

ENLISTED CAREER NOTES

STABILIZATION

The term *stabilization* means, of course, that a soldier has assignment stability. But if the process of identifying and requesting the stabilization of a soldier is not done according to the proper procedures, it can cause confusion and frustration in the control and management system.

Let's take, just as an example, the duty position of first sergeant. A commander does not stabilize a soldier in that position just by putting him behind the first sergeant's desk.

AR 614-5, paragraph 2-11, Computing Stabilized Tours, states that "Stabilized tour lengths will be computed from the initial duty reporting date to the installation, or to the organization, whichever comes first." This means, obviously, that if a soldier has just been assigned to an installation and his first assigned duty position is as a first sergeant, then his MILPO updates the Enlisted Master File (EMF) by a SIDPERS input. This input will code the stabilization into effect. For soldiers assigned to CONUS, their DA Form 2A (Personnel Qualification Record) will show an AEA code of "V," followed by a year-month date reflecting the end of the stabilization.

Commanders and individual soldiers must be responsible for seeing that this important stabilization occurs. They can verify that it has been recorded on the EMF by ordering a copy of the soldier's DA Form 2A a couple of months after the stabilization is supposed to have been initiated. If it has not been recorded, then immediate corrective action can be taken.

But what about a soldier who has been on an installation for a while and who has served in one or more duty positions before being assigned as a

first sergeant?

AR 614-5, paragraph 2-11, continues: "Exceptions will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Requests for exception will be forwarded to the appropriate addresses in Appendix B." This simply means that if a soldier's first duty position at an installation was not as a first sergeant, then his command must *request* the stabilization from HQDA. The stabilization, if favorably considered, will then be authorized by DA. The initiation of a SIDPERS input alone will not accomplish the mission.

FIRST SERGEANT SQI

To award the first sergeant SQI (Skill Qualification Identifier), a commander must follow the procedures outlined in AR 614-200, paragraph 8-66 (c), Eligibility for award of first sergeant SQI. This paragraph states: "The commander awarding the SQI will send information to MILPERCEN for entry on the EMF (AR 640-2-1 and procedure 2-58, DA Pamphlet 600-8-2). Copies of orders awarding SQI 'M' and DA Forms 2A and 2-1 will be forwarded to HQDA (DAPC-EPK-1) for inclusion in the soldier's Career Management Individual File (CMIF). A copy of all correspondence will be retained in the soldier's MPRG."

(If practical, the outside of the envelope should be marked with the pay grade and MOS of the soldier involved. This speeds distribution to the team that will respond to the soldier's request.)

TOLL-FREE EPMD NUMBER

A new 24-hour commercial toll-free telephone number is now available for

enlisted soldiers to use in calling the Information and Assistance Office at the Enlisted Personnel Management Directorate at MILPERCEN.

Soldiers who need personnel assistance, such as contacting their assignment managers or other related matters, can now call 1-800-255-9411.

NEW PROMOTION POLICY

Since October 1984, unit commanders have new, simpler administrative procedures to follow when promoting their soldiers to CPL/SP4. The new policy in no way constitutes automatic advancement, however. Commanders must continue to make conscious decisions on which of their soldiers are fully qualified.

The new promotion authorization, developed to ease the workload on MILPOs and units, has the following key elements:

- All PFCs with three months in grade are eligible for advancement to CPL/SP4 at 24 months' time-in-service without any percentage restrictions (as it now stands). Soldiers must still be recommended by their commanders and must otherwise meet eligibility criteria.

- The Defense Department restriction that no more than 20 percent of the assigned CPLs/SP4s may have fewer than 24 months' time-in-service remains in effect.

- Promotion orders are not required for advancement. Instead, unit commanders will advance their soldiers to CPL/SP4 using a DA Form 4187 until an automated promotion instrument is fielded. The SIDPERS Enlisted Promotion Report can still be used to identify soldiers who are eligible for advancement.

- Early this year, MILPERCEN officials will field a modified version of

the SIDPERS report that will enable commanders to select soldiers for advancement at the 24-month point simply by checking a block "yes" or "no." For these advancements, neither orders nor a DA Form 4187 will be required.

