

United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Report to the Comptroller General



147431

June 1989

Women's
Advisory
Council 1988
Annual Report

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Foreword

This report describes the accomplishments of the Women's Advisory Council (WAC) during fiscal year 1988. Memoranda issued during the year are cited in the text, and copies of these memoranda are included in Appendix I of this report.

The Council's Executive Board wishes to thank all of those who contributed to WAC's efforts during the past year.

Susan A. Sacco
President

Sherry Gilmore Taylor
Executive Vice-President

Diana M. Olmstead
Vice-President for Communications

Judy Pagano and Carol Shulman
Secretary

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Abbreviations

ACG-Ops	Assistant Comptroller General for Operations
DMTAG	Design, Methodology, and Technical Assistance Group
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
FWP	Federal Women's Program
GAO	General Accounting Office
GSA	General Services Administration
WAC	Women's Advisory Council

Introduction and Overview



Background and Goals

The Women's Advisory Council (WAC) was formally established in 1975 to assist the Federal Women's Program. In 1976, WAC was officially sanctioned by the Comptroller General as a permanent council to address the interests of women in GAO.

The Council's overall goals, as stated in its bylaws, are to

- advise and assist the Comptroller General and his designees, the Director of Civil Rights, the Director of Affirmative Action Plans, and the Director of Personnel on policies and programs concerning women in the U.S. General Accounting Office;
- serve as a liaison to Division and Office management;
- advance the interests of women in the U.S. General Accounting Office; and
- provide a representative forum for discussing and publicizing women's issues and problems.

Organization and Issues


The Career Development, Personnel, and Special Projects Committees carried out the Council's work during FY 1988. In addition, an ad hoc committee was formed to conduct the Council's work as it related to Pay for Performance. The Executive Board, composed of the Council's elected officers, also participated in projects and met with GAO officials to discuss various matters throughout the year. Committee members are listed in table 1.1. WAC fiscal year 1988 award recipients are listed in table 1.2.

Specific issues addressed by the Committees during the year included:

- implementation of pay for performance;
- implementation of GAO's no-smoking policy;
- expansion of upward mobility opportunities;
- examination of recruitment efforts and employee benefits at private firms; and
- review of GAO draft orders.

Executive Board Projects

Issues addressed by the Executive Board included:

- incorporating names of contributors into GAO reports;
 - incorporating regional representation into the Council;
 - reinstating the sexual harassment course at GAO; and
- 

-
- commenting on the Human Resource Management Task Force report entitled A Human Resource Agenda for the 1990s.

Contributors' Names in GAO Reports

The Council was asked to comment on the Office of Policy memorandum to divisions and offices on the soon-to-be-implemented policy of naming contributors in GAO reports. (See App. I, p. 18.) The Council supported the concept of naming contributors, but had several concerns:

- the format for listing contributors should be uniform division-wide, not determined by each associate director;
- management should evaluate the project after one year to determine if it is meeting its intended purpose; and
- divisions should determine the criteria for listing employees below the evaluator-in-charge level.

Regional Representation on WAC

In December 1987, the Executive Board met with the Deputy Assistant Comptroller General for Human Resources to discuss adding regional representatives to the Council. While the Council was strongly in favor of adding regional representatives, WAC believed it necessary to look at the impact on both WAC and the Federal Women's Program (FWP) in existence in the regional offices. WAC met with three FWP Managers in February 1988 to discuss similarities and differences between the two programs as well as possible impacts on the groups. Over the next several months, the Council revised its bylaws and developed a draft charter similar to the charters of the other GAO employee councils. The Council is planning to hold special elections for representatives from each GAO regional office during the Spring of 1989, after which the entire Council will vote on the charter and revised bylaws. When this process is completed, both the charter and the bylaws will be forwarded to the Comptroller General for his approval.

Sexual Harassment

In September 1988, the Council sent a memo to the Training Institute expressing concern over the elimination of the sexual harassment course at GAO. (See App. I, p. 19.) The Director of the Training Institute agreed with our concerns and stated that a sexual harassment course would be offered at GAO again in 1989. As part of this continuing dialogue between the Council and the Institute on this issue, WAC was asked in October 1988 to participate on a panel to review presentations of several contractors who provide sexual harassment training workshops.

The Council agreed to participate on the panel and to continue our work on the issue of sexual harassment during FY 1989.

Human Resource Management

In March 1988, the Council commented on the Human Resource Management Task Force report entitled A Human Resource Agenda for the 1990s. (See App. I, p. 20.) WAC generally endorsed the report's recommendations pertaining to strengthening GAO's human resource management. In the area of appraisal and reward systems, the Council agreed with the Task Force that certain accomplishments such as participation as a training instructor and employee development counseling be recognized and rewarded. WAC further recommended that activities such as serving on employee advisory councils, OIP projects, and task forces and boards be accorded similar regard.

President's Message

Fiscal Year 1988 was a year of achievement for the Women's Advisory Council. During the year, WAC became involved in issues that concern all GAO employees, while continuing its work on matters that help advance the interests of women at GAO.

One of WAC's major projects during the year involved a study of the implementation of GAO's smoking policy in divisions and offices. The Council's efforts also included work on improving promotion opportunities for personnel in female-dominated job series, developing a survey to gauge employee satisfaction with GAO's child care information and referral service, commenting on various GAO draft orders, participating on several pay for performance committees, and supporting and monitoring the activities surrounding the establishment of a GAO child care center.

I wish to congratulate this past year's representatives on a job well done and wish continued success to the Fiscal Year 1989 Council.

**Table 1.1: Women's Advisory Council
Members Fiscal Year 1988**

Executive Board		
Susan Sacco	GGD	President
Sherry Gilmore Taylor	RCED	Executive Vice President
Diana Olmstead	IMTEC	Vice-President for Communications
Judy Pagano	RCED	Secretary (Nov. '87 - Apr. '88)
Carol Shulman	RCED	Secretary (May - Oct 1988)
Career Development Committee		
Kathy Peyman	AFMD	Co-Chair
Ellen Smith ^a	IMTEC	Co-Chair
Ellen Aronson	GS&C	
Susan Hoovler ^a	OGC	
Chris Kopocis ^a	OGC	
Mary Pniewski	RCED	
Carol Shulman	RCED	
Cindy Strite	HRD	
Personnel Committee		
Barbara Chapman	PEMD	Chair
Susan Beekman ^a	RCED	
Sarah Brady	NSIAD	
Beverly Cox	PERS	
Tanya Hall ^a	GS&C	
Carol Kolarik	WRO	
Susan Lieber	GGD	
Charlotte Merritt	NSIAD	
Frankie Shannon	PERS	
Jackie Council	GS&C	
Patte Metz	RCED	
Special Projects Committee		
Jan Bogus	GGD	Co-Chair
Diana Olmstead	IMTEC	Co-Chair
Ann Calvaresi-Barr ^a	HRD	
Kim Caprio	AFMD	
Lynne Gressett ^a	GGD	
Eileen Larence	NSIAD	
Inez Minor	COMBINED OFFICES	
Maureen Murphy	OGC	
Judy Pagano	RCED	
Pat Peterson	COMBINED OFFICES	
Ellen Radish	HRD	

(continued)

Introduction and Overview

Beverly Schladt	NSIAD	
Monica Surber ^a	PEMD	
Cindy Walford	PEMD	
AD HOC Committee On Pay For Performance		
Sarah Brady	NSIAD	Co-Chair
Carol Kolarik	WRO	Co-Chair
Kim Caprio	AFMD	
Beverly Cox	PERS	
Maureen Murphy	OGC	
Susan Sacco	GGD	
Sherry Gilmore Taylor	RCED	

^aResigned from Council during year

**Table 1.2: Women's Advisory Council
Fiscal Year 1988 Award Recipients**

Distinguished Achievement Award

Susan A. Sacco
Sheryl Gilmore Taylor

Outstanding Service Award

Sarah J. Brady
Carol L. Kolarik
Eileen R. Larence
Diana M. Olmstead

Special Recognition

Barbara A. Chapman
Inez M. Minor
Judy K. Pagano
Kathleen M. Peyman
Carol H. Shulman

Career Development Issues

During fiscal year 1988, the Women's Advisory Council addressed career development and other employment issues. The Council

- looked at enhancing administrative roles;
- continued its support for expanding upward mobility; and
- reviewed and commented on a draft of the GAO maxiflex order.

Enhancing Administrative Roles

To enhance the roles of some administrative staff and to improve the efficiency of GAO's work, the Council suggested an Operations Improvement Project to test a new administrative position, possibly entitled, "Administrative Assistant". (See App. I, p. 23.) Administrative assistants could perform many of the administrative tasks currently performed by evaluators. They could be available to work on several assignments at once, similar to the way writer/editor positions are structured. Some examples of the types of work an assistant could perform include completing forms required for report processing packages and master report folders, obtaining documents identified in literature searches, and extracting numerical data from documents and entering them on computerized spreadsheets.

The Council recommended to the Assistant Comptroller General for Operations (ACG-Ops) that one or two divisions be encouraged to initiate these projects and that a member of the ACG-Ops staff be assigned responsibility for coordinating and evaluating the results of these and related ongoing projects.

Expanding Upward Mobility

The Council also continued its support for expanding the Upward Mobility Program to include positions other than those solely in the evaluator and DMTAG series. Council members met with staff from the Upward Mobility Program and the Office of the Assistant Comptroller General for Operations to discuss WAC's proposal to add other positions—such as paralegals, writer/editors, and librarians—to the program.

The Council believes expanding the program in this way would increase its appeal to and help retain staff who want additional promotion opportunities but who do not wish to move into the evaluator or DMTAG series.

Increasing the Credit Hour Limit

During fiscal year 1988, a second draft of the proposed GAO maxiflex order 2620.1 was released for comment. In its comments on this proposed order, WAC continued its support for increasing the number of credit hours that can be carried over from one pay period to the next. (See App. I, p. 25.) The draft regulations still limited the number of carry-over hours to ten (10), the equivalent of slightly more than one work day. WAC believes employees should be allowed to carry over at least 16 credit hours—which would provide two days off after busy work periods. In practice, carrying over credit hours is the most accessible and administratively simple method for employees to directly benefit from long work hours. WAC has found that employees generally believe the other tangible methods—use of compensatory time and overtime—are not available.

Personnel Issues

The Women's Advisory Council's principal responsibilities in the personnel area are to monitor personnel rules and review proposed revisions in major personnel directives; review GAO's affirmative action plans and goals and related activities, such as recruitment and merit selection; and monitor the activities of the Personnel Appeals Board. In fiscal year 1988, WAC

- expanded our 1987 recruitment and benefits study, at the request of the Comptroller General, to compare recruitment efforts and employee benefits at private firms to those at GAO;
- participated in preparations for and the final taping of an informational video on the role of the Personnel Appeals Board;
- formed an ad hoc committee to address the Pay for Performance issue;
- participated in an OOH pilot training course designed to help GAO managers deal with employees who have AIDS;
- reviewed proposed changes in the EEO oversight procedures of the Personnel Appeals Board;
- reviewed proposed amendments to the GAO Personnel Act;
- reviewed a 13/14 Council memo on the Federal leave bank experiments; and
- commented on the following GAO draft orders:

Order 2430.1, Performance Appraisal Program

Order 2735.1, Code of Ethics

Order 2735.2, Conflict of Interest and Statements of Employment and Financial Interests

Order 2531.3, Within-Grade Salary Increases

Order 2771.1, Administrative Grievance Procedure

Order 2630.1, Temporary Leave Transfer Program

Order 2451.1, Incentive Awards

Recruitment and Benefits Study

In 1988, at the Comptroller General's request, the Personnel Committee followed up on a study conducted last year relating to other federal agencies' recruitment efforts. The 1987 study found that federal agencies similar to GAO have comparable recruitment materials and

approaches in that they do not go into great detail about employee benefits and personnel policies. Based on these findings, these agencies appeared to have no recruitment advantage over GAO. Our findings also indicated that prospective employees concentrate on asking recruiters about work-related matters such as work content and potential advancement rather than asking about personnel-related matters.

This year we collected recruitment materials and spoke with representatives of 14 companies in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area representing the accounting, management consulting, information systems, and financial services fields. The study looked at the following issues:

- Do corporate recruitment materials contain information not covered in GAO's recruitment brochures?
- Do private firms offer benefits not offered by GAO?
- What differences exist between GAO recruitment materials and those of the private firms in terms of professional presentation and eye appeal?

Although this study is not yet complete, preliminary findings indicate that actual employee benefits offered by the companies contacted are similar to those offered by GAO, although differences exist in the flexible and comprehensive nature of the benefits. Further, WAC found that recruitment materials used by the various companies reflect a level of sophistication and professionalism that the present GAO materials do not match. The study will be completed in early FY 1989. According to the Deputy Assistant Comptroller General for Human Resources, GAO has initiated a review of all recruiting materials to identify and recommend needed improvements.

