

Commentary: 2009, Year of the NCO

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Jan. 27, 2009 -- It's an honor for all Noncommissioned Officers that the Secretary of the Army established 2009 as the "Year of the NCO."

No one is more professional in any other Army than our noncommissioned officer, a leader of Soldiers.

As noncommissioned officers, we are members of a time-honored corps, which is known as "the backbone of the Army." The Army Heritage and Education Center is a national treasury of stories about the noncommissioned officers who served our nation from Valley Forge to Gettysburg, to charges on Omaha Beach and battles along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, to current conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The noncommissioned officers at Carlisle Barracks are few in number, but they have accomplished much. They have shown their willingness to make personal and family sacrifices on behalf of our nation. Our NCOs think ahead at all times and do not just sit and wait for things to happen. They have answered our nation's call and served in theaters of operations such as Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans, and at home providing stability during times of crises in our country. They have recruited, trained and led Soldiers in combat. They have mentored unit members and built cohesive units.

Competence is their watchword. Our NCOs embody the standards our Soldiers must emulate in order to continue the legacy of excellence in our noncommissioned officer Corps. With this in mind, they must be better than their Soldiers no matter what their job. It won't happen overnight, but it takes constant dedication, commitment and hard work. They must lead by example and be the role model. No double standards for NCO and Soldiers. They ensure planning, preparation, and execution phase of the mission.

The NCO never forgets their two basic responsibilities: the accomplishment of the mission and the welfare of their Soldiers. These NCOs know and understand the commander's intent in order to execute their mission flawlessly while providing for "the welfare of Soldiers"; pushing them hard to do unpleasant things to improve their odds of surviving longer on our current and future battlefield? Today our noncommissioned officer serves not only our country, but also provides the security, medical care and training to more than 120 countries throughout the world. Our NCOs are truly caring professionals.



The Army's focus in 2009 will highlight the roles and responsibilities of today's noncommissioned officers by promoting further development through the use of education, fitness and leadership development initiatives. There is none more deserving of this recognition during 2009, get to know these men and women. They make us Army Strong. Hooah!