

The Logistics Branch Needs More Company-grade KD Assignments

Offering company-grade logistics officers more opportunities to fulfill key developmental requirements will help them stay on track with their career timelines.

■ By Capt. Nicholas Amuna

A company command is currently the only key developmental (KD) assignment available to company-grade logistics officers. This does a great disservice to the Army because of the time it takes to achieve company command. Because of the limited number of positions available to the wide pool of quartermaster, transportation, and ordnance officers, it takes a long time for officers to be placed in a company command.

I propose that two battalion or higher staff assignments could also fulfill the KD requirement for company-grade logistics officers. This would pave the way for logistics officers to take advantage of broadening opportunities while staying on track with their career timelines.

The Logistics Branch has one of the largest pools of commissioned officers. Currently, upon completion of the Logistics Captains Career Course, all quartermaster, transportation, and ordnance officers become multifunctional logisticians in functional area 90.

I believe strongly that the reason for having multifunctional logisticians is to develop robust logistics leaders to lead Soldiers in support of military missions worldwide. This idea may sound great on paper, but in my opinion, having a company command as a captain's only possible KD position does a great disservice to the Army.

A company command will equip officers with good leadership skills, but so will staff positions. In most cases, junior officers in staff positions

are exposed to advanced leadership experiences and receive great mentorship while working with senior leaders.

I believe the wait time required for a logistics company-grade officer to assume company command is longer than that of company-grade officers from other branches. I believe the wait is longer because of the combination of quartermaster, transportation, and ordnance officers competing for a handful of company command opportunities.

The long wait time for company command assignments keeps many logistics officers from taking advantage of Army programs such as Advanced Civil Schooling, Training With Industry, fellowships with Army, joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational staffs, and the Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program (VTIP).

For example, the fiscal year 2018 VTIP in/out chart published by the Army Human Resources Command states that logistics captains in year groups 2009 through 2011 can transfer to another branch using the VTIP. However, most of these officers cannot submit a VTIP packet because they have not had the opportunity to complete company command—the only KD duty position for the logistics branch.

In some cases, officers with highly competitive civilian degrees, such as systems engineering, contract management, international relations, chemistry, and physics, end up leaving the Army for a civilian career

instead of waiting and using their expertise in other military branches. Some officers think the logistics branch is holding them back with its limited KD opportunities available to them. They end up leaving voluntarily or through a separation board because they were not able to complete the right jobs at the right times for their career path.

The fiscal year 2018 VTIP in/out matrix supports my assertion that the logistics branch currently has enough company-grade officers who can be useful to other branches of the Army. Adding staff positions as KD opportunities will enable interested officers to apply for branch transfers to other functional areas.

I believe that my recommendation to expand the current KD requirements for company-grade logistics officers will help the outstanding large pool of experienced and well-educated young logisticians move into other functional areas.

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