

# COMMAND SERGEANTS MAJOR

## of the Army Reserve



# Command Sergeants Major of the Army Reserve



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# INTRODUCTION

The office of Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve, established in 1975, is a relatively new addition to the component's command structure. Nevertheless, the post has rapidly assumed an important place in the operation, efficiency, and outreach of the organization. The occupants of this position perform a vital service for the Chief of Army Reserve, providing advice and insight into the views and needs of the thousands of men and women who form the enlisted force. The Command Sergeant Major is an equally essential figure for the Soldiers in the ranks, offering guidance, leadership, and direction on policies, procedures, and processes developed at the highest level. Perhaps most important, the CSM serves as a conduit for communications between leaders and soldiers, bridging the gap between the two and maintaining morale, understanding, and appreciation.

Any person holding this position of high responsibility must demonstrate considerable facility as a leader, politician, motivator, enforcer, mentor, counselor, and advocate. Few men and women possess such a diverse collection of skills. It is therefore not surprising that few have occupied this challenging role. As of 2021, only fourteen individuals have held the title of Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve, two more served as Command Sergeants Major of the U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) during a brief period when responsibilities were separated from those of the Office of the Chief, Army Reserve (OCAR), and two have served in the equally complex role of interim Command Sergeant Major.



Despite their importance, the Command Sergeants Major and their role in the development of the modern Army Reserve have largely been overlooked. While the names and actions of the Chiefs of the Army Reserve have been recalled and documented in historical accounts, the highest-ranking Non-Commissioned Officers of the component have largely been forgotten. At the initiation of the project to document the CSMs of the Army Reserve, historians struggled even to compile a list of names and dates of service. With that list in place, it has proven to be equally challenging to assemble even the most skeletal sketches of their lives and careers.

Nevertheless, their stories deserve to be told. Those who have achieved the status of Command Sergeant Major have helped shape the modern force, professionalize the NCO Corps, and transform the Army Reserve into an organization that is a peer and partner with the Active Component. Just as significantly, their lives and actions demonstrate the effort and endurance required to advance, the obstacles and opportunities that must be confronted along the way, and the results and reward of perseverance. Their biographies are the history of the modern Army Reserve. Their personal histories and insights provide guidance that will help others follow in their footsteps.

The following pages are intended to draw these important figures out of obscurity. Section I provides an overview of the establishment and development of the office of Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve. Section II provides biographies of the seventeen men and women who have held that office to date. These biographies are necessarily uneven in scope. Some have been developed using large volumes of materials obtained in interviews, articles, and other accounts. Others, especially those of the earliest CSMs, draw from limited materials available. At the close, Section III provides an opportunity for a number of the living Command Sergeants Major to speak directly to the modern force and present-day NCOs through their answers to ten fundamental questions about their careers and Army Reserve leadership.



# HISTORY OF THE OFFICE

## Origins of the Sergeant Major

The role of the Sergeant Major has deep roots in the military heritage of the United States. The British Army of the 1700s relied on these non-commissioned officers for vital oversight of the drilling, discipline, and management of regiments. General George Washington, who had served in those regiments in colonial campaigns, observed the important contributions of the Sergeants Major to the success of the troops. When the moment arose to establish his own force, in 1775, he also adopted the rank and made it responsible for the conduct and oversight of Non-commissioned Officers.<sup>1</sup>

Friedrich William von Steuben clarified these duties. The experienced Prussian Soldier accepted Washington's request to serve as Inspector General of the Continental Army in 1778 and he devoted considerable attention to developing a formal and professional force. His manual of regulations, first published the following year, established guidelines for discipline, drills, and tactics for the force. It similarly defined roles for each rank, including that of the Sergeant Major. Von Steuben designated this position as the head of the non-commissioned officers and directly responsible for their conduct and behavior. "He (the Sergeant Major) should be well acquainted with the interior management



*Friedrich William von Steuben*

and discipline of the regiment, and the manner of keeping rosters and forming details,” the Inspector General wrote. “He must always attend the parade, be very expert in counting off the battalion and in every other business of the adjutant to whom he is an assistant.”<sup>2</sup>

## **Defining the Role**

As the United States entered the Federalist Era, the Army’s reliance on the Sergeant Major continued to grow. The responsibilities of the position increased as well. In his 1814, *Handbook for Infantry*, William Duane described the Sergeant Major as a “useful and indispensable officer,” a vital assistant to the adjutant of a regiment, and the person in charge of all enlisted personnel in every drill, fatigue, guard, or other duty. “He should be a complete master of all the exercises of the battalion from the first drill to the movement in line of battles,” Duane wrote, noting that the Sergeant Major “is to the sergeants and corporals, what the major is to the platoon officers.” He also stated that “the duties are very heavy on a single sergeant major to a battalion,” and suggested that “it would be desirable to have a man in that role in every company.” Nevertheless, he recognized that this was a difficult proposition, because “it is not easy to find men every way qualified.” In recognition of these rare skills, the Army introduced a distinct Sergeant Major rank insignia during the War of 1812 era and formally adopted a chevron in 1821.<sup>3</sup>

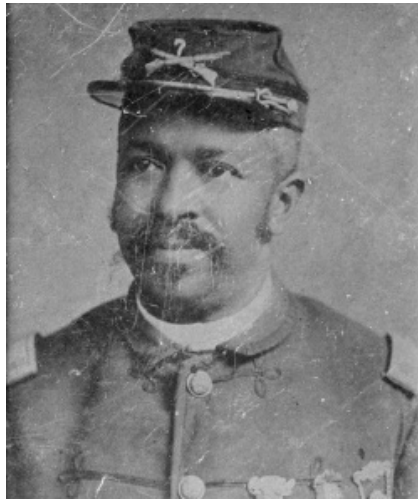
By the time of the Mexican War in 1846, the role of the Sergeant Major was well established in infantry regiments. General Winfield Scott's manual on tactics, which guided preparations for that conflict, presented the highest-ranking non-commissioned Soldier as an integral partner in leadership. As such, he worked side-by-side with the regimental adjutant to train the enlisted troops and shared an equivalent position of command when the force arrayed in line of battle. An uninterrupted string of victories in Mexico demonstrated the success of this cooperative approach and, by 1849, the position of Sergeant Major also had been authorized for regiments of Dragoons, Mounted Riflemen, Artillery, and Engineers.<sup>4</sup>

Duties of the position were further detailed and codified during this era as well. August Valentine Kautz's Civil War-era manual for Non-commissioned officers and enlisted men provided a comprehensive breakdown of the training, discipline, and leadership responsibilities of the Sergeant Major. Its list of duties almost doubled those of previous references. The guide also cited the traits required of a successful occupant of the role. According to Kautz, the successful Sergeant Major "should be a model Soldier for the rest of the regiment in his dress and military deportment. His example and punctual requirements of duty go far towards influencing a proper discipline in the regiment." By establishing himself as the model for Soldierly behavior, the Sergeant Major earned a level of respect equivalent to commissioned officers. Indeed, Kautz—like William Duane before him—recommended that the Sergeant Major have the prospect to receive a commission if one became available in the regiment.<sup>5</sup>

The Sergeant Major role remained a respected leadership position during the Civil War era. It also became one that a new group of men aspired to hold. In 1863, the U.S. Army established the U.S. Colored Troops as a distinct branch of the service and recruited freed slaves and



other Black men to fill the regiments. These units were led almost exclusively by white officers and there was little opportunity for African Americans to earn and hold commissions. However, Black Soldiers were permitted to hold the rank of Sergeant Major and a select few achieved this rank and demonstrated their leadership abilities under fire.



*Sergeants Major Lewis Henry Douglass (top) and Christian Fleetwood (bottom) (Library of Congress)*

Notable examples were Sergeant Majors Lewis Henry Douglass and Christian Fleetwood. Douglass, the eldest son of noted abolitionist Frederick Douglass, served in the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry, which performed valiantly in numerous battles, including the bloody assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina. Fleetwood, of the 4<sup>th</sup> U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment, similarly served in multiple battles, and earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for his character and leadership in the 1864 siege of Petersburg, Virginia.<sup>6</sup>

## Defining the Traits

Character and the modeling of leadership became an increasingly important part of the Sergeant Major position description by the start of the twentieth century. As modern warfare moved away from traditional line battles toward more diffuse formations, the Sergeant Major no longer exercised the same level of direct supervision on the field of battle. Nevertheless, he retained two indispensable functions; to train, motivate, and discipline the troops in advance of a conflict and to serve as a communications conduit between the commissioned leadership and the enlisted force. These dual responsibilities demanded a figure who could earn the trust and respect of superiors and subordinates alike.

In a 1917 manual for Noncommissioned officers, Colonel James Alfred Moss summarized the important traits required to accomplish both duties. To successfully fulfill the role of confidant and representative of the command group—especially the adjutant with whom he collaborated closely—the Sergeant Major had to be trustworthy, and above reproach. “His loyalty should be absolute,” Moss wrote, “and under no circumstances should he ever, by act or word, directly or indirectly, criticize the action of the Adjutant, nor.... talk outside about the official business of the office.” He also benefitted from the talents of a visionary, anticipating the needs of the adjutant, and proactively acting upon them.<sup>7</sup>

Interactions with the enlisted force necessitated an additional set of qualities. To effectively train and develop the enlisted force, the Sergeant Major required a firm understanding of Army regulations, drills, manuals, policies, and doctrine related to the unit and its duties. “He should try,” Moss declared, “to be the best-informed Soldier in the command.” Moss also indicated that the Sergeant Major should be “the most military Soldier in the command.” To induce proper behavior and compliance with regulations by subordinates, the top non-commissioned officer first needed to exhibit his own neatness and correctness of dress, maintain a faultless soldierly bearing, and demonstrate a pleasant and courteous nature, devoid of favoritism in any quarter.<sup>8</sup>

## **Elimination of Sergeant Major Rank**

The position of Sergeant Major was of sufficient significance to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Army, that the National Defense Act of 1916 included specific details about the rank. In that legislation, Sergeants Major were assigned at the regimental and battalion level for Engineers, at the battalion level for Mounted Engineers, to all infantry headquarters companies, and to each cavalry headquarter troop. The act also directed the inclusion of a Sergeant Major in the headquarters company for Field Artillery regiments of two battalions, with an additional position for regiments of three battalions.

Then, only four years later, the National Defense Act of 1920 effectively eliminated those positions. A sweeping reorganization of the Army restricted enlisted Soldiers to seven grades, with the highest non-commissioned rank established as Master Sergeant. Congressional leaders anticipated that this structure would better serve an army that was now comprised of smaller units and pursuing a greater array of specialties. It also significantly reduced costs, an important consideration in an era of dwindling military budgets. The duties required of the Sergeant Major remained, but they were performed by the Senior Master Sergeant. Only the formal title and financial benefits disappeared.<sup>9</sup>

This imperfect solution remained workable in the 1920s and 1930s when the U.S. Army shrank to a skeleton force of fewer than 150,000 troops. It also survived the massive build-up and deployment for World War II. But as Cold War rhetoric between the United States and the Soviet Union evolved into a global contest of wills and power, the seven-grade enlisted framework increasingly became untenable. Modern technology and the complex weaponry of the nuclear age required a greater level of training, knowledge, and skills, and the Army sought a higher grade of non-commissioned officers to manage the process. The need to maintain a constant state of worldwide readiness for an indefinite length of time added to the demand for experienced leaders for the enlisted force.<sup>10</sup>

## **Reemergence**

By the mid-1950s, however, the U.S. Army and other branches of the military struggled to find and retain that leadership. A large portion of enlisted service members—up to 80 percent in some specialties—elected to leave the armed forces after a single term of enlistment. This included the loss of many highly qualified non-commissioned officers in whom the Army had invested substantial money and training time. A major motivator for the departures was the lack of opportunity for career advancement in an organization that was capped at the Master Sergeant level.

In response to this issue, in 1956 Deputy Secretary of Defense Reuben Robertson established the Defense Advisory Committee on Professional and Technical Compensation. That group conducted a detailed study of the Army's personnel problems and formulated several potential resolutions. Primary among these was a proposal to revamp the enlisted grade system by expanding it from seven to nine. The addition of two upper tier NCO positions did not only provide a path for enlisted advancement, it also established a level of leadership required for the enlisted force in the modern era.<sup>11</sup>

These recommendations initiated the reestablishment of the Sergeant Major position in the Army. In June 1958, Congress passed Public Law 85-422, which established the pay levels of E-8 and E-9 at the top of the enlisted structure. For the Army, these grades were designated as First Sergeant and Sergeant Major respectively. In 1959, the Army began promoting NCOs into the reestablished ranks. Within several years, most major commands had placed a Command Sergeant Major back at the top of their enlisted force.<sup>12</sup>

## **Sergeant Major of the Army**

In 1963, Sergeant Major George E. Loikow proposed the idea of a Command Sergeant Major for the Army. Loikow served as an aide to



Army Chief of Staff Earle Wheeler and viewed his role primarily as an administrative assistant for the General. Nevertheless, he also accompanied Wheeler on travel and noted that his exchanges with enlisted personnel provided an important boost to morale and valuable insights into areas of potential concern for the Army. He believed that his successor should be granted the leeway to greatly increase these interactions and assume a more active role as an official liaison between leadership and the enlisted force. He proposed a new position with duties similar to those of a unit Command Sergeant Major and a scope that covered the entire Army.<sup>13</sup>

This proposal gained momentum and came to fruition relatively quickly. Several councils of Sergeants Major endorsed the idea and pushed it forward to the Army Office of Personnel Operations in 1964.



*Flag featuring the insignia of the Sergeant Major of the Army. The insignia was approved in 1966. The flag was authorized in 1999.*

That office agreed with the value of the proposed position and, the following year, recommended establishment of the new office. Discussion then ensued on the exact nature of the position and selection of the first occupant of the role. By 1966, those concerns had been addressed and on 11 July 1966, Sergeant Major William Wooldbridge assumed the title of first Sergeant Major of the Army.”

Over the next decade, Wooldbridge and a series of successors better defined that position. Careful not to circumvent the official command structure and lines of authority, they used their influence to pass information to the enlisted force, introduce and enforce command

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directives, and manage training and readiness. Perhaps of greater significance, Wooldbridge sought to make the Command Sergeant Major of the Army “a voice for the Enlisted Man in the Office of the Chief of Staff.” In time, the office became a conduit for the upward transfer of ideas and information from the non-commissioned ranks to the top leadership. The CSM also emerged as an ombudsman who handled the concerns and complaints of the troops.<sup>14</sup>



*Army Command Sergeant Major conference at the Pentagon, 1970 (Courtesy, National Archives)*

## **Office of Chief Army Reserve**

During this period, the command of the Army Reserve shifted and grew as well. For much of its existence the Organized Reserve lacked strong, focused leadership and responsibility for the troops shuffled multiple times among various offices of the War Department and the Army. By the 1960s, however, pressure grew to give the component

greater continuity and clearer guidance. In 1968, Congress passed legislation to designate a formal chief of the Army Reserve, who would serve as an advisor on reserve affairs to the Chief of Staff of the Army. The Army further adjusted the chain of command in 1975 to allow the Office of Chief of Army Reserve (OCAR) to report directly to the Army Chief of Staff. This placed the position on par with the head of the National Guard Bureau.<sup>15</sup>

This transition represented the leading edge of a move to make the Army Reserve an integral component of a “Total Force.” The Total Force concept was first proposed in 1970 and gained momentum with the elimination of the draft and the establishment of an all-volunteer force in 1973. It recognized that financial and political pressures obliged the Army to reduce its full-time force and make more effective use of its citizen-Soldiers. This was especially the case with the Army Reserve, which had exercised a very minor role in the recent Vietnam conflict.

Under the new policy, the Army Reserve and National Guard would no longer be treated as troops of second resort, sent to reinforce the regular army weeks or months after fighting began. Instead, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird viewed them as an “initial and primary source of augmentation of the active forces.” National Guard troops would supply a large portion of the combat requirement of the Army. Army Reserve troops would concentrate on service support and combat service support roles. Together the two entities would respond alongside the active units as true components of a “homogenous whole.” At the head of one of these coordinated components, the Chief of Army Reserve assumed a position of increased importance within the Army structure.<sup>16</sup>

## **Army Reserve Senior Enlisted Advisor**

The establishment of the Office of Chief of Army Reserve (OCAR) brought about a shift in oversight of the component. In the 1950s and 1960s, the nominal heads of the reserve forces had generally performed advisory functions while members of the active component continued to

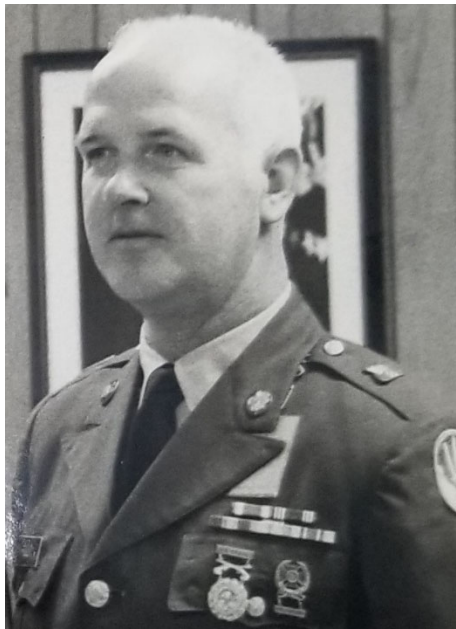
make vital decisions affecting the reserves. Under the new Total Force policy, the Chief of Army Reserve gained greater access to the Chief of Staff. He also assumed direct authority over decisions and actions involving reserve funding, recruitment, training, and management. This included a substantially higher level of control over enlisted personnel. By extension, this necessitated the addition of a senior advisor for enlisted affairs as a prominent part of the Chief of Army Reserve staff.

The push to create a senior enlisted position predated the establishment of OCAR. During the 1960s and 1970s, Reserve leaders had steadily improved their stature within the Army command structure, but still lacked the level of connection to enlisted personnel enjoyed by the other components. While the Office of Chief of the National Guard Bureau included a Staff Sergeant Major in a Senior Enlisted Advisor role, the Army Reserve had no comparable position. Management of and advocacy for enlisted personnel largely remained with the many regionally based Army Reserve Commands. Major General J. Milner Roberts, who served as Chief of Army Reserve from 1971 until May 1975—immediately prior to the establishment of OCAR—believed that this arrangement hampered communications and limited the ability of Army Reserve troops to serve with the same capabilities as their peers in other components. He initiated a request for a Senior Enlisted Advisor in his office and, in November 1974, gained approval for the position.<sup>17</sup>



*Major General J. Milner Roberts*

Roberts sought to fill the role quickly. He invited Sergeants Major of the Army Reserve Troop Program Units to submit their names for consideration for a 60-day Active-Duty Training assignment. This trial period would permit the selectee to demonstrate suitability for the job. If all proceeded smoothly, the candidate would then extend the tour of duty for an additional 22 months to complete the term under the Long Tour Management Program.



*William Foley*

This selection process resulted in the naming of SGM William Foley, the CSM of the 123<sup>rd</sup> Army Reserve Command as the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of Army Reserve. The appointment was made as Robert's tenure drew to a close and Foley ultimately served as the Sergeant Major to Major General Henry Mohr in the newly established Office of Chief of Army Reserve.<sup>18</sup>

Foley took his post during a time of significant change and challenge. Upon MG Mohr's entry into duty, OCAR became a two-star command with roles

and responsibilities that had not yet been fully defined. The role of the Senior Enlisted Advisor remained in flux as well. For years, the Sergeants Major of major Army Reserve commands had followed a line of communication through the US Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) to the Sergeant Major of the Army and it remained to be established how the new position would fit into this channel. Moreover, the Army Reserve as a component had entered a period of considerable volatility. The end of the draft and a shift to an all-volunteer force had caused a precipitous drop

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in enlistments and forced the component to focus attention on recruitment, training, and retention of an enlisted force. At the same time, the Total Force policy led to numerous actions to realign units and focus on the new service and combat support mission of the organization.<sup>19</sup>

The new Senior Enlisted Advisor concentrated his efforts on developing solutions to some of these issues. Foley's initial actions involved the formation of study groups to improve the training of enlisted Soldiers of the Army Reserves. In 1976, he assumed a lead role alongside NCOs from the TRADOC, FORSCOM, and the 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Army in the development of an Army Reserve Enlisted Personnel Management System. This plan, a direct outgrowth of the Total Force policy, aimed to place Army Reserve enlisted personnel on an equal footing with those of the Active Component to ensure equivalence in processes and equity in promotions. It envisioned a program that would integrate training, evaluation, classification, reclassification, promotion, and career development into a single system and ease integration with other components. Although Foley was only one of seven reserve voices on the nine-member panel, he rather quickly set the precedent that his office would play a significant role in developing and implementing policy for the enlisted force of the component. The involvement also established his position as a leader among the Army Reserve NCOs and a voice for the needs of all enlisted personnel.<sup>20</sup>

## **Evolution of Responsibilities**

Subsequent occupants of the office expanded upon this accomplishment and pursued solutions to other issues. SGM Donald Colombo, the second Senior Enlisted Advisor, continued to advocate for improved training of the enlisted force, but also turned his attention to improved funding and equipment for the component. The third SEA, SGM Cornelius Boykins likewise campaigned for better resources and advocated for reserve readiness.<sup>21</sup>

Events during Boykin's term revealed a growing acceptance of the Army Reserve and of the Senior Enlisted Advisor within its structure. Deployment of Army Reserve support units to Grenada during Operation Urgent Fury demonstrated the potential of the component as a partner in the Total Force. More significantly, the leadership role of the Senior Enlisted Advisor within this respected force had become apparent. During Boykin's term, the position migrated to the Active Guard Reserve Program and the rank elevated from Sergeant Major to Command Sergeant Major. He became the first occupant of the office to be formally designated as CSM of the Office of Chief of Army Reserve.

