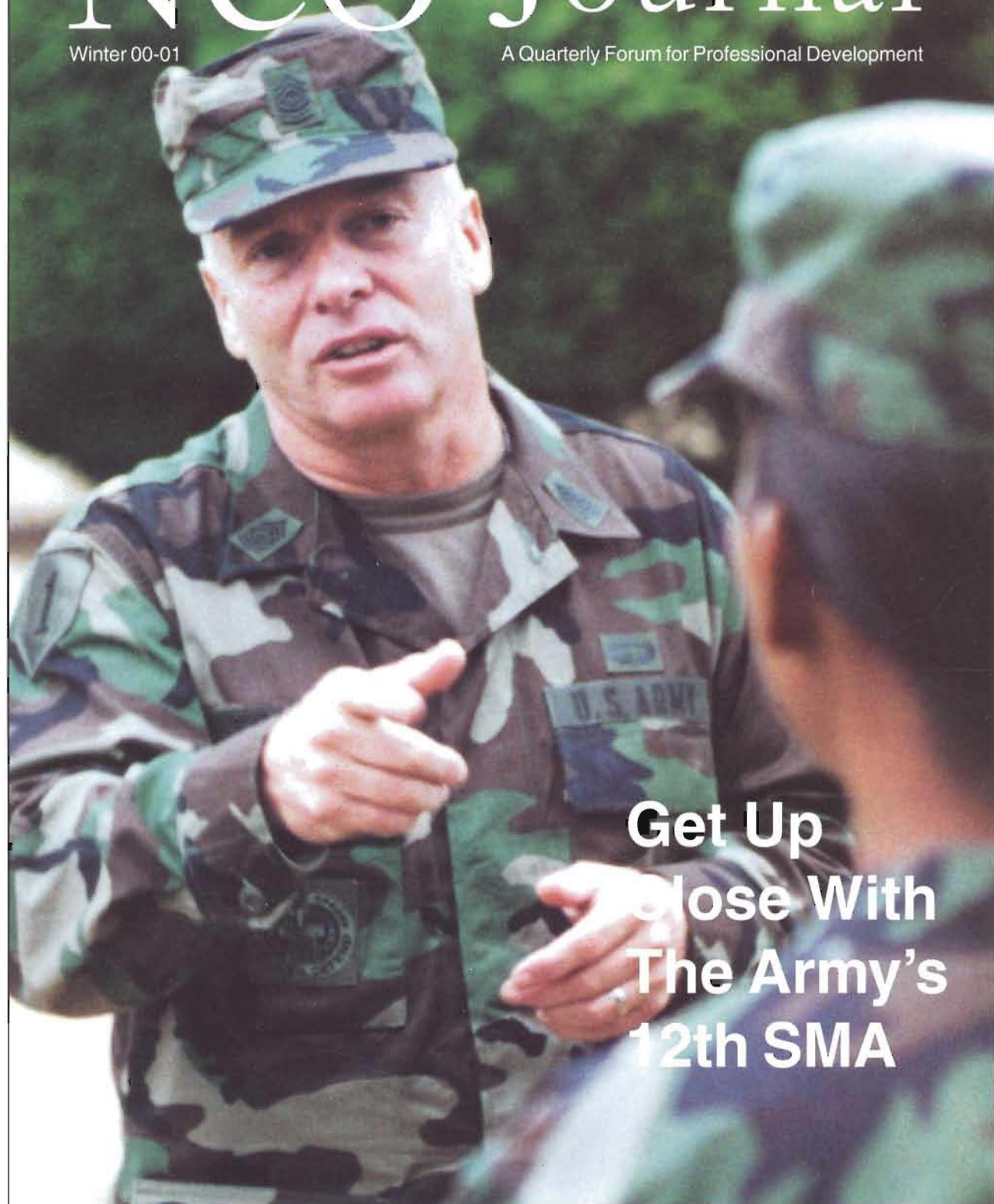


# The NCO Journal

Winter 00-01

A Quarterly Forum for Professional Development



**Get Up  
Close With  
The Army's  
12th SMA**



**18 Building Army Values**

*photo by Staff Sgt. Donald Sparks*

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# The NCO Journal

**Published Quarterly  
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# About This

## ISSUE

At long last the wait is over for your magazine that is dedicated totally to the professional development of the NCO Corps. After three years *The NCO Journal* is back in print and for many of you it's been long overdue.

Just because the magazine stopped printing, it didn't mean that you stopped caring for its content. Numerous letters, e-mails and phone calls have been sent to us over the years asking when is the *Journal* coming back? Why did it end?

Hopefully with its return, *The NCO Journal* can again make an impact on the soldiers aspiring to become noncommissioned officers, junior and senior NCOs, and officers alike.

This is your publication, so the success of the *Journal* heavily depends on the noncommissioned officers who submit articles, stories and photos for use in our "*Journal*." Upcoming edition themes include: Spring - Training/Readiness; Summer - NCOES; Fall - NCO/Officer Relationship.

So we're encouraging you, the NCO Corps, to take this challenge head on.

It's kind of ironic that our last printed version featured Sergeant Major of the Army Robert Hall soon after being appointed as the 11th SMA. We now

return to print with the 12th SMA, Jack E. Tilley. In an interview with the *NCO Journal*, Tilley opens up on what concerns him in leading our soldiers in the 21st Century. Tilley also shares his passion about communicating with soldiers and understanding their concerns and issues.

So what do we have in store for you in this edition? I'll tell you that we have some great NCOs out there in the field who are sharing their thoughts and experiences on paper.

Master Sgt. Michael Sienda explains the importance of creating a unit creed for soldiers and its history dating back to the time of ancient warriors. Sgt. David Ruiz shares his thoughts on why he believes Selfless Service is the most important Army Value.

Command Sgt. Maj. Dan Elder might raise some eyebrows with his personal view on the Army's current promotion system. For those noncommissioned officers who've debated about staying in or getting out, Command Sgt. Maj. James Clifford offers a word of advice in his feature on The Meaning of an Indefinite Reenlistment.

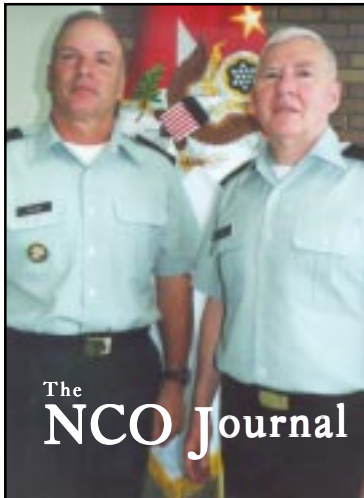
I can assure to you, the reader, that this issue is both informative and entertaining. Our goal is to provide you a quality product as our mission states, "To support training, education and the development of the NCO Corps."

Finally, we're glad to be back in print. Spread the word that your *NCO Journal* is back.



--The Editor-in-Chief

# Letters



## NCO JOURNAL NEEDED TO EDUCATE SOLDIERS

I was very sad to hear about the change of the NCO Journal going from hard copy to electronic format a few years ago.

I am not sad for myself, but for the soldiers who may not have access to the Internet.

These soldiers will not have the opportunity, like many of us, to have read one of the military's most popular and informative magazines.

With the NCO Journal going on-line, many soldiers are truly missing out on some good military information.