Pay for Performance

During fiscal year 1988, several members of WAC's Personnel Committee and other members of the Council formed an ad hoc committee to participate on the various working groups established by the Comptroller General to guide the development of the new Pay for Performance (PFP) system. WAC believes that employee council participation in the working groups helped to make GAO employees' concerns about PFP more clear to management. WAC participated on five working groups: Assessment for Pay, Recruitment, Testing, Evaluation, and Personnel Systems.

Issues addressed in these working groups included:

- use of a contributions sheet in assessment for pay;
- distribution of bonus money;

- need for realistic ratings;
- use of multiple ratings;
- treatment of part-time employees; and
- pre- and post-testing the pay for performance system.

In addition to participating on the PFP working groups, in July WAC sent a memorandum to the Assistant Comptroller General for Operations expressing a number of concerns and questions regarding PFP. Our memo centered on two issues—the distribution of bonus money in each band under Phase I and the treatment of employees not initially covered by PFP. (See App. I, p. 26.)

Personnel Draft Orders

One of the tasks routinely performed by the Personnel Committee is the review of GAO draft orders. These are the rules and regulations by which personnel actions flow. Although they affect the lives of everyone at GAO, the typical GAO employee is probably only vaguely aware of the numerous rules that govern his/her work life. WAC is diligent in reviewing the GAO draft orders and in studying the inherent issues so that its comments can focus on the potential effects of the new orders.

This year the number of draft orders the Council reviewed increased 350% over last year's number. Written comments on six of these documents are included in Appendix I, pp. 29-37. Oral comments were provided on the remaining draft orders. A summation on three of the draft orders follows.

Performance Appraisal Program

Generally, WAC agreed with the increased specificity to the performance appraisal system (draft order 2430.1). However, the Council raised additional points where specificity should be enhanced in the interests of fairness and clarity. The new draft clarified the decision of who should rate an employee in exceptional circumstances—such as a Congressional assignment—but did not recognize the ordinary conflicts of interest between rater and ratee who may be competing for the same promotions and awards. Regarding the reviewing officials' obligation to ensure consistent standards are applied in the rating process, the draft order did not recognize the technical challenge maintaining consistency presents to the rater or the supervisor. In light of the considerable diversity in the implementation of the performance appraisal process, WAC suggested that required core courses through OOHD would make the appraisal process more uniform.

Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest

The two draft orders (2735.1 and 2735.2) introduced examples of situations which present the employee with an ethical conflict. However, requisite employee actions, GAO processes, and repercussions for the employee were unclear. GAO employees need guidance in understanding their rights, restrictions and obligations under the many laws these two orders are based upon. This guidance should take the employee's perspective and help him/her to answer the following questions:

- (1) As a GAO employee, which ethical situations should I be especially conscious of?
- (2) Once I am aware of a possible ethical conflict, what steps should I take?
- (3) When I have taken the required steps, what GAO processes will be set in motion?
- (4) What consequences for my career will/may ensue from any GAO processes set in motion?

We found these orders susceptible to a wide range of interpretations. In the broadest interpretations the orders govern and restrict aspects of employees' lives normally considered private, and GAO runs the risk of failing to achieve voluntary compliance.

Temporary Leave Transfer Program

This notice of a new program (2630.1 A-88) clarified many questions employees have had concerning leave sharing. However, WAC believes that the division heads need guidelines in identifying what is a legitimate emergency, since they have the complete authority to designate recipients. WAC also noted that it was unclear whether an applicant can anticipate a need for a leave transfer or must first endure 10 days without pay.

Since WAC commented on the order, the Leave Transfer Program has been amended to limit participation in the Program to medical emergencies. The revised guidance also states that employees must use all their annual leave, and when appropriate sick leave, before accepting leave donations. Although the employee must demonstrate that the medical emergency will extend beyond 10 days, incurring leave without pay is not a prerequisite for approval of leave transfers.

Special Projects

During fiscal year 1988, the Women's Advisory Council worked on the following special projects:

- monitored the progress and development of the GAO child care center;
- canvassed GAO divisions and offices regarding the implementation of the smoking regulations, and provided the results and our recommendations to the Assistant Comptroller General for Operations;
- designed a data collection instrument for testing user satisfaction with GAO's child care information and referral service;
- commented on the revised policy pertaining to the use of government-provided telephone services for personal calls;
- monitored the activities of the Health Advocacy Program (HAP) and the Asbestos Advisory Panel;
- researched GAO efforts to determine the need for a telecommuting (working at home using computer hookup to office) policy in GAO; and
- continued sponsoring a speakers' series.

Child Care Center

Child care continues to be an important issue for the Women's Advisory Council. During FY 1988, Council members had an active role in the development of a child care center with three WAC representatives serving as members of the Child Care Center Development Board.

In the past, WAC fully endorsed the establishment of an on-site center, and continues to do so. The Comptroller General has stated that GAO will work towards opening the child care center in January 1990, and the Council has offered the Child Care Board its full support in achieving this goal. Space has been designated on the first floor of the GAO building and will be newly renovated to meet District of Columbia licensing standards.

Smoking Regulations

GSA regulations implemented in January 1987 prohibit smoking in GSA-controlled buildings except in designated smoking areas. Agencies were given discretion in implementing the regulations. At GAO, each unit was to designate smoking areas and enforce the policy (GAO Order 2792.5). WAC conducted a survey in FY 1988 of 24 GAO divisions and offices to find out how these units have implemented the no-smoking policy. On June 1, 1988, the results of our efforts were forwarded to the Assistant Comptroller General for Operations, along with recommendations for changes. (See App. I, p. 38.)

Overall, WAC found that the divisions and offices have implemented the policy in an inconsistent manner and in many instances approached the task with a nonchalant attitude. For example, 50 percent of the organizations designated current smokers' cubicles and offices as smoking areas, while only one office relocated smokers to a central area. Most disconcerting were the two units that could not tell us where the smoking areas were located, since unit management had not followed up with those individuals designated by them to implement the policy.

In our memo to the Assistant Comptroller General, WAC stated that the policy was not implemented adequately throughout GAO and was inconsistent with the intent of the order. While differences existing between GAO units and the need for flexibility were recognized, WAC stated that the policy could be strengthened by making the following changes:

- establishing a neutral grievance procedure;
- establishing a mechanism to ensure better enforcement and consistency in implementing the policy;
- extending the GAO policy to GAO cleaning contractor personnel; and
- extending portions of the policy to GAO audit sites.

At the end of the fiscal year, the Assistant Comptroller General was reviewing the smoking regulations and considering changes to the policy.

Revised Telephone Use Policy

The Council reviewed the proposed revision of GAO's policy pertaining to the use of government-provided telephone services for personal calls. (See App. I, p. 44.) In our comments, we suggested that the five minute time limit for personal calls by employees travelling overnight at government expense be expanded to ten minutes. In addition, we noted that the revised policy for non-travel situations appeared to embody existing practices, while highlighting what is/is not acceptable personal use of business telephones.

Speakers' Series

WAC sponsored six seminars during fiscal year 1988. The topics, speakers, and affiliations are listed below.

Financial Planning
Jerry Sperling
Dean Witter Reynolds, Inc.
Assault Prevention

Janet Hankins
District of Columbia Metropolitan Police

“It Starts With You” (film)
Jackie Council
Office of Security and Safety

GAO Counseling Services
Gerry Meade
Office of Counseling and Career Development

GAO ADP Services
Ross Bainbridge
Office of Information Resources Management

Asbestos Display Tour
Joel Dwyer
General Services and Controller

Memoranda Issued

GAO

United States
General Accounting Office

Memorandum

Date: March 16, 1988

To: Bill Franklin - Chair, IMTEC OIP Committee

From: President, Women's Advisory Council - Susan A. Sacco *Diana Almstead for*

Subject: RCED Report on Naming Contributors to GAO Reports

On March 10, 1988, you asked IMTEC's Women's Advisory Council (WAC) representatives to provide comments on RCED's final report to the Operations Improvement Program (OIP) Steering Committee regarding naming contributors to GAO reports. Because this issue generally elicits a response that varies with each individual, IMTEC's representatives sought the comments of other Council members at our March meeting. This approach provides the OIP Steering Committee with consensus comments from the entire Council.

After reading the final RCED report and the recommendations, the majority of the Council members believed the contributor sheet concept was a good idea. However, several concerns were raised and are outlined below.

- WAC believes that the rules governing inclusion of contributors names in reports should be uniform throughout a division, rather than left to the discretion of the appropriate Associate Director.
- More specific criteria should be established, if possible, for including the names of personnel under the rank of Evaluator-in Charge.
- Consideration should be given to making the policy uniform not only at the division level but also at the GAO level. WAC believes continuity should exist among all GAO divisions.
- Some concerns were raised regarding the nature of the work GAO does. For instance, GAO is not a research organization and GAO as a whole stands behind its products--not individuals. In addition, concerns were raised that, given the type and levels of reviews GAO products undergo, reports should be viewed as GAO products, not the work of individuals.

In closing, the Council believes that if the policy is implemented, GAO management should evaluate the project after one year to test for uniformity among divisions and to determine if the project is meeting its intended purpose.

cc: Director, OP

GAO

United States
General Accounting Office

Memorandum

Date: August 25, 1988

To: Director, GAO Training Institute - Terry Hedrick

From: President, Women's Advisory Council -
Susan A. Sacco *Susan A. Sacco*

Subject: Sexual Harassment Workshop

The Women's Advisory Council (WAC) is concerned about the current status of GAO's Sexual Harassment Workshop. We understand that the original contractor is no longer providing the workshop and that it is in a state of transition from the Office of Counseling and Career Development to the Training Institute. We are also concerned that acquiring a new contractor and initiating a new contract through the budget and procurement processes will result in lengthy delays.

WAC believes that the workshop serves an important role in informing staff on how to deal with sexual harassment, and perhaps more importantly, in training staff in recognizing the problem. We would appreciate your assistance in expediting the contracting process and offering a sexual harassment workshop for GAO employees.

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please do not hesitate to call Patricia Metz of our Special Projects Committee on 475-4670 or me on 357-1038.

GAO

United States
General Accounting Office

Memorandum

Date: March 25, 1988

To: Deputy Assistant Comptroller General for Human Resources - Joan M. McCabe

From: President, Women's Advisory Council - Susan A. Sacco *Susan A. Sacco*

Subject: Comments on Human Resource Management Task Force Report

The Women's Advisory Council has reviewed the Human Resource Management Task Force Report entitled A Human Resource Agenda for the 1990s and generally endorses its recommendations pertaining to strengthening GAO's human resource management. Our comments on specific recommendations are discussed below.

Recruiting

1. Designate a high-level human resource management planning group to (1) periodically review and evaluate our human resource needs for the near and mid-term future, (2) recommend human resource goals for the organization, and (3) recommend the adjustments required to our recruiting, training, staff development and other human resource activities which are necessary to achieve those goals.

WAC agrees with the concerns expressed by the Task Force that different hiring practices throughout GAO could lead to significant differences in our staff capabilities from one part of the organization to another. In light of this, a systematic process is needed to monitor and evaluate hiring practices to ensure that GAO's overall human resource needs are being met. It appears that the designation of a human resource management planning group is a step in the right direction.

2. Establish a new high-level office to manage all of GAO's recruiting functions.

WAC strongly agrees with the report's recommendation that a high-level office be established to manage all of GAO's recruiting functions. At the present time, it appears that GAO's recruiting efforts are too decentralized with a lack of leadership from any one office or person and inconsistent hiring policies.

The Council also concurs with the Task Force that a formal system be established to track new hires to determine their progress at GAO. In my personal experience as a supervisor and in speaking with other evaluators who supervise entry-level staff, it appears that many newly hired people are leaving the agency after only one or two years. I feel we need to know if these people are only using their GAO experience as a "stepping stone" to other more prestigious jobs in government and private industry. We also need to know if time and effort is being wasted in hiring people from prestigious schools and training them when their goals are to gain experience at GAO for one or two years and then leave for jobs at other government agencies or private firms.

Training

3. **Establish firm core curricula that cover both technical and supervisory/managerial subjects.**

The Council concurs with this recommendation. We also note that it appears that disparities exist among GAO units in ensuring that staff receive all required core training. Consequently, we further suggest that improvements be made by GAO units in this area.

Staff Development

4. **Set uniform standards for unit staff development activities for the employee levels throughout GAO.**

The Council believes that consistency is needed agency-wide in developmental opportunities for staff and that uniform standards developed by GAO units in conjunction with the ACG-Operations would provide this consistency.

Appraisal and Reward Systems

5. **Strengthen appraisal and reward systems to recognize the staff development responsibilities and contributions of managers and staff.**

WAC agrees with the Task Force that certain accomplishments such as participation as a training instructor and employee development counseling be recognized and rewarded. We further recommend that active participation and contributions made in such activities as serving on employee advisory councils, OIP projects, and various task forces and boards be accorded similar regard.

