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Year of the NCO 2020 to be rolled out

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Soldiers are recognized for their contributions to the Army 2020 Physical Demands Study in March 2014 in the Marne Garden at Fort Stewart, Georgia. The Soldiers were part of a study that the Company D "Dragons," 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division spearheaded for the 2nd ABCT, in conjunction with U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, and the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Richard Wrigley / 2nd ABCT, 3rd ID, Public Affairs NCO)

The last time the Army celebrated the Year of the NCO was 2009, praising the accomplishments and contributions of the revered noncommissioned officer. Then came the NCO 2020 Strategy, ushering in changes to the leadership development of all NCOs. With the logical conclusion point of NCO 2020 in view, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel A. Dailey and

Command Sgt. Maj. David Davenport, command sergeant major of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, agreed that it's time for the Year of the NCO 2020.¹

“It just makes sense to take a moment, take stock of what the NCO does, what the NCO has done and where the NCO is going tomorrow,” said Sgt. Maj. Jose Velazquez, sergeant major of U.S. Army Public Affairs.²

Much has occurred in Army leadership since the Noncommissioned Officer 2020 Strategy was unveiled in December 2015, requiring that all leaders understand their responsibility for developing NCOs. Over the years, Soldiers have learned about the strategy's three major efforts: development, talent management and stewardship of the profession.³

These efforts place emphasis on providing NCOs with the training, education, and experiences needed to conduct the complex missions they will face in the future. Leaders are also urged to emphasize career-long learning as essential to Soldier development and force readiness.⁴

In February, the Army approved Fragmentary Order 4 to the Army Execution Order 236-15, which updated the third effort of the NCO 2020 Strategy.⁵ During the fourth State of NCO Development Town Hall in March at Fort Eustis, Virginia, subject matter experts discussed those updates, which included the Year of the NCO 2020.⁶

“As everyone knows, 2009 was the last one we did and what we found was that it was incredibly important and powerful to stop for a moment for a year and recognize the accomplishments and how far NCOs have come, to recognize their professionalism,” Velazquez said. “With the NCO 2020 initiative and the impacts that NCO 2020 has had and continues to have, we felt that it was an appropriate time to once again stop, take stock of everything that we have done, in particular through the NCO 2020 program, how far we've come even since 2009, and then celebrate and appreciate the accomplishments of the NCO.”

The plan for Year of the NCO 2020 will soon take shape, with help from the force.⁷

“The idea is to highlight numerous NCO 2020 events and initiatives as they are coming to fruition over the next coming years and capture that across the spectrum of the year 2020,” Velazquez said. “It's going to be based on the things that are being accomplished: Soldiers in new courses, Soldiers competing to be more relevant and ready, and of course NCOs leading the way.

“My hope is that the Army embraces the Year of the NCO from a grass-roots kind of level, to where every platoon sergeant and every squad leader in the Army has a regular desire to stop and recognize the NCOs who are leading their units,” he said. “That way, we can highlight it in far more detail and far better from the Army level.”

References

- 1) Command Sgt. Maj. David Davenport in discussion with the author, March 2017.
- 2) Sgt. Maj. Jose Velazquez in discussion with the author, May 2017.
- 3) “NCO 2020 Strategy, NCOs operating in a complex world.” *United States Army Training and Doctrine Command*. Dec. 4, 2015.
<http://www.tradoc.army.mil/FrontPageContent/Docs/NCO2020.pdf>
- 4) Ibid.
- 5) “Stand To! Noncommissioned Officer 2020 Strategy.” TRADOC News Center. March 24, 2017. <http://tradocnews.org/stand-to-noncommissioned-officer-2020-strategy-2/>
- 6) Velazquez, Jose, May 2017.
- 7) Ibid.

