

COUNSELING

MENTORSHIP



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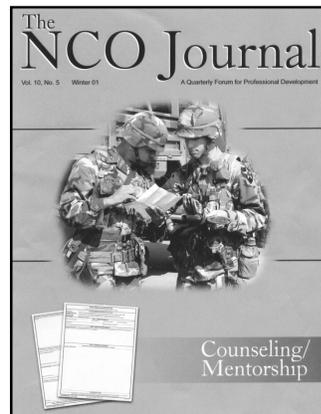
ISSUE

In our first issue since the tragedies that have haunted our nation, there is no doubt that our Army and its NCO Corps will be ready when called into action. The reason why our NCO Corps is the best in the world is because of a long tradition of mentoring and developing leaders. From the time a recruit raises his right hand to take the oath to defend our Nation and up to the time a soldier climbs the ladder up the Noncommissioned Officer Education System, he has been mentored and counseled along the way.

And that's why the theme for this edition of the *NCO Journal* is appropriate as we prepare for days of uncertainty in the future.

However, one thing is definitely certain. The time will come when the entire world will see firsthand the benefits of why we counsel and mentor soldiers - to prepare leaders to win on the battlefield.

Throughout this edition you, the reader, will see the words *counseling* and *mentoring*. In Sgt. 1st Class David Major's article he takes the time to ask junior soldiers 'what exactly is an NCO' in their own words. Through his face-to-face discussions with soldiers, he realizes that as



NCOs, we wear many hats when developing soldiers.

Former NCO, now chief warrant officer, Richard Little reveals the impact of two staff sergeants who laid the foundation for success when he was a young specialist and praises them for all they've done for him.

In our interview, Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony J. Williams shares his views on the significance of counseling and mentoring prior to his departure from the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy to take the reigns as the Training & Doctrine Command command sergeant major.

Williams recalls a time when counseling wasn't so popular in the Army, but today is regarded as one of the primary tools used to develop and groom soldiers.

Following Williams' article, Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel R. Wood, goes into detail why it is important to allow junior NCOs and soldiers to make and learn from their mistakes. He stresses particularly for senior leaders not to micro-manage or create an atmosphere of zero-defects.

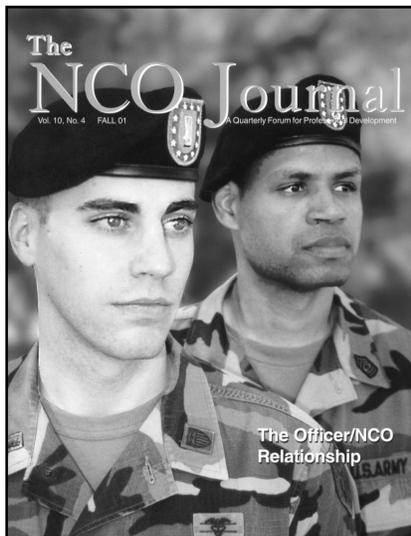
Our Book Review by Capt. Eloy Cuevas depicts the heroic and gallant efforts of World War II veteran Robert Bowen in the book, *Fighting With The Screaming Eagles*. Bowen's personal stories chronicles his time while serving with the 401st Glider Regiment as part of the 101st Airborne Division.

In the wake of the terrorists attacks, hopefully this edition of the *NCO Journal* will provide our NCO Corps a renewed spirit to mentor, counsel, and develop our soldiers into tomorrow's future leaders.

Finally as I depart the *NCO Journal* on permanent change of station, I hope this publication has brought back some pride and enthusiasm to the NCO Corps. The honor has been all mine for serving all of you. Thank you for your support and as always, remember to keep 'putting pen to pad.'

-The Editor-in-Chief

Letters



MORE NCO SCHOOLS

Since we are the most advanced military in the world today, I have some concerns that I would like to share with you. Although our NCO Corps is strong, I feel that we need to get more training and schools like the officers get.

The Army's NCOES allows only PLDC, BNCOC, ANCO, Battle Staff NCO Course (optional), First Sergeants Course (optional) and the Sergeants Major Course (optional) for NCOs.

However officers are given the opportunity CAS3, CGSC, Army War College, National War College, Armed Forces Industrial College (optional), Defense Intelligence College (optional), Army Management Staff College (optional) and the Armed Forces Staff College (optional) just to name a few.

My point is that we are suppose to be "One Army," but look at the variety of colleges the officers get to attend on operational warfare, planning, etc.

I'm not saying that NCOs are not capable but we are capable and willing

to meet the challenges to attend these service colleges. I would suggest that we either make more schools available to well qualified NCOs or make the comparable schools available at our NCO Academies.

SSG Adam M. Drake
223rd Maintenance Company
Dallas, Texas

MORE JOURNAL PRAISE

I just finished reading the Summer issue of the *NCO Journal*. I believe that you guys are right on target.

We need to get the NCO Corps back on line. Don't let a few mistakes bother you. It should be okay to make mistakes as long as we learn from them, this is a very important lesson that we need to teach our junior NCOs.

It appears to me that too often NCO naysayers are afraid to let their juniors make mistakes for fear that they will look bad. This type of attitude really sends the wrong signal to our soldiers. Lets make all of the mistakes now so that we are prepared to make the right decisions when it counts.

Air Assault and keep up the great work.

SFC Joseph Jacobs
Fort Lee, Va.

KEEP OFFICERS IN LOOP

I thoroughly enjoyed MSG Blair's article in the Spring '01 edition of the *NCO Journal* (Training). I would, however, like to bring additional consideration to this argument.

Too many times throughout my career I have heard NCOs hide behind the "That's NCO business" line to keep information from their officers.

I have found this line and attitude to be contradictory to the good working relationship between officers and NCOs. As NCOs we must keep our officers informed of all that is going on with our/their soldiers.

In keeping them informed (and in their allowing us to take care of soldiers at the lowest level) we build a trust that can only end in a team.

This style of teamwork has been extremely effective in my dealings with the officers I work for/with and I encourage others to try it.

If they (officers) trust you, you will have the leeway you need to do your job.

SFC Thomas P. Ransford
88th Military Police Detachment
Camp Zama, Japan

FROM THE EDITOR

Many requests come from the field asking for personal subscriptions to the Journal. Currently the magazine is only available through request from the Government Printing Office.

