

Chapter 9 Armor Branch

9–1. Unique features of Armor Branch

a. Unique purpose of Armor Branch. The Armor Branch is a command centric branch that prepares officers to command combined arms formations across the full spectrum of military operations. The Armor Branch serves two primary functions in support of unified land operations: firstly, to provide combined arms formations the capability to close with and destroy the enemy using fire, maneuver, and shock effect; secondly, to provide cavalry and scout formations the capabilities to perform reconnaissance and security during combined arms maneuver and wide area security operations.

b. The way ahead. The Army's continual change, limited resources, and lessons learned from more than a decade of war continually impact how the Armor Branch trains, assigns and develops officers. The Armor Branch develops agile and adaptive experts in branch competencies, who are multi-skilled leaders that readily operate in a JIIM environment. Armor officers are assigned based on the needs of the Army in accordance with the HQDA manning guidance, the professional development needs of the officer and the officer's preference. While HRC makes every effort to synchronize the three priorities, the needs of the Army and the professional development needs of the officer take precedence over individual preference.

c. Unique functions performed by Armor Branch. Armor officers initially focus on development of the core technical and tactical Armor mobile protected firepower and reconnaissance and security skills. Following initial focus on skills development, Armor officers continually deepen their core skills while developing broader skills in combined arms maneuver, wide area security in support of unified land operations as they progress through their careers. Armor officers fulfill their mission through: the application of mission command and synchronization and integration of warfighting functions; providing expertise on the employment of combined arms forces at all command levels; and developing doctrine, organizations, training, materiel and leaders necessary to support the mission.

d. Unique features of work in Armor Branch. The Armor Branch currently has one AOC and eight SIs. Detailed descriptions of the AOC and SIs listed below can be found in DA Pam 611–21.

(1) Armor officer, general (19A). These officers will receive technical and tactical institutional Armor School and Maneuver Center of Excellence training. Training is focused on the core competencies associated with mobile protected firepower, reconnaissance and security to successfully lead and employ mounted and dismounted formations in combined arms maneuver and wide area security.

(2) SIs associated with Armor AOCs:

(a) M1A2 Abrams Tank (3J).

(b) M2 BIFV/M3 CFV/M7 Bradley fire integration support team leader (3X).

(c) Stryker Leader Course (R4).

(d) Army Reconnaissance Course (R7).

(e) Ranger/Ranger-Parachutist (5R/5S).

(f) Airborne (5P).

(g) Air Assault (2B).

(h) Pathfinder (5Q).

e. Branch detail. Armor Branch participates in the branch detailing of officers into Armor at the grade of lieutenant. Officers detailed Armor will lose their Armor designation once they reach their branch detail expiration date and have been re-assigned into their basic branch.

f. Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program. The VTIP program replaces the functional designation board. This program allows officers to transfer into another branch or FA from their 4th year of active Federal service through their 15th year. This program also allows officers who are branch detailed into another branch to request to remain in Armor. The VTIP panel meets quarterly. Submission of a VTIP packet does not guarantee branch transfer.

g. Branch eligibility. Officers of other branches who desire a branch transfer to Armor should submit a request in accordance with AR 614–100 DA Pam 611–21; and VTIP MILPER messages.

9–2. Officer characteristics required

a. Competencies. Armor officers are valued for their skills as leaders, trainers, and planners. Skills are acquired and perfected through realistic training, PME, self-study and service in the most demanding positions. Armor Branch values assignments in both the operational force and generating force. Armor officers are effective leaders that possess competence, confidence, social, and cultural awareness, and effective oral and written communications skills to cultivate trust, teamwork and commitment, all oriented towards mission accomplishment. The goal of the branch is to provide each officer with a series of leadership, staff and functional assignments, institutional training, broadening and

self-development opportunities to develop combined arms warriors with well-rounded backgrounds and the ability to successfully operate in the JIIM environment.

b. Unique skills. Armor officers should display consistent outstanding performance across a wide variety of operational and generating force assignments. Armor officers demonstrate excellence in their warfighting skills, technical and tactical proficiency, a well developed understanding of joint and combined arms warfare, a superior ability to integrate a wide variety of lethal and non lethal assets to support the mission, and the ability to lead, train, motivate, and care for Soldiers. Armor officers maintain a high-level of resilience to retain the ability to lead and operate across a myriad of organizations.

