

Soldier Job Books Get Digital Makeover

By Jonathan (Jay) Koester - NCO Journal

February 19, 2016



While talking to an experienced NCO, you may hear tales of the old job book. Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Johnson remembers. Johnson, command sergeant major at the Combined Arms Center–Training at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, may be an old Soldier, but he’s not ready to fade away. He wants to make sure the job book doesn’t fade away, either.

“When I was a young — well, I never was a young Soldier because I enlisted late in life — but when I was a junior enlisted Soldier, we were issued a little job book that was about the size of a three-by-five card that was probably seven or eight pages,” Johnson said. “You carried it around in your uniform pocket, and as you successfully performed a task, your sergeant would sign off in the job book. The goal was to complete all the tasks, and that was your certification that you were qualified.”

Officials at the Combined Arms Center-Training are in the process of creating a digital job book to replace the old three-by-five cards, with some modern upgrades.

“The digital capability allows us to follow a Soldier throughout the life cycle of a Soldier, throughout their career,” Johnson said. “The analog book, it would get lost, it would get damaged, if you moved from one unit to another, you sometimes had to start over. The capabilities with the digital job book allow Soldiers to track and show proficiency throughout their time in the service.”

Sgt. Maj. Johnny S. Williams, chief instructor of the Department of Training and Doctrine at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, has fond memories of troubleshooting with other Soldiers over their job book tasks.

“Another Soldier might know more about a common task [in the job book] than you,” Williams said. “This is what I got out of it.

“I think the job book is a good tool for the lower enlisted Soldiers,” he said. “When you become a senior or junior NCO, you’re dealing with tasks at a different level. From private to staff sergeant, it’s a good thing.”

Johnson said the digital job book should give Soldiers some awareness of where they stand in relationship to their peers, sparking competition and inspiring Soldiers to work harder to be proficient at required tasks.

“It will help enable Select, Train, Educate and Promote (STEP),” Johnson said. “You can use this as a leader to see where your Soldiers are at on a certain skill, to give you quantifiable data to recommend them for promotion or not. It will be a great tool for leaders to use that way.

“It also has potential in the future to enable credentialing, licensing and certification for Soldiers,” Johnson said. “If a Soldier is looking to receive a license, credential or certification, the leader can load those tasks into the Soldier’s job book, then track the completion of those tasks. And it also has the ability to track re-occurring tasks. Say you’re a medic and you have to re-certify on a medical task to keep your credential, this would notify the Soldier that they are due to re-certify on the task.”

The digital job book will be released at the end of March. Soldiers will be able to access the job book through the “My Training” display on AKO or

the Army Training Network with a Department of Defense Self-Service Logon. The job book will not be behind a CAC firewall because officials want Soldiers to be able to access it anywhere they have Internet access.

“Right now, you can go into the My Training Portal, click My Training, and there is a job book tab that comes up,” Johnson said. “It shows what is currently up to date in the Digital Training Management System for physical training, weapons qualification, mandatory training, scheduled classes and unit training schedules. So a Soldier can go in right now and click on all that. But what doesn’t show up right now that will when we release it at the end of March is, under mandatory training, it will automatically populate all individual critical task lists by MOS and skill level. So for each Soldier, all the individual critical task lists will be populated in his or her job book, in addition to Army Warrior Tasks and any mandatory training that a Soldier is required to do.”

And so, the Army keeps another useful tool alive, with the added dynamic of going digital. It’s time to sign in to the job book and start checking off tasks.