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Personnel Management in 91SMW Operations

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by

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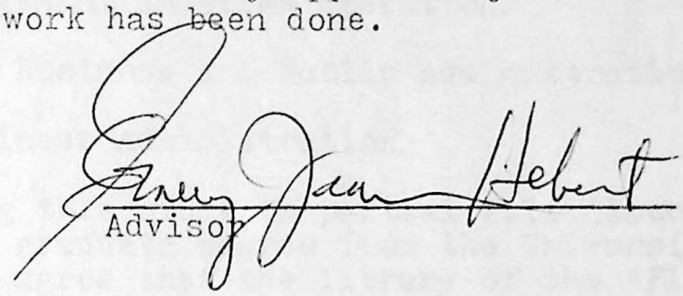
This independent study submitted by Charles David Langlois in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Business Administration from the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Faculty Advisor under whom the work has been done.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge all those who helped me complete this paper and the associated course of study. A special acknowledgement is extended to my wife, Marlene, who tolerated my schedule and also typed this paper.

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ABSTRACT

The intent of this Independent Study is to analyze the present personnel management in the 91SMW Operations. The study is primarily oriented toward present organization and policy as outlined in Air Force manuals and regulations. It is intended to analyze the formation of current policies and decisions. This report will attempt to explain the operation of the present system and its effectiveness. The report also hopes to recommend an alternative method better oriented toward modern military management.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Personnel management has long been recognized as an important part of the overall management of a firm or organization. This statement also holds true in a military organization. In the Air Force, success is measured by the fulfillment of mission objectives, commonly called the mission. The success or failure of the mission is sometimes the sole criteria used to evaluate the effectiveness of a unit. From this, one can see the importance of effective utilization of human resources, especially in today's volunteer Armed Forces. As Chruden and Sherman stated: "The efficiency with which any organization can be operated will depend to a considerable measure upon how effectively its personnel can be managed and utilized."[1]

The primary area of concern for this paper is the 91 Strategic Missile Wing (SMW) based at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota. The mission of the 91SMW is to maintain the capability to deliver thermo-nuclear weapons against strategic targets in accordance with the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Single Integrated Operation Plan (SIOP). To fulfill this mission, the 91SMW is responsible for 150 missiles in underground silos.

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[1]Herbert J. Chruden and Arthur W. Sherman, Jr., Personnel Management, 3rd Edition, p. 1.

These missiles are connected to fifteen underground Launch Control Centers (LCC's). Each LCC is manned by a Missile Combat Crew Commander (MCCC) and a Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander (DMCCC). It is the management of these officers which is the subject of this paper.

While most terms and abbreviations are explained in the text, some may have inadvertently been omitted. Therefore an Appendix of terms, abbreviations, and acronyms, with their explanation is included to better prepare the reader for the contents of the paper.

CHAPTER II

PRESENT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This chapter will explain the present organization structure, its functions, and how it presently manages MCC.

PRESENT ORGANIZATION

The 91SMW is part of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and its position in the command structure is indicated in Figure 1. It is one of nine wings responsible for maintaining part of America's Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) force. A partial organization chart for the 91 SMW is shown in Figure 2. There are two major divisions of the wing - operations and maintenance. The operations portion of the wing manages, trains, and supports the MCC. The maintenance section provides the necessary personnel and equipment to repair or replace weapon system components.

Under the Deputy Commander for Operations (DO) falls the three Tactical Squadrons as well as the staff to help manage, train, and evaluate crew performance. (See Figure 2). This is the area of primary concern for this paper. In order to better understand how the present system operates, a brief explanation of each division would be helpful at this point.

