

Title: The History, Evolution, and Role of the Drill Sergeant.

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## Outline

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### I. Introduction.

A. References: *So...you want to be a Drill Sergeant?* By Thomas M. Easterly; *Mentors & Shapers* by Larry Lane; *A tribute to a DI and a Great Marine* by David A. Ballitine; *Where Values and Excellence Begins* by Leo Baxter; *The Drill Sergeant* by Henry Pascua; *Still a Tough Demanding Job* by William McMichael; *When the Hat Comes Off* by Karen Jowers; *What it Takes to be a Drill Sergeant Is it in You?* By Lisa Hunter; *Tougher Scrutiny for Drill Sergeant Hopefuls* by Jane McHugh.

B. The purpose of this research paper is to give a brief history of the historical evolution, roles, prerequisites, and challenges for today's Drill Sergeants. The research concentrates on the need for Drill Sergeants, formation of the Drill Sergeant Program, roles and responsibilities, and the significant contributions to the Army that make the Drill Sergeant the epitome of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps.

### II. Body.

A. Army of the 1960s - The need for the Drill Sergeants.

B. Army Doctrine - The formation of the Drill Sergeant Program.

C. Selection Process - The prerequisites to become a Drill Sergeant.

D. Utilization - The roles, responsibilities, and huge challenges facing today's Drill Sergeants.

E. Evolving Duties and Responsibilities - The Drill Sergeant's contributions to today's Army during peacetime and War.

### III. Closing.

A. Summary

B. Questions

C. Conclusion: The Drill Sergeant without question is the epitome of the NCO corps in all branches of service. The Drill Sergeant's contributions to combat readiness are immeasurable so, only the best of the best can be selected, trained and entrusted with the responsibility, care, and training of America's Sons and Daughters.

## **The History, Evolution, and Role of The Drill Sergeant**

The history of the Drill Sergeant (DS) is one born of necessity; the ever increasing and challenging roles of the Drill Sergeant take on a unique shape. As the Army transforms itself into the "Force Twenty-One" global dominator, power projection and technology are key ingredients to winning any battle anywhere. However, the Drill Sergeants are the ones that transform America's Sons and Daughters into the mentally and physically fit, elite, educated, and most technological soldiers the world has ever seen. According to *Army Regulation (AR) 614-200*, "The Drill Sergeant is the primary representative of the Army during the formative weeks of an enlistee's training; therefore, only the most professionally qualified soldiers will be assigned to Drill Sergeant Duties".

In late 1962, the Secretary of the Army directed Stephen Ailes, the Assistant Secretary, to conduct a survey of recruit training in the Army. This survey was conducted over a long period and included a wide variety of experienced personnel. To insure his report would be valid, Secretary Ailes made a comprehensive survey, comparing the training techniques of the Marines, Army, Navy, and Air Force. The final report, as submitted to the Department of the Army, contained five principle findings, with appropriate recommendations and suggestions for eliminating the problems encountered. The comparisons of the training centers of the three services with those of the Army demonstrated, that the attitude of the Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) within the Army training centers was very poor. There were contributing reasons, including the long working hours, the difficulty of the demanding nature of the work and lack of free time for family concerns. Inadequate staffing in the training centers caused much of this. In

addition, it was determined that the caliber of Noncommissioned Officers being assigned to the Army training centers was far below the standards required by the other services. The NCOs back then were not properly selected nor did they appreciate the tremendous amount of responsibility that was entrusted to them. In the *Marine Corps Gazette*, David <sup>SP?</sup>Ballitine, sums up the importance and necessity of having high caliber NCOs train recruits by stating that. "The Drill Instructor is the single most important element working this minor miracle, the blending of what was into the what has to be, the merging of an individual with the Marine Corps and the Marine Corps with the individual". Another problem was the negative attitude of the trainer, which had a demoralizing affect on the trainee and resulted in a mental block between the recruit, and the trainer, and thus caused a negative impact on the qualified trainer and the quality of training presented. "An NCO should want to become a Drill Sergeant because a Drill Sergeant encompasses everything that a Noncommissioned Officer is about" (Rogers).

