E. Description of Foreign Officer Career Management Systems

Introduction

Research Objective

We researched the military officer career management systems of six NATO countries to obtain differences and similarities from the existing U.S. military system that could inform our development of alternative future officer management systems. The countries included were the Netherlands, Denmark, Canada, Norway, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the United Kingdom.

Scope

Most of the information was obtained through interviews with serving members of the armed forces of the respective countries. The research effort for the United Kingdom was more intensive and included discussions with staff personnel managers and policymakers for each of the three military services and each of the three corresponding service military or officer study groups that were preparing recommendations for future changes in their respective services. The full scope of the research encompassed the militaries of some 20 foreign countries.\(^1\) We provide here a synopsis of each nation’s officer management system as seen through the eyes of officers in that system,\(^2\) as derived from official documents, or from other sources about that foreign military officer career system.

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\(^{1}\) We also examined the completed research of the study groups in the United Kingdom, which expanded our research base. The British Army “Grove Study Group” researched some 20 different foreign armies, including the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Australia, Canada, Italy, Ireland, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, India, Israel, New Zealand, Japan, Spain, Turkey, Pakistan, and Portugal. While there are variances in aspects of the characteristics of each of these militaries, many items were found to be common among the vast majority.

\(^{2}\) It was also interesting to get the perception of the U.S. system from foreign officers with mutual service in combined organizations. (1) The U.S. system has two periods of experience hemorrhage. The first occurs at about 10 years of service with promotion to major and entrance into the regular officer corps. Their experience said many very experienced captains were denied promotion and forced out who, in their armed forces, would have completed full-term careers to at least 20 years of service. The second hemorrhage is at the 20-years-of-service retirement point when experience is lost both through voluntary and involuntary retirements. In the second case these are majors or more senior officers with considerable experience who would be retained to age 55 in their system. Maintaining this experience should be a goal of longer careers. (2) U.S. officers begin looking and considering their opportunities and qualifications for second careers before reaching the 20-years-of-service retirement point and after. This activity is based upon system-induced anxiety and
Four NATO Nations

Netherlands

The officer corps is essentially composed of two groups: military academy graduates with college degrees (and a very few nonacademy in-service transfers with college degrees) who make up the full-career officers, and officer school graduates without college-level education who compose the limited-career officers. In principle, all officers can expect to remain in military service to age 55 and retire with a relatively high pension of about 80 percent of their last pay level (at least for five years, then 75 percent; others may stay at 80 percent, depending on category of officer and grade at retirement). Limited-career officers are capped at the grade of major though not all will be promoted beyond captain. To be promoted, each officer in this category must apply and be selected for a position requiring a major. Limited-career officers get promoted later (up to several years depending on grade) than full-career officers and are likely to spend most of their careers in line-type assignments at brigade or lower-level units. Few limited-career officers transition to full-career status due to the need to obtain a college education and to acquire an experience base similar to contemporaries already in a full-career status.

Only professional specialty officers are allowed to enter laterally. Those that are conscripted come in as a first lieutenant and may enjoy a full-career status based upon their higher education, similar to academy graduates. Others may be obtained voluntarily and enter laterally at ranks commensurate with contemporaries at their age.

Military academy graduates and full-career officers are expected to reach the grade of lieutenant colonel in due course. However, officers in this category must be selected to attend the War College (about 10 percent of a year group) and complete their studies to be eligible for promotion to colonel and higher.

diminishes officer productivity, which takes away from career contributions for lieutenant colonels and colonels.

3Under the auspices of Brigadier General John Rose, Chief of the Requirements and Programs Branch, Policy and Requirements Division, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), five senior officers from four NATO nations were interviewed with regard to existing and future national military officer personnel management systems. The foreign NATO officers participating and their nationalities and military services are: Colonel Michael Rudderham, Air Force, Canada; Colonel Keith Maxwell, Air Force, Canada; Colonel Herman J. Heimens, Army, Netherlands; Commander Tor Vestlie, Navy, Norway; Lieutenant Colonel Benn Bak, Army, Denmark. Each national representative provided a synopsis of his service’s officer management system and outlined existing career patterns. Subsequently, a general discussion of specific issues ensued, which helped to elaborate on how the military profession in each nation had approached or solved various issues.
These officers form the General Staff Corps and receive special pay (higher pay at each grade than normal course officers of the same grades). Promotion depends upon a vacant recognized requirement (billet) at the next higher grade. The national parliament approves all organizational changes and creations, thus effectively approving the number and grade of all officer positions. Officers must manage their own careers to ensure that they obtain appropriate qualifying skills and military training as well as sufficient experience to ensure qualification for senior positions and later promotion. Assignment to corps and military department staffs is limited to career officers, which ensures that these positions are filled with the best educated and most experienced officers. Few officers leave service in midcareer. “Officership” is considered a profession with a commitment to a full-term career to age 55.

Canada

The Canadian officer system is organized as a long-career system with expectation of service to age 55 for most officers and to age 60 for officers in the medical, dental, and legal profession. The career is composed of three engagements: short engagement through 9 years of service with about 95 percent passing beyond; intermediate engagement through 20 years of service with majors passing beyond and captains requiring exceptions; and indefinite engagement through age 55. Retirement of lieutenant colonels and below requires at least 28 years of service, while colonels and above must stay at least 30 years to retire. Those officers departing voluntarily or selected for separation at the end of the short engagement receive no pension. Officers eliminated at the end of the intermediate engagement (not a large percentage) receive a pension of 40 percent of their pay, including allowances. At age 55, pensions equate to 75 percent of total pay. Most Canadian officers expect to initiate second careers after retirement at age 55.