For those of us with access to the internet, let's continue reading the NCO Journal and pass it on to our soldiers.

I can only hope in the future that the *NCO Journal* goes back to hard copy so we all can have the opportunity to read this great colorful magazine.

*SGM Kevin B. Stuart*  
2nd Infantry Division

## NON-RESIDENT COURSE DESERVES MENTION

I just logged on to *The NCO Journal* and reviewed your summer 2000 issue.

As a recent graduate of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Non-Resident Sergeants Major Course Class 25, I was disappointed that nothing was mentioned about the 360 plus sergeants major who made the great sacrifices to complete this challenging and demanding course.

Your article "USASMA Millennium class graduates" and its ending statement, "The next Sergeants Major Course, Class 51, will begin in

August," gives the perception of two standards.

As you know Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Eric K. Shinseki has mentioned several times that the 21st Century Army will integrate the active and Reserve component to create "The Army."

Although the Non-resident Course covers the same criteria as the Resident Course, I feel the NRC is much more demanding.

The matter of "time management" becomes a necessity to complete the course.

As a Reservist you have to balance your civilian job, your military obligation, your family life and devote countless hours of independent studies.

Everyone who graduates from the Sergeants Major Academy is an outstanding soldier in his or her own right.

I would like for you to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all the soldiers who have gone through and completed the Non-Resident Course.

*CSM Gerardo G. Valles*  
304th Materiel Management  
Center

## WORLDWIDE INFLUENCE

We would like to inform you that the Hungarian Defence Forces joined NATO in 1999. According to the NATO standard, Hungary started to reform its army.

We would like to create a smaller but harder and more mobile army.

As part of this process we reduced the number of officers and conscripts and at the same time NCOs get a more important role within our army.

Our aim is to help these changes so we founded a quarterly *NCO Journal*.

We had a similar journal in our army before World War II, and we wanted to continue its traditions.

We were glad to see your *NCO Journal*. When we looked at it, we saw, considering its goals and topics, that it was the same as ours.

In our opinion our journal is the 'younger brother' of yours.

We would highly appreciate if you were so kind to permit us to use your articles to publish in our journal.

*Brig. Gen. Dr. Janos Tompa*  
Hungarian Defence Forces

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*Editor's Note - The NCO Journal* welcomes comments from our readers. Letters to the editor must be signed and include the writer's full name and rank, unit, post/city and state (or city and country) and mailing address. Letters should be brief and are subject to editing.

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By CSM Dan Elder

# PROMOTIONS

“The only lesson of history is that men never learn anything from history,” said George Hegel. In the past several years promotions to sergeant and staff sergeant have risen dramatically, due in part to the Change In NCO Structure. Yet the question arises, “Are we filling the ranks with unskilled soldiers,” and if so, are we going to pay for it in future conflicts?

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## From the past to the present, NCO promotions have affected the Army’s structure

In the opening quote from George Hegel, Gen. John (Black Jack) Pershing learned the hard way during World War I about unskilled noncommissioned officers.

In the recruiting depots in the United States, inductees were shipped off to Europe as soon as they could be inducted, clothed, equipped and minimally trained.

There was no pool of skilled noncommissioned officers to choose from, so they were selected from the ranks. They received little more than basic recruit training and then they joined their units.

These forces were considered inexperienced and unsophisticated by the allied forces and suffered high casualties.

His force was so untrained that Pershing demanded that more attention be given to training and developing sergeants. The U.S. forces left behind in Europe after World War II were faced with a similar problem.

While units were rapidly demobilizing and returning home, Occupation forces were receiving replacements with little training or combat experience.

Noncommissioned officers were selected from the ranks and placed in charge, only to be required to perform the unique duties of an occupying Army.

In Vietnam it was the attrition of combat, the tour limit and the separation of noncommissioned officers that took its toll on the NCO Corps.

The Army was faced with sending career ‘noncoms’ back into action sooner or filling the ranks with the most senior private first class or specialist.

The Noncommissioned Officer Candidate Course, patterned after the Officer Candidate Course, was developed to train raw recruits to serve as squad and team leaders in Vietnam.

Fast forward to today. There has been much pressure on unit leaders to “hurry-up” and get specialists to the promotion board.

Many bean counters and senior staffers involved in the personnel and promotions arena are pointing the wicked finger of shame on the Army’s senior noncommissioned officers for failing to recommend deserving soldiers for promotion.

I have seen charts and slides “comparing” installations and their number of eligible versus those recommended to each other. Want to get an Army leader’s interest in a program? Just compare their work performance, not against an established standard, but against their peers (there is no promotion standard).

Lately everybody is singing that we have a new problem with promotions and the units in the field have broken the system for selecting, boarding and promoting young soldiers to sergeant.

In a recent *Army Times* article, the outgoing Army

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personnel chief Lt. Gen. David Ohle, claimed, “we surely need to fix the system for promotions to sergeant.”

The same article went on to say that about three years ago the Army was at 50 percent eligible specialists who were on the standing list and today it is a paltry 18 percent. The article also quoted Ohle as assuming the field is creating a higher standard than what is published in the promotion regulations.

Wait a minute and hold on here, people. I know we assign senior noncommissioned officers to the Pentagon to serve as honest brokers for these organizations. It is time for someone to poke a fork in them and get them going.

The first question that comes to mind is that if the sergeant promotion system is broke then why is the staff sergeant promotion system not broke?

They are the same exact system, the semi-centralized promotion system. They both follow a strict format of select, train, and promote. Soldiers are recommended for promotion by their unit leadership and appear before a board of senior noncommissioned officers.

Once recommended for promotion they are then eligible to attend the Primary Leadership Development Course or Basic course.

After completion of this course soldiers are eligible to be

promoted to the next rank. So why does it work for SSGs, but is broken for SGTs?

We need only look back over those three years and see what has happened to our NCO Corps. A recent attempt at alignments to the NCO end strength occurred as a part of the Change in NCO Structure (CINCOS) in 1998.

About 6,700 NCO positions in the Army were downgraded as a cost cutting measure, and like a snowball effect it created leadership hardships and the Army was faced with a lack of expertise we needed.

So in February 1999 the Army “bought back” over 4,500 of those NCO positions. But from the outset the Army realized it would take time to rebuild those losses. In an April 1999 interview, former Sergeant Major of the Army Robert Hall stated that “the good news is the CINCOS buy-back means we are going to bring [NCO jobs] back into the force over the next three or four years; that is how long it’ll take us to promote them.”

So if the senior enlisted soldier explained from the outset we need time to accomplish this, then why are we trying to rush the process?

If my math is correct, CINCOS happened under the same Lt. Gen. Ohle’s watch who claims we are “broken” when it comes to promoting sergeants.

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## Challenging soldiers, giving them responsibility makes a better qualified NCO

Maybe I just haven’t figured this out yet. The most junior, least trained, and only noncommissioned officer in the chain of command is the sergeant/squad leader.

Contrary to popular belief not every person who enters the military is good sergeant material. With the proper coaching, teaching and mentoring a soldier can demonstrate that potential.

But “*when*” each soldier reaches that potential, it is different. So who better to evaluate that but the unit?

A new recruit goes through an evaluation and soldierization process while in Initial Entry Training; a commissioned officer through a service academy, ROTC or OCS; and a warrant officer attends the Warrant Officer Candidate Course.

