

# DRIVER'S SEAT

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## Retention — A Need for Concern

“The Army enlists soldiers but retains families.”

“Be all you can be, because we need you in the Army.”

“We do more by 9 o’clock than most people do all day.”

“From the hills of Bosnia to the rice paddies of Korea, the Armor/Cavalry soldier sets the example.”

All of these themes have encouraged good soldiers to reenlist. In the midst of downsizing and the NCO down-grade program, slogans like these could become increasingly valuable to us in the near future. They can break the ice, provide a rallying point, or further a discussion of retention.

- How do we retain quality soldiers?
- How is the Armor force doing in the area of retention?

A noncommissioned officer’s responsibility is to maintain the integrity and quality of the Armor force. We do this by putting quality soldiers in the right

positions and providing them with career advancement opportunities that not only challenge them, but stimulate their desire to continue an Armor career. We need to emphasize retention opportunities and include the soldier’s family in the decision to stay Armor or Cavalry.

This is too critical a task to be shouldered by the unit retention NCO alone. We must all stay abreast of current retention policies and options available for our soldiers. The intent is not to undercut the retention NCOs, but to supplement their expertise with sound career counseling.

This counseling can be formal, in the manner taught in PLDC, BNCOC, AN-COC, or in FM 22-101 (Counseling), but a number of other methods exist — back deck counseling, foot locker counseling, motor pool counseling, or shooting the breeze, just to name a few.

Whatever method you use, the desired outcome should be the retention of quality Armor/Cavalry soldiers. Only through open lines of communi-

cation can we make the soldier and his family aware of all the information necessary for a sound, intelligent, and informed decision on the advantages of staying Armor/Cavalry. It is better to retain one quality soldier than to allow two less-than-adequate soldiers to reenlist.

Now, how is the Armor force doing on the retention of quality soldiers? The chart is a snapshot of the retention picture in CMF 19. As you can see, we are below the Army average on initial reenlistments across the CMF, and slightly below the Army average in 19D mid-career reenlistment. The remainder of the Armor force is in line with the Army average.

So, the answer to the problem is relatively simple. We must work harder to maintain quality soldiers during their initial enlistment assignments and improve on our retention of 19D mid-career soldiers. We do this by caring for our soldiers and their families, educating them early on about their options, so when reenlistment time occurs there are no surprises, and placing them in the best possible position for promotion and advancement through schooling, Soldier/NCO of the Quarter/Year Boards, enrollment in the Excellence in Armor program, and induction into the Sergeant Morales or Audie Murphy Clubs.

I challenge all of you to heighten your awareness of retention, and to work diligently to retain those soldiers who will someday replace us as leaders.

	<u>19D</u>		<u>19K</u>	
	ARMY RETENTION RATE	MOS RETENTION RATE	ARMY RETENTION RATE	MOS RETENTION RATE
INITIAL	35.6%	31.2%	43.5%	39.2%
MID-CAREER	75.3%	75.0%	73.1%	73.1%
CAREER	78.2%	78.2%	73.1%	73.1%