Operations Training Division (DOT) has the overall responsibility for the conduct of all training of MCC. It is their job to insure all crewmembers are trained in all areas

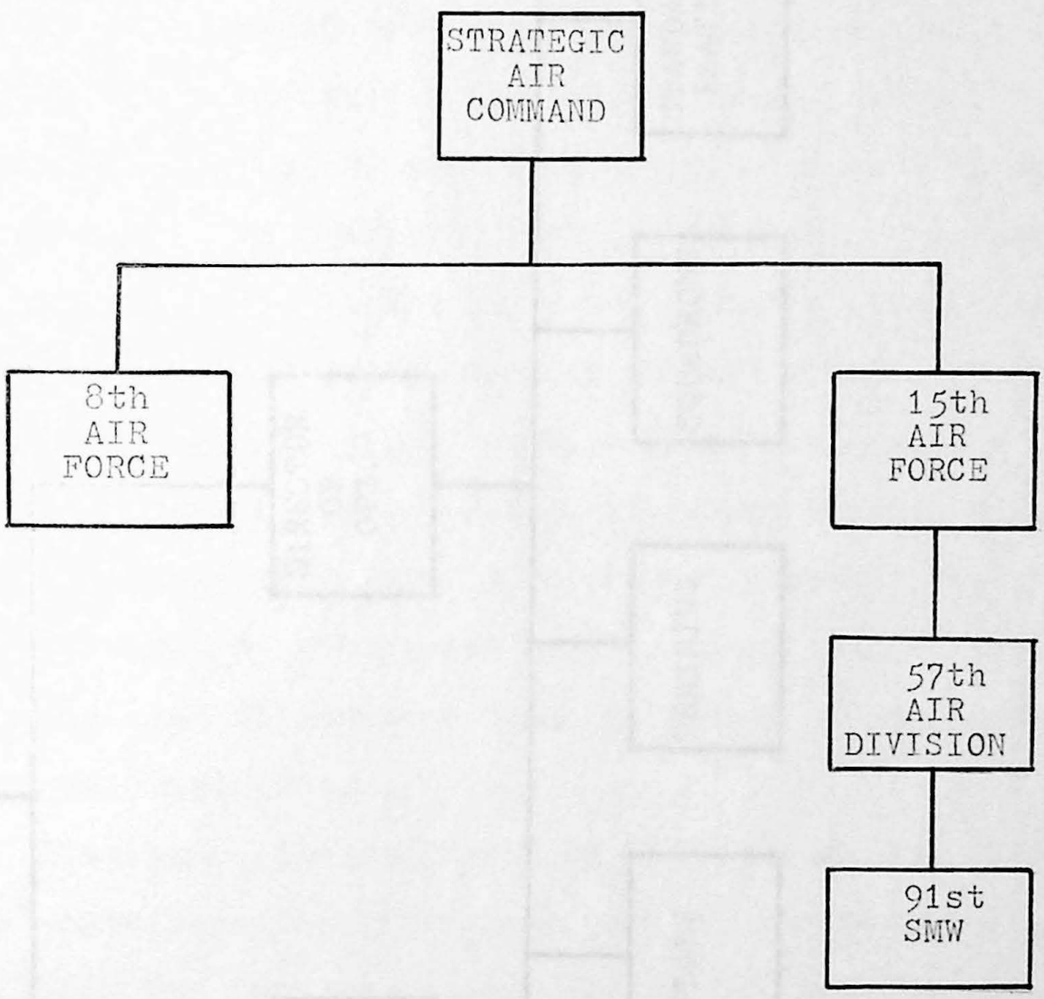

FIGURE 1

LOCATION OF 91SMW IN SAC

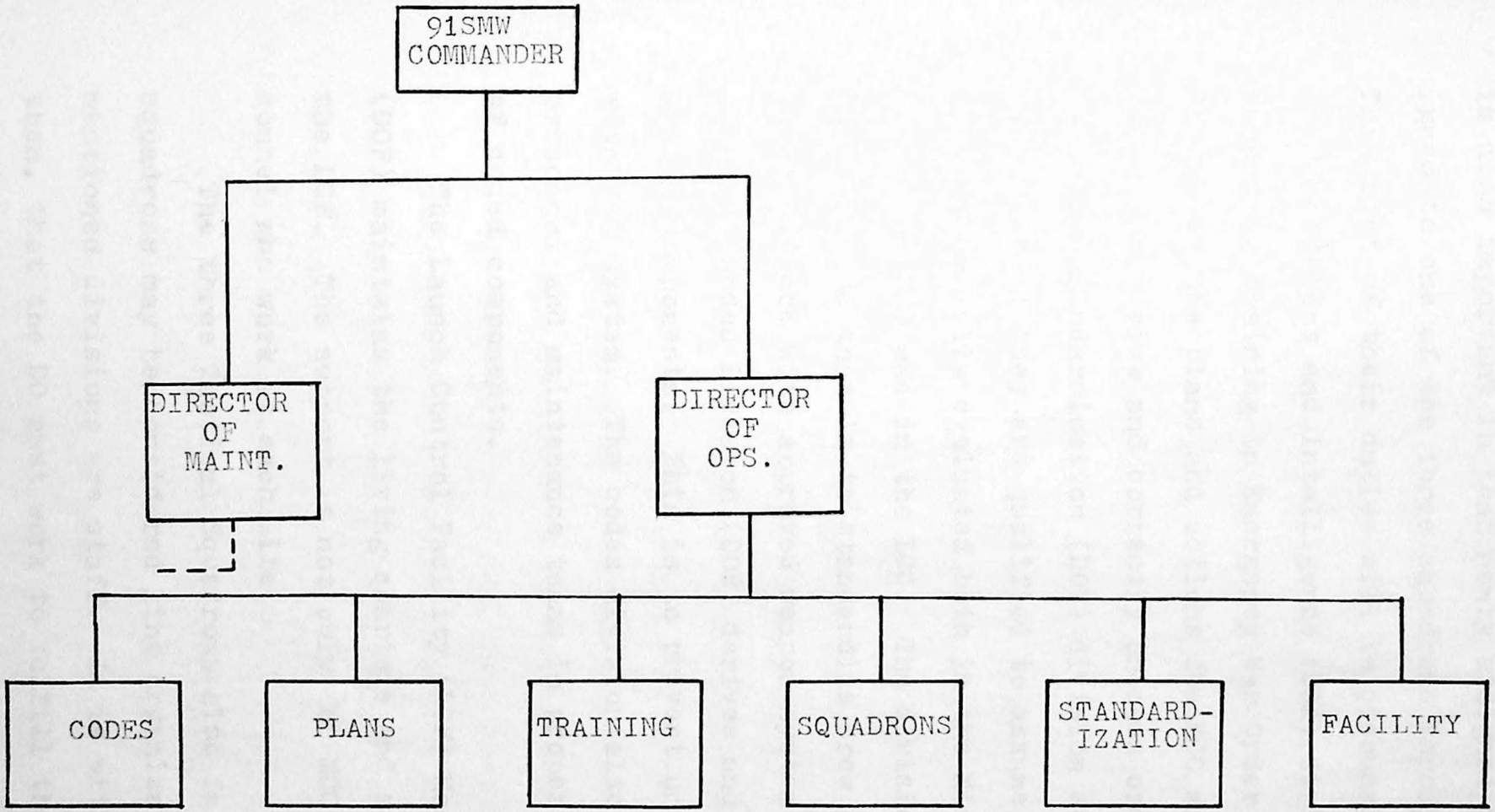

FIGURE 2
91 SMW ORGANIZATION CHART

required before assumption of alert duty. The division is also important in that newly assigned personnel are assigned to one of the three squadrons through this division. This part of their duties will be discussed more fully later.

The Plans and Intelligence (DOX) division provides the necessary training in Emergency War Order (EWO) procedures. These are the plans and actions the MCC must be aware of in order to receive and correctly process orders from the President.

The Standardization (DOV) division evaluates all MCC to determine if they are qualified to assume alert duties. MCC are periodically evaluated both in the Missile Procedures Trainer (MPT) and in the LCC. The division also has a second function and that is to standardize crew procedures and actions in accordance with approved weapon system operation.

The Codes Division (DOE) derives and encodes various system components. This is to prevent unauthorized tampering with the system. The codes division also trains both operations personnel and maintenance teams in proper storage and control of coded components.

