

## Chapter 11

# CAREER MANAGEMENT

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## Introduction

Career management for an Army physician assistant (PA) is multifaceted and requires thoughtful consideration. The first question to answer is, “What do I want to accomplish while I’m wearing the uniform?” The answer will differ from one individual to the next. Personal and professional aspirations are intertwined, and together form the foundation of the path that ultimately shapes a military journey.

A PA’s career options will vary depending on timing, the flexibility of the individual’s plan, and current and emerging Army requirements. Army PAs should develop a plan focused on factors that are important for their professional experience while balancing their personal and family objectives. This chapter will assist the PA in understanding the key factors to consider in developing a prospective plan to carry them through their military career. It will show how the PA can be proactive in preparing and managing their career in the military and beyond. Included is information on regulations, planning tools, resource documents, lessons learned, and tips for success. The chapter will cover career planning, the domains of leader development, mentorship, the officer record brief (ORB), and computer systems used in these processes. At the end of the chapter are several links and references with additional helpful information on PA career management.

## Charting the Path

Army PAs will choose from a variety of challenging and rewarding paths or tracks as they begin their military career. Usually, PAs start

their career in an operational assignment with a company, battalion, or brigade. Thereafter, positions are available in different tracks—clinical; research; broadening assignments, such as recruiter, inspector general, or aide-de-camp; education, such as long-term health education training (LTHET) or teaching in the Interservice Physician Assistant Program (IPAP); and leadership or other nonclinical roles such as a commander or executive staff member. Each Army PA career is unique, and it is important for all PAs to be aware they have the ability and responsibility to manage their own career.

For a junior PA who just finished PA school or a direct-accession PA who still has much to learn about the Army, a 5-year career timeline may seem unfathomable or even untenable given their limited knowledge. However, it is important to start planning early and establish long-term, mid-term, and short-term goals and objectives. An excellent starting point is to “begin with the end in mind,” and find a mentor to assist in charting a career path toward that goal. For example, if a PA desires to be assigned to the 82d Airborne Division, an airborne physical must be obtained, and the PA must be willing and able to participate in airborne operations.

A career map is a living document that is developed, maintained, and validated as a PA moves through the ranks. Within this career timeline, the Army PA can incrementally plot a 5-year plan as a starting point that optimally projects several courses of action for the next two jobs, including educational pursuits, while reflecting on personal interests (Figure 11-1). The plan should be revisited as frequently as necessary to manage expectations and reflect changes in goals, priorities, and opportunities. Plans must also consider the needs of the Army; availability of positions will vary from time to time, and desired duty locations may not have a position that matches the PA’s rank or skill set. For example, the PA position in the 3rd Infantry Division (the Old Guard), at Fort Myer, Virginia, is a two-deep position designed for a captain that opens about every 3 years.

In revisiting the plan, the Army PA should consult with mentors, Human Resources Command (HRC) career managers, and family members, taking into consideration personal and professional goals and realistic objectives. Various personal issues such as family dynamics (a new child, children in high school, new marriage, divorce, aging parents, unexpected illness or disease) can affect the PA’s flexibility for certain assignments. The PA may start their career on a certain track (typically

