

**RFI #1: Women in Operational Career Fields**  
**United States Air Force**  
**Version 2**

**A. Definition of operational career fields (officer and enlisted) for the Service.**

The Air Force Officer Classification Directory defines operational career fields for officers as only 1-series Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC).

Officer operational 1-series AFSCs are defined as:

- The Operations Career Area encompasses utilization fields that directly employ weapon and supporting systems to accomplish the primary operational mission of the Air Force. Included are Operations Commander, Pilot, Combat Systems Officer (CSO), Astronaut, Special Tactics, Air Liaison, Combat Rescue, Space, Nuclear and Missile Operations, Intelligence, Weather, Cyber Operations, Operations Support, and Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) Pilot.

The Air Force Enlisted Classification Directory defines operational career fields for enlisted as only 1-series AFSC.

Enlisted operational 1-series AFSCs are defined as:

- The Aircrew Operations Career Field encompass the pre-flight, in-flight, and post-flight duties of inspecting, training, directing, and performing combat, mobility, and special operations pertinent to enlisted primary aircrew activities.
- The Cyber Warfare Career Field encompasses functions to develop, sustain, and enhance cyberspace capabilities to defend national interests from attack and to create effects in the cyberspace domain to achieve national objectives.
- The Command and Control Systems Operations Career Field encompasses the functions involved in aerospace surveillance and aerospace vehicle detection, including missile warning systems, controlling, and plotting.
- The Intelligence Career Field encompasses functions involved in collecting, producing, and distributing data that have strategic, tactical, or technical value from an intelligence viewpoint.
- The Aircrew Flight Equipment (AFE) field encompasses functions that enhance aircrew performance through the proper equipment integration of the human and the aircraft.

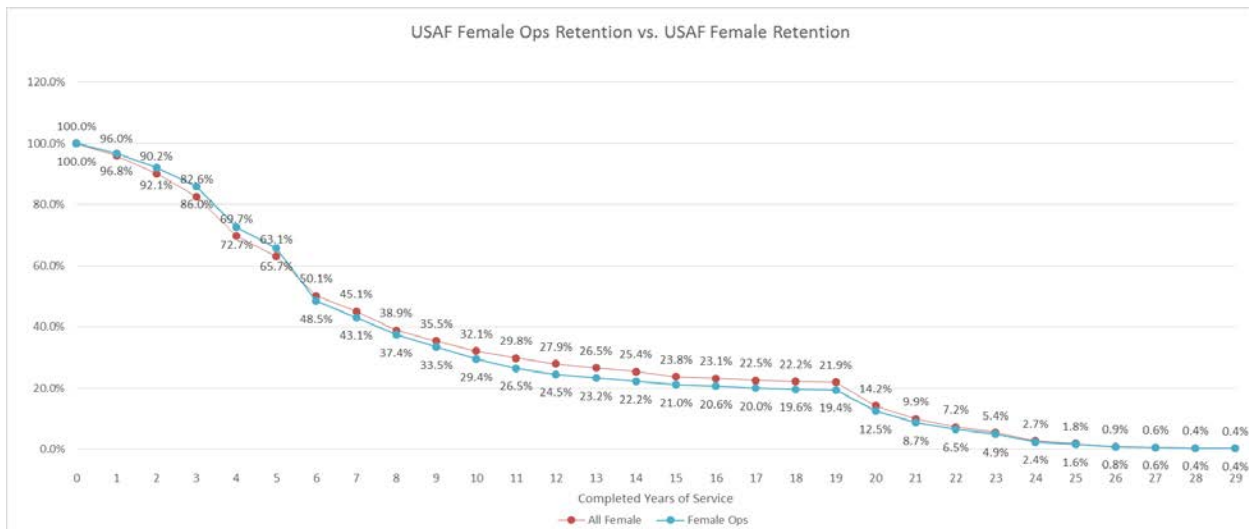
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- The Safety Career Field encompasses functions relating to safety education and engineering; contractor and construction safety; mishap investigation, and analysis and trends computations; operations and facilities evaluation, inspection, and survey; risk assessment; consultation with commanders, functional managers, supervisors, and employees; and safety education and awareness promotion at all levels.
- The Aircrew Protection Career Field encompasses the functions involved in instructing aircrew and other designated personnel on the principles, procedures, and techniques of global survival; and locating and penetrating incident areas to provide emergency medical treatment, survival, and evacuation of survivors.
- The Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) Sensor Operator (SO) Career Field encompasses functions involved in program formulating, policy planning, inspecting, training and directing, and performing combat and operations related to crew position activities, sensor suite operations and unit functionality.