Personnel Management Issues

6. **Systematically review GAO personnel policies in light of our human resource management needs to (1) identify other flexibilities which would improve the management of our work, and (2) develop the guidelines and standards for personnel decisionmaking for managers to follow. As a first step, we urge that an extended probationary period be established.**

The Council also believes that a longer probationary period for new employees is needed. A longer probationary period would allow new employees to demonstrate, over a series of several assignments, whether they are able to adequately perform the type of work GAO requires from its staff. Secondly, a longer period would allow supervisors to better assess whether an employee should be retained by GAO. We further recommend that the period be extended from twelve to eighteen months.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this report and trust that our comments will be given due consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on 357-1038.



United States
General Accounting Office

Memorandum

Date: September 28, 1988

To: Assistant Comptroller General for Operations

Thru: President, Women's Advisory Council - *Susan A. Sacco*
Susan A. Sacco

From: Committee on Career Development, Women's
Advisory Council *Kathy Reyna*
Kathy Reyna

Subject: Suggestion for Operations Improvement Project
on Administrative Assistant Positions

WAC's Committee on Career Development has been considering ways to improve promotion opportunities for personnel in female-dominated job series. We believe creating a new administrative position, possibly entitled "administrative assistant," could provide job enhancement and, we hope, promotion opportunities for some current support staff. In addition, we believe such a position would partially remove evaluators' administrative burden and potentially reduce the amount of time needed to complete assignments. We suggest that you encourage one or two divisions to initiate these projects. In addition, we recommend that you assign one of your staff responsibility for coordinating these and other related projects and evaluating the results.

The administrative assistant could be available to work on several assignments at one time similar to the way writers/editors work. The responsibilities of the administrative assistant could vary depending on the needs of the division or audit site.

One possible role of the administrative assistant could be to write assignment notification and draft report transmittal letters to agencies. This task would require the administrative assistant to be familiar with GAO operations manual notices on coordinating work with agencies and to know whom to call to obtain information that may not be provided in a notice, such as the current agency administrator's name and the correct distribution of notification letters and draft reports. Currently, these routine administrative tasks, which can be extremely time-consuming on multi-agency assignments, are usually performed by EICs.



Operations Improvement

Appendix I
Memoranda Issued

Other possible tasks that could be considered for the administrative assistant position are:

- completing forms required for report processing packages and master report folders,
- obtaining documents identified in literature searches,
- obtaining legislative history documents, and
- extracting numerical data from documents and entering them on computerized spreadsheets.

We believe the administrative assistant position should be looked at as part of the top band for support staff under pay for performance. Therefore, it needs to be tested now so that the results can be used in developing the pay for performance plan.

The Council hopes that this information will be useful to you. If you should have any questions concerning this suggestion, please call Kathy Peyman, Chair of the Career Development Committee, on 275-1978.



United States
General Accounting Office

Memorandum

Date: October 20, 1988

To: Policy and Executive Personnel Branch

Thru: President, Women's Advisory Council - *Susan A. Sacco*
Susan A. Sacco

From: Committee on Career Development, Women's Advisory
Council *Kathy Peyman*

Subject: Comments on Draft Regulations Pertaining to GAO Order
2620.1, Maxiflex Alternative Work Schedules Program

WAC appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft regulations on GAO's maxiflex program. Generally, we believe that the draft regulations are workable. However, we continue to believe that the number of credit hours available for carryover from one pay period to another should be increased from 10 to 16 hours. This increase would enhance the reward available to staff for working long hours during busy periods. Currently, credit hours are the only available way employees have of directly benefiting from long work hours, since it is widely believed that requests for compensatory time or overtime will not be approved and are viewed negatively by management. Therefore, we recommend that the draft regulations be revised to allow a carry over balance of 16 credit hours.

The Council hopes that our comments will be useful to you. If you should have any questions concerning this memorandum, please call Kathy Peyman, Chair of the Career Development Committee, on 275-1978.



Operations Improvement

GAO

United States
General Accounting Office

Memorandum

Date: July 29, 1988

To: Assistant Comptroller General for Operations

From: President, Women's Advisory Council -
Susan A. Sacco *Susan A. Sacco*

Subject: Issues and Concerns Raised by Members of the Women's
Advisory Council (WAC) Regarding Pay for
Performance (PFP)

Recently, members of the Women's Advisory Council discussed GAO's Pay for Performance project and raised a variety of concerns and questions. Our discussion centered on the distribution of bonus money in each band under Phase I and the treatment of employees not initially covered by PFP. WAC members' concerns and comments regarding these issues follow.

Phase I Bonus Money

- Bonus money should be distributed according to the number of people in each band to assure fair distribution of the funds.
- In the past, some supervisors have given fully successful BARS performance appraisals to those undeserving in order to avoid a confrontation with the employee. If the process will be stressing "realistic" ratings, then supervisors must be willing to give less than fully successful ratings when they are deserved. Specialized training on BARS and the assessment for pay process should be given to employees.
- Oversight of both the assessment process and the bonus money distribution during Phase I is critical in order to ensure fairness.
- In light of the rating system for GS-15's being revised to meet BARS criteria, if GS-15's are not rated on the same "realistic" rating system, then employees in Bands I and II could potentially lose on bonus money.
- For FY 1990 and beyond, each GAO unit should fully publicize information concerning the number of employees in each band and a breakdown of available bonus money. If

this course of action is followed, employees will know their chances of receiving a bonus. Additionally, whatever decisions are made for bonus distributions within the unit should be publicized on a yearly basis.

- The unit head should only have the ability to increase the top percentage of people receiving bonuses (15%) in each band by two percent. (This would incorporate those people at the break cut point). This should be written into policy for all bands to ensure a fair distribution of bonus money.
- Staff members are paying special attention to the implementation of Phase I of GAO's Pay for Performance effort. If employees believe that the bonus money is not being distributed fairly among the bands, their trust in and support for future phases of the system could be undermined.
- Some employees are interested in knowing what will happen if a staff person receives more than one rating within an assessment year.
- Part-time employees, most of whom are women, have expressed concerns about how they will be treated under the new system.
- Since non-evaluators will not be participating in the Phase I bonus process, a question has been posed as to whether there will be an increased opportunity for these employees to receive monetary awards in Phase I. (Evaluators' opportunities for additional rewards are going from 12% under the current awards structure to 50% under the PFP bonus structure.)

Employees Not Covered by PFP

In addition to the above-mentioned concerns regarding bonus money, WAC members offered the following comments and suggestions regarding the treatment of employees in 74 job classifications not initially covered by PFP.

- A substantial portion of non-PFP employees, many of whom are women, are in short career ladders, and they see the PFP system as an important tool for increasing their compensation.
- According to GAO management, all employees will be included in a PFP system in the future. However, some extremely important issues need to be addressed and resolved before this can take place. These issues include:

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- non-PFP employees do not have a performance appraisal system that can be used under PFP, and
- the process of developing an appropriate performance appraisal system for non-PFP employees is likely to take several years; therefore, it is imperative that the process begin soon so that these employees will not suffer unnecessary delays in being included in PFP. (What is the status of the contract to design a new appraisal system for non-PFP employees?)

As an initial step in this process, we suggest that goals and timetables for bringing non-evaluators into a PFP system be developed and publicized.

- We are becoming increasingly aware of a morale problem among non-PFP employees. They are telling us that they feel overlooked and ignored by the agency, and believe that management is most concerned about the welfare of its evaluator staff. These employees need to know that GAO recognizes their worth and their contributions to the office's work.
- During this process of developing and transferring to the PFP system, non-PFP employees need to be kept informed about how the system is working. Although some divisions may hold open meetings about PFP, non-PFP employees would benefit considerably from meetings held solely to address their concerns. RCED, for example, recently held a special briefing, and it proved informative to both staff and management.
- We would also like to know if any of the PFP working groups are addressing the needs of non-PFP employees. If not, we suggest that such a group be formed.

As indicated by the above narrative, WAC members are concerned about how PFP will be implemented at GAO. I hope that our comments and suggestions are helpful in dealing with this complex subject. If you have any questions concerning this document, please do not hesitate to call me on 357-1038.

cc: Ms. McCabe, ACG-OPS
Mr. Meissner, ACG-OPS



United States
General Accounting Office

Memorandum

Date: January 19, 1988

To: Management-Employee Relations Branch -
Stephen M. Schmal

Thru: President, Women's Advisory Council - Susan A. Sacco

From: WAC Personnel Committee - Barbara A. Chapman

Subject: WAC Comments on Draft Performance Appraisal Program
Order 2430.1

Generally, we felt that the extra definitions and specifications to the performance appraisal process were necessary. But we see improving the specificity and fairness of the performance appraisal system as an ongoing process. In this context we wish to raise some points.

The new draft goes a long way towards arbitrating the decision of who should rate an employee under the somewhat exceptional circumstances of a Hill assignment or a sabbatical. However, there is no discussion or recognition of the more ordinary conflicts of interest which may arise between supervisors and employees. For example, for the most recent round of performance appraisals, an informal survey revealed five per cent of the raters in one division were at the same GS level as their ratees. These employees may have been competing for the same promotions and awards. The draft order should recognize possible conflicts of interest and set up procedures to identify them early so that the responsibility of rating can be assigned to a more neutral party.

We note and applaud the added rigor in Chapter 2, (section 4. a,b, and c) where the reviewing official must now "ensure" that performance expectations have been communicated, that the raters be consistent in applying standards, and that the rating check marks are consistent with the narrative. However, we are concerned that there are no suggestions about how to implement these requirements. The very concept of uniform standards or how they might be applied by the reviewing official is not developed in the draft and should be.

The section titled "Appraising Objectively" Chapter 3, Section 4, reads as advice for introspection to the rater, but there



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are no oversight procedures to ensure, for example, that raters do not give inflated or deflated ratings (Section 3.4.a). This lack of oversight procedures, in conjunction with the sketchy advice in 2.4.b regarding how to ensure uniform standards, remains an "achilles heel" of the performance appraisal system.

Upon discussion of this issue by the Personnel Committee, we feel that there is a considerable diversity among the divisions in the details of the execution of the performance appraisal. We understand that OOHD will conduct courses to improve supervisors' and managers' understanding of the system. We feel strongly that required core courses for supervisors and managers would be one way to make the performance appraisal process more fair and uniform.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this draft order and remain available for further communications on this subject.

GAO

United States
General Accounting Office

Memorandum

Date: Feb 8, 1988

To: Frances McCoy, Management-Employee Relations Branch
Barbara Chapman for

THRU: Susan Sacco, President, Womens Advisory Council

From: Personnel Committee
Women's Advisory Council

Subject: Comments on Draft GAO Order 2735.1, Code of
Ethics including Employee Responsibilities and
Conduct

and
Draft GAO Order 2735.2, Conflict of Interest
and Statements of Employment and Financial
Interests.

Since these two drafts are so closely related, we will comment on them together. Our comments are in two areas: 1) employee education 2) several areas of substance we feel need more thought.

In general, the drafts represent a moderately successful effort to give examples of situations which present the employee with an ethical conflict. As such they are an improvement over past drafts. However, requisite employee actions, Gao processes and repercussions for the employee are much less clear or possibly not well thought out. Our subsequent discussion of some of the substantive issues will make this apparent.

Due to the importance and complexity of the ethics orders and the many laws they are based upon, we feel that employees need some assistance in understanding their rights, restrictions and obligations. This assistance may take the form of videos, handouts or seminars and training sessions. Employees should be given express permission to use GAO time to become thoroughly acquainted with them. The guidance needs to take the employee's perspective. For example, the presentation should answer these overall questions:

1. As a GAO employee, which ethical situations should I be especially conscious of?
2. Once I am aware of a possible ethical conflict, what steps should I take?

3. Once I have taken the required steps what GAO processes will be set in motion?
4. What consequences for my career will/may ensue from the processes in question 3?

As the orders stand now, it is not possible for the diligent employee to read the drafts and answer these questions.

Substantive Issues

In Order 2735.1, Chapter 2. Paragraph 6, although "nothing...prohibits an employee from seeking...employment with any private employer or governmental entity" the remainder of the paragraph is open to interpretations that will inhibit a GAO employee from seeking employment from any federal or private employer. Part of the problem may be lack of specifics. For example, it is unclear if all the audits the employee has worked on are part of the ethical deliberation process. In some divisions of GAO employees evaluate a broad range of topics and over a period of years could become ineligible for most jobs they might want to apply for. If the intention of the order is not to consider audits cumulatively, it should say current audit only.

Continuing with this same paragraph 6, we feel little thought has been given to the protection of the individual employee who wishes to change from a GAO job to another. In the real world many job applications do not result in employment, yet disclosure of the process in its earliest stages to the employees GAO division will open her up to discriminatory action. In fact, the actions specified on page 5 include reassignment, limiting of her role in the audit, and additional review of her work. Any or all of these could be used against an employee and bias performance appraisals and threaten subsequent career progress.

