



September 2014

**Conscience of the Command
Inspector General
Newsletter 14-04
September 2014**



Ohio National Guard

Volume 14-04

In This Issue:

- **Hail and Farewell**
- **Command IG Update**
- **Officer and Enlisted Record Briefs**
- **Addressing APFT Issues**
- **Before you Tell the IG**
- **DA Photo**

Hail and Farewell

The OHNG Inspector General team has had some recent changes.

MAJ Bob Vagnier departed the IG Office for his new assignment as the 16th Engineer Brigade Administrative Officer. We wish him well, and thank him for his four years of outstanding service as an Inspector General.

MAJ Jon Stewart is now the Deputy Command IG for the Ohio National Guard IG Team.

The More Things Change the More They Stay the Same

By COL Timothy Whalen

I have written in the past about how communicating with subordinates is vitally important in any formation. Responsible and accountable leaders provide clear intent and follow up with candid and honest feedback to ensure successful mission accomplishment. In short, we are and always have been a learning organization. Over the last couple of months, there have been many issues, from local to worldwide, that demand up front conversations, not presentations, with our Soldiers. As

turbulent changes in our Army and the world continue at break neck speed it is imperative that leaders engage Soldiers and their families early and often.

As a Soldier in the Joint Force Headquarters, I find myself a participant at various discussions and meetings. These discussions cover the gamut from the threat (both domestic and beyond), the ongoing reduction in force, impending relocations, fiscal realities, to changes in NGB policy. The list goes on. These engagements, although invaluable to informing leaders, often time fail to inform the majority of the force...our Soldier's, and more importantly their families. The group most affected by the decisions and discussions that take place at higher levels are those that do not get the opportunity to attend these sessions. We all can do better with informing the force.

Topics like the postponement of drill, a delinquent student loan repayment (SLRP), the availability of IDT lodging or the next reduction board all have negative connotations. However, they are no less important than any good news story and require everyone's effort to disseminate 'what we know' to the lowest level. When disseminating information to our formations in a timely matter becomes an afterthought, our Soldiers and their families subscribe to rumors. Not only does the message become garbled, but also the trust in our leaders and the morale of our units suffers. Much like most accidents, all of this is avoidable.

As turbulent change in our business remains the only constant it is more important than ever to stay true with what has never changed...looking people in the eye and telling them what you know.

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

Officer and Enlisted Record Briefs*By MAJ Jon Stewart*

When was the last time you validated your record brief (either Enlisted Record Brief (ERB) or Officer Record Brief (ORB))? Statistically speaking the majority of the Soldiers in the Ohio Army National Guard (OHARNG) must answer “No” to this question. As of 25 September 2014, only 39.73% of the Soldiers assigned to the OHARNG have validated their ERB/ORB at least once since the process began in 2012. The low validation percentage leads to an assumption that less than half of the Soldiers assigned to the OHARNG have ever viewed their record brief. Many of the 39.53% of Soldiers that have validated their ERB/ORB did so over one year ago, outside of compliance with AR 600-8-104 (Army Military Human Resource Records Management), 7 April 2014.

The ERB/ORB is a one-page document initiated upon enlistment or commissioning and used throughout a Soldier’s career. The importance of the record brief lies in the fact that this document is a comprehensive synopsis of a Soldier’s career to include (but not limited to) assignment history, awards and decorations, military education and civilian education. Every Soldier must realize the importance of the information contained in the record brief in order to ensure their respective ERB/ORB is both relevant and accurate. An ERB/ORB tells the story of that Soldier to anyone who reads it, serving as a resume of military service.

AR 600-8-104, para 1-9.e., specifies that it is an individual Soldier responsibility to “review the appropriate record brief as applicable...at least annually...to ensure the record is accurate and contains all required documents.” Soldiers can individually login to their record brief at <https://arngg1.ngb.army.mil/SelfService/CareerCenter/Home.aspx>. Click on “My Record Brief” in order to view the ERB/ORB. From this location, Soldiers can view their current record brief and identify information that requires added or updated. The data and information on the

ERB/ORB should match the documentation posted in the Soldier’s iPERMS record. Soldiers must provide source documentation to the Record Manager (RM) in order to change information on the ERB/ORB. The Soldier’s RM, usually a unit Readiness NCO or Personnel NCO, has access to update the record brief. If no updates are necessary, the Soldier can choose to validate the record brief, thereby meeting the annual regulatory requirement.

For OHARNG Officers, the Field Grade Officer (FGORB) and Warrant Officer Ranking Boards (WORB) review the record brief while conducting board proceedings. After Action Review (AAR) comments from the 2014 FGORB and WORB identified concern over the state of the ORBs they reviewed. One AAR comment focused on the amount of “missing information” from the record brief and that the board could not use the ORB “as a primary source of information for applicant career history.” A positive AAR comment noted, “Accurately populated ORB’s were beneficial as a brief resume.” Officers and Warrant Officers must begin updating and validating their ORB upon commissioning. Waiting until the month before a board meets to bring up to date the information on your ORB is too late.

