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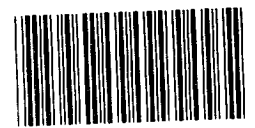
# General Accounting Office

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## DOD's Oversight Of Individual Skill Training In The Military Services Should Be More Comprehensive

This report assesses the adequacy of DOD's management oversight of skill training programs in the military services.

Improved oversight is needed to insure that the services adhere to training policies aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness. Oversight can be improved without infringing on the flexibility of the services to manage their respective programs.



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JULY 31, 1979



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND  
COMPENSATION DIVISION

B-175773

The Honorable Harold Brown  
The Secretary of Defense

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This report assesses management's oversight of the Department of Defense's military specialized skill training programs. We have discussed this report with your staff and have incorporated their comments where appropriate.

This report contains recommendations to you on page 21. As you know, section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs not later than 60 days after the date of the report and to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report.

We are sending copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget. Copies are also being sent to the Chairmen, House and Senate Committees on Armed Services and on Appropriations; and the Chairmen, House Committee on Government Operations and Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs.

We have been told that OSD is nearing completion of its study of the military training establishment. We hope that our report together with the OSD study will more clearly identify the relevant training issues and pave the way for a plan of action to improve DOD's military training program.

We wish to acknowledge the courtesy and cooperation extended by your staff to our representatives during the review.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "H. L. Krieger".

H. L. Krieger  
Director

GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
REPORT TO THE SECRETARY  
OF DEFENSE

DOD'S OVERSIGHT OF INDIVIDUAL  
SKILL TRAINING IN THE MILITARY  
SERVICES SHOULD BE MORE  
COMPREHENSIVE

D I G E S T

The military services spend about \$3 billion a year for formal specialized training in military service schools. The individual services are responsible for the day-to-day management and delivery of training, but the Office of the Secretary of Defense has oversight responsibility for the effectiveness and economy of the overall military training program.

The amount and quality of the Office of the Secretary of Defense's oversight is inadequate in a number of important areas.

--In spite of the trend toward providing individual skill training in operational units through on-the-job training, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics) does not systematically obtain data on the effectiveness and efficiency of this type of training. Officials within the Assistant Secretary's office differ as to whether that office has oversight responsibilities for training provided on the job in operational units.

--Department of Defense's (DOD's) training policy is not explicit as to what training the policy applies to, nor does it provide sufficient guidance to the services.

--The quality and amount of feedback data provided to the Assistant Secretary's office on institutional skill training is not adequate to assure effective oversight of the programs.

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--The Assistant Secretary's office has not exercised an oversight role for the Interservice Training Review Organization and does not systematically receive information needed to assess whether the Organization is making maximum use of interservice training opportunities.

Numerous past studies by GAO, the Congressional Budget Office, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Defense Manpower Commission have identified problems in the manner in which training has been conducted by the services.

There is a need to reassess the resources devoted to skill training oversight and consider whether those resources should be augmented. The adequacy of the one-half to three-quarters of a staff-year which the Office of the Secretary of Defense says it devotes to the oversight of the \$3 billion skill training program at the training directorate level is questionable.

GAO recognizes that the individual services will resist the Office of the Secretary of Defense's increased oversight because they have traditionally wanted to be left alone to manage their own programs. The services need flexibility in the day-to-day management of training programs; however, if properly managed, expanded and improved oversight could be achieved without infringing on service flexibility.

In response to the Office of the Secretary of Defense's earlier requests for additional information, service officials have stated that providing more data would impose unreasonable and unjustifiable workload demands on them. However, any additional information required for the Office of the Secretary of Defense oversight would also be needed by the services in their management of training activities.

Creating a comprehensive integrated servicewide training information system with consistency in data elements and reporting requirements would minimize information demands on the services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

DLG 00751

To improve Office of the Secretary of Defense oversight of specialized skill training, the Secretary of Defense should

- provide more systematic oversight of individual on-the-job skill training in operational units;
- clarify, in writing, the training oversight roles and responsibilities of all levels within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics);
- clarify DOD's policies for specialized skill training and make them more comprehensive;
- establish a system for overseeing the operations of the Interservice Training Review Organization;
- intensify oversight of specialized skill training provided in institutions to include obtaining and analyzing more complete, timely, and accurate information on the amount, cost, and effectiveness of training; and
- reexamine the cost benefits of a single integrated servicewide training management information system to provide timely, consistent, and accurate data to managers at all levels, including the Congress.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense provided comments on a draft of this report which have been incorporated where appropriate. GAO has not reviewed in detail the improvements which the Office of the Secretary of Defense, in its comments, says it has made since completion of GAO's fieldwork.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CBO	Congressional Budget Office
DAS	Defense Audit Service
DOD	Department of Defense
FYDP	Five Year Defense Plan
GAO	General Accounting Office

ISD            instructional systems development

ITRO          Interservice Training Review Organization

MMTR         Military Manpower Training Report

OASD  
  (MRAL)      Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense  
                  (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics)

OJT           on-the-job training

OMB          Office of Management and Budget

OSD          Office of the Secretary of Defense

POM          Program Objective Memorandum

TRADOC       Training and Doctrine Command

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Defense (DOD) spends about \$5.9 billion a year and employs a military and civilian staff of about 151,000 to train an average student load of 217,000 enrolled 1/ at any one time for all training 2/ categories at training institutions. About \$3 billion of this amount provides individual specialized skill training to an average annual input of over 1.2 million students entering the institutions. The table below lists the skill training and estimated average student entrants during fiscal year 1979.