9–3. Key officer life-cycle initiatives for Armor

a. Structure. The primary operational assignments for Armor officers include combined arms battalions and cavalry squadrons across all three types of BCTs. Armor officers may also serve in critical developmental assignments in generating force organizations.

b. Acquire. Armor officers are accessed through USMA, ROTC, and OCS. Officers are accessed into Armor based on their branch preference, assessment of their talents, and the needs of the Army. Armor is a recipient branch under the current system of branch detailing. Armor receives detail officers from the combat support and service support arms to fill lieutenant authorizations.

c. Distribute. The goal of Armor Branch is to provide every Armor officer a variety of leadership, staff, functional and broadening assignments at each grade to develop and employ their skills as combined arms leaders. The priority is on developing a depth of experience in Armor and Cavalry operations while concurrently developing a depth and breadth of experience in JIIM organizations, combined arms maneuver and wide area security. Officers may also have the opportunity to serve in key generating force assignments to develop their knowledge of how the Army operates. Officers will have opportunities to serve in key staff, functional and broadening assignments to further develop their warfighting skills and provide value to the Army. Officers may also rotate between CONUS and OCONUS assignments. Armor officer assignments are managed with a goal to develop the full range of skills necessary to perform as senior leaders.

d. Deploy. Armor Branch officers are warfighters who remain personally and professionally prepared to deploy worldwide at all times. Whether assigned to operational force units with high levels of readiness or fixed-site generating force organizations, all Armor officers remain deployable to accomplish missions across the full spectrum of conflict. Armor officers may deploy with units at any time to deter potential adversaries and to protect national interests, or as individuals to support joint and multinational operations. Armor officers prepare themselves and their families for this most challenging and rewarding expeditionary mindset.

e. Sustain. Armor combat skills develop through institutional training, experience in assignments, self-development, and personal and professional commitment to resilience (physical, social, family, spiritual, and emotional).

(1) *Promotion.* Armor Branch field grade officers designated to remain in Armor and the Operations functional category will compete for promotion only within their functional category. If an Armor officer is designated to one of the two other functional categories, the officer no longer competes with Armor officers for promotion.

(2) *Officer evaluation report.* The OER requires the rater and senior rater to recommend a functional category for all ACC captains through lieutenant colonels. When recommending functional categories for rated officers, rating officials will consider the whole person with factors such as: demonstrated performance, educational background, technical or unique expertise, military experience or training, and the personal preference of the officer. Functional category recommendations of raters and senior raters on the OER will be an important factor taken into consideration during the functional category designation process.

f. Develop. Armor officers are developed through a progression of operational and generating force assignments, broadening assignments, institutional training, and self-development. The focus of Armor officer professional development is on the growth and utilization of warfighting skills. Armor officer development seeks to prepare officers for ever-increasing command and staff responsibilities at higher levels to successfully lead organizations to mission success. These skills support the critical doctrine, organization, training, material, leader development, personnel, and facility solutions for branch Force Management.

g. Separate. Armor Branch has no unique separation processes. All current and former Armor force Soldiers are strongly encouraged to remain involved with the development of the branch. This involvement increases participation in professional associations and through editorial contributions to Army official journals and online forums. Current online sources include: the Armor School website (<https://www.benning.army.mil/armor>), the Maneuver Net Forum (<https://forums.army.mil>), and the Office of the Chief of Armor (<https://www.benning.army.mil/armor/ocoa>).

9–4. Officer developmental assignments

a. Lieutenant. The professional development objective for this phase of an officer's career is to develop requisite baseline Armor Branch skills, knowledge and attributes. The focus of the Armor lieutenant is on the development of Armor and cavalry tactical and technical warfighting skills and the utilization of these skills in an operational assignment as a tank, MGS, or scout platoon leader.

(1) *Education.* Armor BOLC provides the Armor lieutenant the baseline skills necessary to function as a tank and scout platoon leader. Armor lieutenants receive assignment oriented training following Armor BOLC to prepare them for their specific assignments as tank, MGS, or scout platoon leaders. These courses include, but are not limited to: Army Reconnaissance Course, Airborne, Air Assault, Ranger, Infantry Mortar Leader Course, Bradley Leader Course, and Stryker Leader Course. Army Reconnaissance Course is required for all Armor lieutenants. Assignment oriented training will be synchronized to minimize the delay between courses and get the lieutenant to the unit of assignment in the shortest time possible. The requisite assignment oriented training for the Armor lieutenant based on the officer's initial assignment is:

(a) *Armored brigade combat team.* The officer attends the Army Reconnaissance Course and is strongly encouraged to attend Ranger School. The officer will attend other functional training based on availability and the needs of the unit. If the dates for Army Reconnaissance Course and any other functional training conflict, Army Reconnaissance Course is the priority.

(b) *Infantry brigade combat team.* The officer will attend Army Reconnaissance Course. The officer is also required to attend Ranger School. If the dates for Army Reconnaissance Course and any other functional training conflict, Army Reconnaissance Course is the priority. Armor officers assigned to an Infantry brigade combat team (IBCT) Airborne brigade will also attend Airborne School enroute to their assignment.

(c) *Stryker brigade combat team.* The officer will attend Army Reconnaissance Course and is strongly encouraged to attend Ranger School. The officer will attend the Stryker Leader Course. The officer may also attend other functional training courses based upon availability and the needs of the unit. If the dates for Army Reconnaissance Course and any other functional training conflict, Army Reconnaissance Course is the priority.

(2) *Assignments.* The KD assignment during this phase is serving in an operational force operational unit as a tank, MGS, or scout platoon leader.

