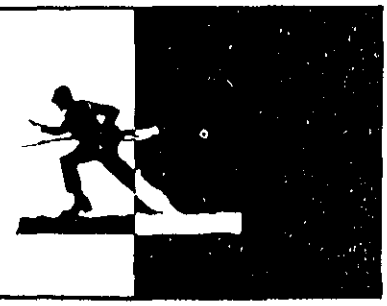
ENLISTED CAREER NOTES



OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

As of 2 April 1984, official photographs are no longer a part of the microfiche official military personnel files for enlisted personnel.

Official photographs for enlisted personnel are still required, however, and they should be forwarded to the local MILPO for subsequent forwarding to Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. Two prints are now required instead of one. Fort Harrison will forward one print to the soldier's branch at MILPERCEN for inclusion in his career management individual file. The official photograph in its hard copy form then will be used by career managers and centralized selection boards.

In view of the decision to stop putting photos on microfiche for enlisted personnel, it is vital that each soldier strictly adhere to AR 640-30, paragraph 7, in submitting his official photo.

EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBERS

Enrollment procedures for the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) changed effective 1 March 1984. Service members who want to enroll in the program should contact their servicing medical treatment facility. Soldiers may request evaluations, or they may be referred to the medical facility by the local Military Personnel Office (MILPO) as a part of their standard outprocessing procedures.

Under the revised plan, the Army Medical Department will identify and code the special educational and health needs of exceptional family members. Special coding teams at specifically designated Army medical centers will consider enrollment requests. The servicing center will report the service member's enrollment and appropriate codes to MILPERCEN. MILPERCEN will use the information to help in assigning soldiers with family members who have special needs.

Every attempt will be made to assign these service members to locations where there are appropriate support facilities to meet their families' specific needs. Service members will be given copies of their enrollments and will be advised of completion of the coding process by the medical treatment facility where they enrolled.

Because these new procedures significantly change the program, soldiers may experience some initial delays at their servicing medical facilities. Priority will be given to service members who already have overseas orders or are expecting to get them. Soldiers who enroll in the EFMP after they have received official assignment instructions need to be aware that their enrollments may not affect their upcoming assignments.

PROMOTION BOARD PROCEDURES

Promotion selection boards play a vital role in the lives of all soldiers, but the selection process remains a mystery to most of them. With a better understanding of how selections are made, a soldier may be able to see what he can do to improve his chances for promotion.

Selections for promotions to the ranks of SFC/PSG through SGM/CSM are made through the Department of the Army Centralized Selection Board process. This system relies completely on information from the soldier's Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) and his Personnel Qualification Record (DA Form 2A and 2-1), also known as the PQR. A soldier must therefore review his file periodically to make sure these items are up to date and accurate.

Enlisted selection boards are convened by Headquarters, Department of the Army and held at the U.S. Army Enlisted Records and Evaluation Center (EREC) at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. Before a board meets, EREC must take several steps to prepare for it.

About four months before a selection board is to convene, the Department of the Army announces primary and secondary zones of consideration for soldiers eligible for promotion. These zones include date of rank, basic service date, and any special requirements necessary for eligibility. When EREC receives the message announcing the zones of consideration, preparations for the upcoming selection board begin.

From the Enlisted Master File (EMF), EREC produces an initial computer list of names of eligible soldiers. This computer list is checked for accuracy against several other sources: the OMPF, the Joint Uniform Military Pay System (JUMPS) files, the list of deserters provided by the U.S. Army Deserter Information Point at EREC, the separation records that EREC maintains, and the Board Edit File, which contains the names of soldiers already selected by previous boards for promotion or schooling.

EREC also checks soldiers' files to determine if any official photos or Senior Enlisted Evaluation Reports are missing. Messages are then sent to all major commands (MACOMs) and Military Personnel Offices (MILPOs). These messages list the soldiers in each command who are eligible for promotion consideration and request PQRs, EERs, or official

photos for files that are not up to date.

Two months before the board meets, EREC again checks the list of eligible soldiers against the JUMPS, deserter, and separated soldiers files. MACOMs and MILPOs receive two more messages reminding them to submit missing PQRs, EERs, photos, and height and weight data.

The final deadline for documentation from all agencies to reach EREC is normally 10 days before the board is to convene. Up to the day before the board convenes, any documents received before the last cutoff date are added to the soldier's file in hard copy form. After this cutoff date, EREC will process anything it receives from the field but will not place it in the soldier's file for review by the board.

