



# U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center

Historical Services Division

## A HISTORY OF DIRECT COMMISSIONS

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THE UNITED STATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE

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### **A History of Direct Commissions**

In May 2018, the US Army directly commissioned two former Soldiers as first lieutenants in Army Cyber Command, bypassing the usual commission sources -- US Military Academy (USMA), Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), and Officer Candidate School (OCS) -- and the rank of second lieutenant. Rapid changes in the cyber field had created a void of cyber knowledge in the Army officer ranks. Bringing in well-educated individuals fills that gap.<sup>1</sup>

The Army has a long history of filling critical positions with direct commissions. That legacy includes the majority of second lieutenants appointed during the First World War, and large numbers of technical branch officers during the Second World War. Direct commissions have included several different groups: line or combat arms officers; medical-related specialty officers; female officers; and non-combat arms technical specialist officers. The process for how those officers have been appointed has changed as necessary to meet Army requirements. Non-combat arms technical specialist officers have the most relevancy for future Army operations.

### **World War I**

Army officer production evolved throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century due in large part to the expansive manpower requirements of both world wars. USMA was the only commissioning source for Regular Army (RA) officers prior to the American entry into World War I. The National Defense Act of 1916 authorized creation of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) and the Officers' Reserve Corps (ORC), and allowed expansion of the Army and recruitment of 1,600 new officers. In the years before NDA 1916, USMA offered the only path the commission for large numbers of officers, and even that path was uncertain: the number of commissions available depended upon the number of vacancies in the force. The War Department did commission most students at military schools such as VMI upon graduation. Each class received one "honor appointment" for a cadet to enter active duty without further examination. When

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<sup>1</sup> Sean Kimmons, "Army cyber swears in first direct commissioned officers, more to come," Army News Service, July 12, 2018, [https://www.army.mil/article/208401/army\\_cyber\\_swears\\_in\\_first\\_direct\\_commissioned\\_officers\\_more\\_to\\_come](https://www.army.mil/article/208401/army_cyber_swears_in_first_direct_commissioned_officers_more_to_come).

the Army began to expand quickly, all recent graduates were offered the opportunity to compete for commissions through examination.

Edward M. Almond, a 1915 VMI graduate, was one of those who benefitted from this expansion of the officer corps. Almond passed the required exam and became a “provisional” second lieutenant in the infantry in November 1916. Almond and some 300 other new lieutenants then reported to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas after Christmas, 1916 for the first provisional Officers Candidate School (OCS) class.<sup>2</sup> Despite the name, the class that Almond and other future general officers such as Thomas T. Handy (VMI ‘14), Lee S. Gerow (VMI ‘13), Withers “Pinky” Burress (VMI ‘13) and Leonard R. Boyd (Enlisted, National Guard) attended was more like the modern Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC) than OCS. Infantry, artillery, coast artillery, and cavalry officers attended classes in basic military instruction before reporting to their respective units. The class provided basic refresher infantry instruction, such as exercising and giving commands, with some field exercises training as well as on basic military subjects, physical fitness, and equitation.<sup>3</sup>

Regular Army strength in April 1917 was 133,111, which included 5,523 men of the Philippine Scouts.<sup>4</sup> Senior Army leaders began planning for a force expansion that could sustain the high attrition rates of the First World War’s Western Front. The Army expanded on an unprecedented scale, growing to a force of more than 3 million Soldiers organized into 64 divisions, the size when the armistice went into effect 18 months later.<sup>5</sup> Building on the initial 1916 appointments, the War Department developed a selection process for additional officers to fill growing vacancies. Special Regulation (SR) No. 1: *Appointment of Provisional Second Lieutenants in the Infantry, Cavalry, Field Artillery Corps, and Coast Artillery Corps, Regular Army* published in 1917 (with five successive modifications ending in June 1919) outlined the appointment process. This regulation established six categories of applicants in order of precedence:

1. USMA Graduates from previous year without a unit vacancy.
2. Enlisted men and officers of the Philippine Scouts
3. Officers’ Reserve Corps members

