

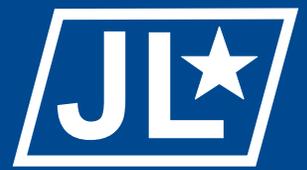
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Special Feature

It's (transformation) happening today here, at Robins AFB [Georgia]. In the future, when other bases and other wings attempt to implement a Future Total Force initiative, those who follow will measure their success against the "Robins Model."¹

—Dr. James Roche,
Secretary of the Air Force

Introduction

Dr. Roche spoke these words to the men and women of the 116th Bomb Wing and 93^d Air Control Wing (ACW) to mark the end of their units as separate reserve and active organizations. The two wings integrated into the 116th Air Control Wing with a makeup consisting of both active and reserve members. This event was significant in that it was the latest in a series of attempts by the Air Force to merge elements of the active and reserve

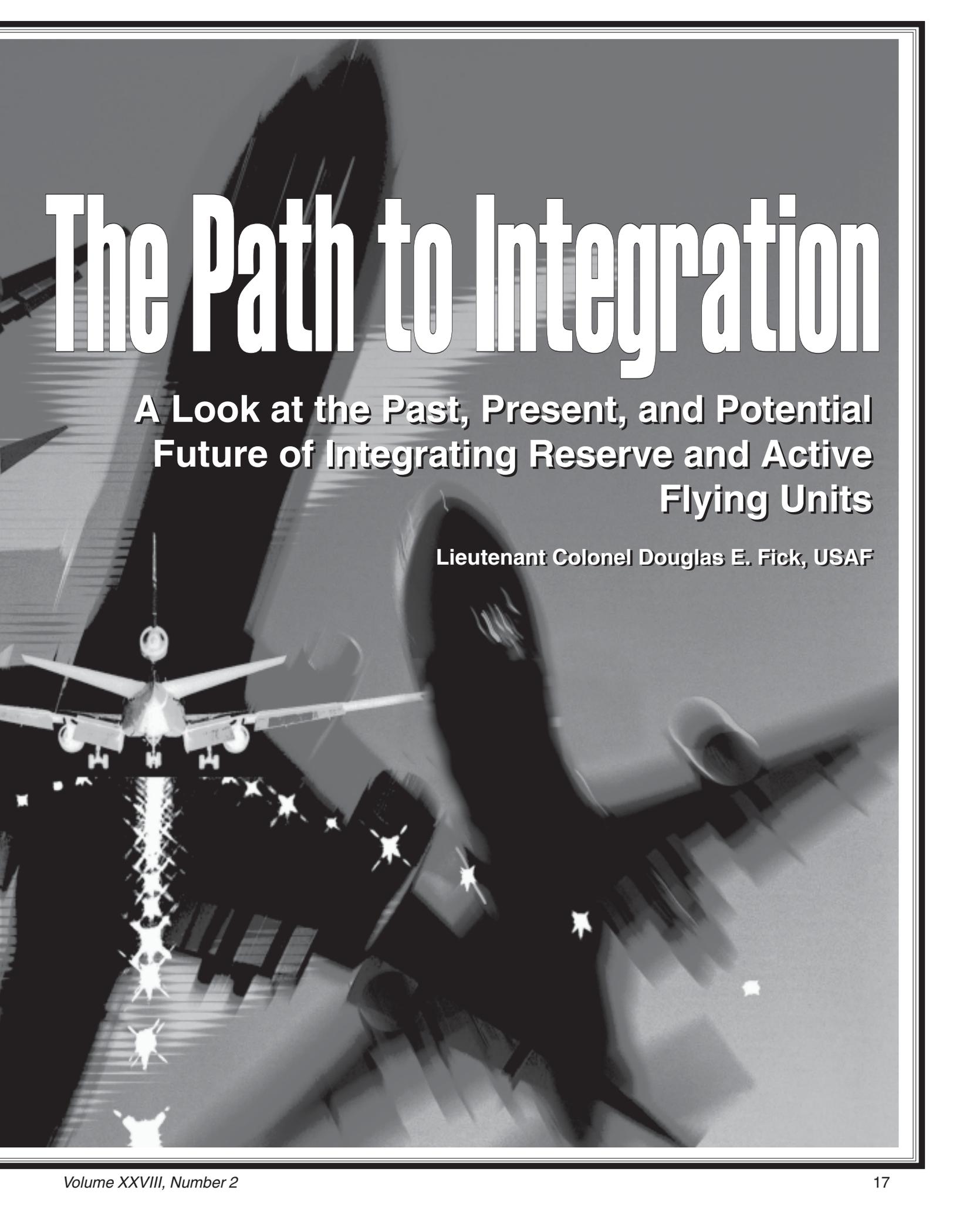
components. With a year of experience behind it, the Robins Model will be used as a roadmap to integrate other units.¹

Early attempts at integration met with failure, resulting in nearly a decade's passing before any effort in this area was made again. The two components will successfully meet the vision of Future Total Force only through a strong long-term commitment throughout the Air Force and Air Reserve Component (ARC). This article looks at the compelling factors that led to initial integration efforts, why they failed, where we now stand, and what the future benefits and challenges will be.

The Absorption Issue

Absorption of new pilots into the Air Force has been a challenge for rated officer assignment personnel and is perhaps the primary driving factor toward integrating active and ARC units. According to Air Force Instruction (AFI) 11-412, "Absorption is the number of inexperienced crewmembers who can be assigned to a major weapon system per year."² Before delving into the complexities of the absorption problem and why the ARC provides assistance toward resolution, it may be beneficial to use an analogy to get an initial concept of absorption. In one aspect, an operational active component squadron can be viewed much like a factory. It takes in raw material (new inexperienced pilots not yet experienced in the applicable aircraft) and produces a product (the same pilot now seasoned and fully mission capable in the aircraft). The Air Force then uses the seasoned pilots to continue the training process or fill staff positions where their flying knowledge is critical.





The Path to Integration

**A Look at the Past, Present, and Potential
Future of Integrating Reserve and Active
Flying Units**

Lieutenant Colonel Douglas E. Fick, USAF

Tools are required to perform this task. At its most basic, those tools are instructor pilots, other experienced pilots, and aircraft sorties. When the system is balanced, there is the right flow of new pilots to match the availability of instructors for initial training missions, the right mix of experienced pilots, and the capability to generate needed sorties. Problems arise when any one of the tools is insufficient.