The professional specialties enter the military directly or laterally from the civilian society at any age and usually begin at the rank of captain with service allowed up to age 60 with similar early retirement provisions by grade as other military officers. Professional specialty officers receive special pay, at higher salaries than other officers, to compensate, attract, and retain them. All dentists are by tradition in the Army; whereas, the other professional specialties have officers in each service. The professional specialty officers serve interchangeably
in all three services (e.g., it is not unusual to have Army doctors on Navy ships). There is no lateral entry for officers outside of the professional specialties.

Officer tours are usually four years with provisions for both longer and shorter. Command tours are limited to two years. Command is not a gate for promotion because of the small numbers of command opportunities, but there seems to be a positive correlation between command and subsequent promotion. Promotion depends upon (1) competitive selection and (2) a vacancy at a higher grade. Officer positions are controlled by skills through a minimum manning level (MML). However, there are a number of officer positions, called generalist positions, that are not skill specific. The total of the MML, skill-specific positions and these added generalist positions, which are independent of skill, make up a requirement called the preferred manning level (PML). Promotion at lower ranks through major is by career management field, groups of skills, or in some cases, individual skill and vacancies are limited by the MML. After major, promotions are competitive across all career management fields and skills and limited to vacancies by the PML. While the Canadian military is a total force concept establishment, reserve officers are brought on active service only for designated shortage billets and with limited tenure. Reserve officers are not converted to career status.

**Norway**

In principle, the Norwegian officer system is a full-career long-term profession that allows officers to complete a 40-year career or retire at age 60, whichever comes first, with two-thirds pay as a pension. There are few NCOs in Norway’s armed forces, and the officer corps fulfills many of the responsibilities traditionally performed by NCOs. This practice results in a higher content of officers, particularly junior officers (e.g., lieutenants) who are performing what would be NCO duties in other nations. All officers are drawn from conscription after one year as enlisted service members. Officer candidates then attend a one year officer’s school and upon successful completion, must serve an additional year of duty as sergeants. Those still wishing to be officers must apply for the military academy. Two groups are then formed: those attending only a two-year program at the academy and those who apply and are accepted for an additional two years of academy study, for a total of four years at the military academy. The short-term academy graduates will not be promoted beyond the rank of major but can stay until age 60. Those completing the four year academy curriculum will in normal course be expected to reach lieutenant colonel or higher before retirement at age 60.
There are two opportunities for officers to voluntarily leave the service or retire prior to age 60. The first opportunity comes four years after completion of the military academy, at about age 30, and in the year studied, several chose to depart to enter private sector employment without any pension. The second opportunity occurs at age 57 when officers can choose to retire. These separations are not qualitative screenings by the services but decisions of the individual officer. Most officers retiring from the military are not expected to pursue second careers because of their age. During the present period of downsizing turbulence, temporary policies are offering early retirement to officers after age 50 to assist force reduction requirements. As a result, qualitative screening reductions to eliminate officers are possible only after age 50 and prior to age 60.

All officers that stay will become captains since there is no qualitative screening to that rank. All officers must remain captains for at least four years. At the rank of captain, officers must apply for special skill training that will qualify them for positions of higher rank and promotion. For all positions in the grades of major and higher, officers must apply and be selected based upon (1) education and special skill qualification, (2) experience, and (3) competent performance in previous assignments. Once selected for a position of higher rank, an officer will be promoted. There is keen competition for most higher-rank positions, and therefore promotion is considered competitive after captain. Officers applying and being selected for these major-and-above positions are allowed to remain in them until they apply and are selected for new positions of the same grade or higher, or they reach age 60 and are required to retire. Special career jobs (such as command) have limited tenure (usually two years). Officers completing special career jobs can either apply for new positions or receive assignments from the service staffs. Officers in field grade that cannot obtain selection for new positions must remain in current positions and grade until retirement.

All captains desiring to be competitive for promotion to major must apply for, be selected for, and complete the officer’s staff college of three-months duration. Majors must apply for, be selected for, and complete the general staff college of one year to be competitive for promotion to lieutenant colonel. These education gates are additional restrictive criteria for being selected for a higher-grade position that can fully qualify an officer for promotion. There are no mechanisms for lateral entry or assimilation of reserve officers into full career officer status in Norway. Personnel management policies are identical for army and air force officers, and there are only minor differences (slower promotions to similar grades) for navy officers.
Denmark

The Danish military officer system is in a state of transition. In both old and new systems, officers are required to serve until mandatory retirement points. The old system’s retirement points were: generals at age 65, colonels and lieutenant colonels at age 62, and majors at age 52. Under the new system, all officers, regardless of rank, will serve until mandatory retirement at age 60. Promotion to captain is expected for all officers automatically. Officers may not receive further promotion after age 55. At age 60 officers receive a 75 percent pension. Under some early retirement provisions, officers can retire before age 60 but receive no pension until age 67.

Officers desiring to obtain promotion beyond captain must complete staff college and receive assignment to an authorized position. Officers without the equivalent of a college education will generally be limited to the rank of captain, although some of these officers are promoted to major in order to fill some less-desirable positions and encourage officer movement to other assignments. Through the rank of major, officers are promoted within their specialties (skills). After major, all officers compete for promotion across specialties. Selection of battalion commanders is within specialties. Officers seeking promotion to lieutenant colonel and higher grades and brigade command must complete general staff training. General staff college attendance requires officer application and military department selection. Selection is very competitive. Once selected for promotion, officers are promoted based upon age. Promotion to lieutenant colonel and above depends upon an authorized billet being approved in the financial legislation. Temporary ranks are used to fill required higher-graded positions not supported by financial legislation, but the higher pay is not allowed. Temporary ranks are often used for positions in NATO of U.N. force positions that are outside of financial legislation.

