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NCO JOURNAL

VOL. 21, NO. 1 · **JANUARY 2012**



THE GOLDEN KNIGHTS

AN ALL-NCO DEMONSTRATION TEAM

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ON THE COVER: Members of the Golden Knights' Black and Gold Demonstration Teams perform a diamond formation Nov. 8, 2009, above Laurinburg, N.C. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GOLDEN KNIGHTS

NCO JOURNAL

The Official Magazine of NCO Professional Development

VOLUME 21, NUMBER 1

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Meeting the needs of today's NCOs

FROM THE MSG

BY MASTER SGT. ANTONY M.C. JOSEPH NCO Journal

When *The NCO Journal* debuted 21 years ago, there was no Internet, NCO Net was a futuristic dream and the NCO Education System was far different than it is today. But the NCO Corps was becoming more educated, more sophisticated and was gaining more responsibility, and NCOs needed an official forum to foster their professional development.

Thus, this magazine was born.

During the past two decades, the pages of *The NCO Journal* have featured stories on topics facing NCOs, ways to be better leaders, new ways to train and motivate Soldiers, and how to excel in the Army profession. And as technology and the needs of the NCO Corps have changed, the content and design of its professional journal have as well.

That's why this month we inaugurate a new *NCO Journal*, one that is designed to be more relevant, more useful and more sought after by NCOs — from corporals to command sergeants major. What we've tried to accomplish is more than just giving the pages of the magazine a facelift. Indeed, we've looked at how every page can be a better resource for you, our readers.

First, we've overhauled our "front-of-the-book" section, now called "In Front." This consolidates news and information from around the Army and from our own reporters that help NCOs excel in the fundamentals of Army leadership: "Be, Know, Do." You'll see some shorter stories with links to longer versions online. You'll also see some new columns like "Ask NCO Net," the best exchanges from NCOs' official online forum, and "Toolkit," tips and tricks that oftentimes can't be found in a field manual or Army regulation.

Our "back-of-the-book" section, now called "In Action," showcases NCOs at their best "leading, training, maintaining and caring" — the hallmark duties that Sgt. Maj. of the Army Glen E. Morrell once defined. Here, you'll find more new columns like "By Example," a profile of the unsung NCO heroes among us, and "This Month in NCO History," which better connects us to our NCO heritage and our "time-honored corps."

We've also refocused our efforts within our feature stories to make our articles more valuable to the time-constrained NCO and will delve more into the topics and issues affecting NCOs today. Your *Journal* is already unique among the armed services. But our efforts are for naught if we do not tell the stories that help you develop as a professional and as a leader.



Thousands of pages have been devoted to stories promoting NCO professional development since *The NCO Journal*'s first issue (center left). STAFF PHOTO

That's where your input comes in. Tell us how we're doing. Tell us what we should be writing about. Tell us how the *NCO Journal* has helped you, or ways it could help you more. I welcome your feedback via email at *antony.m.joseph.mil@mail.mil*.

We hope you enjoy your updated *NCO Journal* and hope even more that it earns your respect and confidence as the foremost publication for the development of professionals, noncommissioned officers, leaders!

News and information NCOs need to

BE, KNOW, DO



Cuts on horizon

Troops need to have patience and let the budget process run its course, Dempsey says

BY JIM GARAMONE
American Forces Press Service

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said he understands that service members are nervous about looming budget cuts, but will have to be patient as the process moves forward.

Speaking in an interview Nov. 30 on his way back from meetings with British officials in London, Gen. Martin E. Dempsey said the Defense Department is pledged to $450 billion in cuts over the next 10 years.

The fiscal 2013 defense budget that will be submitted in February will answer many of the questions troops have, he said.

That budget, Dempsey said, will take the department into fiscal 2017.

"It shouldn't be lost on anybody that we were handed this bill — this reduction — about two months ago," the chairman said.

"What we've been doing is revising our strategy, because you can't just take cuts and do the same things we've been doing," he said.

Fiscal planners are weighing the impact of cuts on the national security strategy and consulting with the services, combatant commanders, defense secretary, and White House and Office of Management and Budget officials, Dempsey said.

"Concurrently, we are doing the mind-numbing work of weighing program cuts and putting a budget together," he said.

Congress, which under the Constitution is charged "to raise and support Armies," and "to provide and maintain a Navy," must be consulted, he noted.

"I know there's a lot of anxiety in the force. I'm anxious," Dempsey said. "But we've got to follow the existing process. If we weren't having a discussion among ourselves about finding $450 billion worth of reductions, we'd still be having the conversation about implementing the changes we have made in response to 10 years at war," he added.

Even if Congress were to give the department all it asks for, the military still would have to examine the strategy, consider threats and make changes, Dempsey said. Any budget discussion would look to reinforce changes that improved capabilities, add

CUTS CONTINUES ON PAGE 7 →

▲ A Soldier with the 10th Mountain Division looks out over the village of Sarhani, Afghanistan, during a patrol June 30, 2009. PHOTO BY SGT. MATTHEW MOELLER

Survey: Gap between civilians, military grows

BY DONNA MILES
American Forces Press Service

A new report confirms a concern military leaders have long recognized: There's a growing disconnect between American civilians and their military.

The report, published in November by the Pew Research Center, notes that a smaller share of Americans currently serve in the armed forces than at any time since the peacetime era between World Wars I and II.

Just one-half of 1 percent of Americans served in uniform at any given time during the past decade — the longest period of sustained conflict in the country's history — the report says. Meanwhile, as the military shrinks in size, the connections between military members and the broader civilian population "appear to be growing more distant," the report says.

The report was based on surveys of more than 2,000 civilian adults and almost 1,900 veterans, more than 700 of whom served after 9/11. Among the respondents, most said they have family members who are serving in the armed forces or have served in the past. However, older Americans were considerably more likely to have close military ties.

More than three-quarters of civilian adults ages 50 and older reported having an immediate family member — a spouse, parent, sibling or child — who served or serves in the military. For many, that service took place before the end of the draft and the introduction of the all-volunteer force in 1973.

Only 57 percent of civilian respondents ages 30 to 49 said they had an immediate family member who served. The percentage dropped to one-third among respondents aged 18 to 29.

The report appears to confirm that for many Americans, military service is a family tradition. Seventy-nine percent of veterans surveyed reported that an immediate family member is serving or has served in the military. That compares to 61 percent among the civilian respondents.

Decisions to serve also appear to be influenced by race, region and political preference, the report showed. Sixty-eight percent of whites, 59 percent of blacks and 30 percent of Hispanic respondents reported having immediate family members who serve or have served in uniform.

Sixty-four percent of Southerners reported immediate family ties to the military. The percentage for those living in the Northeast was 56 percent, and in the West, 57 percent. City dwellers were somewhat less likely than those in the suburbs or rural areas to say a family member served in the military.

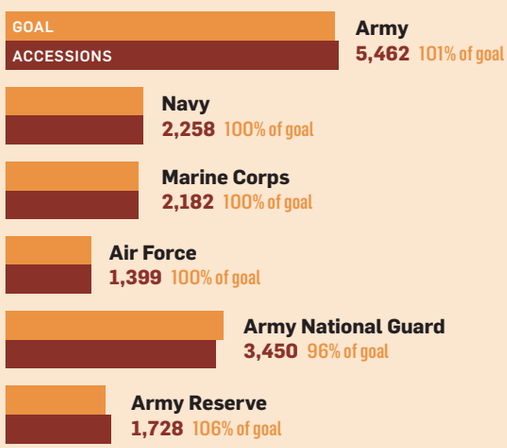
Political party also appeared to be an influencing factor. Seventy-three percent of Republicans, 59 percent of Democrats and 56 percent of independents said an immediate family member served in the military.

The report confirmed perceptions by civilians as well as veterans that the American public doesn't understand the problems faced by those in the military. Seventy-seven percent of veterans and 71 percent of the public shared this view.

▶ **Read the full report at http://j.mp/ja12pew**

BY THE NUMBERS

All four active-duty services and four of the six reserve components met or exceeded their recruiting goals in October, the first month of fiscal 2012: — AFPS



Army planning 'Continuum of Service' between components

Known as the Continuum of Service, the Army Reserve wants Soldiers to have the ability to move between the active and reserve components, and civilian service. The basic concept of Continuum of Service, or COS is to allow Soldiers to move between different statuses while preserving the Army's investment in training and education. It also aims to preserve the Soldiers' accumulated benefits. "I think this is going to take years" to implement, said Maj. Gen. Marcia Anderson, deputy chief of the Army Reserve, "because this impacts (for example) retirement systems." More: http://j.mp/ja12cos

JIEDDO working to reverse trend for larger IEDs in Afghanistan

The amount of explosives used in improvised explosive devices in Afghanistan is increasing while the number of attacks are at "historic highs." In June and July, there were 1,600 IED events in Afghanistan, said Lt. Gen. Michael Barbero, program executive officer, Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization. The good news, he said, is the number of IEDs found and cleared has gone up by 100 percent, as has the number of finds of caches of IED-building material. More: http://j.mp/ja12ieds

Arlington cemetery breaks ground for new columbarium

Arlington National Cemetery began its first major construction project in nearly eight years with a ground-breaking ceremony Nov. 30 for a 20,000-niche columbarium that will extend the life of the cemetery's inurnment space to 2024. A columbarium is a structure that holds urns containing cremated remains. Construction on the cemetery's ninth columbarium is scheduled to be

BRIEFS CONT. ON PAGE 7 →

‘We push it the furthest it can go’

NCOs test new equipment, integrate tomorrow’s network

BY JENNIFER MATTSON NCO Journal

The Army Test and Evaluation Command, Brigade Modernization Command, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology came together to play host to the Network Integration Evaluation 12.1 at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., in October and November.

NIE puts new equipment into the hands of the Soldiers and NCOs of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, who test and help evaluate the equipment.

“Our Soldiers don’t really have a dog in the fight,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Antonio Dunston, command sergeant major of 2nd BCT. “Our dog is really just ensuring that the equipment actually works for the Soldier who is going to be downrange using it. So if it’s bad, we get to tell them it’s bad. If it’s good, we get to tell them it’s good. If it’s halfway there and we just need to change some things, that’s exactly what we get to tell them.”

The feedback these Soldiers give to the exercise’s lead agencies directly impacts the Army’s acquisition and fielding of these new pieces of technology. Soldiers in the 2nd BCT had 45 systems under evaluation and two systems in the test phase this fall — the Rifleman’s Radio and the Soldier Radio Waveform Network — to see if they are able to move to the next round of fielding this spring.

Sgt. Aidan Wood is a truck commander who has deployed to Iraq three times and tested the Joint Battle Command handheld equipment during the exercise. The testing phase requires Soldiers to gauge the limits of the equipment by putting it under extreme circumstances.

“Basically, we push it the furthest it can go,” Wood said. “Then we bring it back and evaluate it.”

The Army is trying a new way of doing business when it comes to acquiring, fielding and testing equipment. In the past, the Army put money, resources and technology into developing specialized systems to equip Soldiers. With budget cuts looming, the Army is now looking for a more efficient way, taking existing technology and tailoring it to meet the Army’s needs.

Sgt. Kenneth Starnes said the benefit to giving the equipment directly to Soldiers at its initial state is that it enables them to provide prompt feedback.

“About 75 percent of what we test out here doesn’t work, but about 25 percent is great,” Starnes said. “And we get 30 days out here to train with it.”

By having multiple network capabilities, the Army is looking at what works best and how each of the smaller networks can work together to provide connectivity to Soldiers on the battlefield. With the equipment directly in the Soldiers’ hands, the lead agencies are able to put the prototypes through realistic scenarios that will stretch the limits of its technology.

“The warfighter is always going to perform the mission,” Dunston said. “But what these systems do is they make it more efficient. They put him in a less threatening environment because of the capabilities they give him, rather than just put him out there by himself. So it just makes him much more efficient as a warfighter, because he’s going to win anyway. He just wins a little easier without putting himself in harm’s way.”



◀ Staff Sgt. Cody Moose, a Soldier with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, demonstrates to senior leaders Nov. 16 at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., the capabilities of an Android phone updated with Blue Force Tracker software. PHOTO BY SHEJAL PULIVARTI

ASK NCO NET

What replaces 1st Sgt. course?

*Each day, NCOs share their knowledge and experience on NCO Net (*https://nconet.army.mil*) the official forum for NCOs. Summarized here are some recent exchanges:*

Now that the First Sergeant Course has been discontinued and portions of the course have been incorporated into the Senior Leaders Course, what should Soldiers who fall within the gray area do — those who have already completed the Advanced NCO Course, but weren't able to attend FSC?

- "I fell into this gray area and am now a first sergeant. I completed Structured Self-Development 4 before taking over as first sergeant, and it was very helpful."
  — 1ST SGT. WADE RUSSELL, *evaluator on Training and Doctrine Command's quality assurance team at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.*
- "First Sgt. Russell, Bingo! That's exactly what sergeants first class and master sergeants need to be doing. At this level of leadership, we are the example-setters; we must be self-driven. There are way too many resources available not to be informed of what to expect when we become first sergeants. SSD is a prime example of what every senior NCO should be doing. The Internet, our mentors, CSMs we've known — all of the above should be utilized when preparing one for being a first sergeant. End of story, no excuses. We don't need a course for every position in the Army in order to be effective at it."
  — SGT. 1ST CLASS JOSEPH DUNBAR, *battalion supply NCO in charge, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 472nd Chemical Battalion, Chicago, Ill.*
- "I graduated from the last distance-learning First Sergeant Course given by USASMA. To be honest, I learned more conducting the Phase I portion via self-study. I would say the combination of SSD4 and self-study of Army regulations and field manuals will prepare you sufficiently. Being a first sergeant is also a learning position. There is no school that will cover every situation a first sergeant will encounter, so experience and constant self-study are your best methods."
  — MASTER SGT. SCHROEDER STREAT, *G-6 staff, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.*

— COMPILED AND EDITED BY JONATHAN (JAY) KOESTER

← CUTS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

funding to bridge gaps and eliminate funding for capabilities no longer needed. The discussions also would include considerations of how much capability is needed.

"The budget we're preparing … has to account for those lessons," Dempsey said.

In the analysis about what has happened to the military during 10 years at war and anticipating what type of military will be needed in 2020, he said, clearly, some capabilities must be resourced. Counterterrorism is a big portion of the budget, he said, and the cyber realm must be addressed, as the country is vulnerable to state or non-state actors.

"Could that mean conventional forces could be pressured by this budget? Yes," Dempsey said. "But we're going to find that balance between capability and capacity — what do we need to do and how often do we need to do it?

"One thing I will assure you of is no one is going to write off the possibility of any particular form of conflict," the chairman continued. "You can't say, 'I don't think we'll have a conflict with a near-peer competitor, so let's just ignore North Korea for the next five years and hope for the best.' That's impossible. So we've got to sustain our high-end conventional capability."

Having the capability to wage conventional-style warfare remains an important deterrent, Dempsey said.

"We've got to have capability along the spectrum," he said, "but some of the capacity is going to be changed, without question." ⩔

← BRIEFS CONT. FROM PAGE 5

complete in June 2013. With a length of almost two football fields, the new structure will dwarf the previous eight columbariums, the largest of which contains 8,000 niches and the smallest 3,000.
More: http://j.mp/ja12ARL

MilConnect is new online portal for DOD beneficiaries

A range of information about Defense Department benefits information and eligibility is now available online. Two new online efforts — milConnect and eCorrespondence — give beneficiaries 24/7 access to personnel information; the ability to update information related to health, education and other benefits; and email notifications about changes in benefits. Anyone who has a Common Access Card, a Defense Finance and Accounting Services myPay account logon, or a DOD Self-Service logon can sign in on the milConnect website or apply at the site for a logon.
More: http://j.mp/ja12benf

Now with Strykers, 3rd ACR changes name

For "Brave Rifles" troopers of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, based at Fort Hood, Texas, Nov. 16 was a day of change. The regiment transitioned from an armored unit to a Stryker unit, changed its name and welcomed a new command team. The 3rd ACR was the Army's sole remaining deployable armored cavalry regiment, but is now an infantry-centric, Stryker-mounted regiment. With the conversion, the unit changed its name to 3rd Cavalry Regiment and added two squadrons. The reactivated "Longknife" Squadron, formerly the regiment's aviation squadron, is now its new reconnaissance squadron. In addition, the regiment stood up a new fires squadron, "Steel" Squadron.
More: http://j.mp/ja123acr ⩔

Junior leaders discuss profession

Group urges reinforced standards, more personal leadership

BY C. TODD LOPEZ Army News Service

Commanders should put down their BlackBerry devices and get involved in the training of their Soldiers, according to a forum of junior leaders who convened at Fort Sill, Okla., in November.