Mismatches occur when there are too many inexperienced pilots or there are not enough instructors and experienced pilots. When this happens, inexperienced pilots do not have adequate access to tools to receive training on a consistent basis. This spreads out the process of seasoning, thus slowing the absorption of new pilots into the ranks of both experienced and instructor pilots. Compounding the problem even more is that flying is a perishable skill. Skill building must be done on a regular basis, or skills they had learned previously tend to erode. This further slows the Air Force's ability to season new pilots.

Causes of absorption mismatches are many and date back to the post-Vietnam era. In 1982, Master Sergeant Ed Martins, writing for the *Air Reservist*, wrote:

It's called an absorption problem. The Air Force does not have enough cockpits to train properly all the pilots coming into its flying units. They come from pilot training, instructor duty, and mission support areas. Putting these pilots into a limited number of cockpits would drive the experience mix toward unacceptably low levels.³

During the 1990s, three separate review programs were implemented in an attempt to size the military for what was believed to be the level of threat for the start of the next century.

Pamela Kane, writing for the *National Guard Magazine* in 1981 stated:

In the early 1980s, the problems were fueled by the fact that many experienced pilots opted for the airlines or the Air National Guard (ANG) and Air Force Reserve after the Vietnam conflict. Since the Vietnam drawdown, the need for active-duty pilots has diminished greatly. No war, no demand. Or so were the thoughts of the American public, which pressured Congress to limit military budgets. At the same time, the experienced pilots, like other well-trained servicemen, left the active Air Force and sought civilian pilot positions and the Air National Guard.⁴

The post-Vietnam era saw absorption challenges not only in experience loss but also in total number of sorties available. The situation did not improve in the 1990s.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, America's military force structure was addressed. It was believed the end of the Cold War would allow for a peace dividend, freeing up dollars by reducing military spending. During the 1990s, three separate review programs were implemented in an attempt to size the military for what was believed to be the level of threat for the start of the next century.

The first program of the 1990s ran from 1990 until 1993; this review process was called Base Force.⁵ The Air Force's principal aim throughout the Base Force initiative was to preserve its modernization and acquisition programs. Accordingly, early in the process of defining the Base Force, Air Force leaders accepted

the fact that the Air Force's force structure would be reduced and, therefore, focused on shaping the ultimate force levels. The Base Force also necessitated a reduction in active manpower for the Air Force to approximately 436,400 by fiscal year (FY) 1997 (a 20.3-percent decline compared with FY90 levels) and a reduction in reserve end strength to some 200,500 (a 21.6-percent decline).⁶ The Air Force was willing to forego force structure to keep highly trained people and fund future capabilities. The planned net result is shown in Table 1.⁷

The actual reduction closely matched the above figures. Active tactical fighter wings went from 24 to 16.1, and reserve fighter wings dropped from 12 to 11.5.⁸ It is likely this force would have been sufficient for future needs except for one unanticipated development—contingency operations. The RAND study, from which the data in Table 1 are pulled, states:

One of the Base Force's key premises—that the post-Cold War world would not be occasioned by large-scale, long-duration contingency operations—was cast in doubt by the post-Gulf War stationing of Air Force tactical fighter and other aircraft in Southwest Asia: a commitment that, despite predictions to the contrary, would remain through the end of the decade.⁹

The decision to cut the force structure, along with increased deployments, resulted in the same units and pilots being tasked constantly with contingency operations, reducing *training*

opportunities and negatively impacting quality of life. The absorption equation did not improve in the mid-1990s with implementation of the Bottom-up Review (BUR).

Service and Major Forces	FY90	FY97	Change
Army			
Army divisions	28	20	-8
Active	18	12	-6
Reserve	10	8	-2
Navy			
Aircraft carriers	15	12	-3
Active	13	11	-2
Reserve	2	1	-1
Battle force ships	546	451	95
Air Force			
Tactical fighter wings	36	26	-10
Active	24	15	-9
Reserve	12	11	-1
Strategic bombers	268	180	-88
Manpower (thousands)			
Active military	2,070	1,626	-444
Reserve military	1,128	920	-208
Civilian	1,073	904	-169
Total	4,271	3,450	-821

Table 1. Planned Base Force Changes to Force Structure and Manpower FY90-97

Article Highlights

The BUR was conducted in 1993 with the intent of accelerating and surpassing the force structure reductions planned under Base Force, increasing the total reduction from 25 percent to 33 percent. Additionally, “The BUR redefined the meaning of engagement in an important way, giving increased rhetorical and policy importance to US participation in multilateral peace and humanitarian operations while setting the stage for an increased operational tempo and rate of deployment even as force reductions continued.¹⁰ Once again, the incompatible goals of increased operational tempo and force reduction would continue stresses initiated by the Base Force draw down. Political decisions to keep a strong overseas presence saw slightly more than 40 percent of Air Force tactical fighter wings deployed outside the continental United States. The Navy successfully argued that deploying more than 25 percent of its carriers was not sustainable while maintaining adequate readiness levels and, thus, kept a relatively higher number of operational flying units than the Air Force. The Air Force did not press the case that, as with the Navy carriers, overseas presence needs and support to contingencies should be considered in determining the number of tactical fighter wings in the force structure.¹¹ If such an argument had been made successfully, the resulting increases in force structure would have eased the strain of limited time to train and reduced personnel tempo. Given the fiscal constraints of a hard top line of \$250B for defense during the period, it is in doubt as to whether the argument would have fallen on willing ears.

The 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) was the third and final attempt in the decade to bring strategy, forces, and resources into alignment. In many ways, the QDR and BUR were similar in limitations and objectives. The QDR was faced with the same top-line defense budget of \$250B; competing for these dollars were ongoing modernization efforts, continuing heavy deployment schedules and eroding force readiness issues.¹² Additionally, while the BUR strategy was one of engagement and enlargement, the QDR strategy elements of shaping and responding had the same practical effect on Air Force units: they relied heavily on forward presence and crisis response capabilities. Both were concerned with ensuring near-term stability in regions of vital interest. The largest ongoing Air Force commitments, the ones causing greatest turbulence, continued to be associated with US operations in Southwest Asia and the Balkans.¹³

The QDR continued the trend toward end-strength reductions, but to a much lesser extent than either Base Force or BUR.