For more information on how to receive the Journal, contact Rosita Effinger at DSN 328-0542.

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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COUNSELING

LESSONS LEARNED

Think hard for what's right when you counsel a soldier - the right words could stay with him for life -- CSM Matthew Lee "Bridge the Gap." Engineer, No.3, 1987, p. 3

By 1SG Kenneth O. Musselwhite

Very few people possess an innate ability to counsel others.

It is a skill learned through study and experience. FM 22-100, *Army Leadership*, is a great starting point but simply reading a book will not prepare you to guide your soldiers' careers. You must apply the principles outlined in the manual and gain experience by both giving and receiving counseling. My first experience with counseling soldiers remains a vivid picture in my mind. I was a newly assigned sergeant in my first leadership position at Fort Riley, Kan.

My platoon did counseling as part of payday activities and the platoon sergeant checked the counselings before releasing the platoon. I was eager to perform well so I prepared the counseling statements beforehand and gave them as directed.

After I completed counseling each of my soldiers I took the signed forms into the platoon sergeant's office for him to review. He read the first couple, crumpled all of them into a ball and threw it at me. He said, "Nobody walks on water. Go back and tell them where they can improve and how to do it."

I learned a very important lesson that day. My platoon sergeant's verbal counseling gave me an insight I had not thought of before. If I don't tell a soldier he or she is not meeting a standard I cannot expect improvement. This first lesson has paid off ever since.

My platoon sergeant taught me this lesson early on, but he and a multitude of other NCOs made sure my education continued.

The next lesson taught was on the benefit of conducting regular counseling no matter what else may be ongoing.

During deployments, field exercises, or whatever mission arises, soldiers still need effective counseling to let them know how they are doing.

Sporadic counseling, given when everyone has time, leaves soldiers wondering if counseling is really important or if it's just done to pass time in garrison.

Soldiers given counseling regularly will continuously improve and will understand the importance of it when they become the leaders.

As much as regular counseling is important, the absence of my next lesson would have drastically offset any benefit. I learned the importance of active listening.

My memories of the counseling I received as a soldier were not all that great. If I was even given counseling, it was usually from a squad leader who gave it because he or she was meeting a requirement.

I was normally called into the office to sign the counseling statement while he or she talked on the phone or completed some other project. There was little, if any, discussion about the content of the statement.

I was floored the first time a counselor sat me down to



photo by Staff Sgt. Steve Faulisi

OPPORTUNITY COUNSELING: Soldiers need effective counseling no matter the scenario to know how they are doing.

discuss my performance. Wanting to know what I thought had been unheard of up to that point. Someone actually listened to me.

He even made recommendations for achieving my goals. I have since learned from giving counseling that you learn a lot more when you focus on the person instead of the magazine article you read earlier in the day or what is on the computer monitor.

I was taught another lesson from a first sergeant while serving a tour in Korea. He called me in to schedule my counseling session. He gave me time to prepare for the counseling before the session started.

I immediately incorporated this into my counseling program. Being able to gather my thoughts before I received counseling gave me time to think about what I had done or not done since my last counseling and also gave me a chance to look at upcoming training to set goals for the future.

My last lesson was hammered home with the release of the Developmental Counseling Form. I had been given counseling and called back to sign a statement after the counselor wrote it but had also been given a prewritten counseling statement to follow along with during a

counseling session. I was an advocate of the first method but could find nothing written that stated either was preferred over the other. The summary of counseling instructions on the Developmental Counseling Form makes prewritten counseling statements as obsolete as the old counseling statement.

Recording the key points as the session is conducted or immediately after allows the participants to explore unforeseen subjects and include them in the statement. This benefits both parties.

All the lessons that I had did not make me an effective counselor. It took years of practice and I continue to pick up bits of helpful information with each counseling session I sit in regardless if I am giving or getting the counseling.

The key to good counseling is to learn all you can about how to conduct an effective session. Study Appendix C in FM 22-100 to learn the basics, glean what you can out of every counseling you are given, and treat each counseling session you give as a means to improve.

1st Sgt. Musselwhite is assigned to C Company, 1st Battalion, 11th Aviation Regiment at Fort Rucker, Ala.



photo by Spc. Jon Creese

ONE HAT FITS ALL

CLOSELY RELATED TO TRAINING IS THE CONCEPT OF MENTORING. TO BE AN EFFECTIVE MENTOR, YOU NEED THE EXPERIENCE AND WISDOM OF YOUR YEARS. YOU ALSO HAVE TO CARE. MENTORING CAN TAKE PLACE ANYWHERE. IT IS A KEY WAY TO LEAD AND STRENGTHEN ARMY VALUES -- DA PAM 600-25, *US ARMY NCOPD GUIDE*

By SFC David Major

While walking through the halls of the Army Medical Department Center & School at Ft. Sam Houston one day, I decided to find ten soldiers at random and ask this straightforward question, "What is an NCO?"

I did not have a certain response in mind. One soldier said an NCO is like his mother, nagging about the cleanliness of his room or making sure homework was done on time. Another said the NCO is a person she looked to for answers about anything and everything.

Yet another said NCOs make things happen and take care of business. Only one soldier had anything remotely negative to say. He felt his NCO is someone who "gives out counseling statements all the time." I did not ask this soldier to elaborate!

Not surprisingly, most answered that an NCO “is a leader.” In fact, none of these soldier’s representations are wrong. An NCO is a leader, a counselor, a source for information, and maybe even a nagging mother.

We are also role models, trainers, and advocates of soldier welfare.

And yes, NCOs do take care of business! It is often said that we NCOs wear many hats. After returning to my office and giving the matter some thought, I came to the conclusion that NCOs are all things under one ‘hat.’ We are mentors.

Webster’s defines a mentor as, “...a trusted counselor or guide...a tutor...a coach.”

Mentors are found in all Army settings - the classroom, the barracks, the platoon sergeant’s office, in formation, off post, etc.

Many of us don’t realize we are mentoring even when dealing with some of the most ordinary issues of the day. Also, it is possible to overlook the fact that what we do as mentors could have an impact on whether or not a soldier will view the Army as a great place to be and reenlist.

