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REPORT TO THE CONGRESS



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Improvements Needed In Determining Graduate Education Requirements For Military Officer Positions B-16558

Department of Defense

BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES

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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
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To the President of the Senate and the
Speaker of the House of Representatives

This is our report on improvements needed in determining graduate education requirements for military officer positions in the Department of Defense. 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).

Copies of this report are being sent to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Secretary of Defense; the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force; the Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps; and the Chairman, U.S. Civil Service Commission.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. M. Kellens".

Acting Comptroller General
of the United States

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ABBREVIATIONS

DOD	Department of Defense
GAO	General Accounting Office
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff

D I G E S T

WHY THE REVIEW WAS MADE

A Joint Chiefs of Staff memorandum established criteria in 1964 for determining graduate education requirements for military officer positions. To fill these positions over 4,200 officers were enrolled during fiscal year 1969 in full-time graduate education programs at an estimated cost of at least \$70 million.

Because of the amount of funds being spent, the General Accounting Office (GAO) reviewed the graduate education program to see whether the positions required the extra education and whether officers' training was adequately used.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The criteria for identifying military officer positions requiring graduate level education and the use of those criteria are so broad and permissive that almost any officer position could be certified as requiring graduate level education. (See p. 9.)

Inconsistent application of the criteria, as well as their broadness, has reduced their usefulness as a meaningful, uniform guide. This has resulted in increasing numbers of positions being certified as requiring graduate education although the need for such education had not been demonstrated or established. (See p. 15.)

The process for evaluating graduate education requirements for officer positions needs to be improved. Subordinate commands requesting certification of positions and headquarters review staffs have not given adequate consideration to:

- Work experience or short training courses as acceptable alternatives to full-time graduate education.
- Inconsistencies between official job descriptions which did not require graduate education and job descriptions submitted for approval of graduate education requirements.
- Using civilians in positions, where possible, to provide continuity of operation and stabilize the work force.

--Similar or identical positions certified as requiring graduate education by one service but not by another.

--Whether graduate education was an essential requirement for performing the position's duties. (See pp. 9 to 18.)

Many officers with graduate education were not being assigned to positions requiring their specialized education to ensure maximum benefits to the military services. (See pp. 22 to 24.)

RECOMMENDATIONS OR SUGGESTIONS

GAO suggested that the Secretary of Defense:

--Issue a policy statement expressing more clearly the intent and objectives of the graduate level education program. **The statement should include a limitation on assignment of military officers in full-time, fully funded graduate degree programs to those positions for which the education is essential for performance of duty.**

--Order the existing criteria revised to limit the broad, permissive interpretations now used.

--Obtain the advice of the Civil Service Commission or another qualified independent body in developing the new criteria.

--Require the military services to apply the new criteria uniformly.

--Consider using civilians in positions requiring graduate degrees whenever possible.

--Review the assignment policies and practices of the services to ensure maximum use of personnel with specialized graduate education where such education is held to be a job prerequisite.

AGENCY ACTIONS AND UNRESOLVED ISSUES

The Department of Defense (DOD) acknowledged that there was a question as to the adequacy of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's criteria and, to the extent that inadequate use of officers is the case, agreed to consider GAO's proposals. DOD contends, however, that GAO has failed to recognize the intangible accepted values and benefits of graduate education. (See pp. 19 and 25.)

GAO believes that graduate education can be expected to enhance the effectiveness and capability of officers and that the opportunity for such education may be an important factor in retaining officers. The Joint Chiefs of Staff criteria, however, do not justify the program on these generalized bases but rather justify it on the requirements of specific positions. (See p. 19.)

GAO believes that the benefits from graduate education must be weighed against the substantial costs of sending officers to school on a full-time, fully funded basis and that more stringent criteria should be applied to justify this substantial investment. (See p. 20.)

GAO believes also that, particularly where a graduate degree is not essential for performing a position's duties, increased use should be made of alternative types of training, such as specialized short courses and after-hours programs. These normally involve less time and cost than does sending officers to school on a full-time, fully funded basis for periods as long as 3 years. (See p. 11.)

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CONGRESS

DCD has indicated little early corrective action in response to GAO's major findings and suggestions. In view of DOD's position and the announced plans of the military services to expand the graduate education program, GAO believes that the Congress may wish to consider limiting the full-time, fully funded graduate level education program (1) to those positions for which such education is essential for the satisfactory performance of duty and (2) to only those officers who can be used primarily in those positions.

CHAPTER 1

FULL-TIME, FULLY FUNDED

OFFICER GRADUATE EDUCATION

IN THE MILITARY SERVICES

Existing statutes authorize the Department of Defense to send military officers to civilian academic institutions at Government expense. Our review considered the program by which officers attend civilian and Defense-operated academic institutions on a full-time, fully funded basis to pursue graduate courses of study. There are various other programs operated by each of the military services which permit military personnel to achieve graduate educational levels on other than a full-time, fully funded basis.

During fiscal year 1969, over 4,200 officers were enrolled in full-time, fully funded graduate education programs at an estimated cost of at least \$70 million. We estimate that in fiscal year 1969 the cost of sending a typical Army captain, major, or lieutenant colonel to a graduate school for 1 year ranged from about \$16,000 to \$22,000. These amounts, which include the officer's pay and allowances, travel, and tuition costs, would be comparable for equivalent grades in the other services.

