

THE NGO JOURNAL

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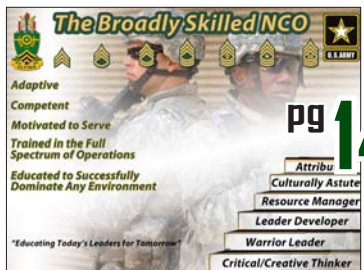
FORUM FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION 2009

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ROLL CALL
We honor the men and women who have sacrificed their lives in current operations around the world.

THE NCO JOURNAL

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From the SMA

Best Warrior Competition

The Army's Best Warrior Competition was held Sept. 27-Oct. 2 at Fort Lee, Va. It was my honor and privilege to witness the hard work of all the participating Soldiers and noncommissioned officers. To reach this level of recognition, these warriors demonstrated dedication to duty and the thirst for excellence. The Best Warrior Competition is extremely important as it showcases the best Soldiers and NCOs the Army has to offer.

A total of 24 warriors competed on behalf of 12 major Army commands and organizations: U.S. Army Forces Command, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, U.S. Army Europe, U.S. Army Materiel Command, U.S. Army Forces Korea, U.S. Army Medical Command, U.S. Army Pacific Command, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, U.S. Army Reserve Command, Army National Guard and the National Capitol Region, which includes several smaller commands.

The 24 warriors represented 19 different military occupational specialties. Some of the MOSs included: a chaplain assistant, military intelligence, transportation, medical, signal, infantry, military police and electrician. Every warrior in this competition represents the greatness of the American Soldier and subsequently the *crème de la crème* of our society. Each warrior demonstrated the high standards of excellence recognized as the mark of the American Soldier. They made a conscious decision to study and demonstrate excellence in their professions. This decision comes from Soldiers who believe in being the best for themselves, their Soldiers and their units.

The NCOs and Soldiers I observed during the weeklong competition are nothing short of inspiring. They endured an exhausting week of physical and mental testing and evaluation including a formal board chaired by seven senior command sergeants major, a written exam of 50 questions and a written essay.

These warriors skillfully performed many battlefield missions, which included weapons qualification, react to ambush and indirect fire, detect and defeat an improvised explosive device, combat lifesaver techniques, combatives and a day and night urban warfare orienteering course. All of these warriors represented themselves and their commands superbly. As your sergeant major of the Army, I could not be prouder of the professionalism and

skills demonstrated by all the competitors.

The Best Warrior Competition is a yearlong process. It begins with Soldiers and NCOs competing in the company, troop or battery Soldier and NCO of the Month and Quarter boards developed by commanders and first sergeants.

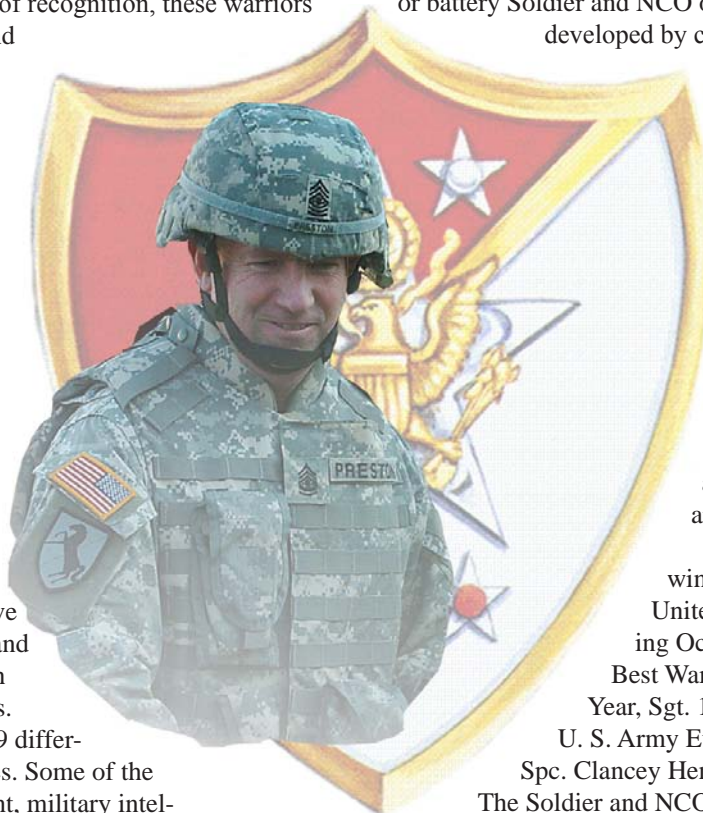
This competition supports one of our three pillars of learning and development supporting Soldiers' growth throughout their careers. The three pillars of learning are operational experience, institutional schools and self-development/self-study. The Best Warrior Competition supports the self-development/self-study pillar which promotes learning about Soldier and family care systems at posts, camps and stations all around the Army.

We announced the competition winners during the Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting Oct. 5. This year's winners of the Best Warrior Competition are NCO of the Year, Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Beckman from U. S. Army Europe and Soldier of the Year, Spc. Clancey Henderson from Forces Command.

The Soldier and NCO of the Year received prestigious honors and cash awards in recognition of their achievements and will represent the Army at special events throughout the next year.

Beckman is a 21B (combat engineer) from Venango, Neb., and assigned to Charlie Company, 7th Army NCO Academy, Camp Normandy in Grafenwoehr, Germany. He has 12 years of service in the Army and as a senior NCO, served as a role model throughout the competition for what a NCO should "Be, Know, and Do." Beckman is an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran and deployed with the 3rd Infantry Division in 2003. Beckman is a graduate of the Sapper Course and is Combatives Level 3 and Combat Lifesaver certified.

His military awards and achievements include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal with "V" device and six oak leaf clusters, and Army Achievement Medal with 11 oak leaf clusters. Beckman is currently pursuing a degree at Central Texas College and is a graduate of Julesburg High School in Julesburg, Colo. He is married and has three children. His personal interests are spending time with his family and volunteering at the local grade school as part of his unit partnership activity. His long-term goals are to serve as a command sergeant major



and continue to lead troops for as long as he can.

Spc. Clancey Henderson is a 35F (all source intelligence analyst) from Longmont, Colo. He is assigned to the 193rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Henderson has two years of service in the Army and is Combat Lifesaver and Combatives Level 2 certified.

His military awards and achievements include the Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Army Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters, National Defense Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon and Overseas Service Ribbon.

Henderson currently attends the American Military University and is pursuing an associate degree in intelligence analysis and research. His interests are rock climbing, running, hiking, reading and community service. Henderson's short-term goals are finishing his associate degree, and getting promoted to sergeant. His long-term goals are earning a bachelor's degree in nuclear physics and starting a family.

The Best Warrior Competition started in 2002 as the NCO and Soldier of the Year Competition by then Sergeant Major of the Army Jack Tilley. The trophy the NCO and Soldier of the Year receive never had an official name. This year, Army Chief of

Staff Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., and I agreed to name the Best Warrior Trophy the "SMA Jack Tilley Award."

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the families, loved ones and unit leadership who supported each warrior throughout this competition. I want to say thanks to the many behind-the-scenes individuals at Fort Lee, Human Resources Command, Combat Camera and the Office of the Sergeant Major of the Army who ensured the competition was a success. This level of competition continues to improve each year thanks to the support of all these organizations and leaders.

Hooah, Army Strong!

Samuel O. Preston



*Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Beckman
United States Army Europe*



*Spc. Clancey Henderson
Forces Command*

Army unveils a new look for the National Museum

By Army Historical Foundation

Army representatives released a series of color architectural renderings for the National Museum of the United States Army, projected to be built next year at Fort Belvoir, Va.

The renderings, prepared by an architectural engineering firm, were unveiled by Judson E. Bennett Jr., project director at the National Museum of the United States Army.

Bennett hopes to break ground for the museum next year and anticipates a public opening in 2013.

The illustrations include conceptual views of the museum's approach, main entrance, lobby, observation tower and adjacent amphitheater.

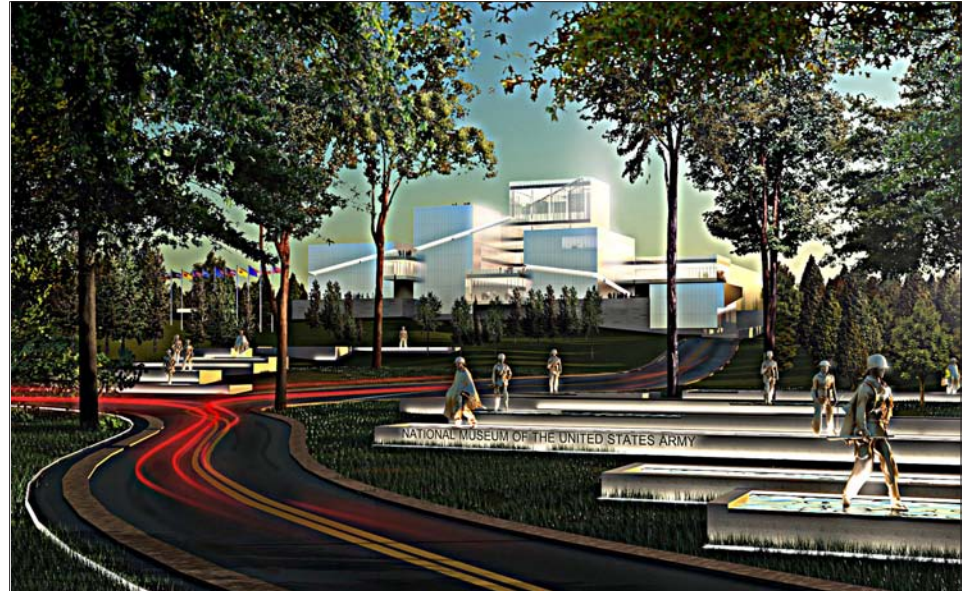
Bennett also released a site plan for the 41-acre museum campus, which shows egress points, parking areas and proposed locations of the museum's major attractions, including the amphitheater, memorial gardens and parade ground.

"The current renderings are the product of many meetings and coordination among a team intent on providing our Army, its Soldiers, veterans, their families and the general public with a world-class historical and educational facility," Bennett said.

He cited as participants members of the National Museum Project Office; the Army's Corps of Engineers; the Army Historical Foundation; and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill architectural engineering firm, all of whose efforts were directed by Jerry Hansen, project executive officer for the museum and deputy assistant secretary of the Army for strategic infrastructure.

"It's important to note that these renderings are conceptual and an early but important milestone in the architectural design process," said Mark Regulinski, managing partner with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.

"Some changes can be expected. Over the next month, we'll continue our work in close coordination with Bennett



Courtesy of the National Museum of the United States Army

New conceptual renderings of the approaches to the National Museum of the United States Army, to be built next year at Fort Belvoir, Va.

and his staff and the exhibit design team from Christopher Chadbourne & Associates on any necessary external and internal modifications," he said.

Regulinski noted that one of his firm's major objectives was to make certain the museum offered visitors an extended experience, beginning with their first glimpse of the imposing four-story tower structure and continuing throughout their initial and return visits.

The Army Historical Foundation, designated by the Army as the official fundraising entity for the \$200 million capital campaign for the National Museum of the United States Army, will incorporate the new conceptual renderings into its publicity and fundraising efforts immediately.

For more information, visit the National Museum of the United States Army at www.armyhistory.org.

USASMA commandant speaks to changes in NCO development

By Carroll Kim
TRADOC Public Affairs →

Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Chandler, commandant of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, discussed specific changes to the noncommissioned officer education curriculum during a Sergeants Corner presentation Oct. 6 at the Association of the United States Army annual meeting.

Titled, “Leader Development: Developing NCOs in an era of persistent conflict,” Chandler spoke to an audience of officers, noncommissioned officers and civilians about how NCO courses are changing to provide career-long learning.

“We’re transitioning from a training-based organization to an educational-based organization,” he said. “We know a Soldier who is trained performs well. What we want is a Soldier who is educated and can solve problems in a variety of conflicts.”

One change includes the Warrior Leader Course using both performance-based testing and performance evaluations. “In the past, we tested Soldiers on tasks. Now, they’re going to have a performance-based assessment and a cognitive module-based assessment,” he said.

The Sergeants Major Course will also undergo improvements. One of the changes includes aligning the 10-month course to the academic school year, which will accommodate the students who bring their families to Fort Bliss, Texas.

Chandler also mentioned the integration of more senior enlisted students from across the services and nations into the school. “We don’t have a directive like the officers to train with international Soldiers, but we know inherently that NCOs will have to operate in joint environments. We have to expose them to it earlier,” he said.