**B. Comparison of:**

**i. Retention of women in operational specialties vs. overall retention of women?**

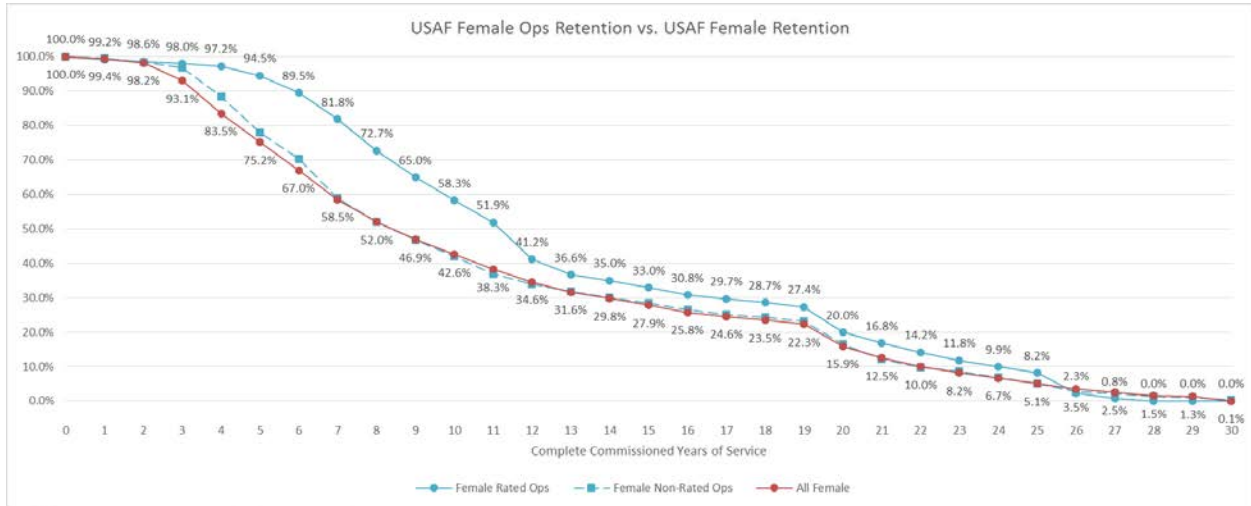
Enlisted women retention in operational specialties mirrors closely with overall women retention.



Officer women retention in operational specialties is higher than overall retention of women for rated operational specialties and mirrors closely for non-rated operational specialties. Rated operational specialties is defined as all Pilot, Combat Systems Officers, Air Battle Manager, and Remotely Piloted Aircraft Pilots (11X, 12X, 13B, and 18X). Non-rated operational specialties are the rest of the 1 series Air Force Specialty Codes. The difference being that rated operational

