



# Air Force Materiel Command Biomedical Sciences Corps Newsletter

Headquarters AFMC – Wright-Patterson AFB, OH  
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## Welcome

Colonel Phil L. Samples  
HQ AFMC/SGO and BSC Executive

Welcome again to the AFMC BSC Newsletter. This month I begin by reflecting on a significant loss to our Corps. Col (ret) Jerry Ross passed away unexpectedly on 17 Feb 08 while attending a conference in San Diego. For the pharmacy community, we knew Col Ross and were all “Jerry’s kids”. For others who may not be familiar, Col Ross finished his AF career August 1998 as the Director, Medical Force Management and Chief, Biomedical Sciences Corps, Office of the Surgeon General, Bolling AFB, DC. He will be remembered as a loving son, husband, father, grandfather and American patriot. He continued to influence officers in the BSC as the Keynote speaker at every Biomedical Officers Management Orientation (BOMO) Course from before his retirement until Friday, 15 Feb 08, just before his death. His approach to leadership left a legacy that will affect us all like a large room of dominos. Although he may no longer directly touch new BSCs in the future, the fact that he influenced all of us and that we continue to use and grow his leadership lessons will serve to perpetuate his influence far beyond the life we share here on earth, similar to the single domino which starts a massive chain reaction.

This month’s AFSC is a non-standard BSC developmental track, 43B, that leads our officers in the Science, Technology and Acquisition track. I continue to encourage everyone to learn their own history but also become familiar with other BSC specialty history in order to better prepare you for that eventual role as BSC Executive. The better you understand all BSC AFSCs the more effective you will be in the BSC Executive mentoring role.

Also in this month’s edition are two great articles one from our AFPC BSCs on the Airman Development Plan (ADP) process and a second one on Mentorship by Col Mark Smith (AFIOH/RS). The ADP article affects everyone

below the grade of Colonel. It is in your best interest to become very conversant in its use and application. Colonel Smith’s article is there for every person, regardless of AFSC or grade, to ensure our continued growth and success.

As always, please let me know if this newsletter is meeting your needs and expectations of communicating information to the field. Until May, have a great Air Force day!

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## Mentoring

Colonel Mark H. Smith  
AFIOH/RS

“Find out who you work for and work for him.” That was the wise advice I learned from my first AF supervisor on my very first day. Captain Davis had worked his way up from Airman Basic to officer, and he was totally dedicated to his assigned job. It wasn’t the job he wanted, either. As a matter of fact, it was the last choice he would have made for himself, but he was the best man for it and it was his. I learned much from the way he faced that situation.

Long before the AF called me, I had an “incidental mentor” (©2008 Mark Smith). An incidental mentor is someone who teaches you a life lesson without even knowing it. I was unemployed at the time and trying to support my young family by selling cookware by the “party

plan.” One of the old timers was giving us budding salesmen a pep talk one day, and he challenged us to ask ourselves this question: “Where do you want to be in 15 years?” With all due respect to Willy Loman and his ilk, I looked at this guy in his purple, three piece suit, matching shoes and silly grin, and I said to myself, “Not here.” That very day I decided to go back to graduate school to become an engineer, and that decision led me to where I am today.

You are all mentors, whether deliberate or incidental. You are being watched. Your subordinates are watching you. People you don’t even know are watching you. They will learn when you fail as well as when you succeed, just as will you. So if you screw up, remember you’ve done a good deed. Someone will listen to what you say. They will decide what they think is sense and what is nonsense. Don’t worry about being profound. It’s up to them to figure it out.

But we usually think of mentoring as a deliberate process. There is one indisputable fact about your AF career: Whether you serve for a few years and then move on, or retire after 20 to 30 years, you will eventually leave the AF. It is your responsibility while you serve to train, guide and mold those who come behind. Some mentoring is formally prescribed. AFI36-3401, *Air Force Mentoring*, describes evaluations (OPRs, EPRs, civilian appraisals), feedback sessions and recognition programs, and declares every supervisor to be a mentor. I’m not going to regurgitate what that instruction says but will instead encourage you to read it. It is brief and instructive. There are also a number of helpful books and web sites with some very good suggestions on how to be a better mentor. I looked at a number of them while preparing this essay with the intent to distill from them a few nuggets for your benefit. What I discovered was that it could be overwhelming if you try to do it all. Instead, I will let you search out those resources for yourself, if you are so inclined, but offer a few observations from the perspective of a 24 year career. First, don’t be discouraged if you find a list of ideal mentor qualities that you don’t quite entirely live up to. Being a mentor can be as much of a growing experience for you as it is for your mentee. Take heart if you are a good listener, and if you need to work on your patience, then try to be a better person tomorrow than you are today.