In 2735.1, Chapter 5, paragraph 1, and again in paragraph 5, the criterion of "embarrassment to GAO" is specified as a basis for denying a GAO employee outside employment or voluntary activities. We feel this criterion is open to idiosyncratic interpretation. In fact, in our discussion, we could not imagine what limits could be used to define such a criterion. Interpreted broadly, it could be used to deny GAO employees any and all outside activities. It sets up the appearance of unfairness and as such works against voluntary compliance with the reporting system.

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Memoranda Issued

Regarding Order 2735.2 , we found that several of the changes, namely delegating and extra review activities, have the effect of increasing dramatically the number of people who will view what should be considered private information involving employee investments, work activities and voluntary organization memberships. We suggest that you review the necessity for the delegating and reviewing, count the potential number of people who will review this information and make efforts to restrict the numbers of reviewers involved.

Order 2735.2 sets up the rudiments of a system in which a "reviewing official" under confusing but menacing directions from this order will probably decline to decide whether any financial or non-financial interest of the employee conflicts with her GAO responsibilities and submit a report to the Ethics Committee. Our concern is that this report cannot be neutral. It is being made by someone who has decided there may be an ethical conflict. At this point the employee should be allowed to present his case in writing too. Later on page 17 the employee may at the discretion of the Ethics Committee be allowed to represent his case to them. This hearing before the committee should be assured.

In summary we find these orders susceptible to wide variance in interpretation. They appear in the broader interpretations to so govern and restrict aspects of employees lives normally considered private, that GAO runs the risk of failing to achieve voluntary compliance.

GAO

United States
General Accounting Office

Memorandum

Date: August 25, 1988

To: Chief, Management-Employee Relations Branch -
Stephen M. Schmal

From: President, Women's Advisory Council - *Susan A. Sacco*
Susan A. Sacco

Subject: Comments on Draft Order 2531.3, Within-Grade Salary
Increases

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the order on within-grade salary increases. Although within-grade increases will ultimately be phased out with the implementation of pay for performance, we agree that the proposed changes should improve the system while it is in operation.

However, we suggest one additional clarification to the draft order. The authority to grant or deny within-grade increases should be delegated from a division/office head to a level no lower than that of the associate director of a division, a deputy director of a headquarters' office, or an assistant manager for operations at a regional office. We believe that these managers are the best source of information concerning an overall assessment of an employee's performance during the waiting period for a within grade increase.

The Council hopes that our comments will be helpful in revising this policy. If you have any questions, please call Susan Lieber of our Personnel Committee on 452-2977 or me on 357-1038.



United States
General Accounting Office

Memorandum

Date: August 3, 1988

To: Chief, Management-Employee Relations Branch -
Stephen M. Schmal

From: President, Women's Advisory Council - *Susan A. Sacco*
Susan A. Sacco

Subject: Proposed Change to GAO Order 2771.1, Administrative
Grievance Procedure

The Women's Advisory Council (WAC) has reviewed the proposed change to GAO Order 2771.1, Administrative Grievance Procedure, regarding the role of grievance examiners on employee grievances which are not the domain of the Personnel Appeals Board.

After much discussion, we believe that the proposed change will produce a procedure which can function fairly. The change would limit the employee and his/her "examiner" to a role of gathering and presenting information on the grievance, while the responsibility for making recommendations on the case is assigned to management. In our opinion, exemplary elements remain in the procedure such as the grieved employee's selection of a skilled examiner to act for him/her and the inclusion of "corrective actions sought" in the presentation of facts to management.

We do have a concern about the brief time limit for generating a grievance procedure. We believe that 15 calendar days beyond the event may not be enough time for the employee to weigh the consequences and wisdom of pursuing a formal complaint through the GAO grievance process. Clearly, some statute of limitations is necessary, but a period of 15 days appears to be too brief. We suggest a time limit of 60 days, at a minimum.

We also believe that a vagueness exists in the delineation of the types of grievances for which employees may use the administrative procedure. Defining a grievance type by stating that it is "not EEO related" and "not otherwise appealable" leaves much unspecified. We suggest that more specificity be developed in the definition of what may constitute grounds for an administrative grievance.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this change to the Administrative Grievance Procedure and hope that our comments will be useful. If you have any questions, please call Barbara Chapman, Chair of our Personnel Committee, on 275-1413.



United States
General Accounting Office

Memorandum

Date: August 15, 1988

To: Director, Personnel - Felix R. Brandon, II

From: President, Women's Advisory Council - *Susan A. Sacco*
Susan A. Sacco

Subject: Comments on GAO Notice 2630.1 (A-88), Temporary Leave
Transfer Program

The Women's Advisory Council (WAC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the GAO notice regarding the Temporary Leave Transfer Program. The notice appears to answer many of the questions employees have had concerning the program; however, several areas need further explanation.

- It appears that the division/office head or designee has complete authority to determine what is and what is not a non-medical "personal" emergency. The notice should be revised to include guidelines for the person making these decisions and/or a further explanation of situations which may be considered non-medical "personal" emergencies.
- In order to qualify for leave transfer, an employee must indicate that he/she expects to be absent from duty without available paid leave for at least 10 workdays. Often it is difficult to predict the length of an absence. Should anyone anticipating such an absence apply for the program just to be on the safe side?

Also, it is unclear if the leave recipient must first endure 10 workdays without paid leave before the transferred leave can be used. The notice implies that if a person will be off work for 9 workdays for which he/she does not have available leave, then 9 days of pay will be lost; however, if he/she will be off work for 11 days without available leave, then no pay will be lost because of eligibility for the leave transfer program. Is this the case, or does the transferred leave only become available for use on the eleventh day?

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Memoranda Issued

We hope our comments are useful in the implementation of the program. If you have any questions, please call Carol Kolarik of our Personnel Committee on 275-4636 or me on 357-1038.

cc: Mr. Schmal
Mr. Smith



United States
General Accounting Office

Memorandum

Date: June 1, 1988

To: Assistant Comptroller General for Operations

From: President, Women's Advisory Council - *Susan A. Sacco*
Susan A. Sacco

Subject: Implementation of GAO Order 2792.5, "Smoking and
Nonsmoking Areas in GAO Controlled Space"

Over the last two months, the Women's Advisory Council (WAC) has gathered information on how GAO's divisions and offices have implemented the smoking policy outlined in GAO Order 2792.5. Twenty-four divisions and offices were asked a series of eight questions. The results are shown in attachment I.

Overall, WAC found that the divisions and offices have implemented the policy in an inconsistent manner and in many instances approached the task with a nonchalant attitude. For example, approximately 50 percent of the organizations designated current smokers' cubicles and offices as smoking areas while only one office relocated smokers to a central area. Approximately 25 percent of the organizations used a combination of approaches. Most disconcerting were the two organizations that could not tell us where the smoking areas were located, since unit management had not followed up with those individuals designated by them to implement the policy. This inconsistency in implementation among units may have resulted from the diversity of individuals designated by unit management as being responsible for setting up unit plans.

In addition to gathering the above information, WAC obtained general comments from various GAO staff. (See attachment II). Comments were obtained both directly and indirectly. For instance, some statements were included in the oral and written documentation gathered from the divisions and offices. Others are examples of comments WAC members heard during the normal course of the workday.

Based on the foregoing information, WAC believes the policy was not implemented adequately throughout GAO and is inconsistent with the intent of the order. The GAO order states that smoking is permitted only in designated areas in

recognition of the increased health hazards of passive smoke on the nonsmoker. While WAC recognizes differences exist between GAO units and the need for flexibility, we believe the policy could be strengthened by making the following changes to GAO's smoking policy.

- **Establish a neutral grievance procedure.** The GAO order states that employees may appeal the designation of an area as a smoking or nonsmoking area in writing to the Assistant Comptroller General, through unit management. Given the inconsistent manner in which unit management has implemented the policy, it is questionable whether employees will feel comfortable with this procedure. WAC suggests a third party, other than unit management, be designated as the contact point for appeals.

In addition to calling for designated areas, the policy also relies on individual responsibility. The GAO order clearly states that all employees are expected to be considerate of the comfort and health of nonsmokers and are responsible for adhering to the policy delineated in the order. However, in some cases the offenders are members of unit management. Consequently, employees are left without an unbiased grievance procedure.

- **Establish a mechanism to ensure better enforcement and consistency in implementing the policy.** While the GAO order designates heads of divisions and offices as responsible for implementing the smoking/nonsmoking policy, these individuals often delegated the authority to a variety of management levels, resulting in inconsistent implementation. WAC believes GAO management should set forth more specific criteria for implementing the policy and require heads of divisions and offices to ensure the policy is implemented consistently.

WAC also believes GAO management must go beyond the policy designated in the existing order to solve this problem. For example, some federal agencies have adopted policies that are more in line with the intent of the federal regulations--e.g. designating their buildings as smoke-free or allowing smoking only in lounge areas set up specifically for the smoking population. Given the configuration of GAO office space and the attitudes that exist, WAC believes GAO should hire an independent consultant to help GAO management formulate a revised policy that would also more closely adhere to the intent of the federal regulations.

- **Extend the GAO policy to GAO cleaning contractor personnel.** Although the GAO order was distributed to GAO personnel, it is not clear that cleaning personnel are aware of the policy. WAC found numerous incidents where cleaning personnel smoke in non-designated areas, such as corridors and restrooms.

- **Extend portions of the GAO policy to GAO audit sites.** Although the GAO order states that personnel assigned to other agencies are governed by the smoking/non-smoking regulations in effect at that location, WAC believes all GAO personnel should be treated equally to the extent possible. For instance, while the policy cannot be extended to prohibit smoking in the hallways, corridors, and restrooms of other buildings, GAO should extend the policy to the self-contained areas used by audit site personnel.

I hope this information will be of assistance in updating the GAO order. If WAC can provide any further assistance on this issue, please contact me on 357-1038.

Attachments - 2

ATTACHMENT I

ATTACHMENT I

The Women's Advisory Council polled 24 divisions and offices. Our findings in eight categories are presented below. The numbers in parentheses refer to the number of divisions/offices giving the particular response.

1. Person(s) responsible for setting up division plans.
 - (3) a. Unit Head
 - (10) b. Unit Head and selected staff
 - (2) c. Deputy Director
 - (1) d. Deputy Director and selected staff
 - (1) e. Associate Directors
 - (2) f. Associate/Group Director Combination
 - (2) g. Branch Managers
 - (3) h. Staff Vote

2. Input on implementation received from:
 - (12) a. All staff
 - (11) b. Selected staff
 - (1) c. No staff input

3. Smoking/Non-Smoking Locations:
 - (1) a. Smokers relocated to one area.
 - (11) b. Current smokers' cubes/offices designated as smoking areas, including secretarial desks.
 - (1) c. Current smokers' cubes/offices designated as smoking areas, excluding secretarial desks.
 - (2) d. New general use area/conference room designated as only smoking area.
 - (1) e. Combination of a. and d.
 - (4) f. Combination of b. and d.
 - (1) g. Combination of a., b., and d.
 - (2) h. Division/office management doesn't know, no follow-up.
 - (1) i. Division/office designated all non-smoking.

4. Were signs posted or a floorplan distributed?
 - (17) a. Yes
 - (6) b. No
 - (1) c. Combination of a. and b.

ATTACHMENT I

ATTACHMENT I

5. Were smoker-eaters or air purifiers purchased?
- (7) a. Yes
 - (16) b. No
 - (1) c. Testing potential equipment.
6. Were memos or the GAO order distributed?
- (6) a. Memo
 - (7) b. Order
 - (1) c. Both a. and b.
 - (9) d. Neither distributed.
 - (1) e. Management doesn't know.
7. How are audit sites handled?
- (1) a. Decided by the Group Director.
 - (4) b. Decided by the other agency.
 - (19) c. Unit has no audit sites.
8. Person responsible for hearing complaints/suggestions.
- (5) a. Unit Head
 - (4) b. Assistant to the Unit Head
 - (2) c. Deputy Director
 - (1) d. Associate Directors
 - (1) e. Group Directors
 - (2) f. Administrative Specialist
 - (1) g. Branch Manager
 - (1) h. Human Resource Manager
 - (1) i. Complaints aired in staff meetings.
 - (6) j. No designee

Appendix I
Memoranda Issued

ATTACHMENT II

ATTACHMENT II

In addition to the statistical data presented in attachment I, the following staff concerns and comments were voiced during our data gathering phase.

1. The Office of Security and Safety prepared an issue paper on the regulations. Preliminary findings indicate staff, including top management, are not following the regulations. Complaints have been received from various divisions.
2. Some management officials have taken a laissez-faire attitude.
3. One office told employees that smoking was permitted in the hallways.
4. Some smokers have complained of being treated unfairly, and since they are considered to be one division's "best" workers, changes to the existing policy may be made.
5. The combination of a smoky environment and asbestos significantly increases health risk factors.
6. The regulations do not adequately address employee compliance.
7. Some staff would prefer regulations with greater rigor and legal jargon.
8. Secretaries receive unequal treatment since their desks were automatically designated smoking areas if the person was a smoker.
9. Many non-smokers express displeasure with implementation methods.
10. The GAO building has inadequate ventilation to permit smoking.
11. Regulations as written may leave GAO liable for lawsuits.
12. Although smoking is prohibited in the hallways and corridors, some staff are still using hanging ashtrays located in the halls.
13. The design of GAO's space makes it impossible to deal with the regulations.

