



SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

INFO MEMO

FOR: SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

FROM: Michael B. Donley **MBD** APR 24 2013

SUBJECT: Air Force Implementation Plan for Integrating Women into Career Fields Engaged in Direct Ground Combat

- The plan for the Air Force to fully integrate women into seven previously closed career fields is attached for your review at TAB A. The Air Force has been on the forefront of this issue since its inception, and this plan keeps us on that positive trajectory. Over 99 percent of our positions are currently open to women and this plan will guide the Air Force in opening the rest no later than January 1, 2016 and complies with the guiding principles of the January 24, 2013 memorandum.
- The Air Force is firm in its belief that removing any remaining restrictions to service will improve its ability to defend the Nation and carry out our mission to Fly, Fight, and Win. The initiative will improve our readiness and capability, and it will allow us to do more to attract and retain women who will continue to make contributions to the Air Force in the years and decades ahead.
- The Air Force will lean forward on this initiative. We have only 7 remaining career fields not currently open to women, less than 5,000 positions across the Total Air Force of over 500,000 personnel. We will partner with United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), the other Services, and your office to achieve this worthy goal.
- We will provide you quarterly updates on our progress, as the Air Force executes our implementation plan and moves toward success.

COORDINATION: NONE

Attachment:  
As stated

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# **Air Force High Level Implementation Plan on Gender Integration**

## **Introduction**

In January 2013, the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) rescinded the 1994 Direct Ground Combat exclusion rule for women, which previously restricted women from assignments in special operations and long range reconnaissance units. The SECDEF further directed the Services to submit a detailed implementation plan consistent with the guiding principles as outlined in the January 24, 2013, memorandum to the Service secretaries.

As of April 2, 2013, the Air Force had 4,686 previously closed positions: 3,470 active duty (AD), 178 Air Force Reserve (AFR), and 1,038 Air National Guard (ANG) (see Attachment 1). These positions span seven Air Force specialty codes (AFSC), and include 13CX (special tactics officer (STO)), 13DX (combat rescue officer (CRO)), 15WXC (special operations weather (SOWT)) officer), 1C2X (combat control team (CCT)), 1C4X (tactical air control party (TACP)), 1T2X (pararescue (PJ)), and 1W0X2 (special operations weather enlisted). The AFR employs personnel in four of seven AFSCs (no special operations weather officers/enlisted or special tactics officers in the AFR inventory.)

As directed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's (CJCS) January 9, 2013, memorandum, the Air Force will review and validate physical and mental standards for all open Air Force specialties no later than (NLT) the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2015 (FY15) in accordance with the timeline at Attachment 3.

## **Purpose**

This plan provides the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD (P&R)) and CJCS with the Air Force's high level implementation plan for integrating women into previously closed career fields. In accordance with the SECDEF's guiding principles, this plan outlines timelines for opening each career field, as well as specified and implied tasks to ensure that the Air Force timeline meets the suspenses contained in CJCS, USD (P&R), and SECDEF guidance.

## **Guiding Principles (SECDEF memorandum dated January 24, 2013)**

- Ensure the success of our Nation's warfighting forces by preserving unit readiness, cohesion, and morale;
- Ensure all Service men and women are given the opportunity to succeed and are set up for success with viable career paths;
- Retain the trust and confidence of the American people to defend this Nation by promoting policies that maintain the best quality and most qualified people;
- Validate occupational performance standards, both physical and mental, for all military occupational specialties (MOS), specifically those that remain closed to women. Eligibility for training and development within designated occupational fields should consist of qualitative and quantifiable standards reflecting the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for each occupation. For occupational specialties open to women, the

occupational performance standards must be gender-neutral as required by Public Law 103-160, Section 542; and

- Ensure a sufficient cadre of midgrade/senior women enlisted and officers are assigned to commands at the point of introduction to ensure success in the long-run.

### **Timelines**

This plan complies with all suspenses in the SECDEF memo. (Note: Air Force-specific timelines are detailed in later sections of the plan.)

