

## FORCE MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS – as of 11Dec 13

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### GENERAL FORCE MANAGEMENT

#### **Q1. Why is the Air Force announcing this now when details on specific career fields aren't available?**

A1. The service has made a conscious decision to announce these force management programs now in order to give Airmen as much time as possible to plan for their futures and make informed decisions.

#### **Q2. What force management programs are the Air Force using this year?**

A2. The Air Force is implementing 8 vs 10 Commissioned Years of Service Waivers, Time in Grade Waivers, Limited Active Duty Service Commitment, Expanded PALACE CHASE, Date of Separation Rollback, Quality Force Review Boards, Enlisted Retention Boards, and Temporary Early Retirement Authority. Additionally, the Air Force will implement Voluntary Separation Pay, Reduction in Force and Force Shaping Boards, and Enhanced Selective Early Retirement Boards.

#### **Q3. Who do I contact to determine what FY14 Force Management programs are applicable to me?**

A3. Once specific details are available, AFPC will notify Airmen via official personnel messages and public news releases that will be posted on [www.afpc.af.mil](http://www.afpc.af.mil) and [www.af.mil](http://www.af.mil). At that time, Airmen will be able to visit myPers at <https://mypers.af.mil> to read the personnel messages and guidance on eligibility and applications.

**Q4. How will I know if I'm affected by force management actions?**

A4. The Air Force will have more specific information on specific force levels in the very near future. Specific board information will be released on the myPers website at <https://mypers.af.mil>.

**Q5. What career fields are vulnerable for this round of force management measures? Can those selected for an FM-related separation volunteer for a different career field?**

A5. Specific career fields will be determined based on overages and identified on the matrix on myPers website by career field and year group. Airmen who are selected for a FM-related separation may have an opportunity to continue their service in either the Air Force Reserve or the National Guard. The AF is currently reviewing retraining opportunities for the next FY.

**Q6. Does this mean that a high quality officer or enlisted member in an overmanned field can get kicked out when a lower quality member in an undermanned field gets to stay? If so, why? If not, how will it work for the high-quality members to be retained?**

A6. The AF will focus on retaining top performers across multiple AFSCs. Retention boards, for both officers and enlisted, will be charged to review records and select high performing Airmen for retention.

**Q7. Are rated and medical officers vulnerable to force management actions?**

A7. Yes, some rated and health professions officers will be eligible for voluntary and involuntary force management programs.

**Q8. How will this affect specific bases and communities?**

A8. We don't know yet how the overall force reduction will affect specific bases or communities.

**Q9. Did the Air Force meet the FY13 end strength?**

A9. The Air Force ended FY13 slightly over end strength, but still within Congressional limits.

**Q10. Is the Air Force projected to meet its end strength goal for FY14?**

A10. The Air Force is currently projected to meet its congressionally mandated end strength by the end of FY14 by implementing voluntary and involuntary measures.

**Q11. Does the Air Force anticipate reducing end strength in the future?**

A11. Previous force management efforts are balancing end strength to authorized levels; however, future reductions may be needed to meet fiscal challenges.

**Q12. If the Air Force reaches end strength goals for FY14, will there be Force Management-related RIFs, boards and rollbacks in FY15?**

A12. Based on budget constraints and strategic goals for DoD, the Air Force expects additional force reductions will be announced for FY15 that may require additional Force Management actions. Under the performance-based personnel management strategy, the DOS Rollback program, enlisted retention boards, and Quality Force Review Boards will be enduring management tools designed to retain a high quality, high performing leaner force.

**Q13. What is the AF strategy to size and shape the force?**

A13. The AF uses a multi-year strategy to shape a performance-driven force leveraging voluntary programs first, incentives where needed and involuntary actions if required. Our goal is to retain key skills, maintain a high quality force, and meet accession requirements. However, the Air Force is modernizing personnel policies and institutionalizing a performance-based strategy versus today's model that values longevity over performance.

**Q14. How is the AF going to help transition Airmen out of the AF?**

A14. Airman and Family Readiness Centers run the redesigned Transition Assistance Program that is mandatory for all (with minor exceptions) transitioning Airmen to decrease the high veteran unemployment numbers. The new program requires attendance at a 5-day workshop with further optional training requirements, along with extensive one-on-one counseling to assist every Airman in developing a comprehensive Individual Transition Plan (ITP).

**Q15. Do Airmen and their families receive any benefits beyond their separation dates?**

A15. Under TERA and the SERB, members will receive all retirement benefits.

