

The Backbone:



A Tribute to the Important Role of NCOs Throughout the JWC and NATO

By MSG Hashim Woodard, USA A,
Chief, JWC Central Registry

As a Senior Non-Commissioned Officer representing the US Army here at the Joint Warfare Centre (JWC), I am honored to have been given the opportunity to expound on a major transformation initiative; the development of a professional NCO Corps within NATO. NATO's two principle component commands, Allied Command Operations (ACO) and Allied Command Transformation (ACT), have both declared 2008 as the "Year of the Non-Commissioned Officer". By the time this magazine edition is distributed, we will be half-way through what I hope will be a historic

year for the Alliance. Befitting this historical declaration, this edition of the JWC Three Swords Magazine is dedicated to the significant and lasting contributions of NCOs assigned throughout the organization. What an exciting time to be an NCO assigned to NATO and empowered to demonstrate the leadership, professionalism, strength, dedication, and commitment to the core values of an NCO Corps!

Throughout the remainder of the year, ACO, ACT, and subordinate commands will continue to highlight past, present, and future contributions of NCOs, whose vital roles comprise the "backbone" of

NATO. In doing so, the Senior Enlisted leadership within NATO will also continue their efforts to address challenges surrounding the realization of a common "NATO NCO Development" program. Despite the significant challenges, this collaborative effort is a central focus of the 2008 declaration. The high military turnover rate within NATO organizations is particularly challenging, with personnel serving on average between two-to-four years before returning to their respective nations.

Before I showcase recent accomplishments of my fellow JWC NCOs, let me first provide a few historical facts sur-





rounding the term “NATO NCO Development.” To paraphrase a well-used quote that has stood the test of time, “in order to know our present and future, we must study and acknowledge our past.” When I conducted a little research into the history behind ongoing efforts to build a professional NCO Corps within NATO, I discovered the first-appointed Senior Enlisted

Advisor (SEA) to the Supreme Allied Commander Operations, US Marine Sergeant Major Alford L. McMichael, was the driving force behind the initial concept of developing a common standard for NCOs throughout NATO. This year’s initiatives will bring greater visibility to the value and contributions of NATO NCOs’ and continue to underline the need for a common standard.

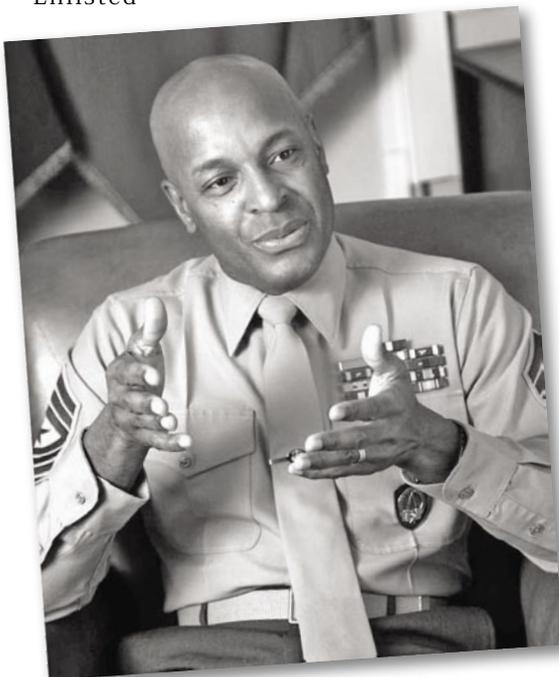
age everyone to visit the NATO website throughout the remainder of the year, www.nato.int/shape/ynco, which is dedicated to the contributions of NCOs serving across the Alliance’s operational footprint and sphere of influence.

During the past twelve months, the JWC SEA, French Navy Warrant Officer 1st Class Jackie Guichard and other assigned Senior NCOs worked together to create and gain approval for two new JWC Directives. The first, JWC Directive 40-18, established Terms of Reference for a JWC Enlisted Advisory Board (EAB). The second, JWC Directive 40-20, established processes for the JWC Outstanding Military Member of the Quarter (MMOQ)/Military Member of the Year (MMOY) Program.

