

OFFICERS CAREER NOTES



BRANCH CHIEF NOTES

Over the past several months numerous promotion and selection boards have convened. Each of these boards, after it adjourns, sends comments to MILPERCEN concerning the official files of the officers involved and the problems it encountered during its deliberations — many of which significantly affected the board's ability to analyze officer records accurately.

The Officer Record Brief (ORB) continues to be a sore point. Many ORBs the boards review are inaccurate. Assignment history, length of time in each assignment, and duty title are the items mentioned as most critical. Local military personnel officers are responsible for updating ORBs, and officers should work closely with their MILPOs. Tenacity and perseverance are required if ORBs are to be accurate.

Hard copy photographs are still missing from many records. An officer's photograph is important in developing board member perceptions about him and his potential for selection or promotion. Photographs should be sent straight to Infantry Branch; we will see that it is filed properly.

Promotion boards have few decision tools. The letter of instruction they receive, ORBs, performance microfiche, and photographs provide the guidance and information they use to make decisions. No officer should take a chance with inaccurate data on his ORB or fiche.

SPECIALTY 54

In December 1981 a proposal to revise SC 54 and eliminate SC 28 (Training Development) was ap-

proved. The two would be merged into a new SC 54 called Operations, Plans, Training, and Force Development.

Along with the merger of SC 54 and SC 28, an additional skill identifier (ASI 7Y) was established for combat development positions, thus eliminating SSI 54B. The unique skills associated with training development were identified by ASI 7Q. This action was intended to promote the establishment of a corps of officers who were proficient in the skills associated with planning and conducting unit operations and training. In addition, the new SC 54 expanded the role of force developer to include manpower management.

Why should an Infantry officer want to have this as one of his specialties? The desire to remain close to fighting units and at the center of tactical operations is an overriding reason, and 31.2 percent of all SC 54 officers are now Infantrymen.

Challenge, promotion, and schooling also make the specialty attractive. Specialty 54 develops our corps and division principal staff officers and high level planners. The operational doctrine of today's Army demands staff officers and commanders who can integrate the actions associated with combat, combat support, and combat service support elements of the AirLand Battle. This complex focusing of activities is called Combined Arms Integration. It has become imperative that the Army develop competent officers who can not only keep pace with this trend but also shape and direct it. Because of its generalist nature and its emphasis on plans, operations, training, and force development, specialty 54 seems uniquely suited to meet today's needs.

Current trends indicate that the opportunity for promotion and selection are excellent for officers serving in SC

54. These officers have shown an above average rate of promotion to colonel, lieutenant colonel, and major, and an above average schooling selection rate for the Command and General Staff College and the senior service colleges.

Some new proposals are now being considered that are designed to help prepare SC 54 officers for the future. The SC 54 portion of AR 611-101 (Commissioned Officer Specialty Classification System) is being revised. If the revised regulation is approved, it will orient future SC 54 officers more toward the tactical environment than is the case now.

This may be accomplished by requiring that all SC 54s be branch qualified. As defined by Infantry Branch, this means they must have successfully completed an officer advanced course and a company command. Although it is not a requirement for entry into SC 54, developmental experience in assignments that support combined arms operations in a tactical environment may ultimately be required for retention. Such assignments might include, for example, battalion/brigade S3 or XO, assistant S3, S3 Air, G3 operations/plans, tactics instructor, air/ground liaison officer.

There are no specific qualification benchmarks by grade. Generally, an efficiency report, other than an adverse one, for a period of at least 12 months from one of the previously mentioned jobs, would qualify an officer at that grade. Additionally, as a minimum training standard for SC 54, each officer must complete the MEL 4 (command and staff level schooling), in either its resident or non-resident form, by the time he enters the zone for promotion to lieutenant colonel.

In February 1984 a quality review of all SC 54 officer records outside the

command and staff college selection window (promotable majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels) was conducted. The officers this board found to be unqualified are being asked to consider another specialty or to update their qualification criteria.