During the period April – June 1964, Pilot Trainer Courses were conducted at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, for selected officers and noncommissioned officers to participate in testing the revised concept of recruit training. Immediately following in July and August, this new training concept was tested with a training battalion at Fort Jackson and a training company at Ft Gordon, Georgia. The success of these tests resulted in the adoption of the new concept, to include the formation of Drill Sergeant Schools throughout the United States. This was the beginning of the Drill Sergeant and produced the first Drill Sergeants used to train recruits in the entire history of the recruit training programs throughout the Army. The Fort Leonard Wood Drill Sergeant School began training noncommissioned officers for Drill Sergeant duties in September 1964. Since that time the Drill Sergeant Program has repeatedly refined its Program of Instruction

(POI) and selection criteria in order to properly select and train only the best qualified Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs). According to the *NCO Journal*, Lisa Hunter states that “Today there are approximately 2, 800 NCOs currently serving as Drill Sergeants on active duty”. Each year an additional 1,400 NCOs are selected to attend one of the three nine-week Drill Sergeant Schools located throughout the continental United States. There are currently thirty-one duty locations where drill sergeants serve with pride. Some of the training that today’s Drill Sergeants Candidates (DSCs) receive while attending the Drill Sergeant School are Army Values and Traditions, human relations, methods of instruction, the “Solderization” process and stress management. DSCs will study a number of field manuals (FMs) and Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) regulations, common task testing and many other subjects plus attend Master Fitness Training (MFT). All DSCs must commit to memory, and present several training modules, including drill and ceremony, physical training, rifle-bayonet, and hand-to-hand combat techniques. So... why would NCOs go through all of the trouble? In the *Field Artillery Journal*, Thomas Easterly writes, “How many get to be a part of the solderization process---change someone’s outlook on life? It’s a proud moment in your life every time trained soldiers walk across a graduation stage and carry with them good honest values, confidence, and commitment to the Army and our nation”.

Because the entrustment of America’s Sons and Daughter’s is not to be taken lightly and the standards are so high, the prerequisites for being selected for Drill Sergeant duty are many. In *the Army Times*, Jane McHugh writes “Another new procedure prohibiting soldiers from becoming drill sergeants until they receive a mental evaluation and are determined to be emotionally stable through reviews of health records and a clinical evaluation”. Drill Sergeant

Candidates (DSCs) must be physically fit, meet body composition requirements in AR 600-9, and be able to pass the APFT (with no substitution of events) upon arrival at DS school. DSCs must be 36 years old or less. However, volunteers may be 37 years old or older provided they have the appropriate medical clearance at the time of request. Medical clearance should state that soldier is medically cleared for DS duty. DSCs must have no record of emotional instability as determined by screening of health records and clinical evaluation by competent mental health officer. Other selection criteria looked at, are NCO Evaluation Reports (NCOERs), Job performance, violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), complexity and responsibility of past assignments and a Department of the Army (DA) security background screening. There are many more prerequisites too numerous to mention however, all can be referenced in AR 614-200, pp 59-60. Under policy changes now in effect, a commander in the rank of lieutenant colonel or higher must personally evaluate a soldier's qualifications and suitability for assignment to the Drill Sergeant Program.

