

The NCO Journal

Summer 96

A Quarterly Forum for Professional Development

Old Guard
Walks the Walk
— see page 10



The NCO Journal

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The *NCO Journal* is a professional publication for Noncommissioned Officers of the U.S. Army. Views expressed herein are those of the authors. Views and contents do not necessarily reflect the official Army or Department of Defense positions and do not change or supersede information in other official publications.

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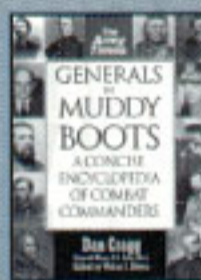
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Letters: Letters to the editor must be signed and include the writer's full name and rank, city and state (or city and country) and mailing address. Letters should be brief and are subject to editing.

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On the Covers

Front: Front and back cover photos by SSG David Abrams. Graphics, page 4, SPC Glenn Dennard.

DELTA Recruits NCOs for Assignment Opportunities

1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-DELTA is offering NCOs and officers leadership opportunities for professional development similar to those available in Special Forces.

NCOs accepted can expect exceptional training, increased levels of responsibility and sufficient authority to complete assigned missions while routinely operating throughout the world as individuals or in small, NCO-led teams. There are ample opportunities to serve in the unit through the rank of sergeant major and to serve on senior staffs as the resident expert and advisor.

DELTA conducts missions requiring rapid response and surgical application of unique skills while maintaining the lowest possible signature.

DELTA conducts worldwide recruiting twice a year preceding its fall and spring assessment and selection courses. Recruiting for the fall course is from March through August and for the spring course from September through February.

For more specific information on requirements and prerequisites call DELTA recruiters at DSN 236-0986 or call collect on the commercial line at (910) 396-0986.

DELTA is also interested in soldiers with combat support and combat service support MOSes (active duty only). If you're interested in a support assignment with DELTA, you can call at the same telephone numbers listed above for information on support prerequisites and assignment opportunities. ■

CPT Paul Chamberlain

The Recruiting Team, Ft. Bragg, NC

SEP Continues to Seek Common Sense Solutions

The Army continues to aggressively seek common sense solutions to enhance soldier lethality, mobility and survivability on the modern battlefield through the Soldier Enhancement Program (SEP). SEP seeks to accelerate the acquisition of lighter, more lethal weapons and im-

proved "soldier items of equipment," and to get that equipment in the field in three years or less.

Since the request for proposals went out last August, the TRADOC System Manager-Soldier received 155 separate submissions from industry, Army staff agencies, major commands and soldiers in the field. Of the 155 projects submitted, 43 new proposals were briefed as potential FY97 funding starts.

The SEP program strives to continue to make soldiers more effective or efficient on the battlefield by reducing their load, enhancing lethality, survivability, command and control, sustainment, mobility and quality of life in the field.

If you feel you have a "common sense" solution for SEP, you can call Mr. Ken Sutton at DSN 835-6047, (FAX 835-1377) or COM (706) 545-6047/1189. ■

COL Robert M. Tesdahl

*TRADOC System Manager-Soldier
Ft. Benning, GA*

Retire Right—Call RSO and Include Your Family

What would you think about a soldier who goes to a battle with an unknown enemy in a foreign territory with no battle plan? You'd think he was a few bricks shy of a full load. Yet, when the retirement battle begins, many soldiers and families approach unprepared.

Once retired, what will your benefits be? When not on active duty, where will you get medical care? As a retiree, and still part of the Total Army, will your rights, benefits and obligations be exactly the same as when you were on active duty? How do you ensure that the benefits and entitlements you've earned as a soldier will stay with your spouse and family?

Your Retirement Services Officer (RSO) can answer these and other questions you may have. Even if retirement is several years away, make it a point to meet your RSO. ■

*HQDA, Army Retirement Services
Alexandria, VA*

1996 Issue of Naval Review Available for Asking

A copy of the annual *Naval Review*, the special May issue of *Proceedings* magazine published by the U.S. Naval Institute, is available free for those who wish a copy. The reference source covers the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and the military in general. Call Val Feltrow at (410) 268-6110 to receive your copy. ■

*U.S. Naval Institute News
Annapolis, MD*

Inactivation Ceremonies Set for Aviation Regiment

Co C, 7th Bn, 159th Aviation Reg, will hold formal inactivation ceremonies at Scott AFB, IL, on August 4, 1996 at 1100 hours.

The ceremonies will represent the termination of Army Reserve aviation in the St. Louis area. Contact MAJ Chinaea or Co C orderly room personnel at COM (618) 256-2925 or FAX (618) 256-2848 if interested in attending.

This inactivation represents the end of USAR aviation activities for all Reserve units that have served the St. Louis area for many years.

These include the 219th Aviation Co, 281st Aviation Co, 7th/158th Aviation Bn and the 148 Aviation Group. ■

*CW4 John Dowdy
St. Louis, MO*

Ft. Rucker Biennial Reunion

The 1996 Ft. Rucker Biennial Reunion will be held August 9-11 at Ft. Rucker, AL. If you wish to attend, contact CSM Samuel R. Reynolds at COM (334) 255-3954, e-mail: SAMUEL_REYNOLDS@rucker.emh4.army.mil or CSM Claytor at COM (334) 255-1998, e-mail: HIRAM_CLAYTOR@rucker.emh4.army.mil or write to 1996 Ft. Rucker Reunion, P.O. Box 620-264, Ft. Rucker, AL. ■

*CSM Samuel R. Reynolds
Ft. Rucker, AL*

Haiti Service Earns Legion of Merit for North Carolina ARNG Master Sergeant

MSG J. J. Colimon, a member of the North Carolina National Guard, has been awarded the Legion of Merit for his service in Haiti. Colimon was there as the NCOIC, U4 transportation, at United Nations Headquarters in Port-Au-Prince.



MSG Jeffrey J. Colimon

Colimon spent the majority of his time as Operations NCO for elections operations. He planned the logistics and transportation support of five territorial elections. He also served as movement control NCOIC and military liaison at the Haitian Electoral Council.

Although born in Chicago of Haitian parents, he returned to Haiti at the age of four and stayed through high school. His knowledge of the culture and traditions of Haiti and the ties he had there stood him in good stead for his military mission.

During the award ceremony, he stated the award was indicative of the Total Army concept at work, which enabled a Reserve Component soldier to be mobilized, put

in a position of great responsibility and achieve notable results.

"I hope that our effort in Haiti will bring about a true democracy and the Haitian people can rebuild their country and become a prosperous nation," Colimon said.

His Legion of Merit citation reads:

"For exceptionally meritorious service from 21 February 1995 to 8 February 1996, while serving as the U4 Transportation Noncommissioned Officer in Charge for the Headquarters, United Nations Mission in Haiti Transportation Division. He planned and executed the redeployment of 6,000 Multi-National personnel and executed the receipt, assembly, and distribution of over 25 million ballots during five Haitian democratic elections. The superb results he attained in executing this unprecedented assignment have given the people of Haiti a historic opportunity for successful democratic self-government and favorably impacted on regional stability. The distinctive accomplishments of Master Sergeant Colimon reflect great credit on him and the United States Army."

Colimon is currently serving on an AGR tour as the ARNG Ops/Tng NCO DRCS, Ft. Campbell, KY. He has been selected to attend the resident Sergeants Major Course, Class 47. ■

*SGM Carol G. Bennett, Senior Army NG Enlisted Advisor
FORSCOM, Ft. McPherson, GA*

NATO Recognizes Outstanding NCOs in Army and Air Force National Guard

Three members of the National Guard shared a historic moment in the sun at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, March 6. The Army Guard's two best soldiers and the Air Guard's top airman for 1995 were given diplomatic recognition by Robert Hunter, the United States' ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The Army Guard's SFC Michael Stafford, New Castle, IN, and SGT Allen Thompson, Fromberg, MT, along with the Air Guard's SSG Claudine Jaramillo, Las Cruces, NM, also received a standing ovation from 22 National Guard generals attending a State Partnership Program at NATO.

It was the first time the National Guard's top enlisted people have ever been recognized at the diplomatic level, said Army National Guard CSM Larry Pence. The top enlisted Active Army and Air Force have never been so honored, Pence said.

Stafford, a full-time Indiana Guardsman, was the Army Guard's NCO of the Year and Thompson, of the Montana Army Guard, was Soldier of the Year. Jaramillo, from the

New Mexico Air Guard, is the reigning Airman of the Year. She is also one of the active Air Force's top 12 enlisted people for 1995.

The State Partnership Program's aim is to help former communist countries of Eastern Europe learn the principles of democracy that those nations haven't known in centuries. ■

*Joint Endeavor National Guard Bureau
Brussels, Belgium*

Transportation Command NCO of Year Named

SFC Jimmie Harris was chosen as the 143rd Transportation Command NCO of the Year during a ceremony at the 228th Transportation Co on February 4. The award and an Army Commendation Medal were presented by BG Michael T. Gaw, commander of the 143rd TRANSCOM.

"It's an honor to have been selected for this award out of 41 competing units and to have Brigadier General Gaw here to present it to me," the Palatka, FL, native said.

Harris has been in the Army for 16 years, including nine

years on active duty. He works in the motor section as the motor sergeant at the 228th Transportation Co during Reserve duty weekends. As a civilian, he is an associate for a plumbing distributor in Palatka.



SFC Harris, wife Barbara and son Jimmie Jr.

In March, he competed in the 1st Army's Reserve NCO competition in Pittsburgh. To prepare for the two competitions, Harris said he studied military publications and civilian periodicals. Also, he got help from his wife, Barbara, who relieved him of some of his family duties. ■

*SPC Marie Bushley and SFC Tom Rusk
143rd Transportation Command PAO, Orlando, FL*

Special Forces and Operations Commands Name Retention NCO of the Year for FY 95

SFC Arthur Palmer, HHC 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), has been selected as the United States Army Special Forces Command (Airborne) and United States Army Special Operations Command Retention NCO of the Year for FY 95. His outstanding performance as the 3rd SFG(A) Retention NCOIC was responsible for the Group achieving 143% of its mission for the year and resulted in the units receiving the Command's Retention Award. ■



SFC Arthur Palmer

CSM Michael W. Jefferson, Headquarters, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), Ft. Bragg, NC

Ft. Lee Names NCO of the Year

SGT Kollin L. Taylor, Ft. Lee's 1995 NCO of the year thought about becoming a pilot and joining the Air Force. "But when I got to the recruiting station, I decided to join the Army. Three years later I can say that I made the right decision."

The Jamaica native is a medical NCO working in the Ears, Nose and Throat (ENT) Clinic. Some of his work includes performing physicals, assisting ENT doctors, doing ear cleanings and assisting doctors with minor surgical procedures.

The Ft. Lee board was the 14th board he's competed in. "When I first started competing at boards, I did it to earn promotions as fast as possible," Taylor said. He's now studying for board number 15 — the North Atlantic Health Service Support Area competition at Ft. Knox, KY. After Ft. Knox, he plans to appear before promotion board number 16. "After that, I think I'll give a rest."

Taylor also attends Saint Leo College where he is working on his bachelor's degree in business. ■

SSG Jim Bolton, PAO, U.S. Army Combined Arms Support Command and Ft. Lee, Ft. Lee, VA

Army Institute for Professional Development Selects 1996 DETC Outstanding Graduate

SFC Marion L. Turner, NCOIC for Directorate of Flight Operations at Redstone Arsenal Army Airfield, AL, has been selected as the Army Institute for Professional Development (AIPD) 1996 outstanding graduate. Turner was selected from among more than 210,000 students in the Army Correspondence Course Program.

Turner's thirst for knowledge led him to complete more than 800 study hours in 19 months with AIPD. The Army has to depend upon fewer soldiers to accomplish a mission that is broader than ever and Turner is an outstanding example of the motivated, multi-faceted soldier needed to lead the Army into the 21st century.

In his present assignment he provides direct leadership and guidance to 19 soldiers with three different Military Occupational Specialties.

Through his broad knowledge gained through completing a diversity of AIPD distance education courses, Turner has earned the respect and confidence of his superiors and subordinates alike.

"The knowledge I have obtained from the AIPD has helped me to stay current in the ever-changing Army, while maintaining the diversity to train and mentor soldiers of different occupational specialties." ■

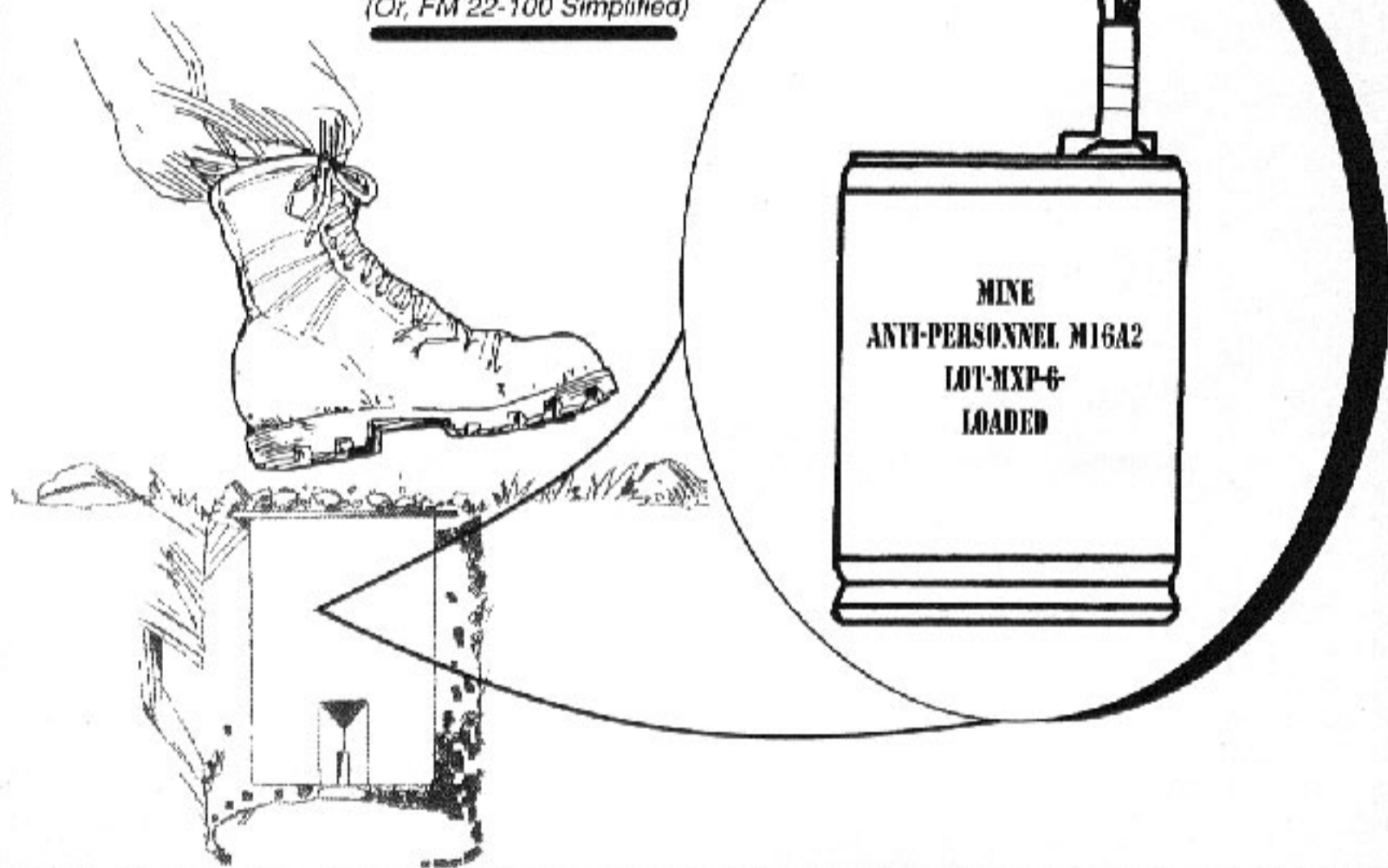


SFC Marion L. Turner

*The Army Institute for Professional Development,
U.S. Army Missile Command, Redstone Arsenal, AL*

“Bouncing Betty” and the “Three-meter zone”

(Or, FM 22-100 Simplified)



By CSM J. D. Pendry

I'm sure you've all read FM 22-100, *Military Leadership*—it's full of great information. Sometimes, it's *too much* information for me to sort out and use when I need it. I've simplified it to make it work for me and to show you what I think it takes to lead and understand the soldiers you are trying to lead.

