Research Problem Review 74-1

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LEVEL II

ARMY OFFICERS: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PRESENT OFFICER CAREER STRUCTURE

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(6) ARMY OFFICERS: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PRESENT OFFICER CAREER STRUCTURE

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FOREWORD

The research reported here was accomplished by the U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences. ARI's Leadership Performance Technical Area mission is the conduct of research included in special manpower procurement requirements such as the identification of officer potential and special capabilities, and the development of a new and comprehensive officer evaluation system. The present publication outlines the current officer career progression pattern within the career channels of the officer structure, including identification of the actual decision points in differential assignment, school selection, and promotion. Important career progression trends are indicated and a dual system of multiple measurement techniques and periods is proposed as a more effective approach to career management.

The entire work unit is responsive to the special requirements of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, particularly in the Officer Personnel Management System, as well as to the general objectives of RDTE Project 2Q62107A712, "Officer Career Management Systems," FY 1974 Work Program.

J. E. UHLANER
Technical Director

ARMY OFFICERS: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PRESENT OFFICER CAREER STRUCTURE

BRIEF

Requirement:

To examine the present officer career structure and identify points of significant changes in career direction, the data base for these changes, and the places to introduce differential measures of officer performance.

Procedure:

A review was made of policy and guidance documents on career development and interviews were conducted with career management officers. This information was utilized for a logical analysis of these procedures and outcomes in terms of their relationship to problems of evaluation of individual performance and potential.

Findings:

The current Army officer career structure can be viewed as a multi-step/multi-path system with the various steps and paths closely related. This career structure creates a situation in which an officer can, early in his career, be "lock stepped" into a negative career progression. The data base used to make career decisions was found to be limited, but the technology for development of an expanded data base does exist through the development of the following:

(1.) A more comprehensive file of valid evaluative measures and

(2.) A systematic method of collecting evaluative information which would insure timeliness and universality.

Utilization of Findings:

ARI research can be utilized by the Army in the revision of current career procedures, i.e., assignment factors, Order of Merit Lists, and promotions. Further, these findings will aid the Army in program development aimed at improving or introducing new evaluative procedures for officers.

ARMY OFFICERS: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PRESENT OFFICER CAREER STRUCTURE

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ARMY OFFICERS: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PRESENT OFFICER CAREER STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

PROBLEM

The identification and application of new and improved measures of officer interest, aptitude, motivation, and potential for career progression is of prime importance in the development of a responsive and effective personnel management system as projected in the new Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS). The U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) conducts research to provide the necessary scientific knowledge and applied findings to evaluate and implement changes required in this area.

The Leadership Performance Technical Area of ARI has as one of its requirements the identification of available measures of officer performance. To fulfill this requirement, it was determined that measures must be identified within the system in which they operate. Therefore, it was necessary first to investigate the elements and structure of the management system.

The development and utilization of Army officers is a long-term process extending from precommissioning to relief from active duty. This involves merging the elements of training, experience, and selection into an efficient and effective structure of maximum benefit to the Army and the individual. While the nature of each specific assignment is to some degree known, the interrelationships of these assignments with succeeding career progress needs to be clarified into an integrated structure sufficient for optimum utilization of performance evaluations in management decisions.

Research reported here examined the present officer career structure and identified those points at which significant changes in career direction occurred, the present data base for those changes, and the places to introduce measures of differential "officer indices," in order to consolidate common trends and findings and help both the researcher and the personnel manager view the decision processes as part of a much wider picture of career development.

METHOD OF ATTACK

This report is based on review of the official documents on career development and interviews with career assignment officers, coupled with a logical analysis of the career management procedures and their outcomes. Close attention was paid to the potential impact of the personnel procedures upon the Officer Personnel Management System and the concepts of the Modern Volunteer Army. Where applicable, research findings are cited; research efforts underway in ARI contributed leads as to the direction the logical analysis should take.

The first task was to investigate the current system, with particular emphasis on defining the "critical career points" which had maximum impact upon career development. Next, the current informational base for making career decisions was investigated. Last, these elements were organized into a systematic and logical structure to aid in understanding the entire system.

CRITICAL CAREER STEPS

FINDINGS

The career steps of critical importance for the future career of an officer were identified either by reference to official documents and assignment practices or through research findings.[1] Also note that the periods defined below are different from those set forth in DA Pamphlet No. 600.3, Career Planning for Army Commissioned Officers.

The Army's overall management system can be broken down into five logically distinct periods. The first period, precommissioning, and the last period, General Officer, will not be discussed in this report. The remaining three periods are: Obligated Service, Technical-Professional Development, and Executive-Professional Service.

Obligated Service Period. During the first few years in the Army an officer is fulfilling a service obligation and forming a career decision. These are the formative years in which he gains or loses critical assignments which may have long-range effects. The career decision is affected by a variety of factors and can quite often change several times during this period. The period begins with commissioning and ends where service obligation ends. For most individuals bulk assignment procedures are used because of administrative necessity (number of assignments) and a lack of sufficient evaluative information upon which to base a decision. For persons with longer periods of service obligation, manner of performance and previous duty become increasingly important factors in making assignments. Some groups (i.e., Regular Army) receive group assignments (command and/or combat arms).