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<sup>2</sup> Adjutant General of the Army to Edward Almond, “Subject: Result of Examination for Provisional Appointment as 2d Lieutenant,” October 5, 1916; Secretary of War to Almond, November 30, 1916; Almond to Adjutant General, December 1, 1916, “Subject: Acceptance of Appointment as 2nd Lieut., US Army,” all in Box 3, Edward Almond Papers, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

<sup>3</sup> Michael E. Lynch, *Edward M. Almond and the US Army: From 92<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division to X Corps* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, Forthcoming), 15. Gerow’s older brother, future general officer Leonard T. Gerow, had received the honor appointment in the Class of 1911.

<sup>4</sup> Marvin A. Kriedberg and Merton G. Henry, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775-1945* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1955), 221.

<sup>5</sup> John B. Wilson, *Maneuver and Firepower: The Evolution of Divisions and Separate Brigades* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1995), 73.

4. National Guard officers
5. College graduates
6. Civilians<sup>6</sup>

The regulation also established specific requirements for the six categories of potential candidates (see Fig. 1):

**Figure 1: Requirements for Second Lieutenant Appointments, 1917**

Requirement		Category					
		1 <i>USMA</i>	2 <i>Philippine Scouts</i>	3 <i>ORC</i>	4 <i>ARNG</i>	5 <i>College</i>	6 <i>Civilian</i>
A	Under 30 Years of Age	x	x				
B	Ages 21 through 27	x		x	x	x	x
C	Competitive Examinations		x	x	x	x	x
D	Unmarried	x	x	x	x	x	x

Source: War Department, Special Regulation No.1, *Appointment of Provisional Second Lieutenants in the Infantry, Cavalry, Field Artillery, and Coast Artillery Corps-Regular Army* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917). Competitive exam exemptions were available for officers from the Organized Reserve Corps (ORC) and Army National Guard (ARNG) with a college degree or for those that completed college courses.

The process for RA appointment consisted of a preliminary examination and a final examination.<sup>7</sup> Applicants submitted requests for examination to the nearest post commander, who convened a selection board, consisting of one medical and two “line” officers, one month prior to the competitive exam.<sup>8</sup>

The first step in the selection process was a thorough medical examination. If the medical officer certified the candidate as physically fit, the other board members then reviewed the records and questioned the prospect to judge his moral character and fitness. Board members completed final reports for all applicants who completed the

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<sup>6</sup> War Department, Special Regulation No.1, *Appointment of Provisional Second Lieutenants in the Infantry, Cavalry, Field Artillery, and Coast Artillery Corps-Regular Army* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917). SR 1, April 1917, provided two separate commissioning categories for college graduates. The first direct appointments were for the first ten honor graduates from “distinguished colleges.” The regulation does not define the criteria for a distinguished college other than the honor student “must have graduated from that institution in a year in which it was rated a ‘distinguished college.’” College graduate candidates from non-distinguished institutions were required to send documents certifying their graduation (i.e., diploma, transcripts, etc.) to the Adjutant General (AG). If approved by the AG, these potential officers received an exemption from testing on all Group 1 subjects (see Fig. 2).

<sup>7</sup> Competitive examination requirements varied for college graduates and officers from Organized Reserve and National Guard with college education.

<sup>8</sup> Two months for installations outside the Continental United States.

preliminary phase and forwarded the documents through their chain of command to the Adjutant General.

The War Department conducted an additional board, for the final examinations for those who had completed the preliminary stage. This board included two line and two medical officers and consisted of four stages. The medical officers first conducted an additional physical examination. Applicants who passed the physical moved on to other tests designed to assess the candidate's suitability for mounted service; measure his mental ability through written answers to a standardized question set; and test his knowledge in a wide range of academic subjects in a branch-oriented, written examination (see Fig. 2).