The military services, through a procedure referred to as validation, have identified about 23,000 officer positions that require the incumbent to possess graduate education. The stated requirement for officers with graduate education has been increasing, as evidenced by the fact that in the Army the number of validated positions, exclusive of those in the medical sciences, has risen from about 3,400 in 1964 to about 5,700 in 1969. The increase in the number of positions validated during the past few years, coupled with the Navy's recent liberalization of its criteria for validating positions (see p. 9), indicates that the program is expanding rapidly.

The Army Chief of Staff, in a recent statement of educational goals, estimated that 75 percent of all Army

career officers could expect the opportunity to gain advanced degrees. The Department of the Navy stated in a program change request dated June 8, 1969, the requirements of the Regular Navy officer corps were such that nearly all officers should have had postgraduate education by the time they were promoted to lieutenant commander. Also, the military services have announced plans to substantially increase the number of officers assigned to graduate school when the personnel demands on U.S. Forces in Southeast Asia diminish.

The validated positions require graduate education in numerous academic disciplines, such as business administration, engineering, and the physical and social sciences. The requirements constitute the justification for each of the military services' sending officers to graduate schools on a full-time basis at Government expense in the estimated annual numbers shown above and for periods as long as 3 years. The number of validated positions in relation to the total number of officers for each service is shown in appendix II.

On March 17, 1964, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) published Memorandum of Policy No. 149 entitled "Military Graduate Level Education Programs." The purposes of this memorandum were:

"a. To establish, insofar as practicable, a standard policy for determining, identifying, and reviewing the military requirements for graduate level education programs for members of the Armed Forces.

"b. To establish a policy which will insure realistic utilization policies for personnel receiving graduate level education, including off-duty education."

The following criteria are provided in that memorandum as guidelines for determining and categorizing those positions which may require assignment of personnel possessing graduate level education.

"a. Positions which are required by law or DOD policy to be filled by individuals possessing graduate level education in a relevant field of study.

"b. Positions in which the primary duties of the incumbents cannot be satisfactorily performed except by individuals possessing qualifications that normally can be acquired only through graduate level education in a relevant field of study. These positions are predominantly those in which there is a direct relationship between the primary duty to be performed, the relevant educational field, the individual's occupational specialty or subspecialty, and the organizational function to be performed. Examples are positions requiring assignment of qualified physical, biological, and social scientists, engineers, designers, analysts, teachers, writers, and statisticians.

"c. Positions which must be filled by individuals who are required to exert direct technical supervision over military and/or civilian personnel who are required to possess graduate level education. These positions are exclusively supervisory and assistant supervisory in nature. There must be a general relationship between the positions, the educational field, and type of organization. Although positions will tend primarily to be in the field grades, some may be in lower grades. Generally, however, level and type of organization supervised will be of more significance than the position's grade. Examples are chiefs of laboratories, detachments, sections, branches, divisions, and similar organizations of a technical, analytical, developmental, or research nature.

"d. Positions which, for optimum effectiveness, should be filled by individuals who possess knowledge of a specific field of study to permit effective staff planning, coordination, and command advisory functions. Such knowledge

would include the capability to comprehend theories, principles, terminology, processes, and techniques which are necessary for effective appraisal and evaluation of complex programs."

With the exception of the Navy, the services have adopted, in general, the JCS criteria described above in their regulations. The Navy, however, has issued somewhat different criteria from those of JCS. The Navy criteria provide, in part, that:

"Identification of P-coded billets [validated positions] in the manpower authorizations will be limited to those wherein the assignment of graduate level educated officers is considered highly desirable for the most effective performance of their functions."

Periodically each military service reviews positions previously validated, deletes those not considered presently valid, and acts on the requests for new validations. Requests for validation are normally initiated in the field and are submitted and reviewed through the chain of command to the reviewing office at the service's headquarters level. This evaluation is accomplished by boards established specifically for this purpose (Army and Air Force) or by the functional staffs at the headquarters level of the services (Navy and Marine Corps).

For example, the Army has established an Army Educational Requirements Board which meets annually to review previous validations, act on requests for new validations, and formulate recommendations to improve the graduate education program. Army regulations require that subordinate commands and installations perform annual reviews of the need for validated positions and report their requirements for officers with graduate degrees to Headquarters, Department of the Army. The validity of these requirements is then considered by the Board.

Each service employs a different methodology in programming the number of students to be enrolled in specific academic disciplines each year. Essentially, each service considers such factors as the number of existing and

projected validated positions in an academic area, the inventory of officers possessing graduate education in that academic specialty, anticipated promotion and attrition rates, and rotation patterns. Such determinations of requirements for graduate training of officers, however, are subject to fund and personnel availability constraints. Officers selected are those who have volunteered for such training and whose prerequisite qualifications have been considered and approved on a selective basis.

The scope of our review is described on page 27. The principal officials of DOD responsible for administration of the activities discussed in this report are listed in appendix IV.

CHAPTER 2

NEED FOR MORE DEFINITIVE CRITERIA AND IMPROVEMENTS IN THE VALIDATION PROCESS

INADEQUACY OF EXISTING VALIDATION CRITERIA

The JCS and military service validation criteria are, in our opinion, so broad and permissive that virtually any officer position could be validated under them. Consequently, their usefulness as uniform and meaningful guides in validating positions is lessened.