While Table 2 shows the Air Force drawing down from 372,000 toward a QDR goal of 339,000, most of the downsizing was from

	1988 Estimate	1999 Projection	2003 Projection	QDR Goal
Army	488	480	480	480
Navy	387	373	369	369
USMC	173	172	172	172
Air Force	372	371	344	339
Total active	1,420	1,396	1,365	1,360
Selected reserves	886	877	837	835
Total civilians	770	747	672	640

Table 2. Planned Department of Defense Personnel End-Strength Levels FY98-03 (in Thousands)

The history of attempts at integrating active Air Force and reserve component units is checkered at best. All units met with failure, resulting in nearly a decade’s passing before any effort in this area was made again. Recently, with Future Total Force, as a backdrop, the 116th Bomb Wing and 93^d Air Control Wing integrated into the 116th Air Control Wing with a makeup consisting of both active and reserve members. This event was significant in that it was the latest in a series of attempts by the Air Force to bring elements of the active and reserve components together. With a year of experience behind it, the Robins Model will be used as a roadmap for the integration of other units.

This article looks at the compelling factors that led to initial integration efforts, why they failed, where the Air Force now stands and what the future benefits and challenges will be. Of note in the article are the latter sections where the major impediments to integration are examined and discussed. While not a purely logistics article, the issues outline herein will have a major impact on both operations and logistics elements.

aggressive, competitive outsourcing (25,400).¹⁴ While manpower reductions were modest during the QDR, the real impact continued to be operational tempo and readiness issues.

By February 1998, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Henry Shelton, in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, described an emerging picture of readiness problems driven by a high operational tempo and wrote, “There is no question that more frequent deployments affect readiness. We are beginning to see anecdotal evidence of readiness issues in some units, particularly at the tactical level of operations. At the operational and strategic levels, however, we remain capable of conducting operations across the spectrum of conflict.”¹⁵ Within the Air Force, the impact is best summarized by the following 5 May 1998 background briefing on military readiness:

As we go into ‘99, our concerns that continue with us in the Air Force are the tempo—we’re at a very high tempo. The Air Force transition[ed] from a Cold War force of fairly good size, equivalent to about 36 fighter wings. We’ve reduced our force structure and completed that by about a third. We reduced our overseas force structure by about two-thirds. At the same time, our contingency-tasking operations have increased by a factor of four. That drives tempo. [T]he aging aircraft that I mentioned. We’re concerned about that, as it continues on because of [the] need to replace not only parts, but also engines and other expensive items to keep that fleet going as we move into our modernization period. We’re right now forecasting about an 1,800 pilot shortfall by ‘02. That’s from a baseline of about 14,200 on our requirement. . . . I would like to be able to say [that it’s as bad as it’s going to get on retention of pilots and other [personnel]], but I don’t think we’re going to get better.¹⁶

The net result of the 1990’s strategy and budget decisions is that since FY97 the loss rate for pilots reaching the end of their initial active-duty service commitment has averaged close to 70 percent, the highest rate ever, except in periods of demobilization or drawdown. Also unprecedented is the loss rate for pilots who have reached their 15th year of service but are not yet eligible for retirement.¹⁷ The combined effect since FY97 is three pilots have left active duty for every two new pilots that the Air Force has

trained.¹⁸ Pilots in these brackets are the experienced core of an operational unit; such an experience drain drastically slows the ability to season inexperienced pilots entering the unit. One solution the Air Force adopted was increasing the active-duty service commitment from 8 to 10 years starting in FY97, but the net effect will not take effect until 2007. The upward trend after 2007 is based solely on the Air Force’s assessment that the 10-year commitment will have a positive impact on retention since those pilots will have from 11 to 13 years of total service before being eligible for separation. This would put retirement benefits only 7 or 8 years in the future for these pilots, making them more likely to finish a 20-year career to realize the benefits (Figure 1).

There are two major areas of concern that the pilot shortage causes. The first is the absorption equation; not enough experienced pilots are staying in to train the next generation of aviators. The second area of concern is filling key staff positions. With so few qualified pilots to draw from, the Air Force must decide either to leave experienced pilots in the squadron to help train or have them fill critical staff billets where their expertise is needed—it cannot do both.²⁰ Because the absorption equation folds back on itself—production of experienced pilots becomes the tool for the next generation of training; the longer the lack of experienced pilots exists, the worse the situation becomes. As the RAND study states, it becomes a slippery slope with ever-decreasing experience levels in operational squadrons.²¹ Currently, the production rate is 330 pilots per year. This rate likely will take operational units into training circumstances where large numbers of assigned mission pilots are decertified from combat-ready status, pilots average too few sorties per month, and the training available to inexperienced pilots is inadequate. To support the current and future needs of the Air Force, total training output must increase to 382 pilots per year.²² The Air Force has several other options to reverse this downward trend.

First, the Air Force could try to increase the number of sorties flown by operational units. More sorties would increase the training capacity of operational units, allowing more

opportunities for inexperienced pilots to get consistent training. Training capacity is a function of two elements, the number of aircraft a unit has (primary aircraft authorization [PAA]) and how often each aircraft can be flown over a given period (utilization [UTE] rate). Increasing the PAA is prohibitively expensive; any aircraft purchased would compete directly for dollars with modernization efforts (such as the F-22 and F-35). Increasing UTE rates also poses problems. These issues include funding additional flying hours, maintenance manning to support the extra flights, parts supply

