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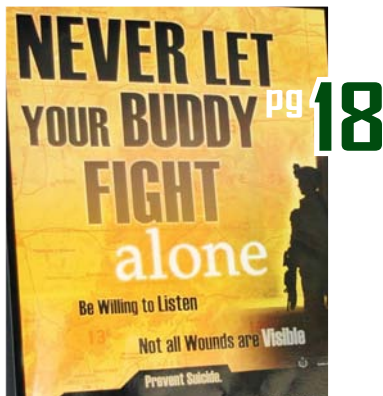
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From the SMA

# Safe Summer: A Team Effort

With summer already in the air and fall on its heels, many of our Soldiers, Civilians and Family members will seek out ways to have fun. The time for outdoor activities, much-deserved vacations and weekend road trips will be the norm for many of our Soldiers and their families.

On 4 May, the U. S. Army Combat Readiness Command, in conjunction with the Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard, launched the 2009 Safe Summer campaign. The USACRC stands ready to support you each and every day in our collective mission to safeguard our most precious resource, our Soldiers.

The Army's campaign, driven by a theme of "No One Stands Alone," is built in a new format to allow leaders and Soldiers at all levels the opportunity to tailor their summer safety campaigns to meet the needs of their specific audiences. This year's theme holds great value in sustaining the force and maintaining an Army Strong, on or off duty.

Summer presents numerous challenges for keeping members in our charge safe. Everyone wants to enjoy the outdoors and maximize their pleasure with friends and family. Make sure your Soldiers, family members and civilians are aware of the hazards and risks involved when participating in summer fun. As leaders and safety professionals, we must remain watchful of the increased hazards associated with off-duty outdoor activities and remain engaged throughout this high-risk summer season.

Daily involvement of leaders in the lives of their Soldiers makes a difference. Safety inspections performed regularly, coaching mentoring Soldiers about their on and off-duty plans are leader responsibilities. For all of our Soldiers, I am asking you to put a renewed emphasis on motorcycle, off road, water and privately owned vehicle safety.

Over the last several years, we have lost more than twice as many Soldiers in off-duty accidents than in on-duty accidents. From FY04 through FY08, the Army lost an average of 148 Soldiers each year due to off-duty accidents. That's the equivalent of losing one company from our battalion formation. If we don't do something different, the Army will lose another company of Soldiers this fiscal year. We, as an Army team, can change this through Soldier, family and leader engagement and by applying the composite risk management process to our on and off-duty activities.

The active Army estimates it has about 75,000 motorcycle riders, plus another 20,000 or so between the National Guard and Army Reserve. Last fiscal year (FY08), 55 Soldiers died in motorcycle crashes; a 34 percent jump from the previous year.

Speed and loss of control have been identified as contributing

factors in the majority of motorcycle crashes. Something else I want to highlight is that allowing someone who is not trained or licensed to operate your motorcycle can have deadly consequences. Don't be the Soldier who allows that to happen.

Leaders can prevent most motorcycle accidents by matching rider experience to the correct motorcycle, wearing the proper protective equipment (PPE) on or off post, and getting the training and education of an experienced rider. Army regulation also requires a brightly colored upper garment during the day and a reflective upper garment during the night. You must wear a long sleeve shirt or jacket, long trousers, full fingered gloves and leather boots or over the ankle shoes. Your helmet must meet the Department of Transportation safety standards.

The Combat Readiness Center has several products available for leaders to use to help create their command climate. Use Army tools, such as the Individual Risk Assessments, Got Risk Flyers, TRiPS Assessment, the USACRC Task Force Newsletter and the Army Readiness Assessments Program, that are specifically developed to help you know your Soldiers, your peers, your formation's safety climate and even your own high-risk tendencies. Investing and understanding these targeted areas can help your leaders and work to prevent the next accident in your organization.

Engaged leaders, starting with first line supervisors, corporals and sergeants, and extending up through the NCO Support Channel and Chain of Command, create the command climate or atmosphere where Risk Management and Safety are a part of our daily activities, both on and off duty and in every mission we execute.

As leaders, we owe it to ourselves and our Soldiers to enforce standards and lead by our example. You have a great responsibility of taking care of Soldiers and growing our leaders for the future. Units with leaders at all levels of command, who enforce standards in all areas from, uniform policies and standards, to safety policies and standards, and everything in between, develop discipline in their junior leaders. Disciplined units are inherently safe units.

Thanks for all that you do to keep Soldiers safe and to keep our Army Strong as we remain the Strength of the Nation. Army Safe is Army Strong! Hooah!



*Kenneth O. Preston*

# Are we promoting them too young?

By **Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola**  
III Corps and Fort Hood

Over the past three months I've attended countless professional development seminars, symposiums, socials and a handful of conferences at which someone invariably states that we're promoting our young enlisted to the rank of Sergeant entirely too early in their career. So my question is: are we really?

What many who make the aforementioned statement lack is perspective born of sufficient tenure in this organization (The Army) to reflect back on the state of our institution in the mid 1970's. Having enlisted in 1976 and having been promoted to the rank of Sergeant nearly two years to the day I enlisted, many an old Soldier in my day also stated that we were promoting our young enlisted at an all too early age in their career. Well, 30 years after pinning the rank of Sergeant on my collar most would say that I'm an acceptable example of a Noncommissioned Officer.

Then, as now, the Army was confronted with many of the same realities we wrestle with each day; an Army that was/is growing in numbers and in organizational structure and one where an increasing number of young Americans are joining our military. Add to this reality the demands on our force; two combatant theaters of operations, a litany of other world-wide obligations, a force that has endured multiple deployments, and one can see why we must commit ourselves to recognizing those with the potential to lead and promote to positions of increased responsibility at an earlier (by some standards) age.

Now, the similarities previously mentioned aside there is one glaring difference, as it relates to the point at which I was promoted to Sergeant and those who have the responsibilities of leadership thrust upon them today; 13 years of relative peace.

I have vivid memories of "being told" when I would attend my first NCOES course PNCOC (WLC). I also remember being foolish enough to tell my Platoon Sergeant "I was too busy" to go to school. I also remember the First Sergeant dragging me out from under my jeep (yup Jeep; M151A2 to be exact), poking me in the chest and stating "what part of you're going to school do you not understand". That was the last time I told a noncommissioned officer I wasn't going to do something. I can recall countless occasions where I was acting on my preconceived notion of what I thought leadership was only to be dragged to the side by a more sage NCO (Sergeant and above) and told (in no uncertain terms) that I was as screwed up as a football bat. Yup, over the 13 years of relative peace that followed my promotion to sergeant I was quite literally "taken to school."

So all the above having been said why are there some (many in all honesty) that say we're promoting at all too early an age? We're an Army at war. We're an Army with units being deployed

and redeployed at a rate previously unheralded in our history. We're an Army that is not, in all honesty, as introspective (at the most junior levels) as it once was, as it once had an opportunity to be. Over the thirteen years following my promotion, the Army refined the Noncommissioned Officer Education System and those who comprised our mid grade and senior enlisted ranks were more consumed by/focused on that which defined the guts of our formations; the junior enlisted and development of the same. Peace is a wonderful thing, but it's purchased on the sacrifice(s) of those who preceded us. Those who will follow us someday will reap the reward of our sacrifice(s). In the meantime we have a professional obligation and a moral imperative to do all we can, officer and NCO alike, to coach, mentor, counsel; inspire and encourage, give freely of our time (on and off duty) to those who aspire to take the helm of this great institution.

I've been witness to much in my more than three decades of, military service. What I revel in today is the

potential and capacity resident in our young troopers. Are all deserving of or capable of wearing the chevrons of a Sergeant, of leading America's youth in battle; short answer is no. Are the vast majority of those who aspire to move up the enlisted leadership ladder equal to the task at hand? Short answer is YES! What they need is someone to hold the darn ladder for them. Our youth are every bit the overachievers that we were/ought still be. They aspire to live up to the proud legacy of our Army and the expectations of the leaders who inspire them. What they need is us (NCO and officer alike) to selflessly and consistently guide them, to encourage them. They don't need to be led by the hand, they want to be challenged, they want to be held to a superlative standard, they want to be taught how to do it right and be held to doing it right the first time. By the way, they're tired of having their time wasted by needlessly revisiting an issue because we failed to hold them properly accountable or provide them the specific guidance they required the first time.

Are there exceptions to what I've just mentioned? Of course, but they are just that; the exception!!

Got a problem with the relative young age of our newest NCOs; got a problem with the limited interpersonal skills, problem solving abilities and lack of institutional values, character traits or moral courage they possess/exhibit?

Well then either deny their promotion (as defined in current Army policy) or stop complaining about them and do something about it. Give them the most precious gift you possess; your time and give it to them until it hurts. Those who raised us did so. It's our turn to set our youngest leaders on the course that will eventually posture them to be The Army's next senior leaders.

Too young? Nah; it just means we have more of "their time" to make them even better than we are.



Courtesy Photo

Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola

# NCOs inducted into Hall of Fame

By Tisha Johnson  
Fort Leavenworth Public Affairs

The Fort Leavenworth Hall of Fame inducted two noncommissioned officers during a ceremony at the Lewis and Clark Center May 19.

Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Smith and Sgt. Maj. William McBryar join the only other NCO in the 95-member Hall of Fame, 1st Sgt. Percival Lowe. Lowe served at Fort Leavenworth from 1849 to 1859.

"Everything that I am today is the result of great noncommissioned officers, like Sergeant Major McBryar and Command Sergeant Major Smith, who took the time to train and mentor me over the years," said Combined Arms Center Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Johndrow.

McBryar's perseverance and unrelenting resolve to succeed are still inspiring today. McBryar's career was distinguished, but frustrating, Johndrow said.

"He entered our Army a century before anyone recognized the term equal opportunity," Johndrow said. "He had to overcome incredible adversity in equality as he struggled to serve his country and become a commissioned officer."

McBryar was an African American who first served in the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in Arizona. He was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1890 for his part in the capture of a group of Apaches who had retreated to a cave after a five-day, 200-mile pursuit. Under fire, McBryar maneuvered to a position where he could ricochet his bullets into the cave, forcing surrender. His was the first Medal of Honor awarded to a 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Soldier.

During McBryar's military career spanning almost 20 years, he would enlist, rise in rank and then be mustered out or leave his unit only to join another again as a private.

McBryar eventually earned a commission as a first lieutenant in the 8th Volunteer Infantry only to have his unit muster out. He earned a commission again in the 49<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Infantry and commanded a company, but was discharged when his unit again mustered out. McBryar eventually re-enlisted in the 9th Cavalry as a private and served at Fort Leavenworth as a corporal from 1905 to 1906.

Medically discharged at the age of 44, McBryar continued to offer his services to the military, but was denied because of his age. McBryar died in 1941 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

"The day an African American puts on the same uniform as everybody else, they know that they have joined the most democratic institution in our nation, where they will rise or fall based on their own merit," Johndrow said. "All of this was made possible by the persistence and sacrifice of Soldiers like



Photo by Rebecca Steed, Fort Leavenworth Public Affairs.

From left, Command Sgt. Maj. (ret) Larry Smith and Combined Arms Center Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Johndrow unveil the hall of fame shadowbox of Smith as CAC Commander Lt. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV looks on during the Fort Leavenworth Hall of Fame ceremony today in the Lewis and Clark Center.

Sergeant Major McBryar."

In 1982, Johndrow said, then 1st Sgt. Larry Smith bumped into a tall lanky kid from Montana and told him he wasn't going to make it if he didn't shape up.

"Well today that lanky kid - well not so lanky anymore - gets to sit up here for a few minutes and tell you how my tough first sergeant was able to mentor and shape me," Johndrow said. "You got me going down the right road, you channeled my energy and for that I'm very grateful."

Smith joined the Army in June 1960 and served in every enlisted leadership position in his 34 years in the Army. He served overseas a total of 25 years and served as a first sergeant eight times for a total of 11 years. Smith was a command sergeant major at battalion, brigade, division and community levels. Many of Smith's 25 years overseas were spent in Germany during the Cold War.

"I was in Germany when the wall went up in 1961 and I was there when it came down in 1989," Smith said.

Smith also served in Vietnam with F Troop, 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, 11<sup>th</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment. Johndrow said Smith was in an area in Vietnam close to Cambodia known

as the Iron Triangle.

From 1991 to 1994 Smith served at Fort Leavenworth as the CAC command sergeant major. Smith said it was the most rewarding assignment of his career.

Smith has continued to serve the Army in leadership positions with the Association of the United States Army, as a member of the Fort Leavenworth Retiree Council, and on the Chief of Staff of the Army's Retiree Council.

"I must say, this induction is not about me," Smith said. "It is about noncommissioned officers."

Smith said NCOs have stepped forward in each period of our history to set the standard. Smith mentioned a few memorable NCOs in the history of the Army like McBryer, Sgt. Alvin York, Sgt. Audie Murphy, Staff Sgt. Hiroshi Miyanura, Sgt. Maj. Basil Plumley, Sgt. Maj. of the Army William Bainbridge and Sgt. 1st Class Paul Smith, who was the first Medal of Honor recipient in Iraq.

Smith said he wanted to offer a challenge to the NCO corps: "To make each year, the Year of the NCO," Smith said.

The Fort Leavenworth Hall of Fame was created in 1969 and is co-sponsored by the Memorial Hall Association, the Henry Leavenworth Chapter of the Association of the United States Army and the command of Fort Leavenworth. The Hall of Fame honors outstanding leaders who, after being stationed at Fort Leavenworth, significantly contributed to the history, heritage and traditions of the Army.

# TRICARE beneficiaries satisfied with care

The latest survey of TRICARE's beneficiaries found more than 60 percent of TRICARE Prime enrollees in the United States rated their health plan at an eight or above on a scale of zero to 10, very similar to civilian plans when adjusted for differences in age and health status.

Every quarter a representative sample of TRICARE beneficiaries are asked about their care in the previous 12 months. These ratings are compared with averages taken from the national Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) benchmarking database. This database contains results from surveys given to users of most accredited civilian health plans.

The Department of Defense (DoD) survey was developed by TRICARE Management Activity and is designed to provide a comprehensive look at beneficiary opinions



about their DoD health care benefits. The survey includes questions from CAHPS, which was designed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, to help consumers choose among health plans.

Data collected on customer service and claims processing found TRICARE's ratings climbed from 2006 to 2008 with 63 percent of responding beneficiaries giving TRICARE an eight or above on customer service. More than 88 percent respondents

rated TRICARE an eight or above on the timeliness and correctness of claims processing. Close to 70 percent of enrollees also ranked their personal provider experience and their specialist experience above an eight as well.