CSM Edward Reilly was able to draw upon this new status when he succeeded Boykin in 1985. Although Reilly only served in the post for about a year, he used the authority inherent in the CSM title to push for better weapons and weapons training, improved educational opportunities, and enhanced support programs for Army Reserve families. He strongly advocated for improved opportunities for the growing female contingent in the component, helping to increase the number of women in NCO positions for specialties ranging from nurse to drill sergeant. Reilly also greatly expanded the number of visits to units in the field, both at home and abroad, using the occasions to measure the pulse of the NCO Corps and enlisted force. Reilly noted that some critics felt he spent too much time on the road, but he believed it was an integral part of the job. "You can't accomplish things sitting on your duff in the office, when things are out in the field," he asserted. "That's where you talk to the people and find out what the problems are and relate them back to the CAR."<sup>22</sup>

By the time Douglas Murray assumed the mantle of Command Sergeant Major in 1986, the position had developed two clearly defined and equally important missions. As Senior Enlisted Advisor, Murray was asked to counsel the Chief of the Army Reserve and staff on "policies, directives, and regulations that pertain to the training, education and professional development, recruitment, assignment, utilization, promotion, pay, privileges, discipline, retention/attrition, and overall

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general welfare of the USAR Soldiers.” As Command Sergeant Major, he assumed a prominent role on leadership and advisory councils, served as a liaison with other components and agencies, represented the Army Reserve with professional groups and other commands, and served as the senior NCO for the component, especially among Sergeants Major of the



*CSM Douglas Murray, in his Pentagon Office*

Active Guard Reserve worldwide. He also was expected to accompany the Chief of Army Reserve on visits to the field, serve on awards boards, provide guidance and counseling to enlisted Soldiers, and coordinate activities with the Sergeant Major of the Army and the CSM of the National Guard.



During his five-year term, Murray performed all aspects of these duties and continued to raise the profile of the office. He offered extensive advice, training, and guidance on issues of recruitment and retention. He supported reforms to the process and fairness of NCO advancement. He also traveled throughout the world—sometimes alongside the Chief of Army Reserve, other times, on solo missions—seeking to highlight the growing involvement of the Army Reserve in the Total Force. In Ecuador, he interacted with engineering units sent to rebuild roads following the devastating 1987 earthquake. In Panama, he met with component civil affairs and military police units participating in the 1989 Operation Just Cause. He also journeyed to Saudi Arabia in 1990 to hear the concerns of Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers that had mobilized in advance of the Gulf War.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to meeting with the troops on these and multiple other missions, Murray strived to make others aware of the burgeoning role of the Army Reserve. During Murray's tenure, *Army Reserve* magazine described the Command Sergeant Major as the person who "makes sure the USAR point of view is clearly understood by his counterparts throughout the Army's command structure, both inside and outside the Pentagon." Murray took that role seriously, coordinating with other components and branches of the services, speaking at conferences and symposia, and acting as a spokesperson for component affairs, requirements, and concerns at Congressional committees and hearings. By the end of his term, Murray had solidified the reputation of the CSM as the head of the NCO corps and a leading figure within the component.<sup>24</sup>

One of Murray's most lasting accomplishments was his successful push to expand promotion opportunities for the Army Reserve enlisted force. Specifically, the new Enlisted Personnel Management System permitted NCOs, who often lacked promotion opportunities with their local unit, to compete for billets at other units in a 50-mile radius. This policy greatly expanded the pool of candidates for many leadership

positions and dictated that advancement would be decided less by geography and more by merit. The process placed the Army Reserve promotion process on a more equal footing with the Active Force and enabled many Soldiers, previously stuck at the E-7 grade, to advance to the E-8 and E-9 ranks. This benefitted the careers of several of Murray's successors, who subsequently took steps to increase the scope and flexibility of the process during their own terms as Command Sergeant Major.<sup>25</sup>

Such action continued to enhance the reputation of the OCAR CSM, and Army leadership recognized the rising stature of the position. During the 1990s, Army Chief of Staff Gordon Sullivan decided that the Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve should accompany the Sergeant Major of the Army and the CSM of the National Guard Bureau on visits to locations where troops of the components trained and deployed. His goal was to reinforce the Total Force concept by presenting the trio as a coordinated and concerted leadership group for the enlisted force. Subsequently, Collin Younger, the sixth CSM for the Army Reserve joined his peers for travel to more than 40 countries and participated in extensive interactions with Soldiers from all three components.<sup>26</sup>

Greater visibility also enabled Younger to expand his advocacy for the component's enlisted ranks. A notable example involved his efforts to enhance the Army Reserve Non-commissioned Officer Education System. When Younger took on the role, funding and unit requirements limited the Army Reserve annual enrollment at the Sergeant Major Academy to about 25 students. By contrast, National Guard and Active Duty NCOs encountered no such restrictions. Younger was able to exert his influence to secure money for training and ease restrictions to the school. The following year, 1100 senior enlisted personnel applied to the academy and more than 300 attended. Other leadership opportunities and training improved as well.<sup>27</sup>

## The United States Army Reserve Command

Younger also participated in another milestone event in the development of the Army Reserve and of his office. In 1990, after many years of discussion about the most effective chain of control for the component, Congress formally established the US Army Reserve Command (USARC) and assigned it control over all subordinate reserve commands. The Command General of USARC would report directly to FORSCOM while the Chief of Army Reserve continued to report to the Chief of Staff of the Army.

Despite this distinction, when the new command formally commenced operations in October 1991, Major General Roger Sandler, Chief of Army Reserve also took the reins as Command

General of USARC. Subsequent leaders have continued that dual-hatted role. Younger also took on a double role, as CSM of the Office of Chief of Army Reserve and as CSM of the U.S. Army Reserve Command.<sup>28</sup>



*CSM Collin Younger at an award presentation, 90<sup>th</sup> ARCOM, San Antonio*

To some degree, the division of responsibility between two commands merely emphasized the dual responsibilities assigned to Murray as CSM almost a decade before. As Command Sergeant Major and Senior Enlisted Advisor for OCAR, Younger continued to provide the Chief of Army Reserve with advice on policy, directives, and regulations for the Army Reserve and its enlisted personnel. In his role for USARC, he assumed responsibility for some 200,000 Army Reserve enlisted Soldiers around the world, including their training, professional development, health, and welfare. On a daily basis, however, the duties of the Command Sergeant Major remained largely unchanged.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, the establishment of USARC, as an intermediary between FORSCOM and Army Reserve field units, bolstered the importance of the CSM as an ombudsman for enlisted issues and as the conduit to carry those concerns to the highest levels of the Army. For example, during his term as the seventh CSM of OCAR and the second to represent USARC, John Rucynski, pressed for resolution of numerous matters of import to his constituency. He successfully campaigned for Special Duty Assignment Pay for Drill Sergeants. He pushed to change the policy that required Soldiers in the Active Guard Reserve programs to complete twelve months of AGR service before they could be considered for promotion. He also advocated for the development of First Sergeants as part of the Active Guard Reserve—a program that was eventually adopted during the term of his successor. “It was always my intent to be the union representative of the Soldiers,” Rucynski said of his role, “to seek out and fix concerns to their satisfaction.”<sup>30</sup>

On the occasions when he could not secure the desired solution, Rucynski took responsibility for detailing the issues and consequences to the troops. A case in point involved the Ready Reserve Mobilization Income Insurance Program. Congress debuted the insurance in 1996 to protect reserve members from financial losses when involuntarily called to active duty. Low enrollment and other issues soon made the program insolvent and legislators abruptly cancelled the program the following year. The timing of this reversal was unfortunate, occurring as numerous

reserve units and thousands of Soldiers deployed in the Balkans. Unable to resolve the problem, Rucynski and Commanding General Max Baratz conducted a nine-day tour and conducted more than 40 programs to explain the problem, outline consequences, and offer feedback from the troops. The circuit focused on the immediate concern, but also revealed the rising importance of the CSM office as an ally, advisor, and caretaker of the force.<sup>31</sup>

Rucynski actively embraced this role. In addition to in-person tours to cover subjects of importance, he reached out via print media. As a regular correspondent to *Army Reserve* magazine, he addressed the force with articles on a variety of topics, including safety, training, the NCO Education System, and the NCO evaluation process. His summaries involved a mix of information, advice, and morale-boosting recollections, designed to let Soldiers know that they had someone listening to them and speaking for them on the leadership team at OCAR.

Ray Lackey, his successor as the OCAR CSM, carried on this tradition and was even more prolific in his writing. He revisited subjects like evaluations and promotions and covered numerous additional topics, ranging from fitness standards and recruiting to the significance of policy changes like the adoption of the black beret as headwear. Like Rucynski before him, Lackey used these articles to impart key information directly to his primary audience. Just as importantly, he cultivated the ideal that the CSM served as a mentor to the force and provided guidance on career, moral, and morale issues. Again, he sought to demonstrate to service members that someone in a position of influence cared.<sup>32</sup>



*CSM Ray Lackey, in his office, maintaining contact with the field*

Indeed, caring had become an expected trait for those holding the office. Like their forbears of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, CSMs still needed to model high character, a Soldierly bearing, and a firm understanding of regulations, policy, and doctrine. Likewise, they remained responsible for the leadership, training, and discipline of the force. In the era of an all-volunteer Army, however, empathy rose in importance. Men and women considering enlistment wanted to know that someone in the organization would look out for their well-being. Those already in the service sought reassurance that someone shared their concerns and would work on their behalf if they chose to stay. Unit officers and NCOs at the field level shouldered much of this responsibility, but volunteers also wanted to believe that someone at the highest levels protected their interests. They turned to the highest-ranking figure in the enlisted force, expecting to find understanding and empathy for their professional and personal needs.



Those who have occupied the role of Command Sergeant Major have embraced the idea that goodwill, concern, and empathy have become defining features of the position. CSM Nicolas Piacentini stated this succinctly: “Soldiers don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” He strived to act in a manner that made his caring evident across the force. CSM Michele S. Jones similarly indicated that she wanted compassion to be part of her legacy. She expressed her wish to be remembered as a leader, “who led from the front, led by example, cared, gave, and fought for my Army Reserve Soldiers and families.”<sup>33</sup>



*CSM Michele S. Jones speaks to Soldiers in Balad, Iraq, December 2005.  
(Photo by SSG Engels Tejada)*

For several years, the Army Reserve had two Command Sergeants Major to provide this care and leadership. When Lieutenant General Thomas Plewes assumed responsibility for the Office of Chief of Army Reserve and the U.S. Army Reserve Command in 1998, he believed that the two offices each merited a dedicated CSM position. John Rucynski remained in his position at OCAR and CSM Frank Spangler took over at USARC. Following Rucynski’s retirement in 1999, Alex Ray Lackey took over at OCAR. LTG James R. Helmly retained this division of duties

when he replaced Plewes in 2002. He appointed Michele S. Jones as Command Sergeant Major at OCAR and selected Nicholas Piacentini, Jr. for that role at USARC. The role resumed as a single position in 2006 when LTG Jack C. Stultz selected Leon Caffie to serve as CSM of both commands.<sup>34</sup>

## **CSM of the Army Reserve and the War on Terror**

This division and eventual reunification of the OCAR and USARC CSM positions occurred during a time of growing Army Reserve importance and increased stress on the force. The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon ushered in a period of intense activity for the component. In the immediate aftermath, units and individuals were called upon to provide disaster response and bolster homeland security. Over the longer term, as the U.S. Army engaged in the Global War on Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Army Reserve faced more extensive and intensive demand for its combat support and combat service support capabilities. For the duration of the decade, troops and units faced constant demands to fulfill operational responsibilities within the Army.

The Command Sergeants Major of the Army Reserve took the lead in preparing enlisted personnel to meet the professional and personal demands of this service—a daunting task that required a mix of demanding leadership and caring support. OCAR CSM Alex Ray Lackey summed up that balance well in a message to the troops shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks. He challenged Army Reserve Soldiers to be “technically and tactically proficient, mentally and physically tough and prepared to mobilize when called.” At the same time, he demonstrated his concern for the well-being of those men and women, providing details about resources, benefits, and insurance options for those about to depart for the military theater. “Now, more than ever,” he advised them, “you need to make sure that your family is well informed, knows who to contact for support or assistance, and can function without you.”<sup>35</sup>



Lackey and Frank Spangler, his counterpart at USARC, relied far more on actions to support these words. Prior to 2001, both CSMs had devoted much of their time to devising plans to improve recruitment, develop and promote readiness, encourage fitness of the troops, and improve family programs. In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, they shifted their focus to effective implementation and expansion of the policies. They traveled extensively to meet with mobilizing units to better relay the importance and availability of readiness, fitness, and support systems. Lackey also initiated several regulatory changes that increase the maximum years of service for Troop Program Unit Soldiers.

One of Lackey's most significant contributions to the office involved a change to his title. Following a visit with Army Reserve troops based in Bosnia and Kosovo, he landed in Macedonia without a scheduled outbound flight. When he attempted to make arrangements to return to the Pentagon, he discovered that those in charge were not aware of the significance of his position as Command Sergeant Major to OCAR and were slow to assist with his efforts. He eventually secured a place on aircraft headed to Frankfurt, where he found a connection to Washington D.C. Frustrated by the delay, he appealed for a more-recognizable designation that would prevent this type of confusion in the future. LTG Thomas Plewes approved the request and from that day forward the position took on the clearer title of Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve.<sup>36</sup>

Following the departure of Lackey and Spangler, Nicholas Piacentini and Michele S. Jones continued the effort to provide instruction, discipline, counsel, and support to the highl-engaged enlisted and NCO force. Each took over the assignment of Command Sergeant Major in 2002—soon after the initiation of hostilities in Afghanistan and shortly before the start of the war in Iraq—and those two conflicts dominated their attention. Both devoted their efforts to keeping commands and troops informed about the wars, regulations, and expectations for the component, advocating for better training and equipment for the troops, and maintaining morale. Toward this end, Jones traveled to both war

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zones to view facilities and directly view the needs. Piacentini coordinated the development of the Welcome Home Warrior Citizen Program to honor all Soldiers upon their return from deployment.

These measures helped sustain the troops during conflict and enabled the Army Reserve to demonstrate its importance to the Total Force. However, the prolonged cycle of mobilizations and deployments in support of the War on Terror had placed a severe strain on the component, its units, and its members. To alleviate that strain, in 2006, FORSCOM introduced a more predictable five-year cycle of deployments for reserve forces. That same year, LTG Jack Stultz, ascended to command of the Army Reserve and appointed Leon Caffie as his Command Sergeant Major for both OCAR and USARC. Stultz assigned Caffie the mission of reinvigorating a weary enlisted force as it embarked on the new readiness process. His ambitious goals included retention of talent, improvement of unit skills, development of NCO leadership, promotion of fairness, and establishment of the foundation for a new generation of recruits and leaders.<sup>37</sup>



*CSM Leon Caffie congratulates a soldier following the oath of enlistment, 2007.*

CSM Caffie vigorously pursued these goals. Having recently served on active duty in Iraq, he already possessed an understanding of the challenges encountered by those in the ranks. He supplemented this knowledge by conducting observational tours and listening to the opinions of Soldiers and civilians throughout the component. He responded to their concerns with initiatives to advance the interest of enlisted Soldiers. New recruitment incentives and family programs helped build and sustain the force. Expanded and improved use of the Active Guard Reserve program created leadership and career opportunities for veteran Soldiers while simultaneously providing mentors for newcomers. Revisions to the promotion process ensured that merit and qualifications determined advancement and better aligned the Army Reserve with the Active Component. The Command Sergeant Major even oversaw changes to the USARC Best Warrior Competition. He used the process to develop better Soldiers and to demonstrate that Army Reserve Soldiers could compete on even terms with those of other components.<sup>38</sup>

By the close of his term in 2010, Caffie had contributed significantly to the development of a more stable and functional Army Reserve. Enlistment had started to climb, and retention numbers increased. The component also boasted improved training and support programs which contributed to readiness and morale. As reserve Soldiers and units continued to make vital contributions to the Total Force, they also earned greater acceptance and respect from the Active Component. Caffie took pride in helping to eliminate the description of reservists as “weekend warriors.” “I always say the United States Army Reserve has arrived,” he stated in an interview shortly before leaving his post as CSM. “It’s very difficult, if not impossible, now to distinguish our reserve Soldiers from active duty.”<sup>39</sup>

## **Back to Basics**

Army Reserve leaders were pleased with the enhanced stature and stability of the component. Nevertheless, concern grew that a decade of

high operational tempo had obscured some of the organization's core values and led to neglect of physical fitness, uniform standards, and general discipline among the troops. Incoming CSM Michael Schultz sought to remedy these issues and used the office to advocate for the restoration of foundational doctrine. In consultation and coordination with his predecessors in office, including Caffie, Collin Younger, Frank Spangler, Alex Lackey, and Michele S. Jones, he initiated a "back to basics" program that reasserted the importance of fundamental Army requirements.<sup>40</sup>

Non-Commissioned Officers were key to the success of this program. Schultz firmly believed that troops would not comply with rules and regulations if the NCOs who supervised them failed to regulate their own behavior. "If I'm telling Soldiers, 'This is what you need to do,' but I'm not doing it myself, I'm not leading from the front," he asserted. He placed additional responsibility on Sergeants Major. Those at the highest levels of the enlisted ranks could not merely rely on information and orders, they needed to reclaim the historical role as the model for dress and deportment in their commands. He included himself in this requirement. As the top enlisted figure in the Army Reserve, he strived to consistently model the behavior he hoped to propagate.

Schultz also understood that good leadership required training and he campaigned for improved instruction and increased opportunities for Non-Commissioned officers to develop their skills. Toward that end, he devoted much of his time in office to the establishment of a Senior Enlisted Management Office (SEMO) to cultivate talent at the highest levels of the enlisted force.<sup>41</sup>

## **Pursuing Change**

Luther Thomas, who became the twelfth CSM of the Army Reserve in February 2013, maintained these efforts but also confronted a period of significant change. The modern Army Reserve looked very different than the component that had first appointed a Senior Enlisted Advisor forty years before. Technological innovations had transformed access to

information, modes of communications, and methods of social interactions. The role of the component continued to evolve as well. In 2012, Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act, which authorized the activation of Army Reserve troops and units for homeland support in the event of major disasters and emergencies. Units continued to provide overseas combat service and support but also took on response to domestic hurricanes, earthquakes, wildfires, and other threats.

Meanwhile, the Army Reserve was experiencing a demographic shift and becoming an increasingly youthful force. At the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, about forty percent of component troops were under the age of thirty. By 2015, the balance had shifted substantially, with more than half of the force younger than thirty years old and one-third under the age of 25. The youth movement was even more pronounced in the enlisted ranks where almost forty percent of the force occupied the 25-years and younger bracket. Faced with this new generation of Soldiers, responsibilities, and resources, Thomas continued to perform the role of guide, advisor, and advocate for the enlisted force and to push for preservation of core values. At the same time, he took steps to make his office an instrument of change and to adapt methods to developing conditions.<sup>42</sup>

Several examples illustrate this balance of continuity and change. Like CSM Schultz before him, Thomas noted the importance of NCOs modeling appropriate behavior. In recognition of the declining median age of the force, however, he asserted that younger, lower-ranked individuals

should assume a greater role in setting the example for their generation.

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*CSM Luther Thomas reaches out to the troops via Armed Forces Radio.*

He similarly supported the idea of sending youthful, combat veterans on recruiting assignments, believing that they would connect better with teen-aged enlistees than aging individuals of higher rank. Continuing the policy of his predecessor, he retained the emphasis on training and leadership development. Yet, once again Thomas skewed toward a younger audience. He focused on providing training for Soldiers at the E-4, E-5, and E-6 levels, encouraged leadership preparation for mid-level NCOs, and supported policy to improve advancement opportunities by automatically including qualified sergeants on promotion lists.<sup>43</sup>

## FOREWORD

This past year, we said goodbye to Collin L. Younger, our sixth Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve and the first Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army Reserve Command. It is absolutely fitting that in honor of this great leader we can dedicate the first ever historical archive of the Command Sergeants Major of the Army Reserve. In this small way we celebrate those who have come before us and never forget their service. The Command Sergeants Major in this book were pioneers in an ever-adapting position that had immense strategic, operational, and tactical impacts across the total force. Their deeds brought further credibility and relevance to our Non-Commissioned Officer Corps.

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge CSM Lawrence M. Leising. It was his idea to create this historical document and his efforts that made it a reality. Without his dedication and attention to detail this book would not exist.

The establishment of the position of Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of Army Reserve in 1975 represented a major milestone and gave the Noncommissioned Officer Corps a voice at the highest level of the organization. In 1984, that position was elevated to the status of Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve. In 1991, Command Sergeant Major Younger became the first enlisted Soldier to serve a dual role, when he assumed both Component and Command responsibilities. Since that time, the position has developed and changed, but the fundamental responsibilities remain the same. The

Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve continues to advise the Chief of Army Reserve on all Soldier matters, while also conducting battlefield circulation to communicate the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Reserve Command's priorities and strategic messages to our Soldiers around the globe. They are influencers and enlisted thought leaders.

In my view, Noncommissioned Officers must act purposefully rather than simply remain in motion. They should be swift in their decisions and cut to the heart of the matter. Our leaders require the Non-Commissioned Officer to be the backbone of our organizations and portray confidence that—with disciplined initiative—we will find a way through adversity and achieve the mission.

Noncommissioned Officers chosen to be the Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve have been individuals who not only have had extraordinary careers, but who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to the welfare of their fellow soldiers.

The careers and life stories of the men and woman who have served as the Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve are both inspirational and instructive. Through them, we gain an appreciation for all the enlisted men and women who, over the past two-and a-half centuries, have worked, fought, and sacrificed to make America's Army Reserve the most lethal, dedicated federal reserve in history. As we continue to shape the Army Reserve to meet the challenges of the next twenty years, it is always appropriate to look back and learn from our history.

