



'Experto Crede'

Designing the New Army Instructor Badge

Master Sgt. Elsi A. Inoa-Santos

Institute for NCO Professional Development

Transforming NCOs' professional development will come about by improving strategies for delivering educational content and leveraging the Army Learning Model. This transformation is a vigorous, evolutionary strategy that drives the Army to re-examine itself on a frequent basis. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's Institute for NCO Professional Development intends to use this strategy to evolve the current NCO Education System into the NCO Professional Development System of the future.

NCOs' feedback was captured in the NCO 2020 Survey Analysis, published in March, which indicated the importance of motivating our NCOs through professional development. INCOPD's staff and other researchers believe that professional development should include learning opportunities that provide instructors with new skills, competencies and a "can-do" attitude to improve the NCOES. Master Sgt. Dan Mueller exemplifies this

vision of NCO development through his design concept for the new Army Instructor Badge.

From 2012 to early 2013, Gary Rauchfuss, then the chief of INCOPD's Learning Innovations & Initiatives Division; Command Sgt. Maj. Wesley Weygandt, then the deputy commandant of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy; and Master Sgt. Lawrence S. Payne, then the program manager of INCOPD's Instructor Development and Recognition Program, worked with Mueller to design the Army Instructor Badge. Mueller, who knew it would be important for instructors to wear a badge that they would feel proud to wear, wanted to create a design that would capture the essence of what it meant to be a professional mentor, trainer and educator.

Mueller's design concept for the instructor badge ties together military history and his background in the Army, where standards, consistency and professional development are crucial for Soldiers to progress and be-

come experts in their field. Mueller said he was “inspired by heraldic symbols tied to education, like the owl’s quill, the torch of knowledge and the laurel wreath.” He worked closely with INCOPD to create a well-thought-out design “that would in some way encompass the countless hours, dedication and commitment of cadre to the Army’s NCOES.” His creativity led to the design of the three badges for the Basic, Senior and Master levels.

The three badges symbolize knowledge, leadership and commitment, Mueller said. A ring of 13 stars represents the original 13 colonies and the critical role that instructors play in building the new Army. The torch signifies a zeal for training and education and a commitment to lifelong learning. The concentric rings radiating from the flame of the torch symbolize the instructor’s role in the three training domains: institutional, operational and self-development. All three Army cohorts are represented through the NCO’s halberd, the officer’s

sword and the owl’s quill, which represents civilian instructors. The open book symbolizes wisdom attained through training and education, and “Experto Crede,” means “Believe the one who has had experience in the matter” in Latin. The uppermost star in the senior and master level badges is a compass rose, which is also referred to as a leadership star. The Master level badge has a laurel wreath edge, which represents accomplishment.

Instructors are inherently motivated and are most impacted by the act of accomplishment and the acknowledgment of their fellow NCOs and leaders through encouragement and recognition. Through the work of Master Sgt. Mueller, Master Sgt. Payne, Command Sgt. Maj. Weygandt and Dr. Rauchfuss, INCOPD is able to continue to support the Army’s NCO academy instructors as they build their professional competencies, which will in turn support implementation of the Army Learning Model as a part of NCO professional development. ■

Master Sgt. Elsi A. Inoa-Santos is a senior military research analyst and Instructor Development and Recognition Program manager at the Institute for Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Eustis, Va.



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