

ensure that soldiers not only have their issued items, but that they are also serviceable.

- Weigh soldiers frequently and counsel them in accordance with AR 600-9. Soldiers should be monitored closely as their report date draws nearer. Soldiers found to be overweight when reporting to NCOES courses will be immediately sent back to their units. When this happens, it's humiliating to the soldier and paints a less-than-favorable picture about the command. In addition, it expends valuable funds needed for a slot that could be used by a qualified, well-deserving soldier.

- The APFT is now required for enrollment in all NCOES courses and is no longer just a requirement for graduation. A strictly-graded APFT should be administered at the unit by an unbiased NCO not more than 30 days prior to a soldier's reporting date for the course. If a soldier fails during this time or marginally meets the minimum requirements, chances are he won't pass the APFT when he arrives for NCOES training. Encourage soldiers to achieve the highest possible score on every APFT for the following reasons: 1. The higher their fitness level, the better their chances are for completing the APFT at their school; and 2. NCOs are expected to exceed minimum standards by superiors, peers and subordinates alike. A minimal-standard leader achieves minimal-standard results.

- Profiles. Soldiers with temporary profiles (except shaving profiles) will not be enrolled. Soldiers with permanent profiles must report with documentation supporting their profile through a medical review board. These soldiers must complete all training requirements within the limitations of their profile. Soldiers who develop profiles during the course will be evaluated by medical personnel and the commandant on an individual basis.

AR 351-1 stipulates that soldiers who are removed from NCOES courses for academic reasons may resubmit an application for re-enrollment when the commander verifies that the soldier is retrained, ready and stands a better chance to complete the course. The commander must send this verification to the school's commandant who will notify MILPERCEN of eligibility for re-enrollment.

Leadership development should be paramount in preparing soldiers for NCOES training at all levels. It's the unit leadership's responsibility for training their subordinates for wartime and peacetime requirements—to include education levels.

Unit leaders carry most of the burden for ensuring success or failure of their soldiers at NCOES schools. Without caring leadership, soldiers are certainly more susceptible to failure, humiliation and, ultimately, removal from military service. We as leaders must fulfill the obligation we accepted when promoted to the rank and title of a leader.

Mission accomplishment and taking care of soldiers, our two basic responsibilities, have not and will not change. NCOES instruction and committed unit leadership working together will perpetuate an even greater NCO Corps that will sustain our Army today and tomorrow. ■

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Delegate, yes. But... Follow Up Follow Up Follow Up

By SGM Donald Brumfield

PVT Jones was preparing to go to the field on a training exercise the next day. SGT Smith, his team leader, conducted a pre-combat check of Jones' equipment to ensure his soldier was fully prepared for the upcoming mission. SGT Smith noted the problems during the inspection and instructed PVT Jones to take corrective action by 0600 the next morning. At 0600, Jones arrived and loaded his equipment on the vehicle for transportation to the field. At 0630, the unit departed for the field without anyone bothering to check the private's gear.

In a TDA unit, a section NCOIC was told by the unit sergeant major to clean the snow from his military vehicles in accordance with the unit policy. The section NCOIC in turn told his soldiers to execute the mission. He noted his team depart the building and later return, reporting that all vehicles had been cleaned. The next day the sergeant major passed this same section NCOIC and asked, "Are all of your vehicles cleaned?" The sergeant major already knew that three of the section's vehicles still had snow sitting on them. The section NCOIC stated, "All my vehicles are clean." The sergeant major checked the bumper numbers and found out whose vehicles weren't properly cleaned.

Do these examples sound like things you've seen in your unit? Is this proper leadership? Does the standard line of "trusting your subordinates" cover this issue? Do you see anything wrong here? Are these basic fundamentals that we're taught by FM 251-101, **Battle Focused Training**, and FM 22-100, **Military Leadership**?

With 21 years in the Army, I'll be the first to stand up and praise the professionalism of the Army's current crop of NCOs. On any given day, on any Army installation, you can walk down the street and see NCOs following the four major factors of leadership: the led, the leader, the situation and communications. I'd like to spend a little time on the first of these—"the led."

