

up the tent and operate the stove effectively. We recommend that they have the tent and stove set up within one hour of occupying a stationary position.

Leaders and medics should begin mandatory checks for frostbite. We recommend two or three times a day; mealtime is a good time for this. Weather will also start to affect the mission as digging becomes more difficult. Snow and ice may limit mobility for both vehicles and dismounted troops. With precautions, however, training and missions are still not extremely hazardous at these temperatures.

**Temperature Zone III (9 to -19 degrees).** As temperatures near and then dip below zero degrees, leaders need to continue the actions they took in Zone II. Soldiers must have a complete cold-weather uniform such as the extreme cold-weather clothing system (ECWCS). Footwear should be vapor barrier (VB) boots, preferably the white extreme-cold version. Gloves, even if they are insulated, may be useless in keeping hands warm; soldiers should have either trigger finger mittens with inserts or arctic mittens.

Since there is a greater chance of cold-weather injuries, leaders and medics must check more frequently. The number of checks now doubles, from two or three times a day to four to six times. Because soldiers are more prone to these injuries while stationary, they should be able to set up the arctic tent in 30 minutes so that

a warming shelter is readily available.

Defensive operations are likely to require engineer support to dig in; pioneer tools and entrenchment tools will barely make a dent in the frozen ground. Snow and the cold make movement even slower. Maintenance requirements increase as the cold causes materials to break more readily. Long endurance operations (greater than 72 hours) are now hazardous.

**Temperature Zone IV (-20 to -40 degrees).** Training or tactical operations are now extremely hazardous. Leaders need to check soldiers hourly for cold-weather problems. Soldiers need warming tents or shelters nearby. Since equipment breaks more often, more spare parts must be on hand. Soldiers in static positions are very vulnerable to frostbite, and moderate movement is required to keep them warm. Almost everything a unit wants to do takes more time.

**Temperature Zone V (below -40 degrees).** These conditions severely limit military operations. Leaders should now check soldiers almost constantly (every 30 minutes). Soldiers exposed to the cold for more than 30 minutes are likely to become cold-weather casualties. Thus, even with experienced units, commanders should limit missions that require extensive outdoor exposure. The only operations conducted should be those that are critical to the unit's survivability. Since we rate this training as extremely hazardous, we recommend that the bri-

gade commander approve any training that is conducted.

A recently published *Risk Assessment Guide* contains the modified worksheet as well as the planning considerations sheets. The Guide is available on request from the Northern Warfare Training Center, 502 Second Street, #2900, Fort Greely, Alaska 96508-2900.

Force protection is one of the elements of combat power. In the harsh and unforgiving environment of extreme cold regions, however, we cannot expect our junior leaders to take care of their soldiers without proper training.

Risk management requires that leaders first identify the risks of extreme cold weather and then take steps to limit them. We believe that our modified risk assessment card and the accompanying planning considerations will help leaders train more effectively. If they execute realistic but safe training, units will have self-confident soldiers who can win in the cold and under any other conditions.

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**Captain Jonathan D. Thompson** was assigned to the U.S. Army Northern Warfare Training Center when he wrote this article. He previously served in the 5th Battalion, 21st Infantry, and commanded a Bradley company in the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, 3d Infantry Division, in Germany. He is a 1985 ROTC graduate of Wheaton College.

**Tom Skala** is training administrator for the Northern Warfare Training Center at Fort Greely.

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# Command and Staff College Selection Board

COLONEL COLE C. KINGSEED

The primary mission of the Army Command and Staff College Selection Board is to select the best-qualified officers to attend a resident command and

staff college and to revalidate officers previously selected but deferred. I served on the 1995 board last summer and would like to share my personal observations

of the selection process. (These remarks are based strictly on my personal experience and reflect neither the official Department of the Army policy nor the opin-

ions of the remaining members of the board.)

The board was made up of 19 officers, all of whom were current or past battalion and brigade level commanders, with a general officer presiding. The board members were from all branches of the Army with sufficient gender and minority representation. The convening authority charged the board to consider, without prejudice or partiality, all eligible officers in accordance with the criteria established by the board's memorandum of instruction.

The board members operated under broad parameters: They used the "best-qualified" method of selection; they were authorized no personal knowledge of the candidates; and they were to vote independently without consulting each other. The selection numbers were specified by branch and year group in the memorandum of instruction. Over the course of his career, each officer is considered a total of four times, with the greatest probability of attendance in the first two years of eligibility.

