

Command and General Staff College

— the nonresident course

by CPT Ray Naworol

How many times have you heard, "If I'm not good enough for selection to resident Command and General Staff College (CGSC), I'm not going to do it by correspondence," or "I'll just wait for one more look before I start the correspondence CGSC." Nonresident CGSC is one way you can control your destiny and it's free! It only costs you time and effort; but, the "payback" could be enormous in terms of professional development and career enhancement.

The choice is yours whether or not to enroll in nonresident CGSC; but, it's easier for you to decide what to do when you consider the facts. This article explains the CGSC facts you should know by discussing:

- FY90 Command and Staff College (CSC) statistics
- The resident CSC selection process
- Reasons for taking nonresident CGSC
- The nonresident CGSC enrollment process

FY90 CSC Statistics

Completion of CSC is an important professional development step in a successful military career. Evidence of this milestone is seen in the latest LTC selection board statistics. Every major selected for lieutenant colonel by the FY90 LTC selection board was military education level 4 (MEL-4). Of those Chemical Corps officers selected by the board, 69 percent were nonresident CGSC graduates. Although being MEL-4 is not a requirement for selection to LTC, the latest board statistics show otherwise.

Resident CSC Selection Process

Attending the CSC resident course is a two-part process. First, a DA selection board selects officers to attend CSC. Then Chemical Branch determines (slates) which CSC the officer will attend.

To be eligible for resident CGSC (IAW AR 351-1), you must already be CPT(P)/MAJ, have less than 14 years AFCS (as of 1 October in the year considered), be an officer advanced course (OAC) graduate, and have neither attended nor declined to attend in residence a United States or foreign-equivalent MEL-4 producing school.

The annual selection board normally looks at five year groups (YG) (below zone (BZ) officers and four other

YGs). For example, the next CSC board should look at YGs 78 through 82 (BZ). The BZ officer is an automatic CSC selectee unless something negative "tarnishes" the file.

The selection board receives specific guidance from HQDA pertaining to the number of officers to select by branch and YG. For example, they may select between 16-20 chemical officers, then break these numbers down by YG as well. Rules established by an extensive 1988/89 DA MEL-4 study include a target "class composition" of 61 percent combat arms, 20 percent combat support arms, 19 percent combat service support officers, and a 50 percent (plus or minus 4 percent) selection rate aggregate spread over the 5-year window for each branch.

Therefore, your chance of being selected over the 4-year window (not including the BZ window) is 40 percent for years 1 and 2, 15 percent for year 3, and 5 percent for year 4. A key point to remember is these percentages sum to 50 percent of a year group already selected for promotion — a tough cut.

After the CSC board makes its selections, Chemical Branch then slates its officers IAW specific quotas to the CGSC, Air and Navy colleges. Slating is based on both performance and non-performance criteria. The non-performance-related considerations are —

- Time in service
- Age of year group
- Current job
- Those who deferred resident attendance
- Assignment history
- Time on station
- MEL.

Slating is also based on past jobs and college requirements as well.

Reasons for Taking Nonresident CGSC

There are four reasons to enroll in the CGSC nonresident course and become MEL-4. First, those officers not selected after their second look (not including BZ) should enroll to ensure they are competitive for lieutenant colonel selection. Second, those officers who wish to be competitive for Sister Service CSC slating should enroll. Third, officers

may complete the course by correspondence to stay in an existing or projected job. For example, there are some nominative, joint, and DA Staff assignments that require MEL-4 officers or officers who are enrolled in nonresident CGSC. Finally, an officer may select this CSC option to qualify for career enhancing MEL-4 majors' jobs as a senior captain.

The nonresident CGSC course is a "certain" method to attain CGSC credit. The nonresident course graduate remains eligible for resident course selection within the same constraints of resident course eligibility criteria. Additionally, a MEL-4 entry on your ORB shows extra initiative and professionalism which can make a positive impact on selection boards.

Nonresident CGSC Enrollment Process

The CGSC nonresident course is structured into six sequential phases, with each phase consisting of a number of subcourses. Three of the subcourses require submission of written requirements, and one subcourse requires an oral briefing. All course requirements must be completed in sequence and the requirements must be completed within 48 months of your enrollment date.

You can take nonresident CGSC by correspondence, by classroom instruction given by U.S. Army Reserve Forces (USARF) schools, or by participating in a combination of USARF school and correspondence. The correspondence option gives you instructional and test material by phase via the mail after you return examinations for grading. The USARF school option gives you classroom instruction provided by Reserve Component officers. Your examinations and written requirements are given in the classroom and sent to Fort Leavenworth for grading. This option has over 350 teaching locations throughout the United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, Germany, Korea, Japan, and Okinawa.

Majors who have completed the OAC are eligible for nonresident CGSC enrollment (IAW CGSC Circular 351-3). As a captain, you can enroll if you meet the following criteria: you completed the OAC and CAS³; you will have seven years AFCS by your enrollment date without completing CAS³; or you have six years AFCS without completing CAS³ (exceptions are considered on a case-by-case basis). Finally, to be eligible, you must meet Army height/weight standards as outlined in AR 600-9.

Some final facts you should consider when deciding whether or not to enroll in the CGSC correspondence course are as follows: There are three chemical officers currently in the primary zone for LTC selection who are not MEL-4, and a significant number of senior majors who will have to "crash" to complete CGSC by correspondence prior to the convene date of their LTC selection board. CSC selection is an extremely competitive process. There are some super officers who won't be selected. Taking the nonresident course offers you more options and makes you more competitive for selection board considerations and more desirable jobs. If you plan on an Army career, don't wait for CGSC resident selection. Control your destiny by enrolling in the nonresident CGSC course now!

At the time this article was written, CPT Ray Naworol was the Chemical Corps Future Readiness Officer assigned to PERSCOM in Alexandria, Virginia. His previous assignments include Commander, 54th Chemical Troop and Regimental Chemical Officer, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment; and Troop Executive Officer, NBC Reconnaissance Platoon Leader, and Squadron Chemical Officer in HHT, 3-7 Cavalry, 8th ID, Germany. CPT Naworol is a CAS³ and chemical officer basic and advanced courses graduate. He is Ranger- and Airborne-qualified, and he holds BA and MA degrees from Idaho State University.

Noncommissioned Officer Education System

Unable to attend? Get rescheduled

Due to Desert Storm/Desert Shield, many chemical NCOs were unable to attend scheduled noncommissioned officer education system (NCOES) courses (ANCOC and BNCOC, for example). In order to maintain professional development of the NCO, immediate action is required to facilitate prompt rescheduling.

All chemical NCOs who were scheduled for an NCOES course prior to Desert Storm/Desert Shield should check with their supervisors to ensure that training and personnel

sections are rescheduling them.

Any soldier who has difficulty obtaining a response through the local channels should call or write the Quartermaster/Chemical Branch. The address is Commander, PERSCOM, ATTN: TAPC-EPM-L (MSG Manigross), 2461 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22331, AUTOVON (DSN 0 221-5886/3906 or commercial (202) 325-5886/3906.