

THE NCO JOURNAL

VOL: 17, ISSUE: 3 SUMMER 2008

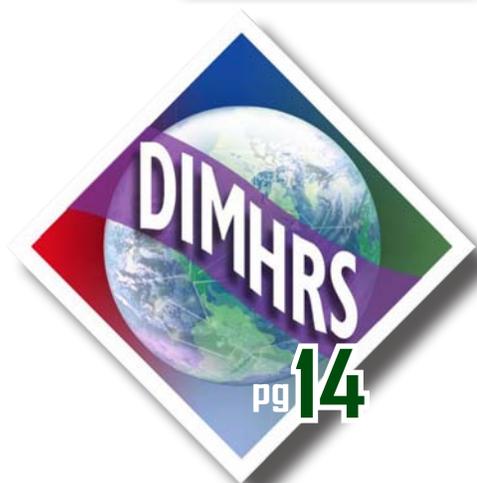
A QUARTERLY FORUM FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FUTURE COMBAT SYSTEMS

NCO - Inspired, Approved, Operated

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Change



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THE NCO JOURNAL

PUBLISHER - Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston **BOARD OF DIRECTORS** - Col. Donald E. Gentry, Commandant; Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond F. Chandler, CSM; Jesse W. McKinney, MA, Secretariat **EDITOR-IN-CHIEF** - Master Sgt. Eric B. Pilgrim DSN 978-8550 **MANAGING EDITOR** - David B. Crozier DSN 978-9069 **PHOTOJOURNALIST** - Staff Sgt. Mary E. Ferguson **GRAPHICS** - Spc. Russel C. Sch-naare **OPSEC OFFICER** - Issac Chapa. *The NCO Journal* is a professional publication for Noncommissioned Officers of the U.S. Army. Views expressed herein are those of the authors. Views and contents do not necessarily reflect official Army or Department of Defense positions and do not change or supersede information in other official publications. Our mission is to provide a forum for the open exchange of ideas and information, to support training, education and development of the NCO Corps and to foster a closer bond among its members. The Secretary of the Army approved funds for printing this publication in accordance with provisions of AR 25-30. **Distribution:** *The Journal* is distributed through the U.S. Army Publishing Agency, Distribution Operations Facility, 1655 Woodson Road, Overland, MO 63114-6128 (Phone: (314) 263-7305 or DSN 693-7305). Units or offices with valid publications accounts can receive the *Journal* by having their publications office submit DA Form 12-99 for inclusion in the 12-series requirements (12-05 Block 0041). Submissions: Print and visual submissions of general interest to the NCO Corps are invited. Unsolicited submissions will not be returned. Photographs are U.S. government-furnished, unless otherwise credited. Prospective contributors are encouraged to contact the *Journal* to discuss requirements. Contacts: Our FAX number is DSN 978-8540 or (915) 568-8540. Or call, (915) 568-8550/9069 or DSN 978-8550/9069. Our e-mail is: ATSS-SJ-NCOJOURNAL@conus.army.mil Letters: Letters to the editor must be signed and include the writer's full name and rank, city and state (or city and country) and mailing address. Letters should be brief and are subject to editing. *The NCO Journal* (ISSN 1058-9058) is published quarterly by the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, 11291 SGT E Churchill St., Fort Bliss, TX 79918-8002. Periodicals postage is paid at El Paso, Texas and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The NCO Journal* Commandant, USASMA ATTN: ATSS-SJ, Editor 11291 SGT E Churchill St. Fort Bliss, TX 79918-8002.

From the SMA

Safety is a Leadership responsibility

I have learned in my years of service that the one mission that will always need a leader's focus is safety. Safety is a leadership responsibility.

Memorial Day through Labor Day are the 101 Critical Days of Summer when Soldiers and their families are at a greater risk for accidents. Summer poses an increased risk as school is out and popular community activities increase with people out enjoying the warm weather. This means more bicycles, pedestrians, motorcyclists and outdoor sporting activities.

The Army commenced its 101 Critical Days of Summer Safety campaign with a simple yet meaningful slogan, "Never Give Safety a Day Off." This year's theme holds great value in sustaining the force and maintaining an Army Strong, on or off the job.

Daily involvement of leaders in the lives of their Soldiers makes a difference. Safety inspections performed regularly, and coaching and mentoring Soldiers about their on and off-duty plans and behavior are leader responsibilities.

For all of our Soldiers, I am asking you to put a renewed emphasis on motorcycle, off-road, water and privately-owned vehicle safety. Several Soldiers were injured or killed in recent months as a result of preventable and avoidable accidents. POVs and motorcycles remain the deadliest threat to our non-deployed force.

Soldiers and leaders together can prevent most motorcycle accidents by matching rider experience to the correct motorcycle, wearing the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) on and off post, and getting the training and education of an experienced rider. Failure to follow these simple rules of engagement are the underlying factors in most motorcycle accidents. Leaders can help new and inexperienced riders make the smart choices by getting them involved in the installation's motorcycle mentorship program. MMP gets young and new riders matched with motorcycle veterans where learning immediately begins and riders learn what right looks like.

Army Regulation 385-10 requires motorcycle riders to wear a brightly colored upper garment during the day and a reflective upper garment during the night. You must also wear a long sleeve shirt or jacket, long trousers, full fingered gloves, and leather boots or over-the-ankle shoes. Your helmet must meet Department of Transportation safety standards.

I've been riding motorcycles since I was a youngster and I always ride with my headlights on high beam during the day and night to ensure I can be seen. The headlight on high beam provides long range recognition to other motorists especially on sunny days when there are many bright, shiny specular surfaces distract-

ing other drivers. At night, most POV drivers, when checking the right of way, look for a pair of headlights. Again, the headlight on high beam for single headlight motorcycles ensures your single light stands out against the backdrop of street and house lights and yet does not produce enough light to blind other motorists. The bottom line is you want other motorists to see you, day and night.

Engaged leaders, starting with first line supervisors – corporals and sergeants – all the way up the NCO support channel and chain of command, create the command climate where risk management and safety are a part of our daily activities in every mission we execute, both on and off duty.

As leaders, we owe it to ourselves and our Soldiers to enforce standards and lead by our example. Units with leaders at all levels of command, who enforce standards in all areas from uniforms to safety and everything in between, develop discipline in their junior leaders. Disciplined units are inherently safe units.

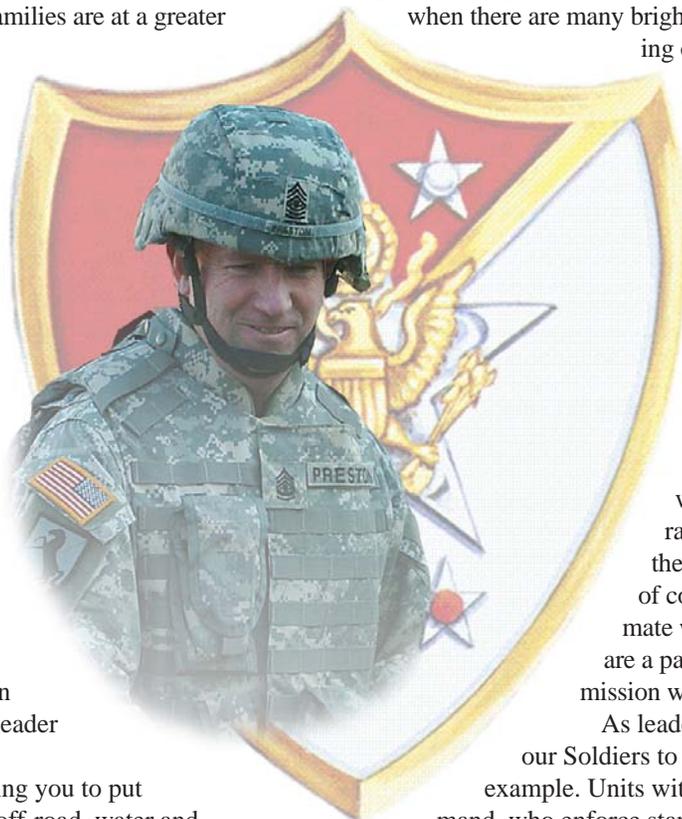
The Combat Readiness Center has several products available for leaders to use to help create their command climate. Use Army tools, such as Individual Risk Assessments, Got Risk Flyers, TRiPS Assessment, the USACRC Task Force Newsletter and the Army Readiness Assessments Program, that are specifically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

Be a leader and be engaged. Take the time to ensure your Soldiers are considering safety in everything they do. You have a great responsibility to take care of Soldiers and grow our leaders for the future.

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

Hooah!

Kenneth O. Preston



Opinion

Suicide is painful – for everybody else

By Master Sgt. Eric Pilgrim →

David was an amazing warrior!

Our unofficial spiritual pillar at the university Baptist Student Union, he was always there for anyone who struggled with studies or personal issues; enjoyed the support of a sweet, beautiful fiancé; famously admired by Baptists all across New Mexico and West Texas as a gifted tent revival preacher. David (not his real name) had it all.

So when I walked into a room full of weeping students at the BSU on a crisp autumn day in 1989 and inquired what had happened, their answer floored me. “David killed himself.”

I had just seen him the day before, typically happy – not a hint of trouble. As I absorbed the details from others, the shared shock of his death struck me. Nobody saw it coming. Nobody knew of David’s doubts. Nobody knew he had lost the hope of his faith, drawn away by philosophical riddles and questions he couldn’t answer. Nobody saw the darkness that enveloped David’s heart; the light that had slowly burned out months before. All that we knew about his decision came from a note he had written to his fiancé explaining his reasons, his fears – his pain.

Ironically, it was his fiancé who found the note after finding his brain-splattered body in his apartment, fingers still gripping the pistol. The woman he loved the most was the one made to suffer the most. We were all made to suffer. I felt the hearts shattering all around me, and mine, and it angered me. Why had he resorted to this? Why couldn’t he just say to somebody, “Hey, I’m hurtin’ here; I need help.”

The sharp rise in suicides among our Soldiers since 2002 has made that decades-old moment as acute and painful as it was then. It has renewed my anger about David’s final decision; decisions that have risen to a number that we haven’t seen in the Army since 1990.

Confirmed suicides among active and reserve component Soldiers reached 115 in 2007, according to Army health officials. The number of suicide attempts also spiked, from 350 in 2002 to roughly 2,100 in 2007. Officials admit self-inflicted injuries unrelated to suicide and a more thorough electronic records system could account for some of those numbers, but not all of them.

What has puzzled those who believe the stress of war accounts for these increases is that the majority of Soldiers who attempted to kill themselves in 2006 had either been back from combat for more than a year or had never even seen combat. Thirty of the 102 who killed themselves that year did so in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Officials say the majority of suicides are attributed to strained or broken relationships.

Another shocking twist is that while the vast majority of Soldiers attempting suicide remain 18-24 year-old enlisted males, there are growing numbers of older aged and female Soldiers attempting it.

In response, the Army has walked the talk by establishing the

Army Family Covenant and spending nearly \$1.5 billion on family quality of life programs. It has also pushed behavioral healthcare professionals forward into combat areas like Iraq and Afghanistan while simultaneously increasing the number of professionals in the States.

Still, we continue to lose Soldiers to suicide.

As NCOs, we need be about the business of caring for our Soldiers. That includes finding out how they’re doing; at home, on the weekends, with their significant others or spouses, with their kids, while on vacation, with friends: not to belittle or punish them for having fears, but to help them. We shouldn’t just settle for what they tell us, either.

If a Soldier is contemplating suicide, chances are that Soldier isn’t going to share it with you. You threaten to destroy the world they have created for themselves by adding guilt and humiliation for what they consider to be a justifiable act. This, in turn, only adds to the rejection and hopelessness they feel and makes the euphoria of suicide even more intoxicating.