But the noncommissioned officer corps, ours which is unique compared to other countries, has no standardized “sergeantization” process, other than at the unit, based on that unit’s mission.

The Primary Leadership Course comes after the soldier has been selected and boarded and met the desired results. We have to get them to the board first.

This current promotion process was the result of the

Army becoming an all-volunteer force in 1973. After the draft ended the NCO Corps was in shambles.

Drugs, tension among the races, the absorption of the Women’s Army Corps and retention of quality soldiers was on everybody’s mind. But top-notch noncommissioned officers were still around to rebuild our corps.

Education and career management systems were built for the enlisted force. Standards were reintroduced to our Army as we got around to rebuilding from within.

Leadership and NCO professional development studies and panels were developed and pride was brought back to our Army.

It has been 27 years since then and we are without a doubt due a reevaluation of our processes. But to throw out the baby with the bath water and condemn the very process that has brought us the capable NCO leadership to be admired the world over is a disservice to our Corps, past and present.

SMA George Dunaway’s comments from 1969 still hold true. The way a soldier can improve their chances of promotion is quite simple, he stated, “a soldier must seek the responsible jobs and see that his job performance will

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earn him the desired [results].”

Arguably, there are those out in the field who have self-imposed “higher” standards for promotion than required. Without condoning those who may be guilty of this, we as an institution are to blame.

We expect our leaders to possess certain skills for our units to be successful. Today NCO leaders are doing more things and making decisions that in years past were left to

higher-ranking leaders.

Because of personnel shortages NCOs are working one or two levels ahead of their grade and training. The decision a sergeant in Kosovo makes today may potentially be played over and over on CNN tomorrow.

It is the responsibility demanded of our senior noncommissioned officers to select and train the best who may ultimately be faced with these decisions.



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## It is up to us (NCO Corps) to develop soldiers to be the best soldier and potential sergeant

The NCO has always been the standards bearer for our Army. We should not let an expected shortage of junior NCOs to cause us to lower our standards.

Old soldiers are not the ones who have to live with bad decisions, but the people we leave behind will be left to clean up our mess.

Having high expectations for candidates to be promoted to the NCO corps should be considered the right way to maintain a professional corps.

Those who do not meet the standards or demonstrate the potential deserve to be counseled face-to-face and told their weaknesses and how to improve.

But it is strange that we only do this for semi-centralized promotions. It would be nice that when a soldier gets passed over for promotion to SFC, MSG or SGM that someone who sat on the board would come back and tell them why they were not selected.

But that debate is for another day. Face-to-face counseling by the commander, with chain of command input is the right thing to do.

I agree that we need to fix the sergeant promotion problem, but let's not do so at the expense of a professional noncommissioned officer corps.

If we allow young soldiers to be promoted to sergeant who are not skilled or mature enough yet to handle the inherent responsibility to train our soldiers for war, the price that we pay may be on the battlefields like Pershing's force in Europe or in our post-Vietnam days.

An unprepared specialist today is an unprepared sergeant tomorrow. It is up to all of us to develop the young soldiers under our charge to be the best soldier, and potential sergeant, that we possibly can.

It is up to the senior noncommissioned officer leadership to trust the unit's recommendations for promotions.

However, that can only occur if the senior Army leadership realizes that you cannot build a sergeant overnight, and by forcing unwilling, unable or untrained soldiers to the promotion board will exacerbate the shortage of sergeants.

In the end we all have the same desire, to be the best Army our nation has to offer when the call comes.

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*CSM Elder is assigned to the 541st Maintenance Bn. at Fort Riley, Kan. He has been a contributing writer to The NCO Journal for several years.*

# What is a “Backbone”?

By SGM Kevin Stuart

*There have been many cliches and analogies to describe the role of the Noncommissioned Officer. NCOs have been labeled the foundation of an unit, the leader among soldiers, the movers and shakers. But as stated in our creed, we are the Backbone of the Army and NCOs need to understand what that really means.*

**E**ver since arriving in the 2nd Infantry Division DISCOM, Division Medical Operations Center as the DMOC SGM, one month ago, I have heard the term “Backbone” used several times to describe NCOs, but do we really understand “What a Backbone Is?” The tradition of our NCO Corps has long been called the “Backbone of the Army.” I have heard this phrase many times and on occasions asked my soldiers to define its meaning. This powerful metaphor is more than weak rhetoric, more than just another “buzz word” for leadership, but what is it? I will use my experience, knowledge and background to define its meaning. On many occasions, I have heard the 2ID DISCOM CSM use this word to motivate, counsel, coach and discuss issues with NCO leaders, but again I ask, “What’s A Backbone?”





*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.”*

**--First paragraph of  
The NCO Creed**

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*“SO, IN SIMPLE TERMS, BACKBONE IS UNDERSTOOD  
AS THE STABILIZER AND CRITICAL LINK OF*

Webster’s Dictionary defines “backbone” as the foundation or most substantial or sturdiest part of something.

I commonly use the medical definition (spinal column or spine) to describe “backbone.” The spinal column or spine is the stabilizer of our upper body; it’s basically the strength of our neck and back.

So, in simple terms, “Backbone” is understood as the stabilizer and critical link of our Army.

The NCO Corps is the strength and heart of our great organization (the stabilizer and force in our Army).

The human body with a weak or lack of backbone would deteriorate into paralysis and eventually die.

In understanding the NCOs role as the “backbone” of our organization, we must remember that this metaphor not only refers to our physical characteristic or tangible trait, but also the mental and moral strength as well.

As I describe “What’s A Backbone,” I will refer to the Army’s seven leadership values.

The “Backbone” must be loyal to country, unit, mission, family, soldiers, peers, and seniors alike and not necessarily in that order.

The duty of the “Backbone” is constantly being ready, willing and able to perform the mission, as well as coaching, mentoring, counseling and motivating soldiers (basically taking care of soldiers, while accomplishing mission).

The “Backbone” must treat all people with respect and dignity, both on and off-duty, all the time. This is non-negotiable.

The “Backbone” always puts the needs of the Army, family, soldiers and mission ahead of their own.

The “Backbone” will serve others, instead of being served. The worth of the “Backbone” will continue to bring honor to our NCO Corps. The “Backbone” will honor our country, Army, soldiers, mission and family.

The “Backbone” must never lie, steal, cheat or bring dishonor or disrespect to our Corps.

The “Backbone” must do the right thing, for the right reason, at the right time, for the right people (our soldiers).

The strength of the “Backbone” lies in the courage displayed both mentally and physically.

The “Backbone” must continue to exhibit firmness in mind and must will him/herself in the face of danger or extreme difficulty.

*OUR ARMY. THE NCO CORPS IS THE*

*STRENGTH AND HEART OF OUR*

*GREAT ORGANIZATION*

*(THE STABILIZER AND*

*FORCE IN OUR*

*ARMY).”*

Lastly, the “Backbone” must demonstrate a positive attitude and encourage, inspire and motivate others to do the same.

Attitudes are contagious and can directly or indirectly affect someone’s life and certainly our Army’s mission.

So, “What’s A Backbone?” The “Backbone” is many things, but most importantly, it is the stability and support of our Army.

This metaphoric term, “backbone” implies that we (NCOs) are the strength, stabilizer and lifeline of our Army.

We must continue believing that we can make a difference in any mission, operation and the lives of our soldiers.

