

Blackbelt Bullet Writing

Captain Michael S. Vetri, 26 COG/CCE

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FOREWORD AND INTRODUCTION

The intent: This guide is meant to give Air Force Airmen (total force) valuable insight into Air Force competitive writing. I specifically mention “Air Force competitive writing” to narrow the scope of what this guide focuses upon: EPRs, OPRs, LOEs, Training Reports, PRFs – any report that is listed in the AFI36-2406, as well as Award Packages (Air Force Forms 1206). Decorations, while important to our careers, is not exactly considered a competitive form of writing, as the achievement has already occurred, and the goal in decorations is to capture the achievement, not necessarily compete against others receiving a decoration.

Air Force competitive writing is becoming ever-increasingly complex and convoluted. With the hidden, unspoken rules of stratifications, the art of writing captivating PRFs for Lt Col hopefuls, obscure messages contained in and around bullets, it is undoubtedly one of the most prized skills to have in an invisible yet intense battleground of text amongst peers. In my opinion, it is the only skill in the Air Force that is under-practiced and over-valued in the Air Force, but under-applicable in the outside world. It is the only skill that requires hundreds of hours of mastery for far-reaching career implications and yet the opportunities and desire to practice are negligible.

This guide is intended to help advance your current skills beyond what is already taught in PME, commissioning sources, professional development classes, and your NCOs across your unit. This guide does not cover basic topics such as the basic structure of a bullet, minimizing excessive white space at the end of a line, etc. The title is “Blackbelt Bullet Writing” as this is meant to teach high-level skills for this craft.

Author’s Introduction: At the time of this publication (June 2020), I am currently the executive officer of the 26th Cyberspace Operations Group. Throughout my exec duty (and during a minor exec run I had in 2014 at Edwards Air Force Base) I have reviewed dozens upon dozens of evaluations, and took particular note in trends and recurring errors or “weak language” within bullets. As crazy and borderline mentally insane as it sounds, I began delving into the deep intricacies of bullet writing and what has given certain Airmen the victory in awards and stratifications.

I proudly come from Baltimore, MD during the early years of my childhood, then my family moved to a small town in Carroll County, MD called New Windsor, where we have more cows than we do humans. I graduated from Francis Scott Key High School in 2006, and spent a year at New Mexico Military Institute afterwards to prepare for the US Air Force Academy, where I graduated in 2011 after studying Chemistry. After commissioning, I found myself in Undergraduate Cyber Training at Keesler Air Force Base, and graduated to take on my first “real job” at Edwards Air Force Base at the 412 Communications Squadron as the Deputy Flight Chief of Network Operations. It was at Edwards Air Force Base that I also earned my Blackbelt in Krav Maga, and developed a love and desire to help teach my fellow Airmen (total force), self-defense in an unpredictable and uncertain world.

It was also at Edwards Air Force Base that I began, without knowing it, the first manifestation of this guide. After having a fantastic Commander (Lt Col Chris Budde, now Col Budde) that taught my valuable lessons in grinding through Air Force Award Package review sessions, also oddly nicknamed “murder boards,” I began to pick up on some additional tips and tricks. One day, as a 2d Lt, I began stringing together more powerful synonyms and ordered them in length order, as I noticed that in these “murder boards” we invested hours in word-smithing and filling just the right amount of space to reach the end of the line. The intent of this giant synonym list for commonly-used words was to help the “murder boards” progress faster. Once this giant list was released, I became the go-to Airman for anything bullet-writing related. Eventually, I spent three months as an exec to the 412 Mission Support Group Commander. Here is where I’ll give a shout-out to then-Major Yerrick, who provided invaluable insight and mentorship on the finer details and techniques on revising evaluations, and reminding me that, as an exec, I spoke for the Commander, which translated to “kicking back” evaluations and reports if they did not meet standards. While this may seem initially not too noteworthy, it was

to me as a growing, young CGO that was acquainted with decisions being made for me. This was an extremely empowering moment that, as a 2d Lt, I was speaking for a Colonel, and catapulted my self-confidence from there.

In 2015, I arrived at New Mexico State University as an Air Force ROTC instructor, which to this very day is still my favorite all-time assignment. For any young CGOs that have less than two years as a Captain, I highly recommend and encourage taking this job as a career-broadening assignment. While at New Mexico State, I began applying these mechanisms I learned from then-Lt Col Budde to my own award packages for CGO, Instructor, and Volunteer of the Quarter. At New Mexico State, I earned nine quarterly awards after being there for twelve quarters, where the first level of competition requires a possible competitive field of 36 other CGOs. I realized these bullet-writing tactics truly began to take off, and I also realized I had a “secret” worth sharing in bullet-writing techniques

In 2016, I met the most important person in my life: my wife Silvana. Before anyone asks, she was not a cadet or student! I want to invest in this section to give her special thanks and sincerest gratitude for all the help she has given me, and the support in making this into an official publication. Endless nights and mornings have been invested into this guide, and my wife has supported me the entire time and cleared my plate so I could focus. Two and a half years after our first meeting, we were married in October of 2018, and a year after marriage, little Alessandra Vetri has blessed us with her joyous presence. It was after taking this role of not only husband, but father, that I also began to see this guide as something not just instructional, but something deeper where I’m looking out for my non-biological kids: my fellow Air Force Airmen that I’m sworn to protect and mentor throughout my career. Here’s to you!

In 2018, I found myself at the 33d Network Warfare Squadron as the Chief of Training, and a cyber investigations operator. After a year of having the most exhilarating time on a computer I probably have ever enjoyed, I moved on to become the 26th COG exec, where I’d also like to give a special shout-out to Col Sean Kern for his incredible mentoring, wisdom, and help in constructing this guide and the fantastic ideas on which subjects to incorporate.

Now, I provide you, Airman, everything I have learned over my nine years of exposure to Air Force Competitive Writing. I do not claim to be the ultimate master in bullet-writing. There are no certification programs or degrees in Air Force Competitive Writing, but I can claim that I have yet to meet more than five other folks that have immersed in hundreds of hours of research, data mining, and trend analysis to deliver a product that has broken barriers and even brought forth new concepts to consider that you will never see in any professional development course. For example, the C6 model for statistical representation is 100% Capt Vetri-derived and grown, without any external influence, and has been implemented in the bullet writing practices of thousands of Airmen (according to my flooded inbox).

I thank you for your investment into my guide, and I am always open to feedback that will improve the overall quality of bullet writing in our Air Force. I regularly check my email, and I’m open to all comments, suggestions, and ideas. Please feel free to talk any time: mikevetri18@gmail.com.

“VANQUISHING” THE BASIC VOCABULARY

Reflection on current capabilities: As a board member, supervisor, or even an Airman reviewing your own bullets for your annual evaluation, have you ever stopped and looked at your bullets and wonder: “where did my vocabulary go? This sounds so boring and uninspiring, a fourth-grader can understand all my adjectives and verbs in here!”

Maybe, maybe not. But if you aspire one day to be a Bullet-writing Blackbelt (or BWB for short) one of the fundamental ways to cracking the code to snatch the attention of higher-ups is to “electrify” your vocabulary.

When competing, every tactic matters: Time and time again, two competing records may be so tightly competitive that the sole distinguisher of the winner will simply be: “whose bullet *sounds* better?”

Let me offer you an example. Which phrase is more appealing to hear: “removed 5K vulnerabilities on network” or “eviscerated 5K weaknesses on \$75M digital infrastructure?” Let’s assume you had the room for the second phrase. The 1206, EPR and OPR forms are your dojo, future Bullet Blackbelts. It is your canvas, your working space, your zone to fabricate and manifest a true piece of art that can cause such a rippling effect for an Airman, both a memorable and a cataclysmic one. Your work on those lines mean can mean the difference between wing-level winner or flight runner-up. We all know where we want our Airmen to land.

Outside implications: Eventually, we will all leave the Air Force, and the inevitable job search on the outside will begin. Hiring companies will often spend less than two minutes looking over dozens of resumes for a handful of positions, and therefore, those two minutes that your resume’ is allotted will need some X factor to distinguish you from the heap of ever-growing paperwork.

The WHIRL: In Appendix A, you will find a tool that has been extremely useful in my career, that I’ve named, for the time being, the Word-Helping Index, Referenced by Length, or “WHIRL” for short. The WHIRL offers the ability to substitute stronger words for the weaker ones. You’ll notice that they’re listed in *lengths* order, not alphabetical. This is to aid the writer in “tweaking” the length of certain words based on the remaining space left at the end of the bullet.

I’ve had O-5s and O-6s contact me saying my package was extremely strong, when in actuality, it was the choice of words that separated from other competitors. A side-by-side comparison of other 17D CGOs gave away the fact that, the context is not much different from the others, but the decorative language allowed my 1206 to pull away from the others.

The asterisk: The WHIRL is not all-inclusive, but it is the result of a giant data-mining operation to ascertain the most powerful synonyms as an attention-grabbing substitute for the pedantic, insipid words that we allow into our dojo.

ELECTRIFYING YOUR BULLETS DISSECTING THE GOOD, BAD, AND THE UGLY...

Spotting the Good

This section is *not* what you think. Writing a good bullet is part of the job of every Airmen, ranked SSgt and above. That’s why this section is a misnomer at first glance. You probably thought “this section talks about how to write a good bullet,” when in actuality, this section rejects the status quo of a “good bullet” and helps in *intensifying* it into something more powerful. We will check out a few examples of “good” and make them more attention-worthy!

“Energy-efficiency” in the Air Force. First, we need to discuss some basic criteria of what makes a memorable bullet that squadrons will want to continually recycle. Let’s be real, Air Force bullet writers are.... not lazy....let’s use the term “energy-efficient”... with bullet writing. Thus, part of your legacy that you leave behind is formulating bullets that stand the test of time.

I will not bore you with the mantra “action, result, impact!” We all know that’s the format. This class is intended to arm you with advanced bullet writing TTPs so that you can own that dojo on the 1206! Your goal is to keep the attention of the reader for as long as possible because your language and BWB skills are truly... *herculean*.

Without further, insipid formatted-text, we will now explore how to configure your sensors of detecting a “good” bullet:

Weak Bullet Indicator	Symptoms	Root Cause
“Tepdump” (Info overload)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4+ acronyms - Overwhelming symbols to squeeze info (/, &, ’, etc) - One part of the bullet is noticeably shorter/longer than the other two parts - Most words shortened, or the cheat code (-e, +’) is over-applied - Leadoff word is shortened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bullet could be describing many impacts of a project - Author inability to prioritize info to input - Result of two similar bullets that merged, trouble combining into one
“Zoro’s Rival” (more slashes than Zoro’s sword)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An overload of slashes, commas, etc - Usually, the middle part of the bullet (result or “what you did”) is fairly lengthy - Not all info between slashes truly relates to first/third part of bullet - Content between slashes abbreviated or shortened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Author trying too hard to fill in white space with similar verbs/actions - Insufficient research performed on bullet content
“Library” (titles/names in the bullet that have little relevance at higher-up)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name that bears no meaning outside the team or unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Author takes pride in the name, or contributed greatly to it - Inability to summarize what the name “did” or “achieved”
“The Clash” (a band that sung “I fought the law”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verb + phrase + resulting verb - Takes place all in one part of the bullet - Look for “noun, symbol, verb” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Author needs to improve summarization skills

(explaining your result of an effort)		- Author does not have enough info on bullet to condense and add more content
“Mainstream Media” (using numbers or stats to attempt to look impressive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact part of bullet will have numbers 0 or 100 (100% on time, 0 down time, etc) - Absolutes in the bullet (only, never, sole, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is essentially a weak impact, which has many root causes - Author does not answer “who cares” - Did not truly assess impact of bullet, or if even needed
“Cheerleader” (unnecessary jubilant phrase that adds no context or meaning to the bullet)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excited descriptor is acceptable if it makes a powerful statement about the results - Middle phrase “crammed” to make up for action and result combined, or impact is mediocre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Event may have been short-lived or fairly straightforward, difficult to add too much content -
“History Professor” (describing entire process unnecessarily)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separated by / or , the “history lesson” described what happened from start to finish, instead of just stating the finish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not enough statistics to fill the space that would be preserved without the history lesson

Examples

“Tcpdump”

Mng’d CSS in hi-tempo phase; helm’d prsnl actions/evals/decs/tasks/awd prgm f/ entire sqdn—91% timeliness rtg

- No quantifiable amount of all programs managed
- 10 words are shortened
- “entire” is unnecessary – why would the member only manage for part of the unit if in CSS?
- Is 91% something to brag about? Maybe, if the timeliness used to be lower, but that must be added

“Zoro’s Rival”

Drv 4-mbr CVA tm; track’d/analyz’d trnds/remedi’d 300 Cat 1s/rpt’d 50K+ gaps in base sys, —sec’d \$75M ntwk

- 3 words all shortened between slashes
- 12 words shortened throughout entire bullet
- Content between action and impact occupied ~ 2/3 of bullet space

“Library”

Aced 16AF high-pri task; mng’d engr’ing dev iso OP MOBIUS, app’d skills to EX RED CLOUD—closed WS gap

- Does anyone know what OPERATION MOBIUS or EXERCISE RED CLOUD are?
- Better solution: split into two bullets to allow for further info to be disclosed about these achievements
- Notice the vague, weak impact because of titles being thrown around in the bullet

“The Clash”

Resolved simulator absence; fought f/ cyber range/delivered to sq w/o delay—0 training risk to live weapon system

- In the middle portion, what we care about is that the squadron has a cyber range, not that the member fought for it
- If “fought f/ cyber range” is removed, that clears up space for the cost of it, how many operators use it, how fast it was delivered if ahead of schedule, etc

“Mainstream Media”

Revamped ops sched proc; presented 100% of forces ISO AFCYBER rqmt—enabled 10K sorties, 0 “no-go” msns

- Shouldn't 100% of forces always be presented? Is that not the standard?
- 0 no-go missions are the standard as well, why is this even mentioned?
- As you can see, the numbers 100 and 0 are famous for being thrown around to satisfy the “number” requirement in a bullet when in reality, they imply a simple standard that was met

“Cheerleader”

Unstoppable engineer in high-vis constr proj! Designed 4 unit telemetry towers—augment'd comm w/ base pilots

- Leadoff phrase contains excessive fluff (descriptors) that forces the rest of the bullet to be jammed up and provide minimal supplemental info
- “unstoppable engineer” occupies excessive room, and “constr” should be replaced with the scope of impact (wing, base, etc)
- High-vis is also a filler, bullets should already contain actions that have been noticed

“History Professor”

Built 1st-ever operator cert pipeline; analyz'd 5 vendors/lias'd w/ ctr sq/committ'd \$70K—upg'd 300 mbrs' KSAs

- Middle part described the Form 9 process when completing a sole-source contract
- This bullet needs to state the value of the training, in addition to capturing more meaningful data, such as:
 - o Processing time to finish a task – did it improve?
 - o Will the certs satisfy DoD8570.1 requirements automatically?
 - o How many new skills or concepts are taught than before? Model as a percentage, even if over 100%

Exercises

Now, we'll take a glance at three bullets that have unfortunately fallen victim to these nasty trends. Give them a solid analysis, and see if you can detect which categories these bullets have fallen under. Empty white space is allocated for any notes you need to incorporate into your analysis. The exercises begin on the next page, and feel free to highlight any additional errors or flaws you detect, even if they were not specifically mentioned within the context of this section of class.

Oversaw \$5M ops budget; ensur'd base srvrs/routers/1000+ comps/TACLANEs upg'd—sustain'd \$75M comm svc

Led cyber footprint reduction; cut expired h/w, port auth, merged info nodes—digital presence down 30%

Top-lvl analyst; year-long efforts ended ISIS in Iraq—relentless drive yielded peace f/ 1st time in 6 years

Fixing the Bad

In this section, we'll take a glance at how to quickly start improving bullets *without delving into the research side of things*. This section is meant to be a bit quicker, as it will help you in developing a “mental checklist” of errors and flaws to look out for that are common in today's bullet-writing world.

A Metaphor for your Startup: Remember, this is *your dojo*, and it's wise to have a “startup” routine that is similar to when you walk into work. As the work day begins, normally I will put down my keys and bag, grab my coffee cup and pour some of the unbeatable office coffee and carcinogen-laden powdered creamer into my mug, find a plastic utensil to stir it, taste-test it, go back and log on, and try to not take more than 20 minutes shooting the breeze with my coworkers.

So as your metaphorical blackbelt bullet-butt kicking skills develop, you'll realize that before long, when you first look at a 1206 or evaluation form, you're detecting errors and ways to improve the writing faster and faster, which is an impressive skill to have when it comes to stacking up those W's at the group or wing level.

So before I offer my personal BWB startup routine, I want to give you some pointers in developing your own. These are in no particular order, and those bright minds that all think differently may progress through these steps in different ways according to preference.

General Principles for your StartUp Routine

Bird's eye view: Before even focusing on one bullet, take the “bird's eye view” and check for any glaring issues that arise by virtue of comparing each bullet to its compadres. Here are some immediate “trigger warnings” or bullets before even diving into content and reading each one individually:

- *Spelling inconsistencies* of the same word on different bullets. Usually you want to *apply this to common words*, as it is rare that uncommon words will be spelled differently in bullets. Words such as (team vs tm) (sqdn vs sq) (mbr vs member) (personnel vs prsnl) etc are the words that generally show inconsistency in 1206s and evaluation forms
 - o Example: Bullet 1 has the word “team,” but Bullet 5 has the word “tm”
- Look for *similar metrics*, this normally indicates that one bullet is probably discussing similar content than another.
 - o Example: Bullet 1 has metric “1.4K” and Bullet 4 has “1.4K.” These may be in fact in completely different contexts, but more often than not, this is not the case
- *Over-excitement* can be seen as “fluff” – search for several exclamation marks or longer leadoff phrases
 - o Example: Bullet 1 starts with “Outstanding instructor!” and Bullet 5 starts with “Phenomenal analyst!” and Bullet 6 starts with “Relentless pursuit of excellence;”
- *Excessive white space* at the end of bullets can be seen as concerning to the reviewer. This is an indicator that the author of the package could not find enough to say about the bullet. In general, if you can fit more than 3 x's at the end of the bullet, more should be included.
- *Sweep the right side* and check for numbers in there. This is obviously the impact section and numbers should be present. Additionally, check that *not all numbers are the same unit of measurement*. For example, bullets 1-6 should not all have dollar-sign values because that can look slightly suspicious that an individual saved money in 6 different ways throughout the quarter (unless he or she is in Finance – so context is important). If numbers are absent, check for quantifiable words such as “only,” “first.” etc as viable substituted. Of course, *make note if you see any zeros or 100s*

--Diving Into Individual Bullets, From Bird's Eye View to Tree-level--

Once we make notes and mark up the form as a whole, then the inevitably fun part ensues – scrutinizing individual bullets. Again, this startup routine is exactly that – finding errors quickly before diving too far into context. Let's look at bullet startup routine concepts:

- Job description: This requires you to know the person's job, which will be indicated on the form. If you see any phrases that cause you to think "isn't this his job anyway?" it's best to make note of it and think of a better action or result.

- o Example for Capt Irtev, Chief of Training:

Helmed sq's rigorous trng pipeline; rpt'd key stats to ACC/ensur'd 100% operators compliant—met 624 OC rqmt

- o The bullet above essentially describes what a Chief of Training does – maintains the pipeline, sends bi-annual reports to MAJCOM, and tracks readiness – this is not impressive
- o Example for Lt Salvaje

Takes care of Airmen; drove flt to 8 individual group/2 wing awards—crucial in meriting Gen McClelland award

- o Notice I did not include Lt Salvaje's specific job in the description. However, what's key is that he's an officer, and officers should always be "taking care of Airmen"

- Wait, what? If you find yourself asking this question, that's a *black flag*. This is an upgraded, more serious version of a red flag. If you cannot understand the bullet after 1-2 readovers, or see the relationship, neither will the awards board. Chances are, if you're reviewing at the unit level and it seems garbled, don't expect the group or higher to understand either. Another example of "Wait, what?" is having an excessive amount of shortened words or abbreviations throughout the bullet.

Mng'd OPCON forces f/ OP ELSOL; track'd cmbt metrics/revis'd WS CONOP—eclipsed POTUS rqmt

- o It hurts to read, doesn't it? Somehow, OPERATION ELSOL was made successful by tracking some sort of combat metrics and revising a CONOP for...something... and in the end it exceeded the expectation of a presidential requirement. This bullet is all over the place with seemingly unrelated information

Led 4-day VLSM blitz; reconfigured subnet msk for 10 base rtrs/gen'd 10 new VLANs—obscured ntwk for APTs

- o Can anyone outside the field of cyber understand this? It's trying to state that variable-length subnet masking took place to make it more difficult for the APT (whatever that is outside of cyber) to target our nodes.
- o But what is VLSM, a "subnet msk," a "rtr," a "VLAN," or "APTs" for non 17D/S or 3D/1B4s?
- o If this is a comm squadron bullet, normally comm is in the MSG, which means they compete against security forces, logistics, and FSS for group-level awards. This is much too technical for the competition context

- RDX is an extremely explosive chemical compound. A mere handful of the powder, when detonated, can impact an entire conference room. RDX in bullet writing occurs when a seemingly low-impact action and result has a sudden, massive impact. This is also known as "stretching the truth." An example:

Restored 3 faulty GH srvrs; id'd severe comm error/rectifi'd encryption issues—saved \$975M ISR msn fm failure

- o Long story short, had this Airman not fixed three servers, the entire nearly-\$1B mission of the Global Hawk (GH) would have crippled. Let that sink in – those three servers are so vital to the mission that without them, the entire ability to perform aerial ISR would be non-existent. Those three servers must have been PEX-related somehow....bad joke.