Technical Professional Development Period. This period starts with the decision to become a career Army officer and continues to either retirement or attendance at Senior Service College. It is marked by personal growth in technical skills (branch specific and/or special career programs) along with a commensurate growth in the traditional skills of leadership, tactics etc.

[1] Medland, Francis F. School and assignment procedures in officer career development. ARI Research Study 71-2. October 1971.

A combination of formalized training and experience develops professional Army officers for command and staff positions. An officer is given an increasingly complex series of duty assignments to develop his leadership skills and attributes, while contributing to the operational functioning of the Army. The attendance of the junior officer at a career course school provides the educational experience necessary to carry out branch-related duties. The generalist skills are developed at Command and General Staff College without the earlier emphasis on branch-related duties. Technical skills are developed through a variety of military and civilian schools.

Executive-Professional Service Period. Upon finishing Command and General Staff College, officers move into this stage of career progression. The officer at this level is given responsible command and staff assignments at the highest organizational levels. For the majority of officers this is the final career period and cannot be classified as developmental. These years are considered the most productive of the officer's professional career. He is utilized as a highly trained executive for the direction and management of complex organizations. Some officers are selected for Senior Service Colleges and nearly all of those selected for promotion to General are from this group.

Chart of Critical Steps. Using the periods just outlined, Tables 1, 2, and 3 detail the specific career steps of major importance in defining the career system. Column headings for Tables 1, 2, and 3 are defined below.

ASSIGNMENTS--The progression of an Army officer through the career pattern is marked by a series of significant assignments, both competitive and non-competitive. This column shows the major events from commissioning to promotion to General, including both duty and school assignments.

PERCENT SELECTED FROM ELIGIBLES--Where data were available, the percentage of eligible officers who received an assignment is given in this column.

GRADE--This column shows the grade or grades of U. S. Army officers given this assignment. In exceptional cases an officer might receive an assignment before or after these limits.

AVERAGE TIME IN SERVICE--The years (or year) during which a particular assignment is generally given.

BASIS FOR MAKING ASSIGNMENT--This column lists the important rules, procedures, and selection variables utilized in determining who will receive an assignment. These are stated in the positive; notable exceptions are medical limitation, grade, and length of service.

IMPORTANCE FOR FUTURE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR ADVANCEMENT--As was previously noted, most assignments to some degree influence following assignments or promotions. This column gives the amount of importance for future assignments attached to a particular assignment. "Very important" means that the next promotion or assignment in general cannot be made without this assignment. "Important" means that a large weight is attached to this assignment but that other factors can compensate for a lack in this one. "Neutral" means that this assignment is not used for future assignments or that the vast majority of individuals complete it. "Negative" refers to the fact that some assignments can have a negative weight for making future assignments.

DISCUSSION

Tables 1, 2, and 3 indicate the critical career points and show the general interaction between various points during active duty. The first area of interest, the selection of a career branch for the officer, occurs at the point of commissioning. Presently, officers from the US Military Academy (USMA), in the order of their graduation standing, select their choice of branch from existing vacancies. The ROTC officers coordinate their branch assignments with the Professor of Military Service (PMS), with informal weight placed upon graduation standing. Given the importance of the appropriate choice of a branch in an officer's career, such initial assignment should be based on the best possible estimates of differential potential. With the current management system, combat arms branches tend to receive an initial advantage over other branches by virtue of the administrative procedures. Regular Army officers also receive a detail in a combat arms branch even if they belong to a non-combat arms branch.

The current system of bulk assignments during the obligated service period results from the large number of officers and assignments and the general paucity of information on the official record, although the importance of these first duty assignments is measured by their later importance in the selection process. The proposed revisions in OPMS which call for designating "commanders" in the mid portion of their career may change this system.

Selection for retention of reserve Army officers on active duty becomes a concern once the officer finishes his obligated service. The timing of this selection may shift back to the precommissioning period if the number of officers needed on active duty drops. If a general reduction occurs in the active force then more officers in the reserve are given short tours (3 to 6 months).

Table 1

OBLIGATED SERVICE PERIOD

Assignments	% Selected from Eligibles	Grade	Average Time In Service	Basis for Making Assignment	Importance for Future Assignment and/or Adv.
1. Basic Branch Course					
a. Regular Army (RA)	100%	2LT	1 Y	ALL RA's go to Combat Arms Branch schools regardless of their basic branch	The exact impact of a decision on a particular Branch is unknown, but assumed to be of some importance
b. Reserve Army	90+%	2LT	1 Y	Reserves go to their respective branch schools (OCS do not attend basic)	
2. Duty Assignments					
a. Non-combat arms RA to combat arms assignment	100%	2LT	1-2 Y	Any RA Officer not in Combat arms branch. Returns to a special basic Branch school upon completion	None - except for the evaluations made during this duty.
b. RA and Reserve (includes a, above when they finish that assignment	100%	2LT-MAJ	1-5 Y	1. Branch Material 2. Availability (person and job). 3. Personnel decision. 4. After first duty-manner of performance from previous duty. 5. Career development	VERY IMPORTANT 1. OERs. 2. Type of assignment (command or equivalent) 3. Proper balance of staff and command positions
3. Technical and civilian training	UNK	1LT-MAJ	2-5 Y	1. Service need 2. Competitive (determined by program)	Unknown
4. Service beyond obligated period (Retention)					
a. RA	UNK	CPT-MAJ	5 Y	The individual officer's personal decision	
b. Reserve	UNK	1LT	2-3 Y	Selection procedures are unknown (previously most officers who wanted to stay were retained)	

