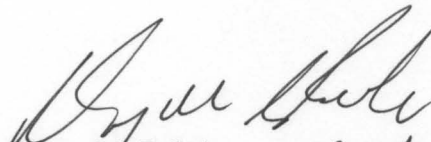


MEMORANDUM FOR Faculty Advisor, ATTN: Command Sergeant Major (Retired) Harper,
United States Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA), Fort Bliss TX 79918

SUBJECT: Future of the NCO Corps

1. Thesis Statement: Changes to the Non-commissioned Officer Military School System will have an Adverse Effect on the Future of the NCO Corps.
2. Discussion. Throughout the Army's history, leadership and NCO leader development has always received continuous attention. Today with the Army transforming, the changes to the Non-commissioned Officer (NCO) military school system will have an adverse effect on the future of the NCO Corps, if that focus becomes heavy on warrior tasks and ignore technical competencies.
3. Counterpoint. The NCOES must also meet the needs of the Army's transformation plan. As the Army transforms, the lessons learned from deploying units enhance the working knowledge of those facing the challenges of deployment. Those already experiencing these challenges concur that the change is overdue.
4. Conclusion. The new NCOES implemented on 1 October 2004 will have an adverse effect on the future of the NCO Corps because TRADOC must develop an NCOES which focuses on the total soldier development and not heavily on warrior tasks. The modern adaptive NCO is fully capable of developing both technical and warrior skills. If the focus continues to be on warrior skills, eventually technical skills will begin to diminish and TRADOC will then have to seek a solution to re-implement an NCOES, which strongly supports the total soldier development concept.
5. Haines Award. I do request that the Haines Award Selection Board consider this paper for the General Haines Award for Excellence in Research. Writing Research Paper, Tenth Edition by James D. Lester and James D. Lester, Jr. is the guide used in the preparation of this research paper.


Mary M. Baksh
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**Future of the NCO Corps
Thesis
Changes to the Non-commissioned Officer Military
School System will have an Adverse Effect on the
Future of the NCO Corps**



**Haines Group (L09)
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18 March 2005**

Outline

Thesis: Changes to the Non-commissioned Officer Military School System will have an Adverse Effect on the Future of the NCO Corps.

I. Introduction.

- A. Explain the reason for this study and the relevance to the War on Global Terrorism.
- B. Explain the Group's recommendation.
- C. Changes to the Non-commissioned Officer Military School System will have an Adverse Effect on the Future of the NCO Corps.

II. Former Standards of NCOES.

- A. History of NCOES.
- B Standards of NCOES.
- C. Overview of former Non-commissioned Officer Military School System.
 - 1. Primary Leadership Development Course.
 - 2. Basic Non-commissioned Officer Course.
 - 3. Advance Non-commissioned Officer Course.
 - 4. The Sergeants Major Course.
 - 5. Other Non-commissioned Officer functional courses.

III. NCO Leader Development.

- A. Institutional Training.
 - 1. Explain the need for NCO education and training.
 - 2. Define NCOES expectations and standards.
- B. Operational Assignments.

C. Self-Development.

1. Explain the need for NCO civilian schooling.
2. Explain how Values and Ethics affect self-development.

D. Professional Development Model.

IV. Future Development of Non-commissioned Officer Schools (NCOES).

A. Explain what generated the need for changes in the Non-commissioned Officer Military School System.

B. Explain the new standards of NCOES.

C. Describe changes for the Non-commissioned Officer Military School System.

1. Primary Leadership Development Course.
2. Basic Non-commissioned Officer Course.
3. Advance Non-commissioned Officer Course.
4. The Sergeants Major Course.
5. Other Non-commissioned Officer functional courses.

V. War Impact on the Non-commissioned Officer Military School System.

A. Explain the events leading up to the War on Global Terrorism, Wars of Iraq and Afghanistan.

B. Wartime Impact on Non-commissioned Officer Military School System.

1. Analyze significance of the Panel's study.
2. Analyze significance of the Army's Transformation.
3. Analyze significance of developing Adaptive Leaders.
4. Analyze significance of the impact of Units of Action (UA).
5. Analyze significance of TRADOC changes to NCOES.

