

Student Handout 3

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The Sergeant Major of the Army pages SH-3-2 thru SH-3-17
40th Anniversary

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THE SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE ARMY

40TH ANNIVERSARY



Office of the Sergeant Major of the Army

By CSM Dan Elder

First printed in the Fall 2001 NCO Journal

For today's Soldiers, the position of Sergeant Major of the Army is as natural as a squad leader. But just 40 short years ago it was not so. It was on the Fourth of July 1966 that the Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Harold K. Johnson approved the establishment of the position of Sergeant Major of the Army, and a week later on a reviewing stand near the Pentagon Mall Entrance the first enlisted man, Sergeant Major William O. Wooldridge, was sworn in as the first Sergeant Major of the Army.

The sergeant major was a part of the fledgling Continental Army of 1775 and served at the head of the noncommissioned officers of the regiment.

In Baron von Steuben's instructions (the Blue Book) he noted that the sergeant major should be well-acquainted with management, discipline of the regiment and of keeping rosters and forming details.

Though their numbers and placement would vary over the years, it took a cost-reduction measure by Congress in June 1920 to eliminate the grade of sergeant major when enlisted members were grouped into E-1 through E7.

Though the position of sergeant major would informally be given to a senior master sergeant (E-7), it would not be until the Military Pay Bill of 1958 that the grade of sergeant major was restored. In April 1959, the first NCOs were promoted into the newly created rank.

In 1964 and again in 1965, the U.S. Army Pacific Command representative at the annual Personnel Sergeants Major of the Army conference recommended establishing a Sergeant Major of the Army position and the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel initiated a study.

In 1957 the Marines had established a Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps position, and the enlisted assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Army, Sgt. Maj. George Loikow, had recommended to Johnson that the Army should follow suit.

Johnson believed that "If we were going to talk about the noncommissioned officers being the backbone of the Army, there ought to be established a position that this was in fact the case."

In May of 1966 Johnson notified the field commanders of the major commands that he intended to appoint a Sergeant Major of the Army and solicited their nominations asking that it be a personal recommendation and should not be considered a contest or retirement-type assignment.

Johnson listed seven duties and functions he expected the SMA to perform, including service as a personal advisor and assistant to the chief of staff on those matters pertaining to enlisted men.

Johnson whittled the 4,700 candidates down to

21 nominees and then selected the only one then serving in Vietnam, the sergeant major of the 1st Infantry Division, William O. Wooldridge.

A highly-decorated veteran of World War II and Vietnam, Wooldridge had served the majority of his career as an infantryman, with 16 years spent overseas. He was quickly dispatched to the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

Johnson signed General Orders #29 officially establishing the position on July 4, 1966, with a tenure to correspond with the Chief of Staff of the Army.

Wooldridge soon arrived from Vietnam, still in his fatigue uniform, and reported to Gen. Johnson, who announced he was to swear Wooldridge in as the first Sergeant Major of the Army on the 11th of July. Wooldridge was to lay low until the official announcement and was fitted for a proper dress uniform.

At 11 a.m. on Monday, the Secretary of the Army, Chief of Staff, and other distinguished guests participated along with the ceremonial troops from the 3rd U.S. Infantry (the Old Guard) in the official swearing-in ceremony of the first Sergeant Major of the Army. Gen. Johnson administered the oath to Wooldridge on the Pentagon Mall.

Since no special rank insignia had yet been developed, Mrs. Wooldridge and Johnson affixed to the sergeant major's uniform a specially designed collar insignia.

This new badge of the office, improvised by Gen. Johnson's special projects officer, Col. Jasper J. Wilson, and approved on July 4, 1966, was devised by attaching the shield (minus the eagle) of the Aide to the Chief of Staff to a standard enlisted brass disk.

The Sergeant Major of the Army was to wear a pair of these insignia in place of the branch and U.S. insignia normally worn by enlisted men. It would not be until the fall of 1978 that the Army would adopt a distinctive insignia of rank for the office.

Special Orders #142 appointed Wooldridge as the Sergeant Major of the Army with a date of rank of July 11, 1966, directing him to serve as principal enlisted assistant to the Chief of Staff, Army.

In his brief instructions, Johnson included on a 3 x 5 card that he presented to Wooldridge that he was to advise the Chief of Staff on "all matters pertaining primarily to enlisted personnel, including ... morale, welfare, training, clothing, insignia, equipment, pay and allowances, customs and courtesies of the service, enlistment and reenlistment, discipline and promotion policies."

Since that July day 40 years ago, 12 other of the most qualified senior noncommissioned officers have held the top position within our Army.

Editor's note: This article was edited for length to fit this page.

Intro

SH-3-3

William O. Wooldridge - 1st Sergeant Major of the Army

July 1966 - August 1968

William O. Wooldridge was born in Shawnee, Oklahoma, on August 12, 1922. SMA Wooldridge entered the Army on November 11, 1940 at Fort Worth, Texas. His early assignments were with the 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division and detached service with British forces in Iceland in 1941 and 1942. In 1942 he was assigned to the 1st Infantry Division in Europe and participated in the North Africa and Sicily Campaigns and the D-Day landings on June 6, 1944.

In October 1944 he was wounded during the battle for the fortress city of Aachen and was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action. He received his second silver star in the Battle of the Bulge Campaign in December 1944.

He has served in nearly every position of leadership from squad leader to first sergeant to command sergeant major. His military career saw him through three wars – World War II, Korea and Vietnam and several assignments with 1st Infantry Division.

Upon completion of his term as Sergeant Major of the Army in 1968, he returned and was assigned to Vietnam as Sergeant Major of the Military Assistance Command-Vietnam. Upon his return stateside he was assigned to the White Sands Missile Range in the Fall of 1969, and after 30 years and 10 months of service he retired at Fort MacArthur, Calif., on February 1, 1972.



In his own words...