After four days of meetings at the Training and Doctrine Command-hosted "Army Profession Junior Leader Forum," about 90 junior Army leaders — including noncommissioned officers, warrant officers and junior officers — delivered to senior Army leaders Nov. 18 their opinions on issues such as trust relationships, standards and discipline, Army professional certification, leader development, and Army culture.

Staff Sgt. Jeremy Adams, part of a work group that discussed "standards and discipline," said commanders need to be more engaged in the training of Soldiers — engaged in a way where they get their uniform dirty.

"Standards need to get reinforced through active presence," Adams said. "Active presence means you are there — not there standing on the wall with a BlackBerry in your hand connected to your email from your desk, but there, actually involved, conducting training ... the 'be, know, do' concept. Let's get back to that."

Staff Sgt. Joshua Freeland of the "certifying Army professionals" work group agreed.

"Leaders at all levels have to be engaged on a personal level, not through email and text messages," Freeland said. "It's already been documented that Soldiers hate electronic leadership."

Capt. Patrick Merriss, with the "standards and discipline" work group told leaders his group was concerned with developing Soldiers' ability to conduct counseling.

"We're not taught how to deliver an effective counseling to our subordinates," he said. He told leadership that as a young lieutenant he said he knew the difference between formal and informal counseling or written and oral counseling, but didn't know how and when to use them or their impact on Soldiers.

Merriss also said there needs to be more "peer-to-peer" leadership among the ranks.

"It's tough to look your brother in the eye and tell him when he's messing up and how he's messing up," he said.

Out of the "leader development" work group, Staff Sgt. Mathew Olodun said there is inflation in NCO Evaluation Report ratings that could be solved in part with input from senior Army leadership.

"The 'one and one' has become the standard, has become the floor," Olodun said. "As an NCO, if you are not meeting that 'one and one' standard, you look like you're lacking next to your peers," Olodun said.

He said his working group recommends the Army redefine the NCO evaluation culture — which could start with input from the top.

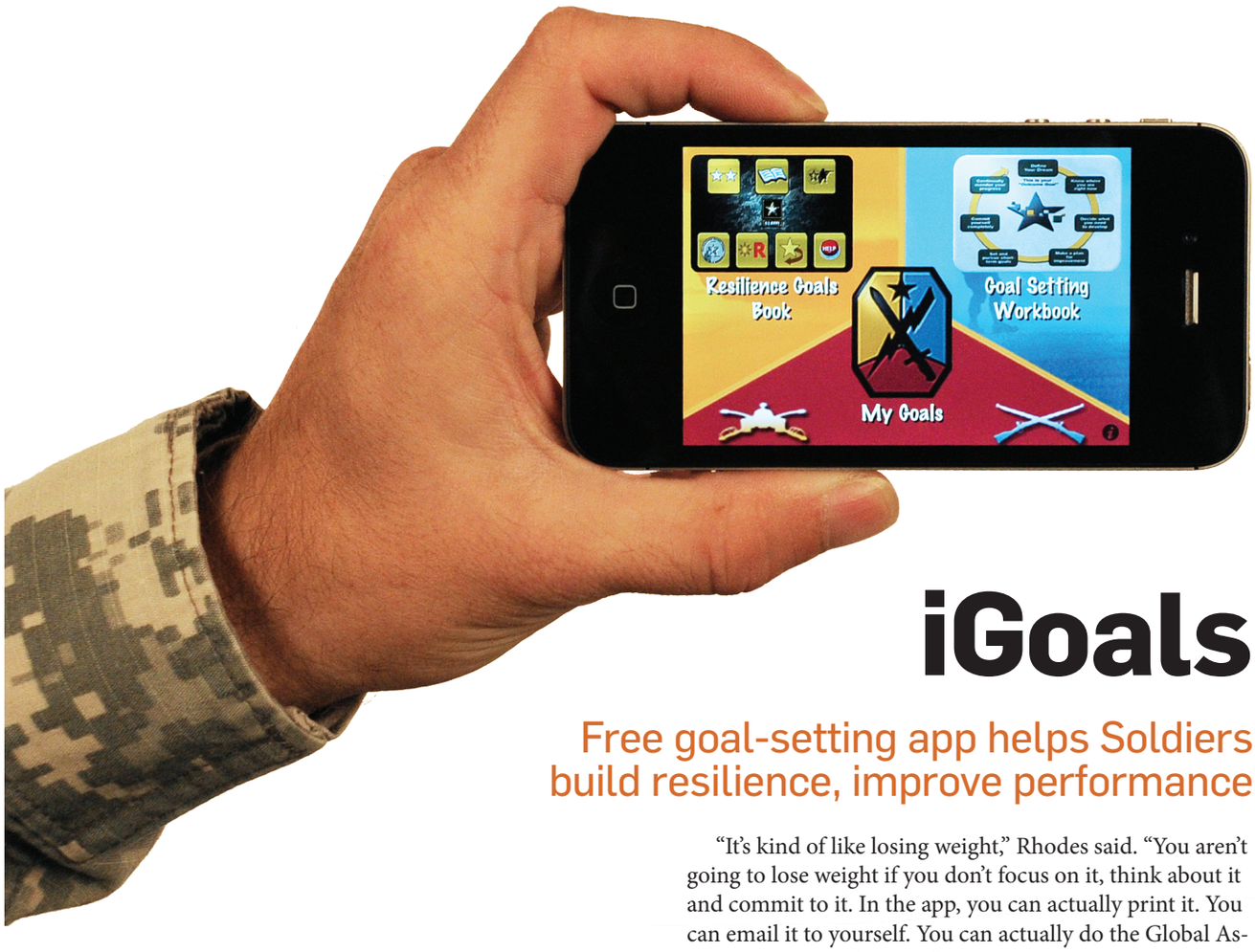
"We recommend ... a memo from the chief of staff of the Army or sergeant major of the Army level to re-establish the baseline of the NCOER ... that getting 'three and three' is okay," Olodun said.

Capt. Robert Graves, who participated in the work group tasked with discussing "certification of Army professionals" said his group sensed an "impending crisis" of individuals — junior leaders especially — who have been promoted in-theater due to their performance there, but who had

FORUM CONTINUES ON PAGE 11 →



◀ NCOs, officers and warrant officers present recommendations to senior Army leaders Nov. 18 during the Army Profession Junior Leader Forum at Fort Sill, Okla.
PHOTO BY MARIE BERBEREA



iGoals

Free goal-setting app helps Soldiers build resilience, improve performance

BY CLIFFORD KYLE JONES NCO Journal

Setting goals is one of the most effective ways to boost performance and build resilience. And with a new app, the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, Ga., has made achieving those goals even easier.

As part of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program, the MCOE recently released iPhone and iPad applications that give Soldiers complete access to an electronic version of the *Resilience Goals Book*, as well as a way to track their own goals, and then share those goals with their supervisors. A version for Android devices is under way.

"Goal-setting is the No. 1 thing that enhances performance," said Samuel M. Rhodes, a training specialist with the MCOE's directorate of training and doctrine and the project manager for the resilience app. Setting goals is necessary for almost any achievement, whether as an individual or as a unit, he said.

"There are certain priorities that you have to establish in order to reach that ultimate goal," Rhodes said. "As you establish your goals, [the app] does a lot of different things: It gives you structure and a plan to get to the goal if you are willing to follow that. Subsequently, it enhances your performance because of the way that it sets up and lays a basis to get from point A to point B and be successful."

The app includes step-by-step tools for managing big goals by breaking them down into a series of smaller steps that can be tracked and handling the actions and beliefs necessary to achieve those goals.

"It's kind of like losing weight," Rhodes said. "You aren't going to lose weight if you don't focus on it, think about it and commit to it. In the app, you can actually print it. You can email it to yourself. You can actually do the Global Assessment Tool right there."

The benefits of the app go far beyond the individual. Rhodes called it "a perfect tool for leaders."

"If I was a squad leader these days, I could actually say, 'Hey, Johnson, I want you to give me your goals; I want you to put them in my phone,'" Rhodes said. "So when we start having conversations with our Soldiers, we can look at this and say, 'Oh, Johnson wants to get a college degree. What have I done to help him do that?' or 'Johnson wants to become Soldier of the Quarter.' And you've got all those priorities and those outcome goals established. You, as a supervisor, can now help him with those goals."

Sgt. 1st Class Vernon Prohaska, who was the operations NCO at MCOE, is one of the more than 5,000 people who had downloaded the app by late November. In an email, he said, "I found this app to be extremely helpful with my immediate issue of PCS'ing to Korea with my family. It enabled me to use my phone, which has become part of my anatomy, in a quick and user-friendly way that helps me track my progress toward achieving my goals. I strongly feel that this app will bear huge dividends down the road when leaders start to recognize how to incorporate it."

DOWNLOAD

Go to the App Store on your iPhone or iPad and search for "Goal Setting – Comprehensive Soldier Fitness." You can also search for the app at the iTunes Store on your desktop computer. Look for the MCOE icon to make sure it's the official app.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SPC. DAVID M. GAFFORD

What should be taught in WLC?

Board gathers for triennial look at the Warrior Leader Course

BY JONATHAN (JAY) KOESTER NCO Journal

In early September, Command Sgt. Maj. Rory Malloy, the commandant of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, told the 15 NCOs gathered around him that the next week wasn't going to be fun or entertaining. But it was going to be important.

"You cannot take this week lightly," Malloy said. "And if you do, you are failing our Army."

Malloy's remarks began the week of the Warrior Leader Course Critical Task Site Selection Board, and the 15 NCOs had been chosen to help the Army decide what lessons need to be in WLC, the foundational course of the NCO Education System.



▲ **Sgt. 1st Class Chasity Bingley, the chief of training at the Seventh Army NCO Academy in Grafenwöhr, Germany, listens as the process is explained for the Warrior Leader Course Critical Task Site Selection Board. Bingley was one of 15 NCOs on the board.** PHOTO BY JONATHAN (JAY) KOESTER

The NCOs were asked to look at a list of tasks and decide which ones were "critical tasks," those that fit the definition of being "collective, individual or leader tasks a unit or individual must perform to accomplish their mission and duties to survive on the battlefield and function across the full spectrum of Army operations."

Malloy and Command Sgt. Maj. Wesley Weygandt, the deputy commandant of USASMA, reminded the assembled NCOs, who came from as far away as Germany and Hawaii, that the entire Army would be judging the decisions they made that week.

"This (WLC) is the building block course," Weygandt said. "I've talked to many Soldiers who say, 'If I was in charge for a day, if I was the king for a day or queen for a day ….' Well, now is your opportunity."

Sgt. Maj. Russell Hurley, deputy director of training at USASMA, explained that after rating the importance of the tasks, members of the board would break down where the tasks should be taught.

"Should it be trained in the unit?" Hurley said. "Should you learn about it on your own? Or should it be taught in the classroom at the institution?"

Sgt. 1st Class Mick Albright, an infantry platoon sergeant from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, said having a say in the future of the WLC was important to him.

"I feel very privileged to be here," Albright said. "I'm glad to be here because the Army, our mission and our responsibilities are such a moving target these days. The military as a whole had a nice grace period for much of the '90s. Since Sept. 11, 2001, we've really been coming leaps and bounds in terms of our professional development and our capacity to educate junior leaders and really make them the leaders that they need to be."

Albright said he hoped the WLC would change to reflect the irregular warfare that Soldiers now often face.

"We're fighting a battle against an enemy who is invisible, but we defeat that enemy through indigenous people," Albright said. "The Warrior Leader Course that I went to didn't embrace that at all. The enemy was very visible and almost static, like, 'There he is. Go conquer. Yay, we won.' It would not be suitable for today, and hopefully we can change that. I do believe we are."

Sgt. 1st Class Chasity Bingley, the chief of training at the Seventh Army NCO Academy in Grafenwöhr, Germany, took a 15-hour flight to be part of the board.



▶ Members of the selection board keyed their input into specialized software over the course of four days to make their recommendations on the importance of 204 tasks, and whether those tasks should be taught inside or outside the NCO Education System. PHOTO BY JONATHAN (JAY) KOESTER

"I actually begged my sergeant major to let me come and be a part of this," Bingley said. "We're building leaders. And if you don't have what's needed in the course, you don't have a strong Army. That's why this is very important to me."

Bingley voiced a worry that many NCOs expressed during the week.

"The biggest concern with WLC is they took out land navigation," she said. "What happens when the Blue Force Tracker doesn't work? Soldiers need at least some familiarization with land navigation. We're hoping that's something they bring back."

Another concern many of the board members had was that WLC, at 17 days, is too short. Many thought it should return to the 30-day program it was until Oct. 1, 2010. Malloy said leaders at USASMA are dealing with that concern through Structured Self-Development, the online courses that are now interspersed through the NCOES timeline.

"Starting Oct. 12, 2012, you will not be allowed to attend the Warrior Leader Course until you've completed SSD1," Malloy said. "So you get prep work, then WLC, and together you're getting way more training than what they did under the 30-day [program of instruction]."

After nearly four days of discussion on 204 proposed tasks, the board recommended 57 of the tasks be taught in WLC. Of those, 50 are now part of the POI.

"That's pretty amazing," Hurley said. "From the list of 204 tasks, at the end of the day, there's only seven tasks that are not in the Warrior Leader Course already. That really validates the course."

Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Lunsford, the WLC course chief at USASMA, said the course convenes a selection board every three years to keep it updated.

"It's a phenomenal piece of information to actually get some feedback from the field on what they think should be taught," Lunsford said. "We had a phenomenal group of noncommissioned officers from all over the world. We had representatives from all three components: active duty, Guard and Reserves. Every one of them got to put their stamp on what they think should be taught at WLC."

Now that the selection board has made its recommendations, the process moves forward, Lunsford said.

"We'll present the analysis to [USASMA's] director of curriculum and to the director of training, and they'll take a look at it. Then it goes to the commandant," he said.

The end product will be a Warrior Leader Course that is current, is meaningful and provides sergeants the tools they need to have to be successful on the battlefield. ⩔

← FORUM CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

not experienced formal schooling to go along with the new rank and responsibility.

"That experience is not being balanced with the institutional knowledge we feel is required to take those broad skills that we hope to impart in [professional military education] to balance with the experience of combat on the ground down in-theater," he said.

Graves said increased funding and increased class sizes could help solve the problem. "We need to get them back into the schools," Graves said.

Recognizing performance outside of regular Army channels — like official Army awards — is important for Soldier development, said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Brendon Ramroth of the "Army culture" work group.

Ramroth relayed that his work group discussed ideas like extending compensation days for Soldiers "that give 110 percent" or providing exceptions from duty rosters, or that Soldiers who exceed fitness standards should be allowed to do PT as individuals. He also said commanders, if they use social media websites, can recognize outstanding performers there as well.

Additionally, the "Army culture" work group recommended the Army should bolster its sponsorship program for Soldiers moving from one unit to another, standardize an Armywide reception and integration standard operating procedure, and should develop a professional "reception cadre" that is responsible for receiving Soldiers as they move from one installation to another, or from advanced individual training to their first duty station. That time period is something Ramoth said his group identified as a "potential gap in character development" for Soldiers. ⩔

TOOLKIT

Putting together a promotion packet

BY JENNIFER MATTSON NCO Journal

When NCOs are eligible for promotion to the ranks of sergeant first class, master sergeant, sergeant major and command sergeant major, they don't appear in front of their company or battalion board, but rather submit their packets for promotion to a centralized selection board at Human Resources Command at Fort Knox, Ky. This process relies more on how NCOs present themselves on paper as they won't get an opportunity to articulate their credentials in person. It is imperative, then, that NCOs competing for promotion pay particular attention to their packets and follow a few guidelines throughout the process.

Timeline for promotion

A military personnel, or MILPER, message is released roughly 120 days before a board convenes and announces the criteria for selecting those eligible for promotion. The list is scrubbed through casualty and mortuary affairs, basic time in service and grade, and approved retirements. Sixty days after the MILPER message goes out to the force, NCOs have the opportunity to certify their board files. They can correct items that are missing from their files, certify that their files are accurate or decline consideration for promotion. If no action is taken to verify their files, NCOs will be considered for promotion with their file "as is."

The centralized board consists of at least five members, but depending on the board, the number of members can range from 38 to 50. To sit on the board, NCOs must be among the best in the Army, said Sgt. Maj. Gilbert Sutton, the sergeant major of the Department of the Army secretariat for selection boards.

In general, board members have outstanding evaluation reports, are physically fit, have attended the Sergeants Major Course at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy and will not retire within six months of the board's decision. These individuals review the packets to determine each NCO's promotion potential, establish an order of merit list and determine who will be promoted to the next rank. The board takes the selection process very seriously, Sutton said.