GAO

United States
General Accounting Office

Memorandum

Date: June 29, 1988
To: Director, OIRM

From: *Sherry Kilmore Taylor for*
President, Women's Advisory Council - Susan Sacco

Subject: Revised Policy Pertaining to the Personal Use of
Government-Provided Telephone Services

As requested, we have reviewed the proposed revision of GAO's policy pertaining to the use of government-provided telephone services for personal calls. We would like to suggest that the 5-minute time limit for personal calls at government expense in Section 6a(3) for employees traveling overnight at government expense be expanded to 10 minutes. In situations where small children and minor household and/or medical emergencies (e.g., appliance repair, mild illness, etc.) are involved, 5 minutes may not be adequate.

We do not believe that the revised policy will have any appreciable impact upon our operations. In non-travel situations, the revised policy seems to embody existing practices, while highlighting what is and is not acceptable personal use of business telephones. The only impact we foresee will be the additional expense to GAO for reimbursing employees for allowed calls in travel situations.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this policy.

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October 1992

Living in Frankfurt

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Appendix II
Two and
Three-Bedroom Floor
Plans

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Abbreviations

ADAC	Allgemeiner Deutsches Automobil-Club
AAFES	Army/Air Force Exchange System
AFN	Armed Forces Network
APO	Army Post Office
DM	Deutsche Mark
DOD	Department of Defense
DODDS	Department of Defense School Systems
FIS	Frankfurt International School
GAO	General Accounting Office
ID	Identification Form
OFM	Office of Financial Management
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PCS	Permanent Change of Station
PX	Post Exchange
VCR	video cassette recorder

Living in Frankfurt

The Post City

Frankfurt am Main is the largest city in the state of Hessen. It has a population of about 663,000 and is surrounded by heavily populated suburbs, beautiful parks, and forests. Located in the center of the continent, it is a transportation hub; you can get to many European cities by air in 1 to 2 hours and by car or train in a day. Frankfurt, 328 feet above sea level, is on the banks of the Main River about 25 miles east of its confluence with the Rhine River.

Frankfurt is a commercial and financial center hosting approximately 500 American businesses and 20 American financial institutions. It is Germany's financial capital, with nearly 270 credit institutions, branches, subsidiaries, and representative offices of major domestic, continental, and foreign banks. And it is the seat of the Bundesbank, the equivalent of our Federal Reserve Bank.

Frankfurt has a long and distinguished history, of which it is justifiably proud. Not only has it been a center for trade fairs, book fairs, and banking for 700 years, but the Free City of Frankfurt was for 400 years the residence of and had responsibility for the election of the Holy Roman Emperor. Its status as a free city lasted until 1866, when Prussia took over. It has had long, enduring, and illustrious ties with the New World; early visitors to Frankfurt included such distinguished Americans as William Penn, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. The first German consulate in America opened in Philadelphia in 1826, and the first U.S. consulate in Frankfurt opened in 1829.

Frankfurt has a large foreign community, mostly Americans representing the U.S. military and federal agencies and American businesses. Currently, 47 countries have consular representation in Frankfurt. Many people in Frankfurt speak English fluently, and most speak some English. Still, it is a good idea to learn some German.

The American Consulate and Its Administration

The American Consulate General provides administrative support to several U.S. agencies, including GAO. Located at 21 Siesmayerstrasse, the Consulate is a 20-minute walk from GAO's European Office and the housing area. The staff, including attached agencies, comprises about 500 American and German personnel.

The Consulate General gives an orientation kit to newly relocated employees with information on life in Frankfurt and places of interest in Germany. Periodically, it offers orientation sessions for new personnel.

These sessions include talks on the operation of the Consulate General and on the functions of the Consulate and attached agencies. In addition, because the Consulate General is aware of the security risks in Europe, it continuously monitors security and alerts staff and dependents to potential problems. The Regional Security Officer also briefs the staff on security in separate sessions.

Your Sponsor

You and your family will be assigned at least one sponsor to answer questions and ease the transition to your new home and office in Frankfurt. Your sponsor will write or call you shortly after your appointment to the European Office. Normally, the sponsor

- meets you at the airport and takes you to your apartment;
- provides you with some groceries and cleaning supplies to get you started (on a reimbursable basis, of course);
- helps you get your identification cards (ID) and other necessary documents;
- introduces you around the office;
- helps you, if you want to find the necessary transformers or possibly a freezer (it's preferable to ask your sponsor to locate these items for you before you arrive, and you should send a check to cover them);
- shows you around the community and shopping facilities and explains the operation of Frankfurt's subway system;
- aids you in taking care of any other special needs.

Your sponsor wants the move to be as easy as possible for you and your family. If you have special needs or requests, do not hesitate to ask, but make your needs known well in advance of your planned arrival.

Housing

The State Department provides housing, utilities, maintenance, and related services to GAO on an agency reimbursable basis (at no cost to the employee). This arrangement—plus the assistance of your sponsor—help make the transition relatively free of the usual problems that surround moving to a new location.

Unfurnished apartment buildings in the Consulate housing area are provided for employees of agencies attached to the Consulate General (which includes GAO). A total of 382 apartments are within 29 buildings, an area officially known (on city maps, for example) as the Carl Schurz Siedlung. Each building has three floors of apartments and a basement and

attic level. The buildings have no elevators. Each has locking security doors, and security guards patrol the area on a 24-hour basis.

Between the buildings are large lawns, where children can play and you can relax and barbecue. GAO families live in the area along with the families of employees from other agencies.

The Consulate Housing Office provides maintenance and lawn care. But you are responsible for properly maintaining housing facilities and grounds and abiding by the Consulate's housing rules. Kitchens do not have garbage disposals or dishwashers. The city provides twice-weekly trash pickup at collection points behind each apartment building.

Permanent apartment assignments are made according to marital status and family size. One-bedroom apartments are assigned to single personnel. Two-bedroom apartments are assigned to couples with no children or with only one child. And three-bedroom apartments are assigned to families with two or more children. Most of the three-bedroom apartments have an additional half-bath, which reduces the size of one of the bedrooms. All main bathrooms have tub and shower combinations. A few four-bedroom apartments are available for large families. When four-bedroom apartments are not available for eligible families, three-bedroom apartments are assigned until larger ones become available.

For housing purposes, dependents must have traveled to post under official U.S. government travel orders and must reside with the employee on a full-time basis. Dependents who reside away from post for schooling or other purposes will not be considered part of the family for housing assignments.

All apartments are large and quite nice with generous wall space. They are painted white throughout, have drapes, a refrigerator, and a gas range. The drapes are usually beige and in good condition. If you want to bring your own drapes, they must be altered for German drapery rods. In Germany, drapes are fastened with small rollers instead of hooks.

Floors in the living rooms and dining areas are hardwood parquet. Floors in the bedroom areas are vinyl tile; floors in the bathrooms and kitchens are ceramic tile. Because the floors are often cold, you may want to bring carpets with you.

The bedrooms have built-in dressers but limited closet space. If you have wardrobes (armoires), bring them with you.

The apartments are not airconditioned because the summers usually are not very hot. Room fans (not provided by the Consulate) are adequate for the few really warm days. The apartment windows do not have screens. The apartments are heated by hot-water radiators. Such systems produce somewhat dry heat; therefore, portable vaporizers or humidifiers are recommended for the bedrooms. They are recommended for the entire apartment if you have respiratory problems.

Utilities—heat, water, gas, and electricity—are provided at no cost to apartment occupants. Telephone service (required for all personnel by State Department procedures) is billed to you. Telephone installation may take several weeks; this one-time service cost is included in your miscellaneous expenses. Monthly telephone bills are not itemized and there is a minimum monthly charge. Telephones with a usage meter are available for an extra charge.

Electricity in the apartments is 220 volt, 50 cycle not the 110 volt, 60 cycle found in the United States. "Step-down" transformers are used to make American appliances functional. You can buy these transformers in the military exchanges. Used transformers are also available from the nearby Thrift Shop or from other families scheduled to return to the United States for a more reasonable price. You can buy small travel transformers that work well for radios, shavers, and so on.

You may ask your sponsor to purchase various-sized transformers for you so they will be ready upon your arrival. Remember, however, that transformers affect only voltages, not cycles. Consequently, electric motors, which cannot be routinely switched to 50 cycles, operate at five-sixths capacity, making electric clocks useless and necessitating a low-cost conversion of record turntables and tape recorders. Depending on the current exchange rate (check with your sponsor), you may want to buy small German appliances for the kitchen. Many people have found it more convenient and less expensive to buy these appliances rather than use several heavy and cumbersome transformers.

Your apartment will have a larger storage area than most stateside apartments. Your basement storage room will range from 8 by 8 feet to 12 by 20 feet. Two, three, and four-bedroom apartments also come with a fourth-floor "maid's room" that can be used for storage or a guest room.

These rooms vary in size but are generally about 11 by 14 feet. Each building has a bathroom on the fourth floor for the common use of all apartment tenants in that building.

Each apartment building has a laundry room in the basement. You will be assigned your own washer and dryer.

Until your personal effects arrive and your permanent apartment is available, you will be housed in a local hotel or a temporary apartment on a reimbursable basis. How long you stay in temporary quarters depends on the arrival of your household goods and the availability of permanent quarters. The Housing Office will notify you when your household goods arrive and your permanent quarters are ready.

Apartment Insurance

GAO, under GAO Order 0267.1, Claim for Personal Property, will accept claims for damage resulting from a defect in the apartment such as a broken pipe or faulty electrical wiring. Coverage does not extend, however, to damages that cannot be traced to a defect or a breakdown of property owned by the government. In other words, you would bear losses resulting from an act such as forced entry and theft unless otherwise insured. Damage claims will be sent to OFM on GAO Form 287.

Apartment insurance is somewhat difficult to find in Germany and very expensive. But you can get it from several insurance companies in the Washington, D.C., area. A current listing of insurers is available from the State Department Transportation Office. Insurance coverage for personal belongings while on travel status is also available from these companies. You may find it worthwhile to check with your insurance company about overseas coverage.

Food, Beverages, and Smoking Supplies

All U.S. personnel assigned or attached to the U.S. Consulate receive military identification cards entitling them to use all military facilities. They also receive a ration card for liquor, cigarettes, coffee, and tea. Ration allowances are not unduly restrictive; most people find them more than adequate.

Many families find a large freezer useful. Upright models are more practical because kitchens are too small for chest-type freezers unless they are small. However, the basement storage room has outlets and freezers of either type can be placed there. You may bring a freezer from the States or

purchase one at the PX at prices comparable to those in the States. A limited number of used freezers may be available from departing members.

A variety of food is available from Army and Air Force commissaries; the Army/Air Force Exchange System (AAFES) Shoppette, a small market; and local markets. U.S. military commissaries and AAFES sales stores are located in Frankfurt, Wiesbaden (25 miles away), and Rhein-Main Air Force Base (15 miles away). The commissaries offer a choice of food similar to that of self-service supermarkets in the United States.

Unfortunately, you may not always find the item or the brand you desire in stock; if you use special or unusual canned goods or spices, stock up before you leave the states. In addition, U.S. military facilities are usually crowded, and shopping can be time-consuming.

Local markets, on the other hand, are adequately stocked with local and imported products and fresh items (generally at competitive prices, except for meat). Americans frequently shop there, especially for cheese and good white wines. (They are less expensive than those at the Class VI Liquor Store.)

Most popular brands of hard liquors, beer, wine, liqueur, and mixes are available at the Class VI store. Hard liquor is rationed (not applicable to German stores) at five bottles a month per adult. Various American soft drinks also are available.

Shopping hours are more limited in Germany than in the United States. German stores are generally open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9 a.m. until 6:30 p.m., Thursday from 9:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. until 1 or 2 p.m. On the first Saturday of the month, most stores are open until 6 p.m.

The Military Shopping Center in Frankfurt contains the following facilities: the post exchange, commissary, liquor store, dry cleaners, gas station, garage, gift shop, audio/video shop, bookstore, bank, car wash, military post office, travel agencies, and several fast food shops.

Clothing

So that you may better plan your wardrobe, the climate in Frankfurt is similar to that of the Middle Atlantic States, except that Frankfurt summers are generally cooler and wetter. PXs in the Frankfurt area stock a very limited selection of clothes and fabrics. You may want to supplement

your wardrobe before leaving the United States, especially children's school clothing, such as boys' corduroys and blue jeans; larger women's and men's sizes; and women's petite sizes (5 feet 2 inches and under).

European-made clothes differ in style and materials and are generally expensive. However, careful shopping can provide good quality at reasonable prices. During the late January and July sales, you will find drastic price reductions and many excellent bargains.

