

The Inspector General: An Air Force Enabler

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Introduction

The Inspector General must have a horse allowed him and some soldiers to attend him and all the rest commanded to obey and assist, or else the service will suffer; for he is but one man and must correct many, and therefore he cannot be beloved. And he must ride from one garrison to another to see the soldiers do not outrage or scathe the country... (Codes of Military and Martial Law, 1629)¹

The concept of an Inspector General (IG) dates as far back as 1629. A lot has changed in the centuries since, but the role of the IG is just as relevant today as it was then. The responsibilities of today's IG are much more complex than those of yesterday. However, many important roles today mirror those of the past.

The development of the IG concept occurred 369 years ago yet the Air Force IG roots trace back to 1927 with the formation of the Inspection Division under the Chief of the Air Corps. Today, the Air Force and the IG exist around the employment of six core competencies which are the backbone of how our force operates: air and space superiority, global attack, rapid global mobility, precision engagement, agile combat support and information superiority. The Secretary of the Air Force IG (SAF/IG) system is an enabler for each core competency, and consists of five distinct parts, each serving a unique population and purpose.

1. The Installation IG is the ombudsman for personal complaints and fraud, waste and abuse (FW&A) concerns at the unit level.
2. The Major Command (MAJCOM) IG inspects assigned units for compliance and capability. In addition, they investigate complaints and FW&A cases.
3. The Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) is a field-operating agency headquartered at Bolling Air Force Base, DC, reporting to SAF/IG. AFOSI is the federal law enforcement agency for the Air Force and has three core mission areas: criminal, fraud and counterintelligence.
4. The Air Force Inspection Agency (AFIA), headquartered at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, is also a field operating agency reporting to SAF/IG. AFIA is chartered with providing objective and independent assessments of Air Force leadership and management functions to enhance readiness, discipline, efficiency and effectiveness. Additionally, AFIA partners with the Joint Commission of Accreditation for Healthcare Organizations to conduct Health Service Inspections (HSIs) and also handles complaint investigations that are too complex for a wing or MAJCOM to handle efficiently.
5. The fifth piece to the Air Force IG system is the secretariat staff. The Inspector General independently assesses the readiness, discipline, efficiency and economy of the total force for the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff.

Additionally, the office of the Inspector General establishes policy, investigates complaints on senior officials and handles any complaint elevated to the Air Staff.

Although the IG is split into five functional areas, all five are focused on readiness, discipline, efficiency and economy. This focus and the unique capabilities of its field operating agencies allows the IG to contribute directly to the six core competencies of the Air Force.

Readiness and Discipline

The readiness of Air Force units depends heavily on the morale and welfare of the troops. Each member of the Air Force team deserves competent leadership, as well as a work environment free of prejudice, sexual harassment, favoritism, and reprisal. The IG complaint system is a forum available to airmen and civilians at all levels to air grievances, point out injustices and alert the Air Force to potential FW&A.

The IG's charter is to determine the facts objectively and professionally. The current Air Force IG, Lieutenant General Richard T. Swope, stresses the following about complaints:

Each complaint follows a similar path consisting of three truths: the 'complainant's truth,' the 'subject's truth' and 'the truth.' Unfortunately, 'the truth' occasionally reveals wrongdoing. In those cases, it's up to the appropriate commander to ensure justice is achieved for all injured parties, not the least of which is the Air Force institution. Fortunately, the vast majority of complaints are unsubstantiated. In these cases, the IG's efforts serve to exonerate the unjustly accused — an equally important outcome, as the accused is just as much a part of the Air Force team as the complainant.²

Like the IG of 1629 whose role was to "ride from one garrison to another to see the soldiers do not outrage or scathe the country,"³ today's IG complaint system is in place to protect the Air Force and its personnel from those who would "outrage" or "scathe."

Readiness and discipline depend upon the IG to uphold good order. In addition to admonishing personal misconduct, protecting our people and assets from criminal activity is also an IG function. AFOSI is the action arm that focuses on crimes against persons and property. AFOSI takes proactive and aggressive steps to uncover and investigate these acts; determining the facts so commanders may take corrective actions. The worth of criminal investigations is founded in the value the Air Force places on the truth as an objective standard for the high expectations of its members. The high value AFOSI places on organizational professionalism and the integrity of its investigative process ensures commanders can react to criminal events with a confidence that guarantees maximum deterrence of unacceptable acts. A potent tool, in the commander's readiness and discipline set of capabilities, AFOSI is committed to discovering the "third truth" that underlies Air Force mission effectiveness.

