



The NCO Journal

Fall 95

A Quarterly Forum for Professional Development

When the new Sergeant Major of the Army rises each morning he goes to the mirror, looks at himself and repeats what are perhaps the most vital 287 words of his day...

(continued page 14)



Sergeant Major of the Army Gene C. McKinney

The NCO Journal

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Our mission is to provide a forum for the open exchange of ideas and information, to support training, education and development of the NCO Corps and to foster a closer bond among its members.

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Letters: Letters to the editor must be signed and include the writer's full name and rank, city and state (or city and country) and mailing address. Letters should be brief and are subject to editing.

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On the Covers

Front and inside back: Photos by SSG David Abrams. Back: Computer design by MSG Gabe Vega.

USASMA Commandant Pledges Commitment to NCO Corps, NCOES

As the new commandant of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, I pledge to you a total commitment to our NCO Corps. I will ensure that we focus our training on war fighting and caring for soldiers and families.

Our NCO Corps is as strong now as it has ever been. Force XXI is a reality. Our challenge? Where do we need to be in the 21st century? What tasks do we need to train? How do we train these tasks? How do we prepare our NCO Corps to continue to be the backbone, the heart and soul of our Army?

In July 1995, we conducted the 10th Worldwide Noncommissioned Officer Education System Conference (see pages 18-19). We had great representation from the Total Army. We identified numerous issues that are relevant to NCOES. We briefed SMA Gene McKinney and we also sent a copy of our after action report to all conference attendees. We will work these issues thoroughly and tenaciously to give you our improved product. As the proponent for NCOES, and regardless of the issue, if it pertains to NCOES—we want you to call us for either answers or assistance.

Let me assure you that we are looking hard at where we are going in the future. We will act in numerous areas: training development, modernization, regionalization, distributive learning, consolidation, accreditation, etc. The bottom line is the backbone of the Army and we must be a part of the evolutionary strengthening process of that backbone as we enter the 21st century.

Look at the level of expertise and the years of experience. The experience of leading, caring, training and maintaining that exists in today's NCO Corps must continue to be a part of shaping our future.

When we cross the line of departure into the 21st century, we will be trained and ready. ■

COL Robert L. Jordan, Jr.

Enhance Soldier Lethality, Mobility and Survivability With the Soldier Enhancement Program (SEP)

Since 1990 the Army has actively sought common sense solutions from soldiers to enhance their lethality, mobility and survivability on the battlefield through the Soldier Enhancement Program (SEP). The purpose of SEP is to accelerate the acquisition of lighter, more lethal weapons and improved "soldier items of equipment," and get that new equipment in the hands of soldiers in three years or less.

SEP candidates for the FY97 SEP program must meet the following criteria: Must be a soldier system item (an item of equipment that is worn, carried or consumed by the soldier for individual use in a tactical environment); must be commercially available (off-the-shelf with little or no modification for field military use); and must satisfy an operational need or battlefield deficiency. If it makes the soldier more effective or efficient on the battlefield, reduces the soldier's load (in either weight or bulk), enhances lethality, survivability, command and control, sustainment, mobility, safety, training, or quality of life or if soldiers are spending their own money to buy it, then it may well be a strong SEP candidate.

The SEP is not an incentive award program. No monetary awards will be given for proposals that are adopted for use and result in a cost saving to the government.

If you would like to submit a SEP proposal, a submission form can be obtained by contacting the TRADOC System Manager-Soldier, ATTN: ATZB-TS, Ft. Benning, GA 31905-5000, COM (706) 545-1189, DSN 835-1189/6047 or Fax 835-1377. All proposals must be received by the TSM-soldier not later than 1 November 1995 in order to be considered for the FY97 program. ■

ARPERCEN Updating Soldier Retirement Points Accounts

In a major push to improve customer service, the U.S. Army Reserve Personnel Center (ARPERCEN) completed a six-month-long validation of over 73,000 soldier retirement points accounts. The data is now ready for input into the automated Retirement Points Accounting System (RPAS).

Conference registration fee is \$5.00 and should be stated on the individual's orders. For more information, call MSG Williams at DSN 978-8633/8011 or COM (915) 568-8633/8011.

The input will be performed by a private contractor for cost effectiveness and to give ARPERCEN personnel the time to continue validating retirement accounts for the 1.8 million reservists served.

A new contract was recently awarded, but it's estimated that it will take four to six months to input all the data for the over 70,000 accounts. During this

time, ARPERCEN will suspend the mailing of RPAS retirement summaries to reservists, allowing the updates to take effect. Otherwise, reservists would receive a yearly retirement points summary showing the outdated or incorrect data. This would cause confusion and not serve the best interests of the soldier.

When new data is inputted into RPAS, reservists will immediately be mailed an updated retirement points summary. Yearly updates will then continue to be mailed on each soldier's retirement year end (RYE) date. ■

Ingrid G. Morgan
ARPERCEN Public Affairs

Seeks Soldiers' Somalia Combat Experiences

MAJ Greg Alderete seeks stories, photos, drawings and combat experiences from soldiers who served in Somalia. He says this combat deployment is "...fast becoming a forgotten chapter in military history. I hope to prevent that.

The book will be entitled "Memoirs from the Basement of Hell (Mogadishu)."

Send information to: MAJ Greg Alderete, ATTN: Somalia Stories, 1907 South Idaho Ave., Caldwell, ID, 83605. Phone (208) 459-4911 or DSN: 422-5050/5060. ■

PERSCOM Joins Information Super Highway

The U.S. Total Army Personnel Command (PERSCOM) established PERSCOM Online, a Homepage on the World Wide Web, to provide soldiers, family members and DA civilians a place to find accurate, pertinent and timely information about Army personnel issues and programs.

PERSCOM Online, offering worldwide access to the Internet, is linked to the Army Homepage "ArmyLink" or can be found under the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) <http://199.209.76.110>. For more information contact PERSCOM Public Affairs: (703) 325-8857, DSN 221-8857. ■

CPT David C. Farlow
PERSCOM PAO, Alexandria, VA

Info on Zeroing M16A2 Sought

The 2d Bn, 29th Inf Reg, in conjunction with the Army Research Institute (ARI), has begun a study to determine if the M16A2 zeroing procedures outlined in FM 23-9 need revising.

Preliminary results indicate that when the rifle is zeroed at 25 meters in accordance with FM 23-9 it will shoot high at 300-meter targets when aimed center of mass. The 2-29th would like to receive any information from *The NCO Journal* readers on the following topics:

- Why the 25-meter zero standard was adapted for the M16A2.
- Any modifications to FM 23-9 zeroing procedures being used in the field to address the tendency of a properly zeroed M16A2 to shoot high at the 300-meter target when aimed center of mass.
- Studies concerning the trajectory of the M16A2.
- Studies concerning the most common engagement ranges in recent U.S. combat operations.
- Problems with the M16A2 rear sight.
- Comparisons between U.S. Army and USMC M16A2 zeroing procedures.

If you have information of value to this study, contact the 2-29th at DSN 784-6922 or (706) 544-6922. Ask for MSG Sump or MAJ Dougherty.

LTC Michael A. Phillips
HQ, 2-29th Inf Reg, Ft. Benning, GA

Families Facing Medical Crises Receive 'Caring Environment'

By the end of this year there will be 24 Fisher Houses on the grounds of major military hospitals and VA medical centers across the United States, built as a gift. Annually, these comfort homes offer more than 140,000 days of lodging in a caring environment that allows military and veterans' families to face a medical crisis together. They can focus on the healing process, free from the financial worry of finding a place to stay in an unfamiliar city, while a loved one is hospitalized.

For more information on Fisher Houses and to locate the one nearest you, contact Fisher House Foundation, Inc. at 1401 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852. Phone (301) 294-8560 or FAX: (301) 294-8562. ■

Fisher House Foundation, Inc.
Rockville, MD

TRADOC Uses Reinvention Authority to Shape Force XXI

Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) has been made a Reinvention Center to give it more power to shape the Army of the 21st Century—Force XXI.

"Reinvention Center authority provides us an opportunity to change the way we change by eliminating barriers," said GEN William W. Hartzog, TRADOC commander.

Among the "barriers" that Hartzog said stand in the way of meeting objectives are outmoded regulations. As a Reinvention Center, TRADOC will have the authority to waive most Army and DoD regulations, except those which affect individuals' rights, equal opportunity and those based on federal law.

Hartzog has designated four reinvention laboratories under the Reinvention Center umbrella. They are the organizations of the TRADOC deputy chiefs of

staff for training, doctrine, combat development and base operations support.

"The lab commanders are charged to follow the Strategic Plan and change the way we change by taking informed risks where appropriate, cutting red tape, listening to customers, empowering employees and getting back to basics," Hartzog said. ■

TRADOC Public Affairs Office
Ft. Monroe, VA

TRADOC Approves PLDC Equivalent Course Credit for Reserve Component

Personnel Service Centers or PSC commanders will grant AC Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) equivalency to soldiers who successfully complete any of the following training:

- Reserve Component PLDC
- Primary Noncommissioned Officer Course.
- Soldiers completing RC PLDC through either Inactive or Active Training must provide documentation of successful training for both.
- RC Phase I Basic or Advance NCO Course taught through Inactive Duty Training of Active Training.
- United States Marine Corps NCO Course.
- USMC Leadership Course
- USMC NCO Basic Course
- USMC NCO Advance Course (taught only at Quantico, VA)
- USMC Resident Staff NCO Career Course (taught only at Quantico, VA)
- AC or RC U.S. Army or USMC Warrant Officer Candidate School

Corresponding study programs are not equivalent to AC PLDC resident training. Courses taught at USMC Institute in Washington, DC, are not equivalent to AC PLDC. Presently, no Air Force or Navy NCO training is equivalent to AC PLDC.

Requests for exceptional cases or foreign service school equivalency must be approved through the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, ATTN: ATSS-DC, Ft. Bliss, TX 78818-1270, (DSN 978-8659) by HQ TRADOC, ATTN: ATTG-ILN, Ft. Monroe,

VA 23651-5000, (DSN 680-5678/5672).

Soldiers must provide valid documentation before PSC's can process actions to select soldiers for promotions, schools and other Enlisted Personnel Management System (EPMS) matters. Valid documentation includes:

- DA Form 1059 (Academic Evaluation Report) and
- Diploma required for USMC courses

Effective date of promotion points will be the date the PSC commander approves the request. Promotion points will be awarded in accordance with AR 600-8-19. Promotion Points will not be awarded retroactively. PERSCOM POC is Junior Enlisted Promotions, DSN 221-9020. ■

TRADOC
Ft. Monroe, VA

Detailed Guide to Army Relationships With Private Organizations Now Available

The laws and regulations regarding official and personal relationships with private organizations (i.e. Noncommissioned Officers Association or NCOA, Association of the United States Army or AUSA, Field Artillery Association or FAA, Judge Advocates Association or JAA, etc.) are complex and extensive.

Changes in the relationships between POs and the Army and Army personnel seem infinite. To assist Army personnel, the director of the Army Staff directed the publication of a *Private Organizations Guide*, published in January 1995.

This guide was provided to all general officers, members of the Senior Executive Services, installation commanders as well as all MACOM ethics counselors. The entire reference guide is available on the JAG electronic bulletin board system (LAAWS BBS).

In addition, officials acting in their official or personal capacities in matters involving private organizations should actively seek legal advice from their ethics counselors to ensure they are acting properly. ■

Department of the Army, Office of the
Chief of Staff, Washington, DC

Medal of Honor Recipient Highlights ARCOM Commemorative Program

"I'm a citizen soldier. I came when I was called and I did the best I could."

Those were the words of **John D. "Bud" Hawk** (SGT), as he addressed the 90th Army Reserve Command's commemorative program recently held at Ft. Sam Houston, TX.



John D. "Bud" Hawk

Hawk's "best" helped stop two German attempts to escape from the Falaise Pocket in World War II, resulted in 500 enemy soldiers being captured and earned SGT Hawk the Medal of Honor when he was a member of 90th ARCOM's forebear, the 90th Inf Div.

"This is not mine," he said, fingering the medal around his neck. "I hold it in trust for those I served with and for all

those who served. It belongs to those who gave their lives...to the people who did what they could and hoped to come back...to those on active duty and in the Reserve today who carry on what we believe in...This is the 90th's medal."★

5th Army PAO, Ft. Sam Houston, TX

NCO Risks Life to Save Others From Hotel Fire

SFC **Randy French**, 728th MP Bn, rescued people from a burning Korean hotel recently, possibly preventing explosions and further damage to nearby buildings. French's knowledge of Korean home gas-delivery systems may have prevented explosions and further damage.

A witness said French risked his own life to help people escape from the fire.

"I'm just glad I was there to help and that nobody got hurt," French said.★



SFC French

19th Theater Army Area Command, PAO, Camp Henry, Taegu, Korea

INSCOM's Top AC Career Counselor Selected

SFC **Douglas J. Ports**, U.S. Army Intelligence & Security Command, has been named Active Army Career Counselor of the Year by the Secretary of the Army. He serves with the 731st MI Bn, 703rd MI Bde, Army Field Station Kunia in Hawaii, and topped 17 others for the honor.★



SFC Ports

INSCOM PAO, Ft. Belvoir, VA

Louisiana NG CSM Audie Murphy Inductee

CSM (Ret) **Harold B. Cook**, who served as the command sergeant major of the Louisiana Army National Guard for 15 years, is the first command sergeant major in Forces Command history to be inducted in the Sergeant Audie Murphy Program.

Cook, who served in the Louisiana National Guard for more than 40 years, learned of the honor during his retirement ceremony last December. FORSCOM CSM Richard Cayton announced the honor before a crowd of more than 450.★

Louisiana National Guard PAO, Jackson Barracks, New Orleans, LA

NTC and Ft. Irwin Select Soldier and NCO of Year

The National Training Center and Ft. Irwin selected SPC **Ray Mercer**, 2-11th ACR, as Soldier of the Year and SSG **Kenneth Aldrich**, HHT, 11th ACR, as NCO of the Year, FY 94.

Mercer has completed 28 credit hours of college at Barstow Community College and plans to continue his education toward an engineering degree. His goal is to become sergeant major of the Army.

