

HJR

29

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Alaska State Legislature

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Representative Carl Gatto

Chair, House Military and Veteran Affairs Committee
District 13 - Palmer

Sponsor Statement HJR 29

“Designating 2009 as the Year of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps of the United States Army.”

The Non-Commissioned Officers are the backbone of the Army, an invaluable wealth of information, knowledge and experience. They are the main cog in the wheel that allows the Army to operate at a time when limits are stretched, while fighting wars on two separate fronts. They are one of the most effective tools that a commander has at his or her disposal, to ensure that their Soldiers are mission ready. NCO's often have more time in the Army than the commanders in charge of them and do not hesitate to take a new commander under their wing, to guide them and help them learn the idiosyncrasies of the unit that they command. They are the first-line supervisors in the Army, the ones who know each of the soldiers in their unit, their strengths and weaknesses. NCO's serve as teacher, often ensuring that the soldiers they command receive the appropriate training and become mission ready. NCO's do not seek accolades and often do not get credit for the important work that they do.

Over the next year, the Army will develop new programs that will help to enhance the training opportunities, educational opportunities and the capability of the NCO Corps. This is a great step forward for the Army, as we recognize the importance of the NCO's and the wealth of experience that they bring to the table. The NCO is often the person, who takes a brand new company commander, and shares their experiences, successes, and failures to help the officer operate effectively in their role as commander. The NCOs know their jobs as well as the jobs of others. They know and understand the equipment they use and know individually the soldiers they lead. They recognize developing problems and take action to ensure that little problems do not escalate.

NCOs remain in the background; they ensure that the day to day operations of their company run smoothly. They work side by side with their soldiers, setting a good example and ensuring that those soldiers are the best that they can be. Like a supervisor in the civilian world, they may be tasked to deal with things outside the scope of their expertise. NCO's are adept at locating the resources they need to address these difficulties. They adapt and overcome barriers and teach those skills to the soldiers they lead. NCO's wear many hats during the course of their duties. To the soldiers they lead, they serve as mentor, father or mother figure, teacher, disciplinarian and friend. To their leaders they're the expert, the advisor, the sounding board, the teacher and mentor. They can't be everything to everyone, but they do come close.

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Army Secretary Announces 2009 Will Be 'Year of NCO'

By C. Todd Lopez
Special to American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Oct. 6, 2008 – The Army will recognize the value of its enlisted leaders at all levels of command as it observes "The Year of the Noncommissioned Officer" in 2009, Army Secretary Pete Geren said today.

Geren made the announcement during his keynote address at the opening of the 2008 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition here.

"At the front of every Army mission in the United States or overseas, you'll find a noncommissioned officer," he said. "They know their mission, they know their equipment, but most importantly, they know their soldiers."

The secretary said that during the year, the Army will develop new initiatives that enhance the training, education, capability and use of the NCO corps, showcase the NCO story to the Army and the American people, and honor the sacrifices and celebrate contributions of the NCO corps, past and present.

"Today's NCO operates autonomously, and always with confidence and competence," he said. "Our NCOs are empowered and trusted like no other NCO in the world, and most advanced armies in the world today are going to school on our model."

Geren noted he came to the Pentagon late in the summer of 2001, and that he was in the building during the Sept. 11 attack.

"And for seven years, I've watched soldiers go off to war, and watched their families stand with them," he said. "I've been inspired by the service of our soldiers, and humbled by the sacrifice of their families -- spouses and kids, moms and dads. And it's the privilege of a lifetime to work with and for soldiers and Army families."

The Army's first priority, Geren said, are the loved ones in harms way.

"They are front of mind 24 hours a day, and we're committed to meeting with urgency the ever-changing, life-and-death needs and demands of our soldiers in Afghanistan and in Iraq," Geren said. "And not just meet their needs and meet the evolving threats, but anticipate, and do everything we can to get ahead of the threat. And care for those who have borne the battle, and their loved ones. These are moral duties of the highest order for our nation and our Army."

The secretary also talked about an often unseen portion of the military -- those who deliver goods and services to the fighting force: the Army logisticians.

"We have 250,000 soldiers in 80 countries, and we've been at war for seven years, with 140,000 soldiers in theater today," he said. "Nobody ever asks, 'Who feeds those guys?'"

"Our logisticians are victims of their own success," he continued. "Their work is so good it is invisible -- it's a given. Wherever our Army goes, whatever our soldiers need, whenever they need it, they get it -- the miracle of Army logistics."

Geren said the Army logistics community repairs more than 14,000 vehicles every year -- a number equal to the number of yellow cabs in New York City. They also move more than 700,000 personnel in and out of theater, equal to the entire population of Charlotte, N.C. And each day, he said, Army logisticians provide 750,000 meals in Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Iraq. They also dispense enough fuel in the combat theater to fill up 750,000 cars -- nearly four times the number of vehicles registered in Washington, D.C.

