A Joint Professional Bulletin for U.S. Field & Air Defense Artillerymen

# Fires

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## ARTICLES



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Headquarters, Department of the Army • PB644-09-4



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**POSTMASTER:** ***Fires*** (USPS 309-010) (ISSN 1935-4096) is published bimonthly; periodical postage paid by Department of the Army at Lawton, OK 73501 and an additional mailing post office. Send address changes to ***Fires***, P.O. Box 33311, Fort Sill, OK 73503-0311.

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# The Year of the NCO

By CSM Joseph D. Smith, FA

The U.S. Army officially kicked off the "Year of the NCO" in January and always has benefited from NCOs who can and do display initiative, make decisions and seize opportunities that correspond with the commander's intent. These qualities are more important than ever in an Army at war. Despite technological improvements and increased situational awareness at every level, NCOs must make decisions that take advantage of fleeting opportunities on the battlefield.

Today, our Fires Center of Excellence NCOs face challenges that are unlike any in our past. Both field artillery and air defense artillery NCOs execute the full spectrum of operations — stability, support, offensive and defensive operations. And never before have our battlefields been more decentralized, our enemy more ruthless, and never have we had more potential for our NCOs to determine our success as a center and as an Army.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, tactical actions by our NCOs do have strategic consequences. To all of our NCOs in the fight — make no mistake — your actions do have impact. You not only affect those serving on your left and right flanks, but also your fellow NCOs and Soldiers who will follow you in future rotations.

Combatant commanders are relying more and more on the precise and lethal fires that both FA and ADA Soldiers can deliver. Commanders also rely heavily on our fires NCOs to plan, coordinate and synchronize nonlethal fires at all levels.

Our Soldiers are performing traditional and nontraditional tasks brilliantly in Iraq and Afghanistan. These tasks include convoy security, counterinsurgency offensive missions, intelligence gathering, logistical support, forward operating base security and unmanned aircraft systems operations to mention a few. All of these Soldiers and NCOs know they are ambassadors representing their country and the U.S. Army.

**Core competency retraining.** We continue to ask our NCOs to lead Soldiers doing nontraditional tasks during the current fight. Those missions take our NCOs and Soldiers away from their traditional tasks. Both FA and ADA leadership recognizes that, to maintain the excellence of our NCOs and Soldiers, we must take efforts to address the atrophy in our core competencies. We especially are experiencing a decline in artillery core competencies due both to deploying repetitively on nonstandard missions and to increasing our skill sets to include nonlethal fires.

Our NCO Corps is the envy of professional militaries around the world; others can see the tremendous value of our NCOs' leadership in current operations. Therefore, we are pursuing initiatives aggressively to regain our edge.

**Mobile training teams.** Mobile training teams are really a growth industry for us due to the operational tempo and short reset periods between deployments. They are a capability, required today because of the War on Terrorism. If we truly believe in educating our NCOs, we must provide that education at all costs.

Thus far, we have taken some of our NCOs out of the operating force to send them all over the world to conduct training for our fires NCOs. Mobile training teams provide training to NCO leaders in all of our military occupational specialties. The teams are designed to train the trainer and to develop subject matter experts in each area so units can regain their core skills.

Second, we are using mobile training teams to meet our NCO Education System demands. Because of the War on Terrorism and deployment schedules, it is difficult to get all of our NCOs into resident NCO Education System classes. Mobile training teams will help meet this demand.

The use of mobile training teams to help Soldiers regain core proficiencies will continue for the foreseeable future. I encourage units to take advantage of these mobile training teams as they reset and as they prepare to execute future deployments.

**21st century priorities.** The future operating atmosphere undoubtedly will be one of declining budgets and assets. The harsh reality is we will not receive all the resources we need to accomplish the tasks required of us at home and abroad. But there are several priorities we can't and will not compromise; the first and foremost being, through the Fires Center of Excellence, we will continue to develop competent and confident fires leaders for our Army.

We also will continue to support the current fight by providing the Army with a campaign-quality, expeditionary fires force that is able to operate effectively and efficiency with air and missile defense partners across the full spectrum of operations.

Transformation of the force will continue to be an ongoing effort and will require us to anticipate requirements, tirelessly advocate for additional resources and integrate force application functions to deliver the optimal combination of lethal and nonlethal fires capabilities for joint and maneuver commanders. So we will continue to sustain the fires force by economically managing our resources to support the current fight — reset, retrain and revitalize the fires force in support of Army Force Generation.

Our Army is ever changing and to keep pace, we need to remember the past and the lessons learned from it, but also be ready to engage the future and all its changes fully. And lastly, we will establish and sustain the Fires Center of Excellence as a world-class learning organization with the best Soldiers, leaders, civilians, facilities and equipment.

I am confident that our Fires NCOs will continue these initiatives and continue to fight with professionalism and discipline, and I am certain our reliance on our NCOs will lead to success. I challenge all our Fires NCOs to carry forward this noble tradition — established by NCOs of years past and still alive in the men and women who proudly fight today. Our Army, the field artillery and the air defense artillery depend on it. Here's to you, NCOs. This is our year to shine more than ever. Let's work hard to earn our honor during the Year of the NCO.

*Agile and Decisive ... Anywhere ... Anytime!* ▪

# The state of the FIST

By SSG Christopher J. Grzecki, FA

During the last six years, fire supporters have deployed to the urban jungle of Iraq and conducted primarily nontraditional missions that infantrymen more commonly perform.

Meanwhile, the fire supporters who operated in the arduous mountains of Afghanistan probably have called for and adjusted more indirect fire rounds, close air support and close combat aviation in combat than they have in training. With the focus of our nation's military operations shifting rapidly to Afghanistan, the Advanced Leadership Course is, now more than ever, an essential stepping stone to become an effective combat leader in today's Army.

As a 13F small group leader at the Advanced Leadership Course at Fort Sill, Okla., I have taught almost 115 of my fellow comrades since early 2008. Since then, I have noticed a few disturbing trends. Though there are multiple reasons for it, but the one that burns my soul the most is the lack of basic fire support knowledge of my peers.

Do not mistake this strictly as a disparaging remark. I think the majority of the fault lies with the maneuver commands for not allowing field artillery Soldiers the opportunities to train. Through my observation, the most common reason for this is their commanders do not understand the need for lethal fires or the fact that fire support skills are indeed a perishable skill set. This, in my opinion, is due to a combination of three things — a lack of command experience in environments that require the use of indirect fires, the ever-growing realm of nonlethal fires and a lack of confidence in fire supporters to execute their missions safely and accurately.

**Rectifying the trend.** The opportunity to rectify this unnerving trend lies at the feet of the company fire support sergeant. The company fire support sergeant, also known as the company fire support team chief or company fire support NCO, has a link to the company commander, either directly or through his company fire support officer. This NCO's position has an enormous amount of responsibility. He is responsible for the fitness, health, welfare, morale, discipline and training of the company's fire supporters.

From my own personal experience and observations, a company fire support NCO has the opportunity and support to ensure he can meet all of his responsibilities — with the exception of training. Junior fire supporters most likely will receive training on maneuver tactics, close-quarters marksmanship, entering and clearing a room, detainee operations, information operations and civil affairs operations, but probably none will receive much needed training on fire support operations.

Likely, these junior fire supporters are assigned directly to their maneuver platoons and are counseled by those platoon sergeants or squad leaders. The company fire support NCO probably has to request time to train the fire support Soldiers from their respective platoon sergeants at the weekly training meeting. Gone are the days of taking your fire support Soldiers into the dayroom to grill them on *Field Manual 6-30 Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Observed Fire* all day. The question is, "How do company fire support NCOs use their link to the commander to address the degradation of skills resulting from lack of training time?"

**Training the commander.** It starts the first moment you and your commander interact. During those few minutes, one of the first characteristics he likely will notice is self confidence. A company fire support NCO either has it or not — there is no gray area, no in-between. You either will ask for what you want or tactfully "tell" the commander how you intend to run your team. Asking how he wants you to do things indirectly lets him know that you do not have a clear, premeditated plan. How will a commander have confidence in you and your men's abilities to engage the enemy with indirect fires effectively and safely if you do not display that same confidence in yourself?

It won't be something that comes to you overnight. However, it can be built, not only through years of experience, but also through knowledge of fire support doctrine and Army regulations. It is the ability to stand up for what you know is right. That first moment of self confidence, or lack thereof, will set the tone for the remainder of the time that the two of you work together. Your company commander either will value everything you have to say or will "take it with a grain of salt" and undermine your every decision. Now that you have your commander's ear, what is the next step?

It is imperative to 1sell your product — lethal fires. Like anything else in this world, no one wants to buy something if they don't know anything about it. We must be passionate about fire support. We must take pride in our craft. We must explain, in as much detail as necessary, the overwhelming need for fire support.

We must describe indirect fire's ability to not only kill the enemy, but to control the enemy, to shape him, and to make him go where we want him to go — so the maneuver element can engage him decisively with direct fire weapon systems. We must teach the commander the value of close air support and close combat aviation and combining those assets with other indirect fire weapons. We must ensure that the commander understands that fire support wins wars.

But how do we do this if we don't have even the basic knowledge of a fire supporter? The answer is simply, you can't. You cannot even begin to accomplish any of these tasks without this knowledge. If you don't have the answers, every attempt to convince your commander why he needs fire support will make you look like a fool. Worse, it will make your entire team and, likely, all fire supporters look like fools as well.

SPC John Garner helps SSG Christopher J. Grzecki call for fire on enemy positions in Gowardesh, Afghanistan, June 21, 2006. (Photo courtesy of SSG Christopher J. Grzecki, U.S. Army)

**Training the fire support NCO.** This is where the NCO Education System helps mitigate that lack of knowledge. The Advanced Leadership Course is more important than ever. Beginning in late 2008, fire support specialist small group leaders began looking at the program of instruction being taught at what was then known as the Basic NCO Course. We realized that the course material just "wasn't cutting it." Fire supporters left Fort Sill without all of the knowledge required to be a company fire support sergeant. We realized that we were failing our comrades.

We analyzed various surveys filled out by company fire support sergeants throughout the Army. We corresponded with the observer/controllers at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La., the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., and the Joint Multinational Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany, about the biggest deficiencies they see among company fire support sergeants rotating through their areas. We have even tapped into our own small group leaders' personal experiences in combat and in garrison. Then, we worked with the fire support specialist writers and developers at the Fort Sill Field Artillery School Department of Training and Doctrine to rewrite the program of instruction.

Some of the new materials that have been added to the Fire Support Specialist Advanced Leadership Course are skill level one and two refresher classes, as well as graded tests. This is intended to ensure that all fire supporters, regardless of their past experience, leave the course with a basic knowledge base. We also have added fire support planning using the eight troop leading procedures, essential fire support task development, fire support night operations and target acquisition assets and capabilities.

We developed an open discussion forum on fire support equipment, tactics and lessons learned. This will be a continually evolving class that covers the different equipment and tactics being used throughout the force. As we all know, a fire supporter in the 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, N.Y., most likely will not be using the same equipment and tactics as one from the 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. This forum will allow students to learn from, not only their peers in class with them, but from those who came before them as well. The Advanced Leadership Course will become the hub for this invaluable information. They then will be able to take this previously unavailable knowledge back to their units with them and put it to good use.

Students attending the Advanced Leadership Course also will have a unique opportunity to use what is the Army's premier call-for-fire simulator, the Joint Fires and Effects Training System. This multimillion dollar system is only available at Fort Sill and dwarfs the call-for-fire trainers with which most of you are familiar. The Joint Fires and Effects Training System has three modules that can be linked together so that they are all looking at a common battlefield from different vantage points. This requires detailed coordination among the different observers. The scenarios either can be pulled from a batch of actual locations from around the world or built from scratch.

We also have developed a capstone practical exercise that incorporates everything the students have learned throughout the course and ties it into a simulated operation. Students will be broken into four groups, three acting as platoon forward observers and one as the company fire support team. The company fire support team will be given a company operations order and a battalion fire support annex D. They will be required to create a company fire support plan, brief their forward observers and then manage the "fight" from their company command post in another module known as the fires cell. Each group will rotate through all four modules to get the opportunity to act as a company fire support sergeant. Each group that rotates through will have a different scenario with an active enemy to fight.

All fire supporters and their commanders should feel confident that the latest program of instruction being taught at the Advanced Leadership Course will ingrain the knowledge required to perform the duties of a company fire support sergeant effectively. The knowledge gained through this step of the NCO Education System should be a stepping stone en route to gaining the confidence needed to train your Soldiers (and your future maneuver commanders) successfully. You must take what you learn in the Advanced Leadership Course or any other service school and continue to educate yourselves as well as your Soldiers.

The phrase "knowledge is power" has never been more applicable. The only way to achieve this knowledge is through education. As NCOs, we must set the example for younger Soldiers and not having an opportunity to train is not an excuse. We must show them that by educating ourselves, we are becoming armed with the knowledge and confidence to make the necessary changes — no matter what echelon we are working in. ▪

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# Success in the nonlethal fight

By SGM Reginald M. Young, FA

In ongoing counterinsurgency operations, there has been a need for balance of lethal and nonlethal effects in the operational environment for the field artillery. To continue to achieve full-spectrum relevance, despite known field artillery skills atrophy, fires professionals at all levels must to be able to coordinate and deliver a wide range of nonlethal effects.

For the past several years, success on the battlefield meant the minimal use of force to gain decisive support of indigenous populations, because locals who were influenced positively by military operations often were more cooperative and offered information on known enemy locations. In contrast, a town or village that had been alienated was more likely to harbor terrorists, emplace improvised explosive devices or riot against Coalition Forces. Due to the urbanization of the world, this is unlikely to change anytime in the near future.

As a result, the ability to adapt to the current battlefield situation has become a critical attribute for all FA NCOs, as well as knowing how to strike the right balance between employing lethal and nonlethal effects. Integrating lethal and nonlethal capabilities not only has become a core competency for field artillery leaders at all levels, it has become a non-negotiable necessity.

Nonlethal effects in the past have included information operations and psychological operations coordinated by fires and effects cells. But in today's battlefield environment, nonlethal effects can and should include initiatives and coordination traditionally viewed as a part of civil affairs team's mission or other nonlethal teams.

**Past successes.** In April 2007, when the Soldiers of 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga., deployed to Baghdad to help Iraqi security forces reduce violence and protect Iraqi citizens, striking that right balance between lethal and nonlethal action became the key to a successful deployment.

The 3rd ID was involved intimately in improving health care for citizens; rebuilding elementary schools, roads and other infrastructure; revitalizing water and electricity hubs; and creating job and educational opportunities for Iraqis. No quality-of-life task was considered to be foreign territory.

Once stability and control were set, it was clear 3rd ID Soldiers had to think beyond current concepts. They had to be willing to implement new ideas and capabilities to improve the quality of life for Iraqi citizens further.

But to do this, 3rd ID Soldiers had to find out what the Iraqi people needed. The need to be versatile became very apparent. No formal pre-deployment training could have prepared the 3rd ID.

Members of the Sons of Iraq push their way into the check-in window at their headquarters in Multaka, Iraq, to register for their monthly salaries, March 6. (Photo by PO2 Brian Short, U.S. Navy)

The NCO Creed states "I will exercise initiative by taking appropriate action in the absence of orders." So in many cases, to create a wedge between the local population and extremist organizations and insurgents, often 3rd ID Fires professionals couldn't refer to anything found in an Army manual. They had to make things work. Most importantly they had to listen to the people.

**Iraqis are just like Americans.** Iraqis want quality of life, and they want to live in safe communities. They want to be part of the solution, but they need the skills to make it happen. So in response to their needs, 3rd ID created more than 60 patrol bases in and among Iraqi neighborhoods. As Fires professionals, they became a force that could integrate into and operate as part of a joint multinational team to continue to meet the Iraqi communities' needs by living among the people they were tasked to help.

To help security-based measures further, 3rd ID, along with Coalition Forces, created the idea of an amplified neighborhood watch system led by Iraqi citizens and augmented by U.S. forces. The "Sons of Iraq" consisted of concerned local citizens who were tired of the violence and uncertainty and who were willing to take a stand and man checkpoints to give their friends and neighbors a secure environment.

The newly implemented security measures also included paying these concerned Iraqi citizens an $8 a day wage for their commitment. The program proved to be so accepted and successful, at one point, more than 36,000 Iraqis participated in the Sons of Iraq, performing security operations in and around the southern belt of Baghdad.

**Increased security means an increased economy.** By integrating a nonlethal effects approach to security measures, the area started to see a corresponding rise in economic stability. Due to roadside violence, roadside markets in the region had all but disappeared. But as Iraqis took more responsibility for the security of their own neighborhoods, roadside markets started to reappear.

Because of the safer environment, traditional agriculture and animal husbandry also made resurgence. The major terrain feature of the region is the Euphrates River, which borders the Triangle to the southwest; so mostly farm land makes up the topography. These farms are usually small and, in the past, were maintained by the families who owned the land.

To help Iraqis return to their financially viable agricultural roots, 3rd ID engineers significantly improved the water infrastructure in Arab Jabour by reconstructing pumping stations and pipelines. This meant clean drinking water, a way to feed livestock, the ability to farm fish, and it also became a way to produce consistent electricity. Repairing these water pipelines and canals benefited more than 2.2 million Iraqis. Most areas went from having only one hour of electricity per day to several hours per day.

**Money as munitions.** While there, leaders had to think of money as munitions, and this became just as important as dropping bombs on buildings in many cases. The 3rd ID created other economic opportunities by thinking outside of normal operational patterns. One particular creative idea was the implementation of micro-grants. Through this initiative, new and existing Iraqi businesses were created and revived. Some businesses were built from the ground up, while others were merely refurbished or restocked. Extending financial sums between $50 and $500 to local businesses and owners led to the economic revitalization of a community that had been all but devastated.

Another powerful example of nonlethal effects came in the form of what was called "pocket money." Basically, commanders on the ground were empowered to give out single $50 payments as they saw fit to cement relationships with businessmen in the local community and to stimulate economic growth further. The division commander, LTG Rick Lynch, and other ground commanders would check up to see how the money ended up being used. In all cases, everyone was empowered to do the right thing, and most did exactly what the grant money was issued to do.

***"We must be leaders who are culturally astute and resilient to uncertain and ambiguous environments while integrating nonlethal fires and effects."***

**Preparing for nonstandard missions.** There is always a danger that as we reset, retrain and refocus on correcting field artillery skills atrophy, the lessons of past success with nonlethal effects will recede from memory. That is why, as NCOs and leaders, we must provide every opportunity for our Soldiers to participate in civilian training and college education, avenues of self-development and experience that takes place outside the military organization to continue achieving success in the area of nonlethal effects. You never know where inspiration to create some of these nonlethal effects will come from.

Yes, we can and should teach our Soldiers how to do things by the regulation, but these other types of experiences and education can give them the insight, the wisdom and the maturity to know when it is appropriate to diverge from the known azimuth. We must be schooled in the basics. But we also must become adaptive leaders who are proficient in joint and combined expeditionary warfare and continuous simultaneous full-spectrum operations. We must be leaders who are culturally astute and resilient to uncertain and ambiguous environments while integrating nonlethal fires and effects.

NCOs must perform the kind of critical thinking and problem-solving skills that formerly were reserved for officers. We must teach NCOs that they are responsible for these critical thinking skills as well. Because then, as Fires professionals, we can continue to destroy, neutralize and suppress the enemy with whatever means possible, lethal or nonlethal, leading to full-spectrum dominance on the battlefield. ▪

**Sergeant Major Reginald M. Young, field artillery, is the fires and effects coordination cell sergeant major, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga., deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He served as the battalion sergeant major for 2nd Battalion, 289th Training Support Field Artillery Regiment, Fort Riley, Kan.; battalion command sergeant major for 1st Battalion, 19th Field Artillery, Fort Sill, Okla.; battery first sergeant for Service Battery, 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery, Camp Hovey, Korea; and the battery first sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Field Artillery Training Center, Fort Sill. He also served as the senior drill sergeant for A Battery, 1st Battalion, 31st Field Artillery, Fort Sill, which was later designated 1st Battalion, 22nd Field Artillery.**

# Backbone Basics: 234 years of Army leadership

By SSG Jarod A. Perkioniemi, PA


LEFT: An unidentified sergeant poses for a picture circa World War I. (Photo courtesy of Library of Congress) RIGHT: SGT Alexis Delapaz, B Battery, 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, stands guard in al Alam, Iraq, June 23. (Photo by Luke P. Thelen, Joint Combat Camera Center Iraq)

**American Revolution.** The history of the U.S. Army NCO starts in 1775 with the birth of the Continental Army. Like the Army itself, the NCO Corps did not copy the fundamental roles of just the British Army; instead it blended traditions of the British, French and Prussian armies to create its own unique institution. As the American political system progressed during the years, the NCO Corps distinguished itself from its European counterparts as well. In 1778, at Valley Forge, Inspector General Friedrich von Steuben, a Prussian-German Army Officer, standardized NCO duties and responsibilities for the Continental Army NCO Corps. Before this, there was very little standardization in what the NCO's true role was in the new Continental Army. In his publication, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, commonly called the "Blue Book," von Steuben set forth the duties and responsibilities of the NCO ranks at that time.

There were five NCO ranks — corporal, sergeant, first sergeant, quartermaster sergeant and sergeant major. When Von Steuben wrote his publication, it became the primary regulation for the Army for the next 30 years. Von Steuben was the first to refer to the NCO Corps as the "backbone" of the Army and his regulation established the centerpiece for NCO duties and responsibilities from 1778 to the present. The development of the NCO Corps helped sustain the Continental Army through severe hardship toward finally achieving U.S. independence in 1783.

It was customary during battles that NCOs were to "fire rapidly and true" and also close gaps created by casualties. NCOs were responsible for keeping men silent during night missions, while leading them through the terrain. This was a key factor during the Battle of Stony Point, where the bayonet training received from von Steuben played a critical role in the charge to capture the fort from the British.

NCOs wore an epaulet, a French word meaning "little shoulder," to signify their rank. Sergeants wore red epaulets while corporals wore green. It was in 1779 that sergeants began to wear two epaulets while corporals retained their single epaulet. It was not uncommon that a Soldier would often spend their entire career within the same regiment. If a Soldier were to change regiments, he would not take his rank with him; the stripes remained with the regiment.

At that time, all promotions that a Soldier received came directly from the regimental commander. No NCO could transfer in grade from one regiment to the other without the permission of the General in Chief of the Army, who was the Commanding General of the U.S. Army.

During the American Revolutionary War, historians indicate that only three Soldiers were awarded the Badge of Military Merit for their acts of heroism. All three were NCOs and received the award from General George Washington himself. The Badge of Military Merit was a purple heart with a floral border and the word "merit" inscribed across the center. The badge is the predecessor to both the Medal of Honor, which was first awarded during the Civil War, and the Purple Heart, which was first awarded in 1927. After the American Revolutionary War, the award faded from use, though it was never abolished. The award of the badge was not recommended again until after World War I.

In the years following the American Revolution, many changes and additions were made to the NCO ranks leading up to the War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War in 1846. The NCO Corps continued to evolve and adapt with time.

**War of 1812 & Mexican-American War.** In February 1812, Congress ordered the creation of a 50,000-man volunteer army. When war was declared on Great Britain in June 1812, there were roughly 7,000 men in the regular service. Many were under the command of senior officers who lacked experience in combat or leading troops. It fell on the NCO Corps, specifically corporals, who were the primary trainers at the time, to prepare the Soldiers for combat against the British.

For two years, war raged across America with the Battle of New Orleans being the last military conflict in January 1815. The Treaty of Ghent was signed in Paris in December 1814 ending the War of 1812; yet, with communications taking a great amount of time to reach their destination, both armies were unaware the war had ended.

After the war, Congress and the War Department continued to institute new

programs and publications to enhance the NCO Corps. The War Department first acknowledged the NCO chevrons in 1821. Sergeants major and quartermaster sergeants wore a worsted chevron on each arm above the elbow; sergeants and senior musicians wore one on each arm below the elbow and corporals wore one on the right arm above the elbow. The practice lasted until 1829.

In 1824, at Fort Monroe, Va., the first school for centralized Soldier instruction was opened. Instead of training officers and NCOs individually, the school focused on training entire units. Though it was suspended from time to time, this became the precursor for all centralized modern technical training Soldiers now receive. A year later, the first attempt at a systematic method for NCO selection was made. Unless overriding considerations came up, regimental commanders were expected to accept the company commanders' recommendations for company NCOs.

In 1829, The Abstract of Infantry Tactics was published and provided new instructions for training NCOs. The main goal of the publication was to ensure that all NCOs possessed "an accurate knowledge of the exercise and use of their firelocks, the manual exercise of the Soldier and of firing and marching."

A sixth rank, ordnance sergeant, was added to the NCO ranks in 1832. It was a specialized rank designated to those with the duties of receiving and preserving the ordnance, arms, ammunition and other military stores of the post that he was assigned.

Dragoon regiments, which were considered elite mounted rangers, were created by Congress in 1833. To show their elite status, Dragoons reintroduced the chevron, with the chevron pointing down on their uniform, for use by NCOs.

In an effort to add more prestige to the NCO Corps, a distinctive sword was adopted in 1840. To this day, the model 1840 NCO sword remains in use during special ceremonial occasions.

With the annexation of Texas in 1845, along with America's desire for more land, the Mexican-American war began in 1846. During the war, the U.S. raised 115,000 troops; 73,000 were volunteers. The volunteers often elected their officers and NCOs by popular vote based on public standing or previous military experience. NCOs often led small detachments against the Mexican Army and Indians to discourage attacks on settlers.

During the war, in 1847, the chevron again was adjusted, this time worn in inverted "V" direction. It would stay this way until the 1850s when the War Department would again make changes to the NCO and their uniforms.

