



NO.001

ARMY RETENTION

April 2025

WELCOME TO OUR

Retention Newsletter



Strengthening the Force, One Soldier at a Time

This newsletter serves as a platform for sharing best practices, innovative initiatives, and fostering collaboration among retention professionals and commanders across the Army. Building a Culture of Retention: Together.

In this
newsletter:

DMPM Corner
SACC Message
Career Counselor Spotlight
Pionk History
Current Initiatives



Director, Military Personnel Management

BG GREGORY S. JOHNSON



As the HQDA, G1 Director of Military Personnel Management, I'd like to first commend the retention field for all your hard work and efforts resulting in FY24 mission success. Also, great work so far in 2025, keep it up! I appreciate the efforts and skill of the whole community. It's a team effort and we are counting on you to help keep Soldiers in our formations and drive readiness for our Army. Your efforts, aligned with your command team's involvement, are key and instrumental to retaining quality Soldier's on a long-term basis for our requirements.

I see Career Counselors as critical difference makers and I am proud to be serving with you and helping to accomplish this. As you already know, we did a few new things in FY25. A key effort being setting priority MOS reclassification targets. Reclassifying personnel into priority and growth MOSs is essential to maintaining the Army's lethality and readiness, and warfighting. Reclassifying Soldier's into MOSs identified as priority will ensure we are able to execute any mission at a moment's notice. Matching talent to the needs of the force through reclassification allows the Army to adapt to evolving mission requirements.

As Career Counselors, you all matter greatly to our Army. You are responsible for executing our mission with care, passion, and precision. You are responsible with providing Soldiers with professional development and clear options and guidance. For this I am grateful. Keep up the great work and let's close out FY25 strong. Looking forward to hearing from you as we prepare for the FY26 mission and continue to build the readiness and lethality of our Army.

Brigadier General Gregory S. Johnson currently serves as the Director, Military Personnel Management, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G - 1, United States Army, Washington, DC. BG Johnson previously served as the 63rd Adjutant General of the United States Army, United States Army Human Resources Command/Commanding General, United States Army Physical Disability Agency/Executive Director, Military Postal Service Agency, Fort Knox, Kentucky.



Senior Army Career Counselor SGM Enrique A. Rose



As Career Counselors, we play a special role in our formations for our command, the Soldier's, and NCOs within the formations. Our job expands beyond regulations and reenlistment ceremonies; we are responsible for counseling Soldier's and helping them make decisions that will lead to successful careers.

We have a responsibility within our formations to provide accurate information that will assist in wise career decisions. As the Army evolves, it's crucial that we provide current information and prioritize retention in critical MOSs to meet the demands of our changing force structure. It is more important than ever that we work together with Soldier's, providing them with the information and resources they need to make sound career decisions that benefit both their individual journeys and the Army's overall strength.

As counselors, it is important to remember we are the commanders' eyes and ears and our conduct both on and off duty, directly reflect on both the retention field and the Army. We must continue to hold ourselves to high standards of professionalism in every interaction with Soldier's and commands. We will continue to be the examples of respect, and reliability, solidifying the trust placed in us.

The NCO and Career Counselor creeds are not just words; they are our foundation from which we serve. Both creeds remind us of the trust emplaced on us to retain a lethal fighting force. We are charged with providing sound counsel, ethical guidance, and honest feedback to both Soldier's and the command to ensure they can make decisions based on ethical guidance.

We contribute to the readiness and strength of the Army by striving for excellence in our rolls. Continue to earn the trust and respect of those you serve, remembering your hard work plays a vital role in retaining America's fighting force.



Career Counselor Spotlight

MSG DANNY BROOKS

Meet MSG Daniel Brooks, an impressive Senior NCO with an equally inspiring career. Originally from Fort Polk, Louisiana, MSG Brooks proudly calls Hinesville, Georgia home. Since joining the Army in March 2005 as a Cavalry Scout, he has charted an impressive path of leadership and excellence.