You may order clothing, shoes, and other items from mail-order catalogs, such as Sears, Montgomery Ward, and J.C. Penny and have them shipped through the Army Post Office (APO). With an APO address, you pay U.S. postage only from origin of shipment to New York. If you have catalogs, bring them with you.

Supplies and Services

Basic Services

Tailoring, shoe repair, dry cleaning, laundry, barber shops, beauty shops, and similar services are available in nearby German stores and at the military shopping center.

Domestic Help

You can arrange for part-time, once-a-week or once-a-month cleaning help on a per-hour basis. European Office staff can recommend specific personnel.

Health and Medicine

The U.S. Army 97th General Hospital in Frankfurt and the clinic at Rhein-Main Air Force Base provide medical care to all official employees and their dependents. These facilities have a per-visit charge for outpatient care and a per-day charge for inpatient care. They accept most government health plans and handle all forms for most of the major medical plans.

Some medical plans do not provide coverage for overseas medical expenses, and others have strict limitations on what doctors and facilities to use. Be sure to check your policy or contact your insurer. Also, ask family or friends to check their health coverage before visiting you in Europe.

Military facilities do not provide dental care for civilians, but several well-qualified, English-speaking dentists practice in Frankfurt. European Office staff can recommend good dentists, as well as physicians.

All required shots are available at military medical facilities. Be sure to bring your immunization record for travel purposes. You need no immunizations for travel just to Germany from the United States. This policy is, of course, subject to change. GAO's Travel Services Section or the State Department can verify immunization requirements.

Also, bring copies of all family medical records and addresses of your physicians to (1) keep in contact with them during your tour in Frankfurt and (2) be able to use the U.S. Army Hospital. If you have any special medical problems, bring a long-term supply of drugs and medical supplies—prescription as well as nonprescription—as many brands are not available in Germany. Some prescription drugs are available at the U.S. Army Hospital, but you must visit the Army doctor before getting a prescription. Also, bring copies of your eyeglass prescription and a spare pair of eyeglasses or contacts. Optical care and service are available through the Army Hospital or from the local economy.

Religious Activities

U.S. military chaplains conduct regular services for members of the Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish faiths. Latter-day Saints, Baptists, Lutherans, Christian Scientists, and Episcopalians are active in the English-speaking community. Many German Protestant and Roman Catholic churches are located in the Frankfurt area, some noted for their choral and organ music.

Banking

Most people find it practical to maintain U.S. bank accounts and to have their paychecks sent directly there. Make such arrangements early, however, to ensure that the bank is receiving your check before you depart for Europe. You may cash personal checks at the Consulate or the PX subject to current daily limitations and government pay and travel checks at the Consulate. The Army provides a bank operated by a U.S. financial institution where you may maintain an account, especially for travel. You may also find it useful to apply for the 24-hour teller card for access to quick cash when the bank is closed. You may purchase DMS with checks or cash at the Consulate or bank as well as other European currencies at the bank.

The Consulate also provides notary services. European Office staff can recommend other financial services in the area.

While traveling on official duty, you may cash personal checks at U.S. embassies and at other U.S. military banks. Sometimes you can use certain credit cards: American Express, Master Card, Visa, and Diner's Club. You may not use oil company credit cards in Europe.

To save time when cashing checks or shopping at U.S. military facilities, personal checks should be preprinted with your name and your spouse's name, your social security number, the European Office military telephone number (320-7511), and the address, as follows:

John E. Smith
Mary E. Smith
444-55-6666-FM 7511
Unit 25401 (GAO)
APO AE 09213

Whether you include your General Schedule grade in print is a matter of personal choice. However, cashiers and tellers will ask you to write your grade on the check at the time of cashing. While personal checks are rarely accepted on the local economy, you can open a "Eurocheck" account, checks from which are accepted throughout Europe.

Education

GAO employees' children may attend two school systems; the Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DODDS) and the Frankfurt International School (FIS). Both school systems have kindergarten through twelfth grade.

DODDS facilities are located on three campuses: (1) elementary, (2) junior high school, and (3) high school. The FIS operates a combined campus that is about a 20 minute drive from the State Department housing area. FIS has an American curriculum and a student population that is 45 percent American, 20 percent German, and 35 percent other nationalities.

Which school your child attends depends upon the current enrollment of DODDS. If DODDS is full, GAO will pay the full cost of the more expensive FIS. In addition, you have the option of paying the difference in cost between DODDS and FIS should you desire.

Three American-operated nursery schools, staffed by American and German teachers, are available. Demand is high, so you may have to wait until your child can be enrolled. Your sponsor can reserve a space for your child before you arrive, if you request. Most GAO parents are very pleased with the Carl Schurz Nursery School located in the housing area. You can get current cost information from your sponsor.

Many American universities and colleges offer programs in Frankfurt. Besides offering full-time studies on its Augsburg campus, the University of Maryland has a Frankfurt center offering limited evening courses in liberal arts for those interested in obtaining American college credits. Boston University has a graduate program leading to an M.S. in business administration, and the Universities of Utah and Southern California offer M.B.A. programs. Other U.S. colleges also have part-time study programs available.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, or Frankfurt University, offers German for foreigners, and its regular classes are open to Americans who are academically qualified and who can speak German. The Army Education Center offers language courses, and a number of German schools offer such courses.

Procedures for obtaining reimbursement for course work are the same as those in the United States, and classes must be taken during nonwork hours. Because much of your work will be outside the immediate Frankfurt area, you may find it difficult to attend classes regularly.

If your schedule permits, you may want to take an introductory language course before you move to help orient you to Germany. The DOD Headstart language program is available to GAO personnel (and dependents) at no cost in Washington, D.C., at the Pentagon. The Education Center and the library at the Abrams Complex also have German language tapes that may be borrowed or duplicated once you arrive. Also, you should consider borrowing a book from your library to give you some insights into the German way of life and economy.

Employment Opportunities for Dependents

Dependents receive special preference among qualified applicants for employment with the U.S. government in Germany. Since many of the military facilities and the attached agencies do not have direct-hire authority, dependents should begin the application process in the United States by filing an SF-171 form for each position desired with the Office of

Personnel Management (OPM) in Washington, D.C. The agencies with authority to hire from applicants in Frankfurt offer mostly part-time or short-duration opportunities.

Dependents would be wise to (1) bring copies of all college transcripts, (2) have complete information and records to fill out the SF-171s, (3) bring a list of each position they may have already applied for with OPM and the date on which they applied, (4) bring any notifications of ratings received from OPM, (5) have their resumes updated if they plan to seek jobs on the local economy (begin with birth date and show professional development chronologically), (6) learn the German language (see the section on continuing education), (7) talk to as many people as they can about their situations and ask for their advice and introduction to others who may be able to help them (about 1 million Americans live in Germany), and (8) plan for at least a 2- or 3-month period before securing positions.

The Job Information Center at the Civilian Personnel Office in Frankfurt and the Civilian Recruitment Center in Heidelberg should be their first stops in the job search. The "Arbeitsamt," or German Employment Commission, also has listings of jobs (mostly clerical and blue collar) available to Americans living in Frankfurt.

Dependent employment on the German economy is limited and usually hard to find. Generally, people must speak fluent German and have some specialized training that qualifies them for work permits so they do not take jobs from unemployed German citizens. Several American firms, however, specifically hire Americans in the areas of banking, computers, and electronics. These companies advertise in the local newspapers and military publications. In addition, the American universities with branches in Frankfurt actively seek college instructors for both part-time and full-time staff positions; normally, they require a Ph.D. or a master's degree (in the subject area) and some teaching experience.

Salaries for corporate professionals are slightly less than those for comparable positions in the States; engineering salaries are much lower. Fewer positions for professional women are available and securing one is often difficult.

Several local companies (video rental stores, insurance agencies, automobile dealers, and so on) cater to the American military community and are owned by Americans; openings at these businesses are usually filled quickly, but you need not be fluent in German to work there. Many

European Office staff have dependents who can also recommend employment opportunities. Consult your sponsor if you have dependents who may want employment.

Pets

Pets, such as dogs and cats, are allowed in apartments but must be confined or walked on a leash. Dogs and cats may be shipped to Germany without quarantine if (1) they are shipped nonstop directly to Frankfurt, (2) they have been inoculated for rabies and distemper not less than 30 nor more than 60 days before departure, and (3) they are accompanied by special forms issued by the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. These forms are printed in German but have corresponding English translations beside the area that your veterinarian must fill out and sign. Be sure to allow a few weeks for delivery of the forms from the German Embassy.

The importation of canaries has no restrictions nor documentary requirements, provided they are free from diseases. The importation of Psittacine birds, like parakeets and parrots; live poultry; and most other birds, however, is generally prohibited.

Check with the airlines for shipping instructions. Also, check with your vet regarding the best method to ship your pet with the least discomfort. You may ship a pet as excess baggage on your flight; this will secure the transportation of the pet in the baggage compartment of the aircraft you fly in, if advance arrangements are made. This excess baggage is at your own expense (tax deductible as a moving expense). You may not use Government Excess Baggage Authorization Tickets to transport pets.

Veterinary services are available through the U.S. military and from German veterinarians. German kennels are available if you wish to leave your pets in Frankfurt while traveling.

Recreation and Social Life

Numerous participant and spectator sports are available in the Frankfurt area, including golf, tennis, racquetball, bowling, swimming, and horseback riding. Clay tennis courts are available in the housing area, and residents are eligible to join the tennis club. The Dependent Youth Activities offers a full range of sports programs in football, basketball, softball, soccer, gymnastics, cheerleading, and baseball for children.

Currently, GAO participates in bowling, volleyball, and softball leagues. Some employees enjoy jogging, handball, and racquetball. Many families

participate with Germans on their volksmarches, which are walking tours in the scenic German countryside. For spectators, Frankfurt has Division I soccer teams, professional football, and the military services have football, basketball, baseball leagues, and so forth.

Bicycling and skiing are popular in Europe. Many bike paths are available in parks and the countryside, and special lanes are available in the cities. The ski areas of Germany, Austria, France, and Switzerland are easy to get to for long weekends. Both Alpine (downhill) and cross-country skiing are available.

Opera, ballet, concerts, recitals, theater, and the cinema are available in Frankfurt and Wiesbaden at reasonable costs. A few cinemas show English-language movies on a selected basis, and several U.S. military theaters in the Frankfurt area show American movies regularly. Festivals and pageants are held several times a year, and commercial exhibitions and trade fairs are held periodically in Frankfurt.

Many social clubs are available in Frankfurt. The American Consulate General Ladies Club and the American Women's Club of Frankfurt offer comprehensive programs for community welfare and social activities. The International Women's Club and Steuben-Schurz Society offer membership to non-Germans. The latter is for both men and women and has a youth group. The Union International Club offers membership to American and German business and professional men and members of the consular corps. It has a swimming pool, tennis and badminton courts, and an excellent bar and restaurant. Teen clubs, Boy and Girl Scouts, Brownies, parent-teacher associations, and church groups are also available.

Pleasure Travel

Frankfurt is centrally located in Europe. You can travel to nearly anyplace in Europe by car in 2 days or less. You may also ride the train, which offers excellent service throughout Europe. Many commercial tours are available to popular European cities, as well as to Moscow, Istanbul, and other sites.

Frankfurt also has an excellent rapid-transit system referred to as the U-bahn, covering an extensive area. Two U-bahn stops are within walking distance of the housing area.

You and every member of your family should get tourist passports for personal travel. Apply for these passports when you apply for your diplomatic passports. You will be reimbursed for this expense.

Driving

Bringing your automobile to Germany is a personal choice, but you should discuss this decision with your sponsor. European cars are made to meet U.S. or European specifications. Cars with U.S. specifications can be shipped back to the United States with no problems; European specification cars must be converted to meet U.S. specifications, which is very costly, before they can be shipped to the United States. On the other hand, you can generally sell a European specification car easily before you return to the United States.

Remember, GAO will not pay to ship a European car purchased while overseas back to the States. However, new European cars made to U.S. specifications often have shipping costs included in the sales price. AAFES sells U.S. and Japanese cars in addition to European cars, at stateside prices plus shipping.

If you plan to bring an auto, be sure it is in good condition, especially the brakes, steering, suspension, and the window glass; have all repairs made before shipping your car. Pay special attention to rust problems. German auto inspectors are very critical of rust, and your car must pass an inspection every 2 years. Do not stock up on tires, as many makes of U.S. tires will not pass German inspection even when new.

AAFES garages are located at most military bases throughout Germany, including Frankfurt. These garages service U.S. cars, but parts availability is sometimes a problem. You may have to wait several weeks for a particular part or even longer for major repairs.

You may also have to wait for the garage or the dealer to obtain U.S. specification parts from another city or even another country. Service for German cars is available at German garages and is usually reasonable, but service for other European models may be expensive. Some Japanese cars can be serviced in Frankfurt by several Japanese car dealers, but repairs tend to be costly even when parts are readily available. Dealers generally do not have U.S. specifications on hand. Bring a set with you, if possible, to facilitate repairs. If not, you may have to order and air-freight a replacement part. This process takes a long time and adds significantly to your repair costs. If you are handy at auto repairs, you may want to bring your own tools and parts to do the work yourself.

