

# Special Forces Branch

## 1. Unique features of the Special Forces Branch

*a. Unique purpose of the Special Forces Branch.* The mission of the Special Forces (SF) is to conduct special operations across the full range of military operations in any operational environment. SF expands the range of available options to the Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) in a variety of scenarios where the commitment of conventional military forces is not feasible or appropriate. They provide military capabilities not available elsewhere in the armed forces. They are the only force specially selected, trained, and equipped to conduct Unconventional Warfare. SF operations are inherently Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM). These operations are conducted at the operational and strategic level. SF Soldiers are language trained, culturally astute, and regionally oriented. SF frequently conduct their operations with or through indigenous forces.

*b. Unique functions performed by the SF Branch.* The SF Branch is within the Maneuver, Fires, and Effects (MFE) functional category. As representatives of the United States in foreign countries, SF often serve as trainers and advisors as well as Soldiers. In war, SF provide unique combined, joint, or unilateral capabilities to the combatant commander. They interact closely with and live under the same conditions as the indigenous forces. They conduct peacetime operations and promote regional stability in areas where conventional forces normally do not operate. Their continuous forward presence assists in creating the conditions necessary for stable development, thereby reducing the risk of armed conflict.

*c. Unique features of work in the SF Branch.* The U.S. Army organizes, trains, and equips SF to perform their core tasks of Unconventional Warfare (UW), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Direct Action (DA), Special Reconnaissance (SR), Counterterrorism (CT), Counter proliferation (CP), and support to Information Operations (IO). Through the conduct of these seven core tasks, SF supports the United States Special Operations Command's (USSOCOM) specified special operations forces (SOF) core tasks. SF missions are dynamic, constantly evolving in response to political-military considerations, technology, and other considerations.

*d. SF nine principal tasks.*

(1) UW is the core activity for Army Special Forces. UW is defined as activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area (FM 3-18, *Special Forces Operations*).

(2) FID is defined as participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency (JP 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense*).

(3) Security Force Assistance (SFA) is defined as DOD activities that contribute to unified action by the U.S. Government (USG) to support the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their supporting institutions (JP 3-22). FID and SFA are both subsets of security cooperation; neither is considered a subset of each other. SFA also prepares Foreign Security Forces (FSF) to defend against external threats and to perform as a part of an international coalition as well.

(4) Counterinsurgency (COIN) operations are those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency (JP 3-24, *Counterinsurgency Operations*).

(5) DA is defined as short duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically-sensitive environments and which employ specialized

military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets (JP 3-05, *Special Operations*).

(6) SR is defined as reconnaissance and surveillance actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance, employing military capabilities not normally found in conventional forces (JP 3-05).

(7) CT is defined as actions taken directly against terrorist networks and indirectly to influence and render global environments inhospitable to terrorist networks (JP 3-26, *Counterterrorism*).

(8) CP is action taken to defeat the threat and/or use of weapons of mass destruction against the United States, our forces, allies, and partners (JP 3-40, *Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction*). Special Forces Operational Detachments (SFODs) designated in national and theater contingency plans to participate in CP may be specially task-organized, trained, and equipped.

(9) IO are defined as the integrated employment of the core capabilities of electronic warfare, computer network operations, psychological operations, military deception, and operations security, in concert with the specified supporting and related capabilities to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own (JP 3-13, *Information Operations*).

*e. SF officer roles.*

(1) SF officers plan, coordinate, direct, and participate in SF operations in all operational environments. An SF captain commands a Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (SFOD-A). The SFOD-A is a flexible and highly trained unit, which includes one SF warrant officer and ten SF noncommissioned officers (NCOs.) The NCOs hold one or more of the following specialties: operations, intelligence, weapons, communications, engineering, or medical. The SFOD-A must be adept at accomplishing a wide range of requirements to include training management, mission planning, logistical planning, resource management, training plan development for foreign forces, and negotiating and working with foreign and U.S. government agencies and country teams. SF officers that successfully command an SFODA may later command larger SF units. They serve on upper echelon SF, Army and Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) staffs, as SOF observer-controllers at Combat Training Centers, in Special Mission Units (SMUs), and in interagency assignments. They also serve as special operations staff officers at various higher-level conventional Army and joint staffs as well as on the staff and faculty of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS).

(2) The SF warrant officer is an adaptive technical expert, combat leader, trainer, and advisor. They are experienced subject-matter experts in UW, as well as operations and intelligence fusion, JIIM operations, training management, and mission planning and execution at all levels across the operational continuum. Through tiered progressive levels of expertise in assignments, training, and education, SF warrant officers support a wide range of SF missions throughout their career. They advise commanders on all aspects of special operations. SF warrant officers are accessed with specific levels of technical ability from the SF NCO ranks. The following are specific characteristics and responsibilities of the separate, successive warrant officer grades:

(a) Warrant Officer 1/Chief Warrant Officer 2. The SF Warrant Officer One (WO1), Chief Warrant Officer Two (CW2), and selected CW3s serve on the SFOD-A as the Assistant Detachment Commander or Detachment Commander in his absence. In this role they serve to ensure the maintenance of institutional knowledge and continuity on the operational detachment alpha. As they gain expertise in special operations, they focus on integrating SOF systems with other branch systems. CW2s may serve on SFOD-Gs as well. SFOD-Gs are also key and developmental positions.

(b) CW3. The SF CW3 is an advanced-level expert in special operations who performs the primary duties of Company Operations Warrant Officer on a SFOD-B, serves as an institutional instructor, and leads specialized staff sections at the battalion and group levels. They also perform any

other branch related duties assigned to them. CW3s may serve on specialized SFOD-As, SFOD-Gs, and SFOD-Es as well. SFOD-Gs and SFOD-Es are also key and developmental positions. .

(c) CW4. The SF CW4 is a senior-level expert in special operations who performs the duties of a Battalion Operations Warrant Officer at the SF battalion level. Also serves as a Senior Warrant Officer Advisor in Army or Joint assignments, serves as an institutional instructor, and leads specialized staff sections at higher special operations commands, and serves in branch immaterial assignments in accordance with the needs of the Army. Select CW4s may serve on SFOD-Es as well. SFOD-Es are also key and developmental positions.

(d) CW5. The SF CW5 is a master-level expert in special operations who performs the duties of Group Warrant Officer at the SF Group level or serves as a Senior Warrant Officer Advisor in Army or Joint assignments. Select CW5s may serve in nominative positions as Command Chief Warrant Officer at the SF Group level and higher or as Commandant of the Special Forces Warrant Officer Institute (Airborne). They also serve in branch immaterial assignments in accordance with the needs of the Army.

