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REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

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Review Of Reliability Of The Air Force Personnel Data System

B-164471

*BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES*

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JULY 25, 1966

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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B- 164471

To the President of the Senate and the
Speaker of the House of Representatives

This **is** our **report** on our review **of** the reliability
of the **Air** Force personnel data system.

Copies of **this** report are being sent to the Di-
rector, Bureau of the Budget; the Secretary of Defense;
and the Secretary of the Air Force.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "James B. Stethem", is positioned above the title.

Comptroller General
of the United States

D I G E S T

WHY THE REVIEW WAS MADE

The General Accounting Office has examined into the reliability of the U.S. Air Force's multimillion-dollar personnel data system. The Air Force, by combining the latest computer applications with the services of 17,600 personnel specialists, designed the system to furnish timely and accurate management data on its 135,500 officers and 758,600 enlisted men.

Data contained in the system influence decisions on assignments, promotions, school selections, separations, retirements, et cetera.

Because the effectiveness of any automated system generally is limited by the quality of information which it provides management, the General Accounting Office (GAO)--using random statistical sampling techniques--tested the reliability of data entered and being retained in the system.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

During the review of the operation of the Air Force personnel data system for the period April through October 1967, GAO found that the system was not furnishing the Air Force with data of the reliability desired. Base-level records were inaccurate and certain types of source documents were missing. (See p. 7.)

The reasons contributing to the inaccuracies were:

- lack of adequate review procedures to ensure the accuracy of personnel information;
- absence of standards for evaluating the reliability of system data;
- ineffective guidance and instruction by higher levels of command;
and
- inadequate staffing and training of personnel.

Tear Sheet

JULY 25, 1968

RECOMMENDATIONS OR SUGGESTIONS

GAO suggested that the Air Force consider taking various actions (see pp. 11 to 16), such as:

- standardizing the review procedures of personnel assistance teams;
- requesting the audit services of the Air Force Auditor General for an assessment of the validity of system data;
- establishing appropriate standards for validating system data;
- improving staffing and training of supervisory and operating personnel.

AGENCY ACTIONS

Air Force officials agreed with our finding and suggestions. Extensive measures have been taken under a personnel data improvement program to increase the reliability of information in the personnel data system. (See pp. 43 to 46.)

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

None.

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INTRODUCTION

The General Accounting Office has made a review of selected aspects of the Air Force personnel data system. Our review was made pursuant to the Budget and Accounting Act, 1921 (31 U.S.C. 53), and the Accounting and Auditing Act of 1950 (31 U.S.C. 67).

Our examination of the operation of the Air Force personnel data system for the period April through October 1967 was directed primarily towards evaluating the accuracy of the data recorded and did not include an overall evaluation of the system. During our review we applied the techniques of random statistical sampling. These techniques were used at each Air Force base that we visited to determine the number of officer and airman records to be included in our sample and to select individual personnel records for detailed examination. The scope of our review is described on page 20 of this report.

BACKGROUND

The Air Force conducts its military personnel operations, which encompass the management of about 135,500 officers and 758,600 enlisted personnel, at three management levels--Headquarters, United States Air Force; major commands; and consolidated base personnel offices (CBPOs). At the time of our review, there were 20 major commands and about 260 CBPOs located at about 200 bases throughout the world.

The personnel operation of Headquarters, United States Air Force, is divided between two groups--the Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel, located at the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., and the Military Personnel Center, located at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. The personnel functions of planning, budgeting, and predicting Air Force personnel resources are accomplished at the Pentagon office, whereas those of assigning, promoting, separating, and retiring all officers and enlisted personnel are performed at the Center which is a field extension of Headquarters, United States Air Force, under the operational control of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel,

To accomplish the efficient and effective management of its personnel resources, the Air Force has established

an automated system which is designed to provide **personnel** managers with accurate and **timely** personnel information. This automated system, known as the personnel data system, is operated **by** about 17,600 personnel **specialists**. The **system** is divided into **two** parts: one **for** officers and the other for airmen.

A detailed description of the two **parts** of the **system**, as well as the future **plans** for the system, is presented below.

OFFICER SYSTEM

The officer system was originally designed and implemented to process personnel data on about 135,000 officers and to meet the need of each major command. The system was installed in 1963. **Subsequently**, the **Ais** Force developed an improved standardized officer system which became operational in **1965**.

The present officer system is an integrated system in that the Center, the major commands, and the CBPOs at the base level participate in its **operations**. The principal, types of equipment utilized by these management levels **for** processing personnel data are as follows:

<u>Management level.</u>	<u>Equipment</u>
Center	Burroughs 5500
Major commands	Honeywell 800/200
CBPOs	Punched card accounting machines

The annual rental cost for the Burroughs 5500 at the Center is about \$936,300, The annual costs allocable to the system for the Honeywell 800/200's and the punched card accounting machines were not readily available since the equipment was **not** used **exclusively** for personnel **operations**.

The standard data base under the officer system, is known as the **uniform offices record (UOR)** and is maintained at all management levels, In this connection, the Center maintains Ais Force-wide UOR data on **magnetic** tapes and discs and the major commands **maintain** officer data on

magnetic tapes. The CBPOs maintain UOR data in the form of 10 punched cards.

The UOR contains information relating to an officer's assignments, training, and education and to other personnel data. Included as appendix I is a copy of a sample UOR showing the types of personnel data maintained for officers. Changes to most of the UOR data in the continental United States are transmitted to the various command levels through the Automatic Digital Network (AUTODIN) which is part of the Defense Communications System,

AIRMAN SYSTEM

The present airman system was set up by the Air Force in October 1965. In the airman system, the vertical flow of data transmitted through AUTODIN terminates at the major command level. The Center maintains no Air Force-wide data base for airmen, but designated major commands maintain a central data base for airmen.

The standard data base under the airman system, known as the uniform airman record (UAR), is maintained at the CBPOs in the form of five punched cards. The UARs do not contain as much personnel information as the UORs contain; however, the data are of the same general nature. Included as appendix 11 is a copy of a sample UAR showing the types of data maintained for enlisted personnel,

The flow of information between major commands and the Center has been confined to some summary information on all airmen and limited individual information on enlisted personnel in pay grades E-6 through E-9,

FUTURE PLANS FOR THE SYSTEM

The Air Force is in the process of making extensive modifications to the system that will result in the establishment of a personnel system known as the personnel management system. In this connection, it is currently planned that the personnel management system will be implemented during 1970.

Some of the major modifications planned for the present system include the installation of computers at base levels to replace the present punched card accounting machine equipment and the establishment of a central standard personnel data base for airmen at the Center. Under the present system, a standard data base for **airmen** is maintained only at CBPOs and designated major commands. The Center will be responsible for the design and **maintenance** of **the** personnel management system.

A list of the principal officials of the Department of Defense and the Department of the Air **Force** responsible for the administration of the activities discussed in this report is included as appendix III.

FINDING

NEED FOR IMPROVING RELIABILITY OF INFORMATION IN THE PERSONNEL DATA SYSTEM

During our review, we found that the data provided by the personnel data system was not of sufficient reliability to the various levels of command for use in the management of personnel resources. In this connection, we found that base-level records were inaccurate and that some source documents were missing. We believe that the inaccuracies in the personnel data were primarily due to the following management weaknesses:

1. Lack of adequate review procedures to ensure the accuracy of personnel information.
2. Absence of standards for evaluating the reliability of the data in the system.
3. Ineffective guidance and instruction by higher levels of command to personnel at the base level.
4. Inadequate staffing and training of personnel at the base level.

The system was designed to provide personnel managers with timely and accurate information for the efficient and effective management of Air Force military personnel. The effectiveness of this multimillion-dollar system as a management tool depends on the accuracy of the data entered and retained in it, since the data provide the bases upon which management decisions are made. Therefore, the reporting of inaccurate personnel data, such as we found during our review, could result in inappropriate management decisions. These decisions could have an effect on both the Air Force and the individual service member because the system provides data which influence decisions on such matters as assignments, promotions, school selections, separations, and retirements.

During our review, we met with representatives of the Air Force to apprise them of our observations and to discuss possible solutions to the problems found and corrective

actions needed to improve the reliability of the data within the system. At the completion of our review, Air Force officials informed us of actions which either had been taken or were planned to correct the matters brought to their attention. They apprised us that review procedures had been standardized and that personnel data system reliability standards had been established for the evaluation of the data maintained in the system.

