

ENLISTED CAREER NOTES



OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

One of the first things a promotion or NCOES selection board member sees when he starts reviewing a record is the NCO's official photograph. This does two things: It helps to emphasize to the board member that the file he is reviewing represents a real soldier — his appearance, awards and decorations, and length of service.

Last year, promotion boards started using the "hard copy" photograph, and in it errors and ill preparation are even more apparent than they were in the microfiche photo.

Getting a good photograph taken requires sound preparation. AR 670-1, Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia, and AR 640-30, Photographs for Military Personnel Files, contain the details.

The proper uniform, according to AR 640-30, is the Army green uniform with basic branch insignia, all permanently authorized ribbons, badges, and tabs correctly displayed. The shoulder sleeve insignia (crests) are not the only authorized deviations from this rule. Only low quarter shoes are authorized.

The initial photograph for an NCO's file must be taken within 60 days of his promotion to SSG and every fifth year thereafter (during his birth month). This is the maximum time between photographs — there is no minimum. An NCO should submit a new photograph whenever it is to his advantage to do so — when he has lost weight, been promoted, gotten a new or better fitting uniform, or received another award or decoration.

Some of the most common problem areas on official photographs are:

- Uniform wrinkled or ill-fitting. (Trouser creases need special attention.)
- Moustaches too long or wide.

(Three out of four fall into this category.)

- Ribbons or badges improperly placed or missing (marksmanship badges, in particular).
- Incorrect number of length-of-service slashes.
- Infantry cord and blue discs.
- Incorrect trouser and sleeve length.
- Edges of soles of low quarters scuffed, scarred, or not shined.

Worse yet, too often the NCO's photo is outdated or missing entirely.

Getting an appointment for a photograph sometimes presents a problem, so it should be done early enough to allow for a retake if it becomes necessary.

When an NCO gets his photograph back, he should take a good, long, critical look at it and ask himself whether the soldier in it looks like a professional who cares about his career. If his answer is "yes," he should get a second opinion, preferably from his next senior NCO. If the answer is "no," he should correct the problems and have another photograph taken.

Because the photograph carries a lot of weight with the board, and because competition for promotion and NCOES selection gets tougher each year, it is worth the trouble to see that the photo is right.

USASMA CLASSES

Students who are scheduled to attend U.S. Army Sergeant Major Academy (USASMA) Class 26, July 1985 to January 1986, have now received their tentative follow-on assignments. Pinpoint assignments for the gaining installations will be made around October.

Students scheduled to attend Class

27, January to July 1986, who have not already done so should forward their updated DA Forms 2A and 2-1 (Personnel Qualification Record, Parts I and II), including a DA Form 2635 (Enlisted Preference Statement). This information is necessary for the proper completion of USASMA worksheets and assignment consideration for projecting the students' next assignments after they graduate.

These documents should be sent to Commander, MILPERCEN, ATTN: DAPC-EPK-1, USASMA Manager, 2461 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22331-0413. The points of contact for inquiries regarding USASMA classes are MSG Bent and Mrs. Alexander, AUTOVON 221-9166/9425/8056.

LETTERS TO PROMOTION BOARDS

Enlisted soldiers who are being considered for promotion or school selection may write letters directly to the board's president, if necessary to correct errors, update files, or supply missing information.

A soldier's complete promotion file consists of:

- The performance (P) fiche from his official Military Personnel File (OMPF).
- DA Forms 2A and 2-1, Personnel Qualification Record.
- His Personnel Data Sheet, which the Enlisted Records and Evaluation Center produces for the board.
- His latest photograph.

Since the boards use these items in making selections for promotion and schools, it is to a soldier's advantage to make sure his file is complete and free of errors.

Items submitted with letters are considered part of the board proceed-

ings and will not be used to update the soldier's OMPF.

Letters to the board president should be written in military letter format, following the procedures in AR 340-15. They should be brief and factual and should not contain information that is already on the OMPF.

Letters may not be used to express grievances or boasts or to justify past misconduct. Letters from third parties, or letters that contain derogatory information about other parties, will not be accepted.

Soldiers should have their letters reviewed by someone who is familiar with military correspondence procedures and who can check for errors in grammar and spelling. A well-written letter can benefit a soldier, but a poorly-written one can hurt him.

Letters should be mailed in time to arrive before the cutoff date, which is normally ten days before the date on which the board convenes.

EMBASSY AND DIPLOMATIC POSTS

The Army is looking for volunteers in the ranks of SGT through SFC/PSG to serve in the Defense Attache System at embassies and diplomatic posts throughout the world. Soldiers who have excellent certifiable foreign language skills or who have passing Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB) scores are especially needed.

Training for these attache assignments may range from four to 18 months, depending on the length of any language training that may be needed.

Details of this program are contained in AR 611-60, and local Military Personnel Offices have additional information.

