



Enlisted PERSCOM Notes

By Lieutenant Colonel Jack F. Smith

Greetings from your Engineer Enlisted Branch at PERSCOM. Since I will soon be leaving to become the Combat Support Division Chief, the next PERSCOM notes will come from Lieutenant Colonel Margaret Burcham, who is moving here from Germany. It has truly been a great experience to work with the Engineer Branch team and serve the soldiers of the Corps of Engineers. While I am moving into a new position, I'll still have responsibility over the engineer community, as well as the Military Police, Military Intelligence, Transportation, Aviation, and Signal Corps. So if you have enlisted issues that you think I can help with, let me know.

Health of the Regiment

The Engineer Regiment is well manned across the Army (see Table 1). While we have some small shortages in military occupational specialties (MOSs) 12Z, 51Z, and 81Z, 17 of the other engineer MOSs are above 100 percent. Our biggest challenge continues to be MOS 12B, which is enrolled in the Army's top ten critically short MOSs. Over the past four months, more than 1,000 new soldiers graduated from advanced individual training and reported to units in the field, which has decreased our shortage of skill level one sappers throughout the force. We fully expect the MOS to be healthy by the beginning of fiscal year (FY) 04. Most units also have 12B20 shortages. The primary reason for this shortage of sergeants is due to the number of sergeants on recruiting duty (about three mechanized battalions' worth of sergeant E5s). Over the next year, we will gradually decrease that number to get our manning in troop units back to a manageable level.

We do still have significant challenges in MOSs 51M and 00B at the noncommissioned officer (NCO) rank that simply will not go away until the units do their job to get soldiers prepped and to their respective promotion boards. I've repeated this story several times, but I will not let it go as long as the NCO shortages continue in these critical engineer MOSs and anyone asks my opinion.

Recruiting and retention have been well above historical averages across the Army and in the Engineer Regiment. Our FY03 recruiting program is all but sold out for FY03, and we have sold the majority of the first quarter FY04 seats. On the reenlistment side, all but 3 of our 21 specialties are well above

the five-year historical trend. Current trends indicate that this success rate will continue. However, our reenlistment rates for MOSs 12Z, 51Z, and 81Z have been well below the historical average. Apparently, senior NCOs are making a lot of significant career decisions.

As of the publication of this article, there should be no engineer MOSs under the stop-loss program, which allows the Army to retain soldiers with critical skills on active duty beyond their separation date. Soldiers currently serving under stop-loss conditions will be allowed to depart the Army during the October-December 2003 timeframe. For those of you who were impacted by the Stop-Loss Program, I want to express to you my gratitude for the sacrifices you have personally made to serve our country. You all are simply great Americans.

MOS	Authorized Strength	Strength (percent)
12B	8,182	99
12C	672	103
12Z	264	94
00B	129	112
51B	882	118
51H	446	104
51K	116	103
51M	248	105
51R	128	148
51T	256	121
51Z	132	94
52E	184	107
62E	1,323	105
62F	277	101
62H	103	99
62J	664	106
62N	469	101
81L	232	102
81T	470	109
81Z	23	96
82D	110	109
Total	15,310	102.6

Table 1. Engineer Enlisted Operational Strengths (as of 30 May 2003)

Engineer MOS Conversion

Effective October 2003, all of the engineer MOSs are being redesignated to a 21-series nomenclature as part of the Army's MOS conversion program. Table 2 lists the deleted engineer MOSs, the new 21-series nomenclature, and the Professional Development NCO (PDNCO) here at PERSCOM who manages the respective MOSs.

These changes will be hard. MOSs 12B, 51B, 62E, and 81L hold special meanings to us old soldiers, and many of us will

Old	New	MOS	PDNCO
21A	21A	Engineer Officer	MSG Boyce
12B	21B	Combat Engineer	MSG Boyce
12C	21C	Bridge Crewmember	MSG Boyce
00B	21D	Engineer Diver	MSG Williamson
62E	21E	Heavy Construction Equipment Operator	MSG Williamson
62F	21F	Crane Operator	MSG Williamson
62G	21G	Quarrying Specialist (Reserve Component)	MSG Williamson
51H	21H	Construction Engineering Supervisor	MSG Williamson
62J	21J	General Construction Equipment Operator	MSG Williamson
51K	21K	Plumber	MSG Williamson
81L	21L	Lithographer	SFC Banco
51M	21M	Fire Protection Specialist	MSG Williamson
62N	21N	Construction Equipment Specialist	MSG Williamson
52E	21P	Prime Power Production Specialist	MSG Williamson
52G	21Q	Transmission and Distribution Specialist	MSG Williamson
51R	21R	Interior Electrician	MSG Williamson
82D	21S	Geodetic Surveyor	SFC Banco
51T	21T	Technical Engineer Specialist	MSG Williamson
81T	21U	Topographic Analyst	SFC Banco
62H	21V	Concrete and Asphalt Equipment Operator	MSG Williamson
51B	21W	Carpentry and Masonry Specialist	MSG Williamson
51Z	21X	General Engineering Supervisor	MSG Williamson
81Z	21Z	Topographic Engineering Supervisor	SFC Banco
12Z	21Z	Combat Engineering Senior Sergeant	MSG Boyce

Table 2. Engineer MOS Conversions

struggle to remember exactly what a 21S or a 21V is. On the other hand, changes such as these will provide some great benefits to our Regiment. There are few in the Army who know what an MOS 00B is or that it is a critical engineer MOS. With the designation 21D, it will be easy to discern that it is an engineer MOS.

Although some MOSs in the Army that are being merged and/or realigned will impact career progressions, NCO development, and the like, this is not the case for engineers. All of our MOSs simply change designations, with no impact on career progression, MOS training, or promotion opportunities.