In addition, we were advised that clarifying instructions had been issued to personnel at the base level regarding the proper coding of personnel data and that actions had been taken to improve the training of personnel specialists. Included on pages 43 through 46 of this report is a list of actions included in the personnel data improvement program which the Air Force has initiated.

A detailed discussion of our finding follows.

Inaccurate personnel data

Our review of the accuracy of data in the uniform officer records and uniform airman records at the base level showed that these records contained erroneous data. We measured the results of our review against the system reliability standards established by the Air Force (see p. 13) and found that the data in the system were not of the reliability required by the Air Force. In addition, we found that 5 percent of the officer data and 2 percent of the airman data were not susceptible to audit due to the absence of source documentation in the individuals' personnel folders. Presented below are the results of our review of the accuracy of UOR and UAR data.

Uniform officer records

Our examination of 378 UORs involving 32,337 applicable blocks of information showed that these records contained a total of 1,725 errors, or an error rate of 5 percent. Our analysis of the records showed that 366 of the 378 UORs contained one or more errors. The number of errors on the UORs examined averaged five for each record. More significantly, however, we found that the error rates for 52 percent of the

critical data items and 28 percent of the noncritical data items did not meet the Air Force's reliability standards. Included as appendix IV is a schedule of UOR data items that did not meet the Air Force's reliability standards.

The following case illustrates our finding.

The UOR contains five information blocks which should identify, by use of coded data, the five most recent technical or flying training courses that officers have completed. These information blocks are used to identify those officers who have completed the specialized training that is a prerequisite for their selection for assignment to particular Air Force positions.

The Air Force reliability standards for these information blocks provides for a minimum accuracy rate of 90 percent. We found, however, that accuracy rates for these information blocks ranged from 51 to 77 percent. This high frequency of error could adversely affect the assignment of officers.

Uniform airman records

Our examination of 480 UARs involving 25,180 applicable blocks of information showed that these records contained a total of 1,461 errors, or an error rate of 6 percent. Our analysis of the records showed that 457 of the 480 UARs contained one or more errors. The number of errors on the UARs examined averaged three for each record. More significantly, however, we found that the error rates for 47 percent of the critical data items and 39 percent of the noncritical data items did not meet the Air Force's reliability standards. Included as appendix V is a schedule of UAR data items which did not meet the Air Force's reliability standards.

The following case illustrates our finding.

One of the UAR data items classified as critical by the Air Force is date of rank (permanent grade). This date establishes the seniority of an individual compared with that of others in the same grade. The

principal use of this item is to identify airmen who are eligible to be considered for promotion.

The Air Force reliability standard for this information block provides for a minimum accuracy rate of 99 percent. We found, however, that the accuracy rate for this information block was 98 percent. Because of this frequency of error, eligible airmen may not have been considered for promotion.

Management weaknesses contributing to inaccurate personnel data

During our review, we observed several management weaknesses which we believe contributed to inaccurate personnel data. Examples of each of the specific management weaknesses identified during our review are discussed below,

Lack of adequate review procedures

Annual records review--One of the principal tools used by the Air Force to ensure that the personnel data recorded in the system are accurate is the annual records review. Under this program, each officer and airman is required to review his personnel record annually to determine whether it is accurate. To show that this review has been accomplished, the officer or airman records the date and his signature on the inside cover of his personnel record folder.

In our review of the administration of the annual records review, we found that 8 percent of the officers and 15 percent of the airmen included in our sample had not reviewed their records in over a year. We found also that at one CBPO the personnel clerk conducting the reviews had not made an item-by-item verification of the personnel data with the individual who was reviewing his record. The assistance of CBPO personnel is necessary because most of the data shown on UORs and UARs are in code form and require the use of the appropriate Air Force manuals to interpret the meanings of the codes.

We found at another CBPO that changes were processed directly into the system, on the basis of statements made by an officer during his annual records review, without a verification being made of the validity of those statements.

As our review progressed and after we brought our findings to the attention of local CBPO officials, we found a definite improvement in the manner in which the annual records reviews were being administered. For example, at one CBPO new procedures were initiated whereby one personnel clerk would assist the individual reviewing his records. At another CBPO, we found that procedures were revised so that

no changes would be made to the UORs without a verification of the accuracy of the change to the applicable source documents first being made. In addition, Air Force officials advised us that they had initiated action to improve the administration of the annual records review. (See p. 43,)

Personnel assistance teams--The Center utilizes personnel assistance teams (PATs) to monitor the accuracy of data in the system and to assist the individual personnel offices in improving personnel administration. In our review of the work performed by the PATs, we were informed by Center representatives that, prior to March 15, 1967, the PATs had limited review procedures and evaluation guides. Hence, the procedures used and the areas reviewed varied with each PAT, depending on the interest and knowledge of each member of the team. We were advised also that there had been no management procedures whereby problem areas could be brought to the attention of cognizant Center officials for corrective action.

Subsequent to March 15, 1967, the PATs adopted audit techniques similar to those used by our audit staffs in our review. For example, the PATs initiated a uniform method of recording errors, adopted the use of statistical sampling techniques, established a uniform method of accumulating data for analysis and evaluation, and adopted the management-by-exception principle whereby only problem areas would be brought to the attention of management for corrective action.

We found that major commands also had PATs which reviewed the operations of the personnel offices under the respective commands. Although these PATs were not under the control of the Center, they performed work similar to the PATs from the Center. Inasmuch as the Center had standardized its review procedures, we proposed that consideration be given to having the PATs from the major commands adopt the same standardized review procedures. In addition, we suggested to Center officials that they consider requesting the audit services of the Air Force Auditor General for an assessment of the validity of the data.

Center officials have taken action on these proposals and have initiated an improvement program to implement our proposals. (See pp. 43 and 44.)

Absence of management reliability standards

We found that the Air Force had not established formal standards for evaluating the degree of reliability of UOR and UAR data. During a meeting with Air Force officials on May 17, 1967, we suggested that appropriate standards be established since we believed that management should have a standard by which to measure the reliability of these data. Accordingly, the Air Force officials developed reliability standards for individual UOR and UAR data items and provided us with copies in July 1967. We were advised that these reliability standards were interim standards which would be subject to adjustment when more refined statistical data were accumulated.

Subsequent to the completion of our review, we were informed that the Air Force had adjusted the reliability standards for UOR and UAR data items. These adjusted standards require a higher degree of accuracy than the standards initially furnished to us. However, we used the initial standards in determining the UOR and UAR data items that did not meet the Air Force's reliability standards (apps. IV and V).

In furnishing us with the UOR reliability standards, a Center official stressed the importance of maintaining accurate personnel data by stating that:

"*** a 1% error in forecasting strength can equate to over a \$15,000,000 error in the officer portion of the military appropriation and could result in an over-obligation of funds ***."

We believe that the establishment of reliability standards will be a valuable tool to the Air Force in bringing problem areas to the attention of management for corrective action. In this connection, we have been advised that the PATs are utilizing reliability standards in evaluating the reliability of the data in the system. (See p. 44.)

Ineffective guidance and instruction by higher levels of command

Many of the errors found during our review were caused by ineffective guidance and instruction to base-level

personnel by higher levels of command. In this connection, we found that (1) a major command had directed a personnel office to deviate from the governing regulations regarding the proper coding of data, (2) the applicable Air Force manuals contained conflicting and/or vague instructions, and (3) the applicable Air Force manuals did not provide sufficient codes to properly classify certain personnel information.

An illustration of the insufficiency of the codes can be found in the coding instructions relating to the information block for an airman's intention to reenlist. Many of the airmen included in our sample were undecided about reenlisting upon the completion of their present terms. However, the applicable Air Force manual did not provide a code for "undecided" but required that an airman be shown as either "intending" or "not intending" to reenlist. We found that some personnel offices were coding the undecided airmen as intending to reenlist, while others were coding them as not intending to reenlist. Consequently, the data being accumulated and retained in the system regarding airmen's intentions to reenlist were not reliable for use by management.,

To determine the effect that erroneous reenlistment intention data could have on individual airmen and on the Air Force, we inquired into the use made of this information by the Air Force. We found that this information was not being used by the Air Force managers at the Center. We brought this matter to the attention of Center representatives who thereupon requested all management levels to report to them the use being made of this data item. As a result of this request, Center representatives found that this item was no longer required by management and advised us that it would be deleted from the system.