Each Enlisted Promotion System (EPS) board (E5 thru E9) further magnified the concern over a lack of quality record briefs at every enlisted level in their respective 2014 EPS Board AAR comments. One board commented they “found that a large number of ERBs were inaccurate, missing information, not updated or not validated. In some cases overseas deployment information, awards, DMOS from previous assignments, recent military courses, and civilian education were missing completely from the Soldier’s ERB.” Another board noted, “Data on the ERBs often times did not match up to what appeared in the Soldier’s iPERMS records.” The ERB is a source document for the EPS Boards to review while evaluating an individual Soldier in order to determine placement on the promotion list. A non-validated ERB is a signal to the board that a Soldier did not take the time to review his/her

own record prior to the board considering that Soldier for promotion to the next higher rank. Is this the message you want to send? A recommendation by one board is very clear and succinct for every OHARNG enlisted member, "Soldiers must review, update and validate their ERB."

As a reminder, less than 40% of OHARNG Soldiers have validated their respective record briefs! Although G1 policy memorandum (Annual Records Review Process), 1 December 2013, requires a review of each Soldier's record brief during the Annual Record Review (ARR), it remains an individual Soldier responsibility. Soldiers must review their record brief online, provide source documentation to the RM so the record brief can be updated, and finally, validate the ERB/ORB when all information is correct. OHARNG Soldiers should not leave the accuracy of their respective ERBs/ORBs to somebody else. Take command of your record brief, and subsequently, take command of your career.

"There is no security in this life. There is only opportunity."

- Gen Douglas MacArthur

Addressing APFT Issues

By MSG Bryan McKinley

The IG Office has encountered several instances of units not in compliance with AR 350-1 (Army Training and Leader Development), 19 August 2014 when it comes to repeated failures of the APFT. In addition, the IG office has noted multiple Soldiers without a valid APFT in over two years. In one instance, over five years have passed since the Soldier last took an APFT. These were typically due to a commander's lack of understanding of medical processes; however, there were identified instances of commanders not complying with Army policy. There are two possible reasons a Soldier can go for over two years without passing a record APFT: (1) The Soldier or unit does not know, or fails to enforce, the standard,

and; (2) The Soldier has a medical condition that needs attention.

Reason #1: For Soldiers who chronically fail the APFT, but do not have an accompanying medical condition, AR 350-1, Appendix G, Paragraph G-9.1. states "Soldiers without medical profiles, who repeatedly fail the APFT, or fail to take the APFT with no authorized waiver within the required time will be barred from re-enlistment or processed for separation from the service." AR 350-1 defines a repetitive failure as "when a Soldier fails a record test, the Soldier is provided adequate time and assistance to improve his or her performance, and failure occurs again." Upon the first failure of the APFT, the Soldier must be flagged IAW AR 600-8-2 (Suspension of Favorable Personnel Actions), 20 October 2012. Commanders are required to retest Soldiers not on active duty and without a medical profile no later than 180 days after the initial failure. Upon failing the retest, the Soldier is a repetitive failure. While leaders should give a Soldier every chance to rehabilitate, AR 135-178 (Enlisted Administrative Separations) 18 March 2014, paragraph 9-2e, **requires** the unit commander to initiate discharge proceedings for Soldiers without medical limitations upon the second consecutive failure of the APFT. If the commander chooses, they may initiate a bar to reenlistment in lieu of separation; however, the commander **must** initiate one of these two actions.

Reason #2: For Soldiers who chronically miss the APFT due to temporary medical profiles: AR 40-501 (Standards of Medical Fitness) RAR 23 August 2010, paragraph 10-13 states, "Each ARNG Soldier is individually responsible for the maintenance of his or her medical, physical, and mental fitness. This includes correcting remediable defects, avoiding harmful habits, and weight control." The completion of the APFT and the ability to perform the Soldier's MOS duties are the minimum level of fitness expected from the ARNG/ARNGUS Soldier. Paragraph 10-14 states that the Soldier is also responsible for seeking medical advice quickly when they

believe their well-being is in question. A Soldier must report any medical condition that occurs when not on duty to the unit commander at the earliest possible opportunity and in all cases, before initiating the next period of training. The regulation further states that the Soldier must provide documentation of medical events that have occurred to the unit administrator before the next period of duty. A profile assessment by a military provider should also occur before the next period of duty. Per paragraph 10-15, the commander will honor the private physician's recommendations until a military provider evaluates the Soldier and a profiling officer determines a course of action. Bottom line, every injury should be documented and reported to the commander. The commander should forward this documentation to the OHARNG Medical Detachment for evaluation by a medical professional. If the Soldier continuously has injuries precluding them from meeting physical fitness standards, the commander should refer that Soldier for medical evaluation to determine eligibility for continued military service.

In conclusion, for whatever reason the Soldier has not passed an APFT within the required time, the unit commander **must** address that reason. Attempt to rehabilitate the Soldier when possible, but meet the requirements of applicable regulations. Regulatory requirements are not suggestions. Get the Soldier fixed and ready to "Fight Tonight."

