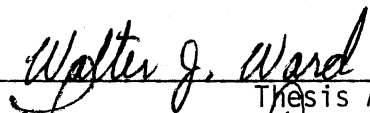
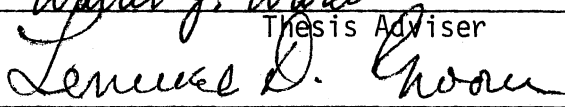


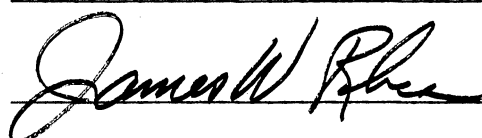
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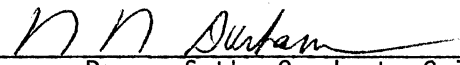
ALTUS GALAXY: READERS' PREFERENCES FOR SIX
CATEGORIES OF NEWS STORIES

Thesis Approved:



Thesis Adviser






Dean of the Graduate College

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PREFACE

Questionable readership, the rise of military underground publications, and the end of the draft and dawn of the all-volunteer era prompted Air Force commanders, information officers and editors to question the values of their base newspapers in the early 1970s.

During this period, I was editor of the Altus Galaxy, one of the Air Force's 150 base newspapers. As a "gatekeeper," I frequently was sweet-talked, cajoled, badgered, shoved and tugged by fellow Air Force members, and even their wives, "to get their story in the paper." Faced with deadlines, a limited staff and not enough editorial space, I often wondered what news was interesting and valuable to my audience, and what--barring directives from higher up--should receive top priority.

This exploratory study was aimed at finding out readers' preferences for different types of news stories in the Altus Galaxy, Altus Air Force Base's newspaper.

Many persons contributed to this study.

I am especially indebted to my friend and educator, Dr. Walter J. Ward, chairman of mass communication graduate studies.

A note of thanks goes to other committee members, Prof. Lemuel D. Groom and Dr. James W. Rhea.

I also wish to express my appreciation to Mr. Paul K. Kackley, Chief, Office of Information, Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma, for his encouragement, assistance and advice during the proposal and data-

gathering phases of the study.

Of course, this study would not have been possible without the cooperation of the 234 Altus Air Force Base personnel who took the time to answer and return the questionnaires.

Special thanks are also due my wife, Cindy, for her support, patience and understanding, and especially for copyreading and typing the manuscript.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to determine readers' preferences for different types of stories in the Altus Galaxy, Altus Air Force Base's newspaper.

The Altus Galaxy is a five-column, 12-16 page tabloid published weekly to provide Air Force news and information not immediately available from other sources to members of the Altus Air Force Base community.

Altus Air Force Base is located in the southwest corner of Oklahoma, just 15 miles north of the Texas border. The base adjoins its namesake, Altus, a city of almost 25,000.

At the time of this study, 4,578 military personnel were assigned to Altus Air Force Base.

Sixty per cent of those personnel were assigned to the 443d Military Airlift Wing of the Military Airlift Command (MAC). The primary mission of the wing, known as the "University of MAC," is to provide transitional training for aircrew members on the C-141 Starlifter and C-5 Galaxy transport aircraft. In addition, the 443d conducts classes for MAC aircrew instructors, crew chiefs, loadmasters and air transportation personnel.

The other 40 per cent of military personnel at Altus were assigned to tenant units. The 11th Air Refueling Squadron, a Strategic Air

Command unit which conducts global air refueling operations, accounted for 14 per cent; while the 4th Mobile Communications Group, an Air Force Communications Service unit which stands ready to provide communications support anywhere in the world, accounted for 19 per cent. The 2002d Communications Squadron and the U.S. Air Force Hospital, Altus, accounted for the remaining 3 and 4 per cent, respectively.

Military personnel form the largest and most important segment of the Altus Galaxy readership. It is mainly for them that the newspaper is published.¹ Other Galaxy readers include civilian base employees, dependents, relatives, retired personnel, reservists and members of the general public.

The Air Force Newspaper

There are two types of Air Force newspapers--official and unofficial.² Official newspapers are financed by appropriated or nonappropriated funds and do not carry commercial advertising. Unofficial newspapers, on the other hand, are commercial enterprise newspapers published by civilian concerns exclusively in the interest of Air Force personnel of a particular base at no cost to the U.S. Government.

In 1973 there were 151 Air Force newspapers.³ The Altus Galaxy was among 103 classified as unofficial commercial enterprise newspapers.

Commercial enterprise newspapers are profit-making endeavors for the publisher using paid advertising as the primary source of revenue. Such newspapers are owned and operated by civilians who have contracts with Air Force base or unit commanders. These contracts define requirements for content, advertising, printing, distribution and obligations of both publishers and commanders.

In return for the privilege of distributing his publication on the Air Force base, the publisher devotes the entire news space to Air Force news, features, photographs and art. The Air Force supplies copy and art for these newspapers and the same material also must be made available to any other civilian publisher requesting it.

Advertisements appearing in base newspapers must conform to "principles of good taste," and the amount of space in each issue used for advertisements must not detract from the internal information function of the publication. For example, according to Air Force Regulation 190-7, the monthly ratio of advertising to news copy for a 12-16 page newspaper like the Altus Galaxy should average 55 per cent to 45 per cent, respectively.

A commercial enterprise publication cannot state that it is an official publication of the Air Force, nor use the name, seal, insignia or emblem of the Air Force, command, base or unit in any manner that might imply it is an official Air Force publication. The following statement must be printed on the front page of each commercial enterprise newspaper:

The (name) is an unofficial newspaper published (frequency of publication) in the interests of personnel at (name of Air Force installation) of (major command). It is published by (name of publisher), a private firm (or individual), in no way connected with the Department of the Air Force. Opinions expressed by the publisher and writers are their own and are not to be considered an official expression by the Department of the Air Force. The appearance of advertisements, including supplements and inserts, in this publication does not constitute an endorsement by the Department of the Air Force of products or services advertised.⁴

Air Force Newspaper Content

Although no strict formula governs how much of what will go into

an Air Force newspaper, much of the content is geared to the space available and policies of the commander. Essentially, the base newspaper falls into the same category as industry's employee publication--it functions primarily as a tool of management in the field of employee communication. It is intended to be a major source of information about the Air Force, major command and local base.

Normally, a paper devotes most of its space to news and features of activities and personalities of the installation. However, like wire services supply civilian editors with news stories and photographs originating in distant places, military news services provide Air Force editors with news stories, features, editorials and photographs of general military interest.

One of these news services is the American Forces Press Service (AFPS), a branch of the Office of Information for the Armed Forces of the Department of Defense, which publishes a weekly news clipsheet.

Another news service, the Air Force News Service (AFNS), is an activity of the Internal Information Division, Office of Information, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force. It sends out weekly news releases, feature articles and photographs emanating from Headquarters, U.S. Air Force. AFNS stories cover new policies, regulations and programs directly affecting Air Force members; developments in new equipment; items that contribute to morale, and information that emphasizes objectives, accomplishments and trends in the Air Force.

Also, Air Force commands operate news services to provide information applicable to command personnel. For example, the Military Airlift Command operates the MAC New Service (MNS).

In many instances local angles may be developed to adapt material

provided by the American Forces, Air Force and command news services more closely to the interest of the base newspaper audience.

In addition to the management house organ function, the Air Force newspaper has an added responsibility as a community newspaper.

As a community service, the base newspaper must provide readers with news of their neighbors' doings; how their jobs contribute to the over-all Air Force mission, and what events have occurred or will take place that will have an impact on their professional careers and/or personal lives.

Unless great care is taken to maintain a well-balanced content, a base newspaper may drift into a pattern that pleases some readers but provides nothing of interest to others. Or, in extreme cases, it may even get so "top heavy" with material handed down by management, that it may alienate, rather than attract, readers.

Or as Air Force Regulation 190-7 states, "Overemphasis on management subjects to the exclusion of entertainment will inevitably result in loss of reading audience and negate the newspaper's purpose. A judicious balance is essential in all Air Force newspapers."

Just how much is overemphasis on management, what constitutes entertainment or when is a judicious balance achieved is not clearly expressed.

Review of the Literature

A search of literature uncovered little in the way of meaningful research in the area of military journalism. Journalism Abstracts, 1963-1974, and Bibliography of Theses and Reports Related to Military Information Activities, 1973, only list one pertinent study,

Paul F. Halpern's thesis, "An Investigation of Reader Attitudes toward Base Newspapers at Three Air Force Installations."

This study was conducted at Clinton-Sherman Air Force Base, Oklahoma; Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma, and Perrin Air Force Base, Texas. A questionnaire asked readers to indicate the need for frequent inclusion of 18 different types of articles and features in their base newspaper. Over-all, military personnel queried from each of the three surveyed bases ranked the 18 items in descending order of preference as follows:

1. local sports page
2. synopses of films at base theater
3. base activities calendar
4. chaplain's column
5. airman-NCO-officers' club column
6. letters to the editor
7. safety column
8. commander's column
9. youth activities column
10. news of other bases
11. base birth announcements
12. base library column
13. syndicated cartoons
14. locally drawn cartoons
15. school lunch menus
16. crossword puzzle
17. pinup pictures
18. medical/dental column⁵

However, since Halpern's 1966 study, Air Force newspapers have adapted to new thinking in content and design.

The reason for this change was summed up by a Defense Information School Newspaper Editors' Course instructor, Master Sergeant Ralph E. Tuttle:

Dwindling readership and the rise of military underground publications in the mid-1960s prompted many commanders to question the value of their newspapers. This situation, coupled with sharp criticism from several members of Congress, brought the military newspaper as a communications vehicle under close scrutiny.

During this period the readers suffered. The career serviceman or woman found that the average military newspaper might be called a communications vehicle, but that its shortcomings vastly overshadowed its merits.

To military newcomers, many with already established misgivings about the Vietnam War, the newspaper was just another 'establishment propaganda effort,' a sort of brain-washing with a journalistic gloss.⁶

Just what did modernization involve? Briefly, it involved changes in two areas--appearance and content. Tuttle explained:

Modernization means discarding static focus-and-brace and vertical layouts in favor of the clean, uncluttered, attractive formats advocated by such design experts as Professors Edmund C. Arnold of Syracuse University, Floyd K. Baskette of the University of Colorado and Jack J. Sissors of Northwestern University.

Modernization also involves a de-emphasis of 'marshmallow' content, such as, news about the wives' club tea, the stilted 'grip-and-grin' photograph, the tiny mug shot and the large group photograph, and a substitution of coverage of topical or 'gut' issues. Drug abuse, alcoholism, housing, consumerism, ecology, equal opportunity and minority relations are just a few topics that can be classified as 'gut' issues.⁷

The purpose of modernization was to shift the focus of military newspapers from the older career serviceman to the larger younger audience.

In 1973 Air Force newspapers had an estimated readership of 2,123,920 active duty personnel.⁸ And the bulk of this reading audience was between ages 25 and 30.⁹

"In order to attract and retain this audience, newspapers must establish credibility and successfully identify with the young soldier in terms of language, graphics and subject matter," the chief of the Army Newspaper Branch, Major Joseph E. Burlas, wrote in the Winter 1971/1972 issue of The Military Journalist.¹⁰

Thus, catchwords like "tell it like it is," "two-way communication,"

"gut issues," "relevant," "meaningful" and "involved" became popular as military newspapers "set out to escape their traditions of static, unattractive, gray formats and insipid, irrelevant and uninteresting content."