- 15 May 2013 Military Departments submit Service plans implementing CJCS guidance to the SECDEF through the CJCS and USD (P&R).
- 30 Jun 2013 Services and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) begin quarterly reporting on progress towards integrating women into previously closed positions (NLT than 10 days after the end of each quarter); quarterly reports continue until integration is complete or December 1, 2015, whichever is earlier.
- 30 Sep 2015 Services develop, review, and validate occupationally-specific, operationally-relevant, gender-neutral physical performance tests and standards used to assess and assign service members.
- 30 Sep 2015 Services submit exceptions to policy (ETP) to open positions/career fields on a case-by-case basis.
- 1 Jan 2016 Services and USSOCOM complete their respective physical standards reviews, operational assessments, and all other prerequisites to fully integrate women into newly opened positions.

### **Air Force Planning Facts (F) and Assumptions (A)**

(A) The Air Force will open all previously closed AFSCs in accordance with (IAW) established deadlines. Should one or more of the Services or USSOCOM request an ETP to keep certain occupational specialties or positions closed to women, the Air Force will evaluate the rationale and determine whether the exception dictates an Air Force decision to: 1) request an ETP or 2) close specific positions – by unit – after considering career development implications, operational requirements, number of positions affected, and other potential impacts to the Air Force.

(A) The Air Education and Training Command physical performance tests and standards study will be used to: 1) develop and validate occupationally specific, operationally relevant, and gender-neutral Air Force physical performance tests and standards for all seven previously closed AFSCs and 2) establish the Air Force precedent and methodological process for the previous step for all other physically-demanding AFSCs. Each career field will remain closed until physical tests and standards for each AFSC have been validated for operational relevance and approved for implementation by the Headquarters Air Force Director of Force Management Policy.

(F) Active recruitment of women into previously closed career fields cannot commence until gender-neutral standards are validated and the congressional notification/waiting period has expired.

### **Tasks to Subordinate Units**

**Task 1:** Eliminate gender-specific policies and assignment restrictions for positions in units with the seven previously closed AFSCs.

a. Review and modify (where necessary) all accession, assignment, and career field classification policies to eliminate restrictions against assigning women to previously closed ground combat positions/units. Office of primary responsibility (OPR): AF/A1P; Office of coordinating responsibility (OCR): Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) and AF/A3O (Estimated completion date (ECD): third quarter (3Q) FY16).

b. Modify officer and enlisted classification guides to remove assignment restrictions. OPR: AFPC; OCR: AF/A1P and AF/A3O (ECD: 3Q FY16)

c. In coordination with the other military Departments and USSOCOM, open positions as specific portions (i.e., by AFSC) of the physical performance tests and standards study are completed. OPR: AF/A1P; OCR: AETC/A3T, AFSOC/A1, ACC/A1, and AFPC (ECD: NLT 4Q FY15).

**Task 2:** Develop and validate occupationally specific, operationally relevant, and gender-neutral physical performance tests and standards.

a. Complete Air Force physical performance tests and standards study. OPR: AETC/A3T; OCR: AF/A3O, AFSOC/A3T, and ACC/A3T (ECD: 3Q FY15)

b. Implement validated tests and standards into all phases of recruitment, selection, technical training, mission qualification training (MQT), and operator testing. OPR: AF/A1P; OCR: Air Force Recruiting Service (AFRS), AF/A3O, AETC/A3, AFSOC/A3, and ACC/A3 (ECD: 4Q FY15)

**Task 3:** Integrate women into previously closed AFSCs, considering each aspect of the personnel lifecycle (recruit, assess, select, train, and develop).

