

# OFFICERS CAREER NOTES



## BRANCH CHIEF'S NOTES

With the new year a new Officer Distribution Plan (ODP) has taken effect. Essentially, it reduces the number of authorized positions in USAREUR and FORSCOM and increases TRADOC requirements. *These changes significantly affect the assignment process.*

The two items that follow in these notes should help clarify the ODP and the assignment process. Combined with some of the information in our Infantry Branch Newsletter (CY 1982), these items are a way for us to communicate with infantry officers.

We will be working closely with USMA, ROTC, and OCS representatives on initial assignments for our new lieutenants. Additional schooling for them, such as Airborne and Ranger, will also be a primary concern.

Captains will continue to move in and out of the Advanced Course and will begin to attend CAS<sup>1</sup> at a more rapid rate, until all captains can attend.

Generally, majors and lieutenant colonels will alternate between their two specialties and continue to attend staff and senior service colleges, respectively.

We hope that our new Infantry Branch Newsletter will help you with your plans for 1982.

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## OFFICER DISTRIBUTION PLAN

The total number of officers in the Army, by each grade and specialty, *does not match perfectly either the total authorizations (from TOE and TDA documents) or the total positions for any given grade and special-*

*ty. (There are four grades — captain through colonel — and about 37 specialties, or about 148 combinations of grades and specialties.)*

Given these odds and all the other variables involved, a perfect match of grades, specialties, and preferences is unlikely. Even if we could freeze authorizations and count noses it wouldn't help. Because assignments are usually made three to nine months in advance, the match-up has to be made on the projected (estimated) inventory versus the projected authorizations.

The Officer Development Plan (ODP) grew out of the need to get the right number of officers with the right grades and specialties to the places where they are needed the most.

The ODP is essentially a matrix (or several of them) with grades on one axis and specialties on the other. Almost every installation has its own matrix, its own ODP. For example, on Fort Carson's ODP, at the intersection of "captain" and "SC 11," the number 53 appears. This means that the sum of the Infantry captains at Fort Carson, plus those on orders to Fort Carson, minus those on orders to leave Fort Carson, should equal 53, no more and no less.

It is a good idea to note here that a given unit can have many vacant positions (authorizations from TDA and TOE) and still be over its ODP. When a friend tells you his unit needs captains and your assignment officer tells you that unit is overstrength, both are correct. The inventory of officers — by extension, the ODP — does not equal authorizations.

The ODP is developed annually for the coming calendar year (CY). Requirements are the projected needs (by grade and specialty) for all Army elements, primarily the sum of all

projected TDA and TOE positions. The projected officer inventory is another matter.

The challenge for the Officer Personnel Management Directorate (OPMD) is to project, months in advance, all the new officers coming on active duty, plus retirements, resignations, promotions, specialty designations and changes, professional schooling and all the other factors that affect the availability of an officer for assignment in a given grade and specialty.

There is only one way to make this projection — name by name, file by file. Career managers (assignment officers) review each individual's status to confirm his specialties, assignment actions, qualifications, schooling, availability, term of service, and personnel actions. Once this inventory has been completed, each officer can be placed in one of three basic categories:

First, an officer may be deleted from the list and not counted at all because of his expected retirement or release from active duty.

Second, he may be considered available for reassignment. As an example, for the CY 1982 ODP, an officer is considered available for reassignment if he is to complete a tour between 1 January 1982 and 30 September 1983 and has not already been placed on orders.

Why September 1983? Because assignments are made nine months in advance, and by December 1982 some officers will be placed on orders with report dates as far away as the following September.

Generally, officers who are available for reassignment are considered available in either of their specialties; the chief exception is an officer (usually a captain) who is not qualified in his initial specialty. In

this case, he will not be considered available in his additional specialty. Another exception is an officer who is in training (FAO or language) for a particular assignment.

The third category, officers who are not available for reassignment, includes those whose tours will not be completed by the end of September 1983. These officers, working in one of their two specialties, are not considered available for reassignment in their other specialties.

