



**STRATEGY
RESEARCH
PROJECT**

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THE ARMY'S RESERVE COMPONENTS PROMOTION SELECTION BOARD SYSTEMS, DISSIMILAR, SEPARATE IN GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES. "DO THESE SELECTION BOARD SYSTEMS REALLY SUPPORT THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY'S GUIDANCE AND THE PROMOTION STATUTES OF ROMPA IN SELECTION THE 'BEST-QUALIFIED' OFFICERS TO MEET THE ARMY'S NEEDS (REQUIREMENTS). ARE THE BEST QUALIFIED OFFICERS BEING SELECTED TO BE THE FUTURE LEADERS OF THE ARMY'S RESERVE COMPONENTS?"

BY

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United States Army**

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U.S. Army War College
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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: LTC SAMUEL T. NICHOLS, JR.

TITLE: THE ARMY'S RESERVE COMPONENTS PROMOTION SELECTION BOARD SYSTEMS, DISSIMILAR, SEPARATE IN GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES. "DO THESE SELECTION BOARD SYSTEMS REALLY SUPPORT THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY'S GUIDANCE AND THE PROMOTION STATUTES OF ROPMA IN SELECTING THE 'BEST-QUALIFIED' OFFICERS TO MEET THE ARMY'S NEEDS (REQUIREMENTS). ARE THE BEST-QUALIFIED OFFICERS BEING SELECTED TO BE THE FUTURE LEADERS OF THE ARMY'S RESERVE COMPONENTS?"

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The Army's RC has three distinct promotion systems that are dissimilar in the methodology and procedures to choose the best-qualified officers as future leaders in the RC. This study examines the mechanics of these three different promotion systems. The enactment of ROPMA promotion policies only pertain to the RC officers considered through the DA Centralized Board process. The two Position Vacancy Boards are in fact assignment systems and promotion systems utilized to promote the fully and/or best-qualified officer to fill a specific vacancy in a geographical region. The Mandatory Board system selects the best-qualified overall to be promoted. The select objective though is based on specific branch and functional requirements. The systems are in fact working independently to achieve their respective goals. To imply they all select the best-qualified officers IAW the ROPMA statutes of promotion is a misnomer. Strong differences and opinion may be apparent concerning the merits of each system but the sole test must be: "Are the best-qualified officers selected by our promotion systems?" and "Are these three selection boards providing equity and fairness to each and every officer considered in the promotion process?"

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PREFACE

First and foremost giving honor to God, my personal savior and the head of my life. Without his divine guidance completion of this research paper would not have been possible. Selecting a topic for my study took long hours of thought and prayer that ultimately led me to pursue it because of its value to the Army. The Army's vision statement is appropriate to emphasize the critical need for this study on how Reserve Component (RC) Officers ultimately become our leaders through its promotion systems. The Secretary of the Army as well as the Chief of Staff of the Army has emphasized in the Army's vision statement, "We are about leadership; it is our stock in trade, and it is what makes us different. We take soldiers who enter the force and grow them into leaders for the next generation of soldiers. We will continue to develop those leaders through study in the institutional schoolhouse, through field experiences gained in operational assignments, and through personal study and professional readings." This study is designed to provide information to the DCSPER, Chief, Army Reserve, Chief, National Guard Bureau, commanders as well as officers of the Army's RC. The study will address issues concerning the mechanics of the three different Army RC promotion systems. It's evident that ROPMA's promotion statutes only pertain to the Army's RC officers through the DA Centralized Mandatory Board process and the USAR Position Vacancy Board (PVB) process. The two PVB promotion systems are truly assignment and promotion systems utilized to promote the fully-qualified (National Guard, Title 32) and best-qualified officer (USAR, Title 10) to fill a specific vacancy in a geographical region. The National Guard's Federal Recognition system for appointment and promotions, Title 32 has existed for over eight decades. The three promotion systems in fact work independently to achieve their desired goals. In the end all best-qualified officers recommended by the DA Centralized Mandatory Board system do not get promoted. If ROPMA was developed to be the 'cure all' in the standardization of promotion and personnel management policies for the Army's RC, it has not accomplished what it was intended to do. You could say its still "business as usual" for the Army's RC in the area of promotions, fragmented, inconsistent policies. The author benefited greatly from the outstanding support and assistance provided by the many personnel in DoD, the U.S. Army, active as well as reserve. Special thanks go to the following National Guard officers, Major General Stephen P. Cortright, Adjutant General, State of Oklahoma, Brigadier General Larry D. Haub, Deputy STARC Commander, State of Oklahoma, and Lieutenant Colonel David W. Brown, Chief, Officer Personnel Branch, State of Oklahoma. Special recognition is extended to Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Glikin presently assigned at the Pentagon in DCSPER, PAE. I truly express my sincere thanks to all for their patience and assistance. I'd like to thank my parents, Mary Alice and Sam T. Nichols Sr. whose stern guidance in my formative years has been the foundation for my moral beliefs. Finally, I want to thank a loving, caring and understanding wife. Fitting an Army officer pay tribute to his spouse who's endured the "good, bad and ugly" for the many years of our wonderful marriage. I would describe her patience as that of Job in the Bible. She's always been there for me when I needed her moral and spiritual support. To my wife I give you these Bible verses for inspiration and as an expression of my love and respect for being an exemplary Army spouse. (Ephesians 5:25-28; Proverbs 18:22; and Proverbs 31:10-13). Thank You!

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THE ARMY'S RESERVE COMPONENTS PROMOTION SELECTION BOARD SYSTEMS, DISSIMILAR, SEPARATE IN GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES. "DO THESE SELECTION BOARD SYSTEMS REALLY SUPPORT THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY'S GUIDANCE AND THE PROMOTION STATUTES OF ROPMA IN SELECTING THE 'BEST-QUALIFIED' OFFICERS TO MEET THE ARMY'S NEEDS (REQUIREMENTS). ARE THE BEST-QUALIFIED OFFICERS BEING SELECTED TO BE THE FUTURE LEADERS OF THE ARMY'S RESERVE COMPONENTS?"

Promotion - - the word carries with it a connotation of prestige; of recognition for a job well done; of a chance for an interesting, challenging job change; a chance to remain in a profession. A promotion can have far-reaching effects on the mission of the Army and the professional development, morale, and well being of the officer corps. And it is not just an officer's own career that is impacted by a promotion. The promotion process determines who will lead the force of the future and that, too, affects other officers. Few other actions in the Army have such a wide impact and interest for so many members.

— LTC Katherine M. Bigler, The Use of Official Photographs in the Army Officer Promotion Selection Board Process, Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College, 1 May 2000, p.1

Probably more important than any other characteristic, the promotion system must be fair and equitable and should be designed so as to reduce the effect of possible human partiality to a maximum degree. To be considered in any aspect of the field of human endeavor, fairness and equality are of utmost importance in promotion. All individuals who are eligible for a given promotion must feel that they have received just and equal consideration and that, where judgment of superiors plays a part, the final decision has been based on fact and honest opinion as opposed to the caprice, fancy, or partiality of the superior.

— LTC Thomas A. Kenan, U.S.A., The Problem of Promotion In The United States Army: Some Considerations Involved, Abstract of a Thesis Presented for the Degree Of Master of Science, The Ohio State University, 1947, p.13

**COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE RESERVE COMPONENT
PROMOTION SYSTEMS**

The Total Force Policy, implemented by the Secretary of Defense in 1973, was a major step toward further integration of the Reserve Component (RC) and Active Component (AC). This policy mandated equity of both components. Every Secretary of Defense for the past 25 years has enthusiastically endorsed the Total Force Policy. The Gulf War highlighted the importance of the Total Force Policy for all components in the success of all military operations.

