

Informal NCO-ER Contract

LIEUTENANT MARK D. BUTLER
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The NCO Counseling Checklist/Record (DA Form 2166-7-1) is designed to be used with the NCO Evaluation Report (NCO-ER) (DA Form 2166-7) as a single source counseling support document. It is required for counseling all NCOs, corporal through sergeant first class, and provides a section in which to record the results. It contains

about all the information necessary to prepare for and conduct a thorough counseling session.

Our unit has found an additional support document useful during initial and quarterly counseling sessions. It is an established, written, informal "contract" between the rater and each NCO in the unit (a platoon, for example), that

measures performance and distinguishes between the Success and Excellence requirements for the NCO-ER. It is similar to the NCO-ER, is maintained in each NCO's counseling file, is an *open* document, and is *not binding by law*. It is simply an agreement between the rater and the rated NCO to support the ratings that are given. (See a major

SAMPLE NCO-ER CONTRACT

COUNSELING SUMMARY—Scout Platoon Sergeant

Rated NCO _____
Rater _____
Senior Rater _____
Reviewer _____

PART III. DUTY DESCRIPTION

Principal Duty Title: Scout Platoon Sergeant
Duty MOS: 11B4G

Daily Duties and Scope: Responsible for the training, welfare, discipline, and combat readiness of a 24-man light infantry scout platoon. Assists and advises the platoon leader in his duties. Supervises the platoon's administration, logistics, and \$218,480 in MTOE equipment. Advises the platoon leader on all matters pertaining to the NCOs and enlisted men of the platoon. Tactically responsible for taking charge of task organized elements, quartering parties, and security in all missions. Takes command of the scout platoon if the platoon leader is absent or wounded.

Areas of special emphasis: DRF 3 Prep, BDE FIX, PLT, FIX, Great Aloha Run, Prep/Upload for JRTC movement, post-COMET training, JRTC.

Appointed Duties: POV NCOIC.

PART IVa—VALUES/NCO RESPONSIBILITIES

- Put the Army, the mission, and subordinates before own personal interests.
- Meet challenges without compromising integrity.
- Maintain high standards of personal conduct on and off duty.
- Obey lawful orders and do what is right without orders.
- Choose the hard right over the easy wrong.
- Exhibit pride in unit and be a team player.
- Demonstrate respect for all soldiers regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or national origin.

PART IVb—COMPETENCE

To receive a rating of **Success**:

- Qualify on assigned weapon during rating period.
- Meet PMOS SQT/SDT standards for grade.
- Develop and manage a platoon SQT/SDT program that ensures

three squad leaders and their subordinates meet PMOS SQT/SDT for their grades.

- Maintain 100 percent accountability and combat readiness of all soldiers and equipment at all times.
- Enroll in and successfully complete any correspondence course.
- Acquire one 25th Infantry Division Master's qualification in any area during rating period.
- Prepare a sensitive items list before all deployments and local field training exercises and continually monitor the list during these events.
- Ensure that the platoon executes DRF-1 N-Hour sequence and barracks close-out plan to standard.

To receive a rating of **Excellence**:

- Qualify expert on assigned weapon.
- Develop and manage a platoon SQT/SDT program that produces a 90 percent average.
- Score 95 percent on SQT/SDT FY(91).
- Develop a program that results in all eligible soldiers being enrolled in successful continuing education.
- Acquire two 25th Infantry Division Master's qualifications in any areas during rating period.

PART IVc—PHYSICAL FITNESS AND MILITARY BEARING

To receive a rating of **Success**:

- Score 270 or better on the APFT.
- Develop and execute a demanding PT program that produces a platoon average of 260 or better and a pass rate of 100 percent.
- Set the example during daily PT.
- Serve as an example for all soldiers in the platoon to emulate.
- See that soldiers always have proper haircuts.
- Stress the importance of always being in the prescribed uniform in garrison and in the field, and always set the example.
- Have a platoon member selected as Soldier of the Month during rating period.
- Enforce 95 percent participation during all PT sessions and road marches with a goal of 100 percent.
- Set a high standard of personal appearance; never wearing or allowing soldiers to wear unserviceable uniforms or boots.

To receive a rating of **Excellence:**

- Score 290 or better on the APFT.
- Develop, manage, and personally supervise a platoon physical fitness program that produces a platoon average of 290 or better.
- Have a platoon member selected Soldier of the Month once during any quarter of the rating period.
- Have a platoon member selected NCO of the Month once during a quarter.