VI. Changing NCOES will not affect Non-Commissioned Officers Corps.

A. NCOES needs changing.

1. NCOES does not prepare the NCO for deployments.

2. NCOs can adapt to changes in NCOES.

B. Leaders owe NCOs training that will make them battle ready.

C. Current NCOES designed to meet the needs of NCOs during Cold War era.

1. Soldiers and leaders need to adapt to the Army's Transformation.

2. NCOES must also meet the needs of the Army's Transformation Plan.

VII. Conclusion.

A. Summary.

B. Recommendation.

C. Changes to the Non-commissioned Officer Military School System will have an Adverse Effect on the Future of the NCO Corps.

Throughout the Army's history, leadership and NCO leader development has always received continuous attention. Today with the Army transforming, the changes to the Non-commissioned Officer (NCO) military school system will have an adverse effect on the future of the NCO Corps, if that focus becomes stronger on warrior tasks and less on MOS technical competencies.

Our Non-commissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) needs changing to meet the challenges that face us on today's modern battlefield. The changes in the current NCOES system are a part of what we must do as an Army to stay on the leading edge of the technological and informational front of today's ever changing and fast-paced environment. Today's Army is fighting a war like none other. We continue to learn more about how our enemies view us and how to transition from an army fighting a conventional war to one fighting a war where our enemy chooses to hide behind tactics of terror. Our enemies are tenacious and ever mindful of the destructive force of our Army on a conventional battlefield but choose to fight in a non-conventional manner most effective to their cause. There is no army that can match our army on the technological front. There is no enemy that can match the destructive force of the United States soldier in combat. Why do we need to adjust the ways that have proven successful? Our Army is changing.

The development of confident and competent NCO leaders in the Army is our most enduring legacy to the future of the Army and the nation. Developing these future leaders with decreasing resources and a smaller force with more wartime commitments challenges us to maximize developmental opportunity. NCO leader development is a progressive system that prepares leaders for increased levels of responsibility and challenges that they will face in full spectrum operations in joint, interagency, and multinational environments (Army Transformation p12).

In the early 1960's, the United States Army was engaged in conflict with Vietnam. As the war progressed, the attrition of combat, the twelve-month tour limit in Vietnam, separations of senior non-commissioned officers and the twenty five-month stateside stabilization policy began to take its toll to the point of crisis. Without a call up of the reserve forces, Vietnam became the Regular Army's war, fought by junior leaders. The Army began sending career non-commissioned officers back into action sooner while filling the ranks with the most senior Private First Class or Specialist. Field commanders were challenged with understaffed vacancies at base camps, filling various key leadership positions, and providing for replacements. Older and more experienced NCOs, some World War II veterans, were strained by the physical requirements of the methods of jungle fighting. The Army was quickly running out of non-commissioned officers in the combat specialties (Macgregor p. 108).

In order to meet these unprecedented requirements for NCO leaders, the Army developed a solution. Based on the proven Officer Candidate Course where an enlisted man could attend basic and advanced training, and if recommended or applied for, filled out an application and attended OCS, the thought was the same could be done for non-commissioned officers. If a carefully selected soldier was given 23 weeks of intensive training that would qualify him to lead a platoon, then others could also be trained to lead squads and fire teams in the same amount of time. The Non-commissioned Officers Candidate Course (NCOCC) was created from this theory. Potential candidates were selected from groups of initial entry soldiers who had a security clearance of confidential, an infantry score of 100 or over, and demonstrated leadership potential. Based on recommendations, the unit commander would select potential NCOs, but all were not volunteers. Those selected to attend NCOCC were immediately made Corporals and later promoted to Sergeant upon graduation from phase one. The select few who graduated with

honors were promoted to Staff Sergeant. The outstanding graduate of the first class, Staff Sergeant Melvin C. Leverick, recalled "I think that those who graduated [from the NCOCC] were much better prepared for some of the problems that would arise in Vietnam" (Macgregor p. 108).