**Q16. Are there any other enlisted programs scheduled for FY14?**

A16. At this time, the Air Force is implementing the Date of Separation (DOS) Rollback Program, Enlisted Retention Boards, and Quality Force Review Boards. The Air Force is also planning on offering another round of the Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA) along with a Voluntary Separation Pay (VSP) Initiative. The Air Force is finalizing the eligibility criteria for these programs.

**Q17. Will individuals selected for involuntary separation or retirement have to repay Transfer of Education Benefits (TEB) to family?**

A17. If a member meets the Department of VA Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility requirements and is selected to involuntarily separate or retire under the FY14 Force Management Program, it will not impact benefits or cause the need for repayment.

## ENLISTED PROGRAMS

### TEMPORARY EARLY RETIREMENT AUTHORITY (TERA) (Voluntary)

#### **Q1. What is Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA)?**

A1. TERA authorizes Airmen with more than 15, but less than 20 years, of total active federal military service to apply for early retirement with a reduced amount of retired pay. The Service Secretary may target by years of service, grade, and skill. TERA retired pay is initially computed using the length of service retirement formula. It is then multiplied by a reduction factor based on the number of months the retiree is short of 20 years. Like all retired pay, TERA gross retired pay is rounded down to the nearest dollar.

#### **Q2. How do I calculate my retirement pay if I'm considering TERA?**

A2. Members retiring under the early retirement provisions receive all benefits of a military member who retired under the normal 20 year retirement provisions, except with regards to retirement pay. Their retired pay is calculated based on the number of years of qualifying service (YOS) actually completed at the time of retirement times 2.5 percent. However, under TERA, the multiplier used to calculate retired pay is reduced by 1 percent for each full year served less than 20 YOS (with less than a full year being reduced at the rate of 1/12th of 1% per month). For example, an individual retiring with exactly 15 YOS would qualify for retired pay at the following rate:

Percentage for YOS: 2.5% times 15 years = 37.5%

TERA Reduction: 37.5% times 5% = 1.875%

Retired Pay Multiplier: Percentage for YOS minus TERA Reduction (37.5% - 1.875% = 35.625%)

If this member has a High-36 average of \$1500, estimated retired pay would be 35.625% times \$1500, or \$534.

#### **Q3. If I received a Career Status Bonus would I have to pay it back?**

A3. No, the SecAF has waived the requirement to recoup the Career Status Bonus for FY14.

#### **Q4. If approved to retire under TERA will I get Concurrent Receipt of Disability Pay if I retire early?**

A4. Yes, per DFAS TERA retirees are eligible for CRDP. Please review the below DFAS webpage: <http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/disability/crdp.html>.

### VOLUNTARY SEPARATION PAY (VSP) (Voluntary)

#### **Q1. Who is eligible to apply for VSP?**

A1. Enlisted VSP applies to Airmen on the active duty list with 6 or more years but less than 20 years of Total Active Federal Military Service. Airmen may apply for VSP in lieu of meeting an enlisted retention board (this does not include the Quality Force Review Board or SNCO Retention Boards). Airmen may apply for VSP if they are in an overage AFSC and grade, which includes Airmen who are eligible to meet an enlisted retention board.

**Q2. Isn't VSP granted first-come, first-served to eligible officers who apply for it?**

A2. No. Airmen are not entitled to receive VSP based solely on submitting an application. According to OSD policy, VSP is used to minimize involuntary separations and to shape the force. The OSD policy stipulates that all VSP applications be reviewed and only those meeting the needs of the Military Service be approved.

**CMSGT RETENTION BOARD (Involuntary)**

**Q1. How many chiefs will be considered by the board?**

A1. It's contingent upon the number of Chiefs who apply and are approved under the voluntary retirement phase of the program. We won't have the answer to that question until the end of the volunteer phase.

**Q2. Will all career fields be considered or only selective fields?**

A2. This board will review the records of Chief Master Sergeants in overage AFSCs and those with negative quality indicators and identify CMSgts recommended for retirement.

**Q3. How long after the board will those selected for retirement have to prepare?**

A3. Approximately 4 months depending on board dates.

**Q4. Will there be an appeal process or is the board decision final?**

A4. Airmen always have the right appeal any records related issues, and routinely do so via the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records. Guidance on the process is available on myPers at <https://mypers.af.mil>.

**Q5. Will ADSCs be waived? Which ones and to what degree?**

A5. The intent is to retain the highest quality Airmen. Active Duty Service Commitments ADSCs will not be a factor in the process.

