialty, concerned primarily with their management role and supervisory responsibilities. (12:2)

1 August 1972: A workshop was held at the Pentagon to seek quantitative and qualitative improvements to the first sergeant specialty. Primary recommendations from the workshop were to:

- a. Establish a formal training/education program for first sergeants.
- b. Upgrade the specialty qualifications.
- c. Implement a first sergeant nomination/selection procedure which would achieve quality goals.
- d. Revise assignment procedures to insure stability, that each command inputs their fair share of first sergeants, and that manning is maintained at 100%. (12:1-3)

October 1972: Air Force Times announces, "First Shirt Course Now Offered by ECI." Extension Course Institute has just announced a correspondence course in the first sergeant field. It's ECI course No. 10090 and should be available through all base education offices. The one-volume study program is mandatory for all airmen upgrading to the first shirt AFSC and available on a voluntary basis to "all members of the military services including the National Guard and the Reserves. Covering management and general supervision, the course discusses personnel administration, training, administrative operations, unit discipline and morale and the first sergeant's responsibilities to his commander. It is a career development course (CDC). Development of the new CDC is one of several steps AF has planned to improve the first shirt field and raise the quality of airmen in it. Air Training Command also has been asked to develop a residence course in the field. (14:5)

February 1973: Air Force would like all its first sergeants to have taken courses in social science, sociology, psychology and English in high school. Those are "desirable" qualifications. In addition, first

shirts "must" have clean records (no court-martial or serious civilian convictions) and present a "high standard of military appearance." The new requirements will be added to previous criteria for the 10090/70 slots in the next revision of AFM 39-1, Change 13, effective April 1. In the first sergeant field, AF is sticking to its plans to limit the jobs to NCOs in the top three grades, but has made a couple of exceptions to allow tech sergeants to remain in the duty for a time. Techs, who are first sergeants in Southeast Asia on April 1, for example, can remain first sergeants until they rotate. Also, techs selected for promotion before April 1 can stay in the first shirt assignments until they are promoted and become eligible to stay on as masters. (6:4)

October 1973: Air Force Times announces the publication of AFR 39-16, The First Sergeant. "For the first time, the new regulation establishes what officials call 'professional guidance, utilization, and standards' for the first sergeant career field. Specifically the regulation: (1) sets up standardized procedures for selection of first sergeants, (2) guarantees a two-year stabilized tour, (3) specifies administrative support for first sergeants, (4) classifies first sergeants as 'mission essential' and gives them priority for on-base housing and (5) establishes the first four-week training course ever formulated by Headquarters for first sergeants." (21:2)

17 October 1973: The first class of the USAF First Sergeant Academy starts as a four week course at Keesler AFB, Mississippi. The course is designed to prepare selected senior noncommissioned officers to perform effectively in the first sergeant career field. The first week is taken up with communicative skills. The second week is on "Unit Administration". The third week of the course starts supply and facilities management, unit morale and welfare programs, and ends with safety and security. The last week is "Human Relations in Management and Leadership." (10:7-10)

January 1976: An in-depth study entitled "The Role of the First Sergeant" was completed by the Directorate of Human Resources, 8AF/DCS Personnel, Barksdale AFB, Louisiana. The study concluded that:

- a. The First Sergeant's position in a unit is not viewed as being desirable nor beneficial to an individual's career progression.
- b. The career field concept (AFSC 10090) for first sergeants is not working.

- c. First Sergeants are normally assigned to fill unit vacancies based upon their possessing AFSC 10090 without regard to past experience, interest, rank or qualifications.
- d. Volunteers are preferred for First Sergeant positions; however, individuals may be selectively assigned or retrained into the career field.
- e. First Sergeants are primarily dormitory managers, administrative clerks, and unit disciplinarians.
- f. A significant number of First Sergeants do not have the required or desired training as outlined in current directives.
- g. First Sergeants are not adequately trained in guidance and counseling techniques needed to prepare them in handling the myriad of personal problems encountered by unit personnel.
- h. First Sergeants do not have an adequate management guide to help them in accomplishing their jobs.
- i. The career growth process for first sergeants is unclear or non-existent.
- j. The First Sergeant's self-image is not good and the total image of the First Sergeant as viewed by peers and other personnel is generally negative.

