



*Editor's Note: This post is part of the FTGN Army Broadening Series that we are running from March 15-30, 2021. Each day, we will publish new insights into the Army's various broadening assignments, starting March 15th, 2021 with an [overview of AIM 2.0](#) and a discussion on how to educate others on assignment selection criteria.*

By Nadi Kassim and Joe Swain

Looking at our assignment slates was one of the most invigorating moments of our Army careers. For the first time, we were presented with a wide set of broadening assignments outside of our specific branches. As a senior Captain, broadening opportunities are the final frontier before assuming field grade roles when, among a litany of tasks, officers are responsible for creating leader development programs, operating at the operational and strategic levels to support tactical units, and engaging a wide array of external stakeholders. The APMS role provides an environment to develop these skills while providing the added benefit of true work-life balance. Although all the positions have their

advantages and disadvantages, the ROTC Assistant Professor of Military Science (APMS) assignment is an immensely rewarding and true broadening experience.

As an APMS, you provide academic instruction, professional mentorship, and leadership coaching development to a cohort of 60 to 100 Cadets every year. ROTC provides a risk-tolerant environment for Cadets and Cadre to experiment with new and innovative ideas to optimize development. You blend personal and professional experiences with doctrinal knowledge to conduct thoughtful classroom instruction and discussion. You are given the freedom to create innovative, practical exercises that will develop skills, leadership qualities, and techniques to prepare Cadets to lead in the most complex situations. The academic environment provides ample opportunities to coordinate with academic departments and athletic programs to teach leadership and translate military experiences to a civilian audience.

MIT Army ROTC developed a practical exercise that uses time-restricted mission planning to train and develop Cadets' critical thinking and decision-making skills, mission planning, confidence, presence, and tactical knowledge. Our program also partnered with top-performing officers completing graduate school at MIT, Harvard, and Tufts to create mutually beneficial "Big Brothers Big Sisters" style mentorship relationships to augment the Cadet's ROTC personal and professional development while providing the mentor an opportunity to participate in military leader development while pursuing broadening opportunities. We also facilitated leadership practicum for MBA candidates at the MIT Sloan School of Management and executed a leadership training camp and mentorship program for the MIT Football and Volleyball Teams. Among others, these initiatives show a clear example of the prospects to experiment with innovative ideas to strengthen leadership

development skills before setting up your first program as a BN S3/XO.

At a university, you are exposed to different ways of thinking and problem solving to challenge and expand your current knowledge base. You are also exposed to university faculty who are experts in foreign and public policy that can improve your knowledge and prepare you to integrate at the strategic level. Universities hold seminars on strategic studies or more focused topics as well as executive conferences on technology and leadership that ROTC personnel can attend. Many universities also provide tuition waivers to their ROTC faculty, which allows them to gain increased education during their assignment.

- Outside of the benefits from your university, being on an academic schedule gives you the opportunity to pursue the Army's Strategic Broadening Seminars, giving you a second broadening experience at the same assignment and allowing you to earn the "6Z" Strategist Advanced Skill Indicator. At the 2018 SBS program at UC Berkeley, attendees interacted with leaders of major tech corporations like Facebook and Slack as well as lecturers at the Haas School of business to learn how these companies trained their leaders, evaluated the performance of individuals, teams, and the company, and managed risk. The seminar also placed a heavy emphasis on bridging the civil-military divide through interactions with tech company employees, artist collectives, and the Berkeley community, which has greatly increased our ability to translate our military experience to the civilian world and reach out to civilian organizations across Cambridge and Boston to work together in a positive way.

You are also exposed to many Army organizations that you would not have otherwise been aware of by being stationed at an assignment not near a major Army post. Many ROTC programs work closely with recruiting companies to provide additional scholarship opportunities to their students and engagement with high school students who may not already be aware of the ROTC option. This not only gives you more knowledge on Recruiting

Command but also gives you the experience necessary to advise NCOs on career choices.

Different geographic regions also give you access to other resources as well. Universities near Army bases can build relationships with local National Guard and Reserve units to improve their Cadets' tactical abilities significantly. At MIT, we have built relationships with the NSA, Defense Digital Services, Defense Logistics Agency, and Army Research Labs to gain additional training for our Cadets and expand our own knowledge of the broad Army. We have been able to leverage these relationships to provide our Cadets access to compete in the Soldier Design Competition against West Point Cadets and university students in developing solutions to a wide range of problems the Army is trying to solve.

The Assistant Professor of Military Science position is the most broadening experience the Army provides. While this may not be the metric by which everyone chooses their post-KD assignment, those looking to improve their leadership skills and invest in the future of the Army would be well served to seek out these positions.

*Nadi Kassim commissioned in 2010 from West Point as a Military Intelligence Officer. He spent nine years on active duty and transitioned to the reserves in September 2019, where he serves with MIT's Army ROTC program. He is currently pursuing his MBA at MIT's Sloan School of Management.*

*Joe Swain commissioned in 2011 from West Point as an Adjutant General Officer. He spent nine years on active duty and transitioned from the MIT Army ROTC program to the reserves with the 75th Innovation Command. He is currently pursuing a J.D. at Boston College Law School.*

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