## **2. Officer Characteristics required**

### *a. Unique skills.*

#### (1) SF officers will—

(a) Be proficient infantry tactical commanders and should be Ranger-qualified or attend the U.S. Army Ranger Course prior to arriving at their first Group of assignment.

(b) Be experts in SF operations and the nine SF principal tasks.

(c) Be tactically and technically proficient in the skills required of an SFOD-A.

(d) Have an aptitude for learning a foreign language. They must sustain foreign language proficiency throughout their careers. This is an essential skill and is critical for all SF officers. During the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC), officers who do not already meet language requirements receive extensive foreign language and cultural training. All officers must successfully meet the current USAJFKSWCS published language course standard requirements before graduating and joining an SF group. The language trained in at the SFQC is the officer's Control Language (CLANG).

(e) Be qualified military parachutists, with a goal of attaining a senior parachutist rating by promotion to Major.

#### (2) SF warrant officers will—

(a) Be proficient in the nine SF principal tasks, intelligence operations, and tactical skills.

(b) Be familiar with all the technical skills of an SFOD-A.

(c) Have an aptitude for learning a foreign language. They must sustain foreign language proficiency throughout their careers. This is an essential skill and is critical for all SF warrant officers.

(d) Be qualified military parachutists, with a requirement of successfully completing Jumpmaster training by promotion to CW3.

### *b. Unique knowledge.*

(1) SF officers and warrant officers require an in-depth knowledge of at least one region of the world and proficiency in at least one of the region's languages.

(2) Officers must complete the SFQC. This provides officers with entry-level knowledge of SF operations. As they develop, officers gain a broader understanding of SF tactics, techniques, and procedures; the special operations targeting and mission planning process; the special operations support and sustainment process; and the joint, multinational, and interagency aspects of special operations.

(3) SF officers and warrant officers must have a unique knowledge of many specialized tactics, techniques, and procedures that support SF operations.

*c. Unique attributes.* SF officers and warrant officers will—

(1) Have the ability to solve complex political-military problems and to develop and employ conventional or unconventional solutions. Develop and employ non-doctrinal methods and techniques when applicable. Be capable of decisive action for missions in which no current doctrine exists.

(2) Have good interpersonal and cross-cultural communications skills as well as political acumen and cultural sensitivity. Mission success will often depend on their ability to establish rapport and influence the attitudes and behaviors of people from foreign cultures.

(3) Be an adaptive thinker who is able to thrive in complex and ambiguous situations.

(4) Be mentally flexible and willing to experiment and innovate in a decentralized and unstructured environment.

(5) Be self-reliant team players who can function as leaders independently or in tightly knit small groups.

(6) Have the cognitive resilience and mental dexterity to act autonomously under extreme stress and be able to inspire others to perform effectively in highly stressful environments.

(7) Be able to learn new skills, accept new ideas, and teach others.

(8) Have unquestionable personal integrity and moral courage.

(9) Be physically fit.

### **3. Professional development overview**

*a. Commissioned officers.* The SF Branch is one of three branches that make up the Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) group within the Operations functional category. The SF Branch consists of officers in the grade of WO1 through Colonel. The SF Branch is a volunteer non-accession branch that draws its officers from other branches of the Army, or in the case of warrant officers, from within enlisted career management field (CMF) 18. The U.S. Army Recruiting Command recruits SF officer volunteers. A Department of the Army (DA) Secretariat accession panel selects promotable First Lieutenants who volunteer in the targeted year group. The volunteers must undergo and pass a rigorous assessment and selection program prior to starting SF training. SF officers must first serve a successful initial tour as a Lieutenant in a small-unit leadership position in one of the Army's other basic branches. This ensures that they have knowledge of conventional Army operations and leadership experience. All SF officers are airborne qualified and maintain that proficiency throughout their careers. They attend the Special Operations Forces Captain's Career Course (SOF CCC). Based on operational requirements, SF officers will undergo training in advanced special operations skills such as Military Free Fall, Combat Diver, military mountaineering, and completion of the Special Warfare Training Course (SWTC). Throughout their careers, SF officers enhance their knowledge by increasing their understanding of the joint and interagency aspects of special operations while they command SF units at levels of increasing responsibility. SF Captains lead Detachments; Majors lead Companies; Lieutenant Colonels lead Battalions; and Colonels lead Groups. SF officers should seek post key developmental (KD) assignments to USAJFKSWCS at all grade levels.

*b. Warrant officers.* The SF warrant officer is a volunteer accessed from CMF 18. All candidates attend the Special Forces Warrant Officer Technical and Tactical Certification Course (WOTTC) at USAJFKSWCS, Fort Bragg, NC. The WOTTC is comprised of Army common core officer leadership tasks and SF warrant officer basic course tasks. At key points in their career, SF warrant officers attend and complete all associated phases of the Warrant Officer Advanced Course (WOAC), Warrant Officer Intermediate Level Education (WOILE), and Warrant Officer Senior Service Education (WOSSE). SF warrant officers serve at SF Detachments, Companies, Battalions, Groups, ACOMs, and joint and interagency commands. Based on operational requirements, SF warrant officers may also undergo

training in advanced special operations skills such as Military Free Fall parachuting, Combat Diver, Advanced Special Operations Techniques (ASOT), SWTC, and military mountaineering.

*c. Regional focus.* SF officers and warrant officers continuously undergo intensive preparation for assignment in their unit's designated geographic areas. Whether the mission profile calls for clandestine employment in a denied area or a low-visibility FID mission in a developing nation, the overall requirement for regional orientation, language proficiency, and cross-cultural interpersonal skills remain the same. SF officers and warrant officers gain and maintain area orientation through military and civilian schooling, language study, area study, mission preparation, and repetitive operational experience during their careers. While Soldiers gain initial language qualification through formal instruction, they maintain language skills through practice and self-study. Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) and Oral Proficiency Indicator (OPI) scores reflect language proficiency. Soldiers must update their DLPT scores annually through formal testing. The organization of SF groups is by region, however, the management of regional expertise is subject to modification as the needs of the Army change.

#### **4. Officer development assignments**

An officer must first successfully serve in his basic branch to be eligible for SF (see paragraph 8b, below). Upon graduation from the SFQC, the officer serves in a key developmental position as a SF Captain, followed by other developmental positions described in the following paragraphs.

##### *a. Captain.*

(1) SF Branch is a non-accession branch. To meet Army military education level requirements, every SF officer must complete the SOFCCC before attending the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC).