Lateral entry is very exceptional or nonexistent. Reserve officers brought on active service are integrated at their current rank based upon experience comparability with active contemporaries. Experience is the key credential to the officer military profession in Denmark.
United Kingdom

British Army

Current British Army Officer Management System. The British Army has a current total active strength of near 136,000 soldiers, with an officer content of just over 16,000 or just less than 12 percent of the total. The strength reduction targets for 1995 are estimated to result in a total army force of about 106,000, including some 13,000 officers or just over 12 percent officer content. The British Army officer corps is currently organized into three parts: regular army (RA), territorial army (TA), and regular army reserve officers (RARO), similar to the officer component of the Individual Ready Reserve in the United States, who receive no compulsory training but are subject to recall. There is also an element of the officer corps called the home service, which is the Northern Ireland equivalent of the British territorial army with service restricted to Northern Ireland. Little migration occurs between these elements except for RA officers assigned to the TA and for officers of the other elements on various forms of short-service assignments in the RA.

All officers in the RA are commissioned from Royal Military College Sandhurst (RMCS). Only about 50 percent of RMCS entrants are university graduates. The three elements have some 20 types of commission, which have varied tenure points with minimums generally from as little as four months to three years and maximums from eight years to age 55, usually dependent upon promotion to major. The RA officer management system is generally described as a closed long-career time-in-grade (TIG) system with both short-term and full-service

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4Interviews and discussions were conducted August 2–5, 1993, with representatives of all three services and the Defense Staff of the United Kingdom (U.K.). One day each was spent with the British Army and Royal Air Force personnel staffs in which briefings and discussions were conducted on key management system issues. Additionally, each of the separate British military services had recently undertaken reviews of their officer career structures, and in two cases enlisted structures as well, in response to the changes in the international security environment and new national economic pressures. These separate studies were in various states, with the army and navy study groups having already reported on their recommendations and initiating some implementation planning efforts, while the air force study was still in progress with a completion date of mid-1994. Meetings were held with members of all three study groups and the study group leaders for the army and air force. Also, a meeting with Major General Pennicott, the senior personnel policy officer on the Imperial Defense Staff, included discussion of matters of service uniformity, reserve and joint personnel management policies, and the potential for significant management system changes.

5The British Army officer management system was explained in detail by members of the Military Secretary’s Department, the Military Secretary being primarily responsible for officer schooling, assignments, and promotions. The principal point of contact was Lieutenant Colonel Finlay Maclean, Coordinator of the Military Secretary’s Department. The British Army Staff also has a parallel position to the U.S. military service Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, but these responsibilities are separate from the Military Secretary and focus on billet requirements and personnel policy. The British Army is in the process of implementing some of the recommendations of its “Review of Army Officer and Soldier Career Structures” conducted by a study group headed by Major General D. A. Grove, and often referred to as the “Grove Study.” Full implementation of the majority of approved recommendations from the Grove Study was expected in 1994.
engagements and a two-track system within career officers. The two-track career commissions are the regular commission with potential for promotion to the highest officer ranks and tenure to age 55 contingent upon selection to major and a special regular commission with promotion limited to major and tenure generally to 16 years of service with good opportunity for conversion to a regular commission and extension of service to age 55. The short-term engagement is related to various forms of the short service commission, which has a maximum tenure of eight years without approved conversion to a career commission, which is possible. Promotions are considered automatic—fully qualified by U. S. standards—to the grade of captain and competitive thereafter within a band of TIG and age, which covers about 3 years for major and 10 years for the grade of lieutenant colonel. Unlike the U.S. promotion system, which tends to focus selection on a single year in the zone with early or late opportunities usually quite reduced and limited to below and above the zone years, the British Army uses the full breadth of the promotion bands with the later years continuing to enjoy a reasonable promotion opportunity if recommended in their latest annual evaluation, called the confidential report.

The officer structure of the British Army is heavily skewed, with the grade of major (O-4) being the most numerous and sharp reductions thereafter at the grades of lieutenant colonel and colonel. Some 1 percent of all British Army officer positions are at the flag ranks, and about 48 percent of the officer corps positions are in the field-grade ranks (O-4 through O-6). Positions for majors currently compose more than 32 percent of the entire officer corps compared with 20 percent subalterns (O1-O2), 30 percent captains (O-3), 12 percent lieutenant colonels, and 4 percent colonels. Providing service tenure to age 55 for all officers promoted to major ensures that this skewed officer structure can be adequately manned. Officer requirements or billets are grouped in two categories: E-1, which is a billet requiring specific arm (branch) or service (corps) skills, and E-2, which is open to assignment without restriction. Since the British Army is still strongly founded on the regimental system, the focus of the early development and assignment of its junior officers is with their arms and services. Since subunit command, the U.S. equivalent of a company, is at the grade of major, the majority of an officer’s assignments through about age 38 including the early years as a major, are in E-1 billets. After completing subunit command and appropriate professional development schooling, e.g., staff college, majors and those in higher ranks will spend increasing numbers of assignments in E-2 billets and return to their arms and services, i.e., billet (E-1), either for commands at unit, equivalent of a U. S. battalion, as lieutenant colonels and at brigade as brigadiers or for staff assignments, which require their specific arm or service. Performance in E-2 billets is generally considered more important to promotion
and appointment boards, particularly for majors and higher ranks, than E-1 billets since the former reflects the all-arms nature of these posts. Officers are prepared for staff officer assignments at three distinct levels (generally, SO-3—unit staff: captain; SO-2—mid-level staff: major; and SO-1—high-level staff (above brigade): lieutenant colonel and higher) through attendance and completion of appropriate education culminating at the staff college, which qualifies officers for SO-2 and, lastly, promotion to lieutenant colonel with SO-2 qualification and experience, which produces SO-1 qualification.

