

Service in today's NCO Corps

By Sgt. Robert J. Harter
Fort Lewis, Wash.

What makes an NCO different from a Soldier? We, as noncommissioned officers, are the first-line supervisors, leaders, advisors and mentors. We are the ones who use not only doctrine, but also experience, to make leadership decisions. We are truly the “backbone of the Army.” When you think of the reach of the NCO within the scope of the Army, it’s staggering. Whatever story is being told around the water cooler – the experiences of Basic Combat Training or a recent deployment – there is one figure who stands out in the Army and that is the noncommissioned officer.

As emphasized in the Baron von Stueben’s *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, NCOs, with their varied roles, are charged with the duties and responsibilities of not only the execution of the mission, but also the good order and discipline of their Soldiers. It is as true now as it was then; the NCO sets the standard by his or her example, strictly adhering to Army regulations. The noncommissioned officer earns subordinates’ respect through deeds and discipline, encouraging them to attain that higher standard while holding them responsible for their actions and performance in their daily duties. This awesome responsibility should be the motivating factor for any leader, the NCO in particular.

While the NCO wears many hats, our heavy workload guides and motivates us to continue to strive and encourage those around us. Our professional discipline and sense of duty are noticed

by our subordinates, and they, in turn, emulate this through the performance of their duties. When something needs to be corrected, an NCO corrects it. When the mission needs to get done, a noncommissioned officer ensures it is executed on time and to standard. When someone falls behind, it is a noncommissioned officer who makes sure they get the help, support and encouragement they need. When the deadline approaches, it is the noncommissioned officer who not only burns the midnight oil to get the job done, but also ingrains the same values in his or her subordinates.

The peer network for NCOs covers the entire globe. We know that by simply working and talking with our peers, the answer to almost any dilemma can be found. I say “almost,” because when our peer network can’t find an answer, we look it up; this is where the senior noncommissioned officer comes into view. By utilizing the senior NCOs within our support channel, there truly is no challenge that can’t be met.

Serving as an NCO means that we are professionals and do what it takes to complete the mission, take care of our subordinates, advise our officers, and enforce Army standards and discipline. It means we are the ones who step forward when asked to volunteer. We are the ones who say, “too easy,” when given a mission.

Bottom line: Noncommissioned officers have the biggest impact on the mission. They are the ones who look to get the job done and make sure others know how to do theirs. And, I look forward to doing it again tomorrow.

PLAY IT SAFE ON A HIKE!

**LEADERS
SOLDIERS
FAMILIES**

- Hike with a friend or family member
- Tell someone where you are going
- Have a plan
- Take plenty of water
- Don't walk off the trail
- Bring a hat and sunscreen
- Know your limitations

SAFE Summer

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG

ARMY STRONG
U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS SAFETY CENTER
<https://safety.army.mil>

ARMY STRONG
X BROTHERS & SISTERS