



Coast Guard HR Flag Voice 149

HOW WILL THE SKILL-BASED ASSIGNMENT INITIATIVE ADDRESS THE JOINT RATING REVIEW?

The Skill-Based Assignment (SBA) initiative was described in ALCGENL 022/01 (251446Z MAY 01) and Flag Voice 147 (sent May 30, 2001). **Skill-Based Assignments is about improving the match between the skills delivered to units by the transfer system and the skills that units need.** To do this, we need much better information about the skills that members have, and a process to better know systematically what units need. Additionally, **the rating changes under the Joint Rating Review (JRR) rely on being able to include skills as assignment factors.** Following the rating mergers, such as FT and ET or the ratings merging into OS, Assignment Officers will need viable skill information to match the skills members have to needs of the billet - and the needs of the unit. Specific information on the rating mergers will be sent soon by ALCOAST. Please keep in mind that *it will take several more assignment cycles beyond 2002 before we have a service-wide Skill-Based Assignment process.* **What we're doing now in FF21 are the first steps to determine how to add skills as an assignment factor.** Even without the JRR, we'd be working to add skills into the assignment process ... there is much demand from operational commanders and from studies like Project Kimball to improve the way we handle skills in the assignment system. **In reality, we've been doing Skill-Based Assignments for years - this initiative just makes it part of the system.**

Traditionally, this 'skills' information has been recorded by the qual codes system. Some ratings have well-maintained qual codes. **The qual codes themselves for many ratings are 'stale,' and with stale codes it's no surprise that the member and billet information is also stale.** Qual Codes for many ratings have not been used for much beyond record keeping. With little reason to keep qual codes up to date, data on both members and billets is obsolete. That's why Assignment Officers have been using a member's assignment history as an analog for skills.

We chose the TC, TT, and Aviation ratings for the Assignment Year 2002 Skill Based Assignment tests for several reasons. First, the TC and TT ratings are the first to select their new ratings (IT? OS?) under the JRR. Aviators have been using a skill based assignment process for years. We selected TC and TT ratings also because members in these ratings are assigned across the Coast Guard - in many types of units (afloat, ashore, groups, support). The first step in the process was to revise the qual codes for TC, TT, and Aviation ratings. This thorough revision was completed after much hard work by the TC, TT, and Aviation Rating Master Chiefs, and the new codes will be promulgated soon. **The new qual codes are on-line now as part of the page where we are asking members to indicate their quals <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/jrr/sba> and they will be promulgated by ALCOAST shortly.** Tentative competencies *by billet* will also be sent to the Area resource staffs.

We're calling the new codes "competencies" to distinguish them from the old qual codes and because they will be in the competency field of CGHRMS (PeopleSoft). There has been an effort to make these competencies relate to qualifications and skills needed upon assignment. Some samples ... the new TC codes

include "Group Comms Watch Stander," "Shipboard HF Operator," "Shipboard Radio Supervisor," "EKMS Manager." The Aviation codes have been revised for the first time since the Aviation Workforce Restructuring, and include aircraft specific equipment qualifications in addition to air crew quals on aircraft.

What are we doing in Assignment Year 2002? Several goals. 1) Find out what it takes to update qualifications on a large scale. TC and TT have 1478 billets, Aviation ratings about 2800 members. Note that we're depending on reliable input, direct from the members with reports to the commands at the end of the process. 2) Find out what it takes to gain good information on member skills and what units need (supply and demand). In order to make sure our systems are fair, we need reliable information. 3) We also need to know the impacts of adding skills as an assignment factor.

The ALCGENL and Flag Voice stress that we aren't changing the Assignment Priority system, and that there will be minimal changes in Assignment Year 2002. We're still feeling our way through this step by step, and we need to determine as many of the impacts as possible before including all ratings in this initiative.

There is much in this for members as well. We want to be able to make best use of each member's talents, to build on their strengths, to allow them to become "experts." That's one of the foundations of the 'Strength-Based Organization' concept. For many individuals, their competencies will match what they like to do because they've been assigned to areas they enjoy. In that case, Skill-Based Assignments is an important enabler for a strength-based organization. We still have to work on systems that allow members to 'retool' their careers. It will take more time to craft a system that allows this, but that is part of our objective.

There is a new leader for the Joint Rating Review team - LCDR Gary Bruce. LCDR Bruce is an ex-QM, OCS graduate, and 110' WPB Commanding Officer. He has been involved in the JRR initiative, rating performance quals, and other issues for the last two years. CDR Al Folsom has moved to be Chief of Systems Force Management. In that position he will still be linked to the JRR. The Rating Force Master Chiefs for all the engineering/technical ratings work in that office.

Regards, FL Ames

[Flag Voice Contents](#)

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