The Launch Control Facility (LCF) Management division (DOF) maintains the living quarters and support equipment of the LCF. The support is not only for MCC but for other personnel who work at each site.

The three Tactical Squadrons also fall under the DO. These squadrons may be considered line organizations while the above mentioned divisions are staff. It is within this framework, then, that the DO must work to fulfill the mission of the 91SMW.

THE MCC

As previously explained, a MCC is composed of two officers. In order to become combat ready, the individuals must complete an extensive training program. This begins with a ten week course known as Operational Readiness Training (ORT) at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California. The prospective crewmember must then complete a local upgrade program in less than six weeks, culminating in an evaluation by DOV to certify combat-ready status.

This training is composed of classroom and MPT phases. All MCC must meet stringent standards of performance before being declared combat-ready. Testing is used extensively to determine how well training is proceeding. Once a MCCM is declared combat-ready, he is constantly exposed to a recurring training, testing, and evaluation program to maintain his high degree of proficiency. Some tests even require a 100 per cent score as a minimum acceptable grade.

The high standards of performance are necessary because of the critical nature of the job. However, this makes the personnel management problem even more difficult since these standards must be met at all times in order to achieve mission objectives.

There are other factors which have a significant influence on crew management. A crewmember cannot be under certain types of medication or any emotional or physical stress. If this happens, he is temporarily disqualified from alert duty. Certification by the flight surgeon is required before

a MCCM is allowed to resume normal duties. In addition, the usual turnover rate is approximately twenty-five per cent, assuming a four year tour and normal reassignment actions. This results in a constant evolving crew force with a variety of experience and training. Also, a number of crewmembers are non-volunteers for crew duty, generally because of the location of missile wings in northern areas, and the demanding requirements of crew duty. With these factors in mind, it is now time to examine the present management system.

PRESENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The total responsibility for the management of MCC falls under the DO. He has control over training and evaluation of crews as well as a direct link to the three squadron commanders under his chain of command. The squadron commander also has a significant amount of decision-making authority as will be brought out later. The organization of the squadron is illustrated in Figure 3.

There are numerous manuals and regulations governing the management of crew resources. One of the most often referenced manuals is SAC Manual 55-66, Vol. I. One of the early requirements in this manual states: "Missile Wings must insure effective management and quality control of policies and requirements established by this and other directives."[2] According to SAC Regulation 23-9, the mission of the Director of Operations is as follows: "Responsible