Aldrich, who has completed 80 college semester hours, is attending Barstow Community College in search of a BA degree in business administration. He wants to compete and win NCO boards and earn a masters degree in business administration.★



SPC Mercer



SSG Aldrich

National Training Center and Ft. Irwin; HQ, 11th ACR, Ft. Irwin

Dolores A. Rabouin 1926-1995

Former students of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy remember **Dolores Rabouin** as the outgoing and friendly lady who managed the Learning Resource Center's (LRC) magazine and newspaper collection. Though she supervised a complex collection of more than 16,000 periodical volumes, Dolores could always be counted on to take time out to help others. Whether locating a needed magazine article or recommending a good book, she eased the way for students, showing them how to use the LRC.

She took a special pride in the Academy and its students. And no one will know exactly how many men and women she encouraged when she sensed academic pressures were worrying them.

The response from senior NCOs to her loss has reminded us how much the students valued her and proves that one person can indeed touch the lives of many others in a positive way.

Dolores Rabouin served as library technician at USASMA's LRC for 18 years.★

Ft. Jackson Selects Drill Instructor of the Year

SFC Anita D. Jordan from the U.S. Army Drill Sergeant School is Ft. Jackson's Drill Sergeant of the Year.

Jordan went up against the best drill sergeants on post from the 1st and 4th Training Brigades and the 120th Reception Bn.

The 13-year veteran said she lived and breathed study guides and studied regulations and made her own question and answer guides from them.

"Sometimes I got tired of all the studying, but I wasn't going to quit," she said.★

U.S. Army Training Center and Soldiers Support Institute, Ft. Jackson, SC.

1st U.S. Army NCOs and Soldiers of the Year Named

AC/AGR NCO of the Year is SFC Michael W. Stafford, Co C, 2d Bn, 152d Inf (MECH), Indiana National Guard.

AC/AGR Soldier of the year is SPC Jack D. Cooper, assigned to HQ Co, USAG, Ft. McCoy, WI.

ARNG NCO of the Year is SSG David M. Marshall, HHC, 1st Bn, 125th Inf, Michigan ARNG.

ARNG Soldier of the Year is SPC Paul J. Toolan, assigned to HHC, 43d MP Bde, Rhode Island ARNG.

USAR NCO of the Year is SSG Edward A. Ramsdell, assigned to 76th Div (Training), Ohio.

USAR Soldier of the Year is CPL Warren J. Porter, assigned to 2290th USAR Hospital, Rockville, MD, 79th USAR Command.★

HQ, First U.S. Army, Ft. Meade, MD

2nd U.S. Army Selects NCO of Year

SFC Pamela Ramble was recently selected 2nd Army NCO of the Year (AC).

Ramble worked as the senior enlisted finance assistant for the Readiness Group Jackson before being reassigned to Ft. Richardson, AK. ★

2nd U.S. Army, Readiness Group Jackson, Ft. Jackson, SC.

Professional Soldiers With Profiles

By MSG Edward W. Ganz Jr.

The Army has a system in place to assist soldiers with temporary or permanent physical limitations. However, it seems there are still those leaders who insist on labeling these soldiers as substandard performers.

Pay attention the next time you're standing in a PT formation. See how quickly the soldiers who can't run are singled out. Suddenly, this profile turns them into wimps, shamers and anything but professionals. For many leaders, soldiers with a profile have no place in the Army and are certainly not qualified to be leaders.

It's also true that there are soldiers who "ride a profile." I define a profile rider as a soldier who constantly uses either a temporary or permanent profile to avoid certain duties and activities. I also believe these soldiers are products of their unit's command climate. In most cases the profile rider can be stopped if leaders take the appropriate actions.

Most soldiers with a profile have a legitimate injury. There's the Airborne Ranger who took one jump too many; the aviator injured in an aircraft accident or the light infantryman with an injured ankle. And yes, maybe even a tank commander who lost a leg while in combat. My point is, these soldiers were and still are just as professional as they were before their injuries.

These professional soldiers still hold up their end of the bargain. Normally an alternate PT event is assigned. However, they still attend unit fitness training and

challenge themselves in every way possible. They don't make excuses or ask for sympathy.

Leaders should help these soldiers by reviewing all profiles and ensuring their soldiers participate within the physical limits of the profile. Unit master fitness trainers (MFTs) should also assist by designing special fitness programs for profile soldiers.

Some of the stigma attached to soldiers with profiles is enhanced in the scoring of alternate events listed in FM 21-20, **Physical Fitness Training**. I believe the GO or NO GO scoring is unjust to these soldiers.

Although they may excel in their assigned alternate event, they will never reach the status of receiving the Army Fitness Badge. It may be that the scoring of these events should be scaled in the same manner as the run event.

The message I'm sending is that many professional soldiers are on limiting physical profiles because they had a desire to stay in top physical condition. It's unfortunate, however, that the body must pay a demanding price in the name of fitness. Those soldiers still want to remain part of the military team.

As NCOs, we must lead from the front by taking the time to evaluate the soldier's disability and its cause. What fitness activities can they perform? What is their current level of fitness? (It might be higher than yours!) Does the profile prevent them from contributing to the unit's warfighting mission? In most cases, the answer to these questions is no.

Now, about the tank commander who lost his leg in combat. He led the largest Army corps in modern warfare to victory during Desert Storm. That commander was the former TRADOC commander, GEN Frederick Franks. Did his profile affect his leadership ability? I think not.■

Ganz was a student in the USASMA Sergeants Major Course, Class 42, Ft. Bliss, TX, when he wrote this article.



Two nations exchange Leadership Perspectives

By SSG David Abrams

In a year filled with WWII commemoration ceremonies, two U.S. NCOs went to Germany to learn a thing or two about leadership from that nation's army. At the same time, two German NCOs arrived at Ft. Bliss, TX, to absorb American-style leadership from the local NCO Academy.

"This was an absolutely worthwhile experience," SSG Edward Chandler exclaimed after returning from the four-week Platoon Leaders Course held in Rendsburg, Germany in late 1994—the first of its kind conducted by the German Army.

Chandler, a Basic NCO Course (BNCOC) instructor at Ft. Bliss, along with ANCOOC instructor SFC Antony Hanna, traveled to Europe both to absorb the German method of teaching NCOs and to offer informal advice on how to fine-tune the course.

The international and historic exchange of soldiers and ideas could lead to further attendance at other NCO training courses by both armies.

"Really, the only difference between us and them was the fact that their officers did all the teaching," Chandler said during a BNCOC cycle break at Bliss'

NCO Academy. "Other than that, everything was the same. They're NCOs just like us. They go home and 'talk Army' to their wives and buddies, too."

While Chandler and Hanna were talking shop with the Germany Army, SFC Frank Muller and SFC Andreas Markmann were going through the rigors of early-morning physical training and attending classes on American tactics at Ft. Bliss.

"We've learned some interesting things here at ANCOOC about the battlefield," said Markmann near the end of the common core portion of the class. "It's going to be good for my soldiers when I can go back and tell them what the American Army is like. That way, they'll know what's going on when we cross-train together."

Markmann and Muller each work in Germany's only two Stinger units. The air defense soldiers, with less than 15 years of military experience between the two of them, said they were selected to be their country's "guinea pigs" based in part on their knowledge of English and on their learning aptitude.

Though both armies' NCO courses use the small group leader process, the differences in teaching and learning styles were readily apparent to the two sets of NCOs.

"The soldiers here work together more than they do in Germany," Muller said. "In our army, NCOs go through school work alone with everyone trying to be the best one in the class. Here, it's more like a partnership. You can always ask other soldiers to help you during class and when doing homework."

After a couple of weeks in Germany, Hanna said he noticed the focus was different in the Platoon Leaders Course. "In the U.S., we train our soldiers *how* to be leaders," he said. "In Germany, they teach their NCOs NATO tactics,

rather than combining leadership and tactics."

Chandler and Hanna spent hours in the classroom studying, among other topics, how to build sand tables, the political role of the military and methods for drawing map overlays. Only a few days were spent in the field putting tactics into practice. "When we did leave the classroom and go to the field, we did everything one step at a time until it all came together," Hanna noted. "They're very methodical—which is not necessarily wrong, it's just different."

Before returning to the U.S. the two ANCOOC instructors had dinner with the school's commandant. "At one point, I leaned over and told him that if he wants to see his NCO Corps grow stronger, he should take some of his top-notch NCOs and make them the instructors rather than leaving all the teaching up to officers," Hanna said. "The potential for NCO instructors in that country is very good."

In fact, the "Success" block has already been checked for the trial program. Both countries have approved further exchanges between the two armies' NCO programs—a move, Hanna said, which can only benefit the allies. "When it comes down to it, they're just like us. We're continuously looking for ways to enhance the Noncommissioned Officer Education System." ■

Abrams is senior journalist for The NCO Journal.

NCOs and Joint Training

By CSM John H. Holden, Jr

As our Army continues to "right size" and as our missions increase, joint training on land, sea and air will make our support to the war fighting commanders-in-chief (CINCs) more effective. Interoperability training for NCOs must and will become increasingly important in the 21st century. Joint training undoubtedly will improve military effectiveness, reduce cost, increase the overall readiness of our military force and foster greater service interoperability throughout all military operations.

We go forward into the future with a larger mission—that of ambassadors—and as an example for all of the countries who want to become a part of NATO or to join in a partnership for peace. As our country continues to provide world leadership, it's apparent that the NCO Corps will become the trainer and role model for these partners.

Despite 21st-century high technology and re-defined missions, the basic theme of leadership for NCOs remains unchanged. We will still be expected to be proficient in our leadership skills and tactical and technical abilities. Our leaders have given us the challenge to help change the very nature of how future battles and wars will be fought.

The digitization of the battlefield now allows for simultaneous sharing of all kinds of information. To support the warfighting CINCs, it's critical that NCOs understand and take on the challenge of learning more about our sister services and related jobs, for we will play a major role in all future interoperability missions.

The NCO leadership and the soldiers they lead are the foundation of military readiness. Today's military mission is characterized by the use of sophisticated technology and an increased rate of deployment and family separation. These developments demand highly qualified, well-trained and motivated soldiers. As NCOs, we must recommend new and innovative techniques, training methods and tactics relevant to

the operational situation that is anticipated.

It's no secret that battles are decided by individuals and teamwork. Soldiers must know basic soldiering skills. They must know their individual weapons and equipment. They must be able to hit what they aim at and operate their technical machines. Keeping a battle focus, concentrating on those things the soldiers and the unit must do well, allows units to train on those areas that are most important in combat.

The most important ingredient of a winning organization—small or large—is teamwork. As seen in recent deployments, this is crucial for a force projection Army because the mission probably will not be well defined. NCOs have direct responsibility for building cohesive teams through vigorous, relevant and tough training.

Staying trained and ready requires constant reevaluation of missions and the ways to best accomplish them. We can't

stand still. We must eliminate deficiencies, use every available opportunity to train and constantly assess our ability to serve as a combat force. Staying ahead of any threat, any situation, any opponent—that's what we're all about. Our Army exists to fight our nation's wars decisively. Maintaining excellence in training allows us to keep the warfighting edge. Battle-focused training develops the discipline, toughness, teamwork and trust vital to succeed in battle. And, if need be, in operations oth-



er than war if that is where our country calls. As NCOs, we have the privilege of leading the finest soldiers in the world. They deserve the best possible leadership we can provide. We must respond to this challenge with selfless dedication and genuine concern for our soldiers and our country. ■

Holden is brigade command sergeant major, 7th Sig Bde, Germany.

On the "Gun Line" of the Army Theater Missile Defense Element (ATMDE) during Exercise Roving Sands, members of the U.S. Army Space Command (Forward) intently watch the hunt for a SCUD launcher. ATMDE uses a vast array of information processors, most of which are in everyday use in the Army, to locate and destroy SCUD launchers after they have fired their deadly cargo.



ARSPACE Public Affairs Office photo

Lightning Strikes at Roving Sands

By SSG David Abrams

Lightning only strikes once in the same place—so they say. While that may hold true for the natural elements, lightning bolts were touching down every hour inside the Force Projection Tactical Operations Center (TOC) during Roving Sands '95 at Ft. Bliss, TX.

The air in the TOC was charged with electricity as a team of officers, noncommissioned officers and junior enlisted soldiers from U.S. Army Space Command monitored the latest launch of a simulated SCUD missile, known as a "lightning."

From one corner of the tent: "We have lightning southeast of Albuquerque."

From another corner: "Lightning! Lightning! Lightning!"

A yellow light mounted on a pole in the center of the TOC started flashing. Soldiers who'd been on break rushed back into the tent. Fingers flew over computer keyboards, bringing up a series of screens with maps of the notional battlefield. The lightning path of the

SCUD arced across the southern half of New Mexico. Though the SCUD was in reality a prop—little more than a tube made of cardboard, sheet metal and 100-mph tape mounted on the back of a flatbed truck—try telling that to the soldiers in the TOC who treated every launch like a life-or-death situation.

"Predator on station!"

"Who do we have in the impact zone?"

A computer screen was consulted, then: "We have no known critical assets on ground."

"Roger, copy."

Tension mounted as Patriot missile crews were alerted to the incoming SCUD. A fire mission went out across the radio airwaves. A Patriot, the ballistic hero of Desert Storm, was launched.

In the dim interior of the connected tents, the air defenders sat at their stations, watching screens with the eyes of hawks while the voices of forward observers and other TOC soldiers chattered over headsets. In the hyper-tense moments after a lightning was first called, the collective blood pressure visibly rose in the tent.

"Impact in 10 seconds."

The Patriot screamed through the desert air, seeking the intruding SCUD.

Finally, a voice choked with relief said, "We have impact."

"OK, everybody. End of mission."

It was over in less than five minutes. The Force Projection TOC had identified a launch, alerted ground forces and monitored the destruction of the enemy missile. Chalk up another victory not only for the friendly forces, but also for the TOC itself as the Army's newest battle-management tool for air defense.

It was also a triumph for the NCO Corps since more than 70 percent of the TOC's personnel wore stripes on their sleeves.

"From the time we set up to the time we break down, NCOs have been running the show," said SSG Loren Roe, a theater tactical planner with U.S. Army Space Command (Forward). "We've got the cream of the NCO crop in here."

The TOC—which played a key role during Roving Sands, the annual joint exercise held in west Texas and southern New Mexico and involving about 24,000 servicemembers—was actually a proto-

type. In 1994, recognizing that nothing in the Army fully integrated weapons and capabilities to counter the theater missile threat, then-Army Chief of Staff GEN Gordon R. Sullivan tasked the U.S. Army Space and Strategic Defense Command to create an organization dedicated to TMD planning and execution. The resulting birth of the Army TMD Element then led to another tasking: create a nerve center to incorporate the four pillars of TMD (attack operations, active defense, passive defense and command, control, communications and intelligence).

