

DRIVER'S SEAT

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Excellence In Armor

If you are a gutsy, stellar performer that faces challenges head-on and plans to climb to the top of the mountain, then I have got just three words for you — Excellence in Armor.

In this issue, I want to talk about a program that is near and dear to my heart. It is a program that exists to catapult tankers and scouts who want to get ahead, and who are not afraid to work hard to get there. Read on!

The purpose of the Excellence in Armor program is to fill tank and cavalry vehicle commander's hatches with our best, brightest, and most highly motivated soldiers, whose performance is consistently outstanding. In essence, Excellence in Armor identifies and recognizes those soldiers who are a measurable cut above the rest. Additionally, the program provides incentives to help retain these quality soldiers.

First, some history. The Excellence in Armor program was initially proposed by the United States Army Armor Center, in May 1984, to the Department of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. After much review, the program was approved for implementation in October 1987.

Since 1987, enrollment has increased to well over 3,080 active duty and 821 Reserve soldiers. As more soldiers see the benefits of the program — that is, see their contemporaries advance — I expect it to grow even further.

The program is open to Career Management Field 19, private through sergeant first class. Enrolling is quite simple. Meeting the standards for enrollment is not!

Soldiers can either be enrolled during One Station Unit Training (OSUT) or by their unit. However, let me point out now that once in, failure to maintain Excellence in Armor standards will cause you to be disenrolled. Once you have been disenrolled, you cannot be re-enrolled. Later, you will see why soldiers benefit by staying in the Excellence in Armor program.

The OSUT selection process begins with the drill sergeant recommending a soldier in the 10th week of training. He bases his decision on the performance, motivation, and leadership potential displayed by the soldier. The soldier also appears before a battalion or squadron level board to confirm his nomination.

During OSUT, Excellence in Armor soldiers receive more than 50 additional hours of training in Skill Level's One and Two.

Before graduation from OSUT, the soldier is formally enrolled into Excellence in Armor, provided he meets the following minimum standards:

APFT Score	230
Weapons Qualification	Sharpshooter
End of Block Tests	Pass All
Armor Crewman Test (ACT I, II, III) or Scout Gunnery Skills Test	Passed All With No More Than One NO-GO Per Test
Armor Stakes	Pass All
High School Diploma or Equivalent	(Waiverable by Bn/Sqdn Cdr)

Once enrolled, his DA Form 2-1 is annotated on line 19 with Excellence in Armor and the enrollment date. Upon assignment to his first permanent duty station, his orders will indicate that he

is an Excellence in Armor soldier. He also hand-carries a letter to the gaining commander informing him of his Excellence in Armor status.

Excellence in Armor enrollment at unit level occurs when a soldier is recommended by his commander and has met the following minimum standards:

- Satisfy unit commander's evaluation of technical proficiency and potential for leadership. This is the most important element.
- Achieve an APFT score of 260 points or higher.
- Pass the Common Tasks Test (CTT).
- Pass the Tank Commander Certification Test Level I.

The test by assigned vehicle is:

M1 Series Tank	FM 17-12-1-2	TCGST
M3 Bradley	FM 21-1	GST
M998 (HMMWV)	FM 17-12-8	GST

- Qualify Sharpshooter on assigned individual weapon.

NOTE: Soldiers enrolled during OSUT have one year to meet the above standards once permanently assigned to a unit, or they face disenrollment.

Commanders who have a soldier not meeting one of the above standards may request a waiver under certain circumstances. One example might be a soldier who consistently scores high on the APFT, has a temporary profile, and cannot take the APFT. Once a soldier

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is accepted into Excellence in Armor, his DA Form 2-1 should be annotated as discussed earlier.

Now for the benefits! Incentives for Excellence in Armor soldiers with exceptional performance are as follows:

- OSUT commanders may promote 10% of their class at the completion of Basic to PV2 and those 10% may be promoted to PFC at the completion of the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) specific phase. Statistics show that the greatest number of these promotions go to Excellence in Armor soldiers, primarily because they have proven themselves to be overachievers.
- A sergeant who is a Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course graduate may request to take the SCCT/TCCT II through his local TCO or TSO.

It is a comprehensive two-hour test on Skill Level 3 and 4 tasks. If he passes with a score of 70 or higher, he is eligible to receive 50 promotion points in

Military Education for his SSG promotion packet. This is in accordance with Army Regulation 600-8-19, *Enlisted Promotions and Reductions*.

- All senior NCO promotion boards are briefed that Excellence in Armor identifies an Armor soldier as a "cut above." On the last SFC promotion board, there were more Excellence in Armor soldiers selected for promotion to SFC than any other category in CMF19. Being an Excellence in Armor soldier certainly has its advantages, not only by increasing your chances for promotion, but also in recognizing you as a cut above everyone else.

The proof of the program has been seen in CMF19 promotions. During the first year that the original OSUT Excellence in Armor enrollee was eligible for promotion to SSG and SFC, 75% of SSG promotions and 74% of SFC selections were Excellence in Armor. Commanders are selecting, and promotion boards are recognizing, the highest quality soldiers.

But the program cannot survive and flourish without command involvement.

Leaders have four responsibilities when it comes to Excellence in Armor: first, identify and challenge incoming Excellence in Armor soldiers; second, establish and support a unit Excellence in Armor program; third, accelerate SPC/SGT/SSG promotions and school attendance for Excellence in Armor soldiers; and fourth, maintain quality in the program! If a soldier no longer meets the standards, disenroll him.

Finally, if you have any questions about Excellence in Armor, you can direct them to the following address:

Commander
U.S. Army Armor Center
ATTN: ATZK-ARP (SFC Berg/Ms. Graham)
Fort Knox, KY 40121-5000

Or call DSN 464-1368/3188 or Commercial (502)624-1368/3188.

Keep Charging!