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## Armor NCOs Do Well in SFC Selection Results

SFC selection results for CY00 are now out, and the results are tallied. Overall, CMF19 soldiers did great, with our E6s earning a 21 percent selection rate compared to the Army's average selection rate of 19.5 percent. The Armor force selection rate also exceeded that of the other top two maneuver combat arms CMFs, almost double that of the Infantry at 10.7 percent and about 1.5 percent higher than Artillery at 19.7 percent. Although Armor selection was down 6 percent from last year, it was still above the Army average.

One important promotion trend continued: our Excellence in Armor (EIA) soldiers again had the highest select rate at 54.6 percent. I believe that two factors determined this rate. The number one reason our EIA soldiers are selected at this phenomenal rate is that these soldiers are the very best soldiers in the Armor Branch. Once our soldiers earn EIA, they seem to remain in the band of excellence. And, of course, we tell selection board members to look for NCOs enrolled in this prestigious program.

The master gunner assignment and platoon sergeant time were the two biggest discriminators beyond the key leadership requirements. Although master gunner is not a "leadership" position, records reflected that these NCOs are clearly above the rest. They strive to stay in the tank commander positions and are normally "the" NCO chosen to serve as a platoon sergeant over other SSGs and occasionally SFCs. For selection to SFC, master gunners accounted for 18 percent of those selected. In fact, 13.6 percent of those selected were both EIA soldiers and master gunners.

Armor NCOs continue to do well in furthering their education. All were BNCOC graduates and 15 percent of the primary zone SSGs were ANCOC graduates. Fifty percent of the primary zone and 36 percent of the secondary zone had between 1 to 4 years of college. The average education level of CMF19 is one year of college, which is also the Army average. With technology changing how we do things, this trend is one our Armor Force needs to continue to support. And the education must not just be stand-alone college courses, but a college program that complements the Armor soldier's career path.

The Armor records reviewed continued to show numerous questionable or inflated NCOERs. These NCOERs rated soldiers as excellent, but did not include bullet comments that supported the rating. The board members generally ignored those excellence blocks that were not justified. Some of these soldiers probably did deserve those ratings, but were not given full credit because of those poorly written bullet statements. Also noted was an inconsistency in ratings when an NCO failed the APFT or was enrolled in an overweight program. Some raters were giving "Success" ratings and some were giving "Needs Some Improvement." Raters must place more emphasis on accurate ratings and writing NCOER bullets that are measurable through demonstrated performance that supports the rating of excellence, success, or needs improvement.

I need to stress that NCOs themselves, as well as their leadership, must place more emphasis on updating and main-

taining the soldier's Enlisted Records Brief (ERB), Official Military Personnel Fiche (OMPF), and official photographs. As an example, records reviewed for staff sergeants eligible for promotion in the secondary zone revealed that over 25 percent of them did not have a photograph.

I am glad to say that physical fitness among CMF19 soldiers appears strong. Many NCOERs reflect high APFT scores and stress excellent military appearance. However, some NCOERs noted "YES" toward compliance with AR 600-9 weight standards, but official photos and weight listed on NCOERs put these ratings into question. In some cases, a fair number of photos were outdated, and the NCO had a significant increase in weight documented on his NCOER. Outdated photos or the lack of an official photo are a definite discriminator, especially if AR 600-9 standards are questionable.

Warfighting competence and TO&E assignments as an armor or scout leader are paramount and will continue to influence promotion selections in the future. NCOs must strive to become branch qualified before moving on to TDA assignments and should avoid back-to-back TDA assignments.

The bottom line is that the overall career management, performance, and potential of the CMF19 SSGs is outstanding. CMF19 has selected some of the Army's best to help lead us in the 21st century. Congratulations to each of those selected. This is just another reason I can say:

**"TODAY IS THE BEST DAY TO BE A SOLDIER."**