The survey also compared TRICARE Prime enrollees' rates for diagnostic screening tests and smoking cessation with goals from Healthy People 2010, an initiative to improve American's health by preventing illness. The results showed TRICARE's preventive care program surpassed the Healthy People 2010 mammography and Pap smear goals for women aged 18 or older, and is nearing the percentage goal for hypertension screenings.

Details of the survey are available at <http://www.tricare.mil/survey/hcsurvey/consumer-watch.cfm>.

## CRC announces Peer to Peer contest winners

A video highlighting the important difference between good and bad safety decisions recently earned a team of Soldiers from Fort Bragg, N.C., top honors in the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center's first Peer to Peer video competition.

Offering a candid look at issues including domestic violence, drug abuse and weapon safety, the winning video submitted by Spc. Marsha Millikin from 1st Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, used humor and honest dialog to encourage Soldiers to always make good decisions.

The Army Safety Center launched the Peer to Peer video competition in September to "put safety in the hands of Soldiers," according to Dr. Patricia LeDuc, USACR/Safety Center Human Factors Task Force director and Peer to Peer competition facilitator.

"With the launch of the Peer to Peer Video Competition, the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center hoped to harness the power of peer influence to help prevent accidents and save lives," she said. "The competition tagline, 'Make a movie - save a life,' challenged Soldiers to personalize safety messaging by creating short videos promoting off-duty safety awareness."

During the submission period, which

ended March 31, Soldiers from around the globe submitted 27 videos that covered topics ranging from cold weather safety to drinking and driving and safe sex. A video focusing on electrical fire prevention earned Sgt. Shawn Patton from 542nd Maintenance Company, Fort Lewis, Wa., second place honors. Third place was claimed by Staff Sgt. Jeremy Caine and Sgt. Christopher Black, both from the U.S. Army Health Clinic Hohenfels, Germany, for their video "Complacency."

"Most Soldiers have a favorite 'there I was' story and the video medium allowed them to share the benefit of their experience with an Army-wide audience," LeDuc said. "This competition capitalized on the power of peer influence, and extended its reach exponentially through the Web via various social media outlets like YouTube or Facebook."

Patton, who is currently deployed to Iraq, said electrical hazards in theater inspired him to submit his video about electrical safety in hopes of preventing future needless accidents.

"It's just a waste for anyone to get hurt over things that can be prevented," he said.

Patton said his goal while making the video was to not only pass important safety

information to his fellow troops but also to make safety fun and interesting.

"We get class after class on the same things," he said. "When you spice up your training (with an interesting and amusing video), people pay attention."

Caine said the Peer to Peer competition was a great opportunity to bring his squad together to spread an important safety message.

"We hope that (our video will help) Soldiers and leaders realize that, though it may be easy at times to take short cuts and be complacent, doing so will result in consequences that could put Soldiers at risk," he said.

All 27 videos submitted during the Peer to Peer competition can be viewed and downloaded at <https://safety.army.mil/videocompetition>. The videos are also available on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/user/USArmySafety](http://www.youtube.com/user/USArmySafety).

The USACR/Safety Center is currently working with representatives from the Family and MWR Command's

Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers organization to make the next Peer to Peer video competition bigger and better than the first. Information about the next round of the Peer to Peer competition will be released as it becomes available.

# DoD announces transferability options for “Post 9/11 GI Bill”

The Defense Department announced recently its policy for transferring educational benefits to the spouses and children of service members under the “Post 9/11 GI Bill,” which takes effect Aug. 1, 2009.

“This is as it should be in a volunteer force where families also serve,” said Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy Bill Carr. “Transferability of GI Bill benefits is the most requested initiative we receive from our service members, and we believe it will assist us in retaining highly qualified military personnel.”

Career service members on active duty or in the selected reserve on Aug. 1, 2009, and who are eligible for the “Post 9/11 GI Bill,” may be entitled to transfer all or a portion of their education entitlement to one or more family members. To be eligible, service members must have served in the Armed Forces for at least six years, and agree to serve four additional years, from the date of election to transfer.

Service members with at least 10 years of service, who by DoD or service policy are prevented from committing to four additional years, may transfer their benefits provided they commit for the maximum amount of time allowed by such policy or statute.

Additionally, to maintain proper force structure and promotion opportunities, temporary rules have been developed for service members eligible to retire between Aug. 1, 2009 and Aug. 1, 2012. Depending on their retirement eligibility date, these service members will commit to one to three additional years, from the date of election to transfer.

The services will provide further implementation guidance. Beginning June 29, 2009, eligible service members may make transfer designations by visiting this Web site: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/TEB/>.

Service members may be eligible for the “Post 9/11 GI Bill” if they served at least 90 aggregate days on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001, and were honorably discharged. Based on the

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Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents

Breaking News

The Department of Veterans Affairs is now accepting and processing applications for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. You should complete and submit the application form available online and will receive a letter explaining VA's decision regarding your eligibility for the program.

The application form requires that individuals currently eligible for benefits under the Montgomery GI BILL-Active Duty (MGIB-AD), Montgomery GI BILL-Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) or the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) make an irrevocable election from their existing program to the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

**For individuals eligible for MGIB-AD**  
Normally, your months of entitlement under the Post-9/11 GI Bill will be equal to the number of months of entitlement you have remaining under the MGIB-AD. However, if you use all of your MGIB-AD benefits, then you may be entitled to a maximum of 12 additional months of benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

**For individuals eligible for MGIB-SR and/or REAP**  
Normally, individuals who are eligible for more than one benefit may use a maximum combined total of 48 months of benefits.

*For example: If you have used 20 months of benefits under REAP, you may be eligible for 28 months of benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.*

**Payments for Post-9/11 GI Bill will not be processed until August 1, 2009.**  
Click [here](#) to access the application form which includes instructions for submitting completed applications.

<http://www.gibill.va.gov>

length of active duty service, members are entitled to a percentage of the cost of tuition and fees, not to exceed the most expensive in-state undergraduate tuition at a public institution of higher learning. Members not on active duty may also receive a monthly living stipend equal to the basic allowance for housing payable to a military E-5 with dependents, and to an annual \$1,000 stipend for books and supplies.

The Department of Veterans Affairs administers the “Post 9/11 GI Bill,” and determines eligibility for education benefits. Further information can be found at <http://www.gibill.va.gov>.

## Year of the NCO Suggested Reading

**On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society (Paperback)**, by Dave Grossman, Back Bay Books; 1 edition (Nov. 1, 1996)

**Common Sense Training: A Working Philosophy for Leaders (Paperback)**, by Arthur Collins, Presidio Press (Nov. 3, 1998)

**The Three Meter Zone: Common Sense Leadership for NCOs (Paperback)**, by J.D. Pendry, Presidio Press (Jan. 9, 2001)

**Memoirs of a Command Sergeant Major and Other Short Stories (Paperback)**, by Mary Ann Laser, Authorhouse (November 2003)

**Sgt. York: His Life, Legend & Legacy : The Remarkable Untold Story of Sergeant Alvin C. York (Hardcover)**, by John Perry, B&H Publishing Group (September 1997)

**Top, an Army First Sergeant's Story (Paperback)**, by James R. Lee, Red Lead Press; 1 edition (Nov. 4, 2005)



# Web standards order opens some social networking sites in CONUS

By C. Todd Lopez  
Army News Service

Soldiers at some Army installations can now view their Facebook pages on Army networks.

A recent operations order from both the 93<sup>rd</sup> Signal Brigade out of Fort Eustis, Va. and the 106<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade, out of Fort Sam Houston, Texas, instructed Directors of Information Management to modify Web filtering software to allow access to several social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and Vimeo. Additionally, DOIMs were instructed to allow access to Web-based email sites.

The 93<sup>rd</sup> Signal Brigade and sister brigade, the 106<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade, are subordinate to the 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Command, Fort Gordon, Ga. The 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Command stood up in August 2008 to assure network access to Army forces inside the continental United States. The 7<sup>th</sup>'s two subordinate brigades divide responsibility for that mission into two areas of responsibility: the 93<sup>rd</sup> manages the eastern portion of the United States, while the 106<sup>th</sup> manages the western portion.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Command, a new command, currently has operational control over only those network assets on Installation Management Command managed installations and facilities. The May operational order affects only installations in the continental United States, and only those managed by IMCOM.

Network responsibility for installations managed by other commands and activities such as Army Materiel Command and Army Medical Command will come at a later date, said Stephen Bullock, strategic communications officer for the 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Command.

"The Army is in the process of building an enterprise network, part of that is the IMCOM DOIMs," he said. "Ultimately,

all DOIMs will be part of the Global Network Enterprise Construct."

Prior to the issuance of the command, policies varied about which Web sites were accessible on Army networks. Col. Ed

Morris, chief of staff of 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Command, said the operations order standardizes web access across the command's AOR.

"I don't see this as real earth shaking," Morris said. "What you are seeing is the manifestation of 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Command applying a consistent set of standards."

The policies in place that restrict access to some Web sites serve to ensure network security, information security and uninterrupted network access to those using network services for operational needs.

"Army Regulation 25-1 specifies that government computing systems are to be used to conduct official business and for other authorized purposes," Bullock said. "This helps avoid compromises or disruptions to service."

Joint Task Force-Global Network Operations, under U.S. Strategic Command, is the ultimate authority for which Web sites must be blocked on military networks. In the operations order released by the 93<sup>rd</sup> and 106<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigades, 11 Web sites were listed as needing to be blocked. That direction came from JTF-GNO, said Col. Jim Garrison, 93<sup>rd</sup> Signal Brigade commander.

"Those sites are blocked by JTF-GNO – a higher level of network management – the Brigade order is a reinforcement of a previously published JTF-GNO directive, that's why access to those 11 sites is denied," Garrison said.

"Those sites are blocked by JTF-GNO – a higher level of network management – the Brigade order is a reinforcement of a previously published JTF-GNO directive, that's why access to those 11 sites is denied," Garrison said.

The commander said the unblocking of some social networking sites was in keeping with direction from Army senior leaders to have Soldiers tell the Army story.



Photo credit C. Todd Lopez

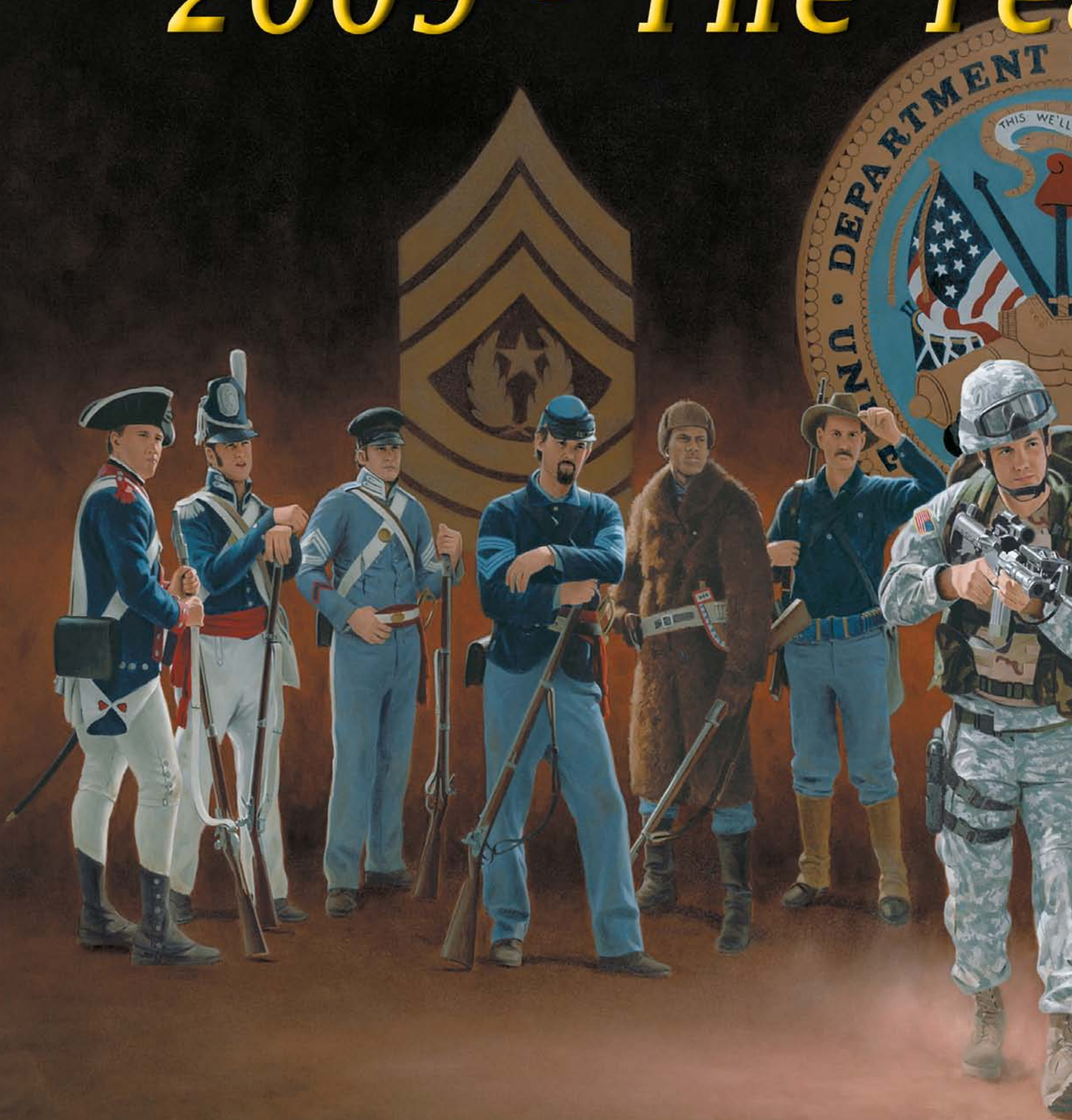
Due to a new operations order from 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Command, Soldiers inside the continental United States at Installation Management Command managed installations will be able to access social media Web sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and Vimeo.



## Year of the NCO Stories

Got a great NCO Story, we want to see it and help you spread the word. Need a topic, or an idea to get you started? Visit the Year of the NCO Web site at <http://www4.army.mil/yearofthenco/home.php> and click on the "initiatives" tab. There you will find a host of information about your year. Send your story to: NCO Journal Magazine, USASMA, 11291 SGT E Churchill St., Fort Bliss, TX 79918-8002 or e-mail them to [ATSS-SJ-NCOJOURNAL@us.army.mil](mailto:ATSS-SJ-NCOJOURNAL@us.army.mil). If submitting photographs, please identify all individuals in the picture. We reserve the right to edit your story based on length, content and grammar.

