

OFFICERS CAREER NOTES



ASSIGNMENT PATTERNS

Since September 1983, the officers at Infantry Branch have taken nine field trips, during which they talked with more than 1,000 officers. Additionally, in the past seven months about 700 Infantry officers have come to visit us at MILPERCEN. The major subject of all of these talks has been "typical assignment patterns." Although assignment patterns are never "typical," certain policies and procedures are used in making all assignments, and these policies and procedures may need to be clarified.

Infantry Branch uses four categories of duties in describing assignments — two with troops and two without:

- Initial Specialty (INSPEC) with troops.
- Additional Specialty (ADSPEC) with troops.
- INSPEC, without troops.
- ADSPEC, without troops.

An INSPEC or ADSPEC assignment with troops is one to an installation where a brigade or battalion is stationed. There, an officer has the opportunity to work in a position at brigade level or lower. (Remember that Infantry Branch assigns officers only to major commands or installations.) Assignments at brigade or below are made by the personnel managers at each level. Each individual officer must take steps to get such an assignment. If an officer cannot get an assignment at brigade level or below while on an assignment with troops, assignment officers still view such an assignment as being with troops.

The officers who are selected to go back to INSPEC or ADSPEC assignments with troops are those who have been away from troops the longest. Next in line for these assignments are

officers who have had an INSPEC or ADSPEC assignment with troops but failed to be assigned to a unit at brigade or below. The decision on whether an officer is to be assigned with troops or without troops is based on his assignment history and his branch qualifications. The amount of time an officer spends with troops is used as a discriminator in determining his future assignments.

Branch qualification criteria remain unchanged. An officer is considered branch qualified if he has had at least 12 months of TOE experience, has successfully completed the advanced course, and has successfully commanded a company. A lieutenant who does not receive a TOE assignment before going to the advanced course will go to a TOE assignment afterward. Once an officer is branch qualified, he can expect INSPEC or ADSPEC assignments away from troops.

Many of the assignments in the four categories require a nomination; many, however, do not. The term "nominative," therefore, is not an accurate description of an assignment.

As always, an officer should consider each of his jobs important, accept the challenge, and perform well. Success will follow.

COUNSELING

A review of the Officer Evaluation Reports coming in on some junior officers indicates a need for their commanders to do a better job of counseling them. Occasionally, an annual report contains lower marks and less-favorable comments than a relief for cause report would. Yet conversations with the officers concerned reveal that they were not counseled at all or, in some cases, that the counseling they

received was *favorable*.

By the time an officer is commissioned, the Army has invested a good deal of time and resources in him. Failure to develop him to his fullest potential is not fair to him or to the Army.

Every commander, therefore, should take time to counsel his subordinates. They are eager for feedback, and a lack of negative feedback is often perceived as support. It's easy to sit back and say nothing and then "hammer" a junior officer on his OER or build a case for relief. But what subordinates need is the guidance and experience that only the insight of a more experienced officer can provide.

It does not take many below-average OERs to make an officer non-competitive. It is far better for a commander to counsel a junior officer and monitor his progress (or lack of it) than to give him his first critique in the form of an OER that will be a permanent part of his record.

Not all newly commissioned officers are destined to become career officers, but the officer corps must try to develop all of them to their fullest potential.

UPDATING RECORDS

Each year as the promotion and selection boards prepare to convene, concerned officers rush to get their records in order. Invariably there is a great deal of confusion regarding what should be in their records and how it should get there.

These records include the following:

- Field 201 File — Military Personnel Record Jacket (MPRJ). Maintained by the local MILPO and used by the unit personnel office.

- Career Management Information File (CMIF). Maintained for personnel actions by Infantry Branch; used for assignment and professional development.

- Official Military Personnel File (OMPF). Maintained at MILPERCEN on microfiche by the Records Services Branch, PERSINSD; used by promotion and selection boards.

The OMPF contains two items that are critical to both assignment and promotion functions — the Officer Record Brief (ORB) and the microfiche.

