

Air Force Policy Letter for Commanders

From the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force



Washington, D.C. 15 March 1983

WE STILL HAVE PILOT RETENTION PROBLEMS. Gen. Thomas M. Ryan Jr., Commander, Air Training Command, said recently in remarks at a meeting of the Dallas Chapter of the Air Force Association:

"[In 1978 and 1979] military pay fell so far below comparable civilian income that we simply couldn't compete. In 1979, for the first time since the beginning of the All Volunteer Force, the Air Force missed its enlisted recruiting goal, and thousands of skilled people -- pilots, engineers and mechanics -- voted with their feet. And losing these people -- particularly the pilots -- probably did as much (if not more) damage as missing our non-prior-service goal. We not only lost the numbers, we lost the experience. Take our losses for 1979-1980, for example: we lost over 3,000 pilots in the 6-11 year category -- in other words, our most active and experienced group.

"For the present, the trends look pretty good. Our shortfalls have dropped from roughly 1,300, back in FY79, to over 900, beginning this fiscal year. But with the advent of the B-1B, the additional C-5s, and other new weapon systems, we'll be fighting an uphill battle to get and keep the quality-rated force we need. . . . We project that 1,000 pilots will be necessary in FY83 alone, just to replace the mandatory retirements within civilian aviation. A large portion of the applicant pool for those jobs will be Air Force pilots. So our pilot retention problems are by no means solved.

"But recruiting itself looks pretty healthy -- for the moment. . . . I have no way of knowing how Congress will view future attempts to cap military pay. But if we do see caps similar to those in '78 and '79, it's only logical to assume we'll also begin to see some of the same detrimental side effects."

"THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN OVER A GENERATION." The place of national defense in a sound economy was addressed by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger in an interview with Frank Reynolds of ABC News. He said: "A sound economy is something that can only be maintained if the country is safe and secure and if the deterrent capability that we have, that has maintained the peace for something like 37 years, is correctly perceived by the Soviets still to be effective. The sound economy is of course essential. I don't advocate defense spending because it will help the economy, but we have to recognize that it doesn't hurt the economy to have defense spending, and also we have to recognize that cutting defense spending doesn't reduce the deficit dollar-for-dollar because you lose a lot of revenues and you lose a lot of jobs which require unemployment insurance and other things to go up. But none of that is a reason to do defense spending.

"The reason to do defense spending is simply because the threat from the Soviets is increasing all the time, and it takes a long time for us to recover strength after we've had a decade of neglect such as we had in the '70s. . . . The only thing that is really important is that the country recognize and that we take the necessary action in time to recover the defensive strength, the deterrent strength that we need. . . . It is the most important issue this country has faced in well over a generation."

EX-POWS SPEAK OF FREEDOM. The latest Air Force Now motion picture, "Operation Homecoming: 10th Anniversary," focuses on the U.S. prisoner-of-war returnees today -- their families and their mutual thoughts. The 28-minute film (AFN 161) is one of the most moving tributes one can find to the meaning of freedom, "the most expensive and precious commodity in the world." The film supports the objectives of Project Warrior. Air Force Public Affairs offices might be able to schedule the loan of a copy to be shown to groups outside the Air Force, as well as inside.

(The Air Force's position on the importance of its people was set forth in a joint statement by Secretary of the Air Force Verne Orr and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Charles A. Gabriel to committees and subcommittees of the Senate and House of Representatives of the 98th Congress. Excerpts follow.)

Air Force people are the foundation of our warfighting and readiness capability. The need for high-quality, trained and experienced people crosses all mission areas and programs. Strong and modern strategic nuclear forces, improved readiness and sustainability, enhanced mobility forces and more modern tactical forces give the Air Force the hardware -- the tools it needs to carry out the mission. However, our people give life to those systems and, as history has shown, ultimately determine the course of battle.

