



## Members:

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# Think Tank

## SOS Class 17B

# Orion Group



# Overview



- Problem
- Assumptions
- Narrative
- Proposed COAs
- RFIs
- Conclusion



# Problem Statement



The USAF has a shortage of 724 fighter pilots. The AF offered financial incentives to address the problem; however, those incentives proved unsuccessful and the pilot shortage continues to grow. The continued fighter pilot shortage reduces AF readiness and may begin to erode the AF's ability to establish and maintain air superiority, particularly in a prolonged conflict against a near-peer adversary.

Without relying on financial incentives, how can the AF address the ***manning, retention and morale*** issues to eliminate the fighter pilot shortage threat to the USAF's mission?



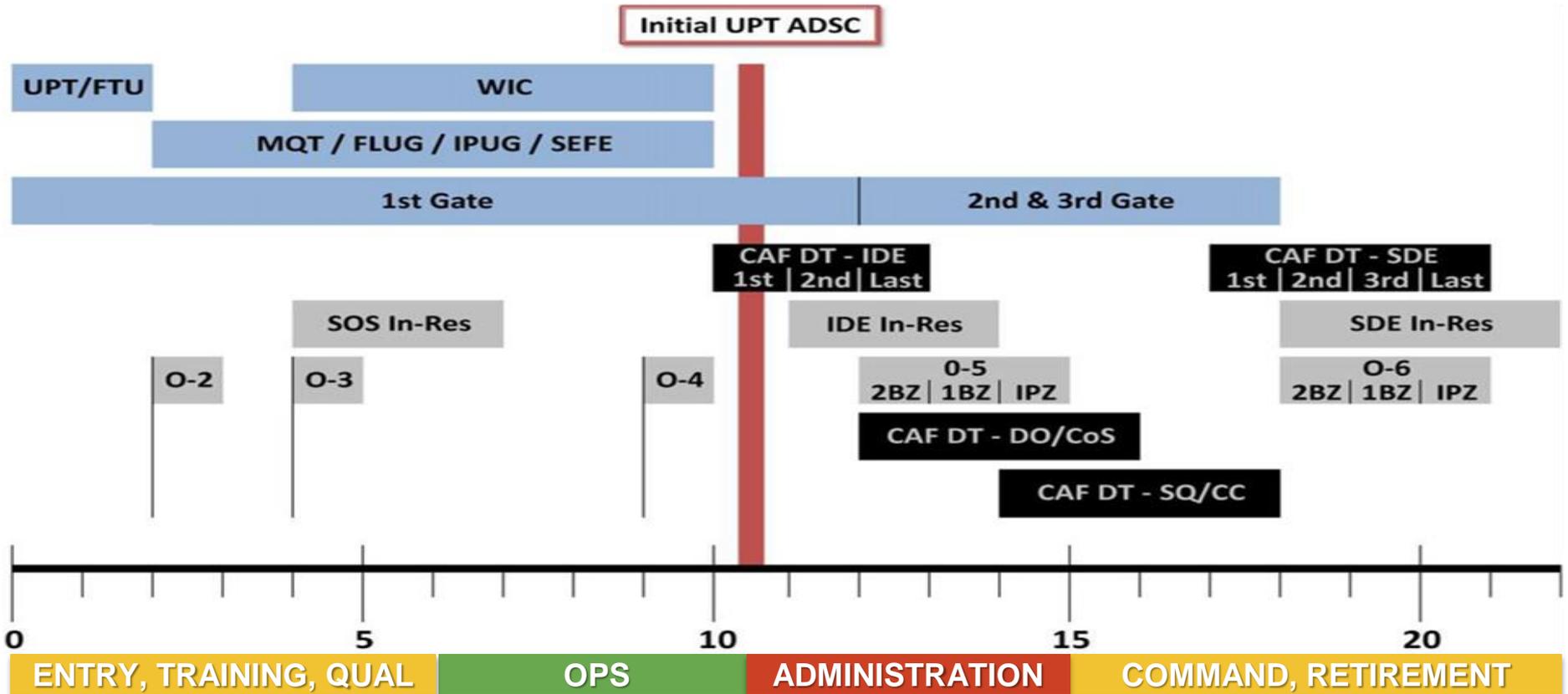
# Assumptions



- Pilots who are separating are going to the airlines
- Air Force CAF exit/retention surveys were answered honestly
  - Pilots want to fly; pilots do not want to do admin
  - Ops tempo (deployments + TDYs) strains home life
  - Leadership culture does not value Airmen / retention
- Training pipeline has already been streamlined & maximized
- No panacea ... comprehensive plan is most appropriate