We brought these matters to the attention of Air Force officials who concurred with our findings and initiated an improvement program designed to correct the above conditions. (See pp. 45 and 46.)

Inadequate staffing and training of personnel

Since many of the errors that we found during our review were the result of human error on the part of base-level

personnel, we examined into the staffing and training of personnel at the five personnel offices we visited. We found that the total number of persons assigned was generally equal to the total number of manpower spaces authorized. However, at several CBPOs, there were personnel shortages in the supervisory positions and overages in the apprentice positions. For example, at one CBPO, we found that 14 supervisory positions were not filled and that 12 more apprentice personnel were assigned than were authorized. At another CBPO, we found that the position of the Chief, CBPO, had been vacant intermittently for almost 2 years.

With respect to the training of CBPO personnel, we found that most personnel had received either formal or on-the-job training in their career field. However, at one CBPO, three of the five officers had received less formal training than was shown in the applicable Air Force manual as "desirable" for their positions. For example, one officer had a degree in physical education rather than in the preferred area of administration or management. In addition, we found instances where the personnel office had only one person who was knowledgeable of the operations of the system.

During our meeting with Air Force officials at the conclusion of our review, we advised them that, in our opinion, the lack of required supervisory personnel as well as trained personnel contributed to the inaccuracies revealed in our review. We advised the Air Force officials also that we believed that there was a need to instill in CBPO personnel, particularly personnel in the lower pay grades, an awareness of the importance of the work being performed in order to reduce or eliminate inaccuracies resulting from human error.

At that meeting, we proposed that the Air Force prepare a general information handbook which would emphasize both the importance of maintaining accurate data and the interrelationship of the individual functions within the system. In addition, we suggested that the Air Force consider publishing a primer for use by operating personnel as a reference to individual data items. We proposed that this primer include such information as definitions of particular data items, references to applicable source documents, necessary coding instructions regarding data items, and illustrations of common problems, areas.

Air Force officials were receptive to our proposals and have taken actions designed to improve the matters brought to their attention. For example, we have been advised by Air Force officials that they have published a general booklet similar to the type we suggested. Air Force officials have informed us also that they have published a primer for use by operating personnel. In addition, we have been advised that, effective July 1, 1967, all airmen entering the personnel field were being given formal training in personnel operation prior to reporting to their first duty stations, (See p. 46.)

Conclusion and agency actions

The personnel data system was designed to retain and provide to Air Force management officials information that they need to manage the service's personnel resources. Using the Air Force's reliability standards, we found that the information being retained in the system was not sufficiently reliable to effectively serve this purpose. Also we identified what we believed to be the basic management weaknesses that contributed to this condition.

On February 27, 1968, we brought our findings to the attention of the Secretary of Defense, The Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower and Reserve Affairs), by letter dated April 26, 1968, commented on our findings on behalf of the Department of Defense. (See app. VI.)

The Assistant Secretary informed us that the Air Force generally **agreed** with our findings and proposals and had taken action to correct the management weaknesses revealed by our review. (See pp. 34 to 40.)

The Assistant Secretary advised us that, although the Air Force generally agreed with our findings and proposals, it questioned the implication that the system was not providing personnel data of sufficient reliability to the various levels of command for use in the management of personnel resources. In this connection we were advised that the Air Force was able to use the data in the system to manage its personnel resources, particularly its Southeast Asia operations,

We based our opinion that the personnel data system was not providing personnel data of sufficient reliability to the various levels of command for use in the management **of** personnel resources on the following factors:

1. Fifty-two percent of the UOR critical data items and 47 percent of the UAR critical data items did **not** meet the Air Force's reliability standards.
2. The Department had designed the system to provide personnel managers with timely and accurate

information for the efficient and effective management of Air Force personnel. Therefore, to the extent that erroneous data were being retained, we believed that the system was not meeting the objective for which it was designed.

The Assistant Secretary also pointed out that there were many checks and balances in the Air Force's overall management of its personnel that were designed to detect and correct decisions which may have been based on erroneous UOR and UAR data in its personnel data system. For example, the Assistant Secretary said that the assignment system had been designed to permit a reclama--an action in contest of a decision by a panel, committee, or the like to restore what has been taken away--when a review of manual records indicated that an individual was not qualified or was ineligible for reassignment.

We recognize that there are manual checks and balances in the Air Force's overall personnel management system that are designed to correct initial management decisions, such as reassignment of personnel, which are proved to be in error because of incorrect personnel data in the system. However, to the extent that additional management actions are required to correct errors caused by inaccurate data in the system, we believe that these actions are both time consuming and costly. Furthermore, it should be noted that, although manual checks may correct initial management decisions such as those relating to the reassignment of personnel, there may be other qualified individuals who have not been considered for reassignment because the inaccurate personnel data in the system precluded them from being considered eligible for reassignment.

The Assistant Secretary stated that the accuracy of the data within the Air Force's personnel system was paramount in the management and operation of the system and that the irreducible minimum or a 100-percent data accuracy rate was a major management objective of the Air Force personnel program. Moreover, the Assistant Secretary informed us that the Air Force had taken actions to increase data accuracy in the personnel data system and that these actions had resulted in a far-reaching data improvement program.

In view of the actions taken by the Air Force, we are making no recommendations at this time since these actions, if properly implemented and monitored, should result in improving the reliability of the data in the system.

SCOPE OF REVIEW

In conducting our review, we used random statistical sampling techniques. To determine sample sizes, we followed the principles of sampling for attributes, using a confidence level of 95 percent, and selected for review personnel records for 378 officers and 480 airmen from a universe of 2,020 officers and 15,303 airmen who were permanently assigned to the following Air Force bases at the time of our review:

McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas
Reese Air Force Base, Texas
Selfsidge Air Force Base, Michigan
Vandenberg Air Force Base, California
Francis E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming

At the base level, we verified the accuracy of the personnel data maintained in the system by comparing the information shown on the source documents--which, for the most part, were contained in the individuals' personnel folders--with the information shown on the uniform officer records and the uniform airman records. Where we found errors, we discussed them with responsible personnel to obtain confirmation of the errors and/or comments. We also interviewed 38 percent of the officers and 56 percent of the airmen included in sample and, to the extent practicable, attempted to identify the causes of the errors.

We examined into the staffing and training of the personnel assigned to the CBPOs visited and inquired into the work performed by the various internal audit groups as it related to verifying the accuracy of personnel information.

As a part of our examination, we compared the personnel data maintained at base level with the personnel data reported to the Military Personnel Center, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, and to the following major commands:

Air Defense Command, Ent Air Force Base, Colorado
Air Training Command, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas
Strategic Air Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska

We also reviewed applicable Air Force regulations, manuals, and directives relating to the system.

APPENDIXES

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LEVEL	FIRST STATION	SECOND STATION	STATE	FIRST CONUS AREA	SECOND CONUS AREA	FIRST O/S CTRY/STATE	SECOND O/S CTRY/STATE	FIRST O/S CTRY/STATE	SECOND O/S CTRY/STATE	FIRST O/S CTRY/STATE	SECOND O/S CTRY/STATE	ASSIGNMENT AVAILABILITY
1	TAYZ	BXUR	09	2	6	12	36	36	BR	36	36	50
ASSIGNMENT DATE	ASSIGNMENT LIMITATION		O/S VOLUNTEER STATUS	NON-CONUS RES STATE/COUNTRY		LEGAL RES/ DOMICILE STATE/CTRY	ASSIGNMENT PLACE FROM WHICH ENTERED AD	PREP MAC	PREP MAC	PREP MAC	PREP MAC	ASSIGNMENT STATUS
310867	Y	Y	Y	Y	Q00L	18	P	Q00L	YY	YY	YY	B3

LANGUAGE		BEST ID NO SP WT CP		SECOND ID NO SP WT CP		K611AHAY LV YN AC MO		HIGH637 LV YN AC MO		ACADEMIC EDUCATION		THIRD LV AC MO		C652 EC YH MS SECOND LV AC MO		YØ EC MS SECOND LV AC MO		YØ THIRD BC MS		SPEC EXP ID OTHER/ R & D WORK AREA		LAST SECOND		YØ TECH ON PLY THG	
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[illegible][illegible]

STU, GRAD, BUS ADMIN, GEO WASH U	PERSONNEL
RJW42	ACCOUNTING SYMBOL

SAMPLE UNIFORM AIRMAN RECORD (UAR)

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (WHEN FILLED IN)

Current Grade	AFSN	Name	Date of Rank Permanent Grade	Category of Enlistment	Race & Sex	Security Clearance				
37	19999999	DOE JOHN R JR	010666	0	4 A	4				
Term of Enlistment	Service Category	Academic Education Level	PCS Code	Spot Promotion Identifier	Component	Functional Category	Character of Discharge	SDN #	EDCSA/Effective Date	Organization
4	X	2	E	0	1	B	0	000	041067	RJWJQ2

Date Departed Last Duty Station	Date Arrived At Station	Functional Account	Program Element	Duty Location	Major Air Command of Assignment Area	Subsistence Allowance Authorization	Date of Birth	Eligibility For Reenlistment	Date of Availability for Reassignment	Reenlistment Selection Status/Reason not Reenl	Eligibility	Intent
220667	290667	1604MDS	00000000	TYMX	1	2	060834	7	300671	0	1	1

*These blocks of information were not included in our review because they either were problem areas known to the Air Force or were not applicable to the Air Force personnel whose records we reviewed.