- Atlanta Falcons are an NFL team that competed in Superbowl 51 against the Patriots. At one point in the game, the Falcons were winning 28-3, a seemingly inevitable blowout. Unfortunately, towards the final third of the game, their performance ended horribly, and the Patriots managed to come back and win in overtime. In bullet writing, a "Falcons" bullet is one that starts off very impressively, but ends weak.

Cmd'd real-world Spec Ops operation; ended enemy cyber ntwk/intel led to 5x ISIS ldr arrests—laud'd by Wg/CC

- This bullet starts off amazing, but finishes so anticlimactic that the 2017 Atlanta Falcons would be proud. Impacts should be at least at a greater scope than the action and result. This bullet has global-level implications, but the bullet praises the member at a wing level.
- *Forced numbers* is a principle that describes seeing numbers in a bullet just for the sake of satisfying the unspoken rule where numbers should be in each bullet. Forced numbers are evident when you spot a metric that really doesn't add any value or impressiveness to the bullet.

Helmed DCO forces in EX RED FLAG; sup'd 3-hour msn/diverted 15 hacking attempts—blue team 100% uptime

- Aside from the obvious 100% uptime figure that should be the standard anyway, how impressive is it that someone can supervise for three hours? Additionally, is 15 hacking attempts more or less than the usual? Without a comparison, we have no context as to the degree of impressiveness this metric offers.

Exercise

We'll now take a look at six consecutive bullets. Again, you may be the type that likes to dive right in to each bullet, or give a quick glance-over prior to delving deep. Using the StartUp routine only, see what concerns you can spot throughout the bullets. For the purpose of allocating proper working space for note-taking, the six bullets will begin on the next page with significant space in between.

Headed CCRI prep efforts; authored 2 policies/sealed up 5K vulns/rpt'd 3 findings--#1 CCRI score in AF to-date

Install'd 2 law enf srvrs at base VCC; enabl'd comm b/w 200 SF/Lancaster Police dept—guard'd \$140B base assets

Activated Boeing KC-46 circuit; DoD #3 pri complete via 1000 mile fiber sys—ensured add'l security of base ntwk

Led 10-mbr team f/ network hardening effort; imp'd classified data policy f/ \$275K ntwk—top insp rating all-time

Helm'd SANS restoration; stopped DDOS attk w/in 2hrs/recovered 945 TB .pst data—upg'd rtr ACLs f/ 1000 dvcs

Dominated access control project; 4 Sqs/2 Groups/Wing Staff upd'g against 5.4M attk—base \$140B assets secured

Researching the Ugly

Here is where we will spend some time figuring out exactly what should be in the bullet. This should only be used as a guide, as all bullets are different based on context, career field, rank, purpose (awards vs evaluations) etc. However, this section focuses on simply optimizing the bullet to the best of your ability.

Don't be boring: Generic statistics on bullets are those that you see all the time. From my time in the 33d NWS, the common metric we'd always see on evaluations or 1206s was the mentioning of the "\$14.2B AFIN" – the value of the Air Force Information Network. We all know that massive values carry significant weight in bullet-writing, however, these values are fairly unimpressive at your unit level that uses it regularly. If you can break through to the next level, then of course this dollar figure is incredible. Because of this, I caution you from using too many generic statistics. The bullet can be immediately viewed as a boring one because the impact is something your unit sees all the time. Just like we mentioned in the WHIRL section, we need to use not only words, but values to make ourselves stand out.

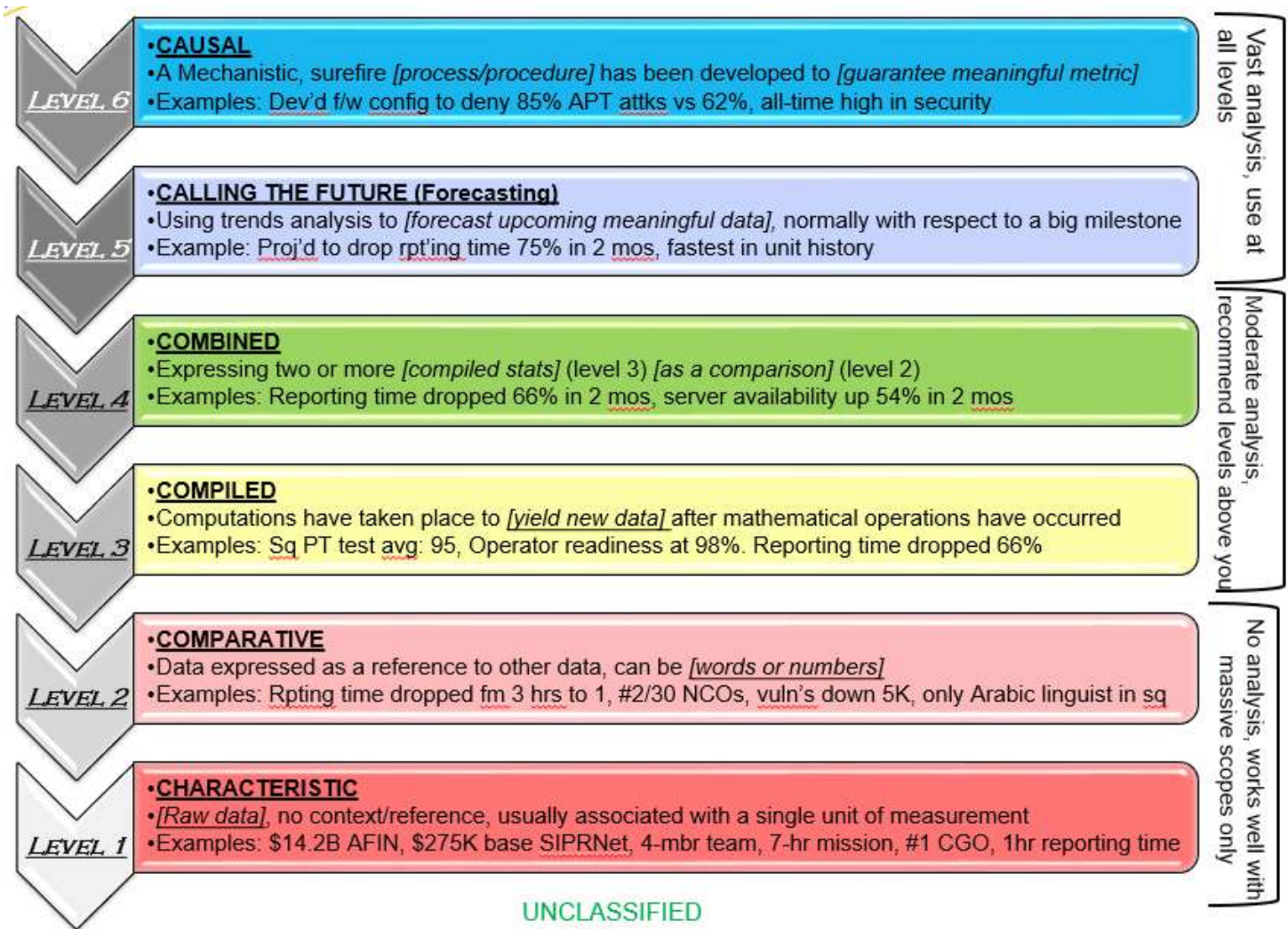
Stats that matter: I've developed a model to describe the different levels of statistics that can be found on evaluations and 1206s. These are the six "C's" to statistical reporting. In general, the higher level C that you can achieve, the more impressive the data on the form:

- Level 1: Characteristic
 - o The data in level 1 simply characterizes the action, result, or impact that has occurred. It is the most basic form of data that is raw, usually not computed, and typically has a unit of measurement surrounding it at the most.
 - Examples: 2-hrs, \$14M, 4-mbr tm, #1 score on CCRI
- Level 2: Comparative
 - o Comparative data seeks to make an impression by comparing it with other events or data that are related to it. This type of data in the report is not only expressed in numbers, but also in words.
 - Examples: "1st of _____, all-new, only, highest in 3 years, all-time high, #2/10 Capts
- *Level 3: Compiled*
 - o Level 3 data separates those willing to grind through mathematical challenges and those that are comfortable at Levels 1 and 2. Data at the compiled level has required exactly that: compilation. At this point, you need to explore significant amounts of data to reveal a statistic or metric that your unit or squadron does not already have. Examples are averages, percentages (not "100% uptime or 0% errors), and trends and patterns
 - Examples: "operator accuracy at 94%, average incident processing time 2 hours,"
- **Level 4: Combined**
 - o The esoteric data that can be found at level 4 is a combination of a level 2 and level 3 effort. In other words, this requires the most effort but can normally yield the greatest attention. Usually, you'll want to make a comparative statement using level 3 concepts. An example would include finding the average time to close a case in September versus August, then model that as a percentage increase or decrease.
 - Examples: "avg ntwk speed up 54% in 2 mos, 14 mbrs scored 11% above "excellent" 5x"
- ***Level 5: Calling the Future (Predicting)
 - o One of the most rare forms of data presented in a 1206 or evaluation is predicting the future. This is risky, as these forms typically want what has already happened, not a guess. This form of data truly shows thorough analysis to the point where trends can indicate what will happen next. Usually, something will need to be measured for months on end to call the future. An example includes averaging out the average response time of new security forces troops over the period of a year, modeling the response time on a graph, and extrapolating it to predict when they will

reach a certain milestone, such as 20 minutes (let's say is the unit record) and incorporating that as an impact: "avg resp time down 75%, trending to crush unit record in 3 mos"

- ****Level 6: Causal****
 - o A causal statistic is normally embedded in a phrase that indicates a mechanism, process, or procedure has been developed that will absolutely yield (or cause, as in the name of this type of statistical reporting) a certain metric each time it is implemented. This is normally a result of excessive statistical analysis. Sometimes this can also be phrased to indicate a certain percent of time this will be successful. However, in order to really impress reviewers, it is best to reach as close to 100% as possible
 - Examples: "new software yields permanent 95% rpt'ing speed," "new vehicle acq txports payload 95% faster/enables 62% more influx warfighters in CENTCOM"

The C6 Model, Visualized



The Statistical Scoresheet

The Statistical Scoresheet for bullet writing assigns a score to a bullet based on two attributes: the level of statistics reported (one of the 6 "Cs" and the scope of which the bullet applies to. This scoresheet assumes that most reviewers will value the scope about 25% more than the level of statistic used. For this, we will model the final score as F(x,y) where x is the scope, or organizational level in which the statistic applies to. X is a value

anywhere from -1 to theoretically up to 10, depending on the level of the Airman and how large of a scale that action had an impact.

Each number in the organization level indicates how many levels above or below the action impacted. For example, a flight chief that has an impact at the Group level will have an X value of 2, since the Group is two levels above the flight. A squadron commander that influences a MAJCOM will have an X value of 3 (Group, Wing, MAJCOM), etc. The method to calculate the Statistical score is $F(x,y) = 1.25x + y$. In general, the bullet should have a value of five, at the minimum, to really start to begin to be considered competitive. In general, we want to aim to write bullets in the green zones:



Org level vs Stat level Scoresheet

		Statistical Reporting Level					
		Characterization (1)	Comparative (2)	Compiled (3)	Combined (4)	Calling the Future (5)	Causal (6)
Org levels above you influenced	-1 or lower	-0.25	0.75	1.75	2.75	3.75	4.75
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	1	2.25	3.25	4.25	5.25	6.25	7.25
	2	3.5	4.5	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.5
	3	4.75	5.75	6.75	7.75	8.75	9.75
	4	6	7	8	9	10	11
	5+	7.25	8.25	9.25	10.25	11.25	12.25

We can all agree that many times, the scope of the bullet is worth more than the level of data presented. However, data must still present meaning.

Let's assume that scope is worth 25% more than level of data. From that, we can model our data point score with the following equation:

$$F(x,y) = 1.25x + y, \text{ where } x = \text{organizational level with respect to you, and } y = \text{statistical reporting level}$$

Generally, you want to generate a minimum score of 5 to have any worthy impact. Scores over 6.5 have a greater potential of being noticed

UNCLASSIFIED

Examples

Tweak first, contemplate next. The final two exercises of the class provide you three bullets to evaluate to see if there are more meaningful statistics to add to the bullet. A short narrative of context will be provided to help you determine if there are other statistics or data that can be incorporated.

The second exercise provides you with a requirement to write a bullet describing a particular topic or achievement, then to begin considering what data would be valuable to add into it.

- 1) MSgt Leeroy Jenkins processed 70 security forces reports this month for only those assigned under his supervision. These reports include the location of the incident, the time reported and the time arrived on scene, if a matter of life or death was involved, and the time in which the troops left the scene

Ensured rapid response to 70+ threats on base; processed 70 rpts/100% closure—10,000 members safety preserved

- 2) 1Lt Yerffej Nietspe led an effort to reduce the amount of clutter tools in his unit's cyber defensive weapon system. In his marking period for his OPR, he was able to drop the number of tools that operators need to use, sped up the processing time to finish an investigation, and, on some occasions, and for the first time, was able to stop a threat before the reported time of 18:49 which indicates how fast an enemy can get in and begin snooping around.

Helm'd DCO wep sys tool consolidation; cut toolset fm 75 to 12/outran top APT 3x—1st time faster than #1 threat

- 3) Maj Smitty Werbenjagermanjensen is a U-2 pilot that completed 201 sorties this past year. His missions included ISR over several countries in the Middle East, 25 of which were during the lead up to the end of ISIS in the capitals of Mosul and Raqqa.

Piloted 201 ISR sorties over CENTCOM zone; 49TB data to IC/2400 flying hrs—led to recapture 2x ISIS capital

Now contemplate. The following 3 passages are merely narratives that are meant to be formulated into a bullet. Consider what data you would want to use to result in the biggest impact.

- 1) Capt Lamar Jackson is a cyber-operator that has completed 150 missions this past year. He works as a sensor operator that is the frontline of defense for his weapon system. Some highlights this year is that he detected the first ever root-level intrusion on a General's computer. He also participated in Exercise BLACK DEMON in which he stopped all red-team threats which has never happened in the history of BLACK DEMON. He also managed to sift through a lot of "noise" and very regularly detected the important incidents and did not become distracted by false alarms.

- 2) MSgt Llawerif is a network perimeter operator that has the main responsibility of securing the boundary of the AFNet. He has written nearly 500 new firewall rules that contains data such as blocked domains, blocked IPs, blocked protocols inside and out, as well as a proxy server operator that has the capability of blocking inbound and outbound traffic to certain websites. He has also written an all-new python script that automates data alerts coming from the firewall on certain areas of interest, just to monitor behaviors. Additionally, he successfully detected an APT masking the type of data packet being used (cloaked as TCP, really ICMP) and blocked it after it had been intruding for 2 years

- 3) SMSgt Namdlo operates on the CDA weapon system, he is primarily responsible for securing the OPSEC of the Air Force. This past year, he sorted through 3,000 emails of which 100 were reportable. Some included the PII spillage of the entire MSgt Promotion Roster. Others involved deployments to where special forces would be stationed for OPERATION STAYDOWNALREADY which ended the ISIS presence for good. He is known throughout the squadron as one of the fastest to process and report OPSEC violations, and has even nerded out enough to develop a script that compiles the report ASAP and only requires an email address to send it to the right party. This essentially allowed his reports to drop from 10 mins to complete to 2 seconds. Over the course of 100 emails, you can imagine the time saved...

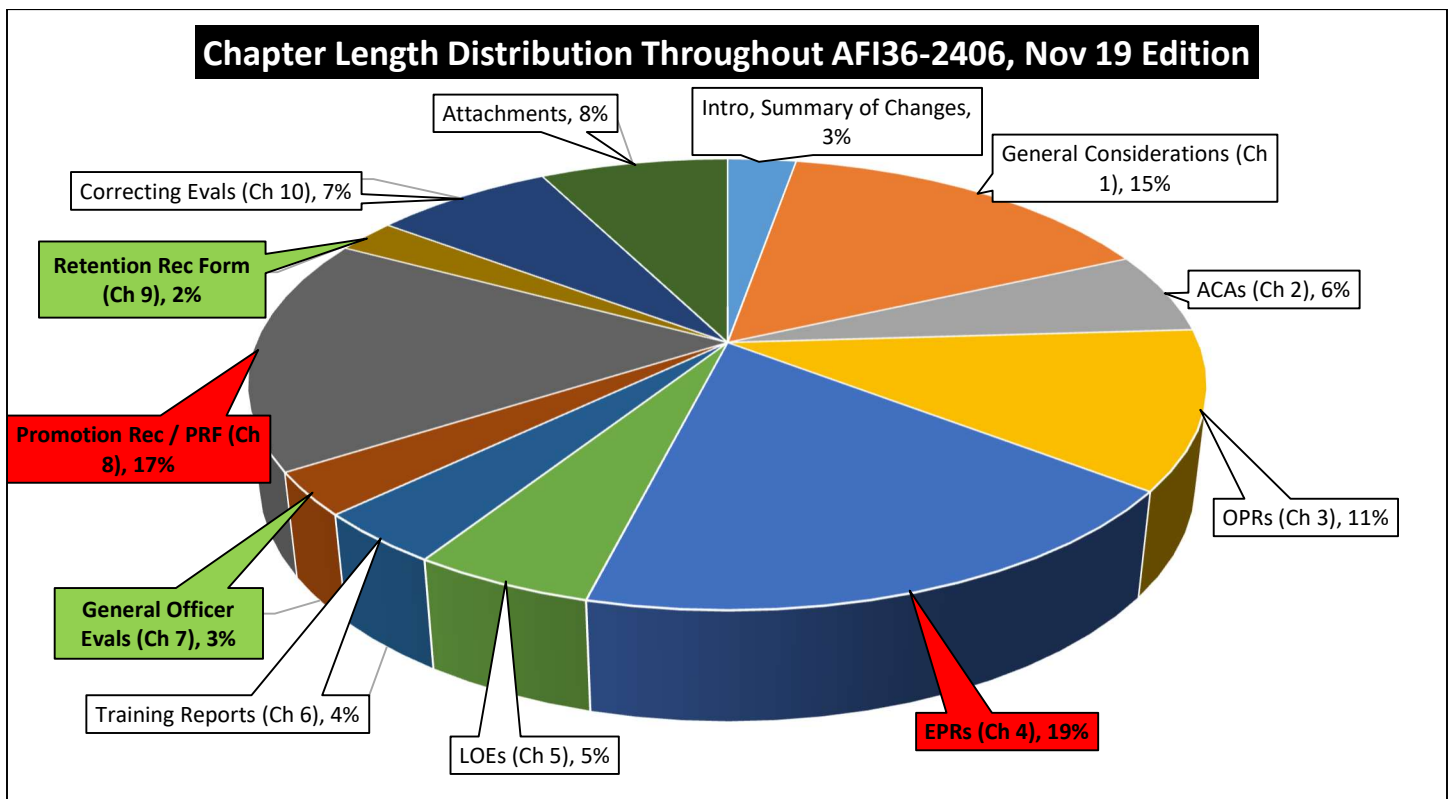
“TRAPDOORS”

KNOWING THE OBSCURE RULES OF AFI 36-2406

The AFI 26-2406 is a monstrous, 291-page document outlining everything you need to know about *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems*. The goal of this particular section is not to educate you on every single paragraph throughout the document, because that would require instituting an official certification program that would eventually lead to its own AFSC. The amount of content throughout the regulation is so vast that it is unreasonable to expect anyone to be an expert at it, regardless of their career field.

Instead, I will briefly outline the different sections and highlight a number of obscure rules, or what I like to call “trap doors” – named as such because all too often, we never know that such a rule exists until it catches us by surprise, and then causes quite a bit of frustration in the VPC world and routing AF Form 1206 packages.

It is also valuable to note the distribution of each chapter throughout the regulation. This will give you some insight into which topics, when it comes to evaluations, have the most constraints and restraints, versus which topics will give you the most “wobble room” to adapt. Below is a quick infographic of each chapter in the regulation and its relative length compared to others:



The chapters that bear the most weight are highlighted in red callout boxes (“EPRs” and “Promotion Recommendations”), whereas the leanest chapters in the regulation (“General Officer Evals” and “Retention Recommendation Form”) are highlighted in green.

From what we can analyze from this quick infographic is that commanders and supervisors have the most leeway in writing RRFs and even LOEs and Training Reports. This comes as no surprise since LOEs and RRFs are used in either assisting in evaluations and are sometimes not considered a formal evaluation, or are quick recommendations to retain or not retain in the rare instances of Reduction-in-Force (RIF).

However, the majority of our Airmen are enlisted, and therefore the heaviest chapter covers their evaluations. Additionally, PRFs involve selecting the absolute most qualified officers to lead our country in the nation’s

defense, and therefore PRFs bear the second-longest chapter, although approximately a quarter of it is occupied by tables and charts.

AFI 36-2406, “Eagle Vision and Trap Doors”

Now we will see the AFI through Eagle Vision, in other words, from 1,000 feet high. Eagles also have sharp, acute vision and can spot even the smallest of prey from high altitudes. For this reason, we will also spot the “trap doors” of the AFI. This metaphor is essentially alluding to the fact that it is only necessary to familiarize yourself with the main points of the AFI – as actually being well-versed would require its own bachelor’s degree program. AFI “Trap Doors” are those hidden or obscure rules that catch us by surprise. This section will empower you to be familiar with these trap doors and provide some examples in which you may encounter them! By the end, you’ll be a classic “Reg Ranger” with the prowess to see a trapdoor well before you stumble upon it!

