Photo courtesy of the Sergeant Major of the Army's Office.

Country music singer Mark Wills gets some support from Sergeant Major of the Army Jack Tilley May 15 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Wills and Tilley visited soldiers injured in Iraq and Kuwait.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack L. Tilley:

Train soldiers to stay alert, stay alive

In April, I visited soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. The conditions were rugged, harsh and challenging. Despite these hardships, the men and women faced the constant stress and dangers with a determination I wish everyone could see.

The threat of snipers, bombs, suicide attacks and ambushes make these missions extremely dangerous. The NCOs and soldiers I spoke with understood these hazards and were trained and prepared to handle it.

Being successful in these operations requires you to be alert and focused. The reason these soldiers remained confident was their training. They credited their sergeants for preparing them for the environment and continually communicating with them during these hard times.

It is critical that NCOs talk to their soldiers. Fear is to be expected but can be overcome by confidence in leadership, training, personal skills and equipment. That's why our sergeants play such a crucial role on the battlefield and the peacekeeping streets.

So as we publish the latest issue of your *NCO Journal*, I hope you continue to lead from the front, fight complacency and keep safety uppermost in your mind.

This quarter's publication takes a look at some great topics. I encourage you to read the articles and share them with your soldiers.

Our soldiers' successes today were set up during their initial entry training by some of the Army's best sergeants. The *NCO Journal* takes a look at the career benefits of being a drill sergeant. As a former drill sergeant, I will tell you it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my career.

Another timely article is about Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. We have activated more than 150,000 soldiers since 9/11 and could not get the job done without their efforts.

The *NCO Journal* is also providing you a user's guide to Army Knowledge Online and a great NCO online resource tool. There is also a spotlight article on the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. This institution has a long and proud tradition. It is unique to the armies of the world and helps set us apart.

I look forward to seeing many of you on my journeys in the coming months. I strongly encourage you to continue providing feedback to the *Journal* staff. We want to make this publication a useful tool for our corps.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack L. Tilley
12th Sergeant Major of the Army

Fall In

New ePIN feature goes live for Army myPay users

Army personnel can now obtain their myPay personal identification numbers by using a new online feature called ePIN. myPay is an online system operated by Defense Finance and Accounting Service. ePIN is available to active, Reserve, Guard, civilians and military retirees with Army Knowledge Online accounts. ePIN greatly simplifies the process of gaining access to myPay. Personnel can visit the myPay Web site, https://myPay.dfas.mil, and click on the "New PIN" button. The system will verify the identity of the user through his/her Social Security Number. The user can elect delivery of the PIN by e-mail or regular mail. Email delivery takes place within 48 hours.

Preventing Gulf War Illness

In an effort to avoid repeating the incidences of unexplained health problems collectively known as Gulf War Illness, that afflicted servicmembers returning from the first Gulf War, the Department of Defense is collecting blood samples from deployed soldiers both before and after deployments to Southwest Asia.

"Having a blood sample could help us months or years down the line to know if people had been exposed to things that they might not have known about during the time of the conflict," said Dr. William Winkenwerder, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs.

Other preventive measures include improved medical records keeping techniques and post-combat questionnaires that asks if individuals have been exposed to pesticides, smoke, oil fires, solvents and chemicals or biological agents.

Winkenwerder said that so far, no indications of Gulf War Illness have been reported.

NCOs wanted for attaché duty

Army Attaché NCOs serve around the world in United States embassies providing staff support within Defense Attaché Offices. The DAO represents the Department of Defense to the host-nation government, assists and advises the U.S. Ambassador on military matters and coordinates other political-military actions.

Applications are accepted on a continuing basis for this highly selective nominative joint-duty assignment. Review the qualification and application procedures in Army Regulation 611-60 (August 2001).

For an information packet containing the regulation, checklists for application, as well as sample forms and other information contact the Attaché NCO recruiter/career manager, Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Williams at:

U.S. Army Field Support Center
Army Attaché Management Division
7321 Parkway Drive South
Hanover, MD 21076
Phone: (301) 677-2134 ext: 3901
Fax: (301) 677-5352
DSN: 622; or e-mail jeff.williams@us.army.mil.

New address for Retirement Services home page

Soldiers contemplating retirement will probably want to check out the Army's new Retirement Services Home Page at http://www.armyg1.army.mil/retire.

The new site features more compact pull-down menus that make navigating the site easier. NCOs nearing retirement can use the site to find information on military benefits, pre-retirement planning and Combat Related Special Compensation.

Woman drill sergeants make history

Sgts. 1st Class Billie Jo Miranda and Corenna L. Rouse set a historic milestone when they were named as the 2003 active duty and Reserve Drill Sergeants of the Year (DSOY) in the annual competition at Fort Monroe, Va., June 20.

It is the first time in history that women hold both titles in the same year.

Miranda, who holds the active title, has been a drill sergeant since February 2002. She represented Fort Jackson, S.C., during the competition.

She said being a drill sergeant is something she has always wanted to do. She applied to attend Drill Sergeant School three times through her career branch before being allowed to attend.

Her persistence finally paid off and she realized her dream.

Miranda said she was inspired to become a drill sergeant by the positive impression her basic training drill sergeant left on her. "From the time I came in the Army, I said 'I want to be a drill sergeant,'" she said. "Drill sergeants are influential people. They do nothing wrong."

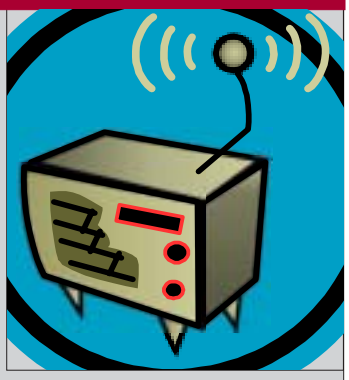
Rouse, the Reserve DSOY, is a computer-aided designer and avid physical fitness guru from Louisville, Ky. She is assigned to the 100th Division (Individual Training), Fort Knox, Ky. Rouse entered the Reserves in 1987 as a Petroleum, Oils and Lubricants (POL) specialist and completed drill sergeant school in 1998. She said that every drill sergeant has his or her reasons for going "on the trail."

She offered encouragement to all NCOs who are considering drill sergeant status. (See story page 8.)

"Usually if I talk to someone, I tell them don't even think about doing this unless you've got good support from your family or your (unit's) staff," she said.

Sgts. 1st Class Billie Jo Miranda (left) and Corenna L. Rouse (right) made history at the Drill Sergeant of the Year competition June 20 at Fort Monroe, Va., when, for the first time, female drill sergeants won both the active Army and Reserve Component Drill Sergeant of the Year awards.

Sergeant's Time radio show



"Sergeant's Time" is a special radio feature offering guest sergeants major the opportunity to answer questions from soldiers via e-mail and during their travels.

"You've got to figure for every person who asks a question there's a bunch of people out there with the same question," said the show's host, Sgt. 1st Class Jose Velazquez. He said "Sergeant's Time" provides a forum for questions to be answered for a worldwide audience.

The show airs each Tuesday at 9 a.m., 3 p.m. and 9 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on SoldiersRadio.com webcasts from the Web site http://www.soldiersradio.com/ and the airwaves over local Soldiers Radio and Television Service outlets on the Soldiers Radio Network. To listen to the webcast, listeners must have Apple's "Quick Time" software, version 6. The Web site includes a link so listeners can download the program free.

NCO Journal subscriptions

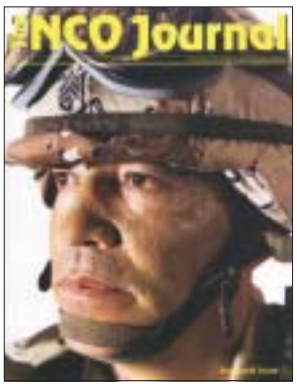
Individual subscriptions to the *NCO Journal* will be available beginning with the October 2003 issue through the Government Printing Office at the annual cost of $16 for domestic and Army Post Office (APO) addresses or $22.40 for delivery to foreign addresses. The subscription price covers four issues annually. The subscription program is open to all individuals and non-government organizations. Individual copies wi11 also be available for $5 domestic or $7 foreign.

If ordering by mail, send a letter requesting a subscription to the *NCO Journal* and include a check or money order payable to: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office Washington, DC 20402.

To order online, visit the GPO Bookstore at http://bookstore.gpo.gov and type in *"NCO Journal"* at the search field. After the search completes, click on the shopping cart next to the title and follow the instructions provided.

The GPO also accepts orders by calling toll-free at 1-866-512-1800.

For more information on GPO publications sales, visit their Web site at http://www.gpo.gov.



Fall In

Lessons learned

Whether you are preparing for a deployment or conducting research during a course of study, the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) Web site can provide a wealth of information gleaned from the experiences of others.

"There are so many things an NCO can get from CALL," said Sgt. 1st Class Timmy Sanders, NCOIC of the CALL administrative section. He goes out to units to brief NCOs on the benefits CALL offers them.

A Reserve component soldier about to join a host unit, for example, can access in-depth information about the unit before deploying.

"If you do that, you can hit the ground running," Sanders said.

Soldiers from around the world send back written after-action reports on operations, training exercises and combat training center rotations.

Specialists at CALL prepare the lessons and make them available to others.

A good source NCOs can use to get CALL products is the Web site at http://call.army.mil.

"The Web site also is a good place for NCOs to get training materials and study ideas for Sergeants Time training," Sanders said.

For more information, visit the Web site or call commercial at (913) 684-3035 or DSN 552-3035.

Assignment Satisfaction Key

Soldiers may update assignment preferences and related information through an Internet tool, the Assignment Satisfaction Key (ASK), available at the Web site https://isdrad06.hoffman.army.mil/ask/.

The site is designed to give Enlisted Personnel Management Division (EPMD) managers a more realistic chance of matching your preferences with readiness needs, according to a Total U.S. Army Personnel Command (PERSCOM) brochure.

After signing in with your Army Knowledge Online (AKO) user identification and password, you can provide information in four areas. One area is for your assignment preferences. You must indicate six locations as your preferences. Three must be stateside and three must be overseas.

Two of the stateside preferences must be for locations where divisional units are stationed. The stateside locations are listed on the site. The four overseas locations available are Hawaii, Germany, Korea and Alaska.

A second area allows you to update or add personal contact information.

You can indicate a desire to volunteer for special duty assignments such as drill sergeant or recruiting duty at the third area.

Personnel managers added a fourth area recently. The latest option allows you to volunteer for assignment locations and receive consideration over non-volunteers.

Visit the Web site or send an e-mail to tapcepco@hoffman.army.mil for more information.

Duty rosters go automated

First sergeants worldwide are using a commercially available software program, "AutoDutyPro," that some say has cut hours from their weekly schedule.

"I had a company that averaged 165 soldiers. When I took over the unit, it literately took me three hours after work to manually complete the DA Form 6 [duty roster]," said Master Sgt. Gavin E. Wainwright, currently assigned to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe (SHAPE), in Belgium. He said that after he began using the program, he was able to turn out his rosters in less than 30 minutes because he only had to enter exemption information one time. The program then adjusted all his duty rosters at once.

The program sells for around $170 and includes a license for one unit to use. A unit is a company-level unit or smaller according to information at the company's Web site at http://www.autodutypro.com/. The software may reside on up to two computers in each licensed unit without violating the terms of the licensing agreement. Updates within each version are available online at no charge, or on a 3.5-inch disk for $20. The price includes mailing and handling.

The company offers discounts for multiple licenses and accepts orders online.

Schedule change at USASMA

The resident Sergeants Major Course, Class 54, slated to start in August has been postponed to January because of current deployments. The course is now slated to start Jan. 12, 2004 and end June 30, 2004.Because of the date changes, the course will be condensed to six months from its usual nine-month curriculum, according to Lt. Col. John Kirby, assistant commandant at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

"This is a one-time change to accommodate all the soldiers who are participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom," Kirby said.

"Our folks in the Directorate of Training and Doctrine are currently reworking the program of instruction to accommodate the more condensed course schedule."

Class 54 students may report as early as Dec. 1, and no later than Jan. 5; however, they are authorized to move their families early to Fort Bliss, Texas.

"Affording students the opportunity to move their families early gives them a chance to move into government housing, stabilize exceptional family members and enroll children in school," Kirby explained. Children must be enrolled in El Paso schools by July 27, in order to attend the first day of school, Aug. 19.

Army offers soldiers LASIK surgery

Soldiers are lining up to apply for LASIK (Laser-Assisted In-Situ Keratomileusis) surgery. The procedure results in greatly improved sight in many soldiers and Uncle Sam picks up the tab.