The Mexican-American War officially ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in February 1848. After the war, the U.S. gained more than 500,000 square miles to expand, creating a larger area of responsibility for the NCOs to defend.

After the Mexican-American War, very few changes occurred for the NCO. It wasn't until 13 years later when the Civil War began that the Army would call upon its "backbone" to lead it in one of the darkest hours in American history.

**Civil War.** After the Mexican-American War, NCOs found themselves leading small units into the new frontier to defend settlements against Indian raids and set up in the newly gained land out west.

In 1849, a young man named Percival Lowe enlisted into the U.S. Army's elite Dragoon unit. Lowe used his knowledge of the land and equestrian skills to make an impact immediately in his unit. Lowe would achieve the rank of first sergeant in just over two years. In 1853, Lowe, along with other NCOs in his company, established the "company court martial." It was not yet recognized by the Army, but this was the first time that NCOs could enforce discipline in their Soldiers for breaking regulations without dealing with lengthy proceedings.

During the 1850s, changes in the chevron and epaulet continued to occur. After declaring in 1847 that the chevron would be worn in the inverted "V" position, it was changed to point down, where it remained until the regulations of 1902. The epaulet became acceptable to wear in dress uniform, but was not permitted with the normal duty uniform.

Major changes to U.S. weaponry occurred in the 1850s that added greatly to the fire power and accuracy of the weapons being used by Soldiers. The Sharps Carbine and Joslyn Rifle, which both used breech loading, added a new dimension of training for Soldiers. NCOs again took the lead ensuring that all Soldiers in the unit were trained and capable to fire the weapons quickly and accurately.

In April 1861, the leadership skills learned from fighting in the Mexican-American War and defending the new frontier from Indian attacks, along with training new Soldiers in advanced weapons and equestrian skills, came full circle for NCOs as cannons under confederate flags opened fire on Fort Sumter, S.C., officially beginning the Civil War.

NCOs would be called on not only to lead the lines of skirmishers, but also to carry the flags and regimental colors of their units. NCOs were charged with this dangerous and deadly task so commanders could define the locations of their units on the field to ensure the units' proper placement and direction.

As the war progressed, new tactical and organizational changes occurred along with developing technology in the form of railroads, telegraph communications, steam ships and other innovations that would affect the ranks of the NCO.

Technical jobs, in the form of ordnance, sappers and hospital stewards, now would receive a higher pay, even if they were not of the same rank, than those who were in tactical jobs.

**Civil War: Union Soldiers stand near a M1861 three-inch rifle.** (*Fires* archive)

The use of more open battlefield formations further enhanced the NCO's tactical combat leadership. The NCO took on multiple tasks on the battlefield at a higher rate than in any previous war.

In September 1862, the NCO's tactical proficiency was pushed to the limit as the Battle at Antietam raged in Maryland. An entire day of attack and counterattacks from both the Union and Confederate Armies resulted in the single bloodiest day in American military history with an estimated 23,000 men losing their lives.

The Civil War continued to incorporate different racial and ethnic groups into the Army, not as individuals, but entire units. After the war, ethnic units discontinued, but the trend of racial units would continue into the Indian Wars, most famous being the "Buffalo Soldiers" of the Cavalry Regiments.

Four years after the war broke out in South Carolina, 600,000 Americans paid the ultimate price for freedom. The war ended in April 1865 with GEN Robert E. Lee surrendering his army to GEN Ulysses S. Grant in Virginia.

With the Civil War behind them, the NCO again looked for opportunities to further training and education across the Army. The NCO would have to do this while battling constant engagements with Native Americans during the Indian Wars of the 1870s to 1890s leading into the Spanish-American War in 1898.

**Indian Wars and Spanish-American War.** In the years following the Civil War, the Army was involved in numerous engagements across the nation while fighting in the Indian Wars of the 1870s to 1890s. These battles, unlike the large scale conflicts found in the Civil War, consisted of numerous scattered skirmishes across vast areas with no decisive battles that signaled the end of the wars. The NCO was relied upon heavily during these random engagements for his knowledge, expertise and experience to lead small units into battle.

In the west, besides engaging in random conflicts with the Indians, NCOs and junior Soldiers often served as bakers, blacksmiths or guards. They also would repair bridges and roads, or build and repair fortifications and houses. With these tedious tasks, constant threat of attacks and very poor pay, desertion was common in the Army. NCOs had to maintain and improve the quality of life and morale of the troops to reduce the rate of desertion.

By 1870, the Artillery School at Fort Monroe had re-opened along with a new Signal Corps school for training NCOs and officers. Efforts to provide the same training for NCOs in other career fields did not attract the same support as many believed that experience in the field, not a classroom, is what made a good NCO in combat career fields.

**Indian Wars: A rifle team at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.** (Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center)

In the 1870s, Army regulations came out limiting the number of enlisted married men in the Army. Despite this, nature won out and helped begin the transformation of Army posts into communities. The first retirement system for enlisted men was created in 1885; anyone who had served for 30 years could retire with three-quarters of his active duty pay.

In 1898, the U.S. declared war on Spain beginning the Spanish-American War. When war was declared, the Army only had 26,000 men. The War Department began asking for volunteers, allowing National Guard units that were formed already to volunteer and serve as a unit. By the conclusion of the war, the U.S. raised 275,000 men to fight against Spain.

Requiring the volunteers to be fully equipped and prepared for combat, NCOs went to work training the troops for battle. The process started off slowly with some volunteer units never seeing the front line of combat.

The war lasted four months, and combat was in the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico and Cuba. The most immediate threat for NCOs dealing with these engagements was not the Spanish soldiers, but instead the threat of disease. Constantly having to brief and maintain the health of their troops, NCOs were fighting against two enemies. An estimated 3,000 lives were lost during the war with 90 percent coming from disease.

After the war, Cuba gained its independence; Puerto Rico and Guam ceded to the U.S.; and the U.S. purchased the Philippines from Spain for $20 million. With the newly gained land, the U.S. had to station more than one-third of the Army overseas to deal with such conflicts as the Philippine Insurrection and Boxer Rebellion. This expansion created a need for additional troops and modernization across the Army.

This modernization had a direct effect on the NCO Corps with new technology and new pay grades. The Army was forced to fight industry for technical workers. Congress passed a law in 1908 to reward those Soldiers in technical fields with higher salaries, while Soldiers in combat fields remained the same. An infantry sergeant major made $25 to $34 a month, while a sergeant in the signal corps made $34 to $43 and a master electrician would make $75 to $84 a month.

The NCO instructions provided in Von Steuben's regulations grew to 417 pages in 1909 when the *Noncommissioned Officers Manual* was formally written. One of the main topics of the manual was discipline and the treatment of junior Soldiers. Its instructions stressed that discipline should be uniform, just and not humiliating.

With new guidelines governing its role in the Army and the conflicts of the Indian Wars and Spanish-America War behind them, the NCO Corps continued forward not realizing it was preparing itself for a war on a scale that it had never participated in before — World War I.

**World War I.** In June 1914, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir

to the Austro-Hungarian throne, was assassinated; an event that many attribute as one of the main underlining moments that led to World War I, known as "the war to end all wars." Not initially becoming involved in the war itself, the U.S. wasted no time preparing itself for the possibility of joining the Entente Powers in their struggle against the Central Powers.

NCOs, specifically corporals, began training Soldiers in what would be the first massive training of men the U.S. had ever seen. By the time the war ended in 1918, NCOs had trained four million men, of which one million went overseas. World War I forced NCOs to use and teach new tactics, as gas warfare became a prominent method of attack by both sides in the war. In addition to the standard land navigation, weapon familiarization and tactical maneuvers training, NCOs taught the proper wear and use of gas masks, meaning multiple trips into the gas chamber. The war also introduced the use of trenches, which protected Soldiers from enemy fire and also connected the front and rear lines, allowing wounded to be transported on and off the line, along with supplies.

In 1917, the U.S. declared war on Germany, officially entering World War I. By the summer of 1918, the U.S. was sending 10,000 troops a day into France to fight alongside its allies. In June 1918, the 2nd Division made the first offensive maneuver by an American division at the villages of Bouresches and Vaux, France. It was a costly offensive with 9,777 casualties, but it helped stop the German offensive and brought a new moral boast to the Entente Powers.

The war ended in July 1919 with the signing of various treaties, the most famous being the Treaty of Versailles, which helped redraw the European map after all of the Central Powers lost land and several new countries were created.

After the war, the NCO Corps underwent major changes including a reorganization of ranks, the introduction of technical ranks, and massive numbers of demotions and enlisted men being pushed out as the Army tried to reduce its numbers.

In 1922, the Army scheduled the reduction of rank for 1,600 NCOs to reduce the force and save money. With entire units being disbanded, Soldiers who had been promoted within their regiments were not allowed to take their ranks with them to their new units — instead the Soldiers went back to the rank of private. It wasn't until 1940 that enlisted Soldiers would retain their stripes if they transferred from one unit to another.

In the 1930s, technicians were created in the Army, who wore chevrons marked with a "T." The slots were created in the corporal, sergeant and staff sergeant grades. This newly created grade increased promotions in the technical career fields. In addition, there were 231 vocational skills that could add $3 to $35 to a Soldier's pay.

With the Great Depression affecting the entire nation, NCOs faced the potential of being demoted or pushed out of the Army and also only receiving half of their pay or consumer goods and food. Desertion again became a problem in the Army. NCOs were relied upon to combat against it, as they themselves felt the pressure of staying in the Army.

During the late 1930s, NCOs fought to keep their ranks and places in the Army, while training Soldiers unique tactics learned from fighting in World War I, while watching new conflicts arise across Europe.

**World War II.** In September 1939, the world again was thrust into a global conflict after Germany unexpectedly attacked Poland, officially starting World War II. The U.S. began to supply aid to the Allied Forces of Great Britain and France against the Axis Powers of Germany and Italy. At the same time, the U.S. was watching its territories carefully in the Pacific as the Japanese began advancing across the ocean.

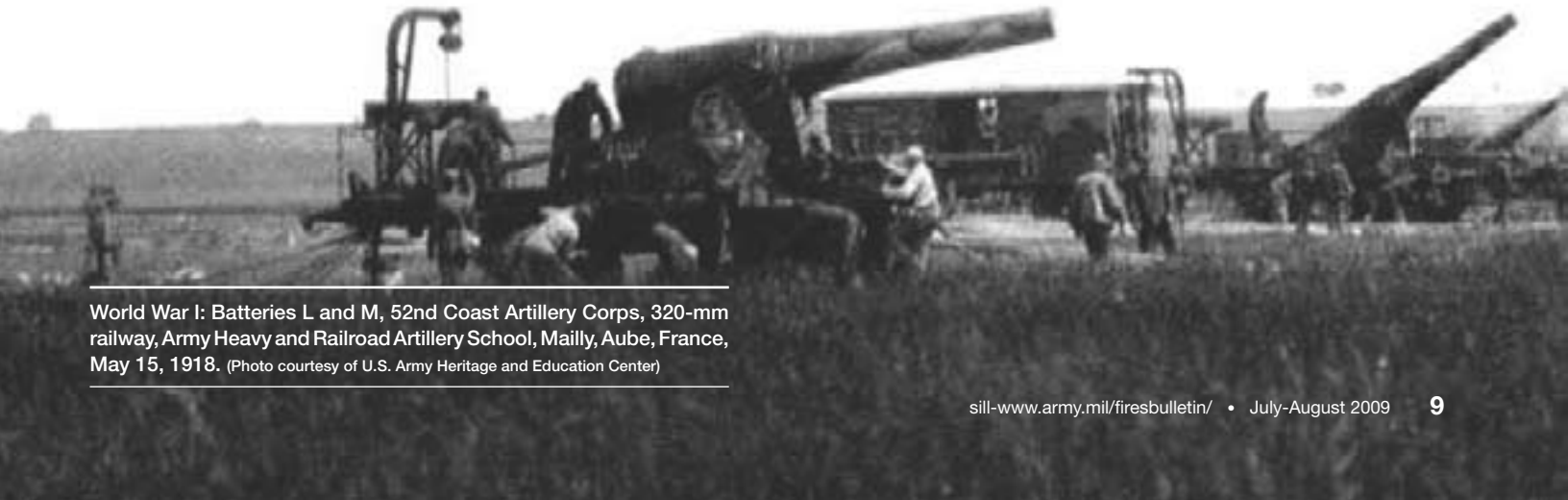
On the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, the idea of the U.S. remaining neutral in the war ended after the Japanese launched an attack against U.S. soil, a day that President Franklin D. Roosevelt referred to as, "a date which will live in infamy."

Being forced to assemble an Army to fight in both Europe and the Pacific, the Army began a massive recruitment of new Soldiers. The Army began using NCOs who were on active duty before the war as the primary trainers for troops destined for overseas duty. NCOs, for the first time, found themselves able to apply for transfers to new branches, as the creation of the paratroopers and paragliders offered new career opportunities. These new branches offered more pay and new challenges for NCOs looking to advance their careers.

These new branches, along with the massive mobilization, would increase the number of NCOs at a faster rate than ever in history. In 1941, the amount of NCOs in the enlisted ranks was 20 percent; that number grew to 50 percent by the end of the war in 1945.

With the vast number of casualties, enlisted men rose through the ranks very quickly during World War II. This resulted in a perceived lessening of the prestige of the NCO to some higher enlisted NCOs who obtained their ranks before the war. Soldiers were promoted quickly from private to corporal and corporal to sergeant after serving only a small amount of time in the unit.

The NCO also saw changes in the field, where in the infantry, the corporal officially was replaced as the squad leader by a sergeant, and the infantry squad grew from eight men to 12. For the first time, due to a shortage in manpower, the Army formally added women into its ranks. Women served in supply, communications, electrical, mechanical and other support careers during the war. It was a slow transition with only 11,000 women in the Army in 1941, but by the end of the war, 93,000 women wore a uniform. When



**World War I: Batteries L and M, 52nd Coast Artillery Corps, 320-mm railway, Army Heavy and Railroad Artillery School, Mailly, Aube, France, May 15, 1918.** (Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center)

the war ended, 37 percent of the women in the Army had achieved the rank of corporal or above.

In the Pacific, as the Japanese quickly advanced, troops found themselves cut off from being resupplied. NCOs were forced to prepare their units for Japanese attacks and, at the same time, find enough food to feed their troops. Many units began hunting their own meals in the form of water buffalo, horses, monkeys and other animals found on the islands.

In Europe, NCOs led troops across Africa, Italy, France, Netherlands and Germany on their way to Victory in Europe Day. During this time, NCOs led Soldiers in two of the largest operations in the history of warfare. The first being the amphibious assault of Normandy, France, during Operation Overlord, and the second being the airborne attacks in the Netherlands during Operation Market Garden.

The war in Europe officially ended in May 1945 with Germany's surrender. Three months later, in August, Japan officially surrendered after the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

That same year, Congress passed a legislation that allowed enlisted men with 20 to 29 years in service to be placed on a retirement list. The Soldier would remain in the reserve until completing 30 years of service, collecting two and a half percent of their average pay for the six months preceding the retirement.

**Korean and Vietnam Wars.** In the years following World War II, a strong emphasis was placed on education for NCOs and junior Soldiers to aid career progression. In December 1949, the first class attended the 2nd Constabulary Brigade's NCO school in Germany. Eight years later, the U.S. Armywide standards were established for NCO academies in accordance with Army Regulation 350-90. By 1959, more than 180,000 Soldiers had attended an NCO academy.

The Army also emphasized the need to advance education outside the military, and in 1952 the Army Education Program was born, which allowed credits for academic education to be attained by Soldiers. The program also helped Soldiers attain high school and college diplomas.

The U.S. Army was drawn into a conflict on foreign soil when North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950 after failed attempts to re-unify Korea under a central government. The U.S. backed South Korea, while China and the Soviet Union supported the North Korean Army.

During the battles of the Korean War, the NCO Corps found itself leading units through deep eroded hills, narrow valleys, deep gorges and thick ridges, advancing mainly in squad size elements. The Korean War also was the first time the Army entered a war as an integrated force, with black and white Soldiers fighting side-by-side in the same units.

After three years of conflict, primarily around the 38th parallel, a cease-fire was established in July 1953.

The NCO Corps saw the addition of two new ranks in 1958 — the ranks of E8 and E9. They were created to "provide a better delineation of responsibility in the enlisted structure."

Conflict broke out in 1959 with communist North Vietnam attacking South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. The first American ground troops went to Vietnam in 1965 — a conflict unlike any previously experienced. Battles took place without any clear front lines; and with the dense jungle surroundings, it was difficult to tell friend from foe. Due to the terrain and types of missions, many operations were performed at a squad- or platoon-sized element, forcing NCOs to lead Soldiers into combat with a decentralized sense of command and control.

In the U.S., the Army, realizing the potential for a long drawn out war and need for more qualified NCOs, created the NCO Candidate Course. It was a 10-week course conducted at Fort Benning, Ga., Fort Knox, Ky., and Fort Sill, Okla. Upon graduation, the Soldier was promoted to E5, and the top five percent received a promotion to E6. Initially, this program was received with mixed feelings, as it was perceived to undermine the prestige of the NCO Corps and the journey an NCO took to join its ranks.

**World War II: American assault troops huddle behind the protective front of a landing craft as it nears a beachhead on the northern coast of France, June 6, 1944, D-Day.** (Photo courtesy of U.S Army Heritage and Education Center)

**Post Vietnam, 1980s and 1990s.** After the creation of the NCO Education System in 1971, NCOs continued to see growth in professional development schooling with the creation of the Primary Leadership Development Course. The Primary Leadership Development Course was created to emphasize training, duties and responsibilities for newly promoted NCOs and those about to be promoted into the NCO ranks.

At Fort Bliss, Texas, the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy became the core location where all NCO Education

**2LT Alyssa Aarhaus (left), D Battery, 3rd Battalion, 43rd ADA Regiment, discusses line of sight communications, with CPL Jeremy Bagley (center) and SPC Mark Bourlier, while setting up a Patriot Missile Battery, at al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, February 15, 2003.** (Photo by MSgt Terry L. Blevins, U.S. Air Force)

System courses were written. In addition, the academy operated three separate NCO courses for specific positions in the NCO Corps. The courses were the First Sergeants, the Operations and Intelligence, and the Personnel and Logistics Courses.

In 1986, the Army established a prerequisite for promotion with the creation of Military Personnel Office Message Number 86-65. The message made it mandatory for all NCOs to attend the Primary Leadership Development Course before being promoted to sergeant; now it's required for promotion to staff sergeant. The Army mandated that all NCOs attend the Basic NCO Course before being promoted to sergeant first class and attend Advanced NCO Course before promotion to master sergeant.

A new Sergeants Major Academy was built in 1987, again confirming the strong emphasis on a well educated NCO Corps. It was a $17 million structure that allowed the Academy to offer new courses and more NCOs a chance to further their careers.

Four years later, in 1991, the first publication of the *NCO Journal* was produced. The publication was a year in the making, with the original titles being *Sergeants Business* and *NCO Call*, before it finally became the *NCO Journal*. The *NCO Journal* — a result of the NCO Profession Leader Task Force — is a professional publication for NCOs and is the second largest Army publication.

Amidst continued progress in the NCO Education System and NCO development, the 1980s and 1990s saw NCOs engaged in numerous conflicts around the globe. Unlike previous large-scale, drawn-out wars such as World War I and II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars, these conflicts were on a much smaller scale. Only a few countries were involved in the conflicts and the amount of time fighting was reduced significantly versus previous wars. In a majority of these conflicts, NCOs found themselves leading troops in peacekeeping missions to help build relationships over a long period of time instead of traditional combat missions.

Conflict broke out in June 1982, after Israel invaded southern Lebanon. The initial Israeli objective was to push the Palestine Liberation Organization 40 kilometers back north away from the border. The U.S., along with the British, French and Italians, known as the Multinational Forces in Lebanon, sent servicemembers into the region to help restore peace between Israel and Lebanon.

A year later, in October 1983, the U.S. invaded Grenada — the first major military operation since the Vietnam War. The conflict began after the assassination of Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. Besides helping restore the pre-revolutionary constitution to the people of Grenada, NCOs led a rescue search for American students located at a local university. The entire conflict lasted less than two months.

In December 1989, 27,000 U.S. servicemembers invaded Panama to remove Manuel Noriega, after a rigged presidential election in which Noriega proclaimed himself "President for Life" over Panama. A few days after the invasion, Noriega surrendered and was flown back to the U.S. to face trial.

The 1990s saw NCOs in Saudi Arabia after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Operation Desert Shield was initiated as a defensive measure to stop the Iraqi Army from potentially invading Saudi Arabia. On February 24, 1991, after a month of air strikes, NCOs led Soldiers against the Iraqi Forces in the largest armored battle in the history of warfare. The operation was such a huge success that less than 100 hours after the initial attack, President George H. W. Bush ordered a cease-fire.

A humanitarian aid mission forced NCOs back into conflict in Somalia from 1992-1993. Mass famine stuck the nation, as a result of General Mohamed Farrah Aidid and his soldiers' preventing poverty-stricken civilians getting food to eat. The U.S. and U.N. intervened to aid the local populous. Unknown to them at the time, the guerilla warfare fought in the streets of Mogadishu and surrounding cities would be a prelude to the type of warfare NCOs would face in the 21st century during Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

The U.S. again assumed the role of peacekeeper and helped prevent "ethnic cleansing," after conflicts broke out in Bosnia in 1994 and in Kosovo in 1999. To this day, Soldiers remain in both countries as part of North Atlantic Treaty Organization peacekeeping missions.

After participating in numerous conflicts around the globe, each with its own unique lessons, the NCO Corps looked toward the new millennium with high hopes for the future.

**OEF, OIF and the future of the NCO.** On September 11, 2001, the entire nation watched as terrorists

struck the World Trade Towers in New York, and the Pentagon, and attempted to use another plane to strike the White House. A few days after, President George W. Bush addressed the world, calling for aid in fighting against terrorism, beginning with destroying terrorist infra-structures in Afghanistan.

A month later, U.S. and British forces started bombing Afghanistan, as Operation Enduring Freedom officially began. In November 2001, U.S. and allied forces established the first forward operation base in Afghanistan.

In January 2002, troops were sent to the island of Basilan, Philippines, to support the Armed Forces of the Philippines by ridding the island of terrorist forces.

Later, in October 2002, Camp Le Monier was established in Djibouti, Africa, to reduce the risk of potential terrorist organizations in the Horn of Africa and to aid in humanitarian missions.

In March 2003, NCOs were on the front lines in Iraq, as Operation Iraqi Freedom began. By December, U.S. forces captured Saddam Hussein, ending his reign of terror over Iraq.

NCOs were responsible for quickly training their Soldiers on the various types of improvised explosive devices and shoot/don't shoot drills, as it became difficult to distinguish who was friend or foe. Unlike previous conflicts where NCOs led Soldiers against another nation's army, they found themselves fighting against individuals. This enemy was not wearing a distinctive uniform, but blended themselves into the crowd, making it harder to distinguish who was a threat.

Urban guerilla warfare became a prominent means of combat as raids and attacks occurred, placing NCOs in the midst of heavily populated areas, surrounded by noncombatants.

With the new style of warfare taking place, a new field manual for operations was introduced in February 2008, *Field Manual 3-0 Operations*. *Field Manual 3-0* focused on the transformation of the Army into full-spectrum operations, in which NCOs find themselves filling logistical, theater support cooperation, and reception, staging and integration onward movement roles, in addition to the traditional combat jobs.

NCO training has been re-evaluated and changed to support the current operations being conducted across the globe. In 2005, the Army changed its Primary Leadership Development Course to reflect a new curriculum that includes lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, a reinforced focus on weapon immersion and an emphasis on small-team leadership; the Army also renamed it the Warrior Leader's Course to reflect the overall change in philosophy.

**Soldiers assigned to 1-319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment fire their M119A1 105-mm lightweight towed howitzers in Kandahar, Afghanistan, Sept. 5, 2002.** (Photo by SGT Sean Terry, U.S. Army)

As NCOs continue to lead troops in combat operations supporting OEF and OIF, the role of the NCO Corps has continued to evolve. In the streets of America, NCOs are looking for the next qualified applicant to join the Army, as NCOs act as recruiters, helping maintain the Army's strength. Currently, there are 9,414 NCOs working as recruiters to ensure that the Army is at full strength.

After applicants join the Army and arrive at basic training, they are met by a select group of NCOs who train, prepare and mentor new Soldiers for what to expect in their Army career — drill sergeants. "This we'll defend" is the inscription worn on the drill sergeants' badge as a symbol of the determination, devotion and consistent readiness of the American Soldier.

Drill sergeants have nine weeks to mold and prepare new Soldiers in the basic fundamentals of soldiering before sending them to their Advanced Individual Training courses, where NCOs instruct them on the specifics of their career fields.

Senior NCOs act as battle staff NCOs, who are the driving force in interlacing vital information from various sections in the command to maintain an overview of the fight.

NCOs also are the primary testers of new equipment before approval for mass distribution. Some of these projects include the Land Warrior Integrated Modular Fighting System, the Javelin anti-armor missile, the XM25 semiautomatic, the XM312 machine gun and the SM3300 grenade launcher.

In 2009, the NCO Corps is being recognized formally for all its efforts. "The Secretary of the Army and I have declared [this year], the year of the [NCO]," said Army Chief of Staff, General George W. Casey. "This is to recognize the role that our NCO Corps has played in holding this Army together and leading it to victory in this long war. I firmly believe that we would not be here today without the role that our NCOs have played every day."