ANDREW J. LOMBARDO  
Fourteenth Sergeant Major of Army Reserve  
April 2022

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## **Into the Digital Age**

Thomas also ushered in an important new era of communication. In the tradition of those who occupied the role before him, he employed multiple methods to reach out to the troops and listen to their opinions and apprehensions. Following in the footsteps of CSMs Rucynski and Lackey, who had relied heavily on the written word, and of CSM Schultz, who made regular use of video technology, Thomas turned to the medium most commonly used by the new generation—the internet. He became the first CSM to reach out to the troops via social media and maintained an active presence on multiple platforms. This proved to be an effective, immediate, and personal method to provide updates on important issues and actions. He also relied on sites like Facebook to field questions and message boards like RallyPoint to engage in direct communication with Soldiers in the field. Interim CSM James Willis eventually advanced the outreach one step farther with the creation of official Army Reserve CSM pages on several of the social media platforms<sup>44</sup>

As technological capabilities progressed, virtual outreach became a staple of the CSM role. When Ted Copeland took office as the thirteenth CSM of the Army Reserve in 2017, the component had recently introduced the concept of Ready Force X. This program, which required many units to remain in a state of sustained readiness, presented multiple challenges to the part-time force and generated much apprehension and many questions in the ranks. Copeland addressed these concerns in well-tested ways, disseminating information and traveling to affected commands to directly provide facts, and guidance. He significantly increased his outreach, however, by initiating “Virtual Huddles.” These live, online presentations of his gatherings with in-person audiences

ensured that many more Soldiers could hear his words and pose questions to him. The sessions, supplemented by a steady stream of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube postings, vastly extended the reach of the CSM office and expanded Copeland's ability to perform the established role as manager, mentor, advocate, and ombuds of the enlisted force.<sup>45</sup>



Andrew Lombardo, the fourteenth CSM, made even greater use of virtual communications—largely out of necessity. He began his term in June 2020, at a time of growing concern over the worldwide spread of the

*CSM Ted Copeland speaks to troops at the Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, June 2019.*

Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Travel and gathering restrictions, designed to slow the spread of the pandemic, interrupted operations and forced a pause and adjustments to collective training and battle assemblies. At the same time, demands upon the Army Reserve grew as numerous Soldiers and units moved to active status for medical support and assistance under the Defense Support to Civil Authorities program. Both aspects necessitated clarification and guidance from the Command Sergeant Major. But Lombardo also was subject to restrictions and limited in his ability to travel and meet with affected units. Instead,



he and the Chief of Army Reserve reached out to the force via an extensive slate of video presentations, virtual seminars and conferences, and digital question and answer sessions. These modes of outreach—previously a supplement to other forms of communication—became a primary and essential form of outreach and contact with the force until travel and gathering restrictions eased.<sup>46</sup>

Lombardo also applied new technology to advance the “back to



*CSM Andrew Lombardo presents virtual guidance to the force, June 2020.*

basics” ideals supported by his predecessors. In 2021, he introduced a “Know Your Tasks” video series to reach out to the enlisted force with direct guidance on issues like physical fitness, field craft, and army standards. The first installment of the series, a presentation on proper use of the M249 machine gun, was issued on multiple platforms and distributed broadly throughout the component. By harnessing the latest innovations and offerings of the digital era, Lombardo himself returned to basics and resumed the longstanding responsibilities of the Command Sergeant Major as an instructor and model for the enlisted force.<sup>47</sup>

## **Enduring Missions**

As Lombardo's actions demonstrate, modernization and advances in the resources available to the Command Sergeant Major have enhanced, not eliminated, a fundamental responsibility of the office. Despite changes over time, each CSM of the Army Reserve has vigorously pursued his or her duty to enforce rules, set standards, and serve as a model for behavior—to be the “most military Soldier in the command.” Nowhere has this been more evident than in the efforts to promote fitness and physical readiness among the troops. Individually and as a group, the CSMs consistently have voiced expectations that Soldiers prepare for and meet the requirements of the Army Physical Fitness Test.

More importantly, they also have strived to demonstrate that they are not immune to these requirements. The eighth CSM, Ray Lackey, for example, not only stressed the importance of NCOs meeting height and weight and fitness requirements, he also regularly participated in the annual Army Ten-Miler to highlight his own commitment to conditioning. Michael Schultz, eleventh CSM, adopted a similar role. He avidly promoted events like the Best Warrior Competition as tools to develop a fitter, more capable force. In 2010, he also joined the competition, by shouldering a rucksack and participating in the 10-mile march portion of the contest.<sup>48</sup>



*CSM Michael Schultz joins contestants of the 2010 Best Warrior Competition in the 10-mile rucksack march..*

Andrew Lombardo, the fourteenth Command Sergeant Major has

upheld this tradition. In September 2020, he introduced the Double Eagle Fitness Challenge, a listing of activity milestones to improve Soldier readiness in the aftermath of COVID-19 shutdowns and quarantines. To promote the program and its importance, the Command Sergeant Major also has joined in numerous training sessions and displayed his willingness to serve as an example for all to follow.<sup>49</sup>



*CSM Andrew Lombardo participates in a physical readiness training session at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 17 July 2020.*

This mission to serve as leader, mentor, and authority has always been balanced with the equally important role of advocacy for the enlisted force. At the most basic level, this requires a broad understanding of Soldier needs and concerns. Each Command Sergeant Major has maintained a heavy schedule of travel, listening sessions, and other outreach to ensure that they are aware of the mood of the troops. Many of the concepts collected through this process have remained the same across the years: the need for better equipment, the requirement for improved training, and the desire for better support systems and structures. Other discussions have involved issues specific to an era or more personal questions about promotions, benefits, and other individual

needs. In all cases, however, listening represents only half of the equation. Having heard the desires and anxieties of the Soldiers, the Command Sergeant Major also has served as the voice for the non-commissioned ranks, ensuring that important issues reach the ears of decision-makers in the Army Reserve, the Army, the Department of Defense, or the halls of Congress.

More significantly, each Command Sergeant Major has emphasized the importance of achieving action on concerns. Nicholas Piacentini, for example, believed that the care and welfare of the troops demanded more than just listening and “lip service” and always strived to resolve or alleviate issues brought to his attention. Similarly,

Michele S. Jones portrayed herself as a leader of the “Get-Stuff-Done Club,” and regularly fought for the needs of Soldiers and their families. The CSMs have used a variety of channels to “get stuff done,” including testimony before Congress, discussions with top officials in the Pentagon, modification of Army Reserve policies, and management of changes through the NCO structure.<sup>50</sup>

In some instances, this has required personal attention. CSM Douglas Murray, for example, recalled receiving a plea for help from an officer who had consistently encountered obstacles with his efforts to have a Soldier enrolled in Drill Sergeant School. Murray stepped in to assist, helping to reserve a seat, secure funding, and verify enrollment. The Soldier subsequently distinguished himself in the training and graduated at the top of his class. Not every case has received an equal level of



*Command Sergeants Major Schultz, Younger, Lackey, and Thomas speak during a Noncommissioned Officer Development Program question and answer session, 2015.*

attention and not all outcomes have been as fruitful, but each of the CSM has shared Murray's determination to knock down barriers and resolve Soldier issues as effectively as possible.<sup>51</sup>

The enduring responsibilities of the Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve as a leader and advocate for the component have necessitated another significant trait of the office—a strong and mutually respectful relationship with the Chief of Army Reserve. Each CSM stepped into the role with an understanding that he or she had been selected to support and advance the vision of the Chief of Army Reserve in office at the time. As CSM Murray stated succinctly, “My job was to execute the CAR’s vision for our Army Reserve through our NCO Corps.” This clear mission provided him, as well as those who came before and after, with a level of authority to push initiatives forward.



*Lt. Gen. Jeffrey W. Talley, Chief of Army Reserve, receives colors from CSM Luther Thomas during a change of responsibility ceremony, January 8, 2016.*

At the same time, however, the job of the Command Sergeant Major has always been to inform and help shape those initiatives. Although the title has changed over the years, the CSM remains the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Command General, drawing upon insights developed over an extensive career in the NCO ranks.

In this role, the CSM wields considerable authority and exerts substantial influence over the development of initiatives, policies, and doctrine. CSM Spangler, for instance, recalled numerous one-on-one meetings with LTG Plewes that involved discussion of issues, exchanges of opinion, and development of a shared plan of action. “He understood

my role and truly respected it,” Spangler later said of his commanding officer. CSM Piacentini enjoyed a similar relationship with LTG Ron Helmly. Piacentini described himself as the general’s right-hand man and ‘Battle Buddy,’ stating that “he never made a final ‘enlisted’ decision without consulting with me for my opinion, suggestion, or recommendation.”

Such a level of support has afforded CSMs considerable leeway in developing their own programs and priorities. During their respective tenures in office, for example, CSMs Caffie and Schultz worked closely with LTG Jack Stultz and observed his readiness to grant them autonomy of action. Caffie noted that his Commanding Officer placed great value in a strong NCO Corps and preferred to guide his CSM in its management rather than direct his activities. Schultz, who succeeded Caffie, cited Stultz as a teacher and a visionary who always listened to his Senior Enlisted Advisor with great respect and strongly backed his initiatives. This type of support held true for other Command Generals as well and has been afforded to all who occupied the office of Command Sergeant Major. CSM James Lambert, for example, filled the role on an interim basis, but recalled that LTG Jeffrey Talley always valued his input and fully backed his decisions.<sup>52</sup>

## **Unique Role of the Army Reserve CSM**

The power to influence initiatives and determine policy is by no means unique to the Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve. It is, however, of particular importance to the component. The wide dispersion of Army Reserve Soldiers and units across the nation limits the ability of service members to track developing trends and influence decisions. The part-time nature of reserve service, which limits military involvement to a few days each month and a few weeks each year, further separates the enlisted force from the decision-making process. In this diffuse system, Soldiers rely heavily on the CSM as a source of information, clarification, and guidance. Moreover, unlike Active Component troops, who have regular access to a chain of command,



Reserve members depend on the Command Sergeants Major to act as a full-time champion for the part-time Soldier.

To accomplish this weighty responsibility, the top enlisted soldiers of the Army Reserve frequently have drawn upon their own experiences as citizen soldiers. Although each of the Command Sergeants Major of the Army Reserve amassed an impressive military record prior to their term, it is important to recognize that the vast majority did so while also maintaining a civilian career and responsibilities outside the Army. They worked their way up the ranks while holding full-time jobs as salespersons, administrators, postmasters, law enforcement officers, and other professions. They attended military training and schooling while also pursuing college educations and professional certifications. Often, future CSMs made great sacrifices in their civilian lives to fulfill military requirements or stepped away from their primary source of income to deploy for active duty. These experiences contributed to their understanding of the Soldiers they represented and fueled a motivation to improve conditions and assist the advancement of others.



*Retired Command Sergeants Major Michele S. Jones, Collin Younger, Frank Spangler, and Alex Lackey, join CSM Michael Schultz at an Army Reserve Leadership Conference, May 2011*



The depth of this desire to help others becomes evident when the Command Sergeants Major reflect on their careers. When asked to look back on their contributions, few begrudge their personal sacrifices but many expressed concern that they had not accomplished more for Army Reserve Soldiers. Specific regrets varied. CSM Younger wished he had provided better support to Wounded Warriors and Gold Star families. CSM Jones and CSM Copeland each expressed concern that they had not done enough to channel resources to Troop Program Unit members. CSM Piacentini felt he could have taken additional steps to assist junior NCOs and help them recognize the value of patience while awaiting advancement. CSM Thomas, by contrast, expressed regret that too many qualified Soldiers left the Army and lamented that he had been unable to speed the promotion process. And CSM Caffie stated his desire to have worked harder to convince Congressional Leaders of the value and importance of the men and women of the Army Reserve. In reality, each Command Sergeant Major devoted enormous effort to achieving these and other goals. Their shared trait of caring for the Soldiers, however, constantly compelled them to do more.<sup>53</sup>

A final notable characteristic of the Command Sergeants Major is that few of them actively sought the position at the start of their careers. On the contrary, most entered the Army Reserve with expectations to move on to civilian pursuits long before they scaled the NCO ladder. None began a military career with the expectation to reach the highest rung. Even when the opportunity lay before them, several future CSMs had to be convinced to apply. Frank Spangler, for example, put his name forward only after his wife, herself a Master Sergeant in the Army, encouraged him to do so. Michele S. Jones and John Rucynski placed themselves in consideration on the urging of peers at the CSM rank. Many others submitted their credentials at the urging of Commanding Officers with whom they had served at lower levels of the organization. All of them operated under a credo best articulated by CSM Michael Schultz: “Do the best job you can in your current position and do not worry about anything else. Eventually everything will take care of itself.”



*100th Anniversary of the USAR, (l to r) CSM Caffie, Lackey, Piacentini, Rucynski, and Younger*

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questions, April 2021.



**COMMAND SERGEANTS MAJOR  
OF THE ARMY RESERVE**

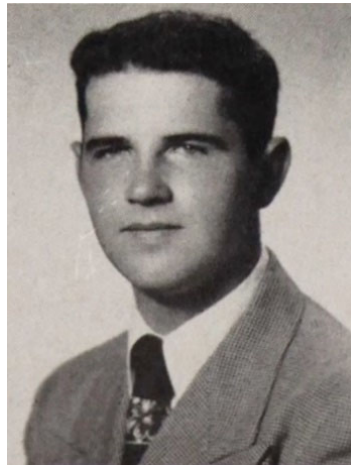




## William R. Foley

William R. Foley, born on May 12, 1931, grew up in the Oak Park community of suburban Chicago. He attended Fenwick High School, a Catholic boy's school where he participated in a wide range of intermural activities, including dramatics, and the rifle club.

He also initiated his military career during this period. At age 16 he enlisted in a program of the Illinois National Guard as part of an Armored Cavalry unit. Under the program he learned a broad range of skills, including experience with the M8 armored car and the M24 Chafee Tank. Nevertheless, upon graduation from high school in 1949, Foley did not follow the typical path of the program which would have had him proceed to National Guard basic training. Instead, he began studies at Northwestern University and enrolled in the Naval ROTC program at that school.



*William Foley as a high school senior, 1949 (courtesy Fenwick High School)*

He hoped to follow in the footsteps of his sister, Connie. His father had died following a heart attack in 1945 and Foley, who was only 14 years old at the time had turned to his elder sibling as a role model. She had



served in the Navy during World War II and remained an officer in the Naval Reserve in the post-war period. Foley intended to complete his education, earn the rank of Ensign by completing ROTC, and join her in that branch of the Armed Services.

These plans were thrown off course during his senior year of college. His mother had been diagnosed with breast cancer and passed away as Foley approached his final semester of school. With his father already deceased and his sister stationed overseas and unable to provide the support he needed, Foley was devastated by the loss and neglected his studies. Just weeks away from completing his degree and achieving his goal of becoming an officer in the Navy, he failed his coursework and dropped out of Northwestern.

The Navy's loss became the Army's gain. His departure from the university occurred in the spring of 1952, at the height of the Korean War. Only months later, he was drafted into service with the Army. In October he took his oath of enlistment and headed to Fort Leonard Wood Missouri for basic training. In February 1953 he became a private, E-2 with the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Division Artillery of the 6th Armored Division. He then quickly moved to Private First Class on the strength of his previous National Guard and ROTC experience.

Despite the continuing need for troops in Korea, Foley was not sent overseas. Because of the sensitive nature of his sister's duties in Europe, it was decided that he would remain at Fort Leonard Wood. He was initially assigned to the 6<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Battalion where his education and military experience earned him the designation as Acting Corporal in April 1953 and full promotion in August. In January 1954, he rose in rank once again, becoming a Sergeant with the Headquarters Company of the 86<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion.

Foley modestly credited his rise in rank to his ability to "read, write, and cipher some," but he had already started to develop a reputation as a leader, a teacher, and above all as a marksman. Since his days in the high school rifle club, Foley had continued to develop his skill with shooting and had become particularly adept with the pistol. Leaders of the 6<sup>th</sup>

Armored Division noted his ability and, as early as June of 1953, began sending him to shooting tryouts and competitions. He became a member of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army pistol team and received certification to train other Soldiers to shoot.

During this period, Foley's personal life changed dramatically as well. Immediately after receiving his draft notice, he proposed to his girlfriend, Sara Frances Sloan, whom he had dated since age fifteen. They married just prior to his departure for Fort Leonard Wood, and she joined him at the post after he completed his training. Foley also resolved his issue that had led to his abrupt departure from college. In 1953, he earned his Bachelor of Business Administration from Northwestern University.



*Foley on the pistol range, circa 1954*

In October 1954, when his Active Duty came to an end, Foley transferred to the Army Reserve and he and his wife Sara returned to Chicago to start a family. Foley also applied his business education to a civilian career. In November, began work as a marketing operations clerk with Shell Oil Company. In 1959, he moved into a sales position with Futorian Manufacturing Company, a wholesale furniture company. He even made a brief foray into politics in 1957, winning the office of Constable of Lyons Township in Cook County, Illinois. It was a position that required him to carry a revolver, but the community had little crime and he had no cause to use it.

The Army Reserve, however, remained a place for Foley to showcase his shooting skills. He had been assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 335<sup>th</sup> Infantry and became a marksmanship instructor in the Illinois Reserve District. He also continued to represent

the regiment in small bore rifle and pistol matches. As one of the best shooters in the country, he became a fixture on the 5<sup>th</sup> Army pistol team and at national competitions.

The opportunity to indulge his passion for firearms came with a cost. In February 1957 Foley applied for an Army commission, hoping that his ROTC training, education, and military experience would earn him consideration as a Second Lieutenant. The Commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army, however, rejected the request. Many of Foley's duties had been designed to increase his time on the range or facilitate his instruction duties, and leaders determined that he lacked sufficient experience commanding troops in a line unit. Instead of becoming an officer, Foley continued to serve as a firearms instructor and accepted a promotion to Master Sergeant, E-7 in April.

He would stay at the E-7 rank for more than a decade. Although the Army introduced the E-8 and E-9 grades in 1958, Foley was in a poor position to compete for one. He was still young with only six years of experience in the Army and found that most of the promotions went to older, more experienced NCOs. Indeed, the transition led to an administrative demotion. Following the establishment of the rank of Master Sergeant E-8, Foley remained at his current grade but was reclassified as a Master Sergeant (E-7).

His unit affiliation changed, however. Because his work with Futurian Manufacturing primarily involved sales in the states of Kentucky and Indiana, in 1960 he relocated his family to Indianapolis, a centralized location in his district. This placed him in the 123<sup>rd</sup> Army Reserve Command (ARCOM), where he served as the Administrative NCO for the Inspector General section. When he transferred to a new furniture sales job with the Schnadig Corporation in 1962, Indianapolis became a permanent home for Foley, his wife, and their six children; William,

Michael, John, Stephen, Elizabeth, and Christopher. He remained with the 123<sup>rd</sup> ARCOM, taking on the duties of G-3 Sergeant Major.

Foley's new Army Reserve responsibilities involved developing and conducting workshops across the nation with the objective to increase reserve enlistments. He also continued his duties as a firearms expert and instructor. John Foley recalls that his father loved to blow things up and burn things down. He regularly volunteered for assignments as a gun, demolition, or flamethrower instructor so that he could improve his own skills as he developed others. Nevertheless, Foley always stressed the proper use and safety of weapons, and his children recall learning a healthy understanding and respect for firearms.

Beyond his boyish delight in explosions, Foley also proved to be a capable leader. He excelled as an instructor. He distinguished himself for even-handed management and discipline. He offered calm and knowledgeable guidance to his subordinates. He also cared about his Soldiers and regularly offered younger NCOs life advice that extended beyond military affairs.

These qualities eventually drew the attention of leadership as well. In September 1970, he finally received a promotion to Master Sergeant, E-8. In July 1972, he earned a promotion to Sergeant Major, E-9 with the G-3 of the 123<sup>rd</sup> ARCOM. In that role, the man who had been denied a commission as a junior officer because of his



lack of supervisory experience, skillfully supervised Soldiers of different ages and backgrounds, including veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and other conflict areas.

Major General J. Milner Roberts saw even greater potential. Roberts had recently assumed command in the Office of Chief of Army Reserve and established the position of Senior Enlisted Advisor in his office. He viewed the educated, experienced, and respected Foley of the 123<sup>rd</sup> ARCOM to be the ideal person to establish and organize the newly-created office. In May 1975, he selected Foley as the first Sergeant Major of OCAR. Foley set aside his civilian work and returned to full-time active duty for the first time since 1954.



*Foley with BG Henry Mohr, Chief of Army Reserve (Courtesy John Foley)*

During his two-year term, Foley divided his efforts between providing general guidance on matters affecting the enlisted force and on establishing parameters for the position. For the first undertaking, he

drew on his two decades of experience to advocate for better training opportunities and improved resources for readiness. Not surprisingly, he placed considerable attention on firearms and weapons training. For the other half of his mission, he worked closely with the top NCOs of other reserve commands to establish himself as a source of assistance, a conduit to the top leadership of the component, and a source of information and guidance. Starting with his initial involvement in the development of an Army Reserve Enlisted Personnel Management System, he set the precedent that his position would not only communicate with fellow Sergeants Major but also assume a prominent role as a leader of the non-commissioned force.

Despite the advances that occurred under Foley's watch, the development of the role of Senior Advisor for OCAR remained very much a work in progress. Even the title remained ambiguous. Foley formally requested that the holder of the position receive the title of Command Sergeant Major, to give great weight to decisions made, but the Sergeant Major of the Army of that era rejected the proposal.

The position was certainly not yet viewed as the crowning achievement of an enlisted career and in 1977, immediately following the close of his term, Foley reported for a follow-up assignment as Senior Enlisted Advisor, Reserve Component Task Force for the Individual Training Evaluation Directorate at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

In this role, as a liaison to the Army Training and Doctrine Command, he advised the directorate commander on Army Reserve policies, assisted with the development of the Skill Qualifying Test and Enlisted Personnel Management System (EPMS), and served as a point of contact with the National Guard Bureau and OCAR. Determined to ensure that the Army Reserve had Soldiers ready to respond when needed, he emphasized improved training and maximized drill periods. He also toured the nation, giving numerous workshops and briefings. During these sessions, he thoroughly tested the training tasks before including them in the Soldier's Manual of Common Tasks.

Despite this strong sense of purpose, Foley never stopped caring for the Soldiers. He adopted the role of father figure to the young Soldiers he encountered, and many of those he worked with fondly referred to him as “Dad.” He offered them life lessons as well as military training. During a three-week trip to West Germany in 1978, he maintained a hectic schedule, traveling to Frankfurt, Vilseck, Heidelberg, and Grafenwoehr. In addition to formal workshops on the Skill Qualifying Test, however, he also counseled young recruits to take advantage of their duty assignment, to move beyond the confines of the military post, and to experience German customs, culture, and beer. Foley also showcased his own enduring sense of fun and adventure, traveling the autobahn between assignments in a rented Porsche 911.

He followed this assignment with a much slower-paced duty as Sergeant Major with the 95<sup>th</sup> Training Division at Bossier City, Louisiana. Foley found this position to be frustratingly dull after years spent in higher profile positions, but he retained an unwavering commitment to training improvements and Soldier readiness. He also appreciated that his inspection tours occasionally gave him an opportunity to indulge in his passion for shooting.