The biggest change will happen between operational experiences and schoolhouse education through Structured Self-Development. The self-paced, professional development is designed to fill the gaps and teach other lessons such as the rank systems of other services and how to conduct drill ceremonies.



Photo by Carroll Kim

Command Sgt. Maj. Ray Chandler, commandant of USASMA, discusses specific changes to NCOES during a Sergeants Corner presentation at the Association of the United States Army annual meeting Oct. 6.

“We’ve had correspondence courses. We want to provide structure, and structure is going to give Soldiers what they need between education and the operation,” Chandler said.

Soldiers will complete scheduled SSD modules as a prerequisite to schoolhouse classes. For example, SSD1, which teaches the rank system of sister services and drill ceremonies, will be completed after Advanced Individual Training but before Warrior Leader Course. The complete program will be available by September 2010.

Chandler closed the update by highlighting the educational accomplishments of today’s NCOs.

“Our last two classes, you have started to see the educational impact on NCOs. Ninety-three percent of the people who graduated (two classes ago) graduated with a college degree. We’re proud of what we do. We’re proud of where we’re going, and we’re proud to be a part of Training and Doctrine Command.”

Year of the NCO Suggested Reading

Ambrose, Stephen E. *Citizen Soldiers*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997.

Crane, Stephen. *The Red Badge of Courage*. New York: Norton, 1982.

Grotelueschen, Mark E. *The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in World War I*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Nye, Roger H. *The Challenge of Command*. New Jersey: Avery Publishing Group, 1986.

O’Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried*. Random House, 1998.

Paret, Peter, ed. *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*. Princeton University Press, 1986.

TRADOC debuts Institution for NCO Professional Development at AUSA

By Carroll Kim
TRADOC Public Affairs

Command Sgt. Maj. David Bruner, senior enlisted advisor of the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, and John Sparks, retired TRADOC command sergeant major, introduced the new Institute for NCO Professional Development during a Sergeants Corner presentation at the Association of the United States Army annual meeting.

A TRADOC first, the INCOPD will merge and monitor education and career moves for all Army NCOs into a single system, which will fall directly under Gen. Martin Dempsey, TRADOC commander.

“It’s truly about NCOs leading other NCOs,” Bruner said. “If you think about it, for those who have been in the business for a long time, you know that NCO professional development was fragmented in many different domains. The Institute for NCO Professional Development is going to integrate all of the activities associated with NCO development.”

Bruner also noted that the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, now falls under the INCOPD program. This year, Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Chandler was named the first enlisted commandant of USASMA.

A major component of INCOPD is the Army Career Tracker, where Soldiers can keep track of civilian education and military goals. The Army Career Tracker will also be made available to supervisors so they can monitor each of their Soldier’s progress in school and at work.

“The Army Career Tracker will not only tell you what you should be doing (now), but also what you should be doing next,” said Sparks, who also supervises the College of the American Soldier (CAS) initiative.

CAS, a higher-educational program geared toward NCOs, is also included in the institute. CAS draws participation from several accredited colleges and universities with flexible



Photo by Carroll Kim

TRADOC senior enlisted advisor, Command Sgt. Maj. David Bruner, tells the Sergeants Corner audience at the Association of the United States Army annual meeting that the Institute for NCO Professional Development will combine all NCO development into one organization.

educational opportunities and credit transferability, allowing NCOs the opportunity to earn higher educational degrees while maintaining an often unpredictable schedule.

Another objective of CAS is to translate military coursework into civilian college credit hours, permitting Soldiers to earn college credits for advanced individual training, the Warrior Leader Course, Advanced Leader Course and Senior Leader Course.

“NCOs are defining and developing their role and contribution to the warfighter,” Dempsey said. “The responsibility TRADOC has given them enables and empowers our NCOs.”

“In the end we hope to eliminate bureaucracy, reduce the time it takes to find new things and new requirements and bring up more leaders,” Sparks said.



Year of the NCO Stories

Have a great NCO story? We want to see it or hear about it so that we can 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, USASMA, 11291 Sgt. E Churchill St., Fort Bliss, TX 79918-8002 or e-mail them to 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.

Pershing's Own gets first female

By Jacqueline M. Hames
Army News Service

Some of the finest musicians in the Army gathered at Brucker Hall on Fort Myer, Va., Oct. 2 to welcome Debra L. McGarity as the first female command sergeant major to the United States Army Band "Pershing's Own."

During a noon ceremony, leader and commander of the Army's official ceremonial band, Col. Thomas Rotondi Jr., welcomed McGarity to her new position.

"I know of no one more qualified or deserving than Debbie to be our next command sergeant major," Rotondi said. "She is simply the right person for the job."

McGarity took the podium amidst a standing ovation, thanking her husband and family for keeping her grounded. She addressed the audience with a smile and said she was extremely proud to be the next command sergeant major for the prestigious band.

"You're among the finest musicians anywhere," she said, expressing her gratitude for the professionalism of the band. "I look forward to working with all of you."

McGarity began her Army career in 1977 as a member of the U.S. Army Ceremonial Band. She has held numerous leadership positions, including noncommissioned officer-in-charge and clarinetist with the U.S. Army Band Woodwind Quintet. She will continue to perform as a clarinetist during



Photo by Jacqueline M. Hames

Debra L. McGarity becomes the first female command sergeant major of the United States Army Band.

her tenure as unit command sergeant major.

The outgoing enlisted leader, Command Sgt. Maj. Ross N. Morgan Jr., spoke very highly of his successor. "She most definitely will be the backbone of 'Pershing's Own.'"

The United States Army Band, "Pershing's Own," was established in 1922 by Army Chief of Staff General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing and emulates the European military bands he heard during World War I. Today, "Pershing's Own" continues to play an important role in national and international events, especially ceremonies in the nation's capital.

Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay offered

Army News Service

Soldiers, veterans and survivors of those whose service was involuntarily extended under Stop Loss between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2008, can apply to receive \$500 for every month, or portion of a month, they served under Stop Loss. The 2009 War Supplemental Appropriations Act established and largely funded the payment for all military services, but dictated each service process and pay their own applicants. The Army estimates 136,000 of the approximately 174,000 eligible service members served in the Army.

The Army created an application process for active and reserve component Soldiers, veterans and survivors of Soldiers to process claims for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay. By law, the Army can only accept claims between Oct. 21, 2009, and Oct. 21, 2010. Eligible can-

didates must submit requests within this time frame, or they will not be processed. The Army has set up an e-mail for questions regarding benefits.

Candidates for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay must submit claims to the Retroactive Stop Loss Web site, the preferred method for submitting applications. Mail or fax submissions will be available to those without access to computers. Future communications will provide instructions for alternative forms of submission. During the application process, candidates will be asked to show documentation to indicate the time served under Stop Loss. The necessary documentation, depending on type of service, includes the following:

- Enlisted Soldiers need to present their DD Form 214 and DD Form 4 enlistment/reenlistment/extension contract(s).
- Enlisted Soldiers who were in an

indefinite status need a memorandum showing retirement/separation request was denied or an approved retirement/separation was amended.

- Officers need a DD Form 214 and memorandum showing retirement/separation request was denied or an approved retirement/separation was amended.

- National Guard Soldiers need to show DA Form 4187 for Stop Loss adjustment for expiration of term of service, separation documentation NGB Form 22, and/or NGB Form 1966.

Continued efforts for the future?

The Army will review, process and pay qualified candidates as applications are received by the Retroactive Stop Loss Web site. Candidates who meet the criteria and show the required documentation will receive their retroactive payment in one lump sum. For more information visit www.stoplosspay.army.mil/.

Army names 2009



Photo by T. Anthony Bell, Fort Lee Public Affairs

Spc. Darwynn McPherson, Army Materiel Command, leaps over an obstacle during the Stress Fire event of the Army Best Warrior Competition.

'Best Warriors'

By David Crozier

They are considered the best of the best – elite warriors of the new millennia – 12 Soldiers, 12 noncommissioned officers representing every major command in the Army including the National Guard and Reserves. They hail from America's heartland – from California to Maryland, Oregon to Alabama; from the plains of Montana to the prairies of Texas, and from our neighboring countries of Canada and Mexico.

As diverse as their beginnings are, so too are the occupational specialties they represent – from chaplain assistant to military police investigator; transportation movement coordinator to safety NCO; Patriot missile operator/maintainer to medical sergeant.

For the last year or so they have been honing their skills and competing against their peers to earn the right to be called the best of the best. It started at the squad level and progressed to the platoon, company, battalion, and brigade level. They then went on to division, corps, field Army and finally to their respective commands.

Through hundreds of hours of training, competing and standing in front of Soldier and NCO boards, they succeeded in rising to the top. On Sept. 27, these warriors converged on Fort Lee, Va., for the "Super Bowl" of competitions to see who would be named the 2009 Department of the Army NCO and Soldier of the Year.

Before the competition began, the warriors, along with their sponsors, had an opportunity to meet during a dinner hosted by the 13th Sgt. Maj. of the Army, Kenneth O. Preston. But as Preston said during the awards luncheon nine days later in Washington, D.C. – "It was the calm before the storm."

Day 1 Forecast: Sunny with periods of high stress

While the sun shone brightly over the tall evergreens of Fort Lee, the "storm" was about to begin at 0800 hours with the first test of the warriors' knowledge and resolve – the dreaded board appearance. The warriors, adorned in their Army Service Uniforms, made their way from their billets to the Fort Lee Club, where Preston and six senior command sergeants major were waiting.

"A personal favorite of mine [for this competition] is the board. I am still a very big fan of the board because it helps [the Soldiers] become experts in that part of their profession that is not taught anywhere in the Army," Preston said. "It promotes self-development and self-study. It allows us to grow those skills that sometimes go untrained right now with the challenges of today's Army."

The board, Preston said, tested the warriors' knowledge on Army regulations and manuals, warrior tasks and battle drills, current events and the Warrior Ethos.

The first to go before the board – Sgt. Matthew Phalen, a military intelligence system repair technician, representing Army Material Command as its NCO of the Year.

"I felt really good about the board. I tried to focus on what I thought it was going to be, and it was a little bit different from what I imagined," Phalen said. "But, it was really like any other board that I have been to. You had the president directing traffic, all the sergeants major throwing questions out there to see how you feel and I think I handled it all very well."

"The long walk was kind of intense," Spc. Darwynn McPherson said, a transportation movement coordinator, representing Army Material Command as its Soldier of the Year. "It's a pretty long walk and you have to keep your bearing while walking toward the chair. It was tough, but once I got the opportunity to speak and answer questions it got a lot easier; the nervousness goes away."

When asked if the board members presented any questions that tripped him up, Phalen replied, "They hit me with a few things I didn't know; I'll have to think about it over the next couple of hours; right now my mind is not straight."

McPherson gave a similar response.

"I can't lie. I kind of stumbled on a few questions," he said. "That is every board. You are not going to know everything, but you give it your best and your all, and you will be squared away. There is always that one question they hit you with."

Day 2 Forecast: Mostly sunny with occasional bouts of confusion

With the board appearance behind them, the warriors settled in for the night to prepare for the next day's events: issuance and pre-combat inspection and checks of their gear – weapons, rucksack, interceptor body armor, Kevlar helmet, etc. Following the equipment check, the warriors trained on conducting reflexive fire before spending the afternoon being interviewed by local and hometown news agencies as well as Army News Service journalists.



Photo by Sgt. Russel Schnaare

Sgt. Lauren Aldaco is interviewed by military journalists during Media Day activities on Day 2 of the competition.

When asked what prompts a sergeant first class with 12 years in the Army to go up against a group of younger NCOs, Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Beckman, representing U.S. Army Europe, said it was a challenge laid out by his Soldiers.

“A little bit of peer pressure to be honest. My first sergeant and sergeant major put forth the challenge to motivate ourselves to find Soldiers who are willing and able; have the right composure and drive; to go to the board. It just so happened that three of the Soldiers in my platoon wanted to do it,” Beckman, a 7th U.S. Army NCO Academy instructor, said. “And they started winning and started asking me, ‘Hey, when are you going to jump in?’ So I said ‘OK’ and jumped in. It just kind of went on from there. We won three of the four quarters at the next level and then it was kind of like the last man standing and that was me.”

For USAREUR Soldier of the Year Spc. Daniel Micek, competing is personal.

“It means outstanding achievement. It means I always push myself to get to the next level following the Warrior Ethos; never accepting defeat, never quit,” he said. “All of that has played into it because you just can’t quit.”