<u>Subcategory of specialized skill training</u>	<u>Average student entrants (note a)</u>	<u>Number of courses</u>
Initial skill (enlisted)	389,457	810
Advanced skill progression (enlisted)	182,839	2,948
Initial skill (officers)	26,591	138
Advanced skill progression (officers)	38,023	732
Functional training (enlisted and officers)	<u>509,224</u>	<u>2,196</u>
Total	1,146,134	6,824
Army one-station unit training	<u>98,151</u>	<u>(b)</u>
Total	<u>1,244,285</u>	<u>6,824</u>

a/As shown in the President's budget for fiscal year 1979.

b/Army one-station unit training combines recruit and initial skill training for certain skills into a single continuous course.

Initial skill training for enlisted persons and officers is provided immediately after recruit or officer acquisition training. This training is job oriented and, added to military fundamentals learned earlier, prepares

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1/Equivalent student/trainee staff-years for participants, including both of those in temporary duty and permanent change of station status.

2/Recruit, officer acquisition, specialized skill, flight, and professional development education.



the individual for taking a place in the job structure including a military occupational specialty or rating at the lowest skill level. Training in advanced skill progression comes after the individual has gained experience through actual work in his or her specialty. This training provides the knowledge needed to perform at a more skilled level and to assume more advanced responsibilities in the given military occupation specialty. Functional skill training covers subject areas which cut across military occupational specialties and provides required skills in addition to the individual's primary specialty or skill level (e.g., survival training in the Air Force).

Initial skill training is usually provided by institutions; however, advanced and functional skill training is provided by institutions and/or by units.

The amount and cost of individual specialized skill training provided through on-the-job training (OJT) in operational units was not available at the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). OSD officials said that the Air Force was the only service that had data on the amount of time spent teaching skills through OJT in operational units.

#### MANAGEMENT AND EXECUTION OF INDIVIDUAL SPECIALIZED SKILL TRAINING

Detailed management of individual specialized skill training is carried out by the four services. Each, except the Marine Corps, has a training commander immediately subordinate to the service chief, who is responsible for most institutional training. Operational unit commanders are, for the most part, responsible to training commands for OJT, and through the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense and the President for crew and unit training. Some training is managed directly by the service headquarters; a few training activities are subordinated directly to the service headquarters. However, the most prevalent organizational pattern for institutional training is through command headquarters which manages most service schools, training centers, and other training facilities.

Within each service headquarters, a principal staff officer is responsible for individual institutional and/or OJT. Other staff members may have primary responsibility for certain types of institutional training; for example, a Surgeon General for medical specialized skill training. Some may also have collateral responsibilities, for example, for allocating manpower and funds to training.

On the Army staff, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations is responsible for individual specialized skill training and OJT. Within the Navy, the principal staff officer for institutional training is the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Manpower and Personnel Training), who is also responsible for individual OJT. The headquarters of the Marine Corps manages individual training through the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Training and his subordinate, the Director of Training. Commanders of the separate major subordinate training activities report directly to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, dealing with the headquarters training staff. Within the Air Force, the Director of Personnel Programs, under the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and Personnel, is responsible for service oversight of individual institutional specialized skill training and OJT.

The Army's principal training command headquarters is the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) located at Fort Monroe, Virginia. TRADOC directly controls individual specialized skill training through installation and school commanders throughout the United States. For the Navy, the Chief of Naval Education and Training at Pensacola, Florida, controls, through his subordinate Chief of Naval Technical Training at Memphis, Tennessee, specialized skill training conducted in Naval training centers, schools, and programs. In the Air Force, the Air Training Command at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, directly controls individual specialized skilled training through training centers and through units. In no instance does a service training command have responsibility for all individual specialized skill training. For example, as previously stated, the Surgeons General provide most service staff oversight of medical specialized skill training.

#### OSD OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Secretary of Defense has overall responsibility for assuring that military individuals are adequately trained to do their assigned duties. Likewise, he is responsible for assuring that training resources are used effectively and efficiently.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics is the principle staff advisor and assistant to the Secretary for DOD training and education of civilian and military personnel. He has oversight responsibility for such training and education matters as

- developing policies, conducting analyses, advising, recommending, and issuing guidance on DOD plans and programs;
- developing systems and standards for administering and managing approved plans and programs;
- initiating programs, actions, and tasking to assure adherence to DOD policies;
- reviewing and evaluating programs for carrying out approved policies and standards; and
- participating in those planning, programing, and budgeting activities which relate to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics) (OASD(MRAL)) responsibilities.

We were told that the foregoing responsibilities for specialized skill training and other training and education have been assigned orally to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Program Management) and further, to the Director for Training and Education. In August 1978 the training and education directorate consisted of a director, four professional staff officers, one officer on a temporary 1-year assignment under a staff training program, and two clerical employees. The director said about one-half to three-fourths of a staff year is devoted to oversight of skill training within the directorate. 1/

PAST STUDIES SHOW THE SERVICES  
NEED TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OF  
SPECIALIZED SKILL TRAINING

Managing specialized skill training to assure effectiveness, efficiency, and economy depends on the soundness of decisions related to what and how the subject matter is taught, how many are taught, and the resources used in the process.

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1/Individual OJT and individual training in institutions (including dedicated training units) have been differentiated from crew and unit training conducted by operational units. As discussed later, only individual training is now deemed within the oversight purview of OSD; oversight of crew and unit training is provided by the Office of Joint Chiefs of Staff on behalf of the Secretary of Defense.

Studies by the Defense Manpower Commission, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and our office have pointed out ways the services could reduce costs or improve effectiveness through better management of training programs. The issues centered around (1) improving the services' management decisionmaking ability on what and how training will be provided to how many students and (2) having OSD require the services to implement specific measures to improve training cost effectiveness. The studies also identified opportunities for more interservice training and, in some instances, recommended a stronger OSD oversight role to assure warranted consolidations. (For further details see app. I.)

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

In view of OSD's role and responsibility in the area, the results of past studies which have highlighted the need to improve the management of training, and the magnitude of specialized skill training, we focused our review toward assessing OSD's oversight of the services' specialized skill training programs. The assessment included evaluating the clarity of policies, the assignment of roles and responsibilities, and review and evaluation processes, including feedback systems.