# 2009 - The Year



*Echoes Thru Time*  
By Larry Selman

# Year of the NCO

- The History of the  
Sergeant Major  
- A Command Sergeant  
Major's Thoughts  
- Suicide - NCO Leadership  
- The adaptive leader  
- NCO Stories



L. SELMAN

# The history of the

By Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Daniel K. Elder

Originally printed Jan. 2, 1998

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The history of the sergeant major extends back to the earliest days of the Army of the United States, but the role that we currently associate with the sergeant major of today is relatively young. Only through continued refinement of the position by forward-thinking leaders, commanders, and noncommissioned officers has the rank of sergeant major been elevated to its prestigious position. Rudyard Kipling described the Army noncommissioned man as the backbone of the Army, and since the origins of the United States Army, the sergeant major has been recognized at the head of noncommissioned officers. The long history of the sergeant major can be traced back to the fifteenth century. Some may argue that the early French and English sergeant major was the predecessor to the present-day Chief of Staff, but the duties were very similar to the sergeant major of today, specifically, supervision of the regiment's noncommissioned officers.

In 1591, Giles Clayton wrote, "A Sargeant Major ... ought to be a man of great courage, for that his office is always to bee in the face of the enemy."<sup>1</sup> Robert Barret, a professional soldier in several armies, made mention of the sergeant major in 1598. He illustrated that the sergeant major delivered the password to the sergeants of the regiment, and that the sergeant "ought to carrie great respect unto the sergeant major."<sup>2</sup> In spelling out the duties of the sergeant major, sixteenth and seventeenth century writers suggested that he was an assistant to the commander, and saw to all the details having to do with the day-to-day administration of an Army, mirroring the duties of a modern day sergeant major.<sup>3</sup>

The earliest mention of the sergeant major rank in the fledgling United States Army was soon after assuming command of the Continental Army in 1775, General George Washington and his staff standardized the table of organization for the infantry regiment, patterning it after the British Army. They included the position of sergeant major to each regiment or battalion headquarters, along with a noncommissioned officer element.<sup>4</sup>

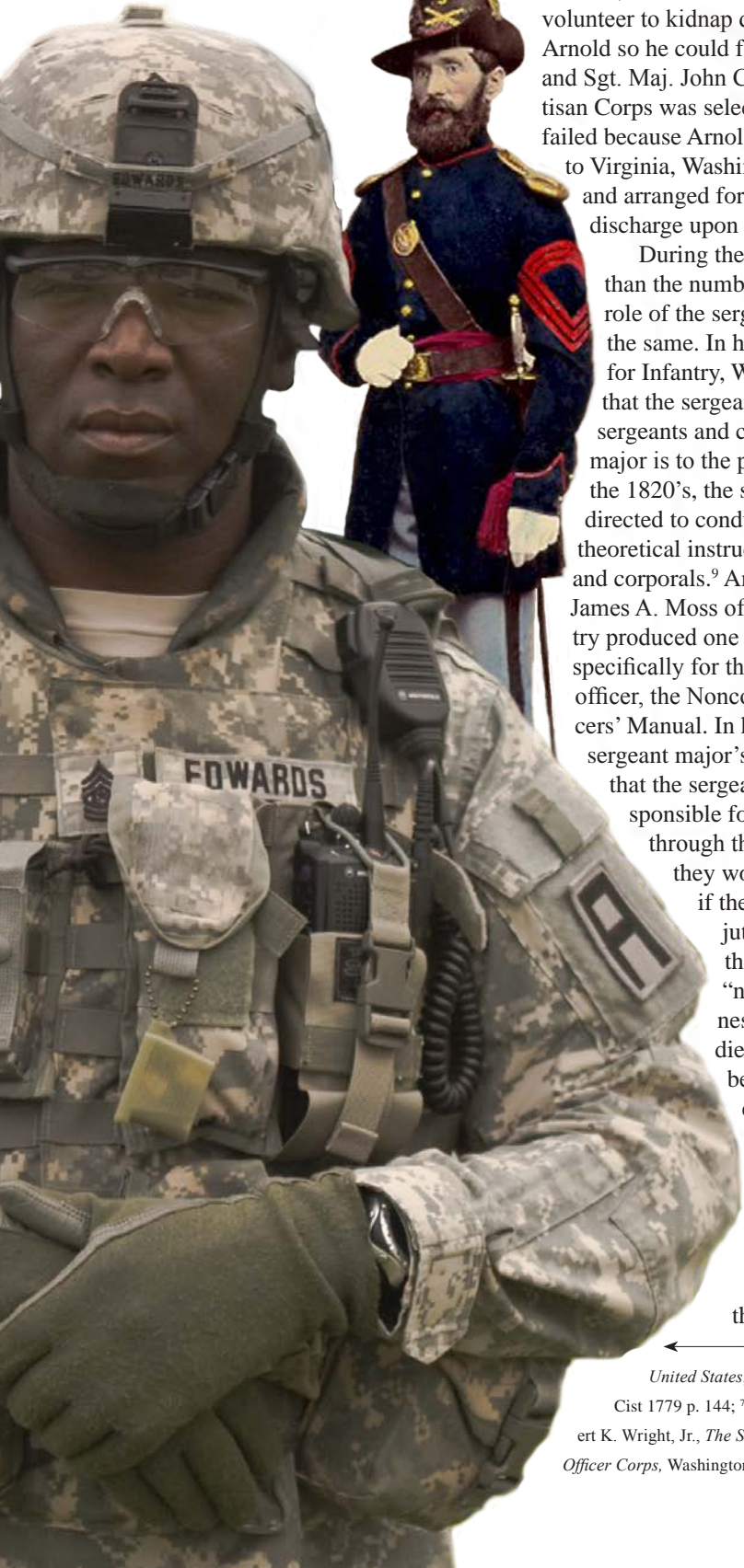
In 1778, General Washington appointed Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben as the second

Inspector General of the Continental Army. Von Steuben attempted to improve the tactics, regulations, and discipline of the Continental Army. Through his knowledge of Prussian Army regulations, he set out to make Washington's Army capable of meeting British regulars on the battlefield.<sup>5</sup> In his *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States, Part I (1779)*, often referred to as the "Blue Book" (in reference to the color of the original binding), von Steuben defined the role of the sergeant major. By writing that he, "must pay the greatest attention to their [noncommissioned officers] conduct and behavior ..."<sup>6</sup> In his instructions, he noted that the sergeant major should be well acquainted with management, discipline of the regiment and of keeping rosters and forming details. He was expected to be an expert in counting off the battalion and attending parades. Though early on the sergeant major was an assistant to the Adjutant, his role with the enlisted and noncommissioned officers has remained basically the same.

<sup>1</sup> Clayton, Giles *Approved Order of Martial Discipline*, London: I.C. for Abraham Kitsonne, 1591 "As quoted in *The Officer/NCO Relationship*, Information Management Support Center, Washington DC, Sep 97, Chap 3, p. 7"; <sup>2</sup> Fisher, Ernest F. Jr., *Guardians of the Republic*.

*A history of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps of the U.S. Army*. New York: Ballantine Books 1994, pp. 11-12; <sup>3</sup> Fisher, pp. 16-17; <sup>4</sup> Fisher, pp. 27-28; <sup>5</sup> Fisher, p. 31; <sup>6</sup> von Steuben, Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the*

# Sergeant Major



In 1780, General Washington sought a volunteer to kidnap defector Benedict Arnold so he could face American justice, and Sgt. Maj. John Champe of the 2d Partisan Corps was selected. Though Champe failed because Arnold's forces redeployed to Virginia, Washington went ahead and arranged for Champe's honorable discharge upon return.<sup>7</sup>

During the next 150 years, other than the number and placement, the role of the sergeant major remained the same. In his 1814 Handbook for Infantry, William Duane stated that the sergeant major was, "to the sergeants and corporals, what the major is to the platoon officers."<sup>8</sup> In the 1820's, the sergeant major was directed to conduct both practical and theoretical instruction for sergeants and corporals.<sup>9</sup> And in 1909, Captain James A. Moss of the 24th U.S. Infantry produced one of the first guides specifically for the noncommissioned officer, the Noncommissioned Officers' Manual. In his description of the sergeant major's duties, he recognized that the sergeant major was responsible for transmitting orders, through the first sergeants, and they would be obeyed just as if they came from the Adjutant. Moss stated that the sergeant major's, "neatness and correctness of dress and in soldierly bearing, he should be faultless, setting an example to the rest of the enlisted men of the command."<sup>10</sup> He also defined the depth of knowledge required by the sergeant major, stating that he must know,

"Army Regulations, the Drill Regulations, the Manual of Guard Duty and so much of the Courts-Martial Manual and the other manuals that pertains to his duties."<sup>11</sup>

In an attempt to reduce costs in June 1920, Congress eliminated the position of sergeant major by grouping enlisted members into seven pay grades (E-1 through E7). The senior noncommissioned officer in an organization for the next thirty-eight years was the senior master sergeant.<sup>12</sup> But throughout this period the conditions of the enlisted man's career choices were brought to light, first by the 1953 Womble Board, then later the Cordiner Committee. Rear Admiral J.P. Womble's group studied, among other things, the problem of enhancing the noncommissioned officer's status and prestige. But, it was five more years until the Defense Advisory Committee on Professional and Technical Compensation, chaired by Ralph J. Cordiner, caused any change. They developed the Military Pay Bill of 1958, which recommended establishing two new enlisted pay grades E-8 and E-9, the "supergrades." In April 1959, the first NCOs were promoted into the newly created rank. But with the creation of the new grades, the question arose of how to address these individuals. Finally, in 1962 Army Chief of Staff General George H. Decker decided that in the tradition of the British Army, the most senior noncommissioned officer would be addressed as "sergeant major," regardless of military specialty.<sup>13</sup> However, this created a problem. Although only one E-9 in any color-bearing unit could actually be the senior enlisted man, each staff section also had an E-9.<sup>14</sup> The resulting problems associated with identifying the senior enlisted man of an organization added to the disdain for the new grade. This, coupled with the confusion of the role of the sergeant major, caused a loss in prestige. In his January 1966 article in the

*United States*, Part I. Philadelphia: Styner & Cist 1779 p. 144; <sup>7</sup> Fisch, Arnold G. Jr., and Robert K. Wright, Jr., *The Story of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps*, Washington D.C.: Center of Military His-

tory 1989 pp. 215-216; <sup>8</sup> Fisch and Wright, p. 162; <sup>9</sup> Arms, L.R. *History of the Sergeant Major*, NCO Museum Staff Article (undated) p. 1; <sup>10</sup> Moss Captain James A., *Noncommissioned Officers' Manual* Menasha, Wisconsin: George



Courtesy Photo

Command Sergeant Major Yzetta L. Nelson (right) holds the distinction of being the first female sergeant major and command sergeant major in the United States Army.

Army magazine, Sgt. Maj. Robert Begg recognized this confusion and attempted to clarify the sergeant major's relationship with his commander, the staff, his soldiers, and himself.<sup>15</sup> It was not until the Vietnam buildup in the mid-sixties that the unit sergeant major had at last been clearly defined and recognized within the enlisted grade structure.<sup>16</sup>

With its definition of the sergeant major as the senior non-commissioned officer within a unit, the Army set out to identify a title to truly recognize these leaders. Under the direction of the Army Chief of Staff, General Harold K. Johnson, the Command Sergeants Major (CSM) Program was established in July 1967. The program would, "create a small body of selected sergeants major for ready assignment to all major commands of the Army."<sup>17</sup> The Chief of Staff also directed that the insignia of the command sergeant major be changed to make them identifiable. With Johnson recommending that a simple change, such as "... adding a wreath around the star might suffice ..."<sup>18</sup> Of the first 192 selectees in December 1967, five of them would ultimately serve in the newly established position of Sergeant Major of the Army. But the program was not extended to the Army Reserve and National Guard until 1974.

Once developed, the role of the command sergeant major was controversial. Some disgruntled commentators complained that command sergeant majors were not commanders.<sup>19</sup> Many voiced concern that the command sergeants major would usurp the lines of authority in the chain of command, and commanders were thought to be underutilizing their command sergeant majors. In his address to senior sergeants during a 1966 Sergeants Major conference, Johnson warned, "But you have to be care-

ful now that in this sergeants major chain you are not establishing some kind of end run position, because this, if it ever developed, and if it ever were then ever identified, would be the very quickest way to torpedo the whole program."<sup>20</sup> Though many major commands attempted to define the duties of the command sergeant major, it took until December 1975 for it to materialize.

Also in 1966, Johnson significantly enhanced the noncommissioned officer corps by creating the position of Sergeant Major of the Army. His action was the result of the 1965 Sergeants Major Personnel Conference. This conference, attended by senior sergeants major, recommended establishing such a post. After receiving names of those recommended for the position, Johnson chose the only candidate serving at that time in Vietnam, Sergeant Major William O. Woolridge. The guidance that Johnson gave Woolridge before his swearing in ceremony on July 11, 1966 was that he would be his principal enlisted assistant and advisor on all matters pertaining to enlisted members in the Army.

This position was conceived as an ombudsman for enlisted personnel, but its role eventually expanded beyond that. In the 1967 edition of Army Regulation 600-20, Army Command Policy and Procedure, it

stated that the position of the Sergeant Major of the Army "serves as the senior enlisted advisor and consultant to the Chief of Staff of the Army on problems affecting enlisted personnel and their solutions."<sup>21</sup> Soon after his selection as the eighth Sergeant Major of the Army, Julius Gates went on to describe what he thought his duties would be, "I think the Sergeant Major of the Army's job is to support and keep the Chief of Staff informed about the enlisted concerns of the Army, and let him know how soldiers are training and living at the canteen-cup level."<sup>22</sup>

By the end of the war in Vietnam, the noncommissioned officer system was plagued with problems the war had left on the corps. Senior Army commanders gathered for a conference at General William DePuy's Training and Doctrine Command head-



## COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

The Command Sergeant Major Program was established in July 1967 by then Chief of Staff, Gen. Harold K. Johnson. The first set of insignia were presented by Johnson to the future First Sergeant Major of the Army William O. Woolridge. The insignia were donated to the NCO Museum at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas, where they remain on display for all to see.