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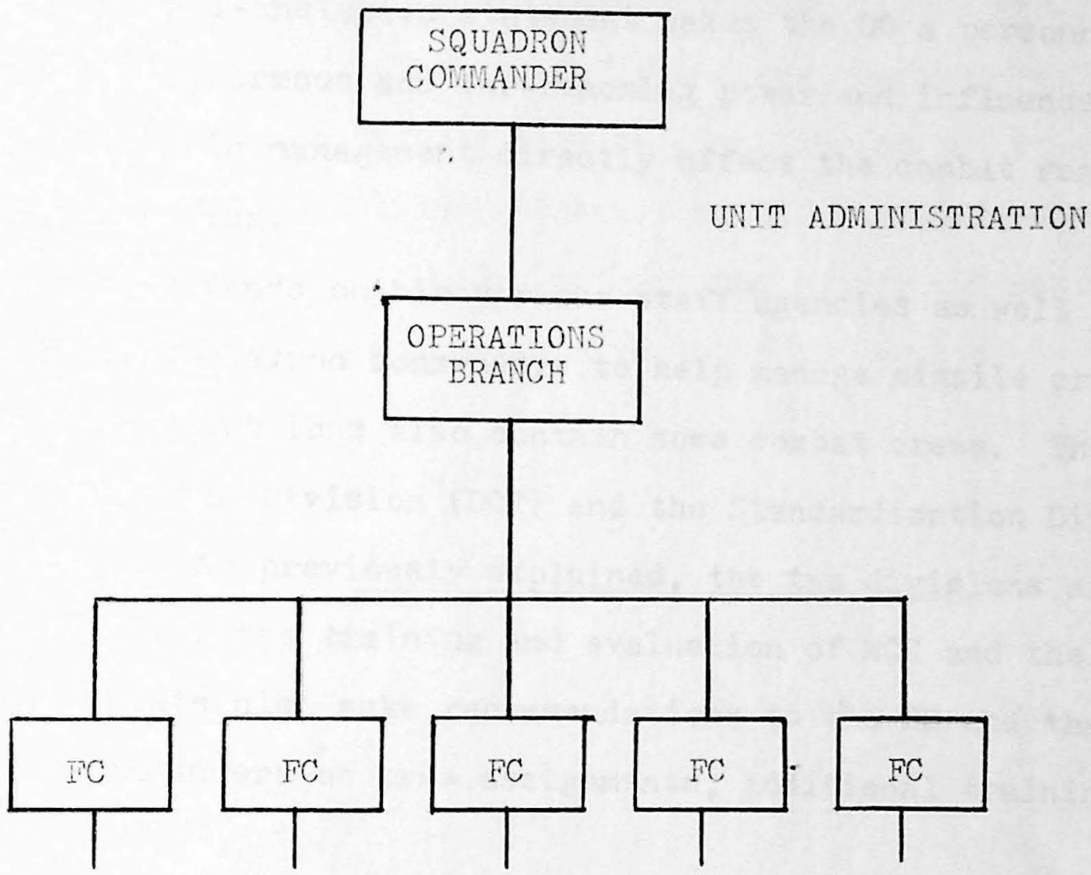
[2]SAC Manual 55-66, Vol. I, p. 1-1.



FC=FLIGHT COMMANDERS

FIGURE 3
SQUADRON ORGANIZATION CHART

for planning, programming, and effective management of activities providing for the operation of missiles, operational training effectiveness, control of missile crews, and maintaining the highest state of combat readiness."[3] This somewhat broad, all-inclusive statement makes the DO a personnel manager with enormous and far-reaching power and influence. His decisions in management directly affect the combat readiness of the wing.

The DO depends on his various staff agencies as well as the three squadron commanders to help manage missile crews. Two of these divisions also contain some combat crews. These are the Training Division (DOT) and the Standardization Division (DOV). As previously explained, the two divisions are responsible for the training and evaluation of MCC and the division chiefs also make recommendations to the DO and the squadron commanders on crew assignments, additional training, etc.

Now, the squadron commanders are required to manage their squadrons to provide MCC for support of the wing's mission. Formally stated this becomes "Fulfill the requirements of the Emergency War Order (EWO) as directed by proper command authority."[4] The squadron commander accomplishes this task by working with his flight commanders to develop the best possible combination of MCC qualified to assume alerts. The

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[3]SAC Regulation 23-9, p. 9-42.

[4]SAC Regulation 23-9, p. 9-42.

squadron commander decides to which flight a crew is assigned and to which crew an individual is assigned. He and the flight commanders perform periodic observations of assigned MCC to monitor their performance. The DOV and DOT division chiefs also perform the same functions to better maintain a professional crew force. DOV and DOT crews are selected for their superior weapon system knowledge and desire for advancement. Their selections naturally come from squadron resources. The complex problems of managing such a dynamic force structure will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH PRESENT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

One of the most obvious difficulties in personnel management of MCC is that there are five separate agencies who are supposed to have the same mission yet depend on one another for personnel and support. DOV and DOT do not have assigned LCC's (They are sometimes assigned to Squadrons for administrative purposes only). Yet, in order to perform their functions, they must be assigned alerts in one of the Squadron LCC's. The squadrons do not have instructors or evaluators, but they must "furnish" personnel to fill these positions as required. The squadron commander sometimes may face a dilemma; form a crew for his needs, or provide a crew to the DOV or DOT division to satisfy wing needs.