Now in its 234th year, the NCO Corps has been through numerous conflicts in defense of freedom and the nation. From fighting for independence against the British, to fighting family and friends during the Civil War, the NCO Corps was there from stopping the Nazis in World War II, to preventing the spread of communism in Korea and Vietnam, to fighting the War on Terrorism, the NCO Corps always has been there when its country needed it the most, continually solidifying itself as the "backbone" of the Army. ▪

**SSG Jarod A. Perkieoniemi, public affairs, is the detachment sergeant for the 20th Public Affairs Detachment, Fort Wainwright, Alaska, currently deployed in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. Before transitioning to public affairs, he served as a recruiter for San Fernando Company, Los Angeles Battalion, Calif.; the training room NCO for C Company, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, Vilseck, Germany; and an infantry Soldier assigned to C Company, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, Hohenfels, Germany.**

A Soldier's story ...

# Pride starts within

SGT Bryan E. Toler helps crew members install an antenna on a Patriot launcher station during march order and emplacement. (Photo by SGT Valenzuela, U.S. Army)

Some Soldiers, both officers and NCOs, have trouble finding "pride in service." Pride, to me, is an undying devotion to duty that includes pride in what one does, what one says, what one wears and how one fights for his country. Having pride in your service — whether air, water or land-based — can win or lose a war.

Anyone can say he has pride in service when he is standing on the parade field watching a pass and review. The color guard passes, the spectators rise, they salute the flag and most feel an overwhelming sense of honor and duty to country; it is obvious they feel pride.

However, can those same officers and NCOs find that same pride in service when they are being held back in the field for another two weeks because they didn't qualify their on gunnery tables? Some leaders do and can, others don't or can't.

**Respect.** Pride in service should start with personal pride, and that type of pride can be defined in many ways. But for me, it is a feeling of self-respect and personal worth. So, by my definition, one really needs to look inward first to have pride in service.

So how do you achieve this? I think it starts with self respect, but ends with respect for my seniors, peers and subordinates because everyone is an essential part of the team. No one has a job that is too small. They all must be done correctly and efficiently to accomplish the mission. Knowing this, a Soldier can expect no matter what mission is assigned, whether it is a fire fight with an unknown enemy or a necessary, but tedious task, he can accomplish his mission with a sense of pride.

Just ordering Soldiers to have pride in service doesn't work. One can't expect the junior enlisted Soldier or a newly commissioned officer to have the same level of self respect, personal worth and pride in service as seasoned Soldiers do. They haven't had the chance to develop it yet. That's the "catch 22;" pride in service doesn't develop overnight or within a few short months. It must be developed through time, experience and service. To achieve it for themselves, Soldiers at all levels need to see it in action within their chain of command.

**Training.** It is the NCO's job to take care of his Soldiers, but often leaders get bogged down in daily tasks such as mandatory unit training or seemingly endless list of unit taskings. So due to the "daily grind," a leader may forget to provide the simplest form of training, but one that can be the most important, which is developing pride in service in their Soldiers.

Yes, pride in service can be taught. It comes when leaders teach their Soldiers how to overcome adversity, how to show heart and motivation when the going gets tough and, lastly, how to wear the uniform properly and with the pride it deserves.

As an NCO, if I can pass on these lessons, self respect and personal worth, then I'm confident my Soldiers will learn to have pride in service as well. It is my personal responsibility, because each Soldier under my charge and who is fighting for his country — despite hardships and regardless of military occupational specialty — deserves to have pride in service.

Soldiers who learn these basic skills can tackle any challenge because they will have the right frame of mind. They also can make the right decisions because they will know they are serving something that is bigger than themselves. They are serving their country. They will know their decisions can bring either a negative or positive light on the uniform, their unit or their country, and that will make a difference to them. That's what pride in service is all about.

**NCO's role.** In this modern age, it's tough to find external sources for pride in what Soldiers do. During WWII, the Soldiers had a clear cut enemy and reason to fight. The simplest minds could grasp the good versus evil concept. Today's counterinsurgency operations, however, thrust our Soldiers into an environment where there is no clear enemy. Protecting civilians may require our Soldiers to battle insurgents, hunger, poverty or even misinformation campaigns. There is not one set "task, condition and standard."

So NCOs must find ways to mitigate the effects a nonlinear counterinsurgency war has on their Soldiers' morale, and ultimately, their pride in service. Leaders owe it to their Soldiers to do whatever in their power is necessary to improve their time in service. We must lead by example, fight for our Soldiers' rights and, if the need arises, stand in front of the command sergeant major with them. Now is the time for a gut check and to show our Soldiers what pride in service looks like.

Start with the small things, because it's the small things that make a big difference in the lives of our Soldiers. For example, the Soldier who struggled with physical training everyday, but never gave up and earns 287 points on his latest Army Physical Fitness Test. Now, that gives me pride to know I helped a Soldier achieve a goal that serves to promote self respect and personal worth and brings pride to the Soldier's service.

That's where pride in service starts — in your heart and that of your Soldiers. Can you give them what they need to go the distance? Teach them pride in service. ▪

SGT Bryan E. Toler
D Battery, 3-2 ADA, 31st ADA Brigade
Fort Sill, Okla.

# Blanketing the skies

Air defense in the Army is just one tactical piece of the overall picture that conveys the superiority of the U.S. and its armed forces as a whole. Air defense's purpose is to help protect the U.S. and its allies from various threats from both sky and space. By intercepting and destroying these threats, air defense provides a blanket of security for the Army's assets and the Soldiers operating at home and abroad.

As many nations around the world develop their militaries, it has become cheaper for those who would threaten the U.S. to obtain cheap, devastating weaponry which can compromise the safety of our assets and our fellow servicemembers around the globe. Air defense is, more than ever, a critical enabler in the U.S. Army.

SGT Ryan Hildebrandt hands a Stinger missile to SGT Wade Russell, both part of 1st Battalion, 188th Air Defense Artillery, 40th Infantry Division, North Dakota Army National Guard, for loading in a pod on board an Avenger at a live-fire exercise in Fort Bliss, Texas, Sept. 20, 2008. (Photo by SGT Jonathan Haugen, U.S. Army)

**The Threat.** Tactical ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles, either operational or being developed by adversarial nations, are a growing threat. Tactical ballistic missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles are cost-effective means to project power over vast areas. Countries and civilians seeking to do devastating damage to U.S. military assets or their neighboring countries understand manning and maintaining aircraft is not a viable means of threat. They realize an effective missile system or unmanned aerial vehicle can do the job at a significantly cheaper cost.

The job of defending American forces from air threats, especially the Army, falls upon air defense artillery and specifically the air defenders that make up the branch. Air defense artillery understands these growing and changing threats and defends the skies and protects Soldiers around the world. Consisting of various military occupational specialties, weapon systems and intelligence-gathering equipment, air defense helps shield ground forces from the enemy.

Equipment such as the Patriot Air Defense System, Theater High Altitude Air Defense System and Avenger Missile Defense System are just a few of the weapons in the Army's arsenal that help provide a blanket of security over the armed forces and key assets. These systems are essential, but cannot be effective unless intelligence gathered on the battlefield by various sources, such as satellite, radar sensors and human intelligence, are combined to put the crosshairs on the threat.

**The 14J.** The Military Occupational Specialty 14J Air Defense Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence Tactical Operations Center Enhanced Operator is a key component in ADA. A 14J Soldier supervises or serves as a member of an early air threat warning network section, team or platoon in operations and intelligence functions. This MOS gathers and combines intelligence from various sources to form a clear picture of the air above the battlefield and relay that information to the firing units.

The 14J operator is a versatile individual, and his job does not consist of just one piece of equipment or duty, but includes several pieces of hardware and many duties all wrapped up into one. The mission of a 14J Soldier is to operate and maintain the Air Defense System Integrator, the Air and Missile Defense Workstation, Forward Area Air Defense Engagement Operations, the Tactical Airspace Integration System and Sentinel radars. By maintaining all these systems, it allows many puzzle pieces of information to come together and form a picture which allows air defense commanders to use their defense assets in an efficient and effective manner.

Training as a 14J Soldier is both challenging and rewarding. Missile readiness and joint exercises with both the Air Force and Navy help prepare 14Js for the challenges of integration and for ensuring firing units have all the information they need to function as efficiently as possible.

On-the-job training is also important to the 14J, who learns to do everything from PowerPoint presentations to computer network design and integration on a daily basis. Training on specific equipment and real-world training exercises are also keys to development for the 14J Soldier. With so many pieces of equipment and tasks to perform, it is vital that 14J Soldiers attend various refresher schools that strictly focus on the equipment.

As the air threats continue to increase throughout the world, the U.S. Army depends on ADA to shield its ground forces from the threats from above. Intercepting and destroying the different weapons which can affect the safety and security of our forces is an ongoing process that involves the training and expertise of all air defenders. ADA assures the blanket of protection for Soldiers engaged in battle never falters and that a Soldier will never have to look up and wonder if it's safe. ▪

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# Army Values and the NCO

Give 'em cold steel, kill 'em with the bayonet!" Those are the famous words from, then newly promoted, Captain Lewis Millett as he ordered his unit to fix bayonets and charge Hill 180 on Feb. 7, 1951, during the Korean War. Millett led the last organized bayonet charge by any American fighting unit as he fought both the North Koreans and the harsh environment, ultimately earning him the Medal of Honor.

CPT Lewis L. Millett (Photo courtesy of Department of Defense)

The situation was grim according to his Medal of Honor citation, which says "While personally leading his company in an attack against a strongly held position he noted that the 1st Platoon was pinned down by small-arms, automatic and antitank fire. Millett ordered the [3rd] Platoon forward, placed himself at the head of the [two] platoons, and, with fixed bayonet, led the assault up the fire-swept hill." Millet was injured in the attack, but he refused medical evacuation until the mission was complete. What allowed Millet to motivate and influence his Soldiers in this situation?

His background provides some insight. Millet served as a field artilleryman; however, his experience was not limited to artillery. He worked in several positions outside of his normal assignment. Millet was a combat-proven NCO during World War II. Millet's leadership skills were not left on the Korean War battlefield. Those same skills are still very much alive in today's field artillery NCOs.

Today's artillery NCOs are the some of the most versatile and flexible of any branch in the Army. They know the meaning of the all-too-familiar acronym ILO — in-lieu-of mission. Artillerymen execute a plethora of missions outside of their military occupational specialties in today's War on Terrorism. They deploy as military police, infantrymen, truck drivers, convoy escorts, prison guards, personal security detachments, military transition team members and much more.

NCOs must focus on the basic building blocks of military leadership to accomplish the myriad of missions outside of the field artillery spectrum. This is illustrated best by looking at the Army Values and using the acronym LDRSHIP, which stands for loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage. Probably every NCO who attended a promotion ceremony or NCO-of-the-month board memorized the acronym LDRSHIP and its meaning. Thinking about the true significance of each word will improve your leadership skills.

**Loyalty.** Loyalty to your Soldiers is crucial — they deserve it. Small-unit operations are more common in today's contemporary operating environment. Soldiers must know their first-line leader, their sergeant, will stand by them regardless of the situation. Many Soldiers will stumble at one time or another. Identify the problem, fix it and "drive on."

There is nothing worse than an NCO who sheds "crocodile tears" when engaging his subordinates. This type of NCO is supportive in person, but publically expresses a Soldier's deficiencies. This can lead to vengeance. It's imperative that NCOs prevent themselves from building a personal dislike for a subordinate which will allow a vengeful attitude to cloud a subordinate's attempt at redemption. Take great care of your Soldiers, and they'll take care of you.

**Duty.** Your duty is much more than just fulfilling obligations. NCOs must take the initiative and execute not only the specified tasks, but also any task that needs to be accomplished. It is easy to overlook the hard jobs when you are not directed specifically to do them. But the superior NCO takes the hard road to ensure all bases are covered. Avoiding the hard right over the easy wrong in garrison might result in an verbal admonishment, but in combat it may result in a Soldier's death. When in charge, take charge with no second guesses.

**Respect.** Treating Soldiers with respect is the most important display of professionalism an NCO can show to subordinates. To make an on-the-spot correction by loudly berating a Soldier with profanity for the whole unit to hear is unacceptable. You will lose his respect and probably his loyalty.

Even worse is when a senior NCO berates a junior NCO with profanity in front of their subordinates. The junior NCO loses his base of power and the respect of his Soldiers when this is done. There is a tactful way to deal with the deficiency regardless of the situation. Nobody wants a "hot head" to lead them on a mission outside of the wire.

**Selfless service.** Taking responsibility for your Soldiers by letting them know you will stand by them in all circumstances will exemplify an NCO's selfless service. Being a leader of Soldiers is a very serious responsibility. NCOs must put the needs of their Soldiers above their own. An NCO must remember he is a leader 24/7 and his responsibility cannot be delegated.

**Honor.** NCOs live by a code of honor and serve as ambassadors of the Army — both on and off duty. There is nothing worse than an NCO who preaches standards to subordinates during the day and does just the opposite after duty hours. NCOs live in "glass houses," and everything they do will be observed and scrutinized. NCOs must set the example and uphold regulations. Having the discipline to make a correction at Wal-Mart is just as important as making one when deployed. To serve with honor is to serve while living the other Army Values.

**Integrity.** An NCO's physical fitness may fluctuate from time to time. He may not show the proper respect during a stressful situation. However, an NCO can never compromise his integrity. There is one thing the Army cannot tolerate — a leader who is a liar, a cheat or a thief. A leader should also have the intestinal fortitude to stand up and admit his mistakes. Accept the consequences and drive on. We expect that from our Soldiers and leaders alike — one team, one standard.

**Personal courage.** Facing fears, both physical and moral, depict an NCO's personal courage. This starts with taking responsibility for all actions in his section and culminates with leading from the front in combat operations. Different leaders fear different things, but the true warrior acknowledges his fears, accepts them and faces those fears with a steadfast determination to overcome them. Sometimes there is "nothing to fear, but fear itself."

The Army Values can be merely words on a page or something to guide your life. It's up to each NCO to make the most of it. Remember as field artillery NCOs, you are the most versatile and professional men and women in the military. Regardless of your future mission or situation, apply the Army Values and shoot for success. So, look your enemy in the eyes, fix bayonets and attack. ▪

MSG Gregory S. Weekley
HHB, 75th Field Artillery Brigade

# Pride in service

What makes me proud of my military service? Well, there are several reasons. First, I love what I do — being an NCO. I believe anyone who is involved in anything meaningful has to love what he is doing, or he should not be involved in it. This is true for a job, career, relationship, sport, hobby or anything else.

I have experienced many bumps in the road of life. About four years ago, I hit one of those bumps; it was an emotional moment where I questioned why I was in the restaurant management industry. After some thought, I told my wife that I needed to do something where I had more purpose in my life. I suggested going into the Army Reserves. I was in the Army National Guard from 1992 to 2000. My wife told me to go active duty because she knew that was what I really wanted.

After speaking with my wife, I enlisted for active duty, June 14, 2006, and subsequently, reenlisted, Oct. 30, 2008, for six more years. Enlisting and re-enlisting are two of the best decisions of my life.

When I enlisted in 2006, I chose the Military Occupational Specialty 13D Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System Specialist. I had some knowledge of field artillery and what the job entailed from my previous military occupational specialty in the Army National Guard — a 13F Fire Support Specialist. I always felt that being involved in field artillery included a certain level of pride, considering its importance on the battlefield.

I am proud of my decision to be a 13D, but I never knew just how important being a part of a fire direction center was to an artillery unit.

I never imagined that two-and-a-half years after enlisting I would be a part of the NCO Corps, or even more so, a chief of a fire direction center. Of course, it involved a lot of hard work and dedication. This dedication did not only come from my personal drive, but from my supervising NCOs. Four of them stand out to me — SSG Joshua McCain, who was my section chief, SFC Rudolph Green; MSG Kevin Leopold; and 1SG Gary Lievense.

**Mentors.** These four NCOs always were very demanding. They constantly pushed and motivated me to do better. Every time I met one challenge, they raised the bar for me to excel to the next level. They always pushed me to be the best Soldier I could be, and they saw me make the transformation from a lower enlisted Soldier to a sergeant in the NCO Corps.

SSG McCain always pushed me through training. He helped me transition through the positions of radio telephone operator, M1068A3 Driver and Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System Operator. When he was reassigned to the 428th Brigade, he saw me take over as the section chief.

SFC Green, as my platoon sergeant, always pushed me to lead from the front. He saw my potential as a leader and showed me how to grasp that potential through constructive criticism and guidance. MSG Leopold would push me to do better, through physical training, military occupational specialty proficiency and leadership.

1SG Gary Lievense became my battery's first sergeant shortly after I joined the NCO ranks. Though he was a very demanding first sergeant (as all should be), he always has leaned on me to meet suspenses. He knew I would have or would find the resources to get the tasks done.

**Rewards.** In my eight-month tenure as an NCO, I have earned the respect and confidence of my first sergeant and chain of command. Because of this, I was selected and appointed the battery's equal opportunity leader. This is a very demanding position and is one I always wanted to perform because of my personal beliefs about equal rights in the unit workplace.

Even though the hours are long and I must sacrifice time with my family, it is worth it. More importantly, my family supports me 100 percent despite these sacrifices.

My position as an NCO has provided me the opportunity to do what I enjoy the most — training, coaching and mentoring Soldiers; providing for their safety; and constantly living the field artillery mission. Becoming an NCO has added another dimension in my life.

Like my mentors, I push my Soldiers to be the best Soldiers they can be through training, mentorship and counseling. I am content in my position. In other words, I love what I do. These things give me the pride to serve as a Soldier and NCO. I am proud to be part of the field artillery and a member of the NCO Corps, the "backbone" of the Army. ▪

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# What's an NCO? More bang for the buck

In this Year of the NCO, you might wonder what NCOs do for the U.S. Army. NCOs do it all. These leaders have their hands in every aspect of the Army from the simplest daily activities to the most complicated strategic planning. Let's get reacquainted with the "backbone of the Army."

NCOs are responsible for the daily activities of the Army. These sergeants are the first-line supervisors for the majority of the work completed by Soldiers. These actions can be as simple as physical training or motor pool maintenance on vehicles or as complicated as leading a combat patrol in war.

Chances are high that every activity from processing pay documents to medical services at the hospital are executed and supervised by sergeants. They touch every aspect of our Soldiers' and our families' lives.

Need a military policeman for an emergency? Here comes a sergeant. Who is teaching at the Warrior Leader Course? A sergeant is instructing right now. Our sergeants find us before we are in the Army — as recruiters. Drill sergeants mold us from civilians into Soldiers. Career counselor NCOs keep us in the Army. Sergeants teach us at Advance Individual Training and at Airborne, Ranger and other specialty schools. Sergeants develop future NCOs in the NCO Educational System. From the Warrior Leader Course to the Sergeants Major Course, NCOs develop the next generation. And who executes portions of Officer Candidate School? NCOs do.

**Enforcers.** Sergeants enforce the rules, regulations and policies of the Army. NCOs don't make policy, they enforce it. Many have heard me say, "I don't make the rules; I get paid handsomely to enforce them." The Army says what is proper and then empowers sergeants to enforce it. The key aspect to this notion is not the rule, but rather the discipline to enforce the standard. NCOs have the discipline to do the right thing and set the example.

So, "What is the big deal about wearing my patrol cap to the Post Exchange?" It is quite simple. A commissioned officer wrote the rule, making it a legal order — a simple and minor one some could argue. I support officers; therefore, I support their rules. Sergeants enforce both simple and complicated regulations.

Convenience and comfort have never been military priorities. If a Soldier or leader cannot enforce the simple rules, how will he tackle the complicated ones? It is a slippery slope of selective enforcement when individuals only correct the regulations they agree with.

**Combat multipliers.** What makes our Army different from others? The NCO. Armies from around the world send their officers to visit the U.S. to see how we run our Army. No one argues the commissioned officers are in charge. A recurring theme comes up, though, when foreign officers see our NCOs doing so much. The comments sound something like this, "How can you trust these sergeants to do so much?" Or, "Only our officers do that." And it is this decentralized implicit trust of our NCOs that creates a huge advantage over other armies. Decisions and, actions take place where no officer is present. NCOs are combat multipliers.

Our Army learned years ago that NCOs can be trusted to execute tasks that historically might have been linked to officers. And historically, NCOs are officers. Sergeants are officers without a commission. There are several sources to refer to this topic, but I won't give a history lesson here. Read *Guardians of the Republic* by Earnest F. Fisher Jr. for a detailed narrative on the history of the NCO. For here and now, we need to know that the NCO is more "bang for the buck" for our Army than any other member.

**The backbone.** Sergeants train individuals, teams and crews. NCOs focus on all the single and small unit requirements that support the collective tasks of platoons and companies.

Sergeants ensure Soldiers are physically fit to arrive at the leading edge of battle. These same sergeants teach Soldiers how to shoot their weapons effectively. NCOs teach our Soldiers when not to shoot, which is sometimes more important. Sergeants take the theory of being a Soldier and apply it to people to make them Soldiers.

NCOs advise and mentor officers. Starting at the platoon level, our Army "marries" an officer with a seasoned NCO to accomplish missions. And it works. The combination of commissioned and noncommissioned officer is powerful and a critical difference in our Army. Senior NCOs advise senior officers about all enlisted issues and concerns. Officers count on NCOs for recommendations on their most critical decisions. Want the truth? Ask an NCO.

NCOs preserve the traditions, customs and courtesies of the Army. From standing at attention or parade rest to drill and ceremonies, NCOs must preserve these "lost arts" of a war-time Army. Respecting the flag at retreat is an NCO function.

Politeness, respect and courtesy are historic indicators of discipline in our service. Who is preserving this tradition of the Army? The NCO must. When an NCO sees an infraction and makes no correction, a new standard is set.

So, if NCOs follow their creed, they will do two things. First, sergeants will accomplish their missions. Not only the ones they choose, but also the ones the Army gives them. NCOs enforce all of them.

And they must ensure the welfare of their Soldiers. Soldiers are a valuable commodity to be protected. To send untrained, undisciplined Soldiers to war is to kill them. NCOs save lives. They do all the dirty work and are quiet professionals who seek no reward other than the satisfaction of making a difference. They are the working class of the Army and the unsung heroes of our nation.

In this year of the NCO, have you thanked a sergeant today? ▪

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SGT Jonathan Hinson leads fellow Soldiers in B Battery, 1st Battalion, 113th Field Artillery Regiment, 30th Brigade Combat Team, on a patrol south of Baghdad, Iraq, June 9. (Photo by SGT Mary Phillips, U.S. Army)



Year of the NCO: pride in service

# Senior NCO's perspective on leadership, training

By SGM Frank C. Cota, Jr., ADA

Thoughts and philosophies on leadership are as varied as leaders themselves. Moreover, those who have written about the subject have much more experience than I; however, my passion and love of the art and study of leadership is every bit as strong.

Units Armywide strive to maintain training and equipment readiness rates in accordance with Army standards. This desire to achieve, and in most cases exceed, Army standards to "be the best" or just to "check the block" sometimes leads to poor judgment. Poor judgment can lead to poorly trained Soldiers and leaders or even injury or death.

This article discusses poor leader judgment in falsifying unit training reports and refers to a unit that may have been a victim of such tactics. It also addresses some fundamental mistakes that occur while preparing and training Soldiers to become leaders. Some of these issues occur routinely, yet senior leaders, especially NCOs, allow them to pass without taking action to stop them. This is not in keeping with the basic responsibilities of the NCO Corps, and the results can prove deadly.

The capture and deaths of Soldiers from the 507th Maintenance Company in March of 2003 is a sad and terrible tale that caused a media frenzy and certainly brought to light our Soldiers' vulnerability and the harshness they face in combat. We know that this type of occurrence happens, but there are some issues that could have been avoided had this unit been trained — not "on paper" but in reality.

The 507th Soldiers met their fate due to the commander's navigational error. Subsequently, only one other leader in the unit recognized that they had taken a wrong turn — a platoon sergeant. The rest followed aimlessly unaware where they were or where they were going. What did the unit training statistics say about this unit before combat? I would wager that they were a C-1 across the board (fully prepared to perform its combat mission).

I will not delve specifically into this case. I only point to the fact that the errors leading up to this tragic event and many of the issues — identified by the Army in the after-action report — point to a unit that was ill prepared to carry out its wartime mission. The tragic and most disconcerting questions here are who knew, why was the chain of command all the way to the top not informed, and why was a maintenance company that was organic to a Patriot battalion assigned to perform a mission in support of a maneuver unit that it had never worked with or supported in any capacity before?

Every leader "worth his salt" in the Army wants to be the best. Striving to be great is something that is ingrained in every Soldier from the first day that he enters the Army. Unit competitions and mottos are filled with the desire to be and look the best. But what happens when leaders cross the line of good judgment by not training to be the best, but rather saying that they are the best. In other words, what happens when leaders at every level "fudge" their statistics on the quarterly training briefings to make themselves appear more "ready" than they really are?

**Unit training reports.** We all have sat in a quarterly training briefing and looked at endless statistics covering weapons qualifications, gunnery tables, physical readiness, nuclear, biological and chemical training … on and on. It seems there is no end to the statistics that the Army maintains on unit readiness. Dull and boring as these meetings and issues are, they are important, not for the sake of competition or of being embarrassed for failing to be as good as the next unit, but because of what tale these statistics tell, and, more importantly, the decisions that are made by commanders at every level as a result.

Tremendous pressures are placed on company-level commanders to perform every required task and to do it before the quarter ends. As leaders, we know that when too much is scheduled, units do a lot of things poorly rather than a few things very well. So, why would a leader "fudge" statistics?

Some commanders may report false statistics because of pressures from higher headquarters, a desire to look better than other units, fear of a superior commander or fear of reporting poor results. Threats of a poor evaluation report may happen as well. This technique is horribly wrong and does a tremendous disservice to the leaders, units and, most importantly, the Soldiers who are the core of the unit.

What about the higher level commanders — do you think they are unaware a unit may not be as ready as it reports? I believe in many instances they are and choose to turn a blind eye for fear of "digging to deep;" it certainly has occurred in my experiences.