The study made the following recommendations:

- a. Revise attachment 6 to AFM 39-1, Airman Classification Manual, to include the following actions:
 - (1) Delete AFSC 10090, First Sergeant, as a career field.
 - (2) Establish AFSC 10090 as a Reporting Identifier, to identify the First Sergeant position on the Unit Detail Listing (UDL).
 - (3) Define the First Sergeant's position as the senior enlisted assistant to the commander.
 - (4) Define the First Sergeant's role as the principal advisor to the commander on enlisted matters.
 - (5) Establish the First Sergeant's duties and responsibilities to parallel those of the commander as they pertain to the morale, welfare, health, and discipline of assigned enlisted personnel.
 - (6) Clarify the extent and degree of the First Sergeant's authority.
 - (7) Change from desirable to mandatory: "Completion of the First Sergeant course." In addition, add "Completion of the USAF Senior NCO Academy is desirable. NOTE: Completion of the above

courses via the ECI Career Development Course (CDC) method is encouraged while awaiting class dates; however, CDCs do not satisfy the mandatory requirements."

- b. Insure only personnel in grades E-7 through E-9 are assigned to First Sergeant positions.
- c. Establish a Special Experience Identifier (SEI) to identify individuals having first sergeant experience.
- d. Change AFR 50-39, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Military Education, to permit First Sergeants in grade E-7 to attend the resident USAF Senior NCO Academy.
- e. Establish a Reporting Identifier - 99007, Manager, Centralized Enlisted Dormitory Housing, on each unit detail listing.
- f. Establish a 70270 Administration Technician position on the Unit Detail Listing of every unit and designate as the Administration Manager.
- g. Establish a Base Sergeant Major and the Wing/NAF/MAJCOM Senior Enlisted Advisor position with reporting identifier 10090.
- h. Designate the NAF and MAJCOM senior enlisted advisors as the OPR for First Sergeant matters.
- i. Develop a First Sergeant handbook.
- k. Reinforce the NCO Supervisor's role in the area of morale, welfare, health, and discipline of his subordinates.
- l. Develop a vigorous program to improve the image of the first sergeant as an integral member of the commander/first sergeant management team. (18:1-8)

30 March - 15 November 1976: A team from the Air Force Inspector General office, headed by Capt Barry D. Bonner, compiled an in-depth study of the First Sergeant career field. Their purpose was to look at the role of the First Sergeant and address selection, training, and utilization. They looked for ways to make the First Sergeant a more effective manager and enhance his image as the key NCO at the unit level. They inspected at HQ USAF and at 11 bases of seven MAJCOMs, interviewing 187 First Sergeants and 200 commanders, as well as enlisted advisors, staff officers, NCOs, and airmen. Their findings were compiled in "Inspection of the Role and Utilization of First Sergeants."

SUMMARY: There are over 1,700 full-time first sergeants in the Air Force. Additionally, many small units use an NCO as first sergeant on an additional-duty basis. Further, most medical units use a medical administrative technician as first sergeant on either a full or part-time basis.

Much had already been done to enhance the career field. In January 1976, AF/DP took the initiative to establish a functional manager at HQ USAF. This provided central management for the first time and established a structure within which further initiatives may be developed. The functional manager has defined and published the role of the first sergeant as that of an advisor to the commander on "people" matters and a manager of unit activities with emphasis on contacts with people. This was the first general guidance on the expected use of these NCOs and has been well received by both commanders and first sergeants.

We found that first sergeants were generally performing well in their newly-defined role. However, we believe they could be even more effective if increased emphasis is placed on better preparing individuals for duty in this field and on improving the organizational environment within which they work. We recommend that the ongoing effort to enhance the field be continued and that special emphasis be given to three areas.

- Improvements should be made in our systems to select, train, and inform first sergeants. For example:

- Better qualified people would be brought into the field if AF/DP required base-level selection boards to review medical and other potentially disqualifying information.

- We found that training at the USAF First Sergeant Course definitely improves first sergeants' performance but many first sergeants have never attended. However, AF/DP recently initiated a program to insure that all first sergeants now in the field attend this course. We believe that training would be further enhanced if attendance for new first sergeants was scheduled at the time retraining into the field is approved.

- First sergeants' image and effectiveness could be improved by increasing their knowledge and understanding of the wide range of Air Force programs that affect them and their people. Periodic first sergeant meetings are useful in this respect but they are not required and some bases do not hold them.

Also, there is no first sergeant "chain of command" to inform them of new or changed policies in areas of importance such as personnel, supply, etc. Rather, first sergeants must depend on briefings, telephone calls, distribution, etc. from a variety of base-level staff agencies. A requirement for periodic first sergeant "crossfeed" meetings, and an AF-wide system to provide specific information to the career field would be helpful.

