

Running Head: Senior Non Commissioned Officer Incentive
Pay

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Abstract

← Throughout my military career, the main thing that has justified me staying in, is the service I am giving to our country. Having witnessed many new recruits being offered the incentives available today, I must admit that I get a little discouraged. What or who determines the worth of a soldier? With each and every one of us devoted to the same purpose, why shouldn't incentives be applied across the board? Time already served should be as important as time new recruits are committing to serve. Incentives shouldn't only be viewed as a means to recruit, but also as a way to retain the good, experienced soldiers already enlisted.

ETHICAL DILEMMA

The Army has had many significant changes during the time I have served. Everything from pay raises, educational opportunities, the Army motto, and our uniform has made me proud to represent the Armed Forces. For the most part the Army life has been good to me and my family. Though, there are still a few select issues that cause dilemma as far as I'm concerned. I don't believe that as a Senior NCO we get all we deserve. We have proven ourselves in order to achieve this title, yet nowadays seem to be taken for granted. The main thing that disturbs me is the lack of incentive to remain in the Army once retirement has been reached. In all reality it isn't really up to us at all if we choose to separate. You can drop your retirement packet, but if you're needed, they will find a way to make sure you stay. I don't believe this practice is right and feel since our enlistment commitment has been reached, we too should be offered the same incentives that the new recruits receive. If we are needed badly enough for our retirement to be disapproved, then the Army should make it worth our while. I can't remember the last time making someone do something they didn't want to or stay somewhere against their will ever turned out productive. I think

using their authoritative power in this way violates our personal rights to a degree.

As in most lines of work, career progression takes time. The Army NCO Corps consists of 9 ranks, with the title of Senior NCO being adopted by those who rank Sergeant First Class and above. The word "Senior" holds many different definitions, depending on the situation. Whatever the case, there used to be a time in the Army when "Senior" meant more than it does today. According to some veterans, the soldiers today have it good; more money, better housing, and incentives. In the "Old Army" you had to be a certain rank for certain privileges. Whether it was getting housing or the Army paying for your PCS moves, all of this had to be earned. It was only those who had served for some time already, proven their abilities, and obtained rank that was awarded these benefits. During these years, being a Senior NCO had its advantages. Times have definitely changed, and might I add, not for the better.

Throughout the 18 years I have served, one thing I've never had the privilege of acquiring is a MOS bonus. Granted, it would've been nice, I committed myself and service to our country anyway. I must admit that each time I re-upped; I enjoyed the feeling of being in control of

the situation. I was choosing to devote more time and was given options. All of this went away though, once I reached my ten year mark. Half of the so-called twenty years needed to retire had been served, and now I was known as a "Lifer." All of my options and control was gone. From this day forth I was now expected to remain in the Army. Not that I didn't plan on being a career soldier, I just felt like my life was out of my control. This realization raised more questions each time I thought about it, and made me doubt some of the Army's ways.

I am a firm believer of finishing something you start, but the approach the Army has been using nowadays goes way beyond this. Having had the privilege to serve as a Drill Sgt. ^{sergeant} one of most prestigious jobs in the Army, I implemented this belief in each recruit. When times got tough and they were missing their loved ones, quitting would've been the answer to all of their problems, so they thought. I pushed them to drive-on, to fulfill what they had originally set out to do. Each night I felt like somewhat of a hypocrite, since I was beginning to doubt the Army myself. I watched as the Army changed around me, and wondered if this was what I really wanted. I saw first hand the type of new recruits we were getting and questioned their reasons. The incentives being offered,

was this the only way young men and women would serve our country? There are currently other incentives is deliberation as well. A possible \$50,000 to be applied toward a home for "new recruits" is just one that sets me off. Here I am a few years from retiring, do they not feel that I could use the same assistance? Why can't the Army offer this to "Lifers" for extra time served? Cash bonuses, payment of student loans, and college funds, why did they deserve this more than me? After having already served my country for so many years, why didn't the Army see me worthy of such perks?

Time passed, and with rank came responsibility.

" Responsibility brought more time away from my family and more stress. Is this the "perk" that was supposed to keep me loving my job? With all military progression, the mission gets more involved. As a Senior NCO we are expected to "lead by example." The way I was feeling at times, I'm sure the Army wouldn't have appreciated the example I felt like setting. Yes, I am aware that life isn't fair, but I truly feel that all of my doubts and regrets could've been subsided had the Army ever made me feel like I was such a high commodity. Offering me a bonus or some type of incentive to show me how much they appreciate my dedication and commitment would've been nice.

No one likes the feeling of being taken for granted, or being overlooked. I always do my job and to the best of my abilities, which in turn benefits the Army. I feel that I am currently in a one-sided relationship, and I'm doing all of the giving. Being at this point in my career, the only thing I have to look forward to is minimal annual pay raises and promotion to SGM. Once this is accomplished, my job will be done. Upon reaching this goal in the Army, I would like to move on. I will have served 20 plus years, and think it should be up to me if I would like to stay. Unfortunately, this is not the case. I have witnessed far too many fellow NCOs being denied this right, and it bothers me very much.

Throughout my military career, I have occasionally been approached by an outsider asking my opinion of the Army. When there aren't wars or peace keeping missions taking place, I think people believe the Army way of life is a breeze. If this is the case, then why are the enlistment numbers down? War and death has a way of making people realize what being in the Army really consists of. The Army retention rate is very low, and those same recruits that were offered incentives to join, have since had the opportunity to ETS as well. It's just us "Lifers" that are more or less stuck. Where's the logic in keeping

good soldier's who have served their time, just because you can, yet offer outrageous incentives to new recruits just to do one enlistment? The same rights we defend each day we serve are wrongly being infringed upon. I see no purpose what so ever in retaining a soldier that doesn't want to stay. Why don't they utilize these powers when it's time for soldiers to re-enlist? Why are they given an option if we aren't? I always thought that time and commitment earned respect. Is this how the Army exercises respect? I am completely against their ability to do this at all, and would like to see it changed.

In closing, I would like to state again that the Army way of life has been good. I have had opportunities to travel the world with my family, which probably would've never happened had I not been in the Army. Though I still feel this is no consolation to the dilemma at hand. Maybe if they took the initiative to commend "Lifers" for their job well done, soldiers' retirement packets wouldn't have to be denied. Just maybe staying in the Army wouldn't seem like a dead-end job once you reached your goal, and soldiers would stay by choice. Whatever happens from this point on, I hope authorities somewhere make this realization and do something about it. I have 3 years left

and don't want to be denied opportunities I have rightfully earned.