

FORCE

Protection

By SGM Samuel Reynolds

As NCOs prepare to step into the 21st century, they will step on solid ground if they've honed their leadership skills to perfection and integrated force protection into the three pillars of their leader development.

NCO leadership is developed through a dynamic process consisting of three equally important pillars: institutional training, operational assignments and self-development. This process provides the education, training and experience NCOs need to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes to be successful leaders. Integrating force protection into this mix enhances this process.

Why Force Protection? For leaders to be successful in war fighting, they must master the four elements of combat power; leadership, firepower, maneuver and force protection. Most NCOs perform the first three elements flawlessly but often short change themselves and their soldiers when doing the one called force protection. To achieve maximum success in combat and garrison, NCOs must understand and execute each element of combat power to near perfection.

What is Force Protection? It's anything that causes a loss of force potential within the scope of safety. In simple terms, force protection is protecting assets, both soldiers and equipment, from the hazards that cause accidents, injuries, fatalities and equipment damage.

Why integrate Force Protection into the three pillars of leader development? The Army uses leader development to build competent and confident leaders. The process encompasses assessment,

feedback, additional training and reinforcement, education, training experience and selection for advancement.

The Army is committed to developing NCOs by providing the education necessary for acquiring the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to lead. This is done through the three pillars of leader development described below.

Institutional Training. The Non-commissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) of progressive and sequential learning provides a foundation of leadership, doctrine, technical and tactical skills each NCO needs to lead today's soldiers.

In each phase of NCOES, NCOs must learn the initiatives of force protection and provide ways to implement these procedures commensurate with their grade level. The most important of these initiatives is the risk management process. Risk management is a decision

making process that allows leaders to achieve safer and more realistic training. NCOs who use the risk management process become more sensitive to potential hazards associated with the full spectrum of Army activities from garrison operations to war.

Operational Assignments. Operational experience gained through assignments provides NCOs the opportunity to use and build upon information learned through formal education. It's in the unit where NCOs learn to lead soldiers and develop and influence other potential NCO leaders. It's in the operational unit where NCOs fine tune those force protection initiatives learned in NCOES. NCOs who implement the risk management process in every activity will lead, train and take care of the soldier, their most precious asset, whether in war or in peace.

Self Development. Individual ini-

Rules for managing risk...

Once you understand the "why" of risk management, you need to be able to apply some general principles.

- Integrate safety into planning. Start as early as possible in the training management cycle. Incorporate the commander's safety guidance into the training for METL tasks. In conducting combat operations, consider safety hazards during the METT-T analysis and include controls in the operation order.
- Accept no unnecessary risk. Soldiering is a risky profession, but no one wants to see soldiers killed or injured. If you can, eliminate or reduce hazards that don't interfere with your unit's ability to accomplish the mission. By protecting soldiers and equipment, you are improving your chances of accomplishing the mission.
- Make risk decisions at the proper level. Leaders at all levels need to apply the risk management process in planning and conducting operations. As you assess hazards and identify controls, determine your authority and resources. Can you reduce the risk to a degree that you may accept; is it based on the commander's guidance?
- Accept risk if benefits outweigh the cost. After instituting controls and assessing the residual risk, ask yourself one more time: What's this worth to me and my unit? Be sure that what you are gaining is worth the potential price.



tiative and self-improvement are keys to training and developing every NCO. The NCO leaders must continue to expand their knowledge base whether through Army correspondence courses, civilian education, reading programs, or self-study programs. The way the Army does business changes daily. As NCOs expand their knowledge of force protection and integrate it into their daily routines, they must always keep abreast of other initiatives to remain competitive, to remain fit to fight.

There's nothing new about force protection. It's been in the Army's arsenal of war fighting capabilities for some time. It's part of the Army's doctrine and one of its four elements of combat power. Simply put, force protection equates to protecting and preserving assets to win in combat.

For the Army to continue successfully, NCOs and their soldiers must always ask and think of the best ways to implement force protection in all missions. Implementation of the four components of force protection is the key. These components are:

Concealment and deception. Make your soldiers difficult for the enemy to locate, strike and destroy. Deceive the enemy through good use of camouflage discipline, etc., to prevent unnecessary combat losses.

"Fit to Fight." Keep your soldiers healthy by safeguarding equipment and supplies from loss or damage and meet soldiers' basic health needs. Supervise preventive maintenance and the quick repair of equipment.

Safety. Integrate safety as a principle element in everything you and your soldiers do. Soldiering is tough, demanding and risky so the potential for danger is inherent. NCOs trained to accomplish missions with safety integrated can manage those associated risks. Safety must be part of the planning, training and operations of all combat operations to preserve combat power.

Prevent Fratricide (the unintentional killing of our own soldiers). New technology has made the modern battlefield very lethal. We can engage and destroy targets before we see them. NCOs must use strong command, disciplined operations and detailed situational awareness. Trained and experienced NCOs exercise positive control over fires, timing of troop movements and disciplined operational procedures.

NCOs must train in force protection and continue to enforce it with their soldiers. This helps in managing and assessing the risks and hazards that go along with soldiering.

NCOs sometimes confuse the terms "risk management" and "risk assessment." They are two different terms. Risk management is a tool that helps leaders at all levels to do exactly what the term implies: manage risk. NCOs face a variety of training, safety and fiscal risks.

Safety risk management, however, is a specific type of risk management. Risk management is a five-step cyclic process that integrates easily into the decision-making process outlined in FM 101-5, **Staff Organization and Operations**. The decision-making process is in-

grained in military leaders and readily lends itself to safety risk management.

Risk Management PROCESS

- 1 Identify hazards.
 - 2 Assess hazards.
 - 3 Make risk decisions.
 - 4 Implement controls.
 - 5 Supervise.
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A "risk assessment" is part of risk management. It can range from simple to complex. A risk assessment causes leaders to identify hazards and threats and place them in perspective to the mission or task at hand. Logically, one can't identify the risk without first determining what the hazards are. The best tool commanders and NCOs can have is risk assessment. Assessing risks in any operation can be as small an issue as simply asking, "How can my soldiers get hurt, and what can I do about it?" Asking that one question and getting an answer, and applying the risk assessment principles—risk analysis and hazard control—may save a soldier's life.

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