Chapter 1 – General Considerations. This chapter sounds extremely vague, but it basically outlines the high-level guidelines we must follow, such as who can be an evaluator, how to dispute an evaluation, responsibilities of each member involved in any kind of an evaluation, what is not allowed in evaluations and what is required based on odd circumstances, and missing evaluations. When in doubt, know this chapter. This is the longest chapter of the entire regulation.

Trap Doors in Chapter 1:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Paragraph Reference</u>	<u>In a Nutshell</u>	<u>Example/Justification (if applicable)</u>
Who gets eyes-on	1.3.1.	Only those with need-to-know can see evals, enforced by AFI 33-332	Could create conflict of interest or unfair competition
If it’s a <i>secret</i> ...	1.3.2.	For classified data, enter: Nine asterisks in FDID block Five asterisks in SRID block “Data Masked” if a classified org	
Flooding the line	1.3.3.	Bullets can be up to two lines	In case anyone tells you it <i>must</i> fit on one line (as of 2020 trends/style - not recommended to exceed 1 line)
Calm down	1.3.4.	Never use more than one exclamation mark	Seen as “fluff” or space fillers
Name’s Will, I go by Bill	1.3.6.1.	Nicknames permissible if they’re a form of the ratee’s name (“Bill” for “William,” or “Mike” for “Michael”)	
Speak Normal English	1.3.6.3.	Cannot create continuation sheet for too many acronyms or abbreviations	Encourages maximal “plain English” language
Ripple effects of Evals	1.4.1.	Career briefs for: Officers are used to evaluate for command, assignments, school Enlisted are used to aid in SNCO stratifying, endorsement level eligibility, forced distribution	Officers are big decision makers, the AF wants the best to command for those decisions and education. Enlisted execute, the Air Force needs to determine the best executing members

			of each mission and properly balance.
The finish line for evals	1.4.3.2.	Evals are official once in PRDA, any changes go through Eval Review Appeals Board (ERAB). T-1 waiver!	Discourages additional change after so many reviewers have already had a chance to change.
Rank on Evals	1.4.9.	The rank on an eval is the rank <i>held at closeout</i> , even if the member only held that rank for a day.	
PT issues and referrals	1.4.10.1.	(NEW) CC discretion to create a referral eval for a failed/non-current PT test	Changed from 2016 reg, where this was an auto-referral. Allows for more “whole Airmen concept” considerations
Delaying the closeout	1.4.10.5.	Only for officers, up to 59 days can be requested to extend the closeout for admin/disciplinary issues.	Begins documentation of potential negative trends if egregious enough, instead of waiting a year.
Non-rated periods	1.4.11.	(NEW) Authorized under unique circumstances, such as medical or other emergencies unique to Airman. Unit commander is final authority	
Maxing out evaluators	1.5.1.	Max number of evaluators: OPRs: exactly 3, unless add’l rater is reviewer or Sr Rater EPRs: at least 2, unless rater is a single evaluator PRF – 1 evaluator TR – 1 evaluator unless disagreement	
Minimum rank to evaluate	1.5.2.2.	<u>Minimum rank to be a rater:</u> Officer: Officer of US <i>or foreign</i> military, or civilian of equal/higher rank Enlisted: Officer, or enlisted of equal or higher rank than ratee, or civilian of GS-5 or higher and higher than ratee <u>Additional Rater Requirements:</u> Officer: US or foreign military in equal grade or higher than rater, higher than ratee Enlisted: Officer or E-7 in US <i>or foreign military</i> in equal or higher grade	
Do not write your own eval	1.6.3.6.	Main focus in this long paragraph is “the rate will not be directed to write or draft any portion of his or her own performance report”	Kills practice of supervisors saying “send me some bullets”
Crime reporting timeline	1.8.1.	All crimes will be reported to supervisor in 72 hours, this includes: - Conviction of a federal criminal law - Citation/violation of motor vehicle is not reportable if it is a lesser offense (minor speeding, parking tickets) - Sex-offenses	Promotes fair evaluation and ensures Airmen of character are placed in high, special positions of trust

		- Court-martial	
Disagreements between rater / add'l rater	1.9.5.	If rater and add'l rater give two different assessments, final say goes to add'l rater	
One less qualifier for a referral EPR	1.10.1, and <i>summary of changes</i>	"Met some, but not all expectations" no longer triggers a referral EPR	Refocusing on content, rather than a checkbox. Must prove an Airman is not meeting standards.
Suspense to respond to referral	1.10.2.5.	Ratee has 3 business days to respond to any changes to a referral eval (non-EAD is 30 days)	
Stay put with a referral eval	1.10.2.11.	You cannot PCS with a referral eval (OPR or EPR)	AF wants to avoid transferring a problematic member to another unit (professional courtesy) and to not risk any important documentation to not have sufficient attention in the event the unit is looking to separate.
What causes a referral	1.10.3.1., <i>summary of changes</i>	Referrals happen for <i>routine</i> or <i>significant</i> detractions from Air Force standards (NEW) "whole Airmen concept" should be taken into account for referral evaluations	Example: late to work 15 times in one year, no excuse (routine detraction) Example: DUI (significant detraction)
Restricted knowledge on referral eval	1.10.5.1.2.	Do not show referral comments to next evaluator until ratee has had a chance to provide a rebuttal	Avoids causing unfair influence on opinion to the next evaluator
Ratee's options when receiving referral eval	1.10.5.2.3.	- 3 days to respond - request for extension to response time - get Area Defense Council guidance - provide comments up to 10 pages which will not disparage character of evaluator unless fully substantiated - have attorney prepare comments, must indicate attorney had permission -- rate + attorney comments will be less than 10 pages	Allows adequate time and options for potentially not-guilty/innocent ratee to clarify situation or provide testimony
"Redemption" in a referral from add'l rater	1.10.5.4.6.	If a subsequent evaluator disagrees with previous evaluator (marks non-concur) then it is no longer a referral eval	Avoids reprisal, personal matters, "grudges," etc stay out of the evaluation and multiple members have a chance to provide insight.
Passing the baton when deployed, for a referral	1.10.5.5.	For referral OPR, if rater is deployed, the next member in chain of command will act on behalf of deployed member	For the sake of completing the OPR in a timely matter

LOE Triggered!	1.10.6.3.2.1.	If an LOE is so awful that it triggers a referral, then rater will prepare a referral OPR, with reason “Directed by HAF”	Some behaviors are so terrible and can occur shortly into the new OPR period that it must be documented ASAP, and not wait for several months
Feedback Accountability	1.11.4.	100% of the time, feedback is mandatory. No excuses. If it was not performed, a reason must be stated	If an officer does not meet standards, how can he/she know, if initial/mid-term feedback was not performed?
Keep personal matters out	1.12.2.1	No discriminatory comments involving age, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, etc, such as “first ever female F35 pilot”	Personal, non-AF specific traits about the member have nothing to do with job performance
Let it go already	1.12.4.2.1.	Never mention acquittals in a trail or charge	Member is not guilty of anything, thus it’s unfair to mention acquittals when considering job performance
Punish in private	1.12.4.3.	Never mention punishments in an eval, but behavior can be documented	Punishments are usually subjective, and many CCs issue punishments differently – that’s a CC-specific item on a member-specific eval. Stick to member-focused eval – just say what he/she did
Referral-triggering comments	1.12.4.4.1	Must be specific, outlining event AND corrective action	“conduct unbecoming” is too vague. This has career implications, get to the point to ensure a fair judgment on the member.
SMSgt Strat in Joint Org	1.12.11.1.	SMSGts may be stratified against other E-8s of other services in a joint organization	SMSGts are a rare rank, and thus it’s difficult to stratify against a low denominator

Chapter 2 – Airman Comprehensive Assessment, 13 pages, 4.2% of Reg. The ACA is a relatively new mechanism to conduct sincere, documented feedback with Airmen to ensure their performance remains optimized as much as possible. This section resides in the regulation not because it is necessarily a type of evaluation, but because they are necessary in order to complete an evaluation. One trapdoor you will later discover is that there is no excuse for not conducting a feedback session. This is a red-hot signal that the Air Force highly values feedback to the Airmen to ensure we all achieve our mission.

Chapter 2 is fairly straightforward – thus, no trapdoors exist

Chapter 3 – Officer Performance Evaluations, 34 pages, 11.1% of Reg. Simple – everything you will ever need to know about OPRs, including when to submit them, certain timelines to meet, even stratification rules!

Trap Doors in Chapter 3:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Paragraph Reference</u>	<u>In a Nutshell</u>	<u>Example/Justification (if applicable)</u>
Good to meet you, gotta go!	3.9.1.1.2.	Officer is at unit less than 120 days, then deploys for extended deployment. Home unit sends <i>informal LOE</i> to deployed unit	Too little time for an OPR, but something needs to be documented for the deployed/CC to gain a year-long insight on the officer's performance
General as a rater - deployed	3.9.3.5.1.	If a GO is a rater, and is deployed, there will only be a single evaluator on the OPR	
Training then first duty station, from date	3.10.1.	For first OPR after initial skills training, the from-date will be the day after TR closeout	You have one job in tech school, thus your OPR (which evaluates you on your job, not getting through training) starts after TR period ends
Non-rated periods	3.12.	CCs use best judgment to determine if Airman will not be rated (convalescent leave, medical issues, etc)	
Confinement and DBC reports	3.12.3.	CC can use periods of non-supervision due to confinement. These trigger directed-by-CC (DBC) reports – to capture extremely egregious actions	
Stratifying for someone higher	3.16.2.4.	Evaluator cannot use the strat of a higher level evaluator, unless it is quoted and that person is also signing off on the evaluation and can NOT provide comments	Compels evaluators to focus only on their scope of responsibility
No double-stratting rank selectees	3.16.2.5.4.	Cannot stratify rank selectees in their future rank and current rank.	Example: If a wing has 2 Cols and 5 Col-selects, you cannot say “#1/7 O-6/O-6 sels” and also “#1/5 O-5s” – pick one
Strat Levels	3.16.2.5.5.1.	<p><i>Tier 1: Peers (#1/10 Capts) – good for all ranks specified in here</i></p> <p><i>Tier 2: Peer Group (#1/20 CGOs) – good for LTs, average for Capts</i></p> <p><i>Tier 3: Duty Position (#1/25 Operators) – good for lower ranks, not so great for upper ranks</i></p> <p><i>Tier 4: Aggregate (#1/50 officers in my Grp) – great strat for lower ranks, value of strat decreases as rank increases</i></p>	
Deployed LOE strats	3.16.2.5.5.4.	Deployed LOE strats and push statements can be used in future LORs	That officer earned that strat, why not make it matter of official record? Plus it shows versatility

			in performing strong at home and abroad
Minimal use of “Senior” on OPRs	3.16.3.2.	No use of “Senior” on an OPR unless it’s an O-6, or an O-5 promoting to O-6, or a specific, legitimate job like “Senior Chaplain”	
Air Force-only comments	3.17.3.	Don’t talk about side jobs if they’re not AF-related	Stick to what is relevant for a report that decides your Air Force career, not your side-job career
AFIT prohibited from school push	3.17.4.1.	Cannot use AFIT as a school push, only an assignment push (staff, etc)	
No Implied / Veiled promo statements	3.17.4.5.	Only permitted job push is next reasonable one, and DE. For example, for a Capt, cannot make a Sq/CC push or an SDE push	Unfair to truly know if a Captain is truly cut out to be a commander considering that appropriate rank is still a long time away
Closeout date extensions	3.18.2.	Only permitted to document negative behavior, not for awards, achievements, or training completion. Extensions must be requested	Avoids allowing evaluators to “game” the system to inflate an eval in an effort to hear back on high-level awards
Closeout extension limit	3.18.2.1.	59 days is the limit – and that’s only to allow enough time to cover any actions needed	
Who grants extensions for closeouts	3.18.3.	Extension requests go to HQ AFPC/DP2SPE, and if granted, will also come from that office	
What to write on evals with extended closeout date	3.18.4.	On OPR form, you must write “Close-out date was extended IAW AFI36-2406, paragraph 3.18”	For future promotion boards, etc – it confirms that this was completed properly and not to simply game the system
No “renewals” with extensions	3.18.5.	Extensions cannot be renewed. If actions require longer than 59 days, another eval will be directed by the CC at the 120-day mark	Affects promotion board actions, retaining the member, etc
Job description content	Table 3.1, Item 12	Rater develops the job description bullet, NOT the rate. Requirements for job description go in this section, also use plain language as much as possible, present tense	This outlines all expectations, there should be no gray space or anything that could be interpreted multiple ways
What to do if feedback never achieved	Table 3.1, Item 16	Enter “N/A” if feedback was not accomplished – this should only be for a low number of supervising days, but typically there is absolutely no excuse.	See Trapdoor “Feedback accountability” in Chapter 1
If DG, but no TR was provided	Table 3.1, Item 48	If member achieved DG, but not TR was provided, the rater may enter the criteria in section X (10) and the fact he/she made DG based on that criteria	Some courses such as joint courses do not provide AF-form TRs, but a top grad is still announced. This is a good example of

			reflecting TG/DG in this case
OPR trigger – 120+ day departure	Table 3.2, Rule 3	Prepare an OPR is rate departs for 120+ days, not due to training or deployed ops	
OPR trigger – court martial actions	Table 3.2, Rule 10	Sentence or confinement from a court martial automatically triggers an OPR, no minimum days required	
Subjective negative LOE comments	Table 3.2, Note 13	An OPR may not need to be prepared, despite LOE referral-type comments, if the rater believes the comments are not serious enough	Honors the best judgment and decision making of the rater
Officer desertion and OPR closeout	Table 3.2, Note 14	If an officer deserts, OPR will closeout on day of desertion and may ONLY contain negative comments	This is a violation of the UCMJ and an extremely egregious offense

Chapter 4 – Enlisted Performance Evaluations, 48 pages, 15.6% of Reg. Self-explanatory. Some interesting sections include lengthy guidance for time-in-grade/time-in-service eligibilities, forced distribution allocation calculations, close-out date charts, and when you can expect MPF to process accounting dates so that your commander knows the number of Definitely- and Must-Promotes are available.

Trap Doors in Chapter 4:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Paragraph Reference</u>	<u>In a Nutshell</u>	<u>Example/Justification (if applicable)</u>
First-time EPR	4.3.1.	(NEW) – AB/Amn/A1C will receive an EPR when reaching 3 years TIS, as of SrA SCOD	Extremely young enlisted ranks are focused on job performance and training
EPRs for retirees vs separating	4.3.4.1.2.	EPRs mandatory for those separating, but not for those retiring unless directed by CC	For those separating, there could still be time remaining if the member elects to transfer to ANG/reserve
Non-rated time	4.8.	Non-rated time may be granted due to lengthy initial skills training, medical reasons etc (enlisted only) for >20 weeks in duration	5 months of not performing your job equates to only 7/12 months on an annual eval, that's an extremely low availability to write ~15 bullets for 7 months. Hence, it must be reflected that the evaluation only covers a certain timeframe that is less than a year
Education = Endorsement	4.11.2.2.	As a SNCO, you must have an associate's or greater to receive a SR strat/endorsement	Air Force emphasis on education and personal development
EFDP for strat consideration	4.11.5.4, <i>summary of changes</i>	(NEW) SR may use EFDP panel process or develop own guidance to determine SNCO stratification	

HYT DQ'ing SR endorsement	4.11.5.4.2.	(New) If HYT retirement date is before the first day of the month that promotion increments begin, the member is DQ'd from SR endorsement	Strats/endorsements are given to those still with potential to serve, not "resume boosters" for when you leave the AF.
TIG Eligible, strats/endorsements, MSgts	4.12.5.1.2.	If: Closeout date is >30 Sep of current year, #Months TIG from DOR to 1 Mar, two years after closeout is less than 20 months = ineligible #Months TIG from DOR to 1 Mar, two years after closeout is greater than 20 months = eligible	
TIG Eligible, strats/endorsements, SMSgts	4.12.5.2.1.	Closeout date before 1 Aug current year, less than 21 months TIG to 1 Dec of current year = eligible Closeout date after 1 Aug current year, TIG to 1 Dec of current year is: Less than 21 months = ineligible Greater than 21 months = eligible	
Enlisted promotion / assignment statements	4.16.1.	Enlisted promotion and assignment statements are only allowed when SNCO is TIG/TIS eligible, and can only be made by final evaluator in section IX	
Enlisted job recommendations, no line number yet	4.16.4.2.	Enlisted without a line number can only be recommended for a position in the rank they're currently in	Enlisted also prove getting to the next rank via WAPS test
EFDP, Sr Enl Ldr = Advisor Only	4.18.2.2.	(New) Air Force Senior Enlisted leader only advises during the panel, <i>no longer a voting member</i>	
Forced distribution when TDY	4.19.4.	Enlisted that are TDY less than 20 weeks will fall under home station forced distribution	
Forced distribution allocations	4.19.6.	5% of all SrA/SSgt/TSgts for Promote Now 10% of SSgt/TSgt for Must Promote 15% of all SrA for Must Promote	
Forced Distribution push notes	4.19.12.1.5.	Push notes for forced distribution are limited to two lines, and can only convey the member's standing in that level of hierarchy (flight, squadron, etc)	
EFDP Scoring	4.19.15.2.	- Rack-and-stack - 6-10 pt increments. If a split occurs where scores are greater than 2 apart, a discussion occurs until rescored and the scores are less than 1.5 in variance	Consistency and synchronization amongst all scoring members

Chapter 5 – AF Form 77, Letter of Evaluation, 17 pages, 5.5% of Reg. Although a short chapter, this is not to be disregarded. Letters of Evaluation (LOEs) are frequently used in a vast variety of contexts and are extremely

useful in the attempt to either augment a hot-shot's OPR/EPR or to begin documenting a trend of negative performance. This chapter can become your best friend when trying to determine if an evaluation is absolutely necessary or an LOE, whether formal or informal, can be used.

Trap Doors in Chapter 5:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Paragraph Reference</u>	<u>In a Nutshell</u>	<u>Example/Justification (if applicable)</u>
Deployed CC LOEs	5.2.1.2.1.	Always mandatory, no min/max # of supervision days, deployed CC must command for 45+ days. Deployed LOE does not restart the clock for OPRs – considered “embedded” evals	
Informal LOE intent, final destination	5.2.2.2.	Informal LOEs never go into MPRG, but help in preparing a formal eval. They augment a duty period of performance for 60-120 days. Used when a member is “loaned out” to another unit.	Intent is to provide insight for a short period of performance for the annual evaluation

Chapter 6 – AF Form 475, Education/Training Report, 11 pages, 3.6% of Reg. The Air Force values training and education for all members, hence you will often see members in extensive training programs. This chapter focuses on all regulations with respect to the Air Force Education and Training Report, the AF Form 475. Normally you will see these come out of initial skills training, any formalized Air Force training that lasts more than 10 business days, PME, etc. You will not receive a TR for vendor-provided training, such as SANS, CompTia, etc.

Trap Doors in Chapter 6:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Paragraph Reference</u>	<u>In a Nutshell</u>	<u>Example/Justification (if applicable)</u>
TR Trigger	6.1.1.1.1.	TRs will be completed as long as the officer is in formal training for at least 10 duty days	All evaluations must have accountability for as much of the entire year as possible

Chapter 7 – General Officer Evaluations, 9 pages, 2.9% of Reg. General Officer (GO) evaluations are processed outside the norm. The most important information that one can obtain from this chapter is that Lt Gen OPRs are optional, as well as any GO that has applied for retirement. GO evaluations are rather lean by comparison to CGOs and FGOs.

No Trap Doors within Chapter 7

Chapter 8 – Promotion Recommendation and Management Level Review Process, 44 pages, 14.3% of Reg. The PRF is essentially in ensuring the top officers reach the higher ranks of leadership within the Air Force. As of 26 Mar 20 (the authoring date of this guide), PRFs only exist for those competing for Lt Col. This chapter covers the types of PRF. Of note, Narrative-Only PRFs, as of this revision date, are only for losing senior raters of Lt Cols, regardless of “zone” status. Senior Raters, Management Level (ML) and MPS have several responsibilities outlined throughout the PRF process. Nothing lies outside the ordinary for ratees.

Trap Doors in Chapter 8:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Paragraph Reference</u>	<u>In a Nutshell</u>	<u>Example/Justification (if applicable)</u>
PRF – concise, to the point	8.1.3.1.1.	(NEW) For O-6 and below, PRFs are 2 lines max. Do not include info already seen in record of performance. No push statements	
PRF Strat Rules	8.1.3.2.1.	SR can provide up to 2 strats. Must strat against promo-eligible officers by zone, and/or authorized peer group	
No promo category strats	8.1.3.4.1.	Prohibited from stratifying against others within the same promo category (#1/22 DPs)	AFI stratification rules are strictly for 4 different tiers, and promo categories are not prohibited
Gray zone officer PCS, for PRF timeliness	8.4.1.	When officer PCSs to a new senior rater <i>after</i> the accounting date, but <i>before</i> the cutoff date: Losing SR prepares PRF and ensure quality review Gaining SR will not change his/her total DP allocations Gaining SR has discretion to give DP to this new officer	The DP allocation process which is released at the accounting date is a monumental effort. Requesting allocation changes for each time an officer PCSs, especially during peak-season, would cause AFPC to never have a finalized number for each senior rater
PRF completion	8.5.	Complete the PRF 2 weeks before the CSB; but in extreme circumstances, the completion date can be 1 duty day prior, at O-6 request	This accounts for investigations, deployments, and other administrative action still pending that would greatly impact promotion
Second chance for DP	8.7.	Supplemental Management Level Review are used to give “promotes” a chance to upgrade to “DP.” They must have copies of the bottom DPs and top Ps. Promotes can be upgraded to DP if permission is granted by the SR and MLR President	The bottom of DP and top of P is a very gray line. This is an additional QC measure to ensure that the clearest possible delineation is established

Chapter 9 – AF Form 3538, Retention Recommendation Form, 5 pages, 1.6% of Reg. The shortest chapter in the entire regulation, Chapter 9 outlines the process to essentially keep or boot Airmen in or from the Air Force using the Retention Recommendation Form. This is especially used in Force Shaping (remember the sequestration in 2013), Reduction-in-Force, and Selective Early Retirement Boards.