The criteria appear to equate the validation of positions for which graduate education is merely desirable with those positions for which it is considered actually essential. The essential categories of the criteria refer to positions for which graduate level education is required by law or DOD policy or where the duties of the position can be satisfactorily performed only by an individual with graduate education. At the other extreme, the criteria not only permit validation of positions in order for the incumbents to achieve optimum effectiveness but also, the implementing regulations of the Army permit validation of officer positions to afford prestige for the incumbents. The JCS criteria, which were promulgated in March 1964, have not been substantively revised since their issuance.

During May 1969 the Navy liberalized its validation criteria to permit the validation of positions for which graduate education was highly desirable. Prior to this, the Navy's criteria had stated that only positions for which graduate education was essential should be validated.

OPINIONS OF INCUMBENTS AND SUPERVISORS

Many of the incumbents in validated positions and their supervisors indicated that graduate education was desirable, but was not essential, for the satisfactory performance of their duties.

We interviewed the incumbents and supervisors of 242 validated officer positions at the locations visited. (See app. III.) With each of the incumbents interviewed, we discussed the nature of his duties, his educational background, and the reasons why he believed that the position in which he was assigned required graduate level education. We also asked each of the incumbents and supervisors of 171 of these positions to choose one of the five following criteria which best described the educational requirements of the position.

1. Graduate level education required by law or DOD policy.
2. Duties can be satisfactorily performed only by an individual with graduate level education.
3. Duties require technical supervision over military and/or civilian personnel required to possess graduate level education.
4. Duties require knowledge of a specific field of study for effective planning, coordination, and command advisory functions in order to obtain optimum effectiveness.
5. Graduate level education desirable in order to permit effective planning and coordination and to afford prestige in dealing with other military services, Government agencies, private concerns, and representatives of foreign governments.

These criteria generally parallel the JCS guidelines as stated on pages 6 and 7. The responses received from the incumbents and supervisors regarding the criteria that they believed justified the position validations are shown below.

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Response</u> (note a)	
	<u>Incumbents</u>	<u>Supervisors</u>
1	2	-
2	34	35
3	8	11
4	78	75
5	44	41

^aFive incumbents and nine supervisors were not available for interview.

As shown above, the evaluation by most of the incumbents and supervisors identified criteria 4 and 5 as the bases which best justified the position validations. These latter criteria suggest that most position validations were based on such subjective factors as attaining optimum effectiveness and affording prestige for the incumbent, rather than on an essential requirement for a graduate degree education.

ALTERNATIVE TRAINING IN LIEU OF GRADUATE EDUCATION

Many of the incumbents and supervisors we interviewed stated their beliefs that alternative types of training below the graduate level, such as the short-term, specialized training given at various service schools, would satisfy the educational needs of the validated positions and would prepare the incumbents for effectively discharging the duties of their positions.

We note that, since substantial numbers of officers attend graduate courses of study on a part-time or off-duty basis with limited Government support, this program could also serve as an alternative to full-time, fully funded graduate education.

DOD, in commenting on our draft report (see app. I), stated that the military services did use a number of short-term, specialized training courses and also promoted off-duty education through the use of their tuition

assistance program and Veterans Administration educational benefits available to active duty personnel.

We believe that, particularly where a graduate degree is not an essential requirement for performing the duties of a position, increased use should be made of alternative types of training which normally involve less time and cost than sending officers to academic institutions at Government expense on a full-time basis for periods of from 1 to 3 years to obtain such degrees.

GRADUATE EDUCATION NOT A REQUIREMENT FOR
COMPARABLE POSITIONS FILLED BY CIVILIANS

Our review of a limited number of job descriptions for civilian positions with duties and responsibilities comparable to the validated military positions showed that none of the civilian positions required the incumbent to possess graduate education. At one installation, some validated military officer positions were converted to civil service positions as part of the DOD civilianization program. Once converted, however, these positions did not require the civilian incumbents to possess graduate degrees.

Generally, specialized experience can be substituted for graduate level education in civilian positions. We noted that certain civilian positions, such as procurement officers and project engineers, were similar to validated military officer positions. The U.S. Civil Service Commission qualification standards permit the substitution of certain types of experience for formal education in positions such as these. We found no evidence, however, of recognition's being given to specialized experience as an alternative to the graduate education requirements for any of the validated military positions.

INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN OFFICIAL
JOB DESCRIPTION DOCUMENTS
AND VALIDATION OF POSITIONS

Formal job descriptions we examined stated that, for many of the validated positions, it was not mandatory for the incumbents to possess graduate education.

The military services have official job descriptions, prescribed by regulations, which establish the duties and responsibilities, specialty qualifications, knowledge, education, experience, and training for broad categories of positions. These are contained in the Army's Manual of Commissioned Officers Military Occupational Specialties, the Air Force Officer Classification Manual, and the Manual of Navy Officer Classifications. In addition, some commands in the military services where we made our examinations, such as the Air Force Systems Command and the Army Materiel

Command, had job description documents showing in more detail the duties and educational requirements for individual positions.

At two Air Force Systems Command installations, we noted that the command had identified on its detailed job attributes cards only 167 of 413 validated positions as those in which graduate level education was essential. For many of these positions, the command's job attributes cards showed a master's degree as an essential educational need while the Air Force Officer Classification Manual description stated that only a bachelor's degree was mandatory.

At Army Materiel Command headquarters, we noted that, although the Army Educational Requirements Board had validated certain positions as requiring masters' degrees, the job descriptions for these validated positions showed requirements for only bachelors' degrees, with masters' degree being shown as desirable.

DOD advised us, in response to our draft report, that corrective actions were being taken wherever such discrepancies were found. The fact that official job description documents do not state that graduate education is an essential requirement of the positions, however, further emphasizes that the positions may have been erroneously validated.

