7. Evaluation Methodology

Introduction

Having determined a range of requirements and designed a number of career management alternatives, the next step is to evaluate the alternatives. This section describes the evaluation methodology. The intent of the evaluation is not to identify a “best” alternative. It is, rather, to provide the policymaker with information about how the alternatives operate. The evaluation combines quantitative and qualitative assessments of various aspects of the alternative management systems. The purpose and objectives of officer career management and other important indicators discussed in Section 1 provide the framework of our evaluation methodology.

As stated in Section 1, in the broadest sense, the primary purpose of officer management should be to provide officers able to discharge the national military strategy. An officer management system must focus on the goals of and meet the needs of those who use officers (its “customers” in a sense). For the U.S. military, users represent a broad spectrum, including the unified commanders (CINCs), the military services, the joint and defense staffs, and the various other defense and nondefense organizations that rely on career military officers for some of their staffing.

Objectives define what the career management system must do to achieve its purpose of providing officers able to discharge the national military strategy. The objectives of the career management system are

- meet requirements
- attract and develop officers
- foster careers
- provide flexibility.

In the evaluation, we also consider

- cost
- uniformity
- public confidence in the military
- number of officers entering, in, and leaving careers.
For each objective or consideration, we identify specific aspects that allow us to compare the various career management alternatives. In many cases, these are quantitative aspects derived from a computer simulation model that calculates an officer force based on the various requirements. In some instances, quantitative comparisons are not possible, and we resort to a qualitative evaluation. The evaluation framework above includes two considerations requested by Congress:

- expected length of officer careers
- timing and opportunities for promotion.

**Objectives as Evaluation Criteria**

**Meet Officer Requirements**

The officer career management system must provide officer inventory—by service, grade, and skill—that matches requirements. We chose this as the dominant criterion because it is central to fulfilling the purpose of a career management system. The Congress recognized its centrality when it directed that the study “should be guided by the basic objective of satisfying the validated grade/skill requirements of the military services.” Thus, we first determine if the various alternative officer career management systems can meet the different officer requirement options by changing appropriate personnel functions, primarily promotion timing. All five alternative officer career systems were made to satisfy each of the six requirements options at service, grade, and skill level of detail.

But meeting the requirement might affect several other criteria and measures as well. For example, changing promotion timing for each respective grade as needed to balance the inventory with each requirements option could also affect uniformity. The nature of these concomitant changes are important, because they provide decisionmakers insight into the operation of a given career management system.

**Attract and Develop Officers**

Grade and skill are not the only considerations with respect to officer qualifications. The officer career management system must provide officers with

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1 Appendix G describes this model and its use.
requisite military experience. We evaluate this aspect in two dimensions. First, we compare military experience profiles, defined as overall average field-grade experience in years in each skill group, generated by the alternative career systems with a baseline of military experience we developed based on service career paths and the requirements options. Second, we measure the variance in years of service at each of the field grades.

We established a military experience requirement baseline by first reviewing officer career paths\(^3\) for kind of experience provided and for when, in the career, that experience was provided. (Appendix I provides a complete description of our methodology.) We then established the minimum desired military-unique experience for the four skill groups by differentiating military experience and training from other skill and professional skill experience and training, which is experience that need not be provided (uniquely) by the military. Service career planners provide a balance of experience throughout a typical career. Military experience varies by skill group over the career length. Support and professional careers have less emphasis on uniquely military experience and more emphasis on skill use and experience.

This information on experience is used in two ways in our study. First, it is the basis for making judgments about lateral entry. Under our assumption that lateral entry is from civilian life, one can observe that there is little ability for making a substitution in line and specialist skill groups because those skill groups have predominantly military experience for which there is no comparable civilian skill. (However, it does suggest that lateral entry from reserve status or with prior active service is more workable because these groups have some military experience already.) On the other hand, the support and profession skill groups are better candidates for lateral entry because of the lower proportion of military-unique experience over a career.

The second way we use experience is to estimate the amount of future experience needed or desired to be successfully developed as an officer in each skill group. When additional experience is required, additional time must be provided on the career path or the new requirement must displace an assignment already on the career path or some combinations of the two must occur.