With my selection as the Sergeant Major of the Army in 1966 I had the opportunity of recommending actions to the Chief of Staff of the Army which would make the noncommissioned officer corps a more respected, valued and visible part of the Army. I convened the first major Command Sergeants Major Conference whose members I credit for many of these recommendations. Among the accomplishments during my two year term were the concept proposals for the Sergeants Major Academy and the Noncommissioned Office Education System, recommending and seeing implemented a Standardized NCO Promotion Process and Centralized Assignments for E-8s and E-9s, the Noncommissioned Officer Candidate Course and the Command Sergeant Major Program. In addition, I made a personal recommendation that unit clerks at company, troop, battery, etc. levels be upgraded from E-4 to E-5

to reflect the importance of this position to the units.

One of my most memorable events was to stand with the Chief of Staff of the Army and be honored with a 19-gun salute during my swearing-in ceremony as Sergeant Major of the Army; it was the proudest moment of my military career.

Then of course I could never forget going to the White House and meeting with President Lyndon Johnson in the oval office, being introduced, by the president, to the Cabinet members and then traveling with the president on Air Force One to Fort Campbell, Ky.

When General Johnson was retiring he came by my office to say goodbye and to give me my final performance appraisal. He said that I had “shouldered a heavy burden” and that he had been very pleased with my performance. He said that I was a good problem solver but I was prone to use a cannon when a rifle may have been a better choice of weapon.

I learned early on that expectations among the troops of what I could do as Sergeant Major of the Army were extraordinary and that when a Soldier has a problem one day is a long time. As I recall, I had made a statement that “Soldiers and Soldier problems are my business. If a Soldier has a problem that has not been addressed at the local level to his satisfaction I want to hear from him.” So one day I received a letter from a private first class who was not happy with the response of his local command regarding several issues that he considered problems. The following day, as I worked his issues, I received another letter from him saying “I wrote you a letter some time ago regarding some problems and I have not had a response.”



Wooldridge is a frequent visitor to the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. He enjoys talking to the students of the Sergeants Major Course.



George W. Dunaway - 2nd Sergeant Major of the Army

September 1968 - September 1970

George W. Dunaway was born in Richmond, Va., on July 24, 1922.

After attending the Airborne Course in August 1943, Sergeant Major Dunaway remained at Fort Benning, Ga., as an Airborne School Instructor until January 1945 when he joined the 517th Combat Team in France as a Platoon Sergeant. He returned to Fort Benning in December 1945 with assignment to the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment where he served as first sergeant of Company "A". In March 1948, Sergeant Major Dunaway was reassigned to the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N. C. There, he became a member of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment as operations sergeant, ascending to the regimental sergeant major position in 1952.

In early 1954 he transferred to the 187th Regimental Combat Team as the combat team sergeant major. He continued in that position for seven years. Departing Fort Campbell in 1961, he took the reins of the 1st Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces in U. S. Army Pacific and later moved to the 5th Special Forces Group in Vietnam, where he remained until June 1967.

He re-joined the 101st Airborne Division and returned to Vietnam with the Commanding General's Command Group on December 13, 1967. In February 1968, he moved to Camp Eagle in the I Corps Tactical Zone where he remained until July 1968 when he was selected as the 2nd Sergeant Major of the Army.



In his own words...

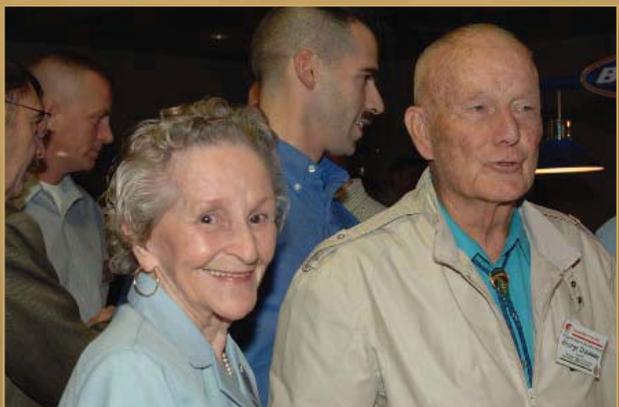
I was a "Sergeant Major" for 16 of the 28 years I served before becoming the second Sergeant Major of the Army. That period spanned three wars: WWII, Korean War, and the Vietnam War. I was appointed Regimental Sergeant Major of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment in 1952, some six years before the Army added the E-8 and E-9 "super" grades to its rank structure in 1958, and served in consecutive sergeant major positions from then until becoming SMA in 1968.

Throughout those first 28 years, I stayed in continuous daily contact with Infantry Soldiers. I took care of my men from my first assignment as an NCO until I retired and beyond. My life was with Soldiers, it was about Soldiers,

and it was for Soldiers. I knew them, they understood me and I always looked out for their best interests within the confines of the organizational mission.

As SMA, I believe that one of my biggest successes was because of my harmonious rapport with General William Westmoreland which resulted in many improvements benefiting enlisted men (the Women's Army Corps wasn't integrated into the Army until after he retired). For example, DA staffers preparing to launch the new U. S. Army Sergeants Major Academy had planned from the very beginning to send students to Fort Bliss in a TDY status without dependents, but I persuaded the CSA to make Academy attendance a PCS move with dependents. I also arranged for the SMA's wife to travel with the SMA periodically, and meet with Soldier's wives to seek ways to improve family life for soldiers. On many trips I also took the Enlisted Personnel Directorate Sergeant Major with me to root out and rectify cases where soldiers were mal-assigned outside their MOS fields. I always knew that a happy Soldier is a good Soldier, and that the Army works best when Soldiers work at jobs in which they are most proficient.

Having begun my career with a brief stint in the National Guard, I visited many National Guard units as I traveled around the country and globe. Those who knew me and/or served under me hasten to confirm that I took care of the men, first and foremost. Some say I am remembered as the Omar Bradley (Soldiers' general) of the enlisted corps.



SMA Dunaway and his wife Mary at the January 2006 Command Sergeants Major Nominative Conference, Fort Bliss, Texas.



Silas L. Copeland - 3rd Sergeant Major of the Army

October 1970 - June 1973

Silas L. Copeland was born in Embryfield, Texas, on April 2, 1920, and died December 4, 2001. He was inducted into the Army on October 28, 1942 in Huntsville, Texas. At the time he was 22 years old, married with one baby daughter.