POSITIONS VALIDATED TO FIT EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUNDS OF INCUMBENTS

At two installations, we found that action had been taken to validate existing positions solely because the incumbents or the personnel in the process of being assigned to those positions had graduate level education. For example, the Air Force Systems Command directed one of its field installations to either reassign officers having a doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) degree to positions requiring that degree or rewrite their job descriptions to show that a Ph.D. degree was essential or desirable for the positions the officers were in.

We believe that an instruction such as this tends to compromise a realistic and objective appraisal of the

educational needs of the positions and that it sanctions changes in statements of position requirements solely to meet the educational backgrounds of the incumbents. We believe also that such positions, once validated, will have a tendency to remain validated after the incumbents are transferred, which would artificially inflate the total number of persons required to be trained to the Ph.D. level.

INCONSISTENCIES WITHIN AND AMONG THE SERVICES
IN VALIDATING SIMILAR POSITIONS

We noted that some military positions with similar duties and responsibilities had been validated as requiring graduate education but that others had not. This situation has occurred for positions at the same installation, at different installations of the same service, and at installations of different services. For example, at one Air Force base we found that six of 12 procurement officer positions had been validated but that at an Army base only one of 60 procurement officer positions had been validated, although the official job descriptions for these positions were similar.

In a much broader instance, we found that five of the assistant chaplain positions in the Continental U.S. Armies had been validated for an advanced degree in comptrollership. We were informed that the reason for this requirement was that an assistant chaplain had duties involving fiscal matters, procurement, and funding. Although there are numerous short courses in these subjects available in each of the military services, it does not appear that any chaplain positions in the Navy and Air Force have been validated for advanced degrees in comptrollership.

DOD, in response to our draft report, advised us that the Army would reexamine the positions so as to reflect a more uniform utilization of those chaplains so qualified. DOD appeared to be responding neither to our point that less expensive and time-consuming training alternatives existed to satisfy the chaplains' requirements nor to our point that there appeared to be nothing peculiar to the functions performed by Army chaplains, as opposed to Navy and Air Force chaplains, that would make advanced degrees in comptrollership necessary for the Army chaplains.

Since we had found inconsistencies in validating similar positions, we proposed in our draft report that DOD require uniform implementation and application of the guidelines, to the maximum extent possible, within and among the military services. DOD agreed that it would seek uniform implementation and application of the guidelines to the maximum extent possible.

INSTALLATIONS NOT INFORMED OF REASONS
FOR HIGHER HEADQUARTERS ACTION

We found that higher headquarters in some instances were not informing subordinate installations of the reasons for disapproving installation requests for position validation or for validating positions the installations had not requested. A local installation generally receives from the military service headquarters a document which reflects all the approved validated positions, including the new positions for which validation requests previously were submitted by the installation. If the requested validation for a new position does not appear on the document, the local installation usually is not informed of the reasons why its higher headquarters rejected the new validation request or deleted positions previously validated and thus is deprived of information and guidance in subsequent evaluations of positions.

INADEQUACY OF INSTALLATION EVALUATION
OF POSITION VALIDATIONS

We noted that at five installations substantive evaluations of the validity of positions which were identified as requiring graduate level education had not been made on a regular basis. For example, at one Navy installation the last evaluation of position validations occurred in 1963. We also found at one installation that the job supervisors prepared the requests for validation which were then administratively reviewed at the base level and submitted to higher headquarters. Because the administrative reviews do not consider the substantive aspects of the position validations, they are not, in our opinion, adequate bases for certifying that actual needs exist for the position validations requested.

We believe that, to ensure a more effective position evaluation, a comprehensive review of each position considered for validation should be performed at the local installation level most familiar with the position requirements. Such a review should include interviews with the incumbent and supervisor regarding the duties of the position. A detailed report of the result of the installation review

and concurrence from the installation's Civilian Personnel Officer should be submitted with the request for validation.

CONCLUSIONS

Our examination indicates that the military headquarters review staffs have validated many officer positions for graduate level education when the need for that level of education has not been demonstrated or established. A major contributing factor has been the broadly stated JCS criteria which permit the military services to make liberal and varying interpretations in implementing these criteria and in applying them to the validation process.

As a general rule, it appears that graduate education is desirable, rather than essential, as a prerequisite qualification of the incumbents of most military officer positions. Thus, where the condition of essentiality is not a prerequisite for graduate level education, military service practices in implementing the JCS criteria have become the basis for substantially and unnecessarily increasing the number of active duty officers who would be authorized to obtain full-time, fully funded advanced education degrees.

We believe that, in evaluating positions to determine educational requirements, the subordinate commands submitting the requests for validation and the headquarters review staffs have not given adequate consideration to (1) experience or short courses as acceptable alternatives for graduate level education, (2) inconsistencies existing between official job descriptions and the job descriptions submitted for validation, (3) the possibility of civilianizing the positions, (4) similar or identical positions in other military services which do not require graduate education, and (5) interviewing incumbents and supervisors to determine whether graduate level education is essential in performing the duties of the positions.

The substantial costs to the Government to fund a program of this type for large numbers of officers and the extended periods of time these military officers are away from their normal duties when attending graduate schools are factors for urgent consideration in connection with

evidence that increasingly larger numbers of positions will be validated by the military services.

