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# AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

## STUDENT REPORT

YOU AND YOUR PROMOTIONS--THE AIR  
FORCE ENLISTED PROMOTION SYSTEM  
MAJOR JAMES G. HARDIN 86-1055

*"insights into tomorrow"*

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TITLE YOU AND YOUR PROMOTIONS--THE AIR FORCE ENLISTED  
PROMOTION SYSTEM

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This pamphlet is designed to help airmen better understand the Air Force enlisted promotion system. It addresses and explains the fully qualified fixed phase point promotion process used for advancement to the grades of Amn, A1C and SrA. Also included is the below-the-zone selection process for SrA. The pamphlet also covers the scoring factors used in WAPS (promotion to SSgt, TSgt and MSgt) and the interaction of the two tier promotion program. It explains how the STEP program operates and how it complements WAPS. In addition, the pamphlet reviews and explains the scoring factors used in the two phase selection process for the senior NCO (SMSgt and CMSgt) grades. The pamphlet describes individual involvement in WAPS and the senior NCO selection process and points out keys for success and pitfalls to be avoided.			
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## PREFACE

This pamphlet provides information to help airmen better understand the Air Force enlisted promotion system. This pamphlet applies to all Air Force enlisted personnel on active duty. It is also designed to be read by commanders, supervisors, spouses and other family members of Air Force enlisted personnel. Remember, the contents of this pamphlet are general in nature and subject to change. For more detailed and up-to-date information refer to the governing directive (AFR 39-29) or consult the Consolidated Base Personnel Office (CBPO).

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YOU AND YOUR PROMOTIONS  
THE AIR FORCE ENLISTED PROMOTION SYSTEM

THE ENLISTED PROMOTION SYSTEM  
A PART OF YOUR WAY OF LIFE

You have chosen a unique and rewarding way of life as a member of the United States Air Force. In serving your country the Air Force makes many demands on you and your family. It also provides many rewards both tangible and intangible. One of the most rewarding aspects of an Air Force career can be promotion to the next higher grade. The system used to advance airmen has always generated considerable interest and sometimes anxiety. This system has developed over time and is carefully reviewed and managed by senior Air Force officials. All levels of command and all facets of the Air Force have contributed to the program we have today. It is your program. You need to understand it and be able to explain it to your family and friends.

PURPOSES OF THE ENLISTED PROMOTION SYSTEM  
(Extracts from AFR 39-29)

Promotion Objective. The Air Force promotes airmen to fill its need for specific grades in each Air Force Specialty (AFS) within the limits set by annual grade ceilings.

Promotion Policy. Basic promotion policy is to advance airmen who clearly show potential for more responsibility through an objective and visible promotion system. Since the promotion system selects airmen for promotion only from among those who are recommended, commanders exercising prudent judgement are fundamentally responsible for maintaining the absolute quality of enlisted promotions. Airmen who do not clearly show potential for increased responsibility will not be promoted. An objective system ensures all airmen receive fair and timely consideration for promotion. Visibility, where possible, enables airmen to determine the basis for selection or nonselection.

## SOME TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

The following terms are often used in describing the Air Force enlisted promotion system. You should be aware of these terms and make them part of your Air Force vocabulary.

Below-the-Zone. A competitive promotion process whereby airman first class (A1C) may be promoted to senior airman (SrA) 6 months earlier than under the normal fully qualified provisions.

Fully Qualified. A noncompetitive promotion process whereby all eligibles that meet the minimum eligibility requirements can be promoted.

Best Qualified. A competitive promotion process under which only a percentage (the best qualified) of the eligibles may be promoted due to a limited promotion quota.

Control Air Force Specialty Code (CAFSC). A code established to effect airman assignments and to assist in the identification and control of training requirements. It also determines the competitive grouping for promotions under the Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS) and the senior NCO system.

Chief Enlisted Manager (CEM) Code. Used to identify chief master sergeants (CMSgt) as top enlisted managers in both highly technical skills and broad areas of managerial competence. Determines the competitive grouping for promotion to CMSgt. Very similar to the CAFSC.

