

SOME QUOTES

"NCOs need to be developed to a higher degree than ever before and the NCO must train, lead, and care for his soldiers"...Both the individual training effort and team-building demand a strong cadre of qualified trainers. These are the Army's Noncommissioned Officers."

— GEN E. C. Meyer, Army Chief of Staff, 1980.

"Sergeants train soldiers to perform individual soldier skills to high standards of excellence"...Training is the Sergeant's principal duty and responsibility."

— FM 22-600-20, the NCO Guide, March 1980.

"Noncommissioned Officers must be professionals. They are expected to set high standards. Those who cannot "hack it will have to pack it."

— SMA William A. Connelly, April 1982

"A Leader who cannot get his soldier to align his toothbrush in his foot locker certainly will have problems getting his soldier to lay down his life for his country."

— LTC Robert (Cold Steel) Powell, 5 Oct 82.

"No one is more professional than I...Competence is my watchword...I will strive to remain tactically and technically proficient. I am aware of my role as a Noncommissioned Officer. I will fulfill my responsibilities inherent in that role...officers in my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine...I will exercise initiative by taking action in the absence of orders."

— from the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer.

"Platoon leaders hold their subordinate leaders responsible for the individual training, personal appearance and cleanliness of their soldiers, and for insuring the following:

1. That each member of their unit is trained to competency in his or her MOS as prescribed in the appropriate soldier's manual.
 2. That all government property issued to members of their unit is properly maintained and accounted for at all times and that discrepancies are verified promptly.
- AR 600-20.

"Sir, both of us can't be the platoon sergeant. You do your job and I'll do mine and mine is preparing the troops for your inspection."

PSG Cordove to 2LT Jones, 1962.

"The Command Sergeants Major are the Custodians of our reputation."

— GEN E. C. Meyer, CSA, 5 OCT 81.

"The Noncommissioned Officers Corps will cause the United States Army to win on any future battlefield."

— LTC Robert (Cold Steel) Powell, 16 FEB 82.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 3D ARMORED DIVISION
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AETF-CSM

15 NOV 1982

SUBJECT: Sergeant's Book

update 3 Feb 1992

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. This Sergeant's Book is not a rehash of anything you've read concerning the role of the noncommissioned officer or sergeant's business. It is an expression of what sergeants ought to be and what sergeants ought to do. It is a "written talk" from me to you.
2. I firmly believe that a corps of highly motivated, professional noncommissioned officers is vital to the success of the fighting Army. The saga of the American Army Sergeant is unmatched by any other Army in peace or war. The single most important trait we have over the Russians is a strong viable Noncommissioned Officers' Corps that can do anything. The Russians are familiar with the US Army's Noncommissioned Officers' Corps, and are not ready to do battle with us.
3. PFC Patriot and I are counting on you to set the example and provide outstanding leadership in your squads, sections, platoons, and companies.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert L. Haga".
ROBERT L. HAGA
CSM
Division Sergeant Major

DISTRIBUTION:

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WHY THIS BOOK

It used to be that noncommissioned officers literally "ran the Army" at troop unit level. It is getting that way again. Sergeants used to have all of the savvy about individual training, keeping equipment straight, and preparing for inspection. Sergeants used to go to great lengths in preparing "their man" for guard mount. They checked, double checked, and triple checked everything.

What happened? In my view, there were several things that interrupted this thing called "sergeants' business."

In the late 1960's and early 1970's our Korean War vintage NCO's retired at the 20 year mark. Also at the same time, many NCO's with both WWII and Korean War service retired at the 25-30 year mark. To make matters worse, the cream of the crop left the Army in the midst of the Vietnam War. Then too, a new generation of young soldiers presented new leadership challenges. During this period the Army was required to pump out thousands of young, inexperienced "instant NCO's". Many, in fact most, of these young sergeants did a magnificent job under extremely trying circumstances. But the role model, that tough, seasoned, professional NCO was gone. The essence of the Corps was fragmented at the very time we needed it the most.

At this point, the commissioned ranks literally reached down and grabbed hold of our Army. This happenstance created another set of problems because having grabbed hold, the commissioned officers were reluctant to let go. Thus, a new generation of lieutenants never understood what sergeants' business was really all about. These young officers were soon captains and they still held fast to both commissioned and noncommissioned duties. Their lieutenants did likewise and soon the problem perpetuated itself.