Five days before the board meets, the EREC commander and division chiefs screen about 400 records, selected at random, to determine any problem areas and to verify the general condition of the files.

A typical selection board is presided over by a major general, with nine brigadier generals as panel chiefs. Each panel concentrates on one career management field (or more) and consists of three members in addition to the general officer chief — a colonel, a lieutenant colonel, and a senior noncommissioned officer.

If a panel will be reviewing and voting on an unusually large number of records, it may have more than three members. Each panel also has a nonvoting NCO as panel recorder.

When the board members arrive, they are briefed on the requirements and duties of the selection board, and they familiarize themselves with the selection procedures and conduct practice votes.

Within the large board room, heavy partitions separate the panels from each other. Panel members are seated together, and each has a work table with a microfiche reader to use in reviewing the soldiers' records.

Entry into the board's work area is restricted to all but board members and selected EREC staff. Board members generally wear civilian clothes during the proceedings. Thus, they can perform their deliberations anonymously and maintain the necessary security.

During board deliberations, each soldier competes with all other soldiers in his zone of consideration by primary and progression MOS only.

The board reviews three items from each soldier's file: the performance portion (P-fiche) of the OMPF, the PQR, and all hard copy documents not on the OMPF. The first item a panel member sees is normally the hard copy official military photo of the NCO being considered. The soldier's appearance in the photo gives them a very important first impression of him. If the soldier in that photo looks sloppy or overweight, or if he is wearing unauthorized awards or decorations, his chances for selection are reduced. A missing or outdated photo can give the impression that the soldier is trying to hide something or that he simply doesn't care.

At this point, board members generally take a quick look at the History Data Report, which gives the NCO's EER scores during the previous 60 rated months. (This report shows such trends as consistently high or low EER scores and improved or erratic scores.) Then the board evaluates the PQR (DA Forms 2A and 2-1). (Form 2A is a computer printout that repeats some of the information found on the 2-1, but in a condensed format.)

Both forms are examined closely for any discrepancies in the items shown on the Form 2A, which include the soldier's present duty assignment, education, date of photograph, and physical profile. The board member also checks to see whether the soldier has signed the last page of the Form 2-1, verifying that he has reviewed the information, and that he has entered his correct height and weight.

Now the board member returns to the P-fiche of the OMPF, paying careful attention to the narrative sections of the EER. Although the numerical scores give a general picture of the NCO's performance, written comments from his rater and indorser tell the story of how he performs his duties. Most important are the Duty Description (Part II) and the Evaluation of Potential (Part IV) blocks.

VOTING/SCORING SYSTEM

Score	Sample Description
1	Substandard soldier, recommend for Qualitative Management Program (QMP)
2	Poor to fair, retain in service
3	Good soldier, weak prospect
4	Excellent soldier, moderate prospect
5	Superior soldier, strong prospect
6	Outstanding soldier, definite select

Based on the three items reviewed (P-fiche, PQR, and hard copy documents), each board member votes on the soldier's record, using a number from 1 to 6. The numerical scoring system and the importance of each is shown in the accompanying chart.

A "+" or a "–" is sometimes added to these scores to give futher weight to a vote. Each member writes the number of points he awards a soldier's record on a score card; the other two voting panel members do not see that score until they have voted.

Once the vote on the record is made, the panel recorder checks the scores. If there is a variance of two or more points among the three voting panel members, the record goes back to each for another review. The third voting member may have found something the other two overlooked, or vice versa. Records are rotated among the panel members so that a voting pattern will not be established by having the same members vote on the same records.

Based on the scores given by the voting members, an order of merit list is compiled of all the soldiers who have been considered. Soldiers who receive the highest scores are generally "best qualified" for promotion.

The selection board also recommends for promotion "out-standingly qualified" soldiers from the secondary zone and determines which soldiers should enter the Qualitative Management Program (QMP). The QMP screens soldiers whose overall records merit a bar to reenlistment.

After the board adjourns, the list of NCOs recommended for promotion is

again compared against JUMPS, deserter, and separation files. This procedure takes about two weeks. During this time, the board recorder verifies the final results of the selection board, prepares lists of the individual soldiers selected or not selected, and compares them against the order of merit list. When this action is complete, the final standings are forwarded to MILPERCEN. EREC then adds to the Board Edit Files the names of the NCOs who have been selected for promotion or schooling.