**Q6. What is the benefit for a chief in volunteering for retirement vs meeting the board?**

A6. A CMSgt who volunteers for retirement will have more time to plan for retirement versus meeting the board and having 90 days less transition time.

**Q7. If selection for retirement results in a financial hardship, will the Air Force reconsider the decision?**

A7. If the selection creates a hardship, we will look at those individual circumstances on a case by case basis.

## **ENLISTED RETENTION BOARDS (Involuntary)**

### **Q1. How long will members have to prepare to meet a retention board?**

A1. Enlisted members will be given 6 months advanced notice of when retention boards will meet. Specific board details with milestones for each board will be released by AFPC.

### **Q2. Will members be able to submit a letter or memo to the retention board?**

A2. Specific board details will be announced in advance of each retention board.

### **Q3. Will commanders be able to make a CC recommendation?**

A3. Yes, similar to officer retention boards, commanders will be required to make a retention recommendation.

### **Q4. Will there be an appeal process for members selected for retirement/separation?**

A4. Airmen always have the right to appeal any records related issues, and routinely do so via the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records. Guidance on the process is available on myPers at <https://mypers.af.mil>.

### **Q5. Will this be an ongoing process, like promotion boards?**

A5. Yes, under the new personnel management strategy, enlisted retention boards are an enduring performance-based management tool designed to retain a high performing leaner force.

## **DOS ROLLBACK (Involuntary)**

### **Q1. What is DOS Rollback?**

A1. The Service Secretary may discharge enlisted members within 12 months of expiration of their term of service based on prescribed criteria. The purpose of the DOS Rollback program is to accelerate the DOS by up to a year, for Airmen who have declined to obtain service retainability for assignments, training, retraining, or Professional Military Education.

### **Q2. Last year, DOS Rollback had four codes Airmen were mandatorily separated under. What changed?**

A2. The Secretary determined that use of Enlisted Retention Boards provides a more comprehensive review of a member's record to ensure only the highest quality airmen are retained; therefore, DOS Rollback will be limited to those airmen who declined service-directed retainability.

## **QUALITY FORCE REVIEW BOARDS (Involuntary)**

### **Q1. What is a Quality Force Review Board?**

A1. The Quality Force Review Board will consider all Airmen (except those in the retirement sanctuary – greater than or equal to 18 years of service and less than 20 years of service as of the mandatory separation/retirement date-with specified negative Reporting Identifiers (RIs), Reenlistment Eligibility (RE) codes, Assignment Availability Codes (AACs), or Grade Status Reasons (GSRs).

### **Q2: Will QFRBs consider enlisted Airmen of all ranks?**

A2: QFRBs will consider enlisted airmen in the grades of SMSgt and below.

## **OFFICER PROGRAMS**

### **TEMPORARY EARLY RETIREMENT AUTHORITY (TERA) (Voluntary)**

#### **Q1. What is Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA)?**

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#### **Q2. How do I calculate my retirement pay if I'm considering TERA?**

A2. Members retiring under the early retirement provisions receive all benefits of a military member who retired under the normal 20 year retirement provisions, except with regards to retirement pay. Their retired pay is calculated based on the number of years of qualifying service (YOS) actually completed at the time of retirement times 2.5 percent. However, under TERA, the multiplier used to calculate retired pay is reduced by 1 percent for each full year served less than 20 YOS (with less than a full year being reduced at the rate of 1/12th of 1% per month). For example, an individual retiring with exactly 15 YOS would qualify for retired pay at the following rate:

Percentage for YOS:  $2.5\% \text{ times } 15 \text{ years} = 37.5\%$

TERA Reduction:  $37.5\% \text{ times } 5\% = 1.875\%$

Retired Pay Multiplier:  $\text{Percentage for YOS minus TERA Reduction } (37.5\% - 1.875\% = 35.625\%)$

If this member has a High-36 average of \$1500, estimated retired pay would be 35.625% times \$1500, or \$534.

#### **Q3. If I received a Career Status Bonus would I have to pay it back?**

A3. No, the SecAF waived the requirement to recoup the Career Status Bonus for FY14.

**Q4. If approved to retire under TERA will I get Concurrent Receipt of Disability Pay if I retire early?**

A4. Yes, per DFAS TERA retirees are eligible for CRDP. Please review the below DFAS webpage: <http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/disability/crdp.html>.

