



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
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IN REPLY REFER TO
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From: Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs
To: Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development
Command (Studies and Analysis Division)

Subj: STUDY COMPLETION LETTER FOR THE CRITICAL SECONDARY
MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY (MOS) STUDY

Ref: (a) MCO 3902.1C

Encl: (1) Executive Summary for the Critical Secondary MOS Study
(2) Critical Secondary MOS Study

1. Study Information

a. Purpose. The purpose of this study was to determine the specific problems faced by the Marine Corps in managing critical secondary (i.e., skill designator) MOSSs and to propose solutions to the problems. The management goal was to obtain the maximum return on investment for the Marine Corps, while maintaining a career pattern that will not adversely impact officers holding these MOSSs.

b. Background. This study was conducted under the auspices of the Marine Corps Studies System per the reference.

c. Objectives. The study has been completed and the objectives of the study have been met (see enclosure (1)). The study objectives were as follows:

(1) Determine the criteria for describing a secondary MOS as "critical" and identify the MOSSs that fall in this category.

(2) Identify the problems associated with management of critical secondary MOSSs and investigate methods to determine if management is successful.

(3) Identify and assess the impact (e.g., fiscal cost and force structure change) of options to improve the management

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of these MOSSs. Consider MOS management practices of other Services, among the possibilities.

(4) Evaluate alternative means of performing the tasks and functions associated with the critical secondary MOSSs.

d. Results. The following major points or recommendations have been produced by the study.

(1) The critical skill designator MOSSs are found in the following programs: International Affairs Officer Program (IAOP), Special Education Program (SEP), Advanced Degree Program (ADP), and Acquisition Workforce Program (AWP) (see enclosure (2)).

(2) The current IAOP is working well, satisfying the Marine Corps requirement for officers with foreign area expertise at a reasonable cost. This program has made tremendous progress since the creation of a full-time IAOP Coordinator billet in PP&O Department. The IAOP Coordinator expressed concerns about possible negative promotion and retention trends within the community. The study team found no evidence that IAOP participants are doing worse than the general officer population in these areas. The study team identified the need for improvement primarily in the areas of identification of requirements and assignment of officers to IAOP billets. Recommendations include development of a formal billet requirement validation process resulting in identification of IAOP billets on T/Os and formalization of officer assignments in order to reduce the informal coordination currently practiced.

(3) The SEP and ADP are closely related programs that have worked well for many years to provide graduate-educated officers for key billets. However, the study team believes that the programs are approaching a crisis point. The number of applications for the programs has been declining and it is becoming more difficult to fill program quotas and SEP billets. There is a widespread perception that participation in SEP will adversely impact an officer's career. The Marine Corps is not receiving the maximum return on investment from these programs, primarily because few officers serve more than one utilization tour. The comprehensive SEP billet validation effort has stalled leaving requirements out of date. Finally, the programs suffer from a lack of proactive program sponsorship. The study

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team found that the most critical need of these programs is proactive leadership and recommends that Training and Education Command (TECOM) immediately assume program sponsorship. TECOM should then develop and execute a plan to revitalize these programs. In short, the data highlighted concerns with the program, however, the analysis also showed that participation in SEP by itself is not a "career ending" endeavor. Many factors play into the selection process to lieutenant colonel (an officer's occupational group, timing of SEP participation, the promotion board process itself). Moreover, some SEP programs complement an officer's PMOS while some do not (an example is a Information Technology degree enhances a command and control officer's PMOS credibility, while the same degree may detract from an infantry officer's PMOS credibility). The following are additional study recommendations include:

- (a) Complete the comprehensive SEP billet validation, including identifying new requirements.
- (b) Establish an objective, independent, periodic review of all SEP billets.
- (c) Senior Marine Corps leadership strongly endorse the program.
- (d) Change the assignment process to facilitate additional utilization tours.
- (e) Identify alternate training/education options where a graduate degree is not required.
- (f) Assign SEP billet functions to GS civilians or contracted specialists where no requirement for military personnel exists.
- (g) Allow officers to opt for an intervening PMOS tour between school and the SEP utilization tour in exchange for additional obligated service in order to maintain PMOS credibility.
- (h) Ensure that promotion and command selection boards recognize SEP officer contributions and value to the Marine Corps.

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(4) The AWP differs from IAOP and SEP/ADP in that it does not depend entirely on volunteers. However, the greatest return on investment comes when acquisition officers apply for membership in the Acquisition Professional Community (APC) and serve additional acquisition tours. The study team found problems with the current officer structure in the AWP. There are far more officer billets requiring APC members (by billet MOS) than can possibly be filled. The Marine Corps' comparatively low civilian-to-military ratio in the acquisition workforce exacerbates the problem. The study team recommends that the acquisition organizations review their current billet structure and consider converting non-critical acquisition positions from MOS 9958 to MOS 9957. Conversion of military positions to civilian positions should continue, where appropriate, in order to bring the Marine Corps' civilian-to-military ratio more in line with the rest of DoD. A greater effort should be made to increase the number of eligible officers who apply for the APC by changing the selection process from a formal annual board to a more frequent or continuously running board and by encouraging officers to apply upon completion of an initial acquisition tour. Marine Corps Systems Command current means of training entry-level acquisition officers should be reviewed to determine if it is the best approach. If so, the courses currently used should be added to the official equivalency list. The Marine Corps needs senior officers with significant acquisition experience to fill critical acquisition positions and must take steps to ensure that officers who serve multiple acquisition tours and perform well are promoted and retained. M&RA is currently evaluating the cost and benefits of implementing a full-time military Acquisition Program Management Officer (APMO) position to manage the military side of the acquisition workforce.

2. Sponsor Intent. The subject study provided Officer Inventory Planners with the M&RA Department needed information. Management of critical secondary skills will continue in earnest while the subject study recommendations are analyzed for potential implementation. Additionally, the following recommendations will be investigated by Manpower Plans:

a. Work in coordination with MARCORSSYSCOM and MM in assessing the feasibility of a full time Acquisition Program Manager Officer (APMO).

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b. Work in coordination with MARCORSSYSCOM and TFSD to assess continuing efforts to reduce the number of 9957 and 9958 billets by conversion to civilianized acquisition billets.

c. Work in coordination with MARCORSSYSCOM and MM to assess feasibility of a functional area for the acquisition workforce MOSs.

d. Coordinate with TECOM and MM in assessing the feasibility of a full time SEP/ADP occupational sponsor.

e. Coordinate with TECOM, TFSD and MM to complete the unfinished SEP billet validation as well as participate in the validation process.


S. T. JOHNSON
By direction

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Enclosure (1) - Executive Summary is contained in Study Final Report

Enclosure (2) - Study Final Report is included as separate document