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REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

ATZK-AR (611-1a)

22 December 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR Sergeant First Class Promotion Board Panel Members for CMF 19

SUBJECT: Career Management Field (CMF) 19 Information Paper

1. The Office of the Chief of Armor, Fort Knox, Kentucky, provides this information paper to assist you in better understanding CMF 19 and the caliber of NCO the Armor Force desires to lead its Soldiers at this important level. This paper will provide an overview of CMF 19 career development and an overview of the Armor programs that we believe you should be aware of to assist with your selection process.
2. Armor Soldiers are valued for their warfighting skills. They acquire and perfect these skills primarily through realistic training, professional military education, and service in the most demanding/critical leadership positions the Armor Branch offers. Service with troops is of primary importance to the Armor Branch. With troops, Armor NCOs polish tactical and technical proficiencies through practical application of warfighting skills. Civilian education achievement, while indicative of time-management skills and motivation, is not a substitute for service in the line.
3. The Cavalry Scout/Armor Crewman Professional Development Model (PDM) serve as a guide that Armor NCOs use when setting professional goals.
 - a. These models show how rank, critical leadership assignments, developmental assignments, and military schooling relate to grade structure. To remain competitive, Armor Soldiers must show initiative to attain these goals. The SSG should be at the corresponding column of the PDM and already have successfully completed an assignment in each of the critical Armor leadership positions and one or more developmental assignments throughout his career. The Armor Branch desires that you select Armor NCOs for promotion that have successfully served in critical leadership assignments; thus indicating potential to excel as a Platoon Sergeant.
 - b. Those NCOs with at least 18 months of successful critical leadership time (19K – Tank Commander, MGS Commander, Vehicle Commander, 19D – Bradley Commander, Stryker Commander, Vehicle Commander or Section Leader) should be considered to have the potential to excel as Platoon Sergeants. SSGs may have performed in these critical leadership positions as a SGT or SGT(P) and this time should also be counted as branch developing time. In addition, also consider any time spent at the next higher leadership position, Platoon Sergeant, as branch developing time.
4. There is no substitute for serving in critical leadership positions throughout an Armor NCO's career.
 - a. The Armor Enlisted Professional Development Guide (and DA Pam 600-25) stresses the importance of serving in critical leadership positions and considers this a requirement before advancing to the next higher grade. Assignment opportunities exist for all Armor SSGs who desire critical leadership time, therefore those SSGs that do not have at least 18 months critical leadership time should not be considered for promotion. However, due to the needs of the Army to fill key developmental assignments(Drill Sergeant and Recruiter), the Armor Force moved a number of quality NCOs who had less than 18 months of critical leadership time immediately after their return from operational deployments. These moves were necessary to utilize their operational experience and satisfy the needs of the Army. In these cases, consider these NCO's as branch developed and fully capable of performing duties as a PSG. In addition, you should look for sustained patterns of excellence throughout the NCO's career to determine promotability.

b. While MTOE positions are highly valued for the development of warfighting skills, give equal weight to success as a Vehicle Commander, whether the NCO served in a MTOE or TDA SSG position. However, Armor NCO's should not serve in critical leadership assignments in back to back skill levels in TDA positions.

c. Consider all graduates of the Advanced Leadership Course (ALC) to have attained the appropriate level of NCOES and the leadership skills necessary to advance to the next higher grade.

5. Armor branch has had several SSGs placed on transition teams in support of both OIF and OEF. Some of these NCOs were selected to these positions before they had the opportunity to complete their critical leadership time of 18 months. Therefore, you should consider the successful completion of a Military Transition Team (MiTT), Embedded Training Team (ETT), or a Provisional Reconstruction Team (PRT) assignment as part of the SSG's critical leadership time. While service on a transition team provides a portion of the requisite skills, it must be combined with time spent as a Vehicle Commander to fully prepare the NCO to serve as a PSG. Our goal is a minimum of 18 months combined time.