(a) Armor lieutenants should be assigned as platoon leaders or staff officers in a Cavalry squadron or combined arms battalion upon completion of Armor BOLC and requisite functional training. The goal of the branch is to assign lieutenants to the operational force as an initial assignment.

(b) A limited number of Armor lieutenants will serve as TRADOC training company executive officers or staff officers for up to 12 months followed by assignment to the operational force. Armor lieutenants that have completed a minimum of 24 months in an operational force unit may be assigned as a TRADOC training company executive officer or staff officer.

(c) Other typical assignments for lieutenants are battalion or squadron specialty platoon leader (scout or mortar), company or troop executive officer, /battalion/squadron or IMCOM staff officer. An Armor officer may also serve in a staff position after promotion to captain, prior to attendance at the MC3.

(3) *Self-development.* Self-development during this phase focuses on Maneuver Leader Development Strategy (MLDS) tactical fundamentals, technical proficiency, troop-leading procedures, leadership skills, gunnery, organizational maintenance, resupply operations, basic administrative operations, and resiliency and other technical proficiency skills. Armor lieutenants are responsible to take the initiative to gain knowledge and experience to prepare themselves to be a captain. Self-improvement and development is gained by observing different activities of both officers and NCOs at the battalion and brigade levels, mentorship, gaining experience in duty positions following a tank, scout and/or MGS platoon leader duties, and a well developed self-study program. Additional information can be found at the following address: <http://www.benning.army.mil/mssp/>.

(4) *Desired experience.* Each Armor lieutenant must successfully serve in an operational force tank or scout platoon leader assignment. Ideally, the officer's technical and tactical abilities will be augmented through assignment to a specialty platoon, company/troop executive officer, or battalion/squadron staff officer position. The goal is to serve a minimum of 12 months in a platoon leader position to develop lieutenants with expertise in mounted and dismounted maneuver. A limited number of Armor lieutenants will also serve in generating force assignments prior to attending MC3.

b. *Captain.* The professional development objective for this phase of an officer's career is to develop officers as a company/troop commander and staff officer in an operational unit. They may also professionally develop through successfully completing one or more command/staff assignments in the generating force.

(1) *Education.* Completion of MC3 or a branch CCC is mandatory during this period. Some Armor officers will attend other branch CCCs or the Marine Corps Expeditionary Warfare School.

(2) *Assignments.* The KD assignment during this phase is company/troop command in either the operational or generating Army. Service as a primary or assistant staff officer is also desirable. Armor officers may serve on operational or generating force unit staffs at the brigade/regiment and battalion/squadron level prior to and/or following command.

(a) Most Armor officers will be assigned to a BCT immediately following completion of the CCC. Armor captains will attend the Cavalry Leader Course. All Armor captains assigned to IBCTs will attend the Ranger Course. All captains assigned to SBCTs will attend the Stryker Leader Course and are encouraged to attend the Ranger Course. All captains assigned to armored BCTs are encouraged to attend the Ranger Course. Select Armor captains will serve their company command and staff assignments initially in a generating force organization, with a follow-on assignment to an

operational force assignment to compete for company command. Armor Branch assigns a limited number of Armor captains to a generating force command following an operational force assignment.

(b) Upon completion of company command and the MC3 or equivalent CCC, multiple broadening assignments are possible. The purpose of these assignments is to meet critical Army requirements, further develop the officer's knowledge base and provide the officer a more well-rounded professional experience. Armor captains should serve in a broadening assignment following company command. The Armor Branch goal is to grow an inventory of officers who are tactically and technically proficient and have expanded their professional skills. Examples of assignments are:

1. AC/RC training support brigade trainer and staff.
2. Army sponsored broadening opportunities fellowships and scholarships (refer to AR 627-1 for a complete listing).
3. CTC observer combat trainer.
4. Project Warrior.
5. Doctrine developer.
6. ROTC Assistant Professor of Military Science.
7. Maneuver Center of Excellence or other Center of Excellence small group instructor.
8. Battalion/brigade staff.
9. Training developer.
10. U.S. Army recruiting company command and staff.
11. USMA service school faculty and staff.
12. Warrior transition unit commander.
13. Aide-de-camp and nominative positions.
14. Other combat arms or branch generalist positions.

(3) *Self-development.* During this phase, Armor officers will advance their leadership, tactical and technical skills, develop a mastery of training management, resiliency, and concentrate on those critical tasks required to accomplish their wartime mission. The officer will develop a more thorough understanding of combined arms operations in a joint environment. Armor captains should initiate/complete a master's degree. Additional information can be found at the following address: <http://www.benning.army.mil/mssp/>

(4) *Desired experience.* The KD assignment for an Armor captain is successful service as a company/troop commander in a 19A, or O2B coded position. There is no substitute for operational company/troop command for developing an Armor officer's leadership and tactical skills, and preparing the officer for future leadership assignments at successively higher levels of responsibility. To be KD complete, Armor captains must serve 18 months (+/- 6 months) company command time; ultimately, the priority for command is the quality of the the officer's performance over time. Armor captains may expand their tactical and technical capabilities through assignment as a battalion/squadron or brigade/regiment staff officer prior to assuming command. Armor captains may serve as company commanders in non-traditional commands in order to meet Army requirements in addition to operational command, and may serve in these positions prior to or after operational command.

c. *Majors.* The professional development objective for this phase of an officer's career is to expand the officer's maneuver tactical and technical experience and continue development as a leader with a comprehensive understanding of combined arms warfare in a joint and expeditionary environment. Through a series of operational and generating force assignments, the Armor major increases contributions to the larger Army and gains greater understanding of how the Army operates.

