

NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS GUIDE

***South Carolina
State Guard***

MARCH 2020





This booklet is not designed to provide comprehensive information. It is rather a guide to things a South Carolina State Guard Noncommissioned Officer needs to know, with references on where to find it. The information found herein is current as of March 2020.

CSM Ken Cabe

COVER: Statue of Baron Frederick von Steuben, Father of the US Army NCO Corps, Lafayette Park, Washington, DC. Erected 1910.

THE NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER

The rank system of the SC State Guard is generally modeled on that of the US Army. Commissioned Officers are the executives, the managers, and the planners. Warrant Officers are highly skilled technical specialists. Enlisted persons are the blue-collar workers who collectively get the job done.

Within the enlisted ranks, there is a subset of supervisors. These are the Noncommissioned Officers, the NCOs.

The role of the US Army NCO was first described by Baron Fredrich von Steuben in his book, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States* in 1779. His vision was that the NCO be the direct leader, trainer, and primary example for the troops of the line.

Von Steuben's goal was to develop a professional NCO corps. He rejected the idea of rewarding good NCOs by commissioning them as officers, and sought ways to make NCO service attractive. Among these were decorations for years of service (forerunners of our hash marks), the Badge of Merit for exemplary service, and authority to carry a sword as a badge of rank.

While we no longer carry swords, von Steuben's vision for a corps of non-commissioned officers remains into the twenty-first century. We are still the trainers, we are still the first-line leaders, we are still the daily examples to all enlisted soldiers.

The role of a State Guard NCO is much the same as that of a US Army NCO, but our mission is different. We are not warfighters; our duties center around humanitarian service to the citizens of South Carolina. Regardless, we should still subscribe to the standards of our active Army counterparts as expressed in the NCO Creed.

The Noncommissioned Officers Creed

No one is more professional than I. I am a noncommissioned officer, a leader of Soldiers. As a noncommissioned officer, I realize that I am a member of a time honored corps, which is known as "The Backbone of the Army." I am proud of the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers, and will at all times conduct myself so as to bring credit upon the Corps, the military service, and my country; regardless of the situation in which I find myself. I will not use my grade or position to attain pleasure, profit, or personal safety.

Competence is my watch-word. My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind – accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my Soldiers. I will strive to remain technically and tactically proficient. I am aware of my role as a noncommissioned officer, I will fulfill my responsibilities inherent in that role. All Soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership. I know my Soldiers, and I will always place their needs above my own. I will communicate consistently with my Soldiers, and never leave them uninformed. I will be fair and impartial when recommending both rewards and punishment.

Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine. I will earn their respect and confidence as well as that of my Soldiers. I will be loyal to those with whom I serve; seniors, peers, and subordinates alike. I will exercise initiative by taking appropriate action in the absence of orders. I will not compromise my integrity, nor my moral courage. I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget that we are professionals, noncommissioned officers, leaders!

Paragraph One of the NCO Creed reflects pride in the history and heritage of the NCO corps. The last sentence of the paragraph speaks to the selfless service and integrity expected of all NCOs. Paragraph Two speaks to the reason for an NCO corps: leadership. The second sentence says everything you need to know about this. And Paragraph Three recognizes the NCO's commitment to all fellow soldiers.

While the US Army NCO Creed looks at the values that should be held by all non-commissioned officers, there is another set of values that pertains specifically to soldiers in the SC State Guard. It recognizes our history, our mission, and our commitment.

The South Carolina State Guard Creed

I am a volunteer, trained and ready. I serve the State of South Carolina in time of need.

I walk in the footsteps of Francis Marion, Andrew Pickens, Thomas Sumter, and Sergeant Jasper. I pledge myself to their tradition of selfless service.

I am a soldier of the State. I find the lost, I rescue those in peril, I tend the injured, I provide counsel, I bring order to chaos. I respond at first call, and I remain on station until the crisis is resolved.

I do not accept pay or favors in exchange for my service; I serve because it is my choice, my pleasure, and my sacred duty.