First of all, if you want to be consistent as a leader you need rules to go by. I picked two rules that work for me. My first rule is something we all do every minute of the day—lead by example. The second rule—always remember what rule number one is.

Besides rules, leaders need priorities to give them direction. My priorities are high standards, a high state of discipline, self-discipline, a high state of soldier and equipment readiness, professional development for NCOs and leaders who are positive role models.

To go with rules and priorities you need a leadership style or technique. FM 22-100 gives you three. Directing, participating and delegating. Knowing them and then just pick-

ing one out to follow won't work. You have to consider other things before you select a style. Primarily, you have to consider the individual soldier you're leading. I call my technique for selecting a style the “three-meter zone.”

You can categorize soldiers in your mind any way that works for you, but three-, 50- and 100 meters is a context I can easily visualize and understand. It helps me know who I'm dealing with and helps me pick the style I need to use.

When I went through basic training a lot of emphasis was placed on mines and booby traps used in Viet Nam because they were causing a lot of casualties. I remember a demonstration that dealt with an anti-personnel mine called a “Bouncing Betty.” When stepped on, this mine bounces up as much as waist high before it detonates. As you might expect, the results can be devastating. The instructor told us if you're within three meters when it detonates you probably won't survive. At 50 meters, he said, your chances of survival improve dramatically. At 100 meters you're relatively safe from this weapon.

After listening to that instructor and seeing pictures of intestines hanging out, I was sure I never wanted to be caught

in Bouncing Betty's three-meter zone. Much like Bouncing Betty, leaders also have a three-meter zone.

Three-meter soldiers require constant *attention*. If they don't get it they will do something that causes you to give them some attention. They'll get a DUI, beat on a spouse, take drugs, write bad checks or forget to come to work. Or, when they finally do come to work they will be on endless appointments. Most of them continue to extend their temporary "No Physical Training" medical profiles. You can't give these soldiers the attention they need unless you keep them in your three-meter zone.

When you give them a mission, give them *detailed instructions*. Make sure you tell them who, what, where, when, why and how. Then tell them all the negative things that will happen if they fail to complete the mission. Keep reminding them of the dangers of being in *your* three-meter zone.

You never have to highlight the positive to three-meter soldiers, because they fully expect to receive an impact award for any mission they complete. Even if someone else completes it for them. You have to constantly check on three-meter soldiers to remind them of their mission, because they like to lose track of what they're supposed to be doing.

On the other hand, if you lose track of them, they will wander out of your three-meter zone. The problem with that is they usually wind up in the first sergeant's three-meter zone. This means *you* have to go into the first sergeant's three-meter zone to get them back. And spending too much time in first sergeants' three-meter zones may soon have them questioning *your* maximum effective range.

By design, life in the three-meter zone is extremely unpleasant—life expectancy can be very short. In fact, no one survives the three-meter zone because the intensity of the fragmentation when a leader detonates is too much for three-meter soldiers to survive.

Your job, though, is to help them survive. To get them out of the three-meter zone, you give them two survival options.

First, tell them what actions they must take to get out of the three-meter zone. You have to make it very clear that all of the negative attention-getting activities have to stop. No more DUIs, spouse beatings or writing of bad checks. Next, tell them what the standards are and what your expectations are. Then, tell them to concentrate on accomplishing their duties to the utmost of their ability. Finally, you tell them if they do those things they'll get out of the three-meter zone and be headed for the relative safety of the fifty-meter zone.

If three-meter zone soldiers don't respond to the first survival option by taking the actions laid out for them, then you have to resort to a second option. The second option meets your obligation to the Army and to other soldiers. That option is to end their Army career and to do it as quickly as possible. *Whichever option is chosen, the end result must be that they leave the three-meter zone.*

Next is the 50-meter soldier. Some soldiers start out in the 50-meter zone and some come there by the three-meter

or one-hundred-meter zone. No matter how they got to be 50-meter soldiers, they require the same leadership style.

I just told you how three-meter soldiers get to the 50-meter zone. One-hundred-meter soldiers usually get there because of some negative experience. It could be anything from a soured marriage to not being selected for promotion.

With the right kind of leadership and positive encouragement you will get them back to the 100-meter zone. With the wrong kind of leadership, they could just as easily be headed to the three-meter zone.

When you give 50-meter soldiers a mission you still need to give detailed instructions by describing the positive things that will come from successfully completing the mission. Fifty-meter soldiers look for positive things to happen in their lives. The desire to have something good happen and their willingness to work for it is what moves them to the 100-meter zone.

Once you've given a mission to 50-meter soldiers you need to check on them once in a while, because sometimes they may need a little direction or re-direction or a pat on the back. They need to know that you're interested in whether or not they successfully complete the mission.

Remember, when they complete the mission they expect something positive to happen. That positive action can be as little as a pat on the back and some kind words. But it needs to be *something*. Your goal is to move these soldiers out to the 100-meter zone where the survival rate is very high.

One-hundred-meter soldiers are what we want in the Army. One-hundred-meter soldiers are grown by positive leadership that teaches them to do their jobs while constantly reinforcing positive habits required to be an effective leader or soldier.

When you give 100-meter soldiers a mission, all you need is to tell them the desired result, provide them with a time line, the necessary resources and point them in the right direction. You can be confident that the job will get done. That's because the way they were brought up constantly rein-

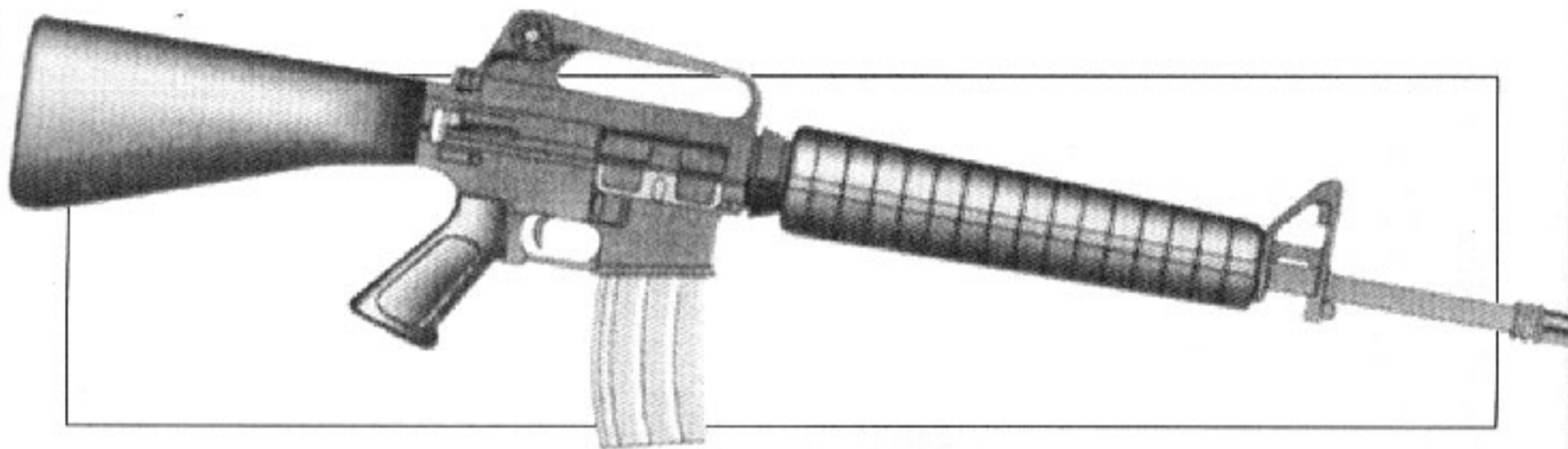
forced the importance of getting the job done. They also know, without being told, that positive things come from getting the job done. They also know, without being told, about the three-meter zone. All these soldiers need from you is a glance in their direction once in a while—just to let them know that you know they're there and you care about the job they're doing.

One-hundred-meter soldiers aren't driven by the fear of the negative or the possibility of reward. They're driven by the satisfaction of successfully completing the mission.

There you have it. FM 22-100 simplified. Two solid rules, some priorities and a technique for selecting a leadership style. ■

Pendry is command sergeant major, Ft. Myer Military Community, Ft. Myer, VA.

Life in the three-meter zone is extremely unpleasant—life can be very short.



By SFC Daniel R. Saito

All soldiers should be familiar with the importance of physical fitness.

Soldiers do physical training (PT) three to five times per week whether they want to or not. A physically fit soldier does a better job both in peacetime and combat. A healthy soldier is more resistant to sickness and can operate for longer periods of time under stressful combat conditions. The Army leadership realizes this important correlation and thus has placed a command emphasis on weekly PT.

Unfortunately, another basic soldiering skill which is more important to soldiers surviving in a combat situation is being seriously neglected in peacetime. I am referring to rifle marksmanship. Soldiers do PT every week, but rifle marksmanship training is conducted semi-annually at best in most units and usually only in conjunction with semi-annual weapons qualification. That is just not often enough.

Operation Desert Storm was so quick and decisive that most soldiers never fired their rifle at an enemy soldier. The mechanized infantry and cavalry units relied on the 25mm cannon and Tube-Launched, Optically-Tracked, Wire-Guided (TOW) missiles of their Bradley Fighting Vehicles. The tankers relied on their laser range-finders to engage targets at 4,000 meters. That "war" may, unfortunately, have given our Army's latest combat veterans the notion that an individual soldier's marksmanship skills may be less important and therefore require less training. That line of thought for any leader may be considered borderline criminal negligence.

Are We Neglecting



Rifle Marksmanship?

Sadly, the one training event the Army leadership is getting away from is rifle marksmanship. Research is being conducted to replace the highly accurate M16A2 rifle with a weapon that fires a three-round burst each time instead of stressing well-aimed single shots. The Marksmanship Training Units (MTU) which used to be an integral part of most active Army divisions seem to be disappearing. Most soldiers have never heard of the competitive marksmanship programs (found in AR 920-15) that most combat divisions used to host annually and are therefore unable to compete for prestigious marksmanship badges authorized for wear on uniforms. True, the pooled expertise the MTUs provided to their installations has been dispersed throughout the units. Also true is the fact that all NCOs should be proficient shooters and therefore proficient as

trainers to train their soldiers. But the expertise of senior NCOs to train the trainers is rapidly fading. New trainers have to be referred to FM 23-9, M16A1 Rifle and M16A2 Rifle Marksmanship, dated July 89.

Here are 10 basic questions on rifle marksmanship that all NCOs should be familiar with. I have provided the page and paragraph of FM 23-9 where the answers can be found. If your answers don't match the guidelines of the field manual, then study the FM until you understand it so you can teach your soldiers. My point is not to embarrass anyone, but to have leaders realize that more emphasis needs to be given to marksmanship training and sustainment to keep soldiers' marksmanship skills within the "band of excellence." It's time to get serious and smart about marksmanship and your job.

1. What is the initial sight setting for a newly issued M16A2 rifle? (pg. G-14 and Fig. G-25)

- rear sight all the way right, front sight flush.
- rear sight 17 clicks right, front sight 11 up from flush, windage drum one click past 8/3.
- front sight flush, rear sight aligned with index mark, elevation one click past 8/3.
- front sight 11 up, rear sight set at 25 meters.

2. To zero the M16A2 rifle at 25 meters, the front sight is: (pg. G-14, 25 meters, para 1)

- moved to flushed and no longer adjusted.
- moved 11 clicks up and no longer adjusted.

- c. used for all elevation adjustments until zeroed.
- d. none of the above.

3. To engage pop-up targets after zeroing, the M16A2 rear sight is: (pg G-14, 25 meters, para 2)

- a. flipped to short range because all targets to 300 meters are considered short range.
- b. left alone because it's already zeroed.
- c. adjusted by moving the elevation wheel to the 8/3 mark.

4. Before being allowed to make any sight adjustments on the M16 rifle when zeroing, the firer must: (pg G-10, para 1)

- a. complete sustainment training before going to the range.
- b. fire two consecutive three-round shot groups within a four-centimeter area.
- c. move the sights to mechanical zero.
- d. fire a three-round shot group on the zero target.

5. The recorded battlesight zero of an M16 rifle is: (pg. G-13 and G-16, Recording of Zero)

- a. the last sight adjustments made prior to confirming zero.
- b. the sum of all sight adjustments made during zeroing.
- c. the last sight adjustment made.
- d. the resulting sight setting after all sight adjustments have been made during zeroing.
- e. the same as the mechanical zero.

6. The battlesight zero on the M16A2 allows the firer to: (pg. 3-22, para 2, and Fig. F-5)

- a. hit all targets out to 300 meters by aiming center mass.
- b. aim center mass at the 300-meter target and hit center mass.
- c. increase chances of target hits in combat out to 400 meters.
- d. all of the above.

7. The battlesight zero sight setting of an M16 is: (pg. 3-21, Concept of Zeroing)

- a. transferable from one weapon to another.
- b. transferable from one soldier to another.
- c. not transferable at all.
- d. 17 clicks right and 11 clicks up.