- Improved manpower and classification standards for first sergeants and the functions they supervise would reduce the time they spend doing and increase the time they could spend managing.

- Many first sergeants now spend the majority of their time doing routine orderly room tasks because they do not have enough clerks. Establishment by AF/PR of an Air Force-wide manpower standard for first sergeants and the unit administrative function they supervise would reduce the wide manning disparities which now exist from unit to unit and would free first sergeants to perform other duties. This situation is compounded by the general inexperience of orderly room clerks caused by the wide variety of jobs in the administrative career field. AF/DA has recommended creation of a suffix on the administrative AFSC to identify and insure retention of experienced people in orderly room work. We support this recommendation.

- First sergeants are responsible for dormitory management and this has grown to a full-time job. They either spend the majority of their time on the "nuts and bolts" of dormitory care, or someone else does it. In 85 percent of the units we visited, a full-time dormitory manager had been assigned without authority. AF/DP has recently created a reporting identifier for these people and we believe this could be used by AF/PR as a basis to create authorized positions and to study the feasibility of a separate AFSC.

- Medical personnel are used as first sergeants in most medical units. We found that most medical technicians did not want the job, felt they were losing proficiency in their primary field, had limited supervisory experience and little training. The result was a high turnover rate, lax enforcement of AF standards and problems in unit management. Problems in unit administration were compounded by the use of medical administrative personnel as orderly room clerks, an area in which most had little experience or interest. We believe that AF/SG should consider authorization of line first sergeants in

medical units where first sergeant duties are a full-time job. AF/SG should also consider authorizing administrative specialists in medical orderly rooms instead of medical administrative specialists.

- The first sergeant's role in unit management could be enhanced by improved definition of the supervisory chain in squadron sections and the relationship of enlisted advisors to first sergeants.

- We found confused supervisory relationships in squadron sections with some first sergeants who did not report to their commanders and some commanders who did not command. A need exists for additional AF/PR and DP guidance on organizational relationships in squadron sections.

- Many senior enlisted advisors are unsure of their authority and priorities because their role has not been defined and there is no job description for them. Some have dropped their "advisor" role and have assumed supervisory prerogatives over first sergeants. The existence of numerous advisors at the same base worsens this situation by developing separate channels of conflicting instructions. AF/DP has an ongoing initiative to define the role of enlisted advisors. We recommend this initiative also define the relationship between senior enlisted advisors and first sergeants.

We believe the lack of central management of the career field prior to 1976 resulted in inadequate planning for the needs of the career field and allowed these problems to happen. The new functional manager has made significant progress and we believe the establishment of this position represents a long-term "fix" for the field. (16:1-4)

19-23 February 1978: Wurtsmith AFB, Michigan, hosted a "40th Air Division First Sergeants Workshop." The conference's central theme included "people, people programs, and how first sergeants can take better care of their people." Guest speakers expected at the conference included : CMSgt Robert D. Gaylor, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force; CMSgt Jim McCoy, SAC Senior Enlisted Advisor; CMSgt Wes Skinner, 8AF SEA; CMSgt Don Hall, AF Department of Personnel, chief in charge of the First Sergeant Programs. (13:--)

15 March 1991: Publication of a new AFR 39-1, Airman Classification, with a revision of the specialty criteria for the first sergeant incorporates many, but not all, of the recommendations that had been made by workshops and conferences. Although the new description bears an uncanny resemblance to the first specialty description published in 1949, many refinements have been brought together to enhance the

first sergeant. The specialty summary now simply states, "Advises and assists the commander in managing unit activities; and exercises general supervision over assigned enlisted personnel. Duties and responsibilities include: (1) Promotes welfare, morale, and health of enlisted personnel; (2) Advises and assists the commander in maintaining discipline and standards regarding quality force; (3) Assists commander in preparing and presenting unit training and information programs; (4) Supervises care and upkeep of unit dormitories and adjacent grounds. (8:A5-3)

In summary, many of the problems experienced by first sergeants during the history of the Air Force have been studied, changed, revised, and revisited numerous times. As you can see from the chronology above, the problem of having first sergeants junior in grade to other enlisted managers in the unit has been studied again and again; but it still continues to be a thorn in the first sergeants side. Manning in the first sergeant career field has been a continual problem. Manning has also moved Technical Sergeants into and out of the career field several times. Changes to the career field have been relatively minor since the establishment of the First Sergeant Academy; however, there is still room for improvement in the career field.

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