"The Army wants the best-qualified Soldiers when it comes to enlistment boards," Sutton said. "They want the best Soldiers in that career management field. The Soldiers should do everything, every day to live the Army Values and to perform their duties to the highest Army standards. When they come to work, they should understand that this is a very professional business, where we're looking for the best-qualified. On- and off-duty, they need to make sure they are in line



◀ **Candice Chatman is promoted to the rank of sergeant first class May 2 at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.**
PHOTO BY SPC. DAVID M. GAFFORD

Common Problems

Human Resources Command's centralized promotion boards review the packets for sergeants first class, master sergeants and sergeants major. After evaluating NCOs, the board addresses common errors and other packet problems found across the Army. Last year's common mistakes and things to avoid when submitting a packet to a promotion board are listed below:



ENLISTED RECORD BRIEFS were not updated and/or did not match NCOERs in terms of duty description and time in position.



DUTY DESCRIPTION did not include scope and duties performed and overall number of Soldiers or NCOs the candidate was responsible for.



DA PHOTO either wasn't updated or one wasn't included. Board members also found inconsistencies in DA photo labs across the Army.



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS were used on forms. Most often, the acronyms were used in reference to MOS-specific duties or awards; the board could not decipher what these acronyms meant.



EDUCATION was not sought by candidate. Either the candidate did not seek military or civilian education, or the candidate had not yet completed all required military education. Some candidates had failed a course or receivied a marginal rating on a DA Form 1059.



EXPERIENCE The candidate did not circulate throughout their career field, did not deploy downrange, did not seek out special-duty assignments (for example, drill sergeant, equal opportunity office, recruiter, instructor) or stayed too long in those special-duty assignments.



VALUES Some had one or more blocks checked "no," which the board saw as a red flag. In addition, disciplinary actions, drunken-driving arrests and memorandums of reprimand were not linked on the back of candidates' NCOERs.



NCO EVALUATION REPORTS had common mistakes or weren't properly reviewed.



FITNESS NCOERs did not clearly state reason for checking "excellence" block. Potential reasons for checking "excellence" include running a marathon, acheiving or maintaining the Army Physical Fitness Test badge, or being awarded a coin for color guard.



SENIOR RATER comments were inconsistent with the rater's. These comments caused the board to question the validity of the rater's comments.



LETTER to the president of the board reiterated information easily found in the candidate's Official Military Personnel File.

with the Army Values and doing everything possible to make sure they have a balance between their military work and their family lives to make sure that they're qualified when the board members are looking at their records."

What makes a strong candidate

Master Sgt. Jason Kirkman, the NCO in charge of enlisted promotions, said Soldiers need to take initiative when it comes to preparing their packets for the board.

"We should be able to forecast and take charge of our own careers to make sure that we are putting our best foot forward for the board members to see," Kirkman said. "There's a strong emphasis on working special-duty jobs — i.e. drill sergeant, recruiter, instructor, (equal opportunity) and (inspector general) — that we need to expand. We can't be stuck on just doing our duty; we need to be a more flexible force to be tactically and technically proficient."

There are benefits to a centralized selection committee deciding who to promote. By not having Soldiers appear before the board, the items included in the NCOs packets, particularly their official photos, need to be squared away, Sutton said.

"The Soldier no longer gets to go in front of the board like on a sergeant E-5 board and salute the president and tell the president of the board how great he or she is. The DA photo is the handshake to the board," Sutton said. "That's the first document the board is going to see."

What the packet should include

A strong packet includes a good DA photo, a consistency between the NCO Evaluation Report and the Enlisted Records Brief, excellent performance in the NCO's jobs, and a record of the NCO seeking challenging jobs, Sutton said.

"The best thing is to focus on the whole-Soldier concept and ensure everything is squared away," Sutton said. "Soldiers should not try to guess what is important to the board members. They should ensure that everything is updated." ⩔

▶ NEXT MONTH: SOCIAL MEDIA

THE NCOS OF THE U.S. ARMY PARACHUTE TEAM:

KNIGHTS OF THE SKY

BY JENNIFER MATTSON
NCO Journal





The Blue Angels, the Thunderbirds and the Golden Knights perform across the United States in recruiting efforts for the Navy, Air Force and Army, respectively. But only one such demonstration team relies solely on their NCOs to demonstrate professionalism, compete internationally and jump out of airplanes with VIPs strapped to them. While the Blue Angels and the Thunderbirds highlight their officer corps by placing officers in key positions — mostly pilots — the demonstrators of the **Golden Knights** are all enlisted.



"This organization is comprised primarily of enlisted personnel," said Sgt. 1st Class Joe Jones, team leader of the Golden Knights' tandem section. "And we travel independently of the team. A sergeant first class takes his team on the road and will perform these parachute demonstrations or tandem jumps away from Fort Bragg.

"For a battalion commander to release those guys to go do airborne operations only under the supervision of the NCO says a lot about the leadership and the trust in the NCOs in this unit. Jumping out of a plane is an inherently dangerous job, but through the emergency procedures and training done under the supervision of the NCOs, the officers in the unit have the full trust and confidence in their NCOs to go out across the country and perform demonstrations."

Performing demonstrations is important, Jones said, but it's only a small fraction of what the Golden Knights do. Their primary mission is to act as a recruiting and retention tool, to engage with the American public and to tell their Army story to people who don't normally interact with service members. To do that, these professionals live and breathe the Army Values as they represent the whole Army to an American public who might have little daily interaction with any branch of military service.

"Jumping out of the plane is only 10 percent of what we do; that's how we get to work," Jones said. "Once we hit the ground, we do the rest of our work. We engage with these people, we share our experiences and our Army story, and share all of the opportunities the Army has to offer — educational benefits, leadership opportunities."

The Airborne roots of the Golden Knights

The Golden Knights began as the Strategic Army Command Parachute Team in 1959. At the time, the Soviets dominated the international competitions in sky diving, and the Army developed a team that could compete with them.

In 1961, the Strategic Army Command Parachute Team became the U.S. Army Parachute Team. And in 1962, the Golden Knights earned their nickname: "gold" for the medals they won, and "knights" because they had "conquered the skies."

In the 53 years the Golden Knights have served the Army, they have appeared in more than 16,000 shows in 48 countries and all 50 states. These professional Soldiers play one of three roles when assigned to the Golden Kights — as a demonstrator, a tandem jumper or competitor. Regardless, these professionals are often given responsibilities above their rank.

For example, before the whole team arrives, a junior NCO will make arrangements for the rest of the team — from deciding where they'll stay to coordinating media engagements.

"A lot of times, an advance representative will get on the ground two days before the rest of the team and find out about media, where to park the aircraft, our hotels, lodging and rental cars," said Staff Sgt. Thomas Melton, a parachute

demonstrator. "Oftentimes on a team, we're working a couple pay grades above the pay grade that we have."

Melton has been with the unit for more than a year. Before coming to the team, he was a parachute maintenance technician with the 82nd Airborne Division. In both roles, he's seen NCOs act as professionals, but with the Golden Knights he's seen that level of professionalism rise in proportion to the amount of responsibility charged with each individual Soldier.

"It's the only place in the Army that I've seen where they rely solely on NCOs," said Sgt. Richard Sloan, a demonstrator with the Golden Knights' Gold Team. "There is a chain of command like any other unit. On the airborne operations, there's at least a field grade officer, but here you don't see that. What you'll see here is basically sergeants first class and below running the entire operation."

Jumping with VIPs

Some of the NCOs in the Golden Knights jump tandem with local government, business and military leaders. This role requires NCOs to be the professional face of the Army as they represent the entire service to the VIPs who place their lives in the jumpers' hands.

When the team arrives to a tandem jump, they often link up with the local recruiting office, which gives them a list of VIPs who are interested in parachuting in tandem with the Golden Knights. Some of the VIPs who have jumped with the Golden Knights are Bill Murray, President George H.W. Bush and members of Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders.

"I've been everywhere from rolling in the mud in a Ranger regiment to having Bill Murray strapped to my chest," Jones said.

Through the experience, the Golden Knights want jumpers to feel more comfortable with the Army and its mission, Jones said. In addition, they act as ambassadors for NCOs across the Army.

"I want them to leave at the end of the day feeling that they just put their lives in the hands of a Soldier," Jones said. "They allowed me to throw them out of an airplane and to bring them down safely. We put our lives in the hands of Soldiers every day, we just don't think about it. When I take someone up for a tandem jump, I basically earn their trust and confidence. They're putting their lives in the hands of a Soldier."

Sloan said the recruiting efforts of the tandem jump help the Army open doors previously closed to Recruiting Command's efforts.

"They take high-profile personnel to give them the opportunity to see what it's like to be in airborne operations," Sloan said. "They'll be strapped to you. They'll exit the aircraft at 12,500 feet off the ground, a 120 mile-an-hour [wind will be] in your face, and you'll feel what it's like to be a Golden Knight for a day."

Demonstrating and competing with the Knights

Two teams of demonstrators — the Black Team and the Gold Team — travel across the United States appearing at football games, air shows and recruiting events. Members of the Golden Knights also compete in national and international parachute competitions. In both roles, NCOs represent the high professional standards of the Army.

"The noncommissioned officers in the Golden Knights are the demonstrators. They are the competitors," said Sgt. 1st Class Greg Windmiller, a competitor in the U.S. Army Parachute Team. "[NCOs] actually make up the meat and potatoes of the team."

While the two demonstration teams perform in towns across the United States, the Golden Knights' competitors perform on the national and international stage in parachute competitions. The competitors serve on separate teams from the demonstrators, and usually have served on the Golden Knights longer than the temporary three-year assignment.

Windmiller has competed for the Army for 11 years and has won several national and international competitions. By highlighting the Army and its capabilities at the national and international level, Windmiller demonstrates the professionalism of its NCO Corps by earning medals that demonstrate the Army's competence.



Previous pages: Members of the Golden Knights parachute down to the Fort Bragg Main Post Parade Field on July 4, 2007.

Opposite page: The Gold Team flies over a 2007 airshow in Hawaii.

Above: Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston tandem-jumps with a member of the Golden Knights on Jan. 14, 2011.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE GOLDEN KNIGHTS

Joining the Golden Knights

To become one of the elite members of the U.S. Army Parachute Team, NCOs must:

- Be active-duty Army
- Have 4 years time remaining in service
- Have 100 freefall jumps
- Be Airborne-qualified, or willing to attend Basic Airborne School
- Submit their application by July 31, 2012

The selection process begins September 2012. For more information, call 910-396-4800, or visit the Golden Knights' website at *www.usarec.army.mil/hq/goldenknights/*.



"My primary job is to be an ambassador for the U.S. Army and to tell the American public what it's all about," Windmiller said. "In a nutshell, I'm a recruiter. But I also get the privilege and the fun of competing in competitions."

Windmiller competes in canopy piloting, the ability to manipulate a parachute for power and speed. He competes in three separate events: speed, distance and accuracy.

"Having a noncommissioned officer, and even a junior noncommissioned officer, with that trust, that experience and that capability is a really unique thing in the military," Windmiller said. "We require our noncommissioned officers to be extremely professional and to conduct themselves in a manner that's appropriate for the Army as well as the team."

Representing the Army

Sgt. Maj. Stephen Young, sergeant major of the Golden Knights, said he takes the responsibility of representing the Army seriously. When Golden Knights parachute in to places around the United States, many citizens don't see Soldiers on a regular basis. To them, the Golden Knights *are* the Army.

"We represent 1.2 million Soldiers — active, National Guard and Reserve," Young said. "We're representing each of those Soldiers individually because we have a variety of MOSs here. We have an Army story. We can tell that Army story, and we can connect with those people."

Sgt. Austin Bowman, a crew chief on a C-31A Troopship, one of the Golden Knights' aircraft, has served with the team for almost two years.

"We have a very senior NCO, who has been an NCO before I even came into the Army," Bowman said. "And then there are NCOs who were just promoted before they came here. There are different levels of experience. Our focus as NCOs on this team is to mentor one another."

Sgt. Shawn Holland, another crew chief, said the majority of his job is preventative maintenance of the aircraft, acting as the load master and coordinating jump operations. Before being assigned to the Golden Knights, Holland served with the 82nd Airborne Division for five years, deploying twice.

"We're all considered leaders," Holland said. "The ability to take our own initiative is always in play, and the ability to organize a chaotic situation is a must."

The NCOs on the U.S. Army Parachute Team lead by example, and they set the example for more than the Soldiers in their unit, Young said.

Left: Sgt. 1st Class Greg Windmiller jumps at Raeford, N.C., May 16, 2009, practicing for a future competition. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GOLDEN KNIGHTS



"They are leaders, mentoring not only the Soldiers who are here — each other and their peers — but they're mentoring Soldiers we come in contact with at air shows or at military bases," Young said. "They're maintaining the standards of discipline and the Warrior Ethos. It may not be downrange, [and] we may not be in Afghanistan or Iraq, but we're still following and trying to set that example for the Soldiers out there and for the American public."

The more jumps you have...

Sgt. 1st Class Dustin Perregrin, a 19D cavalry scout who serves as a demonstrator with the Golden Knights, said though the team adheres to military rank structure, there are times when experience matters more.

"I'm an E-7, and I work for an E-6," Perregrin said. "It's more based on your experience with the team and how long you've been here. Just because I'm an E-7 doesn't mean I know how to sky-dive better than a guy who's been here four or five years who might be a rank lower than me. Everybody here is really determined and motivated, and that's why they're here — because everyone is a team player."

Being a team player is important to the esprit de corps of the Golden Knights; the camaraderie is why most of the Knights continue to serve in this capacity, Perregrin said.

"It's a nominative assignment. Everyone on the team has been deployed, worked in Iraq and Afghanistan," Perregrin said. "We're not here because we wanted to be here, but because they chose us to be here. Most of the guys do three or four years here, but then they go back down to the line."

Working with the community

Sgt. 1st Class Felix Gomez, an aviation NCO for the Golden Knights, coordinates the maintenance and crew chief jobs and works as a liaison for the civilian contractors. He's been with the team for more than three years.

"We have to show the community, wherever we participate in, the image of the Army, show what the Army is all about," Gomez said. "We have some key things that have to be in the spotlight — professionalism, dedication, commitment to the nation and to the Army."

The Golden Knights have different challenges than other NCOs, Gomez said.

