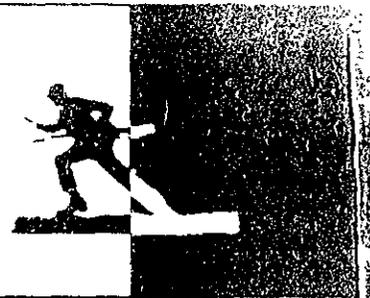


ENLISTED CAREER NOTES



INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Some soldiers overseas may be eligible to receive an extra 30 days of leave, an extra 15 days of leave with free travel to and from the United States, or an extra \$80 per month. These three benefits are available to soldiers who take part in the overseas extension incentive program.

Overseas extensions lower the demand for replacements from soldiers in the United States and increase the time between overseas tours.

The program has two MOS categories—space-imbalanced, which have more than 55 percent of their authorized spaces overseas, and non-space-imbalanced that have a turnaround time of less than 24 months. Presently, there are 33 space-imbalanced and 47 non-space-imbalanced MOSs in the program.

Soldiers in these MOSs who complete their normal overseas tours and extend for at least 12 months (up to a maximum of 18 months) are eligible for any one of the three options.

DA Circular 614-85-1 (Assignments, Details and Transfers—Incentives for Enlisted Members to Extend Tours of Duty Overseas) explains the program's policies. The Department of the Army changes the list of MOSs eligible for the program every six months and announces the changes by message.

SRB CHANGE

Effective 1 October 1986, a soldier will be able to pocket more of his Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) "up front."

In the past, a soldier who was eligible for a \$10,000 SRB would receive \$5,000 (less taxes) when he reenlisted and the remainder in anniversary payments. With the change, that same soldier would receive \$7,500 (less taxes) upon reenlistment and smaller anniversary payments.

The change can actually be worth much

more than \$2,500 to that soldier, because he might be able to use income tax averaging or use it to buy a house, for example.

PROMOTION PROCESS

Many enlisted soldiers may find it hard to understand why they are not promoted as soon as they expect to be. A closer look at the promotion process and how it works may help.

All promotions, whether to private first class or sergeant first class, are dependent upon the needs of the Army. These needs are governed by the number of losses to the force—deaths, separations, and retirements.

Promotions for private through specialist four are made by field commanders. There are no constraints on these promotions provided the soldiers meet the time in service (TIS) and time in grade (TIG) criteria. They may receive accelerated advancements, within the limitations outlined in AR 600-200, provided allocations exist.

Promotions to sergeant and staff sergeant are semi-centralized—soldiers in these ranks compete equally against others in the same MOS based on a point system. Points are awarded for such areas as SQT scores, commander's evaluation, awards and decorations, weapons qualification, physical fitness test score, promotion board appearance, and military and civilian education.

Promotions to the ranks of sergeant first class through sergeant major are fully centralized, with sergeants first class promoted by the needs of their MOSs, and master sergeants and sergeants major by sequence number.

A record of a soldier's total points is forwarded through automated systems to the Department of the Army for consolidation into an Army-wide listing of scores by MOS. The cut-off score that would result in the promotion of the desired number of

soldiers for each MOS is then determined.

The number of promotions is often limited on the basis of MOS comparisons of assigned and authorized strengths and budgetary constraints. For example, high cut-off scores mean fewer promotions because of MOS overstrengths (more soldiers than positions) or tight budgets. Once determined, cut-off scores are mailed to all Army installations for the publication of orders.

Soldiers are eligible for promotion on the first day of the third month following their date of selection. For example: A soldier is boarded and recommended in January. Between 15 January and the end of the month, his points are forwarded to DA. In February his points and those of other soldiers boarded at the same time are consolidated with soldiers already on the list to determine how many are on it and the standing of each. At the beginning of March, DA establishes cut-off scores for promotions on 1 April. Soldiers boarded in January and earlier who meet the 1 April cut-off score are then promoted.

Soldiers who are qualified in overstrength MOSs face tough decisions. They can either continue to work in those areas that earn promotion points while waiting for their MOS to balance and cut-off scores to drop; or they can ask to be reclassified into shortage MOSs to improve their chances for promotion.