For awhile, we went past the point where NCO's should have stepped forward and demanded their rightful place in again running the Army. This is now changing and I definitely perceive that the "NCO problem" has turned the corner.

But having turned the corner, it is time we get on down the road. The name of that road is success! I am encouraged by the reemergence of the Corps. I want an Army where officers are proud of their NCO's, where NCO's are glad to be NCO's, and where troops want to be NCO's. In our small corner of the Army, let's continue to move down the road together.

The decade of the 1980's is going to be an exciting one for our Army in terms of quality soldiers, new equipment, and leadership opportunities. It is also going to be fraught with danger. When the call comes we must be ready.

ENLISTED ASPECTS OF COMMAND

Army Regulation 600-20 covers this subject. Here are some highlights:

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR:

- Carries out policies and standards on the performance, training, appearance, and conduct of enlisted personnel.
- Gives advice and initiates recommendations to the commanders and staff pertaining to enlisted personnel.
- Administers the activities of the NCO support channel.
- Administers the unit noncommissioned officers development program (NCOPP) through the NCO support channel.

FIRST SERGEANT:

- His principal duty is the individual training of enlisted members of the unit. Routine administrative duties are supervised by the first sergeant; however, they should not be given a priority over the training duties.
- Holds formations, instructs platoon sergeants, and assists the commander in operations of the unit.
- Administers the unit NCOPP.

PLATOON SERGEANT:

- The key assistant and advisor to the platoon leader.
- Commands the platoon in the absence of the platoon leader.

SECTION, SQUAD, AND TEAM LEADERS:

- That each member of their unit is trained to competency in his MOS as prescribed in the appropriate soldier's manual.
- That all Government property issued to members of their unit is properly maintained and accounted for at all times and that discrepancies are reported promptly.
- That, while in a duty status, they be ready at all times to report the location and activity of all members of the unit. Thus, as the basic reporting unit in formations, the squad is either present, or persons absent are reported by name. They will not merely be accounted for.
- That the unit is trained to function in its primary mission role.

THE CORPS

Commissioned officers do not really understand what the essence of the Corps is all about. Perhaps they should not try to figure it out. There should be a mystique about the Corps; an intangible essence that prides itself on selfless duty and professional excellence. Whatever it is, it is precious. The senior noncommissioned officers must hold and guard the keys to this fraternity.

THE BACKBONE

The noncommissioned officers are the backbone of the Army. What does being the backbone mean anyway? Well, think of the Army as being the human body consisting of brains, nerves, and muscles. Sever the backbone and what happens? The body collapses and becomes paralyzed; brains remain but nerve, muscle, and power are gone. The backbone keeps the body strong, upright, and straight. The Corps keeps the Army strong, upright, and straight. That is the relationship between the noncommissioned officer and our Army. That is what being the backbone of the Army is all about.

PROFESSIONALISM

A noncommissioned officer is a "professional" soldier. In other words, he is a pro. What does that mean anyway?

-- Professional soldiers study their profession. Professionals always try to improve themselves. They read their professional journals. They study Soldier's manuals, maintenance manuals, and the ARTEP.

-- Professional soldiers discuss training, tactics, and leadership. They share ideas with each other concerning mission accomplishment.

-- Professional soldiers care about PFC Patriot and his family. Professionals worry when their troops lack soldier skills and/or have personal problems.

-- Professional soldiers recommend ways of getting the job done both smarter and better.

OFFICERSHIP

In Army units we usually speak of the leadership in terms of "officers and NCO's". What we really mean here is "officers and officers". When we took the sacred oath of enlistment, we swore to "obey the orders of officers appointed over me". Think about those words for a moment. The word "officer" includes you. There are three types of officers in the United States Army - commissioned, warrant, and noncommissioned. At the leading and fighting end of our Army we are primarily talking about commissioned and noncommissioned officers. In the leading and fighting business, the difference lies not so much in what we do, but rather in size of the force we do it with. I am an officer and you are an officer. What I am talking about is officership. The word "officer" connotes three things - leadership, authority, and responsibility. As officers - commissioned and noncommissioned, we dare not violate our sacred commitment to our troops, to our units, and to our nation.

JOB OR SACRED TRUST?

Most of you are squad and fire team leaders which makes you just about the most important green-tabbers in our Army. There are people in the Army who have more responsibility than you do, but I cannot think of any grade that has more direct authority than the Infantry Squad Leader or the Tank Commander or the Artillery Section Chief. Those very titles have leadership written all over them. You are the leaders who are going to win it or lose it very quickly in the next war. The generals and colonels may position us for battle but it will be the sergeants and staff sergeants who must be able to outfight the other guy on the ground.