There are numerous directives which determine the constraints for crew management. One requires maintaining crew integrity to the highest degree possible without creating inequities in the workload. This requires the formation of the maximum number of crews from available sources. This means that a crew is scheduled for its alerts and training together as opposed to a commander from one crew dispatched on alert with the deputy from another crew. Since the qualifications for positions are the same, this is sometimes done, however, individuals usually prefer working with the same individual over a period of time so that the coordination

developed between crew partners can be fully utilized. Coordination is another important part of crew proficiency but will not be discussed in this paper.

The overwhelming majority of alert tours are performed by line or squadron crews. Therefore, squadron commanders constantly monitor their crews' training and evaluation to insure a quality performance. This sometimes results in crew adjustment such as splitting two crews to exchange crew partners. The theory here, neither proven nor disproven, is that by exchanging partners the "strong" or proficient crewmember, will influence the "weak" or less proficient crewmember, with the result being two "average" crews for the squadron. This averaging theory is used too many times with little improvement in performance standards and four unhappy individuals instead of only two. In the author's opinion, this management practice is unnecessary and is detrimental to overall crew force management objectives.

While the squadron commander constantly strives toward the development of strong crews, he is also tasked with the responsibility to identify especially proficient personnel for instructor or evaluator duty. This actually means he should nominate his best performers to be considered for duties outside the squadron. While the overall mission of the wing is the same for all personnel, it is obvious the objectives of the squadrons and division chiefs could be in conflict. The squadron commander just gets the crews formed and settled when DOV or DOT requires a replacement. Who does the squadron commander get to

replace his man? Since by Manual and Operating Instruction the DOT and DOV personnel are the "most qualified," he will certainly be left with an individual who is less qualified than the one he lost. He may be left without a replacement or with a new crewmember who has not yet completed his formal training.

The departure or arrival of a new crewmember can also cause numerous problems. An unexpected notification of orders, accident, etc., can shift the position of several crewmembers in a few short days. The re-assignment of some personnel such as a Flight Commander could generate an inordinate amount of paperwork to include Officer's Effectiveness Reports (OER's) on those MCCC assigned to his flight. This creates a burden on the Flight Commander in addition to his normal workload. The generation of OER's can sometimes be helpful if a report required by such changes coincides with a promotion board meeting at the same time.

The above discussion points out several problem areas and may give the impression no effort is being made for a co-ordinated effort in crew management. This is not the case. SAC Manual 55-66, Vol. I requires units to develop procedures for notification of all staff and affected agencies of any changes in crewmember status. The procedure developed in the 91SMW is made up in part by a bi-monthly letter to the DOT reflecting actions affecting MCC. This report includes:

1. A monthly projection.
2. Projected personnel actions for following two months.
3. Recapitulation of personnel actions that did not/will not occur as programmed in previous bi-monthly report.
4. Changes to unit six-month projections that occured during this period.[5]

This report is required from each of the three squadrons as well as DOT and DOV. In this way, at least some personnel management decisions are forecast six months in advance. This recognizes the need for advance planning and attempts to provide some definite inputs for use by the DO in forecasting replacements, scheduling, budgets, etc.

This report could be extremely useful in crew force management. However, the sudden, unpredicatable changes that occur in personnel tend to make the projection almost useless in a matter of days. For example, a staff position becomes vacant. A crewmember decides to apply for a job although he had not previously considered that position. If he is selected, then a vacancy on the crew force develops where none was previously forecast. While not like the loss of a key man, his presence could be a serious detriment to overall force structure since his scheduled alerts must be assumed by somebody from the remaining resources. It is the elimination of this sometimes haphazard, crisis-oriented, problem solving solution to operations force structure that will now be addressed.

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[5]DO-OI 35-4, Missile Duty Personnel Actions, 5May75.

CHAPTER IV

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS

There are numerous methods for managing the missile crew force more effectively. Some suggestions are included here and a discussion with advantages and disadvantages follows.