His son John, who served as a First Sergeant at Fort Polk, Louisiana at the time, recalls a memorable example during his father’s inspection tour of that post in 1985. After reviewing activities at the rifle qualification range, the Sergeant Major borrowed a rifle from a Soldier who had just qualified as an Expert Marksman and collected several ammunition magazines. He ordered all the targets brought into line and began firing and taking them down so quickly that observers believed he was using a fully-automatic rifle instead of a semi-automatic. “My father was pure magic with any kind of weapon you could put in his hands,” the younger Foley recalled.





*CSM Foley (right) with ISG John Foley (Courtesy John Foley)*

After he served a brief stint at the Army Reserve Personnel Center, Foley's final military assignment placed him as the Army Reserve NCO liaison to the finance school at Fort Benjamin Harrison. The position allowed him to return to his hometown of Indianapolis and end an extended separation from his wife Sara. She and the family had joined him on his assignment to Fort Eustis, Virginia. But after their children grew up and left home and as Foley found himself frequently on the road, she returned to Indiana to pursue a real estate career. For most than a decade, the couple maintained a commuter marriage, visiting each other as frequently as possible until their reunion.

CSM Foley initially planned to end his Army Reserve career in 1990. As the day approached, however, the U.S. had become involved in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, and the Army implemented a stop-loss policy that delayed his departure. He finally received permission to retire in 1991, when he reached the age of 60.

To the very end of his 39-year military career, CSM Foley set an example for other Soldiers. For example, just prior to his retirement, he took a final physical fitness test at his last duty station. In the running portion of the assessment, he embarrassed a number of younger Soldiers who could not keep up with a man old enough to be their grandfather—even though he was running backward.

He maintained this active pace in civilian life as well. Foley continued to be involved in his community; as president of his neighborhood association, volunteer at the War Memorial Museum of Indianapolis, and member of the Elizabeth Seton Catholic church. He also continued to participate in Army Reserve events and initiatives until his death, from cancer-related complications, on January 26, 2005.



*CSM Foley with wife Sara (Courtesy Sara Foley)*

In addition to his importance as the first Senior Enlisted Advisor for the Office of Chief of Army Reserve, Foley's legacy includes a highly successful family. Prior to her death in 2010, his wife Sara developed a successful real estate business in Indianapolis. Their daughter Sara carried on that tradition in the same community, while their son Chris became a successful land developer in San Francisco. Son Stephen was partner in a successful nationwide law firm until his death in 2014. Michael Foley became an engineer and information technology specialist and consultant.

William developed a career as an international photographer, and his won numerous prizes—including Pulitzer Prize and International Press Freedom Awards—for his work. Finally, Foley’s son John followed in his footsteps, carving out his own career as a First Sergeant in the Army.

Family, friends, and fellow service members remember Foley as a man of many facets. He was a hard-working civilian and a dedicated husband. He was a strong father to his children and a father figure to troops. He devoted his career to building up the Army Reserve and the office of Command Sergeant Major, but he also took delight in shooting and blowing things up. A memory from his son John, captured this mix of devotion to duty and enjoyment of life. “My Dad was the coolest and most competent Soldier I ever knew,” he recalled, ‘and it was always a hoot when we got together.”

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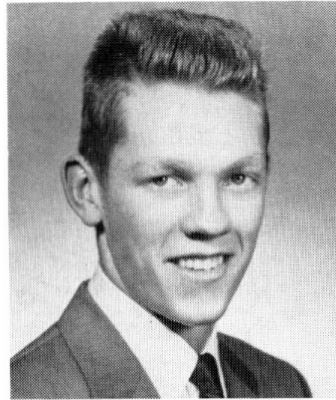


## Donald J. Colombo

Donald James Colombo was born on March 4, 1939, to Joseph and Catherine Piccatto Colombo. His parents raised him on their family farm in Bureau County, Illinois about 100 miles southwest of Chicago. He and his sister Caroline attended school in the nearby community of Princeton, Illinois.

During his teenage years, Colombo took an active role at Princeton High School. He belonged to Future Farmers of America, showed interest in mechanics and auto repair, and played on the football team. At six foot three inches tall, he was also an imposing figure in the school and won a senior accolade as “best build in the school.”

Following his graduation in 1956, Colombo left farm life behind and enlisted in the Army. Records of his initial military service are



*Donald Colombo, Princeton High School, 1956, (courtesy Princeton High School)*





*Colombo, No. 34, as a member of  
the Princeton High School Football  
Team*

unavailable, but Colombo served on a two-year tour of duty before returning to his hometown sometime in 1958 and beginning a civilian career in construction. He initially worked as an equipment mechanic for J. P. Hollerich Company a local building and demolition firm. In 1964, he became plant manager for the Bureau Construction Company. Two years later, he had improved his standing once again and served as the President of his own concrete and construction firm.

Colombo quickly settled back into the community that had defined much of his life. On January 24, 1959, he married Muriel K. Schnicke, also of Princeton, and the couple settled into a home near the downtown. Over the next several years, the couple had two children—Donald and Catherine. Colombo and his wife also became active participants in the local bowling league and competed in tournaments around the region.

Nevertheless, Colombo also maintained his military career. Following the completion of his active-duty requirement, he transferred to the 338<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 85<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, which had recently been reorganized as a reserve element. He served in I Company, a unit based in Princeton and composed of men from the various small communities of Bureau County Illinois. He remained with the Company throughout the 1960s, attending annual training at Fort Leonard Wood, where he assisted with the basic training of new Army recruits. By the end of the decade, he had achieved the rank of Master Sergeant of the Company.

Comfortably settled into family, community, and career, Colombo appeared to be a permanent fixture in his hometown. But changes to the Army would introduce a new opportunity to his predictable life.

In the early 1970s, the Army initiated its program to develop a cohesive organization that made more effective use of Active and Reserve Components. The concept that the different entities would coordinate as peers within a unified “Total Force” demanded that reserve Soldiers receive the same educational opportunities as their full-time counterparts. Toward that end, the Army instituted measures to increase reserve access to schooling opportunities.

A key example involved the program at the newly-created Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss Texas. As the Department of the Army began to compile a list of candidates for the first class of this program, the decision was made to include a small number of candidates from the reserve components in addition to the highly-qualified Soldiers of the Regular Army. When the slate for the initial class was announced in late 1972, the 105-man list included four members of the National Guard and four from the Army Reserve. Colombo earned one of these exclusive slots.

Colombo seized the opportunity. By the end of 1972, he had shuttered his concrete business and exchanged comfortable life and home in Illinois for Soldier quarters and full-time military responsibilities at Biggs Army Airfield in El Paso, Texas. In January 1973, his family joined him.

Colombo’s time at the Sergeant Major Academy invigorated his military career. He excelled as a student and drew the attention of school directors. They had decided to invite a small number of participants from the first class of the Academy to return to teach subsequent sessions. Since those future classes would have a greater percentage of Army Reserve and National Guard members, the leaders also wanted someone with reserve experience. They selected Colombo to fill that role. In October 1973 he was assigned to a two-year tour with the Academy. A later extension of his duties kept him at the school until 1977.



*The first class of the US Army Sergeants Major Academy, 1973. CSM Colombo is in last row, second from left.*

This assignment had a mixed effect on his personal life. He took advantage of his residency in the city to improve his education and earn a degree from the University of Texas at El Paso. But the transition from civilian life in Illinois to military life in West Texas was a difficult one and, in September 1975, he and his wife of 16 years divorced.

Colombo's role as an instructor allowed him to build relationships with numerous Army Reserve Sergeant Majors and Command Sergeant Majors. It also introduced him to top leaders of the component. As a result, when William Foley stepped down as the first Senior Enlisted Advisor for OCAR in 1977, he became a leading candidate to fill the position. In September of that year, he left the Sergeant Major Academy and took up his new position at the Pentagon.

Given his experience as an instructor and trainer, it is not surprising that Colombo dedicated his tenure as Senior Enlisted Advisor in the Office of Chief of Army Reserve to the improvement of enlisted training. Over the course of his three-year term in office, he continually advocated for additional classes, better instruction, greater resources, and more opportunities for Soldiers of the component to receive the type of instruction that he had experienced at the Sergeants Major Academy. He



also worked to ensure the inclusion of Army Reserve troops in major maneuvers and exercises, including the annual REFORGER events in Europe. By the close of his term in 1980, his progress in these areas had helped to transform the Army Reserve into a respected and integral member of the Total Force.

Following his duty as Command Sergeant Major, Colombo brought his military career to a close. He retired from the Army with more than 26 years of experience, divided between active-duty assignments and part-time reserve participation.

In the first years following his retirement, Colombo initially remained in Washington D.C. before moving to the Orlando Florida area in 1986. He remained there for several years until he relocated once again, to the Nashville Tennessee region. He also married once again, to Mary N. Ellithorpe, and the couple settled in the community of Lebanon, Tennessee.

During this period, Colombo returned to the career he had pursued prior to his return to active duty. This included an extended period of employment with Hoover Concrete, a large construction materials company in La Vergne, Tennessee, where he remained until his retirement.

In his latter civilian life, Colombo drifted away from the Army Reserve, maintaining little contact with the organization or his successors in the office of Command Sergeant Major. He died on August 8, 2013, in Mount Juliet, Tennessee, leaving behind his wife, Mary, and his daughter, Catherine. His son Donald William "Bill" Colombo, preceded him in death, having passed away in 2008.

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## Cornelius Boykin

Cornelius Boykin was born on November 29, 1923, in Camden, South Carolina, one of five children of Cornelius and Rosa McLeod Boykin. His mother died when he was young and Boykin and his sister Ernestine relocated to Arlington, Virginia, to live with their maternal uncle, George McLeod. There, Boykin attended Dunbar High School in Washington D.C. and graduated in 1942.

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after January 1, 1922 and on or before June 30, 1924)			
SERIAL NUMBER	1. NAME (Print)		ORDER NUMBER
N 181	Cornelius	Boykin	12,006
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print)			
1716 S. 12th St. Arlington, Va.			
[THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON THE LINE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL]			
3. MAILING ADDRESS			
1716 12th St. S. Arlington, Va. (Same)			
4. TELEPHONE	5. AGE IN YEARS	6. PLACE OF BIRTH	
Chestnut 6457	19	Camden	
Republic 6700	DATE OF BIRTH	South Carolina	
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS			
Mr. George McLeod 1716 12th St. S. Arlington, Va.			
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS			
U.S. Government B. P. R. War Dept			
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS			
Washington D.C.			
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.			
D. S. S. Form 1 (Revised 9-1-42)	(over)	e19-21030-3 Cornelius Boykin	

*Cornelius Boykin's draft registration card, 1942*

Upon completion of High School, Boykin found employment with the Bureau of Public Relations with the War Department, presumably developing news releases and distributing information about the

mounting U.S. involvement in World War II. He also faced the possibility of conscription into the military. Several times during the conflict, Boykin's was called for pre-induction examinations. Because he was African-American, Boykin could not report to a local committee. Instead, he had to journey to Richmond, Virginia, for processing by a "colored" induction board. Despite dutifully complying with this requirement on at least two occasions, Boykin never ended up serving in the great conflict. Instead, he continued to support the military through his civilian service. He also demonstrated his backing of the troops by acting as an Arlington District Representative, leading funding drives for the American Red Cross.

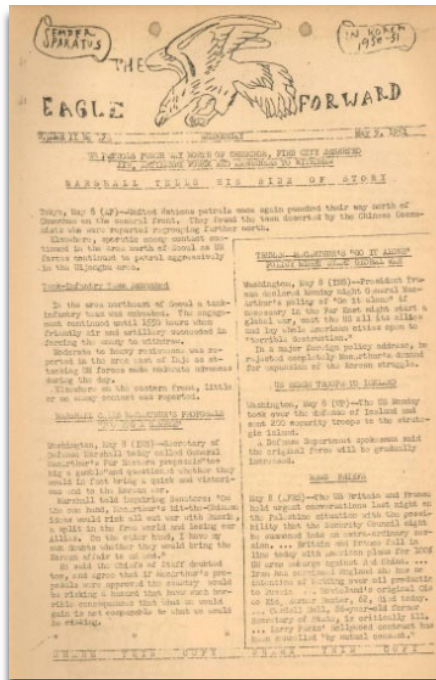
Boykin eventually did end up in the military, enlisting in the Army in November 1948. He was assigned to the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment—one of the original Buffalo Soldier Regiments and the last entirely African American units of the U.S. Army. As a member of that unit, he deployed in September 1950 for a 14-month tour of duty on the front lines of the Korean War.

The 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment fought in multiple major engagements across the Korean peninsula, performing well in some instances but also poorly in several important clashes. The shortcomings of the regiment were highly publicized and to a large degree driven by racial antipathy for the Black Soldiers. The criticism contributed to the low morale of Soldiers of the 24<sup>th</sup>, who resented that they were asked to sacrifice for their country while being treated as second-class citizens.

Private First-Class Boykin played a significant role in the effort to revive both the image and flagging confidence of the regiment. When COL. John T. Corley took command of the unit, one of his first actions was the establishment of a daily newspaper to cover world and wartime news, provide practical military advice, and celebrate individual achievements. Generally, he viewed the publication, *Eagle Forward*, as a key tool for creating a sense of belonging and *esprit de corps* in the ranks.

Boykin was one of the two Soldiers assigned to complete this daunting challenge.

He pursued this assignment with great dedication and sacrifice. Although each issue of the paper consisted only of two pages of material circulated to approximately 600 Soldiers, it was an important contribution to the unit. Boykin and Sergeant Milton Fulcher collected news, wrote columns, assembled, and mimeographed the papers, then distributed copies to the troops on the front six days a week. "It has gone to press in bombed-out buildings, abandoned factories, in open fields, in tents and in creek beds." Journalist Hal Boyle reported in March 1950, noting that "its editors sometimes have to melt the frozen ink on the stove to publish, but no difficulty yet has stopped them."



*An edition of Eagle Forward. PFC Cornelius Boykin helped write, print, and distribute the newspaper on the front lines in Korea.*

From its inception in September 1950 to its final edition on October 1, 1951, the tabloid never missed an edition. It also became a highly-desired souvenir of the war. Boykin noted that many Soldiers requested additional copies to send home to families, but the staff lacked enough paper to meet the demand.

Boykin returned home as a highly-decorated Soldier, with a Bronze Star, Purple Heart with Cluster, and Combat Infantryman Badge. He also had climbed to the rank of Sergeant First Class. Nevertheless, he was very happy to be back home. Still focused on his role as a journalist, he shared

his feelings with his hometown newspaper. "I can verify personally the fact that the Korean police action is no picnic regardless of what the people think here at home," he wrote. He also expressed his wishes that the Soldiers still in Korea soon could return safely as well.

Boykin transferred his military obligation from the Regular Army to the Ready Reserve and sought out civilian employment. His previous experience with the Bureau of Public Relations and his skills demonstrated in Korea, helped him secure a position at the Pentagon, in the office of the Chief of Information for the Department of the Army. Over the next 14 years, he remained a vital part of the staff.



*Color Guard of the 317<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 80<sup>th</sup>  
Training Division, including MSG Boykin  
(third from left) on the cover of Army Reserve  
Magazine June 1966*



In his personal life, Boykin initially settled back in his longtime hometown of Arlington Virginia, where he met Marietta Parson. The couple married in 1957 and began a family. In 1963, the Boykins moved to the other side of the District of Columbia, to Silver Spring Maryland, where they raised their two children, a son Alec and daughter Michele.

During this period, Boykin remained active with the Army Reserve as a member of the 317<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 80<sup>th</sup> Training Division in Riverdale, Maryland. Earning the rank of Master Sergeant, he held the role of Operations Sergeant for the unit.

In 1966, he left his longtime job with the Army Chief of Information to take on the duties in the Information Office of the Chief of Army Reserve. As Associate Editor of *Army Reserve* Magazine, he applied his extensive journalism experience to promoting the importance of the component and its Soldiers as a civilian in the Information Office of the Chief of Army Reserve. Still an Army Reserve Soldier himself, he also moved to a new unit, becoming Sergeant Major of the 352<sup>nd</sup> Civil Affairs Area (A) in Riverdale Maryland.

In 1973, he advanced again, earning the rank of Command Sergeant Major for the 97<sup>th</sup> Army Reserve Command at Fort Meade Maryland. Among his other accomplishments during his five years in that position, he chaired the NCO committee responsible for the development of the US Army Reserve Enlisted Personnel Management System, including Soldier manuals, skill qualifications tests, and Army regulations.

This significant role in the enlisted force—coupled with his active involvement in Army and component affairs through his civilian employment—gave Boykin a thorough understanding of the component, its procedures, its strengths, and its weaknesses. Both careers also allowed him to work closely with top leaders of the Army Reserve. In each role, he demonstrated the same work ethic and determination that had contributed to the success of the *Eagle Forward* newspaper on the front lines of Korea. When the position of Senior Enlisted Advisor for the Chief

of Army Reserve became available in June 1980, MG William Berkman selected Boykin for the job, bringing him back to the office that he had long served as a civilian. He also became the first African American to serve as CSM of OCAR.



*CSM Boykin in Nogales Mexico, 1989*

Boykin acquitted himself well in that position. His efforts to improve resources and readiness of Reserve troops helped component forces make valuable contributions to Operation Urgent Fury intervention in Grenada in 1983. His leadership during that crisis also generated a new level of respect for his position, an elevation of rank, and a change in title, from Senior Enlisted Advisor to Command Sergeant Major.



*Marietta and Cornelius Boykin*

With the completion of his term in August 1985, Boykin elected to bring his 37-year military career to a close. Shortly afterwards, he also ended his long-time residency in the Washington D.C. area as he and his wife Marietta relocated to Tucson, Arizona. Their absence was strongly felt in the nation's capital and even noted in the society pages of *Jet* magazine.

Retirement afforded Boykin time to enjoy two of his long-time passions, golf, and Washington Redskins

football. The move to Arizona allowed him to head out on the course year-round but limited his opportunity to enjoy the Washington season tickets that he had held for more than 30 years. Nevertheless, he made the journey to Washington D.C. at least once each year.

He had an even greater passion for family, enjoying his time with grandsons Baruch and Elisama and granddaughters, Aysha, Olivia, and Paloma. He was especially involved in the lives of his three granddaughters, helping to raise them, assisting with school projects, attending PTA events, and providing a daily presence in their lives.



*Boykin with granddaughters Aysha and Olivia, 2002 (left), and with granddaughter Paloma, 2003, (right).*

Following his death on January 4, 2004, Boykin made one final trip to his longtime hometown. He was buried, with honors, at Arlington National Cemetery, laid to rest beside Marietta, his wife of 47 years, who passed away in 2000.

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## **Edward C. Reilly**

Edward C. Reilly was born in Newark, New Jersey on October 21, 1930. His father, William Harry Reilly, worked as a maintenance foreman for the Port Authority of New York/New Jersey. His mother Laura Eve Starzar Reilly held a position as a receptionist at a local doctor's office.

As a youth, growing up in the central and southern wards of Newark, Reilly had a great love for learning. He read all the books that he could get his hands on and made the effort to learn languages, especially Italian and German. He also devoted time to athletic pursuits and earned a spot on the football team at Newark Central Commercial and Technical High School.

During his high school years, Reilly especially enjoyed business courses and decided that he wanted to pursue additional studies in that field in college. His working-class family, however, had few resources to help him pursue this dream and he was unable to attend a university after graduation. Instead, Reilly decided to enlist in the Army, gain some practical skills, and attend college on the GI Bill following the completion of his enlistment. He finished high school in January 1949 and, just weeks later, found himself at basic training at nearby Fort Dix, New Jersey. In March 1949, he began his military career as a clerk/typist with the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

*Edward Reilly as  
a Senior at  
Newark Center  
Commercial and  
Technical High  
School, 1949*



He completed four years of active duty, most of it overseas. In 1950 he worked as a Corporal at the Tokyo Headquarters of General Douglas MacArthur. Shortly afterward, he was transferred to the Korean conflict, serving at Chorwon-kun. In 1952, he had a second tour in Korea as an intelligence NCO for the 937th Field Artillery Battalion, above the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

At the conclusion of his service, Reilly returned to his hometown of Newark, and found an apartment of his own. Again, he delayed his college education, choosing instead to follow in his father's footsteps by embarking on a civilian career with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. He would remain with this employer for the next three decades, acting as a Marine cargo seaport representative.

He returned to the Army in 1956, enlisting in the reserves as an S-2 Sergeant in the 78<sup>th</sup> Division. He remained active with the artillery for two years, then transferred to stand-by status so that he finally could attend college.



His life took a significant turn, however, in 1959. His father had traveled to Pennsylvania to attend a wedding and found himself seated next to a young woman during the event. The two began to speak, and Reilly's father decided that she was a perfect match for his son. He called Reilly at his apartment and put the woman, Helen, on the phone. The two hit it off, agreed to meet, and four months later had a wedding of their own. The couple remained together for the next 63 years.

His marriage played an important role in motivating Reilly's long-term commitment to the Army Reserve. Following his wedding to Helen, the couple moved into a larger, more expensive apartment. They also began to save money, hoping to buy a house of their own. In July 1960, their son Richard was born. The financial responsibilities that came with these changes motivated Reilly to seek out the benefits of greater involvement in the Reserves. He returned to the Active Reserve in 1959 and would remain in that status for 31 years.

As a reserve Soldier in TPU units, Reilly continued to advance through the NCO ranks, eventually earning the rank of Staff Sergeant Major with the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 78<sup>th</sup> Division in 1971. In 1978 he continued his ascent, taking on the role of Division Command Sergeant Major of the 78<sup>th</sup> Division. Although he would continue to rise higher within the organization, his time with the "New Jersey Lightning Division" remained his favorite. He especially appreciated working for Major General Harley L. Pickens, a leader he fondly recalls as "the real deal."

During this period, Reilly remained active in his civilian life as well. He moved up to positions of increased responsibility at the Port Authority. In 1966, he and his family moved to their new home in Somerset, New Jersey. From 1971 to 1972, he served as Commander of VFW Post 2290 in nearby Manville, New Jersey—one of the largest posts in the nation. He also finally found an opportunity to complete his college education, earning a bachelor's degree from Adelphi University, New York in 1978. He pursued studies toward a master's degree as well but set those aside when he accepted the post of CSM or OCAR.



*Reilly, Commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2290, with  
Herbert R. Rainwater, National Commander, 1971*

He learned of the OCAR vacancy in 1985, during a meeting at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania with Cornelius Boykin, who was then serving as Command Sergeant Major for the Army Reserve. Reilly decided to submit his name for consideration and received an offer from the Chief of Army Reserve, MG William Berkman to take on the role. After 32 years with the Port Authority, Reilly tendered his resignation to his civilian job and returned to full-time duty as a member of the Active Guard Reserve.