The Army is looking at the surgery as a way to improve readiness and has initiated the surgeries under the Warfighter Refractive Eye Surgery program (WRESP). Patients are prioritized according to their jobs, combat arms soldiers or soldiers assigned to combat units have first priority. Next comes combat support and combat service support soldiers, and finally other active-duty personnel as space is available.

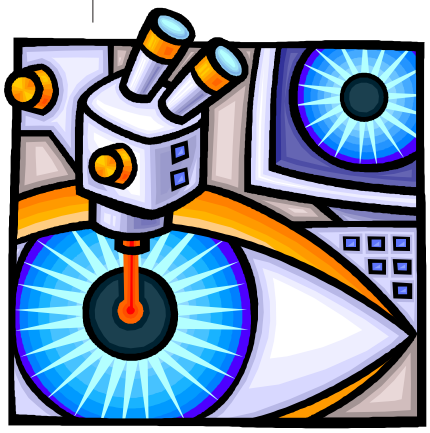
The advantages of not having to wear glasses or contacts affect the soldier on all sides; no more glasses to break while in the field, better vision in protective masks and night-vision devices, and less eye infections in harsh environments. All this leads toward individuals being more effective soldiers and less likely to become a liability on the battlefield.

LASIK is less invasive and almost painless compared to the older PRK (Photorefractive Keratectomy) procedure. LASIK takes approximately 10 minutes per eye. A small flap is cut in the cornea and is peeled back while a laser corrects the patient's vision.

The benefits of the surgery are evident immediately. LASIK recipients can see better within minutes.

PRK patients must wear a bandage over their eyes for two to four days to protect them while they heal.

After surgery the soldier will have two to four days convalescent leave, depending on the type of procedure performed. A profile for 14 to 60 days will be issued affecting parachute jumping, diving, night operations and driving military vehicles.



Soldiers will remain in the Continental United States for at least 30 days, but possibly up to 60 days, after the surgery.

Patients' results vary, but results of 20/70 vision being corrected to 20/15 are not unusual.

Some soldiers that had LASIK surgery between the Persian Gulf War and the conflict in Afghanistan say the surgery was the best thing the Army could do to improve their combat readiness.

Certain soldiers may not be authorized for LASIK or PRK procedures.

LASIK is not allowed for personnel on flight status and is a disqualifying factor for some Army schools.

PRK is allowed for Special Operations personnel.

For detailed information about the surgery reference the following Web sites, http://www.wramc.amedd.army.mil/departments/ophthalmology/refractive/index.htm, http://www.wramc.army.mil/departments/ophthalmology/refractive/surgery/surgeryv2/index.htm and www.fda.gov/cdrh/lasik.

(Editor's note: Information for this brief was compiled from Army News Service Forces Information Service.)

Recruiters of the Year

Phenomenal is the best word to describe the year 2002 for Sgt. 1st Class Thomas M. Downs and Staff Sgt. Calvin N. Lamont, who were selected from more than 7,300 soldiers as the U.S. Army Recruiting Command's Recruiters of the Year.

Both recruiters, who set the pace in their recruiting battalions by each enlisting more than 40 young men and women in the Army, earned the coveted Recruiter Ring in less than two years on recruiting duty – a feat that takes some recruiters several years to achieve. In addition, Lamont is an Audie Murphy Club member and Downs belongs to the Sergeant Morales Club.

Downs, from Fort Wayne, Ind., said he enjoys seeing a young man or woman "go from a rough draft of a person" into a skilled, disciplined soldier.

"The rewarding part for me is when they come back home and they're [squared away]. Then their parents call after they see the kids' graduation and thank you for changing their children's lives and pushing them in the right direction."

Sgt. 1st Class Thomas M. Downs (left) and Staff Sgt. Calvin N. Lamont (right) were named the 2002 Recruiters of the Year.

What brought Lamont, a former Army infantryman, so much success in one year? A positive attitude. Lamont, a Reserve recruiter and assistant station commander for three years in the Denton, Texas, Recruiting Station, left for a new pursuit – Army health care recruiting. Upon completion of the U.S. Army Recruiting and Retention School medical recruiting course, Lamont will be stationed at Del City, Okla., outside of Oklahoma City in the 5th Recruiting Brigade Army Medical Detachment.

Combat patches: who's authorized

Soldiers who participated in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) since Sept. 19, 2001 or in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) since March 3, 2003 are authorized to wear the shoulder sleeve insignia for former wartime service (SSI-FWTS), better known as the combat patch, for the unit to which they were assigned, according to a top uniform wear expert.

To qualify, soldiers must have been assigned to a unit participating in OEF or OIF, been deployed in the Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations and been under the command of the CENTCOM commander in chief.

"There is no time-in-theater requirement to be authorized to wear the combat patch. As long as a soldier meets all the criteria, the soldier may proudly display the combat patch," said Sgt. Maj. Walter O. Morales, Uniform Policy Branch, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1. He said the specific guidance lies in Army Regulation 670-1, *Wear and Appearance of the Uniform*, in paragraph 28-17.

Soldiers who were deployed in the area of operations on training exercises or in support of operations other than OEF or OIF are qualified for the patch if those exercises or operations became combat or support missions to the operation.

"The operations conducted in the Balkans have been of particular interest to leaders recently," Morales said. "Despite the combat-related incidents that often occur in the area, the operations there are considered peacekeeping missions."

Morales said another issue comes up frequently when people ask him about the combat patch. Often, soldiers are unsure of which unit's insignia they are authorized to wear.

"Soldiers assigned to a unit that, in its own right has a unit patch [such as a division or separate brigade], will wear that unit's patch on the right shoulder," Morales said. "This is true regardless of the headquarters to which the unit is assigned."

He gave the example of the 3rd Infantry Division, which has a unit insignia of its own. Soldiers assigned to the 3rd ID would wear that patch whether the division was operating under V Corps, the XVIII Airborne Corps or any other higher headquarters.

"On the other hand, when individual soldiers or soldiers assigned to a unit without an insignia of its own deploys, soldiers wear the unit insignia of the unit they supported in the theater of operations," Morales said. An example would be a Reserve soldier called to active duty and attached to the 3rd ID. That soldier would wear the 3rd ID patch, not his stateside unit's patch.

With the fluid operations that are taking place, some soldiers will find themselves in a position where they are authorized to wear more than one combat patch. "By all means, soldiers who are eligible to wear more than one combat patch may choose which one they want to wear," Morales said. "They can even elect not to wear the SSI-FWTS at all."

Morales said NCOs should visit the Army Uniform Policy Web site at http://www.armyg1.army.mil/directorates/hr/hr_irp/default_uniform.asp. "The Web site also offers a direct link to an electronic version of the uniform wear regulation," he added.

As a final piece of advice, Morales said NCOs should ensure their soldiers retain copies of orders, whether they are assigned, attached or on temporary duty, and any other documentation the senior tactical commander provides before leaving the theater of operations. In addition to reflecting the soldier's participation in combat for the SSI-FWTS, the documents also support authorizations for other awards and decorations.

Deployed soldiers' promotions

Deployed specialists and sergeants may appear before the promotion board using their Enlisted Record Brief (ERB) as the official source document for assessing promotion points. Soldiers will have 60 days once they redeploy to submit a request for retroactive promotion adjustment for any source documents dated prior to the board appearance that the soldier did not have during the deployment, according to a Military Personnel Message issued in March. The changes will be added to Army Regulation 600-8-19, *Enlisted Promotions and Reductions*.

Adding the additional points upon redeployment may result in the soldier receiving a retroactive promotion.

Soldiers who do not submit the request within 60 days waive the opportunity and will only be able to add additional points during their reevaluations.

For more information, contact your Personnel Actions NCO or the U.S. Army Total Personnel Command at DSN 221-0266 or commercial (703) 325-0266 or e-mail tapcmspe@hoffman.army.mil.

War trophies

What soldiers can and cannot bring back from the battlefields in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom are clearly outlined in a memorandum from 3rd U.S. Army commanding general, Lt. Gen. David McKiernan.

According to McKiernan's memo, U.S. Central Command General Order 1a prohibits soldiers from taking weapons, ammunition and military equipment. Items soldiers may claim from the battlefield include helmets, head coverings, uniforms and uniform items, such as insignia, patches, canteens, compasses, rucksacks, pouches and load-bearing equipment. They may also bring back flags, military training manuals, books and pamphlets, posters, placards and photographs. They may bring other items if those items clearly pose no safety or health risk and are not otherwise prohibited by law or regulation. A comprehensive list of items prohibited by U.S. Customs can be found on pages 37-39 of "The CFLCC/377th TSC Redeployment Handbook." You may access the entire handbook on-line at:

http://usasma.bliss.army.mil/journal/prohibited_items.doc

CIB & CMB

Infantry and Special Forces soldiers (other than medics) who satisfactorily perform Infantry or Special Forces duties in active ground combat in either Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) or Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) qualify for the Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB), according to the chief of Military Awards Branch, U.S. Army Total Personnel Command (PERSCOM), Lt. Col. Thomas White.

Medical soldiers who accompany Infantry or Special Forces soldiers in active combat qualify for the Combat Medical Badge (CMB). Some medical personnel will qualify if they are assigned or attached to Armor or Cavalry units while the unit engaged in ground combat, provided that they were personally present and under fire, he said.

To view updated guidance on the CIB and CMB, go to PERSCOM Online at https://www.perscomonline.army.mil/tagd/awards/awdmsg.htm and look for the message, "Delegation of Wartime Approval Authority US JSOC." The message date/time group is 231306Z APR 03.

Soldiers who received the CIB or CMB for Operation Desert Storm in 1991 qualify for a second award based on participation in either OEF or OIF, White said. Nearly 22,000 soldiers qualified for the CIB and another 3,000 for the CMB during Desert Storm, he said.

White said soldiers become eligible for subsequent awards of these badges based on participation in combat during one or more of four conflict eras. The eras include World War II, Korea, the Vietnam Era that ended in March 1995 and the current Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) era that began Sept. 11, 2001. A star above the emblem on the badge denotes a second award.

Soldiers who participated in both OEF and OIF will qualify for only one award of the badge since the operations took place in the same conflict era, White said.

Soldiers who have questions on their eligibility for the award should contact their Personnel Services Detachment.

SMA's web page

Visit Sgt. Maj. of the Army Tilley's Web site at http://www.army.mil/leaders/sma.

The *NCO Journal* online

Visit http://usasma.bliss.army.mil/journal to read issues all the way from 1991 to the present issue. The *Journal* is a quarterly publication dedicated to the professional development of the NCO Corps.

What it takes to be a Drill Sergeant

Is it in you?

By Master Sgt. Lisa Hunter

"This we'll defend:" It's more than a patch on your uniform and donning the "brown round." It's working long hours every day, including weekends. It's constantly being on the go. It's living the "Be, Know, Do." So, is it in you?

Training and Doctrine Command commander, Gen. Kevin Byrnes, wants tomorrow's drill sergeants to be the best the Army has to offer. To make sure that happens, he's hoping more top-notch soldiers will volunteer for the "trail."

"I would like to see a higher rate of volunteers. It's not where it ought to be. Unfortunately, too many of our drill sergeants are not volunteers," said Byrnes. "I would like to see more energy applied by the chain of command to inspire noncommissioned officers to [volunteer] to be drill sergeants."

Byrnes said he's looking for NCOs who are confident in their capabilities, competent in their military occupational specialties and have basic leadership skills. "I want them to be physically fit. I want them to be leaders who have a great understanding of self-discipline," said Byrnes. "Most importantly, I want them to be solidly grounded in the values this Army stands for. And be able to – by example – show those soldiers under their charge that these are the values that an American soldier holds dear."

Approximately 2,800 NCOs are currently serving as drill sergeants on active duty. Each year, approximately 1,400 new NCOs are needed to fill drill sergeant positions. Drill sergeant candidates attend a nine-week school at Fort Jackson, S.C.; Fort Benning, Ga.; or Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. The NCOs attend the school in a Temporary Duty and Return status, giving them the opportunity to take leave before reporting for drill duty.

Of course, every NCO knows that becoming a drill sergeant is a large commitment. It's physically challenging. It means working long hours and lots of weekends for two years.

So what are the perks? Currently, drill sergeants earn $275 a month proficiency pay and increases to $375 in October. But there are several other advantages, according to Master Sgt. James Caudill, NCO in Charge of the Drill Sergeant Assignments Branch, U.S. Total Personnel Command.

