


Running head: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE PAPER

Private First Class to Master Sergeant

MSG Anthony L. Cook

11/09/1983 - Present

14Z5P5W


10/04/2006

Class # 57

When I was in school I always wanted to teach and coach football. After graduating from Hoke County High School in Raeford, North Carolina I attended Mars Hill College. The College was in the western part of North Carolina. I earned a Degree in Health and Physical Education and played football.

My first teaching job was at a Junior High School in Wilmington, North Carolina. After six months, I realized that I was not ready to work in a school system. I was in need of some discipline. I needed self-control. For that reason I decided to join the Army. My plan was to serve three years and go back to what I wanted to do.

My first duty station was at Fort Bragg in the 82nd Airborne Division and It kept me close to home. The first three years were great. The close relationship I had and still have with the guys in the platoon will never be forgotten.

During that tour I participated in numerous FTX's Airborne Operations and live fire exercises. I deployed to Turkey, Spain and Panama. The Army gave me a chance to see the world.

After being promoted to Sergeant, I decided to reenlist and go to Germany. Germany was better than I expected.

Personal Experience Paper 3

While in Germany I had many opportunities to travel and see places that I read about. I traveled to Greece, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, Austria and all over Germany. There was something still missing for me and it was discipline. I was still doing what I wanted and no one could tell me anything. I felt that my Chain of Command was weak and I took full advantage of that. All that changed once I met SSG Promotable, Phillip Rowland. He had just come off duty as a Drill Instructor. After he took over as Platoon Sergeant I quickly knew what discipline was. I tried some of the old tricks on him that I had on the previous Chain of Command but none worked. He labeled me as the rebel leader of the platoon. That came from his observations of me before he took charge. The difference between the outgoing Platoon Sergeant and SSG Rowland was like night and day in leadership styles. For a three-month period, he broke us. He did it through physical training, technical and tactical training and worked us until 23:59 each day.

The guys in the platoon would ask me "Chief" what are we going to do? Chief is what everyone called me then. I replied, "I'm going to get right", because this guy is the real deal. This Stinger Platoon was the best in Germany. We were

forged into a tight group. All for one, and one for all. We were a well organized and disciplined gang that no one messed with.

I was promoted to Staff Sergeant in June of 1989, and was appointed as a Section Sergeant. As a Section Sergeant I was responsible for five, two man Stinger Teams. My section was trained well and enjoyed the competition between the other sections and the rest of the Battalion.

In August of 1990 we received deployment orders for Saudi Arabia. We participated in Desert Shield/Desert Storm. My right hand man Sergeant Armando Ramos could not deploy because his wife was going to have a baby. While deployed my section was attached to an attack Helicopter Battalion. My job was to plan the Battalion's air defense based upon the Battalion Commanders priorities. The two priorities were the two forward area refueling/rearming points and the heavy Assembly Area.

We returned to Germany after Desert Storm was over in April of 1991 and soon after the members of the platoon started receiving orders back to the States.

I will never forget SSG Rowland who is now a Command Sergeant Major at the 94th Air Missile Defense in Hawaii. From Germany I received orders for Recruiting Duty, which I was not happy about. I tried to get my duty changed but was locked in.

After graduating from recruiting school in October of 1991, I was assigned to Columbia Recruiting Battalion with duty in Charleston, South Carolina. I went from telling soldiers what to do to asking people to join the Army for me. Recruiting duty was very challenging and rewarding. I became very good at it. It gave me an opportunity to enlist quality young men and women into the Army. Many of these kids needed direction. As a detail recruiter I was awarded a Gold Badge with two Sapphires. March 1994 I was the top high school recruiter in the brigade for that quarter.

In December 1994 I reported to my next assignment and second tour at the 82nd Airborne Division. My first goal was to attend and pass Jump Master School.

In September of 1995 I made Sergeant First Class, passed Jump Master School and was assigned as 3rd Platoon Sergeant for Delta Battery. As a Platoon Sergeant my main job was to train new Platoon Leaders. I would tell them "I could take advantage of you, but I won't." I would tell them that whenever they made Battalion Commander they could look back and say, "My first Platoon Sergeant took care of me and showed me the ropes."

I went through three Platoon Leaders and in June of 1999 I received orders for Vicenza, Italy. In October of 1999 one of my troopers dies due to problems with his wife. That event affected me deeply because I know I did everything I could to help him.

November of 1999 I reported to Vicenza, Italy and was assigned to HHC 1-508TH Infantry Battalion as the Stinger Platoon Sergeant. Italy for me was another good tour of duty. I met a lot of people, enjoyed the food, shopping and got time to spend with my daughter who lives in Copenhagen, Denmark.

While stationed in Italy, I deployed to Germany, Hungary, Bosnia and Kosovo.

After three years, I had earned the Danish, Italian, and Hungarian Parachutist Badges. I was promoted to Master Sergeant and received orders to Fort Bragg for my third tour of duty their. I reported in December of 2002 and was assigned to HHB 3-4 ADA, attended the First Sergeant Course and took HHB as the First Sergeant in March of 2003. In July of 2003, we received deployment orders to Iraq. In August before we got the deployment orders I broke my ankle on a jump and was relegated to the rear detachment for the Battalion. That was a low point in my career. I wanted to lead my Battery in a possible combat

situation. As a long time soldier, I felt the duty to be a part of my Battery's rotation to Iraq. My thirty-two month tour as the First Sergeant was rewarding and challenging. I hope that I was able to teach soldiers to soldier and be someone's inspiration and motivation.

In July of 2005, I was advised by my CSM that I was selected to attend the Sergeant's Major Academy at Ft. Bliss. I am presently attending the United States Army Sergeant's Major Academy Class # 57. I hope to become a Command Sergeant Major one day, but if it doesn't happen I'll be totally satisfied with the career I have had thus far.