

# CSM Angel Ramos builds successful career by finding good role models

SPC Terysa M. Shaffer

Before he finished high school CSM Angel J. Ramos knew he wanted a career serving his country.

"My two older brothers served in the Marine Corps, and I wanted to serve," said the 35th Signal Brigade command sergeant major.

"I actually committed at the end of my junior year of high school when I joined the delayed entry program. I knew if I stayed around Reading [Pa.] there wasn't much going on and I wanted to make something of myself. I was ready to move out and explore the world so to say," said Ramos.

On any given day, one can easily hear CSM Ramos' booming voice echoing down the corridor of the third floor in the 35th Signal Brigade building on Fort Gordon, Ga.

CSM Ramos, who has been in the Army for 24 years, has earned the reputation of being a "by-the-book" leader because he insists on exceptional attention to details, yet his continuous quest for excellence and passion for mentoring young Soldiers has helped him climb the ranks to the position he holds today.

He says he chose the Signal Corps because he was always interested in the communications field. He opted for the Cable Dawg, 36C, Wire System Installer, military occupational specialty. "I went on to get all the qualifications of a Cable Dawg and learned quickly that we were some of the most motivated Soldiers in the Army. We were always tight and looked out for one another. I've loved being a 'Tower Dawg'. It is the best job ever." Ramos was inspired to leadership by being around highly motivated Soldiers.

"I've always been a go getter. So once I learned what the Army was about, I went for it." He says his career successes were built on finding good role models and then working to do everything they did better. "I enjoyed

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outdoing my leadership in everything possible. I wanted to show them that I had what it took to be a leader."

In order to become a leader, CSM Ramos knew that he had to stand out from his peers and be one of the best Soldiers around. "I was once told that if I didn't like something, then move up and change it, but until then, I was to execute even though it was wrong or didn't make sense. It didn't take me long to move up and start making a difference."

With distinction and honors he completed training such as the Basic-Noncommissioned Officers Course, Advance Noncommissioned Officers Course, First Sergeant Course and Drill Sergeant School. He was named NCO of the Year (1991, 1994), Drill Sergeant of the Year (1996), and was inducted into the Sergeant Morales Club (1993) and the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club (2000).

He said it was his motivation to be an outstanding NCO that drove him to the upper levels of leadership. Ramos also points to another key attribute that helped him succeed. "I paid attention. I listened and executed my duties to the best of my abilities. I lived the NCO Creed each and every day. It meant the world to me. I've always strived for excellence--maxed my APFT, shot expert, attended every board possible and graduated with honors from just about every school I attended."

With several tours of duty, leadership schools and awards to his credit, Ramos acknowledges that all of these accomplishments were preparatory to his most important and challenging role as a leader: mentoring Soldiers. His motivation for the welfare of Soldiers came from his early years in the Army. "I must say that I didn't always have some of the best mentors coming up, but I learned quickly what good leadership was and what Soldiers need. I have been blessed to lead this nation's most precious resource, our sons and daughters, our Warriors. Not a day goes by that I take it for granted."

CSM Ramos' enthusiasm for helping Soldiers can be seen from every angle, from young Soldiers, to seasoned officers.

COL Marc D. Harris, 35th Sig. Bde. commander, said he observed his battle buddy's superior attention to detail a long time ago. "He's really an embodiment of Army values," said Harris, who describes Ramos as being an extremely technically competent NCO with superior understanding of his job field.

SGT Ricardo L. Anaya, a former 35th Sig. Bde. command group driver, said that his Army career was greatly influenced by CSM Ramos. Anaya said from the very first interaction he knew "Ramos was a real sharp and squared away sergeant major. I could tell that he's been in every situation

imaginable, from a young NCO to a high ranking sergeant major." SGT Anaya said he gained from CSM Ramos guidance and the proper tools to become an NCO.

SSG Kenneth B. Tucker, a 35th Sig. Bde. Command group driver, said that Ramos was intimidating at first, but he has a very strong command presence and a welcoming attitude. He recalls when the brigade deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom 10-12, Ramos gave a small speech to all the NCOs. "He gave us a speech that would set our direction for the entire deployment. His choice words instilled purpose to our mission. Like a coach on Sunday, he fired us up and then sent us into the field," said SSG Tucker.

Those around CSM Ramos notice his knowledge on Army standards, and his quickness to correct things that others normally don't notice. "Nothing gets by him," said COL Harris. He notes CSM Ramos' drive to make things right, and that he doesn't hesitate to step in to mentor or educate Soldiers and noncommissioned officers. "It's always good to have one that lives the values and who is extremely competent.