"It is a lot of long hours, but you know you are going to be home most nights," said Caudill, who

Where drill sergeant duty can take you

Fort Benning, Ga.
Fort Knox, Ky.
Fort Jackson, S.C.
Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.
Fort Sill, Okla.
Defense Language Institute, Calif.
Fort Huachuca, Ariz.
Fort Bliss, Texas
Fort Sam Houston, Texas
Fort Fort Rucker, Ala.
Fort Gordon, Ga.
Redstone Arsenal
Fort Bragg, N.C.
Fort Monroe, Va.
Fort Eustis, Va.
Fort Lee, Va.
Fort Belvoir, Va.
Fort Meade, Mary.
Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Mary.
Panama City, Fla.
Goodfellow Air Force Base, Pensocola, Fla.
Lackland Air Force Base, Texas
Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas
Gulfport, Miss.
Pensacola, Fla.
Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, Va.
Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Va.

served as a drill sergeant for two years at Fort Knox, Ky. Caudill, an Infantry soldier, had been assigned to a rapid-deployment unit before going on the trail. "It's nice knowing your schedule eight weeks in advance. Since all of the trainees take Christmas Exodus, you know you're going to be home with your family at Christmas." Drill sergeants usually have a one- or two-week break between training cycles, Caudill said.

"On a personal level, [training soldiers is] one of the most rewarding parts of it," Caudill explained. "You can almost see the changes in these recruits on a daily basis. They come to you as civilians, but you can see them change as they grasp the soldierization process."

Byrnes spoke of his recent visit to Fort Jackson, S.C., where he visited Basic Training soldiers who were at different stages in their training. Byrnes commented on the definitive changes he saw in the new soldiers' confidence and skill levels during the progressive phases of training.

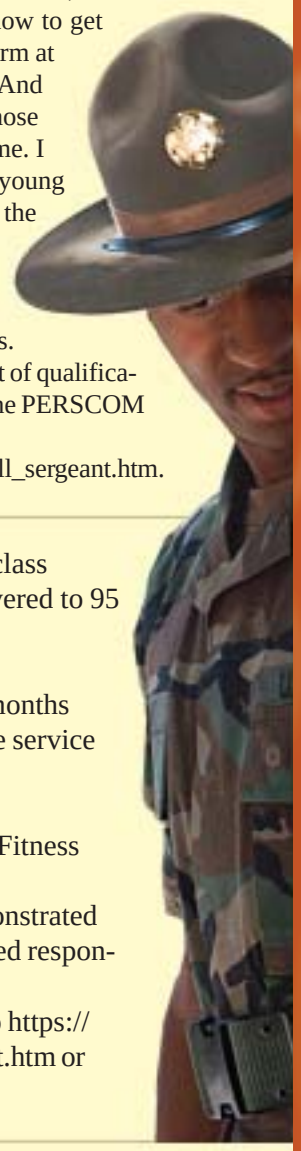
"By the eighth week, I'm very comfortable that these soldiers have the basic fundamentals, and that they would be able to perform if we needed them," Byrnes said. "My thought process in watching all of that was not simply admiring how they come off, but who's making all that happen: Instructors and drill sergeants. It's amazing what they can accomplish in great numbers." Drill sergeants trained more than 66,000 new recruits last year, according to Byrnes.

Of course, serving as a drill sergeant has professional development advantages, as well. One of the most lucrative perks to drill sergeant duty is the future promotion potential, according to Caudill. While the rates varied, the best showing was on the last few years' sergeant first class promotion boards. On those boards, prior and current drill sergeants had a much better selection rate, almost double the Army rate. Drill sergeants and former drill sergeants have enjoyed a higher promotion rate across the board, according to Caudill. Along with promotion advantages, Byrnes pointed out other advantages that will serve NCOs long after they leave the trail.

Drill sergeants are assigned at 27 Army, Navy and Air Force installations (see inset for complete list). While NCOs volunteering for drill status do not get to choose the installation where they will serve, they can specify three assignments they would like when they submit their DA 4187 (Personal Action). Drill sergeants serve for two years and have the option of extending for a third year. When they successfully complete their tours, drill sergeants have preference in their follow-on assignments.

"If you look at the noncommissioned officers we have that wear the drill sergeant patch, they are probably the best trainers, the best communicators – particularly in the area of counseling – in the world," Byrnes said. "They know task, conditions and standards. They know how to get the soldiers to training in the right uniform at the right time with the right equipment. And then, they're not going to let go until those soldiers are trained to standard every time. I really admire how they can transform a young soldier just coming out of civilian life in the short time we give them."

If you think it's in you, check out the list of qualifications in the box on this page for a short list of qualifications. Refer to AR 614-200 for the complete list of qualifications. For more information, check out the PERSCOM Web site at https://www.perscom.army.mil/epinf/drill_sergeant.htm.



- ❒ Rank of staff sergeant or sergeant first class
- ❒ Minimum GT score of 100 (may be waivered to 95 by PERSCOM)
- ❒ Basic NCO Course graduate
- ❒ Qualified on M16A2 rifle in the last six months
- ❒ Minimum of four years continuous active service
- ❒ Meets the height and weight criteria outlined in AR 600-9
- ❒ Must be able to pass the Army Physical Fitness Test, No alternate events
- ❒ Displays good military bearing, had demonstrated capability to perform in positions of increased responsibility
- ❒ For a complete list of requirements, go to https://www.perscom.army.mil/epinf/drill_sergeant.htm or AR 614-200.

Safeguarding Civilian Jobs

ESGR supports Guard/Reserve troops' reemployment rights

By Sgt. Jimmy Norris

They leave their homes, friends, family and the jobs they've worked for years to defend our country. Almost 100,000 members of the Army Reserve and National Guard are currently training, mobilized or deployed.

Some are serving at Army posts across the nation, others are deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan.

They may be gone a month or up to a year, depending on the mission. When it's over, they return home to their friends and family, go back to their civilian jobs and pick up where they left off – hopefully.

For many Guard and Reserve soldiers, returning to their former civilian jobs may be the toughest battle they have to fight.

Under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) of 1994, members of the Army National Guard and Reserve can perform military duty for as long as five years and still return to the same or equal jobs as those they had prior to activation.

Upon their return to the civilian workplace, these soldiers are entitled to a position and salary equal to the ones they left when called to active duty.

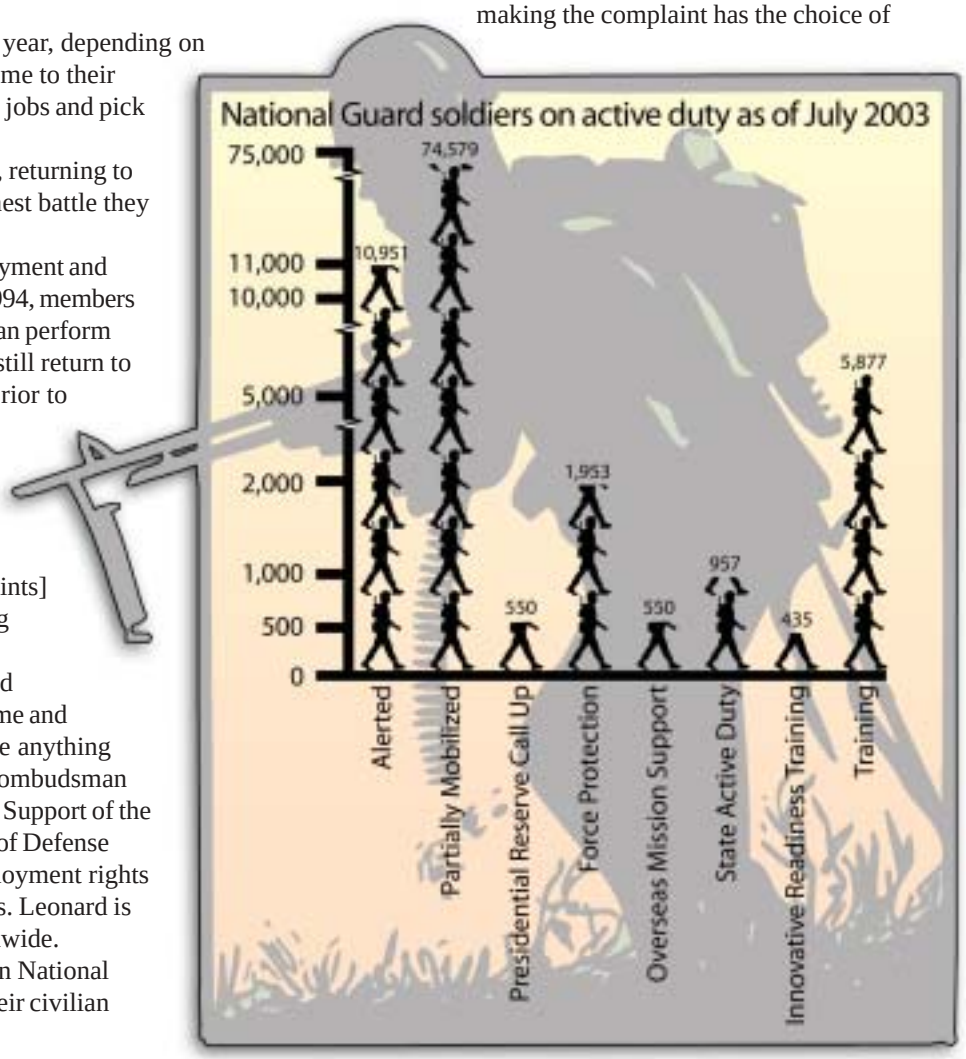
"I get about 200 calls a week. [Complaints] will range anywhere from employers saying [employees serving with the Reserve and National Guard] can't leave to [Reserve and National Guard members] coming back home and the employers saying 'sorry, we don't have anything for you,'" said Barbara Leonard, a civilian ombudsman with the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense organization that helps safeguard the employment rights of both citizen soldiers and their employers. Leonard is one of about 500 ESGR ombudsmen nationwide.

Ombudsmen mediate disputes between National Guard and Reserve servicemembers and their civilian employers.

ESGR is currently training 100 more ombudsmen in anticipation of a sharp increase in calls – from about 17,000 last year, to as many as 22,000 over the next fiscal year.

Most of the calls ESGR receives can be handled by an ESGR ombudsman. Those an ombudsman can't handle are referred to the Department of Labor.

If the Department of Labor is unsuccessful, the individual making the complaint has the choice of



taking it to the Department of Justice, or hiring an attorney, Leonard said.

According to Marine Col. Alan Smith, director of ESGR Ombudsman Services, most of the employers and employees who call ESGR have inquiries, not complaints.

"Three fourths of the calls are really just requests for information," Smith said. "30 to 33 percent of the calls are from employers whose primary concerns are 'what is USERRA and what are my responsibilities?'"

ESGR is supported by more than 4,200 volunteers. Headquartered in Arlington, Va., ESGR has 55 local committees – one in each state and U.S. territory, another in Washington D.C. and one in Europe. In addition to providing information about USERRA and Ombudsman Services, ESGR offers a number of programs to gain and reinforce the support of citizen-soldiers' employers. ESGR presents briefings and exhibits to employers to inform them of the importance of employer support. The group sponsors "Bosslifts," during which employers are taken to Reserve and National Guard training sites where they can see first hand the contribution their employees make to the Total Army. ESGR also has an awards and recognition program which recognizes outstanding employer support of the Guard and Reserve.

In addition to providing protection for National Guard and Reserve members, USERRA provides protection for civilian employers. In accordance with USERRA, Guard and Reserve members are required to notify their employers as soon as possible concerning leave from their civilian work for military training, mobilizations or deployments.

USERRA also sets time limits for citizen-soldiers to return to work. Soldiers who serve 31 days or less are required to report for work at the beginning of the first regularly scheduled work period on the first full calendar day following the completion of the period of military service.

Soldiers who serve between 31-180 days are required to submit an application for reemployment within 14 days after the end of the period of military service.

Soldiers who serve 181 days or more must submit an application for reemployment within 90 days.

The deadlines may be extended up to two years if the soldier is hospitalized or convalescing for a service-related injury or illness.

Smith said employers as a whole have been very supportive of their citizen soldiers. "The employers have been really helping out. When Guard and Reserve members come back they're coming back to positions of like seniority and pay as per the law," he said. "The key is the employers are working in partnership with the DoD."

Guard and Reserve members or their employers who need more information may check the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Web site at http://www.esgr.org as well as the DoL Website at http://www.dol.gov.

The site offers information about USERRA, employer and employee rights and responsibilities and other information that may be useful to citizen soldiers and their employers. They may also call 1-800-336-4590.