The career pattern for regular commission officers provides for promotion to captain, normally after 6 years of service at about age 25 or 26, and later to major for all fully qualified and recommended officers and, at the later rank, the added opportunity for a full career to age 55. The fact that essentially 100 percent of all regular captains passing the promotion examination and being recommended are promoted to major appears to be an implication of the British Army officer structure, which has major as the predominant rank and the long-career service tenured with promotion to that rank. Currently, there is no merit or competitive aspect to the promotion to major and nearly all regular commission officers are promoted at age 32. The promotion to lieutenant colonel is competitive, with an established rate of 70 percent and an average age of 40. For the last few years, the actual promotion rate ranged from 66 to 69 percent, and the actual average timing was from above age 40 and under age 42. The promotion rate to colonel has be set for 45 percent with an average promotion age of 44, but actual rates have been 52–55 percent with average ages of just over 45. The promotion to brigadier has been established at 55 percent and average age of 46, with the actual achievement rates of 46–50 percent and average ages between 46 and 48. Lieutenant colonels not promoted by age 50 are subject to reduced pay and assignment to positions requiring majors. Currently, brigadiers are subject to selective early retirement review at age 52, but no other officer ranks receive qualitative review for early retirement.

**Key Recommended Changes in the British Army Officer Management System.**

The recommendations of the army review are conservative and evolutionary changes. There has been some criticism of the review recommendations due to their apparent marginal change from the current system. Key areas of change were in simplifying accessions, terms of service (engagements), and commissions; improving promotion timing and potential for certain ranks; extending the length of service at the rank of colonel; expanding the selective retirement review to all field-grade ranks beginning at age 50; eliminating the practice of assigning special-list lieutenant colonels to majors’ positions with reduced pay after age 50; adjusting the timing of the school sessions and
expanding access at various officer education levels; and maintaining the other 
existing policies and processes for officer management including retirement at 
age 55, six substantive ranks below brigadier, confidential evaluation, use of 
E-1/E-2 (arms and services/all arms positions) officer billeting system, levels 
within the officer education system, and senior officer unique activities. There 
was a concern expressed that a smaller British Army may force increased 
specialization particularly within the officer corps, which would be directly 
opposite to official objectives to reduce specialization and associated training 
costs of the smaller force. As a result, no recommendations addressed this 
concern, and no additional officer education or training programs supporting 
specialization were supported by the study.

Royal Navy and Royal Marines

Current Royal Navy and Royal Marine Officer Management Systems. The 
combined naval services officer corps now numbers fewer than 10,000 and only 
about 7,500 exclusive of training positions. The study was intended to be a 
“clean-sheet” review with a methodology that included principles of cost-
effectiveness, flexibility, currency, sustainability, rewards for character, fairness, 
and practicality. It was based upon a number of assumptions that included the 
belief that current operational roles will continue, current military capabilities 
will be maintained, there is clear direction to integrate the officers of the Royal 
Marines, and that the composition of the combined officer corps should be 
primarily managed based upon a “platform oriented” system. The platforms 
divided requirements into five groups: surface ships, submarines, fleet air arm, 
Royal Marines, and direct support. This scheme resulted in four separate officer 
structures for naval officer management: warfare (surface sailor, submariner, 
and aviator), Royal Marines, engineering, and supply. The study did not 
examine the “specialist” Royal Navy services or the professional branches, 
(medical, dental, chaplain, career, and family services). The study tried to 
develop a businesslike model for Royal Naval officer structure and management. 
The study began with a fresh consideration of all naval officer requirements 
using a decision rule model that determined the need for an officer versus

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6Information on the Royal Navy (RN) and Royal Marine Corps (RMC) was obtained from the 
Officer Study Group (OSG) and the prepublication synopsis entitled “Officer Study Group 1993” of 
their report “A Strategy for the Future Officer Corps of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines.” The 
synopsis included the current status of approval by the Navy Board of the study recommendations. 
The OSG was headed by now Vice Admiral Sir Michael Layard, Second Sea Lord, who had already 
departed for his current post. Discussions were held with three members of the remaining OSG staff 
under the direction of Captain Ellison, RN. The study was the first in nearly 40 years to review the 
structure and management of the officer corps of the Royal Navy and included the Royal Marines 
since it was directed that full integration of marine officers into the navy was required to meet the 
needs of reduced armed forces.
enlisted, civilian, or contractor in a given position. The significant recommendations and their status of approval will be summarized in a later section.

The Royal Navy (RN) and Royal Marines (RM) have different terms of service, commissions, entry training, and ranks. There were some 84 ways to enter the Royal Navy and 12 for entering the Royal Marines. The naval services have both a regular and reserve officer corps. The RN and RM reserve officers are formed either from volunteers or retired regular officers with a specified number of years of liability, dependent upon age, for recall during a crisis. It appears that naval service reserve officers are much like the U.S. Individual Ready Reserve and not subject to mandatory training. Activation of naval reservists requires a Queen’s Order, which is considered more difficult to obtain than legislation from Parliament. About 40 percent of naval officer entrants are college graduates, and the average officer has about 15 years of service.

