

Army Times
9 Aug 1967
PP. 1, 20

Command SMaj. Slot To Seek 'Best' NCOs

By a Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—From now on, there will be command sergeants major and, on the other hand, there will be sergeants major.

The difference is an Army plan, just approved, to identify and manage the cream of the sergeants major crop for command SMaj positions.

The command sergeant major would occupy the senior enlisted position on the staff of a battalion commander or higher organization.

Earlier this year an estimated 1500 of the 5200 sergeants major were filling so-called command SMaj. slots.

Officials said "the new program will insure that the best senior noncommissioned officers are selected for command

sergeants major positions, and that the experienced command sergeants major—the 'general officers' of the enlisted corps—are most effectively used."

Commanders are being asked to submit recommendations to the Pentagon to nominate SMajs. they want in the com

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SMajs.

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mand plan.

"The records of nominees will be screened by a DA selection board," the Army said. "Those selected for the command sergeants major program will be awarded a single and distinctive designation by DA." A new MOS is being marked out for the position.

Three proposed insignia for the command SMaj. are also being considered, Army Times learned.

OFFICIALS said the Army will also authorize the promotion of outstanding E-8s in the command SMaj. plan at battalion level.

The latest boost to enlisted prestige will be managed by a specially created section in the enlisted directorate of OPO career management, personnel actions and records will be maintained by the section.

Officials say that the new command SMaj. deal will "insure a continuous source of experience, leadership and professionalism" in the most important of enlisted posts.

The Army may also borrow, at least temporarily, the officer efficiency report form for rating command SMajs.

One of the features of the new plan is that command sergeants major will be trained and rated, with those getting high marks tapped for service in higher commands.

Officials said that once a SMaj. is selected for the command plan he is not sure of staying in it. He'll be rated but if he doesn't measure up, he'll be dropped, reverting to his former MOS.

Command SMajs. will retain their MOSs as secondary or additional ones to help OPO in reassignments.

Holders of CSM Rank Top 5,000 in 18 Years

By **LARRY CARNEY**
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — More than 5,000 soldiers have been appointed to the rank of command sergeant major since the first CSM chevrons were pinned on 192 sergeants major on Feb. 1, 1969.

A personnel official said the 5,000 figure was an estimate.

"We don't have any records available that will give us the precise number," he said. "But we think the total is more than 5,000."

The order establishing the program was signed by Gen. Harold K. Johnson, then chief of staff, on July 12, 1967.

The first group of CSMs included five sergeants major who later became sergeant major of the Army. The group included William O. Wooldridge, SMA from July 1966 to August 1968; George W. Dunaway, September 1968-September 1970; Silas L. Copeland, October 1970-June 1973; Leon L. Van Autreve, July 1973-June 1975, and William G. Bainbridge, July 1975-June 1979.

Bainbridge said establishing the CSM program was "significant" because it added a title to the NCO rank structure that specifically recognizes the Army's "most experienced senior NCOs."

The CSM is the ranking NCO in the unit, according to the new Non-

commissioned Officer Professional Development Guide, being distributed to all NCOs.

"They carry out policies and enforce standards related to enlisted personnel performance, training, appearance and conduct," the guide said. "They also advise and make recommendations to the commander and staff on matters pertaining to enlisted personnel."

"The first group of 192 were already serving as the top enlisted soldiers in their units when they received their CSM appointments," Bainbridge said.

Van Autreve told *Army Times* the CSM program was established "with little understanding of what it should do."

"There was no definitive word to indicate the difference between CSM and sergeant major," he said. "That didn't come until later."

But Van Autreve said he was proud of being in the first group of senior NCOs to be appointed to CSM.

The first CSM board considered 214 E-9s for the first 192 CSM appointments.

Although CSMs hold the highest rank in the NCO chain of command, they receive the same pay as a sergeant major. Their insignia have wreaths instead of stars in the middle and they receive the special 00Z50 Military Occupational Specialty.

