

On Leadership: The NCO Creed

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

While I normally write for all the servicemembers in U.S. Army Central, I would like to take an opportunity to direct my comments to the noncommissioned officers and future NCOs on the importance of the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer.

Every NCO should live the Creed. But I want you to know they are more than just words put down on paper 35 years ago. It is as relevant today as the day it was written. The Creed is both a guide for NCOs and a contract with our Soldiers and officers. The Creed plays a part in how I measure myself as a leader and NCO.

I would like to emphasize some parts of the creed to help us better understand what it means.

"No one is more professional than I. I am a Noncommissioned Officer, a leader of Soldiers."

The Creed begins by defining what a noncommissioned officer is. As leaders we are all professionals in our fields. We should always look and act professionally. We are knowledgeable and skilled in our areas. We are flexible and able to lead Soldiers in overcoming challenges and obstacles.

"My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind – accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my Soldiers."

The Creed reminds us of the responsibilities every NCO has – to accomplish the mission, and to take care of Soldiers. Even as we go about accomplishing the mission, make sure your Soldiers are taken care of. As the creed states, an NCO should keep his responsibilities foremost in his mind and in the right priority.

"I will strive to remain technically and tactically proficient."

Leading Soldiers means knowing not only your job, but also your Soldiers' jobs. NCOs should be the experts in their field. NCOs should always lead from the front. They should be knowledgeable in all aspects of the mission. This is even more important as USARCENT transforms into a Full-Spectrum Operations capable headquarters.

"All Soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership."

This is a promise. It is a promise to yourself, your subordinates and your leaders. We can see outstanding leadership every day in the NCO who takes the time to make a correction and square away a Soldier or just gives the quiet pat on the back for a job well done. Each and every NCO makes this promise, and our Soldiers expect it. It is important we strive to live up to it.

"I will communicate consistently with my Soldiers and never leave them uninformed."

Communication is an essential key to any operation. As NCOs we communicate our commander's intentions to our Soldiers and we communicate the concerns of the Soldiers to our commander. In a successful unit the communication channels are always open.

"I will exercise initiative by taking appropriate action in the absence of orders."

Initiative is a hallmark of a good NCO. Knowing the appropriate action without orders, or before a problem arises is a part of our mission. If something is wrong, make it right. If

something is broken, fix it. We are leaders and we cannot let our Soldiers or our leaders down by failing to take appropriate action.

“I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget that we are professionals, Noncommissioned Officers, leaders!”

Hold yourself to the standard. Hold your fellow NCOs to the standard. Don't forget – we are leaders of Soldiers, we are professionals and we are noncommissioned officers.

I encourage each of you to read the NCO Creed, to study it and understand it. Hang it in your office and look at it regularly to remind you of the standard. Live each and every day by the NCO Creed and include it in your daily business. Each paragraph of the Creed holds key elements that remind NCOs of what we should be doing as leaders. The words of the Creed continue to inspire NCOs and serve as a compass to guide us down the right paths as we encounter different challenges and take on new missions.

I am proud of all our noncommissioned officers. Continue to be outstanding leaders and set the example for your junior and senior Soldiers.

-Patton's Own