6. It is sustained quality of service in critical leadership positions, combined with exceptional performance in professionally developing assignments that separates the "Best Qualified" Armor SSG from the pack. To be considered for promotion, an Armor NCO must have demonstrated these qualities. Follow-on positions are important, but all NCOs must serve in the critical leadership position at each rank to establish a solid war-fighting foundation. Quality of service, not time in grade, is the key determinant of success and the primary indicator of potential for promotion to SFC. Use the following guidelines when distinguishing between Best Qualified, Exceptionally Qualified, and Fully Qualified.

Consider the Armor NCO Best Qualified who has:

- Served with distinction as a Vehicle Commander or Section Leader for 18 months or more
- Demonstrated proven excellence in an authorized position at a higher level (i.g. PSG, 1SG)
- Graduated ALC/possibly M-SLC
- Served with distinction in a professionally developing assignment

Consider the Armor NCO Exceptionally Qualified who has:

- Served with distinction as a Vehicle Commander or Section Leader for 18 months or more
- Served with distinction in a professionally developing assignment as a Staff Sergeant
- Exhibited exceptional potential for success at the next higher grade
- Graduated ALC/possibly M-SLC

Consider the Armor NCO Fully Qualified who has:

- Served with distinction as a Vehicle Commander or Section Leader for 18 months or more
- Graduated ALC/possibly M-SLC

7. Armor NCOs should avoid back-to-back TDA assignments. While Armor Branch values the experience gained in these positions, the focus of the NCO must be on war-fighting skills and returning to the operational force. Four-year assignments at Army training centers have led to some NCOs serving back-to-back TDA assignments. However, an NCO with back-to-back TDA assignments beyond 4 years at the same or different locations may indicate a desire to avoid MTOE leadership positions. These NCOs should not be considered as Best Qualified for promotion. Additionally those SSGs who served in TDA, followed by a 12 month tour to Korea, and then back to TDA assignments, should also be considered as avoiding operational assignments and MTOE positions. These NCOs should not be considered as Fully Qualified for promotion unless they have served additional critical leadership time at another location.

8. Other key factors to consider:

a. The Master Gunner Program is a volunteer program designed to train the most technically competent MOS 19K and MOS 19D Soldiers to become the commander's technical advisor for training, gunnery, and gunnery-related maintenance. The Staff Sergeant who has successfully served in a variety of Master Gunner positions and Critical leadership positions, e.g. Tank or Bradley Commander and Master Gunner, is ahead of his peers.

b. Exceeding course standards or selection as Honor/Distinguished graduate in NCOES courses indicates intelligence, leadership, and initiative. NCOs who complete functional military courses demonstrate initiative to further their knowledge and a desire to be of greater value to the Army.

c. Self-development through degree completion is important and shows the Soldier has the initiative and time-management skills to further his knowledge and understanding in a variety of subjects. The focus of CMF 19 is war-fighting, therefore college degree completion is not a substitute for service in critical leadership positions.

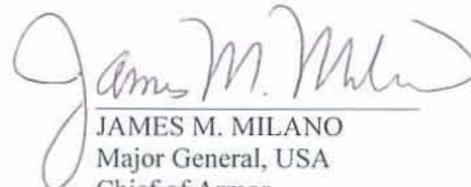
d. Physically fit Soldiers who score well beyond the minimum standard on the APFT (e.g. 270 or higher, especially on the extended scale) should be recognized as exceptional Armor Soldiers.

e. Draper leadership award winners, Order of Saint George recipients, and the Excellence In Armor (EIA) selectees are Armor specific honors that identify leadership and potential. Being selected as recipients of these awards proves the leadership skills and overall leadership potential of the NCO. Although these are not Army programs, the Armor community looks upon these programs as a way to separate the SSG from the pack.

9. In summary, this information paper provides an overview of CMF 19 and emphasizes the importance of promoting top quality Soldiers above their peers. We highlighted critical leadership positions, and emphasized that successful performance in these positions is essential. The Armor force wants NCOs promoted who will be excellent PSGs, who seek challenges, who are versatile, and who genuinely care for Soldiers. Remember, "When all else is equal", look for those indicators that separate the "best qualified from the exceptionally and fully qualified".

10. Please feel free to contact the Office, Chief of Armor at DSN 464-1321/5155 to request additional information or for any other support we can provide you. "Treat 'em Rough!"


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