Until instructions for preparing the DA Form 4187 are available, commanders have the authority to modify the PFC format outlined in Procedure No. 14-5 of DA Pamphlet 600-8-1.

FREE OMPF COPY

A soldier no longer has to visit the Army's Enlisted Records and Evaluation Center (EREC) at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, to find out what's in his Official Master Personnel File (OMPF). Since the Army converted the paper OMPF to microfiche, a soldier may obtain a free copy of his file for review at his home station.

All he has to do is write to Commander, USAEREC, ATTN: PCRE-RF-I, Fort Benjamin Harrison, IN 46249-5301. Each request should include the soldier's complete Social Security Number, name, return address, and signature. It takes about 20 days to process requests.

All soldiers are advised to request a free copy once a year to ensure that their files are accurate, and NCOs in zones of consideration for DA selection boards should ask for one at least four months before the board is scheduled to convene.

Soldiers can still visit EREC offices at Fort Benjamin Harrison, of course, to review their OMPFs, but they must make appointments by calling AUTOVON 699-3361 or commercial (317) 542-3361.

ARMY NEEDS LINGUISTS

The Army's language program offers soldiers a variety of jobs in different career fields and in many locations. To qualify, a soldier must meet the following requirements:

- Must have earned a high school diploma or its GED equivalent.

- Must have a standard score of 45 or higher on the High School Level GED Test 1 and 2 if he graduated from a non-English-speaking high school.

- Must earn a Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB) score of 85 for Dutch, French, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish, and all dialects of these languages.

- Must have a DLAB score of 89 for languages other than those listed above.

- Must have an interim or final security clearance of Secret.

- Must have a physical profile serial of 1 in the "S" factor (psychiatric) and a minimum hearing acuity of 2 in each ear in the "H" factor.

- Must have a score of 95 or higher on the Skill Technical (ST) aptitude area of the ASVAB or AFCT, or on the GT aptitude area of the ACB if tested before May 1973.

- Must have completed Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training before entering language training.

- Must be eligible for reenlistment according to the requirements listed in AR 601-280, Army Reenlistment Program.

- Must not be serving on an enlistment for which he has received an enlistment bonus or a selective reenlistment bonus.

A soldier who is selected for language training must also waive any unfulfilled enlistment or reenlistment commitments. (See AR 601-210, Regular Army and Army Reserve Enlistment Program, or AR 601-280 for details.) He will incur a service obligation as outlined in AR 614-200, Selection of Enlisted Soldiers for Training.

The current DA Circular in the 350 series (Language Training for Enlisted Personnel) contains schedules for this training including starting and ending dates, MOS, grade, and programmed unit of assignment. The circular is updated annually.

Soldiers who are interested in pursuing careers in foreign languages should visit their local MILPOs.

NEW EQUIPMENT TRAINING

MILPERCEN has established procedures for reclassifying, reassigning, and stabilizing soldiers who undergo New Equipment Training (NET) and earn a new MOS or ASI.

To qualify for NET, a soldier must not have a separation action pending or an approved reenlistment option that will cause his reassignment to a location where he cannot use the training. He must meet reclassification criteria for the NET MOS as specified in AR 611-201 and must not have received assignment instructions to a non-NET unit.

The local MILPO will report the new MOS or ASI for which a soldier is undergoing NET through SIDPERS to MILPERCEN 60 days before the training begins. This will ensure that the soldier's newly acquired skill shows up in the automated personnel system. It will also ensure that the soldier is subsequently reassigned to units where his skill can be used.

Soldiers will be stabilized from 60 days before NET through 60 days after NET. The MILPO establishes the stabilization period by adjusting each soldier's AEA code or DEROS. (The stabilization policy applies only to soldiers who are actually undergoing NET; it does not apply to other support personnel in the unit.)

At the beginning of the NET stabilization period, the NET unit will compile a roster of the soldiers scheduled for training and send it through the MILPO to the appropriate MILPERCEN career branch. When the training is completed, the unit commander will certify the training roster and send a copy of it back to MILPERCEN through MILPO.