MAINTAIN THE PRESENT SYSTEM

The problems with the present system were discussed in Chapter II. This system results in numerous conflicts of objectives which detract from overall morale and mission accomplishment. Personnel planning is almost impossibly complicated because of the uncoordinated efforts of five separate "agencies." This diffuse arrangement means duplication of effort and somewhat ineffective central control. This lack of central control is one of the most noticable disadvantages and the results reflect this situation.

The present system has some advantages in that it follows the same general organization as other units in the Air Force (Wing, Squadron, Flight). This makes it easily adaptable for managing and mission assignment. This organization structure however was developed based on previous Air Force policies and therefore was used before the missile field even existed. The use of a decentralized management system in a highly centralized command and control field is a handicap for management at all levels.

REORGANIZATION INTO ONE SQUADRON OR UNIT

This proposal is almost the exact opposite of the present system. Here, one unit would contain all missile crews. This proposal has several inherent advantages. It would immediately decrease the amount of administration support required because of the reduction in record keeping, paperwork, and clerks required for one unit. This would centralize all management decisions into one commander as opposed to the five under the present system. The objectives would be centralized under one commander. It would also mean that staff agencies would have to work with only one agency for all combat crews.

There are also some glaring disadvantages to this proposal. The size of the unit would be tremendous, containing some three to four hundred officers. A unit this size would be unusually hard to manage as well as maintaining a central control for all concerned. The span of control would be quite large so that management again could become ineffective or be so divided that missile crews would lose the personal contact with their superiors. Another disadvantage would be that the commander would be responsible for both training and evaluation. This could result in some conflicts of interest.

One final, but important problem with this proposal is that present regulations prohibit this type of organization. Even though some advantages could be derived from such a proposal, there is no way such a plan could be implemented under the present guidelines.

ORGANIZE A PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

This proposal may sound like a Board of Directors' recommendation. Actually, this would be a committee of selected officers to forecast future needs and plan effective personnel utilization to meet those needs. This committee would take proposals, suggestions, recommendations, and other inputs from the various agencies in operations and consolidate the inputs into an overall master plan. This plan then would govern all personnel moves for a given time frame unless situations requiring immediate action arose. This proposal also has an additional advantage in that all agencies would be forced to make some future plans as to needs. The effect would be that all agencies develop some plan for future requests so that it could be submitted to the personnel committee.

In actual practice, some problems could easily develop which would defeat any purported gains in effectiveness. First, how are the committee members to be chosen? What are their qualifications? How can they be representative of all crewmembers and staff agencies? Second, how forceful are committee decisions? Are they recommendations or a master plan that is in fact directive in nature?

Once again there is the dilemma where present regulations do not allow for a formal committee to direct the Operations management. Any proposal for this area must meet the criteria

outlined in SAC Regulation 23-9, Units, Organizations, and Functions of SAC.

SUMMARY

While the regulations leave little room for innovations, there is some action that can be undertaken to better manage personnel. The above proposals are mostly unworkable in their present form but some of the advantages could be incorporated into management thinking.

CHAPTER V

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE

The restraints placed on organization structure sometimes overshadow the discretionary powers of the DO. He has a considerable amount of authority and influence with which to manage missile crews. Through the use of his authority, several changes in management practice could be implemented to more effectively manage crew personnel.

Instead of a formal committee, the planning function might be better formed if the Squadron Commanders and Division Chiefs met, perhaps once a month, to discuss various inputs and losses of personnel as well as personnel moves. The chief, DOT has inputs for those personnel assigned but have not yet arrived on station. His division assigns these individuals to one of the three squadrons according to the needs of each organization. Personnel losses are usually maintained by the Squadrons or division chiefs so that losses are known somewhat in advance. The problem then becomes how to manage personnel during their assignment to crew duty. The informal personnel committee would determine the various needs of <u>all</u> concerned. Even though each would try to maximize his own benefits, at least during the meeting they would see what the other agencies face in their day-to-day operation. This meeting would at least open some channels of communication for future programmed needs.