"There are a lot of responsibilities in a different way," he said. "You're not dealing directly with other Soldiers; you're dealing more with the public. It's representing a big number of Soldiers before the community." ⩔

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Above: The Golden Knights get ready for a jump at Fort Bliss, Texas, Oct. 22. PHOTO BY JENNIFER MATTSON

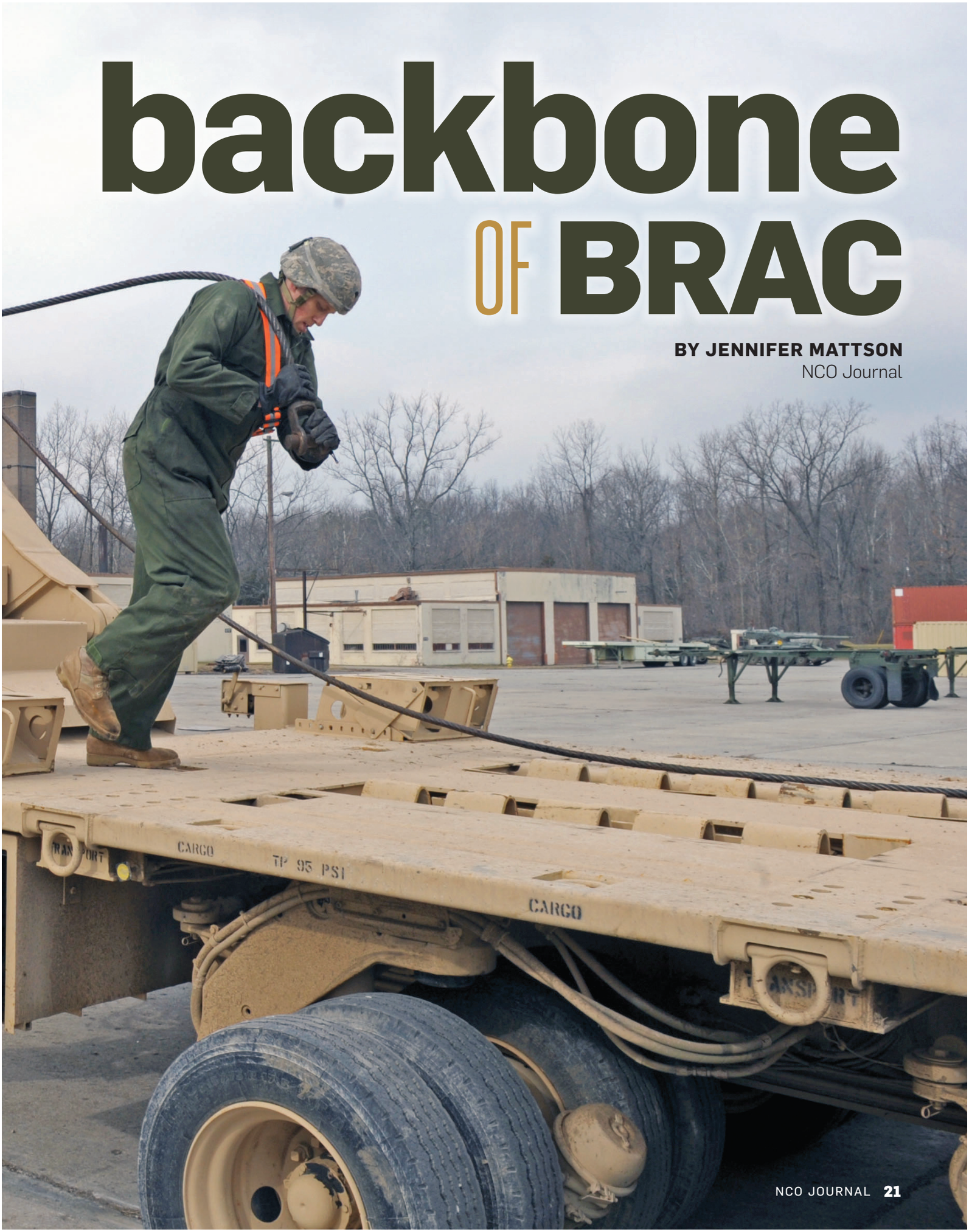
Left: The Golden Knights wave to an air show crowd after a successful jump Oct. 2, 2010. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GOLDEN KNIGHTS



Spc. Kevin Sharp pulls a cable to hook up a tank and pull it onto a truck at Fort Knox, Ky. Tanks from the Armor Center and School moved to Fort Benning, Ga., as a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Act.
PHOTO BY STEPHEN A. MOORE

backbone OF BRAC

BY JENNIFER MATTSON
NCO Journal



On Sept. 15, 2005, President George W. Bush signed the Base Realignment and Closure Act, turning the Department of Defense's recommendations to Congress regarding the future of the United States' military installations into a law. During the next seven years, the act would transform the Army by realigning and closing installations, creating training "centers of excellence" and orienting the Army toward power projection platforms.

Throughout the BRAC process, NCOs played major roles in moving pieces, directing Soldiers and keeping family members abreast of the changes.

"The noncommissioned officer played a key role in [BRAC] because they were the ones who were responsible," said Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Hardy, command sergeant major of the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, Ga. "We're the ones responsible for executing the commander's vision and intent, and going back and providing recommendations as we continue down this path of executing our daily tasks while continuing to train and develop Soldiers, NCOs and officers."

The 2005 act is the fifth iteration of BRAC to be passed by Congress and signed by the president since the process was created in 1988. Overall, defense officials estimated in the 2005 BRAC report that they would see a savings of approximately $50 billion over 20 years. This round of realignments and closures was the first BRAC to consider realigning the operational and training forces in the Army instead of simply reducing personnel and property and consolidating efforts among the armed servcies.

Preparing installations

While the Army was preparing to consolidate personnel, NCOs at Installation Management Command worked to make quality-of-life improvements at Soldiers' new homes.

"We placed Soldiers where services are more readily available, and our spectrum of services is more robust than in years past," said Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola, who was command sergeant major of Installation Management Command during many of the



Above: A historical photograph of Quarters 19 on Fort Monroe, Va. PHOTO COURTESY OF CASEMATE MUSEUM

Fort Monroe

Command Sgt. Maj. Lesly McCorkle was the garrison command sergeant major of Fort Monroe, Va., from February 2010 to the installation shutting its doors as an active post last September. On Nov. 1, Fort Monroe was designated a national monument by President Barack Obama, transferring responsibility for the historic post to the National Parks Service. McCorkle oversaw the installation's transition from a military base to being divided in areas of commercial development and park land for federal, state and local governments.

Fort Monroe was fortified in 1609, but it didn't officially become "Fort Monroe" until 1819. When it was active, it was the third-oldest Army installation — younger only than West Point, N.Y., and Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

"With the installation being older but very historical, it's going to save the Army a lot of money as far as being more energy-efficient by moving units to more greener or energy-efficient installations," McCorkle said.

NCOs had to adapt to the changes and challenges BRAC presented, especially when it came to the Army competitions usually held there, McCorkle said.

"The role the NCOs played was with TRADOC headquarters (which used to be at Fort Monroe). We were hosting a lot of TRADOC competitions here, so they had a major piece," McCorkle said.

Nearby Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., received 4,423 people from Fort Monroe as a result of BRAC.

"NCOs took the lead in getting their units, offices or sections moved to their new location, whether moving to Fort Knox, Fort Eustis or Norfolk Naval Base," McCorkle said.

Though closing the post indicates a closed chapter in the history of the U.S. military, McCorkle said that ultimately, closing Fort Monroe will be beneficial to the Army and to the American taxpayer.

"BRAC at Fort Monroe has been a really good thing for America," McCorkle said. "Change is hard, but change is needed. I don't want people to take BRAC as a negative; they need to take it as a positive and embrace it. They're going to see a positive when it's all said and done. It's going to be cost-efficient, not just for the military but for the American public."

Fort Bliss

The largest BRAC realignment in history occurred at Fort Bliss, Texas. When the 1st Armored Division relocated from Germany and consolidated at Fort Bliss, there were NCOs on both ends coordinating the arrival and departure of the unit's assets. In addition, 29,600 Soldiers and 45,000 family members relocated to Fort Bliss and neighboring El Paso.

Command Sgt. Maj. Phillip Pandy, the garrison command sergeant major at Fort Bliss, said NCOs rose to the occasion and filled in the gaps to make a smooth transition for Soldiers.

"It was a very challenging time for the unit, and what made the difference was NCOs doing their stuff," Pandy said. "You had Soldiers coming in, you had units realigning, leadership moving in and out. Our NCOs were really tasked to take care of Soldiers, maintain the discipline, maintain the standards. Good NCOs excel and made the difference for us."

As NCOs and Soldiers arrived at Fort Bliss, improvements in housing, child and youth services and fitness, health and recreation facilities were being built. The brigade footprints on post grew out of the desert, Pandy said.

"Base alignment means changes and transitions," Pandy said. "Transitions are some of the hardest things we do in our business. When you go through transitions, NCOs do NCO things. NCOs make things move, NCOs take care of things."

Below: The activation ceremony of the 1st Armored Division at Fort Bliss took place at Noel Field on May 24. PHOTO BY JENNIFER MATTSON



months preceding the BRAC deadline of Sept. 15, 2011.

The Army spent more than $15 billion in new construction and used American Recovery and Reinvestment Act dollars to improve the quality of life at each installation, Ciotola said.

IMCOM command sergeants major helped build and manage operational facilities, motor pools, child and youth services buildings, barracks, roads, and hospitals to make installations experiencing an increase in personnel more efficient and family-friendly, he said.

IMCOM also started an initiative that partnered with private contractors to manage, build and maintain family housing on 85 percent of IMCOM's installations. This initiative helped to ensure adequate family housing at the installations where Soldiers were consolidating, Ciotola said.

Establishing centers of excellence

The 2005 BRAC recommendations created centers of excellence to improve Army training. These centers of excellence include: the Human Resources Center of Excellence at Fort Knox, Ky.; the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, Ga.; the Fires Center of Excellence at Fort Sill, Okla.; the Sustainment Center of Excellence at Fort Lee, Va.; and the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

The centers streamline, enhance and improve training to reflect the way Soldiers work in either a deployed environment or to make commands more efficient at home.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Center of Excellence brought together Human Resources Command, Cadet Command, Recruiting Command and Accessions Command at Fort Knox.

Command Sgt. Maj. Bruce Lee, command sergeant major of Human Resources Command, said HRC was able to streamline its processes because the command is now in one location — the Maude Complex at Fort Knox.

"[BRAC] was able to bring three different locations to one location," Lee said. "We were in Alexandria, Va.; St. Louis; and Indianapolis. BRAC was able to bring everybody under one roof — our active and our reserve component, and our records and evaluation center."

Maneuver

The Armor Center and School relocated from Fort Knox to Fort Benning to co-locate with the Infantry Center and School and create the Maneuver

Fort Benning

Fort Benning, Ga., grew tremendously due to BRAC. The installation spent $3.5 billion on new construction, paved 140 miles of new roads, renovated 244 buildings and developed 19 new weapons ranges to accommodate the 22,000 Soldiers and civilians arriving with the Armor Center and School, which relocated from Fort Knox, Ky.

"If you look at the units at the formations across the Army, armor and infantry Soldiers are fighting together," said Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Hardy, command sergeant major of the Maneuver Center of Excellence. "What BRAC has done is it's created opportunities. If you came in the Army to be in the infantry or an infantry officer, or if you came in to be a tanker or a tank commander, when you go to your initial training at [One Station Unit Training] or [Basic Officer Leaders Course], you [now] come to the same place."

Command Sgt. Maj. John Troxell, currently command sergeant major of I Corps at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., but who was previously instrumental in the Armor Center and School's move to Fort Benning, said NCOs were the boots on the ground working to accomplish BRAC's complex mission.

"If it was not for the leadership of specifically the noncommissioned officers throughout this whole move, it would've been a failure," Troxell said. "Their ability at the lowest unit level to understand what the task was that they had to accomplish in their lane and get that task accomplished, which supported the overall mission of the move, was humongous."

Below: The Maneuver Center of Excellence was activated at a ceremony at Fort Benning's Ridgway Hall on Oct. 22. PHOTO BY LORI EGAN



Center of Excellence.

"The NCOs involvement was huge in the success of the Armor School's move to Fort Benning and the Maneuver Center of Excellence," Hardy said.

By being in one location, armor, infantry and cavalry Soldiers are able to come together in one training environment so that they'll appreciate one another's capabilities on the battlefield, Hardy said.

"(Previously,) there was a fight," Hardy said. "The infantry had one point of view, the armor had one point of view and if they didn't come together as they went forward to the next level, potentially both branches could lose out as the fight went out to the higher level. What we found was, when we brought the armor school and infantry school both under the [Maneuver Center of Excellence] at the higher headquarters, we've been able to mediate and do what's best for the maneuver force."

Command Sgt. Maj. John Troxell oversaw part of the Armor Center and School's move to Fort Benning. He is now the command sergeant major of I Corps at Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

Training has to reflect the realities of the deployed environment, he said.

"All NCOs out there who are armor Soldiers, who think that they came in the Army to be a tanker or a Bradley fighting vehicle crewman, they have to understand that the enemy gets a vote; the enemies of our country get a vote on how we do business," Troxell said. "If the enemy is living in the mountains, in the palm groves and in the grape fields, tanks and Bradleys don't cut it there. You have to adjust your mind and get on the ground. The concept of warfare is the same whether you are mounted or dismounted. I've got to be flexible to get on the ground like my infantry brothers and get after the enemy to defeat them and to protect our nation."

Fires

The Air Defense Artillery School relocated from Fort Bliss, Texas, to Fort Sill after being at Fort Bliss since 1940. The ADA school is now co-located with the Field Artillery School, creating the Fires Center of Excellence.

Though the two continue to train differently, by being in the same loca-



Army Reserve and Forces Command officials broke ground on their new headquarters building December 2008 at Fort Bragg, N.C. PHOTO BY TIMOTHY L. HALE

tion, they're able to introduce Soldiers to one another's capabilities, said Command Sgt. Maj. James Carr, command sergeant major of the ADA school at Fort Sill.

"We're still two different components," Carr said. "FA trains their Soldiers and we train ours, but there are some things that we're trying to work together. For instance, the Fires Center of Excellence has ADA and field artillery Soldiers working as one, and that's been the biggest change for air defense and field artillery Soldiers. We have the opportunity to work together."

By introducing the concept in the schoolhouse of working together, Soldiers will be able to take that knowledge to the battlefield, Carr said.

"When we go to war, we fight together," Carr said. "We call it 'from mud to space' — and FA controls the mud, and air defense controls the space. We want to be able to coexist, and we want to be able to train on our equipment together because that's the way we fight, and we want to be able to train as we fight.

Since TRADOC has approved the Fires warfighting function, the co-location of both FA and ADA branches at Fort Sill allows us to learn, study and implement the fires doctrine, which is key to developing fires leaders."

Sustainment

Command Sgt. Maj. C.C. Jenkins, command sergeant major of the Sustainment Center of Excellence, said that by consolidating the Army's sustainment capabilities at Fort Lee the command has a better rapport with Soldiers. The Quartermaster School, Ordnance School, Transportation School, Soldier Support Institute and Army Logistics University came together to form the Sustainment Center of Excellence.

"We can now orchestrate a

BRAC CONTINUES ON PAGE 28 →

Fort McPherson

Command Sgt. Maj. Karl Roberts has spent the last two and a half years as the garrison command sergeant major at Fort McPherson, Ga. After seeing about 13,000 people report for work every day in 2005, he eventually was one of the last Soldiers to leave Fort McPherson.

"I've seen this installation transform from lines of traffic backed up to the highway to no one coming through during the lunch hour," Roberts said. "The one thing I dealt with was to make sure that every Soldier had a follow-on assignment or was about to retire. I am the last guy on the installation to leave in the aspect of the Soldier."

The area around Fort McPherson in suburban Atlanta will continue to be home to about 100,000 retirees and their family members, Roberts said. A public-private land-development company is seeking buyers to make an investment on the installation so that the buildings will continue to be used and taken care of after the Army has left, he said.

"The historical buildings on Fort McPherson will always stay historical buildings," Roberts said. "And the way the law is written, you can't do anything on the exterior of the building, but you can make moderate changes on the inside."

Though the location was used as a training area as early as 1835, it became Fort McPherson officially on Dec. 30, 1867. In the years since, the community outside the gate relied on Soldiers' and their families' business, Roberts said.

"Businesses have really suffered," Roberts said. "When you enter a business now in and around base, when they see a uniform, they say 'We're really going to miss you.' You look around where it used to be crowded, and there's no one in there. Hopefully as these bases start to reopen, they will bring business here to those outside the post."

It cost the Army $4.5 million annually to operate Fort McPherson, which is now part of the annual savings the Army will start to see after closing the post in September.

