

# OFFICERS CAREER NOTES



## CALLING INFANTRY BRANCH

There is a considerable amount of frustration both in Infantry Branch and in the field because of the volume of telephone calls to assignment officers. Each of them is on the phone almost constantly, with one or more calls on "hold," and you may sometimes have difficulty getting through. But there are some ways in which you can help reduce the number of calls and get better service as well.

First, remember that a current preference statement is vital to your assignment officer in making assignments. Therefore, make sure you have an up-to-date preference form on file 9 to 12 months before you are eligible for reassignment. (Generally speaking, Infantry Branch does not have requirements for assignments until five months before a report date if the location is in CONUS and eight months if the location is overseas. An exception to the CONUS rule is ROTC. We know about 95 percent of the ROTC requirements for the following summer each September or October.)

See that your preference statement is realistic. For example, if you are a captain who is branch qualified and currently with troops, you should not ask for assignment only to troop installations. If you do you risk wasting your top few choices.

Make sure your office and home telephone numbers are on the preference form so that your assignment officer can easily get in touch with you. (Periodically, Army requirements force assignment officers to look for someone to fill an assignment earlier than the normal five or eight months before a reporting date.)

You should be aware, too, that Infantry Branch has several personnel

technicians who assist the assignment officers in answering inquiries. Most of these technicians have been in Infantry Branch for several years and can answer many of your questions, including those on extensions, nominations, requests for orders, and receipt of photographs, preference forms, and transcripts, and on other routine matters. Insisting upon speaking to your assignment officer when a technician could answer your question only ties up the officer, keeps other officers on "hold" who are in the active window for assignment, and in the long run raises the frustration level for everyone. Any time the technician you reach cannot answer your question, he or she will then transfer you to the assignment officer himself.

The assignment officers in Infantry Branch have a genuine desire to maintain effective two-way communication with officers in the field. They share your frustrations when high-priority calls cannot be made because of a large volume of routine calls that could be handled either by mail or by the technicians.

Please keep these guidelines in mind so that all infantry officers can be served more efficiently and more quickly.

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## SPECIALTY CODE 18

A MILPERCEN board convened in July to review the ORBs of about 1,500 officers who applied for designation into Specialty Code (SC) 18. From these applicants, the board designated about 850 officers. Judging from the many phone calls from officers in the field, a few points having to do with Special Operations and the SC 18 board are worth reviewing.

The recent board looked only at

each officer's ORB, not at his file ("P" fiche). The members of the board designated an officer in SC 18 on the basis of his experience in his basic branch, on his experience in Special Forces, and on a proportionate representation of his basic year group and branch within Special Operations Forces. The quality of an officer's performance did not necessarily affect his chances of being designated, because OERs were not reviewed. Neither was availability for assignment into the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) considered.

Officers who are not in SC 18 will continue to be assigned to Special Operations Forces (so long as they are "5G" qualified) until 1986-87. (These officers may re-apply for SC 18 each year.)

Special Operations is not an Infantry assignment, nor is it intended to be Infantry-dominant. Combat arms, combat support arms, and combat service support branches are represented throughout SOCOM now, and the board designated some combat support and combat service support officers to ensure greater participation within SOCOM in the future.

Officers who acquire SC 18 as an ADSPEC will continue to serve in assignments in their basic branches. This will serve the dual purpose of developing an officer in his primary branch while simultaneously providing SOCOM with professionally mature and experienced officers.

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## OPMS SURVEY RESULTS

The initial results of a survey that asked some 17,000 randomly selected officers for their perceptions of the Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) have been released.

The study group asked these officers for their candid opinions and, as a result, have already identified several areas of obvious concern:

- Officers think combat support and combat service support officers should serve with troops during their initial duty assignments.

- Nearly half the officers surveyed report that the officer efficiency report support form, DA Form 67-8-1, is prepared when an OER is due, not during the first 30 days of an assignment as required by regulation.

- They are concerned about the Army's loss of officers who leave the service as soon as possible following their nonselection for promotion, command, or school. Officers surveyed favor a system that would retain experienced officers through a full career and reduce the effect of an "up or out" policy.

- Many officers feel that if they are not selected to command at battalion level there is little chance for career progression.

- Many officers are concerned about the limited number of commands available; at the same time, though, they don't want command tour lengths reduced from the current 24 months.

- Officers support the current military and civilian training and school systems.

The final results of the survey, along with approved changes to OPMS, will be published when the study has been completed.

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## PHOTO NOTED ON ORB

Since the decision was made not to put officers' official photos on their Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) microfiche records, officers have had no way of telling whether MILPERCEN has received their latest photos.

But now the month and year of the most recent official photo that MILPERCEN has received are printed in Section X, Remarks, of each officer's Officer Record Brief.

This makes it simple for each offi-

cer to make sure his photo is in good order for the next DA selection boards and MILPERCEN career managers to use in deciding on promotions, assignments, and schools.

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## RANGERS NEEDED

Infantry Branch is constantly looking for lieutenants to serve in the Ranger battalions. To be assigned to one of these battalions, an officer must meet the following prerequisites: Be a senior second lieutenant or a first lieutenant with less than one year time in grade; have completed a normal overseas tour (Korea, Alaska, Panama), or have a minimum of 12 months time-on-station (TOS) in the continental United States; be recommended for the assignment by his present commander; and be Airborne and Ranger qualified.

Any lieutenant who meets the above prerequisites and wants to volunteer for assignment to a Ranger battalion should submit a DA Form 4187 through his chain of command to Commander, MILPERCEN, ATTN: DAPC-OPE-I, 200 Stovall Street, Alexandria, VA 22332.

For further information, anyone who is interested may write to this same address or call AUTOVON 221-0207/08 or commercial (202) 325-0207/08.

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## RESERVE COMPONENT NOTES

### AGR PROFILES

Some active duty U.S. Army Reservists with physical profiles now face board action that could reclassify them or even see them separated from the Army. This is all part of a new regulation designed to ensure that all soldiers can do their jobs under field conditions anywhere in the world.

This new regulation, AR 600-60, applies to most active duty members, including members of the Active Guard/Reserve (AGR) program. It

does *not* apply to USAR soldiers who are ordered to active duty or active duty for training for periods of 30 days or less or to members serving on inactive duty training and active duty training under 10 USC 270(b).

In July, MOS/medical retention boards began screening all soldiers who hold "Level Three" physical profiles. These post-level screening boards now certify whether a soldier is deployable.

The initial screening board may either retain soldiers in their present specialties or reclassify them. It also has the option of putting soldiers on a six-month probation, in which case commanders submit evaluations after 90 days. While the board may refer soldiers to the physical disability system, it will make no decisions concerning their separation from the Army.

Soldiers who are found to be unfit for "worldwide deployability" could be reclassified into a different job or referred to the Army Physical Disability System for further evaluation and possible separation from the Army.

The results of a two-month evaluation of the new procedures show that most soldiers are retained in their current specialties. Only a few are referred for possible separation or reclassification.

The new system also ends the practice of allowing soldiers to sign medical condition statements that allow them to continue their present duty assignments within the limits of their profiles.

The board will review all soldiers who carry physical profiles with a numerical factor of three in one or more of the Army physical profile serial, or "PULHES," factors. Soldiers who receive physical profiles of four will still be referred for physical disability processing.

A physical evaluation board will determine physical fitness — a soldier's ability to do his job. The board may recommend separation from the Army if a soldier cannot reasonably perform the full range of duties required by his MOS/specialty.