Voila! The Force Projection TOC was formed, snapping together all four TMD pillars like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. On the battlefield, the TOC enables the Joint Force Land Component Commander to integrate air, sea and ground

battle information. The TOC is also compact—two C-141 transport planes can deliver personnel and equipment to the battlefield in a matter of hours.

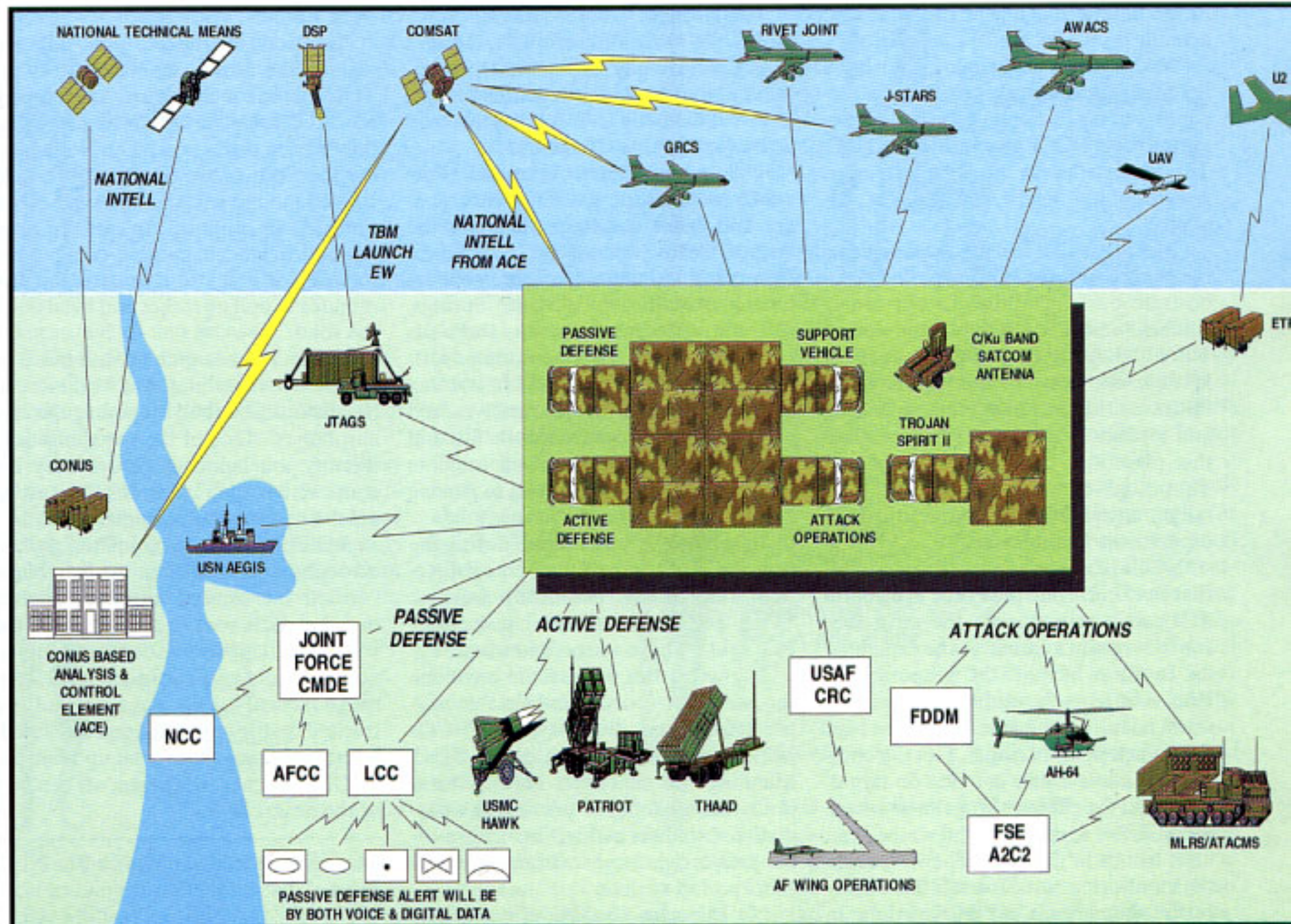
Composed of five High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicles connected by dark green tents, the Force Projection TOC gives a focused and synchronized picture of the joint battlefield. The air defense exercise marked the first time the prototype TOC has been fully operational in a tactical environment. If Roving Sands was a test, military officials declared, then the integrated TOC passed with flying colors—due in large part to the battle reflexes of NCOs who were, so to speak, quick as lightning.

With a vertical range of 10,000 feet and a horizontal sweep of more than 2,000 square miles, computer operators in the TOC had a wide, clear view of the

battlefield. Intelligence assets ranged from overhead satellites to special operations troops maneuvering through the desert. The TOC commander could look at the fused information on one of the dozens of computer screens, then pass the critical data up through the appropriate channels.

If Roving Sands was any indication, the TOC works like a charm, said many of the center's NCOs. "Some people are already calling this the 'TOC of the 21st century,'" Roe said.

During a calm between the lightning storms, SSG James Crenshaw walked out of the crowded TOC into the desert landscape of Ft. Bliss' Logan Heights, the main nerve center for Roving Sands' Blue Force command and control. A SCUD missile had just been identified and destroyed and the adrenaline was



The ATME TOC provides battle management support to the JFLCC throughout the spectrum of conflict. For a small investment in equipment and personnel, a superb TMD battle management tool counters a growing threat.

still pumping through Crenshaw's veins. "I can't wait until the next lightning!" he said, blinking in the bright light outside the tents.

"We never actually shoot the missiles down—we're just the detectors," he explained. "Our objective is to locate the bad guy, then we cue the Patriot units so they can kill him."

"We're like the eyes and the ears of the world," he added. "It's good to feel important."

In the attack operations van branching off the main room of the TOC, SSG Mike Washington from Space Command was tucked into the small space in front of his console. "During a lightning, we're in here listening over the headsets until the commander assigns a priority to the mission," he said. "At that point, we initiate the fire mission and pass it along to the battalion. They're the ones who actually do the technical fire control."

Washington's performance during a lightning normally takes less than 60 seconds, but it's just one of the many integrated roles NCOs play inside the TOC. The importance of the hard strippers is not going unnoticed by senior Army officials.

"Exercises like Roving Sands give us the chance to shine as a Corps and demonstrate our capabilities to our senior leaders," said CSM James Randolph of Third U.S. Army, headquartered at Fort McPherson, GA. "In the future, you'll find more responsibility for the planning and execution of tactical situations like this placed on the NCO's shoulders. That kind of responsibility can't be taught anywhere—it's learned through experiences like this one."

NCOs like Roe agree with Randolph that working inside the Force Projection TOC adds zest to even the most seasoned sergeant's career. As he explained his function in the TOC's operations, Roe could barely disguise the enthusiasm he has for the mission. "Once I get the launch point of origin, I let the commander know if he's got eyes on target. Then I let the chemical guys know where the SCUD's supposed to hit so they can alert troops in the area. Then I go into the monitoring mode to see if there's any further launches. I get all that done in about 45 seconds."

If the Force Projection TOC is ap-

proved for future use, it could very well change the face of the battlefield, Roe added. "What we're doing here is trying to narrow down our alert warnings. In Saudi, if a missile was fired on Dhahran, the whole theater of operations went on alert. We want to avoid that by alerting just those units in the immediate vicinity of the impact zone. We're trying to get the early warning system down to a basic science."

From first alert to final shutdown, the TOC soldiers work inside a window of 18 minutes. "We've set our own goal of 10 minutes, and there have been times when we've gotten it down to six minutes," Crenshaw said with a trace of justifiable pride in his voice.

That the TOC gets the job done like clockwork is something of a minor miracle in itself.

Just six months before Roving Sands began, the Force Projection TOC didn't even exist. Details on personnel, equipment and operating procedures had yet to be solidified by U.S. Army Space and Strategic Defense Command.

U.S. Army Space Command (Forward) received the system in late January and, after demonstrations for the Army Chief of Staff and the U.S. Central Command commander, the soldiers headquartered in Colorado Springs, CO, started learning the nuts and bolts of how to run the TOC's computer software. After only three weeks of training by both computer representatives and augmenting soldiers from forts Sill and Bliss, the Space Command warriors were ready to take their skills to Roving Sands.

Based on the success rate during the exercise, the future of the Force Projection TOC seems practically assured. "This TOC has unlimited potential," Roe said. "There are no boundaries."

If anyone has pushed the envelope for computer-coordinated theater missile defense operations, it was the NCOs working inside the prototype TOC. Manning the center in 12-hour rotations, the platoon of previously unacquainted soldiers melded into a state-of-the-art warfighting team in an amazingly short period of time.

"Considering these guys have only had three weeks to learn everything about this system, they're doing a damn

fine job," said SFC Ricky Judy, NCOIC of the TOC. "My NCOs are trying to incorporate multitudes of information, bring it all together then send it to the commander so he can make a decision. It can be very stressful, especially when you've got an inbound SCUD and someone has to make a decision whether or not to shoot it down."

As Judy spoke, the activity inside the TOC shifted to a blizzard of excitement. There weren't any inbound SCUDs, but a scouting team on the ground had spotted an enemy missile launcher. A preemptive strike was now the order of the day.

From the center of the room: "Do we have cleared airspace?"

A sergeant tapped his keyboard, searched the screen for an answer, then called out: "Not yet, sir. I'm waiting on word from the Air Force."

The seconds ticked into minutes, making the tension unbearable, as the TOC waited for clearance. Any moment now, the enemy launcher might realize they'd been discovered. The NCOs pacing the floor of the TOC knew a well-trained mobile launcher crew has an estimated 30 minutes to set up, two minutes to launch, another two minutes to wait for gases to dissipate and five minutes to pull up stakes and head down the road.

"They'll either pick up and move or they'll fire something at us," said Roe as he anxiously cupped a hand against his earphones. "One of the key things is to identify the launcher before they become active, then kill it. It's like cutting off the head so the body dies."

Relief spread like melted butter throughout the TOC as the Air Force verified the cleared airspace. Chatter over headsets rose to a fever pitch, the voices overlapped in a tangle of alpha-numerics and grid coordinates. A long-range tactical missile was launched and tracked on the computer screens. Finally, an exuberant cheer went up when the SCUD launcher was blown off the face of the desert. ■

Abrams is senior journalist for The NCO Journal.

Posture Affects Performance

By SGM Donnie E. Carpenter

Add poor posture to the demands of Army physical training and you see countless unnecessary injuries that cost us money, time, efficiency—and possibly even lives.

Part of the problem lies with soldiers who enter this Army with virtually no training in or awareness of good posture. Many arrive with full-blown postural deformities.

By the time we get many of our youth into uniform, much damage has already been done. Posture directly influences the weight-bearing joints of the body and poor posture causes strain that impairs performance and contributes to pain and irritation in the neck, back, hips,



Very Poor Posture

- Head forward
- Very exaggerated curve of upper back
- Abdomen relaxed
- Chest flat
- Sloping hollow back

knees, ankles and arches.

On the other hand, good posture contributes to general health and muscular endurance while reducing muscle strain and fatigue.

When I enlisted 22 years ago, military bearing and good posture were still semi-conscious, but growing tired and sluggish. Their perceived role in military physical training was fading fast back then.



Poor Posture

- Relaxed (fatigue) posture
- Head forward
- Abdomen relaxed
- Shoulder blades prominent
- Hollow back

I came on the scene when 1969 physical training doctrine was only four years old. Military bearing was still stressed because my superiors trained under 1957 doctrine when posture training

held 20 pages and all of one chapter. The 1985 FM 21-20 deleted posture training altogether. These days a soldier can sit, stand, walk, run and march irrationally without much fear of reprimand.

Both the 1946 and 1957 PT manuals included precise exercises designed to correct muscular deficiencies associated



Fair Posture

- Head forward
- Abdomen prominent
- Exaggerated curve in upper back
- Slight hollow back

with poor posture. Even the later revisions of 1969-1980 warned that malformations of the body caused by poor military bearing impair performance and troop morale. The manuals further cautioned that these physical and accompanying psychological weaknesses, if left unchecked, might eventually become permanent disabilities.

Good posture allows opposing muscle groups to maintain balance, contributing to proper alignment of the skeletal system and optimal position of the internal organs. Poor posture leads to imbalances often

characterized by round shoulders, flat chest, sway back, protruding abdomen and tilted pelvis. These and other related deformities look terrible, contribute to a host of orthopedic problems and impair movement.

Poor posture also is associated with sensory integration dysfunction (SID). Soldiers with SID simply can't move well because this condition interferes with equilibrium, balance and protective responses. When soldiers with SID are required to make any kind of movement beyond their normal and extremely limited range, it's not

uncommon to see nausea, hypersensitivity to movement, perspiration, increased respiratory rate, etc.

When Army leaders rebuilt physical training doctrine during and after World War II, they called upon a famous physical educator named Dr. Charles McCloy for advice. He taught that "good posture is that adjustment of the various parts of the whole, in harmony with the individual's own bony and ligamentous architecture, which gives the greatest mechanical efficiency, the least interference with organic function and the greatest freedom from strains."

McCloy's timeless advice may be couched in some long words, but if it's



SIT TALL

- Chin in
- Shoulders relaxed
- Chest raised
- Upper back and hips in line
- Belt parallel with floor
- Upper legs on chair
- Lower legs vertical
- Feet flat on floor

simple enough for a crusty old sergeant major to understand, it should certainly be clear to the hordes of physical fitness experts calling for reform in our current approach.

I commend the physical therapy community for reminding us that good posture and military bearing is an underlying foundation upon which to build an effective physical readiness program. They have given us all a friendly little slap on the back of the head. Now it's time to straighten up, get smart

and fix the problem. ■

Carpenter is currently assigned to the United States Army Physical Fitness School (USAPFS), Ft. Benning, GA.