(1) *Education.* Military education required during this phase is completion of ILE through completion of the Command and General Staff College or sister Service equivalent in residence or through distance learning. ILE is divided into two phases. Phase 1 is a 14-week common core training block of instruction. Phase 2 is the Advanced Operations Course which is the field grade credentialing course that is required for all Armor officers. In addition to Army and sister Service ILE programs, officers can also compete for foreign and interagency fellowship positions, which also meet the MEL 4 requirement. Officers may also compete for selection to the SAMS following the Advanced Operations and Warfighting Course. Officers may also choose to compete for a seat in SAMS. SAMS officers will serve a utilization tour as a corps or division plans/assistant G3 staff officer. Armor majors will attend the Cavalry elective at ILE.

(2) *Assignments.* KD assignments during this phase are:

- (a) Operational force battalion/squadron S3/XO.
- (b) Operational force brigade/regiment S3.
- (c) Generating force battalion/squadron S3/XO.
- (d) Generating force brigade S3.
- (e) Security force assistance assignments (along with additional operational force S3/XO time). Security force assistance assignments are vital to the success of the Army during global contingency operations. Armor majors will serve in these assignments. This experience, when combined with time spent as an operational force S3/XO, provides

the Armor major the skills to prepare the officer for future operating and generating force assignments with increasing responsibility and for battalion command.

(f) Division chief of plans (SAMS Utilization). The division chief of plans position is considered a KD experience for the SAMS graduate Armor officer when served in conjunction with at least 12 months service in a battalion/squadron or brigade/regimental S3 position. Experience at the brigade/regimental level and below remain absolutely essential to the professional growth of the Armor officer and necessary for success at future levels of command.

(g) There is no substitute for KD time in preparing an Armor officer for future command and for building maneuver and combined arms skills. The Armor major may further expand tactical and technical skills by serving in staff assignments at division level and higher.

(3) *Broadening assignments.* Armor majors will also meet the Army's mission requirements and build on their institutional skills through varied generating force, joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational (JIIM) assignments. Examples of Armor major assignments beyond KD positions are provided below:

- (a) AC/RC S3/XO.
- (b) Advisor positions for foreign schools.
- (c) HQDA and ACOM staff.
- (d) Army sponsored broadening opportunities fellowships and scholarships (refer to AR 627-1 for a complete listing).
- (e) Brigade, division or corps staff.
- (f) Combat developer.
- (g) CTC observer combat trainer.
- (h) HQDA staff officer.
- (i) Doctrine developer.
- (j) Joint staff officer.
- (k) Multinational and coalition trainer and staff officer.
- (l) ROTC Assistant Professor of Military Science.
- (m) Service school instructor, staff, and faculty.
- (n) Training developer.
- (o) USMA faculty and staff.
- (p) Advanced civil schooling.
- (q) Nominative positions.

(4) *Self-development.* Armor majors are expected to continue self-development efforts to include off-duty schooling. Majors continue to build intellectual capacity, strategic perspective, develop operational skills, and improve resiliency conditioning. Armor majors will develop and use a diverse set of skills as they move between combined arms leadership positions in the operational force and generating force organizations as well as functional Armor, branch immaterial and JIIM assignments. Additional information can be found at the following address: <http://www.benning.army.mil/mssp/>.

(5) *Desired experience.* At this stage of the officer's career, the Armor major hones skills in the planning and execution of combined arms/joint warfare and develops expertise in the JIIM operational environment. While the goal is to provide every Armor major a minimum of 18 months combined time in the KD positions, the quality of performance in the assignment, rather than time spent in the assignment, is the critical factor.

(6) *Additional factors.*

(a) The goal of the branch is to develop field grade officers who embody a collective knowledge of JIIM experience. While not every officer will receive an assignment in a qualifying joint assignment or serve in a fellowship in a JIIM agency, the goal is to provide the maximum opportunity for Armor majors to receive this opportunity.

(b) Armor majors may be credited for joint service either through assignment to a qualifying joint duty assignment list (Joint duty assignment list) position or through the point system based on qualifying joint service via the Joint Qualification System. The objective of the Joint Qualification System is to ensure a systematic, progressive, career-long development of officers in joint matters and to ensure that officers have the requisite experience and education to be highly proficient in joint matters, as directed in 10 USC, Chapter 38. Joint Qualification System allows officers to apply for joint credit based on experience in positions in the Contemporary Operating Environment.

d. *Lieutenant colonel.* The professional development objective for this phase of an officer's career is demonstrated excellence in tactical skills, technical proficiency and the ability to lead, train, motivate and care for Soldiers in both the command and staff environments. An Armor officer's opportunity to serve in the operational force will decrease as the officer increases in rank and the percentage of generating force positions increases. The officer's previous assignments, institutional training, and self-development prepare the officer for role in the generating force positions of increasing responsibility.