The role of the Drill Sergeant is forever changing; not only is the Drill Sergeant a trainer, mentor, counselor, disciplinarian, and standard bearer, but occasionally they are expected to go beyond the iron-curtain and become the soldier's confidant, a big brother or sister, the one person who can listen and help a soldier work through professional or personal problems. "Giving the soldiers the "tough love" they need to develop as productive and motivated Soldiers as well as citizens" (Matson). It is a tough balancing act between a professional and personal relationship is a thin line that both the Drill Sergeant and soldier must understand. This relationship is established because of position of authority and partly because of human nature to care for a fellow human being. In the *Soldiers Magazine*, Larry Lane writes, "The relationship

between Drill Sergeant and Trainee is a long standing one, and its goal is to produce the world's finest soldiers". The soldiers that enlist in today's Army are diversified from all walks of life and ingraining the Army Core Values in all soldiers is a unique challenge. Because of the current economy, it is normal for both parents to work away from the home in order to maintain an average income. In the *Field Artillery Journal*, Major General Leo Baxter writes that, "Inculcating the seven core Army values in our new soldiers—loyalty, duty, respect, selfless-service, honor, integrity and personal courage. These values will help them make ethical decisions and be successful in an Army that reflects the complexity of American society". Our society's youth are predisposed to being raised by daycare centers or live-in nanny's. This presents a unique role for the Drill Sergeant in that the Drill Sergeant now must assume the role of becoming a parent figure. "The trick is to walk that tightrope without falling off, to do so today's Drill Sergeants are asked to be part trainer, part psychologist, part parent, and part role model" (McMichael).

Because of the contributions provided by today's Drill Sergeants, our Army enjoys the role of "World Super-Power". Our Drill Sergeants train and produce the world's finest soldiers. Many foreign countries send their NCOS to the United States to try to emulate our training methods. Most countries praise our NCO corps and hold in high esteem our Drill Sergeants. "One of the greatest challenges the Drill Sergeant faces today is leadership. Furthermore, leading youth in a military atmosphere is indeed a difficult task, especially in our present day society" (Pascua). Nevertheless, it is a task that our Drill Sergeants are up to. Since September 11, 2001, the war on terrorism has changed the way TRADOC trains our soldiers. The Drill Sergeant's duties and responsibilities are currently evolving. Today's training incorporates lessons-learned from

Afghanistan and Iraq. Soldiers serving in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), who had been prior Drill Sergeants found themselves being asked to train local civilians for that nation's Military (a role typically reserved for special forces soldiers). TRADOC, understanding the importance of quality training and capturing lessons-learned, dispatched fifty Drill Sergeants from the various training bases. These Drill Sergeants were deployed to Iraq in order to train the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC). In the *Wall Street Journal*, Greg Jaffe writes, "The U.S. military has long trained foreign armies and even guerrilla fighters to assist U.S. troops. But the effort here marks the first time that the military has deployed Drill Sergeants to instruct civilians". As evolution continues so must the roles and responsibilities of today's Drill Sergeants. The continuing war on terrorism and future campaigns will be inevitable and without question help to shape our military. Drill Sergeants must retain lessons-learned and be steadfast in their responsibility of shaping the Army of the future.

The Drill Sergeant without question is the Backbone of the Army and the epitome of the NCO corps in all branches of service. The Drill Sergeant's contribution to combat readiness are immeasurable, and only the best of the best can be entrusted with the care and training of America's Sons and Daughters. The statement "on today's modern battlefield" as written in the Drill Sergeant Creed is almost incomprehensible. Today's modern battlefield and the roles that soldiers play on this battlefield have no boundaries, it is global, national, and in some instances local. An example of this modern battlefield would be a soldier trained as an artilleryman, finding himself in Iraq providing security for a children's school house engaging, chasing, capturing, and processing a fedahyeen suicide bomber trying to kill innocent children in order to

maintain terror. To summarize the importance of the “total concept”, that the evaluation, selection, and training process plays in the drill sergeant program, one must always remember the first phrase of the drill sergeant creed. “I will train each soldier to become a highly motivated, well-disciplined, physically and mentally fit soldier capable of defeating any enemy on today’s modern battlefield”. The process of converting young Americans into today’s soldier is a magnificent one indeed, for the hope of the free world rests on these sergeants, and the soldiers that they train. No mistake can be made in this; greatest of endeavors, far too much would be at risk.

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