

# Regimental News from the Desk of the Sergeant Major

*Sergeant Major Jeffrey A. Todd*

The following note was written by SSG Louis "Dino" Dinatale who is a member of Team Personnel Command (PERSCOM). From personal experience, I know that the enlisted members of The Judge Advocate General's Corps are the best informed soldiers in the Army. I say this without hesitation or reservation. I speak to them individually and in groups when conducting Article 6 visits and, suffice it to say, our soldiers are aware of what is going on within The Judge Advocate General's Corps and the Army. One very large reason for this is the work of Master Sergeant Jenkins, Staff Sergeant Dinatale, and our newest member of the Team, Mr. Paul Smith. This team works tirelessly to ensure our soldiers know what career enhancing assignments are available to them. Sergeant Major Todd.

## Individual Assignment Focus

The 71D (Legal Specialist) Career Branch Professional Development noncommissioned officers are asked a variety of questions, but the following question tops the list: "What good assignments are available to me?" It is a common question that you may ponder while reviewing the list of assignments, from exotic to everyday, posted frequently on the Legal Automation Army-Wide System Bulletin Board Service. The answer for each soldier depends on what he has determined to be his assignment focus.

In contemplating your next assignment, what "drives-the-train"? Some soldiers consider the proximity to family or recreational pursuits when looking into their next assignment. While these soldiers have weighted their assignment focus towards satisfying personal endeavors, the majority of soldiers watch assignments as opportunities for upward mobility and seek certain duty positions accordingly. These are the soldiers that study their career map diligently to ensure they are taking the right steps as they visualize their upward climb towards the senior ranks. There are also soldiers who look at assignments as simply Army-business. They take a passive position in their assignments by allowing the career managers to determine their individual focus. The career managers then make their decisions based on the needs of the Army and any available documentation contained in their personnel records.

Interest in assignments vary, but selection for assignments is more competitive than ever. The soldier with the most skills and varied experience ends up with the better assignments. A soldier should write out his career goals and a timeline to achieve

them. When planning career goals, soldiers should consider the personal satisfaction, sacrifices, and obtainability of the varied positions. One way to help ensure a variety of assignments is to talk with the Career Branch about available assignments and the criteria used for selection. Many soldiers focus on the "hard-assignments," or Tables of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) assignments as the litmus test of promotion potential, but in reality, a combination of Tables of Distribution and Allowance (TDA) and TO&E assignments presents a better picture of a soldier's versatility to perform in various environments and his functionality in the Army of the 21st Century.

Assignment decisions can be very tough for career managers when the only tools available for making assignments are the Personnel Qualification Record and the noncommissioned officer evaluation reports. To help ensure soldier involvement, The Judge Advocate General Regimental Sergeant Major has directed the 71D Career Branch members to visit soldiers in both Continental United States and Outside the Continental United States locations. The Career Branch coordinates visits with the installation chief legal noncommissioned officers to plan briefings and one-on-one interviews with soldiers. This enables the Career Branch to tell the "PERSCOM Story" on the assignment process. It also allows soldiers the opportunity to personally speak with their Career Manager about decisions that will have an impact on their lives and careers.

Regardless of what one's individual assignment focus may be, all soldiers need to continually work towards self-improvement through military and civilian education. PERSCOM decisions for "specialized" assignments such as instructor, medical claims investigator, drill sergeant, and recruiter involve looking at the soldier's technical knowledge, but also for communication skills, leadership, and completion of college. Many times, this involves the soldier submitting a resume outlining his experience and ability to perform the prescribed duties. Some soldiers who are fully qualified are not selected for assignment due to stabilization requirements. Those soldiers still remain active for consideration at a later time based on their availability for assignment and desire to be accepted for selection.

While the Army's primary goal is to meet the personnel requirements of the Army, it's secondary goal is to meet soldiers' personal desires and provide the greatest opportunity for professional development. Staff Sergeant DiNatale III.