(1) *Education.* Lieutenant colonels selected for command will complete a PCC, phases I, II, and III prior to command. Lieutenant colonels may be selected for SSC. Lieutenant colonels not selected for resident attendance must complete SSC by correspondence to achieve MEL 1.

(2) *Assignments.* Lieutenant colonels in Armor seek assignments of greater responsibility in branch and branch immaterial positions. Lieutenant colonel assignments allow the potential for greater contribution to the branch and the entire Army. This important phase of an Armor officer's career provides for assignments that further develop joint combined arms skill sets and improved warfighting skills. The most critical assignment for Armor lieutenant colonels in the Operations functional category is battalion/squadron level command. Armor lieutenant colonels selected for command will normally serve 18 to 24 months in command at battalion level. Armor officers are selected for command selection list commands in four major command categories: operations, strategic support, recruiting and training, and installation. All battalion-level commands are opt-in boards, and officers will compete for all command categories. Examples of duty assignments for lieutenant colonels are listed below. Note that assignment opportunities for some Armor lieutenant colonel positions are limited to former battalion commanders.

- (a) Instructor at ILE.
- (b) Nominative positions.
- (c) Brigade DCO.
- (d) CTC observer combat trainer.
- (e) Division G3.
- (f) Corps staff.
- (g) HQDA or joint staff, NATO staff, combatant command staff.
- (h) AC/RC CDR/observer/controller/staff.
- (i) ROTC PMS.
- (j) Maneuver Center of Excellence staff (doctrine, capabilities).
- (k) Service branch school staff and instructors.

(3) *Self-development.* During this phase of an Armor officer's career, self-development takes the form of self-assessment, off-duty civil schooling, perfecting mentoring and managerial skills and sustaining resiliency. The officer continues to hone combined arms warfighting skills and the understanding of the joint operational environment. Additional information can be found at the following address: <http://www.benning.army.mil/mssp/>.

(4) *Desired experience.* The goal of Armor officer development is to prepare every officer for command of a combined arms battalion, cavalry squadron, generating force training battalion, or other institutional command at the lieutenant colonel level. While not every officer will command, Armor lieutenant colonels provide exceptional contributions to the Army outside of command. The focus remains the development of officers imbued with technical and tactical knowledge of the joint, combined arms, maneuver warfare. The critical assignment for an Armor lieutenant colonel is command.

e. Colonel. The professional development objective for this phase of an officer's career is improvement of warfighting, training, and staff skills, along with leadership, managerial and executive talents. Colonels are expected to be multi-skilled leaders: strategic and innovative thinkers; builders of leaders and teams; competent warfighters; skilled in governance, statesmanship, and diplomacy; and able to understand and operate within a cultural context.

(1) *Education.* Historically, the majority of officers selected for promotion to colonel are selected to attend SSC. Colonels not selected for resident attendance must complete SSC by correspondence to achieve MEL 1.

(2) *Assignments.* Armor colonels contribute to the Army by serving in crucial assignments in both branch and branch immaterial positions. The critical task during this phase is to fully develop the broad skills and competencies required of a multi-skilled leader, while maintaining and improving branch/maneuver competency (warfighting skills). Armor colonels will make full use of their broad operations and JIIM experiences, managerial skills and executive talents to meet the needs of the Army. A critical assignment for an Armor colonel is selection for command. Armor officers selected for brigade-level command will serve in the same four command CSL categories as lieutenant colonels. Critical assignments for colonels include:

- (a) Brigade, regiment, or garrison command.
- (b) CTC operations group commander.
- (c) Combat trainer/leader developer.
- (d) Department director, Maneuver Center of Excellence.
- (e) Division chief of staff.
- (f) Division or corps G-3.
- (g) Executive officer to a general officer.
- (h) HQDA or joint staff.
- (i) TRADOC capabilities manager.

(3) *Self-development.* Armor colonels maintain their branch skills and keep current on all changes that affect the Soldiers they command and/or manage. JIIM assignments are important during this phase.

(4) *Desired experience.* The primary goal at this stage is to exploit the significant breadth and depth of experiences and knowledge gained in a position where the officer can provide a significant contribution to the operational and generating force. The critical assignment for an Armor colonel is brigade-level command. No other position provides the Armor officer with the opportunity to fully use depth of experience in joint and combined arms warfare and to

capitalize on functional generating force assignments in service to the Army. However, only a limited number of Armor officers will have the opportunity to command. Those officers not selected for command will continue to provide exceptional service in Army and JIIM assignments of increasing responsibility. These officers also provide the critical bridge between the operational and generating force, and serve commanders in key staff elements.

f. Joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational assignments. The development of Armor officers will also focus on the development of agile, adaptive, and multi-skilled leaders who collectively embody knowledge of JIIM organizations. Armor officers will be considered for a billet on the Joint duty assignment list based on the needs of the Army, professional development needs of the officer and availability of a joint assignment. JIIM experience, developed through sequential assignments, provides the broad perspective necessary to be successful now and in the future.