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\(^3\) *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Utilization* (Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, August, 1989); *The Naval Officer’s Career Planning Guidebook* (NAVPERS 15605, FY 1990); *The Marine Officer’s Guide*, Kenneth W. Estes, Naval Institute Press, 1985, pp. 278–279; the Air Force allowed us to review a draft of their forthcoming new career manual.

\(^4\) Line officers, for example, have 7, 6, and 7 years respectively of military experience in each decade of a 30 year career. Specialist career paths tend to emphasize military experience in the first decade and then have a pattern similar to line officers; a reflection of either military-unique initial specialist training (e.g. Navy nuclear power) or establishing military experience before “specializing.”
Although we used existing career patterns as a start point for a baseline experience profile, we wanted to ensure that the standard we used reflected future needs as well as past experience. Section 2 indicated that in the future there would be increased emphasis on joint operations, reserve matters, humanitarian missions, peacekeeping and peacemaking, and advances in technology. Moreover, our research indicated that some services believed that less frequent movement would lead to longer assignments on average, which would mean assignments needed now could not be accommodated in a fixed-length career; other services believed that additional future assignments represented broadening of an officer and could not be substituted for tours of duty already on a service’s critical path for officer development. Additionally, the Congress appears to have recognized such changes by allowing temporary variation in Marine Corps O-4 and O-5 grades “to accommodate a plan prepared to . . . satisfy joint and external assignment demands, and joint professional military education requirements.”\textsuperscript{5} These changes would seem to indicate the need for additional military experience for officers in the future, particularly line officers.

The additional experience needed was judged to be uniquely military. We estimated that the above changes were equivalent to one additional experience tour of 4 years (1 year of training/education\textsuperscript{6} and a 3 year tour of duty) to be added to the career path of line and specialist skill groups. In support and profession skill groups, we estimated that this military experience could be substituted for existing skill assignments. We included both the assignment for a typical length of three years and training/education of one year to prepare for the assignment. Career paths for line and specialist were modified by adding four years in total.\textsuperscript{7}

If changed experience requirements can be satisfied by substituting for other experience (that is no longer needed), no further evaluation is required. We felt that additional or changed military experience requirements for support and professional skill groups could be accommodated through substitution of the new required military experience for other military or skill experience. However, we did not substitute military experience for skill experience for line and


\textsuperscript{6}Adding an educational/training tour manifests itself also in the individual’s account, which has a ripple effect in diverse areas of officer career management. For this evaluation, we were interested only in the effect of an additional tour on average years of service.

\textsuperscript{7}In reality, this additional time in a career might be spent in one year increments added to existing assignments rather than in one entire additional assignment. The net effect would be the same.
specialist skill groups because there was less other/skill experience for which to
substitute. Thus, for a line officer with a 20 years of uniquely military experience
in a 30-year career path, an additional 4 years would result in a new career path
having 24 years of military experience out of 34.\textsuperscript{8} This suggests that longer
career paths are needed for line and specialist officers simply to accommodate
the increased developmental needs.

However, not all officers stay for a complete career over the 30 or 34 year career
path. We are more interested in determining how much additional experience is
desired for a field-grade officer over an expected career profile. Actual
experience of the overall officer corps or of field-grade officers is frequently and
commonly expressed in terms of average years of service. At a given moment in
time a field-grade officer in the line skill group has about 17 years of service.\textsuperscript{9}
We selected average years of service of field-grade officers as the measure of
desired future experience and of future experience \textit{provided} by career management
alternatives for our evaluation.\textsuperscript{10}

Desired average years of service for a field-grade officer in each skill group was
calculated by comparing two ratios. For a line officer, it is the ratio of 20 years of
desired military experience in a 30 year career path compared with the new
desired 24 years of military experience in a 34 year career path. This is about a 6
percent increase in desired experience or about one additional year in average
years of service. Thus, desired average field-grade years of service for line
officers was estimated to be 18 years, which is an increase of about 1 year from
current experience levels.