DA boards held annually select soldiers for promotion to sergeant first class, master sergeant, and sergeant major. Selections are made in each MOS on the basis of the number of projected vacancies. Promotions to sergeant first class are made each month by MOS on the basis of the needs of each MOS and of budgetary constraints. Promotions to master sergeant and sergeant major are based solely on assigned and authorized strengths of the respective ranks and, of course, on budget constraints.

ENLISTED CAREER NOTES

SQTs CONTINUE

Various reports have been published announcing pending changes in the Army's individual training evaluation program. Nevertheless, while proposed changes are being discussed, soldiers will continue to take skill qualification tests as scheduled through Fiscal Year 1987.

KEEP RECORDS CURRENT

Many soldiers continue to underestimate the importance of their individual personnel qualification records, according to MILPERCEN's Enlisted Personnel Management Directorate.

These records, often referred to as DA Forms 2 and 2-1, are the keys to a soldier's career. They stand as a permanent and formal record of his individual qualifications, his past and present duty assignments, and a host of other data as required by AR 640-2-1.

When the information in these records is out of date or incorrect, it can cause assignment difficulties for the soldier or keep a Department of the Army board from selecting him for advanced schooling or promotion.

Continued discrepancies in DA Forms 2 and 2-1 give the impression that the soldiers are not taking their careers seriously. Sometimes outdated records accompany personnel requests to MILPERCEN. Or DA Form 2 does not contain the same information as Form 2-1, and the Enlisted Master File reflects other contradictions in the data that is essential to assignment managers. Members of selection boards may notice, for example, that while a soldier's DA Form 2 shows that he is 66 inches tall, his Form 2-1 shows his height as 68 inches.

Too many soldiers seem to be depending upon the system to take care of them. That may not happen. Although record custodians have a responsibility to maintain personnel qualification records, total accuracy is not possible without the involvement of each soldier. Too many items are required on these documents to leave their accuracy to the records clerk at the personnel office.

Only the soldier can solve these problems. Although an annual audit of DA

Forms 2 and 2-1 is no longer required, it is important that all soldiers take control of their own futures by carefully reviewing their records at least once a year.

EMF/CMIF

Many enlisted soldiers seem to think that after they have verified the accuracy of their Official Personnel Files at Fort Benjamin Harrison, there is nothing they can do about their records. But there is.

Two other files also play a vital role in a soldier's career—the Enlisted Master File and the Career Management Information File, both maintained at MILPERCEN.

The Enlisted Master File (EMF) is computerized. It contains more than 250 data elements, such as name, social security number, rank, MOS, date of rank, date of last permanent change of station, date returned from overseas, marital status, number of family members, assignment preferences, and date entered active duty.

Computer transactions from battalion personnel and administration centers or installation MILPOs update the EMF. This file is used by the centralized assignment procedures computer system at MILPERCEN in making nominations for worldwide assignments and future training.

Obviously, then, if the data in a soldier's EMF is wrong, he can suffer. For example, he could be sent overseas sooner than required for his MOS if his date returned from overseas code is blank or incorrect.

The EMF is also the primary source of information for determining assignments and schooling for soldiers from private through sergeant. (MILPERCEN does not maintain DA Forms 2 and 2-1 or Career Management Information Files (CMIFs) for soldiers in these ranks.)

CMIFs are maintained by the career branches at MILPERCEN on all non-commissioned officers from staff sergeant through sergeant major. When a soldier is promoted to staff sergeant, the local MILPO forwards copies of DA Forms 2 and 2-1 to his career branch, where they are used to create a CMIF. The Enlisted Records and Evaluation Center (EREC) provides a microfiche copy of the soldier's

OMPF for inclusion in his CMIF.

The CMIF contains items such as copies of evaluation and academic reports, EREC Form 10A (Enlisted Evaluation Data Report), DA Form 2635 (Enlisted Preference Statement), photograph, reclassification orders, retirement application, assignment transaction sheets, volunteer applications, career manager's notes, and correspondence with the NCO.

A soldier's CMIF is updated only when he provides new information or after a promotion board, when EREC sends his microfiche OMPF and DA Forms 2 and 2-1 for inclusion in the file.