Banta Publishing Company 1909 p. 61; <sup>11</sup> Moss, p. 61; <sup>12</sup> Gillespie, Mark., [et al.], *The Sergeants Major of the Army*, Center for Military History, Washington D.C., 1995 pp. 4-5;

<sup>13</sup> Fisher, p. 312; <sup>14</sup> Fisher, p. 312; <sup>15</sup> Begg, SGM Robert B. "Sergeant Major," Army, Jan. 1966, pp. 37-39; <sup>16</sup> Fisher, p. 314; <sup>17</sup> Fisher, p. 316; <sup>18</sup> Gillespie, p. 14; <sup>19</sup> Bainbridge, SMA

William, *Top Sergeant* New York: Ballentine Books 1995 p. 182; <sup>20</sup> Gillespie, p. 7; <sup>21</sup> Fisch and Wright, p. 170; <sup>22</sup> Gillespie, pp. 154; <sup>23</sup> DePuy, GEN William E., address TRADOC Commander's Conference, Dec 10-11, 1975 "As quoted in *The Officer/NCO Relationship*, Information Management Support Center, Washington DC, Sep 97, Chap 3, p. 1"; <sup>24</sup> Fisher,


quarters to discuss the role of the command sergeant major. DePuy noted that, "He [the sergeant major] sort of floats around out there and observes what's going on with soldiers and tells the old man about that. Fine, I think he can do that, but that's a very limited view of what a sergeant major is supposed to do."<sup>23</sup> DePuy also pointed out that, "the overwhelming number of captains commanding companies ... in the Army rejected the claim of the sergeant major to any authority at all over unit noncommissioned officers."<sup>24</sup> The conferees agreed that the line of authority from the command sergeant major on down through the noncommissioned officer echelons must be clear and understood by all. DePuy then went on to lay the foundation for what is now known as the noncommissioned officer support channel. He wrote that the noncommissioned officer has two responsibilities, "to accomplish an assigned group of collective missions ..." and, "to supervise the training of the individual soldiers in that squad, section or crew." He concluded by stating that it, "should be almost an exclusive responsibility of the first-line supervisors under the direction of and with the support of platoon sergeants, first sergeants, and command sergeants major."<sup>25</sup> In 1977 a Sergeants Major Academy Task Force was created to form Army doctrine on the duties and responsibilities of the noncommissioned officer. The Task Force developed Field Manual 22-600-20, *The Duties, Responsibilities, and Authority of NCO's*, and when finally printed in March 1980, the noncommissioned officer support channel was finally formalized.

In 1985, Colonel Claude Abate and Lieutenant General Warren P. Giddings pointed out that, "The CSM is the most experienced enlisted member of the battalion and to limit his duties and responsibilities to routine matters associated with garrison operations does not take full advantage of his background, experience, rank, or position."<sup>26</sup> The Army was coming to terms with the realization that the sergeant major was an important asset for commanders not only in garrison, but also on the battlefield.


By 1989, a Leader Development Task Force was formed, and drawing heavily from the Professional Army Ethic, the

**HEADQUARTERS  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**


**FM 7-22.7  
(TC 22-6)**




**THE ARMY  
NONCOMMISSIONED  
OFFICER GUIDE**



Sergeant of Riflemen  
1821





Sergeant Major of the Army  
1994

**DECEMBER 2002**

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In November 1990, the Army published Training Circular 22-6, *The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide* (now FM 7-27.7) that clearly defined the roles of the sergeant major.

NCO Creed, and the Oath of Enlistment, they developed leadership competencies and the skills, knowledge and attitudes that the command sergeant major and sergeant major should possess. By formalizing these competencies in Training Circular 22-6, *The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide* in November 1990, the roles of the sergeant major were clearly defined. By then, commanders had recognized the importance of the sergeant major, and noted in TRADOC Pamphlet 525-100-2, *Leadership and Command on the Battlefield: Battalion and Company*, "[During Operation Desert Storm] many battalion commanders commented that their command sergeants major seemed to be everywhere, talking with soldiers, smoothing problems in the logistics and maintenance efforts, and assisting the commander with control of the unit."<sup>27</sup>

Beginning with the earliest days of the inception of the United States Army, the role of the sergeant major has always been at the head of the noncommissioned officers. Through refinement and expansion of our military, the position of the sergeant major has matured to its rightful place in the corps of noncommissioned officers. In his article in *Army* magazine in May 1986, Lt. Gen. Robert L. Wetzel summed up how he utilized his sergeant major in combat, "The same way I use him in peacetime – to show the way. I expect the sergeant major to be at or near the point of decision at critical times

and provide me, as the commander, with an unbiased assessment."<sup>28</sup>

The sergeant major will surely enter the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with clearly defined duties, responsibilities, admiration and respect.



## SERGEANT MAJOR

SGMs' experience and abilities are equal to that of the CSM, but the sphere of influence regarding leadership is generally limited to those directly under his/her charge. Assists Officers at the battalion level - 300 to 1,000 Soldiers. Minimum 10 years time in service for promotion.

p. 391; <sup>25</sup> Fisher, p. 398; <sup>26</sup> Abate, COL Claude W. Giddings, and LTG Warren P., What is a Sergeant Major USAWC Paper, 1985, pp. 26, 29, 35 "As quoted in *The Officer/NCO Relationship*, Information Management Support Center, Washington DC, Sep 97, Chap 3, p. 1";

<sup>27</sup> TRADOC Pam 525-100-2, *Leadership and Command on the Battlefield: Battalion and*

*Company* 1993, p.28 "As quoted in *The Officer/NCO Relationship*, Information Management Support Center, Washington DC, Sep 97, Chap 3, p. 7"; <sup>28</sup> Wetzel, LTG Robert L., *The Sergeant Major's Role-Leadership to 'Show the Way'*, Army, May 1986, pp. 71-72

# A Command Sergeant

By Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey J. Mellinger  
U.S. Army Materiel Command

A good friend of mine, about to become a nominative-level command sergeant major, asked me for some thoughts on what it took to serve at that level. I thought for some time about what a command sergeant major should be, know, and do at the nominative level, and this document is the result. It also occurred to me that every CSM has the same responsibilities, albeit at different levels. Therefore, here are some of my thoughts on the subject. Please feel free to share this with others, and I welcome all improvement suggestions. Good luck, and remember – the higher you climb the flagpole, the more your rear shows.

- Never, ever, embarrass or place your commander in a spot. There are many ways to avoid this, but the easiest is to always do the right thing, and don't do anything that may have the appearance of impropriety. If it appears so, soldiers will believe it so.

- Be the commander's eyes and ears, and say what needs saying. You should not have to ask to see your commander on enlisted or command matters – you are on the personal staff, and should have unimpeded access.

- The position is bigger than you are. Simply put, be ever mindful that you are but a transient in the position, and you are there to serve, not be served. If ever a decision needs making which could possibly jeopardize the integrity or value of the position, you must choose keeping the position intact.

- Report every meal, gift, trinket or benefit to your legal team. There are laws, and you may break one unknowingly. "I'm sorry" won't cut it.

- Take time every day to talk to one soldier, civilian or family member about something, anything. Just take the time. It will help keep your feet on the floor and your mind on the matter at hand – accomplishing the mission while caring for the troops.

- Always remember that you live in a glass house. It comes equipped with listening devices and a full complement of reporters. Periodically ask someone on the outside (a trusted agent – such as the deputy, another senior NCO, or the IG) what you and your business look like to them. It will help keep you honest and avoid negative appearances.

- Visit every unit at least quarterly. More frequently than this may be mission impossible, and you will become a burden without trying.

- Spend quality time with each unit, but not more than two or three days. Benjamin Franklin, Poor Richard's Almanac, 1736, said, "Fish and visitors smell in three days." Don't stay long enough to become a "fish," but stay long enough to have a meaningful visit. As bad as those who stay too long are the ones who come only for the "bennies" (the annual BBQ, the VIP visit, the foreign wings, etc.), but depart immediately.





# nt Major's thoughts

- Keep a pocket full of tokens (coins, gadgets, etc.) for presentation, but have someone keep a running list to eliminate the question about how you disbursed the items. I don't like giving repeat objects, as it tends to cheapen the act. Moreover, I personally do not give coins for the sake of giving coins (glad-handing) – they ought to recognize achievement or accomplishment and mean something (as they are regulated and intended).

- Take the time to have meaningful talks with NCOs and soldiers. See them where they work, doing what they do. Remember that these are the really important people in your outfit; the ones who make the rest of us look good. Take the time to let them know that you know what they do for all of us.

- When you visit units, know that you will generally see what's working. You need also to see what is not working, as your job requires you to propose fixes. Be inquisitive, but do not become an inspector. Point out what is working well, and what needs addressing.

- Find out who and where every each is located. You have units and personnel that nobody ever visits, but without whom we could not do what we do. Find and recognize every soldier you can. A handshake and a look-them-in-the-eyes thank-you go further and mean more than most people realize.

- Help commanders and their senior NCOs develop as a team. Build command teams and trust of each in the other. Watch for senior NCOs who are not supportive of the commander, and for commanders who do not utilize their NCOs to the fullest.

- Watch what you say in which forum. Remember everyone will pass your off-handed comments as new policy, and most of the time without your knowledge.

- Never have "sensing sessions." They are for chaplains and IGs, not command sergeants majors. Sergeants major do their sensing by routinely talking to soldiers, civilians and family members. NCO calls are good and can be productive, but bring something germane or pertinent to talk about. Stay abreast of current policies, procedures and doctrine so you can speak with authority. However, if you do not know for sure, do not

give an answer. When you say, "I'll get back to you," do it!

- Be as upbeat and optimistic as possible when speaking to groups. Avoid "woe is me" discussions and attitudes. If the discussion turns to something negative, be truthful and honest, factual and forthright, but never pessimistic. Soldiers look to you for your steadfastness and rock-solid demeanor, not for whining and crying. If there is a problem, solve it, or do the best you can with it.

- Find out what your NCOs and soldiers are concerned with. You are their representative, and you must know what concerns them in order to be most effective.

- Don't forget about the staff. They, too, have need and want

of your guidance, opinions and thoughts. Part of your job is to work with the staff to ensure sharing of information and coordination exists as appropriate.

- Talk to your soldiers about the benefits of military life. Discussions sometimes seem to sway towards what's

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Always remember that you live in a glass house. It comes equipped with listening devices and a full complement of reporters. Periodically ask someone on the outside what you and your business look like to them. It will help keep you honest and avoid negative appearances.

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wrong or not good enough. How do you measure the security you feel on post? How about the benefits we tend to take for granted (commissary, post office, exchange, health and dental, schools)? Where is there more equal opportunity, where truly your work is measured on performance and potential, not skin color, religion or sex? We are in the profession of arms, and the price for our benefits is selfless service, honor, duty, and country first.

- Think Army and think Purple. Learn how each MOS interchanges and assists the other. Learn how each component contributes to your organization and mission. Recognize how each service plays a role. And learn how to communicate the importance of all of this to your soldiers and NCOs.

- Accept that your life belongs to your soldiers. You must be available for each when they need you – not when you want to. Your place is with your soldiers, not in the boardroom. Can you ever tell your troops that you can't visit training or operations because you have meetings, or that your e-mail won't let you go?

- Be compassionate, yet firm. See the issue from more than one side. Empathize, understand, ask questions, and help others come to their own solutions. Learn to give steering corrections and offer suggestions rather than give direction. Don't shirk from taking a position on an issue. Check your facts and get input, but take a position. Make a decision. Stick by your decisions, but don't be afraid to admit that you never intended to go to Abilene, and get the car turned around.

- Never take on public challenges. Let things pass, and save the correction for a private moment as soon as possible. Learn

how to take cheap shots without visible emotion. The shooter will become small from embarrassment, and others will think more of you if you are unflappable.

- Check everything before you make a recommendation or decision. Learn how to quietly “run the wickets” or “check the traps.”

- Keep a circle of friends you can call anytime about anything, but keep the circle known only to you. The decisions and recommendations must be yours, but wise leaders always seek other opinions and view points.

- Tough challenge here. Learn to be more demure. de mure. Adj. 1. Modest and reserved in manner or behavior. 2. Affectedly shy, modest, or reserved. Speak quietly and carry a big brain. Get beyond being a battalion CSM or ISG. Speak with authority when you speak, and speak loudly if you have to, but do most of your work quietly and steadily. But be a command sergeant major. One of my great mentors said often that, “...if buck sergeants used all the authority given by law and regulation, they would scare all of us...”

- Become more introspective, and take time to think out all the implications and downwind effects of the next words out of your mouth. Think long and hard before you speak.

- What will your legacy say about you? When you leave, what will be different about your organization? How high will you reach on the wall to leave your mark?

- Only reserve those things to do yourself that only you can do. You have great soldiers and civilians – let them do the job for which they trained.

- Find ways to recognize and thank someone more than you

- Find ways to recognize and thank someone more than you



Photo by Sgt. Corinna Strand

Command sergeants major Jeffrey Mellinger and Marvin Hill shake hands after the change of responsibility ceremony at Camp Victory's Al-Faw Palace. Hill replaced Mellinger as the Multi-National Force-Iraq command sergeant major.

find ways to point out flaws. The recipient of recognition will work harder for you and the organization as a result.

- Enforce standards. Sounds easy, but to do this, you have to know and be able to teach correct procedures, policies and standards. And the hardest part for many is to stop and make the correction, rather than walk on by and pretend not to see.

- Soldiers do exactly in war as they do in training. No seatbelts in training equals death in war (and peace). No helmets in tactical vehicles equal head injuries and death. No muzzle awareness and weapons safety checks equal negligent

discharge fatalities and injuries. Don't wear eye protection in training? You will see soldiers blinded needlessly.

- Set the example. Be fit, professional, punctual, and knowledgeable. Be approachable. Read over your promotion orders, charter and appointment certificate again.

- Be physically fit. Do your physical fitness training with your soldiers. Nothing worse than a senior leader who skates by without doing PT just because they can. After all, who will challenge you? Your conscience should!

- Help junior officers feel comfortable talking to the CSM. You have much to offer, and mentoring young officers should be on your agenda every day. Take an active role developing officers – it is a part of your charter.

- Do not fail to investigate. Despite initial appearances, or the ease with which you can summarily dismiss accusations of wrongdoing, allow every charge to run its course in the proper fashion, through the proper channels. Do not allow dirt to be swept under a rug. And when results warrant, take appropriate actions.

- Support equal opportunity. Sure sounds easy when you say it fast. If you routinely treat soldiers with dignity and respect (you can be hard and fair simultaneously), you will do fine. You will surely get into trouble if you ignore, you fail to correct, or you fail to act. Nobody should get preferential treatment, and if you do so, you will set yourself up for unequal opportunity allegations.

- Sexual harassment goes to war as often as it goes to the main post area. Reflect for a moment on all the senior leaders you know who destroyed their career with malice and aforethought through sexual misconduct or inappropriate relationships of some sort.

- Travel when and where you must, but remember you have an obligation to taxpayers to give them a day's work for a day's pay. Going TDY to visit friends, see a new place, go shopping, or play a new course are not only illegal, but destroy soldier confidence in you. Go to or hold conferences as you must, but be careful that you can say with certainty that you used the time and money as taxpayers expect.

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*What will your legacy say about you? When you leave, what will be different about your organization? How high will you reach on the wall to leave your mark?*

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By: John Makamson, depot photographer.

Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Mellinger, Army Materiel Command, is greeted by a mechanic at Anniston Army Depot as Sgt. Maj. Tony Butler, right, Dennis Williams and James McKinney look on.