(Y = year)
(Unk = Unknown)

Table 2

TECHNICAL-PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PERIOD

Assignments	% Selected from Eligibles	Grade	Average Time In Service	Basis for Making Assignment	Importance for Future Assignment and/or Adv.
1. Branch-Advanced Courses	95+%	CPT	1 Y	Almost all RA and reserve officers go. Time of attendance is the important factor	Early attendance important. (Ends effective period for branch transfers)
2. Special Career Programs	Unk	2LT-COL	2-20 Y	1. Rank 2. Educational background 3. Previous experience	
3. Graduate-Professional civilian training	Unk	CPT-LTC	5-19 Y	1. Previous Educational background 2. Academic achievement tests 3. Acceptance at a school 4. OML	IMPORTANT. Necessary requirement but not sufficient
4. Duty assignments	Unk	CPT-LTC	3-12 Y	1. Service need 2. Previous Command, Staff, or Special Career Assignments 3. OML 4. Availability 5. Career enhancing 6. Branch Development	Very Important
a. Command					
b. Staff	Unk	CPT-LTC	3-12 Y		Not negative unless repetitive tour.
c. Special Career	Unk	CPT-LTC	3-12 Y		Unknown, although may be negative
5. Command and General Staff College (C&GS)	50%	MAJ-LTC	8-16 Y	1. OML & OPO Selection Brd. 2. Previous assignments 3. Personnel decision	Very Important--the attainment of the rank of COL and high command and staff is very dependent upon this
6. Duty Assignments					
a. Increased responsibility and requirement	50%	LTC	12-20	1. C and GS college 2. OML 3. Career enhancing 4. Monitored file	Very Important
b. Service need (Utilization to retirement)	50%	LTC		Not C and GS college	Negative

(OML = Order of Merit List)

Table 3

EXECUTIVE-PROFESSIONAL PERIOD

Assignments	% Selected from Eligibles	Grade	Average Time In Service	Basis for Making Assignment	Importance for Future Assignment and/or Adv.
1. Senior Service College (SSC)	30%	LTC-COL	15-23	1. C & GS college 2. Duty assignments--Command or equivalent	Very Important-for promotion to General and obtaining good duty assignment.
2. Command Assignment					
a. Career Enhancing	Unk	COL	20-25 Y	1. OML 2. SSC 3. Previous duty 4. Prior to Being in Primary Zone for General	Very Important
b. Utilization position (service need)	Unk (low)	LTC-COL	20-30 Y	Out of primary zone for General but with good performance ratings	Neutral
3. Staff Assignments					
a. Career Enhancing	Unk	COL	20-25 Y	Same as 2 a	Very Important
b. Utilization position (service need)	Unk (high)	LTC-COL	20-30 Y	Same as 2 b	Neutral
4. Promotion to General	10%	COL	20-25 Y	1. SSC 2. Previous duty	

Attendance at the career course school is not an issue of attendance versus non-attendance but of time in service before attendance. An officer who attends before a contemporary has gained an advantage in terms of career development. First, it is a matter of record that he attended early and this affects later assignments. Second, it can to some degree enable a young officer to gain an assignment or two on his peers. Career course is also important as the last effective point that a change in branch can be made.

During the early part of the technical-professional period many branches start a "monitored file" system in which an officer, selected as having exceptional promise, receives additional monitored treatment in his career development. This is represented by making several assignments ahead for the monitored officer to insure he is progressing along in his career.

In the past, the "Special Career Fields" career development potential was ambiguous. It ran counter to the "generalist" concept, and many felt that too deep an involvement in a career field could be damaging to the future development of an officer. The status of Special Career Fields may change with the implementation of OPMS II, in which every officer will be required to develop a second skill during the first ten years.

Army policy on civilian education for the development of a specialty is very positive. Recent directives have gone even further in requiring a certain educational level for all officers. The weight given to civilian education in current selection procedures is small and therefore it may effectively contribute little in selection for career progression.

Duty assignments during the technical-professional period are of the utmost importance for future career development, for two reasons. First, they are influential in promotion decisions, and second, they influence the OML used as one basis for selection to Command and General Staff College. Attendance at C&GSC while not an official requirement for promotion to Colonel is in practice mandatory. Since duty assignments which are prerequisites to C&GCS can also carry positive weight in the selection for promotion to Colonel, they receive a double weight in the selection process.

Duty assignments continue to be of major importance during the executive-professional period. As in the technical-professional pattern, duty assignments are now important in the selection of officers to attend a Senior Service College, which is given a large weight in the selection of General Officers.

CONCLUSIONS

This review of the critical career steps provides several generalizations about the management system. First, most Army personnel decisions have a dual purpose--the selection of an officer who can

perform a particular task, and the use of this assignment as a proving and training ground for future higher level assignments. There is a question whether any selection procedure can fulfill both of these goals adequately. The present system stresses early performance in the belief that it is related to future performance.

Second, given the "up or out" system of the Army and reliance on a limited number of selection values, there is a basic inequality of opportunity in the overall system.