# Narrative: 11F Career





# Proposed COAs



## PUSH MECHANISM

- Cross Flow Opportunities

## PULL MECHANISM

- Pilot Transition Program



## FLOW MECHANISMS

- “Special Duty Officer” Dual Track
- Squadron/Unit Level Support
- Change Leadership Culture



# Proposed COAs



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# Push: Cross Flow

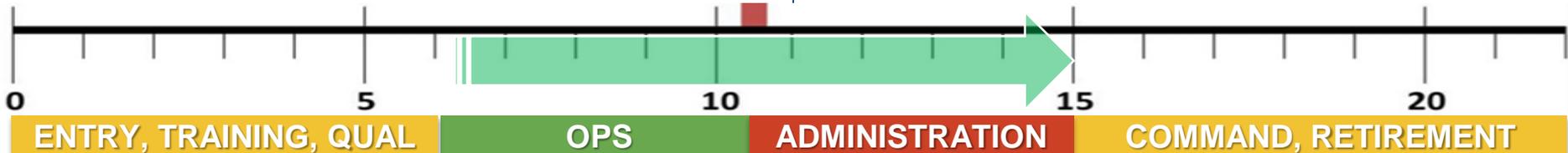


## Problem

- Production of qualified fighter pilots is not meeting the area of demand

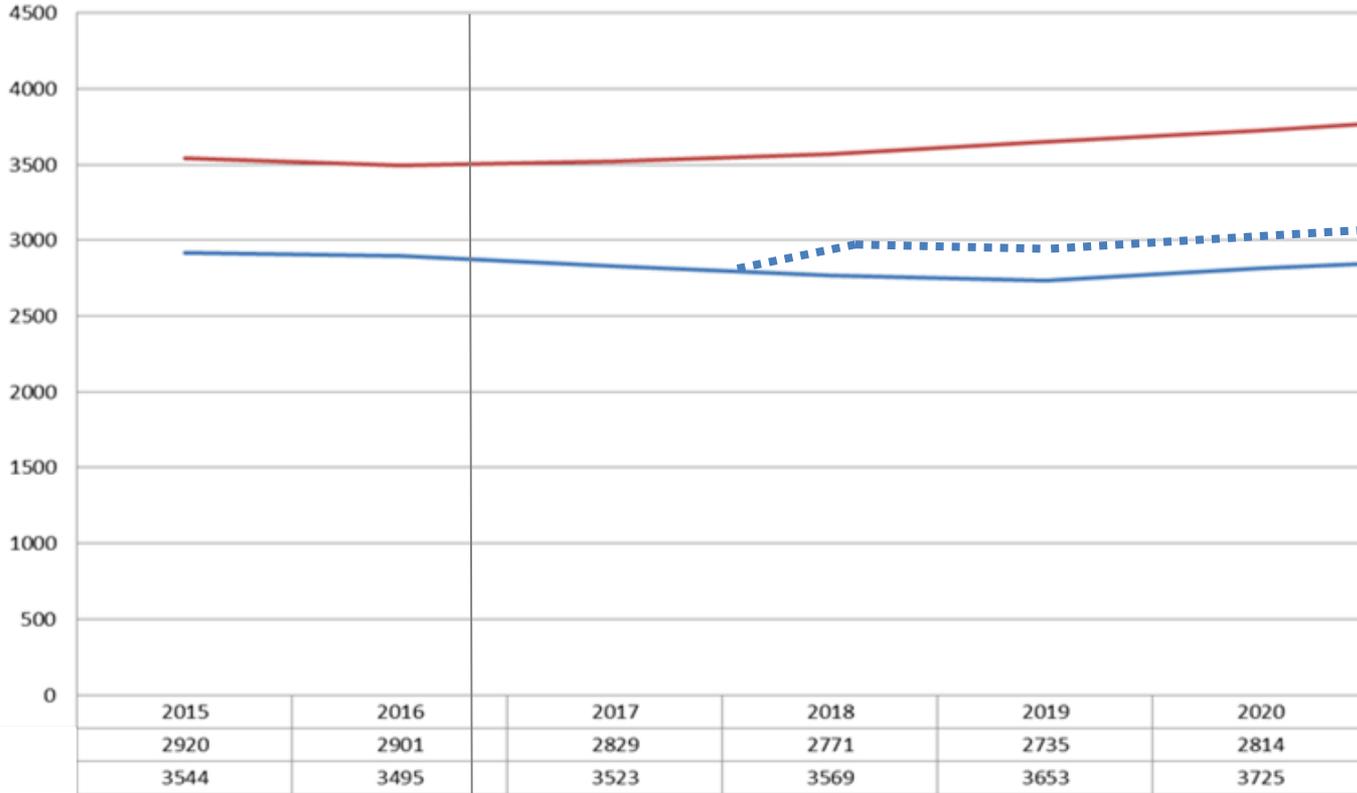
## Solution

- Cross flow opportunities
- Target 6-7 year mark
- 8-yr ADSC served concurrently with existing commitment
- Produces 11Fs with one ops assignment + other experience
- T-38-trained pilots take 1 yr
- Non-T-38-trained pilots take 2 yrs





