

GAO

Testimony



138669

For Release on
Delivery
Expected at
9:00 a.m.
Thursday
May 18, 1989

DOD's Implementation of Joint
Officer Personnel Policies

Statement of
Louis J. Rodrigues, Director, Logistics Issues
National Security and International Affairs
Division

Before the
Subcommittee on Investigations
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives



0-5459 / 138669

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee,

I am pleased to be here today to discuss implementation of title IV of the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act--Joint Officer Personnel Policy. At the request of this Subcommittee, and the Senate Committee on Armed Services, we have examined the types of positions that have been designated as joint duty assignments as well as implementation of selected other provisions. I would like to discuss both of these efforts today.

As you are aware, title IV of the Reorganization Act had several objectives. It sought to increase the joint perspective and thinking among officers, improve the quality of officers assigned to joint duty, and increase their educational preparation and experience level. To achieve these objectives, the Reorganization Act established a category of officers known as joint specialty officers, defined their qualifying education and experience requirements, and set target promotion rates for joint specialists and other officers assigned to joint duty. It established minimum tour lengths for joint duty assignments and required officers to complete a joint duty assignment to be eligible for promotion to general/flag rank.

REVIEW OF THE JOINT
DUTY ASSIGNMENT LIST

Title IV of the Reorganization Act required the Secretary of Defense to publish a list of joint duty assignments. By serving in these assignments, officers are expected to gain significant experience in joint matters. Joint matters are defined in the act as "matters relating to the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces including matters relating to national military strategy, strategic and contingency planning, and command and control of combat operations under unified command". The act specifically excludes assignments for joint training or education or assignments in an officer's own military department from the joint duty assignment list (JDAL).

The Secretary of Defense published a JDAL in April 1987 containing about 8,000 positions. The list was published after considerable debate within DOD about its size and composition. The debate centered on reconciling the act's many requirements with the services' manpower needs and concerns. Options on the size of the list ranged from 6,000 to over 11,000 positions. DOD rejected the smaller list because of a concern that a smaller number of positions would result in an unacceptably low number of candidates for general/flag officer positions. DOD rejected a larger list because of concerns that the drain of high quality officers from the services would adversely affect readiness.

DOD placed a limit of 9,000 positions on the list. All major/lieutenant commander and above positions in organizations considered to be force employers (or force employment planners) were included on the list (primarily the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, and unified commands). The remaining defense organizations (such as the Defense Logistics Agency and the Defense Communications Agency) were allowed to designate no more than 50 percent of their major/lieutenant commander and above positions. Defense agency managers decided which 50 percent of their positions would be on the list. The JDAL is updated annually and the May 1988 list contains 8,363 positions.

ANALYSIS OF JDAL POSITIONS

To determine the extent to which positions on the JDAL provide significant experience in the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces, we analyzed a random sample of positions on the May 1988 JDAL. Based on interviews with position incumbents and a review of supplemental position descriptions, we assigned sampled positions to one of six broad categories. These categories were:

- Joint operational (current operations, exercises, and/or plans),
- Joint operational (other operational matters),
- Joint nonoperational (nonoperational plans and policies),
- Joint technical and administrative,
- Single service operational (assigned to joint organization)

but works primarily with their own service on operational matters), and

--Single service nonoperational (assigned to joint organizations but works primarily with their own service on nonoperational matters).

Positions in the first category come closest to meeting the criteria established in the act--involvement in the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces. Positions in the second category, although not providing direct involvement in the employment of forces, do expose officers to operational matters. Although positions in the next two categories provide joint experience, their duties and responsibilities do not provide operational exposure. Positions in the last two categories are located in joint organizations, but they are oriented towards an officer's own service; they do not provide a multiservice work experience.

Attachment 1 contains a more detailed discussion of our methodology, including examples of positions in each category.

JDAL Includes Positions that Do Not Provide Operational Experience

The JDAL positions we reviewed provide officers with a broad range of work experiences, ranging from multiservice operations to single service administrative duties. A significant percentage of the positions, however, do not provide operational experience. In

the force employer agencies surveyed, 95 of 241 JDAL positions sampled (39 percent) did not provide joint operational experience. In the Defense agencies we surveyed, 77 of the 133 positions we sampled (58 percent) did not provide joint operational experience. Table 1 displays our survey results for the force employment and defense agencies, respectively.