Commissions in the naval services vary in length but support essentially three groups of officers: the central core or general list (GL) and two supporting arms: the supplementary list (SL) and the special duties (SD) list with the last focused on officers entering from the enlisted and warrant ranks. The general list officers obtain career commissions (CC) with duration subject to rank and age while the supplementary list officers receive either a short-career commission (SCC) ending usually at eight years of service, medium-career commission ending usually at age 38, or extended medium-career commission ending at retirement at age 50. There is migration between SL and GL at various ranks and types of commissions. The SD officers serve with a single commission that allows them service until mandatory retirement age 53, with very reduced opportunity for migration into GL. Within these lists, there exist a wide variety of skill groups and management branches (e.g., warfare, engineering, supply, and personnel). There is also a significant effort to balance the positions by branch at sea and ashore. Promotion is generally within branch and by type commission, with fully qualified GL officers being promoted up to lieutenant commander (RN) or major (RM) based upon age or time in rank without competition or quota based upon requirements. Promotion above the grade of lieutenant commander and equivalent is a competitive selection based upon requirements across commissions and branches. Officers within three years of retirement are not eligible for further promotion. Officers in both SL and SD lists are promoted by quota after lieutenant and not promoted beyond the rank of commander. Current officer mandatory retirement is based upon rank and age. Within the GL, CC retirement is at age 50 for lieutenant commander, age 53 for commander, and age 55 for captain, and extended ages beyond 55 are allowed for flag ranks.
There are no current provisions for mandatory selective early retirement, but inducements are being offered to obtain voluntary early retirement to support the reduction in the size of naval forces.

**Key Recommended Changes in the Royal Navy and Royal Marine Officer Management System.** The recommendations of the naval OSG have been reviewed by the Navy Board and the senior flag officers of the RN and RM and placed in four categories. These categories are

A. Recommendation is approved for implementation

B. Recommendation is approved in principle but requires further study before a decision to implement

C. Recommendation was not considered to have sufficient study to be approved in principle

D. Recommendations that were disapproved.

It is, therefore, appropriate to report and summarize only those key recommendations in categories A and B because the others are much more speculative in nature. In the main, the naval recommendations appear to be evolutionary but far more significant in their effect on the current management system than the changes in the army and tend to give more weight to uniformity aspects among all of the British military services.

The Royal Marines were integrated within the naval officer corps by aligning RM ranks with those of the RN, providing the RM with an appropriate share of the common appointments (those assignments external to the service-controlled assignments), and introduction of a common element in basic training for both services. The common RN/RM rank structure is to include a substantive rank equivalent to one-star above captain/colonel. A standard set of commissioning lists includes terms of service and common retirement at age 55 subject to successful passage of career review points (CRPs). The commissions will consist of a common initial commission with a standard term of service to be determined (maximum tenure of 8–12 years is considered) to be followed upon application or offering by either a CC leading to a full career and retirement or a specialist commission, with service limited to specialist skills, promotion usually later than CC officers, and potential no further than the one-star rank, and with career length limited to the common retirement age subject to CRPs. Officers are grouped into four “platform-based” branches for management, which are: warfare (with specialties of surface, submariner, and aviation), engineering, Royal Marines, and supply, with the current instructor branch distributed appropriately across the new branches. Business-area skills are formalized with
the introduction of the generalist skill group, those acquired within a normal career pattern (training, personnel, operations, intelligence, logistics, engineering, and project management), and specialist skill group, those skills requiring additional experience and/or training (e.g., hydrography, legal, and information technology). Officers in all branches would be allowed to pursue either a generalist skill or specialist skills within certain restrictions. For example, officers in all four branches would be able to acquire the training, personnel, logistics, and project management business skills; all officers in branches other than supply would be able to acquire intelligence business skills; only warfare and RM branch officers would be able to acquire operations business skills; only engineering branch officers would serve in engineering and specified engineering; and maintenance appointments in both logistics and project management would be restricted to engineering branch officers. CRPs will be introduced at specific seniority points set beyond the average promotion timing for each competitive rank below the one-star rank to consider officers for further service or separation with severance pay. Lastly, education and training will be enhanced over current patterns by ensuring that all officers with potential for promotion to the rank of commander will complete the Royal Navy Staff College and all officers on a CC should complete the initial staff course or equivalent.

Royal Air Force

Current Royal Air Force Officer Management System. While the Royal Air Force (RAF) has a current total service strength of more than 80,000 and a strength reduction target of about 75,000 for 1995, the RAF officer corps has just under 13,000 officers, or about 16 percent of the force, with plans for reduction over the next few years, in similar proportions, in response to the changes in the international environment and the national economic pressures that have reduced the size of the service.