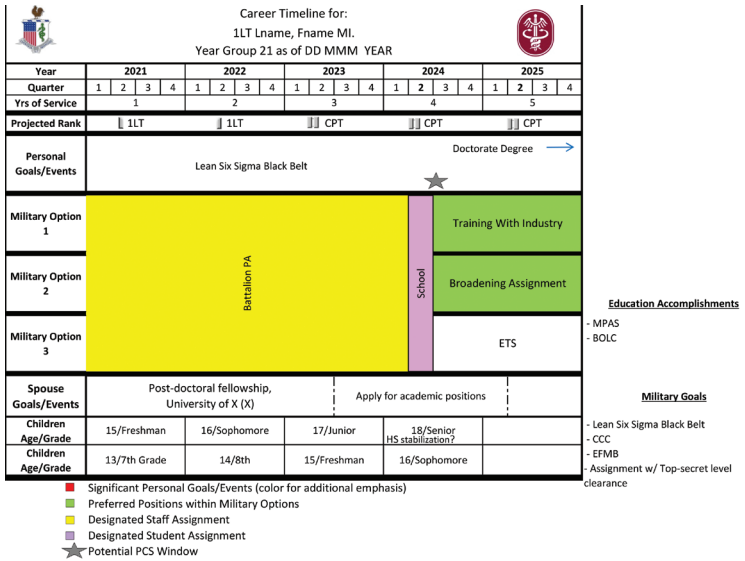


Figure 11-1. Example of a 5-year plan.

operational) and decide to pursue clinical positions, further education or research, perhaps even command, recruiting, and leadership.

Staying in the Army until retirement may be a viable option, and it is important to understand the factors that will affect retirement benefits and options. Some of these factors are retiring as an officer versus a noncommissioned officer for those who are prior enlisted, and accumulating 30 years of active federal commissioned service time versus reaching the mandatory retirement age of 62. The key to success in execution of a proposed career timeline is establishing achievable objectives and milestones along a path toward an individual’s personal definition of success. Additionally, PAs must be flexible and recognize opportunities along the way.

Additionally, PAs must recognize and be familiar with the regulations that govern the process of career management. Army competitive category (ACC) officers in the Army derive their guidance from Army Regulation 600-3, *The Army Personnel Development System*.<sup>1</sup> The Army provides guidance to the Army Medical Department (AMEDD) and the

Army Medical Specialist Corps (SP) in Department of the Army (DA) Pamphlet (PAM) 600-4, *Army Medical Department Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, specifically chapters 3 and 4.<sup>2</sup> This pamphlet provides information about expectations for career progression, promotions, positions, and educational opportunities, as well as a lifecycle map. The lifecycle map lays out military educational requirements, training opportunities, and recommendations for positions to be held for each rank, and serves as a starting point to develop a 5- to 10-year plan.

## **Three Domains of Leader Development**

The career plan must take into account the three domains of leader development: institutional training, operational assignments, and self-development.<sup>2</sup> Professional military education is structured to correspond with ranks and promotions, as discussed below. A variety of assignments and positions are necessary to become a well-rounded leader and officer. Self-development includes individual study, research activities, professional reading and writing, completion of certifications and degrees, and continual self-assessment. The Army has developed the Army Career Tracker as a tool to aid officers with professional development, planning, and structured mentorship.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Institutional Training***

**Professional Military Education.** It is important for all officers to attend the appropriate military schools to attain the level of military education and development commensurate to their rank and remain competitive with their peers for promotion. Professional military education focuses on core competencies and leader development to produce competent and technically and tactically proficient officers. It begins with initial military training at the Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC).

Once an officer is a first lieutenant (promotable), they may request enrollment in the Captains Career Course (CCC) by submitting a DA Form 3838 to their commander (a lieutenant colonel/O-5 or above) for approval by the HRC career manager, or enroll directly in coordination with a permanent change of station (PCS) reassignment with temporary duty en route. Four 9-week CCC resident courses are offered annually. Additionally, a 20-week pilot CCC for AMEDD officers began in

January 2020 (refer to Chapter 56, CCC). The CCC carries a 1-year active duty service obligation (ADSO). The course should be completed prior to the major promotion board and is a prerequisite to taking a command assignment or starting LTHET. Intermediate Level Education (ILE) is the Army's training for field-grade officers. (Chapter 8, Attending ILE, provides in-depth information. Other education that enhances professional development is covered in Chapter 4, Academic Leadership Roles, Education, and Additional Training for PAs.)

