MSE personnel impact

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by MSgt. Harry Grindle

The fielding of Mobile Subscriber Equipment (MSE), scheduled for FY 88—FY 93, will have a substantial personnel impact throughout the Army. Signal soldiers either will have to be retrained and given new MOS classifications or else (because so much standardized user owned and operated equipment will replace systems and equipment that today require an operator) reassigned.

The charts in Figure 1 depict the projected MSE personnel situation. Our total MSE force will exceed 27,000 personnel, of which 19,000 will be Signal soldiers. The new enlisted MSE MOSs will encompass skill levels one through five. We will get a large portion of our Signal MSE force by retraining and reclassifying existing Signal MOS holders. Signal officer authorizations for specialty code 25 will increase. Signal warrant officer (MOS 290) authorizations will decrease. And Signal enlisted authorizations, primarily CMF 31 (Communications Operations), will decrease by over 6,000. Accordingly, our primary concern is about the effect MSE implementation will have on the enlisted Signal force.

Figure 2 shows what will happen to many of our soldiers who have traditionally served in non-Signal units. Standardized user owned and operated equipment will result in the elimination of over 4,000 Signal spaces in non-Signal TOE; we would hope to retain these personnel in the Signal Corps. However, if this is not feasible, then reclassifying them into associated electronic MOSs would at least enable the Army to retain the skills and experience of Signal soldiers. The final option would be to transfer these soldiers into an Army shortage MOS.

Signal soldiers in the corps and division Signal brigades and battalions will also need to orient themselves to the new MSE military occupational specialties. With the movement of TRI-TAC equipment from the corps Signal brigades to echelons above corps, EAC soldiers will also need to be reassigned and/or retrained and reclassified.

The charts at Figure 3 reflect the anticipated personnel changes in III Corps after MSE is fielded in FY 88. However, the total reduction of 588 Signal personnel in III Corps active units does not tell the whole story, since the chart only reflects Signal units and doesn't include Signal soldiers in non-Signal units. The remaining four Army corps will experience a similar transition. Figure 4 shows the total active component Signal personnel decrements resulting from the MSE fielding. During the fielding year, MSE MOS fill (Figure 5) will be accomplished primarily through reclassification of existing MOS holders, supplemented by the accession pipeline for skill level one soldiers. Although the primary MOS feed will come from CMF 31, we will also retrain and reclassify some CMF 29 (Communications-Electronics Maintenance) personnel who are in overstrength MOSs.

Three new MOSs and four additional skill identifiers (ASIs) have been established for MSE. MOS 31D (MSE Transmission Systems Operator) personnel will supervise, install, operate, and perform unit level maintenance on MSE radio transmission equipment, radio access units (RAUs) and COMSEC devices. MOS 31F (MSE Network Switching System Operator) personnel will supervise, install, operate, and perform unit level maintenance on node centrals, extension switches, net radio interface (NRI) equipment, and associated multiplexing, COMSEC equipment, and other devices. Both of these MOSs will be capped at SFC by MOS 31W (MSE Communications Chief).

