

While we have always had that right, and I believe the law in the past has only said, "An officer who has had long service with a particular branch," and you had one Chief of Engineers who was not rated in the engineers. General Reybold was a Coast Artillery man for 5 or 6 years before he was made Chief of Engineers.

I cannot hold the fear you express as a real one. While I would admit it would become legally possible, I cannot for one instant believe that a Secretary of War, or whoever is making the recommendation to the President for appointment, could not or would not get the best man for that particular thing he has.

I understand, also, that the House has put into the bill the amendment that any appointee for a chief of a branch must be confirmed by the Senate. So, there is still the congressional check on that particular matter.

The CHAIRMAN. That takes care of the chief of the branch all right if that amendment is correctly worded, but how about the men down the line?

General EISENHOWER. Down the line I would submit this, Mr. Chairman: It has become valuable for men to serve in different branches. It is no longer possible, as I see it, to compartment all of the Army all the way to the top, keep those people in their place and get what you need.

Certainly, we would hope that Infantry officers would serve in the Artillery. We certainly want to change back and forth between the Air Forces and the Ground Forces. We have got to have a greater circulation of the officers among the several branches.

However, when you get something like rivers and harbors, and there are few people who know about that, you put on a man who knows about handling rivers and harbor things. If you put me on it today, I would have to resign. I would not know anything about it.

That is the way it would be run for always. We have many jobs. From each of these branches, they send people to the General Staff. They are represented in every section of the General Staff.

We are simply trying to get away from old and artificial designations that no longer seem to have much merit.

A combat engineer today is just as much a combat man as he is an engineer. In the same way, a man in the tank force, had to know just about as much about infantry fighting as he does the handling of his tank.

The old, clean-cut designations of the nineteenth century are gone.

The CHAIRMAN. General, it is argued and will be asked before this committee that our engineers were so far in advance of the engineers of any army in the world—English and what not—one big reason why we were able to land and cross rivers such as the Rhine was due to that fact.

For instance, I know that the English Army took a great credit for getting across the Rhine River, but the credit should go to the Army Engineer Corps that were assigned to British at the time they crossed.

General EISENHOWER. Well, I think you are a little confused on one point. They did not take much credit themselves. If there was one place where the American Army engineers were bragged about, it was in the British Army. They had much contact with us. They thought our engineers were something out of this world, and they were.