Marital Status & Nr Dependents	Status	Proficiency Pay Not Receiving Pro-Pay Reasons	Current Accompanied Status	Years Active Commissioned and WO Service	TAFMSD	Pay Date	Expiration Term of Service	Date of Separation
E	0	Y	1	00	110154	110154	011267	010568
Length of Current/Last OS Tour	ODS/D/DEROS	Non-CONUS Resident, Country/State	Assignment Action Nr/Vol Overseas Area	NCO Professional School	Citizenship Status	Religious Denomination	Mental Category	
K	190865	YY	GV3036	T	1	C	2	

PAFSC	2d AFSC	CAFSC	DAFSC	Training Status	Training-In AFSC	Date Entered/Completed/Withdrawn Training	Training-Out AFSC	Reassignment OJT Training Status	USAF Supervisory Examination
73291	000000	73291	W73270	Y	000000	000000	000000	Y	1

Last APR Rating	Last APR Date	Good Conduct Medal Number	Good Conduct Medal Date	Extended Active Duty Date	RSPPP Option	Annuity	In-Service Guaranteed Home Loan	Variable Reenlistment Bonus	Human Reliability Determination Status	Date
A	220667	1	100166	110154	0	0	2	Y	0	000000
1 RJWJQ2										

ACADEMIC EDUCATION
 1 - Non-high school graduate
 2 - High school graduate
 3 - College, completed less than 2 years
 4 - College, completed 2 yrs but not 3 years
 5 - College, completed 3 or more years but did not earn a degree
 6 - College graduate and awarded a bachelor degree or equivalent
 7 - Post-graduate college but no post-graduate degree
 8 - Masters degree
 9 - Doctors degree
 0 - Unknown

HUMAN RELIABILITY STATUS
 1 - Interviewed & qualified under AFM 35-99 first screening without medical interview
 2 - Interviewed & qualified under AFM 35-99 second or subsequent screening without medical interview
 3 - Interviewed & qualified under AFM 35-99 first screening with medical interview
 4 - Interviewed & qualified under AFM 35-99 second or subsequent screening with medical interview
 5 - Permanent disqualification
 6 - Temporary disqualification
 7 - Pending interview for current assignment
 0 - Not applicable to current assignment

MARITAL STATUS & NR OF DEPENDENTS
 SINGLE
 0 - None
 1 - One
 2 - Two
 3 - Three
 4 - Four
 5 - Five
 6 - Six
 7 - Seven
 8 - Eight or more
 9 - Unknown
 MARRIED
 A - One
 B - Two
 C - Three
 D - Four
 E - Five
 F - Six
 G - Seven
 H - Eight or more
 I - Unknown
 J - None

NCO PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS
 T - NCO Academy
 U - NCO Preparatory School
 Y - Not applicable
 Z - Unknown
PROFICIENCY PAY STATUS
 0 - Airman not possessing a proficiency pay AFSC and not receiving proficiency pay.
 1 - Airman possessing proficiency pay AFSC and receiving first step of proficiency pay (P-1).
 2 - Airman possessing proficiency pay AFSC and receiving second step of proficiency pay (P-2).
 3 - Airman possessing proficiency pay AFSC and receiving third step of proficiency pay (P-3).
 4 - Airman possessing a proficiency pay AFSC and not receiving proficiency pay.
 9 - Unknown

RACE AND SEX
 1 - Male Negro
 A - Male White
 J - Male Other
 2 - Female Negro
 H - Female White
 K - Female Other

REASON NOT REENLISTING
 0 - Not applicable
 2 - Does not elect to reenlist
 3 - Selected & extended but declined at ETS
 4 - Quota limitation
 5 - Qualitative Standards
REENLISTMENT ELIGIBILITY
 0 - Not applicable
 1 - Is eligible to reenlist
 2 - Is not eligible to reenlist
 9 - Unknown

REENLISTMENT INTENTION
 0 - Not applicable
 1 - Intends to reenlist
 2 - Does not intend to reenlist
 9 - Unknown

REENLISTMENT SELECTION STATUS
 0 - Not applicable
 1 - Selected - first term airman
 4 - Not selected quota-limitation
 5 - Not selected, qualitative standards
 6 - SELECTED - 10 YEARS SERVICE
 7 - " " 24 " "
 8 - " " 27 " "
 9 - Unknown

SECURITY CLEARANCE
 0 - None
 1 - Special Investigative Background
 2 - Cryptographic
 3 - Top Secret
 4 - Secret
 5 - Confidential
 6 - Clearance Revoked
 7 - Not Clearable
 8 - Clearance temporarily suspended
 9 - Unknown

SPOT PROMOTION IDENTIFIER
 0 - Never held a spot promotion greater than his current grade
 1 - Currently serving in a spot grade, one grade above normal active duty grade
 2 - Has held a spot grade higher than current grade
 3 - Currently serving in a spot grade two grades above normal active duty grade
 9 - Unknown

SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE AUTHORIZATION
 0 - Not applicable
 1 - Not authorized
 2 - Granted permission to mess separately
 3 - Rations in kind not available
 4 - Supplemental subsistence allowance authorized
 5 - Emergency conditions where no Government messing facilities are available
 9 - Unknown

TRAINING STATUS
 A - Upgrade Training (1 to 3 skill level)
 B - Upgrade Training (3 to 5 skill level)
 C - Upgrade Training (3-7, 5-7 skill level)
 D - Upgrade Training (capability only AFM 39-4) (3-7, 5-7 skill level)
 F - Cross Training (not under selective reenlistment)
 G - Cross Training (first term airman who extend their enlistment 48 months and/or reenlist under the selective reenlistment program for retraining)
 W - Withdrawn from OJT (for any cause)
 Y - Not in training
 Z - Completed Training (includes award of the AFS for which trained)

USAF SUPERVISORY EXAMINATION RESULTS
 0 - Not tested
 1 - Qualified
 2 - Unqualified
 9 - Unknown

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APPENDIX II

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
AND THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTRATION OF ACTIVITIES
DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT

Tenure of office	
From	To

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:

Clark M. Clifford	Mar. 1968	Present
Robert S. McNamara	Jan. 1961	Feb. 1968

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
(MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS) :

Alfred B. Fitt	Oct. 1967	Present
Thomas D. Morris	Oct. 1965	Sept. 1967

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE:

Dr. Harold Brown	Oct. 1965	Present
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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR
FORCE (MANPOWER AND RESERVE
AFFAIRS) :

J. William Doolittle	Apr. 1968	Present
Dr. Eugene T. Ferraro (acting)	Jan. 1968	Mar. 1968

DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF THE AIR
FORCE (MANPOWER) (abolished) :

Dr. Eugene T. Ferraro	June 1966	Dec. 1967
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SCHEDULE OF UOR DATA ITEMS NOT MEETING
AIR FORCE RELIABILITY STANDARDS

