



NCO Promotions Get Tougher This Year; More Changes Ahead

By Pablo Villa — NCO Journal

Broad changes for enlisted promotions took effect March 2. More are expected later this year. The most recent comprehensive list of changes to Army Regulation 600-8-19 are tied to the reduction in size of the force, Army Chief of Staff Raymond T. Odierno said Jan. 6 during a virtual town hall event at Fort Lee, Va. During the past 10 years, the Army peaked at a force level of about 570,000 Soldiers. That number is scheduled to dip to 450,000 by the end of 2017.

To maintain high standards in the Army's NCO Corps, promotions have to become more challenging, Odierno said.

"What we want to do is promote the right people ... so we maintain a strong Army," he said. "We've got to have the people we want to move forward. But it is not going to be as fast as it was five years ago."

To that end, changes to the NCO schooling system were announced in February, with the revised promotion regulations coming soon after.

Among the key changes is the implementation of a

link between promotion and the successful completion of Structured Self-Development courses. The SSD program helps develop adaptive, agile and critical-thinking leaders as well as prepare Soldiers to function effectively in the Contemporary Operational Environment, or COE. Now, the course is a requirement for promotion for Soldiers vying for ranks from sergeant to master sergeant.

Another key change is a policy that allows promotion points for Soldiers who have spent time in a combat zone. Previously, Soldiers in the Middle East were often kept from taking part in distance education studies because of the rigors of deployment. Now, sergeants can attain up to 30 points and staff sergeants up to 60 points for their time overseas.

A closer look at some of the pertinent updates to this year's enlisted promotion changes, along with resources for more information, may be seen below.

[Click here](#) to download a printable version of the document.

[Click here](#) to see a complete look at AR 600-8-19. ■

NCO PROMOTIONS

HIGHLIGHTS OF NEW POLICIES FOR ENLISTED PROMOTIONS INSTALLED THIS YEAR

A look at some of the major changes in this year's Army enlisted promotion policy. More changes are coming this year. A complete look at the updates to Army Regulation 600-8-19 — which took effect March 2 — may be found at www.apd.army.mil/pdffiles/r600_8_19.pdf

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS



PROMOTION TO SERGEANT

- All Regular Army and Army Reserve corporals and specialists must complete SSD-1 to compete for promotion to sergeant.

- Army National Guard corporals and specialists must complete SSD-1 to be eligible for promotion.

- Soldiers who receive a battlefield promotion to sergeant but who are not a graduate of SSD-1, must complete the course within 270 days after redeployment (for Regular Army Soldiers) or release from active duty (for National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers) to retain rank.



PROMOTION TO STAFF SERGEANT

Sergeants of the active and reserve components must complete SSD-2 to compete for promotion to staff sergeant.



PROMOTION TO SGT. 1ST CLASS

All staff sergeants of the active and reserve components must complete SSD-3 to qualify for consideration by a sergeant first class promotion selection board.



PROMOTION TO MASTER SGT.

Completion of SSD-4 is required to qualify for consideration by a master sergeant promotion selection board.



PROMOTION TO SERGEANT MAJOR

- Graduation from the Sergeants Major Course is required for promotion to sergeant major. However, satisfactory progress in the non-resident version of the SMC yields conditional promotion.

- Conditionally promoted sergeants major who are reduced or removed from the E9 list are ineligible for future promotion.

PROMOTION POINTS



The new policy allows promotion points for time spent in a combat zone:

30

Points for sergeant

60

Points for staff sgt.

SPECIAL MOS

The new regulation expands eligibility for Soldiers in the Special MOS Alignment Promotion Program, or SMAPP. The program guarantees a promotion to Soldiers who switch to a shortage MOS. The regulation expands the SMAPP to all components. This program was previously limited to the Army and the Army Reserve.

NON-PROMOTABLE ITEMS

- Lack of a qualifying Army Physical Fitness Test score. (The restriction does not apply to Soldiers who are declared missing, terminally ill or enrolled in the Disability Evaluation System.)

- Not in compliance with Army weight standards.

- Soldier was punished, or received suspended punishment, under Article 15 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Soldier regains promotion eligibility the day of completion of correctional custody, suspension, restriction, extra duty, and/or suspended forfeiture of pay, whichever occurs later. Summarized proceedings, as described in AR 27-10, do not result in non-promotable status.

- Command referral and enrollment in the Army Substance Abuse Program. Self-referred Soldiers are eligible for promotion while enrolled in the ASAP.

- Qualifying conviction for domestic violence under the provisions of federal law.

- Soldier has failed, due to his or her own fault, to complete reclassification training to a new MOS.

- Court-martial conviction within the past 12 months. Previously, Soldiers who had a court-martial conviction were placed in non-promotable status for the duration of their enlistment.

RESOURCES

WEBSITE: www.hrc.army.mil/TAGD/EnlistedPromotions

EMAIL: askhrc.army@us.army.mil

PHONE: 1-888-ARMYHRC DSN: 983-9500

ADDRESS: U.S. Army Human Resources Command, 1600 Spearhead Division Ave. Fort Knox, KY 40122

NCO JOURNAL

NCO JOURNAL

<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/NCO-Journal/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NCOJournal>

<https://twitter.com/NCOJournal>

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the NCO Journal, the U.S. Army, or the Department of Defense.