I am proud to wear the uniform of the State of South Carolina.

I am ready. Send me!

The SC State Guard Creed, like most military writings, recognizes the contributions of its notable officers: Marion, Pickens, and Sumter. But our creed goes further, naming a heroic NCO, Sergeant William Jasper

Sergeant Jasper was illiterate, but on June 28, 1776, he wrote the book on courage at Ft. Moultrie. If you are a SC State Guard NCO, read up on Sergeant Jasper. He is an example to us all.

The Oath of Enlistment

I, (your name) do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the State of South Carolina against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the Governor of the State of South Carolina and the orders of the officers appointed over me; that I make this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the Office of (rank) in the State Guard of the State of South Carolina upon which I am about to enter; so help me God.

Every enlisted person in the State Guard takes this solemn oath sealing their commitment to serve the state of South Carolina. The oath is similar to the oath taken by active Army soldiers, and actually includes some of the same language used in the Presidential Oath of Office.

Every State Guard soldier cannot participate in every drill, every deployment, every day. We all have other responsibilities, but once a soldier takes this oath, service becomes a duty. NCOs should impress this upon their soldiers. This is not a game we are playing; this is serious business. Take it seriously.

QUALIFICATIONS OF AN NCO

All enlisted members of the SC State Guard must have at least a high school diploma or a GED to advance in rank. Most enlisted persons will enter State Guard service as a Private, Private First Class, or perhaps Corporal, depending on civilian experience and training. Those with prior military service may enter at their last federal rank or even one rank higher. College graduates may also serve in the enlisted ranks.

Promotion through the NCO ranks requires additional military education at every level. The education requirements for each NCO grade are explained in *SCSG Regulation 600-1, Chapter 7-2*. This regulation is posted on the SC State Guard website under Personnel on the Documents page.

In addition to education, NCOs must demonstrate leadership and dedication to service. Promotion to the rank of Sergeant through Master Sergeant involves appearance before an NCO Promotion Board. This board, made up of senior NCOs, will examine the candidate and make a recommendation regarding his fitness for promotion.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

The SC State Guard does not have a physical fitness test, but we do have a height/weight standard, adjusted for age. Because NCOs are the example for their troops, it is imperative that they meet or exceed every standard. If you are not willing to meet the height/weight standard, maybe you should re-examine your commitment to service in the SC State Guard.

The height/weight chart is on the State Guard website on the Documents page of the Personnel tab.

DUTIES OF THE NCO

We have already alluded to some of the duties of an NCO, and there are many. Most will fall into the main categories of training, direct leadership, conduct and discipline, bearing and appearance, and administration. We will look at these individually.

Training

Based on his experience in the Prussian Army, Baron von Steuben established the NCO as the principal trainer for the Continental Army. His idea was to take good enlisted leaders and train them to be trainers. Today, *Army Training Circular 7-22.7 (Army Noncommissioned Officers Guide)* says training is the NCO's principal duty.

Training, by definition, is a transfer of skills from one person to another. NCOs, therefore, must first master these skills themselves and then teach them to their soldiers. If you are going to teach, you must be the expert.

One skill you need is how to conduct effective training. Take a military instruction course if it is available; if not, study the Methods of Instruction booklet on the SC State Guard website. Open the menu item for Personnel, click Documents Library, then Other Publications. What you're looking for is titled *MOI Student Handbook*. This booklet will help you learn to organize information into a military lesson outline and will give you tips on presenting the lesson.

What skills must the NCO be able to teach? It depends on your unit's mission, so look first at your unit's Mission Essential Task List (METL). These are the tasks your troops are expected to perform, and each of these tasks can be broken down into specific skills your soldiers must master.

There is one set of skills that every NCO should be able to teach. These are found in *Army Training Circular 3-21.5 (Drill and Ceremonies)*. If you are a new NCO, concentrate on Chapters 1-4 and Chapter 7. Since we are an unarmed force, disregard anything having to do with weapons.

When a deployment comes, your unit's success depends on the quality of its training. The quality of its training depends on you.