With more than 5,000 packets crossing our desks over the course of the month we served, we had an average of two to three minutes to review an officer's file. Naturally, this varied with individual members, but we rapidly developed a system for evaluating a file. On the surface, this short time seems inadequate for assessing an officer's potential, but it was enough to determine trends during his career and to make an informed judgment concerning his future.

What was available to the members in determining the best-qualified officers to attend the resident course? Generally speaking, each file has four components: a full-length photograph, the officer record brief (ORB), any letters to the board president or late officer evaluation reports (OERs) that had not been posted to the microfiche, and the official military personnel file (OMPF).

The following are some comments on each of these components along with a few suggestions for those of you who will be preparing files for a future board:

**Photograph.** The board considered the photograph an essential element of the file and was satisfied that it repre-

sented the officer well. The photo was the first item that I examined.

Board members observed several common problems with the photos. Although the vast majority were excellent, a significant number were not up to date. Surprisingly, a good number of recently promoted majors had photographs that still showed them as captains. Black-and-white photos (used before the switch to color photos) generally had one of two problems—either a mismatch in rank or not showing awards earned since the photo entered the file.

The fit of the uniform is another important characteristic that catches a board member's eye. Does the officer appear overweight? Is he wearing the awards correctly? In this respect, the most common error was the misplacement of the Overseas Service Ribbon and the Army Service Ribbon.

My advice is to check the order-of-precedence chart, which is posted at most photographic laboratories, to ensure that your ribbons are in the proper order. In short, put your best foot forward. Wear your best uniform, see that it is well pressed, ensure that your awards and decorations are in the proper order, and personally examine the photograph before sending it to be posted to your file.

Although Army regulations require that photographs be submitted at least every five years, I recommend that you update your photograph after every promotion and before your records are to go before any selection board.

**ORB.** Turning to the ORB, I first checked to see whether the officer had updated it. A quick review of his assignment history, awards, and schooling gave me a good impression of what I could expect to see when I examined the microfiche. I also checked the currency of the officer's physical examination and his height and weight data. Source of commission was irrelevant to my assessment of the officer's file.

My impression is that the Army in general and Infantry branch in particular are doing a superb job in creating opportunities for officers to serve in critical positions of leadership. Each Infantry officer whose file I examined had served in several assignments as a platoon leader,

and the vast majority had served as unit executive officers. Every officer had commanded at company level with a substantial number commanding a second company. Following consecutive tours in TOE and TDA units, many officers had then served as small-unit instructors in the service schools, Reserve Officer Training Corps detachments, or the United States Military Academy. The Recruiting Command had also attracted a substantial number of junior officers.

**Loose Documents.** Not every officer had letters to the board president in his file. The vast majority of these letters involved the officers' requests to attend foreign schools instead of the Army's Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth, or another service's command and staff course. The remaining loose papers in the packet were OERs that met the deadline but had not been posted on the microfiche file. Again, most files were current, but a good number of senior raters had forwarded complete-the-record reports or exercised their senior rater option to benefit officers whose records were going before the board.

**OMPF.** Undoubtedly the most important item in an officer's packet was his OMPF, consisting primarily of the microfiche containing OERs. The OER remains the single most effective tool to help the board member in his selection of the best-qualified officers. OER scores tend to vary with rater and senior rater philosophy. The board considered an officer's performance across the broad spectrum of his career, as opposed to focus on a single numerical score.

Here's how I examined an average file. Following a quick review of any entry in the *Commendatory and Disciplinary Data* (located at the bottom of the microfiche), I reviewed the OERs, beginning with the officer's initial report. Scores tended to be lower in the initial assignment because of the lack of experience normally associated with second lieutenants. All reports were important to me, but some—such as command reports—received greater scrutiny.

With respect to the OER, the duty title more than the duty description caught my eye. I then examined the *Performance*

*Evaluation-Professionalism* section in which the rater evaluated the officer's professional competence and professional ethics. Any number lower than a "1" in this section should have an explanatory comment, but it is not required in all cases. Height and weight data is important. If an officer does not show the appropriate level of military bearing and appearance—and if there is no comment concerning the requirements of Army Regulation 600-9, *The Army Weight Control Program*—he is at a severe disadvantage when compared to his contemporaries.