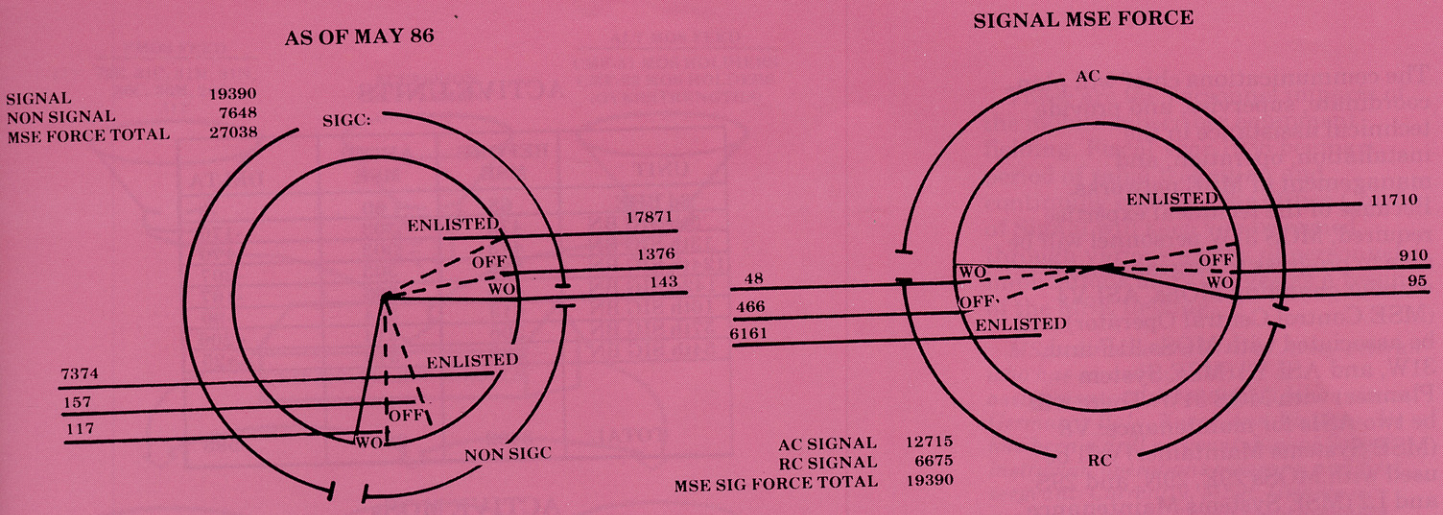
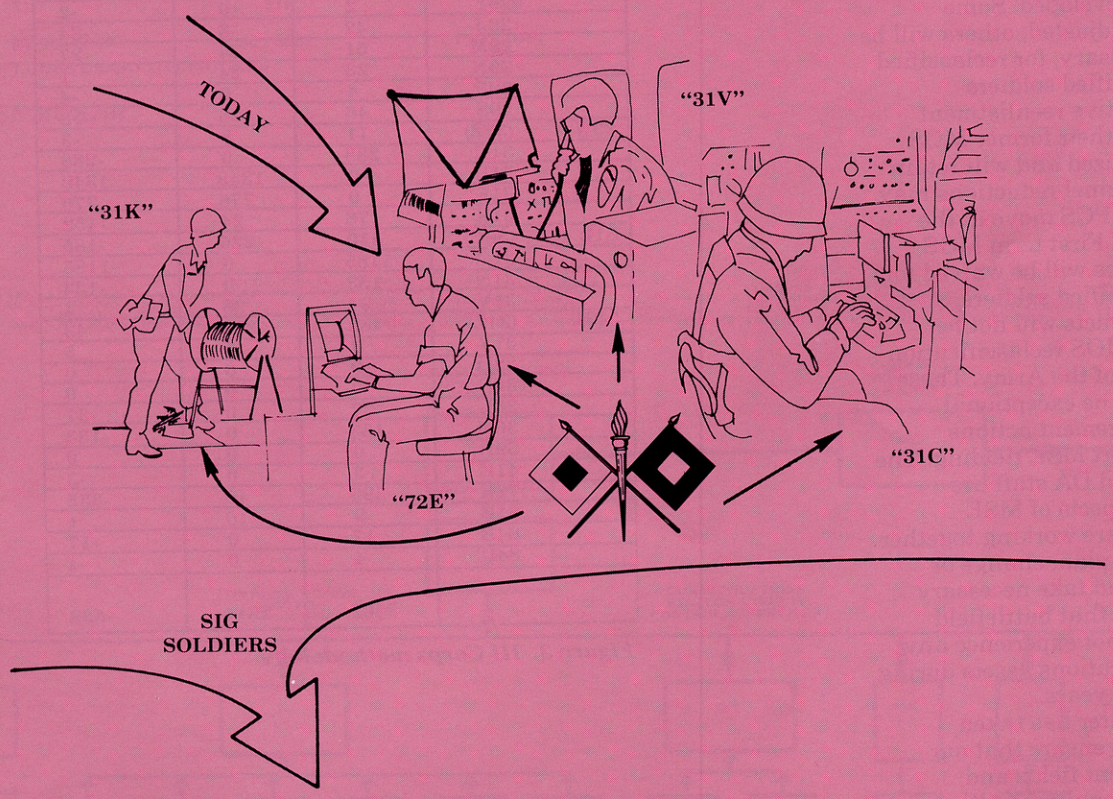


Figure 1. Sizing the personnel situation



MOS	PRI = 1	PRI = 2	PRI = 3	PRI = 4
31V →	31V	MSE	ASSOC ELCT MOS	ARMY
31C →	MSE	SC	ASSOC ELCT MOS	ARMY
31K →	31K	SC	ASSOC ELCT MOS	ARMY
36M →	MSE	SC	ASSOC ELCT MOS	ARMY
72E →	MSE	SC	ASSOC ELCT MOS	ARMY
36C →	MSE	SC	ASSOC ELCT MOS	ARMY

Figure 2. What happens to Signal soldiers in non-Signal units

The communications chief will plan, coordinate, supervise, and provide technical assistance in the installation, operation, and management of MSE networks. Because of the technical expertise required, MOS 31W personnel will be able to progress to sergeant major without changing MOSs. ASI V4 (MSE Control Central Operator) will be associated with MOSs 31F and 31W, and ASI Y3 (MSE System Planner) with MOS 31W. There will be two ASIs for maintenance: V8 (MSE Systems Maintainer) will be used with MOSs 29E, 29N, and 29S; and L2 (MSE Systems Maintenance Manager) will be associated with MOS 29W.