Perhaps one of the biggest benefits AFOSI has given the Air Force comes from its suicide investigations. Suicide is a tragic loss of life that has a significant impact on families and coworkers. All apparent suicides are investigated by AFOSI to ensure they were not an accident,

a homicide, or possibly a natural death, etc. A secondary, but often equally important reason is to provide commanders with insight into the circumstances that led to suicide in hopes that similar tragedies may be averted.⁴

Economy and Efficiency

Readiness and discipline are just half of the IG's charter. Economy and efficiency are equally important.

The functions most often associated with the IG are inspections. In the 17th century it was said that, "he is but one man and must correct many, and therefore he cannot be beloved."⁵ The modern day IG is still a long way from being "beloved." The negative connotation of the last 369 years will never quite go away. Regardless, it certainly won't undermine the importance of assessing the economy and efficiency of the Air Force.

Each service trains and equips its personnel to meet the needs of the National Command Authorities and the Unified Commands. For the most part, the Air Force uses the Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) to assess how well it's meeting mission-essential taskings. A 1997 Chief of Staff-chartered Blue Ribbon Commission on Organizational Evaluations and Awards validated the necessity of the ORI.

The ORI is invaluable as an independent, third party verification of unit capability. ORIs give commanders critical and unique level of confidence that subordinate units are fully mission capable. In this sense, the ORI remains a "family jewel."⁶

Through these independent assessments, Inspectors General are literally the "eyes and ears" of the Air Force Secretary, Chief of Staff and commanders at all levels concerning the economy and efficiency of the Air Force.

By the end of fiscal year 1998 the Air Force will have reduced its active duty force to 371,000 from 607,000 in 1986.⁷ Conversely, the roles and missions of the Air Force have increased. The Air Force is globally engaged in peacekeeping, humanitarian and non-combatant evacuation support operations. Additionally, deployment rates have increased dramatically since the cold war. Altogether last year, some 14,000 total force airmen were deployed on any given day.⁸ Doing more with less, forces the Air Force to squeeze every last drop of economy and efficiency from its processes, to include the inspection system. Consequently, Inspectors General at all levels are using practical and innovative techniques to measure "what's important." As the Air Force continues to drawdown, the ORI will remain a vital part of the IG system.

Operational Readiness Inspections in the past were often characterized by the following:

An ORI is a situation in which you stop doing what you were doing in order to simulate doing what you were just doing so that you can show someone else that you can simulate doing what you were just doing as well as you were doing it before you stopped doing it to simulate doing it!⁹

In the last few years, the ORI has changed considerably. Inspectors General Air Force-wide understand that there is no value gained watching units simulate what they've just performed in theater. Taking advantage of the high operations tempo, many units are receiving ORI credit for executing their real-world jobs. Additionally, units have earned ORI credit by participating in major exercises. Trimming the number of inspectable compliance items and utilizing sampling are other innovative techniques the IG is employing.

Another innovative effort that has changed the face of medical operations is the new Health Services Inspection (HSI) process. AFIA has streamlined HSIs dramatically. The new process deemed, Project Odyssey I, is a joint venture with the Joint Commission on Accreditation and Healthcare Organization which is aimed at improving medical oversight for all active duty, guard and reserve units worldwide. It has reduced inspection time and inspectors from 11-person teams for six days to seven-person teams for two-to-three days; reduced inspection criteria by 62 percent; and saved over \$380,000 during a three-year period. The resounding success of Project Odyssey I resulted in the development of Project Odyssey II — the "inspectionless inspection." The net result of Project Odyssey II should be measuring sustained performance through remote sampling and reporting in all of our medical facilities.¹⁰

Whether it's an ORI or an HSI, measuring the economy and efficiency of the force using faster, smarter and easier methods will reduce the inspection footprint on each unit, thereby allowing the units to focus on what's truly important — meeting mission-essential taskings through their core competencies. In addition to measuring the economy and efficiency of the Air Force's ability to execute its core competencies, the IG also has an active role in each.