Direct Leadership

Leadership, according to the military definition, is "influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission." It is getting people to willingly do what you want them to. This is different from command, in that command is based entirely on rank or position.

The NCO is usually in the role of a direct leader. That means that the NCO interacts with the soldiers daily, knows them well, and deals with them face-to-face. Most of the time this is at the small unit level: squad, team, or platoon.

If you explain what is needed and why (provide purpose), give good instructions (provide direction) and encourage the troops (provide motivation), your troops will generally respond appropriately. Their performance is based on their belief in you, your truthfulness and your competence.

Sometimes a leader must resort to command. In an emergency, there may not be time to explain and motivate. If you have proven yourself to the troops, they will obey without questioning.

One of the standard precepts of military leadership is the admonition to lead by example. NCOs should be aware that the troops are always watching, taking cues, and modifying their behavior to fit the example you set. General Colin Powell said, "Soldiers watch what their leaders do. You can give them classes and lecture them forever, but it is your personal example they will follow."

There are lots of references to leadership, both in military terms and in civilian terms. NCOs would do well to read Chapter 4 of *Training Circular 7-22.7 (Noncommissioned Officer Guide)* and *Army Doctrine Publication 6-22 (Army Leadership and the Profession)*.

If you remember nothing else about leadership, always remember that a military leader has two responsibilities: accomplish the mission and attend to the welfare of the troops. While mission always has priority, there are few situations in the State Guard where the mission is in conflict with the welfare of the troops. Good leaders know that if they take care of the troops, the troops will take care of the mission.

Conduct and Discipline

As a direct leader, the NCO is the first to notice the troops' behavior, both good and bad. One soldier's bad behavior, if unchecked, can and will spread to others. It is the job of the NCO to take note and take action quickly.

Most poor behavior can be corrected simply by letting the offender know that the behavior is unacceptable. How you do this depends on the offense and the offender. Some minor corrections ("Get in step, Private Wilson!") can be made publicly, but most are better handled in private.

Some things that an NCO might have to deal with are soldiers who do shoddy work, soldiers who are late for assemblies, soldiers who do not show up for scheduled activities, and soldiers with poor grooming habits. The NCO should, through counselling, try to find the underlying cause for these behaviors and address it.

Since our personnel are all unpaid volunteers, there is little an NCO can do to punish improper behaviors. If the soldier does not respond positively to counselling, the best course of action might be to recommend the person for a discharge.

Some infractions are more serious. Insubordination, workplace harassment (see *Policy Memorandum 19-001* on Documents page of website), and criminal behavior must be dealt with on a formal level. The NCO should document violations carefully and immediately report them up the chain of command. The Staff Judge Advocate and/or the Inspector General is available to assist with these issues.

When faced with a disciplinary problem, the worst thing an NCO can do is ignore the situation. The problem won't fix itself. Sometimes it is tempting to transfer the problem person to another unit. Unless you really believe that the problem is an irreconcilable personality conflict, don't do it! You are just passing your problem on to someone else. Taking the easy way out is not the NCO way.

Uniform and Appearance

The appearance of a military unit is more than just aesthetics. It speaks to the unit's pride, esprit de corps, and confidence. This is not just parade ground excellence; a sharp-looking unit is almost always an effective unit.

Beginning with von Steuben's NCOs during the Revolution, sergeants have always been charged with maintaining the appearance of the force. The building block of the unit is the individual soldier, and this where you have to start.

A soldier's appearance is a function of training, discipline, and attention to detail. Wear of the uniform and military bearing are not intuitive; these things must be taught and reinforced again and again. That is your job.

Remember the old line about leading by example? Every minute you are with the troops, you are teaching, for they learn by watching you. Your uniform should be perfect, your grooming should be impeccable, and you should always behave with honor and dignity. You cannot expect your soldiers to excel if you do not set the example.

If you are going to be the paragon of military appearance, where do you learn what you need to know? There are two essential references: *Army Regulation 670-1* and *Department of the Army Pamphlet 670-1*. In addition, you must be very familiar with *SC State Guard Regulation 670-1*.