To ease personnel turbulence during the MSE fielding years, an exceptional personnel management plan has been developed. Some policies will be adjusted; others will be waived, as necessary, for reclassified soldiers. Reclassified soldiers receiving a selective reenlistment bonus (SRB) for their former MOS will not be penalized and will retain the bonus. Personnel reductions may require a second PCS move in the same fiscal year. First term MOS utilization policies will be waived for retrained/reclassified soldiers. Enlistment contracts will not be invalidated for MOS reclassification due to the needs of the Army. These are just a few of the exceptional personnel management actions planned to support MSE fielding. The Signal Center and DA staff are examining all aspects of MSE fielding, and we are working together to implement the plan, change or waive policies, and take necessary actions to ensure that battlefield commanders do not experience any loss of communications assets during the MSE fielding years.

The Signal Center has taken several actions to ensure that our career management fields and military occupational specialties are prepared for the transition to MSE, as well as to achieve other force modernization goals. We will complete the realignment of Career Management Field 29 by March 1987. All MILPERCEN letters of notification have been approved and the CMF 31 restructure will be effective in 1987. And as depicted in Figure 6, we have established functional groupings of MOSs, identified skill level 4 supervisory positions, and adjusted standards of grade authorization.

ACTIVE UNITS

UNIT	BEFORE MSE	AFTER MSE	DELTA
3d BDE	68	60	-6
5th SIG BN	473	303	-170
13th SIG BN	473	303	-170
124th SIG BN	510	303	-207
142d SIG BN	470	303	-167
16th SIG BN	613	514	-99
57th SIG BN	308	514	+206
54th SIG BN	489	514	+25
TOTAL	3402	2814	-588

ACTIVE MOSs

MOS	BEFORE MSE	AFTER MSE	DELTA
26Q	201	20	-181
29E	23	17	-6
29F	2	0	-2
29J	42	8	-34
29M	51	24	-27
29N	23	24	1
29P	4	0	-4
29S	46	28	-18
29W = (32Z)	11	8	-3
31C	288	0	-288
31D	0	1349	1349
31F	0	776	776
31K	176	24	-152
31L = (36C)	410	225	-185
31M	1185	0	-1185
31N	133	0	-133
31V	24	28	4
31W = (31Z)	185	228	43
31Y	0	5	5
32D	0	0	0
34F	0	0	0
36L	37	0	-37
36M	133	0	-133
39B	0	0	0
41E	3	0	-3
72E	395	40	-355
81E	9	10	1
84B	17	0	-17
84C	4	0	-4
	3402	2814	-588

Figure 3. III Corps methodology

CORPS	SRC 11	NON-SRC 11	SIGNAL FORCE DECREMENT
III	553	1309	1862
V	163	965	1128
VII	399	1313	1712
XVIII	202	964	1166
I	223	429	652
TOTALS	1540	4980	6520

Figure 4. Signal Corps MSE enlisted active component decrement (projected from May 86 data)

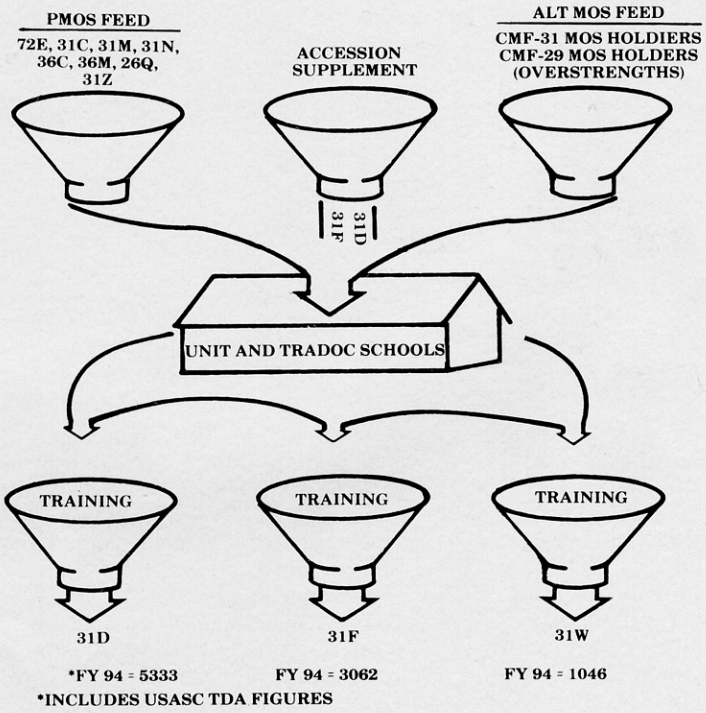


Figure 5. MSE MOS fill

These are the personnel impacts of the mobile subscriber equipment fielding. Fiscal year 1988 begins a period of rapid transition and continuing change. The Office Chief of Signal will keep you informed, through various media, of personnel implications and changes as a result of the MSE fielding.