Prior to becoming a Career Counselor, MSG Brooks served as a Drill Sergeant, and earned some of the Army's most prestigious distinctions, including the Ranger tab, Airborne, and Air Assault qualifications. His dedication and exceptional performance earned him induction into the Excellence in Armor program, as well as the coveted Armor Regiment's Order of Saint George.

MSG Brooks became an Army Career Counselor in March 2015. He has served in a multitude of assignments as a counselor including Battalion Career Counselor, Senior Career Counselor, Senior Operations NCO and is currently a student at the Sergeants Major Academy. MSG Brooks accredits his opportunity to become an Army Career Counselor to MSG Michael Lee, SGM Richard Reather, and SGM Paula Griffin.

Outside of his professional achievements, MSG Brooks and his wife, Holly, share a passion for outdoor adventures, including hiking and marathon running. As a devoted football fan, he proudly supports the New Orleans Saints.

MSG Brooks' leadership extends beyond his military contributions. In December 2023, his courageous actions to safeguard the public earned him the Soldier's Medal, presented by Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Pete Hegseth. Additionally, he was awarded Germany's Christophorus Medal by Bavaria Governor Markus Söder.

Following his graduation from the Sergeants Major Course at the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence this June, MSG Brooks will assume the role of Command Career Counselor for the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, New York.

Peers describe MSG Brooks as a humble and dedicated leader, committed to imparting his knowledge and fostering unit cohesion. The Army retention field looks forward to the continued excellence and innovation he will undoubtedly bring to the mission.



Career Counselor of the Century

Dr. Jerome Pionk

Dr. Jerome Pionk served in the U.S. Army for over 30 years, retiring from Active duty as a Retention Sergeant Major in April 2000. Dr. Pionk's experience as a Recruiter and Career Counselor were pivotal in his role as the Senior Retention Policy Proponent at the Pentagon. Dr. Pionk's accomplishments include achieving the rank of Major in the Army Reserves where he served with distinction. During his retirement, Dr. Pionk was honored as the Army's Career Counselor of the Century for his continued commitment and dedication to Army retention.

Dr. Pionk's educational accomplishments include a Doctorate in Business and Human Resources from North Central University as well as a Master of Arts degree from Liberty University. After retiring, Dr. Pionk was instrumental in contributing to human resources programs and a variety of military retention policies by working as a consultant for the U.S. Army. He was also a Professor at American Military University. Dr. Pionk was an accomplished author, writing three books including topics on retention and his childhood growing up in South Dakota.

The Sergeant Major Jerome Pionk Excellence in Retention Medal recognizes significant achievements and exemplary service of personnel who work in and support Army Retention. The recipients of the medal have made significant contributions to the Army Retention Program.

Dr. Jerome Pionk Award Recipients

Career Counselor of the Year Recipients

SFC	Aimee K. Fields
SFC	Joseph Compton
SFC	Rolanda Wilder
SFC	Eric Ramos
SSG	Alisa Licata
SFC	Joey Thomas
SFC	Morgan Smith
SFC	Jackie Lord
SFC	Palmer, Nicole S.
SFC	Griffin, Sean T.
SFC	Bukowski, Antoni
SSG	Olson, Zachary
SFC	Moise, Anais
SFC	Caldwell, Steven

Service Achievements Recipients

Mr.	Grim, Christopher
MSG	Graham, Brian O.
SGM	Fennell, Kelvin L.
COL	Edwards, Jason T.
SGM	Johnson, Decarlo J.
SGM	Gish, Christopher L.
MSG	Gomez, Dustin V.
SGM	Huerta, Abel
SGM	Hubble, Carla
MSG	Erickson, Richard
1LT	Aldana, William
MSG	Porter, Delano
MSG	Lacerda, Mary
SGM	Bridges, Danielle
MSG	Jamison, Kory
SGM	Schaffhauser, William