(2) Upon successful completion of the SOFCCC, Captains will attend the SFQC (60-64 weeks).

(3) SF Captains should successfully command an SFOD-A, optimally for 24 months. This is the key developmental position for all SF Captains. Specially selected Captains may command an SFOD-E and/or SFOD-G in a Group's 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion which is key and developmentally equivalent to SFOD-A command. Both of these commands equate to Company, Battery, or Troop command in the other Operations branches.

(4) All SF Captains should optimally serve a minimum of 36 months in an 18A coded position within a SF Group and select Captains may remain assigned for up to 4 years.

(5) The primary preferred developmental assignment for a SF Captain is in a position coded 18A as a staff officer in an SF operational Battalion or Group headquarters. Other preferred developmental assignments include the following:

(a) Service in a second command following the officer's initial Detachment command. Selection to a second command is appropriate for an officer with high potential. Preferred second commands include Group Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) as well as Battalion Headquarters and Support Company (HSC).

(b) Service in a SMU.

(c) Service as a joint staff officer.

(d) Service as an instructor at the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Warfare Training Group (SWTG).

(e) Service as an observer controller at a CTC.

(f) Service in a broadening opportunity program.

(g) Service as an Interagency Operations Officer.

(6) In addition to professional development through operational assignments, SF Captains should begin an intensive self-development program. Their efforts should focus on gaining an in-depth understanding of combined arms operations, gaining and maintaining regional and linguistic expertise, and increasing proficiency in SF and infantry officer common core and branch tasks.

(7) It is strongly encouraged that Captains attend Ranger school if not already qualified and may attend advanced special operations skill courses such as Combat Diver, Combat Diving Supervisor, Military Free Fall (MFF); MFF Jumpmaster; Advanced Special Operations Techniques (ASOT); ATLC; and Special Forces Advanced Reconnaissance, Target Analysis, & Exploitation Course (SFARTAETC) to meet mission requirements.

(8) SF officers, as commanders of airborne units, must successfully complete static-line jumpmaster training as a Captain.

(9) Because of the extensive training involved in SF, officers volunteering for SF who do not already have a Baccalaureate degree must complete their degree before attending the SFQC.

*b. Major.* SF Majors should successfully serve for approximately 24 months in any of the key developmental positions listed below or a combination of these positions:

(1) SF Company Commander. Majors command SF Companies. Each line Company Commander is responsible for his Company headquarters, the Special Forces Operational Detachment Bravo (SFOD-B), and six subordinate SFOD-As. Majors who served in the Group's 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion as Captains may command an SFOD-F, SFOD-H, and Special Warfare Planning Detachment (SWPD) commands are key and developmentally equivalent to SFOD-B command. It is preferable that Majors who serve as Captains in SFOD-G and/or SFOD-E command these units.

(2) SF Battalion Operations Officer (S-3). The S-3 performs duties as the Battalion operations officer, similar to other MFE Battalion S-3s.

(3) SF Battalion Executive Officer (XO). The XO performs duties similar to other MFE Battalion XOs.

(4) SF Group S-3 Operations Officer. The Group S-3 operations officer performs duties relating to planning for future operations.

(5) SF Group Support Company (GSC) commander. The GSC commander is responsible for intelligence, training, and operations support within SF Groups.

(6) SF Group Operations Detachment Commander. The Group Operations Detachment Commander is responsible for training support and oversight of designated special or advanced skills within the groups.

(7) Positions corresponding to statements one through five above in the USAJFKSWCS, 1st SWTG (A), Special Operations Recruiting Battalion, an SMU, at the International Special Training Center (Vilseck, GE) or in the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, or as an Interagency Operations Officer.

(8) Designated positions in the Combined Arms Center (CAC) SOF cell and JRTC plans.

(9) Commander, Operational Detachment-39, Korea.

(10) Designated operations or plans staff officer positions at USASOC, in a Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC), or equivalent Joint Special Operations and Interagency organizations.

(11) Preferred developmental assignments for SF Majors include the following:

(a) Service as a joint or combined staff officer. Special operations are inherently joint operations, and SF Majors should seek joint or combined duty after their key developmental assignment.

(b) Service as an SF assignment officer or Chief, Special Mission Division at U.S. Army Human Resources Command (USAHRC).

(c) Attendance at the highly competitive Advanced Military Studies Program (AMSP) at the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS). SF Majors that graduate from SAMS and are key and developmental qualified will serve in an SF-coded SAMS assignment. Officers that are not key and developmental qualified will serve in an SF key and developmental qualifying position before fulfilling their SAMS utilization.

(d) Attendance at the highly competitive Department of Defense Analysis Program at the Naval Postgraduate School. The Special Operations Master's Degree Program at the Naval Postgraduate School is 18 months of advanced study for selected officers. It provides a broad education in the art and

science of Unconventional Warfare at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. This training is followed by a tour (normally after serving in a key developmental position) as an operational planner at USSOCOM, USASOC, a TSOC, or in designated JSOTFs. SF officers who attend the P950 ILE Preparatory Course, and the Naval Command and Staff Distance Education Courses while attending NPS will receive full ILE/JPME I credit.

(e) Participation in the Interagency Studies Program (ISP) which provides SF officers with an accredited Master's degree, preparing them for post key and developmental assignments in joint and interagency Special Operations Forces billets.

(f) Participation in the National Defense University (NDU) program of study at USAJFKSWCS which provides SF officers with an accredited Master's degree focused on Strategic Security Studies with a concentration in Irregular Warfare or International Security Studies. It prepares officers for post key and developmental assignments in joint and interagency Special Operations Forces billets. NDU does not provide ILE credit but does provide AOC credit; it is recommended for SF Majors who have already served in a key and developmental position.

(14) There is much greater emphasis on self-development at the field grade levels, with the focus on more general areas of knowledge rather than specific tasks. Officers without a Master's degree are highly encouraged to enroll in a civilian college or university to earn an advanced degree either off duty or, if applicable, through a fully funded program in conjunction with ILE. However, completion of a Master's degree should not take precedence over completion of ILE or the successful execution of any assignment. SF Majors should also maintain and enhance their foreign language and cultural proficiency and continue their self-development program aimed at the mastery of Unconventional Warfare doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures.