Instead, ask a spouse how the Soldier is doing; ask their friends. Ask if the Soldier has an unusual preoccupation with death – talking about it, writing about it, joking about it. Ask if the Soldier seems more interested in weapons than usual. Ask whether the Soldier has made off-handed comments about hopelessness: “Nothing changes ... What’s the use ... Why do you care what I think ...” Ask if the Soldier has been giving away prized possessions on a whim, withdrawing from friends and family, growing quiet, acting more erratic in drinking or driving habits and contacting people they rarely contact to check on them and say goodbye. Ask if the Soldier suddenly seems calm after a period of stress.

What I’ve found through my experiences and those of others around me is that those who entertain thoughts of suicide, even for the briefest of moments, have most likely been traveling on the wrong road for a while now. Suicide is not a first resort to stopping the pain. It’s the last resort; dead last. And like my friend David, so many are out there who have suffered silently under a tremendous weight of pain and fear for so long that suicide actually begins to look enticing, euphoric; painless. But it’s not!

The 1970 movie, M*A*S*H, introduced us to a song called “Suicide is Painless” that would later become the theme song to the hit TV series with the same name. The song in many ways demonstrates what’s wrong with suicide – a pleasant tune with romantic, catchy lyrics telling me it is okay to end my life: “Suicide is painless, it brings on many changes and I can take or leave it if I please ...”

Certainly all the pain will end in an instant, but the devastation left behind for others to wrestle with lasts several lifetimes — and it doesn’t have to. Recognize the pain, accept that pain is not weakness, and get help from trained professionals.

For your Soldiers. For you.

Visit <https://www.battlemind.army.mil/> for more information and links to other helpful resources.

Army expands Battlemind training

By 1st Lt. James Williams III

Due to its success in preparing Soldiers for deployment, the Army has decided to transition Battlemind training from a deployment cycle requirement to standard training Army-wide.

“Although Battlemind is in its infancy, it is proving to be effective in theater,” said Maj. Todd Yosick, chief of the Battlemind training office at the Army Medical Department Center and School. “Modules are already being developed for basic training.”

The Army Medical Department created the Battlemind concept with the specific goals of addressing problems associated with the mental health of Soldiers affected by combat.

One of the Battlemind tools the Army developed is a Web site containing audiovisual training aids and other materials to allow units to conduct their own mental health training. The site also provides training for leaders, healthcare providers, individual Soldiers and family members.

The new Web site features a module that addresses the stigma associated with post traumatic stress disorder; the testimonial of a suicide survivor; and scenario-based animations for younger members of the family.

“A lot of effort has been put into this site,” said Ann Ham, a public affairs official for the Office of the Surgeon General and Medical Command. “It’s a training and teaching guide, and now the training aids are concise and complete.”

The stigma associated with mental health problems is one of the major hurdles the Army must overcome. By providing more training on mental health to Soldiers, the Army hopes to mitigate the stigma and identify personnel that may need assistance.

“The goal isn’t to create a bunch of shrinks, but we want to empower squad leaders and buddies to say, ‘Hey, are you

The screenshot shows the Battlemind website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'BATTLEMIND' and 'SOLDIER SUPPORT' tabs. Below the navigation bar, there are sections for 'VIDEO RESOURCES' and 'BATTLEMIND MEDIA PLAYER'. The video player is currently displaying a video titled 'Mr Poe and Friends : Mr Poe & Sgt. Drew'. The video player includes a video player interface with a play button, a progress bar, and a volume control. Below the video player, there is a description of the video series and links to download the transcript and the video series.

On the Army's Battlemind Web site, “Sgt. Drew” narrates a video to help children deal with deployment separation stress. The site contains resources that help Soldiers and family members cope with the stresses of a deployment.

alright?” Yosick said.

With the recent increase of suicides – a total of 115 in fiscal 2007 – Army medical officials are taking the mental health of Soldiers very seriously. There is an atmosphere of excitement among the Army’s leadership, due to the hope of continued success with Battlemind training, said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston.

“Battlemind training helps Soldiers adjust their emotions and understand their inner feelings,” Preston said.

Now that the Web site is fully functional, all Soldiers can visit the site at <http://www.battlemind.army.mil>.

MC4 device recording patient info in combat hospitals

Army News Service – Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. Eric B. Schoemaker has announced continued expansion of medical information technology to support a comprehensive electronic health record for patients in combat zones.

Medical Communications for Combat Casualty Care, or MC4, provides digital recording capabilities and access to battlefield medical information via ruggedized laptops and handhelds intended to be used in combat zones to document patient care.

MC4 is now used at Army and Air Force medical facilities in Iraq and

Afghanistan, in the Multinational Forces and Observers Effort in Sinai, Egypt, as well as by Army Special Forces, Navy and Marine providers throughout Southwest Asia. The system ensures that service members have an electronic, lifelong medical record.

More than 5 million electronic medical records have been captured since MC4’s deployment in 2003.

To date, the Army’s MC4 program has deployed more than 24,000 systems to medical units in Iraq and 13 other countries, and trained more than 26,000 field medics, doctors, nurses and com-

manders on how to use the system in combat support hospitals and battalion aid stations.

After the Gulf War, thousands of deployed service members returned from duty without proof of combat-related illnesses and injuries, resulting in loss of benefits.

In 1997, presidential and congressional mandates called for a medical tracking system and lifelong electronic medical record for all service members – MC4 is that solution, officials said.

For more information about MC4, visit www.mc4.army.mil.

Army continues fight against suicides

By Elizabeth M. Lorge
Army News Service

Despite a new report showing that 2007 had the Army's highest suicide rate since record-keeping began in 1980, Army officials told Pentagon reporters May 29 that new prevention and mental health efforts are helping Soldiers.

There were 115 suicides last year in the active Army, with two cases still pending, according to the 2007 Army Suicide Event Report. This was up from 102 suicides in 2006. To date, the Army has 38 confirmed suicides for 2008, with 12 pending.

The 2007 numbers include 93 active duty Soldiers and 22 mobilized reserve component Soldiers. When not mobilized, the National Guard and Army Reserve track suicide numbers differently, and lost an additional 53 Soldiers.

There were also 935 active duty suicide attempts, which Col. Elspeth C. Richie, psychiatry consultant to the Army's surgeon general, said includes any self-inflicted injury that leads to hospitalization or evacuation. This number is less than half of the approximately 2,100 attempts reported in 2006.

Richie and Brig. Gen. Rhonda Cornum, assistant surgeon general for force protection, didn't like the upward trend of the past few years, and said the Army is making huge changes in its culture and the way it perceives mental healthcare to help Soldiers.

"Army leadership is committed to taking care of every Soldier regardless of where they are ill, injured or have a psychological diagnosis," said Cornum. "But our responsibility really doesn't start and stop there. Just as we don't wait for Soldiers to get malaria when they deploy them, we employ the full range of prevention, mitigation and treatment strategies ... We do all the things we can to prevent and reduce risk and then, if they still get the disease, we apply scientifically tested and specific treatments to cure it, with the expectation of full recovery and return to the force.

"We need to approach the maintenance of good mental health ... in the same way, by preventive education and by



Photo by Elizabeth M. Lorge

Col. Elspeth Richie (left), the Army's top psychiatrist, and Brig. Gen. Rhonda Cornum, assistant surgeon general for force protection, talk to Pentagon reporters about the 2007 Army Suicide Event Report and steps the Army is taking to prevent Soldier suicides.

applying risk-mitigation strategies in order to increase resilience and hardiness in our Soldiers before they are exposed to those environments associated with a high risk for mental health issues," she said.

The majority of the Soldiers who committed suicide had not sought psychological intervention, Richie said, so it's vital that Soldiers know it's okay to ask for help.

Part of that education is Battlemind training, which teaches Soldiers and their families about readjustment issues and mental health problems they could face after a deployment, danger signs and how to get help.

According to Richie, Battlemind has been particularly successful in reducing anxiety and depression. She said the fifth annual mental health advisory team, which deployed to Iraq in the fall, found that 12 percent of Soldiers who said they had received the training reported post-traumatic stress symptoms, versus 20 percent who had not received the training. She added that the rate of stigma attached to getting help went down on four of five markers.

The Department of Defense recently revised a question regarding mental health on national security questionnaires, excluding noncourt-ordered, nonviolence-related marital, family and grief counsel-

ing, as well as counseling for adjustments from combat. This, Cornum said, should help alleviate concerns many Soldiers have about their security clearances or ability to work in sensitive jobs.

The Army is also working on training primary care providers to recognize and diagnose combat stress injuries and

other mental health problems, and has hired 180 additional behavioral health providers in the United States, although Richie acknowledges this is not enough. The Army has requested more.

"One of the things that I believe is happening, looking at these reports, is that the Army is very, very busy and perhaps we haven't taken care of each other as much as we'd like to. So if somebody's stressed next to you and you're stressed yourself, you might not have the energy to reach out to them ... How can we take care of each other better?" Richie said.

"A good first sergeant is one of the best screeners there is," she said.

Forty-three percent of the Soldier suicides last year took place after a deployment and many took place when Soldiers changed units and lost connectivity.

Failed relationships, she said, are the biggest risk factors for suicide. While deployments can and do contribute to relationship problems, she cautioned against blaming higher suicide numbers on deployments alone. Twenty-six percent of the Soldiers who committed suicide had never deployed.

For more information, visit www.behavioralhealth.army.mil or www.battlemind.org.

USASMA inducts two to Hall of Honor

By David Crozier

Throughout its 35-year history the U. S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas, has helped mold, educate and inspire senior noncommissioned officers from around the world to take on the gauntlet of showcasing the importance of NCOs. Specifically that the Noncommissioned Officer Education System is an integral part of the military and NCOs are the backbone of the profession of arms.

On May 8, the staff, faculty, students of Sergeants Major Course Class 58 and special guests of the Academy took time to showcase and honor two former students who took that gauntlet a step further by formally inducting them into the Academy Hall of Honor.

"I am honored to join you today in recognizing two very special men whose vision, ingenuity and determination have increased the effectiveness of countless NCOs, and have guided the NCO Corps of the U.S. Army and many European nations into the 21st century and beyond," said Col. Donald Gentry, commandant of USASMA, during opening remarks of the third annual induction ceremony. "[We honor] Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) John D. Sparks and Czech Army Command Sgt. Maj. Ludek Kolesa, who join an elite group of leaders who are quite literally the Who's Who of Army enlisted professional development."

Gentry lauded Sparks and Kolesa, saying they joined the ranks of the architects of the establishment and growth of NCOES and the Academy; architects like General Bruce Clark, who established the first NCO Academy in Germany in 1949; the first and fifth Sergeants Major of the Army, William O. Wooldridge and William G. Bainbridge respectively; and Gen. Ralph Haines, the man responsible for the establishment of USASMA.

"These men are but a few of the 22 architects we have proudly lauded for bringing our forces to where they are today," he said. "And today, it is my privilege to introduce two more that have learned the skills of a sergeant major in this very Academy and have taken that knowledge along with their own vision, personal courage and sheer determination, to move Soldier education and NCO professionalism down a new path."

The path, Gentry explained to the crowd of more than 600, resulted in Sparks and Kolesa being chosen as the newest members of the Hall of Honor.

"Sergeant Major Sparks has had a remarkable career, but it is the work he has done on behalf of Soldier and NCO education that is so distinguished," he said. "[He] has been what can only be described as the accelerant of the transformation of NCOES. John's vision for his architectural design, much of which is

already being realized, has revolutionized NCOES and set us up to embrace the future with boldness and confidence."

Looking to Kolesa's accomplishments, Gentry noted that he not only helped further the status of the NCO Corps in his own country's military, but of the militaries of many European nations.

"Sergeant Major Kolesa was the first-ever Command Sergeant Major of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic. Since then, he has been instrumental in unifying the efforts of the Supreme Allied Command Europe and Supreme Allied Command Transformation by establishing a charter that will provide one platform for which all European senior enlisted leaders will operate," Gentry said. "That charter focuses on leadership, standards, proficiency and training. He has been a tireless advocate of the value and importance of NCOs across countries and in doing so has influenced an entire continent in the development of professional armies capable of working together for the common good."

Both Sparks and Kolesa were brought up on stage to unveil their wall plaques, replicas of the ones that hang in the foyer of the East Auditorium of the Academy.

