

# **A Pilots Guide for Transferring**

from the



**Navy, Marine or Coast Guard**

to the



**Air Force Reserves**

**VERSION 1.1**  
**Updated November 2003**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<a href="#">Opening Thoughts / Disclaimer . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
---	-------------------

### **Section 1: Getting Hired and Officially “Gained” by the AFRES**

<a href="#">Chapter 1. Contacting the Unit for Hiring Information . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 2. The Application Package . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 3. Contacting the Unit for the Interview . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 4. The Interview . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 5. Post Interview . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 6. Contacting the Recruiter . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 7. Meeting the Recruiter . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 8. The Commissioning Package . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 9. The Aeronautical Rating Board . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 10. The Flight Physical . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 11. Behind the Scene . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 12. Your Commission and Appointment Order . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 13. Final Thoughts . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">13</a>

### **Section 2: Making Money**

<a href="#">Chapter 1. Understanding the Money Train . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 2. The Bureaucracy Continues – “checking into the unit” . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 3. The Training Program . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 4. Post Training, Maximizing your pay while minimizing you pain . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 5. Understanding Retirement (in a nutshell) . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">26</a>

### **Section 3: Reference Material**

<a href="#">Chapter 1. Sea Legs to Land Lover language conversion . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">28</a>
---	--------------------

## Opening Thoughts / Disclaimer

After spending countless number of hours on the telephone attempting to explain the bureaucratic and exhausting process of trying to transfer gold wings for silver ones, I decided it would be best to write down all my (and the folks I've worked with) trials and tribulations. What started as a "short" document has turned into a longer than expected discussion, but hopefully is well worth the read. After all, if it helps speed up the process and/or the understanding then I feel it's worth its cost in paper. I guess the Air Force has gotten the best of me since leaving the Marines, since this turned out to be much longer than I originally planned (the Air Force thrives on its "paperwork" as you will soon find out). Since most Naval Aviators have successfully finished the Alcohol Anonymous 12 step process (or at least most probably need to do it), I felt adding one more step wouldn't hurt; so enclosed is a "quick" 13 step process for trading in those Gold wings for Silver ones.

The process described in the following document is from my experience transitioning over to the dark side starting back in late 1999 when I was flying AV8B Harriers. Since then I have been involved in the process for several other fellow gold wing brethren that have decided to cross over, to include being on the hiring board of my current squadron, directly involved with the Aeronautical Rating Board process, and countless number of trips to the Chief Pilot, the Operations Group Commander and Wing Commander to try to explain "US Marine" paperwork to them.

I have attempted to refrain from the "specifics" of my current squadron, group and wing as to keep this generic enough for all of the Air Force Reserves. However, my experience is transitioning from the Marines into the Air Forces Air Mobility Command (AMC). I believe that 95% of the information enclosed will be true for over 95% of you transitioning to the Air Force Reserves – regardless of whether it's AMC or ACC. My background includes two formal interviews, several phone call "interviews" and being hired at two AFRES units. I would assume (*uh oh*) that the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) at Warner Robbins, GA and the Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC) in Denver, CO operate independently of AMC, ACC and the other commands policies. After all, they all follow the same Air Force Instructions (AFI) don't they?

If, during the course of your transition, you find something to be in error, or you wish to help explain the process better please let me know and I will attempt to keep this document updated periodically. Feel free to *e-mail* me with any questions.

Of note; with today's economic environment (airline furloughs) it is getting harder and harder to find a unit that has openings and is willing to hire someone from another service. What was once an environment of easy pickings for us Gold Wing aviators has changed to that of slim pickings. So, I would offer that if you find a unit willing to hire you, I would jump all over it. What you will soon find out is that once you are a member of the AFRES, it is much easier to transition to another AFRES or ANG unit. Good luck and happy hunting.

If you received this document via email, then ignore the hyperlinks to the forms and documents. I have set up this document as one of many other documents and forms to be included on a CD ROM diskette, thus all the hyperlinks would work correctly if you are viewing this from the CD ROM. Without the CD ROM (as a stand alone document) you must download all the forms and documents yourself off the internet as listed in [Section 1, Chapter 13.1](#).

## **13 Steps for Naval aviators to be gained by an AFRES unit**

(this includes Marine, Navy and Coast Guard pilots)

### **1. Contact the Chief Pilot (or hiring representative) to see if unit is hiring.**

- Air, Inc (800-AIR-APPS) puts out a handbook called “Flying in the Guard and Reserve” by Robert Black that has almost every Reserve and Guard unit in it. I did notice (in the version that I have anyway) that one unit – the 514<sup>th</sup> AW (78<sup>th</sup> and 76<sup>th</sup> Flying Squadrons) a Reserve KC-10 unit at McGuire AFB, NJ is not listed though.

- If the unit you call is not hiring, ask them if they have a “sister squadron” that is, or if they know of a similar unit that is hiring. Of course ask them when/if they plan to start hiring.

- Other contacts are extremely beneficial. Networking, Networking, Networking. After all, it’s not what you know, but who you know.

### **2. Send the Chief Pilot an application package:**

- A. Cover letter: state why you want to join this unit in particular, where you currently live or plan on living if hired, and how long you plan on staying in the unit if hired (future aspirations).
- B. Resume
- C. Letters of Recommendation (3 minimum) – see [Section 1, Chapter 13.2.A](#)
- F. DD 214 or DD 215 (if applicable), or statement of when you are available (which may be in your cover letter).
- E. Summary of flight time
  - i. Single page typed summary by T/M/S
  - ii. Copy of logbook pages
    - a. last page of each T/M/S flown
    - b. summary of mishaps
    - c. list of qualifications
    - d. last page showing total hours
- G. Copy of most current NATOPS and Instrument check evaluation (last 3 evaluations if available)
- H. Copy of last 3 Officer Evaluation Reports (Fitness Reports)
- I. Anything else specifically requested.

### **3. Contact Chief Pilot for Interview: Ask what uniform to wear (if applicable); most likely a flight suit.**

- If it will be a while before the interview ask if he/she would mind if you could come up and meet the “key players” in person. Most units won’t interview you until you are 6-8 months from separating. Unfortunately, the paperwork to join the AFRES seems to take around 6-10 months or sometimes as long as 12 months. Unless you have an unusual situation, I would stretch the truth some and actually tell the unit you are separating 2-3 months prior to your actual separation date. One you are hired and have begun the paperwork, you can “refine” your separation date with the unit for a later time. Usually the unit won’t get you a class date for training until you are officially an AFRES officer (appointment order in hand – see section 12). If they *give* you a class date, it is probably a “tentative” date written in pencil. Also, the unit doesn’t work very close with the recruiter, so the info you tell the recruiter (your actual separation date) will probably never get back to the unit. In either case, by that time you can tell the unit your “refined” separation date has changed due to “operational constraints” by your current command.

### **4. Go to Interview and bring the following:**

- A. Additional copy(s) of the application package
- B. All flight Logbooks (military and civilian if applicable)
- C. NATOPS jacket folder

- D. Copy of most recent flight physical
- E. Additional letters of Recommendation (if applicable)
- F. DD 214 or DD 215 (if applicable at this time)
- G. A flight suit (if not wearing one).
- H. Anything else specifically requested by the Chief Pilot

During the interview be prepared to answer some “tough” questions such as:

- Why do you want to join our unit?
- Why do you want to join the AFRES and not the Navy, Marine, Coast Guard Reserves (as applicable to your background) Army Reserves or Air National Guard?
- Have you applied to any other units?
- What experience will you bring to our unit?
- Where do you plan on living?
- If hired, how much time will you be available to drill with the unit?
- Where do you see yourself in 2 years / 5 years?
- What do you do for your civilian job? What do you plan on doing for your civilian job? Do you want to fly for the airlines? What will you do with the reserves once you are hired by an airline?
- Where is your civilian job located at?
- Once you are hired by the airlines do you plan to stay in the AFRES? Our unit?
- Are you willing to get the ANTHRAX vaccine?
- What will happen to your life (family life, civilian life) if our unit becomes activated / mobilized?
- Have you been passed over for promotion before? How many times? Why?
- Why are you leaving (or have left) active duty? Why join the reserves?
- If you plan on living in XX city, why are you applying with us? We haven’t had good luck with reservists that live out of town.

I haven’t heard of an interview yet where they have asked “technical questions”. All the ones that I have heard about, and all the ones that I have been involved in the interviewers are more interested in the applicants personality, if they plan on putting in time at the unit, plan on sticking around, and if they will get along with them.

Some units perform interviews with just the Chief Pilot (TR), Chief Pilot (ART), and additional pilots. In other units the Squadron Commander and/or Director of Operations may be part of the process. Many interviews take place during the squadrons Unit Training Assembly (UTA) weekend. In this case, it is not uncommon for the interviewers to ask you to join them for lunch – where traditionally all the pilots that are in for the UTA go out to lunch together. Consider this an opportunity to meet other pilots that may or may not have input on whether to hire you. This might also be an opportunity to meet the Squadron Commander and Operations Officer if you haven’t already done so.

I sat in one interview where the interviewers were the Squadron Commander (one each from each flying squadron), the Operations Officer and the Chief Pilot. In another it was just both of the Chief Pilots and another squadron pilot.

## **5. Post Interview:**

Case A. Some units will ask you to step outside for a few minutes, and discuss in private whether or not they desire to hire you. In this case you should find out almost immediately if you are hired.

Case B. Other units will just “thank you for your interest in the unit” and tell you that they will contact you in the near future to let you know their hiring plans. Occasionally, the Chief Pilot must “clear” any prospective new hire through the Commander, and/or must evaluate all candidates (due to limited slots, or unit desire) before offering a position. One note, when I interviewed there were 4 people interviewing for over 15 open positions (how could you not get hired in this case)? One candidate was current/qualified in the unit’s major weapon system (MWS) and living in the area (currently on AD), one was a Marine helicopter pilot w/ fixed wing IP time at Whiting, one was myself (fixed wing Marine fighter pilot) and one was a KC-135 IP from the other side of the CONUS. All were hired except

one – the candidate that was current / qualified in the MWS. See [Chapter 1, Section 13.2.F](#) “Final Thoughts” for more details, but as it turned out that person basically made it known that they wanted to keep flying only for a little bit while they looked for a non-flying position. My “future” unit didn’t tell me I was hired until 3 days later, so don’t give up hope if they don’t tell you right away.