It is easy to devote our best efforts toward those who need our help the least. Certainly, we must identify our high achievers, stratify them in their evaluations, nominate them for awards and recommend them for challenging assignments. But it is all too easy to let someone who most needs our guidance fall by the wayside. First, you have to care. Sometimes that requires brutal honesty, what’s become known as “tough love.” If your mentee has some deficiency that keeps him or her from achieving full potential, and you don’t identify it to them and help them to overcome it, probably no one else will, either. It’s hard to give negative feedback, but that’s your duty as a supervisor and as a mentor. If given in a spirit of generous instruction (constructive criticism), it will probably be received in the same spirit. It needs to be given early to allow time for correction. There should be no surprises at evaluation time.

Delegation is a little appreciated virtue of a good mentor. It is tempting to burden your star performers with the important assignments or to take them on yourself, but you need to allow others to grow with the challenge. If you’re not careful, you could be contributing to the “glass ceiling” that many experience as they find themselves unable to advance for want of a progressive track record. That can leave you vulnerable as you are ultimately responsible for the task, but it is the only way to grow competence in your organization. Again, mentoring can be a growing experience for you as well as for your mentee. And there’s the added benefit of increasing the overall capability of your organization and eventually relieving some of the stress from yourself.

Being a mentor is a difficult but rewarding task. It should be pursued with passion, compassion, and integrity. In the long run, your ability to shape the Airmen of tomorrow will be your greatest legacy to the AF of the future

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### **Airmen Development Plan**

**Lt Col Kirk D. Stocker  
AFPC BSC Assignments Officer**

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas -- The AF Personnel Center here recently implemented the Airmen Development Plan, which incorporates multiple applications onto a single web-based platform. The ADP allows officers and civil services members to communicate

assignment preferences, developmental desires, command intent, and special duty preferences to their reviewer and to AFPC. The ADP also provides access to efficiency reports, training reports, decoration citations, duty history, and career planning diagrams. The ADP can be accessed through the AF Portal or AFPC Secure.

The ADP helps AFPC provide consistent, reliable and knowledgeable customer service, provide accurate, up-to-date personnel information, and provide guidance and resources that enable Airmen to take ownership of their careers.

There are four main functions in the ADP system: assignment preference, developmental preference, command selection and special duty. The system is designed so individuals can tailor their development plans to one or more of these four functions. Tutorials for members, raters, commanders and senior raters are available on the ADP site; users who have further issues or questions may contact the AFPC Contact Center at DSN 665-5000 or 1 (800) 616-3775 (option 1, 1, 2).

The assignment preference tab provides the opportunity to communicate to raters, commanders, DT, and assignment officers desires for the next 1 to 3 years. When entering assignment preferences, the system allows individuals to select up to five duty type preferences, with up to five locations for each duty type. Preferences will help the assignment team match desires to AF mission needs.

The developmental preference tab allows users to select a duty type, job level, and major command combination that correlates with each career field. There are three tracks for each category, and each track can be populated utilizing the drop-down menus. Individuals use this section to spell out short term and long term goals.

The command selection tab should only be completed by individuals who meet command eligibility requirements and want to compete for command. Completing this section will result in the ADP being forwarded to the Senior Rater for review.

The special duty selection tab provides the opportunity to volunteer for career broadening duties outside of an individual's primary AFSC.

Participation in a career broadening assignment may be limited by resource constraints within each AFSC.

If an individual's rater is not an AF officer or an AF civilian, the development plan can still be forwarded by designating a non-AF officer or civilian as a reviewing official. This is done by inputting the reviewing official's SSN in the "associate other user" tab. Once this is done, the reviewing official's identity is stored in the ADP database and can be retrieved for future use.

The reviewing official has access to see SURF and records of performance when reviewing the E-record (OPRs, training reports and decoration citations). Commanders in each chain (unit commanders, group commanders, and wing commanders) should all be able to access development plans, SURFs, career planning diagrams and E-records of officers and civilians assigned to them at any time. Development plans can be submitted to anyone for review and mentoring purposes, but only the chain of command can officially submit the ADP to AFPC. The unit commander is the lowest level of authority that can forward a development plan to AFPC, and command selection applications must be forwarded to AFPC by the senior rater.

The "Comments" section provides the opportunity to elaborate on previous selections and communicate any other pertinent information that is not addressed elsewhere. There is a 500 character limit in each comment section. The message should be concise and state any information important for the DT and assignment officer to be aware of, especially regarding a joint spouse issue or additional qualifications/experiences obtained that is not documented clearly in the records.