"The spirit of the law is to make the servicemember whole upon returning to the workplace, meaning they are not discriminated against and do not fall behind their peers because of their service to their country," said Smith. "The way we translate that is a person has like seniority, status and pay to the position they'd be in had they not been mobilized."

What else can ESGR do for you?

Briefings with the Boss: Briefings with the Boss provides an informal forum in which local employers, unit commanders, ESGR members and community leaders meet to network and discuss issues that may arise from employee participation in the National Guard and Reserve.

Bosslifts: Bosslifts transport employers and supervisors to military training sites where they observe National Guard and Reserve members on duty as part of the Total Force. This provides the employer a better understanding of what their Reserve members do when they are away from their civilian jobs for military duty. Employers see firsthand the type and quality of military training and leadership activities National Guard and Reserve members receive. The selected sites for Bosslifts usually emphasize National Guard and Reserve training and, whenever possible, include multiple branches of the military.

Ombudsmen Services: The Ombudsmen Services Program was established in 1974 to provide information, counseling, and informal mediation of issues relating to compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). The Ombudsmen Services Program provides information, informal mediation and referral service to resolve employer conflicts. ESGR is not an enforcement agency and does not offer legal counsel or advice. More than 95 percent of all such requests for assistance are resolved in this informal process, without requiring referral to the Department of Labor for formal investigation.

Awards Program: The National Committee of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve sponsors an Awards Program designed to recognize employers for employment policies and practices that are supportive of their employees' participation in the National Guard and Reserve. All employer recognition and awards originate from nominations by individual Reserve and National Guard members. Depending on the degree of support, the level of recognition rises to the "Employer Support Freedom Award," presented by the Secretary of Defense.

Photo by Pfc. Joshua Hutcheson, 101st Airborne Division(Air Assault)

Sgt. 1st Class Otis Nunn, frequency manager, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), watches a sunset on the balcony of one of Saddam's palaces in Mosul. The palace was completed in 1994 and overlooks the Tigris River.

Soldiers receive reintegration training during redeployment

Soldiers returning from deployments will receive more reintegration training, to help with the impact deployments can have on family life. The soldiers will receive more training than ever before because of Army-wide implementation of a Deployment Cycle Support (DCS) plan that began in May.

Using the plan, returning soldiers must remain with their unit through mandatory medical and mental health screenings, as well as reunion training designed to ease reintegration into family relationships, all before getting on a homeward bound plane, said Sgt. Maj. Lon H. Crosier of the Human Resources Policy Directorate, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1.

Photo by Spc. Matt Meadows

Austin Tucker, age 3, stands behind a "welcome home" sign at Lawton, Okla., Regional Airport, June 15. Tucker was at the airport to welcome his uncle, Spc. Paul Jones, Battery C, 1st Bn., 14th Field Artillery.

"As the backbone of the Army, NCOs monitor many diverse systems while maintaining a high level of readiness in the unit," he said. "The most crucial of those systems remains the soldier. Without soldiers coming together as a cohesive team everything else is insignificant."

Historically, NCOs have focused on training and vehicle and equipment readiness. Often, Crosier said, they would neglect to focus on the personal readiness of soldiers and families.

"Deployment cycle training will focus on caring for soldiers and their families to ensure a healthy, ready Army," Crosier said.

While the DCS covers three areas – predeployment, operations and redeployment – the first changes many soldiers

will see will be during the redeployment phase.

Soldiers preparing to return from current operations, training exercises and training center rotations will first receive training in the field. Leaders will have the opportunity to screen their soldiers using a *Unit Risk Reduction Leader Tips* card. The card includes a soldier risk assessment checklist as a tool to identify soldiers at risk for developing readjustment problems. The screening covers indicators such as suicidal thoughts, financial troubles and possible causes of strained family relations.

Another key element in DCS is that the unit leadership will ensure a hand-off takes place between the unit and the homestation assistance agencies.

"In the past, it was the soldier's responsibility to make these appointments once [he or she] redeployed," Crosier explained. "Now soldiers will be required to see a counselor before being allowed to take any leave from the unit."

Photo by Spc. Robert Woodward, 101st Airborne Division

An infantry soldier with the 101st Airborne Div. keeps a photo of his sweetheart close to him at all times – in his Kevlar.

In fact, all soldiers will remain under unit control for the first 10 days following redeployment, Crosier said. The soldiers will spend half of each day undergoing more integration training and observations. They may use the remaining time to visit with families or take care of personal business. Once all soldiers in the unit have completed their DCS tasks, they are free to take block leave, Crosier said.

The training at home station consists of a series of briefings, videos and appointments with installation service agencies.

Soldiers also receive handouts on the subjects the training covers. The handouts include:

- ❒ Reestablishing intimate and sexual relations
- ❒ Children's reactions to the soldier's return
- ❒ Reunion stress
- ❒ Stress symptoms
- ❒ Reunion stress coping strategies
- ❒ Adjustment for soldiers
- ❒ Sources of support and assistance for Army spouses and families
- ❒ Other sources of support and assistance
- ❒ Going back to work

❒ The classes dealing with reunion stress prompt soldiers to ask themselves questions such as, "What changes might have happened while I was gone?" and, "Do I view these changes as a crisis or threat?" Unit leaders use the briefings to impart to soldiers that blaming others or ignoring changes are bad coping strategies. Viewing change positively is a good strategy, according to the handout on coping strategies. Other good strategies include expecting to have doubts and worries, forgetting any fantasies you may have had about reunion day and not expecting everything to be the same as when you left. Soldiers who approach their return to family life with those attitudes are much less likely to experience problems, Crosier said.

He also said the training concerning service agency availability would be good for many soldiers and NCOs. "While talking to junior and mid-level leaders recently in the field, I was astonished by their lack of knowledge on the multitude of readily available resources," Crosier said. He also became aware of another reality: soldiers generally have a fear of bring unwanted attention on themselves by seeking assistance from a referral agency such as Army Community Service (ACS), the chaplain or a medical facility.

"As Army leaders we must address these issues and allow the DCS system to work effectively without the soldier being harassed or penalized," Crosier said. He said NCOs must also be keen and consistent in identifying the warning signs of trouble that often lead to domestic conflicts and other serious problems.

(Editor's note: The Army Well Being Office, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, provided the information for this article.)

Photo by Spc. William Shelton

Spc. Kelly Simmons, 19th Maintenance Battalion, Fort Sill, Okla., rushes from formation to hug her son, 7-month-old Conner, after a welcome home victory celebration, June 11. The 19th Maintenance Bn. deployed for Operations Iraqi Freedom, March 16.

Combat stress:

Battling the unseen enemy

Photo by Sgt. Kyran V. Adams

A soldier from Company B, 2nd Battalion 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, pulls security during an operation April 6, in central Iraq.

By Sgt. 1st Class George Loucks
U.S. Army Medical Command

On the battlefield or during operations other than war, NCOs know there is no such thing as an eight-hour workday, three hot meals a day, a clean shower or a comfortable bed; there are no normal situations. Most NCOs and their soldiers have had similar experiences during training or other missions, but each exercise and mission comes with an emotional price tag.

Having to kill a 12-year-old boy who's aiming a rocket-propelled grenade at you, excavating bodies from a mass grave or seeing members of your own unit killed or wounded tend to take a psychological toll on soldiers.

Julius Caesar said, "What tends to bother men's minds is far greater than what they see." Effective intervention and awareness of Combat Stress Control (CSC) are often deciding factors in the ability to sustain the warrior ethos and be victorious. NCOs must take steps to prevent combat stress; they must know when to respond to it, manage it and use CSC as a force multiplier.

Soldiers often go for days without a break, maybe because of the threat level, the ongoing mission or personal concerns that plague soldiers' minds. In any case, the stress leaves them drained physically, mentally and emotionally. Remember seeing the soldiers' exhausted appearance during the Shock-and-Awe Campaign at the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom? While most leaders are aware of the diverse stressors their soldiers face, it takes time for new leaders to learn their units' missions, their troops and their combined capabilities. Leaders must continue to hone their stress management skills, their judgment and insight as the varied reactions soldiers may have. More importantly, leaders must know their soldiers' limits and be ready with appropriate coping skills to help their soldiers get through it.

Combat stress behaviors are categorized into three areas, one is adaptive and two are dysfunctional. Of course, leaders strive for the adaptive or positive combat stress factors. Positive combat stress factors include a functioning family support group, unit cohesion, loyalty to fellow soldiers and their unit and unconditional support up and down the chain of command. In some cases, you may see soldiers who display higher than normal endurance levels and demonstrate indifference to pain and injury.

In a few cases, soldiers react to stress in what could be defined as Misconduct Combat Stress Behaviors. Soldiers who are usually able to adapt and function well may exhibit Misconduct Combat Stress Behaviors. Some extreme cases of this type of behavior include murder, rape, torture and/or other brutality toward enemy prisoners or noncombatants. Other examples include soldiers going absent without leave or deserting, abusing alcohol or drugs or threatening someone in the chain of command. Some soldiers may make excessive visits to sick call to get out of a mission or even self inflict wounds. Other examples include leaders who are excessively eager to commit the unit to a dangerous mission or take other unnecessary risks that could lead to avoidable deaths.

The second dysfunctional form of combat stress is battle fatigue, which any normal soldier may experience. Some symptoms include what is known as the thousand-yard stare or shell shock. Other symptoms include hyper-alertness, fear, anxiety, panic, anger, rage, physical complaints, depression, indecision, exhaustion, apathy and overall poorer performance. The stress of the mission or conflict, homefront worries, first exposure to combat, unit casualties and even being the "new guy" can contribute to battle fatigue. War and other operations are designed to stress the enemy; it's only natural for soldiers to be exposed to that stress.

Battle fatigue is basically a temporary overloading and redirecting of psychological defenses, but it doesn't last forever. Something will give and more than likely it will be the soldier.

Leaders must deal with this type of stress quickly and as close to the front lines as possible. Soldiers who exhibit combat fatigue symptoms should stay with their units, their support structure.

Leaders need to take proactive measures designed to minimize the effects of combat stress and battle fatigue. Leaders should encourage unit cohesion and impart unit pride. They should also ensure soldiers' physical fitness, conduct tough and realistic training; practice effective time and resource management; and plan efficient sleep discipline within the mission's boundaries.

NCOs have to guard against their soldiers becoming complacent or assuming a passive posture.

Providing soldiers with too much or too little information can have an overwhelming effect on the soldiers. NCOs must be aware of this.

If soldiers seem to be overloaded or confused by the information, step back and readdress the issue. Clarity leads to success. It may be the mission itself or too many changes. Unforeseen variables for which the soldiers

Photo by Capt. Enrique T. Vasquez, 32d Air and Missle Defense Command

32nd Army Air and Missile Defense Command soldiers sit inside a bunker during an early warning SCUD drill exercise in Kuwait.

Photo by Sgt. Kyran V. Adams

Soldiers of Company B, 2nd Battalion 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, move out for an operation April 6, in central Iraq. The unit is deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

weren't trained can wear down soldiers' physical, psychological and emotional stamina.

For example, the threat of a nuclear, biological or chemical (NBC) attack is real. For most soldiers, the threat is outside the scope of their daily experiences. The NBC threat causes soldiers to react with a heightened state of alertness and fear, that interferes with soldiers' performance.

If NCOs address these concerns with preventive measures instead of reacting to them, the chance of counterbalancing or preventing battle fatigue increases greatly.

Prevention is the secret weapon in the battle against combat stress. Some techniques are as simple as resting when there's time. Leaders, too, must make efforts to get proper rest in order to be most effective. Another tactic is learning and practicing progressive relaxation techniques prior to movement. In addition, when it's appropriate, create an environment for your soldiers to vent, process what they encountered and constructively share their feelings.

Photo by Capt. Enrique T. Vasquez, 32nd Air and Missile Defense Command

Pvt. Lester Mena, Stinger Avenger crewmember, Battery D, 1-3 Air Defense Artillery, scans the skies of Kuwait in search of possible air threats.

Leaders do not need to go it alone in the fight against battle fatigue. Resources are available for any soldier who is experiencing combat stress. The unit chaplain and physician's assistant make up the first line of defense. Sometimes, soldiers just need some time to process a horrific event, a homefront issue they couldn't resolve before deploying or a leadership issue.

Division Mental Health and Combat Stress Control Prevention teams make every effort to stay close to the forward-deployed soldiers. Their goals are the same as the soldiers' leaders: keep the soldiers involved in the mission and as close to the unit as possible.