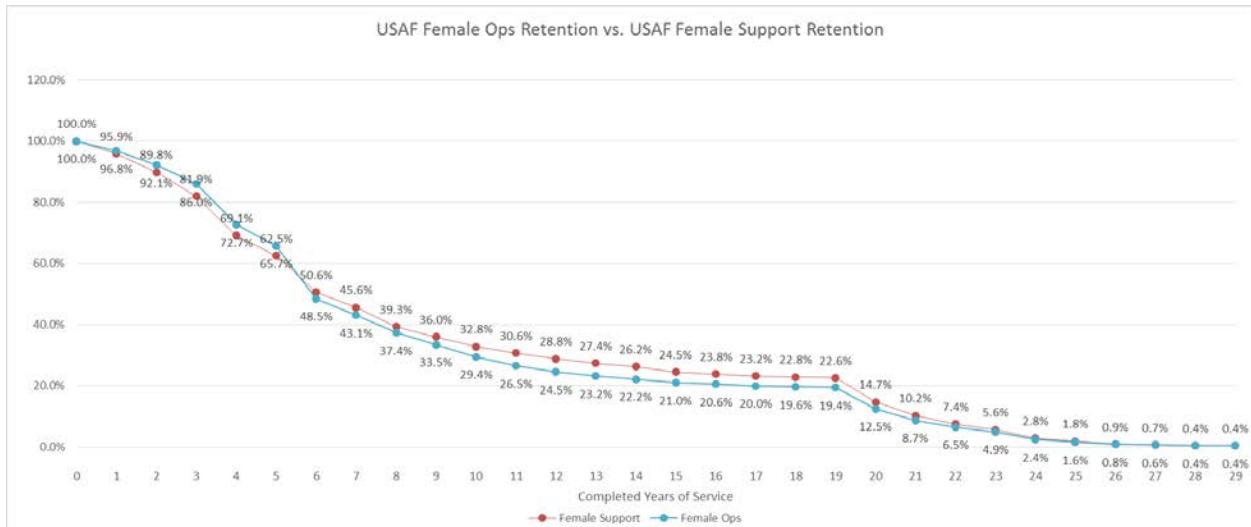
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specialties have a longer initial active duty service commitment than all other specialties. After the 12 year mark, when most pilot active duty service commitments expire, the rated operational specialties retention follows the same trend as overall women retention.



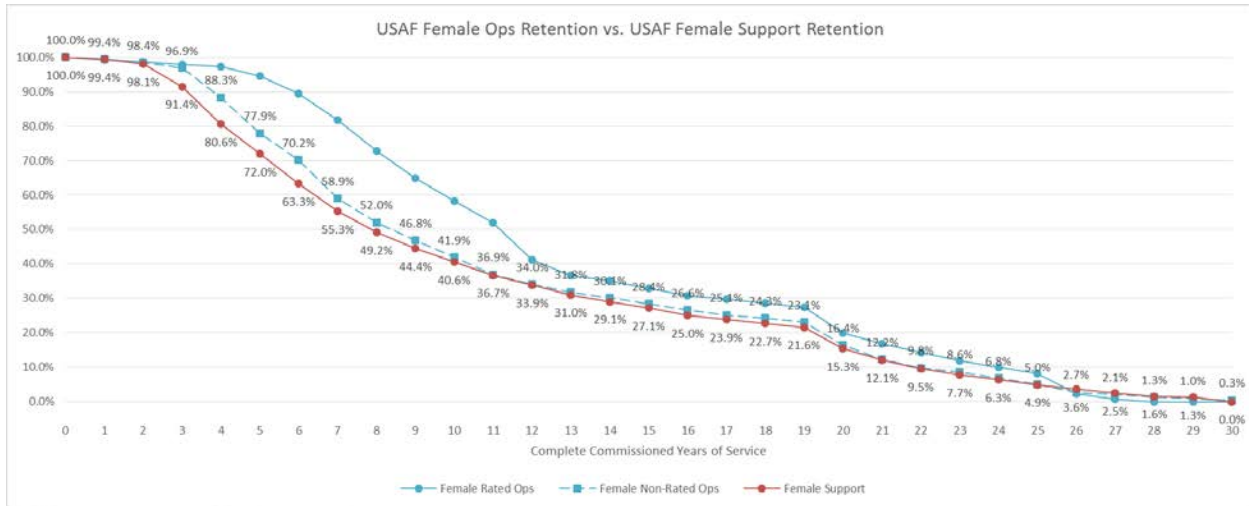
### ii. Retention of women in operational specialties vs. retention of women in support-oriented career disciplines?

Enlisted women retention in operational specialties mirrors closely with women in support-oriented specialties.