Reilly served as CSM for OCAR from September 1985 to August 1986. During that period, he focused his attention on obtaining better weapons and weapons training for component Soldiers. He also placed considerable emphasis on training female Soldiers for NCO roles and improving their advancement in specialties ranging from nurse to drill sergeant.

Having waited so long to complete his own schooling, Reilly keenly recognized the value of education for all Soldiers of the Army Reserve. He devoted much effort to improving education courses and opportunities within the Army to help the component's NCOs qualify for advancement. He also encouraged NCOs to pursue their college education and expand their opportunities through that route. He took considerable pride in a growing number of enlisted Soldiers who completed their studies and earned their way into the commissioned ranks. He strongly believed that these actions not only benefitted the Soldier but also provided the service with officers who had a much better understanding of the organization and the enlisted force.

Despite the value of these achievements, Reilly suggests that one of his greatest accomplishments involved his success in securing a personal office. When he arrived in 1985, the Command Sergeant Major remained a relatively new position without an accompanying support staff. In the performance of his duties, Reilly worked from a common area, surrounded by other members of the Command General's team. He immediately recognized that this arraignment limited the effectiveness of his position. On many occasions, he was called upon to provide personal counseling to NCOs. Other times, he had reasons to correct behaviors or address poor decisions of others. Not wanting to publicly admonish and embarrass his visitors, he requested and received a private space from which to conduct these vital interactions. His request set a precedent and all subsequent CSMs also received individual office space.



*CSM Reilly, in his Pentagon office*

After a relatively brief tenure at OCAR, Reilly moved on to other Active Guard Reserve roles. He served as Senior Enlisted Advisor to U.S. Army Europe and First Army before bringing a forty-year military career to a close in 1990.

In the post-military years, Reilly enjoyed retirement with his wife Helen. The couple relocated to Ocala Florida and remained together until her death in 2021.

Reilly also remained committed to the Army Reserve and its mission. Long after he had retired from service, he made annual calls to the current Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve to stress his enduring belief that Soldiers of the component required more and better weapons training.

Over the course of his career, Reilly earned numerous awards and decorations, including the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal (three Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Accommodation Medal (second award), Korean Service Medal, Army of Occupation Medal, United Nations Korea Medal, and the Expert Infantry Badge.

CSM Reilly currently lives in Stafford, Virginia.

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## **Douglas E. Murray**

Douglas E. Murray was born to James A. and Janet V. (Dempsey) Murray on February 9, 1938, at Little Company of Mary Hospital in Evergreen Park, Illinois. In 1951, his parents resettled him, his two brothers, and three sisters in Peoria Heights, Illinois, where his youngest sister was born. Murray attended secondary school in his new hometown and graduated from Woodruff High School in the spring of 1956.

The following fall, he continued his schooling at Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois. This briefly reunited him with his two older brothers who also attended the college. They had recently returned from military service, with the Army and Air Force respectively, and used their GI Bill benefits to pay for tuition. Douglas Murray, by contrast, had to pause his education between semesters and work full-time to cover his education expenses. One of those breaks in his college enrollment arrived just as the Berlin Crisis erupted in 1961. When President John F. Kennedy ordered a doubling of the draft to respond to the threat, Murray lost his educational deferment. On September 18, 1961, he was drafted into the U.S. Army.

Murray began Basic Combat Training at Fort Knox Kentucky, during the term of General George H. Decker as the 22<sup>nd</sup> Chief of Staff, Army. This was just one of the many pieces of information that Drill Sergeants required trainees to learn to become good Soldiers. He also quickly learned the role of a Sergeant and the importance of meeting standards and other fundamentals of being a Soldier.

This included an early lesson in discipline. When a First Sergeant spied Murray with hands in pockets, he directed the young Private to fill his pockets with gravel and complete the training day with them fully loaded. Murray would never forget the lesson on the importance of appearance.

After completing Basic Training, Murray attended the Southeastern Signal Corps School for Radio Teletype and Crypto training at Ft Gordon, Georgia. With his graduation from that program, he achieved the rank of Private First Class and shipped off to Germany. He was assigned to Company A, 32<sup>nd</sup> Signal Battalion in Darmstadt, Germany with duty at Gibbs Kaserne in Frankfurt, Germany. There he advanced to the rank of SP4 (Acting) and participated in numerous maneuver training exercises as part of the V Corps Commander's Tactical Signal Team. This included a sometimes-tense six-month attachment to the 14<sup>th</sup> Armored Cav in Germany in support of exercises along the Fulda Gap.



*PFCs Kent Knee, Tim Gribben, Bill Farmer and Doug Murray, (pictured left to right). Co A, 32<sup>nd</sup> Signal Battalion, Frankfurt Germany, 1962*



Murray seized the opportunity to broaden his horizons. During periods of leave, he traveled extensively throughout Europe. He also participated in V Corps Special Services activities. This included joining the cast of a 1962 stage production of “The Diary of Anne Frank.” which took second Place in the USAREUR Tournament of Plays and was warmly received by the audiences at the Frankfurt Playhouse.

The period produced some sad moments for the young Soldier as well. When one of his good friends was critically injured in a streetcar accident in Frankfurt, Murray remained by his hospital bed until he passed away. Following his tour in Germany, Murray also visited the friend’s family in Maryland “to console them, shed some light on the incident and to let them know how much their son meant to so many of his colleagues.”

When he returned to the United States in September 1963, Murray separated from active duty. Originally, he transferred to the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) with a promotion to the rank of SP-4. Later he joined a Troop Program Unit—the 301<sup>st</sup> Signal Company in Peoria, IL—where he earned promotion to the rank of Sergeant on September 9, 1964.

The transition to civilian status, allowed Murray to move forward with other aspects of his life. He moved to Chicago and found employment as a field sales representative for a medical gas and equipment company. By 1968 he had advanced to the position of Assistant Manager of Marketing and Sales at the company’s corporate headquarters, with responsibility for market development and promotion. In January 1971, he took over duties as the company’s Assistant Regional Manager for an area that included eleven Midwestern states. He also built a family. On October 17, 1964, he married Eva Mae Martin and the couple soon welcomed a daughter, Dawn Marie, and a son Gregory Vernon.

Sergeant Murray’s first Army Reserve duty in the Chicago area was a two-week annual training as a Ham Station operator for Fifth Army headquarters at Ft. Sheridan. He subsequently served in a series of units of the 86<sup>th</sup> US Army Reserve Command. He started as a Pay Specialist

with the 478<sup>th</sup> Personnel Services Company, moved on to become Communications Chief in the 354<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Group, and then advanced to First Sergeant with the 315<sup>th</sup> DS Group. He next took on the responsibilities of Chief Log NCO and Chief Supply NCO at the 86<sup>th</sup> Army Reserve Command headquarters. These moves were accompanied by promotions to Staff Sergeant on December 7, 1965, and to Sergeant First Class on September 7, 1967.

These assignments had a considerable influence on Murray's military career. He enjoyed the service, training, and camaraderie and decided to reenlist following the expiration of his initial military term. He also found that the major Troop Program Units in the Chicago area covered all elements of Combat, Combat Support and Combat Service Support, giving him the opportunity to acquire a diversity of skills and a broad awareness of the organization.

During this period, Murray also earned recognition for achievements and leadership in both of his careers. In addition to his Army promotions, he served as a Troop Train Commander, escorting new recruits to Fort McCoy, Wisconsin for basic training. In his civilian life, he received the title of "At Large Enlisted Man" from the Board of Governors of the Blackhawk Association, was selected twice for the Chicago Tribune's Annual Achievement Award, received an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Award, and served as President of Chemetron Employees Credit Union.

In September 1972, Murray received a promotion from his civilian employer, becoming Regional Manager for the warehousing and sales of medical gases and equipment for a region that covered sixteen Northeastern States. This required him to move his family to the Philadelphia area and transfer to a new Army Reserve unit. He joined the Headquarters of the 79<sup>th</sup> USARCOM in Colmar, PA, in the G-4 as the Chief Movements NCO. On October 13, 1972, he was promoted to the rank of Master Sergeant.



*Murray (center) at his reenlistment in 1975, with CPT Dave Scourfield (right) and SFC Denesowicz (left)*

During his tenure with the headquarters of the 79<sup>th</sup>, Murray served on teams that visited subordinate units and training sites throughout the multi-state command, including at Ft. Dix, NJ, and Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. Often he accompanied the Deputy Commander, Brigadier General John S. D. Eisenhower on these tours. In January 1975, MSG Murray received additional assignment as the Senior Supply Sergeant for the command.

Murray reenlisted once again on September 5, 1975, and soon faced another move. In March 1976, his civilian employer rewarded him with additional advancement, to the status of National Sales Manager. This required him to operate from the company's new headquarters and Murray and his family relocated to St. Louis, Missouri.

The transfer presented a challenge for Murray's military career. Billets at the Master Sergeant level were not plentiful, and a suitable permanent position was not immediately available. He attended several

drills with the headquarters staff of the 102<sup>nd</sup> USARCOM on a probationary status before securing reassignment to the G-4 staff. There Murray worked on command logistical issues, a role that required him to travel to all units of the command. The position also gained him an additional promotion, and he became a Sergeant Major on October 26, 1976.

His upward climb continued several years later. On November 3, 1980, Murray became Command Sergeant Major of the 102<sup>nd</sup> USARCOM. At the direction of the Commanding General, CSM Murray took charge of devising plans to advance the role of NCOs and improve mission readiness for the command. He traveled extensively throughout the command, meeting with the NCO Corps, developing an understanding of its strengths and assessing professional development needs. He also organized NCO forums and conducted town hall-style meetings that permitted him to candidly engage with Soldiers of all ranks. The gatherings provided Murray with a broad awareness of personnel concerns, including promotions, assignments, career progression and career stagnation. When possible, he responded by initiating reforms to improve opportunities for Soldiers of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Command. He also committed to making these issues a priority in future leadership roles.

Murray continued to balance his Army duties with equally demanding civilian responsibilities. In 1981, he parted ways with his long-time employer and joined another medical company. Responsible for international marketing, he traveled extensively throughout the world, especially in Europe, South America, and Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, he placed that career on hold in July 1984 when he was selected to return to active duty as the first Command Sergeant Major of the recently-established US Army Reserve Personnel Center (ARPERCEN).

ARPERCEN was a product of the Army Reserve's transition from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve and the commander, Colonel Ross G. Pickus, had sought out a Command Sergeant Major who could convince the force of its importance. Murray immediately put his years

of marketing experience to work. In addition to conducting the more standard duties of his office, he frequently went on the road to offer briefings about the command and its functions and to “sell” its services to the force.

These visits did not only involve speeches and words. At each stop he met with senior NCOs or Officers of a command to address issues that he uncovered during visits. He made it a policy to address all concerns and resolve as many as possible. His reputation as someone who got things done placed him in high demand and he fielded frequent requests for speaking engagements and visits.

The experience positioned Murray for his next role as Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve. During his constant travels around the country, he developed an extensive list of personal contacts and had frequent interactions with component leaders. His duties, likewise, helped him to develop a thorough understanding of management of the Individual Ready Reserve and Individual Mobilization Augmentees. His role in building good personnel services for TPU Soldiers made him one of the most knowledgeable and respected figures in the NCO ranks. When the dual position of Senior Enlisted Advisor for OCAR and CSM Army Reserve became available in October 1986, Murray was a natural choice to fill it.

Initially, he held the position on an interim basis, joining the Sergeant Major of the Army in strategy meetings and responding to requests as they arose. In December 1986, however, Major General William F. Ward, Jr. made the assignment official. On January 7, 1987, Murray formally reported for duty as the fifth Senior Enlisted Advisor and Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve.

Once again, Murray's marketing skills served him well. He continued to fulfill the fundamental CSM responsibilities as an advisor to the Chief of Army Reserve, representative of the command, and leader of the NCO and enlisted force. He also acted as an advocate for new initiatives, including a new Army Reserve TPU promotion protocol, a revised Command Sergeant Major program, and a new Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report system. Once again, he traversed the nation speaking at conferences, workshops, training sites, and community functions to build support for these changes. Additionally, he appeared at numerous US Army Recruiting Command workshops and training sessions to address issues of Army Reserve recruiting and retention issues and goals. By 1990, his duties increasingly focused on the preparedness of component troops for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.



*MG William F. Ward, Jr. presents a print to CSM Murray, during 1991 change of responsibility ceremony.*

Murray's outreach extended around the globe as well. He engaged with component units deployed to Honduras and Panama and checked on the well-being of engineering and medical units sent to Ecuador for earthquake relief. He joined the CSM of the 9<sup>th</sup> Army Reserve Command (ARCOM) on a tour of American Samoa, Saipan, Japan, and Korea. His European tours included visits to Heidelberg, Germany, to facilitate development of an Army Reserve School detachment and units for the 7<sup>th</sup> ARCOM. On a January 1991 visit to Saudi Arabia, he met with troops and worked to resolve logistical problems, leaving the country just hours before the start of the Persian Gulf War.



*BG Tom Kilmartin and CSM Murray with Gus the Camel during their visit to Saudi Arabia*

In August 1991, Murray's term as Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve came to a close, but his contributions to the component and the Army continued. He took on a second term as the CSM of the Army Reserve Personnel Center, on the staff of BG Tom Kilmartin. Among numerous other actions, he reenergized the command color guard



and helped it earn status as the 17<sup>th</sup> Honor Guard authorized by DA Regulations. He also wrote monthly articles for the command magazine, conducted community outreach, and participated in the February 1992 ceremony to unveil a monument to Army Reserve Soldiers killed in a scud attack during the Persian Gulf War. His travels continued as well with numerous visits with Army Reserve Soldiers and units. This included a return to Saudi Arabia and interactions with troops involved in handling logistics in the aftermath of the Gulf War. CSM Murray's leadership helped ARPERCEN win the 1993 Army Community of Excellence Award, Special Category.



*(Pictured from left to right) MAJ Rick Cole, SGT Martini Hayes, SSG Daniel Kessinger, COL John W. Frost, Cdr, MAJ John Aleshunas and CSM Douglas E. Murray*

In 1994, at the request of the Department of the Army, the Chief of Army Reserve nominated CSM Murray for the position of Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, (OSD-RA) Ms. Deborah Lee. Ultimately, CSM Murray was selected from a field of six candidates from various Guard and Reserve Components. He became the first Army Reserve CSM and the fourth Senior Enlisted Soldier to fill that position.

Over the next four years, he represented 1.8 million service members—including 1.3 million enlisted personnel—from all seven Reserve and National Guard components. He took on this advocate role with vigor, maintaining an active schedule of meetings, planning sessions, information-gathering tours, and visiting training exercises, deployments, and diplomatic missions around the world.

Murray strived to help leaders at the highest levels understand the concerns and contributions of the reserve components and their personnel to the nation's Armed Forces. He developed and conducted numerous town hall meetings at US facilities and with forward deployed units, to permit men and women of the reserves to speak directly to the Assistant Secretary. With the approval of the OSD-RA and the support of LTG Paul J. Kern, a Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Defense, he also organized visits to Guard and Reserve training sites and exercises to showcase the readiness of the components and quality of the Soldiers.

He similarly worked to ensure that communications and information reached the force. He conducted numerous visits to posts, exercises, and deployments, to maintain a personal dialog with the troops. He also developed the SEAGRAM, an outreach instrument to keep the Reserve components informed of new developments that concerned them. To demonstrate support for the Senior Enlisted Advisors of the reserve components, he represented the OSD-RA at Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve at meetings and award ceremonies as frequently as his busy schedule permitted.

In addition to acting as a conduit for information, Murray addressed the issues raised and took great effort to resolve problems and alleviate concerns. As a participant in Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve meetings, he worked to reduce conflicts between civilian jobs and military service. He introduced changes to the Senior Enlisted Council, increasing the frequency of meetings and expanding the scope of council activities.

These measures, in turn, produced notable results. Under Murray's guidance, the Senior Enlisted Council submitted documentation to the Reserve Forces Policy Board on more than thirty quality of life issues that required policy adjustments or legislative attention. Eighteen of these moved forward for fixes. He also helped draft a working document to establish an active component SEA at the Joint Chiefs level.

While pursuing this busy agenda, he also joined Secretary Lee on extensive travels to military operations around the globe. On these tours, the pair continually emphasized the role of the reserve components and the value of increasing opportunities for Soldiers and units. A visit with the Multinational Force and Observers—the military force responsible for overseeing the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel—resulted in more Army Guard and Reserve support for the mission. A meeting with Assistant Secretary of Defense Lee, General Wesley K Clark, Jr., the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO forces Europe, similarly helped expand the involvement of the reserve components in that arena. A review tour of military-to-military programs with former Eastern Bloc countries aided the development of stronger relations in another important region.

With the completion of his tour of duty as Senior Enlisted Advisor to OSD-RA in February 1998, Murray retired from the military, bringing 37 years of distinguished service to a close. A few of the notable honors conferred upon him during that career include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Department of Defense Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Achievement Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Good Conduct Medal (fifth award) as well as the Office of the Secretary of Defense Identification Badge and the Department of the Army Staff Identification Badge.

CSM Murray has remained active in his civilian life. Following his retirement from the Army, he initially took on duties as a Senior Program Manager for a security system services company. In 2008, he became President and CEO of the Atholl Group, a consulting company for organizational analysis, risk assessment, and operational resilience. He also continued to serve the Army. Notably, he acted as an Army subject matter expert for the Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Servicemembers, the largest study of its kind ever conducted by the Army.

Murray stepped into the role of President emeritus of the Atholl Group in 2016. Fully retired, he currently lives in Mesa, Arizona.



*CSM Murray running the Army 10-miler in Washington DC in 1995*

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CSM Douglas E. Murray, Autobiographical summary, 26 April 2021.

### *A Note from CSM Douglas E. Murray*

My record of service in both the active and reserve of the Army is not all that unique. Many Citizen-Soldiers served before me. Those who served after me have faced an operational environment with considerably more challenges than I did. Hopefully, my contributions helped pave the way for the outstanding performance of today's operational Army Reserve NCO Corps.

I have had the privilege to serve the Nation in our Army for more than 36 years but never the honor to defend her in combat. Time and circumstances did not pass that honor to me and by that, I mean that when the Army was called to such conflicts, my service time and place in the United States Army Reserve was not in the picture for mobilization. This was so for most in the USAR prior to the critical shift from a strategic to an operational reserve.

Nevertheless, I devoted all my time as a Command Sergeant Major to energizing the NCO Corps and advancing my Commander's decisions on readiness, professional development, and quality of life for Soldiers and their families. Mission accomplishment was paramount.

Each of the successive CSMs of the Army Reserve who followed me have built upon the successes of those they followed while adding their own unique contributions, each critical to the important transition of the Army Reserve from a strategic Federal Reserve to a highly effective and absolutely needed operational Federal Reserve of the Army that the Army Reserve has become today.

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## Collin L. Younger

Collin Lester Younger, the son of Theophus and Alberta Dixon Younger, was born on November 1, 1940, in Ayden, North Carolina. Growing up in a small town in the eastern part of the southern state, Younger was required to attend segregated African-American schools and saw little opportunity for advancement in his hometown. Seeking to expand his horizons, he decided to leave shortly after he graduated from South Ayden High School in May 1958. His older sister, Bertha Mae Younger Gillis, had already settled in the Washington D.C. area, so Younger boarded a bus and headed north to join her there.

He initially planned to work and save his earnings to fund a college education. He had construction experience in North Carolina and soon found employment in that field in Washington. But the wages from his job were limited and he quickly realized that he would never be able to set aside enough of his earnings to pay for tuition and other school



*Collin Younger,  
childhood photo  
(above) and high  
school portrait  
(below)*



expenses. This prompted him to explore other options that might speed him on his way. He eventually decided that enlistment in the Army offered the best path toward his goal.

Once that decision was made, Younger acted quickly. He visited an Army recruiting station in the capital city and took all required entrance tests. He passed these assessments easily and informed the recruiter that he intended to enlist immediately—that very same day if possible.

This eagerness aroused suspicion from the recruiter. The man had never encountered anyone so ready to begin service and he grew concerned that Younger might be seeking to elude authorities. He went so far as to contact law enforcement agencies to verify that the young man before him was not a fugitive from justice. Once he had received a clean report from the Metropolitan D.C. police, however, the recruiter found an opening for the following day and quickly completed the paperwork. On June 24, 1959, Collin Younger became a Private Soldier in the U.S. Army.

The new enlistee never even returned home. The recruiting officer drove him to the train station and bought him a ticket for his journey to basic training. Younger slept on the floor of the depot that night and, the next morning, boarded a southbound train. On 23 June 1959, he arrived at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Only a few days after signing his name to commitment papers, Younger was outfitted in a private's uniform, laboring in ninety-degree heat to clip hedges and clean trash out of foxholes.

Following completion of basic training, he was assigned to Fort Sill, Oklahoma for additional instruction. There, he officially participated in training at the Artillery School but also developed practical knowledge through personal experience. He recalls a Sunday afternoon, early in his stay, when he heard rumors that officials were seeking volunteers to form a detail for motor pool work. He believed that this meant there would be no official requirement for work and took the opportunity to leave the post to see a movie.

When he returned later that afternoon, he found that his unit had been called to duty for the detail and that he had missed a required assignment. As a punishment, he received 14 days of extra duty. Nevertheless, he learned a lifetime lesson to keep his eyes and ears open, be aware of comings and goings, stay inquisitive about activities happening around him, and never get left out and miss something important.



*Corporal Collin L. Younger, 1961*

The formal and informal training at Fort Sill prepared Private First Class Younger for his next assignment with the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. Assigned to Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, he served for two years as an artillery crewman and climbed to the rank of Corporal.

In January 1961, Younger transitioned from active duty to the Army Reserve, assigned to the 80<sup>th</sup> Training Division. He left Hawaii, returned to the Washington D.C. area, and once again pursued a civilian career. He took two civil service exams, one for employment with the U.S. Postal Service and one for a place in the police department. Although he passed both tests, the Postal Service offered a job first and he joined that organization. Nevertheless, his true goal was to serve on the police force and, when a position finally became available in August 1968, he accepted a place with the Metropolitan D.C. Police Department.