For the first time in its history, I believe the United States Army has a fair inkling of what the next war will be like. It will be unmatched in its ferocity. The modern battlefield is going to be a very unforgiving place. Now the thought of war should not seem remote to you. Every new soldier signing on for a twenty year career since 1922 has seen one and sometimes two or three wars. Think about that. The call is going to come and it will come unexpectedly. We must train PFC Patriot to win and survive on the modern battlefield.

The combat arms officers in the Army, the commissioned and noncommissioned, are partners in the noblest profession known to man. Soldiering is a profession that encompasses much more than a "job". No "job" ever required an oath. Our business centers around a sacred trust. The difference between the two is as different as night and day. Jobs are a dime-a-dozen. A soldier's life is priceless. Let's start thinking in those terms and reach out for the great challenges and opportunities we have in leading and teaching our soldiers. In doing so you will have all of the respect and authority you could ever ask for. You will have earned it.

THE "BUCK" SERGEANT

The transition from soldier to sergeant is the roughest jump of all. In the Infantry, there is no "break-in" period for the buck sergeant. PFC Patriot quickly holds him accountable for the proper exercise of leadership. We must insure that our best young SPC are ready for the challenge. The senior noncommissioned officers must quickly integrate the new sergeant into the Corps. The new sergeant must clearly understand that he is no longer merely a soldier but is now a professional soldier. He must realize very quickly that he is no longer "one of the troops". The buck sergeant has about as much authority as a command sergeant major. A soldier must obey a junior sergeant just as quickly as he would a colonel. I have absolutely no use for a tentative, compromising sergeant of any rank. I want our buck sergeants to get on with it. I want all of our "bucks" to be bucking for Staff Sergeant!

TRAINING

Training is the most important thing we do and it is bound up in nearly everything we do. It is through tough training that we take care of a soldier. Training is the sergeant's principal duty and responsibility. Go back and re-read your training responsibilities.

Sergeants are primarily responsible for the individual training of our soldiers. This means you must be at least as good or better in your MOS skills than any of your soldiers. The various Soldier's Manuals and the ARTEP must be your everyday companions. You must understand training objectives in terms of tasks, conditions, and standards. Inasmuch as maintenance is training, you must also understand the operator's manual pertaining to your vehicles, weapons, and radios. Always critique training with your soldiers. Go over their mistakes and the things they did well. You may even have to do some tasks over again.

Are you maintaining job books? Can all of your subordinates read a map? Do they know basic first aid lifesaving measures? Can the vehicle crew perform operator checks? Can they use a compass? If the answer to any of these basic questions is no, then you've got work to do. There are a hundred questions you can ask. What about you? Can you answer them?

Are you supposed to know everything? Well, as a sergeant you are supposed to know just about any subject concerning whatever is required in your MOS. For example, in the Soldier's Manual 19010 & 19020, PFC Patriot is told, "If you do not understand any parts of the manual or want to know more about advancement opportunities, see your squad leader." "Take advantage of his knowledge and experience." That's tough - but that's also why you are a sergeant!

But what if you do not know the answer to a soldier's question. Don't put him off! Be honest about it. In this case, an answer I recommend goes like this: "Jones, that's a darn good question and I'm rusty on it. Let's get the manual out and re-learn it together!" If you do this, the soldier will respect you and, of course, everybody learns.

What about training time and training opportunities? You have plenty and what's more, many of you are wasting them. I want you to always be prepared to teach and train during slack-times. You do this through "hip pocket" training. Here are some examples.

— During collective training you and your squad may have established a good defensive position and have time to spare before the attack comes. Well, get out the Soldier's Manual! Teach something! Learn something!

— No matter what the training schedule calls for you usually have plenty of slacktime. Again, get out the Soldier's Manual and learn something! That's using initiative. That's being professional. That's being a United States Army Sergeant!

MAINTENANCE

PFC Patriot expects his equipment to work, and in many cases, to save his life. He is smart enough to know that equipment which is not properly maintained will not work. PFC Patriot is fully aware that his vehicle will require service while in the field, upon returning from the field, and even when parked. Noncommissioned officers are promoted because of demonstrated leadership. With promotion comes responsibility. With responsibility comes M1A1 tanks, Bradley, HUMMMVs, machine guns, 5 ton trucks, 1/4 ton trucks, etc., and the list goes on and on. These items of equipment, just like TA50, need to be maintained properly. Sergeants must not be afraid to get their hands dirty. They must feel that when a piece of equipment looks good or is deadlined, that it will reflect on them. Sergeants must aggressively work toward getting "their" vehicle back to a "go" state.