USASMA annually inducts members into the Hall of Honor based on nominations received from around the Army and allied nations whose members have attended the Sergeants Major Course. The nominations are then reviewed by Academy staff with the final selection being done by the commandant. Since instruction began at the Academy in 1973, more than 30,000 students have graduated the Sergeants Major Course. The Academy hosted its first international student in 1975. Since then, 433 international students have graduated from the course with many going on to serve as sergeants majors of their respective armies, sergeants major of their armed forces, senior enlisted advisors to defense ministers, or chiefs of defense.

"These are two individuals who have made contributions not just to their unit, not just their country, but to the world," Gentry said, "and it was a huge honor to be able to recognize these architects of NCOES."



Photos by David Crozier

Top, Czech Army Command Sgt. Maj. Ludek Kolesa, (right) smiles after unveiling his Hall of Honor Plaque and certificate. Above, Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) John D. Sparks unveil his plaque and certificate. Assisting Kolesa and Sparks were Col. Donald Gentry, commandant U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy and Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Chandler, USASMA command sergeant major.

GRAT helps ID hazards, controls

By Chris Frazier
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center

The newest tool in the Army's arsenal of safety products, the Ground Risk Assessment Tool, facilitates the process of identifying accident hazards and controls for a variety of ground operations and off duty activities.

GRAT was designed to aid in mitigating risk by reinforcing the five-step composite risk management process. Brig. Gen. Bill Forrester, director of Army safety and commanding general of the USACRC, said the new tool, coupled with CRM, is critical to making sound risk decisions at all levels of leadership.

"Using GRAT in concert with the military decision-making process will help Army leaders achieve success in their missions and make safety an integral part of their planning processes," Forrester said.

GRAT, replacing the Army Management Information System-1 or ASMIS-1 Ground Tool, consists of five parts, which include daily accident statistics; accident vignettes; current accident summaries; resources such as Army regulations, training circulars, field manuals and other guidance related to the mission or task; and an automated interactive CRM worksheet based on user input and selection of existing hazards and controls. Its easy-to-use information allows the user to save, e-mail or print a CRM worksheet (DA Form 7566).

USACRC Command Sgt. Maj. Tod Glidewell said GRAT is unique because it will continuously be updated with current, relevant information from units throughout the world.

"Using this tool allows leaders to save time, learn from others' mistakes and incorporate risk management throughout the

SEVERITY	HAZARD PROBABILITY				
	Improbable	Unlikely	Occasional	Frequent	Certain
EXTREMELY HIGH	A	B	C	D	E
HIGH	F	G	H	I	J
MODERATE	K	L	M	N	O
LOW	P	Q	R	S	T

military decision-making process," Glidewell said.

Glidewell believes GRAT will prove a valuable asset for leaders and Soldiers.

"The Army's mission is complex and the current operating environment challenges Soldiers with unique risks daily," Glidewell said. "Empowering Soldiers and leaders to reduce accidental loss and injury by incorporating CRM into mission planning through the use of this tool is a practice that can significantly increase combat power."

For more information about the Ground Risk Assessment Tool, visit <https://cr.army.mil/grat/>.

DoD standardizes enlistment waiver process

DoD News Release - The Department of Defense announced changes July 2, to improve the enlistment screening process by standardizing enlistment criteria and generating uniform reporting of waiver types across all services.

On 1 July, DoD and the nation celebrated the 35th Anniversary of the all-volunteer force (AVF). Presently, more than 1.4 million men and women choose to serve on active duty, along with nearly 1.1 million members of the National Guard and Reserves. Waivers have allowed some of them the opportunity to serve honorably.

"Waivers have long been a part of the enlistment process, allowing communities a greater voice in identifying young persons who, despite factors such as youthful misconduct, are judged trustworthy and capable, and found fully qualified for service in the armed forces," said Bill

Carr, deputy under secretary for Military Personnel Policy.

The most noticeable change to the policy is in the area of conduct waivers. Previously, each service categorized offenses differently, making it impossible to provide reliable comparisons across services over time.

"Under the new policy, all conduct offenses will be classified into one of four different categories," Carr said. "The most severe offenses will be classified as 'major misconduct,' while less severe offenses will be considered 'misconduct,' 'non-traffic,' or 'traffic' offenses. Also new is a coding system allowing services to track the level of the misconduct and the specific offense in question," said Carr.

About one in five recruits receives admission to the military by means of a waiver. About one third are for medical waivers— most frequently for high body fat

— and nearly two thirds involve youthful misconduct waivers.

Today's force is highly educated with nearly 95 percent of recruits holding a high school diploma, compared to about 75 percent of their civilian counterparts. Moreover, two thirds are drawn from the top half of American youth in math and verbal aptitude.

The standardization of data will allow the defense department to better analyze the relationship between offenses or categories of offense on the one hand, and attrition or performance concerns on the other.

This new policy, when it goes into effect on Oct. 1, 2008, will not prohibit further changes in the management of the military's screening for service in the armed forces. It will represent another affirmative step in sustaining the pattern of success that has come to characterize the volunteer force.



Photos courtesy of www.army.mil and www.fcs.army.mil

FCS

Future Combat Systems

By Staff Sgt. Mary E. Ferguson



A swarm of production personnel, engineers and technicians in white coats wait in anticipation. Are the unattended ground sensors working correctly; are they speaking to the network capability integration kit the way they should? Is the technology useful; if not, what needs to be changed? With clipboards in hand, they stand ready for answers and to take notes on sustainments and improvements. They're prepared to revisit the drawing board again and again until they get it right, until they earn the subject matter experts' seal of approval. But their laboratory isn't housed in some fancy air-conditioned building in Washington, D.C., and their answers don't live in the opinions or observations of some uber-educated engineering genius. They work instead in the sand, wind, desert heat and mountainous terrain of west Texas and southern New Mexico. The subject matter experts they turn to each wear the Army Combat Uniform, usually with a combat patch on the right arm, and the seal of approval they seek usually comes in the form of a loud "Hooah!" Who better to be the approving voice behind the evaluation and fine-tuning of the Army's Future Combat Systems than the noncommissioned officers and Soldiers who've been in the fight. Where better to perfect these systems than in the Iraq- and Afghanistan-like conditions of Fort Bliss, Texas, and White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico.

Army officials have dubbed the Future Combat Systems program and the brigade combat team it will eventually produce as the cornerstones of Army modernization. Since the program's conception more than 10 years ago, it's been looked to as the key to providing Soldiers with the technologies and capabilities necessary to dominate asymmetric ground warfare and remain self-sustaining in remote areas.

Whether through operational needs statements, lessons learned or after action reviews, NCOs have contributed to the program since its origin. Now, via the 5th Brigade, 1st Armored Division (Army Evaluation Task Force), NCOs are directly shaping the systems they and other Soldiers will use on tomorrow's battlefield.

The Fort Bliss-based task force was created from the ground up in 2007 with the specific mission of evaluating and improving the 14 systems that comprise FCS. The complete set of systems will ultimately equip the brigade combat team of the future; a goal the Army predicts to achieve in 2015, with a bulk of the capabilities now slated to first reach Infantry brigade combat teams by fiscal 2011, according to a June 26 Pentagon news conference.

The AETF began chipping away at this massive mission by focusing on the first of three scheduled spin outs designed to accelerate the fielding of select FCS capabilities and reduce operational risks as soon as possible, rather than waiting until all 14 systems are tested to field the equipment, said Command Sgt. Maj. David S. Davenport Sr., the AETF command sergeant major.

Spin Out 1 technology includes: the Network Capability Integration Kit, which consists of an integrated computer system, limited battle command and System of Systems Common Operating Environment integrated onto Abrams (A-Kit), Bradley (B-Kit) and humvee platforms; Unattended Urban (U-UGS) and Tactical (T-UGS) Ground Sensors that have multimode sensors and imaging capabilities for target detection, location and classification; and the Non-Line of Sight Launch System, which provides a networked, unmanned, launched missile system, each unit with 15 Precision Attack Missiles capable of extended range and precise targeting.

In addition to the Spin Out 1 testing, primarily conducted by the brigade's 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, the AETF's 1st Combined Arms Battalion has been working, mainly with simulators, on incorporating and developing doctrine for future vehicle capabilities.

The brigade's Fires Battalion is also involved with 1st and 2nd CAB missions, determining how to provide fire support for these future capabilities, Davenport explained.

But Spin Out 1 is front-and-center for the task force, and AETF Soldiers tested the four inter-operable systems in May during their first Force Development Test and Experiment. While the exercise was one of the largest user tests in Army history and garnered Army-wide attention, Davenport said it's the training, evaluations and modifications that culminated with the larger test, that truly reflect the central and critical roles NCOs and Soldiers are playing in the FCS program.

"[FCS] is nothing that I expected when I was told I would be involved in it," he explained. "I thought we'd get a piece of equipment, train on it for a little while, go to the field where a bunch of white coats would collect data, and that would be it – No, this is a totally new way of testing and fielding capabilities. The process is what makes it so relevant and applicable; putting [a system] in Soldiers' hands early, letting them fool with it, break it, offer feedback to an engineer or technician right then, and that technician actually taking and incorporating the feedback into the next design."

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Command Sgt. Maj. David S. Davenport Sr.
5th Brigade, 1st Armored Division
Army Evaluation Task Force

Davenport emphasized that the real foundation of the AETF and the FCS evaluation process was built long before his Soldiers physically received any FCS capabilities. He said that foundation was born and remains strong because of the fundamental training and core leadership competencies his brigade continuously focuses on.

Staff Sgt. Joshua M. Flowers, a Bradley commander in the AETF's 2nd CAB, said, "Without the basic NCO core, without the

pre-training we did before we started evaluating this equipment; if they would have instead just said, 'Here you go, take this new equipment and go use it this or that way,' then this program wouldn't be effective."

That's not what the Army has done at all with the FCS program. The veteran of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom explained that when he arrived to the brigade in early 2007, he initially trained and led his Soldiers through Infantry tactics, Bradley training, gunnery and qualifications, and unit training similar to what's conducted prior to a deployment; all before even thinking about the FCS capabilities they would eventually be evaluating.

"In a way, the fundamental training was like my past units, but in other ways it was very different," said Staff Sgt. Christopher M. Mazzaresse, a 2nd CAB dismount squad leader and veteran of two combat tours to Iraq. "It's really been more of a challenge for us NCOs because it really puts the pressure on us to train our Soldiers [well], so we are then able to spend our time on the FCS program and still remain tactically and technically sound in the Infantry portions of our job. In essence, it's really just condensed

our training and magnified any shortcomings we need to address.”

Once the AETF leadership determined the unit was certified in the traditional heavy brigade combat team-type of missions, they decided it was time to get the leaders smart on the technology. They developed a two-week long Tactical Leaders Course where subject matter experts instructed on the systems’ capabilities.

“Keep in mind, we still didn’t actually have the equipment, so we had to get creative and develop training strategies, like upgrading the software and hardware in the Close Combat Trainers at Fort Bliss to replicate a B-KITed vehicle; we could at least begin learning the start-up procedures and how to leverage the technology,” Davenport said.

When the technology started arriving, the AETF Soldiers worked with the equipment daily through a series of tests with engineers present to translate their feedback into immediate change.

“We could really see the change happening in those [individual system] tests,” Mazzaresse said. “For example, when we first got the [Unattended Ground Sensors], my Soldiers were telling me, ‘This is a lot of stuff that isn’t going to work and it’s too bulky.’ But then we got bags to carry it, and the equipment started to change based on what we had told the technicians.”

Witnessing these early changes helped the unit’s NCOs illustrate to their Soldiers the significant impact they are making on the battlefield without actually being in a combat zone.

“Again, here’s another vital role NCOs are playing in the whole process; getting their Soldiers motivated and focused on the task,” Davenport agreed. “About 65 percent of the brigade’s Soldiers are [combat] veterans ... but we still have young Soldiers here who weren’t too excited. It was the NCOs who were stressing to them the huge difference they are making for the Soldiers in the current fight and for themselves in the future.”