We (“The Backbone”) must continue to make positive things happen with a positive mental attitude.

Military and civilian leaders around the world respect the U.S. Army’s Noncommissioned Officer Corps for its ability to take care of its soldiers and accomplishing the mission.

Do you now know, “What’s A Backbone?” The “Backbone” of the Army is a heritage we must never tarnish. The reputation of this metaphoric term “Backbone” must be reinforced by the daily, but genuine display, of our Army’s values.

We must continue to stand by the Army values while carrying those time-honored traditions for many ages to come.

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*SGM Stuart is the Division Medical Operations Center sergeant major at Camp Casey, Korea.*

# Instilling Pride

NCOs who understand the importance of morale and esprit know that instilling pride contributes significantly to combat readiness. - *The NCO Journal/Winter 1993*

**By MSG Michael Sienda**

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**I**'ll never forget the times as a young Ranger of reciting the Ranger Creed in front of my fellow Rangers. We had to memorize all six paragraphs and be prepared to recite it in front of our peers at any time.

After a short time, I realized it was not just the words I memorized, but a true standard and motto (*Rangers Lead the Way*) by those of us who chose to wear the 75th Ranger Scroll Patch and the Ranger Tab.

In one of my previous units, Task Force 160, we also had a creed and a motto: *Night Stalkers Don't Quit*.

The creeds and mottos of these units were an important part of the unit culture, which bound us together as a cohesive team.

In my last unit, we did not have a unit creed.

We consistently told our soldiers they were a select group performing a mission of national importance.

Our motto (Send Me) was commonly used but it lacked a creed to accompany it.

So I decided to take on creating a unit creed as a project. Creeds go back to the ancient warriors. They were developed and written for instilling esprit de corps and unit pride.

The Athenian oath is considered the original Warrior Creed: *"I will not disgrace the soldiers' arms, nor abandon the comrade who stands at my side; but whether alone or with many, I will fight to defend things sacred and profane. I will hand down my country not lessened, but larger and better than I received it."*

Quite often, we as leaders tell our soldiers that they belong to a great unit, with high standards, a proud history, and an important mission.

Why not capture these principles and truths and incorporate them into a unit creed?

The unit creed can increase your soldiers feelings about

being part of a winning team and serve to set standards, common beliefs, and a code of behavior.

Some concepts to keep in mind when writing your unit creed are the importance of your unit's mission, training, professionalism of the soldiers, care of equipment, and expected standards. Five to six paragraphs is probably sufficient.

Beginning each sentence of the paragraph with a letter from your motto or a common unit word will serve as a mnemonic device to assist your soldiers in remembering the creed. A well written creed should speak to your soldiers.

It should cause your soldiers to feel proud and special that they belong to a great unit.

Along with that, the creed should remind them that being special carries a lot of responsibility with high standards of discipline, training, and leadership.

Once you've prepared a good draft, read it to yourself and ask yourself the following questions: Do I feel proud? Am I touching the right buttons?

Does it speak to the fact I'm part of a winning team? Are there standards for me and other soldiers to strive for?

When you can answer these questions, take it to the leadership and ask for their feedback and ideas.

Your unit command sergeant major will be a good source of ideas. Once finalized, you will want to get it out to the soldiers.

Some ideas to consider are: posting it in the unit area, unit intranet, and producing some wallet cards.

History shows that soldiers in combat fight for their fellow soldiers and will live up to the standards their leaders expect from them. Inspire your soldiers and instill a sense of pride in them by developing a unit creed.

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*MSG Sienda is currently a student in Sergeants Major Course Class 51. He also created the unit creed and symbol (next page) for his last unit.*

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# The Eagle and Sword Creed

**S**econd to none, I am the Silent Warrior. I chose a path few will take, by volunteering for the Nation's premier enabling force. I am a true professional, a specially selected and trained airborne soldier serving in a distinct unit with a legacy of unsurpassed operational excellence supporting my nation's most sensitive missions. I am proud to serve in the Loyal Order of the Eagle and Sword.

**E**agerly, I look forward to new missions. My environment requires precision and I anticipate challenges along the way. Risks; I will manage them. Setbacks; I will expect them and continue the mission, knowing they will make me stronger than I was before. Mustering moral courage, I will strive to deliver the highest levels of competence and unconditional loyalty while constantly looking out for my fellow teammates.

**N**o other unit can support the Warfighter better than mine. Tremendous trust and confidence is placed in me by my teammates and leaders. Decisively, I will make the tough decisions within the legal, moral, and ethical boundaries. Ever vigilant, I will do the right thing. I will not let down my fellow teammates nor embarrass the unit.

**D**emanding and expecting the best of myself, I will always remain mission focused, for my profession is tough, exacting, and very unforgiving. I will always keep myself physically strong and mentally fit, ready on a moment's notice, anytime, anywhere.

**M**eticulously I will uphold the high standards and deliver more than expected. Because soldiers like me, not equipment, are the units' most valuable asset. I will always remember that value-added is not measured by my past accomplishments, but what I can bring to the table tomorrow.

**E**ngaged downrange in harms way at the tip of the spear, is where you will find me. I am the eyes and ears of the Warfighter. Recognizing the danger is great, yet I continue to search for the truth. I am trained and ready. I have the right stuff. I am the Silent Warrior.

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**C**reeds go back to the ancient warriors. They were developed and written for instilling esprit de corps and unit pride.

# A talk with Sergeant Major of the Army Jack Tilley about readiness, the role of NCOs, the Army's Vision, and his devotion of developing leaders

**F**or the 472 students beginning Sergeant Major Course Class 51, opening ceremonies resembled an old-fashioned high school pep rally as they were treated to motivational remarks from the Army's 12th Sergeant Major of the Army, Jack L. Tilley. Tilley made his first appearance at the Sergeants Major

Academy in August since being sworn in June 23 as the SMA and he inspired the students with his lighthearted demeanor and his passion for the Noncommissioned Officer Corps. In a career which has spanned more than 30

years, Tilley who entered the Army in 1968 from Vancouver, Wash., never figured on doing much except being a good specialist. He admitted he never worried about getting promoted or "getting out of his lane" and as long as he took care of soldiers, he'd have no problems in the Army. Then he was promoted to sergeant and the rest is history.

As an armored cavalryman, his military biography includes a combat tour in Vietnam and prior to assuming the SMA, he was the command sergeant major to the U.S. Army Central Command at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.

To a remarkable extent, Tilley's actions, commitment to values and service to the Army and nation has helped thousands of soldiers during his career.

He sat down for an interview with *The NCO Journal*, prior to delivering the opening remarks to Sergeants Major Course Class 51, with *Journal* Editor-in-Chief Staff Sgt. Donald Sparks for a wide-ranging conversation.

What follows is an edited and abbreviated version of that dialogue, which took place in August 2000.

***NCOJ* - For the many soldiers, who only know you by name and by your photo which hangs in the company orderly room, tell us about the soldier currently serving as the Army's 12th SMA.**

***Tilley*** - I tell people I'm just an old soldier. I've spent about 60 percent of my time in TO&E units and the other 40 percent in TRADOC units. I'm just a soldier just like you, except I have a different job with a different responsibility. I think I'm an extrovert. I like talking to people and I like communicating with people. The key to success, I believe most of the time, is good communication skills - counseling and sitting down talking to soldiers. I've been doing that for almost 32 years

and I love it. I love trying to help soldiers.