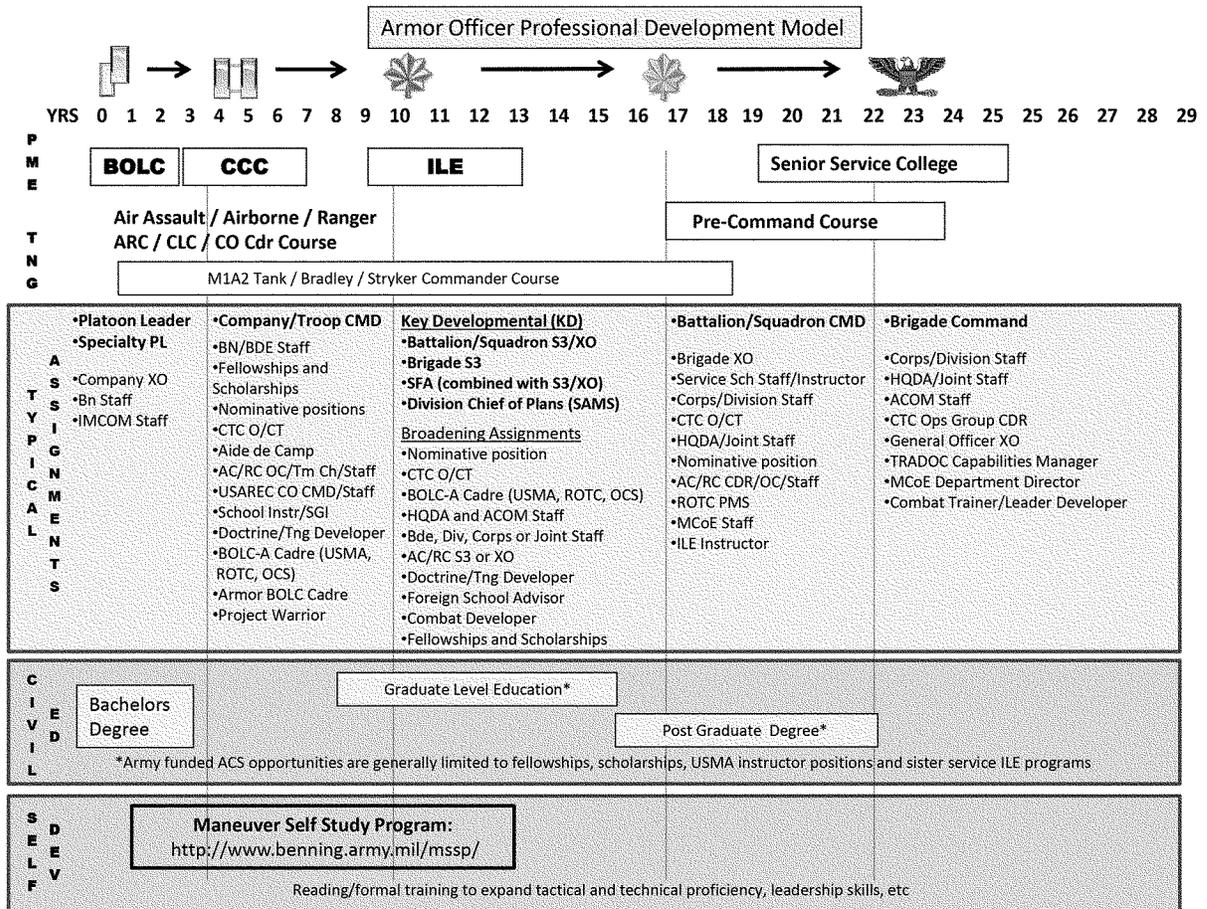
9–5. Assignment preferences and precedence.

The professional development goal of Armor Branch is to produce and sustain highly-qualified officers who are tactically and operationally oriented to lead Soldiers, command units in combat and perform other assigned missions. Assignments in combined arms organizations develop the officer's overall ability to achieve that goal. The officer's assignments are based on the needs of the Army, the officer's professional development needs and the officer's preference. While the senior leader development office makes every effort to support individual officer's assignment preferences, the needs of the Army and the officer's professional development needs are the priority.