Attacks on the problems posed here are underway in the development of the Officer Personnel Management System, which defines more specific and limited channels for career progression, and concurrently in the development of "officer indices"--combinations of evaluative information unique to the particular personnel management decision at hand.

SELECTION VARIABLES

FINDINGS

The officer in today's Army undergoes a variety of experiences in reaching his particular career position. In the process a wide variety of information (both official and unofficial) is collected on his performance. All this information can theoretically be used for making career decisions, but due to the variety of forms and locations, the information actually used or potentially useful is quite limited. This section surveys the sources of information and evaluates the feasibility of new measures being used in a multiple indices program.

Presently six sources of information could potentially be used to make selection and classification decisions. They are records from precommissioning programs, personnel files (hard copy), personnel file (ADP tape), Army School records, career file, and research files.

Records from Precommissioning Programs. The three precommissioning programs--for the Regular Army (USMA), reserve officer program (ROTC), and officer candidate program (OCS)--do not use the same selection devices and evaluative techniques. Table 4 lists some of the evaluation techniques used in these programs.

Personnel Records (Hard Copy). Two official hard copy officer files are maintained. The Official Military Personnel File is the DA record; its contents and location are determined by AR 640-10. The second, the Military Personnel Records Jacket is the field file, and its contents are also determined by AR 640-10. Both files contain a common core of information. The exact contents are detailed in AR 640-10.

Personnel Records (Tape Copy). The Officers Master Tape (OMT) is an automatic data processing summary of the hard copy records. This file was revised in January of 1969. A complete list of the information contained in this file is given in Officers Master File User's Information Manual, published by USADATCOM in July 1969.

Table 4

EVALUATIVE TECHNIQUES USED IN PRECOMMISSIONING PROGRAMS

A. REGULAR ARMY (USMA)

1. Scholastic Aptitude Tests
2. High School Grades (S)[a]
3. English Composition Achievement Test (S)
4. Level I or II Mathematics Achievement Test (S)
5. Physical Aptitude Test (S)
6. Aptitude for Service Ratings
7. USMA Academic Grades
8. Overall Grades (USMA)(OML)
9. Supervisor Ratings

B. RESERVE OFFICER PROGRAM (ROTC)

1. ROTC Qualifying Examination (S)
2. ROTC Evaluation Report (ROE) (Selection for RA)
3. ROTC Inventory (RI) (Selection for RA)
4. Supervisor Ratings
5. College Grades

C. OFFICER CANDIDATE PROGRAM (OCS)

1. The Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) (S)
2. General Technical Aptitude Area (GT) (S)
3. The Officer Candidate Test (OCT) (S)
4. The Officer Leadership Qualification Report (OLR-1) (S)
5. The Officer Leadership Qualification Inventory (OQI-1) (S)
6. The Officer Leadership Board Interview (OLB-1) (S)
7. Supervisor Ratings
8. Physical Combat Proficiency Test
9. Course Grades

Note.--For other measures, see Kaplan, Harry, Psychological testing programs in the U. S. Army. U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences. 1 September 1973.

[a] S = Selection device.

Army School Records. An Army officer spends a considerable amount of time in formal military training programs. The final results from these training programs are recorded as part of his service record, but little if any information on specific achievements, such as class rank or classroom grades, ever makes its way into the record. The information on record is detailed by AR 623-106, covering academic reports. A complete survey of information available from each of the major military schools is beyond the scope of this report, but one school may be cited as an example of the type of variables available for use. Table 5 details components of the final grade average at Engineer Officer Basic Course. The breadth of this material is evident.[2]

Career File. The Office of Personnel Operations (OPO)[3] presently maintains a career file, in the career branch, on each officer. The core of this file is the "Officer Qualification Record" Form 66 (AR 611-103) and Officer Efficiency Reports (OER). The remaining contents of the file are controlled by OPD-OPO directives. This file is presently the primary source of information used to make career management decisions. Table 6 details the contents of Form 66. In addition, two other files maintained by OPO are important--a tape record of the OERs for each officer (all branches), and the Order of Merit List (OML) compiled by OPO and maintained as part of the career file.

Research Files. Among the potentially most useful sources of information are the various research measures and information collected by Army agencies (i.e., ARI, HumRRO, OPD). These measures are not now part of the selection and classification procedures.

As an example of the variety of information under investigation, Table 7 lists the psychological scales derived from the Differential Officer Battery (DOB). The DOB is an extensive set of experimental tests developed and refined for differential prediction of broad domains of leadership. The instruments were developed in a comprehensive ARI research program. The DOB measures of abilities, knowledge, motivation, and personality proved valid in predicting differentially two broad areas of leadership--combat and technical-managerial--as well as some secondary aspects of officer performance.

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[2] Program of Instruction for 4-5-C20 Engineer Officer Basic Course. U.S. Army Engineer School, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, January 1972.

[3] Designation of Office of Personnel Operations (OPO) changed to Military Personnel Center (MILPERCEN) 15 January 1973.

