

# ARMY COMMUNICATOR

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# 2009

## YEAR OF THE

# NCO

Plus:

- Signal Soldiers finish strong in Best Ranger Competition
- Thoughts by CSM Jeffrey J. Mellinger, Army Material Command





# Chief of Signal

This issue of Army Communicator is dedicated to “The Year of the NCO.” The U.S. Army’s Noncommissioned Officer Corps has its roots in the Continental Army, which was formed on 14 June 1775. For 234 years, NCOs have been the primary and most visible leaders for the bulk of Army personnel – the enlisted corps.

Every Soldier is familiar with SGT Alvin C. York, SSG Audie L. Murphy, MSG Roy P. Benavidez, and SFC Paul R. Smith. They are some of the brightest stars in the history of the NCO Corps.

There are many others:

-SGT John Ordway was first sergeant for the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery (1803 – 1806). A statue of SGT Ordway was dedicated on 23 September 2006, in the newly constructed Memorial Park at Fort Lewis, Wash. It is the Army’s first statue to a named enlisted Soldier.

-SGM Carolyn H. James was the first female master sergeant in 1959, and the first female promoted to sergeant major in 1960. She was a veteran of the Korean War.

-SGM William “Billy” Waugh was awarded eight Purple Hearts and the High Altitude Low Opening Jumpmaster Parachute Badge with Gold Star for free-fall parachute operation during the Vietnam War.

-CSM Yzetta Nelson was the first female command sergeant major.

-CSM Basil L. Plumley is a veteran of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. He made all four combat jumps with the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division in WWII (Sicily, Salerno, D-Day and Market Garden) and one in Korea with the 187th Airborne Infantry Regiment. His awards and decorations include the Silver Star with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Bronze Star with One Oak Leaf Cluster, and four Purple Hearts. Sam Elliott played CSM Plumley in the movie “We Were Soldiers Once ... And Young.” He still lives in Georgia.

-SGT Heather L. Johnsen was the first woman to earn the prestigious tomb guard identification badge in March 1996.

But, when I think of “The Year of the NCO,” I think of two NCOs in particular:

-SGT Morales was a squad leader, stationed with a division in Germany. He was the proverbial “98-pound weakling” and had not completed high school—only the GED program. Of Puerto Rican descent, he had only a limited command of English. Despite his physical limitations, lack of formal education, and minority-group status, he strove for the highest caliber of leadership. SGT Morales pitched right in with the disliked drudgery-type details. He led by example, particularly when it meant getting his hands dirty. While in the division, SGT Morales completed high school and the equivalent of two years of college. SGT Morales was not a Medal of Honor recipient. SGT Morales was not killed in action. SGT Morales was not a command sergeant major. SGT Morales had a lot in his favor but no special advantages. SGT Morales was an NCO who worked at his job to the best of his ability. His Soldiers believed in him.

-CSM Knox Bellingham saw action in France and Germany during World War II, and served through five campaigns in Korea.

Between 1942 and 1959, CSM Bellingham served 15 out of 17 years as a first sergeant. Two of our Army values are duty and selfless

service, and our warrior ethos includes the line, “I will never quit.” I can think of few better examples of living the Army values and the warrior ethos than CSM Bellingham.

This year is dedicated to individual NCOs who perform to the best of their ability every day. And it is dedicated to an entire Corps that has served in this fashion for 234 years.

I am deeply honored that the history of the NCO Corps includes Soldiers like SGT Alvin C. York, SSG Audie L. Murphy, MSG Roy P. Benavidez, and SFC Paul R. Smith. I am just as honored that we have thousands of NCOs like SGT Morales and CSM Knox Bellingham serving with us today. This issue of the Army Communicator and “The Year of the NCO,” are about everyday heroes. It is about our noncommissioned officers.



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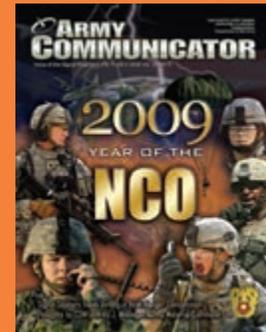
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## Voice of the Signal Regiment

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Cover by Billy Cheney

**Cover: Army Communicator 3rd Volume 2009 recognizes the experiences and contributions made by noncommissioned officers.**

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**Many Soldiers recounted their "Proudest Moment as an NCO" in an essay contest sponsored by the Association of the U.S. Army. During the Signal Corps Ball in June 2009, prizes were awarded to authors of the best essays submitted. The top three winners were first place, SSG Jacqueline Pope; second place, 1SG William Evans; and third place, SGT Tonya Robertson. Read their winning essays in this issue of the Army Communicator.**

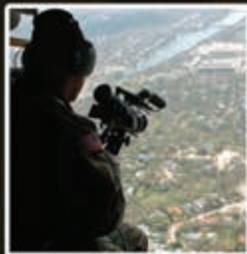
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09

The United States Army Signal Center of Excellence  
and Fort Gordon, Georgia  
Celebrates

The Year of the  
*Noncommissioned Officer*



ARMY NCO - No One is More Professional than I . . .



# Command Sergeant Major

## NCOs: Warriors. Educators. Leaders.

2009 is "The Year of the NCO." This is our year. This is our edition of the Army Communicator.

First, congratulations to our newest noncommissioned officers. To those who were promoted to sergeant in 2009, welcome to the NCO Corps, and thank you for your service.

I'd like to share a quote that I came across the other day from *This Kind of War* by T. R. Fehrenbach: "You may fly over a land forever, you may bomb it, atomize it, pulverize it and wipe it clean of life -- but if you desire to defend it, protect it and keep it for civilization, you must do this on the ground, the way the Roman legions did, by putting your young men into the mud." This is the essence of being an NCO. We put our boots in the mud, and we hold. The mud in Iraq and Afghanistan is like cement -- gray, thick like paste when it's wet, and hard to chip off when it's dry. Many of you volunteer to go BACK into that mud. It is an absolute honor to serve with you.

The Army expects much of your Soldiers, and it expects even more from you. Live the Army Values. Embody The Soldier and NCO creeds...not just when it's easy, but always. We are the most innovative, most pro-active and most persistent noncommissioned officers in history. We solve problems. We don't accept defeat. We don't quit.

Here are some important questions and the relevant answers. Who? Us. When? Now. Where? Here.

You must stand ready to deploy. Many of you are already combat-proven Warriors. Now, you are responsible for training your Soldiers to fight and win. They must stand ready, too. You must aggressively seek opportunities for training and toughening your teams. You must loudly and persistently call for the resources that you need to better train your Soldiers.

We have incredible technology available to us. An M1 Tank has more firepower than an entire division from the Civil War. A Signal Battalion has 10 times more communications capability than the entire Army Expeditionary Force of 1917. But the Soldier, not technology, is our centerpiece. You must make Warriors. You must teach your Soldiers. You must educate them. You must mentor them. You must lead them.

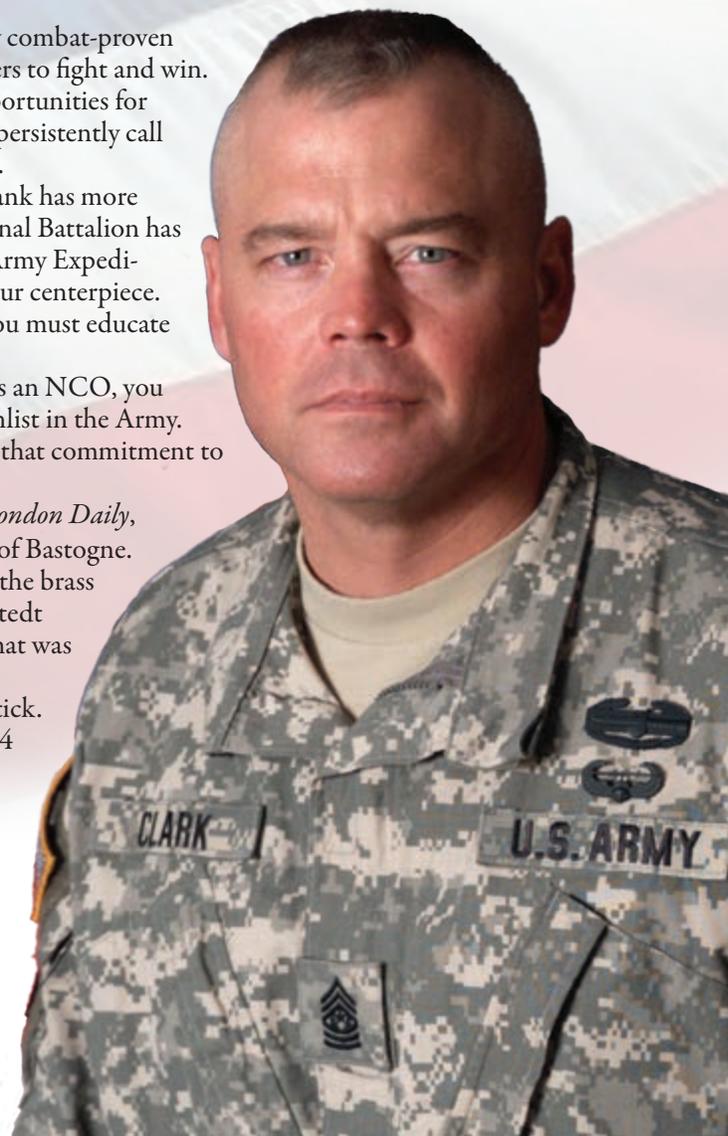
The American Soldier is the guardian of our freedom. As an NCO, you lead the guardians. It takes an enormous commitment to enlist in the Army. But when a Soldier volunteers to become an NCO, it takes that commitment to an entirely different level. I am proud of each one of you.

I'd like to close with another quote. It comes from the *London Daily*, January 30th, 1945. The author is writing about the Battle of Bastogne.

"It was a Soldier's battle. Once joined there wasn't much the brass could do. It was up to the man with the M1. When Rundstedt pitched in his best, the Soldiers everywhere would stick. That was Bastogne. The Soldier's battle. They stuck."

We are the U.S. Army's noncommissioned officers. We stick. We put our boots in the mud, and we hold. We have for 234 years. We always will.

My name is Clark and I'm a Soldier.



*Thomas J. Clark*



# Fort Gordon provides continuous recognition

By SFC Ann Renay Pruitt

Units across Fort Gordon completed a series of events and planned others in recognition of the Year of the NCO.

## January

Our first major event for the 2009 Year of the NCO was our NCO/Audie Murphy Induction Ceremony, which was held on 15 January 2009. This post-wide event was hosted by the Signal Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy under the auspices of CSM Vernon R. Praymous, commandant. Our guest speaker was BG Jeffrey Foley, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon commanding general.

The vision included having 100 Soldiers, from various units across Fort Gordon inducted into the NCO Corps. Other post senior NCOs collaborated to ensure that the event was all inclusive and of exceptional quality to bolster morale and enhance the esprit de corps of the noncommissioned officer corps. Fort Gordon's senior enlisted leaders answered the call for unity providing the names of over 100 newly-promoted NCOs to be inducted into the illustrious NCO Corps. Three exceptional NCOs were offered for induction into the prestigious SGT Audie Murphy Club.

"It was truly an honor to spearhead this monumental event," said CSM Praymous. "Every Soldier, NCO, officer and civilian that was in attendance, was impressed by the professionalism and pride that exuded from the NCOs as they were being inducted. It was a day that we will never forget and I am proud to have been a part of it."

\*The RNCOA began a series of posters to recognize outstanding NCOs who are making a difference during the Year of the NCO. The first NCO honored was SFC Katrina Richardson. SFC Richardson was a platoon sergeant in B Company 447th Signal Battalion. She is Fort Gordon's 2009 NCO of the Year.

\*SFC Sean Parrish, SFC Joseph Billups, and SSG Joseph Bicchieri provided additional video support on Inauguration day and 1SG Robert Hyatt provided still photo support for the Presidential Inauguration of Barack Obama. Each position was critical to the official DOD support and VI documentation of the Presidential Inauguration.

\*On, 22 January 2009, MG Jon L. Trost, Army National Guard deputy commanding general visited the RNCOA TTB, in support of the Year of the NCO.

\*The RNCOA supported our veterans by donating coats, sweaters and clothing during the commandant's Year of the NCO "Warm Hearts, Warm Vets" run. RNCOA students, staff and faculty members voluntarily donated items to give those less fortunate a way to warmly bring in the New Year. The academy's donations completely filled an entire refrigerator box. The donations were beneficial to veterans in need.

## February

\*The RNCOA received a visit from the 12th sergeant major of the Army, retired SMA Jack L. Tilley. He shared his knowledge and past experiences in the Army with the staff and faculty of the Signal Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy, in support of the Year of the NCO.

\*The February Year of the NCO poster was dedicated

to SFC Marcus T. Mustin. SFC Mustin was a senior small group Leader for the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course at the Signal Regimental NCO Academy. He is a member of the prestigious "Sergeant Audie Murphy Club", "Sergeant Morales Club" and a member of a Time Honored Corps, which is known as the "Backbone of the Army."

\*On 25 Feb 2009, 12 Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course students participated as judges of the Annual Augusta JROTC Drill Competition held at Harlem High School. The students judged in the areas of squad and platoon drill, and drill team competition. They received accolades from the Senior JROTC instructors of the area and were awarded Certificates of Appreciation for their participation. The students are doing a lot of wonderful things for the Greater Augusta community and are truly living up to the "Year of the NCO" standard.

\*Thirteen NCOs from the Public Affairs Basic Noncommissioned Officer course at Fort Meade, Md., demonstrated selfless service as they traveled to the Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore's Emmanuel Monastery, 7 February to assist nuns with moving furniture, mopping, sweeping and cleaning a house to be transformed into a home where people will come for retreats and spiritual renewal. This is a great example of "What NCOs do."

\*The post newspaper featured an article on 13 February entitled, "NCOs contribute beyond battlefields."

## March

\*The 15th Regimental Signal Brigade supported the Georgia JROTC State Drill Competition.

\*Augusta, Ga. Mayor Deke Copenhaver, recognized the RNCOA for sponsoring the RNCOA Black History Month command program. The Soldiers received certificates of recognition from the mayor, for the event in which Alvin D. Mason, Augusta mayor pro-tem was the guest speaker. The Soldiers received accolades from all in attendance and their efforts supported the Year of the NCO Pride in Service Initiative.

\*Students from the Signal RNCOA trained 67 Soldiers from the Georgia National Guard 148th BSB (FWD) on their Signal Warrior Tasks and Drills to prepare them for their upcoming mobilization to Camp Shelby. This collaborative effort focused on the initiatives of the Year of the NCO.

\*The RNCOA conducted a three-mile run, in support of the Year of the NCO physical fitness initiative. The run was led by CSM Thomas Clark, Signal Regimental command sergeant major. Soldiers from the Fort Gordon Sergeant Audie Murphy Club, 35th Signal Brigade, 15th Regimental Signal Brigade and the staff, faculty and students of the RNCOA followed in succession. The run was completed with all participants demonstrating a high spirit and motivation throughout the event. SGM Jannith Parker, from 3rd Army in Atlanta was our guest speaker at the RNCOA Women's History Month luncheon, sponsored by the Advance Leaders Course students and held at the Gordon Club.

## April

\*On 14 April a team of Congressional staff members from the Georgia delegation visited the fort.

\*SMA Kenneth O. Preston visited Fort Gordon and the



(From left) Sponsor SFC Chandra Davis, Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy, and the five SGT Audie Murphy Club selectees, SSG Ronald Mitchell, RNCOA; SSG Aseba Green, 15th Regimental Signal Brigade; SSGs Terrish Butler, Patrick Banks and Jermaine Allen, RNCOA stand before the SAMC selection board members on 20 June 2009 at Fort Gordon.

Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy on 10 April 09. Our day began with SMA Preston leading the RNCOA Run at 0600 hours. At 0855, the SMA Preston personally greeted all comers prior to attending a combined (25U/25B/25S/25W) graduation ceremony where he served as the guest speaker for the event. Immediately following the graduation, the SMA received a RNCOA update and brief from the commandant, deputy commandant, branch chiefs and the Signal Regimental Year of the NCO liaison SFC Ann Renay Pruitt. After a tour of the new modular barracks and lunch, members of the RNCOA listened to the SMA as he addressed Soldiers regarding the current and future posture of the Army during a town hall meeting.

\*The RNCOA hosted a scenario at the Academy's TTB as part of the field exercise coordinated by the 35th Signal Brigade for the Augusta in Army Boots program. This event allowed our civilian leaders to participate in military related training exercises as part of the Year of the NCO initiative.

#### May

On 16 May 09 - Fort Gordon's 17th Annual Signal Corps Regimental Association Spring Challenge 2009 was conducted.

\*The RNCOA hosted a session with Paul Williams, the reigning two-time WBO Welterweight champion on 15 May.

\*On 17 May, the SLC students provided support to the Evans High School Track Team during the American Cancer Society's 25th National Relay for Life; contributing to the team achieving their goal of raising \$24,000 for the American Cancer Society.

\*The Signal RNCOA sponsored a program for local JROTC cadets during Camp Semaphore 2009. Future leaders were excited and enthusiastic as they maneuvered their way through numerous stations; such as land navigation, the rappel tower, first aid reaction course, leadership reaction course, obstacle course, one-rope bridge and waterborne survival. All of the youngsters gave their best effort and said they were proud to be a part of our leadership in training Year of the NCO initiative.

\*1SG Robert Hyatt from the Fort Meade, Md. RNCOA Detachment, attended an awards ceremony on 27 May to be recognized for his success during the All Army Photo Contest. His photograph titled "Into the Storm" won second place Army in the monochrome scenic category of the contest. He is a true leader who epitomizes what the Year of the NCO represents.

#### June

\*During the week 1-5 June 09, Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Summer Day Camp, Operation Camp Semaphore 2009 was held.

\*On 26 June under a theme of

"Pride in Service," the 2009 NCO of the Year Ball was held.

#### July

\*On 16 July, the compact on Education for Children of Military Families was reaffirmed.

#### August

\*On 26 August the RNCOA Women's Equality Day Program and pot luck dinner were held.

#### September

\*On 11 September a Patriot's Day celebration and a post-wide reenlistment ceremony were held.

Other events scheduled for the Year of the NCO included:

#### October

\*23 October - U.S. Army SIGCEN and Fort Gordon's National Disability Employment Awareness Luncheon

#### November

\*15 Nov - 15 Dec 09 - RNCOA "Holiday Helping Hand" program.

#### December

Wrap up the Year/Way ahead for NCOs.

\*5 December - NCO of the Year essay winner announced and published.

*SFC Pruitt is the Signal Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy future plans NCOIC and Year of the NCO liaison.*

# Best of the Best NCOs step forward

By Nick Spinelli

SSG Jermaine Allen of the Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy stood ramrod straight. Facing him were six senior NCO's, sitting at a table, watching his every move.

Finally, after what Allen said felt like an endless silence, the Soldier at the center of the table, CSM Thomas Clark, Signal Regimental command sergeant major, spoke.

"Tell me about SGT Audie Leon Murphy," he said.

On the 10th floor of Signal Towers, Allen begins to speak. Not just about SGT Audie Murphy, but also about himself. He speaks about his career, the challenges he has faced, the obstacles he has overcome and his plans for the future.