We did our work primarily at the Offices of the Assistant Secretaries of Defense for Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics; Comptroller; Communications, Command, Control, and Intelligence; Program Analysis and Evaluation; and Health Affairs. We also talked to officials of CBO and OMB regarding related studies they had made.

Comments provided by OSD on our preliminary report have been incorporated where appropriate. We did not review in detail the improvements which OSD says it has made since completion of our fieldwork.

## CHAPTER 2

### NEED FOR IMPROVED OSD MANAGEMENT

#### OVERSIGHT OF INDIVIDUAL SPECIALIZED SKILL TRAINING

As previously stated, the Secretary of Defense has overall responsibility for assuring that military personnel are adequately trained individually to perform their primary mission. Likewise, he is responsible for assuring that training resources are used in a manner that fosters improved effectiveness and economy and conforms with DOD policy. OASD(MRAL), the Secretary's principal staff element for training and education, must, through its oversight system, assure that services manage training in a manner that will discharge the Secretary's responsibilities. As a minimum, this requires that

- training policies clearly state the scope of coverage and guidance on what is expected of the services in their training programs and
- there be an effective system of oversight to assure compliance with DOD policy and permit informed decisionmaking. This includes training management information on the amount, cost, and quality of training in each category actually provided as well as that planned, programed, and budgeted.

The issue of how much involvement OSD should have in the oversight of services' programs and the amount of information required from the individual services has been the subject of past study. On the one hand, the services should be allowed sufficient flexibility to manage their programs to meet their peculiar requirements, and OSD involvement should be limited. In general, we agree with this philosophy, and have, in the past, recommended limiting OSD oversight to formulation and evaluation of policy and supervision of efficient policy execution. Yet, at the same time, the Secretary of Defense is responsible and accountable for the effectiveness and efficiency of the overall DOD training program and should have assurance that the services are following DOD's training policy. As a result, he must exercise oversight. The key issue is the adequacy of oversight and the information available to exercise it.

From the training problems identified in past studies (see pp. 4 and 5) and the results of our findings discussed below, we believe that expanded and improved OSD oversight of training is needed.

Specifically, we believe OSD needs to

- provide more systematic oversight of individual on-the-job training,
- clarify and better define the scope of its training policies,
- assume a stronger OASD(MRAL) oversight role over the Interservice Training Review Organization (ITRO),
- improve OASD(MRAL) oversight of institutional skill training by obtaining better quality data and increase its assessments of training effectiveness, and
- reassess resources devoted to skill training oversight and consider its augmentation.

NEED FOR MORE SYSTEMATIC  
OVERSIGHT OF INDIVIDUAL OJT

The DOD policy provides that training in formal or technical schools will be used only to the extent that training requirements cannot be adequately or profitably met by OJT. As part of their instructional systems development (ISD) process, the services identify which job tasks are to be taught in institutions and which through OJT. More importantly, an essential part of OSD's oversight responsibilities is consideration of such things as trade-offs between providing individual skill training in institutions or OJT in units or in eliminating certain types of training altogether. To do this, OSD must be able to compare the cost effectiveness of training, such as advanced enlisted skill progression training provided in institutions as opposed to units. As a result, the OASD(MRAL) oversight system must include data on and evaluation of individual specialized skill training provided by the services through OJT in operational units as well as in institutions.

We were told that OASD(MRAL) does not systematically obtain data on individual OJT in units even though officials said there is indirect feedback through the services' unit readiness reports and oversight is conducted through the

budget process for operational units. 1/ However, training officials further said that the type, amount, and cost of individual OJT in the budget is not separately stated from other unit activities, and therefore, the data are not adequate for OASD(MRAL) monitoring purposes.

In response to our preliminary report, OSD agrees that it could do more in OJT oversight, but cites its inability to separate OJT from unit training as making oversight of OJT difficult. OSD states that OJT is combined with unit training and is often indistinguishable. Therefore, it says, OSD must rely on other methods for its oversight of OJT, such as through staff visits, reviews of service plans to improve OJT, and analysis of budget proposals.

While we recognize this difficulty, the issue still remains that with increased training being provided through OJT, the need for more systematic oversight data becomes more important.

The DOD directive that assigns training oversight responsibility to OASD(MRAL) does not contain language that, in any way, would limit the scope of responsibility to any type of training or method for delivery. For example, it does not indicate that oversight should be concentrated on training provided in institutions or to recruit, flight, skill, or any other particular types of training. Yet, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Program Management) said that the Director of Training and Education did not have oversight responsibility for OJT. He further said his office was only interested in OJT as an alternative method of training that is considered in the ISD process. In our discussions with senior OSD oversight officials, we obtained differing views as to whether oversight should be (1) provided for individual skill training as a complete system or (2) provided only for institutional training. While most officials view the OSD oversight responsibilities as being comprehensive in scope--to include oversight of both institutional and OJT--the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Program Management) does not think anyone has ever interpreted the assignment of this responsibility for training as including oversight of OJT. Several

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1/The following are our recent reports that stress the need for stronger OJT programs: "The Key to Improving Maintenance of Army Equipment: Commanders Must Motivate Their Personnel" (LCD-78-428, Dec. 22, 1978) and "Readiness of First Line U.S. Combat Armored Units in Europe" (LCD-76-412, June 30, 1976).

officials generally felt that OJT is so closely related to institutional training that oversight of the latter could not be effectively carried out without oversight of the former. Most officials said actual OASD(MRAL) oversight had been limited to institutional training because of such factors as (1) interest of the Congress in institutional training loads and related data, (2) resources available to provide oversight, and (3) internal management decisions within OASD(MRAL) to concentrate on institutional training. We believe the limited oversight is also due, in part, to the absence of a clear delegation in writing as to what the assigned roles and responsibilities should be for officers within OASD(MRAL).