Before the career branch takes any action on an NCO in the rank of sergeant through sergeant major, it reviews his CMIF. This ensures that the soldier is qualified for the assignment or training and that it supports his professional development.

An NCO's annual audit of his DA Forms 2 and 2-1 is the best way for him to make sure the files used to manage and develop his career are accurate and complete. When changes are made to these documents, after 30 days he should verify that the changes are in his Enlisted Master File.

The most important information for evaluating professional development is schools completed and assignment history, and this information is available only from DA Form 2-1.

Enlisted Master Files and Career Management Information Files must therefore be as accurate and complete as possible if a soldier is to assist in managing his own career.

RACIAL/ETHNIC CODE

All soldiers are responsible for making sure their racial and ethnic category (REDCAT) data base information accurately reflects the group to which they belong or with which they most closely identify.

Current Department of the Army policy requires that each soldier identify himself as a member of one of the six Department of Defense standard race or population groups—American Indian, Asian, Black, White, Other, and Unknown, as well as choose one of the 21 standard

ethnic groups (which include "Other" and "Unknown").

The accuracy of this data is important to the Army's assessment of its true racial/ethnic composition. It helps ensure that procedures and regulations do not adversely affect members of any particular group. Without accurate information in the data base, such effects cannot be measured.

Soldiers establish and maintain accurate racial/ethnic category data through their servicing MILPOs, and an appropriate time to do this is during the periodic review of their records.

NCO CORPS CHANGES

The Army is carrying out some of the recommendations made by the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Study, which was completed earlier this year, and of the Training and Doctrine Command's Enlisted Personnel Management System Review.

One change will be to limit soldiers' assignments in non-primary specialties

and undocumented positions to 12 months or less. This will benefit soldiers and the Army, because it will keep soldiers in assignments that will promote their progression in the careers for which they have been trained. For example, an 11B infantry sergeant could not work for more than 12 months as a 71L administration NCO.

Another change includes limiting back-to-back assignments outside a soldier's normal career pattern. Under this change, an enlisted soldier would no longer be allowed to go, for example, from a recruiting job straight into a drill sergeant assignment or an ROTC job. This will help keep soldiers in the mainstream while supporting the professional development of individual soldiers. Soldiers assigned to special duty jobs such as recreation service will continue to be limited to 90 days in those jobs.

During the next year, MILPERCEN officials will test changes in the centralized assignment process for enlisted soldiers. They will be making recommendations in writing to help the gaining command make final assignments for in-bound soldiers. These recommendations would take into

consideration the soldier's training and experience.

Another change calls for the elimination of mandatory secondary MOSs for NCOs in the rank of promotable sergeant and above. Too many soldiers have secondary MOSs in their files for which they have not been trained. This change will affect soldiers in all but the space-imbalanced MOSs.

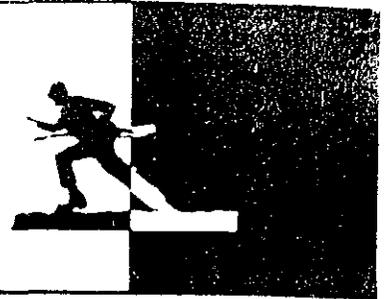
Secondary MOSs will be awarded only after appropriate training, and if a soldier has had formal training or experience in a certain field, then he would retain that secondary MOS.

The NCO Professional Development Study identified eight requirements that define the responsibilities and duties of NCOs. These include job proficiency, MOS competency, physical fitness and military bearing, basic education skills, leadership skills, training skills, commitment to professional values, and attributes and personal responsibility.

A new EER is now being developed that will include these eight requirements. It should be fielded by the fall of 1987.



OFFICERS CAREER NOTES



CORRECTION ON PIN-ON POINTS

The item concerning "pin-on" points for promotion that appears in INFANTRY's July-August 1986 issue (page 47) contains an error. The correct current targets are as follows:

- Colonels—22 years, plus or minus 1 year.
- Lieutenant colonels—16 years, plus or minus 1 year.
- Majors—10 years, plus or minus 1 year.

As the earlier item explains, these are not requirements, only guidelines.