Before a selection board convenes, the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel determines the number of soldiers to be promoted for each MOS and each zone based on the number of soldiers in that specialty and grade compared to the number authorized Army-wide. For this reason, the number of promotions in "overage" MOSs is generally lower than that for "shortage" ones.

In the past, promotions were based on overall shortages in a career management field, but this method had its drawbacks since even a shortage field will have overage MOSs in it. Promotion by this method meant that soldiers in overage specialities were promoted as easily as those in shortage ones. This created an even greater disparity in the overage MOSs. Overstrength MOSs now receive the minimum number of promotion recommendations.

Restrictions are imposed on the promotion of soldiers in an overage MOS. Under these restrictions, selection boards can recommend for promotion only those soldiers who are "the best of the best." Soldiers do have other options to consider. Currently, for example, the selection boards screen the records of soldiers in overstrength MOSs with the intention of promoting them in other MOSs.

Reclassification is not involuntary, however. An NCO selected for reclassification can decline the promotion and try to get selected in his primary MOS the following year. NCOs are not selected for or reclassified into MOSs for which they are not qualified. The selection board must check the records against MOS prerequisites and training to ensure that both are met. When a soldier is considered for promotion in a secondary or other MOS, his experience in that skill is judged to determine whether he is qualified.

Because the Army seeks to increase the quality and professionalism of its soldiers, the competition for promotion is tougher than ever before. Soldiers owe it to themselves to see that their records are as accurate and up to date as possible. The rest is up to selection board members.

EIGHT-YEAR OBLIGATION

Soldiers who reenlist after 1 June 1984 incur an eight-year military obligation, a two-year increase that is expected to strengthen the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) eventually.

The new policy increases the time soldiers remain "on call" with the IRR after they leave active-duty or Reserve units. IRR rosters provide the Nation's primary source of additional trained personnel available during emergency mobilization.

The new obligation is not retroactive and does not lengthen the IRR time for any service member who enlisted before 1 June 1984.

DRILL SERGEANT COURSE

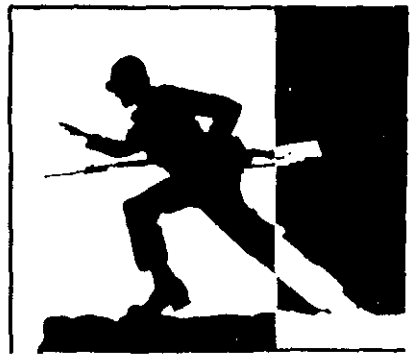
The Drill Sergeant Course was recently restructured, and one of the main changes was that drill sergeants will now train and teach within their respective branches. In other words, in one-station unit training (OSUT), Infantry sergeants will train Infantrymen, Artillery sergeants will train Artillerymen, and Armor sergeants will train tankers.

The main points of the restructuring are:

- Fifty percent of the drill sergeants assigned to basic training companies will be from Infantry MOSs; 20 percent will come from other combat arms MOSs; 30 percent will come from combat support or combat service support MOSs.
- At installations that conduct basic training for women, each basic training company will be authorized two female drill sergeants.
- In advanced individual training companies, 70 percent of the drill sergeants will be from the MOS series being taught. The remaining 30 percent will be from the combat arms MOSs.
- In OSUT companies or batteries, 85 percent of the drill sergeants will be from the combat MOSs being taught. The other 15 percent will be from combat support or combat service support MOSs.

IRR REFRESHER

The Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) is being updated. The program, called Skill Level 1 Refresher Training, is designed to refresh a soldier in the critical combat task proficiency and survival skills for IRR soldiers in the ranks of PV1 through SP4. This group makes up 84 percent of the enlisted IRR force.

A 14-day pilot course has been conducted, and this Skill Level 1 training will be expanded this year. Starting in September, the 91st and 104th Divisions (USAR), will train 150 infantrymen each at Fort Ord, California, and Fort Lewis, Washington. The 100th Division will train 200 Armor soldiers at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

In fiscal year 1985, the program is projected to expand further with refresher training planned for MOSs 11B, 12B, 13B, 19D, 19E, 63B, 64C, and 95B, involving 1,000 Reservists.