For example, in the July 23, 1971, issue of the Hamilton Air Force Base, California, Intercept, the base commander commented:

I think a number of people are surprised--some delighted, some disturbed--to see that the Intercept occasionally carries features and letters which 'knock' the Air Force, or even lampoon other government agencies. Let me set the record straight about how I personally feel about these things.

First of all, to borrow a phrase from our youth culture, 'I dig' the Air Force. I wish more people did. I wish we had the highest retention rate of any base in the Air Force. I wish every training film, every commander's call, and every job in the Air Force was enjoyable, and that the people who run them were always equally as pleasant.

And frankly, it bothers me to read about people who are bitter about such things. But to tell my staff 'I don't want that printed' is a little like saying 'I'm sick and tired about reading how smoking causes cancer, so I'm going to stop reading.'

Still, we have to draw the line. At what point do I say 'Enough--the base paper is going overboard?' The answer is really quite simple: when the Intercept carries 'bad news' without balancing it with objective reporting which brings out the good news, too, then it goes too far.

Hopefully, though, Intercept readers will notice that in the period of any one month, there is a balance of good and bad news. They may also be assured that if a specific 'bad news' article is run that doesn't give the other side a chance to reply, I'll have the newspaper staff on the carpet. This has occasionally happened in the past.

But if I were to sum up the general philosophy that's governed the freedom of expression I've given the base newspaper staff, I'd have to borrow a phrase from my information officer: 'Tell your bad news truthfully, so you can tell your good news believably.'

That's what telling it like it is--real communication--is all about.¹¹

It seems evident an Air Force newspaper cannot be run "by the seat of the pants." It takes both technical and practical know-how, plus a clear understanding of what Air Force newspapers are about in order to get the job done.

Statement of the Problem

Air Force Regulation 190-7 states, "The functions of an Air Force newspaper are to increase knowledge and understanding of the Air Force by providing detailed coverage of information of interest and value to Air Force personnel."

But, what is "interesting and valuable" information to Air Force personnel?

Are "management" stories interesting and valuable? Do Air Force personnel want to read biographical stories on key Air Force officials? Do they want to read about new aircraft and weapon systems? Do they want to read about Air Force programs and policies?

Are "editorials" interesting and valuable? Do Air Force members want to read articles written to influence them to agree with Air Force viewpoints? Do they want to read "commander's comments" columns? Do they want to read "hotline" columns?

Are "feature" stories interesting and valuable? Do Air Force personnel want to read about the base "junior officer, NCO and airman of the month"? Do they want to read about unit, section and office accomplishments? Do they want to read human-interest articles about fellow officers and enlisted men?

Are "names-in-the-news" interesting and valuable? Do Air Force members want to read about personnel who are promoted or who are

presented Air Force awards? Do they want to read about personnel who re-enlist or retire?

Are "family" news stories interesting and valuable? Do Air Force personnel want to read about wives' club events? Do they want to read about youth activities? Do they want to read about outstanding achievements of members of a fellow airman's family?

Are "general" news stories interesting and valuable? Do Air Force members want to read about topical issues, such as ecology, energy conservation, consumerism, housing, etc.? Do they want to read letters to the editor and inquiring reporter columns? Do they want to read about on- and off-base recreational activities? Do they want to read about base intramural sports events?

Air Force newspaper readers' preferences, then, was the major issue to which this thesis was addressed. No scientific investigation of this nature was located; thus, the lack of hypotheses.

This exploratory study had two objectives:

1. To determine Altus Galaxy readers' preferences for six different types of news stories--management, editorial, feature, names-in-the-news, family and general interest.

2. To determine to what extent membership in a particular military group affected a person's interest in various categories of Altus Galaxy news stories.

FOOTNOTES

¹U.S. Department of Defense, Armed Forces Newspaper Guide, DOD GEN-34 (Washington, D.C., 1971), p. 16.

²U.S. Department of the Air Force, Information Activities: Air Force Newspapers, Base Guides, and Directories, Air Force Regulation 190-7 (September 18, 1970), p. 2.

³Sallie R. Garman and Harold Newcomb, "A Content Analysis of Air Force Newspapers" (Washington, D.C., July, 1974), p. 31.

⁴Information Activities: Air Force Newspapers, Base Guides, and Directories, p. 7.

⁵Paul Felix Halpern, "An Investigation of Reader Attitudes toward Base Newspapers at Three Air Force Installations" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1966), pp. 85-86.

⁶Air Force News Service, "Editors Notebook" (Washington, D.C., August 17, 1973), attachment.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Garman and Newcomb, p. 31.

⁹Air Force News Service, "Editors Notebook" (Washington, D.C., April 20, 1973), p. 7F.

¹⁰Joseph E. Burlas, "Gimmicks, Gewgaws and Gadgets," The Military Journalist, VII (Winter 1971/72), p. 1.

¹¹Lee A. Sarter, "Going Overboard," Intercept (July 23, 1971), p. 4.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

"I can always find something of interest to me in our base newspaper" is a comment editors hope to elicit from fellow Air Force members who make up base newspaper readers. Obviously, this is an extremely difficult goal to achieve.

Base newspapers must appeal to many types of military readers: officers, noncommissioned officers and airmen; men and women; persons of different ages, races and backgrounds; first termers and careerists; personnel who work on the flightline or in a hangar and those who work in an office; shift workers and those who work 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., etc.

Complicating a base newspaper editor's task is the ever-present need to include material that will help him achieve the internal information objective of the publication.

This study, therefore, was aimed at finding out how interesting various types of stories were to base newspaper readers. Specifically, this thesis concerned Altus Air Force Base personnel's preferences for different types of Altus Galaxy stories.

In order to measure readers' preferences, a questionnaire was designed. Each participant in the study was asked to rate his degree of interest from very interesting to not at all interesting in various types of news stories.

Altus Air Force Base personnel were divided into five socio-economic

groups: field grade officers, company grade officers, senior NCOs, NCOs and airmen. This is a normal breakdown of Air Force members by rank and responsibility.

To facilitate analysis, Altus Galaxy news stories were categorized as: (1) management, (2) editorial, (3) feature, (4) names-in-the-news, (5) family and (6) general interest.

These six categories and statements representing each category in the questionnaire were derived from a review of Galaxy content, Air Force regulations and guidelines concerning base newspapers, and observations of Air Force information officers and editors.

A list of more than 80 statements was composed. From this group, 50 items were selected for the questionnaire based upon recommendations of the chief of Altus Air Force Base's Office of Information. Obviously, not every type of base newspaper story could be included in the questionnaire.

Ten statements were selected for the management news category, nine for editorial, eight for feature, six for names-in-the-news, six for family and 11 for general interest.

Variables and Definitions

Questionnaire statements representing management news, editorials, features, names-in-the-news, family news and general interest news in the Altus Galaxy were the independent variables and degree of interest was the dependent variable. The assigned variable comprised the five groups of Altus Air Force Base personnel selected to respond to the questionnaire. Following are operational definitions of the assigned and independent variables.

Types of Respondents

Field Grade Officer. Air Force officer with rank of colonel, lieutenant colonel or major.

Company Grade Officer. Air Force officer with rank of captain, first lieutenant or second lieutenant.

Senior NCO. Air Force noncommissioned officer with rank of chief master sergeant, senior master sergeant or master sergeant.

NCO. Air Force noncommissioned officer with rank of technical sergeant, staff sergeant or sergeant.

Airman. Air Force enlisted man or woman with rank of airman 1st class, airman or airman basic.

Categories of News Stories

Management. Information on Department of Defense, Air Force, major command and base programs and policies. Any material obviously published in the interest of "management." For example, stories that report changes in Air Force policies; stories about new equipment and procedures introduced to help personnel carry out their missions; biographical stories on "key" Air Force officials; stories on equal opportunity and treatment of personnel and other social actions programs; stories that pertain to promotion opportunities, pay increases and service benefits, and stories that publicize a Combined Federal Campaign or savings bond drive.

Editorial. Information intended to educate and persuade, as well as, enhance morale. For example, stories that make every effort to present a positive picture of the Air Force; stories that emphasize need for new aircraft and weapon systems; editorials that explain and

support Air Force programs and policies; stories in which squadron commanders and "key" base officials express their views; "Commander's Comments" columns in which the wing commander explains his programs and policies, and "Hotline" columns in which the wing commander responds to questions of base personnel.

Feature. Information intended to entertain or supplement rather than inform, and selected for presentation primarily because of some element other than timeliness. For example, stories that acquaint readers with outstanding accomplishments of local personalities and organizations; stories that depict how personnel of various base duty sections contribute to the base mission; "personality sketches" about the base "junior officer, NCO or airman of the month," and stories about hobbyists, such as, an airman who is building a stock car or an officer who is building an airplane.

Names-in-the-News. Information "just about people." For example, stories that "name" local personnel who receive promotions, who receive Air Force decorations and awards, who are new arrivals on base, who are departing for new assignments, who re-enlist and who retire.

Family. Information about Air Force dependents and their activities. For example, stories about wives' clubs; stories about youth groups; stories about scouting programs; stories about chapel activities, and stories about "volunteer" organizations.

General Interest. Any type of information that does not fit in the above five categories. For example, "how to" stories that provide minor maintenance instructions for base housing occupants; employee participation and opinion material, such as, letters in the editor and "inquiring reporter" columns; stories that announce recreational and

entertainment activities; stories that report results of base sports events; stories on non-military subjects, and stories about topical issues, such as, ecology, energy conservation, consumerism, drug abuse.

Method of Measurement

The questionnaire was made up of 50 statements about news stories Altus Air Force Base personnel might read in the Altus Galaxy. Participants in the study were asked to indicate how interesting or uninteresting each item was to them on a scale ranging from 7 (very interesting) to 1 (not at all interesting).

For example, take the statement:

Feature stories about Altus AFB personnel.

Very
Interesting _____ X _____ Not at all
Interesting

If to the respondent, "feature stories about Altus AFB personnel" were "slightly interesting," an "X" would be placed in the third blank as illustrated above.

The scale below indicates what the seven different positions were supposed to represent.

very	inter-	slightly	neutral	slightly	not	not
inter-	esting	inter-		not	inter-	at all
esting		esting		inter-	esting	inter-
				esting		esting

The questionnaire was pretested on five individuals--a lieutenant colonel, a technical sergeant, a staff sergeant and two sergeants--from the intended survey population. No problems with questions, answer choices or procedures were discovered.

A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

Three hundred fifty of Altus Air Force Base's some 4,500 personnel were selected through stratified random sampling to participate in the study.

Participants were chosen from an up-to-date, computer-prepared "base locator list" which divided Altus personnel by rank into 15 groups, or strata. These groups were "colonel," "lieutenant colonel," "major," "captain," "first lieutenant," "second lieutenant," "chief master sergeant," "senior master sergeant," "master sergeant," "technical sergeant," "staff sergeant," "sergeant," "airman 1st class," "airman" and "airman basic." Personnel in each group were listed alphabetically and numbered consecutively.

Random samples, then, were taken separately from each of the 15 groups by means of a table of random numbers.