Mazzaresse said that many of his first-term Soldiers enlisted to go to combat. Naturally, their morale was a bit low when they arrived at the AETF instead of going into the fight, but it improved drastically when they discovered how big of an impact they’re making.

After strengthening the unit by establishing these NCO-Soldier relationships and conducting both fundamental and FCS pre-training, the AETF finally conducted May’s publicized Force Development Test and Experiment (FDT&E), which was a preliminary test for the larger Limited User Test (LUT) scheduled for this summer.

“The FDT&E was the first time we collectively brought all of the [Spin Out 1] systems together,” Davenport said. “We put the Soldiers through 10 vignettes. It was descriptive, not pre-scriptive, so they knew what the task was, but they weren’t told exactly how to use the technology. They had to use their training, and we had data collectors and Observer Controller teams out there making sure they stayed doctrinally sound.”

The Systems

The Future Combat Systems program will provide Soldiers 14 systems connected by a common network.



Tactical-UGS (T-UGS), contain a network-enabled reporting system for perimeter security and chemical, radiological, nuclear detection in a tactical setting.

UGS

Unattended Ground Sensors

Urban-UGS (U-UGS), contain a network-enabled reporting system for situational awareness, and provide residual protection for cleared areas in an urban setting.



NLOS-LS

Non-Line of Sight-Launch System

The NLOS-LS consists of a platform-independent Container Launch Unit (CLU) with 15 Precision Attack Missiles (PAM) and provides a rapidly deployable network-linked precision guided munitions launch capability.



The Class IV UAV has a range appropriate for a brigade mission. It provides communications relay capabilities and wide-angle persistent surveillance.

UAV

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

The Class I UAV is a platoon-level asset that provides dismounted Soldiers with Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition (RSTA) and laser designation.





The three versions of the Multifunctional Utility/Logistics and Equipment (MULE) Vehicle support dismantled and air assault operations. The Transport MULE Vehicle carries 1,900-2,400 pounds of equipment.

Unmanned Ground Vehicles

The Small Unmanned Ground Vehicle (SUGV) operates in urban terrain, tunnels, sewers and caves. It assists Soldiers during high-risk urban intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions.



Manned Ground Vehicles



The Non-Line of Sight-Cannon (NLOS-C), a self-propelled howitzer with a two-man crew, is a FCS indirect fire support capability that provides extended-range precision attack.

NLOS-Vehicles

The Non-Line of Sight-Mortar (NLOS-M) is the short-to-mid-range indirect fire support component of the Manned Ground Vehicle (MGV) family. It holds a three man crew.



Ground Combat Vehicles



The Mounted Combat System (MCS) provides line of sight and beyond line of sight offensive firepower capability.



The two versions of **Medical Vehicles (MV)** are designed to provide advanced trauma life support to injured Soldiers.



The **Command and Control Vehicle (C2V)** is the hub of battlefield, providing tools to synchronize combat power.



The **Recovery and Maintenance Vehicle (FRMV)** is a maneuver-sustainment system that provides recovery and maintenance support.



The **Reconnaissance and Surveillance Vehicle (RSV)** acts as the eyes and ears of the battlefield with its advanced sensors.



The four versions of **Infantry Carrier Vehicles (ICV)** transport 9-person infantry squads to various close-assault missions.

Each vignette culminated with an after action review where the Soldiers, technicians and OCs discussed whether the systems collaborated like they should, assess how the Soldiers actually used the capabilities, and determined sustainments and improvements.

When conducting the FDT&E and future tests like it, the FCS program combines the experience of NCOs like Flowers and Mazzaresse with battlefield-like weather and terrain conditions and relevant mission tasks to ensure that the process generates the most applicable systems possible for today and tomorrow's Soldiers in combat.

To meet this goal, one of the AETF leadership mandates when building the brigade was to fill its ranks with as many fresh out of the fight combat veterans possible. "We were successful," Davenport said. "We've got a couple of Silver Star recipients and more than 40 Purple Heart recipients among our many multiple-tour NCOs and Soldiers."

He added, "It makes perfect sense to have combat-experienced NCOs and Soldiers collectively evaluating the technology – It's not the command sergeants major of the world who are going to be using this stuff; it's the sergeants and staff sergeants because let's face it, success in Iraq and Afghanistan is happening at that level."

Flowers said, "During these battlefield [replicating] tests, I can say to the white coats around me, 'I never would have dreamed of doing this or that in Iraq,' and it may sound weird, but sometimes when I wake up at Fort Bliss or White Sands [Missile Range] and the first thing I see is the mountains, it puts me back in Afghanistan, waking up on a patrol; the conditions are perfect for the program's success."

The FDT&E vignettes, like the conditions they are conducted in, also parallel what Soldiers are facing in battle, and the AETF Soldiers approach the vignettes just as they would any combat mission.

"These capabilities we're evaluating aren't going to change how NCOs prepare for a mission in the fight; they're instead going to aid NCOs by providing better situational awareness so they can make better decisions," Davenport explained. "NCOs are still going to have to conduct troop leading procedures, [pre-combat inspections and checks] and do rehearsals before executing the mission. So, they're going to do all those same things when evaluating these capabilities; actually more because now they have to also do checks and rehearsals with the new systems."

Flowers agreed that the missions during the two week FDT&E for Spin Out 1 were very comparable to what a unit would face in combat, complete with a warning order the night prior and pre-planning to make sure the mission is a success.

For many of the AETF NCOs, collective exercises like the FDT&E are where they can really try out and improve the capabilities and then be able to confidently relay to their fellow NCOs in combat that the systems AETF is generating will actually be useful, possibly even save lives, on the battlefield.

During the individual tests, the Soldiers were told to

place the systems and give the thumbs up, but with the FDT&E, they were given a mission -- for example, to clear a village -- where they would also encounter insurgent forces. They had to actually conduct the mission in real time, reacting to whatever the scenario threw at them, and at the same time incorporate and test the systems, Mazzarese said.

"In the village clearing scenario, we'd set up the [Urban-Unattended Ground Sensors] in the village that way when we were clearing through, we'd still have rear security without actually having to separate our Soldiers -- definitely something we could benefit from in Iraq or Afghanistan," he explained.

On the other hand, Davenport said, "they could also use the [Tactical-Unattended Ground Sensors] to provide additional security by setting them up around the perimeter and have both sensors feeding imagery back to the B-KITed

vehicle; Soldiers can get really creative with these systems, and these realistic tests reveal that."

All the feedback and lessons learned from the FDT&E will be applied to the Limited User Test slated for this summer. The LUT is similar to the FDT&E but takes the evaluation process even further, Davenport said, "because we completely take away all the technicians; so if something breaks or is not connecting or feeding back imagery, then the Soldiers themselves must follow the troubleshooting procedures that they've been taught to fix the problem without assistance. Now that's combat realism, because there's not going to be any white coats on the battlefield to tell you how to use or fix this stuff."

Under the Spin Out process, following the LUT, the Army will begin fielding these evaluated and improved systems to Soldiers in combat, which AETF NCOs agree is a fantastic concept because it gets the equipment out to Soldiers so they can start using it, and also serves as a driving factor in the AETF Soldiers' motivation.

"Our Soldiers understand that they are giving feedback and working tirelessly on equipment that will be used soon," Davenport said. "In fact, they may be a specialist now, but they may be a team leader in a few years and be in Iraq using these very systems that they helped create."

This scenario will likely become reality for many of the AETF Soldiers as the unit begins a normal leadership rotation. Davenport said the rotation will be conducted on a staggered life-cycle basis so the brigade doesn't lose all of its uniquely experienced Soldiers at once. Then "we'll start preparing for Spin Out 2, which we'll handle like we did Spin Out 1 ... first and foremost getting the equipment into Soldiers hands'."

Both Flowers and Mazzarese said when they do transi-

tion back to the line, they'll carry with them the skills they've developed while participating in the FCS evaluation process.

"No doubt, being an NCO in this particular unit has made me a much more adaptable, thorough and multi-tasking leader," Flowers said. "Throughout the whole process here, from the beginning, things have changed constantly. Every week we'd come in and something changed; we had to learn it quickly, get it out to our Soldiers and be able to adapt while still completing our Infantry-focused tasks."

Davenport views the experience the AETF NCOs have participated in as a way to show them a different process for getting new equipment to the field; one that embeds NCOs in every stage and lets them know that in FCS, their technical and tactical expertise warrants their vote on the equipment they are going to use.

"That's the message I want NCOs out there to get about

these systems too; the attitude I want them to have when they start getting this stuff," he explained. "These [systems] are designed for them to use, by their fellow NCOs who've been where they are. It's proof that they get a vote."

While the AETF's primary mission is to test and improve these systems, the FCS evaluation process has also produced revelations regarding NCOs roles in the future force.

"We've realized that we are going to have to develop a new specific role

for NCOs, called a digital masterunner," Davenport said. "They will be the commander's expert on these capabilities; how to train, employ and fix these systems. Much like a Bradley master gunner, they will provide sound counsel and advice to whatever level of command they're at."

Overall, the role of every NCO is going to continue to grow as we build this future force, he added. "These capabilities will give NCOs more situational awareness than they've ever had before. They are going to be depended on to understand tactics better, even above the squad level, so they can effectively use this increased awareness."

The NCOs of the future will also have to process a lot of information quickly and be able to adapt; then make sound on-the-spot decisions similar to the skills Flowers, Mazzarese and other AETF NCOs have gained during their time in the task force.

"Our NCOs are doing these things already all over today's battlefields. [FCS] just gives them the tools to develop these skills even further; do their jobs even better," Davenport said.

As the Army leadership unveils and fields each of these FCS capabilities, the AETF and the NCOs who spearhead this critical mission will likely be tackling a new test somewhere in the mock battlefields of west Texas; dedicated to making the next systems even better. 

No doubt, being an NCO in this particular unit has made me a much more adaptable, thorough and multi-tasking leader. We had to learn it quickly, get it out to our Soldiers and be able to adapt while still completing our Infantry-focused tasks.

Staff Sgt. Joshua M. Flowers
5th Brigade, 1st Armored Division
Army Evaluation Task Force

KEYSTONE-RETAIN-CS

SIDPERS-ARNG

TAPDB-AE

PEPDUS 3

RRS

EDAS SAM RICS RPAS

ACTIVE ARMY

ADTRANS ARTRAMS

ITAPDB UIC OSSS TAPDB-AO ZIP/GLC

RLAS WWL RSAS/RCCPDS ORACLE-AO

ARMY RESERVE

ASBS

ASK

RPAM SEPS ARPIMS RSDQ

AGRMIS-Interface

TPUMS ROAMS

TOPMIS II eMILPO

RVPS TAADS-R UPDB

AGR/Calvin AGRMIS

MGIB MEGAX

TOPMIS TOPTUS MOBPEERS

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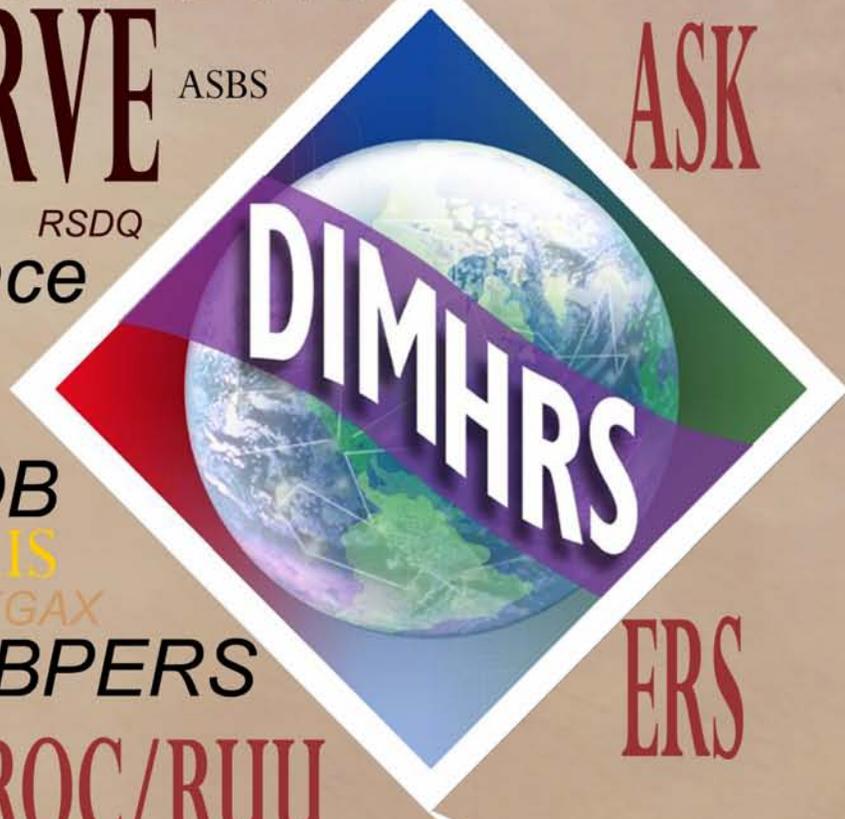
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Merging pay and personnel

DIMHRS streamlines top management systems

By David Crozier

“**H**ey, sarge. I got promoted three months ago and I still ain’t getting paid right. I’m a sergeant now and finance is still paying me as a specialist. And you know that commendation medal I got from my last unit? I can’t find it anywhere in my records. I haven’t gotten credit for earning my EIB, either.”