Army Times November 9, 1987

28 June 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES ARMY

SUBJECT: Command Sergeants Major Program

1. Reference our discussion on 27 June, the following comments and papers are submitted.
2. As set forth in your note when approving the initial concept of the Command Sergeants Major Program (Yellow Tab "A"), you felt a good selective process was necessary to assure that the Command Sergeants Major would be the best rather than just those available. However, I don't think the selection process subsequently used was effective in this. The increments set up in the nomination of sergeants major for the Program was by slot identification and not zones of consideration. This in itself limited those to be nominated to only sergeants major assigned to slots or who were geographically located in areas which called for CSM positions. Sergeants Major at such assignments as ROTC duty, and Reserve and National Guard advisors never, in most cases, had an opportunity to be considered during the first three increments. The initial concept paper on the CSM Program (Yellow Tab "B"), which was revised prior to being submitted to you, set forth that zones of consideration would be used in the selection process (see red tab). I reviewed that study and felt it was the most effective way to insure the selection of the best sergeants major for the Program and not just the ones that were available at that time. My feeling on the selection process was that we would deal directly with people, and that slot identification would not enter into the picture until such time that the best people had been selected. Once we had selected the top sergeants major in the Army, then we could have been concerned with slot assignments.
3. My conception of a Command Sergeant Major is that he would be primarily concerned with troops and assigned to command levels that are responsible for soldiers and not simply an administrative NCO at a major headquarters. I will cite a few slots that have come to my attention that seem to me we could

never justify a Command Sergeant Major in: USASCAF, SHAPE, Joint and Unified Commands (where there is not a clear cut need for a troop type sergeant major), Chaplain School, Finance School, AG School, Common Specialist Training Battalions (i. e., Cooks and Bakers Course, Administrative Mechanics, etc.).

4. Although we have a Command Sergeant Major Section which handles the assignment control of CSM's, I don't feel we are fitting the man against the job as effectively as we could. Rather than having an administrative sergeant major deciding the assignments on our CSM's, we should have a line type CSM in this position who would be better qualified in matching a man against a job. The CSM could be placed on a two year detail assignment to that office. A combat arms lieutenant colonel should head up this office and be responsible to COPO, not SECB or EPD. All we have really done at the present is move the personnel records from one office to another, as the final decision on assignments of CSM's still rests with the Chief and Sergeant Major of the Senior Enlisted Control Branch. I know personally of instances where a CSM has been nominated for a certain CSM position for which he was not even qualified to hold -- physically or professionally.

5. You mentioned in your discussion with General Beverly on 13 July 1967 (Yellow Tab "C") that assignments on CSM's would be controlled only by DA. If a senior commander desires a specific CSM to be assigned to a CSM position in his command, and that CSM is available, I see no reason why such assignment cannot be made. However, in order to retain compliance with your guidance and continue effective management of the Program, I feel additional guidance to commanders in the field is needed to insure that they advise DA of their desires on such diversions.

6. I hope that you will have time that I may come see you to discuss with you further the selection process and the management of the Program. I have become increasingly concerned as we move along that we have marched backward and not forward on the Program. I would recommend that you ask Brigadier General Johnson, Colonel LeClair of the Senior Enlisted Control Branch, and Lt Colonel Kane of the CSM Program Office to come up and give you a detailed briefing on the selection process and slot identification system we are using. In my opinion, much needs to be done if we are to obtain the best sergeants major in the Army. I understand with the third increment now completed, we have between 1200 and 1400 CSM's in the Program. I feel this is about 50 percent overstrength based on the needs of the Army and CSM positions.

7. At Yellow Tab "D" are some of the letters I have received from CSM's in the field. They hit on some of the problems that we have encountered already and point up what I think is a good general opinion from troop type sergeants major.

8. I think that the input into the Program has got to be limited to sergeants major who have had troop experience. Commands without troops don't need Command Sergeants Major -- they need Staff Sergeants Major.

4 Incl

Tab A - Approved CSM
Program SS

Tab B - Original Draft CSM
Program SS

Tab C - Memo for Record, 17 Jul 67

Tab D - Letters from CSM's

WILLIAM O WOOLDRIDGE
Sergeant Major of the Army