***NCOJ* - What were your first thoughts upon finding out you'd been selected as the Sergeant Major of the Army?**

***Tilley*** - I was surprised. There are a lot of quality noncommissioned officers who were considered for Sergeant Major of the Army and any one could have been selected. I was very shocked and very honored and humbled by the selection. In fact it took a little while for it to set in. I told my wife, Gloria, after I'd been selected. I came home and said, "Gloria you know I've been selected as the twelfth Sergeant Major of the Army." She said, "How many people are there in the Army?" I said, "Well including the Reserves and the National Guard, and active duty, I'd probably say there are about a million soldiers." She then said, "How many congratulations notes did you receive?" I said, "About 300." And she said, "You've got a lot of work to do," so that was very humbling for me.

***NCOJ* - What's been your mainstay over the years as far as developing soldiers?**

***Tilley*** - Getting around soldiers and getting around noncommissioned officers, for me, is uplifting. I draw from it and I feel so good when I get around them. I can be tired, working 24 hours, and I'll go out and see a group of soldiers and I just feel strong. It gives me that extra power and energy - in fact, even when I run. If I run by myself, I'd probably run a 12-minute mile; yet if I run with soldiers, I'll kick it up and run an 8-minute mile. That's what makes me feel good. It also makes me feel good if I can help them and again, I go back to communication. It's talking to them and



NCOJ: For the many soldiers, who only know you by name ... tell us about the soldier currently serving as the Army's 12th Sergeant Major of the Army?

Tilley: I tell people I'm an old soldier...the key to success... is good communication skills - counseling and sitting down talking to soldiers. I love trying to help soldiers.

taking the time to make sure you hear their concerns. Can I help all their concerns and can I do all the things they need me to do?

Absolutely not, but I want to listen to them and I want to understand what's going on. I didn't realize it, until I got into this office, the things that the Sergeant Major of the Army had to do. This is a different level for me and nobody ever trained me to do this. They trained me at all the other levels and I think I'm pretty capable, but they didn't train me to testify in front of

**soldiers. Although recently privatization has started at Fort Hood, what other initiatives are being looked at for quality housing for soldiers?**

*Tilley* - Privatization is looked at all the time. Commanders are right on top of the things they need to do, as far as trying to fix the quarters.

Because of our mission and because of the things that are going on in the military, we need to make sure that we focus a lot harder on the

***NCOJ* - Although the pay gap has narrowed a little from senior enlisted to officers, do you expect the increases to keep going? Also because the salaries and benefits for private sector workers has increased because of the economy, do you foresee raises for servicemembers in the future?**

*Tilley* - Oh absolutely! That's another board that I sit on. The Army, DoD, and leaders in Congress are really focused on that. Our senior leaders are focused on improving pay for everybody - soldiers, noncommissioned officers and officers.

I think one of the big things that's going to happen, is pay increasing a half of percent above of the economic cost index. That's going to be helpful for us.

We're staying focused to make sure that if we're going to have a quality force, we pay for that quality force.

Another thing we need to do is make sure we educate soldiers about investing. I'm not trying to sell any kind of program to anyone, but soldiers need to sit down and use their money wisely.

Soldiers need to understand how they should invest and start a program, at a very young age; that will assist them, when they reach my age, for their retirement.

The unfortunate thing, about most of the people in the Army, is that we don't think about retirement until we're about two years out. And then we worry if we have enough for a house or do we have enough money, so let's start educating soldiers while they're young.

***NCOJ* - In a recent article by *Army Times*, it mentioned that**

photos by Master Sgt. David Schad



“ Getting around soldiers and getting around noncommissioned officers, for me, is uplifting...It's talking to them and taking time to make sure I hear their concerns.”

Congress. So I have to make sure I get out and find out what the concerns are of the soldiers. And a lot of times they talk to me about pay, retirement benefits, quality of life and TRICARE. Those are the four top issues.

***NCOJ* - Concerning Quality of Life, military housing has always been an issue for**

quality of life for the soldiers and their families. And I'll tell you, that I've surely been impressed since I've been here at the Pentagon about the things that people want to do to try to make it better for our soldiers. We're a large organization and things don't happen in a week's time. It takes a little time; it takes years to try to make it better.

**the Army has finally fully manned its most severe combat readiness problem - unit personnel shortages. Despite recruiting soldiers to fill the vacancies, some units and MOS specialties are still suffering retention problems. What's going to be your strategy to fix the manning issue so the divisions can be prepared to go to combat with the required personnel?**

*Tilley* - I think we just need to make sure that we don't break the Army. We need to make sure there is a balance. Keep your leaders informed and let them know if you think we have cut down to a level where it's going to start affecting our training. My issue is to make sure that if we're cutting too deep somewhere we're placing emphasis, that we're not hurting the quality of life and we're not hurting the soldiers.

***NCOJ* - For the first time in several years, Recruiting Command has said it will meet its recruiting mission. In your view, how do we keep selling the Army back to the American people so we won't suffer another recruiting drought?**

*Tilley* - I am pumped up about that! We need to tell our story. We need to tell all the things that we're doing in the military. One of the initiatives that the Secretary of the Army has just announced, University Access On-Line, there is going to be more than \$500 million dedicated to that program through 2005. That's a good way for soldiers to get their degree. The program wants to ensure when a new soldier comes into the Army that after three or four years they attain an associate's

degree. And if they already have an associate's, try to attain their bachelor's or master's degree. Those are the kind of things we need. The other thing I think we need is to make sure we have people taking care of each other. Talk to each other and make sure we understand what our concerns are.

***NCOJ* - Last fiscal year the Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff presented the Army's new Vision of Transformation. The Vision states, "We**

may not fully understand yet is that transformation involves a lot more than two brigades up at Fort Lewis - it's about the future and what kind of Army we'll have for decades to come. We will continue to man, modernize and train our current forces throughout the transformation.

We were very fortunate to have six months to get ready to fight the war in Desert Storm and Desert Shield, but we can't be sure if we'll have that kind of time to get ready again.

The interim brigades we put



**“Because of our mission and because of the things that are going on in the military, we need to make sure that we focus a lot harder on the quality of life for the soldiers and their families.”**

**will develop leaders at all levels and in all components who can prosecute war decisively and who can negotiate and leverage effectively in those missions requiring engagement skills.” Define how this statement applies to the NCO Corps and the NCO's role in making the Vision come to life.**

*Tilley* - One thing some soldiers

together at Lewis and other posts will be deployable and fully operational units and no doubt do a lot for readiness.

But, they will also provide us a focus as we design the objective force. We shouldn't get too wrapped up on the equipment aspect of transformation. The vehicles are key, but so are the people.

We will continue to need



sharp, quick-thinking leaders. The variety of missions and volume of information they'll be given will place a lot of responsibility on them.

Transformation could cause as many changes in training and developing leaders in our schools as tactics and equipment. The result will be a future that lets us put a more powerful force on the ground faster, and that will save a lot of lives. These are interesting times, and sergeants need to stay open

**during the past 10 years. What's the message we need to tell Congress in order to fund the vehicles and equipment needed to make the Army's vision a reality?**

*Tilley* - We need to make sure we educate Congress. We need to make sure we tell the Army's story about what we're doing. A lot of times people don't understand what we're doing in the military. They're not aware of some of the missions we're

was preparing for the firefighting mission. During the interview he said he wasn't trained to fight fires and he was then asked what his impression was of the mission.