8. Before a soldier is allowed to qualify, he or she must have a confirmed zero. A confirmed zero is: (pg. G-11, para 2, Fig.

G-22 and pg. G-16, para 4, Fig. G-29)

- a. three rounds anywhere within the silhouette of the zero target.
- b. two consecutive three-round shot groups within the circle on the zero target.
- c. six rounds within the four-centimeter circle of the zero target.
- d. one three-round shot group within the four-centimeter circle of the zero target.

9. A promotable specialist fires on a record fire range in the morning and does not qualify. The specialist requalifies again that afternoon and fires an Expert score. What qualification badge is the specialist authorized to wear? (pg. G-45, para 4 and G-48, para 2)

- a. Expert.
- b. Sharpshooter.
- c. Marksman.

10. All newly assigned soldiers issued a previously zeroed M16 rifle must move the sights to the initial sight setting before attempting to zero. (pg. 3-22, para 2, 3, 4)

- a. True.
- b. False.

Lack of command emphasis and opportunity... to regularly practice... rifle marksmanship skills is appalling.

The FM specifies marksmanship standards that all soldiers are expected to meet. There aren't any acceptable reasons for not meeting the standards. With proper and frequent marksmanship training, the unit can save training dollars, which are wasted by allowing soldiers to burn up ammunition attempting to re-zero or re-qualify without the intense but patient remedial training required to teach soldiers to shoot better.

The lack of command emphasis and opportunity for soldiers to regularly practice their rifle marksmanship skills is appalling. What would happen if the Army gave PT the same emphasis that rifle marksmanship now gets? Don't do

any organized PT, but still administer record Army Physical Fitness Tests (APFT) semi-annually? The outcome would be the same. Many soldiers would perform poorly and would barely be able to meet standards. Luckily, most soldiers can maintain an acceptable level of fitness without having to buy any extra equipment. It's not the same with rifle marksmanship. A soldier cannot get proficient with a weapon if he or she can't practice with it. Practice doesn't necessarily mean live fire. There are soldiers of all ranks who cannot perform combat survival skills like immediate action to clear a malfunction or a rapid reload magazine change. And because soldiers can't afford to go out and buy their own M16 or its civilian version, the AR-15, the Army and its leadership is even more liable for ensuring promotion points — especially to those deployed in harm's way. We claim to be the best trained fighting force in the world. Are we? Not if our soldiers are deficient in one of the most basic soldiering skills.

A well-trained soldier thoroughly proficient in individual weapon training will be better able to perform in a combat environment. A soldier's ability to engage and hit targets at more than 300 meters instills a confidence in his weapon that significantly increases survivability in combat. If all soldiers were given the chance to attain a high level of marksmanship proficiency, our Army would be truly awesome in combat. Rifle marksmanship is a skill that will, like any other skill, deteriorate without regular sustainment training. It is also a proud American heritage handed down from the first boatload of our American ancestors who had to be able to shoot to survive in the New World. That heritage has passed on through the infancy of our great Army to our still-developing 21st-century fighting force. A soldier and his rifle will always be crucial factors on our battlefields. ■

Saito is armament maintenance manager, Rock Island Arsenal, IL.

Commentary

What A Backbone Does

By SSG David R. Gayvert

The NCO Corps has long been called the "Backbone of the Army." We've all heard the phrase and perhaps have even quoted it a few times ourselves. But if this powerful metaphor is to be more than empty rhetoric — more than just another leadership sound bite — it's important that NCOs ask exactly what this characterization really means and what implications it holds for the way we ought to view our role, responsibilities and duties in our Army.

An obvious interpretation perhaps might be that NCOs are simply the source and coordinators of physical labor required by the Army — in other words, the workhorses of the organization. This view is too one-dimensional for an Army that is evermore dependent upon complex technologies, information and decentralized operations.

Today's effective NCO must be able, ready and willing to do more than merely supply the manpower for assigned tasks. He or she must not only demonstrate expertise in a chosen field, but also be a capable manager of people and resources, providing and maintaining the vital links between concept and actual execution of training and operations.

Under this light, the NCO Corps may be seen as perhaps the critical element of the Army's framework; an essential component of the human infrastructure without which the organization could not move — just as an individual body would collapse into paralysis if deprived of its spine.

Such an understanding of an NCO's role as the backbone of his or her unit has teeth and inherently charges us to do more than simply what we are told, but rather to be proactive in the planning, coordination and evaluation processes vital to the smooth and effective operation of our units.

Though this second, fuller interpretation of the metaphor is clearly better than the first, it still seems incomplete. This is because the idea of 'backbone' conjures up not only tangible, physical attributes, but moral ones as well. The test of a true leader, as opposed to one who is merely a good manager, lies in this domain. Courage, integrity and steadfastness are perhaps the most common traits brought to mind when the term is used to describe a person. These same qualities are imputed to the NCO Corps by our metaphor. We must be the ones who can be counted on to do the right thing, both by those appointed above us and by those whom we supervise. We must be willing to question and challenge them when they cease to move the organization forward. If we expect to deserve the title "Backbone of the Army," we must not only believe and act as though we can make a difference in its operation, we must accept it as our duty to do just that — day in and day out.

A smaller, increasingly sophisticated Army demands more of us now than at perhaps any other time in history. *Our success as leaders depends on how we interpret and how we live the metaphors and slogans created both to describe and to motivate us.* ■

Gayvert is with the 125th Military Intelligence Bn, Schofield Barracks, HI

UXO D

"...totally, totali

Danger lies just under the feet of most soldiers deployed to the Bosnia theater. One wrong step and the threat of land mines becomes a deadly reality.

Used by all warring parties in the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict, land mines are one of the biggest dangers facing U.S. forces. An estimated 4 to 6 million anti-tank and anti-personnel mines have been randomly laid in mountain roads, fields, forests and villages. Soldiers often don't realize what they're looking at is a deadly explosive until it's too late. Army officials have continually stressed one fact: mine awareness prevents mine casualties.

Now, thanks to the efforts of officials at Redstone Arsenal, AL, mine recognition just got a little easier.

Through the combined efforts of the U.S. Army Ordnance Missile and Munitions Center and School (USAOMMCS) and the Training Support Center of the Corporate Information Center-U.S. Army Missile Command (CIC-MI-COM), a set of seven ammunition recognition boards is now available to all Army personnel.

To effectively augment the current unexploded ordnance (UXO) identification training so that it would be easily understood by soldiers, the new training item was suggested by SGM Gary Sampson of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Training Department, USAOMMCS.

Sampson's innovation was to take mine identification models off the flat page and make them three-dimensional.

"These are nice, but they're pictures, they're little line drawings," Sampson said as he flipped through a mine data pamphlet. "Why not show soldiers what the actual items look like?"

That's exactly what he and other officials at Redstone Arsenal have done with the new ammunition recognition

Deaths

unacceptable...."

boards which use plastic, vacuum-formed, examples of ordnance soldiers might typically encounter on the battlefield.

The UXO issue became a greater concern to Army officials in the aftermath of Operation Desert Storm in which an estimated 20 percent of all GI casualties were caused by mines and unexploded munitions. The deaths of 26 soldiers were attributed to UXO.

"These are totally, totally unacceptable casualties," Sampson said. Most of the incidents in Desert Storm involved soldiers picking up material they naively planned to bring home as souvenirs to hang on the rear-view mirrors of their cars, he added.

UXO was identified as a battlefield deficiency. An Army-wide training program was put into effect. Videotapes, a plastic ordnance training aid kit, field manuals and graphics training aids were distributed. Still, Sampson felt there could be more — something to make identification even easier.

The new recognition boards illustrate grenades, rockets, projectiles, submunitions, mortars and a variety of mines in their true-to-life colors and sizes. Through the combined efforts of USAOMMCS and CIC-MICOM, a collection of regional mines, mine fuzes and delay firing and booby trap devices were obtained from U.S. and foreign sources, making the models on the boards even more realistic.

As troops deployed to Bosnia are uncomfortably familiar with, land mines can take on a variety of shapes and sizes and can be hidden anywhere. "We're talking tens of hundreds of thousands on a battlefield," Sampson said. "The trouble is, they don't look like pieces of ordnance. They're literally everywhere. This is probably the biggest hazard our U.S. soldiers face."

Production of 229 sets of ammunition recognition boards (DVC-T 05-50) began in December 1995 and production of mine recognition boards (DVC-T 05-51) began in February 1996. Both items can now be requested through local training support centers. ■

For more information, contact Sampson at DSN 746-4654 or (205) 876-2796.

Samples from ammo and mine recognition boards

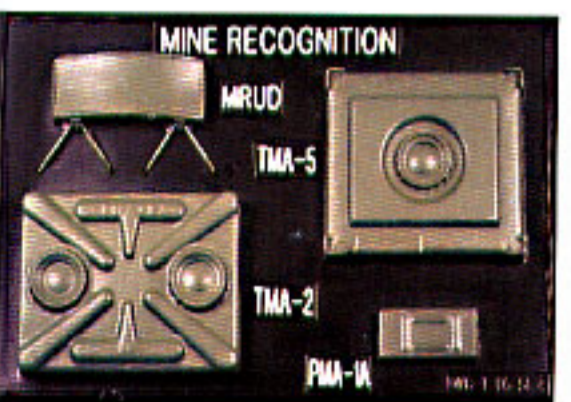
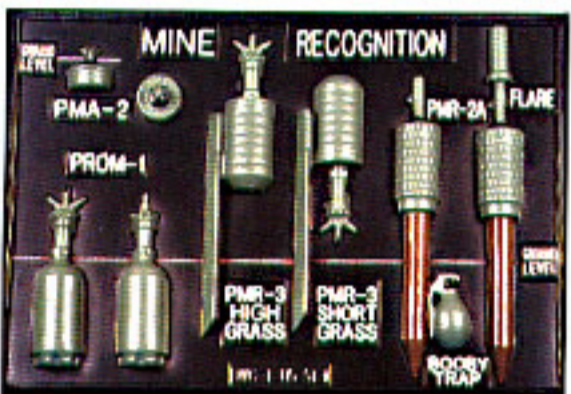


Photo by Joint Combat Camera



*Inside Report:
Training For
Deployment In*

BOSNIA

By MSG William Bushue

In November 1995, I was provided the unique opportunity to be part of the Combined Arms Assessment Team deployed out of the Center for Army Lessons Learned at Ft. Leavenworth, KS. Our mission was to gather relevant lessons learned in support of Task Force Eagle and the Total Army. It was my privilege to be the guest of the 1st Armored Div; observing their operation was an exceptional education I feel obligated to share with all noncommissioned officers.

The team consisted of 37 soldiers deploying from installations throughout the continental United States. We departed home station and journeyed to Ft. Benning, GA, the Individual Deployment Site (IDS) for all replacement soldiers going to the Bosnia-Herzegovina theater. The personnel there attend to the administrative and equipment needs of every soldier.

Our trip to Bosnia was routed through a week of situational lane training at Hoehenfels, Germany. The predeployment exercises there are well-researched and very reflective of the Bosnia-Herzegovina area of operations, with an emphasis on performance-oriented training dedicated to saving soldiers' lives.

The soldier's ability to mentally assess his skills and physically execute the expected tasks were the winning factors in this deployment. Soldiers in the maneuver and support units found they performed the same basic tasks on the Mission Essential Task List as they did during predeployment training. In Bosnia, the METL was done well. Confidence and performance were both high. By capturing the embodiment of the current tactical and operational environment, the exacting standards of crew drills increased the levels of confidence



Photos by Joint Combat Camera

and performance as soon as soldiers realized they were prepared for this mission. Developing a quality scenario for redeployment training increased unit effectiveness and enhanced the soldiers' confidence in their ability to fight and win. Any unit would do well to emulate these training results.

Concern about cold weather injuries was an additional factor in this mission. Soldiers deployed with the required cold weather gear and trained properly in its use prior to deployment. This was evidenced by the continually low percentage of cold weather injuries for such a high percentage of soldiers exposed to the elements on a daily basis. Cold weather environments can be mentally as well as physically limiting. Recognizing this, the units trained prior to deployment with the latest cold weather systems and thus enhanced the soldiers' confidence. This alleviated concerns that could have hampered daily duties in such an austere environment. NCOs were visible and involved themselves consistently in not only the physical but the mental preparation of daily task performance, as well.

In my conversations with numerous NCOs, I took note of suggestions on how the Noncommissioned Officer Education System can do a better job supporting the peacekeeping missions. Many times the suggestions centered around public relations and checkpoint operations. NCOs in Bosnia said positive media relations and checkpoint operations don't have to be skills learned at the last minute. It would be a tremendous asset to commanders if our NCOES could teach common task versions of these two skills that needed only refinement prior to deployment. This would allow replacement NCOs to quickly integrate into unit operations without relying on familiarization and on-the-job training.

By emphasizing fire and maneuver training, there is a tendency for a soldier's basic field skills to atrophy. Two

areas of concern are field sanitation and field fortification. The majority of units I observed were aware of mistakes they'd made while training at home station. As a result, they deployed with good field techniques. In organizations that failed to attain a sufficient level of sustainment facilities within a reasonable amount of time, soldiers compensated with substitute methods that may or may not conform to accepted standards. These are the areas that will challenge NCOs during a protracted period of sustainment.

The leadership I saw in Bosnia is, by anyone's standard, an example of the hard work and dedicated professionalism we have all come to expect. The pride in performance demonstra-

ted by the NCO Corps is mirrored daily in the faces of the soldiers they lead. ■

Bushue is class coordinator for USASMA's Non-resident Course.



At the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

NCOs Walk the

Story and photos by
SSG David Abrams

The shoes are the first things you notice. The low quarters gleam like fresh-cut obsidian even on overcast days in Washington, D.C. Each step the soldier takes across the 63-foot walkway is a perfect, 30-inch stride, heels clicking with the perfection of metronomes. On the 21st step, the steel-plated shoes come together, cracking like a rifle shot across the nearby graves of Arlington National Cemetery.

After making a series of facing movements, each lasting exactly 21 seconds, the soldier turns and begins another 21-step vigil across the white marble plaza while camera-clicking tourists line up behind a metal barrier.

It is perhaps the infantry's highest-visibility assignment: the 3rd U.S. Inf, commonly known as "The Old Guard." Though guarding the Tomb of the Un-

known Soldier is only one small part of the unit's mission, it is the image of the stoic soldier in crisp dress blues that is lodged most firmly in the public's mind.