Most important, he speaks about how he would handle each scenario presented him by those at the table who are judging him, weighing his measure. Allen knows this is the last hurdle he has to face. If he overcomes it, he will be part of a select few comprised of only two percent of all Army NCOs. He will be a member of the SGT Audie Murphy Club.

"To be a member of the SGT Audie Murphy Club is to be recognized as a stellar NCO who leads from the front and perpetuates the Army values," said SFC Kanisha Evans, current president of the Fort Gordon SAMC.

**Sponsor SFC Chandra Davis, Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy, makes minor adjustments to the uniform of Audie Murphy Club selectee, SSG Aseba Green, 15th Regimental Signal Brigade, prior to the SAMC board on 20 June 2009 at Fort Gordon.**



"These are the best of the best."

Currently there are 30 SAMC members on post, including Reservists and National Guard members. New members are selected quarterly, but Evans says the selection process is incredibly tough and thorough.

"First, the Soldier has to be on the ball. They have to be incredibly squared away with no problems. Then, they have to pass a board on a brigade level just to be recommended to apply for membership."

Those NCOs who receive a recommendation must then pass a series of tests, including a physical fitness evaluation, a drill evaluation and a written exam. Meanwhile, they have to participate in all SAMC activities, community events and fundraisers. If they score high enough on these evaluations, they have to face a final board.

"This one board alone will assist you during the rest of your military career," CSM Clark said to the potential selectees before the board. "This isn't just another NCO association, this is a way of life. Being a member means doing the right thing every time, all the time. We only want the right people. Today, we'll see if you are the right people."

During the board, the potential selectees are quizzed on general military knowledge as well as specific areas such as drill and ceremonies, first aid, leadership and family/Soldier sup-

port. But they aren't just judged on their knowledge.

"It's not what you know, it's what you do," said selection board member SGM Victor Fernandez, School of Information Technology. "What are you doing for your people?"

For SSG Allen, he says he wanted to be a member of the club because it would mean he was one of the best. "It's an elite organization," he said. "It separates you from other NCO's and lets you shine in the community."

After his examination, Allen was excused from the room so the board members could deliberate. For Allen to be accepted, the vote had to be unanimous.

"That's one of the things that makes this final step so hard," explained CSM Clark.

Once the votes had been cast and counted, SSG Allen was called back into the room. He stood at attention in front of the table, waiting for the selection board to determine his fate.

"On behalf of myself, this board and Fort Gordon," said CSM Clark, "congratulations and welcome to the SAMC."

Allen breathed a sigh of relief, shook hands with the board members and was excused from the room. He was the first of five. In a few moments, the next potential selectee would stand where he stood. They too would be weighed and measured. And they too would be found to be among the select few who are honored with SAMC membership. In fact, all five of the NCOs who faced the selection board, SSG Allen, SSG Aseba Green of the 15th Signal Brigade, SSGs Patrick Banks, Terrish Butler and Ronald Mitchell, all attached to the RNCOA, are now members of the SAMC. They were scheduled to be officially inducted in September along with those selected at the previous and subsequent quarterly boards.

"I'm relieved and excited," concluded SSG Allen. "It's such an honor to be a part of this club."

*Mr. Spinelli is a writer/editor for the Fort Gordon Signal Newspaper.*



## Year of the NCO

***"The goal of the corps of NCOs, whose duty is the day-to-day business of running the Army so that the officer corps has time to command it, is to continue to improve our Army at every turn. We want to leave it better than we found it. Regardless of the kind of unit you're in, it ought to be an "elite" outfit, because its NCOs can make it one."***

***~SMA William G. Bainbridge,  
5th Sergeant Major of the Army***

We announce 2009 as the Year of the NCO. During this year, we will accelerate previously approved strategic NCO development initiatives that enhance training, education, capability, and utilization of our NCO Corps. We will showcase the NCO story for the Army and the American people to honor the sacrifices and celebrate the contributions of the NCO Corps, past and present.

Today's NCO operates autonomously, with confidence and competence. We empower and trust our NCOs like no other army in the world. In fact, many of the world's armies are looking at our NCO Corps as a model for their own as they recognize the vital roles NCOs play in our Army.

Our NCOs lead the way in education, in training, in discipline. They share their strength of character with every Soldier they lead, every officer they serve, and every civilian they support.

NCOs are the keepers of our standards. From the recruiting station to basic training to combat zones; civil affairs to medicine to logistics; natural disaster assistance to graveside attendance at Arlington; whether Active, Guard or Reserve, our NCOs take the lead. Hence the phrase, Sergeant take the lead!

  
Kenneth O. Preston  
Sergeant Major of the Army

  
George W. Casey, Jr.  
General, United States Army  
Chief of Staff

  
Pete Geren  
Secretary of the Army

# Year of the NCO



**Fort Gordon**

**NCO of the Year**

**SFC Katrina Richardson**

PLT SGT B Company 447 Signal Battalion

Known as the backbone of the Army, an invaluable wealth of information, knowledge and experience. They are the main cog in the wheel that allows the Army to operate at a time when limits are stretched, while fighting wars on two separate fronts. They are one of the most effective tools that a commander has at his or her disposal, to ensure that their Soldiers are mission ready. They don't hesitate to take a new commander under their wing, to guide them and help them learn the idiosyncrasies of the unit that they command.

They are the first-line supervisors in the Army, the ones who know each of the Soldiers in their unit, their strengths and weaknesses. They are sometimes a teacher, ensuring that the Soldiers underneath them receive the appropriate training and that they are mission ready. They don't seek accolades and often don't get credit for the important work they do.

**Who are they?**

**They Are The Noncommissioned Officers Of The United States Army.**

**ARMY STRONG**   
"STRENGTH LIKE NO OTHER" ARMY

# Fort Gordon's Post NCO of the Year

By SPC Siriwan Mobley

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren named 2009 as "Year of the Noncommissioned Officer." This initiative was established to recognize the value of NCO Soldiers who set the standards and perform above their peers in the areas of education, leadership, physical and mental fitness, and Fort Gordon's post NCO of the year is SFC Katrina Richardson, of B Company, 447 Signal Battalion.

"I am very proud, and I love what I do," says Richardson. "My former first sergeant 1SG Ulysses Rayford is actually responsible for encouraging me to go to the boards, and my command sergeant major pushed me as well."

The Army is about setting standards, so standard based competitions

are held to find those Soldiers who are above the average. The selection process for post NCO takes about a year. During that time, Soldiers have to go to multiple boards and compete at different levels such as the Soldier of the month board, then to Soldier of the quarter. The next steps after winning post NCO of the year are the Combined Arms Command Board and then the TRADOC boards.

"My day starts at 0430 and ends around 1900 on a good day, but anytime I can get out front and lead the way for my Soldiers then that is my proudest moment. For me to win the NCO board and awards shows my Soldiers what they should be doing."

Richardson has been doing a lot. Prior to being the senior platoon sergeant for B Company 447th Signal Battalion, she served as a drill ser-

geant and she is an active member of the SGT Audie Murphy Club. She has 359 Soldiers that fall under her leadership. Richardson also acts as a liaison between the Soldiers, their platoon sergeants and their chain of command. Her duties and responsibilities do not stop there, as she is responsible for making sure that each Soldier has physical fitness training each morning, and attends school during the day. She spends time mentoring in the evening and on-the-spot corrections of Soldiers is an ongoing process for her.

"I have sent five Soldiers to the board and all of them have made it to brigade level and two have made it to post level. I have also had an NCO under my supervision inducted to the SGT Audie Murphy club," says Richardson. "It's about doing what I do [leading and training] as an NCO. I enjoy leading the way for my Soldiers and serving as a role model for them."

According to those around her, Richardson is known for being a superior NCO, a mentor, a leader and motivator for all Soldiers. She has set a standard for her Soldiers. PVT Anthony Aldridge, B Company 447th Signal Battalion Advance Individual Training student says, "It's the best thing to be around someone [Richardson] who is the best. It helps me to live up to the highest standards instead of the usual requirements."

SFC Richardson has been in the Army 11 years, and she has two sons. Her advice to junior Soldiers coming up the ranks is "Believe in yourself. Set your goals and use your resources to strive for those goals. Find a senior NCO mentor. And lastly get all the civilian and military education available."

Noncommissioned officers are the "backbone" of the Army. They lead by example, instruct from experience, take care of Soldiers and uphold and set standards. "This has been a continuous effort for me [setting the standards] and one that I enjoy," says Richardson.

*SpC. Mobley is an Intelligence Analyst with the 297th Military Intelligence Battalion, C Co at Fort Gordon, Ga.*



The 2009 Fort Gordon NCO of the Year SFC Katrina Richardson, of B Company 447 Signal Battalion, gives instructions to members of her platoon.

# Army strong – strength like no other

By Molly Swift

In late November 2008, CSM Thomas Clark, Signal Regimental command sergeant major, spoke with me regarding 2009, the Year of the NCO. A noncommissioned officer is an enlisted member of an armed force who has been given authority by a commissioned officer. CSM Clark is the highest ranking NCO on Fort Gordon.

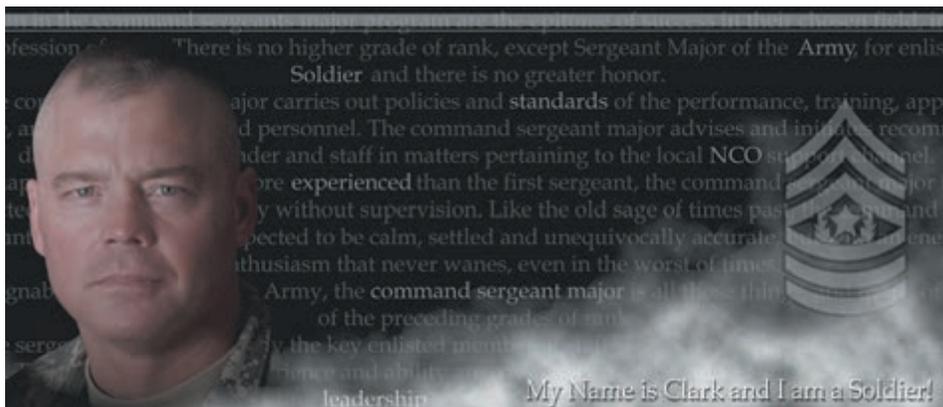
**So tell me about the Year of the NCO – what it is and what it means.**

The Year of the NCO was announced at this year's Association of the U.S. Army conference by the Secretary of the Army Peter Geren and he made that announcement as part of his keynote speech. He said, "At the front of every Army mission in the U.S. or overseas you will find a noncommissioned officer – they know their mission, they know their equipment, but most importantly they know their Soldiers." I have many bosses as a noncommissioned officer. I have BG Jeffrey Foley [U.S. Army Chief of Signal and Fort Gordon commanding general]. I have the Signal Soldiers who I say we work for, and I have a grateful nation. The NCOs are a support chain to the commissioned officers. So as an NCO I work for BG Foley and I'm blessed to be his eyes and ears. A lot of times I will go out and check on important matters, come back and brief him. Based on that he will implement policies.

Most NCOs' jobs start in the morning, getting their Soldiers ready for PT, taking part in PT with their Soldiers and then visiting a dining facility here on Fort Gordon to make sure the chow is good. As the head NCO on the post, I may be traveling worldwide to visit Signal leaders or we may be right here on Fort Gordon doing a vast variety of jobs. Any Signal Soldier worldwide, I am responsible for his/her education and training.

**What does it mean to be an NCO – what are your responsibilities?**

NCOs have a noncommissioned of-



ficers creed and it talks about two things – accomplishment of the mission and the welfare of our Soldiers. NCOs often work in the background to ensure the day to day operations of the way things run go smoothly. No mission is too small for our nation and I believe that noncommissioned officers take on those tasks and make sure they are accomplished to a world class standard.

I always begin my speeches with "My name is Clark, and I'm a Soldier." This allows me to never forget where I came from and also serves as a reminder that I work for every Soldier assigned to the Signal regiment.

**The role of the NCO has changed substantially since Vietnam. Can you expand on this and explain how the functions of noncommissioned officers are evolving?**

When I went to Operation Iraqi Freedom I, we had NCOs that routinely performed tasks that when I first came in the military were done by seasoned captains. As the Army expands, so does the role of the noncommissioned officer. You can see them being ground assault combat leaders. This frees the captain, the lieutenant and the officer to do more important things for their companies, their battalions, their brigades. So if we are able to help in any way it makes everyone stronger.

Other countries say that one of the things that set the American Army apart from all others is the strength of their NCO corps. Recently we

visited other Armies, and it would be unheard of for them to give some of the tasks to NCOs that are routinely performed by NCOs in the American Army.

Transformation is not a word that NCOs are unfamiliar with; for we tend to embrace change and revolutionize our environments to adapt to change. One of the major revolutionary changes that have been embraced by the RNCOA is the implementation of Mobile Training Teams; the concept of deploying members of the RNCOA staff and faculty to remote locations to train Signal Soldiers at their parent duty stations. At present, the RNCOA MTTs have travelled to 13 CONUS and OCONUS locations; allowing our Signal Soldiers the ability to attend NCOES training while remaining at their duty stations. The RNCOA MTT is one transformation tool that is used to enable Signal Soldiers the opportunity to train locally, upon redeployment, while spending quality time with their families. Implementing the Mobile Training Team concept is a significant accomplishment of the Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy that keeps our Soldiers Army Strong, "Strength Like no Other."

**What does the Year of the Noncommissioned Officer mean to you and other NCOs?**

We should feel honored that there is a year set aside for us, and humbled.

(Continued on page 12)

# 2009 Year of the NCO

February



A Member of the Prestigious  
“Sergeant Audie Murphy Club”

SFC Marcus T. Mustin  
Senior SGL BNCOC  
Regimental NCO Academy  
“Pride in Service”



A Member of the Elite  
“Sergeant Morales Club”



A Member of a Time Honored Corps  
Known as the “Backbone of the Army”

**ARMY STRONG**  
“STRENGTH LIKE NO OTHER”



(Continued from page 10)

The new Army slogan is Army Strong, Strength like No Other. Every day they are challenged with the care of America's sons and daughters – a young non-commissioned officer will care for them in the Army. Sometimes it won't matter what the higher ranking people are in the end, it will matter to those sons and daughters that their first line supervisors is an NCO. The NCO routinely serves alongside of them with their boots on the ground – keeping them alive in combat. It means a great deal.

**So as an NCO your role is primarily that of a shepherd?**

A shepherd role is a good analogy

but you can also think of it this way – if Fort Gordon was a city, BG Foley would be the mayor and I would be the sheriff.

**What kind of celebrations can we expect to see throughout 2009?**

On 15 January we are kicking off the celebrations in Alexander Hall at 1 p.m. with a post-wide NCO induction ceremony. At the ceremony we will celebrate new enlisted Soldiers becoming NCOs - BG Foley will be our guest speaker and he will talk about the goals and responsibilities of the NCO. We would like to invite the entire community to attend. Throughout the entire year there will be a monthly event to mark the celebration.

**Is there anything else you would like the Fort Gordon community to know about NCOs, anything they haven't heard before or what you feel they need to hear?**

When the community sees not just Noncommissioned officers but all officers, young enlisted Soldiers, they just need to know they have a relentless love for our country. We want to be world-class Soldiers and we want to provide world-class care for our country. And every time they thank us, we should be the ones thanking them – it is an honor to serve on behalf of a grateful nation.

*Mrs. Swift is the editor of the Fort Gordon FYI Magazine.*

## Outstanding NCO Spotlight

*BY SSG Paula Taylor*

To see her walking through the halls of the Network Enterprise Technology Command/9th Signal Command headquarters, she looks like an average noncommissioned officer.

But SGT Lisa Morales, command post node team chief, Company A 40th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, 11th Signal Brigade, has proven she is more than average.

"She's the first Soldier from NETCOM to win at the U.S. Army Forces Command level throughout our history of competing," said CSM Donald G. Manley, NETCOM's se-

nior enlisted Soldier. "She is also the first female noncommissioned officer to win FORSCOM NCO of the Year."

Manley said he learned from sergeants major that participated at the FORSCOM board at Fort Hood, Texas, that Morales had done "exceptionally well" there, and "represented [NETCOM] with the utmost professionalism."

"We are all extremely proud of her and what she has accomplished thus far," Manley said.

Morales' 2008 success at FORSCOM level represents the sixth win in a string of competitions that culminated at the Department of the Army level.

Each competition tested Morales' mettle in such areas as physical training, land navigation, warrior tasks, written essays, written tests and oral boards.

Morales said she is proud to be able to represent her unit and all Signal Soldiers and sees the competitions as a step forward in her career.

"These competitions push both Soldiers and NCOs to their limits, both mentally and physically," she said. "We are able to increase our depth of military knowledge and basic skills. We learn our values and strengths through competitions such as these. We are better at the culmination of the competition whether we win or lose due to the mental and physical preparation we put forth to prepare to compete."

Along with challenging herself, Morales said she encourages her troops to enter the competitions as well.

*SSG Taylor is the noncommissioned officer in charge for the public affairs office, Network Enterprise Technology Command/9th Signal Command (Army), Fort Huachuca, Ariz. She was previously assigned to and deployed with the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, during OIF 06-08 and is 2005 a graduate of the Public Affairs Writers Course from the Defense Information School, Fort Meade, Md.*

**SGT Lisa Morales, 11th Signal Brigade, stops to call for fire during the Network Enterprise Technology Command/9th Signal Command NCO of the Year competition, June 18, 2008. Morales won NCO of the year and went on to become the first female NETCOM Soldier to win Forces Command NCO of the year.**





# 2009 Year of the NCO

March



“Leadership is  
Like a 4 x 4 Relay



Set the Standard  
and Pass it on”

*SGM Barbara A. Hunter*



**ARMY STRONG**  
“STRENGTH LIKE NO OTHER”



# Signal Soldiers Best Ranger competitors

By MSG Harry Ferguson

Two Signal Soldiers, assigned to the Ranger Communications Company of the 75th Ranger Regiment turned in strong performances to earn high rankings in the 2009 Best Ranger Competition in May 2009 at Fort Benning, Ga. SGT Michael Malchow, a 25S, placed third in the overall standings and SGT Edward Killmeier, a 25Q, placed 14th.



SGT Michael Malchow, a 25S Signal Soldier, negotiates the Tri-tower climb above and emerges from the water confidence course during the Best Ranger Competition at Fort Benning, Ga. in May 2009.

The Best Ranger Competition challenges the technical, mental and physical abilities of two-man Ranger teams. Out of a starting field of 49 teams, only 24 finished the three-day event.

The first event of the day one was a 4.8 mile run through rugged, uneven terrain with a swamp and chest-high water. After the run, the competitors immediately had to negotiate an obstacle course called the Darby Queen, which is over a mile long with 26 obstacles. After the Darby Queen, competitors negotiated a series of marksmanship challenges which included a machine gun range, a stress shoot and a moving target range, as well as a field expedient litter carry covering an unknown distance. During the litter carry, the competitors were graded on providing first aid to a simulated casualty whose wounds included a double amputation and abdominal evisceration. The last event of day one was an 18 mile footmarch with rucksacks that weighed about 65 pounds. The footmarch started at 2100 hours and continued into the early morning of day two.