# Push: Cross Flow



Red Line = Demand  
 Dashed Line = Cross Flow  
 Blue Line = Supply

AFPC  
 Fall 2016  
 11F Retention Webinar



# Proposed COAs



## PUSH MECHANISM

- Cross Flow Opportunities

## PULL MECHANISM

- Pilot Transition Program

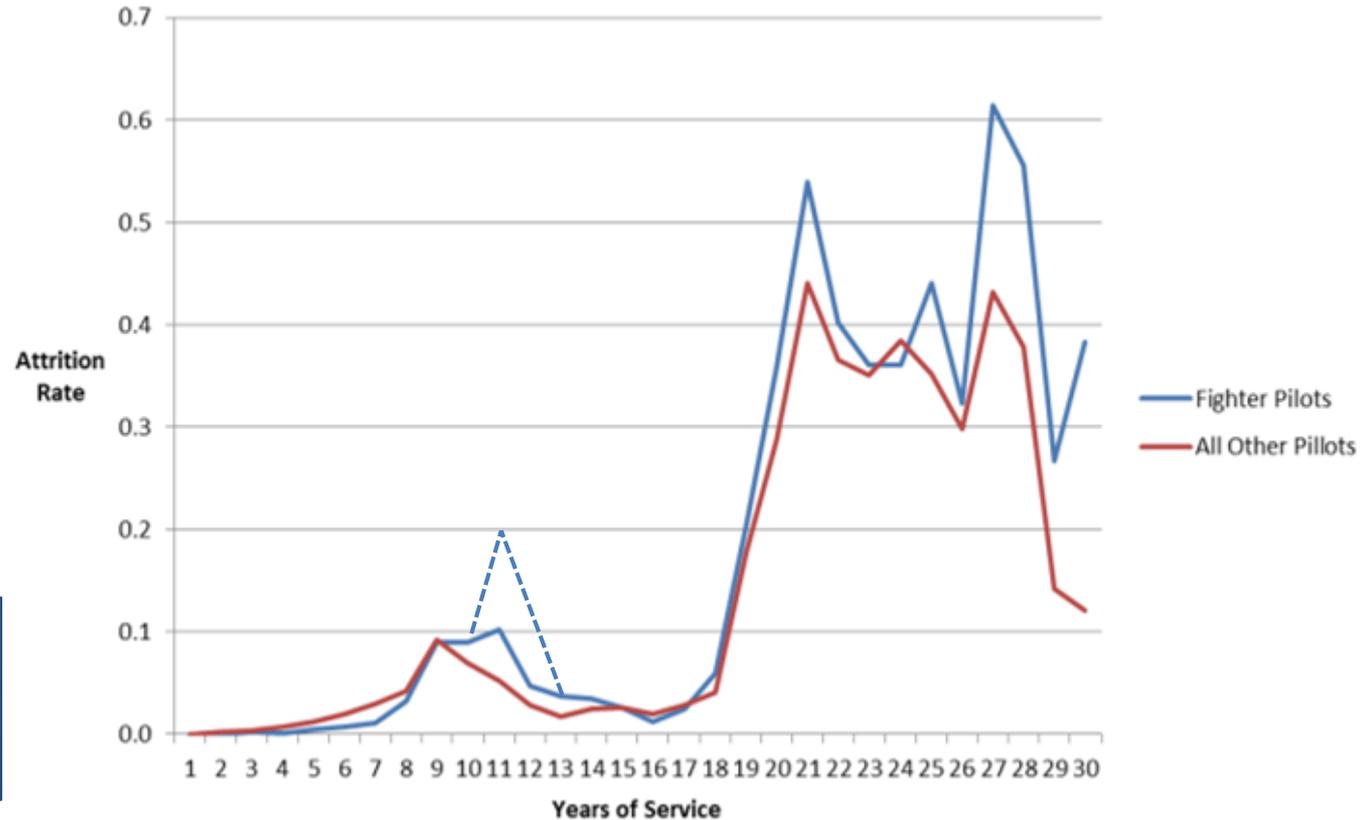


## FLOW MECHANISMS

- “Special Duty Officer” Dual Track
- Squadron/Unit Level Support
- Change Leadership Culture



