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Army Core Values Throughout NCO History

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The recent emphasis on Army values is properly timed as we stress getting back to the basics. However, consideration of others and the seven core values: **Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless service, Honor, Integrity and Personal courage (pronounced Leadership)**, is nothing new to the noncommissioned officer corps. Our history is grounded in these principles, and one only needs to look to our past to see examples of our ethic.

instructions to the sergeant and corporal were filled with thoughts of consideration of others. He had recognized that the discipline and order of a company depended on the first line NCO, and stated that they "cannot be too circumspect in their behavior towards the men" (respect), and that by "avoiding too great familiarity with the men, they will not only gain their love and confidence, but be treated with proper respect" (loyalty).

Going back to the first manual for the noncommissioned officer, Major General Freidrich von Steuben specified certain values for NCOs in his "Blue Book." As the Army's second Inspector General, von Steuben listed in his 1779 instructions for the first sergeant that he had "acquired the degree of confidence of his officers as to be appointed first sergeant" (integrity). He went on to say that the first sergeant should be "intimately acquainted with the character of every soldier in the company" (duty), and "he should impress upon their [soldiers'] minds the indispensable necessity of the strictest obedience" (honor). He also wrote that the first sergeant "is to be always in camp or quarters, to answer any call that may be made" (selfless service). Von Steuben's

Though only six of the seven values are easily recognized in von Steuben's manual, examples of courage by noncommissioned officers are evident throughout our history. The Badge for Military Merit was the first decoration awarded to soldiers of the fledgling colonial Army, and the first to receive the new decoration were sergeants. Elijah Churchill and William Brown both were awarded the badge from General George Washington for their display of courage during the Revolutionary War on 3 May 1783. During the War of Independence, staff NCOs supported staff officers, and line NCOs backed up, and could take over for, line officers in combat. A "covering sergeant" stood in the second rank behind the commander and was responsible for protecting him. He kept

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his bayonet fixed and his musket was shouldered, ready to protect the officer (duty).

The noncommissioned officer has a long tradition of embracing the values of military service. In his 1814 edition of "A Handbook for Infantry," William Duane wrote that "the non-commissioned officers should be selected from among the most orderly and best qualified men — upon them will depend very much the order and good conduct of a company." From the earliest days of our Army, noncommissioned officers were recognized as being those whose values and traditions were among the best. In the Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1892, the secretary reported that "the noncommissioned officer was never a more important and responsible individual than now."

In the early part of this century, James Moss published the first known handbook for NCOs, the *Noncommissioned Officers' Manual*. In the 1916 edition, Moss dedicated an entire chapter to "Considerations." He wrote that "the efficiency, discipline and reputation of a command depend to a great extent on its Noncommissioned Officers." He also stated, "Soldiers are appointed Noncommissioned Officers because . . . they possess a high sense of duty, force of character, efficiency, sobriety and other soldierly, manly qualities." He recognized that the position of the NCO is one of honor and responsibility. Throughout his book Moss cited instances of the soldierly values that we recognize today: "What ever you do, do not speak ill of your regiment or any of your officers" (loyalty); every NCO should "be able to instruct his men in all their duties and look after them properly in garrison, in camp, on the march, and in battle" (duty); "The Noncommissioned Officer who is soldierly, reserved, fair and efficient, has the satisfaction of knowing that he enjoys the confidence, and respect of those that he commands (respect); "the ambition of every Noncommissioned Officer should . . . be to so qualify himself that he will be able to 'make good' with his men and his officers" (selfless service), and many other examples.

Throughout our history, we can point to countless citations of noncommissioned officers

who embodied a system of values. Staff Sergeant Paul Bolden of the 30th Infantry Division was awarded the Medal of Honor during World War II when he attacked a formidable enemy strong point in Petit-Coo, Belgium. He voluntarily went up against 35 SS troopers, and was struck in the shoulder, chest and stomach by part of a grenade-burst, which killed his comrade across the street. He withdrew from the house, waiting for the surviving Germans to come out and surrender. When none appeared in the doorway, he summoned his ebbing strength, overcame the extreme pain he suffered and boldly walked back into the house, firing as he went. He had killed the remaining 15 enemy soldiers when his ammunition ran out. Selfless service, initiative and courage were traits that SSG Bolden knew quite well.

Great noncommissioned officers who have recognized the importance of values have formed our legacy. SMA Glen Morrell summed it up best by stating that "character . . . is the most important quality you can find in any person, but especially in a soldier." He later went on to say that "—noncommissioned officers must have the intestinal fortitude to carry out their duties and to do what is right for our soldiers and our Army." All levels of leadership have recognized that the noncommissioned officer has embraced the ideals of values. Then Army Chief of Staff General John Wickham noted that his former platoon sergeant "knew what was meant by living Army values, and I've never forgotten that lesson." And one of the most decorated and beloved American soldiers, Audie Murphy, recognized that "all the men who stood up against the enemy, taking their beatings without whimper . . . would go to hell and back to preserve what our country thinks right and decent."

Values and consideration of others is nothing new to the Army's professional noncommissioned officer corps, as it has been a part of our lineage and heritage from the beginning. Our history has captured NCOs at their best in peacetime and war, living the Army ethic. We shall continue to impress upon others the conduct that our Army and our nation expect from us. We owe them nothing less.