Promotion Eligibility Cutoff Date (PECD). The cutoff date at which certain promotion factors (PME, APRs, decorations) must be completed or closed out not later than in order to be included in the promotion cycle. Also no promotion ineligible condition can exist on PECD if an airman is to compete or test during an upcoming promotion cycle.

Chronic Critical Shortage (CCS) Skills. Undermanned skills primarily in the sortie-generating career fields that receive a 5 percentage point higher selection rate than non-CCS skills in the Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS).

Two Tier. Refers to the process by which CCS skills receive a higher selection rate than non-CCS skills.

Selection Objective/Promotion Quota. The number of eligibles that can be promoted during a given cycle. It can be expressed as a percent of eligibles or the actual number of eligibles that can be promoted.

Stripes for Exceptional Performers (STEP). A special limited promotion program that permits senior Air Force commanders to promote truly outstanding individuals to the grades of staff sergeant, technical sergeant or master sergeant. Some normal eligibility conditions may be waived under STEP.

Fixed Phase Point. Used to describe the time frame an airman basic, airman, or airman first class can expect to be promoted under the fully qualified first term promotion system.

Whole-Person Concept. A subjective assessment of an airman's promotion potential using such factors as job performance, education, breadth of experience, level and degree of responsibility, awards and decorations, leadership and professional competence. Part of the board process used in the senior NCOs promotion system.

### PROMOTION OF FIRST TERM AIRMEN

The Air Force uses a fully qualified promotion system with fixed phased points to promote airmen to the grades of airman, airman first class and senior airman. The system uses a combination of time-in-grade (TIG) and time-in-service (TIS) requirements. Promotions are spread out over a reasonable time during the first 36 months of military service. The system is designed to provide a stable, predictable and visible promotion pattern for first term airmen.

**Promotion to Airman (Amn).** For those airmen who enter the Air Force as an airman basic (AB) promotion to Amn requires 6 months time-in-service and recommendation by your commander.

**Promotion to Airman First Class (A1C).** Promotion to A1C requires 10 months time-in-grade and recommendation by your commander. Individuals who initially enlist for 6 years, or enter the Air Force under special accession programs, are promoted to A1C at an accelerated pace.

**Promotion to Senior Airman (SrA).** Promotion to SrA requires 20 months time-in-grade and 36 months time-in-service or 28 months time-in-grade alone. You must also have your commander's recommendation and a 5-skill level in your Primary Air Force Specialty Code (PAFSC) (or 3-skill level when no 5-level exists in the AFSC).

The TIG and TIS phase point patterns for promotion to Amn, A1C and SrA are displayed below. All promotions are effective on the day the TIG and TIS requirements are met. There are slightly different TIG and TIS requirements for promotion if you entered the Air Force as an Amn or A1C. About 30 percent of all

accessions enter the Air Force as Amn or A1C because of special qualifications (Junior ROTC, Civil Air Patrol participation, college credit) or a willingness to enlist for 6 years. The phase point system recognizes the special qualifications of those who enter in a higher grade and the special experience gained by those who serve in a lower grade.

PROMOTION TO	NORMAL ACCESSION
AB (E-1)	*ENTRY GRADE*
Amn (E-2)	6 TIS & 6 TIG
A1C (E-3)	16 TIS & 10 TIG
SrA (E-4)	36 TIS & 20 TIG
PROMOTION TO	SPECIAL ACCESSION
AB (E-1)	N/A
Amn (E-2)	*ENTRY GRADE*
A1C (E-3)	10 TIS & 10 TIG
SrA (E-4)	36 TIS & 26 TIG
PROMOTION TO	SPECIAL ACCESSION
AB (E-1)	N/A
Amn (E-2)	N/A
A1C (E-3)	*ENTRY GRADE*
SrA (E-4)	28 TIS & 28 TIG
PROMOTION TO	6 Yr ENLISTEE
AB (E-1)	N/A
Amn (E-2)	N/A
A1C (E-3)	GRADUATION BMT
SrA (E-4)	30 TIS & 28 TIG