Trap Doors in Chapter 9:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Paragraph Reference</u>	<u>In a Nutshell</u>	<u>Example/Justification (if applicable)</u>
Evaluators – no gaming the system	9.2.1.3.4.	Prohibited to select “definitely retain,” “retain,” or “do not retain” based on member’s intent to retire/separate. This must be based on performance only	Higher headquarters does not know the intent of each member, and the focus is on retaining the

			highest quality service members, not the ones who still have time left
Downgrading RRF content – mandatory notify	9.5.1.	If any change to the RRF is negative in nature, or downgrading, the member must be provided a copy of the new RRF from the evaluator, and the officer is granted a right to write a letter to the CSB. Officer will be notified of his/her right to write a letter by the evaluator.	This ensures that feedback is accomplished and any possibility of favoritism, discrimination, or immature “grudges” are eliminated between member and evaluator

Chapter 10 – Correcting Officer and Enlisted Evaluations, 20 pages, 6.5% of Reg. The grand finale of the AFI focuses upon the processes of correcting errors or possible injustices to evaluations, specifically EPRs, OPRs, and PRFs. There are many instances of Airmen feeling that an evaluator or rater may have unfairly written a weaker-than-deserved evaluations, but it is important to note that there are certain criteria that must be met in order to substantiate a case, as well as the initial standing of the board with respect to how it views the evaluation in the beginning stages.

Trap Doors in Chapter 10:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Paragraph Reference</u>	<u>In a Nutshell</u>	<u>Example/Justification (if applicable)</u>
Burden of Proof on Ratee	10.2.1.3.	Evaluations are assumed to be accurate by the board, the Ratee must provide substantial evidence that an injustice or error was made	Throughout the entire evaluation process, there were plenty of opportunities for discussion and correction, so there must be very convincing evidence that, even after months of circulating the evaluation from ratee to all evaluators, an injustice was made
Ratees Prohibited from Board Discussions	10.2.3.3.2.	The board does not permit personal appearances; the ratee or his/her representative are forbidden from being present at the board	This allows the board to focus on only the facts and documents presented. The board may reach out for more information, but the individual or representative in question may not be present. This prevents possible distractions and conflicts of opinion versus fact
Appeal at Your Own Risk	10.2.3.3.6.	The Evaluations Report Appeals Board (ERAB) may direct a revision that is different from the original request	This allows latitude and best judgment of the Board. For example, if the ratee wishes the

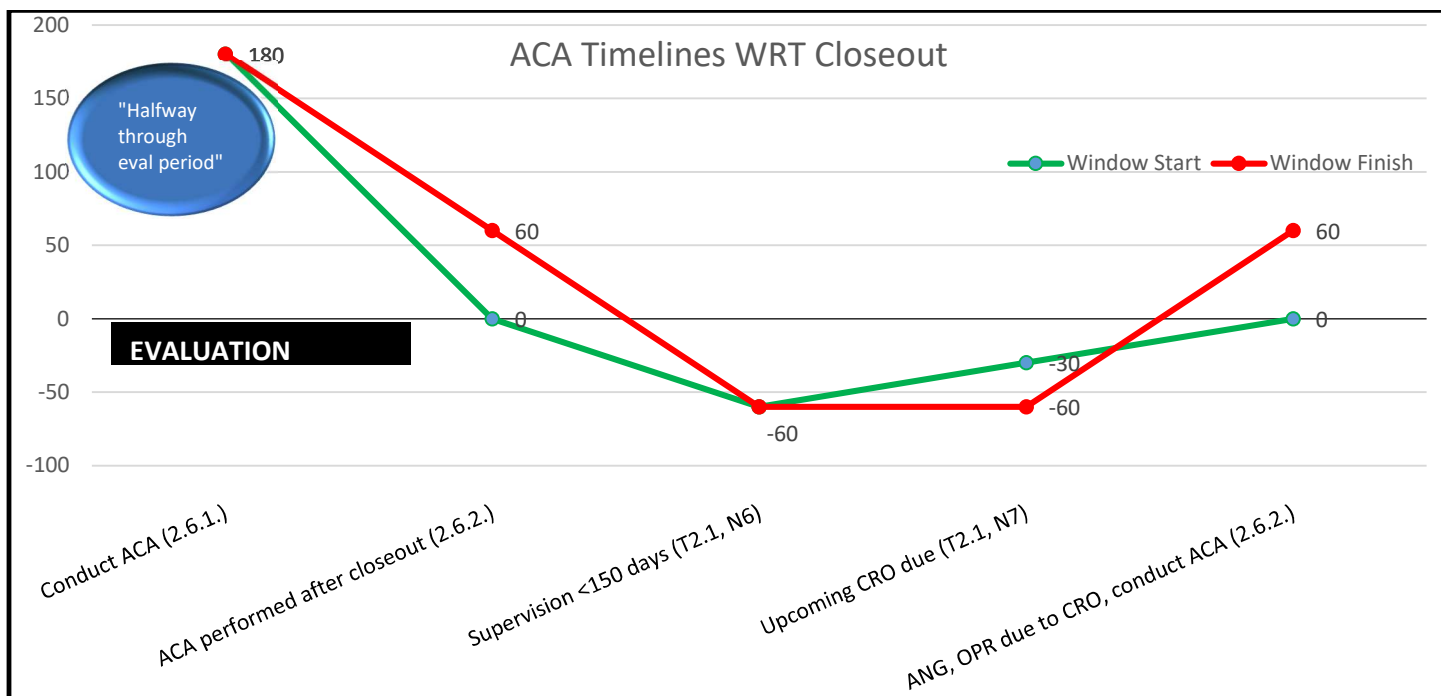
			report to be voided because the feedback date is incorrect, the board may simply correct the date and keep the evaluation as valid
Accountability for One's Behavior	10.2.4.10.2.	If corrective action (LOR, UIF, etc) was "set aside" but the behavior that led to the set-aside corrective action still took place, then the comments describing that behavior are still valid	The intent of an EPR or OPR is to evaluate the performance and at times, behavior of the ratee to gauge his or her potential for command, promotion, schooling, etc. The intent is not to outline every administrative or corrective action taken in one's career
Corrections Initiated by Someone Other than Ratee	10.4.5.3.	Someone other than the ratee may initiate the appeal process. That person must first receive an acknowledgement from the ratee (concur or non-concur). Requests can progress even with non-concur. The ratee should provide a statement if non-concurring, otherwise lack of remarks will be taken as acceptance by the ratee	There are young enlisted and officers that are not fully trained or familiarized with all the intricacies of bullet-writing and evaluation "norms." We owe it to our Airmen that if we see a possible injustice, even if the ratee is oblivious to any underlying messages that the raters are providing that may appear unfair or unnecessary, that we address those, but preferably before the evaluation becomes a matter of record

KNOWING THE AFI TOOTH TO “TAIL” (TIMELINES, INSIGHT, ABSOLUTES, AND LIMITS)

Throughout the AFI 36-2406, there lies a brutal amount of timelines, suspenses, minimum and maximum values, insightful information, and other limits that can seem incredibly overwhelming to commit to memory. As part of a black belt, not only is it important to execute your crafty skills (bullet writing), but also know *when* those crafty skills are to be utilized.

This chapter presents every timeline (including suspenses), insightful information that is crucial to decision-making, absolute (always, never, first, etc) and limit (such as minimums and maximums) in a more user-friendly, visually-appealing format. This saves you perhaps hours of digging through the regulations desperately trying to determine how long you have until a deadline has suddenly approached. Some visuals will even contain some helpful ways or mnemonics to aid you in deciphering and perhaps even memorizing the TAIL!

CHAPTER 2 – ACAS



This graph lists out each task that must be accomplished with ACAs (the x-axis tasks), and the number of days before or after (negative or positive value) that it must be executed.

Example: Task “ACA performed after closeout” must be performed anywhere between 0-60 days

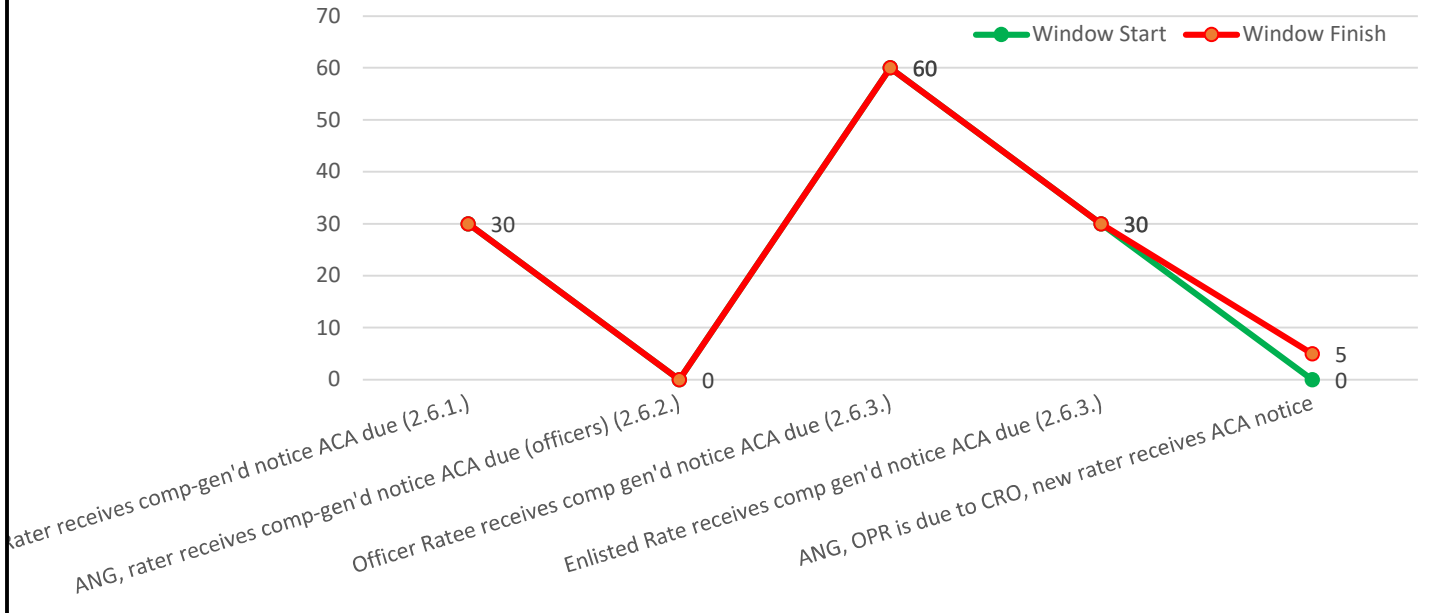
Some tasks do not have a “window” but rather a “point.” This indicates that a task *must be completed at that exact day with respect to the evaluation closeout (indicated as “0” on the x-axis)*

Example: Task “Supervision <150 days” (meaning if the ratee has been supervised less than 150 days) must be executed 60 days before closeout. I.e. – the ACA must be performed 60 days prior to closeout

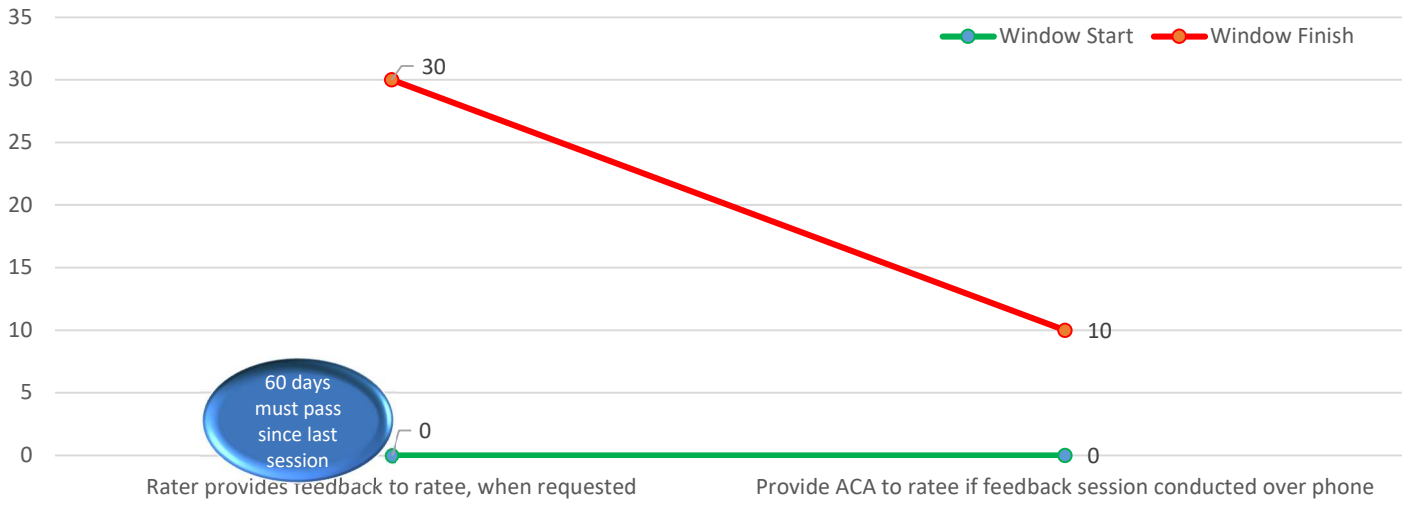
A blue “milestone” is depicted to aid in *clarifying the point*.

Example: The task of “Conduct ACA” at 180 days is actually an approximation. The regulation actually states to conduct the ACA halfway through the evaluation period. Sometimes this is not exactly 180 days, but the supervisor should attempt to conduct the ACA as close to halfway as possible.

ACA Timelines WRT Supervisor Start Date

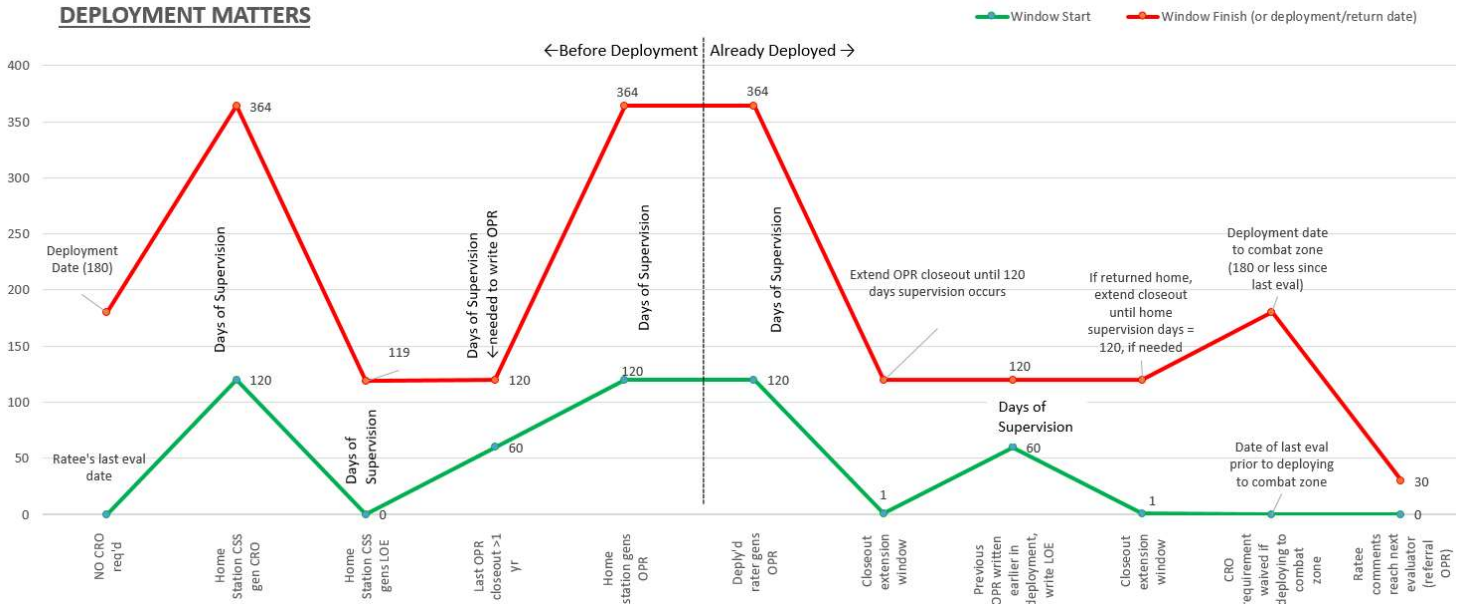


ACA Timelines WRT Providing Feedback when Requested by Ratee

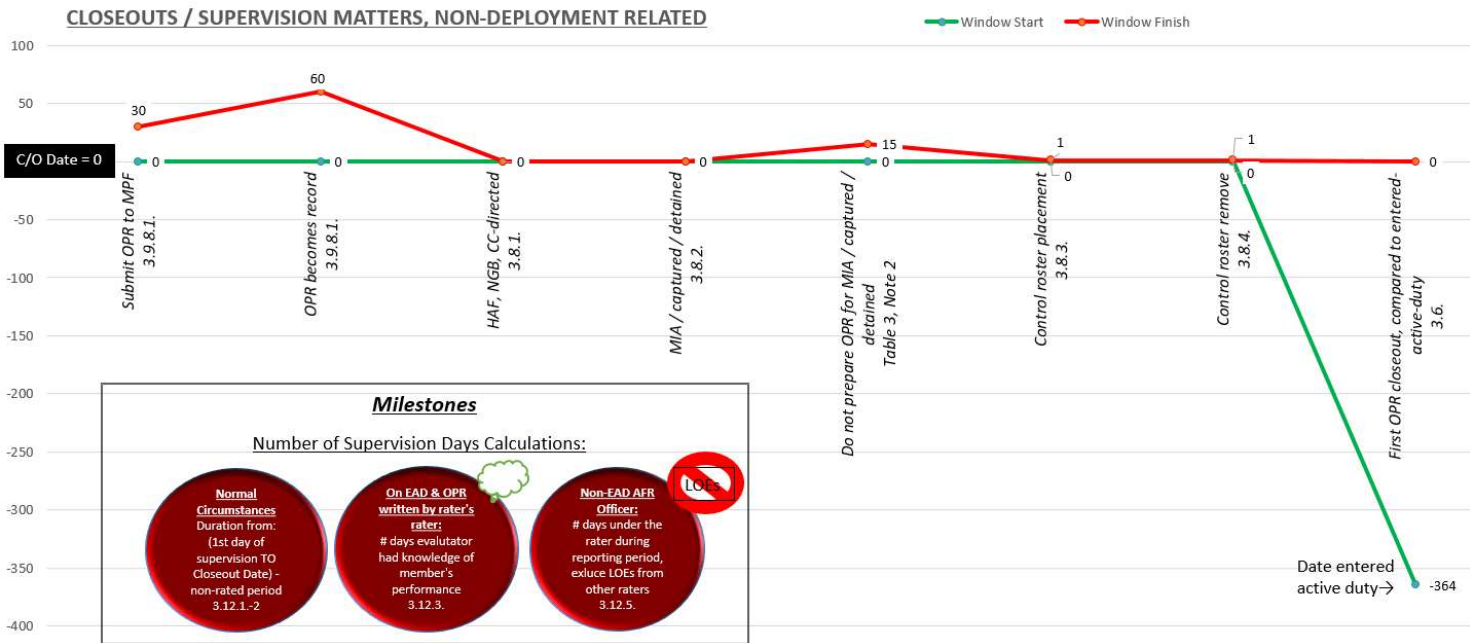


CHAPTER 3 – OPRs

DEPLOYMENT MATTERS

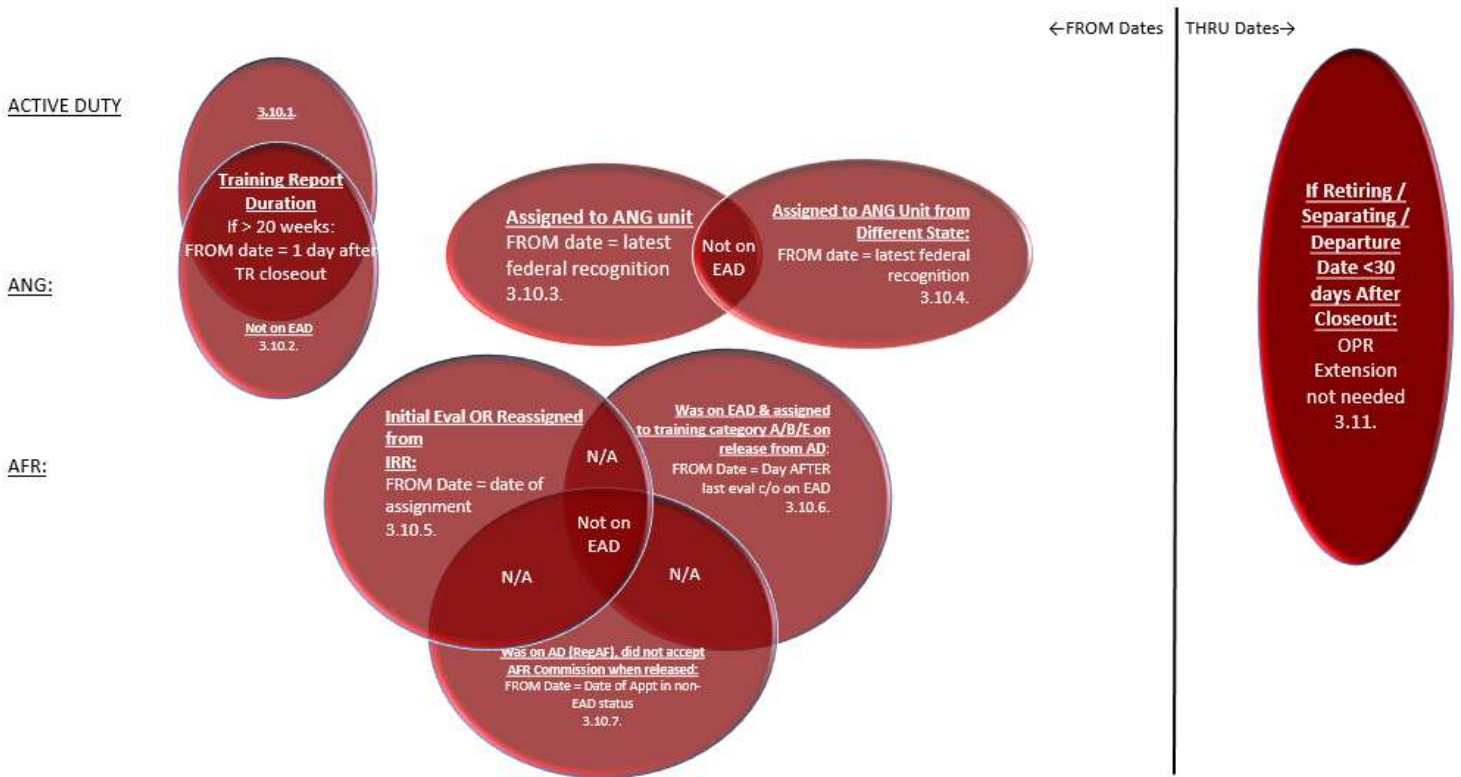


CLOSEOUTS / SUPERVISION MATTERS, NON-DEPLOYMENT RELATED



*Note – the means in which to calculate supervision days for an OPR is the exact same as an EPR.

