

in the training management process. Additionally, NCOs attending ALC will also soon attend the follow-on Infantry Master Trainer Course. LTG Anderson stated between better training management for both NCO and officer professional military education and the introduction of TE&Os as you evaluate units/planned training you see complementary efforts. Use T&EOs to plan training and you will start getting the standard and steps you need directly.

### LTG Anderson's Closing Comments

We are what we design ourselves to be. We design ourselves through training management, our use of time, our prioritization, how we see risk, and where we put our resources. Don't be afraid to slow things down and do it right — to give more time to a subordinate and let them struggle with something but with the understanding that they will own it and move it forward, if coached, evaluated, and assessed. See also "Close Fighting Fundamentals" (<https://www.army.mil/article/289567>), which may help leaders visualize the types of skills we need to develop at the tactical level as part of the hedge against uncertainty. Commanders should think through this on their own terms; it's not a task list but describes what right looks like. Lastly, T&EOs are coming back, and smart officers are going to own and train against them; you will be evaluated and assessed against T&EOs at CTCs. Continue to command on the offense, ruthlessly prioritize, accept risk on things that are no longer necessary or important. Do not have an untrained formation.

*The purpose of the Infantry Warfighting Forum is to enhance infantry/mobile brigade combat team leaders, leader teams, unit training, and operations. This forum helps provide feedback for identification/resolution of problems through senior leader channels and provides a venue for shaping Infantry initiatives to make our Infantry more relevant for today's environment.*

# INFANTRY BRANCH UPDATE

## Welcome From the Infantry Branch Chief

Fellow Infantrymen,

We salute you and your formations for your tireless commitment to excellence! Congratulations to the Infantry NCOs promoted to sergeant first class (SFC) and to those entrusted with battalion command — your leadership drives our legacy forward. In this special edition, we unveil the forward-leaning vision of the U.S. Army Human Resources Command (HRC) Infantry Branch and spotlight the dynamic trends defining how our Infantry force is built, led, and employed on today's ever-evolving battlefield.



The Infantry Branch stands resolute in educating our force about assignment opportunities, mentoring every Infantryman to reach new heights and communicating the cutting-edge trends reshaping our profession. Our mission is to deliver honest, transparent, and actionable information that fortifies readiness across the Army. As always, we strive to synchronize individual Soldier aspirations with Active Component Manning Guidance (ACMG), ensuring the right leaders are in the right place at the decisive moment.

### Enlisted Infantry Update

**Enlisted Market Cycles (EMC).** The EMC remains the cornerstone for strategically aligning Infantry Soldiers to the Army's evolving operational demands. Each Soldier is purposefully matched to a six-week EMC window, determined by their Year-Month Available to Move (YMAV), ensuring our formations remain agile and mission-ready.

EMC Cycle	Market Opens	Market Closes	Report Months
EMC 27-02	29 APR 2026	02 JUN 2026	JAN–MAR 2027

**NCO Career Progression.** Advancement to SFC and master sergeant (MSG) is anchored in the time-tested Professional Development Model (PDM) for MOS 11B, 11C, and 11Z, as established in Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 600-25, *U.S. Army Noncommissioned Officer Professional Guide*. Leaders are charged with actively guiding Soldiers to understand and achieve the key milestones that define competitiveness for promotion and assignment to positions of greater responsibility.

**EMC Preparation is Critical.** EMC preparation is a team effort, demanding proactive engagement from both Soldiers and leaders. Infantry leaders must champion education on EMC procedures, set clear expectations, and proactively address common pitfalls identified by career managers.

**1. Recognizing Critical Development (CD) requirements before entering the market is essential.** CD stabilization ensures SSGs and SFCs meet minimum career model requirements in accordance with DA PAM 600-25. NCOs who enter the EMC without meeting CD requirements should preference operational assignments that allow them to complete these milestones and remain competitive.

**2. Stabilization timeline.** For SGT(P) through MSGs, requests for individual, organizational, or nonroutine stabilization must be submitted to HRC no

later than 45 days before the market opens. NCOs receive notification 30 days prior to market opening to confirm their availability. Soldiers who believe their YMAV is incorrect should contact their Enlisted Career Manager immediately.

