

NCO Induction Ceremony



**An unofficial guide for Noncommissioned Officers
inducting the newly promoted into the Corps**

Official History

Courtesy the NCO Museum

1 Dec 88 Then FORSCOM Command Sergeant Major, CSM addressed SMC Class 32, describing the FORSCOM NCO Induction Ceremony. It was based on his observation of a German Army NCO Induction Ceremony. He suggested that others should adopt a similar program.

27 Apr 89 Sergeants Major Academy conducts their first NCO Induction Ceremony. SGT , daughter of SMC Course 33 student.

Apr 89 TRADOC tasks USASMA to develop an operational unit level “NCO Induction Ceremony” tape in conjunction with the 1989 theme, “The Year of the NCO

Apr 89 USASMA Student Operations and PAO develop a script
15 Sep 89 and film, which was approved by the Commandant. Included lighting three candles to emphasize the three parts of the NCO Creed.

18 Sep 89 Briefed DCSOP and SMA at the Pentagon on Ceremony. SMA was unaware of film or ceremony. He was unimpressed, and believed a ceremony was unnecessary.

1 Oct 89 briefed then TRADOC CSM . Made recommendation to shorten film and include unit officers. Briefed CoS, GEN and others. CoS supported the film, yet others objected to the secrecy, and felt that the use of three candles was ritualistic.

6-25 Oct 89 Revised video, removing candle portion and still emphasized the NCO Creed.

5 Dec 89 Briefed General Officer Steering Committee. GEN requested input from those present and AMC CSM objected to ammo pouch on the uniforms (upside down). CoS requested re-shoot of video.

23 Feb 90 Remade video. Awaiting final approval.

END

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Induction Ceremony Purpose

The induction ceremony is a celebration of the newly promoted joining the ranks of a professional noncommissioned officer corps, and emphasizes and builds on the pride we all share as members of such an elite corps. The ceremony should also serve to honor the memory of those men and women of the NCO Corps who have served with pride and distinction.

Induction ceremonies should in no way be used as an opportunity for hazing, but more as a rite of passage. It allows fellow NCOs of a unit to build and develop a cohesive bond, support team development, and serve as a legacy for future NCO Induction Ceremonies.

Promotion Ceremony

The importance of recognizing the transition from “just one of the guys or gals” to a noncommissioned officer should be shared among the superiors, peers, and subordinates of the newly promoted. This action allows the commander, the ultimate approving authority for the promotion of enlisted Soldiers within their charge, to serve their role in the process. The induction ceremony should be held separate, and to serve as an extension of the promotion ceremony. Typical Army promotion effective dates occur on the first day of a month, and when possible, so should the induction ceremony.

Timing

As part of the socialization process for new noncommissioned officers, the Induction Ceremony should be scheduled as a training event on the training calendar. The formal portion should take place during the duty day, prior to retreat. By making it a training event during duty hours, you not only get maximum participation, but command support (Commanders approve training schedules). The optimum time is 1630 to 1700 for the formal portion (the ceremony), and 1700-1730 for the informal portion (greetings, congratulations and socializing).

Key Personnel

As the senior NCO of the command, the Battalion Command Sergeant Major serves as the host of the NCO Induction Ceremony. The units First Sergeants are the CSM's assistants, and they compose the “Official Party.” If desired, a guest speaker for the ceremony may be included, and also is a part of the official party. A narrator will serve as the Master of Ceremonies.

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Invited Guests and VIPs

As a wholly noncommissioned officer sponsored event, guests and VIPs should be limited to current and former U.S. Army NCOs. Certain situations may warrant an officer or civilian to attend, and will not detract from the nature of the occasion. Typical invited guests could include higher echelon Command Sergeants Major (Brigade, Division, Regimental, Commandant), Installation or Base Support Battalion (BSB) Command Sergeants Major, or even lateral (Battalion level) Command Sergeants Major. Additionally, special guests serving as motivational speakers should be included (though not required) as part of an induction ceremony.

Equipment Required

- All weather binder
- NCO Creed (typed)
- NCO Creed Cert
- Rank- SGT-ACU/Pin on

Ceremony

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PLACES: Official party – Waiting outside the ceremony room.
Narrator – At the sound system/podium.
Inductees – Formed in advance at an appropriate location. Each should have a copy (or portion) of the NCO Creed.

(2-minutes before ceremony begins)

NARRATOR: Ladies and Gentlemen, the ceremony will begin in two minutes.

(At the predetermined time)

NARRATOR: Please rise for the official party.

(Official party arrives, marches to designated location. Stops, then takes appropriate positions)

NARRATOR: Welcome to C Company, 422nd Signal Bn, NCO Induction Ceremony where we recognize the passing of the inductees into the ranks of the time-honored United States Army Noncommissioned Officer Corps. Today's official party consists of CSM *Name* and 1SG *Name*.

