GENERAL

army letter of continuity example

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Introduction

In the U.S. Army, a **letter of continuity**is a formal document that preserves an enlisted soldier's service record and benefits when they are temporarily separated from active duty. Whether a soldier is deployed overseas, attending school, or on a leave of absence, the letter of continuity ensures that their career progression, pay, and eligibility for future assignments remain intact. Understanding how to write and use this document is essential for both soldiers and their superiors. This guide will walk you through what a letter of continuity is, when it is required, its key components, and a detailed example that you can adapt to your own needs.

What Is a Letter of Continuity in the Army?

A letter of continuity is a written notice issued by a commander that confirms a soldier's continued status with a unit or organization during a period of absence. It is not a discharge or a promotion; rather, it is a protective measure that safeguards the soldier's record and benefits. The Army uses this tool to:

- Maintain the soldier's rank and time in service
- Ensure eligibility for future assignments, promotions, and training
- Preserve the soldier's pay and allowances during the absence
- Facilitate a smooth return to active duty or transition to civilian life

When Is a Letter of Continuity Used?

Typical scenarios that trigger the need for a letter of continuity include:

1. Deployments: Soldiers deployed overseas for extended periods often require a continuity letter to keep their records active.
2. Education Programs: Enlisted personnel attending the Army's educational institutions (e.g., Community College, university programs) may be absent from their unit.
3. Medical or Family Leave: Soldiers on medical treatment or caring for a family member may need a letter to maintain their status.
4. Special Assignments: Assignments such as language training, joint service duty, or specialized courses.
5. Reserve or National Guard Mobilization: When reservists or National Guard members are mobilized, continuity letters help preserve their Army record.

Key Elements of a Letter of Continuity

While each letter is tailored to the specific situation, the core components remain consistent. A well crafted letter of continuity typically includes the following:

- Header Information: Unit name, address, and the commanding officer's details.
- Recipient Address: The name and rank of the soldier receiving the letter.
- Subject Line: Clearly states "Letter of Continuity" along with the soldier's service number.
- Opening Statement: Introduces the purpose of the letter.
- Absence Details: Dates, location, and reason for the soldier's separation.

- Confirmation of Status: Explicit statement that the soldier's rank, time in service, and benefits remain active.
- Authority and Signatures: Signed by the commander or authorized officer.
- Attachments: Any supporting documents, such as deployment orders, medical certificates, or educational enrollment forms.

How to Draft an Army Letter of Continuity

Writing a letter of continuity is a straightforward process, but it requires precision and adherence to Army regulations. Follow these steps to ensure your letter meets all requirements:

1. Gather Required Information: Collect the soldier's full name, rank, service number, unit designation, and the exact dates of the absence.
2. Use the Correct Format: The Army follows a specific memorandum format (e.g., FM 6-22). Use the appropriate header, subject line, and body structure.
3. Be Clear and Concise: Use formal language, avoid jargon, and keep sentences straightforward.
4. Verify Accuracy: Double check dates, names, and ranks to avoid errors that could delay processing.
5. Obtain Necessary Signatures: The letter must be signed by the commanding officer or a designated authority.
6. Attach Supporting Documents: Include any orders or certificates that substantiate the soldier's absence.
7. Distribute Copies: Provide copies to the soldier, the unit's administrative office, and the Army Personnel Center.

Sample Army Letter of Continuity Example

Below is a complete example that demonstrates how to structure a letter of continuity. Feel free to adjust the details to fit your specific situation. This example uses a fictional soldier, "Sgt. Emily R. Thompson," and a deployment scenario.

Army Letter of Continuity Example

Unit: 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment**Address:** 1234 Military Drive, Fort Bragg, NC 28307**Date:**15 March 2024

To:

Sgt. Emily R. Thompson,
Service Number: 12345678
1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment
Fort Bragg, NC 28307

Subject:

Letter of Continuity – Sgt. Emily R. Thompson (Service Number 12345678)

1. Purpose

This letter serves to confirm the continued status of Sgt. Emily R. Thompson during her temporary separation from the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, effective 20 March 2024 through 19 September 2024.

2. Absence Details

Sgt. Thompson will be deployed to Afghanistan under Operation Freedom's Sentinel. She will be stationed at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, as part of the 4th Brigade Combat Team. Her deployment order (DO-2024-03) indicates a six month tour of duty.

3. Confirmation of Status

During this period, Sgt. Thompson's rank, time in service, and all associated benefits, including pay, allowances, and eligibility for future assignments, shall remain active and unchanged. She will continue to accrue time in grade and time in service as if she were present with the unit.

4. Authority

Signed by the Commanding Officer of 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment.

_____

LtCol. John A. Williams
Commanding Officer

5. Attachments

- Deployment Order (DO-2024-03)
- Medical Clearance Certificate

Copies of this letter shall be forwarded to the Army Personnel Center and retained in the unit's administrative file.

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Common Mistakes to Avoid

Even a seasoned writer can slip into errors that compromise the effectiveness of a letter of continuity. Here are common pitfalls and how to avoid them:

- Inaccurate Dates: A typo in the start or end date can cause confusion. Verify dates against deployment orders or leave forms.
- Missing Signatures: The letter must be signed by an authorized commander. An unsigned document may be rejected.
- Omitting Attachments: Supporting documents strengthen the letter. Without them, the Army may request additional evidence.
- Using Informal Language: Maintain a professional tone; avoid slang or overly casual phrasing.
- Failing to Follow Format: The Army has strict formatting guidelines. Deviating from the prescribed structure can delay processing.

Tips for Writing an Effective Letter

To maximize clarity and compliance, consider the following best practices:

1. Use the Official Army Style Guide: Refer to FM 6-22 and the Army Style Guide for formatting rules.
2. Keep It Brief: Aim for one page unless additional details are necessary.
3. Highlight Key Points: Use bold or italic sparingly to emphasize critical information.
4. Proofread Thoroughly: Check for spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.
5. Confirm Chain of Command: Ensure the letter is routed through the correct authority for approval.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can a letter of continuity be issued for a short leave of absence?

A: Yes. Any temporary separation—whether for a few days or several months—requires a continuity letter to maintain the soldier's status.

Q: Is a letter of continuity the same as a deployment order?

A: No. A deployment order authorizes the assignment, while a letter of continuity preserves the soldier's record during that assignment.

Q: Who can sign a letter of continuity?

The commanding officer or an authorized commander with the appropriate level of authority can sign the letter.

Q: Do I need to submit the letter to the Army Personnel Center?

Yes. Copies should be forwarded to the Personnel Center and retained in the unit's administrative file.

Conclusion

A well crafted **army letter of continuity example** serves as a vital safeguard for soldiers and units alike. By clearly stating the soldier's continued status, the Army ensures that career progression, benefits, and eligibility remain uninterrupted, even during periods of separation. Following the guidelines outlined above—collecting accurate information, adhering to format, and securing proper signatures—will help you produce a professional document that meets all regulatory requirements. Whether you are a soldier preparing for deployment or a commander ensuring your unit's readiness, mastering the art of the letter of continuity is an essential skill for maintaining operational effectiveness and supporting the careers of those who serve.

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