MAKING MISTAKES

Can you make a mistake? Certainly you can. I will always underwrite an honest learning mistake. So will PFC Patriot. But there is a difference in honest mistakes and dereliction of duty. Misreading an azimuth and ending up on the wrong objective can be embarrassing but it's a learning mistake. Forgetting a broken vehicle and a crew with no chow is an example of dereliction. There are many examples in each category. You and I know the difference between the two. So does PFC Patriot. Mistakes should be made "leaning forward". Work on your mistakes and do better the next time. Don't ever be guilty of dereliction.

INITIATIVE

Initiative is getting the job done in the absence of orders. All sergeants should be able to work with minimum guidance and supervision. When given a mission, sergeants should be trusted to accomplish it.

Why should a young 22 year old second lieutenant have to explain everything to a sergeant with 14 years of service? One would think it would be the other way around. Take the initiative! Check PFC Patriot's room and equipment without being told. Inventory your squad's equipment without being told. Conduct maintenance without being told. Are your squad's weapons in good shape? What about protective masks? Are your vehicles ready for inspection? Do you carry a notebook? Do you have opportunity training prepared? Keep your troops completely tactical in the field without being told. Do you know how many family members are in your squad? I am talking about wives, kids, and the dog. Figure out better ways of getting any mission accomplished without being told.

Sergeants with initiative are "squared away" in the eyes of the troops. Why? Because sergeants with initiative take care of their soldiers. On the other hand, sergeants who always have to be prodded are usually "owned" by the troops. Take the initiative - all day, everyday!

AUTHORITY

As a noncommissioned officer you possess enormous authority. PFC Patriot is required to obey all of your orders. Because your authority is so great, you must use it responsibly. Only immature and insecure sergeants throw their rank around. We have no room in our Army for "chicken" sergeants. Your orders must always be lawful and have a purpose behind them.

You are expected to give orders that point toward a mission accomplishment in garrison and in the field. You are expected to make on-the-spot corrections on any soldier anywhere. This includes on post, off post, and at bus and air terminals. A sloppy soldier should never get by a sergeant.

Never get in a shouting match with a malcontent. You lose prestige and authority when you do. Don't get down on his level, and by no means put your hands on him. Instead, see that disciplinary action is properly taken.

A final caution: Make sure you follow orders in the same manner you expect troops to follow yours.

PFC PATRIOT

The American soldier is the noblest creature on the face of the earth. The security of our nation ultimately rests in the hands of PFC Patriot. He must always be the center of our attention. He is at the point of the bayonet. The responsibility of taking care of soldiers is total and it is the most important thing we do. Since PFC patriot is sworn to obey your orders, taking care of him becomes a sacred duty and a sacred trust. This "cost of responsibility" cannot be cast off at the end of the duty day; it must be worn constantly.

You must insure that PFC Patriot gets the best training possible. You must insure that his equipment is serviceable and accounted for. You must insure that he presents the appearance of a soldier everyday. You must insure that PFC Patriot is treated with dignity and respect and that his problems are attended to. You must pat him on the back when he tries hard and does a good job. You must counsel him and help him when he fails. You are also responsible for being fair and impartial when recommending extra training and disciplinary action.

These are heavy responsibilities but they come with the hallowed title of "Sergeant". It is the degree of experience and responsibility that separated you from PFC Patriot.

LOYALTY

Loyalty is bound up in trustworthiness and faithfulness. Loyalty is supporting your leaders even though sometimes you may not totally agree with them. Loyalty is not passing the buck. Loyalty is never complaining in front of the troops. Loyalty is positive thinking. Loyalty is going the extra mile in looking for mission and men.

Sometimes our junior sergeants will see what appears to be a conflict between accomplishment of the mission and looking after the welfare of the troops. Remember, mission accomplishment must always come first because it embraces the greater good for all. True conflicts between the two are extremely rare.

The issuance of orders and the obedience to orders has a great deal to do with loyalty. The manner in which we issue orders has a great deal to do with the manner in which they are carried out. Orders hesitantly given will be hesitantly carried out. Orders issued with threats and curses are very likely not to be carried out at all. Orders from your superiors must be issued as if they were your own. What about the following order?