<u>Data item description</u>	Total number of appli- cable in- formation <u>blocks</u>	Total num- ber of er- rors	GAO com- puted error rate	Air Force reliabil- ity stan- dards (note a)
(Percentages)				
CRITICAL DATA ITEMS:				
Date of rank--current grade	378	13	3.4	1.0
Effective date of change in strength accountability	378	40	10.6	0.5
Military service obligation	378	8	2.1	1.0
Date of separation	378	21	5.6	0.5
Total years service date/ promotion list service date	378	9	2.4	0.5
Combat area--days temporary duty	378	9	2.4	1.0
Personnel accounting symbal	378	3	0.8	0.5
NONCRITICAL DATA ITEMS:				
Date departed last duty station	378	46	12.2	10.0
Date arrived at station	378	41	10.8	10.0
Overseas tour length-- current/last	209 ^b	24	11.5	5.0
Assignment preference--first continental United States area	378	43	11.4	10.0
Assignment preference--sec- ond continental United States area	378	60	15.9	10.0
Assignment availability date	378	39	10.3	5.0
Assignment limitation--first	378	31	8.2	5.0
Assignment limitation--sec- ond	99 ^b	5	5.1	5.0
Home of record	378	27	7.1	5.0

SCHEDULE OF UOR DATA ITEMS NOT MEETING

AIR FORCE RELIABILITY STANDARDS (cont nued)

<u>Data item description</u>	<u>Total number of appli- cable in- formation blocks</u>	<u>Total num- ber of er- rors</u>	<u>'GAO com- puted error sate</u>	<u>Air Force reliabil- ity stan- dards (note a)</u>
(Percentages)				
NONCRITICAL DATA ITEMS (continued):				
Legal residence	378	56	14.8	5.0
Place from which entered ac- tive duty	378	41	10.8	5.0
Assignment status	378	44	11.6	5.0
Academic education--highest	378	54	14.3	5.0
Special experience identity other/Research and devel- opment work area--last	378	35	9.3	5.0
Special experience identity other/Research and develop- ment work area--second	160 ^b	12	7.5	5.0
Retired serviceman's family protection plan	96 ^b	9	9.4	5.0
Current tour--reason unac- companied	21 ^b	7	33.3	10.0
Technical or flying train- ing--last	378	87	23.0	10.0
Technical or flying train- ing--second	290 ^b	82	28.3	10.0
Technical or flying train- ing--third	213 ^b	74	34.7	10.0
Technical or flying train- ing--fourth	152 ^b	64	42.1	10.0
Technical or flying train- ing--fifth	107 ^b	52	48.6	10.0
Date suspended/grounded	95 ^b	5	5.3	5.0
Date removed/suspended/ grounded	48 ^b	3	6.2	5.0

SCHEDULE OF UOR DATA ITEMS NOT MEETING

AIR FORCE RELIABILITY STANDARDS (continued)

- ^aThe Air Force provided us with reliability standards ranging from 90 to 99.5 percent. However, for purposes of comparison, we have subtracted these reliability standards from 100 percent.
- ^bThe total number of applicable information blocks is less than the total sample size because the particular information was not applicable to all the individuals whose records we reviewed.

SCHEDULE OF UAR DATA ITEMS NOT MEETING

AIR FORCE RELIABILITY STANDARDS

<u>Data item description</u>	Total number of appli- cable in- formation <u>blocks</u>	Total num- ber of er- rors	GAO com- puted error rate	Air Force reliabil- ity stan- dards (note a)
(Percentages)				
CRITICAL DATA ITEMS:				
Date of rank--permanent grade	480	12	2.5	1.0
Permanent change of station code	480	56	11.7	1.0
Effective date of change in strength accountability	480	68	14.2	0.5
Organization	480	3	0.6	0.5
Proficiency pay--status	480	7	1.5	1.0
Proficiency pay--reason not receiving	35 ^b	6	17.1	1.0
Expiration term of service	480	7	1.5	1.0
Date of separation	480	10	2.1	0.5
NONCRITICAL DATA ITEMS:				
Date departed last duty station	480	60	12.5	10.0
Date arrived at station	480	67	14.0	10.0
Subsistence allowance au- thorization	480	26	5.4	5.0
Eligibility for reassign- ment	480	27	5.6	5.0
Date of availability for reassignment	480 ^b	57	11.9	5.0
Reason not reenlisting	68 ^b	6	8.8	5.0
Eligibility	480	103	21.5	5.0
Marital status and number of dependents	480	47	9.8	5.0

SCHEDULE OF UAR DATA ITEMS NOT MEETING

AIR FORCE RELIABILITY STANDARDS (continued)

<u>Data item description</u>	<u>Total number of appli- cable in- formation blocks</u>	<u>Total num- ber of er- rors</u>	<u>GAO com- puted error rate</u>	<u>Air Force reliabil- ity stan- dards (note a)</u>
			(Percentages)	
NONCRITICAL DATA ITEMS (continued):				
Current accompanied status	270 ^b	40	14.8	10.0
Overseas duty selection date/Date eligible for return from overseas	480	42	8.8	5.0
Mental category	480	78	16.2	10.0
Date entered/completed/ withdrawn training	332 ^b	50	15.1	5.0
United States Air Force supervisory examination	25 ^b	3	12.0	5.0
Retired serviceman's family protection plan option	50 ^b	10	20.0	5.0
Retired serviceman's family protection plan annuity	51 ^b	9	17.6	5.0
Human reliability determina- tion--status	480	52	10.8	5.0

^aThe Air Force provided us with reliability standards ranging from 90 to 99.5 percent. However, for purposes of comparison, we have subtracted these reliability standards from 100 percent.

^bThe total number of applicable information blocks is less than the total sample size because the particular information was not applicable to all the individuals whose records we reviewed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON 20330



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

APR 26 1968

Dear Mr. Newman:

The Secretary of Defense has asked me to reply to your letter of February 27, 1968, providing copies of your draft report on the Review of the Air Force Personnel Data System (OSD Case #2739).

A key objective of the Air Force Personnel Data System has been and is the accurate and timely reporting of personnel information. We will not be satisfied with anything Less than the irreducible minimum data accuracy rate, hence our goal is 100% accuracy. As a result, the Air Force has been fully responsive to the GAO findings and initiated aggressive action while the review was in progress to improve Air Force directives, policies and procedures. Immediately following the exit briefing, a comprehensive and detailed USAF Data Improvement Program, in greater depth than originally described to GAO, was implemented. Significant achievements have been made towards the goal of an error-free data system.

Each of the main topics in the GAO report is discussed below:

a. Need for Improving the Reliability of Information in the Personnel Data System,

(1). Summary of GAO findings:

(a). During our review, we found that the Personnel Data System was not providing personnel data of sufficient reliability to the various levels of command for use in the management of personnel resources.

(b). The reporting of inaccurate personnel data, such as we found during our review, could result in inappropriate management decisions. These decisions have their effect on both the Air Force and the individual service member because the System provides data which influences decisions on such matters as assignments, promotions, school selections, separations and retirements.

(2). Air Force comments:

(a). We confirm that there were and are certain data items that do not meet the desired degree of reliability. The report reflects an overall error rate of 5% for officer data and 6% for airman

data, or stated positively, a 95% and 94% accuracy rate. However we question the implication that the Personnel Data System was not providing personnel data of sufficient reliability to the various levels of command for use in the management of personnel resources. This judgment is overstated so long as we are, in fact, able to use the data in managing our resources, particularly in connection with Southeast Asia operations.

(b). The total Air Force personnel system used in the management of personnel resources encompasses more than just the Personnel Data System. Personnel policies and procedures contain many checks and balances designed to detect and correct management decisions which may have been based on errors in UOR and UAR data. The computer does not reassign people, but is used as a management tool to select personnel eligible for reassignment according to established criteria. Recognizing the probability of some errors in the system, it is possible that the individual selected for reassignment is not qualified or eligible for reassignment. However, the assignment system includes "fail-safe" procedures as indicated in the following examples to preclude the malassignment of personnel. The assignment system is designed to permit Consolidated Base personnel Offices (CBPOs) to submit a reclama when a review of manual records indicates an individual is not qualified or eligible for reassignment.

(c). For example, at the time of the GAO review, about 1,500 airmen in grades E-6 through E-9 were centrally selected each month for overseas assignment by the Military Personnel Center. UAR summary data furnished by each major command was consolidated into a priority sequence listing for the selection of the most eligible airmen in these grades for overseas assignment. A study conducted from February through August 1967 indicated 10,427 name selections were made by the Military Personnel Center. Of those selected, only 417 requests for release were submitted and airmen replaced based upon erroneous data reported in the major command UAR. Although a replacement rate of about 4% is not acceptable, effective management was achieved in selectively manning all overseas requirements, including Southeast Asia, through the reclama and relevy check and balance provisions within the assignment system. Using the UOR/UAR data base, approximately 20,000 airman and 3,500 officer assignment actions are consummated monthly.