**Figure 2: Direct Commissioning Examination Requirements, April 1917**

Group	Requirements	Academic Tests	
		Group 1	Group 2
RA Enlisted Soldiers, Philippine Scouts (Officers and men)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infantry (IN), Cavalry (CAV), Field Artillery (FA), and Coast Artillery Corps (CAC)</li> <li>• Physical Exam</li> <li>• Mental Exam</li> <li>• Mounted Service Assessment</li> <li>• Academic Examinations (Group 1)</li> </ul>	<u>Group 1 (ALL)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US Military/Constitution</li> <li>• English Grammar/Composition</li> <li>• General History</li> <li>• Geography</li> <li>• Arithmetic</li> <li>• Algebra</li> <li>• Geometry, Plane</li> <li>• Trigonometry, Plane</li> <li>• Elementary Electricity (CAC)</li> <li>• Elementary Mechanics (CAC)</li> <li>• Elementary Chemistry (CAC)</li> </ul>	N/A
Officers Reserve Corps, National Guard Officers, and College Graduates**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infantry (IN), Cavalry (CAV), Field Artillery (FA), and Coast Artillery Corps (CAC)</li> <li>• Physical Exam</li> <li>• Mental Exam</li> <li>• Moral Character</li> <li>• Mounted Service Assessment</li> <li>• Academic Examinations (Groups 1 and 2)</li> </ul>	Same as subjects as Group 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English and American Literature</li> <li>• French</li> <li>• German</li> <li>• Spanish</li> <li>• Analytical Geometry</li> <li>• Calculus (Diff. and Integral)</li> <li>• Tactics and Field Engineering (IN, CAV, and FA)</li> <li>• Surveying</li> <li>• Advanced Electricity (CAC)</li> <li>• Advanced Mechanics (CAC)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• - Candidates in the first group seeking non-CAC commissions could take an exam in drill regulations in lieu of algebra, geometry, or trigonometry testing</li> <li>** - College graduates (including ORC and ARNG officers) received exemptions from Group 1 tests and were required to select two subjects from Group 2, but no more than one foreign language. Non-college graduates were required to take testing batteries for both groups.</li> </ul>			

Source: War Department, Special Regulation No.1, *Appointment of Provisional Second Lieutenants in the Infantry, Cavalry, Field Artillery, and Coast Artillery Corps-Regular Army* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917).

Testing requirements varied based on an applicant's background and education level. USMA graduates were exempt from taking a competitive examination due to the four years of undergraduate schooling and military training required for graduation and commissioning. Applicants seeking commissions in the infantry, cavalry and field artillery had an option to take "practical" and verbal exams based on current drill regulations in lieu of algebra, geometry, or trigonometry. Candidates who passed their physical, mental, and written exams with an average higher than 75 percent (with no

single exam score lower than 70 %) were rank ordered on a selection list based on those averages.

After the declaration of war, the Army extended RA commissioning opportunities to a greater range of candidates. Changes included extending the maximum age for Philippine Scout officers and men from 27 to 34 years of age. National Guard and naval militia officers who served a minimum of 90 days on active duty and in the revised age range could compete for Regular Army commissions. The criteria remained the same for ORC members. The president could waive age restrictions on a case by case basis.<sup>9</sup>

With the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) seeing combat for the first time in large numbers in July 1918, the War Department began to look to the future. The original appointments had been provisional, but the Army recognized the need “to determine the physical, moral, and professional qualifications for permanent appointment.” Provisional officers who had served for a minimum of 21 months as a second lieutenant were eligible to take a new examination focused solely on testing relevant military and specific branch knowledge (see Fig 3).<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 3: Final Examination Areas for Permanent RA Commissions, 1918**

Infantry and Cavalry	Field Artillery	Coast Artillery Corps
Equipment		
Administration		
Army Organization and Field Service Regulations		
Small Arms Firing Manual		
Military Law		
Military Hygiene		
Military Topography		
Manual of Interior Guard Duty		
Drill Regulations of the [Prospective ] Arm	Drill and Service Regulations for the Field Artillery	Drill Regulations for the Infantry and Coast Artillery
Military Field Engineering		
Hippology (Cavalry only)	Hippology	
	Field Gunnery	Gunnery
	Motor Transportation	

Source: War Department, *Special Regulation No.1: Appointment of Provisional Second Lieutenants in the Infantry, Cavalry, Field Artillery, and Coast Artillery Corps-Regular Army, Ch. 2* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, July 1918), 2.