The Sinai Project

Photo by SGM Richard Wickman



By SSG David Abrams

SSG Stephen Strickland couldn't reach out and touch his Primary Leadership Development Course students because they were more than 9,000 miles away, but that didn't stop the Ft. Bliss Noncommissioned Officers Academy instructor from making sure the 32 "NCO wannabes" got some of the best leadership training the Army has to offer via a ground-breaking course that used cameras, computers and fiber optics.

Thanks to a two-way video-satellite link, Strickland could stare directly into a camera in a specially designed studio-classroom at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy and teach Reserve Component soldiers sitting in a classroom in the Sinai Desert with only about two seconds of transmission delay.

The satellite-linked PLDC was to be one of the first steps in Force XXI, the Army-wide push to turn 20th-century soldiers into 21st-century techno-warriors before the century even turns. Gadgetry aside, USASMA officials be-

lieve these initial classes of PLDC could very well change the face of the classroom phase of all future NCOES instruction.

Known informally around the halls of USASMA as "the Sinai project," the landmark PLDC was a video teletraining pilot for the Reserve Component, said SGM Dan Hubbard, Directorate of Training sergeant major. "We're using the technology to project what we'd normally do in classrooms here to a distant campus," he added.

Distance learning is spreading like wildfire in an Army which is already moving from individual posts to a worldwide military community linked by the information superhighway and the fax machine. SGM Richard Wickman, PLDC course evaluator for USASMA's Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization, said television network courses are being developed for Defense Language Institute and Infantry Officer Advanced courses. "This type of training has got a lot of uses," he said. "All the soldiers I talked to in the Sinai were impressed that the Army has the capability to do something like this."

Broadcasting from a studio in Texas to relay stations in Virginia and New Jersey then over to the Sinai classroom required only slight modifications in the course presentation.

"For the first couple of days I had to get used to the microphones and the cameras, but after that it was just like teaching any other PLDC class," said Strickland, a PLDC instructor for three years. "It took a little while to get to know each soldier's personality because I wasn't circulating around the classroom, but it didn't take long to know which students were always prepared and which ones needed a little extra attention."

The U.S. Army Reserve and Army National Guard soldiers—part of the 4th Bn, 505th Parachute Inf Reg, 82nd Airborne Div, which deployed in January to the desert for a Multinational Force and Observers rotation—took PLDC while at the MFO base camp after spending three weeks patrolling the Egypt-Israel border as part of the peace-keeping operation. The unit was comprised of 72 percent Guard volunteers eight percent Reserve volunteers and 20

percent Regular Army soldiers.

"In one sense, this was a tougher-than-average PLDC because these soldiers had a real-world mission—they came out of the field from their patrolling and observation posts and the very next day they were in the classroom; then, the day after they graduated, they were right back out in the field," Wickman said.

Wickman was on-site in the desert for the first of three TNET PLDCs to ensure the course was taught to Army standards. "Before I went to the Sinai, I was really skeptical," he said. "I didn't think anything like this could be taught over TNET. But I have to admit, I saw a transformation take place—there was a real connection between the instructor and his students. SSG Strickland really brought these soldiers together as part of the small-group process."

USASMA, the proponent agency for PLDC, took the lead in designing the course for television presentation in mid-December 1994 when Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) officials made the decision to provide junior leadership training to the deployed soldiers. USASMA officials then contracted for training support materials which could be transmitted over the network, including colorful graphics and a "television script" for instructors to use as a guide when conducting class.

The 200 instructional slides used in most PLDC classrooms mushroomed to more than 700 visual graphics which were also presented to each student in a special note-taking book.

"This was something that had never been done before over this great of a distance," Wickman said.

The long-distance transmission between Ft. Bliss and the Sinai, the first of its kind in the NCOES, is an example of the impact technology has on today's Army. Using a complicated system of satellite hookups, 150 hours of PLDC classes were beamed into two temporary classrooms on the other side of the world. Strickland gauged the reaction of his Sinai students by simply glancing up at the two video screens in front of him.

Although the VTT process has been used in other locations, USASMA officials said this was the first time a complete distance-learning package was presented to students.

Strickland had four different camera angles in the two classrooms to monitor the students' facial reactions and classwork. "Through remote control, I can move the cameras around and zoom in on their nametags or see what they're writing in their notebooks," he said.

The instructor at USASMA could also use the camera to show slides and play instructional videotapes to enhance the classroom experience for the Sinai students.

Four assistant small group leaders stood by in the classrooms to pick up where Strickland left off once the satellite transmission switched off for the day or if the system ever went down (something which only happened once during the first course). Those hands-on portions of PLDC which could not be taught over the airwaves—such as land navigation, drill and ceremony and the field training exercise—were under the control of the ASGLs who also administered written exams and evaluated the students' performance on leadership tasks.

Along with sitting in the classroom, the RC soldiers had the usual stresses of PLDC once the TV screen went blank.

"We tried to create, as best we could, a demanding NCO academy environment," Wickman said. "These soldiers

Soldiers in the Sinai complete PLDC via TNET from a classroom 9,000 miles away in Texas—all the while performing a real-world mission.

still did barracks maintenance and had inspections just like any other PLDC students."

The first long-distance PLDC was conducted in early March with other iterations of the leadership course following in May and June. This gave the deployed RC soldiers from 26 states a golden opportunity to climb the first step

on the NCOES ladder. Normally, RC soldiers must attend the course at an NCO academy during their annual training after completing a written pre-resident package. With the state-of-the-art PLDC, the RC soldiers received firsthand instruction from an Active Component NCO—another "first" for the project.

For SPC Tracy Zimmerman, a Reservist from Orange, TX, the leadership course was a highlight in his tour-of-duty in the desert. "This is like a bonus for me," he said during a break in his map reading class. "I just came here to the Sinai for the mission and now being able to take PLDC is like icing on the cake."

Distance learning is not without its critics, however—many of whom feel the computer chip will take the heart and soul out of leadership training. "I had some initial concerns," said SGM Charles Keller, chief of USASMA's PLDC Curriculum Development Branch. "The technology's great and certainly applicable to many different things in the Army, but I don't think anyone's advocating the replacement of anything in NCOES with distance learning."

Despite the oceans and continents separating the teacher from his students, Keller said the quality of education remained the same. In fact, the ratio of students to instructors was slightly higher than the average PLDC.

"These soldiers in the Sinai got the same training as any other Reserve Component soldiers who go through PLDC," Hubbard said. "They were evaluated on the same tasks and held to the same standards—only the conditions were different."

Of the 96 students who began the landmark courses, only nine failed, Keller said.

While the jury is still out on whether or not distance learning will win approval from the Department of the Army, Wickman cautioned, "I would never want to see TNET replace traditional NCOES schools because we can get a lot out of the personal interaction the instructor has with his students. However, for remote sites, you can't beat this type of opportunity." ■

Abrams is senior journalist for The NCO Journal.

SMA McKinney Launches

By SSG David Abrams

Starting with

"No one is more professional than I," Gene McKinney recites the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer from top to bottom. "All the answers are in there," he says. "It talks about how professional we should be, it talks about us being the backbone of the Army, it talks about NCO-officer relationships, it talks about integrity. It's an affirmation of how we do business."

McKinney challenges anyone to test him on the Creed. "Give me one word from anywhere in there and I'll be able to pick up and finish it out for you. That's how committed I am to the Creed."

Since becoming the 10th Sergeant Major of the Army on June 30, the 47-year-old native of Monticello, FL, wears his commitment to the NCO Corps on his sleeve, along with the nine service stripes and the recently redesigned SMA insignia.

"I think the Corps is the best it has ever been," he says. "I think it will get even better. We have a lot of young, smart NCOs who want to make a difference, who want their share of responsibility, who are willing to learn from their mistakes. I'm so proud to be a part of that."

On the eve of the 1995 Worldwide NCO Education System Conference, McKinney pauses between preparing his opening remarks and visiting trainees at Ft. Bliss' NCO Academy to talk about the challenges he faces at the top of the enlisted chain and about his vision for the future of the NCO Corps.

"One of the things I want to emphasize at this conference is that we need to ensure our NCOs are prepared for the 21st century and the challenges of Force XXI," he says while relaxing at his guest quarters. Even in repose, his six-foot, two-inch, broad-shouldered frame seems tensed for action. "Because of in-

creasing technology, we need to focus even more on leadership. I think we've tended to get a little separated from each other—nowadays, everybody's got their own little cubicle and computer terminal—but the one factor that pulls it all together is leadership."

As McKinney leads America's enlisted toward the challenging hurdles of Force XXI's battle-ready focus, he says there are some soldiers who are understandably resistant to sweeping changes. "As we assimilate Force XXI, we need to be more flexible, more efficient," he notes. "One of the things we must be willing to do is get rid of the excess baggage of old, traditional ways of thinking. If some of those ways are applicable, let's keep them; if not, let's drop them. We need to be critical and analytical in our thinking. If we can find a way to do something easier and still have it be effective, then of course that's the right way to do business."

“Even at a young age I was leaning toward the green suit.”

Take a look in McKinney's high school yearbook and, while his classmates listed their career goals as "Accountant," "Movie Star," or "Teacher," the future SMA wrote "Military."

"Even at a young age I was leaning toward the green suit," he says.

Soon after graduation, McKinney seized that goal by enlisting in the Army in 1968. He served a one-year tour in Vietnam, returned to Ft. Bragg, NC, made the grade of sergeant, then abruptly left the service. He'd gotten married and, since both he and his wife Wilhemina wanted to attend college it became, he says, "an affordability issue." Unable to foot the bill for both educations on

what the G.I. Bill provided at the time, McKinney came back into the Army. He'd been out of uniform for only 35 days.

"My mother had a lot to do with that decision," he says, his eyes twinkling behind wire-rimmed glasses. "She said, 'You've been to Vietnam, seen some of the hardest combat known to man, and they made you a sergeant. You've obviously done well for yourself in the service. Why leave it now?' It made perfect sense to me, so I came back in. At that point, I knew I wanted to make the military my career. I told everyone I was here to stay."

Twenty-seven years after first raising his right hand for the oath of enlistment, McKinney sits at the peak of the profession. He comes to the Pentagon from a three-and-a-half-year assignment as command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army in Heidelberg, Germany. Prior to that, he held CSM positions at 1st Armored Div and 8th Inf Div (Mechanized).

When asked if he ever imagined he'd be sitting behind the SMA desk when he was a teenager penning career goals in his yearbook, he shakes his head and says, "You can never see the full development of yourself down the road. But there's a certain distance you *can* see. I believe if you go as far as you can see and then get there, you'll be able to see a little bit farther and so on. I kept seeing myself in the position and grade one step above where I was at.

"It's not always as clear as you want it to be, but you can make it a lot clearer by just plugging away at your goal," he adds. "Persistence and determination. There's nothing in the world that can take the place of persistence. Talent won't, genius won't, education won't. If you're persistent and determined to keep going, you'll get there."

This is the message McKinney wants to bring to the soldiers he visits at units around the globe. He says he wants to

Each Day With NCO Creed

especially reassure some of the younger, first-term soldiers that the job they're doing isn't going unnoticed and shouldn't go unrewarded.

"The level of responsibility in our young specialists and sergeants today is far different from that of their peers in the past. In Macedonia, I've seen sergeants manning observation posts, running patrols, preparing operations orders, taking care of logistics, cooking their own meals and pulling their own security—all this without an officer or senior NCO in sight. Our soldiers are working hard, doing things far above their level of experience and some of them are still not getting promoted like they should.

“If we can find a way to do something easier and still have it be effective, then of course that's the right way to do business.”

"I do have some concerns about local promotion boards," he adds. "Not necessarily in how the local boards select and promote, but in the larger retention and MOS-management issues of the system. We need to give soldiers more of an opportunity to get promoted. I'm not sure how to fix the local promotion situation, but I *am* looking very hard at that issue."

McKinney is a storyteller. Whether joking about the confusion that arises when he and twin brother James (also a CSM) are mistaken for each other or about the time he called home to his wife

and another man answered ("It turned out to be former SMA Kidd....I'd accidentally dialed his number!"), McKinney loves to spin a tale.

Right now, he's answering critics of the centralized promotion system. "When I hear people complaining about how the system is 'broken,' I tend to think that's only their perception," he says. "It's their lack of understanding how the board works.

"Let me tell you a story. There once was an older, experienced umpire and, during one particular ball game, every time he called something there was a guy up in the stands who'd yell 'It's a ball!' or 'It's a strike!'—just the opposite of what the ump had said. Finally, the official stopped the ball game and went up into the stands. 'How much money do you have on you?' he said to the fan. The fellow opened his wallet and showed the ump 10 one-dollar bills. 'That's what I've got, too,' said the ump. 'Now here's what we're gonna do: we'll line your dollar bills up on home plate and then we'll line my dollar bills up on home plate—that's 20 dollars neatly laid out on home plate—then, from where you're sitting in the stands, you read off the serial numbers on each one of the bills. Every one you can read, you can have and every one I can read I get to keep.' The fan protested, saying, 'No, no, you're too close.' The ump poked his finger at the guy and said, 'That's exactly my point—I'm closer to the issue.'"

McKinney sits back, pleased with his analogy. "So, when I hear soldiers say the promotion system is broken and that certain colleagues of theirs should never have been promoted, I tell them there are people behind home plate who are closer to the serial numbers. Everyone I know who's sat on the centralized promotion board has said they've been extremely fair and equitable in picking the right people."

The SMA is willing to discuss the matter with anyone. "I'm prepared to

address complaints and criticisms in any forum as long as the people are more specific on what they feel is 'broken' in the system."

When McKinney was a staff sergeant serving as a scout section leader in 3rd Squadron, 3rd ACR at Ft. Bliss, he met one of the most influential people in his career. Felix Helms was the first shirt for McKinney's unit and from the moment the future SMA set foot in the door, Helms saw the young soldier's potential.

“I think the Corps is the best it's ever been. I think it will get even better.”

McKinney smiles as he recalls Helms' mentorship. "The guy was tough as nails, but he always looked out for my best interests," he says. "One day he called me into his office and asked me to take over the communications section because, he said, they lacked leadership. I told him, 'First sergeant, I can barely spell communications let alone run the section with all its different radios and pieces of equipment.' His answer to me was: 'You're an outstanding leader and good leaders always find a way.'"

McKinney overcame his apprehension, working in the signal section for nearly a year before moving on to be scout section sergeant and then to platoon sergeant.

