



America's Defenders

NCOs Make A Difference For Troops And Their Families

(NAPSA)—As some troops begin returning from Iraq and others remain abroad to preserve freedom, the safety and welfare of America's soldiers is a central focus in the minds of the American public. Enter Sergeant Major of the Army Jack L. Tilley—the highest-ranking non-commissioned officer (NCO) in the U.S. Army and the voice of more than one million soldiers.

NCOs are often referred to as “the backbone of the Army;” they are a corps of sergeants who develop and lead the enlisted soldiers below them and provide perspective and support to the commissioned officers above them. As Sergeant Major of the Army, Tilley's charge is to represent and further the interests of every Army soldier.

“It's important to communicate and deal with soldiers on their ground,” said Tilley. “When I'm in the field talking to groups of 20, 50 or even 200 soldiers, I pick up on three or four issues or concerns that they have.”

Known for his face-to-face interactions with soldiers and unique abilities in building morale, Tilley has traveled over 460,000 miles throughout the world to visit more than 155,000 soldiers during his tenure as Sergeant Major of the Army. In addition to domestic trips, Tilley spends much of his time overseas, visiting U.S. Army soldiers in the Middle East, Central Asia, the Balkans and Korea, where enlisted troops confront the challenges of being away from family and constantly face the prospect



A soldier's soldier, Sergeant Major of the Army Jack L. Tilley is the voice of millions of enlisted men and women.

of imminent conflict.

Tilley is a soldier's soldier who connects with troops on their terms and makes a real difference in their jobs. Whether he is challenging soldiers half his age to one-armed push-up contests, or conveying their concerns to Congress and Army leadership, Tilley goes above and beyond his call of duty and continually demonstrates his dedication to soldiers and the country.

Tilley, along with the vast network of Army NCOs, serve a crucial role—addressing enlisted soldier issues, particularly in areas affecting their training and quality of life. NCOs provide vital support to soldiers, are a critical bridge to their families and help make the U.S. Army the strongest fighting force in the world.

“If you get right down to it, our job is pretty easy: close in and destroy the enemy,” said Tilley. “And that's what we have to do. So we train and know how to train,

but we also know how to deal with the human aspect of soldiers and their family members. Having served 34 years in the Army, I understand the importance of my role as Sergeant Major of the Army and regularly address the Army on soldiers' issues.”

A graduate of the Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, Tilley and other NCO leaders throughout the force focus on leadership development and have learned how to open up channels of communication between soldiers and the officer ranks. The Academy excels at fine tuning NCO leaders, making them stronger NCOs when managing troops under any situation.

“When working with other NCOs, I tell them to be honest, fair and treat soldiers with dignity and respect,” said Tilley. “The key to being a good sergeant is to support the people above you and serve the people below you, that's the difference.”

Tilley and the Army's NCOs have a special and more urgent responsibility to train, develop and care for soldiers.

“As far as my responsibilities, and every NCO's responsibilities, that has not changed,” said Tilley. “We could never be successful in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, or wherever we go in the world, if it wasn't for the things we do on a daily basis in the U.S. Army.”

More information about SMA Tilley can be found at www.army.mil/leaders/sma. For information about the U.S. Army, visit www.GoArmy.com.