As the Army's oldest infantry unit — pre-dating the Constitution by four years — the Old Guard's reputation could easily be a burden or distraction to daily soldiering, but many of its NCOs say they manage their subordinates much as they would in a regular line unit. The main difference is that when they report to work each day, these infantry soldiers step squarely under the public's microscope. Whether guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, escorting the President at official functions or riding in the military's only ceremonial equestrian unit, everything — from the highly-polished shoes to the snow-white gloves — must be not just perfect, but better than perfect.

In the tomb guard dayroom, 25 feet beneath the Arlington Memorial Am-



Walk of Perfection

phitheater, CPL Todd Brunori holds up a pair of low quarters. "I spent two hours on these last night," he says. "With the rest of the uniform, it could take up to six hours to get everything right."

For soldiers new to the tomb guard way of life, those six hours will likely be spent shining shoes, polishing brass and pressing the uniform until the creases are knife-sharp. "Time management is what gets most of the new people," says Brunori, an assistant relief commander for the platoon. "If you don't know what you're doing, it could take all day. Eventually, you get a system down, a master plan."

Such obsession with perfection is what makes the Old Guard tick like clockwork as the Army's foremost ceremonial unit. As the primary cogs in that machinery, Old Guard NCOs apply all the standard infantry troop leading procedures...and then some.

"There's no room for error," says SSG Jeff Roper, first relief commander for the tomb guard. "Everyone here lives and dies by Line Six."

Roper is referring to the sixth line in the Sentinel's Creed: "My standard will remain perfection." Posted beside the door leading from the dayroom to the upper plaza, the creed is the last thing tomb guards see before going up to "walk the walk."

Since 1948, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier has been guarded 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by a soldier from the 3rd U.S. Inf. There are actually four "Unknowns" interred on the plaza

— the remains of servicemen from World Wars I and II, Korea and Vietnam. In a ceremony popular with the cemetery's annual 3.5 million visitors, guard shifts change every hour in the winter, every half hour in the summer. The relief commander — an NCO — comes up from the dayroom with the incoming guard, steps to the center of the plaza, explains the significance of the guard change to the assembled tourists, then proceeds to inspect the soldier

about to assume guard duty. It is the only time many of the tourists will ever see a precise, by-the-book inspection of military personnel and weapons.

As an NCO, Roper knows it's his duty to maintain high standards during the white-glove inspection, even if it means sending the soldier back down to the dayroom to correct a deficiency.

"If, for some reason, you haven't been paying attention to detail before you get assigned here, then you'll have it down pat by the time you leave," Roper says. "In fact, inspecting other soldiers' uniforms is just second nature to me by now."

For the 10-year Army veteran, leading by example is always at the front of his mind, whether it's the way he carries



himself when walking around the day-room or while inspecting soldiers during the changing of the guard. "If I'm inspecting my soldiers carefully, how can I expect them to obey me if I've got wrinkled pants or smudges on my brass? While I'm inspecting them, I know they're also inspecting me."

Once on duty, tomb guards take 21 steps, face the tomb for 21 seconds, make another facing movement for 21 seconds, take another 21 steps to the other side of the plaza, face for 21 seconds then repeat the whole process again. The number 21 represents the highest salute given to dignitaries in military and state ceremonies.

To be a member of the Old Guard, soldiers must meet certain standards — including a minimum height of 5 feet, 8 inches. Recruiters visit basic training companies to find potential candidates and Regimental Command Sergeant Major CSM Michael Bergman says that any qualified infantry soldier is always encouraged to submit a DA Form 4187 to their branch manager. "All of our soldiers are hand-picked," Bergman adds.

Brunori was one of seven soldiers selected from his basic training unit and when the recruiter told him he qualified for the Old Guard, he had only the vaguest notion of what the prestigious regiment was all about. "There's a lot of mystery surrounding us," he says, taking a break between guard shifts at the Tomb of the Unknown. "Before I left basic training, I didn't know a lot about the Old Guard, but I did know it was an honor to be selected. Some of the drill sergeants started giving me a hard time, telling me I'd be polishing doorknobs at the White House, but they didn't really have a good understanding of what the Old Guard is all about. I certainly haven't polished any doorknobs since I've been here."

Instead, the Pennsylvania native found himself assigned to the 1st Presidential Marching Plt, a job which required him to escort the President and visiting dignitaries. "The last time I was at the White House was when Yeltsin was there," he says nonchalantly, as if he's talking about someone he saw at the enlisted club last night instead of the Russian President. During his stay in that platoon, Brunori also participated in President Bush's retirement and Pres-

ident Clinton's inauguration ceremony. "Sure, the first couple times at the White House were mind-blowers," he says, "but eventually it just became part of the job."

Upon arrival at 3rd Inf Headquarters, soldiers like Brunori go through a three-week Regimental Orientation Program which teaches O.G.-wannabes everything they need to know about the unit's standards for uniform preparation, drill and ceremony and manual of

arms. By the time they graduate from ROP (pronounced "rope"), the soldiers have earned the buff-colored strap all Old Guard soldiers wear on their left shoulder.

Those who don't make it through ROP are returned to their previous unit. "If they can't do it and we send them back, it's not that they're bad soldiers," Roper says. "Usually it's the soldier himself who realizes he's just not cut out for the Old Guard."



After ROP, soldiers are assigned to one of nine companies where they receive more in-depth training on their particular responsibilities. After a year, Old Guard soldiers have the opportunity to apply for one of the specialty platoons like tomb guard.

"Normally, NCOs have to have some depth of trust in you before they'll send you out to a specialty platoon," Brunori says.

There are seven specialty units in the 3rd U.S. Inf, including the Commander-in-Chief's Guard, line companies that share ceremonial and field duties, the U.S. Army Drill Team (famous for the silent "front-to-rear overhead rifle toss" complete with fixed bayonets), the Fife and Drum Corps, Salute Gun Battery and Caisson Plt. This last unit — which uses a team of six horses to pull a flag-draped casket on an artillery caisson during funeral processions — is the only one of its kind in the entire military, Bergman says. "Having an equestrian background helps to be a member of this platoon, but soldiers still must learn how to ride in processions." The platoon will likely be remembered best for its escort during President John F. Kennedy's funeral.

Soldiers assigned to the Commander-in-Chief's Guard replicate the original unit assigned to the original commander-in-chief, George Washington. The unit dresses in colonial garb and is organized according to guidelines prescribed by Baron Friedrich Von Steuben. "The challenge to those NCOs is to learn everything they can about colonial history, including how to carry black powder muzzle loaders," Bergman says. "Not only do they have to *look* like colonial soldiers, they have to *act* like colonial soldiers."

To assist with authenticity, the Old Guard has its own uniform and flag shop with clothing ranging from World War I "doughboy" helmets to Revolutionary War British grenadier coats.

Just as Brunori says there tends to be an aura of mystery around the regiment, NCOs like SSG Gary Hardy say their Old Guard assignments are one-of-a-kind. "This is the other side of the Army, the one you never know is there until you actually get in and start doing the job," says the platoon sergeant for Co C.

Since joining the Old Guard four

years ago, Hardy's days have been filled with performing the honor guard for as many as 10 funerals each day where his soldiers pull double duty as both pallbearers and firing party. In his platoon, the daily schedule calls for endless uniform preparation, training sessions and schedule coordination — a routine broken only by the graveside services themselves.

In everything he does, Hardy applies standard leadership principles learned from years in the infantry. "They say the Old Guard is a different kind of Army, but it's not," he says. "We have a mission here and — just like anyone in the 82nd, the 101st or the 25th — we do site recons, pre-combat checks and movements to contact."

Also contrary to popular rumor, Old Guard soldiers *do* go to the field — whether it's training for the expert infantry badge at nearby Virginia installations or a rotation through the Joint Readiness Training Center at Ft. Polk, LA. "We're always pictured as the Army's ceremonial unit, but the tactical side is there, too," Bergman says.

When Old Guard soldiers do have the chance to participate in a field training exercise, they approach the event with as much — if not more — gusto as their infantry counterparts at other posts.

"I see a higher level of concentration and discipline in these soldiers," Roper says. "They're really ready to absorb standard infantry tactics and maneuvers by the time they hit the field."

Similarly, Hardy says NCOs shouldn't worry about their infantry skills going stale while assigned to the Old Guard. "You can leave here and still do your tactical mission."

After serving in other platoons, those who want to become members of the tomb guard must go through the rigorous "new kid on the block" process all over again, learning how to get the 21-step walk down to a science and committing to memory minute details about the 612-acre Arlington National Cemetery. Soldiers are required to know exact locations of more than 140 graves and the stories behind the veterans buried there. At the end of six months, they take a 100-question Badge Test. Passing the exam earns them the coveted silver tomb guard badge worn on the right breast

pocket. After nine months of honorable service at the tomb, badge holders receive permanent orders for the decoration and may then wear the badge for the rest of their military career. Since 1958, less than 400 sentinels have earned this distinction.

In March, SGT Heather Lynn Johnsen became the first woman to earn the badge. Because it's a combat arms unit, the Old Guard didn't allow females into its ranks until 1994 when the 289th Military Police Co was attached to it. Johnsen joined that same year, and in June 1995 she applied for tomb duty.

As Johnsen steps onto the plaza for her inspection on a crisp spring morning, there is only a small reaction from the crowd. With her pinned-up hair, 5-foot, 11-inch frame and stoic expression, Johnsen seems to have successfully integrated the Old Guard.

Because assignment to the tomb guard is voluntary, members can leave any time they wish. Few ever do. Engage Old Guard soldiers in conversation and invariably their speech will be peppered with words like "pride," "honor" and "brotherhood of soldiers."

Knowledge about the cemetery and the tomb is handed down to each new generation of guards like an ancestral legacy. "From day one, you explain the training purpose behind everything," says Brunori. "Tomb guards who worked here years ago will visit, watch us training new soldiers and say *they* said the same things to *their* soldiers. It just keeps getting passed along."

Long before dawn breaks over the Capitol dome to the east and the cemetery's first visitors enter the front gates, sentinels have been at their post, silently pacing in front of the huge marble vault. On the plaza, the atmosphere is hushed, the silence broken only by the whirring of camcorder motors and the relief commander reciting the changing-of-the-guard speech.

Downstairs in the dayroom, there is also an air of quiet contemplation as soldiers make final preparations to their dress blue uniforms and practice the manual of arms with their M-14 rifles. Two monitors mounted near the ceiling record activity on the plaza via security cameras. Relief commanders are also responsible for compiling detailed daily logs which fill ledger books stretching

back decades. Guard quarters are small, as economical as the sentinel walk itself — every available inch of space is taken up with two bunks for resting between shifts, an arms vault, a room for ceremonial wreaths, a pool table (the one recreational luxury) and the ubiquitous mirrors.

With at least six soldiers ready to go out on the plaza at any given time, sentinels may walk as many as five tours each day. Three different reliefs work 24-hour shifts in a fixed schedule. "I can tell you exactly what day I'll be working three years from now — it never changes," says Roper who has worked at the tomb for nearly two years.

To the outsider, the walking guard might look like a mind-numbing exercise in repetition, but to those who actually take the 21 30-inch strides, it is a time for reflecting on those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for the country.

"We're doing this for the Unknowns, not the tourists," Roper says. "Some times I'll look out at all the hundreds of thousands of gravestones and it'll hit me

hard — everybody in this cemetery died defending America. I don't know *how* they died — maybe it was a peaceful death or maybe it was violent and awful — but they all died for the country. I don't think there's anything better I could do in the Army than to protect them now."

Brunori says he concentrates on the 21-counts and his posture while working the plaza. "It takes some endurance, but it's almost like floating on air. So many things go through my mind that I don't really feel my body until I come downstairs and take off the belt. That's when I feel it in my back and legs."

Even though he's always in the eye of the public, Brunori doesn't pay attention to the cameras clicking behind him. "I'm not a tourist attraction for people to take pictures of," he insists. "I'm actually guarding somebody in that tomb."

Once the cemetery closes at 6 p.m., the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier becomes a restricted military area and sentinels switch to a tactical roving guard in BDUs, walking the perimeter while

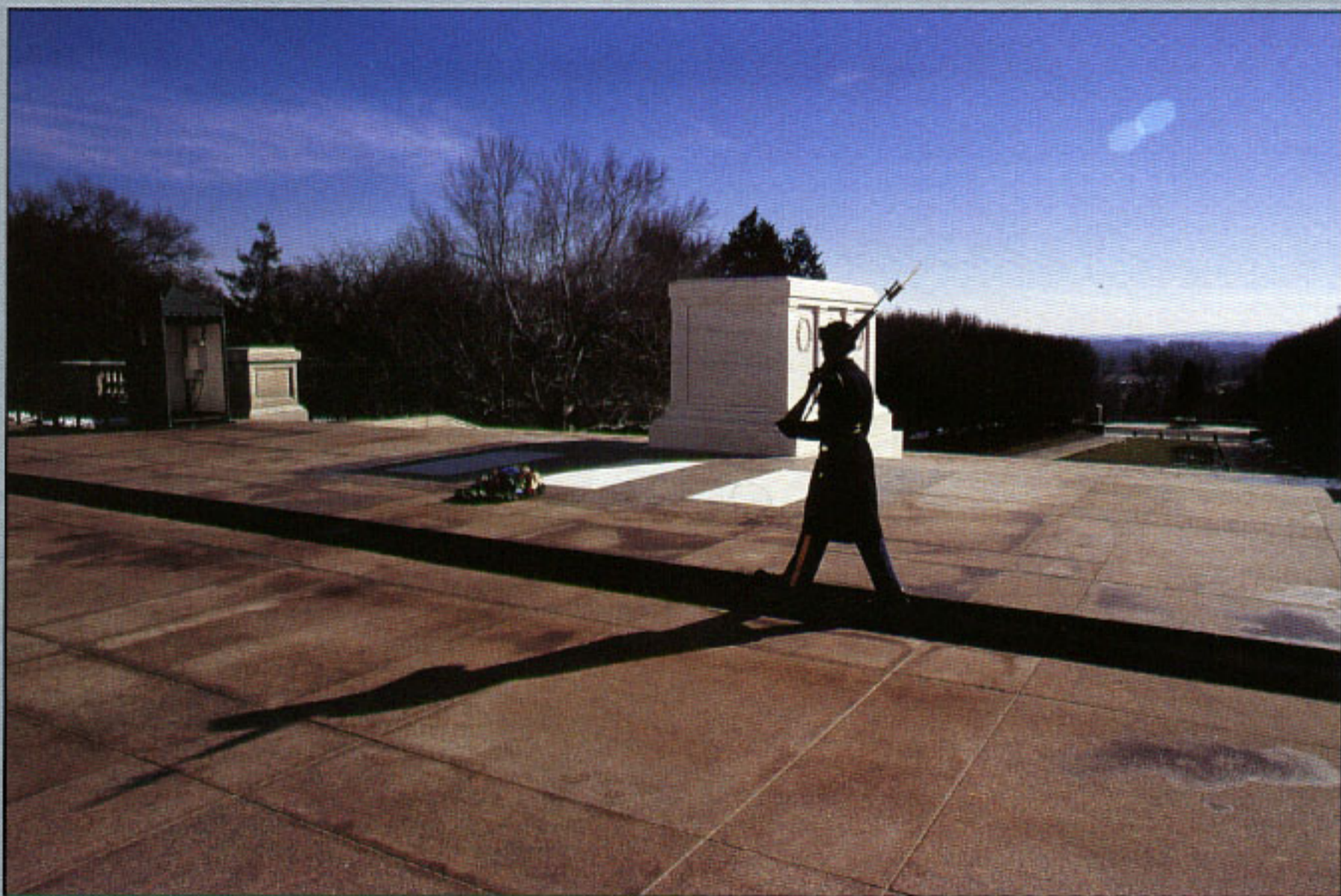
NCOs train new soldiers on the plaza.