While the battlefield is not a place to conduct therapy, there is a simple, effective approach that forward-deployed mental health professionals apply.

See the box at the bottom of the page for the steps to this approach.

To accomplish the mission, NCOs must take care of their soldiers and themselves. By taking preventive measures, recognizing signs of battle fatigue and making appropriate and timely disposition, NCOs are better able to successfully continue the mission.

If left alone and not treated, the risk for future problems and possible mental health disorders may follow. Prevention is the force multiplier.

(Editor's note: Sgt. 1st Class George Loucks is the NCOIC of the Soldier and Family Support Branch, Academy of Health Science, U.S. Army Medical Department Center and School, Fort Sam Houston, Texas.)

MAXimize your APFT score

By Sgt. Maj. Robert S. Rush

Many soldiers can increase their physical fitness beyond their present level if they're willing to concentrate on deficiencies instead of just trying to run faster.

This individual physical training (PT) program was developed for soldiers with little time to devote to PT.

The program was validated using 40 students in a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program. Students exercised three times per week for 20-25 minutes, not including running. The following results were achieved: after one month the average score for students increased by 15-20 points from an average of 192 to 212; at the end of three months, students went from their average of 212 to 243; the second three months saw average scores climb to 267 with the low score 242 and the high score 300. Since this is an individual program, it is designed to fit each soldier's physical ability. The program gradually takes a soldier to a higher level of physical fitness.

Take a look at your last Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). From your scores you can determine where the starting point for your Individual Fitness Program should be. If you haven't taken an APFT in the last three to four months, you may want to conduct an assessment of your physical abilities before beginning.

To conduct a self-assessment, do as many correct push-ups and sit-ups as you can in one minute, and then run as hard as you can for a timed one-half mile. Multiply your push-up and sit-up scores by 1.25 to find an entry point in the charts. Multiply your one-half mile time by four.

Photo by Spc. Matthew MacRoberts

Sgt. 1st Class James L. Thorpe assists Staff Sgt. Felipe Albino to perform a set of sit-ups. Both NCOs are assigned to the Fort Bliss, Texas, NCO Academy.

The program

If done correctly, the program will bring you to muscle failure. This exercise regime is designed to be done every other day, as your muscles need from 24 to 48 hours to recover from hard usage.

APFT number of sit-ups

Number	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85
Sit-ups	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34
Crunches	4	5	6	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Flutter kick	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30
Legs spreader	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30

Photo courtesy of Fort Jackson, S.C., PAO

A soldier strives to knock out one more push-up during her APFT.

APFT number of push-ups

Number	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85
Push-ups	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34
Close-hand	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Wide-arm	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Turn & bounce	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30

To get your starting numbers, look at the charts. The numbers along the top of the charts are the number of push-ups or sit-ups you performed. Follow the number down the row to give you the number of repetitions for each exercise you're to begin with in your individual program.

Push-up and sit-up improvement

1. Regular push-ups: Do three sets with one-minute rests between sets. Form is important. If you can't do the push-ups properly, go to your knees and continue until you've finished the sets. After three workouts, add three push-ups to each set. (Example: you start with 14 push-ups on Wednesday, the next Wednesday you go to 17 push-ups.)

2. Regular sit-ups: Do three sets with one-minute rests between sets. If you can't do all the sit-ups properly, lower the angle of your legs until they're almost parallel to the ground. After three workouts, add three sit-ups to each set. (Example: you start with 11 sit-ups on Wednesday. The next Wednesday you go to 14 sit-ups.)

3. Close-hand pushups: Put your hands close together under your chest. Perform the push-ups. Go to your knees if necessary. Add one close-hand after every three workouts.

4. Wide-arm push-ups: Place hands as far apart as possible. Perform the push-up. Go to your knees if necessary. Add one wide-arm push-up after every three workouts.

5. Crunches: See separate chart on next page.

6. Turn and bounce: Hold arms parallel to the ground. Palms facing up. The exercise is an eight-count movement at a slow cadence. Pivot slowly at the waist to the right for four counts and then to the left for four counts. Add two turn and bounces after every three workouts. (Editor's note: Since this program was developed in 1993, studies have shown that, during the turn and bounce, exaggerated or excessive bouncing at the turn can be harmful. The turn and bounce done more like a turn and stretch is much more effective.)

7. Flutter kicks: Put your hands under your buttocks while lying flat on your back. Lift your feet six to eight inches off the ground to start. Begin by lifting legs in sequence six to 18 inches. Keep legs slightly bent to reduce the strain on your back. One repetition equals four counts. Add two flutter kicks after every three workouts.

8. Leg spreaders: Put your hands under your buttocks while lying flat on your back. Lift your feet six to eight inches off the ground to start. Begin by spreading legs 18-30 inches and then bringing them back together. Keep legs slightly bent to reduce the strain on your back. One repetition equals four counts. Add two leg spreaders after every three workouts.

Use the running chart to increase your aerobic and anaerobic stamina and to improve your run time. Enter the table using your run time from your APFT or your time from your self-assessment (half-mile times four). For example, your run time is 14:15. Enter the chart at +14. This program is designed to be run every other day, although there is no harm in running more often.

Photo courtesy of Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., PAO

Soldiers at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., run during unit PT.

Running

Sprint day: Enter the sprint portion of the chart at your run time now. Do four sprints of each of the distances, alternating your sprints between the distances. Begin with the lower distance for your speed. Attempt to beat the time listed. Rest one minute before you run the longer sprint. Rest two minutes between the longer and shorter sprints. If you feel you are not properly stressed (and as you develop your wind), decrease the amount of rest time between sprints. For those with run times of +17 to +19, when the 220-yard sprint goal is met, move up to the one-quarter mile (440 yards) and one-half mile (880 yards) runs.

Fast run day: Begin with the lower distance for your speed. When you beat the time for the distance, move to a longer distance in the same row. When you surpass the time for the distance at the bottom of the row, move to the left one row maintaining the same distance. When you move one row to the left on the fast run, also move your sprint goals to the same row.

Long and slow run: Run at least 20 minutes for a good cardio-vascular workout. Run for time during this session, not necessarily distance.

Using the program

The program is designed to have very little paper overhead. Each soldier is responsible for his or her pace in the program, which has the additional benefit of exercising the soldier's self discipline.

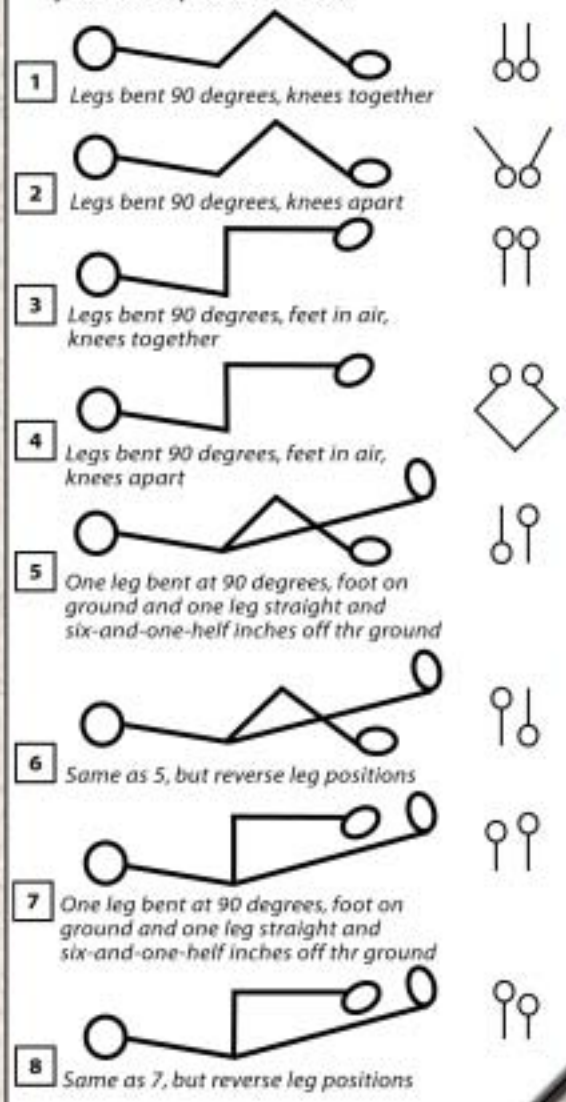
One technique to start the program would be to give each soldier a packet and have the program explained after an APFT or diagnostic APFT. Organized PT would still be conducted, but with each soldier doing the amount of exercise determined by his or her specific program. As a check, periodic diagnostic tests could be used to review progress.

As with any program, results are directly attributable to the amount of effort expended. Soldiers who can't keep up on the battlefield are losses just as much as casualties suffered through enemy action. We, as NCOs, are charged with not letting this happen.

(Editor's note: Rush was the Army advisor to the 26th Infantry Division, Camp Edward, Maine, when this article was written. Reprinted from the NCO Journal Summer '93 issue.)

The crunches

Start position is with arms across chest, hands grasping shoulders. Try not to stop between sets.



APFT run times

minutes	+12	+13	+14	+15	+16	+17	+18	+19
220 yards	—	—	—	—	—	:48	:51	:48
440 yards	1:07	1:15	1:23	1:30	1:37	1:45	1:52	2:00
880 yards	2:45	3:00	3:15	3:30	3:45	4:00	4:15	4:30
Fast run	—	—	—	—	—	+mi>4:00 ↓	+mi>4:15 ↓	+mi>4:40 ↓
	2+ mi 11:30 ↓ 2 mi 14:30	2+ mi 12:30 ↓ 2 mi 15:30	1 mi 6:30 ↓ 2 mi 13:30	1 mi 7:00 ↓ 2 mi 14:30	1 mi 7:30 ↓ 2 mi 15:30	1 mi 8:00 ↓ 2 mi 16:30	1 mi 8:30 ↓ 2 mi 17:30	1 mi 9:00 ↓ 2 mi 18:30
Long and slow run	Run at least 20 minutes for time and not distance							

ABCs of... AKO

www.us.army.mil

Army Knowledge Online

By Staff Sgt.Dave Enders and Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) Phil Tegtmeier

The Army Portal at Army Knowledge Online (AKO) offers NCOs a variety of ways to share information and access Web-based, customer-service programs in the areas of finance, personnel and health. The five most useful services available include AKO Mail, self-service areas, collaboration centers, AKO Chat and threaded discussions.

To help you make the most of what AKO offers, we've assembled a user's guide describing how to use those services to help NCOs perform their duties.

AKO Mail

The attraction of AKO Mail is the same as other Web-based e-mail accounts, according to Maj. C. J. Wallington, an AKO team leader. Wallington manages several teams of contractors who work on different aspects of AKO. Users can access their accounts from any computer that has an Internet hookup. And when you move, retire or go from active duty to Reserve duty, the AKO Mail address remains the same. Family members, civilian employees and contractors are also eligible for accounts.

"Eventually, AKO Mail will replace all other e-mail accounts," Wallington said. Installations and units will no longer maintain e-mail accounts at local levels, and AKO's planned global directory will allow users to find anyone in the Army family around the world.

Two updates to AKO e-mail services are underway, he said. In the first update, selected individuals worldwide are testing a version of Microsoft Outlook that will replace the current e-mail interface. The switch will allow users to share calendars, schedule meetings and track appointments. Users can access information while on temporary duty (TDY), deployment or leave. The second e-mail system under development is for AKO-S, the classified version of AKO available on secured networks. It will provide much the same features but will enable users to send and receive classified information.

Self-Service

When you log on to AKO, the home screen appears. This is a page you can personalize by selecting which windows you want to appear. Those windows include a variety of customizable windows grouping the available information services.

The Self-Service area contains a list of terms such as "My Personnel" and "My Finance." By clicking on one of those fields, you navigate to a Web page that has information relating to that specific area. A click on "My Finance," for example, brings up a page of finance-related frames like "My Pay" and finance-related messages. You can view your Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) online or download and print it, for example.

"AKO will be the user's standard desktop across the Army…whatever information users need, they will log onto AKO and reach it there," Wallington said. When you need to see how much your voucher is after TDY, you will find the information on your "My Finance" Web page accessed through the portal. The

same is true for assignment, health and dental readiness and educational information. By having the information available over a secure Web site like AKO, soldiers will spend less time on appointments to view their records or handle pay and personnel changes and have more time available for training, Wallington said.

Knowledge Collaboration Center

The Knowledge Collaboration Center (KCC), one of the newest AKO features, allows you to share documents. You can store up to 50KB in documents on the AKO server and access them while on TDY, deployments or even on leave. You can create group folders others can access and use to hold shared documents like unit packing lists, training schedules and policy letters.