The NCOCC was designed to maximize the two-year tour of the enlisted draftee. The Army Chief of Staff, General Harold K. Johnson approved the concept on June 22, 1967, and on September 5, 1967 the first course at Fort Benning, Georgia began with Sergeant Major Don Wright serving as the first NCOCC Commandant. By combining the amount of time it took to attend basic and advanced training, including leave and travel time, and then adding a twelve-month tour in Vietnam, the developers settled on a 21-22 week course. NCOCC was divided into two phases. Phase I was 12 weeks of intensive, hands-on training, broken down into three basic phases. For the Infantry NCO, the course included tasks such as physical training, hand-to-hand combat, weapons, first aid, map reading, communications, and indirect fire. Vietnam veterans or Rangers taught many of the classes, but the cadre of the first course was commissioned officers. The second basic phase focused on instruction of fire team, squad and platoon tactics. Though over 300 hours of instruction were given, 80-percent was conducted in the field. The final basic phase was a "dress rehearsal for Vietnam," a full week of patrols, ambush, defensive perimeters, and navigation. Twice daily the Vietnam-schooled Rangers critiqued the candidates and all training was conducted tactically (Fisch and Wright p. 21).

As with many programs of its time, NCOCC was originally developed to meet the needs of the combat arms. With the success of the course, it was extended to other career fields, and the program became known as the Skill Development Base Program. The Armored School began NCOCC on December 5, 1967. Some schools later offered a correspondence "preparatory

course” for those who anticipated attending NCOCC or had not benefited from such formal military schooling (Fisch and Wright p. 21).

As with the Leadership Preparation Course tested by Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), the “regular” NCOs and soldiers had much resentment for the NCOCC graduates, as those who took four to six years to earn their stripes the hard way, were immediately angered. More experienced NCOs began to use terms like “Shake 'n' Bake,” “Instant NCO,” or “Whip-n-Chills” to identify this new type of NCO. Many complained by verbally or in writing that it took years to build an NCO and that the program was wrong. Many feared it would affect their promotion opportunities, and one senior NCO worried that “nobody had shown them [NCOCC graduates] how to keep floor buffers operational in Garrison (Fisch and Wright p. 22).

William O. Wooldridge, serving in the recently established position of Sergeant Major of the Army stated that, “promotions given to men who complete the course will not directly affect the promotion possibilities of other deserving soldiers in Vietnam or other parts of the world.” In his speech to the first graduating class Wooldridge said, “Great things are expected from you. Besides being the first class, you are also the first group who has ever been trained this way. It has been a whole new idea in training.” As the Sergeant Major of the Army expressed, all were not suspicious of this new way to train NCOs. After initial skepticism, former Battalion Commander Colonel W. G. Skelton explained, “within a short time they [NCOCC graduates] proved themselves completely and we were crying for more (Fisch and Wright p. 23). Because of their training, they repeatedly surpassed the soldier who had risen from the ranks in combat and provided the quality of leadership at the squad and platoon level which is essential in the type of fighting we are doing” (Fisch and Wright p. 22).

Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) is one of the key things that made the NCO Corps what it is today. The Corps standard is the envy of every Army in the world.

NCOES will remain a viable pillar of NCO Leader Development, a solid foundation to build the skills needed to lead and train the Army. NCOES is the keystone for NCO development. NCOES provides leader and MOS skill training in an integrated system of resident training at four levels primary, basic, advanced, and senior (AR 350-90 p. 12).

The three-week, non-MOS specific Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) is the first phase of the NCO Corps and is conducted at sixteen Noncommissioned Officer Academies (NCOA) worldwide. The primary focus is on the leadership development of the junior soldiers to understand the basics of leadership. It develops competent and confident leaders capable of decisive action. PLDC is currently developed to teach at the team leader NCO level (AR 350-90 p. 13).