Table 5

FORT BELVOIR ENGINEER OFFICER BASIC COURSE GRADE COMPONENTS

1. Final Physical Fitness Test
2. Initial Peer Rating (Fourth Week)
3. Final Peer Rating (Eighth Week)
4. Leadership Information Quiz (FM 22-5)
5. Maintenance Management and Supply Exam
6. Night Land Navigation Practical Exam
7. Map and Aerial Photographic Qualifying Exam
8. Orienteering Practical Exam
9. Engineer Reconnaissance Practical Exam
10. Combat Engineer Practical Exam
11. Leadership, Staff, Intelligence, and Communications Exam
12. Combat Operations Exam
13. Fixed Bridges and Construction Management Exam
14. Construction Engineering Field Problem
15. Heavy Construction Exam
16. Personnel Management Exam

Table 6

VARIABLES OF OFFICER QUALIFICATIONS RECORD
(AR 611-103)

1. Name
2. Grade
3. Component
4. Date of Birth
5. Race
6. Date of Current Tour
7. Religion
8. Branch (Basic and Control)
9. Military Occupational Specialities
10. Assignment Limitation
11. Investigations and Clearances
12. Appointments
13. Service Agreement
14. Physical Status
15. Ratings, Specialities, and Designations
16. Civilian Education and Military Schooling
17. Foreign Service (Command)
18. Record of Assignments
19. Efficiency Ratings

Table 6 (continued)

20. Coding
21. Awards and Decorations
22. Campaigns
23. Qualification in Arms
24. Details
25. Birthplace and Citizenship
26. Marital Status
27. Dependents
28. Main Civilian Occupation
29. Second Best Civilian Occupation
30. Avocations
31. Sports
32. Languages
33. Remarks
34. Signature of Officer
35. Date of Annual Audit

Table 7

VARIABLES DERIVED FROM ITEM ANALYSIS OF DOB INSTRUMENTS

INFORMATION TESTS	
Factored Scales	**Residual Content Scales**
1 Practical Skills	11 Military Tactics
2 Technology Operations	12 Outdoors
3 Math and Physical Science	13 Human Sciences
4 History and Politics	14 Technology Content
5 Literature and Arts	15 Math and Science Content
6 Entertainment	16 History and Literature
7 Finance	17 Supply
8 Organized Sports	18 Intellectual Entertainment
9 Intellectual Games	19 Finance Content
10 Medical and Chemical	20 Political Science
	21 Economics and Sociology
	22 Quantitative Miscellany
	23 Qualitative Miscellany

Table 7 (continued)

SELF-DESCRIPTION INVENTORIES

Differential Inventory--A		Differential Inventory--B	
24	Decisive Leader	38	Mechanical Interest
25	Administrator	39	Administrative Interest
26	Combat Interest	40	Aggressive Self-assurance
27	Manual Crafts	41	Frustration Tolerance
28	Outdoor Interest	42	Scientific Interest
29	Social Advantage	43	Outdoor Skills and Combat Leadership
30	Aesthetic Interest	44	Verbal or Social Leadership
31	Emotional Control	45	Athletic Interest
32	Construction Interest	46	Concern for Order
33	Easy-going Disposition	47	Freedom from Neurosis
34	Sports Interest	48	Easy-goingness
35	Nature Endurance	49	Civil Engineering vs Electronics
36	Sociability	50	Active Supervision
37	Achievement Need	51	Military Intelligence
		52	Administrative Supervision
		53	Combat Engineering
		54	Capacity for Detail
		55	White-collar vs Manual
		56	Administrative Leadership
		57	Freedom from Anomie
		58	Diagram Interpretation
		59	Physical Leadership

SPEEDED PRACTICAL JUDGMENT TEST

60	Taut Ship	64	Combat Discipline
61	Indecision	65	Mediation
62	Reluctant Leadership	66	Considerate Fairness
63	Buckpassing	67	Command Responsibility

INDIVIDUAL UNDERSTANDING TEST

(Responses included own attitudes and estimated attitudes of best and poorest cadet known to respondent. Resultant scale scores were self-attitude sum across items of the scale and ratio sum which placed self in relation to best and poorest cadet)

Self	Scale	Ratio
68	Combat Leadership	77
69	Mechanical Orientation	78
70	Aesthetic-Intellectual	79
71	Healthy Self-Acceptance	80
72	Concern for Order	81
73	Administration Orientation	82
74	Scientific Orientation	83
75	Strict Discipline	84
76	Management Drive	85

Table 7 (continued)

GROUP AWARENESS TEST

(Responses consisted of estimating percentage of each of three groups--NCOs, enlisted recruits, and newly-commissioned ROTC graduates--agreeing with a given statement. Correct percentages were obtained by actual test of these groups. Thus there were six scores on each scale: "perception" scores for each group as estimated, and "accuracy" scores representing the sum of absolute distances from the correct percentages)

Perception				Accuracy		
NCO	RCT	ROTC		NCO	RCT	ROTC
86	94	102	Good work habits	110	118	126
87	95	103	Leader-follower relations	111	119	127
88	96	104	Fighting man's code	112	120	128
89	97	105	Marriage and family	113	121	129
90	98	106	Cynicism	114	122	130
91	99	107	Non-involvement	115	123	131
92	100	108	Personal integrity	116	124	132
93	101	109	Varied activities	117	125	133

PERSONAL LATA RECORD

(One section covered a variety of items on personal and family background. Another section listed school subjects, respondent indicating if he had taken them, his attitude and level of performance in them. The "skill and interest" scales were derived from the school subjects responses)

134	Math-Science Skill and Interest
135	Economic-Cultural Level
136	Language Skill and Interest
137	Manual Skill and Interest
138	Urban vs Rural Background
139	Business Skill and Interest
140	Political Science Skill and Interest
141	Social Science Skill and Interest
142	Versatile Activities
143	Social Responsibility
144	Frontiersman Orientation
145	Practical Concreteness
146	Quiet Life Orientation

Note.--Reproduced from Table 1, in Helme, W. H., Willemin, L. P. and Day, R. W. Psychological Factors measured in the Differential Officer Battery. ARI Research Report 1173, July 1971.