The second day of activity kicked off at 0300 hours with an event called Ranger Stakes night. Night stakes consisted of more medical tasks, weapons assembly drills and a mystery event. By the time of sunrise on the morning of day two, the sleep deprived competitors were well into the day portion of 'Ranger Stakes.'

During Day Stakes, they were tested on the tri-tower climb, demolitions, a grenade assault course, FBCB2, a Ranger first responder casualty evacuation scenario, a stress shoot and another mystery event. At the end of Day Two the competitors set out on an orienteering course which lasted 10 hours in an area covering approximately 60 square miles.

Day Three began with the HELO cast swim in which the competitors are dropped out of a UH-60 helicopter into Victory Pond. The competitors have to waterproof their rucksacks and swim with them to the shore. After the HELO cast swim, the competitors negotiated the Ranger water confidence test and slide for life apparatus at Hurley Hill. Next the competitors were flown by UH-60 to Engineer's Landing on the banks of the Chattahoochee River, where they manned canoes and conducted a six mile boat movement. Immediately, following the boat movement, the competitors completed the last event of the competition, a 2.5 mile buddy run to the finish line. By the time the competitors crossed the finish line they had been up for 60 hours with no programmed sleep or meals and covered in excess of 100 miles on foot.

SGT Malchow and SGT Killmeier demonstrated that Signal Soldiers have the aptitude and the resolve to excel in any situation regardless of the circumstances. They represented the 75th Ranger Regiment, the Signal Corps and the Noncommissioned Officer Corps exceptionally well. Their story deserves to be told, as well as others, in this Year of the NCO. Get the word out to all who need to know, that the men and women whom fill the Noncommissioned Officer Corp are as strong today as it ever; and our young leaders prove it every day.

MSG Ferguson is assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment.

(Continued on page 15)

# Outstanding NCO Spotlight

By Bonnie Heater

*(This is one of a series of articles in The Signal newspaper highlighting the talents, skills and accomplishments of noncommissioned officers serving in the U.S. Army during 2009 The Year of the NCO)*

SSG Geczal Rivera, a chapel assistant from Fort Gordon, was one of the service members working behind the scenes at the 2009 Presidential Inauguration.

He was chosen as an outstanding representative of the U.S. Army Garrison at Fort Gordon said Col. John Holwick, the garrison commander.

Back in November 2008, the garrison received a tasking from the Installation Management Command of the Southeast Region for a Soldier in the rank of specialist through staff sergeant, who would be able to travel to Washington, D.C., for the inauguration, according to 1SG Katherine Pennebecker, garrison first sergeant. "CPT [Theodosia] Martin, [garrison

company commander] and I took a look at who was in our unit and decided we had a couple of Soldiers who could fit the bill," 1SG Pennebecker said. "SGT Rivera was one of them.

"He is an outstanding noncommissioned officer who cares deeply for his Soldiers, his mission and his unit," she said. "SGT Rivera gets any task assigned completed and looks for ways to improve his section. He strives to help his Soldiers excel at whatever they are doing."

After careful consideration the garrison leadership selected the NCO-IC of chapel assistants for the Good Shepherd Chapel to represent Fort Gordon at the Presidential Inauguration.

The Passaic, N.J. native left Dec. 15, 2008 for Washington. This gave him a month to review the 2005 Armed Forces Inaugural Committee continuity book and create power point presentations to help his team understand their duties and responsibilities. During this period SSG Rivera spent a lot of time at the Pentagon in training and talking with other NCOICs to make sure everyone knew what role they would play on Jan. 20. The Kingsfeld University alumnus worked for the AFIC as the parade staging security noncommissioned officer in charge.

"I was the only Army NCOIC in the Parade Staging Division," he explained. "The other three were in the Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. I was the staging security NCOIC. Their jobs were different than mine. They were made Entry Control NCOIC, Traffic Control NCOIC and Command Post NCOIC."

Once his team arrived in Washington he spent two weeks training them. The team consisted of five Soldiers and one Sailor. "Although I didn't get to select my team, I was very lucky because they were all either military police or infantry men," he said. "They were experienced in handling crowds."

While in the nation's capitol, his five-member team assisted the U.S. Secret Service in credentialing the Presidential Parade participants

and screening them for weapons as they entered the parade staging area which was located in the north parking lot area of the Pentagon.

"We were looking for any unauthorized weapons, and making sure that everyone who entered the staging area was credentialed, and reported directly to the command post," said the American Intercontinental University alumnus.

"As parade participants entered the staging area, they passed through our screening tents with magnetometers, and we scanned them," he said.

Security measures for the 2009 Presidential Inauguration included street closures on both sides of Pennsylvania Avenue, thousands of surveillance cameras, air patrols, sharpshooters, personal searches and the U.S. Coast Guard monitored the water ways.

The fact that both President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama twice exited their armored limousine on Pennsylvania Avenue and walked a portion of the parade route illustrated how comfortable and self-assured they were with the security measures taken that day to protect them.

Vice President Joseph Biden and his wife, Jill Biden, also walked the parade route at several points with their children Beau, Hunter and Ashley. Later the president made a stop at the Mary J. Sweitzer Federal Building where he spoke with Rivera, other service members who planned out the security for the parade. "He talked briefly with us and thanked us for our work," Rivera said. "The President was very polite and he had a great sense of humor. He was down to earth. It was an honor to serve the garrison and Fort Gordon at the inauguration," he added.

Rivera is projected to depart the post in May for Fort Jackson to take on a new challenge as the Chaplain Officer Basic Course platoon sergeant.

*Ms. Heater is a staff writer/editor for The Signal newspaper.*

(Rangers - continued from page 14)



*(Left) SGT Michael Malchow, a 25S Signal Soldier and SGT Edward Killmeier, a 25Q Signal Soldier, press forward during the Buddy Run portion of the Best Ranger Competition at Fort Benning, Ga. in May 2009.*

# The Noncommissioned Officer

By SGM Daniel Elder and SGM Felix Sanchez

It started on the fourth floor of Building 4 at Fort Benning, Ga. in 1973 with a plain white sheet of paper and three letters--N-C-O.

From there begins the history of the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer. The Creed has been around for many years in different forms and fashions. Sergeants can recall reading the creed on the day they were first inducted into the NCO Corps.

But take a quick glance at any creed and you will notice the absence of the author's name at the bottom. Where the creed originated from has questioned many.

To date, there are few historical collections relating to the noncommissioned officer. In the foreword of one of the premier studies of the NCO, *Guardians of the Republic: a History of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps of the U.S. Army*, Russell F. Weigley pointed out that "Until the publication of this book, the American noncommissioned officers who have provided the backbone of our Army have never been appropriately studied by military historians." The NCO Journal had published a request for information about the origins of the Creed in the Spring 96 edition, yet had received little response. The earliest mention of the creed in official and unofficial publications seemed to be in the year 1989, but the creed is older than that. The problem centered on "which creed?" As Arms mentions in his article, "In the early 1980's I first started seeing NCO Creeds produced by various commands. Though similar in nature,

they differed in detail." Research had also turned up different versions of the Creed. A reprint of the Sergeants Book, prepared in 1982 by then 3rd Armored Division sergeant major, CSM Robert Haga, discusses the Creed. In his timeless book, he expressed his "written talk" to the noncommissioned officers within his division. On the last page, barely readable, is a small copy of the familiar "Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer." Also, on the inside back cover was the "United States Army Noncommissioned Officer Creed," which was an oath that a noncommissioned officer would repeat or sign. Obviously multiple Creeds were used. While researching information about NCO responsibilities in TC 22-6, *The Noncommissioned Officer Guide*, there is a reference to the 1989 "NCO Leader Development Task Force," which resulted in the publishing of that Training Circular. It stated that "Drawing heavily from the Professional Army Ethic (FM 100-1), the NCO CREED (emphasis added), and the Oath of Enlistment, the Task Force identified 14 attitudes common to all effective NCO leaders." In 1989, not only was the Task Force formed, the Creed appeared in numerous publications. In their salute to NCOs, the Military Police journal printed on the back cover a copy of the familiar Creed. And then later in that "Year of the NCO," other publications would ultimately print copies of the same Creed, including the Ordnance magazine, and the INSCOM Journal. The Leader Development Task Force conducted a "thorough literature search which included 17 previous studies concerning leadership and

professional development." Of those studies, one of the most important was the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Study of 1985. This two-volume study (also known as the Soldiers Study) has been the guiding document for noncommissioned officer development since its release in 1986. Now a Major General, Simpson is certain that one of the noncommissioned officers serving on the Soldier Study panel provided him a copy, and he does not recollect seeing it before about 1980.

The June 1981 edition of RB 22-600-20, *The Duties, Responsibilities and Authority of NCO's and the Interplay and Relationship with the Duties, Responsibilities and Authority of Officers*, published by the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, in which the summary refers to a creed, "An official ethical code is the Moral and Ethical Responsibilities of Leaders; Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer." However, there is no published copy of the Creed.

The Army's search for the origins of the Creed was on. Soldiers appearing before boards were being asked questions like "who wrote the Creed?" and people wanted to know its history.

In preparing research for the U.S. Army Information Management Support Center's book *The Noncommissioned Officer Corps on Training, Cohesion, and Combat*, the compiler, Marianna Yamamoto, discovered a significant passage. SFC Michael T. Woodward wrote in the Jul-Aug 1975 issue of the *Infantry* magazine that, "The Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer was developed by the NCOs of the NCO Subcommittee, Command and Leadership Committee, Leadership Department USAIS (U.S. Army Infantry School)." In the Spring 97 edition, the NCO Journal printed a story on the Creed based on IMCEN's information.

Meanwhile, the number of questions increased about the Creed's author.

In October 1972, Sergeant Major of the Army Silas L. Copeland stated that "a code of ethics...cannot be developed overnight by edict or official

***Though re-written many different ways, the Creed still today begins its paragraphs with those three letters, N C O. It continues to guide and reinforce the values of the new generation of noncommissioned officers.***

# Creed has long evolving history

pronouncement. It is developed by years of practice and performance of duty according to high ethical standards. It must be self policing.

Without such a code, a professional Soldier or a group soon loses its identity and effectiveness." Could this have been a call for the development of a document to guide noncommissioned officers? Was this the impetuous to develop our Creed?

By 1973, there was an oath of enlistment for incoming enlistees and an oath of commissioning for the officers, yet the noncommissioned officer had nothing that recognized their induction into the NCO Corps. An NCO subcommittee's first drafts did not make it through the Infantry Center's editors, and they rewrote the Creed numerous times. When it was ultimately approved, the Creed was

designed on a scroll, and printed on the inside cover of the Special Texts issued to students attending the noncommissioned officer courses at Fort Benning, beginning in 1974. Though the Creed was submitted higher for approval and distribution Army-wide, was not formalized by an official Army publication until 11 years later. Woodward's Infantry magazine article on "Followership" was one of a series of articles discussing leadership. Soon after the article was published, the NCOs serving on the sub-committee moved on to their next assignments.

The "unofficial" Creed did not go away. Many of those sergeants who graduated from the Infantry School took their copy of the Creed and shared it with the Army. Other commands may have copied, revised, or reworded it, yet they all basically followed the format of the original. When first written, the Creed began, "No man is more professional than I..." At the time the Creed was developed, the Women's Army Corps had not been integrated into the Army. Much later, at a senior NCO conference, several female command sergeants major objected to the masculine wording of the Creed. As a result, the Army began using the non-gender specific version we know today.

Though re-written many different ways, the Creed still today begins its paragraphs with those three letters, NCO. It continues to guide and reinforce the values of the new generation of noncommissioned officers.

At the time of its development, the sergeants of the NCO Subcommittee were unaware of the impact the Creed would have in the coming years. However, the goal of providing a tool for measuring the competencies of a noncommissioned officer was achieved, and is forever a part of our history.

*(U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy  
May 3, 1998, Fort Bliss, Texas  
Reprinted from [www.NCOhistory.com](http://www.NCOhistory.com))*

## NCO Creed

*No one is more professional than I.  
I am a Noncommissioned Officer, a leader of Soldiers.  
As a Noncommissioned Officer, I realize that I am a member of a time-honored corps, which is known as "The Backbone of the Army." I am proud of the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers and will at all times conduct myself so as to bring credit upon the Corps, the Military Service and my country regardless of the situation in which I find myself. I will not use my grade or position to attain pleasure, profit, or personal safety. Competence is my watchword. My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind -- accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my Soldiers. I will strive to remain technically and tactically proficient. I am aware of my role as a Noncommissioned Officer. I will fulfill my responsibilities inherent in that role. All soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership. I know my Soldiers and I will always place their needs above my own. I will communicate consistently with my Soldiers and never leave them uninformed. I will be fair and impartial when recommending both rewards and punishment. Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine. I will earn their respect and confidence as well as that of my Soldiers. I will be loyal to those with whom I serve; seniors, peers, and subordinates alike. I will exercise initiative by taking appropriate action in the absence of orders. I will not compromise my integrity, nor my moral courage. I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget that we are professionals,  
Noncommissioned Officers, leaders!*

# NCOs perform crucial tasks successfully

By CSM Ray D. Lane

Every year noncommissioned officers make significant contributions to our armed forces. This year on its 234th Birthday, the Army's senior leadership once again took time out to specifically recognize the vital role of NCOs and their influence on America's future. The agency is especially fortunate to have professional NCOs from the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard.

The purpose of the Year of the NCO is to enhance education, fitness, leadership development, and pride in service through the implementation of programs and policies that support the sustainment and growth of the NCO Corps. By recognizing the professionalism, courage, and dedication of the men and women who serve proudly as NCOs throughout the world, Americans will be better informed on the roles, responsibilities, and quality of our NCOs and, hopefully, more Americans will be inspired to join the ranks of the NCO.

The Defense Information Systems Agency is a combat support organization responsible for enabling joint warfighting across all the services in the defense of our nation. The Joint Task Force Global Network Operations is responsible for directing the operations and defense of the Global Information Grid. The NCOs of DISA and JTF-GNO are trained professionals who take unconditional pride in providing Command and Control capabilities and defending critical networks.

At DISA and JTF-GNO, our joint teams of NCOs are essential in providing acquisition and contract support, network engineering, operation, and defense of the GIG, as well as direct communications support to the President, vice president, and other national level leaders. They assist in providing dependable capabilities that enable the flow of communications during critical decision-making scenarios in both peace and war. Our NCOs deploy as joint teams to any area in the world to provide C2 capabilities to commanders and warfighters. The NCOs of DISA and JTF-GNO are assisting operations for every Combatant Command.

In recent years, NCOs have made major adaptations to an ever-changing world of technological advancements. As a result, NCOs now advise Congress and many of the military's top leaders in numerous areas crucial to the future of our Armed Forces.

Recalling personal experiences while participating in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, I particularly remember the level of autonomy our NCOs exercised throughout the initial phases of the operation. Sergeants were in charge of small, but critical teams, making life and death decisions that affected major outcomes during the drive to Baghdad.

Brigade and Battalion-level Command Sergeants Major were engaged in every aspect of the operation, working closely with their officer counterparts to achieve mission success. The Year of the NCO pays tribute to this special group of leaders and honors them for what they are: a national treasure and the envy of other armed forces.



CSM Ray D. Lane, is the senior enlisted advisor at the Defense Information Systems Agency and Joint Task Force-Global Network Operations, Arlington, Va. Prior to his present assignment, CSM Lane served as the command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command-Life Cycle Management Command and Fort Monmouth, N.J. He also served as the 160th Signal Brigade command sergeant major, where he managed the health, welfare, and morale of signal-commercialization forces throughout Southwest Asia during Operations Iraqi Freedom 2 and 3.

## ACRONYM QuickScan

DISA - Defense Information System Agency  
JTF-GNO - Joint Task Force Global Network Operations  
NCO - Noncommissioned officer  
GIG - Global Information Grid  
C2 - Command and Control

***“The Year of the NCO pays tribute to this special group of leaders and honors them for what they are: a national treasure and the envy of other armed forces.”***

# Year of the NCO

2009  
April



**Diversity.....**  
**the building blocks of a strong institution**



**REGIMENTAL NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER ACADEMY**

**COMMANDANT**  
CSM VERNON R. PRAYMOUS



**DEPUTY**  
SGM CARLOS L. GOODMAN

**Leadership.....**  
**the mortar that holds them together**

**ARMY STRONG**  
"STRENGTH LIKE NO OTHER"



# Combat Camera Soldiers active in theater

By SPC Justin French

About 255 bullets separated into 10 magazine clips, eight of which are strapped across his chest.

A condensed first aid kit and night vision goggles are attached to his sides. An M4 carbine rifle hangs from a clip on the shoulder of his ceramic plated body armor. He has a nine millimeter pistol holstered on his right thigh.

What makes this Soldier different is the \$4,000 Nikon camera in his hand and the backpack containing a Sony PD170 video camera with various batteries and lenses mixed in with his survival gear.

The men and women of combat camera are Soldiers. They are the eyes of the military around the world.

Known as 25Vs" or combat documentation production specialists, Soldiers of the 55th Signal Company, based out of Fort Meade, Md., are unique.

They have a rare job and operate different from any other army unit in the world.

Not all of the men and women have a background of photography or video work before the nine-month advanced individual training they received from the Department of Defense, but many do. "Many of our cameramen and women already possess bachelor's degrees and many are working toward master's degrees in their field," said former MAJ Donald Reeves, former Combat Camera Company commander. They enter the military from all over but were selected to be part of the only active-duty combat camera unit in the Army.

Some service members first see the job on a list of available positions they qualified for when entering into the Army. Others joined the military specifically this field.

Ssg Gardener, from Washington D.C., says, "When recruiters tell you that you can join the Army and see the world, doing this job, it is actually true. We are in direct support of OIF, OEF and a variety of other contingencies in the United States and around the world," MAJ Daniel Wood, Combat Camera commander says.

Combat Camera Soldiers provide imagery and video for "tactical, education, and strategic purposes," Wood says. So far this year Combat Camera Soldiers have been active in Iraq, Honduras, Afghanistan, Qatar, Colombia, the Caribbean, and the Dominican Republic. Before the year is over, more teams will be sent to Iraq and Afghanistan and other combat camera Soldiers are preparing for missions to Australia, Russia and Panama.

Combat Camera documentation has been published in magazines like Time and Newsweek and footage has been shown on CNN and various nightly news casts on a variety of channels.

All of this is accomplished with a company of only 200 Soldiers.

"When we're deployed we aren't staying in one place," 23-year-old SPC Derek Niccolson says. The Combat Camera Company mission is to cover every level of events in an area or country where the United States has a military presence.

Combat Camera Soldiers work with different military

services and a wide range of units, supporting combat, humanitarian, Special Forces, intelligence, reconnaissance, engineering, legal, public affairs, and other operations. In one deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan a Combat Camera Soldier gets to experience it all.

SPC Niccolson deployed into Afghanistan from November 2007 to June 2008 as part of a seven Soldier team. With only seven army Combat Camera Soldiers in Afghanistan at the time, work was constantly sending him out alone to different units. His assignments varied from a couple of days to two months with any one unit before being called off to another location.