In addition to using comparisons of military experience, we also examined
variance in years of service at each grade O-4 through O-6. In some alternatives,
officers are promoted to a grade over a longer period and, depending on the
career flow structure and transition personnel function, spread over a wider
year-of-service band. Greater variance around a promotion point offers both a
broader pool of experienced people to draw from and the ability to promote

\textsuperscript{8}For a specialist having 24 years of military experience in a 30 year career; an additional 4 year
tour results in 28 years of military experience over a 34 year career or a 3 percent increase of about 6
months. For a support officer, there is no change because the additional needed military experience
has been substituted for assignment and experience already on the career path and not added to the
career path.

\textsuperscript{9}A field-grade officer in the support skill group has about 17.1 years of service, and a field-grade
officer in the specialist skill group has about 16.5 years of service. These differences reflect
underlying patterns of continuation. Support officers tend to stay longer than line officers, while
specialists tend to leave earlier than line officers.

\textsuperscript{10}Overall average years of service for the officer corps includes large numbers of officers who
attrite (or are attrited) after initial obligated service. Field-grade officers compose all of the career
force in all but the Long, Stable alternative in which a proportionately much smaller number of
company-grade officers attain career status.
officers when qualified. More time at each grade allows for additional development and attainment of increased experience by the individual officer. Thus, alternatives with wider variance would tend to provide a more experienced force.

**Foster Careers**

The previous criteria evaluate alternatives from the organizational perspective. This objective takes into account the individual officer’s viewpoint. A career management system should engender commitment and should afford opportunity for a military career. Career flow structures such as up-or-out, up-and-stay, or in-and-out and variation in these structures from choices made about accessing, developing, promoting, and transitioning affect commitment to the organization and career satisfaction for the individual officer. Differences between career systems premised on what has been called “vaulting ambition” and those premised in “grounded stability” should be measurable by assessing career satisfaction for officers. Career satisfaction is largely a matter of an individual officer comparing civilian career (and life) expectations with those being offered by a military career.

We use three approaches to evaluate this objective. First, we identify the key factors that influence career satisfaction and subjectively determine the extent to which each alternative contributes to the key factors. Second, we use the continuation rates to determine career lengths as a measure of comparison among alternatives. Finally, we measure the number of retirements that occur by alternative and compare them. Longer careers and more retirements indicate systems that provide greater satisfaction and opportunity and thus tend to foster careers.

Our research and review of the literature identified four key factors that influence future career satisfaction and commitment decisions: professional

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12Compensation also affects outcomes such as satisfaction, commitment, turnover, and stability. We do not study compensation policy. However, we use knowledge about compensation practice and may specify points in a system where compensation might affect behavior. We examine behaviors of alternative systems under the initial assumption of comparable compensation and then highlight if needed, where some compensation practice might need to change to induce a desired behavior. Various presidential or defense commissions have studied compensation and retirement. We assume that the compensation system will continue to motivate the same sorts of behavior that it does now.

13Appendix B on the profession of officership and Appendix C on career satisfaction provide a detailed assessment of career satisfaction and commitment factors.
satisfaction, job expectations, family considerations, and compensation. The relative importance of the four career satisfaction factors can shift over time.

As members of a profession, officers seek an organizational culture that is congruent with their profession. (See Appendix B for a discussion of officership as a profession.) In particular, they seek a culture that values loyalty and integrity and recognizes the long-term importance of their experience and dedication in matters relating to national security. Promotion should be fair and equitable and based on competence; those who have the appropriate commitment, skills, and knowledge should be able to serve for a lengthy period. Career systems that afford longer periods of professional satisfaction for officers with commitment should be more valued.

With respect to job expectations, officers seek challenge, autonomy, competent coworkers, responsibility, and accomplishment.\textsuperscript{14} They seek positions that provide educational opportunities, a variety of assignments, and professional associations. They also desire a work environment that meets their personal expectations, satisfies career values, and is sensitive to increasing family responsibilities.\textsuperscript{15}

Officers want a career that accommodates families, including a working spouse, dual-career couples (dual-military couples), or single parents. These considerations may mean more flexibility in work schedules and fewer relocations or deployments, especially later in careers. Careers need to recognize future life-styles of shared family responsibilities and greater emphasis on family-related activities.

