

# Gunner's Seat: This is My Squad – Forging a New Path!

The challenges facing our Army are vast, complex and never come with simple solutions. From modernization efforts to ensure superiority over any adversary, deliberate focus on training and leader development to build lethal formations that can deploy, fight and win, to investing in the lives of all our people and their families – we are committed to forging a new path!

These efforts cannot fall solely on the shoulders of senior leaders. They will require unwavering commitment from every echelon of the Army's total force. For nearly 246 years, our Army has answered our nation's call not only to defend her liberties and to be a beacon of hope globally, but to steward the Army profession – understanding we represent the best of our nation. We must model the example for the people we serve. Yes, our challenges are difficult; however, there is something we all can do today to improve our Army – invest in your squad!

"This is My Squad (TIMS)" recognizes the importance of investing in our people above all else. Deeper connections, accountability and servant leadership are focus areas I feel are essential for TIMS to thrive.

GEN James McConville, the 40<sup>th</sup> Army Chief of Staff, said, "We win through our people, and people will drive success in our readiness, modernization and reform priorities. We must take care of our people." Taking care of our Soldiers starts with building trust with our Soldiers. How do we build trust with Soldiers within our squads? We must go beyond the nametapes sewn on their chests or what we see on a Soldier's record brief. Everyone has a unique story. Learning their story is truly rewarding and will open the door for deeper connections. Getting to know your squad is well-spent time that will have an enormous return on investment. These connections begin the building blocks of trust and team-building, and perhaps a deeper appreciation for our teammates.

Personal legacy is largely defined by the impact made in the lives of the people we lead. From the most stellar Soldier to the most challenged, they all deserve outstanding leaders, leaders committed to improve the lives of others both personally and professionally. Leadership matters, and the power of a connected leadership cannot be overstated.

As a steward of the profession, accountability is paramount to building a cohesive squad. What we accept big or small, directly or indirectly, positively or negatively, will have a lasting impact on the squad. Are we accounting for the training and resources our squads need to survive the crucible of ground conflict? Are we accounting not only for their physical, but mental, social and spiritual fitness? Are we accounting for their development, both personal and professional? Are we accounting for their families by ensuring they have the very best resources and support, deserving of the sacrifice they too make daily?

Perhaps the most important thing I have learned in 26 years of service is that Soldiering is an affair of the heart! We are trusted with the lives of America's sons and daughters. That trust extends to combat outpost, combat-training center, home station and everywhere in between, with no days off. Simply, servant leaders lead with empathy and compassion, create opportunity for all to flourish, treat people with dignity and respect, and ensure squad members have a deep sense of purpose and value. The Army we want tomorrow starts with investing in our squad today!

Forge the Thunderbolt!

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