Within OASD(MRAL), oversight responsibility is not further assigned in writing to subordinate organizational units. The responsibility has either been orally assigned to or assumed by training managers.

OSD said that there is no difference of opinion within OASD(MRAL) about the roles and responsibilities for training oversight. This may be true now but during our fieldwork the differences were apparent. However, highlighting this issue has apparently resulted in its resolution.

NEED TO CLARIFY AND BETTER DEFINE  
SCOPE OF DOD TRAINING POLICIES

DOD Directive 1100.4 dated August 20, 1954, sets forth general manpower policies for DOD including those for training. In addition, OSD annually issues supplemental guidance to the services (the so-called consolidated guidance) as part of the planning, programming, and budgeting process.

A review of the policy directive and related consolidated guidance, as well as of comments from various oversight officials, shows a need to clarify and better define the scope of training policies. The existing policies

- offer little guidance as to what is expected of the services in providing OJT or other training in units and
- do not set forth a DOD position on training, development and delivery techniques such as (1) job task analysis and ISD in formulating training courses and (2) interservice training to foster effectiveness and economy in training.



The wording of existing policies deals mainly with institutional training and related training loads. By comparison, OJT is only mentioned in the policies by saying that

- training in formal or technical schools will be used to the extent that training cannot be adequately or profitably met by OJT and
- formal training should be followed as soon as feasible by on-the-job applications of learned skills.

The policy does not mention whether OJT should be supported with instructional materials or other means that would improve training effectiveness and economy. Similarly, it does not mention DOD's position on using self-paced instruction, simulators, etc., in providing institutional training.

In response to our questions, several OSD officials told us the existing policies on individual skill training were inadequate and that more definitive policies and guidance are needed. Regarding this, we obtained an uncirculated revised draft to the existing policies which clearly defines what is expected of the services. It specifically points to ways the services should achieve economies and efficiencies in the design, development, and delivery of training within and among the services. For example, the draft policies contain guidance, not in the existing policies, such as

- training courses will be structured through task analysis of duties actually performed in operational units;
- courses will contain only instruction in those tasks which can be taught most efficiently and effectively through formal courses, remaining tasks will be deferred to be learned through job experience;
- OJT, supported by appropriate instructional materials, will be used as a full or partial substitute for formal training;
- individually paced instruction techniques will be used whenever feasible to minimize time spent in training status;
- training equipment--flight simulators--will be used to improve the quality of training and to control training costs;

--training will be conducted as consolidated joint or intercomponent training whenever analysis indicates that it would be cost effective; and

--each proposed new course will be analyzed for consolidation potential before being initiated unilaterally by a single DOD component.

In our opinion, guidance, such as that contained in the un-circulated revised draft, clearly defines what the services should do in providing training; this should increase their understanding of what is expected of them. In August 1978 an OSD official told us he was responsible for getting out a revised policy document in the fall of 1978. However, in response to our followup inquiry in February 1979, the official said the revised document had not been and probably would not be issued. He further said that they would rely on annual consolidated guidance to convey policy to the services.

OSD agrees that its policies could be more comprehensive, especially as it relates to ISD. However, it adds that each of the services are implementing ISD even though the policy is not articulated in a DOD directive and that OSD has provided policy guidance in other ways such as before, and during program and budgetary reviews. However, a recent OSD sponsored study concluded in its preliminary report that services' efforts to promote the use of ISD are not adequate.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN OSD  
OVERSIGHT OF INSTITUTIONAL  
SPECIALIZED SKILL TRAINING

OSD oversight of institutional specialized skill training can be improved by (1) increasing the amount of data it obtains and analyzes on the effectiveness of training provided and (2) obtaining and analyzing more complete, timely, and accurate data on the quality, type, amount, and cost of skill training planned, programed, budgeted, and accomplished. Such action should improve OSD's ability to execute its oversight responsibilities and should enhance the probability that OSD and the services will identify and implement opportunities for increased training effectiveness and economy.

Need for improved oversight of  
the efficiency and effectiveness  
of services' specialized skill  
training

To carry out its oversight responsibility for assuring compliance with DOD training policies, OASD(MRAL) must have adequate feedback for assessing whether service training programs result in individuals being taught the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for successfully performing assigned tasks at the least possible cost. It must also be assured that service decisions in designing, developing, and delivering training are soundly based. More specifically, OASD(MRAL) must assure the adequacy of management processes for determining such things as (1) how course lengths and content are determined, (2) how the split between formal training and OJT is determined, (3) whether interservice training should be used, and (4) how training effectiveness is evaluated, including feedback mechanisms. The results of the services' review and evaluation of what and how the subject is taught, to how many students, the amount and type of resources devoted for training instruction and training support, and the effectiveness of training in enabling graduates to perform assigned jobs are essential to OASD(MRAL) in carrying out its oversight responsibility.

Although it varies somewhat in organization and detail by service, the general process for making key decisions on the type, amount, and content of training provided is the ISD process. Among other things, ISD is a logical way of identifying training needs and determining whether the training can be provided more efficiently and effectively in formal institutions or on-the-job in operating units. ISD can also be used to select appropriate delivery methods for institutional training, including examining the feasibility of using existing schools and courses within other services. ITRO, established to identify opportunities and plans for joint use of training courses among the services, appears to be an excellent means for executing the latter process. However, the Defense Manpower Commission, CBO, and our office have criticized ITRO for not aggressively identifying and recommending interservice training opportunities.

Another important use of ISD is measurement of training effectiveness. This is accomplished by tests to determine whether actual learning experiences satisfy intended and required learning objectives and by assessing performance of graduates in job assignments to determine whether they can do the job for which they are trained.