Research suggests that compensation should remain a job satisfaction discriminator.\textsuperscript{16} However, total family compensation, including the military portion, will be the future criterion, and in many cases the nonmilitary portion of

\textsuperscript{14}“The most consistent relationship emerging from both the civilian and military literatures is that the probability of turnover decreases as job challenge and autonomy increase.” Gerry L. Wilcove, Regina L. Burch, Aileen M. Conroy, and Reginald A. Bruce, Officer Career Development: A Review of the Civilian and Military Research Literature on Turnover and Retention, NPRDC-TN-91-23, Navy Personnel Research and Development Center, September 1991.


family income may be larger. (See Appendix C for a more detailed discussion of these factors.)

In addition to these key influences on career satisfaction, our evaluation determined whether a particular alternative allowed committed officers to continue a military career. The net effect of commitment and opportunity is measured by continuation rates that reflect the proportion of the inventory in any selected year of service that is retained in the succeeding year of service. Each alternative officer career system used unique continuation rates in its design. Hence, we quantitatively compare alternative systems by using expected career lengths—one of the specific measures asked for by Congress—that result for each alternative.

Another indication of career satisfaction and opportunity is the percentage of officers that retire. One could expect that a career management system that allowed a high percentage of entering officers to reach retirement would be more appealing to the career-minded officer. We compare alternatives on the proportion of initial accessions that reach 20 years of service as a measure of retirement eligibility, even though some alternatives will require longer service to retire with an immediate annuity.

**Provide Flexibility to Adapt to Change**

The officer career management system should be responsive to rapidly changing requirements for officers, both increases and decreases. Experience since World War II strongly supports the need for a flexible officer career management system. We considered three measures that assess the ability of an alternative to move from one set of requirements to another in a five-year period by measuring

- the amount of change in annual continuation rates needed to meet the new requirements
- the amount of change in promotion timing or opportunity across different requirements options
- the ability of a system to meet the new requirements and remain within external grade table limitations.

In addition to these quantitative measures, we also assessed the various alternatives qualitatively.

We analyzed the recent officer force drawdown and concluded that in the absence of tenure and the presence of transition incentives, decreases in
continuation over a 5-year period of up to 20 percent could be achieved. We assumed increases of the same magnitude could be accommodated as well. Without tenure provisions, one can cut (but not grow) officers across the year-of-service profile. With incentives one can separate officers more equitably. Larger variations in a short time period would likely require changes in the career system or in separation policy. Thus, we regard annual changes in average continuation rates of 4 percent or less for a period of five years as acceptable. Officer career systems that needed lower changes in average annual continuation rates to meet new requirements would be considered the more flexible career systems.

To ensure that all officer career management systems met the set of officer grade requirements options, we varied promotion timing in order to balance the officer inventory in each service with its respective officer requirements by grade. Thus, need for change in promotion timing or opportunity is a second measure regarding which alternative officer career systems can adapt to the various requirements options more flexibly.

Each alternative needs different numbers of promotions to meet grade requirements. For example, alternatives with higher O-4 to O-6 continuation rates tend to have fewer promotions to those grades. As requirements options change, there are either fewer or more field-grade officers. Thus, a requirement option reduces or increases promotions in the transition period of five years that we have chosen. We can measure the year-to-year change in promotions for these requirements options against the base of promotions provided in each alternative. These year-to-year changes need to be accommodated either by changes in promotion timing or opportunity or by a shortage or excess of officers in a grade. Thus, alternatives that have the widest swings in promotions in adjusting to a new requirement option will be judged to be the least flexible because they will require the greatest change in existing promotion practice.