9–6. Duration of officer life-cycle assignments

a. Key developmental Armor Branch positions. The Armor Branch officer will serve in several KD positions as they progress through their career in order to develop a joint and expeditionary mindset, tactical and technical expertise in combined arms warfare, a firm grounding in Armor and Cavalry operations, and knowledge of JIIM organizations. There is no substitute in the Armor Branch for service with troops in key leadership positions. The goal of the Armor officer PDM is to provide the Armor officer a series of operational staff and leadership positions, supplemented by opportunities to augment their knowledge in key generating force positions, in order to achieve success in positions of leadership at successively higher levels. The primary positions that develop this level of expertise, in sequence, are platoon leader, company/troop commander, S3/XO. The goal is to ensure that every Armor officer is given the opportunity to serve in each of these key leadership assignments. While operational realities and the limited number of positions will prevent the branch from providing every officer the opportunity to command at the battalion and brigade level, the goal remains to prepare every Armor officer for command. Those officers who do not command at the battalion level will continue to provide critical support to the Army in key positions. Their role will remain to ensure that generating force organizations continue to maintain focus on their critical role in supporting the warfight. Armor officers, experts in combined arms maneuver and wide area security, serve as the critical link between the operational and generating force.

b. Armor Branch life-cycle. The Armor Branch developmental goals directly support the goal of the Army with joint and expeditionary capabilities. Figure 9–1 shows how Armor Branch timelines, military and additional training, KD assignments and self-development fit together to support the Armor Branch goal of growing future combined arms warriors.



Cavalry tactics and techniques. Prior to assignment to a Cavalry platoon, the Armor lieutenant is strongly encouraged to attend the Army Reconnaissance Course. In addition, the Armor lieutenant may attend Ranger School, Infantry Mortar Leader Course, Bradley Leader Course, MGS Leader Course, Stryker Leader Course, Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leaders Course, Airborne, Air Assault and Pathfinder. Additional training following BOLC is primarily dependent on the lieutenant's unit of assignment. Officers must obtain a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university prior to consideration for promotion to captain.

(2) *Assignments.* Key development during this critical phase of the officer's career is assignment as a tank or scout platoon leader. Every attempt should be made to assign junior officers as platoon leaders. This duty provides the officer an understanding of operations and leadership that will build a solid foundation for future service and duties of increased responsibility. After completing a platoon leader assignment, Armor officers should seek a variety of broadening assignments, which will enhance their future performance and prepare them for company command. Broadening assignments for lieutenants include battalion or squadron specialty platoon leader (support, scout, or mortar), company or troop executive officer, and battalion or squadron liaison officer.

(3) *Self-development.* Self-development during this phase should focus on tactical fundamentals, troop-leading procedures, leadership skills, gunnery, organizational maintenance, resupply operations, basic administrative operations, physical conditioning, and other branch technical proficiency skills. After serving as a tank, scout and/or MGS platoon leader Armor lieutenants can gain experience by serving in other duty positions. Armor lieutenants must take initiative to gain knowledge and experience for the next level of assignments and responsibilities as a captain. Self-improvement and development can also be achieved by seeking mentors and participating in different activities with both officers and NCOs at the company, battalion, and brigade levels. The Maneuver Self Study Program provides additional resources for self-development. The Maneuver Self Study Program can be found at the following address (<http://www.benning.army.mil/mssp/>).

b. Captain.

(1) *Education.* PME during this phase is completion of the MC3, which prepares the captain for company command and battalion and brigade staff assignments. MC3 can be completed through attendance at the six-month resident course or the RC (RC) course (MC3-RC), which has three distributed learning phases and two 2-week resident phases. Prior to assignment to a Cavalry troop captains are strongly encouraged to attend the Cavalry Leaders Course. Officers must obtain a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university to qualify for promotion to captain.

(2) *Assignments.* Assignments in a company, battalion, or brigade organization should follow a progressive order whenever possible. The command of a company or troop is key leadership development at this stage of an officer's career. The goal is for each captain to serve a minimum of 36 months company/troop command time (plus or minus 12 months); however, the quality of the officer's performance is more important than the length of time in command. An Armor officer may also command a mechanized infantry or rifle company, depending on various factors including availability, geographic proximity, and leadership preference. The limited number of company command positions may not afford every officer the opportunity to command an MTOE company or troop. Captains may command a TDA company, but the preference is command of an MTOE company which better develops the captain's tactical and technical expertise. Upon completion of company command a full spectrum of assignments are possible. The purpose of these assignments is to meet critical Army requirements, further develop the officer's knowledge base and provide the officer a more well-rounded professional experience. The objective of the branch is to grow an inventory of officers who are tactically and technically proficient and have expanded their skills in a variety of challenging assignments. Armor officers may serve on MTOE or TDA unit staffs at the battalion/squadron and brigade/regiment level prior to or subsequent to company command.

(3) *Self-development.* During this phase, Armor officers must hone their leadership, tactical and technical skills, develop a mastery of training management, physical conditioning and concentrate on those critical tasks required to accomplish their wartime mission. The officer continues to develop a more thorough understanding of combined arms operations in a joint environment. Armor captains should consider beginning work on a master's degree. The Maneuver Self Study Program provides additional resources for self-development. The Maneuver Self Study Program can be found at the following address (<http://www.benning.army.mil/mssp/>).

c. Major. Promotion to major normally occurs on or after the tenth year of commissioned service. Selection for major is based on performance and potential for further service in positions of greater responsibility. These qualities are measured by the officer's assignment history, development within the Armor Branch, and the relative standing of the officer to peers as indicated in OER.