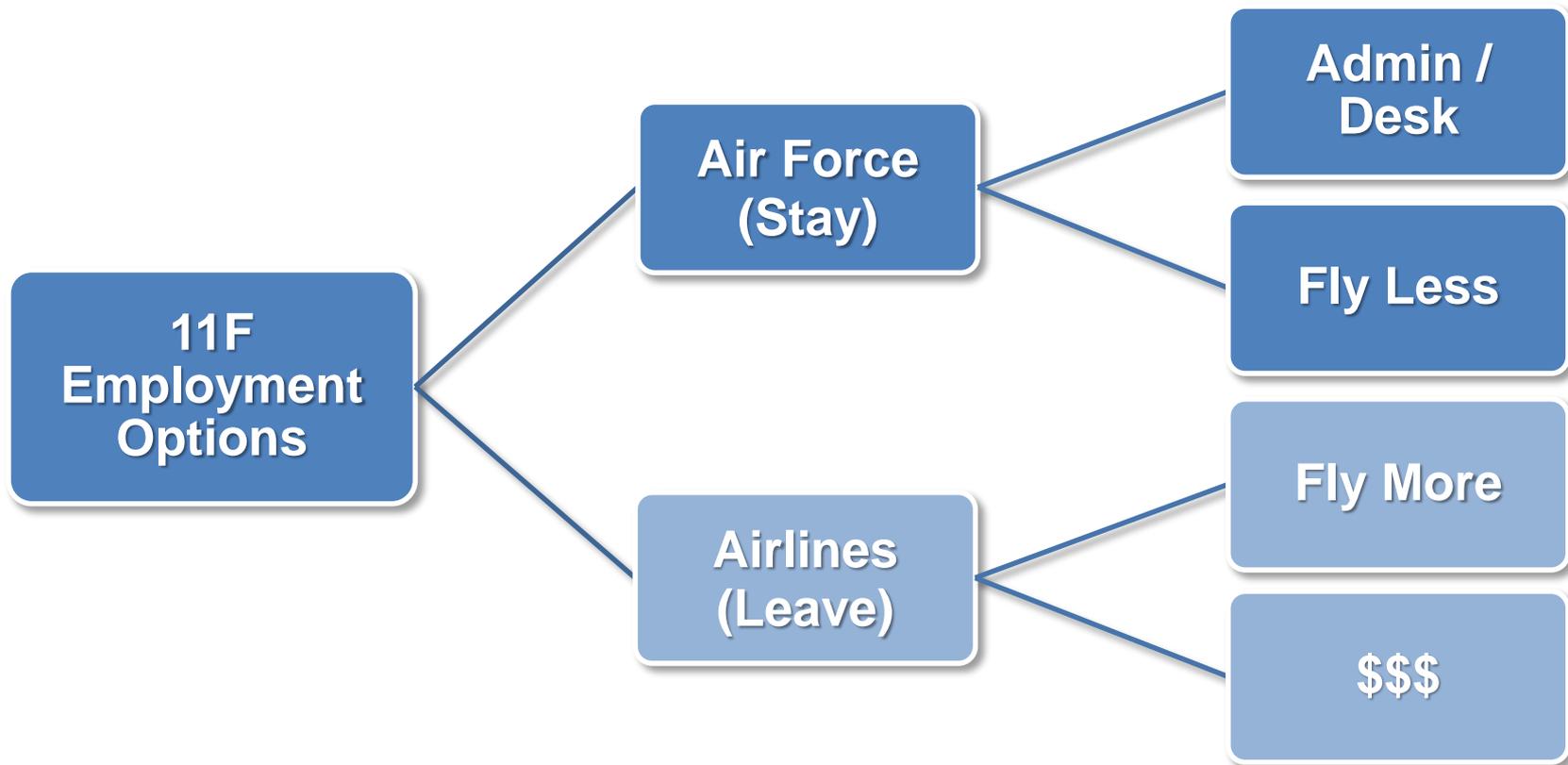
# Historical Attrition Rates



2015 RAND Study:  
2004 – 2014  
Average Rate of Separation  
by Years of Service



# Historical Dichotomy



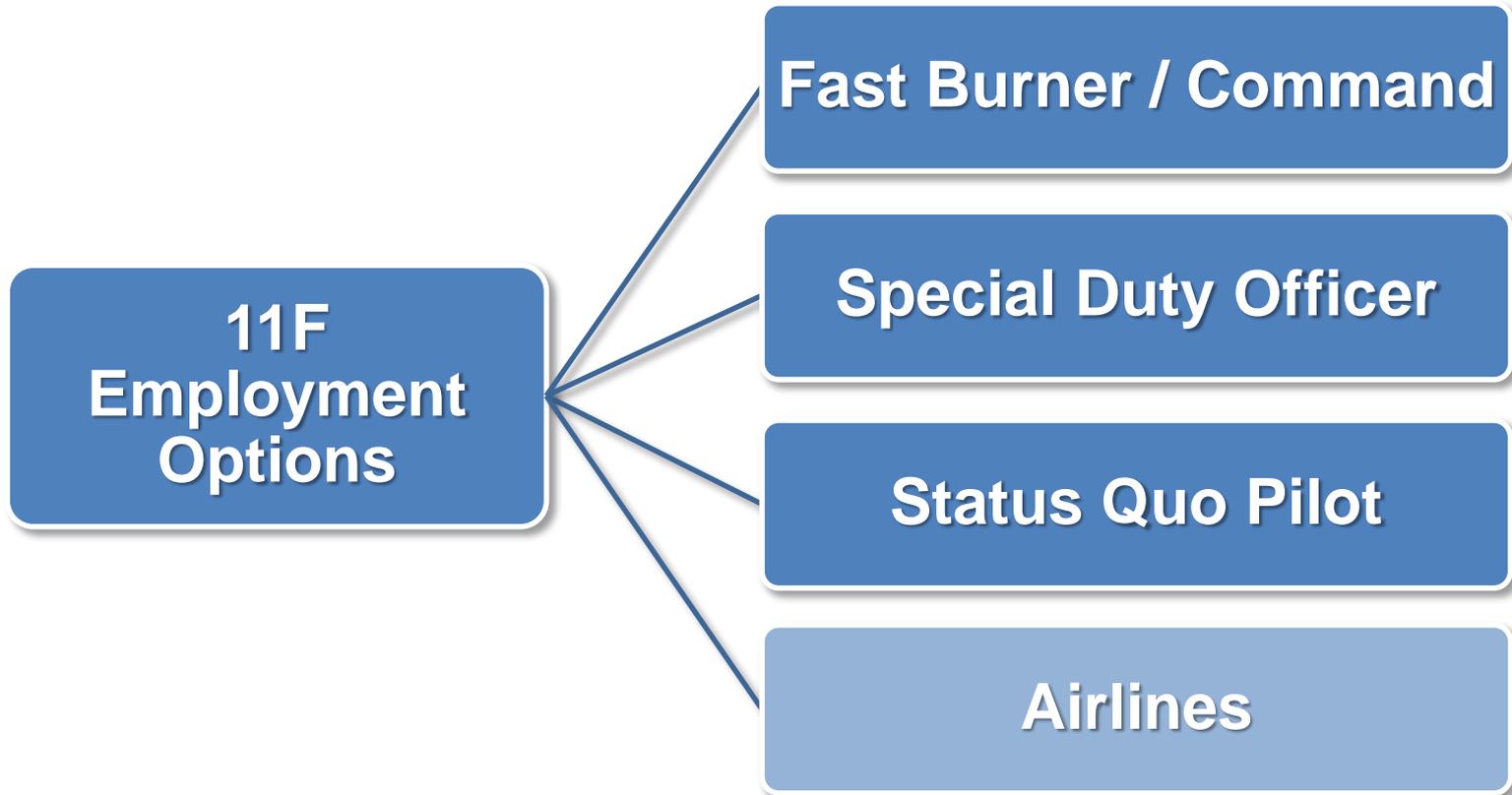


# Dichotomy: Pop-Culture





# New Options





# Flow: Special Duty Officer

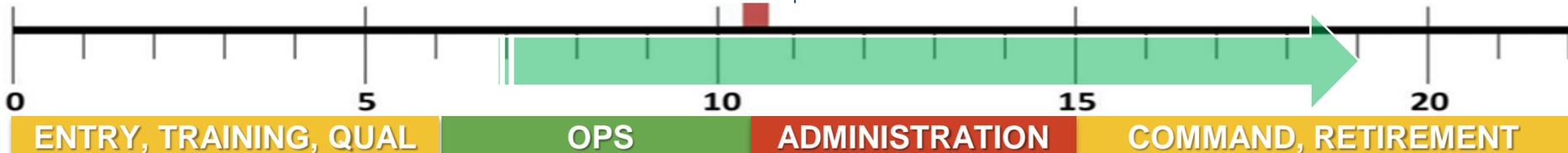


## Problem

- Perceived dichotomy between flying a desk or leaving for the airlines

## Solution

- Special Duty Officer (SDO) track
- Target 7-9 yr mark (end of 2nd tour)