DISCUSSION

Presently the precommissioning data is not maintained beyond the commissioning point, except in rare cases. The procedures for establishing and maintaining the files would be relatively simple, but the problem of different information coming from each precommissioning program would remain.

The hard-copy files are by far the most complete but also the most difficult to maintain and use. The detail of papers, which must by regulation be retained, makes it difficult to file and retrieve the necessary information.

The Officers Master Tape Record suffers from two problems. First, the data on the tape are not always the most important and useful to the assignment officers, and second, there is some evidence that the accuracy and timeliness may not be adequate for selection and assignment needs.

The military school files presently are not maintained beyond the end of school course or any other official file. A second difficulty with school records is the lack of communality across branches and levels of school. Without data, the relationship between these record factors and later career performance cannot be determined. Some effort will be required to establish these relationships, if school files are to be used operationally.

The career file is presently the operational file for duty and school assignment. (Promotions and Senior Service College selections are done at the DA level.) A review of the information in that file indicates that it covers broad areas of the officers' performance but that input is scarce except for data generated by the career system. Also, the nature of the OERs and OMLs make it advisable that these be kept separate from the main filing system.

CONCLUSIONS

The information contained in the above files would, if merged, provide the Army with a rather detailed picture of the officer. This totality should be contrasted with the present range of variables used operationally by the career branch. The appendix lists the present operational variables used for school selection and promotion. This list is not exhaustive; other variables can be added if they are felt to be necessary for good selection and discrimination.

Present file information and organization are oriented towards the development and maintenance of administrative file systems and not towards informational systems for making career decisions. The career file is closest to an information systems model, but it falls short of the needed requirement for a multiple-indices approach.

Along with the problems of information storage and retrieval, the data base used to make career decisions was found to be limited; but the technology for development of an expanded data base does exist through development of a more comprehensive file of valid evaluative measures and a systematic method of collecting evaluative information to insure timeliness and universality.

THE MULTI-STEP/MULTI-PATH SYSTEM

FINDINGS

The career development of an Army officer as outlined above will be viewed as a multi-step/multi-path system (MS-MP). The steps are the major training and duty assignments through which the officer must progress in order to be competitive in career development. The paths are the various outcomes of each step. The outcomes are either a promotion decision or an assignment (duty and/or school). For example, the assignment to a duty station (step) could have three possible outcomes (paths): a command or command-equivalent position (positive for career development), a repetitive tour of previous duty (neutral for career development), or a position which must be filled and the officer is available (negative for career development). The polarity (sign) of a path is determined by its potential for enhancing career development.

The MS-MP system does not directly include the promotion decision as part of the career system. The decision to promote is made through a separate administrative procedure even though the same information may be used by both the personnel assignment system and the promotion board. Therefore the promotion system both influences and is influenced by the assignment pattern.

The following set of assumptions were made or derived about the MS-MP system. They are:

1. Each step has a selection program associated with it. The selection can be by a totally mechanical computation of selection variables, an individual assignment based on judgment of the officer and his record, or a group assignment, a procedure essentially random for any individual.

2. A step becomes part of the selection process for later steps.

3. The system is sequential; that is, there is a logical and/or mandated order for steps. There can be some interchange of steps if the steps are not related to each other.

4. Paths have polarities (sign--positive, neutral, or negative) associated with them. The number, polarity, and weight of paths from any step can vary.

5. A positive path increases the likelihood of a positive path from the next step and a negative path almost always leads to a negative path from the following steps. Neutral paths lead to paths as dictated by paths previous to the neutral path.

6. The timing of completion of a step affects both the sign and weight of the resultant path (i.e., the same path changes sign from positive to neutral as a function of time).

Figure 1 is a sample flow chart of the MS-MP system. It covers the major steps from Branch Advanced Course through Senior Service College. In following the chart, remember that selection for early attendance at Career Course is dependent upon OERs and appropriate duty assignment. Furthermore, duty assignments at that point are dependent upon source of commission, Branch, OERs, and the assignments previously held.

DISCUSSION

A review of Figure 1 highlights several important elements of the current system. The most important concept is that the system is "lock stepped." That is, if the individual starts out with a positive path early in his career he will be very likely to continue with positive paths. On the other hand, if he starts out with a negative path steps in the future are affected in a negative manner. One example of an early positive step is that of the combat arms officer whose first duty assignment is a command. He performs well in it, and therefore he is very likely to be selected for early attendance at Career Course, followed by a favorable command staff and assignment pattern. His chances will be very good for early attendance at Command and General Staff College followed by duty assignments commensurate with this training. He will therefore be high on the list for selection to Senior Service College. This pattern also enhances his promotion opportunities.