**Civilian Education.** All PAs are required to have civilian education to at least a bachelor's degree level,<sup>4</sup> although the profession is currently based primarily on master's degree-level education. The IPAP awards a bachelor's degree after completing phase 1 and a master's upon graduation. Army PAs can also come from other accredited civilian PA programs. Beyond the entry-level degree requirement, several opportunities for further education are available, such as the LTHET program, in which PAs can earn additional master's or doctorate-level degrees. One of these opportunities is the Doctor of Science degree in emergency medicine, orthopedics, or general surgery (see chapters 5 through 7 for information on these specialties). The Army PA may also attend a civilian school of their choice through the LTHET, and every year there may be different education opportunities. The Army PA incurs ADSO for LTHET; however, they can elect to complete a graduate degree via distance learning, such as a DSc, DMSc, or PhD without incurring an ADSO.

### ***Operational Assignments***

PAs can achieve diversity through a balance of operational, clinical, research, educational, SP, and AMEDD developmental and immaterial (can be held regardless of an individual's area of concentration) positions (refer to Section 3 of this handbook for various roles of PAs). SP immaterial positions (designated 65X) include recruiter, recruiting battalion executive officer, corps-specific branch proponent officer, HRC branch chief, SP branch executive officer and fellow, and AMEDD Personnel Proponent Directorate staff officer. AMEDD immaterial positions (designated 05A) include warrior transition unit deputy commanding officer, aide-de-camp, executive assistant, and several strategic staff officer positions at both the Defense Health Agency and the Army Medical Command. At the rank of major (promotable) and lieutenant colonel, opportunities exist to compete for command

select list (CSL) command (for further information about CSL, use the search engine on the HRC website<sup>5</sup> and enter “command management branch”).

Key components of a career timeline are the positions, and the experience provided by each one, that are fundamental to becoming a well-rounded officer. At this time, the AMEDD has no positions coded as key and developmental, but there are many duty assignments that serve a similar purpose in PA career development. Examples of potential key developmental jobs are senior brigade combat team PA, division PA, corps PA, Forces Command PA, IPAP phase II coordinator, IPAP program director, IPAP program manager, IPAP instructor and other medical training instructors, and Department of Combat Doctrine and Development staff officer.

### ***Self-Development***

Self-development begins with discipline and organization. One tactic is to implement a battle rhythm that orchestrates reading, writing, research, studying, and skill set improvement. For example, one could read a medical journal article once a month, read the news daily, monitor S1Net (<https://www.milsuite.mil/s1net>)<sup>6</sup> for Army human resources (HR) updates, attend online courses, or obtain new credentials to meet an identified need that will benefit a patient population. The important thing is to have a plan for self-development and tailor it to meet professional needs—as a soldier, leader, clinician, and individual.

## **Meeting with Mentors**

It is important for Army PAs to seek mentorship early and often. The mentor-mentee relationship is bilateral; each person benefits from the other during the course of the mentorship. Mentors should review the mentees' ORB, curriculum vitae (CV), and officer evaluation reports (OERs) before providing guidance, and the mentees should assemble these documents to prepare for meetings.

### ***Officer Record Briefs***

The ORB is a military resume, a snapshot of a career, credentials, and accomplishments. Commanders may use the ORB to determine which position inbound officers are best suited for and what they need for

career progression. In addition to the courses listed above, any Army-sponsored school or program recognized by the Army Training and Requirements Resources System (ATRRS) that lasts more than 40 hours can be recorded in the ORB's military education section.

The ORB must be updated on a regular basis, preferably annually, perhaps as a birth month audit. Additionally, updates are recommended when being considered for a new position, moving to a new unit, receiving a new award or rank, going before any board, or returning from a deployment. Job titles on the ORB should describe what duty or position was held, such as deputy, chief, director, assistant chief, or officer in charge.

It is important that the designations "known losses" or "surplus soldier" do not appear in the ORB's assignment information when it is sent before any board, whether for a promotion, education, or other selection processes. These phrases demonstrate lack of attention to detail and could be negative factors in the boards' decisions. The Army photo, once an important element of promotion selection boards, was suspended from use effective August 1, 2020.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Curriculum Vitae***

Along with the ORB, a professional CV that provides a snapshot of accomplishments is a good document to maintain and is required by most military medical treatment facilities as part of a credentialing packet. Often, HRC will announce opportunities that require nominees to submit a packet including the ORB, a CV, and the last five OERs. The CV should highlight current and past experiences; civilian and military education; certification and affiliations; projects, publications, and presentations; features and recognitions; awards and decorations; special skills; and references. (Note that the CV is different from the Assignment Interactive Module 2.0 [AIM.2] resume that will be discussed later in this chapter.)

