



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
SECRETARIAT FOR DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY SELECTION BOARDS
1600 SPEARHEAD DIVISION AVENUE
FORT KNOX, KY 40122

AHRC-PDV-S

20 April 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR Director of Military Personnel Management, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff G-1, 300 Army Pentagon, Washington, DC 20310-0300

SUBJECT: Field After Action Report – Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) Regular Army (RA) and Army Reserve Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Sergeant First Class (SFC) Promotion Board

1. References.

- a. AR 600-8-19, Enlisted Promotions and Reductions, dated 25 April 2017.
- b. Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-25, dated 11 September 2015.
- c. DAPE-MPE-PD, Memorandum of Instruction (MOI) dated 06 March 2018, Subject: FY18 RA/USAR AGR SFC Promotion Board.

2. General: The FY18 RA and AGR SFC Promotion Selection Board convened at the Department of the Army Secretariat, Fort Knox, Kentucky on 03 April 2018, to select the best qualified noncommissioned officers for the purpose of promotion to SFC.

3. Board Issues and Observations.

- a. Issue: Board Files with erroneous information and/or missing critical information.
 - (1) Discussion: There were large variations with recorded height between evaluations and on Enlisted Record Brief (ERBs). Additionally, grammatical and administrative errors indicated poor administrative oversight by the rating chain. Duty titles on ERBs often did not match evaluations, which created inconsistencies. Non-Commissioned Officers, with accurate and applicable documentation in their files i.e. evaluations, Department of the Army (DA) Form 1059s were most competitive. Board members identified several inconsistencies between DA Photo, ERB, and Performance Files. All entries on the ERB should be up to date and supported with documentation in the performance files.

- (2) Recommendation: Soldiers should review their board file with their supervisors, in accordance with the applicable MILPER message, as part of a counseling program to support the importance of a correct board file. The NCOs

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competing for promotion must understand the accuracy or inaccuracy of their board file is a direct reflection of them.

b. Issue: Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report (NCOER)

(1) Discussion: The new NCOER provided the panel members a better understanding of the NCO's overall performance and potential. The rater and senior rater comments were utilized to help identify the best qualified NCOs for promotion. The use of clear enumeration by the senior rater provided the panel with a strong perspective of where the NCO stood in the population, e.g. "1 of 5". Senior rater enumeration without explaining the population was less helpful to panel members and provided a vague, less useful perspective. Panel members viewed several NCOERs with inconsistent rater and senior rater comments (e.g. rater assessed performance as Far Exceeded and senior rater assessed potential as Qualified). Panel members found these inconsistencies in comments to be difficult to interpret without additional clarification.

(2) Recommendation: Continue to educate the force on the new NCOER. Ensure all leaders understand the importance of clear, concise statements and the value of enumerating the NCO. Raters/senior raters should utilize the evaluation report effectively to identify top performers. Senior enlisted advisors at every echelon should assist in the review of enlisted evaluations through dedicated collaboration.

d. Issue: Department of Army (DA) Photos missing, outdated and or not in accordance with AR 670-1.

(1) Discussion: A large number of missing and outdated DA photos gave the perception that NCOs either did not understand the importance of having an updated photo on file, or did not consider themselves competitive for advancement. There were few files missing photos accompanied by a letter to the President of the Board with an explanation. Additionally poorly fitting uniforms gave an unprofessional look and/or the belief that the NCO did not understand the importance of a professional photo. This view was heightened when grooming standards were not in accordance with AR 670-1.

(2) Recommendation: NCOs should be mentored on the importance of having an updated DA photo that is in accordance with regulations. They must understand that ownership for the quality of photo rests with the individual. NCOs should prepare themselves appropriately by having at least one senior NCO assess and provide feedback on their appearance in uniform.

e. Issue: Letters to the President of the Board.

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(1) Discussion: Letters to the President of the Board were carefully considered and identified those NCOs who appropriately addressed issues that impacted their promotion file. A number of Soldiers submitted letters to the president of the board that provided irrelevant information and failed to effectively communicate their message. Letters should address discrepancies that will impact the board. For example, events such as winning the NCO of the quarter/year or being inducted into the Audie Murphy Club should be noted as they are not reflected on the ERB.

(2) Recommendation: Letters to the president of the board should be vetted by the rated Soldier's leadership to ensure clarity of message and relevancy of information presented. This oversight will ensure that NCOs consider their purpose for writing the letter and that a quality document is submitted with their desired message. Ultimately, it is the NCO's decision on what he or she believes should be directly addressed to the President of the Board and panel members.

f. Issue: NCOs failing to maintain Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) and or Army Body Composition Program (ABCP) standards.