A contrasting example is the combat arms officer who does not receive his command position until after his initial duty assignment. He is thereby delayed in attending Career Course and thus retarded in his necessary future assignments.

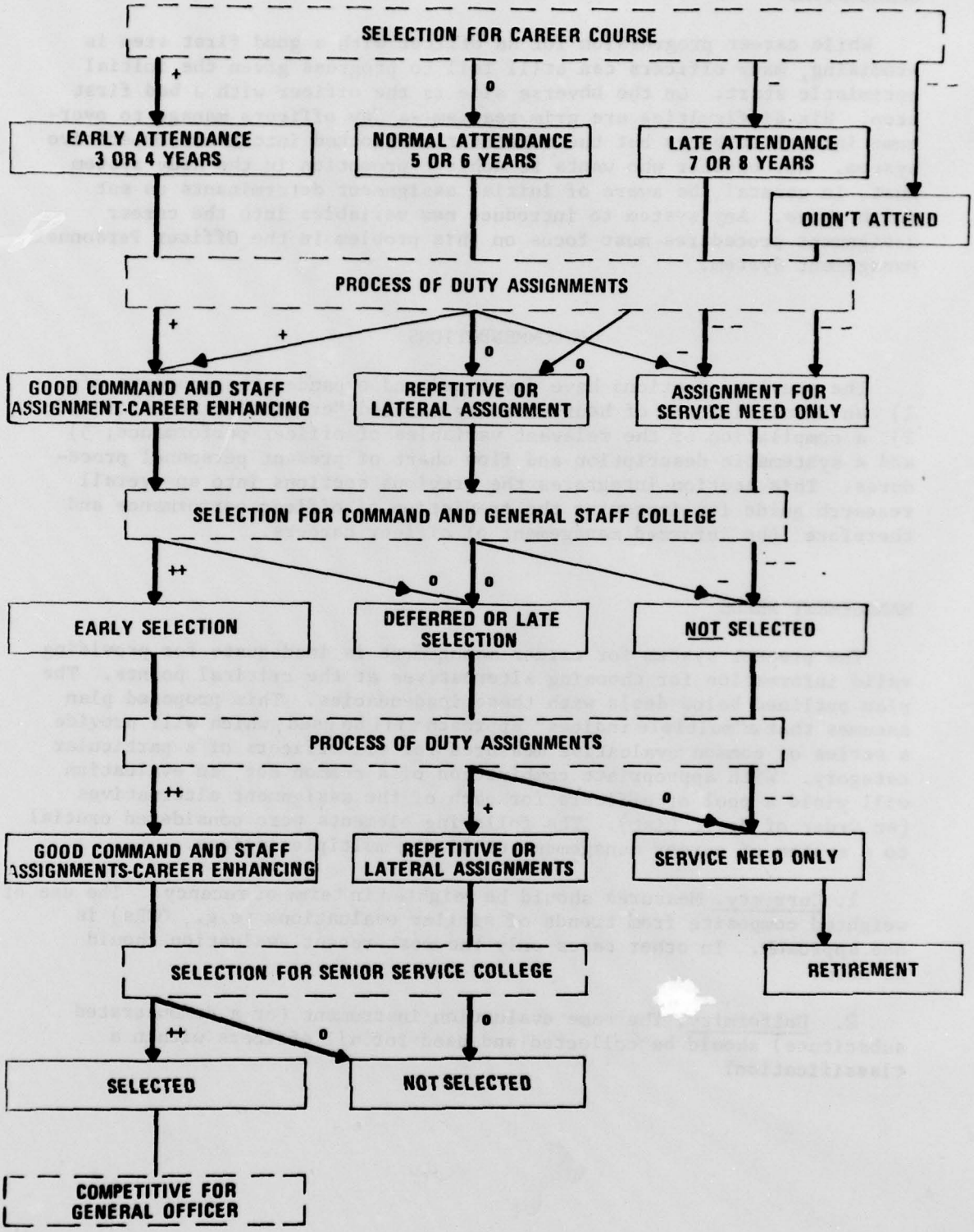

Figure 1. Sample multi-step/multi-path flow chart

CONCLUSIONS

While career progression for an officer with a good first step is promising, many officers can still fail to progress given the initial optimistic start. On the obverse side is the officer with a bad first step. His difficulties are grim realism--a few officers manage to overcome initial setbacks but the remainder are locked into a noncompetitive system. Any officer who wants to achieve promotion in the Army system must, in general, be aware of initial assignment determinants as set forth above. Any system to introduce new variables into the career assignment procedures must focus on this problem in the Officer Personnel Management System.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous sections have developed and expanded the concepts of: 1) an identification of heuristically defined "critical career points"; 2) a compilation of the relevant variables of officer performance; 3) and a systematic description and flow chart of present personnel procedures. This section integrates the previous sections into an overall research guide for improving the prediction of officer performance and therefore the informed management of officer careers.