PART IVd—LEADERSHIP

To receive a rating of **Success:**

- Lead by example at all times—in garrison, in the field, on and off duty.
- Ensure that all soldiers receive quality performance-oriented counseling at least once a month. Spot check counseling files monthly.
- Counsel all NCOs to ensure that they receive quality NCO-ER counseling once a quarter in addition to their monthly performance counseling.
- Ensure that all NCOs in the platoon have established written contracts that outline job responsibilities and expectations.
- Recommend problem soldiers for rehabilitation, disciplinary action, bar to reenlistment, or separation, as appropriate.
- Ensure that qualified and deserving soldiers are promoted at the proper times.
- Emphasize safety in all activities, both on and off duty.
- Develop and maintain platoon discipline and cohesion through timely and appropriate disciplinary actions, high standards of barracks and personal appearance, and emphasis on military courtesy and conduct.
- Participate in unit team sports.

To receive a rating of **Excellence:**

- Develop, manage, and constantly monitor a platoon counseling program that measures performance and distinguishes between Success and Excellence requirements.
- Motivate one squad leader and all qualified and deserving soldiers to attend and graduate from RIP.
- Coach a unit sports team.

PART IVe—TRAINING

To receive a rating of **Success:**

- Ensure that 100 percent of assigned soldiers pass their SQT/SDT for the fiscal year.
- Ensure that 100 percent of assigned soldiers are qualified on their assigned weapons.
- Ensure that 100 percent of assigned soldiers are qualified on the NBC Battle Run, and Chamber.
- Encourage all eligible NCOs to earn one 25th Infantry Division Master's qualification during the rating period.
- Encourage all soldiers to attend appropriate service or leadership schools.
- Ensure that all soldiers are prepared and adequately trained to attend RIP and/or Ranger School.
- Ensure that squad leaders and assistant squad leaders are actively involved in training their squads.
- Negotiate brigade ETX with the fewest possible untrained areas.
- Train the scout platoon during the second quarter to survive and win at JRTC.
- Train squad leaders and scouts in garrison and in the field. Stress the following areas:
 - Proper movement techniques (with security always in mind).
 - Reconnaissance techniques.
 - Communications (constant, proper procedures 1 X Pad, SALUTE).
 - Call for fire.
 - Casualty evacuation.
- Attend all training meetings, provide input to the training schedule, advise the platoon leader of all required training, be creative, inventive, and enthusiastic in planning and conducting all training.

To receive a rating of **Excellence:**

- Upgrade all P/U assessments from brigade ETX to perfection.
- Encourage eligible NCOs to earn two division master's qualifications in any given area during rating period.
- See that platoon produces a 90 percent average or higher on SQT/SDT during the fiscal year.
- Ensure that all platoon weapons are 100 percent zeroed and constantly maintained.
- Ensure that all soldiers are zeroed on their assigned weapon and within 30 days of assignment to any new weapon.

PART IVf—RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

To receive a rating of **Success:**

- Pass all command inspections, including the QGI and COMET, with a rating of Satisfactory or better in responsible areas.
- Maintain 100 percent accountability of all assigned MTOE equipment.
- Maintain accurate, up-to-date alert roster for the platoon.
- Ensure that all soldiers are trained for combat.
- Ensure that deserving soldiers receive timely and appropriate recognition or awards for outstanding achievements and service.
- Supervise the operator preventive maintenance of platoon equipment (to -10 standards) so that no decrease in combat capability occurs.
- Keep the platoon leader informed of personnel and equipment status at all times.
- Ensure that all scouts maintain serviceable TA-50 items by being active in PEO and inspections—both sets.
- Meet social obligations and encourage NCOs to do the same.
- Maintain the barracks to QGI standard.
- Execute aggressive POV inspections to ensure that our soldiers operate SAFE transportation.

To receive a rating of **Excellence:**

- Receive score of 100 percent on QGI POV, home town news release, physical security, and crime prevention inspections.
- Ensure that the platoon has the best looking soldiers and barracks during the QGI.
- Ensure that all school quotas given to the platoon are filled with informed and prepared soldiers (zero LOMs, etc.).
- Ensure that no operator level penalties are incurred during inspections.