He replied, "When I enlisted in the Army, I swore to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. And that's exactly what I'm doing. Whether it's fires or hurricanes, I'm protecting my country." So the focus of the Army isn't just wars, it's not just peacekeeping, although those are important. There's also going to be firefighting and hurricane assistance missions. So the Army is trying to do it all - taking care of America anyway we can.

***NCOJ* - There have been a series of articles in several publications describing how basic training isn't the same as your "father's experience" and that it has made weaker soldiers. How do you debate this so-called myth?**

*Tilley* - I've been getting a lot of comments about soldiers coming out of the training units and many leaders are saying that they're softer soldiers. Leaders have to understand that it's a newer environment out there and a different culture.

Kids are sitting behind a computer and are doing a lot of things with them. They're not out as much doing the kind of things, such as exercising, like we use to do. So be a little compassionate, look new soldiers in the eye, explain what the standards are and tell them what you expect of them. That's what we need to do as a Corps.

As a first sergeant and sergeant major, I always

photos by Master Sgt. David Schad



“ The focus of the Army isn't just wars, it's not just peacekeeping...there's going to be firefighting and hurricane assistance. So the Army is trying to do it all - taking care of America anyway we can.”

minded, keep updated on transformation and be thinking about how it will impact the NCO Corps.

***NCOJ* - The need for high mobility is going to be critical to the Army's vision. In a chart featured by *USA Today*, it depicted fewer dollars being spent on the military's budget**

involved in. But, here we go back to communication again. Let's be honest and straightforward and tell people what our missions are so they understand the commitment that we have to the United States of America.

You know I heard a great quote from a young soldier from one of the battalions at Fort Hood being interviewed as he

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recommended an Article 15 as a last resort and only after I'd used counseling and other methods. With some soldiers, there may come a time when an Article 15 is what's needed to either get them going in the right direction or have them released from active duty.

***NCOJ*** - Recently I read a quote that states, "Tradition cannot be inherited, and if you want it, you must obtain it through great labor." Well as you know our Army is more than 225 years old and NCOs have played a vital role in its history. Explain your feelings when you reflect on the NCO Corps since you first came in the Army.

***Tilley*** - Since I first came in the Army, the NCO Corps has been outstanding. I have had mentors and developers that have counseled me all throughout my military career and that still continues on.

There are soldiers who stick out in my mind such as my first sergeant when I was a platoon sergeant. He had a neat way of sitting down with me and telling me what was right and wrong.

At Fort Knox, the post sergeant major had a great way of mentoring you and making sure you did things right.

There is no big difference between now and then with the NCO Corps. I think the development process still works. I think the mentoring still works.

I think that every noncommissioned officer should put their arm around a young soldier and try to make sure that he or she tries to stay in the military. I think, that

sometimes we have a problem, in that we forget about some of the basic fundamentals and not continuing to focus on developing soldiers.

We also get paid as NCOs to assist and develop officers. We have to make sure that we're communicating with our officers. They plan and we execute.

***NCOJ*** - Do you have any final thoughts you'd like to share with soldiers?



“ Be proud of who you are everyday of the week because we have a great Army... and we just don't need to forget that.”

***Tilley*** - The final thing that I'd like to tell them is that we have a great Army and we have a great NCO Corps.

I'm going to continue to work on pay, quality of life, TRICARE and benefits.

The one message that I'd like to put out to everyone is to stay focused. Stay in your lane and understand what we're doing and be proud of who you are everyday of the week because we

have a great Army.

The one thing that I've been telling NCOs is that I need for them to ratchet it up and tighten up on those basic fundamentals of soldiering - physical fitness, counseling, mentoring. NCOs lead from the front and not from the back.

I believe in standards. I would just ask the NCO Corps, not to say that they're doing a bad job, to get out of the 'I don't see mode.'

We have a lot of NCOs

walking around and just sort of walking by mistakes. I tell people we've got to stop that. We have to ratchet it up on the standards.

To tell you the truth, I'm just pumped up about everything. I've been in the military for a long time and I think sometimes people forget how strong the NCO and Officer Corps really are. We have a great Army, and we just don't need to ever forget that.

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# BUILDING & INSTILLING ARMY VALUES

By MSG Bruce Barnes



photo by Staff Sgt. Donald Sparks

*Ask any soldier to recite the Army's Seven Core values, the author writes, and without hesitation they can say Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. Now he suggests is it enough to simply publish these values for all to see or do we actually demonstrate them for our soldiers?*

**S**ince the beginning of our nation more than 200 years ago, our military has experienced many great technological achievements (from the first steam-powered tank to digital warfare).

However, no matter how great our technology, we are still

far behind in the field of ethics.

The moral problems facing our nation today present one of the single greatest challenges to our country's future. With the Army's implementation of the seven core values, our leadership has demonstrated its commitment to

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conquering the ethical threat that plagues our nation.

But, is it enough to simply publish these values for all to see? As leaders, we must not only read and understand these values, we must demonstrate them in our character.

When soldiers are asked if they know the Army's seven core values, they answer quickly: "loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honesty, integrity, and personal courage."

When the same soldiers are asked how they incorporate these values into their character, they get a bewildered look on their faces.

I believe there are five steps we can use to build these values into our character - DECIDE, CONFRONT, PRACTICE, MENTOR, AND REFLECT.

Just as in building a house, one must start with the foundation first.

Through the process of deciding, confronting, practicing, mentoring and reflecting, we can build a strong ethical foundation from the ground up.

By acting in a manner that is consistent with your personal values, you begin to form a habit.

A habit is defined as an acquired pattern of behavior that has become almost involuntary as a result of frequent repetition.

To assist in making a habit of living your values, mentally rehearse or visualize what you would do if you were confronted with a moral dilemma.

By visualizing your values, you can mentally prepare yourself before making ethical decisions.

## **PRACTICE**

The best way to learn anything is to perform, or practice, the skill you are trying to develop. As leaders, we must be aware of how our values impact others. Your soldiers watch your actions on a daily basis. They deserve to be led by a strong ethical leader.

Alexander Hamilton once said "those who do not stand for something may fall for anything."

*With the Army's implementation of the seven core values, our leadership has demonstrated its commitment to conquering the ethical threat that plagues our nation.*

## **DECIDE**

The first step in building a strong foundation is to decide upon what values are most important to you. When determining personal values, it is helpful to imagine if today was the last day of your life, and you had 24 hours to live.

Then ask the question, "What would I spend my last hours doing?" The answer to this question will help identify what you value the most.

When you place all of your values together, you will begin to see your purpose in life.

A purpose is not a goal. A purpose is a general direction or path you follow while attaining your goals.

A sense of purpose will focus your actions on living your values. For instance, if one of your values is family, then choose a goal that will help you to improve upon this value.

Next, write down your goals so you can ensure your daily actions support your values.

## **CONFRONT**

The second step is to confront difficult situations as if you already embrace the values you had previously decided to adopt.

## **MENTOR**

Mentoring is the key to implementing the Army's core values. The most effective way to teach is by example.

However, once you have mastered your personal values, you need to help develop those of your subordinates. Then, look for those values in your subordinates.