*Appearances.* Leaders at all levels want their units to be the best. To be the best, they need to train their units. However, if a gunnery streamer means more to you than your Soldiers' lives, then buy a streamer and get out of the Army. If you as a leader feel your unit deserves it, then earn it through training and preparation.

If the unit's best efforts result in a Q-2, then that is what it has earned. The Soldiers know what to do to improve. Commanders at all levels, assess your unit statistics, and the Army will place you in the fight accordingly. If a leader lies about how good his unit is, then it may receive a mission that it is not ready for. A "paper champion" is no champion at all.

*Lack of training time.* Other issues arise when leaders place so much emphasis on a unit's passing its respective training, that undue pressures are placed on evaluation teams to "give the unit the benefit of the doubt." This also is dangerous.

Often the red-cycle tasks (details that occur during non-training time) or just plain poor planning will keep a unit from training as much and as thoroughly as it should, and an evaluation team is placed in a position to compromise its integrity because the unit commander has stated that all units "will get a go."

*Fear and intimidation.* When commanders and leaders create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation to subordinate units for poor statistics, what they receive may be an inaccurate report of "paper physical training tests" and "check-the-block" weapons crew certifications. Ultimately, it will be the Soldiers who may pay the ultimate price for a unit's desire or fear of reporting the truth of their respective unit's true abilities.

I once had a senior leader tell me and other first sergeants during a meeting that "the old man doesn't like the way the weapons qualifications look, so do what you have to do to get them to reflect what he is looking for." I was absolutely floored. I told him and the rest of the leaders I was not where I wanted to be, but I had a plan to get there — maybe not within the time frame he wanted, but I had a plan none the less.

I also stated I would not be responsible for reporting my unit was at a level it was not. I do not ever want to be responsible for the death or injury of Soldiers because I said they were ready when they weren't. I alluded to the tragedy of the 507th and how after "peeling back the onion" on the events that led to their deaths and capture, poor training was the underlying factor of their tragedy.

**Accurate reporting.** We have to get all leaders out of the mentality of wanting to "look good" and into the mentality of actually "being good." My leadership philosophy summates what our obligation as leaders is regarding training and leadership. To

Florida Guardsmen from 3rd Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, carry a shoulder mounted stinger missile launcher as they head to the firing lane at McGregor Range, N.M., April 21.

paraphrase, the "why" [of training] is to preserve our Soldiers and ensure that we properly train, lead and care for them. America has entrusted its sons and daughters to our care, and they deserve of nothing less than our most diligent efforts and best leadership.

We must not allow a leader at any level to say or report that the unit is more ready than it actually is. We have to take a stand and report our units as they are. It is a "come as you are" scenario, and we are obligated legally, morally and ethically to report our training status as it really is. If you are not ready, make a plan to get ready, but don't lie.

Reporting a unit is not ready is just the first step. The most important step is training and maintaining it. In the end, what is reported to higher headquarters is not as important as what happens when we lie. Death, injury, capture and accidents are the end result of our failure to do the right thing.

**Building leaders.** Another area in which overzealous leaders can cause harm is in advising young NCOs. I have witnessed some poor preparation of our young NCOs. So much so, a large majority of these leaders ascended to the next level only to fail at various leadership positions due to inexperience. These flaws mostly were due to leaders not preparing these leaders adequately to hold these positions.

In today's Army, leaders at all levels — particularly on the enlisted side of the house — speak to Soldiers about preparing to "get to the next level." But what does "preparing" entail? Does it mean going to the respective NCO professional development course to ascend to the next level? Is it making sure that your records are "straight?" Does it mean that Soldiers should compete at Soldier and NCO of the quarter/month/year boards or become drill sergeants and recruiters to get recognized and have something on their records that distinguishes them from others?

Leaders often instruct Soldiers how to get to the next level without giving them the tools to perform at that level. Not all Army leaders fail to train and mentor their Soldiers, but often a Soldier is groomed to come up quickly without really being prepared to hold the next position adequately.

Often when leaders speak to subordinates about what they should do to be promoted, we speak of drill sergeant and recruiter duties. But do we really look at the overall competency and skill set of the Soldier we are sending? More importantly, have we looked at the Soldier's records to see if he has fulfilled all the job requirements throughout the course of his career?

I have seen Soldiers — selected at various NCO and Soldier-of-the-year boards or inducted as Sergeant Audie Murphy or Morales club members — become winners and then work outside their military occupational specialty for inordinate periods of time because that gained favor with leadership at higher levels.

I am not disparaging those accomplishments because they are all praiseworthy and take great discipline and work to achieve. However, leaders need to teach these accomplishments are merely the "shine on the armor" and not the hardening of the armor itself. These things, ultimately, will get Soldiers promoted above their peers. But they must recognize they have to return to their career management fields when their time is done.

I have witnessed many "high speed" Soldiers go to drill sergeant school and subsequently become instructors or vice versa. These Soldiers stay "offline" working outside of their career management fields for far too long. A Soldier who goes to drill sergeant school as a sergeant and then becomes an instructor will stay offline for approximately four to six years. By the time both these tours are finished, the Soldier is probably a sergeant first class with only a minimal amount of experience in their military occupational specialty.

This Soldier will go on to be a platoon sergeant. But, with even the most diligent work ethic, can this senior leader lead a platoon, mentor a platoon leader and be an asset to the unit with so little understanding and experience? Sure, the Soldier ascended the ladder as he should in respect to the recommended periods, but what is he bringing to the table other than a quick ascension record?

He has won these boards and attended these schools because he was advised that doing so would quicken his promotion. But now that he wears the rank, what can he do with it? He was advised these accomplishments were necessary, that he needed to "check the block" with these deeds — and now, he lacks the fundamental skill sets his position requires.

Often Soldiers leave these positions (instructor, drill sergeant, etc.) only because they realized or were advised that they now need platoon sergeant time to get promoted to master sergeant. Solders who wish to move up the ranks quickly recognize the necessary assignment requirements and try to fulfill these positions because they know they must "check the block." The means to ascend with accomplishments can only go so far. Even if they can "check the block" with accomplishments and positions, ultimately, they will serve in greater capacities and have to perform.

Unfortunately, I have seen many of these so called "high speed" Soldiers "crash and burn" as senior leaders because they didn't know what was expected of them. I have seen platoon sergeants focus on key control and connexes instead of crew and combat drills because they only knew about the former and not the latter. Because their "formative years" of leader development were spent on the easily attainable and aesthetic nature of "spit and polish" instead of training Soldiers in their basic career management field tasks, they focus on what can be seen easily and not on developing skills they need to prepare for combat.

As a master gunner, I saw every battery and crew in my unit perform their wartime missions on numerous occasions. Many times, I saw a crew drill so poorly that, short of injury or death, it was a complete disaster. On several occasions, the reason was pure incompetence, but there were also times where a senior leader — a platoon sergeant or first sergeant — had been away from the "game" far too long and had lost the edge on what proper training and preparation was all about.

Can a senior NCO properly advise a platoon leader or commander on the numerous tasks required for combat, garrison or red-cycle tasking if he has never performed, prepared or participated in any of those events — or if it was so long ago that he forgot what he learned? Ascension in the ranks is more than just increasing your pay grade; it's about increasing your knowledge and competence. "Checking the block" to move up really does a disservice to us and our Soldiers. Every leadership position an NCO fulfills must be done with the passion and conviction that he would give to his own children.

We must teach Soldiers that fulfilling these positions and achieving recognition on these boards is a wonderful thing, but we also must advise them that these accomplishments should not be the nucleus of their existence nor should they be laurels to rest on for the entirety of a career. Our Soldiers' lives and our nation's security depend on the senior leader's ability to teach, coach and mentor Soldiers and junior leaders. Soldiers at the lowest level are

SFC Gregory Laldee (right), color guard NCO-in-charge, 108th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, stands next to his color guard team after being pinned with an Army achievement medal during the XVIII Airborne Corps award ceremony at Fort Bragg, N.C., May 29. (Photo by SPC Crystal Abbott, U.S. Army)

making quick decisions with dire consequences for a bad decision in today's asymmetric warfare, and we must work ever harder to give these Soldiers the necessary tools to succeed.

**Leadership guidelines.** NCOs are the standard bearers and standard enforcers of the Army, but basic leadership guidelines often are forgotten in the daily business of being a Soldier and leader. These guidelines can help mitigate poor judgment. These guidelines are based upon principles that helped me and my Soldiers enjoy great success, and I hope they help validate your current views on these issues or at least give a different perspective on them.

The basics are paramount to the success of any team, and no team can perform without having a solid grasp of those basics. The basic doctrine that governs how all troops, batteries and companies conduct business is the same. So, why aren't all units exceptional if the doctrine that guides them is the same? It is because, as an Army, leadership and our legacy are left in people and not on paper. Leaders make units great, not the doctrine. I have broken down these basics into the "who, what, where, when and why" of leadership. These guidelines and tenets are geared towards the senior NCO, but are applicable to leaders at all levels.

*Who.* The "who" is fairly simple; it applies to all of our Soldiers, Department of the Army civilians and family members. This is our Army family and team. These are the people we are dedicated to serve.

*What.* Lead by example; commitment to Soldiers and their families is paramount. If you, as a leader, are not committed and passionate about what you do, your Soldiers will know it and conduct themselves accordingly.

Have faith; trust Soldiers to do the right thing. We must foster an environment that is conducive to Soldiers taking initiative and growing. In today's asymmetric battlefield, Soldiers at all levels make quick decisions that will affect lives. Harness their abilities and desires and help them to improve.

Keep a watchful eye; train and supervise Soldiers always. Ensure you are present throughout every facet of training, mission or task. Our presence reinforces the importance of any task. If it is important enough for our Soldiers to do, then it's important enough for us to be there. Our presence establishes parameters and keeps Soldiers on task or on track.

Mentor, teach and train Soldiers; take the time to show them what "right looks like." Don't assume our Soldiers know how to perform a task or mission. Or if you do assume, do not be disappointed if the results are not what you expected and then "blast" the Soldiers because things aren't as you wanted them.

Know when to step in; take the time to talk with your subordinates at every available opportunity. When supervising and inspecting training, use that time to help Soldiers understand what they are doing and why they are doing it. Soldiers will work harder to accomplish a task or mission if they understand why it's important. This also helps you gauge strengths and weaknesses within your unit and helps you decide where you must focus your efforts.

Evaluate subordinate leaders; ensure that they are training and caring for their Soldiers. A simple way of gauging the abilities, worthiness and character of a leader is to ask yourself this simple question, "Would I trust this leader to lead my own children?" If the answer is no, then work to improve this leader's abilities. If this leader does not improve, then take measures to remove the leader from his position and, ultimately, the Army if necessary. The defense of a nation is no place for apathy or complacency, especially with leadership.

*Where.* The "where" applies from the field of play to the field of battle. Leadership and its tenets are applicable in every environment. Apply them in the field, in garrison, in combat and in every other place that puts you in contact with Soldiers.

SGT Andrew Reinheimer, E Battery, 3rd Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, attached to the Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, transports a "casualty" during the final training exercise of a three-day combat lifesaver course in Baghdad, Iraq, July 22. (Photo by SFC Ron Burke, U.S. Army)

*When.* The "when" is now and always. It is important to apply the basics of leadership presently, ensuring an investment in our leadership future.

*Why.* The "why" is to preserve our Soldiers and ensure they are trained, led and cared for properly. America has entrusted its sons and daughters to our care, and they deserve nothing less than our most diligent efforts and best leadership. We, as leaders, must never forget the rank and positions we hold are bestowed upon us to serve our Soldiers and their interests and not vice versa. Never forget where you came from. If you keep this in mind, you are less likely to make arbitrary decisions and recommendations regarding the disposition of our Soldiers.

**Guiding principles.** Lead, train and care for Soldiers with the same care and compassion that you would with your own children. Do everything in your power to ensure they are prepared and trained properly so that they may fight, win and return.

Remember leaders and NCOs are the nucleus of our Army. We must remain strong and confident. Remaining competent and vigilant will keep the power of our NCO Corps firmly in our hands. Our passion and love for what we do should permeate our organization. Our integrity and honor must be paramount. We must be the standard-bearers and standard enforcers. It is crucial to treat Soldiers with dignity and respect.

I realize leaders work hard to attain their respective ranks or positions. In that regard, temper your decisions with patience and understanding when dealing with challenging situations or Soldiers. Just because we can treat a subordinate a certain way, does not necessarily mean we should.

First sergeants and sergeants major must be extraordinarily cautious when reprimanding subordinates. Remember, we are in very powerful positions and could do more harm than good if our words or actions are overly harsh. I am not suggesting we do not deal firmly with subordinates when they fail to meet standards or mission requirements; but we must proceed with the wisdom and patience our years of experience have bestowed upon us.

Lastly, leaders should strive always to have Soldiers give their loyalty to the person we are and not the rank we wear. Regulation mandates respect and loyalty be given to the rank; however, it is more of a challenge and an ultimate reward to have Soldiers respect the leader beneath the rank. Exude the youthful enthusiasm of a young corporal with the knowledge, wisdom and the temperament of a sergeant major.

These thoughts are neither prolific nor profound; however, these basics have continued to serve me well. Leadership, as with anything, is a continual learning and evolving process. According to John Maxwell, longtime leadership expert and author; CSM Philip Rowland, 94th Army Air and Missile Defense Command; and CSM Ricky Lovett, former CSM of the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Air Defense Artillery, 31st ADA Brigade — men I respect tremendously — it takes about 20 years to develop a sergeant major or good leader.

I realize this is just the opinion of a select few; however, it merits thought — leadership is an ongoing and long process. Leaders must strive to learn and grow. In this way, we continually are improving — not for ourselves, but for those we lead.

Lead your Soldiers, your sections and your unit with dedication, loyalty, integrity and honor. Your subordinates recognize these traits and respond in kind. Teach them to become leaders with whom you would be proud to serve — and not to just "check the block."

Knowledge, like money, cannot be taken with us after we pass, so share it generously. We spend our lives learning through our experiences, and I feel that it is incumbent upon leaders at all levels to share their knowledge continually. The value of knowledge lies not in its acquisition, but rather in its application. ▪

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# Leadership ...


For centuries, history has been written with the pen strokes of men in leadership positions. Leadership was paramount when the pyramids were constructed and when the Greeks subjugated the known world of ancient times. It was used to build the Roman Empire; it was also used in the building of the new world and the birth of a new nation.

The word leader has been used to describe some of the world's most influential people. They changed the courses of events and earned themselves immortality in the pages of history. People like Charlemagne, Alexander the Great, George Washington and Dwight D. Eisenhower are a few of the world's greatest leaders. None of them were born with the ability to lead.

Leadership is cultivated with careful guidance and a willingness and desire to develop tomorrow's leaders. Since the founding of the U.S. Army in 1775, leadership has been the keystone on which our great military and nation were built and maintained. Being a leader is not an easy task. It takes an enormous amount of time and commitment on the part of the leader to cultivate, mentor and train future leaders.

**NCOs.** No one knows this more than today's NCOs. They are young men and women responsible for training and mentoring Soldiers to deploy and execute the president's orders around the globe. It is a time-honored and sacred responsibility to defend one's country and those who cannot defend themselves.

The Army provides NCOs tools to build their own personal style of leadership. Its inherent structure provides ready examples of leadership for developing leaders to observe and emulate. Further, the Army has an entire educational system designed to teach leadership to its NCOs—the NCO Educational System. It is up to the individual to use and adapt these tools continually to become a better leader and NCO.

Soldiers learn how to be a leader based on the examples set by their leaders — their NCOs. Whether good or bad examples, young Soldiers learn what works and what doesn't work for them as future NCOs. Once these Soldiers become NCOs, they are scrutinized constantly by their Soldiers and always have to be mindful of the examples they set for their Soldiers.

Young corporals and sergeants will find these are the best ranks to hold because they still have a direct and profound influence on their Soldiers. They are still in the "mud and muck" with them, and this is the most opportune time to set the example. When Soldiers are cold and hungry with their NCO, it builds respect and a bond. When these same Soldiers, fed and warm, realize their NCO provided for their needs before his own, they witness what it is to be an NCO. Accomplish your mission, take care of Soldiers and set the example — that is the essence of what it is to be an NCO.

**The NCO's role.** It is the NCO's role to ensure future generations of leaders can carry on the traditions and standards their predecessors put in place. NCOs are and will continue to be what their NCOs trained them to be. This is the true measure of NCOs. Their legacy will be the quality of the NCOs who take the torch of leadership and teach the next generation.

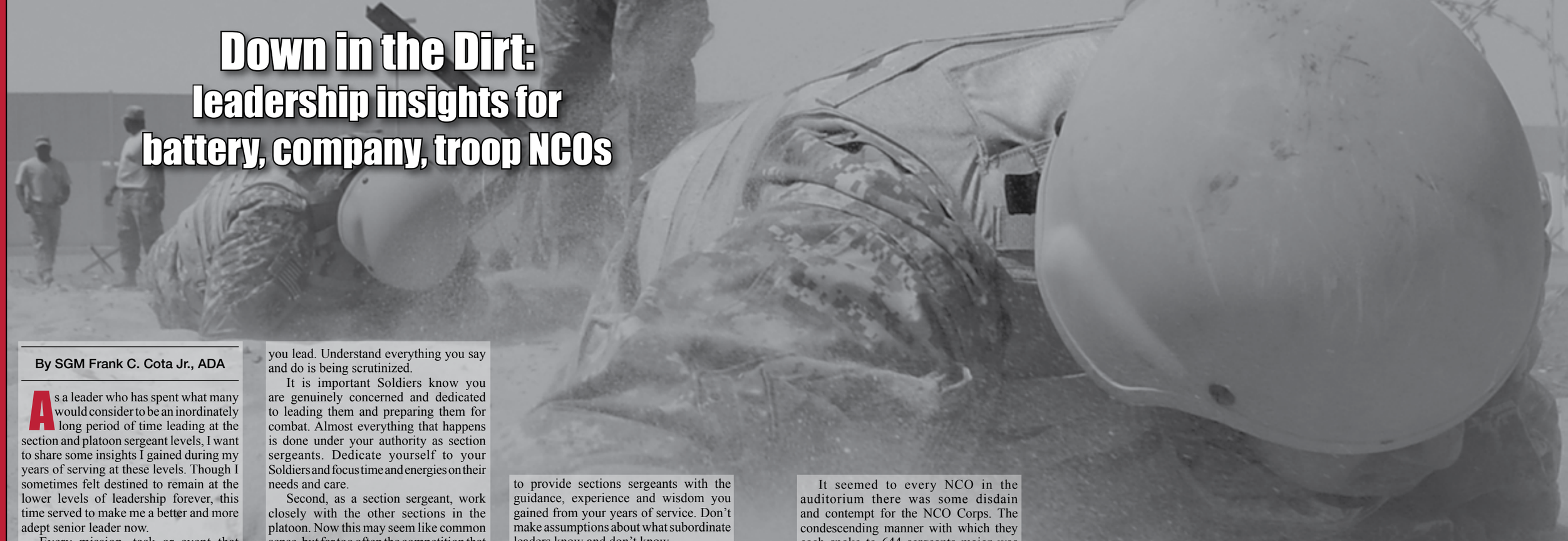
Knowing this, it is not enough to memorize things like the NCO Creed to get through a promotion board because, without application, the creed is just worthless words that can be spouted on command. Loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage are traits of a leader. NCOs do not have the luxury of picking and choosing which leadership trait is appropriate to the situation at hand. If a leader lacks any one of these seven traits, he cannot be an effective leader.

When in charge, be in charge. Know the difference between personal and professional and never let the two mix. Inspect what you expect. Let Soldiers know you are approachable. Make a decision — good or bad; any decision is better than indecision. Application is always better than memorization. Always be aware as an NCO, you are in the spotlight. Do what is right for the right reasons. Enforce discipline and the Army's traditions. Remind Soldiers of what is at stake. Set the example for young impressionable Soldiers to emulate.

It is the mission and duty of all NCOs to ensure Soldiers are trained adequately to carry out any mission — anywhere in the world. NCOs are responsible for writing their portion of history.

SGT James A. Harrison
3-2 Air Defense Artillery, Fort Sill, Okla.

# Down in the Dirt:
## leadership insights for battery, company, troop NCOs



By SGM Frank C. Cota Jr., ADA

As a leader who has spent what many would consider to be an inordinately long period of time leading at the section and platoon sergeant levels, I want to share some insights I gained during my years of serving at these levels. Though I sometimes felt destined to remain at the lower levels of leadership forever, this time served to make me a better and more adept senior leader now.

Every mission, task or event that happens in the Army is executed by the core of leaders at the section and platoon levels. These leaders are the nucleus of the key leaders whose knowledge and expertise are essential for the successful accomplishment of anything the Army must do.

In coming up through the ranks, I spent more than one-third of my time in section- and platoon-level positions. I served more than four years as a section sergeant and more than four and a half years as a platoon sergeant.

I truly loved serving at these levels, and the vast majority of my leadership and training tenets were formed during these years. My years of serving at both levels instilled in me the importance of the leadership and dedication that is crucial at these levels.

**Section sergeants.** First, for the section sergeant or section sergeant to be, serve with passion. Do not "go through the motions" of leadership or training, but commit yourself whole heartedly to those you lead. Understand everything you say and do is being scrutinized.

It is important Soldiers know you are genuinely concerned and dedicated to leading them and preparing them for combat. Almost everything that happens is done under your authority as section sergeants. Dedicate yourself to your Soldiers and focus time and energies on their needs and care.

Second, as a section sergeant, work closely with the other sections in the platoon. Now this may seem like common sense, but far too often the competition that is generated between sections also brings with it some negative aspects as well. Some examples are not sharing information or approaches to training, working in a void or vacuum because you want your section to be the best, or hoarding training resources or expert knowledge.

At the end of the day, our Soldiers are worthy of every bit of knowledge or expertise we can offer them. If it does not come from you, it should come from somewhere. If you truly understand yourself and your capabilities and shortcomings, work with the other section sergeants to strengthen your weaknesses. This enhances your abilities as a leader and also, and more importantly, strengthens and enhances the combat readiness of your section and the entire unit. Put your element before your ego; you and your section will be better for it.

**Platoon sergeants.** For the platoon sergeant, you are the foundation of the platoon. It is absolutely crucial to provide sections sergeants with the guidance, experience and wisdom you gained from your years of service. Don't make assumptions about what subordinate leaders know and don't know.

Ensure you are present at every training event, task or mission, regardless of the size and scope of the event at hand. Mentor the section sergeants and help prepare them to take your position. Being "indispensable" as a platoon sergeant is never a good thing. Your presence should be felt, but over time, less often needed.

Platoon sergeants must encourage these same training, mentoring, and leadership tenets in their platoon leaders. These young leaders require as much, if not more, mentorship and guidance than your section sergeants, although not for the reasons you jokingly may be thinking about. These young leaders have a great deal of responsibility thrust upon them in their very young careers. Their successes or failures rest squarely with you.

While I was attending the Sergeants Major Academy, we were subjected to a great many speakers — some good and others not. Perhaps the most eye-opening and disconcerting things I heard came from two general officers at two separate speaking events. To look at on paper and hear what was spoken would not necessarily raise any red flags, but *how* they said it was what disturbed me the most.

It seemed to every NCO in the auditorium there was some disdain and contempt for the NCO Corps. The condescending manner with which they each spoke to 644 sergeants major was disheartening. One told a story of how a sergeant major had berated him as a young lieutenant, and the other answered several questions with a patronizing and disgusted tone. "Didn't you read my slide; it answers that question!" These lieutenant generals quite possibly had been mistreated as young officers. Of course, I can only speculate, however, there was clearly something that had affected their views and trust of the NCO Corps negatively.

I am sure many have heard things like "Hey LT, I'll call you when I need you, until then just sit there." But NCOs, it's not about what you need; it's about what those young lieutenants need. They need your leadership, they need your guidance, they need your mentorship — and they need it right away.

The things these young leaders will do will affect more personnel over the long run than any other leader you will have influence over. Build that command team early. Build trust and build a strong relationship with those young lieutenants.

Ensure they are trained and involved in everything the platoon will do from the most exciting events to the mundane. You must involve them in all of it. One learns by doing and not by sitting in a corner and watching.

These young lieutenants are our future commanders at all levels. Take the time you have as their platoon sergeant to ensure they trust and respect the NCO Corps — as we know it must be to set the right tone and attitude for the remainder of their careers.

You think we don't have influence? I refer once again to two bitter general officers who probably would argue to the contrary, maybe not publically, but privately. Some three decades later, their contempt and distrust of the NCO Corps was present and evident. Three decades of distrust and lack of respect.

We as NCOs cannot and must not allow this to happen. You get one shot at this with any one particular lieutenant — one shot, one chance to set the tone for a lifetime of leadership and service to our Soldiers and future leaders. Do it right and you have an ally for a lifetime; do it wrong and you have an adversary for a lifetime.

I wish you all the very best in your endeavors, leaders. Go out and lead your troops and invest your passions, time and efforts in our troops who are deserving of our most diligent and concerted efforts. As one of my favorite leadership authors, John C. Maxwell, states in his book, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws Of Leadership*, "Leadership is built daily and not in a day."

So please, go out, build and lead our nation and our Army's greatest asset — our Soldiers. ▪

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SGT Vincent McGoldrick (right), 52nd Air Defense Artillery Battalion, pulls himself through a 25-foot sandpit on a Defender Challenge Course, Southwest Asia, April 25. Teams from different units ran the course, testing stamina, strength and brain power. (Photo by SrA. Brian J. Ellis, U.S. Air Force)

# Lessons on Leadership: thoughts for junior leaders

By MAJ Luis M. Rivera, FA

As I complete another assignment and almost 14 years in the Army, I feel it is time to rethink my outlook on leadership. As a lieutenant, I knew I had to be as technically and tactically proficient as possible. Now, as I get further into my career, I am relying more on others to be the technical and tactical experts, while I concentrate more of my time on leadership. I hope the following principles and lessons help our junior leaders mold their leadership styles.