The resounding success of U.S. military forces during operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm is directly attributed to the seamless integration of the AC and RC in all facets of military operations.

The enactment of the Reserve Officer Personnel Act (ROPMA) made the process easier for the integration of the two components and to preclude RC personnel management problems experienced in the Gulf War. ROPMA provides for compatible practices concerning the appointment, promotion, separation, and retirement of officers in the RC. However, ROPMA has presented challenges for the National Guard and RC in some of the unique policies in personnel management and promotion that do not parallel their AC counterparts.

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

For many years, RC personnel management policies were fragmented. Since the enactment of ROPMA there has been situations in the area of promotions where ROPMA policies have failed to produce fairness and equality. If the present trends discussed in this paper continue, the Army's RC officer corps cannot and will not be comprised of the *best-qualified* officers available. And the RC will not meet its personnel readiness needs, thus severely affecting the mobilization readiness of Army RC units in the future.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the three Army RC selection board systems. The focus will be on examining each selection board to see if they actually select the *best-qualified* officers. I will examine each board process for the effects of laws and regulatory guidance concerning the selections of officers from another selection board. The questions to be answered are, "Are the *best-qualified* officers being selected by our promotion systems?" and "Are these three selection boards providing equity and fairness to each and every officer considered in the promotion process?"

APPROACH

This study will: (1) provide a historical prospective of the RC selection board system; (2) evaluate the Army's RC selection board systems based on personal experiences and observations, (3) look at the selection methods used by the three Army RC selection boards and their direct and indirect effect on the overall selection of officers, and finally (4) make recommendations for change.

PART I: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

There have been numerous studies commissioned by the Army's leadership over the decades concerning AC promotions, but few concerning RC promotions. Papers dating to the

early 1900s address concerns relating to promotions and the difficulties in promoting the *best-qualified* soldiers in a system perceived to be fair and impartial. The *best-qualified* officer being promoted by any promotion system should be central to any personnel management system.

The first real promotion system for the Reserves occurred in the late 1940s primarily because of World War II and the huge build up of the active force. The majority of RC promotion policies have come from law and regulatory guidance utilized primarily by the AC promotion process.

ACTS GOVERNING OFFICER PROMOTIONS

Initially Army promotions were based on vacancies within each regiment. As the Army became larger and more complex this system was expanded to fill branch vacancies and finally, shortly before World War I, to fill Army-wide Component vacancies by grade. Reserve promotions were first comprehensively managed under provisions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 1916. The 1916 NDAA also provided the initial concept for what became known as Federal Recognition of National Guard officer's commissions. The 1920 NDAA provided broad administrative latitude in the promotion of reserve officers. It provided that any reserve officer may hold a commission in the National Guard without thereby vacating his reserve commission.¹ The dual status concept was established in 1933.

Between WWI and World War II, there was relatively little attention paid to RC personnel management and promotions. This was primarily due to the lack of legislation in those key areas.

Army RC promotions became very different in the eligibility of officers after 1954 to present. Requirements to complete Military Education at each rank came into being. And, completion of Civilian Education before promotion to major was established by regulatory guidance in 1989. Then this requirement was moved back to the rank of captain and codified by law in 1992.

OFFICER PERSONNEL ACT OF 1947

As the nation returned to normalcy after World War II and proposed to revert to the pre-war military structure, the legislative and executive branches of government sought a comprehensive, integrated officer management system. The answer was the Officer Personnel Act (OPA) of 1947, the first statute governing permanent promotions and eliminations of Regular officers in all the services. Although the act did not merge or unify the services'

promotion systems, the legislation was intended to serve as a catalyst for standardizing the separate systems.

From 1947 onward, the Army could expect to see a structure that would expand and contract. The RC officer would be counted on to come on Active Duty (AD) and then be released as situations dictated. To provide a promotion system sufficient for these and other flexible conditions, temporary promotions of both AC and RC officer were authorized.

OPA was drafted on the assumption that the services would have a continuing need for many thousands of temporary officers for years into the future. Temporary officers on extended AD, not the career officer, would be the victims of any reduction-in-force. The temporary system became the focus of criticism of OPA in the ensuing years.

THE ARMED FORCES ACT OF 1952 required the Services to establish regulations for Reserve officer's promotions. By the close of the Korean War, Congress felt Reserve officer personnel management was simply too chaotic. The Act of 1952 led to the development, consideration and ultimate passage of Reserve Officer Personnel Act (ROPA). The 1954 ROPA statutes created a parallel, permanent promotion system for Reserve officers on extended AD and in the active reserves providing a guaranteed promotion flow. The ROPA amendments of 1960 removed many of the remaining major differences between the Services' Reserve officer promotion procedures.

OFFICER GRADE LIMITATION ACT OF 1954

In 1947, policymakers did not contemplate the need for a large standing Army with a sizeable officer corps. As OPA placed ceilings on the number of Regular officers, it granted the Service secretaries the latitude to make temporary promotions when the number of Regular and active duty Reserve officers required exceeded allowable limits. During the 1950s, Congress voiced its displeasure with the increasing number of senior officers and the unrestrained awarding of temporary promotions. Specifically, Congress thought OPA's temporary officer language was too broad for one Service and found the statute's lack of restrictions in the other Services objectionable.

Therefore, in 1954, Congress enacted the Officer Grade Limitation Act (OGLA), which controlled temporary promotions and limited the number of officers, both Regular and Reserve, who could serve on active duty in the grades of major and above. OGLA, and OPA combined, gave rise to a dual-track system of temporary and permanent promotions and produced an

Army officer management system that based assignments, precedence, and other attributes of grade and rank on temporary seniority.

DEFENSE OFFICER PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1981 (DOPMA)

DOPMA was the first comprehensive revision of the statutes relating to the appointment, promotion, tenure, and separation of Regular commissioned officers since enactment of the 1947 OPA. It also incorporated procedures for considering Regular and Reserve officers serving on active duty into a single personnel management system. Prior to the enactment of DOPMA, however, the promotion and retention of Reserve officers serving on AD was managed by service policies. This was particularly the case in the Army and the Air Force, which had by far the largest numbers of Reserve officers serving on AD and the largest number remaining on AD for a full career. DOPMA revised this in important part by (1) setting out statutory provisions for promotion eligibility, composition and operation of promotion boards, which applied to both Regular and Reserve officers serving on the active-duty list; and (2) by standardizing credit for educational experience in the original appointments of Regular and Reserve officers. In retrospect, the three major changes which DOPMA made in officer personnel management were: (1) a single promotion system for active-duty list officers, (2) a single active-duty list, and (3) an increase in numerical limits on Regular officers to permit the Services to establish an all-Regular career force.

DOPMA institutionalized the *best-qualified* idea, terminated the temporary promotion system, and merged the management systems of Regular and Reserve officers on AD. Even though Congress had devoted considerable attention to the management of AD officers since World War II, its interest in the management of RC officers was comparatively low. During the last three decades, just one comprehensive piece of legislation for managing RC officers, ROPA of 1954, had been passed.