- Government cellular telephones are for government calls. Don't be lulled into thinking that the plan allows a certain number of monthly minutes, so it doesn't matter whom you call when from where. You are accountable, and legal opinions will tell you that personal calls from government cell phones are not legal.

- Learn to speak and write using the English language, and do so without profanity. Cursing is colorful, but fails to convey meaning. In addition, if you are inarticulate, others will not take you seriously or consider you competent or even intelligent. In the words of Von Steuben, on choosing NCOs, ".....and none can be said to be qualified who do not read and write in a tolerable manner."

- Be social, but do not fraternize. Attend functions, but know when it's time to leave. Be certain that you never drive after drinking, regardless of the amount. Soldier perception will be that you drink and drive. Can you imagine what the MPs at the gate will say after you drive through with a hint of alcohol on your breath? Just don't do it.

As I stated in the beginning, this is not an all-inclusive or ordered list. It is just a collection of thoughts intended to cause you to think before you do something that will cost you your credibility, your career, or your future.

Best wishes for continued success caring for, training, leading, and maintaining America's sons and daughters.

*Command Sergeant Major Jeffrey J. Mellinger assumed duties as the U.S. Army Materiel Command's 13th Command Sergeant Major on Nov. 2, 2007.*

*CSM Mellinger was drafted on April 18, 1972, at Eugene, Oregon. Following basic and advanced training at Fort Ord, Calif., he completed airborne training at Fort Benning, Ga. His first assignment was in the Federal Republic of Germany as a unit clerk.*

*He has held every leadership position from squad leader to command sergeant major and is a graduate of Class 37 and the Command Sergeants Major Course, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas.*



# SEEK HELP, DESTROY THE SCOURGE OF SUICIDE

By MSG Antony M.C. Joseph

Soldiers, by the very nature of their profession are destined to sacrifice. Whether it is by laying down their lives in the defense of country, freedom, comrades, or just the quality time they would have spent with their loved ones; sacrifice is part and parcel of a Soldier's life. However, when a Soldier takes his or her own life it is an antithesis of the otherwise noble and courageous life they led.

Recently the Army has seen a spike in the numbers of Soldiers committing suicide. In 2008, reports showed that there were 140 confirmed cases of suicide and one cause of death yet to be determined, the highest number since the Army started keeping records in 1980. For the past few year the rate has steadily increased despite efforts toward greater awareness and intervention. The figures released at the end of May 2009 show that there have been 117 reported cases in calendar year 2009. Of these, 48 have been confirmed as suicides and 69 are pending final determination of manner of death.

Col. Carroll J. Diebold, the psychiatry consultant to the Army Surgeon General, said that there are "lots of different factors that lead to someone committing suicide - the feeling of helplessness or hopelessness with one's situation, with no solution in sight at all - leads to searching for an easy way out," he said. "Under stress it is easy to forget that Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem - no way back."

Chap. Maj. Paul A. Rodgers, a career Soldier, and someone who attempted suicide agrees with Diebold and added that anger is also a sign of depression and "in my situation where my life was falling apart, my ministry was falling apart, I got angry before I attempted (to take my life)."

Suicide is not a recent scourge in the Army. In Chuck Deans' book, *Nam Vet.*, printed in 1990 by Multnomah Press, Portland, Oregon, 97226, the author states that "Fifty-eight thousand plus died in the Vietnam War. Over 150,000 have committed suicide since the war ended." Recently, there has been more light directed at the rate of suicides in the Army due to a more informed and involved media making it seem that suicides are a current phenomena. However, according to Capt. Jimmie J. Butcher Jr., a licensed clinical psychologist at Fort Campbell, Ky., the recent steady rise in suicides could be attributed to multiple deployments in combat, "but it is hard to say that, that alone is the

definitive reason." In fact, according to Army statistics, five out of the recent 11 suicides at fort Campbell never deployed or saw combat. Another reason Butcher suggested is "the problems with the resiliency of the youth coming into the Army today. America is a wealthy country. The youth of today have everything; their parents are taking great care of them; and they expect things to be the same way when they come into the Army; and when it is not; they are unable to cope." Butcher added that "until recently (when comparing suicide rates to the civilian world) the Army has done better, it is only recently that we are showing similar numbers."

The Army recently launched a \$50 million, multi-year study on suicide and suicidal behavior among Soldiers in conjunction with the National Institute of Mental Health; it is the largest single study on the subject of suicide that NIMH has ever undertaken.

"Under stress it is easy to forget that Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem

No way back"

"The upper levels of the Army have great visibility of this serious topic, the vice chief of staff has stood up a task force to address this issue very aggressively," Diebold said.

If human nature could be controlled, perhaps suicide could be eradicated. Since that is not possible, perhaps the most realistic step is education. Along with the awareness and prevention training that each unit conducts, the Army is assigning Behavioral Health Specialists to individual brigades. Diebold, who is also the chief of psychiatry at Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii, said that these specialists are an intrinsic part of the unit, so trust can be built more easily and therefore Soldiers are more willing to seek help from someone they know.

Interactive videos are also another tool units are using to tackle the problems of suicide. The videos are used as part of a three-phase training program. During Phase one, usually before a deployment Videos such as Shoulder-to-Shoulder: No Soldier Stands Alone is shown followed by discussions where Soldiers are able to share personal experiences and discuss the causes of suicides and the ways to help their fellow Soldiers. Phase two is conducted in theater and Soldiers are encouraged to discuss issues pertinent to current situations, and how to deal with the related stress. Phase three is an annual training that reiterates the lessons from the previous two phases. The training is re-instituted when the Soldier returns home from combat during the redeploy-



ment and reintegration process.

Other tools such as Applied Suicide Intervention Sustainment Training, and Ask, Care, Escort program are also being widely used to battle suicides in the Army. ASIST is a two-day, hands-on, practice-oriented, immersion experience that helps Soldiers at all levels become ready, willing and able to do suicide first-aid interventions. The ACE program is quite simply as the name suggests Ask a Soldier about problems, show Care and understanding and Escort them to the right resource for medical and professional help.

Lt. Col. Garry Dale, the deputy installation chaplain at Fort Campbell is a great believer in programs such as ACE and ASIST. “We all have our bad days, but you have to come right out and ask someone if they are contemplating suicide,” he said.

“You have to be an active listener, show them you care, and finally escort them to the professionals for help.”

Rodgers is also a great proponent of listening. “You have to let the person with a problem talk. If an EMT (emergency medical technician) comes to help someone who is drowning, they have to get the water out of the lungs before they can breathe life back into the victim,” he said. “Similarly, you have to listen and understand the person’s problem before you can assist them.”

He uses his own experiences, while conducting ASIST classes at Fort Bliss, Texas, and during counseling to persuade Soldiers to seek help.

Up to one-fifth of the more than 1.7 million military members who have served in Afghanistan or Iraq are believed to suffer from some form of anxiety, depression or other emotional prob-

lems. Studies have shown that about half of those who need help do not seek it. Diebold said, “You wouldn’t hesitate to seek medical attention for a physical injury or wound. Why then would you hesitate to seek medical attention for a psychological injury?”

Peer disdain and the fear of stigma affecting a burgeoning career have long been detractors to Soldiers who might be in need of help. A senior warrant officer asked, “If I was to say that I am having a problem, or that I am depressed, will I be able to fly tomorrow? Will I be able to lead Soldiers tomorrow?” To which Rodgers answered, “If he doesn’t get help, and his problems lead to him committing suicide, will he ever be able to fly or lead Soldiers?” Sgt 1st Class Gary Bartlett, an operations NCO and a platoon sergeant with 35 Soldiers in his care also weighed in “If I was having a problem I would be doing an injustice to my

to be an active listener, show them you care, and finally escort them to the professionals for help.”
Soldiers if I didn’t seek help to fix my troubles.” he said. “In fact, with help, I would come back and be a better leader, better able to understand my Soldiers and in turn help them in their time of need.”

**“Just as attending school is not an admission of ignorance, seeking professional help is not an admission of weakness. It instead makes better Soldiers and better leaders.”**

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Rodgers used himself as an example and said “I am a prime example of, though I should have done this before I attempted suicide, seeking help and coming back doesn’t adversely affect your career.”

A former Soldier and NCO Neal A. Schilling, who referred himself to the mental health professionals, because of suicidal ideations is also a great supporter of the benefits of seeking help early, “Soldiers who refer themselves for help do so to strengthen themselves,” he said. “Just as attending school is not an admission of ignorance, seeking professional help is not an admission of weakness. It instead makes better Soldiers and better leaders.”

Diebold insists that stigma has no place in today's Army and that leaders at all levels are keeping an eye on making sure that no unfavorable actions are meted out to those seeking help.

Butcher and Diebold both stressed that for all the Army's programs to work leaders at all levels need to be better trained, and leaders will need to know their Soldiers. Otherwise how will a leader realize his Soldier is showing signs of despair?

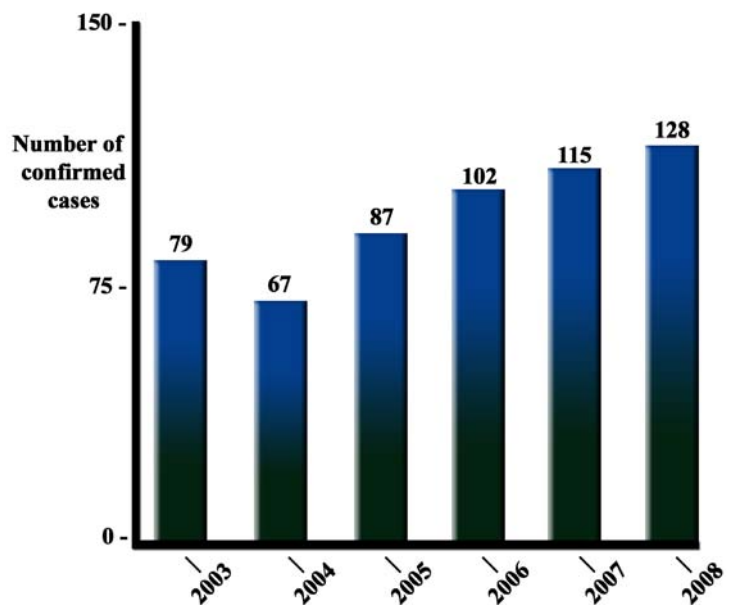
Butcher who has been an NCO for most of his Army career and has only just recently become a psychologist and an officer said, "If NCOs are truly the backbone of the Army then they should be allowed to do their job, that of being a guide, a mentor, and a leader. When a young Soldier comes into a unit it is now like his family. The initial influences on that Soldier is what forms him. What his squad leader or platoon sergeant teaches him directly reflects on how he performs. I have been in many units where the NCOs, first sergeants and commanders have been involved with the Soldiers' lives from the beginning, and you see a phenomenal positive impact on that [Soldiers'] demeanor and performance," he said. "It shows them that somebody cares, and they in turn respond in a like manner. In contrast, units without strong, caring leadership always have problems with discipline and morale."

Schilling echoes Butcher's sentiments, "Sergeants must stand behind the words of the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer and truly know their Soldiers," he said. "They must know about any problems in their Soldier's relationships, sudden changes in a Soldier's goals or behavior, and any problems in a Soldier's past. Significant events in Soldier's lives, such as the death of a family member, divorce, injuries, financial difficulty, or pending discharges should be indicators to sergeants of a need for attention, even if the Soldier gives no indication of distress." He added that sergeants should be the first responders in the support structure that leads a Soldier to professional help.

Staff Sgt. Crystal Aldridge, a senior brigade paralegal with the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade at Fort Campbell, supports total involvement in a Soldier's professional and personal growth, and adds that, "if you have a happy Soldier, he works well. I believe that happiness and self esteem leads to more proficiency

and vice versa, and therefore (a person is) less likely to have a destructive mindset or suicidal ideations," she said. "I make myself approachable to all my Soldiers, and am very predictable in the way I deal with all of them. When Soldiers feel that they can trust someone, they are more likely to come to you in times of stress and need. Soldiers are the lifeblood of the Army, and as an NCO it is my honor to nurture, guide and lead them."

"The Army really is changing, leaders are aware of the stress Soldiers are under and are strong advocates for seeking help," Rodgers said. Every Soldier regardless of how junior is a combatant in this fight against suicide and should be the first point in the process of care. **There is nothing beautiful about suicide.**"



As of May 2009 there are 48 confirmed cases and 69 still under investigation.



## PROTECTING OUR SOLDIERS

Leaders have the power and responsibility to protect their Soldiers on and off the battlefield. This includes recognizing uncharacteristic and suicidal behaviors.

Effective suicide prevention requires everyone in the unit to be aware of the risk factors for suicide and know how to respond. Commanders, noncommissioned officers (NCOs), and supervisors must lead the way.

If a Soldier seems suicidal, the time to take action is NOW. Talk to the Soldier before it is too late.

### WHAT TO LOOK FOR: WARNING SIGNS

Distress can lead to the development of unhealthy behaviors. People closest to the Soldier (fellow Soldiers, family, friends) are in the best position to recognize changes due to distress and to provide support.

#### Look For:

- Comments that suggest thoughts or plans of suicide.
- Rehearsal of suicidal acts.
- Giving away possessions.
- Obsession with death, dying, etc.
- Uncharacteristic behaviors (e.g., reckless driving, excessive drinking, stealing).
- Significant change in performance.
- Appearing overwhelmed by recent stressor(s).
- Depressed mood, hopelessness.
- Withdrawal from social activities.

## RESOURCES

Following are some of the resources available to help leaders respond to Soldiers who may be at risk for suicide.

- Leaders can contact their unit chaplain or mental health provider.
- AKO: <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/3347998>
- USACHPPM: <http://chppm-www.apega.army.mil/dhbw/Readiness/suicide.aspx>
- Army GI: <http://www.army.gi.army.mil/hr/suicide.asp>

## WHAT TO DO

It is best for mental health or medical professionals to assess and manage suicidal Soldiers, but there may be times when unit leaders or peers find themselves on the phone with a suicidal Soldier. In any situation, if a Soldier threatens suicide, take him very seriously. You may have very limited time and only one chance to intervene. The most important thing to do is take action.

#### By Phone:

- Establish a helping relationship (get your foot in the door).
- Quickly express that you are glad the Soldier called.
- Immediately get the telephone number that he is calling from in case you are disconnected.
- Find out where the Soldier is located.
- Get as much information as possible about the Soldier's plans, access to means of self-harm, and intent.
- Listen and do not give advice.
- Keep the Soldier talking as long as possible until help can reach him but avoid topics that agitate him (i.e., his unfair supervisor, cheating spouse, etc.).
- Follow up and ensure the Soldier is evaluated.

