

Analysis of the Awareness and Usage of the  
New Library Facilities at Moody Air Force Base

---

**Jennifer Cronin**  
**April 26, 2009**

ABSTRACT

Because of the important and specialized role served by military libraries, it is important to know whether these needs are being met. The author offers the hypothesis that the new facilities at Moody Air Force Base have increased awareness of facilities in meeting the needs of its patrons. If proven correct, this data may serve as evidence to support the issuing of funds for improvement of facilities at other military locations.

INTRODUCTION

The library facilities on military bases are a hybrid of the traditional public and the traditional academic library. Military libraries are required to offer services similar to public libraries, such as book loans and Children's Services. These services are important to the active military members and their dependants, especially when deployed abroad where English services may not be available at local libraries. Additionally, military libraries often serve as a center for building community between the diverse populations that are often deployed from their traditional communities.

Military libraries are often required to fill roles similar to those traditionally held by academic libraries. Many of their patrons are young men and women who are single and far from home for the first time. For these individuals, it is important to be able to maintain contact with family. Access to personal computers and/or vehicles is often limited for new recruits when they first arrive on base. Access to library services are often their only means of contact with family and loved ones during these difficult transitions.

Military members regularly prepare for educational or promotional tests. These individuals require access to CLEP Test information and other study material. Military patrons receiving overseas deployments require access to language training materiel. Due to the shared academic requirements of most military patrons, military libraries often deal in volume over diversity, as a large number of patrons may require access to the same material at the same time. Access to this material must be met, as this material is not simply a leisurely desire, but an important element in career progression or successful completion of their day-to-day mission goals.

The library at Moody Air Force Base has been located for several years in an older building. Although this building was centralized in the base, it was not often frequented. Despite the friendliness of the staff, the dark hallways and the odd nooks, leftover from the

original design, did not convey a welcoming feeling or provide a desired reading environment. Staff addressed the design concerns to the best of their abilities, but every building has its limitations.

#### PROBLEM STATEMENT

This research proposal seeks to determine the change in awareness and usage of the new library facilities at Moody AFB compared to the previous location. During the course of the study, additional data will be collected to determine which aspects of the new library facility are most responsible for the patron's decision to utilize the facility and its resources. We predict that the new facilities will have an increased patronage and will therefore more adequately meet the needs of the Moody AFB community.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

Research for comparative articles to serve as a background or basis of the author's research yielded few results pertaining directly to the subject of the research. EBSCO (targeting the Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts database) and GALILEO were utilized with very limited results and only tangentially related information. The articles with the most relevance to the research topic were:

##### *MILITARY LIBRARY MAKING A DIFFERENCE*

A library located at an Army post in Germany reaches out to their community and attempts to meet the needs of soldiers and families far from home. This article demonstrates the difference that a library can make in the lives of others, regardless of the size, and the importance of military libraries in assisting the military personnel.

##### *MILITARY LIBRARIES FACE CLOSURES*

This article demonstrates the importance of continuing to evaluate the needs of the patrons. When a library fails to maintain tangible data regarding its importance to the community, it risks becoming a budget cut.

Other information collected to assist during the development of this proposal were:

##### *INTERVIEW WITH MOODY LIBRARY DIRECTOR*

During the initial data collection phase of this survey, the Moody AFB Library Director was contacted to discuss the background of the library, its new facility, and the possibility of progressing with the research project as proposed. The improvements and disadvantages of the new facility were discussed as a measure of relating what effect the

new facility may have on altering the services available to their clientele and how these changes might influence their clientele's perceptions.

Ms. HollyMay, the Moody AFB Library Director, expressed that the most visible change is the ambiance. The lighting in the new facility is far improved over the previous facility and the new paint scheme and furniture gives a clean and relaxed feeling. The physical size of the facility is similar to the previous facility, but arranged in a more open and spacious layout that allows greater ease of access.

The new layout has allowed the addition of reading rooms. One reading room has been designed with the intent of serving parents that desire to read to their children. Another reading area is designed for the teen patrons with literature targeted for the young adult. The library is also proud of their new Quiet Room. Unlike the remainder of the library, the Quiet Room has specific policies discouraging Study Groups and Cell Phone usage, asking readers instead to focus on quiet tasks, such as, reading or thinking.

During the acquisition phase of the new facility, library policy was reviewed, leading to the development or refinement of current policies. Included in those changes was the introduction of a new Patron Code of Conduct that addresses Tobacco Use, Dress Code, and Rules regarding employee and patron interaction. These new guidelines were approved through the standard chain of command prior to the new facility being opened.

#### *GATE STATISTICS*

During a previous interview, the director of the Moody AFB Library released documentation profiling the library's gate statistics. This information provided the study with data regarding the number of patrons entering and exiting the facility during select months between 2004 and 2009.

#### *METHODOLOGY*

This study will seek to determine the differences between the library's previous level of usage and its current level of usage. This will be done through comparative analysis of gate records (usage statistics) and a random sampling survey. The author of the survey will work with the library's administrator to compare the current gate records for the new facility against previous gate records from the old facility during the same time last year to determine whether a noticeable increase or decrease can be evaluated.