His passion for this job helped him develop a successful career. Upon completion of the Police Training Academy, he served as a Patrol Officer

and School Resource Officer assigned to the Second District. He was also selected for a detail to the Police Training Academy as an instructor. In 1977 he earned the rank of Sergeant and became a Street Supervisor of Patrol Officers and was assigned to the First District. He then transferred back to the Police Training Academy as Supervisor of the Instructors, supervised drivers training, and in-service training for senior officer training.

In November 1979, another promotion raised Younger to Lieutenant with responsibility for Community Relations in the Fifth District. In 1984, he served in another year-long detail with the Police Training Academy with responsibility for the development of new promotion exams for prospective Sergeants, Lieutenants, and Captains.



*Washington D.C. Chief of Police, Maurice T. Turner, congratulates Collin Younger on his promotion to Captain, June 1987.*

In June 1987, he was elevated to Captain and accepted an assignment as the Commander of the Narcotics Special Investigation Division (NSID), Washington, D.C. In that role, he directly supervised 115 officers, including four Lieutenants, sixteen Sergeants, and 95 Officers/Detectives, and directed all efforts to control illegal drug and liquor trafficking, gambling, and prostitution in the District of Columbia. In 1990, this resulted in his participation with the FBI

task force and undercover sting operation that led to the arrest of Washington D.C. Mayor Marion Barry.

During this period, Younger also achieved his goal of completing a college degree. He enrolled at American University in Washington, D.C. as a part-time student, took classes when his civilian and military duties permitted, and earned a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice in 1978. He also attended the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Academy, Quantico, VA, and graduated from that program in 1982. Additionally, he has participated in numerous post-graduate seminars.

Against this backdrop, Younger made a steady climb through the ranks of the 80<sup>th</sup> Training Division as well. In June 1963 he achieved the rank Sergeant (E-5). A year later, in September 1964 he rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant, E-6.

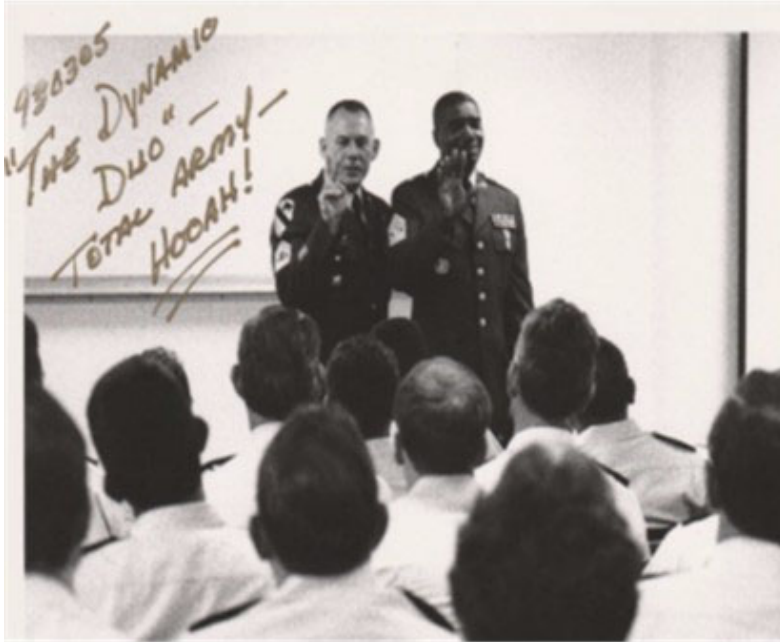
In 1970, Army Reserve recognized the need for a Drill Sergeant School and Younger played a key role in the development of coursework and the implementation of the program that operates to this day. In October 1970, he gained a promotion to Sergeant First Class and became a Drill Sergeant. From 1970 thru 1976 Younger took on the role of Military Occupation Specialty Instructor and Chief Instructor. His promotion to Master Sergeant E-8 occurred in August 1979 and he was named First Sergeant the following year.

Younger emerged as an important senior leader of the 80<sup>th</sup> Division in the 1980s. In January 1984, he rose to the rank of Sergeant Major, initially serving at the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment of the first brigade in Alexandria Virginia. That same year, in September, he accepted his first Command Sergeant Major position with the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment of the 3/317<sup>th</sup> in Culpepper, Virginia. In August 1987, he changed roles once again to serve as the CSM of the 2053<sup>rd</sup> Reception Battalion, stationed in Baltimore, Maryland.

Then, in January 1988, he advanced once more when General John Knapp selected him to serve as the Command Sergeant Major for the 80<sup>th</sup> Division (Training) in Richmond Virginia. Younger credited General Knapp with nurturing his desire to lead. When Knapp first selected Younger as his CSM, he called together a formation to introduce his new staff member. During that gathering, he made clear that Younger spoke on his behalf and that the words of his Senior Non-Commissioned Officer carried the same level of authority as his own. Knapp also backed up this assertion, giving full support to Younger and the other NCOs in his command and encouraging them to develop their skills and seek advancement. This awareness that he could have a real opportunity to lead and make an impact gave Younger the confidence to act decisively in his first CSM assignment and inspired him to seek additional opportunities on a larger stage.

That moment arrived in August 1991 when Major General Roger Sandler, selected Younger to serve as the sixth Command Sergeant Major and Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of Army Reserve. In August of that year, Younger retired from the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Police, entered the Active Guard Reserve, and moved his office across the city to the Pentagon. In October, following the formal establishment of the US Army Reserve Command at Fort McPherson, Georgia, Younger accepted the simultaneous assignment of First Command Sergeant Major and Senior Enlisted Advisor of that command as well.

In this dual role, CSM Younger assumed responsibility for oversight of the interests, training, professional development, health, and welfare of approximately 210,000 Army Reserve enlisted Soldiers in postings around the globe. Over the next three years, CSM Younger actively pursued this mission. He regularly traveled across the nation and to more than 40 countries to inspect troops, observe training, disseminate information, and listen to concerns.



*SMA Kidd and CSM Younger addressing soldiers in 1992*

He often conducted these inspection tours in conjunction with, Richard Kidd, Sergeant Major of the United States Army and Roger Blackwood, National Guard Command Sergeant Major. The recent introduction of the Total Force policy and plans for the overall reduction of the Army had generated a great deal of concern and confusion in the ranks of all three components, and Army Chief of Staff Gordon Sullivan requested that the top NCOs of each act as a team to clarify the plan and to promote the concept of a seamless force. A typical presentation involved Kidd introducing the team and the concept and each Command Sergeant Major explaining the role of their individual component within the Total Force.

In addition to this program, CSM Younger pursued his own goals and points of emphasis. His extensive experience in the 80<sup>th</sup> Training Command naturally led him to focus on the importance of training the troops. In an era of limited funding and proposed budget cuts, he stressed



the need for effective instruction rather than high volume of training. “In the past, we’ve done a lot of training that was nice to know but not necessary for Soldiers to perform their jobs,” he noted when questioned about Army Reserve readiness. “What we do now will have to directly relate to the Soldier’s military function.” He also understood that reserve Soldiers tended to be skilled in the technical aspects of their positions but less prepared with combat survivability skills. With this in mind, he directed a renewed effort to conduct more practical training to develop tactical abilities in the enlisted force.

He similarly devoted effort to reforming the Non-Commissioned Officer Education System. During Younger’s term as Command Sergeant Major, Army Reserve participation in the NCO school system rose dramatically and produced a generation of non-commissioned leaders ready to step into positions of authority. He also successfully negotiated for increased numbers of Active Guard Reserve instructors in the NCO academies. Despite these gains, Younger noted that too many reserve



*Secretary of Defense William Perry and CSM Younger in 1997 at Ft Dix, New Jersey*

members received training only to leave the Army shortly after. In response, he advocated for a more careful selection process that picked Soldiers with leadership potential and a desire to pursue a long-term military career.

Throughout his 41 years of military service, CSM Younger consistently strived to establish his legacy as a great mentor and role model. Although he continually stressed the importance of physical fitness and fulfilling requirements, he avoided a threatening tone and remained positive in his approach. “Make sure you meet the standards, continue to improve,” he told the troops. “And don’t worry about the peaks and valleys in the Army Reserve because they’re going to happen. If Soldiers are doing the right things, they’ll survive.” At the same time, however, he expected Soldiers to pride themselves on dedication to duty, perseverance, physical fitness, and military readiness. He frequently advised NCOs to “never stop learning and make positive changes where you can affect change.”



*President Bill Clinton with CSM Younger in 1998*

Younger himself modeled this behavior, not only while in office but also after the conclusion of his term in April 1996. Rather than retire from the Army and round out an impressive military career, he elected to continue his service as Command Sergeant Major to the Post Commander of Fort Dix, New Jersey. In that role, he again emphasized the care, welfare, training, and housing of the thousands of Soldiers under his command. He also served as liaison between more than thirty military and civilian organizations on and off the installation. During Younger's time at this post, the Fort Dix installation transferred from the control of Army Forces Command to United States Army Command management. CSM Younger assumed a leading role in both the transition and the transition ceremony.

This assignment also had an important impact on his personal life. Shortly after he arrived at the post, he met Teresita Beverage, a civilian employed with the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Directorate. Over the next several years, the two worked together on special events and projects and developed a strong bond. That friendship grew over time, and the couple eventually married in 2003.

In 1998, CSM Younger moved on once again, this time accepting an assignment as the Senior Enlisted Advisor for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. In this role, he provided guidance on enlisted affairs for the 1.4 million personnel of the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard Reserves as well as the Army and Air Force National Guard. He also served as the Chairman of the Department of Defense Reserve Forces Senior Enlisted Advisory Council.

Younger used his influence in this position to push forward an additional positive change for the Army Reserve. At that time, Army Reserve Soldiers were issued a red identification card while active-duty Soldiers received a green version. This distinction undermined the ideal of a unified Total Force, and CSM Younger and his team initiated the

process that would result in a single Common Access Card (CAC) which became the standard form of military identification.



*Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen, CSM Younger and Mrs. Janet Langhart Cohen at the Senior Enlisted Forum for Reserve Affairs*

CSM Younger also took pride in coordinating and executing the first Senior Enlisted Forum for Reserve Affairs. This event, hosted by the Secretary of Defense William Cohen in June 2000 drew more than 100 participants and involved discussion of military quality of life issues like childcare, health care, recruiting, and retention. It was also one of Younger's final accomplishments while in the Army. He retired on December 1, 2000, bringing a 41-year career of service to a close.

That career was both lengthy and distinguished. A strong advocate of education and training CSM Younger himself completed Basic Training, Advanced Individual Training, Small Group Instructor Trainer Course, Army Basic Instructor Course, all noncommissioned officer schools, and the First Sergeant Course. He also attended United States Army Sergeants Major Academy in class number 19 and served as class president.



*90th Anniversary of USARC, left to right CSM Murray, CSM Boykin, CSM Rucynski, CSM Foley and CSM Younger*

CSM Younger compiled an even longer list of military decorations. His accolades include the Legion of Merit, The Defense Superior Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Good Conduct medal, third award, Army Reserve Component Medal with four oak leaf clusters, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with hourglass device, Overseas Service Ribbon, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Drill Sergeant Badge, Department of the Army Staff Badge and the Office of the Secretary of Defense Identification Badge. The Association of the United States Army also awarded CSM Younger the “Major General James Earl Rudder Medal” for his contributions to the advancement of the Association of the US Army’s goal of a seamless and component integrated Army. He became the first enlisted Soldier to ever receive this award.

An end to military service did not bring a close to a distinguished civilian career. In September 2000 CSM Younger (Ret) accepted

employment with United Services Automobile Association (USAA) as a program manager for the National Guard and Reserve Components. He remained in that position for thirteen years until his retirement in February 2013.



*CSM Younger, with his beloved wife Terri, at the 2016 Army Ball, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina*

CSM Collin L. Younger passed on December 8, 2021, at home in San Antonio with his family by his side. He battled Parkinson's Disease for the last few years of his life. CSM Younger leaves us a legacy of love, beautiful memories, and service to family and country. Remaining behind to cherish his memory are his devoted, loving wife, Teresita Beverage; four children, Annette, Collin Jr., Robert, and Melissa; six grandchildren Brooke, Collin III, Brandon, Monte, Nicholas, and Anabelle; and three great-grandchildren Malik, Grayson, and Rylan.



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CSM Suzanne B. Polk, Interview with CSM (Ret.) Collin Younger, 20 February 2019, in San Antonio, Texas.

*A Note on the Interview* by CSM Suzanne B. Polk

CSM Younger and his wife, Teresita, were very welcoming to allow me the honor and privilege of telling CSM Younger's story. He was humble and honest and talked about having difficulties as an African American in the United States Army in 1959 and throughout his military career. He overcame the prejudices he faced through perseverance and never let them stop him attaining his goal of becoming a First Sergeant and beyond.

His dedication to duty, concern, and compassion for all Soldiers in uniform, is unprecedented. He talked well about all his Soldiers and most of his leaders. During his time as the 6th Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserves, he brought major changes to the Reserves that we still benefit from today.

A great leader and NCO, it was my humble pleasure to meet him, and his wife, talk with him face to face, and hear his story. CSM (RET) Younger embodies the core principles and values of the Army. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to him and his lovely wife for their time and effort for this special project that will carry their legacy for the next generation of Soldiers.





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## John E. “Jack” Rucynski

John “Jack” Rucynski was born on January 10, 1945 in Oswego, New York. As a child of devout Catholic parents, he was given the name John at birth, but always was known as Jack.

His early life, in the aftermath of the Depression and World War II, was one with few luxuries. His father had served two tours in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and was a member of the New York Army National Guard for 17 years, but a lengthy illness prevented him from retiring. With little money to spare, Jack, his four older brothers and two younger sisters had to work from an early age. Rucynski took on jobs cutting grass and delivering newspapers or milk to earn spending money and help his parents make ends meet. This responsibility helped him to develop a work ethic that would drive him throughout his military career.



That career started early. Rucynski and three friends made a pact to join the Marine Corps immediately after completing their senior year of high school. Waiting until he turned 17, Rucynski signed up and prepared to ship out immediately after graduation. At the last minute he failed a course and was not given a diploma, but his enlistment was set. He boarded the train for Parris Island, South Carolina for sixteen weeks of basic training.

*Private Rucynski,  
Marine Corps boot  
camp, 1962*



*Graduation day, USMC basic training,  
Parris Island, South Carolina., 1962*

His next stop was Camp Geiger, North Carolina—in the Fall of 1962—for four weeks at the Infantry Training Regiment (ITR). That training would be put on hold during the final week as attention turned to the Cuban Missile Crisis. It was a period of hurry up and wait that quickly passed into history.

In this early stage of his military career, Rucynski had several encounters with

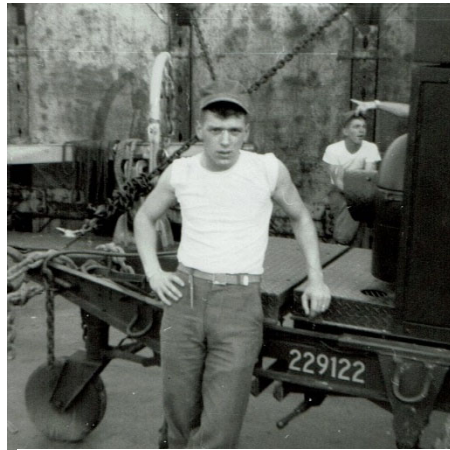
individuals who provided valuable advice and career guidance. The first was an interaction with his Section Leader, Sergeant Lewis. Lewis was an outstanding NCO who set the example of leadership through his caring, mentoring, and training ability. He also directly encouraged the young Marine to choose his friends carefully and to surround himself with others who put the mission first.

Rucynski also learned an important lesson on the only occasion that he faced disciplinary action during his military career. When he was returning from a weekend of liberty, his friend's car broke down and he arrived late for duty. It was his failure to report his situation, not the tardiness, that earned him two weeks of punishment. He never forgot the importance of communication or the wonders that even a simple phone call could produce. It was a message that he would relay to hundreds of soldiers over the course of his career.

After a year and a half at Camp Lejeune, Rucynski was ordered to move on to Okinawa. He literally shipped out to his destination, traveling aboard a military transport. The vessel encountered a typhoon *en route* from Japan, and the resulting experience made him hope never to travel on board another ship.

He arrived at Okinawa in August 1964 to join the 3<sup>rd</sup> Force Service Regiment. However, the training NCO, Staff Sergeant Goetz, declared that no Marine would receive an assignment without possessing at least a High School Graduate Equivalency Degree. Rucynski spent the next two weeks at the education center to obtain the diploma that had eluded him earlier. It was an accomplishment that would produce numerous rewards in the years to follow. In the immediate aftermath, Rucynski completed an additional two weeks of training in motor transport school and took on the assignment as the Commander's driver.

In March 1965, his unit received orders to proceed to Vietnam. To get there, Rucynski endured another difficult ship voyage—a seven-day trek across the South China Sea aboard a dock landing ship (LSD). On arrival in Vietnam, Rucynski was a member of the 9<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division, a unit assigned a sector defending the Da Nang airbase.



*Rucynski aboard an LSD on the South China Sea, 1964*



*Corporal Rucynski, Danang Vietnam, 1965  
with injury sustained in a fuel dump explosion*

Initially, he and his unit experienced only harassing encounters with the enemy. As the American buildup in Danang grew, however, the Viet Cong initiated nighttime attacks with small arms and mortars that caused extensive damage and casualties. One nighttime attack on a fuel storage facility created a fire that burned Rucynski's face and eye. He was treated and returned to the fight after several days.

When his tour of duty ended in 1966, Rucynski—who had earned a promotion to the rank of Corporal—returned to the United States and to Camp Lejeune. At that time, he expected to leave active duty in June, but demand for Marines led to a six-month extension of his term. As a result, in September 1966 he earned promotion to the rank of Sergeant before returning to civilian life at the end of the year.

While serving in the Marine Corps, he married Kathy McIntosh from his hometown of Oswego. In time, the couple had three children: daughters, Tamara and Robin, and a son, John Jr. To support his growing family as a civilian, Rucynski took a job as a laborer with Alcan Aluminum Corporation. Taking advantage of the GED earned while in the service, he worked his way up the workforce over the next several years to a management position as a Metallurgical Technician.

Looking to further expand his horizons, he explored other options. In 1970 he took the New York State Police Exam and earned an appointment



*Trooper Rucynski, in the office (above) and on an undercover assignment with the New York State Police (right), 1973*



to the State Police Academy. His experience with the Marines helped him endure the mental and physical challenges of that training and earn a place in the ranks of the New York State Police.

Over the next several years, Rucynski never shied away from difficult assignments. His service included two major undercover narcotics operations and a role in quelling the bloody riot at the Attica Correctional Facility in September 1971. His dedication to duty helped him gain promotion to the New York Bureau of Criminal Investigation in 1977. He remained in that position until 1981, when he suffered a spinal injury while making an arrest. At that time, he was forced to end his law enforcement career of almost 12 years and embark on a rigorous physical fitness program to regain his health.

During his years on the police force, Rucynski also returned to military service. In 1967, he enlisted in the Army Reserve as a Sergeant in Battery C, 40<sup>th</sup> Artillery in Oswego. The move proved to be a challenging one. He found himself in an organization that included many



enlistees seeking to avoid the draft and service in Vietnam. Uniform, grooming, and discipline standards differed significantly from his experience in the Marines. In 1968, his unit reorganized as Company D, 479<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, under the 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade. Soldiers like Rucynski, who had started their service with an artillery focus, had to adjust to an influx of new Privates trained as engineers. The crowding of more than 100 Soldiers into a facility intended to serve twenty-five made it difficult to train—especially in the winter months.

Nevertheless, this period demonstrated to him that people of diverse training and goals could become a cohesive unit. He found that not all enlistees were seeking to avoid the draft and that it was possible to encourage a level of *esprit de corps*. He learned that not all training had to be top-down. By enacting a type of “train the trainer” program, the unit permitted the young, enlisted Soldiers to guide those of the higher ranks in the development of engineering skills. He also discovered that, even when faced with severe space restrictions, a unit that put forth the effort could mature and grow.

For a time, Rucynski found it more difficult to reconcile his military responsibilities with his civilian career. When he interviewed for the New York State Police, it was made clear to him that active service in the reserves would undermine his chances of earning an appointment. This obliged him to transfer to the Individual Ready Reserve until 1972, when changing attitudes on the Police Force enabled him to return to duty as a Staff Sergeant, Squad Leader with Company D, 479<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion.

He came back to a unit that was very similar to and yet notably different from the one he left previously. The 137-person unit still operated out of the same cramped facility. Much of the personnel also remained the same. But the youths of the 1960s had matured and become Corporals and Sergeants or earned commissions and become more focused on the Army mission. The unit also was fortunate to have First Sergeant Walter Brown to provide a spark that had been missing in the past.

With Rucynski moving into the role of Platoon Sergeant and, later, of Operations Sergeant, the unit engaged in hard and realistic training and continued to improve. From 1976 through 1980, D Company earned a grade as top in the battalion. In 1982, Rucynski entered the Active Guard Reserve program as Operations and Training NCO for the Company and was able to devote his full effort to planning and execution of training.

He soon was called upon to help transform another unit. In July 1983 Rucynski earned a promotion to Master Sergeant with assignment to the 330<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion as the Battalion Operations and Training NCO. He reported for duty in January 1984 to an organization in turmoil, that lacked cohesion and a sense of direction.

Fortunately, he and the incoming commissioned officers of the Operations and Training (S-3) staff were Vietnam veterans, and all had training experience. As a group, they had the battalion essentially start over, focusing training on basic, level-one and level-two tasks and gradually progressing through Annual Training. The process initially caused some concern for the Command Group and evaluators, who believed that the requirements were too simple. However, Soldiers were eager to develop real skills and the process boosted their morale as it rapidly improved their readiness. When Rucynski was transferred after only fourteen months, he left behind a unit with strong foundations and all companies had passed evaluations at the 1984 Annual Training.

With his transfer to Forces Command, Fort McPherson, Georgia in 1985, Rucynski occupied the position of Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of the Organizational Integration Branch for the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans. This was a mundane title for the complex task of rewriting the Modified Tables of Organization and Equipment for Army Reserve units to standardize them with equivalent Active Component units. Rucynski and his branch completed extensive preparation and training in advance of the project. Then they embarked on the complex process of pouring over and rewriting thousands of documents to advance the One Army concept.

His next assignment came in August 1986, with a move to the FORSCOM Engineers Office as the Combat Engineer Senior Sergeant. Charged with responsibility for annual training evaluations, he conducted four over the following year. In each, he used his knowledge of training and Army organizational requirements to provide extensive feedback and mentorship to the units involved.