After all data in each section has been thoroughly reviewed, the "Save & Continue" button can be clicked to move to the next section. The "Previous" button can be clicked to go back and review these sections again or the "Cancel" button will cancel this review action completely.

Once the ODP information is complete, an individual can hit the "Select Rater/Reviewer" button and follow the prompts. The select function allows for a search for a rater/reviewer by last name; if no results are found, a search can be made by first name or rank.

After a development plan is created and submitted to the reviewing official, the user has access to either view it or recall it. To recall a development plan (to add or change something before the reviewer has approved it), the user can navigate to the development plan screen by clicking “Development Plan” in the left navigation bar of the dashboard and clicking the “Recall Development Plan” button. Once a development plan is forwarded to AFPC, it cannot be recalled, but it can be re-submitted if a change is required.

Generating an ADP does not automatically notify the reviewer. If the ADP is time-sensitive, an individual may want to communicate to the reviewer that an ADP is in the system awaiting review.

Keeping the ADP up-to-date is important, even after a permanent change of station, because the ADP encompasses more than just assignments. Individuals with questions can contact the AF Contact Center or Assignment Officer at AFPC.

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## **The Research, Development and Acquisition Career Track**

**Lt Col Dan Davis  
Wright Patterson Medical Center, OH**

At the outset, I would like to acknowledge Colonel Debra Niemeyer, Deputy Assistant Surgeon General, Modernization Directorate and Military Consultant to the Surgeon General for Biomedical Research, and Major Terry Mathews, Program Manager, Manpower and Organization Force Development, Biomedical Sciences Corps, for their guidance and provision of references for this article.

The Research, Development and Acquisition (RD&A) career track within the BSC is a recent edition when compared to the clinical and command tracks. I believe that those whom are contemplating, and even those that are currently in this career track, need more information on the past, present and future of this track. The following article will provide a brief history, a discussion of the career path, what training is required, where you gain experience to move up the career path, what you should be monitoring as you look to promotion and what our current leadership is working on to enhance our career opportunities.

*When and why did the RD&A career track begin?* A Science and Technology (S&T) track or path was established in 2006, and was subsequently renamed in 2007, “Research, Development and Acquisition” (RD&A) as a broader characterization of BSC officers supporting modernization activities. This track aids in identifying BSC officers occupying positions at AF/DoD research and development facilities, program offices, testing agencies and assigned to other unique positions outside their specialty and not on the traditional clinical or command paths. Furthermore, the track was needed to lay out training, education, and experiential requirements and to grow officers to fill existing and projected positions requiring unique skill sets. Over the last year, much work has been done on delineating the RD&A career path within the BSC career pyramid

*Where can I see the career pyramid and how do I interpret it?* The BSC career pyramid can be found at [https://kx.afms.mil/kxweb/dotmil/file/web/ctb\\_043640.pdf](https://kx.afms.mil/kxweb/dotmil/file/web/ctb_043640.pdf). I could try to incorporate it here, but you would not be able to read it without a microscope. The RD&A career path is outlined on the right hand side of the pyramid. You may step, in and out of the path, as I did. For the first 5 years of my AF career, I was in pharmacy, and then spent 12 years in the logistics and acquisition community and am now back at an MTF in the pharmacy. As the pyramid outlines, Lieutenants should focus on their specialty, that is your core knowledge. You will utilize it both to evaluate what you do in the RD&A track from an end-user perspective and, if deployed, that is the expertise they will tap in the deployed location. That connection to your specialty needs to be maintained throughout your career. As a Captain, you should begin to get your feet wet in the programmatic side of acquisition, those disciplines that form the triad of program management-cost, schedule and performance, and would include testing and evaluation (T&E), project management, cost accounting, risk management, as well as others. Another option is to be involved in research and then progress on to manage that process. As a Major, you should continue to grow, both in fiscal management and personnel responsibility. Those jobs that will allow you to do so include an assignment as a program manager or project director. As a Lieutenant Colonel, those jobs could be program managers for larger projects, a lab director, or Air Staff force development. As

a Colonel, project management at an even higher level, a directorate director, select MAJCOM, Air or Joint Staff positions, or possibly BSC Director would be the best positions to hold.

