



**N  
C  
O  
  
O  
  
T  
  
E  
  
S**

from AUSA's Institute of Land Warfare

## TRAIN THE TRAINER TO STANDARD

by

CSM Brent H. Cottrell

Senior noncommissioned officers are charged specifically to train the trainer to standard (page 4-2, FM 25-101). The importance of this responsibility cannot be passed on, taken lightly or ignored.

Command sergeants major, sergeants major, first sergeants, master sergeants, and sergeants first class who assume their subordinate NCO trainers are thoroughly prepared without having checked and verified are jeopardizing standards and wasting soldiers' time. Even more important is the unspoken message being passed to the staff sergeants and sergeants who will eventually replace them — the message that they do not care, the training is not important, and you are on your own.

If you think this does not apply to you, do a few simple checks. Watch the administration of the next APFT. Standards will probably be read from MF 21-20, and will be properly demonstrated. We usually do this well. The true test is to watch the graders in action. They were the training responsibility of the test adminis-

trator — a master sergeant or sergeant first class. Do they get down and watch shoulder blades touch and soldiers come up to the 90-degree point and back down before the situp repetition is counted? For pushups, does the grader look for the soldier to fully extend his arms and go down with body straight until elbows are in horizontal alignment with shoulder blades? Do the graders know what to do and say to the soldier if the repetition is not correct?

Do soldiers in your unit who scored well on their last APFT fail to gain entrance to PLDC because they cannot do pushups or situps correctly? If this is happening in your unit, then it needs immediate attention. It is criminal, because the soldier went by the standard we allowed. Soldiers pay for this — not the sergeant who failed to enforce the Army standard. The APFT is not the only check. Look at weapons PMI and vehicle maintenance procedures, too.

Most of us grew up in the Army with a trainer-certifying process called the Murder Board. It was a dreaded endeavor where those

*NCO NOTES is published by the AUSA Institute of Land Warfare. This program is an outlet for short pieces written by NCOs for NCOs. Topics can range from leadership techniques to those unwritten "how-to" ideas and procedures that make the Army work. The content represents the personal opinions of the author and not necessarily the position of the Association of the United States Army or its members. Proposed topics of 1,000 words or less may be submitted to Association of the United States Army. MSGT George E. Ehling, Editor, NCO Update, PO Box 1560, Arlington, Virginia 22201.*



tasked to give the training demonstrated their preparedness and knowledge to a panel of senior NCOs who knew the task, condition and standard. These senior NCOs were experienced in giving the training and had researched the manuals to ensure any changes, improvements, modifications or improved teaching techniques were included in the training. The premise was if you could successfully present the training to them you could present it to anyone.

This board was conducted on Friday evening after the duty day and dealt specifically with all instructors for the next week's training. It was stated up front that no substandard trainer would be allowed to remain that way even if it took all weekend. Woe be to any who appeared and

failed to be prepared because senior NCO board members would not take lightly those sergeants who infringed on their weekend time. These seniors felt this way because they made themselves available *before* the board presentation and were glad to assist. They took great pride in someone they helped who did well.

Training is noncommissioned officer business and if we fail at this we are undermining our great Army. We are also causing our soldiers to not be all they can be. Maintaining standards is also our business. The old Army of the past is gone but lessons from the past should not be forgotten. Our Army with its great soldiers deserves to be all it can be.

(CSM Brent H. Cottrell, who authored this bit of wisdom, is currently Command Sergeant Major, HHC 17th Aviation Brigade, with the Eighth U.S. Army in South Korea.)

###