MSgt. Grindle is a 24-year Army veteran who has served in a variety of assignments with tactical Signal units in Germany, Italy, Korea, and Vietnam. He has been a drill sergeant, Signal School instructor, operations sergeant, and first sergeant. Currently, MSgt. Grindle is assigned as CMF 31 life cycle manager with the Office Chief of Signal, USASC&FG. He has also been inducted into the Sergeant Morales Club in United States Army, Europe.

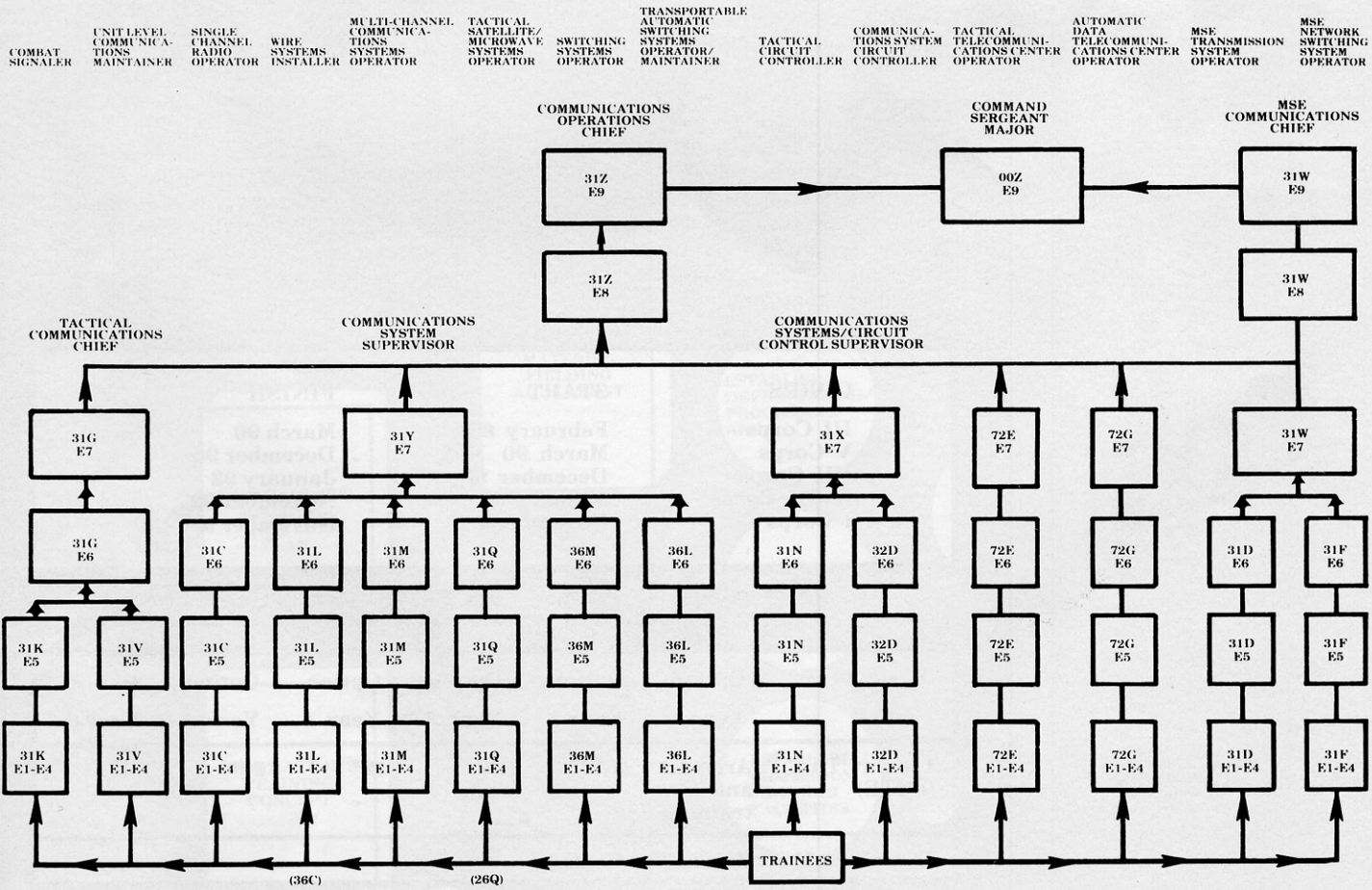


Figure 6. CMF 31 restructure