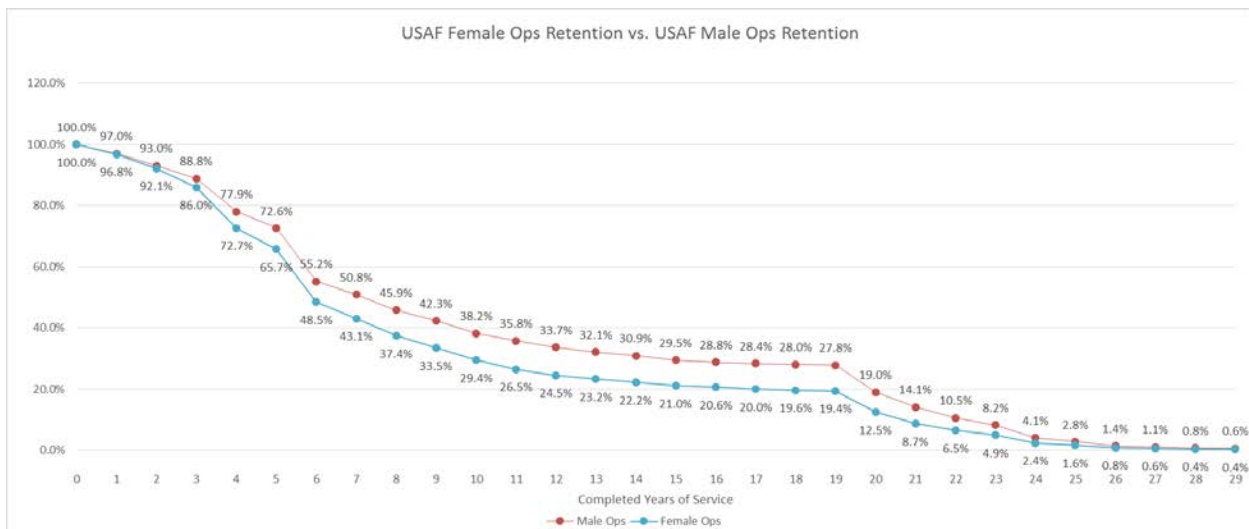
Officer women retention in operational specialties is higher than women in support-oriented specialties for rated operations and mirrors closely for non-rated operation specialties. The higher retention in rated operations is due to their longer initial active duty service commitments. After the 12 year mark, the retention trend in rated operations becomes similar for operational specialties and support-oriented specialties.

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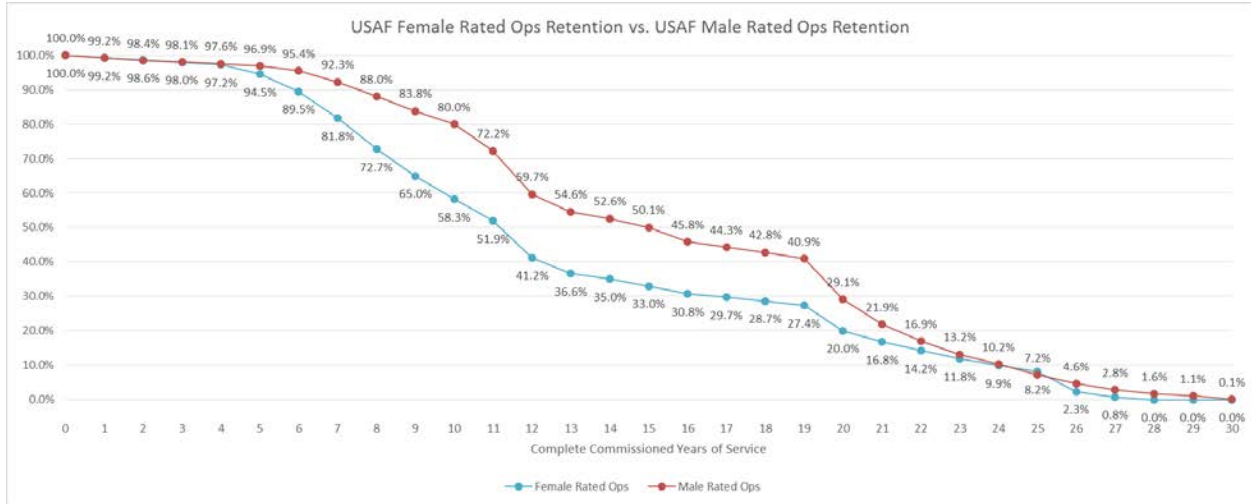
### iii. Retention of women in operational specialties vs. retention of men in the same disciplines?