Statement: "I have read and have been counseled on this document. I am fully aware of what I must do to receive a Success or an Excellence rating on my NCO-ER. I am also aware that if I do not agree with the standards established by this document, I must discuss these points with my rater to solve and/or correct any discrepancies. Additionally, I may include items not mentioned in this document in the event I perform at a level worthy of Excellence. This may qualify me to receive an Excellence rating in the respective area of interest.

END OF STATEMENT

Date _____ XXXXX XXXXXXXX
Rater NCO

STATEMENT: "I am fully aware of my responsibilities as the Rater to the Rated NCO. I agree to be fair in my evaluation of the Rated NCO. I agree to counsel him quarterly and more often, if needed. I agree to listen to his comments and will weigh all facts carefully to make a decision concerning his evaluation."

END OF STATEMENT

Date _____ XXXX XXXXXXXX
Rater

portion of a sample contract for a scout platoon sergeant in the 25th Infantry Division.)

On the contract form, the rating chain is identified, the *draft* duty description is identified, and the standards for success and excellence regarding each area—competence, physical fitness, military bearing, leadership, training, responsibility, and accountability—are spelled out.

During an initial counseling session, the rater explains the rating chain and the duty description, discusses the meaning of the values and responsibilities section on the NCO-ER, and explains from the informal contract the standards for success and excellence that apply to the specific duty position. All the data that is documented during initial and quarterly counseling sessions is recorded on a DA Form 2166-7-1, with the informal contract attached to it.

During a quarterly counseling period, the rater updates the informal contract on the basis of what he has observed and the NCO's demonstrated behavior and results, discusses what was done well and what could have been done better, and records this data on the DA form.

The process is painless and lets the rated NCO know exactly what is expected of him and where he stands. Then, when it is time to prepare an NCO-ER for the rated NCO, the rater can refer back to the bullet comments made during the quarterly counseling sessions.

All NCOs deserve effective counseling and an honest and fair rating. If a rater uses the informal contract method, he will improve NCO duty performance, open lines of communication (without interpersonal gaps), and ensure that standards are set and met. He will not

be forced to second guess a rated NCO's accomplishments and cause an inaccurate or unfair NCO-ER to be sent forward with meaningless bullet comments.

A leader must read and study the regulatory guidance regarding counseling, no matter what method or technique he uses. If he does this, he and his NCOs can make the counseling and rating system work.

Lieutenant Mark D. Butler, when he wrote this article, was a scout platoon leader, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. He is now a rifle platoon leader in the 2d Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment. He is a 1988 ROTC graduate of Tarleton State University.

Command Sergeant Major Angus A. Gray, command sergeant major of the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, has completed 27 years of active service. He conceived and developed the informal "contract," which was then further developed and modified for use at platoon and squad level.

The Bradley

Let's Make It Even Better

LIEUTENANT LAWRENCE A. LEONE

With an ever-decreasing budget and limited research and development funds, it is time the Army started making conscientious efforts to acquire off-the-shelf technology and reapply existing technology that can help us field the most lethal fighting force possible.

In the M2A2 Bradley, the Army has one of the world's finest fighting vehicles. Its ability to engage and destroy both tanks and light armored vehicles has been well documented. Its speed, agility, and survivability are almost unmatched in the free world. With its add-on armor and anti-spall kevlar lining, its crew is doubly protected.

While the Bradley excels in passive protection, I believe it falls short in providing the crew with close-in security capabilities. The M231 firing port weapon is designed for the rear security of the vehicle while moving or at short halts. The gunner is supposed to fire strictly tracer ammunition so that he can more easily adjust his fire onto a target he is observing through the rear vision blocks. The M231's minimum cyclic rate of fire is 1,225 rounds per minute from a 30-round magazine. For a soldier trying to suppress an RPG team to his rear, that high cyclic rate of fire will cause him to run through

his loaded magazines in a short period of time, maybe too short to properly suppress an enemy threat.

A simple and cost-effective solution to this problem is available today on the civilian market — a 90-round drum magazine specifically designed for the M16 family of weapons and made of high-impact, clear plastic. It costs about \$45. If the Army bought these magazines in large numbers, the price would surely go down and would better allow the M231 to be used for its designed purpose. This 90-round drum magazine could also be used by both the M16A2 and the M249 in emergency conditions,