AR 670-1 is the underlying authority for everything having to do with uniform and appearance, but the part you need to read is Chapter Three. This chapter covers everything about grooming: haircuts, tattoos, make-up, jewelry, etc.

DA Pam 670-1 is the detailed guide to every uniform worn by the US Army. Since we primarily wear the Army Combat Uniform-Operational Camouflage Pattern, that is where you should concentrate your efforts. When you are comfortable with the rules governing the OCP, you should begin study on the dress uniform, the Army Service Uniform (ASU).

AR 670-1 and DA Pam 670-1 are both available on-line, but they change from time to time. The current one is always available on the Marlow White website. Marlow White is a huge supplier of military uniforms and they always have the most current version of the regulations posted on their site.

Finally, you need to know about SC State Guard Regulation 670-1. The State Guard has generally adopted the US Army guidelines, but there are several pages of variations due to the nature of our organization. These variations are posted on the Documents page of the SCSG website.

You should consider purchasing a hard copy of DA Pam 670-1. Due to the exhaustive amount of information, the book bounces you around with references to other entries in other parts of the document. When this happens, you can keep your finger on the page while you explore the additional material. In addition, you'll probably want to make marginal notes and insert markers for things you want to remember.

Sometimes you'll have a question, you'll do the research, and still have a question. Where do you turn? Ask one of your senior NCOs, perhaps the First Sergeant or the Battalion Sergeant Major. The last word on uniforms and appearance in our organization is the Sergeant Major of the State Guard. His word is the law.

A final word on uniforms. Make sure your people know when and where to wear their uniform. Wear the uniform to State Guard drills and other functions. Don't wear it to bars, political rallies, and commercial business events. The simple test is this: is the event scheduled or sanctioned by the SC State Guard? If not, check with your chain of command.

The sum total of a soldier's appearance and demeanor is called military bearing. It includes the uniform, grooming, posture, manner, and verbal expression. According to definition, military bearing is "a commanding presence, a professional image of authority." It is, quite simply, the essence of a soldier. As an NCO, your military bearing sets the example, and your soldiers will follow suit.

Making your unit look good involves four things: setting a personal example, training, on-the-spot corrections, and formal inspections. We've talked about setting the example, and we've explored sources of information upon which you can base formal training. Now let's take a look at on-the-spot corrections and in-ranks inspections.

On-the-spot corrections are when you notice a problem with a soldier and take the necessary steps to fix it, right then and there. Take the soldier aside, point out the problem, and help him to fix it immediately. This should also be practiced with peers and even with superiors, but must always be handled discreetly and respectfully.

In-ranks inspections allow you to make a formal, person-by-person evaluation of every soldier in your unit. The idea of inspections is credited to Peter the Great of Russia in the late 1600s as a way of checking the readiness of his troops. Detailed instructions for conducting in-ranks inspections are found in *Training Circular 3-21.5 (Drill and Ceremonies)*, Sections 7-16 through 7-18

The formality and direct scrutiny of in-ranks inspections make troops take them very seriously. Planned inspections are good for emphasizing attention to detail; unannounced inspections send a strong message that soldiers should always be ready. While they require a considerable time investment, in-ranks inspections give good returns in overall unit appearance.

Administration

NCOs like to think of themselves as action-oriented, hands-on field leaders. Depending on their rank and position, however, NCOs may also have to develop training schedules, prepare lesson plans for training, keep attendance rosters, maintain training records, and interpret five-paragraph orders for the troops. Be aware that administrative responsibility increases as an NCO advances in rank.

Remember that discussion about the welfare of the troops? Our troops don't get paid, so the only tangible rewards they get are promotions and awards. And that involves paperwork . . .

Promotions

There are usually two objective requirements for promotion: time in grade and military education. Time in grade is a prescribed length of time that a soldier must serve in his present grade before he is eligible for promotion. In addition to time in grade, the soldier must also have completed the military courses required for promotion.