(d). Information in the UOR/UAR has also provided the basis for a continuing series of analyses directed toward major revisions and improvements in personnel policies and procedures. An example is a recently completed study of officer and noncommissioned officer rotation to Southeast Asia. By using available UOR/UAR information, and through statistical methodology, it was possible with a completely acceptable degree of accuracy to project the rotation of the eligible resource to Southeast Asia, forecast when second involuntary tours would become necessary and take actions to delay the advent of involuntary second Southeast Asia tours. Several major policy and procedure changes were based on the detailed results which made possible a more equitable sharing of this duty among Air Force personnel and a delay in involuntary second tours.

(e). We agree that the reporting of inaccurate personnel data could result in errors in some initial management actions. The probability of errors in the system and their influence on management decisions is accepted. However, the implication that errors in initial management actions would have an adverse effect on both the Air Force and the individual is questioned. As indicated above, and in the examples that follow in paragraphs b and c, the personnel system has checks and balances designed to make the system "fail-safe" by detecting errors in UOR/UAR data and correcting them prior to consummation of management decisions.

b. Uniform Officer Records (UORs).

(1). Summary of GAO findings: The Air Force reliability standard for these information blocks (the five most recent technical or flying training courses for officers) provides for a minimum accuracy rate of 90 percent. We found, however, error rates for these information blocks ranging from 23 percent to about **49** percent. This high frequency of error could adversely affect the assignment of officers.

(2). **Air Force comments:**

(a). We agree that this error rate could adversely affect the assignment of officers. It is accepted that the high degree of error may have had an effect on the selection process of officer assignments. However, the "fail-safe" procedures (reclama, review and relevy actions) similar to those indicated above are designed to assure that officers have the proper prerequisites for assignment to a particular Air Force position,

(b). The difficulty encountered by CBPOs in determining the proper codes by course description in ADE CO-820, AFM 300-4 was identified and action initiated to alleviate the problem. AFM 50-5 has been revised to include the corresponding code with course titles. Also, certificates now issued upon completion of training reflect the applicable code for entry into the UOR. In addition, since AFM 300-4 did not include codes for new courses, it was amended in October 1967 to provide for some 1500 additional codes for courses not previously included. Another 1500 new codes are being added in April 1968.

c. Uniform Airman Records (UARs).

(1). Summary of GAO findings: The Air Force reliability standard for this information block (date of rank - permanent grade) provides for a minimum accuracy rate of 99 percent. We found, however, the error rate for this information block was about two percent. This frequency of error could result in eligible airmen not being considered for promotion,

(2). Air Force comments:

(a). We agree that the frequency of error of about two percent in date of rank (permanent grade) could result in eligible airmen not being considered for promotion. Again, there are checks and balances built into the airman promotion system, similar to those indicated above for the assignment **system**, and more importantly, to find the error and correct it, as indicated below, thereby preventing eligible airmen from being overlooked for promotion,

1. Date of rank (permanent grade) is one of several factors, such as primary Air Force specialty, used as criteria to prepare a machine listing of airmen eligible for promotion. Eligibility listings are checked by the Special Actions Unit of the CBPO for necessary corrections, additions or deletions to insure eligibility for promotion consideration. Copies are also sent to the unit commander for evaluation of eligibles.' In addition to this manual audit, eligibility listings are posted on the bulletin board so interested personnel may insure their information is correct

2. Additionally, an ineligible listing is now being prepared indicating the reason why an airman is not eligible for promotion. Copies of this Listing are available in Unit Administration of the CBPO to afford the individual an opportunity to verify the accuracy of eligibility data and know why he is not being considered for promotion. This tightens control procedures for the identification of any UAR errors that may cause an airman to be overlooked and builds an audit trail as the total of the eligible and ineligible listings must **equal** total assigned in that grade.

(b). During the Fiscal Year 68-2 and 68-3 airman promotion cycles, 0.14% of the airmen selected for promotion in these cycles were initially overlooked by virtue of UAR errors. Due to the "fail-safe" procedures outlined above, errors were identified and the airmen promoted on schedule.

d. Lack of Adequate Review Procedures - Annual Records Review.

(1). Summary of GAO findings: 'In our review of the administration of the annual records review, we found that about eight percent of the officers and about 15 percent of the airmen included in our sample had not reviewed their records in over a year. Additionally, at one CBPO, we found that the personnel clerk conducting the reviews did not make an item by item verification of the personnel data with the individual who **was** reviewing his records. The assistance of CBPO personnel is necessary because most

of the data shown on the UOR and UAR print-outs are coded and require the use of the appropriate Air Force manuals to interpret the meaning of these codes. We also observed at another CBPO that changes were processed directly into the System based on statements made by an officer during his annual records review without verifying the validity of these statements to the underlying source documents.

(2). Air Force comments:

(a). We agree that: records review procedures previously outlined in Air Force directives did not explicitly cover every detailed aspect of a records review, Also, no report was required to measure the degree of participation. A comprehensive program has been devised and included in Air Force directives to evaluate participation and improve the effectiveness of the records review program (see Appendix III).¹

(b). The new procedures specify that a qualified personnel technician will review the record with the individual concerned, checking each data item against the hard copy validation document filed in the unit personnel records. Any errors or disagreements will be resolved by the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) in the CBPO. The OPR will also be responsible for entering the corrected data into the system by use of a correction form.

(c). An Annual Records Review Participation Report is now submitted each month from CBPOs through the major commands to Hq USAF. The report depicts the number of personnel scheduled; the number excused who did not complete the review; the percent of compliance and the percent of completion of reviews. This provides management at Hq USAF and major commands a means to monitor participation and take corrective action when required.

e. Personnel Assistance Teams (PATs).

(1). Summary of GAO findings:

(a). In our review of the work performed by the PATs, we were informed by Center representatives that prior to March 15, 1967, the PATs had standard review procedures and evaluation guides of a limited nature. Hence the procedures used and areas reviewed varied with each personnel team depending upon the interest and knowledge of each member of the team. Consequently, there was no systematic procedure for accumulating data for statistical analysis. We were also advised that prior to March 15, 1967, there was no management procedure whereby problem areas were brought to the attention of cognizant Center officials for corrective action.

¹GAO note: The agency's comments appear as appendix VI in this report. Accordingly, appendix III to the agency's comments is also identified in this report as appendix VI.

APPENDIX VI

Page 6

(b). During our review, we found that major commands have PATs which also review the operations of the Personnel Offices under their respective commands. While these PATs are not under the control of the Center, they perform **work** similar to the PATs from the Center. Inasmuch as the PATs from the Center have standardized their review procedures, we proposed that consideration be given to having the **PATs** from the major commands adopt the same standardized review procedures. In addition, we suggested to Center officials that they consider requesting the audit services of the Air Force Auditor General in order to have an independent audit group assess the validity **of** the data.

(2). Air Force comments:

(a). The Personnel Assistance Program, prior to March 15, 1967, as cited **by GAO**, had no management procedure whereby problem areas were brought to the attention of appropriate Air Staff agencies for corrective action. Since 1963, the **PATs** have prepared a written report (AFPMC Form 5) of their observations and recommendations, copies of which were left with the **CBPO** visited and forwarded to all functional managers within the Center. To strengthen this area of Air Force personnel management the **CBPO** Division was organized on March 15, 1967 with a Management Branch to work with Air Staff agencies on a continuing basis to recommend corrective action and follow-up as required.

(b). **We** concur with the GAO recommendation and have implemented standard review procedures for use by Personnel Assistance Teams at both **Hq USAF** and major commands. In addition, the Air Force Auditor General will conduct a one-time world-wide examination of data reliability in the current system. Further, Base Resident Auditors will periodically validate the reliability of data in the system on a selected basis, Appendix III contains the current status of these actions.¹

(c). Using standard review procedures, Personnel Assistance Teams made a follow-up visit to Reese AFB and Vandenberg AFB in January 1968 to determine the results of actions since the GAO review to improve data accuracy. The following comparison shows the results of the GAO review versus subsequently observed reliability rates and the percentage of improvement.

