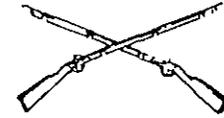




Commandant's NOTE



MAJOR GENERAL SAM WETZEL

INFANTRY PROPONENCY

On 1 October 1981 specialty proponency for the various branches was transferred to the commandants of the respective service schools. Thus, I, as Commandant of the U.S. Army Infantry School, became the Chief of Infantry.

This transfer of proponency for infantry was intended to ensure that specific infantry needs are taken into consideration when personnel management policies are established by the Department of the Army. The Infantry School is now responsible for gathering and evaluating information, for setting priorities, and for making changes that will improve the infantry and the individual infantryman.

One of the first problems we have had to face as infantry proponents is an MOS imbalance in certain enlisted ranks that limits promotion opportunities.

First, there is an imbalance between the ranks of sergeant and staff sergeant in MOS 11B (Infantryman). Because there are not enough authorizations at the rank of sergeant to permit smooth progression between the two grades, many sergeants are doing the work of staff sergeants without the additional pay or the additional rank.

A similar problem exists in MOS 11C (Indirect Fire Infantryman) between the ranks of staff sergeant and sergeant first class/platoon sergeant. Again, because there are not enough staff sergeant authorizations to meet the requirements at the higher grade, we must fill sergeant first class/platoon sergeant positions with staff sergeants. These limited authorizations also cause a bottleneck between the ranks of sergeant and staff sergeant in this MOS, which means that deserving sergeants cannot be promoted.

In MOS 11H (Heavy Antiarmor Weapons Crewman) there is a large base of staff sergeants supporting a small number of sergeants first class/platoon sergeants. This results in limited promotion opportunities for some very deserving noncommissioned officers.

In an effort to solve these problems, we have conducted an analysis of the Career Management Field (CMF) 11 structure and what might be done to correct them. For an MOS or a CMF to be self-sustaining it must be structured in the shape of a pyramid. Although CMF 11 is generally structured in this fashion, the CMF 11 MOSs are not. And since we now promote by MOS instead of by CMF, this has created a problem.

In our analysis we first looked at TOEs and MTOEs and decided that they should remain as they are so that the units will be structured and trained as they will be expected to fight. Secondly, we considered incorporating some MOSs into others

and using additional skill identifiers (ASI) to correct the problem. We soon realized, though, that certain skills are unique and are not necessarily additional skills within another MOS.

But in studying the Army's tables of distribution and allowances (TDAs), we saw that more than 91 percent of all enlisted infantry authorizations, regardless of grade, were coded 11B, a disproportionate number.

We felt that we could accomplish two objectives at the same time: We could recode certain selected 11B positions as either 11C or 11H positions, which meant that we could not only spread some of the talent we have in 11C and 11H among the TDA positions, we could bring a whole new dimension of experience to our training centers and schools. Secondly, we could simply increase the base of authorizations for staff sergeants in 11C and for sergeants first class/platoon sergeants in MOS 11H without increasing our end strength. (As the 11B positions at staff sergeant level were recoded as 11C, that would automatically decrease the imbalance between the ranks of sergeant and staff sergeant in 11B.)

We then looked at those enlisted positions that are considered infantry but that are still general in nature and are not MOS specific (drill sergeants and counseling, for example) and decided we could recode the ones we needed by grades and MOSs and use them to balance the various MOSs.

While the Infantry Training Center and the Infantry School can accommodate a lot of these proposed changes, it cannot accommodate them all. But we are taking the first step and setting the example so that other TDA units in TRADOC and FORSCOM will follow suit.

Specialty proponency, of course, is not our only task. We at the Infantry School, as do the other service schools, also have proponency for operational concepts, organization and force structure, materiel requirements, doctrine, tactics, training developments, and user testing. We will devote our best efforts to developing and promoting these concepts.

Fort Benning has truly assumed its rightful role as the Home of the Infantry. But the proponency for infantry extends far beyond the boundaries of Fort Benning. As Chief of Infantry I have traveled extensively in the past year in an effort to stay in touch with infantry units around the world. I will continue to do so. And I encourage you to keep up the dialogue with your home, Fort Benning

Practice Combined Arms.