Table 1. First Term Promotion Phase Points (in months)

#### Below-the-Zone (BTZ) Promotion to SrA

The BTZ program is a competitive program for early advancement to SrA. Under the BTZ program up to 15 percent of the highly qualified airman first class (A1C) may be promoted to SrA 6 months earlier than under the normal fully qualified procedures. Promotion consideration is done on a quarterly basis. All eligible A1C are considered for BTZ promotion in the month (December, March, June, September) prior to the quarter (January-March, April-June, July-September, October-December) in which they would be 6 months from a fully qualified selection. Those individuals who are selected for a BTZ promotion will be

promoted 6 months prior to their projected fully qualified promotion date.

There are two different selection procedures under which airmen may be considered for promotion to BTZ SrA. Commanders of units with less than seven eligibles may nominate one individual to a Central Base Selection Board. Commanders of units with seven or more eligibles may use a unit board, record review, recommendation of supervisors or a method specified by the MAJCOM to make selections for BTZ SrA. Airmen are considered only once under one or the other procedure with the selection opportunity being 15 percent under either procedure.

The Central Base Selection Board consists of at least three, but not more than nine, voting members and a non-voting recorder. The board president must be in grade CMSgt or higher. The two other mandatory members must be NCOs in the grade of MSgt or higher. The six optional members must be NCOs in the grade of TSgt or higher. The board members are sworn to perform their duties without prejudice or partiality having in view the special fitness of the airmen and efficiency of the Air Force. Normally each nominee will personally appear before the board. In making their selections board members may consider and compare each nominee's military bearing, personal appearance, duty performance, knowledge of mission and current events, supervisory abilities and communicative skills.

#### PROMOTION TO THE GRADES OF SSGT TSGT AND MSGT

The Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS). The Weighted Airman Promotion System is the primary promotion program used to advance airmen to the grades of SSgt, TSgt and MSgt. WAPS is a best qualified promotion program that uses the total score of six weighted factors to make promotion selections. WAPS was developed by the Air Force Human Resources Laboratory (AFHRL) to replicate the results of an actual promotion selection board. The factors used in WAPS must meet three basic criteria. They are to (1) be predictive of success in the next higher grade (2) be quantifiable, and (3) apply universally to all airmen. WAPS has been operational since 1970 and is periodically reviewed and revalidated by AFHRL and senior Air Force personnel managers to make sure the mathematical model is consistent with current Air Force management policies. The basic factors used in WAPS and minimum eligibility requirements are listed below.

PROMOTION SELECTION FACTOR	MAXIMUM POINTS
SPECIALTY KNOWLEDGE TEST	100
PROMOTION FITNESS EXAM	100
TIME-IN-SERVICE	40
TIME-IN-GRADE	60
DECORATIONS	25
AIRMAN PERFORMANCE REPORTS (APRs)	135
TOTAL MAXIMUM POINTS	460

#### MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

GRADE	SKILL LEVEL	TIG*	TAFMS**
SSgt	5	6 months	3 yrs
TSgt	7	18 months	5 yrs
MSgt	7	24 months	8 yrs

Table 2. WAPS Factors and Minimum Eligibility Requirements

\* Time-in-grade computed as of the first day of the month before the month in which promotions normally are made in the cycle.

\*\* Total active federal military service as of the first day of the last month of the promotion cycle.

Note: All eligibles must be recommended for promotion in writing by their commander. The skill level must be obtained by PECD. For complete details see AFR 39-29 table 5.

Under WAPS you only compete for promotion against other eligible airmen in your Control Air Force Specialty Code (CAFSC). Selections are managed centrally at the Air Force Military Personnel Center at Randolph AFB, Texas. Airmen are aligned in an order of merit list according to the total weighted factor score. The promotion quota is applied, and those with scores that fall within that quota are selected. For example, if there were 100 eligible airmen in a particular CAFSC and the promotion quota was 18 percent, then the computer would go down the order of merit list to airman number 18 and that score would become the cutoff required for promotion in the CAFSC. If there is a tie score at the cutoff point then all

airmen with the tie score will be promoted.