McKinney credits Helms' faith in his leadership ability for his success with that platoon. "He was always trying to teach me something," he recalls. "I'd be on my way out the front door for the day and he'd call me in and say, 'Come here, let me show you how to run a suspense file.' Or, maybe it was how to counsel or how to set up a duty roster. It doesn't

really matter. When you get down to it, it's not about what skills he taught me, it's the fact that he gave a damn about me."

As SMA, McKinney says he cares just as deeply about all the soldiers now under his purview.

"When I visit soldiers in the field, I want to absorb what's bothering them," he says.

These days, the "bothersome" issues increasingly center around quality of life—a blanket term which includes everything from the condition of military housing to the types of candy bars in Meals, Ready to Eat.

"What is quality of life? It's peace of mind," McKinney says. "The soldier asks himself, 'No matter how much sacrifice I have to make on the battlefield, what am I going home to when the fighting stops?' If a soldier is reasonably comfortable with the fact that he's going back to a decent environment, that his family's being cared for and that the issues which have come up while he's been away have been to some degree resolved, then he's going to do all he can out there on the front. That's not to say

“I'm not sure how to fix the local promotion situation but I am looking very hard at that issue.”

he won't give his all even if the quality of life isn't up to standard, but you have to understand that we're all human beings. Families are an important part of our lives. So, we have to balance soldiers being cared for and families being cared for."

In the past decade, the balancing act has gotten better. McKinney says great

strides have been taken toward improving quality of life for soldiers and families, but there are still more steps to be taken—especially in the treatment of single soldiers, he adds.

"We talk about all the great, smart, young men and women we have in the Army, but we still want to corral them up, put them in a cage and lock the door," he says, referring to lifestyle restrictions in the barracks and, occasionally, the workplace. "When you corral those young soldiers, you also corral their creative and innovative ways of thinking. If you treat a person the way you see them, they'll stay that way; but if you treat that person the way you *want* them to be, then chances are they'll change. In other words, if you see me as a lazy old bum, I'll stay that way; but if you see me as a mature, intelligent person who can go out and make a lot of things happen, then for the most part I'm not going to go out and disappoint you because I want to prove you right. Whichever way you push me, that's the way I'm going."

For the next 16 months, McKinney will be pushing himself as he embarks on a whirlwind, continent-hopping tour of Army installations. Though he'll still attend to important affairs at his Washington, DC, desk, his goal is to meet and greet as many soldiers as he can in as many places as he can as quickly as he can. The dust won't even have time to settle under his combat boots.

He wants to bring his message of faith in the NCO Corps to soldiers and officers at all levels.

As the SMA, McKinney also wants to act as a sounding board for legitimate grievances which may exist on the local level. He'll be looking for patterns of similar problems which may indicate a larger issue that needs to be addressed. The SMA's job, he notes, is like that of a funnel, channeling bona fide complaints and solutions to the top of the chain of command.

"At the same time, I don't want anyone to think this job has the authority to change anything," he cautions. "I *do* have the position and the location to influence things, but I *don't* make changes. I use factual information and, of course, some of it becomes emotional. It also goes without saying that I don't want to circumvent the local chain of command."

“I didn't come into this job with any preconceived ideas that the Army's broken. Nor did I come in thinking the Army's all fixed. I came with an open mind.”

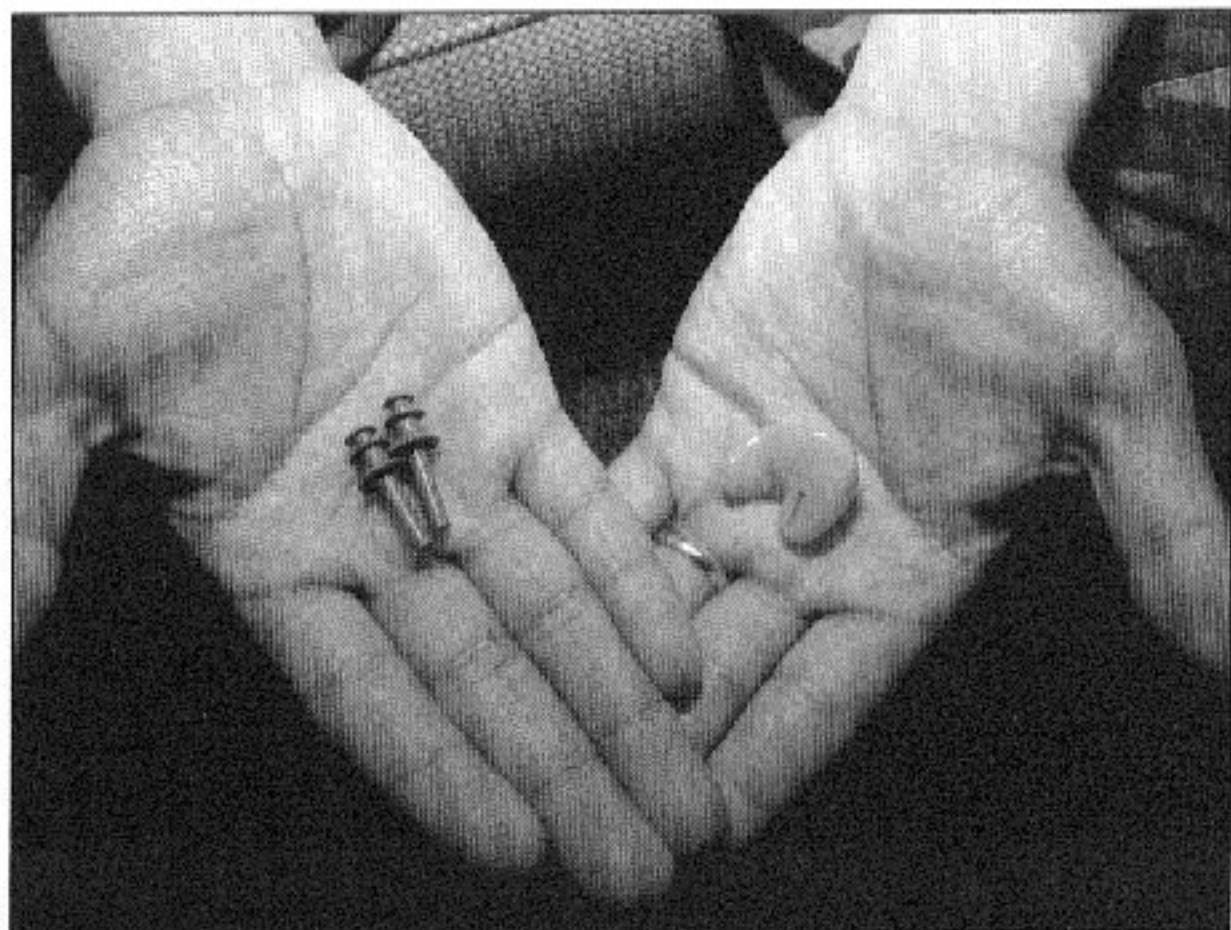
Nonetheless, McKinney radiates an openness which makes it easy for even the lowest-ranking soldier to approach him with a great deal of respect yet very little fear.

"I've been in the foxhole my whole career—on the tanks, in the cold, in the heat," he tells one group of soldiers at Ft. Bliss. "I want to assure you, I won't forget where I came from."

"I didn't come into this job with any preconceived ideas that the Army's broken," he adds. "Nor did I come in thinking the Army's all fixed. I came with an open mind."

A mind, by the way, that is filled with the NCO Creed at the start of each day. ■

Abrams is senior journalist for The NCO Journal.



After
20 years
of service...

Only One Regret

By SGM Kevin M. Skelly

As I complete my 20th year of service to the United States Army, I find myself reflecting back to see if there was anything in those previous years I would change if given the chance. I certainly wouldn't change my serving with all of those super soldiers I came to know over the years. I wouldn't change any of the great duty stations I served at—forts Lewis, Sam Houston and Bragg, to name just a few. Nor would I change the opportunity to have served my country overseas in Asia where I was able to learn another culture. Then there were all the opportunities for personal and professional development I received through the Non-commissioned Officer Education System and the Army Continuing Education programs. I'd be crazy to change any of that.

While reminiscing, I'm distracted by a noise in my ears. It's a ringing noise I'm all too familiar with and it grows louder the longer I concentrate on it. It's a sound I must live with because I have no choice—it's a part of me now, a part of my life. Every minute of every day for

the rest of my life I'll have this high-pitched distraction in my ears.

Yes, that's it! If I could change one thing from the past 20 years, it would be the constant ringing in my ears I live with now—all because I didn't wear hearing protection when I should have.

It probably began that time I went to the rifle range without my earplugs. I was young and figured it would OK just this one time. Besides, my leaders weren't really checking anyway.

Or, maybe it was one of those times I was around the artillery pieces when they were firing and I figured I could get my fingers in my ears quick enough...I couldn't.

When I left Field Artillery, I went Airborne and joined the Special Forces. I can recall many times I'd climb into helicopters thinking the ride was too short to bother with earplugs. I was too hoo-ah for earplugs anyway; we all were.

My hearing loss also could have been the result of driving multitudes of Army trucks without taking the time to insert protection in my ears.

In truth, it's probably a combination of all of the above. As a result of my ignorance, I am now the proud owner of

hearing aids at the ripe old age of 37 years. Army doctors have provided me with a fancy pair of \$2,000 earplugs. That's because they said my hearing deficiency is permanent, just like that high whine in my ears.

Permanent.

The hearing aids aren't too uncomfortable...once you get used to them. My friends eventually got used to seeing me wear them. Now they only remind me that I'm too young to have them. I caution them not to make the same mistake I did or they'll get a pair, too. I only wish some of my previous leaders had taken that extra moment to ensure we had earplugs—and used them!

Now that I'm a leader, I take that extra moment. I see the looks on the faces and I hear the grumbling, but I don't give in. I know

that as a leader I sometimes have to make unpopular decisions. Through my experience, I must override the youthful exuberance and ignorance of some of my soldiers to ensure they do the smart thing.

I also take the time to explain why earplugs are so important. Today's soldiers are intelligent and deserve a better explanation than "because I said so." Then I tell them about the ringing, every minute of every day...ringing that never stops. That's what usually does the trick. I can see it on their faces and in their eyes.

Regrettably, my choice has already been made. The only thing I can change now are the batteries in my hearing aids.

However, you still have a choice. ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS use hearing protection. Ignore any ribbing you may get from your buddies.

If you're a leader, make hearing protection mandatory and please check your soldiers. It only takes a moment to inspect their ears, but the ringing lasts forever.■

Skelly is sergeant major, Joint Special Ops, Force Integration, Ft. Bragg, NC.

"We are going on the offensive."

NCOES Conferees

By SSG David Abrams

The 1995 Worldwide Noncommissioned Officer Education System Conference opened with a challenge and a promise. Standing in the West Auditorium of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, COL Robert Jordan said in a loud, booming voice, "We are going on the offensive."

Thunderous applause greeted this assurance that a serious, proactive approach would be taken with NCOES issues during the conference, held at Ft. Bliss, TX, July 24-28.

Jordan, USASMA's newest commandant, also told the 415 officers, senior NCOs and DA civilians gathered in the auditorium for the biennial event that no comment made during the conference would be taken lightly when it came to shaping the future of NCO training.

"We'll take your knowledge, your expertise and shape the battlefield of the future," he told the record crowd of senior leaders. "I really believe the results of this conference have the potential to collectively shape the vision, concept and philosophy of NCOES."

This year marked the 10th gathering where officials discuss current issues in all aspects of NCO training and development. From billeting in Primary Leadership Development Courses to updates on distance learning, the seminars emphasized active participation from those in attendance.

"The curriculum allowed everyone to walk away knowing where we were headed for the 21st century," said MSG Billy Williams, action NCO for the conference.

Some of that direction was provided by SMA Gene McKinney who also greeted the conference-goers with a challenge during his opening remarks: "I want to know three things before this conference is over: *What* should we train in NCOES courses? *Where* should sol-

diers be trained? And *how* do we notify soldiers in a timely, sequential manner that they're going to an NCOES course?"

In remarks that brought the auditorium to its feet in a standing ovation, McKinney said, "We need to have one standard so that the soldier going to PLDC at Ft. Benning, GA, will receive the same standard of training as the soldier going through PLDC at Ft. Bliss. We need to get rid of the mindset where

everybody wants to put their own personal 'spin' on NCOES."

Williams said one of the most important aspects of the conference was the detailed, six-page survey given to everyone who came to the seminars. "We compiled all the raw data from those questions, put it in the after action report and sent the results up to Training and Doctrine Command as well as a copy to everyone who attended," Williams noted.

NCOES Issues, Discussion

☐ *Exceptions to policy*

Discussion: A class often won't fill to the minimum class size. Without an approved exception policy, the NCO Academy can't conduct the class. The problem is that the approval/disapproval needed immediately. Commandants would like the authority to make the decision or at least have more flexibility. This is a significant problem in low-density MOSes where there will never be enough soldiers to reach the minimum class size. If the soldier doesn't attend NCOES, he or she remains ineligible for promotion.

Recommendation: TRADOC should delegate authority to commandants to determine minimum maximum class sizes based on resource capabilities.

☐ *Leadership Assessment and Development Program*

Discussion: Due to poor resources and training, this didn't work the first time and there is no reason to believe it will work again. There's virtually no resource or doctrinal support for LADP. In these times of short money, it would seem logical to drop the program entirely. Conference-goers agreed there's a need to improve counseling skills, but leaders should use techniques they already have rather than replace them with a complicated, resource-intensive program. Don't reinvent the wheel!

Recommendation: Discontinue LADP within NCOES.

☐ *Senior Small Group Leader authorization*

Discussion: TRADOC Regulation 315-10 requires NCO Academies to have one SSGL for every four SGLs. However, manpower teams don't recognize this requirement when determining TDA authorizations.

Recommendation: TRADOC should incorporate this requirement into manpower guidance to ensure all NCO Academies get TDA authorization for proper staffing.

☐ *First sergeants as course chiefs*

Discussion: This would allow the NCO Academy to mirror the normal chain of command. There's a strong consensus to do this, using experienced first sergeants. TRADOC didn't approve a policy change because of a sudden demand for the First Sergeant Course and a congressionally-mandated limit on the number of first sergeants. This change would also require a revision of AR 611-201.

Recommendation: TRADOC should change AR 611-201, submit it to DA for consideration and modify the NCOES rank structure accordingly.