After serving at various posts in the United States, he was sent overseas in January 1945 and served with 2nd Armored Division as a tank commander and later a tank platoon sergeant. In late 1945 he was stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, where he served with the 67th Tank Battalion and 82nd Reconnaissance Battalion. In 1950 he joined the 1st Cavalry Division, then located in Japan. From there, his unit was moved into Korea.

He has served as a senior ROTC instructor with Texas A&M (1953) and Centenary College of Louisiana, (1957). His other assignments include stints with 22nd Infantry Regiment, Germany, 1953; 1st Armored Division, Fort Hood, Texas, 1954; 8th Infantry Division, Germany; 2nd Armored Division, Fort Hood, Texas, 1962; 4th Armored Division, Germany, 1966; 1st Infantry Division (Big Red One), Republic of Vietnam, 1969; and as the division command sergeant major of the 4th Infantry Division located in the Central Highlands of Vietnam until he was selected as the 3rd Sergeant Major of the Army in 1970.

He has held various leadership positions to include tank commander, platoon sergeant, operations sergeant, first sergeant, sergeant major, division sergeant major and brigade sergeant major.



In his own words...

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt of the Oral History taken by Sgt. Maj. Erwin H. Koehler at Sgt. Maj. Copeland's home in Huntsville, Texas on 13 October 1993.

INTERVIEWER: It took the Army a long time to develop levels and say to the soldier, "This is what you're going to be trained at this level. Now when you get to this level, this is how you're going to be trained." And the Soldier had his training broken down by his grade, his duty.

SMA COPELAND: It took us so long to do it. You go back to yesterday, our methods "stunk," and we knew

it, and there wasn't much we did, in those days, to correct the deficiency. Usually when you received a quota to send a Soldier to school, you picked the Soldier you could best do without. Consequently, that Soldier went to school, with very little knowledge, and he returned the same way. Therefore, you were not enhancing the morale, the prestige, and the efficiency of the unit. We went on year, after year, after year, through that system until, finally ... we decide that we were going to make this thing work ... it began functioning during that modern volunteer army era, and you all continued to make it work. I sat up there at the Sergeants Major Academy during graduation, after graduation, and I witnessed and heard the Chief of Staff of the Army address the graduates and tell them, unequivocally, that, "This Academy is here to stay. That it has done wonders, not just this Academy, but all the other entities leading up to, and culminating, here at this Academy. It's here to stay." Because the Army has recognized that this is the only way to go. If you're going to have a professional, highly articulate army, we're not talking about just getting an education. We could send them to the university and bring them back with doctorates, if we wanted to do that ... But they need military knowledge ... and today, when those sergeants are graduated from that Academy they know their stuff; they're highly educated; they're articulate. I missed [going to the Academy]. But I was there for the first graduation. I could see that we were getting results.



This picture of SMA Copeland, right, hangs in the halls of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy where each of the past 12 SMAs have their place of honor.



Leon L. Van Autreve - 4th Sergeant Major of the Army

July 1973 - June 1975

Leon L. Van Autreve was born in Eeklo, Belgium, on January 29, 1920 and died March 14, 2002, in San Antonio, Texas.

He entered the Army in August 1941 from Delphos, Ohio. After basic training at Fort Belvoir, he served overseas with the 9th Infantry Division and participated in the invasion of Port Lyautey, Africa. He was discharged in August 1945 and enlisted again in March 1948. After a tour in Germany from 1950 to 1954, he served as an instructor with the ROTC at the University of Toledo until 1958. From ROTC duty he was assigned to CONRAC Armor Board at Fort Knox, Ky., remaining there until reassignment to Korea in 1960. Upon completion of his tour in Korea, Sergeant Major Van Autreve returned to Fort Belvoir and was promoted to Sergeant Major in 1962. He served as Sergeant Major of the 91st Engineer Battalion from 1962 until 1963.

From 1963 to 1964, Sergeant Major Van Autreve was stationed in Indonesia, 1964 to 1967 in Germany as Sergeant Major, 317th Engineer Battalion, and 1967 to 1969 in Vietnam as Sergeant Major of the 20th Engineer Brigade. In July 1969 he was selected for assignment to Alaska as the Command Sergeant Major, where he remained until he was selected as the Sergeant Major of the Army in 1973.



In his own words...

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt of the Oral History taken by Sgt. Maj. Erwin H. Koehler of Sgt. Maj. Van Autreve in San Antonio, Texas on 3 February 1994.

"I had a philosophy that, you know, I finally found out that I had direct access to the Chief of Staff of the Army. But I did not feel it was my job to go see him about any problems. I did that with the Vice Chief of Staff. And I did not want to see him, because I felt that 90 percent of the problems that I encountered in the field, 95 percent I should

be able to take care of by going to action officers.

We had a Colonel Geise, whom I worked with. He came up to see me one day. He said, "You know something?" He said, "All you talk about is noncommissioned officers." I said, "Well, that's right." I said, "We're going to get the Noncommissioned Officers Corps rolling and we're going to get this Army rolling because of the noncommissioned officers." He said, "I've got something to show you." So he came up, armed with about twenty 201 files. I went through them -- Child molestation, five Article 15s, six Article 15s, courts martials. These were command sergeants major and sergeants major in the Army. I was really furious.

He said, "I've given you twenty, but I can give you another twenty more, if you like." So I had facsimiles made, and I erased the name and any information that might elude to a specific individual, and I took them with me.

I'd get up in front of a group of noncommissioned officers and I would read off some of the violations and some of the background on some of these senior people. Then I'd throw the 201s out in the audience and I'd say, "It's your fault that you allow these people to survive."

Well people used to think it was pretty funny. They knew what was coming and they'd start ducking, because I'd throw them damn things out there and I'd really get hostile about the fact we tolerated those incompetent, those people who had perpetrated these deeds against children, wives, and other illegal things that they had done, and still survived the system and became an E-9. It worked, [I got their attention].