With round-the-clock training and tomb guarding, there is always the danger of burnout, but soldiers claim that unit pride makes most hardships disappear. "Sure, sometimes it seems I have no life of my own, but it's all worth it," Brunori says. "There's nothing like this assignment anywhere else in the Army."

"Certainly, the stress level here can be high," Bergman says. "Our soldiers probably change uniforms more times in a day than any other unit — the mission demand is always there."

But even with that elevated stress, Bergman says the rewards can be tremendous — especially for NCOs. "While they're here at the Old Guard, NCOs learn what level of standards they can achieve. When they leave, they carry their pride and discipline with them. Those feelings stay with them and that, in turn, helps raise the overall standards of the Army." ■

Abrams is senior journalist for The NCO Journal.



Forget Promotion

If...

By SFC Andres M. Sanchez

As the Chief NCO of the Field Services Branch (better known to the field as the 1st PERSCOM "Promotions Branch"), I've seen too many requests for retroactive promotion as an exception to policy denied. Often, these requests involve soldiers or NCOs who have inprocessed without a promotion packet and cannot obtain one from the losing command and/or personnel detachment (PD) within the 90-day time period stipulated in AR 600-8-19, **Enlisted Promotions and Reductions**. This usually occurs because the soldier lost the packet while on leave en route or forgot to acquire the promotion packet before departing the losing command.

Army policy specifies the minimum documentation required to reconstruct a promotion packet. Soldiers must present a copy of the promotion board proceedings and either a legitimate copy of the Promotion Standing List (AAC-C10 SIDPERS Report) or a statement issued by the losing command PD verifying that the soldier/NCO was recommended for promotion by a valid board and had attained promotion status.

In USAREUR almost 10% of promotable soldiers arrive with either documents missing or no promotion packet. Almost one-third of that number aren't integrated into the Promotion Standing List — thereby causing the soldier to miss a possible promotion.

In most cases it's because of a lack of communication between the gaining and losing command in verifying the soldier's promotion status.

You also have situations where soldiers thought they have met a cut-off score, based on the last re-evaluation month, only to find out the promotion packet sat in some clerk's in-box and was

turned in late to the PD. Sound familiar? Well, it happens every day.

Again, AR 600-8-19 specifically stipulates that the promotion effective date is based on the date the promotion packet is received at the PD and *not* when it was prepared. In other cases, soldiers don't realize they were never integrated on the C10 until they thought they met the cut-off score (at this time it's too late to rectify); the regulation prohibits an administrative adjustment that may lead to a retroactive promotion.

We receive more phone calls regarding the examples above than any other situation. Most often the response must be that these aren't grounds for an exception to policy. However, the Total Army Personnel Command (PERSCOM) has developed a new system to manage semi-centralized enlisted promotions. This new system uses the Enlisted Distribution and Assignment System (EDAS) instead of the Standard Installation/Division Personnel System (SIDPERS). Personnel detachments will use this system to update promotion point data at the top of the system. This is an on-line system that should eventually eliminate the need for the losing command to verify the soldier's promotion status provided the losing command has updated the soldier's promotion status via EDAS.

As the Army enters the final stages of its "reengineering," promotions are becoming more competitive. All the more reason for NCOs to get involved. That includes the corporal, specialist or sergeant who is awaiting promotion.

He/she must be responsible and take an active role in acquiring the complete promotion packet upon reassignment. Whether we're an infantry sergeant or a journalist sergeant major, we all need to put our two cents' worth in the program. Too many soldiers pay the price and learn the system the hard way. We can't sit back and blame the "Personnel World" if we NCOs haven't offered to help or at least ask what went wrong.

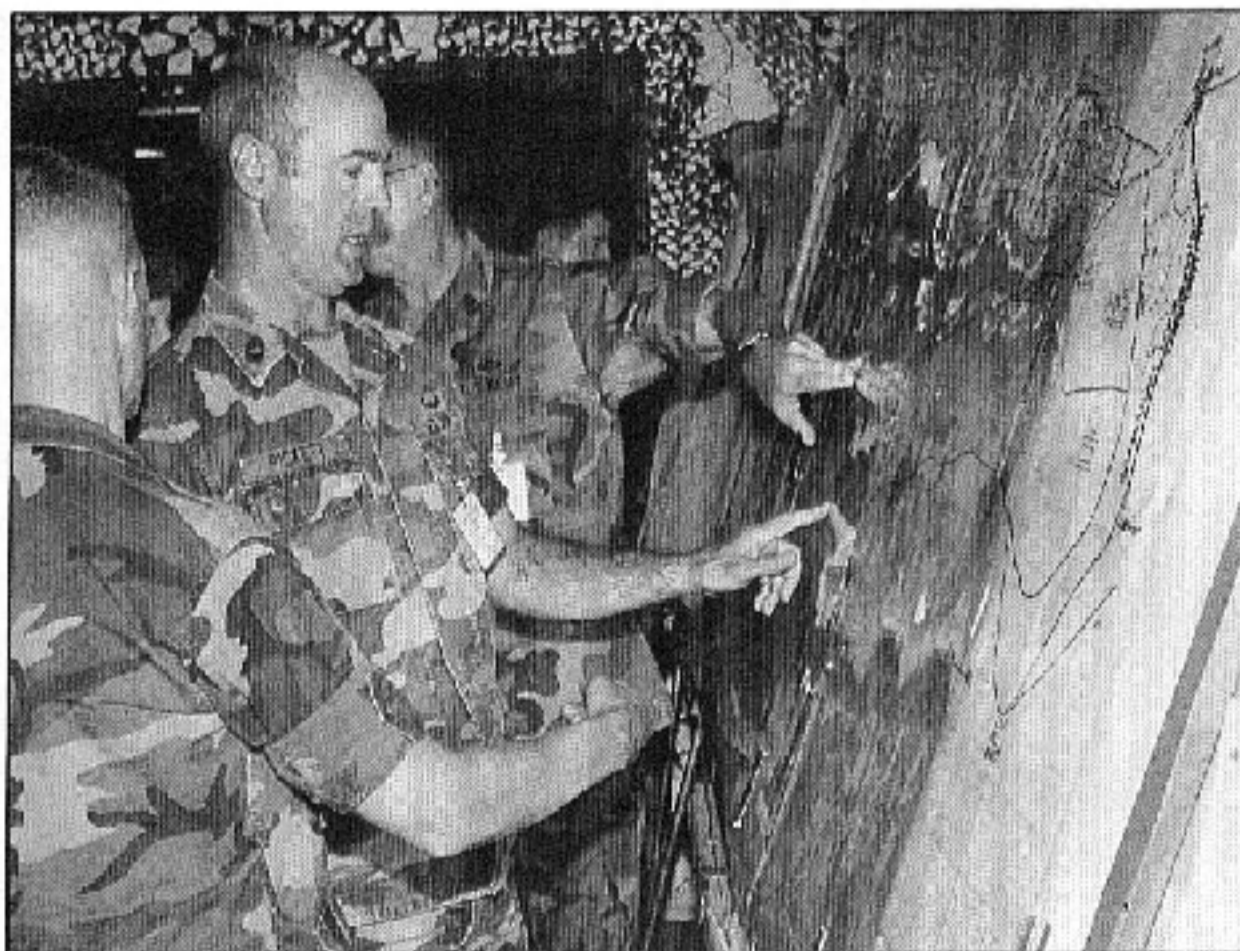
We must get involved and implement

some sort of program or procedure to prevent this from happening. In my professional opinion, the solution is within our reach. Let me give some simple, effective hints:

- Include the soldier's name on the distribution line of the board proceedings and ensure distribution is made.
- Put an NCO or SPC(P) (personnel type) in charge of promotions in your battalion S-1. They know what it's like to miss the cut-off scores by two points. They know the importance of getting the re-evaluation into the PD before the end of the month.
- Provide soldiers with copies of the Transmittal Form (DA Form 200) right after the battalion S-1 submits the re-evaluation/recomputation to the PD, not three months later.
- Conduct quarterly NCODP classes on the enlisted semi-centralized promotion system (SGT/SSG). We all have access to personnel sergeants, whether at the battalion, brigade S-1 or Personnel Detachment.
- Institute procedures at battalion and company levels to ensure soldiers do not depart without a copy of the AAC-C10 report and board proceedings, just like you do on NCOER.

I think the best and most effective way to tackle this problem is by educating our soldiers and NCOs. Remember, *knowledge is power* — and knowledge is what it will take to put this issue to rest. I'm confident that the NCO Corps can and will tackle this problem, by just getting involved and making sure subordinates have the knowledge to manage their own careers. ■

Sanchez is Chief NCO, Field Services Branch, HHC 1st PERSCOM, Heidelberg, Germany.



NCOs take on added responsibilities in a tactical operations center.

Operations Sergeant...

Train Your NCOs For the TOC

By SGM Jerry Puik

Your entire career as a hard-charging motivated noncommissioned officer has been spent in challenging leadership positions such as squad leader, section sergeant, platoon sergeant and first sergeant. And that was just fine because you've always enjoyed being "on the ground" working with soldiers. But now that hard-driving work ethic has landed you a job as an operations sergeant. The only staff experience you ever had was as a PFC many, many years ago when you were tasked (with much resistance) to be the driver for the battalion S-3.

You remember vividly how the tactical operations center (TOC) was a place run primarily by officers. The enlisted soldiers only performed tasks such as ensuring the coffee maker was always up and running, pitching tents and pulling guard duty.

Well, those days have passed. In today's smaller Army, the NCO is much more involved in the staff planning and

coordination of combat operations within the TOC.

Since you are truly a professional NCO of the highest caliber, you undoubtedly want to do the best job you can, so now it's time for you, the operations sergeant, to ask a few questions and assess your section. You already know your NCOs have become subject matter experts in the myriad of duties required while operating in garrison such as training NCO, schools NCO, filling out unit status reports and hundreds of other duties. But are the NCOs and soldiers in your section trained to perform their most critical function, their assigned duties within the TOC, when your unit deploys to combat? Does your unit have a current tactical operations center standard operating procedure (TOC-SOP)? Do officers or battle staff NCOs post and update the map boards? Do the battle staff NCOs and radio operators know what the commander's critical information requirements (CCIR) are? Do they even know the meaning of the acronym? Do the battle staff NCOs un-

derstand the tactical decision-making process (TDMP)? These are all questions to ask when assessing your section.

Here are a few other things to think about when considering what training your section needs in order to improve TOC operations. First, read all the after action reports and take-home packages prepared on your TOC during the past two years. This includes any trips your unit has made to the National Training Center at Ft. Irwin, CA, or the Joint Readiness Training Center at Ft. Polk, LA, and any recent participation in WARFIGHTER command post exercises. These products provide great insight to potential training weaknesses.

Next, pull out a copy of the TOCSOP. Does it cover the duties and responsibilities of battle staff NCOs? Most TOC-SOPs do a great job of describing duties of key officers, but don't go into enough detail listing the duties and responsibilities of the operations sergeant/sergeant major, assistant operations sergeants or shift NCOs, as well as radio operators. A newly-assigned battle staff NCO or radio operator should be able to pick up the TOCSOP, read it and understand what his or her responsibilities are within that TOC. This will help lessen the time required to train that person to perform assigned duties.

Other areas that might require some training are staff journals and journal files. In most TOCs, it's the responsibility of a battle staff NCO to prepare and maintain these documents. Normally, each staff section within a TOC maintains its own staff journal and journal files. How to prepare staff journals and journal files is covered in some detail in AR 220-15; FM 101-5, Appendix B (dated May 84) and (if you're fortunate enough to have a copy) the final draft of FM 101-5, dated Aug 93, Appendix I. The staff journal is normally recorded on DA Form 1594 (Daily Staff Journal or Duty Officer's Log) and covers a period not to exceed 24 hours. Common errors include not filling out the heading completely, running the journal for an extended period of time (i.e., longer than 24 hours), incomplete entries and not indicating accurately what action was tak-

en in the "Action Taken" column. Typically, you'll find the word "Logged" under the "Action Taken" column for all entries in that journal. FM 101-5 suggests using letter symbols to represent certain actions taken and explaining the letter symbols in a legend.

If officers within the TOC are posting and updating map boards, they will not have sufficient time to do their own job of integrating resources and synchronizing the fight. This can lead to tired and inefficient officers, resulting in an ineffective staff. Battle staff NCOs must be thoroughly knowledgeable on how to depict operational graphics and symbols in accordance with FM 101-5-1 and FM 21-26. Some frequently overlooked items include map overlays that do not have the proper classification clearly labeled on the top and bottom and no registration marks to aid in lining up the overlay to the map. Marginal information should also be included on the overlay. If your commander requires you to use colors and symbols that are not LAW FM 101-5-1, they must be explained in the overlay's legend.

Some frequently overlooked items include map overlays that do not have the proper classification clearly labeled on the top and bottom and no registration marks to aid in lining up the overlay to the map.

Does your TOCSOP cover the actions taken during a shift change? Are the battle staff NCOs involved in the shift change brief or is it exclusively the officers' domain? Whether there is involvement of battle staff NCOs at the shift change brief or not, there still must be a one-on-one exchange between the battle staff NCOs going off shift and those coming on shift, to include the radio operators. A good technique is to prepare, on a pocket-size card, a generic shift change briefing format for all battle staff NCOs and radio operators to carry in their breast pocket. When it's time for a shift change they each pull out the card

and go down the list and follow the format. This ensures that a thorough briefing has taken place and the incoming personnel have a complete picture of what occurred during the last shift.

