

INFANTRY NEWS



THE NEW JOINT SERVICE Software (JSS) for military pay brings with it a new scope of responsibility for Army leaders. A soldier's pay has always been the dual responsibility of unit leaders (squad leader, platoon sergeant/platoon leader, first sergeant, and company commander) and the local finance office. The unit initiates the paperwork to authorize or change the soldier's pay, and sends it through the personnel and administration center (PAC) to the servicing finance and accounting office (FAO).

Usually, the pay account change is made without further action by the unit, PAC, or FAO. Unfortunately, though, and in some cases all too often, something happens that keeps the soldier's pay from being changed, or causes the change to be made incorrectly. No matter what the cause, the error has to be resolved by the unit, the PAC, and the FAO working together.

The JSS, however, brings with it a new philosophy. It offers many benefits—improved automation, fewer duplicate personnel in the FAO headquarters, and improved support to the service member, among others. With the reduction of overhead positions, the JSS brings with it the theory that a service member's pay is his own responsibility. A soldier must be able to read his leave and earnings statement (LES), know whether it is correct with all appropriate entitlements and collections, and, if the LES is wrong, take the appropriate corrective action.

This corrective action may range from resubmitting the appropriate document or order to the finance office for processing, or going to the PAC to receive an

answer or explanation. The unstated change in this process is that the finance office no longer maintains transmittal letters or logs, and does not log in a document received from the unit or PAC. This change makes it necessary for the soldier to maintain a copy of any documents sent to the finance office to effect a change in his pay—a small change, but with a big effect on him and his unit. The responsibility for correcting the problem is now the soldier's, not that of the chain of command or the FAO.

This means that leaders at all levels must assert themselves for the good of the soldier. Making the soldier responsible for his own pay is a drastic departure from the usual "top-down" type of care that many soldiers have come to depend upon.

Soldiers will be responsible for correcting problems with their pay account, and leaders must see that their soldiers know the *hows* and *whys* of the JSS. They can accomplish this task only through an expanded training program with the local finance unit.

In addition to training, the FAO offers some tools that help both the unit commander and the PAC ensure that finance transactions have been made as submitted:

- Commanders receive, through the PAC, the Unit Commander's Finance Report and review it with their subordinate leaders. Many of the current finance problems occur when the PAC does not send a report to the commander, or when the commander receives the report but ignores its contents. Experience has shown, however, that a Unit

Commander's Finance Report is most effective when it gets down to the platoon sergeant or platoon leader.

- S-1s and PACs receive the Daily Register of Transactions, which they can use to track documents sent to the FAO and their status. This register shows the S-1 whether documents are being batched and whether they are being sent to the FAO in a timely manner.

The period of the Army's drawdown is bringing about many changes, and some may see JSS as one of the negative aspects. But the Finance Corps views it as another way to support and serve the soldiers of today and tomorrow.

THE OFFICER CANDIDATE School (OCS) at Fort Benning has presented its 1992 Robert P. Patterson Award to Second Lieutenant Mark A. Jackson. This prestigious award is given each year in memory of Judge Patterson, who was commissioned a second lieutenant from the World War I equivalent of OCS. He attained the rank of major and was recognized for his acts of gallantry and bravery by award of the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, and the Purple Heart.

The award is presented each year to the outstanding infantry graduate of OCS and the Infantry Officer Basic Course. The selection is made on the basis of leadership, academic effectiveness, aptitude, and character.

Lieutenant Jackson is now assigned to the 2d Battalion, 325th Infantry, 82d Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