While this scenario is fictitious, the difficulty of keeping Soldiers’ personnel and pay records up-to-date has been a reality NCOs have had to contend with for decades in the Army. Horror stories like the one above can and do happen under the current system of management that encompasses more than 160 databases, management systems and structures the Army uses to track different aspects of a Soldier’s military record – legacy systems that do not, or cannot, communicate well with other system(s). These legacy systems require Human Resources Command and finance specialists to make multiple inputs of the same information into the various systems. That’s more than 160 different ways to make an errant entry, 160 ways to lose a routing slip, 160 ways to create a nightmare for a Soldier who only wants to get paid properly and be recognized for his or her accomplishments. To make matters worse, the active Army’s systems do not jive with the systems of the Army National Guard and Reserves. Therefore, when a reserve component Soldier is brought on active duty for deployment in support of operations, a myriad of other prob-

<https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/ArmyDIMHRS/index.html>

Soldiers and HR professionals are encouraged to visit the DIMHRS Web site to become familiar with what the new program has to offer.

For HR specialists there are online training modules to complete before they can be certified on DIMHRS.

Soldiers at all levels are encouraged to visit the site several times before the March 1, 2009 launch to become familiar with the workings of DIMHRS.

lems arise for that Soldier's accountability for service, pay and so on.

Welcome to the Department of Defense's answer to this recurring problem: the Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System – or as it is known affectionately in the Army – DIMHRS (DIME-ERS).

"DIMHRS is a fully integrated Web-based system using the PeopleSoft platform. It is a system for all components, both active and reserve, and all services combined together on one system where there will be one Soldier, one record, throughout all services, throughout all the world," said Sgt. 1st Class Rodney Miller, a finance specialist and DIMHRS master trainer. "So the good thing about it, or the benefit of it, is the Soldiers having 24-hour access, seven days a week to the system. They can go in and update, review their records. And the HR specialist has that same capability along with the commanders. So in total, DIMHRS is a great benefit to the Soldier, the command and the services."

With a launch date set for March 1, 2009, the members of the DIMHRS team are completing all of the training, testing and updating of the systems so that when it does go live in 2009, there are no issues. To ensure that is the case, every Soldier in the Army will get a briefing on the system. HR personnel responsible for the maintenance of DIMHRS will be trained and select HR professionals will be further trained to complete train-the-trainer requirements.

To the average Soldier, all that training and testing is persona non grata. All they want to know is how it will affect their pay, their promotions, their credit for service, and how hard it will be to use.

Simply put – "If you can update your MySpace, you can do DIMHRS," said Sgt. 1st Class Raymond H. Myers, DIMHRS Strategic Communications NCOIC.

"It is very user friendly – very user friendly," said Sgt. 1st Class James Duprey, DIMHRS master trainer. "If you can go online and work your way through a Bank of America demo, you can work DIMHRS."

But what specifically will Soldiers be able to do within DIMHRS; any action that they can initiate already with a DA Form 4187 and more, say officials.

"There are practically 150 additional self-service items the member has capability to access; everything from online retirement requests, separations, reclassification, to some extent some limited training for the Army Reserve and Army National Guard," said Master Sgt. James Stover, DIMHRS sergeant major. "They can go ahead and request training, short tour active duty, those types of things – assignment volunteering for certain assignments and so on. So there is a large scale amount of automated self-service capability that we don't have in today's personnel and finance systems."

To really understand the capabilities of DIMHRS from a Soldier's perspective, Stover recommends that all Soldiers visit the DIMHRS Web site at <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/ArmyDIMHRS/index.html>. Then click on the *Outreach Materials* link and locate the *UPK's Link*. Once there, Stover said, Soldiers get an opportunity to use the User Productivity Kits to get familiar with many of DIMHRS capabilities. He cautioned, however, the UPKs are close to what the final product is going to be, but may not be exactly what is released in March 2009.

HR gets all the work

While DIMHRS is a boon to the average Soldier, allowing him or her more visibility and control over their personal records – for the HR and finance folks who used to have to work with all of those legacy systems – it is a dream come true. This is especially true for the finance folks as they will get out of being the pay masters and hand that job over to the HR folks.

“All our finance NCOs working in DIHMRS have unique roles because they are actually designing themselves out of a job. Literally, when we implement DIMHRS across the Army inventory, military pay ceases to be a 44 Charlie Finance Corps function and it moves over to HR,” Stover said. “So the Finance guys are looking at things from the standpoint of how much we can get into DIHMRS because the HR folks have a knowledge base that they need to catch up on. But the automation capability that is going to happen on the military pay side allows us to eliminate a requirement associated with the Finance Corps and move the primary principle input to HR. So instead of having two inputs, one on the personnel and one on the pay side, it all comes from one input.”

To prepare for this transition, the folks at DIMHRS are putting the finishing touches on the system, getting their folks trained to go out to the field and train others,



U.S. Army Photo

Personnel in the Human Resources and pay fields try out a pre-release build of the DIMHRS system at a May 2008 live demonstration in New Orleans.

and ensuring the Web-based instruction for those in the field is up to date.

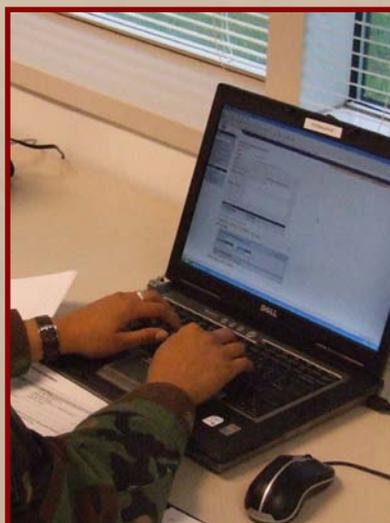
“Right now, we are doing train-the-trainer rehearsals where we are reviewing, updating; making sure our lesson plans are accurate, correct, with no errors. We are rehearsing those things so when we go out and train the trainers, those folks will be able to take the information back to their units, give classes and conduct instructional-led classes to help Soldiers who are doing the Internet-based instruction be better prepared,” said Sgt. 1st Class James Duprey, a finance specialist and DIMHRS master trainer. “And we are also going to conduct DIMHRS Administrator Training.”

Once the training of the DIMHRS personnel and field training is done, there are a few more steps to be completed before the actual launch in March 2009.

“From the standpoint of all of our NCOs, they are prepared to go ahead and initiate and kick off. Once we finish the testing, we go into the Department of Defense’s acceptance of the application and that will be about a 30-day period. After that, the Army, led by Army Test and Evaluation Command, goes into a very robust operational test environment where we will be testing everything initially in a lab and then push it out to the field where we will be doing dual entry into both the legacy environment and DIMHRS,” Stover said. “Then there is a third phase where you take a small portion of the population and place them on DIMHRS to actually run the payroll portion two

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Sgt. 1st Class Raymond H. Myers
DIMHRS Strategic
Communications NCOIC



months prior to actual implementation in the March time frame.”

But how cool is DIMHRS to the ones who are responsible for the maintenance of the system?

“To me, I think it is outstanding because I worked in G-1, I worked at a couple of personnel service detachments and also a couple of brigades. And when you look at it, you don’t have to try and run around to different systems; for example – promotions. Right now when we get promoted, you have to go get it updated in EMILPO (electronic military personnel office), and SIDPERS (Standard Installation/Division Personnel System), and you go to finance and make sure it is updated, and into EDAS (Enlisted Distribution and Assignment System),” said Sgt. 1st Class Donna Pankey-Garcia, an HR specialist and DIMHRS master trainer. “Now you don’t have to worry about that. Now it is all in one system. It is less paperwork, less time for the Soldier to be out there trying to make sure all this stuff is straight. That goes back to Soldiers being trained on one system instead of several different systems.”

Duprey agrees.

“On a finance perspective, you no longer have to run around from HR and bring the stuff to finance, then I have to go through this system and do the input, then wait until it updates. With DIMHRS, once it is in the system it is there; the transaction is done,” he said. “The personnel action drives that finance transaction, and once DIMHRS checks the eligibility rules and says, ‘Okay this Soldier is entitled to it,’ that Soldier is going to get paid. So to me it is outstanding.”

While the active duty side of DIMHRS worked rather easily, getting DIMHRS to be a one-system-for-all – including the active and reserve component – took some finessing.

“You’re dealing with the functional components of the Army National Guard, the Army Reserve and the active component – all of the various different system owners that are sitting out there – and bring them all in and basically say how do we take what we do, which is similar but different, and push that into a single process,” Stover said. “So we had to look at what makes the Army National Guard process unique and what portions of that do we need to bring over to DIMHRS; what specifically about the Army Reserve? What part of the mobilization process do we have to keep, and try and merge that all together? And that was a very challenging aspect.”

Another unique aspect and a small challenge for the HR specialist is learning some new terminology. Because DIMHRS is an off-shoot of PeopleSoft, terminology like “employee name” replaces “service member,” “employee ID” replaces the social security number, “absence”

replaces “leave,” and so on. The social security number will still be maintained, but it will not be an integral part of DIMHRS for Soldier identification and will not appear on most of the documents created for viewing by unauthorized personnel.

“Most of the terminology changes are going to be invisible to the Soldier. One of the biggest things that our HR guys have to get used to is the fact that we are no longer going to be using SSN as the key identifier,” Stover said. “Sixty to 90 days before we go live with DIMHRS, everybody in the Army will be emailed, through their AKO account, their employee ID number. That is the one time that you will probably see the term employee. And that really becomes the unique identifier into the system. This is all to protect the personal information that is sitting out there and prevent it from being stolen.”



Controlled Access

Stover explained that once DIMHRS goes active, there will be restrictions to accessing certain portions of the system.

“If you are an HR professional with a responsibility for servicing other Soldiers’ accounts, you will only be able to log onto the system utilizing your Common Access Card capability,” he said. “Members who are only allowed to access their own record will do so utilizing username and strong, long password. Approximately six months after launch, there will be a change and at that point in time if you attempt to access the system from a non-dot.mil account you will automatically be directed to member self-service capabilities only.”

Because of the need to keep DIMHRS available 24/7 to Soldiers anywhere in the world, the system will stay unclassified, thus allowing it to remain a Web-based system.



Soldiers will have the ability to complete more than 150 tasks using the self-service module on DIMHRS; no more DA Form 1489s to get lost in the shuffle. Once a Soldier submits a request on DIMHRS it is automatically viewable by HR specialists who will move the action along electronically.

Get ready for DIMHRS

The biggest thing Soldiers and NCOs can do at this point in the DIMHRS process is to go online and preview the User Productivity Kits, and ensure all of their records are updated.