AGENCY COMMENTS AND GAO EVALUATION

In commenting on our draft report, DOD made the following general comments:

" As a general observation, therefore, we believe that the draft report is too limited in its consideration of the utility of education. Of particular concern is the failure to acknowledge:

"(a) The rising educational aspirations of the segment of the population from which we must recruit military officers.

"(b) The value of graduate education in our junior officer retention efforts.

"(c) The increased capability which an officer with graduate level education brings to billets which he may occupy outside of the limited range of positions validated for his academic credentials."

The agency comments also express the view that "Education is a continuing way of life and within the Military Services it contributes to the intellectual development of officers."

DOD's comments contend that we have failed to recognize the intangible accepted values and benefits of graduate education. It is readily apparent that graduate education can be expected to enhance the effectiveness and capability of officers and that the opportunity for such education may be an important factor in retaining officers in the military services. We note, however, that the JCS criteria justified the program on the requirements of specific positions rather than on these generalized bases. Furthermore, DOD operates various other programs which permit officers to attain graduate academic levels but which are not justified by the educational requirements of specific positions.

We believe that the benefits flowing from graduate education must be weighed against the substantial costs to the Government in sending officers to graduate school on a full-time, fully funded basis and that more stringent criteria should be applied to justify this substantial investment. Furthermore, we believe that only those positions in which graduate education is essential for the incumbents to satisfactorily perform the duties of the positions should be validated and serve as the basis for sending officers on a full-time, fully funded basis to graduate school.

In our draft report we proposed that the Secretary of Defense:

1. Issue a policy statement expressing the intent and objectives of the graduate level education program to include a limitation on assignments of military officers in full-time, fully funded advanced degree programs to those positions for which such education is an essential requirement for performance of duty.
2. Direct a revision of the JCS criteria in more specific and meaningful terms, to limit the broad and permissive interpretation now used by the military services.
3. Obtain the advice of the U.S. Civil Service Commission or another qualified independent body in developing the criteria for establishing graduate level education requirements for military officer positions.

DOD agreed that a policy statement would be helpful but did not indicate whether it agreed that such a policy statement should contain the limitation expressed in our proposal. DOD also acknowledged that there was a question as to the adequacy of the JCS criteria and advised us that they would be reexamined to determine whether any further revision was needed but did not indicate whether it felt that the JCS criteria should be made more restrictive. As discussed previously it appears that DOD's intention is to further expand and liberalize its full-time, fully funded graduate education program. DOD had no objection to seeking

the advice of any qualified independent body, including the Civil Service Commission; however, it did not indicate whether it would seek such advice.

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CONGRESS

In view of DOD's position, we believe that the Congress may wish to consider limiting the full-time, fully funded graduate education program to those positions where such education is an essential requirement for the satisfactory performance of duty.

CHAPTER 3

OFFICERS WITH GRADUATE EDUCATION

NOT UTILIZED IN VALIDATED POSITIONS

Our review of the assignment of officers indicates that many of the approximately 33,000 officers in the military services who have earned graduate degrees, either by their own efforts or through Government-sponsored programs, were not being assigned to positions which would require full utilization of their educational backgrounds.

A total of 703 validated positions existed at the 14 military installations we visited during our review. Although 506 officers at these locations had earned masters' degrees or higher, only 162 of the officers having these advanced degrees had been assigned to fill validated positions. Therefore, 344 officers, or about 68 percent of those with advanced degrees, were not being utilized in validated positions. An analysis of the education level of the incumbents in these validated positions follows.

<u>Education level of officer assigned</u>	<u>Number of validated positions</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less than master's degree	437	62
Master's degree or higher	162	23
Position vacant	<u>104</u>	<u>15</u>
Total	<u>703</u>	<u>100</u>

At the locations we visited, the underutilization of officers with advanced degrees was accentuated by the fact that individuals with less than masters' degrees occupied 437 positions and vacancies existed in 104 positions which, according to the military services, required graduate education at the same time that 344 officers with graduate degrees referred to above were assigned to other nonvalidated positions. Some of these officers with graduate degrees could reasonably be expected to satisfy the educational and grade requirements of the validated positions at the bases at which they were assigned or they could have been

assigned to other bases with positions requiring graduate degrees in the pertinent academic areas.

UTILIZATION OF OFFICERS ON COMPLETION
OF GRADUATE TRAINING

The utilization policies of the military departments also indicate that the armed services will not attain full utilization of their officers' graduate education backgrounds after a DOD-sponsored full-time school tour for those officers.

It is one of the Army's goals that, on completion of school assignments leading to graduate degrees, officers serve at least one 3-year initial utilization tour each and that selected officers serve one or more reutilization tours. Initial utilization tours are defined by Army regulations as the first mandatory tours of officers in validated positions, usually in the grades of captain through lieutenant colonel. Reutilization tours are all subsequent tours in higher grade positions identified as requiring officers trained to the graduate degree level.

As a normal sequence, junior grade officers who have completed their graduate education and have served initial utilization tours will subsequently be promoted to higher grades in accordance with the regular promotion practices of the military services. This results in a continuing need for the services to send officers to graduate school, once positions are validated as initial utilization assignments.

After considering initial utilization and reutilization tours and loss rates, the Army Educational Requirements Board has determined that an officer in the armored, artillery, or infantry branches could be used in reutilization positions up to 37.5 percent of his total service time "without harming his career." If there should be any conflict in determining what position an officer should be assigned to, the needs of the Army and of the local commander are the primary considerations.