Specific requirements for each grade of enlisted promotion are spelled out in *SCSG Regulation 600-1 (Chapter 7)*. This regulation is found on the SCSG website Documents page.

Most NCOs don't have direct access to a soldier's personnel file, so you should maintain some basic records on each of your people. Your record for each soldier should include: full name, State Guard ID number, date of enlistment, contact information, date of last promotion, and a list of training courses the person has completed. *Do not* maintain a record of sensitive personal information like Social Security number and Medical Form 801.

All personnel actions, including promotions, are managed on SCSG Form 4 (SCSG website Documents page). When you have a soldier ready for promotion, you should start the process. *Don't wait for an officer to do it. This is your job, your responsibility.* Fill out the Form 4, entering name of the soldier, his present rank, his ID number, and the recommended promotion. Don't sign it; just make a copy for your file and pass it up through the chain of command.

Awards and Decorations

Familiarize yourself with awards and decorations offered by the SC State Guard. The reference is *SC State Guard Regulation 672-1 (Chapter 2)*, found on the State Guard website Documents page.

Awards are ribbons given to recognize service and training. These usually recognize achievements during a 12-month period that begins and ends with the soldier's SCSG enlistment anniversary date. Soldiers who attend drill and participate in scheduled activities probably qualify for one or more of these awards every year. It is up to you to keep up with your soldiers' eligibility and submit the request on a timely basis.

Decorations recognize significant personal accomplishments. They are considered more noteworthy and are valued more highly than awards. The event which the decoration recognizes must be documented and verified.

Awards and decorations are requested on either SCSG Form 58 or SCSG Form 59, both found on the Documents page of the website. Specific information on the appropriate form is found in *SC State Guard Regulation 672-1 (Chapter 1-5)*.

NCO RANKS

There are seven distinct levels in noncommissioned officer service, including Sergeant, Staff Sergeant, Sergeant First Class, Master Sergeant, First Sergeant, Sergeant Major, and Command Sergeant Major. In addition, there is the position of Sergeant Major of the State Guard. Each of these has its own distinctive insignia, and each has its own realm of responsibility.

Noncommissioned officers are supervisors; they are not expected to serve as labor on work details unless there is a shortage of workers. In a civilian context, an NCO would be the foreman or crew leader.

Sergeant

The Sergeant wears three chevrons as rank insignia, and is generally responsible for directly supervising a team or a squad. This might include from five to ten lower-ranking soldiers. The Sergeant is Grade E-5.

Staff Sergeant

The Staff Sergeant is a more experienced NCO; his insignia is three chevrons and one rocker. He may supervise the same number of people as the Sergeant, but his squad or team may include Sergeants or even other Staff Sergeants. Due to his experience, the Staff Sergeant is expected to mentor less experienced NCOs. The Staff Sergeant is Grade E-6.

Sergeant First Class

The Sergeant First Class wears three chevrons and two rockers. He is an experienced soldier and may be in charge of up to 40 enlisted persons. The Sergeant First Class is usually seen as a mentor and example to both lower ranking NCOs and young officers. The Sergeant First Class is Grade E-7.

Master Sergeant

The Master Sergeant is a highly experienced soldier who may be a specialist in some particular area. He usually operates at a staff level, directing the operations of enlisted personnel on his team. His insignia is three chevrons and three rockers. The Master Sergeant is Grade E-8.

First Sergeant

The First Sergeant is the senior enlisted person in a company-level organization. He is responsible for the training, discipline, and well-being of all the enlisted personnel in the company. First Sergeant is not a rank, but an appointment. (First Sergeants are Grade E-8, the same as Master Sergeants.) First Sergeants may be addressed as “First Sergeant” or “Top”, but never as “Sarge.” The First Sergeant’s insignia is three chevrons and three rockers with a diamond in the center.

Sergeant Major and Command Sergeant Major

These are the top enlisted positions in the State Guard system; both are Grade E-9. The Sergeant Major is a staff-level specialist who manages a major area of responsibility at Battalion, Brigade, or Division level. His insignia is three chevrons and three rockers with a star in the center.