Germany has an excellent freeway (autobahn) system with high speed limits. Traffic generally moves along at 75 to 80 miles per hour, and much higher speeds are permitted in some areas.

Gasoline at European stations is about double the price in the states or at the PX. Gasoline coupons, which reduce the price, are available to U.S. personnel for use in Germany. Similar coupons for Holland may be purchased at the PX, and coupons for Italy may be obtained in Italy with appropriate travel documents. Unleaded gasoline is available throughout Europe.

The cost of car insurance in Germany is generally comparable to the cost of U.S. insurance. Discuss this expense with your sponsor. Premiums are generally based on either the book value or the horsepower of the car. Some are also based on marital status and previous driving records. Liability coverage with a German company is required, but the rest may be obtained in the United States. Complete coverage can be obtained through the Consulate from an insurance company in Bonn on an immediate basis. Most staff have found this to be quite convenient and less expensive than other arrangements. If possible, bring a statement from your stateside insurance agent indicating the number of years you have driven without an accident. You may be eligible for a discount.

Many staff also join Allgemeiner Deutsches Automobil-Club (ADAC), which is a motorist club in Germany similar to the American Automobile Association in the United States. It provides roadside and other services for an associate membership. You may join ADAC after your arrival.

Mail and Communications

All of the families in the European Office have their mail sent to the Office. The APO address is: Name, ACG-Frankfurt, Unit 25401, APO AE 09213. If you are single and traveling for an extended period, the Office will forward your mail to your work location if you so request. The spouses of married travelers may pick up their mail at the Office.

Service between Washington, D.C., and the European Office takes from 4 to 6 days. GAO employees have duty-free import privileges for items that can be mailed to the APO address.

The Armed Forces Network (AFN) airs American radio and television programs but only one station is available, however. To receive this station, you need not convert your television; a transformer will suffice. Televisions with quartz lock tuners cannot be tuned in to the AFN station without the use of a video cassette recorder (VCR); VCRs are available in military shopping facilities at rates comparable to stateside prices.

To receive German programs or the local cable system you must have a multi-system TV or have your television converted. (This can be done after you arrive.) Multi-system TV's are readily available at the PX, but they tend to be more expensive than U.S. system TV's.

Working in the European Office

The European Office is currently authorized 50 staff, including five support personnel. A large portion of the assignments are for the National Security and International Affairs Division (NSIAD), and involve activities of the Department of Defense, State Department, and the Agency for International Development. The staff has become increasingly involved in examining international financial markets and banking and performs studies relative to foreign governments' programs. It also works for the General Government Division; the Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division; the Human Resources Division; and other GAO divisions. In many respects, this staff is similar to a regional office in the United States.

Travel

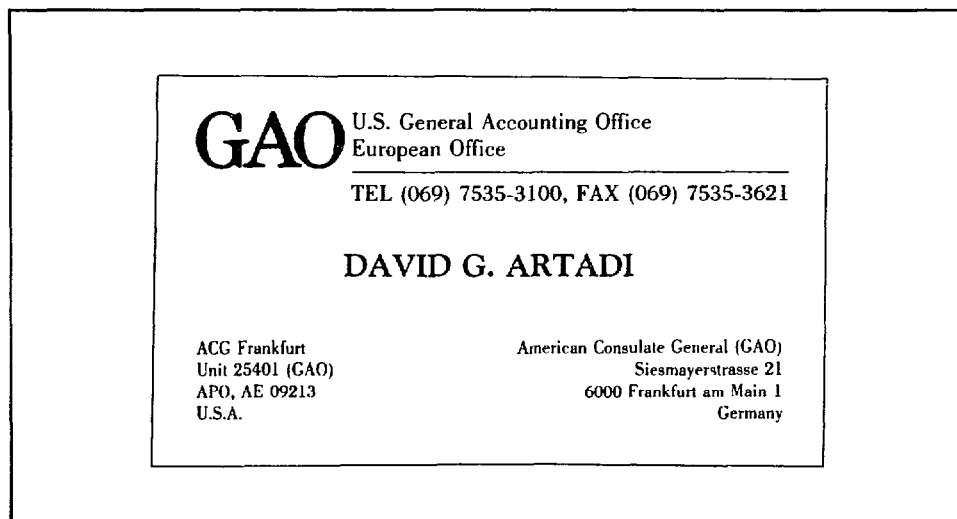
The European Office's territorial responsibility is vast. The European Office covers Europe, Greenland, Africa, and the Middle East to the eastern border of Iran. While visits to these areas are interesting and educational, you may be away from Frankfurt for as long as 6 weeks at a time. Most jobs in Germany require travel to locales within a 3-hour drive; you may return to Frankfurt on the weekends. Travel averaged about 20 percent of total working hours with no significant variance from job to job.

Leave

Annual leave in the European Office, as in other offices, must be approved in advance by your supervisor. The overseas annual leave ceiling is 45 days. On returning to the United States, you may carry a 45-day balance until you establish a lower ceiling, as explained in GAO Order 0247.1, "Time and Attendance Reporting."

Business Cards

Because your job will likely take you to many countries where you will work with foreign government and business officials, you should have a good supply of business cards. When ordering, you should include the information shown in the following example:



You can order business cards before you leave the States or after you arrive in Europe.

Moving to Germany

Upon accepting an assignment to the European Office, you must sign an employment agreement, obtain U.S. passports for all family members, and arrange for shipping of your personal belongings and vehicle.

Employment Agreement

When you sign the agreement to serve for 2 years, transportation by American carriers will be furnished at government expense from your residence in the states to Frankfurt for you, your immediate family¹ and your household furnishings. If you decide to store some of your furnishings, the government will pay storage cost during your Frankfurt tour. The government has a net weight limit of household furnishings—18,000 pounds for both families and single staff members—that applies to the total shipped and stored. This amount, however, is quite adequate for average households.

Upon completing your assignment in the European office, you and your family are entitled to the same return transportation allowances. After 2 years of service, you may be granted an option to extend an overseas tour for an additional 2 years at the same post and to be eligible for home leave.

¹Children must be under 21 years of age or incapable of self-support. Dependent parents of employees or spouse are considered immediate family.

Home leave, which is not chargeable to annual leave, allows you travel expenses to and from your last duty station in the states, including transportation expenses for your immediate family. Home leave for employees stationed in Frankfurt is 5 days for each 12 months of foreign service. But a full 2-year tour must be completed before leave is granted, and the leave must be taken in the United States. Home leave may be granted and taken only if followed by another overseas tour. Under current policy, the maximum tour at any overseas office is 4 years, that is, two 2-year tours. Moreover, the 4-year period dates from initial assignment to the overseas post. This means that a second 2-year tour starts at the conclusion of the first tour and not when the employee returns to the overseas post from home leave. Also, home leave is limited to the amount accrued at the end of the 24-month tour (10 days) regardless of any delay in actually taking home leave.

If you are among the best qualified for promotion through the annual assessment process during the last year of your European tour, you may apply for promotion in your home unit or any GAO-wide opportunities. However, you are not eligible for promotion in the European Office during your last year. (See GAO Order 2335.8, "Merit Selection Program.") If you are transferring laterally, you will be assigned under a reassignment plan that will consider your needs and those of GAO divisions and offices in the United States. Currently, when transferring back to the States, you are asked to submit a list of preferences for reassignment, one of which is your home unit.

Passports

You and your family must obtain U.S. passports before leaving the states. You must have a birth certificate; a baptismal certificate with date and place of birth; a naturalization record; or other acceptable proof, such as notarized affidavits from your mother or witnesses certifying the date and place of birth. When you have your passport pictures taken, have additional photographs made and bring them with you to Frankfurt. You will need the extra pictures for visas required by some foreign countries and for various identification forms in Germany. You may obtain extras in the Frankfurt PX area. Usually, you will need about 18 pictures per adult and 9 per child to satisfy your immediate needs. Contact the GAO photographer for an appointment.

Shipping Household Furnishings

Your household furnishings are shipped to Frankfurt by air and surface. The furnishings you bring are a matter of preference, but consider the

following suggestions when making your decision. Regardless of what you ship or store, a detailed inventory of your belongings is a must. If a major item is missing but not specifically identified, it may be extremely difficult to make a claim.

Before shipping, determine whether the government offers sufficient insurance coverage. The maximum amount allowed under the Claims Act of 1964 is \$25,000. The government's coverage is limited by categories and computed on replacement value. GAO Order 0267.1 provides additional information on the government's coverage. If you have a homeowner's policy, find out whether it insures your household goods while they are in international transit. If not, you may wish to obtain extra insurance with a \$25,000 deductible, if possible. Considering inflation, it could cost much more to replace your belongings. The State Department's Transportation Office, the mover, or European Office staff can recommend insurance companies that provide the necessary coverage.

Air Freight

The government will ship by air a portion of your total weight allowance. The current allowance is 175 pounds of air freight per family member. You may use this allowance to ship essential items needed to keep your household going until the balance of your shipment arrives. To speed delivery of your air freight, write your name, "American Consulate General (GAO), Frankfurt/Main, Germany," on each box. Allow 2 to 3 weeks for delivery of air freight to Frankfurt. Since air freight has been known to take longer, use your baggage allowance to carry all valuable papers, such as your travel orders, inventory records, medical records, shipping contracts, official college transcripts, and work resumes, on the plane with you. Further, if you have fragile or small valuables, such as irreplaceable jewelry or cameras, bring them in your carry-on luggage.

Ask your mover to pack the air freight before packing any of the items for surface shipment or storage; this way you can add or subtract items as necessary to fully use the weight allowance. If you save the air freight for last and exceed the weight allowance, you will have to pay for the overage. In addition, your air freight will not be shipped until the State Department has received your payment for the coverage, and it has sent a cable to the moving firm authorizing it to ship the goods.

Also, ask the mover to bring scales for weighing the packed cartons. Your mover will be able to provide an estimate of these weights so you can plan what to bring in your air freight.

Some items suggested for air freight are

- clothing to include a change of seasons (winter jackets may be needed year round, as well as clothes for numerous social events, including Consulate functions);
- mechanical or battery-powered alarm clocks;
- a battery-operated radio;
- a bath mat;
- children's car seats;
- a first-aid kit;
- rain gear;
- an electric fan;
- sewing kit or machine;
- a collapsible two-wheel grocery cart;
- VCR;
- travel converter kit (available at most department stores);
- bicycles (especially children's);
- sports equipment;
- spices and cookbooks;
- medicine; and
- camera equipment.

Be sure to bring the mover's name and telephone number, the shipper's name and telephone number, the airline flight number and date, the waybill or freight bill number, and the inventory list with you. Should it become necessary, your shipment can then be traced much faster.

Surface Freight

What you decide to ship and what you decide to sell or leave behind in storage is a matter of preference. Most of your household effects can be used in Frankfurt. The average time for surface shipment from Washington, D.C., to Frankfurt has been 8 to 10 weeks; the time is normally longer for those coming from a regional office. If you have any particularly valuable item that you want to leave behind, you may want to have a friend or relative keep it for you.

The items you may want to leave behind are

- television sets equipped with quartz crystal lock turner (frequencies are different in Germany), unless you will use it in conjunction with a VCR;
- electric clocks or clock radios;
- heavy lawn furniture;

- lawn mowers and other garden equipment;
- trash cans; and
- light bulbs.

Also keep in mind that you may buy some treasures, such as grandfather clocks, dishes, or lead crystal, during your stay in Europe. You may need some of your weight allowance for your return trip to the states. (The weight allowance for the return trip is the same as that for moving to Frankfurt).

You can use the following household items in Germany:

- vacuum cleaners (bring extra bags and belts for your machine);
- sewing machine;
- movie and slide projectors;
- hand tools and small power tools;
- items needed for hanging pictures;
- bicycles;
- microwave ovens (only if 50 cycle or convertible to 50 cycle);
- Christmas lights;
- catalogs;
- nonperishable food (canned goods, spices, dry goods);
- freezers (preferably General Electric or RCA Whirlpool because of availability of service);
- television sets (color or black and white);
- carpets or rugs;
- bathroom decor (as all German bathroom fixtures are larger than U.S. fixtures, U.S. tank and toilet top covers do not fit German fixtures);
- console or component stereo equipment;
- light lawn furniture;
- barbecue grill;
- camping gear;
- electric fan;
- small stepladder; and
- sporting gear (most sports are available).

Most American appliances can be used with transformers. New appliances can be purchased from the PX; used ones can be purchased from people living in the housing area. Availability of used appliances is greatest in the summer, since this is when most people living in Consulate housing are transferred.

Before plugging any appliance directly into an outlet, be sure that its voltage is compatible with Germany's 220-volt electrical system. Be sure to bring your lamps as they will work with 220-volt bulbs and a small plug adapter, which is available in Germany.