For Enlisted women in operational specialties a higher percentage of women get out after the initial enlistment period. Subsequently, the retention rate largely equals that of men.

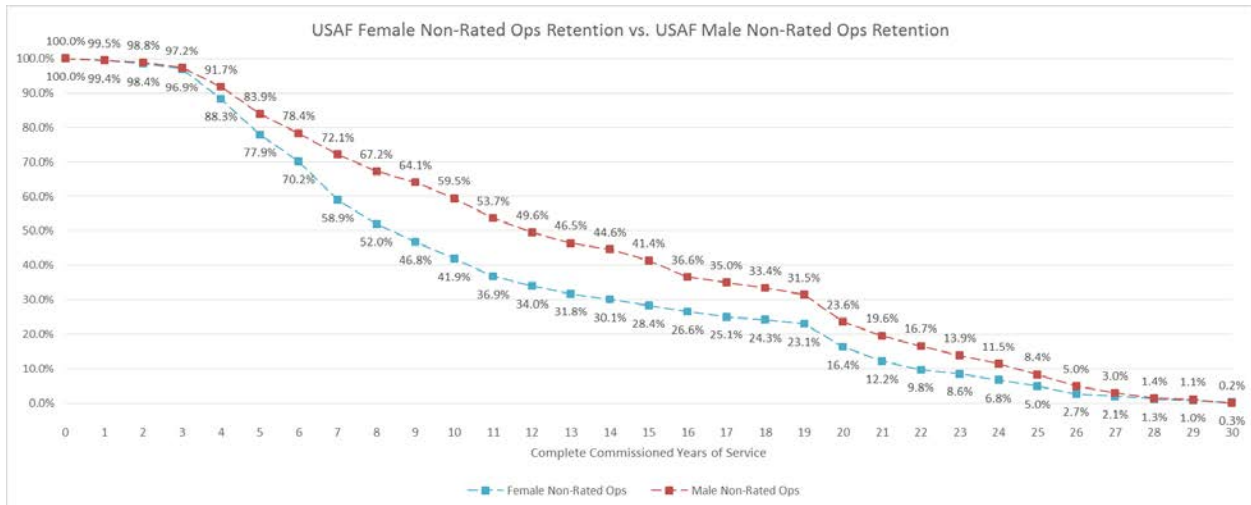


Officer women retention in operational specialties is lower than men in the rated operations side for the first 12 years. This may be due to women having more avenues for waivers of the longer Active Duty Service Commitment given to the rated specialties. After 12 years, the retention trend for women mirrors the trend for men.