Table 1

Sample Results - JDAL Positions in Force Employment and Defense Agencies

| <u>GAO Position Category</u> | <u>Percentages</u> | |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|
| | <u>Force Employers</u> | <u>Defense Agencies</u> |
| I. Joint Operational (Operations, Exercises, and Plans) | 37% | 10% |
| II. Joint Operational (Other) | <u>24</u> | <u>32</u> |
| SUBTOTAL - JOINT OPERATIONAL | <u>61%</u> | <u>42%</u> |
| III. Joint Non-Operational (Plans & Policies) | 27% | 23% |
| IV. Joint Technical & Administrative | 10 | 33 |
| V. Single Service Operational | 1 | 0 |
| VI. Single Service Non-Operational | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> |
| SUBTOTAL - NOT JOINT OPERATIONAL | <u>39%</u> | <u>58%</u> |
| TOTALS | <u>100%</u> | <u>100%</u> |
| Number of sampled positions | 241 | 133 |

POSITIONS NOT ON THE JDAL PROVIDE
OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCE

We also reviewed selected positions not currently on the JDAL to determine whether there are additional positions that provide the experience envisioned by the act. Although we are uncertain about the number, selected positions in the military departments (in-service positions) provide joint operational experience. However, title IV specifically prohibits assignments within an officer's own military department from being on the JDAL. Newly issued DOD guidelines have opened the possibility that selected positions currently categorized as in-service may be added to the JDAL. Specifically, in February 1989, OSD issued guidelines to the military departments that allow the inclusion of dual-hat and cross-department positions on the JDAL, provided that those positions are transferred to a joint organization or another military department.

A dual-hat position is "an assignment in which the incumbent officer has responsibilities to both a service and a joint, combined, or international organization or activity". For example, although 14 of the officers in our in-service Korea sample were authorized on the U.S. 8th Army manning documents, they were physically located in U.S. Forces Korea offices and spent the majority of their time performing Combined Forces Command duties and responsibilities. Under the new guidelines, for a position to

be on the JDAL, the Army must transfer the position authorization to Combined Forces Command, a joint organization.

We found dual-hat positions that provide experience in the integrated employment of forces. We interviewed incumbents of 27 dual-hat positions: 22 in the Pacific Command and associated organizations and 5 in the Transportation Command. The Pacific Command sample was taken from a universe of 152 positions identified by service officials as providing good experience in joint matters. In selecting individual positions, we attempted to obtain a balanced representation of pay grade, job function, and command location. At the Transportation Command, we interviewed the five incumbents available during our visit.

We determined that 19 of these positions provide joint operational experience (category I or II): 17 in the Pacific Command and 2 in the Transportation Command. For example, the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, 8th U.S. Army, also serves as the Chief, Plans and Operations Branch, J-2, U.S. Forces Korea and the Chief, Plans and Operations Division, C-2, Combined Forces Command. His duties include preparing the intelligence portion of U.S. Forces Korea/Combined Field Command operations plans, planning and controlling the intelligence participation in command exercises, representing the U.S. 8th Army and U.S. Forces Korea at all intelligence/electronic warfare meetings, and managing an office that directs counterintelligence at Yongsan, Korea. In the event

of war, he will serve as Director, Intelligence, U.S. Forces Korea and U.S. 8th Army. This officer maintains his office and is actually collocated with the Combined Forces Command.

Officers serving in cross-departmental positions currently remain on the service manning documents, but are actually assigned to positions in other military departments. For example, Air Force air liaison officers are typically cross-departmental positions. The air liaison officers we interviewed were pilots who were advising U.S. Army components on the capabilities, limitations, and proper use of tactical air units. Air liaison officers are generally collocated with the Army units they work with. For example, the Air Force air liaison officer assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division coordinates air support requests from subordinate air liaison officers at the Army brigade and battalion level, and directs air support for the Army commander. The incumbent also advises the Army commander regarding close air support during exercises and operations. Under the February 1989 guidelines, for an Air Force air liaison officer to obtain joint credit, the Air Force must be willing to transfer the position to the Army, although the Air Force officer would still fill the position.

A DOD official said OSD and the Joint Staff will be requesting nomination of dual-hat and cross-department positions to be included on the updated 1990 JDAL. However, they believe such nominations will be limited because, even though the positions

offer joint operational experience, the position must be transferred to the joint organization to be on the JDAL.

Operational Positions in Defense Agencies

In addition to sampling defense agency positions that were included on the JDAL, we also sampled positions that were not included on the list. These positions were excluded from the list because only 50 percent of each defense agency's positions could be designated as joint duty positions. We interviewed a random sample of 130 officers in nondesignated positions in four combat support agencies and found that 28 percent of the positions provided joint operational experience. Table 2 displays our survey results for non-JDAL positions in combat support agencies.