Directly aligned with the Air Force core competency of information superiority, AFOSI has the most robust computer crime investigative capability in the federal government. AFOSI was the first federal agency to create this capability. Since 1979, they have led the way in exploiting computer media for evidentiary purposes. Today, AFOSI continues to lead as the executive agency for the Department of Defense's new computer forensic media analysis laboratory.¹¹

Additionally, AFOSI Special Agents are "hacker trackers." Working closely with the information warfare squadron at Shaw Air Force Base and the Air Force Computer Emergency Response Team at Kelly Air Force Base, OSI special agents are able to track down criminals responsible for hundreds of unauthorized computer intrusions. Recently, they were instrumental in the capture of a foreign hacker called the Analyzer and his star "pupils," a couple of U.S. teenagers. The Deputy Secretary of Defense, Dr. John J. Hamre, described the exploits of the Analyzer and his accomplices as "a serious wake-up call."¹² AFOSI never sleeps.

People are the fundamental building block to excelling in our core competencies. However, the weapon systems they use are also an integral part to the Air Force's success. For example, the Air Force can't achieve rapid global mobility without the C-17 Globemaster III and air superiority would be difficult without the F-15 Eagle. Unfortunately, evidence of fraudulent practices has been found in almost every major weapon system we have.¹³ Fraud costs the government and ultimately taxpayers, millions of dollars annually. The IG plays an active role in preventing such occurrences. AFOSI conducts fraud investigations in the procurement area: product substitution, diversion, fraudulent billing, conflicts of interest and bribery. Other types of

fraud involve military and civilian members who have been caught cheating the Air Force. In these budget-tightening days, the impact of fraud, waste and abuse is felt throughout the Air Force.¹⁴

In fiscal year 1997 the Central Systems Investigators, who are special agents assigned to monitor fraud in major weapon systems, returned an average \$1.73 million per agent to the U.S. Treasury or the Air Force, for a total of \$199 million dollars.¹⁵ Every fraudulent dollar spent is one less dollar the Air Force can use toward accomplishing its mission. The nearly \$200 million dollars recovered in fiscal year 1997 is enough to pay for one C-17, four F-117s, 663 AGM-130A air-to-surface missiles, or 72 child development centers.¹⁶ Incidentally, the budget for Central Systems Investigations was \$10.6 million.¹⁷ AFOSI is producing big returns on a relatively small investment.

In addition to conducting criminal and fraud investigations, AFOSI's counterintelligence mission has never been more important to today's expeditionary Aerospace Force. In 1950, it was an OSI commander in Korea who first alerted General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo of the impending North Korean invasion.¹⁸ Today, as the Air Force is deployed around the world there are also OSI agents collecting, analyzing, and disseminating tactical and strategic threat information through the use of counterintelligence operations. These operations help keep commanders abreast of the threat to Air Force personnel and resources posed by terrorism, agitational activity and foreign intelligence services.¹⁹ During Operation DESERT STORM, OSI's excellent counterintelligence efforts were recognized by the Central Intelligence Agency Director for their key contribution to national security.²⁰ Commanders worldwide value AFOSI's counterintelligence efforts.

Looking Forward

It isn't enough to bring together a credible complaint program, independent inspections and the unique capabilities of AFOSI. The processes the Air Force uses for employment must also be honed if it's to be effective. The mission of AFIA is to provide objective and independent assessments of Air Force leadership and management functions to enhance readiness, discipline, efficiency and effectiveness. AFIA also recommends improvements to current Air Force processes for fulfilling peacetime, contingency and wartime missions.²¹ In other words, AFIA is the Air Force's internal consulting agency.

In 1927 the Chief of the Air Corps desired "... an inspection system to anticipate when problems were likely to develop and prescribe actions to prevent them from happening."²² Essentially, he wanted a "crystal ball" that came with solutions. A concept of oversight that potentially anticipates problem areas and recommends actions to prevent them requires an organization with extremely high situational awareness and agility. The ability to see emerging trends and anticipate a need in the Air Force landscape requires the capability to see the Air Force as an integrated whole.²³ This is surely a tall order — AFIA has met the challenge.

Central to all AFIA does is the concept that "Teams Make It Happen." Recently, they worked with a National Football League team to glean vital information on what it takes to build a winning team. (Hint: it's much more than merely getting the best players for each position.) Not

only is team building important but "keeping the saw sharp" is vital. To upgrade the skills of their inspectors, they created AFIA University in which the commander and AFIA personnel teach in order to produce a world-class Air Force inspector. AFIA then equips their teams with the best tools industry can provide (mind mapping tools, 3-D Ishikawa diagrams, and collaborative databases) and the best technology for their mission (high-resolution digital cameras, information mapping technology, and mini-cybercams — to name a few). Lastly, they are given the means to generate the best ideas (an integrity and efficiency-based analytical methodology, lessons learned knowledge bases, etc.) for exploring the anatomy of a given operational issue or topic.²⁴ AFIA is unlike any other Air Force organization. World-class assessments require a world-class "consulting" team.