*c. Lieutenant colonel.* Promotion to Lieutenant Colonel constitutes success, and subsequent assignments focus on developing the officer for broader contributions to the branch, the Army, and special operations in general. Key developmental assignments for a SF Lieutenant Colonel include successful service as a tactical, training, institutional, or recruiting Battalion Commander (Centralized Selection List billet at the Battalion level). Preferred developmental assignments for SF Lieutenant Colonels include the following:

(1) Service in a USSOCOM or a TSOC-designated JSOTF.

(2) Service as an XO of an SF Group, within the 1st SWTG (A), or in an equivalent position at a SMU.

(3) Service as a DA, DOD, or JCS staff officer or in interagency positions requiring SF experience and expertise.

(4) Service as a staff officer or commander in a joint or combined headquarters and earning a joint service skill identifier.

(5) Service in 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces Command (Airborne) (1<sup>st</sup> SFC (A)) as the DCS, G-3/5/7, Chief of Operations, Chief of Training, or DCS, G-7. The 1<sup>st</sup> SFC (A) DCS, G-3/5/7 position is designated for fill by a Former Battalion Commander (FBC).

(6) Service in USAJFKSWCS as the DCS, G-3/5/7, DCO 1st Special Warfare Training Group or Director, SF Proponency positions designated for fill by a FBC.

(7) Service in USASOC as the assistant DCS, G-3/5/7, Command Group XO, or Deputy Chief of Staff, positions designated for fill by a FBC.

(8) Service at USAHRC as the SF Officer Branch Chief or Enlisted Branch Chief in the ARSOF group, positions designated for fill by a FBC.

(9) Service on the staff and faculty of the Command and General Staff College (CGSC).

(10) For self-development, SF Lieutenant Colonels focus on general areas of knowledge. They should enhance their regional knowledge and improve their language proficiency as well as continue their mastery of unconventional warfare.

*d. Colonel.* SF Colonels continue to serve the branch, special operations, and the Army through service in any SF-coded Colonel position or combination of positions within USSOCOM, USASOC, USAJFKSWCS, 1<sup>st</sup> SFC (A), HQDA, joint staffs, service schools, and other key organizations.

(1) Key development for a SF Colonel is successful service as a tactical, training, institutional, or recruiting commander (Centralized Selection List billet at the Group or Brigade level) or command of a designated JSOTF. SF Colonel assignments aim to develop the officer for broader contributions to the branch, the U.S. Army, and special operations in general.

(2) Other developmental assignments include the following:

(a) Service as the Deputy Commander of an SF Group or SMU.

(b) Service as a TSOC Deputy Commander, Chief of Staff, J-3 or J5.

(c) Service as a joint staff officer at USSOCOM.

(d) Service as a joint staff officer or commander in a joint critical position requiring SF expertise.

(e) Service as Chief of Staff or Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, USASOC.

(f) Service as Deputy Commander or Chief of Staff, 1<sup>st</sup> SFC (A).

(g) Service as Chief of Staff, Director of CDID, Special Forces Commandant, Director of ARSOF Human Resources, or Director of Army Special Operations Combined Integration Center (ARSOCIC) at USAJFKSWCS.

(h) Service with the Army staff or with another government agency.

(i) Service on the staff and faculty of the CGSC or U.S. Army War College.

(j) Service on a combined staff.

(3) For self-development, SF Colonels focus on general areas of knowledge. Colonels should further enhance their regional orientation and language proficiency and continue to follow an extensive professional self-development regimen.

*e. Warrant officers.* Active Army (AA) and U.S. Army National Guard (ARNG) SF warrant officers serve in developmental and broadening assignments at the detachment, company and battalion level. Immediately upon completion of WOTTC, the SF warrant officer should begin an intensive self-development program to continue the goal of becoming an expert in Special Operations. Their efforts should focus on gaining an in-depth understanding of the principal tasks of Unconventional Warfare and Foreign Internal Defense, as well as operations in a Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, Multinational environment. In addition, efforts should be towards gaining and maintaining regional and linguistic expertise and maintaining proficiency in all of the remaining SF core tasks.

(1) SF WO1/CW2 (Active Army and ARNG).

(a) SF WO1s must successfully complete SF WOTTC and serve successfully as an Assistant Detachment Commander or Detachment Commander on an SFOD-A or SFOD-G as the initial assignment. Preferably, a WO1/CW2 will serve successfully on an SFOD-A prior to assignment on an SFOD-G. A WO1/CW2 must serve successfully for a minimum of three years, with the preferred minimum being six years on an SFOD-A/SFOD-G. The key responsibilities for a WO1/CW2 on an SFOD-A/G are leadership, operations and intelligence fusion, mission planning, Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, Multinational coordination, training management, resource management, information management and continuity of the detachment.

(b) SF WO1s and CW2s should plan and implement an intensive self-development program. Their efforts must focus on gaining in-depth understanding of UW and combined arms operations in a JIIM environment. They must gain and maintain advanced regional and linguistic expertise. They must maintain a current foreign language proficiency that corresponds to their regional affiliation.

(c) SF WO1s and CW2s should complete an associate degree before eligibility for selection to CW3.



(d) As an integral member of the leadership team in an airborne unit, SF warrant officers must successfully complete static-line jumpmaster training before eligibility of promotion to CW3.

(e) Although not required, advanced special operations skill courses such as Combat Diver, Combat Diving Supervisor, Military Freefall, Military Freefall Jumpmaster, , and Special Forces Advanced Reconnaissance Target Analysis and Exploitation Techniques Course provide valuable professional development.

(f) The SF CW2 should complete the SF Warrant Officer Advance Course (WOAC) prior to promotion to CW3. SF CW2s are eligible to attend the WOAC after serving for one year as a CW2.

(g) The SF CW2 should complete the Advanced Special Operations Techniques Course prior to promotion to CW3.

(2) SF CW3.

(a) The SF CW3 should be MEL Q certified prior to promotion to CW4. SF CW3s are eligible to attend WOILE after serving for one year as a CW3.

(b) Developmental assignments for SF CW3s are:

1. Service as an SF Company Operations Officer focusing primarily on operations and intelligence fusion during mission planning and execution, Company Training Management, and Long Range/Future Operations. This is a KD position for all CW3s. The CW3 will serve as the senior warrant officer advisor to the commander and the company for all warrant officer-related matters to include accession, training, education, professional development, management, and mentorship.

2. Service on a SFOD-E.

3. Service on a SFOD-G.

4. Service as a SF Battalion Assistant Operations warrant officer.

5. Service as a Company Operations warrant officer within the 1st SWTG (A).

(c) Broadening assignments for SF CW3s include the following:

1. Service as an instructor or doctrine writer at USAJFKSWCS, ideally for no longer than 36 months.

2. Service as a staff officer at 1<sup>st</sup> SFC (A), USASOC, JSOC, USSOCOM, TSOC, USAJFKSWCS, ideally for no longer than 36 months.