Combat Arms (CA), Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) BNCOCs are conducted at proponent service schools. Successful completion of BNCOC is a prerequisite to be considered for promotion to Sergeant First Class (SFC). There are 157-skill level two and skill level three courses online. Training lengths vary from two to nineteen weeks with an average of nine weeks. A one-week common core, designed by the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, supplements leadership training received at PLDC. The rest of the course is structured around their perspective Primary Military Occupational Skills. BNCOC is currently developed to teach at the squad leader NCO level (AR 350-90 p. 13).

Soldiers who attend the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (ANCOC) are selected by Department of the Army, Sergeant First Class and ANCOC Selection Board. An NCO must be an ANCOC graduate to be considered for promotion to Master Sergeant (MSG). Effective

1 October 1993, ANCOC became a prerequisite prior to promotion to SFC. Training lengths vary from four to nineteen weeks with an average of nine weeks. Scheduling is done by the soldier's career branch. The course is structured around their perspective Primary Military Occupational Skills. ANCOC is currently developed to teach at the platoon sergeant NCO level (AR 350-90 p. 18).

The Sergeants Major Course (SMC) is the only senior level NCOES course and the capstone of NCO education. The SMC is a nine-month resident course conducted at Fort Bliss, Texas. Selected individuals may complete SMC by correspondence studies. Attendance to resident or non-resident training is determined by a Department of the Army Selection Board. Soldiers selected for promotion to Sergeant Major(SGM) or appointment to Command Sergeant Major (CSM) who are not graduates will attend the next resident SMC. Soldiers may be deferred for compassionate or medical reasons, but they may not decline once selected (AR 350-90 p. 19).

Additionally, two functional NCO courses have been added: the First Sergeants Course and Battle Staff NCO Course. These two courses only train soldiers selected for assignments as First Sergeants and Battle Staff NCOs with an Additional Skill Identifier 2S positions (AR 350-90 p. 19).

The First Sergeant course is a four-week, non-MOS specific course given at Fort Bliss, Texas and teaches the duties and responsibilities of a First Sergeant. The First Sergeant is the primary liaison with the Company Commander on all matters concerning the Enlisted Corps. He or she is the eyes and ears for the commander and the mouth for the enlisted force (First Sergeant Course).

The Battle Staff NCO Course is the only course offered by the US Army to train NCO staff members how to operate as part of a battalion or higher staff. The course is an intense, fast

paced, performance-oriented program of instruction that concentrates on the battle staff duties and responsibilities of the coordinating and special staff sections, regardless of the NCO's functional area assignment (Battle Staff NCO Course).

The NCO leader development process consists of three distinct but closely related pillars: institutional training, operational assignments, and self-development. This cycle ensures that NCOs gain the skills, knowledge, and behavior needed before assuming and while occupying leadership positions. These attributes of an NCO come from a combination of schooling, assignments, and self-development. The Army of tomorrow relies on the Army of today to accept the challenge and responsibility for the development of leaders for the future (DA PAM 350-58 p1).

Institutional training consist of all the formal military training and education NCOs received throughout their military career. The purpose of this training is to ensure that NCOs develop the values, attributes, war fighting, and actions needed to be an effective leader in today's Army. These same skills are put to the test by follow-on operational assignments and conducting self-development programs. NCOs sustain and continue to broaden their leadership potential in their profession of arms. Institutional training provides the sound foundation upon which all-future NCO leader development rests (DA PAM 600-25 p 2).

The institutional training pillar of the NCO leader development consist of the Non-commissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) and other functional courses. The NCOES is designed to teach NCOs how to lead and train soldiers to meet the demands of full-spectrum operations on today's modern battlefield. This schooling consists of four levels: primary, basic, advanced, and senior. Functional courses are based on specific skills needed for special assignments or duties. The Army uses resident and distance learning instruction to provide this

institutional training to the NCOs. No matter how the NCOs receive this training they are still held to the same expectations and standards throughout the Army. Institutional training should occur before NCOs receive significant new levels of operational assignments. This prepares the NCOs to perform their duties better at the next level of assignment (DA PAM 600-25 p 2).