Service Achievements Recipients

Mrs.	Pionk
SGM	Matthew Quick
MSG	Charles Manherz
COL	Cort Hunt
SGM	Robert Theriot
MSG	Robert Woods
SFC	Timothy Donahue
SGM	Mark A. Thompson
SGM	Stuart C. Morgan
SFC	Phylise Harp
SFC	Cepeda, Kelvinlee
SGM	Herbert, David
MSG	Lizarraga, Sonny
MSG	Holman, Shaun
SGM	Spigelmyer, Scott
SFC	Chavez, Gabriel J.
SGM	Cavaliere, John
SGM	Godinez, Gerardo
MSG	Morgan, Scott
SGM	Grimes, Nicholas

SGM	Muñoz, J. Mark
Ms.	Embrey, Teddi
SGM	Whitney, Tobey
MSG	Block, Samantha
SGM	Crist, Eric
SGM	Reather, Richard
SFC	Waterbury, Shawnte
Mr.	Bragg, James
MSG	Fisher, Nathan
SGM	Reed, Tito
SFC	Licata, Jennifer
MSG	Nuñez, Joel
Mr.	Wood, Scott
Mr.	Smith, Jamie
Mr.	Thomas Whitehouse
SGM	Michel, Pablo A.



Dr. Jerome Pionk Award Recipient; SGM(R) Mark Thompson

Sergeant Major (R) Mark Thompson was awarded the Sergeant Major Jerome Pionk Excellence in Retention medal for his vast contributions to the Army retention field during his tenure as the 14th Army Senior Army Career Counselor (SACC).

Mark Thompson began his Army career in 1996 as a 14R, Bradley-Stinger-Fighting Vehicle Crewmember and served in a variety of positions before transitioning to an Army Career Counselor in 2001. He dedicated his career as a counselor shaping the future of countless Career Counselors and Soldier's across the Army. He served in many diverse and demanding roles including Battalion Career Counselor, Senior Training Developer, as well as the USASOC Command Career Counselor. He concluded his military service as the 14th Senior Army Career Counselor.

Mark Thompson continues to be an instrumental part in shaping the Army landscape while serving in his current role as the Chief of Enlisted Incentives and Budget Branch at the Pentagon. He oversees critical programs that attract and retain top-tier talent. He guarantees the Army stays competitive in a constantly changing recruitment environment through an effective use of bonuses, education benefits, and loan repayable alternatives. He is responsible for strategic budget management, policy development, and fostering collaboration among Army stakeholders to ensure that these key initiatives meet the Army's rapidly changing requirements. Through his leadership, Sergeant Major (R) Thompson continues to play a significant role in building an army that is highly capable and prepared for the future.

Sergeant Major (R) Thompson's career exemplifies the positive impact dedicated individuals have on the Army. His commitment to his fellow Soldier's, both past and present, leaves a legacy that will inspire future generations of leaders.



Current Initiatives

Enhancing Officer Retention in the U.S. Army

Officer Retention Program Development Plan and programs like the Army Junior Officer Counseling (AJOC), we are focused on retaining top-tier officers by providing career progression opportunities, leadership development, and competitive incentives. Key initiatives include the Talent-Based Branching, Career Satisfaction Program (CSP), and various professional development programs designed to serve as vital tools in retaining skilled officers to meet the Army's high standards.

The Army remains dedicated to refining its officer retention programs to sustain a highly capable and prepared force. By linking incentives to Active Duty Service Obligations (ADSO) and expanding opportunities for advanced education and training, we aim to create a supportive environment that encourages officers to continue their service beyond initial commitments. These efforts are crucial in ensuring that the U.S. Army retains its best talent and remains ready to meet the challenges of the future.

These initiatives ensure that our committed officers remain motivated and engaged, fortifying a stronger and more capable Army for the future. With informed officer retention efforts, we are confident that our dedicated officers will remain engaged and motivated, contributing to a stronger and more resilient Army for years to come.

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