2008 represents an important continuum of Sergeant Major McMichael’s earlier efforts; the torch now passed to US Army Command Sergeant Major Michael Bartelle, the current Senior NCO for ACO; and Czech Republic Army Command Sergeant Major Ludek Kolesa, Senior NCO for ACT.

With full support and backing from both the JWC Director and Chief of Staff, credibility of the EAB and direct-access to Senior Leadership for enlisted-specific issues was achieved. Additionally, JWC

Rest assured, these two accomplished and very capable Senior NCOs will continue this important endeavor for the sake of all NCOs within NATO. I encour-



◀ *Sergeant Major Alford L. McMichael, US Marine Corps, the first NCO in NATO’s history to represent the NATO Alliance’s entire enlisted force. Photo by UK Army Cpl. Jim Hennessey. “My priority won’t be with the nations that already have strong NCO Corps, but with the nations who want to make their enlisted force better.” Sgt. Maj. McMichael, 4 February 2004.*





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Directive 40-20, established a MMOY nomination-process whereby the JWC nominee to ACT's annual MMOY program, represented the strongest candidate vetted and nominated by his/her enlisted peers. Implementation and continued adherence to these important Directives will continue to provide platforms to recognize the hard work, professionalism and dedication of NCOs here at the JWC.



Throughout the JWC, the many talents and contributions of its NCO population can be seen and felt. From Section Chiefs, to Graphics Technicians, to Information Managers for major exercises such as NATO's STEADFAST series of exercises, NCOs have and continue to showcase their teaching, mentoring, and adaptability skills. I extend a heart-felt "thank-you" for all you do! In so many ways, you truly are the "backbone" of this organization. As you read through the additional articles and excerpts in this edition, reflect on your individual and collective accomplishments with pride.

NCOs serving within NATO must actively seek training and continued development from the many opportunities that currently exist throughout the Alliance and its Partnership countries. There are currently forty-three NATO-School courses, which are

◀ *MSG Woodard,*
Chief, JWC Central Registry

open to NCOs in Oberammergau, Germany. Every NCO should have the opportunity to attend the NATO Senior NCO Orientation Course prior to, or shortly after assuming a NATO post.

Fellow NCOs; recognize the immeasurable value of communicating frequently with peers, sharing information, and highlighting the positive aspects of being an intricate part of a joint, multinational and multicultural operating and training environment.

Equally important is the role each of us has with respect to educating NATO officer and civilian personnel - through our personal on-the-job example of technical/tactical competence and experience. Get involved in community activities and events. Continue to support ongoing NATO initiatives by educating your successor and respective enlisted service personnel when you return to your nations.

As I near the end of my NATO tour, I am both proud and blessed to have been a part of a truly historic transformational period within the Alliance. †

The Year of NCO in

By Warrant Officer (WO1) Jackie Guichard, FRA N,
Admin Supervisor, DOS, JWC

AS the Senior Enlisted Leader of JWC, I am honoured to have the opportunity to talk about NCOs within NATO in our magazine. At the initiative of CSM (ACO) Michael Bartelle and CSM (ACT) Ludek Kolesa, both strategic Commanders, SACEUR and SACT, have agreed to declare 2008 "Year of the NCO" in NATO. We can all be proud of that decision, for this is a way to recognize that NCOs are an integral link in the chain of command for NATO; that they contribute in all areas of military activity by providing their leadership, inspiration, and motivation; that they have a key role in transforming the Alliance.

What is Transformation?

NATO's military transformation efforts strive for improved interoperability where fundamentally joint, network-centric, distributed forces, capable of rapid decision superiority and massed effects across the battle space, ensure

the Alliance's relevance, now and in the future. This will not be achieved without a clear vision, common aim and qualified personnel.