A written score notice is provided to all eligibles who competed for promotion. The score notice shows the points for each factor, the total score and the score required for promotion. It also indicates your total score standing in comparison with all others who competed in your grade and CAFSC. For nonselects the score notice provides the information and visibility on the areas that may be improved before the next promotion cycle.

### Two Tier System

Airmen compete for promotion under WAPS in two basic groups. The first group is comprised of all those eligibles in AFSCs known as chronic critical shortage (CCS) skills and the second group is comprised of all those eligibles in the non-CCS AFSCs. This equates to a two tier system whereby those AFSCs designated as CCS skills receive a 5 percentage point higher selection rate than the non-CCS skills. For example, if the non-CCS selection rate is 25 percent, then the CCS rate would be 30 percent.

The CCS skills are those AFSCs that have a direct impact on readiness and for the most part are considered to be sortie-generating skills. The manning criteria is 7-level manning at less than 80 percent or 7-level at less than 90 percent with combined 5-and 7-level also less than 90 percent. In addition, the manning problem should be chronic in nature with no anticipated get-well date. Once an AFSC has been designated as a CCS skill, it will normally remain on the CCS list for 2 years as a minimum. All AFSCs on the CCS list are reviewed semiannually for continuation or deletion. The two tier system is one of several Air Force initiatives being used to balance the shortages and overages among the various AFSCs. For complete details on the two tier program and a list of the CCS skills, check with your servicing CBPO.

### Promotion Fitness Exam (PFE) and Specialty Knowledge Test (SKT)

Testing is an important aspect of competition under WAPS. The two tests represent a sizable portion of the points available and the area where you can have most impact from one cycle to next. The SKT measures your knowledge of your career field and the PFE measures your knowledge of military subjects and management practices for the grade level you are competing. Everyone takes the PFE, but some airmen are exempt from taking the SKT. In some career fields where the eligible population is very small a SKT is not developed. Airmen who are in a retraining status as of the promotion eligibility cutoff date

(PECD) are also exempt from taking the SKT. Airmen in a retraining status normally have a 12 month exemption from the SKT so they can attain a skill level commensurate with their grade. Retrainees that are SKT exempt compete for promotion as a separate group by grade according to the first two digits of their CAFSC. The promotion quota for retrainees is the same quota they would have received for their specific CAFSC and grade.

Both the SKT and PFE are 100 multiple choice question tests that are scored on a percent right basis (there is no passing or failing score). So 70 right answers on a test would equate to 70 percent or 70 promotion points. Sometimes faulty or obsolete questions are discovered and deleted prior to the scoring and selection process. Thus that same 70 right answers out of 98 valid questions would equate to 71.42 percent or 71.42 promotion points. Test scores are valid for one promotion cycle for competition to TSgt and MSGt and for two cycles for SSgt. Because tests for SSgt are valid for two cycles, sergeants competing for SSgt may see their test scores change from one cycle to the next when they did not retest. This situation can happen when questions become obsolete between cycles due to change in equipment, procedures or directives.

In preparing for the SKT and the PFE, there are two important pamphlets you need to review. These two pamphlets are AFP 39-8 and AFP 50-34 Volume 1. In AFP 39-8 you will find a listing of all primary and supplemental study references for the upcoming testing cycle. In AFP 50-34 Volume I you will find the primary source for the PFE test questions plus the subject knowledge levels needed for the grade you are competing. You can obtain a copy of these pamphlets from your unit WAPS monitor, the CBPO Promotion and Testing unit or the CBPO Customer Service unit. It is your responsibility to make sure you review the correct study reference material and comply with the testing schedule established by the CBPO. If you fail to show for your scheduled test, without good reason, you may be declared ineligible for promotion during that cycle.

