

MAGAZINE ARCHIVES

Below is an excerpt from the July 1958 issue of **NATIONAL GUARDSMAN**, as this magazine was known at the time. It is part of a series of relevant articles from our more than 70 years of archives.

New Titles, New Confusion

Just when the average soldier had mastered the Army's enlisted rank structure—seven pay grades, three kinds of Privates, and an imposing array of Specialists and Sergeants—approval of a military pay raise added two new elite grades and brought some long-discarded Sergeant's titles out of retirement.

The new grades, paywise, are E-8 and E-9. The highest, E-9, will be Sergeants Major, a title discarded before World War II. Holding the E-8 slots will be two familiar titles, First Sergeant or Master Sergeant, as appropriate.

As in the past, the Master Sergeant's "stripes" will consist of three chevrons above, three rockers below, while the First Sergeant wears the same "three up, three down" plus a diamond-shaped lozenge in the center.

Something new has been added for the Sergeant Major—a star in place of the diamond in the center of the cluster of stripes.

Next in line, as E-7s (formerly the highest pay grade), will be the men with three stripes and two rockers on their sleeves, to be called Sergeant First Class or Platoon Sergeant, according to their new assignment.

Grade E-6, now entitled Sergeants First Class, will now be known as Staff Sergeants, another time-honored Army title dropped during post-World War II reorganization. As before, their chevrons will consist of three stripes and one rocker.

And finally, the E-5s will be called Sergeants and reintroduced after an absence of several years will be the "buck sergeant" insignia, three stripes with no arc below the chevron.

There'll be no change in the pay grades, titles, or insigne of Corporals and Privates.

The new pay grades took effect 1 June but it will take longer to change over to the new rank insignia. New stripes will be issued "on an evolutionary basis as replacement ... is required," says a DA announcement.

Promotions into the two highest pay grades will be phased over four years, the announcement says further, with initial promotions limited to personnel chosen for First Sergeant and Sergeant Major positions. Subsequent promotions into other key leadership and critical specialist positions will be initiated during the second quarter of FY 1959.