Users can choose to view the documents on the Web or download them to local computers for later reference. *(Editor's note: The information appearing in this article, for example, comes largely from briefings we downloaded from the AKO staff's KCC.)*

AKO Chat

You can use the AKO Chat feature to take part in online conversations on hundreds of topics. AKO Chat uses Instant Messenger to keep you in touch in near-real time. Users can initiate a new chat room or visit an existing one to share ideas, opinions and information with others. The chat rooms are listed alphabetically, or you can search for specific users or topics. Members of the AKO Team do not "referee" the discussions, Wallington said. Users are expected to abide by the rules of common decency and can be held accountable if they violate regulations or policies. Using the chat rooms, users can share solutions to common problems or brainstorm with others. The site gives you the option of beginning a new chat room on a specific topic. Then users can schedule discussions in advance by coordinating a chat time with coworkers, mentors in your career field or others. Or you can join in an existing chat by selecting a room from the window that appears when you click on AKO Chat from the portal.

Threaded discussions

Threaded discussions differ from online chats. In discussions, you may enter a discussion on a topic, log off at any time and return to view the input of others during later sessions.

Discussions often branch off from central themes to sub-topics. You can follow the threads of multiple discussions by expanding and contracting discussion folders that appear on screen.

Some soldiers assigned to units in U.S. Army, Pacific (USARPAC) have used the site to post questions about proper wear and appearance of the uniform, for example. Web site managers in USARPAC also host a discussion thread where members of the command can make suggestions for improving command products and services. There are other ways to use the discussion areas. Some career field and functional area managers have discussion areas running. Soldiers have gone to the Criminal Investigation Command (CID) discussion area, for example, to ask about becoming CID agents.

Increasing the use of AKO is part of creating a cultural change that will eventually see soldiers relying on AKO for all of the information they need – even on tomorrow's battlefield, Wallington said. The number of agencies offering services through the portal will continue to increase over the next few years, he added.

Soldiers and other authorized users can begin tapping the resources available by logging on to AKO at http://www.us.army.mil and registering for access, Wallington said. There's a 10-minute tutorial available at the log-in page for those who want to learn more. You can also begin to navigate through the site and use the red "help" button to get assistance when you don't understand a certain feature. Experts are available at the AKO Help Desk around the clock. Help is also available offline by phone at DSN 654-3791 or toll-free at 1-877-256-8737.

Academy evolution

Establishing the legacy of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy

By Sgt. Maj. Larry Lane

The capstone for the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES), a school for sergeants major and command sergeants major, was an idea that had been talked about throughout the mid-1960s. However, it would be a simple phone call in the fall of 1971 that would be the first step in establishing the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA).

Oddly enough, an officer was the initial driving force behind the Academy. One morning, Gen. Ralph Haines, commander of the U.S. Army Continental Command (CONARC), contacted his old friend, Command Sgt. Maj. William G. Bainbridge, the command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Pacific Command (USARPAC). Haines and Bainbridge had worked together at USARPAC. CONARC handled training the force and planning operations before the command was split into the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command and the U.S. Army Forces Command in 1973. Haines wanted to send future sergeants major and command sergeants major back to school, to train them to assist their commanders at their next higher level of responsibility.

Haines chose Col. Karl Morton, his own executive officer, to be the Academy's first commandant and Bainbridge as its first command sergeant major. With only two of the staff members identified and no resources earmarked for the academy, the two began the tough mission of getting the Academy up and running. Authorized by the Department of Army General Order 98 on July 18, 1972, the Academy's two founders shared an ambitious goal of beginning the first sergeants major course on Jan. 15, 1973.

1 *First discussions about establishing a multi-level NCO education system*

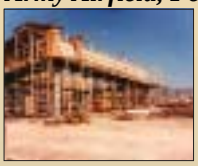
2 *1964, 1965, 1966, 1970 - Various plans for "Senior NCO Academy" shelved*

3 *July 1967 - Enlisted grade structure study proposes educational system which becomes NCO Education System (NCOES)*

4 *February 1969 - Gen. Bruce Palmer, Jr., Vice-Chief of Staff of the Army, approves NCOES concept*

5 *May 1971 - First basic-level courses offered in NCOES*

6 *July 1972 - U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA) established at Biggs Army Airfield, Fort Bliss, Texas*



7 *January 1973 - Sergeants Major Course (SMC) Class One begins as six-month course; ULTIMA Spouses' Association forms*

8 *August 1974 - First nonresident SMC class begins*

"My goal was to make sure the Academy was oriented toward training noncommissioned officers at the senior level," explained Bainbridge.

Bainbridge, who would later become the fifth Sergeant Major of the Army, wanted to provide the most senior NCOs with a set of common skills. "Not MOS (military occupational specialty), but to operate in any field at any level with any of the services."

To design a curriculum that would answer this requirement, Morton and Bainbridge met with a committee at Fort Bliss, Texas, the future site of the Academy.

The committee was comprised of 10 command sergeants major from the major Army commands and 13 military and civilian educators, including instructors from the Army War College and the Command and General Staff College. Other committee members were from unique Army schools like the Armor and Signal schools.

After two weeks, the committee decided on seven courses of instruction: leadership, world affairs, human relations, military management, military organizations, operations and college electives that the students would study at a local college.

Of the subjects the committee chose, world affairs was the most controversial. A number of officers questioned why enlisted soldiers needed to learn about world affairs, since most of their careers were often spent in operational and tactical environments. The common mindset was that only officers should be concerned with the "big picture" and enlisted soldiers should focus on training.

Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, then Chief of Staff of the Army, eventually decided the matter. Abrams had a close relationship with senior NCOs; he said the study of world affairs made sense.

Bainbridge theorized that Abrams thought there's "nothing wrong with smart sergeants." Bainbridge wrote in his autobiography, *Top Sergeant*. "After all, the Army is a tool of the government, and if it sends soldiers overseas, as it did recently in the Persian Gulf, and they understand why they have to go, there's no question in my mind they're going to be better soldiers for it. It's just good common sense."

With the concept and curriculum decided, the next key steps to establishing the Academy was identifying facilities, administrative staff, faculty and the students themselves.

Trials and tribulations, no personnel, working and trying to get the building started, Bainbridge said, were just some of the challenges facing the newly formed staff and faculty.

The initial facilities were a collection of buildings taken over from the Defense Language Institute, that had closed its doors on Biggs Army Airfield, an annex of Fort Bliss.

The buildings took some work to get ready, and some buildings were still undergoing renovation when the first course started.

"In our [Learning Resource Center] (LRC), all the references were in boxes. When a student came in and asked for this or that, the staffers would say, 'that's in box 71.'" Bainbridge recalled. Today, the LRC offers some of the latest technology for conducting research.

The original administrative staff and some of the teaching staff was generously provided by CONARC. The initial staff approved for the Academy was 120, comprised of 47 officers, one warrant officer, 40 enlisted soldiers and 32 civilians.

While the initial vision was for an Academy with a teaching staff of all senior sergeants major, the reality was that very few senior enlisted soldiers had the education to write lesson plans or fill an instructor's position at that level.

Officers filled the majority of the teaching positions for the first few classes. As more senior NCOs acquired higher levels of civilian education, these numbers shifted toward a predominantly enlisted faculty.

To select students for the first class, the following criteria was developed: Soldiers would have to be a first sergeant or master sergeant with between 15 and 23 years of service. Soldiers would have to have a primary MOS score and general technical score of at least 100 points. And, of the soldiers selected, at least half of them would have had first sergeant duty. For the first class, the goal was to enroll 160 students. However, based on the lack of facilities, the leadership finally

10 October 1981 - First Sergeant Course (FSC) inaugurated at USASMA

11 July 1982 - USASMA becomes proponent for Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC); courses taught worldwide

14 January 1986 - First international students attend SMC

16 August 1988 - First Personnel and Logistics Course (P&LC) starts

9 June 1981 - NCO Museum opens on Biggs Field near Academy; USASMA becomes proponent for Advanced NCO Course (ANCOC) common core portion; courses taught worldwide

13 January 1986 - Operations and Intelligence Course (O&IC) starts at USASMA

12 October 1984 - USASMA becomes the proponent for common core portion of Basic NCO Course (BNCOC); courses taught worldwide

15 August 1987 - New Academy building complex completed

FY2002 USASMA statistics

Faculty	
Enlisted assigned	227
Officers assigned	6
Civilians assigned	36

Students	
Command Sgt. Maj. Course	288
CSM Spouses Course	111
Sgt. Maj. Course	624
Sgt. Maj. Course, NRC	526
First Sgt. Course	724
First Sgt. Course, VTT	242
Battle Staff Course	387
Battle Staff Course, VTT	601

decided on 105 NCOs who were chosen from throughout the active-duty Army, National Guard and Reserve forces.

The smaller class served as a manageable pilot class to stress test the new Academy and its new methods of instruction. "The small group" method would involve breaking the students into groups of 10 to 15 soldiers, with each group facilitated by a senior instructor. The small groups were designed to inspire soldiers to share their experiences with each other.

The first student, Master Sgt. Norman Anderson, reported Nov. 20, 1972 and was assigned what could be considered the first student project: breaking down the 105 students into 15 small groups. He strived for variety in MOSs, gender and ethnicity, educational background and staff experience. The more diverse the group, the more diverse experiences they would be able to share.

"The greatest asset that the Academy has ever had is the student body itself," Bainbridge explained, regarding the instructional approach. "The diversity of those people gets better every time. It is camaraderie of the student body and what you learn from one another. You learn a lot more from one another than you learn from the curriculum."

Anderson also established and illustrated the principle that the Academy staff still stresses today: the Academy belongs to the students. The curriculum and the Academy itself is forever evolving, often incorporating students' ideas for improvement. Morton and Bainbridge made their deadline, and the first six-month course began Jan. 15, 1973.

Today, the Academy hosts the Command Sergeant Major Course, the resident and nonresident Sergeants Major courses, the First Sergeant Course and the Battle Staff NCO Course. In addition, the Academy also takes a leading role in developing common core training programs used throughout the NCO Education System in NCO academies worldwide.

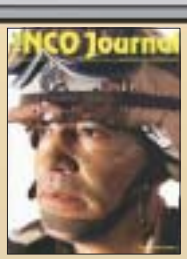
17 1988-1989 - USASMA hosts NCO Leader Development Task Force (NCOLD-TF)

19 January 1991 - O&IC and P&LC combined; first Battle Staff Course (BSC) begins

21 March 1995 - First Video Tele-training (VTT) of PLDC Course taught from USASMA to students in the Sinai

18 May 1989 - Command Sergeants Major Course (CSMC) inaugurated

20 January 1991 - USASMA publishes first issue of the NCO Journal



22 August 1995 - First nine-month SMC class begins

Initial USASMA statistics

Faculty

Enlisted assigned	40
Officers assigned	47
Civilians assigned	32
Warrant officers assigned	1
Total	120

Maintaining student interaction is the core of USASMA's unique learning environment and is one of the challenges the Academy now faces as the faculty and staff expand the Academy's course offerings through distance education.

"In order to support the Army Vision, we're going to have to develop training programs that are more Web friendly and use Web technologies to provide more NCOs with training opportunities," explained USASMA Command Sgt. Maj. Clifford West. "While we're celebrating 30 years as a schoolhouse, we're not just sitting on our thumbs," West said. "If today's NCO is terrific, tomorrow's NCO must be a superstar. That's a big challenge for us. I only have one word for that: Hooah!"

More initiatives are underway to bring further refinements to the Academy and, hence, to NCOES. These changes are the next step in the Academy's – and the NCO Corps' – evolution.

(Editor's note: Sgt. Maj. Lane is the Public Affairs sergeant major for the Southern European Task Force, Vicenza, Italy. Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) Phillip Tegtmeier contributed to this story.)