**SELECTIVE EARLY RETIREMENT BOARD (SERB) (Involuntary)**

**Q1. What is a Selective Early Retirement Board (SERB)?**

A1. This SERB applies to regular officers on the active duty list in grades of Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel. Eligibility is defined as Colonels with at least 4 years time in grade and Lieutenant Colonels who have been non-selected for promotion to the next higher grade at least twice and who, in either case, are not on a list of officers recommended for promotion. Officers can only be considered by the SERB once in any 5-year period. Officers will be considered by the SERB within competitive categories (similar to a promotion board); total number of officers recommended for retirement cannot exceed 30 percent of the eligible population by grade.

**Q2. Why is the Air Force using a SERB to meet end strength?**

A2. The Air Force is over manned in Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels. We are targeting overages within those grades to help meet end strength.

**Q3. How will the SERB affect overall colonel manning?**

A3. We implemented various force management initiatives to size and shape Air Force manning to funded, authorized end strength. The colonel SERB will help address overages at that rank, but will not completely resolve our manning issues.

**Q4. What is the maximum number of colonels that will be affected by the SERB?**

A4. By law, no more than 30% of the force eligible in each competitive category may be selected for early retirement by the SERB. We continually assess manning in each competitive category with regard to projected end strength to determine respective SERB selection rates.

**Q5. When was the last Colonel SERB held? Is it mandatory?**

A5. Both the Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel SERBs convened at AFPC on Dec 9, 2013. Prior to this board, the last Colonel SERB was held Jan 9, 2012 and the last Lieutenant Colonel SERB was on Oct. 26, 2011. The people who met those boards are not eligible for this current SERB.



## **ENHANCED SELECTIVE EARLY RETIREMENT BOARD (Involuntary)**

### **Q1. What is an Enhanced Selective Early Retirement Board (ESERB)?**

A1. The ESERB is a new authority granted in the FY13 NDAA that Air Force has not previously used. It applies to regular officers on the active duty list in grades of Captain (with prior service) through Colonel. Eligibility is defined as Colonels with 2 but less than 4 years time in grade; Lieutenant Colonels who have been once non-selected for promotion to the next higher grade; and retirement-eligible officers below the rank of Colonel on active duty. Officers can be considered by the ESERB each year, provided they continue to meet eligibility criteria. The authority allows consideration by grade, year groups, specialties, or competitive categories; total number of officers recommended for retirement cannot exceed 30 percent of the eligible population within each grade.

### **Q2. Does ESERB provide the same “once every five years” eligibility constraint as the regular SERB?**

A2. No. Under the regular SERB, officers can only be considered by a board once every 5 years, which usually means each officer is considered once in a career. However, officers can be considered by consecutive ESERB boards every year until they voluntarily retire or become eligible for SERB.

### **Q3. Does the Air Force plan to consider officers for ESERB by consecutive boards?**

A3. The Air Force will need to make that determination after finalizing the officer end strength target for the out-years and analyzing retention, gains, and other force management factors.

### **Q4. Why is the Air Force using an ESERB to meet end strength? Who will be considered? Just Lt Cols and Cols, or Cpts and Majs as well?**

A4. Under the law, ESERB allows for more flexibility to selectively consider officers for retirement. ESERB can consider retirement eligible Lt Cols once deferred for promotion, Cols with 2 but less than 4 years TIG, and retirement-eligible Captains, Majors and Lieutenant Colonels

### **Q5. How many officers will be selected for ESERB?**

A5. By law (10 USC § 638a), no more than 30% of the eligible officers in each grade in each competitive category may be selected for early retirement by the ESERB. The AF will continually assess manning in each competitive category with regard to projected end strength to determine respective ESERB selection rates.

### **Q6. If the Air Force receives enough voluntary applications will it still conduct the ESERB?**

A6. We will continue to assess manning in each competitive category with regard to projected end strength to determine E-SERB use and selection rates.

## **VOLUNTARY SEPARATION PAY (VSP) (Voluntary) and REDUCTION IN FORCE (RIF) BOARD (Involuntary)**

### **Q1. Who is eligible to apply for VSP?**

A1. Officers on the active duty list with 6 or more years Total Active Commissioned Service and less than 20 years of Total Active Federal Military Service. RIF-eligible officers may apply for VSP in lieu of meeting the RIF Board.

### **Q2. Isn't VSP granted first-come, first-served to eligible officers who apply for it?**

A2. No. RIF eligible officers are not entitled to receive VSP based solely on submitting an application. According to OSD policy, VSP is used to minimize involuntary separations and to shape the force. The OSD policy stipulates that all VSP applications be reviewed and only those meeting the needs of the Military Service be approved.