☐ *Distance Learning*

Discussion: The PLDC Chief presented the results of recent instruction conducted via TNET for peacekeeping soldiers in the Sinai. Many attendants questioned using distance learning tech-

Set Future Course

Concern ran high at the conference about repetitious tasks in NCOES courses. In answering McKinney's first question, participants gave the following response in the AAR: "We all agree that NCOES is not broken. There is always fine tuning to be done but no reason for a major overhaul... We strongly believe we should leave PLDC alone... BNCOC and ANCOC should build on the material presented in PLDC. Do not repeat subjects in BNCOC and ANCOC unless

they build on the previous instruction."

The report went on to say that the majority of attendants objected to "the numerous DA- and TRADOC-directed mandatory training subjects in all NCOES courses (such as) Risk Management, Environmental Awareness and EO/Sexual Harassment. These lessons are redundant, resource-intensive and inefficient. NCOES is not the place to repeat the mandatory training which takes place in T&OE and TDA units."

In addressing McKinney's second question as to where soldiers should be trained, the report noted the high level of discussion in the PLDC seminars about making better use of training dollars by training at the nearest location. "This works well for PLDC but not for BNCOC," the attendants said.

The final recommendation was to keep PLDC training at current locations.

When it came to notification of soldiers due to attend NCOES courses, the Reserve Component representatives felt their notification system worked well and should remain unchanged. While the active side of the house said they would continue to use the ATRRS system, the process needs to be refined in order to get notification down to the lowest (unit) level possible. "(We need to) provide better training for the (ATRRS) operators and increased command emphasis," the report said.

(See a complete list of conference issues and recommendations in the accompanying sidebar)

By the end of the conference, senior officials were glowing about the overwhelming turnout and the positive level of discussion in all of the seminars.

"I've been to several of these conferences and I think this is the best one that's ever taken place," said TRADOC CSM Gilbert Paez. "This is the first time we've had such a large group involved in the destiny of the NCO Corps. We all agree that NCOES is not 'broken,' but we do need refinements in some areas. Furthermore, we have to welcome technology and simulation devices to enhance NCOES for Force XXI.

"Thanks to this conference, we have a direction in which to work," Paez added.

Abrams is senior journalist for The NCO Journal.

And Recommendations

iques to deliver a performance-oriented leadership course, saying the current ideology appears to "make TNET work 'just because it's there.'"

Recommendation: Use distance learning as a training enhancer instead of a replacement for resident instruction.

Army Physical Fitness Test standards

Discussion: A representative from the Physical Fitness School briefed proposed changes to the APFT standards and the physical fitness uniform.

Recommendations: Don't change the APFT or the PFU without prior input from the field.

NCOES College Credit Program

Discussion: TRADOC will contract an educational institution to teach selected PLDC, BNCOC and ANCOC lessons. This program allows students to receive college credit while attending NCOES. The cost for this at the PLDC level is almost as much as both BNCOC and ANCOC. Considering the low return on investment for PLDC soldiers, it might be unwise to use the program in PLDC.

Recommendation: Pursue at all levels of NCOES, but especially focus on BNCOC and ANCOC.

TABE vs. BASE

Discussion: There's a need for a tool to measure basic skills and predict a soldier's performance in NCOES. TRADOC's Education Division believes the TABE doesn't measure the soldier's basic skills. Another means is needed to measure those skills.

Recommendation: More analysis of BASE is needed. No matter which test is used, soldiers must be tested, counseled and provided an opportunity to improve early in their careers.

Change DA Form 1059 (Academic Evaluation Report)

Discussion: The TRADOC CSM briefed his proposal to eliminate the "Marginally Achieved Course Standards" on the AER. The rationale is that if a student can't meet the standards, NCO Academics give remedial training, then reevaluate. If the student then meets the standard, the correct block to check would be "Met Course Standards." While PLDC representatives at the conference opposed any changes to the 1059, the BNCOC/ANCOC group concurred with changes.

Recommendation: This proposal should be exposed to a larger audience.

Permanent profiles

Discussion: Many profiled soldiers can't perform to minimum course standards. Returning the soldier to the unit is a costly measure.

Recommendation: Current guidance is sufficient but there needs to be closer MEDCOM and unit involvement. ■

Soldiers Gain No-Cost College Credit for NCOES

By SGM John Weiske

Recently, an American Council on Education (ACE) evaluation team reviewed the Program of Instruction (POI) of all USASMA-generated NCOES courses. Each POI was analyzed for its content and depth of material as compared to college level studies and classified into major areas of concentration. The team then determined the college course equivalency and the amount of credit hours earned for the instruction.

The BNCOC and ANCOE recommended credits are from the evaluation of the Common Leader Training portion of the course, which is USASMA's responsibility. Each proponent school is responsible for the additional MOS instruction and ensuring that the entire course is evaluated by ACE.

It's important to note that the Battle Staff NCO Course wasn't previously evaluated by ACE and graduates of the course haven't been able to receive corresponding college credit for the course. Battle Staff NCO Course graduates should now consider applying for an update on their Servicemembers Opportunity College Agreement (SOCAD) to have the recommended credit from BSNCOE applied to their college transcript.

This ACE evaluation included the Sergeants Major Course nine-month POI, which will allow the present class to receive college credit upon graduation in June of 1996. Since the POI was extended from 22 weeks to 40 weeks, the course increased from 18 to 22 recommended credit hours, 11 hours of which are considered upper level (junior/senior) instruction.

All ACE-recommended credit for NCOES and other Army training courses is listed in the Guide to the Evaluation of Education Experience in the Armed Services publication. This guide is located in ev-

ery Army Education Center and provides the education counselor a means of evaluating the soldier's military training toward college equivalency credit.

Each college reserves the right to accept or reject the ACE recommendations for credit as there is no guarantee that the college will accept the credit as listed in the ACE guide. All Servicemember Opportunity Colleges will evaluate military training using the ACE Guide and will apply the recommended credit toward a degree plan. In most cases they will not transcript duplicated credit.

The soldier must complete a DD Form 295, Application for the Evaluation of Learning Experience During Military Service, at his or her servicing personnel office and provide a certified copy to the education counselor. The counselor will ensure that all information is correct and add the corresponding ACE evaluation numbers. The DD 295 is then sent to the college for evaluation. Any time a soldier is evaluated at a different college a DD Form 295 must be submitted for evaluation by that college. These hours will not transfer from one college to another as a transcript course does.

The ACE-recommended college equivalency hours are at no cost to the soldier or the government and are based strictly on the evaluation of the course POI. As a school's POI is changed or substantially amended it should be re-evaluated by ACE to ensure soldiers are receiving the maximum amount of credit as they complete their MOS or NCOES development training. ■

Weiske is school secretariat for the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Ft. Bliss, TX.



At Ft. Benning...

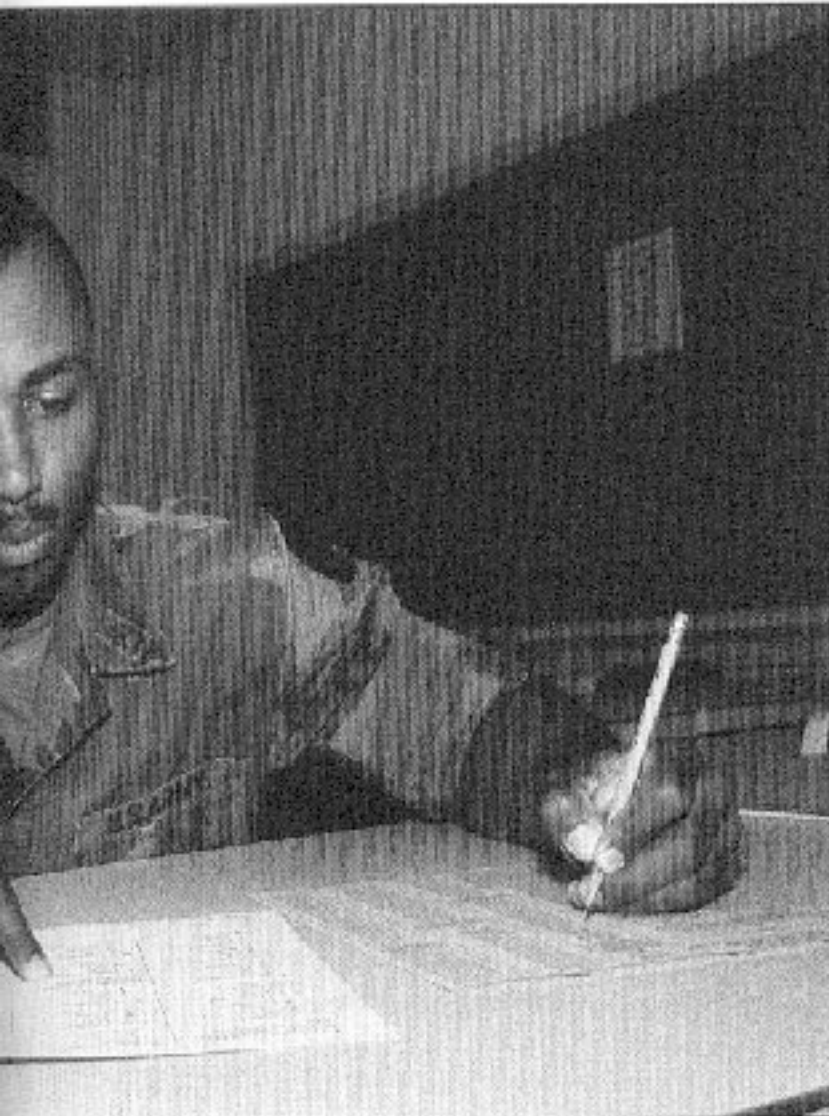
BASE H

By SSG David Abrams

For years, soldiers on their way to NCOES courses have filed into a small room, sat at desks and filled in the bubbles on test score sheets with No. 2 pencils. The examination, the Test of Adult Basic Education, is designed to give Army school officials an idea of the soldier's general knowledge of math, reading and grammar skills. Taking the TABE has become as familiar as packing the duffle bag for PLDC.

Now there's another test on the horizon—one which may eventually replace the TABE with questions specifically designed to evaluate common military leadership skills.

The Basic Army Skills Examination goes even farther than the TABE in measuring a soldier's knowledge of skills related to the military, said Bill Kinnison, an education services specialist with



SSG Marcus Johnson ponders a question while taking the TABE at the Ft. Bliss, TX, Army Education Center.

Photo by SSG David Abrams

ts Homer

Training and Doctrine Command's Education Training and Support Division.

"Some areas on both tests are identical—such as, reading comprehension and identifying parts of speech," he said. "But what the BASE has that the TABE doesn't is questions on how to read tables, graphs and gauges. These are skills every soldier needs to know."

Kinnison, the unofficial cheerleader for the BASE, is proposing that the Army phase out the TABE and replace it with the BASE. It's a move he admits is not popular in many circles. When he briefed on the BASE at the recent Worldwide NCOES Conference, Kinnison was met with protests from senior leaders concerned about the effectiveness of the new test and the costs associated with fielding it to local education centers.

"We've already done all the prelimi-

nary research on BASE," he said, referring to a \$15 million, intensive front-end task analysis of BASE conducted before the first proposal went up to the Department of the Army for approval. "We looked at 94 high-density Military Occupational Specialties to determine the academic skills they needed for each level of NCOES. It was the most detailed research study ever done on this planet!"

"The only studies done on the TABE as it relates to NCOES involve test results," he continued. "Those studies don't go into the test contents as specifically related to NCOES."

Kinnison and other proponents of the BASE are currently waiting on the go-ahead from the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. Once the green light is official, Kinnison said the BASE could be in the hands of local education centers within nine months.

The biggest beauty of the BASE is the fact that the Army "owns" it, Kinnison noted. First developed in 1987 for U.S. Army Europe, the BASE has since seen a lot of shelf life as education centers continue to use the traditional TABE for soldiers bound for NCOES.

"One thing that makes the BASE so special is the fact that soldier tasks are matched to academic tasks and then tested on the BASE so everything is linked," Kinnison added. "The TABE on the other hand is a general basic skills test that was developed for civilian use."

One significant change in the works is setting a passing score for each level of NCOES. "We know the level of knowledge needs to go up as the soldier's level of responsibility increases," Kinnison said. "Therefore, the different cut-off scores would more accurately measure what that soldier needs to know at each level of his or her career. I'm sure this is

something that would have a lot of appeal for NCOs taking the test."

In addition, Kinnison proposes that each career management field establish its own score. "For instance, the more technical CMFs may want to set a much higher passing score than the rest of the Army," he said. "Others may not feel they need to set such high scores."

Kinnison's suggestion is that subject matter experts like chiefs of schools and local academy cadre be the ones to set the score standards. "What could be more appropriate than NCOs coming up with the passing scores?" he says. "NCOs will have their hands on the BASE from the start. After all, it's their test; they own it. My goal is to get this exam off the dusty shelves and into the hands of NCOs."

At least one education center in the Army has blown the dust off the booklet covers and started using the BASE on a regular basis.

At Fort Benning, GA, the BASE has completely replaced the TABE in the last two years, primarily due to substantial savings, said Elaine Livingston, education services officer for the installation. "Every time we gave the TABE, we had to pay for all the materials," she said. "With the BASE, however, there are no costs involved."

Test Control Officer Gloria Kelsey, who works directly with the new exam, said not only is the BASE easier to administer (it requires fewer individual timed sections), it's also more pertinent to those filling in the answer sheets. "Most of the questions are directly related to the Army—for instance, the reading comprehension scenarios are about soldiers and military life," she said. "This makes it very familiar territory for the test-takers."

Both Ft. Benning officials said they see a bright future for the BASE, at least at their installation.

Meanwhile, as Kinnison continues to wait for approval from DCSOPS, he also continues to champion the proposal to change the exams: "The research and statistical analysis has all been done and it tells us that the BASE is a good, reliable test." ■

Abrams is senior journalist for The NCO Journal.