For example, the personnel roster showed 200 captains were assigned to the base. A sample of 17 captains was needed. Therefore, 17 different numbers between 001 and 200 were chosen from a table of random numbers. From the list of captains, those with the chosen numbers were selected into the sample.

The same procedure was used for each of the other 14 rank groups until the 350-member total sample was filled.

Questionnaires were sent to 3 of 12 colonels, 5 of 42 lieutenant colonels, 11 of 109 majors, 17 of 200 captains, 5 of 67 first lieutenants, 5 of 49 second lieutenants, 5 of 34 chief master sergeants, 7 of 76 senior master sergeants, 25 of 325 master sergeants, 38 of 498 technical sergeants, 60 of 801 staff sergeants, 66 of 947 sergeants, 66 of 950 airmen 1st class, 32 of 419 airmen and 5 of 48 airmen basic.

Data Gathering Procedure

Questionnaires were distributed to the 350 sample subjects by name through their unit of assignment. These units were: 443d Military Airlift Wing; 443d Technical Training Squadron; 56th Military Airlift Squadron; 57th Military Airlift Squadron; 443d Air Base Group; 443d Avionics Maintenance Squadron; 443d Field Maintenance Squadron; 443d Organizational Maintenance Squadron; 443d Security Police Squadron; 443d Civil Engineering Squadron; 443d Supply Squadron; 443d Transportation Squadron; Detachment 1, Headquarters Military Airlift Command; U.S. Air Force Hospital, Altus; Detachment 4, 1365 Photo Squadron; Detachment 4, 15th Weather Squadron; 2002d Communications Squadron; 11th Air Refueling Squadron, and 4th Mobile Communications Group.

The chief of Altus Air Force Base's Information Office and this writer personally delivered questionnaires to the squadron commander, officer-in-charge or first sergeant of each of the above units. Unit officials were briefed about the Altus Galaxy study and asked to have questionnaires distributed and returned to the base information office within two weeks.

Sample subjects, therefore, were contacted by their individual units and asked to complete the questionnaire. A cover letter explained why participation was needed and provided instructions on completing the questionnaire.

The name of each subject appeared on the cover letter for distribution purposes. Participants, consequently, were instructed to retain the letter in order to guarantee anonymity.

In addition to the name of each subject on the cover letter, the attached questionnaire also was marked with the individual's rank:

"Col," "LtCol," "Maj," "Capt," "1stLt," "2ndLt," "CMSgt," "SMSgt," "MSgt," "TSgt," "SSgt," "Sgt," "A1C," "Amn," and "AB." No additional demographic data were requested.

The study was conducted during February, 1974. Two weeks after questionnaires were distributed to sample subjects, a story was published in the Galaxy reminding persons who had not completed and returned questionnaires to please do so, and thanking those who had participated in the study. The follow-up story is attached as Appendix B.

Seventy-two per cent of the 350 questionnaires were returned. Two captains, two senior master sergeants, seven master sergeants, 10 technical sergeants, 23 staff sergeants, 20 sergeants, 21 airmen 1st class, 12 airmen and one airman basic failed to respond.

Questionnaires from two technical sergeants, four staff sergeants, three sergeants, seven airmen 1st class, one airman and one airman basic were invalid due to response biases indicated by the same or patterned responses to the 50 statements.

Responses from 234 questionnaires, then, were analyzed.

While varying interests in different types of news stories by Altus Air Force Base personnel was the major issue in this study, three tests constituted analysis of data: (1) test for differences in interests between groups, (2) test for differences in mean interests in the six categories of news stories and (3) test for significance of interaction of groups and news stories.

A factorial analysis of variance was used to analyze the data.

Factorial analysis of variance is the statistical method that analyzes the independent and interactive effects of two or more

independent variables on a dependent variable.¹

As discussed earlier in this chapter, categories of news stories and types of Altus Air Force Base personnel comprised the independent variables. The dependent variable was the mean interest in news stories by base personnel.

A 5 x 6 crossbreak, as illustrated in Table I, was used to facilitate this study. A crossbreak is a numerical tabular presentation of data in which variables are juxtaposed in order to study the relations between them.²

TABLE I
ANALYSIS PARADIGM ILLUSTRATING
JUXTAPOSITION OF VARIABLES

<u>CATEGORIES OF NEWS STORIES</u>	
Management	Editorial Feature Names-In- Family General The-News Interest
<u>TYPES OF ALTUS AFB PERSONNEL</u>	
Field Grade Officers	
Company Grade Officers	Mean Interest Scores on Statements Measuring Preferences for News Stories
Senior NCOs	
NCOs	
Airmen	

From interpretation of the crossbreak and factorial analysis of variance the investigator was able to determine:

1. Altus Galaxy readers' preferences for six different types of news stories.
2. To what extent membership in a particular military group affected a person's interest in various categories of Altus Galaxy news stories.

The factorial analysis of variance provided only a rough estimate of the main and interactive effects of respondent groups and news category "effects" on interest scores. Some group means were highly unequal, which contributed to potential sample bias. Too, between-subjects' variance was included in the error variance in the two-factor factorial analysis.

To offset some of these pitfalls, the author conducted a treatment-by-subjects analysis of variance to check the reliability of the six news categories.

FOOTNOTES

¹Fred N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York, 1964), p. 213.

²Ibid., p. 625.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

How interesting are Altus Galaxy news stories to Altus Air Force Base personnel?

To answer this question, a questionnaire was designed comprising 50 statements about news stories base personnel might read in the Galaxy. Each respondent indicated his or her degree of interest in each item on a seven-point scale from "very interesting" to "not at all interesting." Each statement comported to one of the six categories of news stories: "management," "editorial," "feature," "names-in-the-news," "family" and "general interest," as defined in Chapter II.

Respondents were Altus Air Force Base military personnel, the primary audience of the Galaxy. Each respondent was assigned to one of five groups, based on rank: colonels, lieutenant colonels and majors to "field grade officer;" captains, first lieutenants and second lieutenants to "company grade officer;" chief master sergeants, senior master sergeants and master sergeants to "senior NCO;" technical sergeants, staff sergeants and sergeants to "NCO," and airmen 1st class, airmen and airmen basic to "airman."

Of the 350 questionnaires distributed to a stratified random sampling of base personnel, 234 usable responses were returned. A wide range of return percentages resulted among different types of respondents.

A return rate of 100 per cent was established for field grade officers, as 19 questionnaires of the 19 sent were returned. Twenty-five of 27 (93 per cent) were returned by company grade officers; 28 of 37 (76 per cent) were returned by senior NCOs; 102 of 164 (62 per cent) were returned by NCOs, and 60 of 103 (58 per cent) were returned by airmen.

It should be noted the questionnaire return rate decreased with the rank of respondents.

Table II, page 25, shows mean interest scores for each category--management, editorial, feature, names-in-the-news, family and general interest--by each group--field grade officer, company grade officer, senior NCO, NCO and airman.

These data were computed by assigning values to the possible statement responses, such as, 7 for "very interesting," 6 for "interesting," 5 for "slightly interesting," 4 for "neutral," 3 for "slightly not interesting," 2 for "not interesting," and 1 for "not at all interesting."

A mean interest score was obtained for each of the six categories by averaging a person's responses to statements made about each category. Then, a mean for each group was determined.

The mean serves two important purposes.¹ First, it is a shorthand description of a mass of quantitative data obtained from a sample. It is more meaningful and economical to let one number stand for a group than to try to note and remember all the particular numbers. A mean is, therefore, descriptive of a sample obtained at a particular time in a particular way. Second, it also describes indirectly but with some accuracy the population from which the sample was drawn.

For example, if the sample of "field grade officers" is

TABLE II
 COMPARISON OF MEAN INTEREST SCORES FOR SIX CATEGORIES
 OF NEWS STORIES BY FIVE ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE GROUPS

	<u>CATEGORIES OF NEWS STORIES</u>						Means
	Management	Editorial	Feature	Names-In- The-News	Family	General Interest	
<u>ALTUS</u>							
<u>TYPES OF</u>							
<u>AIR FORCE BASE</u>							
<u>PERSONNEL</u>							
Field Grade Officers	5.24	4.80	5.21	4.75	4.25	4.97	4.87
Company Grade Officers	5.09	4.65	5.00	4.47	4.23	5.08	4.75
Senior NCOs	5.46	5.11	5.16	5.13	4.48	4.95	5.05
NCOs	5.14	4.70	4.72	4.47	4.09	5.29	4.74
Airmen	5.07	4.78	4.80	4.23	3.95	5.34	4.70
Means	5.20	4.81	4.98	4.61	4.20	5.13	4.82

representative of all field grade officers at Altus Air Force Base, then the average of their scores tells us much about the average of the population.

This chapter, then, is concerned with analysis and interpretation of findings.

A multi-factor variance analysis was applied to the 11,466 decisions made by base personnel. That is, 234 Altus Air Force Base personnel indicated their degrees of interest in the 49 statements about news stories they might read in the Altus Galaxy.

Differences in Personnel Types

Referring to the three test questions presented in Chapter II:

1. Were there significant differences between the mean interest scores of the five types of Altus Air Force Base personnel?

The answer is yes. The F-ratio of 3.39 (df = 4/1374) meant that the probability of differences as large as that observed between the mean interest of at least two types of personnel would occur by chance less than one time in 100 ($p < .01$). Mean interests by types of personnel, as shown in Table II, page 25, were as follows:

1. Senior NCOs (5.05)
2. Field Grade Officers (4.87)
3. Company Grade Officers (4.75)
4. NCOs (4.74)
5. Airmen (4.70)

Significant differences occurred between three pairs of group means, as shown in Table III, page 27. Mean interest of senior NCOs exceeded that of company grade officers, NCOs and airmen. Differences in interest between the other seven pairs of personnel types were not significant.

TABLE III

MEAN INTERESTS, DIFFERENCE SCORES BETWEEN
TYPES OF ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE PERSONNEL,
ACCOMPANIED BY PROBABILITY LEVELS

Mean Interest in Each Pair of Personnel Types				Mean Difference	Probability	
Senior NCOs	5.05	v.	Company Grade Officers	4.75	.30	<.05
Senior NCOs	5.05	v.	NCOs	4.74	.31	<.05
Senior NCOs	5.05	v.	Airmen	4.70	.35	<.05
Field Grade Officers	4.87	v.	Company Grade Officers	4.75	.12	n.s.
Senior NCOs	5.05	v.	Field Grade Officers	4.87	.18	n.s.
Field Grade Officers	4.87	v.	NCOs	4.74	.13	n.s.
Field Grade Officers	4.87	v.	Airmen	4.70	.17	n.s.
Company Grade Officers	4.75	v.	NCOs	4.74	.01	n.s.
Company Grade Officers	4.75	v.	Airmen	4.70	.05	n.s.
NCOs	4.74	v.	Airmen	4.70	.04	n.s.

News Category Differences

2. Were there significant differences between the mean interests in the six categories of news?

Yes. The F-ratio of 31.69 (df = 5/1374, $p < .01$) meant that a difference as large as that observed between at least two of the categories of news would occur by chance less than one time in 100. Mean interest scores for each category were as follows:

1. Management (5.20)
2. General Interest (5.13)
3. Features (4.98)
4. Editorials (4.81)
5. Names-in-the-News (4.61)
6. Family (4.20)

The over-all F-ratio meant only that the author could be confident that a significant difference existed between management stories, with highest mean interest of 5.20, and family stories, with the lowest mean interest of 4.20. However, differences in mean interest between two categories were not significant, as shown in Table IV, page 29.