If Case B happens, I recommend within a week send the chief pilot and/or squadron commander a thank you letter. It would be appropriate to thank the Chief Pilot and the unit for their time and opportunity to interview, and again express your desire to join the unit, and that you look forward for the opportunity to join the unit.

In either case, when the unit tells you that they want to hire you (CONGRATULATIONS by the way), don’t forget to thank the Chief Pilot and let them know they won’t be disappointed, but more importantly ask them for the unit Recruiter’s name, phone number, and e-mail address and also ask the Chief Pilot for letter (Email message works) stating that the unit desires to hire you (you will need this to give to the recruiter).

**NOTE:**

- Even though the unit desires to hire you, there are many wickets that must be accomplished before you can become an AFRES Officer. The unit will most likely put you “on the books” as joining the unit and support your application package(s) as they get endorsed through the unit, but there are many paperwork items that are out of their control that could stop or slow your application. Bottom line, until you have the [Appointment Order](#) (see [chapter 12](#)) you are not officially hired and part of the unit.

If you are hired by more than one unit, certainly look out for your best interests but, by all means let each unit know of your intentions at the earliest possible time.

## 6. Contacting your Recruiter:

A. Contact the units Recruiter as soon as possible. Each recruiter has a certain area of responsibility, so don’t be surprised if the units Recruiter passes you off to another Air Force Reserve Recruiter in your area. Each Recruiter gets “points/credit” for everyone they in-process, so allow the units Recruiter the opportunity to help you before going directly to your “home town” AFRES Recruiter. It is kind of like getting the commission off a car sale for them. For example; if you are stationed at Cherry Point, NC you will probably use an AFRES Recruiter at Seymour Johnson AFB; if you are stationed at Yuma, AZ you will probably use one at Luke AFB.

**NOTE:**

- The Air Force has specific guidance (Air Force Instructions) on how to in process Officers. With that being said, in my experience each recruiter seems to have “their own process” for getting this done and always seems to include more in the Commissioning package than what the AFI asks for. Since the recruiter “controls” your destiny follow their advice, but if things seemed “gooned up” by all means ask questions and get the Chief Pilot (or appointed hiring officer) involved.

### B. Initial things to accomplish when first talking to your Recruiter:

- i. The obvious things like tell him/her who you are and your background, the name/location of the unit that has hired you, the Chief Pilots name/phone number/email, etc.
- ii. Provide a copy of the letter from the Chief Pilot stating they desire to hire you to the recruiter.
- iii. Ask the recruiter if he/she can set up a medical appointment for you to accomplish an Air Force flight physical (see [chapter 10](#) for details). **The sooner the better!**
- iv. Ask the recruiter for an appointment to meet them in person and to fill out / sign the paperwork necessary for your commissioning package (see [chapter 8](#) for details). **The sooner the better!** This can probably be accomplished the same day as your flight physical. I would anticipate spending about 4 hours (1/2 day) with the recruiter.
- v. Ask the recruiter about what forms you will need to fill out for the commissioning package. This way, you can look these up on the internet (see [chapter 8](#)) and have an idea of what information the recruiter needs. (Reference [AFI 36-2005](#) & [Chapter 8](#) of this document)

## 7. Meeting your Recruiter:

Bring a copy or original of EVERY official piece of military paperwork to include (but not limited to):

- i. Officer Qualification Record (OQR)
- ii. Medical Record, Dental Record and military shot record.
- iii. NATOPS Jacket folder
- iv. Flight Logbooks
- v. Most current LES
- vi. A copy of all forms the recruiter tells you they need
- vii. A copy of your college transcripts (although you also need to have a copy from your school sent directly to the recruiter or *provide a sealed copy in person*)
- viii. Copies of all your award certificates
- ix. Copies of all your commissioning certificates
- x. Copies of your Naval Aviator designation certificates
- xi. Copies of all your Fitness Reports (Officer Evaluations)
- xii. Copies of all letters of recommendation (3 minimum)
- xiii. [AF Form 24](#)
- xiv. [SF 180](#)
- xv. Any DD 214 and DD 215 (if applicable at this time) – prior enlisted service?  
- once you separate your recruiter will need a copy of your DD 214 and/or DD 215
- xvi. [SF 86](#), [SF 86a](#), and [SF 86c](#) or results of National Agency Check (NAC) – an ENTNAC within 24 months.
- xvii. Conditional Release from current branch (should be the from the IRR when the time comes)  
[DD Form 368](#).
- xviii. [AF Form 2030](#)
- xviii. [AF Form 3010](#)
- xx. [AF Form 56](#)
- xxi. [SGLV-8286 Form](#) (SGLI Election and Certificate Form)
- xxii. [DD Form 93](#) (Record of Emergency Data)
- xxiii. [AF Form 883](#) (Privacy Act Statement)
- xxiv. Any [DD Form 4/1](#) you may have from a prior enlistment (PLC)

B. The AFI states that the recruiter is supposed to measure and weigh you to ensure you are within the proper height/weight standards (yes the AFRES actually has a standard for this). Believe it or not, the AFRES standards are very similar to what the USMC has set, but there are waivers in place in case you are a body builder type person. With that being said, as long as you don't look overweight, I doubt the recruiter would actually weigh and measure you.

### **NOTE:**

Before going any further, let me explain the “general process” for the application:

- There are 3 basic “packages” that must be approved – all from different agencies within the AFRES Command (AFRC) before the Air Force Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC) in Denver, CO issues the commission warrant and appointment order. These three are the “meat and potatoes” of the process.

1. Commissioning Package – [Chapter 8](#)
2. Aeronautical Rating Board (ARB) – [Chapter 9](#)
3. Flight Physical (SF 88, SF 93 and EKG) – [Chapter 10](#)

## 8. The Commissioning Package:

A. Reference [AFI 36-2005](#) (chapters 2 and 3 especially, and attachments 3, 8, and 12) and [AFI 36-2004](#) for what is required. Ultimately, your Commissioning package will get approved / disapproved at AFRC by the General himself. As previously mentioned, your recruiter will probably put more into the package than what the AFI calls for – which is not necessarily a bad thing (after all, the AF thrives on paperwork). Everything that was listed in [Chapter 7](#) (meeting your recruiter) plus your “John Hancock” on several of these documents should be enough for what the recruiter needs to assemble the commissioning package. A few items that will need to be added later are:

1. [AF Form 1288](#). This form is filled out by your recruiter and then needs to be endorsed by the Squadron Commander (SQ/CC) gaining you (the unit that just hired you). The Wing Employment office also needs to endorse it and get a unit vacancy position number from the Chief Pilot. Here in lies the problem with the unit vacancy position number. If the squadron has plenty of open slots, the Chief Pilot will probably issue one almost immediately. However, if the squadron doesn’t have many open positions, or if they will be overmanned (the squadrons are authorized to be overmanned – at least to a certain amount), then the Chief pilot may elect to wait to issue the unit vacancy position number until a later date, such as when the ARB has been approved by the AFRC. The reason behind the madness simply has to do with the paperwork required to shuffle names against position numbers; so let me digress some to explain the manning process in the squadron.

Each squadron has a certain number of positions where they are authorized to put a person in. There will be a certain number of LtCol slots, a certain number of Major slots, etc as you go down the line. It’s not a big deal to put a Major in a LtCol slot, but not vice versa. Really the only requirement (for manning purposes) is that each person has a position number. In the case where the squadron is, or will be, overmanned someone must be pulled out of a position and put into an “overage” slot – whereas they are not eligible to be promoted while in this slot. The chief pilot can also do other creative things like doubling up officers attending UPT (since they are formally not assigned to the unit until completion of UPT). Either of these things requires an endorsement from the WG/CC to do this, and then when the manning level stabilizes down the road, requires another endorsement to return this person back into a position number. For this reason, Chief Pilots don’t like doing this unless absolutely required. For example, if the unit is full, but knows in a few months they will lose some pilots due to normal attrition (retirement, resignation, etc) then the Chief Pilot may elect to move one of the “future retirement” pilots into an overage slot in order to free up a vacancy position number. This will help “lead turn” the process to get an additional pilot into the squadron and possibly trained before the “future retirement” pilot actually leaves the squadron.

### NOTE:

Air Force units are structurally different than Navy & Marine units – even though the names sound familiar.

- An [Air Force Squadron](#) (Flying Squadron) is essentially made up of Pilots, (and flight engineers, loadmasters, and/or boom operators as required by MWS), some Operations folks, Standardization/Evaluation department (like DSS), Training department and the command structure to support it. It is usually commanded by a Lt Col.
- An [Air Force Operations Group](#) is essentially one or more Flying Squadrons, plus an Operations Support Flight Squadron commanded by a Lt Col. This is essentially a “super” Operations department w/ 24 hour Operations support. The remainder of the Operations Group (OG) contains an OG Training department, OG Scheduling Department, OG Stan/Eval Dept, Intelligence, and TALCE. The OG is usually commanded by a Colonel. It is similar in function to a Marine Squadron, but much larger (the OG that my SQ is in has over 700 people in it).
- An [Air Force Wing](#) is essentially the equivalent of a Marine Air Group. It contains an Operations Group, Logistics Group, Maintenance Squadrons, Intelligence department, and many other Squadrons and departments. It is commanded by a Colonel or quite possibly a BGEN. Although similar in function to a Marine Air Group, it probably has many more people in it. It also can have more than one type of MWS (T/M/S) in it.
- A [numbered Air Force](#) (MAJCOM) would be the equivalent of a Marine Air Wing. Usually commanded by a Maj GEN and includes several MWS.

2. [Flight Physical](#). Must be endorsed by Randolph AFB, TX – see [Section 1, Chapter 10](#) of this guide.



3. “Twice passed” waiver letter or “Once passed” waiver letter (if applicable). In either case, if you have been passed over for promotion you need a waiver letter endorsed by the SQ/CC, OG/CC and WG/CC. In the case of being passed over only once, the WG/CC is the approval authority. If you have been passed over twice, the approving authority is AFRC (the General) and you should get this as part of the commissioning package approval. Your recruiter will have more details for you if this is the case, but more than likely this will become part of the commissioning package.

One other note about being passed over twice (as an O-03). If you have over 7 years of time-in-grade as an O-03 (eg: Marine Captain, Navy or Coast Guard Lieutenant), then you will need to get a waiver letter because you have missed your “gates” for promotion once you become an Air Force Officer. Check with your recruiter on this for the specifics, but I believe the waiver letter gets approved from somewhere inside the pentagon by a LtGEN. I have recently heard of one applicant that had his “twice passed over” letter endorsed by the MajGEN at AFRC, but his 7 year time-in-grade waiver was rejected because the 3 star felt he wouldn’t be competitive for promotion in the AFRES.

