

Army NCO Strategy

“Winning matters and People are my number one priority. People are our Soldiers — Regular Army, National Guard, and Reserve — their Families, Civilians, and Soldiers for Life — Retirees and Veterans. We win through our people and we must take care of them...”

— **GEN James McConville**
40th Chief of Staff of the Army

NCO Strategy Purpose: People are the Army’s greatest strength and most important weapon system. The Army NCO Strategy will develop and empower NCOs to leverage their knowledge, skills, and behaviors to lead.

I. Introduction:

The Army has transitioned from a focus on counterinsurgency operations to large-scale combat operations (LSCO) and strategic competition. Under the pressure of constant change and rapid technological advances, the NCO Corps developed an enduring and flexible strategy to lead us into the future. The Army NCO Strategy, coupled with This is My Squad (TiMS), is based on the vision of what an NCO must BE, KNOW, and DO to compete and win in multi-domain environments.

The Army NCO Strategy, nested in the guidance and vision of our leaders, reflects our Army values and NCO core competencies. The concept of the Army NCO Strategy will drive the NCO Guide, and the two will evolve in concert to ensure the NCO Corps remains current, relevant, and the best in the world.

II. Army NCO Strategy End States:

NCOs must build cohesive teams that are highly trained, disciplined, and fit that are ready to fight and win, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. They must also develop Soldiers for Life certified in the Army’s Profession of Arms.

Highly Trained: The most elite fighting forces in the world are built upon small units and individuals who are masters of their craft. NCOs continuously develop as leaders through progressive and sequential processes that incorporate training, education, and experience across the three learning domains — institutional, operational, and self-development. The NCO Corps has an enduring and foundational role in unit training. NCOs are responsible for the individual training of Soldiers, squads, crews, and small teams. NCOs conduct standards-based, performance-oriented, battle-focused training.

Example Initiatives: *Expert Infantryman Badge/Expert Soldier Badge/Expert Field Medical Badge requirements review and Master Gunner*

Disciplined: Effective leaders build cohesive teams by emphasizing standards and discipline. NCOs set unit culture by modeling and recognizing acceptable behaviors based on the Army Values, and eliminating unprofessional conduct. NCOs also inspire confidence, build trust amongst team members, and ensure Soldiers have the necessary technical and tactical expertise to be the most lethal combat force in the world. Discipline reinforces the understanding of Army, organizational, and personal standards. Discipline also enables the commitment to professional excellence, which is the hallmark of the Army profession. Soldiers expect their leaders to enforce standards in an impartial, transparent, and consistent manner.

Example Initiatives: *Metrics for Discipline and Social Behavior*



Fit: Leaders must connect with their Soldiers to address stressors and empower them to overcome challenges. To this end, NCOs must support a comprehensive, integrated, and immersive health and fitness system that generates lethal Soldiers who are mentally, physically, and socially connected capable of competing, fighting, and winning in multi-domain operations (MDO). Holistic fitness recognizes that individual and family well-being depends on interdependent areas, including physical fitness, resilience, training, individual spirituality (self-identity, beliefs, and life purpose beyond self), social interaction (positive connection with others), and physical, psychological, and behavioral health.

Example Initiatives: *Holistic Health and Fitness and Soldier Performance Readiness Centers*

Soldier for Life: NCOs must build and maintain trust throughout the entirety of a Soldier's career. Trust starts at the recruitment phase and initial entry training to reception and integration into the operational force. NCOs reinforce trust throughout a Soldier's career and ultimately their transition from service back to the civilian sector. This process includes talent management to provide NCOs with stability and predictability. Effective talent management strives to balance the Army's needs with Soldier development and personal preferences. NCOs involved in this process will gain a Soldier's lifelong commitment through their honesty and accountability.

Example Initiatives: *This is My Squad, Enlisted Career-long Assessments, and Soldier and Leader Development Tool*

NCO Strategy: This Is My Squad (TiMS)

The NCO Strategy fosters an environment of cohesive teams in which Soldiers want to train and grow together; everyone has a squad. Additionally, TiMS focuses on enhancing the education and technological tools leaders need to care for, train, and resource their units. NCOs must have adequate planning time, resources, and authority to support their missions. Empowering leaders inevitably has a positive impact on negative trends.

TiMS end state: Cohesive teams that are highly trained, disciplined, and fit, ready to fight and win where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

TiMS objectives enable NCOs to apply the Army NCO Strategy to set the culture within their units, find commonalities within their cohesive teams, actively influence unit members to perform at their fullest potential, and show a positive future.

TiMS objectives are tangible and critical requirements leaders at all levels must build, maintain, and improve. MDO requires a diverse Army that understands people and their environments. TiMS objectives build cohesive teams and defeat the impermissible and problematic behaviors that erode our readiness and the Profession of Arms.

III. Conclusion:

As the Army trains to compete, fight, and win in an environment of strategic competition and potential LSCO, some of our greatest threats come from within. We must work to prevent the harmful behaviors that hurt Soldiers and break trust with the American people: sexual assault and sexual harassment, acts of racism and extremism, and death by suicide. The Army NCO Strategy, coupled with TiMS, prepares today's and tomorrow's NCOs to be the professional and agile leaders our Soldiers need to fight and win our nation's wars.



Soldiers assigned to the 10th Mountain Division conduct training during an expert badge event at Fort Drum, NY, in September 2021. (Photo by Cierra Clark)