Soldiers who do not complete NET will revert to the MOS they held previously. The MILPO will then terminate the stabilization period and delete from their new assignments any soldiers who were on assignment instructions in a NET MOS or ASI.

More information is available from MILPERCEN, DAPC-EPZ-H, AUTOVON 221-8090 or 221-8091.

OFFICERS CAREER NOTES

CVI/VI PROCEDURES

More officers in the other-than-regular-Army (OTRA) category are now requesting Conditional Voluntary Indefinite (CVI) or Voluntary Indefinite (VI) status. A change to AR 135-215 (Officer Records of Service on Active Duty) will therefore be required so that the necessary strength limits can be maintained more easily.

The new system will require the establishment of a centralized board that is responsible for the qualitative management of the officer corps. The proposed process outlined here will use centralized screening to review the CVI/VI applications of all OTRA officers who ask for career status.

Applicants for both CVI and VI status will be evaluated by a single-panel board. The board will include an appropriate minority member, a woman, and a Reserve Component member, and the board president will be at least a colonel.

The board will select only those applicants who have the potential to serve 20 years of active Federal service and whose manner of performance is competitive with that of their contemporaries. An officer whose manner of performance represents a promotion risk will not be selected.

Before submitting a request for CVI status, OTRA officers must complete at least two years of active Federal service. They will be scheduled to attend an advanced course only after their CVI status has been determined.

Applications for CVI status will include recommendations from the officer's chain of command and will be forwarded so as to arrive at the officer's career management division not later than his 27th month of AFCS. Each officer must state on his application that he understands that he may

have to accept a branch transfer in exchange for continued active duty, and he will list three branch preferences in case a transfer becomes mandatory. If he wants to be voluntarily transferred to another branch, he must also state this on his application.

Because all CVI-approved officers will be identified automatically by computer, no formal application is required for VI. OTRA officers will be considered before they complete eight years of AFCS. The centralized board will vote on each officer's file for VI when he has had seven and one-half years of AFCS.

All officers who are approved for VI status will be allowed to remain in the Army until selected for promotion to major and integrated into the Regular Army, unless they are separated sooner under other appropriate regulations.

At the VI point, the Army hopes to have succeeded in balancing all branch strengths. If basic branch shortages still remain, however, it may be necessary to transfer more officers from over-strength specialties to the under-strength ones. In such cases, every effort will be made to assess the effect of such a move on each officer's career. Additionally, every effort will be made to make branch transfers on a voluntary basis, preferably selecting those officers who have had the most experience in the new branch.

All officers who have already been approved for CVI/VI will continue on active duty under the old criteria.

The proponent for AR 135-215 is MILPERCEN, ATTN: DAPC-OPP-M. The point of contact for questions is the Personnel Actions Branch, Combat Arms Division, AUTOVON 221-0146/0147 or commercial (202) 325-0146/0147.

DOUGHBOY AWARD

The Distinguished Doughboy Award is presented each year to an individual who has been instrumental in improving the morale and welfare of the Infantryman.

The award, established in 1980, is a brass-plated, World War I doughboy helmet mounted on a walnut base that is decorated with crossed rifles. Past recipients of the award are Bob Hope, H. Ross Perot, Bill Mauldin, Major General Aubrey S. Newman, and Senator John G. Tower.

Traditionally, the Doughboy Award is presented annually at the National Infantry Ball, and Infantry Branch, MILPERCEN is now accepting nominations for the 1985 award. The 1985 ball is scheduled for 9 November in Washington, D.C.

Any Army Infantryman may nominate a candidate for the award, keeping in mind the following criteria:

- The award is presented to an individual, not to an organization, in recognition of that person's direct efforts to aid the Infantryman.

- The award cannot be presented posthumously except when the recipient dies after he has been selected.

- The award *cannot* be given to active duty military members, to civilian executives who are active in the defense establishment, or anyone who is directly involved in or affiliated with an organization that has defense industry contracts.

- The recipient does not have to be present to accept the award.

- The final selection is made by the Commander of the U.S. Army Infantry Center and School at Fort Benning.