4. DD 214 / DD 215. Check with your recruiter on this, but you may actually be able to have your commissioning package “approved” at AFRC without this. However, if this is the case, you will definitely need the DD 214 / DD 215 before it goes to ARPC. Again check with your recruiter on this but, the bottom line is that you can not receive your AFRES commission until you are actually separated from Active Duty. So, don’t plan on being on terminal leave and getting sworn into the AFRES. Also, what this means to you is that it is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** that you take a commission in your services Individual Ready Reserves (IRR for the Marines) because you do not want any sort of break in service or you will lose time in service and time in grade, thus making it longer to be promoted once you do become an AFRES officer.

5. Because of going into the IRR (or appropriate unit) you will need a Conditional Release (DD form 368) from the appropriate unit (Marine IRR in this example). You will not actually be released from your current command (IRR) until you have sworn into the AFRES. However, before the AFRES will issue your commission warrant, you must have the DD form 368 endorsed by your current command. Then, after you get sworn in, your current command will ‘back date’ the release to the day prior to your AFRES swearing-in. This will ensure you do not have a break in service or break in time of grade. Get started on getting the DD form 368 as soon as you transfer into the IRR – this will help speed up the paperwork required for the commissioning package. A good POC in the US Marines for the DD form 368 is Mrs. Fisher (GS-12) at [fishermc@manpower.usmc.mil](mailto:fishermc@manpower.usmc.mil) phone number is 703-784-9306/07; DSN 278 prefix.

## 9. The Aeronautical Rating Board (ARB) Package:

The ARB package is the actual document/package that will award you the Air Force Pilot Wings (Aeronautical Rating). Reference [AFI 11-402](#) for the ARB and the conversion of the aeronautical rating. The SQ/CC will appoint an ARB reviewing officer to perform an independent review of your “request for a waiver before an aeronautical rating board”, and then forward their recommendation through the SQ/CC, OG/CC and WG/CC for endorsement. Once endorsed by the WG/CC, the squadron will send the ARB package to their MAJCOM/DO (its numbered AF) for approval and then the ARB package will proceed to AFRC at Warner Robbins, GA where the Director of Operations (DO) for AFRC will approve / disapprove. Then, AFRC should send some notification back to the Squadron notifying them that the ARB was either approved or disapproved. Keep in close contact with AFRC once your ARB gets to them. It normally takes 1-2 weeks to approve/disapprove the ARB once it gets to the AFRC/DO office – pending their workload. A good phone number at AFRC for the ARB is DSN 497-1145.

Note: the ARB process does not “convert” your gold wings to silver wings. The ARB is there to award you the Air Force Pilot Aeronautical Rating based on your past accomplishments. Therefore, you are authorized to wear the gold wings and also the silver ones.

Reference [AFI 11-402, attachment 3](#), for the exact format of your request. Follow the EXACT format as listed in the attachment and provide the following information (at a minimum), plus what is requested in the

attachment, for each section. Some of the items will look very familiar to what was requested for the interview package, and what you gathered up for the recruiter. In any case it's better to have more, than less.

- Section 2.a. - Provide a copy of your current (or most recent) orders assigning you to DIFOPS (duty involving flight operations).
- Section 2.b. - Provide a copy of your designation as a Naval Aviator.
  - Provide any additional copies of orders or certificates that verifies completion of formal training
    - Such as ORM training, SERE school, etc.
  - Provide a copy of Section IIIB – Operational Physiology & Survival Training, from your NATOPS training jacket.
- Section 2.c. - Provide a copy of qualification letters / designation letter (Section Lead, FCF Pilot, etc.)
- Section 2.d. - Provide a copy of your [SF88](#), [SF93](#), and EKG (that has been approved by Randolph AFB)
- Section 2.e. - Provide a one page summary of your flying time by MWS (T/M/S)
  - Provide at a minimum, a photocopy of the last page of your logbook of each MWS flown, and the last page of your logbook showing the total time. (some people just include a photo copy of their entire log book).
- Section 2.f. - Provide a copy of your resume with the requested information on it.
- Section 2.g. - Provide a copy of all your commission certificates, OCS orders (you can get credit for those points), and any other documents that have dates of commission and promotion on it.
  - Provide a copy of your most recent Leave and Earnings Statement (LES).
- Section 2.h. - Provide a typed letter with your original signature stating that you have never been disqualified for aviation service for cause (eg: you were not kicked out of flight school or had an Flight Evaluation Performance Board disqualifying you from flying).
- Section 2.i. - Provide a typed letter with your original signature summarizing any accidents, or stating you have not had any accidents as a crewmember.
  - Provide a photocopy of the mishap record located in the back of your Navy log book.
- Section 2.j. - Provide a typed letter with your original signature stating such assignment limitation, or stating that you completed US Navy Flight School as a fixed wing pilot. **\*\*Note\*\***
- Section 2.k. - Provide a typed letter summary with your original signature of your Civilian flying since separation.

**\*\*Note\*\*** Helicopter pilots (even those that have been a T-34 IP at Whiting) read the AFI carefully; you will have slightly different requirements / restrictions on your aeronautical orders, and you will more than likely have to attend Air Force UPT for T-1 Beachcraft (or possibly the entire UPT) training before going to your MWS platform training (“the RAG”).

I have seen ARB packages that are nearly 1 ½ inches thick (no kidding), and some as thin as about ¼ inch thick. If you are going to error, I would include more than what you think they need. Remember, if it gets kicked back it just means more time that you are not getting paid by the AFRES. Once you assemble the package if you do the following, it will help speed the process up.

1. Make one copy and keep for your records (recommended).
2. Make two additional complete copies.
3. Put the original letter (copied identical from the attachment 3 letter) with your signature on the top of the original package.
4. Take the original package, punch holes in it, and place it in a three ring binder.
5. Take the original package and put some sort of tabs on each section to easily identify each section clearly.
6. Take one copy, and tab it out like the original, and put a big clip on it – put a sticky note on it saying “for your numbered Air Force / MAJCOM.”
7. Take the second copy; put a big clip on it, and a sticky note saying “squadron copy”.
8. Mail all three packages together to the Chief Pilot or ARB Officer.

The above 8 steps process is not mandatory, but the squadron will end up doing the photocopying and tabs and it might take the ARB officer or Chief Pilot (or some “office Lt”) some time to do it. If you present the material to them already done, all they have to do is type up the endorsement letters for signature. If you have already

separated from the service, I wouldn't spend the money to photo copy all this at Office Depot (unless you are just itching to spend that separation money). If you haven't "dropped your letter yet" and you don't want your Commander to find out what you are up to, just let your future Squadron make the copies.

After sending the ARB to the squadron, call and make sure they have received it. Then, give it about 5-10 working days to see if it has been endorsed by the SQ, OG and WG, or see if they need more information. Once it's been endorsed get your recruiter to check up on the [AF Form 1288](#) – assuming the chief pilot has issued the vacancy number.

By this time, the recruiter should have everything required to send off the Commissioning Package (the [AF Form 1288](#), the Flight Physical, and all the other paperwork you previously gave him). If the Chief Pilot elects to wait on the unit vacancy number, then the [AF Form 1288](#) will hold up the commissioning package. Once the ARB is endorsed by the unit, one copy is mailed to the units numbered Air Force Command (MAJCOM) Director of Operations (DO) for endorsement, the original ARB package will be mailed off AFRC for approval, and one copy will reside with the unit – probably in the circular file cabinet.

Follow up at AFRC to ensure the ARB gets approved there. Once approved it will await your commissioning package for the final approval.

## **10. The Flight Physical:**

Even though the AFI ([AFI 48-123](#)) states that the physical can be accomplished by any DoD flight surgeon, I recommend getting it done by an Air Force flight surgeon. The reason being that there are several sections on the [SF 88](#) (Report of Medical Examination) in which the Air Force has specific direction on how to fill it out (eg: block 45A where the US Navy flight surgeons don't normally or ever fill this out). Expect a "complete" physical – like the entrance physical you had before attending Naval Flight School.

The bottom line is that the Flight Physical must be sent to Randolph AFB, TX and endorsed by the medical unit there. If there are any "glitches" it gets sent back. I had mine done by a US Navy flight surgeon, looking directly at the AFI which states what items needed to be accomplished on the [SF 88](#), and it was still "kicked back" twice – once because the Navy and Air Force use the same eye vision tester, but each call it a different name and once because a few blocks were not filled out (even though the AFI didn't state such).

You will need an [SF 88](#) form, an [SF 93](#) form and an EKG for your complete flight physical package. Part of the [SF 88](#) includes a dental exam so ensure your recruiter schedules this as necessary. Please reference the [AFI](#), but I believe you need what is called a Class II physical exam with a Class I dental.

I recommend getting the physical done first since it must be approved by Randolph and a copy must be included in both the Commissioning package and the ARB package.

## **11. Behind the Scenes – a trip to the MAJCOM, AFRC and ARPC:**

Once your Recruiter mails off the Flight Physical, and the Commissioning Package, and once the unit mails off the ARB package what really goes on at the MAJCOM, AFRC and ARPC?

Well, let's start with the flight physical. As mentioned the physical gets mailed to Randolph AFB, TX for approval. If the recruiter is smart they will run it by their local medical squadron before mailing it off to Randolph. That way, if there are any mistakes it can be corrected early. Once it has been approved / endorsed by Randolph, they will mail it back to your recruiter. This is when you will need an extra copy for the ARB package.

Once the physical is back endorsed, include it in your ARB, and once the ARB is endorsed by the SQ, OG and WG, it will be mailed to the Wings MAJCOM/DO and the AFRC/DO in Warner Robbins. The ARB will be endorsed at the MAJCOM and finally approved at Warner Robbins (AFRC), and then wait for the Commissioning Package to be approved.

At some point (maybe as late as when the ARB is approved) the Chief Pilot will issue a unit vacancy position number for the [AF Form 1288](#). When the Wing Employment office mails the [1288](#) to the recruiter, the recruiter should then have everything for the commissioning package (including the original flight physical), the DD214/215 and the Conditional Release Form ([DD form 368](#)). The commissioning package will go to AFRC in Warner Robbins (a different office than the ARB) and it will get approved. Once it is approved, it will meet up with the ARB and together, the entire lump of paperwork will be mailed to ARPC in Denver, CO for its final approval / administrative paperwork drill. I don't think ARPC actually 'approves' it, but they have to determine what your new Date of Rank will be, what your new retention / retirement date is, and a whole lot of other dates and administrative items.