Most RAF officers, some 39 percent, are in the general duty (air) skill group, which is made up primarily of the flying officers: pilots, navigators, aviation electronic officers (AEOs), and the special air crew (SAC) (currently the SAC has some 1,000 flying officers or about 20 percent of all RAF pilots). SAC officers are RAF aviation officers not promoted to squadron leader (O-4) by age 38, or about 16 years of service, who are then assimilated into the full-career category but are

7Information on the Royal Air Force (RAF) was obtained from interviews with key officers on the staff of the RAF Personnel Management Command at Innsworth, England, and an interview with Air Vice Marshall Roberts, the head of the Royal Air Force Personnel Study Group, which was assigned the mission of recommending changes to the RAF personnel management system to accommodate the smaller size and reduced budget of that service.
eligible only for flying posts. Some SAC officers may ultimately achieve promotion to squadron leader (O-4), but all SAC receive special pay to partially compensate for their lower ranks. Other prominent RAF officer skill groupings include engineer (18 percent), administrative (15 percent), general duty (ground) (10 percent), supply (7 percent), security (6 percent), and professionals (medical, dental, legal, and chaplain) (about 5 percent). The RAF officer grade structure is steeply pyramidal, with about 63 percent in the junior grades (U.S. equivalent to O-1 through O-3) and about 36 percent in the field grades (O-4 through O-6) and the remainder in the flag ranks (1 percent). Within the field grades, the pyramidal officer structure is even more pronounced with about 23 percent of the total officers holding the rank of squadron leader (O-4), 10 percent at wing commander (O-5) and only 3 percent at group captain (O-6). The RAF officer corps is expected to maintain a similar grade structure in the future after planned reductions.

RAF College Cranwell is the source of all RAF regular career officers. Until 1970, when the service began recruiting university graduates who were sent to a 24 week precommissioning officer course, RAF officers were accessed only after successful completion of a three-year education at RAF College Cranwell. Today this composite of university and secondary school accession methods provides the RAF with about 40 percent university-degree officers, not including the accession of professional services (medical, dental, legal, and chaplain), and the in-service degree education programs for selected specialties such as engineers. All officer receive one of three types of RAF commissions: short service commission for a minimum of 3 and a maximum tenure of 8 years; graduate commission for 12 years maximum if not promoted to squadron leader (O-4); and permanent commission, with a maximum of 16 years. At the career midpoint of 16 years of service/age 38, permanent commission RAF officers may either voluntarily retire with immediate pension or continue service. This retirement option is unique to the RAF in the U.K. armed forces. Officers on other types of commission must apply for assimilation before they reach maximum commission tenure to continue service. Officers assimilated into the career regular force at the career midpoint (16/38), e.g., SAC, are allowed tenure to age 55. All officers promoted to the rank of squadron leader (O-4) receive permanent commissions and full career tenure to age 55. In addition to the career midpoint opportunity for retirement with immediate pension, career officers may retire at 22 years or service/age 48 or full career tenure of age 55 with immediate pension. While the value of these pensions is determined from rank and years of service, the RAF is the only service with immediate pension options prior to completing a full career at age 55.
Military education is designed to prepare officers for increased responsibilities at higher staff levels or provide technical expertise required within a specialty or branch. The first such military education is the individual staff studies course, which is an 18-month correspondence course for junior officers but is a requirement for promotion eligibility to squadron leader (O-4). The next level is the basic staff course, requiring one month of schooling, to prepare officers for the staff officer 1 (SO-1) level and required for promotion eligibility to wing commander (O-5). There is also an officers command course, requiring one month of schooling, which is required for squadron leader promotion eligibility. Next is the advanced staff course, requiring one year resident schooling, for officers with potential to be group captains (O-6) and above. Lastly, the Royal College of Defense Studies, also requiring one year of resident schooling and which is for officers in the grade of group captain or above, prepares them for high-level defense and RAF staff assignments.

Promotion in the RAF through the rank of flight lieutenant (O-3) is based upon time in grade for fully qualified officers. Subsequent promotion is based upon merit for best-qualified officers and minimum time-in-grade requirements. Promotion to squadron leader requires a minimum of four years in grade as flight lieutenant, promotion to wing commander a minimum of four years as squadron leader, and promotion to group captain a minimum of three and one-half years as wing commander. All officers considered for merit promotions (field grades and above) are screened from the point of minimum eligibility until within three years of retirement. In actual practice, most RAF officers are promoted to field-grade ranks in a 5 to 8 years time-in-grade window. SAC officers, who are generally assimilated as junior officers at the midcareer point, may be promoted to squadron leader up to age 45 in spite of receiving a full career tenure to age 55.

Career patterns within the RAF are generally quite rigid, with no migration between branches or specialties and development focused on the responsibilities of each rank. In the initial years and ranks, pilot officer (O-1) through flight lieutenant (O-3) officers are assigned to learn the tasks within their branches. As an example, pilot officers spend about two years to complete pilot qualifications and then, at higher ranks, receive subsequent pilot and staff tours at the squadron level of about three years each. After promotion to squadron leader, assignments to higher echelon staffs become more prevalent as alternatives to command or branch staff assignments. While tour lengths vary based upon a composite of requirements in each branch, the average tour is three years with the RAF-desired tour length being four years in all but command tours, which
are usually limited to two years. RAF officers, depending on branch, command at squadron (O-4), wing (O-5) and station (O-6) below the flag ranks.