Operational assignments translate the theory into practice by placing NCOs in positions to apply those Skills, Knowledge, and Behaviors (SKBs) acquired during institutional training and education (DA PAM 350-58 p3). The assignments that NCOs receive are based on the NCOs Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) and additional skills. Special duty assignments present a unique challenge and opportunity for NCO leader development as the NCO is often performing duties outside their MOS in positions that include Drill Sergeant, Recruiter, and joint duty which give them the opportunity to broaden their SKBs. Command Sergeants Major (CSM) use the Non-commissioned Officer Professional Development (NCOPD) program during operational assignments to train their NCOs on all aspects of leadership and training unique to their unit (DA PAM 350-58 p 3).

Finally, commanders enhance NCO leader development during operational assignments by assigning NCOs progressively more complex and demanding duties; assessing their performance against standards, and providing information on strengths, weakness, and developmental needs; counseling and coaching regularly; and helping them prepare and execute developmental action plans to achieve maximum growth (DA PAM 350-58 p 3).

Self-development, the final pillar of leader development, is a planned, progressive, and sequential program consisting of individual study, education, research, and professional reading. Self-development focuses and builds on the training received during institutional training and experiences of operational assignments. NCOs are responsible for their self-development, which

should consist of maximizing their strengths, while minimizing their weaknesses to reach their goals of leader development. Initially, self-development is narrow in focus, but broadens as individuals become more familiar with their own strengths and weaknesses, determine their own specific needs, and become more independent. Each NCO's knowledge and perspective increase with age, experience, institutional training, and operational assignments. NCOs use the Professional Development Model (PDM) to assist them in their self-development throughout their career (DA PAM 600-25 p 3).

Professional Development Models are based on each MOS and are a template used to show NCOs what they can do to better prepare themselves for schooling and duty assignments. It also shows NCOs what they need to do to be competitive for promotions and levels of greater responsibilities. PDM is an important tool for leaders to use when counseling their NCOs on professional and personnel growth. (DA PAM 600-25 p 3).

Institutional training in the Army starts with the inception at the Army recruiting station and move the enlisted soldier through the phases of basic training and on to Advance Individual Training (AIT). The Army took an exhaustive look at common core for NCOES and found that some of these tasks continue to migrate downward. TRADOC made a needs base assessment to determine exactly what tasks belong to and need to be taught at each non-commissioned officer rank and educational level (Caldwell).

While at the Army Recruiting Station, the new soldier is trained in advance individual tasks, physical fitness, and the Warrior Ethos. Continuing through basic training and AIT the soldier is now being trained in the lessons learned from the War in Iraq and provided basic weaponry and protective suits identical to that in the combat zone. The next phase of training for young soldiers is the "right to passage" as they cross into the Army's NCO Corps. This initial phase

Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) provides young NCOs with the basic fundamental skills needed to lead a small squad. This course like the rest is being trained with the lessons learned in Iraq and warrior tasks development. In addition, PLDC was shortened from 30 days to 15 to return soldiers in their perspective units faster and ready to deploy (Caldwell).

TRADOC removed unnecessary classes from the NCOES curriculum. Also, Department of the Army has lifted height and weight requirements, time remaining in service requirements for NCOES courses; all in order to adjust the Army for future combat needs. The removal of marching and parade formations, inspections and non-combative tasks from NCOES was applauded by leaders around the Army (Caldwell).

The Army has adjusted to the combative situation and thus changed the NCOES system. Changes include realistic training, lessons learned, body fat requirements lowered, retention requirements dropped. Self-development is the wave of the future and TRADOC is currently working on developing a curriculum that provides NCOs with Bachelors Degree after completion of the United States Sergeant Majors Academy (Caldwell).