**NOTE:**

The time is now getting close to you "officially" becoming an AFRES officer. Although most units won't officially sign you up for a training class, it probably is a good idea to contact the Squadron Training Officer (SQ/DOT) to let him/her know that probably within a 6 - 8 weeks you should be an AFRES Officer. They will probably give you a rough idea of how long it will be for a training class.

Here are a few phone numbers that might come in handy. I'll refrain from putting a name to the phone number since people rotate through these positions frequently.

1. AFRC for the ARB: DSN 497-1145
2. AFRC for the Commissioning Package: DSN 497-1235
3. AFRC for both the ARB and Commissioning Package – routing person: Commercial (303) 676-7057
4. ARPC for the Commissioning Warrant and Appointment Order: 1-800-525-0102 (x 71291) or DSN 926-6443

## 12. Your Commissioning Warrant and Appointment Order:

Once your ARB and Commissioning Package have been endorsed / approved by AFRC, and ARPC has done their bureaucratic magic on it, ARPC will mail you or your recruiter your [commissioning oath](#) – simply a single piece of typed paper saying that the President of the United States appoints you a XXXX in the AFRES, etc... You must get sworn in by a commissioned officer (of any service) either active or retired. There is also a date of when you must be sworn in by or the warrant becomes null and void.

I recommend that once you get sworn in, have the commissioning officer sign the form – [AF Form 133](#), make a copy of it for your records, and then contact the POC on the paperwork and fax it to them as soon as possible. Put the original in the mail and send it back to the POC at ARPC. Once they have the faxed copy they can start the paperwork required to generate the appointment order and have everything ready, just waiting for the original.

When ARPC gets the original they will do more bureaucratic magic on it and then issue and mail out the Appointment Order (ARPC Form 92). **Congratulations, once you have the [appointment order](#) you are now able to go to the unit and start making money.** I think the official statement is that you can "execute the duties of the office that you have been appointed to" or something to that extent. Check the [appointment order](#) closely. There is a lot of information on this piece of paper that will affect you down the road – such as your Pay Entry Base Date (Pay Date), your retirement/retention (R/R) date ([reference AFMAN 36-8001, chapter 2, table 2.4](#)), your date of rank (DOR), and your date of appointment. Incidentally, the [appointment order](#) also has your unit vacancy number on it (position control number). Also, look carefully at the Remarks section – about 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the way down the page: It should say something like "Gaining MPF to input PTI 107". This is the cryptic way of saying that your gaining unit (Wing Employment office) will put ALL your information into the Master Computer System called "Mil Mod" for the AFRES. This will become extremely important when you check into the unit – look under [Section 2, Chapter 2](#) of this document for more information.

Nevertheless, unless you have prior commitments to a civilian job or vacation, I would call up the Chief Pilot and let him know the good news. Also contact the Training officer to try to finalize a training date (However, I would count on spending at least 2 weeks at the unit to get some more admin items done before attending any training).



Finally, I would contact the schedulers to let them know you want to come in “on status” (probably annual tour and/or UTA status at this point) to start taking care of your checking in paperwork (reference [section 2, chapter 2](#)). Most units will give you a progression tour (“prog tour”) following your initial training, so don’t feel bad about using up your Annual Tour days at this time – especially if its close to the end of the FY. Also, start thinking about doing RUTAs for your UTAs that you will miss while at initial training. Check with the schedulers to see how far you can RUTA in advance (see section 2, chapter 1 for an explanation of pay & status). Finally, if you can’t RUTA that many UTAs in advance, see if they will let you RUTA some in advance, and then the remainder afterwards. Some units will cut you RPA orders for the school, and then a separate RPA order for your progression tour. Once you finish your initial training (RPA orders), you can usually delay your progression tour orders long enough to have some time at home and also to RUTA the UTAs you’ve missed, or just take a vacation.

By the way, you can only sell back 60 days of leave in your entire officer career (unless you are on contingency orders, such as for Operation Iraqi Freedom or Enduring Freedom). Your initial school and progression tour are not contingency orders, therefore if you have already sold back 60 days of leave in your career, then you must take your leave or lose it. Unless your command will re-cut the orders (which is unlikely), then you must take your earned leave (2.5 days/month) during the dates that are already reflected on the orders. By the way, you will receive a LES, but for some reason the Reserves don’t put your leave balance on the LES. Check with the reserve military pay section at your wing HQ for your current balance. This office will be one of the first places you go to after receiving your appointment order so you will know exactly where it is and who the people are that work in it.

Okay, I’ve somewhat digressed at this point, but the bottom line is once you have your appointment order you can start making money. Skip down to [section 2, chapter 2](#) to understand what you must accomplish the first week or so when you check into the unit. There are actually some things you MUST accomplish prior to attending any training, and some things you need to accomplish in order to start seeing money show up in your bank account.

### 13. Final Thoughts (in no particular order)

1. All publications and forms can be found on <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil>

High speed internet will help out these documents are in the 3-4 MB size. Most, if not all, are in Adobe Acrobat PDF format. Some are in Form Flow format. You should be able to get this program if you are still on active duty. Go to [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com) to the  icon to download adobe acrobat if you don’t have it. Some of the forms are in IMT format. When you go the [e-publishing website](#) and find a document that is in IMT format, click on the blue box “ IMT” to download the program, or included on this CD ROM is the [program viewer.exe](#) to install the program and also the txt document to [view the instructions](#).

2. A few recommendations (in no particular order):

- A. Get letters of recommendations from the highest ranking, highest billet personnel (present or former) possible. Squadron/Unit Commanders, Executive Officer, Group Commanders, Group Executive Officers, Group Operations Officers, and anyone in the unit you are applying to are good ones.

- B. Apply to many Reserve units that interest you. Don’t focus on just one unit. The beautiful thing about the AFRES is that once you are a member of the AFRES, it is much easier to switch units – all you need at that point is an [AF Form 1288](#).

- C. Get yourself a FAX machine, copy machine and computer with Email and Internet. If you are still on active duty you should be all set up at work unless you don’t want your boss to know what you are up to.

- D. When you get off active duty **DO NOT have a break in service**. Go into the Individual Ready Reserves (IRR for the Marines). If you have a break in service, you will loose time in grade and time in service which may be the difference in getting promoted later rather than sooner – translation, the higher rank, the more money you will

make. Did I mention the reserve motto: “how to maximize your pay, while minimizing your pain.” With that being said, it is easier for the unit to justify bringing you on as an O3 rather than an O4. However, if your timing is right you can interview as an O3 and by the time you get “formally” approved by the Air Force Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC) you become an O4 and can mail your recruiter all the promotion information, thus becoming an Air Force Reserve O4.

E. Make a photo copy of EVERYTHING you send off and keep it for your records.

F. Trying to join a Reserve unit is kind of like “rushing a Fraternity”. It is very possible that you will be in the unit for many years to come so the other pilots want to know that they will get along with you – both in the cockpit and out. If possible make several trips to the unit to “hang out” with them on the UTA (that is when most of the pilots are there anyway). Start little by little. The first time you may just spend as little as 15-30 minutes at the unit, the next time may be over lunch. Don’t overstay your welcome, but let them know you are interested. Also, like anything else it helps if you know someone in the unit that can “sponsor you”. Thank you letters to the Chief Pilot and Sq/CC after a visit do help!

G. Make a complete “**certified true**” copy of your Medical and Dental Records. Do the same with your Officer Qualification Record (OQR). There is a good chance your new Wing Medical will get your official medical records and dental records from the Veterans Administration (VA), but just in case they don’t you won’t have to start from scratch. Also, you probably won’t be able to take your original medical and dental records with you when you discharge (the USMC order states they must go to the VA). I recommend removing all your X-rays from the original records and keep them with your certified true copies. You can always put them back in later, and the Admin/S-1 folks that take your records at the time of separation from AD don’t really know what is supposed to be in there anyway.

H. Every time you mail, fax, or email something, follow up with a phone call to ensure they received it. Unfortunately, the people involved in the application process don’t necessarily have your best interest in mind like you do.

I. Don’t get frustrated with the system. The Air Force breeds paperwork and bureaucracy. Expect every item (paperwork, packages, waivers, etc.) that gets routed to sit on someone’s desk for the “allotted time” as listed in the AFI (which you usually get “I have 10 working days”). Also, don’t get frustrated when something gets kicked back for a mistake in the paperwork – unfortunately it’s the first mistake the person notices and they usually don’t check any further in the document/package – until they get it back again with the first mistake corrected. Expect it to be kicked back – at least once – so start the paperwork early regardless of what your recruiter says.

J. Just because you join the AFRES and are approved for the Air Force Aeronautical Rating (AF Wings), you are still authorized to wear your Naval Aviation Wings of Gold. I’ve seen a few prior Naval Aviators that have both Navy wings and AF wings on their flight suit/jacket patch!!

K. When you first check into the unit, find another pilot or aircrew member in a similar situation (commuter, non-commuter, married, single, renting, own, no civilian job, civilian job, etc.) and pick their brain on how to maximize you pay. Also read [Section 2, Chapter 4](#) to help out.

L. The quick and dirty of what you need to know and do to transfer over – in order.

1. Get hired by the unit
2. Meet with the recruiter
3. Get your Flight Physical and Dental exam completed and endorsed by the Air Force
4. Submit your ARB package to the squadron. The squadron will route it to the numbered AF and also to the AFRC.
5. Submit your Commissioning Package to AFRC (may be done simultaneously w/ the ARB) – your recruiter should submit this.
6. Get your commission letter and appointment order from ARPC.

7. You're now an AFRES Officer!! Go make \$\$\$\$\$\$\$

3. If you are looking at other options, other than an AFRES Traditional Reservist see below. I do not have any experience in the area of becoming an Air Reserve Technician (ART), an Active Guard or Reserve (AGR), or an Inter-service Transfer, but some of the references may help you get started.

A. Reference [AGMO Form 335-3-R](#) for an Air Reserve Technician position. When you interview with the squadron, if you are interested in an ART position, ask them if there is one available. If so, they will probably tell you how to apply for it. My guess is you will have to transfer over to the AFRES and simultaneously or afterwards apply for the ART position.