Whenever feasible, Navy officers graduating from academic programs are ordered to billets which require the

specialized graduate training they have received. A 1966 DOD Officer Education Study made available to us, however, indicates that about two thirds of these officers are not immediately assigned to utilization tours. Because of shore-sea rotation policies, they will have intervening sea tours of 2 or 3 years prior to utilization tours. Second utilization tours are served by approximately 30 percent and third tours by roughly 10 percent of the graduates. On the basis of these data, it appears that the Navy may expect no more than about 1.4 utilization tours for each officer sent to graduate school.

The Air Force attempts to assign the majority of officers who receive advanced degrees into the utilization fields for which they were trained immediately upon completion of their academic programs. After initial utilization, subsequent assignments are determined on an individual basis.

CONCLUSIONS

In our opinion, the assignment policies and practices of the military services, some of which appear to be designed for purposes of career development and progression, often preclude the fullest utilization of officers with graduate degrees in validated positions. For example, an officer who spends 1 year in basic and advanced officer and other technical training, several years in a graduate education program, 1 year in a command and staff school, and five to six additional tours (either utilization or nonutilization tours), will have served 20 years or more and will be eligible for retirement.

Since there will be limited benefits to the military service for its investment in the officer's graduate education if the officer is not utilized to any great extent in validated positions, we suggest that the military services avail themselves of the potential for increased benefits with an accompanying reduction of costs, by more effective utilization of all officers with graduate degrees without regard to how the degrees were obtained. This would materially reduce the number of vacant validated positions, as well as the number of validated positions held by officers with less than masters' degrees. We also believe that, if

the services were more effective in assigning those officers who already have advanced degrees to validated positions, a corresponding reduction in the number of officers required for assignment to graduate schools could result.

Since the estimated cost to send a typical military officer to graduate school for 1 year ranges from \$16,000 to \$22,000, substantial savings could be realized if the number of validated positions were based on an essential requirement for, and full utilization of, the officers with advanced degrees.

AGENCY COMMENTS AND GAO EVALUATION

In our draft report we proposed that the Secretary of Defense direct the review of the assignment policies and practices of the military services--as they relate to all validated positions where graduate education is held to be a prerequisite, and particularly as they relate to those officers who have received the type of Government sponsored and funded graduate level education described in this report--to ensure maximum utilization of their specialized training during the remainder of their active duty careers.

In commenting on our draft report, DOD advised us that, to the extent that incomplete utilization is the case, our proposals would be considered. DOD advised us also that our draft report had overlooked the salient point that the needs of the military service and not the possession of any one particular skill or attribute would dictate an officer's assignment. DOD further advised that each service sought a management procedure to ensure that it would get an acceptable return on its educational investment but took into consideration other aspects, such as the need to fill military requirements, the rotation of officers to better prepare them for added responsibilities, and the desirability of a total career development approach.

As discussed previously, these factors often preclude the full utilization of officers with graduate education and the realization of an acceptable return to the Government, in an economic sense, on the substantial educational investment in those military officers who have attended graduate schools on a full-time, fully funded basis.

In our draft report we proposed also that DOD consider the civilianization of positions requiring advanced degrees wherever possible in order to stabilize the work force and provide continuity of operation so that incumbents of these positions would not be subject to frequent rotation, command prerogative reassignments, and early retirement.

DOD advised us that the determination as to whether a position should be military or civilian was predicated on the factors of military essentiality (combat, combat support, legal requirements, training or command requirements, and rotation requirements). When these factors are not present, alternative manpower sources (Government civilians or contractor personnel) are considered. An advanced degree may be a requirement of the position but not a factor in determining whether the incumbent should be military or civilian.

We believe that, to obtain a reasonable payoff from the substantial investment in the graduate education of military officers, a stable work force with minimal rotation, reassignments, and early retirements is required. We believe that, if this objective cannot be attained through increased stabilization of military personnel receiving such costly, specialized education, DOD should consider the use of civilians in those positions, wherever possible, since civilians are not subject to the turbulence of rotational assignments attendant to the military officer population. Also, the many advantages of continuity of an incumbent's assignment in a key managerial position, be he military or civilian, must receive proper consideration and be weighed against the disadvantages of moving a succession of military personnel through that position.

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CONGRESS

Since other higher priority requirements of the many-faceted career management program used by DOD for military personnel often preclude the utilization of such officers in validated positions, we believe that the Congress may wish to consider limiting the full-time, fully funded graduate education program to only those officers who can be utilized primarily in validated positions.

CHAPTER 4

SCOPE OF REVIEW

Our review was performed during 1969 at the headquarters of the military services, at 14 military installations, and at the headquarters of various major commands. (See app. III.) Our review of the Marine Corps, however, was limited in relation to the reviews performed in the other services and was conducted only at the headquarters level. Generally officers of the medical, legal, and ecclesiastical professions were not included in our review, and our findings and conclusions, except where specifically stated, would not necessarily pertain to those officer categories.

We reviewed the policies and procedures governing the implementation and interpretation of the validation criteria, interviewed officers assigned to validated positions and their immediate supervisors, reviewed officers' records to determine the educational levels attained, and reviewed the extent to which officers with advanced degrees were being utilized in validated positions.

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APPENDIXES

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MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D C 20301

6 APR 1970

Honorable Elmer B. Staats
Comptroller General of
the United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Staats:

Your draft report "Improvements Needed in Determining Graduate Education Requirements for Military Officer Positions," dated January 26, 1970 has been reviewed by the Service Secretaries and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The report indicates that the Services have not been completely successful in utilizing the graduate education of officers through subsequent tours of duty related to the education. To the extent that incomplete utilization is the case, effective control measures must be devised and the recommendations of your office will be carefully considered.