Assignments

A large portion of our active Army is fully committed in units around the world: three-plus divisions in the Middle East, a brigade-plus in Afghanistan, a brigade-plus in the Balkans, a division in Europe, and a division in Korea. This situation leaves only a very small pool of soldiers to rotate through critical assignments both stateside and overseas. We will be placing soldiers on assignment with even less than two years time on station to meet pressing Army readiness needs—and with as little as two months notification. As an institution, we don't like to do this to our soldiers, but those are the circumstances we now face in order to meet the needs of the Army. As the situation stabilizes and our soldiers redeploy, we will be able to return to many of the stabilization and assignment policies that were in place before the global war on terrorism, but it will take us some time to get there.

The assignments will come, so be ready. I'll use this opportunity to put in another plug for the Assignment Satisfaction Key (ASK) program that can be found on the Army Knowledge Online Web site <<http://www.army.mil/ako/>> and the PERSCOM Web site <<http://www.perscom.army.net/>>. You should go there and update your volunteer and assignment preference data. Even with our current needs to place soldiers in Korea and other places, the first thing we still look at as we look for candidates is the ASK data.

For soldiers deployed overseas, I'm sure you're wondering if you'll be placed on orders as soon as your unit returns to the continental United States (CONUS). The answer is that many of you may well be placed on orders. We are reducing strengths of units in our institutional Army to continue to send replacements overseas. Our intent is to backfill these shortages in our training base, drill sergeant program, recruiting, Active Component/Reserve Component, and other areas with soldiers who return from deployment. You'll be given at least 90 days to stabilize after your deployment, but then many of you will be sent somewhere in CONUS. Obviously, it is very important that you update your ASK data.

Promotions and Training

With all of the unit and individual deployments around the globe, we do have a significant number of soldiers who have either deferred or were pulled out of the NCO Education System. Whether it was the Primary Leader Development Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course, or Advanced Noncommissioned Officers Course, these soldiers will be rescheduled for schooling as soon as their deployment and stabilization allows. Many of these schools will be a temporary duty assignment while en route to new locations.

For information on pending selection boards, visit the PERSCOM Web site. It's up to you to review your Official Military Personnel File. You can obtain a copy by following the procedures posted at the Web site.

Contacting Us

The sole function of the Engineer Enlisted Branch at PERSCOM is to support soldiers and commanders in

the field. I encourage you to contact your assignment manager, PDNCO, Branch sergeant major, me, or Lieutenant Colonel Burcham with any questions you have about assignments or professional development. The PERSCOM Web site has information on how to reach us. Remember, the only thing in the assignment process that does not have to be a variable is your preference. Take the time to let us know your preference.

Lieutenant Colonel Smith has been the chief of the Engineer Enlisted Branch for the past year. He previously commanded the 44th Engineer Battalion in Korea and prior to that was a war plans analyst at the U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska. Lieutenant Colonel Smith holds a master's in nuclear engineering from Penn State, a master's in military science from the Advanced School of Military Studies, and a master's in strategic studies from the Army War College.

Regimental Awards - Reserve Component

Each year we recognize the best noncommissioned officer, lieutenant, and engineer company, in each of the components, for outstanding contributions and service to our Regiment and Army. Every engineer unit in the Regiment can submit the name and achievements of its best of the best to compete in these distinguished award competitions. Only the finest engineer soldiers are selected as recipients of these awards. They will carry throughout their careers the distinction and recognition of being the Engineer Branch's best and brightest soldiers and leaders. The results of the 2002 Active Component Itschner and Grizzly Awards and Sturgis Medal selection boards were listed in *Engineer*, April-June 2003, page 26. The selections for the Reserve Component are as follows:

The Itschner Award committee selection for the U.S. Army Reserve: Headquarters Support Company, 463d Engineer Battalion (Combat)(Heavy), Wheeling, West Virginia, and for the Army National Guard: Alpha Company 1088th Engineer Battalion, 256th Infantry Brigade, Opelousas, Louisiana.

The Grizzly Award Committee selection for the U.S. Army Reserve: First Lieutenant Mark Dibble, 652d Engineer Company (Multirole Bridge), Ellsworth, Wisconsin, and for the Army National Guard: First Lieutenant John G. St. Romain, Bravo Company, 1088th Engineer Battalion, 256th Infantry Brigade, New Roads, Louisiana.

The Sturgis Medal committee selection for the U.S. Army Reserve: Sergeant First Class Lawrence Spradley, Headquarters

Support Company, 854th Engineer Battalion (Combat)(Heavy), Kingston, New York.

All of the nominees represented their major commands with the highest professionalism and dedication to the Engineer Corps's vision and deserve our highest praise. The award recipients will be recognized at the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Ball, tentatively scheduled for 17 October 2003.

For many years, senior leaders of the Regiment have debated about an appropriate award to recognize the very best engineer soldier, private through specialist. In keeping with the tradition of naming such an award after a distinguished member of the Regiment, the Regimental Command Sergeant Major, along with other senior sergeants major, recommended and gained approval for an award named after the most distinguished command sergeant major in the history of our Regiment—the fourth Sergeant Major of the Army, Leon Van Autreve.

The award is significant for two reasons: first, it was created to recognize the most outstanding junior enlisted soldier of the three components of our Regiment as a tribute to one of our Army's greatest champions of welfare and care of soldiers and their families; second, it showcases and highlights the important and significant service our junior enlisted soldiers provide to our nation. They are truly our most valued resource, and we wouldn't be the Army or Regiment that we are without their selfless and dedicated service. The Van Autreve nominations will be submitted for FY03 and presented at ENFORCE 04.


Lieutenant General Robert B. Flowers
Chief of Engineers


Major General R.L. Van Antwerp
Commandant, U.S. Army Engineer School