Although OASD(MRAL) officials recognize ISD as the key management process for assuring that effective training is provided at the least cost, they have only limited information on the services' use and ISD results. OASD(MRAL) officials commented that they rely almost totally on the individual services for making sound management decisions in ISD that determine the effectiveness and efficiency of training. An OASD(MRAL) official said that he views OSD's oversight role as being limited to having assurance that the services have a reasonable concept for systematically designing, developing, and delivering training. However, during our review, the information available to OASD(MRAL) on the services' use and ISD results in fiscal year 1979 primarily consisted of aggregate data on course length reductions resulting from ISD in two of the four services and minutes from the ITRO meetings. Information was not available for assessing key service decisions, including those by ITRO, on the extent of interservice training and the mix of formal training and OJT. Additionally, information was not available to show service evaluations of training effectiveness and any resulting modifications in training programs.

In discussing the kind of data now available, OASD (MRAL) officials told us that information currently available on the services' use and ISD results is not sufficient for them to adequately carry out their oversight responsibility. The officials said uniform data is needed for each of the services to show when courses were last subjected to ISD; this data would show resulting changes in content, length, and delivery techniques and the plans for additional reviews. Information is also needed on evaluations of training effectiveness. An OASD (MRAL) official stated that the information should be computerized and periodically updated to help their reviews and evaluations. This could be integrated with ITRO efforts to computerize the services' course catalogs.

A primary reason for requiring more systematic information is to establish a greater sense of accountability among the services for effective implementation of ISD. In this regard, a recent preliminary report evaluating the services implementation of ISD for OASD(MRAL) concludes that the potential of ISD to assure that training meets job requirements is not being realized, and that service efforts to promote the use of ISD are not sufficient to assure that ISD is applied.

Closer OSD oversight of services' ISD efforts is warranted because of the central role it plays in training cost effectiveness. A systematic receipt of information

on the services' use and results of ISD would be valuable to OASD(MRAL) for assessing service compliance with DOD training policies on (1) minimizing course lengths, (2) establishing a proper mix of formal training and OJT, (3) assuring reasonableness in the amount and type of resources allocated to training, and (4) effectiveness of training provided. In addition, the information would enable OASD(MRAL) to more systematically review and evaluate service efforts in improving training cost effectiveness through such means as (1) individually paced instructions, (2) use of flight and other simulators, and (3) interservice training.

The lack of monitoring of ITRO as a tool for achieving interservice training has been the subject of past reports. Both Defense Manpower Commission and our office have previously recommended that OSD assume greater oversight authority and responsibility for the organization. We believe a stronger OSD role is still needed. An OASD(MRAL) official said that plans for drafting a Secretary of Defense letter and instructions to establish such a role have been delayed because of the urgency of other training oversight matters and the limited staff available for such efforts.

OSD agrees that OASD(MRAL) should improve its oversight of ITRO. It states that some improvements were made in the last ITRO study of Cryptologic Training.

Need to obtain and analyze more complete, timely, and accurate data on the amount and cost of specialized skill training

To accomplish training oversight, managers need detailed, complete, timely, consistent, and accurate data on the type, amount, and cost of training. Because institutional specialized skill training consists of five subcategories--base operating support, medical support, other operations and maintenance activities, training investment costs for construction and procurement, and training administration and command overhead--such data as (1) the numbers of students (training loads and workloads), (2) supporting manpower, and (3) funding for military and civilian pay and allowances would be needed by subcategory for OSD to adequately assess whether DOD training policies are being implemented by the services. Likewise, to help OSD oversight managers resolve issues in their review and evaluation during all phases of the planning, programing, and budgeting process, the foregoing data by subcategories should be available, as a minimum, during three decision stages.

These stages occur each May and June in support of the Program Objective Memorandum (POM) submission, each October to reflect program decisions and to support the services' budget submission to OSD, and each January to reflect the Secretary of Defense's decisions and support the President's budget including the annual Military Manpower Training Report (MMTR) to the Congress. Also, data on the Five-Year Defense Plan (FYDP) must be reconciled and updated during each stage of the process.

Data required for OSD oversight has been addressed in past GAO reports. We pointed out in April 1976 1/ that training data required of the services for the budget and in selected management reports were inconsistent, requiring extensive additional work to produce. Among other things, we recommended that the Secretary of Defense establish a single standardized training data base to meet the needs of all users. In February 1978 we also reported 2/ that the MMTR staffing data submitted by the services and reported by OSD to the Congress were incomplete and inaccurate. Recent work by the Defense Audit Service (DAS) also shows problems with training data submitted by the services. DAS officials said they had completed a study since our report was issued which also showed that incompatible and inconsistent data was submitted by the services for the FYDP, budget, and MMTR. At the time of completion of our fieldwork, a report had not been issued on the study results.

The feedback data that OASD(MRAL) receives from the services on the quality, amount, and cost of skill training still are not adequate for assessing adherence to DOD policies. The data requests do not include all the information required and the services do not always provide the data requested, nor is the data provided detailed, complete, timely, or accurate.

Training oversight officials said the data which have been received as part of the POM and budget process as well as in the FYDP have not been in sufficient detail to permit adequate oversight analysis of the five subcategories of

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1/"Suggested Improvements in Staffing and Organization of Top Management Headquarters in the Department of Defense" (FPCD-76-35, Apr. 20, 1976).

2/"Opportunities Exist for Substantial Savings in Administration of Military Skill Training Programs" (FPCD-78-13, Feb. 14, 1978).

specialized skill training. For example, the POM process does not provide data on funding, support manpower, training loads, and base operating support costs by subcategories unless there are significant changes from the most recent MMTR. In addition, it is not possible to compute the cost of training a new enlisted person using FYDP because it does not differentiate the cost of initial skill training from other types of specialized skill training, and base operating support costs are not related to specific subcategories of training.