*As you progress along this path, what type of training will it require?* You need to continue training in your professional military career, your specialty and your chosen path in the RD&A track. No matter what career path you are following, if you want to be promoted, you **must** complete developmental education: Basic Developmental Education (BDE) as a Captain, Intermediate Developmental Education (IDE) as a Major and Senior Developmental Education (SDE) as a Lt Col. It is highly recommended to complete these requirements as soon as you are eligible. As for specialty training, one should consider graduate degrees through AFIT or distance learning, fellowships and, for most of us, continuing education in our profession to maintain licensure. In the RD&A arena, especially the acquisition side of the house, you should begin taking Defense Acquisition University (DAU) courses as Captains and Majors; many of the courses are online at <http://www.dau.mil>. A caveat to gaining access to these courses is that you have to go through the AF acquisition community to get placed in these courses. The ease of entering the courses depends on where you are stationed, what job you are currently holding and who is your Acquisition community liaison. You will initially have to take Acquisition (Acq) 101 – Fundamentals of Systems Acquisition Management; it is the foundation course for all other Acquisition courses. The basic (101 series) courses can be taken on-line. The next course is Acq 201, Intermediate System Acquisition. It has two parts, A & B, part A is an online course, part B is an in-residence course. If you continue on in the program management arena as a Lt Col or Col, you will need to complete 3-4 additional courses including a substantial in-residence course. Completing course work is the introductory portion; gaining experience in the field is the next step.

*Where do I gain experience?* Locations run the gamut from medical center to DoD level. At the medical center level, you can work in Clinical Investigation Facilities. As you move up the experiential ladder, there are places like 311<sup>th</sup> Human System Wing, 711<sup>th</sup> Human Performance Wing, the AF Research Laboratory, and the Joint Program Executive Office for Chemical

Biological Defense. At the AF level, you can work at Air Staff in the AF/SG office or one of the Field Operating Agencies, AF Medical Support Agency (AFMSA) or AF Medical Operations Agency (AFMOA), or AF Personnel Center (AFPC). At the DoD level, there are Joint Program Offices at the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense-Health Affairs, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, and the Joint Staff. Stand up of the 711<sup>th</sup> Human Systems Wing, and in the future, consolidation of the Services' Medical Research and Development activities may provide opportunities.

*As you gain this experience, what should you be doing to put the best face forward to the promotion boards?* Monitoring your progress along the promotion path is **your** responsibility with the assistance of your mentor or a senior leader in your field. As stated earlier, DE is an absolute **must**. Not completing DE is an automatic promotion disqualifier. Gaining an advanced degree is becoming a de facto requirement. Increased responsibility in fiscal management and program/project scope will enhance the picture that the promotion board sees. You must also make sure that your chain of command is stratifying you among your peers. If you are moving back and forth between your specialty track and the RD&A track, you need to ensure that the MTF chain of command knows what your level of responsibility is compared to what they would see in an MTF (i.e. flight command and squadron command vs. project/program management and other RD&A positions). It's also critical you serve in a command position if you expect to be competitive for promotion. I am working with the RD&A leadership to garner a look at how the RD&A community is fairing in promotion boards. As the information becomes available, a follow-up article will provide an update.

*Where is the current RD&A leadership focusing to enhance the career path?*

Force Development has created lists of acquisition trained/certified personnel and is working with the BSC Associate Corps Chiefs and Col Niemeyer to identify specific RD&A positions. In addition, a Medical Research Developmental Identifier will help the Developmental Teams identify candidates for RD&A positions (not visible at promotion boards). Force Development and Col Niemeyer obtained the opportunity for our officers to compete with the LAF for the AF National

Laboratory Technical Fellowship Program. Additionally, they have identified specialized AFIT Advance Degree Program opportunities (e.g., with DOE), acquisition-coded billets and developed Special Experience Identifiers for both positions and personnel.

The career path will continue to evolve, as it does, we will keep you updated.

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**BSC Squadron Command  
Projected Vacancies Summer/Fall  
2009**

Corps	MAJCOM	Base	Sq Type	Turn Date
BSC	ACC	BARKSDALE	MDOS	Jul 09
BSC	ACC	DYESS	MDSS	Jun 09
BSC	ACC	MOODY	MDSS	Oct 09
BSC	AETC	LAUGHLIN	MDSS	Jul-09
BSC	AETC	RANDOLPH	MDOS	Sep-09
BSC	AETC	SHEPPARD	TRS	Jul-09
BSC	AETC	TYNDALL	MDSS	Aug-09
BSC	AFMC	TINKER	MDOS	2009
BSC	AFSOC	HURLBURT	MDOS	2009
BSC	AFSPC	MALMSTROM	MDSS	Jul-09
BSC	AFSPC	VANDENBERG	MDOS	Jul/Aug 09
BSC	AMC	MACDILL	MDSS	Jun-09
BSC	AMC	SCOTT	AMDS	2009
BSC	PACAF	ANDERSEN	MDSS	2009
BSC	PACAF	HICKAM	MDOS	2009
BSC	PACAF	YOKOTA	AMDS	2009
BSC	USAFE	AVIANO	MDOS	Jun-09
BSC	USAFE	LAJES	MDSS	Jun-09

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through diversity..**