### ***Officer Evaluation Reports***

OERs, used to assess an officer's performance during a rating period, are an additional communication tool for promotion boards and mentors. An OER provides a concise representation of the officer's performance as evaluated by their rater and senior rater. Several products available on the HRC and MilSuite websites provide tips for officers and their

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Years Svc	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mil Ed/ Schools	CCC					CCC				ILC
Civ Ed	ACLS/IBLS		PALS		RECE/ERT (MOS/ET)			ATLS		
Operational	BCT Sr PA			SOF PA	Corps Level PA	APA		BCT SR PA		DIR SR PA
Positions and Tracks	Clinical	N/A		MEDDAC		ORC Clinic				
Educational	N/A			N/A	LTHET		DCMT INST		IPAP INST	
Research/Staff	N/A			COMMAND		HRC	IG	SP XO		USAREC
Duty Station	Ft Drum			Ft Bragg			Ft Cav			
Board	CPT BOARD					BZ MAJ BOARD	FZ MAJ BOARD	AZ MAJ BOARD		
Promotion										
Age										
Spouse Age Career										
Child 1 Age Grade										
Child 2 Age Grade										
Child 3 Age Grade										
Preferences (As of ):										
	<b>POSITION:</b>						<b>Location:</b>			
	1)						1)			
	2)						2)			
	3)						3)			
	4)						4)			

Figure 11-2. Example of a career timeline map.

raters on maximizing the OER as an opportunity to reflect the officer’s performance and potential. For more information on ORBs, see DA PAM 600-8-104, Chapter 5.<sup>8</sup>

### Creating a Career Plan

Once the foundations of a career plan and mentorship have been established, the Army PA can put pen to paper and draft a timeline. There are several examples of career plans, such as Figure 11-2, that can be modified based on individual preference. The timeline should include date, age, years of service, military education, civilian education, deployments, assignments, duty station locations, promotions, spouse’s career milestones, and children’s milestones. Leave space under the timeline to note future assignment preferences based on location and