		<u>GAO Rate</u>	<u>PAT Rate</u>	<u>Percent Improvement</u>
Reese AFB				
	UOR	93.5%	94.0%	0.5%
	UAR	94.2%	97.0%	2.8%
Vandenberg AFB				
	UOR	96.7%	99.23	2.5%
	UAR	94.9%	99.0%	4.1%

¹GAO note: Referenced citation changed, See P. 35.

f. Absence of Management Reliability Standards.

(1). Summary of GAO findings: We found that the Air Force had not established formal standards for evaluating the degree of reliability of UOR and UAR data. During a meeting with Air Force officials on May 17, 1967, we suggested that appropriate standards be established, since we believed that management should have a standard by which to measure the reliability of these data. Accordingly, on July 5, 1967, and July 10, 1967, Air Force officials provided us with copies of their newly developed reliability standards for individual UOR and UAR data items respectively. We were advised that these reliability standards were interim standards which would be adjusted when more refined statistical data are accumulated.

(2). Air Force comments:

(a). The finding by GAO that the Air Force had not established formal goals (except the implicit standard of 100 percent accuracy) is correct. Standards or goals (Personnel Data Reliability Rates - PDRRs) have been established for each data item on the soft copy print-out of the UOR and UAR based on accumulated statistical data. These PDRRs (goals) were distributed to all major commands in December 1967 and observed reliability rates by PATs are compared to these standards.

(b). Due to increased emphasis on data accuracy, the reliability of certain UOR data items rose above the December 1967 Personnel Data Reliability Rates. As a result, PDRRs (goals) in the following UOR data items were raised significantly in March 1968, as shown below,

	<u>Interim PDRR</u>	<u>Dec PDRR</u>	<u>Mar PDRR</u>
Permanent Grade	95.0%	97.5%	99.0%
Third Assignment Limitation	95.0%	99.0%	100.0%
Third Professional/Military School	95.0%	99.5%	100.0%
Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan - Option/Annuity	95.0%	95.0%	98.0%
Dependent Children, Fifth and Sixth	90.0%	99.5%	100.0%
Number of Additional Children	90.0%	99.5%	100.0%
Additional Aeronautical Rating	95.0%	98.0%	100.0%

(3). The intent in the future is to continually raise our standards as data reliability increases until we have attained our objective of 100 percent data accuracy, or achieved an irreducible minimum.

g. Ineffective Guidance and Instruction by Higher Levels of Command.

vague instructions, and (3) the applicable Air Force manuals did not

(b). In addition, more definitive procedures have been established for the review and coordination of Hq USAF personnel publications and major command supplements thereto. Specifically, designated Hq USAF personnel directives in the 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 39, 45, 50, 211, 213, and 900 series are given a technical review by the Directorate of Personnel Data Systems prior to publication. This insures the procedures are compatible with personnel data systems, and that data element definitions and codes agree with AFM 300-4. Major command supplements to directives will be submitted to the Air Staff OPR for review and approval prior to publication, and will contain the OPR's authority for publication. Existing command supplements must also be submitted for Hq USAF OPR approval or automatically superseded. A retroactive review of major command supplements is being accomplished. An implementing directive in the AFR 5 series and a revised Personnel Operating Instruction 35-1 have been prepared and are being finalized within Air Staff agencies to establish responsibilities and procedures for the implementation of this program,

h. Inadequate Staffing and Training of Personnel.

(1). Summary of GAO findings:

(a). We found that ~~the~~ total number of personnel assigned was generally equal to ~~the~~ total number of personnel authorized. However, at several bases there were personnel shortages in the supervisory positions and overages in the apprentice positions.

(b). With respect to the training of CBPO personnel, we found that most personnel had either formal or on-the-job training in their career field. However, at one base, three of the five officers had less formal training than is shown in the applicable Air Force manual as "desirable" for their position. In addition, we found instances where the Personnel Office had only one person who was knowledgeable of the operations of the System.

(c). We further advised Air Force officials that we believed there was a need to instill in CBPO personnel, particularly in the lower pay grades, an awareness of the importance of the work they are performing in order to reduce or eliminate inaccuracies resulting from human error,

(d). We proposed that the Air Force prepare a general information handbook which would emphasize both the importance of maintaining accurate data as well as explaining the interrelationship of each individual's function within the System. In addition, we suggested that the Air Force consider publishing a "primer" for use by the operating personnel as a reference to individual data items,

(2). Air Force comments:

(a). We agree with the GAO that there has been a shortage of personnel qualified to fill supervisory positions at many CBPOs. The two principal causes of this condition are: (1) CBPO manpower authorizations were increased during Fiscal Years 1967 and 1968 throughout the Air Force as the result of a comprehensive management engineering survey. This survey established that prior manpower authorizations in the personnel area were inadequate for the tasks to be performed and added approximately 1200 authorizations to the CBPO work force. (2) The unexpected and continuing requirement to man Southeast Asia with great numbers of the most highly qualified personnel specialists available.

(b). As noted by the GAO, airmen were entered into the personnel career field at the apprentice level to fill these increased requirements. To improve the quality of airmen entering the personnel career field, all airmen at the apprentice level beginning July, 1967 are given formal personnel training at Air Training Command courses prior to reporting to their first duty station. To further manage this area, a program has been developed at the Military Personnel Center which permits closer monitoring of CBPO supervisory manning by grade and Air Force specialty.

(c). Some officers are entered into the personnel career field with academic backgrounds other than those listed as "desirable" in the Air Force Classification Manual. Our experience has shown that those officers who possess only the mandatory qualifications and who

receive appropriate **technica** training through on-the-job training' or formal means satisfy the knowledge requirements of **the** job at CBPO level. "Desirable" qualifications are listed to show those which would enhance an individual's ability in the specialty, provide qualification for **higher** levels of skill and responsibilities and to serve as a guide for occupational development. Mandatory and desirable qualifications listed in the classification directives receive constant Air Force attention and are modified as necessary to keep pace with changes in specialty requirements.

(d). We agree with the need for Personnel Data Systems training of those CBPO functional managers not directly involved with data reporting. As a means of assisting in training such personnel, we have distributed **a** training package to all CBPOs for use in their in-house training programs. It illustrates mechanized products, explains their content and use, and emphasizes the importance of their accuracy to all product users. These packages have been provided since June 1967 and are updated when system changes occur.,

(e). We agree with the GAO that a need exists to improve in our personnel specialists an awareness of the importance of their **work**. This area is emphasized at the formal personnel school which all **airmen** must attend prior to assignment to duty in a CBPO, as indicated above. Also, a General Personnel Data System Description Pamphlet has been developed and approved for publication. It is designed to explain the overall operation of the system in laymen's terms and provide a better understanding of the manager's and individual's role in the total system. Emphasis is placed upon the responsibilities of the individual and the manager for data accuracy.

(f). Based on suggestions by GAO and our feasibility study, a Personnel Data System Data Item **Cross** Reference Index (Frimer) was developed and distributed to all CBPOs in December 1967 for use as a quick-reference guide for all UOR/UAR data items. The index was expanded to include even more cross reference data than recommended by the GAO to make it as comprehensive as possible. Responses received from major **commands** after 60 days use indicate a favorable reaction and acceptance of the index as a training **aid** and management tool. The following examples of comments received **from** major commands are quoted in part: "The Cross Reference Index should be of valuable assistance in the **training** of inexperienced personnel and as a ready reference to managers and supervisors," and "The Cross Reference Index is one of the best products distributed to assist personnel in gaining a better understanding of the Personnel Data System."

i. Conclusion and Agency Actions.

(1). Summary of GAO findings: The Personnel Data System was designed to retain and provide to Air Force management officials information that they need to manage the service's personnel resources. Using the Air Force's reliability standards, we found that the information being retained in the System was not sufficiently reliable to effectively serve this purpose, and we identified what we believe to be the basic management weaknesses that contributed to this condition.

(2). Air Force comments:

(a). The USAF Personnel Data System is a new, far-reaching venture into highly sophisticated and heretofore uncharted data processing areas. Many of the innovations and breakthroughs, as a result of pioneering efforts by the Air Force, are now being accepted and utilized by other governmental agencies as well as civilian industry. During the design and day-to-day operation of the system, situations continue to arise in which there are no known solutions or outside source of experience to which the Air Force can turn for assistance. We will continue to solve these problems in-house while searching for new ideas and advanced techniques to further enhance the USAF Personnel Data System, regardless of the source.