Tests for differences between all possible combinations of categorical mean interests showed that management and general interest articles did not differ significantly, but both carried a higher mean interest than any other type of story.

Feature stories topped editorials, as well as names-in-the-news and family stories, while editorials were more interesting than names-in-the-news and family articles. Least interesting were family stories, which were overshadowed significantly by all other categories.

Regarding the first two questions on main effects, then, only senior NCOs displayed a significantly higher interest in the six categories of Altus Galaxy content than did some of the other types of

TABLE IV
DIFFERENCES IN MEAN INTEREST BETWEEN ALL
POSSIBLE PAIRS OF NEWS CATEGORIES

Mean Interest in Each Pair of Categories				Mean Difference	Probability Level	
Management	5.20	v.	Gen. Int.	5.13	.07	n.s.
Management	5.20	v.	Features	4.98	.22	p < .01
Management	5.20	v.	Editorials	4.81	.39	p < .01
Management	5.20	v.	"Names"	4.61	.59	p < .01
Management	5.20	v.	Family	4.20	1.00	p < .01
Gen. Int.	5.13	v.	Features	4.98	.15	p < .05
Gen. Int.	5.13	v.	Editorials	4.81	.32	p < .01
Gen. Int.	5.13	v.	"Names"	4.61	.52	p < .01
Gen. Int.	5.13	v.	Family	4.20	.93	p < .01
Features	4.98	v.	Editorials	4.81	.17	p < .05
Features	4.98	v.	"Names"	4.61	.37	p < .01
Features	4.98	v.	Family	4.20	.78	p < .01
Editorials	4.81	v.	"Names"	4.61	.20	p < .01
Editorials	4.81	v.	Family	4.20	.61	p < .01
"Names"	4.61	v.	Family	4.20	.41	p < .01

Critical Differences = .1473 at p < .05 and .1945 at p < .01

base personnel; namely, company grade officers, NCOs and airmen.

On the other hand, all categories of content differed in their interest-pulling power, except management and general interest stories which were equally interesting.

Detailed discussions are attached as Appendixes C and D.

Interactive Tendencies

3. Was there significant interaction between categories of news stories and types of Altus Air Force Base personnel?

The answer is no. The F-ratio of 1.04 fell just short of the .05 probability level, indicating that differential interest in news categories by types of personnel would occur by chance more than 5 times in 100.

However, since the error variance very possibly was inflated by hidden individual differences which would tend to deflate the interaction F-ratio, the author chose to take note of some of the more obvious patterns which indicated that the over-all interest in particular news categories depended on the type of personnel who responded to the questionnaire.*

Possible interactive tendencies were determined by inspecting the difference in interest each type of personnel registered between any two categories of news. The author arbitrarily considered any mean difference in interest beyond .30 to be worthy of note.

* In fact, the author ran a treatments-by-subject analysis of the 234 respondents' interest ratings on the six categories of news. The between-subjects' variance was significant ($F = 6.33$, $df = 233/1165$, $p < .01$), indicating existence of individual differences not accounted for in the author's straightforward factorial analysis of variance.

Management versus Features

Management news drew significantly higher interest than features (5.20 v. 4.98, $p < .01$). A closer inspection of Table V reveals that NCOs probably contributed most to management's higher interest ratings, with a gap of .42 between their interest in management (5.14) and features (4.72).

TABLE V
MEAN INTEREST SCORES SHOWING TENDENCIES
OF MANAGEMENT NEWS AND FEATURES TO
INTERACT WITH TYPES OF ALTUS
AIR FORCE BASE PERSONNEL

<u>PERSONNEL TYPES</u>	<u>NEWS CATEGORIES</u>	
	Management News	Features
Field Grade Officers	5.24	5.21
Senior NCOs	5.46	5.16
Company Grade Officers	5.09	5.00
NCOs	5.14	4.72
Airmen	5.07	4.80

Officers, senior NCOs and airmen were as interested in features as they were in management news.

Management versus Names-in-the-News

Management news tended also to draw higher interest than names-in-the-news (5.20 v. 4.61, $p < .01$). The higher interest in management over "names" was true across all types of personnel. However, the gap between mean interest in the two categories of news was greatest for company graders, NCOs and airmen. They, then, tended to contribute most to the higher interest in management and lower interest in "names."

Management versus Family News

The higher interest in management over family news (5.20 v. 4.20, $p < .01$) held up across all types of personnel. However, the two largest contributors to management's superiority of interest were airmen and NCOs whose interest in management news exceeded their interest in family news by 1.12 and 1.05, respectively.

Management versus General Interest News

As pointed out in Table II, page 25, the management and general interest news categories were the only two which did not differ significantly in interest. On the other hand, this over-all similarity could have been deceiving due to numerous tendencies toward interactions involving news categories and various types of personnel. This can be illustrated through dissection of Table VI.

Only the senior NCOs tended to show a higher interest in management news over general interest (5.46 v. 4.95), as shown in Table VI. All other types of personnel showed similar interest in the two categories of news.

TABLE VI
 MEAN INTEREST SCORES SHOWING TENDENCIES OF
 MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL INTEREST NEWS
 TO INTERACT WITH TYPES OF ALTUS
 AIR FORCE BASE PERSONNEL

<u>PERSONNEL TYPES</u>	<u>NEWS CATEGORIES</u>	
	Management News	General Interest
Field Grade Officers	5.24	4.97
Company Grade Officers	5.09	5.08
Senior NCOs	5.46	4.95
NCOs	5.14	5.29
Airmen	5.07	5.34

However, looking at the two categories of news separately, the senior NCOs tended to be more interested in management news than were company grade officers (5.09), NCOs (5.14) or airmen (5.07).

The compensating pattern which explains the equal over-all interest between management and general interest news involved the relatively high interest of NCOs and airmen in general interest news (5.29 and 5.34, respectively). These two types of personnel were tended to be more attracted to general interest news than were senior NCOs and field grade officers.

Editorials versus Features

Features drew more interest than editorials (4.98 v. 4.81, $p < .05$).

Table VII indicates that this was due mostly to field and company grade officers who showed a higher mean interest in features than in editorials.

TABLE VII
MEAN INTEREST SCORES SHOWING TENDENCIES
OF EDITORIALS AND FEATURES TO
INTERACT WITH TYPES OF ALTUS
AIR FORCE BASE PERSONNEL

<u>PERSONNEL TYPES</u>	<u>NEWS CATEGORIES</u>	
	Editorials	Features
Field Grade Officers	4.80	5.21
Senior NCOs	5.11	5.16
NCOs	4.70	4.72
Airmen	4.78	4.80
Company Grade Officers	4.65	5.00

Field grade officers expressed a mean interest of 5.21 in features compared to 4.80 in editorials, while company grade officers noted a similar pattern of a 5.00 mean interest in features and 4.65 in editorials. Backgrounding this pattern was the nearly similar attraction of features and editorials for noncommissioned officers and airmen.

Editorials versus Names-in-the-News

Editorials were rated more interesting than names-in-the-news (4.81 v. 4.61, $p < .01$). By comparing the difference in mean interest between editorials and "names" by each type of personnel in Table VIII, one can see that the popularity of editorials over "names" was due mostly to airmen.

TABLE VIII

MEAN INTEREST SCORES SHOWING TENDENCIES
OF EDITORIALS AND NAMES-IN-THE-NEWS
TO INTERACT WITH TYPES OF ALTUS
AIR FORCE BASE PERSONNEL

<u>PERSONNEL TYPES</u>	<u>NEWS CATEGORIES</u>	
	Editorials	"Names"
Field Grade Officers	4.80	4.75
Company Grade Officers	4.65	4.47
Senior NCOs	5.11	5.13
NCOs	4.70	4.47
Airmen	4.78	4.23

While airmen expressed a mean interest of .55 in editorials over "names" (4.78 minus 4.23 = .55), officers and non-commissioned officers showed very similar interests in both categories of news. That is,

they did not express a difference in interest greater than the arbitrary .30.

Editorials versus Family News

Editorials, like all other categories of news, drew more interest than did family news (4.81 v. 4.20, $p < .01$). Table IX shows that editorials probably overshadowed family news across all types of personnel.

TABLE IX
MEAN INTEREST SCORES SHOWING TENDENCIES
OF EDITORIALS AND FAMILY NEWS TO
INTERACT WITH TYPES OF ALTUS
AIR FORCE BASE PERSONNEL

<u>PERSONNEL TYPES</u>	<u>NEWS CATEGORIES</u>	
	Editorials	Family
Field Grade Officers	4.80	4.25
Company Grade Officers	4.65	4.23
Senior NCOs	5.11	4.48
NCOs	4.70	4.09
Airmen	4.78	3.95

In the above table, one can see that all types of personnel expressed a .30-plus interest in editorials over family news. Noteworthy is that senior NCOs showed a relatively high interest in editorials

compared with other types of personnel, and that airmen showed a lower interest in family news than did senior NCOs. In fact, airmen contributed even more to the higher rating of editorials over family news than did any other type of personnel.

Editorials versus General Interest News

Editorials did not measure up to general interest news in drawing readers (4.81 v. 5.13, $p < .01$), and this was pretty much true across all types of personnel, as seen in Table X.

TABLE X
MEAN INTEREST SCORES SHOWING TENDENCIES OF
EDITORIALS AND GENERAL INTEREST NEWS
TO INTERACT WITH TYPES OF ALTUS
AIR FORCE BASE PERSONNEL

<u>PERSONNEL TYPES</u>	<u>NEWS CATEGORIES</u>	
	Editorials	General Interest
Field Grade Officers	4.80	4.97
Company Grade Officers	4.65	5.08
Senior NCOs	5.11	4.95
NCOs	4.70	5.29
Airmen	4.78	5.34

All types of personnel expressed more interest in general interest

news than in editorials, except senior NCOs. However, the difference between the mean interest of 5.11 for editorials and 4.95 in general interest by senior NCOs was not considered substantial by the author. Nor was the differing interest of field grade officers in the two categories of news.

In essence, the higher interest in general news over editorials was due mostly to company grades, NCOs and airmen, all of whom expressed a greater-than-.30 interest in general news than in editorials.

Editorials versus Management

Management news was rated more interesting than editorials (5.20 v. 4.81, $p < .01$). All types of personnel showed higher interest for management news. Only airmen, with a gap of .29, did not express a difference in interest greater than the arbitrary .30.

Features versus Names-in-the-News

The over-all higher interest earned by features over "names" (4.98 v. 4.61, $p < .01$) did not hold up for all types of readers, as shown in Table XI.

Popularity of features resided mostly among field and company grade officers, as well as among airmen. In Table XI, the reader can see that, with each of these three types of personnel, features drew more than a .30 higher interest in features than in "names." Senior NCOs and airmen, however, were about as interested in one category of news as the other.

TABLE XI
 MEAN INTEREST SCORES SHOWING TENDENCIES
 OF FEATURES AND NAMES-IN-THE-NEWS
 TO INTERACT WITH TYPES OF ALTUS
 AIR FORCE BASE PERSONNEL

<u>PERSONNEL TYPES</u>	<u>NEWS CATEGORIES</u>	
	Features	"Names"
Field Grade Officers	5.21	4.75
Senior NCOs	5.16	5.13
Company Grade Officers	5.00	4.47
NCOs	4.72	4.47
Airmen	4.80	4.23

Features versus Family News

Features dominated family news in interest across the board of personnel types (4.98 v. 4.20, $p < .01$), as shown in Table XII.