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Another area where battle staff NCOs have significant impact is information management. If you do not have an effective means for displaying information and distributing information, your TOC will likely become bogged down and cease to function effectively during fast-paced operations. Most TOCSOPs cover in detail the types of charts and status boards that will be displayed in the TOC according to your commander's preference. Where the shortcoming is observed is in the area of maintaining and updating the information, especially during fast-paced operations. Your TOCSOP should specify who is responsible for maintaining these charts and at what frequency they are to be updated. Additionally, these visual display techniques should each have a date-time group clearly posted, to ensure your commander gets the most current information available. It also allows you, the operations sergeant, to spot-check to ensure everyone is doing a good job.

There is no single doctrinal source that covers in detail tactics, techniques and procedures for TOC operations, but the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) at Ft. Leavenworth, KS, has published an excellent newsletter titled **Tactical Operations Center (TOC), Number 95-7, dated May 95**. This particular issue covers many of the problems experienced by TOCs at the combined training centers (CTC). Some of

the areas covered in the newsletter include TOC functions, duties and responsibilities of TOC personnel, TOC layout and information management. It also includes a simple generic, command post exercise (CPX) you can conduct in your unit and ideas on easy-to-implement home-station training for your TOC personnel. This particular issue should be on the mandatory reading list of all operations sergeants. It can be ordered from CALL Customer Service at Ft. Leavenworth by calling DSN 552-2255 or commercial (913) 684-2255. The E-mail address is call@leav-emh.army.mil. If you enjoy "surfing the 'Net" you might want to browse the CALL homepage at <http://call.army.mil:1100/call.html> or browse their web page at <http://call.army.mil:1100/call/homepage/newsletters/95-7/toctoc.html> and read online the entire contents of **Newsletter 95-7, Tactical Operations Center (TOC)**.

One final point: The training tips discussed in this article apply equally whether you're in a combat, combat support or combat service support unit from battalion level all the way up to corps level, or a member of the fire support element, air defense section, or the engineer section within a larger unit's TOC. The important thing to remember is to

Your TOCSOP should specify who is responsible for maintaining the types of charts and status boards that will be displayed according to your commander's preference.

train at every possible opportunity. The battle staff NCOs and soldiers within your section can contribute immensely to the success of your unit's mission, but you must train them so they can competently and confidently carry out their duties within the TOC. ■

Puik is a faculty advisor for the Sergeants Major Course at USASMA, Ft. Bliss, TX.

Senior Enlisted Leaders Discuss Current Issues

Stories and photos by
SSG David Abrams

For three days, the voice of the NCO Corps was loud and clear during roundtable discussions at the Senior Enlisted Leadership Conference held at Ft. Bliss, TX. Twenty-one command sergeants major, sergeants major and military retirees representing the Army's major commands and organizations came together May 28-30 for briefings and emotionally-charged debates on enlisted issues ranging from promotions to barracks policies.

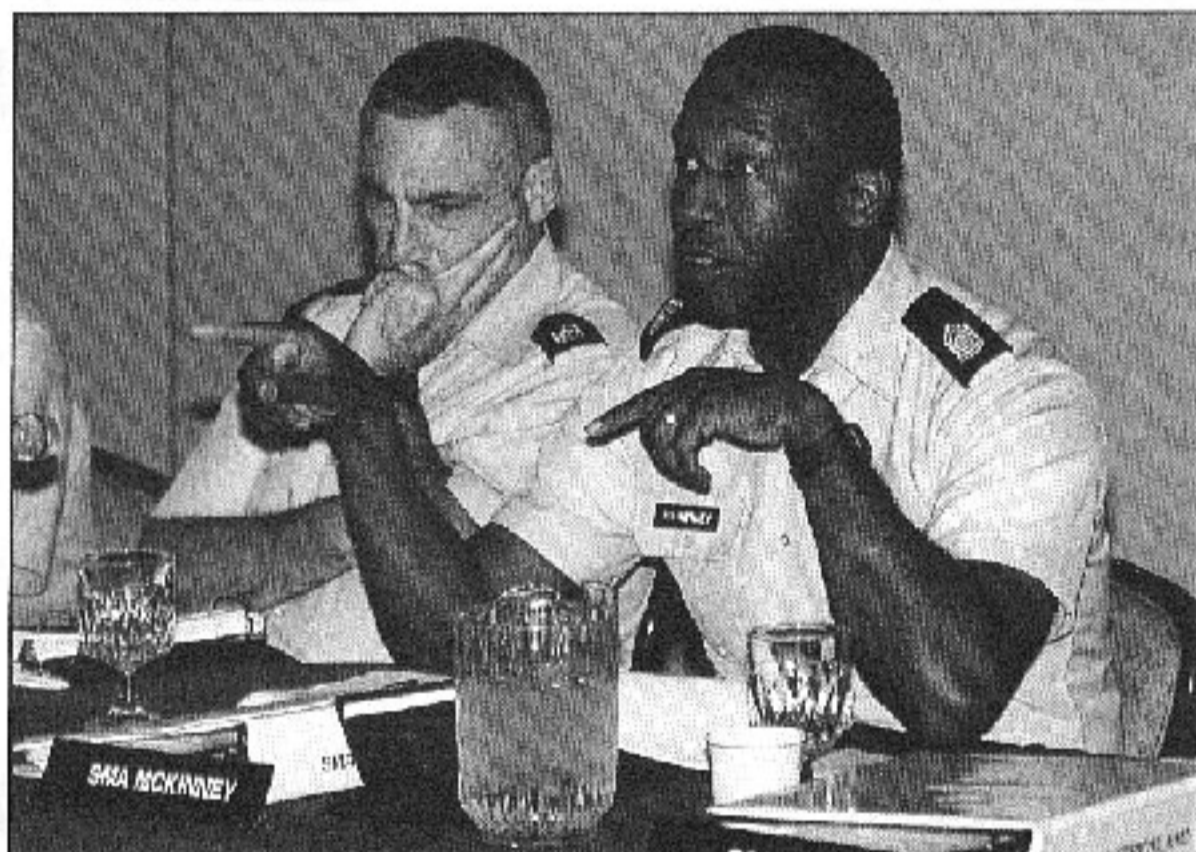
The purpose of the annual conference, said Sergeant Major of the Army Gene C. McKinney, was to "define NCO and enlisted issues, formulate them, then get them going in the right direction through the right channels."

McKinney, who chaired the conference, said he would like to start meeting with a smaller group of senior enlisted leaders every quarter, as well as coming together in the larger group once every six months to talk about top issues affecting enlisted soldiers. He encouraged the group to communicate more frequently with him via E-mail so that everyone could stay abreast of current enlisted affairs.

"The Army is changing every day," he said in an interview with *The NCO Journal*. "Our role as NCOs is getting broader. We, as senior leaders, need to come together to wrestle with the current and future issues which most affect our soldiers and their families. From here, we can take all the feedback we get at the conference back to the Army's decision makers. My philosophy has always been, if you want something to happen you need to start working on it five years in advance."

Most of the topics on the table during the conference, however, were at the forefront of most NCOs' minds today.

The following is a general look at the



SMA Gene C. McKinney said the purpose of the conference was to define NCO and enlisted issues, formulate them, then get them going through the right channels.

discussion swirling around the hot items at the conference:

APFT Requirement

Since 1995, when the Council of Sergeants Major recommended making the Army Physical Fitness Test an entrance requirement to Noncommissioned Officer Education System schools, the subject of the fitness test has been a hot one. Prior to last year, NCOES students took an APFT soon after arrival and those who failed were allowed to retest near the end of the course. If they passed the second test (and met all other course requirements) they were allowed to graduate. Current policy dictates, however, that all students take the APFT within 72 hours of arrival at school. Failures are dropped from the class and sent back to their units.

In speaking to the conference participants during a roundtable discussion, Army Chief of Staff GEN Dennis J.

Reimer said, "Overall, my feeling is to keep the policy in effect" — a statement that was met with universal agreement by the senior enlisted leaders in the room.

"I think we face a degradation of the NCO Corps if we let NCOs go through a course without passing the APFT," said CSM Larry D. Pence, command sergeant major of the Office of the Chief, National Guard.

In a March 8 message, Reimer directed that the current policy be kept in place.

NCOES Attendance

McKinney was adamant when it came to the practice of sending non-promotable soldiers to NCOES courses.

"I don't want another non-promotable in school," he told the sergeants major. "Period. End of discussion. I'm tired of it. Part of our problem with NCOES is that we're out there keeping

things alive just to keep them alive."

Barracks Policy

Some of the senior leaders felt soldiers living in barracks need a standard, general policy which would apply to all soldiers equally across the Army. While local commanders would retain control over their soldiers and barracks, those at the conference felt that additional guidance from higher levels would not be a bad thing.

"A soldier living under one barracks policy at Installation A should not have to PCS to Installation B where he gets in trouble for doing something that was perfectly OK at Installation A," said CSM Henry D. Bone of U.S. Army Special Operations Command. "It's just not fair to the soldier."

"We owe our soldiers some form of predictability and stability when it comes to barracks policies," McKinney agreed.

"When a soldier goes from post to post, he or she should expect to be treated the same way."

The Sergeant Major of the Army added that he is currently trying to come up with a different name than "barracks" for the single enlisted soldier living facility.

Extremism

McKinney was also emphatic on this issue: "We do not have an extremist problem in the Army."

He speaks with authority after having served on the recent Task Force on Extremist Activities, organized in the wake of the alleged racially-motivated slayings of two Fayetteville, NC, residents. Two Ft. Bragg soldiers were charged with the killings. A third soldier was charged with conspiracy to commit first-degree murder.

Consensus at the Senior Enlisted

Leadership Conference was that the three soldiers did not represent the military as a whole and that recent media reports may have blown the matter out of proportion.

However, Bone echoed the frustration of many NCOs concerning the limits of their authority when he said, "What if a sergeant comes across a soldier who has a Nazi flag hanging in his room and he suspects him of participating in extremist activities, but when he asks him to take it down that soldier says it's a souvenir his grandfather captured in World War II. What's an NCO to do in that case?"

Reimer said he understood the leaders' frustration and agreed the regulation is "ambiguous at best." He also condemned the alleged behavior of the three Ft. Bragg soldiers, saying they don't reflect general attitudes within the Army. "We're so small, we can't af-

"Our soldiers over there in Bosnia are doing us... proud."

*GEN Dennis J. Reimer,
U.S. Army Chief of Staff*

Fresh from a trip to the Bosnia theater of operations, Army Chief of Staff GEN Dennis J. Reimer had nothing but praise for the NCO Corps when he briefed a group of command sergeants major at the annual Senior Enlisted Leadership Conference May 29.

"Our soldiers over there in Bosnia are doing us all proud," he told the 21 leaders gathered around the conference table. "They all look good; no one's out of uniform. This kind of behavior is ingrained in them, it's second nature, and that's NCO leadership at its finest. It's a tribute to what you have done."

During the two hours he spent with the top enlisted leaders from the Army's major commands, Reimer spoke on a wide variety of topics affecting the enlisted population. However, it was the professionalism of NCOs in Bosnia that seemed to make the greatest impact.



"Every time I go to Bosnia, I'm tremendously impressed," Reimer said. "The quality of life is getting better on a daily basis. The food is improving and morale is high."

"There has been a lot of criticism of the no-alcohol policy," he added, "but looking at the safety record, I think it's the absolute right thing. There have been fewer accidents in Bosnia than there probably would have been if those units had stayed in Germany."

One issue that concerned Reimer was the high personnel tempo throughout the Army. "It's very hard

to define a matrix for PERSTEM-PO," he told those at the conference. "Right now, the average length of deployment for a soldier is 138 days. I've just said good-bye to some NCOs who were off on their seventh deployment since Operation Desert Storm. I feel we're deploying too many too much."

This can directly affect training, he added, citing one of the problems with military training is the "turbulence and lack of personnel — particularly in the middle-grade NCO ranks."

However, even as Army leaders deal with what Reimer called the "stresses and strains of the New World Order," one of the keys to operational success will always be those who wear the stripes. "The NCO Corps is what makes our Army different," he said. "We are the envy of every other army because of our NCOs. Everyone wants to know our secret, but I tell them it's really no secret. Our success lies in our people. There are no shortcuts — you can't make an NCO overnight. You must first have quality NCOs who are motivated to get the job done." ■

The drawdown has overall benefitted the NCO Corps

LTG Theodore G. Stroup Jr.

The ax has stopped chopping, the scissors have stopped snipping, the troop-cutters have stopped cutting troops...for now. That's the message the Army's top leaders gave to the sergeants major gathered at the recent Senior Enlisted Leadership Conference.

"The drawdown is now over, for all intents and purposes," said LTG Theodore G. Stroup Jr., the Army's deputy chief of staff for personnel. "Clearly, we have just come through a revolution."

While Stroup admitted he doesn't know what the future holds for the already slimmed-down Army, he said he is "constantly optimistic, always looking for the best."

The Army's budget has constrained NCO promotions to 98 percent, he said.



However, he added, the drawdown has overall benefitted the NCO Corps. "We wanted to have a much richer leadership mix in the Corps once the drawdown was over and I think we've accomplished that."

Earlier in the conference, Army Chief of Staff GEN Dennis J. Reimer told the assembled sergeants major, "There's a great debate going on over how many soldiers we need in the active Army today...I've argued that the Army's

as low as it needs to go right now."

Under this year's budget, the Army is scheduled to hold steady at 495,000 active-duty members in 10 divisions.

While the level of NCOs in 1986's Army stood at 42 percent of the force, today it is closer to 50 percent. By 2000, Reimer said senior leaders can expect that number to drop to 47.5 percent — the same percentage of NCOs in the Army during 1989.

"How we do that (reduce to that number) is going to be very complicated and will require an awful lot of effort," Reimer said. "We'll have to go back and look at unit tables of organization and equipment (TO&Es). We can't just salami-slice this."

During his hour-long briefing, Stroup tasked the sergeants major to be more vigilant on personnel data accuracy at their major commands. "We have data accuracy problems throughout the whole system."

"Readiness of the Army is an enlisted issue — not an officer issue, not an equipment issue. To have a trained and ready Army, you have to have the combat boots on the ground. And for that, NCO leadership is the key." ■

Senior Enlisted continued

ford to have bad apples," he said. "But bear in mind that we get the melting pot of America when recruits report to basic training. Our drill sergeants do a wonderful job of turning out professional soldiers and so I think we really need to invest in that NCO who's going to plant the seed in the first 72 hours of basic training. You can do a lot in that short amount of time."

Zero Defects

The concept of a perfection-driven, faultless Army sparked an animated conversation a few hours into the conference.

"Some NCOs think disagreement (with superiors) is disloyalty," said CSM Gilbert F. Pacz of Training and Doctrine Command. "But that's not necessarily so. Disagreement can sometimes be healthy."

