



Left to right: Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III, Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps Micheal P. Barrett, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Mike D. Stevens, Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Cody and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Michael P. Leavitt prepare for a wreath laying ceremony in honor of Armed Forces Day on May 18, 2013, at Arlington National Cemetery, Va. A new book highlights the contributions of NCOs and petty officers as the “backbone of the armed forces.”

Contributors Credit Teamwork for New Multi-Service NCO, Petty Officer Guide

By Tech. Sgt. David Whitecar

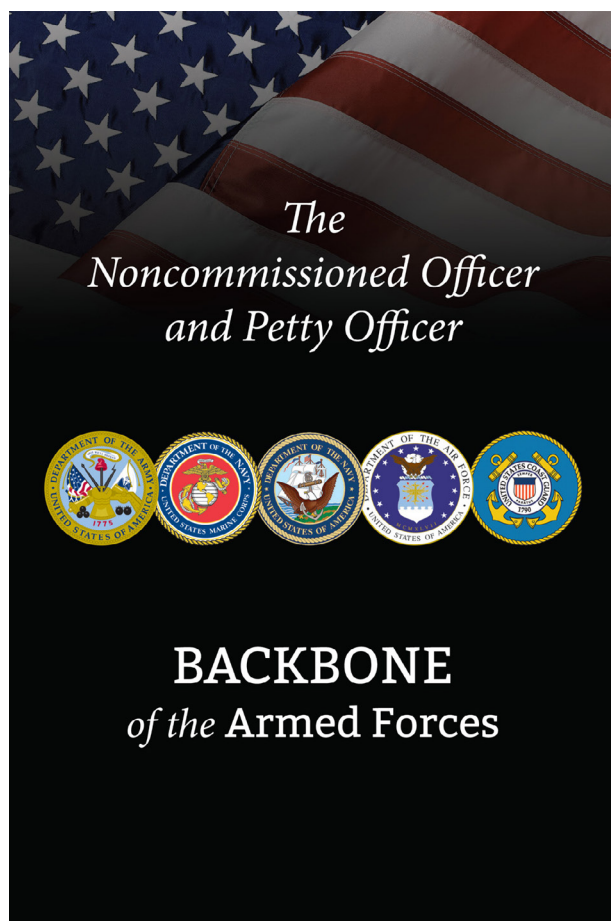
17th Training Wing Public Affairs &

Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.

American Forces Press Service

The National Defense University Press today released the inaugural edition of *The Noncommissioned Officer and Petty Officer: Backbone of the Armed Forces*.

Written by a team of active, reserve and retired senior enlisted officers from all service branches, this book is a multi-service reference for NCOs and POs that defines how they fit into their organization, centers them in the



The book's cover.

Profession of Arms, exposes their international engagement and explains their dual roles of complementing the officer and enabling the force.

Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia, senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, hosted the inaugural release in the Pentagon Auditorium, where the first book was autographed and then delivered to the Library of Congress, where it will reside for historical preservation.

The keynote speaker at the event was Gen. Martin Dempsey, the 18th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who wrote in his foreword to the book, "We know the noncommissioned officers and petty officers to have exceptional competence, professional character and soldierly grit — they are exemplars of our Profession of Arms."

This forward compliments the book itself which strives to prepare young men and women to become NCOs and POs, re-inspires serving enlisted leaders and simulates reflection by those who have retired from or left active service.

Electronic copies of the handbook can be found after on the NDU Press site at www.ndu.edu/press/nco.html, and at the Joint Electronic Library at www.dtic.mil/doctrine/nco.htm.

'It's going to be a team effort'

The collaborative effort to create the first book of its kind may not have been possible without the cooperative efforts of a unique team of senior enlisted service members, two of the book's leading contributors said.

Dr. Albert C. Pierce, professor of ethics and national security at the National Defense University at Ft. McNair, D.C., and retired Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Curtis L. Brownhill both served as co-leads to guide and coordinate the writing team for the book.