Oversight officials pointed out that the only data in sufficient detail for analyzing the amount and cost of subcategories of specialized skill training are required as part of the data call for the annual MMTR. However, the officials said the data provided by the services are not complete in some instances, and are not timely for use in the POM and budget processes. For example, some services do not provide all of the required data, i.e., the Army has failed to provide funding data by the five subcategories of skill training since the initiation of the MMTR in fiscal year 1974. The MMTR data are not timely for OSD oversight in that they are received months after program decisions have already been made by the Secretary of Defense in the POM and budget processes based only on aggregate data on the specialized skill training category. The officials further said that MMTR data are not easily reconcilable with FYDP and the data provided by subcategory detail are often inconsistent and inaccurate.

Most OSD officials attributed the data inadequacies in the existing feedback systems to such factors as (1) resistance by the services to provide OSD additional training data needed for executing its oversight role, (2) philosophy of some OASD(MRAL) officials that analysis of aggregate data for the overall specialized skill training program category (as compared to subcategory) is sufficient when "managing by exception" as compared with when exercising a firmer oversight role, and (3) differences in management views as to the level of detail needed for management oversight of institutional specialized skill training.

The OASD(MRAL) training directorate has put forth substantial efforts toward specifying and implementing a uniform training data and cost method among the military services, particularly regarding individual specialized skill training.

In December 1977, OASD(MRAL) proposed a FYDP Training Subsystem in an effort to (1) obtain feedback data in more detail, (2) improve accuracy and consistency, (3) improve timeliness, and (4) create a single training data base. The proposed automated subsystem would have required services to provide data revisions by subcategory of training to reflect program changes three times each year to correspond with the key decision processes as compared to annually for the MMTR data call. In addition, the subsystem differentiated individual training category costs and identified base operating costs with specific subcategories of skill training.

Service officials said the required additional information would impose unreasonable and unjustifiable workload demands and was without a statutory basis because MMTR is only required annually. OASD(MRAL) officials told us the subsystem was not approved within OASD(MRAL) because of the services' objections. In lieu thereof, OASD (Comptroller) management approved, in August 1978, a separate call for similarly formatted data by subcategory as part of the annual budget request. We learned however, that except for the Air Force, the requested data formats were not provided in the services' budget submittals due September 1978.

Assuming the services provide properly formatted detailed data next year as part of the newly established budget requirement, the timeliness and completeness of feedback data should improve; however, similar data is still needed for the POM process to improve program decisions. Additional efforts will also be required to improve the compatibility, consistency, and accuracy of training feedback data provided by the services for FYDP, the budget, and MMTR for OASD(MRAL) to adequately assess the services adherence to DOD training policies and congressional ceilings on training loads and manpower.

In response to our preliminary report, OSD states that the data problems were caused by the nature of the data request in terms of it being (1) too voluminous, (2) unobtainable from DOD's standard accounting and budgeting systems, and (3) too detailed to be of value in the decisionmaking process at the OSD level. OSD adds that since DOD has recently restructured the FYDP elements to help identify resources within the training establishment, it decided to reorient the MMTR. It now, according to OSD, corresponds very closely with FYDP and is more timely, accurate, and useful.



Whether these changes will improve the quality of the data and resulting oversight remains to be seen. A major question is whether the MMTR data, in its revised format, will be usable for detailed or aggregate analysis within the training community. When the Congress established the MMTR requirements, it apparently did so in frustration with attempts to analyze FYDP training data in detail.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### CONCLUSIONS

In recent years, the issue of how much OSD oversight is needed to assure compliance with DOD policy has been raised a number of times. In a July 6, 1976, report 1/ we concluded that OSD should limit its involvement in service programs to formulating DOD policy and assuring service compliance.

Because of the sizable cost of DOD formal military specialized skill training provided in institutions (about \$3 billion a year) and the importance of effective training to the readiness of our armed forces, it is vital that these programs be effectively managed and that there be adequate oversight. This requires complete, timely, and accurate data.

The services are responsible for day-to-day management and delivery of training and the Secretary of Defense has oversight responsibility for the effectiveness and economy of the overall military training program.

The key issue is: Is OSD effectively exercising its oversight responsibilities?

In addition to the studies made by CBO, OMB, and the Defense Manpower Commission, we have made numerous studies identifying problems in the manner in which training has been conducted by the services. These studies and our current work raised, in our minds, questions about the adequacy of the OSD oversight role.

In general, we believe the level and quality of OSD oversight is inadequate in a number of important areas. Specifically, we noted that:

--In spite of the trend toward providing individual skill training in operational units through OJT, OASD(MRAL) does not systematically obtain data on the effectiveness and efficiency of this type of training. Also, differing views exist within

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1/"Highlights of a Report on Staffing and Organization of Top Management Headquarters in the Department of Defense" (FPCD-76-35A, July 6, 1976).

OASD(MRAL) about whether their oversight responsibilities include training provided on the job in operational units.

--The existing DOD training policy is not clear enough in its scope and does not provide sufficient guidance to the services.

--The quality and amount of feedback data provided to OASD(MRAL) on institutional skill training is not adequate to assure effective oversight of these programs.

--OASD(MRAL) has not exercised an effective oversight role for ITRO nor does it systematically receive adequate information for assessing whether it is making maximum use of interservice training opportunities.

In addition, we question whether the one-half to three-quarters of a staff year, which we were told is devoted to oversight of the \$3 billion skill training program at the OSD training directorate level, is adequate. In view of the problems identified by the past studies and the issues raised above, we believe there is a need to reassess resources devoted to skill training oversight and consider their augmentation.

We recognize that increased OSD oversight will likely be resisted by the individual services who traditionally want to be left alone to manage their own programs. While we agree in the need for service flexibility in the day-to-day management of their programs, we believe that improved OASD oversight is needed and, if properly managed, can be achieved without infringing on this needed service flexibility.