Asked what it was like to be the only female Soldier of the Year competitor, Sgt. Lauren Aldaco, representing U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, said, “It means I am going to put forth all of my effort and prove that we are all Soldiers, and we are all created equal. I want to show that females can do this, too, so that others, subordinates and junior Soldiers, will want to come forward and do the same thing.”

With the day waning, it was time to prepare for the next day’s pending storm.

Day 3 Forecast: Overcast with 100 percent chance of heart-pounding thunder

The storm arrived early as the warriors were roused from their beds around 0400 hours to prepare for several high pressure cells, the first – the Army Physical Fitness Test. Under the glow of floodlights, the warriors were lined up in groups of four and took turns pumping and crunching out the most push-ups and sit-ups

they could muster within the allotted two minutes. Next came the two-mile run on Fort Lee’s track. The maximum standard for the majority of the warriors is 13 minutes for men and 15:36 for women.



Photo by Sgt. Russel Schnaare

The warriors had to complete a standard Army PT test as part of the competition. The test consisted of sit-ups, push-ups and a two-mile run.

Fort Lee helped the warriors’ efforts by providing a cheering section in the bleachers made up of Advanced Individual Training students from several of the quartermaster training companies.

Marking both a personal best and a record pace for the eight years of Best Warrior competitions was Spc. Clancey Henderson, representing Forces Command, who ran the event in 10:34. Henderson, an all source intelligence analyst with 1st Infantry Division, said, “The crowd definitely helped out. Every time I came by they stood up and cheered. That got me running faster.”

Coming in second was Spc. Jonathan Jordan, representing U.S. Army Medical Command, who finished the run in 12:18. Afterward he said, “It was a good run. I usually keep a pace like that to hit below 12:30 just to be safe. It was a pretty average run.”

With the morning physical assault over, Jordan took notice of his fellow competitors before making his way to the next test, the written exam and essay – all before lunch.

“I think everyone is in really good shape. There are no slackers; nobody just got here because they don’t deserve it; so it’s a tough crowd,” he said. “I think they are all good, and everyone is still pretty much in it. We have so many events left, so many points out there; anyone can really win it.”

Following lunch, the warriors were brought to the Operation Center, located in



Photo by David Crozier

Fort Lee Soldiers acted out scenarios for the competitors during different portions of the event. Above, a hostage situation during the daytime urban land navigation.

a field adjacent to the Fort Lee Club, to begin the next events.

“Today we are going to be conducting the urban warrior orienteering course, which is pretty much land navigation in an urban environment,” said Sgt. 1st Class Juan Rivera, 109th Quartermaster Company, 240th Quartermaster Battalion, and the noncommissioned officer in charge of the event. “The competitors will be looking for four points where they will retrieve certain information, which they will bring it back to the Operation Center and we will grade that. Some of the things they will be doing will be interacting with civilians from Iraq. They are also going to talk to civilian leadership to gather information, which will eventually lead them to locate a civilian contractor who has been taken hostage. Along their dismounted patrols, it throws a scenario in there so we can get away from the traditional land navigation.”

With all of their combat gear plus a 35-pound rucksack to carry, the competitors had three hours to complete each orienteering event. Again, Henderson showed his resolve to be first; completing the day navigation course in 1:34:54. Fourteen minutes later, Sgt. Jason Boatwright, representing the National Capital Region, completed his course. The night navigation took the Soldiers well into the night, and while they were all looking forward to a good night’s sleep in their billets, all would be for naught as they would instead proceed to a Forward Operating Base created especially for the competition on Fort Lee’s Range Training Complex.

Day 4 Forecast: Tsunami warning followed by bouts of controlled chaos

Many Soldiers call it “O-dark thirty.” But the warriors of this competition, after having been through 20 hours of Day 3, more than likely called it just plain ridiculous. By 0500 hours,



Photo by David Crozier

Above, one of the competitors extracts a wounded Soldier during an ambush of a convoy patrolling the streets of a mock Iraqi town.



Photo by Sgt. Russel Schnaare

Part of the competition that tested the Soldiers’ knowledge of their warrior tasks and battle drills was the calling in of a 9-Line MEDEVAC request, which included loading a wounded Soldier onto a waiting Chinook helicopter.

they were out of their bunks and on their way to another 19 or so hours of pure adrenaline-sapping events, which tested their knowledge of the Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills.

Sgt. 1st Class Derrick Green of Fort Lee’s Warrior Training Center explained the day’s events.

“Today, we will be conducting realistic scenarios that emulate the combat environment in Iraq and Afghanistan. We have six different scenarios in which the competitors will be evaluated, consisting of the detainee operations lane, evaluate a casualty lane, weapons assembly/disassembly lane, close combat shoot/no shoot scenario and a 9-line MEDEVAC lane. After all events, the competitors will then move into weapons zero, day qualification, night qualification and stress fire events.”

Green explained that planning for this year’s event began a year out with several meetings leading up to the competition. He added, “The Soldiers can expect relevant, rigorous and robust training that they can take back to their units and actually train Soldiers who are going forward into combat,” he said. “What we have here is world-class training they can use at the unit level that will set their Soldiers up for success in the theaters of Afghanistan and Iraq.”

For the competitors, the events of the past days tested their mettle.

“It is going good. Some of it has been very challenging. The stress fire was challenging, but it was fun,” said Sgt. Sarah Haskins, representing U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command and the only female competitor for NCO of the Year. “The daytime land nav with the rucksack really slowed me down, so that was very, very challenging. No surprises, however. My command did a really good job of training me on most of the scenarios, so there really weren’t a lot of surprises.”

“It is amazing to see all of the potential and talent everyone has coming to this competition. Everybody here is the best of the best, and it is really neat to see that from the Army and to see

NCOs and Soldiers together and how they both develop,” said Sgt. Cole Joines, representing the National Capital Region. “Just the talent they bring to the table; the things we learn here are not only in the competition but, also are things we can take back home and train our Soldiers.”

At the weapons station, Staff Sgt. Samuel Knox, an instructor with the 266th Quartermaster Battalion, explained what the competitors were up against.

“Here they are going to be clearing, disassembling, and then assembling and doing a full-function check on each of the assigned weapons systems – the Mk19 grenade launcher, M249 squad automatic weapon, M2 50-caliber machine gun and the M4 carbine. They will also be doing some concurrent training on the M9 pistol,” he said. “The first part is one minute; the second part is two minutes.”

The M4 carbine test was done under blackout conditions.

At the detainee operations test, the competitors were confronted with four different scenarios with each Soldier going through one. The point of this lane, explained Staff Sgt. Jennifer Hurd, event NCOIC, is to evaluate a competitor processing an enemy combatant using the proper procedures and escalation of force.

“We made this like a real-life mission,” she said. “They have to identify the enemy combatant, detain them, and then figure out their route through the scenario.”

The day ended as it began, in total darkness, as the competitors aimed their M4 rifles downrange for a night-fire qualification. By the time the last flare was extinguished, it was time again to make their way to the FOB for whatever rest their exhausted bodies could afford them.

Day 5 – Forecast: Extremely hazy with persistent exhaustion, clearing by noon

With about four hours of sleep, the warriors awakened to the last day of competition – the Mystery Event. Until now, everything the warriors were tested on was outlined in the method of instruction for all competitors to prepare from. The Mystery Event, Preston said, was not known to anyone except the event organizers. Here, the competitors were tested on combat lifesaver tasks, how to egress from a rolled-over humvee using the HEAT trainer, conduct casualty evaluation and evacuation from a battlefield, escalation of force and rules of engagement, and knowledge of military dress and appearance – all capped off with a double elimination combatives tournament.

“The Best Warrior Competition is a culmination of competitions that have taken place all over the Army over the last year,” Preston said. “Every time they compete, they grow a little more in their base of Army knowledge. It is really about being an expert in their specialty. They all have the warrior spirit and have demonstrated the seven Army Values.”

“It’s been pretty grueling, pretty rigorous, but all in all we are very competitive. I have seen the Army’s best. I have seen that even though we are competing against each other, [we’ve worked] together as a team,” said Sgt. David Dasilma, representing U.S. Army Medical Command. “We teamed up on a convoy, took out the enemy, worked all the missions together. I compare it to a NBA team going for the championship. Say the Lakers; Kobe



The last event of the competition was a dual-elimination combatives tournament. Above, Spc. Clancey Henderson (l) goes up against Spc. Michael Englesgjerd.

Photo by Sgt. Russel Schnaare

Bryant is going to be picked the MVP, but he couldn’t get there without the Lakers winning the championship together. That’s how this has been. In the beginning we were more isolated. But now that we have been in the field together, sleeping in the same tent, it has become one big team effort, and one person will stand out from that team effort.”

He added, “The toughest part is just staying focused when your body wants to let you down. It is manageable and something we do every day. We are able to do it, but you have to consciously make the decision to find the extra energy.”

If all of their energy had not been spent through five days of grueling competition, the combatives tournament surely would sap their last breath.

“Combatives is a personal favorite of mine,” Preston said. “It is the culmination event, the final stressor, and it is a chance for us to showcase combatives all across the Army. I am very proud of what has taken place over the last five years and how combatives has grown in popularity. All of our units have put combatives training into their fitness regime, and it has become part of our culture.”

Taking top honors for the Soldiers, MEDCOM’s Sgt. Jonathan Jordan; for the NCOs, Staff Sgt. Lucas Miller, representing U.S. Army Special Operations Command. Upon naming the winners of the tournament, Jordan and Miller faced off to see who would be champion of the pit, with Jordan coming out as the victor.

With the competition complete, Preston gathered the exhausted warriors to congratulate them for a “great competition.” He pointed out that everyone was a winner, “there are no losers here.”

Asked what caught his eye the most about this year’s



competition, Preston said it was the breadth of experience in occupational specialties.

“All the different MOSs that are represented here is what I am very proud of. The competitors are a reflection of the Army. It is not one particular career field or occupation out there. You have got not only the full spectrum of career fields that ranges everywhere from satellite communication to the chaplain’s assistant to the field artillery

Soldier, you have got a breadth of experience. Similarly, we represent America. We have Soldiers here from California to North Carolina and Montana to Texas. So, they represent the country; they represent the Army very well in all of the talent we have.”

After two days of relaxation and a clearing of the skies within, the warriors gathered at the annual Association of the United States Army convention in Washington, D.C., for a lunch hosted by Preston and attended by such notables as Secretary of the Army John McHugh; Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George Casey; Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Peter Chiarelli; and former Sgts. Maj. of the Army William Connelly, Robert Hall and Gene McKinney, as well as a host of senior leaders and noncommissioned officers from all the major commands and reserve components.

Here, Preston announced the winners of the competition – Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Beckman and Spc. Clancey Henderson. Both were presented by Preston and Chiarelli; the newly named “SMA Jack Tilley Award” in honor of Tilley’s establishment of the competition eight years earlier. Each winner also received a bevy of awards, gifts and mementos from several individual and corporate sponsors.

In a news conference following the luncheon, Beckman recalled his reaction to the announcement.

“Honestly when Preston announced my name, I heard ‘United States Army Europe.’ I started going through my head who that would be, and it actually took me a while to do the math to realize that it was me. But going up front I was thinking about my first board appearance back in February or March. It was snowy

in Germany, and I was thinking to myself, ‘Oh, I wish I would just fall down, and I wouldn’t have to keep doing these boards.’ I was thinking of a way out,” he said. “What would have happened if I did slip and fall that day? What would have happened if I had just [forgotten] about going to the board? If I didn’t bring my leaders book? I am glad everything worked out the way it did. I was real excited and happy.”

Henderson had a similar reaction.

“It was odd. They have some great competitors here. Just talking to them, I did not make any enemies this week. Everyone I talked to we became great friends,” he said. “Part of me wanted them to win because I was excited for them, and I wanted them to know they are good people. At the same time, I heard my name, and I was like ‘Wow.’”

Asked what it meant to be named the best of the best, both warriors were humbled and proud.


“Being the NCO of the Year for the Army, considering that it is the Year of the NCO, means a whole bunch to me. My father was a crew chief on Chinooks in Vietnam. He was a hard stripe as an E-5 sergeant, and while he was in Vietnam he got out as a spec. five,” Beckman said. “But my father was a NCO, and I wanted to be one when I was growing up. Now that I am that representative – I am the NCO of the Year – I can take what I have learned from my father, take what I have learned growing up in the Army for 13 years, being assigned to infantry units, armor units, being assigned to Training and Doctrine Command as a drill sergeant, taking all this good knowledge and disperse it not to just NCOs but [also] to Soldiers.”

