DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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WASHINGTON, DC 20310-0300

DAPE-ZA

23 MAR 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Consolidated Exceptions to Policy Concerning Enlisted Promotions During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak

1. References.

a. Army Regulation 600-8-19, Enlisted Promotions and Reductions, 16 May 2019.

b. FRAGO 8 to HQDA EXORD 144-20, Army Wide Preparedness and Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak (141746Z MAR 20).

c. DAPE-MPE-PD Memorandum, subj: Conducting Promotion Boards (Semi Centralized Promotions) in Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak, dated 20 March 2020.

2. Due to travel and training restrictions established to protect the force and preserve readiness (reference 1b), this memorandum identifies approved exceptions to policy concerning promotion of enlisted Soldiers. These exceptions to policy are made out of an abundance of caution, with an intent to help reduce gatherings and potentially mitigate placing individuals at risk of infection. Unless sooner terminated, these exceptions to policy remain in effect through 30 September 2020.

3. Semi-Centralized Promotion Boards. The following is applicable to the Regular Army (RA) and U.S. Army Reserve (USAR)):

a. The ability to authorize an alternate to a monthly unit promotion board, as set forth in reference 1a (paragraph 3-12b(3)(a)), is hereby extended to battalion commanders serving as promotion authorities.

b. Battalion commanders are authorized to use virtual promotion boards, or the battalion commander may, in lieu of conducting unit promotion boards, rely on the battalion command sergeant major (CSM) to make a recommendation regarding promotion of enlisted Soldiers. The battalion CSM's recommendation will be based on one-on-one interactions with the recommended Soldier and/or input from the chain of command/NCO support channel.

c. The authority to elect this option rests with the promotion authority (battalion commander or higher commander). If deemed appropriate, the promotion authority will

document the decision to exercise this option and ensure that written record is maintained indicating that the physical board was set aside due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the provisions of reference 1a (paragraph 3-12b(3)(a)), and this memorandum.

d. The Director, Army National Guard (DARNG) is encouraged to provide specific guidance regarding applicability, as deemed appropriate, relating to promotion boards for Title 32 Soldiers.

e. Reference 1c is rescinded and replaced with the above.

4. Training Requirements for Promotion Eligibility. The following is applicable to the RA and USAR:

a. Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT).

(1) While passing an APFT remains a promotion eligibility requirement, I am authorizing the use of the last record APFT to qualify Soldiers for promotion recommendation and pin-on (to include award of promotion points) regardless of when the APFT was last administered.

(2) This provision allows Soldiers continued eligibility for promotion recommendation and pin-on to Sergeant (SGT/E5) and Staff Sergeant (SSG/E6) as specified in reference 1a (Tables 3-1 through 3-4), preventing them from being removed from an existing promotion recommended list. Further, this allows Soldiers continued promotion pin-on eligibility to all enlisted grades as specified in reference 1a (paragraph 1-11a(3)(d)).

(3) Commanders will not flag Soldiers for failing to take the APFT during this suspension. Soldiers who previously failed an APFT, will remain flagged until they successfully pass an APFT. Further guidance regarding flagging will be published separately.

b. Weapons Qualification.

(1) Although not tied to promotion recommendation or pin-on eligibility, the requirement, that the most recent weapons qualification score be within the last 24 months for a Soldier to receive promotion points, as specified in paragraph 3-16a(1), is suspended as it pertains to award of promotion points within the semi-centralized promotion system.

(2) During this period, promotion points will be awarded based on the most recent weapons qualification, regardless of when completed.

c. The DARNG is encouraged to provide specific guidance regarding applicability, as deemed appropriate, to the expiration of APFT and weapons qualifications for Title 32 Soldiers.

5. Professional Military Education (PME) Requirements. The following is applicable to the RA and USAR:

a. I am exercising my authority set forth in paragraph 1-29b of reference 1a, to suspend the requirement to complete a requisite PME course, listed in paragraph 1-29a of reference 1a, to qualify for promotion pin-on for the ranks of Staff Sergeant (SSG/E6) and Sergeant First Class (SFC/E7).

b. This temporary suspension will become effective for the May 2020 promotion month.

c. During this period of suspension, Soldiers are eligible for promotion to the rank of SSG/E6 and SFC/E7 without regard to PME completion, provided they are otherwise fully qualified as set forth in reference 1a. This temporary suspension of PME does not waive the PME requirement for promotion pin-on to SGT/E5, Master Sergeant/E8, or Sergeant Major/E9.

d. This temporary suspension does not diminish the importance of completing required PME to sustain a professional NCO corps. Further, this suspension does not relieve NCOs from ultimately completing the appropriate level of PME required for the grade to which promoted. An NCO promoted, without the requisite PME, as a result of this temporary suspension, will be disqualified from future promotion eligibility until such time as they are fully qualified in their newly promoted grade by completing the requisite PME course. Those RA and USAR (AGR) NCOs who fail to fully qualify themselves for promotion consideration to the following grade by the time they attain primary zone promotion eligibility, may be subject to a Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) bar to continued service.

e. Previously published PME exception to policy programs for deployed NCOs for promotion to SSG/E6 and SFC/E7 will not be applied during this suspension period.

f. Soldiers who have completed the requisite level of PME to fully qualify themselves for promotion to SSG/E6 or SFC/E7 will be selected for promotion pin-on before those who are not PME complete.

g. Guidance regarding PME and promotion eligibility for the Army National Guard will be published separately.

6. The approved exceptions to policy listed above are limited to the promotion of enlisted Soldiers. The approved exceptions do not relieve a commander from maintaining unit readiness by completing the training requirements of AR 350-1 or as otherwise required by Army policy.

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