

## **On Leadership: NCO development in USARCENT**

### **Command Sgt. Maj. John Fourhman**

*Editor's note: This is the fifth in a series of articles by the Commanding General and the Command Sergeant Major.*

Whether you are a sergeant major or a corporal, every noncommissioned officer has a responsibility to mentor and develop subordinates and anyone else who stands in need of guidance.

The mentoring process goes all the way down from the senior NCOs through the junior ranks. At every level we need to focus on developing the skills in all our Soldiers to help them grow as leaders. This is particularly important when deployed, a time when our privates and specialists don't have the benefit of formal NCO academies – the Warrior Leader Course in particular – that they would normally have when not deployed. They won't get that schooling until they transition back. Mentorship is key in developing and growing Soldiers into leaders. There is also a mentoring piece more senior NCOs, platoon sergeants and above, have in bringing their junior officers along.

The recent Lucky Strike exercise was a good chance for the commander and me to get an appreciation of where the headquarters is now. It gave our NCOs a chance to self-assess and us, as leaders, to assess our subordinates' competencies and see where we need to go over the next few months to prepare ourselves for Lucky Warrior. We made big strides over the course of Lucky Strike. There were some growing pains and a steep learning curve. From that assessment we are building our professional development programs. Education is key as we help Soldiers mature in the Army and build their skills and knowledge. From the commanding general and I, NCOs and junior officers should already be tracking on a series of professional development modules which will help in expanding knowledge and competencies on operating in the joint world. Additionally, beginning in May, we will have battle staff NCO courses that prepare Soldiers at the staff sergeant and sergeant first class level to operate inside a joint headquarters environment. On a more personal level, the CG and I will also initiate a series of officer professional development and NCO professional development classes that address the doctrinal aspects of full-spectrum operations so everyone has a common understanding of what that means as it applies to USARCENT – from phase zero, or shaping operations through high intensity conflict, and how the headquarters contributes in each of those levels of conflict. At the same time we will talk about the campaign plan to become trained and ready as a certified headquarters by the time Lucky Warrior is over this fall.

Changes in our structure will create other opportunities for NCOs to develop new skills. In the headquarters over the summer we are looking at recoding about 70 positions traditionally held by captains and majors into NCO positions. It will require some midgrade and senior NCOs to go through a different level of development, because these are non-traditional staff positions for NCOs.

With all the changes and growth there will be some growing pains. If we educate ourselves and continue to develop, mentor and lead our Soldiers at all levels, those pains will be minimal. Remember we are a changing headquarters and a changing Army. The junior Soldiers sitting in your section are the leaders of tomorrow. Make sure as you

develop your own skills, you mentor them and develop theirs as well. Each of you is a leader. Be the leader we need.

-Patton's Own