Table 2

Sample Results - Non-JDA Positions
in Sampled Defense Agencies

| <u>Positions Category</u> | <u>Sample Percentage</u> |
|--|------------------------------|
| I. Joint Operational (Operations, Exercises, and Plans) | 9% |
| II. Joint Operational (Other) | <u>19</u> |
| SUBTOTAL - JOINT OPERATIONAL | <u>28%</u> |
| III. Joint Non-Operational (Plans & Policies) | 25% |
| IV. Joint Technical & Administrative | 40 |
| V. Single Service Operational | 0 |
| VI. Single Service Non-Operational | <u>7</u> |
| SUBTOTAL - NOT JOINT OPERATIONAL | <u>72%</u> |
| TOTAL | <u>100%</u> |
| Number of sampled positions | 130 |

DEVELOPING AN OPERATIONALLY FOCUSED LIST

The results of our study suggest that many of the 8,363 positions on the JDAL provide experience related to the integrated employment of forces. About 61 percent of the positions in force employer agencies fell into the joint operational categories. For the defense agencies in our sample, the proportion of positions in joint operational categories was substantially lower, about 42 percent. This suggests a much smaller, operationally focused JDAL.

The services see difficulties with a smaller list. In particular, they are concerned that a smaller list would reduce opportunities for officers to satisfy the requirement for a joint duty assignment prior to promotion to general/flag rank. They do not believe the recent DOD guidance on dual-hat and cross-department positions will result in a substantial number of positions being added to the list.

Many of the positions in the nonoperational categories fell into support career fields such as personnel, communications, and logistics. Although we have not completed our analysis, we expect that opportunities for officers in operational career fields will not decrease as significantly. Nevertheless, a smaller, operationally focused list will, in all likelihood, result in greater difficulties in qualifying officers for promotion to general/flag officer.

We believe it would be preferable to accept a higher number of waivers of this requirement (and possibly a restructuring of the waiver provisions) than to place officers in positions that do not provide the kind of experience envisioned by the legislation. Alternatively, the Congress may want to assess whether it is preferable for a greater number of officers to gain experience in a joint, multiservice environment than in the integrated employment of forces. This would suggest the need to modify the criteria for

inclusion of positions on the joint duty assignment list, but would permit a larger list.

DOD'S PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING
TITLE IV

I will now discuss DoD's progress in implementing other selected provisions of title IV¹. Specifically, I would like to discuss

- the quality of officers assigned to joint duty and selected for the joint specialty,
- the achievement of promotion targets,
- the applicability of title IV to reservists, and
- DOD's efforts to establish and disseminate policies and to meet congressionally mandated reporting requirements.

Quality of Officers Assigned to
Joint Duty

As you are well aware, title IV sought to improve the quality of officers assigned to joint duty. Quality can be viewed in several different ways, including, improving quality by increasing the preparation of officers for joint duty. Other indicators of quality, commonly used by the services to identify high potential officers, include selection for command, promotion at a faster than normal rate, previously considered and passed over for promotion (an indicator of lower potential officers), and selection for

¹Implementation of these provisions is discussed in detail in our report, Military Personnel: Implementation Status of Joint Officer Personnel Policies (GAO/NSIAD-89-113, Apr. 7, 1989).

service school (or, in the Navy's case, consideration for executive officer tour).

Using these indicators, our analysis of quality, which covered the period from January 1, 1988, to September 30, 1988, showed that generally, quality officers are being assigned to joint duty and selected as joint specialists.

We compared officers assigned to joint duty with officers currently on the staffs of their service headquarters (the service headquarters staff is traditionally thought of as representing high quality officers) and with the service average for all officers. When compared to the service average, officers were generally equivalent or higher in quality. However, when compared with the headquarters staff, Army colonels and Navy lieutenant commanders and commanders tended to be lower on quality indicators.

We also examined the quality of officers selected as joint specialists. Joint specialists must have joint professional military education plus a full tour of duty in a joint duty assignment, a process which takes about 4 years to complete. During the transition period,² officers can be selected as joint specialists based on education or experience alone. A minimum of

²The Reorganization Act established an initial 2-year transition period from October 1986 to October 1988. The Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1989 authorized an extension of the transition period for an additional year.

1,000 joint duty positions must be designated as critical positions, which can only be filled by joint specialists. Further, half of all joint duty positions must be filled by joint specialists or nominees for the joint specialty.