It is a good idea to begin your preparations for testing early. Acquiring knowledge of your AFSC and general military knowledge is a long-term process that can not be crammed into a few days just before testing. The SKT and PFE will measure your knowledge over a broad range of specific and general subject matter you need to know as an NCO in your career field. Senior NCOs representing all commands and career fields write your test. Using their firsthand experience they develop questions that test your ability to use your knowledge of the Air Force and your AFSC to solve realistic problems. While some of your knowledge will come from job experience, it is rare that an airman works in all areas of the career field. Therefore,



individual study of all the reference material is critical to successful WAPS testing.

#### Time-in-Service

You are awarded two points for each year of TAFMS up to 20 years, as of the last day of the month of the promotion cycle. One-sixth point is credited for each month of TAFMS (15 days or more are computed as 1/6 point; periods less than 15 days are dropped).

#### Time-in-Grade

You are awarded 1/2 point for each month in grade up to 10 years, as of the first day of the last month of the promotion cycle (15 days or more are counted as 1/2 point; periods less than 15 days are dropped).

#### Decorations

Decorations awarded in any grade and in any branch of U.S. military service are creditable for points under WAPS. Decorations are assigned a point value according to their order of precedence. The maximum number of points you can receive for decorations is 25. To count for a particular promotion cycle the closing date for the period of the decoration must be on or before the PECD. You can compute your decorations score by multiplying the points allowed for each decoration by the number of times you have been awarded that decoration and then totaling all points.

The points allowed for each decoration are as follows:  
Medal of Honor, 15; Air Force Cross, 11; Navy Cross, 11;  
Distinguished Service Cross, 11; Defense Distinguished Service Medal, 9; Distinguished Service Medal, 9; Silver Star, 9;  
Legion of Merit, 7; Distinguished Flying Cross, 7; Defense Superior Service Medal, 7; Airman's Medal, 5; Navy-Marine Corps Medal, 5; Coast Guard Medal, 5; Bronze Star Medal, 5; Purple Heart, 5; Defense Meritorious Service Medal, 5; Meritorious Service Medal, 5; Soldier's Medal, 5; Air Medal, 3; Air Force Commendation Medal, 3; Army Commendation Medal, 3; Navy Commendation Medal, 3; Joint Services Commendation Medal, 3; Coast Guard Commendation Medal, 3; Air Force Achievement Medal, 1; Navy Achievement Medal, 1; Army Achievement Medal, 1; Coast Guard Achievement Medal, 1.

Example: You have one Meritorious Service Medal ( $5 \times 1 = 5$ ), two Air Force Commendation Medals ( $3 \times 2 = 6$ ) and one Air Force Achievement Medal ( $1 \times 1 = 1$ ). Total promotion points from decorations equal 12 ( $5 + 6 + 1 = 12$ ).

## Airman Performance Reports (APRs)

The APR is a reflection of your job performance and an important part of the WAPS formula. Your APRs can provide up to a maximum of 135 promotion points. To be counted in a promotion cycle an APR must have a closeout date on or before the PECD. To compute your score add the overall evaluation of all APRs that closed out within 5 years immediately preceeding the PECD (not to exceed 10 reports) and multiply by 15. Divide that total by the total number of reports and carry out to the second decimal place. Numbers beyond the second decimal are dropped.

Example: You have eight reports with the following ratings:  $9+9+9+9+9+8+8+7=68 \times 15=1020$  divided by 8 = 127.50. Total promotion points from APRs would be 127.50.

