

# Mentorship builds a legacy

*By CW4 Roy L. Rucker Sr.*

Effective mentorship among Signal warrant officers can build a legacy leading to a more effective Signal Regiment.

I have heard many senior leaders say through the years, "I wish I would have known what I know now," or "if only someone would have guided me in the right direction."

How many times have you said this to yourself? If you could look back now and watch yourself being developed years

ago, and take the knowledge, skills, attributes, and experience you have today and mentor your younger self, what level of development could you provide to yourself in order to improve the professional you have become today?

Let me encourage you to accept the responsibility of developing positive professional mentorship relationships.

Mentorship is defined as the voluntary developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and

a person of lesser experience that is characterized by mutual trust and respect (AR 600-100).

This trusting relationship provides a non-threatening environment in which a mentee, can seek advice. When done correctly the process aids the mentee in reaching full professional potential.

## **Role of the Mentor**

The mentor serves a very powerful role in the relationship. He/she sets the stage to provide either positive or negative guid



Senior warrant officers regularly provide mentor time with warrant officer candidates during the Warrant Officer Basic Course.

ance that will impact the life of those mentored.

For anyone who is willing to accept the mentor role, you must ensure that you are representing the positive aspects of being a mentor. Before seeking out mentees or becoming a mentor you should ensure that you are willing to serve in the role all the time. Start by making yourself approachable and are willing to voluntarily provide advice and guidance for situations you feel require it. Most of the time this can be done in your work environment simply by offering advice to fellow junior and senior warrant officers. If you continue to be this type of person you will eventually build a reputation that fosters an environment where people will want to seek you out for guidance.

Next you should be the person or role model that not only can tell a mentee how to perform properly but you should be practicing what you advise as well. Always demonstrate the image of what right looks like. No one respects or seeks out a hypocrite.

Good mentors are great listeners. Be willing to set your agenda aside and give a proper ear to the concerns of the mentee. This will allow you to provide the appropriate counseling at the right time.

Everyone can't be a mentor. If you are one of the people who does not have the temperament to build relationships, be the good steward and pass that potential mentee on to someone who has the desire.

Always be willing to share the information that put you where you are today. Your knowledge and encouragement have the potential to propel the mentee to greater levels of achievement. If you are chosen as a mentor, ensure that you can provide the knowledge and guidance that's being required. You can't teach, coach, and mentor if you don't have the proper knowledge. You will only serve to be a detriment to a potentially great future leader.

The process is much like that of a journey. In a journey you need some critical information to be successful. Where are you trying to get? Where are you currently? What are the critical waypoints that will make the journey successful? The mentor helps the mentee to answer these questions.

### **Mentee Responsibility**

The relationship also has requirements for the mentee. The person advice should be receptive to guidance and advice. This means regularly assess-

ing ones strengths and weaknesses and knowing when to seek advice. A mentor's time is precious and being on time for sessions should be well respected. Always remember that mentorship is a two way relationship and it's perfectly okay for you to approach a mentor and not just wait for a mentor to take an interest in you and your career. Also remember mentorship is not limited to technical guidance but can be a relationship that will help you grow in your personal life as well.

Your mentor is not there to solve all of your problems or to manage your life. The mentor is like a sign post that gives directions at critical junctures. It is still up to you to give a 100% effort to the development of your own career. Be willing to take constructive criticism that may help you identify hurdles that stand between you and a stellar career.

Be open and take ownership. Be ready to learn, not just do.

As a good mentee, remember to use the advice you are given and be vigilant with reporting the outcome of your failures and successes to your mentor. This will serve to make the mentorship relationship stronger.

### **Mentorship Legacy**

Just a short while ago the question was asked, "Is mentorship broken within the warrant officer Corps?" My answer to that would be a very convincing... NO!!! I don't feel it's broken, I just think it's a work in progress that needs more energizing. We, as leaders/mentors, should strive to create a culture and climate that fosters learning and development for the legacy that will be gifted to future warrant officers.

The whole purpose of building a mentorship legacy, for junior warrant officers, is to establish a strong family that will leave each generation of leaders in a much better environment than the one before it. One mentor, one person, can change a life forever. I urge you to be that one person.

*CW4 Roy L. Rucker Sr. has severed as the Land-WarNet Tactical Division branch chief in the 106th Signal Brigade, San Antonio, Texas since October 2008. His previous assignment at the 13th ESC, Fort Hood, Texas was as the G6 and senior network technician. He has more than 21 years of military service and currently mentors 42 warrant officers, officers and Soldiers.* 🇺🇸