RESERVE OFFICER PERSONNEL ACT OF 1954 (ROPA)

Congress intended to make the management of RC officers like that of AC officers, extending its desire for standardization among the services as expressed in the 1947 OPA. Congress intended use for ROPA was:

To provide for officers of the Reserve Components a statutory basis for promotion and elimination comparable to that provided for officers of the regular components by the Officer Personnel Act of 1947.²

Army RC officers who meet minimum time-in-grade and time-in-service requirements

must be considered for promotion and are promoted if they were found *fully-qualified* by a selection board. If a Position Vacancy board considers an RC officer, the officer has to be *best-qualified* among those officers found *fully-qualified*. ROPA failed to provide uniformity in the timing of promotions and the use of the *best-qualified* criterion. Under ROPA, consistency and uniformity in promotion criteria was still lacking.

THE RESERVE OFFICER PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1996 (ROPMA)

In 1980, the House Committee on Armed Services expressed a desire for ROPMA legislation. The efforts of a ROPMA Task Force did not lead to fruition because the task force members were given the assignment as an additional duty. Subsequently, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs established the Department of Defense (DoD) ROPMA General Officer Steering Committee in July 1981 to guide the ROPMA Work Group, which was to develop proposed ROPMA legislation.

ROPMA provided for a single list of all Reserve officers for each Service. This list would be used to establish seniority within grade, to determine eligibility for promotion and to determine the sequence and timing of promotion. The promotion system that was established by ROPMA was not a radical departure from the old ROPA statutes. The primary objectives of ROPMA were to update the law pertaining to Reserve officers so as to conform with DOPMA where appropriate. ROPMA retained the Position Vacancy system of the National Guard to appoint and promote officers of the National Guard.

PART II: THE ARMY'S RESERVE COMPONENT PROMOTION SYSTEMS

The Army's RC has three promotion systems; (1) the National Guard (Title 32) Position Vacancy system better know as Federal Recognition, (2) the United States Army Reserve (USAR) Position Vacancy system and (3) the Department of the Army (DA) Centralized Mandatory Board system (Title 10). These three Promotion Selection Boards (PSBs) are dissimilar in methodology and some procedures. The two Position Vacancy Boards (PVBs), National Guard and USAR, are promotion systems that assign officers to a specific vacancy.

Title 32, U.S.C., establishes the National Guard's Federal Recognition system guidelines and procedures. Title 10 U.S.C., establishes the other two promotion systems. The provisions of ROPMA were enacted on 1 October 1996. ROPMA provided a new PVB system that replaced the system used by the USAR and the Air Force Reserve. ROPMA preserved intact the National Guard's Position Vacancy promotion system that has been the virtual lifeline of the National Guard personnel system since 1916. The significance of this will become evident later

in this paper. Two promotion systems, the National Guard's PVB and the DA Centralized Mandatory Board affect the selection of the best-qualified officers for any respective PSB.

The DA Secretariat administers PSBs for the centralized Mandatory Board and the USAR PVB system. The two boards are similar. Both boards are centralized and use the *best-qualified* method to select officers, but they have subtle differences.

The DA Centralized Mandatory Board system is used for both the USAR and National Guard officers. Select objectives for each competitive category are determined by the aggregate vacancies from each Army RC projected over the next five years for the specific rank. This board is probably the least efficient of the three promotion systems in meeting the Army's needs. This is due primarily to the following factors; (1) the board's select objectives are derived primarily from specific branch and functional area requirements that limits its range, (2) instructions are given to the board to select the *best-qualified* officers based on criterion established in the Secretary of the Army's Memorandum of Instruction (MOI) without regard to the way the select objectives were originally established, and finally, (3) National Guard officers can be considered simultaneously by the Federal Recognition process. The Secretary's direction in the board's MOI to select the *best-qualified* officers to meet the needs of the Army is another issue. An officer selected by a Mandatory Board as being *best-qualified* has a very real possibility of never being promoted, especially to the rank of Colonel (COL). ROPMA allows a voluntary delay in promotion. This is primarily because no vacancy exists in the geographical region near the officer's home of record. The voluntary delay provision may be viewed as a tool to provide equity and fairness through the promotion process but in actuality it is not. To be promoted, an officer selected as *best-qualified* by the Mandatory Board must relocate to a vacancy compatible with their respective skills. This is difficult for officers at all ranks and especially COL. If Mandatory Boards were mobilization requirements based, they would better meet the Army's needs. The voluntary delay statute permits an imperfect board system, since the *best-qualified* officer may never get promoted.

I served in the DA Secretariat for over five years, the last three as the Chief of the office. This experience gave me an in-depth understanding of laws, policies, and procedures governing the Army's RC selection board systems. There is "no formal Army training program" associated with the skill sets required to work in the DA Secretariat, yet the importance of a well-trained support staff for RC Selection Boards is paramount to the success of any selection boards mission. The Chief, DA Secretariat, Board Recorders, and Civilian Support Staff are the

Secretary of the Army's honest brokers in this process. My observations on the Army's RC selection board systems are formed from actual participation in the board process.

The two PVB PSBs have inherent flaws that may prevent the *best-qualified* officers from even being considered in their systems. In the National Guard's PVB system, the local commander selects one officer to compete for a unit's vacancy. The Federal Recognition Board, therefore, only looks at one officer to see if they are qualified for the promotion. No eligible USAR officer in the geographic locale is considered. Likewise, only USAR officers are considered for vacant positions in USAR units.

The National Guard's PVB (Federal Recognition) system is the primary promotion vehicle for the 54 states and territories. These boards are conducted on a monthly or as needed basis. In contrast USAR PVBs are held semi-annually to fill vacancies in USAR units. Even though these two promotion systems are considered assignment and promotion systems there is a question of competition for the vacancy of all qualified officers in a geographic locale. This brings in question again, "Are the best-qualified officers being promoted by the three different Army RC selection boards from the officer population being considered?"

The National Guard's PVB has a direct effect on the DA Centralized Mandatory Board system in the selection of the best-qualified officer. Under Title 10 U.S.C. § 14301 officers previously selected by any selection board are prohibited from being considered from any subsequent RC PSB. This is whether the selected officer is on a board report or an approved promotion list. A Federal Recognition board (Title 32) and a DA Centralized Mandatory Board (Title 10) can simultaneously consider a National Guard officer. Even though the law prohibits consideration of selected officers, with all 54 states and territories conducting Federal Recognition boards on a continuous basis it is virtually impossible to enforce this provision. There have been numerous instances over the years where officers were Federal Recognized, and then non-selected by a DA Centralized Mandatory Board that was considering them at the same time. The results of the Mandatory Board are thereby compromised and potentially better qualified officers are passed over. Simultaneous consideration of National Guard officers has a direct impact on the *best-qualified* officers being selected for promotion. And, the equity and fairness issue must be considered because of the perception of all officers being considered by our promotion systems.

Only two of the Army's RC selection systems do select the *best-qualified* among those officers considered. The National Guard's PVB PSB system is less competitive and uses the

fully-qualified method to select officers being considered. Maintaining a high degree of confidence in the fairness and impartiality of these promotion systems is critical.³ Perhaps the changes suggested in this study can help reestablish the fairness of each selection system.⁴

PART III: RESERVE COMPONENTS PROMOTION SELECTION BOARDS METHODS OF SELECTION AND PROMOTION SELECTION BOARD SYSTEMS

The Secretary of the Army's MOI provides guidance to selection boards concerning the method of selection the board will use during its deliberations. Along with this guidance the Secretary establishes the number of officers to be selected. In my investigations, the AC has conducted selection at the rank of captain and below using the *fully-qualified* method of selection as far back as 1947. Presently, Title 10 U.S.C. § 616(c)(1) and (2) describes what a selection board must accomplish. All DOPMA convened boards must use the *best-qualified* criterion. The Secretary has determined that all captain's boards will use the *fully-qualified* criterion. DA Memorandum 600-2 further describes the method of selection for AC captain boards.

