

It's Easy to be Humble When . . .

There's a story about a proud first sergeant who bragged about his son while attending the son's graduation from West Point. "Yup, he's got my brains," the father boasted. "He must have *your* brains," replied top's obviously irritated wife, "because I still have *mine!*"

That story illustrates one of the cold, hard facts of life: Even perfection has its shortcomings. As NCOs, we have often experienced humbling events that challenge our status as professionals. In the context of professional development, here's some food for thought. We'll call it:

It's Easy to be Humble When . . .

You're a squad leader enrolled in BSEP . . . and every member of your squad has a college degree.

As a first sergeant, you have to ask the company commander to correct mistakes in your letter to the promotion board.

You've finally learned to type . . . and your children are taking courses in advanced computer programming.

You're summoned to the CSM's office to discuss a QMP action, and you ask, "How do you spell that?"

Your boss is raving about your 180 GT score . . . until you point out that it's your PT score.

While attending night school, you realize that your children are older than your classmates . . . and your professor.

As the post CSM, you send out a flyer . . . which is anonymously returned, with errors circled in red.

During a PT test, you're lapped by a 47-year-old female officer.

You discover during your briefing to the division commander that your own name is

misspelled on your briefing slides.

You think an ellipsis has to do with the moon aligning with the Earth and sun.

Computer language almost made sense when you first heard terms like "buffer," "bulletin board" and "sign-in."

You invest your entire voluntary separation pay in the Florida lottery . . . and lose.

You're a platoon sergeant . . . and your subordinate squad leader of 10 years ago is now your first sergeant.

The clerk in the retirement section announces that you hold the post record for "bad time" . . . and that you owe the Army another year before you can retire.

Your platoon's average SQT score was 95 . . . and you scored 59.

In a letter to a promotion board, you boast that you've "maxed out" your PULHES at 36!

The CSM who is presiding on your promotion board is the same guy you rear-ended in the parking lot this morning.

The "skycap" you instructed to pick up your bags informs you that he's in the Coast Guard . . . and he's an admiral.

Your daughter's Girl Scout uniform has more awards and decorations than does your uniform.

Your spouse asks why every other SFC in your unit made the promotion list and you didn't.

You let your ID card expire.

While looking at proofs of your official photo, you realize your nylons have runs.

Your soldiers see you walking on water . . . when the latrine floods.

Your duty section schedules a get-together . . . while you're on leave.



Your boss praises you in public . . . and calls you by the wrong name.

Your paperboy refuses to take your personal check.

You correct a private's uniform violation . . . and he points out that you're not wearing a belt.

It's been so long, you can't remember your date of rank.

The kid you got busted 10 years ago and drummed out of the Army is your new company commander.

You're not selected for the advanced course . . . but your subordinate is.

You "bolo" on the rifle range.

You graduate from the First Sergeant Course . . . and you're diverted to a desk job at battalion.

You learn that the soldier you just failed on the PT test is your brigade CSM.

You get orders to take a remedial KP course.

You return from a long TDY and your family asks, "Are you back . . . so soon?"

Your boss put you in for an award . . . which is downgraded to a reprimand.

You gain 20 pounds while on leave.

The person you just flirted with is your commander's spouse.

You've forgotten your general orders.

You're the only person at your high school reunion without a college degree.

You learn that you were the runner-up for a nominative position . . . and the job went to someone named Jethro Bodine.

Thanks to many anonymous NCOs, most of whom swear these experiences are non-fictional.

