

Centralized Selection List will include all sergeants major, command sergeants major

By David Ruderman

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(U.S. Army photo)

In April, a single division began managing the careers of 5,000 sergeants major and command sergeants major across the Army. The new Sergeant Major Management Division's latest milestone came with the publication of a Military Personnel Message outlining criteria and procedures for the Centralized Selection List board for key active component and Active Guard and Reserve brigade and battalion CSM and SGM billet positions.

The MILPER - available at the Human Resources Command website (<https://www.hrc.army.mil/Milper/16-220>) - indicates the board will convene Oct. 18 and the formal slate is planned to be released in April 2017. The fiscal year 2018 board will include all active-duty Soldiers in the E9 grade with 27 years or less of service.

Eligible NCOs will be authorized to update their My Board File information until Oct. 18, and all AMHRR/iPERMS update submissions must be received, error free, by Oct. 14. All criteria and procedures are detailed in the MILPER, division chief Sgt. Maj. Eric Thom said.

"All eligible NCOs will be looked at for battalion, brigade and key billets," he said. "Everybody who falls within the eligibility criteria is going to be looked at. It's not an opt-in board, it's an all-in board."

HRC Command Sgt. Maj. Wardell Jefferson said, "It is critical that sergeants major across all components understand the importance of the CSL process, both to their own career development and to the Army at large."

Thom made his first official visit as SMMD chief to the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, earlier this month.

"That's because this is the largest concentration of our eligible population and these Soldiers will be very interested in what they can and cannot compete for," he said. "It will be an opportunity to talk to them before the board window closes."

Thom said selected NCOs will be slated for both command sergeants major positions and for key billets. They will be managed through SMMD's Command Management Branch.

"If I could emphasize anything, I need people to understand that the key billets are on the same list," he said.

Thom reiterated the importance of key billets to the Army and to sergeants major planning their career development. These staff positions are deemed so critical by their proponents that they must be filled at all times. That has created challenges and opportunities that are high on SMMD's agenda.

Thom said that in addition to proponents defining their particular key billet assignments, sergeants major across the Army must come to terms with the fact that being selected for a key billet is as much a professional endorsement as being selected for a command sergeant major position.

"People compete because they want that next level CSM billet," he said. "The key billets are SGM billets and, frankly, a good portion of the field simply don't want to lose their wreath. Their mindset is: 'I made CSM, so I have to stay CSM.' The truth is, it is going to be very hard to do that. There will still be some, but they will be the minority. Most will have to move back and forth."

Despite that misperception, selection for a key billet is both critical to the Army and a solid step forward in an NCO's career progression, Jefferson said.

"Key billets, which are critical SGM positions on division and corps staffs, are also very important in the development of our most senior noncommissioned officers," he said.

"I can tell you from personal experience, I've been able to go back and forth, and I've made it up to the three-star level," Thom said. "So it can be done. The two points to keep in mind are: First, key billets will open additional opportunities that CSM billets alone will not, and second, all CSL billets trump non-CSL billets."