#### In Person:

- Find out what is going on with the Soldier.
- Use open-ended questions such as: "How are things going?" or "How are you dealing with...?"
- Share concern for his well-being.
- Be honest and direct.
- Listen to words and emotions.
- Repeat what he says using his words.
- Ask directly about his intent, i.e., "Are you thinking about suicide?" This will not put new ideas in his head.
- Keep the Soldier safe—DO NOT leave him alone; have a capable Soldier with him at ALL times.
- Take steps to remove potential means of self-harm including firearms, pills, knives, and ropes.

- Involve security if the Soldier is agitated or combative.
- The command should escort the Soldier to the military treatment facility (MTF) or civilian emergency room (ER) if the MTF is unavailable.
- Follow up and verify that the Soldier was evaluated.
- If psychiatric hospitalization is required, talk to the MTF staff about what assistance is needed (e.g., arranging for necessary belongings, child care, or pet care).
- Monitor the Soldier until you are convinced the Soldier is no longer at risk.
- The Soldier may be so intent on suicide that he becomes dangerous to those attempting to help him. Talk to a mental health provider for advice on whether to call an ambulance or transport him yourself. If the advice is to transport him in your vehicle, a person must sit at each door to prevent the suicidal Soldier from exiting the moving vehicle. Have your appointed contact person give the mental health provider the unit commander's telephone number for feedback following the evaluation. During duty hours, contact your MTF. After duty hours, contact the post or civilian ER. Mental health evaluations must be conducted in a location where medical support and security are available. If there is not an ER on post, the MTF duty crew will handle suicide risk assessments using the local community medical or mental health facilities.

## WHAT TO AVOID

Leaders should let their Soldiers know they are safe and in good hands if they ask for help.

- Do NOT minimize the problem. Do NOT ask, "Is that all?"
- Do NOT overreact to the problem.
- Do NOT create a stigma about seeking mental health treatment.
- Do NOT give simplistic advice such as, "All you have to do is..."
- Do NOT tell the Soldier to "suck it up," or "get over it."
- Do NOT make the problem a source of unit gossip.
- Involve others on a need-to-know basis.
- Do NOT delay a necessary referral.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

### Possible Scenarios:

- *The Soldier refuses voluntary evaluation for suicide risk:* Contact your local MTF for advice. In general, consent is not required to transport the suicidal Soldier to the MTF or ER.
  - *The Soldier is found to be at some risk but not hospitalized:* Work with the medical staff on the best course of action. Upon return to the command, the medical staff should:
    - » Communicate the current level of risk.
    - » Recommend protective measures and monitoring, if any.
    - » Provide administrative recommendations (duty status, suitability, separation, and retention).
    - » Schedule medical follow-up appointments.
  - *Treatment is offered, but the Soldier refuses treatment:* Soldiers not at imminent risk cannot be mandated to receive medical or mental health treatment. Leaders and mental health providers must collaborate to maximize the Soldier's safety. Upon return to the command, the medical staff should:
    - » Communicate the current level of risk.
    - » Provide advice on protective measures and monitoring, if any.
    - » Recommend any administrative restrictions (duty status, separation/retention).
    - » Schedule medical follow-up appointments.
    - » Provide a course of action if the Soldier's risk of self-harm increases or does not improve.
  - *The Soldier is treated but is not getting better:* Work closely with the medical staff on the best course of action. Medical staff may:
    - » Have other treatment approaches available (different medications or therapies).
    - » Recommend changing the Soldier to limited duty status to receive additional treatment.
    - » Recommend administrative actions or medical retirement in cases where long-term improvement is unlikely with any reasonable treatment.
- As a leader, you have the power to make a difference, to save a life, and to set a positive example.

## A LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUICIDE PREVENTION



<http://chppm-www.apega.army.mil/dhbw/Population/combnt.aspx>

1-800-222-9698

# What is an adaptive leader?

By Command Sgt. Maj. David M. Bruner  
TRADOC

General [Martin E.] Dempsey's greatest priority is leader development. A cornerstone of leader development is creating *adaptive* leaders. What does this mean? We all know what a leader is – they've been a part of our Army experience since the first day we got off the bus in basic training and realized that the drill sergeant was not kidding when he told us to move it. As a noncommissioned officer, you are a leader. By wearing stripes, you are entrusted with the authority to *lead*. So what is the difference between a *leader* and an *adaptive leader*?

To adapt is 'to make suitable to or fit for a specific use or situation.' An adaptive leader is someone who, when faced with an ambiguous scenario with no clear solution, can chart a sensible course to resolve the problem. Consider the implications in this joke:

*A battleship is underway on an inky black night. The sailor on watch sees a light ahead off the starboard bow. The captain tells a yeoman to signal the other vessel with the message: "Advise you change course twenty degrees immediately"*

*The answer comes back, "No. Advise you change course twenty degrees immediately." The captain is furious; after all he commands a battleship!*

*So he has the yeoman signal back, "I am a captain. We are on a collision course. Alter your course twenty degrees now!"*

*The answer comes back, "I am a petty officer third class, and I strongly urge you to alter your course twenty degrees."*

*Now the captain is full of rage. He signals "I am a battleship in the United States Navy!"*

*The answer comes back, "I am a lighthouse."*

So what do we learn from this joke besides the fact that we all enlisted in the right service? We learn the danger in *not* being an adaptive leader. The captain had the authority to issue the order for the other vessel to move. He was probably following the standard operating procedures in manuals. Yet he didn't have the whole picture and when faced with the ambiguity and imprudence of a Petty Officer telling him he was wrong, he let emotion and pride take charge. He doubled down with bad cards. He was charting the wrong course, doing it by the book! The captain simply could not step back and adapt to an unconventional situation.

Leading Soldiers is not like preparing a meal out of a cook book. There is no 'McLeader' method. "Take 11 Soldiers, train for 10 weeks with drill sergeant, add one seasoned staff sergeant, stir in 12 battle drills and bake for 12 months in the desert," is a ridiculous statement. Does this mean we should throw out the book and wing it?

Of course not – that's just as ridiculous as the captain expecting the lighthouse to move based on his authority as an officer in the Navy. Doctrine and the accompanying training that reflects that doctrine builds discipline and provides a ready pool of unconscious knowledge to draw on in the future. This is invaluable in producing the foundational skills for Soldiering. Adaptability is built *into* our Doctrine. Reread FM 3.0, *Full Spectrum Operations*, and see how often it stresses the importance of adaptable leadership.

Becoming an adaptable leader is hard. It is easy to follow directions. Leading requires a lot of brain power and a lot of will power and a lot of training and education. Being adaptable to anything is hard and takes time. Think of adapting to the altitude in Afghanistan or the heat in Iraq. That takes time and effort and is a strictly bodily process. Mental processes are that much harder.

As an efficient machine, the human brain is amazing. In terms of the electrical impulses that power our thoughts, our minds operate on less

than a nickel's worth of electricity a day. This efficiency comes at a cost. Our brains take shortcuts based on past experiences and are always searching for new experiences so it can create more embedded neural pathways to automatically guide behavior. You truly are what you consistently do. That's the way the brain works.

This is why training itself cuts two ways. It enables instantaneous, unconscious reactions that enable us to survive in combat. Think about reacting to small arms fire: Soldiers drop

and immediately return fire before the conscious part of the brain realizes even realizes there is a threat. This is a good example of conscientious training making a positive difference on the battlefield. Sometimes you can't think. You don't have time. You simply must act.

Yet this web of habits that we embed deep in ourselves grows deeper with each behavior we repeat can limit our flexibility. Consider this passage adapted from a book written by a



Courtesy photo

Command Sgt. Maj. David M. Bruner

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*Training and drills enable us to react. Education enables us to adapt.*

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*They that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils.*

-Francis Bacon

*One of the serious problems in planning the fight against American doctrine is that the Americans do not read their manuals, nor do they feel any obligation to follow their doctrine...*

-written in a Soviet Lieutenant's notebook

veteran who crossed the berm into Iraq in 2003 and spent more than 16 months fighting as an infantryman. In this passage the platoon's medic has been shot during a routine foot patrol and is in critical condition. The Radio Transmission Operator, a specialist, is attempting to call in the Medevac:

*"Raptor main, this is Raptor Three-Four. We've been hit at the bank! We need medevac immediately! Over."*

*"Three four this is main. Calm down – what's your grid? Over."*

*"We're at the (expletive) bank! You have the grid written on the wall right in front of you! We need a medevac (expletive) now! Doc is hit bad! Over."*

*The people on the other side of the radio didn't know the streets. If any of the regular soldiers had been in the CP, it would have been as simple as "We're across from the furniture store" or "Go out the front gate and take a left," but that wasn't the case. Paperwork had to be filed, grids had to be copied and sent to higher...*

*The Quick Reaction Force was immediately called up ... every soldier was downstairs in minutes, their gear and weapons ready for command, but none came ... almost 45 minutes would go by before any American Soldiers left the compound.*

*Back at the bank, the specialist was still yelling into the*

*radio but receiving only opposition from people who couldn't comprehend the situation. One even threatened to pursue disciplinary action against him for cursing on the radio. Everything was black-and-white in the CP. They never seemed to realize we weren't there to write reports or to have soccer games with the locals.*

*A private had his hands over his mouth and was staring at the whole scene, trying not to hyperventilate. The specialist grabbed him boldly by the shoulders and shook him.*

*"Get the (expletive) over there and pull security!" There was no doubt who was in charge. While everyone else stood numbly by, a young specialist from Tallahassee Community College with no military experience other than the Florida National Guard organized a perimeter and communicated with higher.*

Those on the other side of the radio were not adaptive at all. Instead of recognizing that there was a more efficient way to push out the QRF, they squabbled with the man on the ground over petty paperwork, staff checklists and radio procedure while a Soldier lay bleeding. Were they bad Soldiers? I doubt it. In their training and the monotony of months of similar day-to-day operations, they had developed deeply ingrained routines and could not adapt to an unexpected occurrence. Stuck in a 'bad habit web' they spun; they couldn't adapt to the chaos of the random event.

It did not match their past experience.

The specialist, however, adapted quickly. Standard procedure would have been to call in a 9-line Medevac. He thought the QRF would get out of the gate faster if he took a cognitive shortcut by saying they were by the bank. The location would have been familiar to any member of his platoon, but was not a common reference point to the decision makers in the rear. When he realized no one could make sense of his shortcut, he was in a position to make a decision, he had to adapt again.

With some of the noncommissioned officers around him focusing on the wounded medic or the crowd, a specialist took control. While communicating with higher, the young specialist steadied unsure, panicking Soldiers and directed medical care for the wounded medic with authority. What I find most remarkable about this is the last sentence – a special-



Courtesy Photo

Above, Sgt. Maj. David Bruner addresses the crowd after being awarded the Legion of Merit during a ceremony at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Fort Riley, Kan.

ist, with no special credentials or training beyond the scope of a normal infantry training learned in One Station Unit Training – grew and adapted as a leader. He took control and affected the chaos around him. Not everything was done by the book, but ultimately he adapted successfully and the medic lived because of it.

We, as leaders, are guided by life experience and common sense just as that specialist was. Army training and civilian life experience give us instinctual examples of what has worked and what has not in our past. Sometimes, this is good – as in reacting to contact – and sometimes it is detrimental, as when the Medevac procedures for the specialist’s company created more, not less, obstacles to rescuing the injured Soldier.

The only factor that enables us to *adapt*, that is, to pick and choose which habitual (and thus more natural and automatic) mental process to follow and which to override is education. Training and drills enable us to react. Education enables us to adapt.

Psychologist Read Montague, who studies the way the human mind works using computers networked in a structure similar to human brain works, notes:

*The habitual whispers of past experience attempt to guide us... [these habits] never quite go away and they are particular to us, to the lives we have lived and experienced... [they] will be with us for good, but it’s also fairly clear that the same system that plagues us with these ghosts also provides a way out – just by our understanding of the nature of its operation. We overplay these automated guides with new ideas that we deem important and that can veto the habits.*

We get these ideas through education. It can be the experiential education of ‘walking the streets and learning where the bank is’ like the Soldiers in the second story. Yet it is also sitting in a library studying mathematics or history or anthropology or chemistry. This type of learning produces mental models that can help us mirror and respond to the complexities of the modern battlefield and encourages the type of abstract thinking that is required in full spectrum operations.

This is why NCOES is undergoing such a sea of change now. We are pushing complex leadership training down to lower ranks. Imagine how the specialist could have functioned if he had gone through the Warrior Leader Course as a private first class to enhance his basic leadership skills or had already completed Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course common core through distance learning. He would have had a better knowledge of command post policies and procedures and required even less adaptation.



To learn more about the College of the American Soldier, visit GoArmyEd at [https://www.goarmyed.com/public/public\\_cas.aspx](https://www.goarmyed.com/public/public_cas.aspx).

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**Becoming an adaptable leader is hard. It is easy to follow directions. Leading requires a lot of brain power and a lot of will power and a lot of training and education.**

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Now imagine this scenario instead. The specialist had learned some basic Arabic prior to his deployment using Rosetta Stone® and his time at JRTC. As they patrolled, he learned more of the local dialect and slang and became friendly with the locals. In his civilian college courses, which he was enrolled in as soon as he enlisted, through the College of the American Soldier, he had been taking courses in psychology and anthropology. During brief downtimes in the deployment, he was working on a paper about the local ethnography of the city they kept safe. In front of the bank, he noticed a man wearing a head scarf that was not common to the area and took note of tribal tattoos that indicated he was from down south. In talking with employees at the bank, he noticed that though they were trying to act calm, they kept making unconscious gestures that indicated worry and apprehension.

He put two and two together a few minutes before the gunman could shoot and was able to coordinate with local security forces patrolling with them to arrest the man. No one is hurt.

That’s not as dramatic of a story. Yet it is a far better one for all involved. We as an NCO Corps must recognize that an adaptable leader’s most important tool is his mind. PT is conducted every morning to keep in physical shape. We must exercise our minds as well. The more education we have, the more we realize how limited our knowledge is. This allows us appreciate how many ways there are to solve a problem. This is the wonderful thing about the College of the American Soldier. If NCO’s take full advantage of it (as we must), the intellectual capital we will develop in the Corps will hone the already sharp edge of our sergeants to a razor’s edge of proficiency. Under this system, as your character and physical strength grows, so does your mind, producing the ideal NCO: an adaptable leader of rock solid integrity who will make the right decisions in the hard moments.

*Command Sgt. Maj. David M. Bruner is the Training and Doctrine Command, command sergeant major. Prior to arriving at TRADOC he served as the command sergeant major of the Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kan. He has more than 31 years of service and has held many leadership positions, including platoon sergeant, Special Forces engineer sergeant and team sergeant, first sergeant, senior enlisted adviser for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and commandant.*

# Commentary: Safety-briefing cliches carry meaning

By Don Kramer  
Northwest Guardian →

“What a senseless way to die.”

