

## **Gunner's Seat: Shortages in the Branch**

I would like to use this setting to bid farewell to promotable BG John Kolasheski and his family as they depart Fort Benning, GA. I would also like to thank them for their unwavering support and incredible contributions to the Armor family. BG Kolasheski's devotion and expertise allowed us as the Armor proponent to make changes and decisions that will influence the Armor Branch for the foreseeable future. We continue to wish success to the Kolasheskis as promotable BG Kolasheski progresses to his next assignment as the U.S. Army Forces Command's deputy chief of staff, G-3/5/7.

I would like to focus this edition of Gunner's Seat on the shortage of sergeants the Armor Branch is currently facing. As of July 17, the 19D military-occupation specialty is short by 115, and the 19K MOS is short 299 sergeants. While those numbers don't seem very dramatic, there is a major issue seen from them: while we are short sergeants, 884 19D and 340 19K specialists were eligible to attend the board in the primary zone. So the main issue becomes we are not getting Soldiers ready to attend the board.

As is always the case, there exists an ever-growing need to grow leaders and noncommissioned officers from within our own ranks; this is what we do for sergeants and staff sergeants. Several steps can be taken to ensure that our junior Soldiers are prepared to be sent to the board when the appropriate time comes, and all that these actions require is some careful thought and attention from you as their leader. These simple tasks include ensuring your Soldiers complete structured self-development on-line courses well before their board appearance and ensuring you are sending them to the Basic Leader Course as soon as they are eligible and able to attend. Finally, leaders should be training their Soldiers to excel at the promotion board by making them rehearse and by conducting mock boards to simulate the stressful environment they will be undergoing.

In closing, I would like to welcome the 51<sup>st</sup> Chief of Armor, BG David Lesperance, and his family. BG Lesperance joins us after departing Fort Bragg, NC, as the assistant commanding general (support) for 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces Command. I look forward to working with BG Lesperance as we continue to guide and develop the future Soldiers and leaders of the Armor Branch.

**CSM ALAN K. HUMMEL**  
Command Sergeant Major  
U.S. Army Armor School