

Letters

SMA book squared away

I was reading the latest issue of the *NCO Journal* (October 2003) and noticed an article on Page 25 named *History of SMA is squared away in new book*. I would be very much interested in purchasing this book or even the original book. I am a retired sergeant major working at Fort Richardson, Alaska, as a GS employee. I worked as the Principal Administrative Assistant for Sergeant Major of the Army [George] Dunaway and [Silas] Copeland from 1968 through 1974. I surely have an interest in that office and the office holders over the years. I knew all before I retired in 1989 as I worked with each during my daily duties for the SMA.

I tried to send you a comment through the *NCO Journal* Web site, but just couldn't get it to work. It asked the question to rate the *Journal* and I rated it superior in all accounts. It is a fine publication and look forward to it each month.

*Bobby W. Alexander
Force Integration Div G3
Fort Richardson, Alaska*

(Editor's note: We cannot determine why your comment never made it through our Website. As with any technology there are glitches occasionally and hope that your one experience does not prevent you from sending us more feedback. As for how to purchase the new SMA book or even how to get a hold of the previous one, you can find it on the Government Printing Office's online bookstore at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>. In the search engine area for "Search the Sales Product Catalog (SPC):" type "Sergeants Major of the Army. The second reference that comes up should be — Title: Sergeants Major of the Army (Clothbound Edition). The price on the site says it goes for \$40 in the U.S. and \$54 for overseas. The original book — The Story of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps; The Backbone of the Army — is no longer in print. We apologize for not including this information in the original article. Our commandant found a copy of the original and an extra copy of the new book and we have out both copies.)

Addressing the drill sergeant shortage

I am writing on the issue of filling the drill sergeant shortage. This is in reference to the Vol. 12, No. 4 - October 2003 issue of the *NCO Journal*.

There seems to be a shortage of drill sergeants in the military as a whole. The real question is, why? Staff Sgt. Webley made a good point when he said; "Do you think that the volunteer rate would increase if becoming a drill sergeant were open to [Active Guard and Reserve] Soldiers?" in the last issue of the *NCO Journal*.

I am an Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) Soldier currently stationed in Milwaukee, Wis. During my entire career in the military, I've come up against situations where the drill sergeant branch has been very particular about their selections. I do understand that it's all about strength management and that's fine. However, look at what a predicament they're in now. This is just like when the Army downsized after Desert Storm. The Army had to come up with ways to get the strength of our forces up again.

If we are supposed to be an "Army of One," why are there a lot of things not open to the Active Guard and Reserve that are open to the other components? Do AGR Soldiers have the same career advancement opportunities as active or Reserve Soldiers? There are limited warrant officer Military Occupational Specialties, recruiting opportunities, no Ranger, Airborne and Air Assault school opportunities, to name a few. Even though an Active Guard and Reserve Soldier is on active-duty, they are not considered active duty Soldiers. If Active Guard and Reserve Soldiers wanted to transfer over to the active component for career opportunities, they cannot without losing rank. So why does my identification card say "Active Duty?" I'm held to the same standards and punished under the same authority as an active duty Soldier, but not fully treated as an active duty Soldier? Do you think that's why the Army slogan was changed from "Be All That You Can Be"?

Don't get me wrong, I love the Army. However, as an Active Guard and Reserve Soldier, I'm probably speaking for many other AGR Soldiers. I would like the opportunity to serve my country like every other Soldier in uniform.

*Master Sgt. Darren L. Williams
7th Brigade, 84th Division (IT)
Milwaukee, Wis.*

Journal seeks your input

The *NCO Journal* welcomes your thoughts and encourages you to write to: The NCO Journal, 11291 SGT E Churchill Street, Fort Bliss, Texas, 79918-8002 or e-mail us at ATSS-SJ-NCOJOURNAL@bliss.army.mil. We reserve the right to edit your comments for clarity, grammar, spelling and length.

Where do you need to be to show your leadership?

Over the years, I've been very fortunate to find strong mentors at every one of my duty stations. Here at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with Command Sgt. Maj. Clifford West, the Academy command sergeant major.

On March 3, he retired after 32 years of service. The week before his retirement, West held one last NCOPD with the 700 plus students of the Sergeants Major Course Class 54. West talked to the students about some of the basic ingredients of being a good NCO. They were all simple things that we should all know and do, but his talk was still a reminder of what our responsibilities are as NCOs. Here's what he had to say:

When a Soldier enters his organization, he wants to be his best. How can he do that and how can his NCOs help him do that? Reception and integration counseling is one of the best tools you have. This gives you a chance to explain the standards, discipline and responsibility. You should bring him under your wing and make him part of the organization.

What do you do the first time you realize a Soldier has a problem? If you do recommend nonjudicial punishment, try to speak with him or her about the issue.

If you had the Soldier report to the Staff Duty Officer, he probably didn't learn anything from it. Did a detail sergeant supervise him or did his first-line supervisor do it? On the other hand, if it's the Soldier's first Article 15 and you gave him the maximum punishment, what does he have to look forward to? Remember, retention starts on Day One, not when they get into their reenlistment window.

Also, invest in your unit's family readiness group (FRG). There is no more important time than now to have an FRG. They are not babysitting or taxi services. They are there to educate families on how to take care of themselves, teach them about TRICARE, the chaplain's services, etc.

If you want to be an effective leader, start with yourself. There are three people in each of us: the person you see in the mirror; the person you are with your friends and family; and the person you are with your Soldiers. Your subordinates have to be able to understand you. The relationship you have with your spouse and children is the same relationship you should have with your Soldiers. How do you want to be treated? How do you want your children to be treated if they were in the Army? Dignity and respect goes both ways in the Army.

Look at what gives you inner strength, whether it's your spirituality, your family or whatever. Also look at your physical strength; it will make you a better leader by keeping your mind sharp.



Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Clifford West

Most of all, you have to be predictable. What is the Number One complaint in the Army? Lack of predictability. Soldiers want to know what they are going to be doing that day. The best tool you have that will give your Soldiers predictability is the training schedule.

Set the example for what's important to the unit. Ask yourself, "Where do I need to be to show my leadership?" If you don't show up it's not important. You are your Soldiers' image of perfection, leadership by example. Just talking about it doesn't get anything done. It's your actions. Colin Powell said, "'If it isn't broke, don't fix it.' is a cliché for a complacent leader." You have to check on your Soldiers. Along with that, visit the areas where your Soldiers are being taken care of: the Emergency Room, Army Community Service, the Troop Medical Clinic... Go on sick call and see what your Soldiers have to do.

A normal day for an NCO leader should include training, maintaining, caring and leading. You have to instill in your Soldiers the standards, discipline and responsibility. Have you ever seen a squared-away unit that had trash all over the ground and grass that needs cutting?

We will let a buck sergeant lead a patrol down a back alley in Iraq, but we don't put them in charge during training. In Iraq, they have to make decisions whether to return fire or run for cover. Their ability to make those decisions all reflects on their ability to take charge, their discipline, authority and responsibility. If you expect Soldiers to lay down their lives for you, show them that you care about them, not just professionally but personally.

Even though CSM West has retired, he won't soon be forgotten. His calm, reasonable leadership style and his can-do attitude are still alive in the Army through me and so many other Soldiers that he touched along the way. Thank you, CSM West.

*Master Sgt. Lisa Hunter
Editor in Chief*