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The Retention Discussion

By COL Timothy Whalen

Many varied topics are covered not only in this newsletter but in publications from other staff sections and units as well. These documents provide very specific information that should be disseminated to every member of the Ohio National Guard. As I gloss over the topics that we have written about over the last couple of years, I submit each one is, directly or indirectly, tied to the retention of the force. As we move further from mobilizations and deployments, the common thread is predominantly 'rightsizing the force' and/or the retention of the force. I believe that the retention discussion will not fade away anytime soon.

Active Strategy is a valuable tool that offers a 'snapshot in time' in many key functional areas. A unit's pro score or retention rate is common knowledge among leaders. However, leaders must have a discussion on what drives a unit's retention score. The hard questions we must ask are: *why is my percentage a certain number, is this percentage the best we can do and how can we improve the dialogue with initial term Soldiers, mid-termers, careerists?* Leaders cannot look at ASE as just a number but

rather as a departure point for analysis and critique.

Incentives, tangible and intangible, to serve in this business are a key component to the retention of our force. Commanders need to understand and champion the incentive that rallied a citizen to raise his/her right hand to serve. If we don't understand what motivates a Soldier, we lose, Ohio loses, and we only have ourselves to blame.

Furthermore, retention is not just a reflection of the success or failure of a command team. A retention program is a direct reflection of the entire unit. Every Soldier in every formation deserves to be proud of their unit. The discussion of 'who stays?' and 'who goes?' needs to be an active conversation rather than a presentation in a unit. Whether good or bad the only acceptable course of action for addressing a unit's retention program is 'all in' all the time.

Special Conditioning Programs

By MAJ Bob Vagnier

According to Active Strategy Enterprise (ASE), about 23% of eligible OHARNG Soldiers have not passed the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). What should happen when a Soldier fails the APFT and how can we help the Soldier pass? While most units have gotten proficient at flagging and counseling Soldiers, very few units have developed the required special conditioning program. Admittedly, some Soldiers simply do not care about passing; there are individuals

"When Called, We Respond with Ready Units to Execute Federal, State, and Community Missions."

who just don't know how to condition themselves to pass the APFT.

AR 350-1 (Army Training and Leader Development), RAR 4 August 2011 states, "Special conditioning programs are appropriate for Soldiers who have difficulty meeting unit goals or Army standards. Such programs will not be punitive; they must be designed to improve the fitness level of Soldiers." The goal of a special conditioning program is to help a Soldier pass the APFT. However, units often continuously retest a Soldier who fails the APFT instead of getting to the root problem of why a he or she cannot pass.

A special conditioning program is designed to help improve a Soldier's overall physical performance; including recovery from a profile. The most common complaint/excuse we hear from leaders that do not have a special conditioning program is that they cannot force a Soldier to exercise the other 28 days a month. However, what leaders can do, is teach a Soldier how to exercise the other 28 days. This is especially true for Soldiers coming off a profile or who have difficulty passing the APFT.

According to FM 7-22 (Army Physical Readiness Training), October 2012, "the reconditioning program is the battalion commander and command sergeant major's program...the success of the program is dependent on the priority placed on it from the top down." Restated: the battalion develops the special conditioning program and companies execute.

A battalion's special conditioning program should incorporate the three phases of a physical readiness training program (PRT) with the goal of improving performance and reducing injury. While it is impossible to take a M-Day Soldier through an entire reconditioning PRT, it is entirely possible to develop a sample training program and demonstrate exercises and techniques.

FM 7-22 also provides detail on the three phases of reconditioning (initial, toughening and sustaining) and includes examples of the critical components of Army fitness (strength, endurance, and mobility). In addition to FM 7-22, I have found that most units have a certified personal trainer or an individual with significant Army and civilian experience in physical fitness. Commanders must leverage this experience to help develop a special conditioning program for Soldiers who cannot pass the APFT.

The success of a special conditioning program lays solely on the amount of leader emphases it receives. Soldiers must understand PRT principles, exercises and techniques as well as the importance that their physical fitness plays in overall unit readiness. Conversely, commanders and First Sergeants need to inspire and motivate Soldiers to commit to a special conditioning program the other 28 days a month.