***23** August 1996 - Distance Learning (DL) mode for BSC inaugurated*

***25** October 1998 - BSC first offered in DL mode*

***27** January 2001 - Academy hosts first SMA nominative command sergeant major conference*

***24** June 1997 - Academy staff dedicates new classroom wing*

***26** October 2001 - First offering of Total Army Training System (TATS) version of FSC*

The Quick LINKS

Online sources to save NCOs precious time

https://www.us.army.mil – Army Knowledge Online (AKO) is the official portal for all Army-related Internet resources. You can also personalize your AKO web pages, build communities and enter chat rooms.

http://www.usapa.army.mil/ You can download Form Flow and nearly any Army publication available digitally from the U.S. Army Publishing Agency Home Page.

http://www.leadership.army.mil – The U.S. Army Leader's Tool Kit has links to everything you may need to assemble a leader's book, examples of climate surveys and leader development tools.

http://call.army.mil – The Center of Army Lessons Learned (CALL) Web site offers lessons learned and historical analysis from operations and exercises that improve unit performance.

http://www.counseling.army.mil – The U.S. Army's Developmental Counseling Library contains tools and information designed to assist Army leaders at all levels.

http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg – The U.S. Army Center of Military History Web site provides information concerning all aspects of military history.

http://www.armyg1.army.mil/retire – The Retirement Services Home Page features information on retirement benefits, pre-retirement planning and Combat Related Special Compensation.

http://www.atsc.army.mil/accp/aipdnew.asp – Army Correspondence Course Program Web site gives you the option of taking correspondence courses via the Internet regardless of where you may be in the world.

https://www.perscomonline.army.mil – PERSCOM Online includes information and services designed to assist with advancing your military career.

http://www.benning.army.mil/usapfs/training/index.htm – The U.S. Army's Physical Fitness School Training Web site provides valuable physical fitnesstraining resources.

http://www.tricare.osd.mil – The official site of the military's health care plan lists toll-free phone numbers, offers fact sheets about TRICARE programs and carries news announcements regarding program changes.

http://www.firstsergeant.com – This site provides information targeted at senior NCOs, but offers something for NCOs of all grades.

http://www.ncoer.com – If you're preparing an initial counseling or a Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report (NCOER) support form, you can use these tools to write a solid NCOER for soldiers with any military occupational specialty.

http://www.arng.army.mil – The Army National Guard (ARNG) Web site provides information to ARNG soldiers and families, including news programs and resources.

http://www.adtdl.army.mil – The General Dennis J. Reimer Training and Doctrine Digital Library includes all U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) publications.

http://www.army.mil/usar – The Army Reserve Web site assists Reserve soldiers and families. Items include leadership tools, information on Army programs, Transformation and much more.

http://www.defenselink.mil – DefenseLINK includes the latest press releases and news about the Department of Defense and what soldiers are doing around the world. It also has links to many other information resources.

http://www.army.mil/leaders/sma/ – The Sergeant Major of the Army Web site offers a wealth of professional development information, including updates on counseling, personnel information and links to other valuable resources.

http://www.army.mil/soldiers – The site for *Soldiers*, the official Army magazine, includes back issues and the annual *Soldiers Almanac*.

http://www.jagcnet.army.mil/legal – The U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps sponsors this site as the legal information portal to inform soldiers on various legal services including legal affairs, wills and powers of attorney.

http://usasma.bliss.army.mil/journal – The *NCO Journal* is the professional development magazine for all NCOs.

http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw – The U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine provides information on health maintenance, preventive medicine and more.

http://www.esgr.org – Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve provides a variety of information and services in an effort to safeguard the employment rights of members of Reserve and National Guard soldiers.

http://www.safety.army.mil/home.html – The U.S. Army Safety Center Web site offers plans of action for safety awareness, tips, tools and statistics for preparing subordinates to be safe and implementing risk assessment programs.

NCOER.COM - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search Favorites History Print

Address http://ncoer.com/ Go

60 SECOND REVIEW

NCOER writing guidance to keep at your fingertips

By Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) Phil Tegtmeier

Thanks to one noncommissioned officer's frustration and initiative, young NCOs looking for guidance on how to complete a professional Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report (NCOER) there is now a Web site dedicated to that very subject.

"I searched the web and gathered helpful ideas and links on how to prepare and write NCOERs and put them in one place," said Sgt. 1st Class Steve Myers, who operates the Web site www.ncoer.com on his own time. Myers said his frustration came from trying to find official guidance beyond the technical details of properly completing the DA Form 2166-8, Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report.

Myers was an infantryman serving with the 25th Infantry Division (Light) three years ago when he started the Web site. He had searched the Web for guidance on preparing a leadership development class he was to give. It was then he realized most of the links talked about the "what" and "when" of preparing NCOERs, but not much on the "how." He decided to start a Web site as his way of filling the gap.

During my first trip to the site, I got the impression that I was at a better-than-amateurish, less-than-sophisticated stop on the information highway. But the site's simplicity didn't stop me from realizing that I'd found a professional source for links, information and chat opportunities.

I guess I'm a lucky guy; when I first hit the Web site I got a popup window informing me that I was the hourly winner of a cruise vacation. Myers said the advertisers he gets help offset the cost of running the site and that he ensures he accepts only "G-rated" advertising. I certainly wasn't offended by any of the advertising that keeps this important source of information up and running.

The home page is clean and well organized, with a banner across the top, a link directory in a bar running down the left side and other links with short descriptions of what can be found at the linked site in the main white window pane.

Overall, it's very easy to find information on very specific topics regarding the NCOER.

The links in the main section of the page appear in black type rather than the traditional blue color of hyperlinks, so it's not obvious to all users that they lead somewhere. But after running my mouse arrow over the first link and having it turn red, I got the hang of it. I clicked on the first one and the referred site opened in a separate window – a feature I appreciate.

How we rate it

Ease of use: ★★★★★

Value to user: ★★★★★

Design quality: ★★★

Overall rating: ★★★★½

(Scale of 1-5 stars)

The external links take the visitor to commercial dot-coms, non-profit organizations and official Army Web sites. Internal links include a chat room where anyone who prepares NCOERs can exchange views on how to write bullets, when to give someone an "excellent" rating or how to enter skill codes on the evaluation form. Myers moderates the chats, provides expertise and keeps chats focused on specific topics.

Myers also includes sample bullet comments, categorized by the various sections of the evaluation form, at another link.

"Although my site has example bullets on areas like competence, leadership and responsibility, they're not intended to be 'copy-and-paste' items," Myers said. Rather, he explained, they should help the visitor get a fresh idea or two about how to document performance in the real world.

I was impressed with the accuracy of the information and advice available on this site, and I recommend it for officers, civilians and NCOs who may need help writing an NCOER.

Internet

Letters

Positive leadership

As NCOs we are responsible for many things. One of the most often overlooked is one of the more important and far reaching. We are responsible for shaping our soldiers' views. We do this in a subtle but direct way with our reactions. Whether we view things as obstacles or opportunities will govern our reactions. These reactions are seen by our soldiers and are used in their appraisal of us and our work. We owe it to them to give them the most positive example of leadership possible.

Bringing smoke: A young specialist once told me, "I could be a sergeant major; I'd like to stand up there and yell." A private at a different unit asked me, "Why don't you walk around and bring smoke on everyone like the sergeant major at basic training did?" There is a time and a place for "bringing smoke." It is important to be able to motivate soldiers quickly and forcefully when the situation requires it. "Bringing smoke" simply because you can by virtue of your rank or assignment can be counter-productive. Most NCO leaders will tell their soldiers about their "open-door policy." If an NCO always appears angry and spends a lot of time chewing out the troops, how many soldiers will risk using the "open-door policy?" This is especially true if the problem is something of a sensitive or personal nature. Fury can be an asset when aimed carefully and used sparingly and judiciously. Your soldiers should fear you when you yell, not because you yell.

Criticisms or corrections should be finely focused on those soldiers that need them. Minor ones should be sent down the chain of command so the appropriate subordinate leaders can do their jobs. In most cases, especially if safety is not an issue, chewing out a soldier in front of other soldiers is not a good idea. It is unprofessional on the leader's part. It is humiliating on the soldier's part. It is usually a waste of time for all the rest of the soldiers.

The leader's assessment of a situation will color the soldiers' assessment of the situation.

As the situation changes, and it will, how we present it to our soldiers makes all the difference in the world. We can walk in and announce, "OK, guys, they're giving us the run-around again." The troops would know immediately that they were getting the run-around again and there is nothing they can do about it. Or, we can walk in and announce,"OK, guys, change #20, instead of doing this we will be doing that." What the troops know in this instance is that change happens, and when it does you respond accordingly. The added advantage is that it teaches the younger soldiers to be flexible and that changes, although undesirable, are a part of life. Rather than getting upset, they simply shift gears. These young soldiers are tomorrow's NCO leadership.

Griping and complaining are considered to be inalienable rights of soldiers. Once you become an NCO you waive some of these rights. Your opportunity to blow off steam, get it off your chest, or vent is limited to peers, somewhere away from subordinates. Your soldiers deserve that. We will always be at the mercy of someone or something. If it's not "those guys up at headquarters," it will be the weather, or the budget or something. Any task can be done well under ideal conditions, adversity is an opportunity to excel.

Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) John Hurley

The key to motivation

The Army defines leadership as "the process of influencing others to accomplish the mission by providing purpose, direction, and motivation." If leadership is this three-legged stool, one of the legs is not holding enough weight. Purpose and direction are easy to quantify, but motivation is a soft subject that often is hard to grasp and employ. Motivation is something that causes a person to act in a certain way. Too often we think of medals, ribbons, and other such awards as motivational tools. Or worse, we use the threat of punishment as motivation. Recent studies of large groups of employees in the civilian sector have discovered some surprising observations about motivation that apply even more critically to the military.

In 2002, the Gallup organization began to get press on a study they had completed. Gallup is best known for its political polling in elections, but does many kinds of polling for a wide variety of purposes throughout the year. Gallup was researching what motivated employees. They polled over 300,000 employees in thousands of companies and discovered some troubling facts for the supervisors (leaders) of these companies. Between 50 and 60 percent of employees (subordinates) are not doing their best work because they are not excited about their leader's goals and feel that their own needs and contributions are not important. Additionally, between 15 to 20 percent of employees are achieving less and feeling less enthusiastic about their work than they could be. On the high end of the percentages, this means that 80 percent of personnel are not performing to their potential. The cliché in many organizations is that "10 percent of the people do 100 percent of the work." Gallup's findings show this fact is not far off the mark. Gallup's conclusion through the details of the study was that leaders are treating subordinates like they were rational beings. Leaders need to be reminded that people are foremost emotional beings. The challenge of a leader, therefore, is to create emotional incentives.

Many factors were used to rate an employee's emotional incentive, or engagement in the organization. Replace motivation with any of these terms and the meaning and result is the same. The top ten were:

1. I know what is expected of me at work.
2. I have proper materials and equipment to do my work.
3. I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
4. In the past week I have been praised for doing good work.
5. My superior seems to care about me as a person.
6. Someone at my work encourages my development.

7. My opinions seem to count.
8. My units mission makes me feel my job is important.
9. I have a best friend at work.
10. In the past six months someone has talked to me about my progress.

As NCOs, our responses are obvious to many of the above. For instance, items 1 and 10 can be addressed easily by the counseling we are required to do with our subordinates. What was striking about the list was what was did not make the top 10 motivating factors in tying someone emotionally to an organization. Note that there was no mention of compensation time, awards, bonuses, parties or celebrations.

Bob Nelson, of Nelson Motivation Inc., has made a career out of teaching civilian organizations how to give employees a sense of "empowerment," or – in military jargon – motivation. He has authored several books on the subject. He states that productivity is not driven by only wages and other rewards, but by "recognition of a job well done" and " a sense that they are appreciated and included in the operation." Nelson's polling resulted in equally dismal results, less than 50 percent of employees said their organizations were great places to work. Nelson's comment for the civilian supervisor is just as applicable to the NCO: "Finding creative ways to keep up morale and improve productivity is a huge challenge." His study of traditional awards was even more damning than Gallup's. He found that when supervisors expressed thanks in typical ways such as cash or awards, it sent a message to workers that unless they got these things, their contribution was not important. He found that workers who were motivated and felt connected to their organization had trust in their leaders, were shown that their opinions were valued, and were kept in the loop and supported when they took the initiative. Nelson said that people work for people, not for organizations, and that this is truer than ever in the age of the often abstract organization of today with fax machines, e-mail and people changing jobs and/or careers many times in their lives.

It is more important than ever to build and strengthen a relationship between you and your soldiers, to set high standards and give your soldiers every tool and opportunity to achieve them. You must care for, praise, encourage and value your subordinates. Only then will you draw the best out of them. In an age of increasing "op tempos" and tightening of resources, we cannot afford to have any soldier "disengaged" or unmotivated. NCOs have major advantages over civilian leaders. We are part of a chain that stretches back more than 200 years and across thousands of battlefields. Nothing builds ties to a unit like the unit's history, esprit de corps and team building that the NCO Corps can produce.

Sgt. Maj. John J. Blair
9th Theater Support Command (U.S. Army Reserve)
Fort Belvoir, Va.