“As we get closer to deployment, we will be putting more and more information out there. We have just about completed our site visit schedule where we are going out to all the major installations to brief the leadership,” Stover said. “It still really comes down to the Soldiers’ perspective, however. They need to start working their records management piece now. Make sure that if you think you have a discrepancy in your records, get it corrected now. From a standpoint of preparedness, there will be some changes in the way that payroll will be computed, and those messages are going out as far as how things will be. For example, if you like the

once-a-month pay option, that pay option is not available under DIMHRS.”

There should not be any angst concerning the deployment of DIMHRS, officials stated. It is a good system for the Soldiers and the Army as a whole and will alleviate many of the problems of the past.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston agrees.

“DIMHRS is good news because it is going to fix all of the problems that we have been challenged with as NCOs in taking care of Soldiers. All of us remember the problems – you do the personnel action to promote somebody, but that action doesn’t make it over to the finance channel and they don’t get paid for it. We have lived through that for decades, so now with DIMHRS ... when you do a personnel action that affects your pay, it doesn’t have to be paperwork going from one agency to another; it is all combined together.” 🖱️

For more information about DIMHRS, visit the Web site at <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/ArmyDIMHRS/index.html> often as updates are posted regularly.



“DIMHRS is good news because it is going to fix all of the problems that we have been challenged with as NCOs in taking care of Soldiers.”

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston



On the road to change

SMA explains changes in NCO management/auto promotion

By David Crozier →

As the 13th Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA) during a critical time in the Army and the Nation's history, Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston knows only too well that keeping the force informed is one of the top things any noncommissioned officer can do to ensure mission success. Since taking over the position in January 2004, he has done just that, traveling the globe and talking to Soldiers to inform them of changes to the Army structure, Army doctrine and overall Soldiering.

In his travels however, Preston has observed that not everyone has a full understanding of the changes occurring or pending because of the high operation tempo and having more than a quarter of a million Soldiers dispersed to more than 80 countries around the globe. Most recently, Preston has been answering a lot of questions about the Sergeant Major/Command Sergeant Major Management System and the Auto-Promotion System and each time he answers questions, he likes to give a little historical perspective to show the force how the decisions came about.

SGM/CSM Management System

"Let me start by saying what is the task and purpose of having a management system and what is it that you are trying to fix," he said. "And that is where you have to start; looking at it from a historical perspective."

The current management system is based on time on station, he explained. If a Soldier is in a particular military occupational specialty (MOS) and has been on station the longest, and another station needs to fill a billet with that MOS background and grade, then that Soldier is the next person to come down on orders to move to the next assignment.

"But the Army is changing and we are now getting away from the people moving in and out of the unit throughout the course of a year," Preston said. "We are going to life cycle, management. When you are assigned to a unit during a life cycle you don't ETS, PCS, or retire during that life cycle. You [and] the unit are locked in for pre-deployment."

That lockdown, that forming of the team and keeping it together for at least 36 months, also includes commanders, command sergeants major and sergeants major. The Army learned some lessons from the first units that went through life cycle management. Once a unit returns from deployment and transitions into reintegration and rest, there is a major change in personnel. Preston uses the example of 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, the first Stryker Brigade that stood up at Fort Lewis, Wash.

The Army started building the brigade in 2000; manned it to 100 percent, the unit stayed together for two years while fielding the Stryker, they deployed in November 2003, came home in November 2004 and the unit began reset. The commanders and command sergeants major then move on to their next career qualifying assignments. The brigade, while together, continued to grow their NCOs and was at 148 percent strength in staff sergeants. The Army comes in, grabs a bunch of them, and makes them drill sergeants and recruiters and moves them out to the institutional Army. Then they move Soldiers from the institutional Army to the brigade. So there is a big turn over, Preston explains.

What was at issue with the senior NCOs was the lack of a formal system to move the brigade CSM, the battalion CSMs and the unit SGMs to their next career qualifying assignments. With a very short window of opportunity to move these NCOs before

the unit went into its next 36-month life cycle lockdown, many CSMs found themselves in a position of either staying with the unit for another three years or retiring. Many opted for staying with the unit for another life cycle.

“So now you’ve got a brigade CSM who has been in his position for about 5 ½ years; the battalion SGMs have been there for about 5 ½ years. Of course they are frustrated and now they are going to retire. So what happens is we are not getting our best qualified, most deserving senior NCOs moving up into the senior NCO positions,” Preston said. “And as we continue to grow and put more and more units into the life cycle, that problem is going to continue to grow. So we really need something to take care of that.”

Another reason for the need for a management system, he explains, is because it takes two years to grow a sergeant major. Master sergeants are selected during the June board for promotion to SGM and attendance at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas. It is one year before they attend the Academy and complete the nine-month course of instruction. Upon graduation and with PCS moves and personal leave en route to their next unit, two years have gone by.

Another issue causing problems in senior NCO positions is that approximately 550 senior NCOs retire throughout the year, leaving what Preston calls “holes in the yard.” With Sergeants Major Course classes yielding approximately 550 sergeants major only once each year, the Army saw many of the “holes” left by retirements unfilled until those students graduated. To fix that in the interim, the Army started sending junior non-promotable master sergeants to the Academy and using some of them to fill sergeant major positions upon graduation. Eventually, Preston explained, 90 percent of those non-promotable master sergeants do get promoted to sergeant major within three years, but he believes because they are pushed into their positions early, they are disadvantaged when it comes to competing for CSM.

“They are not getting the leadership, career qualifying assignment that their peers are who didn’t get selected to go to school. Now they find themselves perhaps disadvantaged for promotion,” he said.

Starting with Class 60, selectees will only go to the academy if they have been selected to be a sergeant major. To help fill some of the “holes in the yard,” the Army in the past two boards has also selected three years worth of promotions. By the time Class 60 graduates, they will be able to go out into the force, Preston said, and be utilized to replace someone out in the field who is either moving to their next career qualifying position or retiring.

That leads to the management system and how senior NCOs will compete for positions.

“This is what the senior NCOs have said they want – more flexibility in assignments and more opportunities for assignment consideration – so about the two year mark, what I can do is go online and, using the ASK (assignment satisfaction key), I will go through and answer a series of questions. Human Resources Command will put every CSM and SGM position

available out there to me so that I can see it. Now through this process it may ask, ‘Preston if you are selected to be a brigade CSM of an operational brigade, what are your top three choices of where you want to be assigned? Now if I am picked to be a brigade CSM for an institutional brigade, my top three choices might be ... If I am not selected to be a CSM – and this gets into competing for CSM – if I am not picked to be a brigade CSM, and I am retained as a battalion level CSM, my top three choices are ... If I am picked to go be an institutional battalion CSM my choices might be ... Then of course if I am not selected to be kept as a CSM, and I am selected to be assigned as an operational SGM, my top three choices might be retirement, a small group instructor at the Academy, a senior NCO teacher, counselor with ROTC at one of the colleges or universities. This system will better place senior NCOs and manage senior NCOs and put them in those positions where they can best serve the Army.”

Preston explained that this system will not affect the current SGMs and CSMs, but will affect the upcoming sergeants first class and junior master sergeants.



Photo by Pvt. Sharla Perrin, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Boon (right), of 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division from San Antonio, Texas, and Command Sgt. Maj. James Pippin, the brigade’s new command sergeant major, complete the time-honored ritual of passing the unit’s colors.



The plan is to start moving people beginning in 2010, but as Preston said, “It is going to take us years beyond that to really fully implement the system and cover down on all the different career fields and assignment positions out there.”

For more information, contact the SGM/CSM assignment manager at HRC.

Auto Promotions



U.S. Army photo

Sgt. Joshua Foye, 1st Space Brigade, gets inducted into the noncommissioned officer ranks by promotion to the rank of sergeant in a simple ceremony in Iraq. Foye has clearly demonstrated his potential and is now recognized for his efforts.

“This is one of those areas where you have to understand what is the problem and why this system was put into place. For all of us who wear stripes, all of us as noncommissioned officers, we forced the Army to put this policy in place – the specialist to sergeants, sergeant to staff sergeant promotions. We the NCO Corps forced the Army to put that system in.”

What Preston alluded to again drew him back to where it all began. He said that during Gen. Eric Shinseki’s term as Chief of Staff of the Army, the Army was experiencing a large number of military occupational specialties that were severely undermanned – something the Army calls a star MOS. With the enlisted promotion system based on an 800-point system, a promotable specialist has to have a minimum of 350 points to be put on the order of merit list. Soldiers earn promotion points through weapons qualification, PT tests, education – both military and civilian, awards and decorations, promotion board results and points from their commanders.

When the Army takes a look at promotions to sergeant in a particular MOS, they adjust the cutoff scores based on the points of the specialists who are eligible for promotion. If the Army has 100 promotable specialists and they have points from 652 to 352 with only 10 positions to fill, HRC knows who those specialists are and will adjust the cutoff score to ensure the top 10 Soldiers to get promoted.

“[It’s a] very fair system and that’s how it is designed to work. It is a very good system, and has been with us for a very long time,” Preston said. “Now where you run into problems is if you have 10 vacancies in a low density MOS and HRC goes out to find the specialist promotables and there is nobody there. That is what we call a star MOS. A star MOS is where there is nobody on the promotion standing list but there are still vacancies for promotion.”

Preston explained that in 1999, Shinseki saw the Army had approximately 30 Star MOS’s and sent a letter out to the field stating the most important thing leaders can do right now is grow sergeants. Leaders took heed and star MOS’s dropped to manageable levels. What happened next, Preston said, was the Army took their eye off of the issue and went back to doing business as normal and the number of star MOS’s rose again to about 32-33 by 2002.

“So in 2002, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack Tilley sent a

personal 4-star letter to all the senior sergeant majors. I was the V Corps SGM in Germany, and he said, ‘Hey, I need your help. We have got [too many star MOS’s] and I need your help,’” Preston said. “So I had the two divisions, 1st Armored and 1st Infantry, and I had the 11 separate brigades and the COSCOM; and I told all of the senior sergeant majors, I need their battalion sergeant majors to go down to their company, troop, battery level orderly rooms and pull out the counseling files of those specialists that are in the primary zone and see what we are doing to counsel them; see what we are doing to coach, teach and mentor them to grow them to be sergeants.”

Again, the star MOS numbers came down. Again the Army took its eyes off the issue and went back to business as usual.

“We got really busy again because Iraq came the following year; we were already in Afghanistan at that point and with the deployment and the operational tempo, star MOS’s shot way up,” he said. “So when HRC came to me two years ago, the Army was up to like 36 star MOS’s. So I said, ‘Okay now I understand what we have done from a historical perspective, so answer the *so what* question.’ So we have a star MOS. That means as soon as somebody goes in front of the board and they have the minimum points of 350, they get promoted. I mean, that’s got to be a good thing.”

The answer was, however, not a good thing for the NCO Corps. The impact of having a star MOS for several years is that when you don’t fill the sergeant vacancies, then you don’t have the population of sergeants to promote to staff sergeants and that means you don’t have the population of staff sergeants to promote to sergeant first class. Then, you don’t have the population to promote to master sergeant and so on, he explained. That,

coupled with the Army is growing by 65,000 Soldiers and the lack of NCOs in the force becomes a major issue for the Corps.

To fix the issue, HRC recommended that specialists in the primary zone that have four years time in service and one year time in grade, are automatically placed on the order of merit list for promotion. This criteria also led to the fact that 90 percent of Soldiers in this category have already re-enlisted and made the commitment to stay with the Army.

Preston liked the idea but wanted the units to have more control over who would make the order of merit list.

“I said the leadership has still got to get a vote. Who knows Spc. Preston down there better than the first sergeant and my company commander? They need to say yes or no. The promotion authority is the battalion commander. So the battalion commander and battalion sergeant major need to say yes or no.”

He explained that even though a Soldier is put on the order of merit list with a minimum of 350 points, it is very unlikely the Soldier will get promoted before his or her peers.

“Will I ever get promoted? Probably not; because the only way I am going to get anything more than 350 points is to go before the board. I have got to go before the board so I can gain credit for the things that I have done – weapons qualification, PT and all the rest of it.”