ANCOC GRADUATES

NCOs who were selected for promotion to SFC/PSG or selected to attend the Advanced NCO Course from the Fiscal Year 1986 list and who have completed either the resident or non-resident course, are asked to forward

their diplomas and/or DA Form 1056 to HQ, MILPERCEN, ATTN: DAPC-EPK-1, SFC Calanni, so their official files can be updated.

SECRET CLEARANCE FOR ANCOC

Because of certain curriculum changes, soldiers who have been selected to attend the Advanced NCO Course should immediately begin the paperwork necessary for them to obtain Secret clearances. Although a clearance is not mandatory, any student who does not have at least an interim Secret clearance will miss certain classes.

NEW WARRANT OFFICER TRAINING SYSTEM

Warrant officer candidates must now complete a "triple check" evaluation under the new Warrant Officer Training System (WOTS) before being appointed and assigned to their first units.

WOTS, which was implemented 1 October 1984, replaces the Warrant Officer Education System, which had no standard selection or training structure.

Under the old system, candidates were either approved by a selection board or granted direct appointments. Direct appointees could attend a short warrant officer orientation course and go straight to their first unit assignments without having any functional training in their new MOSs.

The "triple check" entry-level process under WOTS requires that a warrant officer:

- Be approved by a centralized board drawn from MILPERCEN, the Army Reserve Personnel Center, and State Adjutants General.

- Complete the Warrant Officer Entry Course, which is conducted at Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Fort Rucker, Alabama; and Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. (The WOEC lasts almost seven weeks and is taught in a high stress environment that provides

standardized training in leadership, ethics, communicative arts, military history, structure of the Army, land navigation, support functions, and other common military subjects required by all warrant officer MOSs.)

- Receive technical certification by the TRADOC MOS proponent. (This is accomplished through diagnostic examinations and a resident technical certification course.)

Newly appointed warrant officers are expected to perform highly specialized technical leadership and middle management functions. Their schooling is therefore directed primarily toward in-depth occupational training instead of the broad multifunctional training given to commissioned officers.

After 5 to 11 years of warrant officer service, every warrant officer must now attend a Warrant Officer Advanced Course. Beyond the twelfth year of service, a select group of senior warrant officers are chosen by a Department of the Army selection board to attend the MOS-immaterial Warrant Officer Senior Course. This course focuses on preparing selected warrant officers for policy and planning duties on high-level staffs or comparable positions on other staffs.

Soldiers interested in applying for warrant officer appointments should read AR 135-100 (Appointment of Commissioned and Warrant Officers) and DA Circular 601-84-4 (WO Procurement Program, FY 85). This quarterly circular gives the latest essential information for warrant officer candidates.



OFFICERS CAREER NOTES



SPECIAL FORCES VOLUNTEERS

Effective 1 April 1985, MILPERCEN resumed assigning a limited number of lieutenants to four Special Forces Groups of the 1st Special Operations Command (SOCOM).

Requests for assignment will be processed on a case by case basis until about September 1986. At that time the Special Operations Warrant Officer Program will be capable of providing the required support for SOCOM, and lieutenants will no longer be required.

Breaks in stabilization will be approved for officers who are designated for SOCOM assignments if they are stationed in CONUS but not if they are stationed overseas.

To be eligible to volunteer for Special Forces training and duty an officer must meet the following requirements:

- Must be a combat arms or a combat service arms officer.
- Must be a first lieutenant as of his projected report date into SOCOM and for a period of 12 months thereafter (this does not include the five-month qualification course).
- Must have 18 months of experience in his basic branch serving with a TOE unit.
- Must meet the requirements as defined in AR 614-162 (if not already ASI 5G qualified).
- Must have the endorsement of the command to which he is currently assigned.

Officers designated for Special Operations training and assignment will be sent to the JFK Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg for five months to attend the Special Operations Detachment Officer Qualification Course. Upon successful completion of the qualification course these officers will be assigned to one of the four

Special Forces Groups.

Interested officers should consult with their battalion adjutants and submit their requests in accordance with the provisions of AR 614-162.

NEW DA FORM 483

A new officer preference statement (DA Form 483) has now replaced the old form. The difference is that a computer can read the new form and make the data on it immediately available to assignment managers through terminals on their desks.

The information an officer enters on the form, which also becomes part of his official master file, includes his preferred functional area, his preference for duty overseas or in the continental United States, any duty or location priority, three duty preferences, and several tour location choices.

There is also a comment sheet so that an officer can express career desires that are not included in the automated part of the form.

Officers should submit the automated preference statement:

- About 12 months before completing an overseas tour.
- About 12 months after reporting to a CONUS station.
- Within 60 days after starting a class at a CONUS service school or a civilian installation or entering the training with industry program.
- Whenever his personal preferences change.

Officers are cautioned to follow the directions on the form carefully and to return the form *unfolded* in an envelope 9 by 12 inches or larger. (The computer cannot process folded forms.)

The information on the form becomes part of the new automated officer distribution and assignment system. The date of an officer's latest

preference statement appears on his Officer Record Brief.

The new forms are available from servicing Military Personnel Offices. The old form should not be used.