**Priorities — set and live them.** Earlier in my career, my priorities were not well defined, and my focus was not on my family. Now, after 14 years of service, I understand why we have priorities. My number one priority is my spirituality. It has not always been my number one priority, and, when it wasn't, my life was a mess. My second priority has changed throughout the years, but thanks to a good friend, I put number two into better perspective.

My number two, most of the time, is my family, but can and has been other things as well. It could be my country, career, hobbies, etc. Your secondary priority will depend on your current situation. My number two is country when I am deployed. When I'm not deployed, my number two is my family. That doesn't mean I love my family any less when deployed. One thing I have learned is to take care of my family now and consistently because when the Army goes away, I want my family to still be there.

Focus and don't have too many priorities because like I heard LTG Rick Lynch say, "If you focus on everything, you can't fix anything." Whenever I'm in doubt of what my number two should be, I just refer back to number one. Once you establish your priorities, get feedback from a respected mentor, share them with your family and then set out to live and protect them.

**SAD — standards, accountability and discipline.** When I was a battalion S3, my command sergeant major, CSM James Benedict, taught me the Army has a standard for everything it does. Beyond that, it also has those standards written down somewhere in a technical manual, Army regulation, standing operating procedures or a policy letter.

The problem comes when Soldiers, mainly officers, don't read those documents, don't know and understand the standards and then violate them. The usual excuse I've heard when a standard is violated is, "Well, the regulation doesn't say we couldn't do it!" They are correct; do you know why? Regulations are not written to tell you what not to do. They are written to inform you of what to do, and anything other than that is wrong. You may not agree with it, but unless you are in a position to change it, suck it up and follow the set standards. If you want to make recommendations, make them; but until the standard is changed, follow it.

Standards that are upheld and Soldiers who are held accountable contribute to good order and discipline in a unit. There must be accountability for everything we do. When there is no accountability, there's often chaos, strife and a bad command climate. Even small infractions must be dealt with immediately. If all Soldiers in a unit know and follow the standards and leaders hold everyone accountable for their actions, the result will be a well-disciplined unit with a great command climate, good order and discipline.

**Know your Soldiers and their families.** As a captain, I worked for a lieutenant colonel who was adamant about asking me how my family was doing and asked about them by their names. Every time, it really impressed me that he took the time to remember my family members' names and cared enough to ask about them. He wasn't just faking it to "check the block." He was truly genuine in his references, and most of our conversations lasted longer than five minutes.

Leaders must make an honest, solid effort to know their Soldiers and families.

You don't have to know their names, but I will tell you it is a combat multiplier when you ask your immediate subordinates about their spouse and kids each week. Think of how you feel when a leader asks you about your family. Better yet, how do you feel when a leader never asks about your family? How are you supposed to lead your subordinates if you don't know about their families, how they are personally, and more importantly, how to pick up on when they are having problems?

Do not fake being concerned for your Soldiers; they will see right through you. On the other hand, genuine concern will instill trust and confidence from your subordinates — a sense of teamwork and camaraderie only explained by experience and not words.

**Coach, counsel and mentor.** I feel the Army pays a lot of lip service to this topic, and it is not enforced properly. In my opinion, a leader's sole purpose is to put himself out of the job by coaching his subordinates to do his job. This endeavor takes time and dedication, and it must be done deliberately. Reflect on what *Field Manual 6-22 Army Leadership* states about the competency on developing other leaders. "Leaders encourage and support others to grow as individuals and teams. They facilitate the achievement of organizational goals through assisting others to develop. They prepare others to assume new positions elsewhere in the organization, making the organization more versatile and productive."

> ***"Leaders must make an honest, solid, effort to know their Soldiers and families."***

Coaching is synonymous with teaching; they both deal with instructing others. Coaching takes one-on-one dedication and time. Before taking command of my first battery, my battalion commander took me aside on different occasions to impart words of wisdom, lessons learned and his leadership philosophy. During a deployment before taking command, he allowed me to "right-seat-ride" with the unit I was going to command to see them in action. As the final piece of his coaching, we sat down and with his help, I wrote my command philosophy. That experience encouraged me to do the same with my lieutenants before they move on to lead a platoon and before departing for the Captain's Career Course.

Army Regulation 623-3 requires initial counseling to occur within the first 30 days of an officer's or NCO's arrival to his new unit. It further requires quarterly follow-up counseling for all NCOs and officers in the ranks of lieutenant, captain and warrant officer one and two. My experience tells me this does not happen very often, if at all. A leader must take the responsibility initially to articulate to his subordinates what is expected of them, how they have performed and, more importantly, give them focus for the future. Counseling is crucial to growing leaders and organizations.

After a subordinate departs from the direct influence of a leader, the endeavor can change to mentoring, which is done indirectly because there is no direct daily contact. Mentoring must be wanted, and the leader must want to give it. Too many times, I see junior leaders come into a unit, and their senior leaders expect them to go straight into a job they have never done and excel without any guidance, coaching or mentoring. Prime your subordinates for their next duty and set them up for success.

Have you been coached, counseled or mentored? Do you currently have a mentor whom you can contact, ask for advice and speak with regarding professional matters? Is there a subordinate who is looking for that in you? Do your part to improve the Army. Find ways to coach, counsel and mentor the future leaders of our Army.

**The "doer" does what the "checker" checks**. This is another one taken from the "CSM Benedict kit bag." How much effort will a Soldier put into a task if he knows you will not check his progress? After a while, the Soldier may even think you don't care if you don't check on him. Some may see this as micromanagement, but it is what leaders do. Supervising is one of the troop-leading procedures, and it can't be ignored. Let me be very clear that supervision is not micromanagement.

The other benefit of this axiom is if a Soldier knows you will check on him, his pride and discipline will not allow him to fail. By checking on your subordinates, you also can gauge if your orders are being followed, which is key to mission accomplishment. An organization's success and failures can be gauged easily by how proactive leaders check on their subordinates.

**Thermostat or thermometer?** This was also taken from another command sergeant major kit bag — this time from CSM Marvin L. Hill. Think about the difference between a thermostat and a thermometer. How can a Soldier be either, and which one is most important to be? If someone is a thermometer, they can tell the temperature of an organization and maybe even tell you what is causing the temperature to rise or fall, but that's all. The thermometer cannot change or influence the unit's temperature.

It takes someone special to be a thermostat. First, a thermostat must know the temperature of a unit just like the thermometer. Once the temperature is established, the thermostat can influence the temperature. The thermostat can change the temperature using attitude, character and influence. If the unit is cold, the thermostat can turn up the heat. If the temperature is hot, the thermostat can cool things down. The thermostat always knows the "pulse" of the unit and can influence it accordingly. The key is the thermostat possesses integrity, a positive attitude, strong character, and is a positive influence.

**Predictability.** If there is something Soldiers want more than money and time off, it is predictability. Leaders must provide predictability now more than ever with the War on Terrorism's deployments. This must be established and enforced from the division commander down to the squad leader.

In the 3rd Infantry Division, we provided predictability by ensuring Soldiers received a copy of the next week's training schedule every Thursday. They could take it home and share with their families. The training day ended on Thursdays at 3 p.m. During battery command time, our commander's policy was no training past 5 p.m. unless approved 48 hours prior. This policy allowed a Soldier to tell his family beforehand when he was scheduled to work late. This was the exception, not the norm.

Other ways that leaders can ensure predictability is having effective battalion- and company-level training meetings. These meetings cover as far out as 12 weeks and allow for the timely acquisition of resources. Once a training schedule is approved, it is not changed. The battalion commander was the approval authority for any changes

1LT John Avery, left, and SSG Albert Trujillo conduct a shift-change brief at entry control point training at Fort Hood, Texas, May 8. (Photo by SSG Liesl Marelli, U.S. Army)

PFC Ryan Saunders, targeting specialist, SSG Joshua Salem, brigade targeting NCO, and MAJ Jason Yanda, brigade fire support officer, all with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, oversee the brigade's live-fire training exercise at Fort Bragg, N.C., June 9 to 11. (Photo by SPC Michael J. MacLeod, U.S. Army)

made to an approved and published training schedule. The bottom line is leaders had to make a conscious effort not to change training once it was published. This put more strain and emphasis on the planning cycle, ensuring a Soldier's time was not wasted and established predictability.

**Let your actions and speech be filled with grace.** It amazes me how many leaders and Soldiers in today's Army think every sentence they speak has to have a curse word in it. As a lieutenant going through Ranger School, I remember when the brigade commander gave us his introduction speech. He said that if a leader has to curse, he is not educated enough to lead his Soldiers.

Your speech and actions will say a lot about you and how you treat others. It will influence how others respond to you and how they will perform for you. Some leaders think if you don't get loud and mad when someone fails in a tasking that you are soft and won't be able to influence your Soldiers in the future. *Field Manual 6-22 Army Leadership* Appendix A states that a leader can create a positive environment by showing "others how to accomplish tasks while remaining respectful, resolute and focused." If you lose control and everyone is fearful to talk to you, how effective do you think you will be in leading them? Will they accomplish the tasks assigned to them? Yes, if they are disciplined Soldiers, but you won't earn their respect.

Wisdom and knowledge come from experience and learning to listen to others before you respond. If you are always screaming, losing control and cursing at your Soldiers, you won't have room to learn from them and hear what they have to say. The climate in your unit will not be productive. Check yourself next time someone tells you something contradictory to what you wanted to hear and see if you react with malice or with grace. Remember your words can be weapons of destruction or tools of construction.

**Character and attitude drive influence.** How do you react when your boss rants and raves, responding in a negative way to everything you say? Now, reverse that. What is the atmosphere in a unit where the attitude of its leaders is open, positive and nurturing? You choose how your attitude will be each day and how you react to outside influences. If you are a leader, your attitude will affect your subordinates around you and also will affect the performance level of your unit and or staff.

COL (Retired) Colin Willis once told me my unit would take on my attitude within the first 90 days of assuming command. Good or bad, my attitude would be their attitude. So, I had to choose wisely what my attitude would be each day.

Your character is tied directly to your integrity, and your integrity must be impeccable. Leaders have no room for violations of character or integrity in any way. When I think of character, I think of the words spoken by GEN George C. Marshal in 1941. He said, "When you are commanding, leading [Soldiers] under conditions where physical exhaustion and privation must be ignored; where the lives of [Soldiers] may be sacrificed, then, the efficiency of your leadership will depend only to a minor degree on your tactical or technical ability. It will primarily be determined by your character."

Your character and attitude will drive the amount and type of influence you have on your subordinates. If you choose to have a poor character and attitude toward your Soldiers, your influence over them will be minimal to none. Choose wisely what path you take. Be a leader of impeccable character, positive attitude, and your influence will be a combat multiplier.

**Look for the gold, not the dirt.** I first heard this saying reading the book *Maxwell 3-in-1 Special Edition (The Winning Attitude/Developing the Leaders Around You/Becoming a Person of Influence)* by John Maxwell. Too many times leaders look for what Soldiers do wrong instead of what they do right. Positive things do happen regardless of the situation. It takes a true leader to see every situation in a positive way. Looking for the gold can bring out lessons learned in the worst of circumstances, and the unit can improve from those discoveries.

Leaders who are negative and hold grudges don't have the maturity to see past shortcomings and motivate their Soldiers to improve. COL (Retired) Mark Blum asked me, "What are you going to do with the hand that you are dealt." At the time, he was referring to how we, as commanders, were going to train our units even though we were at 50 percent strength. In that type of situation, you have to look for the gold to get something positive out of very little.

As I look back at my years of service, I am very fortunate to have had great NCOs who took the time to teach me about leadership because they wanted their officer to succeed. Whether it was my Dad, platoon sergeant, first sergeant or command sergeant major, the backbone of the Army has been a great influence in my career. I challenge you — whatever stage of your career you are in — take time to put pen to paper and write down the principles you feel mold your outlook on leadership. Once you do, be true to your words and share them with the future leaders of our country. ▪

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# Knowledge: force multiplier, life enhancer


By SFC Arthur V. Jones, ADA

In today's Army, there has been a new surge in the initiative of education. Soldiers need to be smarter and more skilled on a constantly changing battlefield. The way Soldiers train, learn and ultimately react on the battlefield has evolved.

The Army's recent education initiative gives Soldiers the skills they need to survive in hostile environments. In addition, Soldiers have numerous opportunities to better themselves through military and civilian education, better preparing for the future.

**NCOES restructuring.** 2009 is "The Year of the NCO." Appropriately enough, the NCO Education System is integrating various changes to its curriculum. We see these changes taking place in the various schools of the NCO Education System.

The Primary Leadership Development Course has evolved into the Warrior Leader Course. Soldiers who attend the Warrior Leader Course receive classroom instruction and a hands-on evaluation of their demonstrated and potential leadership. Many installations have reduced the course length to 15 days to accommodate units that are deploying. Soldiers receive evaluations in both garrison and tactical environments at the squad and team leader levels.

The Basic NCO Course and the Advanced NCO Course also underwent various changes. In the past, the Basic NCO Course focused its leadership evaluations on the squad level, and the Advanced NCO Course concentrated on a platoon sergeant's duties.

Now, numerous NCOs are serving in positions of greater responsibility, well above their pay grade and rank. The Basic NCO Course has transitioned to the Advanced Leadership Course. The Advanced NCO Course has changed to Senior Leadership Course.

**TOP: A drill sergeant shows a Soldier his shot grouping at a zeroing range.** (*Fires* Archive) **BOTTOM: A U.S. Soldier talks an Afghan National Army soldier through zeroing target efforts during basic rifle marksmanship training, Feb. 11.** (Photo by TSgt. Jill LaVoie, U.S. Air Force)

The length of the Advanced Leadership and Senior Leadership Courses vary according to the career management fields. The Advanced Leadership Course now focuses on squad and platoon leadership, and the Senior Leadership Course includes first sergeant tasks. Although the First Sergeant Course is taught at the Sergeants Major Academy and via distance learning, Senior Leadership Course students will be introduced to some of the most critical first sergeant tasks. Based on a Fort Sill, Okla., Fires Center of Excellence NCO Academy initiative, all Senior Leadership Course small group instructors attend the First Sergeant Course to learn, and thereby teach the material, giving them greater credibility to their students.

**Outcome based training and education.** How Soldiers are trained also is changing. Until recently, it was thought that training the Soldier through vast repetition was the absolute best way to train. Soldiers were given the task, condition and standard. If one could not achieve the standard, the individual retrained until the given standard was met. Through constant repetition, Soldiers "learned" how to accomplish the task and got a "go" for the training.

This methodology worked well enough in static conditions, but what happens when the conditions change? Just because Soldiers repeated a task did not necessarily mean that they understood the "why" aspect of it.

"Knowing is not enough, we must apply," said Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, a German novelist and playwright. This quote perfectly describes the goals of Outcome Based Training and Education. The new methodology is to create a Soldier who is proficient in a task, but also can rapidly adapt to a changing situation.

This methodology focuses on the fundamentals through repetition and challenges the Soldier to use critical thinking skills when the situation changes. Soldiers are allowed to make mistakes and go back and look at why they made them, giving them a greater understanding of the task. This gives the Soldier greater flexibility to react to any scenario and allows the Soldier to develop the critical skill of being able to think under stress and during a changing environment.

The Army's Asymmetric Warfare Group instructs the Combat Application Training Course in an effort to introduce Soldiers to the Outcome Based Training and Education methodology. In my experience, I honestly can say I was slightly wary of this new way of teaching. However, my opinion changed when I had the opportunity to attend the Combat Application Training Course.

This course is designed to fortify the fundamentals of rifle marksmanship in the Soldier's mind. It's five days long and focuses on tasks not taught during basic rifle marksmanship. However, the fundamentals are stressed continually during the training. Soldiers learn how to mount reflexive scopes and lasers and how to rig their rifles with combat ready slings.

Although the instructors give examples and recommendations of what works for them, it is up to the Soldier to find out what works best for him individually. Other nontraditional aspects of the Combat Application Training Course include teaching method of angle and multiple zeros at different distances. At the end of the training, most Soldiers have a greater confidence in their ability to fire their weapons.

The instructor's role is also significantly different as he no longer gives the student the correct answer, but guides his thoughts to stimulate the thinking process. Because the Soldier understands the fundamentals, he can master the skill set. The Soldier, in effect, becomes confident and accountable for his own training.

This new teaching methodology is taking many forms in many classrooms, to include classes at the Fires Center of Excellence NCO Academy. For example, the Virtual Experience Immersive Learning Simulations give Soldiers a chance to role play various characters in leadership positions. During these simulations, the Soldier experiences different scenarios, requiring the Soldier to make decisions as he progresses through the program. After the Soldier makes a decision, the program provides feedback, and he has a chance to repeat each scenario.

According to WILL Interactive, the company behind the simulator, Virtual Experience Immersive Learning Simulations "replaces the passive 'teach by telling'" approach with an active "learn by doing" model based on how people naturally internalize information and make behavior choices. At the end of the training, the instructors can discuss with the students why and how decisions were made to enhance the overall learning process further.

**Civilian educational opportunities.** The Army is also making it easier for Soldiers to attend college courses to earn a degree through information at its GoArmyEd Web site. According to GoArmyEd.com, "All active duty Soldiers (officers, warrant officers, enlisted) are authorized to participate in the [tuition assistance] program through the GoArmyEd portal (subject to qualifying criteria). This includes members of the Army National Guard, as well as U.S. Army Reserves component Soldiers who are activated under U.S. Code Title 10 or Title 32." Once registered, Soldiers have various options to earn a degree while still serving.

Through the program, Soldiers receive $4,500 annually for tuition assistance to attend institutes of higher learning, either actively in the classroom or online through the Internet. This annual stipend covers most, if not all costs incurred by the Soldier, and he pays minimal money out-of-pocket. The money works like a grant, and the only caveat is a Soldier must earn passing grades. In many instances, the chain of command can insist the tuition assistance money be paid back if the Soldier fails to complete their courses or earn passing grades. However, if the Soldier chooses to use the tuition assistance program, their Montgomery G.I. Bill still remains in effect for when the Soldier separates from the service.

By using the tuition assistance program, in some instances, Soldiers can earn multiple degrees before they reach retirement. Earning a degree gives the Soldier a competitive edge for promotion and almost guarantees a higher salary when the Soldier leaves active duty.

The training the Army provides its Soldiers always has been top notch as demonstrated in past and present conflicts. Education and training coupled with new technologies make our Army the greatest in the world. As a constantly evolving and ever-changing Army, Soldiers need adaptive training to survive in today's unpredictable operational environment. Training always has been one of an NCO's paramount responsibilities. As NCOs we owe our Soldiers the absolute best training; this translates to success on the battlefield and success in life. ▪

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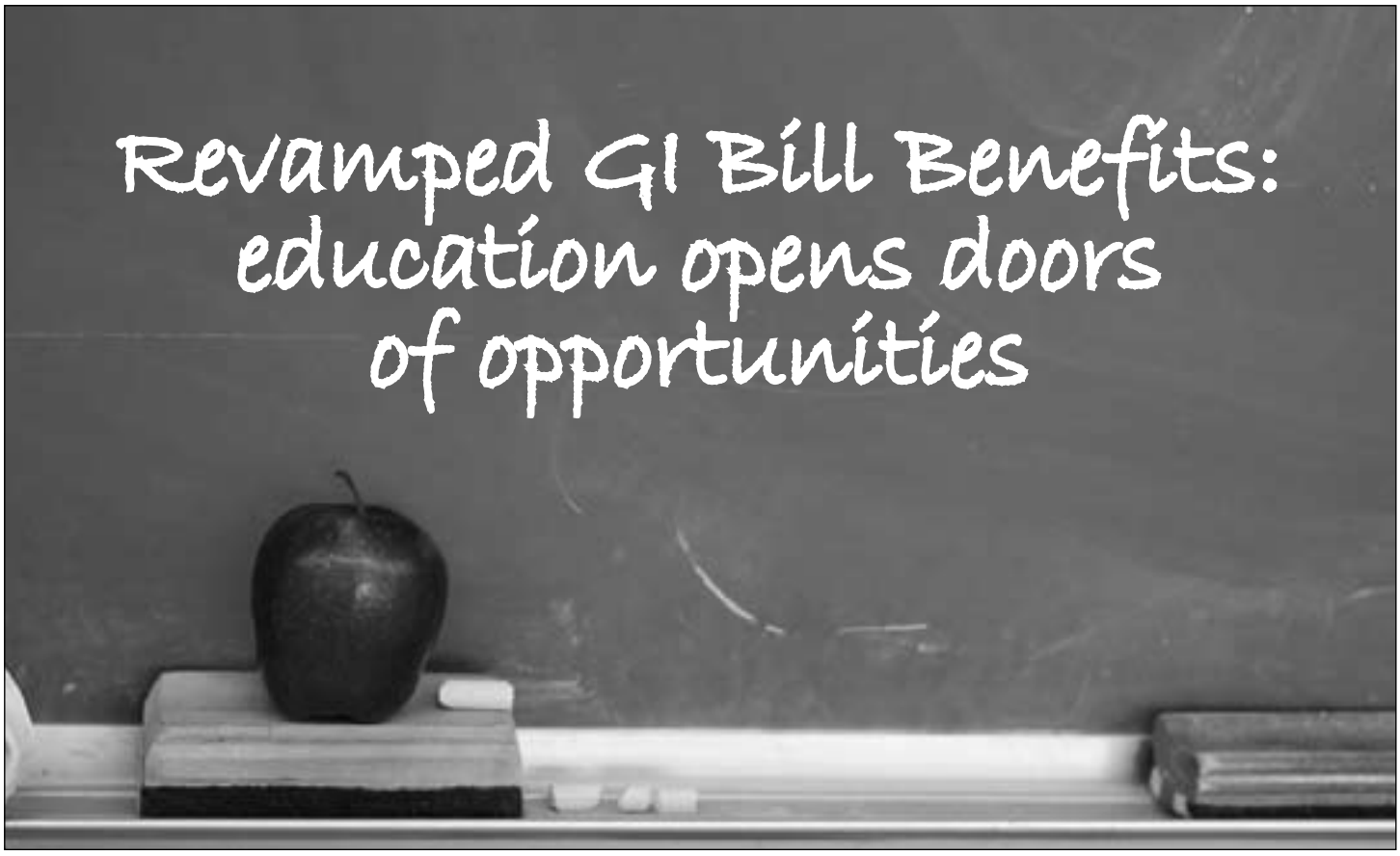
# Revamped GI Bill Benefits: education opens doors of opportunities



By CPL Eric J. Schuckmann, ADA

The largest overhaul in decades to veterans' education benefits took effect August 1. The Post-9/11 GI Bill, also known as Chapter 33 benefits, offers eligible servicemembers, their families and veterans new opportunities to pursue continuing education. As the program's name implies, it is designed for veterans of the War on Terrorism.

Veterans who served on or after September 11, 2001, are eligible for varying percentages of compensation for their education at a college or university. That is an important change from previous GI Bills that paid for undergraduate college, graduate school, certificate programs, on-the-job training, apprenticeship training, flight training and non-collegiate degree courses. See the figure for additional differences between the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the Montgomery GI Bill.

Many individuals are eligible for both education programs, but must choose either to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill or stay with the original GI Bill program. The decision to switch is irrevocable.

**Eligibility.** Servicemembers must serve at least 90 days on active duty to qualify for percentages of compensation. See **www.gibill.va.gov** for qualifying percentages. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, servicemembers who receive the maximum benefit are eligible for payment of their tuition, fees, housing allowance, and a yearly books and supplies stipend.

Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the cost of tuition and fees cannot exceed the most expensive in-state undergraduate tuition at a public institution of higher learning in the state that the student attends. A monthly housing allowance also is authorized that is equal to the basic housing allowance normally given to an E-5 with dependents in the same zip code as the school. Students who exclusively attend classes via an online university are not eligible for the housing allowance. Also, active duty Soldiers or students who take a half load of courses or less are ineligible for the housing allowance. An annual tuition and supplies stipend of up to $1,000 is authorized.

**How it works**. The Department of Veterans Affairs will pay each student directly for each quarter, semester or term that he is enrolled — generally up to 36 months of full-time study, which is closely associated with a four-year undergraduate degree on a nine-month academic year. Not everyone is eligible for the same amount of reimbursement; the Post-9/11 GI Bill reflects time served.

**The Yellow Ribbon Program.** Through this extension program of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, it is possible to attend a school that exceeds the maximum in-state undergraduate tuition. If eligible, the cost of tuition can be shared by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the college or institution of choice. Most schools that participate in the program will pay up to 50 percent of tuition on behalf of the student, while the rest is paid for through VA. However, colleges can limit the number of Yellow Ribbon Program students, so it pays to research which schools participate and apply for the program as soon as possible to get a huge break on tuition costs. A list of Yellow Ribbon Program schools is available at **www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/CH33/YRP/YRP_List.htm**.

Veterans must meet one of the following three requirements to qualify for the Yellow Ribbon Program. Servicemembers must have served an aggregate period of active duty after September 10, 2001 of at least 36 months. Veterans must be honorably discharged from active duty for a service-connected disability and served 30 continuous days after September 10, 2001. In addition, an individual can apply for the Yellow Ribbon Program if he or she is dependent-eligible for transfer of entitlement under the Post-9/11 GI Bill — if the veteran meets the above standards.

**Family Members.** Details of the Post-9/11 GI Bill are still emerging. Less than two months before the program's kick-off, the Department of Defense released new information. Now, career servicemembers on active duty or in the selected reserve on August 1, 2009, and who are eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill may be entitled to transfer all or a portion of their education entitlement to one or more family members. Servicemembers must have served in the armed forces for at least six years and agree to serve four additional years from the date of election to transfer.