### PROMOTION CYCLE DATES

PROMOTION TO SSgt (A-cycle)	PROMOTION TO SSgt (B-cycle)
DATA VERIFICATION	DATA VERIFICATION
February	August
PECD	PECD
31 March	30 September
TESTING	TESTING
April-May	October-November
SELECTION	SELECTION
July	January
PROMOTION PERIOD	PROMOTION PERIOD
1 Aug thru 1 Jan	1 Feb thru 1 July

PROMOTION TO  
TSgt & MSgt  
DATA VERIFICATION  
November  
PECD  
31 December  
TESTING  
January-March  
SELECTION  
June  
PROMOTION PERIOD  
1 Aug thru 1 July

Table 3. Promotion Cycle Dates for WAPS

Note: Selections for staff sergeant are made semiannually (A and B cycle). Technical and master sergeant selections are made annually. Before each promotion cycle every eligible airman will receive a data verification computer printout. This printout will display the data (except for test scores) that will be used in the upcoming selection process. It is important that you carefully review the data and report any errors to the CBPO.

### Stripes for Exceptional Performers (STEP)

The STEP program provides major commanders and commanders of Separate Operating Agencies (SOAs) and other senior Air Force officers with large enlisted populations a means to promote a few outstanding airmen. The program accommodates the unique circumstances which, in the commander's judgement, clearly warrants promotion. STEP is not an alternate promotion system for those who do not compete well under WAPS. STEP is designed to complement WAPS by promoting a very small number of outstanding performers with exceptional potential to serve in a higher grade. STEP promotion quotas are distributed to major commanders and others on the basis of their population of airmen in grades E-4 (SrA/Sgt), E-5 (SSgt) and E-6 (TSgt). The total annual STEP promotion quota is approximately 460. Commanders and senior Air Force officers are provided maximum latitude to exercise their judgement in selecting individuals for a STEP promotion. They may establish whatever selection levels, internal guidelines, procedures or nomination formats they believe are appropriate. Commanders may also waive minimum time-in-grade requirements; however, an airman may not receive any more than one promotion under any combination of promotion programs within a one year period. The minimum total active federal military service (TAFMS) requirement can not be waived.

### PROMOTION TO THE GRADES OF SMSGT AND CMSGT

Promotion to the top two Air Force enlisted grades is a highly competitive process. By law only a maximum of 1 percent of the enlisted force can be in the grade of CMSgt and not more than 3 percent in the grades of CMSgt and SMSgt combined. Therefore, many highly qualified NCOs will never attain these grades due to the intense competition and limited number of promotion quotas.

The promotion program for senior NCOs was implemented in 1977 and uses a two phase selection process. Phase I is a weighted system very similar to WAPS and Phase II is a Central Promotion Evaluation Board. The scores from Phase I factors and

the evaluation board score are combined to produce an order of merit list and make selections. The Phase I factors are visible, objective and quantifiable assessments of potential. The Phase II board process is a subjective evaluation of your judgement, leadership/management ability and potential to assume increased responsibility. You compete and are selected for promotion in the Chief Enlisted Manager (CEM) level (for CMSgt) or superintendent level (for SMSgt) of your CAFSC. The factors used in the senior NCO promotion process and minimum eligibility requirements are listed below.

PHASE I	
PROMOTION SELECTION FACTOR	MAXIMUM POINTS
-----	-----
SUPERVISORY EXAM	100
TIME-IN-SERVICE	25
TIME-IN-GRADE	60
DECORATIONS	25
PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION (PME)	35
AIRMAN PERFORMANCE REPORTS (APRs)	135
TOTAL	380

PHASE II	
EVALUATION BOARD	450
TOTAL MAXIMUM POINTS	830

MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS			
GRADE	SKILL LEVEL	TIG*	TAFMS**
-----	-----	----	-----
SrSgt	7 or 9	20 months	11 yrs
CMSgt	9	21 months	14 yrs

Table 4. Senior NCO Promotion Factors and Minimum Eligibility Requirements

\* Time-in-grade computed as the first day of the month before the month in which promotions normally are made in the cycle.

\*\* Total active federal military service as of the first day of the last month of the promotion cycle. This must by law include 10 years cumulative enlisted service for promotion to CMSgt and 8 years cumulative enlisted service for promotion to SMSgt.