All types of personnel gave the nod to features, with the smallest difference being .63 in mean interest having been expressed by NCOs. Field grade officers registered the largest difference with a .96. Even that difference was double the author's arbitrary .30. In a capsule, family took a back seat to features among all types of Altus Air Force Base personnel.

TABLE XII
 MEAN INTEREST SCORES SHOWING TENDENCIES
 OF FEATURES AND FAMILY NEWS TO
 INTERACT WITH TYPES OF ALTUS
 AIR FORCE BASE PERSONNEL

<u>PERSONNEL TYPES</u>	<u>NEWS CATEGORIES</u>	
	Features	Family
Field Grade Officers	5.21	4.25
Company Grade Officers	5.00	4.23
Senior NCOs	5.16	4.48
NCOs	4.72	4.09
Airmen	4.80	3.95

Features versus General Interest News

Features' seemingly comfortable lead over family news did not hold up against the powerful, attention-drawing general interest news. Mean interest in the latter (5.13) over features (4.98) probably would hold up in 95 out of 100 samples of Altus Air Force Base personnel. However, general interest's superior standing was questionable among some types of personnel, as suggested in Table XIII.

General interest's edge over features tended to be due solely to non-coms and airmen. The 5.29 mean interest in general interest stories by NCOs was .57 greater than their interest in features, while airmen's 5.34 mean interest in general stories was .54 greater than their 4.80

interest in features.

Officers and senior non-coms were about as interested in features as they were in general stories.

TABLE XIII

MEAN INTEREST SCORES SHOWING TENDENCIES
OF FEATURES AND GENERAL INTEREST NEWS
TO INTERACT WITH TYPES OF ALTUS
AIR FORCE BASE PERSONNEL

<u>PERSONNEL TYPES</u>	<u>NEWS CATEGORIES</u>	
	Features	General Interest
Field Grade Officers	5.21	4.97
Company Grade Officers	5.00	5.08
NCOs	4.72	5.29
Airmen	4.80	5.34
Senior NCOs	5.16	4.95

Names-in-the-News versus Family News

Field grade and non-commissioned officers tended to contribute most to the edge that names-in-the-news held over family news (4.61 v. 4.20, $p < .01$), as evidenced in Table XIV.

Field grade officers expressed a .50 higher interest in "names" (4.75 v. 4.25), while NCOs registered a .38 higher interest (4.47 v.

4.09) and senior NCOs a .65 greater interest in "names" (5.13 v. 4.48). Neither company grade officers nor airmen expressed any notable difference of interest in "names" and family news.

TABLE XIV
 MEAN INTEREST SCORES SHOWING TENDENCIES
 OF NAMES-IN-THE-NEWS AND FAMILY NEWS
 TO INTERACT WITH TYPES OF ALTUS
 AIR FORCE BASE PERSONNEL

<u>PERSONNEL TYPES</u>	<u>NEWS CATEGORIES</u>	
	"Names"	Family
Field Grade Officers	4.75	4.25
Company Grade Officers	4.47	4.23
NCOs	4.47	4.09
Senior NCOs	5.13	4.48
Airmen	4.23	3.95

Names-in-the-News versus General Interest News

The 4.61 mean interest shown in "names" was significantly lower than the 5.13 mean interest in general stories ($p < .01$), but the substantial difference did not hold for all types of personnel. Table XV suggests that the higher interest in general stories over "names" came mostly from company grade officers (5.08 v. 4.47), NCOs (5.29 v. 4.47),

and airmen (5.34 v. 4.23).

TABLE XV
MEAN INTEREST SCORES SHOWING TENDENCIES OF
NAMES-IN-THE-NEWS AND GENERAL INTEREST
NEWS TO INTERACT WITH TYPES OF ALTUS
AIR FORCE BASE PERSONNEL

<u>PERSONNEL TYPES</u>	<u>NEWS CATEGORIES</u>	
	"Names"	General Interest
Field Grade Officers	4.75	4.97
Company Grade Officers	4.47	5.08
Senior NCOs	5.13	4.95
NCOs	4.47	5.29
Airmen	4.23	5.34

Field grade officers and senior NCOs tended not to prefer general interest news over "names."

Worthy of note is that the partiality of airmen for general interest news over "names" was one of the three or four largest recorded throughout the study (5.34 v. 4.23 = 1.11).

Family versus General Interest News

General interest news overshadowed family news by nearly one mean

interest score (5.13 v. 4.20, $p < .01$). As shown in Table XVI, all types of personnel preferred general stories over family news.

TABLE XVI
MEAN INTEREST SCORES SHOWING TENDENCIES
OF FAMILY AND GENERAL INTEREST NEWS
TO INTERACT WITH TYPES OF ALTUS
AIR FORCE BASE PERSONNEL

<u>PERSONNEL TYPES</u>	<u>NEWS CATEGORIES</u>	
	Family	General Interest
Company Grade Officers	4.23	5.08
Senior NCOs	4.48	4.95
Field Grade Officers	4.25	4.97
NCOs	4.09	5.29
Airmen	3.95	5.34

The widest gap in interest between any two categories of news occurred among the NCOs on family and general interest news. The difference between a mean interest of 5.29 for general stories and 4.09 for family news among NCOs in Table XVI was 1.20. Obviously, these NCOs contributed most to general interest superiority over family news.

Summary

The fact, then, that some news categories were designated as more

interesting than others tended to depend, in many cases, on what type of Altus Air Force Base personnel was doing the designating.

NCOs, for example, contributed heavily to management news' popularity over features, names-in-the-news and family news. NCOs also tended to figure in the higher interest in general stories over editorials, names-in-the-news and family news.

Airmen tended to contribute to the higher interest in management news over features, names-in-the-news and family news, as well as to the high preference for editorials over names-in-the-news and family news. Too, the airmen contributed to features' popularity over names-in-the-news. On the other hand, airmen helped boost the popularity of general stories over features and names-in-the-news.

Senior NCOs tended not to contribute substantially to the popularity of any category of news over another, except perhaps in the case of the higher interest generated by general stories over names-in-the-news.

Field grade officers tended to figure notably in the popularity of features over editorials and names-in-the-news. On the other hand, field graders tended, more than did other types, to boost the interest of names-in-the-news over family news.

Like the field grade officers, company graders seemed to elevate the interest of features over editorials and names-in-the-news. They contributed substantially also to the appeal of general stories over "names."

What were some of the pairs of news categories on which all types, or nearly all types, of personnel tended to agree on interest?

All types tended to show preference for management news over

editorials and features over family news. Four of the five types were "equally" interested in management and general interest news. Only NCOs tended to show more interest in management than general news.

With exception of airmen, all types rated editorials, names-in-the-news and family news as similar in interest. Airmen saw editorials as more interesting than "names" and family news.

FOOTNOTES

¹J. P. Guilford and Benjamin Fruchter, Fundamental Statistics in Psychology and Education (New York, 1973), pp. 42-43.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study of attitudes of Altus Air Force Base personnel toward content of their base newspaper had two basic objectives:

1. To determine Altus Galaxy readers' preferences for six different categories of news stories--management, editorial, feature, names-in-the-news, family and general interest.
2. To determine to what extent membership in a military group--field grade officer, company grade officer, senior NCO, NCO and airman--affected an individual's interest in the six categories of Altus Galaxy news stories.

A 50-item questionnaire, designed to elicit responses related to study objectives, was distributed in February, 1974, to 350 randomly selected Altus Air Force Base personnel. Seventy-two per cent of the sampled personnel returned questionnaires.

A multi-factor variance analysis was used to analyze preference scores.

Three tests constituted analysis of data: (1) test for differences in mean interests between groups, (2) test for differences in mean interests in the six categories of news stories and (3) test for significance of interaction of groups and news stories.

Factorial analysis of variance showed significant differences between the mean interest scores of some of the five types of Altus Air

Force Base personnel. The F-ratio (3.39) meant the probability of differences as large as those observed between interest of at least two types of personnel would occur by chance less than one time in 100.

As shown in Table III, page 27, interest of senior NCOs was greater than that of company grade officers, NCOs and airmen. Senior NCOs displayed a significantly higher interest in the six categories of Altus Galaxy content than did those three types of base personnel.

Also, factorial variance analysis showed a significant difference between management stories, with the highest mean interest of 5.20, and family stories, with the lowest interest of 4.20. The F-ratio (31.69) was significant at the .01 probability level.

Table IV, page 29, shows all categories of news stories differed in their interest-pulling power, except management and general interest stories which were equally interesting. Both management and general interest articles were more interesting than any other type of story. Feature stories were rated higher than editorials, names-in-the-news and family stories. Editorials topped names-in-the-news and family articles. Least interesting were family stories, which were overshadowed significantly by all other categories.

Tables XVII through XXII in Appendix C examine over-all reader interest in specific types of stories. The 10 most interesting stories were:

1. Stories pertaining to promotion opportunities, pay increases, and service benefits. (MANAGEMENT)
2. Stories on off-base recreational activities, such as camping, boating, hunting, fishing, motorcycle races, auto races, etc. (GENERAL INTEREST)

3. Stories on educational opportunities available to Altus AFB personnel. (MANAGEMENT)
4. "Hotline" columns in which the wing commander responds to questions of Altus AFB personnel. (EDITORIAL)
5. Stories that report on-base recreational and entertainment activities, such as upcoming movies at the base theater, and events at the officers and NCO clubs and recreation center. (GENERAL INTEREST)
6. Stories that report changes in Air Force, major command and base policies. (MANAGEMENT)
7. Stories that explain Air Force policy in terms of how it affects Altus AFB personnel. (MANAGEMENT)
8. Stories that report what the Air Force is doing around the world and how Altus AFB personnel fit into the operation. (MANAGEMENT)
9. "Commanders Comments" columns in which the wing commander explains his programs and policies. (EDITORIAL)
10. Letters to the editor. (GENERAL INTEREST)
Photo features depicting how personnel of various base duty sections contribute to the base mission. (FEATURE)

Conversely, the 10 least interesting stories were:

1. Stories that name new wives' club officers. (FAMILY)
2. Stories that name base personnel who reenlist. (NAMES-IN-THE-NEWS)
3. Editorials written to influence the reader to agree with Air Force views. (EDITORIAL)
4. Stories that publicize the Combined Federal Campaign or

- a savings bond drive. (MANAGEMENT)
5. Stories that attempt to influence the thinking of Altus AFB personnel. (EDITORIAL)
 6. Stories that name base personnel retiring from the Air Force. (NAMES-IN-THE-NEWS)
 7. Stories on activities of youth center members, chapel youth groups or scouts. (FAMILY)
 8. Stories on equal opportunity and treatment of personnel and other social actions programs. (MANAGEMENT)
 9. Stories on "volunteer organizations" such as Family Services, Red Cross, Thrift Shop, etc. (FAMILY)
 10. Stories that report "family news" such as activities of wives' clubs, school groups and scout troops. (FAMILY)

Summary: Interactive Tendencies

Factorial analysis of variance showed interaction between categories of Altus Galaxy news stories and types of Altus Air Force Base personnel was not significant. The F-ratio (1.04) fell just short of the .05 probability level.