The report raises in our minds further questions as to whether or not the existing Joint Chiefs of Staff directive for graduate education of officers is adequate today. If, as a result of additional review, it becomes clear that our standards are to be revised, such revision will include the questions of cost, of utilization, and of the effect of educational opportunities on retention of officers and on their general fitness for the technological and political problems of Defense.

Attached are detailed comments on several aspects of your report.


Roger T. Kelley

APPENDIX I
Page 2

Department of Defense Comments on the GAO Draft Report Entitled
"Improvements Needed in Determining Graduate Education Requirements
for Military Officer Positions," dated January 26, 1970

The GAO report addresses itself to criteria for identifying military officer positions which require graduate level education. These criteria exist within the Military Departments and actions to improve them are constantly being taken. Obviously, there are no absolutes in establishing such criteria; as further experience is attained through the educational requirements review procedures of the Military Departments, needed changes will be made.

While recognizing the importance of the criteria, we believe that the GAO report has overlooked a very important element in the education and training of military officers. The report does not recognize sufficiently that graduate education is more than training in the particular skill -- important as that may be. Education is a continuing way of life and within the Military Services it contributes to the intellectual development of officers. Graduate education imparts to the student advanced technical knowledge. More importantly, it helps broaden his capacity for original thought and promote the development of analytical tools for problem solving.

Allied with the general increase in the amount of college level education which is now considered desirable is a rise in the expectations of junior officers concerning educational opportunities. Influenced by the values of the society from which they come, our young officers rank the opportunities for advanced education high among those factors which influence them to make a career of the military profession.

As a general observation, therefore, we believe that the draft report is too limited in its consideration of the utility of education. Of particular concern is the failure to acknowledge:

- (a) The rising educational aspirations of the segment of the population from which we must recruit military officers.
- (b) The value of graduate education in our junior officer retention efforts.
- (c) The increased capability which an officer with graduate level education brings to billets which he may occupy outside of the limited range of positions validated for his academic credentials.

One other significant point should be mentioned. The GAO draft report overlooks the salient point that the needs of the Military Service will dictate an officer's assignment and not the possession of any one particular skill or attribute. Each Service seeks a management procedure to insure that it gets an acceptable return on its educational investment but takes into consideration other aspects such as the need to fill military requirements, the rotation of officers to better prepare them for added responsibilities, and the desirability of a total career development approach.

With respect to the specific proposals [See GAO note on p. 36] we would like to make the following comments.

1. Proposal

The Secretary of Defense should issue a policy statement expressing the intent and objectives of the graduate level education program.

Comment

We concur that such a policy statement would be helpful and will take steps to develop one.

2. Proposal

The Secretary of Defense should direct a revision of the JCS criteria in more specific and meaningful terms.

Comment

The criteria published by the JCS were reviewed in collaboration with the Services. They will be re-examined to determine whether any further revision is required in light of the directive proposed above.

3. Proposal

The Secretary of Defense should utilize the advice of the United States Civil Service Commission or another qualified independent body in developing the criteria for establishing graduate level education requirements for military officer positions.

Comment

There is no objection to seeking the advice of any qualified independent body in this area, including the Civil Service Commission.

APPENDIX I
Page 4

4. Proposal

The Secretary of Defense should require uniform implementation and application of the guidelines, to the maximum extent possible, within and between the military services.

Comment

We shall seek uniform implementation and application of the guidelines to the maximum extent possible.

5. Proposal

The Secretary of Defense should consider the civilianization of positions requiring advanced degrees wherever possible.

Comment

The determination as to whether a position should be military or civilian is predicated on the factors of military essentiality (combat, combat support, legal requirements, training or command requirements, and rotation requirements). When these factors are not present, alternative manpower sources (government civilians or contractor personnel) are considered. An advanced degree may be a requirement of the position, but not a factor in determining whether the incumbent should be military or civilian.

6.

[See GAO note.]

GAO note: Section dealing with matter no longer contained in this report has been omitted.

[See GAO note.]

The following comments pertain to several specific points in the draft report.

[See GAO note.]

GAO note: Sections which deal with matters no longer contained in this report or which have been revised have been omitted.

[See GAO note on p. 35]

3. [See GAO note.]

The GAO suggests alternative training in lieu of graduate education.

The Military Services do use a number of short-term specialized training courses. They also promote off-duty education through the use of tuition assistance and the GI Bill benefits. Thus, alternatives are constantly sought and used wherever advantageous.

4. [See GAO note.]

The GAO draft report states that there are inconsistencies between official job description documents and validation of positions.

Corrective actions are taken wherever such discrepancies are found.

5. [See GAO note.]

The GAO describes the validation of five assistant chaplain positions in the Continental Armies for advanced degrees in comptrollership.

The Army will re-examine the positions so as to reflect a more uniform utilization of those chaplains so qualified.

GAO note: Page references which refer to our draft report have been omitted.