The temporary lieutenants took examinations based on their assigned branch of service. Infantry and cavalry officers took the same battery of tests, with the exception of hippology (equine studies) required for those in mounted units. Field artillerymen

<sup>9</sup> Special Regulation No.1.

<sup>10</sup> War Department, *Special Regulation No.1: Appointment of Provisional Second Lieutenants in the Infantry, Cavalry, Field Artillery, and Coast Artillery Corps-Regular Army, Ch. 2* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, July 1918), p. 2-3.

covered more topics than their peers in the other combat branches. The evolving nature of field artillery required the young officers to be knowledgeable in both horse and motor conveyance operations. The coast artillery's unique mission required officers to be competent in both the infantry and coast artillery regulations. The static nature of fixed gun emplacements negated the requirement for those officers to have the same expertise in field engineering as the other branches.

With the postwar demobilization of the Army, provisional officers competed for retention on active duty. The War Department directed that local boards for final exams be conducted at regimental level.<sup>11</sup> These boards consisted of five officers (two medical, three line) who conducted physical and moral examinations similar to the ones required for initial commissioning. The grading system for the examination for permanent rank status introduced subjective judgment, such as "excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor" to gauge exam performance, rather than the strict numerical scoring system used previously. Regimental commanders were also authorized to augment the traditional examination processes with testimonials from the lieutenant's chain of command to certify his competence and eligibility for RA rank. This evaluation method provided board members with greater flexibility in assessing the lieutenant's competence in designated subject areas. A score of "good" or higher on these tests was required for retention, and that remained subject to availability of positions.

Postwar changes also allowed temporary officers disabled or incapacitated in the line of duty to retire at the permanent rank they held when injured. The War Department revised the evaluation procedure for new provisional commissions, aligning it with that used for permanent rank. The change also revised the order of precedence for placement into the force:

- USMA graduates
- Officers and Soldiers of the Philippine Scouts (between 21 and 34 years old)
- Organized Militia, National Guard, and Naval Militia members (between 21 and 34) with ninety or more days of federal service on or after 1916
- Commissioned officers of the National Guard (between 21 and 27)
- Members of the Officers' Reserve Corps (between 21 and 27)
- Honor graduates of distinguished colleges (between 21 and 27)
- Civilians (between 21 and 27)<sup>12</sup>

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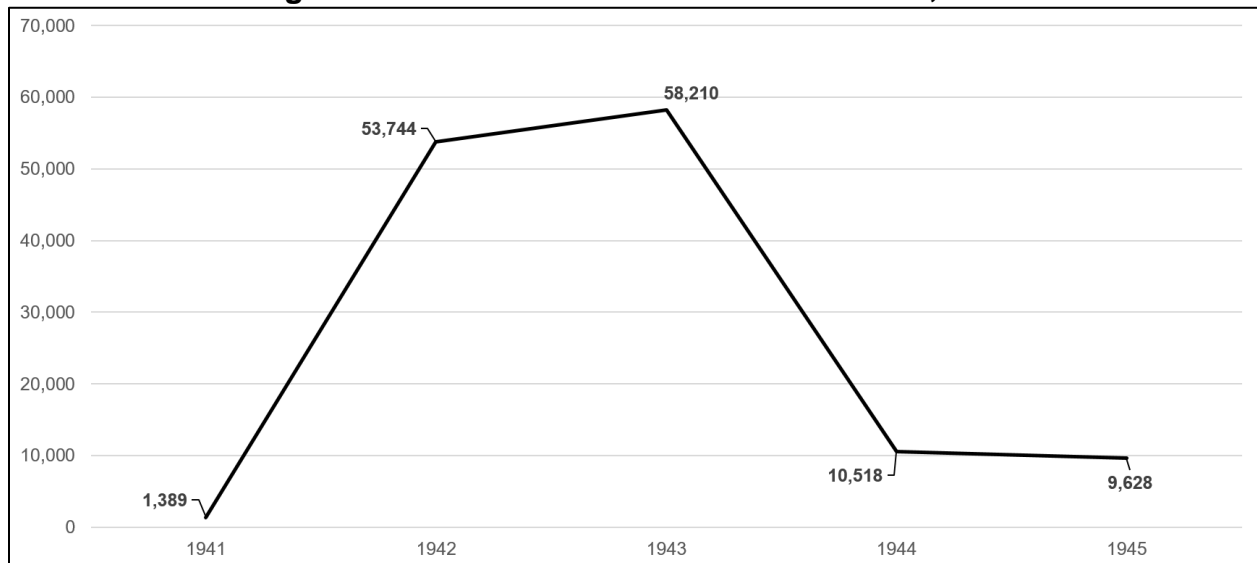
<sup>11</sup> District level for coastal artillery units.

