

The Army Is Overhauling Its Battalion Commander Selection Process

[Army](#) officers bucking for a battalion command will soon have to go through a five-day assessment course aimed at evaluating their mental and physical potential for the sought-after assignment.

Beginning in January, officers selected from the lieutenant colonel centralized selection list will attend the Battalion Commander Assessment Program (BCAP) at [Fort Knox](#), Kentucky, according to a recent Army news release.

Until now, battalion commanders have been selected by a board review of personnel files.

"We spend more time and more money on selecting a private to be in [75th] Ranger Regiment than we do selecting what I would argue is one of the most consequential leadership positions in the Army, our battalion commanders," Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville said in October at the Association of the United States Army's annual meeting, according to the release.

Last summer, infantry and armor officers participated in two battalion commander assessment pilots at [Fort Benning](#), Georgia, the release states. Officers participating in the BCAP next year will go through a series of physical and cognitive assessments. Participants will test on written and verbal communication, interview with behavioral psychologists, and take part in a panel interview with senior Army officers, it adds.

The assessments are objective, scientifically valid instruments designed to assess potential, where evaluations are subjective in nature and rely on observation of past actions, Army officials said in the release.

Data gathered from the process is employed to calculate an assessment order of merit that Human Resources Command will use to determine primary and alternate selects and to slate officers to positions, according to the release. It added that past performance will still play a role in determining a new order of merit.

If successful, the new assessment effort will likely be used in selecting enlisted personnel, as well as Army civilians, for leadership assignments, McConville said in the release.

The BCAP effort is part of a cultural transformation in the Army to move away from the practice of handing out promotions and leadership assignments based on a soldier's seniority.

In April, the [Army announced a new merit-based, enlisted promotion system](#), scheduled to be in place by 2021. It's meant to reward qualified soldiers with more rank but also force sergeants out of the service if they fail to meet the new standards.