In 1987, his accomplishment helped him attain a place in the 30<sup>th</sup> class of the Sergeants Major Academy, where he exceeded course standards. While in attendance he also received promotion to Sergeant Major.

In his first role at this new rank, in 1988 he was assigned to Second United States Army at Fort Gillum, Georgia. As the Professional Development NCO, he had responsibility for all US Army Reserve schools operating in a 13-state area. It was a period of constricted budgets and the position demanded that he use innovation and careful oversight to ensure that the schools all accomplished their missions and functions. One way to cut costs and increase training numbers was to coordinate with other components to share instruction and reduce duplication of effort. Working closely with his counterpart in the National Guard Bureau, SGM Hoyt Couch, Rucynski found ways to overcome sacred ground differences in organizational culture and surpass obstacles to advance training initiatives as a team effort. He also helped establish a model for more extensive future collaborations between the components which has become the norm in the modern academies.

In May 1989, Rucynski advanced once again when he was selected as the Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve Readiness Training Center at Fort McCoy Wisconsin. There he worked closely with a team headed by the commander, Colonel Paul Z. Barnes, to devise new and up-to-date training modules for the Army Reserve. The team of Rucynski, CSM Jim Czajkowski, and CSM Don Hendrickson also developed the Command Sergeant Major course taught at reserve units.



*CSM Rucynski (center) with CSM Tom O'Grady, (left) and CSM Louis Alvarez (right) at U.S. Army Command Sergeant Major Conference, 1991*

During Operation Desert Storm, COL Barnes named CSM Rucynski as the NCOIC of the Arrival/Departure Airfield Control Group to assist with the deployment of personnel and cargo. The quality assistance provided by the ARRTC team was later recognized with the presentation of the Army Superior Unit Awards.

In 1992, Rucynski briefly served on an interim basis as CSM for Task Force Badger in Panama, working with National Guard and Army Reserve units on nation-building projects. He then moved on to his assignment as Commandant of the U.S. Army Reserve NCO Academy, at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. He immediately introduced improvements to the school, drawing on his accomplishments and lessons learned while serving as Professional Development NCO at Second Army. He continued to advocate for the removal of barriers between Army Reserve and National Guard schools. This teamwork approach eliminated duplicate courses and enhanced training opportunities. As a result, enrollment at the NCO Academy improved markedly—from 368 in fiscal year 1991 to more than 3000 Soldiers trained in fiscal year 1992/93.

More importantly, Rucynski strived to improve the quality of the education. When he first arrived at the Academy, he took the reins of a school that was marked for inactivation because of a failed accreditation review. Confronting a storm of protest, Rucynski initiated an instructor certification program and mandated strict adherence to Army standards. He also conducted face-to-face interviews with every member of the academy to discuss the accreditation criteria for their individual areas of attention. He offered guidance, mentorship, and the advice to “simply do your job and we will pass.” Those words rang true. During the next review, the TRADOC Accreditation team classified the academy as the best in the Army Reserve, awarding it a positive assessment in all 152 areas evaluated.

Rucynski returned to Fort McCoy as the installation Command Sergeant Major in May 1994 and continued his positive leadership for the civilian and military communities. He also took on several special projects. These included establishment of a new education office to improve development opportunities, creation of the Fort McCoy Historical Center to foster an appreciation of site history, and revitalization of the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS)



*CSM Rucynski with Sergeant Major of the Army  
Richard Kidd, Fort McCoy, 1995*

program to boost Soldier morale. Likewise, he established a Non-Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA) post and served as its first President. His contributions were instrumental to Fort McCoy winning an Army Community of Excellence Award. CSM Rucynski also was

selected two times as guest instructor at the Sergeants Major Academy during this period and chosen twice to teach the CSM course.

In January 1996, Chief of Army Reserve MG Max Baratz selected CSM Rucynski to serve as the Senior Noncommissioned Officer in the U.S. Army Reserve and Senior Enlisted Advisor. Stepping into that role as the seventh CSM of the Army Reserve in March, Rucynski quickly developed a close and mutually respectful relationship with his commander. He continued to pursue his efforts to develop *esprit de corps* and teamwork in the ranks—this time for the entire component. He similarly maintained his longstanding goal of comprehensive training and his high standards for personal appearance. He demonstrated his concern for Soldier health and welfare by conducting numerous motivational visits to mobilization sites, including visits to more than 8,400 troops deployed to Bosnia during Operation Joint Guard. Overall, he strived to establish his personal code of “Training, Leadership, and Caring” as a guideline for the entire NCO force.



*CSM Rucynski with CSM John Leonard, Army National Guard, Mount Vis, Bosnia, 1998*

Rucynski viewed cooperation with other leaders as paramount to the success of his tenure. He developed a close bond with his counterpart in the Army National Guard—also a Marine Corps veteran of Vietnam—and the two collaborated on numerous projects of mutual concern. Both benefitted from a unique relationship with Sergeant Major of the Army Robert Hall. Hall strongly believed in the One Army, One Standard ideal and strived to ensure that the Guard and Reserve had a role in decision-making. Because of this policy, Rucynski had the honor to sit on a Board of Directors consisting of Senior Enlisted Soldiers of each four-star command and enjoyed an equal opportunity to provide input on enlisted affairs.

He similarly worked closely with his predecessor in office, CSM Douglas Murray, who had moved into the role of Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. Murray included Rucynski on the Senior Enlisted Advisory Board, an assignment that allowed him to interact with the senior enlisted reserve advisors of each branch of the armed services. The experience not only placed Rucynski in a position to gather knowledge and influence policy, it also became a source of lasting friendships with his peers.

The end of Rucynski's term, in January 2000, also brought his military career of more than 38 years to a close. Starting as a Private in the Marine Corps, he had earned the rank Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve, served alongside some of the finest Non-commissioned Officers of the Army, and provided service to its Soldiers.

Throughout that period, he emphasized the importance of training and education, and set an example with his own preparation. In addition to his initial training with the Marines, CSM Rucynski developed his skills with the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, Total Quality Management Course, Senior Noncommissioned Officer Course, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Course, First Sergeant Course, U. S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (Class #30), and Army Logistics Management School.



He also focused on his personal education. In addition to completing his GED while in the Marines, he earned an associate degree in Business Administration at El Paso Community College (1988) while serving as the Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve. He also continued his quest for learning after retirement. In 2005, at 60 years of age, he completed his bachelor's degree in Human and Community Services from Empire State College.

CSM Rucynski has received extensive recognition for his service as a Soldier and civilian. His police awards include three Superintendent Commendations for undercover drug assignments in the early 1970s. He also received the New York State Conspicuous Service Cross with one gold and two silver cross devices and the Conspicuous Service Star with two silver devices.

His lengthy list of military awards and honors include the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, with silver Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Achievement Medal, with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation (Navy), Navy Unit Commendation, Army Good Conduct Medal with five knots, Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, Reserve Component Achievement Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with two stars, Armed Forces Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal (Silver Hour Glass), NCO Professional Development with four device, Army Service Ribbon, two Army Reserve Component Overseas Training Ribbons, NATO Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with 60 device, Army Superior Unit Award, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, Vietnam Civil Action Medal and the Department of the Army Staff Badge. He has also received the Engineer Corps Silver De Fleury and been selected as an honorary member of the Audie Murphy Club.



*CSM Rucynski right), his wife Kathy and SMA Robert Hall, St. Louis, Missouri, 1999*

After his retirement, CSM Rucynski was employed by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs as a Program Manager for an initiative to provide funeral honors for veterans throughout the state. His Military Funeral Honors Program (MFHP) was reviewed and approved by state legislators and signed into law in 2000 by Governor Tommy Thompson. For his efforts, Rucynski received a Certificate of Commendation from Governor McCallum and a Citation by the Assembly of Wisconsin. He continues to advocate veterans' issues at the National, State, and local level.

CSM Jack Rucynski currently resides in Parish, New York with Kathy, his wife of more than 59 years.

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## **Frank Spangler**

Frank Spangler's experience with military life began shortly after his birth on December 8, 1943, in Paso Robles, California. His father, Frank Spangler Sr., served as a Second Lieutenant in the Army and received frequent orders to transfer to a new station. His mother, the former Pebble M. McDuffee, took on the duties of a Soldier's wife. She helped move the family, first to Camp Cooke in Santa Barbara, California and then to Camp Wolters in Mineral Wells, Texas—where another son and daughter were born. She also looked over the young family when her husband was ordered to deploy for service in World War II.

Spangler soon experienced another relocation. Following a divorce from Frank Sr., Spangler's mother married William Ware, an NCO in the Army. When his stepfather received orders to Fort McArthur in San Pedro California, Spangler moved again, back to the Pacific coast.

The family settled near Los Angeles for the remainder of Spangler's youth. He graduated from Grover Cleveland High School in Reseda California, where he participated as a member of the gymnastics team. Nevertheless, the military continued to influence his life. When William Ware received orders to deploy during the Korean War, the young Spangler experienced an extended separation from his stepfather.



*Frank Spangler being sworn into the Army by his stepfather Army Sergeant William Ware, 1961*

Spangler's early experiences with the military lifestyle instilled in him a deep understanding of duty and a desire to serve his country. He enlisted in the Army as part of a delayed entry program while in high school. Shortly after graduation, in March 1961 he set out for basic training on a three-year enlistment. In the short interval in between, he married his high school sweetheart. She would remain behind in California while he completed training.

That instruction period extended for many months. Following his basic training, Spangler attended Signal School at Fort Monmouth New Jersey. He then reported to Fort Bliss, Texas, to complete Fire Unit Integration Facility Equipment Repair Training. In 1963, after almost two years of instruction, he reported to Fort Lawton, Washington with an assignment to the 6<sup>th</sup> Army Signal Detachment. After almost two years of waiting for him to complete his instruction, his wife Jeanne joined him at

his new home. She brought with her their daughter Kellie, who had been born while Spangler was at Fort Monmouth.

In his assignment with the 6th Army Signal Detachment, Spangler was assigned to a Firing Unit Integration Facility where he conducted equipment maintenance throughout the Seattle area as part of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). In a notable moment during that duty, Spangler viewed a U2 spy plane on radar for the first time. The jet moved so quickly that it formed a line across the screen rather than a series of dots. That sight, and the potential that it represented, enthralled him to the point that he eventually decided to pursue a civilian career in the aerospace industry when his enlistment expired.

That term ended in 1964, and Spangler moved to Chatsworth, CA with Jeanne and daughter Kellie. Later that same year, his second daughter Kimberly was born and a son, Frank Jr. followed in 1965. Spangler supported this growing family using the skills he learned while in the service. He found several jobs in his field of interest. This included work as a contractor with Bendex Aviation conducting deep space probes for the Jet Propulsion laboratory and employment for a period with NASA.

Throughout this period, Spangler retained his belief in public service which had first inspired him to join the Army. Seeking to recapture some of the spirit of his time in the military, in 1968 he shifted careers and joined the Los Angeles Police Department. In recognition of his maturity, he was selected to attend an abbreviated, 90-day version of the Police Academy. Because of his youthful appearance, the newly-graduated officer received an assignment to serve in the Narcotics Division in the San Fernando Valley/Hollywood area, as an undercover officer at Birmingham and North Hollywood High Schools. Spangler and his fellow undercover officers handed their badges, identification, handcuffs and IDs to their Lieutenant and assumed the role of students with a mission to root out dealers and suppliers who peddled drugs in the schools. He and his peers needed only 90 days to complete a roundup of

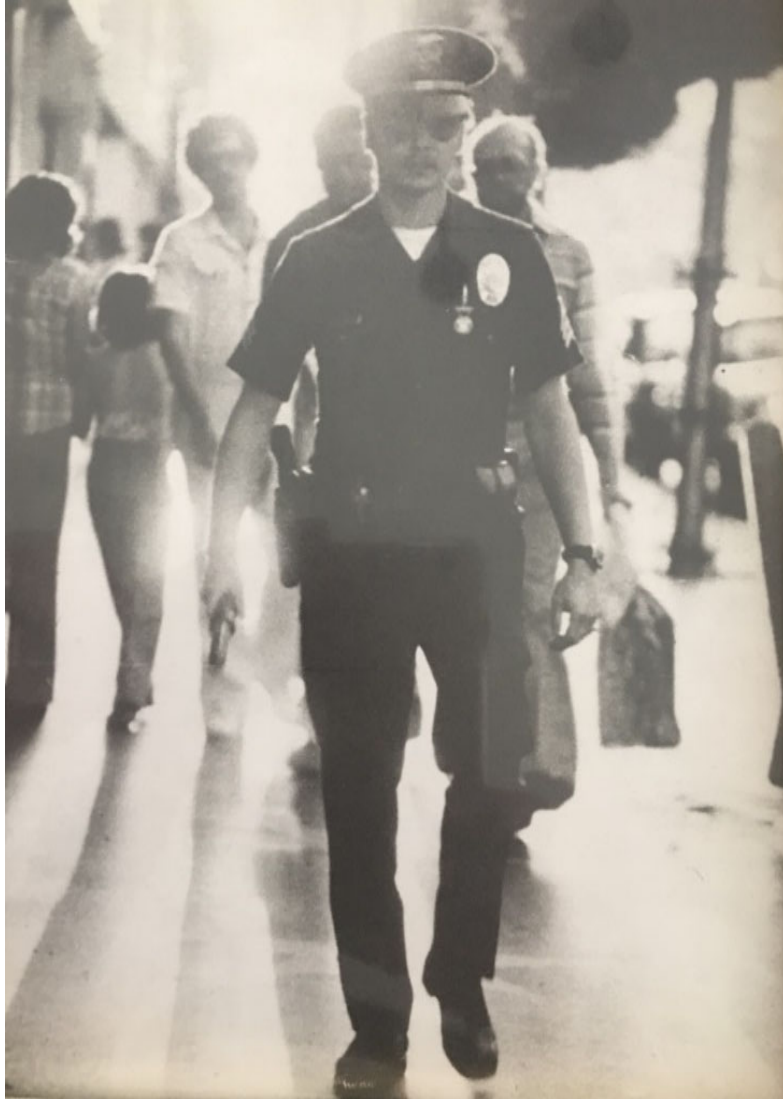


offenders. Only 180 days into service, Spangler helped to secure almost 100 narcotics arrests.

This rapid start evolved into a steady advance in his new profession. After completing the narcotics assignment, he briefly served on the Central Vice squad before moving on to Central Patrol as a patrol officer. His service there soon earned him a promotion to training officer and Senior Lead Officer. In 1974, he attained the rank of Patrol Sergeant and transferred, in succession, to the Rampart, Hollywood, and Central Divisions. At that last posting, he took on responsibilities as first-line supervisor for patrol.

Despite his flourishing civilian career, Spangler continued to feel a pull to military service. In 1974, as he attained the rank of police sergeant, he enlisted in the California National Guard and attended Military Police training in Signal Hill, California. With his assignment to the 40<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company of the 40<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, he gained the rank of Sergeant in the Army as well.

In 1976, after two years of National Guard Service, Staff Sergeant Spangler applied for and received a transfer to the Army Reserves. The change of components was accompanied by a shift from the military Police Corps to a new role as a Counterintelligence NCO. This required him to attend Counterintelligence School, where he made a strong impression. Upon graduation he was selected as an instructor at the NCO Academy, where he taught both the Basic and Advanced NCO Courses. During this assignment, he advanced to the rank of Sergeant First Class.



*Officer Spangler patrolling the Hollywood area as a Los Angeles Police Officer in 1978*

CSM Spangler subsequently transferred to the 63rd Regional Support Command where his profile continued to rise. Initially, he received a promotion to Master Sergeant and became the Senior Intelligence NCO and Headquarters Company First Sergeant. He then advanced to the rank of Sergeant Major in the same command and served as the Operations SGM. While in that role he also accepted an invitation to attend the Sergeants Major Academy as a member of the 30<sup>th</sup> class. In the next step up the ladder, he was chosen to serve as the Command Sergeant Major of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 214<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment.

The assignment to the 1st/214<sup>th</sup> Aviation tested CSM Spangler's skills. Upon arrival, he quickly learned that the contract pilots of the unit had been hired for their flight experience rather than their leadership qualities. As a result, he encountered a very different level of discipline than that of his previous experiences. Nevertheless, he also saw an opportunity to use the expertise and abilities he had learned in the Army and the police force to transform these intractable Soldiers into an efficient and organized corps. A key example was the case of a pilot who consistently failed to meet appropriate uniform standards. CSM Spangler acted as a mentor and explained the importance of modeling appropriate conduct for the younger pilots. With time the pilot transformed his attitude and appearance, a change that served as the catalyst for additional compliance and improved morale throughout the entire unit.

Spangler made substantial progress in his development of the 1<sup>st</sup>/214<sup>th</sup> Aviation, but only served in the position for a brief time before being transferred for a series of other assignments. His first duty was a brief term as CSM of the 168<sup>th</sup> Aviation Group. After only several months, he was allocated to a team headed by COL Jimmy Douglas which evaluated the readiness of Tier 1 units throughout the command. Then, in 1997, Spangler was on the move once again, this time designated to serve as the Command Sergeant Major for the 63<sup>rd</sup> Regional Support Command.

As he advanced in the Army Reserve ranks, Spangler continued a parallel climb in the Los Angeles Police Department. He earned

promotions, in 1984, as a Burglary and Auto Theft Detective at West Valley and Rampart Detective Divisions and, in 1987 as a staff research analyst for the Investigative Analysis Section, Operations Headquarters Bureau. Two years later, he transferred to the Detective Control Unit, North Hollywood Detectives, to serve as head of Investigative Control. By 1990, Spangler was promoted to Traffic Watch Commander, Valley Bureau Traffic Division, then quickly became Patrol Watch Commander, Rampart Area in September of 1990.

In 1992, Spangler rose to Lieutenant in the LAPD and was assigned as Officer in Charge, General Investigations Section, Central Detective Division. He also served as the Assistant Commanding Officer, managed follow-up investigations, and supervised the Gang Enforcement Section and the Crime Analysis Detail. By 1993, he had become Vice Investigations Coordinator, Operations-West Bureau, where he supervised operations and selected, developed, and trained investigators. The final stop in the sequence was his promotion in 1994 to Lieutenant 2, Commanding Officer, West Los Angeles Detective Division, the title he held until his retirement. In that position, he was responsible for the management and leadership of gang crime and crime analysis units in a 64 square mile area of the city.

During this tenure as Commanding Officer, Spangler became involved in one of the most notorious criminal cases in U.S. history. On June 13, 1994, he responded to a call from a crime scene in West Los Angeles and became the first commanding officer to arrive at the location of the murder of Nichole Brown Simpson. Spangler also served as the commander of one of the detectives who became infamous for his role in the investigation and litigation of the case, Detective Mark Furman. As a result of both connections, Spangler would eventually be called to testify in the criminal and civil trials of O.J. Simpson.

Spangler retired from the LAPD on August 15, 1998, to take on full-time military duty as the Command Sergeant Major of the US Army Reserve Command. He had been encouraged to apply for the job by his

second wife, Pam, a retired Master Sergeant in the Army, and earned the appointment from LTG Thomas Plewes in July 1998. After a ceremony, which included the honor of having his LAPD service read into the City of Los Angeles minutes for perpetuity, Spangler reported to the USARC Headquarters at Fort McPherson Georgia.

As USARC CSM Spangler emphasized personal contact with the force and traveled to each Major Subordinate Command at least two times each year. He used these contacts, and his position of influence, to advocate for discipline and meeting standards and emphasize the importance of individual and unit readiness throughout the component.

Each of these points of emphasis increased in importance because of another infamous moment in history—the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. After watching the attacks unfold from his headquarters office, Spangler immediately became involved in the efforts to further improve the readiness of troops for impending conflict. With the onset of Operation Enduring Freedom and U.S. involvement in conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, he devoted much of the balance of his term to assisting with the process of deploying Army Reserve troops in support of combat operations.

The end of CSM Spangler's four-year term as Command Sergeant Major also signaled a close to his military service. On July 1, 2002, just before his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, he retired from the Army and brought a 30-year Army career to a close. He moved, first to Longview Texas, to be close to his mother, and later to Tyler, TX where he currently resides.

In his post-Army life, CSM Spangler has included shares of both sorrow and joy. In 2003, a serious traffic accident near Shreveport, Louisiana claimed the life of his wife Pam and left him injured with an extended path to recovery.

He eventually reclaimed his health and life. In 2005, he married his current wife Lynda and the couple traveled extensively across the United States and around the world. CSM Spangler also took up motorcycle



*CSM Spangler and his wife Pam, 2002*

racings and achieved a top ranking in the country for brakeless class motorcycles on a flat track. That love for cycling motivated him to return to work as the service manager for a Harley Davison dealership in Tyler, Texas from 2007 to 2009.

CSM Spangler's awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal (1<sup>st</sup> OLC), Army Commendation Medal (1<sup>st</sup> OLC), Army Achievement Medal (1<sup>st</sup> OLC), Army Good Conduct Medal (3<sup>rd</sup> Award), Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (8<sup>th</sup> Award), National Defense Service Medal (2<sup>nd</sup> Award), Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Silver Hourglass, NCO Professional Development Ribbon (Numeral 4), and Army Service Ribbon.

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*A Note on the Interviews* by CSM (Ret) Christopher M. Mulch:

CSM Spangler and his wife, Lynda, graciously opened their home to me and allowed me the privilege of sharing his life. Like many of his generation, CSM Spangler was very humble about his achievements. However, he was also eager to share his experiences to help complete this project to carry the legacy of the Command Sergeant Major to the next generation of Soldiers. His story of balancing roles as a LAPD Lieutenant and Army Reserve Soldier is one all Reservists can relate to and shines a light on the dedication required to serve both the Nation and our communities.



CSM Spangler's pivotal role in the Army Reserve transition from peace to a wartime stance in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks underscores his service to this country. His experiences during that time helped form him into the leader he became in both his civilian and military careers. Having experienced personal loss from the attacks, he maintained compassion for all Soldiers and made it a top priority to visit as many Soldiers as possible during his tenure. Even today, two decades later, when CSM Spangler speaks of Soldiers, he demonstrates his genuine care for all that he served with.