Leon Van Autreve takes the oath of office of Sergeant Major of the Army. Standing beside him is Army Chief of Staff General Creighton Abrams.



William G. Bainbridge - 5th Sergeant Major of the Army

July 1975 - June 1979

William G. Bainbridge was born in Galesburg, Illinois, on April 17, 1925.

He entered the Army in June 1943. Following basic training Sergeant Major Bainbridge was recalled to active duty in January 1951. Following assignments at Camp Atterbury, Indiana; Fort Sheridan, Illinois; Fort Riley, Kan.; and Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.; he was reassigned to Europe and served as the Operations Sergeant with Headquarters, VII Corps. In 1962 he returned to Fort Riley, Kan., where he served with the 1st Infantry Division as Sergeant Major of the 1st Battle Group, 28th Infantry, later reorganized as the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry. In 1965 he accompanied the battalion to Vietnam. Midway through his tour in Vietnam, Sergeant Major Bainbridge was appointed Command Sergeant Major of the II Field Force.

From September 1966 through August 1967 he was Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army Infantry Training Center, Fort Benning, Ga. He then was appointed the Command Sergeant Major of the First United States Army at Fort George G. Meade, Md., and later selected to serve as Command Sergeant Major of the United States Army, Pacific located in Fort Shafter, Hawaii. In October 1972 Sergeant Major Bainbridge became the first Command Sergeant Major of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas and remained there until his appointment as Sergeant Major of the Army on 1 July 1975.



In his own words...

Two actions during my tour as SMA that I believe were significant were: I developed the office of the SMA into a viable part of the Army Staff through which actions affecting the enlisted force had to be routed. I also was able to convince then Maj. Gen. Maxwell Thurman, director of Personnel, Arms and Equipment that NCOES funding that was being diverted to other programs should be fenced, or NCOES could be in jeopardy.

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt of the Oral History taken by Sgt. Maj. Erwin H. Koehler of Sgt. Maj. Bainbridge in Palm Bay, Fla., on 10 March 1994.

What do you think were the major problems within the Army, during your tenure, and how were they solved?

SMA Bainbridge: It's not evident to the whole Army,

but my contribution was to the NCOES system. We had, what General Myer talked about, the "Hollow Army, and we did have a hollow army. We didn't have enough money for this and enough money for that. But we were in a transition period for NCOES. We started at the top with the Academy, and we had some other things coming on-line after that.

In my visits to the field, I found out that there was money being used by commanders--that should be used for educational purposes--that was going into field exercises, and people weren't going to school.

So I knew this was going to be a problem down the road. I got an audience with General Maxwell Thurman [in the Chief's office] and I spent about two hours with him. I laid all of this out and told him what the problems were, as I saw them. ... I said, "My problem is, General Thurman, if we don't do something now, and if that money isn't fenced for NCOES, three years down the road, and is left vulnerable for some other program that seems more important at the time, we're going to throw the baby out with the bath water."

When the conversation was all finished, he said, "Sergeant Major, your money will be fenced. NCOES is not going to go away because of the money."

That two hours, out of my whole four-year tour, I think was worth it to the Army, and at least to the NCO Corps, by having them keeping that money long enough for the NCOES to become something that wasn't going to go away.



SMA Bainbridge at the 2006 Command Sergeants Major Nominative Conference, Fort Bliss, Texas



William A. Connelly - 6th Sergeant Major of the Army

July 1979 - June 1983

William A. Connelly was born in Monticello, Ga., on June 2, 1931.

Ordered to active duty in March 1954, he was a Tank Crewman, Tank Commander, Platoon Sergeant and First Sergeant in the 761st Tank Battalion, 3rd Armored Division at Fort Knox, Ky. The first of his four tours in Europe was with the 826th Tank Battalion at Hammelburg and Schweinfurt, Germany, from January 1955 – November 1956. The 826th returned to Fort Benning, Georgia, where he served as an Operations Sergeant and Platoon Sergeant until August 1958. He returned to Europe, serving as Platoon Sergeant with the 4th Armored Division in Furth, Germany, until September 1961. He was back in CONUS at Fort Stewart, Ga., with the 32nd Armor as that unit was being sent to Germany as part of the build up during the Berlin crisis.

Other assignments include: 1962-64, 32nd Tank Battalion, Munich, Germany ; 1964-67, 2nd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart; Dominican Republic; Fort Knox ; 1967-68 Chief Enlisted Adviser, Georgia National Guard, Griffin, Ga.; 1969-70, 1st Cavalry Division, Republic of Vietnam; 1970-73, Reception Company, 1st Training Brigade, 1st and 2nd Battalion, Fort Knox; 1972 Student, Class #2, Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas; 1972-75, 1st Armored Division, Erlangen, Germany; 1975-76, Seventh Army Training Command, Grafenwoehr, Germany; 1976-77, 1st Armored Division, Ansbach, Germany; 1977-79, U.S. Army Forces Command, Fort McPherson, Ga.; 1979-83 Sergeant Major of the Army.



In his own words...

When I became SMA in July 1979, I knew that I wanted to preserve and make NCOES better. All SMAs before me had done that and I was a product of the NCOES system as I was the first SMA that graduated from the Sergeants Major Academy.

With NCOES always on my mind the CSA told me to write an Army regulation on NCO development. I met with one of the generals in G3 and told him that I didn't want an Army regulation that told the commander how to suck eggs. I wanted a regulation that required an NCO Development program down to Battalion level that would develop



1st Sgt. William Connelly on duty in the Dominican Republic, 1965.

the NCO and assist the commander in a successful command. He understood and in about a year we published a regulation.

My next endeavor was to see if I could eliminate the specialists rank in the Army. I didn't like it when it was instituted in the mid 50s. If you think it is difficult to get the Army to do something, try and get it to undo

something. It got done, but not on my watch. I only planted the seed. It finally happened with the exception of SP4 and in my opinion, it was a great day for the NCO Corps.