By SSG David Gayvert

SSG Smith is an exemplary soldier. With just under seven years' time in service, he's entered the secondary zone for promotion consideration and his chances are better than average. Entering the Army when he was 21 with two years of college under his belt, Smith has gone far in his brief Army career. Always seeking all the military education he can get his hands on, within his first enlistment he completed numerous MOS-related courses, graduated from the Jumpmaster and Pathfinder courses, earned the coveted Ranger Tab and got his Master Jumpwings. He was promoted to staff sergeant two weeks short of his four-year mark. He served with distinction in three major military operations: Just Cause, Desert Storm and Restore Hope. On top of all that, he earned a bachelor's degree in Political Science and is now working on a master's degree in the same field. *His monthly paycheck: \$1,674.60.*

Eighteen-year-old PVT Jones, fresh out of Initial Entry Training and newly arrived at Smith's unit, may turn out to be a good soldier, provided he receives large amounts of attention, supervision and training from the likes of SSG Smith. Jones made it through basic training, frankly, by the skin of his teeth and his performance at Advanced Individual Training was not a whole lot better. On top of that, his APFT scores are marginal and he can't shoot straight. *His monthly paycheck: \$2,186.59.*

How can this be? An accounting error perhaps? Not at all. The difference is that PVT Jones has already taken a wife—a decision SSG Smith has not yet felt compelled to make. While Smith was dodging sniper bullets in Somalia, Jones was marrying his high school sweetheart before trekking off to basic training.

[Note: These salary figures assume the soldiers are stationed at Schofield Barracks, HI, and include applicable BAQ, VHA, BAS and current COLA, but no special or propays. It is further assumed PVT Jones' wife is not a servicemember.]

These soldiers are fictitious, designed to show extremes of experience and ability—differences for which, when it comes time to put its money where its mouth is, the Army seems to have little appreciation.

Based ostensibly on his or her greater "need," a married soldier, regardless of rank, regardless of performance, is automatically granted numerous cash and "quality-of-life" entitlements not guaranteed to single enlisted soldiers until they reach the rank of sergeant first class after serving an average of eight to 12 years. Even if Smith is picked up on this

year's list, it will likely be close to two more years before he actually pins on sergeant first class stripes and claims many (but not all) of the entitlements Jones draws from his first day in the unit.

Does this make sense? Is it—and I hesitate to use the "f" word—fair? To answer these loaded questions, let's take a look at the disparities between the incomes of our two soldiers.

Shortly after arriving at his unit, Jones receives either private quarters on post or, more likely, Basic Allowance for Quarters and Variable Housing Allowance each month which enables him to live off-post. SSG Smith shares a room in the barracks with another NCO. Both are allotted 120 square feet of living space—enough for a wall locker, desk, dresser and king-sized bed. Phone, latrine and laundry facilities are shared with a dozen other soldiers on the floor.

Jones receives Basic Allowance for Subsistence which allows him to eat what (and when) he chooses. Smith receives no monetary allowance for rations and -- if he doesn't want to erode the already modest purchasing power of his monthly base pay—is constrained to eat in the unit dining facility, the hours of which do not always mesh with his college class times and other off-duty self-improvement activities.

If he's stationed in a part of the world where the cost of living is markedly higher than average, the married Jones receives a larger share of COLA than a single soldier. If he's deployed away from his wife for more than 30 days, he gets Family Separation Allowance. Smith, of course, receives no such additional monies.

Great differences exist in the money paid single and married soldiers. Does a married soldier "need" more pay than a single soldier—regardless of rank or performance?

When it comes time for Jones to PCS, he'll receive Dislocation Allowance (equal to two months' BAQ) to assist with moving costs. He'll get a higher per diem allowance for his authorized travel days. If he's leaving or returning to the Continental United States, he'll be granted a Temporary Lodging Allowance of up to \$138 per day (a figure that varies) to pay for a hotel room and associated costs. He and his wife could also be lodged in guest housing on his new post until

he finishes inprocessing and finds new quarters. Smith, on the other hand, receives no DLA or gets a smaller per diem and spends his first days at the new station in a temporary barracks room.

By now, you probably have at least two protests. First, you'll wonder why no mention has been made of the non-monetary allowances received by barracks residents. Your second objection will likely be that, given the much greater costs associated with marriage and family, even with the additional cash entitlements, married soldiers often have less

discretionary income than those who are single and barracks-bound. In short, they need those funds just to survive.

Even those of you conceding the general accuracy of the two fictional soldiers will point out that no financial value has been assigned to Smith's government room and board, thus distorting the salary comparison. True enough, but the missed point here is that such "payment in kind" is *not* the same as cash which can be spent as an individual sees fit. I don't know any soldiers, given the choice, who'd refuse separate rations in favor of a meal card. Moreover, the combined monthly BAQ and VHA received by Jones is \$858.22. Admittedly, this does not go far in the local housing market. Jones will probably have to rely on part of his base pay to get adequate housing. But his stipend is still a sizeable chunk of cash. Given this amount of money, would you pay the Army \$860 a month for half of a barracks room? (If you answered "yes," then I've got a deal for you.)

Life in the barracks is *not* the same as living in your own house or apartment. Not even close. In addition to the inconveniences already mentioned, barracks life normally carries with it a list of do's and don't's. Though local command policies vary, typical restrictions include limits upon the type and amount of alcohol which may be consumed or stored on the premises; guest visitation hours and the nature of activities permitted during those times; types of appliances, furniture and decor authorized for use or display; and SOPs for how the room must be arranged. There's also no question as to who will be nabbed for those last-minute, after-hours "hey you" details.

Finally, there's the issue of living away from the place of work. Putting distance between the workplace and home can be a valuable stress reliever. For those who live in the barracks—frequently just up the stairs or down the hall from their normal place of duty—the feeling that they never really leave work can sap energy and lead to job burn-out.

It seems the system offers a "marriage bonus." Just by saying "I do," a private can more than double his salary. This incentive can be hard to resist, particularly if his prospective spouse is self-supporting. At best, it persuades soldiers to get married before they're truly ready, emotionally or financially. At worst, it promotes marriages of convenience. Of course, it's hard to tell how prevalent such occurrences are, but even a few are too many.

But what about the argument that married soldiers must receive allowances not granted to single soldiers of the same rank because married soldiers clearly have a much greater need for such? Haven't we all seen cases where, even after entitlements are added in, the income of military families

with several children remains low enough to qualify them for food stamps and other forms of welfare relief? Thus, the extra money paid to married soldiers, far from being an extravagance or "unfair," is an essential provision for the basic needs of a family.

If the objection is that military salaries in general ought to be more generous, you won't hear any dissent from me. But it seems the argument here is that because they *need* more, married soldiers should be *paid* more. I reject such reasoning as wrong-headed and unfair. The Army organizes the type, amount and value of work by rank. To be sure, there are often vast differences both in the quality and quantity of work performed by soldiers of the same rank, but theoretically at least, those soldiers who consistently produce outstanding results, will be promoted faster and enjoy the privileges and salary that come with higher rank. So far, so good.

Unfortunately, this is where the logic ends. If the worth of the labor of a staff sergeant with six years of service is judged to be \$1,584 plus change each month, how does that labor suddenly become worth hundreds of dollars more as a result of a purely voluntary change in personal lifestyle? The answer is, of course, it doesn't. The fact that one needs more money because of personal choices is not the responsibility of that individual's employer, but of

the individual himself. Should I be paid more because I decide to change my life by buying a Porche 911 and now need \$500 more each month to cover the car payment?

To those who would dismiss all these objections as just so much whining and point out that a military career has never been about money, but about national service, I would answer that the Army itself, with its multi-million dollar advertising budget, emphasizes the material benefits waiting for potential enlistees rather than the sacrifices they'll be called upon to make. Even those motivated by ideals of patriotism, duty and honor aren't immune to those inducements which improve their material quality of life.

To sum up, single enlisted soldiers are not compensated at a rate equivalent to their married counterparts. The "payment-in-kind" afforded to unmarried soldiers does *not* equal the entitlements granted to the servicemember with a spouse and children. This disparity is greatest in the ranks below sergeant first class, but differentials in Cost of Living and Permanent Change of Station allowances result in married soldiers always receiving greater cash entitlements. No amount of BOSS (Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers) dances, cookouts or day trips can balance this tipped scale. ■

Gayvert is with A Co, 125 MI Bn, Schofield Barracks, HI.

The extra money paid to married soldiers, far from being an extravagance or "unfair," is an essential provision for the basic needs of a family.

The Iron Sergeant

By SFC (Ret) Richard Raymond, III

In his long and distinguished military career, GEN George Washington saw many a hero and witnessed many a deed of valor on the field of battle. When he established as the first American award for "instances of unusual gallantry, extraordinary fidelity and essential service," the Badge of Military Merit (the original Purple Heart), he undoubtedly had men like SGT David L. Brainard in mind.

More than two centuries ago Washington pinned the Badge of Military Merit on the coats of three sergeants who had walked through the flame of battle to earn them. Yet none before or since had faced and beaten more terrible foes—cold, hunger, desolation and despair—than SGT Brainard, 5th Cav (detached), U.S. Army.

Brainard was among the five ragged, emaciated survivors of the Greely Arctic Expedition who were snatched from the brink of death. And all owed their survival to SGT Brainard—who received a gold watch for his efforts.

In May 1881, Lieutenant Adolphus W. Greely, a Signal Corps officer and Civil War veteran, led a party of 25 soldier-scientists in setting up a station at Lady Franklin Bay, 300 miles from the North Pole.

Like Greely, Brainard impressed all members as a man who knew his duty and would perform it, come what might. For he had faced bullets and taken wounds and in a frontier Army where stripes came slowly, he was a sergeant after only five years' service.

Appointed first sergeant and chief commissary, his duties embraced not only the normal administrative management of 21 enlisted members, but also the overseeing of exact and equitable issuance of rations and supplies. And, as required of all other expedition members, he kept a detailed journal of activities.

At the end of the first year, a scheduled resupply ship failed to push through a channel being blocked with thick ice. A second vessel the following summer was caught and crushed, its crew barely managing to save themselves. Though there was plenty of food and fuel, Greely followed his orders and withdrew from his base to Cape Sabine, 250 miles to the south.

After 500 crooked miles through the grinding ice floes, they set up a rough camp and prepared for the coming winter. Rations were cut to bare-survival level and all hands made to hunt, fish and trap for whatever thin subsistence

might be found in that barren waste. Not least of their anxieties was fuel—of what use were rations if they froze?

Now Brainard's character came to the fore. With all food and fuel in his absolute care, with every human incentive to cheat, he held unswervingly to his trust. Each man should have his just measure—no more, no less. Of his own efforts, he gathered some 400 pounds each month of the unpalatable and faintly nourishing shrimp called "sea lice."

When one member fell ill in a fearful 200-mile trip to find supplies, Brainard went out alone to feed and bring him back alive. Yet in this desperate plight, there was one who cheated, who stole food from the others. Such a fellow, they reckoned, was little better than a murderer. Greely wrote a grim order, which Brainard carried out: "Shoot the thief." In his official report, Greely later wrote, "I am quite sure that, in this dire extremity, not a morsel of unauthorized food was consumed by Sergeant Brainard."

On a day in June 1884, Brainard served out the last of the rations. All that could be done had been and all but Brainard and PVT Long were confined by weakness to their sleeping bags to await the end. Eighteen members had already died from starvation, drowning or freezing. Yet they had preserved their scientific records, the fruit of three bitter years under the arctic winds.

And then a long, mournful wail drifted over the frozen flats. It was a steam whistle—the rescue ships had arrived! Greely and his six skeletal men were taken aboard the Navy's *Thetis* and tenderly cared for. One died on the way home.

After a searing public investigation, in which Greely's every act and motive were closely examined, he was absolved of the slightest suspicion of wrong. The clearest proof of high character was his later promotion to major general and chief of the Signal Corps. Brainard himself received a commission in the Cavalry, "for gallant and meritorious service in the Arctic Expedition of 1881-84." He served for more than 40 years with increasing distinction and honor.

In 1930, Greely at the age of 91 received a Medal of Honor for "a lifetime of public service." And at his side in this proud moment stood his one-time first sergeant, now a retired brigadier general. He too wore his honors, graven in letters of gold, upon his faithful heart. ■



The six survivors of the Greely Arctic Expedition sat for this portrait in 1884. From left are Privates Julius Fredericks, Henry Biederbick and Maurice Connell, Lieutenant Adolphus W. Greely, Sergeant Francis Long and Sergeant David Brainard. (U.S. Army photo)

Raymond is a retired sergeant first class, Virginia Army National Guard, and a frequent contributor to *The NCO Journal*.

Letters to the Editor

Send letters to:

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Home—where you hang your Kevlar

I'm a new reader of *The NCO Journal* and I like to hear what the NCOs of the Army discuss among their peers. I hope to become a part of the "backbone" someday and your magazine shows me the problems that NCOs face every day and the discussions give good solutions to these problems and how to solve them.

I'm also writing to say that I agree with SPC Renee Houston (Spring 95 *Journal*) of the 3/81 Armor Reg, Ft. Knox, KY. SPC Houston discussed the standards of barracks living as unfair and inconsistent. I've been under both the Single Soldier Initiative Program and now, the Single Soldier Quality of Life Program. These two programs have great ideas and good foundations, but it seems as though nobody wants to take charge of the driving force behind them.

On the other hand, I couldn't disagree more with SSG Thomas Muldoon, U.S. Army Reserve, Bolivar, OH. He states, "...Besides, the barracks aren't meant to be one's permanent home." I don't remember my recruiter telling me anything about enlisting into marriage. I was under the impression I could enlist and not worry about having a roof over my head because I was single. To me, home is where you hang your Kevlar.

PFC Joseph P. Campbell
529th Ord Co, Vilseck, Germany

Sergeant's Time

One of the best thought-out training events for NCOs and soldiers in recent years, "Sergeant's Time" is usually conducted one day a week for a four- to eight-hour period.

This training event in my opinion is the only real time the front-line supervisors can improve their squads' development. These front-line leaders often feel as if they have to conduct training that will please their chain of command. This time should be used for NCOs to measure their soldiers' skills, knowledge or combat readiness.

I hope that our senior leaders can create and maintain an environment that protects and promotes growth for our front-line leaders. We should encourage creativity and promote flexibility in our section leaders. Our Army needs soldiers who are well-disciplined and capable of thinking for themselves.

SSG Reginald La Grone
Ft. Sill, OK

ROTC unit develops class based on magazine articles

We would first like to start off by thanking *The NCO Journal* and *Infantry Magazine* for giving us the resources to open an exchange of ideas and information to support training, education and the development of future U.S. Army officers at Bowling Green State University, "The Black Swamp Battalion," Army

ROTC. Articles on the Battle of Mogadishu allowed us to develop a class on the battle and present it to the cadre and cadets in our weekly Officer and NCO Professional Development program.