SELECTION BOARD COMMENTS

Feedback from 1986 officer selection boards at MILPERCEN has brought out several areas of concern:

OERs. Too many acronyms are still being used, especially in duty titles. Board members are from various branches, so the duty description must be written in terms that are common to all branches.

The comments in Part IV (Professionalism) should be able to stand alone without reference to the traits listed above. For example, instead of "A.1.—Always, A.6.—Consistently," comments should be straightforward: "Judgment is superb."

Weight. Weight control is a continuing issue with selection boards. Officers who are consistently pushing the maximum screening table weight or who have been given a new, medically determined maximum allowable weight are bound to receive close scrutiny. This is especially true when there has been a history of increasing weight.

A photo can tell the board members a lot about how well an officer meets military appearance standards, even if the officer does not meet the screening table or maximum allowable weight standards (AR 600-9). In these instances, raters are

also encouraged to help clarify an officer's appearance and fitness by making specific comments, positive or negative.

Photographs. Although the problems with photos have been discussed time and time again, promotion boards continue to complain about the absence of current photos or the poor quality of the photos they do see. Additional general comments are made about such problems as ribbons not being worn, shoes not shined, poor pressing of uniform, and improper length of trousers.

Officer Record Briefs. Although a yearly audit of an officer's ORB is required, in numerous instances it appeared that these audits had not been conducted. Officers should pay particular attention to assignment history, awards, both military and civilian education, and date of last photo and physical.

KEEP ORB CURRENT

Each year during an officer's birth month, his local Military Personnel Office (MILPO) contacts him and reminds him to review his ORB and make any necessary changes. For the data elements that can be corrected by the MILPO, changes are entered by automated transactions and conveyed to MILPERCEN for posting to the Officer Master File (OMF). For the data elements that cannot be corrected locally, the MILPO sends supporting documentation to the appropriate career branch office.

The problem is that many officers never go to the MILPO to validate their ORBs. And of those who do, many do not follow up to make sure the changes were posted.

New ORBs are sent to MILPOs four months after an officer's birth month and again four months later. In addition, an officer may request an updated ORB by mail from MILPERCEN (ATTN: ASNI-SMC). Requests must include name, grade, social security number, and date

of birth. Special requests should not be submitted less than 60 days after an annual ORB audit to allow time for the results to be posted to the OMF.

The importance of accuracy in such categories as pay entry basic date (PEBD), advanced civilian education, and height/weight is obvious. But an officer who lets his ORB go unaudited for extended periods may suddenly find a host of less visible problems. Faulty or inconsistent abbreviations in the assignment history section, for example, take on new importance when an officer knows that a promotion board will shortly be reviewing the ORB in detail.

Another problem worth mentioning—again—is the proper way to fill out and submit the Officer Preference Statement, DA Form 483. The instructions in the upper right corner of the form clearly say that a No. 2 pencil is to be used and that the form is to be mailed unfolded in a 9x12 envelope. But many are still received filled out in ink, crayon, or magic marker and folded or stapled.

SINGLE TRACK OPTION

In accordance with the recommendation of the Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) Study Group, officers are being developed in different career patterns to meet Army requirements through single and dual tracking.

In order to meet the large number of Army requirements at the field grades, especially in the functional areas, only a small number of combat arms officers will be allowed to single track in their branch.

The combat arms officers who do request to single track in their branch must also be aware of potential assignment limitations. Specifically, they will be eligible to fill only the positions coded for their branch, branch immaterial, or combat arms immaterial. They will not be considered for any other positions coded for

a functional area, such as division and brigade personnel positions (coded 41) and operations positions (coded 54).

Limits to the single track inventories will be established by year group for each branch and functional area in which single tracking is permitted.

The personnel proponents for some functional areas have determined that branch experience, through dual tracking, is vital to professional development. Therefore, single tracking is not permitted in SCs 18 (Special Operations), 48 (Foreign Area Officer), 50 (Force Development), and 54 (Operations, Plans, and Training).

Because of current and projected shortages, a very limited number of officers in the following basic branches will be allowed to single track in any functional area: 21 (Engineer), 25 (Signal), 35 (Military Intelligence), 74 (Chemical), 91 (Ordnance), and 92 (Quartermaster).