Command Sergeant Major is an appointment, not a rank. He is the senior enlisted person in the unit, serving as his commander's direct advisor on all things pertaining to enlisted personnel. The Command Sergeant Major's insignia is three chevrons, three rockers, and a star surrounded by a laurel wreath.

Sergeants Major are the only enlisted soldiers expected to work without supervision. Traditionally, they are expected to be experts regarding wear of the uniform and military courtesy. They are addressed only as "Sergeant Major."

Sergeant Major of the State Guard

This appointed position is the highest-ranking enlisted person in the State Guard. He is the trusted confidant and advisor to the State Guard Commander. His insignia is three chevrons, three rockers, with a palmetto tree surrounded by a laurel wreath. The Sergeant Major of the State Guard is the official custodian of the Regimental Colors and the final word on uniform and grooming questions.

THE NCO-OFFICER RELATIONSHIP

In the active Army, officers and enlisted people interact professionally based on their duties and their status in the organization. Officers are the supervisors and managers; enlisted personnel are the work force.

This same distinction governs social interaction as well. While Army officers and enlisted may attend some of the same official social functions, they maintain a professional distance when it comes to familiarity.

This relationship is more complicated among citizen-soldiers like the State Guard. We are civilians most of the time, and many of us have civilian relationships with other Guard members. Roles may be reversed when we put on the uniform; the supervisor may become the subordinate and vice versa.

The key here is duty status. When you are on State Guard duty, military rules apply. As an NCO, be ever conscious that you set the example when it comes to military courtesy. Salute all officers; use "Sir" and "Ma'am" appropriately when speaking with them. Address both officers and enlisted soldiers by their title, not by their name. Err on the side of formality and your professionalism is never in doubt. For more information see *Army Regulation 600-20 (Command Policy), Table 1.1*.

Be especially cautious at social events where both officers and enlisted personnel are present. Alcohol tends to break down inhibitions, and one of the first casualties is military courtesy. The NCO Creed says, "no one is more professional than I." Don't let a social event ruin your credibility.

State Guard officers are commissioned because the state has confidence in their education, experience, and character. As NCOs we are obligated to follow their orders, show them respect, and advise them when appropriate. We are also expected to be trainers and mentors for new officers, especially Second Lieutenants and First Lieutenants. In return, we expect our officers to be truthful, fair, and decisive leaders. For more information, refer to *TC 7-22.7 (Noncommissioned Officers Guide), Chapter 5*.

MILITARY COURTESY AND PROTOCOL

The NCO must be the authority for his troops on matters involving courtesy and protocol. In the last section, we discussed rendering salutes to officers, but now we look at a bigger picture.

Most State Guard soldiers know what is expected in a routine morning formation. If it gets more complicated than that, people start looking around to see what others are doing. The NCO's challenge is two-fold: teach them appropriately ahead of time, and serve as a correct example any time something unusual comes up.

Special areas of concern regard courtesies to the Flag of the United States and the National Anthem. These are covered in *FM 7-21.13, The Soldier's Guide, Chapter 4*. Also covered in this chapter are special rules observed on military bases during Reveille and Retreat ceremonies. Additional information pertaining to soldiers out of uniform is found in the *Flag Code: US Code of Laws, Title 4, Chapter 1*.

Finally, what do soldiers do during an observance when the Pledge of Allegiance is recited? It depends on where they are and whether or not they are in uniform. This information may be found in *Army Regulation 600-25, Section 1-12* and in *FM 7-21.13, Section 4-24*.

Know what to do and do it correctly. This is the mark of a leader; this is the job of the NCO.

RECRUITING

In the State Guard, every member is supposed to be a recruiter. This is an informal effort where members encourage their acquaintances to join the organization.

The day-to-day responsibility of recruiting, however, lies with the NCOs. For some NCOs this is their primary duty; for others it is simply one of many tasks associated with their regular State Guard job.