He added, “It is a great honor; I didn’t expect this. I come from a very small community in Nebraska. The closest town was 50 miles from my house, and we didn’t have a lot of money when I was growing up. So, I really didn’t have an opportunity for college. I really liked looking forward to the military. I am glad that I am able to represent my engineer corps, my unit and USAEUR.”

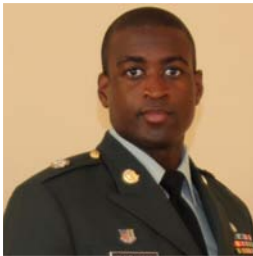
Henderson took a similar stance.

“Throughout the competition I had the same mentality – do everything I can. If I mess up, figure out what I did wrong and go back at it. And now that I am here, I am awestruck to be honest, because we had some really great competitors out there – the best the Army has to offer,” he said. “I am absolutely humbled and honored to have known them for that week. I made some really good friends and look forward to working with each of them.”

In the end, Preston said, the competition is more than just naming the best warriors; it is a showcase of today’s total Army.

“All of these Soldiers understand and know what it takes to achieve excellence. Tiger Woods would not be the greatest golfer in the world had it not been for him starting at the low levels and then gradually becoming a subject matter expert in his profession, and it is the same thing with being a Soldier. Every time you rise to the different levels of competition you gain a little more knowledge. Just talking to all the warriors [who] are here, all 24 have grown immensely in the last week. They have learned so much from each other just by competing against each other. And it has allowed them to step up to a whole new level of knowledge and understanding. The good thing for the Army is they take all this new knowledge back to their units and organizations,” he said. “What they gained from this competition, they now have the ability to give back and share with those Soldiers in their care to make them better.” 

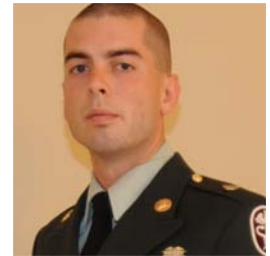
BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION COMPETITORS



Sgt. David Dasilma
68W
Health Care NCO



Sgt. Jonathan Jordan
68J
Medical
Supply Specialist



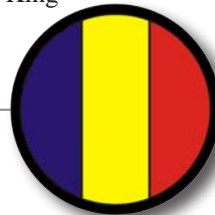
Sgt. Cole Joines
35PCM
Cryptologic
Chinese Linguist



Sgt. Jason Boatwright
56M
Chaplain Assistant
Funds Clerk



Sgt. 1st Class Corey King
11B40
Military Science
Instructor



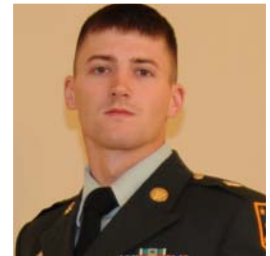
Sgt. Lauren Aldaco
31B
Military Police
Investigator



Sgt. Aron Reyes
13F10
Artillery
Forward Observer



WINNER
Spc. Clancey
Henderson
35F10
All Source
Intelligence Analyst



Sgt. Lucas Miller
18D
Special Operations
Medical Sergeant



Spc. Michael Engelsjerd
11B1V
Gun Team Leader

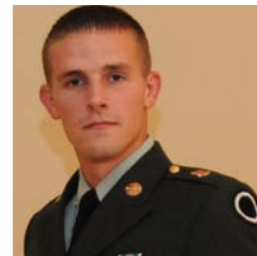




Sgt. Ryan Brubaker
11B20
Infantry
Squad Leader



← Spc. Guy Mellor
13B10
Cannon Crewmember



Sgt. Haskins, Sarah
35S
Signal Analyst



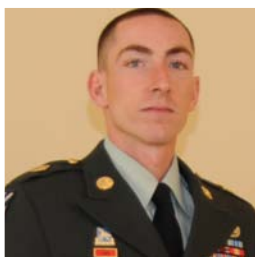
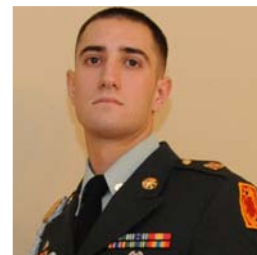
← Sgt. Travis Parsons
25S1C
Satellite Network
Controller



Staff Sgt. Randy Gray
35N30
Signals Intelligence
Analyst



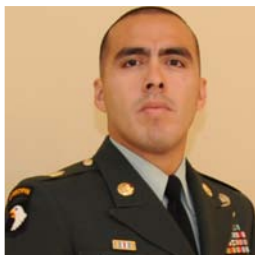
← Spc. James Holmes
14T10
Launch Crew
Member



Sgt. Matthew Phelan
35T
Military Intelligence
System Repairer



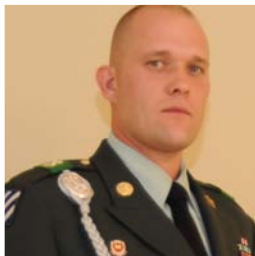
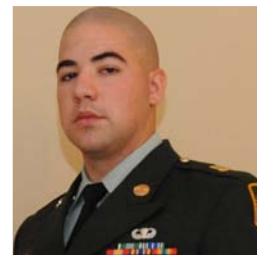
← Spc. Darwynn
McPherson
88N
Transportation
Management Coordinator



Staff Sgt. Neftali Bonilla
15U
Chinook Helicopter
Technician



← Spc. Matthew
Grothe
31B
Military Policeman

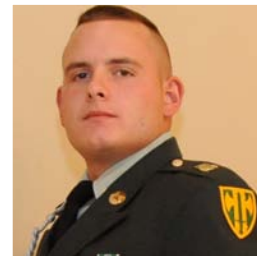


Sgt. 1st Class
Aaron Beckman
21B48
Combat Engineer



WINNER

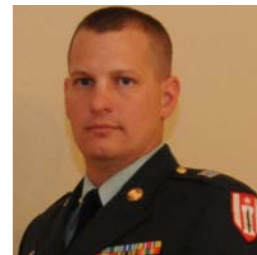
← Spc. Daniel Micek
31B
Military Policeman



Staff Sgt. Aaron Butler
68J30
Medical Logistics
Sergeant



← Spc. Shiloh Becher
21R
Interior Electrician



STRUCTURING THE BROADLY SKILLED NCO

New Self-Development courses to provide continuous learning; bridge gap between institutional and operational domains

By Angela Simental →

“A noncommissioned officer corps, grounded in heritage, values and traditions that embodies the warrior ethos; values perpetual learning; and is capable of leading, training and motivating Soldiers.”

— Vision of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps, Future Leader Development of Army NCOs Workshop, 1998

The impact of World War II on the Army paved the way for a new beginning of the Noncommissioned Officer Education System. Suddenly, the Army was faced with a huge number of untrained Soldiers, and was forced to shift its focus. The idea of developing a career plan for Noncommissioned Officers emerged, making education an important part of training in the late 1960s. Decades later, in the ‘80s and ‘90s, the NCOES underwent other changes and revisions. Once again, time is changing and the Army faces different challenges to which its education and training must adapt, as stated in the document “Educating Noncommissioned Officers: A chronological study on the development of educational programs for U.S. Army Noncommissioned Officers.” Abiding by the long-standing NCOES values, a pivotal transformation seeking to create well-rounded, broadly skilled leaders through the reconstruction of existing courses and the addition of new ones, is well on its way.

According to various sources at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, today’s challenges call for an Army that is professional, well-trained and educated. Institutional training, education, operational assignments and self-development are closely knit qualities that will create an NCO leader who meets these Army standards. This sequence of education and reinforcement requires a lifetime commitment, and as part of NCOES transformation, the Army has established a

series of Self-Development Courses promoting life-long learning, starting with Structured Self-Development, a self-paced online curriculum under the umbrella of Self-Development, which will begin January 2010.

Overview of Self-Development

Self-development encompasses individual study, education, research and professional reading. As the title of the program suggests, Self-development is a personal responsibility and centers on maximizing leadership strengths, decreasing weaknesses and attaining individual leadership development goals. It also requires a joint effort between Soldiers and first-line leaders.

“If you are truly devoted to your career, and you want to advance in your career, you’ve got to engage in Self-Development,” said Michael Doyle, Ed.D., dean of academics at USASMA.

Self-Development will improve the NCOs’ knowledge and experience gained through institutional training and operational assignments, Doyle said.

Doyle also explains that Self-Development is designed to help Soldiers balance and achieve their personal and professional goals. According to Sgt. Maj. Melinda Yarbrough, SSD course manager, there are three components under Self-Development that will guide each Soldier to triumph. The first component is SSD, a mandatory online course beginning January 2010. The other two are optional:

Guided Self-Development, which focuses on a set of individual development goals that will cover a wide variety of topics related but not limited to the military profession; and Personal Self-Development, where Soldiers define their learning objectives through traditional and non-traditional learning opportunities. This phase will be self-initiated, self-paced and Soldiers define their goals.

The program requires personal initiative. As stated in the Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-25, in order for Soldiers to succeed, they “must regularly conduct honest assessments of their strengths and weaknesses. First-line leaders must regularly provide feedback on performance and assist individuals in developing/refining a development action plan to guide performance improvement.”

History of Self-Development

“We took a look at the entire way that we educate Soldiers and decided that there needed to be a transformation,” Doyle said.

SSD has been in the works for about three years, becoming one of the focal points of NCOES transformation. SSD was first discussed in the 2004 NCOES Transformation Operation Order.

As the proponent for SSD, USASMA is responsible for developing and maintaining all instructional products. “The whole SSD process is developed here at USASMA – from writing the lessons to developing them into [Interactive Multimedia Instruction] products,” Yarbrough said.

What is Structured Self-Development

This new program, designed with the all-encompassing NCO in mind, will be a mandatory online course that is defined in DA PAM 600-25 as “a set of required content progressively sequenced across a Soldier’s career, closely linked and synchronized with the operational and institutional domains, setting conditions for continuous growth both as a warrior and warrior leader.”

“The main objective is that there will be no breach [between institutional training and operational assignments]. One of the objectives is that there is life-long learning across a Soldier’s career. We have to be

continuously educating that Soldier,” Yarbrough said.

All enlisted Soldiers who have finished Advanced Individual Training will be automatically enrolled in SSD1, and will begin the program once they are in their unit. SSD1 will be a prerequisite to other NCOES courses. Doyle said SSD1 will teach young privates through specialists the skills and competencies they need in order to be promoted. “SSD1 helps them bridge their goals as far as their career goes.”

SSD will be divided into five levels, implementing no more than 80 hours per level. This means that SSD will be adding 400 hours of learning throughout a Soldier’s career. The lessons will be completed according to each Soldier’s pace via Blackboard Academic Suite, and they will have up to two years to complete each of the levels.

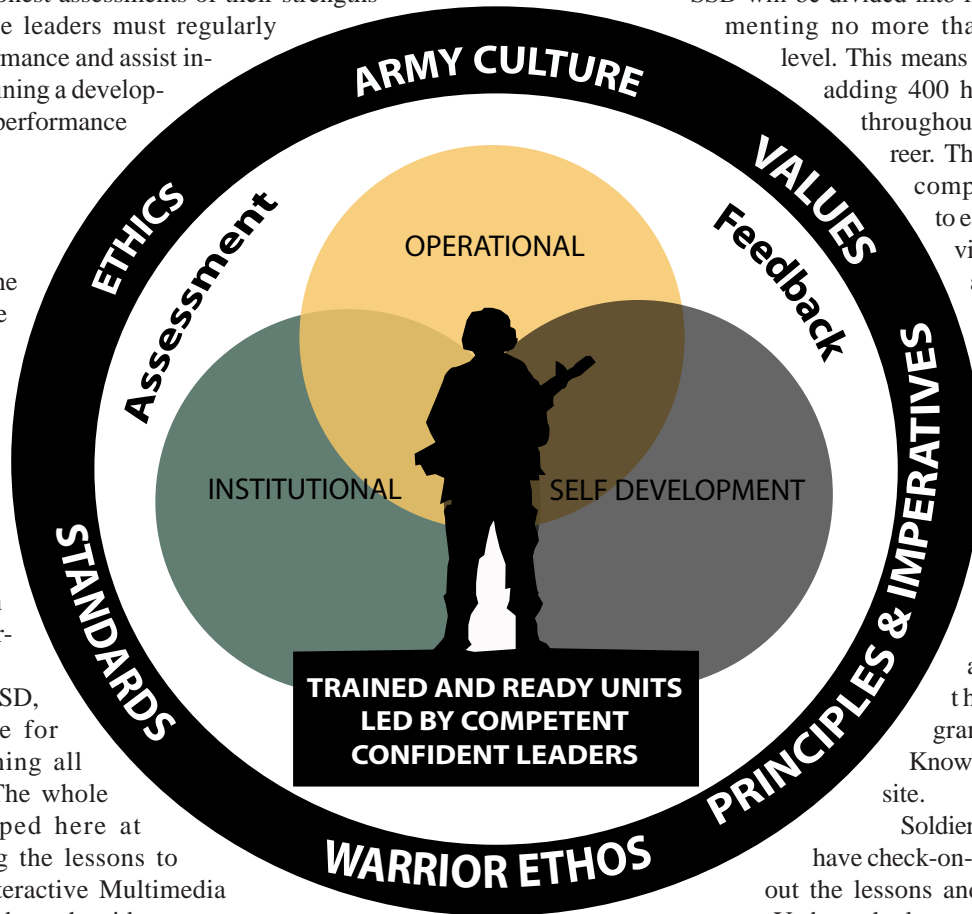
Because SSD will be available via Blackboard, deployed Soldiers will be able to access and continue the SSD program through Army Knowledge Online Web site.