Rear Admiral John Woodward, Commander of the British Naval Task Force, attributed the success of their recent operations in the South Atlantic to "a flexibility of mind and equipment." The British were faced with the challenge of conducting a war in an improbable place, under severe weather conditions, and against an unexpected foe. To meet the challenge, they had to fight with the men and equipment they had on hand.

We in the United States Air Force could be faced with similar challenges -- it has happened before. We have to make the best use of the forces we have. All too often we are conditioned to wait for the "magic weapon" that is right around the corner. In reality, our "magic weapon" is our people -- people who are well-trained, who seek and practice innovative tactics, and who apply our country's technological advantages.

The Air Force requires high-quality people with technically oriented skills. During the past year we have been successful in recruiting and retaining these types of individuals; however, it is important that this success is not misread. Internal leadership efforts, adequate recruiting resources, high unemployment rates, resurging patriotism and significant pay increases provided by Congress in FY 81 and '82 all played a part.

Nevertheless, we must not ignore the lessons of the past. Avoiding a recurrence of the "people problems" of the '70s and sustaining our current recruiting and retention successes will continue to be a challenge facing the Air Force. We must therefore take care of our people by providing them adequate compensation and entitlements -- they, in return, will assure that we have a trained and motivated combat capability.

All active duty, civilian and reserve components contribute to the Total Force. We organize, equip, and train active and reserve forces as a team. By working together, we are building the warfighting capability our nation needs to deter our enemies and, when called upon, to fight and win.

Nearly 20% of the Total Force is made up of civilians. This work force provides an essential element of continuity, stability, corporate memory and expertise. Active duty military forces are assigned to combat and to direct combat support missions, while full-time civilians are assigned to essential support functions. Together, the military and civilian components satisfy the requirements for deterrence, peacetime presence, and immediate response in a crisis contingency, national emergency, or war.

Our Air Reserve Force components, the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, are an integral part of the Total Force. These "civilian airmen" provide a ready, highly experienced augmentation force. The high quality of these individuals and an ongoing emphasis on combat readiness and sustainability contribute greatly to the capabilities the Air Reserve Forces provide in support of the Air Force mission. The Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, with approximately 15% of Total Force people, contribute to nearly 25% of all Air Force flying and support missions and in some areas provide more than half the total mission capability.

BRIEFS ON MATTERS AFFECTING THE AIR FORCE

One challenge in managing the current force relates to our nonrated officers, says Secretary of the Air Force Verne Orr. He explains it this way: "There is a saying that the mission of the Air Force is 'to fly and fight and don't you forget it.' That has a salty tang, and I would like to have it up on my wall. But 60% of our officers today are not rated. The nonrated officers are a vital part of the flying Air Force, and so it's our responsibility to see that the same promotion opportunities are there for both rated and nonrated officers alike."

According to the budget analysis published by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in the Executive Office of the President, the budget assumes no October 1983 pay increase for Federal white- and blue-collar workers and military personnel. OMB says that the final decision on the level of the fiscal year 1984 pay increases will be made in the late summer. Legislative proposals for civilians include: annuity adjustment for retirement prior to age 65. It will be phased in during a 10-year period. Employees 55 or older at enactment would not be affected. The cost-of-living (COLA) adjustment would be eliminated for 1984. Further, current law limits COLA adjustments to half of the consumer price index for retirees under age 62 through 1985. Employee retirement deductions would increase to 9% in 1984 from the present 7% and to 11% in 1985. Annuity calculations would be based on the highest five years of earnings. The current calculation base is the highest three years. Employees within three years of retirement eligibility would not be affected. These proposals will, of course, be debated in Congress before passage, amendment or defeat.