Our third measure is the likely effect of the existing grade tables. Senator Nunn expressed the policy considerations about oversight in discussing the implementation of DOPMA:

> Congress has the constitutional responsibility to enact rules and regulations governing the Armed Forces. Congress must control

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17The current drawdown period contains officer requirement and inventory reductions larger than 30 percent and exceeds five years. Further, the current officer career management system has required several significant changes, e.g., changes in grade tables, new retirement authority, and a variety of separation authorities to accommodate this large change in the officer inventories of the services. Changes in average annual continuation rates greater than our standard of 4 percent per year would suggest the need for major changes in the alternative officer career systems evaluated here.
When DOPMA became law in 1980, it continued control of the entire system of officer management through control of the field grades. “The principal statutory regulation for officer personnel management will continue to be exercised through the grade distribution authorized by the grade tables.”

Each alternative career system adapted, without external constraints, as needs for numbers of officers changed in each requirements option. We evaluated the effect of the existing grade tables by applying them to the grade requirements in each requirements option. All alternatives were able to meet the grade requirements without the external constraint. This evaluation shows whether a given option can meet the grade requirements within the framework of the current grade limitation table. Because some requirements options are smaller in size than officer strengths used in the existing sliding-scale grade table, we extended those grade tables using the methodology of the existing grade table—as officer strengths decrease, proportion of officers in the field grades increases. The Congress also directed in the FY 1994 Authorization Act that the effect of the proposed USMC grade table be examined. We compare its effect to that of the existing USMC grade table for each requirements option.

Our qualitative evaluation included an analysis of the fundamental operation of the various alternatives. The three numerical measures notwithstanding, some alternatives clearly offer more inherent flexibility than others because of their underlying career flow structures. Moreover, the design of certain personnel functions in an alternative (e.g., whether they incorporate vesting or transition incentives) creates expectations within the officer corps that can facilitate reductions or expansions. We wanted to ensure that the evaluation captured that flexibility, so we evaluated the options on their qualitative flexibility as well.

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18 Congressional Record, August 10, 1976, p. 26644.
19 Vice Admiral John G. Finneran, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Military Personnel Policy, U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, DOPMA (Defense Officer Personnel Management Act) (H.R. 5503), Hearings, Military Compensation Subcommittee, Committee on Armed Services, June 27, 1977, p. 112.
20 Section 523, Title 10 U.S.C.
Considerations as Evaluation Criteria

While the four objectives above describe the necessary conditions to achieve the purpose of the officer management system, there are additional indicators that the decisionmaker should consider in choosing among alternative career systems.

Cost

In evaluating cost we considered the relative magnitude and direction of differences in per capita\(^{21}\) cost for the alternative officer career management systems and different requirements options. We compared the average cost per officer by service for each alternative while holding requirements options constant. Included in the cost were basic pay, social security contribution, retirement accrual (assuming REDUX, the retirement system introduced in 1986), differential allowances, and accession and initial training costs. We are interested in how average per capita costs change as the number of accessions and transitions and seniority and grade mix change in the different alternatives while holding the different requirements options constant. We recognize that our costs are imprecise, but, for a given requirements option, the per capita costs show direction and magnitude of change for the different alternative career systems.

Evaluation was made relative to the current system by considering whether overall per capita costs increased or decreased and whether the change was large or small. We also discuss why some categories of cost vary by alternatives even if overall costs are similar. Variances in cost are particularly illustrative when different alternative management systems are evaluated using the same requirements options.\(^{22}\)

\(^{21}\) We recognize that this is a limited measure, but it does provide a sufficient basis for comparing alternatives. A recent RAND study says that per capita manpower cost estimates are useful when the presumption is that force strength is a given (Adele Palmer, *Cost Factors in the Army, Volume 2—Factors, Methods, and Models*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, R-4078/2-PA&E, 1992). As stated above, we are costing across alternatives given a constantly sized requirement option. We recognize the report’s statement that: “Average per-capita costs can change if the inventory grows or shrinks because the seniority and grade mix change.” Other studies have pointed out that there may be measurable benefits of using a more senior force that would presumably be more productive and also might require less indirect manpower to support it. See for example, Gary R. Nelson, Robert M. Gay, and Charles Robert Roll, Jr., *Manpower Cost Reduction in Electronics Maintenance: Framework and Recommendations*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, R-1483-ARPA, July 1974. As this study points out, substituting senior personnel for junior personnel would raise the average cost per person, but their greater effectiveness could result in a requirement for fewer direct personnel and fewer indirect support personnel and could thereby reduce total costs. Such an analysis is beyond the scope of our study.