From his side of the table, CSM Franklin D. Thomas from Southern

Command added his angle on the subject: "The notion of zero defects can sometimes be good because it helps us to better evaluate an individual. The Army has designed certain systems to show us whether a task was performed correctly or not."

Finally, Reimer provided his views on the subject by saying, "I want to develop young leaders who are willing to take risks. In this post-Cold War Army, we sometimes find ourselves in uncertain waters. We have to have people who aren't afraid to reach out their hands for fear they'll get those hands cut off."

Discussion on these and other issues remained lively and passionate throughout the entire conference.

However, if there was one topic that concerned McKinney the most it was the subject of promotions — specifically the amount of time it takes for soldiers to pin on their rank.

"Promotion is the catalyst that keeps soldiers alive and well," he said. "It's their measuring stick to show how well

they're doing against their peers. The slow rate of promotions has a profound effect on both soldiers and their families. The more I travel around the Army, the more I realize that soldiers aren't in it just for the money. Promotions are all about self-worth."

For at least one observer, the conference was an eye-opening experience. "I wish more people could see this," said SSG Joseph Lister, a court reporter with the Ft. Bliss Judge Advocate General who was recording the entire proceedings. "The perception from the junior enlisted ranks is that senior leaders are mainly worried about protecting their own interests and retirement benefits. But I think if a private sat in on this conference like I have, it would change his perception of the Army dramatically. It's not just what these sergeants major say, it's how they feel. You can see it in their eyes — they really care about helping all soldiers." ■

America's Army includes National Guard, Army Reserve, single soldiers, Department of the Army civilians, retirees and family members

While the top enlisted men from the Army's major commands were sitting around a conference table at the Senior Enlisted Leadership Conference, what may arguably be called the heart and soul of the gathering was meeting in the very next room. Here, 11 wives simultaneously discussed some of the same issues their husbands were debating at their roundtable.

Chaired by Wilhemina McKinney, the spouse group tackled issues like the Army Family Team Building program and the size of the average enlisted soldier's paycheck.

"One of our biggest concerns was defining what an Army team is," McKinney said. "The single soldier is part of that team, so is the National Guard, the Army Reserve, Department of the Army civilians, retirees and family members. When we talk about 'America's Army,' this is what we mean."

Those attending the spouse conference agreed the size of the monthly paycheck for "America's Army" is not what it should be.

"One aspect of the quality of life means your pay meets the standard of today's living," McKinney noted. "But for many enlisted soldiers, it's taking two paychecks to meet the standard of living. A lot of spouses feel they have to work even though they'd rather play a more active role in the Army family."

As a result, volunteering for Army organizations and programs suffers, she added. "I think more spouses would be involved with Army Community Services or AFTB if they didn't have to work just to keep up with expenses."

AFTB, initiated two years ago, is designed to educate families on the intricacies of Army life, starting with the first duty station and continuing through retirement. With three different levels of classes divided according to the spouse's military experience, family members can easily access the training at any point in their military career.

In a briefing to the spouse group, Army Chief of Staff GEN Dennis J. Reimer praised the success of AFTB as

well as other support he sees coming from the homefront. "We have sometimes not tapped into the talent that is sitting around this table," Reimer said. "You represent a lot of expertise and I assure you we won't do anything without getting input from people like you."

After briefing the spouse group on general Army topics like base closures, current military operations and Army mission statements, Reimer said it all boils down to one thing: taking care of soldiers. "Everything we do is done for our soldiers," he noted. "They're our core competency. The American people trust us with their most precious assets — their sons and daughters. All they ask is that we take care of them and train them right. That's a tremendous responsibility to put on your husbands' shoulders."

"However," he continued, "we have

to make sure that people realize that we can't so much make business decisions as we do decisions of the heart — especially when it comes to cutting programs and benefits. We'll continue to take care of people first, which may not always be the most cost-effective decisions, but we're going to do it anyway."

McKinney said she appreciated the Chief of Staff's concern for the Army family and said she plans to forward the after action report from the spouse conference to his office. Over the years, she said, she's learned that the Army family can make a difference, especially in quality of life issues. "Soldiers and family members must speak louder to those who are making the decisions," she said. "After all, if the family members aren't happy, then the soldiers aren't happy. Both team members must be happy if we want to have a successful Army." ■

USASMA Marks Milestone With SMC Class 46

By MSG Pete Durban

Two hundred senior noncommissioned officers set a new milestone for NCO formal education May 31 as they graduated from the first nine-month Sergeants Major Course at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Ft. Bliss, TX.

The graduation ceremony at Biggs Army Airfield honored the graduates in front of an audience of more than 800 family members and friends. The guest speaker was Sergeant Major of the Army Gene C. McKinney.

Also graduating from the course were several Navy and Coast Guard senior NCOs, as well as international students from Botswana, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Japan, England, Canada, Singapore, Namibia, Brazil, Lebanon and Australia.

In his remarks, McKinney said, "I believe we are in a time of identity crisis...It's important to know

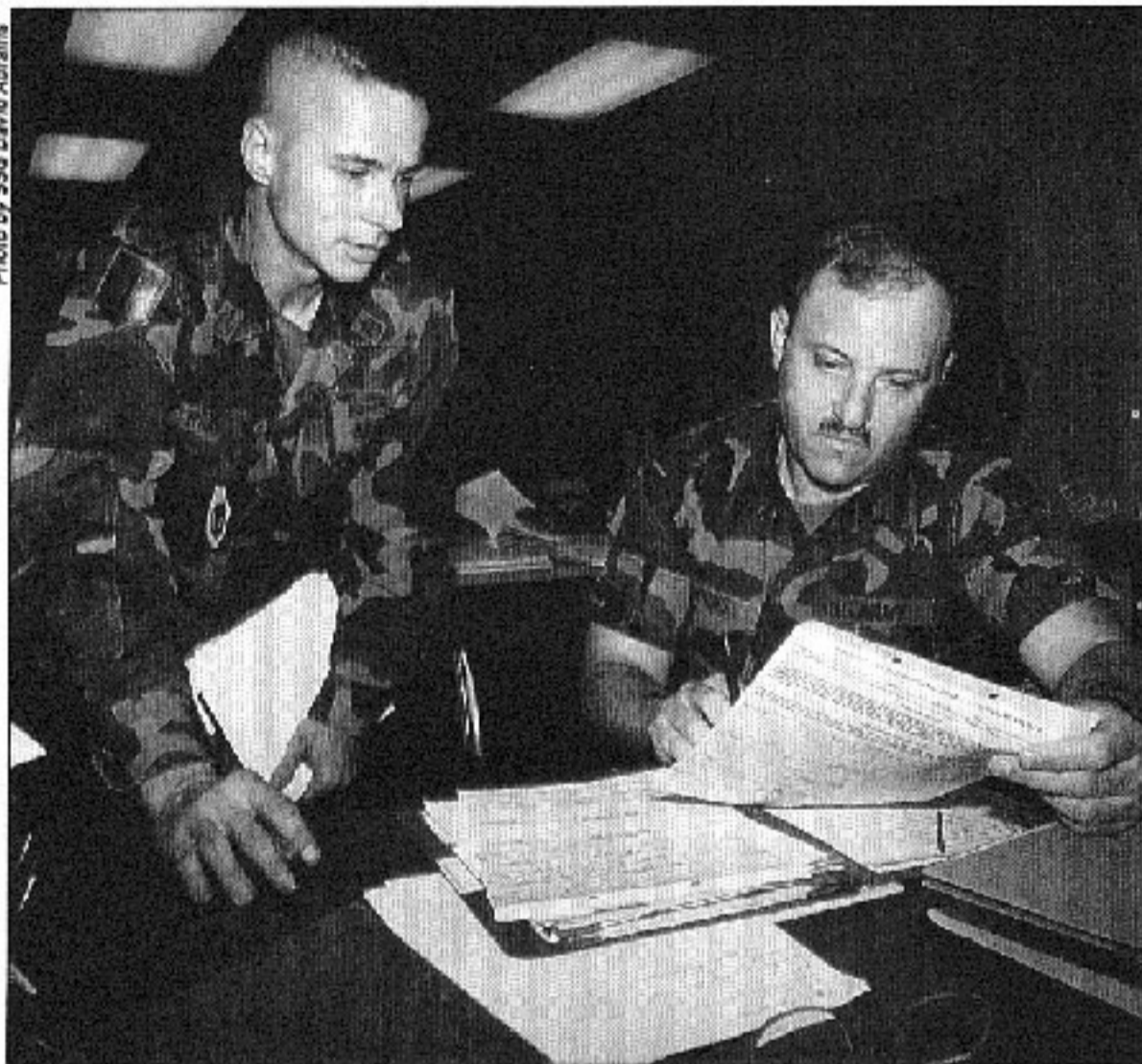
who we are and our responsibilities; before that, we must understand that our environment has changed and continues to change on a daily basis and maybe that's the reason for some of our loss of identity."

The Army's top enlisted soldier went on to urge the graduates to "think like your soldiers...I believe if we do that, then we are at the crossroad of having a better understanding of our operating environment and everyone's frame of reference. This will allow us to better guide our people to the successes of life."

Graduates of Class 46 were the first to attend the nine-month course. Previous classes graduated in six months.

The next class is scheduled to begin in August. Approximately 500 students are expected for Class 47. ■

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USASMA Accreditation Team...

Accredit Check

By SSG David Abrams

The dozens of Noncommissioned Officer academies scattered across the globe are designed to train and prepare soldiers to become top-notch leaders in today's Army. Though diverse in cadre, geography and resources, each NCO academy should adhere to Army-wide standards. Who, then, polices these academies? Who ensures the training standard is the same for the PLDC in Korea as it is for the one at Ft. Knox?

That sometimes thankless task falls to a small group of sergeants major from the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy's Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization who leave Ft. Bliss, TX, up to a dozen times each year to inspect the Army's Primary Leadership Development Courses and Basic and Advanced NCO Courses.

A visit from the DOES Accreditation Team is enough to make most academy

commandants and instructors start shaking in their combat boots, but SGM Dwight Humphrey says there is nothing for academies to worry about...as long as they're performing to standard.

"Contrary to popular belief, the accreditation process *is* a friendly affair," he says. "We don't go in with the mindset to tell them this is wrong or that is wrong. We sincerely want to help them get accredited and to do that we suggest better ways of doing things."

At the start of each Accreditation Team visit, the NCO academy is given a pre-briefing, partly to explain what the team will be examining and partly to calm some jittery nerves.

"We're here to ensure your academy is teaching in accordance with the program of instruction as established by the proponents, regulations and guidelines," Humphrey tells a group of NCOs from the Henry Caro NCO Academy at Ft. Benning, GA. "When we do these

SSG John Riley, Ft. Benning BNCOC Operations Sergeant, explains the school's developmental counseling records to SGM Steve Jenkins from USASMA's Accreditation Team.

evaluations, it's a working environment."

Within minutes, the Accreditation Team is at work in a small, fluorescent-lit classroom at the Ft. Benning academy—poring over student academic evaluation reports, Army Physical Fitness Test scores, training schedules, lesson plans and student counseling records from recent classes. Surrounded by stacks of accordion files, manilla folders and three-ring binders, SGM Frank Berta says, "We really try to protect the student. In other words, are AERs and academic drops being done properly? Is the academy developing leaders like it's supposed to be doing?"

The USASMA team accredits three types of academies: Forces Command, Training and Doctrine Command and Reserve Component. Each of the Army's NCO academies can expect a visit from the Accreditation Team about once every three years. After spending nearly a week at each installation, the team makes one of three recommendations: accreditation, non-accreditation or withhold accreditation. This last classification, Berta points out, is when "we think the academy can fix the problem in 60 days. If we get a letter from them in that time saying the problem's been taken care of, then we send them a certificate of accreditation."

A rating of non-accreditation is, of course, much more serious and could result in the academy closing its doors. If, after its initial visit, the Accreditation Team non-accredits an academy, that training center then has six months to repair whatever is wrong with its system before the USASMA team pays another visit. "If they fail that inspection, then they're taken off the Army Training Requirements and Resources System," Berta says. "However, I don't think that's ever happened."

The primary purpose of the Accreditation Team, he adds, is to ensure academies:

- teach students the right tasks to the right standards;
- use qualified SGLs;

- have all equipment, supplies and facilities required by regulation and POIs;
- provide an atmosphere conducive to learning.

On the whole, the level of instruction at the Army's NCO academies is on the upswing, Humphrey says. "Academies are, across the board, energetic, dedicated and believe in providing a high quality standard in training. You see it from the students on up to the commandant and his or her higher headquarters. You see it in the conduct of training, the facilities, the school environment and the small group leaders. Since coming to this job four years ago, I've seen continuous improvement."

Though diverse in cadre, geography and resources, each NCO academy adheres to Army-wide standards.

If team members *do* find shortcomings or discrepancies, they work with the local cadre to correct them on the spot.

"You can't be thin-skinned in this business," says CSM Willie Wells, commandant of the Henry Caro NCO Academy which sees more than 3,000 students pass through its doors each year. "If they tell me something is wrong, I have to drive on and fix it. In that way, I see the accreditation process as an assistance visit. They are constantly providing me with feedback and they'll always go back to the regs to show us where we're wrong. They're here to not only make my academy better but also help improve the Army as a whole. They make sure we're all on the same sheet of music by synchronizing all the academies throughout the Army."

Wells says he has only one suggestion for the Accreditation Team: pay more visits. "My recommendation — and I raised it at the Worldwide NCO Education System Conference last year — is that when a commandant takes over an academy *that's* when the team should come in. It would really help me, as a commandant, to get set straight on the right path from the beginning. As it is now, with accreditation visits spaced

three years apart, you might have a commandant come in for two years then leave without ever once having to go through this process."

In addition to sifting through reams of paperwork during the visits, the Accreditation Team also evaluates classes in progress and inspects field training exercise sites. "We have to make sure the FTX site is conducive to training, i.e. the geographical location, foliage, facilities, and so on," says SGM Curtiss Garner. "We also have to make sure there *is* a site. Sometimes, they'll tell us they've got a great FTX location but it turns out there's really nothing there at all."

If there are no PLDC, BNCOC or ANCOC classes in session, the team asks the cadre to either give an in-depth briefing on their method and content of instruction or conduct a mock, studentless training session so the team can evaluate the quality of teaching at the academy.

However, it's the paperwork that really points up any documented problems. "We don't have enough time to go down to the nuts and bolts during each visit," Berta says. "So, we look for trends."

One trend which, until recently, plagued nearly all NCO academies was developmental counseling.

"Apart from FM 22-100 identifying the nine leadership competencies, there's really nothing out there that specifically tells academies how to conduct developmental counseling," Humphrey says. "So, the Accreditation Team evaluators came up with a better and simpler method — a counseling sheet that

The level of instruction at the Army's NCO academies is on the upswing.

identifies those competencies and has a place for the SGLs to note their observations of how the student performs as the class goes along."