### Phase I

Under the Phase I weighted process APRs, time-in-grade and decorations are computed in exactly the same manner as under WAPS. Time-in-service is computed very similar to WAPS but the point value is only one per year or 1/12 point per month up to the maximum of 25 points (25 years). The supervisory exam, like the SKT and PFE, is an annual 100 multiple choice question test scored on a percent right basis (there is no passing or failing score). The primary reference source for supervisory exam questions is AFP 50-34 Vol.II.

The Phase I process also includes points for professional military education (PME) which was not included in WAPS. The courses that count for PME points are the Senior NCO Academy (20 points) and the NCO Academy (15 points). The point value for resident or correspondence completion is the same but there is no double counting for having completed the same course in residence and by correspondence. To count for a particular promotion cycle PME must be completed on or before the PECD. Therefore, your early enrollment and completion of PME will ensure you will get maximum points for PME.

### Phase II

This phase of the senior NCO promotion program involves the scoring of each eligible's selection folder (record) using the whole-person concept. When you are considered by the evaluation board, only those documents in your selection folder are reviewed by the board members. Documents included in your selection folder are your APRs (all reports closing on or after 1 January 1967), citations for approved U.S. decorations plus a declination letter if you have refused in-residence attendance at the Senior NCO Academy. The folder also contains a computer generated promotion brief. The brief contains such basic information as your name, unit, SSAN, grade, duty title, date-of-rank, AFSC information, type and number of decorations, PME, academic education, high year of tenure date, TAFMSD and projected retirement date, if you have one. Prior to the selection process all eligible airmen are given the opportunity to review the information that will appear on the promotion brief. The review is accomplished by means of the Data Verification Record (DVR) which contains all the information that will appear on the promotion brief used by the board members. It is your responsibility to carefully review your DVR and to promptly report any data errors to the CBPO. Do not take

this task lightly. It is a critical and vital part of the process to ensure you receive a fair, accurate and timely evaluation of your promotion potential.

### Board Membership

Within reason, the Air Force Military Personnel Center (AFMPC) tries to mirror board membership with the same demographic characteristics of the eligible population. Factors such as career field, command of assignment plus female and minority representation are considered in selecting board members. Board members are selected to provide a balanced perspective but not to sponsor or represent any particular group, command or agency. Individuals serving on a CMSgt or SMSgt board are in the grade of colonel or chief master sergeant with the board president being a general officer. The board is organized into panels with each panel having two colonels and one chief master sergeant.

### Operation of the Board

While a board is in session the board members work for the Chief of Staff U.S. Air Force under the direct guidance of the board president. By means of a "formal change" board members are given specific guidance as to their duties and responsibilities. They are also briefed on the eligibility criteria for the promotion cycle, selection folder contents and the eligible population profile. Prior to scoring of records each board member is required to take the following oath: "I solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will, without prejudice or partiality, having in view both the special fitness of the NCOs and the efficiency of the United States Air Force, perform the duties imposed upon me."

Using the whole-person concept, board members make a complete assessment of each eligible's record using the factors listed below. These factors have been reviewed and approved by the Chief of Staff as being the most significant items in making the whole-person evaluation. Each individual board member's assessment of a factor is subjective; therefore, there is no specific weight or priority listing associated with a factor.

1. Performance - as documented in your APRs.
2. Education - both PME and academic and how it relates to your career field.
3. Breadth of Experience - where and at what level assigned, type and variety of job experience.
4. Level/Degree of Responsibility - scope and type responsibility, exposure, opportunity to make decisions affecting resources and people.
5. Specific Achievements - awards, decorations, special recognition.

6. Leadership - In staff, operations and key positions. What have your rating officials said about your leadership qualities and potential?

Prior to scoring "for the record," board members conduct a practice session or trial run. During this trial run board members acquaint themselves with the contents of the selection folder and the assessment process. All board members will score 15 to 20 records by secret ballot using a rating scale of 6 to 10 in half-point increments. Board members may also keep notes during the trial run to use in the open discussions which follow the practice scoring. The trial run is an important safeguard built into the board process to ensure each record receives a consistent evaluation in comparison with other eligibles.