(1) Discussion: NCOs who consistently demonstrated physical fitness excellence and maintained their weight in accordance with AR 600-9 were viewed favorably and were frequently considered best qualified for promotion and to lead Soldiers. APFT failures and enrollments in ABCP were viewed as unfavorable. NCOERs that reflected the last APFT scores and failures to meet standards in accordance with ABCP requirements assisted panel members in quickly differentiating between NCOs who exceeded standards from those who failed to meet standards. Many raters and senior raters continued to give favorable ratings such as Most Qualified/ Highly Qualified to NCOs who failed to meet APFT and/or ABCP standards. Additionally, Panel members noted several files reflected inconsistencies in height and weight on consecutive NCOERs. Numerous files reflected significant trends where the NCO consistently struggled to maintain physical fitness standards. Failure to maintain consistency within the Army standards IAW AR 600-9 resulted in panel members questioning the Soldier's ability to lead.

(2) Recommendation: Unit leaders and Soldiers must continue to place high emphasis on fitness and ensure their programs lead to improvements. Units should enforce the standardization of the ABCP and appoint quality trained personnel to assist with managing the program. Unit level leadership should ensure that readiness standards are maintained and that all information provided on the NCO's evaluation report, to include the APFT and HT/WT is complete, accurate, and in accordance with AR 600-9. Leaders must hold subordinates accountable for not meeting standards regardless of rank, duty position, or special skillset they provide.

g. Issue: Non-Commissioned Officer and Civilian Education.

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(1) Discussion: Those who consistently pursued opportunities for self-improvement through military and civilian education were viewed favorably by the panel. NCOs who completed minimal education requirements to become eligible for promotion were viewed less favorably. NCOs with qualifications and certifications such as Master Resiliency Trainers, Equal Opportunity Advisors, Victim Advocates, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, Master Fitness Trainers, etc. were viewed as much more competitive and prepared for responsibilities at the next level. Leadership training such as Ranger, Sapper, Airborne, Air Assault, Pathfinder, etc. and membership in professional clubs such as the Sergeant Audie Murphy or Sergeant Morales clubs were also viewed as highly favorable. Many records were found to be inconsistent with regard to college credits annotated in official records and the ERB. Several NCOERs included comments from Academic Evaluation Reports (DA Form 1059) that were viewed by the panel as unauthorized in accordance with AR 623-3.

(2) Recommendation: Leaders should familiarize themselves with DA Pam 600-25 to ensure they understand the appropriate level of military and civilian education for each rank and or level of responsibility. Soldiers seeking to set themselves apart from their peers and improvement above and beyond what is provided by DA Pam 600-25 is a clear demonstration of exceeding standards. Soldiers should ensure college credits, transcripts, diplomas and certifications match the information annotated on their ERBs. It is imperative that supervisors of NCOs afford them opportunities to attend schooling to increase their overall competitiveness.

4. Conclusion or general comments.

a. It is important that senior leaders at all echelons conduct talent management of subordinate leaders to prepare them for future roles of greater responsibility. Commanders and Command Sergeant's Major should assist in managing the careers of subordinate NCOs to ensure they are aware of the requirements for advancement. Performance in broadening assignments matter, as NCOs with a variety of experience are highly competitive. Leaders must take a holistic approach of ensuring a thorough review of an NCO's military file, done early into the Soldier's career and promotion to the NCO Corps, facilitating dialogue and providing an appropriate career path in accordance with DA PAM 600-25. All leaders and Career Management Field (CMF) branch managers should continue to identify talent and potential for promotion to ensure the best are promoted while safeguarding the institution. Specifically, raters and senior raters should continue to groom NCOs for senior leadership assignments based on their talents, and mentored on educational goals, to include credentialing.

b. Raters and senior raters must understand that they owe it to the rated NCO, as well as to the Army, to counsel and provide an honest assessment on the NCOER. A staggering amount of ambiguously and poorly written senior rater narratives require panel members to interpret the senior rater's intent. Senior raters should clearly

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communicate an enumeration against peers, evaluate overall performance, and rate potential for promotion and further education in succinct sentences.

c. This "best qualified" promotion board was extremely competitive in each CMF, which makes it very difficult, but not impossible, for a Soldier to overcome disciplinary or derogatory file information. Depending on each panel member's individual voting philosophy, derogatory information, in some cases, may be overcome with a significant positive trend in performance and potential within the past five to seven years. Additionally, it is incumbent upon Soldiers to ensure that any form of possible derogatory information in their file that is related to an incident is concluded within a timely manner. Soldiers cannot delay in providing necessary documentation negating the incident if they are found to have been responsible. Soldiers hold the responsibility to manage their own careers. They should seek assignment diversity to demonstrate the ability to accept greater responsibility and potential for further promotion.



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