**Key Recommended Changes in the Royal Air Force Officer Management System.** The RAF personnel study group under the direction of Air Vice Marshall (AVM) Roberts was only partially under way in developing recommendations for the future RAF personnel management system. The RAF study group is expected to complete its recommendations to the RAF board in the January–March 1994 time frame. The following are some insights on probable recommendations provided by AVM Roberts:

- Reduce the number of nonprofessional branches to three: operations, logistics, and administration, which will assist in reducing specialization of the officer corps.
- Make the officer and enlisted forces requirements more generalist and less technical through amalgamation during the reduction with increased focus on development of only a few highly technical officer skills, such as aircraft battle damage repair.
- Extend the retirement point to age 60, including SAC pilots, to extend the potential utilization periods for highly trained and skilled officers.
- Retain pilots in flying positions longer (including SAC) to ensure better return on training investment.
- Require a reserve obligation of six years after completion of active service to enhance potential for expansion.
- Total RAF force size may be reduced to less than 70,000.
- Provide for performance pay increments within each grade.
- Increase the percentage of officers accessed with university degrees but keep in step with changes in society so as not to lose competitive potential for high-quality accessions.
- Recognize the effect of technology on specialization and push for limiting highly technical positions while increasing multidiscipline requirements on the officer corps.
- Maintain the separate and distinguishable differences of the RAF while allowing for logical uniformity.
- Oppose any effort to promote a single joint service.
- Study the potential within RAF organizations for “delayering” to reduce overgrading of position requirements, while maintaining the existing rank structure (similar to the U.S. O-1 through O-10 officer grades).
**Uniformity of the British Armed Forces**

An interview was held with Major General Sir Anthony Pennicott, Deputy Chief of Defense Staff for Personnel Policy. Key concerns discussed were the potential for unification of the armed services, uniformity of personnel policy and management systems, and the effect of the changing environment and diminishing national defense resources on future British officer management.

General Pennicott stated that while the reorganization of the defense staff in 1985 was a serious effort to ensure appropriate uniformity considerations by the separate services, there were continuing bases for distinctive systemic differences in the services and fundamental mission differences that would perpetuate the historic service separation. With regard to personnel policies, much has been done to adopt uniform policies where they are logical and practical. Examples cited were the pay and compensation systems (although there are some obvious distinctions remaining), gender policies, higher-level officer education systems, and possibly the future accession and retirement systems. General Pennicott saw the recent and ongoing separate service personnel studies as examples of service efforts to consider any useful elements of uniformity and stated that his office was consulted by all three study groups on those potential recommendations that might support common or uniform personnel policies.

The reduced size of the defense establishment was seen as a direct consequence of national economic pressures, reductions in the threat, and changes in the international environment. In that regard, General Pennicott saw a future of evolutionary changes in personnel management policies matching the evolving needs of the reduction in force size. Some policies being directed by European legislation, such as laws prohibiting sex discrimination, providing maternity leave, and health and safety requirements, will foster additional uniformity in the services. As to civilianization and use of lateral entry programs, General Pennicott felt the former had already been used excessively and had negatively affected necessary flexibility within the military personnel system and that lateral entry had no sound basis to support any military-unique skill requirements (professional skills such as medical and legal were excepted). He believed that the principal skill developed in the initial decade of officer experience was leadership, which could not be equaled in any realistic way by civilian experience. Lastly, he commented on women in the military as being already accommodated by policy but stated that racial integration would take longer to become a reality in spite of policies supporting racial equality in the armed forces.
Federal Republic of Germany⁸

The Federal Republic of Germany uses a uniform system for managing the officers of its three military services. Military service in Germany is based upon national service with conscription for all eligible males. All officers begin their careers in the enlisted ranks. Those selected will usually spend no less, and usually spend more, than their normal conscript period, now 12 months, as enlisted service members. Annual screening of officer applicants results in some 1,300 candidates for all three services. The officer candidates will attend one of the two German armed forces university institutions for a period of more than three and up to four years to obtain a university-level degree and an officer’s commission. The officer career system is designed to provide the potential for a 40 year career inclusive of enlisted service and university attendance.

Graduates of the German armed forces universities are commissioned in all three services with either regular or temporary commissions, depending on their graduating status. Usually the top 25–30 percent of the graduating classes receive regular commissions, which allow them to serve long careers with retirement, depending primarily upon their ultimate advancement in rank. The remainder of the officer graduates receive temporary commissions with some potential for later integration into regular career status. Each graduating officer incurs a mandatory service obligation of no less than 12 years. Additional officers are commissioned from the enlisted NCO ranks usually after some 12–15 years of service. These officers receive a specialist commission. Those officers who remain with temporary commissions and those with specialist commissions are limited in their potential for advancement to the grade of captain.⁹

German officers with regular commissions receive promotion advancements generally earlier than those with other commissions. There are six substantive grades of officers below flag rank in the German armed forces. However, there are multiple levels in grades, with three at captain and two each at lieutenant colonel and colonel, with the more senior level called “de luxe.” Within the regular officers, a division is made at the grade of captain selecting the very best officers, some 10–15 percent annually, to attend the prestigious two year general staff course. Graduates of this course, general staff officers (GSOs), form the core from which all senior leaders of the German armed forces will be selected. All regular commissioned officers can expect promotion to major and most to

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⁸The material for the discussion of the German officer management system was drawn largely from two sources: (1) Interviews with the German military attaché at the German Embassy in Washington, D.C.; and (2) Strand, “Military Career Paths in Transition,” op. cit., pp. 260–301.

⁹Ibid., pp. 260–264.
lieutenant colonel, but the vast majority of officers advanced to the higher grades of colonel and the flag ranks will be GSOs. Further, all GSOs will be advanced to at least the higher-level rank in the grade of lieutenant colonel and receive special management of their assignments and continuing education. This very competitive two-track regular officer career seems to ensure both high competency and appropriate specialized military experience and training for the future senior leadership of the German armed forces.  