Generally, Combat Camera Soldiers work in one or two-person teams. Communication is done over the phone or via e-mail to update mission status and to transmit imagery. "The connections we make in each new unit are what get us through the day," says SPC Mark Salazar, a recent returnee from Afghanistan.

Each Soldier is expected to blend in with the unit. They sleep, eat, take guard duty shifts, backup, and rely on the Soldiers of that temporary unit. Though their mission is to document, they are Soldiers first.

When a Combat Camera Soldier is on mission the camera is out with the lens cap off, but safety of the unit always comes first.

"Sometimes you're part of the room clearing team, or you may have to replace a wounded gunner on a humvee



**(Above) SPC French Combat Camera production specialists with the 55th Signal Battalion, like all Signal Soldiers in theater performs warrior combat duties while (at right) completing his mission as the official eyes on the ground in combat zones. Signal Soldiers provide imagery and video for tactical, education, and strategic purposes.**

during a convoy. That is your mission then. Pictures come after the location is secure," says SGT David Kobi, a veteran Combat Camera Soldier.

Some combat situations can still be safely documented. Sometimes a Combat Camera Soldier can document and fight at the same time.

In 2008, SPC Michael Carter, a Combat Cameraman, was awarded the Silver Star, the Army's third highest medal for valor. He was working with a Special Forces unit and things turned bad on a mountain top in Afghanistan.

During an ambush, while bul-

lets were hitting all around, Carter retrieved several wounded Soldiers from exposed positions. He suppressed enemy fire and halted their further advancement. Using himself at times to break their fall, he was instrumental in getting the wounded off the mountain to safety. Because of Carter's actions all the members of the unit survived, but his camera didn't. A bullet tore through it. As a Soldier, sometimes things are lost that can't be replaced.

Recently during a foot patrol, a fire fight broke out in the hills of Afghanistan. Due to wounds received during

the engagement, SPC Evan Marcy's leg had to be amputated.

Combat Camera Soldiers say they have the best job in the military, but the work they do is not without danger.

Combat Camera Company soldiers work with video and photographic products.

The photography and video work is submitted raw and without any manipulation. After each mission the photographs and videos are embedded with a caption and a VIRIN number. The caption is a brief paragraph identifying the facts of the image or video clip. The VIRIN number is a military style identifier citing the date and the shooter responsible for the documentation.

The media is eventually stored and archived and, depending upon classification, is placed on several sites to which the public and news media have access.

The video and imagery is immediately provided to the unit and subsequent higher leadership giving the eyes on the ground perspective to commanders, "for good or bad," says 1SG William Armstrong, Camera Company first sergeant.

Armstrong was a combat cameraman for several years before returning to the unit as the company first sergeant.

Some missions function like clockwork. Others can fall short. Combat Camera work depicts the reality of the situation, Armstrong explains. The truth of a photograph or video product is what bridges the gap between troops and commanders.

"It also gives the Soldiers something to show their families to explain the importance of what it is they are doing so far from home," SPC Niccolson says.

"In order to do our job we have to put ourselves in hostile situations," says SPC Ronald Wright, a Combat Camera Company member.

"When deployed we are expected to conduct ourselves like professional senior NCOs, says Wright. If Combat Camera Soldiers are privates, they now have to be able to operate at a level several pay grades above them."

"They have to perform like senior NCOs," Armstrong says. They are the subject matter experts. They



(Continued on page 23)

# Year of the NCO

2009  
May



**SSG Nohea L. Nako'oka**  
**Signal Regimental NCO Academy**

**Senior Leader Course Student**  
**Class 25U 011-09**

## Leadership....

## In Training

**ARMY STRONG**  
"STRENGTH LIKE NO OTHER" 

coordinate with and spell out what they need to get done to whoever is in charge, "all the way up to General," says Armstrong. Then they meet the troops.

"Combat Camera is a special unit to be able to embed with other units. They're curious about what we do," Salazar says.

"When we show up to a unit we are the new guy. Sometimes we get glared at and it feels like they are sizing us up. We can explain to them all day about our training and experience but what they know is what they see," says SPC Ronald Gaete. "How we perform out on mission, is

everything. Confidence and being able to cover-down [take over and perform it to standard] on their job and different weapon systems goes a long way. Add that to well done photography and video work with professional equipment and units quickly understand that this new guy is an asset," Gaete says.

SPC Niccolson says, "We get not only the immediate satisfaction of a product that has historical significance, we know efforts made by our fellow service members won't be lost to history."

*SPC Justin French is the lead 21st Signal Brigade Public Affairs Office writer/photographer.*

## Year of the NCO provides great opportunity

*By CSM Tyrone Johnson*

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren announced at the 2008 Association of the U. S. Army Annual meeting and Exposition that 2009 will be the "Year of the Noncommissioned Officer."

This is a great opportunity to enhance our NCOs' education, fitness, leadership development and pride in service through implementation of programs and policies that support the sustainment and growth of our NCO Corps.

As an NCO who has been in the Army for 26 years, I am ecstatic about this great event. It has been 20 years since the last "Year of the NCO" and many things have changed.

This is the opportunity to tell the story about what being an NCO is all about. Every NCO's experience may be different or their reason for joining the Army may be different. But one thing that holds true is that these NCOs understand they are here to serve the nation in combating terrorism at home and abroad and supporting the Global War on Terrorism, as we fight the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I am proud to be a member of the Armed Forces and to serve in an Army that has the greatest NCO Corps in the world. I attended the Sergeant Major of the Army Conference held at Fort Bliss, Texas, this past January 2009. As the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army General Casey talked to a group of Sergeants Major and senior leaders about the

Year of the NCO, you could feel the pride as they spoke about the key initiatives that were being established to support this program.

Secretary Geren stated "our NCOs are empowered and trusted like no other NCOs in the world, and most advanced Armies in the world today are going to school on our model."

General Casey stated "there is no doubt in [my] mind that our noncommissioned officer corps is the glue that's holding this Army together and that's allowed us to accomplish the impossible every day".

With these quotes, some of you may ask, what is a noncommissioned officer and what do they really do? NCOs are the "Backbone of the Army." They are leaders directly responsible for the training, leading, coaching, mentoring, and health and welfare of their Soldiers. The NCOs two basic responsibilities are the welfare of their Soldiers (and families) and the accomplishment of the mission.

NCOs must lead by example, train from experience, and maintain and enforce standards. These NCOs had many different experiences since 9/11 and the Year of the NCO will give them the opportunity through speaking engagements, news articles, media coverage, and social networking to share their story and be recognized for their accomplishments.

I am proud of the NCOs that serve in the Army and extremely proud of the professional NCOs that are serving with CECOM LCMC. The official opening ceremony of

the Year of the NCO was conducted along with the unveiling of the Year of the NCO poster on 23 Feb 2009 at the Expo Theater on Fort Monmouth. There will also be many events throughout the year that will be hosted to celebrate the "Year of the NCO".

On 28 Jan 2009 an NCO Professional Development class was conducted at Lane Hall on Fort Monmouth, N.J. for the Year of the NCO. MG Dennis L. Via, CECOM LCMC and Fort Monmouth commanding general, spoke highly of the NCO Corps and how his NCOs provided support, guidance and leadership as he rose through the ranks from second lieutenant to major general.

I was asked why I did not follow in my father's footsteps who retired after 30 years in the Navy. While I was thinking about what service to join, I saw the Army commercial "Be all that you can be" that played on television in the early 1980's. After watching that Soldier jump out of the airplane and land safely on the drop zone with a smile on his face and say "good morning first sergeant," I was convinced the Army was for me and I never looked back.

As you come in contact with NCOs throughout the year, I would ask you to take a minute to thank them for their dedication and commitment and also for their service to the nation.

It is fitting that 2009 is the year of the NCO and I look forward to seeing the Soldiers, civilians and leaders from all organizations show their appreciation for the best NCO Corps in the world.

*CSM Tyrone Johnson is the command sergeant major of the Communications-Electronics Command Life Cycle Management Command and Fort Monmouth.*

# Year of the NCO

2009  
June



## “Pride of Service” Country & Community

MSG Marion E. Benson III  
Headquarters & Alpha Company  
442nd Signal Battalion

Volunteer Firefighter  
Grovetown  
Department of Public Safety



# My greatest NCO moment

1SG William C. Evans

In a military career spanning more than 24 years, including eight deployments, I have enjoyed many moments that made me proud to be an NCO. I placed first in the 1999 and 2000 Garner Cup Competition held at Fort Bliss, Texas. This competition consists of different Antenna Mast Group teams from all over the world competing to see who has the highest honed skills. The countries that were represented included the United States,

France, Russia and Germany. In addition, I am a member of the prestigious Sergeant Audie Murphy Club and have prepared many of my subordinates to achieve the same. Seeing that look of joy and pride of accomplishment on my Soldiers' faces always gives me a great sense of fulfillment. However, my greatest moment as an NCO was when my daughter recognized me as her hero.

I truly believe my last deployment solidified my daughter's understanding of how vital our military is to en-

suring world freedom. She also realized how dangerous it could be too.

My last deployment assignment was to a National Police Transition Team, which is totally different from a Military Transition Team. On an NPTT, we are tasked to teach, coach and mentor Iraq's police force. About 90% of these men have no prior military or law enforcement experience. On the other hand, MITTs are trained and well disciplined. Equipment issues are critically different also. NPTT members patrol the city in standard pick-up trucks. MITTs have armored HMMWV with crew serve weapons. Plus, with NPTT there was always the loyalty issue. Every day we had to be extremely wary. We had to protect ourselves against suicide bombers that were embedded within the police force. When we planned a mission we had to keep it a secret even from our Iraqi counterparts up to the last minutes. I lost a good buddy, SFC Robert Dunham, in Iraq due to mission intelligence compromise.

My daughter realized how important and dangerous my work is and wrote an essay about me and SFC Dunham. She placed first in the Laney Walker High School Hero Essay Contest that was hosted by the Augusta Chronicle (See the article "Winning Essay, at left").

This essay really touched me. I believe it will resonate with anyone else who reads it. Reading the essay let me know that my long hours, days, and months have been noticed by my daughter and my entire family. The moment when I read that essay the first time was my greatest moment of being a noncommissioned officer. It is a moment I relive every day when I look into the eyes of my daughter and the rest of my family.

*1SG William C. Evans is the Signal Regimental Noncommissioned Officers Academy Advanced Leaders Course first sergeant.*



## A winning essay

By Re'jenia Evans

The word hero can be defined in numerous ways. A hero can be an individual such as, a superhero like superman or spider-man who goes around saving the world day-in and day-out. A hero can also be someone that has been an inspiration and someone that many people look up to for guidance and motivation. My definition of a hero is someone who has impacted me to the greatest degree. A hero is someone who has inspired me, my family, and this nation. I have two African-American heroes that I can't mention one without the other who have dedicated their lives to protect this nation each and every day of their lives, First Sergeant William C. Evans and Sergeant Robert Dunham.

My first hero is First Sergeant William C. Evans, also known as my dad. My dad has served in the United States Army for more than twenty four years and has gone overseas more than seven times. He has been stationed in many different parts of the world; he is now the Branch Chief of Advanced Leaders Course at Fort Gordon, Georgia. I consider my dad to be my hero because he has sacrificed so much for my family, this community, and this nation. He has just recently returned from the War in Iraq in December of 2007. My dad motivates me in everything that I do. He inspires me to be better than he and my mother were when they were younger. Though my dad can be tough, he pushes me in a positive way to follow my dreams and never give up in anything that I do. Because of these reasons, I nominated him to be my number one hero.

Another man that is considered an African American hero not just to me, but the United States of America, is Sergeant Robert Dunham. Sergeant Dunham was also stationed in Fort Gordon, Georgia. Sergeant Dunham is declared as my hero because he dedicated and sacrificed his life in protecting our country in May of 2007. Sergeant Dunham was a dear friend to my family, and a loving husband to Kimberly Dunham and father to his five sons. Sergeant Dunham was a strong man of God with much integrity and the heart of an angel. Sergeant Dunham touched many hearts and souls through song in playing the piano. He used the piano to minister to people who were down and feeling lost. Sergeant Dunham encouraged me to obtain faith in running track. His words inspired me to keep moving forward and minister to people through my God given talent to run track. Sergeant Dunham was a man of passion and integrity that loved to help people grow and conquer through any force or task.

In conclusion these men have touched many lives of the young and the old whether it's here in Augusta or overseas in Iraq. They have created legacies that will live on and on. They've also opened up many doors and inspired many new beginnings in my life. Therefore, I am honored and delighted to call First Sergeant William C. Evans and Sergeant Robert Dunham my African American heroes."

# Regimental NCO Academy commandant acknowledges the importance of education

By Molly Swift

**1. July's theme is "Pride in Service" when we acknowledge the roles and accomplishments of NCOs - we also celebrate the birth and independence of our nation. Are these two related and if so can you explain how?**

All NCOs set goals for themselves; once the decision is made, it is the "birth" of a new facet of their lives. These goals allow the NCO to gain the independence that they need to propel them to the next level in their lives; whether it is in their education, their careers or personal goals. Like the independence of our nation, NCO accomplishments will bring about great and positive changes in the lives of the citizens of our great nation.

**2. You indicated in your blog that education is vital to a Soldier's success because it will assist him or her to "seek positions of greater responsibility." Do you see this mentality to be a core difference to previous years - it seems that in years gone by many Soldiers were expected to remain focused on combat and not worry so much about career progression?**

It's so important that our NCO's understand the role of education. It's always tossed out "We are a smarter Army now" - I've heard that term so often - as you go through school and then to complete this stage of your life it is that education that will help you. I joined the Army as a very young, inexperienced and uneducated non-commissioned officer and rose up through the ranks and now I'm here to ensure that every single Soldier gets an education. That's been my goal for 27 years, making sure that they are educated. With

every window of opportunity I'm given, I take that chance to drive that point home. Education is the backbone of every career, both formal and informal, to be successful.

In the academy I post an education board - not a PT board - and I use it as a motivational tool. You and I are sergeant first class, but I see that you are working on your PhD so that's a driver for me. I want to get there and with the support we provide that goal is possible.

**3. Education is the theme for August - how will Fort Gordon observe this month and what kind of activities can we expect to see?**

We are providing briefs on the education services that are available. It's not just for the academy but the academy feels it's important and it's something that we've done before and opened to all - spouses and families.

**4. Do you feel the greater availability of accredited online education entities such as Troy University and the University of Phoenix has led to a revolution of individual aspirations to become more educated and skilled?**

Maybe not so much a revolution - and I don't know that the existence of online schools are altering the perception of Soldiers, but the availability of online education has enhanced the experience and encouraged Soldiers to become engaged in education. On my last deployment, everywhere I went from Afghanistan, the horn of Africa to Kuwait, someone was talking education and they were all able to choose it as an option. You can't get anywhere without it - it is preparedness for life. I keep telling Soldiers, "you want to start during your Army ca-



reer - it's almost too late when you retire!"

**5. Talk to us about blogging which is another communication tool that the Army seems to welcome. How useful is it in conveying the Army's messages to include expounding on the themes of the Year of the NCO?**

Blogging is just a way to communicate and express yourself - to get across the Army's message. So once you put that blog out there, it's easier to get feedback. The social networking thing - that's just a way to get your message out there and we will continue doing this - I get tons of feedback and some of it I might not want but it helps further the message. And it reaches all over the place - it doesn't matter where you are, could be Georgia or Utah or Kansas. It is a useful tool; especially because by looking at the written word you are given an opportunity to jog your memory and you can respond to what other people say. And that kind of conversation is what the Army needs.

***"...the availability of online education has enhanced the experience and encouraged Soldiers to become engaged in education."***

# 2009 Year of the NCO August



## Education... Military and Civilian

...The most powerful weapon  
in the Army's Arsenal

CPL Milisa D. Harper  
B Co 551st Signal Battalion  
Operations NCO



ARMY STRONG  
"STRENGTH LIKE NO OTHER"



# Education blog

By CSM Vernon Praymous

The focus of this blog is "Education."

As the commandant of the Signal Regiment Noncommissioned Officer Academy, located at Fort Gordon, Ga., I am continually exposed to large amounts of information and various opportunities to learn new things. Technology is ever-evolving which makes it necessary that Signal Soldiers keep up with the most up-to-date changes in technology. Having the ability to adapt to an ever-changing world is key to a Soldier's success.

In addition to being adaptable, a Soldier must also set goals for himself, seek positions of greater responsibility and pursue opportunities to further his education. These small steps will help him to separate himself from his peers in this competitive Army.

I am a firm believer that "you shouldn't put all of your eggs in one basket" meaning that although I have had a very successful career as a Soldier, I am aware that one day, I will need to retire and let someone else fill the position of command sergeant major. Knowing this, it is my personal responsibility to plan for a future outside of the military. My career path is grounded in technology. We live in a technological society where jobs and careers are attached to degrees awarded to deserving individuals who have worked hard to earn the right to walk across stage and graduate from the college of their choice. Once you have achieved this goal, various windows of opportunity will begin to open for you. Your lifestyle will improve, as well as, your financial resources.

That recently earned degree has made it possible for you to separate yourself from your peers. You are now able to enter into lucrative careers with benefits, higher pay, manageable hours and safe working conditions. You now have options and do not have to wait helplessly on a Social Security check to arrive, upon retirement. Even in a thriving economy, many employers today look to hire applicants who have degrees first, to handle the excessive information that runs their organizations.

Many opportunities for skilled laborers have been outsourced to third world countries, and jobs are becoming increasing harder to obtain due to the large amounts of uneducated individuals who are competing for the positions that don't require a degree.

It is a fact that people who earn the higher degrees get the higher pay and I explain this concept to my staff and faculty at the RNCOA every chance that I get. I learned this concept early in my career and this knowledge aided me in developing ways to motivate my Soldiers to better themselves through furthering their education.

Our motto at the Signal Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy is "Train to Lead, Lead to Train." In order for me to expect my Soldiers to follow me, I must be a great leader and lead by example. I graduated with a Masters degree from Excelsior College and hold a Bachelor degree in Liberal Arts from Excelsior College as well as a Bachelor in Communications from the University of Maryland. At the RNCOA, over 50 percent of the staff have either earned or are pursuing degrees. A few of the staff members and their accomplishments include:

SFC Ann Renay Pruitt: Signal Regimental Year of the

NCO liaison has completed requirements for her PhD in Organization and Management with an Information Technology Specialization from Capella University. She is currently working on her dissertation and is scheduled to graduate in March 2010. SFC Pruitt holds an Associate's Degree in Technology from Pierce College, a Bachelors of Science in Liberal Arts from Excelsior College and an Executive MBA from Troy University in Information Technology.

SFC Zschiechrich Moore: Signal Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy ANCOC SGL is pursuing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration/ Human Resource Management from Columbia Southern University. SFC Moore is due to graduate in May 2010. SFC Bridget Porter: Signal Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy Test Control Officer is pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Troy University. She is due to graduate in December 2009.

SFC Christopher Tison: Signal Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy ANCOC SGL is pursuing a Bachelor's in Computer Science from Grantham University. He is due to graduate in August 2010. SFC Tison currently holds an Associate's Degree in Computer Science.