It was the unspoken sentiment most of us in the battalion shared during the memorial ceremony at the Ft. Lewis, WA, Evergreen Chapel.

Company leaders reword their memories to the Friday before Memorial Day, questioning what they could have said or done differently to change events.

A Soldier had lost his life at a local lake, celebrating his imminent exit from the Army. Though it happened 28 years ago, I can still feel the sense of loss and helplessness over it.

Company first sergeants throughout 2nd Battalion, 39th Infantry had gathered their platoons the Friday before to give the obligatory safety briefings, the last official requirement before the long weekend.

I can picture restless Soldiers in formation, eyes glazed over, planning their routes to the lake, their trips to the Class VI store and what they had in store the next day for the popular specialist.

He had made it to 22 on his last birthday without tasting alcohol. His friends, however, convinced him that it was his last chance to finally party with his buddies. He was too congenial to turn them down.

His platoon had recently been through a lot together, surviving an Inspector General inspection and acing an Army Training and Evaluation Program at the Yakima Training Center. It had been a punishing year and they felt entitled to blow off steam.

The next day, beer dulling their senses and ruining their reason, the Soldiers ignored their first sergeant’s warnings and tested the icy lake water. Going in became a test of manhood. Soon there was confusion, kamikazee-style charges into the water, splashing and drilling each other with a volleyball from close range. After a while as their lips turned blue, they got out to dry off, warm up and refuel.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain

A commander gives his troops a safety briefing. Safety briefings have the potential to save lives.

It was a great time on a sunny day for a tight-knit platoon, a group of friends. They popped fresh beers and toasted their bravado.

Finally, someone noticed the guest of honor was missing. Another said he had seen him run into the water, but no one had seen him come out. Confusion turned to panic through the platoon. Several Soldiers dashed back into the lake, diving furiously to the murky bottom until they couldn’t stand the cold.

“It happened so quickly,” they said afterward. One second their friend was there, splashing in the freezing water, and the next he was gone. Disasters often happen like that.

The battalion’s leaders met to assess what had gone wrong. The commander was ending his two-year tour without so much as a serious training injury – until this. He demanded to know how his safety messages had been transmitted to the troops.

In the end, the company commander and his first sergeant had gone by the numbers. They had said the right things, conducted the required safety briefings.

They had even warned of the cold lakes and as always, cautioned against drinking to excess. Their Soldiers chose to disregard the messages.

Safety briefings tend to be cliché. “What other words can you use?” the company commander asked, indicating that there had to be a better way to get the safety message out. But it was too late for that specialist, and as battalion adjutant, it fell to me to write the commander’s eulogy. I began it with what we all felt.

“What a senseless way to die.”

*Editor’s note: Visit the Combat Readiness Center Web site at <https://safety.army.mil/Default.aspx> to learn more about the Army’s Safety initiatives and messages. Of particular note is the Summer Safety section that has 20 different topics for NCOs and commanders to use as part of their regular safety briefings. This year’s Safe Summer Campaign reaffirms the Army’s commitment to protecting our Band of Brothers and Sisters by reminding every member of the Army Family that “no one stands alone.”*

# NCO Stories

*A selection of Valor*



*Staff Sergeant Nicky Daniel Bacon*

## *Citation to award the Medal of Honor*

*For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Staff Sergeant Bacon distinguished himself while serving as a squad leader with the 1st Platoon, Company B, during an operation west of Tam Ky. When Company B came under fire from an enemy bunker line to the front, Staff Sergeant Bacon quickly organized his men and led them forward in an assault. He advanced on a hostile bunker and destroyed it with grenades. As he did so, several fellow soldiers including the 1st Platoon leader, were struck by machine gun fire and fell wounded in an exposed position forward of the rest of the platoon. Staff Sergeant Bacon immediately assumed command of the platoon and assaulted the hostile gun position, finally killing the enemy gun crew in a single-handed effort. When the 3d Platoon moved to Staff Sergeant Bacon's location, its leader*

*was also wounded. Without hesitation Staff Sergeant. Bacon took charge of the additional platoon and continued the fight. In the ensuing action he personally killed 4 more enemy soldiers and silenced an antitank weapon. Under his leadership and example, the members of both platoons accepted his authority without question. Continuing to ignore the intense hostile fire, he climbed up on the exposed deck of a tank and directed fire into the enemy position while several wounded men were evacuated. As a result of Staff Sergeant Bacon's extraordinary efforts, his company was able to move forward, eliminate the enemy positions, and rescue the men trapped to the front. Staff Sergeant Bacon's bravery at the risk of his life was in the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.*

# Bacon continues serving those who served

By Stacy A. Ouellette  
Public Affairs Specialist, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Nicky D. Bacon's career began as an Infantryman, fighting his way through the thick jungles of Vietnam. His actions there warranted his receiving the Medal of Honor.

He received the award for his actions on August 26, 1968, during the Battle of Tam Ky, Republic of Vietnam. At the time, he was a staff sergeant with Company B, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade.

"Everything is teamwork," Bacon said. "Somebody is singled out for the award. I might have been able to knock out a couple of machine gun positions and at the time it was my duty to do.

"There were many other people at the same time firing their weapons, doing all they could do to take care of the situation."

His memory of the battle hasn't dimmed with time, nor does he have nightmares from the experience. Instead, some details remain clear vividly and he rarely needs help to fall asleep.

"One of the clearer moments is we were riding in there with the Cavalry, on armored personnel carriers and tanks," he recalled, "I didn't hear anything due to the sound of the tanks, and then all of a sudden there were bullets pinging metal."

Once the Viet Cong forces started shooting rocket-propelled grenades, the tanks started backing up to provide overhead fire support to the Infantrymen, who went into the wood line for cover. Bacon's platoon was the first one in.

"We got in there and were fighting like hell for a long time. I was able to knock out a couple of positions as I went in and at one point it got real hairy," Bacon said.

"It's hard to remember the entire battle. There was just a lot of firepower going on from both sides," he said.

The Viet Cong were trying to close in on his unit and he believes they didn't realize there were Infantrymen along with the tanks.

"It was obvious that if the Cavalry had been in there by themselves, there would've been a lot more casualties," he said.

At the time, Bacon's unit thought the Viet Cong had a reinforced company on the hill. As it turned out, it was a regiment sized unit, which is more than five times the size of what was initially anticipated.

"As a grunt, I had a map and a compass. The overall battle plan isn't really explained to you on that level. Your mission is, but the overall plan is not," he said.

"I was taking out people who were bringing the most target fire on us. I couldn't do what had to be done as long as they were in position doing what they were."

Throughout the battle, Bacon thought his own platoon leader

had been killed because two others in the unit were. Bacon didn't find out until years later that he not only lived, but also became an Army surgeon, later retiring from service as a brigadier general.

"We were successful, victorious and should not have been," Bacon said. "They had all the advantages. They had the high ground, were dug in and camouflaged. It was a hell of a fight."

He gives a lot of credit to prayer and the Soldiers he fought with that day. At the time, U.S. Forces were building up troop levels in the area and it was all out war, all the time.

"In '68 things were very, very hairy," he said. "It was all out war. There were ambushes and fire fights all the time. You didn't go for long periods of time without exchanging fire. Battles were real battles."

Part of his motivation during the battle was knowing there were wounded Soldiers out there depending on him. His mind was set on doing his part to take out the enemy and get to those Soldiers.

"I know if I'm out there wounded, somebody is coming for me and vice versa," he said. "If someone's out there, they know I'm coming for them."

If there's a target out there between you and what you're trying to do, then take it out. That's what happened."

Bacon is humble about receiving the medal. He recalls the more famous recipients like Audie Murphy and Alvin York, who also believed they didn't deserve it any more than anyone else.

"There was nothing magical about what I did any more than someone who died or was wounded that day," Bacon said.

"I just survived it and was in a position to do some things that maybe someone else would've done if I hadn't," he said. "You're not there to evaluate and be brave. You get stuck sometimes in something."

Bacon is the seventh recipient from Arkansas since World War II to receive the award and is the state's only recipient for the Vietnam War.

His other awards and decorations include: the Distinguished Service Cross, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Combat Infantry Badge, Purple Heart, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, Army Commendation Medal, and a number of other service awards.

After retiring from the Army as a first sergeant with 21 years of service, Bacon continued to serve America as a Veteran. He worked for the Phoenix, Arizona Veterans Affairs Regional Office and later the Director of the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs.

Bacon's motto in life has remained, "to serve those who have served." He was appointed as Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army for the State of Arkansas in 2003, appointed to serve on the President's National Hire Veterans Committee, and also on the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission.

Bacon co-owns the Disabled Veterans Construction, Inc., and resides in Rosebud, Ark., with his wife Tamera Ann. He has five children and six grandchildren.



Nicky Daniel Bacon

# Going above and beyond earns Soldier Silver Star

By David Crozier

In the late afternoon of March 20, 2003 the members of Bonecrusher Troop, 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, 7<sup>th</sup> U.S. Cavalry received orders to go secure a bridge in An Najaf, Iraq. The sands of Iraq were being blown about in a severe sandstorm; visibility – hampered at best. Still, a routine mission, so they thought. But the events of that day would lead to one of their Soldiers receiving the third highest award for valor the Army bestows upon its members.

“We were told to go secure this bridge,” said Sgt. Maj. Javier Camacho, who was then Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Camacho, Platoon Sergeant. “I was the first one to cross and once we secured the bridge we found explosives under it. No one else could cross until we got the engineers out to clear the bridge.”

Once cleared, the rest of the troop came across and the platoon moved out. With Camacho platoon as the trail platoon, the unit proceeded down the road about 8 kilometers until it came under enemy fire from both sides of the road.

“I saw the tracers of the rounds being fired and hitting the middle of the troop and we knew it was enemy fire, so I told my crew to make sure they identified the enemy before they fired,” Camacho said. “Then my gunner said, ‘hey, a tank got hit.’ I couldn’t see it because the sandstorm was so bad, but I heard someone call over the net that the 2/3 crew was totally killed.”

Camacho said as his tank drove by they could see the flames and pieces of tank flying off. In the process of passing the burning tank, Camacho’s crew found themselves in the predicament of a soft embankment. Instead of trying to correct and get back on the road, Camacho directed the crew to continue down the embankment while engaging targets to their left. Once on the bottom of the embankment, Camacho informed his “wingman” to stay on the road and engage the enemy to the right while he took on the enemy to the left.

In driving down the embankment, Camacho’s gunner observed that some of the crew from 2/3 was still alive keeping cover on the embankment. By this time Camacho’s tank had become mired in the sand. He ordered his crew to put on their gear and exit the tank to begin recovery efforts of both his tank and the crew of 2/3.

“Meanwhile we went and secured those three Soldiers,” he said. “The the gunner asked me, ‘Sergeant Camacho, can you get my driver?’ and I asked ‘Where is he?’ ‘He’s still alive in the tank,’ he replied”

The tank was about 150 meters away and all he could see were flames coming out of the TC’s hatch. He grabbed his gunner and began to make his way towards the disabled tank when ammo from the tank began to explode towards the embankment.



Sgt. Maj. Javier Camacho

“So we had to get on the road and run to the tank,” he said. “We took a knee and the driver popped his hatch to let us know he was still alive.”

Realizing they needed to extinguish the flames before they could extract the driver, Camacho and his gunner made three round trips to his now freed tank to retrieve fire extinguishers, all the while avoiding being hit by enemy fire.

“Eventually we got him out,” he said. “By then my tank was back on the road, the Bradleys had arrived, so we put the Soldier in the back of the Bradley, and recovered all the crew.

Nine days later, Camacho and his crew would be faced with another situation that required service above and beyond the call of duty.

On April 3, 2003, while traveling north toward Baghdad, Camacho and his crew observed a brigade scout vehicle take direct fire and begin to burn. As the crew scrambled from the vehicle, Camacho could see they were pinned down by unrelenting enemy

small arms and RPG fire.

“I could see it getting peppered. So I told my driver to pull up next to the humvee. As we were getting close I could see a body half in, and half out of the humvee. I couldn’t see the other crew members,” he said. “I told my crew I’m getting off, cover me. So I jumped off the tank with my equipment, flack vest, and I went and pulled the soldier out of the humvee. As I was doing I saw the two other Soldiers that were in the humvee, hiding behind the back tire. I pulled the Soldier out, he was still conscious and his face was completely covered in blood. I couldn’t see his name on his headband because a piece of shrapnel took it off. But he was conscious.”

Because of intense enemy fire, Camacho could not get the injured Soldier to safety inside his tank. Instead he had to wait for Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Steven Newby, one of the scouts, to come to the scene with his Bradley to give assistance.

“Newby showed up and he said, ‘Let’s put him in my Bradley.’ He already had his ramp down, but he was on the other side of the highway,” Camacho said. “The other two Soldiers took off for the Bradley and Newby and I, we knew we couldn’t stand up, so we got on our hands and knees and we dragged the Soldier across the highway.”

Camacho said the whole thing was surreal and that he didn’t really do anything to warrant getting the recognition. In fact he credits the actions of his crew for the successfulness of both missions.

“It is humbling, very humbling,” he said of getting the Silver Star. “I didn’t think I deserved it. To me I was doing my job, that was it. There were a lot more people involved. Nobody does it by themselves.”



# Sky Soldier awarded Distinguished Service Cross

By Staff Sgt. Brandon Aird  
173rd ABCT Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Erich Phillips, mortar platoon sergeant for Chosen Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment, also known as "The Rock," was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross Sept. 15, 2008, in Vicenza, Italy for his actions Aug. 22, 2007, at Ranch House in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan.

The DSC is the second highest military decoration that can be awarded to a member of the Army, and only the fifth awarded to a servicemember during Operation Enduring Freedom.

Before dawn on Aug. 22, 2007, 60 to 80 Taliban extremists moved into position to launch a three-pronged attack against Ranch House. Video footage posted on an extremist website showed Taliban rehearsing over a detailed map of Ranch House's fighting positions.

"Their plan was to overrun our forward operating base," said Phillips, who is from Eastpoint, Fla.

When the Taliban attacked Ranch House, 22 American Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team were living at the base. They worked side-by-side with the Afghan National Army in one of the most rugged and remote NATO bases in Afghanistan.

Every defended position was bombarded with small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades simultaneously, said Phillips.

"I woke up to RPG's slamming into my building," recalled Phillips.

The Taliban, who breached the Afghan perimeter, quickly overtook an ANA and Afghan Security Guards (private security firm) weapons and ammo cache, which they unleashed on the U.S. Soldiers.

"At this point all communication was lost with Post 3 and Post 4," said Phillips. Phillips didn't know it yet, but Post 3 was destroyed and Pfc. Jeddah Deloria was trapped underneath the collapsed fighting position. The other wounded Soldiers from Post 3 had retreated to Post 2.