Our analysis of joint specialists was the same as that made for officers assigned to joint duty; that is, we compared the quality of officers selected as joint specialists to headquarters staff and the service average. Compared to headquarters staff, officers from all the services were generally equivalent or higher on key quality indicators, although Army and Air Force colonels and Navy captains were lower in some areas. The quality of joint specialists were equivalent or higher on all indicators when compared with the service average.

Our analysis suggests that quality officers are being selected as joint specialists. However, the quality of officers assigned to critical positions was lower for two of the four services.

We analyzed the quality of officers assigned to critical positions based on a comparison with officers selected as joint specialists. Through the analysis, we sought to establish whether joint specialists actually assigned to critical positions represented, on average, the same quality as the total joint specialist

population.³ We found that Air Force officers assigned to critical positions were lower on most indicators than other officers, while Navy commanders and captains were lower on several indicators but equivalent or higher on others. Army and Marine Corps officers were generally equivalent or higher when compared to joint specialists.

DOD attributes the shortfall to the late selection of officers for the joint specialty and the Joint Staff's revalidation of all critical positions. These factors made it difficult to accurately target officers for critical positions. DOD expects a more representative mix of joint specialists will be assigned to critical positions in the future.

Promotion Targets

Title IV also established promotion targets to ensure that high quality officers are assigned to joint duty and that officers are not penalized for joint assignments.

Our analysis of promotion data from 1985 to 1988 showed that the services were not consistently meeting promotion targets.

Shortfalls were common for promotions to colonel/Navy captain. DOD

³A limitation of our study was that for the period reviewed, many of the assignment decisions were made prior to the selection of joint specialists. Thus, in making assignment decisions, the services were anticipating who was likely to qualify for and be selected as a joint specialist.

believes and we agree that these shortfalls reflect assignment practices that existed prior to enactment of the Reorganization Act. DOD expects that the quality of officers currently being assigned to joint duty should help eliminate future shortfalls by the early 1990s.

Reservists

The act also requires the Secretary of Defense establish personnel policies emphasizing education and experience in joint matters for reserve officers not on the active duty list. DOD has initiated efforts to analyze title IV's applicability to reservists, but, because of concerns on how title IV applies to reservists it has not issued the policy.

DOD estimated that a review of programs affecting reserve officers would be completed by mid-May 1989, and any required personnel policy changes will be included in a DOD directive (expected by the end of 1989) addressing joint officer management policy.

Other Efforts

Finally, although no formal directives have been published, implementing guidance has been issued by DOD, and the services are updating career handbooks. DOD has also published numerous documents in an effort to educate officers about title IV

requirements. In addition, the services have devoted considerable effort -- an estimated 50,000 manhours and over \$1 million -- to developing data systems to support reporting requirements established by title IV and its subsequent amendments.

In summary Mr. Chairman, we believe DOD is making strides in implementing provisions of title IV. However, the type of positions to be included on the JDAL remains a key issue. As our study shows, many positions on the JDAL do not provide joint operational experience.

An operationally focused JDAL would be considerably smaller than the current list and this could make it difficult for DoD to satisfy various provisions of the legislation. The issue becomes one of choice. The current list of positions apparently will enable DOD to comply with the legislation, but many officers are getting experience that has little bearing on operations. On the other hand, a smaller, operationally focused list will make DOD's management of officer assignments more difficult, likely increase the use of waivers, and may ultimately require adjustments to the legislation.

That concludes my statement. I would be happy to answer any questions.

ATTACHMENT

METHODOLOGY

Title IV of the DOD Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 required DOD to designate positions as joint duty assignments. To do this, DOD designated one group of agencies as force employment agencies wherein all positions held by officers at the major/lieutenant commander level and above would be designated as joint duty assignments. Another group of agencies (primarily Defense agencies such as Defense Logistics Agency and Defense Communications Agency) were directed to provide DOD with lists of positions that qualified as joint duty assignments, but could not exceed 50% of the total major/lieutenant commander positions at that agency. Because joint duty assignments were designated so differently in the two groups of agencies, we used different sampling methods.

FORCE EMPLOYER AGENCIES

The sample of force employer agencies included the OSD, the Joint Staff, the U.S. Pacific Command, the U.S. Atlantic Command, and the U.S. Transportation Command. From these agencies, we took a simple random sample of 241 of the 2,548 positions. The confidence interval around the percentages in Table I of the testimony for Force Employer agencies is + or - 6 percent at a 95 percent level of confidence.

DEFENSE AGENCIES

The sample of positions from the Defense agencies was taken from positions in the following agencies: the Defense Communications Agency, the Defense Logistics Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Defense Mapping Agency. These agencies were designated in the Reorganization Act as combat support agencies. To adequately assess the joint duty assignment positions in these agencies and provide the ability to compare joint duty assignments with other non-designated assignments, we drew separate sub-samples of joint and non-joint positions.

