

Changes simplify ADSC program

by **F. Whitten Peters**

Secretary of the Air Force

and **Gen. Michael E. Ryan**

Air Force chief of staff

After years of dealing piecemeal with repeated problems related to active-duty service commitments, we decided there had to be a better way. Our airmen deserve a system they can understand.

We formed a tiger team to overhaul the entire ADSC system. The charge to the team was explicit: Make it simple! Led by Lt. Gen. Roger DeKok, deputy chief of staff for plans and programs, the group has exceeded even our high expectations.

With help from across the Air Force, the team produced a new Air Force instruction that will be published June 1. Gone are page after page of charts and rules. In their place is a simple, two-chart instruction, with rules written in plain English. All service commitments will be in one instruction. There will be no more major command supplements and confusing references.

We also standardized service commitments and removed those that don't make sense today. For instance, why require a service commitment for promotion when, by law, commissioned officers must remain on active duty for three years to retire in that grade? The same common sense approach led us to eliminate the service commitments for any training class that lasts fewer than 20 weeks. That one move elimi-

nates 95 percent of the ADSCs generated by technical training.

Equally important, we are creating a system that assumes our airmen are people of honesty and integrity who will live up to their commitments.

We were determined that the ADSC overhaul be accomplished quickly. From start to finish, we've been at this less than three months. But we did need to guard against unintended consequences and "gotchas" and to seek out the opinions of those who will work under the new rules.

That's why we took the time to assemble a "Red Team" of 30 airmen from all commands and walks of Air Force life. They reviewed the proposed changes and then split into two teams to apply the new rules — without help from anyone — to 15 scenarios. Each team got 14 of 15 correct. They both missed the same one, and we have rewritten that part of the instruction to make it clearer. The Red Team also made a number of more general suggestions that were incorporated into the final version of the instruction. Their input was invaluable.

As with any major decision, we had to make tough choices. For standardization, some ADSCs are increased in the new instruction. There aren't many and we believe those changes are justified. We also had to decide who would be affected by the new rules.

After weighing the needs of the Air Force and the nation against the desires of our airmen, we decided the new service commitments will apply

only to people who sign commitments after June 1.

Unfortunately, we cannot afford to apply new rules to people who signed commitments under the old system. We have already relied on those commitments in making our force management plans, and it is just too difficult to "unring the bell." We are convinced our airmen understand this.

For those who feel an injustice has been done in the past or in the way these new rules are being implemented, we have given the commander of the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas wide latitude to grant relief. We have discussed with him what needs to be done, and we are all committed that this new system will be fair to airmen and the taxpaying public. That commitment will guide the implementation process.

Nothing is more devastating to retention than treating people unfairly. Our goal for the past two and a half years has been to ensure the Air Force is a great place to work. This means more than lowering operations tempo, improving the quality of housing and raising pay. It also means ensuring our Air Force treats its people right.

You give us a great deal. We demand integrity, selfless service, and excellence from everyone on our great team. You have every right to expect the same in return.

We are the world's greatest Air Force because of your dedication. Thank you for your service; you are truly the best and brightest our nation has to offer. We're honored to serve on your team.

Med group offers automated phone system

The 437th Medical Group recently installed an enhanced automated telephone answering system. Customers can now call 963-6790 for most routine health care needs. For medical emergencies, call 911. When calling 963-6790, you will be given four options to choose from:

1) Press 1 to make, cancel, or reschedule an appointment; **2)** Press 2 for general information, TRICARE issues, Pharmacy service, and Flight Medicine Clinic; **3)** Press 3 to speak to a nurse or leave a message for your provider (IMPORTANT: This is the number to call when notifying your provider of a civilian emergency room visit within the past 24 hours or to request an out-of-area urgent care authorization); **4)** Press 4 to talk to a Family Practice Clinic representative.

Also, several avenues are available to help resolve problems customers may encounter. You're invited to share comments on a Customer Comment Card, located in several wall units throughout the facility. Also, if an issue requires a more immediate response, customers are invited to speak with the patient advocate in the clinic they are visiting.

If you experience an issue that isn't resolved to your satisfaction at the specific clinic you're visiting, visit the TRICARE office or call Master Sgt. Barry Harvey, the Medical Group's Patient Advocate, at 963-6702.

For more details, call 963-6505.