B. Reference [NGB Form 34-1](#) for an Active Guard or Reserve position.

C. Reference [Interservice Transfer \(IST\) Assignment Opportunities for Pilots](#) for information on doing an Interservice transfer (active duty-to-active duty)

## Officially Joining the Unit (What you need to know to make money)

### 1. Understanding the Money Train:

“When it comes to money, you only screw it up once”



The Cash Cow

Reference [AFMAN 36-8001](#) for specific details. Also, to help understand where your money is coming from and what each type of pay does for your retirement and wallet it is best to break down pay into two categories or what we call pay status:

Category (1) Inactive Duty and category (2) Active Duty.

#### Types of Status and (number of days or periods authorized)

<u>Inactive Duty</u>	<u>Active Duty</u>
- UTA (48)	- Manday (X)
- AFTP/GTP (48)	- MPA
- RMP (X)	- RPA
	- Annual Tour (15)

#### Definitions:

##### Inactive Duty (ID).

Inactive duty is a pay status in which you perform military duty, but are not in Active Duty Status. That sounds nebulous doesn't it? Well, this is the easiest way to understand it, since most everyone understands Active Duty. Let me further explain. When on ID status, you really only fall under the UCMJ and military status (better check w/ the lawyers on this) during the actual period you are drilling – which is usually 4 or 8 hours a day. Each ID



day includes two 4 hour periods. So period one is in the morning 4 hours (0730-1130), and period 2 is in the afternoon 4 hours (1230-1630).

*Some commands (in ACC) actually have 3 ID periods a day – mostly the ones that sit alert for 8 hours at a time (24 hours a day) – where they let you really milk the cash cow.*

Anyway, during period one or two you can utilize a UTA period or an AFTP/GTP period or two of each (with certain limitations described below). What you really want to know is that for each period you get 1/30<sup>th</sup> of your AD Basic Pay, and 1/30<sup>th</sup> of your [Flight Pay](#) (basically 1/30<sup>th</sup> of any “[military PAY](#)”; but not benefits such as BAH or BAS). So in reality, in one work day you get 2 days of pay. There are some restrictions on when you can be on ID status. Mostly it is for “training”; therefore, it usually has to be in CONUS. Although, sometimes your Operations Officer may allow you to be in ID status when flying to such places as Puerto Rico – on a training flight. Also, during one day you can not combine ID and AD status. You are in one status or the other (from 0000 – 2359). You can only be on one pay status per day. You can however revert back and forth each day – see the maximizing your pay ([Section 2, Ch 4](#)) section.

During periods of ID, most (if not all) units will pay for your billeting. Because of so many Reservists performing ID on the normal UTA weekend you may be billeted on base or off base in a hotel. In either case the unit pays for it up front – this is what is called a “direct bill”. In any case your scheduler should fax a letter to billeting stating that you are performing ID and the unit is paying for the room. In some cases, billeting actually wants to see an [AF Form 40A](#) – which you won’t have if you are doing an AFTP/GTP. Call the schedulers and have them fax the billeting request letter, or just bring it to billeting the next morning.

Now for those of you that are thinking 10-15 years down the road you ask the question “what does an ID period do for my retirement”? Well, it depends on what pay status you are in. If you are on a UTA status, then each pay period (4 hours) gives you 1 point. If you are on an AFTP status, then you only get points towards the first 12 periods. (See the retirement section for further explanation of points). So, for a UTA weekend (2 days) you get 4 points towards retirement.

Inactive duty can be broken down into three groups: (1) UTA or RUTA, (2) AFTP/GTP, or (3) RMP.

**UTA = Unit Training Assembly.** When you hear the ads on television that say “as a reservist you do as little as one weekend a month and two weeks a year”, well the one weekend a month is the UTA they are referring to. In traditional units (like an Army reserve grunt unit), the unit may actually have “hard” UTA weekends where every swinging Jack and Jill must attend. This usually doesn’t fare well for aviation units that have many pilots (and other aircrew) that need to maintain currency in the airplane and the simulator. So, most units have flexible scheduling allowing you to perform the UTA at your convenience – usually the same month, or sometimes a month early or a month late w/ prior permission. This is what is called a RUTA, for Rescheduled UTA. If you perform your UTA on any day other than the scheduled UTA, the schedulers (Air Reserve Technicians) require that you fill out an [AF Form 40A](#). Sometimes you will need a copy of this [40A](#) for billeting so the hotel/BOQ can do a direct bill to your unit.

With the understanding of ID and the UTA, you can see that there are 4 UTA periods each month (one weekend / month), thus out-of-the-cockpit math tells us there are 48 UTA periods a year. It is interesting to note that you are REQUIRED to perform all your UTA periods, unless specifically approved (I would get it in writing) by the SQ/CC to be excused. But, when you get 2 days pay for 1 day of work why would you want to throw these away? You also get 1 retirement point for each UTA period you use (48/year).

Incidentally, typical to the military, each year is defined by the Fiscal Year (FY). So don’t plan to RUTA September’s UTA in October (a different FY).

**AFTP = Additional Flight Training Period.** These are what I call your “freebee” ID status – a great way to maximize your pay (especially if you are a Reserve BUM). There are 48 AFTPs a year, but you can only use a maximum of 16 a quarter. So, if you use 16 a quarter for the first three quarters of the FY, then you will not have any

AFTP for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. AFTPs pay out the same as a UTA period, but you must fill out different paperwork for the schedulers (do not fill out a [40A](#) for AFTPs). To log an AFTP or GTP (explained below) fill out an [AF Form 3956](#) - your schedulers probably have a binder already set up with your (and all the other pilots) forms in it to do this. Check with the scheduler before you do this the first time – since the process changes frequently and they are the ones to interpret what status you were in for each period which translates to how you get paid.

Let me digress some to further define the AFTP status. As you would infer from the definition, the AFTP was designed for additional FLIGHT training. However, you can actually log an AFTP period doing ground training – this is what we call a Ground Training Period (GTP). The restriction is that you can not log two GTP in the same day. Therefore, if you fly (an airplane, not a simulator) you can log either two AFTPs (assuming you fly at least 0.1 hours in each ID period), or one AFTP and one GTP a day (assuming you flew only in one ID period). For example, if you were flying (actually airborne) during the first ID period, and also during the second ID period, then you can log two AFTPs that day – or what is traditionally called a “double TP”. If you had a late takeoff and only flew during the second ID period, then you would log a GTP for the first period, and an AFTP for the second period. Or, if you wanted to get crazy (see maximizing your pay section for further details) for this last example you could log a UTA or RUTA for the first period and an AFTP for the second period. Whatever you decide, make sure the schedulers understand clearly what status you are in for each PERIOD. Each squadron has its own way to decipher that so check with them before you log it.

More on GTPs. Some squadrons may limit how you use them, for example unless specific approval is given they may not approve a GTP and RUTA/UTA period the same day. Check with your schedulers for details. Also you can only log 12 GTP a year. Again check with your schedulers. Final note on AFTP or GTP. You only get retirement points for the first 12 AFTP/GTP periods you perform. You can only get a maximum of 75 ID retirement points a year. 48 UTA + 15 Reserve + 12 AFTP/GTP ID points = 75 ID retirement points.

**RMP = Readiness Management Period.** RMPs can be used for 1 period a day – no more and not in conjunction with any other ID status or AD status. Only 24 RMP a year are authorized. I have very rarely seen RMPs used. Mostly because people will ask for a man-day first since they pay more than a single ID period. However, if you only want to work 4 hours a day and don't want to use a GTP (or don't have any left), it is worth asking for a RMP. You get one point towards retirement for an RMP.

### **Active Duty (AD).**

I'm sure everyone pretty much understands what AD is. You are in military status 24 hours a day, you receive 1/30<sup>th</sup> of a days [pay and benefits](#) for each day you are on AD, and you receive 1 retirement point for each day on AD status. You also receive [per diem](#) if you are away from you home (exception when you in AT status – see below), and after filing a travel claim you will receive reimbursement for you hotel or BOQ room. Incidentally, when you check into the hotel/BOQ you will be in a “self pay” status for the room – meaning you pay, but will get reimbursed by the government when you file a [travel claim](#). Did I mention to present your frequent flyer card to get the hotel to credit the points to your personal account?

Active duty can be broken down into three groups: (1) Manday – MPA, (2) Manday – RPA, or (3) Annual Tour (AT).

**Mandays.** A Manday is simply a day of active duty. It can either be paid for by the Active Duty AF, or it can be paid for by the AF Reserves. If the Active Duty AF pays for it then it is called MPA (don't ask me what that stands for). If the AF Reserves pay for it, then it is called RPA (again don't ask). Usually for training (like initial training, progression tours, and follow on training) and temporary duty supporting the reserves you will be cut RPA orders. If you are supporting the AF active duty, then you will probably get MPA orders. In either case, it is transparent to you as far as getting paid. For each day you work you will get 1/30<sup>th</sup> of your full active duty [pay and benefits](#). Unlike ID, you get [per diem](#), housing allowance (type II BAH if it is less than 30 consecutive days), and substance allowance. You will pay for your lodging but, will get reimbursed once you file your travel claim. You

also get TRICARE medical benefits and if on AD orders for more than 30 days your family qualifies for TRICARE benefits.

Note: My following explanations of RPA days and MPA days are geared towards the AMC mission where the aircrew frequently fly missions that support either Reserve training or Active Duty missions. While outside the scope of this document, the AMC Reserve units frequently “buy” missions from the active duty. In essence, the Reserves fly Active Duty missions because the Active Duty doesn’t have enough people to support them, thus the reason why the Active Duty AF will pay for the reservist to fly the missions (MPA orders).

**RPA.** As mentioned above, you will usually get RPA orders for training or supporting the reserves (such as off station training with aircraft). Your unit will probably have limited amount of RPA days and in some cases will mandate that you use your Annual Tour days before “cutting” any RPA orders for you. This usually only applies if you are going on a reserve mission (such as an off station trainer, or other reserve missions). For your initial training and progression tour you will get RPA days without having to use your annual tour first. Check with your scheduler to see how this works for your unit.

**MPA.** For missions that support the active duty you will get MPA orders. Generally, you are limited to 139 MPA days a year (fiscal year). Recently, this has been waived to 179 days, 270 days, and beyond. The magic numbers are designed around your benefits that are derived from each. Below are some details.

More than 30 consecutive days = TRICARE benefits for your family (TRICARE STANDARD) \*note\*

More than 139 consecutive days = you rate a PCS move / benefits

More than 179 consecutive days = your family rates TRICARE PRIME \*note\*

\*note\* Currently Congress has authorized several benefits for reservists that are on active duty orders.