Soldiers should expect to have check-on-learning throughout the lessons and end-of-module exams. Yarbrough also explained that there will be no facilitator or interaction with students.

The system will allow Soldiers to go back and review courses they have already passed, but they cannot jump ahead. “The lessons at each level are progressive and sequential,” Yarbrough said. “Advancing to the next level depends upon the Soldier’s rank and completion of the previous SSD level along with the completion of previous NCOES.”

Soldiers who have completed courses before January 2010 will be “grandfathered” into SSD.

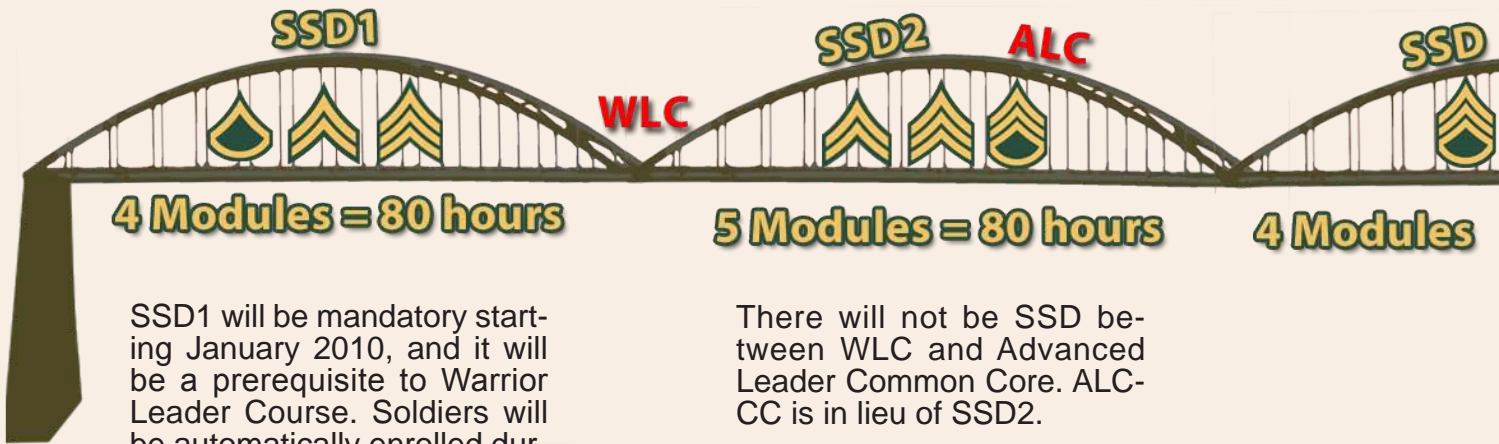
“Soldiers who have already completed the WLC will not have to go back and complete SSD1,” Command Sgt. Maj.



“The purpose of Noncommissioned Officer Education System is to build NCO trust and confidence, to raise tactical and technical competence and to inculcate the essential values of the professional Army ethic through the corps.”


— Col. Kenneth Simpson, commandant, and Command Sgt. Maj. Oren Bevins, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, October 1989


BRIDGING



SSD1 will be mandatory starting January 2010, and it will be a prerequisite to Warrior Leader Course. Soldiers will be automatically enrolled during AIT and begin once they are in their unit. SSD1 will focus on team and squad levels, teaching leadership, NCO History and introducing Soldiers to the Army's drills and ceremonies.

There will not be SSD between WLC and Advanced Leader Common Core. ALC-CC is in lieu of SSD2.

 **Institutional Domain**

 **Operational Domain**

Richard Rosen, deputy commandant of USASMA, explained. "The same concept applies to all other levels with possibly an exception for SSD5 since sergeants major that have already completed the course may want to take it."

"When we go to school, we don't walk out with a whole body of knowledge," Doyle said. "There is some of that that we forgot, so having SSD allows Soldiers to work things back into their skill set."

SSD focuses on a set of cognitive skills that prepares and enhances Soldiers' abilities to lead competently as warriors. SSD will help develop, along with the institutional and operational domains, a broadly skilled NCO who can be culturally astute as well as a critical and creative thinker, a resource manager, a leader developer and a warrior leader, Yarbrough explained.

"Structured Self-Development will aid in the process of developing the agile and adaptive leader. SSD helps in that process because it is life-long learning, and that is what the Army wants when it comes to NCOES transformation," Yarbrough said.

Doyle said that as the Global War on Terrorism continues, the Army must act at a greater speed; therefore, having educated, well-rounded Soldiers who are able to make significant decisions is an important part in the establishment of SSD.

"As we have moved to this era of persistent conflict, the notion of the 'strategic corporal,' is really there. We have team leaders who are making decisions that 30 or 40 years ago would've been made by a captain or a major," Doyle said.

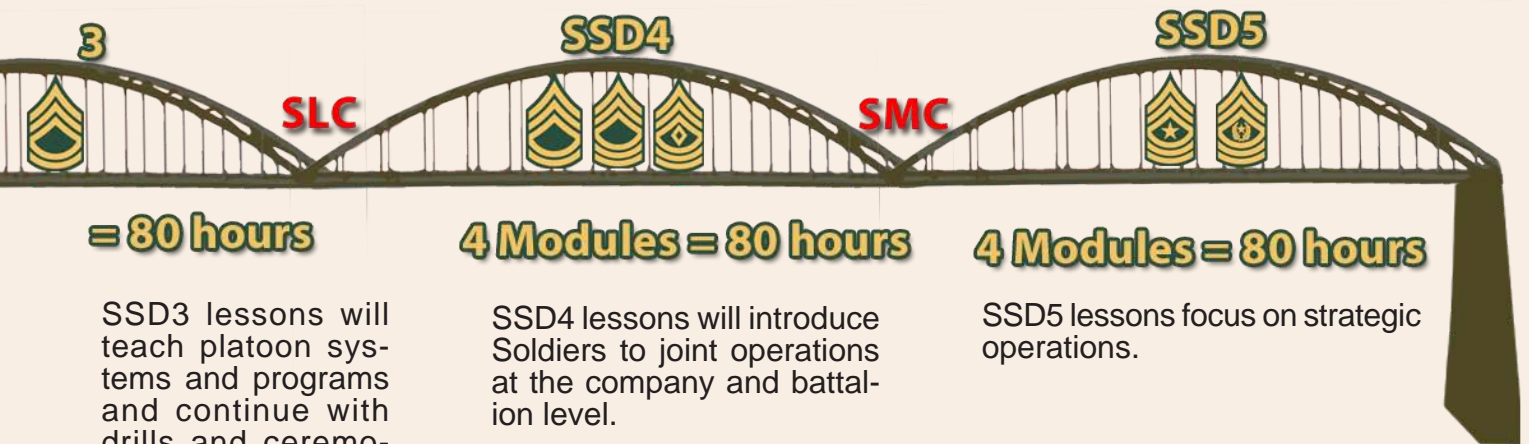
Pursuing career and personal goals through SSD

From the old correspondence courses during the Vietnam era to the new and more sophisticated online programs, the Army has always been committed to Soldiers' education and personal growth.

In SSD, Soldiers will be able to attain skills they can use right now and also help them become future leaders, Doyle said.

Self-discipline and self-awareness play a big role in all the levels of Self-Development. This new program will help Soldiers

THE GAP



= 80 hours

SSD3 lessons will teach platoon systems and programs and continue with drills and ceremonies. SSDIII will be taken after ALC and before the Senior Leader Course, previously known as the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (ANCOC).

4 Modules = 80 hours

SSD4 lessons will introduce Soldiers to joint operations at the company and battalion level.

4 Modules = 80 hours

SSD5 lessons focus on strategic operations.

SSD AT A GLANCE

SSD will reinforce what is learned in institutional training and operational assignments. Each SSD level consists of a series of modules of up to 80 hours. The operational domain provides “real world” experience in problem solving, while the institutional domain focuses on education and transitioning through the NCOES.

have a smoother progression through the NCO Education System and also to formal education, he added.

SSD calls for continuous growth. Its implementation this coming year will strengthen Soldiers’ knowledge, providing reinforcement between institutional and operational domains. “SSD is the future of life-long learning for our Soldiers and leaders,” Yarbrough said.

“To have better prepared Soldiers – better prepared to take leadership roles, better prepared to do their job today and better prepared to take greater responsibilities tomorrow,” Doyle said, summarizing the goals of SSD.

“The purpose of Noncommissioned Officer Academies is to broaden the professional knowledge of the noncommissioned officer and instill in him the confidence and sense of responsibility required to make of him a capable leader.”

—Army Regulation, Noncommissioned Officer Academies, June 1957



As the new year approaches, the Army is well on its way to fulfilling its initiative to remodel the Non-commissioned Officer Education System, introducing new programs, unveiling modified courses and implementing a more modern approach to educating today's NCO. In accordance with the tide of changes to the NCOES, the Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officer Course (BSNCO) is undergoing its own brand of transformation.

The functional course prepares staff sergeants through sergeants major to serve as members of a staff at the battalion level or higher. While the core of the course remains unchanged, fundamental modifications are being made to “leave training behind and start educating,” a larger goal of the entire NCOES, said Sgt. Maj. Jose Fragoso, director of the Battle Staff course at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, where the course is written and designed.

Battle Staff Basics

Originally developed in January 1991, the Battle Staff course was introduced as a way to combine the teachings of both the Operations and Intelligence and the Personnel and Logistics courses. “One of the catalysts (behind the course) was that the Army realized there was no mechanism to train NCOs in staff functions,” Fragoso said. Contrastingly, “by the time officers go through ROTC or West Point, they understand they’ll be staff officers, so the training is embedded.”

Since very early on, the Battle Staff course has been taught in two phases. Phase I is completed online by NCOs at their home units via online correspondence over a 60-day period. Phase II is a three-week course taught at any of the four resident sites across the country (Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa.; Fort McCoy, Wis.; and Camp Williams, Utah), or from USASMA to distance-learning sites worldwide using video teletraining technology (VTT).

The course curriculum has traditionally included lessons on plans, orders and annexes, graphics and overlays, military intelligence and combat service support, as well as emphasis on briefing presentations and command post exercises.

Though not required as part of the NCOES, the Battle Staff course is recommended to all NCOs looking to become more effective members of any staff and glean a better understanding of staff operations. The course is not limited to any particular military occupational specialty but is open to educating all NCOs. “We’re a skill-level producing, functional course,” said Master Sgt. David Wilkinson, Battle Staff course manager at USASMA. “We combine skill levels because we want to tie everyone together in the war-fighting process.”

Growing Pains

Widely regarded as one of the Army’s most challenging NCO courses, the Battle Staff course has struggled with low Phase I graduation rates, an issue which has been addressed in the course restructuring. “We recently took a look at the numbers because we were not getting enough people through Phase I, so they could come (to resident or VTT distance learning sites) for Phase II,” said Michael Doyle, Ed.D., dean of academics at USASMA.



Photo by SGM Larry Robinson

USASMA Battle Staff course students perform a brigade operations order brief rehearsal, a key component of the course’s critical thinking focus.

“When we designed the course, we designed it so there was a test following each module. But when we started [using] our distance learning equipment, it wouldn’t allow us to set the test up that way,” Doyle said. “As an alternative, we gathered all tests and put them at the end of the course.”

