

# OFFICERS CAREER NOTES



Army officers excel in taking responsibility for the soldiers and the material resources assigned to them. Success in these duties requires planning and execution. But there is one area of responsibility that officers routinely overlook: maintaining their own individual records. Too many officers do not perform the maintenance necessary to ensure that their own official files are in the best competitive form, not just for promotions, schools, and special boards but also for the numerous file reviews that may be conducted to meet special last-minute requirements.

Your file is a direct reflection of you, and its frequent review and update is a career necessity. Ensure that the information in the file representing you is correct. If you are not selected for a promotion or school because of an inaccurate file, fixing it could take months. Boards do not have time to question the accuracy of your file and, unfortunately, PERSCOM assignment officers are no longer able to help with individual record maintenance as they once did.

Selection boards generally review only three items: Your officer record brief (ORB), your official photo, and your microfiche official military personnel file (OMPF). Most of the professional development decisions about you will originate from these records, and you are responsible for seeing that these items are always ready for the board.

## Officer Record Brief

Your personnel service center (PSC) should provide a current ORB for your review 60 days before a board is to convene. This is your last chance to make corrections; the ORB you correct will be the one provided to the board. A few last-minute updates, if needed, will

reflect your interest and your attention to detail. Numerous pen-and-ink changes will indicate poor planning and lack of prior attention to detail.

Keep your ORB updated during your annual audits, and follow up to make sure the changes noted earlier have been made. When reviewing your ORB, this is what you should look for:

**Assignment History.** Make sure job titles and units are easy to understand and that the job title on the ORB matches the one on the corresponding OER. Your OERs can be used to justify changes. Replace acronyms with clear titles wherever possible; for example, use *executive officer* instead of *XO*. Ensure that the number of months in each position is accurate, and get rid of double entries for the same position. Replace old MOS codes with current codes the board will recognize.

**Photo Date.** Make sure the date of your official photo is current within the past five years.

**Physical Examination Date.** You should have a physical examination every five years, more frequently in some cases. An out-of-date physical may cause the board to suspect you are trying to hide a weight gain or a change in fitness status. Check your height and weight and physical profile for accuracy. Watch the changes to the weight and height scale as reflected on your OERs—adding height after the age of 18 is likely to raise questions.

**Date of Rank.** If your date of rank is incorrect, you may not be considered in the appropriate promotion zone.

**Education.** Make sure your civilian and military education level codes are accurate.

In brief, *check all entries for accuracy.* Use Army Regulation 600-8-104, *Military Personnel Information Man-*

*agement/Records*, Chapter 4, to help you update your ORB. If the ORB is not correct, work with your local PSC to get the changes made. Changes can take time, so start early.

## Official Photo

Official photos are no longer placed on the microfiche but are kept on file and delivered to the board. The hard-copy photo will be the first part of your file a board member sees, and you should ensure that it will make a good first impression. Although you are required to update your photo every five years, or when you are promoted, feedback reveals that a photo less than three years old gives a better "picture" of what you look like. Get a color photo for your board. Send two copies directly to your assignment officer, and keep the negatives for your files.

## Microfiche OMPF

The contents of your microfiche OMPF are the only indication a board member has of your performance. You should order a copy every year. Send your signed request, with your social security number, to Commander, U.S. Total Army Personnel Command, ATTN: TAPC-MSR-S, 200 Stovall Street, Alexandria, VA 22332-0444.

Make sure your OERs are kept up to date and in sequence. Awards and other documents are normally held until an OER update is required. If you have difficulty with your microfiche corrections, send documentation to your branch for help. Documents that arrive too late to be placed on your microfiche are delivered to the board in hard copy.

Make sure your hard work is not ignored through a failure to maintain your own records.