AFIA assessments, now known as Eagle Looks, are systemic reviews or examinations of issues important to the Air Force. AFIA teams use an operational mode that incorporates simultaneous experimentation and innovation—risk taking. They are free to intelligently experiment with new technologies; new approaches or new concepts designed to improve the mission process.²⁵ AFIA goes to great lengths to provide complete and in-depth reviews.

A prominent example is AFIA's recently conducted Eagle Look of Lean Logistics (Agile Logistics).²⁶ The purpose was to assess the implementation and maturity of Lean Logistics and its effect on combat readiness. The successful achievement of two Air Force core competencies, agile combat support and rapid global mobility are directly dependent upon the successful implementation of Lean Logistics.²⁷

The AFIA team collected data from multiple sources, including personal interviews. Over 160 interview sessions at 35 units were conducted, involving over 1,300 individuals. Units included Headquarters Air Force, MAJCOMs, operational field units, depots, product centers, joint organizations and industry. After a detailed analysis the team produced 10 findings, three observations and 30 recommendations — all designed at making Lean Logistics a better system for today and the future.²⁸

Every AFIA Eagle Look is attacked with the same tenacity and attention to detail as the Lean Logistics look. AFIA has conducted assessments on a broad range of topics such as the Family Day Care Program, the Air Force Enhanced Corporate Structure, War Reserve Materiel, Personnel Accountability and Acquisition Reform. If it's an important issue to the Air Force, then it's fair game for the Inspection Agency. AFIA is doing much more than the Chief of the Air Corps ever envisioned. It's helping the Air Force pave the way to a better future.

Conclusion

Through effective employment of its six core competencies (air and space superiority, global attack, rapid global mobility, precision engagement, agile combat support and information superiority) the United States Air Force has become the world's most respected aerospace force. Readiness, discipline, economy and efficiency are the paths toward success in each competency. A credible complaints program, independent inspections and the important contributions of AFOSI and AFIA are why the Air Force Inspector General is an enabler to the Air Force and its ability to succeed in each core competency.

Notes

1. Lt Gen Mark Anderson, "Signature Article", *TIG Brief*, January-February 1994: 2
2. Taken from several one-on-one discussions with Lt Gen Swope in early 1998.
3. Anderson
4. AFOSI Annual Report to AF Commanders, January 1998
5. Anderson
6. Report of the CSAF Blue Ribbon Commission on Organizational Evaluations & Awards, February 1997
7. Air Force News Service, 16 May 98
8. "FY 99 Joint SECAF/CSAF Posture Statement", *Air Force Policy Letter Digest*, March/April 1998
9. AFIA Inspection School Workbook, undated
10. Col Jim Robertson, "A Shift of Vision", *TIG Brief*, May-June 1998: 4-7
11. Brig Gen Francis X. Taylor, "Preserving Our Legacy, Protecting the Future", *Global Reliance*, vol. 23 no. 4 (July-October 1997): 2
12. SMSgt Jim Katzaman, "DOD on Alert Against Computer Intrusions", *Global Reliance*, vol. 24 no. 2 (March-April 1998): 9
13. Weapons system information found in a literature review of 1996-1998 AFOSI products (fraud reports, fraud articles in the TIG brief magazine, etc.)
14. Capt Steve Murray, "Fraud in the Air Force", *TIG Brief*, January-February 1998: 20
15. AFOSI Semi-Annual report on Fraud Operations, 1 April 1997 - 30 September 1997. (FY 97 recovery figure based on total recoveries from investigations closed during FY97.)
16. Cost of child development center obtained from AF/ILEPA. All other cost information obtained from Air Force fact sheets.
17. AFOSI Semi-Annual report on Fraud Operations
18. Taylor
19. AFOSI Command Brief, 6 November 1997
20. Taylor
21. Air Force Mission Directive 31, 1 November 1995: 1
22. Robertson
23. Ibid
24. Ibid
25. Ibid
26. Lean Logistics has been renamed Agile Logistics
27. AFIA, Acquisition Management Review: Lean Logistics, PN 97-501, 17 December 97
28. AFIA, Acquisition Management Review: Lean Logistics

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