NATO's military transformation encompasses not only reorganization and re-equipping, but also a standardization of its military manpower. We will have to train and educate our people to common standards that underpin interoperability across all areas of Alliance operations and functions. In that role, NCOs can bring their efficient and timely advice and support that NATO Leadership needs to maintain NATO as the world's pre-eminent Alliance for stability and security.

In today's world global terrorism, potential use of weapons of mass destruction, regional instability, failing states, radical ideologies and unresolved conflicts are the greatest threats we face. NATO has to address new challenges in roles such as conflict prevention, crisis management, peacekeeping, disaster response and humanitarian relief.

In order to fulfil these new missions, NATO needs to be able to rely on people who are comfortable working together, deployable at short notice, flexible on length of stay, etc. That is precisely where the experience of NCOs is unmatched, for they are able to address different military cultures, capability levels, geographic and historic perspectives, as well as unique national security and domestic law issues.

For the professional development and leadership of our NCOs, we have to train and educate them to common standards that strengthen interoperability across the whole spectrum of the Alliance.

In that perspective, the Senior Enlisted Leaders (Command Sergeant Majors) of all NATO Commands and at national levels have gathered for bi-yearly symposia over the last three years and have drawn up the basis for what should become the NATO NCO Standards. These Standards have yet to be approved. They need to be finalized and promulgated as soon as possible to keep a chance to build a competent and effective NATO NCO Corps.

JWC: Transformation Tool

The Joint Warfare Centre assists in the training and evaluation of joint military staffs within ACO for certification by the Alliance's military commanders, based on NATO's operating standards and mission requirements. JWC is ACT's agent for promoting and conducting broad operational-level joint and multinational experimentation, analysis, and doctrine development, as well as for the collective staff training of Partner Nations.

The NCOs at JWC

Compared to the activities and responsibilities normally assigned to NCOs in their respective forces, the duties of the NCOs in the JWC are primarily to ensure support in positions as



Brigadier General Ruhlman, COS JWC, presented WO1 Guichard with a JWC plaque at the Farewell Breakfast for his dedicated service and devotion to duty, 11 June 2008.



NATO

administrative staff and technicians/operators. We, NCOs, work behind the scenes to provide essential support to JWC staff. JWC NCOs come from different horizons and cultures and had to adapt themselves to a new country, new mentalities and sometimes even new technologies. Nevertheless, they are men and women of today who share the same passion for their duties.

Their commitment and dedication must remain at a superior level, especially in these troubled times where the armed forces are much requested to serve peace. NCOs are a wealth of knowledge and experience that the entire organization relies on. They also are the driving force behind training, and role models and mentors for the junior enlisted. They demonstrate, through their open mind, expertise and loyalty, a standard of professionalism often imitated but seldom, if ever, equalized. But NCOs are not only experts or technicians; they also are responsible chiefs. NCOs have always been the soul of an army, the hyphen between the command and the execution. They are the ones by whom the mission either succeeds or fails. It is for them to have the responsibility of the last order, the decisive gesture. Thanks to the fighting spirit of the NCOs, NATO has fully entered the 21st Century. They are an important part of the organization that will allow JWC to fulfill its assigned missions, in order to improve NATO's effectiveness and interoperability.

Finally, I would like to add that I am nearing the end of my three-year posting to JWC. It has been an honour and a great experience to serve as the first appointed Senior Enlisted Advisor for JWC. I am proud of my fellow NCO comrades who work hard for the reliability and success of JWC and help hoist the "Three Swords" flag so high in the NATO Transformation sky. ✦

I am the Chief Graphics Production, and my Section is really international as staff comes from Norway, Poland, Turkey and Italy. We are producing all graphics designs and printing publications for exercises and everyday life here at JWC. Our main goal is to fulfill customer expectations and deliver high quality products. The Polish Army prepares very competent and professional NCOs. Every year, some of them complete their military education abroad. So, I cannot really see any difference between Polish NCOs and those of other nations; we are all truly International Non-Commissioned Officers, and we all have a true feeling of being integral members of the NCO-team, which is known as the "backbone of any modern military organization".