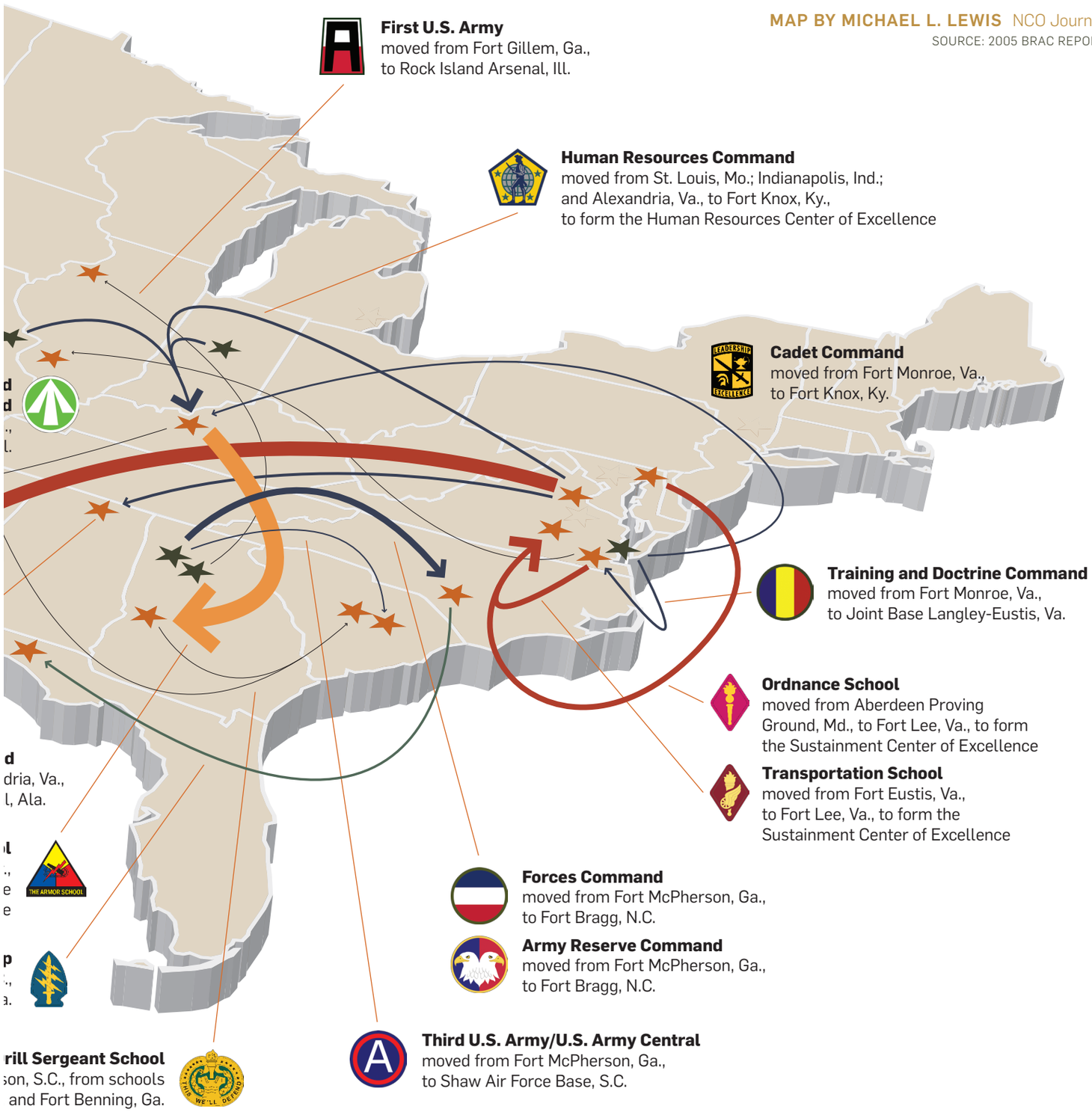

SOUTH K
1st Infantry Division
moved from South Korea and Germany
to Fort Riley, Kan.
4th Infantry Division
moved from Fort Hood, Texas,
to Fort Carson, Colo.
Air Defense Artillery School
moved from Fort Bliss, Texas, to Fort Sill, Okla.,
to form the Fires Center of Excellence
1st Armored Division
moved from Germany
to Fort Bliss, Texas
OLD IRONSIDES
Surface Deployment and
Distribution Command
moved from Fort Eustis, Va.,
to Scott Air Force Base, Ill.
Installation Management Command
moved from Alexandria, Va.,
to Fort Sam Houston, Texas
Materiel Command
moved from Alexandria,
to Redstone Arsenal, Ala
Armor School
moved from Fort Knox, Ky.,
to Fort Benning, Ga. to form the
Maneuver Center of Excellence
7th Special Forces Group
moved from Fort Bragg, N.C.,
to Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.
Drill S
established at Fort Jackson, S
at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and
GERMANY
LEGEND
Line width indicates the relative number of Soldiers estimated to
have been relocated as a result of a unit's BRAC-related move:
15,000
10,000
5,000
1,000
<1,000
closed installation
realigned installation

2005 BRAC Moves

The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission made dozens of recommendations that affected tens of thousands of Army personnel. The largest BRAC-related moves affecting Army units are depicted in the map.

MAP BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS NCO Journal
SOURCE: 2005 BRAC REPORT

Joint Regional Corrections Facility
established at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.,
from elements at Fort Sill, Okla.; Fort Knox, Ky.;
and Lackland Air Force Base, Texas



First U.S. Army
moved from Fort Gillem, Ga.,
to Rock Island Arsenal, Ill.

Human Resources Command
moved from St. Louis, Mo.; Indianapolis, Ind.;
and Alexandria, Va., to Fort Knox, Ky.,
to form the Human Resources Center of Excellence

Cadet Command
moved from Fort Monroe, Va.,
to Fort Knox, Ky.

Training and Doctrine Command
moved from Fort Monroe, Va.,
to Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.

Ordnance School
moved from Aberdeen Proving
Ground, Md., to Fort Lee, Va., to form
the Sustainment Center of Excellence

Transportation School
moved from Fort Eustis, Va.,
to Fort Lee, Va., to form the
Sustainment Center of Excellence

Forces Command
moved from Fort McPherson, Ga.,
to Fort Bragg, N.C.

Army Reserve Command
moved from Fort McPherson, Ga.,
to Fort Bragg, N.C.

Third U.S. Army/U.S. Army Central
moved from Fort McPherson, Ga.,
to Shaw Air Force Base, S.C.

rill Sergeant School
son, S.C., from schools
and Fort Benning, Ga.

← **BRAC CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25**
training process so that NCOs, officers and civilians within the Sustainment Corps understand sustainment, train them to the standards and send them out to the operational side of the house so that they can execute it at a moment's notice for any worldwide contingency," Jenkins said.

To accommodate the new Sustainment Center of Excellence, Fort Lee built an ordnance campus from scratch, an explosive ordnance disposal building, a new dental and medical facility, and a new tactical wheeled-vehicle facility. In addition, Fort Lee is constructing the Army's largest lodge — a 1,000-room hotel to accommodate the influx of new students. In 2005, Fort Lee had approximately 18,400 personnel working daily inside the gates; in 2011 that number has jumped to about 44,500.

Sustainment Soldiers will be ready for more than deployment, Jenkins said. They'll be ready to access key information by looking to Fort Lee as the hub for sustainment knowledge. Fort Lee has the needed equipment so warfighters can train, deploy, arrive on time and be resupplied, he said.

"The way we made the Army more efficient is simple," Jenkins said. "Now the Army doesn't have to look all over the world to get sustainment information. We have a state-of-the-art logistics university that's a part of Fort Lee; we have experts there in sustainment. If anyone comes to Fort Lee, or calls Fort Lee or goes on the Web, we can access them, help them, sustain them and bring them in for training."

Maneuver Support

Maneuver Support Soldiers — military police; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear Soldiers; and engineers — now train at the same place since an earlier BRAC round in 1999 closed Fort McClellan, Ala., then the home of the MP and CBRN schools.

Since then, Fort Leonard Wood has experienced an influx of growth in maneuver support-related personnel and facilities, growing from one training brigade combat team to three training brigades and adding a new maneuver enhancement brigade from the 1st Infantry Division, which activated Oct. 16, 2008.

"NCOs basically run Fort Leonard Wood," said Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Wells, command sergeant major of the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence. "They don't lead Fort Leonard Wood — that's the mission and duty of commissioned officers — but they sure do run it. And we help all the regiments. Especially at the Maneuver Support Center, you will find yourself working in a particular section where you'll be sitting right beside a military policeman and a senior NCO who just happens to be a CBRN Soldier. And you'll be working on different projects or the same projects.

"That's what NCOs do; they help in the integration piece to make the transition from wherever these regiments came from to Fort Leonard Wood to make it as seamless as possible," Wells said.

Maj. Gen. David D. Halverson and Janet Monti (left) join Command Sgt. Maj. Dwight L. Morrisey and Paul Monti (right) Aug. 19 in naming the new Mission Simulation Center at Fort Sill, Okla., for Sgt. 1st Class Jared Monti, a fire support specialist who received the Medal of Honor posthumously for actions in Afghanistan. The building was constructed as part of BRAC's creation of the Fires Center of Excellence at Fort Sill. PHOTO BY SHARON MCBRIDE

Power projection platforms

Not only did BRAC transform the way TRADOC conducted business, it also transformed the operational Army by creating "power projection platforms." Essentially, BRAC consolidated divisions at various installations including Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Carson, Colo.; and Fort Bliss. These power projection platforms enable divisions to train, deploy and redeploy in the same area, saving the Army from sending Soldiers to other locations for additional training by having that training available at the Soldiers' home stations.

"Forces Command is excited because, given BRAC, we've nested our combatant commands, our divisions, at very robust military installations,



Command Sgt. Major C.C. Jenkins (left), the command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Support Command, Sustainment Center of Excellence and Fort Lee, joins Joyce Rozier and Brig. Gen. Lynn A. Collyar (center), the chief of ordnance, and other dignitaries in cutting the ribbon to dedicate the new Tactical Support Equipment Department building for Maj. Gen. Jackson E. Rozier, a former ordnance chief. PHOTO BY KIMBERLY FRITZ



which also serve as military projection platforms," Ciotola said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Dailey, command sergeant major of the 4th Infantry Division and Fort Carson, said making Fort Carson a power projection platform has enabled the 4th Infantry Division to deploy out of one location with all of its assets.

"Fort Carson has always had a reputation for being a world-class facility for Soldiers and families to train and live," Dailey said. "But restationing with BRAC added a combat infantry division and all its assets, which required change — major upgrades to facilities. Family support centers, deployment support centers, ranges and training facilities all had to be updated. All these things went through years of planning and preparation."

Fort Carson built two complete brigade combat team footprints in addition to facilities for support agencies, family support, post exchange services, gates and family housing to accommodate the increase of personnel due to BRAC.

"As we realign — which we need to do to make our Army stronger, to conserve resources and funding, and to maximize our training capabilities at certain duty stations — I think that it's a great movement toward the [Army Force Generation] concept, where we align divisions and their brigade combat teams so the brigades are with their divisions and they can manage their training. And that all can be utilized under the 4th Infantry Division at Fort Carson," Dailey said.

By designating Fort Carson a power projection platform, the Army has made Fort Carson and the 4th Infantry Division more efficient by allowing Soldiers to receive their training at home station, especially when the operational tempo is high, Dailey said.

"[BRAC] has made us much stronger; we have realigned the division," Dailey said. "We have instituted a multitude of noncommissioned officer professional development procedures and policies. Fort Carson itself was a great benefactor in the first multicomponent noncommissioned officer academy, which was made up of the Army Reserve, the National Guard, and the majority by the active force.

"It is a very successful NCO academy we stood up. The division has come to Fort Carson and taken the lead on that effort. It has given the opportunity for those young Soldiers who are entering the ranks of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps to be able to deploy and return, get the needed training at their home station, and spend that valuable time with their families and not have to ship off. Previously we didn't have the NCO Academy there. We also bring the strength of the division and the division staff and all the assets and capabilities it has and can project to Fort Carson, so the division staff can reach out and touch these great schools."

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Key leader advice

"Flexiblity has to be your watchword, and understading that you're there as the NCO and there are going to be unforecasted challenges. You and your leadership will get your organization through those by being flexible and making timely decisions."

— COMMAND SGT. MAJ. JOHN W. TROXELL

"You have to have patience. It takes a long time to accomplish construction, and you have to plan for it. Project as far as you can out, and involve Soldiers in those plans."

— COMMAND SGT. MAJ. DANIEL DAILEY

"In accepting and receiving these units, you have to treat these Soldiers as you would — sometimes better than — your own Soldiers. You have to make them feel welcomed and make them feel part of the team."

— COMMAND SGT. MAJ. ROBERT WELLS

U.S. forces have withdrawn, but thanks to **lessons learned** from America's NCO Corps, Iraq's army is

READY to STAND ALONE

BY CLIFFORD KYLE JONES NCO Journal

The United States pulled the last of its troops out of Iraq at the end of 2011. As Iraq's military takes over sole responsibility for the country's security, the Iraqi Army will proceed with special insight into what Iraqi command sergeants major called the greatest army in the world — the U.S. Army.

As part of a professional development exchange, five Iraqi command sergeants major and the deputy commander of the Iraqi Ground Forces Command, Lt. Gen. Riyadh Jalal Qassiri, visited Army posts across the United States in November to deepen their understanding of the U.S. NCO Corps and U.S. Soldier development.

"I'm in awe of all that I saw in all three posts — Fort Benning (Ga.), Fort Polk (La.) and Fort Bliss (Texas) — training at a very high level, punctuality, self-confidence, bravery," said Command Sgt. Maj. Muntasar Jassim Abbas Muhsan, the command sergeant major of the Iraqi Army's 14th Division. "And every time we saw training, the following training impressed me even more. And we kept going from one kind of training to another. The NCOs of the U.S. Army are giants. The U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (at Fort Bliss) impressed me greatly. … Every army in the world envies the U.S. Army and would love to see such a school and such training in its country."



Iraqi Special Operations Force soldiers line up to meet five wounded American Soldiers in 2011 at a compound in Baghdad. The ISOF soldiers performed three demonstrations for the warriors to show the progress the Iraqi Army has made since the war began in 2003. PHOTO BY SGT. LINDSEY BRADFORD



The U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy's chief of protocol, Ron Fraser, led a group of Iraqis, their escorts and their translator on a tour of the academy in November 2011. PHOTOS BY CLIFFORD KYLE JONES

The lessons from the visits weren't limited to the training exercises the Iraqis witnessed. The Iraqis' escorts from the U.S. Army were careful to explain how each step in the process helps develop a "Soldier who is confident, competent, adaptable and flexible," said Command Sgt. Maj. Charles Room, one of the Iraqis' escorts.

"That's been kind of the overall theme — how we develop our noncommissioned officers from soldierization, to specialty individual training, … up until it culminates at the Sergeants Major Academy at the pinnacle of a noncommissioned officer: sergeant major," Room said. "Every time we do stuff, we're always bringing that message back so that they understand: Yeah, you just saw the Ranger School (at Fort Benning), but here again, this is a leadership school. The average guy who goes in there is a young E-4. I went as an E-3. They're not teaching you any high-speed tactics. What they're doing is instilling your values — your Warrior Ethos — and they're building confidence and competence in that young warrior. So every time



Command Sgt. Maj. Muntasar Jassim Abbas Muhsan, the command sergeant major of the Iraqi Army's 14th Division, took a break during his tour of USASMA to read some of the academy's instructional material.

we do these things, we try to get [the Iraqis] to engage with everybody … [then] we try to put the linkage back in so there's a message."

Although the visit came as the drawdown of U.S. forces was under way, Room was careful to note that the Iraqis' tour of U.S. installations didn't mark the end of the process for U.S.–Iraqi relations. Rather, it was the beginning of a new stage.

"It's part of what we're doing now to continue partnering with the Iraqi forces in the new phase of theater security cooperation," he said. "As we finish the operational [mission] and we come back here, we want to maintain relationships. So we want to continue to build capacity with the Iraqis. We also want to maintain and build relationships — those relationships we've had for the last eight years. It's not a delegation coming here and looking at things. It's an exchange. This is a building block, too."

Indeed, the Iraqi ground forces command sergeant major, Command Sgt. Maj. Husham Abdul Ridah, said the information he and his fellow command sergeants major will take back will be a significant building block for the Iraqi Army.

"The effect of this trip on us is humongous. We are determined when we go back to have a fresh beginning of the NCO Corps in Iraq," Husham said. "For the U.S. Army to be this international great army, they train 24/7. That's what I saw with my eyes, and that's what we want to transfer to Iraq. So like the United States Army, we will become a great army — an army with great experience and well-trained. I wish that all the Iraqi NCOs had the opportunity to see those training installations. I'm also very much impressed with the Sergeants Major Academy, especially in the fact that it is completely run and managed by NCOs. This tells everybody how great those leaders, those NCOs, are."

Before the United States overthrew Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq in 2003, the Iraqi army — like many armies around the world — lacked a strong NCO corps. But as the nation has begun to rebuild its military with help from the United States, Iraq's leaders have recognized that a vibrant NCO corps is critical to its military success.



Command Sgt. Maj. Rory Malloy, commandant of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, exchanges gifts with Command Sgt. Maj. Naser Abdulhasan Juhi of the Iraqi army. The two served together in Iraq. Naser will be part of the next class at USASMA.

> **"For the U.S. Army to be this international great army, they train 24/7. That's what I saw with my eyes, and that's what we want to transfer to Iraq."**
>
> **— HUSHAM ABDUL RIDAH, COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR OF IRAQI GROUND FORCES COMMAND**

"Yes, this is a new trend. But I think that the Iraqi government is going to pursue this," Muntasar said. "As proof, we are here in America, sent by the Iraqi government, and the head of the delegation is a lieutenant general. So all this tells us that the Iraqi government is keen to improve the Iraqi NCO Corps."

Command Sgt. Maj. Naser Abdulhasan Juhi, command sergeant major of the Iraqi army's 12th division, was also grateful that Riyadh made the trip with the command sergeants major, noting that he "is one of the highest ranking Iraqi officers" — essentially, the equivalent of the U.S. Army's vice chief of staff.

"For him to come with us on such a delegation, this speaks that the Iraqi government wants to improve the level and readiness of the Iraqi army," Naser said. "The rank of the lieutenant general and the fact that he is involved in improving the training and the level of NCOs tells me that we are going to reach a very high level as NCOs in the coming days of Iraq. And we will."