In 1947, permanent and temporary boards for RC officers used either method of selection according to the RC officer's status. With the enactment of ROPA in 1954, most Army RC PSBs used the *fully-qualified* method of selection, (i.e., to select one or all qualified officers) except for the Army RC COL PSB. The COL PSB used the *best-qualified* method of selection primarily because of the number of COL's that could be in an active status.

Title 10 U.S.C. § 14108(a) mandated the *best-qualified* method of selection for all RC officer boards below the rank of Brigadier General.

Under ROPMA, it is the best-qualified standard, and the board would have to pick the best-qualified from among those who are determined to be fully qualified. that is an important change.⁵

Below are the definitions of *fully-qualified* and *best-qualified* as used in the Secretary of the Army's MOI to selection boards considering Army RC officers.

FULLY QUALIFIED

Selection Boards in determining whether an officer is '*fully-qualified*' for promotion, should satisfy themselves that the officer is qualified professionally and morally, has demonstrated integrity, is physically fit, and is capable of performing the duties of an officer with his or her qualifications in the next higher grade, and is educationally qualified.⁶

BEST QUALIFIED

Based on careful consideration of the record of each officer determined to be fully qualified, individuals recommended for selection will be determined

to be '*best qualified*' through ability, potential for future service and particular skills, to assume the duties of the next higher grade and to meet the needs of the Army as outlined in the board's MOI.⁷

From the above definitions, one can see that they are largely synonymous. Title 10 U.S.C. § 616 (c) and § 14108 (b) along with the Secretary's MOI further defines the importance of the definition *fully-qualified*. It stipulates that an officer must be found 'first' *fully-qualified* by the board to be recommended for promotion. An officer who is found *fully-qualified* by an Army RC PSB is an officer who should be recommended for promotion according to the Secretary's guidance.

Under the *best-qualified* method of selection, the board is provided with a zone of officers, but in addition is given a specific number of officers that it must select. The board must 'first' determine which officers are *fully-qualified*. However, since the board can only select a specified number, they must place the officers considered *fully-qualified* on an order of merit list and recommend only the prescribed number.⁸

We will now look at the Army's RC selection board systems in detail. It will be evident that the readers of this study these promotion systems are dissimilar and contradictory in certain processes. In comparison these systems all have inherent strengths and some apparent weaknesses.

ARMY RESERVE COMPONENT PROMOTION SELECTION BOARDS

Colonel Board Member rotated his tired neck, rubbed his red eyes, took his glasses off laid them in front of his viewer, and finally stood up from his desk stretched and let out a loud yawn. Continuously the colonel had questioned himself since the start of record voting and wondered, "Am I following the secretary's guidance?" This was the hardest task he had been charged with and perhaps the most important. After all, selecting the next generation of Army Reserve leaders was a great responsibility. He had to review several hundred files daily and even at that pace he would be away from his command, civilian job and his family for more than a month. A nagging burden and fear that he may not have been voting consistently was on his mind. Was he giving more today for how well officers performed in various assignments than on yesterday, giving more weight to photos, allowing his personal bias towards command sway his decision when reviewing files of administrative officers? Constantly on his mind was the secretary's guidance, "No evaluation of demonstrated professionalism or potential for future service can be complete or objective without review of the entire file." Also, "however the board must place the greatest emphasis on an officers more recent performance in his or her career field." In reviewing the preponderance of files on Individual Ready Reserve

(IRR) officers who left active duty more than seven years ago he wondered how to apply this guidance since the majority of the officers had been good quality officers on Active Duty (AD), but since leaving AD have done absolutely nothing to enhance their career status. All he could do was forge onward hopeful that the other members who probably were in the same boat would offset his errors.

— LTC Samuel T. Nichols, Jr. U.S. Army War College Fellow, AY 00-01

Colonel Board Member is typical of more than 250 officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) who are called upon each year to serve as members on Department of the Army Centralized Mandatory Boards, Reserve components (RC), which are conducted by the DA Secretariat for Selection Boards, RC. Also, the National Guard holds Federal recognition boards at each state headquarters. Board members are directed to ensure all eligible NCOs and officers are considered without prejudice or partiality. Members are given an oath to follow all governing laws, regulatory requirements, policy, and written administrative instructions regarding board procedures and made to understand their duty and obligation. Board members are charged to recognize those officers who will make the greatest contribution as Army leaders for years to come. The selection board's charter is to follow the instructions from the Secretary of the Army to the letter and select the *best-qualified* officers to meet the Army's needs. PSBs are charged to identify the best-qualified soldiers for command, promotion and professional development.

The Army RC DA Centralized Mandatory PSB system evolved from the centralized board system used by the AC.

Several Army RC PSBs have been administered under the *fully-qualified* criterion. These have been Captain Chaplain and Army Medical Department (AMEDD) boards. The reason for this was the officers being considered were fewer than the Secretary's authorized select objective for the boards. There is no law or regulatory guidance that authorizes any Army RC Mandatory Board to be conducted by the *fully-qualified* criterion. Only the AC has DA Memorandum 600-2 that gives supplemental guidance to conduct all captain PSBs by the *fully-qualified* criterion.

NATIONAL GUARD POSITION VACANCY SYSTEM

ROPMA preserves intact the unit vacancy promotion system that is peculiar to the Army and the Air National Guard. As you know, there are only two National Guard Components, the Air National Guard and the Army National Guard, and because of the geographical restrictions associated

with those two components, they have devised a relatively unique unit vacancy promotion system, and that system would not be altered by ROPMA.

— Mr. Henry J. Schwelter, Counsel, House Armed Services Committee, Markup of H.R. 1040, The Reserve Officer Personnel Act, March 24, 1993

Position Vacancy promotions through the Federal Recognition process have been the lifeline of the National Guard for decades. The key factors attributing to the success of the system are, (1) its an assignment and promotion system, (2) it assigns an officer to a specific vacancy if the Federal Recognition board finds the officer fully-qualified for assignment to the position.

The Army National Guard promotion system is designed to do the following:

- Provide sufficient qualified officers in each grade to sustain the needs of the Army National Guard.
- Maintain the integrity of the promotion system by providing for fair and equitable advancement of officers and eliminate substandard or marginal officers as early as possible.
- Provide a proper promotion flow through the various grades to ensure an energetic, highly motivated Army National Guard officer corps with a high retention rate among top-quality officers.⁹

Officers in the RC who are in an active status are listed on the Reserve Active Status List (RASL) by rank and competitive category. An officer must be on this list to be considered for promotion.

Under existing law, the Army and Air Force may use the unit vacancy system to promote officers to meet specific requirements associated with approved billets. The general criteria established for an officer to be considered for promotion under the unit vacancy program are: 1) the officer must be occupying or be available to occupy a position that is authorized for the higher grade; 2) the officer must be fully-qualified and geographically available; 3) the officer must have completed the minimum years of service in grade required by law in addition to any other time-in-grade criteria established by the secretary of the military department concerned.¹⁰

Qualifications also include meeting the minimum military and civilian education requirements for promotion to the next higher grade.

The approval process is important to note for Federal Recognition boards. Once the State

Federal Recognition board is recessed and the paperwork is sent forward through the approval process, the officer is granted Temporary Federal Recognition for a six-month period. The officer is not promoted nor paid at the higher grade during this period because the Federal Recognition is still pending final approval and appointment as a Reserve commissioned officer of the Army. Temporary Federal Recognition automatically ends after six months (Title 32 U.S.C. § 308). In reality, Title 32 and M-Day officers receive Permanent Federal Recognition orders prior to final approval from the President and can be promoted by the state. Title 10 U.S.C. § 14301 (c)(3) provides guidance for the National Guard officer not to be considered by a board. The guidance contained in Title 10 U.S.C. §14301 (c)(3) is different for the National Guard and the USAR officer.