During this meeting, various staff agencies should provide inputs to identify specific problems or potential problem areas with crewmembers or crews. This may not warrant the re-crewing of individuals but only serve as a means of identifying weak areas needing attention. The commander then is in a better position to recommend additional help for those who need it. The staff may also identify especially capable individuals for consideration as instructors or evaluators. This is extremely important in crew-management since the performance of crews is highly dependent upon the training they receive and the thoroughness of the evaluation section.

There is also a means for a crewmember to submit his name for a staff, instructor, or evaluator position. This consists of a letter to the DO as defined in DO OI 35-5.[6] This letter contains a statement by the crewmember as to what position he desires and why. It is then forwarded through the appropriate squadron commander or division head for co-ordination with all the DO staff agencies concerned. These letters of application should be brought out as additional inputs during the personnel committee meeting. Since most of those present are already familiar with the applications, there could be some constructive recommendations as to which can be seriously considered for the vacancies identified.

The crewmember has gained an advantage through a committee formed in this manner. He has a direct representative in his

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6 DO-OI 35-5, Selection for Instructor/Evaluator Staff Duties, 19Dec74.

commander or division chief. This at least allows him to be considered by someone knowledgeable of his capabilities and desires. It also allows the committee to see the entire crew force as a whole instead of sections so that unnecessary moves are avoided. The constant shifting of personnel between flights, staff agencies, or crew partner exchanges really contributes little or nothing to the maintenance of a professional and stable missile crew force.

This proposed alternative is not a radical shift in organization or management philosophy in the Air Force. This is simply a realization of present organizational constraints and a method of working within those constraints. The organization exists at the present time to implement such a committee to oversee the utilization of personnel.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The organization of missile units is clearly and rigidly defined in SAC Regulation 23-9. Within this framework it is possible to organize a planning committee to plan the most effective utilization of missile combat crews.

Squadron commanders and division chiefs would provide inputs for consideration and discussion. The overall objective for the committee would be a workable plan to effectively manage personnel assigned to Operations. This objective should be paramount in the minds of the committee. Personal judgement would be important but not an overwhelming influence. The committee must identify needs and the means of meeting those needs. Its decisions should be fair and equitable to all agencies and especially considerate of individual crewmembers' wants and desires since this is the reason for its formation.

The author feels this approach to crew personnel management is a much needed addition to the present formal organization structure. A central planning committee would serve as an effective management tool for all areas in missile wing operations. Further study in this area would also be helpful to determine if some type of reorganization could be beneficial in serving the needs of missile force management.

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY

ALERT - 36-hour duty shift at a missile Launch Control Center.

DMCCC - Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander - The officer assigned as second in command of a missile combat crew.

FLIGHT COMMANDER - Commander of one of five flights assigned to each Squadron.

JCS - Joint Chiefs of Staff.

LCC - Launch Control Center - The underground duty station for a MCC containing the necessary equipment to monitor and launch their missiles.

LCF - Launch Control Facility - The entire above and below ground facilities which combine to house living and work areas for personnel support of an ICBM weapon system.

MCC - Missile Combat Crew - Two officers qualified in the weapon system and certified to perform alert duty.

(Combat-Ready MCC) A non-combat ready crew has not completed the required training or has not been certified.

MCCC - Missile Combat Crew Commander - The senior missile combat crew officer responsible for the launch control center, missiles, and other facilities under his control.

MCCM - Missile Combat Crew Member - An individual member of a MCC.

MPT - Missile Procedures Trainer - LCC simulator in which the MCC practices the necessary procedures required in the performance of their duties.

OER - Officer Effectiveness Report - A rating or evaluation of an individual's performance of his duties.

OI - Operating Instruction - Local agency instructions directing the operation and management of some area defined in other manuals or regulations. This directive identifies local procedures to comply with other regulations.

ORT - Operational Readiness Training - The initial ten weeks training required for a MCC.

RECURRING TRAINING - Local training of MCC on a monthly basis to maintain combat-ready status.

UPGRADE TRAINING - Local classroom and MPT training required of MCC prior to becoming certified combat-ready.

WEAPON SYSTEM - A combination of men and equipment required to operate and maintain a missile or aircraft system.

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