"Our growing softness, our increasing lack of physical fitness, is a menace to our security."
-John F. Kennedy

Subsistence Cash Collection

By MAJ Jon Stewart

This is the time of year that most units are attending (or preparing to attend) Annual Training (AT). During any training period, commanders are required to provide subsistence for Soldiers in training; subsequently they are required to collect cash from Soldiers who receive Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS). AR 30-22 (Army Food Program), 24 July 2012, defines the Reserve Component Subsistence System (RCSS) in paragraph 3-32. The RCSS is the "mandatory accounting system for [ARNG] feeding for IDT and AT." Generally, Soldiers required to pay for meals are officers (to include warrant officers) and

any enlisted Soldiers receiving BAS (normally AGR and FTNGDOS Soldiers). The Ohio Army National Guard Headcount SOP is a great reference for further information and regulatory guidance concerning cash collection operations.

Prior to any training event, the commander is required to validate and submit a DA Form 5913 (Strength and Feeder Report), which identifies all Subsistence-In-Kind (SIK) Soldiers authorized meals. The commander cannot delegate signature authority for the DA Form 5913 to another Soldier (such as an XO or RNCO). AR 30-22, Para 3-32.a.(3) further specifies that if the commander includes Soldiers on the DA 5913 that are required to pay for meals, then the commander is "directly responsible for the additional meals requested and will ensure cash collection is accomplished." To clarify, if a commander allows Soldiers to consume government meals without paying, that commander is now responsible to pay the price of the meal. A FLIPL can be initiated to collect these funds from the commander.

During IDT, the only method of reimbursement to the government is through physical cash collection using a DD Form 1544 (Cash Meal Payment Sheet). The commander should approve a list of SIK Soldiers and a separate list of Soldiers that are required to pay. This will allow the headcount NCO to collect payment from Soldiers as necessary. Upon completion of the IDT period, the commander will review and sign the DA 5913 for accuracy. As with the initial submission, the commander cannot delegate signature authority on this final report.

While attending AT the commander has an additional option. DoD 7000.14-R (Financial Management Regulation), Volume 7A, Chapter 25, July 2013, para 250105 stipulates that meal collection can be made in "cash tendered to the government mess, by collection/reduction of otherwise entitled subsistence travel per diem, or through pay

account collection." Many Soldiers will want to argue the point that they do not eat every meal, and therefore should not pay the full amount. However, DoD 7000.14-R notes that commanders can require mandatory collection for all meals available, "whether the meals are actually eaten or not." Just like an IDT period, during AT, the commander must sign and submit the DA 5913.

Restated – AGRs, FTNGDOS, and officers must pay for meals received during training periods. Commanders need to understand the cash collection process and requirements or else risk paying for their subordinate's meals. Higher commands can monetarily charge commanders that allow other officers (and any enlisted Soldier drawing BAS) to consume meals without paying for them. This is always a matter of contention during training periods, but no matter how unpopular cash collection is, it still must be done. Is your unit in compliance?

"Leadership in a democratic army means firmness, not harshness; understanding, not weakness; generosity, not selfishness; pride, not egotism."

-General of the Army Omar Bradley

Tattoo Policy Changes

By MSG Bryan McKinley

As many of you know, the updated AR 670-1 (Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia), 31 March 2014 imposes new standards on tattooing, branding and body mutilation. As in previous editions of AR 670-1, certain tattoos and brands are prejudicial to good order and discipline. This includes tattoos that support extremist beliefs, are indecent, sexist or racist in nature. The current AR 670-1 defines tattoos that are prejudicial to good order and discipline paragraph 3-3b. However, these definitions are unchanged

from the previous edition and Soldiers are unable to be grandfathered.

The current AR 670-1 contains several new restrictions on tattoos in paragraph 3-3c. The regulation prohibits Soldiers from:

- having tattoos or brands on the head, face (excluding permanent makeup), neck, wrists, hands and fingers.
- having more than four visible tattoos below the elbow (to the wrist bone) or below the knee. The tattoos in these areas must be smaller than the size of the wearer's hand with fingers extended and joined with the thumb touching the base of the index finger.
- having sleeve tattoos below the elbow or below the knee.

Soldiers who have tattoos that were compliant with previous tattoo policies, but are no longer in compliance with AR 670-1 are grandfathered; however, there is a requirement to document the grandfathered tattoo in order to ensure compliance, as well as to protect the Soldier.