SFC Archie Williams: Signal Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy ANCOC SGL is pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration with a Human Resource Management concentration from Baker College. He is scheduled to graduate in June 2009.

SFC Michael Whittaker: Signal Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy contractor with LinQuest Corporation is pursuing a Bachelor's of Arts in Organizational Leadership from Breneau University with a projected graduation date of May 2011.

SSG Nicholas P. Jones: Signal Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy S-3 NCO is pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from American Military University.

Mr. Johnny Britt: Retired from the Army, but still serving our Signal Soldiers as an instructor at the Signal Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy. Mr. Britt continues to pursue his degree.

I am very proud of these NCOs, former NCOs and leaders. They lead by example and are great role models for others in the academy to follow. Education is important because it impacts our development and stimulates our economic growth. Education inspires confidence and provides our Soldiers with the skills needed to participate in our ever-changing world. It makes us self-reliant and aware of the opportunities and rights provided to us by being citizens of this beautiful country. The right to earn an education is one that our Soldiers die to defend every day. Don't let their lives have been taken in vain. Get out there and sign up for a college course, and encourage your Soldiers to do the same. I look forward to your responses to this blog and hope that my words have encouraged you to take advantage of this invaluable resource.

Join this blog at <http://nco.theopendemo.com/blog/?p=238>

*CSM Vernon R. Praymous, Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy commandant posted this blog on April 23, 2009.*

# 2009 Year of the NCO

July



## “Pride of Service” Past & Present

**ISG Robert A. Hyatt**  
**Regimental Noncommissioned Officers Academy**  
**Detachment**  
**Fort Meade, Maryland**

**ARMY STRONG**   
“STRENGTH LIKE NO OTHER” U.S. ARMY

# What every command sergeant major should know

By CSM Jeffrey J. Mellinger

A good friend of mine, about to become a nominative-level command sergeant major, asked me for some thoughts on what it took to serve at that level. I thought for some time about what a command sergeant major should be, know, and do at the nominative level, and this document is the result.

It also occurred to me that every command sergeant major has the same responsibilities, albeit at different levels. Therefore, here are some of my thoughts on the subject. Please feel free to share this with others, and I welcome all improvement suggestions. Good luck, and remember – the higher you climb the flagpole, the more your rear shows.

- Never, ever, embarrass or place your commander in a spot. There are many ways to avoid this, but the easiest is to always do the right thing, and don't do anything that may have the appearance of impropriety. If it appears so, Soldiers will believe it so.

- Be the commander's eyes and ears, and say what needs saying. You should not have to ask to see your commander on enlisted or command matters – you are on the personal staff, and should have unimpeded access.

- The position is bigger than you are. Simply put, be ever mindful that you are but a transient in the position, and you are there to serve, not be served. If ever a decision needs making which could possibly jeopardize the integrity or value of the position, you must choose keeping the position intact.

- Report every meal, gift, trinket or benefit to your legal team. There are laws, and you may break one unknowingly. "I'm sorry" won't cut it.

- Take time every day to talk to one Soldier, civilian or Family member about something, anything. Just take the time. It will help keep your feet on the floor and your mind on the matter at hand – accomplishing the mission while caring for the troops.

- Always remember that you live in a glass house. It comes equipped with listening devices and a full complement of reporters. Periodically ask someone on the outside (a

trusted agent – such as the deputy, another senior NCO, or the IG) what you and your business look like to them. It will help keep you honest and avoid negative appearances.

- Visit every unit at least quarterly. More frequently than this may be mission impossible, and you will become a burden without trying.

- Spend quality time with each unit, but not more than two or three days. Benjamin Franklin, Poor Richard's Almanac, 1736, said, "Fish and visitors smell in three days." Don't stay long enough to become a "fish," but stay long enough to have a meaningful visit. As bad as those who stay too long are the ones who come only for the "bennies" (the annual BBQ, the VIP visit, the foreign wings, etc.), but depart immediately.

- Keep a pocket full of tokens (coins, gadgets, etc.) for presentation, but have someone keep a running list to eliminate the question about how you disbursed the items. I don't like giving repeat objects, as it tends to cheapen the act. Moreover, I personally do not give coins for the sake of giving coins (glad-handing) – they ought to recognize achievement or accomplishment and mean something (as they are regulated and intended).

- Take the time to have meaningful talks with NCOs and Soldiers. See them where they work, doing what they do. Remember that these are the really important people in your outfit; the ones who make the rest of us look good. Take the time to let them know that you know what they do for all of us.

- When you visit units, know that you will generally see what's working. You need also to see what is not working, as your job requires you to propose fixes. Be inquisitive, but do not become an inspector. Point out what is working well, and what needs addressing.

- Find out who and where every each is located. You have units and personnel that nobody ever visits,



but without whom we could not do what we do. Find and recognize every Soldier you can. A handshake and a look-them-in-the-eyes thank-you go further and mean more than most people realize.

- Help commanders and their senior NCOs develop as a team. Build command teams and trust of each in the other. Watch for senior NCOs who are not supportive of the commander, and for commanders who do not utilize their NCOs to the fullest.

- Watch what you say in which forum. Remember everyone will pass your off-handed comments as new policy, and most of the time without your knowledge.

- Never have "sensing sessions." They are for chaplains and IGs, not command sergeants majors. Sergeants major do their sensing by routinely talking to Soldiers, civilians and Family members. NCO calls are good and can be productive, but bring something germane or pertinent to talk about. Stay abreast of current policies, procedures and doctrine so you can speak with authority. However, if you do not know for sure, do not give an

answer. When you say, "I'll get back to you," do it!

- Be as upbeat and optimistic as possible when speaking to groups. Avoid "woe is me" discussions and attitudes. If the discussion turns to something negative, be truthful and honest, factual and forthright, but never pessimistic. Soldiers look to you for your steadfastness and rock-solid demeanor, not for whining and crying. If there is a problem, solve it, or do the best you can with it.

- Find out what your NCOs and Soldiers are concerned with. You are their representative, and you must know what concerns them in order to be most effective.

- Don't forget about the staff. They, too, have need and want of your guidance, opinions and thoughts. Part of your job is to work with the staff to ensure sharing of information and coordination exists as appropriate.

- Talk to your Soldiers about the benefits of military life. Discussions sometimes seem to sway towards what's wrong or not good enough. How do you measure the security you feel on post? How about the benefits we tend to take for granted (commissary, post office, exchange, health and dental, schools)? Where is there more equal opportunity, where truly your work is measured on performance and potential, not skin color, religion or sex? We are in the profession of arms, and the price for our benefits is selfless service, honor, duty, and country first.

- Think Army and think Purple. Learn how each MOS interchanges and assists the other. Learn how each component contributes to your organization and mission. Recognize how each service plays a role. And learn how to communicate the importance of all of this to your Soldiers and NCOs.

- Accept that your life belongs to your Soldiers. You must be available for each when they need you - not when you want to. Your place is with your Soldiers, not in the boardroom. Can you ever tell your troops that you can't visit training or operations because you have meetings, or that your e-mail won't let you go?

- Be compassionate, yet firm. See the issue from more than one side. Empathize, understand, ask questions, and help others come to their own solutions. Learn to give steering corrections and offer suggestions rather than

**"Always remember that you live in a glass house. It comes equipped with listening devices and a full complement of reporters. Periodically ask someone on the outside what you and your business look like to them. It will help keep you honest and avoid negative appearances."**

give direction. Don't shirk from taking a position on an issue. Check your facts and get input, but take a position. Make a decision. Stick by your decisions, but don't be afraid to admit that you never intended to go to Abilene, and get the car turned around.

- Never take on public challenges. Let things pass, and save the correction for a private moment as soon as possible. Learn how to take cheap shots without visible emotion. The shooter will become small from embarrassment, and others will think more of you if you are unflappable.

- Check everything before you make a recommendation or decision. Learn how to quietly "run the wickets" or "check the traps."

- Keep a circle of friends you can call anytime about anything, but keep the circle known only to you. The decisions and recommendations must be yours, but wise leaders always seek other opinions and viewpoints.

- Tough challenge here. Learn to be more demure. [*dictionary defines demure as Adj. 1. Modest and reserved in manner or behavior. 2. Affectedly shy, modest, or reserved.*] Speak quietly and carry a big brain. Get beyond being a battalion CSM or 1SG. Speak with authority when you speak, and speak loudly if you have to, but do most of your work quietly and steadily. But be a command sergeant major. One of my great mentors said often that, "... if buck sergeants used all the authority given by law and regulation, they would scare all of us..."

- Become more introspective, and take time to think out all the implications and downwind effects of the next words out of your mouth. Think long and hard before you speak.

- What will your legacy say about you? When you leave, what will be different about your organization? How high will you reach on the wall to leave your mark?

- Only reserve those things to do

yourself that only you can do. You have great Soldiers and civilians - let them do the job for which they trained.

- Find ways to recognize and thank someone more than you find ways to point out flaws. The recipient of recognition will work harder for you and the organization as a result.

- Enforce standards. Sounds easy, but to do this, you have to know and be able to teach correct procedures, policies and standards. And the hardest part for many is to stop and make the correction, rather than walk on by and pretend not to see.

- Soldiers do exactly in war as they do in training. No seatbelts in training equals death in war (and peace). No helmets in tactical vehicles equal head injuries and death. No muzzle awareness and weapons safety checks equal negligent discharge fatalities and injuries. Don't wear eye protection in training? You will see Soldiers blinded needlessly.

- Set the example. Be fit, professional, punctual, and knowledgeable. Be approachable. Read over your promotion orders, charter and appointment certificate again.

- Be physically fit. Do your physical fitness training with your Soldiers. Nothing worse than a senior leader who skates by without doing PT just because they can. After all, who will challenge you? Your conscience should!

- Help junior officers feel comfortable talking to the CSM. You have much to offer, and mentoring young officers should be on your agenda every day. Take an active role developing officers - it is a part of your charter.

- Do not fail to investigate. Despite initial appearances, or the ease with which you can summarily dismiss accusations of wrongdoing, allow every charge to run its course in the proper fashion, through the proper chan-

(Continued on page 32)

nels. Do not allow dirt to be swept under a rug. And when results warrant, take appropriate actions.

- Support equal opportunity. Sure sounds easy when you say it fast. If you routinely treat Soldiers with dignity and respect (you can be hard and fair simultaneously), you will do fine. You will surely get into trouble if you ignore, you fail to correct, or you fail to act. Nobody should get preferential treatment, and if you do so, you will set yourself up for unequal opportunity allegations.

- Sexual harassment goes to war as often as it goes to the main post area. Reflect for a moment on all the senior leaders you know who destroyed their career with malice and afthought through sexual misconduct or inappropriate relationships of some sort.

- Travel when and where you must, but remember you have an obligation to taxpayers to give them a day's work for a day's pay. Going TDY to visit friends, see a new place, go shopping, or play a new course are not only illegal, but destroy Soldier confidence in you. Go to or hold conferences as you must, but be careful that you can say with certainty that you used the time and money as taxpayers expect.

- Government cellular telephones are for government calls. Don't be lulled into thinking that the plan allows a certain number of monthly minutes, so it doesn't matter whom you call when from where. You are accountable, and legal opinions will tell you that personal calls from government cell phones are not legal.

- Learn to speak and write using the English language, and do so without profanity. Cursing is colorful, but fails to convey meaning. In addition, if you are inarticulate, others will not take you seriously or consider you competent or even intelligent. In the words of Von Steuben, on choosing

**“What will your legacy say about you? When you leave, what will be different about your organization? How high will you reach on the wall to leave your mark?”**

NCOs, “.....and none can be said to be qualified who do not read and write in a tolerable manner.”

- Be social, but do not fraternize. Attend functions, but know when it's time to leave. Be certain that you never drive after drinking, regardless of the amount. Soldier perception will be that you drink and drive. Can you imagine what the MPs at the gate will say after you drive through with a hint of alcohol on your breath? Just don't do it.

As I stated in the beginning, this is not an all-inclusive or ordered list. It is just a collection of thoughts intended to cause you to think before you do something that will cost you your credibility, your career, or your future.

Best wishes for continued success caring for, training, leading, and maintaining America's sons and daughters.

*CSM Jeffrey J. Mellinger assumed duties as the U.S. Army Materiel Command's 13th command sergeant major on Nov. 2, 2007. CSM Mellinger was drafted on April 18, 1972, at Eugene, Ore. Following basic and advanced training at Fort Ord, Calif., he completed airborne training at Fort Benning, Ga. His first assignment was in the Federal Republic of Germany as a unit clerk. He has held every leadership position from squad leader to command sergeant major and is a graduate of Class 37 and the Command Sergeants Major Course, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas.*



## 5th Signal Command recognizes top NCO

SSG Brian M. Hong (left), 509th Signal Battalion, and SPC Daniel L. Justice (center), 2nd Signal Brigade, are recognized as 5th Signal Command Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier of the Year during the 2009 Soldier and NCO of the Year ceremony, while CSM Major Marilyn Washington, 5th Signal command sergeant major, applauds at the Schuh Theater on Sullivan Barracks. The two NCOs are also the Network Enterprise Technology Command/9th Signal Command Soldier and NCO of the Year for 2009.

# My proudest NCO moment

By SGT Tonya Y. Robertson

Every day as an NCO provides me many occasions for jubilation.

There are no lost moments or accomplishments too small for a person as quickly moved, as emotionally empathic, and as consummately receptive to the positives as I am.

Yet, when I deployed to Iraq as a specialist, I was very afraid.

I was afraid to leave my 1-year-old daughter with her grandparents. I was proud of the fact that I was serving in this nation's great Army, standing for freedom, fighting for justice, and securing peace for those who were afraid just like me.

In the middle of May 2007, I had been in Iraq for about five months. I was ready to go on R & R Leave. I missed wearing my regular clothes, driving a car, having reliable internet service, making anytime phone calls, sleeping in my bed, and going to grocery stores. Most of all I missed my family.

Arriving at the Atlanta Hartsfield International Airport to a standing ovation made my heart swell and a lump form in my throat. I walked through the corridor thinking "You are a Soldier. You are not supposed to let these wonderful people see you cry." Even though they stood and clapped for everyone, it felt good to be recognized and appreciated. The R & R time went by so fast. In the blink of an eye, it was time to return to "business as usual."

My last order of business was to check my Army Knowledge Online e-mail account. The e-mail subject read "Congratulations." I thought I had won a prize. The text of the message was "The PSB at Fort Bliss will cut your orders." Immediately thinking "promotion," I went to the Army Human Resource Command website. I had made cut-off and my date of rank was 1 June 2007. On 15 June 2007, after I had returned and settled into

my Containerized Housing Unit, I was promoted and reenlisted on Forward Operating Base Marez, Mosul, Iraq. There aren't many times in Soldiers' careers that they reenlist and get promoted in the Biblical cradle of life, Nineveh. My service, my job, and my life have always been "business as usual."

On the day I was unofficially inducted into the NCO corps, there was the traditional commander's speech, the ceremony, and my departing words in conclusion. My words were simply "Thank you to all who helped me get here. Now I have got to get back to work."

Now I had four troopers. They were the same troopers that had and would always stand beside me in the fight and that had looked up to me before I had the stripes. There was nothing that I would tell them to do that I wouldn't do myself.

Those Soldiers gave me reason to be proud. I escorted them to the education center where, with the assistance of an education counselor, I helped them decide what their educational goals were. I coached them on the range and encouraged them during PT. I was their first NCO since AIT. They were all as different as people are, and were treated as such. My Soldiers were in serious denial when the time came for my PCS. The fact that it was hard for them to see me go was my proudest moment as an NCO. The good leaders are allowed to just leave. The bad leaders are the ones that Soldiers are glad to see go. Outstanding leaders--the ones that talk to their Soldiers, know their Soldiers, and really care about their Soldiers, are the ones the troopers never want to see leave.

As a human resource sergeant, there are many facets to my day. When I finish a report, when I assist a fellow Soldier, when I enter an office and everyone smiles, I am proud. When I meet or exceed a suspense

item target, a goal, a timeline, a deadline, or other administrative function; those are the moments when I take a breath, say a small prayer of thanks, and get back to work.

At the end of the day when my daughter and I are both doing homework are the moments I treasure the most. I am proud of her when she learns a new letter of the alphabet or a song we can sing together. I am proud of me when I finish an assignment, a class or a final exam. For me, every moment is special. Every day offers a new lesson to learn and I attempt to take full advantage of it. You cannot take anything back. Once an action is done or words are said, there is no rewind, no retakes, and no blooper reels. Life in full action includes the small moments, the big moments, the accomplishments, and the disappointments. I am a proud Soldier, a proud mother, and with many more mountains to climb, a very proud noncommissioned officer every day.

*SGT Robertson is a Soldier, parent, and poet, assigned to the Regimental Non-commissioned Officer Academy, at Fort Gordon, Ga. She is attending Grantham University in pursuit of an associates degree and finalizing production of her first book.*



## ACRONYM QuickScan

**AIT** - Advance Individual Training  
**NCO** - Noncommissioned Officer  
**PCS** - Permanent Change of Station  
**PT** - Physical Training  
**R & R** Rest and Recuperation Leave

**"The bad leaders are the ones that Soldiers are glad to see go. Outstanding leaders--the ones that talk to their Soldiers, know their Soldiers, and really care about their Soldiers, are the ones the troopers never want to see leave."**



# 2009 Year of the NCO

September

**Mental Fitness**

**Strong Mind**

**Strong Body**

**SGT Axel L. Pagan**

**25B20**

**HHC 162nd Infantry Brigade**

**Fort Polk, Louisiana**

**ARMY STRONG**   
"STRENGTH LIKE NO OTHER" 

# My proudest NCO moment

By SFC Jacqueline A. Pope

Acknowledgement of my skills beyond my years in the military produced the proudest moment of my career.

Less than eight months after completing AIT, I completed the Primary Leadership Development Course and became a sergeant. Most of my peers wished me well. However, others thought that I was promoted too fast. In my naiveté, I thought I knew everything I needed. I could call cadence, run fast, and counsel Soldiers. Although that certainly was an over simplification of an NCO's duties; that was what I thought I needed to be a good NCO.

When I got pinned, I strutted around on a false cloud of euphoria until I received an assignment for a restricted tour to Korea. I had never been out of the United States. Never in my wildest imaginings did I think that I would leave the country without my husband who was also a newly promoted sergeant. Those orders were the pin that burst my bubble. Right away I sank into a pit of self-doubt, constantly questioning whether I was ready to be an NCO in Korea.

Although I was pretty confident about my abilities as an NCO at Fort Campbell, I was extremely nervous and unsure about what Korea expected in an NCO.

But orders are orders. So I laced my boots; packed up my duffel bag; put my family and personal affairs in order; and off I went.

When I arrived in Korea, I moved around a couple of times which made me further believe I was not fully prepared to take on the challenge of being an NCO in Korea. Finally, the command sergeant major assigned me to work as a Battalion Operation Cell NCO. I was not happy about that because I wanted to work in a Technical Control Facility since my only assignment before this was tactical gained while working in an Electronic Maintenance Shop. I thought, here I was with the opportunity to work strategic, and the opportunity was going to be squandered on BOC.