Passing the tests after learning 17 modules proved difficult for most students, resulting in a fairly large failure rate.

However, according to Doyle, it really wasn’t that the students were failing. “The tests weren’t designed to be taken that way, so we went back and redesigned the tests,” he said. Now, students are faced with just one cumulative exam at the end of Phase I that tests the knowledge, skills and ability needed to be successful in Phase II.

Phase II

While Phase I offers an overview of the Battle Staff course material, Phase II serves as the core of the course, incorporating various blocks of instruction that prepare NCOs to serve as a staff member in any capacity. Students are not trained to take on a specialized role, but rather to understand the methods and roles of the entire staff operation.

Because the course is taught to NCOs of a variety of ranks and military occupational specialties, Phase II students have the benefit of participating in open-discussion-type classes, where peers and instructors alike share military stories and experience with one another.

“Because we all have different MOSs, we share information from other MOSs and [are] able to share different perspectives,” said Sgt. 1st Class Neil Leavens, a Battle Staff course student at USASMA.

Army officials have likened this strategy to learning a sport and its strategies and positions.

“We combine skill levels to tie everyone into the war-fighting process.”

– Master Sgt. David Wilkinson
Battle Staff course manager at USASMA

“As Command Sgt. Maj. (Raymond) Chandler likes to say – and I agree wholeheartedly – you’re not teaching someone how to play first base; you’re teaching them how to play baseball,” Frago said, referring to USASMA’s commandant.

“You have to know the rules to play the game, and the first year you’re in that position, you don’t necessarily know what you’re going to be good at,” Frago said. “With

the Battle Staff course, you get the knowledge and education to ask questions and learn the process.”

In Transition

To support the new NCOES focus on education rather than training, the Battle Staff course is undergoing various changes which are scheduled to debut in January 2010. With the new emphasis, the course is designed to produce confident and competent NCOs who can serve as subject matter experts on any battalion or brigade staff by utilizing the critical learning techniques taught in the course.

While it previously included a command post exercise in which students served in particular positions and capacities, the Battle Staff course will soon be geared toward developing critical thinking skills. In these new exercises, students will be tasked



Photo by Cassandra Yardeni

Battle Staff course instructor Master Sgt. Virgil Ebrecht addresses BSC students at Fort Hood, Fort Irwin and Fort Carson via video teletraining technology from USASMA.

to “develop products that tie into the military decision-making process,” said Master Sgt. Virgil Ebrecht, a Battle Staff course instructor at USASMA.

In keeping with constantly evolving technology, the process in which students are taught graphics and overlay is changing to incorporate the automated Army Battle Command System.

“It’s going to be a more modern approach to the way we teach,” Ebrecht said.

“We’re planning to re-introduce the ABCs into the course as an overview with concentration on how the intelligence preparation of the battlefield and military decision-making process are tied together through the Command Post of the Future,” Wilkinson said.

In order to fulfill a staff role that plans for contingency or combat operations, NCOs must be educated in the intelligence preparation of the battlefield process, a systematic method of analyzing the threats and environment in a specific area, said course officials. It is “designed to support staff estimates and military decision making,” as prescribed in the Field Manual 34 - 130, Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield.

The revamped Battle Staff course will educate NCOs in meeting the criteria of intelligence preparation of the battlefield through its plans, orders and annexes instruction. Though previously part

of the curriculum, the redeveloped course will include even more emphasis on practical exercises such as producing and presenting operation orders.

“Our mission isn’t to train; it’s to educate,” Fragoso said. “If we educate our NCOs earlier on the basics you’ll have NCOs who understand the methods, what’s expected and what’s needed so that they can be members of a staff.”

“Our mission isn’t to train, it’s to educate.”

– Sgt. Maj. Jose Fragoso
Battle Staff course director at USASMA

Looking Ahead

Like all Soldiers today, the ability to remain adaptable to any situation is at the forefront of the Battle Staff course mission. With progress in mind, course directors have outlined a number of goals to ensure

success for the NCOs who take the course.

Wilkinson emphasized the importance of transience within each phase of the process, and the ability for pre-war, war and post-war assignments to integrate seamlessly.

To achieve this, future Battle Staff course curricula will include more instruction of the intelligence preparation of the battlefield and military decision-making process “closer to the levels of what battalion- and brigade-level captains receive to ensure a paralleled level of knowledge shared by the battle captain and Battle Staff NCO,” he said.

BATTLE STAFF BREAKDOWN

<i>Phase I</i>		<i>Phase II</i>
WHO	Open to any MOS, staff sergeants through sergeants major	Open to any MOS, staff sergeants through sergeants major who have completed Phase I
WHAT	Individualized and self-paced reviews of Army operations, combat service support, command staff functions and more	Performance-oriented. Topics include graphics and overlays, plans, orders and annexes; military briefings; rehearsals; staff functions and more
WHEN	New courses begin Jan. 1, 2010; April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2010.	Resident courses in 2010 begin Jan. 5; Feb. 24; April 14; June 2 and Aug. 31. VTT courses begin every few weeks. Visit https://atrrs.army.mil for more information
WHERE	Conducted at home stations via distance learning	Resident courses at Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa.; Fort McCoy, Wis.; and Camp Williams, Utah. VTT courses from USASMA to distance-learning sites worldwide
WHY	Prerequisite for Phase II	To become educated on the skills, operations and maneuvers to serve as a competent, confident member of a battalion or higher level staff
TIME FRAME	60 days	3 weeks

While the NCOES continues to evolve, functional programs like the Battle Staff course maintain a vital role in educating the whole NCO, explained Fragoso. Combining skill levels to address the many variables in the battlefield today, the new Battle Staff course is designed to complement the experience of NCOs with added leadership development.


“Having those experienced NCOs who have been out there (on the battlefield), inside the command center, with (this new) education — that’s really what we do here,” Doyle said. “It’s more than battle staff training, it’s battle staff education.” 

Photo by Cassandra Yardeni

Right - Battle Staff course students at USASMA receive instruction on the Command Post of the Future technology during a Battle Staff training lesson.



Developing great leadership

By Sgt. Nicholas E. Teague
1-78th Field Artillery Battalion

Leadership is a word often used in the United States military. The acronym, LDRSHIP, represents the Army's seven values, which we must use and apply to call ourselves Soldiers. We develop into leaders throughout our careers. We recruit, train and appoint new leaders. We plan and carry out operations under the direction of our command and staff leaders.

But, how does one define and become a great leader?

A great leader is someone who helps others do and become more than they ever thought possible. Developing great leadership is about unlocking potential.

It is not about telling people what to do, but inspiring them to achieve and lead by example. The quality of leadership makes the difference between a team that is passionate about what it's doing versus one that is simply following orders.

Good leadership isn't hard to achieve, but a truly *great* leader stands out above all other leaders. A great leader does not make false assumptions, is understanding and humble, and accepts that there's always room for improvement.

To be a *great* leader, one must be an *effective* leader. An effective leader can make things happen the right way. When something is wrong, they will solve the problem in a timely manner instead of letting it continue unresolved, making a situation more complex.

But there are many factors that can stand in the way of becoming an effective leader. One of the most dangerous misconceptions about leadership is thinking that a leader knows it all. Another is the idea that an efficient leader is also effective, which is absolutely incorrect.

My mentor once told me: *"The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership. One should never yield to temptation and sacrifice effectiveness for efficiency."*

An effective leader must keep in mind that human frailty comes into play whether you are a private or a command sergeant major. So while the ultimate decision and responsibility may lie with one individual, it is incumbent upon that individual to gather information and trust others' points of view before developing a plan of action.

Great leaders also must be open to change. A leader should not think that their way is the only way to accomplish goals. As Napoleon stated, *"There are no bad regiments; there are only bad colonels."* Especially when working with team building, a leader must be able to take advice and appropriate criticism to better the way a mission will operate and get it accomplished.

Some people have only one style of leadership. But they

must be willing to change as their leadership style may not always work.

Flexible leadership can be difficult, however it is great because it involves being able to adapt according to the situation and the status of the team. An example is taking charge when a team is forming, but playing the role of coach when a team is managing itself well. It takes knowing which battles to fight, and which to let pass. It allows room for error and opportunity to make corrections and solve problems. Another aspect of flexibility is being creative and thinking of new ways to approach problems or situations.

However, in saying that, we must remember to present our personal ideas to our subordinates and superiors before applying them in order to win the fundamental support of our team.

When doing this, the idea will often be viewed as a positive change.

Author John Maxwell says this: *"The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The leader adjusts the sails."*

If we keep this in mind, it will help us develop into flexible leaders, which will bring us that much closer to great leadership.

There are many qualities that people will notice about future

great leaders, including the ability to listen. Potential leaders of greatness have a "holding court" quality about them. When they speak, people listen. Some people talk a great deal – they give a speech – but nobody listens.

Leaders must have a great amount of mental toughness without acting "mean" and understand that no one can lead without being criticized. Most people would prefer a tough-minded leader who will work for the benefit of the team and is a positive influence on the team.

Leadership creates a certain separation from one's peers. The distance comes because leaders carry major responsibilities, often the weight of an entire organization. A potentially *great* leader must recognize this pressure is normal and not be afraid to seek out developmental counseling from their mentors.

To be a *great* leader, period, a person must have a leader's spirit, which consists of the drive, willingness and motivation to lead. After all, becoming an effective leader takes hard work. If you're not prepared to work hard at developing your leadership skills, or if you're not sure you want to lead, you'll struggle to be effective. People who struggle with this may feel depressed, and perhaps lose sight of their personal goals and their team's goals.

There must be a sense of purpose.

As stated by Gen. Creighton Abrams, *"There must be a willingness to march a little farther, to carry a heavier load, to step out into the dark and the unknown for the safety and well-being of others."*

A great leader is someone who helps others do and become more than they ever thought possible. Developing great leadership is about unlocking potential. It is not about telling people what to do, but inspiring them to achieve and lead by example.

This statement illustrates that leaders must show spirit, even in times of doubt.

A great leader must maintain that sense of purpose in the face of adversity and setback. Your position, whether as a commissioned or noncommissioned officer, is not a precursor or a barrier to the appropriate development and expression of vision. In the military, rank is often viewed from a socialist's perspective by newer soldiers. They cannot step up to the challenge and lead. In other cases, they are intimidated by superiors and are afraid to reach out and seek guidance and mentorship to develop their leadership vision.

A great leader has the ability to motivate, to inspire, to boost the morale of others. When subordinates feel this motivation, they, too, will demonstrate strength. We rely on these characteristics so immensely that absence of these skills can cause a devastating drop in confidence in subordinates. In turn, they will no longer trust their leaders.

John Quincy Adams said, *"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."*

The ability to motivate is an essential tool for all leaders to have in their toolbox. A good leader with a positive attitude and a vision can motivate anyone – even those who may feel dissatisfied with their jobs. Subordinates must be included in all parts of the process, every step of the way. Teamwork is the key here, not hierarchy, especially when "One Team, One Fight" was once the Army motto. Now, however, our motto signifies that there is strength in teamwork: "Army Strong." That said, people must still be treated as individuals. Always acknowledge their importance and show them respect. They're people first, Soldiers second. Superior work must be encouraged, recognized and rewarded. Leaders must motivate and boost the pride and morale of their section.

A great leader will have an outstanding ability to communicate, which is imperative if the mission is to be completed successfully. Effective communication will greatly speed up the progress of the tasks at hand. Speaking and writing are certainly important, but perhaps a more important element of communication is the ability to listen. We all know what it is like to have a conversation with someone who is not listening. The next time you engage in a conversation, truly make an effort to listen. You'll find yourself enjoying and learning from the people with whom you associate. Not only does this show your concern for others, but it also shows compassion and understanding.

Leaders must lead by example. All of us have had a role model, someone we've admired, and someone who has influenced us by their actions, ethical standards, ideals or achievements. We cannot make someone fear us and then expect to have their loyalty.

Gen. Dwight Eisenhower said, *"I would rather try to persuade a man to go along, because once I have persuaded him, he will stick. If I scare him, he will stay just as long as he is scared, and then he is gone."*

As Soldiers, we may tend to forget the influence we have on those with whom we live and work. We tend to think only leaders are influential. But all of us, intentionally or not, constantly project our personal vision – the way we think life should be lived, our code of personal conduct – to everyone we meet.

Our conduct in the work environment surrounds us like the air we breathe. Almost subconsciously, we absorb the examples of others. We're influenced, changed in some way. The changes may be small – almost unnoticeable – but over the course of time, the effects may be far reaching and profound. We're different people because of what we see; we've changed others by what we do.