"FROM" / "TO" DATE CALCULATIONS (Outside the norm)



Don't panic! This From/Thru date calculation infographic is easier to decipher than at first glance! First, determine which part of the total force that has your concern (active duty, guard, or reserve – all listed on the left).

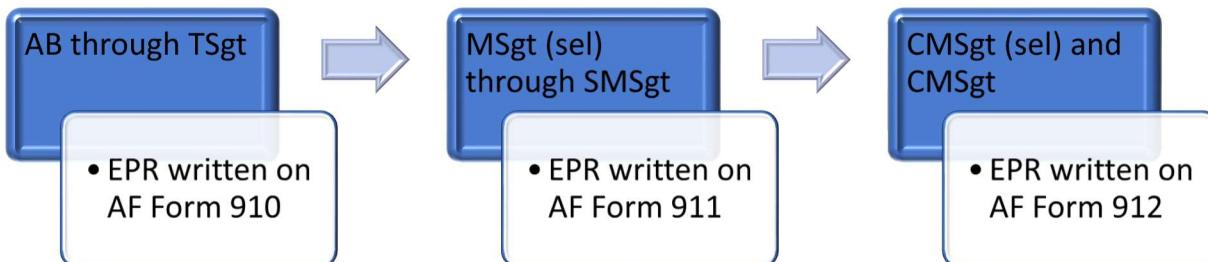
Then determine if you are looking for an answer regarding a from or a thru date on an OPR. All from dates are listed to the left of the black vertical line, whereas thru date rules (only one) is listed on the right.

From there, look for the situation that pertains to you. Some situations pertain to more than one component, hence you will see an overlap.

Example: For both active duty and guard, if a training report duration lasts greater than 20 weeks, the from date will be the day after the closeout of the training report.

CHAPTER 4 – EPRS

The EPR section is where innovative modeling needed to make a giant leap in order to capture all important pieces of data, limits, and deadlines. Approximately 80% of our force is enlisted, and this explains the reason in which the regulations focus so heavily for enlisted evaluations.



AB, Amn, A1C receive initial eval after 36 mos TIS as of SrA SCOD 31 Mar (4.3.1.)

Timeline diagram showing 36-month intervals for TIS and SCOD.											
Entered Service	SrA SCOD				SrA SCOD				SrA SCOD	SrA SCOD	
1 Jan, Yr 1	31 Mar, Yr 1			1 Jan, Yr 2	31 Mar, Yr 2			1 Jan, Yr 3	31 Mar, Yr 3	1 Jan, Yr 4	31 Mar, Yr 4
	3 mos TIS				15 mos TIS				27 mos TIS		39 mos TIS!

When court martial sentence is overturned, inclusive dates of AF Form 77 = last SCOD to released back to duty (4.3.4.)

Timeline diagram showing inclusive dates of AF Form 77 (LOE).										
Last SCOD	Court Martial Sentence								Overturned, Released back to duty	Next SCOD

EPR optional if member's separation / retirement date w/in 1 year of SCOD (4.3.5.)

If not writing EPR, complete final report with special verbiage NET 30 days before separation/retirement (4.3.5.2.2.)

Timeline diagram showing EPR requirements.										
Mandatory EPR			Optional EPR (retirement date < 1 yr from next SCOD)							
		Last SCOD			Finish final EPR w/ special verbiage	Retirement / Sep Date				Next SCOD

Do NOT Write EPR for ratee if:

BEFORE SCOD	Mbr's SCOD	AFTER SCOD
Died while on AD (4.4.2.)		Optional if death on/after SCOD (4.4.2.)
	In Commissioning prgm (4.4.3.)	
Disenrolled from commissioning prgm - must write one, c/o = date of removal (4.4.3.)		
Confined due to court martial sentence (4.4.4.)		
Appealate r/w leave, awaiting appeals court decision, in AF SF Center confinement (4.4.5.)		

This "DO NOT WRITE EPR for ratee if" chart is meant to be read as:

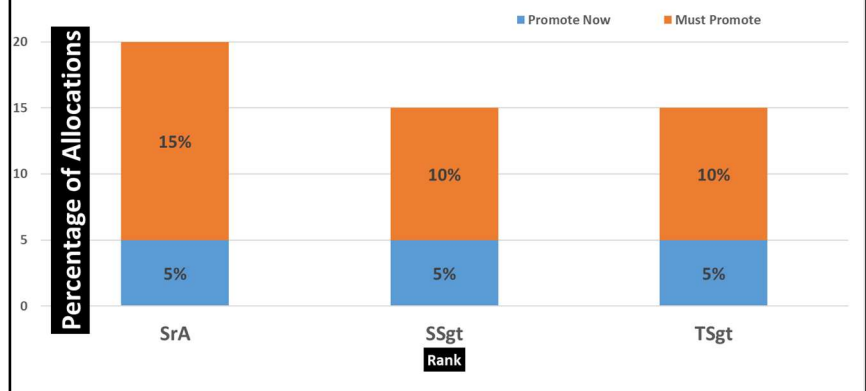
The condition in which to NOT write an EPR is below the "Before SCOD, Mbr's SCOD, After SCOD" row.

After which, the event listed shows the relative time, with respect to the SCOD, in which it occurs which will trigger NOT writing an EPR.

Example: If a member is in a commissioning program as of the SCOD, do not write an EPR

Example: If a member died before or on the date of the SCOD, do not write an EPR. If it occurred after, the EPR is optional

Force Distribution Allocations for "Promote Now" and "Must Promote" (4.18.4.2.)



Note: "Acct" indicates the accounting date for each squadron's number of Airmen in that rank specified. On that date, AFPC accounts for how many members a squadron has in that rank, which will determine large/small units and number of PN/MP allocations

CY FY	Year 2025 (ODD YEAR)												Year 2026 (EVEN YEAR)												Year 2027 (ODD YEAR)											
	FY 25				FY 26				FY 27				FY 26				FY 27				FY 28															
Part of Total Force	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar									
RegAF, AGR	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct									
ARC, non-	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct	3 - Acct									

Repeat previous timelines to all future years

Small Unit	Up to 10	11 or more	How EFDP proceeds	Sr / Mgmt - level FD actions (4.18.4.2.2) / [s.]	Allocations (4.18.6.2.1.)
Small Unit	Up to 10	11 or more	Roll up, compete at Sr-level or Mgmt-level EFDP (4.18.4.2.2.)	All Small Units compete for allocation, if not enough allocation, automatically has 1 PN, 1MP	Submit up to amount that Sr-level is granted
Large Unit	11 or more	11 or more	Hold its own FD Panel (4.18.4.2.1.)		Reference Chart for each rank

Scoring EFDP Packages					
Largest difference between any two scoring members					
0	0.5	1	1.5	2 or greater	
Accept final average score				This is a split; stop scoring and discuss until greatest difference <2	

Amn TDY to School (4.18.4.6.)				
0 wks	10 wks	20 wks	Greater than 20 wks	
Home station EFDP			TDY location EFDP	

EFDP Nomination Folder (4.18.7.1.)




Current for EFDP



Previous EPR



2 EPRs Ago



Current SURF



All Decorations

Type of Eval Needed	All on AD Status (Table 4.2.)						Not on AD Status (Table 4.3.)				
	RegAF		ARC			AGR	ARC non-AGR				
INITIAL EPR NEEDED	BEFORE	Mbr	AFTER	BEFORE	Mbr	AFTER	Dec 1	Mar 31,			
	SCOD	SCOD	SCOD	SCOD	SCOD	SCOD	20< mos TIS	20< mos TIS			
	Ratee = SrA (r1)		Ratee > A1C, no eval yet (r3)					C/O=20 mos TIS (n2)		C/O=3/31 (n2)	
	Ratee < SrA, 36 mos TAFMS (r2)										
Ratee < SrA, 20 - 36 mos TIS, dir'd by CC (n1)											
A1C Enlisted into National Call to Service Program (n9)											
ANNUAL EPR NEEDED	Member's Grade SCOD = Closeout (r5)		LAST	1 yr has passed (r4)		EVAL	LAST	Promoted		NEXT	
			EVAL			DUE	EVAL	Demoted		SCOD	
2 or more years difference (r19)											
Ratee = CMSgt (r13)											
BIENNIAL EPR NEEDED							LAST	Ratee > SrA & 2+ yrs has passed (r2)		BIENNIAL	
						EVAL			DUE	Ratee = CMSgt (r9)	
DIRECTED-BY-COMMANDER EPR NEEDED	These rules apply to all total force members on AD status						These rules apply only to non-AD mbrs				
	Closeout = 1 day prior to status		Closeout = Exact Day of Status Change			Closeout = CC Discretion	Closeout = Exact Day of Status Change		Closeout = CC Discretion		
	Placed on Control Roster (r6, n3)		Deserter (placed on record status 6) (n4)			Document substandard performance (r7)	Deserter (placed on record status 6) (n6)		Document substandard performance (r4)		
	Sentenced by Court Martial (r17)										
CC notified ratee of involuntary separation, ratee <MSgt (n5)											
DIRECTED-BY-HAF EPR NEEDED	These rules apply to all total force members on AD status						These rules apply only to non-AD mbrs				
	Day -1	Day 0				Day 15	Day 0	Day 15	1 yr	2 yrs	
	C/O = day before notice of invol sep (<MSgt) (n5)	Member's duration as MIA/captured/interned status= NO EPR (n7)				Prepare mbr EPR as AFPC/DP3SP directs, C/O = day 1 of MIA / captured / interned status (n7)	C/O = date of discharge (r7)				
	C/O = 1st day as 9A000, 9A100 (r10, n7)						Dir'd by HAF, ARPC, NGB (r6)				
	AFPC / DP3SP directs it (r12)						Member's duration as MIA / captured / interned status = no EPR (r8)	Prepare mbr EPR as ARPC / DPTSE directs, C/O = day 1 of MIA / captured / interned status (n5)			
			LAST		Promoted		LAST		Promoted		
			EVAL		Demoted		EVAL		Demoted		
			New Rank SCOD		New Rank SCOD		New Rank SCOD		New Rank SCOD		
			The following applies to only ARC			The following applies to only AGR			2+ years difference (ARC) (r10)		
			LAST		Promoted		LAST		Promoted		
		EVAL		Demoted		EVAL		Demoted			
		New Rank SCOD		New Rank SCOD		New Rank SCOD		New Rank SCOD			
		2+ years difference (r18)			1+ year difference (r19)			1+ year difference (r11)			
Directed by Full-Time Unit/CC, TAG, NGB/CF					In conjunction w/ invol removal from ANG AGR or Stat Tour (r14)						
					ANG Unit/CC, Adjutant Gen, NGB/CF directs it (r15)						

FROM / THRU DATE CALCULATIONS

PREVIOUS EVAL ON FILE: FORMER USAFA CADET: ← FROM THRU → INITIAL: ANNUAL/BIENNIAL: DIR'D BY CC / HAF/ NGB:

RegAF:

FROM = day AFTER previous eval closeout (4.6.1.)

FROM = TAFMS date (4.6.2.)

CLOSEOUT = 1st SCOD after achieving SFA OR 36 mos TTS as of SFA SCOD (4.7.1.1.)

Annual: Closeout on SCOD (4.7.2.1.)

Promo-select: Closeout = SCOD for rank selected to (4.7.2.1.)

STATUS CHANGES, including: MIA CAPTURED DETAINED Dir'd by CC: Closeout = Effective date of status change (4.7.3.1.1., 4.7.3.1.4.)

Demotion: Closeout = SCOD of previous rank (4.7.3.1.3.)

Directed by CC Closeout = date directed by CC (4.7.3.1.4.)

STEP / supplemental promotion causes > 1 yr gap in between evals
Closeout = SCOD for new rank (triggers DBH instead of Annual eval) (4.7.3.1.2.)

AFR:

Returned to enlisted grade: FROM = extended active duty date (4.6.3.)

FROM = Date assigned to AIC (4.6.4.)

(Below SSGt): FROM = Date initial entry uniformed services (4.6.4.)

> SFA added from any components: FROM = Date arrive station (4.6.5.)

(Below SSGt): FROM = Date initial entry uniformed services (4.6.5.)

CLOSEOUT = 1st SCOD as a STA (4.7.1.2.)

Biennial: Closeout on SCOD (4.7.2.2.)

ANG:





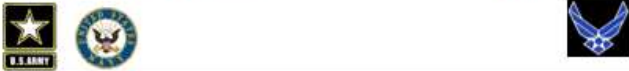
FROM = day AFTER previous eval closeout (4.6.1.)

CHAPTER 5 – LOES

Letters of Evaluation have a vast variety of rules, triggers, and deadlines. For this reason, it is near impossible to construct one timeline that can accurately depict all circumstances for every type of LOE. Therefore, an organized infographic sorted by LOE type best suits this chapter of the AFI 36-2406. The first chart gives a general overview of LOE rules (informal and formal) whereas the second chart delves deeper into mandatory LOEs (also known as Formal LOEs).

LOE Type	Official Record in PRDA?	Examples	FROM	Supervision Period	THRU
Informal	NO (5.2.2.)	Any instance not mentioned in Formal LOE Type (5.2.2.)	LATEST DATE OF: - 1st day of supervision - day after closeout of: -- EPR -- OPR -- TR (5.4.1.)	Period of Supervision for LOE, 60-119 days (5.2.1.4.)	Last day of supervision (T5.2, n2a)
Formal	YES (5.2.1.)	(5.2.) - Deployed Ops - Contingency Ops - Deployed CC - Separation - Supplemental - Administrative - Board-specific PRF not req'd			Day before PCS, PCA, temp duty Or CC written notice of separation (T5.2, n2b)

Formal LOEs(all from Chapter 5.2.)			
Name	Documents:	Limits / Deadlines / Triggers to Know	Noteworthy
Deployed CC	Performance of deployed officers on G-series orders filling a CC billet	45+ days filling CC billet	★ 1 rater for O-7+, unless referral
		Written NLT 7 days after relinquishing Cmd	<div style="border: 2px solid green; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;">Same deadline</div>
		FROM: Assumed Cmd → THRU: Relinquished Cmd OPR Clock not "reset;" this is embedded	
Deployed/ Contingency Ops	Performance of deployed members	60+ days supervision Written NLT 7 days of departure	Mbr can request LOE if under 60 days supervision
Separation	SrA separation if TAFMS too short, or officers separating w/ supervision days too short	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">Officers w/ <120 days supervision, & separating</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> EVALUATION Outstanding Very Good Satisfactory Marginal Unsatisfactory </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">SrA <36 mos TAFMS, for: - Unsat performance - Parenthood - Uncontrollable conditions</div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> </div>	If SrA transferring to other branch, write EPR <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 20px;"> </div>
Supplemental	Augment or provide more info for an eval		4 types, all continuations sheets for: - Referral evals ← most common - Evaluator disagreements - Air Force Advisor - Functional / Acquisition Examiner

Administrative	Break in service	<p>Prior service with earlier eval, but break in service: FROM: service break day 1 THRU: extended active duty - 1 assignment begins - 1 (non-AD, SrA+)</p> <p>If prior service, no earlier eval, break in service: TAFMS (enlisted) reentry to AD - 1 Extended active duty (officers)</p>	<p>Project Next Eval Closeout To:</p> <p>Enlisted: 20+ mos TAFMS → Next SCOD, Annual eval <20 mos TAFMS → 20 mos TAFMS, Initial eval</p> <p>Officers: 1 yr from EAD, Annual Eval</p>
	Long periods of lost time	<p>START: Last eval closeout + 1 day END: Mbr released from confinement</p>	<p>Prisoner Status  Appellate Leave</p>
	Educational leave	<p>START: Started program END: Return to Unit Next eval FROM: Return to Unit + 1 day</p> <p></p>	<p>Signed by: Unit CC or above </p>
	Temporarily retired, then returned		Dates managed by AFPC/DPSDD
	Substitute lost, missing, removed evals	<p>18 months after closeout Do not reaccomplish missing eval</p> <p>120 Days Wait time to request missing eval after member re-entered duty</p>	<p>Examples: - Ordered removed by AF Board for Correction of Mil Records (AFI 36-2603), or by ERAB (Ch 10) - Lost/missing evals where all attempts to locate have failed </p>
	Service Transfer	<p>START: Closeout of other svc eval END: Entered USAF</p> <p></p>	

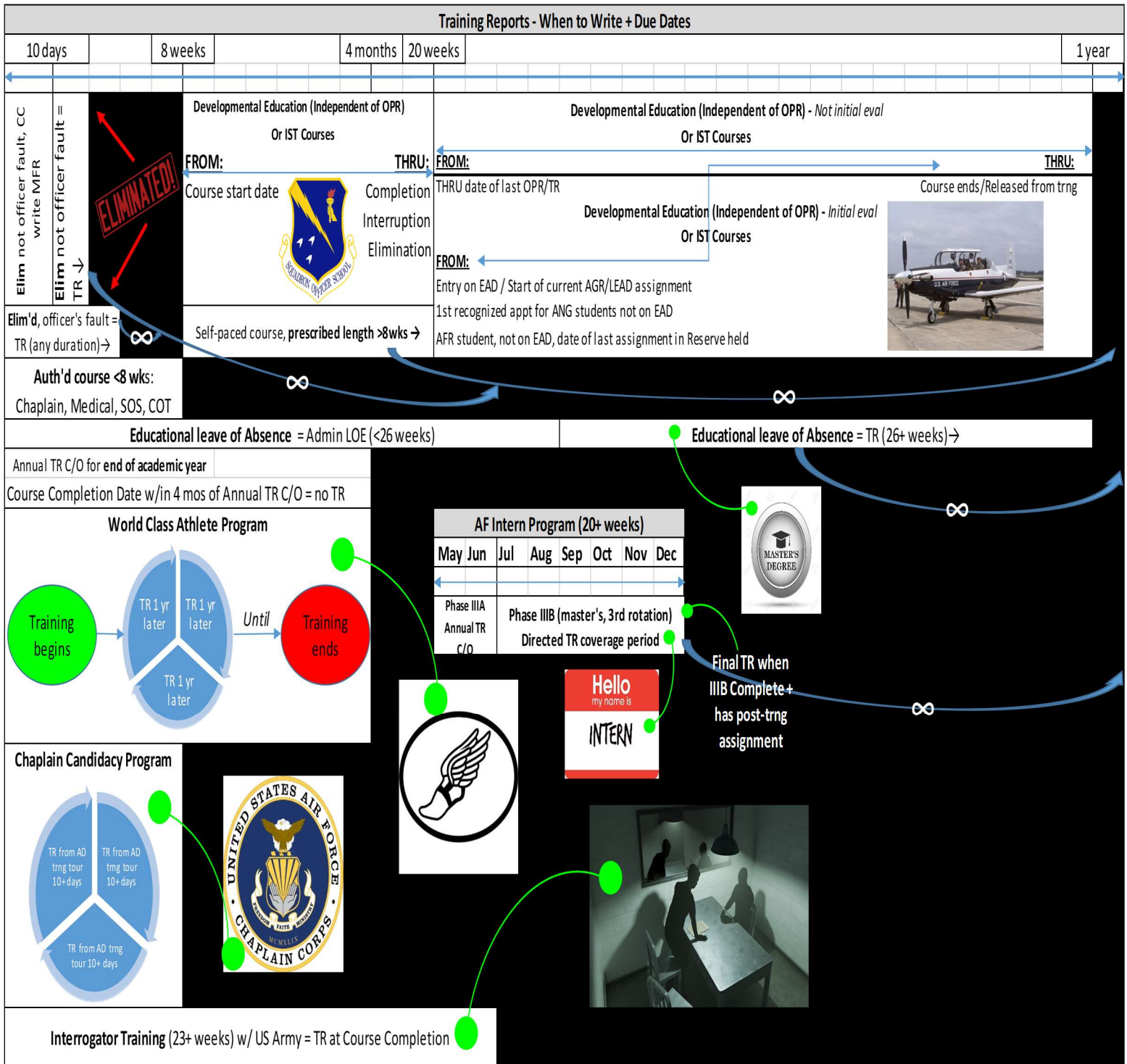
CHAPTER 6 – TRAINING REPORTS (TRs)

There are a vast variety of training reports (TRs) and reasons to write one, and to not write one but substitute the period of work for a different evaluation. Because of the extremely unique nature of training reports, and that many of them are more circumstantial than every other evaluation we have covered, the best modeling technique involves an infographic with pictorial references scattered throughout the model as a quick visual reference on where to find guidance on that circumstance.

