

The Enlisted Aide Program and Training

A course at the Joint Culinary Center of Excellence instructs current and future enlisted aides on their duties and arms them with the knowledge needed to address situations that are not clear cut.

According to Department of Defense (DOD) Instruction 1315.09, Utilization of Enlisted Personnel on Personal Staffs of General and Flag Officers, enlisted aides are authorized for the purpose of relieving general and flag officers of those minor tasks and details that would otherwise be performed at the expense of the officer's primary military official duties. Enlisted aides assist with the care, cleanliness, and order of assigned quarters, uniforms, and military personal equipment. They also act as the point of contact in officers' quarters, receive and maintain records of telephone calls, make appointments and receive guests, and assist in the planning, preparation, and conduct of official functions and activities.

Enlisted Aide Selection and Management

Enlisted aides often hold military occupational specialty (MOS) 92G (food service specialist), but it is not a requirement. In the Army and Air Force, general and flag officers who are authorized enlisted aides can choose Soldiers and Airmen from any MOS. (The Marine Corps, the Navy, and the Coast Guard require enlisted aides to be culinary specialists.)

Officers in all services make their selections through an interview process that includes a records review and recommendations. The requirements to become an enlisted aide include:

- ❑ Being in the rank of E-5 or above. (E-4s are admitted into the program on a case-by-case basis.)
- ❑ Having 2 years of cooking experience.
- ❑ Submitting paperwork and documents to volunteer for the program, including the servicemember's last five evaluations.
- ❑ Having at least a secret security clearance.

An "Enlisted Aide Packet Check List," including instructions on how to submit the packet and who to submit it to, is available on the Internet at http://www.quartermaster.army.mil/jccoe/Special_Programs_Directorate/Enlisted_Aide_web_documents/EA_Packet_Instruction_Checklist.pdf.

In July, six Army enlisted aide authorizations were vacant. Since these vacancies change all the time, the

Army Enlisted Aide Manager, whose contact information is available in the checklist document, can be contacted for the most up-to-date information.

A Short History of the Enlisted Aide

Individuals have served as enlisted aides since the Revolutionary War. General George Washington had an enlisted aide on his staff before he built his artillery and infantry. However, the individual performing the functions of the enlisted aide did not have this formal title. He was instead known as a "servant."

Enlisted aides continued to "serve" officers in all ranks until the program was halted in the second half of the 20th century. In 1959, Senator William Proxmire began raising concerns about racial prejudice, enlisted aides acting as personal servants, and the high cost of the Enlisted Aide Program. (There were more than 3,000 enlisted aides across DOD.)

"He [Senator Proxmire] was trying to bring up to Congress and the Department of Defense that enlisted aides were being underutilized and that they were being pretty much abused," said Senior Chief Petty Officer Frank Davila, an Enlisted Aide Training Course instructor. "He shed the light on the program and . . . the program actually was disestablished."

DOD Directive 1315.9, which has recently been replaced by DOD Instruction 1315.09, was rewritten with the help of then President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The word "servant" was replaced with the newly created term "enlisted aide." Language also was added to the directive to ensure against the abuse of enlisted aides.

In 1973, a General Accounting Office (now Government Accountability Office) report found that the program was cost prohibitive. (In the year before, the Quartermaster Center and School had trained 6 classes of 24 enlisted aides. A total of 1,915 enlisted aides were trained across the services.) As a result, the Secretary of Defense ended enlisted aide training.

In 1974, the program was reestablished, and Congress mandated that the authorized number of enlisted aides be reduced. Once reductions were completed in 1976, the program was left with 300 authorizations—85 percent

An Enlisted Aide Training Course instructor shows a student the specifics of setting up a general officer's uniform during a practical exercise. (Photo by Julianne E. Cochran, Army Sustainment)



fewer enlisted aides than before the program's disestablishment. Today, Title 10 of the U.S. Code continues to limit enlisted aide authorizations to 300 (65 joint, 81 Army, 21 Marine, 58 Navy, and 75 Air Force positions.)

The Evolution of Enlisted Aide Training

After its reestablishment, the enlisted aide program employed on-the-job training (OJT) to qualify its force. Navy enlisted aides did OJT on board ships to support executive dining rooms. Enlisted aides in all services received OJT in the Pentagon's executive dining messes, the White House, Camp David, and the C20 Program [where enlisted aides acted as flight attendants on jets used by general and flag officers.]

To provide additional experience, the Navy regularly sent Sailors to Starkey International Institute in Colorado and other personal services schools because no formal military training was available.

While schools like Starkey helped to develop the personal services and culinary skills of enlisted aides, their civilian curriculum ignored important aspects of military household management. After attending such schools, enlisted aides still needed training on uniform maintenance, antiterrorism, operational security, community security, and the DOD rules and regulations applying to their field.

Finally, in 1992, workshops for enlisted aides began at Fort Lee, Virginia. Army enlisted aides were the first to attend, and the Navy began to send their enlisted aides shortly after. Though the workshops filled some training gaps, a formal training program still did not exist.

A Formal Program Fills the Gaps

In November 2003, the Chief of Staff of the Army determined that there was a need for a program to select, train, and manage enlisted aides. In March 2004, Ser-

geant Major Jamey Ryan was assigned as the Senior Enlisted Aide Advisor and designed a modern Enlisted Aide Training Course (EATC), which was then taught at the Army Center of Excellence, Subsistence and now at the Joint Culinary Center of Excellence (JCCoE) at Fort Lee. This formal program addressed military-specific areas of household management.

Initially, classes were only available to the Army. Navy enlisted aides began attending in 2008. The program continues to gradually improve based on input from the enlisted aide community, and it is receiving additional support from all of the military services. In fiscal year 2013, all services, including the Coast Guard, are expected to send enlisted aides to the course.

While the course is still not mandatory, having all branches involved improves the credibility of the program and increases the likelihood of it being chosen over civilian alternatives. This saves DOD money and ensures standardized training for enlisted aides.

The Curriculum

Students attending the EATC receive instruction on a wide variety of subjects. Most importantly, they are exposed to the DOD and service regulations pertaining to enlisted aides.

"When an admiral or a general gets promoted to one or two stars and they've never had that privilege of having an enlisted aide on their staff, they don't know what they [the enlisted aides] can and can't do," said Senior Chief Davila. "And, that's why we feel that it's very important that all those enlisted aides that are identified or are going to be enlisted aides that they come to this training first. . . [where] we can give them those necessary tools