<sup>12</sup> Special Regulation No.1, 3.

## World War II

In the peacetime years after World War I, USMA and ROTC provided a sufficient number of line officers to meet the requirements for Regular Army, National Guard, and Officers' Reserve Corps. A new Officer Candidate School (OCS) opened in 1941 in response to the growing need for officers as the Army began gradually to increase its end strength as the threat of a new war in Europe grew. OCS provided a flexible means of officer production, because the War Department controlled the graduation quotas based on force requirements. OCS produced just 1,389 officers the first year, but after the United States entered the war the numbers went up dramatically. With candidates coming from both the enlisted ranks and college ROTC programs, OCS provided more than 55,400 lieutenants by the end of 1942.<sup>13</sup> Army Ground Forces (AGF) managed officer production for combat arms units. Figure 3 illustrates the flexibility of OCS and relationship to the AGF:

**Figure 3: OCS Production for AGF Branches, 1941-1945**



Source: William Keast, *The Procurement and Branch Distribution of Officers* (Washington: Historical Section - Army Ground Forces, 1946), 47. The AGF managed the anti-aircraft, armor, cavalry, coastal artillery, field artillery, infantry, and tank destroyer branches.

Figure 3 shows the sharp increase of OCS graduates between 1941 and 1943 due to mobilization requirements for the rapidly expanding force. The expeditious commissioning process led to a surplus of officers by 1943. This surplus, plus the reassigning of officers from anti-aircraft, coast artillery, and tank destroyer units to front line combat formations including armor and infantry formations allowed the AGF to decrease OCS output for the remainder of the war.

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<sup>13</sup> William Keast, *The Procurement and Branch Distribution of Officers* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Section - Army Ground Forces, 1946), 8.



Technological advancements in warfare between World Wars I and II created requirements for specialized subject matter experts. America's rapid industrial mobilization created the need for technical experts to manage materiel development, augment existing medical capability, and design and test emerging technologies. Army Services Forces (ASF), created in 1942 along with AGF and Army Air Forces (AAF), managed the direct commissioning of civilians into the Army. The process proved controversial, with some citing that appointments were based on "connections" and not merit. Secretary of War Henry Stimson disagreed with the direct commissioning of civilians with expertise in advanced fields; he argued that commissions should go to those serving in combat units. OCS produced large numbers of officers quickly, however, so few line officers received direct commissions in World War II.

The urgent need for experts outweighed the Secretary's concerns and in 1942 alone, 104,000 civilians became officers in the Army through direct commissioning. The Medical Corps received half of these officers, with the remainder going to the AAF and ASF. The conflict's progression increased the need for specialized officers and by the end of 1944, more than 16,000 had received officer's rank; three-quarters of this total served as clergy or medical personnel. The branches and ranks authorized were as follows:<sup>14</sup>

- Chaplains and Medical, Dental, Veterinary, and Sanitary Corps – first lieutenant to colonel<sup>15</sup>
- Medical Administrative Corps – second lieutenant to captain
- Judge Advocate General's Department – captain to colonel
- Military Intelligence Department – second lieutenant to lieutenant colonel<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, direct commissions were extended to industrial centers in World War II. In some industries, entire work units were simply "affiliated" as a unit, with the upper management commissioned as officers and regular employees becoming enlisted personnel:

