

ATSS-MH (870)

MEMORANDUM FOR Commandant, United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas 79918-8002

SUBJECT: Access Agreement for Personal Experience Papers

1. I, David A Callahan, have submitted a Personal Experience Paper to the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy archives regarding events and experiences from my participation in Establishing an RSP that may be of historical significance to the United States Army and the Noncommissioned Officer Corps.

2. I understand the manuscript and attached documents will be accessioned into the historical holdings of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy archives and will belong to the United States Government to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the United States Army as determined by the Chief of Military History or his representative. I also understand that I may retain a copy for my own use subject to classification restrictions.

3. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interest in the paper to the United States Army with the following caveat/exception:

(DAE) None
() Other:

I understand that the information in this paper may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and therefore, may be releasable to the public contrary to my wishes. I further understand that, within the limits of the law, the United States Army will attempt to honor the restrictions I have requested to be placed on this material.

Date: 14 JULY 2010

Printed Name: David A Callahan

Signature: 

Accepted on behalf of the United States Army by:

Printed Name/Date: _____

Signature: _____

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Establishing a Recruit Sustainment Program

MSG David A. Callahan

United States Army Sergeants Major Academy

Centennial Colorado, 1 October 2004 to 10 April 2005

30 May 2010

CLASS # 35

Unclassified

Readiness NCO, 79T40, RRBN, JFHQ Colorado Army National Guard

Establishing a Recruit Sustainment Program I

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ABSTRACT

During the period of 1 October 2004 to 10 April 2005, I SFC David Callahan, was charged by the Recruiting and Retention Battalion Commander, to establish a Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) for the Colorado Army National Guard (COARNG). Reduction of attrition and increasing retention of the non-prior service (NPS) Soldiers in the COARNG was the goal of the RSP. COARNG went from 50th to 3rd overall in the Nation in NPS attrition in less than 7 months, with an annualized attrition rate of less than 3%. This is an account of how starting the RSP took all of my organizational, operational, and leadership skills in order to meet established deadlines.

Establishing a Recruit Sustainment Program

The focus and goal of the Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) for the Colorado Army National Guard (COARNG) is to reduce the overall attrition rate and increase the retention rate of the Non-Prior Service (NPS) Soldiers. COARNG, on 1 October 2004 had a NPS annualized attrition rate of 18% and retention rate of only 68%. Being charged with starting up this program was challenging and those of us who were part of it had to use many of the skills we learned in our military careers. Being assigned as the Readiness NCOIC of the program, I had to use research, operations, and planning and personnel management skills on a daily basis in order to get the program off the ground.

Beginning 1 October 2004 we researched and identified every NPS Soldier in the COARNG and determined the phase of training they were awaiting. Once the 264 individuals were identified, we verified through various means and systems that these individuals were indeed scheduled for and awaiting training for their prospective Military Occupational Specialty (MOS).

After we verified the information, we requested their training orders thru the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) Denver. My experiences as a qualified 71L administrative Specialist and a qualified 79T Recruiting and Retention NCO greatly assisted in this process, because these gave me a solid understanding of the requirements to ship a Soldier to Initial Entry Training (IET).

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After all the orders were gathered we were able to verify every single NPS Soldier's contract training ship date, training locations, MOS path and more importantly their home of record. A letter of intent was sent to each Soldier detailing the start of the RSP beginning 10 April 2005 which would be conducted at our Regional Training Institute (RTI) on Ft. Carson, Colorado. The letter also explained that NPS Soldiers would be attached for pay and administrative purposes and they were required to attend their weekend drills with us in a trainee status until they returned from school MOS qualified.

In order to brief my Commander on 1 November 2004, I called each individual Soldier and annotated their concerns. One of the concerns was; "How does this affect my unit of assignment when I return from my advanced individual training (AIT)?" The answer is it didn't, we would release them from attachment upon award of their MOS and they returned as a qualified viable asset to their parent unit. Through active listening I was able to answer their concerns and put most of them to rest immediately over the phone.

Concurrently with the phone calls the support staff and I worked hand in hand with our United States Property and Fiscal Accounting Office better known as USPFO, to establish the derivative Unit Identification Code (UIC) and establish a unit Pay Roll Number (PRN) in accordance with fiscal law.

When the UIC and PRN were established our personnel, created a Unit Manning Report (UMR) for the RTI which included the NPS Soldiers that would be attached to the RSP. Several issues arose as we began the attachment process. Our experience showed, that many of our support staff had recently enlisted into the COARNG themselves from another component

and did not fully understand the process required to attach a Soldier from one unit to another. At this time, we delayed the attachments and conducted in house training directed by the Chief of Personnel Branch (G1) and her staff. This training provided a vast amount of information and practical application from the department that is directly responsible for all personnel actions. The result was the error free UMR.

