

Welcome Addition: 210A Warrant Officers in Modular Engineer Companies

By Captain John A. Dills III

In recent years, our Engineer Regiment and Corps have undergone transformation, and this transformation has been especially profound for construction units. One of the most significant changes was the addition of a military occupational specialty (MOS) 210A Construction Engineering Technician¹ to vertical construction companies. With this addition comes the question: What is the best way to integrate a warrant officer into those companies? The 554th Engineer Company considered this question in early 2008 and employed a plan that effectively integrated and synchronized these construction experts.

Prepare to Receive

It was important to consider two issues when integrating 210As into the company's command structure. The first issue was related to leadership and responsibility. By adding a warrant officer to a platoon, there was the potential for conflict with the platoon leader and platoon sergeant. Furthermore, Soldiers who were accustomed to the established chain of command could become confused

about the role of the warrant officer. The 554th avoided this conflict by placing the warrant officers under the direct supervision of the company commander. Likewise, the warrant officers' rating chain did not include the platoon leaders; instead, it was linked to the company and battalion commanders.

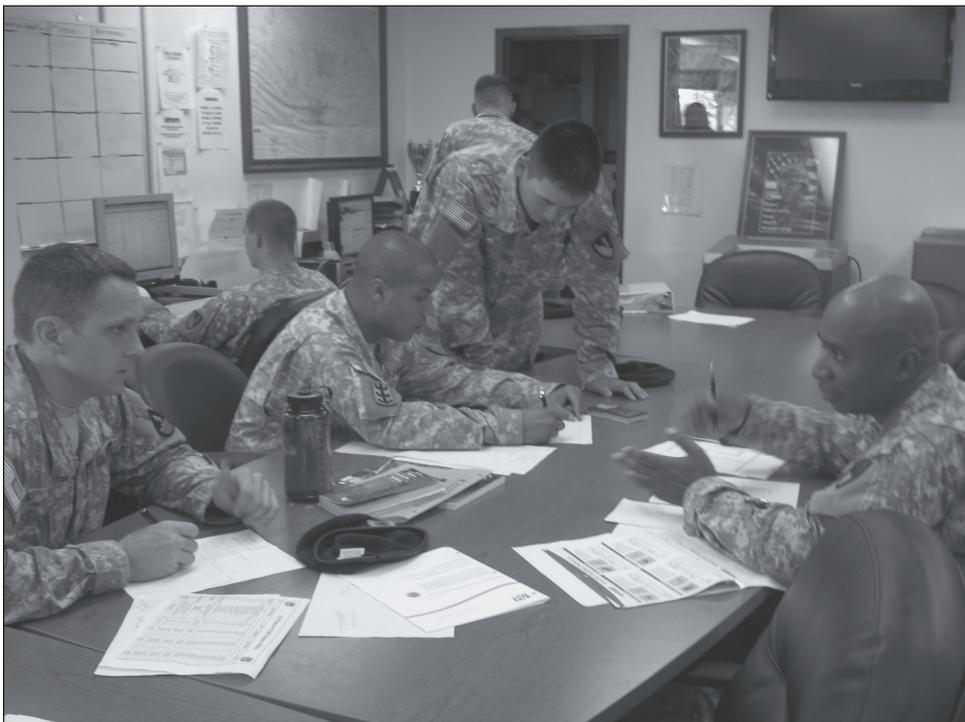
The second consideration was the Regiment's intended role of the warrant officer. The 210A Branch Manager provided guidance on the company's plan and the Regiment's intent. After hearing the company's proposed plan to use the warrant officers as technical advisors, the branch manager agreed that the company's plan and suggested rating chain were in keeping with the Regiment's intended use of the 210As in the modular force.

Having determined how to best use the warrant officers, the company turned its attention to the integration of these welcome additions. To accomplish this task, the company commander contacted the warrant officers identified on the unit's "Gains Roster" to welcome them and to gather their expectations of how they would fit into the company's command structure.

Then the company developed a detailed initial counseling to enable the warrant officers to assume their role and responsibilities with a clear understanding. The counseling expressed requirements far beyond their technical title. They were charged with assisting in mentoring, guiding, and developing the lieutenants and Soldiers in their platoons. In addition, they serve as a unique source of advice and influence within the platoons. As such, they report directly to the commander with their recommendations on ways to resolve prolonged conflicts.

Integration

During a "Leader's Luncheon," the company commander stressed



Members of the 554th Engineer Company go over plans for a new project.

that the 210As are the company's technical expertise placed within the platoons to enhance the platoon's construction efforts. Additionally, the 210As within the platoons were not to assume or serve in supervisory positions, but to assist, guide, and mentor the platoon on engineering and construction tasks. Furthermore, the commander explained that the 210As were the company's internal quality control and quality assurance points of contact. The 210As would serve as the initial points of contact for outside entities as the platoons pressed forward with their missions. This would enable the lieutenants to focus on the administration and project management of their respective platoons while allowing their platoon sergeant to dedicate more time to personnel management and mentoring the unit's future noncommissioned officer leadership.

Key to Success

By having this distinct division of labor, the company not only created an efficient system of checks and balances but also laid the foundation for effective cooperation and communication within the platoons' leadership and clearly defined the positions and responsibilities of all involved. In retrospect, this was the key to success.



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Endnote

¹Effective 1 February 2010, the 210A MOS title changed from Utilities Operation and Maintenance Technician to Construction Engineering Technician.

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