



# Russia is Shortening Officer Training and Adjusting Conscription Standards

**OE Watch Commentary:** The accompanying excerpted article from the 22 June 2018 edition of *Izvestiya* discusses a new Russian initiative to decrease the length of training programs for most new Ground Forces' lieutenants from approximately five to four years. As stated, the number of academic hours spent studying military and civilian courses will not be affected, instead training time at the academies will be cut from lengthy practical application training that embeds cadets in units.

In conjunction, the accompanying excerpted article from the 9 June 2018 edition of *Izvestiya* discusses a major change to the way conscripts are assessed for military service. In the past, Russian youth were categorized medically as 'fit for service', 'unfit for service', or 'fit for service with limitations'. These youth were then assessed into the military, deemed unfit, or placed into an inactive reserve, respectively. According to new legislation, youth assessed into the third category (fit for service with limitations) are now being given an opportunity to voluntarily have their medical statuses reassessed for military service. Apparently, this category can also bar youth from enrolling in military academies and hinder the ability to find work in the state security services. This tweaking of medical assessments and shortening of officer training are likely intended to slightly increase the available manpower pool. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

**Source:** Aleksandr Kruglov and Bogdan Stepovoy, "Лейтенантские погоны положат под новогоднюю елку: Военные училища подготовят в три раза больше офицеров-танкистов и пехотинцев (Lieutenants' Epaulets to Be Left Under the New Year's Tree: Military Colleges to Train Three Times More Tank Officers and Infantrymen)," *Izvestiya*, 22 June 2018. <https://iz.ru/757228/aleksandr-kruglov-bogdan-stepovoi/leitenantskie-pogony-polozhat-pod-novogodniuiu-elku>

*The Ministry of Defense is introducing a new timetable for training lieutenants. Higher military educational establishments plan to have two graduating classes of students in 2018. The first graduating class received its lieutenant's epaulets in March, the second will receive them in December. In 2019 students will graduate not in summer, as usual, but in October. The new timetable for sending lieutenants to the troops reflects the transition by higher military educational establishments from a five-year to a four-year training program and a shortage of officers in the troops. This year approximately 2,000 lieutenants will be sent to the troops -- three times more than a year ago. Experts believe that the accelerated pace of graduation will have no impact on the quality of officer training...*

*The four-year program experiment for the training of lieutenants was concluded in 2018. It was deemed to be a success, consequently, all combined-arms commanders will train for a year less. In military colleges with complex technical specializations the training period will remain as before -- five years...*

*Students who have to leave educational establishments during the transitional period will have received a full-fledged education. Specialized accelerated learning methods have been developed for them by the Ministry of Defense. There will be no reduction in the number of academic hours allocated to the main subjects. But in the last few months before graduation students will have to apply themselves to their studies. The academic timetable will become even busier because of the increased number of classes.*

*Currently colleges training lieutenants for the Ground Troops are recruiting students to be trained under the new program. The Moscow Higher Combined-Arms Command School told *Izvestiya* that the 2018 intake would receive their lieutenants' epaulets in four years' time. The Kazan' Red Banner Higher Tank Command School confirmed to *Izvestiya* that this year's intake of students will also be training for four years. The training period will be reduced to four years at the Novosibirsk and Far East Higher Combined Arms Command Schools. These higher educational establishments train all lieutenants for the Ground Troops' motorized and tank formations...*

*In the Soviet Union, there was a four-year system of higher vocational military education. The time allocated for this training was sufficient for colleges to produce skilled officers. The Ground Troops' higher educational establishments switched to a five-year training system in 1995. Early graduations of lieutenants were held for the last time in 1999 and 2000. Back then the Army needed officers to carry out counterterrorist operations in Chechnya...*

**Source:** Aleksandr Kruglov and Bogdan Stepovoy, "«Дембель» наступит быстрее: Минобороны меняет правила призыва на срочную службу (Discharges Will Arrive Sooner: The Defense Ministry Is Changing Conscription Rules)," *Izvestiya*, 9 June 2018. <https://iz.ru/753553/aleksandr-kruglov-bogdan-stepovoi/dembel-nastupit-bystree>

*The Defense Ministry is preparing to change the conscription rules. As early as this fall, the young people who have been declared fit for conscription with limitations will be able to voluntarily undergo a second examination by a medical commission. This is particularly important for the citizens who want to make a career in the security agencies, as well as for those applying for admission to the military higher education institutions. The rules for calculating the duration of service in the Armed Forces will also be clarified...*

*Approximately 30 percent of conscripts are granted exemption from military service annually due to the state of health, Sergey Krivenko told *Izvestiya*. The option of a second examination is particularly important for those applying to the military higher education institutions. They are often disqualified by the medical commissions established by the enlistment offices. Also, a significant number of young people want to serve in the Army, so that they can subsequently join the civilian public service, the police, or other security agencies. This is especially common in the regions. In these cases too, the possibility of having a diagnosis reevaluated will be useful...*

*The amendments make it possible for any conscript aged between 18 and 27 to undergo a second examination by a medical commission. The draft government decree includes a detailed description of the relevant procedure. A young man will need to submit an application to the enlistment office. The chief enlistment officer will then direct him for a second examination in a municipal or a state medical institution. A detailed examination can be conducted as an outpatient or an inpatient procedure...*