

CAREER IN BORDER ROADS ORGANIZATION

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Border Roads Organization is a multifaceted, modern construction Organisation committed to meeting the strategic needs of the armed forces. Its role is to develop and maintain the operational road infrastructure in border areas and it also contributes to the socio-economic development of the border states. It was raised in 1960 to carve roads through difficult Himalayas in North-Western and North-Eastern border areas of the country. Though for basic purpose it is a road constructing civil engineering organization –task-function-wise similar to Central and or State PWDs -- yet in overall effect its role is akin to that of Corps of Engineers of the Indian Army. It constructs and maintains roads in virgin areas where other civil engineering works-executing agencies are unable to operate. The officers, supervisors and men required for maintaining this Force are drawn partly from the Armed Forces, especially Corps of Engineers, and partly enrolled/enlisted from open market exclusively for this Force. A few officers, especially doctors, are drawn from Indian Air Force and the Navy also. The troops enrolled exclusively for manning functions of this organization are collectively known as General Reserve Engineer Force, or 'GREF'. The personnel drawn from other defence forces are considered on normal military duty. In other words while the phrase 'Border Roads Organization' stands for the department as a whole, 'GREF' is the name of the collective body of the former's whole-time regular employees, recruited,maintained and deployed , exclusively on execution of BRO's projects /



works only. The technical head of the organization, located at New Delhi, named as Director General Border Roads, is a Lt. General from Corps of Engineers. The organization is a potential employer not only for technically qualified/ trained professionals but also for semi-skilled and unskilled youths having aptitude for outdoor life.

Setup of Units

The lower most independent working unit in BRO is called Road Construction Company, or 'RCC'. Like a Division of the provincial PWD, an RCC is commanded by an officer of the rank of Executive Engineer or Major. It comprises of functional platoons like 'Formation Cutting Platoon' for cutting new roads; 'Permanent Works Platoon' for construction of culverts, retaining and breast walls, drains and parapets, etc.; 'Surfacing Platoon' for metalling the driveway and 'Road Maintenance Platoon'

for keeping the finished roads in good repairs. These platoons are placed under the charge of a Platoon Officer of the rank of Assistant Executive Engineer or a Captain, who reports to the Officer Commanding RCC for all executives, administrative and financial matters. A few RCCs make a Border Roads Task Force, or 'BRTF', which is like a Circle of the provincial PWD or an Engineer Regiment of the Army. Earlier Task Force(s) used to be commanded by a Superintending Engineer or a Colonel of Corps of Engrs. A few BRTFs put together form a BRO Project. A Project is commanded by a Chief Engineer of GREF or a

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Brigadier of the Corps of Engrs. To assist the RCCs and BRTFs produce optimum results, the organization, has certain common service units like 'Engineer Stores Supply & Transport Company' or for procurement, storage, issuance and transport of construction stores; 'Field Workshop' or 'Field Workshop Platoon' for maintenance and repairs of the departmental vehicles and assorted hill cutting /road building/maintaining machinery and Base Depots' for holding buffer stocks of stores and equipment. The organization in addition holds GREF Pioneer Companies, each having some 400 Pioneers, who are the organization's foot soldiers. They handle all kinds of manual tasks, which otherwise can't be got executed through locally mustered / imported casual daily wagers. BRO also borrows a complement of Army Pioneers, who are authorized and also hold fire arms for security duties with movement of cash, sensitive documents and or VIPs. These common service units are manned by officers having expertise in specific fields. Non-technical administrative officers command the GREF pioneer companies, who form bulk of the force. The Medical Staging Sections and Medical Inspection Rooms take care of the sick and suffering troops, while Dental officer and his team move from camp to camp for checking and improving the denture of the road building troops deployed in forward areas. While every BRO Project has one Signals Officer for manning the wireless communications network, a Postal Unit is there to look after movement of official daak as

well as the private mail of the troops. Provost unit is one more setup in a Project for taking care of the internal as well as external security in the organization.

Governing Regulations

The GREF officers and men are simultaneously governed under two separate sets of rules. For the purpose of recruitment, leave, pay and allowances and retirement or discharge etc., they are governed under Central Civil Services Regulations. For the purpose of discipline, however, they are / can also be simultaneously governed under the provisions of Army Act, 1950, with certain essential modifications, specially dove-tailed for GREF. The application of the Army Act entitles the GREF personnel, to a number of privileges like those entitled to the personnel of other wings of the Armed Forces.

Cadres of GREF Officers

Bulk of GREF officers are Civil Engineers, followed by the Electrical & Mechanical Engineers. Both these groups are constituted into Border Roads Engineering Service, or 'BRES'. Next numerically lesser strong groups are GREF Administrative Officers and Medical Officers.

Categories of Tradesmen

The bulk of working strength of GREF comprises of the troops deployed on construction of roads and buildings. They are Pioneers, Masons, Drillers, Dozer Operators, Compressor Drivers, Mechanics, Electricians, Carpenters, Mates, Leading Hands, Overseers, etc. The aforesaid road making troops are supported by clerks, nursing assistants, wireless operators, safaiwalas, cooks, etc., who are responsible for running the administration in offices and camps.

Recruitment

The recruitment of GREF officers is conducted by Union Public Service Commission based on the requirement projected by the head of the organization. The BRES officers are recruited by the Union Public Service Commission through an all India Engineering Services Competitive Examination. Officers of the other cadres are recruited by the UPSC through interview only. In addition, a good number of officers rise from and out of organisation's serving lower ranks through departmental promotions.

The recruitment of various categories of GREF subordinates is done centrally by the Commandant, GREF Centre and Records, located at Pune in Maharashtra. While the advertising of the vacancies in officers cadres is done by UPSC through leading newspapers of the country, that for the subordinates is done by GREF Records by inserting advertisement in the newspapers.

Pay and Allowances

In the matter of pay and allowances, while services officers and personnel retain their respective original terms and conditions of the defence service, the GREF troops are governed by Central Govt.'s scales of pay. All benefits of service available to Central Govt. servants are also applicable to GREF personnel also. Therefore, the benefits like Children Education Allowance, Leave Travel Concession Central Govt. Employees Group Insurance Scheme, General Provident Fund, House Rent Allowance, allotment of Govt. Accommodation, gratuity etc. all are applicable to GREF nearly at par with other Central Govt. employ-

ees. Rather the BRO's field of work being in remote areas, the troops while deployed in those hard areas are entitled at a good number of places of work to remote locality allowance or special compensatory allowance at variable rates according to the pay scale and the place of work. Those posted to Anadamans & Nicobar and or North-Eastern Region, Ladakh etc. get an additional allowance.

In addition to above benefits of Central Govt. Service, the GREF personnel also enjoy free rations and Canteen facilities.

Promotional Prospects

BRO being a defence oriented civil engineering organization, the civil engineer officers stand fairly good chances of promotion. A direct entry AEE (Civil) can rise upto the post of Additional DGBR. An Electrical and Mechanical Engineer Officer who joins organization as Asstt. Executive Engineer can hope to rise up to the level of Chief Engineer. The Medical Officers can rise up to Deputy Chief Medical Officer (SG) and Administrative Officers to the post of Director (Adm). The subordinates having lesser promotional prospects get time bound higher pay scales.

For an industrious individual who has zeal for outdoor work, spirit of patriotism and craving to serve the motherland, who sees pride in belonging to a uniformed/disciplined setup, Border Roads Organization is the best choice for realizing ones cherished career dreams.

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