\(^{22}\) In one requirements option, civilian-for-officer substitution occurs. We do not cost this substitution. We are more interested in the effect from changing alternatives for career management than in the relative costs of the several requirements options. For a full explanation of treatment of personnel-related costs, see Palmer and Larson, *Cost Factors in the Army*, op. cit.
Uniformity

The view of uniformity varies depending on the group involved. Congress wants uniform and consistent application across service but has expressed willingness to consider differences by skill. The services desire more leeway to address service-specific differences. Officers want fair and equitable application across skills within a service. A future concern is how much uniformity should exist among skill groups—line, professional, support, and specialist. It may become increasingly more difficult to treat these skill groups uniformly as requirements change.

We address the issue of uniformity across services—the traditional sense—and use two measures to evaluate it: promotion timing in each field grade and expected career length. While our evaluation does not include a detailed analysis of variations among skill groups, we note where several of the systems introduce practices that might suggest different personnel policies for different skill groups. (If these differences become significant, they could also adversely affect career satisfaction.)

The two measures we choose address those items frequently compared to determine equity among officer groups. As mentioned earlier, promotion timing for the field grades was varied to meet requirements. Changes of one year in promotion timing were considered acceptable, while larger changes in either direction were considered as not being uniform. We made quantitative comparisons of field-grade promotion timing for each service and expected career lengths for each service. We then qualitatively judged whether the alternative officer career systems were uniform across services. Large deviations in any of these direct measures resulted in a judgment that the alternative did not facilitate uniformity.

Career length is a straightforward comparison of the average career length compared across services. We calculate an overall average length of career for each service and compare the length for each service with other services in the same option. If the variation between the low and high service average exceeds three years, we regard the alternative as one that does not contribute to uniformity.

[23]The actuality and perception of fairness in accession, promotion, and separation are a critical part of the officer management equation within the system. There are legal standards that must be met that are most typically premised in racial, ethnic, and gender comparisons. However, beyond the legal standards are societal values that convey understandings of fairness and equity.
Public Confidence in the Military as an Institution

The nation currently has a great deal of confidence in the people running the military, judging by polls. In 1993, 42 percent of Americans had a great deal of confidence in the people running the military, highest among institutions covered.24 Such confidence is an important component in the military’s ability to support a national security strategy. Based on our review of pertinent literature and discussions with senior military officers, we posit that an officer career management system contributes to maintaining public confidence by providing competent officers, by attracting and retaining officers representative of national demography, and by being reasonably compatible with societal norms in the United States for careers. To evaluate this consideration, we qualitatively examine an alternative’s ability to provide officers perceived as competent, its ability to change in composition, and the compatibility of its management with civilian practices and to make subjective judgments about the extent to which they foster public confidence.

Presently, the military is perceived to be quite competent. For example, when he was Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney stated, “I would argue that the most important contributor to our victory in the Gulf was the quality of the force itself.” Moreover, this emphasis on competence to include “continued mastery of critical areas of warfare” has been stated as one of the enduring requirements of the regional defense strategy.25 The reputation for competence is also high judging by suggestions for involvement of the military in societal problems. “If there’s one institution that seems to me to hold out hope for the rest of America and our capacity to transform ourselves, if there’s one institution we should be learning from, it has been the US military.”26 We subjectively assess an alternative’s capability to produce military officers perceived as competent.