To qualify for single tracking, an officer must meet the single track criteria established by the personnel proponents as shown in DA Pamphlet 600-3, subject to the above restrictions.

Several methods will be used to implement the single track career pattern:

- Officers who hold two specialty codes in the same branch—for example, an officer who holds SC 22 and SC 23—will be automatically single tracked in the Engineer branch. This also applies to the Military Intelligence, Signal, Ordnance, and Quartermaster branches. The conversion will be automatic with no application required. If an officer in this category wishes to add a functional area, however, and dual track, he should forward his request, by letter, to his career management officer.

- Some of the officers who currently hold two branch codes or two functional area codes have been recommended for the single track career pattern on the basis of Army requirements and individual qualifications. These officers have been advised of the board's recommendation and given an opportunity to appeal before a final decision.

- At seven years of service, officers who are eligible to single track in their branch will be given an opportunity to express their desires before the functional area designation process.

Any officer who wants to single track in either his branch or his functional area and does not fall under one of the above three categories (and who is not subject to the restrictions discussed earlier) may submit his application by letter to USA MILPERCEN, ATTN: DAPC-OPB, 200 Stovall Street, Alexandria, VA 22332-0400, by 30 November 1986. Boards will convene in December 1986 and January 1987 to select those who are to single track. Board results will be available in April 1987.

The procedures outlined here do not apply to promotable lieutenant colonels or to serving colonels. Requests from officers in these ranks will be considered on a case-by-case basis by individual application to Colonels Division, MILPERCEN, ATTN: DAPC-OPC, 200 Stovall Street, Alexandria, VA 22332-0400.

RESERVE COMPONENT PROMOTIONS

The selection rate for educationally qualified officers considered by Reserve Component promotion boards is high, but too many of the officers not selected are passed over primarily because of incomplete files.

The most common deficiencies in the files being reviewed are missing education documents and missing Officer Evaluation Reports. A significant number of files are also missing photos, or they contain photos of poor quality. Another problem is insufficient data to establish that an officer meets the height and weight standards as outlined in AR 600-9.

If you are a Reserve Component officer whose records are due to go before a promotion board, here is what you need to do:

- Get a copy of your microfiche Official Military Personnel File about one year before the board is to convene. For promotion to captain or major, that means January or February. For promotion to lieutenant colonel or colonel, the boards meet in September and October.

- Take the OMPF to the Reserve Center or any library to use a microfiche reader. Check the "P" (Performance) fiche, which contains such things as OERs, academic evaluation reports (AERs), awards, and disciplinary data.

This is the primary document used by selection boards.

- The fiche should contain proof that you have completed the education requirement for promotion to the next higher rank. If it does not, forward a copy of the AER (DA Form 1059) through channels to get that proof on the fiche and before the board.

- While you are looking at the fiche, inventory your OERs. All of them should be there, except possibly the latest one. If they are not, your record will be less competitive than those of other officers before the board. If an OER is missing, ask your personnel officer to initiate a tracer. (A recent records screen showed that more than 25 percent of the records were missing OERs. And a single OER sometimes makes the difference between selection and non-selection.)

- Have an official photo made if you can; if not, a snapshot will do. First, make sure your uniform fits right, get it pressed, get a haircut, shine your shoes. Then have the photo taken against a plain wall. Get the photo enlarged so you can provide a 4x10 copy to the board. Have several copies made. On the back of each, carefully print your name, rank, social security number, branch, date of the photo, and your current height and weight. Sign the photo.

- Make sure your weight is within the standards every time you are weighed. If you have a higher maximum allowable weight (MAW) than the tables permit, send a copy of the MAW document with your packet to the board. If there is any question about your weight, mention your current weight in a letter to the board.

- Write a letter to the board president.

In it detail documents that are missing from your fiche, such as OERs or education records. If your weight is near the maximum allowable for your height, state your current weight. If you have a maximum allowable weight from the "pinch test" that exceeds what is allowed in the tables, attach a copy of the MAW statement as an enclosure.

If your fiche does not contain proof of the education required for promotion, tell the board you have completed the requirement, and attach a copy of the proof—DA 1059 or your diploma. If you are working on military education beyond that required, mention this as well.