For certain signal and ordnance units activated by Army Ground Forces, civilians were commissioned directly, with no requirement of military experience. This was accomplished by the process of affiliation, by which a group of employees of an industrial concern were organized bodily as a military unit, the higher employees in the civilian group becoming officers in the military unit. The relation of officers and enlisted men under this system did not prove altogether satisfactory. Direct commissioning of civilians for other purposes was negligible in the Ground Forces.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> John Millet, *The Army Service Forces: The Organization and Role of the Army Service Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1954), 101.

<sup>15</sup> Direct appointment remains one of the primary methods of recruitment of medical officers, both physicians and nurses.

<sup>16</sup> Army Regulation 605-10, *Officers Appointed in the Army of the United States*, October 1941, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Keast, *The Procurement and Branch Distribution of Officers*, 2.

Technical branches, including the Signal Corps, used a variety of direct commissioning programs to incorporate personnel with advanced subject matter expertise in an expanding and technologically advanced force. The “Affiliated Plan” commissioned and inducted management personnel from select civilian companies such as Bell Telephone to serve as unit cadre. A signal battalion in 1941, for example, used the program to fill eleven (out of 20) table of organization officer positions with men directly commissioned from civilian companies and received an additional thirteen non-commissioned officers through the same process. The Affiliated Plan created the core leadership group for more than 400 Signal Corps units during World War II.<sup>18</sup>

Another means of recruiting experts was the Electronics Training Group (ETG) program commissioned scientists with degrees in electrical engineering and physics. Candidates completed a three-week indoctrination course at the Signal School at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. The new officers then went to England to learn radar and anti-aircraft operations. The initial program included three months at British air defense schools, followed by five months at an active English air defense location. The urgent calls for trained operators forced the British to curtail the original ETG training time allocations. Some American officers remained in Great Britain and others returned for assignment to the Aircraft Warning Department, air defense, and other units.<sup>19</sup>

Civilian applicants for direct commissions needed to meet the same educational qualifications (military and non-military) as those in the Reserves, but that could be waived by the appropriate arm or service chief:

In the case of persons recommended for appointment from civil life as commissioned officers in the Army of the United States the recommendation must include satisfactory evidence that the recommended individual possesses special qualifications, and that these special qualifications are required in the position to which he is to be assigned if commissioned.<sup>20</sup>

Applicants for direct appointment submitted a request to the Adjutant General, who then consulted with the appropriate arm or service chief. Consideration was given to whether a current Reserve officer could fill the role sought by the civilian and whether the application needed to go before an examining board. The most extreme example of a direct appointment was William Knudsen, president of General Motors. In 1940,

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<sup>18</sup> George Raynor Thompson, Dixie R. Harris, Pauline M. Oakes, and Dulany Terret, *United States Army in World War II, The Technical Services, The Signal Corps: The Test (December 1941 to July 1943)*, (Washington: Center of Military History, 1957), 39; Rebecca Robbins Raines, *Getting the Message Through: A Branch History of the Signal Corps* (Washington: Center of Military History, 2011), 255.

<sup>19</sup> Raines, *Getting the Message Through*, 258; Dulaney Terrett, *United States Army in World War II, The Technical Services, The Signal Corps: The Emergency (To December 1941)*, (Washington: Center of Military History, 1956), 287.

<sup>20</sup> AR 605-10 (OCT 1941, 4. The regulations changed periodically, but these criteria for direct commissions remained consistent throughout the war.

