


Army creates electronic warfare career field

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By Jamie Findlater

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WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Feb. 6, 2009) -- The Army has announced approval for the establishment of a new Electronic Warfare 29-series career field for officers, **warrant officers** and enlisted personnel.

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The new career field will eventually give the Army the largest electronic warfare manpower force of all the services. Nearly 1,600 EW personnel, serving at every level of command, will be added to the Army over the next three years. The Army is also considering adding an additional 2,300 personnel to the career field in the near future as personnel become available, officials said.

The Army's EW personnel will be experts not only in fighting the threat of improvised explosive devices, but will also provide commanders and their staffs guidance on how the electromagnetic spectrum can impact operations, officials said, and how friendly EW can be used to gain an advantage in support of tactical and operational objectives across the full spectrum of operations.

"The new administration has already declared they will be emphasizing technical investments across the federal government, but in particular, electronic warfare capabilities and other technological innovations," said Col. Laurie G. Buckhout, the Army's chief of electronic warfare. "The Army is leaning forward now to address the very complex challenge of controlling the electromagnetic environment in land warfare. The creation of a large cadre of full-time EW specialists is a critical step in the right direction."

Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, Army vice chief of staff, and former commanding general of Multi-National Corps-Iraq, recognized this vital need for greater EW capability in 2006 when he placed Navy electronic warfare officers with ground combat units in Iraq to manage the complicated electromagnetic spectrum.

"We learned the hard way in 2006 how to leverage EW skill sets from the joint community to counter the emerging remote-controlled IED threats," Chiarelli said.

America's enemies are now using the electromagnetic spectrum against it and its Soldiers. By creating an electronic warfare career field, the Army is better capable of mitigating that threat, Chiarelli said.

"One of the enduring features of any future battlefield will be determined (by) resourceful enemies attempting to undermine our will by leveraging the electronic spectrum," Chiarelli said. "Building an EW structure within the Army will greatly enhance our ability to proactively counter these threats. A commitment to EW allows us to tightly integrate non-kinetic and kinetic capabilities across the Army and as part of joint operations."

Approval for the career field was based on an extensive study conducted by the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. The study concluded that the Army EW expertise is not only necessary for counterinsurgency efforts like OIF and OEF, but against the full range of potential adversaries and should therefore be institutionalized as an enduring core competency.

To develop EW experts, Fort Sill, Okla., is now conducting a series of pilot EW Courses. Warrant officer and enlisted pilot courses are expected to begin in spring 2009. The third officer functional area pilot course is scheduled to begin June 29.

The career management field identifiers will be Functional Area 29 for officers, **Military Occupational Specialty 290A for warrant officers**, and Military Occupational Specialty 29E for enlisted personnel.

(Jamie Findlater writes for the Army's Electronic Warfare Office)

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