In April 2002, the Chief of Staff, Army compiled a panel of senior leaders to assess the effectiveness of NCOES. One of their objectives was to ensure NCOES met the needs of the Army Transformation and prepared NCOs for Wartime operations. Effective 1 October 2004, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) has directed the restructure of the NCO Education System to reflect current war fighting conditions. TRADOC plans to change lesson plans in their institutions to incorporate lessons learned from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Report NCO p 1, p 28). The changes to the Non-

commissioned Officer Military Education system will have an adverse effect on the future of the NCO Corps.

The panel found most NCOES did not incorporate scenario-based training that represented wartime skills needed for current deployment. NCOES taught technical and tactical tasks that were branch doctrine and did not support the Army Transformation Plan, which required units to train in Combined and Joint Operations. TRADOC considered whether the Sergeants Major Academy effectively met the Army Transformation requirements in its nine-month course but has yet to make a recommendation (The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Report NCO p 2-4).

The Army plans to transform to Units of Action (UA), which will keep soldiers on station for the life cycle of the unit. This will prevent regular individual PCS, which is needed for the nine-month Sergeants Major Course (SMC) (Army Campaign Plan). Under Army Transformation, soldiers are stabilized by Human Resources Command in their Units of Action for a 36-month operational cycle. The cycle has three phases: Phase I, the Reset phase; Phase II, the Training phase and Phase III, the Ready to deploy phase. During the Reset phase, half of the phase is dedicated to starting the cycle to include in processing new soldiers into their units and the other half assists with the transition of soldiers out of their units for PCS, ETS etc. The Reset phase will be the allocated time for soldiers to attend NCOES either in a TDY and return status if they will be returning to their units or in a TDY en route status where the soldiers attend school before signing into their new Units of Action (Army Campaign Plan).

An analysis may prove that the window will be too narrow to ensure maximum participation at NCOES. For example, if a soldier should receive a profile just prior to going to school and the unit transitions to the training and ready to deploy phases the soldier may lose his or her

opportunity to attend NCOES for another three years. Therefore, if the operational cycle of the unit takes priority over the soldier's development, how effective is the need for NCOES and would a lack of interest be developed as more and more NCOs appear to perform efficiently and effectively although not having received formal NCOES.

Leonard Wong a retired Army Officer recently wrote about the need for adaptive leaders after interviewing junior leaders who are currently fighting the war on terror. He wrote about junior officers and NCOs making decisions on the battlefield with no clear guidance or FRAGO from their superiors and fixing situations as they occur. He stated that because the leaders faced situations involving insurgency, peace operations and nation building they were required to operate smartly and efficiently without orders. The writer continued that one officer stated that under old doctrine, field grade officers would have had the authority to deal with the local Iraqi leaders but many times the junior officers had the job of negotiating with the locals. Wong emphasized that because young leaders were becoming highly adaptive and experienced they must have good training, schooling, and a non-stifling culture to return to after the war, so warrior skills were not lost. The author believes with the right training and development the young leaders fighting the war today will become exceptional senior leaders in the future (Wong p 1-3).

Judging from the findings in this study, NCOES must be a priority again. NCOES will be the place where these young leaders will come together and share lessons learned. Their ideas will ensure a stronger Program of Instruction (POI) by virtue of the critique process as unneeded tasks are eliminated from the curriculum and replaced by much-needed adaptive skills. The transformation of NCOES was needed because the War on Global Terrorism makes the entire world the potential battle space and as stated by Douglas Macgregor in his book "Transformation

under Fire,” “the Army must leave behind its Garrison mentality and embrace a joint expeditionary mindset.” Meaning soldiers must be ready to deploy any where in the world under very rough conditions (Macgregor p320).