The force development portion of AR 611-101 will also fundamentally change. To qualify in the future for SSI 54C (Force Development), an officer must first be a qualified 54. The officer should apply for the new four-week Force Development Course taught at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Anyone who is headed for a force development or manpower management assignment should contact his assignment officer at MILPERCEN to see about attending this course.

The proposed revision of AR 611-101 will change duty position coding guidance to get SC 54s down to brigade level positions. This would occur in lieu of the current use of most SC 54s, which is basically at corps level and above.

Additional questions or comments should be directed to the SC 54 controllers at Infantry Branch: Major Chris E. Brown (LTC controller) and Captain Spurgeon A. Moore (MAJ/CPT controller) at AUTOVON 221-0317/18 or commercial (202) 325-0317/18.

SERVICE OBLIGATIONS

Officers who attend advanced level schools that start after 30 September 1984 will have to remain in the Army for at least a year. This move is intended to make mid-level training more cost effective.

Specific obligations include, for example, the following:

- A one-year obligation for attending an officer advanced course starting 1 October 1984 or later, with the obligation effective upon graduation or upon release from the course.
- A two-year obligation for officers attending the Judge Advocate General's graduate course.
- A three-year obligation for officers entering the astronaut candidate

program after July 1984.

These revised service obligations will be included in a change to AR 350-100. Further information is available from local military personnel officers.

OAC RESTRUCTURED

The mission of Officer Advanced Courses (OACs) is to produce technically and tactically competent captains who are professionally qualified for their next assignment and prepared for future development.

Another benefit of a branch OAC is that it gives young officers an opportunity to soak up not only the latest ideas and developments of their branch, but also to share experiences and aspirations with their fellow officers. The branch schools also benefit from their OACs because of the new ideas, insights, and challenges students fresh from duty in the field bring with them to each school. The schools and their faculties thus can be better proponents for doctrine and development.

Over the past year, TRADOC, recognizing the increased schooling demands on the officer corps and the growing needs for specialized education, has explored options for improving the OACs. After several alternatives were presented and discussed, a decision was made to retain the present permanent-change-of-station (PCS) OAC, but in a modified form.

A PCS OAC of 20 weeks will be established. It will contain a core of common and branch-specific tasks that all students will take and a series of modules that will be determined on an individual basis in coordination with each student. The selection of the individual modules will be based on SSI experience or professional development requirements. Additional modules of up to six weeks at the end of an OAC will give an officer intensive training for his next assignment.

The OAC core will provide the basic knowledge and skills all captains in a

particular branch need, and will be made up of common and branch specific components. The common component, of about six weeks, will be prescribed by TRADOC and included in every OAC. It will cover leadership, training, combined arms, logistics, force development, and other common military subjects. The length and content of the branch-specific component will be determined by each commandant and will vary by branch.

The modules within the 20-week core OAC will provide more detailed technical and tactical instruction. They may be organized around SSI or configured functionally, depending on the structure and the requirements of the particular branch. They will be designed to provide individualized training to officers.

Add-on pre-command and other functional modules will give an officer intensive training for his next assignment and will be selected for each student after that assignment has been determined. The type and length of a module will be determined by the branch proponent and will vary by branch, but in no case will it exceed six weeks.

The concept of add-on modules will allow an officer several methods of attending and completing advanced course training. For example, those officers with a clearly defined branch assignment will take the appropriate modules at their own service schools, such as the pre-command course or the operations module for S3s. Officers going to S1 assignments will go to the course at Fort Benjamin Harrison, while those selected to be battalion maintenance officers will go to a course at Fort Knox or Fort Benning. Officers who are going to an assignment that requires no specific training (graduate school, for example) or to a command that provides its own assignment-specific training (Recruiting Command, ROTC) will leave their service schools at the end of the 20-week OAC.

The implementation date for this revised OAC is January 1985.