**NCO Promotion Trends.** The path to promotion continues to spotlight the Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB) and the coveted Ranger Tab as hallmarks of excellence. While advanced education and credentials enhance professional development, they supplement — never replace — the foundational standards expected of exceptional Infantry Soldiers. High-level skills and certifications distinguish NCOs from their peers, but first and foremost, every Soldier must embody the core attributes that define the most qualified (MQ) among us.

### Infantry Officer Update

Officer assignment cycles remain aligned with the Army Talent Alignment Process (ATAP).

ATAP Cycle	Market Opens	Market Closes	Report Months
ATAP 27-01	15 APR 2026	14 MAY 2026	OCT 2026–MAR 2027
ATAP 27-02	23 SEP 2026	04 NOV 2026	APR–SEP 2027
ATAP 28-01	14 APR 2027	13 MAY 2027	OCT 2027–MAR 2028

**ATAP 26-02 Lessons Learned.** Timeless principles endure — officers who launch their preparation early, thoroughly research prospective units, update their YMAV, and sharpen their marketability, consistently command success in the assignment process. Professional communication is non-negotiable; officers should reach out to units within the first 48 hours, deliver compelling, tailored messages, and follow up promptly. Those who balance ambition with realism, and seek mentorship from branch managers and senior leaders, consistently outpace their peers.

**Market Approach.** Successful engagement demands a compelling narrative that showcases an officer’s unique strengths, aspirations, and anticipated impact. Thoughtful, informed questions signal genuine interest and a high degree of professionalism. Officers who maintain organization and seize every opportunity stand out as the most reliable and mission-ready candidates.

**Infantry Captain Broadening Insight.** Choosing the optimal post-key development (KD) assignment is pivotal for career trajectory. Captains tracking toward their goals should seek challenging assignments that expand their expertise, position them for field-grade KD, and sharpen their edge for Major (MAJ) KD opportunities. These career-shaping decisions are best made in partnership with mentors, branch managers, and trusted senior leaders.

Several assignments distinguish themselves as premier developmental opportunities for aspiring field grade Infantry

officers. Notably, headquarters and headquarters company (HHC) command, small group leader (SGL) roles at the Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC), and observer-coach/trainer (OC/T) assignments prepare officers for the challenges and responsibilities of higher command.

### MAJ Promotion Selection Board (PSB) Reflections (December 2025)

1. The MAJ PSB achieved a 74 percent selection rate for Infantry officers in the primary zone (PZ), compared to the Army-wide average of 83 percent.

2. Officers who secure three MQ ratings in their last five officer evaluation reports (OERs) — with at least one in KD command — continue to dominate as the most competitive candidates.

3. The board consistently favors officers who excel in both command and staff roles, as evidenced by senior rater (SR) MQ block checks.

**FY27 Command Select List (CSL) Reflections (January 2026).** The FY27 CSL outcomes underscore the high stakes and competitive nature of command selection in today’s Army.

1. The principal selection rate reached 42.5 percent (54 of 127), a decrease from CSL 26 and the preceding three-year average, reflecting increasing standards and selectivity.

2. Excellence in field grade KD positions remains the decisive factor; every principal selected earned MQ ratings in both KD evaluations.

3. Nearly 89 percent of principals secured MQ blocks on all five of their most recent OERs — an impressive rise from previous years, underscoring the caliber of today’s Infantry leaders.

### Closing Comments from the Infantry Branch Chief

It is our honor to champion this storied branch and every Infantryman within it. Together, we forge an unbreakable force and advance a legacy built on valor, discipline, and unwavering service. Since 1775, Infantrymen have relentlessly closed the “Last Hundred Yards” for our nation — and with every step forward, we reaffirm that sacred mission. Follow Me.

— LTC Garrett P. Turley  
Infantry Branch Chief 51

**HRC Infantry Branch Points of Contact and Videos:**  
<https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/Infantry%20Branch%20POCs>