Once discovered, immediately praise and encourage the behavior. It is important to note that mentoring values is not preaching values. Mentoring is the process of leading by example and rewarding positive behavior.

## **REFLECT**

The final step in building a strong ethical foundation is to reflect on your personal habits. Ask the question, "Am I living my life in accordance with my values?"

If the answer is yes, then you should have attained many of your goals. If you have not made satisfactory progress toward your goals, you need to recheck your road map (goals) once again to determine if your actions reflect your purpose and direction in life.

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*This article is a reprint from the Summer edition of the NCO Journal which appeared on the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy's website.*

# The Meaning of an Indefinite Reenlistment

*One year ago staff sergeants and above with ten years of service were allowed to reenlist indefinitely. Although many NCOs have sworn to continue serving the Nation, some had second thoughts afterwards. The question arises, ‘what happens if someone changes their mind and wants to get out of the service?’ NCOs need to understand what it means when they raise their right hand to repeat the oath.*

**By CSM James Clifford**

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**I**n 1999 Army Regulation 601-280 was changed to allow staff sergeants and above, with ten years of service to reenlist indefinitely. That monumental change was seen as a victory for noncommissioned officer professionalism. For years NCOs asked why officers were allowed to attain indefinite status but enlisted soldiers were expected to reaffirm their commitment every two to six years.

Were not NCOs just as committed and professional, in duty performance if not by definition, as officers? The answer was, “Of course, we are just as committed and professional.”

So, why then were we required to raise our right hand and reaffirm that we were ready to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, and that we would obey those leaders appointed over us every two plus years?

There were no good answers to these questions. Finally, common sense prevailed and regulations changed to allow NCOs to attain indefinite status at the very point in their career where their commitment and dedication could not be questioned.

Now, I am finding that the indefinite status is not necessarily a popular program among some NCOs. NCOs who are about to reenlist, or who have just reenlisted, have expressed concerns to me about the future.

Some of them are worried that when -- note I said when, not if -- they decide to separate from the Army they will not be allowed to.

NCOs in shortage Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) are worried that they will be denied the opportunity

to leave the service.

They are telling me that as they near the ten-year mark in their career they are unsure that they will want to stay in the Army for an additional ten years.

Some say that they may choose to get out now, rather than put themselves in a situation where they may be required to serve unwillingly. To them I only have two words, “Good Bye!” This is a volunteer Army. We don't want anyone who isn't willing to serve.

I empathize with the burden that these young NCOs carry. It was easier for me. Every few years all I had to do was reenlist and move on.

I was not worn down by the daily reflection on whether I did the right thing by reenlisting or not. I made my decision, and I freed myself from the thought that maybe I made a mistake.

I did not have to think about it again until the Expiration of Time and Service (ETS) date on my identification card drew near. NCOs who reup in indefinite status are faced with the possibility that there's a job out there that is better for them and their families.

NCOs who are now indefinite and can in most cases leave the Army at any time question whether they made the right decision. It is ironic that for some, the idea of indefinite status is more constraining than having an ETS date.

Those of us with an ETS date don't have to think of the possibility of what is on the outside until just before it is time to reup again. The indefinite NCO has to think about it daily. That seems to be a burden to some.

This brings up the problem; if you are about to reup for



photo by Staff Sgt. Donald Sparks

*What was once a popular program among some NCOs, now has some unsure if indefinite reenlistment is the right way to reaffirm their commitment to the U.S. Army.*

indefinite status and you are worried about the Army not letting you go, should you reenlist? Maybe not.

I say that because if, after ten or more years of service, you are still wondering if you will stay in until you are retirement eligible, you have not developed the long term commitment necessary to be a soldier.

Your level of commitment at this point in your career is the most important thing. The Army has invested many years and countless dollars in your development as a soldier. At this point in your career the institution recognizes your choice to be a career soldier by giving you the same status as professional officers.

True, some NCOs, just as some officers, will choose to depart before retirement, but that should be in rare and special cases. To NCOs who are about to make the decision regarding reenlistment into indefinite status I say, “think about it.” Think hard, and think long.

Are you committed to the Army, or are you using the Army as a place to hang your hat until something better comes along? If you look in the mirror and you see a soldier, then reenlist and don't look back.

If you don't see a soldier, then leave the Army and don't look back. In either case, make a decision and do not regret it. If you are in indefinite status and you are continually looking for and wondering about other job opportunities

you have misunderstood the meaning of the indefinite reenlistment.

Indefinite status is not the first step toward leaving the Army. It is the next step toward completing your Army career. It is not designed to ease your transition. It is a symbolic recognition that you are a committed soldier.

NCOs in indefinite status are no longer saddled with the label of first term, second term, etc...

Those NCOs are recognized as professionals who will continue to lead our Army for the next decade, if not longer.

When my ETS date draws near about one year from now, I will be proud to reenlist for the final time in my career. After more than 25 years I will finally be able to carry an ID card that truly reflects my level of commitment. For the first time, in the Expiration Date block it will say “indefinite.” That will be a proud day in my career.

NCOs...if you are already in indefinite status, look upon that with proud reflection on what it really means. If you are nearing reenlistment think deeply about it; embrace it as a rite of passage that is only bestowed upon the truly committed. If you cannot do that, I thank you for your service and wish you luck in your civilian career.

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*CSM Clifford is the command sergeant major of the 63rd Ordnance Battalion (EOD) located in Fort Dix, N.J.*

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# What Makes An Effective Leader In Today's Army?

*ARMY VALUE - Selfless Service; Put the welfare of the Nation, the Army and our subordinates before our own. The Army can't function except as a team, and for a team to work, the individual has to give up self-interest for the good of the whole. (Ref; FM 22-100 para 2-22)*

**By SGT David Ruiz**

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**W**hat makes an effective leader in today's Army?

From my experiences and during my career in the Army, I feel one leadership trait stands out above the rest— selfless service. Selfless service is a trait that all leaders must possess. The necessity for selfless service in today's Army is critical. I believe selfless service guides and pushes a noncommissioned officer to the next limit; thus causing a leader to place the needs of soldiers above his/her own.

The Army preaches selflessness as a desired quality of a soldier. It's having a strong desire to thrive, not self-centered, but selfless.

Selfless ambition is a positive attitude that uses an individual's talent to benefit others. For this NCO, that is a very important issue.

This quality transcends and progresses from the individual soldier all the way up the NCO support channel, from a 4-man fire-team through the squad, platoon, company levels and in turn spread to a division, corps and our Army.

By not being ego centered, our Army becomes stronger as a whole, when our future leaders experience, understand, and live this element of leadership responsibility.

As a leader and a soldier of soldiers, I realize that NCOs are the foundation and the backbone

who will mentor our Army's future leaders.

Soldiers are the most important assets of today's Army. Without outstanding soldiers, the Army will not meet the expectations that our world requires for the 21st Century.

As leaders, we must display positive attitude, set the example, uphold "The Creed" and live up to our Corps' values.

By understanding and applying selfless service into our way of life, our Army will be more professional, efficient and effective, thereby able to carry out the missions our nation entrusts to us.

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*Sgt. Ruiz is assigned to the Combat Support Coordination Team 2 (CSCT#2) in Taegu, Korea.*

**D**estined to become a classic of war reporting, **BLACK HAWK DOWN** is

Mark Bowden's brilliant account of the longest sustained firefight involving American troops since the Vietnam War.