What it all boils down to in the end, Preston explained, is that NCOs need to keep their eyes on the issue at all times, continue to coach, teach and mentor Soldiers to grow them into sergeants.

“You can’t recruit a sergeant. You have to grow them,” Preston said. “And the Army needs senior NCOs to help grow sergeants by doing what NCOs do – coach, teach and mentor.” 🙌



Photo by Sgt. Bryanna Poulin

SMA Preston said NCOs need to grow sergeants through mentoring, coaching and teaching. Above, Sgt. Juan Obregon, combat medic, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, demonstrates wrapping a wound during an exercise at the Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii.

Command Sgt. Maj. “Joe” Gainey

Setting the foundation as the first SEAC

By David Crozier →

His parents named him William Joseph Gainey at birth, but he always introduces himself as Joe. From the very moment you meet him you are put at ease by his South Carolina demeanor. Yet, at the same time, you know he is serious about Soldiering. So when he was selected to become the first senior enlisted advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the many who know him believed it to be a no-brainer. Now that he has retired from the Army after 33 ½ years and after spending the last 2 ½ years as the SEAC, he said he is thankful for the many opportunities he has had serving his beloved country and for being the first to hold the highest enlisted position within the Department of Defense.

Gainey initially turned down the idea of being considered for the position, telling Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston, “No thank you. Not interested. I want to go back to war with my corps.”

He would soon change his mind after being informed that the Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Peter Schoomaker said he would be one of the Army’s two nominees.

“That put it in a different ballgame. I could not say no,” Gainey said. “I have always had a personal belief in that I never put my name on a slate. I always waited for people to call me because I didn’t want to be a slate runner and here’s why. I believe we have the ground and we have the stars, meaning general officers in this case. If you focus on the stars there’s a 45-degree plane that you are missing. Where are the troops? On that 45-degree plane.”

Accepting his nomination, Gainey said he joined a list of 10 others representing the sister services – Air Force, Navy, and Marines. From there, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Marine Gen. Peter Pace put together a panel of general officers to look at the list of nominees and whittle it down to five candidates who would be interviewed by Pace.

“I think I was the third interview,” Gainey said. “From there he made his selection.”

Once selected, Pace told Gainey to “get out there and tell him what is really going on.” To find out what was really on the hearts and minds of the young men and women serving in today’s military.

“That was his words and that was my job. I traveled the world,” Gainey said.

But there was a slight problem; there was no real foundation, no roles, and no history for the position to guide Gainey in his travels. He was about to venture into the unknown from a joint perspective.

“I didn’t know what I didn’t know – straight up,” he said.

“I was honored to be selected to the position, but I didn’t know what it would entail.”

So what Gainey did first was to develop the roles of the SEAC and model them after the roles and responsibilities of each of the service senior enlisted advisors.

“They gave me a blank sheet of paper and said come up with your roles,” Gainey said. “And what I did was I went



Photo by Sgt. Mary Ferguson

to the five services; the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard – we forget the Coast Guard a lot – and I looked at their roles and I took a piece of each of them and made mine.”

What he ended up with is: Oversight, Spokesman, Communicator and Integrator. For spokesman, Gainey said, as the senior enlisted person within the Department of Defense he would many times be called upon to speak for all the services. As such, he knew he had to learn as much as he could about each service.

As communicator, Gainey said he was the direct link between the Secretary of Defense and the service senior enlisted advisors and the combatant command senior enlisted advisors.

He eventually set it up where the senior enlisted advisors sat down with the defense secretary at a quarterly luncheon.

“Before the SEAC position came about, the services never spoke to the Secretary of Defense. They just didn’t do it. They went to their boss who went to the Secretary of Defense. Once the position was established and Secretary of Defense [Robert] Gates came on board, he asked me one day if there was anything that I would like him to do. I explained to him that Colin Powell used to have a luncheon with the service senior enlisted advisors and I asked [Secretary Gates] if he would start that back up, which he did.”

He also became the direct link between the services and the combatant commands, the force providers and the war fighters, as Gainey respectively calls them.

As the integrator, Gainey said he and his team took a look at all the services and if there was a good idea out there that could be used by others, his team would surface that idea.

“The United States Marine Corps; when a young Marine goes to boot camp he gets issued a weapon. My team asked the question one time, and it was ‘Gunny Sergeant’ Steven Soanes, ‘Why don’t the Army issue weapons at basic training like the Marine Corps do?’ Gainey said. “So as an integrator, I took that great idea and went to the Sergeant Major of the Army and asked, ‘Why doesn’t the Army issue weapons to basic trainees like the Marine Corps?’ Guess what? We do now. They get a weapon within two hours of coming into boot camp and that’s the weapon they keep throughout basic training.”

With his roles established, the next challenge for Gainey was to get out and be the eyes and ears for the chairman, something he said was not as easy as it looked.

“The learning curve was when I first went to visit the Air Force. I could not go there as an Army guy even though I wore the uniform. I had to earn their trust,” he said. “Everyone was suspicious of me at first because, why would DoD need a senior enlisted and this guy is an Army puke at that. So all the services were very leery of me at first; not me as a person, but

what was on my left – U.S. Army.”

To set his learning curve into high gear, Gainey made it his first mission to visit every service’s personnel center, including his own. He learned how the Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard assign troops, conduct promotion boards, reassign troops, conduct retirements, and so on. By his second year in office, Gainey said, the doors opened up; the leeriness was gone. As for the Army, he got updated on all of the latest issues and changes affecting Soldiers.

He traveled the globe, several times, learning about the services and joint operations. He flew on the Air Force’s Airborne



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Timothy Book

Command Sgt. Maj. William J. Gainey (center) crosses Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Nov. 22 on a U.S. Coast Guard 25-foot transportable small boat piloted by Coast Guardsmen deployed from Port Security Unit 311, San Pedro, Calif.

Early Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft with his nephew as one of the crewmembers. He spent time on the USS Ronald Regan, USS Ohio, USS Stinson and the USS James E. Williams, named after the most decorated enlisted person in the Navy. He visited every major Air Force base he could get to. He spent time at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, seeing the operations at Camp Delta, and he observed and talked with Special Forces units following real-world missions. Admittedly not a man who likes large crowds, Gainey also took care to talk to troops one-on-one so he could go back to the chairman and let him know what was on their hearts and minds.

What he learned is even though the services wear different uniforms, they are very much the same, especially in their core values.

“If you take the core values, and I have done this, of all the services and lay them out on the table, you will be shocked as to how many of them are the same,” he said. “And the ones that don’t have the exact same words; look up the words that are different and you’ll find they have the same meaning. They are all the same.”

Gainey also found out that joint operations work.

“I spent 18 days going out to the Special Forces. I went to the Special Forces of the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Air Force. I went to the Philippines, Japan, a place called California; we went to Fort Bragg, to complexes that don’t exist. We went all over the world for 18 days, and I got to see, no kidding, on the ground in the Philippines, a joint Special Forces unit that had just accomplished a mission, and I got to talk to those guys. I got to go see where the mission happened, and [joint] is working,” Gainey said. “It is like a melting pot. It is working very well. The warriors on the ground come together. They don’t give a rat’s [behind] what service you are from. They care about can you hit your target. It is working very well on the ground.”

Working in a way much different than he sees it at the Pentagon. Gainey said he believes many at the Pentagon do not have the same sense of urgency as the ground troops when it comes to supporting war fighters.

“[The services] as force providers have to have a sense of urgency because for every day we take to introduce a new piece

of equipment, a new round or whatever, someone is dying,” he said. “My big thing is 75 percent. I believe that we do not owe the troopers a 100-percent solution. We owe them 75-percent solutions because, if I give you a 75-percent solution on how to solve a problem, you will come up with the other 25 percent. I have seen it on the ground too much. And by us waiting to come up with a 100-percent solution, how many troops are dying while they wait for the other 25 percent? Unacceptable.”

One goal that Gainey and his team pushed a lot for was joint professional military education. He said, when he first came into the position in October 2005, if anybody thought they were going to go anywhere into a combat operation all by themselves, they were severely mistaken. It is not the Army, not the Air Force, not the Navy, but a joint world these days. And even though he did not get joint education to move forward like he would’ve wanted to, he is confident there are those who will take on that gauntlet and see it through.

“Guys like Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Ripka [US Africa Command], Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Balch [US Southern Command] and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Carlton Kent; they all believe in joint education and they are in the position to influence it a lot more than I could,” Gainey said. “The next class of the Sergeants Major Academy will have Marines in it because Kent was a graduate of USASMA and he said he did not learn how to be a Marine at the Academy, but he did learn how to interact with other services. So joint education is very important to him.”

Throughout Gainey’s tenure as the first SEAC, another task he took to heart was getting the services to better understand each other and to talk to each other.

“Well I can’t say Joe Gainey made any changes, because I don’t think I did. I think what I did was I showed the services that, ‘You know guess what? There are other things besides just the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.’ What I used to tell them and they used to get so sick of me saying this, ‘Take your index finger and put it over your service identifier on your name tape. You’ve got U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marines and U.S. Coast Guard. When you put your finger over your service, what’s left? US,’” Gainey said. “And I used to tell them its all about US. One of my biggest accomplishments, my team’s accomplishment because it ain’t me; it’s the team. What we accomplished is we got the services to, no kidding, sit down and talk to each other. And if you see them now they are more like brothers than neighbors.”

As he leaves behind his beloved Army for the civilian life, he is ever mindful of those who made a difference in his life while a Soldier.

“The first guy that made a difference in my life was sergeant

first class Rutherford. We used to call him ‘War Daddy,’ because this guy was a ball of fire. And he, over all others, taught me to know the basics. I mean, War Daddy said, ‘You know your jeeps, your tanks will get you to where you are going, but your brains are going to keep you alive.’ So he used to really push that into us – field survival training,” he said. “Another is a guy named Fred Davenport – he was again sergeant first class and he became first sergeant and then he became Sgt. Maj. Fred Davenport. He taught me more than anyone that you can delegate authority but you cannot delegate responsibility. He taught me that no matter if your Soldiers do good or bad, it is you that failed, not them. I’ll never forget that.”



U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Derrick Ingle

Command Sgt. Maj. William J. Gainey presents Oscar Brown, a retiree, with a coin during a tour of the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Washington, D.C. Gainey said that anyone visiting the D.C. area should take the time to visit the home and its occupants.

Gainey’s advice to young non-commissioned officers – “You have got to make a decision in life, E-5; well, actually young corporal. You are now a noncommissioned officer. Are you going to be selfless or selfish? You can only be one of the two. You can’t be in between. You have to be selfless or selfish. A selfless person is somebody that always puts their troops before them.

“Another thing, if I take a wrong turn and you know I am going wrong, tell me I am wrong. It takes a dumber person to follow me if they know I am going the wrong way. So that’s what I would tell young troops – selfless, selfish, and be quick about telling people your shortcomings.”

While no one has been selected to fill his vacancy as the SEAC, Gainey said he was given the opportunity to provide names to Navy Admiral Mike Mullen, to be considered as his replacement.

“I have already given the chairman names from the Army, Marine Corps and Air Force. I gave him six names. He elected not to let the Navy play because he is Navy. But I gave him the right names. And he told me, I don’t just want a name, I want the right person to be nominated. Each of the three services – Army, Air Force and Marines nominated two very qualified individuals. I know all six of them personally,” he said.

His advice to them – “Don’t try to fill my shoes because, unless they wear a 9 ½ - 10 depending on the shoe, they won’t be able to fill them. Be their own self. Don’t try to start from scratch. Take some initiatives that are in place and work them. Because what I told Admiral Mullen is I think Joe Gainey and his team did a real good job establishing the foundation. And it is pretty good concrete. But I don’t think I was the guy to put the walls up. But in that group of six there’s two in there, they can make the walls and build a ceiling easily.”

