

TRADOC Assignments Can Broaden a Career

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In this issue's article, I'd like to share some insights about TRADOC assignments and how my impressions of them have changed since I arrived at Fort Knox. Many soldiers and NCOs feel cold chills running down their spines when they receive orders sending them to a TRADOC assignment at a post like Fort Knox, Kentucky. I was even one of them!

I asked myself many questions: "What had I done? Why did I have to be the one to go? Did my records look so bad that the assignment personnel at Armor Branch decided that I was already ALL I WAS GOING TO BE in this Army, so they sent me here?" When I received a phone call from my sponsor telling me that I was a valued asset, and that I had many good things to offer to the TRADOC Training System, I thought to myself, that must be the standard party line, code for, "Gotcha! Another one bites the dust."

After being here now for two years and being very involved in the TRADOC Training System, I can say I was as wrong as wrong could be about branch assignment personnel trying to end careers. In fact, it is exactly the opposite. I can only speak about what I have observed from the foxhole here at Fort Knox, but I believe that much of what you are about to read holds true at most any TRADOC assignment.

The Armor Branch NCOs manage the force in accordance with set guidelines. These guidelines can be found in the promotion board guidance that guides selection of the senior Armor NCOs, and the Armor Enlisted Career Map that shows all enlisted grades 'a way' to manage their career's in assign-

ments, schools, promotions, and training. Both the promotion board guidance and the Career Map are on the Office of the Chief of Armor (OCA) web site on the Fort Knox Home Page. When making assignments, the branch ensures that a soldier's assignment is complementary to the potential for advancement in accordance with the documents stated above.

Most of us feel we need to stay with troops if we want to be competitive for advancement. The map also recommends seeking and working in tough assignments. But the guidance also says that the Army needs soldiers who have performed well in varied types of assignments, read TO&E to TDA to TO&E. Tough assignments exist all over the Army, to include TRADOC. TRADOC assignments are good career builders, provided you do not do back-to-back TDA assignments.

But why are TRADOC assignments good career builders? Most soldiers and leaders know that TRADOC installations do training because we all went through these posts in Basic, Advanced Training, One Station Training, the Officer Basic or Advance courses, and training in the NCOES system. But did you also know that NCOs assigned to TRADOC also work in the Total Army Training System (TATS)? They work to ensure that reserve and active training supports our One Army. And Army transformation? TRADOC has the lead in laying out the Army's new path. There are many challenging assignments in TRADOC that are extremely vital to our Army. In the directorate that deals with future developments, the Directorate of Force Development (DFD), NCOs are directly involved in

developing what the future combat fighting systems will look like and how they will perform. Others work on what future soldiers will wear or some of the equipment that integrates with the current and future platforms. Still others are working at modernizing current combat systems. At the Mounted Maneuver Battle Lab (MMBL), NCOs are helping model and work simulations for future ideas. In the Directorate of Training Development (DTDD), NCOs are writing the doctrine we are currently using, as well as writing the doctrine for the future. Also, NCOs are key advisors with industry in the development of new simulator training systems. And still others are developing new training methodologies that are helping to revolutionize the way we can do training and evaluations.

I can go on, and there are many more things that are going on here, but the bottom line is that being assigned to TRADOC here at Fort Knox provides you the chance to have an impact on what will happen to our Army in the years to come. If you have been in the line units, I need you to share your experience with the whole force, seek an assignment to Fort Knox or to other TDA positions. They will be both challenging and rewarding. If you are completing a TDA assignment, then get back to a TO&E organization to empower your troops with the knowledge you have gained working a TDA position.

Wherever you are, continue to make this the best Army in the world and remember to:

"FORGE THE THUNDERBOLT, BECAUSE TODAY IS THE BEST DAY TO BE A SOLDIER."