



## Army Senior Leaders Send – Empowering NCOs



This October, at the Association of the United States Army annual convention, Army Senior Leaders charted a path to maintain an Army that is *Ready Today, and More Lethal Tomorrow*. Building the Army of 2028, as described in the Army Vision, requires a Renaissance across the Total Army. This Renaissance represents a renewal in how the Army envisions and prepares for future conflict.

Ongoing initiatives will result in next-generation equipment, modernized doctrine, reorganized formations, an updated personnel system, and a larger force. Achieving our goals will require hard work and a disciplined focus. Change is never easy, but fortunately the U.S. Army is well suited to adapt to the future environment for one principal reason: *Our Non-Commissioned Officer Corps*.

NCOs are the backbone of the Army. For over 243 years, our professional NCO Corps has given us the competitive edge on the battlefield. As we prepare for an uncertain future, our NCOs are needed more than ever to inculcate this Renaissance throughout the Army. To enable their success in doing so, we must place greater trust in our NCOs.

In this spirit, we have taken several actions to return time and authority to the NCO Corps: unburdening them from mandatory training tasks that offered little value; eliminating on-line processes such as TRiPS; and, reducing the frequency of externally mandated inspections, to name a few. These initiatives place a great deal more responsibility on the shoulders of our NCOs. Our intent, however, is to empower leaders to train their Soldiers to standard in the best way they see fit. After all, they know their Soldiers better than anyone.


NCOs are the primary trainers of individual tasks – something that should be done in person, not outsourced to a video or website. Sergeants must be masters of the individual skills they teach. They must set the example in all they say and do as leaders. We expect leaders of all ranks, and especially NCOs, to teach their Soldiers face-to-face, to show their conviction when giving a class on how to spot SHARP violations or prevent suicides, and to demonstrate great care by visiting the barracks on weekends to check on their Soldiers.

The Army needs great NCOs. We need NCOs who are eager to get to know and invest time in their Soldiers in a positive and professional way. We need NCOs who can lead from the front during PT. We need NCOs who are ready to deploy on a moment's notice. We need NCOs who work to develop themselves and their subordinates. And we need NCOs who live the Army Values day in and day out, taking care of their Soldiers and their families, 24/7.

There is much more all leaders can do to empower their subordinates. It begins with extending trust. After all, if we expect our leaders to do the right thing in wartime, then we must build this trust during peacetime. Mistakes will certainly be made, but we must give our NCOs the room to lead, to grow, and to learn, by accepting prudent risk and encouraging disciplined initiative.

By operating under this philosophy – a philosophy of Mission Command – we should be confident that when war comes, and our Nation calls, the Army will be a more ready and lethal force, led by the best NCOs in the world.

  
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