- 10-yr ADSC served concurrently with existing commitment
- Not eligible to command ... No PME, staff jobs, or non-flying related duties
- Fly gray & white jets, not desks
- Maintain path for promotion to Lt Col





# Flow: Increase Sq Support

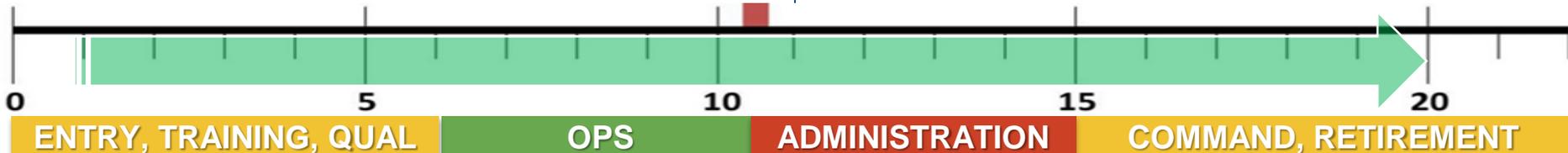


## Problem

- Unit level additional duties significantly contributed to 11F separations

## Solution

- Increase squadron-level operational support
- Use civil service & contractors to alleviate non-flying related tasks
- Prioritize 11F flying opportunities
- Maximize time with family while in garrison





# Flow: Change Leadership Culture

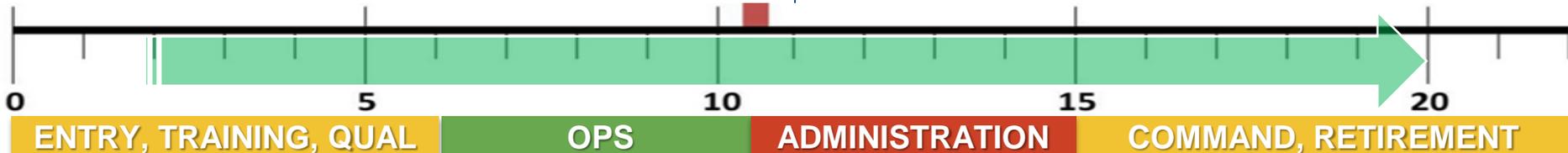


## Problem

- Mission completion is dominant promotion factor; current culture does not consider burnout & morale

## Solution

- Make retention a promotion factor
- If retaining pilots matters, communicate that ...
- Use unit climate assessments or per-unit retention rates as metric
- Include it in the PRF for O-5/O-6
- Consider full 360° feedback