In response to earlier OASD(MRAL) requests for additional information, service officials have stated that it would require unreasonable and unjustifiable workload demands on them. However, it appears to us that any information required for OSD oversight would also be needed by the services for their management. Nevertheless, any additional OASD(MRAL) information requests must (1) be clearly defined and well understood by the services, (2) be sensitive to resource requirements needed to provide and analyze the information both at OSD and the services, (3) meet, to the maximum extent possible, the needs of all users, and (4) eliminate duplication of data requests. These goals

can be facilitated by having a single integrated service-wide information system capable of responding to the training information requirements of all managers, including the Congress.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary of Defense improve DOD's oversight of specialized skill training by

- providing more systematic oversight of individual specialized skill training provided on the job in operational units;
- clarifying in writing, the training oversight roles and responsibilities of all levels within OASD(MRAL);
- clarifying and making DOD's policies for skill training more comprehensive;
- establishing an oversight system for monitoring the ITRO operations;
- intensifying oversight of specialized skill training provided in institutions to include obtaining and analyzing more detailed, complete, timely, and accurate information on the amount, cost, and effectiveness of training; and
- reexamine the cost benefits of a single integrated servicewide training management information system to provide timely, consistent, and accurate data to managers at all levels, including the Congress.

SUMMARY OF PRIOR STUDY RESULTSDEFENSE MANPOWER COMMISSION STUDY

The Defense Manpower Commission study pointed out that qualitative controls over management of training and education are vested almost entirely with the service responsible for conducting the program. The study also pointed out:

"From writing the job description to approving the training control documents that support the description, the Service is autonomous."

Opportunities for interservice training courses are considered by the ITRO in which the four services participate. The study concluded that the effectiveness of ITRO has been reduced because all services must agree to a change; any lack of unanimity perpetuates the status quo. Although some reports of ITRO meetings are provided to OASD(MRAL), that office does not actively participate in the decision process to resolve impasses caused by parochial dispute among the services. The Commission pointed to the need for a stronger OSD oversight role by recommending that the training and education function within OSD be charged with reviewing the ITRO program to assure effectiveness of training and education programs.

PAST GAO STUDIES

We have issued 10 reports 1/ in the past 5 years urging the services and DOD to improve various aspects of training management to achieve greater economy and effectiveness. Because the services are reluctant to institute needed changes, several reports pointed to the need for a more directive OSD role by recommending that OSD require the services to implement measures to improve training cost effectiveness. Because of the potential ITRO offers for interservice training with the services' ISD processes, we, like the Defense Manpower Commission, have also recommended that the management oversight role of OASD(MRAL) be expanded to include effective oversight authority and responsibility for ITRO. By such action, OSD would be in a

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1/For further details see appendix II.

better position for effecting warranted consolidations of training not being accomplished through cooperative efforts of the services.

As previously mentioned, the soundness of decisions by service personnel in the ISD process as to what and how training is conducted and the resources to be used is basic to whether training is conducted in the most effective and efficient manner at lowest costs. Our recent report entitled "Opportunities Exist for Substantial Savings in Administration of Military Skill Training Programs" (FPCD-78-13, Feb. 14, 1978), illustrates how DOD could save millions of dollars a year by requiring the services to improve decisions as to what and how skill training will be provided. Specifically, the report recommended that the Secretary of Defense require

- the services to provide skill training a minimum of 40 class-hours a week whenever possible and eliminate nonskill training activities from course curriculums,
- the Army to adopt a more reasonable criterion for determining staffing levels for skill training instructors to be consistent with the other services, and
- the services to substitute civilians for military personnel or contract for training support whenever feasible.

OMB'S REDUCTIONS IN DOD'S  
REQUESTED SKILL TRAINING  
BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 1979

After studying DOD's training establishment, OMB pointed out opportunities for additional efficiencies and economies in the way the services manage training. For example, OMB estimated that the fiscal year 1979 DOD training budget would have been about \$200 million higher had it not been for economy measures taken in reviewing DOD's request. In the area of specialized skill training, OMB proposed (1) reductions in training loads offset by increases in OJT, (2) reductions in length of courses, and (3) reductions in support personnel. An OMB official told us the proposed reductions in specialized skill training resulted from a year long series of analyses and contacts and visits with officials of DOD and the services. He also said that because of the diversity and complexity of specialized skill training, it was difficult to get specific data on the courses that should be cut.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE  
ASSESSMENTS OF POTENTIAL FOR  
ECONOMIES IN DEFENSE TRAINING

The Congressional Budget Office has also pointed out that additional potential economies are possible by better management of training. CBO, in its issue paper, "The Costs of Defense Manpower: Issues for 1977," concluded that reductions in enlisted entry level training (recruit and initial skill) could save about \$1.4 billion for the 5-year period 1978-82. The study suggests that the services could shorten entry level training through improvements in training techniques, some integration of training phases, and better management of trainee time and training and support manpower during the training process.

In a 1978 analysis of recent administration efforts to economize in military training as reflected in the fiscal year 1979 DOD budget, CBO discussed further opportunities to improve the management and efficiency of skill training. Specifically, it suggested that room for considerably more consolidation of training by the services appears to exist when fewer than 40 course/skill areas are taught jointly by 2 or more services. CBO also suggested that by reducing fiscal year 1978 programmed loads for reserves and the National Guard (to reflect the extent scheduled students fail to report for training courses) training costs would be reduced by \$20 million.

CBO also suggested that the Congress should be sensitive to the relationship between military training and unit readiness. It pointed out also that if training reductions are too severe, skill proficiency could decline even as manning levels increased. Conversely, too heavy a concentration of resources on formal school training could lead to an excessively large and costly training structure or to undermanned force units. CBO further added that the indicators of military readiness used by the services are not sensitive enough to measure the impact of such shifts in resources between training and operating forces. Therefore, CBO concluded that the best mix of training and unit operating levels cannot be categorically determined with presently available data.