a. (Recruit) Develop strategic messages/themes to: 1) advertise expanded opportunities for potential enlisted accessions and officer candidates and 2) enable recruiters to expand the candidate pool for all recruiting and commissioning sources, to include active duty crossflow, sources of commissioning, direct accessions pipeline, etc. OPR: AFRS; OCR: AF/A1P, AF/A3O, USAFA/A1, and Holm Center (ECD: 2Q FY15)

b. (Recruit) Following expiration of waiting period after congressional notification, release Air Force public affairs message announcing opening of specific career fields to women. OPR: SAF/PA; OCR: AFPC and AF/A1P (ECD: 3Q FY15)

c. (Assess/select/train) Incorporate validated physical performance tests and standards in all training content and methods from accessions through MQT and operator testing. OPR: AF/A1P; OCR: AETC/A3, AFRS, AFSOC/A3, and ACC/A3 (ECD: 4Q FY15)

d. (Train) Conduct training review for pipeline instructors on integration expectations. OPR: AETC/A3; OCR: AF/A3O, AFSOC/A3, and ACC/A3 (ECD: 2Q FY16)

e. (Train) Within existing unit manpower resources, identify, train, and place female support cadre in each training pipeline and/or operational unit to facilitate integration. Support personnel should be augmented with a female liaison officer (e.g., a senior non-commissioned officer (SNCO)/first sergeant), and include (to the maximum extent possible) medical personnel (e.g., independent duty medical technician (IDMT) or equivalent) and an operations psychologist. All personnel will be pre-screened and provided extensive familiarization with the ground combat training environment. OPR: AETC/A1; OCR: AF/A1P, AETC/A3, and AFPC (ECD: 4Q FY15)

f. (Train) Review logistical requirements for all training pipelines, considering unique requirements for berthing, restrooms, equipment, hygiene, medical/psychological support, etc. Any concerns or deficiencies shall be identified to AF/A1P for resolution. OPR: AETC/A3; OCR: AF/A3O, AFSOC/A3, ACC/A3, and AETC/SG (ECD: 2Q FY14)

g. (Train) Review training content and methods used at all training sources (from formal schools to unit-level programs) for all initial and enduring/recurring mission qualification requirements. Resolve all identified concerns or deficiencies. OPR: AF/A1P; OCR: AETC/A3, AF/A3O, AFSOC/A3, and ACC/A3 (ECD: 1Q FY14)

h. (Develop) For career development purposes, it is assumed that female officers and enlisted personnel assigned to these seven AFSCs may cross flow between special operations forces (SOF) and non-SOF assignments throughout their careers, and may employ/deploy jointly with sister Service SOF and conventional components. Some AFSCs (specifically CRO, PJ, and TACP) align against both Combat Air Forces (CAF) and SOF operational assignments. All specialties are subject to potential assignment in supporting or supported non-SOF commands. As a result, the developmental pyramid for all affected AFSCs will be identical; female officers and enlisted personnel will need to complete a combination operational, staff, and career broadening assignments (many of which reside in or support SOF) in order to assume positions of greater rank and responsibility (see Attachment 2). In the event that one (or more) of the other Services and/or USSOCOM requests an ETP to restrict certain occupational specialties and/or positions to women, the Air Force will carefully evaluate these situations on a case-by-case basis to avoid assigning women to career fields where career progression/upward mobility is restricted.

### **Air Force Integrated Timeline/Milestones (see Attachment 3)**

- 31 May 15 TACP (1C4X) physical standards validated, congressional notification

- 30 Jun 15 SOWT officer and enlisted (15WX, 1W0X2) physical standards validated, congressional notification
- 31 Jul 15 STO, CRO, CCT, and PJ (13CX, 13DX, 1C2X, 1T2X) physical standards validated, congressional notification
- 30 Sep 15 TACP AFSC open, begin recruit/assess/select phase (one year)
- 31 Oct 15 SOWT AFSC open, begin recruit/assess/select phase (one year)
- 30 Nov 15 CCT/PJ/STO AFSCs open, begin recruit/assess/select phase (one year)

**Attachment 1**  
Affected Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSC)

- The following AFSCs were previously closed to women due to the 1994 Direct Ground Combat definition and assignment rule (DCAR), which was based on engagement in long range reconnaissance operations and special operations forces missions:

- 13DX (combat rescue officer)
- 13CX (special tactics officer)
- 15WXC (special operations weather officer)
- 1C2XX (enlisted combat controller)
- 1C4XX (enlisted tactical air command and control party)
- 1T2XX (enlisted pararescue)
- 1W0X2 (enlisted special operations weather)