After the trial run board members begin the actual scoring of records. The same three member panel will score all the records of eligibles within a competing AFSC or CEM code. This ensures all eligibles are evaluated against the same standard in a fair and consistent manner. Each panel member scores records individually using a secret ballot without any discussion with other panel members. Records are rotated among panel members until all members have scored the records. Each panel member gives his/her ballots directly to a board recorder so no other panel member is aware of another member's vote. The recorder will review the votes of the panel members. If a record receives scores with a difference of more than one point among panel members (example 9.5, 9.0, 8.0), the record must be sent back to the panel for resolution. Such a situation is called a "split vote" and panel members must resolve these scores to within not more than one point difference. In resolving a split vote members may openly discuss how and why they scored the record. Normally such discussion will resolve the condition, but if a panel is unable to agree the record will go to the board president for resolution. The combined scores of the three panel members is multiplied by 15 to produce the Phase II board score. The minimum board score is 270 (6+6+6X15) and the maximum score is 450 (10+10+10X15).

In scoring the records panel members do not have access to the weighted factor scores. The board's primary objective is to score all records and create an order of merit list. After the board adjourns AFMPC, by means of a computer operation, will combine scores from Phase I and Phase II and produce a final order of merit listing by total score within each AFSC or CEM code. The promotion quota is applied to the order of merit list and those within the quota become selects. As in WAPS all eligibles with tie scores at the cutoff point will be promoted. Each eligible receives a score notice (similar to WAPS) that reflects the score on each of the Phase I factors and the Phase

II board score. The score notice also indicates relative standing among selectees or nonselectees plus the score required for promotion.

#### PROMOTION CYCLE DATES

PROMOTION TO CMSgt	PROMOTION TO SMSgt
DATA VERIFICATION	DATA VERIFICATION
June	July
PECD	PECD
31 July	31 August
TESTING	TESTING
August	September
SELECTION	SELECTION
Oct/Nov	Jan/Feb
PROMOTION PERIOD	PROMOTION PERIOD
1 Jan thru 1 Dec	1 Apr thru 1 Mar

Table 5. Senior NCO Promotion Cycle Dates

#### PROMOTION RELEASE PROCEDURES

After the completion of a WAPS or senior NCO selection process, AFMPC electronically transmits the results worldwide to each CBPO. In turn the CBPO immediately, upon receipt of the selections, releases the information to unit commanders. The commanders may then inform individuals of their tentative selection for promotion. The word tentative is key. Selection status is not confirmed until the CBPO completes the post selection data verification during which all data items used in the promotion selection process are checked against source documents in the personnel record.

#### SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

Your personal involvement in the promotion process is critical if you are to be successful. You must take an active interest in your job performance, study methods, testing, and data verification to ensure you have done everything possible to make yourself competitive for promotion. Since no system is perfect, errors sometimes do occur. If after selections are announced you detect an error or believe an error exists in your score computation, promptly report it to the CBPO. There are



established procedures to handle supplemental considerations and the CBPO will have complete details. If an error is detected and you are selected for promotion by a supplemental process, your promotion effective date and date of rank will be the same as if you had been selected initially. It is also important to remember that each promotion cycle is different. Just because you were close to promotion on the last cycle does not mean you can count on promotion the next cycle. The tests change, the promotion quota changes and there are new eligibles. Also, promotion evaluation boards members (promotion to CMSgt and SMSgt) are different each cycle and each board arrives at its own scoring standard. Therefore, the new board may look at your record in a slightly different manner than did the previous board. Again, remember there are new eligibles and even though you have improved your record, the other eligibles may have also improved their records.

You should understand that the basic Air Force promotion policy is to advance airmen who clearly show potential for more responsibility. Not all airmen can be promoted to the higher grades and competition becomes more intense the higher you go. Your personal involvement and knowledge of the system plus strict quality control by commanders and supervisors will guarantee that only the most deserving are promoted. GOOD LUCK!

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