Great leadership is set by example and is straight forward. We don't need to advertise ourselves as great leaders or ask others to do so. Leaders are subject to constant scrutiny. We hope and expect they will maintain high standards and diligence of their position. But, being human, we are also imperfect.

Gen. Omar Bradley stated, *"Leadership in a democratic army means firmness, not harshness; understanding, not weakness; generosity, not selfishness; pride, not egotism."*

We must support our superiors and encourage them to support us.

Quite often, however, the demands of leadership bring out the very best in us. Arriving at a new duty station, we attempt to forecast what can and cannot achieve. But, settling in, we see the desire of the troops to excel, to perform the mission proudly and we're encouraged to match that desire with increased commitment. This is what makes leaders and units perform beyond their perceived limitations, beyond

what they thought themselves capable.

A great leader will be continually decisive. How often do we hear people say, "I wish they would just make a choice, any choice!" There are very few sources of irritation more frustrating to subordinates than the indecisive leader, one who cannot efficiently lay out a rational and logical course of action. Perhaps equally frustrating are leaders who keep changing their decisions or go back on their word, reflecting the most recently applied pressure or criticism of their previous decisions.

We must not be afraid of ridicule, nor must we fear making an error and being replaced.

Gen. Omar Bradley said, *"Leadership is intangible, and therefore no weapon ever designed can replace it."*

Great leadership is needed on and off the battlefield. It rests in our hands to carry onward the finest of our military traditions and be an example of a great leader to the soldiers of the past, the present and the future.

Editor's note: Teague hails from Kingsport Tenn. He is assigned to 1-78th Field Artillery Battalion, Fort Sill, Okla. Teague has an associate degree in Biblical Studies from New Life Bible College and Seminary. His aspirations include obtaining a doctorate in Christian Counseling within the next 6 years, going to Army parachutist training, and going to combat sometime in his career. His greatest aspiration is to be the sergeant major of the Army.

A great leader will have an outstanding ability to communicate, which is imperative if the mission is to be completed successfully. Effective communication will greatly speed up the progress of the tasks at hand.

NCO Stories

A selection of Valor



Sgt. 1st Class Jared C. Monti

Citation to award the Medal of Honor

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty:

Staff Sgt. Jared C. Monti distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a team leader with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, in connection with combat operations against an armed enemy in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan, on June 21, 2006.

While Monti was leading a mission aimed at gathering intelligence and directing fire against the enemy, his 16-man patrol was attacked by as many as 50 enemy fighters. On the verge of being overrun, Monti quickly directed his men to set up a defensive position behind a rock formation. He then called for indirect fire support, accurately targeting the rounds upon the enemy who had closed to within 50 meters of his position. While still directing fire, Monti personally engaged the enemy with his rifle and a grenade, successfully disrupting an attempt to flank his patrol.

Monti then realized that one of his Soldiers was lying wounded in the open ground between the advancing enemy and the patrol's position.

With complete disregard for his own safety, Monti twice attempted to move from behind the cover of the rocks into the face of relentless enemy fire to rescue his fallen comrade. Determined not to leave his Soldier, Monti made a third attempt to cross open terrain through intense enemy fire. On this final attempt, he was mortally wounded, sacrificing his own life in an effort to save his fellow Soldier.

Monti's selfless acts of heroism inspired his patrol to fight off the larger enemy force. Monti's immeasurable courage and uncommon valor are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division and the United States Army.

'Soldiers' NCO' earns Medal of Honor for heroic actions in Afghanistan

By Elizabeth M. Collins
Army News Service

Ask anyone who knew Sgt. 1st Class Jared Monti of the 10th Mountain Division, and they'll tell you he was the best friend, the best Soldier, the best noncommissioned officer and the best person they ever knew.

"He set an example in every way, shape and form," said former Capt. Ross A. Berkoff, the unit's intelligence officer, explaining that Monti was known as the best NCO in the 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

"He was willing to stand up for his Soldiers," added now-Staff Sgt. Christopher J. Grzecki. "He didn't care what the guy above him thought of him as long as he knew that he was doing the right thing to take care of his guys."

Monti would have done anything for his Soldiers, so after the initial shock, no one was surprised that he sacrificed his life to save another Soldier during an intense firefight with Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan on June 21, 2006.

He was posthumously promoted to sergeant first class the following day and was the first Soldier awarded the Medal of Honor for Operation Enduring Freedom. President Barack Obama presented his parents with the award at a White House ceremony Sept. 17 in Washington.

Monti earned the medal when he and 15 other Soldiers became the first American servicemembers to ever set foot in the Gremen Valley near the Pakistan border. Reports had shown insurgents were in the area but did not specify their exact location, their numbers or the types of weapons they had.

Monti's patrol consisted of two six-man kill teams – combinations of snipers and forward observers – led by Sgt. 1st Class Christopher M. Cunningham and Staff Sgt. John Hawes. They were on a reconnaissance mission to provide information about the enemy before the 3rd BCT began a larger push into the region for Operation Gowardesh Thrust.

As dusk was falling, a rocket-propelled grenade flew over the heads of the team and they were overwhelmed by a stunning amount of firepower. Some of the Soldiers' rifles were shot out of their hands while others couldn't even reach their weapons. Monti got on the radio to call in indirect fire and air support and Hawes remembered the Soldiers taking cover behind a few boulders, passing weapons back and forth to take the best shots.

Cunningham soon realized Pfc. Brian J. Bradbury was missing. He was injured and laying about 20 meters away in a slight depression. Cunningham was closer and offered to get him, but Monti refused, saying Bradbury was his Soldier.

He handed his radio to Sgt. Chris J. Grzecki and, running toward Bradbury, said, "You are now Chaos three-five," his call sign. The wood line erupted with intense fire aimed at Monti. He made it a few meters before he was pushed back behind a small



Photo by D. Myles Cullen

President Barack Obama posthumously awards Sgt. 1st Class Jared C. Monti the Medal of Honor and presents it to his parents, Paul and Janet Monti, in the East Room of the White House on Sept. 17.

stone wall where another Soldier lay dead. He ran out again, was pushed behind the wall again and then ran into fire a third time.

"Monti ran straight for Bradbury as we all provided covering fire," Hawes wrote to Monti's mother Janet. "I remember seeing Monti running and I was firing ... as close as I dared. ... Just as he was about to reach Bradbury, I ran out of ammo, and as I dropped behind the rock to change magazines ... I heard an RPG ... explode. Monti's scream that he had been hit followed shortly after." Monti said he made his peace with God and asked someone to tell his parents he loved them before falling silent.

"I have a tremendous feeling of pride," Monti's father, Paul, said. "But I still can't get over not having my son. I would give all of this up, all of it, everything, just to have him back, just to be able to hug him one more time."

"It's nothing you want," Hawes explained. "When you start getting into that level of award, especially the Silver Star and higher, it's sounds cool when you read about it in a book. But when you realize what it takes to earn it It really has to hit the fan and friends and stuff die, and that's not worth anything."

"Faced with overwhelming enemy fire, Jared could have stayed where he was behind that rock." Obama said at Monti's award ceremony. But, "that was not the kind of Soldier Jared Monti was."

Monti's mother, Janet, said her son would have wanted the medal to go to his men. "To him it would represent every single Soldier, Marine, sailor – whoever. Whether they're still in Afghanistan or Iraq or home; whether they came home alive or in a casket; came home spiritually, emotionally or physically wounded ... this (award) is for all of them," she said.

Two days of hell, nine Soldiers of valor

**By Master Sgt. Donald Sparks
Special Operations Command-Europe Public Affairs**

On two separate days in April, members of Company B, 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), were engaged in hostile enemy action, resulting in nine of its members receiving awards for valor.

Staff Sgts. Steven Hurt and Jason Lebeau each were pinned the Bronze Star Medal with “V” device and Staff Sgts. Daniel Devlin, Juanmanuel Mata, John Lewis and Christopher Smith were decorated with Army Commendation Medals with “V” device during a ceremony held July 29 at Panzer Kaserne outside Stuttgart, Germany. Devlin also received a Purple Heart.

Three other team members not present at the ceremony who also earned the Bronze Star were Sgt. 1st Class Jason Dryden, Staff Sgt. Kenneth Powell and Staff Sgt. Keith Waller. Waller also received a Purple Heart.

The team was partnered with a Romanian Special Forces detachment and was called to assist two platoons from the 10th Mountain Division to capture a senior-level insurgent hiding in a compound.

By the time they arrived, the enemy had fortified its position within the compound, emplacing crew-served weapons and strategically positioning fighters to defend against the assault.

“Within five minutes we were taking pretty effective fire from the insurgents. Waller and four of the Romanian soldiers were immediately hit,” said Master Sgt. Joshua Whitty, the detachment’s team sergeant. “Incredibly, Waller kept up the fight until the medics pulled him away.”

At that point, Hurt, one of the team’s communications sergeants, realized that he needed to reposition to make contact with the air medevac. After just completing an assault against the enemy position, he again exposed himself to enemy machine gun fire while moving to establish communications.

“Staff Sgt. Hurt is one of my most aggressive Soldiers – a shooter first,” Whitty said. “He was one of the first guys up on that roof, and he knew when it was time to pull out of the fight to get satellite communications

and relay information on the ground situation.”

As the enemy continued its attack on their position, Smith, Dryden and Powell continued to treat the injured Soldiers, also putting themselves at serious personal risk.

On Day 2 the team partnered with an Afghanistan National Army platoon, a squad of Soldiers from the 71st Cavalry Regiment and a Romanian Special Forces team and prepared to conduct a deliberate detention operation of an insurgent

commander and improvised explosive device facilitator.

Whitty described the situation as the “worst timing” for the men, as they were already physically and emotionally spent after clearing five insurgent compounds during the previous 24 hours.

The enemy had an elevated position and watched as the men entered a narrow alleyway before opening fire and inflicting life-threatening wounds on two of the Soldiers from the 71st Cavalry Regiment. The enemy also launched a rocket-propelled grenade in the alleyway, with fragments of the grenade penetrating the

edge of Devlin’s helmet and lacerating his head.

“I knew I was dinked, but it was nothing serious,” Devlin said.

While receiving direct small arms fire, the Special Forces Soldiers began giving immediate first aid care to the wounded Soldiers and placed seven tourniquets on one of them, eventually saving both his life and limb.

Both Mata and Lebeau took turns providing suppressive fire against the enemy, while also taking turns giving critical care by applying direct pressure to stop the bleeding.

Whitty, who was separated from his men, attributed the many hours of first aid cross-training his Soldiers conducted before their deployment for saving the lives of the two wounded Soldiers. He added that every man is confident enough to do some part of every other man’s job on the team.

Summing up the actions of all the men on those two nights, Devlin said, “If any one member of our team had not been there, it could have been so much worse.

Everyone played a vital role, and everyone made a difference.”



Photo by Angelo Jasper

Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), stand in formation following a valor award ceremony in which two received the Bronze Star Medal with “V” device and four received the Army Commendation Medal with “V” device. Three other Soldiers also earned the Bronze Star for valor.



Korean War hero receives Distinguished Service Cross 58 years after disappearing in North Korea mission

By Alex McVeigh
Army News Service

Fifty-eight years after Sgt. 1st Class William T. Miles parachuted into North Korea, he was awarded the military's second highest honor, the Distinguished Service Cross.

Three generations of Miles' family members gathered at the Spates Community Club at Fort Myer, Va., on April 22 to receive the Distinguished Service Cross in his honor. A medal was given to each of his three siblings, who grew up unsure of what had happened to their brother.

"For almost 50 years, we didn't know what happened to him," said Marjorie Hantwerker, Miles' sister. "The Army Ranger organization helped us finally figure out what happened."

In October 2001, Miles' family held a memorial service for him in Arlington National Cemetery. In August 2003, Miles was inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame.

As part of Operation Spitfire, a mission designed to locate, strengthen and guide allied troops, Miles jumped into North Korea on June 18, 1951. He and his team discovered and destroyed two bases used by the Chinese to launch surprise attacks.

On July 6, a friendly aircraft dropped supplies in broad daylight, allowing Chinese forces to discover the location of Miles' team. Miles and a South Korean lieutenant volunteered to stay behind and delay the Chinese advance, and were never seen again.

The path that led to Miles being awarded the Distinguished Service Cross started with retired Col. Douglas Dillard. While researching the Korean War, he came upon the story of the Soldier who was never seen again after parachuting into enemy territory.