Effective 1 October 2004, TRADOC changed the curriculum incorporating warrior tasks into all its NCOES with the exception of the Sergeants Major Course. Common Core was removed from ANCOC and placed down at the BNCOC level (NCO Journal p24). This supported comments coming back from the theatre, which stated that many Staff Sergeants were already filling Platoon Sergeants positions. Research supports the fact that as the world continues to change what becomes priority for NCOES will also change. Today the priority is the War on Terror and insurgency but tomorrow the war may be with traditional forces. Macgregor again stated, “Leaders who adjust to a chaotic wartime environment take the places of the fallen and determines how they will fight or will not fight the war” (Macgregor p192). Therefore, in theory, the focus of NCOES should not be on developing leaders to fight terrorism but developing adaptive leaders.

After careful review, NCOES must continue to develop warrior tasks but not to the level of uniformity, preventing the freedom of adaptive leaders to conform to the changing battlespace. Another area that NCOES transformers are forgetting is technical proficiency. With ever changing technology, the need to refine technical skills, should become just as valuable as warrior tasks and leader development, in NCOES. If the warrior is not an expert on his or her assigned equipment, whether it is a weapon, computer system, tank, truck, as examples and the manual or doctrine that support the system, there will still be room for deficiency. Research shows the Army has the ability to develop all areas of the total soldier and need not give heavy priority to one area over the neglect of the other. A future concern is for soldiers viewing

technical proficiency as secondary to combat development, developing complacent attitudes, and later encountering an enemy, which uses their diminished technical efficiency against them. Just as leaders are learning to adapt to the non-conventional warfare of terrorists, they must also leave no area of the total soldier development vulnerable to exploitation from future forms of terror, conventional or unconventional warfare. Changes to the Non-commissioned Officer Military School System will have an adverse effect on the future of the NCO Corps if the changes focus heavily on warrior tasks development and less on technical MOS proficiency.

The NCOES system is not "*broke*." There is no grave danger in not changing the way we educate our forces. The problems voiced by those in the field are that NCOES does not prepare the NCOs for deployments. Those not having the experience of deployments to support Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) are not getting the tools necessary to allow them to be successful sooner when they are deployed. Squad tactics are squad tactics, but choices that influence the decision making process are made easier through experience. More tactical experience and less emphasis on technical knowledge can produce the quality of NCOs we are looking for to make sound and timely decisions. Technical knowledge comes through practice toward proficiency. Tactical knowledge is no different. When we balance the equation we are found lacking in some of those key leadership and critical decision making processes that allow our successes to come sooner rather than later (McNair).

The NCO in today's Army is second to none in their abilities to adapt to change and meet head on the challenges and rigors of combat. Their flexibility and adaptability are unmatched. The Army should adapt and change to meet this quality soldier's expectations. By introducing changes to our NCOES we provide real time, experience fresh from the theatre of operations from those who have the first hand working knowledge of facing the trials in combat. Immediate

transfer of this knowledge will better equip those not having this knowledge to gain new ground in meeting future challenges. "I don't think we need a lot of time spent in the classroom, but we need more performance-oriented measures, especially in the leadership area" (McNair).

As leaders we must provide our soldiers opportunities to succeed at each level of their careers. Coaching, mentoring and training are the most successful methods of passing on the knowledge of the voice of experience. Just as the Army transforms to modularity and new methods of meeting the challenges of tomorrow's battlefield our NCOs and junior leaders must transform to the process that affects how we fight. The role of NCOES is critical in meeting the needs of the individual soldier. When a soldier attends one of the levels of professional development they expect to get the best, the latest and greatest information on how we as an Army expect to meet the expectations of those we serve. A key part of this is opportunities in training to be thrust into roles that challenge the way we think and how we operate. The current NCOES is providing some of those opportunities but soldiers at all levels are asking for more from us as leaders to meet those challenges faced during deployment (McNair).