And NCOs must understand that an individual soldier’s welfare can influence the success of the entire unit’s mission.

With this in mind, I believe there are two types of mentoring we NCOs utilize in our day-to-day interaction with soldiers - personal and professional.

Personal mentoring involves providing support with matters concerning a soldier’s welfare. This can include counseling on the subject of emotional and physical well-being, financial planning, promotions, educational goals, and family affairs.

As mentors, we must not neglect our soldiers’ personal needs. If we do, we lose the ability to motivate and direct our soldiers toward achieving the organization’s goals. (This is what I always tell my NCOs - you cannot abandon soldier welfare and expect to accomplish the mission. It won’t happen!)

With successful personal mentoring, soldiers will gain trust in your abilities to assist them when the need arises and become more receptive in embracing their roles within the unit.

This is where your professional mentoring takes over and begins to define the soldier’s role and secure the success of the unit. Professional mentoring communicates purpose, direction, and motivation (PDM) to your soldiers.

One notable publication NCOs use as a guide in understanding the importance of providing PDM is FM 22-100, *Military Leadership*.

According to this manual, leaders must “be” ethical, honorable, and committed to the Army ethic.

A leader must also “know” herself, her job and unit, and Army standards. But, it’s what leaders “do” which sets the example for soldiers.

According to FM 22-100, “Purpose gives soldiers a reason why they should do difficult things...Direction shows what must be done...Motivation gives soldiers the will to do everything they are capable of doing to accomplish a mission.”

It’s your actions that “give life” to these words.

Words alone have no value to soldier or unit success. The NCO’s actions as professional, and personal mentor make feasible an effective organization.

Personal and professional mentoring are key ingredients in soldier welfare and unit success. Without the NCO accepting the role of mentor, the soldier and unit would suffer.

When leaving the office that day, I reflected back on the conversations I had with those ten soldiers and why I believed they were really describing the NCO as a mentor.

I couldn’t resist asking one more soldier what his thoughts were on the subject. Snapping to parade rest, the soldier answered, “Sergeant, NCOs are the backbone of the Army.”

Appreciating the answer, I agreed and dismissed the soldier. As I began to turn toward the other direction, he asked, “Sergeant, can you help me with a question about my pay?”

Without a doubt, this is what it’s all about.



DEVELOPING SUBORDINATES: Mentoring and teaching are so important because the payback is so great.

Sgt. 1st Class Major is assigned to the Army Medical Department Center & School at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

How the Impact of Mentoring Developed a Future Leader

Because leaders don't know which of their subordinates today will be the most significant contributors and leaders in the future, they strive to provide all their subordinates with the knowledge and skills necessary to become the best they can be - for the Army and for themselves. -- FM 22-100, p. 5-16

By CW3 Richard D. Litle

As a specialist, back before electricity was invented, I had two NCOs that led, cajoled and trained me - Staff Sgt. Arthur Eubanks and Staff Sgt. John Brundage. These two NCOs are the reason I have been successful in my Army career.

I am now a Personnel chief warrant officer, after having made sergeant first class at around 10 years. Without their guidance and leadership, I do not think nearly half of the success that has occurred in my career would have happened.

Staff Sgt. Eubanks refused to allow me to attend the E-5 promotion board until I could quote a myriad of regulations. Daily I would be quizzed with five questions. If I failed to answer a question, then that same question would be added to the list the next day, so I would now have six questions.

By the end of the week, if I could not answer a question, I remained at the office and researched it - then I could go home.

After several weeks of exhibiting competence (not missing any questions) at this skill, I was finally allowed to attend the promotion board.

It took several months to say the least for me to reach my goal, but today I am better for it. Eubanks felt just knowing the bureaucratically quoted phrases was not enough, but I had better know what the devil

I was talking about. He had an encyclopedic knowledge of regulations. I hope that I am worthy of his tutelage.

Staff Sgt. Brundage (now Command Sgt. Maj. Brundage) was a quiet, self-confident NCO. He worked daily to temper my enthusiasm of regulations by knowing how to apply them when taking care of soldiers.

He would quietly allow me to stick my foot in my mouth, then dig it out again, all without demeaning me or dampening my spirit.

He allowed me to know that failure is failure only if you fail to learn from it. I learned not to criticize another soldier's failure unless it was malicious or intentional. There is an old adage, "You learn good judgment by using bad judgment," which sums up his mentoring style.

I hope, in some way, that I have repaid these NCOs in kind by my success. I wish every young soldier and officer had a Staff Sgt. Eubanks and Staff Sgt. Brundage to be a mentor. They taught me how to be a NCO and leader, and for that I'm truly grateful.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Litle is Chief, Personnel Service Support Team at MacDill, Air Force Base, Fla. He's also a former personnel sergeant and infantryman.

**It is the noncommissioned officer
to whom the soldier first turns
when he needs information,
counsel, or other help.
So NCOs need to...**

Deliver The Promise...Lead Your Soldiers

By MSG Christopher J. Zimmer

When someone pinned those stripes on your collar, you made a promise. You promised to take care of soldiers and teach them how to stay alive. You either did it consciously by reciting the NCO Creed or some other way during a ceremony.

One way or the other, you are wearing them, so now you gotta deliver. You owe your soldiers the best leadership you are capable of giving. You have to take that extra step every day to ensure your soldiers have all the tools they need to survive and win on the battlefield.

Deliver the promise; guard that sacred trust given to you by the people of our nation. They have given you their sons and daughters, young pieces of themselves, their most sacred possessions.

They trust you to take care of them, to keep them alive, and to make them succeed. Deliver the promise. Take care of your soldiers.

To take care of soldiers, you must be a good leader; you must make Sergeants Tracks. Sergeants Tracks are those visible signs that a competent, professional noncommissioned officer is in the area.



Soldiers are alert and are moving with a purpose. They know what they have to do and they know how to do it. When you leave Sergeants Tracks you ensure that the Army is prepared to fight and win, any place, any time.

Check, check, and correct. Look at your soldiers. Look at what's going on around you. Check, check, and correct. You should leave Sergeants Tracks behind you everywhere you go. They are the mark of a true professional.

