



# Commandant's Note

MAJOR GENERAL JOHN M. Le MOYNE Chief of Infantry

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## The Infantry Leader and Army Transformation

In today's operational environment, teams, task forces, and brigade combat teams almost always are multi-branched, multi-serviced, and multi-national. The future will continue this trend. The Objective Force into which we are transforming demands it. Our infantry leaders, NCOs and officers, must prepare to meet the future leadership challenges or become irrelevant! I would like to use my last "Commandant's Note" as an opportunity to describe our vision for Infantry leader development in this rapidly transforming Army.

The Army is fully committed to transformation as expressed by the vision of our senior leaders. The Secretary of the Army states that "Transformation is an imperative. We must transform...the way we train, equip, fight, and care for people." The Army Chief of Staff stated that "We can transform today in a time of peace and prosperity. Or we can try to change tomorrow on the eve of the next war, when the window has closed, our perspective has narrowed, and our potential limited by the press of time and the constraints of resources." Much of the media focus during this transformation process has been on Army equipment and organizations. One critical aspect of this transformation is "the people of our Army." The Army Web page illustrates this in stating, "Transformation is more than technology—it's about training soldiers and growing leaders who are agile, versatile, and adaptive."

The Infantry School and PERSCOM's Infantry Branch are developing career management and professional development programs and policies tailored for Army infantry leaders, both officer and enlisted. These

programs and policies are designed to develop leaders who are versatile, adaptable, and experienced in varied operational environments as well as different types of infantry organizations.

The first program focusing on enlisted professional development is the *Buddy Team Assignment Program* (BTAP). This is a simple concept that assigns soldiers as buddy-teams in One-Station Unit Training (OSUT). The buddy-team soldiers go through OSUT together and upon graduation, are assigned to the same unit. They remain a buddy-team for at least the first six months in their first unit.

The Infantry School developed buddy-team assignments based on a principle we all learned very early in our careers: the fear of the unknown when joining our first unit. The initial trials that test young infantrymen fall into perspective when a trusted buddy is on his flank. Other objectives of the program include increased performance during OSUT and at the buddy-team's first duty station, higher re-enlistment rates, and less first-term attrition.

We are developing and implementing buddy-team assignments in three phases. Phase 1 was the initial test phase designed to determine if the program was capable of meeting established objectives. Approximately 2,200 11M OSUT soldiers were assigned as part of this initial test. The Infantry Training Brigade and PERSCOM paired 1,200 of those soldiers as buddy teams in OSUT, while the remaining soldiers formed a control group. The Army Research Institute (ARI) conducted its first survey in March 2001 and published preliminary results in July 2001. These results indi-

cate that buddy-teams enhance many aspects of the soldier's initial experience in the Army. The majority of the respondents agreed that assigning buddies to the same unit is a good Army practice. Most important, unit leaders are telling us it is working and to expand it.

Phase 2 will be an implementation program that assigns almost all infantrymen as buddy teams. Most 11B soldiers entering the Army will take part in the implementation. The only infantrymen not included in the test implementation are infantry soldiers entering the Army under Ranger contracts and those in MOS 11C. The Infantry School omitted Ranger contract soldiers from the test implementation because the high degree of attrition during their follow-on training makes buddy-team assignments impractical at this time. The 11C soldiers were not part of the test implementation because manpower requirements often preclude units from assigning these infantrymen in pairs to the same unit. We will change this in the future. Phase 2 also introduces an automated assignment tool that helps us determine whether buddy-teams members actually were assigned to the same unit.

Phase 3 will include infantrymen with Ranger enlistment contracts and 11Cs in the buddy-team process once the Infantry School and PERSCOM refine assignment and tracking procedures. This phase will also seek to improve buddy-team pairing by introducing psychological profiling as part of the initial buddy-team pairing procedure.

Although buddy-team assignments are an Infantry School initiative, other branch proponents are showing great interest in this program. Some form of the program could someday see Army-wide implementation in other Career Management Fields (CMFs).

The *11-series MOS consolidation* is another significant change for infantry soldiers. In March 2001 we submitted a proposal to consolidate MOS 11B, 11H, and 11M into MOS 11B in the ranks of PVT through SFC. Additionally, all CMF 11 NCOs (including MOS 11C) in the ranks of 1SG/MSG and above will be consolidated into MOS 11Z. The Army Chief of Staff approved the consolidation proposal on 13 June 2001. The conversion process has already started for infantrymen entering the Army and will be complete by 1 October 2001.

PERSCOM's Infantry Branch will assign Skill Level 1 and 2 infantrymen (PVT-SGT) to both vehicular and non-vehicular infantry units based on the needs of the Army. Skill Level 3 and 4 infantrymen (SSG and SFC) will be given the opportunity to volunteer to cross over to a different type of Infantry (vehicular to non-vehicular and vice versa). We need about 1,000 NCOs a year out of the 17,000 available to volunteer.

Senior enlisted infantry leaders (11Z) will be assigned to all types of infantry units based on need.

The Infantry School will ease the transition process for Skill Level 3 and 4 infantrymen by creating transition schools for mechanized infantry, light infantry, and antiarmor infantry. NCOs facing assignments outside their current specialty will receive necessary transition training en-route to their new assignments. These transition schools are only temporary and the Infantry School will eventually integrate their subject matter into core NCO schools such as BNCOC and ANCOC.