3. Service as an Advanced Skills Committee OIC in a Group Advanced Skills company.

4. Service as an SFOD-A Assistant Detachment Commander or Detachment Commander.

(d) SF CW3s should attempt to complete a Baccalaureate degree program before eligibility and selection to CW4.

(e) SF CW3s must maintain a current foreign language proficiency that corresponds to his regional affiliation.

(f) Select CW3s who demonstrate exceptional academic capability and meet established criteria may pursue a funded advanced civilian degree to meet the needs of the Army and SF. The education will provide SF warrant officers with an accredited Master's degree that prepares warrant officers for developmental and broadening assignments in joint and interagency Special Operations Forces positions. Initial utilization assignment for graduates will normally be within the SF Group with a follow-on broadening assignment at a general-officer level SF, ARSOF, or joint SOF staff. These degree programs include the Naval Post Graduate School (NPS), National Defense University, and National Defense Intelligence College.

(3) SF CW4.

(a) SF CW4s should complete the WOSSE prior to promotion to CW5. SF CW4s are eligible to attend WOSSE after serving one year as a CW4.

(b) Developmental assignments for SF CW4s include the following:

1. Service as a Battalion Operations Warrant Officer focusing primarily on operations and intelligence fusion during mission planning and execution, Battalion Training Management, and Long Range/Future Operations. This is a KD position for all CW4s. The SF CW4 will serve as the senior

warrant officer advisor to the commander and the battalion for all warrant officer-related matters to include, accessions, training, education, professional development, management and mentorship. As the SWOA, the SF CW4 will represent the Battalion with the Command Team at all official functions.

2. Service as a Group Assistant Operations warrant officer.
3. Service on a SFOD-E.
4. Group Operations warrant officer at 1st SWTG (A).
5. Service as a Battalion Operations warrant officer within the 1st SWTG (A).

(c) Broadening assignments as SF CW4s include the following:

1. Service as the 180A proponent manager for the SF Commandant, USAJFKSWCS
2. Service as the 180A career manager at HRC
3. Service as an instructor, doctrine writer, or staff officer at USAJFKSWCS.
4. Service as an operations staff officer at 1st SFC (A), USASOC, JSOC, TSOC, GCC,

USSOCOM or HQDA.

(d) SF CW4s should attempt to attain a Master's degree.

(e) Select CW4s who demonstrate exceptional academic capability and meet established criteria may pursue a funded advanced civilian degree to meet the needs of the Army and SF. This education will provide SF warrant officers with an accredited Master's degree to prepare them for developmental assignments in joint and interagency Special Operations Forces positions. Degree programs include the Naval Post Graduate School (NPS), National Defense University (NDU), and National Defense Intelligence College (NDIC). Initial utilization assignment for graduates will normally be within the SF Group with a follow-on broadening assignment at a general officer level SF, ARSOF, or joint SOF staffs.

(f) SF CW4s must maintain a current foreign language proficiency that corresponds to his regional affiliation.

(4) SF CW5.

(a) Developmental assignments for SF CW5s include the following:

1. Service as the Group Operations Warrant Officer focusing primarily on operations and intelligence fusion during mission planning and execution, synchronization/integration of all staff elements, including JIIM assets, long range future operations, and training management. Provides advice to the Group Operations Officer on planning, resourcing, and the execution of all engagements in support of operations throughout the units AOR.

2. DCS, G3 Operations Warrant Officer at 1<sup>st</sup> SFC (A) or USASOC.

3. Plans Officer, CIG, USASOC.

4. TSOC Senior Operations warrant officer advisor to the CG and staff for all SOF operations and other interests as directed.

5. USSOCOM Senior Operations warrant officer advisor to the CG and staff for all SOF operations and other interests as directed.

6. Selected SF CW5s will serve as a SF Group CCWO as an advisor to the Group Commander and staff on all aspects of Special Forces specialized training, core missions, operations, plans, intelligence, collateral and focal point activities, operational preparation of the environment and the Group's AOR. Additionally, the CCWO is responsible for the MOS life-cycle functions for all Warrant Officers assigned to the Group and the principle advisor regarding accession management, assignments, retention, performance evaluations, and discipline of Warrant Officers.

(b) Select CW5s may have an opportunity to serve in Warrant Officer or Officer MOS-Immaterial positions.

(c) An SF CW5 must complete a CW5 developmental assignment prior to consideration for a nominative assignment as the Chief Warrant Officer of the Branch-USAJFKSWCS, Regimental Command Chief Warrant Officer-1<sup>st</sup> SFC (A), or Commandant-SF Warrant Officer Institute USAJFKSWCS.

(d) SF CW5s must maintain a current foreign language proficiency that corresponds to their regional affiliation.

*f. Branch and generalist assignments.* SF officers who remain in the MFE functional category above the rank of Captain will have increasing opportunities to serve in branch and generalist assignments. SF officers must ensure their minimum assignment requirements are met in SF Groups to remain competitive.

*g. Joint and interagency assignments.* The Army will consider SF officers and warrant officers for joint as well as interagency duty assignments. They should strive to serve in these critical positions. Joint experience is important to the Army and essential to individual officers for their advancement into senior leadership positions.

*h. Combined assignments.* The Army will consider SF officers and warrant officers for duty as commanders or staff officers of combined commands at a rate that equals or exceeds that of the other MFE functional category officers and warrant officers. Experience in combined commands provides extensive professional development to individual officers for their advancement into senior leadership positions.

*i. Command selection criteria.* The main criterion for SF command selection is exceptional performance. To remain competitive for command selection in both SF groups and SMUs, officers should balance key assignments in both types of units. SF officers are strongly encouraged to volunteer for recruiting and garrison command consideration, as well as critical command and staff billets in joint and JSOTFs. SF officers with post key developmental or preferred developmental assignments outside of 1<sup>ST</sup> SFC (A), in such places as a TSOC, USSOCOM, USAJFKSWCS, Department of the Army or other broadening assignment will be regarded as strong competitors for command selection.

## **5. Assignment preferences**

*a. Preferences.* Officers should strive to serve in KD positions at each grade plate while expanding experience and expertise through broadening assignments throughout DOD. Officer development will continue to occur through a methodical sequence of progressive assignments in TOE units, staff and TDA billets, joint and coalition assignments, and institutional training positions. Self-development continues to be an essential component of officer development. The goal is to develop officers that can expertly conduct SF operations in support of the combatant commanders. Development occurs through the Army school system with all officers selected for promotion completing some form of resident professional military education training.

