



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY HUMAN RESOURCES COMMAND
DA SECRETARIAT FOR SENIOR ENLISTED SELECTION BOARDS
8899 EAST 56TH STREET
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46249-5301

AHRC-PDV-SEB

25 August 2008

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

SUBJECT: Field After Action Report - FY09 Master Sergeant Selection Board

1. References.

- a. DAPE-MPE-PD, Memorandum of Instruction (MOI) dated 3 June 2008, Subject: MOI for the FY09 Master Sergeant Selection Board.
- b. FY09 Master Sergeant Selection Board Standard Operating Procedures effective 5 August 2008.

2. General. The FY09 MSG Selection Board convened at the DA Secretariat for Senior Enlisted Selection Boards, Indianapolis, Indiana on 5 August 2008 to select the best qualified noncommissioned officers for promotion to MSG IAW references 1a and 1b above. The board also screened packets on Soldiers referred to it under the Stand-By Advisory Board (STAB) process.

3. Board Issues and Observations (items of interest to the field relating to the board process, procedures and personnel files).

- a. Competence Assessment of Promotion Zone. The board membership was unanimous regarding "potential" as the most important factor considered when selecting NCOs for promotion to Master Sergeant (MSG). There were an abundance of highly qualified NCOs competing across our Army, and we are confident we have selected the best qualified NCOs for promotion. We cannot overemphasize the importance of a comprehensive validation of records by the individual NCO with assistance from their leadership. The considered NCOs validation sent a clear message of preparedness and a strong desire for advancement. The board membership overwhelmingly agreed that up-to-date efficiency reports, ERBs, physical fitness and bearing data, military awards and honors, civilian and military education levels with supporting documentation; and a current photo brought clarity to the selection process.

- b. Performance and Potential.

1. Those NCOs that served in a variety of challenging and demanding (high risk) assignments in the current grade were viewed more favorably than NCOs that remained in low risk (less demanding), or positions outside their career field for an extended period.

2. Overall, the NCOER remains viable and was the most critical indicator of potential for promotion. Those NCOs whose evaluations were well written, with quantifiable excellence ratings and clearly articulated statements regarding future potential stood out and were viewed more

favorably. Justifiable and objective comments were the most useful in determining best qualified for promotion.

a. Rater. The majority of the rater comments on performance were well written. In some instances comments did not substantiate rating/s of excellence. Raters should carefully evaluate the performance of their subordinates and give the appropriate rating commensurate to that performance. Raters should avoid creating inflated reports which make it difficult for board members to discern fully qualified from best qualified NCOs.

b. Senior Rater. The board observed that a majority of the NCOERs showed agreement between the rater and senior rater comments. However, senior raters should clearly articulate to the board promotion potential and use statements such as "promote immediately, promote now" for the very best NCOs. Promote ahead of peers is not perceived as strong a message and should be reserved for those meeting the standard. In many instances strong statements were matched with raters annotating "fully capable" and the senior rater giving marks of 2s or lower in both the performance and potential categories.

c. Reviewer. When rating inconsistencies occur on the NCOER, it is the responsibility of the Reviewer to mitigate the differences.

d. All rating officials should be knowledgeable of DA Pamphlet 623-3, Evaluation Reporting System and they should clearly understand their roles and responsibilities.

3. Outstanding performance for extended periods of time in MOS-related leadership positions were viewed as key potential indicators and favorably considered in the selection process.

c. Utilization and Assignments.

1. NCOs should strive to attain the appropriate balance between generating force and operating force assignments. Those who attained only the minimum (less than 24 months) time in operating force assignments were not as competitive as those who stayed the course before moving to another high priority assignment. The key remains the right balance of challenging assignments. Across all CMFs, favorable consideration was given to NCOs that sought out the tough assignments.

2. There were a vast number of NCOs that had combat experience. Strong or superior performance during combat deployments was considered favorably by the board. Leaders should be reminded to properly capture deployment time in NCOERs. The board did not feel those without combat experience were negatively impacted based upon their assignment history, MOS requirements (serving in demanding assignments i.e., drill sergeant, recruiter) and overall performance. However if an NCOs assignment history lacked challenging assignments and deployments it gave the appearance of avoiding high risk jobs and was viewed negatively.