"When it comes to Army knowledge, there is literally no one that can compare to what he portrays as a leader. I had the privilege to work alongside a command sergeant major who really showed me a side of the Army that I never knew. It was interesting to me to finally understand where all organizational standards came from. CSM Ramos strictly adheres to Army standards when it comes to his brigade's operation and appearance," said SGT Anaya.

With CSM Ramos' help, SSG Tucker said he has a better understanding of the role of a NCO. "His attention to detail and standard of perfection obviously shows within him and his area of operation," said SSG Tucker.

CSM Ramos' coaching of SGT Anaya and SSG Tucker ties back to his main mission in the Army. "My sole purpose is to lead and mentor these Soldiers to become the Army's future noncommissioned officers," said CSM Ramos.

From being a squad leader, section sergeant, platoon sergeant, first sergeant, sergeant major and com-



Photo by COL Marc D. Harris

**CSM Angel J. Ramos, 35th Signal Brigade command sergeant major, looks out the window to enjoy the view while flying on a Black Hawk helicopter to visit the supporting battalions of Task Force Lion at their perspective forward operating bases scattered throughout Iraq.**

mand sergeant major, CSM Ramos always promoted professionalism throughout his Army career. "I've always had a saying coming up 'professionalism by example.' By exhibiting this quality, others quickly noticed what could be accomplished or achieved. I'm a firm believer that you must be able to live in the shoes of your Soldiers before you expect them to carry something out. In other words, the Drill Sergeant Creed says

it best: 'I will lead by example, never requiring a Soldier to attempt any task that I myself would not do.'"

By leading by example, many Soldiers and NCOs see the standard that CSM Ramos puts out and try to imitate it. "In my future Army career I will always put forth 100 percent as a leader. I have always looked up to CSM Ramos as a role model in whom

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I would like to myself reflect one day, and I understand to do this I really need to step up my abilities as a father and a leader in everything I do," said SGT Anaya.

CSM Ramos makes sure to emphasize professionalism in his leadership as well as his career. "As non-commissioned officers, everyone looks at you, they are sizing you up and determining if you have what it takes to lead. If you have it and don't share it with others, then it's for nothing. I on the other hand try to reach out to all that I can so they too can become solid leaders who are capable of leading and taking care of their Soldiers and families," said CSM Ramos.

CSM Ramos' leadership style stems from the few NCOs that he says had an impact on his career. "1SG Eddie Bell without a doubt had the biggest impact on me. He was an old school first sergeant who did not play. As one of his platoon sergeants, he stayed on me and ensured that I knew what being an NCO was all about. He was a tremendous leader and now a very good friend of mine. CSM Kenneth Williams, who I've known for a very long time has been one of my mentors. He was always calm



Photo by SGT Ricardo L. Anaya

**CSM Angel J. Ramos, 35th Signal Brigade command sergeant major, presents a coin to a Soldier of the 72nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion for his outstanding efforts in Kirkuk, Iraq. CSM Ramos, along with COL Marc D. Harris, 35th Signal Brigade commander, made many visits to different forward operating bases in Iraq to provide close support to Soldiers.**

and never seemed to get excited, but yet his message was very clear. He always made it a point to advise and guide me. CSM Michael Terry just didn't give up on me. Even though at times I felt he didn't care, he always did. It just took me awhile to figure

out what he was trying to teach me," said CSM Ramos.

CSM Ramos said these leaders, along with other NCOs took the time to mentor him and make him who he is today. And now as the command sergeant major of the 35th Sig. Bde., CSM Ramos still enforces the Army standards unequivocally. He says he will continue counseling, mentoring and coaching Soldiers.

With over 20 awards, three deployments and bachelors and masters degrees --both magna cum laude, CSM Ramos is most proud of having the honor to lead America's sons and daughters. "I have had this honor as a platoon sergeant, first sergeant, battalion command sergeant major and brigade command sergeant major. It doesn't get any better than that!"



Photo by SPC Terysa M. Shaffer

**Participants of the Task Force Lion Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier of the Year competition take off during the two mile run event of the Army Physical Fitness Test in Baghdad, Iraq. The command teams of the 35th Signal Brigade and 67th Expeditionary Signal Battalion used the APFT to raise the morale of the Soldiers during the event.**

*SPC Terysa M. Shaffer was born in Subic Bay, Philippines at the U.S. Naval Hospital on October 4, 1985. After attaining her Bachelor Degree in English, emphasis in Journalism, she entered the U.S. Army in September of 2008 and completed Basic Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Meade, Maryland. She is currently working as a Public Affairs Specialist with the 35th Signal Brigade out of Fort Gordon, Georgia.* 🇺🇸