On 1 November we back briefed the Commander of our current status and of any unresolved questions from the Soldiers directly affected by the decision to start the RSP. Being satisfied with the present accomplishment, he then directed us to start on a training schedule so we could have valid, effective and relevant training for NPS Soldiers who had not yet completed AIT. The challenge being to create and adopt training that National Guard Bureau (NGB) had already placed into packages as an example for NPS training and make it interesting and relevant as well having some Warrior Tasks incorporated. Our new suspense was 1 January 2005.

Working with the senior instructor at the RTI, he assigned two Sergeants First Class (SFC) to assist with our training objectives. Meetings were held, tasks were assigned to individuals and deadlines were established. The dedicated SFC's familiarized themselves with training requirements, using their research abilities on training doctrine and regulatory guidance regarding the training for NPS Soldiers during their pre-IADT status. Regulations clarified and defined many actions that had to be taken as well as options for training that could be planned. One specific requirement that had to be incorporated on every single drill, since we gain new NPS Soldiers monthly, was suicide awareness and sexual harassment training. The training plan

began to take shape, and as was focused specifically on preparing reserve Component NPS Soldiers to be successful at basic training and AIT.

In January 2005 the training plan was briefed to the Commander and the Director of Training and Operations (G3) and met their approval with a minor rotation of instructors. The decision to change instructors was based on the individual strengths of a particular instructor. Classroom and field training were assigned to the appropriate instructor, so they could come back to us by the end of the month with a list of resources required for conducting and executing training based on task conditions and standards.

In February with the list of required resources in hand, I was directed to go to the Director of Logistics (G4) and the G3 to request training aids, vehicle support, aviation assets and many other items to support training. While working with the G4, there was a huge learning curve, I had to learn real quickly some of the guidelines and rules for purchasing and contracting of supplies. This was not as simple as going to the supply sergeant and requesting items; we had no supply section and were operating as a unit with no full time manning support. After many days with the G4 staff personnel, I learned how to request and to receive all classes of supply to include food and blank ammunition, as well as how to account for, request and purchase the correct way.

In March 2005 we faced our biggest challenge yet, the program was less than 45 days away and many details remained. Lodging was not yet confirmed with billeting at Ft. Carson due to mobilization requirements, and cooks being assigned from various units were not identified are few examples of the scramble. The NCOs working on the project each grabbed a

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detail item and took charge, we met with directorates, drove to Ft. Carson billeting office, and negotiated the details and got commitments from the appropriate offices. We held information briefings on a weekly basis, each briefer was responsible for a portion of the execution, and an example of this is the personnel section. Personnel were the largest piece of the success of our first drill. The staff from this section dedicated themselves to accomplish each and every assigned task with accuracy and professionalism that directly reflects the NCO Creed.

At last April arrived and there were only 10 days to finalize everything. Many drafts were completed, printed and copied. Uniforms arrived. Personnel were assigned by specific MOS' as support staff such as supply, cooks and most importantly medics. Physical fitness tests were administered to all instructors; their assigned classes were briefed to the entire group and critiqued prior to drill. Every single NCO and junior enlisted Soldier assigned, many of whom were volunteers, dedicated numerous extra hours and gave up a ton of personal time to ensure drill would be executed and go off without a major issue.

Drill weekend was intense, the emotion, energy and enthusiasm of those assigned to the RSP was electrifying. Pride, dedication and excellence filled the air. NPS Soldiers were in awe of the NCOs and staffs, corrections were made for improper courtesies, and how to stand in formation. The staff was professional, caring, educated and extremely dedicated to the task at hand. As the Readiness NCO it was my task to ensure the support staff executed their assigned tasks, so when the breakfast meal was going to be 20 minutes late due to malfunctioning ovens, I notified the 1SG and he adjusted the training schedule to reflect the change and he notified the

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instructors. At the end of the drill weekend for the NPS Soldiers we instructed them to complete an After Action Review (AAR) of the entire weekend not just the classes they had taken.

When drill weekend was over and the NSP Soldiers were dismissed the Commander and 1SG held the staff and instructors afterwards to conduct our own AAR. Each individual made comments both positive and identified areas of improvement; one example is the staff forgot to place a visitor's book at the rear of one of the classrooms. Corrective actions by the respective section or instructor were due to the Commander 5 days after drill. One thing that was very unique, the 1SG read a handful of the AAR comments that he felt deserved note. He read both the positive ones and a few negative ones, a positive comment was the willingness of a senior NCO to take a NPS Soldier aside and help them with things they had trouble with, an example of a negative one was, and there wasn't enough food.

In conclusion, I believe that the NCO core and the values that they stand for were reflected in their dedication to the success of the RSP's drill weekend. The way they came together and made things happen directly reflects the professionalism of our Army today and the leaders of tomorrow. Colorado National Guard NCO's led the way and made a positive impact and in less than one year by reducing our NPS attrition rate from 18% to 2.4% and increased our retention rate from 68% to 94%. NCOs lead the way.