### *b. Assignments.*

(1) SF officers' assignments to developmental leadership positions have precedence. Typically, officers should seek assignments in the following order:

(a) Service as the commander of an SF Detachment (SFOD-A/G).

(b) Service on a Battalion or Group staff, as an SFOD-B XO, or on a designated specialty SFOD-

A.

(c) Service in USAJFKSWCS, 1<sup>st</sup> SFC (A) and other SOCOM, Army and joint assignments.

(d) Attendance at the Command and General Staff Officer Course ILE or equivalent program.

(e) Attendance at the AMSP, the Special Operations Master's Degree Program in the Department of Defense Analysis at the Naval Postgraduate School, or the Interagency Studies Program

(f) Service as the commander of a SF Company (SFOD-B/F/H), as a Battalion S-3 or XO, plans officer, Operations Detachment Commander, or Group Support Company (GSC) commander, Group S-3, or designated key developmental position.

(g) Joint assignment.

(h) Service as the commander of a CSL-selected Battalion-level command.

(i) Attendance at a Senior Service College.

(j) Service as the commander of a CSL-selected Group/Brigade -level command.

(2) Active Army and ARNGSF warrant officer assignments to positions of leadership and technical expertise have precedence. Typically, SF warrant officers should seek assignments in the following order:

(a) Service as an SFOD-A Assistant Detachment Commander.

(b) Service on a SFOD-G

(c) Service as a Company (SFOD-B) Operations warrant officer.

(d) Service on a SFOD-E

(e) Service as a Battalion (SFOD-C) Operations warrant officer.

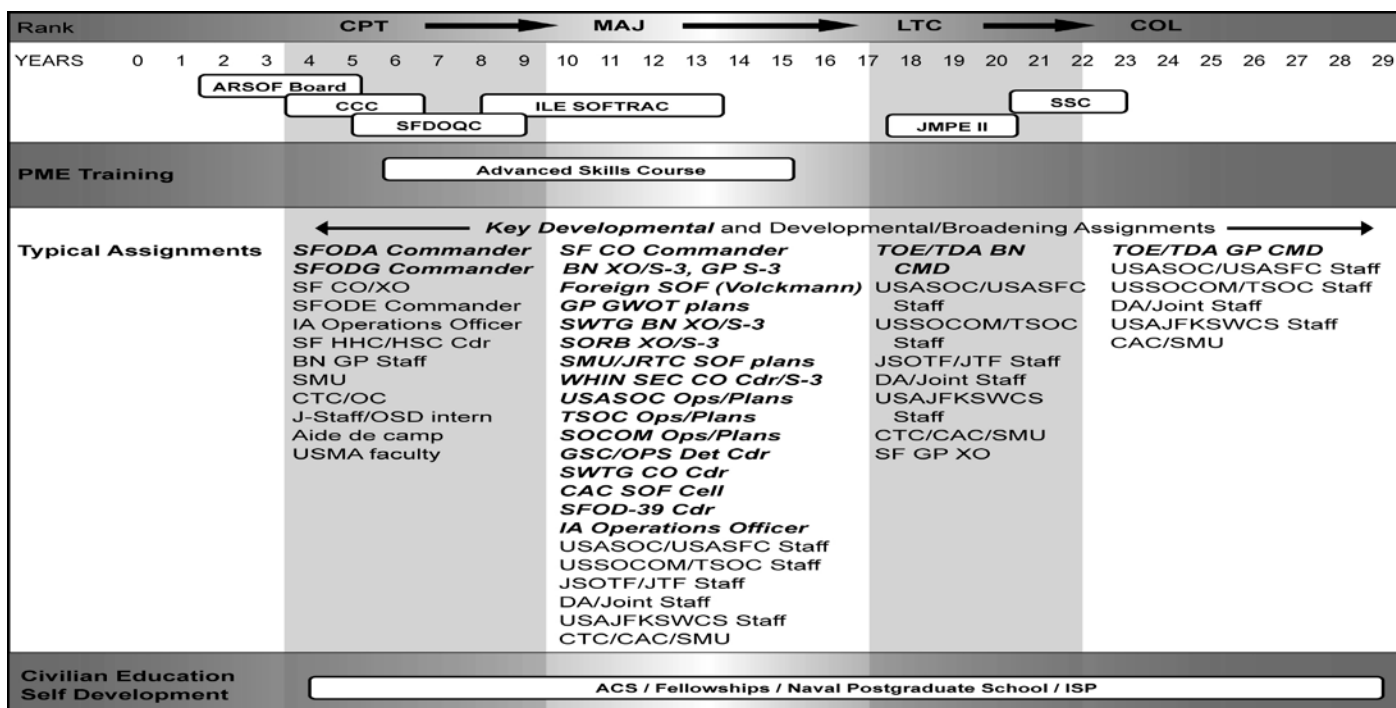
(f) Service as a Group Operations warrant officer or CCWO.

(g) Service as an operations warrant officer or staff officer, instructor, or writer at USAJFKSWCS, 1<sup>st</sup> SFC (A), USASOC or a joint assignment may be sought after promotion to CW3. (Applicable to USAR when serving on Active Army orders).