(b). It is the USAF Personnel goal to have in-being at all times a personnel data system that is visionary in scope, responsive to the needs of Air Force management and always abreast of the latest data processing technique. Accuracy of the data within the USAF personnel system is paramount in the management and Operation of the system, therefore the irreducible minimum or a 100% data accuracy rate is a major management objective of the Air Force personnel program. Due to the complex inter-working of a world-wide data system of such magnitude as the current Personnel Data System, data accuracies within the system will unavoidably have peaks and valleys. Changes and modifications normally result in increased errors until assimilated; this is accepted as a way of life. We are continually searching for answers to problems associated with large-scale systems management and are directing our efforts to minimizing the impact of these conditions where possible.

(c). As pointed out earlier in the report, we question the GAO position that information retained in the system was not sufficiently reliable to effectively serve the purpose for which the system was designed. The degree of reliability found by the GAO is not acceptable to the Air Force, but cannot be used as the sole or gross measure of overall system effectiveness in terms of how well personnel resources have been managed.

(d). Actions taken to increase data accuracy in the Personnel Data System are included in the attached Appendix III,¹ which has been updated for inclusion in the final report. These actions have resulted in a far-reaching data improvement program based on our own, as well as GAO's, findings and suggestions.

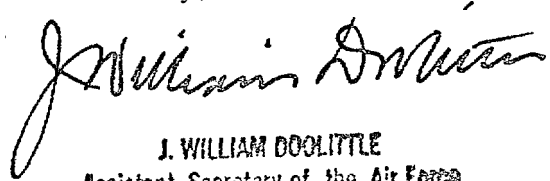
¹GAO note: Referenced citation changed. See p. 35.

APPENDIX VI

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(e). The effort expended in the 1700 mandays by the General Accounting Office in this review has been of immeasurable assistance in identifying and recommending actions to enhance USAF personnel system objectives. The cooperative attitude and professional approach, plus the GAO audit team member's individual experience, have rendered the Air Force a significant service. GAO's efforts, plus the aggressive actions by the Air Force, will play a major role in more effectively managing current and future USAF Personnel Data Systems. The assistance rendered by the General Accounting Office is appreciated.

Sincerely,



J. WILLIAM DOOLITTLE
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force
Manpower and Reserve Affairs

1 Atch
Revised Appendix III¹

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U. S. General Accounting Office
Washington, D. C. 20548

¹GAO note: Referenced citation changed. See p. 35.

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
PERSONNEL DATA IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

to correspond with the management weaknesses discussed in this report.

Outside Agency Audits

The Comptroller and Auditor General of the Air Force have concurred in the use of the Base Resident Auditor to validate the reliability of data in the Personnel Data System (UOR/UAR). A proposed Audit Package was forwarded to the Auditor General in February 1968. Final arrangements for conducting this type of audit are being established in coordination with the Auditor General.

Personnel Data Review Program

A program has been initiated to identify and correct selective UOR/UAR data items on a periodic basis. The first group of data items, selected because of their significance and/or low reliability rate, was furnished all CBPOs (except those in PACAF) in February 1968. Results of the initial Personnel Data Review Program were forwarded to the USAF Military Personnel Center by major commands in March 1968. Reports will be correlated with the computed reliability rates and used to identify areas where even greater corrective emphasis is required. This program will be continued on a bi-monthly schedule.

Records Review Program

A program has been established to increase and evaluate participation in the annual records review program. Instructions have been issued for reporting annual records review participation to Hq USAF. The first report was submitted in March 1968. Detailed standard record review procedures have been included in the records maintenance manuals to accomplish a more effective records review. These procedures have been published and distributed.

Air Force Standardized Personnel Assistance Teams Program

Standardized review procedures for use by USAFMPC and Major Command PATs were developed, staffed, coordinated with all commands and officially implemented in February 1968. In addition, a standardized evaluation guide has been developed for use by all commands.

Air Force Validation Plan

A study was made to determine the most appropriate level of command at which to provide the capability to validate UOR and UAR data and to provide retention of source validation documents at that level. Appropriate directives were revised and published in March 1968 identifying validation documents for each PDS data item, including filing and disposition of these documents. Directives now specify that appropriate documents in the unit personnel records will be compared with the data in the system at the time of records review. These validation documents will provide an audit trail for inspectors and auditors.

PERSONNEL DATA SYSTEM EVALUATION

Air Force Personnel Data System Evaluation Program

Personnel Data Reliability Rates (PDRRs) have been developed and disseminated to all commands. PDRRs developed and forwarded to all commands in December 1967 are considerably higher than the "interim standards" originally given to and used by the GAO in this survey. These December 1967 PDRRs for certain UOR data items were subsequently raised in March 1968 when observed AF mean rates for these items rose above the December rates.

Functional Managers Responsibilities

A program has been initiated for functional managers at Air Staff and the major commands to participate with complementary actions to improve the reliability of UOR and UAR data. Directives have been revised to specify responsibilities of Offices of Primary Responsibility (OPRs) for the accuracy of data they enter into the system. This includes continued Air Staff surveillance of reliability of data entered by functional counterparts at subordinate levels.

Responsibilities of Data Managers

A clearly defined Quality Control program has been established **at** each echelon of command. Specific responsibilities of **major** commands and CBPOs for the management of this program to improve data accuracy have been published in appropriate directives.

GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTION

Improvement and Control of Air Force Personnel Publications

The following directives are being finalized within the Air Staff:
(a) **A** revision of Personnel Office Instruction 35-1, for use of Air Staff DCS/Personnel offices, which outlines control and coordination procedures for issuance of **Hq USAF** directives governing Personnel programs, and (b) **A** new regulation which **will** contain detailed procedures for controlling the issuance **of** supplementary instructions (to **Hq USAF** Personnel Directives) within the major commands. This regulation, among other control measures, **will** require advance approval from the **Hq USAF OPR** for **all** supplements to **Hq USAF** Personnel directives.

Major Command Management Information Office Meeting

A workshop for representatives of all major command management information offices **was** held during December 1967. Positive guidance **was given** to correct errors uncovered by the GAO review and to establish continuing procedures to maintain increased data accuracy. Primary emphasis was placed upon implementation **of** the USAF Personnel **Data Improvement Program** and the establishment of an effective quality control program at all levels,

Personnel and Finance Procedures

As an integral part of **this** continuing improvement program, Personnel and Accounting and Finance representatives of **Hq USAF** and representatives of the Accounting and Finance Center meet monthly to resolve problems and discuss improved methods to accomplish the interrelated actions of various Finance and Personnel **programs** at all levels of command. All proposed directives that involve interface between the Personnel and the Accounting and Finance functions are reviewed and coordinated by the respective staffs before implementation, and problem areas are resolved by face-to-face contact *or* telephone discussions on a day-by-day basis,

Rapid Information Communications Systems

Contact point listings have been prepared to encourage telephonic communications between the Center 2nd major commands, and between major commands and CBPOs. These listings identify persons to contact for clarification of instructions or interpretation of procedures when reliability of data in the system is involved.

STAFFING AND TRAINING OF CBPO PERSONNELCBPO Manning Improvement Program

A functional manager for CBPO manning has been established at the Center to monitor and, in conjunction with the major commands, improve skill and grade manning of CBPOs for officers and airmen. A Personnel Management Record at the Center will provide detailed manning information to more closely monitor and control CBPO manning and assignment actions to and from the personnel function.

Personnel Data System Training Program

In-house training requirements for support of the Personnel Data System have been specified in Air Force Manual 30-3. Continued emphasis has been placed on the urgency of the requirement to implement, and enlarge upon this training program. Progress of training programs at base level will continue to receive close attention by the USAF Personnel Assistance Teams. Vu-graphs illustrating base level products and their use, with an accompanying narrative, have been furnished all CBPOs. This training tool is updated by the Center each time the content, format, or use of products change.

Personnel Data System General Description Pamphlet

A pamphlet has been developed and approved for publication which provides a simple description of the system for all users and managers. This pamphlet is designed to increase the understanding of the individual's and manager's role in the total system and provide an orientation of the overall operation of the system.

Personnel Data System "Primer"

A Personnel Data System Data Item Cross Reference Index has been developed and is now in use at CBPOs as a quick reference guide for all UOR/UAR data items. This index assists personnel in gaining a better understanding of the coding and procedural complexities of the system by providing in one document the definition, location, source and coding instructions for each data item.