Another part of being a true professional is watching your own lane. It's an old concept and you've probably heard it first in basic training at the rifle range. "Firers, watch your lane..."

I think that this concept can be applied to how you do your business every day. The concept is simple. Pay attention to *your* squad, *your* team, or whatever you are in charge of. Make *your* soldiers the best soldiers that they can be.

Get them trained and prepared to do whatever your unit mission is. If you focus on your soldiers and your job... life will be grand!

You will have a clear focus in life and everything else will be trivial. Don't be concerned about why some other squad or section doesn't do PT three to five times a week. Don't worry about why some other squad doesn't have to practice team drills and go on road marches.

Just worry about what your mission is and what you have to do to make your soldiers ready to execute that mission.

That doesn't mean you should walk past a deficiency without correcting it.

That doesn't mean you shouldn't help other leaders or give them advice. It means that you should just do what you are supposed to do and don't waste energy sweating what you think other leaders are getting away with. It's not your problem; you can't change it, so why worry about it.

Here's something else that is important to remember. Sometimes you just gotta "Suck it up and soldier!" Everything we do as NCOs is tough. We work long hours in difficult places all over the world, but some things just have to be done.

I once had to prepare a Chapter 11 discharge for a soldier in one of my companies. He was a physically strong, intelligent private that had no physical impairments. He just couldn't see past the minor challenges of basic training to the benefits of completing something that he started.

He chose, instead, to scratch his wrist with a broken disposable razor just so he could go home. The mental health experts told me that he had "poor stress management abilities," but I know that he just had no heart.

The point I'm trying to make is that we can accomplish almost anything if we just have the heart to do it. Don't waste time thinking about why some mission that you have been given is hard or will take a long time to finish. Just suck it up, get down to business and make it happen. Just do it!

No other nation's Army has systematically put as much trust in its NCO Corps as the United States of America. No other nation gives as much responsibility to its NCO Corps either.

We are entrusted with the care and training of our soldiers. We are entrusted with far-reaching decision-making abilities, with only the

commander's intent as a guide.

A team leader leads his team; a squad leader leads her squad using the Operations Order with the commander's intent. These leaders make life or death decisions in the absence of the commander, as long as it meets the commander's intent.

All of this is true because of our forefathers, the command sergeants major of the past who developed the Noncommissioned Officer Education System. NCOES has changed a lot over the years to the dynamic courses we have today.

It's this system that allows us to promote soldiers to sergeant in about two years and staff sergeant in about four years. We can do this and expect good results because the NCOES gives the soldiers the knowledge base resquired to be successful.

A professional NCO Corps is vital to the Army's success. You can live up to this trust and make yourself more professional. Make yourself technically and tactically proficient. Read and teach yourself about all aspects of our profession. Watch and learn from your leaders.

See what they do that works and make that a part of how you do business. Check, check and correct your soldiers; make them ready to fight and win. Watch your lane; don't worry about what everyone else is doing.

When the job is tough...suck it up and soldier. Take care of your soldiers. Deliver the promise. Make it happen

Master Sgt. Zimmer is a graduate of Sergeants Major Course Clas 51.



STAYING POWER

When **CSM Anthony Williams** joined the U.S. Army, he didn't count on serving nearly three decades. On the heels of his departure to take the reigns of the U.S. Army Training & Doctrine Command, the long-time soldier talks about how counseling and mentoring has shaped his career.

Interview by **Phil Tegtmeier**
Photos by **SSG Donald Sparks**

It's the fifteenth day of November and although he should be talking to the packers picking up his household goods, Command Sgt. Major Anthony Williams still can be seen in his empty office. As many well-wishers come by to shake hands and bid him farewell, it is evident on Williams' face that this departure is probably one of the hardest he's had in the Army.

After all he was just selected as the command sergeant major for the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy in March and now seven months later, he's packing his bags again after being announced as the new command sergeant major for the U.S. Army Training & Doctrine Command. It was a job he didn't ask for, but he was handpicked.

Williams exclaims it is a bittersweet move because he was doing something at the Academy that he loves to do - mentoring noncommissioned officers. In an interview with the *NCO Journal*, he discusses the Army's overall change of attitude towards counseling and he shares the impact that mentoring and counseling has on soldiers and the benefits that come from it.

NCOJ: *Sergeant Major, we hear a lot about mentoring and counseling these days. NCOs have been counseling soldiers for centuries. What's this mentoring business all about?*

Williams: I'll tell you, there's been a lot of talk lately about what mentoring is. At all of the conferences I attend, there's been a discussion about what mentoring is.

Everybody's trying to describe it. I know the Army Leadership Panel is working on a definition defining the term. We're going to brief the chief in January or February on the importance of finding a way to describe how you do it. A lot of people say that it's something that happens naturally by you observing someone else. That's indirect mentorship.

But direct mentorship is where you deliberately take the

that counseling and mentoring efforts lead directly to improved unit performance?

Williams: I think the Army has gone a long way in the area of counseling. We started out with the basic counseling, like how to get a soldier promoted. There's performance counseling, there's NCOES counseling, and NCO counseling.

Now we've got leader development counseling and others, and I think what we've been doing over the years is developing more effective ways to counsel.

We have found ways to improve how we counsel. It's no longer a way of sitting the soldier down and telling him how well he performed over the last thirty days.

In developmental counseling, it's a matter of sitting the soldier down and telling him not only how well he did over



time to give someone the foundation they need to be a better soldier.

A mentor is usually a person you grew up with that you have respect for and who has been out there and has been energetic and successful.

That success and energy and the love of the Army and that kind of thing - we draw from that, and become better soldiers ourselves. I don't deliberately walk around here looking for people to mentor.

It may be happening, but I don't even know it's happening. It's like in the past when I would walk around observing people and mentoring them, and they didn't even know they were being mentored. There's a lot of indirect mentoring that goes on in the Army already.

NCOJ: *What are some of the ways an NCO can ensure*

the last thirty days, but also of telling the soldier how he or she can improve their performance and then looking deeper down the road.

When the Army went to development counseling, [we] took a great step in helping soldiers understand how to do better in the Army.

I'm a strong believer in counseling. I was counseled as I came up in the Army, and because I was counseled as I came up, it showed me that my leader cared about me.