The Chief and I were in a conversation about the Army having a pullover sweater. This was in July and he said he wanted a black pull over sweater that every Soldier could wear by October of that year. I got in touch with the staff officer of the uniform board. He and I designed the sweater in my office and I never talked to the chief about it again until I wore it in his office. He liked it and I wore the first sweater to speak at the AUSA European conference in October.

Sometime in early 1982 I discussed with the CSA and G1 about the possibility of establishing a medal to honor achievements, somewhere between the Bronze Star and the Army Accommodation medal; a medal for successful completion of AIT; a medal for overseas duty, and a medal for completion of NCOES. It would give a soldier a chance to serve a tour of duty of 3 to 4 years and depart the service with 4 to 5 ribbons on his chest. The G1 took that and ran with it. I did nothing to make that happen, but plant the seed

During my 30 years the NCOES has meant more to the NCO Corps and the Army than anything I know. Each SMA has made it better and it should always be a program that the SMA be extensively involved.

SMAs can't do much without the support of the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Army staff. I had their support and that is why SMAs can say and not feel boastful that "they planted the seed."



Glen E. Morrell - 7th Sergeant Major of the Army

July 1983 - July 1987

Glen E. Morrell, was born in Wick, W.V., on May 26, 1936.

He served in the United States Army for more than 31 years. Since his entry on active duty in November 1954 he has served in virtually every noncommissioned officer leadership position. His career has taken him through many Continental United States assignments, two tours in Europe, three tours in the Republic of Vietnam and two tours in Panama.

His units of assignment include the 6th Infantry in Berlin; 14th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Germany; 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C.; 5th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, N.C., and three tours in the Republic of Vietnam; two tours with the 7th and 8th Special Forces Group, Panama; 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kan.; Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor duty with St. John University, Minn.; 1st Ranger Battalion, 75th Infantry, Fort Stewart, Ga., Special Forces Detachment (AIRBORNE) Europe; United States Army Recruiting Command, Fort Sheridan, Ill.; and the United States Army Forces Command, Fort McPherson, Ga.

Glen E. Morrell, the 7th Sergeant Major of the Army, was sworn in on July 1, 1983 and served until his term ended in July of 1987.



In his own words...

It was an honor to be selected as the Seventh Sergeant Major of the Army by General John A. Wickham in 1983. It was a privilege to serve as the representative of the Enlisted Force, and the U.S. Army. Anything I accomplished was done by the outstanding support of my administrative personnel, the staff noncommissioned officers of the Department of the Army, and the outstanding MACOM command sergeants major with whom I worked during my tour of duty. I also appreciated the institutional knowledge and support from the former Sergeants Major of the Army on matters which I solicited recommendations on. All the above enabled me to make

timely decisions and recommendations to the Chief of Staff of the Army, to better all aspects of Soldier training, promotion, assignments, family issues, and a million other things that had an impact of the Enlisted Force of the Army.

I do not dwell on any one thing as being more important than the other. What was done during my tenure was with the support of those I have mentioned. I know for a fact that the U.S. Army has the best Soldiers, and noncommissioned officer corps that will always accomplish the mission in a successful manner. It was an honor to serve them.

Editor's note: During an oral history interview conducted by SGM Erwin Koehler at SMA Morrell's home in Port Saint John, Cocoa, Fla., March 31, 1994, he was asked what is an American Soldier? Here is his reply.

Well, to me an American Soldier is a person that has been trained and has the desire to be the best that there is whatever their job might be; and can do any damn thing under the sun, provided their needs are taken care of and they've got good leadership. They'll go the extra mile every time and time again. Hopefully we'll always have those kind of American Soldiers, who will always be successful in carrying out whatever the United States does in the way of foreign diplomacy and foreign policy. I hope the hell we always have that type of person serving in the United States Army.



SMA Morrell, right, talks with Command Sgt. Maj. John J. Leonard, CSM National Guard Bureau during the 2006 CSM Nominative Conference, Fort Bliss, Texas.



Julius W. Gates - 8th Sergeant Major of the Army

July 1987 - June 1991

Sergeant Major of the Army Julius (Bill) William Gates, native of North Carolina, entered the United States Army on August 12, 1958 and attended initial training at Fort Jackson, S.C. He served three tours in Germany, two combat tours in Vietnam, and a tour in the Republic of Korea.

His stateside assignments include duty with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky., the United States Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Ga., the 1st Ranger Battalion at Fort Stewart, Ga., the Virginia Military Institute of Lexington, Va., and Fort Bliss, Texas. Sergeant Major Gates has served in numerous noncommissioned officer leadership positions. Highlights of his assignments are: command sergeant major of the 2nd Armored Division (Forward), the command sergeant major of the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, and the command sergeant major of U.S. Forces Korea/Eighth Sergeant Major of the Army.

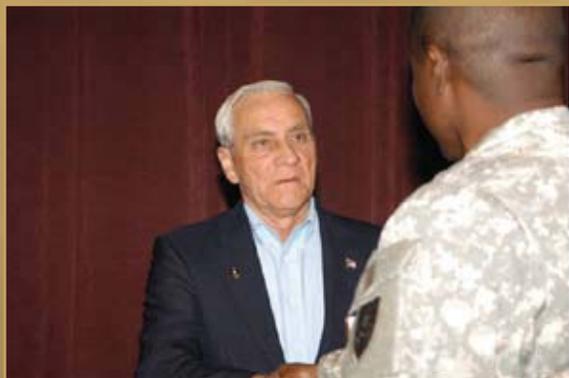
He was responsible for the the first NCO historical volume, *The Story of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps*; the introduction of Army Field Manual 25-101, *Battle Focused Training*; and the launching of the *NCO Journal* as an official publication.



In his own words...

When I assumed the duties and responsibilities of Sergeant Major of the Army, my first remarks to the media were that I represented “Soldier Warfighters at the Canteen-Cup-Level.” Subsequently, all chinaware was removed from the Office, Sergeant Major of the Army and replaced with canteen cups, from which future visitors were required to drink their coffee.