However, 41st Signal Battalion was a very busy unit with it carrying half of the responsibility for strategic

communication in South Korea. I felt overwhelmed from the amount of information being sought out at the BOC. The BOC NCO had to possess an understanding of troubleshooting; a keen awareness of communication projects, and to provide guidance based on the known capabilities of the 41st Signal Battalion assets during the planning of exercises. Here I was a sergeant with one year of experience on the tactical side of the 25P MOS, and no experience on the strategic side outside of AIT.

Although I had only been in the Army for two years when I arrived at 41st Signal Battalion, I was actually 28 years old. Everyone around me thought that I had been in the Army for a longer period of time because of my age. I tried to conceal the fact that I had been in the Army for such a short period of time.

During my off duty time, I would visit some of the 24-hour TCFs to get training from some of the Soldiers, with whom I attended AIT. They helped me gain greater knowledge and understanding of the normal day-to-day operations. Eventually, I began learning equipment capabilities and troubleshooting methods. As my knowledge base grew, my briefings to the S-3 had fewer gaps to fill, and my confidence level rose. My confidence was so high until a senior NCO pulled me to the side to explain to me that I needed to calm down and only brief pertinent information concerning questions asked. I understood the concept but I had a very difficult time learning how to wait until the S-3 would ask another question instead of rambling on with insignificant information.

Then just as I was getting comfortable in the job, my position changed to circuit actions NCO. In this job I had to track from "cradle to grave" activity on all circuits within the battalion. In this position, I learned how to be respectful but firm with officers and senior NCOs to ensure all activities focused on the primary mission. Also I learned a lot about building good working relationships with an understanding founded on the need to mutually support one another. At some point we all need a helping hand.

Once my tour was over, I was so

surprised with the overwhelmingly positive response I received from everyone concerning my upcoming permanent change of duty.

There was a senior NCO who told me that the only thing that he would advise me to do would be to start learning what is actually happening outside of the TCF. He told me to not only find out what the problem is by talking to users on the phone but get in the habit of physically going to the user locations, if possible, to understand the problem more fully and possibly assist in solving it quicker. I then told him that I know that I have a lot to work on and hopefully my next assignment will afford me the opportunity to continue to grow as an NCO. Then he asked me about my previous assignments and I conveyed that I had been at Fort Campbell for one year working in EMS. He waited for me to continue and then I said that I have been in the Army for three years.

My proudest moment as an NCO was when he looked at me in amazement and said that he would have never guessed that. He apologized for leaning on me so heavily in the past. Then I told him that if it were not for NCOs like him pushing me as hard as he did then I would not have developed so far in such a short period of time. I then smiled and thanked him for the advice.

*SFC Pope serves as a training developer in the Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy.*



## ACRONYM QuickScan

**AIT** - Advanced Individual Training  
**BOC** - Battalion Operation Cell  
**EMS** - Electronic Maintenance Shop  
**MOS** - Military occupational specialty  
**NCO** - Noncommissioned Officer  
**PLDC** - Primary Leadership Development Course  
**TCF** - Technical Control Facility

# Year of the NCO

October



**The Army is One Big Family  
....and Leadership Runs in the Family.**



**SFC Ronaldo K. Branch**  
Fort Gordon, Georgia

**SSG Takethia C. Branch**  
Fort Gordon, Georgia

**SSG Jennifer M. Lee**  
Fort Gordon, Georgia

**SSG Thomas Lee, Jr.**  
Fort Detrick, Maryland

## Married Army Couples

**ARMY STRONG**  
"STRENGTH LIKE NO OTHER"

# Several major changes reduce Field Manuals

By Roger Spears, Alonzo Long, Rick San Miguel

During a recent Functional Area Analysis hosted at the Signal Center, Fort Gordon. The FAA indicated that FM 6-02.71 does not adequately address the separation of duties and responsibilities between the Army Service component command G-6 and the Signal Command (Theater) commander. This, in turn, led to the belief by some that the tasks and functions performed by the two organizations are largely the same and duplicative. This is primarily the result of the SC(T) commander also being designated as the ASCC G-6 with no delineation specified as to the different organizations and their respective missions.

To address the concerns of the FAA, BG Jeffrey Foley, Signal Center of Excellence and Fort Gordon commanding general and MG Susan Lawrence, 9th Signal Command (T) commanding general, Fort Huachuca, Ariz., requested that an in progress review hosted by the Doctrine Section, Fort Gordon with Net-

**“It’s easy to think of doctrine as being written by an enigmatic group of people known as “they,” but it is truly a regimental effort, and eventually, we will all have to operate within the doctrine that we have either helped build or failed to contribute to.”**  
(Author unknown)



work Enterprise Technology Command, U.S. Forces Command and various key stakeholders. After various discussions and staffing of the document within the community of key stakeholders, FM 6-02.71 was revised to clearly articulate the duties and responsibilities between the ASCC G-6 and the SC(T) commander. The anticipated publication of FM 6-02.71, Network Operations (Change 1) is November/December 2010 and will be available on Reimer Digital Library <http://www.adtdl.army.mil>

FM 6-02.71, Network Operations, was originally published in July 2009. It provides doctrine for the overall guidance and direction pertaining to the command and control of Army commu-

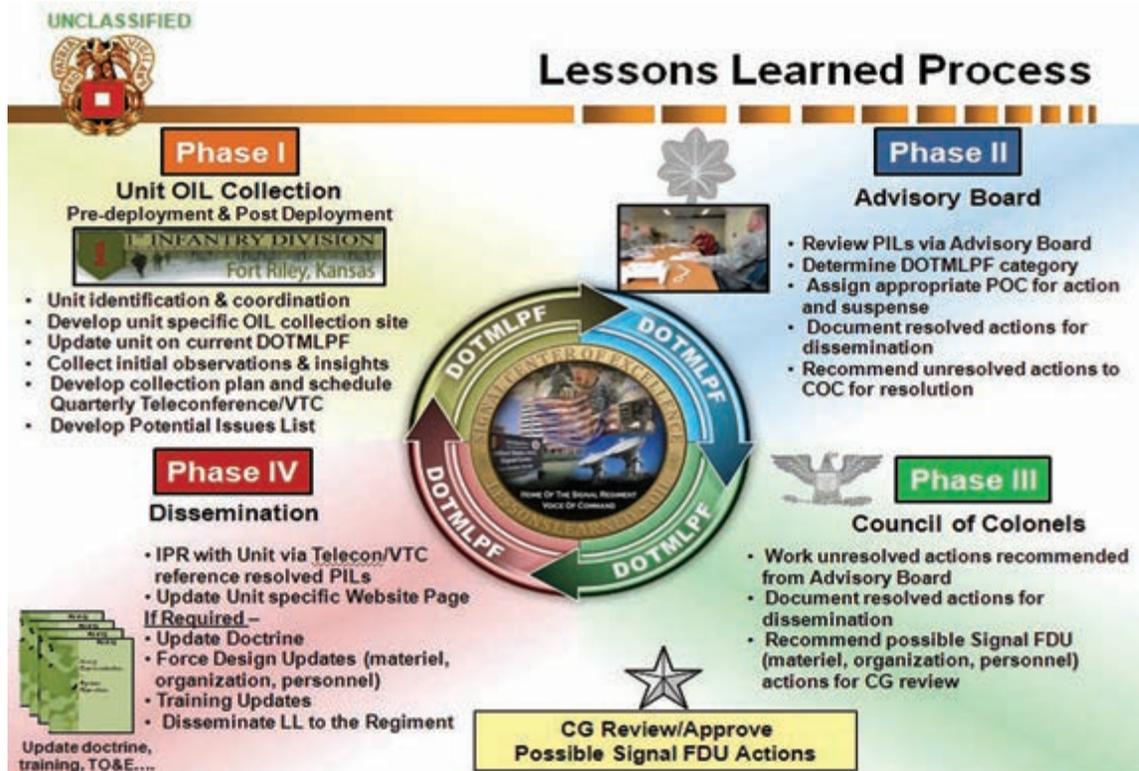
nications networks (voice, video, and data) and information services (collaboration, messaging, storage, mediation, etc.) throughout strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The current version of FM 6-02.71 is published and available on Reimer Digital Library <http://www.adtdl.army.mil>

## Signal Lessons Learned Task Force

The Signal Center of Excellence has implemented a “Signal Lessons Learned Task Force” to capture Signal observations, insights, and lessons learned from deployed units under doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, person-

nel, and facilities. The Signal Lessons Learned Task Force is available during-

**Pre-deployment --** Units receive a doctrinal, force structure, personnel, and lessons learned briefing to the G-6 and staff. The team establishes a working relationship with the G-6 and staff in their submission of OILs during pre-deployment, deployment and rotation back to home station. If requested by the unit a quarterly video teleconference/teleconference is prearranged to discuss OILs submitted by the unit during that quarter. A unit specific homepage will



(Continued on page 38)

be established for submission of the units OILs by the Signal Lessons Learned Task Force.

- During deployment. Units who are deployed and are interested in submitting their Signal OILs can do so by contacting the Signal Lessons Learned Task Force and coordinate by email or via VTC/teleconference for submission of their OILs during their deployment. The team establishes a working relationship with the G-6 and staff during their deployment and rotation back to home station. If requested by the unit a quarterly VTC/teleconference is prearranged to discuss OILs submitted by the unit during each quarter. A unit specific homepage will be established for submission of the units OILs by the Signal Lessons Learned Task Force.

- Post-deployment. The signal Lessons Learned Task Force is also available to discuss/capture Signal OILs that occurred during deployment. The team is available to provide the G-6 and staff a doctrinal, force structure, personnel, and lessons learned briefing. A unit specific homepage will be established for submission of further OILs and a VTC/teleconference can be arranged for further discussion of any OILs submitted.

Signal OILs for all three categories are posted on the Signal Lessons Learned Task Force home page on Army Knowledge Online by DOTMLPF. More information can be obtained at [www.gordon.army.mil/doctrine](http://www.gordon.army.mil/doctrine).

## Newly Published

### *FM 6-02.43, Signal Soldier's Guide*

This manual was first published in June 1995 as FM 11-43, Signal Leaders Guide, and was targeted to the junior signal officers and non-commissioned officers. The newly published manual, FM 6-02.43, Signal Soldiers Guide is a comprehensive guide for all signal Soldiers.

FM 6-02.43 addresses the Army's portion of the Global Information Grid, LandWarNet, and key roles and responsibilities that are critical to signal Soldiers at all echelons of employment. Tactical networks are no longer separate from the strategic structure as the systems employed at the tactical level rely on strategic network connectivity to operate effectively during all phases of operations. FM 6-02.43 covers signal support and the signal leader roles and responsibilities at all echelons from theater to the maneuver battalion S-6.

With the elimination of a signal battalion structure, the G-6 and S-6 now become the focal point for signal support requirements. The Signal Soldiers Guide addresses the challenges these changes pose as the G-6/S-6 organizations are restructured to support the modular construct, as well as, the responsibilities and coordination now required for LWN employment. This FM also outlines the roles of the signal company commander and support personnel in relation to the G-6/S-6.

FM 6-02.43 references commonly needed information on signal and retransmission site reconnaissance, signal input to the military decision making process, considerations for electromagnetic spectrum operations, and an overview of fielded communications systems and network services and capabilities. The manual also addresses communications electronics maintenance and captures the impacts on maintenance procedures and responsibilities as they relate to Army two-level maintenance policies. FM 6-02.43 is published and available on Reimer Digital Library <http://www.adtdl.army.mil>.

The FM is also available for ordering by the unit from the Army Publishing Directorate.

## Special Text 6-02.75, COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY OPERATIONS

Commanders and Soldiers in the field reported significant COMSEC operations issues that have a negative impact on operations in garrison and in deployed environments. In order to meet the expectations of commanders in this modernized net-centric environment a DOTMLPF assessment was initiated by the Signal Center of Excellence to capture a holistic review of COMSEC operations.

As more capable networking systems are being fielded, challenges are being experienced in COMSEC operations, crypto net planning and distribution. The challenges in COMSEC operations that commanders and Soldiers are encountering as well as the findings from the DOTMLPF assessment resulted in the Commanding General, United States Army Signal Center of Excellence directing the doctrine developers to develop ST 6-02.75, COMSEC Operations. ST 6-02.75 is a "How to Guide" for COMSEC operations. It provides guidance on the employment, handling, and storage of COMSEC materials by our current operational forces. This ST also addresses conceptual COMSEC operations, responsibilities, and procedures for key management infrastructure (KMI).

ST 6-02.75 also provides the fundamental principles for COMSEC operations in support of strategic, operational, and tactical mission objectives. It also provides roles and responsibilities for Soldiers providing COMSEC planning, management, and accounting services in support of Army transformation objectives and LWN capabilities. This manual will continue to evolve as Black Key capabilities are fielded and as we proceed in our efforts to establish and mature our objective KMI.

ST 6-02.75 is published and available on Reimer Digital Library <http://www.adtdl.army.mil> under Commandant Approved Training.

## ST 6-02.53, TACTICAL RADIO OPERATIONS

Ongoing missions and engagements mandate that tactical radio systems remain technologically superior to any threat to provide a maximum degree of survivability for commanders and Soldiers on today's battlefield. On the modular battlefield units require radio communication equipment that improves their warfighting capability. Tactical radios provide the critical command, control, and communication link between commanders and Soldiers.

FM 6-02.53, Tactical Radio Operations, which was recently published, serves as a reference document for tactical radio systems used on the modular battlefield. It does not replace field manuals or technical manuals governing combat net radios on equipment use. It provides doctrinal procedures and guidance for using tactical radios on the modern battlefield. FM 6-02.53 targets operators, supervisors, and planners, providing a common reference for tactical radios. It also provides a basic guidance and gives the system planner the necessary steps for network planning, interoperability considerations, and equipment capabilities. FM 6-02.53 is published and available on Reimer Digital Library <http://www.adtdl.army.mil>.

We encourage you to contact us and provide feedback on the doctrine products we are developing to ensure that signal doctrine remains relevant. Weekly doctrinal updates

are available on AKO at <https://www.ua.army.mil/suite/folder/926805>. CAC login is required.

As stated in past articles, this effort is too large and too important to be done in a vacuum. You can contact us via email at [signal.doctrine@us.army.mil](mailto:signal.doctrine@us.army.mil), or by phone. POCs for Signal Regiment Doctrine development are: Rick Meredith, DSN 780-6465, commercial 706-791-6465 or Rick San Miguel, DSN 780-6506, commercial 706-791-6506.

*Mr. Roger Spears works for RLM Communications, Inc. supporting the Concepts and Doctrine Branch, Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate, U.S. Army Signal Center of Excellence, Fort Gordon, GA. He is a retired Army sergeant major with assignments including both echelons above and below corps signal units.*

*Mr. Alonzo Long is a Department of the Army Civilian, and presently holds the position of Signal doctrine writer, Concepts and Doctrine Branch, Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate, U.S. Army Signal Center of Excellence, Fort Gordon, GA. His background spans 23 years of service to the Signal Regiment.*

*Mr. Rick San Miguel is a Department of the Army civilian and presently holds a position of Signal doctrine writer, Concepts and Doctrine Branch, Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate, U.S. Army Signal Center of Excellence Fort Gordon, GA. His background spans 30 years of service to the Signal Regiment.*

## ACRONYM QuickScan

AKO – Army Knowledge Online  
ASCC – Army Service component commander  
ATTP – Army Tactics Techniques and Procedures  
BCT – Brigade combat team  
CAC – Common access card  
CADD – Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate  
C-E – Communications and electronics  
COMSEC – Communications security  
DOTMLPF – Doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities  
FM – Field manuals  
FMI – Field manual interim  
GIG – Global Information Grid  
GNEC – Global Enterprise Network Construct  
GSTM – General subject technical manual  
KMI – Key Management Infrastructure  
LWN – LandWarNet  
MDMP – Military decision making process  
OIL – Observations, insights, lessons learned  
POC – Point of contact  
ST – Special text  
TC – Training circulars  
VTC – Video teleconference  
WIN-T – Warfighter Information Network-Tactical



## NCOs honored during Year of the NCO launch

*(Left to right) SFC Dolores Rivera, 52nd Signal Battalion, SFC Keith Cade, 509th Signal Battalion, and SSG Gabriel Burkman, SSG Beau Martindale, SSG Benjamin Wagner, and SGT Nathan Williams of the 720th EOD Company, are honored for their accomplishments and bravery during the Year of the Non-Commissioned Officer launch held at Schuh Theater, Sullivan Barracks Mannheim, Germany February 23, 2009. Throughout 2009, named The Year of the NCO by Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey, the U.S. Army recognizes the accomplishments and contributions of the NCO Corps.*

# Signaleers earn German proficiency badges

By CSM Kristine A. Purnell

In the spirit of marksmanship training and partnership, NCOs and Soldiers from the 69th Signal Battalion in Grafenwöhr, Germany were afforded the opportunity to compete for the German Armed Forces Badge for Weapons Proficiency called Schützenschnur.

The Schützenschnur is a decoration of the Bundeswehr, the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Germany, and is one of several foreign awards U.S. military personnel are authorized to wear on their dress uniforms.

SSG Marcelino Villali, the Battalion Training NCO, coordinated the training event in partnership with the German Army's German Military Representative for Grafenwöhr and Hohenfels. The training was hosted from 16-20 July 2009 in the Grafenwöhr Training Area.

To earn the award Soldiers must successfully shoot the German service rifle (G36), pistol (P8) and machine gun (MG3). The award grade (gold, silver, bronze) is determined by the overall score.

PFC Kevin Shank, a new arrival into the unit and one of six Soldiers to earn a roped silver medallion, called his participation "very challenging and a great opportunity to interact with the German Soldiers and fire their weapons." "The M63 machine gun is the largest weapon that I have ever fired and the biggest challenge because it was very hard to keep the weapon stable and be able to fire at the targets at the same time," he said. "The G36 rifle is one of the best weapons I have ever shot. It was an old Browning!"

Thirteen Soldiers from the 69th Signal Battalion were awarded the Schützenschnur by Oberstleutnant (lieutenant

colonel) Kussinger in a closing ceremony held on 5 August 2009. The Schützenschnur in Gold was awarded to SSG Marcelino Villali, SPC Bryan Carney, and PFC Brett Lopez. The Schützenschnur in Silver was awarded to SFC James Nejelski, SSG Antonio Frazier, SSG Bryan Hansen, SSG Jay Lopez, and PFC Kevin Shank. The Schützenschnur in Bronze was awarded to SPC Javier Acosta, SPC Alrice Barnes, SPC Adrian Daniel, and SPC Jeremy Uzzle.

CSM Kristine A. Purnell is the 69th Signal Battalion command sergeant major.



SSG Marcelino Villali fires the MG3 machine gun as Stabsfeldwebel (master sergeant) Ulrich Hübner verifies his accuracy.

# NCO forum kicks off year-long observance

By Jennifer Clampet

"At the front of every Army mission in the United States or overseas you'll find a noncommissioned officer. They know their missions, they know their equipment, but most importantly they know their Soldiers." The words,

attributed to Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, echoed off the walls in the Wiesbaden Fitness Center as NCOs from across the U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden sat in the bleachers and listened. The 102nd Signal Battalion's July 30 NCO Forum celebrated the Year of the NCO. And with the offerings of lectures

on issues such as the new GI Bill, the I A.M. Strong campaign and financial investments, the forum was also intended to accelerate the development of NCOs, said 102nd Signal Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Daniel Jr. About 200 NCOs attended lectures throughout the day-long event.