I'll tell you, when I came up and I was a new sergeant, I was a little afraid of counseling. When you used to get counseled, you weren't sure if the person counseling you wasn't documenting something in the negative or documenting something in the positive.

In those days, counseling kind of had a bad rap because counseling was viewed as a negative thing. If you were

being counseled, it was not a good thing.

But over the years, we've discovered that counseling can be something good. It's not something you should be afraid of. It's something you should embrace.

If senior leaders don't start talking about it (counseling) and pushing it as a good thing, then junior NCOs and junior soldiers won't understand the total concept we're trying to get to.

NCOJ: *What specific advice would you have for that new sergeant who's counseling soldiers for the first time - usually soldiers who used to be peers?*

Williams: I would tell them, one, you've got to get to know the soldier. You've got to spend time with them and come to know their strengths and know their shortcomings.

You can't be thin-skinned when the soldier points out something and be an effective counselor. If the soldier can be comfortable and feels there won't be any reprisals out of this, the soldier can open up and talk to the leader. That way, a leader can learn about himself.

NCOJ: *A lot of soldiers are being told that they should go out and "find themselves a mentor." What are the aspects of a good person to select as a mentor? What should you look for in a possible mentor?*

Williams: A mentor should be someone you respect. It should be someone you feel you can go to and admit you've done something wrong and expect them to give you good recommendations on how to fix it.

It has to be someone who you know won't criticize you



“If senior leaders don't start talking about it (counseling) and pushing it as a good thing, then junior NCOs and junior soldiers won't understand the total concept we're trying to get to.”

You've got to be able to point out those shortcomings in a developmental sort of way. They can't be shortcomings that you created. And in every soldier, in every person, there is something positive - and there's a way to bring out those positive things. So I would say to the NCO, "Don't be afraid to counsel."

Do your homework when you're counseling and be factual during the counseling session. If you sit down and you're not talking factually, the soldier is going to be defensive, and the counseling session will be wasted.

The next thing I would tell them is to become good listeners. If you sit down there and you talk to a soldier, it's going to be a one-way conversation.

The soldier has to be able to respond back to the leader, to agree and disagree on the counseling, and to tell the leader how you feel about the counseling.

to the point where you can't recover. That's the nature of the mentoring process.

If you've picked your mentor, you're not going to be thin-skinned when they help you see your own shortcomings. You're going to them to get help; that's the whole reason for having a mentor.

When criticism is coming from someone you look up to and respect, you're going to be more receptive to your mentor's suggestions and advice on how to fix the problem.

NCO: *What are some of the signs to look for during a counseling session that could be indications of deeper issues?*

Williams: It depends on what kind of counseling you're

performing. One of the first signs is whether a soldier becomes defensive or argumentative.

That usually indicates there's a deeper problem. But if you're counseling someone for misconduct, there are other signs. I think you have to evaluate the soldier's values. If they're not performing well, you have to look to the "why."

If you're talking to a soldier about something that has to do with duty performance, you might have a soldier who was a marginal achiever when he graduated out of AIT and might need help understanding the technical aspects of the MOS.

Other times, you'll have a soldier who's really intelligent; someone who got good scores in school but who might have poor interpersonal skills.



They might be a smart guy who's a leader and is really aggressive, and they might have a leader above them who's not as smart in the MOS, not as aggressive.

In each case, you have to take time to not only find out what's wrong, but also find something that's right about the soldier. Just the other day a soldier came to me for guidance on an ongoing project.

Before we started, I made sure he understood how pleased I was about how he had handled another project.

People need to be told every now and then when they've done something good rather than wait around for someone to tell them how they did something bad.

And it wasn't that I told him, "You did really well on that other project, but here's what you could have done better."

NCOJ: In our last issue, Secretary of the Army Thomas E. White said that NCOs can help the Army get away from an environment that somehow encourages micromanagement by mentoring their officers as well as their soldiers. How does a NCO mentor an officer?

Williams: Personally, I've never had a "problem" in my lane with an officer not knowing that it's okay for a soldier to learn from mistakes.

But I have seen officers who need to be informed that the soldiers coming in today might not have the same education level as their officers, but they're very intelligent.

A lot of them are very junior, and because of their maturity level of being new to the Army, they're going to make some mistakes.

Therefore, the sergeant should be there as a mentor for the young soldiers to help them through the process of learning and growing - just like someone had to do for us.

When I came in, I had no college experience, so I had to have someone to take me through the process of going from being inexperienced in my MOS to a higher maturity level.

So people had to be patient with me as I got through that

"If you've picked your mentor, you're not going to be thin-skinned when they help you see your own shortcomings. You're going to them for help; that's the whole reason for having a mentor."

maturing process in the Army. Young officers have to learn they have a role. It's not just a case of soldiers training soldiers, but the officer has to share in the process of training those soldiers.

Too many NCOs have taken the role of trainer, which they should do, and leaving the officer out of training, which they shouldn't do.

Take Sergeant's Time for example. A lot of sergeants think that's their time, so they take the soldiers out for training while the officer goes off to do something with the battery commander. But the officer has to be invited to that training, too. By being at training, the officer learns to understand the importance of the soldier's job.

By being there, he validates that the sergeant knows his job, and by being there he's part of the team. It's a team effort, and that's why the lieutenant is called the platoon leader. I think officers do understand that soldiers have to learn from their mistakes. If the sergeant is playing the right role, he can explain to the officer about the need for patience as young soldiers become more mature.

At time of press, Command Sgt. Maj. Williams assumed duties as the TRADOC command sergeant major Nov. 30, 2001.

THE VALUES OF DEVELOPING LEADERS

By CSM Daniel R. Wood



U.S. Army photo

Today, as in the past, our junior NCOs have a tough job. It is especially difficult because their challenges are the greatest at a time when their experience level is low. It is important for our junior NCO leaders to know their job thoroughly and understand the skills of the soldiers they lead. -- SMA Glen E. Morrell

Upon returning from a very successful JRTC rotation, I reflected on the number of key leaders that were either killed in action or wounded in action. However, this did not stop the unit from accomplishing the mission.

