

Growth of the Armor Branch: Armor Soldier 2020 (Combat-Arms Integration)

by SFC Sara Frederichs

I joined the Army in June 2003 upon completion of high school in Chatfield, MN. I attended basic training and advanced individual training at Fort Jackson, SC, where I obtained the military-occupation specialty (MOS) of 36B financial-management technician.



Figure 1. SFC Sara Frederichs.

My first duty assignment was with 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, in Baumholder, Germany, where I was stationed from 2003-2008.

In 2008, I decided to reclassify to 31B military police (MP). My first duty assignment as an MP was with 93rd MP Battalion at Fort Bliss, TX, where I was stationed from 2008-2012, serving as a team leader and squad leader.

In 2012, the Department of the Army selected me for drill-sergeant duties. Upon graduation from the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Academy, I was assigned to Company A, 795th Military Police Battalion, Fort Leonard Wood, MO, as a drill sergeant in MP one-station unit training (OSUT).

In 2014, I volunteered to be a drill-sergeant leader at the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant Academy at Fort Jackson. Upon completion of my drill-sergeant tour, I was assigned as the operations sergeant of the Fort Jackson Provost Marshall Office.

In 2015, as combat arms opened up to women, female noncommissioned officers (NCOs) who had previously served as a drill sergeant were requested to return to the trail to support the increased numbers of female drill sergeants required. I accepted the request and began my second drill-sergeant tour at Fort Benning, GA, in 2016.

While I was on the trail at Fort Benning, as a drill sergeant in 19K OSUT with Company B, 1st Battalion, 81st Armored Regiment, I was approached by my company commander and first sergeant in the winter of 2017, asking me if I would be interested in reclassing to 19K armor crewman. I decided to accept the challenge, and in March 2017, I reclassified into a new profession as a staff sergeant at the time. By the end of the year, I would attend the Tank Commander Certification Course, Maneuver Leader's Maintenance Course, Armor Advanced Leader's Course and

Maneuver Senior Leader's Course. I completed my two years on the trail with Company B, 1st Battalion, 81st Armored Regiment, in July 2018 before moving to Fort Bliss, TX.

I am currently assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, where I serve as a platoon sergeant for a tank platoon and lead 14 19K tankers in ensuring we are the best trained and ready for any mission. I have also had the pleasure of playing the dual role as a platoon sergeant and company first sergeant, when I coordinated the return of the company's Soldiers and equipment from an overseas rotation; established a Soldier-quarantine program for my unit; and, during Strike Focus, managed the brigade's field-training exercise.



Figure 2. SFC Sara Frederichs works on a tank.

Naturally, reclassing into a new MOS can be challenging, especially as a NCO. However, I felt that I possessed the intellect and competency as a leader to be able to answer the call to assist women's integration into combat arms. I now have 12 years' experience as a NCO. The transfer of tactical knowledge and experience as a MP translated relatively easy to tanker and has made the transition smooth. I am aware that I have had an unusual Army career, but as I see it, the Army is full of opportunities that should be taken.

SFC Sara Frederichs is a 19K armor crewman assigned to Axemen Company, 1-37 Armor Battalion, Fort Bliss, TX. Her previous assignments include 19K OSUT drill sergeant, 1st Battalion, 81st Armor Regiment, Fort Benning, GA; MP squad leader, 93rd MP Battalion, Fort Bliss, TX; and finance clerk, 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, Baumholder, Germany. Her military schooling includes the M1A2 Tank Commander's Certification Course, Senior Leader's Course, Advanced Leader's Course, Maneuver Leader's Maintenance Course, Master Fitness Trainer Course, Basic Instructor Course, Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Course, and Drill Sergeant Course.

Acronym Quick-Scan

MOS – military-occupation specialty

MP – military police

NCO – noncommissioned officer

OSUT – one-station unit training