Phillips organized defenses around the tactical operations center, which was being hit by RPG's, machine guns and small-arms fire. The 22 Soldiers were outnumbered three to one.

Phillips seeing that the TOC risked being overrun began positioning Soldiers in a defensive perimeter and relayed information to 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Matthew Ferrara, platoon leader, who was on the radio calling for artillery and close air support.

The effective enemy fire destroyed the TOC's radio antennas mounted on the roof, which left the platoon with no communication for five minutes.

Ferrara moved the TOC outside and with a dismantled radio, re-established communications.

After learning Post 2 had numerous casualties, Phillips grabbed Sgt. Kyle Dirkontis, the platoon medic, and attempted to assault up the mountain toward Post 2. Phillips's Soldiers used hand grenades and small-arms fire to help cover his and Dirkontis' movement.

While bounding toward Post 2, Phillips and Dirkontis were pinned down by enemy fire at a set of wooden structures, which were Post 2's living quarters.

"At this point, Soldiers at Post 2 yelled down to me that two enemy fighters were on the other end of the building I was taking cover on," said Phillips.

Phillips, only three meters away from the enemy, rolled two hand grenades over the top of the living quarters.

"Once the explosion went off Doc (Dirkontis) realized how bad we were taking fire and he came from behind cover to fire and was shot in the chest," explained Phillips.

Dirkontis coughing up blood and suffering from a collapsed lung was unable to stand up. Phillips coordinated with Post 2 to provide cover fire while he dragged Dirkontis

down the hill. Upon reaching the mortar pit, Phillips started to perform first aid and was assisted by another Soldier.

Phillips directed the Soldier to provide first aid while he continued to fire small arms and direct another Soldier's grenades toward Taliban positions until an Air Force A-10 Warthog began strafing the base.

"The first gun run went southeast to west behind the aid station right into the back of the TOC, and the second came from the south to the north down the center of the FOB," said Phillips.

The Warthog helped repel the advancing Taliban and enabled Phillips to lead a team of Soldiers to recover Deloria who had been alone at Post 3 for two and a half hours.

"Once I climbed the ladder to Post 3 I could see the post had taken severe damage and had fallen on top of Deloria," said Phillips. "Deloria had attempted to blow all four claymore mines. He even applied first aid to himself and was holding his weapon when I found him. I tried to carry Deloria back down to the casualty collection point, but he said 'I want to walk sergeant'."

Once back to the casualty collection point, Phillips began preparing Soldiers for evacuation and helped evacuate all of the wounded. Once the quick reaction force arrived, Phillips led the Soldiers to retake the lost section of the base.

By fighting's end, half of the U.S. Soldiers would be wounded and one ANA and ASG would be killed. No Soldiers were killed in the two and half hour firefight and the base was not overrun.

"I just tried to maintain the front line," said Phillips. "The other Soldiers deserve just as much recognition as me."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Brandon Aird

Gen. Cart Ham, commander of U.S. Army Europe, awards Staff Sgt. Erich R. Phillips, mortar platoon sergeant for Chosen Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment (Airborne), the Distinguished Service Cross.



# PHOTO JOURNAL

Photo by Luke P. Thelen



A Soldier from 25th Special Troops Battalion, 25th Infantry Division instructs children from the Tikrit Orphanage on how to bowl at the Morale, Welfare and Recreations Facility at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

Photo by Staff Sgt. James Selesnick



Staff Sgt. Adam Jeter, 82nd Airborne Division, launches a raven unmanned aerial vehicle during a joint air assault operation planned and led by the Iraqi army and Iraqi national police in the Ma'dain area east of Baghdad, Iraq.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea



Staff Sgt. Damian Remijio, instructs a National Police officer assigned to the 3rd NP Brigade, 1st NP Division to keep his sights on a door during a training event, at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, located outside of eastern Baghdad.

Photo by Spc. Karah Cohen



U.S. Vice President, Joe Biden addresses U.S. Servicemen and civilians serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom, during a naturalization ceremony at Al Faw Palace in Baghdad, Iraq, July 4. Two hundred thirty-seven service members were sworn in as U.S. citizens during the ceremony.



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# Letters to the Editor

The NCO Journal  
11291 SGT E Churchill Street  
Fort Bliss, Texas 79918-8002

## Thanks for an outstanding product!

**Dear Editor,**

Your Spring 2008 issue of The NCO Journal is truly an outstanding product. Congratulations!

Starting with the “tell your story” message of SMA Kenneth O. Preston and moving to your passionate send off of former SMA George Dunaway, prefaced by the caring thoughts of MSG Pilgrim’s father’s endurance, I could anticipate that this issue would be a noteworthy one.

Then, as I turned to the articles by Sgt. Marry Ferguson on NCO-led and Drill Sergeants, my eyes focused on the photograph of the left heel of each Soldier touching the ground simultaneously as the platoon counted cadence. That’s precision both by the platoon and the photographer.

Dave Crozier’s articles featuring the 8th Army’s land navigation training brought back memories of the role that the Korean terrain played in the see-saw engagements 50 years ago on the one hand, and the realization that no one could have imagined the huge contrast between the North of the 38th parallel and the South of the 38th parallel as it is today on the other hand, making one wonder what Iraq 50 years from now will look like.

Next, the Q and A of General George W. Casey absorbed my attention. Of particular interest were the frequent references made by the General to the outstanding qualities of today’s Soldiers/NCOs and what NCOES needs to produce in NCOs for tomorrow’s contingencies. It was uplifting to find that the Chief of Staff (the Army’s top strategist) identified the expansion of NCO intangibles – thought processes, creativity, and breath and depth – as a priority in developing readiness for the challenges likely to confront tomorrow’s NCOs and the Army generally. I continue to be optimistic that the NCOES will gravitate into an Army Sergeants College, or that the College of the American Soldier will become aligned with prescribed educational outcomes essential to performance requirements of tomorrow’s NCOs (the pyramid of Sergeants that constitutes direct leadership).

Then, you close the issue with the Roll Call, quite appropriate, which in actuality is an Honor Roll. A job well done. Just like

a personal letter. Many thanks to you and your associates.

*Andrew S. Korim*  
*Sarver, PA*

## The NCO: A Short History

**Dear Editor,**

Just finished reading the article entitled “The NCO: A Short History” written by Mr. Larry Arms and found it quite interesting. However, I did notice what appears to be an error in the article.

There was a line that stated: “To address this problem, in 1958, the Army added the ranks of staff sergeant and sergeant major to the NCO Corps.”

In reading the book entitled: “Guardians of the Republic A History of the Noncommissioned Corps of the U.S. Army” written by Ernest F. Fisher, Jr. on page 308 it is written that in 1958, it was the pay grade of E-8 and E-9 was created, as part of the Military Pay Bill of 1958. It was this legislation that gave the enlisted ranks the pay scale that exists today.

The actual title / rank of both Staff Sergeant and Sergeant Major are almost as old as the Army itself, it is just that when one starts to read about the various changes in titles, jobs and pay scales that things tend to get confusing.

*SFC John W. Wingfield, Jr.*  
*Ft Knox, KY*

*SFC Wingfield: When one talks of pay grades and ranks there is often some confusion. My friend, Dr. Fisher in his work Guardians of the Republic is correct in stating that in 1958 they created the E-8 and E-9 pay grades as part of the Military Pay Bill of 1958. However, the ranks that were added were that of staff sergeant and sergeant major. The rank of sergeant major had been removed from the NCO Corps in 1920. The rank of staff sergeant had been removed in 1948. In 1957 there were only four NCO ranks and pay grades: corporal, E-4; sergeant, E-5; sergeant first class, E-6; and the master sergeant/first sergeant, E-7.*

*Larry Arms*

# Roll call

o f t h e f a l l e n

## Operation Iraqi Freedom

Staff Sgt. Randy S. Agno, 29, Pearl City, Hawaii, May 8, 2009 ♦ Spc. Omar M. Albrak, 21, Chicago, Ill., May 9, 2009 ♦ Spc. Michael J. Anaya, 23, Crestview, Fla., April 12, 2009 ♦ 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Leevi K. Barnard, 28, Mount Airy, N.C., May 21, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Jacob D. Barton, 20, Lenox, Mo., May 11, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Daniel J. Beard, 24, Buffalo, N.Y., April 3, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Paul F. Brooks, 34, Joplin, Mo., May 21, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Timothy A. David, 28, Gladwin, Mich., June 28, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Justin J. Duffy, 31, Cozad, Neb., June 2, 2009 ♦ Spc. Chad A. Edmundson, 20, Williamsburg, Pa., May 27, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Edward W. Forrest Jr., 25, St. Louis, Mo., April 10, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Raphael A. Futrell, 26, Anderson, S.C., March 25, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Christian E. Bueno-Galdos, 25, Paterson, N.J., May 11, 2009 ♦ Pvt. Bryce E. Gautier, 22, Cypress, Calif., April 10, 2009 ♦ Maj. Jason E. George, 38, Tehachapi, Calif., May 21, 2009 ♦ Staff Sgt. Bryan E. Hall, 32, Elk Grove, Calif., April 10, 2009 ♦ Pvt. Justin P. Hartford, 21, Elmira, N.Y., May 8, 2009 ♦ Spc. Joshua L. Hazlewood, 22, Manvel, Texas, June 25, 2009 ♦ Spc. Casey L. Hills, 23, Salem, Illinois, June 24, 2009 ♦ Maj. Matthew P. Houseal, 54, Amarillo, Texas, May 11, 2009 ♦ Pvt. Bradley W. Iorio, 19, Galloway, N.J., May 29, 2009 ♦ Spc. Chancellor A. Keesling, 25, Indianapolis, Ind., June 19, 2009 ♦ Spc. Christopher M. Kurth, 23, Alamogordo, N.M., June 4, 2009 ♦ Pvt. Thomas E. Lee, III, 20, Dalton, Ga., May 29, 2009 ♦ Staff Sgt. Edmond L. Lo, 23, Salem, N.H., June 13, 2009 ♦ Army Civilian Maged M. Hussein, 43, of Cairo, Egypt, May 25, 2009 ♦ Maj. Steven Hutchinson, 60, Scottsdale, Ariz., May 10, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Christopher D. Loza, 24, Abilene, Texas, April 10, 2009 ♦ Spc. Marko M. Samson, 30, Columbus, Ohio, May 31, 2009 ♦ Spc. Jeremiah P. McCleery, 24, Portola, Calif., May 2, 2009 ♦ Cpl. Ryan C. McGhee, 21, Fredericksburg, Va., May 13, 2009 ♦ Spc. Israel Candelaria Mejias, 28, San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico, April 5, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Raul Moncada, 29, Madera, Calif., April 13, 2009 ♦ Command Sgt. Maj. Benjamin Moore, Jr., 43, Waycross, Ga., Apr 24, 2009 ♦ Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Brian Naseman, 36, New Bremen, Ohio, May 22, 2009 ♦ Spc. Charles D. Parrish, 23, Jasper, Ala., died June 4, 2009 ♦ Cpl. Jason G. Pautsch, 20, Davenport, Iowa, April 10, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Devin C. Pochie, 25, Jacksonville, N.C., Mar. 31, 2009 ♦ Capt. Kafele H. Sims, 32, Los Angeles, Calif., June 16, 2009 ♦ Pfc. Samuel D. Stone, 20, Port Orchard, Wash., May 30, 2009 ♦ Spc. Shawn D. Sykes, 28, Portsmouth, Va., May 7, 2009 ♦ Spc. Jake R. Velloza, 22, Inverness, Calif., May 2, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Leroy O. Webster, 28, Sioux Falls, S.D., April 25, 2009 ♦ Staff Sgt. Gary L. Woods Jr., 24, Lebanon Junction, Ky., April 10, 2009 ♦ Pfc. Micheal E. Yates Jr., 19, Federalsburg, Md., May 11, 2009

## Operation Enduring Freedom

Cpl. Francisco X. Aguila, 35, Bayamon, Puerto Rico, April 14, 2009 ♦ Maj. Rocco M. Barnes, 50, Los Angeles, Calif., June 4, 2009 ♦ Staff Sgt. John C. Beale, 39, Riverdale, Ga., June 4, 2009 ♦ 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. John D. Blair, 38, Calhoun, Ga., June 20, 2009 ♦ 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Brian N. Bradshaw, 24, Steilacoom, Wash., June 25, 2009 ♦ Chief Warrant Officer Brent S. Cole, 38, Reedsville, W. Va., May 22, 2009 ♦ Pfc. Peter K. Cross, 20, Saginaw, Texas, June 26, 2009 ♦ Pfc. Richard A. Dewater, 21, Topeka, Kan., April 15, 2009 ♦ Pvt. Steven T. Drees, 19, Peshigo, Wis., June 28, 2009 ♦ Sgt. 1st Class Kevin A. Dupont, 52, Templeton, Mass., June 17, 2009 ♦ Staff Sgt. Jeffrey A. Hall, 28, Huntsville, Ala., June 1, 2009 ♦ Spc. Roberto A. Hernandez II, 21, Far Rockaway, N.Y., June 2, 2009 ♦ Maj. Kevin M. Jenrette, 37, Lula, Ga., June 4, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Ricky D. Jones, 26, Plantersville, Ala., June 21, 2009 ♦ Spc. Jeffrey W. Jordan, 21, Rome, Ga., June 4, 2009 ♦ Spc. Ryan C. King, 22, Dallas, Ga., May 1, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Terry J. Lynch, 22, of Shepherd, Mont., died June 29, 2009 ♦ Staff Sgt. Joshua A. Melton, 26, of Carlyle, Ill., June 19, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Jasper K. Obakyrairur, 26, Hilo, Hawaii, June 1, 2009 ♦ Pfc. Matthew D. Ogden, 33, Corpus Christi, Texas, June 1, 2009 ♦ Spc. Jonathan C. O'Neill, 22, Zephyrhills, Fla., June 15, 2009 ♦ Sgt. James D. Pirtle, 21, Colorado Springs, Colo., May 1, 2009 ♦ Spc. Rodrigo A. Munguia Rivas, 27, Germantown, Md., June 21, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Lukasz D. Saczek, 23, Lake in the Hills, Ill., May 10, 2009 ♦ Spc. Eduardo S. Silva, 25, Greenfield, Calif., June 9, 2009 ♦ Sgt. Paul G. Smith, 43, of Peoria, Ill., June 19, 2009 ♦ Staff Sgt. William D. Vile, 27, Philadelphia, Pa., May 1, 2009 ♦ Pfc. Matthew W. Wilson, 19, Miller, Mo., June 1, 2009

*Editor's note: This is a continuation of the list that was started with the October 2003 issue of the NCO Journal and contains those names released by the Department of Defense between March 27 and June 30, 2009.*

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