Per paragraph 3-3, Soldiers with now unauthorized, but grandfathered, tattoos must notify their commander. Unit commanders are then required to document each tattoo or brand with an official memorandum and a photo of the tattoo/brand as an enclosure. The commander must upload the memorandum and photos into the Soldier's Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR). This memorandum and enclosures will remain in the Soldier's record as long as the Soldier continues serving in an active or reserve status. DA Pam 670-1, paragraph 3-3 discusses the requirements in detail. In addition, AR 670-1 requires commanders to conduct annual checks for new, unauthorized tattoos.

If a Soldier has any tattoo or brand that is prohibited, not grandfathered, or

acquires any new tattoo or brand in violation of the regulation, the commander will counsel the Soldier on DA Form 4856 (Developmental Counseling Form), clearly stating that the Soldier is out of compliance and how the tattoo violates the regulation. The commander will give the Soldier no less than 15 calendar days to seek medical and/or legal advice, consider options and respond to the counseling in writing. The Soldier has three options: appeal the finding that the tattoo or brand violates the regulation, pursue having the tattoo or brand medically removed, or keep the tattoo/brand.

If the Soldier chooses to appeal the finding, the commander will forward the appeal to the first O-6 commander in the chain of command for final determination. If the Soldier chooses to have the tattoo or brand medically removed, the commander will counsel the Soldier on a plan for scheduling the procedure and allow a reasonable amount of time to resolve the issue. If the Soldier declines removal, the commander must counsel the Soldier on the DA Form 4856, stating that refusal to remove the out-of-compliance tattoo or brand constitutes a violation of a lawful order and will result in adverse action. The commander will then initiate administrative separation procedures.

In conclusion, the Army policy is in place to protect Army interests as well as the Soldier. It is imperative that commanders document grandfathered tattoos as quickly as possible in order to comply with the new requirements.

"To see what is right and not do it is want of courage"

-Confucius

Line OF Duty Process

By SFC Craig McGue

Line of duty (LOD) determinations are essential for protecting the interest of both the Soldier and the Ohio Army National Guard. To help facilitate the medical management of duty related conditions, the Administrative part to the LOD is crucial. During recent Annual Training visits, the IG Office found units are not completing the LOD Unit Initiation Checklist and submitting within 2 days of the incident per Tab A (Line Of Duty) to Appendix 3 (Medical Management Programs) to Annex D (Availability) to the OHARNG Personnel Readiness Campaign Plan TY14.

Soldiers, who incur an injury or disease, while in a duty status, may be entitled to benefits. The LOD is the gateway to the Medical Management Processing System (MMPS), which determines future care and benefits for an injured Soldier. There are four types of LOD investigations with each having a specific timeline and checklist:

1. **Administrative** - Administrative LODs are initiated but returned to the unit from health services because the illness or injuries are so slight, that they will not have lasting significance. This LOD is not uploaded into the module however units are required to maintain a hardcopy of the Unit Initiation Checklist and any medical documents related to the incident.
2. **Informal - Unit must complete a informal LOD within 40 days-** Informal LOD is prepared when treatment may extend beyond the end of the period of authorized training and incapacitation pay may result because of the injury or illness. It is done for injuries or disease clearly incurred within the line of duty

(IDT, AT, ADT, or mobilization.) The condition cannot be repetitive in nature (no suspicion of misconduct or pre-existing condition.) This is also initiated when follow-up care is necessary. This LOD is input within the online module for review and processing. Informal LOD Determinations are determined at State level.

3. **Formal - Unit must complete a Formal LOD within 75 days-** Formal LOD is prepared when injury, illness or disease occurs under strange or doubtful circumstances or existed prior to military service. This LOD is input within the online module for review and processing. Formal LOD determinations are made at NGB for all cases except death. Human Resource Command is the approval authority for all death cases.
4. **Presumptive - Unit and case managers submit potential prospective cases to Health Services. All cases will be assessed and prepared for a review board held monthly –** A Presumptive LOD investigation is defined as a belief an injury, illness, or disease occurred in the line of duty and the Soldier was on Active Duty for 30 days or more.

Appendix 3 to Annex D of the TY14 PRCP provides information on required documentation, timelines, and templates for completing the LOD process. Three important things for units to remember:

- The LOD is the precursor for all medical management and medical programs the Army has to offer.
- Commanders or their delegate must assist in the process, review and

make all corrections at the unit level
as necessary.

- Applications with errors are often held or returned without action, creating a delay in Soldier care, compensation and benefits.

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

-Henry Ford