Although retired from the Army now, Gainey will stay in touch with the troopers he loves so much as he is going to work for the Joint IED Defeat Organization as a senior mentor, traveling the globe again in support of Soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and “Coasties” everywhere. 🏠



Photo courtesy of www.army.mil

NCO

Where we



“Every ‘old timer’ prides himself on being able to tell you how different things were in the ‘old Army.’ Most regale their listeners with the exploits of that ‘old Army’ and tell how things will never again be the same. Well, here’s one old timer who hopes they never are! I’m proud to be a part of the ‘old Army,’ and also proud to have the privilege of being part of the new Army.”

The first Sergeant Major of the Army, William O. Wooldridge, spoke those words ... in 1967. The Army’s then top enlisted Soldier was addressing the graduates of the first Noncommissioned Officer Candidate Course; the leadership course created and conducted during the Vietnam era to provide select initial entry Soldiers with additional training prior to sending them to the front lines. But his words about the “old” versus “new” Army weren’t references to changes in uniforms or weapons; they were instead about changes in NCO education, which were intended to prepare Soldiers for the increased roles they faced in battle.

His quote could easily come from many of today’s senior NCOs considering the ongoing transformation happening in the Noncommissioned Officer Education System, designed to produce NCOs who are multi-faceted warrior leaders capable of thinking quickly and critically on today’s full-spectrum battlefield.

As Wooldridge’s decades-old words coupled with today’s NCOES transformation reflect, the Army has historically adapted and continues to tailor its training to ensure NCOs are prepared for their present and future missions.

While this adaptability is nothing new, today’s NCOES has evolved tremendously since its inception more than three decades ago. Its courses are taught in

academies and on the Internet throughout the world to all levels of NCOs in the active, Reserve and National Guard components; even to service members from other branches of the U.S. military and international militaries.

Still, transforming this system may look simple enough on a PowerPoint slide; rename courses, shuffle around or delete tasks, and add a few structured self-development programs. In reality, it’s a massive undertaking, but one the Army is attacking head-on.

Armed with an experience-driven plan of action, the Army’s Training and Doctrine Command, the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy and NCO academies Army-wide are transitioning NCOES. While the system is already revered by other armies throughout the world, Army leaders are determined to make it more relevant and accelerated, with each level of education within each training domain deliberately tailored to provide continuous learning opportunities at the appropriate moments throughout Soldiers’ careers.

There’s no secret vault behind that PowerPoint slide, holding the answers of how to make this happen over night, but a brief update on NCOES transformation – where we are, where we’re aiming – reveals much about this aggressive mission.

ES
are; Where we’re aiming!

Story & Graphic by Staff Sgt. Mary E. Ferguson

SELF-DEVELOPMENT DOMAIN

According to TRADOC, the self-development domain of the NCO leader development strategy must contain structure in order to bridge the gaps between the operational and institutional domains, and foster Soldiers' career-long learning. A five-level structured self-development program (SSDP) is currently under construction. The program's curriculum is designed to compliment the other two parts of the self-development domain – guided and personal self development – and directly ties the domain to the ultimate goal of NCOES transformation; to produce warrior leaders who are critical thinkers and resource managers.

Structured Self-Development Program 1

The Army is working to establish SSDP 1. The computer-based training will consist of 80 hours of online interactive multimedia instruction via Black Board. DOTD has currently validated 40 of those hours. TRADOC slates SSDP 1's completion and phase-in during Fiscal 09, followed by SSDP 1 becoming a requirement for Warrior Leader Course graduation by fiscal 10 and a prerequisite for WLC enrollment by FY 11. The intent is for Soldiers to self-enroll after graduating Initial Entry Training.

SSDP 2

Upon validation, SSDP 2 will include 80 hours of online interactive multimedia instruction via Black Board, to be completed after Warrior Leader Course and prior to attending the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (Advanced Leader Course).



OPERATIONAL DOMAIN

Assignment experience and real world problem solving feed the operational domain of the NCO leader development strategy. The Army's current operations tempo continues to provide NCOs opportunities to develop their leadership abilities. More and more NCOs are stepping up and assuming the responsibilities and missions traditionally expected of the ranks above them. Recognizing this trend, NCOES transformation is focusing on accelerating NCO development by migrating training tasks downward in the self-development and institutional domains to ensure NCOs receive the maximum amount of training on a position prior to holding that position.

Warrior Leader Course

The Warrior Leader Course is currently undergoing a total redesign led by USASMA. In addition to transitioning in SSDP 1 completion as a prerequisite for attending WLC, the Army is also migrating relevant tasks from the current Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (Advanced Leader Course) curriculum. The redesigned WLC will prepare specialists and corporals for success at both team and squad levels, with selected team-level tasks covered via SSDP 1. The Army has also employed WLC Mobile Training Teams to reduce the backlog of redeploying NCOs awaiting the course.

Advanced Leader Course

The Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course will soon be renamed the Advanced Leader Course (ALC). The course's two phases are currently being refocused to include select tasks now covered in the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer curriculum, with the intent of preparing sergeants and staff sergeants for positions at the squad, section and platoon levels. The ALC Phase 1/ Common Core curriculum will be primarily delivered through computer-based training and complimented by the training provided in SSDP 2. This common core conversion is scheduled to complete the testing phase in August, with fiscal 09 serving as a transition year, and fiscal 10 as the target for fully implementing the Web-based delivery while maintaining the Video Tele-Training capabilities, with both provided by USASMA. ALC Phase II will continue to provide MOS-specific training, but TRADOC is attempting to reduce the training to 8 weeks or less where possible and adjust class dates for low density MOSs to align with redeployment resets.

College of the American Soldier

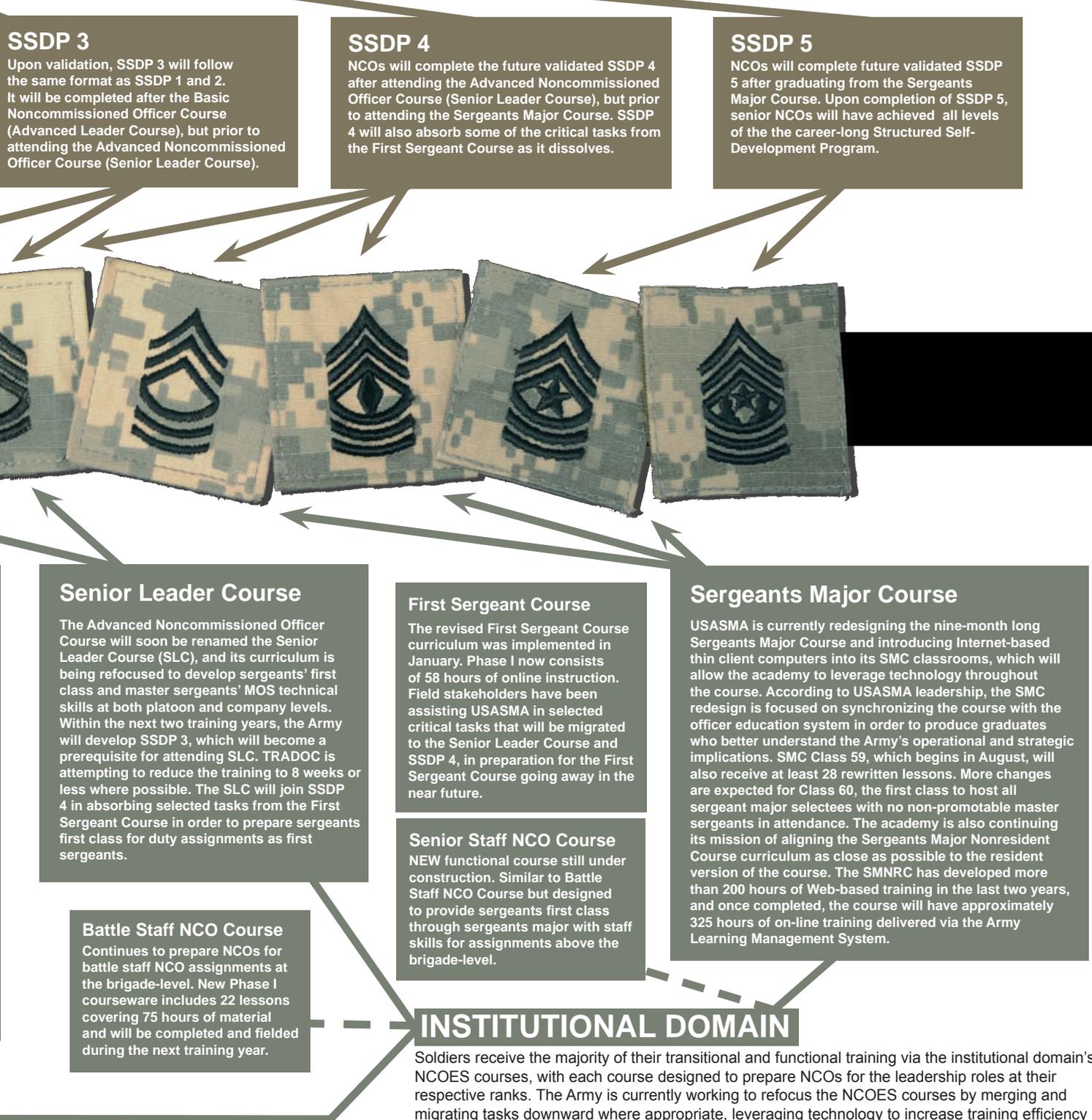
College of the American Soldier (CAS) works in conjunction with GoArmyEd and colleges that participate in the Career Noncommissioned Officer Degrees Program, to expand existing civilian education support for Soldiers and leaders. CAS is available to all NCOs at any point in their career. It awards maximum college credit for Army leadership schools based on completion of NCOES up to the Sergeant Major Course. The Army is continuing to work to expand the list of colleges participating in CAS.

This graphic was produced based on information from the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, the 2008 NCOES Commandants Conference and www.army.mil.

Warrior University & Army Career Tracker

The **Warrior University** online portal will serve as a professional "home" for Soldiers and leaders to facilitate and foster lifelong learning. Its mission will be to synchronize and integrate all training so Soldiers are aware of new systems and lessons learned and receive the appropriate training, regardless of their physical location.

The **Army Career Tracker** is a career management tool that combines training, assignment history, and formal/informal education, enabling Soldiers to holistically manage their career-long learning. ACT also serves as a tool for supervisors and commanders to counsel and effectively lead their Soldiers and units. Soldiers and supervisors will soon be able to access Warrior University and their personalized Army Career Tracker through AKO.



Roll call

o f t h e f a l l e n

Operation Iraqi Freedom

Spc. William E. Allmon, 25, Ardmore, Okla., April 12, 2008 ♦ *Sgt. John D. Aragon, 22, Antioch, Calif., June 12, 2008* ♦ *Sgt. Jesse A. Ault, 28, Dublin, Va., April 9, 2007* ♦ *Spc. Durrell L. Bennett, 22, Spanaway, Wash., March 29, 2008* ♦ *Pfc. John T. Bishop, 22, Gaylord, Mich., April 23, 2008* ♦ *Staff Sgt. Ronald C. Blystone, 34, Springfield, Mo., April 23, 2008* ♦ *Staff Sgt. Bryan E. Bolander, 26, Bakersfield, Calif., April 29, 2008* ♦ *Spc. Benjamin K. Broski, 22, Colorado Springs, Colo., April 18, 2008* ♦ *Staff Sgt. Jason Brown, 29, Magnolia, Texas, April 17, 2008* ♦ *Spc. Lerando J. Brown, 27, Gulfport, Miss., March 15, 2008* ♦ *Staff Sgt. Chad A. Caldwell, 24, Spokane, Wash., April 30, 2008* ♦ *Cpl. Steven I. Canelo, 20, Houston, Texas, March 26, 2008* ♦ *Sgt. 1st Class Steven J. Chevalier, 35, Flint, Mich., July 9, 2008* ♦ *Spc. Steven J. Christofferson, 20, Cudahy, Wis., April 21, 2008* ♦ *Sgt. Victor M. Cota, 33, Tucson, Ariz., May 14, 2008* ♦ *Spc. Jason N. 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Operation Enduring Freedom

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Editor's note: This is a continuation of the list that was started with the October 2003 issue of the NCO Journal and contains those names released by the Department of Defense between March 17, 2008 and July 10, 2008.

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