**Sergeant Major Leszek A. Wojtalik, POL A,
Chief, Graphics Section, JWC**



of people from the most diverse backgrounds and experiences. My fondest memory is the conversations that I had with various people - from a Private driving me to the airport to a three-star General telling an anecdote in the middle of the night as we were traveling from an exercise site to a hotel in Lisbon. Experiences like Allied Action 05 in San Clemente, Spain (and some 20 other exercises and major events), as well as my deployment to Kabul were extremely helpful and I feel that each day of my assignment I have learnt something from my fellow NCOs or Officers. My advice to my colleagues: Speak with each other, listen to each other and learn from each other!

**Sergeant Major Meelis Koger, EST A
Admin NCO, JED, JWC**



I am an Admin NCO working in the Capability Development Division (CDD) of the Joint Warfare Centre. I joined the JWC staff in 2006, after spending two years as an admin apprentice with the Personnel Office at Camp Madla. In CDD my work involves preparing and participating in exercises, experiments and post venue work. General administrative duties are also part of this role. The best thing about working in an international environment is the language experience and learning about the views of different cultures. I do enjoy learning from fellow staff members of various militaries and backgrounds. Have a nice NATO day!

**Petty Officer Linda Sletten, NOR N
Admin, CDD, JWC**





VIEWPOINT

Sergeant Major Ludek Kolesa,
Czech Republic Army
ACT Senior Enlisted Leader



Shortly after we began the New Year, both NATO Strategic Commanders declared 2008 "the Year of the NCO in NATO."

I was on my first visit to the JWC with my Commander, General Matfis, and after his tour, I was given the opportunity to address the NCOs with a brief. After which I was, and continued to be, engaged in very interesting and challenging discussions; they lasted throughout my stay. These discussions further convinced me that there are professional, qualified, enthusiastic, and motivated NCOs serving in JWC.

As in any other NATO institution or Headquarters I have heard that some of you may feel unutilized and not really challenged by the job, or that you are ready to take over more responsibilities and face bigger challenges. This approach of yours is exactly what keeps me and the other Senior Enlisted Leaders carrying on with our efforts to assist our Nations in their NCO Corps' transformation, which would naturally mirror into the NATO structures. You continue to give us new energy to develop and promote additional NATO NCO Development Programs and cooperation with NATO, PfP, and also contact countries' NCOs. Without your support, this initiative would not continue to progress. Still, this is NATO - soon to be more than 26 Nations - and everything takes time.

We have a vision, and we are working on several initiatives that are changing the history of NATO NCOs. "The Year of the NCO in NATO" is a great initiative and a tremendous asset in helping in our efforts.

(Recommended Reading: Interview with Sergeant Major Kolesa in ACT's Transformer Magazine, Spring 2008: "2008 The Year of the NCO in NATO Campaign", p:3)

"MMOY Ceremony formally recognizes NCOs for their achievement"

SSG Mark Ledesma represented the Joint Warfare Centre at the ACT Military Member of the Year Ceremony (MMOY)



As an NCO recognized for exceptional service achievement, what's your advice to NCOs serving in NATO?

My advice to NCOs serving in NATO is to continue working beyond what is normally expected of you. All of us bring different experiences to this organization. We have an obligation to show everyone

that NCOs are fully capable of contributing to the success of NATO's mission.

What makes NCOs the cornerstone of military?

The U.S. Army uses the term "backbone" to describe the NCO Corps. This is a perfect description of how NCOs are the support structure in any Military. We are required to carry out orders and to successfully complete the missions given to us. We are responsible for every Soldier's welfare and professional development. It is expected we will not shy away from accepting greater responsibilities.

Why is it difficult to describe the NCO ranks in NATO?

NATO has no set structure to describe the roles and responsibilities of the NCO. It is a very hard task to accomplish. Each nation has its own structure. The views can be very different. Take, for example, Norway. The NCO structure does not hold as many ranks as other nations. How do you create a structure without forcing another nation's ideals on one another?