L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
2029	2030	2031	2032	2024	2025							
10	11	12	13	14	15							
						<b>Examples</b>						
						<b>MEL</b>						
						<b>SHORT COURSES</b>						
						BMC C4 Flight section Homestead SdC NBC						
						CCC JT Mod Plus ER Basic Skills BDE/DIR SurTOMC						
						ILE Global Med Burns and Trauma Tropical Med PM						
						FSC Em War Sur Joint Op Mod Mgmt Humanitarian						
						<b>GIV ED</b>						
						M of Ed Doc EM HHC/AdmIn CERTIFICATIONS:						
						P&D Ed Doc Wra ACLS/IBLS/ATLS/PALS/INMT						
						Doc Ortho Gen Surg						
						<b>POSITIONS</b>						
						BCT PA Recruiting Command DIV PA IPAP PH II						
						Corp Incl PA IG White House Corp SR PA Instructor						
						Aviation PA SF/IBGR SR BCT PA FORSCOM IPAP Director						
						Staff OIC Clinic JRTC/NTC Liaison USAREC Counselor						
						HRC STAFF OFFICER SP XO OCDD DHET USA CRM						
						SP EXECUTIVE FELLOW APFD Allied Health Staff OTSG CSBFO						
						<b>DUTY STATIONS</b>						
						Alaska Campbell Germany Irwin Kuwait						
						Bahrain Curacao Heusden Jackson Leezenworth						
						Bilbao Ecuador Gordon Japan Les						
						Bragg Draw Hawaii Knox Leonardwood						
						Busan GTRMO Italy Korea Lewis						
						Presidio West Point Walter Reed San Houston Meads						
						Moor Polk Shaw AFB Rilov Ryker						
						Hood Still Stewart Riyadh						
						<b>Projected Promotion Zones</b>						
						<b>PYG</b>						
						<b>BD YR DOR TO MAJ</b>						
						2019 11 24000002-20070801						
						2020 12 24000002-20070801						
						2021 13 24000002-20070801						
						2022 14 24000002-20080301						
						2023 15 24000002-20080301						
						<b>BOARDS</b>						
						<b>CPT Board:</b>						
						<b>DEC</b>						
						<b>PYG</b>						
						<b>BD YR DOR TO CPT</b>						
						11 24000002-20070801						
						12 24000002-20070801						
						13 24000002-20080301						
						14 24000002-20080301						
						15 24000002-20100401						
						<b>LTC Board:</b>						
						<b>SEP</b>						
						<b>PYG</b>						
						<b>BD YR DOR TO MAJ</b>						
						11 24000002-20070801						
						12 24000002-20070801						
						13 24000002-20080301						
						14 24000002-20080301						
						15 24000002-20100401						
						<b>COL Board:</b>						
						<b>JUL</b>						
						<b>PYG</b>						
						<b>BD YR DOR TO LT</b>						
						11 24000002-20070801						
						12 24000002-20070801						
						13 24000002-20080301						
						14 24000002-20080301						
						15 24000002-20100401						
						<b>IE Board:</b>						
						<b>May</b>						
						<b>PYG</b>						
						<b>BD YR DOR TO LT</b>						
						11 24000002-20070801						
						12 24000002-20070801						
						13 24000002-20080301						
						14 24000002-20080301						
						15 24000002-20100401						
						<b>SSC Board:</b>						
						<b>APR</b>						
						<b>PYG</b>						
						<b>BD YR DOR TO LT</b>						
						11 24000002-20070801						
						12 24000002-20070801						
						13 24000002-20080301						
						14 24000002-20080301						
						15 24000002-20100401						
						<b>LTHET Board:</b>						
						<b>MAY</b>						
						<b>PYG</b>						
						<b>BD YR DOR TO LT</b>						
						11 24000002-20070801						
						12 24000002-20070801						
						13 24000002-20080301						
						14 24000002-20080301						
						15 24000002-20100401						
						<b>PLUG INS:</b>						
						<b>08</b>						
						<b>09</b>						
						<b>10</b>						
						<b>11</b>						
						<b>12</b>						
						<b>Decision Point</b>						
						<b>(ADSO complete)</b>						
						<b>(LTHET application)</b>						
						<b>(10 years as officer)</b>						
						<b>(MRUG/LAD)</b>						
						<b>(RECENT)</b>						

position. These preferences should be considered during timeline reviews and meetings with mentors.

**Promotions and Boards**

The Army PA must track possible promotions and prepare for them. The HRC website is a great tool to help plan the career timeline in coordination with when promotions may occur, depending on the Army PA's year group. For example, a PA in year group 2012 can expect their primary zone for promotion to major in the year 2020, and if selected, promotion in 2021. Officers may view their projected timeline based on their cohort year group in the AIM.2 website under branch pages. A recommendation is to plot the "below the zone" board, the primary or "in the zone" board and if desired, "above the zone" board. Other

boards to follow are LTHET boards (if applying, one must start planning 2 years prior to the board to meet qualifications and appropriately prepare and also plan to be PCS-eligible during the application process), ILE and senior service education selection boards, and CSL command boards. One board no PA will likely forget is the recertification board for national certification. Plotting the first and second year of eligibility to take the test will promote preparedness for this key event. Once all the boards are plotted, it may be a good time to input assignments and positions; this is best accomplished after a discussion with mentors, career managers, and family members.