Nominations should be submitted to HQ MILPERCEN, ATTN: DAPC-OPE-I (CPT Sittnick), 200

PREFERENCE STATEMENT

The Preference Statement (DA Form 483) is your most important link with your assignment officer, and you reduce your chance of going where you want to go when you do not see that there is a current statement in your file. (Currently, about 60 percent of the files managed in Infantry Branch do not contain a current preference statement.)

Because of the volume of requirements and the number of Infantry officers, the everyday job of making assignments is quite demanding and time sensitive. The assignment officer, using computer rosters, must identify the most available and best qualified officers to consider for a specific position. Once he has done this, the first document he consults in an officer's file is his preference statement.

If you have a current and detailed preference statement in your file, your assignment officer immediately knows several things about you:

- What position you now hold.
- What you want to do next (professional and personal considerations).
- How to get in touch with you (home and duty telephone numbers).
- Something about your family (personal data).

The reverse side of the preference statement form explains how to fill it out, but here are a few tips:

Under the section entitled "MACOM/Activity/Location," list as many locations as you prefer. Do *not* limit your selection to three locations just because three spaces are provided on the form. This is particularly important if your first three choices are Forts Carson, Lewis, and Ord. This is not to say that you should not request these locations, but because many other Infantrymen also request them, you need to give the assignment officer more flexibility in making your assignment.

Under "Duty Assignment," in-

clude Army priority assignment choices (ARMR, ROTC, USMA, USAREC, and DA Staff) as well as the traditional Infantry assignments. If it is your turn for an assignment away from troops and you have failed to state a clear preference, you are taking a chance on being assigned without regard to your wishes. Many Infantrymen would prefer, for example, a three-year assignment teaching or developing doctrine at the Infantry School to a three-year ROTC assignment, and assignment officers need to know this. Even though your assignment officer always tries to consult you before making an assignment, your location or duty requirement may make it impossible for him to reach you.

Under "Professional Development Comments," list your career aspirations. For example, if you are interested in a battalion or company command, as most Infantry officers are, request assignments that will improve your chances of getting one. Also include any comments that you consider pertinent to managing your career.

Under "Personal Considerations," list any personal problems that you want your assignment officer to consider. If you have a legitimate personal hardship, ask for a compassionate assignment in accordance with AR 614-100, or apply for the Exceptional Family Membership Program.

The timely submission of your preference statement is absolutely essential. As a general rule, if you want an overseas tour, your preference statement should reach MILPERCEN nine months before the desired reporting date and for a CONUS assignment, six months before.

It is suggested that the statements be submitted at these times:

- When the Personnel Qualification Record (DA Form 2-1) is initially prepared.
- About 9 to 12 months before the completion of an overseas tour or a stabilized tour within CONUS.
- Within 60 days before beginning a course of instruction at a CONUS

service school on a PCS, at a civilian institution, or in a training with industry program.

- Nine months before completing an initial utilization tour and at any time thereafter when preferences change (if you are a commissioned officer who has received his graduate degree through a full-time Army program that requires a utilization tour).

If you obtained a degree from another source (on your own or before you were commissioned), you are also invited to indicate such preferences. After studying DA Pamphlet 600-3 (Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Utilization), with Changes 1-3, specify in Item 12 of the form where you want a reutilization tour. This statement should include the type of assignment you prefer (personnel management, procurement, R and D staff officer, for example) and, if you know them, the agencies or headquarters to which you would like to be assigned periodically throughout your remaining years of service.

It is recommended that you keep a copy of your most recent preference statement so you will know what your assignment officer has in front of him as he tries to find you an appropriate assignment.

Infantry officers should forward their preference statements to HQDA, USAMILPERCEN, DAPC-OPE-I, Alexandria, VA 22332-0400.

OPMS STUDY RESULTS

Over the next three to five years, the Army's top leaders will direct the implementation of recommendations from a recently completed study of the Officer Personnel Management System. (OPMS is the system by which an Army officer's entire career, including professional development and duty assignments, is managed by the Army either at The Pentagon or at field operating agencies.)