The Position Vacancy promotion system has had the effect of operating both as an assignment to a specific position and promotion to fill the vacancy.¹¹ This process provides increased flexibility in providing nominations to selection boards monthly or on an as needed basis. This promotion system meets the needs of the 54 states and territories.

UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE POSITION VACANCY PROMOTION SYSTEM

Under the Position Vacancy system, however, as General Conaway indicated, we don't even consider people for positions unless there is a vacancy in a given unit because in that case we only promote against existing vacancies. In that case those promotions will be competitive, because there will be several officers competing for a single given position with only the best-qualified officers actually selected for promotion.

—MG Roger Sandler, Chief, Army Reserve, House Armed Services Committee, H.R. 4481, The Reserve Officer Personnel Act, September 23, 1992

The USAR PVB is used to consider all USAR officers who are on the RASL for promotion to fill Troop Program Unit (TPU) vacancies. The PVB is designed to promote officers to fill vacancies that cannot be filled locally with qualified officers. The board considers all *best-qualified*, geographically available, USAR officers in the same competitive category, branch, and specialty. This system uses the *best-qualified* method of selection to select only one officer for each position. All considered officers must meet all the basic eligibility requirements to be considered. All officers are recommended as *best-qualified* must first be considered *fully-qualified*.

This PVB system is a lengthy but thorough process and ensures all qualified, geographically available officers are provided equal and fair consideration. There are several RC personnel agencies involved in this process. (AR 135-155, paragraph 2-9c. contains the other procedural guidance used to administer USAR PVBs.) The USAR PVB is presently held semi-annually. The USAR PVB approval process is exactly like the Mandatory Board process. It usually takes five to seven months from the board's recess to Presidential approval and final public release of the list.

The USAR PVB process, though cumbersome, ensures all eligible USAR officers are boarded for consideration. Presently, this PVB process is the best PSB the Army RC has. The process considers all officers on the RASL (e.g., Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), Individual Management Augmentee and Troop Program Unit officers) within the geographic locale of the projected vacancies. The reason(s) why officer(s) are ineligible or decline consideration must be recorded, documented and provided to the convening authority.

DA CENTRALIZED MANDATORY BOARD SYSTEM

I think the change in ROPMA is going to give us the opportunity to promote our best qualified officers both under the unit vacancy system and the mandatory system. Under the mandatory promotion system we will all select the very best qualified persons predicated on the secretary's determination about how many officers we can select in each grade.

— MG Roger Sandler, Chief, Army Reserve, House Armed Services Committee, H.R. 4481, The Reserve Officer Personnel Act, September 23, 1992

The DA Centralized Mandatory Board system is used to consider all eligible Army RC officers who are on the RASL. This promotion system is vacancy driven in the aggregate, not driven by a specific vacancy like the two PVB PSB systems mentioned earlier. Selection of all eligible officers on these boards is based on selecting the *best-qualified* from those being considered except for the Title 32 Federal Recognition boards.

The AC has a program to develop leaders through assignments, formal schooling, personal development and promotion. AC promotion boards select those officers *best-qualified* to fill the Army's requirements. The National Guard's and USAR's PVB accomplish much of the same in their systems.

For all Army Promotion List (APL) PSBs, officers of the basic branches and Judge Advocate General officers compete for promotion against each other. The board's select objective is based on overall vacancies that are branch and functional area specific, but the

actual selections are not. This is primarily due to the Secretary's MOI to select the overall *best-qualified* officers from the considered population. For example, assume that vacancies exist for 50 captains (CPT) in each of the following branches, AR, AG, JA, TC, MP. The board is given a select objective of 50 first lieutenants (1LTs) to CPT. The Secretary's MOI directs the board to select the 50 *best-qualified* 1LTs for promotion to the rank of CPT. The board selects 25 CA, 15 IN, 5 QM, and 5 SC officers. The 25 CA officers find vacancies and are promoted, but the rest of the officers selected cannot be promoted because there are no vacancies in their respective branch or functional area. So the vacancies that made up the original select objective will go unfilled. Thus, the unit's requirements go unfilled causing personnel readiness problems and the officers selected are not promoted causing a moral problems. This is the reality of the Mandatory Board system.

How should the Mandatory Boards be administered? The board should receive specific instructions to promote to requirements. The MOI should contain specific instructions, like the AC selection boards have for decades, to select officers to meet the Army's requirements.

The main problem with the Mandatory Board system is that there is a percentage of officers who are selected for promotion who never get promoted.

PART IV: COMPARISON OF EACH PROMOTION SELECTION SYSTEM AND THEIR EFFECT ON EACH OTHER

The National Guard's Federal Recognition system has suited the needs for the 54 states and territories for decades. Even though this system provides flexibility and fits the specific needs of the units it meets the needs of the state only. The flaws in this system are, (1) The local commander picks only one officer to compete for the promotion, a very subjective process. ("Subjective", according to Random House Webster College Dictionary's definition, "is existing in the mind; belonging to the thinking subject rather than to the object of thought; placing excessive emphasis on one's mood, attitudes, opinions, etc."), (2) the board membership is not as diversified as the DA Centralized board systems (i.e., most board members come from within the same state). Centralized boards are prohibited from having more than one officer from each command, and (3) the Secretary of the Army's MOI informs the board that all board members must find the officer *fully-qualified*.

The best promotion system is the USAR PVB. USAR PVBs are used for USAR officers to fill specific vacancies in units. This board considers all eligible USAR officers in a geographic locale. Only USAR officers can compete for these vacancies. Officers must be qualified before

they can be considered. This system has a centralized board utilizing a diversified membership. This is probably the most important concept associated with any centralized board. The board is an assignment system and a promotion system utilized to promote the *best-qualified* officer to fill a specific vacancy in a geographic region. The apparent flaws to this system are, (1) not all eligible Army RC officers are considered, (2) officers can apply for multiple vacancies thus increasing chances of being promoted, and (3) the board is only held semi-annually in contrast to National Guard Federal Recognition boards that are convened monthly or as needed.

The DA Centralized Mandatory Board is the least efficient of the three promotion systems in meeting the Army's needs. The Secretary's select objective is based off on branch and functional area requirements whereas the board is asked to select the *best-qualified* officers regardless of the select objective. There is a strong possibility that a *best-qualified* officer may never be promoted. This difficulty is due largely to National Guard officers being considered under Title 32 and Title 10 selection boards simultaneously. 10 U.S.C. § 14301(c) prohibits consideration of officers previously selected by other selection boards.

The National Guard and USAR PVB systems are the optimum in how Army RC officers should be promoted. The DA Centralized Mandatory Board is the least preferred method. The Army must look at all the promotion systems and come up with one system that meets all the statutes of law and regulation. An honest effort in this area will further build the confidence in our officers and truly comply with the secretary's guidance for selection boards to meet the Army's needs (requirements).

THE CAPTAIN ACTIVE COMPETITIVE CATEGORY (ACC) SELECTION BOARD AND ITS EFFECT ON COMPANY GRADE SHORTAGES IN THE AC

Both the AC and RC are experiencing extremes personnel shortages in the company grade area. When we look at two PSBs and examine the effectiveness of the type of board used for the same rank and the desired results from the respective components we begin to see some of the reasons.