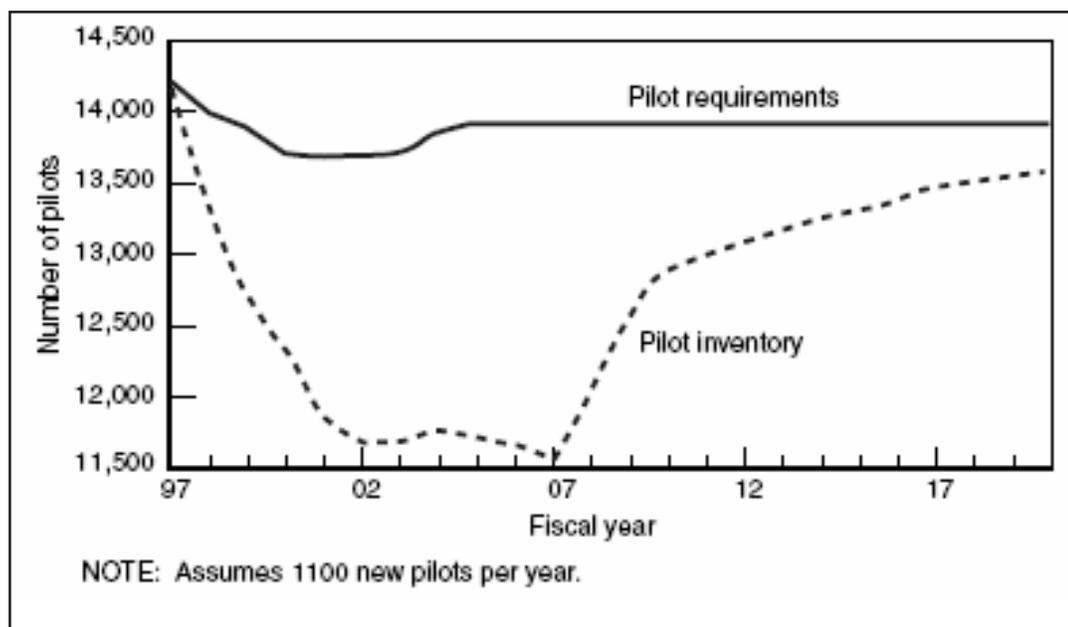


Figure 1. Pilot Requirements versus Pilot Inventory¹⁹

problems, and aircraft age.²³ Additionally, without increasing the number of experienced pilots, the additional sorties would force the current pilots to fly more often. The ability to fly experienced pilots on extra sorties per month is limited by available flying days and required duties outside of flying, further limiting the utility of increasing the UTE rate.

The next option to balance the absorption equation is to decrease the number of incoming new pilots. While this will bring an operational squadron back into balance (training tools are equal to training requirements), it ignores the long-term pilot needs of the Air Force and is not sustainable for any extended period.²⁴

Third, the Air Force is looking to increase retention rates of experienced pilots. The Air Force will need to overcome factors such as the large pay disparity between military and commercial flying, the negative effects of multiple deployments, frequent moves, family turmoil, and other quality-of-life issues.²⁵ With the current downturn in airline hiring, caused by the economic slowdown after 11 September 2001, there is a temporary lull in job opportunities in the civilian sector. This will provide temporary attrition relief, but long-term market effects likely will return to pre-9/11 conditions.²⁶ Success in this area would have the greatest impact on absorption and overall pilot manning in the Air Force, but historically, finding a strategy for success has been elusive, as low pilot bonus take rates during the late 1990s have shown.

The last option is total force absorption. Unlike active component operational squadrons, which only bring in inexperienced pilots, reserve component squadrons have two

surge of inexperienced pilots into an active component operational squadron had the net effect of dropping experience rates to between 30 percent and 70 percent. With such low experience rates, the new pilots could not be absorbed into the system. More cockpits and experienced mentors were needed, and the Air Force looked to the ARC for help.²⁸

The ARC had two factors that made this a winning situation for both active duty and reserve. First, at the same time that the Air Force was looking to place inexperienced aviators with the ANG and the Air Force Reserve Command for seasoning, ARC was experiencing vacancies in pilot manning. The traditional source of manning for these units was from the pool of prior service pilots; by the early 1980s, this pool had dwindled because of years of low Air Force output. While ARC units were allowed to send a limited number of selected applicants through the Air Force training program, there were few slots available. Additionally, the long training cycle, from initial selection until completion of basic pilot training (typically 2 years or more), meant the flow would not be adequate to keep up with attrition (retirements and separations). Second, the experience rates in the ARC remained very high, allowing them to absorb inexperienced Air Force aviators without seriously impacting unit experience levels.²⁹

Out of these complementary goals, Project Season was developed as a 7-year training cycle, running from 1981 through 1987. Beginning in FY81, active-duty inexperienced pilots started seasoning with ARC units, and eventually, approximately 200 pilots would fly with the Guard. The program ran through FY87 when the last of these pilots returned to active-duty units,

Project Season was developed as a 7-year training cycle, running from 1981 through 1987. Beginning in FY81, active-duty inexperienced pilots started seasoning with ARC units.

sources for reaching pilot manning levels: inexperienced pilot applicants sent to pilot training by the reserve unit and recruiting experienced pilots from the active duty. Active component squadrons strive for a 65-percent experience level (a level last encountered in 1996)²⁷ but typically see rates in the 50-percent range. ARC squadrons quite often see 90 percent of their squadron experienced. For our absorption equation, a squadron with a 90-percent experience rate has the ability to absorb and train inexperienced pilots as long as the sorties are there to support the effort. This fact was not lost on the Air Force, and in 1981, the Air Force, Air Force Reserves, and ANG entered a program called Project Season.

Project Season

During the peak of the Vietnam conflict, Air Training Command was producing more than 3,000 pilots annually. In the post-Vietnam era, that number dropped dramatically; by 1978, less than 1,000 pilots were being trained each year. As the 1980s began, a serious pilot shortage had developed. The Air Force responded by increasing pilot production to 1,900 by 1981. This

and the ARC-selected applicants (now qualified as inexperienced pilots) returned to the ARC unit to replace the active-duty pilots.³⁰

Despite the initial win-win perception of Project Season, several factors quickly soured the program. During this timeframe, Lieutenant General Jon B. Conaway, USAF, Retired, was chief of the National Guard Bureau and director of the ANG. He made several observations regarding Project Season. The first was that the program came with no flying hours or maintenance support for the additional sorties required to train the inexperienced aviators. Additional training sorties were not a factor in units that were undermanned; excess sortie capacity existed in these situations. However, not all units that took Air Force inexperienced pilots were undermanned. They either had to reallocate sorties among the pilots or ask the National Guard Bureau for more flying hours. They then had to task their maintenance organizations to generate more sorties to meet the increased demand (without additional maintenance manpower from the Air Force to support flying the inexperienced Air Force pilots).

In addition, the Air Force charged any mishaps caused by Project Season active-duty pilots against the ARC with which they were flying. Comparisons between the mishap rates of the various Air Force components often are used as a yardstick of the level of professionalism and training within the component. With a much smaller total flying-hour pool, being charged with even one or two additional mishaps could have political consequences because of an elevated mishap rate. Conaway did not view either of these issues as showstoppers; the components dealt with them on a case-by-case basis.³¹ The critical factor came about when it was time for the Project Season pilots to return to the Air Force. Dr William W. Taylor of the RAND organization made the following observation:

A primary difficulty with the previous Project Season initiative was the result of the short (5- or 6-year) active-duty service commitment that the participating pilots incurred. When coupled with a liberal Palace Chase policy that was also in effect at the time, this made most of the pilots eligible to affiliate with the Guard or Reserve when they finished their initial operational flying tour. The young pilots who favorably impressed their Guard (or Reserve) unit leaders were heavily recruited to leave active duty and remain in the same unit. Conversely, the participating pilots who did not perform well during this initial operational tour were certain to return to an active unit because their Guard or Reserve unit was unwilling to keep them (even if they wanted to affiliate and were eligible to do so). This situation could have generated a negative performance bias in the group who stayed on active duty—a disproportionate share of them

absorption issue. The Total Force Absorption Program (TFAP) initiative had (and continues to have) the ARC absorbing 50 active-duty pilots per year with 30 of them going to fighter units. Two key factors had changed that allowed the Air Force to make another attempt: 10-year commitments and the end of the Palace Chase program. The 10-year service commitment introduced in 1997, along with limiting when TFAP pilots are allowed to fly with the ARC, ensures these pilots have at least 3 years of service commitment to the Air Force prior to separation eligibility. By the time of separation eligibility, these pilots typically will have between 12 and 13 years of total time accumulated toward retirement. The Air Force views this as a strong incentive to remain with the active-duty Air Force since separating to the ARC most often means delaying retirement benefits until age 60.³⁴ Another key provision was to provide a TFAP concept for oversight, to include a mechanism that ensures participants are linked to active-duty units throughout their assignments with the ARC.³⁵ Although not explicitly stated, this linkage provision was likely the result of lessons learned from Project Season; lack of oversight during Project Season was blamed, in part, for the high number of pilots that left active duty for the ARC. Lack of mentoring about active-duty advantages and career opportunities, combined with easy separation options, were, at least partially, responsible for the Project Treason syndrome.

The Fighter Associate Program continues the concept of greater integration between the Air Force and Air Force Reserve that began with TFAP.

failed to distinguish themselves during their initial operational tour, whereas pilots who performed well were likely to respond to encouragement and separate from active duty.³²

There were several reasons why the Project Season pilots left active duty in such high numbers. First, ARC offered lower deployment rates plus the ability to homestead in one location. A typical active-duty fighter pilot career would consist of permanent changes of station once every 2 to 3 years and at least one remote unaccompanied tour. For many families, the ability to live a more stable life without multiple moves and extended separation was very attractive. Second, the major airlines started a large hiring spurt during the 1980s. Many Project Season pilots seized the opportunity to separate from the Air Force, gain a commercial pilot job, and then use part-time employment in the ARC as an income supplement during their initial, low-paying years with the airline. A program that started out with much promise ended up with the unofficial moniker of Project Treason.³³ The failure occurred partly because of bad timing but more so because the Air Force failed to understand the economic and lifestyle dynamics that came into play. Because of the failure of Project Season, it would be more than a decade before the Air Force would attempt another integration effort with the ARC.

Total Force Absorption Program

In 1999, 12 years after the failed Project Season program closed, the four-star Rated Summit (RS 99) again addressed the

Within TFAP, there are two categories of pilots authorized to participate with ARC units: INEX pilots are on first operational flying assignments, and LIMEX pilots have completed mission qualification training but have not yet accumulated the hours required to be declared experienced.³⁶ In practice, INEX fighter pilots are not participating; only active-duty pilots who already have completed a minimum of 18 months of training (and often after their full initial 3-year operational tour) are sent to ARC units.³⁷

These pilots often achieve experienced status early in their ARC tour, minimizing the full absorption bonus that sending INEX pilots to ARC would give. Sending INEX pilots would maximize the effects of both absorption and ARC experience levels; by sending LIMEX pilots to the ARC, the Air Force is addressing a different issue than absorption. In addition to the absorption problem, active-duty units were finding themselves in a situation where INEX pilots and instructor pilots who were training them flew the vast majority of missions available to the unit. This left the LIMEX pilots with few sorties, and those that were flown often were adversary support for the INEX instructor pilot missions. Both quantity and quality of training were deficient, extending the amount of time it took the LIMEX pilots to reach fully experienced status and instructor status. Again, the problem was feeding on itself by slowing the whole aging process of fighter pilots; TFAP is seen as a way to work around the issue.

The Air Force put in place a linkage between TFAP pilots and an active-duty unit. In practice, these pilots still have limited contact on a once-per-quarter basis with the officer (usually an active-duty squadron flight commander) who writes their appraisal. TFAP pilots are supposed to fly with their active-duty unit to expose them to active-duty operational tactics, techniques, and procedures. In reality, often the ARC aircraft the TFAP pilot flies is of a different design block than the assigned active-duty aircraft; TFAP pilots cannot fly with their active-duty units because of block differences. If there is a mismatch between the ARC and active-duty missions, special compartmentalized security issues may even prevent the TFAP pilot from participating in mission planning and debriefing.

The TFAP concept of operations solution is to have a two ship of ARC aircraft (with an ARC supervisor pilot and the TFAP pilot) deploy to the active-duty unit.³⁸ This two ship would fly with the active-duty squadron, allowing the active-duty supervisor to evaluate the progress of the TFAP flyer. Unfortunately, no active-duty funding backs this concept. This author dealt with exactly this situation; deploying a two ship (with maintenance support) twice a year was cost-prohibitive, competing directly with other unit deployments and training schools. Additionally, while deployed, the impact to home-station flying has to be factored in. Less aircraft at the ARC unit during the week means less ability to meet the planned flying schedule. The other option is to have the active-duty supervisor deploy to and fly with the ARC unit.

One final long-term issue will bear watching. The linkage to active duty during the TFAP pilot's time with the ARC has been spotty at best. If this lack of visibility translates into lower promotion rates and less lucrative follow-on assignments, as compared to the same age group that remained with active-duty units, the integrated assignments to ARC components will come to be viewed as career-limiting choices. Such a view would have negative implications for the many other total force programs currently being implemented or proposed for future implementation.

Fighter Associate Program

The Fighter Associate Program (FAP) continues the concept of greater integration between the Air Force and Air Force Reserve (AFR) that began with TFAP. Although initially an arrangement between only the Air Force and Air Force Reserve, the program is set to include Air National Guard (ANG) units in the near future. There are several differences between TFAP and FAP. The Fighter Associate Program brings the focus back to absorption, and the program, for the first time, sees aviators from the reserve component flying with active-duty squadrons, in addition to sending active-duty flyers to reserve units. The Fighter Associate Program continues to develop the way administrative control (ADCON) issues will be resolved; successfully setting the ADCON framework will be crucial to plans involving even larger scale integration between active-duty and ARC forces.