1. If you are on AD orders longer than 30 days, your family rates TRICARE PRIME and you and your family will continue to receive this benefit for 120 days AFTER you get off orders. Although again the current legislation is attempting to extend this benefit to 6 months after you terminate your orders.
2. You are not required to pay the \$150 annual deductible for TRICARE STANDARD – it has been waived

These TRICARE and PCS benefits only apply if you are on consecutive day orders, not a “total” of MPA mandays.

Also, the rule is applied as only allowing 139 days of MPA days (total) a year without a waiver. Most missions that you go on will be anywhere between 4-14 days long. So you could probably do 1 mission a month and average around 139 days of MPA days for the FY.

Again, with MPA orders you get paid exactly the same as your RPA days. File a travel claim for your Perdiem and lodging expenses and also your mileage between work (AF Base) and your hotel.

**Annual Tour.** You rate 15 days a year (FY) of Annual Tour Active Duty. These are your days to do as you see fit. They are generally designed for you to get caught up on training that you were not able to accomplish on your UTAs and AFTP/GTP. Like I mentioned before, some units will require you to use your AT days before issuing RPA days for missions such as “off station” training missions. Because these missions are “training” missions, they can do that. However, if you are doing local training, such as upgrade training, then you should get RPA orders.

Most units will let you split up your AT days so you don’t have to use all 15 at once. I typically do 3-4 AT a month for each quarter (3 for the last quarter) because I live out of town and it helps maximize my pay (see Section 2, Chapter 4 for more details on this).

If you live out of the commuting area (55 miles or more away by your zip code) which is defined as a “non-commuter”, you will rate [perdiem](#) while on your AT – with some exceptions as listed herein. One caveat to your AT [perdiem](#) is that except for your travel day to and from the unit, you do not rate [perdiem](#). One exception to this is that

if you are away from your home station, then you rate [perdiem](#) for the entire AT period. If you live locally, then no [perdiem](#) is paid. For example, if you use your AT days to go on an off station training mission to Jacksonville, FL but your home station is Dover, DE you will rate two days of [perdiem](#) (travel to and travel from) at Dover, and the remainder for Jacksonville. Remember, if you live locally, you only rate [perdiem](#) while away from home station (on a mission for example). See [Section 2, Chapter 4](#) for more details. See the two examples to help track all the different pay status you were in performing duty. [Example 1](#), [Example 2](#).

## 2. Checking into the unit

Now that you have your appointment order and understand all there is to know about the pay structure you are armed and ready to check into your unit. Step one is to get in touch with the schedulers and / or chief pilot and set up at least one week (I recommend two weeks – 10 working days) of paid status to go to the unit to check in.

Some units have a “newcomers” check-in process in which you show up for a UTA weekend and the Wing sets up most your basic administrative check-in procedures. I stress “basic”, because you will still need a good week to take care of some things which are specific to your AFSC (Air Force Service Code). Check with your Wing Employment office to see if they have a “newcomers weekend” to attend.

In any case, here is a laundry list of most of what you will need to accomplish – most of them before you can attend any formal training course: I have attempted to compile the list in the most important order – for you to start getting paid, and then to attend training as quickly as possible. I would recommend that you take every piece of paperwork you have (remember my recommendation on [Section 1, Chapter 13.2.E](#)) with you to facilitate checking into your unit. (your helmet bag works great for carrying all of these documents)

1. Get your Military Identification Card – at your wing **customer service** office. Take your appointment order.
2. Go buy a new blue Air Force Officers Cover and rank insignia for the cover and also rank insignia for as many flight suits you want to have the insignia sewn on.
3. Get entered into the “Mil Mod” computer system – at your **wing employment** office. Reference your appointment order – Remarks section; *Gaining MPF to enter PTI 107*. Be patient with the employment office. Stay there “in person” during the entire process (it will take hours) because you will probably have to “interpret” Marine/Navy/Coast Guard paperwork terminology into Air Force paperwork terminology. This is one of the most important steps of checking in!!
4. Check into the **Military Pay** section
  - Ensure they have everything necessary (direct deposit forms) to start paying you. They may have to wait a few days for the Mil Mod computer section to update its records w/ your information.
5. Get your [AF Form 1042](#) approved (local signoff on your flight physical) – at your **wing medical** office.
  - While you are there ensure they have your Medical and Dental records. If not, have they been requested from the VA? Remember, you have a certified true copy and the original X-rays in case they can’t get the records.
  - You might need a new flight physical if it has been over a year – or if you are “in zone”. Your flight physical can not expire while you are at initial training !! Set up an appointment if necessary. Sometimes it can take weeks or months for an appointment. Welcome to the Air Force.
6. Check with your **training officer** to see if you need to do the altitude chamber or other pre-requirements for training – if so schedule an appointment.
7. Get entered into the Flight Records computer – at the **flight record** office. Take your logbooks, NATOPS jacket, and other forms that show start and finish dates of flight school. This is where they set up your “flying gates” for flight pay, and enter your flight time into the AFORMS systems. Also, once

you have a current flight physical ([AF Form 1042](#)) they will issue your aeronautical orders. You will probably get an AO for just a pilot at first. However, at a later date you will probably get an AO that qualify you as a Senior Pilot or a Command pilot (if you have been around the block a while). Ask the flight records manager to explain the flight gate process to you (its different than in the Marines) and the determination for pilot, senior pilot or command pilot rating (it is also in the [AFI 11-402](#)). Note, you must fly at least once every 3 months to keep your flight gates going!! Have the flight records manager explain this.

8. Get with your squadron training officer for a training date – at the **squadron’s pilot shop**.
  - The training officer should give you a list of what is required for training; both prerequisites and physical items. Also as time gets closer the training officer should have a form (called a RIP) for you to fill out for your orders to be cut for the TDY – check it and add in any leave you want to take (before or after the TDY dates).
9. Go to the **wing customer service** office to fill out miscellaneous forms – Record of Emergency Data, Virtual MPF, Update the DEERS computer system (important for your family and TRICARE), and other miscellaneous paperwork.
10. Go to the **TRICARE office** at the clinic / hospital to ensure they have all your families’ information and that you and your family are in the DEERS computer.
11. Get with your **schedulers** for information on how to fill out different pay forms such as an AF Form 40A (for RUTAs), [AF Form 3956](#) (for AFTP/GTP), [AF FORM 938](#) (Active Duty Orders), and [DD Form 1351-2](#), [1351-2C](#) (Travel Claim) and [SF 1164](#) (Claim for reimbursement of expenditures on official business).
12. Get with your **squadron operations** department to check in (give them your home address and other info) and request a Bank of America Government Visa Credit Card.
13. Get with your **training officer** to set up your “training table”. Once this is done, get a print out from the schedulers for all your required ground training. About 50% of your ground training should be able to be signed off immediately (your shots, initial water survival, initial land survival, etc.) Ask the scheduler what all the different items are and how to sign them off (as appropriate for completing them). Most pilot shops have an [AF Form 1522](#) to sign off individual events. Some events are signed off on the [AF Form 1522](#) in different places than the pilot shop. For example, the LL04 Ground Egress event will probably be signed off in the life support shop. Start signing off as much ground training as you can before going to your initial training. Again, your schedulers can help out with this. [See Section 2, Chapter 3](#) for more details on ground and flight training.
14. Get your **uniform issue**. After determining what items you need (AF leather jacket, more flight suits, another nomex flight jacket, nomex gloves, helmet bag, boots, patches, etc...) fill out a “request for individual clothing” form, get it signed by your chief pilot or DO and take it to where these items get issued. Additionally, this form may authorize you to have all the Velcro and rank (although you must buy the rank insignia at your own expense) insignia sewn on at no expense to you. Additionally, your chief pilot or DO may have squadron and other unit patches for you. Also, find out who is responsible for ordering your new air force nametags for you flightsuit and leather jacket and place an order with them. For quicker service call MARDON directly at 1-800-231-8843 or visit their website at [www.mardonco.com](http://www.mardonco.com).
15. Go to the **squadron security manager** and if necessary the Security Force Squadron to ensure your security clearance has transferred over. If it has been over 10 years since your last Security Clearance investigation, you will need to do a periodic re-investigation – you will need to fill out an [SF 86](#), [SF 86a](#), and [SF 86c Form](#).

### 3. The Training Program

One thing the AF is good at tracking is your ground training currency and flight training currency. The AMC side of the AF utilized a computer system called AFORMS and CAAS to input and track all of your flying and ground currency items. Everything such as your shot records, pistol qualification, physical fitness test, check ride, instrument exams, takeoffs and landings are tracked. Below is an example of what a typical AMC CAAS printout looks like. The first is an example of a ground currency printout, the second is for flying currency. Not all currency items are included in order to keep the examples shorter than normal. The schedulers can print these forms for you.

Individual Flying Currency (By Next)		As of: 08OCT03						
JONES, IAN B		Qual: MC 5 -Flt		SSAN: 456-12-6789				
Tot: 2030.1		MDS: 585.1	30Day: 55.1/7	60Day: 61.0/9	90Day: 103.0/15	NVG: 0.0/0		
ID	Description	Gnd	Flg	LstAcmp	InPhase	NextDue	SchdFor	Status
G065	SDP TRNG	-O	-O	###	No Date	OneTime	OneTime	
G182	HAZ CARGO	-I	-I	###	No Date	OneTime	OneTime	
G250	SIM DAY (1-2)	-I	-I	***	11MAR02	01JAN03	30JUN03	
G007	FLT RCDS RVW	-O	-O	***	09AUG02	01JUN03	30SEP03	
Q170	FEF REVIEW	-O	-O	**	20JAN03	01OCT03	31OCT03	
H040	FLU SHOT	-O	-O	*	14DEC02	01OCT03	31DEC03	
G120	ISO-PREP	-I	-I		04AUG03	01NOV03	31JAN04	
LL04R	CHEM REF (RES)	-I	-I		15JAN02	01JAN04	30JUN04	
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
G005	PHYSICAL EX	-G	-G		28MAY03	01APR04	30SEP04	
G231	INITIAL CRM	-I	-I		09JAN02	OneTime	OneTime	
SS20	BASIC SURV	-O	-O		07AUG92	OneTime	OneTime	

Every time you perform a ground training currency item, you log off the event on an [AF Form 1522](#). Sometimes these [AF Form 1522](#) will be logged off at the place you accomplish the ground training (eg: LLO4R CHEM REF at the chemical warfare training site) and sometimes you will log them in the pilot shop. I recommend that you always log the event on the AF Form 1522 located in the pilot shop regardless of where else you log it. That way, if for some reason AFORMS never gets updated, you have a quick reference of when you accomplished the training and it will be easier to justify your training.