CPT (ACC) AUTH: 14,287 ASGN: 11,972 (83.8%)	CPT (OVERALL) AUTH: 19,622 ASGN: 17,416 (88.8%)
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TABLE 1. ACTIVE COMPONENT CAPTAIN PERSONNEL STATUS (AS OF 1 FEBRUARY 2001)

Passage of the OPA in 1947 marked an attempt by Congress to provide for centralized officer personnel management and to ensure the military followed a meritocratic system of promotion. The OPA of 1947 outlawed the practice of blanket promotion based on seniority and replaced it with promotion based on merit.¹² This act provided a permanent long range promotion system for AC officers incorporating the following features:

- Selection by board action.
- Selection by either the fully or best-qualified methods of selection.
- To maintain minimum promotion flow of officers at the respective grades.
- To select a minimum of 80% of those considered for first time when best-qualified method of selection is used.¹³

The *fully-qualified* method was used for promotions to the rank of captain only. The *best-qualified* method of selection was used for all temporary and permanent promotions of all officers above the rank of captain. The 1947 OPA use of the *fully-qualified* method of selection is still used today for all captain's selection boards.

Title 10 U.S.C. § 616 is the statute concerning recommendations for AC selection boards. DA Memorandum 600-2, Subject: Policies and Procedures for Active-Duty List Officer Selection Boards, supplements the above Title 10 statute. Also, AR 600-8-29, Subject: Officer Promotions supports the objectives of the Army's officer promotion system. The above directives comprise a comprehensive set of laws, regulatory guidance, and policies that effectively manages the AC personnel management systems.

DA Memorandum 600-2 states:

Officers recommended for promotion must be 'fully-qualified' and 'best-qualified' for promotion. For the purpose of this board, the terms 'best-qualified for promotion' and 'fully-qualified for promotion' are synonymous. Recommendations are made on the basis of available information, albeit limited. These officers should be deemed qualified to serve in the next higher grade unless the board finds documents adverse in conduct or performance.¹⁴

The board is given instructions to attempt to meet the selection goals reflecting the number of promotions needed to ensure relative consistency of selection opportunity across all skill and specialty areas or to support projected force structure needs.

The key to the administration and conduct of AC PSBs is the specificity of instructions

given to the board through the law, Army Regulations, DA Memorandum 600-2, and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

Presently, the AC captain's board is still using *fully-qualified* criteria primarily because of the AC's company grade shortages. Dr. Leonard Wong quotes an important message from the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army:

In the last 10 years, the voluntary attrition rate for captains has risen from 6.7% to an all-time high of 10.6%. If we, as senior leaders, don't take action now to turn this around, we may not be able to meet our future requirements.¹⁵

The fiscal Year 2001 captain PSB recessed on 21 November 2000. The board reviewed files of 3,720 officers. The board selected 3,671 officers for a selected percentage of 98.68%. Also, the time in service requirement was changed for the board from 48 months to 42 months. The AC is proactively attempting to reduce their company grade shortages, which ultimately will cause short and long term personnel readiness problems for the RC.

THE CAPTAIN ARMY PROMOTION LIST (APL) SELECTION BOARD AND ITS DIRECT IMPACT IN BEING A CAUSE OF THE ARMY'S RC COMPANY GRADE SHORTAGE

We've had very poor officer accession into the USAR. We're very short of Junior-grade officers.

— MAJ Susan LeFleur, USAR, Incentive Officer, Army Times,
25 December 2000, p. 21

There currently exists a critical captain shortage in the USAR and a corresponding critical lieutenant shortage is imminent. If serious attention and actions are not focused on this problem ASAP, these shortages will result in the USAR not being able to fulfill wartime requirements for company grade officers in as little as 2-3 years.

— After Action Report, 2000 AR-PERSCOM Worldwide USAR
Senior Level Personnel Conference, 28 September 2000, p.17

ARNG	USAR
AUTH: 12,729	AUTH: 15,083
ASGN: 7,714	ASGN: 9,135
Delta(+/-): -5,015	Delta(+/-): -5,948
%Fill: 60.6	%Fill: 60.6

TABLE 2. ARMY RC CAPTAIN'S STRENGTH FILL AND VACANCY STATUS (AS OF 1 FEBRUARY 2001)

AR 135-155 supplements the objectives of the Army's RC officer promotion system

established in Title 10 U.S.C. § 14108. This regulation has been in revision since 1996. All RC PSBs are *best-qualified* in accordance with (IAW) ROPMA promotion policies.

The captain APL PSB has not met the Secretary's select objective since the enactment of ROPMA. This has been primarily due to the following factors:

- Lack of proof of baccalaureate degree completion in the officer's board file.
- Utilization of the wrong method of selection for this type PSB.

Prior to ROPMA's enactment, RC PSBs were administered by the *fully-qualified* method except for the rank of COL. Selection was higher on pre-ROPMA boards primarily because of the method of selection and there was no civilian education requirement. The method of selection is key primarily because the officers in the majority of considered officers over the past several years have come from the IRR category. The IRR is becoming an endangered species for all types of Army RC PSBs. The 1LTs being considered have about five years time-in-grade. If the majority of that time is spent in the IRR, these officers are not competitive using the *best-qualified* method. The *fully-qualified* method of selection should be used because of the limited information in the officer's promotion files. Also, instructions should continue to be given to the board to find officers *fully-qualified* unless the board finds adverse conduct or performance. Instructions should exactly mirror the guidance expressly given in the AC's DA Memorandum 600-2 for captain's selection boards specifically including the statement that *fully* and *best-qualified* are to be viewed as synonymous. The Army leadership needs to give this board attention because the procedures for AC and RC captain's boards should be the same.

The ROPMA and DOPMA statutes are the same, dictating 'up-or-out.' Therefore, there must be more officers who are qualified to serve in the next higher grade than the vacancies require. Presently, the captain APL PSBs aren't meeting the Secretary's select objective because not enough 1LTs are being found *fully-qualified* to meet the Army's needs. An alternative is the implementation of Selective Continuation (SELCON) for the RC.

The provisions of Title 10 U.S.C. § 14701 originally called for the individual officer twice passed-over to request retention in an active status from the Secretary of the Army in the current grade. This provision was not comparable to section 637, 10 U.S.C. the AC uses presently. The NDAA for FY 2000 section 522 amended the SELCON provisions of § 14701, 10 U.S.C., which now makes it the prerogative of the secretary to convene SELCON boards as needed to meet the needs of the Army. We need to use SELCON boards immediately.

- Since the enactment of ROPMA captain APL PSBs have not met the Secretary's select objective.
- Lieutenant accessions into the Army's RC has been minimal.
- 10,000 or more vacancies exist in the Army's RC at the rank of captain.
- The majority of traditional Army RC officers possess more than one qualifying branch designator.

The previous twice non-selected officers are not mobilization assets to the Army's RC because of their non-selection for promotion.

CAPTAIN'S SELECTION STATISTICS SINCE ROPMA'S ENACTMENT					
<i>APL</i>			<i>AMEDD</i>		
<i>CONS</i>	<i>SEL</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>CONS</i>	<i>SEL</i>	<i>%</i>
23,090	7,022	30.4	5,593	2,530	45.2
<i>CHAPLAIN</i>			<i>CPT OVERALL</i>		
<i>CONS</i>	<i>SEL</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>CONS</i>	<i>SEL</i>	<i>%</i>
299	120	40.1	28,982	9,672	33.4

TABLE 3. ARMY RC CAPTAIN PROMOTION SELECTION STATISTICS SINCE ROPMA'S ENACTMENT (1 OCTOBER 1996)

In the last four years 19,310 lieutenants have been passed-over. Of that number, 16,068 (83.2%) came from the APL competitive category. The primary reasons of non-selection have been (1) no proof of baccalaureate degree completion prior to convene date and (2) use of the wrong method of selection for all Army RC captain's PSBs.