Guest speaker Command Sgt Maj. Darius ZaGara of the Joint Multinational Training Command noted that today's NCOs are asked to play the parts of leaders, counselors, financial planners and much more. "We are better," said ZaGara. "You are better because you don't fight just for the Constitution but for the men and women on your right and on your left. Simply put, you are the best."

CSM Ralph R. Beam, U.S. Army Europe command sergeant major, speaks to Soldiers during the 102d Signal Battalion NCO Forum held in January 2009. CSM Beam was one of many guest speakers invited to educate Army leaders in celebration of the "Year of the NCO."



Ms. Clampet works in the U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden Public Affairs Office.

# Interim test set for Tactical Radios-AN/PRM-34B

By LTC Marvin Jennings

An essential item in a radio maintainer, MOS 25U, preventive maintenance toolkit for troubleshooting the Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System, is a portable test set. The PRM-34 test set, NSN 6625-01-094-5646 is currently in the Army inventory. The test set checks for receiver sensitivity, frequency, and transmitter RF power.

Currently the Army is short over 3000 test sets, and parts for the existing system are not available. In 2009 the U.S. Army Test, Measurement, and Diagnostic Equipment Sup-

port Center reevaluated the requirements and specifications for the PRM-34 and determined that a replacement for the current test set is required. USATSC moved quickly to send out a request for information to industry for the PRM-34 replacement, the PRM-36.

Recognizing that a need existed and that it may take up to 18 months for development and fielding of the PRM-36, Agilent Technologies, Inc., took the initiative and developed an interim solution, the PRM-34B. The PRM-34B design is based on critical Soldier feedback.

In addition to meeting or exceeding all of the AN/PRM-34 specifications, the size and weight were reduced by 85%, making it extremely portable and allowing the radio test set to fit in the cargo pocket of the maintainer's uniform. These improvements were made while maintaining a rugged, weather-resistant design, which enables reliable field operation.

This new design also features an easy one-button press operation of all required Tx and Rx measurements while preserving the compatibility with existing AN/PRM-34 accessories. You can literally check out a radio and antenna in less than 30 seconds. Simply connect the radio, power up the tester, push the button, and key the handset of the radio to be tested.

All existing AN/PRM-34 connectors, cables, and load devices are compatible with the PRM-34B. The Radio Test Set is powered by a BA-5372/U battery which is currently in the military inventory and used with SINCGARS radios. These features facilitate making the PRM-34B an essential tool for all SINCGARS radio operators and maintainers.

The PRM-34 is not only for testing/troubleshooting the SINCGARS it can be used for other tactical radios (i.e. PRC-117, PRC-150, PRC-148, PSC-5D). The radios are connected to the test set, tuned to operating frequencies inside the PRM-34/SINCGARS radio spectrum (30 MHz to 88 MHz), and the radio handset is keyed. The PRM-34 then performs all tests automatically in approximately 15 seconds.

The Fort Gordon 25U Maintainer Course, 101st Air Assault Division, Tobyhanna Army Depot, the 25th Infantry Division in Alaska, and 45th IBCT ARNG are currently using the interim PRM-34 Portable Test Sets.

The PRM-34B is a commercial off-the-shelf item on the GSA website: [https://www.gsadvantage.gov/advgsa/advantage/main/start\\_page.do](https://www.gsadvantage.gov/advgsa/advantage/main/start_page.do)

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## ACRONYM QuickScan

COTS - Commercial off the shelf

RFI - Request for information

SINCGARS - Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System

TMDE - Test, measurement and diagnostic equipment

USATSC - U.S. Army Test Support Center

## New NCOs welcomed

By Chrystal Smith

"From this day forward, you will be changed forever." That was the message communicated to more than 60 newly inducted U.S. and German sergeants during a 102d Signal Battalion sponsored community induction ceremony in the Wiesbaden Fitness Center. CSM Michael Bartelle, Allied Command Operations command sergeant major, affirmed the noncommissioned officers as teammates, mentors, coaches and leaders in a keynote address accentuating the contributions of the NCO, and giving the inductees an insightful glimpse into their futures as members of the elite NCO corps. As the ceremony reminded the Soldiers of their credo, what's requested of them by their juniors and their charge of leadership they were additionally advised by leaders to maintain a consciousness of focus and appropriate leadership positioning.

German Soldiers were also inducted, symbolic of the global military environment. "We fight in a joint environment; this ceremony represents how we fight," said CSM Robert A. Daniel, Jr. The inductees represented the 102nd Signal Battalion, Wiesbaden Dental Clinic, Wiesbaden Health Clinic, 66th Military Intelligence Brigade, 212th Military Police Company and the 1st Armored Division Special Troops Battalion.



*German MSGT Martin Krause, 282nd Fuehrungsunterstuetzungsbataillon, walks through the arch of responsibility during the 102nd Signal Battalion's NCO induction ceremony held at the Wiesbaden Army Air Field Gym Jan. 23, 2009.*

*Ms. Smith works in the U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden Public Affairs Office.*

Enlisted news ... officer news ... warrant-officer news -- from the enlisted and officer divisions at Office Chief of Signal, Fort Gordon, Ga.

By MSG Shabazz S. McKenzie

Recently, members of the Office Chief of Signal Enlisted Division visited Fort Detrick, Md. to conduct a Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development session with the Soldiers assigned to the 302nd Signal Battalion and talk to the Soldiers working in MOSs 25P, 25S and 25T. We wanted to educate the NCOs, clear up any rumors, and address Soldiers' concerns.

Earlier this year, CSM Thomas Clark, regimental command sergeant major, visited the unit and gathered some of the Soldiers' concerns. One concern expressed was the future of MOS 25P.

As part of the follow-up on CSM Clark's visit, OCOS Enlisted Division members coordinated with CSM Willie Clemmons, 302nd Signal Battalion command sergeant major, SFC Nakita Crawford, 302nd Sig. Bn. S3 plans NCO and SFC Anthony Melecio, Fort Belvoir Technical Control Facility NCOIC, to schedule a date to visit the unit.

The briefing was successful and the senior NCOs made it happen.

The OCOS Enlisted Division attended an office call with CSM Clemmons where he expressed that he was pleased to know the resources that OCOS provided. He also said he was very interested in having OCOS visit again to discuss ongoing issues and concerns with MOS 25B. OCOS also met with LTC Douglas Orsi, 302nd Sig. Bn. commander and OCOS personnel explained to him that the main focus of the visit was to keep the Signal Regiment informed.

During a brief discussion about merging similar MOSs, OCOS members explained a detailed process that we periodically conduct with each Signal MOS called Viability Analysis and Feasibility Studies. This process logically evaluates whether an MOS is viable and considers courses of action such as merging or deleting MOSs.

During the NCO PD session, we discussed the roles and responsibilities of the Signal Personnel Development Office of OCOS. Additionally, we talked about how Soldiers can use our website and its products such as Monthly Posture Sheets and Promotion Trends for sergeant and staff sergeant ranks to become better leaders and better Soldiers.

One topic that garnered a lot of interest was the Monthly Posture Sheet. Soldiers were provided detailed instructions on how they could use the information on the Posture Sheet to predict future promotions and monitor MOS growth. NCOs can use the data to aid them while conducting their monthly counseling sessions with junior enlisted Soldiers.

We closed the session with a briefing on the "Way Ahead for MOS 25P." OCOS staff members set an objective focused on clearing up all rumors about MOS 25P. First, MOS 25P is currently managed under the Assignment Oriented Training Program. AOT was designed to prepare Soldiers for their initial assignment. MOS 25P has two tracks designed to do just that, they are called Additional Skill Identifiers 7D and 7E.

ASI 7D is given to Soldiers that are training on the tactical equipment/systems and ASI 7E is given to Soldiers who are trained on the strategic/fixed-station equipment/systems.

Next, we went over the Viability Analysis and Feasibility Studies done on MOSs 25P, 25S and 25T. Then we discussed Two Level Maintenance and its affect on MOS 25P. TLM changed the old concept of having four levels of maintenance (organizational, direct support, general support and depot) to the new two levels of maintenance--field and sustainment. TLM has the potential to cause MOS 25P to become a strategic-only MOS. Soldiers working this MOS will have very few opportunities to serve in deploying units. The only assignments available to them will be predominantly in Strategic Signal Companies, Battalions and Brigades, organizations such White House Communications Agency, Joint Communications Support Element, and the Defense Information Systems Agency. The current 25P ASI 7D positions are tactical positions as mentioned above. The Soldiers assigned to these positions perform maintenance-only tasks. Under TLM, the Signal Corps cannot have maintenance-only positions. Many of our Signal MOSs that end with "Operator-Maintainer" are acceptable under the TLM concept. They are acceptable because we operator and maintain our Signal systems. Under TLM, we will perform Field-level maintenance on the systems that we operate. Field-level maintenance consists of on-system/point of failure repairs. All bench-centric repairs are considered Sustainment-Level maintenance and will be performed by the Ordnance Corps. The 25P ASI 7D positions are maintenance-only positions and are therefore, in question by the Ordnance Corps. We concluded the session by going over the possible courses of action to move forward with the remaining 25P ASI 7E positions, which include possibly merging the remaining 25P ASI 7E tasks with another similar MOS.

For more information, visit the OCOS website <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/838> or contact Office Chief of Signal senior career management NCO, MSG Shabazz S. McKenzie ([shabazz.s.mckenzie@conus.army.mil](mailto:shabazz.s.mckenzie@conus.army.mil); DSN 780-8163).

### ACRONYM QuickScan

AOT - Assignment Oriented Training  
ASI - Additional Skill Identifiers  
OCOS - Office Chief of Signal  
MOS - Military Occupation Specialty  
MTOE - Modified Table of Organization and Equipment  
NCOIC - Noncommissioned Officer In Charge  
NCO PD - Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development session  
TDA - Table of Distribution and Allowance  
TLM - Two level maintenance

# Proposal suggests making college degree mandatory for NCOs

By MAJ Dennis J. McGee

The original purpose of this article was to propose making college degrees a requirement for noncommissioned officers, as it is for commissioned officers. However, research showed that there are already numerous programs to help soldiers receive college credits to apply toward degrees. The focus now is to provide the critical resource of time for NCOs to get their degrees.

The U.S. Army has once again officially dedicated a year as the "Year of the Noncommissioned Officer." In 1989, then Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh, Jr., along with Army Chief of Staff GEN Carl E. Vuono and SMA Julius W. Gates, declared the Army theme for 1989 as the "Year of the NCO." GEN Vuono viewed it as an opportunity to enhance the responsibilities and the status of the NCO Corps through programs that underscored the four enduring roles of the NCO: leader, trainer, role model, and standard bearer.

There is no doubt that today's NCO Corps is unmatched anywhere in the world. The most frequently requested military-to-military security cooperation training program by other nations is for their NCOs to attend one of our NCO courses. Today's NCOs are also products of the world's best military education system. The NCO Education System runs the spectrum from entry level leader training at the Warrior Leader Course to Sergeants Major Academy. Throughout the careers of all Soldiers, NCOs are required to pass through these gates in the NCOES. The courses are all well structured and designed according to a set standard of learning.

In addition to NCO academies, the Army has encouraged enlisted Soldiers to advance their education by other means. By 1952, the Army had developed the Army Education Program to allow Soldiers to attain credits for academic education. This program provided a number of ways for the enlisted Soldier to attain a high school or college diploma.

**"Today's NCOs are products of the world's best military education system. There is no doubt that today's NCO Corps is unmatched anywhere in the world."**

Perhaps one of the biggest discriminators for promotion to the senior NCO ranks is the lack of a college degree. This has become even more important now as the Army has become greatly concerned with retaining midgrade NCOs. Like most professions, if there is no longer a chance of promotion, then many will choose to leave that career field and change jobs. On average, most NCOs have completed their first enlistment and are beyond four years of service.

By the time they have completed several military education courses, most of which are transferable as civilian education credits. The various programs offered by the Army Continuing Education System permit Soldiers to take advantage of online colleges and universities that offer college credit for military training and education. Additionally, these post-secondary programs offer tuition assistance, flexible degree completion timelines, and civilian licensing or certification.

The Department of Veteran Affairs administers the various Montgomery-GI bill programs that provide funding for college course. There are also other programs, that assist Soldiers with associate and baccalaureate degree programs through accredited colleges and universities and provide credit for Army institutional schooling and professional credentialing or licensing.

The challenge is finding the time to complete these degree requirements outside of the Army professional NCOES. NCOs who have college degrees have usually completed them on their own time, after duty hours, in deployed combat zones, or over many weekends, usually taking several years.

If the Army is serious about

recognizing its professional NCO Corps, then it should provide the opportunity for NCOs to complete their degrees either during or following one of their NCOES courses. Ideally, Soldiers attending a Basic or Advanced NCO Course should have the opportunity to complete their associate's or bachelor's degree. The current operational tempo causes many of today's leaders to be reluctant to release their NCO leaders to attend these schools. If the Army would make it mandatory for NCOs to complete college degrees, then this could serve as an impetus to force units to send NCOs to their respective NCOES courses on time. After, or in conjunction with, the course the NCOs could complete required college courses while on temporary duty away from the distractions of a unit, in an academic environment surrounded by their peers.

As the Army focuses this year on its NCO Corps and continues to transform the NCOES, it should make strides similar to those that were made 20 years ago during the last "Year of the NCO."

*MAJ McGee is an engineer officer attending the School of Advanced Military Studies at the U.S. Army command and General Staff College. This article is an excerpt from an item published in the May-August 2009 edition of the Engineer, the professional bulletin produced by the U.S. Army Engineer School.*

## ACRONYM QuickScan

**ACES** - Army Continuing Education system  
**NCOES** - Noncommissioned Officer Education System  
**NCO** - Noncommissioned Officer

# 112th Signal Battalion uses equal parts

By CPT Jillian M. Klug

The 112th Signal Battalion (Special Operations) (Airborne) demonstrated during its most recent deployment in support of Overseas Contingency Operations, January to August 2009, that an increased tactical and technical investment in making Special Operations communicators is the most effective way to maintain its status as U.S. Special Operations Command's leading communications force.

Two of the battalion's major lessons learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom were that the Soldiers are expected to do more with less, and Special Operations Forces' information requirements continue to increase and become exponentially more technically complicated and diversified.

The current 112th Signal Battalion commander, LTC Sam Anderson, implemented an aggressive training regimen to address and overcome these concerns based upon the "Five SOF Truths" - SOF cannot be mass produced, quality is better than quantity, competent SOF cannot be created after emergencies occur, humans are more important than hardware, and most Special Operations depend on non-SOF support. His vision was for the 112th to be the unquestioned best communicators in USSOCOM, and specifically fill an ever increasing technical and doctrinal gap identified in SOF communications today. This vision burgeoned mission guidance which called on the unit to become the definitive communications equipment subject matter experts, to provide a world-class deployable network operations capability, and maintain the ability to deploy multiple theater support hub nodes simultaneously, while leading the USASOC communications community into the next fight against global extremism.

With one company deployed at all times the 112th is heavily reliant on its red, green, amber cyclic training system to sustain its high OPTEMPO and produce a deployable company every eight months. The roadmap to successfully achieving the vision was paved during Charlie Company's six month pre-deployment "Green Cycle" training. Led by CPT Jillian M. Klug, company commander and 1SG James E. Jetton, Charlie Company's green cycle was solidified based upon the input of the battalion's most important leaders, the team chiefs.

"The team chiefs are pivotal to the unit's success, they're not only responsible to teach, coach, and mentor the junior Soldiers but more often than not when they deploy, they find themselves as the highest ranking signal communicator at their site providing services to a Special Operations Task Force commander. As an E5 or an E6 that's a huge responsibility, they must be spot-on" said Jetton.

Incorporating the team chiefs' previous deployment experience and vast communications knowledge, the green cycle plan focused on rigorous collective technical and tactical training at the team, platoon, and company level, which covered the gamete of the battalion's communications equipment inventory ranging from suitcase sized fly-away packages to the most complex theater hub node. As the only Army signal battalion dedicated to SOF and not task organized under NETCOM or FORSCOM, the 112th Signal Battalion owns Army Program of Record systems, USSOCOM SOF-unique

communications systems, and routinely develops new systems to fulfill technology gaps. When a 112th customer has a communications need that cannot be satisfied by the Army or SOF equipment inventory, the unit develops solutions like the theater hub node. Designed and built by the 112th, the theater hub node is the only one in the Army capable of supporting multiple theaters simultaneously, and is both Joint Interoperability Test Command and SOF certified with interfaces to provide Defense Information Systems Network and SOF Information Enterprise services respectively.

With built-in validation exercises based upon set training objectives, green cycle allowed the company to "crawl-walk-run" toward becoming USASOC's most revered communicators. At the end of the technical training pipeline, a culmination exercise allowed each team chief to gauge their team's readiness for the company-lead validation exercise, SIGNAL STRIKE.

"We receive Soldiers just like any other NETCOM unit. There is no selection process, but we expect our Soldiers to perform at a higher level because of our mission and who we support. Our team chiefs are integral in taking regular signal Soldiers and making them 112th Signal Battalion communicators" stated Jetton.

The company exhibited complete autonomy throughout all phases of SIGNAL STRIKE and was solely responsible for concept development, all planning and coordination, logistical support, scenario development and execution, and exercise control.

"It was challenging for us as a company to execute such a complex production, but the results were well worth it. Our goal in SIGNAL STRIKE was to evaluate the teams in action; not only under perfect circumstances, but more frequently under duress in the midst of very intense scenarios which were built to mirror what they'll see downrange," said Klug. "The teams are designed to be lean and each member must be proficient in all aspects of equipment operations. It is in SIGNAL STRIKE where we saw the first glimpse of the SME's come to the surface."

In one such scenario modeled after the unit's commanding general Radio Telephone Operator mission, junior enlisted members were given a solo mission for time to navigate a member of the company headquarters to an urban environment checkpoint, provide radio, data, and voice communications; and capstone the event by conducting an area reconnaissance for future operations.

The culminating battalion-led SHADOW STRIKE exercise was geared towards validating the leaders within the company organization. Helicopter and airborne operations, road marches, Army physical fitness tests, coupled with unfamiliar situations, and complex technical problems built off of tactical scenarios were integrated into a calculated coordination matrix that provided non-descript mission type orders for the teams to install, operate, and maintain their communications packages. By the initiation of SHADOW STRIKE, team deployment locations were decided by the company command team and approved by the battalion command team. Scenarios were team specific and built around what the team would likely experience in the six month deployed cycle, "Amber Cycle."

# tactical and technical in success recipe

Reacting to contact, the team chiefs had to lead the team through scenarios via delegation, establishing priorities of work, and showcasing high levels of cross-training which allowed the battalion command team to assess all levels of the leaderships' ability to think outside the box.

Technical insertions by the battalion's warrant officers and civilian experts were abundant and focused on evaluating the team's ability to identify network issues and initiate troubleshooting procedures, while dealing with scenario injects designed to evaluate teams at less than deployed strength. The teams emerged from SHADOW STRIKE tired but confident in their tactical and technical skills, but most importantly trusting in their team. Charlie Company surfaced ready to tackle Amber Cycle and the challenge of deploying globally in support of SOF. From the exercise and training perspective, the battalion's Green Cycle training might look similar to a conventional signal battalion's pre-deployment flight path. But the battalion is designed to do, and support, much more with significantly less Soldiers.