Understanding the ground training CAAS printout will pay big dividends (no pun intended). Under the column labeled “Gnd” identifies what items will ground you from flying. A “-G” indicates that it is a grounding item. Such things as Ground Egress, Physical Exam, and Altitude Chamber will ground you from flying local training flights and missions (stateside and overseas). A “-O” indicates that it is a grounding item for Overseas sorties. A “-N” indicates that it is non-grounding. Under the column labeled “Flg” identifies when the item is due – as a “quick snapshot”. The symbol “###” indicates that you have never accomplished this item. The symbol “\*\*\*” indicates the item is overdue, “\*\*” indicates you are within 30 days of being overdue, and “\*” indicates you are in-phase to accomplish this item. Normally you are not allowed to accomplish the item until you are in-phase. If you are

overdue, and then accomplish the item, ensure the person who updates AFORMS clearly knows that you have accomplished the item “out of phase” otherwise it will probably not get updated properly.

Individual Flying Currency (By Next)		As of: 08OCT03																	
JONES, IAN B		Qual: MC 5		-Flt		SSAN: 456-12-6789													
Tot: 2030.1		MDS: 585.1		30Day: 55.1/7		60Day: 61.0/9		90Day: 103.0/15		NVG: 0.0/0									
ID	Description	Gnd	Required			** ACCMPLSHMTS **						Remaining			LstAcmp	NextDue			
			M	Q	S	Jl	Ag	Se	Oc	Nv	De	M	Q	S					
P020	TAKEOFF	-I -N	-	-	18	5	7	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	22SEP03	31OCT03		
P070	APPROACH TOT	-I -N	-	-	20	5	5	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	22SEP03	31OCT03		
P190	LANDING TOT	-I -N	-	-	18	5	8	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	22SEP03	31OCT03		
P192	NIGHT LNDING	-I -N	-	-	2	1	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22SEP03	31DEC03		
.																			
.																			
.																			
.																			
XB08	TAXI TRNG	-O -N	-	-	1	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	04SEP03	No Date		

For your flight training currency items, you also will log these off. The base where I fly out of has created its own form for tracking flight training events. Ours is called a [Dov Form 306](#) (on the back side which is not listed), but referencing [the DAFBI 11-202 Mission History Report](#) Instruction on the last page, and you will get an idea. After the flight, I photo copy the front and back of this form and keep it for my records. Again, if for some reason your flight training never gets updated, it will be easier to re-create your accomplishments. Note: Your flight training is based upon accomplishing a certain number of items in each 6 month period (January-June and July-December).

Reference the “[AFORMS Decoder](#)” as an example of what each ground currency item consists of, what you need to do to accomplish it, and how/where to sign it off.

#### 4. Post Training, Maximizing your pay while minimizing you pain

Okay, now you are really on your way to earning all that money you’ve been waiting for. Let me first say that it is quite overwhelming all the different ways a traditional reservist can earn money (be on pay status). So, with that in mind, you will probably realize at one point that you could have been in XX status and earned more money than you did. You will probably only screw that up once. Now for the meat and potatoes of maximizing you pay.

##### A. Non-Commuter:

First, if you live outside the commuting area (55 miles per computed by your zip code), then each and every time you are on AD orders you will rate TDY travel money. You also may be entitled to rate a “travel day” to and from. Let me explain in more detail by using myself as an example. Lets say you live in Chicago, Illinois and your reserve unit is in Dover, Delaware. If you have AD orders for a mission that is supposed to alert (4 hours before your scheduled takeoff time) at 0100L on Thursday, you obviously must travel up the day prior because there is no way you can make it to Dover on the same day as when you orders officially start. So, you decide to travel up (via airplane in this example) on Wednesday. When you endorse your orders ([AF Form 938](#)) and travel claim ([DD 1351-2](#) and [1351-2C](#)), you indicate that you departed Chicago on Wednesday. Military pay will then pay you an AD day for Wednesday – regardless of when on Wednesday you traveled. So lets take it a little further. You work a full day at

your civilian job on Wednesday, drive to the airport and take one of the last flights out – say at 7:00 PM, and arrive in Dover (via Philadelphia IAP (PHL) or Baltimore/Washington IAP (BWI)) at 9:00 PM. You just got a full days pay at your civilian job and you also got a one day of pay from the Air Force. In reality you are supposed to be in “crew rest” within local commuting distance to Dover 12 hours prior to your alert time. So, this may be an extreme example with the times, but you get the idea. On your travel claim you are entitled to POV miles to/from your home and the airport, airport parking, and tolls – don’t forget this. Also, how do you get from PHL or BWI to Dover? Well, this is where you must be creative. On AD orders, it is the units responsibility to get you to Dover (at all costs – but usually the cheapest!!). If it is a short (4-5 day) mission, then probably a rental car will be the cheapest. If it’s a longer mission, then probably a shuttle from the airport to your base, and then a local taxi once you are in the area is the cheapest. Be creative and do yourself a favor and do a “[cost comparison](#)” for your DO and CC to justify what you are requesting. Obviously a rental car is probably the most convenient for you, so try to make the numbers work so you can request that on your orders. Speaking of which, when you ask for the orders, remember to get them to include the phrase “hire of special convenience authorized” which will cover you for a rental car, a limo/shuttle, or any other way you might travel. Don’t forget to include the cost of gas for your rental car on the [DD 1351-2](#). Now, remember that “travel day” you got coming out, well you also rate one going back assuming you get back from your mission and its too late to make it to the airport to fly back home. You can probably catch the first flight out in the morning, and be back at your civilian job by lunch time. Are you starting to get the idea? Finally on this thought, whatever kind of orders you are on will be the kind of AD days you are charged with your travel days. Meaning, if you are on your AT, then your travel days will be charged from your AT balance. You only have 15 AT days a year so use them wisely. Doing MPA or RPA days you generally have unlimited (well 139/year without a waiver) days.

Secondly, you can combine AD and ID training on one trip and get the AF to pay for your travel when doing so – this is called “*displaced travel*”. Generally, the reserves must be able to justify to the active duty that you are not abusing the system. My unit says they will only pay 3 times a FY for displaced travel while performing your AT. However, when performing MPA or RPA orders they will allow displaced travel an unlimited amount of times. The one stipulation they place is that you must perform a minimum of 3 AD days with any displaced travel. So, what this tells you is that since the AF pays for your travel (and per diem) on AD orders, it is very beneficial to you to do displaced travel as much as possible. Remember when performing ID training you must pay for your own way to the unit, so try to combine as much AD with ID to qualify for displaced travel. And if I didn’t make this clear, when you perform displaced travel you still get per diem on the days you perform ID (cha-ching!!).

Thirdly, which goes along with the displaced travel is that you might be able to split up your AT days. So, use this to your advantage with your displaced travel to maximize your travel and per diem. Speaking of [per diem](#), remember with your AT, if you stay local then you only get [per diem](#) on the first and last day of your AT (assuming you live out of the commuting area) – yet another reason to split them up.

Below is an example for one quarter of how I am able to maximize my pay with travel days, [per diem](#) and displaced travel.

<b><u>October</u></b>	Pay Day 1	Travel Day out	<b><i>(Displaced Travel Orders)</i></b>
	Pay Day 2	AT (day 1)	Work Day 1 (local training)
	Pay Day 3	AT (day 2)	Work Day 2 (local training)
	Pay Day 4	AT (day 3)	Work Day 3 (local training)
	Pay Day 5	ID (RUTA – 2 periods)	Work Day 4
	Pay Day 6	ID (RUTA – 2 periods)	Work Day 5
	Pay Day 7	ID (AFTP – 2 periods)	Work Day 6
	Pay Day 8	Travel Day back	

Charged: 5 days of AT, 2 UTA days (4 periods), 1 ID day (2 periods)  
 Worked 6 days, but got paid for 11 days of pay, 5 days of benefits, and 8 days of per diem

<b><u>November</u></b>	Pay Day 1	Travel Day out	<b><i>(Displaced Travel Orders)</i></b>
	Pay Day 2	ID (AFTP – 2 periods)	Work Day 1



Pay Day 3	ID (RUTA – 2 periods)	Work Day 2
Pay Day 4	ID (RUTA – 2 periods)	Work Day 3
Pay Day 5	MPA orders	Work Day 4 (mission)
Pay Day 6	MPA orders	Work Day 5 (mission)
Pay Day 7	MPA orders	Work Day 6 (mission)
Pay Day 8	MPA orders	Work Day 7 (mission)
Pay Day 9	Travel day back	

Charged: 6 MPA days, 2 UTA days (4 periods), 1 ID day (2 periods)

Worked: 7 days, but got paid for 12 days of pay, 6 days of benefits, and 9 days of per diem

<b><u>December</u></b>	Pay Day 1	ID (AFTP – 2 periods)	Work Day 1
	Pay Day 2	ID (RUTA – 2 periods)	Work Day 2
	Pay Day 3	ID (RUTA – 2 periods)	Work Day 3
	Pay Day 4	ID (AFTP – 2 periods)	Work Day 4
	Pay Day 5	ID (AFTP – 2 periods)	Work Day 5

Charged: 2 UTA days, 6 ID periods

Worked: 5 days, got paid for 10 days of pay

Out of pocket expenses: Your travel expenses to your reserve unit \*note\*

\*note\* I have travel passes on a major airline, and a POV at an airport close to my reserve unit, so my travel expenses are virtually nil when I perform ID exclusively. If you don't have this luxury, then simply combine AD days (probably MPA) with your ID to capitalize on this displaced travel benefit.

So, after one quarter of the FY, I have performed 5 days of your AT, 6 days of MPA, 3 months of your UTA (6 periods), and 10 AFTP/GTP ID periods (remember you can only perform a maximum of 48 ID periods a FY, and no more than 16 AFTP/GTP ID periods a quarter – so pace yourself so you can make good money all year round). If you keep up this pace you will use all your AT, approximately 24 MPA/RPA AD days, all your UTA periods (which you are required to do anyway unless you get a waiver) and 40+ of your AFTP/GTP ID periods, and best of all you have gotten the AF to pay for your travel to/from the majority (if not all) of the time.