A new regulation, Cooperation with Civilian Law Enforcement Officials (AFR 125-4) is being distributed this month. The Department of Defense and the Air Force are strongly committed to support the Vice President's South Florida task force combatting the flow of illicit drugs into the U.S. President Reagan signed into law the Department of Defense Authorization Act of 1982, S.815. Among the provisions affecting the Air Force in the new Public Law 97-86 are sections 341-373 of Title 10 that incorporate existing interpretations of the Posse Comitatus Act by clearly setting forth statutory authorization for military officials to provide information, equipment and/or facilities and to also provide training and expert advice to civilian law enforcement officials. Provisions are incorporated to ensure compliance with other applicable laws, such as the Privacy Act and the Federal Property and Administrative Services Acts. Section 374 expands the support the military can provide for monitoring and communicating the movement of air and sea traffic. Section 375 prevents direct participation by military personnel in any civilian law enforcement action unless otherwise authorized by law.

On 10 Feb. the governing body of the Church of England, led by the archbishop of Canterbury, defeated by 338 to 100 a resolution that would have supported the unilateral nuclear disarmament of Britain. The church synod of bishops, priests and lay people, went on to approve, 275-222, a resolution endorsing multilateral disarmament and rejecting first use of the weapons.

Pacifism or strength? Fifty years ago, after one of the most famous debates in British history, the members of the Oxford Union Society voted "that this house will in no circumstances fight for king and country." On 10 Feb., according to news reports, exactly 50 years after the earlier vote, the Oxford undergraduates and guest speakers exchanged heated views on whether pacifism or strength is more likely to preserve the peace. History did not repeat itself. This time the members of the elite and publicly influential debating society voted 416 to 187 that they would fight for queen and country.

In Geneva, Switzerland, in February, the United States proposed the global destruction of all chemical weapon stockpiles and production facilities over a 10-year period. News services reported that U.S. negotiator Louis C. Fields Jr. told the 40-nation Disarmament Conference any treaty on destroying existing chemical weapons and banning all further production must be based on "systematic international on-site inspection" to prevent cheating. Fields, in presenting draft elements of a treaty to the conference, said progress on such a ban has been prevented so far by Soviet refusal to accept strict verification procedures.

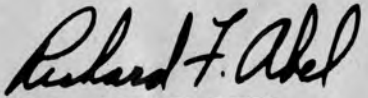
Nuclear energy supplied 21% of the electricity generated in the Federal Republic of Germany last year, up from 16% in 1981. This accounts for more than three and a half times the amount of hydro-electric energy produced. The main source of electric power was coal (60%), while utilization of gas and oil was further reduced.

Two wargames, centrally purchased for libraries by the Air Force Library Program (MPCSOA), MIG Killers and MIG Killers Expansion Kit, and A House Divided have been shipped. Six other games, including Code 2000: The Next War, Parts I and II, Hof Gap, Sinai, Task Force, and Terrible Swift Sword are scheduled to be shipped soon. Ace of Aces and Battle of the Bulge, announced as being ordered, are out of print and not available.

The Air Force needs 23 lieutenant colonels and 147 majors or captains to serve as Air Force ROTC faculty members at colleges and universities across the country, beginning in the summer of 1984. Sixteen of the lieutenant colonel and seven captain or major positions are for rated officers only. All other positions are open to nonrated line officers in all career fields. For additional information, officers should contact their base personnel office.

Advances In Air-Oriented Soviet Naval Forces. In his statement to the House Armed Services Committee on the Navy's posture, Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman Jr. said: "During 1982, Soviet naval operations showed advances in sophistication and capability. For the first time, exercises by Backfire bombers against U.S. carrier groups were conducted. We saw the first attempts by air-to-air missile-armed Forger V/TOL aircraft to intercept U.S. naval aircraft. Another new element was the participation of the carrier Kiev in support of a massive Warsaw Pact exercise, Shield 82. In Southwest Asia, U.S.-built Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam provided support for another innovation. A Soviet carrier battle group, headed by the Minsk, was deployed to the Indian Ocean. Closer to home, the dispatch of a cruiser/destroyer/submarine task force to Cuba highlighted the increasing importance to the Soviet Navy of its Caribbean Sea enclave."

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