Anyone with any leadership ability knows no two soldiers are alike. All soldiers cannot be *led* the same way. Some soldiers need close supervision while others need very little. We as leaders must correctly assess our soldiers' competence, motivation and commitment in order to accurately lead our soldiers. I feel this is where we as leaders all too often fail our soldiers. Most leaders are very good at issuing orders or providing guidance; however, I've noted a weakness across the Army in our ability to follow up, properly supervise, or spot check our soldiers. All too often, we stop at these stages. *(continued next page)*

A soldier is counseled, shown his strengths and weaknesses and then told how to correct them. The session ends and the next time he's counseled is at his quarterly counseling. Did we really follow up and assist the soldier?

The unit holds an FTX and at different phases of the exercise, it conducts after action reviews to evaluate and assess the training. Commanders, NCOs and soldiers discuss and note training weaknesses they've found. The unit returns from the field, does maintenance and then, all too often, continues training according to their original training plan. What happened to allowing team leaders and squad leaders time to correct the noted training weaknesses?

As leaders, we know what we're supposed to do. It all comes down to individual training versus operational tempo. It's our job as NCOs to ensure that individual training is conducted to standard. All too often, the real key is keeping up with the momentum of the unit. Unfortunately, too many NCOs fail to take a stand and ensure that follow-up and proper supervision are being done. After all, no one wants to be the bad guy.

How many times have you as an NCO observed another NCO giving a block of instruction with a soldier's manual in his hand and no training aids present? All too often, we see leaders who have not prepared properly to train soldiers. When this happens, do you blame the instructor or his chain of command?

I say we have to blame both. The chain of command should have provided the resources and given enough notice to allow the leader to prepare for the block of instruction. By the same token, the leader should have been professional enough to ensure he was prepared. Last, but not least, his supervisor should have set him up for success, rehearsing the block of instruction.

I don't believe these are isolated examples—these are Total Army problems. As Active-duty, National Guard and Reserve NCOs, we have the authority and responsibility to lead our soldiers to the best of our ability. We must control, direct, evaluate, coordinate and plan the efforts of subordinates to ensure the task is accomplished. We may delegate some of our authority to our subordinates, but we must understand we remain responsible, liable and accountable for the outcome.

Soldiers have individual responsibility for their actions. Leaders have command responsibility and should be held accountable for the actions of their subordinates. Of course, this doesn't mean soldiers should not be allowed to make mistakes. The idea of a zero-defect Army is crazy. We need to be flexible enough to learn from our mistakes.

We have the greatest Army the world has ever seen. However, we as NCOs can make it even better. The day of NCOs who fail to supervise their soldiers or lead by example is gone. We must train leaders at all levels by providing realistic training, refusing to cut corners, enforcing standards, mentoring our soldiers, and most importantly, showing soldiers we really care. ■

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By SGM Richard L. Barnes

Faster than an Apache can kill a tank; more powerful than a nuclear explosion; able to leap the best NCO support channel in a single bound. Is it a bird? A plane? No, it's a pay complaint.

It's sad but true that in this high-tech world of computer automation some soldiers still don't receive all of their pay entitlements on time.

Some of you squad leaders and platoon sergeants out there might say, "Why are you writing to *me* about this? Life happens; when it does, the Personnel Administration Center (PAC) and Finance need to fix it. I just need to make sure my soldiers get the time to go take care of it so they and their families don't suffer."

Once a pay problem exists, I agree with you. However, you as small-unit leaders can take a proactive approach to prevent many common pay entitlement problems from ever happening. Let's define the problem and then look at ways you can help.

Pay timeliness is a measure of how fast it takes to get a pay entitlement into the Finance computer system from the time the event happened. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service considers the pay transaction to be timely if it gets into the computer within 30 days of the effective date. The DEAS goal is to get 93 percent of these transactions in on-time. Transactions to start, stop or change Variable Housing Allowance (VHA), Basic Allowance for Quarters (BAQ), Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS), etc., are common ones that affect pay timeliness. These three types of transactions are also some of the worst offenders for pay timeliness. The soldier almost completely controls when events that affect VHA and BAQ occur. The unit controls BAS transactions. These are the areas where we at Finance can use your help the most.

Many times you're the first unit leader to know the soldier did something that affects an entitlement. The soldier may not want to tell Finance right away because he may lose money and he needs it right now. He figures he'll tell Finance later when he can better afford it.

On the other hand, the service member might be due a small amount of money but would rather save it for a rainy day. These "Christmas Club soldiers" figure they'll just go to Finance when they need the money. For BAS transactions, the commander might decide to give a soldier separate rations, so the first sergeant takes the meal card and prepares a DA Form 4187. Since the unit is going to the field for two weeks, the clerk figures he'll submit the form when he gets