One of the strengths of our Army lies in our ability to execute the “one-up” or “fall out one” drill. As key leaders became casualties, junior leaders stepped up to the plate and units continued on to mission accomplishment.

The quality of junior leaders in our Army is directly proportionate to the quality of teaching, coaching, and mentoring unit level leaders give them.

We must make it a priority in our units to build strong junior leaders in order to insure the effectiveness of tomorrow’s Army.

When leaders micro-manage, create zero defect environments, and fail to encourage junior leader initiative, they destroy the foundation of the unit. This creates hardship



photo by Master Sgt. Larry Lane

“Competent leaders do not just appear; they must be developed and nurtured. Respect your soldiers when they fail. Pick them up, dust them off, re-train them, and put them back in the saddle.”

for the future chain of command.

We must stop complaining about not having enough junior NCOs and instead put our focus on training and building competent leaders from the soldiers we have. The potential is there!

One of the great strengths of good units lies in the ability of subordinates to effectively assume the role of the leaders when they are unavailable or incapacitated.

Units must develop a leader-training program that encompasses the seven Army Values. Be loyal in trusting and developing your soldiers by sending them to schools and providing opportunities for advancement and increased responsibility.

They will in turn be loyal to you, the unit and the mission. Fulfill your duty by training them for their present job as well as the next level up and they will be prepared to

execute that duty when called upon.

Competent leaders do not just appear; they must be developed and nurtured. Respect your soldiers when they fail. Pick them up, dust them off, re-train them, and put them back in the saddle.

Soldiers will respect you for your patience and persistence. You might just have a future leader instead of a future chapter.

Selfless Service means the needs of others come first. Whether that means the needs of the country, your unit or the needs of another soldier. Leaders can serve their soldiers...yet still be in charge.

Don't lose your battle focus; leaders are here to serve our soldiers not the other way around. If we as leaders serve them now, they will in turn serve the soldiers of

tomorrow. "Mission first, soldiers always."

Selfless service is not a single act; it's a leadership style. We must be honest with ourselves, admitting that we make mistakes. When it comes to mistakes, the only difference between veteran leaders and aspiring leaders is that veteran leaders have made more.

It is okay for soldiers to be less than perfect... that's why we call it training. Display honor when dealing with soldier's mistakes, maintaining their esteem. Soldiers will in turn be honorable by taking responsibility for their mistakes.

The mistake then becomes an opportunity to learn instead of a setback for the soldier. One way or the other, mistakes will happen, so why not put a positive spin on it?

This leads us to integrity. A white lie is still a lie. A half-truth is still not the truth. Soldiers need to know that your word is your bond and that you always have their best interest at heart.

As we create an environment of integrity that is non-threatening and without fear of retribution, our soldiers will be less likely to choose the easy wrong over the hard right.

With the complex multinational environment our Army is operating in, we must foster integrity early on in leader development. The more we require the hard right, the easier it will become to execute.

Personal Courage is a necessary attribute in junior leaders. These leaders must possess the confidence to make decisions and accept risk. Unit leaders must then have the courage to back up subordinates who err while taking action in good faith.

Make no mistake; it will take personal courage for unit leaders to develop loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honesty, and integrity in to our soldiers.

The payoff will be a personally courageous junior leader

who will instill these values into tomorrow's leaders. Whether the mission is peace or war, our Army will be better prepared to accomplish it.

We are so often unsuccessful in our integration of these Army values into our junior leader development. When no room is given for failure or the leader chooses to do the job themselves the result is stifled initiative, diminished drive, prolonged professional development, and the ultimate avoidance of responsibility for the leader in training.

If junior leaders are never given any maneuver room, they will be unprepared when faced with the element of risk. We

want leaders who are able to handle risk... yet smart enough and experienced enough to know how to mitigate the risk.

They must also be confident enough to call off a mission when the level of risk is too high. This ability comes only through experience.

A reprimand or the relief of responsibility may be the easiest or quickest way to deal with a failed leader. What long-term benefit will come from that course of action?

Time taken to teach, coach, mentor and re-train may be more difficult and time consuming, but the end result will be a stronger future leader.

Growing a confident and competent leader in our Army is not an easy or quick process. It takes time, patience, and a great deal of

If junior leaders are never given any maneuver room, they will be unprepared when faced with the element of risk. We want leaders who are able to handle risk...yet smart enough and experienced enough to know how to mitigate the risk.

consistency from the unit leader.

We must all remember that it is a Climb to Glory... not a leap. Incorporate the seven Army values into your leader development programs and we will reap a strong Army for tomorrow.

Command Sgt. Maj. Wood is the battalion command sergeant major for the 4-31st Infantry Regiment at Fort Drum, N.Y.

An NCO's Charge

You must talk to soldiers. Now, I don't mean in formation or groups, but one-on-one. Take time to really talk to a soldier, one soldier a day...the benefits of each talk will be multiple. When one soldier leaves after talking to you, he'll tell the rest. So, by talking to a soldier, you talk to the unit. -- CSM Daniel E. Wright, Field Artillery, June 1995, p.3

By SSG Martin A. Schwerzler

I emailed an old college friend last week and I attached some pictures that my wife, Ransom, had emailed to me in the field. He responded with an email that caught me by surprise and made me stop and think about a lot of things. He wrote that in seeing how big my children had grown made him realize that we too had grown up.

Overtly this is obvious, but he reached me in a more subtle way by admitting that he had moved to Alaska in one final attempt to stave off that force of nature, growing up.

He had found someone in his life and decided to settle down and raise a family; consequently bringing upon himself more responsibility, and triggering thoughts in my mind about my responsibilities and how I had grown up.

It was obvious in that I have a family and kids which made me consider schools, housing, and finances, but there were other career gauges by which I have matured.

The other night I had dinner with several specialists. While we ate it was not so obvious, but when we were finished, we sat and talked.

At that moment I realized how much they were looking toward me in a more patriarchal manner.

They poked fun at each other, had a laugh, and discussed the recent local gossip. I could tell that I was not in the same circle, though I was welcome and included. I could tell it was quite clear that I was the supervisor and not the peer.

The next day I had a counseling session. It was the first time I was going to be the rater of another NCO. We found a reasonably quiet and appropriate location and I was about to conduct his initial counseling.