For example, if you are looking for guidance on one of the most common types of training reports, developmental education, rather than sift through and read each and every box on various types of guidance, the Squadron Officer School (SOS) emblem is displayed towards the top (which is a type of developmental education).

You will also notice various arrows stemming from an informational box that extends to the edge of the graphic, with an infinity symbol overlaying the arrow. This is to indicate that a TR would be written in a certain circumstance as long as a certain duration of time has been met – there is no maximum time.

For example, a member may take an educational leave of absence to learn from a civilian institution. You'll notice that the box for this circumstance starts at 26 weeks, and has our symbol as previous mentioned. This means that any educational leave of absence from 26 weeks on to an infinite amount of time (no maximum time stated in the AFI) will apply to writing this TR.



AFIT TRs Received			
Type of Program	1 yr 18 mos 2 yrs		
Masters or Long School	Master's / long school students (Final TR) (Above Promo Zone = DBH TR)		
PhD Program	Assume PhD Program = 3 years		
Both	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">PhD Students - receive midterm TR at end of this period</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">PhD Students - receive final TR at end of program</td> </tr> </table>	PhD Students - receive midterm TR at end of this period	PhD Students - receive final TR at end of program
PhD Students - receive midterm TR at end of this period	PhD Students - receive final TR at end of program		
Both	DBC Referral TR is student not making progress ✖		

CHAPTER 7 – GENERAL OFFICER EVALUATIONS

The information contained in this section of the guide will be most useful for executives, administrative assistants, action groups and senior leadership working for General Officers. Of course, anyone of the rank O-7 and above should find this section useful.

When perusing through the seventh and second-shortest chapter in the regulation, it was quickly evident that this chapter would require the greatest amount of effort in modeling in an effective manner. Remember, this chapter of the guide focuses upon timelines, suspenses, limits, etc. General Officer Evaluation guidance is more focused on responsibilities and which entities must perform each action.

Before you panic from viewing the upcoming diagrams that models each rule in Chapter 7, realize that reading and deciphering these diagrams are more user-friendly than initially viewed.

Cells:

First and foremost, you'll notice that:

Black Cells represent a **type of report**

Red Cells indicate a **significant person or entity** in a pathway (pathways will be explained later)

Yellow Cells indicate **an action** that has taken place, such a CRO occurring, TDY, etc

Blue Cells indicate a **minor entity** or player within the pathway

Green Cells indicate a **date** or a **period of time**

Purple Cells indicate a **circumstance**, such as promotion eligibility or yielding an optional report

White Cells simply represent **attributes of the AF Form 78**, or better known as a General Officer Evaluation

Lines:

Lines in the diagrams simply point from one cell to the next, with the relationship or significant information being placed somewhere along the line (if needed). You will notice there are many line colors, this is to distinguish different pathways and processes that take place, *this has no relationship to cell colors mentioned above*. The purpose of line colors is solely to distinguish between different pathways that may interact with the same cell.

This helps the reader because you will know if a pathway or process has ended at a cell because no other line of that color will be heading outward from the cell. You may notice that several lines of the same color converge on one cell, and that's ok! That simply means that each of those pathways ends at that cell. It does *not* mean that those pathways are related to each other.

In short, wherever you see a starting point of a line color, follow that all the way until it reaches a cell where it no longer has an outbound line of the same color, that is essentially a *pathway*.

Pathways: The entire process of beginning at a cell starting point and following the same colored lines all the way to an ending point (which is indicated by no further outbound lines of that color) is this guide's definition of a pathway.

An entire pathway visually aids the reader in understanding the rules and relationships in terms of General Officer evaluations. It also provides insight into how processes or rules can potentially interact or have similar starting or ending points, which can aid you in noticing patterns or overlaps in processes. Rather than grinding through Chapter 7 and attempting to process the information from a black-and-white textual standpoint, you have these diagrams to quickly dispatch any questions you may have.

For example, let's look at the pathway in part 1, black line color, starting at the red "General Officer" cell. The black line points to a TDY occurring. Then two black lines diverge outward to either an LOE or OPR. So far, we know that when a General Officer goes TDY, either an LOE or OPR will occur. We must look at the

information in the lines to see the relationship. One quick look and we can tell that if a General Officer is TDY for 60-179 days, this will trigger an LOE. If the General Officer is TDY for 180 days or more, that will trigger an OPR.

What about *several of the same-colored lines diverging* from the same point? This indicates *simultaneous conditions*. For the technical folks, consider it an “*and*” statement or condition.

For example, again, let’s take a look at the pathway in part one, *red line* color, starting at the red “General Officer” cell. Three lines diverge out of the cell, pointing towards retirement date, the closeout cell, and the OPR cell. We notice that the line heading towards the retirement date has information indicating that the date has been withdrawn. This means the General Officer has withdrawn his retirement date. The red line heading towards the closeout cell has information “within 90 days.” Remember, this is an “and” statement. Putting this information together, we determine that the General Officer has withdrawn his retirement date within 90 days of his OPR closeout. The final line points towards the OPR with the information “promo rec” (or promotion recommendation).

Putting this all together, we conclude that a General Officer that has withdrawn his retirement date <and> within 90 days of his closeout <and> a promotion recommendation on his OPR.

Translating to plain English: A General Officer that has withdrawn his retirement date within 90 days of his annual closeout will have a promotion recommendation on his OPR. Note: The promotion recommendation means there will be a recommendation to be promoted or not be promoted.

The Blackbelt Example: Now, let’s translate the most convoluted pathway in the diagrams – the black pathway in part 2, starting from “General Officer”

Cell: General Officer

Info on Black Line: moves within

Cell: Current Management Level

Info on Black Line: within 90 days of

Cell: Closeout

Info on Black Line: then

Cell: Rater

Info on Black Line: writes

Cell: CRO

Info on Black Line: forward to

Cell: Current Management Level

Info on Black Line: (and)

- completes if promotion eligible + (16-19)

-- Cell: Block 15

- completes if not promotion eligible

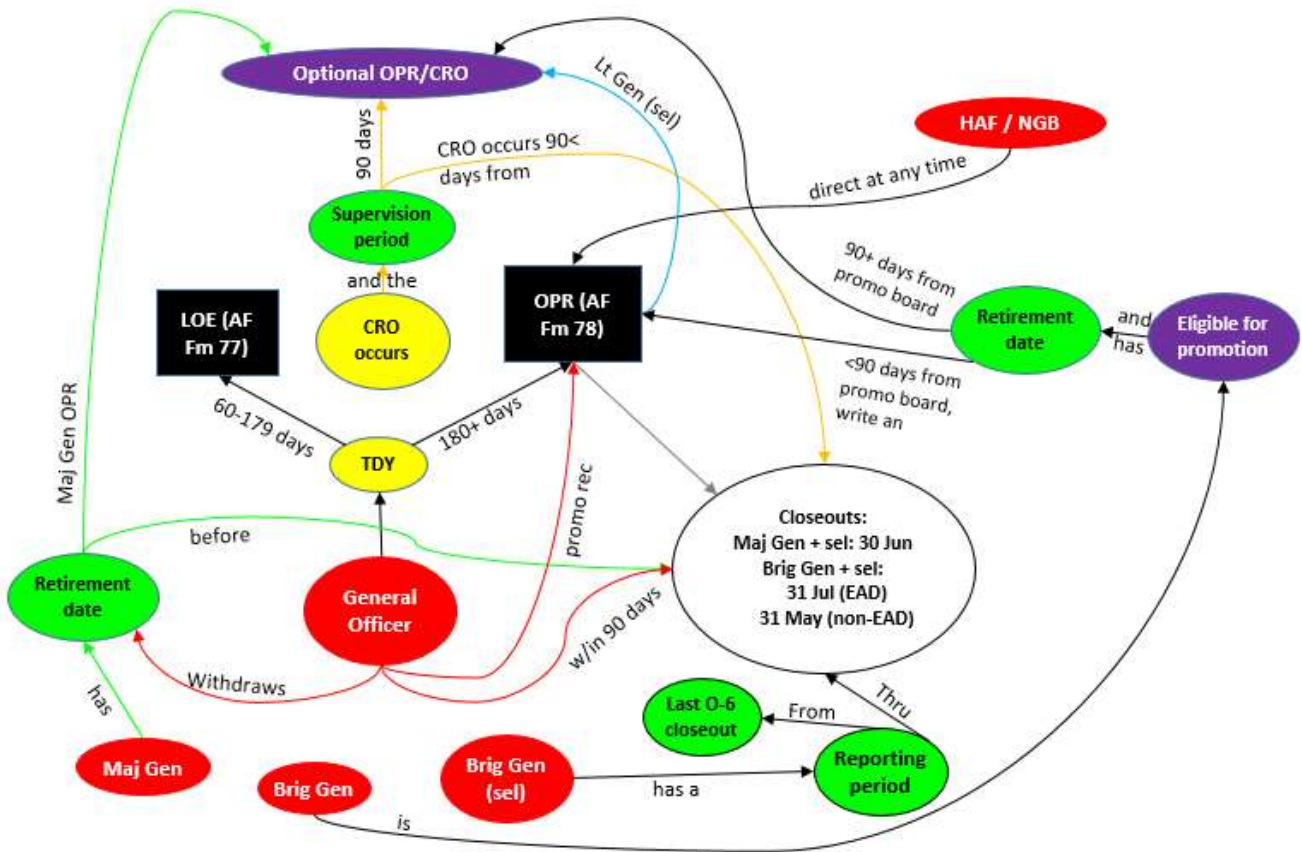
-- Cell: Block 16-19

Translated:

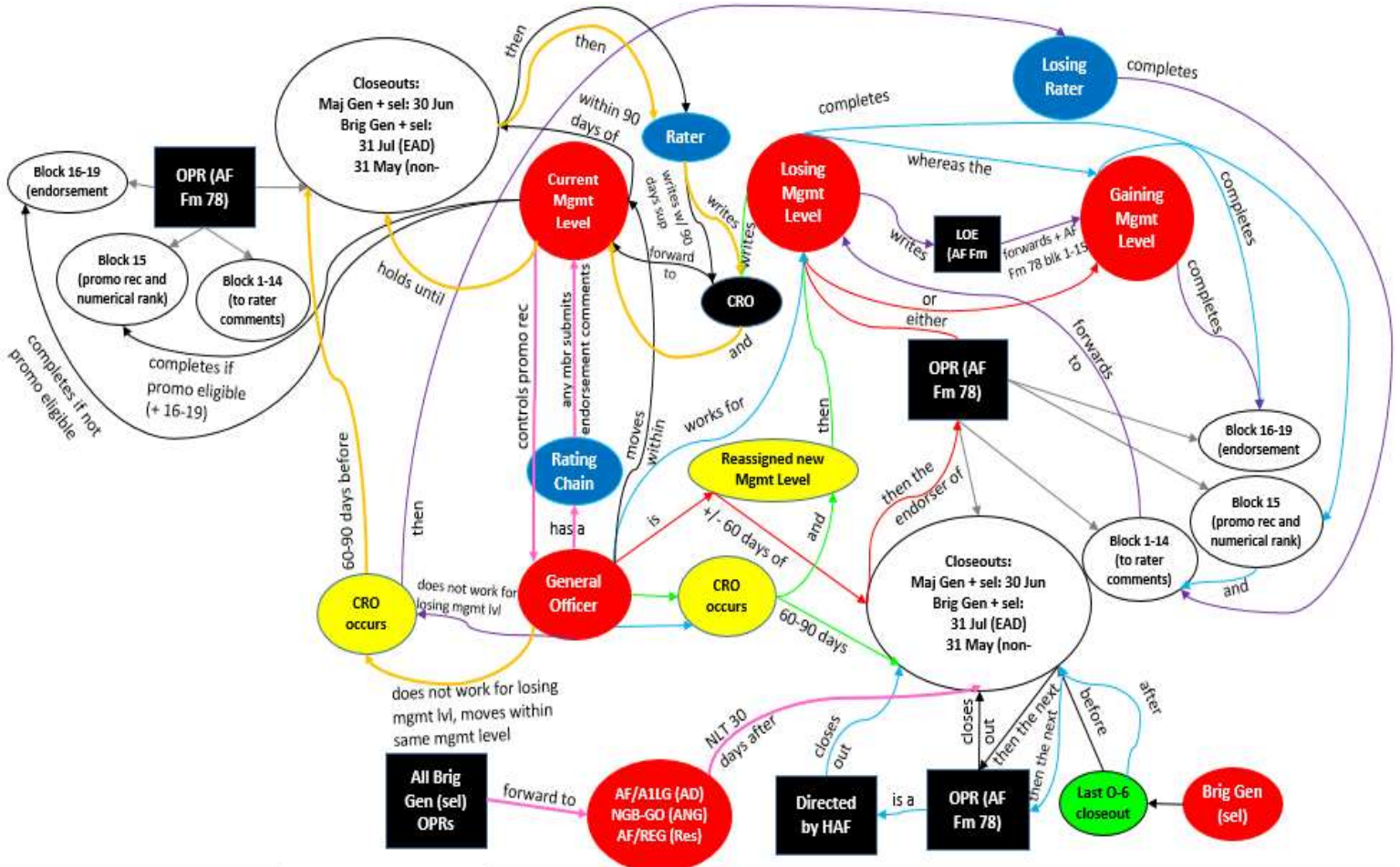
A General Officer that moves within his current management level within 90 days of closeout, then the Rater will write a CRO, forward it to the Management Level (of the General Officer, of course), and then the Management Level will complete (if promotion eligible, plus block 16-19) block 15. If the General Officer is not promotion eligible, the Management Level will complete only blocks 16-19.

If that translation seemed challenging, breathe easy, that is the most challenging pathway to decipher. Without further delay, below are the diagrams of Chapter 7:

Visual “Cellular Pathway” of AFI 36-2406, Para 7.2 – 7.4.3.

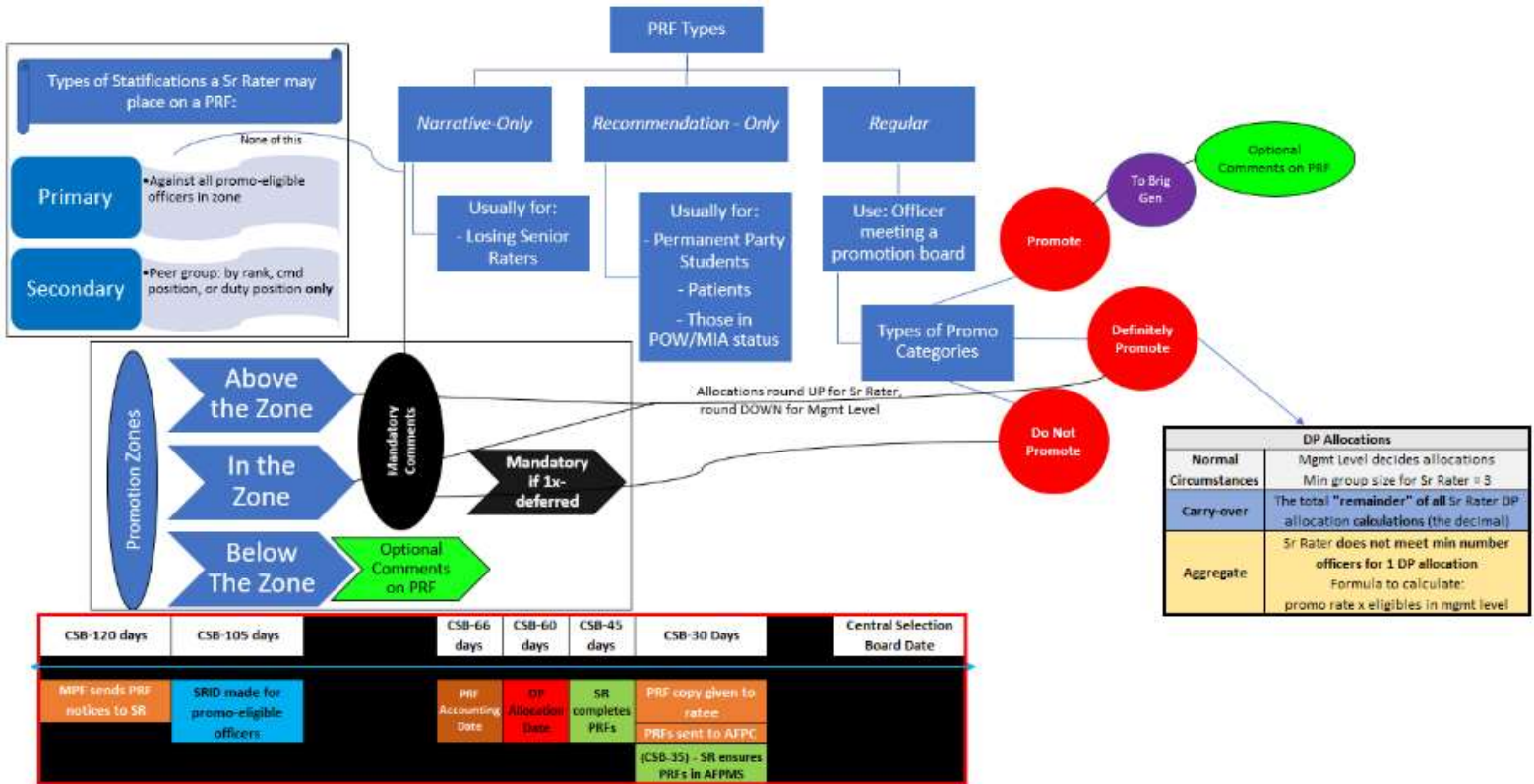


Visual “Cellular Pathway” of AFI 36-2406, Para 7.4.4.-7.4.8. (can you believe this encompasses only 1.5 pages in the regulation?!)



CHAPTER 8 – PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION FORMS (PRF)

The PRF chapter is one of the heaviest, as described earlier, but most content involves mainly responsibilities of each entity involved in the process, as well as the steps involved in the central selection board (CSB). The remaining data is summarized in the figure below:



CHAPTER 9 – RETENTION RECOMMENDATION FORMS (RRF)

At certain times in our history, the tough decision must be made on which Airmen will stay, and which will be cut loose. In an ideal world, this should never happen, but unfortunately this event transpires more often than what one would deem “comfortable.”