However, possible interactive tendencies were noted by inspecting the difference in interest that each type of personnel registered between any two categories of news.

Management news tended to be more interesting than family news, names-in-the-news, editorials and features. The higher interest in management over these four categories of news stories was true for all types of personnel.

However, airmen and NCOs were the largest contributors to

management's superiority over family news, while company grade officers, NCOs and airmen contributed most to the higher interest for management over "names-in-the-news." All five types of personnel contributed to management's superiority over editorials, while NCOs probably contributed most to management's higher rating over features.

Management and general interest news categories were the only ones which did not differ significantly in interest. Senior NCOs tended to show a higher interest in management over general interest, but all other types of personnel showed similar interest in the two categories of news.

General interest news overshadowed family news, with NCOs contributing the most to general interest's superiority over family news.

Interest in general news was significantly higher than for names-in-the-news, but the substantial difference did not hold for all types of personnel. Higher interest for general interest stories over "names" came mostly from company grade officers, NCOs and airmen. Field grade officers and senior NCOs tended not to prefer general interest news over "names."

All types of personnel except senior NCOs expressed more interest in general interest news than in editorials. And, general interest news' margin over features tended to be due to non-coms and airmen. Officers and senior NCOs were about as interested in features as they were in general stories.

Interest-wise, features dominated family news across the board of personnel types. Over-all, features were rated higher than names-in-the-news. Popularity of features mostly was due to field and company grade officers as well as airmen. Senior NCOs and, to a certain extent,

NCOs, were about as interested in features as "names."

Editorials drew more interest than did family news among all types of personnel. Editorials were rated more interesting than names-in-the-news. The popularity of editorials over "names" was due mostly to airmen. Both groups of officers and noncommissioned officers showed very similar interests in both categories.

Field grade officers and senior NCOs and NCOs tended to contribute most to the edge that names-in-the-news held over family news. Neither company grade officers nor airmen expressed any notable difference of interest in "names" and family news.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Several conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the study findings.

In order to understand the findings, it is important to know the function of the Altus Galaxy as Altus Air Force Base's newspaper. Insight can be gained from the following excerpt from Information Policies and Procedures, Air Force Manual 190-9.

Essentially, the base newspaper falls into the same category as industry's house organ, since it functions primarily as a tool of management in the field of employee communication. It is intended to serve as a major source of information about the Air Force, major command and local base. Many of the problems a commander faces result from a lack of good communication with his people. When people are not aware of the background of actions which affect them and do not have a means to air their questions or grievances, they can become frustrated and disgruntled. Through such editorial devices as action-line columns and letters to the editor, the base newspaper can provide a vital two-way communication link between the commander and his people. Information officers must give close attention to this medium and should assign the best qualified personnel to prepare its editorial matter. Content of the base newspaper is determined by the commander through his information

officer. The commander is responsible for insuring that his paper conforms to Air Force standards and policy.¹

In other words, the Altus Galaxy can serve as the wing commander's principal communications vehicle. It can provide him with a method of talking with the men and women of his command. It also can provide him with feedback from those people.

According to findings of this study, senior NCOs over-all were more interested in the six categories of news stories--management, feature, editorial, names-in-the-news, family and general interest--than company grade officers, NCOs and airmen.

This raises a new question. Is the Altus Galaxy, a tool of management, geared to its "primary" audience?

The Altus Galaxy staff must be familiar with the composition of their readers. At the time this study was conducted, staff sergeants, sergeants, airmen 1st class, airmen and airmen basic comprised almost 70 per cent of the Galaxy's military audience. According to findings of this study, discussed in Chapter III and summed up earlier in this chapter, interpretative reporting is what these younger readers want in their base newspaper. They want important issues explored honestly and openly, with all sides covered as factually as humanly possible. They want facts. They want truth.

A visually exciting publication will probably cause readers to at least stop and pick up the latest issue; but if the publication lacks content, then appearance will not keep fidelity among its readers.

To communicate, an Air Force newspaper must show concern for the needs and interests of its audience. A lieutenant colonel wrote on his questionnaire the following pertinent comments.

In most cases stories are interesting if they involve you or the things you are interested in. A list of men promoted is interesting if I know someone who is eligible--if not it would be dull. If I had a son in scouts--or a neighbor's son--I would be interested in a story on local scouting. Youth Center--Wives Club--Chapel Activities--etc.--all are interesting or dull depending on your involvement. Stories about unusual accomplishments (i.e. officer building an airplane in backyard), or about events that concern all of us, have universal appeal--otherwise our interest will be dependent on our involvement.

Interestingly, the Altus Galaxy was selected the best newspaper in its category in the Military Airlift Command in 1973. Apparently, then, it is on the right track according to management.

More specific studies--like one concerned only with reader interests of staff sergeants, sergeants, airmen 1st class and airmen--might be conducted to find out what the Galaxy's primary audience thinks.

Findings of this study cannot be generalized to other base newspapers. However, this investigation can provide newspaper editors at other Air Force bases with basic information regarding reader preferences and serve as a model or springboard for them to conduct a study.

Hopefully, this study will assist the Altus Air Force Base commander, information officer and editor in making "gatekeeper" decisions about the Altus Galaxy and contribute to the base internal information program.

FOOTNOTES

¹U.S. Department of the Air Force, Information Activities: Policies and Procedures, Air Force Manual 190-9 (September 22, 1972), p.4.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Stories that report what the Air Force is doing around the world and how Altus AFB personnel fit into the operation.

Very interesting _____ Not at all interesting

2. Stories about new equipment and procedures introduced to help Altus AFB personnel carry out their missions.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

3. Photo features (a story and photographs) depicting how personnel of various base duty sections contribute to the base mission.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

4. Stories emphasizing the need for new aircraft and weapon systems.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

5. Stories that explain Air Force policy in terms of how it affects Altus AFB personnel.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

6. Stories that make every effort to present a positive picture of the Air Force.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

7. Stories that attempt to influence thinking of Altus AFB personnel.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

8. Stories that reflect unfavorably on the Air Force.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

9. Stories that report changes in Air Force, major command and base policies.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

10. Editorials that explain and support the commander's programs and policies.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

11. Editorials written to influence the reader to agree with Air Force views.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

12. "Commander's Comments" columns in which the wing commander explains his programs and policies.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

13. Stories in which squadron commanders and key base officials such as the chaplain, staff judge advocate, comptroller, etc., express their views.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

14. Editorials on such subjects as equal opportunity and treatment of personnel, drug/alcohol abuse and safety to affect thinking and actions of Air Force personnel.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

15. Stories on equal opportunity and treatment of personnel and other social actions programs.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

16. "Hotline" columns in which the wing commander responds to questions of Altus AFB personnel.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

17. Stories pertaining to promotion opportunities, pay increases and service benefits.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

18. Stories that publicize the Combined Federal Campaign or a savings bond drive.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

19. Stories that report changes in key Air Force personnel, such as a new Air Force chief of staff, major command commander or wing commander.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

20. Biographical stories on new squadron commanders and other key base officials.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

21. Stories that name the base junior officer, NCO or airman of the quarter.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

22. Stories that publicize accomplishments and honors of Altus AFB units, sections or offices.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

23. Stories about outstanding officers and enlisted personnel at Altus AFB.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

24. "How to" stories that provide instructions for watering lawns, lighting gas pilot lights in base housing, protecting property from theft, disposing of pollutants, etc.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

25. Stories on topical issues, such as ecology, energy conservation, consumerism, housing, etc.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

26. Letters to the editor.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

27. "Inquiring reporter" opinion columns that provide an outlet for Altus AFB personnel to air their comments on various topics, by responding to a question like, what do you think of daylight savings time?

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

28. Stories on base sports events.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

29. Sports feature stories on athletic interests and achievements of Altus AFB personnel.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

30. Stories that report results of base intramural sports events.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

31. Stories that report on-base recreational and entertainment activities, such as upcoming movies at the base theater and events at the officers and NCO clubs and recreation center.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

32. Stories on off-base recreational activities, such as camping, boating, hunting, fishing, motorcycle races, auto races, etc.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

33. Stories that report "family news," such as activities of wives' clubs, school groups and scout troops.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

34. Stories on activities of youth center members, chapel youth groups or scouts.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

35. Stories that name new wives' club officers.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

36. Stories on "volunteer organizations," such as Family Services, Red Cross, Thrift Shop, etc.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

37. Stories that recognize achievements of members of an Air Force man's family.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

38. Stories that announce upcoming base events, such as an open house, wives club bazaar, chapel picnic, etc.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

39. Stories on educational opportunities available to Altus AFB personnel.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

40. Stories that recognize Altus AFB personnel who take advantage of educational opportunities, such as an Airman who earns a degree or an NCO who attends an NCO leadership academy.

Very
Interesting _____ Not at all
Interesting

41. Stories that name base personnel who receive promotions.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

42. Stories that name Altus AFB personnel departing for new assignments.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

43. Stories that name new personnel arriving at Altus AFB.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

44. Stories that name base personnel who reenlist.

Very interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

45. Stories that name base personnel retiring from the Air Force.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

46. Stories that name base personnel who receive Air Force awards.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

47. Feature stories about Altus AFB personnel, such as an airman building a stock car or an officer building an airplane in their spare time.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

48. Stories on non-military subjects.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

49. Stories on first-term airmen.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

50. Stories on career Air Force personnel.

Very Interesting _____ Not at all Interesting

APPENDIX B

FOLLOW-UP STORY

Galaxy surveyed

Readers polled

Got an opinion about what you would like to see published in the base newspaper?

Some 350 airmen basic through colonels recently were selected at random from the more than 4,000 Altus AFB personnel to express their views on this subject. Each was given a 50-item questionnaire and asked to record how interesting specific types of news stories are to them.

Among topics covered were stories on Air Force or "management" subjects; "names in the news" stories, such as personnel promoted or honored; stories on sports and recreational events on and off base; feature stories about base personnel; stories on family news, such as wives club and youth group activities, and employee participation and opinion stories, such as letters to the editor and "inquiring reporter" columns.

How interesting these various stories are to the sample of 350 base personnel will give the 443rd Military Airlift Wing Information Office staff guidance in selecting news content weekly for the base newspaper.

Highlights of the study, such as the amount of interest in certain types of stories indicated by participants, will be published in a future issue of the Galaxy.

Also, responses to this questionnaire will be the topic of a thesis by Bob Wegener, a former member of the base information office staff, who is working on a master's degree in mass communications at Oklahoma State University. A copy of his thesis will be available in the information office this summer for review by interested base personnel.

A "thank you" is extended to all personnel who were selected and took their time to participate in this study for the base newspaper. Also, special thanks to the representatives from each squadron who distributed and collected the questionnaires.

Anyone given a questionnaire, who has not yet completed it, is requested to please do so. It is a chance to tell the newspaper staff what types of news stories are interesting. Simply, fill out the questionnaire as directed and bring it to the information office in room 110 of building 178 or drop it in distribution, addressed to OI, Stop 17.

APPENDIX C

ANALYSIS OF ITEMS BY NEWS CATEGORIES

One objective of this study was to determine how interesting Altus Galaxy news stories are to Altus Air Force Base personnel.

A categorical review of responses to 49 questionnaire statements follows.

General Interest Category

Table XVII, pages 72, 73 and 74, shows mean interest scores by five groups of Altus Air Force Base personnel for 10 statements under the general interest category.