We took a simple random sample of 133 positions from the 1159 "joint" designated positions identified by the defense agencies. A simple random sample of 130 positions was drawn from the 951 non-joint positions identified by the agencies. The confidence interval around the percentages in Table I and II for defense agencies is + or - 8 percent at a 95 percent level of confidence.

INTERVIEWS

Between October 1988 and April 1989, we conducted 504 structured personal interviews worldwide with officers who filled the sampled

positions. Substitute sample billets were used in place of positions not filled at the time of the interview.

CATEGORIZATION

We developed a categorization scheme to capture the two dimensions of joint duty assignments described in the act: its single or multiservice nature and its degree of involvement with the employment of land, sea, and air forces. We asked questions about the officer's actual work experience, which enabled us to classify positions in one of the following categories:

1. The positions directly involves the incumbent in multi-service operations, exercises and/or operations/contingency plans,
2. The position directly involves the incumbent in multi-service operational issues not including exercises and/or operations/contingency plans,
3. The position directly involves the incumbent in multi-service non-operational issues,
4. The position directly involves the incumbent in multi-service administrative and/or technical matters,
5. The position directly involves the incumbent in single service operational issues including but not limited to exercises and plans,
6. The position directly involves the incumbent in single service non-operational issues and/or administrative or technical matters.

The officer assignments placed in each of the first four categories are all multiservice; those placed in each of the last two categories are single service in content. With regard to the employment of forces, the first category consists of the most directly operational multiservice assignments. For example, a position in Category I provides experience that is most closely aligned with the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces. These positions directly involve officers in operational matters including operational and contingency planning, exercises, and actual military operations. For example, a plans officer in the Intelligence Directorate of the Pacific Command is directly involved with exercises and plans. The position is in a multiservice unit responsible for preparing and reviewing intelligence policy, plans and procedures. The position incumbent prepares the intelligence portions of command operations plans, joint exercises, and special contingency plans. In addition, the officer reviews, monitors, and coordinates Pacific Command intelligence plans and directives. Another example is a position in the exercises branch of the Joint Staff's Operations Directorate. The incumbent of the position plans and critiques major JCS-sponsored mobilization and contingency crisis exercises. The incumbent coordinates the exercises throughout OSD, the services, and major commands, and also participates in the actual exercises.

Category II positions provide operational experience that is less directly aligned with the employment of forces than category I positions. Positions within the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) frequently fell into this category. For example, an intelligence analyst in DIA's Directorate for Current Intelligence assesses and projects potential threats to U.S. security by receiving and analyzing information on military forces, political developments, and foreign relations in assigned countries. In another example, a staff officer for the Joint Staff's Logistics Directorate analyzes operationally-oriented logistics issues. At the time of the interview, the incumbent was involved in a study to determine the logistical implications of the services' responses to projected threats over the next five years.

The third and fourth category contain the multiservice assignments least directly involved with operational matters. Category III positions involve officers in matters that have little direct bearing on military operations. These positions, although important, do not provide the incumbent with direct experience in the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces. For example, a position in the Contracting Directorate of DLA involves the incumbent in reviewing proposed procurement legislation and policies, and analyzing the impact on DLA operations. The incumbent also reviews contracting actions for compliance with contracting regulations and studies requests for deviations from

ATTACHMENT

ATTACHMENT

federal acquisition regulations. In another example, an officer in OSD is responsible for prisoner of war or missing in action affairs. The incumbent develops and coordinates plans and policies concerning U.S., allied, and enemy soldiers who are prisoners of war or missing in action.

Joint technical and administrative positions (Category IV) provide officers with experience which, although multiservice, is not operational and does not involve plans or policy development. For example, the incumbent of a position at DLA's Defense Construction Supply Center provides technical advice to the Center Commander and directs several technical programs such as cataloguing, value engineering, and technical data management. The incumbent of a Joint Staff position is responsible for providing various types of administrative support for the Joint Staff including mail and document distribution.

The fifth category contains the most directly operational single service positions; the final category the least. Single service-oriented positions provide officers with experience which can be operational or non-operational, but which is primarily with their own service. For example, an Army officer employed as a logistics coordination officer in DLA's Supply Operations Directorate serves as his service's primary DLA headquarters point of contact. His responsibilities include identifying Army weapons systems which

ATTACHMENT

ATTACHMENT

require DLA support, establishing and enhancing communications between the Army and DLA, and analyzing Army reports to identify potential support problems.