Discipline and respect

As a junior NCO in the Reserve component, I am extremely frustrated with the lack of discipline in following customs and courtesies. Soldiers do not show the proper respect to NCOs or officers. I see it not only on [drill] weekends but also in the full-time force.

It all starts when soldiers return from basic [training], [advanced individual training] or [one-station unit training]. Everyone learns during their soldierization process what is proper. Our soldiers come back disciplined and well-mannered. After a few months, however, they lose their discipline and military bearing because their section NCOs don't continue setting the example or enforcing the standards as their drill sergeants did during training.

I have high expectations of my soldiers and make on-the-spot corrections whenever necessary. During [drill] weekends I make corrections when soldiers stray from the standards of parade rest, attention, saluting and addressing NCOs and officers properly. The problem I'm having is that same soldier can turn around and see a senior NCO or officer doing the same thing.

Things such as this will not change until it is forced from the top down, not the other way. I look to our senior NCOs to set the example, enforce the standards and expect more. I'm sure I'm not the only NCO going through the same trouble. Any advice would be very appreciated.

Cpl. Robert G. Olinger
Fairfield, Iowa

Preparing for deployment

So you have been notified that you are deploying in support of one of many operations that our Army is currently engaged in; welcome to the club. The companies busily prepare their units to load up, jump on the iron bird and touch down in their new home away from home. Wait! What did the NCO support channel do to get the soldiers ready? Here are some ideas of how I had my senior NCOs crack that nut.

Promotions: I had every one of my sergeants and below put together their "I Love Me" books to hand carry on deployment. My first sergeants checked each book to verify all pertinent data was in "The Book." When my soldiers made the cut-off score, they knew that they made it. Their points are not suspended nor must they provide any source documents to "prove" that they made their points after redeployment. We made sure that the soldier would only have to go through this once. My lower enlisted soldiers who compete for those ever so few waivers are also covered. Their first sergeants do not have to guess if they attended a school or completed correspondence courses, they know. The commanders also know that they are selecting the best qualified and the right soldiers for promotion.

Equally important is the centralized promotion boards. I directed that all my staff sergeants, sergeants first class and master sergeants have a DA photo before we deployed. We did this early on so that their first sergeants and I had an opportunity to check the photos and provide feedback to the NCOs. They also reviewed and updated their DA Form 2-1 and Enlisted Records Briefs. Every NCO took their Official Military Personnel File on the deployment.

Counseling files: The company put the soldiers counseling files in as part of the orderly rooms' packing lists. It was imperative during the deployment as not all the soldiers deployed with their predeployment supervisors. There were too many instances where a soldier's previous counseling was critical to making decisions about that soldier's assignment or other decisions. The counseling files assisted us in writing awards, NCOERs, recom-

mendations for Audie Murphy and Maj. Gen. Aubrey "Red" Newman boards, promotions and even disciplinary actions.

Concerning NCOERs, close out the NCOERs prior to your deployment when possible.

Training files: Simply having a "soft copy" of the training files is insufficient. Although our electronic training database files are extremely useful in tracking dates of rank, weapon qualifications, physical fitness data, clothing sizes, etc., the electronic files are not a substitute for some of the "hard copy" documents found in the training files, especially weapon qualification and Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) scorecards, which are needed for sergeant and staff sergeant promotion point computation. When deployed soldiers take APFTs, requalify on their assigned weapons, become Combat Lifesaver certified or recertified, etc., the training NCO simply places the results in the existing training files, as opposed to creating entirely new training records to be reintegrated with home-station records after redeployment.

One last point, ask your signal officer or network specialist to download your e-mail and desktop files. I was saved much anguish by bringing my home station e-mail personal folders with me. I also downloaded all my computer files on CD.

Command Sgt. Lori L. Brown
110th Military Intelligence Battalion
Fort Drum, New York

FLPP flop

I agree with Staff Sgt. Brett Beliveau's view of the removal of the Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP). My second language is Spanish and I constantly have to use my language skills to communicate with the retired and active-duty family members (not to mention military foreign nationals). To keep other languages and indiscriminately omit others and yet take advantage of bilingual soldiers' value of selfless service is somewhat unethical. Our government can afford to maintain the incentive. Keep FLPP as a "one for all and all for one" concept.

Sgt. 1st Class Herb Rivera
Walter Reed Army Medical Center

A fix for branch certification

With the current focus on branch certification we as an Army are starting the good old check-the-block era, just like the Vietnam War, where leaders were rotated in and out of combat units to get "the right amount of command time to someday receive a star." If you have never read *Self Destruction, the Disintegration and Decay of the United States Army during the Vietnam Era*, do so, it is very insightful on what went wrong with our leadership in the late '60s and into the '70s.

I fear we are repeating history with our current branch qualification focus.

I would like to offer some insight on the current branch qualification process, its problems and a suggested fix.

In Armor, a staff sergeant is considered branch qualified after 18 months successful Tank Commander time. A sergeant first class is considered branch qualified after 18 months successful Tank Platoon Sergeant time.

We in Armor are counting [Table of Distribution and Allowances platoon sergeant] time, but I can see where we may need to because available platoons out there and the three-company concept forces this to be standard practice.

The problem we run into is the standard of what branch certification really is. I have seen several cases but I will discuss one. I have a staff sergeant in my unit who was a promotable sergeant Tank Commander for 10 months, then was promoted to staff sergeant. Two months after that, he received his annual NCOER rating him for 12 months as a staff sergeant Tank Commander.

Another six months passed and he is on orders. He receives a Change of Rater NCOER for six months and there you have it. A soldier who has been a staff sergeant for a whole eight months and he is branch certified as a staff sergeant Tank Commander. This is a failure of the system.

It is essential that we keep our leaders in position so that they become proficient in their branch-qualifying jobs; branch qualification should be for that grade and that grade alone, not completed by adding time from the previous grade.

How do we fix this? I propose that once an NCO is promoted he receive a Complete the Record NCOER stating he has entered the new grade. This does not have to be a formal evaluation as the soldier may have just received a rating. But a Complete the Record NCOER would show that there is no doubt as to when the soldier started branch certification for his current grade.

Master Sgt. Samuel D. Carlson
Troop K, 2/16 Cavalry
Ft. Knox, Ky.

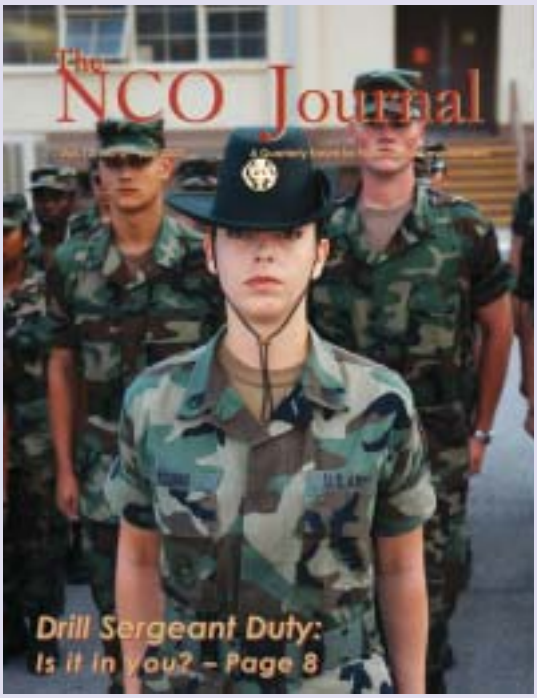
Counterproposal for rank and insignia

After reading April 2003 issue's letter from Sgt. Maj. [Osvardo] Vasquez about changing both "insignias" and "'verbiage" for NCOs, I had two thoughts: A respectful "Whoa!" to the plan for any drastic change to the uniform and a profound "Tracking" on Sgt. Maj. Vasquez's idea for the wordage used for NCOs. I say "Tracking," as he is close, but don't "Fire" yet. I don't see a problem in the way Army NCOs are titled. His example, sergeants. But I feel the Army could do better with the way NCOs are [currently] addressed when spoken to.

My time in joint training environments, especially while at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, showed me that some other branches [of service] actually have it right. As a platoon sergeant for a multi-branch platoon, you should have seen my platoon members' faces, when I introduced myself, sergeant first class, and explained they were to call me "Sergeant." Several NCOs [from other services] asked me to reconsider not being called "sergeant first class." I stuck by the Army way and told them to adjust. It took weeks for the NCOs, but for the junior enlisted – out of respect for my rank or fear of their senior NCOs – it was just plain *hard* for them to not show me the respect of using my full title.

That's my take on Sgt. Maj. Vasquez's letter. It opened dialogue and thought. Thank you, Sergeant Major. Perhaps this could be another positive legacy for Sergeant Major of the Army [Jack] Tilley (to go with his hooah one-arm push-ups). With his request that full titles be spoken when addressing NCOs, he could be the Sergeant Major of the Army that puts just a "little more pride" in making staff sergeant, sergeant first class or master sergeant.

Sgt. 1st Class Charles R. Ryan
Senior instructor
Fort Riley, Kansas



Journal strives to provide useful information

This issue of the *NCO Journal* is dedicated to all of the soldiers deployed around the world. It's been a long, dangerous mission with no end in sight. Hopes are that they will return home safely and soon. With that in mind, several of this issue's articles focus on combat and redeployment concerns.

Sgt. 1st Class George Loucks' article takes an indepth look at combat fatigue and how to fight it. Loucks provides valuable information for every NCO going into a combat zone or even an extended training exercise. (See page 12.)

While combat stress is a known enemy that soldiers face, the great unknown and anxious expectations of returning home from deployment is an area where soldiers often tread on unfamiliar terrain. Sgt. Maj. Lon Crosier helps explain a new program, the Deployment Cycle Support plan, that helps soldiers cope with the redeployment and readjusting to homelife. (See page 15.)

National Guard and Reserve soldiers returning from deployment sometimes have a unique set of circumstances with which they must cope: will their civilian jobs be waiting for them? A Department of Defense organization, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, works to inform Guard and Reserve soldiers of their lawful reemployment rights and to mediate any conflicts between Reserve soldiers and their civilian employers.

As for active-duty soldiers returning home who are thinking about "What's next?" Gen. Kevin Byrnes, the Training and Doctrine Command commander, may have a suggestion: Drill sergeant duty. See page 8 if you think you are up for the task of training the Army's ultimate weapons, new soldiers.

As with every issue of the *Journal*, we try to provide NCOs with news they can use. This quarter, we focus on assets available on the Worldwide Web, including a user's guide to Army Knowledge Online (AKO) and a two-page tear-out of Web site resources that may come in hand.

Please remember, the *Journal* staff is always looking for articles, commentaries, letters to the editor and photographs. Submitting articles or photographs to the *Journal* is a great way to spotlight your command or installation. Thanks to all of you who have and continue to contribute.

I would also like to thank all of you who took the time to complete the *Journal* readership survey. The response has been so strong that we are still compiling the results. We'll give you the whole breakdown in our October issue.

And, lastly, we have some folks we'd like to welcome and others we'd like to farewell. First, I'd like to welcome our new directorate chief, Sgt. Maj. Glenn Wagner. Although Sgt. Maj. Wagner does not work on the *Journal* on a daily basis, he's quickly become one of our greatest supporters. I'd like to welcome Sgt. Maj. Kelvin Hughes. Sgt. Maj. Hughes is a field artilleryman that recently graduated the Sergeants Major Course. He's helping us while he awaits his assignment as a battalion command sergeant major.

We also have two new journalists on board, Sgt. Chad Jones and Spc. Matthew MacRoberts.

Sgt. Jones just PCSed from the 25th Infantry Division Public Affairs Office.

Spc. MacRoberts previously served as an active-duty Infantry soldier and most recently served as a journalist in the Army Reserve 361st Press Camp Headquarters, Fort Totten, N. Y. I believe these soldiers will be great assets to the magazine.

And lastly, we say farewell to two *Journal* staffers, Sgt. Jimmy Norris and Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) Phil Tegtmeier. Sgt. Norris is leaving to become a staff member on the Fort Bliss, Texas, newspaper, the *Monitor*; Phil has left to return to his adopted home in Italy.

One last farewell I must note is that of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy commandant, Col. Michael Enneking. Col. Enneking, a former NCO, truly understands the value of NCOs. He has given the *Journal* staff tremendous support for which we are eternally grateful. He leaves the Academy to serve as the Inspector General for the state of Oklahoma. We wish him the best.

As always, we remember those who are forward deployed. They are in our thoughts and prayers.

Master Sgt. Lisa Hunter
Editor in Chief