APPENDIX II

OFFICER STRENGTH, VALIDATED POSITIONS, AND GRADUATE ENROLLMENT

OF THE MILITARY SERVICES

FISCAL YEAR 1969

Service	Average officer strength (man-years) (note a)		Validated positions		Officer graduate enrollment		Percent of validated positions to officer strength
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Air Force	137,800	33.0	11,779	51.3	1,952	45.8	8.5
Army	169,600	40.5	5,716	24.9	829	19.4	3.4
Navy	85,800	20.5	4,883	21.2	1,274	29.9	5.7
Marine Corps	<u>24,900</u>	<u>6.0</u>	<u>591</u>	<u>2.6</u>	<u>209</u>	<u>4.9</u>	<u>2.4</u>
Total	<u>418,100</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>22,969</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>4,264</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>5.5</u>

^a Average officer strength includes officers in medical, legal, and ecclesiastical corps. Data shown were supplied by DOD and not verified by GAO.

APPENDIX III

LOCATIONS VISITED

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY:

Headquarters, Washington, D.C.
U.S. Army Materiel Command, Washington, D.C.
U.S. Continental Army Command, Fort Monroe, Virginia
U.S. Army Natick Laboratories, Natick, Massachusetts
U.S. Army Security Agency Training Center and School,
Fort Devens, Massachusetts
5th U.S. Army, Fort Sheridan, Illinois
U.S. Army Electronics Command, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey
U.S. Army Signal Center and School, Fort Monmouth, New
Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY:

Headquarters, Washington, D.C.
Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C.
Naval Ships Systems Command, Washington, D.C.
Boston Naval Shipyard, Charlestown, Massachusetts
Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, New Hampshire
Navy Resale System Office (formerly Navy Ship's Store
Office), Brooklyn, New York
Navy Electronic Supply Office, Great Lakes, Illinois
9th Naval District, Great Lakes, Illinois
Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE:

Headquarters, Washington, D.C.
Air Force Systems Command, Andrews Air Force Base,
Washington, D.C.
Electronic Systems Division, L. G. Hanscom Field, Bed-
ford, Massachusetts
Rome Air Development Center, Griffiss Air Force Base,
New York
Chanute Technical Training Center, Chanute Air Force
Base, Illinois
Air Training Command, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas

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

<u>Tenure of office</u>	
<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:

Melvin R. Laird	Jan. 1969	Present
Clark Clifford	Mar. 1968	Jan. 1969
Robert S. McNamara	Jan. 1961	Feb. 1968

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
(MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS):

Roger T. Kelley	Feb. 1969	Present
Alfred B. Fitt	Oct. 1967	Jan. 1969

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
DEFENSE (EDUCATION):

Dr. George C. S. Benson	Nov. 1969	Present
Dr. Nathan Brodsky (acting)	July 1968	Nov. 1969
Dr. Lynn M. Bartlett	July 1965	July 1968

CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF:

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer	July 1970	Present
Gen. Earle G. Wheeler	July 1964	July 1970

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Stanley R. Resor	July 1965	Present
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PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACTIVITIES
DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT (continued)

	<u>Tenure of office</u>	
	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
<u>DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY (continued)</u>		
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS):		
William K. Brehm	Apr. 1968	Present
Arthur W. Allen, Jr. (acting)	Jan. 1968	Apr. 1968
Arthur W. Allen, Jr. (note a)	Oct. 1963	Jan. 1968
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSON- NEL:		
Lt. Gen. Walter T. Kerwin	Aug. 1969	Present
Lt. Gen. A. O. Connor	July 1967	July 1969
DIRECTOR OF INDIVIDUAL TRAINING:		
Maj. Gen. C. M. Gettys	July 1969	Present
Maj. Gen. Willard Pearson	June 1968	June 1969
Maj. Gen. Melvin Zais	July 1966	June 1968
<u>DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY</u>		
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY:		
John H. Chafee	Jan. 1969	Present
Paul R. Ignatius	Aug. 1967	Jan. 1969
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS):		
James D. Hittle	Feb. 1969	Present
Randolph S. Driver (note a)	Aug. 1967	Feb. 1969

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACTIVITIES
DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT (continued)

Tenure of office
From To

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY (continued)

CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL:

Vice Admiral C. K. Duncan	Apr. 1968	Present
Vice Admiral B. J. Semmes, Jr.	Apr. 1964	Mar. 1968

COMMANDANT, U.S. MARINE CORPS:

Gen. Leonard F. Chapman, Jr.	Jan. 1968	Present
Gen. Wallace M. Greene	Jan. 1964	Dec. 1967

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE:

Dr. Robert C. Seamans, Jr.	Jan. 1969	Present
Dr. Harold Brown	Oct. 1965	Jan. 1969

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR
FORCE (MANPOWER AND RESERVE
AFFAIRS):

James P. Goode (acting)	Apr. 1970	Present
Dr. Curtis W. Tarr	June 1969	Apr. 1970
James P. Goode (acting)	Mar. 1969	June 1969
J. William Doolittle	Apr. 1968	Mar. 1969
Dr. Eugene T. Ferraro (act- ing)	Jan. 1968	Mar. 1968
Dr. Eugene T. Ferraro (note a)	June 1966	Dec. 1967

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACTIVITIES
DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT (continued)

Tenure of office
From To

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE (continued)

DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSON-
NEL:

Lt. Gen. Austin J. Russell	Aug. 1969	Present
Lt. Gen. John W. Carpenter III	Aug. 1968	July 1969
Lt. Gen. Horace M. Wade	Aug. 1966	July 1968

DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL TRAINING
AND EDUCATION:

Maj. Gen. Lester F. Miller	Aug. 1968	Present
Maj. Gen. Leo F. Dusard	Aug. 1966	July 1968

^a Performed corresponding duties as Deputy Under Secretary (Manpower) prior to creation of present office in January 1968.