The completed form should be sent directly to MILPERCEN using one of the addresses listed on it.

OER SUPPORT FORM

AR 623-105 now requires that raters and rated officers have a face-to-face discussion of the rated officer's duties, responsibilities, and performance objectives. The discussion must take place during the first 30 days of a rating period.

The OER Support Form (DA Form 67-8-1) is also being changed to include a record of this face-to-face discussion. Both the rated officer and the rater will have to initial the form to verify the date of the discussion.

The revised form will also include more space for the officer's performance objectives and significant contributions.

Instructions for using the new form will be in Issue Number 4 of the Officer Ranks Personnel Update, and the new OER support forms should be available beginning in May.

CAS¹

CAS¹ is the Combined Arms and Services Staff School. It is open to young officers with between six and ten years of commissioned service. Many of the young officers who are eligible to attend do not fully understand the course or what it is intended to accomplish.

In brief, CAS¹ takes young officers and teaches them to function better in staff positions with the Army in the

field. The course is offered in two phases:

Phase I — the non-resident phase — is open to all graduates of officer advanced courses. It consists of 14 self-paced modules which take about 136 hours to complete.

As a student completes each lesson, he takes the test and sends the answer sheet to the Extension Training Management Division at Fort Leavenworth for grading. When he has completed all 14 lessons, the student receives an open-book comprehensive exam. After he passes this exam, he is then qualified for Phase II, the resident portion of the course, which is held at Fort Leavenworth.

All Phase I qualified OPMD-managed officers in year groups 1977 and beyond will be considered to attend Phase II, which takes nine weeks.

After in-processing, which includes a weigh-in, an English diagnostic test, and the Army Physical Readiness Test, each student is assigned to a 12-person staff group. Each group works with a senior field grade officer, normally a lieutenant colonel who is a former battalion commander. This group stays together throughout the nine-week course.

The students work through 34 problem-solving lessons. These lessons are grouped into seven exercises and threaded together by a common scenario. The general scenario focuses on a fictional mechanized infantry division stationed somewhere in Kansas.

The students begin at division headquarters where they participate in an accelerated eight-day training exercise. This exercise familiarizes them with problem solving, time management, and basic staff techniques. They write military and nonmilitary letters, DFs, messages, fact sheets, memoranda, and a staff study. They also practice quantitative skills such as statistics, linear programming, decision trees, PERT diagrams, regression analysis, and calculator and computer operations. During this training, each student also prepares and presents a complete information briefing.

When this training exercise is fin-

ished, the scenario continues as the officers are assigned to a notional battalion within the division. Here the students conduct a state-of-training analysis, prepare short-range and long-range training programs, resource the long-range plan in terms of funds and POL, and plan for a battalion field training exercise.

The next exercise focuses on managing limited resources (money and manpower) to accomplish assigned missions. The students, acting as members of a directorate of industrial operations maintenance division, formulate a budget on the basis of written and oral guidance.

As part of the training scenario, the world situation worsens, and the division, which has two active brigades and a reserve component roundout brigade, must mobilize.

The students then develop selected portions of mobilization plans with the goal of developing an understanding of the basic staff considerations associated with the mobilization process. The students play the role of staff officers of the mobilizing brigade, or of officers on an installation staff, in both cases' planning for the support and reception of the mobilized units.

After the mock mobilization, the students then focus on planning combat operations in a NATO setting and prepare individual staff estimates and a division operations plan. They also formulate the deployment plan and the logistics support plan for the division during the movement.

Finally, the student staff goes through the entire staff planning sequence and the command-post execution of two division-size operations.

In short, in CAS³ the students learn how to analyze and solve problems, coordinate the solutions, and properly communicate those solutions — abilities that will allow the graduates to perform better as staff officers.

SHORT-TERM EXTENSIONS

Army Reserve officers who are serving their initial three-year or four-year active duty service obligations no

longer need to request short-term extensions to complete full overseas tours. All they have to do is complete the Overseas Tour Election Statement, DA Form 5121-R, at their MILPOs, and their short-term extensions will be approved automatically.

In the past, officers who first had to complete the basic course and other qualification courses often did not have enough time left on their initial obligations for them to serve a full overseas tour. And officers who wanted their families to accompany them overseas had to submit a request for short-term extension on active duty and wait for approval before they could apply for movement of their families.

Changes to AR 135-215 and DA Pamphlet 600-8-10 will soon require MILPOs to send a copy of an officer's DA Form 5121-R to the appropriate career management division at MILPERCEN as a record of the tour election and the voluntary extension.

For more information, anyone who is interested may write to MILPERCEN, ATTN: DAPC-OPP-M, or call AUTOVON 221-7680.

IOAC/RC

The following is the Summer 1985 schedule of the resident phases of the Infantry Officer Advanced Correspondence Course to be offered for Reserve Component officers:

PHASES:

2 and 6	14 July to 26 July
4 and 6	28 July to 9 August
2 and 4	11 August to 23 August