"I knew Sgt. Maj. Battaglia when he was at Joint Forces Command," Pierce said. "He and I had worked on a couple of projects together. He knew that I had been part of the team that produced the book *The Armed Forces Officer*, which was published by NDU Press in 2007."

Pierce said Battaglia liked the book and asked him if there was such a book written for noncommissioned officers. "I said not that I'm aware of," Pierce said. "He [asked], 'Do you think there should be such a book?' And I said, 'Absolutely. What do you think?' And he said, 'You bet.'"

Once Battaglia became the chairman's senior advisor, Pierce said, he was able to bring his idea to fruition.

From the beginning, the book was to be of, by and for NCOs and petty officers, "and that's what it is," he said, noting he's the only person involved who has not been a noncommissioned officer or a petty officer.

Pierce said the group received advice from Battaglia that proved essential to its successful completion.

"I think at our very first meeting, Sgt. Maj. Battaglia said, 'Check your egos at the front door, because it's going to be a team effort,'" Pierce recalled.

In addition to the co-leads and group of writers from each service component, including the reserves and National Guard, Battaglia reached out to service senior enlisted advisors for suggestions.

"The team, overwhelmingly, was cooperative, collegial, rolled with the punches, accepted comments, criticism and suggestions," Pierce said. "Everybody was focused on the mission."

Writing a book for all the armed forces

Brownhill, who served as senior enlisted advisor for U.S. Central Command from 2004 to 2007 and retired after 34 years of military service, explained the book's writing process.

"What it really kind of took was a team of writers representing each of the services — all senior NCOs and senior petty officers — with a broad spectrum of experiences, both conventional and Special Forces," he said. "There's just a whole broad range of talent that was brought to that grouping. The book has gone through countless reviews and revisions by the team and by the co-leads."

Brownhill described the group contributors as "unique" and explained why the process went so smoothly.

“Sometimes, you just get lucky,” he said. “We were very fortunate to have a very incredible team that was very open-minded [and] very non-egotistical in a sense that there’s always a pride of ownership, and nobody hung onto that. That’s probably the beauty of the book.”

Another unique aspect of the book, Brownhill said, is it’s the first time a book for NCOs and petty officers has been written from a U.S. armed forces perspective.

“I think it’s the first time it was ever approached, through Sgt. Maj. Battaglia’s vision, to try to do this from an armed services perspective and not a service-centric perspective,” he said. “We didn’t use this book as a how-to or an instruction manual to teach you to be a good NCO.”

This book, he said, was written in such a way that it will appeal to multiple audiences. The team wanted to holistically characterize and define what it is to be a noncommissioned officer and a petty officer in the United States armed forces, he added.

“We defined them organizationally in the armed forces — how they relate to officers, how they relate to the force, how they relate to mission accomplishment,” Brownhill said. “Then we started to characterize them in terms of their consistently applied traits, qualities, competencies and those kinds of things.”

The book should appeal to any past, present, or future NCO or petty officer, Brownhill said, adding

that international militaries might also gain from this book. And parents of aspiring service members might also be interested in it, he said.

“If ... you have a grown child that’s thinking about joining the military,” he said, “I think Mom and Dad would be very interested in who’s going to be leading, caring, developing and otherwise taking care of their son or daughter.”

Both co-leads reflected on their participation in the project.

“We didn’t make any of this up,” Pierce noted. “All we did was look back at [NCOs and petty officers], who they are and describe them and characterize them. Had there not been a couple of centuries of stellar service by noncommissioned officers and petty officers, we wouldn’t have been able to write this book.”

Brownhill said the team accomplished a tough task.

“Defining and characterizing a grouping of servants to the nation — that’s a complex notion,” he said. “It’s easy to get lost in the loftiness of that notion, but to the team’s credit, they got it [right].” ■

Download the book

Electronic copies are available in .PDF, .MOBI and .EPUB format and can be found on the NDU Press site at www.ndu.edu/press/nco.html, and at the Joint Electronic Library at www.dtic.mil/doctrine/nco.htm.



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