3. Assignment managers and Leaders should continue to counsel NCOs on the importance of seeking diverse positions in the operating forces, generating forces and special assignments.

d. Training and Education. NCOs who pursued higher levels of education and acquired degrees were viewed favorable by the board. It showed perseverance and clearly reflected the value that

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NCOs place on personal and professional development. Marginally achieving standards in ANCOC and other NCOES were looked at as unfavorable. However, exceeding standards in NCOES contributed to strengthening the NCO's file. While validating the ERB and OMPF, NCOs should pay close attention to proper annotation of schooling and ensure submission of transcripts.

e. Physical Fitness. For a majority of the files, NCOs met physical fitness and height and weight standards. A significant number of NCOs scored above 270 on the APFT. The APFT score though listed on the NCOER, had less importance than the reference to earning the Army Physical Fitness Badge. Those NCOs that earned the badge consistently, clearly stood out from their peers. Though not in large numbers, any reference to an inability to maintain HT/WT standards or pass the APFT were discriminatory entries and were not looked at favorably. Leaders must continue to enforce the standards of AR 600-9 and properly annotate the NCOER to reflect marginal performance i.e. reframe from giving a "success" rating when NCO is not in compliance with weight standard.

f. DA Photographs. For the majority of files, the photos portrayed a professional appearance and outstanding military bearing. The photo is a significant part of the overall file and it is imperative that NCOs update their photos IAW AR 640-30. A photo should be taken in the current rank, with current awards and badges. NCOs should check and have their senior enlisted leadership check their uniforms for compliance with AR 670-1. Consideration was given for absence of a photo in cases of deployment and other extreme circumstances. However, if clearly apparent the NCO could have taken a photo prior to deployment, or presently assigned to a nondeployed location it was viewed unfavorably.

g. Duty Position/Description. The board found significant challenges in many cases with duty positions not being accurately reflected on the ERB and NCOER. The positions should match and provide the board member accurate information of the duty position and the grade.

h. Leadership Awards/Regimental Recognition. A strong indicator of commitment to excellence was apparent with those NCOs who exceeded the standard i.e. Distinguished Honor Graduate, Commandants Lists etc, (ANCOC, Battle Staff and other military schools) and induction into Sergeant Audie Murphy/Sergeant Morales, and those who received Regimental Awards. In most cases there was a correlation between these high standards and sustained superior performance in duty assignments. Going above and beyond in these areas was viewed in a positive manner by the board members.

i. Disciplinary Actions. There was an overwhelming sense that our NCO Corps is disciplined and it is reflected in their manner of performance. Recent disciplinary action and unfavorable comments about the NCOs character and values in an NCOER represented a lack of potential for promotion. Leaders are reminded that UCMJ or negative administrative actions should be captured on NCOERs.

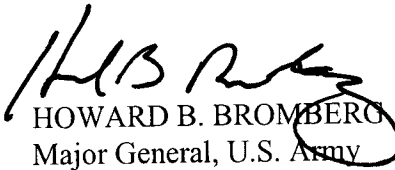
j. Board Preparation/ERB Validation. It is imperative that NCOs review and validate their records on a consistent basis. Those NCOs that took time through comments on their ERB brought resolution to an area that may have been unclear to the board. NCOs should be encouraged to utilize the comment section when validating their ERB. It is recommended that letters to the Board President be factual, short, significant and to the point. Those submitted for administrative issues add no value to the process. In some cases there were competitive NCOs without validated ERBs and updated photos. The bottom line is NCOs that took the time to update the ERB, took a current

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photo and ensured that information in the ERB/OMPF and photo match, set a very positive tone with panel members.

4. Conclusion. It is important the field understands the significance of preparing for promotion boards. It should come as no surprise that those NCOs who took the time to prepare their records for promotion and those who demonstrated sustained superior performance in demanding jobs were selected for promotion. Leaders must set the tone by ensuring evaluations communicate the message that is intended for board members. The board applied the "whole Soldier" concept in its selection of NCOs to Master Sergeants. The board strongly believes that we have recommended the very best qualified SFCs to promotion to MSG to meet the Army's future requirements.


HOWARD B. BROMBERG
Major General, U.S. Army
Board President