As I began, I realized he was at the position of at ease. I never realized until then how respectful that position is and I had rarely expected that amount of discipline before. At that moment it struck me that I was a staff sergeant in the U.S. Army and I had a responsibility to that soldier just as he had a responsibility to be at the position of at ease.

All of these recent incidents made me stop and ask the deeper question, "Why do I do what I do?" That was a very difficult question for me to answer to myself.

At first I explained it as, "I joined the military for the money and security," but I realized that was the easy answer and I know in my heart I could do better on the civilian economy.



photo by Anna Caudill-Peterson

“ In choosing to become a noncommissioned officer I accepted the responsibility of those subordinate to myself. I have found that I am a role model, a trainer, and a counselor.”

Then, while reading McNamara’s *In Retrospect*, I found that I have a duty to serve my country and in performing that duty I found that I had more to give than just a few years of service.

In choosing to become a noncommissioned officer I accepted the responsibility of those subordinate to myself. I have found that I am a role model, a trainer, and a counselor.

My rank alone forces me to be a role model because it sets me above the rest and therefore they look up to me and will hopefully emulate what I do or do not do. I am charged with providing them with training that assists them in performing their duties which theirs, as well as many others lives depend.

I must be a counselor because I must tell them how they have performed both well and poorly. I am not permitted the luxury of being strictly a friend, but an approachable concerned mentor.

I have felt awed and overcome with this burden at times, but I remind myself of the examples that were there for me when I was the greenhorn. I was fortunate to have quality leaders over me who saw the potential within me.

So now, I have been charged to provide the leadership to the next generation of noncommissioned officers and hopefully they too will come to the realization that they must stay to preserve the tradition of excellence and to accept nothing less.

The bottom line is that I believe I make a difference everyday I serve my country. As long as I am making that difference and have a soldier that needs a mentor, I will be there.

Staff Sgt. Schwerzler wrote this article while on deployment to Task Force Hawk, Tirane, Albania on May 18, 1999. He is currently assigned to Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 311th MI Bn., Fort Campbell, Ky.

The Diamond



By Dr. Robert Bouilly

How do you tell who's a first sergeant? Easy. Look for the soldier with the chevron that has a hollow diamond in the center. These days the hollow diamond is surrounded by three stripes above and three rockers below.

Its pretty much the same in the Marine Corps except that the diamond is a solid olive drab on a red background.

Where did the diamond come from? Tough question. The 1847 Army uniform regulation decreed for the first time that first sergeants would be identified through the wearing of a hollow diamond along with rank of chevrons.

Ever since, the hollow diamond has been the mark of the Army first sergeant. In times past the diamond has been different colors depending on the branch of the wearer. Sometimes the diamond has been big, sometimes rather small, but always hollow.

The only exception has come with the adoption of subdued pin-ons beginning in 1981. These metal insignia are so small that the diamond is solid and, of course, black as is the whole pin-on.

We don't know why the Army uniform designers chose the hollow diamond in 1847. No one sat down and wrote out a memo saying, 'we chose the hollow diamond because....' We can only guess; now your guess will be as good as the next person's.

We do know that American uniform designers tended to copy current European military fashion in the first half of the 19th century - particularly the English. By the time of the Napoleonic Wars (1800-1815) some British units had taken to showing rank designation through the use of chevrons.

This still doesn't explain the diamond. Perhaps the diamond came from the waistcoat of previous uniforms.

In the Revolutionary War the long coats had a tieback system near the knee which allowed the wearer to pull back the front of the coat and fasten it to the back so marching would be easier.

General George Washington decreed that the reinforcements for this hook and eye system would be a red heart. (They really did pay this kind of attention to each little detail.) The British uniform was similar, and some diamond-shaped reinforcements are known.

Anyway, styles changed and the long coat of the Army uniform became more abbreviated so that there was no real need for a tie-back system for marching. Still, the uniform retained a stylized representation of the tieback on what would be called today the tail of the coat.

The patch now appeared to pull up the bottom of the tail. Captain John Wool's 1813 uniform has survived and it has a diamond patch on each tail.

Styles changed again and the Army uniform did away with tails altogether in 1833. There were no diamonds anywhere on the uniform. However, in 1847 the designers brought back the diamond as a device indicating the first sergeant. Why? We don't know. Why a hollow diamond? Again we don't know. Perhaps the uniform designers were nostalgic about the diamond from the uniforms they had worn in their younger days.

Whatever the reason, the hollow diamond has been around a long time now and has served the NCO Corps well. Chances are that it will remain for some time to come.

Dr. Bouilly is the historian for the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. This article first appeared in the Summer 1995 edition of the NCO Journal.

FIGHTING WITH THE SCREAMING EAGLES

With the 101st Airborne from Normandy to Bastogne

BY CPT ELOY E. CUEVAS

Robert Bowen has written an enlightening and riveting book that details his service in the 101st Airborne Division during the latter half of World War II.

This book provides us Bowen's own personal story, compiled from saved letters to his wife, as a soldier in the 401st Glider Regiment.

He chronicles his service state-side, followed by the movement of his unit to Europe, their Pre-Operation Overlord training in England, and the combat action along the tactical front from June 1944 through December 1944.