The 112th teams range from a Command Post Node -like SDN-Medium team, supporting a Brigade Combat Team sized element with only two Soldiers, to a seven Soldier hub node team supporting two theaters; whereas a one-theater division-level JNTC hub node deploys with 15 Soldiers. Across the deployed spectrum, one company from the 112th provides similar capabilities as a signal battalion by supporting the equivalent of seven BCTs with only a company sized element that is roughly half of a traditional signal company.

Deploying at just under 100% strength, Charlie Company embarked on their Amber Cycle mission spreading 10 teams across six countries and four continents. Klug and Jetton established their company Command and Control Post in Iraq, with the preponderance of their teams, and at the center of gravity of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM Special Operations Forces. While functioning as the forward face, the Company C2 was dual-hatted as the primary maintenance and supply support activity for all deployed teams. It

also performed a non-traditional "mission planning" role to assist the battalion's forward "NETOPS" function, the Systems Control located in the CENT-COM AOR, to build relationships with theater communications organizations and leverage theater infrastructure to accomplish SOF objectives. With no supporting staff, the company C2 was the battalion's liaison office between all SOF elements, general purpose forces, and multiple theater-level network control organizations.

"C2's proximity to the communications organizations supporting Iraq and their ability to surge to Afghanistan allowed them to work projects face-to-face in concert with the SYSCON's objectives in order to professionalize the SOF C4I network," said CPT David J. Munafo, the battalion SYSCON officer in charge. "It was a team effort between the SYSCON and C2 and we made a noticeable, positive impact on the SOF network during Charlie Company's rotation."

Almost immediately at the deployed sites, the team chiefs saw the rewards from the recent arduous Green Cycle, and began to easily fill the SME niche with their SOF customers by taking on new equipment responsibilities, providing higher level network consultation, and a "can do" attitude. "We've received some pretty amazing reports of stuff the teams have accomplished. In one case SPC Joseph Santiago, supporting SOF in the Philippines, made two antennas out of wire and paperclips that actually worked to communicate across their camp and inside a building," noted platoon leader, 1LT Matthew Peine. "He researched and built the antennas on his own, using the manual from the Special Forces Communications Sergeants' Antenna Theory course. Now that is pretty impressive for a junior Soldier, but we teach them to think on their feet to get the problem solved."

Training is a constant for the 112th Signal Battalion Soldier, and Charlie company deployed with specific Amber Cycle goals - 100% A+ and NET+ certification across the company and two CCNAs. Leading the charge, Jetton developed strong relationships with 261st Signal Brigade, Delaware

National Guard, to attend Baghdad Signal University, Iraq and ARCENT Signal University, Kuwait.

"Amber Cycle is always a good time for the Soldiers to re-concentrate on not only technical training, but also professional and personal education as well," Jetton said.

Since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the battalion has had a constant deployed presence in support of the Global War on Terrorism with more than 1/3 of the force constantly deployed. As the combatant commanders' need for Special Operations Forces continues to grow, so does the requirement for quality communications and the 112th communicators. When critical traffic needs to be sent, SOF units can be confident that there is a 112th Signal Battalion Soldier behind the scenes, in the shadows, ensuring their data gets received, and their mission can drive on. "Penetrate the Shadows."

*CPT Klug is a native of Pennsburg, Pa. She graduated from Lehigh University in June of 2000, received her commission through ROTC and immediately entered active duty in the Signal Corps. CPT Klug has been the Charlie Company Commander, 112th Signal Battalion (Special Operations) (Airborne) since May 2008 and deployed in support of OIF in 2009.*

## ACRONYM QuickScan

**C2** - Command and Control  
**CPN** - Command Post Node  
**DISN** - Defense Information Systems Network  
**JITC** - Joint Interoperability Test Command  
**NETOPS** - Network operations  
**OEF** - Operation Enduring Freedom  
**OIF** - Operation Iraqi Freedom  
**OPTEMPO** - Operations tempo  
**RTO** - Radio Telephone Operator  
**SME** - Subject matter expert  
**SOF** - Special operations forces  
**SIE** - SOF Information Enterprise  
**SYSCON** - Systems Control  
**USSOCOM** - U.S. Special Operations Command

# Blended learning supports NCO Corps training

By Directorate of Training staff

One of the major duties of every NCO is to plan and execute training events for individual Soldiers, units and higher headquarters organizations. This often complex task requires the training NCO to have a variety of training resources readily available for use.

The LandWarNet eUniversity staff, in partnership with the Signal Center of Excellence staff and faculty, have an ongoing commitment to support the Army's training NCOs by providing quality, state-of-the-art online training resources available 24/7. The availability of these resources enables any trainer to effectively use a blended training strategy to accomplish the training mission.

Blended learning often refers specifically to the provision or use of training resources which combine e-learning with other educational resources.

## Training NCO's use LWNeU to achieve blended training

Army communications equipment can go down at any time. Most times the issue may involve switches, routers and other complicated components. The fix usually demands the valuable skills of a knowledgeable COMSEC team.

The Soldiers of 319th Signal Battalion are a well-equipped team which rapidly responds to such incidents by extending expertise throughout the network. Team members gather information; diagnose and troubleshoot problems; narrow down their list of solutions; then execute. In a network-centric environment, their level of competency is valuable, but growing and maintaining a knowledge base is even more important.

One of the biggest obstacles for Army trainers is, developing a training strategy that supports their METL, while continuing to expand the skill sets of young Soldiers. Many Signaleers advance through MOS training, but haven't been exposed to large networks. Very few get the opportunity to touch the hardware and software they might

see in the field. Even the smartest Signal Soldier needs to encounter a broken Promina 400 data module every now and then.

"Getting Soldiers to think in a 'real world' environment is a training challenge," says SFC Anna Obregon, S3 NCOIC/COMSEC custodian, 319th Signal Battalion. "We recently completed our annual training at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif. in support of Grecian Firebolt, and it was rewarding to see Soldiers meet and exceed the requirements of the mission. We do not get to see that often back at home station."

Grecian Firebolt is a large-scale exercise where Signal Soldiers create and defend a communications network. Signal Soldiers setup seven communication sites across the United States, combining six separate training exercises spread between California, Wisconsin and Georgia. The exercises included nearly 4000 Active, Guard and Reserve Soldiers, and covered a wide array of specialties such as chemical warfare, combat medicine, and network switching.



With a specific mission to provide dedicated communications support to the warfighter, the 319th Sig. Bn., installs, operates, and maintains an Echelon Above Corps Digital Group Multiplex communications system for a theater army or joint task force. The Sacramento, Calif. based unit trains with several communications components including AN/TTC-39A Circuit Switches, AN/TTC-48 Small Extension Nodes, LOS radios and other devices.

To secure a competitive warfighting advantage, Army Signal NCOs and commanders are tasked with preparing Signal Soldiers for their role in the network—a role that includes on-the-job training and “off-the-job” learning.

The Firebolt exercise allowed 319th Sig. Bn. Soldiers to experience, first hand, the complexities of a tactical network. It also presented a unique opportunity to explore blended training.

LandWarNet e-University, the Signal Regiment’s online presence for training, defines blended training as the combination of traditional Soldier training, with new training capabilities such as distributed and virtual learning.

Polished by her own training experiences, SFC Obregon knows that cultivating a strong knowledge base is the key to establishing a lifelong learner. The 319th Sig. Bn. consists mostly of 25 series Soldiers, and also trains 42, 92, and 63 Soldiers who support the 319th mission. All Soldiers, Signal or not, need more than annual training exercises to maintain and grow their skill sets.

How can a Soldier use web-based training when equipment isn’t available?

To supplement traditional training requirements, the 319th Sig. Bn. began using LWN eU to host online training resources. Soldiers are given access to the 319th Unit University, where they may use courses setup by their training staff.

While Signal specifics like JNN, Phoenix, and networking are always commonplace, the 319th also has Warrior Tasks and yearly mandatory training like suicide prevention that must be completed. A unit university is a customizable training website used to provide commanders, training staff members and Soldiers with access to the most up-to-date training for their unit missions. Unit universities provide direct access to TRADOC approved MOS training, computer-based train-



**SSG Devry Hamilton, Headquarters Headquarters Company, 15th Regimental Signal Brigade points to the motto on the wall outside the Distributed Education Branch in Moran Hall. He says the motto mirrors his views of distributed learning and its value to Soldiers and the training mission.**

ing, simulations, interactive multimedia instruction and links to several joint training resources.

During Grecian Firebolt, several 319th Soldiers took advantage of their unit university’s resources. “Many Soldiers, who had not previously had the opportunity to access our unit university, were able to complete many courses during down time,” SFC Obregon stated. The 319th Unit University currently has over 200 student Soldiers enrolled, and contains JNN, FBCB2, WIN-T, Promina, STT, COMSEC, tactical radios, fiber optics, and SKL training.

As the Army continues to explore the blended approach to Soldier training, commanders must find ways to keep Signal Soldiers actively engaged in hands-on training and distributed learning. The result will be better prepared Soldiers who can successfully support the required basic tenets of network-centric warfare. The four foundational tenets indicate: A robustly networked force improves information sharing; information sharing enhances the quality of information and shared situational awareness; shared situational awareness enables collaboration and self-synchronization, and enhances sustainability; and these, in turn, dramatically increase mission effectiveness.

Signal Soldiers, out of necessity, are relying more on web-based resources to meet mission critical, pre-deployment and MOS-sustainment needs. The traditional hands-on approach keeps the Soldier in the action. A distributed learning supplement keeps the Soldier

sharp when there is no action.

The ability to communicate clearly and quickly is a requirement over the network, and it’s the knowledgeable Signal Soldiers who make it happen.

“I would like to see each company get involved in creating an individualized training plan for each Soldier,” said SFC Obregon. “Each Soldier has different strengths and weaknesses, and a leader can use LandWarNet e-University to capitalize on their strengths.”

The 319th Sig. Bn. is taking full advantage of every LWN eU resource available. SFC Obregon has been able to give her Soldiers unlimited access to MOS training, technical manuals, simulations, CBTs, and provide links to 319th required training. Her site also allows Soldiers to post feedback and hold online discussions.

“Every unit in the Army, regardless of MOS should use LandWarNet e-University to build a unique training plan for their Soldiers,” said SFC Obregon. “A trained Soldier is a combat ready Soldier. If we, as leaders fail to train our Soldiers, we fail as leaders in enforcing performance to standard.”

### **Noncommissioned Officers Play a Vital Role in Creating Online Training Materials**

NCOs who are members of the Signal Center of Excellence staff and faculty are instrumental in creating the online materials hosted on LWN eU. Distributed Education Branch, Digital Training Divi-

(Continued on page 48)

(Continued from page 47)

sion, Directorate of Training staff members recently interviewed SSG Devry Hamilton of HHC, 15th Regimental Signal Brigade concerning a recent online training development project completed by the Training Development Cell in the 15RSB. Following are the questions and answers from the interview:

**Question:** Describe the work you have been doing with the 15RSB Training Development Staff for the sustainment training courses created in Blackboard and hosted in the Sustainment Training Section of the LWN eU Portal:

**SSG Hamilton:** The whole initiative began last year when the Brigade Commander directed the training development cell of our organization to create multimedia instructional materials suitable to be used for sustainment training for resident school graduates as well as other Soldiers in the field. Completed training products will be hosted on LWN

eU and made available to the Soldiers in the field environment at the earliest opportunity. I was one of 3 NCOs in charge of coordinating and facilitating the project. The project is near completion and consists of training materials for MOS 25B, 25C, 25S, 25P, 25Q, 25L and 25U. I was awarded an Army Achievement Medal and a Brigade Commander's Coin for the work I've done on this project. The training materials contain voice-over PowerPoint Presentations and recorded classroom practical exercises used in resident courses as well as New Equipment Training Materials that are available for the equipment systems covered in the individual courses. We used Adobe Captivate and Presenter Software Programs to package the materials to reduce the size of products to make them easier to download from the LWN eU web portal.

**Question:** How do you think completed instruction will help Soldiers in the Signal Regiment?

**SSG Hamilton:** Completed instruc-

tion will help resident course graduates review training missed while at the schoolhouse and it will also assist Team Leaders and Section Chiefs with providing training to Soldiers who need "cross-training" when organizations are short qualified personnel in specific MOS areas.

**Question:** What other feedback would you like to provide concerning the project you worked on, LWN eU web Portal and/or distributed Learning products offered on the LWN eU Blackboard Server in general?

**SSG Hamilton:** The completed Blackboard materials we created will help Signal Soldiers across the Army because it will make new training materials readily available to them in a user friendly format. All the training products offered via LWN eU are essential to keeping our Soldiers trained and ready. The availability of the LWN eU Portal enables training like the products we developed to be offered to anyone within our training



# Certificate of Appreciation

Presented to

**SFC Anna Obregon**

*S3 NCOIC/COMSEC Custodian, 319th Signal Battalion*

For winning the 4QFY09 "Best of Breed" award for LandWarNet eUniversity Unit Universities. Your outstanding leadership in establishing and developing the 319th Signal Battalion's first on-line university was invaluable. Your dedication and forward thinking in training your soldiers reflects great credit upon yourself, your unit and the United States Army.

PAULA A. CYR  
SGM, USA  
Directorate of Training

THOMAS F. WASHER II  
COL, SC  
Director, Directorate of Training

The 319th Signal Battalion NCOs were awarded the "Best of Breed" Award this year by the Signal Center of Excellence Director of Training for the innovative ways they have incorporated the LandWarNet e-University's training resources into the organization's training.

domain that has web access and a desire to learn.

State-of-the-Art Support for Army Force Generation Interactive multimedia instruction greatly enhances and standardizes instruction for Active Component and Reserve Component units throughout the Force when self-development, sustainment, refresher and remedial training are conducted.

The following Virtual/PC-based simulators are available via the LWN-eU (<https://lwn.army.mil>) web portal to facilitate communications equipment operations training:

## FIELDDED SIMS

1. WIN-T INC 2  
Fielded: JUN 09  
Target Audience: 25N10
2. SSS (v3) Transit Cases  
Fielded: MAR 09  
Target Audience: 25N10, 25F10
3. WIN-T INC 1  
Fielded: DEC 08  
Target Audience: 25N10, 25F10
4. SSS (v3)  
Fielded: JUN 08  
Target Audience: 25N10, 25F10
5. Phoenix Upgrades (Alpha Version)  
Fielded: JAN 08  
Target Audience: 25S10
6. Phoenix Upgrades (Bravo Version)  
Fielded: JAN 08  
Target Audience: 25S10
7. JNN Upgrades v2 (Spiral 5-7)  
Fielded: DEC 07  
Target Audience: 25N10
8. STT Upgrades JNN-N v2 (Spiral 5-7)  
Fielded: DEC 07  
Target Audience: 25Q10, 25S10
9. CPN Upgrades JNN-N v2 (Spiral 5-7)  
Fielded: DEC 07  
Target Audience: 25B10
10. Baseband Upgrades (Spiral 5-7)  
Fielded: DEC 07  
Target Audience: 25N10
11. JNN-N v3 Upgrade Lot 9 (Spiral 8)  
Fielded: DEC 07  
Target Audience: 25N10, 25B10
12. CPN Upgrades Lot 9 (Spiral 8)

Fielded: DEC 07  
Target Audience: 25B10

13. JNN-N v3 Baseband Upgrades Lot 9 (Spiral 8)  
Fielded: DEC 07  
Target Audience: 25N10

14. AN/TSC- 85/93  
Fielded: MAY 07  
Target Audience: 25S10

15. Phoenix (Version A)  
Fielded: APR 07  
Target Audience: 25S10

16. LAN/WAN  
Fielded: APR 07  
Target Audience: 25B30 TATS-C, C, F, L, P, Q, S, U, W, 250N, 251A, 53A, 25A LT/CPT

17. SATCOM Hub Upgrades (S 5-7)  
Fielded: MAR 07  
Target Audience: 25S10

18. JNTC-S- INC 2  
Fielded: FEB 06  
Target Audience: 25N10, 25B10

19. JNN (S 1)  
Fielded: OCT 05  
Target Audience: 25N10

20. JNN-1 (Spiral 5-7)  
Fielded: OCT 05  
Target Audience: 25B10

21. JNN-1 (Spiral 5-7)  
Fielded: OCT 05  
Target Audience: 25Q10

22. DTOC  
Fielded: OCT 05  
Target Audience: 25B10

23. TIMS (ISYSCON)  
Fielded: OCT 05  
Target Audience: 25B10

24. HCLOS  
Fielded: OCT 05  
Target Audience: 25Q10

25. GSC-52  
Fielded: JAN 04  
Target Audience: 25S10

26. BSN  
Fielded: OCT 04  
Target Audience: 25F10, Q10, P10

27. FBCB2

Fielded: OCT 03  
Target Audience: 25U

28. TRC-173  
Fielded: NOV 01  
Target Audience: 25P10, Q10

29. S6 Staff Simulation  
Fielded: AUG 09  
Target Audience: 25A, FA53, 254A, 250N, 25U50

For more information on the status of virtual/PC-based simulator training products, contact Patrick Baker, Chief, Digital Training Division, DOT at DSN 780-0221 or commercial at (706) 791-0221.

## ACRONYM QuickScan

**BSN** - Brigade Subscriber Node  
**CBT** - computer-based training  
**COMSEC** - Communications Security  
**CPN** - Command Post Node  
**dL** - Distributed Learning  
**DGM** - Digital Group multiplex  
**DTOC** - Division Tactical Operations Center  
**EAC** - Echelons above corps  
**eLearning** - Electronic learning  
**FBCB2** - Force XXI Battle Command, Brigade-and-Below  
**GSC** - Ground Station Control  
**HCLOS** - High Capacity Line of Site  
**JNN** - Joint Network Node  
**JNN-N** - Joint Network Node-Network  
**JNTC-S** - Joint Network Transport Capability Spiral  
**LAN/WAN** - Local Area Network/Wide Area Network  
**LLC** - Lifelong Learning Center  
**LOS** - Line of sight  
**LWN-eU** - LandWarNet-eUniversity  
**MOS** - Military Occupational specialty  
**SATCOM Hub** - Satellite Communications Hub  
**SSS** - Single Shelter Switch  
**STT** - Satellite Transportable Terminal  
**TIMS** - Tactical Internet Management System  
**TRADOC** - U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command  
**TRC** - Tactical Radio Communications  
**WIN-T** - Warfighter Information Network-Tactical



## Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (Requester Publications Only)

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*"Our senior enlisted best understand our troops, the sources of their motivations, and their hopes for the future. You may lead your units from a strategic level, but these professionals really lead your units. You should measure your commitment by theirs."*

REMARKS FROM A BRIEF DELIVERED JUNE 11, 2009  
TO A GROUP OF GRADUATING SENIOR  
MILITARY OFFICERS AT THE NATIONAL  
DEFENSE UNIVERSITY IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

-ADMIRAL MIKE MULLEN  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

**ARMY  
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