# Proposed COAs



## PUSH MECHANISM

- Cross Flow Opportunities

## PULL MECHANISM

- Pilot Transition Program

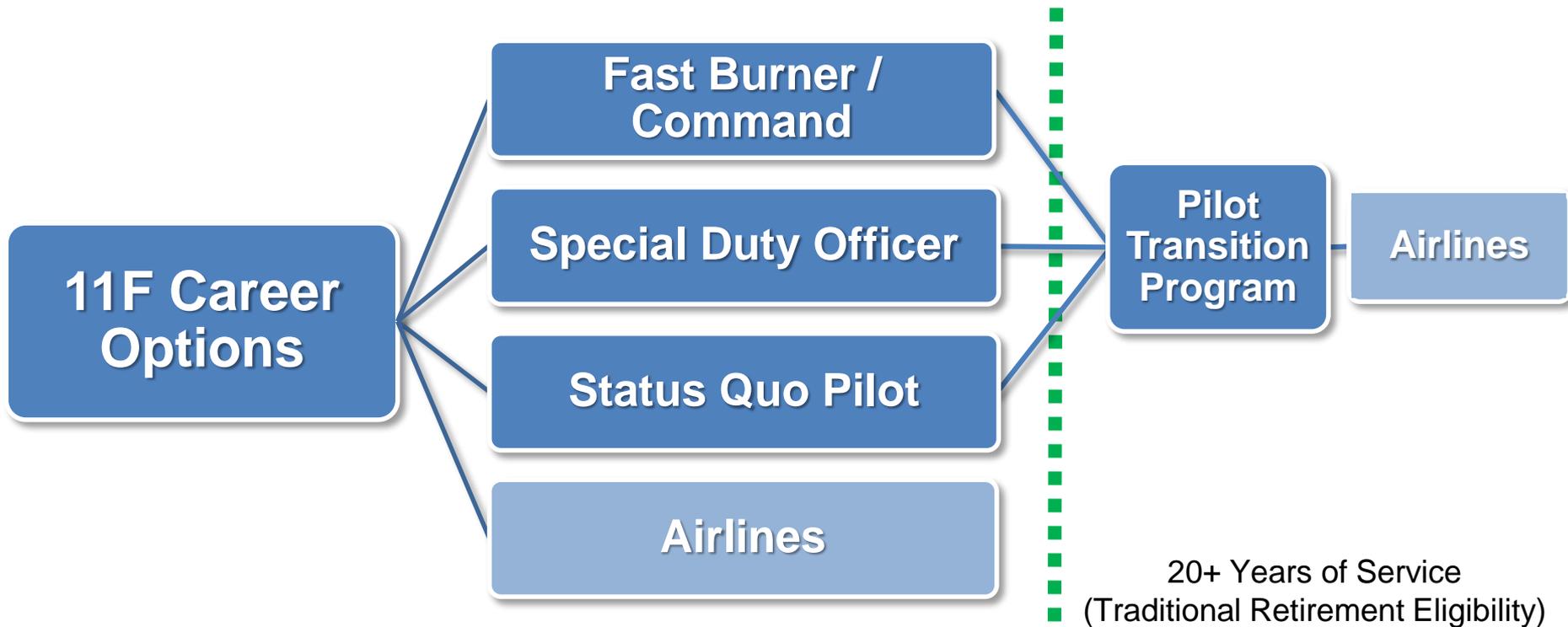


## FLOW MECHANISMS

- “Special Duty Officer” Dual Track
- Squadron/Unit Level Support
- Change Leadership Culture



# New Options





# Pull Mechanism



## Problem

- Marketability after twenty years of service as an 11F

## Solution

- Pilot Transition Program: Air Force pays for ATP & Type Rating ( $\leq \$20K$ )
- 20+ year pilots are eligible
- Permissive TDY to avoid burning terminal leave
- Soft landing for pilots committed to the Air Force





# RFIs



- What is the actual number of unfilled billets/requirements?
  - 200+, 700+, 1200+?
- Which billets aren't filled?
  - Wingmen, 2-ship/4-ship leads, IPs, ALOs, white jets, or desks?
- If staff billets remain unfilled, can they be converted to 16G or other non-fighter AFSCs?
- What is the experienced/non-experienced ratio in individual squadrons?



# Conclusion



- Push
  - Cross flow (Manning)
- Flow
  - Special Duty Officer (Retention)
  - Increase Squadron Support (Retention / Morale)
  - Change Leadership Culture (Morale)
- Pull
  - Pilot Transition Program (Retention / Morale)



# Questions?