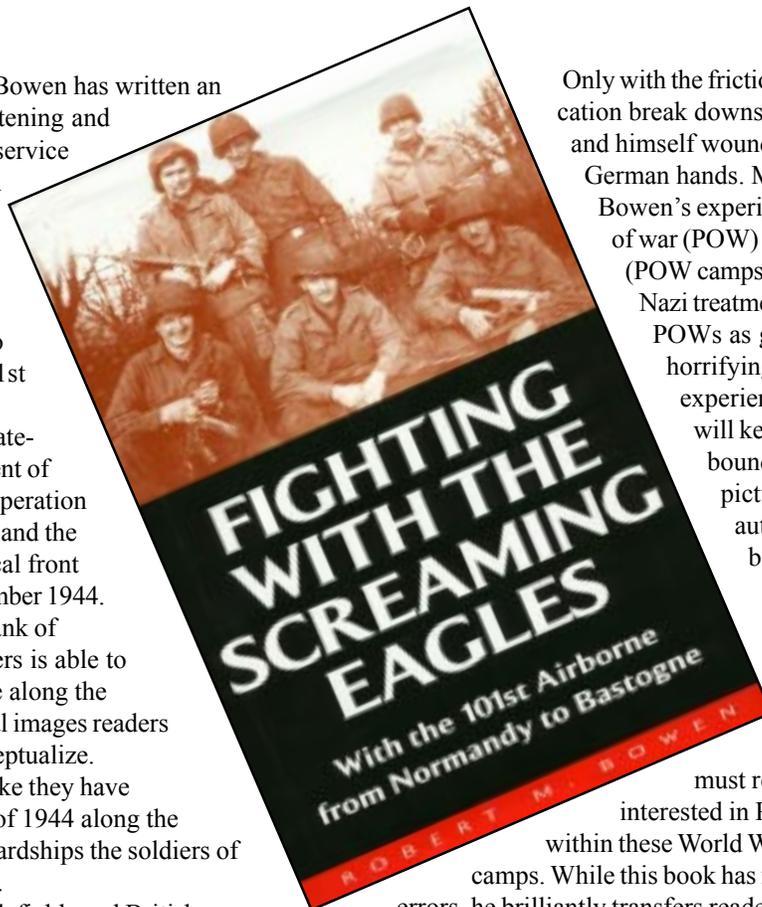
Bowen is promoted to the rank of Sergeant and through his letters is able to transcribe his images of battle along the German front into vivid mental images readers can visualize, smell, and conceptualize.

He makes the reader seem like they have stepped back into the Winter of 1944 along the German front, facing all the hardships the soldiers of the European campaign faced.

From the snow covered battlefields and British rations to sleepless bone-chilling nights, he provides us with conditions of the battlefield as experienced by the Allied and German soldiers.

He also adds personal care to all the soldiers he mentions in the book by telling us their hometown. From a leadership viewpoint, without an officer, he becomes selected to become the platoon leader and immediately illuminates the NCO traits needed to become a noncommissioned officer in today's army.

His care and personal interest in ensuring his soldiers survival lends to his unit's success along the front.



Only with the friction of war, communication break downs, low unit strength, and himself wounded does he fall into German hands. Most interesting is Bowen's experience as a prisoner of war (POW) in German stalags (POW camps). Readers will find Nazi treatment of American POWs as gut-wrenching and horrifying. His eye-opening experience at the stalags will keep any reader spell-bound, as it paints a picture as unlike any author has provided before.

His ability to capture his living conditions at these stalags will certainly qualify his book a

must read for readers interested in POW treatment within these World War II German POW camps. While this book has minor grammar errors, he brilliantly transfers readers to the life Sgt. Robert Bowen experienced while fighting for his men, his unit, and his country.

From one former Screaming Eagle to another, an excellent book and a real credit to the story of the 101st Airborne Division during the cold days and nights of Winter 1944, leading to Victory in Europe (VE) day.

FIGHTING WITH THE SCREAMING EAGLES:
With the 101st Airborne
By Robert M. Bowen
Hardcover, 256pp
Stackpole Books;
August, 2001; \$29.95

Capt. Cuevas is currently the Director of the School Secretariat at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. He was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division from 1993-1996.

Failing to take care of our own

By SSG Donald Sparks

Sadly as I write this commentary a good friend of mine is counting his days he has left in uniform after serving 10 years in the Army. No more will this damn good noncommissioned officer and excellent motivator of soldiers wear chevrons indicating that he is a leader and professional. Even worse, he's leaving on bad terms from the military. No, he's not facing disciplinary action, nor is he subject to any administrative chapter proceeding. He's leaving in part because he's fed up with what he perceives as a hypocrisy of leadership.

When I asked him to explain what he meant, he made it plain. As a NCO he said it was his duty and responsibility to counsel and mentor the soldiers under his charge. Whether it was counseling for drug prevention, bad-check writing, or praise for a job well done, he made sure that he took time to listen to his soldiers.

He also mentioned his soldiers were never confused on what he expected of them and what they should expect of him. On a monthly basis he discussed their strengths, weaknesses, and their goals to achieve. I recall him ready to jump on me once after joking with him about one of his soldiers not answering the phone in a "military" manner.

Just as a mother bear protects her cubs, without hesitation he barked at me that his soldiers are always professional and he reminds them to always be so during counseling. The passion he had for taking care of his soldiers was revealed.

So what was it exactly that had him so teed off to refuse reenlisting? He received a NCOER indicating he needed improvement in a couple of areas, yet he himself hadn't been counseled as indicated on the NCO Counseling Checklist/Record by his rater.

How does the old saying go? Oh yeah, no news is good news. Located at the top of this form it states: The purpose of this counseling is to improve performance and to professionally develop the rated NCO...Counseling at the end of the rating period is too late since there is no time to improve before evaluation.

Of course not trying to sound like a barracks lawyer or public defender, I asked my friend if he insisted on counseling during the rated period. He said he did, but never

received it. Therefore he grudgingly signed the NCOER and chose to exit the military.

As a rated NCO, it is absolutely mandatory and is your right to DEMAND counseling from your rater. How can we as leaders who insist on counseling our subordinates on a regular basis not apply those same guidelines to ourselves concerning our own professional development. It's a travesty when we just take for granted that all is well and we're now too busy to be counseled ourselves.

What has happened to my friend is nothing new in the field. I'm sure there are many NCOs who have gone through an entire rating period without quarterly counseling and then are teed off upon seeing bullet comments that don't reflect their value, what they've done well and how to improve.

If an NCO is willing to allow the rated period to go by without any counseling, then it's partly their fault in the end when their NCOER doesn't reflect what they've accomplished.

As far my as my friend is concerned, it's too late and his mind is made up to retire his chevrons. Am I upset that my friend is leaving? Hell, yes, I am. But even more than that, I feel that his departure could have been prevented if both he and his rater followed the guidelines of counseling stated in FM 22-100. Now the Army is less one good NCO because we failed to take care of our own.

This is Staff Sgt. Sparks final edition as the Editor-in-Chief of the NCO Journal. He is assuming the duties of the NCOIC, Public Affairs at Fort Huachuca, Ariz.