The German officer formal education and development system is rigidly structured and strongly focused on the middle grades of captain and major. By the time officers reach captain, they possess most of their branch skills and some 10 to 12 years of military experience. Captains attend company commander’s courses to further develop their leadership skills and then the field-grade officer qualification course, a mandatory precursor to advancement to major. Next occurs selection for either the staff officers course or, for those on the more competitive track, general staff officers course. Much later in the careers of those destined for the most senior leadership positions, selection from mostly GSOs at the grade of colonel or brigadier general is made for attendance at the war college. The war college is seen as preparation for senior officers to serve at the strategic, combined (NATO commands), and operational levels of staff and command.

Retirement for officers in the German armed forces is based directly upon age and grade and indirectly tied to the type of commission, regular or other. Captains are mandatorily retired at age 53 with a pension equal to 75 percent of their salary. Majors, all being regular officers, may serve to age 55. Lieutenant colonels may serve until age 57, colonels have service allowed to age 59, and generals serve to age 60. In each of the field-grade and flag ranks, the pension is equal to the same 75 percent of salary for those reaching the age limits. Those officers retiring earlier are provided pensions based upon a factor of 1.87 percent per year, with a maximum time of 40 years or 75 percent of salary. Officers who depart service before reaching retirement age will receive full credit for their military service in their subsequent civilian pension plans.

The German armed forces officer career management system offers some features quite different from other European military officer systems. A summary of these key features follows:

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10 Ibid., pp. 262–264.
11 Ibid., pp. 283–290.
12 Ibid., pp. 292–301.
• Long career system with tenure by grade: O-3 to age 53, O-4 to age 55, O-5 to age 57, O-6 to age 59, and flag officers to age 60.

• Two-track commission system: regular with tenure to ages by grade as listed above, and temporary with advancement limited to captain (O-3). (There is also a specialist commission for long-serving enlisted personnel that is subject to advancement limitation of captain.)

• Uniform officer education and training system leading to a common university degree with various subject majors.

• Regular career officers competitively divided at senior captain between normal course and fast-track general staff officers.

• Six officer grades below flag rank but three levels of O-3 and two levels each of O-5 and O-6.

• Uniform officer management system for all three military services.

• Retirement at career tenures providing up to 75 percent of salary as pension, early separation from service contributing to civilian retirement plan with pension delayed until ultimate retirement.

Comparison of Foreign Military Officer Systems

A comparison of these officer management systems shows several key elements to be common to all or most. Table E.1 summarizes the types of officer systems, retirement points, rank structure, and level of uniformity between services. In the case of the United Kingdom, the summary includes both the existing and recommended future characteristics.

Those characteristics common to the majority of the foreign military officer systems reviewed are summarized in the 10 items shown below.

• Generally closed systems: no reserve entry or lateral entry except for the professions. The concept of reserves is not the same as in the United States.

• Generally long, “one-career” systems: retirement age at 55 (or later) with sufficient annuity so that a “second” career is not needed unless an officer chooses to do so.

• Some form of dual tenures: short service for some, career for others.

• Career status related to promotion to major or lieutenant commander.

• College degree not required for commission or promotion.

• Fast-track careers related to military/civilian education and command and high-level staff experience.
Table E.1
Summary Comparison of Foreign Military Officer Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Type System</th>
<th>Retirement Age</th>
<th>Ranks</th>
<th>Service Uniqueness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>3-E, (9, 20 yrs, and age 55)</td>
<td>age 55 (60 prof)</td>
<td>O-1–O-9</td>
<td>Uniform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland</td>
<td>2-Trk Com Long C</td>
<td>age 55</td>
<td>O-1–O-9</td>
<td>Uniform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>2-Trk Com Long C</td>
<td>by grd (52, 62, 65)</td>
<td>O-1–O-9</td>
<td>Uniform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>2-Trk Com Long C</td>
<td>40 yrs or age 55</td>
<td>O-1–O-9</td>
<td>Uniform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2-Trk Com Long C</td>
<td>by grd (55, 57, 59, and 60 for flag)</td>
<td>O-1–O-10 w/levels</td>
<td>Uniform/Terr Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.-Army</td>
<td>2-E, (8 yrs, age 55)</td>
<td>age 55, SER O-7, SER at 50, age 55</td>
<td>O-1–O-10 w/SER</td>
<td>Not uniform/More uniform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.-RAF</td>
<td>3-E, (8, 16 yrs, age 55)</td>
<td>age 55</td>
<td>O-1–O-10</td>
<td>Not uniform/More uniform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.-R Navy</td>
<td>Varies by branch</td>
<td>by grd (50,53,55 age 55 w/CRPs)</td>
<td>No O-7</td>
<td>Not uniform/More uniform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: E=engagement, Trk=track, Com=commission, C=career, grd=grade, SER=selected early retirement.

- Generally six officer grades below flag rank.
- Experience and maturity valued because of missions (e.g., peace operations).
- Officer career management systems are not necessarily uniform among the separate military services.
- Officership is a career, not a profession, and fits with national views about careers.

Various aspects of these systems should provide insights into the development of alternative future officer career management systems for the U.S. military services. One obvious difference is much longer careers, which could suggest consideration of extending U.S. officer careers beyond 30 years. Several areas of commonalty or similarity also exist; for example, the number of officer grades below flag rank is six in most of the countries researched, which is as it is in the United States. Lastly, the evidence in foreign military officer systems of certain characteristics that are not found in U.S. systems can demonstrate their plausibility, but in the final analysis, our alternative officer career management systems must be able to fit the culture of this nation and its military officer corps.