### ***Assignment and Position Opportunities***

The first time a PA has the opportunity to use the “marketplace” to find positions and compete with others in the same permanent change of station cycle, they should pay attention to available options of interest and their locations. One method is to first determine the desired position, and be open to several locations where the position can be held. Knowing that most assignments are at a duty location for approximately 3 years (with some exceptions), a plan to diversify or garner additional experiences at that location should be considered. If a desired position at a senior rank requires certain skills and education, the junior PA should pursue the requirements to be competitive when they achieve that rank. Additionally, they should reach out to officers who have held or currently hold the role to seek additional guidance on how to prepare. Deployment plotting is key as well; certain tasks must be done before or after deployments, such as sitting for certification boards, attending in-person training or certification, and updating board files with documentation that is not available during deployment.

### ***Family Members***

Family members are an important part of any Army PA’s career planning; for example, individuals may need to care for their parents, or have spouses with their own careers. Children’s milestones must also be considered; for example, high school “stabilization” allows parents to remain in one area so a child can stay in one high school.

## **Assignment Interactive Module Career Management Platform**

AIM.2 is a web-based information system designed to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the officer management process, and facilitate communication among soldiers, units, commanders, and the HRC Officer Personnel Management Directorate.<sup>9</sup> AIM.2 was developed to improve officer management by integrating multiple aspects of career management that were previously processed through separate mechanisms. The system links many aspects of officer records to ensure they are factored into career management efficiently. AIM.2 uses data in a regulated market system to match officer talent with unit requirements, providing an opportunity for each to learn about each other, and influence both of their preferences.

AIM.2 does more than assist with reassignment actions; it also serves as a communication portal to advertise opportunities, branch information, volunteer assignments, and strategic billets. It allows communication between officers and their career managers, links officers to other electronic records, allows viewing of Army photographs, and processes special actions such as high school stabilizations, Exceptional Family Member Program stabilization, compassionate reassignment requests, and Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB) volunteering (see Chapter 13, SFAB, for more details).

An essential element of successful participation in AIM.2 is to prepare and maintain a resume in the system. Officers can build and review their resume on their AIM branch webpage at <https://aim.hrc.army.mil/> (select “My Resume”).<sup>9</sup> Unit leaders are able to view your resume as a participant in a PCS movement cycle. The resume has two main pages, the ORB (previously discussed), and the officer self-professed talents section. In the self-professed talents section, an officer can advertise more information about themselves beyond what is in their ORB, sharing more information about their knowledge, skills, and attributes, to show they are the best fit for desired assignments. The section has eight parts: summary, education, civilian, assignments, cultural, travel, language, and references. PAs should use this section to add greater depth in these areas, such as education not entered in the ORB, specifics on language skills they possess, and more detail on travel experiences. An officer’s communication via the resume can help leaders decide who their preference will be in the market process.

There is no current mandatory way for officers to complete their resume, though they should be written as thoroughly as possible. Officers may be interested in consideration for assignment opportunities at any time, and having an AIM resume ready enhances their opportunities for selection. Like the ORB, the resume should be regularly updated for accuracy. The AIM.2 system is meant to bridge active duty officer talent management during the transition to the Integrated Personnel and Pay System–Army (IPPS–A).

## **Integrated Personnel and Pay System–Army**

The IPPS-A is a web-based HR system that provides integrated personnel and pay capabilities and a comprehensive HR record for all soldiers in each component. Once IPPS-A is fully deployed, the system will enable HR transactions to automatically trigger soldier pay. IPPS-A's ability to combine personnel and pay functions (eg, a promotion or call to active duty) will address current inefficiencies caused by complex interfaces among more than 40 “stove-piped” HR systems. As a result, IPPS-A will leave fewer opportunities for error and will become the authoritative and comprehensive source of Army personnel and pay information.<sup>10</sup> In addition, soldiers will have common access card (CAC) access to their own personal information 24 hours a day via the self-service web portal.