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NCOs at the

Helping Soldiers' morale means going where they go

BY JONATHAN (JAY) KOESTER
NCO Journal

From their first day on a post to their last day deployed, Soldiers know the Exchange well. Exchange stores and restaurants are part of Army life everywhere. But what those Soldiers might not see are the NCOs working behind the scenes to keep the Exchange working for the Soldiers and their families.

It's a small group. At the headquarters of the Exchange, which recently rebranded from Army & Air Force Exchange Service, in suburban Dallas, there are about 3,000 employees; out of those 3,000, only about 75 are uniformed military personnel. But those airmen and Soldiers serve an important purpose. Not only do they provide a direct voice into what service members want from the Exchange, but they provide a daily reminder of the purpose of the Exchange, said Army Staff Sgt. Lewis Hilburn, military outreach NCO for the Exchange.

"The Exchange needs NCOs to keep everything in perspective," Hilburn said. "These civilians, they have a vague idea, 'Oh, we're helping the military.' But when you actually see the person in uniform every day, it's, 'Oh, it's them that I'm working for.'

"I've been on several projects, and they always come to me, 'What do you think about this or that;' and I have to say, 'Why would Soldiers want that?'" Hilburn said. "I give my opinion based on being an NCO and a Soldier."

Army Sgt. 1st Class Jon Cupp, the public affairs officer for the Pacific region of the Exchange, based in Okinawa, Japan, agreed that the opinions of NCOs are important to operations of the Exchange.

"Noncommissioned officers add the experience of our service to give vital input into what military service members and their families expect from a retailer," Cupp said. "Most NCOs have been deployed and can give their thoughts on Exchange operations in the combat theater."



Soldiers of C Company, 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, purchase items from a mobile Exchange store at Combat Outpost Malekashay in eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistan border in November 2008.
PHOTO BY 1ST. LT. NATHAN PERRY

EXCHANGE


CHEEZ-IT
FRITO-LAY
NEWPORT
KING SIZE BOX
MENTHOL FILTERS
MADE IN U.S.A.
Mountain Dew
Marlboro
LIGHTS



Air Force Tech. Sgt. Larry McCoy gets fitted for a custom uniform at an Exchange clothing sales store. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE EXCHANGE

The Mission

There are two parts of the Exchange's mission that make it important to the Army. First, profits from the Exchange go back to military posts. During the past 10 years, the Exchange has given $2.4 billion to Installation Management Command's G-9 Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs, and Air Force Services.

But perhaps even more important is the motto NCOs at the Exchange know well: "We go where you go."

"In World Wars I and II, we pioneered the role of foreign posts, then cemented the 'we go' mission in Vietnam," explains an introductory video shown to all new Exchange employees. "But the events of Sept. 11, 2001, radically changed how the Exchange performs its mission. As U.S. forces deployed to wage the war against terrorism, we immediately joined them.

"Less than 45 days after the 9/11 attack, we'd opened stores in Uzbekistan, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kyrgyzstan, Djibouti and remote camps in the Kuwaiti desert. When troops entered Afghanistan, we quickly followed and opened stores in Kandahar, Bagram and the capital of Kabul. But the Exchange didn't stop there. Even before Baghdad fell, we had a store on the ground in Iraq. When we opened a Burger King at Baghdad International Airport, we set a record of selling more Whoppers than any Burger King on the planet."

Helping the morale of deployed Soldiers is one of the chief missions for the Exchange, said Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Jeffry Helm, the senior enlisted advisor of the Exchange.

"My favorite is when they say they can get that soda, they can get that candy bar and they can sit down after they've been out kicking in doors for 12 hours," Helm said. "You can sit in a corner and eat that and forget where you are at for 10, 15 minutes. And for 10, 15 minutes you're in Anytown, USA, just having that American soda, that American candy bar."

Because the Exchange goes wherever Soldiers go, NCOs deal with logistics challenges not seen by other stores.

Army Sgt. Maj. Douglas Dunn, the senior enlisted advisor for the Exchange's Europe region, said the conditions the Exchange operates in are extraordinary.

"Customs issues are a continual challenge because the unique nature of Exchange operational support to deployed active-duty members," Dunn said. "Moving customs-free or tax-free merchandise into emerging third-world nations is difficult at best, and requires close communications with a multitude of [Department of Defense] and other federal agencies.

"Supply chain interruptions due to insurgent activity, operational tempo changes, or in-transit theft is another major area of focus for this position," Dunn said. "These challenges require constant contact with internal and external investigating, and logistical organizations that test our ability to communicate across cultural and language barriers in an attempt to maximize the throughput of product to the warfighter."

Those logistical challenges are what make the Exchange different than other retailers, said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Larry McCoy, Air Force program manager for military clothing sales.

"The thing is, they do travel with us," McCoy said. "You don't see Wal-Mart traveling over to Iraq, Afghanistan, places like that. But with the Exchange, they put their lives at risk just like we do. Just like we're out there fighting, they're out there. That's something that we greatly appreciate."

What it takes

Because of its special mission of serving Soldiers in a mostly civilian environment, there are certain traits leaders look for in the NCOs who come to work for the Exchange.

"You have to be a go-getter," McCoy said. "You need someone who is going to seek new opportunities for the Exchange and for the military members. You don't

Exchanging names

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service has rebranded itself as simply the Exchange. The rebranding should ease the confusion caused by the various names used in the past. Some people use the abbreviation AAFES. On Army bases, you'd hear stores called the PX, for Post Exchange. On Air Force bases you'd hear the stores called BX, for Base Exchange.

"What's the common denominator with all those names?" said Army Lt. Col. Tom Shrader, chief of public affairs at the Exchange. "It's the word Exchange. So in order to make everything unified, we're switching to the Exchange. The headquarters changed in July, and we'll be rolling it out to every post during the next couple years."

want to just sit back and go with the flow.

"I'm always looking for ways to improve the lives of the warfighters, whether it's providing new items, or as simple as making our online storefront easier to navigate. You just have to get out there and find ways to make things better for the warfighters."

Air Force Master Sgt. Joseph E. Segarra, superintendent of the military personnel office at the Exchange, focused on the civilian communication aspects of the job.

"The organizational and communication skills need to be good because we deal with a lot of civilians here," Segarra said. "We want to make sure we have a good rapport with the civilians, and I think we do."

Challenges

Although no NCO at Exchange headquarters in Dallas would claim to be doing dangerous, high operational tempo work, there are challenges to the job. And facing those challenges has made each of them better leaders, they say.

Helm said it took him some time to realize he needed to change his leadership style when working with civilians.

"When I first got here, it was kind of tough," Helm said. "In the military, when you're an E-9 or a senior NCO, you don't always have to explain why you want somebody to do something. You can just say, 'Go do it.' And they say, 'Yes sir; Yes ma'am,' and they go do it. When you are dealing with civilians, you can't use that approach, so you have to kind of change your leadership style from 'directive' to 'teamwork.' The bottom line is they all want the best for our troops. But you still have to step back and read that email a second time before you hit the send button to make sure it's not directive in nature, make sure it's more of a cooperative tone."

Helm said he makes it a point to talk to NCOs about their leadership style when they arrive at Exchange headquarters.

"They need to be outgoing, definitely not as directive," Helm said. "And if their leadership style is directive, then we just make sure to sit down with them when they get here and stress to them, you need to change your leadership style here."

In the end, Hilburn said, working at the Exchange wasn't always easy but has made him a better NCO.

"Being here, I've had to exercise a lot of patience, a lot of empathy toward other people," Hilburn said. "Definitely, I've become a better leader, a better NCO, because of this assignment."

A job at the Exchange offers NCOs a way to affect the entire Army and their families, Helm said.

"The Exchange is a phenomenal career opportunity for any young NCO out there," Helm said. "If your military occupational specialty is here at the Exchange, talk to your job counselor and consider coming because you have a chance to touch not just your company or your battalion, but you have the chance to touch the entire Army with the decisions that you make and the input that you give.

"We have 12.4 million eligible customers, so you're impacting 12.4 million people," Helm said. "There's not many jobs in the Army that you can impact that many people."

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Why no McDonald's?

One of the common questions Soldiers have is about how the Exchange chooses the restaurants that end up on post.

Thomas Branning, vice president of the Exchange's restaurant, theater and hospitality division, said the Exchange "conducts multiple solicitations for fast-food franchise agreements within market segments that are popular with our demographic base. Brands must have a global presence so that they can be operated at Army and Air Force installations worldwide."

"We have primary, secondary and intercept brands," Branning said. "Primary brands are the go-to brands and usually have exclusivity agreements written in their agreement. If it's burgers, we go to Burger King. We can't just go put whatever we want, where we want. Brand franchisors must approve each location.

"We actually have three McDonald's, all places where Burger King had encroachment issues with the local franchisee. Holloman, Peterson and Kirtland Air Force Bases (in Colorado and New Mexico) have McDonald's, and we also had a couple in Iraq."



Sgt. Maj. James A. Pigford (left), senior enlisted advisor of the Exchange's Pacific Region, chats with Marine Corps Master Sgt. Michael Cline of Marine Aerial Refueling Squadron 152 during the opening of 24-hour gas pumps on Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Japan, in July. PHOTO BY SGT. 1ST CLASS JON CUPP

IN ACTION

Stories of NCOs

LEADING, TRAINING, MAINTAINING, & CARING

Still recruiting after 60 years

Veterans inspired his enlistment after World War II, re-enlistment after Desert Storm

BY DONNA MILES
American Forces Press Service

In early November, retired Sgt. Maj. Ray Moran visited the Military Entrance Processing Station at Fort Meade, Md., to bid goodbye and good luck to young men and women, many of whom he recruited himself, as they headed off to basic training.

Moran's frequent visits to the station are reminiscent of his boyhood days in Latrobe, Pa. He remembers fondly when he and his brother, Sam, ran to the local rail station to wave goodbye to U.S. troops bound for combat during World War II. Veterans inspired Moran's life-long love of the military and the men and women who serve in uniform.

He joined their ranks as soon as he was old enough, in 1948. It was the start of a 30-year career that included duty in post-World War II Japan, in Korea during the Korean Conflict, in Vietnam, and after volunteering to return to active duty after his retirement, during Operation Desert Storm.

Today, at age 82, Moran continues to make his mark on the military as its oldest and longest-serving recruiter. Over the past 60 years, he figures he has enlisted more than 1,000 Soldiers, and he continues to sign on more every day.

Talking with Moran, still widely known by the moniker he picked up in Vietnam — "Old Soldier" — is like reading chapters out of a history book. He remembers being too young to enlist during World War II, but making a point with his brother to give a proper send-off to combat-bound troops marching down his street to the local train station every Tuesday. "We were always there," he said.

Looking at his long list of duties after he enlisted in the Army, it's clear that Moran was, in fact, always where the action was.

Shortly after his basic training at Camp Breckenridge, Ky., he found himself helping keep the peace in post-World War II Tokyo. When war broke out in Korea, he



deployed there on July 17, 1950, with the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment.

Moran recalls moving with his unit into North Korea, all thinking the war was almost over when news broke that China had entered the conflict. "The Chinese had joined the North Koreans in the war and were pushing back our troops," he said.

Moran was among the troops charged with retrieving the bodies of more than 800 of their fellow Soldiers killed during an attack near North Korea's Yalu River. Some, their hands tied behind their backs with barbed wire, had been shot in the head.

The experience was a far cry from the triumphant Armistice Day parade Moran had expected to be a part of in Japan. Gen. Douglas MacArthur had personally selected his unit to return from Korea to parade through downtown Tokyo.

"The problem was, there were so many mines in the bay in Korea that the Navy couldn't come in to get us," Moran said.

Instead, he remained in Korea where he enjoyed chance encounters with his brother. Moran remembered setting up and manning roadblocks one blustery night in November 1950 when Sam drove through, transporting wounded troops.

"That night, I'd been freezing until I heard his voice," Moran recalled. "But after that, I stayed warm all night long."

Serendipity struck again when both Moran boys returned home from the war hours apart on July 10, 1951.

Members of the local Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion posts — many of them the troops they had bid farewell to at the railroad station — descended on their home to make them honorary members.

"They kind of motivated us," Moran said.

Moran was so motivated, in fact, that he decided to re-enlist and continue his military service, which ultimately lasted three decades.

It was the start of his recruiting career that included some of the toughest assignments: recruiting during Vietnam, and recruiting the first members of the all-volunteer force.

Even after hanging up his uniform in 1978, Moran has remained an integral part of that

MORAN CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE →

◀ Retired Sgt. Maj. Ray Moran, who celebrated his 82nd birthday in November, talks with a prospective recruit in his office at Fort Meade, Md. Moran is the military's oldest and longest-serving recruiter, and his office wall documents the many Soldiers he has recruited over the past six decades. PHOTO BY JONATHAN E. AGEE

NCO's action saves suicidal Soldier's life

BY DAVE LARSON III Corps and Fort Hood

Just past 6 a.m. on Oct. 9, very few people were inside the III Corps Shoppette at Fort Hood, Texas. Staff Sgt. Timothy Warden had stopped in to buy some ice and soft drinks on the way to work. Inside, something strange was about to happen.

"In my 15-and-a-half years in the Army, this was the first time I'd come across something like this," he said.

Warden, an infantryman with 1st Battalion, 393rd Infantry Regiment, 479th Field Artillery Brigade, Division West, First U.S. Army, noticed another patron having issues with the cashier.



Warden

"He was in line in front of me trying to buy a pack of cigarettes," Warden said. "The cashier wouldn't sell him any because he didn't have his ID. I suggested he leave."

Then the situation changed quickly.

"The Soldier said, 'Hey sergeant, once you finish here can I talk to you?'" Warden said. "I thought at the time maybe he needed a ride home, or was going to ask me for money to buy cigarettes."

Warden made his purchase and stopped to listen to the Soldier, who Warden guessed was in his early 20s. He noticed something else.

"He was looking pretty rough. He looked like he'd gotten into a fight. I asked him who he got into a fight with, and he answered, 'I'm done,'" Warden said. "He kept saying that — 'I'm done.'"

It was then that his Army training kicked in — the ACE model for suicide prevention: Ask, Care and Escort. "It took awhile for it to click," he said, "but when it did, I knew this guy needed some help."

He called the military police and kept an eye on the Soldier until the MPs arrived. "I was told later they took him to the hospital," he said.

The following week, Lt. Gen. Don Campbell Jr., III Corps and Fort Hood's commanding general, commended Warden for his alert actions in aid of a fellow Soldier in need of help.

"It is the observant, proactive deeds of folks like Staff Sgt. Warden who save lives every day," Campbell wrote in a recent Facebook entry. "Staff Sgt. Warden noticed a troubled Soldier at a shoppette; he intervened to see what the issue was. Upon talking with the Soldier, Staff Sgt. Warden knew he was in trouble; he kept the Soldier at the shoppette and called for help."

"It is because of Staff Sgt. Warden's quick actions that a Fort Hood team member is getting the help he needs and deserves," Campbell continued.

Warden said he was humbled to meet the post's commanding general. But the most important thing, Warden said, was that a young Soldier is getting help and his family has been spared the loss of a loved one.

"I saved his mom the heartache of somebody coming to her door ... telling her she'd lost her son," he said. "No one wants that.

"I had a job to do and somewhere to go, but in the end, I'm glad I stuck around to talk to this individual," he said. "If your battle buddy is hurting in any way, you know how to go out and get him some help." ⩔

← MORAN CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

force as a civilian Army Reserve recruiter at U.S. Army Recruiting Command's 1st Recruiting Brigade at Fort Meade.

He had only one brief hiatus from that duty when he convinced the right person to recall him to active duty during Operation Desert Storm.

Moran, who was 60 years old at the time, served as a casualty escort at the mortuary at Dover Air Force Base, Del. "It was what the Army needed me to do, so that's what I did," he said.

When terrorists struck the United States on 9/11, Moran, then 70, again volunteered to return to military duty. But the Army drew the line. "I got really upset when the Army said no," he said. "They told me that at my age, they were only accepting doctors [from the retirement rolls]."

The consolation, he said, was knowing he could continue to serve the military he loves by recruiting quality, dedicated forces to fill its ranks.

Moran bonds with potential recruits easily, with his big smile and encouraging manner. One needs to spend only a few hours with him to realize he has friends of all ages nearly everywhere he goes.

He's become a fixture in the recruiting community. A Fort Meade street now bears his name. He was honored in late 2008 as one of the first two inductees into the Army's Recruiting and Retention Hall of Fame at Fort Jackson, S.C. — the Sgt. Maj. Ray Moran "Old Soldier" Hall of Fame.

