

## Changes on horizon for Air Force pilots

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5/29/2007 - **WASHINGTON (AFPN)** -- The Air Force recently announced there are changes forthcoming in aircrew management.

A new process called Transformational Aircrew Management Initiatives for the 21st Century, or TAMI-21, is intended to account for force structure changes that have caused imbalances in pilot inventory distribution and set the table for what the Air Force pilot force will look like in the future.

The initiatives will ensure pilots receive training in certain rated positions to bring the structure of the pilot force more in line with Air Force priorities.

"The advance capabilities of our 5th generation fighter aircraft has allowed the Air Force to significantly cut the number of aircraft we need," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley. "We have reduced the number of fighter aircraft in our inventory by 152 since 2001, while increasing the number of UAS platforms by 113 and AFSOC platforms by 25 over the next several years.

"The decrease in fighter and bomber cockpits, combined with the increased need for Special Operations and UAS capabilities, demands a redistribution of our pilot force," he said.

In order to accomplish this redistribution, the chief of staff recently approved the six initiatives of TAMI-21, which include:

- Eliminating combat air forces operations unit overmanning
- Opening up previously restricted airframes to new specialized undergraduate training graduates
- Placing career enlisted aviators in non-flying rated requirements
- Using the Total Force to help absorb new pilots and provide staff expertise
- Increasing the minimum number of sorties required per month for inexperienced pilots
- Ensuring aircrew training requirements meet combatant commander needs

"Our aircrew management system has not changed dramatically since 1999," said Lt. Gen. Howie Chandler, Air Force deputy chief of staff for Operations, Plans and Requirements. "We must re-balance our aircrew system to meet the updated demands brought about by post-9/11 missions and several force structure changes while making the most of our new airborne systems."

With the growing importance of unmanned aerial systems and Air Force special operations, the Air Force is realigning some of its assets to provide capable, proven pilots to these increasingly critical programs.

As a result of TAMI-21, the Air Force will allow fighter and bomber pilots with limited experience to volunteer for long-term reassignment to special operations and UAS mission areas.

"Redistributing some of our outstanding young pilots to new weapons system which demand their aggressive mindset will ensure the success of these growing mission areas," General Chandler said. "At the same time, the operational units they leave behind will see an immediate increase in sorties per pilot, equating to increased combat capability across the combat air forces."

Beginning in 2008, SUPT graduates will be eligible for assignment to the F-22, and from now on, all manned platforms will be programmed to accept SUPT graduates as part of initial operational capability, to include F-35, CSAR-X, KC-X and all future systems.

"The stakes are too high and resources too scarce to have anything other than an optimally tuned force of Airmen," said Lt. Gen. Roger Brady, deputy chief of staff of Air Force Manpower and Personnel. "The six TAMI-21 initiatives ensure that we get the most trained capability for the Air Force's rated force investment dollar."

The third initiative will allow the Air Force to convert several hundred rated officer positions to CEA positions. Placing CEAs in non-flying positions that require operational expertise will leverage the vast pool of experience found among enlisted aviators and provide them greater responsibility and professional growth opportunities.

Additionally, as the Air Force moves toward a more integrated Total Force, some active-duty pilots are already assigned to Guard and Reserve units, lending their Air Reserve Component expertise in seasoning new pilots on active duty as well as potentially filling some active-duty staff positions requiring rated experience.

"The Air Force has many exciting rated career opportunities for aggressive and forward-thinking officers," General Brady said. "The rapid growth of AFSOC and UAS would make these two high-return options very attractive if I were a young lieutenant or captain today."

"More than ever, I believe our rated force has come to understand that we are in the business of using Airpower to create effects in the battlespace," he said. "The UAS is a great capability to do that and there are great opportunities for our aviators in this exciting new mission area."