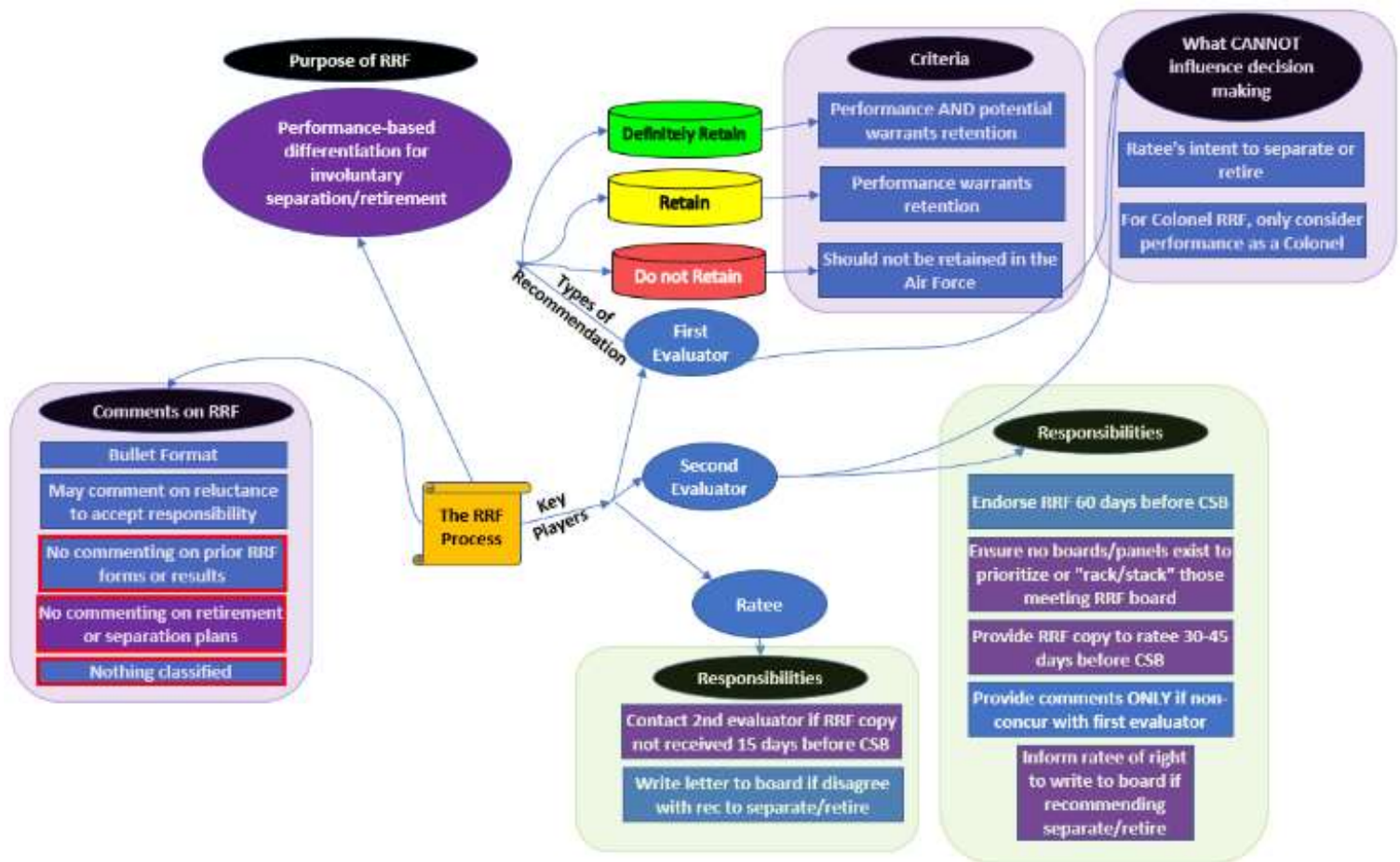
The Retention Recommendation Forms are used to convey to the central selection board which members are deemed worthy of remaining in the Air Force based on performance and/or performance potential. Evaluators are given “definitely retain” allocations but are not compelled to meet a “do not retain” quota.

The following infographic best describes the meager chapter of the RRFs, which only comprise 2% of the entire regulation. Although the chapter on RRFs is rather small, the implications are exactly the inverse. If involved in this process, you are directly engaged in deciding the future careers of Airmen, and it is the discussions and deliberations that make up the vast majority of this process. Evaluators should have access to as many performance-based records as possible when evaluating those under review for retention, especially OPRs, SURF, TRs, LOEs, decorations, UIFs, AFFMS scores, etc. The finest detail may make the difference in a recommendation to retain or separate.

One surprising fact you will see is that, as an evaluator, you cannot make a decision to retain or not retain based on the ratee’s intent to separate or retire. The intent of the retention CSB is to retain the best-performing members, regardless of future plans. *In other words, that’s the Air Force, in AFI-terms, telling you that it values*

a member that works hard and performs well and may have plans to leave over a member that does not perform well yet has no plans to leave. The return-on-investment on a member that can perform well and leave soon is greater than one that is “dead weight” and only costing his or her squadron administrative time to process paperwork.

Those items highlighted below in purple should be given special attention to anyone involved in the process.



CHAPTER 10 – CORRECTING OFFICER AND ENLISTED EVALUATIONS

The grand finale of the AFI36-2406 finally encapsulates any scenario in which the ratee feels there has been an error on the evaluation, or an injustice. Airmen across the globe have a right to express concern when an evaluation has potentially, and unjustifiably, harmed their future careers. However, it is important to note that the correction boards are *not designed* to strengthen evaluations and will not honor any requests to do only that.

In the infographic below, in the bottom left corner, it is important to note that, with respect to minor corrections, officer matters will be colored in red, while enlisted matters are colored in black.

Attributes of certain entities are expressed as hollow, transparent boxes, such as Board Presidents for minor corrections on evaluations, or how to commence the Evaluations Record Appeals Board (ERAB).

Time Limits

- Submit appeal **within 3 years of most becoming master of record** (add 2 years to final signature date if unknown)
- **180** - 45 days before cutoff date
- If expedited request, submit by 90 days before cutoff **(still no guarantee)**

Prohibited Requests

- Void eval, when correction can be made administratively
- Void eval, but keep attachments
- Void evaluator's comments, but keep subsequent evaluator's comments
- Void evaluator comments, but keep ratings, or vice versa
- Change an evaluator's comments when evaluator does not permit change
- Make evaluation sound stronger
- Void eval that comments on behavior that lead to administrative action

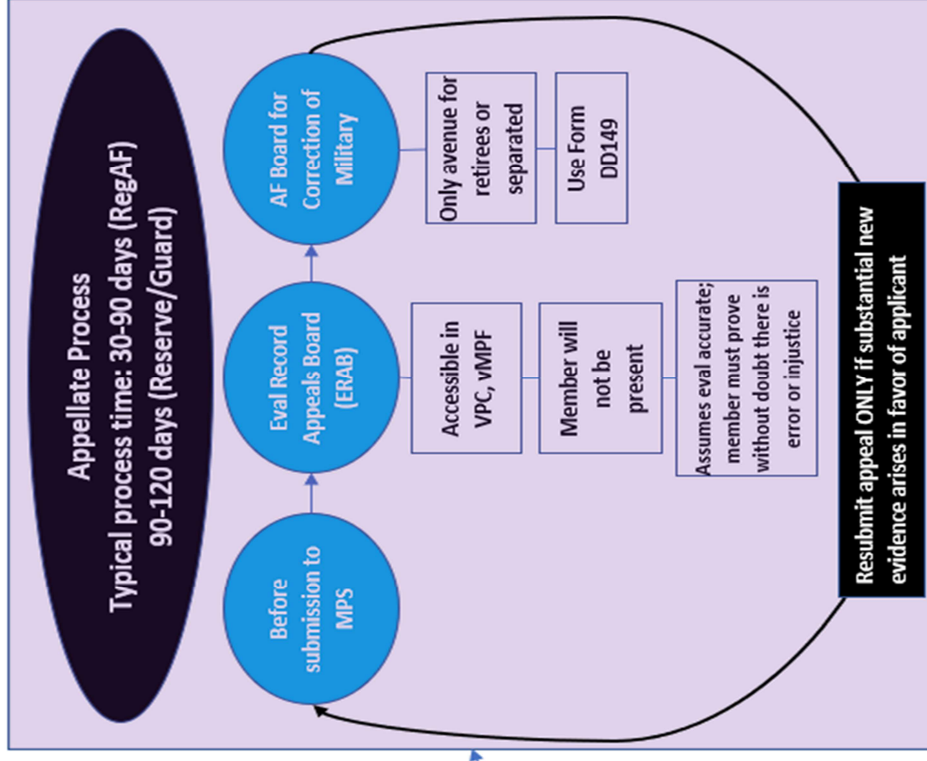
Purpose: correct errors or injustices on evaluations at the lowest possible level

The Eval Correction Process

Total Force Service Center: Decides if appeal will need minor correction or formal board

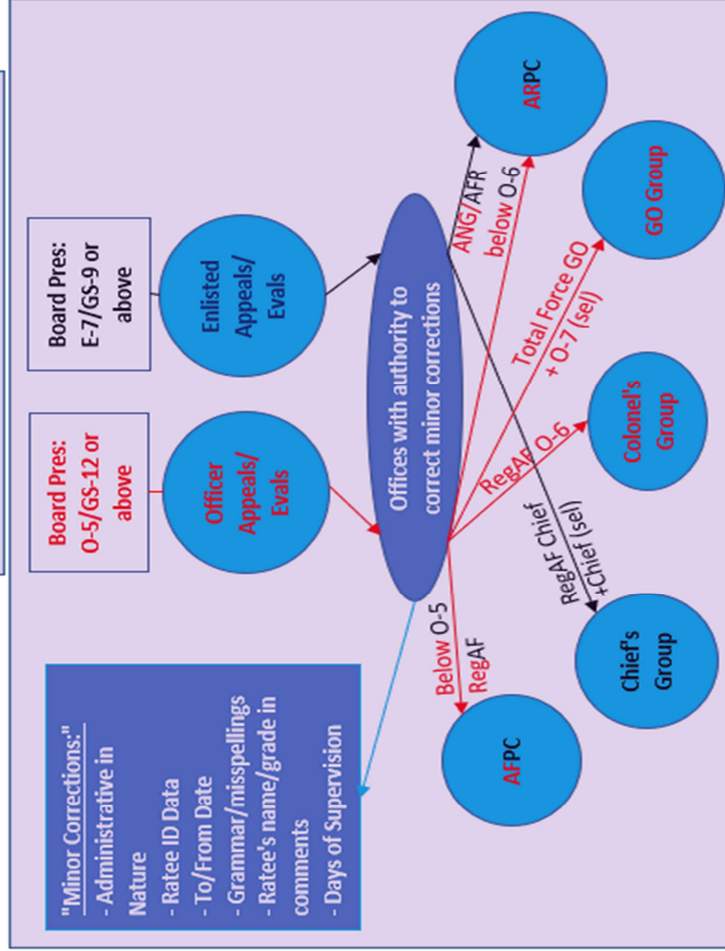
Minor corrections

Formal Board Needed



If Appeal Initiated by someone other than ratee:

- 1) Verify ratee, and get a non-concur/non-concur statement
- 2) Appeal can move forward with non-concur, the purpose is raise acknowledgment
- 3) Ratee has 10 calendar days to respond if unable to submit comments on erroneous report
- 4) Annotate lack of rates comments if 10 days pass without ratee comments
- 5) Move forward with appellate process above



FUTURE OPR TRENDS – SQUEEZING THE “LIME” INTO YOUR EVALUATIONS

The future of officer evaluations are, as of Spring 2020, beginning to focus more on concepts outlined in the AF11-2, “Commander’s Responsibilities.” In this publication, there are four specific areas that are emphasized that point to the overall duties of a commander. These duties can be remembered using the acronym “LIME:”

- Leading People
- Improving the Unit
- Managing Resources
- Executing the Mission

In the AFI, the responsibilities are not listed in the order above, but rather:

- Executing the Mission
- Leading People
- Managing Resources
- Improving the Unit

If you are looking for an acronym to help remember the duties in order of precedence in the AFI, consider **ELMI**, **ELRI**, or “**Every Leader Must Improve**,” “**Execs Like Responsive Units**” (especially for TMT, with respect to that final mnemonic.

The AF11-2 is a noticeably short document, a meager six pages, but it is one of those rare AFIs that get straight to the point on what it expects of its leaders in command. There is no indication that those areas mentioned first, as compared to last, are of any greater significance. Therefore, for the purpose of this guide, we will assume that all four areas are weighted the same.

We will continue on in this chapter delving deeply into each area and observing examples of certain attributes or actions that provide evidence of that particular area being addressed. After which, we will discuss how bullets on an evaluation can be written to indicate that these areas are being addressed. From there, we will examine some artifacts or tangible evidence that you can reference to aid you in finding meaningful data and evidence in constructing bullets that indicate accomplishing these four different areas.

Leading People:

We begin our lime squeeze with one of the most difficult words to define in the military: leadership. Air University and colleges across the country have published thousands of books and launched probably an equal number of courses that dissect this concept.

From an AF11-2 perspective, here are some key words that are mentioned that can aid in zeroing-in on what your bullets can focus on:

“Pay judicious attention to the morale and welfare of their subordinates”

When you hear morale and welfare, you may immediately default to thinking of the squadron first sergeant, or one of the Force Support Squadron’s functions. However, improving the morale and welfare can be taken on by any individual, any time. Some items to consider when implementing this in your bullets:

- Squadron parties, booster club positions (President, VP, Treasurer, etc), money raised for equipment
- Reduction in redundant tasks, freeing up time for more mission-essential items
- Positive statistics from climate surveys
- Implementation of DEOCS feedback leading to a reduction in negative statistics
- Squadron-developed programs that the wing adapted for morale and welfare (designated driver program, battle-buddy concept for mental health, etc)

“A healthy command climate fosters good order and discipline, teamwork, cohesion, and trust”

The most successful units in the Air Force are those that rely on their smaller teams to perform the mission with little to no decision-making on the commander’s part, except to continually provide resources, manning, and guidance to the team. In any relationship, whether it is professional, personal, or familial, I would argue that one of the strongest sources of friction derives from a lack of trust. The absence of trust breaks down communication, as peers will not count on a particular person to do the job. Therefore each other person increases their workload to get a job done for which there is no trust for the designated person to complete. The second and third-order effects of broken trust cause increased work, broken communication, no cohesion, resentment, and bitterness – all the toxic traits of an organization destined to cripple. While capturing the preceding terms in a bullet may be particularly daunting, here are some helpful examples:

- Positive DEOCS statistics
- A noticeable drop in disciplinary issues, or if the squadron is leading amongst x-amount of units
- A forming of a tiger team, improvement process team, etc to solve exceptionally-challenging issues
- Number of team-level awards captured in the marking period, as well as the competitors defeated
- Cultural or social issues addressed or resolved indicates the urgency to build and maintain trust

Communication

From an officer’s standpoint, this attribute does not necessarily only mean delivering a clear and concise message, it is much more. Officers are responsible for building networks and partnerships to expand the sources of information and insight that flow in and out of their scope of responsibility. Some great examples of building communication within an officer’s purview:

- Partnerships leveraged for a specific project or initiative that resulted in better results than working solo
- Information or insight gained from social networks developed
- Inspection results that derived from the officer’s guidance and intent
- “Practice runs” or “ROC drills” that enabled the team to better prepare for the live event
- Test score averages as a result of the officer’s instructional capabilities

Training and Development

Our Airmen – the most valuable part of our Air Force – cannot successfully perform the mission without a solid education that is applicable to job-related duties. As officers, we owe it to our subordinates to continually and frequently provide training and development opportunities to continue as the most lethal Air Force in the world. Lack of development or training only leads to stagnancy and prevents modernization of our weaponry and capabilities. No disruptive invention or innovation ever occurred without some form of education, trial-and-error, or extensive studying in the field. Examples of capturing this leadership attribute are:

- A number of new courses offered to your unit, a percentage increase since last time
- Obtaining an advanced degree in a field of study related to the mission
- A formation of a test, development, or training flight or team to focus on the educational aspect of the job
- A formation of an individual development plan for members of the squadron
- Joint-training opportunities that contribute to the integration of all branches in support of our national interests

Tools and Artifacts:

Morale and Welfare:

- DEOCS Surveys
- Robust SharePoint Sites
- Newsletters
- CC Call Minutes
- Emails of reassurance (open-door policies, etc)
- Commander feedback boxes
- Wingman days and Resiliency Tactical Pauses

- Squadron social media sites
- Self-help initiatives
- The Awards Program
- Chaplain Engagement

Good order and Discipline (GD), Teamwork (TW), Cohesion and Trust (CT):

- Status of Discipline slides (GD)
- Checklists (GD)
- Job Safety Training Outline (GD)
- JAG Engagement (GD)
- DEOCS Surveys (GD, CT)
- Tiger teams, IPTs (TW)
- Squadron social media sites (TW, CT)
- Idea programs, innovation programs (TW, CT)
- Emails of reassurance (CT)
- Commander feedback boxes (CT)
- Wingman days, Resiliency Tactical Pauses (CT)
- Robust SharePoint Sites (All)

Communication:

- Memoranda of Agreement
- Memoranda of Understanding
- Meeting minutes with outside organizations
- Mission and Vision Statements
- Commander feedback boxes
- Unit message boards
- Collaboration Sites
- Usage of OneNote
- Usage of Shared Documents
- Frequency of meetings (without excessive engagement)
- Recall roster possession and drills
- Cellular phone applications designed for team collaboration (Slack, Trello, etc)

Training and Development:

- Job-related commercial certifications earned
- ADLS training records
- Job-related advanced degrees
- Idea programs, innovation programs
- Special Experience Identifiers
- SURFs (FOUO) contain a vast amount of educational data
- Civilian training opportunities
- Memoranda of Agreement or Understanding with commercial vendors
- Training trackers
- Individual Development Plans
- Allocated time for CDC studying, in conjunction with results
- Squadron Academic or Training Days

Improving the Unit:

An immediate goal of any officer inbound to a new position is to leave the flight, squadron, group, etc much better than the condition in which it was at the time the officer first arrived. It is safe to say that there will

always be room for improvement, room to grow, and knowledge to expand upon. With an ever-changing battleground on land, at sea, in air, space, and cyberspace, the possibilities for improvement are unending. In this sense, officers should strive to streamline processes, raise inspection scores, and make decisions based upon facts and decisions, while simultaneously staying within legal boundaries and supporting the mission at all levels. If efforts are not aligned with mission, it is the officer's duty to re-prioritize or question the intent of an ongoing project or initiative. Again, below are key phrases from the "Improving the Unit" section from the AFI:

"Continuous Process Improvement . . . foster a culture of innovation"

CPI persists as one of the most hot-topic items across the Air Force in terms of bettering squadrons. In the wing I currently serve in, we have monthly recurring taskers to update the roster of CPI-certified green and blackbelts, and those members are immediately put to work! An officer has an inherent duty to better the flight, unit, etc that he enters so that will free up resources for other important initiatives, hopefully to also further advance his scope of responsibility's mission. Below are some examples and topics to incorporate into your bullets to capture this:

- CPI certified members, both green and blackbelt
- Innovation encouragement and execution, along with follow-through
- Recurring certified CPI practitioners incorporated into squadron business
- Developing processes to track and analyze key performance indicators
- Using internal control mechanisms during mission execution (inventory, safety, trigger points, etc)

"Identifying and fixing deficiencies"

This excerpt will typically call to mind inspection scores and the IGEMS program, however, it is important for any officer to note that a deficiency is not solely constituted by what is identified in an inspection. Deficiencies, by definition, are any metrics that have not met a set standard. The following are examples of identifying and fixing them within an officer's scope of responsibility to incorporate into bullets:

- Identifying bottlenecks through the use of analytics and research studies
- Uncovering the sources of bottlenecks and proposing several COAs to expedite processes
- Developing a fix-action plan that permanently fixes the solution, rather than temporarily for an inspection
- Reassessing the applicability of an inspection item as it pertains to a squadron's mission, exploring waivers
- Reconfiguring a manning document to reallocate manpower where it is most vital in a unit (i.e. – deficient in certain types of operators, etc)

"Make data-driven decisions"

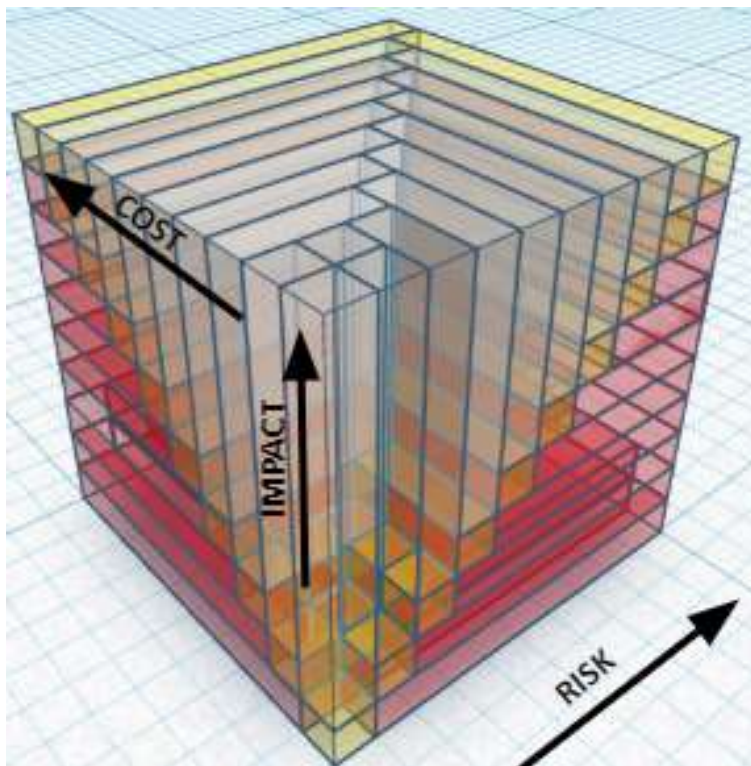
Any officer knows that not all decisions made will be 100% informed. Missing information, the depth of information, the breadth, or certain details that may make the difference in trigger points may be lacking. However, when the time allows, officers should strive to make complex decisions and know the type of data and information required for that decision. In a way, officers should prepare to be mildly proficient in data science, at least with respect to knowing what questions must be asked, and where to ascertain that data. While making data-driven decisions may be difficult to capture in an evaluation, the following suggestions can help aid you in the content to incorporate:

- Developing, analyzing, and applying data from trackers, then adding impacts from those trackers in the bullet
- Ascertaining new data that leads to influential decisions from higher levels of leadership
- Launching surveys or assessments to fuel decisions such as unfunded requirements
- Forming an action team to capture metrics that prove a "certain way of doing things" is ineffective
- Setting forth a pilot program to determine if a project or initiative should continue forward

"Manage Risk"

Risk Management is another hot topic discussed especially in the operational career fields. While we should put forth our best effort to avoid a risk-averse culture, it is important to avoid recklessness or making rash decisions when time allows. I personally have developed an in-depth model for risk management, which has been

implemented in the Information Environment Advanced Analysis (IEAA) Course, which I highly recommend for anyone exploring the option of serving in a joint operational environment. The figure below, called the RIC Model (Risk, Impact, Cost) in which each attribute is scored on a scale of 1-10, and the final overall score is placed somewhere within the cube. If the final score lands in red – the action should be avoided, if it lands in white – press forward, if it lands in yellow – it requires more deliberation and discussion.