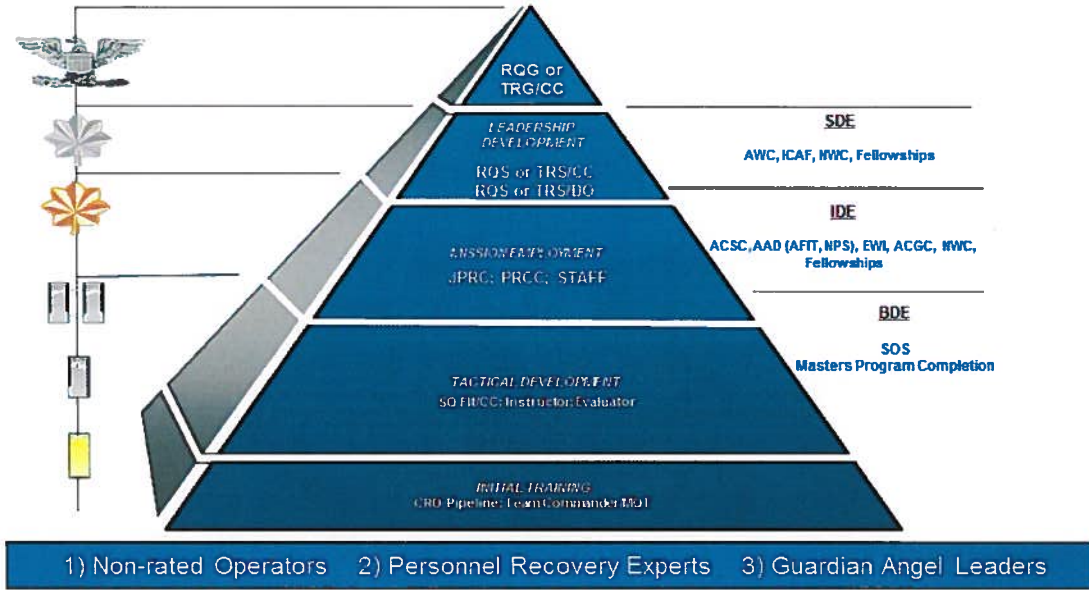
**Total Force Authorizations by Major Command (MAJCOM)**

	13CX	13DX	15WXC	1C2XX	1C4XX	1T2XX	1W0X2	Totals:
ACTIVE	121	144	18	604	1,870	578	135	3,470
GUARD	8	39	6	64	732	147	42	1,038
RESERVES		39		2	5	132		178
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>2,561</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>4,686</b>