On the back of the OER, I checked to see that the rater had marked the *Always Exceeded Requirements* and *Promote Ahead of Contemporaries* blocks. The rater's comments on potential carried more weight for me than those relating to performance. An assessment of an officer's ability to perform at the next higher level of responsibility was crucial in my personal decision to select him for further military schooling.

The senior rater's comments on potential and his senior rater profile were the most important elements of the OER in helping me make my personal assessment. Senior raters who failed to differentiate among officers generally lost their votes. Some senior officers used the "stair-step approach," giving the rated officer an initial second block, regardless of his potential, then an automatic top block on subsequent reports.

The top box was unmistakably the one most frequently used, but a top-box, center-of-mass report did not help the board members truly understand the senior rater's intentions. In such cases, board members relied almost exclusively on the senior rater's comments to determine his true evaluation of the rated officer. Other common difficulties centered on senior raters whose comments focused more on performance than on potential.

Am I saying that if an officer received a "two block," his career was over? Hardly. In fact, most officers received what we would normally consider less-than-favorable reports. Board members were more interested in trends and whether the officer had improved with experience. Command reports frequently

<u>WORD PICTURE</u>	
6 +/-	TOP FEW/MUST SELECT SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE SUPERIOR POTENTIAL
5 +/-	DEFINITE SELECT CLEARLY ABOVE CONTEMPORARIES OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE
4 +/-	SHOULD SELECT ABOVE CONTEMPORARIES SOLID PERFORMANCE
3 +/-	SELECT IF THERE IS ROOM COMPETITIVE AVERAGE PERFORMANCE
----- <i>FULLY QUALIFIED</i> / <i>NOT FULLY QUALIFIED</i> -----	
2 +/-	DO NOT SELECT MARGINAL PERFORMANCE
1	POSSIBLE SHOW CAUSE POOR PERFORMANCE

**Figure 1**

<u>DEFERRED OFFICER WORD PICTURE</u>	
YES	VALIDATE SUSTAINED LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE
NO	REMOVE RECORD OF PUNISHMENT LETTER OF REPRIMAND RELIEF FOR CAUSE MARKED DECLINE IN PERFORMANCE

**Figure 2**

had the officer receiving a "two block," followed by a "one block" on a subsequent report. These officers were highly competitive, and many were selected to attend a command and staff college. It was the rare officer who received only top blocks throughout his career.

After examining the OMPF, it was then time to vote. The board used the word picture form shown in Figure 1 in assessing an officer's file. They used a similar picture (Figure 2) in evaluating a deferred officer's file, but voted a simple yes or no (instead of a numerical grade) to validate or remove an officer from the deferred list.

Again, each officer voted independently, and recorders from the Total Army Personnel Command tallied the votes. Once the tally was complete, the board decided on the dividing line between officers deemed fully qualified and those not fully qualified. What was

readily apparent was that today's Army is a highly qualified and professional force.

It was regrettable that all the fully qualified officers could not attend the resident course, but branch allocations and the limited number of slots required that the board select the *most highly* qualified officers from the *fully* qualified list. For Infantry branch, this included three officers from Year Group (YG) 1982, five from YG 1983, and 30 each from YGs 1984 and 1985. If you are not selected in your first year of eligibility, I strongly suggest you enroll in the CGSC correspondence course. Don't wait for the second "go round."

Following the vote, the board then deliberated to validate deferred officers from previous lists and to nominate principals and alternates to attend foreign command and staff colleges. Special boards also dominated the agenda before the board officially recessed. Only in rare cases did the board identify officers for potential elimination or removal from promotion or school lists. All recommendations were ratified by a majority of the board members.

In summary, I am convinced that the selection process is sound, precludes bias, and facilitates the selection of the best-qualified officers to attend the resident course. Good performance across the broad spectrum of duties and over the officer's entire career remains the single most important prerequisite for selection to attend the resident course. As a general rule, I recommend you seek challenging jobs in which your rater and senior rater can assess your performance on a regular basis. Do the best you can, ensure that your file and photograph are current, and enjoy what you do. Leading infantrymen in today's Army is a challenging and rewarding enterprise. Make the most of it, and the schooling and promotions will fall into place.

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**Colonel Cole C. Kingseed** is assigned to the Department of History at the United States Military Academy. He previously commanded the 4th Battalion, 87th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. He is a 1971 ROTC graduate of the University of Dayton and holds a doctorate from Ohio State University.

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