Rated highest were items 32 and 31, stories about on- and off-base recreational and entertainment activities, with mean scores of 5.92 and 5.68, respectively.

Items 26, 27 and 25, with mean scores of 5.28, 5.17 and 5.08, pointed out reader interest in some topics that go hand in hand with modernization of Air Force newspapers, such as, letters to the editor, "inquiring reporter" opinion columns and stories on topical or "gut" issues. Field grade officers rated inquiring reporter columns between "slightly not interesting" and "neutral" with a mean score of 3.78, while airmen ranked them "interesting" with a mean score of 5.85. And a senior master sergeant commented that letters to the editor should be "about subjects of interest to other Air Force personnel."

Sports stories, sports features and results of base intramural events were given mean scores of 5.06, 5.03 and 4.96 on items 28, 29 and 30, respectively.

The lowest mean score for a statement under the general interest category was 4.88 for item 24, regarding "how to" stories that provide instructions for watering lawns, lighting gas pilot lights, protecting

TABLE XVII

MEAN INTEREST SCORES FOR GENERAL INTEREST CATEGORY BY GROUPS

32. Stories on off-base recreational activities, such as, camping, boating, hunting, fishing, motorcycle races, auto races, etc.

Airman	NCO	Company Grade Officer	Field Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Mean
6.05	6.05	5.72	5.68	5.53	5.92

31. Stories that report on-base recreational and entertainment activities, such as, upcoming movies at the base theater and events at the officers and NCO clubs and recreation center.

Airman	Company Grade Officer	Field Grade Officer	NCO	Senior NCO	Mean
5.95	5.84	5.63	5.61	5.28	5.68

26. Letters to the editor.

Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	NCO	Senior NCO	Airman	Mean
5.63	5.60	5.24	5.21	5.13	5.28

27. "Inquiring reporter" opinion columns that provide an outlet for Altus AFB personnel to air their comments on various topics, by responding to a question like, what do you think of daylight savings time?

Airman	NCO	Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	Field Grade Officer	Mean
5.85	5.20	5.07	4.52	3.78	5.17

TABLE XVII (Continued)

25. Stories on topical issues, such as, ecology, energy conservation, consumerism, housing, etc.

NCO	Airman	Field Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	Mean
5.31	5.10	4.95	4.75	4.52	5.08

28. Stories on base sports events.

Airman	NCO	Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Mean
5.30	5.13	4.89	4.76	4.68	5.06

48. Stories on non-military subjects.

Airman	NCO	Company Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Field Grade Officer	Mean
5.32	5.14	5.12	4.57	4.31	5.05

29. Sports feature stories on athletic interests and achievements of Altus AFB personnel.

NCO	Airman	Company Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Field Grade Officer	Mean
5.18	5.17	4.80	4.71	4.63	5.03

30. Stories that report results of base intramural sports events.

Airman	NCO	Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Mean
5.15	5.03	4.89	4.76	4.57	4.96

TABLE XVII (Continued)

-
24. "How to" stories that provide instructions for watering lawns, lighting gas pilot lights in base housing, protecting property from theft, disposing of pollutants, etc.
-

Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	Senior NCO	NCO	Airman	Mean
5.26	5.20	5.07	4.97	4.40	4.88

property from theft, disposing of pollutants, etc. One sergeant noted such stories would "be good for married personnel."

A mean score of 5.05 for the generalized statement 48, stories on non-military subjects, confirmed interest in the other nine items under the general interest category.

Management Category

Promotion opportunities, pay increases, service benefits and educational opportunities were the most interesting topics among management news stories.

Table XVIII, pages 76 and 77, shows items 17 (promotion opportunities, pay increases) and 39 (educational benefits) with mean scores of 6.22 and 5.79, respectively. Incidentally, item 17 was the highest rated of the 49 statements on the questionnaire.

Items 9, 5, 1 and 2, regarding Air Force-wide policies and procedures, were given mean scores of 5.66, 5.58, 5.49 and 5.31, respectively. The latter three mean scores represented a wide range of scores by the five groups.

Stories reporting changes in key Air Force personnel and presenting biographical sketches of important base officials, items 19 and 20, were rated 4.91 and 4.61. Generally, senior officers and senior NCOs were more interested in these topics than junior officers, NCOs and airmen. An airman 1st class, however, wrote that these stories were needed for a better working relationship between base personnel and commanders.

With mean scores of 4.15 and 3.89--near the "neutral" and "slightly not interesting" points on the continuum--items 15 and 18 were the

TABLE XVIII
MEAN INTEREST SCORES FOR MANAGEMENT CATEGORY BY GROUPS

17. Stories pertaining to promotion opportunities, pay increases and service benefits.

Senior NCO	NCO	Airman	Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	Mean
6.71	6.27	6.27	5.89	5.60	6.22

39. Stories on educational opportunities available to Altus AFB personnel.

Company Grade Officer	NCO	Airman	Field Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Mean
6.16	5.81	5.77	5.68	5.50	5.79

9. Stories that report changes in Air Force, major command and base policies.

Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	NCO	Airman	Field Grade Officer	Mean
5.96	5.84	5.62	5.57	5.53	5.66

5. Stories that explain Air Force policy in terms of how it affects Altus AFB personnel.

Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	Airman	NCO	Field Grade Officer	Mean
6.39	5.68	5.48	5.47	5.16	5.58

1. Stories that report what the Air Force is doing around the world and how Altus AFB personnel fit into the operation.

Field Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	NCO	Airman	Mean
6.00	5.96	5.52	5.41	5.25	5.49

TABLE XVIII (Continued)

2. Stories about new equipment and procedures introduced to help Altus AFB personnel carry out their missions.					
Field Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	NCO	Airman	Mean
6.10	5.89	5.48	5.16	4.98	5.31
19. Stories that report changes in key Air Force personnel, such as a new Air Force chief of staff, major command commander or wing commander.					
Field Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	NCO	Airman	Mean
5.42	5.39	5.08	4.93	4.41	4.91
20. Biographical stories on new squadron commanders and other key base officials.					
Field Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	NCO	Airman	Mean
5.53	5.53	4.92	4.41	4.08	4.61
15. Stories on equal opportunity and treatment of personnel and other social actions programs.					
Airman	NCO	Field Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	Mean
4.85	4.16	3.89	3.50	3.36	4.15
18. Stories that publicize the Combined Federal Campaign or a savings bond drive.					
NCO	Airman	Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	Field Grade Officer	Mean
4.12	4.05	3.71	3.28	3.26	3.89

lowest ranked statements under the management category.

Item 15 concerned stories on equal opportunity and treatment of personnel and item 18 was about stories that publicize the Combined Federal Campaign and similar fund drives. Interestingly, both, which are "must run" topics for base newspaper editors, were rated lowest by respondents representing management, that is, senior NCOs and officers.

Feature Category

Photo features depicting how personnel of various base duty sections contribute to the base mission (item 3) and stories that publicize accomplishments and honors of base units, sections or offices (item 22) were the most interesting subjects of the feature category. These items had mean scores of 5.28 and 5.23, respectively, as indicated in Table XIX, pages 79 and 80.

Differences were noted between mean scores for similar statements 23, 40 and 21. Included were ratings of 5.13 for stories about outstanding officers and enlisted personnel, 5.08 for stories that recognize Altus AFB personnel who take advantage of educational opportunities and 4.80 for stories that name the base junior officer, NCO or airman of the quarter. Less interest in the latter topic might be due to a put-up stigma sometimes attached to such an award.

All three items were more interesting to officers and senior NCOs than NCOs and airmen with a difference of 1.00 between the highest (field grade officers) and lowest (airmen) ratings for two of the items, 23 and 21.

Item 47, feature stories about base personnel, was rated 4.83, while more specific items 49 and 50, stories on first-term airmen and

TABLE XIX
MEAN INTEREST SCORES FOR FEATURE CATEGORY BY GROUPS

3. Photo features (a story and photographs) depicting how personnel of various base duty sections contribute to the base mission.					
Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	Field Grade Officer	Airman	NCO	Mean
5.64	5.56	5.42	5.25	5.10	5.28
22. Stories that publicize accomplishments and honors of Altus AFB units, sections or offices.					
Field Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	NCO	Airman	Mean
5.95	5.68	5.40	5.09	4.95	5.23
23. Stories about outstanding officers and enlisted personnel at Altus AFB.					
Field Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	NCO	Airman	Mean
5.79	5.61	5.40	5.01	4.80	5.13
40. Stories that recognize Altus AFB personnel who take advantage of educational opportunities, such as, an Airman who earns a degree or an NCO who attends an NCO leadership academy.					
Company Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Field Grade Officer	NCO	Airman	Mean
5.40	5.32	5.26	5.00	4.92	5.08

TABLE XIX (Continued)

47. Feature stories about Altus AFB personnel, such as, an airman building a stock car or an officer building an airplane in their spare time.

Airman	Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	NCO	Senior NCO	Mean
5.00	4.95	4.80	4.78	4.61	4.83

21. Stories that name the base junior officer, NCO or airman of the quarter.

Field Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	Airman	NCO	Mean
5.68	5.53	4.96	4.60	4.51	4.80

49. Stories on first-term airmen.

Airman	NCO	Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Mean
4.80	4.25	4.21	3.96	3.89	4.32

50. Stories on career Air Force personnel.

Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	Field Grade Officer	Airman	NCO	Mean
4.96	4.52	4.42	4.10	4.02	4.24

stories on career Air Force personnel, had mean scores of 4.32 and 4.24, respectively. As expected, airmen and NCOs expressed the most interest for item 49 and senior NCOs and officers indicated the most interest in item 50.

However, one airman 1st class commented, "More credit could be given career personnel; if it weren't for them, there wouldn't be much of an Air Force." And, another airman 1st class wrote, "For the number of first-term airmen, there is very little said."

Editorial Category

Statements under the editorial category drew the most comments and widest range of mean scores. Most interesting of these nine statements was item 16, "hotline" columns in which the wing commander responds to questions of base personnel. The over-all mean score of 5.72, as shown in Table XX, pages 82 and 83, represents an almost equal interest by all five types of respondents.

Item 12, "commander's comments" columns in which the wing commander explains his programs and policies, received a rating of 5.40 with senior NCOs and field grade officers indicating considerably more interest than NCOs and airmen.

Editorials that explain and support the commander's programs and policies (item 10), stories in which squadron commanders and key base officials express their views (item 13), stories emphasizing the need for new aircraft and weapon systems (item 4), and stories that make every effort to present a positive picture of the Air Force (item 6) were rated 5.05, 4.96, 4.92 and 4.81, respectively. Mean scores by the five types of respondents varied for items 10 and 6 with senior NCOs

TABLE XX

MEAN INTEREST SCORES FOR EDITORIAL CATEGORY BY GROUPS

16. Hotline columns in which the wing commander responds to questions of Altus AFB personnel.

Airman	Company Grade Officer	Field Grade Officer	NCO	Senior NCO	Mean
5.97	5.80	5.63	5.60	5.59	5.72

12. "Commander's Comments" columns in which the wing commander explains his programs and policies.

Senior NCO	Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	NCO	Airman	Mean
6.28	6.00	5.48	5.27	4.98	5.40

10. Editorials that explain and support the commander's programs and policies.

Senior NCO	Field Grade Officer	NCO	Airman	Company Grade Officer	Mean
5.96	5.31	5.00	4.76	4.72	5.05

13. Stories in which squadron commanders and key base officials, such as the chaplain, staff judge advocate, comptroller, etc., express their views.