The tradition of commemorating the passing of a Soldier to a noncommissioned officer can be traced to the Army of Fredrick the Great. Before one could be recognized in the full status of a NCO, he was required to stand four watches, one every four days. At the first watch the private Soldiers appeared and claimed a gift of bread and brandy. The company NCOs came to the second watch for beer and tobacco, and the First Sergeant reserved his visit for the third watch, when he was presented with a glass of wine and a piece of tobacco on a tin plate¹. Today, we commemorate this rite of passage as a celebration of the newly promoted joining the ranks of a professional noncommissioned officer corps, and emphasize and build on the pride we all share as members of such an elite corps. We also serve to honor the memory of those men and women of the NCO Corps who have served with pride and distinction. Today, we remember one of our own, one whose courage should not go unremembered:

NARRATOR: CHARLTON, CORNELIUS H.

Rank and organization: Sergeant, U.S. Army, Company C, 24th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. Place and date: Near Chipo-ri, Korea, 2 June 1951. Entered service at: Bronx, N.Y. Born: 24 July 1929, East Gulf, W. Va. G.O. No.: 30, 19 March 1952.

Citation: Sgt. Charlton, a member of Company C, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action against the enemy. His platoon was attacking heavily defended hostile positions on commanding ground when the leader was wounded and evacuated. Sgt. Charlton assumed command, rallied the men, and spearheaded the assault against the hill. Personally eliminating 2 hostile positions and killing 6 of the enemy with his rifle fire and grenades, he continued up the

¹*The Army of Fredrick the Great*, pg 31

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slope until the unit suffered heavy casualties and became pinned down. Regrouping the men he led them forward only to be again hurled back by a shower of grenades. Despite a severe chest wound, Sgt. Charlton refused medical attention and led a third daring charge which carried to the crest of the ridge. Observing that the remaining emplacement which had retarded the advance was situated on the reverse slope, he charged it alone, was again hit by a grenade but raked the position with a devastating fire which eliminated it and routed the defenders. The wounds received during his daring exploits resulted in his death but his indomitable courage, superb leadership, and gallant self-sacrifice reflect the highest credit upon himself the infantry, and the military service.

NARRATOR: Since the earliest days of our Army, the noncommissioned officer has been recognized as one who instills discipline and order within a unit. In his instructions for the "Sergeants and Corporals," Baron Freidrich von Steuben, the U.S. Army's first "Drill-Master" listed in his *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, the **Blue Book** that: "Each Sergeant and Corporal will be answerable for the squad committed to his care. He must pay particular attention to their conduct in every respect and that they keep themselves and their arms always clean. In dealing with recruits, they must exercise all their patience and while on the march, the noncommissioned officers must preserve order and regularity."

Today, we continue that tradition. (Name), our (guest speaker)(CSM) now will share his/her instructions with our newest Sergeants and Corporals.

NARRATOR: Attention to orders! The Secretary of the Army has reposed special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity and professional excellence of these Soldiers.

Specialist Name

Specialist Name

CPL Name

[At this point, each Soldier's name is called individually. Soldier and sponsor/guest move forward and meet CSM Name at center stage. Soldier turns to face audience, sponsor/guest hands one stripe to CSM Name, and they promote the Soldier together. CSM Name shakes Soldier's hand, Soldier executes a column half-right from the halt and is escorted from the stage to a point directly in front of the stage. Soldier remains there and sponsor/guest moves to their seat. This continues until all Soldiers have been promoted and are in front of the stage.]

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NARRATOR: In view of these qualities and their demonstrated leadership potential and dedicated service to the U.S. Army, they are, therefore, promoted to Sergeant. By Order of the Secretary of the Army: (the promotion authority will be as reads on the promotion order).

NARRATOR: Ladies and Gentlemen, please be seated

SPEAKER: (motivational speech)

NARRATOR: The Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer has served as a guiding document for noncommissioned officers since its inception in 1973, though its concepts have been always been a part of our Corps. Each major paragraph begins with three letters: N, C, and O. These words have inspired noncommissioned officers, and have served as a compass to guide us down the right paths that we encounter. Today, our newest noncommissioned officers will affirm their commitment to the professionalism of our corps, and become a part of the "Backbone" of the Army.

(Inductees rise)

Divide the NCO Creed into equal parts, based on the number of inductees. Have each inductee read their portion, in sequence.

CSM/HOST: Moves to each inductee, issues them the All-weather binder, and then shakes their hand and congratulates them.

ALL PRESENT: Applause.

NARRATOR: As we conclude today's ceremony we ask you to greet our newest inductees, and join us in welcoming them to the Corps. Please rise for the exit of the official party.

OFFICIAL PARTY: Departs. Ceremony ends. Informal portion begins (socializing).