Information has been provided to the DCSPERs representative stating the need to use SELCON in many Areas of Concentration (AOC) at the captain and major ranks. On January 18, 2001 the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASA M&RA) approved the concept pending development of policies and procedures for the conduct of SELCON boards.

PART V: RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the implementation of ROPMA, the PERSCOM Office of Promotions, Reserve Components has experienced increased difficulty in effectively accomplishing their selection mission. They have experienced a dramatic increase in the number of officers non-selected because of lack of evidence of educational qualification. This combined with a large number of missing performance and accessioning documents has resulted in a huge increase in Special Selection Boards, congressionals, email and

telephone inquiries, last minute changes to the Memorandum of Instruction to the boards, and requests for copies of non-select files. These additional burdens, coupled with an already reduced workforce within the Office of Promotions (RC) have resulted in excessive overtime costs, employee chronic fatigue and increased susceptibility to administrative errors.

— Mr. John D. Miller, Chief, Management Division,
PERSCOM, Memorandum dated 10 February 2000

Obviously, solutions to the problems associated with the Army's RC promotion systems discussed in this paper are not simple. The effects and ramifications are numerous and must be examined in the utmost detail. Presently, no Army RC promotion system incorporates all the desirable features and excludes all undesirable features. Nevertheless the following recommendations are submitted for consideration:

1. Change the Centralized DA Mandatory Board process to a board system more like the two Army RC Position Vacancy systems.

Presently, the two Army RC PVB systems are the best systems to select the best-qualified officers to become leaders for the Army's RC. This board's select objective is based off actual branch and functional area requirements. These boards also serve the purpose of assigning those officers found *best-qualified* to a specific unit vacancy.

Centralized DA Mandatory Boards should be conducted at the Regional Support Command (RSC) Headquarters. "ALL" eligible officers must be considered regardless of component (i.e., National Guard and USAR). The board's membership must be chosen from senior officers outside the respective RSC where the vacancies exist. No officer from within the RSC should be a member of the board. The board's results would then be sent before the first DA Centralized Mandatory Board for validation. This process should be done under the *fully-qualified* criterion.

Alternatively, reconfigure the DA Centralized Mandatory Board to be requirements driven. For each rank and competitive category the board would have projected vacancies for each USAR RSC and National Guard unit. Then, all qualified officers within a reasonable commuting distance (or those officers who have submitted a waiver of distance considerations), would be considered. This board would retain the important tenet of diversified board membership and be run just like the present DA Centralized Mandatory Board system with the main exception that the board now will truly select the best-qualified officers to meet the Army RCs needs.

2. Create a separate Selection Board for officers assigned to the Individual Ready Reserve.

IRR officers at a distinct disadvantage because of the instructions issued to the board in the Secretary's MOI. The majority of the IRR population is non-selected on DA Centralized Mandatory Boards because they are not competitive, not having recent performance reports in their consideration files. This category of officer has either left AD within the past several years or has served in the IRR for a number of years. Therefore, there may not be many documented evaluations on the officer's OMPF for the board to evaluate.

The majority of lieutenants considered for RC captain PSBs probably have less information for a selection board to evaluate from the officer's OMPF than their AC counterparts. The Army should look at conducting a separate board for IRR officers similar to that used for Army RC Enlisted PSBs. This board considers enlisted soldiers for promotion in the IRR only.

3. Development and fielding of Reserve Component specific supplemental guidance to ROPMA promotion policies and Secretary of the Army Memorandum of Instruction.

The promotion regulation, AR 135-155 once released to the field, possibly the summer of CY 2001, still will be deficient in providing supplemental guidance to existing statutes of law and other regulatory guidance provided to Army RC PSBs. AR 135-155 has been in staffing channels since CY 1996. Also, the RC DA Memorandum 600-xx has been in the developmental stages since 1996. The DCSPER SOP has two specific RC chapters that should have more specificity and applicability to Army RC selection boards. The main problem with the enactment of ROPMA was that AR 135-155 did not complement the ROPMA promotion statutes. Also, the DCSPER SOP had not been updated since CY 1994 making much of the RC guidance contained in the SOP useless. Constant last minute changes to policies and procedures in the Office of Promotions and the DA secretariat RC coupled with outdated office procedures, the lack of office SOPs and untrained personnel in promotion procedures have had a direct and indirect affect on Army RC officers being considered before PSBs. Standardized procedures are a must if officers are to get fair and equitable treatment in this process and Army RC selection boards are to select the '*best-qualified*' to become the Army RC leaders of the future.

The AC has several continuity regulations and directives that greatly enhance selection board administration.

- AR 600-8-29, Subject: Officer Promotions.
- DA Memorandum 600-2, Subject: Policies and Procedures for Active duty List Officer Selection Boards

- DCSPER SOP, Subject: HQDA Selection Boards

DA Memorandum 600-2 is the main document used to supplement the Secretary of the Army's board MOI. It tells the selection board the essential information to consider and the procedure to be used in the selection of officers in certain situations. The MOI for any Army RC selection board is generic in nature. Presently there is no sufficient supplemental guidance available in this area.

4. For all Army RC captain PSBs use the *fully-qualified* method of selection instead of the best-qualified method as described in ROPMA statutes.

Since the enactment of ROPMA 1 Oct 96, no captain APL PSB has made its select objective. This has been primarily due to the following factors:

- Secretary's instructions to the board to use the *best-qualified* method of selection.
- Proof of baccalaureate degree completion requirements prior to convene date of any captain PSB.

The AC has utilized the fully qualified method of selection for the past five plus decades. DA Memorandum 600-2 specifies the method of selection for all AC captain PSBs. DA Memorandum 600-2 provides specific guidance stating the following:

Recommendations must be made on the basis of available information, albeit limited. These officers have met the Army's high standards for commissioned service and should be deemed qualified to serve in the next higher grade unless the board file contains documents adverse conduct or performance.¹⁶

The fully qualified method of selection is appropriate for the board to consider officers at this rank.

One of the main initiatives being utilized by the AC is SELCON for two-time passed-over captains to be retained on AD for a specified period of time. These initiatives have implications on accessions of former AC officers into the Army's RCs.

5. Change guidance contained in DoDD 1310.2, Subject: Appointing Commissioned Officers and Secretary of the Army board MOI's concerning baccalaureate degree completion requirements. DoDD 1310.2 should be rescinded or changed to complement Title 10 U.S.C. § 12205 to allow baccalaureate completion for RC officers at the time of appointment/promotion to a grade above first lieutenant in the RC.

DoDD 1310.2 is more restrictive than the Title 10 U.S.C. § 12205 and in paragraph D.2.b. (8) states,

“An officer without the degree shall be considered but shall not be selected by the board.”¹⁷ On the other hand, there was guidance contained in the FY00 captain ACC PSB MOI which stated:

“Baccalaureate Degree Completion. The boards will not view the lack of a baccalaureate degree as a criterion for non-selection.”¹⁸

The majority of new officer accessions each year are commissioned through ROTC and the Armed Force’s Military Academies. These officers graduate from accredited institutions. The only concern should be ROTC Early Commissionees and National Guard state OCS officers. The proof of baccalaureate degree completion needs to be moved to a post-board check prior to the promotion order being cut. The AC presently does this as a post-board check by reviewing a civilian completion code in the TOPMIS II database. We must agree that a majority of our present Army RC officers came from AD and accordingly their baccalaureate degrees were verified through various personnel agencies. The rules must be fair and consistent for all selection board processes.