An officer's ORB includes several all-important items that he should always keep up to date: assignment history, civilian and military education, and physicals — height and weight — which are due at ages 25, 30, 35 (every five years).

Each officer should go to his MILPO each year during his birth month to review his ORB and correct any discrepancies.

The microfiche record is in three parts — Performance (P), Service (S), and (sometimes) Restricted (R) — with the following contents and uses:

- The performance fiche contains evaluation reports, awards, decorations, letters of commendation, Article 15s, courts-martial, letters of reprimand, course completions, and college transcripts. It is used by selection boards, career managers, the Army Board for Correction of Military Records (ABCMR), and for other personnel actions. (For letters of commendation to be placed in his file, the officer's name must appear in the basic letter, and a statement that it is to be filed in his OMPF must appear in it.)

- The service fiche contains the accession package, promotion orders, extension of service agreements, RA appointments, and other data required for service computation. It is used by career managers, by the ABCMR, and for service computation. It is not normally seen by selection boards.

- The restricted fiche (when there is one) contains denied OER appeals, courts-martial with no finding of guilty, wholly-set-aside courts-martial

or Article 15s, and ABCMR case documents. It is seen only by the individual officer concerned and the ABCMR. It is not released to selection boards or other agencies without special permission or written request from the individual concerned.

- An officer's performance fiche is critical because it provides promotion boards with his evaluation reports, awards, and commendatory documents. He should make sure that all of his evaluation reports, and *only* his, are properly recorded.

Photographs are required within 60 days of promotion to first lieutenant. After the initial photo, the officer is required to update his photo every four years. Boots are not authorized in official photos. (AR 640-30 contains specific instructions.) Photos are maintained in hard copy at Infantry Branch — not on the microfiche.

An officer need not make a special trip to MILPERCEN to check his OMPF. He may obtain a free copy of his microfiche and his most current ORB by writing to DA, MILPERCEN, ATTN: DAPC-MSR-S, 200 Stovall Street, Alexandria, VA 22332.

Officers are encouraged to visit their MILPOs and submit changes through their personnel officers. Anyone who encounters difficulty in trying to get items on his records corrected should forward a request, along with substantiation, to Infantry Branch, and we will assist him.

Any officer who wants to visit MILPERCEN to review his records should call Records Service Branch (AUTOVON 221-9618 or commercial 202/325-9618) 72 hours before his visit so that his official file will be available. No appointment is necessary for the visit itself.

ACTIVE GUARD/RESERVE

The U.S. Army Reserve's Active Guard/Reserve management program (AGR) is now five years old. Its goal is to improve the mobilization readiness posture of the Army Reserve. The program has proved not only effective but essential in attaining that goal.

The program's strength increased in

Fiscal Year 1983 to more than 8,200 highly skilled and experienced Army Reserve officers and enlisted soldiers serving on active duty in USAR AGR status. These people serve in various duty positions within Army Reserve major commands and troop program units; Headquarters, Department of the Army, and commands throughout the United States, Europe, and Korea.

The program is to be expanded to more than 15,000 by the end of Fiscal Year 1985 and to more than 27,000 through Fiscal Year 1989. Only the best qualified Army Reservists become members of the program, and to be retained they must continue to display these attributes.

For information concerning application procedures and board schedules, interested Reservists should contact their personnel management officers/career counselors.

ARPERCEN PMOs

The Army Reserve Personnel Center (ARPERCEN) Personnel Management Officers (PMOs) are the same people who were previously the PMOs at the Reserve Components Personnel and Administration Center (RCPAC).

They are advisors and managers of the careers of officers and warrant officers who make up the Ready Reserve. This includes members of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) and Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs), all of whom must bolster the strength of our nation's total Army in case of a national emergency.

The PMOs for Active/Guard Reserve (AGR) officers perform slightly different tasks. These PMOs are functionally oriented; they manage both individuals and positions to accomplish mobilization goals. Acting as guidance counselors, AGR PMOs initiate actions and monitor their progression, answering officers' questions, such as "When do I go to school?" "What is my next assignment?" and "What is best for my career?"