MANAGEMENT NEEDS

The present system for career management is inadequate for providing valid information for choosing alternatives at the critical points. The plan outlined below deals with these inadequacies. This proposed plan assumes that a"multiple indices" approach will be used, which will provide a series of common evaluative measures for all officers of a particular category. With appropriate combination of a common set, an evaluation will yield a pool of officers for each of the assignment alternatives (an Order of Merit List). The following elements were considered crucial to a system of career management utilizing multiple indices.

1. Currency. Measures should be weighted in terms of recency. The use of a weighted composite from trends of similar evaluations (e.g., OERs) is one approach. In other cases only the most recent evaluation should be used.

2. Uniformity. The same evaluation instrument (or a demonstrated substitute) should be collected and used for all officers within a classification.

3. Independence. Except where necessary, one measure should not be used as a determinant of another measure in the set. Statistical analysis and adjustment may be needed to correct this problem.

4. Acceptability. Measures and their value in predicting officer performance should be understood and accepted by both individual officers and personnel officers who use them for career decisions.

5. Reliability. Measures must demonstrate an acceptable level of reliability or consistency of scores.

6. Validity. Measures must be valid. This is defined primarily in terms of ability to predict future performance from the measurement score.

The first four points are a combination of good psychometric procedure and sound management policy. The last two elements, reliability and validity, are scientific questions to be answered by research. New evaluative techniques (current and independent), applied Army-wide to a group of officers (uniform), acceptable to them (relevant), and with demonstrated reliability and validity, will make a substantial contribution to the personnel officer's ability to make accurate judgments on assignments.

INADEQUACIES OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM

The present operational set of selection variables is limited in scope and often redundant (i.e., various sections of the OER are assigned points and summed but they represent overlapping information). The "lockstep" system both contributes to and results from these limitations and redundancies.

Present operational variables inadequately cover the domain of available measures. They have often been adopted on a subjective basis by operating personnel, for reasons of ready availability and face value rather than empirical verification. Weighting can be improved to better reflect the desired criteria of selection for given personnel decisions.

Although it is recognized that the present system is not the best, the general body of officers and career managers accept its relevancy to future officer performance. With the exception of OER[4] this acceptance is not based on validity and reliability studies. While an officer is being constantly evaluated, "old" information tends to be retained over an extended time, possibly beyond its usefulness. Finally, the procedure of using personnel actions as selectors for other personnel actions means that some individuals never receive the "test."

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[4] Bayroff, A.G., and Haggerty, H. R. A study of officer rating methodology. XI. Summary of major findings. ARI Research Report 910. December 1952.

PROJECTED EFFORTS

The following is a proposed system of personnel selection and classification which will more closely meet the criteria set out in the six points above. Basic to the new system is the concept of independent measurement periods. This concept is not new to the Army; it consists of designating particular periods of career development and isolating evaluative procedures within that period. If an individual moves to the next period, he should be considered successful and start on a level with all other individuals completing the period. The precommissioning training is in general treated in this manner, with the exception that superior performance (top of class) is recognized and carried into the obligated service period.

It is proposed that four periods be established. They will roughly correspond to the career development periods already described. They are:

1. Selection → Basic Course
2. Basic Course → Career Course
3. Career Course → C&GS College
4. C&GS College → Senior Service College

These periods were selected because the major training programs delineating them are established as "critical career points" and they offer the opportunity for useful evaluative programs. An officer would therefore receive at the school and during the measurement period a variety of measures to be used by the Army for selection and classification during this period. When or if he achieves the next period, certain previous evaluative information would be selectively dropped or its weight reduced and the cycle started again.

The initiation of the proposed "multiple indices" plan naturally will not correct all previous problems. Expansion of the data bank on officers can, however, engender continuing improvements. The necessary experimental verification of assignment weights for each index can serve to highlight deficiencies and requirements for future developmental work.

Currency is established within the designated period. The use of the military schools as evaluation centers should tend to insure uniform measurement. Independence can be achieved by statistical procedures to reduce redundancy effect. The relevancy of any one measure and of the whole system is an empirical question determined by the personnel officers' and the evaluated officers' perceptions of the system. The assessment of their perceived requirements will be a necessary component to establishing relevancy.

SUMMARY

Current career patterns can be viewed as a multi-step/multi-path system with the various steps and paths closely related. The pattern creates a system where a person can, early in his career, be "lock stepped" into either a positive or negative career progression. Each of the critical career points contributes to this pattern. It has been established that the current set of evaluative measures is limited but also that other measures are available or have been field tested and can be introduced into the system. Finally, a dual system of a multiple indices approach coupled with a system of measurement periods has been proposed. These dual systems, each reinforcing the other, will provide more effective predictions of officer performance in the various assignment areas.

APPENDIX

SELECTION VARIABLES - OML AND RECOMMENDATION TO PROMOTION BOARD

1. Officer Efficiency Index
2. Officer Efficiency Reports
    a. Manner of Performance
    b. Derogatory Comments
    c. Moral Character
    d. Report Trends
3. Assignments
    a. Type of Assignment
    b. Level of Assignment
    c. Pattern of Assignments
    d. Combat Service
4. Branch
5. Source of Commission
6. MOS
7. Service Agreement
8. Special Career Field
9. Grade
10. Military Education
11. Civilian Education
12. Age
13. Length of Service
14. Awards and Decorations
15. Disciplinary Action
16. Branch Evaluations
17. Physical Condition (PULHES)
18. Medical Limitation