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

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

Temporary rules have been developed for servicemembers eligible to retire between August 1, 2009 and August 1, 2012. Depending on their retirement eligibility date, these servicemembers will have to commit to one to three additional years from the date of election to transfer. Eligible servicemembers may make transfer designations by visiting **https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/TEB**.

| Type of training | Post-9/11 GI Bill | Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty |
|---|---|---|
| Institute of higher learning in residence | Yes | Yes |
| Institute of higher learning online only and distance/Internet training | Yes | Yes |
| On the job training and apprenticeship training | No | Yes |
| Flight training | No | Yes |
| Correspondence | No | Yes |
| Licensing and certification | Yes | Yes |
| National testing programs | No | Yes |
| Entrepreneurship training | No | Yes |
| Accelerated payment | No | Yes |
| Co-op training | No | Yes |
| Work-study program | Yes | Yes |
| Tuition assistance top up | Yes | Yes |

Differences between the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the Montgomery GI Bill

**Important considerations.** The Post-9/11 GI Bill isn't for everyone. The Department of Veterans Affairs offers five education programs: Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33); Montgomery GI-Bill Active Duty (Chapter 30); Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606); Reserve Education Assistance Program (Chapter 1607); and the Veterans Education Assistance Program.

First, let's examine first monetary differences between the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the Montgomery GI Bill. It is possible to make or lose money on either of the programs. The Post-9/11 GI Bill pays tuition and fees directly to the school. However because a school's tuition and fees may vary, a servicemember still may need to make up the difference out of pocket if benefits do not cover all the costs.

On the other hand, the Montgomery GI Bill pays active duty Soldiers who have served at least years $1,321 per month if they carry a full course load. Active duty soldiers with less than three years of service receive $1,073 per month. Reservists are eligible for $329 per month under their version of the Montgomery GI Bill. The Reserve Education Assistance Program pays $1,056.90 to a student with at least two years of consecutive active duty service; $792.60 to an individual with at least one year, but less than two years of consecutive active duty service; and $528.40 to an individual with at least 90 days of consecutive active duty service, but less than one year of continuous active duty service. If the student chooses to take less than a full load of courses, the benefit amounts are prorated.

Visit **www.gibill.va.gov** to apply for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Another caveat is a student must "pass" and complete all his courses to continue to receive benefits. If a student fails a course, in some cases, the student can be required to pay those benefits back.

**Spend education money wisely.** It is beneficial to do your homework to decide what type of education to pursue. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, network systems and data communications analysts, personal and homecare aides, home health aides, computer software engineers and veterinary technologists and technicians will see the greatest increase in demand by 2016.

Demand for network systems and data communications analysts, and personal and homecare aides is forecasted to grow by more than 50 percent by 2016. However, not all of these jobs require a formal college education. Personal, homecare and home health aides do not require an associate or bachelor's degree.

On the other hand, the manufacturing industry is forecasted to experience significant job loss by the same time. Specifically, manufacturing makes up 19 of 21 occupations that are expected to lose anywhere between three and 8.4 percent of its jobs annually between 2006 and 2016.

**A formal education can open doors.** It isn't mandatory to get a college degree, but it sure can open doors. By not getting a college degree, Soldiers who have paid into the Montgomery GI Bill are throwing away more than $37,000 and the potential to make three times more money than those with only a high school diploma after getting out of the Army.

Almost 75 percent of civilian jobs require a post-secondary education degree. So by not getting a degree, you are relegating yourself to the bottom of the barrel. For a few, military experience alone can translate into a great paying job. But it's Soldiers who take the time to get a higher education who stand out.

According to a survey conducted last year by *CNNMoney.com*, "Education Pays," a large earnings gap exists between high school and college graduates. For example, recent statistics state women 25 to 34 years old with bachelor's degrees earned 70 percent more than those with only high school diplomas — up from 47 percent in 1985. For men, that gap was 63 percent — up from 37 percent in 1985. Also, full-time workers 25 to 34 years old with college degrees make an average of $14,000 a year more than those with only high school diplomas.

So, experience plus education is a decisive advantage when it comes to beating out the competition. You can get a job, but is it going to be the best job possible with the best pay? It can be tough to be a Soldier in school, balancing commitments like deployments and families. But it can be worth the effort to get an education when the job opportunities after the Army don't necessarily mean working as a security guard at the mall.

**Tuition assistance — use it or lose it.** Not enough Soldiers take advantage of 100 percent tuition assistance even though more than 20 percent of recruits plan on attending college, according to 2008 U.S. Army demographics.

Tuition assistance is available for all active duty Soldiers and pays 100 percent of fees and tuition with a ceiling of $4,500 per year. It's free money you can invest in your future, and it doesn't tap into your GI Bill benefits, no matter which version you choose. It's important to note Soldiers who do use tuition assistance must make progress toward their degrees and must repay the money if they fail or withdraw from classes.

Not sure what kind of degree to pursue? It's always a good idea to get started on prerequisites early by taking advantage of the 100 percent tuition assistance. That way classes like English 101 or Math 101 would be out of the way.

Most Soldiers use the excuse of not having enough time, but, for example, how much time do you spend playing X-Box? How much time do you spend watching TV? Not enough time during a deployment? There's always downtime during a deployment, so basically you just have to decide to invest in your future. You can choose to take a college class or play a videogame, but the important question is which choice is going to pay off in the future? If a Soldier commits just one hour, three days a week to a college class, that's one step toward earning a degree. Also many colleges offer online courses and will work with Soldiers despite poor Internet connections during deployments.

Other Soldiers say it takes away from family time when they aren't deployed. But it's a trade off. It's a little inconvenient or even painful now, but it will definitely pay off when you are making more money as a civilian because of your degree and your family isn't strapped for cash.

Soldiers don't always have to start from scratch when earning a degree. A lot of times college credit can be given for military experience or schools. All those military courses really can add up. Some Soldiers find they can get an associate degree that way.

Education is important; it's definitely your passport to opportunities. More jobs, especially the better-paying ones, require analysis, thinking, interpretation and communication. And for most, acquiring these skills requires more education. So don't let opportunity pass you by, especially if it's yours for the taking. ▪

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## History of the GI Bill

The idea of offering veterans an opportunity to pursue an education isn't new. However, it hasn't been without controversy. Congress passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944. The legislation, which President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law June 22, 1944, attempted to protect World War II veterans. The law wasn't spontaneous or without merit. Lawmakers wanted to avoid the criticism they received following World War I when, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans received little more than $60 and a train ride home.

**World War II.** Despite the backlash from the treatment of World War I veterans, not everyone was sold on the idea of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, also known as the GI Bill of Rights.

The bill almost didn't make it to President Roosevelt's desk for signature into law. Lawmakers in the House of Representatives and the Senate agreed on education and home loan benefits, but the two couldn't put their differences aside regarding unemployment benefits. Interestingly enough, fewer than 20 percent of veterans took advantage of unemployment benefits — the law's most debated issue.

The same was not true for the law's education and home loans programs. The GI Bill made higher education a reality for millions of people. Veterans flooded college admissions instead of the workforce; 49 percent applied for education benefits. They were almost the majority of college applications in 1947. Nearly half of 16 million American World War II veterans attended college by the end of the original GI Bill in 1956.

**Post Vietnam.** It took 28 years for a revamped GI Bill, which bears former Mississippi Congressman Gillespie V. "Sonny" Montgomery's name. Montgomery served as the Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs in 1981.

In his self-entitled 1993 autobiography, *Sonny Montgomery: The Veteran's Champion* — jointly authored by Michael B. Ballard, a military historian, and Craig S. Pipper — Montgomery describes the three reasons that motivated overhauling the GI Bill. First, he wanted to offer veterans new opportunities to readjust to civilian life. He didn't believe the post-Vietnam Veteran's Assistance Program was working because few veterans took advantage of the program. Second, Montgomery wanted to give the entire volunteer military the best opportunity to recruit and retain qualified servicemembers. Third, Montgomery believed education was the avenue to accomplish his previously mentioned goals.

Like the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, Montgomery's GI Bill experienced criticism. Congressional lawmakers were skeptical of the program for an all-volunteer force. Specifically, the House Armed Services Committee wanted to know how the renovated GI Bill would be funded. President Ronald Reagan's substantial defense budget increase later calmed lawmakers' fears about the program's price tag (Montgomery, 71).

However, Montgomery's GI Bill didn't become a reality overnight. It took several more years for the bill, the Educational Assistance Program of 1984, to make its way through Congress. Reagan signed the bill into law in 1984 as a three-year pilot program (Montgomery, 77). The Educational Assistance Program almost didn't see the end of its pilot program because of Reagan's proposed budget cuts in fiscal year 1987. Never the less, the Educational Assistance Program survived (Montgomery, 78).

Illinois Congressman Lane Evans amended the Educational Assistance Program to rename the program after Montgomery, reflecting Montgomery's dedication to the GI Bill. ▪

# Coalition-ANA Partnering: Lessons learned from a field-expedient artillery school

By MAJ Kevin K. Parker, IN, SFC Coyt D. Palmer, MSG David C. Rogers, SSG Jamie A. McIntyre and CSM Robert R. Lehtonen, all FA

Units deploying to Afghanistan and Iraq often partner with host nation security forces. In Afghanistan, 4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery — part of an infantry brigade combat team — recently partnered with and trained artillerymen from the Afghan National Army. The commander's intent was to develop a partnership between his battalion, the Afghan National Army field artillery unit and a French operational mentor liaison team. Howitzer sections, fire direction centers, forward observers and the leadership teams could train, certify and qualify the howitzer crews on both the M119A2 105-mm howitzer — common to U.S. field artillery units in support of light infantry — and the Soviet era D30 122-mm howitzers used by the Afghan National Army. It was critical that the leadership teams of all three partners — including officers and master gunners — work toward developing the Afghan National Army field artillery's skills to provide indirect fires in combat.

The 4-25 FA's preliminary evaluation of the Afghan National Army unit before deployment, later confirmed in theater, suggested a formal training program was required to develop joint operational capabilities. The command sergeants major and master gunners determined the best way to develop these skills would be through creating a field artillery school. Coordinating with the senior battalion NCOs and the French operational mentor liaison teams, the NCOs developed clever strategies to deal with manpower shortages, language barriers and the challenges of training the Afghan soldiers on Soviet-era equipment and fire support techniques.

The foreign internal defense mission also was well within the battalion NCO's competencies. The NCOs organized a field artillery school to train Afghan officers as forward observers in one instruction block, as fire direction officers in another, and to train gun crews from the ranks of the Afghan enlisted and NCOs. Each skill set was organized as a separate school, headed by NCOs — with the battalion command sergeant major as the NCO in charge of the school.

This article offers an examination of the phases of the partnering operation and a case study on the forward observer course taught by the battalion. It details how the subject matter was developed and tailored to the Afghan National Army, how the battalion prepared for the mission and lessons learned from the first graduating class. Similar lessons hold for the courses on fire direction and gun crews.

**Planning the partnership.** The battalion developed a multiphase process to work toward the goal of combined arms operations with the Afghan National Army. These phases were train the trainer and planning in the continental U.S. and in theater, the introduction and partnership in theater, equipment and familiarization in theater, supply and maintainer in theater, field artillery Tables I to VI in theater, section certification and qualification Tables VII and VIII in theater, live-fire exercise in theater, graduation in theater, and combined arms operations in combat in theater.

*Phase 1: Train the trainer and planning in the continental U.S. and theater.* Phase 1 occurs throughout the deployment. During this phase, trainers were validated and the curriculum was checked throughout the training process. This phase also included cultural awareness training and the development of contacts list with the Afghan National Army and operational mentor liaison team and a roster of the partnered Afghan unit. Before the command sergeant major and master gunners validated the field artillery school trainers, each trainer rehearsed training blocks, rehearsed instruction with interpreters and trained selected interpreters on these fire support tasks.

M119s and D30 howitzers were collocated on the battalion's forward operating base to increase training efficiency. By having these howitzers collocated, gun crews assigned to the hot guns could help train the Afghan gun crews.

Finally, a records system was developed to track the training of the Afghan soldiers and crews. This is important as it provided an additional opportunity to train the Afghan unit chain of command on the importance of maintaining training records and using them to assess unit status and proficiency. From our vantage, this records system made it easy to assess the Afghan National Army and report the students' status to the various agencies and commands responsible for tracking the Afghan national security forces' capabilities.

*Phase 2: Introduction and partnership in theater.* During this phase, assigned batteries and platoons met with their partnered Afghan units for team-building exercises, such as volleyball games, which are very popular in Afghanistan. It is highly recommended that U.S. units partnering with Afghan National Army or Afghan National Police units bring volleyball equipment for team building. Other team-building, mission focused activities include joint foot patrols in villages or urban areas.

Introductions to training partners and the exchange of job descriptions are important, as well as the development of working relationships between leaders. It may be necessary to educate the partnered Afghan unit and foreign operational mentor liaison team units on the U.S. Army officer-NCO partnership. This can be incorporated into blocks of instruction on troop-leading procedures and the development of the training plan between key leaders in all partnered units. The end state of this phase was the emerging relationships with Afghan peers that will continue to be built during the deployment and the deliverables include the training plan and agreement on tangible training goals.

*Phase 3: Equipment and familiarization in theater.* This phase includes a layout of all howitzers, fire direction and forward observer equipment of both the Afghan and U.S. crews. The layout, in every configuration, included all basic issue items and included a walkthrough and orientation on the equipment, its use, troubleshooting and demonstrations of crew drills.

The fire direction center conducted all operations using manual gunnery with charts, graphical firing tables and graphical site tables specific to the M119 and tabular firing tables. This exercise was particularly important because it allowed the Afghan soldiers to inspect the equipment and watch their U.S. partners in action and to visualize the goals they would work toward in the coming week. The end state of this phase was that U.S. personnel were familiar with Afghan-issued Russian equipment, and Afghan personnel were familiar with U.S. equipment and crew drills.

*Phase 4: Supply and maintenance in theater.* During this phase the U.S. and Afghan personnel each learn to perform preventive maintenance checks and services on their own and their partner's equipment and demonstrate a working knowledge of using maintenance records. This phase continues throughout the relationship with the Afghan National Army. Helping the Afghans develop an inventory and hand receipt system can be challenging because of the low literacy rates amongst their soldiers. With the continued logistical challenges facing the Afghan National Army, supply problems and accountability are an important focus of the mentoring and training relationship. The evolution of the Afghans' battlefield operating systems continues to be the biggest challenge faced by its partner coalition units.

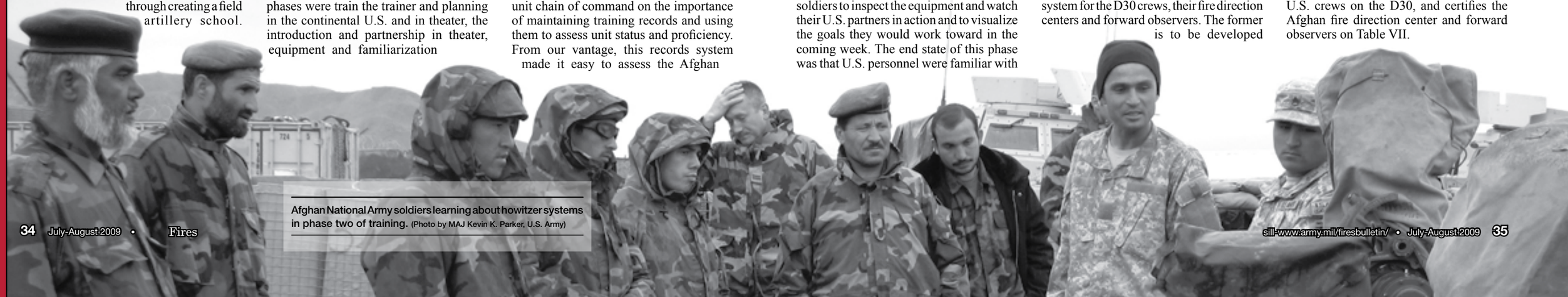
Another challenge was teaching the Afghans to conduct basic level maintenance tasks on daily, weekly and monthly schedules and teaching them the duties traditionally assigned to the Military Occupational Specialty 45B Artillery Mechanic. This is, again, an opportunity to teach the Afghans about the NCO Corps and its role in ensuring maintenance. The 4-25 FA taught Afghan National Army section chiefs to oversee preventive maintenance checks and services and record keeping, such as the use of Department of the Army Form 4513 Record of Missions Fired as a means of tracking howitzer use. Platoon leadership was taught to maintain records with the DA Form 2408-4 Weapon Record Data. Again, these training efforts were complicated by the literacy levels and the ability to get these forms translated into either Dari or Pashto.

*Phase 5: Field Artillery Tables I to VI in theater.* This phase requires Afghan soldiers to be trained and tested on Tables I through IV and development of a similar table system for the D30 crews, their fire direction centers and forward observers. The former is to be developed during U.S. familiarization with the D30 weapons system and is the responsibility of the battalion master gunner. This phase begins with U.S., Afghan National Army forces and French operational mentor liaison teams training together on U.S. firing tables. Although the tables often needed to be adapted with respect to the mission constraints, the training included the Artillery Skills Proficiency Test, including the gunner's test and the awarding of qualification badges; Table I: Individual and Leader Tasks; Table II: Air Assault Rigging (M119 and D30); Table III: Machine Gun Training/Qualification; Table IV: Direct Fire Procedures; Table V: Occupations (Day and Night); and Table VI: Air Assault Raids and Operations.

The focus on air assault rigging, raids and operations is important, as the Afghan National Army Air Corp fields rotary wing aircraft and prepares to initiate air mobile operations during the battalion's current tour. The lack of Afghan fixed- and rotary-wing close air support suggests that the Afghans will be heavily reliant on their indirect fires, and the training emphasis reflected that priority.

*Phase 6: Section Certification and Qualification Tables VII and VIII in theater.* In this phase, Afghan soldiers train for and conduct a section certification (a culmination of all tables) to the battalion standard on both the D30 and M119 howitzers. The certification is evaluated jointly by U.S. and Afghan master gunners. Likewise, the U.S. Soldiers complete section certification on the D30s in accordance with the D30 section certification standards and are evaluated jointly by U.S. and Afghan master gunners.

After dry-fire certifications, both the Afghan and U.S. crews conduct Live-Fire Table VIII qualification with fire direction center and forward observers working together to complete Table VII. This phase certifies Afghan soldiers on both the D30 and M119 howitzers, certifies U.S. crews on the D30, and certifies the Afghan fire direction center and forward observers on Table VII.



Afghan National Army soldiers learning about howitzer systems in phase two of training. (Photo by MAJ Kevin K. Parker, U.S. Army)

*Phase 7: Live fire exercises in theater.* This phase is a series of one day events culminating in a live-fire exercise during which the Afghans fire all applicable missions. This phase is unique because the Afghan National Army must develop their own fire plans, complete four hours of live firing with the fire direction centers and forward observers observing and adjusting fires. This is challenging because the Afghan field artillery primarily is trained to engage known targets, thus the communication between the forward observer and fire direction center during adjust fire missions represents a formidable test of the training effectiveness. The missions were designed to be realistic to the training area and include walking shoots. It requires the Afghans to do battle tracking and to do so with methods that have been evolved by the U.S. and operational mentor liaison team cadre.

*Phase 8: Graduation in theater.* The forward observer pipeline cycles several times compared to a single cycle of the gunners and fire direction center classes. The latter are designed to take the entire year to reach Phase 9, in part because of the reduced training time of the Afghan gun crews. Graduation is designed to be a festive affair with advertisements, including invitations to the media, U.S. and Afghan higher headquarters, local officials and all soldiers on the forward operating base. Digitally crafted certificates and coins are awarded to the graduates and trainers, and support personnel are recognized with awards. Our ceremony was conducted on the gun line to facilitate photograph opportunities, and the ceremony concluded with a dinner party with U.S. and Afghan cuisine.

The 4-25 FA developed special awards to recognize the Afghan soldiers' achievements. Awards included a special partnership patch based on the partnership emblem. A U.S./Afghan flag pin and U.S. gunner's badges were developed to reward Afghan soldiers with uncommon proficiency. Afghans generally enjoy receiving certificates with emblems and stamps on them. These rewards were the source of pride among the rewarded soldiers, inspiring competition among the Afghan soldiers to be recognized for their skills.

After-action reviews were conducted and documented, and certification rosters were prepared for future replacement in position and transfer of authority. Records were compiled for the battalion historian. The end state was achieved, the training goals were met and public recognition of the Afghan accomplishments was well supported by attendance at the graduation and supporting information operations.

*Phase 9: Combined arms operations in combat in theater.* Ongoing joint operations following Phase 8 constitute Phase 9 to validate the partnership program further and enhance Afghans' combat capabilities. The desired end state for the partnership during 4-25 FA's deployment was a D30 Air Assault Operation with the Afghan National Army slingloading their howitzers to a forward area in support of combat operations. The visibility to the highest echelons of the Afghan National Army is important to this operation to inspire confidence in their organic capabilities and to demonstrate the effectiveness of the partnership.

These phases were not without their challenges. The D30 howitzers the Afghans have often are old with cracks, pits and an assumed operating risk. The ammunition is old. The propellant is old and smells odd; the physical integrity of its packaging is subject to mechanical failure. There are limited basic issue items for the howitzers and no trained maintainers or platoon sergeant. Equipment such as maps, calculators, protractors and tabular firing tables are also in short supply. The Afghan National Army is not trained to account for nonstandard conditions, assuming standard information without the help of metrological data, muzzle velocity variation or other data sets. Additionally, their fire direction center has only one person, so there are no redundant calculations of firing data for safety checks. These are just a few of the difficulties that have to be overcome during the partnering relationship — often requiring commanders to pick and choose what battles to fight to improve the Afghans' capabilities.

**Forward observer training class.** One excellent example of the three different schools is the forward observer training. The partnered Afghan unit was roughly competent with firing preplanned targets only with a level of subject matter expertise comparable to that required to complete Table I fires. With this assessment driving the curricula, the primary challenges to establish the schools were the availability of training materials in the Pashto and Dari languages and the use of Soviet-era artillery weapon systems.

Training materials, namely manuals and PowerPoint slides in Pashto and Dari, were found after a two-week search through historical data held by the combined joint task force fire support coordinator at Bagram Airbase. Many of these materials were developed and archived during a previous tour by the 82nd Airborne Division. This was the case for the forward observer course taught by a Military Occupational Specialty 13F Fire Support Specialist sergeant first class with help from two French operational mentor liaison team members assigned to the partnered Afghan unit. The rapid stand-up of the course (within 60 days of occupying the battlespace) was facilitated by the NCO's "train-the-trainer" approach to preparing the interpreter for the course. In this case, the NCO-in-charge took care in selecting a trilingual interpreter (Dari, Pashto and English) and in training him with materials and discussions a week before each topic. This made for efficient, effective classroom sessions and live fires.

Use of Soviet-era compasses and map reading conventions (NATO reads grids right and up; Russians read them up and right.) also represent hurdles to effective training of the Afghans, but having an experienced NCO-in-charge to review the materials and to gain proficiency on these standard operating procedures helped. Challenges included the availability of Russian 6000-mil compasses. The students — all of them company grade officers with a captain as the senior officer in the class — came from an Afghan battalion that had only one compass and one set of binoculars for the entire company. Additional materials, such as Russian protractors for map reading and tabular firing tables for the Russian D30 122-mm howitzer, also were required. We obtained them from the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan.

Training was broken down into three phases according to the 13F forward observer tasks, the 13F 100-series map reading tasks, the 13F 200-series forward observer tasks and the 13F 300-series tasks covering fire planning. Training included classroom instruction, practical exercises, simulator training with the Forward Observer Simulator from the Fires Knowledge Network for the adjustment of fires and live fire training. The U.S. NCO-in-charge, French operational mentor liaison team and a Category 1 local national interpreter directed and participated in all training events. All of these events were covered in a four to five week period and was facilitated by the prior knowledge and training of the Afghan officers. Forward observers in the Afghan National Army are drawn exclusively from the officer corps.

Unique challenges to working with the Afghans had to be addressed for the successful completion of the training. Because many of the officers came from units that were not collocated with the field artillery battalion, logistical concerns such as transportation, billeting and rations were the responsibility of the school cadre.

This differed from the gun crew and fire direction center training classes, which were composed of Afghan officers and soldiers whose unit was collocated with the battalion, requiring that their training be limited to three days a week so they could participate in missions and complete duties with their own unit. For the transient forward observer students, an Afghan National Army requirement for religious study was worked into the training schedule as two half days off per week — in addition to being off every Friday to celebrate the Muslim holy day.

Tribal demographics within the Afghan National Army were another concern. Tribal heterogeneity within the class led to the formation of social cliques that potentiated tension among the Afghan officers. Team-building exercises and assigned group study can be used to bridge the divide between different tribes. In this case, class members were dependent upon each other for group study.

Also, the class leader — who was selected based on ability rather than assignment — was a member of a minority tribe and spoke Pasto, Dari and English. He became the *de facto* spokesman for the students, facilitating communication among the Afghan officers.

Before moving to the forward operating base for the training, we learned from some students that other officers in the unit may have been excluded from consideration for attendance because of their tribal origin. Thus, it may benefit coalition units to send a delegation to the partnered Afghan unit to get a class roster, determine the tribal origin of the soldiers and ensure that training is offered uniformly.

This is important because many Afghans still harbor bitterness over previous factional conflicts. It has been expressed among the Afghan trainees in the form of bragging about one faction beating another or the number of deaths inflicted by one group on another. Instructors should be particularly sensitive to this kind of banter, work with the interpreter to suppress this behavior as soon as possible.