While exalting risk-informed decisions is typically not an easy task with bullet writing, what should be focused upon are the results of those risks, or lessons learned. The following examples can aid you in developing the best bullets with respect to managing risk and making risk-informed decisions:

- Applying lessons learned in a failed project for future projects (it is important to allow your Airmen to experience failure in an initiative, but be prepared to reinvigorate them upon failure and reassure them of what has been learned)
- Become extremely familiar with the deviation process, and defend the decision with logic and facts
- If successful, discussing your risk-informed decision and how it may be adapted to other units
- Developing a new methodology or analytical method to analyze risk, such as the model highlighted above
- Incorporating your personnel into risk management training and encouraging its application unit-wide

“Strategic Alignment”

Ultimately, while a GIF (not the file format, GIF stands for Good Idea Fairy) storm may be a daily recurring theme in an officer’s life, it is critical to first ask the GIF “how will this further our mission or support it?” If that question can be answered, the follow-up will be “will this replace or make better any current processes we have, and what will be the cost?” If the GIF survives these two questions, the next question should be “ok, you proved this is aligned to our mission and will make our processes better, are you willing to create a team and sell it to the unit?” If the GIF can make it through this three-question gauntlet, it is recommended to push forward.

We must remember in all we do, we must make decisions in the best interest of the Air Force, always.

Throughout a career, officers will see all kinds of “shiny objects,” those distractors that appear fantastic for the unit but after some research, it is determined the cost, risk, or training familiarity or switching cost will be rather overwhelming and setback current operations significantly just to familiarize with it. With that said, the

following are examples to add to your bullets to emphasize strategic alignment:

- Focus upon the impact, what did your project or initiative do for the larger mission? (Without creating an RDX bullet)
- Periodically revising mission and vision statements to maintain relevance and motivation for the unit
- Metric review boards to determine if adjustments must be made, and the results of the changes
- Reassessing the unit's mission to determine possible expansions of capabilities
- Revising the unit manning document and creating/modifying billets to create a more effective force
- Aligning objectives, key results, and lines of effort to evolving priorities of higher organizational levels

Tools and Artifacts:

Continuous Process Improvement:

- Roster of CPI-certified personnel
- Roster of all personnel with CPI-related certifications
- After-action Reports
- Squadron surveys on process improvement recommendations

Identifying and Fixing Deficiencies:

- List of prioritized, recommended improvements for the unit
- MICT
- Root Cause Analyses
- Trend analysis of deficient processes
- CIMB meeting minutes and material

Data-driven Decisions:

- Analytical metrics of key performance indicators
- Analysis performed on metrics, with decision-inducing statistics (averages, standard deviations, variance, etc)
- Unit, Group, Wing Dashboards
- Synthesizing applications for multiple sources of data
- Data analytics team, skilled in data analysis, to provide meaningful insight behind data captured

Manage Risk:

- Mathematical application of risky decisions (RIC model, weighted sum model, etc)
- Risk management assessments
- Risk management test averages or results of personnel
- A dashboard of go/no-go conditions
- Trigger points of lines of effort, or decisions that must be made

Strategic Alignment:

- Unit Strategic Plan
- List of running initiatives or programs in the unit, and status of each as well as resources needed
- Wing-level prioritized lines of effort
- Higher level mission and vision statements posted and known throughout the unit
- Objectives and LOEs visually depicted as aligned to upper level priorities
- Reallocating budget to meet higher-level priorities

Managing Resources:

Missions and advancement reach stagnation when resources are unavailable or scarce. On the flip side, officers must ensure not to over-indulge in resources, as those can be used for other units' missions as well. The AFI1-2 mentions six types of resources that officers must continually be aware of: manpower, funds, equipment, facilities and environment, guidance, and time. A continual balance to ensure the availability of all six should be

towards the forefront of a leader's mind, and immediately addressed when there is a shortage. The scarcity of one resource can lead to an overuse of other resources, or exhaustion. For example, attempting to accomplish a mission where time is limited could strain the use of current equipment and manpower.

Manpower

The most precious resource of the Armed Forces – the human. While some processes have been automated, and some weapon systems have been controlled through the cyber domain (RPAs versus manned flight), nothing can substitute a strongly trained mind of an Airman. Unlike computers, humans are capable of sound judgment, emotional intelligence, social context, and evaluating the “intangibles” of a situation that computers have yet to achieve. To emphasize the effective use of manning, consider the following scenarios for bullets:

- Trends from Unit Readiness Reports
- Reallocation of billets to satisfy evolving mission demands
- Individual Training and Development Plans for each billet in the squadron
- A process to determine the hidden talent in the unit, for possible multi-tasking and continuity
- Continuity programs designed to familiarize new personnel in becoming experts at processes

Funds

Aside from manning, the next two categories of resources (equipment, facilities and environment) are extinct without sufficient funding. It is no secret that funding is essentially one of an officer's, and especially commander's, weekly (if not daily) topic of conversation. While all units have a squadron financial advisor, it is ultimately the commander's decision with officer input on funding prioritization. The following examples are ways in which you can incorporate funding figures into your evaluations and award packages:

- Funds acquired for a mission or project, as well as the prioritization it earned at higher levels (i.e., what is the squadron priority versus wing priority? This shows a convincing that the highest priorities align with the wing mission)
- Funds saved due to a new process implementation or other resource acquired, and the relevant savings (i.e., where can the saved money be reallocated towards? High-level missions, helping other units, etc)
- Funds raised for the morale and welfare of Airmen, which usually stem from booster clubs or snack bars
- Sole source contracts (Form 9s) that, with enough research performed, lead to a very inexpensive solution while feasible, which was later adapted to other units or organizations
- Using valuable manning, funds saved from allowing Airman to build a capability internally rather than submitting an unfunded requirement and attempting to pay

Equipment

The focus in this section is not necessarily acquiring equipment, but the maintenance and sustainment as well. Additionally, officers must project towards the future how long equipment will be sustainable, and when routine servicing or updating will be required, which play a part into funding allocation. A prime example is our routine computer operating system update. The incompatibilities of software in Windows 7 and Windows 10 users back in 2018 forced some geographically-separated units, such as AFROTC units, to be incapable of processing certain requirements due to obsolete operating systems, costing them precious time to complete the tasks on personal laptops and computers. Several avenues are available to capture the effective usage of equipment in bullet-writing, such as:

- Equipment upgrades and the added capabilities provided or time saved
- Equipment consolidation to streamline processes, where one device is automated compared to several manual
- Reduction in unnecessary equipment to save money, maintenance, or space
- Development of new equipment (disruptive technologies) that have been adapted for usage across many units
- Supportive equipment to augment or amplify current capabilities

Facilities and Environment

The physical and digital work area arguably are the most important factor to a successful day at the office. How

many times have you been unable to focus because it was too hot, too cold, too noisy due to construction, etc? As mentioned in our first category of resources, manpower, the human mind is a powerful tool that cannot be substituted. Therefore, as officers, we have a responsibility to provide a working environment to our Airmen that promote effective and innovate thinking, as well as an opportunity to “step out” and think in peace, especially if working on a new pathfinder-style project that has never been attempted before. Consider the following methodologies to incorporate into your bullets when discussing fostering a positive facility and work environment for your Airmen:

- Necessary repairs made for the building that have been dwelling for extensive amounts of time
- Added physical space which enables the addition of either greater manpower or additional resources
- From a digital perspective – secured digital servers, cables, routers, etc which enable uninterrupted access to the AFNet
- For those in a classified facility – consider the security of classified information and the negative ramifications if that facility is breached
- Expansion of a facility to enable new mission subsets, greater synchronization with sister squadrons, or additional manpower and/or equipment

Guidance

While many may originally question how exactly guidance can be used as a resource, it is the premise of all other resources that are allocated and utilized. Resources are specifically acquired to address the mission and guidance of the commander. From a junior officer perspective, the same applies for a flight commander. It is vital that officers communicate the purpose of their scope of responsibility to the team since that will impact the resources used to achieve the purpose. The following examples highlight methodologies to incorporate principles of guidance usage in bullet-writing:

- Implementation of Commander’s Intent
- Publication of Operating Instructions that outline specific standards and processes expected
- Rewriting mission and vision statements that align with strategic-level priorities and current resources
- Lines of Effort to explain the current priorities and tasks taking place to achieve a desired end state
- An authoring of the operational approach to reach the mission objectives

Time

Perhaps one of the most valued resources for any individual Airman is his or her time. I personally once asked the civilians that I supervised if they had a preference between time-off awards or bonuses. All nine of them in my flight, without hesitation, responded for time-off awards. The military can sometimes be a daunting daily grind, and it is vital that Airmen are taking hard-earned time off, and even more importantly for supervisors to honor that time off to the maximum extent possible, and avoid contacting those Airmen unless there is a grave emergency.

Time is also valuable in the sense that wasted time on processes that can easily be performed at a more optimal and preferred pace, but require extensive red tape to traverse, will often conjure feelings of aggravation or distrust in innovative processes. Officers: Airmen value time nearly above all else at work – make their day worth the drive in, allow them the time for professional development and provide them resources to clear their plates as much as possible of redundant, unnecessary endeavors. Below are some examples in which you can emphasize the effective use of time in the workplace:

- Approximate (or exact, if known) time saved due to a new piece of equipment or revised process
- Time invested into a new initiative for the betterment of a mission
- Processing time saved due to approved waivers
- Total time saved between all personnel of an eliminated process
- Time restored to Airmen due to a collective effort to improve (i.e. – no Fitness Improvement Program in the squadron since everyone has reached a passing score)

Tools and Artifacts:

Manpower:

- Unit Manning Document
- Training Records (ADLS, CDC advancement)
- Special Experience Identifiers
- Statements of Work
- Manpower studies
- TBA
- Gain/Loss Roster
- DOC
- SORTS

Funds:

- Unit Spend Plan
- Unfunded Requirements materials (slides, spreadsheets, etc)
- Prioritized list of requirements
- POM meeting minutes
- Form 9 records
- CRIS
- Analytical trackers designed to calculate unit spending on resources
- Resource Advisor documents
- Status checks on unfunded requirements, and number of times submitted
- Mission impact analysis
- GPC Records

Equipment:

- SORTS
- METL, MESL, MTTL
- DRRS
- Form 9 records
- Proof of Concept, if applicable
- GPC Records

Facilities and Environment:

- Facility Condition Index
- Waivers (for safety, security, etc)
- ORM Assessment
- AF Form 332
- Safety Inspections
- Correspondence with CE squadron
- Work Order Requests

Guidance:

- Mission or Vision Statements
- OPLANS
- CONOPS
- Line of Effort Publications
- AFSAS Reports
- CCIRs
- After-action Reports

- Lessons learned and best practices
- Inspection feedback database
- Squadron bulletin board
- ePubs
- CIFS
- DEOCS surveys

Time:

- Duty Schedule Predictability
- Personnel tracker (leave, TDY, etc)
- Climate Surveys
- LeaveWeb (for use or lose leave)
- Correspondence and/or addressing matters with HHQ when overtasked
- Stand-down days or Resiliency Tactical Pauses
- Time usage studies on potentially high-time investment tasks

Executing the Mission:

For the most part, a vast majority of the bullets in which we already craft already point to mission execution. The point of every evaluation is to assess the ratee's performance against expectations for the job, and in that sense, the job is the execution of duty tasks for the mission. While additional duties typically do not directly contribute to the mission, but more of a supportive function, they are normally withheld from mentioning due to our tendency to write mission-centric bullets.

From an AF11-2 standpoint, the three major focus areas are: primary mission execution (the squadron's mission), AEF readiness, and mission assurance command and control (the last area focused more upon solely commanders than just any officer).

Primary Mission Execution

This section encompasses the bread-and-butter of most of the bullets we write today. Typically, actions taking place within this realm include day-to-day missions, enduring projects or programs, or even expeditionary missions that take place in theater. Regardless of the length and location, this section represents the execution of a squadron's main mission, or highest-priority mission given dynamic circumstances. Some examples of primary mission execution include:

- Initiation, progress, or completion of a new project or program
- A link to your duties as it relates to higher-level missions
- Decision points that have caused an adjustment or change in the mission for the best interest of the unit
- Relating routine operations to a grander picture, such as a squadron or higher vision
- Mapping out second and third-order effects from your duties that could possibly influence other missions

AEF Readiness

Airmen are expected to be deployable-ready 24/7, and to defend our nation against all enemies, as specified in our Oath. This includes medically, physically, spiritually, and emotionally – and all the tests and pre-deployment procedures that are affiliated with them. Above all, our ultimate job is not to dwell at home, but to engage in actions in the defense of our national interests. The following examples speak to different methods in which you can highlight AEF readiness in bullet writing:

- Tabletop drills mimicking deployed environment conditions
- Expeditionary skills training, such as SABC, Force Protection, etc
- Sustainment, over long periods of time, high level of AEF-readiness
- Mock deployments
- Regular circulation of information on deployed environment conditions

Mission Assurance Command and Control

For our commanders, this section primarily focuses on the capability to maintain stability, communication, and agile command and control while in the face of adversity. Regardless of the threat, obstacle, or hazard, our Airmen are reliant upon clear guidance and contingency plans in all scenarios. While each scenario is unique and may not have a preset script to follow, it is crucial for a commander to have set guidance and procedures that outline how to respond in abnormal conditions or when certain norms or standards have deviated. It is of the utmost importance for commanders to take adequate time to prepare for the worst, and communicate those plans, for any imaginable situation. As a martial arts instructor, I always tell folks that nobody wishes they had self-defense training until the moment they truly need it. By then, it is far too late to invest in it. Likewise in the military – a commander cannot train and prepare for adversity or disaster “too frequently,” as responding to disasters and adversity is in all Airmen’s job description. To capture this concept of command and control in an adverse environment, consider these examples:

- Continuity of Operations Planning or revisions; take caution to avoid disclosing excessive information as this can lead to a classified level
- Disaster Recovery Procedures and any exercises of practicing them
- Agile processes designed to revise mission directives given a changing environment
- For operational career fields, the acquisition of simulators to immerse operators in abnormal conditions
- Planning for alternate communication methods while maintaining security-in-depth

Tools and Artifacts:

Primary Mission Execution:

This category is the primary subject that most bullets are focused upon already. Even the most extensive list would not fully capture all possible artifacts to consider. As a general guidance to any Airman, seek to look towards what aspects of your duties are either new in nature, have been trending positive lately, contain joint or combined personnel or resources, or have implications in scope that are far above your current level of operations.

AEF Readiness:

- UTC allocations
- After-action reports of tabletop exercises
- Key statistics of simulations or mock deployments
- Non-profile passing rates of the Fitness Assessment
- Listing and plans to address external constraints threatening AEF readiness
- Unit self-evaluation of organization, training, and equipping forces for AEF readiness
- Unit assessments on potential to meet mission directives and guidance given current resources
- Mitigations and plans of action to remedy deficiencies towards full readiness

Mission Assurance Command and Control:

- Continuity of Operations Plans
- OPSEC directives and policies
- Disaster Recovery Plans
- Processes describing alternative communication methods or failovers
- Redundant or “mirrored” servers holding important digital data
- Emergency Action Plans
- Roster of Personnel trained in Emergency Management
- Plans for Incident Response
- Active Shooter Defense Procedures
- Force Protection training currency rate

Appendix A: The WHIRL

<u>“Reduced”</u>	Extinguished	Spearheaded	Purified	Pivotal
Cut		Quarterbacked	Revived	Drastic
Sunk	<u>“Increased /</u>		Restored	Serious
Sliced	<u>Strengthened”</u>	<u>“Started, but</u>	Repaired	Crucial
Killed	Grew	<u>unfinished”</u>	Rectified	Integral
Exiled	Jolted	Set	Cleansed	Lifeline
Struck	Spread	Staged	Resolved	Perilous
Stifled	Surged	Fueled	Doctored	Colossal
Blazed	Jumped	Ignited	Corrected	High-pri
Sacked	Inflated	Primed	Stabilized	Linchpin
Blitzed	Pumped	Piloted	Debugged	Climactic
Popped	Boosted	Sparked	Dispatched	Important
Slashed	Polished	Charged	Revitalized	Imperative
Deleted	Enlarged	Powered	Rejuvenated	Dangerous
Tackled	Morphed	Prepared	Resuscitated	Significant
Crushed	Bolstered	Activated	Counteracted	Momentous
Torched	Upgraded	Launched	Responded to	Monumental
Stormed	Enhanced	Catalyzed		
Dropped	Expanded	Rolled-out	<u>“Avoided”</u>	<u>“Vulnerability”</u>
Rammed	Amplified	Catapulted	Juked	Gap
Stomped	Magnified		Eluded	Flaw
Chopped	Optimized	<u>“Secured”</u>	Evaded	Hole
Depleted	Electrified	Bound	Dodged	Fault
Trimmed	Multiplied	Braced	Averted	Threat
Slammed	Intensified	Walled	Escaped	Defect
Thrashed	Maximized	Locked	Held off	Fissure
Shredded	Skyrocketed	Readied	Bypassed	Exploit
Thwarted		Blocked	Suppressed	Weakness
Removed	<u>“Led”</u>	Cinched	Warded off	Deficiency
Squashed	Drove	Guarded	Outmaneuvered	Shortcoming
Disrupted	Bossed	Fortified		Attack vector
Bulldozed	Headed	Clamped	<u>“Ensured”</u>	
Destroyed	Helmed	Clenched	Evoked	<u>“Controlled”</u>
Abolished	Reigned	Protected	Yielded	Stalled
Pummeled	Directed	Defended	Fostered	Calmed
Decimated	Presided	Hardened	Produced	Limited
Eradicated	Oversaw	Wrangled	Provoked	Quelled
Massacred	Managed	Prevented	Manifested	Isolated
Smothered	Propelled	Rigidified	Resulted in	Delayed
Conquered	Governed	Tightened	Guaranteed	Numbed
Hammered	Anchored	Barricaded		Subdued
Stampeded	Conducted	Garrisoned	<u>“Critical”</u>	Enclaved
Incinerated	Supervised	Safeguarded	Key	Outpaced
Plummeted	Architected	Locked down	Vital	Cordoned
Obliterated	Commanded		Focal	Deadened
Diminished	Championed	<u>“Fixed”</u>	Grave	Regulated
Vanquished	Orchestrated	Patched	Urgent	Contained

Restrained
Suppressed
Surrounded
Constrained
Quarantined
Tranquilized

“Finished”

Aced
Ruled
Ended
Outdid
Eclipsed
Mastered
Prevailed
Outpaced
Surpassed
Completed
Conquered
Dominated
Vanquished
Surmounted

“Trained”

Drilled
Taught
Molded
Educated
Groomed
Instructed
Sharpened
Developed

“Stellar”

Superb
Red-hot
Esoteric
Flawless
Superior
Faultless
Versatile
Point man
Herculean
White-hot
Unrivalled
Outshining
Unmatched
Astounding

Dominating
Magnificent
High-octane
Phenomenal
High-caliber
Unsurpassed
Multifaceted
Unparalleled
Unblemished
Hard-charging

“Warrior”

Chief
Sentry
Battler
Expert
Master
Fighter
Warden
Sentinel
Guardian
Protector
Defender
Gladiator
Blackbelt
Champion
Conqueror
Vindicator
Dominator
Practitioner

“Praised”

Lauded
Exulted
Boasted
Vaunted
Honored
Esteemed
Acclaimed
Resounded
Spotlighted
Highlighted
Gasconaded
Commended
Aggrandized

“Improved”

Reshaped
Reformed

Optimized
Revamped
Streamlined
*See “increased/
strengthened”
section*

**“Beat” (as in a
deadline)**

Outran
Dusted
Blasted
Eclipsed
Outpaced
Exceeded
Surpassed
Obliterated

“Earned”

Won
Scored
Reaped
Merited
Secured
Attained
Clinched
Captured
Obtained
Acquired
Garnered
Achieved
Triumphed
*See “finished”
section”

“Monitored”

Tested
Traced
Sniped
Studied
Gauged
Audited
Tracked
Scanned
Assessed
Surveyed
Analyzed
Inspected

Eagle eye
Evaluated
Examined
Computed
Scrutinized
Investigated
Watchdogged

“Skills/Skilled”

Deft
Craft
Forte
Adept
Gifted
Adroit
Expert
Talents
Finesse
Toolset
Abilities
Talented
Regimen
Expertise
Strengths
Ingenuity
Repertoire
Proficiency
Knowledge
Skillfulness
Capabilities
Inventiveness

“Wrote”

Inked
Coded
Signed
Indited
Scribed
Scripted
Conjured
Finalized
Authored
Composed
Committed
Formulated
Transcribed

“Setup for”

Set
Staged
Primed
Outlook
Readied
Prepared
Projected
Forecasted
Calculated to
*See “started, but
unfinished”
section*