#### B. Commuter: (you live in the local area)

First, since you live locally you can perform as much of your ID after you have worked a “full day” at your civilian job. Sign up for the evening local flights and evening simulators. You probably won't be able to RUTA, GTP or a RMP after hours as your time has to be able to be verified that you actually worked.

Secondly, remember all those collateral duties you had in the Marines or Navy? Well the AFRES has many of the same responsibilities, but usually doesn't have the manpower to keep every program running. Talk to your chief pilot and Sq/CC about picking up some of these duties in exchange for mandays. Below are some examples from my squadron of where they give out either unlimited mandays, or a limited amount of mandays based on the task/billet.

- a. OPR Officer – unlimited mandays
- b. Awards Officer – unlimited mandays
- c. Safety Officer – unlimited mandays
- d. Assistant Training Officer – unlimited mandays
- e. ARB Officer – limited
- f. Voting Officer – limited
- g. Combined Federal Campaign Officer – limited
- h. Airshow Coordinator – limited

In general, for nearly every ART position, there is an equivalent TR position. These positions usually allow you to perform unlimited mandays as well. However, usually these positions are usually only available for pilots that have been in the squadron for a while and have the appropriate Air Force qualifications for them.

## 5. Understanding Retirement (in a nutshell)

I'll briefly explain the reserve retirement here. Consult your MPF and your wing retirement section for full details. Also reference [AFMAN 36-8001, Chapter 2](#) and the [Reserve Retirement Document](#) for more details.

First, you will receive your retirement pay starting at age 60 even if you retire before then! (Although, there is current legislation before congress to reduce the age by 1 year for every 2 years you remain in the reserves past 20 years. So, if you had 30 years of qualifying reserve retirement years (more on this below) then you could receive your retirement check starting at age 55.

Now, what makes up a qualifying reserve retirement year – or what is otherwise known as a “good year”. First, you must understand that as far as retirement goes, every member has their own “year” when you are counting points. What I mean by this is that when you go into the reserves you will get a retirement/retention date that is computed by when you first went into the service (any service – your first “enlistment”). So, for example if you went into the Marine PLC program on 13 December of 1988, years later went on AD, then transferred into the AFRES with no break in service, then your retirement/retention day would be 13 December, and each year to accumulate points towards retirement would begin on 13 December, and end on 12 December the following year. Confusing enough? Check your Appointment order – towards the bottom – because it will have your retirement/retention date on it. Also, after about 3-4 months after officially joining and checking into the unit, call AFPC in Denver (1-800-525-0102 x71331 or dsn 925-6375 or commercial 303-676-6375) and ask for a summary of your retirement points. At some point each year you will probably get a statement on your retirement points as well. Also, on your LES it will tell you how many AD day, and ID days you have performed for the FY so you can keep track and check that AFPC is counting everything correctly.

Okay, now back to how you accumulate these points. Well you must have at least 50 points to qualify for a “good year”. You get 15 points a year just for being a reservist – isn't that nice of the AF. You get 1 point for each UTA period you work – so if you work every one you will have 48 points a year. This makes a total of 63 points from ID so far. You get 1 point for each ID period you work – but you can only have a total of 75 points towards retirement from all your ID training. So, in reality even if you work more than 12 AFTP/GTP ID periods, you will only get 12 points towards retirement (assuming you've done all your UTA ID periods). You get 1 point for each AD day you work (regardless of whether it is an AT, MPA or RPA). So, lets assume you work 45 days of AD, perform all your UTA periods and perform at least 12 AFTP/GTP ID periods. You will accumulate 120 points towards retirement (and you could have only “worked” approximately 55 days – remember displaced travel) which is approximately one third of a full AD year. Not too bad huh?

When you transition from AD to the reserves, AFPC will convert all your AD time into reserve points by giving you one point for each AD day worked – and vice-versa if you ever go back to AD. Thus another reason to call AFPC shortly after joining the reserves and also to check your retirement points summary sheet. Also, another good reason to check your DD214 extremely carefully, and if you were a Marine PLC type (or had prior enlisted time) ensure you provide AFPC copies of your old DD214 or at least a copy of the orders reflecting the dates. Every little bit will help later. Two six week sessions of Marine PLC will give you around 130 more points (100 days of AD, plus 15 points a year just for being a reservist).

One other note, to retire in the reserve system, your last 8 years in the reserves must be “good years”.

Now that you know how to figure out all your points, simply add up each year and come up with a total point number. Assuming you had 10 years of AD before joining the reserves, and then performed 120 points a year thereafter for 10 years, you would have approximately 4850 points towards retirement (3650 for you AD time, and 1200 for your reserve time).

It's now simple to figure out your retirement paycheck. Follow the three step process:

1. Take your total points and divide by 360 = number of years (equivalent to AD)
2. Take the number of years and multiply by 2.5 percent (.025) = percentage multiplier
3. Take the percentage multiplier and multiply by your monthly active duty basic pay for equivalent pay grade (\*note) at age 60 = monthly retired pay

\*note: for those that became Reservists after 8 Sep 1981 use an average of the highest 3 years of monthly pay

Example: a LtCol who retires after 22 years that has accumulated 5000 points

1.  $5000 / 360 = 13.89$
2.  $13.89 \times .025 = .3472$
3.  $.3472 \times \$5751.90 = \$1997.19$  a month starting at age 60 (age 59 assuming the legislation is approved).

## Glossary

ACC	=	Air Combat Command. The glamour boys. The fighters. Pointy nose, fast movers!
ACIQ	=	Aircraft Commander Initial Qualification course.
A Code	=	Symbol on flight orders indicating who is the Aircraft Commander.
AD	=	Active Duty
AETC	=	Air Education Training Command. The equivalent to Navy white and orange jets. “white jets” as the AF calls it.
AF	=	Air Force. Boys in Blue. Businessmen in blue suits.
AFORMS	=	This is the master computer system that tracks everything from your flight time, to flight training / currency, and ground training / currency
AFI	=	Air Force Instruction. A document that provides specific guidance for its particular subject. The AF has one for everything you do.
AFRC	=	Air Force Reserve Command. Located in Warner Robbins, Georgia.
AFRES	=	Air Force Reserves
AMC	=	Air Mobility Command. The big boys – the heavy aircraft. The boys that earn per diem!
ANG	=	Air National Guard.
AO	=	Aeronautical Orders. Orders authorizing you to fly. Issued by Flight Records.
ARB	=	Aeronautical Review Board. The item necessary to convert your Gold Wings to Silver Wings.
AS	=	Airlift Squadron
AT	=	Annual Tour. Your 15 days a year of active duty for training.
ARPC	=	Air Reserve Personnel Center. Located in Denver, Colorado.
ART	=	Air Reserve Technician. A Civil Servant (GS-xx) employee that is also a Reservist with the unit. These are the “full time” employees in the unit that run the day-to-day operations.
AW	=	Airlift Wing
BOA	=	Bank of America; the bank that issues your Government Credit Card which must be used for all TDY expenses.
BUM	=	a Traditional Reservist (TR) that doesn’t have a civilian job. Relies on the Reserves for all their normal income and benefits. Normally a BUM is your best source for how to maximize your pay.
CAAS	=	This is the computer system that the schedulers use to print out your flight and ground currency
CC	=	Commander; usually abbreviated after the unit (eg: 944FW/CC would indicate 944 Fighter Wing Commander).
Chief Pilot (ART)	=	Air Reserve Technician Chief Pilot. The person that runs the day-to-day operations of the pilot shop.
Chief Pilot (TR)	=	The ‘actual’ chief pilot; traditional reservist that holds the billet of chief pilot.
CIQ	=	Co-Pilot Initial Qualification course.
DEERS	=	The computer system that the DoD utilizes to show TRICARE your current status of military duty.
DINIF	=	the Air Force equivalent of being “Med down”. Unable to fly for medical reasons.
DO	=	Director of Operations. Similar duties to that of a Marine Squadron Operations officer.
DoD	=	Department of Defense
DOP	=	Chief Pilot
DOT	=	Director of Training (within the Pilot Section).
EP	=	Evaluator Pilot. Similar to being a NATOPS / Instrument check pilot.
FC	=	Co-Pilot – non mission qualified. After completing initial training for Co-Pilot, but not yet mission qualified.
FP	=	First Pilot – non mission qualified. After completing initial training for Pilot, but not yet mission qualified.
FS	=	Fighter Squadron
FW	=	Fighter Wing
FY	=	Fiscal Year. October 1 through September 30 <sup>th</sup> .
ID	=	Inactive Duty
IP	=	Instructor Pilot.
MC	=	Mission Qualified Co-Pilot
MC F	=	Mission Qualified First Pilot.
MP	=	Mission Qualified Pilot
MPA	=	Pay status for an active duty day paid for by the active duty.
MWS	=	Major Weapon System. Similar to what the Navy & Marines call Type, Model, Series (T/M/S). What the AF considers a “fleet” aircraft.

OG = Operations Group unit symbol  
 OPR = Officer Performance Report. The equivalent to a Marine Fitness Report, but much less detailed.  
 POC = Point of Contact  
 SQ = Squadron unit symbol  
 RMP = Reserve Management Period. An Inactive duty drill status that has only one period (4 hours) of pay a day.  
 RPA = Pay status for an active duty day paid for by the Reserves  
 RUTA = Rescheduled Unit Training Assembly. An Inactive Duty drill status that has been rescheduled (at the members request) from the original UTA weekend.  
 TALCE = Tanker Airlift Control Element: A team of qualified AF personnel established to control, coordinate and Function as an AF command and control (C2) facility where normal C2 facilities are not present.  
 TDY = Temporary Duty. Temporary Active Duty (TAD) for Marines.  
 T/M/S = Type, Model, Series. Navy & Marine terminology which refers to a specific type of aircraft. For example an F/A-18C would be a different T/M/S than an F/A-18D. Typically what the AF refers to as a Major Weapons System (MWS).  
 TR = Traditional Reservist. A reservist who is not an ART  
 UC = Unqualified Copilot: A copilot that has not finished initial training on the MWS assigned.  
 UTA = Unit Training Assembly. An Inactive Duty drill status, normally conducted on the weekends with 2 ID periods each day  
 VA = Veterans Administration  
 Virtual MPF = Virtual Management Personnel Flight: Computer / Internet system that allows you to check and update all your personal information such as your record of emergency data.  
 WG = "Generic" Wing unit symbol