The study's author will work with the library's administrator to provide a survey to the patrons that are willing to participate. This study will identify the following items: the respondent's population identifiers (age and duty status), familiarity with the facility, usage of the facility, and preferred services utilized most often by the respondents. Additionally, the survey will include a qualitative question referring to the general level of satisfaction felt with the current library facilities in meeting individual needs. This survey (see appendix) will be distributed to the following populations: library patrons, active duty members of a local squadron, and the Base BX. These populations will identify three populations and their relation to the library. The surveys distributed to the patrons of the library will provide responses from individuals already actively engaged in using the resources of the library. The surveys distributed to the active duty members of the squadron and at the BX will provide a large body of individuals for whom the facility was built, an excellent cross-section of age, duty status (among the BX respondents), and library usage levels. Prior to the distribution of the survey, administration of each of the areas will need to reissue authorization for the project, as required by standard military regulations. Preparations have been made to place 200 surveys at the library, 500 surveys at the BX, and the 200 members of the 23 LRS's email distribution list. The survey anticipates a 30% return on distributed surveys, yielding around 250 respondents for its sample. It is felt that this number will be far more than sufficient to obtain accurate results. The week of August 30<sup>th</sup> through September 5<sup>th</sup> has been selected as the week to conduct the sample as it will provide ample time to finalize preparations and to compute and analyze data within the time frame allowed.

The limitations of this study will be similar to other studies utilizing surveys for data collection. Due to the voluntary nature of surveys, it is not possible to know what level of response one will obtain. We have attempted to offset this limitation by supplying a high volume of surveys with the hope of getting a substantial return even if the respondent percentage is low. Another possible limitation may be inaccuracy in the gate statistics. The new library shares a building with the Educational Services Department. This shared purpose may result in individuals wandering in looking for something and find that they are in the wrong place, which would trigger an unnecessary gate count. We do not anticipate that this inaccuracy will be substantial.

## DATA ANALYSIS

This study primarily utilizes quantitative methods to collect data, with a couple of exceptions. The survey, once completed and returned, will be processed for statistical analysis. Information will be broken down by specific population in order to determine which population uses the library more frequently. This information will be displayed in a pie chart.

In addition the data from previous gate records will be compared to more recent gate records to determine to what extent the attendance had increased. It is the desire of the survey's author to utilize the data to determine if the new library facilities have increased awareness and usage, which populations are most likely to utilize the new facilities, and which aspect of the facilities are preferred by the patrons who regularly utilize the facilities. This data will be presented in a graphical format to more easily illustrate the percentage selections of the responding populations.

## CONCLUSION

By conducting this survey, and hopefully confirming our hypothesis, we will have statistical evidence adequate enough to justify the necessity of funding more modern library facilities at military locations. Military libraries provide added morale of all military personnel and their dependants, and enable military personnel to be successful in careers and educational pursuits.

APPENDIX

*APPENDIX 1-MOODY AFB LIBRARY PATRON SURVEY*

1) What is your age? (circle one)

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| a) 10-18 yrs | d) 35-50 yrs |
| b) 19-25 yrs | e) 50-65 yrs |
| c) 26-35 yrs | f) 65+ yrs   |

2) What is your military status? (circle one)

- |                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a) Active Duty                | d) Dependant               |
| b) Civilian military employee | e) Retired military member |
| c) Reserve                    |                            |

3) Were you previously aware that the library has recently moved to a new facility? Yes/No

4) Did you ever use the previous library Facilities? Yes/No

- a) If yes, did you find these facilities satisfactory to meet your needs? Yes/No

5) Have you utilized the new library facilities? Yes/No

- a) If yes, do these facilities meet your needs? Yes/No

6) How long has it been since you last utilized the Moody Library?

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a) Less than 1 month  | d) Less than 1 year   |
| b) Less than 3 months | e) More than one year |
| c) Less than 6 months |                       |

7) How frequently do you utilize the Moody Library facilities?

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| a) Weekly               | d) About once a year                                    |
| b) Monthly              | e) I have not used the Moody Library in either facility |
| c) Several times a year |   |

8) Which services provided by the library do you utilize (circle all that apply)

- a) Loan services (books, movies and other material)
- b) Computers for processing
- c) Internet access
- d) The Quiet Room
- e) Children's resources (Books and/or story time)
- f) Teen sitting area

9) Which Service do you utilize most often? (circle one)

- a) Loan services (books, movies and other material)
- b) Computers for processing
- c) Internet access
- d) The Quiet Room
- e) Children's resources (Books and/or story time)
- f) Teen sitting area
- g) None of the above

10) Does the current Library facility meet your library and information needs?

- a) Yes, very well
- b) Yes, adequately
- c) No, my library and information needs are poorly met
- d) I don't know. I have not used this service.

11) Where did you receive this survey?

- a) Moody Library
- b) BX
- c) Email
- d) Other \_\_\_\_\_



REFERENCES

(2007 April 13). Military Libraries Face Closures. *American Libraries*, 38, Retrieved January 25, 2009, from <http://library.valdosta.edu:2082/ehost/detail?vid=3&hid=114&sid=79ce2d7d-a47c-47c8-8efd-5f0628b64e6a%40sessionmgr107&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=lih&AN=25038312> .

(2007, March). Military Libraries Making a Difference. *American Libraries*, 38, Retrieved January 25, 2009, from <http://library.valdosta.edu:2082/ehost/detail?vid=5&hid=114&sid=79ce2d7d-a47c-47c8-8efd-5f0628b64e6a%40sessionmgr107&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=lih&AN=24394366>.