"A man dies when he refuses to stand up for that which is right."

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Before You Tell the IG... *By MSG Bryan McKinley*

The IG Office has received multiple calls from Soldiers concerning issues that can be resolved by the chain of command. In addition, many complaints are not appropriate for Inspector General involvement. While this office will never refuse to assist anyone, it is important

for Soldiers to engage their chain of command and/or follow the appropriate means of redress.

Engaging the commander is as simple as using the commander's open door policy. Per AR 600-20 (Army Command Policy), RAR 20 September 2012, paragraph 2-2, commanders will establish open door policies within their command. The open door policy allows members of the command to present facts, concerns and problems of a personal or professional nature that the Soldier is unable to resolve on their own. This regulation also states that it is a Soldier's responsibility to make the commander aware of problems. The IG office will always encourage the Soldier to take the issue to the chain of command in order to allow the commander an opportunity to resolve the issue.

Some issues are simply inappropriate for IG involvement. Per AR 20-1 (Inspector General Activities and Procedures) RAR 3 July 2012, paragraph 6-3, any issue that has a means of redress is inappropriate for Inspector General involvement. Issues regarding evaluation reports (both officer and NCO), non-judicial punishment, indebtedness, enlisted reductions and financial liability investigations for property loss (FLIPL) all have means of redress through their respective appeals process. Once the redress process is exhausted, the IG office is limited to a review of the process to determine if the imposing authority afforded the Soldier due process as provided by law or regulation.

In closing, before contacting the IG Office, Soldiers must give the chain of command a chance to address and resolve issues by following the processes provided. One of the first questions we will ask is "have you talked to your chain of command?" If the answer is no, we will mentor the Soldier to address the issue with their chain of command. If for some reason, the Soldier is not comfortable making the complaint to their commander, the IG will address the issue in a way that supports the chain of command while addressing the needs of the Soldier.

DA Photo*By SFC Craig McGue*

In the absence of yourself, consider your DA Photo a handshake with board members. Whether it is a promotion board, a selection board, or a command consideration, your DA Photo is an important part of the selection process. A good DA Photo indicates a professional, disciplined, physically fit and competent Soldier. Soldiers should also check their records before having their DA Photo taken to ensure they have properly recorded all medals, badges, ribbons and other accoutrements. The DA Photo is an individual responsibility so this is your statement to the board that can be the difference between a positive or negative discriminator.

The Inspector General's Office received After Action Reviews (AAR) from numerous boards held in FY 2014. Some of the common discrepancies found during these boards were: DA Photo is missing completely or out of date; rank displayed in photo was not current rank of the Soldier; some Soldiers were advanced two E-Grades from their last DA Photo; improper fitting of the uniform worn; excessive wrinkles in Soldiers uniform; inaccurate awards between DA Photo and ERB; Soldiers wearing unit citations that were not authorized.

When getting your DA Photo, consider the following information to help you prepare. AR 640-30 (Photographs for Military Human Resources Records), 18 September 2008 will guide you on procedures for taking your photo along with providing examples of official DA Photos. You should also match your records to the uniform worn for the DA Photo. Reviewing your records and matching your uniform send a strong message to the board that you care. Wear **ONLY** authorized badges, tabs, awards, and decorations that reflect on your Enlisted Records Brief (ERB) or Officer Records Brief (ORB), to include state awards. Ensure your Distinctive Unit Insignia (Unit Crest) is clearly visible. Soldiers who are regimentally affiliated should

wear their Regimental Distinctive Insignia. AR 670-1 **does not** authorize the wearing of green leadership Tabs in a DA Photo.

As of today, Soldiers have an option on which uniform to wear. AR 670-1 (Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia) 15 September 2014 prescribes the uniforms, awards, insignia, and accoutrements authorized for wear. Since 1 July 2009, Soldiers have been able to wear either the (Green) Class A uniform or the (Blue) Army Service Uniform (ASU). To clarify for our more "seasoned" Soldiers, the old Dress Blue uniform can no longer be worn in an official DA Photo. In addition, ALARACT 099/2011 updated ALARACT message 202/2008, which specifies the wear out date for the (Green) Class A uniform as 4th Quarter FY 2015. Soldiers who have a DA Photo in the (Green) Class A uniform must get a new DA Photo prior to 30 September 2015. Females do have the option to wear the skirt or slacks during a DA Photo.

Once you have your DA Photo, ensure you accept or reject the photo within 3 days. The Department of the Army photograph Management Information System (DAPMIS) is the program used to view and accept or Reject DA Photos. DAPMIS photos give greater ownership to individual Soldiers and ease of use to the personnel management system. You can log into DAPMIS and review your photo at the following link.

<https://knoxhrc16.hrc.army.mil/dapmis/ImageAcceptProlog.do>

The bottom line: Your DA Photo is very important. The wear and appearance of **your uniform in your DA Photo** is a direct reflection of **you**. How you choose to present yourself to board members might determine the next step in your career.

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression"
- Oscar Wilde