President Franklin Roosevelt asked Knudsen, to co-direct the Office of Production Management. Knudsen received a direct appointment as a lieutenant general, the highest ranking direct appointment of the war.<sup>21</sup>

## Women

World War II saw the first appointment of female officers other than nurses in large numbers. Women had no path to commission through either USMA or ROTC until the 1970s, so direct appointments were the primary venue for commissioning women. Some women who entered the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) and Women's Army Corps (WAC) as officers received direct commissions from civilian life. (In July 1943 the WAAC became the WAC and officially part of the Army.) In May 1942, Oveta Culp Hobby, who had led the Women's Interest Section of the War Department's Bureau of Public Relations, was directly commissioned a colonel into the WAAC.<sup>22</sup> Otherwise, women who applied to be WAC officers in World War II went to WAC OCS at Fort Des Moines, Iowa.<sup>23</sup> Margaret Craighill became the first female physician to receive a commission into the US Army Medical Corps; she was appointed a major in May 1943.<sup>24</sup> The number of non-medical direct appointments for women began to wane in the 1970s as women were allowed to join ROTC in 1974, and the first women were admitted to West Point in 1976. With these two commissioning options open, the WAC was disestablished in 1978 and women integrated into the Regular Army. After this, direct appointments for women became the exception rather than the rule.

## Conclusion and Way Ahead:

The Army has, in time of need, commissioned civilians possessing specialized expertise through nonstandard means. Certain prerequisites were required in all cases. Those civilians, from Lt. Gen. Knudsen in World War II to the two directly commissioned cyber officers of 2018, brought unique knowledge to the Army. Harnessing such specialized knowledge immediately, rather than waiting for an individual to rise through the ranks, helps the Army stay abreast of technology, and in turn be more prepared for future needs.

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<sup>21</sup> "‘Big Bill’ Knudsen turned Chevrolet into a powerhouse," *Automotive News*, October 11, 2011, <http://www.autonews.com/article/20111031/CHEVY100/310319979/big-bill-knudsen-turned-chevrolet-into-a-powerhouse>.

<sup>22</sup> Army Women's Museum, "Colonel Oveta Culp Hobby," Center of Military History News and Features, March 2016, [https://history.army.mil/news/2016/160300a\\_womensHistoryMonth.html](https://history.army.mil/news/2016/160300a_womensHistoryMonth.html).

<sup>23</sup> "Creation of the Women's Army Corps," Women in the Army, <https://www.army.mil/women/history/wac.html>.

<sup>24</sup> "Dr. Margaret D. Craighill," Changing the Face of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, [https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography\\_72.html](https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography_72.html). The U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center has Craighill's papers.

- a. **Status of the officer.** The challenge for direct commissions lies not in the legal and regulatory requirements for them, because those laws and regulations have often been modified in the past to meet requirements. Notwithstanding the current need to continue direct commissions for medical professionals, the largest number of direct commissions necessary would seem to be in the technical branches. A larger concern is the status these officers will have in the force, the positions for which they are allowed to compete, and perhaps the pay scale on which they would be paid. In previous eras, the direct commission was simply another commissioning source, and those officers competed for command and promotion without prejudice.
- b. **Limited Duty Officer.** If the requirements for technical officers become so disparate that they would not be required to compete on an equal basis with their peers, then perhaps the Army should adopt a limited duty officer program similar to that used by the Navy. These officers would be technical specialists similar to a warrant officer, but they would have skills unavailable in the military. A limited duty officer would never be expected to exercise command, but would fill critical staff or coordination positions. They might very well be expected to fulfill senior management positions, and perhaps limited command positions in specific technical environments.
- c. **Specialized rank or insignia.** Such commissions may require use of specialized insignia to differentiate them from line officers. There is some precedent for this. Before WAACs were integrated into the Regular Army as WACs, they used a different rank system than the rest of the Army. The WAAC used “First Officer” (Captain), “Second Officer” (First Lieutenant), and “Third Officer” (Second Lieutenant). While not necessarily successful examples, these do provide ways to differentiate officers with specific technical skills.
- d. **Professional Pay.** Though the number of direct commissions in line and technical branches has dropped to negligible levels in recent years, the medical community still routinely uses the direct appointment. The Army recruits medical providers with professional pay as one incentive, and could easily do the same with technical professionals. This pro pay is congruent to the enlistment and reenlistment bonuses paid for certain combat MOSs.



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