This system will be used by all soldiers across all components of service, active duty, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve, as well as by the HR professionals who support them. It will be launched incrementally in phases. Training is planned for all users based on their roles and phase of integration. A mobile application is available for current service members with access to IPPS-A, and will be available as the system is activated for their components during fielding to the rest of the Army.<sup>10</sup> The program is currently active in the Army National Guard, and at the time of this writing was successful in Pennsylvania and in the process of implementation across the remainder of the National Guard through 2020. The next release is projected to begin integration of active duty and the Army Reserve. For more information on IPPS-A, see <https://ipps-a.army.mil/>.<sup>10</sup>

## **Lessons Learned**

- PAs should attend and participate in 65D (PA) and SP Corps forums, which are open discussions led by experts and leaders over audio or video media. Often the latest and most relevant information is communicated in these forums.
- PAs should seek advice and mentorship from health service and ACC mentors.
- PAs must develop a strategy to achieve military career goals before leaving the Army. However, they must also remain flexible enough to adjust because their goals may change over time.

## **Tips for Success**

- Review the career timeline at least quarterly with family members, mentors, and leaders.
- Meet with the chain of command in the beginning of each evaluation period, at least quarterly, and again at least a month prior to an OER deadline.
- Let the chain of command know that the Army PA field-grade promotions are not “fully qualified” boards, they are “best qualified” boards (not everyone who is qualified will get promoted).
- Attend at least one military course a year.
- Attend a centrally funded course en route to every PCS.
- Review the ORB and always make an effort to improve at least one aspect of the OER, whether that be military education, civilian education, weight, or a new language.
- Be well read and well rounded; read at least one professional and one personal book a month, and routinely try new skills.
- Be aware of assignment considerations terms for career planning (see the attachment to this chapter provided by Colonel John Detro and Major Drew Kennedy at HRC).

## **Conclusion**

Career management is an individual responsibility. It requires careful thought and the ability to maximize the use of existing tools and resources, while remaining flexible and available when rare

opportunities arise. To make the most informed planning decisions, Army PAs must reach out to mentors and leaders for career guidance. They also have a responsibility to lead and mentor others, guiding junior officers and peers to be as successful as possible while maintaining the role of the AMEDD in ensuring the US Army remains the premier and most talented fighting force in the world.

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## **Attachment: Assignment Considerations Terms**

**High School Stabilization (HSS).** Intended to provide stability to officers with family members in their senior year of high school and avoid disruption of the school schedule. HSS packets are submitted through AIM.2, after March 1 of the student's sophomore year and before September 30 of the junior year. Assignments officers can provide instructions and sample packets on request.

**Married Army Couples Program (MACP).** To the maximum extent possible and consistent with valid Army vacancies, married officers enrolled in MACP are assigned to a location where they can establish a joint domicile within a 50-mile radius or 1-hour driving time of their spouse's assignment. Army requirements and readiness goals are paramount, and married Army couples must be prepared to meet military obligations regardless of assignment. Initial enrollment is conducted through the officer's S1. Enlisted IPAP students must re-submit MACP applications upon commissioning and should inform their assignments officer of their MACP status when requesting initial assignments.

**Compassionate Reassignment.** Officers with serious family problems that can only be alleviated by an assignment to a particular geographical area may request reassignment, deletion, or deferment. The request must involve the health and welfare of a family member. Compassionate reassignments are generally for 12 months only.

**Consecutive Overseas Tours (COTs) and In-Place Consecutive Overseas Tours (IPCOTs).** A COT requires the officer to PCS between OCONUS duty stations and complete both prescribed tours. An IPCOT requires the officer to complete the first prescribed tour and remain at the current duty station for a second full prescribed tour. Officers must serve the prescribed tour lengths for both tours. Officers applying for COT/IPCOT are eligible for leave with paid travel and transportation expenses to the home of record for the officer and command-sponsored dependents.

**Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).** Officers enrolled in the EFMP receive consideration of their exceptional family member's special needs during the assignment selection process. Enrollment in the EFMP is mandatory for officers with family members with special medical and/or educational needs. Assignment officers will submit requests to ensure the gaining installation can appropriately manage the family member. Officers must pay close attention to their EFMP expiration date; they will not be placed on accompanied orders if EFMP is not approved. Officers cannot waive EFMP for an accompanied tour but may elect to serve an unaccompanied (12-month) tour at a location outside the United States.