Composition—what the officer corps looks like—includes representativeness and is affected by opportunity for service of people in diverse demographic and

24This has not always been the case. Data gathered by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), which for the last 20 years has been polling the nation in regard to its confidence in the people who are running American institutions, reveal that 60 percent of Americans had a great deal of confidence in the people running the military in 1991 reflecting public confidence due to the success of Desert Storm. These figures differ from public opinion toward the people running the military in the late 1970s and early 1980s during which time between 28 and 31 percent of the nation had a great deal of confidence. “Confidence in Institutions,” The Public Perspective: A Roper Center Review of Public Opinion and Polling, 1993, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 84–96.


socioeconomic groups. Several measures and characteristics of alternatives are used to qualitatively evaluate how an alternative allows change in composition. These are level of accessions, entry policy, continuation policy, and attrition policy. With high levels of accession, one would expect more heterogeneity (e.g., there would be opportunity for substantial entry from ROTC, enlisted, or reserve). Lateral entry could be used to provide more rapid change in composition by attracting individuals from underrepresented groups who show potential for military service. Lateral entry from the enlisted force, for example, could contribute to providing the officer corps with greater numbers of qualified minorities.

Compatibility addresses the degree to which officer career management practices are consistent with commonly accepted management practices found in public and private sector organizations. For example, the degree to which a system allows for lateral entry or the opportunity to stay or how it grants future annuities based on years of experience in the organization may vary across alternative officer management systems.

**Numbers of Officers Entering, In, and Leaving Careers**

Career structures and the personnel functions of accessing, developing, promoting, and transitioning officers within career structures govern the numbers of officers who enter, stay in, and leave careers. We use three separable but related measures that show the numerical effect of different regulations of flows into, within, and out of the officer corps: (1) accessions, (2) promotions, and (3) transitions (including voluntary and involuntary separations and retirements). This assessment is more descriptive than evaluative. The intention is to describe how the various functions operate within a given system so policymakers have a basis for choosing which systems (or aspects of systems) might best meet policy goals.

**Accessions.** The level of accessions that is required to sustain each officer career system is one measure of personnel turnover. (Transitions or departures from the system are another.) The relative amount (high or low) of accessions is the

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27 The DoD annually provides a report comparing characteristics of military personnel with the U.S. population on demographic, socioeconomic, and other attributes. See, for example, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), *Population Representation in the Military Services Fiscal Year 1992*, October 1993.

28 The Senate directed that our report should “include an evaluation of flows into, within, and out of the officer corps.” *Senate Report 102-352*, pp. 199–200.
basis for assessment of the various alternative career systems on two dimensions. The first is the likelihood that the number of accessions supports the institutions of accession as they now exist. The second is whether sufficient accessions exist to eventually support likely reserve component needs for trained officers with active experience.29

**Promotions.** We measure the number of promotions to the three field grades. Promotions result from two factors: (1) promotion opportunity, the rates of selection for officers considered for promotion; and (2) promotion timing, the career point at which promotion generally occurs. Promotion timing was previously evaluated as a measure of flexibility and compared across services as a measure of uniformity. Here, we provide, by grade, promotion points for each service and alternative. Promotion opportunity percentages were difficult to compare among alternatives because some alternatives used long interval promotion zones, and as a result, opportunities are not exactly comparable because there is greater variance around the promotion point. For this reason, we provide the number of promotions that would occur at each grade, by service, and by alternative.

**Transitions.** The quantity of transitions—separations and retirements—out of the inventory and the point at which these transitions occur are measured. We provide data about expected retirements for each alternative and service. We also provide data about separations expected to occur between 3 and 10 years of service for each alternative and military service, and we characterize this data set as the potential reserve forces pool.

**Summary**

This section outlined the evaluation methodology. Each alternative is evaluated against different requirements options using the criteria and measures set forth here. Some criteria, such as meeting requirements, come directly from the objectives of officer career management. Other measures, such as cost, represent practical, but crucial, considerations.

The next section applies the criteria and measures to each alternative and arranges the results in a matrix scorecard. The scorecard can assist the decision process by providing the analytic information useful in choosing among

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29The Air Force and Marines currently have a high flow of officers with active experience to the reserves. The Army is required by recent legislation to achieve a 65 percent content of prior active service officers. Hence, high accessions in the active officer force are more supportive of these demands for active service in the reserves since it ensures a sufficient population to support flow out of the active force to reserves.
alternatives but does not require any weights to be given to the criteria in advance. Decisionmakers can make their own judgments about how to weight criteria.