Cadre for the forward observer training generally was pleased with the professionalism and effort the Afghan officers put into the class. The small student-teacher ratio (nine to four, including the two French operational mentor liaison teams, the interpreter and the U.S. NCO-in-charge) contributed to the success by mitigating the tribal differences, facilitating camaraderie among the students, smoothing group training exercises and enabling more direct interaction between the cadre with the students.

During final live-fire exercises, Afghan officers conducted a variety of adjust and planned fire missions with U.S. gun crews manning M777 155-mm and M109 105-mm howitzers and Afghans manning the D30s. During this exercise, the students prepared terrain sketches, plotted known targets, spotted and adjusted fires with the U.S. gun crew via the class NCO-in-charge and interpreter. After the graduation ceremony, the class leader was allowed to stay on as cadre for the next class. This process of choosing the best student in the class as cadre ensures that a practiced, proficient pool of instructors will be created with the unit, and their technical competency and leadership is recognized by their fellow soldiers.

While appearing to be a new responsibility of the conventional U.S. Army, foreign internal defense is a mission that is particularly well suited to its NCO Corps. When the partnering relationship was identified in the battalion commander's intent as a priority, it ensured that the school — the brainchild of the senior NCOs in the battalion — would be resourced and supported properly by the staff and commander.

Years of experience as drill sergeants, schoolhouse instructors, deployments and training of U.S. units on newly fielded weapon systems and standing operating experience meant that each NCO was well prepared to conduct this mission. The resourcefulness of the NCOs in locating and preparing training materials also facilitated success on a short time scale.

These materials are now on the Fires Knowledge Network for all artillery units to access. The 4-25 FA NCOs acknowledge the stress incurred during the school's genesis in the early days of the deployment. Future units can prepare to succeed by using 4-25 FA's lessons learned, materials and curriculum to prepare at home station before deployment. To facilitate this effort, it is important that the instructional materials and relationships receive command recognition, priority and accommodation. The outgoing unit must educate the incoming unit leaders about the mission and help its Soldiers prepare. ▪

BACKGROUND: The field artillery partnership emblem was designed for letterheads, award certificates and graduation certificates as a result of the Afghan National Army training program. (Courtesy of MAJ Kevin K. Parker, U.S. Army)

**Major Kevin K. Parker, infantry, was assigned to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, as the Center for Army Lessons Learned Theater Observation Detachment during Operation Enduring Freedom IX. He is a member of Special Operations Detachment-Global, Rhode Island Army National Guard. He has a Ph.D. in Applied Physics from Vanderbilt University. In civilian life, he is the Thomas D. Cabot Associate Professor of Applied Science at Harvard University.**

**Sergeant First Class Coyt D. Palmer II, field artillery, is the forward observer master gunner of the 4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Battalion, deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. This is his second deployment to Afghanistan. He served as the effects NCO in the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry, Fort Drum, N.Y.; the Targeting NCO, 3rd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum; and as a field recruiter with the Oklahoma City Recruiting Battalion.**

**Master Sergeant David C. Rogers III, field artillery, is the master gunner of the 4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Battalion, deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. This is his third deployment to Afghanistan. He served as a platoon sergeant with E Battery 7th Field Artillery, Fort Drum; Observer-Controller/Trainer with the 2nd Brigade, 78th Division (Training Support), Fort Drum; and with 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, as a platoon sergeant and master gunner at Fort Campbell, Ky.**

**Staff Sergeant Jamie A. McIntyre, field artillery, is the digital master gunner of the 4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Battalion, deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. This is his third deployment to Afghanistan. He served as the fire control NCO for the 4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Battalion; fire control sergeant for A Battery, 4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Battalion; and as an advanced field artillery tactical data system specialist for 3rd Battalion, 6th Field Artillery.**

**Command Sergeant Major Robert R. Lehtonen, field artillery, is the battalion command sergeant major for 4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Battalion, deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. His previous duty assignments include every cannoneer duty position for both light towed artillery and heavy mechanized artillery. He has served as an NCO Education System instructor, drill sergeant, gunnery sergeant, platoon sergeant, chief of the firing Battery, first sergeant, brigade S2 NCO-in-charge, battalion operations sergeant major, and brigade operations sergeant major.**

# Improvise, Adapt, Overcome:
## small unit training

I deployed twice to Iraq with a Multiple-Launch Rocket System firing platoon with the 6th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery. In the Army we often hear, it's an NCO's role to ensure junior Soldiers can carry on with the mission in the absence of a leader.

It's because of this, as NCOs we have to go beyond making sure our Soldiers are tactically and technically proficient. We must not only bring all our experience to the table, but our essence as leaders. We must also integrate lessons learned from previous deployments into our current training scenarios. Because, when it comes right down to it and when you least expect it, fate can step in and take you out of the fight. So, are your Soldiers ready and able to complete the mission without you?

**Deployed with the U.S. Marine Corps.** My second deployment took me to Tikrit. It was there my unit conducted convoy security missions. My junior leaders already had first-hand experience with the mission given to us because of our prior deployment, and it showed. But, three months into our deployment, my platoon was tasked to move to Forward Operating Base Fallujah, where we supported a U.S. Marine Corps logistics transportation unit.

Our mission took us to a variety of different areas, such as Ramadi, Camp Smitty, al Asad and Baghdad. We enjoyed our time with the Marines. They are pure go-getters, always looking for the next fight.

**Challenges.** While stationed in Fallujah, we had to become very resourceful. We were under control of a joint Army-Marine command center. As a result we really didn't have any higher U.S. Army unit we could depend on for support.

The Marine Corps transportation company did what they could for us as far as Class III and Class IX products. The joint command center sent us to various places on Forward Operating Base Fallujah for support of other supply classes. But often, we had to make do with what we had.

This also forced my Soldiers to become creative thinkers to accomplish the mission with little or no back up resources. Because we were the only Soldiers there and had no other Army unit to turn to when the going got tough, we became a tight-knitted group. We definitely gained a new perspective on making our equipment and supplies go the distance.

But no matter what we were doing, I had to make sure I took care of my troops. Because of the lack of direct Army support in a forward deployed area, often the platoon felt like the red-headed step children of the U.S. Marine Corps. Every day, I reassured them we were sent there because the platoon was competent enough to operate on our own.

Being a platoon sergeant of an artillery platoon, I usually didn't need to "hand carry" my Soldiers through a mission. As long as I gave them the mission and the tools they needed, they could accomplish it. It was a different case in Fallujah.

It was important my troops knew I was willing to get my hands dirty right along with them. They had to know I would not give them any task I wouldn't do myself. It was also important to the mission to stay involved.

We developed a genuine cohesion within the platoon that is seen among most units in the Army. But for us, cohesion grew tenfold because of the circumstances we found ourselves in. Basically, we were just a handful of U.S. Army Soldiers in the midst of a sea of U.S. Marines. Everything we did was different from the Marines, from the way we talked, ate and slept to the way we conducted our missions. For some of my Soldiers, it was truly an isolating experience. But in the end, the unit turned a possible negative into a positive and became very self-sufficient.

**Training.** Successful training creates a successful deployment. Before deploying, our unit participated in very strenuous and realistic training. This was our first step into becoming a tight, cohesive unit. We trained on everything from convoy procedures to live-fire exercises. We practiced security during movement and the procedures for responding to small arms or an improvised explosive device attack. Nothing was left untrained, and we prepared for every possible scenario.

It was during this time, we emphasized the task of taking the fight to the enemy and that — no matter what happened — no one was to be left behind. As we laid the groundwork of unit cohesion during our training, none of us really knew how vitally important it would be to us during future operations.

This was just the start. When the platoon had some down time, we continually talked about what we would do if certain situations were to arise and what our expectations were. This became important in March 2006. After completing long three months in Fallujah, we were ordered back to Tikrit.

**The payoff.** My unit sent three additional vehicles to support our convoy on the trip north. We made three attempts to leave the forward operating base. Each time, the routes were closed due to improvised explosive device attacks. After the third day, we were given clearance to leave.

The previous attacks on our route didn't really deter the mindset of the platoon. We had been in similar attacks, thankfully with no injuries. I was in the third vehicle. As we proceeded on our route, my vehicle was hit with an improvised explosive device. My vehicle was engulfed in flames, and my driver and I were seriously injured. Luckily, we immediately were ejected from the vehicle by the blast.

Most of what occured after that is distant and hazy. I remember putting out the flames which covered most of my body. Once I regained composure, I looked for my driver to determine his status. While I searched, I noticed that my platoon was conducting their security steps just as we had practiced numerous times before. All their training had paid off as this was their immediate reaction to the situation.

The only confusion was my own. Dazed, bloodied and extremely angered, I assessed the area with my platoon leader to coordinate a casualty evacuation.

I was very proud of my troops that day. They lived up to the Army Values. The platoon continued to secure the area as my driver and I were evacuated. Although a great team was broken up that day, I had no doubt that they would operate just as they had done before under the guidance of any NCO.

The NCO Corps is a vital clock piece that keeps everything ticking. It is the NCO's role to ensure their Soldiers can carry on without them, and by doing so become leaders themselves. This is the true measure of being an NCO. Are you up for it? ▪

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# IFPC: Master gunner, why not?

By SSG Nicholas W. Martinelli, ADA

Indirect fire protection capabilities, formally known as Counter-Rockets, Artillery and Mortars, is a new program the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy are creating. The Counter-Rockets, Artillery and Mortars project started in 2005 and is a work in progress.

I was curious to see how this new system would work in Iraq and to see if all the hype was true. I got my chance in March 2007 when my interceptor platoon deployed. We controlled eight Land-Based Phalanx Weapon Systems on Logistics Support Area Anaconda. We had two other platoons that controlled the engagement operations center and the sense and warn equipment.

After working with the indirect fire protection capabilities equipment for 15 months, I am a true supporter of the project. However, there are some areas that need some improvement.

Right now, any Soldier can perform an indirect fire protection capabilities mission. My unit had a variety of Soldiers from different military occupational specialties. But this caused an issue because other Soldiers from different military occupational specialities are not trained on air defense operations so they had a harder time learning their roles as Land-Based Phalanx Weapon Systems operators. This is where a master gunner would have helped.

**Master gunner.** An indirect fire protection capabilities master gunner would have to know all of the systems. There would have to be prerequisites to attend the master gunner course, such as attending the Land-Based Phalanx Weapon Systems operator and maintainer schools, the engagement operations center class and the sense and warn classes. All of the schools required would be given at the unit level and the master gunner school would be taught at the brigade level.

Centurion Land-Based Phalanx Weapon System test fires. (Photo courtesy of Ratheon)

Only after completing those classes, he would attend a master gunner course. This course would require the Soldier's entire indirect fire protection capabilities knowledge. The course would teach the Soldier how to emplace the entire system in theater or in a training environment. It would teach in-depth troubleshooting abilities for all of the indirect fire protection capabilities' equipment.

**Combat multipler.** The Army already has master gunner courses for the Avenger and Patriot weapons systems, and they have increased mission effectiveness tremendously. An indirect fire protection capabilities master gunner would enhance Soldiers' overall knowledge on the system, increasing mission effectiveness as well.

The master gunner would save time in real-world environments. Currently, when there is an issue with one of the indirect fire protection capabilities systems, it can take days to fix it, hurting mission effectiveness. This solution would decrease repair time because there would not be a need to wait for Department of Defense civilians or U.S. Navy Land-Based Phalanx Weapon Systems technicians to arrive to fix the problem. Plus, having a proficient indirect fire protection capabilities Soldier would enhance mission capabilities.

In garrison, the master gunner could create 90-day training schedules for certification purposes. Everyone who is involved with the indirect fire protection capabilities mission should be proficient in all areas, and a master gunner could train and certify the platoons and sections on operating the equipment. He also could ensure the unit stays current on all required training.

It appears that the Army will make the indirect fire protection capabilities a program of record, and that day may not be far off. We should start thinking about the master gunner option now, while we have the time to get ahead. The new schoolhouse for indirect fire protection capabilities is open at Fort Sill, Okla. It is a beautiful training area; so let's take advantage of it and get an indirect fire protection capabilities master gunner school started. ▪

# Preparing the NCO Corps for the 21st century

By LTC Frederick J. Maxwell, SC

CSM Tory Guimond, command sergeant major of the Wyoming Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery Regiment, works on his skills with an M4 carbine at Fort Hood, Texas, May 23. (Photo by 2LT Christian Venhuizen, U.S. Army)

Today's environment presents tremendous new challenges to the military professional. The Army's role, simply to fight and win wars, is no longer as clear. According to Amos A. Jordan, Jr. in his article "Officer Education" in the *Handbook of Military Institutions*, the military vocation may be defined as "the management and application of military resources in deterrent, peacekeeping, and combat roles in the context of technological, social and political change." Based upon this definition, today's professional Soldier may serve in many diverse roles. The Army is changing to serve in these roles better.

During his statement to Congress about Army transformation on March 8, 2000, General Eric K. Shinseki stated that Army Vision 2020 calls for a transformation to a force that will that will be more responsive, deployable, agile, versatile, lethal, survivable and sustainable than the current force. The transformation objective is to develop and field a force that embodies the decisive warfighting capabilities found in today's heavy forces and the strategic responsiveness found in today's light forces.

**The NCO's role.** To be successful, quality leadership of small units is more important than ever. If the U.S. Army is to be recognized as a great army in all respects, senior leaders must recognize and acknowledge the vital and primary functions of the NCO Corps. In any army, the NCO is the critical element in integrating the enlisted Soldiers into the organization. This integration includes melding the Soldiers with the unit's officers, weapons, organizational objectives and the goals and values for which the unit is prepared to fight. *Field Manual 22-600-20, The Army NCO Guide* affirms this basic function of the NCO. "Sergeants must have the skill, ability and leadership to train Soldiers for combat and lead them in combat ... fire teams, squads, crews, gun sections ... fight together as teams, using their equipment to high standards of excellence."

Historically, the role of the NCO has been to provide leadership and training to junior enlisted Soldiers. Sergeants provide the essential link between the commander and his Soldiers. While this role is not changing, the NCO no longer can expect to be successful with basic leadership skills and training ability as were his predecessors. Further, with the Army's expanded roles in today's world, NCOs must have knowledge, training and technical as well as interpersonal skills on a much greater scale. They also must be more adaptive and have a greater depth of insight than in the past.

In today's highly publicized military operations, we are bombarded with media accounts of American Soldiers "walking point" — that is, in the forefront of military operations across the full spectrum of military operations. They must deal with situations and events that have the potential for immediate, worldwide consequences. For example, a squad leader responsible for a checkpoint might have to make decisions with second- or third-order effects. In the 21st century, professional military education alone is not sufficient to develop NCOs to deal with both their traditional military roles as leaders and trainers and nontraditional roles as *de facto* policy makers.

**Historical background.** As the Civil War often is described as the first modern war, World War I could be considered the first technological war. The Army created technical specialists who trained and supervised Soldiers in newly emergent technical occupations, such as radio operators, truck drivers and mechanics (See the Center for Military History's book *Time Honored Professionals: The NCO Corps Since 1775*).

The increased use of technology in warfare opened a division between NCOs who were troop leaders and those who were specialists. Often, young Soldiers with special technical skills received NCO status and higher pay than troop leaders with many more years of service and experience. This, consequently, impacted the morale of the combat leader. Compared to their British and French counterparts, the hastily promoted American NCOs were only half-trained. In response, General John J. Pershing directed the establishment of special schools for sergeants to improve small-unit leadership and NCO professionalism (*Professionals,* 14). Although this was a step in the right direction, unfortunately, the sergeants' schools were held only within the American Expeditionary Forces in France, and they were discontinued after the Armistice.

Although some leadership training was made a part of unit training cycles before deployment, special schools for NCOs were not revived during World War II. In 1947, the Army opened an NCO academy system in occupied Germany. The intent of the program of instruction was to develop service-wide standards for NCO education. This one-month course stressed leadership skills such as map reading and methods of small unit training. While the course content was useful, some major problems remained unsolved. Too few academies were opened to reach most NCOs, the quality of instruction was uneven and the academies prospered or suffered depending upon the changing budgets of parent commands.

The rapid expansion of the Army during the Vietnam War allowed little time for training and seasoning of NCOs. As a result, the Army expanded its NCO schools to produce great numbers of enlisted leaders. Individuals who had leadership skills were identified during Advanced Individual Training and, upon graduation from a short course, were awarded sergeant stripes. These sergeants often experienced difficulty in gaining acceptance from other, "hard stripe" NCOs. Derisively nicknamed "Shake-and-Bakes," they had not earned their stripes based on experience and the proverbial "school of hard knocks."

**History of the NCO Education System.** Shortages of trained NCOs during the Vietnam era led to the development of the Army's NCO Education System. Implemented in 1971, NCO Education System offered a three-level educational progression including both military occupational specialty-specific and nonspecific stages (*Professionals,* 13). The Army Training Program, used since World War I, was time-oriented, and the Army needed programs that required Soldiers to train to standards. The Skill Qualifications Test replaced military occupational specialty tests to give an indicator of Soldier proficiency in 1977. In 1980, the Self Development Test replaced Skill Qualifications Test with the intent of NCOs taking more responsibility for their own military occupational specialty and leadership development.

The Training and Doctrine Command established a progressive and sequential NCO Education System aimed at giving NCOs more attractive career opportunities while providing the Army with more capable NCOs. With the transition to the all volunteer Army in 1973, the NCO Education System expanded to include military occupational specialty and professional education. While NCO Education System improved the NCO Corps' competence, it did not give clear patterns of career development and promotion potential. The Enlisted Personnel Management System, introduced in 1975, resolved some of those issues.

The Enlisted Personnel Management System expanded professional opportunities while at the same time improving skill levels. It eliminated "dead-end" career fields by grouping together related specialties, thus opening career paths from E1 to E9 for all Soldiers. At the same time, to remain eligible for promotion, Soldiers had to demonstrate their abilities at required levels through Skill Qualifications Tests.

In 1980, Training and Doctrine Command introduced another professional system related to career management. The NCO Development Plan amounted to formal NCO leadership training. A "doing" rather than "testing" experience, the NCO Development Plan enables NCOs to apply the training and skills learned in NCO Education System and Enlisted Personnel Management System in their own units. A major reason for the effectiveness of the NCO Development Plan is its relation to tradition. NCOs had exchanged information on their duties informally for more than 200 years. With the NCO Development Plan, sergeants gather in more formal sessions to examine professional topics usually within their units.

**Army training.** The Army offers about 240 distinct military occupational specialties to enlisted personnel. The Army is focused on the post-Cold War era and has assumed roles of peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. This is also a time of vastly reduced budgets and increased operating tempo. These factors naturally challenge our NCOs, who are responsible for individual training at the unit level.

Army training often is characterized as being event driven with units and their commanders (and trainers) looking forward only to the next major event, such as the next rotation to the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., or to an operation overseas. Short-term priorities dominate. Unit proficiency, professional knowledge, teamwork and small-unit leadership do not grow and do not have a long-term cumulative effect on unit performance. Instead, there appears to be a series of short-term efforts to hold the system off, to hold assignments steady and to train for an upcoming event (e.g., six months' preparation for the next deployment). After this period, the short-term rules, in effect during the preparation phase, are relaxed, and the system reasserts itself with massively disruptive effects on any unit proficiency gained. The treadmill then continues with the commander rapidly refocusing on a new short-tense event with new people and new priorities.

**Army training methodologies must change.** Army transformation was built upon full-spectrum dominance. To be successful in the future, the Army needs leaders who are

## Generational developments

The Baby Boomers Generation was shaped by events such as the assassination of President Kennedy. Pictured is Kennedy's funeral procession leaving the White House for St. Matthew's Cathedral, Nov. 25, 1963. (Photo courtesy of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum)

Generation X was shaped by events such as Operation Desert Storm. Pictured are M-198 155-mm howitzers of the 18th Field Artillery Brigade firing on the first day of the ground offensive in southern Iraq, Feb. 24, 1991. (Photo by SGT Nathan Webster, U.S. Army)

Generation D (digitial) is being shaped by the digitial revolution and the ability to communicate instantly without physical contact through email, blogs and short messages called tweets.

to act with speed, precision and confidence. Ever-changing missions and unforeseen shapes of the areas of military operations decry the need for NCOs who are adaptive, innovative, flexible and "in tune" with their surroundings.

As former Sergeant Major of the Army, Silas L. Copeland said, "It will take the hearts, hands, and heads of every Soldier to build a better Army (See "The Sergeant Major of Army talks to the troops man to man" in the December 1971 edition of *Soldiers*). Never in history has the role of the sergeant been more important. For in today's operations, especially military operations in other than war, the actions of our lower level leaders can define national policy. These full-spectrum operations will exacerbate training challenges.

The Army must evolve current leadership training methodologies to meet the challenges of Army transformation. Interim and objective forces systems require much more understanding and proficiency on the part of NCOs. Doctrine is changing as these smaller, lighter, more flexible systems are developed. Legacy force doctrine and training requirements may remain much the same until the Army is transformed fully to the objective force. Soldiers potentially will be responsible for very different tactics, techniques and procedures.

More than ever, sergeants need to know how to work together. With budget cuts and training curtailed by real-world operations, training becomes more critical and there isn't time, or resources, to "redo" or retrain. Consequently, we all must do a good job the first time. This doesn't mean we should have a "zero defect" Army; rather it means we need to do a better job training.

Emerging technology is revolutionizing warfighting and demanding new training methods. The ground combat Soldier will not disappear, nor will the need for trained, competent leaders and trainers. In today's Army, with increasing reliance on science and technology, even combat leaders must be technically savvy.

Commanders at all levels must support their NCOs as they grow. Leaders must hold NCOs accountable and responsible, but, in turn, must give them accountability and responsibility. We cannot afford to expect NCOs simply to respond to orders as did their forefathers. They need to know and understand the "hows" and "whys."

**NCO qualifications.** The NCO should have general skills, including the ability to evaluate people and information and to communicate effectively. The NCO must understand large and complicated situations. Seeing the "big picture" means making cognitive connections and balancing its diverse components. Further, he must understand technical, organizational and social relationships. This requires some degree of socio-political sophistication. Enlisted leaders must adapt to political and technical situations while adhering to the Army's traditions, doctrines and missions. They must be aware of the joint and international nature of military planning and operations and be free from Army parochialism. Additionally, while they may have to relate professionally with allies, they should avoid politico-military interchange.

We expect our NCOs to be versatile and demonstrate job motivation consistently. We expect them to exercise creativity under the capable leadership of professional officers. A professional NCO must have a wide range of knowledge and absorb new data and concepts quickly. Also, he must lead and motivate his charges through patience and intellectual leadership. Persuasion, not orders, is often the best motivational strategy. Finally, today's NCO must obey his superiors and bring his best judgment as a military expert to bear on Army policy decisions.

Individual on-the-job productivity exercises personal attributes, such as ability, motivation, physical coordination and other job-specific skills. But how do commanders measure potential productivity? Civilian employers who lack information on the potential productivity of job applicants may use various proxies for these skills. According to David K. Horne in his book *The Impact of Soldier Quality on Performance in the Army*, education may be an indicator of productivity if individuals learn skills in school which may be applied to the job.

**Civilian education.** Sergeants' first priorities are to lead, train and care for their charges. The competitive nature of the Army, however, demands that they obtain the added edge that continued education provides.

Education is an important and integral part of military life. It sharpens skills and abilities and maximizes individual potential that, in turn, may affect promotions and career development. Educational experiences in the military classroom and on the job are only one small part of the educational opportunities provided to today's Soldier. In fact, at most Army installations, Soldiers can earn a college degree without leaving the post. Soldiers should not view their tours in the Army as time lost. In fact, increasing emphasis on higher education seems to ensure that Soldiers taking off-duty college courses stay competitive in the promotion arena.

The Army takes its commitment to education seriously. More importantly, it is committed to the development of the individual Soldier. Through various programs, the Army can fund a Soldier's civilian education. Soldiers who take advantage of these opportunities will earn college credits, promotion points, and eventually, college degrees (See Revamped GI Bill Benefits: education opens doors of opportunities on Page 21).

Limited education puts limits on where individuals go with their lives. Civilian education enhances the individual's personal and professional value. This is important in the military, not so much for a "check the block" entry on his service record, but as an individual accomplishment. Higher education puts additional tools in an individual's "kit bag" and these tools help in the performance of everyday duties and increase the individual's self worth. Civilian education facilitates one's ability to grasp abstract concepts and to apply rational problem-solving skills. Higher education increases thinking skills and encourages imagination, innovation and vision.

When we talk about how outstanding our Soldiers are, we need to keep it in context and understand what we really are saying. Soldiers are smarter because of education. Civilian educational initiatives are important to the professional growth and development of the military. But they present challenges to retention. Anecdotal information from NCOs indicates dissatisfaction with perceived college requirements. Some feel those who have invested in civilian education may have better chances for promotion, but while many attend classes during duty hours, not all NCOs have the opportunities to take advantage of these courses. Secondly, the fast pace in most units often precludes any expectations of stability to allow attendance.

Senior leaders should place greater emphasis on civilian graduate education for our NCOs than in the past. NCOs, regardless of military occupational specialty, should be encouraged to attend civilian graduate schools. Specialist career patterns could provide selected NCOs with the opportunity to attend civilian schools and gain expertise in their fields. Civilian education should not be viewed as a luxury or limited to a certain number of slots annually. Nor should it be programmed rigidly into a Soldier's career pattern.

Commanders and supervisors should allow Soldiers to exploit the Internet. The Army is making great strides in providing education opportunities via the Web. Interactive training courses need to be widely available on the Internet, and these courses should be interactive, not be just documents posted on servers.

First, these can provide self-development mechanisms to introduce outstanding NCOs to the skills needed for their jobs. Distance-learning mechanisms can help those NCOs acquire necessary skills. Second, for those NCOs who mastered the needed skills on the job, the NCO education system can adjust to give up-front proficiency testing and enhanced curricula. Simply put, they learn before attending classes.