(1) *Education.* Completion of the CCC is required for promotion to major. Officers complete the requirements for ILE through Command and General Staff College (resident or nonresident) or a sister Service resident Command and General Staff College. JPME courses offered through Joint Forces Staff College or Joint Continuing and Distance Education School are available primarily to those officers with a follow-on joint assignment.

(2) *Assignments.* Key development during this phase is assignment as a battalion/squadron operations officer (S3), or battalion executive officer (XO). Successful assignments in positions such as XO and S3 best prepare officers for the rigors of battalion/squadron command. Higher headquarters positions such as division staff and JFHQ is also

recommended. Duty in progressively challenging assignments is an essential ingredient in the career development of officers prior to promotion to lieutenant colonel.

(3) *Self-development.* Armor majors are expected to continue self-development efforts to build intellectual capital, strategic perspective, hone operational skills and sustain physical conditioning. Armor majors will develop and use a diverse set of skills as they move between combined arms leadership positions in operational and generating force organizations as well as functional Armor, branch immaterial and JIIM assignments. Armor officers should complete their masters degree before their selection board for lieutenant colonel. Although not a requirement, a masters degree makes the Armor officer more rounded in education and more competitive for the board. The Maneuver Self Study Program provides additional resources for self-development. The Maneuver Self Study Program can be found at the following address (<http://www.benning.army.mil/mssp/>).

d. Lieutenant colonel. The DA promotion board considers the major for promotion to lieutenant colonel at the 16th year of commissioned service. Highly-qualified officers in this phase may be selected to command a battalion or squadron. Other assignments include brigade/regimental S3 or XO, division primary staff, various JFHQ assignments, or other staff positions.

(1) *Education.* Completion of ILE Common Core Course is a requirement for promotion to lieutenant colonel. The Advanced Operations and Warfighting Course (AOWC) phase of ILE is a requirement for selection for battalion command. Selectees for battalion command attend the Maneuver Pre-Command Course. Qualified Armor lieutenant colonels may apply for the U.S. Army War College or other SSC (resident or DL). JPME courses offered through Joint Forces Staff College or Joint Continuing and Distance Education School are available primarily to those officers with a follow-on joint assignment.

(2) *Assignments.* Highly-qualified lieutenant colonels may be selected to command a battalion, squadron, or Armor TASS battalion. Other typical assignments include: brigade or regimental S3 or XO, division primary staff, and various JFHQ, or other staff positions. Joint assignments are important during this phase and may be critical for promotion to colonel.

(3) *Self-development.* During this phase of an Armor officer's career, self-development takes the form of self-assessment, off-duty civil schooling, perfecting mentoring and managerial skills, and sustaining physical conditioning. The officer should also continue to hone combined arms warfighting skills and understanding of the joint operational environment. The Maneuver Self Study Program provides additional resources for self-development. The Maneuver Self Study Program can be found at <http://www.benning.army.mil/mssp/>.

e. Colonel.

(1) *Education.* Completion of ILE is a requirement for promotion to colonel. Selectees for brigade command attend the Maneuver PCC. Colonels are encouraged to complete SSC (resident or nonresident).

(2) *Assignments.* Highly-qualified colonels may be selected to command an Armored BCT, Stryker BCT or Infantry BCT. Other typical assignments include AGR program participation and various senior duty positions at the division and JFHQ levels, and HQDA and joint staff assignments.

(3) *Self-development.* Armor colonels must maintain their branch skills and keep current on all changes that affect the Soldiers they command and/or manage. JIIM assignments are important during this phase. The Maneuver Self Study Program provides additional resources for self-development. The Maneuver Self Study Program can be found at <http://www.benning.army.mil/mssp/>.

Chapter 10 Aviation Branch

10-1. Unique features of the Aviation Branch

a. Purpose of the Aviation Branch.

(1) Army Aviation is an Operations branch. Army Aviation provides a maneuver advantage to Army and joint force commanders in unified land operations through its capabilities to overcome the constraints of limiting terrain and extended distances. Army Aviation essentially operates in the land domain, with the majority of its combat power in formations at the same echelon as supported ground formations and responsible to the same higher command. Aviation combat power is integrated with the ground force at the lowest practical level, ensuring responsiveness to the needs of the ground commander. Army Aviation conducts reconnaissance and security to develop actionable combat information; employs fires to destroy, neutralize, or suppress enemy forces; conducts air assault to maneuver ground forces to positions of advantage in relation to the enemy; provides air movement of personnel, equipment, and supplies to points of need; conducts air medical evacuation and provides air traffic services (ATS). When required, select Army Aviation units can establish and operate Army and Joint airfields in support of operations.

(2) In general, the Aviation company equipped with either manned rotary-wing or fixed-wing platforms or unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) is the basic 'building block' of the Army Aviation force. Aviation company types include: attack-recon (equipped with attack/reconnaissance helicopters such as the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior or AH-64