Once each officer is thus categorized, it is possible, through a computer program, to compare the available projected inventory with total projected requirements throughout the world. The officers in the first category are not counted at all. Those in the third category are counted against a requirement that matches their grades and serving specialties. The remaining officers, available for reassignment in either specialty, are matched against the appropriate requirements until the inventory is exhausted.

Again, this is accomplished with a computer program, and it does not always work out perfectly. In some cases officers are "left over" in particular grades and specialties; far more common, though, there will be shortages of officers in several grade and specialty combinations.

The net result of this comparison is called the Asset Utilization Plan (AUP), which reflects, by grade and specialty, the number of officers each branch should be able to provide in each specialty. In total numbers, then, AUP equals ODP, which reflects each major command's share of those officers, again by grade and specialty.

A unit's fill of officers is a reflection of the number of officers in the inventory and the unit's priority. This priority is determined, primarily, from the Department of the Army Master Priority List (DAMPL). One element of the DAMPL reflects personnel priority; this is a number that, when all of a MACOM'S units are consolidated, determines its percentage of fill. Another computer

program converts AUP to ODP in accordance with these priorities.

The process permits selective grade substitutions (for example, using extra lieutenants against shortages at other grades) and ensures that all elements receive a reasonable share of the available officers. This process determines an ODP for each MACOM; the MACOM commanders then sub-allocate officers to their subordinate commands and installations.

At MILPERCEN, the ODP has two main functions. First, the Distribution Division, OPMD, uses it to determine the requisitions that will be "opened," that is, passed to the assignment divisions to be filled; and second, it shows an assignment officer which commands have shortages that he needs to fill.

Because there are never quite enough officers to go around, the ODP is a way of making sure the ones that are available are placed where the Army needs them most.

### ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

The Officer Personnel Management Directorate (OPMD) directs the reassignment of Army Promotion List (APL) officers in the ranks of lieutenant through colonel. The OPMD provides the major commands with the officers they need to perform their missions, and the major commands determine the specific duty assignments for the effective employment of these officers.

But the assignment process is rarely simple and straightforward. Each assignment must be carefully considered because of special job prerequisites, such as military education, language ability, additional skill identifiers, security clearance, or because of problems related to the officer and his family.

The following example, although not a typical assignment action, demonstrates in a simple situation the major steps in an assignment process over a two-month assignment cycle.

On 29 December, the personnel

manager for U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR), submits a requisition for a major in specialty code (SC) 41 to replace an Armor officer in the G1 office of a division who is due to leave on normal rotation the following October.

The Distribution Division of OPMD receives the requisition, confirms the loss of the Armor officer, and ensures that USAREUR is projected to be below the ODP for majors in SC 41. Then it validates the request and forwards it to the AG Branch, which controls the assignment of officers in SCs 41, 42, and 43.

The controller at AG Branch reviews the participation of all branches in SC 41 assignments and finds that Infantry Branch is behind in participation and should be given the requirement. By 25 January the responsible assignment officer in Infantry Branch has the requirement.

The assignment officer reviews his management book for available officers in the CONUS sustaining base. This book contains a list of Infantry officers grouped by additional specialty codes and in the order of their dates of availability (DTAV).

After eliminating from consideration all the officers who are not available (those who are either serving overseas, attending a military PCS school, or serving in USMA or ROTC instructor duty during the next academic year), the assignment officer picks out five majors (11/41) whose DTAVs make them the most available for consideration.

In reviewing the Career Management Individual Files (CMIFs) of these officers, the assignment officer compares them in terms of military education level, last overseas tour, last tour with troops, eligibility for promotion, branch immaterial assignments, and personal preferences.

Officers A and B are eliminated from further consideration outright, because MAJ A is locked in to attend CGSC for his next PCS, and MAJ B will probably be selected for promotion by the next board.