As of August 2003, the Fighter Associate Program entered the hiring phase for AFR personnel.³⁹ Under the Fighter Associate Program, there will be two types of programs: one will have reserve personnel participating in active-duty units; this part of the Fighter Associate Program will be known as reserve associate; programs where active-duty personnel participate with reserve

units will be known as active associate units. One full-time support aviator from the ARC and three traditional reservist pilots will be assigned to reserve associate units. An active-duty base may have more than one such reserve associate unit (one per squadron).⁴⁰ In addition to aviators, the Fighter Associate Program, for the first time, introduces the concept of blending in AFR maintenance personnel. A maintenance unit will consist of two full-time support and four traditional reservists per squadron. The concept has two benefits. First, the extra maintenance manpower will generate the extra sorties required to support four additional pilots flying with the squadron. Second, AFR maintenance personnel tend to have higher qualifications than their active-duty counterparts, for much the same reasons that exist on the pilot side. The AFR recruits from maintenance personnel separating from the active-duty system capture many highly experienced maintainers. Additionally, the AFR Air Reserve Technician retirement system keeps personnel until the age of 56 (or older). The net effect is very experienced maintenance personnel. By blending AFR maintainers with active-duty maintainers, an experience transfer pays dividends, both short and long term, for the active duty. The Air Force Reserve Command will select the reserve associate pilots. The goal is to hire experienced instructor pilots to have an immediate impact on the absorption equation (Table 3).

One experienced instructor pilot, along with one or two additional INEX pilots, will be assigned to active associate units. The experienced instructor pilot will act as both supervisor and mentor for the assigned INEX active-duty pilots.⁴¹ By reestablishing as an active-duty direct link, the Air Force is better positioned to prevent the issues seen during Project Season. The combined effect of the reserve and active associate units will leverage absorption capability. The combination of additional instructors and more sorties (because of the additional maintenance support) within the reserve associate unit and access to a large pool of experience within the active associate unit will mean better absorption. Once the program expands to include the ANG, absorbing 382 pilots per year starts to become a reachable goal.

The FAP memorandum of agreement goes on to lay out the basics of ADCON, financial management, and status of resources and training reporting. With each integration effort, the Air Force and ARC are putting more thought into the critical components that make the program viable for long-term sustainment. Long-term sustainment will depend on how pilots who participate in the program are treated as they return to their parent component.

The FAP concept of operations sets standards concerning personnel actions to address this concern; pilots returning to

Active Associate	Reserve Associate	Reserve Maintenance
Hill AFB, Utah	Hill AFB	Shaw AFB (2)
Homestead ARB, Florida	Eglin AFB, Florida	Eglin AFB
NAS Fort Worth, Texas	Nellis AFB, Nevada	Langley AFB
NAS New Orleans, Louisiana	Langley AFB, Virginia	
Whiteman AFB, Missouri	Shaw AFB, South Carolina (2)	

Table 3. Active and Reserve Associate Locations

active duty will receive ops-to-ops assignments and Squadron Officer School College slots at the same rate as active-duty pilots assigned to active-duty squadrons. This is a start, but there are historical examples that point to the validity of the *out of sight, out of mind* adage. For years, ARC squadrons have received rated active-duty lieutenant colonels to act as Air Force liaison officers between the ARC unit and the Air Force. In general, promotion rates for these officers historically have been very low, and the tour has been considered a retirement assignment. If active-duty experienced instructor pilots who participate in the active associate program have the same fate, a valuable opportunity will be missed. Instead of developing future active-duty leaders with a strong understanding of the ARC strengths and weaknesses, the active associate program will be either a dumping ground for pilots looking for one last flying tour prior to retiring or a place for the Air Force to put pilots it does not consider promotable. It will take strong program buy-in at the Air Combat Command plans and programs level, and that buy-in will need to be consistent through leadership changes until the program is fully integrated.

Reserve associate pilots will face a similar challenge. They will be out of the day-to-day operations at their home ARC unit for up to 3 years. If higher level leadership positions are not made available at an equitable rate, the program will not draw the type of pilots that would best serve the ARC and active duty. The reserve associate program offers ARC pilots the opportunity to understand current active-duty challenges. The ARC will realize the benefit of this understanding only if it sends its potential leaders to participate in the reserve associate program.

Base Realignment and Closure

The progression from Project Season through TFAP and FAP shows an ever-evolving vision of what the future total force will look like. The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission will play a large part in shaping the Future Total Force concept. The 2005 BRAC Commission is likely to make deep infrastructure cuts, compelling the Air Force and ARC to better match the remaining basing options against their training and operational commitments.

Various forms of BRAC have a long history, dating back to the early 20th century when Secretary of War Henry Stimson sought to consolidate his widely dispersed and inefficient army.⁴² Consolidation continues into the present era. There have been four recent BRAC commissions, 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995. In total, these commissions have reduced the Air Force infrastructure by approximately 20 percent.⁴³ After a 10-year hiatus, BRAC will be back in force in 2005. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has stated that BRAC 2005 will cut as much surplus as the previous four rounds combined, to include at least 25 percent of its remaining real estate.⁴⁴ President George W. Bush's FY02 budget blueprint agrees with this level of reduction, indicating a 23-percent excess infrastructure in the Department of Defense and that new rounds of base closures will be necessary to shape the military more efficiently.⁴⁵

With the prospects of the mother of all BRACs looming, the National Guard Bureau is assessing future options. Brigadier General David Brubaker, deputy director of the Air National Guard, presented a BRAC 2005 briefing to the Adjutant Generals Association of the United States on 23 and 24 September 2003.

Brubaker is the ANG representative on the Base Closure Executive Group; as such, he is the only ANG member to vote on closure issues. He has stated that with the potential depth of cuts in BRAC 2005 he does not foresee a scenario where the BRAC will spare ANG facilities. In his view, there may be force structure cuts reducing the bottom line number of ANG people. In the past, the ANG has protected personnel by moving them within states, but this may not be an option this time. The ANG has units spread over every state, many states having multiple units with the same or similar missions. The scenario is ripe for both closure and realignment to optimize both infrastructure and force structure requirements.

The ANG has several options available to meet the challenges of BRAC 2005. The ANG Director, Lieutenant General Daniel James III, is looking to consolidate geographically separated units, collocate flying units and units with similar missions within the state, and blend base operation support by positioning ANG units onto active-duty bases, as well as having active-duty elements blend into ANG units.⁴⁶ Although James spoke in terms of the ANG, his statements apply equally as well to the Air Force Reserve since the scenario is similar but on a smaller scale.

James' third option of integration between active-duty and ARC components actually began with the integration of the 116th Bomb Wing and 93^d at Robins AFB in September 2002.