My first major task was to educate Army leaders on the implementation of the new Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report (NCOER), which replaced the Enlisted Evaluation Report (EER). The new report initiative was the first of its kind to be developed entirely by the noncommissioned officer corps. The new report required performance counseling and bullet comments to constructively measure specific standards and objectives. The new evaluation report successfully permeated throughout the total Army in 1988-1989.



SMA Gates talks with a student of the Sergeants Major Course during a break from the 2006 Command Sergeants Major Nominative Conference, Fort Bliss, Texas.

With strong support from General Vuono, I was able to improve the Noncommissioned Officer Institutional Training in spearheading the establishment of the Command Sergeant Major (Designee) Course in 1989. The course was designed, similar to the Officer Pre-Command Course, to train and prepare newly designated Command Sergeants Major to assume the duties and responsibilities of a unit Command Sergeant Major.

Working with the *NCO Journal* I established the Army Theme for 1989: “The Year of the Noncommissioned Officer.” It was a significant year for the history of the U.S. Army noncommissioned officer corps. The first U.S. Army Historical Volume dedicated entirely to Noncommissioned Officers was published, and the *NCO Journal*, the first of its kind strictly dedicated for noncommissioned officers -- was launched and funded as an official U.S. Army publication.

Another significant milestone during my term in Noncommissioned Officer leader development was the linkage of promotions to Noncommissioned Officer Education course attendance. Based on strong recommendations by myself and senior noncommissioned officers; the Chief of Staff approved in 1988, the Army-wide policy for attendance and successful completion of a prerequisite Noncommissioned Officer Education System course prior to promotion.

Finally, one of my favorite programs I helped to establish was the BOSS program in 1989. We had stuff for families, but nothing for single Soldiers and I knew that wasn't right. As I said after my swearing in ceremony, I represented “Soldier Warfighters at the Canteen-Cup-Level.”



Richard A. Kidd - 9th Sergeant Major of the Army

July 1991 - June 1995

Richard A. Kidd was born in Morehead, Ky., on June 24, 1943.

His assignments include two combat tours in Vietnam (1966-67 & 1970-71) and multiple tours in Korea and Europe. Before becoming the ninth Sergeant Major of the Army, he was command sergeant major of I Corps (America's Corps) & Fort Lewis, Fort Lewis, Wash. Among his other assignments, he has been command sergeant major for numerous organizations. These included CSM of the 9th Aviation Battalion; 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry; Commandant, 1st Armored Division, NCO Academy, Katterbach, Germany. He returned to Fort Lewis after his tour in Germany and served consecutively as CSM of the 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment; 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division (Motorized); and 9th Infantry Division (Motorized).

Sergeant Major of the Army Kidd, the 9th Sergeant Major of the Army, was sworn in on July 2, 1991 and served until his term expired in June of 1995.

During his tenure, the NCOES program made the final change that more closely linked it to promotion and supported the Army's "select, train, promote, assign" philosophy. He also supported quality of life issues such as the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) program and improved health care for Soldiers and their families.



In his own words...

During an interview, conducted as I prepared to retire after 33 plus years, the last four years of which I served as the 9th Sergeant Major of the Army from 1991-1995, I was asked, what I felt was, a profound question. "How would I like for Soldiers and Soldiers' families to remember me." It was a great question, and one that, frankly, I was not prepared for—but all of a sudden, from the recesses of my memory—I remembered something that seemed to impress both Soldiers and their Families the most. They would say, "He really listens and he really cares" and so, I responded to the interviewer by saying, I hope that I will be remembered that way. "He really listened and he really cared." I



SMA Kidd during a 2005 visit to the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas

have even passed on to my wife, Sylvia, that I would be honored with that as the inscription on my gravesite marker.

Now I am being asked about my legacy and most memorable events. SMA Bill Gates, the SMA that I followed, accomplished many things toward making our Army and the Soldiers "all that they could be," as did

all of the preceding SMAs. They passed on to me a better Army in every way. That was my legacy from them and what I hoped would be my legacy to those that followed me. On the day I retired, standing on the reviewing stand at Fort Myer, Va., I said I could retire proudly knowing that I played some small part in making our Army better, and ensuring that it continued to be the "Best Army In The World—Bar None".

As for memorable events—every time I have met a Soldier and/or a Soldier's family members, it has been a memorable and special event. Every Soldier is unique and each has their own special story, a story that goes a long way toward explaining why we have such a great Army. It was an honor to travel all over the world, wherever our Soldiers have been deployed or stationed, to watch them in action and to observe how professional, committed, patriotic and dedicated they are. It was both an honor and one of my greatest pleasures to represent them and ensure their comments and needs were heard. Now, as I watch today's Soldiers perform magnificently and professionally day in and day out, all over the world—my memorable events continue to grow.

As we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of the Office of the Sergeant Major of the Army, I can, without hesitation, say it is an Office that has served the Army well, and state with much pride that I was honored to have been selected to the Office, to represent our great Soldiers and can only hope that they felt "I really listened and I really cared."



Gene C. McKinney - 10th Sergeant Major of the Army

July 1995 - October 1997

Gene C. McKinney is one of five McKinney brothers born in Monticello, Fla., all of whom served in the Army. One served as an officer, one retired as a master sergeant, another served in Vietnam, and an identical twin reached the rank of Command Sergeant Major. He enlisted in the United States Army in August 1968 and completed Basic and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Knox, Ky. During his more than 30 years of service, he served in every enlisted leadership position from scout leader to command sergeant major.

His assignments included one combat infantry tour in Vietnam from 1969-1970 with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, and he was an armored cavalryman for more than two decades. Before becoming the 10th Sergeant Major of the Army, his CSM assignments included the following: Command Sergeant Major of U. S. Army Europe; 8th Infantry Division (Mechanized), Bad Kreuznach, Germany; 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, Vilseck, Germany; 612th Quartermaster, Fort Bragg, N.C.; 1st Battalion, 58th Mechanized Infantry, 197th Brigade, Fort Benning, Ga.; 3rd Squadron, 12th Cavalry Regiment, Buedingen, Germany; 3rd and 4th Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Bliss, Texas; and 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Bamberg, Germany.



In his own words...