"We talked much about the surge -- 15,000 more Soldiers in Iraq -- but nobody ever mentioned that Army logisticians would serve 45,000 more meals each day, and ship 120,000 more gallons of water each day," he said. During operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, 619 sustainment and support soldiers have given their lives, the secretary said.

Geren also pointed out the historic anniversaries the Army has celebrated in 2008, including the 25th anniversary of the Army Family Action Plan, the 30th anniversary of the disestablishment of the Women's Army Corps, and the 60th anniversary of the integration of the U.S. military.

"Sixty years ago, our Army did not stand as one," he said. "It was not a single band of brothers, rather, a collection of bands of brothers divided by race."

The policy then, he said, was that the Army was separate, but "hardly equal."

"[It was a] cruel irony of our nation sending soldiers to fight for freedom against the Germans -- yet affording privileges to white German prisoners of war held in the United States that were denied to the African-Americans soldiers who guarded them," the secretary said.

On July 26, 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9981, declaring "there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin."

"With the stroke of a pen, President Truman launched the Army on the path to the color-blind institution we know today," Geren said. "The Army moved slowly and stubbornly at first, but now stands as the model for equal opportunity in our nation. Today, we have an Army where the only colors that matter are red, white, and blue."

Geren also took time to reiterate another priority of the Army -- the elimination of sexual assault within the ranks.

"The brothers and sisters of our Army must be able to count on each other, wherever they are, in the battlefield or in the barracks, and whenever, on duty or off, no matter the cost," he said. "We will create a climate of zero tolerance for gender-based misconduct -- in attitude, word, and deed, and become fully, as our values demand, a band of brothers and sisters."

(C. Todd Lopez works at the Soldiers Media Center.)

Biographies:

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Army Secretary announces 2009 'Year of NCO'

BY C. Todd Lopez

WASHINGTON -- During his keynote address at the opening of the 2008 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition, Secretary of the Army Pete Geren announced 2009 would be "the Year Of The Noncommissioned Officer."

"At the front of every Army mission in the United States or overseas, you'll find a non-commissioned officer," he said. "They know their mission, they know their equipment, but most importantly, they know their Soldiers."

The secretary said that during the year, the Army will accelerate NCO development of strategic initiatives, develop new initiatives that enhance the training, education, capability, and utilization of the NCO corps, showcase the NCO story to the Army and the American people, and honor the sacrifices and celebrate contributions of the NCO Corps, past and present.

"Today's NCO operates autonomously, and always with confidence and competence," he said. "Our NCOs are empowered and trusted like no other NCO in the world, and most advanced armies in the world today are going to school on our model."

More than 3,000 Soldiers, civilians and military personnel from allied nations gathered Oct. 6 for the opening of the 2008 AUSA meeting.

The opening event of the three-day meeting, themed "America's Army: The Strength of the Nation," featured music, reflection on the history of the Army, presentation of AUSA awards and Secretary Geren's address.

Due to a changing administration, the secretary said this has been a

year of "lasts" for him: last budget to prepare, last time representing the service at an Army-Navy game, last time talking with Soldiers as their secretary, and last time addressing an AUSA meeting. He told the gathered crowd he's talked about people -- those Soldiers, Army families and civilians that make up the Army.

"I came to the Pentagon late summer of 2001, and I was in the Pentagon the morning of 9/11," he said. "And for seven years, I've watched Soldiers go off to war, and watched their families stand with them. I've been inspired by the service of our Soldiers, and humbled by the sacrifice of their families -- spouses and kids, moms and dads. And it's the privilege of a lifetime to work with and for Soldiers and Army families."

The first priority of the Army, Geren said, are the loved ones in harm's way.

"They are front of mind 24 hours a day, and we're committed to meeting with urgency the ever-changing life and death needs and demands of our Soldiers in Afghanistan and in Iraq," Geren said. "And not just meet their needs and meet the evolving threats, but anticipate, and do everything we can to get ahead of the threat. And care for those who have borne the battle, and their loved ones. These are moral duties of the highest order for our nation and our Army."

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During the course of Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, over 619 sustainment and support Soldiers have given their lives, the secretary said.

Secretary Geren also pointed out the historic anniversaries the Army has celebrated in 2008, including the 25th anniversary of the Army Family Action Plan, the 30th anniversary of the disestablishment of the Women's Army Corps, and the 60th anniversary of the integration of the U.S. military.

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FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: HJR 29
 () Publish Date: _____

Identifier (file name): _____ Dept. Affected: _____
 Title HJR 29 DESIGNATING 2009 AS THE YEAR OF ARMY NCO RDU _____
 Component _____
 Sponsor Representative Carl Gatto
 Requester Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Component Number _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2010	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Contractual								
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims								
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES								
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()								
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY 2010	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
1002 Federal Receipts							
1003 GF Match							
1004 GF							
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other Interagency Receipts							
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

ANALYSIS: *(Attach a separate page if necessary)*

Prepared by: House Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Phone _____
 Division _____ Date/Time _____
 Approved by: Represtatative Carl Gatto Date 3/31/2009