Robins and Beyond

In June 2001, Rumsfeld announced a reduction in the B-1 fleet to 60 aircraft. The plan was to relocate B-1s from the Georgia ANG at Robins AFB to Dyess AFB, Texas, and Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota. No follow-on mission was proposed for the Georgia ANG. What Rumsfeld had not considered was the strong congressional intervention that resulted. ANG units have strong state ties. As a major employer of state citizens (with a large number of them registered voters), ANG units tend to have close affiliations with their elected representatives. In the end, a General Accounting Office study was conducted to examine possible solutions other than eliminating 1,172 full- and part-time military positions in Georgia.

The result was the inactivation of the 116th Bomb Wing (Georgia ANG) and 93^d (active duty) and activation of the 116th Air Control Wing as a total force blended unit.⁴⁷ The 116th is the most aggressive attempt at active component and reserve component integration to date. One year into integration efforts, Colonel Bob Doehling, commander of the 116th, laid out many of the challenges facing total force integration.

Under United States Code, Title 10 (Armed Forces) and Title 32 (National Guard), commanders are not one and the same. The law regarding Title 10 versus Title 32 chain of command is being addressed. In the near future, it is likely that a single designated commander will have administrative control across both titles, but for now, a Title 10 commander does not have administrative authority (appraisals, disciplinary action, and so forth) over Title 32 personnel. The same applies for a Title 32 commander and Title 10 personnel. This forced a situation in which the wing had dual tracks of administrative control. The wing commander administered to Title 32 personnel, and a separate chain of authority ran from the Title 10 vice wing commander to the Title 10 personnel. Coalition leadership at the national level often is difficult (Operations Desert Storm, Allied Force, and Iraqi Freedom are good examples of compromise coalition

partnerships). Coalition leadership within a single military organization easily can create schisms with the potential to tear a unit apart.

One integration proposal put forth by the Virginia ANG would bypass this problem altogether. Several reasons led to the current efforts of the Virginia unit to integrate with the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley AFB as it converts to the F/A-22. For much the same reasons that the Air Force elected to move Robins B-1s, high infrastructure costs associated with the F/A-22 (training facilities and specialized stealth maintenance equipment) make farming the F/A-22 out as individual squadrons cost prohibitive. Therefore, the Air Force is looking to locate F/A-22s at a small number of large bases to take advantages of economy of scale. Additionally, as James pointed out, as BRAC reduces the current fighter force by approximately 33 percent, properly positioned ANG units need to look at integration or face a loss of mission. Integration of Richmond and Langley would free up Richmond's 18 F-16s, fueling further integration efforts within the tactical air force.⁴⁸

Although still in the early concept phase, Virginia would look to integrate by moving its entire operations group and maintenance group to Langley (without bringing any aircraft). Once there, they would divide approximately 32 pilots, 180 full-time maintainers, and 240 traditional ANG maintainers between the three active-duty squadrons and would operate under the 1st Fighter Wing as an associate unit. This integration would increase the crew ratio from 1.25 to 1.50. This increase in crew ratio is essential to maintaining the likely high-operations tempo of the F/A-22, while taking advantage of the experience base of the reserve component unit. Administrative control would still fall

highest levels, it is not atypical for an ANG commander to hold the position for 4 or more years; Air Force commanders rotate through positions at a much faster rate before either retiring or progressing into the higher ranks available across the Air Force. If an integrated wing has an ANG commander, there are two options. The first option is to leave the ANG officer in command until follow-on positions open up or retirement. The disadvantage in this scenario is that there is no opportunity for leadership positions for active-duty officers. This would act as a strong disincentive to accept an integrated assignment for active-duty personnel. The second option is to rotate the ANG officer out of the command billet commensurate with active-duty rates. Unlike the Air Force, an ANG unit has few positions that such an officer can flow into. Most likely, the officer will be forced to accept a position of lower responsibility (often in the same unit because of Air Force specialty code constraints) or retire. Within the Title 32 technician system, an early retirement is not an option. A situation would then exist where an active-duty commander would have a former commander working for him. This scenario could have adverse effects on the order and discipline within the unit. A simplistic answer would be that there is only one commander as designated by legal orders, but human nature suggests many situations where singularity of command would be eroded. This erosion need not be through deliberate action and may be as innocent as unit members still perceiving the authority of the former commander as still intact.

Another option is to designate either the active component or reserve component as the lead in any integrated wing. As the designated lead, that component would fill the commander

The next question to be resolved will deal with how best to mix leadership coming from very diverse backgrounds with very different career progressions.

to the Virginia operations group. By keeping administrative control within the reserve component, the two separate systems would function without some of the concerns mentioned above. As of this writing, it was uncertain what leadership positions within the three active component squadrons (both flying and maintenance) or at the wing level reserve component personnel would hold, if any. Without some representation in leadership positions—as an associate unit without any assigned aircraft—the Virginia ANG unit could find itself with very little influence in decision cycles. During a briefing at the Air War College, General John P. Jumper expressed concern along these lines when he indicated that preserving an ANG unit's identity as it associated with a larger Air Force wing was a major consideration to be worked out as total force develops.

The next question to be resolved will deal with how best to mix leadership coming from very diverse backgrounds with very different career progressions when an integration model like Robins is carried out. With careers often extending until 56 years of age, ANG officers (and senior enlisted personnel) tend to hold jobs for much longer than their active-duty counterparts. At the

positions, and the follow component would contribute lower ranking members to the mix so career progression is not affected. While a viable option, this only works when the reserve component acts as lead at a reserve component facility. The Air Force would have the option to flow officers in the rank of major and below and enlisted personnel of staff sergeant and below through a tour with the reserve component unit before continuing their higher rank career progression within the active component. This would take advantage of the reserve component experience level and seasoning opportunities. If the active component were designated as the lead, reserve component personnel would be locked out of any integrated command positions. In this scenario, few options would exist within the state for follow-on leadership positions. Reserve component personnel would have limited career opportunities.

Since the lead-follow concept does not apply equally to both the active component and reserve component, it may not find favor except in scenarios where it can be applied on a small scale. The Fighter Associate Program (both active associate and reserve associate) is a good example where lead-follow works since both

active component and reserve component pilots can flow back to their parent organization for follow-on assignments. When large-scale integration is anticipated, force management will become crucial. A *move after next* progression needs to be considered before installing a reserve component commander, vice commander, or even shop chief. Without having a viable 2-to-3 year follow-on position (or planned retirement), leadership opportunities could be unfairly denied to active component members.