"Men, I don't like this order anymore than you do but the lieutenant is making us do it."

The above statement is a disloyal statement rather than an order. It is disloyal to the lieutenant. This sort of statement would be made by a gutless, insecure sergeant. It is buck-passing. Believe me, such an "order" will be carried out reluctantly and with little enthusiasm.

Should you disagree with an order you may of course seek clarification. If the order still stands, you must get on with it to the best of your ability. Loyalty demands that.

PROBLEM SOLVING

The chain of command must also be a "chain of concern." Some of your troops are going to have personal problems. Some of PFC Patriot's problems will be minor in nature while others will be truly mind-boggling. Getting the problem solved starts with you! If the soldier's problem is beyond your scope you must seek assistance from the chain of command. Even then you can't just pass the problem on and forget it. I want you to stay close to the situation until the soldier is helped.

Besides yourself and the chain of command, who else can help? The chaplain is available and can help. The battalion staff can help. Army Community Services (ACS) can help PFC Patriot and his family. AER and the Red Cross are available and can help. Drug and alcohol counselors can help. Finance and budget experts are available. Marriage counselors are ready to assist. Army health nurses can help families with child care. Social workers are available. Army legal assistance can offer advice.

Remember this - an ignored problem does not go away - it gets worse.

FRATERNIZATION

As a noncommissioned officer you are no longer "one of the troops". Remember, it is the degree of experience and responsibility that separates you from the troops. At times you will be required to issue orders necessary to accomplish tough, demanding missions. You cannot effectively do this if you pal around with the troops. It just simply will not work. Soldiers are not going to give instant obedience to sergeants that play with them. In battle, PFC Patriot will look for the steady hand and firm voice of the sergeant. In battle, instant obedience may mean the difference between life and death. Sergeants socialize with sergeants. Here are some guidelines:

- Don't joke around with the troops.
- Don't horseplay with the troops.
- Don't drink with the troops.
- Don't loan money to the troops.
- Don't borrow money from the troops.
- Don't call soldiers by their first names. Call them by their rank and last name.
- Don't allow troops to call you by your first name.

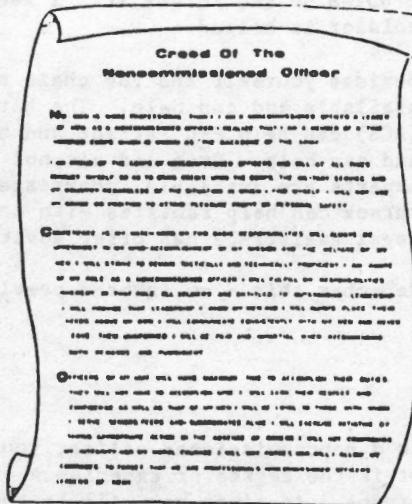
Can you ever socialize with soldiers? Yes, under controlled situations such as at a platoon or company party. You should have a good time here but watch yourself. Remember, set the example at all times.

SERGEANT DISCIPLINE

As a noncommissioned officer you are required to set high standards of integrity, trust, and personal conduct. When a sergeant tells me something, I believe him. PFC Patriot and I have no place for an untrustworthy noncommissioned officer. Remember also, your conduct must be above reproach off duty as well as on duty. I want you to watch the following:

- Alcohol Abuse.
- Overweight and Physical Fitness.
- Failure to Pay Just Debts.
- Traffic Offenses.
- Non-Support of Dependents.
- Domestic Disturbances.
- Fraternizing with Enlisted Personnel.
- Vulgarity Toward Anyone.

MORALS



The noncommissioned officer must possess the highest of moral conduct. This means he pays his debts, doesn't write bad checks, obeys the rules, doesn't drive his POV while intoxicated, and, of course, does not become engaged in infidelity. The United States society is and has been rapidly losing the moral fiber that has long made our country strong! The young people entering the Army have different morals than the older senior noncommissioned officers. We have a responsibility to mold these young people into soldiers and provide dedicated moral upright citizens who do what is right, and stand proud and upright for our country and flag.

A FINAL WORD

In a democracy such as ours, soldiering is the noblest profession known to men. Since the nation and soldier's lives are at stake, soldiering demands near perfection from imperfect people. Because this is so, we professionals have got to redouble our efforts toward accomplishing the mission and taking care of our soldiers.

In our small corner of this great Army, let's do our very best and lean forward in everything that we do.

Sergeant, Take Charge!!