The current NCOES is designed to meet the needs of NCOs during the Cold War Era (McNair). The Cold War is over. Those threats are no longer valid and the challenges faced today are more diversified. The one Army concept is more important now than ever before. With the downsizing of our military in the last decade reserve forces are picking up a bigger piece of the load and expected to know and perform their duties consistent with those who do it "twenty-four-seven." Changing NCOES provides the opportunities for citizen soldiers to meet those expectations and greatly reduces the learning curve. As active component units move toward transformation, reserve component units patiently wait to see how this will effect what resources are allocated and what new expectations await them in order to meet tomorrow's

challenges. The lag time between fielding and transforming the Army must be minimal. NCOES has to implement the changes being made in operational deployments in order for reserve component units to better understand their roles in meeting the expectations of the transformational army (McNair).

Soldiers and leaders need to adapt to the Army's transformation. It took three years for the Striker Brigade to train, prepare and meet the challenges of deployment in support of OIF. How long will it take a National Guard unit to employ its forces consistently with that of its Active Component counterpart? There is no time like the present to get a jump on the future. NCOES must include the concepts of operation in its curriculum to provide NCOs in the system the tools necessary to fill their roles without hesitation. Leaders must provide the working knowledge of experience to those without this knowledge to continue to be successful.

The NCOES must also meet the needs of the Army's Transformation Plan. As the Army transforms the lessons learned from deploying units enhance the working knowledge of those facing the challenges of deployment. Those already experiencing these challenges concur that the change is overdue. CSM Du a recent guest speaker for students at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy voiced confidence and elation in the success of the Stryker Brigade. Confidence in the system is critical. We must believe that the instruction we are getting at every level of NCOES is consistent with the expectation to achieve success on the battlefield. As leaders, we evaluate what information and training we are providing to those in our care. We are charged with passing on information and experience that will cause the leaders of tomorrow not to have to question why they were not given the tools necessary to adapt to new challenges. As we evaluate the current NCOES we have to be cautious and yet we must be innovative in our pursuit of providing our soldiers with the best Army (Ball).

Our NCOES is not "*broke.*" It has served in producing the greatest army on today's modern battlefield. Changes to the system do not have to be radical. The system does have to meet the expectations of the individual soldier who will be expected to meet the challenges of tomorrow's battlefield. When we as leaders look at our NCOES we must be able to state without hesitation that we provided every tool necessary for the success of each individual soldier. We must not neglect our duties and we must be diligent in our efforts to provide knowledge and understanding to those in our charge. Competent leaders do not take for granted that competency is learned through observation alone. The leader and led both have responsibilities and it is our duty to fulfill those responsibilities with vigor and enthusiasm. We must not fail in our efforts to continuously evaluate and revise the system that has served us to this point (FM 7-0).

NCOES has created a truly professional NCO Corps. Today our NCO Corps is envied by the rest of the world as the "backbone" of our Army (Army Times p. 3).

Although the changes to the Non-Commissioned Officer Military School System will have an adverse affect on the future of the NCO Corps, it will continue to be grounded in heritage, values and traditions, that embodies the Warrior Ethos; values perpetual learning; and is capable of leading, training and motivating soldiers.

We must always be an NCO Corps that; Leads by example, Trains from experience, Maintains and Enforces standards, Takes care of soldiers and Adapts to the changing world. (Patch p. 20).

The Army has started to re-engineer NCO leader development and training programs to focus on gaining and sustaining the high levels of expertise on technical and cognitive skills, which is essential for current and future forces. Growing competent, adaptive, and self-aware leaders, embodied with the Army warrior culture, is essential to instill a culture of innovation in the Army (Army Transformation p16).

The new NCOES implemented on October 1, 2004 will have an adverse effect on the future of the NCO Corps because TRADOC must develop an NCOES which focuses on the total soldier development and not heavily on warrior tasks. The modern adaptive NCO is fully capable of developing both technical and warrior skills. If the focus continues to be on warrior skills, eventually technical skills will begin to diminish and TRADOC will then have to seek a solution to re-implement an NCOES, which strongly supports the total soldier development concept.

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