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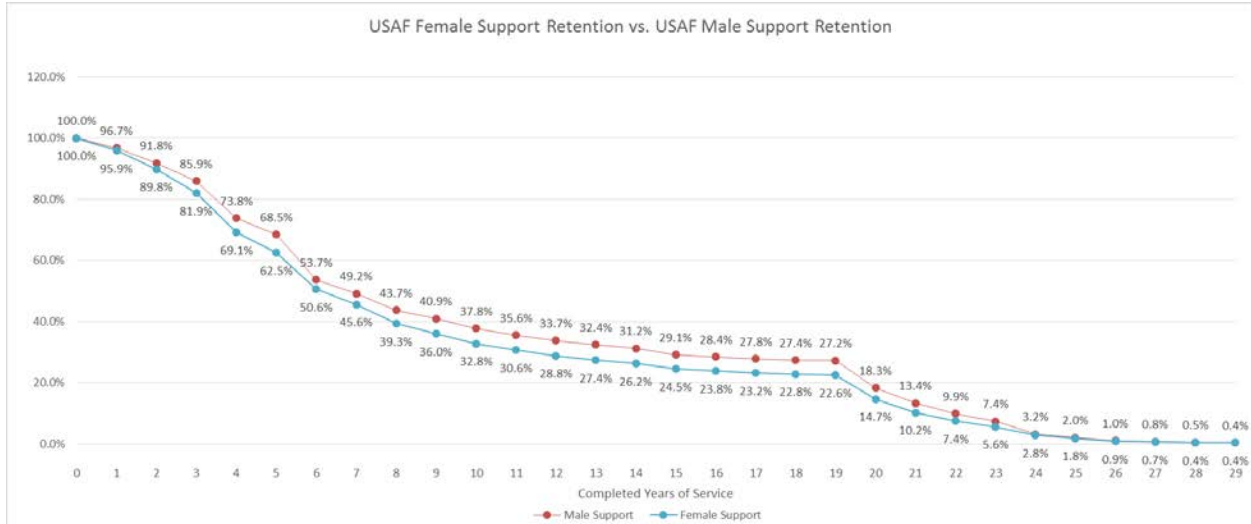
For non-rated operational specialties, the women have lower retention until the 16 year point. At the 16 year point, the retention trend is slightly better for women than men.



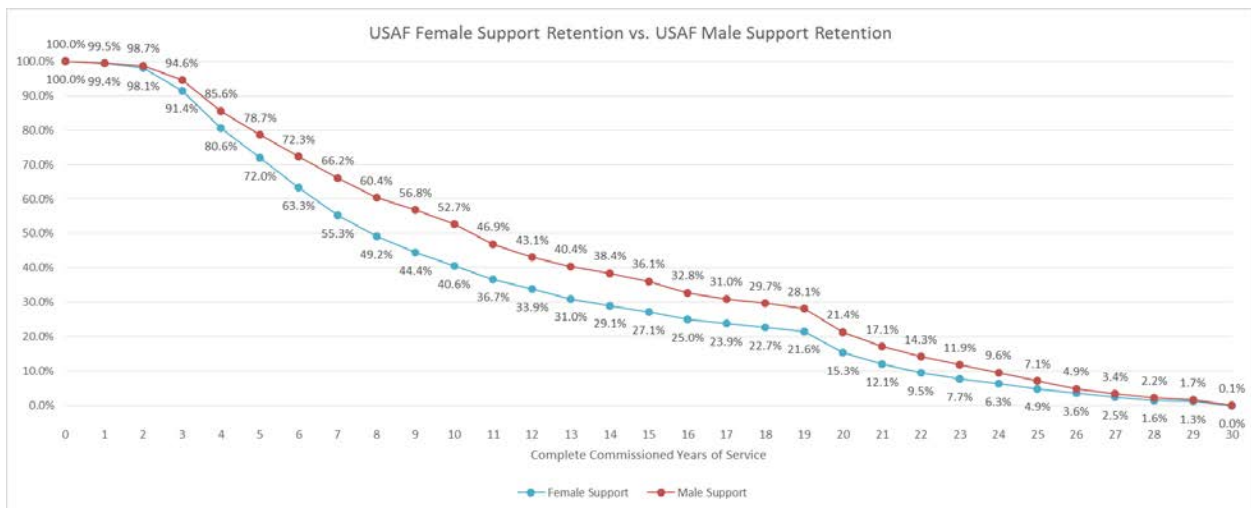
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## iv. Retention of women in support-oriented career disciplines vs. retention of men in the same disciplines?

Enlisted women retention in support-oriented career specialties is slightly lower than in men for the first 8 years. After that, it mirrors closely the retention of men in support-oriented specialties.



Until the 9 year point, officer women retention in support-oriented specialties is lower than men in support-oriented specialties. For years 9-16, the trend is the same for women and men, with women having a slightly better trend starting at the 16 year mark.



## C. What actions is the Service taking to determine the root cause and address any disparities?

A pre-decisional Information Paper is in coordination for CSAF review addressing the root cause and disparities in retention rates of women in the Air Force.