The study focused on the active duty commissioned officers managed by MILPERCEN's Officer Personnel Management Directorate, but also

reviewed the special branches, the Reserve Components, and warrant officers.

The changes the group recommended will affect the management structure of all specialties, accession/separation, command, the quantity and quality of officers, the role of female officers, and the specialty proponent's role in OPMS.

The highlight of the study was the group's recommendation that the following major modifications be made to the dual-specialty system:

- Permit multiple career patterns to meet Army needs.

- Set up functional area designation windows for combat arms, combat support, and combat service support officers at different points to meet branch needs and Army requirements.

- Manage, develop, and promote officers by branch and/or functional area.

- Transfer some officers at their third and eighth years of service to other branches to support Army requirements.

- Identify officer professional development needs on orders to the gaining command.

- Develop a centralized Officer Personnel Management System for the U.S. Army Reserve.

The group's recommended changes concerning all specialties were:

- Expand the latitude for specialty coding, but centrally control the procedures for changing authorization documents.

- Set up rank-ordered coding for branch immaterial positions.

- Require the branch proponents to concur or non-concur in any changes to positions involving their branch or functional areas in any table-of-organization or table-of-distribution-and-allowances organization.

- Have all changes in branch or functional area approved at Headquarters, DA.

- Have HQDA issue specific instructions to the major Army commands and to the proponents to conduct a definitive and detailed review of authorization documents to identify and code all branch immaterial posi-

tions and recode all remaining positions.

- Adhere to special coding procedures for battalion staff positions, as directed by the Army's Chief of Staff.

In the area of accession and separation, the group recommended that the system do the following:

- Access officers at a steady rate annually.

- Improve precommissioning quality and objectives.

- Develop tough, centralized standards for "voluntary indefinite" duty.

- Carry out "selective early retirement" and submit legislation to allow reconsideration after two years.

- Conduct a joint-service/DOD review of the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) once the results of all current officer-personnel-related studies are known.

On the subject of command, the Army has directed the following changes on the basis of the group's recommendations:

- Starting with the Fiscal Year 1986 lieutenant colonel and colonel command boards (which met in the Fall of 1984), no more than 10 percent of the available commands in each grade can be filled from the first-year eligibles. The remainder will be filled from the second, third, and fourth-plus years of eligibility without constraints.

- Beginning with the 1984 board for 1986 command, a three-panel board will be used for each of the combat arms, combat support, and combat service support command selections.

- No first-year eligibles will be placed on the alternate list.

- The current policy on centralized selection, slating, and list-publication will be continued wherever possible. Assignments of promotable majors and promotable lieutenant colonels who have been selected for command will ensure that they have been promoted before they assume command.

- In the future, basic training battalions and brigades will be commanded by Infantry officers.

On the matter of distributing officers in terms of both quantity and quality, the study group called for:

- Reducing the nominative process to meet the current policy of equal distribution of quality (matching individual qualifications to job requirements without concern for "promotion potential").

- Distributing officers by branch and functional area.

- Managing and developing officers in their branch and functional area through training and utilization in areas of concentration.

Noting that the specialty proponent must play a more central role in the OPMS operation, the group recommended that the Army do the following:

- Revise AR 600-3 to require, not just advise, proponents to complete their assigned responsibilities.

- Establish and resource a "standardized proponent cell" to integrate proponent responsibilities for each branch.

- Designate the commandant or director of each branch school as branch proponent.

- Designate a proponent for each functional area and skill.

- Clearly outline career paths and opportunities for command, overseas assignment, and civil schooling.

The group deferred further study of the warrant officer corps to a specially chartered group that is expected to issue its findings in the summer of 1985. And all issues and recommendations on education and training were directed for further study to the Professional Development of Officers Study Group.

Noting that each approved recommendation has a realistic time line for completion, Army personnel officials also point out that "grandfathering" provisions will be necessary in many areas. Procedures have been or will be developed to safeguard certain year groups, branches, and other specific groups of officers against significant disadvantage from these changes.

The OPMS Study Group's findings and recommendations are discussed more fully in the September-October 1984 issue of "Commander's Call."