6. Amend or Delete 10 U.S.C. § 14301(c)(3), 10 U.S.C. through the NDAA to read the same as § 14301(c)(1) or (2). This would provide parity for all considered Army RC officers recommended for promotion that are deleted for consideration from subsequent selection boards.

10 U.S.C. § 14301 provides the guidance for all previously selected officers not eligible to be considered by subsequent selection boards. The issue is for the National Guard officer who is being considered for Federal Recognition and DA Centralized Mandatory Board consideration at the same time. The current situation directly impacts Title 32, Section 307 and Title 10, Section 14301 and results in a race to see which board results are released first for the National Guard officer considered simultaneously by both boards. A National Guard officer should not be considered by a DA Centralized Mandatory Board simultaneously with any other board.

7. Title 10 U.S.C. §14301 (c)(3) must be changed now to provide consistency for all previously considered officers not to be considered for other RC selection boards.

A provision must be added to this section of law to preclude consideration of the National Guard officer when the officer is eligible for a DA Centralized Mandatory Board. This

change would remove the advantage the National Guard officer has in being allowed considered by two selection boards at the same time. Simultaneous consideration of National Guard officers has a direct impact on DA Centralized Mandatory results at all ranks.

The Mandatory Board system was never intended to consider the specific needs of the National Guard and USAR units.

Summary Comment:

Treat others as you would have them treat you. This is a simple statement of the golden rule – but a critical issue. Every soldier must feel that he is being treated fairly and that you care and are making an honest attempt to ensure he or she reaches full potential. Initiative will be stifled and creativity destroyed unless soldiers felt they have been given a fair chance to mature and grow.

— General Dennis J. Reimer, CSA in Military Review, January
February 1996

The only valid reason for having a promotion system is to provide the best-qualified officers in the appropriate ranks to meet the needs (requirements) of the Army.¹⁹ The promotion system is a basic element and heart of any personnel management system. As such, it is co-equal with assignments, education, training, and evaluations. It provides the Army with the means to meet the officer requirements of the force structure so that it can perform its missions.²⁰ A promotion can have far-reaching effects on the Army's mission, its personnel management and the professional development, morale, and well being of the officer corps. And it is not just an officer's own career that is impacted by a promotion. The promotion process determines who will lead the force of the future and that, too, affects other officers. Few other actions in the Army have such a wide impact and interest for so many members. Today's Army is characterized as a meritocracy, where career advancement is supposed to be determined mostly by one's ability to achieve Army goals.²¹

MG Thomas J. Plewes in a speech delivered at the Reserve Officers Association Mid-Winter Conference on 25 January 2000 stated the following:

To expend or even to remain where we are now requires the same thing: people. General Creighton Abrams told us that the Army is people. That is an absolute, fundamental truth. We cannot afford to lose people. We also cannot afford to not get people to join us.²²

We are losing countless numbers of qualified officers through the Army's inability to make the required changes in a timely manner in its promotion systems and policies. The Army's RC

needs the same comprehensive promotion policies and procedural guidance like the AC, (e.g., DA Memorandum 600-2, DCSPER SOP (RC specific) guidance, and the Secretary of the Army MOI stating specific guidance reflecting the requirements to meet the actual needs of the Army).

The Honorable Beverly B. Byron, Chairman of the Military Personnel and Compensation Subcommittee expressed her reservations in testimony concerning ROPMA in a subcommittee meeting on 11 August 1992:

If we go back and look at DOPMA in 1981, there were a lot of problems that developed which were not apparent when the legislation was enacted. They were just technical in nature, but they were now law, and it was a long tedious process to correct that.²³

The Army must make every attempt in the evaluation and analysis of its three promotion systems to continue to answer the questions, "Are the best-qualified officers being selected by our promotion systems?" and "Are these three selection board systems providing equity and fairness to each and every officer considered in the promotion process?"

WORD COUNT= 10,042

ENDNOTES

¹ Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Reserve Officer Personnel Management Act (ROPMA), 102d Cong., 2d sess., 23 September 1992, 19.

² Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Reserve Officer Personnel Act of 1954, Report No. 2010 to accompany HR 6573, 3.

³ P.E.Riedel, Improvements To The Officer Selection Process, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 15 March 1993), 3.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Reserve Officer Personnel Management Act (ROPMA), 102d Cong., 2d sess., 23 September 1992, 5.

⁶ Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera, "Subject: Memorandum of Instructions," memorandum for President and Members, Calendar Year 1999 Reserve Components Captain, Army Promotion List (APL) Promotion Selection Board, Washington, D.C., 2 November 1999.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Bolte Committee Report, "The Army Promotion Systems," briefing slides with scripted commentary, Washington, D.C., Department of Defense, 9 February 1961.

⁹ Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera, "Subject: Memorandum of Instructions to the Army National Guard Federal Recognition Board," memorandum for President and Members, Federal Recognition Board, Washington, D.C., 29 September 1999.

¹⁰ Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Reserve Officer Personnel Management Act (ROPMA), 102d Cong., 2d sess., 23 September 1992, 24.

¹¹ Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Reserve Officer Personnel Management Act (ROPMA), 102d Cong., 2d sess., 23 September 1992, 25.

¹² Years of service remained an element for promotion, with promotion to each rank having a corresponding requirement for a certain number of years of service.

¹³ Bolte Committee Report, "The Army Promotion Systems," briefing slides with scripted commentary, Washington, D.C., Department of Defense, 9 February 1961.

¹⁴ U.S. Army Personnel Command, "Policies and Procedures for Active-Duty List Officer Selection Boards", 24 September 1999; available from <http://books.usapa.belvoir.army.mil/cgi-bin/bookmgr/BOOKS/M600_2/A.0>; Internet; accessed 24 March 2001.

¹⁵ Message from the Vice Chief of Staff, Army, headquarters Department of the Army, February 15, 2000.

¹⁶ U.S. Army Personnel Command, "Policies and Procedures for Active-Duty List Officer Selection Boards", 24 September 1999; available from <http://books.usapa.belvoir.army.mil/cgi-bin/bookmgr/BOOKS/M600_2/A.0>; Internet; accessed 24 March 2001.

¹⁷ Department of Defense, Appointing Commissioned Officers, Department of Defense Directive 1310.2 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 28 May 1996), 6.

¹⁸ Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera, "Subject: Instructions for the Fiscal Year 2000 Captain, Army Competitive Category, Promotion Selection Board," memorandum for President and Board Members, FY00 Captain, Army Competitive Category Promotion Selection Board, Washington D.C., undated.

¹⁹ Bolte Committee Report, "The Army Promotion Systems," briefing slides with scripted commentary, Washington, D.C., Department of Defense, 9 February 1961.

²⁰ Eleas A. Cozantis and Paul J. Higgins, Promotion of Officers by Specialty, A Group Study Project, (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 23 May 1978), 6.

²¹ Katherine M. Bigler, The Use of Official Photographs in the Army Officer Promotion Selection Board Process, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 1 May 2000), 1.

²² Thomas J. Plewes, Army Reserve Vision, Vision Statement presented at the ROA Mid-Winter Conference (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 2000), 2.

²³ Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Reserve Officer Personnel Management Act (ROPMA), 102d Cong., 2d sess., 23 September 1992, 43.

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