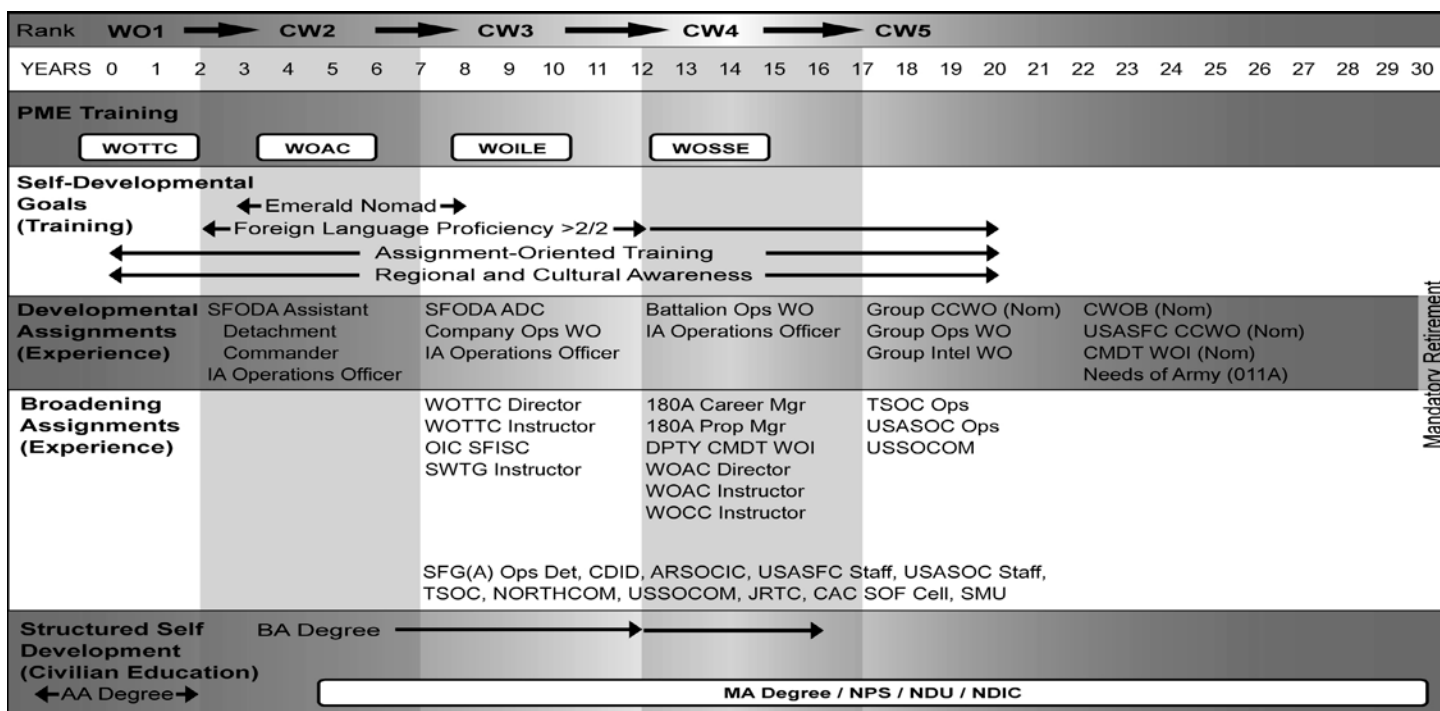
## 6. Duration of developmental officer life-cycle assignments

All Captains will optimally serve 24 months in their key developmental position in a SF group as an SFOD-A commander. The goal is for all Majors to serve for 24 months in key and developmental positions in an operational Group, training Group, or other designated 18A coded position. Figure 1 depicts the key developmental positions of the SF Branch.

Figure 1. The Special Forces Officer Developmental Model



**Figure 2. The Special Forces Warrant Officer Developmental Model**



## 7. Requirements, authorizations, and inventory

*a. Goal.* The goal is to maintain a healthy, viable career path for officers who remain in the MFE functional category. To accomplish this, the field-grade inventory must be structured to meet branch authorizations, to provide sufficient flexibility in supporting branch and generalist participation, and to allow all officers to serve in key developmental assignments for the period needed to achieve requisite professional development.

*b. Captain accessions.* The CG, USAJFKSWCS, validates Captain accessions requirements in an annual mission requirements letter to DA G-1. The goal for all Captains is to graduate the SFQC between their fifth and sixth years in service and to serve in multiple assignments and obtain professional development in SF before consideration for promotion to Major.

## 8. Key officer life-cycle initiatives for Special Forces

*a. Structure.* SF structure is somewhat different from that of the other MFE branches because of its high officer content and the absence of Lieutenants.

*b. Acquire.* The SF Branch is a non-accession branch. The U.S. Army Recruiting Command recruits officers as SF volunteers. Eligible officers are considered in their third year of service. An annual MILPER message provides eligibility, application requirements and ARSOF Officer Accession Panel dates. SF warrant officers are accessed from all CMF 18 MOSs. The Special Forces Proponent, USAJFKSWCS, publishes recruitment guidance each fiscal year. The primary recruiters for new accessions are SF warrant officers. Individuals meeting MOS 180A prerequisites submit an application packet through the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) Web page to USAREC, where

a centralized warrant officer selection board will select the best-qualified applicants based on the needs of the Army. The ARNG applications will be returned through the National Guard Bureau to the Adjutant Generals office of the state where a federal recognition board is conducted to select qualified applicants. Board-selected individuals will be scheduled to attend the Special Forces Warrant Officer Technical and Tactical Certification Course at USAJFKSWCS, Fort Bragg, NC.

*c. SF officer training prerequisites.* Officers applying for selection for SF training will meet the following prerequisites:

- (1) Be an Active Army Soldier.
- (2) Be in their third year of active federal commissioned service when the SF Accessions Board convenes (Active Army only).
- (3) Be a Captain or be selected for promotion to Captain.
- (4) Have enough time remaining as a Captain to complete SF training and serve a minimum of 3 years in an SF unit before consideration in the primary zone for promotion to Major. This allows for the completion of key and developmental assignments and attainment of sufficient SF experience before selection for Major.
- (5) Be airborne qualified. If not airborne qualified, the applicant must volunteer for airborne training.
- (6) Have passed the APFT in his age category, with a minimum of 240 points overall, 60 points minimum per event.
- (7) Be able to swim 50 meters unassisted while wearing the full Army combat uniform with boots.
- (8) Have scored at least 85 on the Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB) or have met USAJFKSWCS language school graduation standards on the DLPT in an SF-required language (other than English).
- (9) Have met the medical standards for SF training per AR 40-501, Standards of Medical Fitness.
- (10) Have a Secret security clearance and be eligible for a Top Secret security clearance.

*d. Branch-transfer policies.* Although SF Branch controls volunteers throughout their training, they remain members of their basic branches of assignment during training. The training pipeline begins with TDY attendance to Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS), which an officer must successfully complete to continue onto subsequent phases of SF qualification training. Upon successful completion of the SFQC, the officer receives his first assignment to an SF operational unit. The USAHRC transfers officers to SF upon successful completion of the SFQC. Officers failing to be selected at SFAS or failing to achieve SFQC course standards must return to their initial branches of assignment. Officers who completed SF training as enlisted Soldiers will still complete the SFQC before transferring to SF. However, they will not normally attend SFAS nor will they be required to re-attend SERE training if they have already completed the SERE Level C (High Risk) Course. Active Army and Army National Guard (ARNG) SF qualification training requirements are identical. ARNG officers who successfully complete the Active Army SFQC do not have to repeat SFQC training if accessed into the Active Army.