Another issue that Robins must deal with is the demands of a low-density/high-demand (LD/HD) platform. The Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System has continuous missions around the globe and a high operational and personnel tempo to match. One of the historical recruiting attractions of the ANG has been limited deployments compared to the active duty. If ANG unit members (both full time and traditional) are tasked to deploy at rates approaching the Air Force, will recruiting suffer? It is still too early to determine long-term trends, but the incompatibility of civilian employment and constant

Doehling's briefing included a useful summary of the differences between the active-duty and ANG culture.⁴⁹ As Doehling's chart (Table 4) shows, an area that reserve component units traditionally have not had to contend with (on anything but a limited basis) is the relative youth of the active-duty members. The reserve component does bring in new members, but these junior members tend to be traditional guardsmen for several years prior to competing for full-time positions. The net result is an older, more mature full-time force with only limited exposure (typically on drill weekends and deployments) to relatively young personnel. As Doehling points out, the ANG has few disciplinary issues in comparison to their active-duty brethren. Dealing with a younger workforce initially will be a challenge for reserve component commanders. Additionally, if integration occurs at a reserve component base, these young people may not have facilities typically provided on Air Force bases. The list includes commissaries, base exchanges, gyms, and housing. The increased costs associated with living off a local economy may be beyond the reach of junior enlisted members.

Both reserve component and active component leadership and personnel will have to come to terms with the unique nature of each other's culture for an integrated wing to succeed.

military deployments are sure to take a toll on traditional members. To counter this eventuality, a larger ratio of full-time ANG members may be required. If that is the case, most of the traditional cost benefits of reserve component versus active component units will be lost. Even with additional full-time positions, a strong economy could make recruiting sufficient reserve component personnel difficult as potential recruits (both initial recruits and separating military) find job opportunities without the constant family separation that LD/HD missions require.

Two solutions exist. First, limit integrated tours to more senior noncommissioned officers (NCO). The downside is that the reserve component level of experience would not be available to those who would benefit the most. The second option is to provide additional allowances to bridge the gap and either add or expand existing facilities located at reserve component bases to handle increased demands. Formal versus casual unit atmosphere is also a concern. Long-term working relationships are typical in the reserve component because of the length of careers and lack of permanent changes of station. This leads to a

Active Duty Culture	Air National Guard Culture
More formal unit atmosphere.	More casual unit atmosphere.
Significant number of disciplinary actions.	Few disciplinary actions.
Large group of underage personnel.	Rarely have underage personnel.
Dormitory living for single junior enlisted.	No one has to live in government quarters.
No UMD slot required for promotion.	Must hold UMD position to promote.
Frequent PCS enhances career.	No PCS likely during career.
EPRs responsibility growth in accordance with rank.	APRs emphasize potential for growth.
Primary worker is SSgt or below.	WG/WL employees are primary workers.
TSgts are supervisors not workers.	WG/WL worker frequently is a MSgt.
SMSgts are not assigned at shop level.	SMSgt assigned at shop level.
Nightshift supervised by junior ranks.	Nightshift supervision same as day.
Officers are primary supervisors.	Enlisted are primary supervisors.
Rank overages do not affect promotions.	Rank overages not authorized.
Excess personnel do not affect promotions.	Excess personnel affect promotions.
Active rank ratio is lower than ANG.	ANG rank ratio is higher than AD.
Separation from Air Force normally slow.	Separation from ANG very quick.

Table 4. Cultural Differences Active Versus Reserve

more informal working environment. Additionally, the Association of Civil Technicians acts as a union and represents nonsupervisory ANG personnel. Working relationships between wing leadership and union leadership can be critical in determining overall productivity and unit harmony. Working through union issues and the formal grievance process will be a cultural shift that active component commanders will need to master quickly. Both reserve component and active component leadership and personnel will have to come to terms with the unique nature of each other's culture for an integrated wing to succeed.

None of these cultural differences is in and of itself a showstopper toward integration. The majority of issues revolve around working the supervisory chain in a fair and equitable manner. The key will be getting the leadership equation right. If both the active component and reserve component provide officers and senior NCOs with leadership growth potential after their integrated tour, then total force integration is likely to succeed. In a decade, a large number of high-level leaders from both components will have intimate working knowledge of their component's strengths and weaknesses. If this occurs, the cultural differences likely will be lessened and the goal of a seamless total force much more probable. If either component fails to provide true leaders and only sends those they consider nonpromotable, then total force integration may very well go the way of Project Season.

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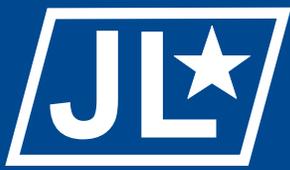
At the time of writing of this article, Lieutenant Colonel Fick was a student at the Air War College.

JL*

notable quotes

Appeasement—surrender on the installment plan.

—Arthur H. Vandenberg

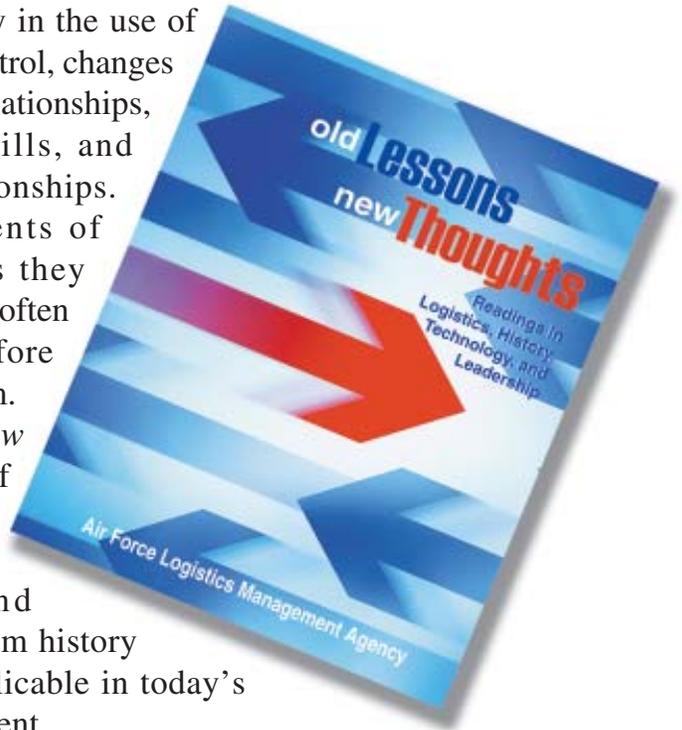


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