The foundation of any man or woman comes from within and their connection with a higher being. Knowing from whence I came is what I want people to remember about me. The Creed of the NCO Corps has been my ethos as a professional noncommissioned officer. As it says, "I know my soldiers and I will always place their needs above my own." I am content that I displayed this philosophy, not only by reciting the Creed, but also by living it. The ones that know me most will say, "Gene McKinney cared more about Soldiers than he did himself." The darkest days of my life as Sergeant Major of the Army were during the days

nessed the death of my only child. The out pouring of love, faith, care and concern from our Army family, enabled Wilhemina and me to continue to represent our soldiers and their families.

Earning my way from a very young private to sergeant major of the Army was quite a daunting accomplishment. What one must remember is to always know who they are. There is an old African proverb that says, "If you don't know who you are, anyone can name you and if anyone can name you, you will answer to anything." My point is that the NCO Corps continues to be the backbone of the Army and in my opinion that remains true today. I led the charge to recognize normative command sergeants major at the general officer level. For the soldiers in that position to receive Special Duty Pay is one of my greatest achievements. Some condemned it because in their mind it was to be selfish service. I initiated this effort not to place money into the pocket of senior enlisted soldiers, but rather to recognize the worth of our senior enlisted leaders. From command sergeants major at the battalion level to the four star level, the pay did not change. The levels of responsibilities changed tremendously, but the pay remained. I thought it was only fitting to recognize the worth of the senior backbones of the Army.

Wilhemina and I remain in high spirits and very thankful for our good health. We wish all of our soldiers well and especially those that are in harms way. We ask that each of you to be prepared for the unexpected no matter how dedicated you are, life will throw you a curve and you got to be ready for it.



SMA McKinney at the 2006 Martin Luther King Jr. Observance held at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas

of my beloved son's attempt to recover from an automobile accident during his freshman year in college. I cared so much for my soldiers and families; I left my wife and my son's bedside while he was in the Neurology Intensive Care Unit in Tallahassee, Fla., to travel back to Washington, DC to testify before Congress on behalf of my soldiers. Shortly after my return to the hospital I wit-



Robert E. Hall - 11th Sergeant Major of the Army

October 1997 - June 2000

Robert E. Hall was born in Gaffney, S.C., on May 31, 1947. He entered the Army in February 1968 and attended basic training at Fort Bragg, N.C., and advanced individual training at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Throughout his 32-year career, SMA Hall has held every key leadership position including: squad leader, 2nd Infantry Division, Korea; platoon sergeant, battalion operations sergeant and battalion intelligence sergeant, 1st Armored Division, Germany; first sergeant, B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 59th Air Defense Artillery, Germany; and drill sergeant, Fort Bliss, Texas.

Before becoming the 11th Sergeant Major of the Army, his command sergeant major assignments included the following: Command Sergeant Major of the U. S. Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.; 1st Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery, Fort Stewart, Ga.; Commandant, 24th Infantry Division Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Fort Stewart; 24th Division Artillery, Saudi Arabia and Iraq; 2nd Infantry Division, Korea; First U.S. Army, Fort Meade, Md.

His military education includes Drill Sergeant School, Advanced Noncommissioned Officers Course, First Sergeants Course, and the Sergeants Major Academy, where he served as an instructor upon graduation from class 26. He also served on the staff of the Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, Va.



In his own words...

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the *NCO Journal's* coverage of the 40th anniversary of the Office of the Sergeant Major of the Army, and thank you for making this happen. It is an historic milestone, but it also causes one to wonder why it took so long to establish this position. The value of noncommissioned leadership has been recognized since Baron Von Steuben at Valley Forge. But still this should not detract from the recognition of the position. Today, as always, Noncommissioned Leaders are recognized as the professionals they are at every level.

I do appreciate the opportunity to talk of my time in the position, but that is not my style.

It was my honor to serve the Soldiers and the Army and I did so to the best of my ability. Just as I said during my swearing in when I promised every bit of my time, effort, energy, and whatever talent God gave me to serve Soldiers and families . . . Active, Guard, and Reserve. Someone else gets to judge how well I did.

As others, I faced a multitude of issues, policy changes, congressional testimony, and challenges. It wasn't my message, but the message of the Soldiers that was important to me. Soldiers told me they were concerned about many things, but mainly they were concerned about Pay, Housing, Medical Care, and Retirement Benefits. Those items gave me the direction to proceed, to start the process to make corrections. There were other policies and proposals that, in my opinion, were detrimental to the NCO Corps and the Army. One which readily comes to mind is the Change in NCO Structure (CINCOS.) Many NCOs today do not remember this policy . . . and that's the way it should be.

My only desire was to serve, to do so to the best of my ability, and to understand how decisions are made in the Pentagon, but never to forget that I am a Soldier. I wanted to have some of the same mud on my boots as the Soldiers I was honored to represent. Represent to the Army Leadership, the Congress, and the American people through the media.



SMA Hall shares a moment with Command Sgt. Maj. Debra Strickland, HQ IMA, during the 2006 Command Sergeants Major Nominative Conference, Fort Bliss, Texas.



Jack L. Tilley - 12th Sergeant Major of the Army

June 2000 - January 2004

Jack L. Tilley was born in Vancouver, Wash., on Dec. 3, 1948. He entered the Army in November 1966 and attended basic training at Fort Lewis, Wash., and advanced individual training at Fort Knox, Ky. Following tours in Vietnam and Fort Benning, Ga., SMA Tilley left the Army for two years before enlisting again in September 1971.

Throughout his 34-year career, SMA Tilley has held every key leadership position including tank commander, section leader, drill sergeant, platoon sergeant, senior instructor, operations sergeant and first sergeant. His military education includes the First Sergeants Course and the Sergeants Major Academy. He is also a graduate of the basic airborne course, drill sergeant school and master gunner's course.

SMA Tilley demonstrated his personal commitment to the Army and his Soldiers as he advanced to positions of higher responsibility. He has held a variety of important positions culminating in his assignment as the Sergeant Major of the Army. He previously held the senior enlisted position as Command Sergeant Major of the U. S. Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. Other assignments he held as Command Sergeant Major were 1st Battalion, 10th Cavalry, Fort Knox, 194th Armor Brigade, 1st Armored Division, Bad Kreuznach, Germany and U. S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, Arlington, Va.