On October 3, 1993, about a hundred elite U.S. soldiers were dropped by helicopter into the teeming market in the heart of Mogadishu, Somalia.

Their mission was to abduct two top lieutenants of a Somali warlord and return to base.

It was supposed to take an hour. Instead they found themselves pinned down through a long and terrible night fighting against thousands of heavily armed Somalis.

The following morning, 18 Americans were dead and more than 70 had been badly injured.

Bowden, an award-winning journalist, captured this harrowing ordeal through the eyes of the young soldiers and the Somalis who fought that day.

Interviewing people on both sides, and accessing thousands of pages of Army records, including still-classified videotapes, radio transcripts and audiotapes, Bowden has written a riveting story that captures heroism, courage, and the brutality of battle.

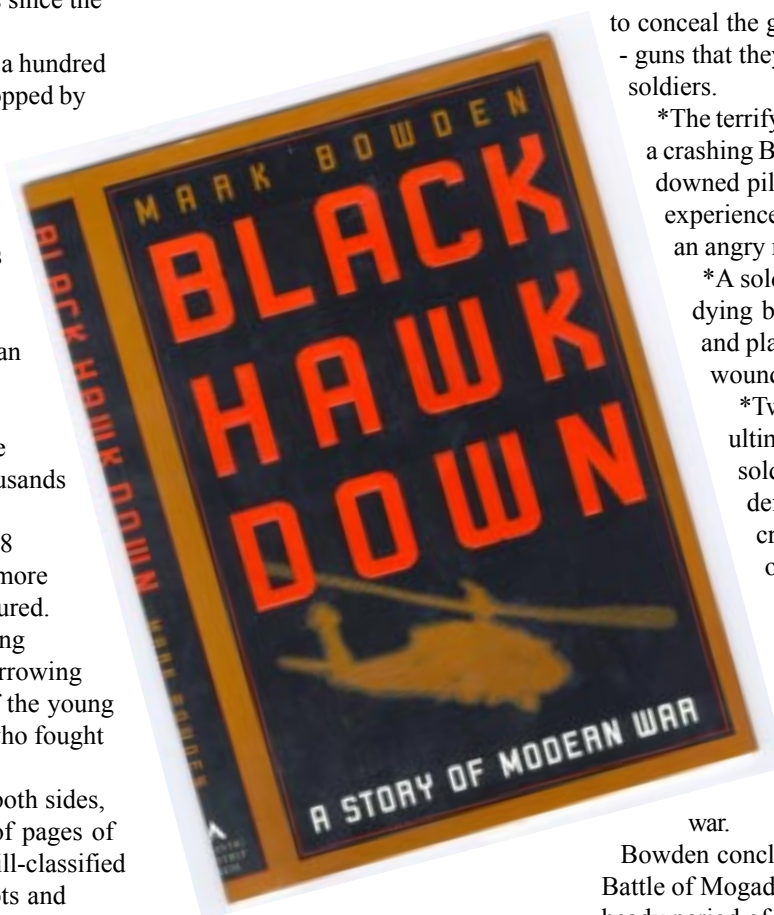
From the beginning, this mission was risky.

The American soldiers were going into the heart of the enemy stronghold at the worst possible time.

Not only were they going in broad daylight, minimizing the benefits of the technology available to them at night, but they were landing at a time of day when the young Somalis were pumped up on khat, a drug that made

## BLACK HAWK DOWN

BY SGM GREG  
KENDALL



BLACK HAWK DOWN  
A STORY OF MODERN  
WAR

By Mark Bowden  
Atlantic Monthly Press;  
March 1, 2000; \$24.00

them violent and fearless.

From the moment the first soldiers hit the ground, the plan went horribly wrong.

As a result of his painstaking

research, Bowden is able to deliver an astonishing blow-by-blow account that includes many unforgettable scenes:

\*Soldiers erecting a bunker around a dying comrade in order to disarm the live grenade embedded in his torso.

\* Women in the streets using babies to conceal the guns they are carrying - guns that they turn on American soldiers.

\*The terrifying view from inside a crashing Black Hawk, and a downed pilot's out of body experience as he is tormented by an angry mob.

\*A soldier retrieving his dying buddy's severed hand and placing it in the wounded man's pocket.

\*Two brave (and ultimately doomed) Delta soldiers volunteering to defend four downed crewmen from hundreds of encircling Somalis.

**BLACK HAWK DOWN** is a riveting look at the terror and exhilaration of combat and the irreversible consequences of

war.

Bowden concludes by saying "The Battle of Mogadishu ended a brief heady period of post Cold War innocence.

It ended a time when America and its allies felt they could sweep venal dictators and vicious tribal violence from the planet as easily and relatively bloodlessly as Saddam Hussein was swept from Kuwait.

Mogadishu has had a profound cautionary influence on U.S. military policy ever since."

SGM Kendall is the former Editor-in-Chief of the *NCO Journal*.



# WANTED: Writers

## No Experience Necessary

By SSG Donald Sparks

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**N**ine years ago *The NCO Journal* made its debut to the United

States Army and it made an immediate impact on the men and women wearing chevrons across the world. During its span the magazine published more than 350 articles on a variety of topics ranging from improving your PT score, to the history of the NCO Corps, and protecting the force. Immediately, noncommissioned officers answered the call by then-Sergeant Major of the Army Bill Gates to “energize ourselves to writing and submitting recommended topics for publication.”

The birth of *The NCO Journal* is a result of the finest Noncommissioned Officer Corps in the world. Our competence, professionalism, commitment and responsibility is unmatched by any other army.

Fastforward to today and the role of the NCO is still key to the Army’s success. As we increase in strength, more soldiers will advance in the ranks and ultimately be promoted to sergeant.

My fellow noncommissioned officers, in order for us to maximize the potential of these leaders, it is imperative that we pass on the knowledge, skills, expertise and experience to our own.

*The NCO Journal* is a valuable tool we can use to ensure that our Corps remains strong through leader development. *The NCO Journal* exists to provide information to increase NCO awareness, knowledge, and understanding of NCO professional development.

That’s where I need your help.

*The NCO Journal* is our publication and for it to become a success, your input, your contributions and your pen and pad is needed.

Share your knowledge with the next generation of noncommissioned officers and officers alike. We talk on a daily basis of how we can improve a facet of training or ‘what we would do if we were in charge.’ So write it on paper.

*The NCO Journal* needs your manuscripts, your articles,

your photos, your voice. No journalism or writing experience is necessary. We’ll take care of the editing process.

All NCOs - active, Reserve, National Guard, retired - are owners of this magazine. With that in mind, tell us what you want so we can work for you. You are the stockholder.

The future looks good for *The NCO Journal*. Our themes for this fiscal year are: Spring - Training/Readiness; Summer - Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES); Fall - NCO/Officer Relationship.

Now is the time to write and submit articles for those future editions. Keep in mind the deadline to the printer is about one month before the issue date and, ideally, we should receive your submissions about a month before then. Articles for the Spring (March) issue should arrive no later than January.

Also, earlier this year, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki released his recommended professional reading list for all leaders. Upon reading one of the proposed books, tell us what you think about it and we’ll use it as a book review.

In closing, the success of the journal rests with us. My fellow noncommissioned officers, let’s put pen to pad and develop our Corps.

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