*e. Waiver authority.* The CG, USAJFKSWCS is the final waiver authority for course prerequisites as well as qualification and branch-transfer requirements. All requests for waivers should be addressed to the Special Forces Commandant, USAJFKSWCS, ATTN: AOJK-CDI-SF, Fort Bragg, NC 28310-5200.

*f. SF warrant officer training prerequisites.* Active Army and ARNGSF warrant officer training requirements are identical. SF NCOs applying for selection for SF warrant officer (MOS 180A) training must meet the following prerequisites:

- (1) Must be a U.S. citizen or possesses U.S. citizenship. No waivers are accepted.
- (2) Have a general technical score of 110 or higher. No waivers are accepted.
- (3) Be a high school graduate or have a general equivalency diploma. No waivers are accepted.

(4) Have a secret-level security clearance and have initiated a request for a top secret security clearance.

(5) Be able to pass the standard Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) in accordance with FM 21-20 and to meet height and weight standards in accordance with AR 600-9.

(6) Be able to pass the appointment physical for technicians as verified by an appropriate medical authority on U.S. Army Recruiting Command Form 1932. NOTE: Verification statement by appropriate medical authority to be included on USAREC Form 1932.

(7) Have at least 12 months remaining on their enlistment contract.

(8) Be less than 46 years of age.

(9) Be serving as a SSG (E-6) or above.

(10) Have at least one CMF 18 MOS.

(11) Have a minimum of 3 years' experience at the SFOD-A level.

(12) Have a current DLPT with at least a 1/1 foreign language proficiency score.

(13) Must be Achilles Dagger qualified and current (24 months) prior to the applicable accession board.

(14) Must be SERE Level C (High Risk) qualified or attend SERE Level C training prior to attending WOTTCC.

(15) Have letters of recommendation from the chain of command (Company, Battalion, and Group Commanders), as well as the SF Group Command Chief Warrant Officer. If applying from outside of an SF Group or requesting transfer to a different group than currently assigned, additional letters of recommendation are required from the commander and CCWO of the gaining Group.

*g. Distribution.* Careful management is required to balance the need to retain sufficient experienced officers in the branch with the need to keep the inventory small enough to allow for sufficient key developmental assignments. The Army will make every effort to provide professional development opportunities for officers to ensure they are able to compete for advancement.

*h. Deployment.* SF officers will remain personally and professionally prepared to deploy worldwide at all times. Whether assigned to deployable TOE units with high levels of readiness or fixed-site TDA organizations, all SF officers must be ready to deploy and able to accomplish missions across the full spectrum of conflict. SF officers may deploy on short notice with their units to conduct combat operations, deter potential adversaries, and to protect national interests or as individuals to support joint and multinational combat operations or sustainment and support operations. SF officers must prepare themselves and their families for this challenging life-cycle function.

*i. Sustainment.* Recent OPMS updates have changed the manner of execution in some areas affecting officer career development.

(1) Promotion. Following functional category designation, SF officers will compete for promotion only within the MFE functional category.

(2) Command. Central selection of SF Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel commanders will continue in four functional categories: operations, strategic support, recruiting and training, and installation. The SF personnel proponent at the USAJFKSWCS closely monitors the number of commands available to SF officers to achieve branch professional development on par with that of the other MFE branches. A special DA board fills selected SMU commands. Officers are selected to command SMUs generally in lieu of CSL commands, not as a second command though selected SMUs are designated as second commands.

(3) Officer Evaluation Report (OER). The OER will reinforce the linkage between officer development and officer personnel management. Starting with Captain, the Rater and Senior Rater will recommend the rated officer for the functional category that best suits his abilities and interests. SF

Raters and Senior Raters thus perform a critical function that helps ensure that both the MFE functional category and other functional categories possess quality officers.

*j. Separation.* The branch separation process remains the same as for the rest of the Army.

## **9. Army National Guard (ARNG) Special Forces Officers**

*a. General career development.* ARNG officer career development requirements are normally satisfied by attendance at military schools combined with planned, progressive assignments in SF units or positions and continuous self-development. To be considered a qualified SF officer at each grade, the length of Service in a given position is not the focus; the key is the assignment opportunities, experiences, and sufficient time served during each assignment to develop SF competence. Because of geographical and recruiting realities, Lieutenants may be assigned to ARNG SF companies.

*b. Developmental opportunities.* ARNG Captain, Major, Lieutenant Colonel, and Colonel key and primary developmental assignments, as well as branch-transfer requirements, are the same as for Active Army officers. ARNG SF officer development, in general, should parallel that of their Active Army counterparts. The ARNG officers may not find an SF unit with openings at their grade or may be ineligible for promotion until finding a unit position at the proper grade. ARNG officers' civilian careers and other considerations may limit them to serving in geographically available units. Even though ARNG SF officers are limited by geographical and positional considerations, they should strive for assignments in SF units that yield the same developmental and competitive opportunities as their Active Army counterparts. ARNG SF officers should contact their state officer manager or their senior branch officer to ensure they can meet their professional development objectives. These transfers are necessitated by geographical considerations, as well as the need to provide as many officers as possible the opportunity to serve with troops in leadership and staff positions, or to complete professional military education (PME) requirements. Transfers within a component will normally be temporary, and should not be seen as impacting negatively on an SF officer's career.

## **10. United States Army Reserve (USAR) Special Forces Officers**

*a. General career development.* The USAR has no SF force structure in their organization but may have individual SF officers within the ranks. Options for such officers include duty in the IRR with possible IMA program positions or short tour positions, AGR program positions, branch immaterial positions, or positions in non-SF units. Some officers may have to branch transfer. A USAR officer may branch transfer several times during his career and may not be able to follow the normal SF career model.

*b. Assignments.* SF officers in the USAR may find assignments in TPU, Individual Augmentee (IMA), and DIMA positions in Active Army organizations, installations or HQDA agencies, tours of Active Duty in Support of Administrative Support (ADOS), Contingency Operations in Support of Administrative Support (CO-ADOS) annual training (AT) or temporary tour on Active Duty (TTAD). When IRR SF officers are mobilized in an SF position, they are expected to complete SF officer refresher course in residence before deploying. To meet professional developmental objectives in the Army Reserve, SF officers must be willing to work with their Personnel Management Officer (PMO) team to rotate between TPU, IRR, the IMA program, Drilling Individual Mobilized Augmentee (DIMA), Joint Reserve Units (JRU), the IRR-Augmentee (IRR-A) program, Active Guard Reserve (AGR) programs, and even apply for short active duty tours.