All NCOs should be familiar with the eligibility requirements for State Guard membership. These are found in *SCSG Regulation 600-1, Chapter 2 (for officers) and Chapter 6 (for enlisted personnel)*. Other information on recruiting is available on the State Guard website under the Join tab.

Recruiting is not just about numbers. While we always need members, we shouldn't take just any warm body. In every recruiting situation, the NCO should ask himself the question: will this person be an asset to the SC State Guard? If the answer is yes, try to recruit them. If the answer is no, move on.

Recruiter training is available to any State Guard NCO by contacting the Recruiting NCOIC.

CHALLENGES IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The digital revolution has changed the way we operate in almost every facet of our lives. Most of these changes are improvements: we can communicate faster, we have more information available, we can produce and transmit images instantly, and we can work more efficiently.

With all that efficiency, however, comes heightened risk and reduced privacy. Remind your troops not to post anything on social media that could compromise Operational Security (OPSEC). Caution them against using photos of persons in State Guard uniforms unless the photos have been approved by the Public Affairs Section. Tell them never to post anything that con-

done illegal, immoral, or unethical action. Require them to use their State Guard email account for State Guard business. And remind them that we must keep our State Guard activities and our political activities totally separate.

As much as is possible, monitor the on-line presence of your troops. You are probably already Friends on Facebook, connected on Linked-In, and following on Twitter. If you see something that is inappropriate, talk to your soldier about it in private.

DEPLOYMENT

The entire reason for the SC State Guard is to provide assistance during times of disaster. Our motto is “trained and ready.” We know NCOs are the trainers, but we also must make sure that our soldiers are ready.

The State Guard requires everyone to have a go-bag packed. Everything your soldiers need to know about the go-bag is in Chapter 11 of the *New Members Handbook*, found on State Guard website under Francis Marion Reception Company.

To make sure your soldiers are prepared, test them periodically. Activate your notification system the night before a scheduled assembly. Tell everyone to bring their go-bag to drill, then inspect the contents to ensure that it is complete. This is the only way you can know your troops are truly ready.

When we deploy, most of us are eager and excited about the opportunity to serve. We put on the uniform, throw the go-bag into the car and take off.

For families, however, it may be a different story. Those left behind may be apprehensive about the deployed member’s safety, concerned about how they will cope while their soldier is gone, or perhaps a little angry about being abandoned.

As an NCO, you are responsible for the well-being of your troops, and you also have a responsibility to their families. Make sure you have family contact information for every one of your soldiers so you can contact them in case of emergency. Make sure the families know that you’ll call if something comes up. And if the need arises, make sure you do it.

CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

The SC State Guard is one of the oldest military organizations in the United States, with roots in the Charleston Militia of 1670. Our regimental colors are decorated with 13 campaign streamers dating back to the American Revolution, and our members have served in every war since.

Our shoulder sleeve insignia bears the palmetto tree and the Latin phrase “Paratos Exercitus.” The palmetto commemorates the victory of the Second SC Regiment at the battle of Sullivan’s Island in 1776, and the Latin translates into “trained and ready.”

Our distinctive unit insignia bears symbols showing our origins in England, our service in the American Revolution, and our involvement in the American Civil War. The Latin phrase “Ultima Ratio” emphasizes that we are indeed the last resort in the protection of South Carolina.

While we no longer have a combat role, we step up when disaster strikes. Whether it be hurricanes, tornados, floods, winter storms, or disease, the State Guard stands ready to serve South Carolina.

NCOs are the conservators of our organization's history, passing the traditions on to new generations of soldiers. Read and study. Visit the SC Military Museum. And always remember that you, right now, are writing the next chapter in a 350-year history of selfless service.

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Additional Reading for NCOs

Guardians of the Republic, A History of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps of the US Army, by Ernest F. Fisher, Jr.; 1994, 2001

The Drillmaster of Valley Forge, by Paul Lockhart; 2008

NCO Guide, 10th Edition, by CSM Dan Elder, USA (Ret); 1948, 2008 (10th Edition)

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