Company Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Field Grade Officer	NCO	Airman	Mean
5.24	5.21	5.10	4.97	4.65	4.96

TABLE XX (Continued)

4. Stories emphasizing the need for new aircraft and weapon systems.					
Senior NCO	NCO	Airman	Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	Mean
5.18	5.02	4.80	4.74	4.68	4.92
6. Stories that make every effort to present a positive picture of the Air Force.					
Senior NCO	Field Grade Officer	Airman	NCO	Company Grade Officer	Mean
5.43	5.10	4.81	4.66	4.48	4.81
14. Editorials on such subjects as equal opportunity and treatment of personnel, drug/alcohol abuse and safety to affect the thinking and actions of Air Force personnel.					
Airman	NCO	Senior NCO	Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	Mean
4.97	4.40	4.32	4.21	3.96	4.47
7. Stories that attempt to influence thinking of Altus AFB personnel.					
Senior NCO	Airman	NCO	Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	Mean
4.32	4.14	3.89	3.84	3.64	3.97
11. Editorials written to influence the reader to agree with Air Force views.					
Airman	Company Grade Officer	Senior NCO	NCO	Field Grade Officer	Mean
3.91	3.88	3.68	3.50	3.06	3.64

expressing the most interest and company grade officers indicating the least interest.

Concerning item 10, editorials that explain and support the commander's programs and policies, a sergeant wrote, "Point out both the good aspects of the program and the bad." And, an airman 1st class stated the editorials "could go deeper into the subject and be better explained."

Statement 6, stories that make every effort to present a positive picture of the Air Force, drew the following comments: "The stories should be informative, unbiased reporting whether good or bad," a sergeant said. "Facts should be stated, not biased opinions," an airman 1st class wrote. "How about honest stories? Tell it like it is," an airman basic stated.

A mean score of 4.97 was assigned to item 14, editorials on such subjects as equal opportunity and treatment of personnel, drug/alcohol abuse and safety to affect the thinking and actions of Air Force personnel, with individual scores ranging from 4.97 by airmen to 3.96 by company grade officers.

Ranked lowest were items 7 and 11, stories that attempt to influence thinking of Altus Air Force Base personnel and editorials written to influence the reader to agree with Air Force view, with mean scores of 3.97 and 3.64 respectively.

Commenting on statement 11, a major wrote, "only if they explain why the Air Force has to take the view," while an airman 1st class remarked, "should stay with the facts," and an airman basic said, "write the facts; let the reader decide," regarding both items.

The mean score of 3.64 for item 11 was next to the lowest indicated

toward the 49 statements on the questionnaire. Item 11, also, was one of only two statements with which all five groups responded with scores on the "not interesting" end of the continuum, that is, less than 4.0.

Names-in-the-News Category

Table XXI, pages 86 and 87, shows mean scores ranging from 5.09 to 3.64 for statements under the names-in-the-news category.

Item 41, stories that name base personnel who receive promotions, was ranked highest with a mean score of 5.09.

Next came stories that name base personnel departing for new assignments (item 42) and stories that name new personnel arriving at Altus Air Force Base (item 43) with mean scores of 4.76 each.

Item 46, stories that name base personnel who receive Air Force awards, was given a mean score of 4.71, followed by item 45, stories that name base personnel who reenlist, with a mean score of 4.09.

The greatest differences between scores indicated by the five types of respondents were for items 41 and 45. Airmen apparently were not as interested in promotion stories as members of the other four groups and airmen and NCOs were less interested in retirement stories than members of the other three groups, especially senior NCOs.

The mean score of 3.64 for item 44 about reenlistment stories tied item 11 of the editorial category as the second least interesting statement on the questionnaire. Only senior NCOs with a mean score of 4.07 rated item 44 on the "interesting" end of the continuum.

Interestingly, senior NCOs expressed the most interest for all six statements under the names-in-the-news category.

TABLE XXI

MEAN INTEREST SCORES FOR NAMES-IN-THE-NEWS CATEGORY BY GROUPS

41. Stories that name base personnel who receive promotions.

Senior NCO	Field Grade Officer	NCO	Company Grade Officer	Airman	Mean
5.71	5.67	5.15	5.00	4.58	5.09

42. Stories that name Altus AFB personnel departing for new assignments.

Senior NCO	NCO	Airman	Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	Mean
5.32	4.75	4.65	4.63	4.52	4.76

43. Stories that name new personnel arriving at Altus AFB.

Senior NCO	Field Grade Officer	NCO	Company Grade Officer	Airman	Mean
5.28	5.10	4.79	4.52	4.43	4.76

46. Stories that name base personnel who receive Air Force awards.

Senior NCO	Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	NCO	Airman	Mean
5.18	5.05	4.76	4.60	4.57	4.71

45. Stories that name base personnel retiring from the Air Force.

Senior NCO	Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	NCO	Airman	Mean
5.21	4.53	4.28	3.87	3.72	4.09

TABLE XXI (Continued)

44. Stories that name base personnel who reenlist.

Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	NCO	Field Grade Officer	Airman	Mean
4.07	3.72	3.63	3.58	3.45	3.64

Family Category

Ranked last in overall interest were family news stories.

Stories that announce upcoming base events, such as, an open house, wives club bazaar, chapel picnic, etc., (item 38) with a mean score of 4.57, and stories that recognize achievements of members of an Air Force man's family (item 37) with a mean score of 4.43, were the most interesting statements under the family category, as shown in Table XXII, pages 89 and 90. Officers and senior NCOs expressed the most interest in both statements.

Items 33, 36 and 34 received mean scores just slightly on the "interesting" end of the continuum, that is greater than 4.0. Included were stories that report "family news," such as, activities of wives' clubs, school groups and scout troops (4.18); stories on "volunteer organizations," such as, Family Services, Red Cross, Thrift Shop (4.17), and stories on activities of youth center members, chapel youth groups or scouts (4.14).

Least interesting was item 35, stories that name new wives' club officers. Its mean score of 3.26 not only was the lowest for the family category, but was also the lowest for all 49 statements on the questionnaire. In addition, all five types of respondents rated this statement on the "not interesting" end of the continuum.

TABLE XXII
MEAN INTEREST SCORES FOR FAMILY CATEGORY BY GROUPS

38. Stories that announce upcoming base events, such as an open house wives club bazaar, chapel picnic, etc.

Company Grade Officer	Field Grade Officer	Senior NCO	NCO	Airman	Mean
5.24	4.84	4.82	4.50	4.22	4.57

37. Stories that recognize achievements of members of an Air Force man's family.

Senior NCO	Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	Airman	NCO	Mean
5.07	4.95	4.48	4.25	4.24	4.43

33. Stories that report "family news," such as activities of wives' clubs, school groups and scout troops.

Company Grade Officer	Senior NCO	NCO	Field Grade Officer	Airman	Mean
4.40	4.39	4.21	4.00	4.00	4.18

36. Stories on "volunteer organizations," such as Family Services, Red Cross, Thrift Shop, etc.

Senior NCO	NCO	Airman	Field Grade Officer	Company Grade Officer	Mean
4.43	4.23	4.08	4.05	3.96	4.17

34. Stories on activities of youth center members, chapel youth groups or scouts.

Senior NCO	Company Grade Officer	NCO	Field Grade Officer	Airman	Mean
4.57	4.24	4.17	4.05	3.88	4.14

TABLE XXII (Continued)

35. Stories that name new wives' club officers.

Field Grade Officer	Senior NCO	Airman	NCO	Company Grade Officer	Mean
3.63	3.57	3.27	3.16	3.08	3.26

APPENDIX D

TYPES OF PERSONNEL AND INTEREST IN NEWS ITEMS

A goal of this study was to find out how membership in a particular military group tended to affect reader interest in different categories of Altus Galaxy news stories.

A discussion of preferences for the 49 questionnaire items by the five types of respondents follows.

Senior NCOs

The highest mean score given by senior NCOs was 6.71 for stories pertaining to promotion opportunities, pay increases and service benefits. Also ranked high were stories that explain Air Force policy in terms of how it affects Altus Air Force Base personnel (6.39) and "commander's comments" columns in which the wing commander explains his programs and policies (6.28).

In addition, "interesting" scores of 5.96 were assigned to stories that report what the Air Force is doing around the world and how Altus personnel fit into the operation, stories that report changes in Air Force, major command and base policies and editorials that explain and support the commander's programs and policies.

Senior NCOs' lowest mean score was 3.50 for stories on equal opportunity and treatment of personnel and other social actions programs. Also, among the least interesting were stories that name new wives' club officers (3.57), editorials written to influence the reader to agree with Air Force views (3.68), stories that publicize the Combined Federal Campaign or a savings bond drive (3.71) and stories on first-term airmen (3.89).

Field Grade Officers

Field grade officers indicated the most interest (6.10) in stories about new equipment and procedures introduced to help Altus Air Force Base personnel carry out their missions. Also rated high were "commander's comments" columns (6.00) and stories that publicize accomplishments and honors of Altus Air Force Base units, sections or offices (5.95).

The least interest was shown editorials written to influence the reader to agree with Air Force views (3.06). Also receiving low mean scores were stories that publicize the Combined Federal Campaign or a savings bond drive (3.26), stories that name base personnel who reenlist (3.58), stories that name new wives' club officers (3.63), "inquiring reporter" opinion columns (3.78), and stories on equal opportunity and treatment of personnel and other social actions programs (3.89).

Company Grade Officers

The highest rating given by company grade officers was 6.16 for stories on educational opportunities available to Altus Air Force Base personnel. Among the most interesting were stories that report on-base recreational and entertainment activities (5.84), stories that report changes in Air Force, major command and base policies (5.84) and "hotline" columns in which the wing commander responds to questions of base personnel (5.80).

Company grade officers' lowest mean score was 3.08 for stories that name new wives' club officers. Other "not interesting" topics include stories that publicize the Combined Federal Campaign or a savings bond drive (3.26), stories on equal opportunity and treatment (3.36) and

stories that attempt to influence thinking of Air Force personnel (3.64).

NCOs

NCOs expressed the most interest in stories pertaining to promotion opportunities, pay increases and service benefits with a mean score of 6.27. Also ranked high were stories on off-base recreational activities such as camping, boating, hunting, fishing, motorcycle races and auto races (6.05), and stories on educational opportunities available to base personnel (5.81).

The group's lowest mean score was 3.16 for stories that name new wives' club officers. Also among the least interesting were editorials written to influence the reader to agree with Air Force views (3.50), stories that name base personnel who reenlist (3.58) and stories that name base personnel retiring from the Air Force (3.87).

Airmen

Like senior NCOs and NCOs, airmen indicated the most interest--a mean score of 6.27--for stories pertaining to promotion opportunities, pay increases and service benefits. High ratings also were given stories on off-base recreational activities (6.05), "hotline columns" (5.97), stories that report on-base recreational and entertainment activities (5.95) and "inquiring reporter" opinion columns (5.85).

The group's lowest mean score, 3.27, was for stories that name new wives' club officers. Also, receiving low mean scores were stories that name base personnel who reenlist (3.45), stories that name base personnel retiring from the Air Force (3.72), stories on activities of youth center members, chapel youth groups or scouts (3.88).

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