Shipping Your Car

You may ship your car (American or foreign) to Europe at government expense provided you agree to use it as necessary on government business on a reimbursable basis. Likewise, that car or another American-made car may be shipped back to the states at government expense. The government pays all costs for cars that occupy less than 800 cubic feet; you must pay expenses for cars exceeding this limit. Most vehicles, including Volkswagen buses, are within this limitation. A foreign-made, foreign-purchased car may not be shipped to the United States at government expense except under extremely limited circumstances (which currently do not apply to Europe).

Before shipping your car, make sure you have adequate insurance coverage. You can purchase additional insurance protection (marine insurance) from the dispatch agent. Also, be sure that removable items, such as rearview mirrors, mats, cushions, the cigarette lighter, and hubcaps, are listed on the shipping manifest (because they may disappear during shipment) and that proper mileage is recorded. If possible, pack these items separately in your surface shipment along with the jack, spare tires, and snow tires. Before moving such items, however, check with your dispatch agent.

The average time for shipment is 4 to 8 weeks. The dispatch agent will arrange to have your vehicle picked up at your residence, and you will not have to drive it to the port for shipping.

When your car arrives in Frankfurt, the Consulate Motor Pool Office will change your headlights and make small modifications to meet German requirements. It may require you to buy new tires to meet German requirements for high-speed driving. The Motor Pool Office will also arrange to have your car inspected at a German inspection station. Your car will have to be inspected again in 2 years.

German law also requires that you have a first-aid kit and a triangular reflector in your car. These items can be purchased at the AAFES auto store.

The Consulate provides, free of charge, German and international driver's licenses, which do not require that you take exams or road tests if you have a valid stateside license.

Your Arrival

Your first few days will be spent settling in, obtaining IDs, and getting oriented to your new environment. On the first day, you will probably unpack and catch up on your sleep. On the second day, you will probably go to the European Office for an introductory tour and then to the Consulate to take care of your IDs. You will need extra photos for everyone in your family 16 and older to apply for ausweis (German ID card) and driver's licenses. All family members 10 and older receive military ID cards. Bring your shipping documents so that the Consulate can trace your shipment.

You will immediately receive an ID enabling you to use the commissary and PX. Your sponsor will take you to the military shopping center. If possible, arrive in Frankfurt early in the week so that you can do all of this before the weekend.

Be prepared for some significant cash outlays within the first few months: reimbursing your sponsor for food, transformers, telephone installation charges, auto inspection, auto insurance, and possibly new tires.

Arrival of Household Goods

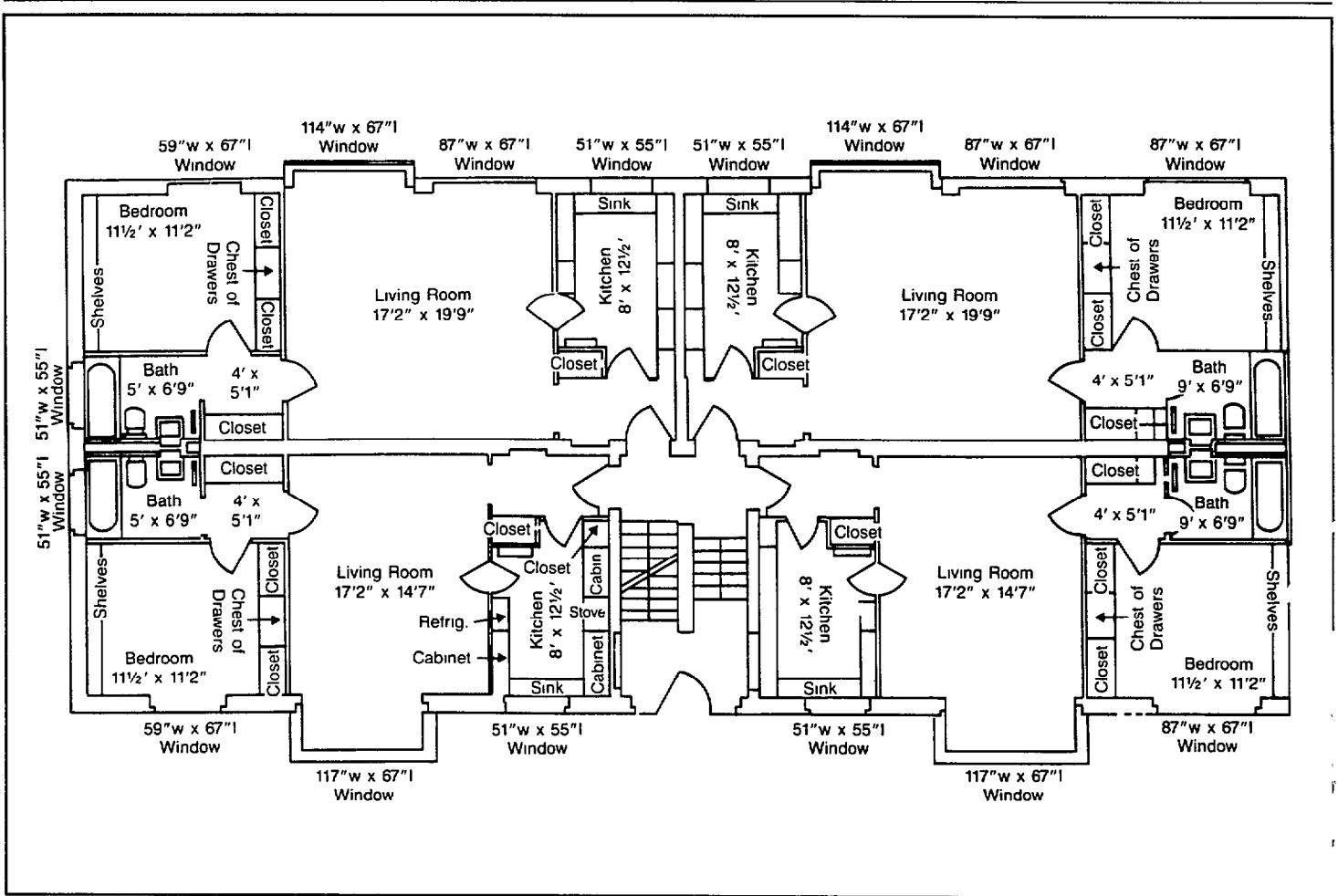
The Consulate will notify you when your household goods arrive and schedule a date for delivery to your permanent quarters. Agree on a tentative date, and then check immediately with the Housing Office to make absolutely certain that all repairs, painting, and subsequent cleanup will be completed by that date. Then confirm the date with the Consulate.

When your goods are delivered, carefully examine the furniture and any unpacked or uncrated items for damage. Also, check large items and crates/cartons (each will have a number) with your inventory list or the mover's inventory list. It is not necessary to refuse to sign the bill of lading or delivery receipt in case of damage or loss. Just make an appropriate notation on the mover's inventory or any other documents that the mover presents for your signature, detailing the exact nature of the damage or loss.

Notify the Consulate if you have had damage or loss so that it can, in turn, contact the agent of the delivering carrier. Also, notify your stateside

mover of any damages, and state that a claim will follow. Do not discard, clean, or repair damaged property (which is relatively rare) before an agent inspects it or before obtaining estimates of the repair costs from a qualified professional. The latter will give you a full report in writing and charge a fee, which can be included in your subsequent claim. File any claim for damage or loss first with the shipper, not GAO or the Consulate. (See GAO Order 0267.1. for details on filing claims.) European Office staff also can advise you on the proper filing procedures. There is a 2-year time limit for filing claims.

One-Bedroom Floor Plans



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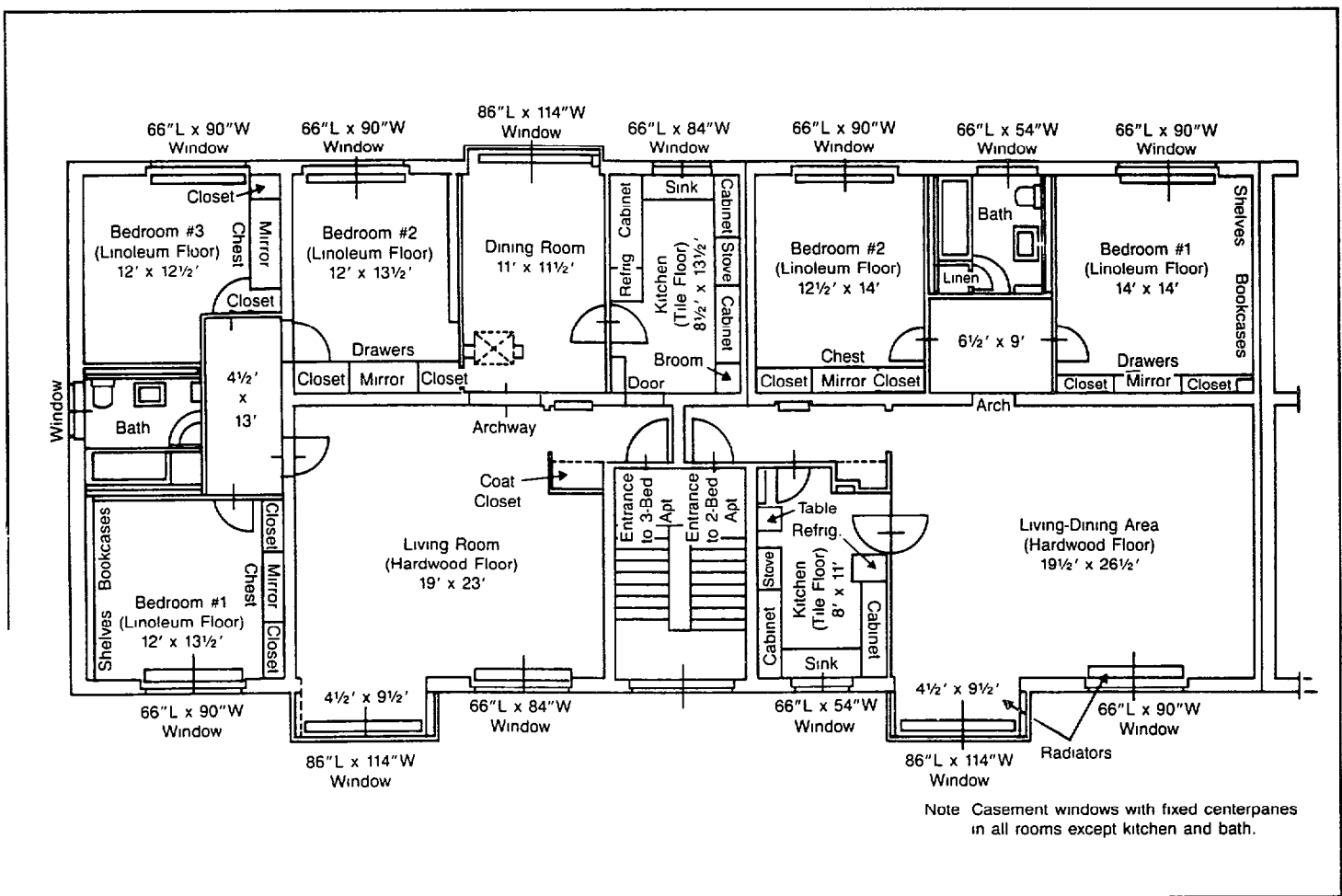
A Message From the Director and Staff of the European Office

A tour in an overseas office can be a fascinating experience which will undoubtedly enhance your professional and personal development. This handbook was prepared by the European Office to provide GAO staff interested in an overseas assignment with information on the living and working conditions in Frankfurt. Interested staff are also encouraged to seek additional information from current or former European Office staff members. In many respects, working in the European Office is no different than working in any other GAO field office. We are involved in a variety of issue areas and we work closely with the headquarters programming divisions. What makes our work unique is of course the foreign locations where it is performed. Europe, Africa, and the Middle East are all within our geographic area of responsibility. Working in these locations provides our staff with opportunities to experience first hand things that otherwise they may have only read about. At the same time, however, some of the logistical and cultural requirements associated with the travel can become stressful, and do require adaptability and flexibility on our staff's part.

Similarly, living in a foreign country requires some change in our staff's lifestyle. While there is a "little America" atmosphere within the U.S. State Department community in Frankfurt, where European Office staff live, day-to-day exposure to the German culture and language is inevitable. Most staff have found life in Frankfurt to be quite enjoyable, but we encourage everyone to carefully consider how an overseas relocation might effect their lifestyle.

We believe this handbook will answer many of your questions. If selected for an overseas assignment, you will receive detailed guidance and assistance from a number of GAO offices. In addition, the European Office will provide a sponsor to answer specific questions and help ease the transition when you arrive in Frankfurt.

Two and Three-Bedroom Floor Plans



Ordering Information

The first copy of each GAO report and testimony is free. Additional copies are \$2 each. Orders should be sent to the following address, accompanied by a check or money order made out to the Superintendent of Documents, when necessary. Orders for 100 or more copies to be mailed to a single address are discounted 25 percent.

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