In his own words...

I think more than any other office, there's no doubt that we affected the pay raises for the noncommissioned officer corps; I'm really proud about that. Also the quality of life for family members. I was lucky enough to be involved with a lot of folks that were focused on quality of life issues such as housing to help promote reenlistment.

Another thing I think is certainly important is I tried to build a bond with the National Guard. We started saying "One Army," not Guard, and Reserve and active duty; so we tried to build a better relationship with the noncommissioned officer corps on the Reserve and National Guard side of the house. We started this with a conference down in El Paso, Texas, where we brought in all senior noncommissioned officers. I think we probably really established

a better relationship with the Guard and the Reserve there just by communicating and learning about each other and being able to assist each other with a lot of the stuff that we do on a day-to-day basis.

One of the other things, which I didn't do a very good job on, we did was we tried to establish a test for the noncommissioned officer corps. I was really excited about doing that; unfortunately, I never got it completed. It was really an evaluation to see if we were selecting the right kind of people for the next level in promotions.

The last thing was the beret. The beret was certainly a challenge for the military. That decision was made before I got there, but I think in the long run it turned out to be a pretty positive decision. There were a lot of retirees and a lot of seniors that didn't like it, but in the long run it was the right decision for our U.S. Army.

We have a great Army and a great noncommissioned officer corps. I didn't know [Army Chief of Staff] Gen. [Eric] Shinseki until I got the chance to work with him in the Pentagon. Certainly I don't believe there was a finer officer that I ever worked with in my tenure in the military.

Lastly, when you get out and you start looking back at the Army and you look at all services – and all services are great – you'll see we really have just a tremendous, talented noncommissioned officer corps; there's no doubt about that. I was proud to serve in the Army; really, I'm still serving only just in a different capacity.



SMA Tilley speaks with attendees of the 2006 Command Sergeants Major Nominative Conference, Fort Bliss, Texas, during the icebreaker.



Kenneth O. Preston - 13th Sergeant Major of the Army

January 2004 - Present

Kenneth O. Preston is a native of Mount Savage, Md., and was born Feb. 18, 1957. He entered the Army on June 30, 1975. He attended Basic Training and Armor Advanced Individual Training at Fort Knox, Ky.

Throughout his 30-year career, he has served in every enlisted leadership position from cavalry scout and tank commander to his current position as Sergeant Major of the Army. Other assignments he held as command sergeant major were 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, 3rd "Grey Wolf" Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, 1st Armored Division in Bad Kreuznach, Germany, and V Corps in Heidelberg, Germany.

His most recent assignment was as the command sergeant major for Combined Joint Task Force 7 serving in Baghdad, Iraq.

His military education includes Basic Noncommissioned Officer's Course, Advanced Noncommissioned Officer's Course, First Sergeant's Course, M1/M1A1 Tank Master Gunner Course, Master Fitness Trainer Course, Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officer's Course, and the U. S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston was sworn in as the 13th Sergeant Major of the Army on January 15, 2004.



In his own words...

As the Sergeant Major of the Army, my legacy is yet to be determined. Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, our Army Chief of Staff, selected me as his senior enlisted advisor while I was serving as the Combined Joint Task Force – 7 / V Corps Command Sergeant Major in Baghdad. Having the opportunity to serve as the Sergeant Major of the Army is the most humbling experience in my 31-year Army career.

When I was appointed as SMA on Jan. 15, 2004, Gen. Schoomaker told me we had a lot of work to do. The work he referred to was the Army's primary mission to support the Global War on Terror and executing the largest transformation of our Army since World War II. I get the opportunity to meet with thousands of Soldiers each month and bring their ideas back to the Pentagon. Especially those ideas tied to Army Transformation. That has been my focus since I started this job, and remains my focus today.

My fire team and I have traveled many miles during that past two and a half years, visiting Soldiers and their families and listening to their ideas and concerns. From what I see in places like Grafenwohr, Germany, Taegu, South Korea, and Fort Riley, Kansas, our Army has a bright future. It's not an easy time to be a Soldier. For the first time in our nation's history we have had to fight a long-duration war with an all-volunteer force. My hat is off to every Soldier in our force who has chosen to answer the call to duty during this demanding time.

The last two years have been an extremely challenging time for our Army. We are in the process of transforming into a more expeditionary Army, one capable of getting to the fight sooner. Our Army is becoming more modular, where our units are similar in design and are able to replace one another seamlessly while in combat. Dwell time at home station is now increasing as we stand up more brigade combat teams. To the individual Soldier and their family, transformation will simply mean more predictability and stability. Soldiers and leaders are getting more predictability to plan for a mission. They know when they will deploy, when they will be home, and can in turn prepare their families and loved ones.

It is hard to believe that the office of the Sergeant Major of the Army is now in its 40th year. Our Army and NCO Corps owe a debt of gratitude to all the former Sergeants Major of the Army, as they shaped our enlisted force and helped transform our Army into the formidable fighting force it is today.



SMA Preston talks with Command Sgt. Maj. Roshan Safi, the first Afghan National Army student to attend the Sergeants Major Course.



SERGEANTS MAJOR OF THE ARMY

SMA WILLIAM O. WOOLDRIDGE 1966-1968

SMA GEORGE W. DUNAWAY 1968-1970

SMA SILAS L. COPELAND 1970-1973

SMA LEON L. VAN AUTREVE 1973-1975

SMA WILLIAM G. BAINBRIDGE 1975-1979

SMA WILLIAM A. CONNELLY 1979-1983

SMA GLEN E. MORRELL 1983-1987

SMA JULIUS W. GATES 1987-1991

SMA RICHARD A. KIDD 1991-1995

SMA GENE C. MCKINNEY 1995-1997

SMA ROBERT E. HALL 1997-2000

SMA JACK L. TILLEY 2000-2004

SMA KENNETH O. PRESTON 2004-