MAJ C is available, has not been overseas since 1972, and has been away from the kind of troop opportunity that is available in Europe longer than any of the other officers being considered. But he wants a CONUS assignment, while both MAJs D and E want to get back to Europe.

MAJ E has never served in a branch immaterial assignment (USAREC, ROTC, USMA, USARMR) and should be assigned instead as XO (SC 41) in a district recruiting command. In the end, MAJ D, who is currently assigned to Fort Monroe, gets the assignment to Europe. (MAJ C remains vulnerable for overseas assignment if there are no volunteers. Otherwise, he will be

assigned to CONUS, hopefully to a FORSCOM or TRADOC installation with troop opportunities.)

The next step in the process is for the assignment officer to prepare an assignment worksheet. The appropriate enroute schooling is determined and requested. When the school request is approved and returned several days later, the final assignment worksheet is prepared. The worksheet is then circulated to the SC 41 controller, to the appropriate professional development officers, and to the Infantry Branch Chief for concurrence.

MAJ D's losing command, Fort Monroe, is then alerted by telephone to the proposed assignment action. This alert notification is passed down

the chain of command to MAJ D. Seventy-two hours after the losing command receives the alert, and not later than the end of February, a Request for Orders (RFO) is transmitted by MILPERCEN, unless either the losing command or MAJ D responds to the alert with a request for reconsideration of the assignment. The losing command publishes orders for MAJ D on the basis of the information in the RFO.

When these orders are issued for MAJ D, the personnel people at Fort Monroe adjust their projected strength to show themselves short one major in October. Fort Monroe then submits a requisition to MILPERCEN by 1 April for a major in SC 11, and the process starts over again.

## RESERVE COMPONENT NOTES

### CGSC WRITING REQUIREMENT

Officers who are now beginning their Command and General Staff College education through correspondence studies or through U.S. Army Reserve Schools will find their writing requirement doubled.

Before the 1981-82 school year, officers were required to write one 750- to 1,000-word paper on a military subject. In line with the Army's renewed emphasis on writing skills, this requirement has been expanded to include a 500- to 750-word argumentative paper plus a 1,000- to 1,500-word staff paper. This change parallels a revision in the resident CGSC course.

Exempt from the new requirement are students who are already enrolled in Phases III and V of the CGSC with USAR Schools and those who have already passed the writing requirement through correspondence courses.

Phase I students must submit the argumentative paper by 31 May 1982. Because about one student in five fails the first effort, students actually have until 1 October 1982 to pass the requirement.

For students enrolling now, the second paper — the staff paper — will have to be successfully completed by 1 October 1983 so that they can continue into Phase V of the course.

Even with a second submission, not all students succeed. Last year, 131 students were dropped from the course for failure to meet the earlier one-paper requirement.

### CAS<sup>3</sup> AND CGSC

Reserve officers will no longer receive Command and General Staff College equivalent credit for education and promotion purposes by completing the Combined Arms and Service Staff School (CAS<sup>3</sup>) course.

The change rescinds the earlier policy that the CAS<sup>3</sup> be considered the full educational equivalent of the CGSC.

The change will have little effect on the Reserve officer educational system. The Reserve officers who have completed CAS<sup>3</sup> will be granted CGSC equivalency for promotion purposes.

For most Reserve officers, the completion of CGSC is still required

for promotion to colonel, and the completion of half the course is required for promotion to lieutenant colonel.

### OER RATING CHAIN

The Officer Evaluation Reporting (OER) System rating chain for all officers now corresponds to their chain of command, even when the chain contains a mixture of Active and Reserve Component officers.

This eliminates a previous rule that required active duty officers to be rating officials for many Active Component officers serving in USAR units.

As an example of how the new policy works, an Active Component officer serving as a platoon leader with a USAR company could be rated by his Reserve company commander with the Reserve battalion commander serving as his senior rater.

Or, a USAR officer serving in an Active Guard Reserve status on the Department of the Army staff would normally be rated by an Active Component branch chief, while an Active Component division chief would be the senior rater.