Can you tell us about the 2007 ACT MMOY?

This year, the 2007 MMOY was held at ACT Headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia from 25-29 February. The competition started with each candidate giving an introduction about themselves to the MMOY Board Members. As the competition continued, I was required to give two presentations. The first presentation described the JWC command and responsibilities. The second presentation involved describing the NCO structure within the U.S. Army. The final part of the competition allowed each member of the Board to ask two questions, each about ACT. This was the most difficult part because we were not aware of what questions would be asked. It was an honor to represent JWC in the competition.

What is the importance of MMOY Ceremony?

The ceremony is significant in that it formally recognizes NCOs for their achievement. It is important for leaders to identify and reward individuals for portraying the characteristics we want to see in our organization. It shows the command cares and takes a personal interest in achievement.

In three words, how would you describe success?

Dedication, development and teamwork.



On the top floor of the E-Block there is the Command Group, including the Information and Knowledge Management Office, which is the office from which the JWC Webmaster works. SCPO Henning Kørvel (whose NATO last name is Koervel) has served with the Danish Navy since 1969, chiefly in the Faeroe Islands, - and is proud of it too! Manpower reductions in the Danish Forces, including the Island Command Faeroes, brought him back to Denmark in 2006. Shortly after, he applied for the vacant position as Webmaster at the JWC, where he arrived in July last year. So, that was my short introduction. As part of the in-processing procedure, newcomers stop by my office to submit their request for accounts on the NATO Secret and NATO Unclassified workstations. So, I am one of the few persons that get to say "hello" to almost all JWC members. My job as the JWC Webmaster also involves working on the SharePoint Server Portal and the WISE Portal, and more recently, also on the Windows SharePoint Services, which have just been implemented on the NU LAN. I have also contributed to the JWC external website (www.jwc.nato.int), ensuring that useful functionalities have been installed on the server where the website is hosted.

**SCPO Henning Kørvel, DNK N,
JWC Webmaster, IKM**



I want to start off saying congratulations to all NCOs within the Alliance, THIS IS OUR YEAR! We should be proud of ourselves. My daily job at the Joint Warfare Centre is to be an assistant on the Command Group staff. I work mainly in the DOS Office, though I also sometimes provide assistance as needed to the JWC Director and Chief of Staff, especially during exercises at Ulsnes. I enjoy working in a multinational environment, and I learn new things everyday about the different cultures in the JWC community. Every morning I look forward to a day at work, serving NATO.

**SGT Jarle Lønseth-Vidtun, NOR AF
DOS, JWC**



Since 2005, I have been a part of the CIS/Helpdesk, where most staff are NCOs. It has been a very interesting job, which carries its own challenges, though. Our job is to solve all kinds of computer problems that staff may have, and when we fix a problem, everybody is happy. That makes me happy too. That's my reward. I am very pleased with NATO's decision to dedicate 2008 to NCOs. Bulgaria set up a Professional College for NCOs in 2007, and I am glad to see such developments, which are a true recognition of our work.

**MST Iliyan E. Matanski, BGR A
Technician, JWC**



**Serving as a Non-Commissioned Officer in NATO vs. National Forces:
Where is the difference?**

Serving with NATO as a Senior NCO is one of the most challenging jobs there is. It is not the professional part that is the biggest challenge; but rather, the fact of doing business in a foreign language with colleagues of up to 26 different nations. While there is a common understanding of the role of all officer ranks, the approaches to that of the NCOs vary greatly with several different models being available within the forces of NATO's member nations. As a consequence, NATO is working hard to achieve a common understanding and a clear definition of NCO/SNCO role inside the Organization. To serve with NATO is nevertheless an experience I see as a mandatory part of the professional and personal development of every Senior NCO in NATO. I am proud for Germany being a part of NATO and honoured that the German Armed Forces gave me the chance to serve in the NATO/JWC Team.

**SMstSgt Juergen Eise, DEU F,
PAO, JWC**