"When I discovered the details, there was no way I couldn't offer a recommendation," Dillard said. "His unit was deactivated three months after the disappearance, and it kind of got lost in the shuffle."



Photo by Alex McVeigh

Brig. Gen. Reuben Jones, Army adjutant general, hands the Distinguished Service Cross to the family members of Sgt. 1st Class William T. Miles at a ceremony April 22, 58 years following his disappearance after parachuting into enemy territory.

At the ceremony, Brig. Gen. Reuben Jones, Army adjutant general, spoke of a man who played football in high school and worked in a factory before enlisting at Fort Dix, N.J., in March 1948. Miles was assigned to the 4th Ranger Infantry but was serving with the Eighth Army's G-3 Operations at the time of his mission.

After Jones spoke, he presented medals to Hantwerker and sister Janice Payne. A third medal was designated for brother Donald Miles, who was unable to attend the ceremony. Donald, who lives in Philadelphia, is also a Korean War veteran.

Hantwerker took the podium for a few moments, and though her voice broke at times, she managed to convey the pride and sense of loss that her entire family was feeling.

"I don't think it ever entered his mind not to volunteer for that mission," she said. "Just like it probably never entered his mind that his sisters would be here, 50 years later, accepting the Distinguished Service Cross that he rightfully earned."

Miles had also been awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Ranger Tab, the Parachutist Badge with two Jump Stars, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean War Service Medal with four Bronze Service Stars and the Korean War Service Medal.

The Distinguished Service Cross is the second-highest decoration that can be given to a Soldier. It is awarded for extreme gallantry and risk of life in actual combat against an armed enemy force.

"When we heard about the award, we were all a little surprised in a way," Payne said. "But it's a wonderful feeling, and we're so relieved that he was finally recognized."



PHOTO JOURNAL

Welcome to another edition of Photo Journal, the place where everyone has the opportunity to put their favorite photos on display. The guidelines for submitting pictures are as follows: The picture should depict NCOs in action, whether they're leading Soldiers in the field, conducting training or just plain taking care of business. You don't have to be a professional photographer to enter. When submitting photos, please include the names of individuals in the photo, a brief description of the action, location, the photographer's name and unit.

Photos may be submitted as a hard copy or digitally. If you e-mail a digital photo, make sure it is at least 300 dpi. Mail photos to The NCO Journal, Commandant, USASMA, ATTN: ATSS-SCN, Editor, 11291 SGT E. Churchill St., Fort Bliss, TX 79918-8002 or e-mail the electronic version to ATSS-SJ-NCOJOURNAL@conus.army.mil.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell



Staff Sgt. Andrew Byrnes (left) and Sgt. James Hall, assigned to 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, carry part of a mortar tube used by insurgents siezed during a combined caches sweep in northwestern Baghdad.

Photo by Spc. Mike MacLeod



A Soldier cleans his protective eyewear as other infantrymen of 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, get ready to move out at Camp Ramadi, Iraq.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim



Sgt. William Farmer, a scout assigned to 9th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, watches out for enemy activity even after he is notionally shot during the Spur Ride at Fort Hood, Texas.

Photo by Spc. Anderson Savoy



A Kirkuk, Iraq, police investigator discusses procedures and investigating techniques with Staff Sgt. Phillip Bowman, C-Troop, 4-9 Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division.

Photo by Spc. Maurice Galloway



A 14th Iraqi Army Division sergeant and Staff Sgt. James Rowlett, 407th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team, Basrah EOD Co., 17th Fires Brigade, prepare 2,600 pounds of seized explosives for detonation throughout the pile.

Photo by Jason Minto



From right, President Barack Obama, Maj. Gen. Daniel Wright, Brig. Gen. Michael Repass, Command Sgt. Maj. Mario Vigil and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz board an aircraft during a dignified transfer at Dover Air Force Base, Del.

Roll call

o f t h e f a l l e n

Operation Iraqi Freedom

Spc. Paul E. Andersen, 49, Dowagiac, Mich., Oct. 1, 2009 ♦ *Maj. David L. Audo, 35, Saint Joseph, Ill., Oct. 27, 2009* ♦ *Staff Sgt. Bradley Espinoza, 26, Mission, Texas, Oct. 19, 2009* ♦ *Maj. Tad T. Hervas, 48, Coon Rapids, Minn., Oct. 6, 2009* ♦ *Pfc. Daniel J. Rivera, 22, Rochester, N.Y., Oct. 18, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Ross E. Vogel III, 27, Red Lion, Pa., Sept. 29, 2009*

Operation Enduring Freedom

Sgt. Ryan C. Adams, 26, Rhineland, Wis., Oct. 2, 2009 ♦ *Spc. George W. Cauley, 24, Walker, Minn., Oct. 10, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Kyle A Coumas, 22, Lockeford, Calif., Oct. 21, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Michael A. Dahl Jr., 23, Moreno Valley, Calif., Oct. 17, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Jesus O. Flores Jr., 28, La Mirada, Calif., Oct. 15, 2009* ♦ *Staff Sgt. Alex French IV, 31, Milledgeville, Ga., Sept. 30, 2009* ♦ *Sgt. Justin T. Gallegos, 27, Tucson, Ariz., Oct. 3, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Kevin J. Graham, 27, Benton, Ky., Sept. 26, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Anthony G. Green, 28, Matthews, N.C., Oct. 16, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Christopher T. Griffin, 24, Kincheloe, Mich., Oct. 3, 2009* ♦ *Pfc. Kimble A. Han, 30, Lefhi, Utah, Oct. 23, 2009* ♦ *Sgt. Joshua M. Hardt, 24, Applegate, Calif., Oct. 3, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Russell S. Hercules Jr., 22, Murfreesboro, Tenn., Oct. 1, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Kevin O. Hill, 23, Brooklyn, N.Y., Oct. 4, 2009* ♦ *Sgt. Joshua J. Kirk, 30, South Portland, Maine, Oct. 3, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Corey J. Kowall, 20, Murfreesboro, Tenn., Sept. 20, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Daniel C. Lawson, 33, Deerfield Beach, Fla., Oct. 15, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Eric N. Lembke, 25, Tampa, Fla., Oct. 23, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Stephan L. Mace, 21, Lovettsville, Va., Oct. 3, 2009* ♦ *Staff Sgt. Jack M. Martin III, 26, Bethany, Okla., Sept. 29, 2009* ♦ *Staff Sgt. Vernon W. Martin, 25, Savannah, Ga., Oct. 3, 2009* ♦ *Pfc. William L. Meredith, 26, Virginia Beach, Va., Sept. 21, 2009* ♦ *Pfc. Alan H. Newton Jr., 26, Asheboro, N.C., Oct. 2, 2009* ♦ *Pfc. Brandon A. Owens, 21, Memphis, Tenn., Oct. 2, 2009* ♦ *Staff Sgt. Thomas D. Rabjohn, 39, Litchfield Park, Ariz., Oct. 3, 2009* ♦ *Sgt. Titus R. Reynolds, 23, Columbus, Ohio, Sept. 24, 2009* ♦ *Sgt. Christopher M. Rudzinski, 28, Rantoul, Ill., Oct. 16, 2009* ♦ *Sgt. Roberto D. Sanchez, 24, Satellite Beach, Fla., Oct. 1, 2009* ♦ *Sgt. Michael P. Scusa, 22, Villas, N.J., Oct. 3, 2009* ♦ *Sgt. 1st Class Christopher D. Shaw, 37, Markham, Ill., Sept. 29, 2009* ♦ *Capt. Benjamin A. Sklaver, 32, Medford, Mass., Oct. 2, 2009* ♦ *Sgt. Aaron M. Smith, 25, Manhattan, Kan., Oct. 2, 2009* ♦ *Sgt. Edward B. Smith, 30, Homestead, Fla., Sept. 24, 2009* ♦ *Staff Sgt. Chris N. Staats, 32, Fredericksburg, Texas, Oct. 16, 2009* ♦ *Staff Sgt. Glen H. Stinson Jr., 34, Blairsville, Pa., Oct. 15, 2009* ♦ *Pfc. Devin J. Michel, 19, Stockton, Ill., Oct. 24, 2009* ♦ *Pfc. Brandon M. Styer, 19, Lancaster, Pa., Oct. 15, 2009* ♦ *Pfc. Kevin C. Thomson, 22, Reno, Nev., Oct. 3, 2009* ♦ *Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth W. Westbrook, 41, Shiprock, N. M., Oct. 7, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Joseph V. White, 21, Bellevue, Wash., Sept. 24, 2009* ♦ *Spc. Damon G. Winkelman, 23, Lakeville, Ohio, Sept. 20, 2009* ♦ *Sgt. Eduviges G. Wolf, 24, Hawthorne, Calif., Oct. 25, 2009*

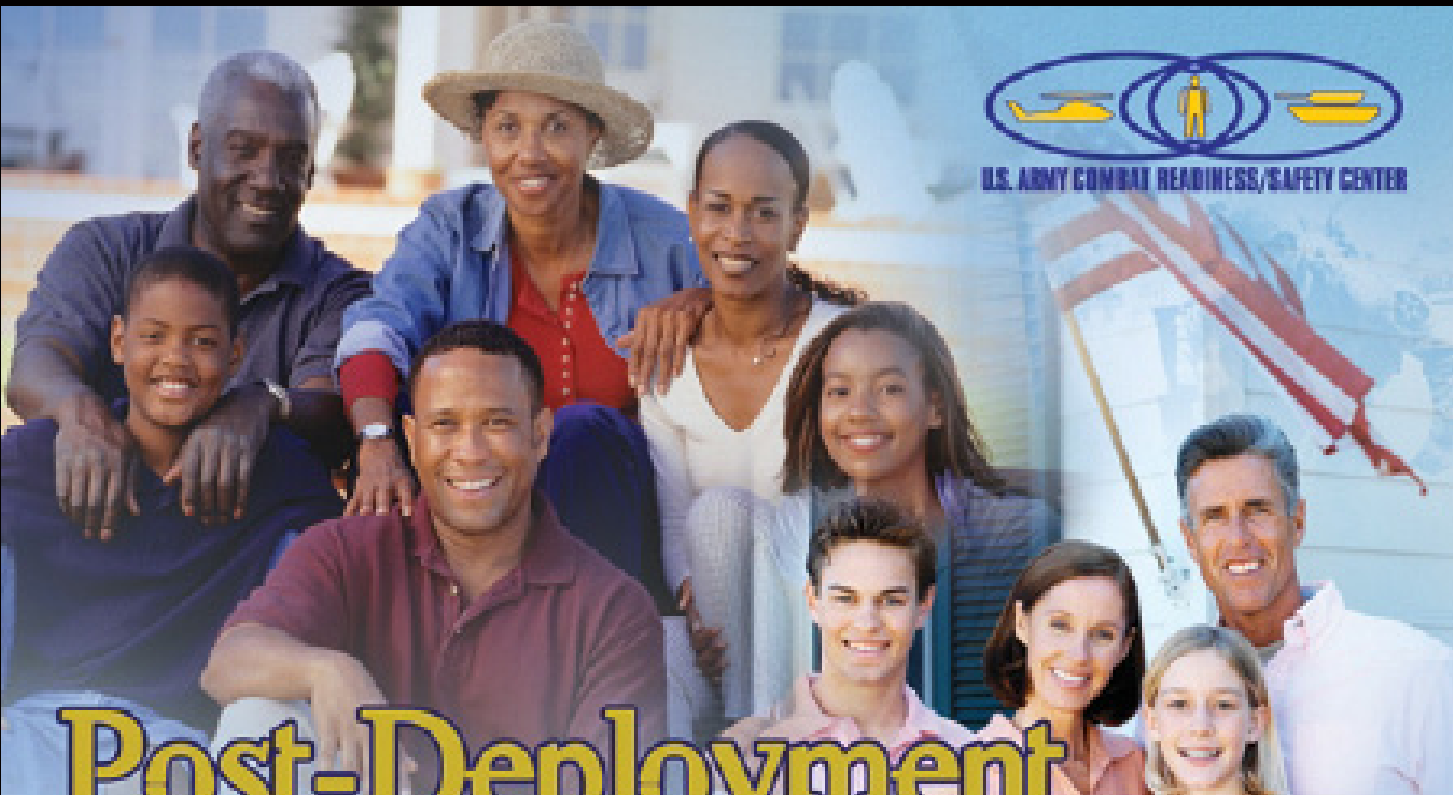
Editor's note: This is a continuation of the list that was first started with the October 2003 issue of the NCO Journal and contains those names released by the Department of Defense between Sept. 19 and Oct. 28, 2009.

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