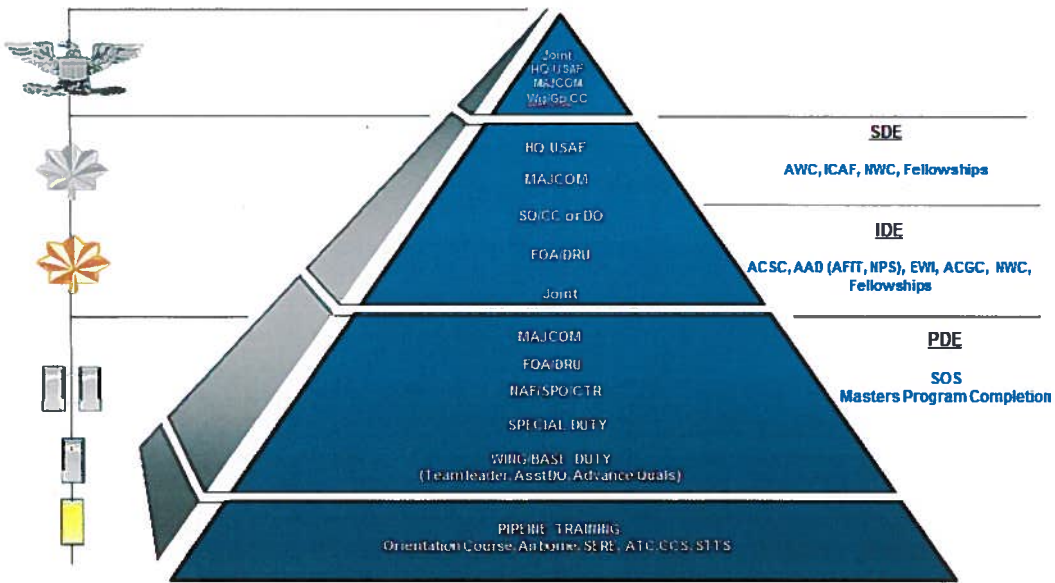
Data current as of 15 Apr 2013

## Attachment 2 Career Development Pyramids

### Combat Rescue Officer (CRO)

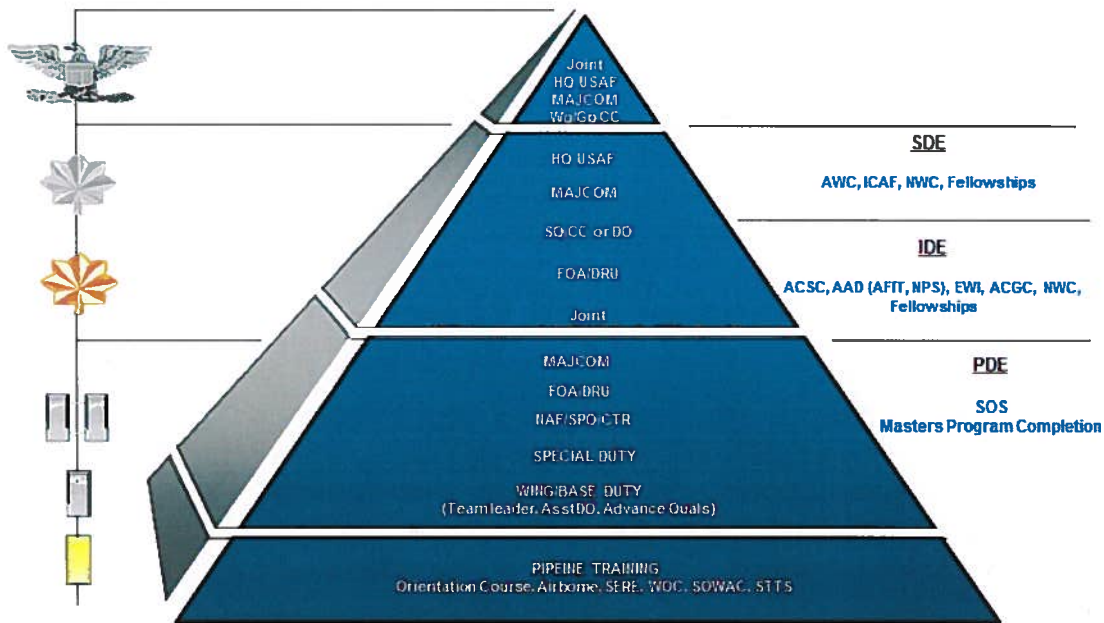