CITATIONS TO PRIOR GAO REPORTSOPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR SUBSTANTIAL SAVINGS IN ADMINISTRATION OF MILITARY SKILL TRAINING PROGRAMS, FPCD-78-13, FEBRUARY 14, 1975

DOD could save millions of dollars a year by requiring

- the services to increase the number of courses now conducted for less than 40 class-hours a week to a full 40-hour class week by eliminating or scheduling separately nonskill training activities,
- the Army to establish a more economical and supportable criterion for instructor staffing, and
- the services to use the least costly method of staffing training activities as instructed by the Congress.

Staffing data submitted to the Congress in the Military Manpower Training Report is incomplete and inaccurate, making valid assessment of the training resources difficult if not impossible.

NEED FOR BETTER ASSESSMENT OF INTERSERVICE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES, FPCD-76-92, OCTOBER 12, 1976

This report recommends that the Secretary of Defense expand the role of his office in overseeing the activities of the Interservice Training Review Organization to better assess and organize training consolidations. Thus, proposed interservice training which offers opportunities for saving without impairing military missions would be more effectively accomplished.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN DETERMINING SKILL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS, FPCD-76-28, FEBRUARY 10, 1976

Inaccuracies in setting skill-training rates for enlistees may cause the Army to have too many personnel in some specialties and too few in others.

This report (1) identifies the causes of inaccurate training rates, (2) gives examples of resulting overcommitments by recruiters, and (3) recommends corrective measures.



MILITARY TRAINING TIME AND  
COST SHOULD BE REDUCED THROUGH  
IMPROVED MANAGEMENT, FPCD-76-4,  
SEPTEMBER 2, 1975

The military services are increasing costs by delaying recruit and initial skill training of new members. This report identifies reasons for the delays and recommends measures to reduce them.

FEASIBILITY OF CONSOLIDATING  
MILITARY CHAPLAIN SCHOOLS,  
FPCD-75-123, JULY 1, 1975

The work confirmed findings of previous services' studies that much course material could be taught to all services on a consolidated basis. The report further points out that a consolidated chaplain school should provide opportunities for cost savings or an educational environment leading to greater professional growth and development if it is preferred over separate schools but projections of cost savings would depend on selection of a specific site.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE USE OF  
FLIGHT SIMULATORS--ACCOMPLISHMENTS,  
PROBLEMS, AND POSSIBLE SAVINGS,  
PSAD-75-95, JUNE 24, 1975

The report shows that Air Force and Navy Commands, operating large multiengine aircraft, have not used existing simulator equipment to its full potential because of various constraints and problems--primarily managerial and attitudinal, rather than technological. The report concludes that acquiring modern simulators offers no assurance that the desired cost savings and training benefits will be realized and suggests that strong mandates and incentives are needed to assure maximum effective simulator use and that unnecessary flying is eliminated.

LETTER REPORT TO SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
ON LACK OF POLICIES AND REGULATIONS ON  
SIMULATION, B-157905, MAY 29, 1974

Air Force and Navy policies and regulations governing flying do not encourage maximum use of flight simulators since little, if any, proficiency credit is allowed for simulator time. Flying personnel are encouraged to fly as much as possible to meet proficiency and currency requirements to qualify for advanced aeronautical ratings and to

further their military careers. In effect, existing flight policies and regulations are hindering progress in achieving the cost savings and training benefits available through increased use of simulators. The report concludes that policies and regulations should encourage the maximum use of simulators to reduce flying by giving more recognition to simulator time.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASED INTERSERVICE  
USE OF TRAINING PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES,  
B-175773, NOVEMBER 27, 1973

Interservice training has not been extensive up to now because each military service has decided how its training requirements could be met within its resources. Neither OSD nor the services' headquarters had assessed efforts by the training commands to promote interservice training.

Although the services began a joint review of training programs and resources in September 1972, OSD has been excluded from the joint meetings and has not established its roles in promoting interservice training. However, the services have provided OSD with periodic progress reports on their activities. The report recommends that the Secretary of Defense, by directive or other appropriate means, establish an OSD role in interservice training and monitor the services' review closely.

GREATER USE OF FLIGHT SIMULATORS IN  
MILITARY PILOT TRAINING CAN LOWER  
COSTS AND INCREASE PILOT PROFICIENCY,  
B-157905, AUGUST 9, 1973

This report shows how military flight training costs can be reduced substantially and the projected shortages of fuel eased somewhat through greater use of flight simulators by the Air Force and the Navy. To achieve the foregoing, the report recommends that the Secretary of Defense require the Navy and the Air Force to

- put a higher priority on developing improved simulators which can replace maximum amounts of flight training;
- assure that development and use of adequate simulators are integral parts of acquisition or modification programs for sophisticated aircraft; and

- use simulators as much as possible to reach and maintain desired proficiency, including the establishment of simulator grading methods which will provide a more accurate evaluation of pilot proficiency.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT IN  
THE ADMINISTRATION OF TECHNICAL  
TRAINING ACTIVITIES, B-175773,  
JUNE 14, 1973

This report concludes that the management of naval technical training can be further improved in instructor requirement determinations, in developing systems for feedback of training information, and in standardization of instructor training programs. This report discloses that:

- Differences in the interpretation of instructions governing determination of instructor requirements, as well as the lack of management review at the training activities visited, resulted in both overstatement and an understatement in Navy training instructor requirement submissions.
- The Navy does not have a formal system for collecting, assessing, and disseminating information regarding the adequacy of its technical training.
- The absence of a standardized instructor training policy would limit the extent of instructor assignments in teaching various phases of courses. As a result, instructors can spend as much as 30 percent of their 3-year tours observing other instructors.

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