> **"The biggest reward in the world is just having the camaraderie and respect that you get from your fellow Soldiers."**
>
> **— RETIRED SGT. MAJ. RAY MORAN**

Moran marvels that he now finds himself recruiting children, and even the grandchildren, of the veterans he enlisted — including his own grandson.

"Recruiting is easy when you love something, and I happen to love the military. So talking about it is an easy task for me," he said. "I know we have tough times and we make sacrifices and there are hardships. I'm not getting away from that. But I will tell you this: There are a lot of rewards. And the biggest reward in the world is just having the camaraderie and respect that you get from your fellow Soldiers."

Today's recruits are smart, he said, and know what they are signing on for and what they want to do in the military.

"So I am sort of a locomotive, to take them where they want to go," he said. "It's pretty wonderful."



Mission yell

▲ Staff Sgt. Mark Lynas, a squad leader in Provincial Reconstruction Team Zabul, calls for a member of his team during a Nov. 26 mission in Shah Joy, Afghanistan. Lynas deployed with Company C, 182nd Infantry Regiment, Massachusetts National Guard. PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN GROVERT FUENTES-CONTRERAS

BY EXAMPLE

‘Each one, teach one’

1st Sgt. Mildred Lara Gonzales takes the lead for U.S. Army South HQ’s sustainment company

First Sgt. Mildred Lara Gonzales has served as an active-duty Soldier for 13 years and for one year in the Army Reserves as a paralegal. She was born in Honduras, lived in Boston and eventually moved to Tampa Bay, Fla., where she enlisted in January 1997 after serving in the ROTC Battalion out of Valencia Community College. Lara Gonzales has served with the 25th Infantry Division, Hawaii; 23rd Chemical Battalion, Korea; at Fort Jackson, S.C., as a drill sergeant; and she has deployed twice with the 1st Cavalry Division. In August, she became the first sergeant for the Intelligence and Sustainment Company of Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, U.S. Army South, at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Why did you join the Army?

I was going through ROTC at Florida, and I enjoyed all of the stuff I was doing. I thought it would be interesting to see what it was like full time. When I joined, I didn’t have any aspect of staying in for 20 years. I joined to see what it was about, and I liked it a lot.

What role have NCOs played in your development as a Soldier and NCO?

NCOs have played a major role, from the time I was a private. I remember being an E-2 and one of my NCOs was a staff sergeant. He took the time to make sure that I was well-trained in my Soldier skills. He took an interest in my career and ensured that I was going to jobs that would make me a well-rounded NCO. NCOs have played a major role in almost every aspect in my military career.

What makes a good NCO?

What makes a good NCO is someone who is not just interested in themselves and their well-being, but who cares about everyone around them. They don’t have to be your Soldier [for you] to influence them.

How do you set the example?

When it comes to my Soldiers, I think the example to set is that you can do the same thing. If my Soldiers are out there working hard, I go out there and help out. As a senior NCO, I’m out there. Regardless of my rank, I’m out there doing PT with them; I’m out there firing my weapon with them. Training is required of all of us.

What changes would you like to see Armywide?

I would like to see senior NCOs teaching Soldiers like they taught me. Each one, teach one; grab a junior Soldier and take care of them throughout their military career. Whether they’re doing great things or not, you still strive to teach them “what right looks like.”



What advice do you have for junior NCOs?

My advice would be to always work hard to strive hard to be a good NCO to help the people around you. If NCOs work together, we can definitely make this a better Army.

How do you see NCOs rising to the challenge in your organization?

There are great NCOs within my organization and we all band together to make the mission happen and to still take care of each individual Soldier within our organization. They do a great job balancing both the needs of the Soldier and the needs of the Army.

How does your current job impact the Army?

In the first sergeant position, the impact I feel I’m making is that I’m able to reach out and touch Soldiers in all MOSs, not just within the legal community. I’m actually able to sit down and mentor, coach and train them to be better NCOs. I would like to leave knowing I was able to mentor all the NCOs, officers and junior Soldiers alike.

— INTERVIEW BY JENNIFER MATTSON

▲ Capt. Marissa Mantanona (right) presents Company B’s guidon to 1st Sgt. Mildred Lara Gonzales (left), representing the transfer of responsibiilty and care of the company’s troops. PHOTO BY SGT. TAMIKA EXOM

THIS MONTH IN NCO HISTORY

January 23, 1945

As the 94th Infantry Division, known as "Patton's Golden Nugget," was making its way across the Siegfried Switch line near Tettingen, Germany, Nicholas Oresko, then a technical sergeant and platoon leader in C Company, 302nd Infantry Regiment, encountered relentless automatic-weapons fire from German positions. With his company's survival dependent on the elimination of one nearby bunker, Oresko rushed the bunker alone, dodging bullets until he was close enough to destroy most of the position with a grenade.

He dispatched the remaining enemy gunners with his rifle before being seriously wounded in the hip by machine-gun fire from another nearby bunker. Despite his bleeding wound, he led a platoon to destroy the second position, repeating his original feat by single-handedly destroying the bunker with another grenade and his rifle. He refused to be evacuated until the mission was successfully accomplished.

For his "quick thinking, indomitable courage and unswerving devotion to the attack in the face of bitter resistance and while wounded," Oresko was awarded the Medal of Honor as a master sergeant later that year. Today, he is the oldest living recipient of the nation's highest award for valor and plans to celebrate his 93rd birthday this month.



Oresko in 2001

"As a young boy, whenever I felt tired or slightly ill, my dead mother would encourage me to keep going," he told author Peter C. Lemon in the 1997 book, *Beyond the Medal*. "She would say, 'Don't give in to yourself; keep going and doing. You can always do more than you realize.'

"No one knows what he or she is capable of doing at a given moment," Oresko said. "You rise to the occasion."

— BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS



Silver Star

▲ Lt. Gen. Mark Hertling, commanding general of U.S. Army Europe, presents the Silver Star Medal to Sgt. Jose G. Arocha of 4th Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, on July 27 at Rose Barracks in Vilseck, Germany. Arocha earned the medal in March as a corporal when he risked his life to save the lives of his fellow Soldiers after an Afghan insurgent disguised as a friendly guard opened fire on his squadron. PHOTO BY SGT. JERRY WILSON

Benning HQ named after MoH recipients

BY CHERYL RODEWIG
Fort Benning Bayonet

More than 500 people gathered Sept. 23 to witness the dedication of the Maneuver Center of Excellence's new headquarters at Fort Benning, Ga. McGinnis-Wickam Hall was named in honor of Spc. Ross McGinnis and Cpl. Jerry Wickam, Medal of Honor recipients representing the infantry and armor branches, respectively.

Maj. Gen. Robert Brown, the MCoE commanding general, said the most significant part of the day was the building's official renaming.

"This building has been known as Infantry Hall or Building 4," he said. "Today, we are going to change that, and we're going to reflect the uniting of armor and infantry here at Fort Benning. As we dedicate this building

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‘We needed the best and got them’

NCO leads team that trains and mentors Afghan police

BY PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS CHRIS FAHEY
Navy Visual News Service



As Task Force Spartan 3’s armored convoy stopped Nov. 8 at the congested Freedom Circle in downtown Kabul, Afghanistan, the 15 specially trained Soldiers — including team leader Staff Sgt. Mark Moon — dismounted to find the Afghan National Police set up, ready and already searching vehicles.

“Since we’ve started doing our checkpoints and mentoring the Afghan police, I’ve seen a big difference in their work ethic and capability,” Moon said. “The checkpoints we’ve helped them work are being run correctly and nearly autonomously.”

Stood up in early September, Task Force Spartan consists of several teams, most of which are based at Camp Phoenix in Kabul. Spartan 3 is the largest of the teams and the only element based at Camp Eggers in Kabul. Team members serve as combat advisors to the ANP at more than 50 different checkpoints in five Afghan police districts, spread out across the densely populated capital city, where more than 3.9 million people reside.

“There are a lot of people out here,” said Moon. “We show the Afghan police how to protect themselves and catch insurgents. Ultimately, this will help ensure a successful security transition in 2014.”

According to Master Sgt. Jerry Dees, a senior NCO on the Spartan 3 team, completing their mission demanded a higher pedigree of Soldier.

“We needed the best and got them,” Dees said. “Every single person on this team was handpicked based on their capabilities, motivation and overall desire to conduct themselves as professional Soldiers. [We] communicate extremely well and understand that building a good rapport with the Afghan police requires respect and courtesy.”

Spartan 3 mentors work shoulder-to-shoulder with ANP officers, demonstrating ways to identify possible vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, vehicle and personnel searches, and how to set up traffic control points. This mission requires even the most junior Soldier to perform as a seasoned warfighter, team leaders said.

“Being a leader fills me with a lot of confidence,” said Spc. Matthew Crane, Spartan 3’s juniormost truck commander. “Proving that I’m capable of doing the job of a noncommissioned officer gives me a lot of fulfillment.”

In addition to directly supporting NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan’s goal to train and mentor Afghans in preparation for the 2014 security transition, Spartan 3’s efforts also support the Afghanistan Ministry of Interior’s priority to counter internal corruption. By setting a positive example — both externally in the way Spartan 3 Soldiers engage the Afghan community and internally in the way the team works together — Afghan police see a reachable standard that emphasizes common respect, Moon said. Those lessons come naturally by way of a classic Soldier mentality, he said.

“I’m here for my team, and we are all here for each other,” Moon said. “When we work with the ANP, we demonstrate this in our actions. They are happy to see us and appreciate us being there.” ⩔

▲ Staff Sgt. Mark Moon, Task Force Spartan 3’s team leader, supervises a routine vehicle inspection conducted by Afghan National Police officers Nov. 8 at Freedom Circle in the heart of downtown Kabul. Spartan 3 team members serve as combat advisors to ANP officers at more than 50 different checkpoints throughout the densely populated city. PHOTO BY NAVY PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS CHRIS FAHEY

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and honor the memories of Spc. McGinnis and Cpl. Wickam, we recognize that these Soldiers are representative of the very foundation of our Army — like the brick and mortar that solidifies this building, making it as strong and sturdy as it is."

McGinnis entered basic training at Fort Benning within days of his high school graduation. While deployed to Iraq, the infantryman was fatally wounded during an ambush when a grenade was thrown into his vehicle.

"He made a conscience choice to save his fellow Soldiers — threw himself on that grenade in that humvee, saving the lives of all those others present," Brown said. "At just 19, to make that choice is incredible.

"He chose to offer his life in exchange for the lives of the men he served with. ... Age didn't matter, nor did time and place. What mattered were his actions. His legacy and bravery will be remembered and honored by thousands who walk through the halls of this building."



McGinnis



Wickam

Nearly 40 years before McGinnis, Wickam joined the Army and trained to be an armored cavalryman at Fort Knox, Ky. He deployed to Vietnam with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

"It was his aggressiveness and coolness under fire that stands out when it comes to remembering the fearless leader who tragically lost his life at 25 years of age," Brown said. "Cpl. Wickam was a fighter, and although he was mortally wounded in what transpired in January 1968, it was only after he put up one heck of a fight. He assaulted enemy bunkers multiple times, captured enemy soldiers, disrupted an enemy ambush, saved countless lives … all while under heavy fire that in the end would claim his life.

"Cpl. Wickam showed an unmatched warrior spirit and a fight and perseverance that was undeterred and unwavering.

"He never gave up, and he never quit fighting — and today we remember him for his spirit." ⩔



Amish upbringing comes full circle

BY STAFF SGT. MEGAN GARCIA Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall

Within the area of Holmes County, Ohio, rests the world's largest Amish community, a community which taught Sgt. Ruben Troyer, from an early age, the true value of horses.

"There were 20 to 30 horses specific to my family," Troyer said. "Horses were our transportation and our means to farm. They were our livelihood."

Now 29 years old and the senior horse trainer for the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) Caisson platoon at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Va., Troyer is still depending on horses, but in a totally different way.

The Caisson platoon, the only platoon of its kind in the Army, maintains a solemn mission, laying to rest the nation's heroes in Arlington National Cemetery, Va. Five days a week, six horses led by four Soldiers pull a flag-draped casket atop a black artillery caisson into the cemetery.

"I realize the success of this mission starts with me because I have to get the horses ready before they go out into the cemetery," Troyer said. "My upbringing taught me how horses react in certain situations and what I can and can't do around them," said Troyer. "I've learned their bad habits, and I know ultimately it's all about earning their respect and confidence."

For Troyer, that starts with first earning the horse's trust.

"You have to show the horse who's in charge by also letting them know you're there to lead them and not hurt them," he said.

No matter what the horse is pulling — a plow, an Amish wagon or caisson — the spirit of a horse holds deep meaning in Troyer's heart.

"To see a horse that has absolutely no regard for a human being at first, then seeing it respond to training, getting its respect and confidence, and getting it to trust me enough to put a saddle on its back and ride it to the point that it is functional in a ceremony for the United States Army is a great honor," Troyer said. ⩔

▲ Sgt. Ruben Troyer, senior horse trainer for Caisson platoon, 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard), allows Rambler, a Caisson horse, to sniff his saddle before placing it on Rambler's back during a horse training session.
PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. MEGAN GARCIA

‘So much anger’

Wife helps sergeant fight stigma that NCOs don’t get help for their PTSD-induced rage

BY ELAINE SANCHEZ
American Forces Press Service

When her Soldier husband was injured in Iraq, Catrina Tomsich gave up everything to be with him. She shut down her business, left a support network of friends and uprooted their 5-year-old son, Brayden, to move here to help him recover.

She did so without hesitation, but not without fear.

Her concerns didn’t center on her husband’s recovery — his injuries weren’t life threatening — or their uncertain future, but on her own safety and that of her son’s.

Catrina’s husband, Sgt. John Tomsich, had been suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder since 2005. The noncommissioned officer maintained a stoic front for his troops, but barely could contain his rage at home.

“For five years I heard, ‘I hate you; I don’t love you anymore’ every day,” she said. “That can definitely take an emotional toll on someone.”

Catrina first noticed a change in her husband after his 2005 deployment to Kosovo, his first since he joined the Army in 1998. He was there during a period of political tension, he recalled, and was out shopping one day with several of his leaders when hostilities broke out around them. Weapons were fired, he said, but no one was seriously injured. They wound up cornered in a hotel, uncertain of what would occur overnight.

“That’s where the anger started,” Tomsich said. “But I didn’t talk about it to anyone.” NCOs couldn’t discuss their problems with anger or depression, he believed at the time, or the troops under them would question the integrity of their leadership. Instead, he said, “You try and fight it and not tell anyone you have problems.”

Tomsich returned home after an 18-month tour in 2006 only to deploy again in 2009, this time to Iraq. Although an infantryman by trade, he was pulled to serve on detainee guard duty. About six months into his deployment, he suffered a spinal injury to his neck while on duty that caused him to lose the use of his right arm.

The doctors weren’t equipped to treat him in Iraq, so Tomsich was sent to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio in April 2010.

Catrina drove from Houston to see her husband every weekend, but she soon realized he needed full-time care after he developed a stomach illness that required surgery. That’s when she shut down the financial education business she had started in 2007, packed up her house and son, and moved to San Antonio to care for her husband.

But she did so with trepidation. While he was physically improving and recovering the use of his arm, his PTSD was growing worse. “The anger was awful,” she said. “He was snapping on every little thing. Anything would make him upset and angry.”

“I was even abusive to her in my dreams,” he added. One night, he recalled, he kept yelling at her in his sleep to “Stand down!”

The years of anger and rage were wearing on Catrina. In short, “Our marriage was on the rocks,” she said.

Tomsich had evaded mental health care for years, and dismissed his wife’s urging get help. But after a particularly bad episode one weekend, Catrina took matters into her own hands.

PTSD CONTINUED ON PAGE 50 →



▲ **Sgt. John Tomsich and his wife, Catrina, play with their son, Brayden, Nov. 10 at the Warrior and Family Support Center in San Antonio.** PHOTO BY LINDA HOSEK



Medics compete in first-ever contest

Competition honors legendary command sergeant major

BY LORI NEWMAN Fort Sam Houston News Leader

Sixty-two Soldiers from across the Army competed in a grueling 72-hour, two-Soldier team competition at Camp Bullis, Texas, Nov. 4–6 to earn the title of best medic.

The inaugural Command Sgt. Maj. Jack L. Clark Jr. Best Medic Competition was dedicated to the 13th command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Medical Command.

Clark's family came from Florida to participate in the dedication ceremony and meet the competitors.

"It is appropriate that such a prestigious competition be named after Command Sgt. Maj. Clark," said retired Command Sgt. Maj. Sandra Townsend, the keynote speaker for the dedication ceremony.