### **Q3. If enough officers apply and are accepted for voluntary separations or retirements, is it possible retention boards will be cancelled?**

A3. Yes.

### **Q4. How can I review my records, to ensure they are accurate and up-to-date?**

A4. Members can review their records on-line 24/7 through the Personnel Records Data Application (PRDA) on AFPC's Secure Site. Log in to AFPC Secure via the myPers website or AF Portal. Then, select "PRDA" under "Available Applications." Next, select "PRDA" under "My Sections" and select "Selection Folder" under "Available Category." All the items in your "Selection Folder" (and your RRF) is what the board will review.

### **Q5. Will VSP applicant records be thoroughly reviewed before making an approval/disapproval decision?**

A5. No. The VSP process does not include an assessment of the quality of an officer's record. This will be the purview of the RIF board. The VSP application review process is strictly administrative, focusing on AFSC experience as well as active duty service commitment length and reason.

### **Q6. Are retention recommendation forms necessary for officers who applied for voluntary separation?**

A6. A Retention Recommendation Form (RRF) is mandatory for all RIF eligible officers, even if they were disapproved for VSP. The RRF is the method senior raters convey to retention boards their assessment of whether an officer should be retained.

### **Q7. Are there opportunities for officers to continue to serve if they are not selected for retention by the RIF board?**

A7. Yes. Officers not selected for retention by a RIF board may apply for opportunities in the Air Force Reserves, Air National Guard, Civil Service, and our Sister Services. The AFPC website contains links for each of these options.

**Q8. Who determines tolerable level of risk to the Air Force mission when disapproving VSP applications?**

A8. After assessing all applications, Senior AF leadership determines the tolerable level of risk to the mission.

**FORCE SHAPING BOARD (FSB) (Involuntary)**

**Q1. Who is eligible to meet a Force Shaping Board?**

A1. FSB will consider active duty officers with more than 3 but less than 6 years of commissioned service as of 31 Dec 14.

**Q2. How do I know if I will meet the FSB?**

A2. Impacted officers will be notified by AFPC and their chain of command.

**Q3. What is the intent of the FSB?**

A3. To reduce the overage officer year groups by separating officers in excess AFSCs. These actions will lessen the current excess junior officer population.

**Q4. If enough officers apply and are accepted for voluntary separations or retirement, is it possible force shaping boards will be cancelled?**

A4. The Air Force has the flexibility to cancel any Force Management Board prior to the board convening.

**Q5. How does a FSB board work?**

A5. The FSB will thoroughly review the records of all eligible officers based on retaining the best qualified officers according to the “whole person concept”.

**Q6. How can I review my records, to ensure they are accurate and up-to-date?**

A6. Members can review their records on-line 24/7 through the Personnel Records Data Application (PRDA) on AFPC’s Secure Site. Log in to AFPC Secure via the myPers website or AF Portal. Then, select “PRDA” under “Available Applications.” Next, select “PRDA” under “My Sections” and select “Selection Folder” under “Available Category.” All the items in your “Selection Folder” (and your RRF) is what the board will review.

**Q7. Are Retention Recommendation Forms necessary for all officers identified for FSB?**

A7. A Retention Recommendation Form (RRF) is mandatory for all FSB eligible officers. The RRF is the method senior raters convey to retention boards their assessment of whether an officer should be retained.

**Q8. Are there opportunities for officers to continue to serve if they not selected for retention by the FSB?**

A8. Yes. Officers not selected for retention by the FSB may apply for opportunities in the Air Force Reserves, Air National Guard, Civil Service, and our Sister Services. The AFPC website contains links for each of these options.

**Q9. How can I avoid meeting the FSB?**

A9. Unless an individual meets specific ineligibility criteria or the board is cancelled, the Secretary of the Air Force, by law submits the names of officers in each grade, year group or specialty (or combination thereof) to the FSB. However, if you choose to voluntarily separate and your date of separation is prior to 30 September 2014, you will be exempt from meeting the FSB.

**Q10. If I'm selected for separation, when will I have to leave the Active Duty Air Force?**

A10. Those officers not retained by the FSB will separate NLT 31 Dec 14.

**Q11. Will those selected for separation by the Force Shaping Board be required to repay their Air Force Academy or ROTC scholarship?**

A11. No, officers involuntarily separated by the Force Shaping Board will not be required to have their scholarship repaid.