### Special Tactics Officer (STO)

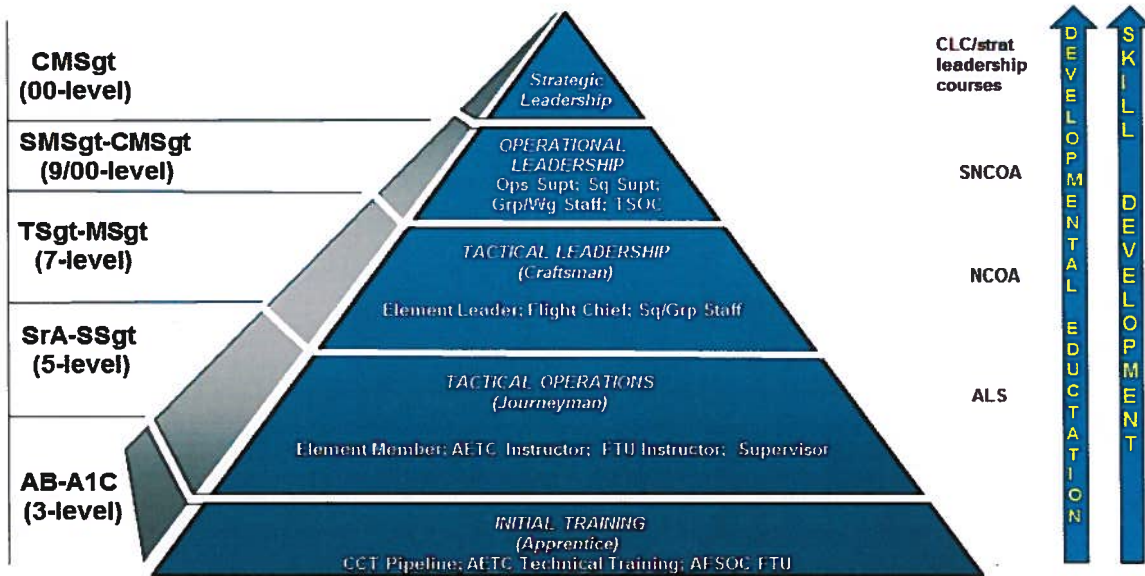




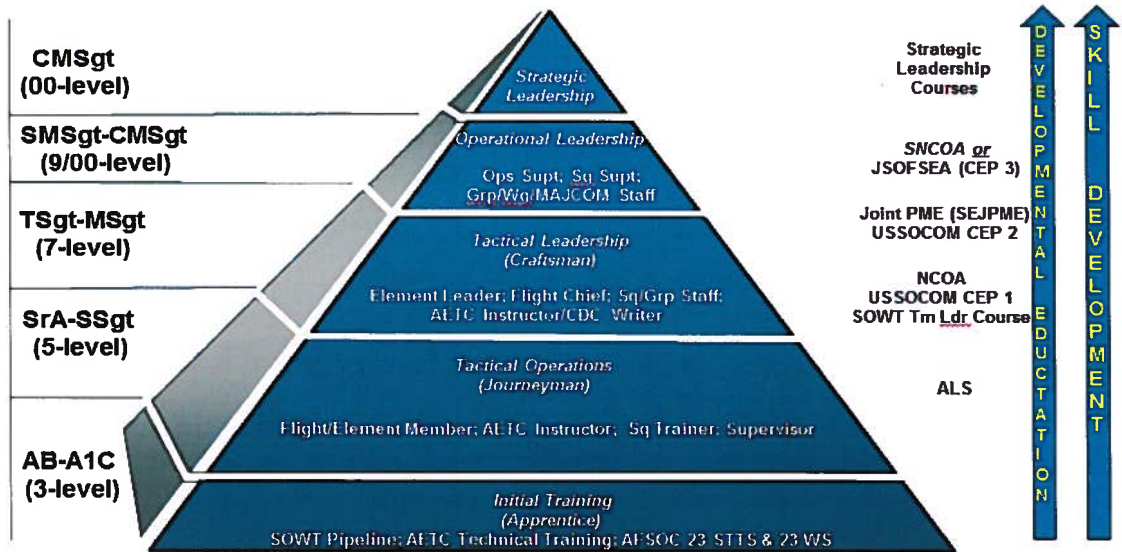
## Special Operations Weather Officer (SOWT-O)



