AMC Pilot Retention: A Delphi Study

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Abstract
This research studied AMC pilot retention in the forthcoming decade and what influences millennial pilots to stay or leave active duty. Furthermore, this study asked if a dual track (fly only career path) would help with retention in AMC. A Delphi Study consisting of 16 AMC aviation experts was utilized to answer the research questions. The expert panel was comprised of officer ranks spanning from Major to Colonel and included instructor pilots, flying squadron commanders, and operations group commanders.

This analysis determined that AMC will have a difficult time with pilot retention in the next ten years. Additionally, the high operations tempo coupled with outside employment opportunities are the main causal factors influencing pilots to leave active duty. While career autonomy is proven to positively affect retention, a dual track option is not believed to have a significant impact on AMC pilot retention. Finally, the panel concluded that the AF was not likely to employ any of the panel’s responses on how to bolster AMC retention.

Research Question
If the AF continues with its current policies, what will AMC pilot retention look like over the next 10 years?

Methodology
A three round Delphi survey was utilized to gain insights from MAF aviators. The voluntary panel was consisted of 16 officers in the ranks of Maj – Col and had served as MajC’s, SqC’s, or G/O/G’s.

The Round One survey collected narrative responses which were analyzed and presented for quantitative rating in Round Two.

Round Three presented score averages from Round Two and asked the pilots if they wished to change their ratings based on the average scores from the panel. Scoring for Round Two and Three were based on a 7 point Likert Scale for likelihood and a 3 point scale for impact.

Implications
This research indicates that the operations tempo will remain high and pilot retention will be a challenge.

Recommendations
1. Reduce Operations Tempo
2. Increase Support Personnel
3. Enhance Quality of Life
4. Bolster Career Autonomy

Collaboration
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