"He was one of the most respected leaders and noncommissioned officers in the history of our command. He was a mover and a shaker, known for making every place he went better. He understood the important role of medics in the Army and the trust Soldiers and leaders must have in the Army Medical Department."

In the end, Sgt. 1st Class John Maitha and Staff Sgt. Christopher Whitaker, representing the 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, at Fort Benning, Ga., secured the title of the Army's Best Combat Medic Team.

"We had no idea where we were placewise, so we just kept going as hard and as fast as we could on everything," Maitha said.

The first day of the competition began with a physical fitness challenge, which included a three-mile run and pulling a tire that weighed several hundred pounds.

The obstacle course tested the team's agility and physical strength. Each team needed to complete 15 of 19 obstacles as quickly and safely as possible.

The M9 stress shoot mimicked a combat situation where every shot counts. Teams showcased their marksmanship skills, completing three separate firing engagements while evacuating a simulated casualty on a litter.

"The M9 stress shoot was the most fun," Maitha said.

Once the M9 event was complete, the two-Soldier

◀ **Evaluator Staff Sgt. Tam Thai observes Staff Sgt. Chad Howell and Pfc. Patrick Condon from Europe Regional Medical Command, Weisbaden, Germany, during the physical fitness challenge event Nov. 4 at Camp Bullis, Texas. The physical fitness challenge was the first event of the inaugural Command Sgt. Maj. Jack L. Clark Jr. Best Medic Competition.** PHOTO BY LORI NEWMAN

teams marched six kilometers to the next part of the competition, the M4 stress shoot. The advanced land navigation course began at 11 p.m.

"We liked the night land navigation because it was challenging, and it was different," Maitha said. "They [flew] us in on a Black Hawk helicopter heading to an unknown [helicopter landing zone], and we had to figure out where we were before we could even start the course."



Clark

Teams were flown by helicopter and inserted into the rugged terrain of Camp Bullis. Once on the ground, each team had six hours to locate 12 grid coordinate locations using terrain association and topographical maps.

"The night land nav was definitely the toughest," Whitaker said.

Early the next morning, the candidates tackled the urban assault lane. Using munitions similar to paint ball rounds, the Soldiers had to engage the enemy while treating casualties and defending themselves.

The daytime combat medic lane tested the candidates' ability to perform casualty care in close quarters as well as their ability to evacuate wounded individuals to medevac aircraft.

The night combat medic lane tested the competitors' ability to perform medical tasks under the cover of darkness using the Tactical Simulator for Military Medicine. The teams were required to gain fire superiority, stabilize their casualty and move them from the simulator into a ground evacuation vehicle.

Mounted land navigation tested the candidates' ability to provide medical treatment while en route to a medical treatment facility.

At 5 a.m. the next day, each two-Soldier team worked together to complete a 75-question written exam designed to test their tactical and technical proficiency.

After the exam, competitors moved to the virtual convoy combat simulator. The simulator provided a 360-degree battlefield allowing candidates to perform basic Soldier skills while in a simulated mounted environment. Teams worked together to complete the scenario, engaging hostile targets and calling in situational reports.

The leadership reaction course tested each team's ability to think, lead and work together to negotiate eight obstacles.

The final event was a timed 2.7-mile buddy run, testing the fortitude and endurance of the competitors. Each team had to complete the run carrying a 180-pound "casualty" on a litter.

Shortly after Sunday's last event, an awards ceremony was held at Camp Bullis. Lt. Gen. Eric Schoomaker, Army surgeon general and commanding general of U.S. Army Medical Command at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, joined the Clark family in presenting trophies to the winning team. He recognized all the teams for their accomplishments during the 72-hour competition.

Pricilla Clark congratulated all the competitors.

"You have been tested beyond human capability, and you have come through this standing and smiling," she said. "You have given us the true definition of never giving up." ⩔

WINNERS

1ST PLACE: Sgt. 1st Class John Maitha and **Staff Sgt. Christopher Whitaker**, 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning, Ga.

2ND PLACE: Staff Sgt. Gabriel Mendoza and **Staff Sgt. Gabriel Valdez**, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), Fort Bragg, N.C.

3RD PLACE: Spc. Allen Klingsporn and **Spc. Austin Kreutzfeld**, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C

▼ **Sgt. Brian Baker of the 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Ky., fires at targets during the M9 stress shoot event.** PHOTO BY LORI NEWMAN



Air assault wings sprout at Fort Hood

NCOs run post's first such course in twenty years

BY SPC. NATHAN BOOTH
4th Public Affairs Detachment

In late October, after 10 days of some of the most challenging training in the Army, 163 Soldiers and airmen graduated from the first Air Assault Course in two decades at Fort Hood, Texas. But, unlike some Army training programs and events, the Fort Hood Air Assault Course is run entirely by NCOs.



"You have noncommissioned officers at 'The Great Place' who are smart, physically fit and have been given an opportunity," said Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur L. Coleman Jr., the III Corps and Fort Hood command sergeant major. "Our noncommissioned officers can get the job done when given the chance to do so."

"It being run by noncommissioned officers shows that an NCO can do anything that they put their mind to, so long as they ensure they have the right training and initiative to make it happen," said Sgt. 1st Class James Williams, the NCO in charge of the Fort Hood Air Assault Course.

With the help of an Air Assault Course mobile training team from Fort Benning, Ga., the Fort Hood Air Assault Course became a reality, all driven by the motivation and dedication of NCOs.

"It's definitely good for Fort Hood to have this type of training at the installation," said Sgt. 1st Class Bobby Hann, NCOIC of the pathology department at Fort Hood's Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center. "It builds a stronger team, which is always beneficial to the military as a whole."

"The skill set that they're going to offer their units at the end of 10 days is unmatched," Coleman said. "Students will be able to go back to their organizations and know what right looks like when it comes to sling load operations."

> **"It's going to get me a good year ahead of my training schedule as we get ready to deploy."**
>
> **— SGT. SERGIO CARDENAS**

"It has a lot of practical application," said Sgt. Sergio Cardenas, platoon sergeant of 3rd Platoon, "Apache" Troop, 1st Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

"It's a great tool for me to be able to train my Soldiers in the future. It's going to get me a good year ahead of my training schedule as we get ready to deploy in the next few years."

Williams said he hopes the hard work it took to get Fort Hood ready for this course, coupled with the enthusiasm of those who attended and the units that sent Soldiers to this course will allow it to develop into a fully self-con-

◀ Sgt. 1st Class James Williams, the NCO in charge of the Fort Hood Air Assault Course, demonstrates an "Australian rappel" for students Oct. 27 at Fort Hood, Texas. It was the first such course in two decades at the post, and was run entirely by NCOs. PHOTO BY SGT. ERIC GLASSEY



▶ **Sgt. Frank Rosalin (right), an instructor with the Air Assault Course mobile training team from Fort Benning, Ga., gives a student at the Fort Hood Air Assault Course the final go before his 80-foot rappel to the ground Oct. 27.** PHOTO BY SGT. ERIC GLASSEY

tained air assault course, managed and instructed by Fort Hood NCOs.

"I would like to see it happen," Williams said. "We have the facility, and we have what it takes. We just need some noncommissioned officers with the initiative and will to make it happen."

The current cadre at the Fort Hood Air Assault Course is setting the standards and paving the way that will allow that dream to become reality, and Coleman said he is proud of the job his NCOs are doing.

"In my 33 years in the Army, our noncommissioned officers have come a long way," Coleman said. "What I really take from this is that our noncommissioned officers can get the job done. They're showing me that they know what they're doing." ⩔

Motorcycle rider training more than just another requirement

BY MASTER SGT. JOHN COLLINS
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center

For Army motorcycle riders, like me, it seems there are always new training requirements that make us debate if riding is worth the hassle. For more than 20 years, I've loved cruising on the open road and enjoying the ride. For me, it is worth it.

There is a new training requirement for riders in the Army. If you check out AR 385-10, you'll see "motorcycle sustainment training" has been added. Basically, it puts in place a three-year cycle for riders to go back and retake the Experienced RiderCourse, now known as the Basic RiderCourse II, or the Motorcycle Sportbike RiderCourse.

When I first heard about this, I thought, "I've been riding for years and have already completed this training before, so why do I need it again?" However, since I work at the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center at Fort Rucker, Ala., I figured I'd better get into compliance, regardless my personal feelings. So, I signed up for the first available Basic RiderCourse II course at Fort Rucker. I showed up with some preconceived ideas of how the training would go. I was in for a surprise.

When I first took the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Experienced RiderCourse three years ago, I owned a 2008 Suzuki C90T. This time around, however, I was on a 2004 Harley-Davidson Ultra Classic equipped with a full touring package. Trying to adjust to an additional 200 pounds and the Harley's narrower tires, I stumbled going through the corners on the new Basic RiderCourse II.

During a turn, I dragged my floorboard a little. The sound of it dragging on the range surface caught me off guard. The instructor demonstrated the exercise and then began giving me some pointers based on what he saw. I made some adjustments and, suddenly, it was "game on."

RIDING CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE →



▶ **Master Sgt. Richard Sylvia (left) and Lt. Col. Richard Fornili, both with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Medical Brigade, discuss Fornili's custom motorcycle March 10, at Fort Hood, Texas, before the start of the Motorcycle Mentorship Ride.** PHOTO BY DAWN PANDOLIANO

← **RIDING** CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

It was like an epiphany; my bike and I were operating in sync — just like we should be. I also realized the training was working, rebuilding skills that had degraded over time.

By the end of the day, I completed the course and felt more confident operating my motorcycle. The attitude, "Here we go again," had changed as I saw the bigger picture. And I was about to need the skills I'd just refined.

The following weekend, I rode to Nashville, Tenn., for the Tennessee State University Motorcycle Rally. Riding in bumper-to-bumper traffic in downtown Nashville, I had a near miss with a distracted driver. Too busy talking on his cellphone and not paying attention to the road, he didn't notice the driver ahead of him slam on his brakes. When he finally did, it was at the last second, and he jammed on his brakes. This, in turn, caused me to react accordingly by doing a quick stop.

"The attitude, 'Here we go again,' had changed as I saw the bigger picture. And I was about to need the skills I'd just refined."

— MASTER SGT. JOHN COLLINS

In that instant, I was thankful for the way my training had emphasized following distances, evasive maneuvers, and using the front and back brakes to stop without sliding. Where I'd originally taken the course to be in compliance, now I was grateful for the way it prepared me for the risks on the road.

As an avid rider, I had become complacent in my riding skills and even developed a few bad habits. Both of these were sure telltale signs that I was in need of the refresher training program. The old adage, "It's like riding a bicycle, you never forget," does not apply to riding motorcycles. The skills needed to ride and operate a motorcycle are perishable and need to be refreshed.

It is also important to have refresher training when changing motorcycles, as each brand and style operates differently. So when your command says there is new or additional training required for riding a motorcycle, keep an open mind.

No matter how you mitigate the risk, riding a motorcycle is an activity that will always be risky. However, you can still have fun and enjoy the ride. Take the time to inspect your bike, ensure you have plenty of rest, dress appropriately for the ride and take every opportunity to sharpen your skills for riding.

Next time you hear that more requirements for motorcycle training are coming, embrace it and know that it may save your life by keeping you on your "A" game.

← **PTSD** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45

"He had so much anger and rage, and that weekend our son saw it and was crying and scared of Daddy," she said. "I wasn't about to let that happen anymore. I put my foot down."

Catrina marched into a trailer where she knew behavioral health specialists worked, and demanded to speak to a counselor. "I had no idea what I was doing," she said. Yet, a week later, her husband was placed in counseling.

He underwent in-depth psychological testing and evaluation, and was diagnosed with severe PTSD.

Concerned about being perceived as weak, he was resistant to treatment — a combination of counseling and medication — but a counselor gave him the "verbal kick in the butt" he needed, he said. She told him she had problems too, and the first step to healing was to open up about them. "She told me, 'Just tell me your issues, and we'll work from there'" he said. "It got worse at first, but then slowly started to get better."

Catrina noticed a marked improvement over time. Her husband is still not where he was when they got married, but "he's 100 times better than in 2005," she said.

Tomsich and his wife now share their story with others to encourage them to seek the help they need without fear of career repercussions. Catrina even has taken women to seek help for their husbands as she did two years ago.

As for Tomsich, "I tell [Soldiers], if they don't seek help, I'm going to have their wives tell on them like mine did," he joked.

Catrina said she's seen marriages break under the pressure of a spouse's physical and emotional wounds. It's a path she knows she could have taken during her years of emotional abuse.

"But I believe you should never give up," she said. "Women come and tell me, 'He's not the man he used to be.' I tell them, 'Never give up.' If I had, we wouldn't be here together now.

"No matter what we're given in life, we can choose how we deal with it," she added. "And I'm going to choose to have a positive attitude."

Tomsich will medically retire this month, and the couple plans to move to North Carolina to be near family.

"Being here for the past two years really inspired me," she said. "Seeing the changes in my family … I want to help others achieve the same things."

Submit your article

The NCO Journal always seeks articles related to NCO professional development. If you have a story, photo or illustration, please send it to Master Sgt. Antony Joseph at **antony.m.joseph.mil@mail.mil**. Text should be sent in Microsoft Word format or in an email message. Photos and artwork should be high-resolution digital files. Submissions will be edited for content, length and style.

Roll Call
OF THE FALLEN

Operation New Dawn

Spc. David E. Hickman, 23
Greensboro, N.C., Nov. 14, 2011

Operation Enduring Freedom

Spc. James R. Burnett Jr., 21
Wichita, Kan., Nov. 16, 2011

◆

Pfc. Matthew C. Colin, 22
Navarre, Fla., Nov. 16, 2011

◆

Sgt. 1st Class Clark A. Corley Jr., 35
Oxnard, Calif., Dec. 3, 2011

◆

Pvt. Jackie L. Diener II, 20
Boyne City, Mich., Nov. 21, 2011

◆

Pfc. Adam E. Dobereiner, 21
Moline, Ill., Nov. 18, 2011

◆

Sgt. 1st Class Johnathan B. McCain, 38
Apache Junction, Ariz., Nov.13, 2011

Spc. Ryan M. Lumley, 21
Lakeland, Fla., Dec. 3, 2011

◆

Spc. Thomas J. Mayberry, 21
Springville, Calif., Dec. 3, 2011

◆

Sgt. 1st Class Dennis R. Murray, 38
Red Broiling Springs, Tenn., Nov. 21, 2011

◆

Spc. Calvin M. Pereda, 21
Fayetteville, N.C., Nov. 12, 2011

◆

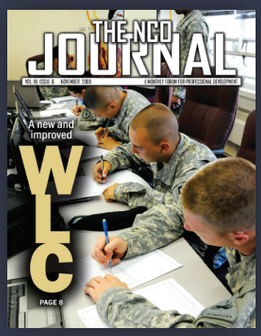
Sgt. Ryan D. Sharp, 28
Idaho Falls, Idaho, Dec. 3, 2011

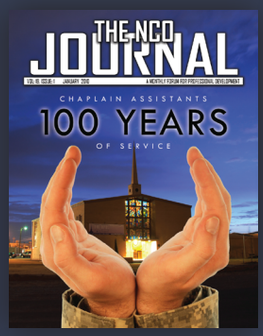
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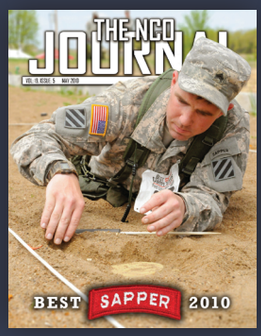
Spc. Sean M. Walsh, 21
San Jose, Calif., Nov. 16, 2011

YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN

This is a continuation of a list that began in the October 2003 issue of The NCO Journal *and contains names released by the Department of Defense between Nov. 12, 2011 and Dec. 9, 2011.*



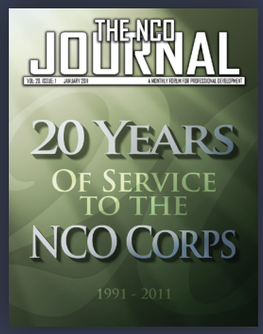










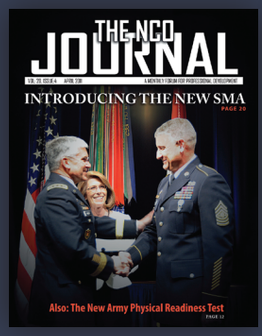


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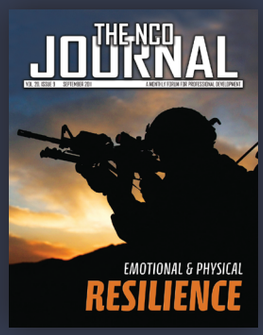
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