As the Army moves more and more toward distance education, NCOs will have to solve problems. Automation and its infrastructure are not inexpensive. Operational tempo may impact the Soldier's time to learn on the Internet. Therefore, will Soldiers be expected to participate during non-duty hours or will commanders authorize time during the duty day? Finally, will distance learning relieve the schoolhouse of its training responsibilities while placing a heavier load on the unit and individual?

**New generations.** The pool from which the Army recruits is changing constantly. In some cases, these changes are demographic and reflect the results of immigration and other influences. In other cases, the changes are of a more social nature. For example, generational differences, attitudes and expectations may impose further skill set requirements on the transformed Army and its leaders at every level.

Extensive research in demographics has yielded a wealth of knowledge concerning generational characteristics of "Boomers," the "X Generation," and now the "D Generation." It is important that leaders realize that these are three distinct generations.

Baby Boomers, most of the senior officers and NCOs, grew up during a time of economic prosperity against a backdrop of rebellion and indulgence. Their views were shaped by events such as Vietnam, Woodstock, the Kennedy assassination and Kent State. Boomer childhood consisted of nuclear families. In the work force, Boomers worked relentlessly in pursuit of goals, often at the expense of marriages, family and personal lives.

In contrast to all the attention heaped on the Baby Boomers as they grew up, Generation X arrived on the scene unnoticed. These youths are sometimes called the Slackers, Baby Busters, Twentysomethings or the MTV generation. Generation X developed a cynical, pragmatic, survivor mentality as they experienced a world much less idyllic than their Boomer predecessors. Watergate, Three Mile Island, Operation Desert Storm and Rodney King shaped their thinking in their early years. With Boomer parents overworked

**1SG Phillip Pressley, B Battery, 1st Battalion, 113th Field Artillery Regiment, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, talks with an Iraqi army soldier while on a joint patrol, south of Baghdad, June 20.** (Photo by SGT Mary Phillips, U.S. Army)

focused on accomplishing personal goals, Generation X children often were neglected and overlooked (See Geoffrey T. Holtz's book *Welcome to the Jungle*).

The "D Generation" (digital generation) are those who were born in the computer age. They are familiar and comfortable with automation. They enjoy spending hours alone with their computers and form electronic relationships with others.

These differences are significant. Add to them the cultural diversity that America has experienced in recent decades and the leadership challenges are daunting. Leaders, by necessity, will need to apply new, innovative techniques to lead and influence Soldiers. More importantly, dealing with these circumstances during the turmoil of Army transformation may impose yet more consternation on junior leaders, who will be comprised of generational mixes.

**Conclusions.** Despite today's uncertainties and challenges, the outlines of future operations within the new world order are emerging. Military force is one instrument among many that the U.S. likely will employ. It is clear that the military's role has changed in conducting U.S. foreign affairs. The Army likely will continue to deploy forces, often as part of multilateral coalitions, for specific and achievable purposes. Forces probably will be more dispersed, and commanders still will be held accountable for needless collateral damage. Second, the rate of technological change in the decades ahead will be much greater than that of the past decade and will continue to accelerate.

Together, these trends will alter traditional concepts of professional military expertise, making it more difficult to distinguish between warriors and non-warriors, commanders and non-commanders, and technicians and non-technicians. Future military operations will require competencies outside the realm of traditional "military expertise" as well as a level of political and technical sophistication unknown and not wielded by past military leaders.

In many respects the NCO Corps is in better shape than ever. As a result of a sophisticated development system, NCOs are better educated and more highly motivated. They display great pride and confidence in their duties. NCOs today are better trained and more professional than at any time in our history. The NCO Corps is comprised of professional volunteers who are highly skilled and technically and tactically proficient. They will continue to be the backbone of the Army. To do so, they must have continued training, education and responsibilities.

**Recommendations.** What should Army leaders do to strengthen NCO Corps professionalism and to guarantee success during and after Army transformation? First, our senior leadership needs to adopt a comprehensive development plan to direct and guide efforts to educate and train future NCO leaders. Second, the Army should publish leadership development guides focused on 21st century leadership requirements. NCOs do not need generic checklists, but guides for building future leadership teams. Third, the Army should work with sister services and other defense agencies to create career-broadening opportunities that include NCOs. Lastly, NCO leader development should be a regular topic at senior officer planning sessions.

Commanders must be concerned about their units' performance during their watch. But they also must learn to give sergeants their missions and then avoid the temptations to tell them how to do the mission or to require them to check in constantly with status reports.

In return for enduring the hardships of military life and fulfilling the obligations of a professional Soldier, Army leaders must give our NCOs career opportunities and a reasonable modicum of security. The Army Officer Corps should strive to support the NCO Corps by stressing traditional military values and clarifying the meaning and importance of military professionalism, selfless service and absolute integrity. We, as leaders, must include NCOs in the decision- making process, whenever possible and appropriate, and increase the NCOs' input into key decisions. This is not to undermine the chain of command, but rather to broaden the base of knowledge, expertise and experience supporting our decisions.

Senior leaders must mentor NCOs realistically. Officers need to sit down with their NCOs and talk with them, but not as if they are being counseled. Mentoring is not performance counseling, nor is it the required monthly or quarterly counseling. This is merely an officer taking an interest in the life of a subordinate.

If the Army intends to remain the world's most capable and respected fighting force, every member of its leadership teams needs to have an unprecedented range of skills and breadth of experience to bear on his responsibilities. The Army's transformed NCO leadership is being shaped today and it will mature over the next decade. Without the active involvement of today's senior leadership, tomorrow's NCOs will not meet the challenges we will face in the 21st century. ▪

This is a reprint of Lieutenant Colonel Frederick J. Maxwell's strategy research project for the U.S. Army War College. It has been edited for length and *Fires* style and format.


SPC Marc B. Aquino, 1st Battalion, 497th Field Artillery Regiment, Hawaii National Guard, runs two miles as part of the Army Physical Fitness Test at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, May 13. (Photo courtesy of 20th Public Affairs Division)

# Artillery Fit: physical fitness while deployed

By Majors G. Damon Wells and Shawn M. Bault, both FA

Today's artilleryman faces two unique problems pertaining to combat readiness. First, extended deployments are degrading artillery specific mission-essential task list and military occupational specialty related skills because many Redlegs are performing various nonstandard missions during multiple deployments. The artilleryman's diverse skill set and rapid adaptability, while providing much needed manpower in the War on Terrorism, has contributed to the decline of core competencies and associated functional fitness. Secondly, in the post-deployment period known as reset, units fail to maximize physical training time. Units generally focus most of their training time on mission-essential tactical and technical competencies, while either neglecting or incorrectly training the physical component to combat readiness.

To regain combat readiness more effectively and optimally during reset and to sustain that readiness during deployment, an approach to physical training that is both efficient and mission-essential task list focused is necessary. A sensible solution is an emphasis on functional-fitness training, both austere (combat) and traditional that enhances mission-essential tactical and technical competencies, while maximizing training time.

Physical fitness is the foundation of a Soldier's combat readiness. Soldiers need a combination of health- and skill-related fitness components, such as muscular strength and endurance, cardiovascular strength and endurance, flexibility, agility, balance, coordination, speed, power, plus a level of "functional fitness" which is the ability to transfer these components to efficient movement.

Functional fitness consists of a broad array of natural or realistic physical work that involves multiple planes and joints. For Soldiers, this work includes all the tasks associated with combat performance. Essentially, functional training results in the body being trained the way it needs to move to perform optimally. The end state is enhanced Soldier performance on the battlefield. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the artillery, more specifically, in a light cannon battery where Soldiers execute a myriad of individual tasks that require lifting, pushing, pulling, jumping and running. One could argue that the Military Occupational Specialty 13B Cannon Crewmember is one of the most functional jobs in the Army and has increased in functionality due to recent nonstandard missions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Physical training should be used to develop and enhance the physical components within a unit's mission-essential task list. Commanders must ask themselves, "What is the purpose and relevance of our physical training?" As with field operations, if the answer is not based on the mission-essential task list, then the unit is using its time and energy inefficiently. Time is precious; units must reset rapidly and prepare efficiently for their next mission in the War on Terrorism. The field artillery, often required to perform infantry, engineer, military police and transportation tasks, must be even more vigilant in taking advantage of training time. This article discusses physical fitness training for a light cannon battery and provides a mission-essential task list based physical training program focused on a functional fitness concept that leaders can implement at any time, but especially during reset and deployment operations, ensuring 13B combat readiness.

**Reset: regaining skills and fitness.** A recurring problem in the Redleg community is the gradual degradation of artillery-specific functional fitness during extended deployments. The artilleryman frequently finds himself learning and performing missions that have nothing in common with his traditional mission. As a result, his technical and tactical skills decay, as does his fitness level. Finding the time to conduct physical training during a deployment is often difficult. Inadequate facilities, dangerous conditions, lack of time and environmental hazards are all

roadblocks to fitness in theater. The result is a Soldier who redeploys at a fraction of his original fitness capacity.

Also, upon redeployment, most units take 30 days of leave and require an additional 30 days of physical training before conducting their first Army Physical Fitness Test. This is reasonable, but the time spent focusing on the health-related components can be decreased by maintaining fitness throughout the deployment (when able) and increasing training efficiency upon redeployment. Most post-deployment physical fitness programs incorrectly focus on increasing the Soldiers' fitness levels to score well on the Army Physical Fitness Test. While this practice is based on good intentions, it is the wrong approach.

A more effective method for the artillery unit is shifting the focus from Army Physical Fitness Test requirements to mission-essential task list related events. A base level of fitness must be achieved and maintained, but a unit cannot complete reset successfully if they are not combat ready by the end of the phase.

This certainly includes a level of specific fitness for the cannoneer. The following exercises and workout descriptions are applicable to both austere and reset situations and can increase Soldier proficiency significantly and reduce non-mission capable time after deployments.

**The functional training concept.** Functional fitness training is a dual-purpose concept. First, it allows a unit to improve general fitness that is conducive to better health and contributes to the health related components of fitness (cardiorespiratory fitness/endurance, muscular strength endurance, etc.). More importantly, the application of a functional fitness concept permits units to improve specific tasks that contribute to their wartime mission (tactical and technical proficiency). Functional training involves conditioning the body for movement. In this case, that means preparing Soldiers for the functions of combat operations. After a recent, thorough analysis from past operations in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, it was discovered that a significant number of preventable muscle injuries were due to overuse and dysfunctional movement.

Organizations such as the U.S. Marine Corps, 75th Ranger Regiment and the Fires Center of Excellence have recognized and adapted to this fact. Both the Marines and the Rangers see themselves as combat athletes in their preparation for combat. To them, the process is similar to a collegiate or professional athlete's preparation for his sport. Athletes spend hours focusing on strengthening and mastering the body mechanics required of their sport. In the same manner, Soldiers need a comprehensive fitness program that develops the physical skills needed for combat, regardless of the environment.

**The program.** It is no secret that the light cannoneer exerts significant physical effort during the course of combat operations. The process of preparing a howitzer for operation, preparing ammunition and executing fire missions in a hostile environment can have adverse effects on even the fittest Soldier. A well planned and executed functional fitness regimen positively impacts a unit's level of success and decreases injury rates significantly due to the practice of proper body mechanics.

The cannoneer does not have to be a muscle-bound strongman to accomplish his mission effectively, but the benefits of muscular strength and endurance training certainly lead to a faster and more proficient crew. Along with the obvious health benefits and ability to work harder and longer under stress, the motor skills developed through rigorous mission focused and functional training will lead to improvements in mission execution as well.

Emplacing a M119A1 howitzer for a night raid involves moving thousands of pounds in equipment under stressful conditions with limited time and personnel. Each physically demanding portion of this endeavor can be recreated and practiced during morning physical training. Some examples of specific movements within the 13B's repertoire are lifting the trails of the howitzer, pushing the howitzer onto the base plate and handling ammunition.

*Lifting.* The initial lift of the trails involves a significant percentage of the musculature of the entire body. Great strength is required in the legs, back, core and forearms to complete this task properly. This movement can be trained in a number of different ways. It is simulated in the gym with a traditional "deadlift." Proper deadlift training increases the strength of all of the applicable muscles.

In austere conditions, where fitness equipment is lacking, this can be simulated with heavy water cans, ammunition cans, weighted litters or a variety of methods that use resistance lifted from the ground to an upright position. Any repetition scheme can be used, but two to five sets of six to 10 repetitions are optimal to develop strength. An ancillary benefit of training deadlift-type movements is the strengthening of the core, including the lower back. This, in turn, reduces the number of lower back injuries sustained during training and combat.

Another effective exercise is the "farmer's walk." This involves picking up two equally heavy items and walking a set distance. This movement is functional because there are many situations in which Soldiers must carry heavy loads for a distance. The weight and the distance can vary. Relay races are a great tool to increase performance through competition.

*Pushing.* The Soldiers also must push the howitzer off of the platform and onto the base plate, requiring a great deal of physical effort. This movement involves the legs, core, arms and shoulders. It also demands an explosive push, which requires a slightly different training technique. In the gym, Olympic lifts such as the "clean and jerk" are optimal for developing explosive power.

In the Army, however, Olympic lifts are not preferred training exercises due to the intense learning curve, so other methods must be employed. "Jump squats" performed with added resistance are a good exercise for developing ground-based power. To complete one repetition, the Soldiers "bear hugs" some sand bags or a rucksack and from the squatting position, forcefully jumps as high as possible and lands back into the squatting start position.

The bottom half of this movement can be simulated with "depth jumps" from a platform. Besides enhancing the pushing aspect, "jump squats" and "depth jumps" also ensure proper body kinesthetics when jumping and landing, such as dismounting from a vehicle during firing point occupation or from a helicopter during air assaults.

The "push press" is another great upper-body power exercise. Start by holding a weighted object at shoulder level and then rest it on the front of the shoulders. Forcefully push the weight up to an arms-locked position. Under control, return the weight to the starting position. Results from power exercises are achieved best with four to six repetitions and less than three sets.

*Carrying.* Handling ammunition is another duty that requires a great deal of muscular strength and endurance. Soldiers must have superior grip and arm strength, as well as leg and lower back strength to perform this demanding task for a high number of repetitions. Medicine ball training simulates these tasks well. If medicine balls are not available, sand bags wrapped with tape or even rocks are suitable substitutes.

With these training tools, the "carry and load drill" is an effective exercise. This involves carrying a weighted object from one point to another and placing it on a raised platform, such as the tailgate of a high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle. Using nonstandard tools like

Dead lift: Lift two equal-weighted objects from the ground to an upright position. Two to five sets of six to 10 repetitions is optimal.

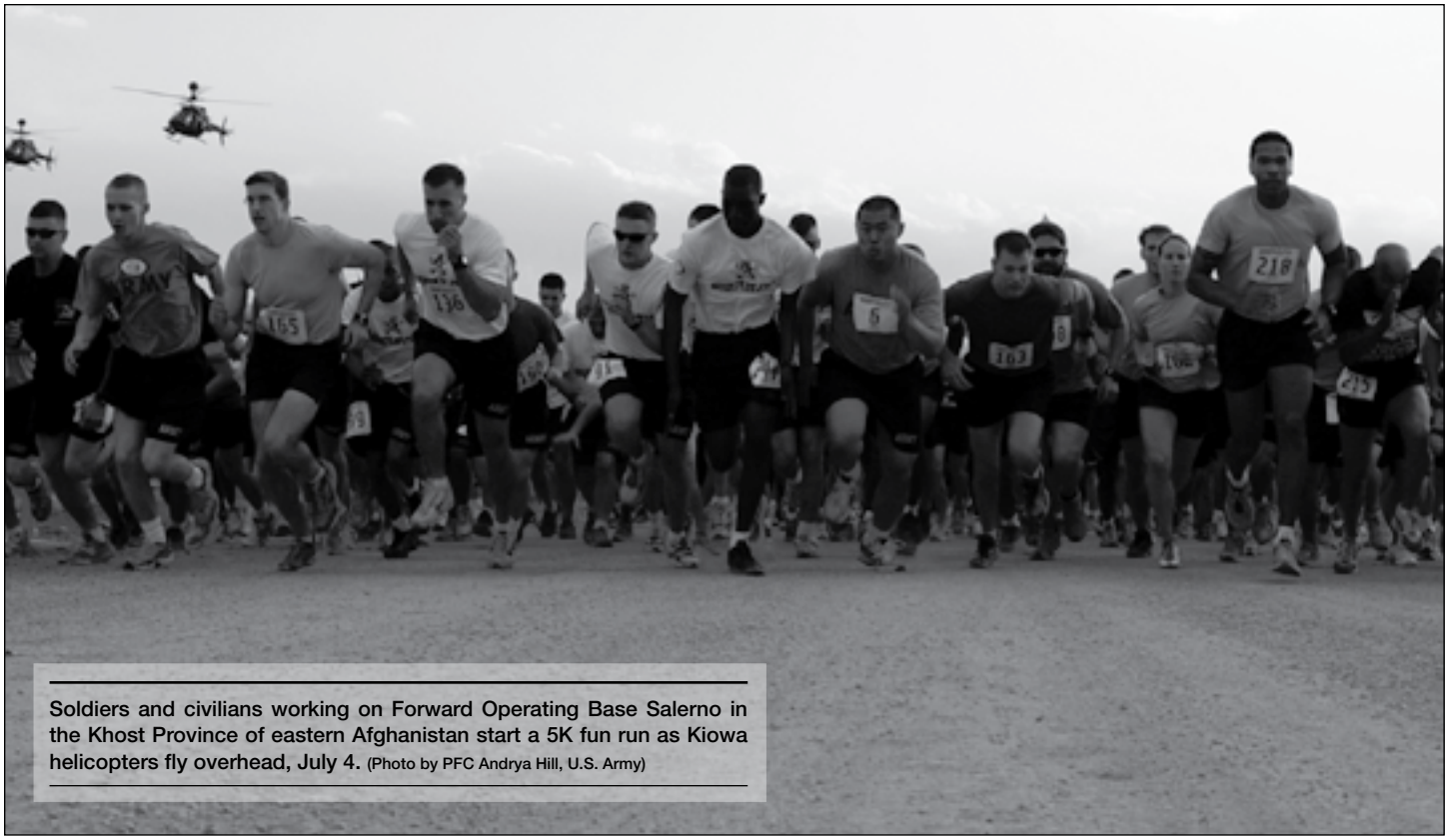
Jump squats: Starting from a squatting position, forcefully jump as high as possible and land back into the squatting start position. Hold weighted objects for more resistance.

Farmer's walk: Pick up two equally heavy items, such as water or ammunition cans, and walk a set distance. The weight and the distance can vary.

Depth jumps: Jump from a raised platform, such as a vehicle tailgate, landing in a squatting position. Hold weighted objects for more resistance.

Push press: Hold a weighted object at shoulder level. Push the weight up to an arms-locked position. Under control, return the weight to the starting position.

Carry and load: Carry a weighted object from one point to another and place it on a raised platform.



Soldiers and civilians working on Forward Operating Base Salerno in the Khost Province of eastern Afghanistan start a 5K fun run as Kiowa helicopters fly overhead, July 4. (Photo by PFC Andrya Hill, U.S. Army)

and sandbags increases the training effect as Soldiers are forced to accommodate various gripping techniques.

The exercises described in this article are far from all-inclusive. There is a great variety of functional exercises for the light artilleryman that should be applied during physical training programs. Functional strength and power programs may be integrated into the battery's physical training program on an alternating day schedule with lower intensity, traditional workouts on the off days.

For example, a battery may implement the functional training on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and perform ability group runs and calisthenics on Tuesday and Thursday. The benefit of this schedule is that it allows leaders to build a strong base of fitness during the reset period, while building core competencies and fitness simultaneously.

Obviously, the example exercises will benefit any unit or Soldier performing them. Functional fitness is a concept that the Army as a whole must embrace and implement. The goal is to pick exercises that directly mimic, as close as possible, some portion of the unit's mission-essential combat tasks.

Any unit with physical tasks on their mission-essential task list can benefit from a functional fitness concept, not just the light artillery. Units that lack physically demanding mission-essential task lists can implement training based on Warrior Tasks or theater-specific physical tasks. The light artillery gunners are a great model because their job is particularly physically and functionally demanding.

Traditionally, light artillerymen build their fitness base around a long group run, calisthenics and moderate-to-high intensity workouts. We propose a paradigm shift, moving the focus to short-burst, high-intensity workouts. There always will be a place for running, push-ups, pull-ups and sit-ups. They are excellent exercises and can compliment any fitness routine; however, a unit's physical training regimen must reflect its combat mission.

For the light artillery, that means a functional approach of quick bursts of power intervals as the base program, supplemented with both high- and low-intensity cardiovascular training to ensure prolonged mission endurance.

By properly incorporating a functional fitness concept based on the mission-essential task list, a unit can take full advantage of precious training time — not just in the field or on the range, but also during physical training, enhancing unit combat readiness. ▪

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# The NCO Creed

No one is more professional than I. I am a noncommissioned officer, a leader of soldiers. As a noncommissioned officer, I realize that I am a member of a time honored corps, which is known as "The Backbone of the Army." I am proud of the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers and will at all times conduct myself so as to bring credit upon the Corps, the military service and my country regardless of the situation in which I find myself. I will not use my grade or position to attain pleasure, profit or personal safety.

Competence is my watchword. My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind — accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my Soldiers. I will strive to remain technically and tactically proficient. I am aware of my role as a noncommissioned officer. I will fulfill my responsibilities inherent in that role. All Soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership. I know my Soldiers, and I will always place their needs above my own. I will communicate consistently with my Soldiers and never leave them uninformed. I will be fair and impartial when recommending both rewards and punishment.

Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine. I will earn their respect and confidence as well as that of my Soldiers. I will be loyal to those with whom I serve; seniors, peers and subordinates alike. I will exercise initiative by taking appropriate action in the absence of orders. I will not compromise my integrity, nor my moral courage. I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget that we are professionals, noncommissioned officers, leaders!

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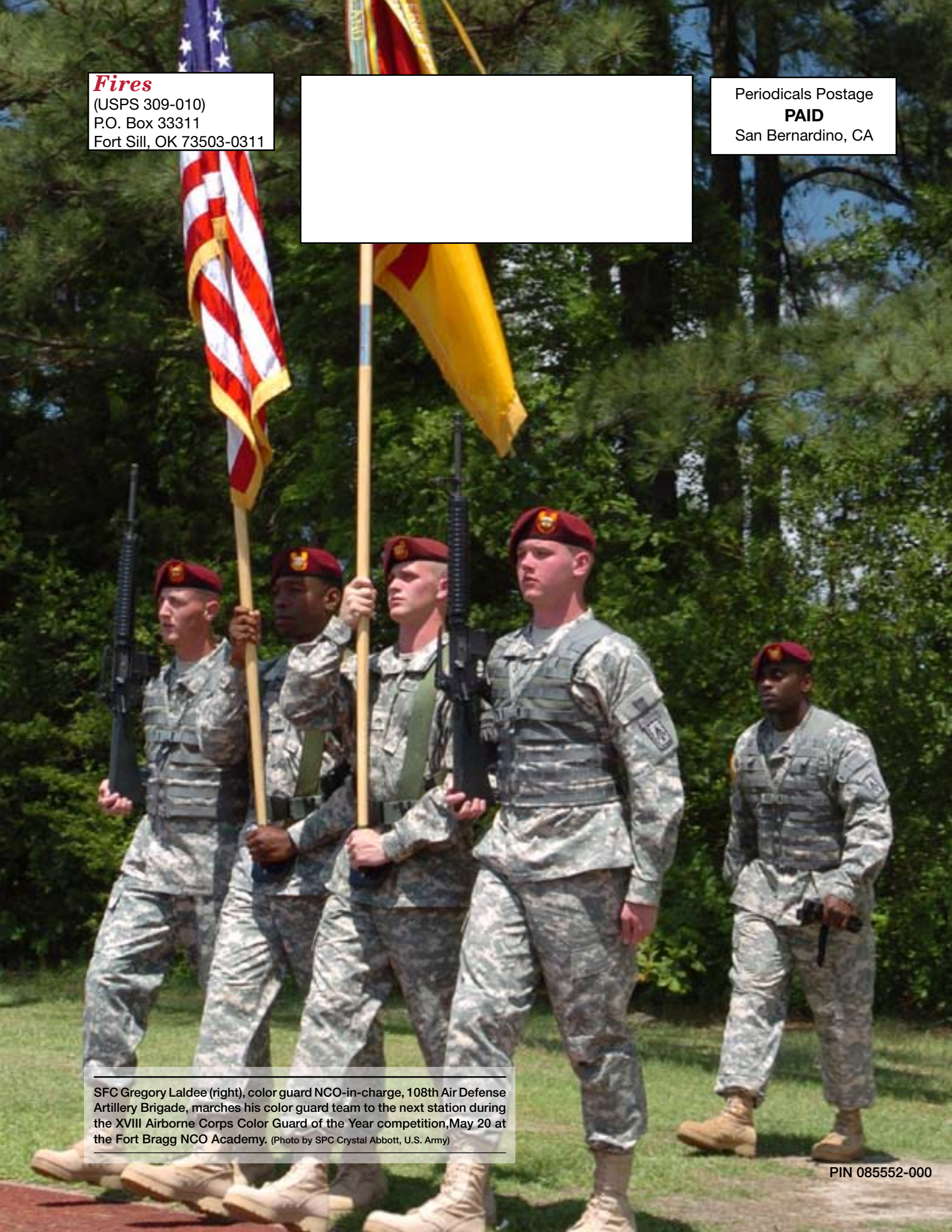

SFC Gregory Laldee (right), color guard NCO-in-charge, 108th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, marches his color guard team to the next station during the XVIII Airborne Corps Color Guard of the Year competition,May 20 at the Fort Bragg NCO Academy. (Photo by SPC Crystal Abbott, U.S. Army)

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