This class enabled us to show the cadets what we believe is the future battlefield and also how NCOs and officers work together to make the Army's "team concept" come to life.

We're glad to say the class was a success.

2LT Nelson G. Kraft and SSG Joseph Mamiolo
U.S. Army ROTC Bn, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH

Reevaluate promotion system

I'm writing in reference to "Disgruntled with promotion system" by CPL Ronnie Thompson (Winter 94-95).

I agree with his letter and want to add that PT and weapons qualification should be re-examined in regards to promotion. As it now stands, if a soldier scores 300 on his APFT and expert in weapons qualification, he is allowed 50 promotion points. If they're going to keep PT and weapons as part of the promotion points system, then it should be fair across the board. Does a soldier who scores 300 or qualify expert in weapons make him a better leader than a soldier who scores 260 on PT and qualifies as sharpshooter? How do you justify soldiers in remote sites who can't qualify? How about soldiers who are on profile and taking the alternate PT test?

The Army standard for PT is 180 and marksman for weapon qualification. If they score 300 and qualify expert then they have exceeded the standard. I echo CPL Thompson's question—"When will the Army reevaluate the promotion system?"

SGT Steve Yearwood
HQ USAG, Vint Hill Farms Station, VA

No fan of promotion point system

There are discrepancies in the rebuttal (Spring 95) to CPL Thompson from SSG Donald Kilgore. First of all, time in

grade and time in service are no longer valid for points under the existing promotion point worksheet. In fact, they haven't been for some time. As far as MOS knowledge—well, we all know what happened to the SQT/SDT programs. For some of us there hasn't been a valid SQT/SDT for many years.

Recommendations from the chain of command? I don't know how it is in other units, but in the units I've been assigned to, the commander rarely interviews the soldier, looks at his/her record or talks to his/her supervisor before awarding points to the soldier.

I agree with SSG Kilgore's statement that "an NCO...who takes the time to pursue his/her civilian education does make a more effective leader." And I, too, was dismayed with the comments in *Army Times* pertaining to the need for less emphasis on college credit for promotion points.

However, I'm not a fan of the promotion point system. Archaic and many times unfair, it rewards those soldier in those MOSes who happen to be in the right place at the right time (call it the "MOS du jour"), while, at the same time punishing those soldiers (pay purposes, leadership positions, etc.) who, by no fault of their own, get bogged down in overstrength MOSes.

A soldier shouldn't have to change his MOS to accommodate promotion. Too many soldiers are promoted to grades they are neither prepared for, nor in some cases, worthy of, simply because they have the requisite amount of points that month.

The system needs a large overhaul. We're losing too many quality soldiers simply because they can't acquire the points they need to get to the next level.

SGT Bruce G. Stratton

C Co, 306th MI Bn, Ft. Huachuca, AZ

Policy governing barracks life outdated

The article by CSM Dare in your Winter 94-95 issue was right on target. I retired from active duty in 1967. At that time, the number of married personnel in the Army had reached a high level,

with most living in housing apart from single troops. It had become very clear some years before my retirement that the policies governing life in the barracks had become greatly outdated, for all the reasons cited by CSM Dare.

If command sergeants major as a group promoted CSM Dare's ideas with their commanders, a better break could develop for single soldiers living in barracks.

*ISG (Ret) James W. Clinton
Old Bethpage, NY*

What's meant by "...pampering single soldiers?"

I'd like to know what SSG Muldoon (Spring 95) feels is pampering the single soldier. Does he think walking past the orderly room on the way to your room (after duty hours) is justification for a "hey you" detail?

I've been single all my Army career and have lived in the barracks the entire time. As an NCO and a 29-year-old adult, do I need to have someone dictate to me how much alcohol I can have in my room? Or what hours my friends may stay in my room? What justifies my first sergeant coming into my room whenever he wants to inspect and then not going over to a married soldier's house, unannounced, to "see how he or she is living"?

I understand the need to have some control over the barracks (inventories of government-owned furniture, health and welfare inspections, etc.). At the same time, am I to be treated as a second-class soldier, in constant need of supervision and direction, no matter what my rank and age, just because I haven't, as yet, decided to get married or have a child?

*SGT James L. Rechin, Jr.
USAG, Ft. Monmouth, NJ*

Re-examine beliefs, show some respect for single soldier

I've done a slow burn ever since reading SSG Muldoon's letter (Spring 95). The BOSS program has been fighting an

uphill battle against policies touted by SSG Muldoon. He needs to re-examine his beliefs and show more respect for soldiers who happen to be single.

While I'm 42 and single by choice, I reside in the barracks by policy. According to SSG Muldoon, I should be told: How to decorate my room, who may visit me and when, how much or little alcohol I may keep and that I should be grateful for these trespasses on my freedom of choice.

Having a room that you can call your own is not pampering. Having privacy is not pampering. Decorating your room is not pampering. Having visitors of your own choosing in your own room when and for how long you want is not pampering. It's called respect.

I'm not sure what he meant when he said barracks aren't intended to be one's permanent home. Are the barracks non-permanent because a soldier will be moving in three years? Wouldn't family quarters also qualify as non-permanent then?

I can't conceive of married soldiers of any age or rank who would put up with barracks-type restrictions in their family quarters—on- or off-post.

The Army needs to consider making a name change from barracks to billets or single soldier quarters and remove responsibility from the unit and give it to post housing for quartering single soldiers. Only then can we start to remove the stigma of "barracks" living.

*SGT Alan B. Griggs
Ft. Myer, VA*

PCS moves prompt complaints by "beloved NCO Corps"

Time and time again after completing a PCS move and arriving at my new unit, I continue to hear bad things about the units. What makes it really bad, all of the complaining isn't coming from the junior enlisted soldiers. Constant complaining is coming from our beloved NCO Corps.

I understand the majority of NCOs want to lead by example, but this one example of unprofessionalism is definitely not needed. We as NCOs need to set the

example, which means supporting our leaders, units and country. We need not hinder our daily mission by bringing down the morale of our soldiers—which is being done by continuing to point out all the things that are wrong. Instead, we need to keep soldiers motivated. Take time out and show your soldiers the good things about being wherever you may be located. Use that energy not to worsen situations, but to better them.

*SGT Robert L. Smith, III
A Co, 6/43d ADA, APO AE*

PT failure can stop career

All NCOs at some point in their career will attend an NCOES course. On day one you will take the APFT. If you fail, you won't have three weeks for a retest, you won't have two weeks to adjust to altitude, climate or weather. You'll go back to your duty station as a failure without a second chance.

Now more than ever, a PT failure can be a career-stopper. We must meet the standards at all times and we can't focus on just the minimum standards.

When I was in the final phase of the Battle Staff Course at Ft. Bliss, TX, we lost a few soldiers after the retest (no longer used).

Two other soldiers and I came to this class from Ft. Wainwright, AK. We all passed and did fairly well, despite the differences between the areas. Bottom line? The excuses won't wash.

Accept the fact that stress and change will affect your body and mind. Adjust your training to focus on the maximum—not the minimum. Your career could depend on it.

*SFC Samuel W. Downs, Jr.
HHC, 1st Bde, Ft. Wainwright, AK*

Those aggravating acronyms

I would like to correct Thomas S. Prohaska's corrections concerning acronym corrections (Spring 95).

This former NCO criticizes a soldier who stated on a promotion board that LCE stood for Load Carrying Equipment and STB stood for Supertropical

Bleach. The soldier Prohaska criticized is absolutely correct. According to STP 21-SCMT (Oct 94) and STP 21-24-SMCT (Oct 92), LCE is referred to as Load Carrying Equipment. According to FM 3-5, NBC Decontamination, dated Nov 93, STB does stand for Supertropical Bleach. I haven't checked the label on the 50-gallon drums, but I'm sure the regulation will suffice.

It's a shame this "squared away" soldier probably failed the promotion/soldier of the month board due to this NCO's ignorance and lack of general military knowledge.

I do agree that study guides are the absolute worst documents for study materials. Army pubs constantly change and local study guides can't keep up with the changes. If one is used, all questions should be referenced and backed up with a regulation before using it as a study guide. Also, visit your local education center to see if the regulations have been updated or rescinded.

*SSG Kenneth G. Blasko
Ft. Detrick, MD*

Check CURRENT regulations before expressing opinion

SSG Kilgore (Spring 95) said the Army's promotion system hadn't changed since 1982. Army Regulation 600-8-19, effective 1 November 91 and Interim Change Number: 101, dated 8 April 94 are the current Army Regulations that govern the CURRENT promotion system. Lack of knowledge can lead subordinates to believe that an NCO will say anything to get a soldier to stop expressing his concerns and beliefs.

I also believe the promotion system is unfair. I have 736 promotion points out of a possible 800. I'm still pursuing civilian education but I think the current promotion system promotes combat arms MOSes more than others. Granted the Army needs combat arms NCOs, but a shortage in one MOS shouldn't preclude a soldier in an overstrength MOS such as mine (75B) from being promoted. Defense budget allows for so many promotions per month throughout

the Army and most of these promotions are being taken by combat arms soldiers who are afforded the time and opportunity to obtain points. I've obtained 130 of my 150 military education points from correspondence courses, PLDC and BNCOC. So it's possible to obtain a lot of points without having to take civilian college classes—which is often used as an excuse for not having many points. A lot of 75Bs are obviously out busting their chops and being competitive because no one with 736 points has been promoted since August 94.

To all those soldiers in the same boat I'm in, BE PATIENT.

*SGT Anthony P. Harbison
Babenhausen, Germany*

Personal hygiene in the field

When a unit is "deployed" to the field, deployment should simulate a real world mission. This doesn't mean we run to the rear to take showers every couple of days. To train soldiers, we must perform personal hygiene in the field.

However, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) makes this almost impossible. They seem more worried about a spot on the ground than a soldier staying clean. The last time I heard, they were still making biodegradable soap.

The Army has portable showers in its inventory but the EPA says it's a "no go." As NCOs, it's our job to insure that soldiers stay clean and healthy in the field.

*CPL Noel D. Severson
Ft. Gordon, GA*

OOTW old hat to EOD soldiers

Your Winter 94-95 issue dealt with Operations Other Than War (OOTW) as if Army units had never done OOTW missions—something Explosive Ordnance Disposal soldiers have been doing for many years. How about a story on an EOD unit?

*SFC Everett A. Johnson
Ft. Monmouth, NJ*

[Good suggestion, SFC Johnson. How about writing such an article for us? Ed.]

In Retrospect:

The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam

By
Robert S. McNamara
with Brian VanDeMark

Times Books, 1995
414 pages, \$25 (HB)

Vietnam veterans and war protesters alike have vilified former Secretary of Defense McNamara for not apologizing in this book. Unfortunately, they seem to have missed the point. McNamara appears not to have written this book to apologize, but rather to explain. He describes in detail the difficulties he and other policy makers in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations experienced as they tried to decide what to do in Vietnam.

He describes the climate of a United States that had just suffered WW II, the Korean conflict and the rise of Soviet and Chinese communism.

Many veteran diplomats subscribed to the "Domino Theory" and honestly believed that if Vietnam fell to communism, then Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia and the Philippines would also fall. They believed wholeheartedly that by stopping the communists in Vietnam they could save the world for democracy.

McNamara describes how he, then Secretary of State Dean Rusk and others agonized over how best to defeat the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong. He also tells us that as early as 1963 he and others started to feel that they could not win the war and started instead to worry about *how not to lose the war*.

McNamara gives us insight into the questions he, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Dean Rusk and other policy makers tried to answer. With the benefit of over 25 years of hindsight, he also tells us the questions and issues that they either ignored or didn't even both-

er to consider. He also shows us that we must consider these same issues and questions in this post-Cold War world.

McNamara readily admits the mistakes he and others made from 1963 to 1968. Moreover, he doesn't rationalize the mistakes but details the way those mistakes could have been

avoided. He may not have apologized, but he *is* accepting responsibility. He also vividly reminds us that those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Let us hope that we use his account to help us learn. ■

MSG R. C. Oberlender

Show—don't tell! That's what a practical soldier demands in his day-to-day life and that's precisely what is found in William Bainbridge's down-to-earth, plain-spoken autobiography. To understand the enlisted Army, the most effective memoir is one that creates a lasting mental likeness of the NCO. Authors Bainbridge and Cragg largely succeed in painting a vivid and revealing portrait. This narrative takes its place among those histories that really picture, not just describe, the exceptional lives of ostensibly common men.

Born in Knox County, IL, in 1925, the man who would become the longest-tenured sergeant major of the Army worked on a farm. Bainbridge seems to be the personification of Norman Rockwell's rural America. WWII introduced young Bill to the art of soldiering and traditions that would, with few interruptions, last 31 years with the Army.

Bainbridge fought in Europe, was captured by the Germans at the Battle of the Bulge and endured the privations of the prisoner of war until liberated on Good Friday, 1945.

"I went into captivity weighing about 140 pounds and came out weighing only 89 pounds," he recalls. He returned to life on a Midwestern farm until the Korean War "compelled" him back to service. In retrospect, he writes, "...it was the greatest thing that ever happened to me."

The Army developed Bainbridge into the perfect NCO: *the utilitarian*

pragmatist. The way the author saw it, his duty was to "fix things at the source, before the company commander had to take action. This is just what any good sergeant does..." From one base assignment to the next, the education of a soldier prepared Bainbridge for the moral convulsions and self-doubt imposed on the Army during the Vietnam War.

This valuable chapter — "Vietnam" — concludes with the classic harangue that if the military had been allowed to run the campaign as a war and not a political holding action, "the final outcome would have been different."

After selection as sergeant major of the Army by a board of general officers, Bainbridge obtained improved professional NCO training, fur-

thered the acceptance of the enlisted corps as co-partners in the military mission with officers and other reforms. His view of women in the military shows through when he unabashedly declares, "I have absolutely no problem with women in combat units." He goes on to write that, "The idea that women can't make good soldiers is a mindset, not an incontrovertible fact."

As SMA, Bainbridge sought respect for NCOs with a show-don't-tell simplicity that supported his leadership while simultaneously intimating to his commanders that "Officers command the Army but NCOs run it." ■

J. Michael Brower

Top Sergeant:

The Life and Times of Sergeant Major William G. Bainbridge

By
SMA William G. Bainbridge (Ret)
and Dan Cragg

Ballentine Books, 1995
368 pages, \$23 (HB)