The CMF 11 consolidation policy fits perfectly with an Army in transition and ensures that our NCOs will be able to meet the challenges of the future. Our enlisted leaders will have more assignment opportunities available to them and the Infantry will benefit from the new ideas and experiences brought to units by NCOs coming from a different type of infantry unit. Our NCOs will have multiple skills and diverse assignment backgrounds, and their MOSs and career management opportunities will better reflect and support this diversity. As the Army changes, they will have the skills and experience to change with it.

Meeting the challenge of Army transformation requires officers who are versatile, professionally well-rounded, and capable of leading any type of infantry unit in a combined arms environment. The Infantry School, in coordination with PERSCOM's Infantry Branch, has developed several policies and programs designed to develop infantry officers who have those professional qualities. These policies will apply to all infantry officers from Lieutenant through Lieutenant Colonel and will influence the promotion, command, and command-slating process. We will develop the Army's future leaders!

The first new policy affecting officer professional development is *the initial entry training policy for lieutenants*. This policy is designed to provide infantry lieutenants the training they need to perform in their first duty assignment and expedite their arrival at those units. We developed this policy because our lieutenants were spending increasing amounts of time completing their initial entry training, thus delaying their arrival at their first duty station. This fact—combined with the possibility of reduced pin-on time to captain to help make up the shortage in that grade—meant that we had to streamline lieutenant training. Our goal is to get infantry lieutenants into key company-grade assignments within nine months so they can gain that invaluable leadership experience before being promoted to captain.

This policy establishes a nine-month standard for the

completion of all lieutenant initial entry training at the Infantry School. Required training includes the Infantry Officer Basic Course (IOBC) and certain follow-on schools specifically required for assignment to their first unit. Those follow-on schools include Airborne School, the Mechanized Leader Course, and the Infantry Mortar Leader Course.

I strongly encourage infantry lieutenants to volunteer for Ranger training. The Infantry School will continue to provide this training for all officers who volunteer and meet the prerequisites. Although Ranger School is not required initial entry training for infantry lieutenants, it has always provided the Army with tactically competent, aggressive, self-disciplined, and confident leaders who are prepared to train and lead units in combat. We will continue to emphasize this leadership laboratory called Ranger School.

The cornerstone of infantry officer career management is the *vehicular/non-vehicular assignment imperative*. This policy focuses primarily on lieutenants and captains but will also apply to infantry majors. Under this policy, infantry officers must serve in both vehicular and non-vehicular assignments throughout their careers. Aligning with only one type of Infantry produces an officer with fewer skills and experiences. They are not professionally competent for combined, joint, or coalition operations. Vehicular infantry units include mechanized and motorized (IBCT) units while non-vehicular infantry units include light, airborne, Ranger, and air assault infantry units. An infantry officer's service in units should include platoon leader, company command, and staff positions at the battalion and brigade staff level. The length of assignment to each type of infantry slot ideally should be at least 12 months, if possible. Infantry Branch (OPMD) will assign captains to a type of infantry unit different from the type they served in as lieutenants to expand the officers' experience early in their careers. This will enable Infantry Branch to assign that officer to either type of infantry unit as a major, knowing that he has experience in both areas. If for some reason an officer is assigned to the same type of infantry unit as both a lieutenant and captain, Infantry Branch will ensure that he serves in the other type of infantry as a major. We must do this to prepare for future combat operations!

Another important part of infantry officer development is *assignment location*. Overseas duty provides

our officers with experience in different operational environments, increases their understanding of foreign military organizations, and provides insights into adapting to the constraints of the host nation. Infantry Branch will assign officers to overseas locations on an equal basis, especially at the ranks of lieutenant and captain. This parity rule also ensures that the hardships and opportunities of overseas duty are distributed equally throughout the infantry.

Infantry officer assignments should also expose them to environments and procedures at different installations in CONUS. For this reason, Infantry Branch will avoid assigning officers to back-to-back tours at the same installation. No homesteading!

The Office of Infantry Proponency here at the Infantry School develops career management and professional development policies for all infantrymen. The PERSCOM Infantry Branch (OPMD and EPMD) executes these policies and provides comments to the Infantry Branch Chief on policy implementation. PERSCOM's Infantry Branch will retain the flexibility to make exceptions to these personnel policies on the basis of Army needs and other specific exceptions approved by the Infantry Branch Chief. These policy changes are ultimately reflected in updated versions of DA PAM 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Development and Career Management*, and DA PAM 600-25, *Non-commissioned Officer Professional Development and Utilization*. The Office of Infantry Proponency is updating the infantry sections of these documents for inclusion in their next publication.

Over the past few years, we have seen the Army rapidly move forward on its transition mission. Organizations, equipment, weapons, and doctrine are changing as part of this transformation. We must update and refine the career management and development policies for our infantry leaders so they can keep pace with this transition. The Infantry School remains committed to ensuring that our officers and NCOs are fully prepared to lead the Infantry and the Army, both now and in the future.

If we do not change now to meet the future needs of our soldiers, our Army, and our nation, we will run the risk of being not only professionally unprepared and irrelevant, but of also putting our soldiers at unnecessary risk, something that you and I must never again allow to happen.