The USASMA team members are not the only visitors to Ft. Benning during "Accreditation Week." A group of senior NCOs from Ft. Polk's NCO Academy is also on hand to observe the observers.

"We've got our own accreditation coming up in six months and this is a way for us to see first-hand what we need to tighten up on and where we need to do some fine-tuning to our own program," says MSG Keith Smith, chief of training

"We're here to ensure your academy is teaching in accordance with the program of instruction as established by the proponents, regulations and guidelines."

at the Ft. Polk NCO Academy. "I'd recommend to anyone facing an accreditation to go visit another NCO academy ahead of time. It eliminates the need to burn the midnight oil, working day and night at the last minute to make sure everything's squared away.

"I don't look on an accreditation visit as a harassment," he adds. "This is more like quality control. We need to know if we're doing the right thing at our academy. If we're not, then we're going down."

This is not the first time Smith has had a close encounter with an inspection of this type. He went through a similar accreditation process while stationed at Ft. Leonardwood, MO, nine years ago. "We probably worried about it more than we should have because we passed with flying colors," he says, recalling that accreditation. "We knew we were doing the right thing, but there's always something in the back of your mind that wonders if there's something you missed."

Smith — and other NCO academy cadre — can rest assured: USASMA's Accreditation Team will leave no stones unturned to keep the Army's training up to standard. ■

Abrams is senior journalist for The NCO Journal.

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 Ft. Bliss, TX 79918-8002



Where would Combat Arms be without lowly support MOSes?

Again, the God Almighty Combat Arms speaks. Where exactly would SGT Thompson (*Letter to Editor, Spring 96*) be without the lowly support MOSes? I'll tell you—not paid, not fed and not equipped for the mission.

I realize not all combat arms soldiers maintain this superiority complex, but I've seen enough evidence to be incensed at this moronic attitude.

My husband works in a S-1 shop in an armor brigade with the general consensus being they're rear echelon wimps. No one notices that the shop lights are on at 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. until they personally have a problem. Then it's whining and complaining over something a platoon sergeant has neglected or even the soldier himself. *Then*, they need S-1 to fix everything.

At the same time, combat arms MOSes don't have the time for college. Neither does my husband. So when you only need 500 or 550 points for promotion, my husband's MOS stands above 700 constantly. But, I see you think that's fair.

As far as "setting the standard," my husband takes great pride in his job and is highly professional in both attitude and appearance.

So as far as joining the gang in combat arms, we've been there, done that and will continue to do so. Jump off that high horse and learn to respect people for the

job they do and don't demean someone just because they don't carry a combat arms MOS.

*Penny S. Forsythe
 Ft. Lewis, WA*

No matter your MOS or rank, we're all in the same Army

I have three comments in regard to two letters in your Spring 96 edition.

First, SFC LaHaine has a valid point, but I feel he may not reach many NCOs. Primarily, because most of the NCOs who've been voicing their concerns are sergeants and promotable specialists. He obviously has made it to the senior level, so naturally his opinion may not carry much weight.

Second, SGT Thompson is certainly proud of his CME. However, I do know personnel of various ranks, in the same CME, who don't share his promotion theory. It's simply not plausible to just switch MOSes because of the cutoff scores. MOSes are being merged frequently. (I'm in an MOS that was combined.)

Third, it shouldn't matter what your MOS or rank is. We're all in the same Army. As a result, that makes us all responsible for taking care of each other. NCOs just have a *greater* responsibility.

As an NCO, I live by two simple phrases.

My two basic responsibilities are: the accomplishment of my mission and the

welfare of my soldiers and set the example. By working hard on and off duty I got promoted in a tough MOS. For the specialists and sergeants trying to get promoted—don't give up, just work harder. Life will never be completely fair. What makes it easy is *knowing how to adapt and overcome.*

*Ssg Rosetta Parker (31F FTUS)
 Yauco, Puerto Rico*

Battle Staff MTT makes passing course easier

Last year I had the pleasure of attending the first Mobile Training Team (MTT) course given by the Battle Staff Course, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Ft. Bliss, TX.

I Corps CSM Roberts requested the Battle Staff Course (BSC) send instructors to help prepare us for attendance at the BSC.

The school sent MSG Alexander and MSG Diaz to Ft. Lewis to teach the two-week MTT course. We were taught only the testable subjects in the fast-paced course, with heavy emphasis on graphics.

We took the MTT course very seriously because we had read about the BSC in *The NCO Journal* and had heard horror stories about the failure rate being very high.

This year I attended the regular Battle Staff Course. I'm sure the MTT course made the difference for me because I don't think I could have passed without the practice. I believe that some, if not most, of the NCOs who fail this course could have passed if they could have had the practice I got in the MTT course and if graduates of the BSC had helped prepare others in their unit beforehand.

I hope all my fellow Battle Staff graduates will go back to their units and help their peers get ready for this course. The BSC should try to send out more Mobile Training Teams, as well. The key to passing the BSC is preparation, preparation, preparation.

*Ssg William G. Hansel
 IHIC, 5th Bn, 20th Inf, Ft. Lewis, WA*

AG Corps NCOs responsible for correct term usage

I understand the difficulties and long hours MSG Musgrove dealt with in a maneuver unit Bn S-1 (*"Combat PAC Supervisor," Spring 96*). I was a former assistant personnel sergeant in the 6th Inf Div (Light), personnel sergeant in the 325th Airborne Inf Reg, 82nd Airborne Div, Ft. Bragg, NC, and a graduate of the Battle Staff NCO Course.

I agree that **TC 12-16, PAC Noncommissioned Officer's Guide**, dated June 1991, does provide some useful information for a personnel sergeant. However, **AR 600-8-103, Battalion S-1**, dated September 1991, officially re-named the following terms:

- Personnel and Administration Center (PAC) to Battalion S-1
- PAC supervisor to personnel sergeant
- Personnel Staff Noncommissioned Officer (PSNCO) to assistant personnel sergeant

I still have NCOs and officers ask me what a "personnel sergeant" is. When I explain, they reply, "Oh, a PAC supervisor." As Adjutant General Corps NCOs, it is our responsibility to keep up with the newest terminology and ensure the battalion-level TDAs and TOEs are published with the correct terms.

SFC G. B. Patrick

Senior personnel supervisor, Office of the Chief of Staff, Army, the Pentagon, Washington, DC

The NCO Journal benefits Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion

I'm writing on behalf of the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion (BALTBAT) as a follow up to our recent telephone conversation.

Since these countries are just starting to rebuild, I personally feel that your magazine will help benefit the program. With all of the training teams that go through the Baltics, from many different countries, when I talk to some of them one of the recurring themes of a problem that is hard to tackle is their lack of the NCO concept and the amount of trust and responsibility we place in ours.

The *NCO Journal* would not only be available to the BALTBAT personnel to promote professionalism and practice reading English, but would also be available to the instructors from the other countries, themselves professional soldiers.

The possibilities for multinational jointness at the NCO level are immeasurable. The magazines will be distributed among the countries of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and I guarantee you the magazines will be dog-cared in no time.

*CDR Jeffrey S. Beeby, USN
U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation,
Denmark*

Quotation from GEN Reimer article applies to Army Reserves

Your Spring 96 issue (*CSA counts on NCOs to keep the spirit alive*) contains a quotation from Aubrey Newman's book (*"Follow Me: The Human Element of Leadership"*) titled "Remember Me." That piece really hits the Army Reserves.

The Reserves meet once a month and two weeks out of the year. The "chitchat" is about trying to put together what happened last drill, what's happening this month's drill and what's supposed to happen next drill.

The Reserves consist of civilians and Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) soldiers who maintain the unit during the month. The number of "full timers" who are assigned to that unit depends on the size of the unit.

The unit I'm assigned to has 45 Reserve positions, three AGR positions for maintenance and one civilian position. We also support another unit that adds 30 Reserve positions.

I'm a Reservist and a unit administrator for both Reserve units. It's the "full-timers" and dedicated commanders and first sergeants and Reservists who keep the units going. The Reserves work like a revolving door and it's due to poor sponsorship that makes the statement "Remember Me" so applicable to the Reserves.

As NCOs and leaders we should know our soldiers and make it a point to

talk to each one of them during the drill weekend. So many times the best soldiers leave the Reserves because they aren't challenged. They go untrained in their MOS, don't get promoted, sit around waiting for someone to make a decision. We NCOs must ensure that our soldiers aren't relating to the person in "Remember Me."

Remember them before it's too late. I've added your story to my sponsorship letter, my newsletter and my bulletin board. Maybe the right NCOs will read it.

*SSG Cathi Cronin
659th Det I, Yakima, WA*

Why aren't sergeants (E-5s) being taken for drill sergeants?

I have six years in service and am in excellent physical and mental condition. At this point in my career I'm trying all kinds of things to set me ahead of my peers and I feel I've gone as lateral as I can at the unit level.

I read in your Spring 96 edition about AC shortages in the training arena and thought this would finally be my shot at becoming a drill sergeant. I was told by a representative from the Drill Sergeant Branch that they were "no longer taking E-5s."

I feel this isn't right and that shortages should be filled by any NCO E-5 and above.

In recent times I've known of two E-5 females who were selected and got pregnant because they didn't want to go. Surely, if those were open to any qualified sergeant that wouldn't have happened.

As an E-5, I'm a leader too and should be given every opportunity to enhance my career as well.

*SGT Keith D. Baskerville
Ft. Clayton, Panama*

Sergeant proposes "truly fair" promotion system

Our promotion system is laced with injustice and lack of equal opportunity because of the old buddy-buddy system.

If you don't have "face time," your opportunity for further promotion is slim.

"You have to take the hard jobs," they say. I've seen more than enough fine NCOs who've done just that only to be passed over for promotion again and again. They took the hard jobs, they have clean records and high awards. Yet, they still wait year after year for someone on the board to recognize their potential.

If you really want a truly fair and equal opportunity promotion system for senior NCOs, here it is:

☞ All of the records the board reviews must be void of name, race, gender, SSN, religious preference, photo and the dates the soldier was stationed at each unit.

☞ What board members will have to review after all this is omitted are the hard-core facts of performance. Those whose job performance stands out above the others should be promoted before their peers.

☞ Promotions shouldn't be determined by board members who base their decision on whether they like the individual or not—whether the soldier is black, white, yellow or brown; whether they're male or female in some MOSes; whether or not they belong to special clubs.

Regardless of what the skeptics say, this proposed system would work. It would be fair and equal for all soldiers. To all those soldiers who believe and know that the promotion system needs improvement—continue to speak out.

SFC Delbert Roger III
Ft. Knox, KY

Reserve unit assignment the "greatest challenge...faced"

I'm an Active-duty soldier assigned to a Reserve unit and it's by far the greatest challenge I've ever faced in my 15 years of service, which includes time as a drill sergeant, instructor, platoon sergeant and first sergeant.

I'm in a Reserve unit in Chattanooga, TN. I've been told I shouldn't come in here trying to make changes, that Reserve units do things differently. Yet, I've seen so many violations of FM 20-21

and AR600-9 that it's made me wonder why I was sent here. Not that a lot of good things aren't happening within the Reserve Command. I will remain loyal to my unit just as I was to my Active unit.

However, there is little or no support and my rater, senior rater and reviewer are all part of this system. I must drive 100 miles to the nearest military installation for any service. I made three trips just to get a DA photo taken and I got no travel or any other allowance. There's no gym, post exchange or commissary.

I'm not complaining — merely making things known to my Army family. I may not win the war, but there are little battles I will attempt to win. And, I will never lower my standards for the sake of anyone, no matter the cost.

SFC Jackie A. Horton
Training/Operation NCOIC,
Chattanooga, TN

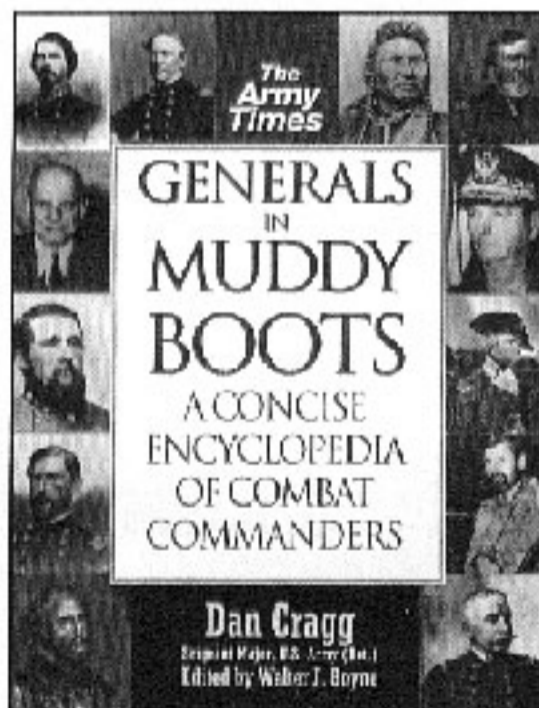
Both PT and marksmanship should count toward promotion

The comments (*Spring 96 Letters to the Editor*) of SGT Davis (what shooting Expert on the rifle range had to do with an E-7 leading troops) and SGT Thompson's remarks (that quality NCOs exceed standards, including PT), prompted me to write. They said for anything to mean a damn, it has to count for promotion.

Our battalion this year devoted three drills to marksmanship qualification instead of the usual one. Since the direct fire of a rifle gets to its target a hundred times faster than the indirect fire of the artillery, the further that rifle fire can reach, the better; and for any emphasis on it to count...the E-7 shooting Expert is also going to have to count.

SGT Roger K. Fike
CAARNG, San Miguel, CA

Book Reviews



Author Dan Cragg is a retired sergeant major who served 22 years in the U.S. Army, 5-1/2 years in Vietnam.

A book is first a social act, a product for the public, only secondly is it a personal statement. Generally, you will search in vain for the perspective of the senior enlisted man himself on the role and acts of the architects of strategy;

seldom do the *doers* become the *appraisers*.

The author examines commanders who fought alongside their troops, from farthest antiquity through the conflict in Vietnam. The 300-plus selected leaders are culled from both famous and lesser-known figures. All demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities, cared for the lives in their charge, displayed bravery under fire, had good luck, were plain-spoken and knew something about how to win a fight.

This 196-page reference will be a boon to the busy student of military history. Cragg's sensitivity to a commander's concern for his troops—making sure they aren't committed to battle without having obtained every possible advantage for them—permeates the book and will appeal to both the young and members of the "brown shoe" generation.

This book, reviewed by J. Michael Brower, an analyst with the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army, sells for \$29.95 and was published this year by The Army Times Publishing Company, New York.