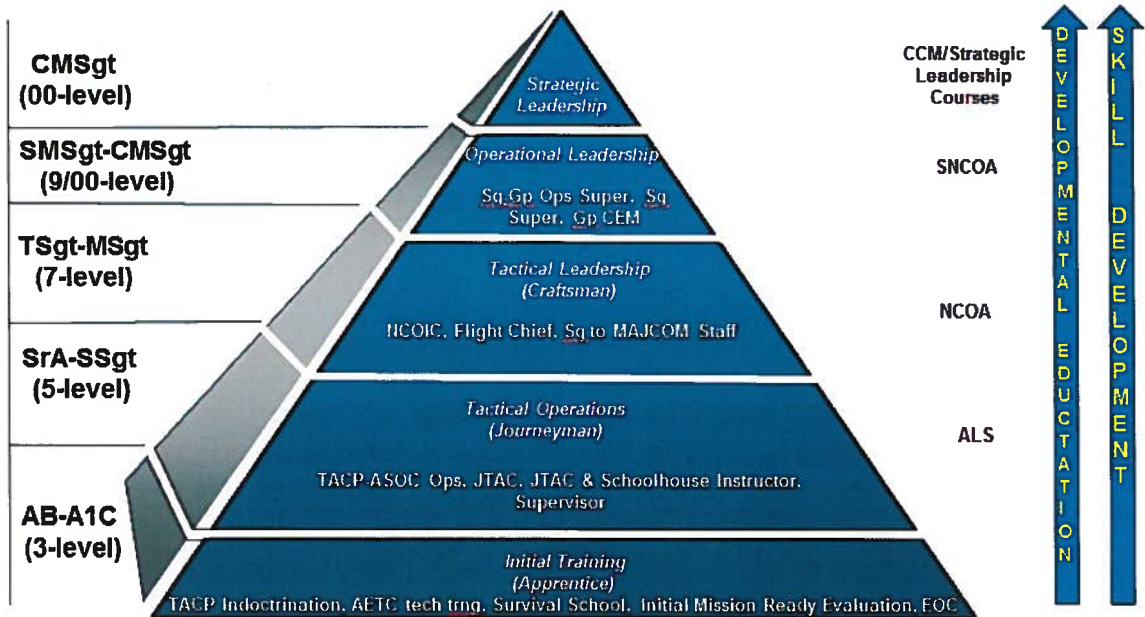
## Combat Control (CCT)



## Special Operations Weather Enlisted (SOWT-E)



## Tactical Air Control Party (TACP)



### Attachment 3 Air Force High Level Timeline



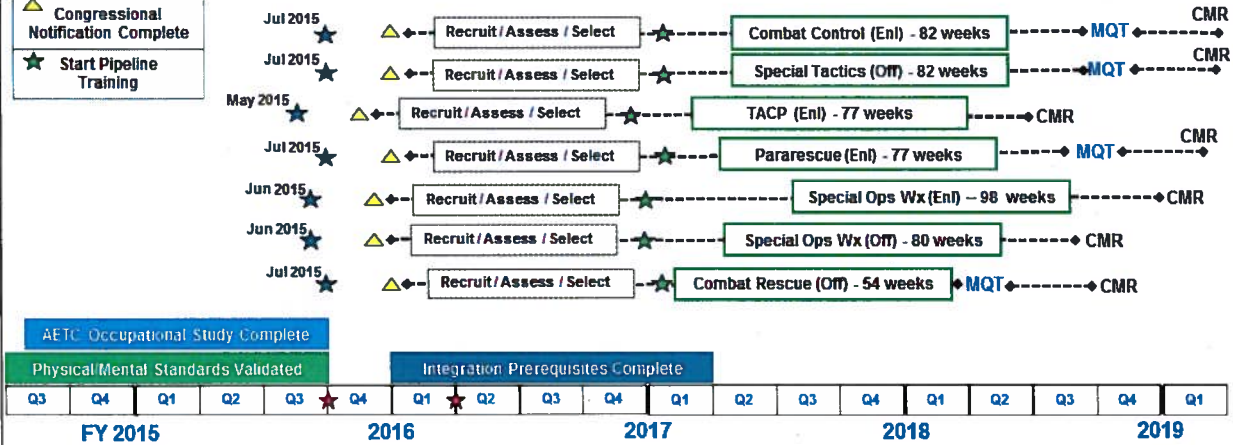
DRAFT/PRE-DECISIONAL/FOUO

# High Level AF Timeline

U.S. AIR FORCE

- ★ AETC Physical Standards Study Complete
- ▲ Congressional Notification Complete
- ★ Start Pipeline Training

CMR: Combat Mission Ready  
MQT: Mission Qual Training



**Note:** Training pipelines are dependent upon accession source, application process timelines, selection of qualified candidates, course schedules, seat availability, etc. For purposes of standardization, all pipelines depicted above assume immediate entry upon selection and no extraordinary breaks in training.