## **Alex Ray Lackey**

Alex Ray Lackey was born in Middletown, Ohio on March 7, 1953, and grew up in the Mayfield neighborhood of that community. His early childhood was a complicated one that Lackey later came to view as a character-building experience. His parents divorced when he was young, and he was primarily raised by his mother. She died when Lackey was fourteen years old, essentially leaving him and his older sister, Pam, to care for each other. His father, a truck driver, was away much of the time and not able to provide a steady presence. Other family members took the two siblings periodically but were not in a position to care for both of them long-term. The pair finally settled at the home of their cousin Phyliss who stepped forward and made sacrifices to keep the siblings together.

While attending Middletown High School, Lackey worked part-time at a local grocery store as well. When a friend suggested that they join the Army as part of the buddy system, however, Lackey was willing to set both school and job aside. Believing that he had little to lose and an opportunity to greatly improve his opportunities, he pledged to sign up as a Soldier. Enlistment also afforded him a chance to maintain the legacy of his father and his five uncles, who had all served in the military during World War II.

He honored both his commitment and family tradition but did without his buddy at his side. When the moment arrived to enlist, Ray's friend decided not to go through with the plan. Lackey kept his word. On October 7, 1970, he traveled to the Military Entrance Processing Station

in Cincinnati and signed a three-year contract. Shortly after, he embarked on his first airplane ride, to Basic Combat Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

One of his most important lessons during this period was learned outside of formal training. On his first day in camp, he volunteered to collect some equipment and set off in the direction indicated by his drill sergeant. While searching for the supply room, he asked an officer for directions. The officer promptly reprimanded him for failing to salute. Lackey found his way and returned with the equipment, but he also came away with the awareness that a Soldier should never set out on a mission without the proper guidance and complete information. It was a lesson he would apply throughout his career.

Following basic training, Lackey moved on to Fort Sill Oklahoma to attend advanced individual training as an artillery crewman (MOS 13B). During the eight-week program, a group of trainers from Fort Benning spoke with his company and solicited Soldiers to attend basic airborne school. Ray, who had learned a valuable lesson the last time he volunteered, decided to sign up. The move would also allow him to follow in the footsteps of his namesake uncle Alex, who had served at the Battle of the Bulge with the 101st Airborne Division. He completed his instruction at Fort Sill and immediately moved on to Georgia.

At Fort Benning, Lackey recognized that he had made the right decision. He enjoyed the physical training, daily runs, swing landing trainer, and 34-foot jump tower. Beginning with his first jump out of a C130, he successfully used this instruction to exit the aircraft safely and land using his three points of contact. When graduation day arrived, he proudly took part in the ceremony with his father and sister in attendance.

Prior to that day, Ray received notification of his assignment to the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg. On arrival in North Carolina, he was placed in Company B, 1st Battalion, 504th Infantry Regiment, and given on-the-job training as an infantryman (MOS 11B). During this period, he benefitted from the mentorship of Platoon Sergeant A. J.

White—who had high expectations of his Soldiers and held them to high standards. For example, when Lackey and others of his unit lined up for inspection wearing faded uniforms, the discipline-minded NCO declared that they were wearing cook uniforms and assigned them to kitchen duty. Lackey recognized his error, purchased a new uniform, and restored himself to good standing. More importantly, he accepted the Sergeant's commitment to high standards and made it a foundation of his own leadership philosophy.



*CSM Lackey, 1971, shining his boots at Fort Bragg, North Carolina*

Under White's leadership, Ray became an exemplary Soldier. The Platoon Sergeant insisted that his Soldiers compete for honors and Lackey consistently earned supernumerary guard duty and selection as Company, Battalion, Brigade, and Division Soldier of the month. Along with Specialist E-4 (SP4) Williams and SP4 Johnny Ray Bell he won the 82nd Airborne Division M-60 machine gun competition. He also earned the Expert Infantry Badge and attended the basic leadership course, and the Jungle Operations Training Course at Fort Sherman, Panama.

Sergeant White also offered additional guidance that would have an immense influence on Lackey's life. When he learned that Ray had never completed high school, he counseled the young Soldier on the importance of earning the diploma. He also presented options available to attain it and arranged an initial meeting to get the process started.

Lackey heeded the advice and made a significant effort to attain this goal. Initially, he took preparatory training and completed the test to earn a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. He then focused on completing his high school requirements. Attending evening classes after his unit had been dismissed for the day and working around his field training exercises and formal military education, he finally earned his high school diploma. In the years that followed, this effort paid dividends many times over, creating opportunities for Lackey in the Army and as a civilian.

His military career advanced first. In 1971, Lackey rose to the rank of Corporal. He also gained recognition as runner-up for Division Soldier of the year. This accomplishment secured him an assignment as an Army Recruiter in Bowling Green Kentucky, where his father had settled in search of better trucking opportunities. It was a



*Corporal Lackey, (kneeling, left) receiving honors as 82nd Airborne Division Runner-up Soldier of the Year*

period of transformation in his personal life as well. Before leaving Fort Bragg for his new duty he got married.

In the final weeks of his military obligation, Lackey followed the guidance of his father and leaders and reenlisted in the Army. His first choice for the new term was to attend Ranger School, but the program had an extremely limited number of slots available he could not gain a place. Inside he accepted a position at the Drill Sergeant School at nearby Fort Knox Kentucky. The assignment, to Company A, 11th BN, 5th training BDE as a drill sergeant candidate enabled him to stay in close contact with his family.

Lackey remained at Fort Knox for the next four years. Following his graduation from Drill Sergeant School in 1973, he earned a promotion to Sergeant and was assigned as assistant platoon sergeant under the Drill Sergeant MOS available at the time. He soon earned promotion to Staff Sergeant and, following the retirement of his Platoon Sergeant, took on that role for the 1st platoon. He was also given additional duties as the unit's reenlistment Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO), Chemical, Biological, and Radiological (CBR) NCO, and acting Training NCO.

As an instructor, Lackey worked hard to develop enlistees of the new, all-volunteer Army into disciplined Soldiers. He strived to emulate his own mentors, performing physical training alongside the troops, enforcing standards, and modeling behavior. He also advanced his own training by attending the NCO Basic Course (11B). These efforts earned Lackey recognition as Drill Sergeant of the Cycle several times and the Drill Sergeant of the year for his Battalion. During this period, he and his wife also started a family with the births of a daughter, Jennifer Rae, and a son, William Greg.

In 1976, Lackey came down on levy for Korea. Officials at the replacement detachment reviewed his credentials and offered him an alternate place with the 8<sup>th</sup> Army NCO Academy, but SSG Lackey opted for the more challenging assignment. He noted that he had been assigned outside of his Military Occupational Specialty for three years and wanted to join an infantry unit on the Demilitarized Zone. Accordingly, he was placed in Company A 1/32 INF (Buccaneers), 2nd Infantry Division



Camp Howze, Korea, serving under Battalion CSM Richard Kidd who later became the ninth Sergeant Major of the Army.



*Ray Lackey as a TOW  
section leader  
Weapons Platoon,  
1/32 Infantry, 2nd  
Infantry Division  
Camp Howze, Korea*

He initially served the weapons platoon as a squad leader, attending trainer courses for the Dragon anti-tank weapon system and TOW missiles. He then moved into the role of Weapons Platoon Sergeant with a rotation to Guard Post Ouellette every three months. During his initial rotation, Lackey noted deficiencies in security procedures and ammunition accountability at this sensitive location and took responsibility for improvements. He and his squad leaders—with the support of engineers—inspected perimeter fencing, replaced claymore mines and blasting caps where necessary, improved sandbag defenses at fortified positions, and checked security for convoys. They also improved the system for ammunition change-overs from one platoon to the next and revamped security for convoys and patrols. This included taking measures to ensure that a squad leader accompanied every patrol that moved beyond the fence. Lackey himself escorted any patrol with a new platoon member making an initial trip beyond the barrier.

His service involved him in two notable events of 1976. On July 4, he led the only combat patrol of the U.S. Army that was active on the

nation's 200th birthday. On August 18, he was in the DMZ when two U.S. Officers, CPT Arthur Bonifas and 1st LT. Mark Barrett, were killed by North Korean Soldiers as they led a party to remove a tree in the Joint Security Zone. The incident placed the Korean Peninsula on a DEFCON 3 alert. Lackey's unit was designated as part of a ready reactionary force and remained in a state of high readiness until U.S. and South Korean forces launched Operation Paul Bunyan and cut down the tree.

When his year-long rotation in Korea ended in April 1977, Lackey hoped to land a position with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne at Fort Bragg. Instead, he reported to Fort Knox Kentucky as an Assistant Operations Sergeant for the Test and Evaluations Branch. Although he was concerned that the assignment might limit his opportunity for advancement, he pursued it with his accustomed vigor. He set out to improve procedures, processes, and discipline for the NCO testers in the organization—conducting regular meetings, initiating formal counseling and development programs, and instilling a sense of pride and purpose to the duties. He also worked on his personal development, completing the Advanced NCO course for infantry and earning assignment as Operation Sergeant.

Despite these accomplishments, Lackey saw little opportunity for progression. He earned consideration for promotion through the secondary zone process, but his ranking of 5,274 indicated that he might have to wait years for advancement. This realization, and a determination to pursue a college education, caused him to reassess his future and consider other ways to support his family. When his term of service ended, on June 27, 1979, he began work as a letter carrier for the U.S. Postal Service in Bowling Green Kentucky and started attending night classes at Western Kentucky University.

Nevertheless, he remained committed to the Army. He immediately enlisted in the Army Reserve as a Staff Sergeant (P), senior Drill Sergeant, with Company E 2/399 1st Brigade, 100th Division. There, he again applied his leadership and organizational skills to the improvement of a unit. When he arrived for his assignment, he encountered part-time

Soldiers who had become complacent in physical training and instruction. To counter this attitude, Lackey, introduced an improved conditioning program, instituted more frequent drills, and promoted basic marksmanship skills. He also assisted with physical security, held classes on retirement point cards, and took on additional duty as the unit's training NCO. His reforms helped the once-lackluster unit achieve a Commendable Rating during the next Army Inspector General (AIG) inspection.



*Lackey at the time of his Drill Sergeant of the Year honors, 1982*

The efforts garnered him personal recognition as well. In 1980 he earned promotion to E-7 Sergeant First Class. He also received accolades as Drill Sergeant of the Year for his battalion, the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, and the 100<sup>th</sup> Division. Ultimately, he achieved distinction as the Drill Sergeant of the Year for the Army Reserve. As a requirement of the honor, he spent much of the next twelve months touring Basic and Advanced Individual Training installations with Charles W. Fitzpatrick, the Active Army Drill Sergeant of the Year.

In 1982, Lackey was assigned the duty of Battalion Operation Sergeant for Headquarters, 2/399, 1st Brigade, 100th Division. Under the guidance of Operations officer MAJ Marvin Kinch, he concentrated on ensuring that the unit met standards for mandatory training, physical training, equipment, and medical readiness. This included meetings with each company and a review of every individual training record to ensure that training NCOs took appropriate responsibility for unit development.

His growing reputation for thoroughness was accompanied by continued advancement. In April 1983 he earned promotion to Master

Sergeant, E-8. The following year, he attended the Senior NCO Course. His unit improved as well. Over a three-year period, the 2/399 Battalion Operations section received commendable ratings in all inspections, including the Fifth Army's Command Readiness Inspection.

In 1985, Lackey applied for and was selected as First Sergeant, Company C of the 2/399. In this duty, he helped manage the battalion's transition from Basic Combat Training to Advance Individual Training in Armor (MOS 19E) and participated in three successful annual trainings. He also developed or improved multiple initiatives for the battalion, including programs for soldier welfare and retention, NCO mentorship, Soldier and NCO of the Year, and an NCO Developmental Program. He continued to strive to improve his own capabilities as well by attending the First Sergeant Course

Lackey also dedicated himself to non-military obligations. He completed the requirements for an associate degree. He took on the responsibilities of a single parent. Meanwhile, he advanced in his civilian profession. After serving for two and a half years as a part-time flexible employee who provided support to other letter carriers, in 1982 he was promoted to status as a regular carrier and received his own route. By 1985, he served as a Supervisor for the Delivery and Routes Department in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Two years later, the same emphasis on discipline and duty that aided his advance in the Army landed him a promotion to Superintendent of the Window Services Section of the post office.

His military obligations occasionally intervened with this career, but Lackey had the good fortune to have an employer that was willing to accommodate him. In 1988, for example, First Sergeant Lackey had the distinction of becoming one of the first Army Reserve Troop Program Unit Soldiers to receive an invitation to the Resident Course of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA). This required him to step aside from his postal position for seven and a half months to attend the school in El Paso Texas. His postal supervisors approved the move

and covered his position on an interim basis until he returned to his job. Lackey made the most of the opportunity, exceeding course standards and earning a superior rating in all five demonstrated-ability categories.

Following his graduation from the Sergeants Major Academy, Lackey was reassigned as First Sergeant of Company C 1/399 1 Brigade, 100<sup>th</sup> Division. With the support of his civilian unit administrator and commander, Lackey focused on developing his subordinates, competing in the Division Color Guard Competition, and ensuring that his unit achieved one hundred percent MOS and Drill Sergeant Qualification.

On January 11, 1991, Lackey was promoted to Sergeant Major with an immediate appointment as Command Sergeant Major, assigned as Commandant of the 100th Division Leadership Academy and Drill Sergeant School, 4th TNG Support BDE at Fort Knox. Three weeks later, before he had attended his first drill with the new unit, his entire brigade was mobilized in support of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

Once again, he stepped away from civilian responsibilities and returned to active service. Over the next months, he and his unit planned, organized, and executed Common Task Testing (CTT) for more than 1,000 mobilized soldiers and certified them prior to deployment. His unit also continued to perform its Army Reserve Drill Sergeant School mission on weekends to ensure the availability of qualified Drill Sergeants for the 100th Division.

When the 4th Training Support Brigade was demobilized on March 26, 1991, Lackey returned to his civilian duties and his Troop Program Unit position. During the next two years, he and his First Sergeant, ensured that all 41 cadre in their unit were trained, boarded, and qualified. They also started a physical fitness program to give Soldiers the mental and physical toughness needed to conduct physical training.

In January 1993, Lackey advanced in both his civilian and military careers. His promotion with the U.S. Postal Service came first, and he was named Supervisor of the Customer Services Department at the U.S. Post Office in Bowling Green Kentucky. A short time later, he was

assigned to the 4th Brigade Training Support, 100th Division as Brigade Command Sergeant Major. He closed out his tenure at the Leadership Academy and Drill Sergeant School with its first all-NCO Change of Responsibility and moved on to his new unit.

Over the next three years, Lackey worked closely with the Brigade Commander, COL Albert Freeland, to ensure compliance with standards and development of fundamental skills. He initiated physical fitness programming and personally trained with Soldiers during his visits to units. He emphasized regular weapon and vehicle inspections. To improve the NCO force, he took measures to ensure that all Evaluation Reports were completed in a timely manner and held annual meetings to discuss the NCO Development Program. He also helped establish a successful Family Readiness Program, that encouraged the involvement and cooperation of officers, NCOs, Soldiers, and spouses of the organization

In 1994 the unit reorganized as the 3rd Training Support Brigade, 100th Division. Under this new designation, the benefits of Lackey's leadership became apparent. In addition to helping his unit win the Division Color Guard Competition, he also trained and mentored the Drill Sergeant of the Year for the 100<sup>th</sup> Division and the Army Reserve in three consecutive competitions.<sup>1</sup>

Another reorganization of the unit, in May 1996, established Lackey as Command Sergeant Major of the 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade Training Support for the 100<sup>th</sup> Division at Fort Knox. This expanded his area of responsibility and required him to visit a different unit each week. His emphasis remained the same. With the support of his Battalion Command Sergeants Major, he continued to promote physical fitness, standards, and family support.

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<sup>1</sup> These included SSG Christopher Laird, selected 100<sup>th</sup> Division and Army Reserve Drill Sergeant of the Year in 1994, SSG Bruce Clark in 1995, and SFC Ronald Cootes who earned both designations in 1996.

These methods also continued to produce results. The Brigade once again won the 100<sup>th</sup> Division Color Guard Competition and an emphasis on training helped establish the 100<sup>th</sup> as the training division with the highest level of Military Occupational Specialty Qualification and the lowest no-show rate in the Total Army School System.

In September 1996, MG William Barron, who had previously served as his Lackey's Commander in the 399<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, selected him as Command Sergeant Major of the 100th Division. In that role, Lackey continued to emphasize leadership, individual training, and physical fitness at the division level. Barron also assigned him responsibilities for the Army's Performance Improvement Criteria, the division's Equal Employee Opportunity program, and the Total Army School System. When in the field, visiting eight brigades across the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama, he participated in physical training with the units, worked closely with brigade CSMs, and met regularly with Soldiers.

Lackey also stressed administrative measures. He trained for and assisted with Vision, Mission, Strategic Alignment, and Performance Management of the division. He became skilled with the Army Training Requirements and Resources System (ATRRS). He tracked soldiers to ensure they were prepared and physically fit to attend the Non-Commissioned Officer Educational System or Drill Sergeant School. He set up an order of merit list to fill vacancies in the division. In the early days of electronic communications, he introduced email and initiated computer training in the ranks. Following implementation of the Army's Select, Promote, Train Promotion System, he met with NCOs to ensure that they understand the educational requirements and other standards of the program.

Under Lackey's guidance, the division continued to excel. One example was the ongoing development of Drill Sergeants, as the 100th Division Drill Sergeant of the Year for 1997 and 1998 both earned recognition as Army Reserve Drill Sergeant of the Year. With these



accomplishments, Lackey had helped Soldiers of his unit achieve this distinction for five consecutive years.<sup>2</sup>



*CSM Lackey (seated) with winners of the title of Army Reserve Drill Sergeant of the Year, SGT 1<sup>st</sup> Class Theresa Belle, SSG Timothy R. Graves, SFC Ronald Cootes, SSG Bruce Clark, and SSG Christopher Laird*

While performing these duties, Lackey was recommended, slated, and interviewed as a candidate for the position of Command Sergeant Major for the Office, Chief of Army Reserve. His accomplishments, and a glowing recommendation from MG William Barron, helped him earn the duty. In the summer of 1999, MG Thomas Plewes selected him to serve as the eighth Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve. In September, Lackey transferred to Active Guard Reserve Status, sold his home in Kentucky, and moved to Washington D.C to start the new phase of his career.

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<sup>2</sup> SGT 1<sup>st</sup> Class Theresa Belles received the honor in 1997 and SSG Timothy R. Graves in 1998.

His civilian employers assisted with the transition. The U.S. Postal Service allowed Lackey to leave his position with an understanding that the organization would find him an equivalent role at the close of his three-year Army term. Out-going CSM Rucynski also helped with the adjustment. He scheduled meetings to introduce his successor to the OCAR NCOs and remained on duty long enough to allow Lackey to settle into housing at Fort Myer Virginia. The two then worked side-by-side for several weeks to ensure a smooth turnover of duties before the formal transfer of responsibility in October.

Lackey would maintain this type of partnership throughout his term as Command Sergeant Major. Over the next three years, he worked closely with the Sergeant Major of the Army, the CSM of the Army National Guard, and other senior enlisted advisors. Together they visited forces around the world, presented testimony to lawmakers, and addressed other areas of common concern. He expanded ties with the Association of the United States Army to improve the Army Reserve enlisted presence with this organization. Believing that Soldiers would benefit from more information about the organization that they served, he coordinated with former CSM Collin Younger and the United Service Automobile Association to distribute free copies of the Army Almanac to all 207,000 members of the Army Reserve. He also collaborated with the Army Reserve Association to establish numerous training and education scholarships.

As he settled into his duties as Army Reserve CSM, Lackey continued to emphasize familiar goals. He upheld his longstanding emphasis on physical fitness and standards. He increased activity of Medical and Physical Evaluation Boards to improve readiness and remove Soldiers who were physically unable to perform. Additionally, he worked to recognize and improve Soldier skills and performance by establishing annual national-level competitions for Soldier and NCO of the year.

These contests included attendance from the Sergeant Major of the Army and eventually would evolve into the modern Best Warrior competition.

Lackey extended his high expectations to all levels of the



*CSM Lackey running the Army 10-Miler in Washington, D.C. in 2000.*

organization and demanded that NCO leaders set the example for fitness. He organized a Sergeants Major conference with mandatory attendance and required all participants to weigh-in and complete the Army Physical Fitness Test upon arrival. He imposed similar fitness requirements on all OCAR staff, including himself and his executive staff. Moreover, he demonstrated his personal commitment to physical readiness through regular participation in the annual Army Ten-miler run.

In addition to fitness, Lackey continued to place a priority on other aspects of well-being for Soldiers, NCOs and their families. He worked closely with General Plewes, and his wife Liz, to improve the Army Reserve's Family support program. He established Process Action Teams to review all regulations affecting enlisted soldiers and ensure they were current, relevant, and required. Through quarterly NCO Development Program sessions, he encouraged training and advancement in the ranks. All the while, an active travel schedule allowed him to maintain in-person contact with units and Soldiers—including those stationed with the peacekeeping force in Bosnia.

His attention to the well-being of the force shone through in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Lackey was present in the building when American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the west side of the Pentagon. After helping the staff of his office to safety, he returned to the burning building to locate and assist others as well. When the Army Reserve immediately mobilized the 311 Quartermaster and Mortuary Affairs unit, based in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, to retrieve the



*CSM Lackey (above) in front of the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, and (left) with now-CSM Paul Mantha at the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes*

remains of Soldiers and civilians, CSM Lackey was there to assist. He met the incoming Soldiers on the tarmac at Dover Air Force Base, escorted them to temporary housing at Fort Myer Virginia, and helped them secure longer-term lodging. In the days that followed, he and MG Plewes also attended numerous funerals for victims.

The events of September 11 greatly influenced the remainder of his term as Command Sergeant Major. In the ensuing months, he participated in briefings for the initial mobilizations and for deployments under Operations Noble Eagle and Just Cause and visited with Army Reserve units called to duty. He also initiated several enlisted regulatory changes to help with the war on terror. These included increasing maximum years of service (MYOS) for E-5 thru E-8 Troop Program Unit soldiers and reinstating MYOS for E-9 TPU soldiers.

In 2002, incoming Chief of Army Reserve, LTG James Helmly complemented Lackey's performance as Command Sergeant Major and proposed to extend his term. However, Lackey felt obligated to return to his civilian job. In May 2000, he applied for and earned selection to the position of Postmaster at Fort Knox. The Postal Service then filled the slot on a temporary basis while awaiting his return. Grateful for this arrangement and not wanting to place additional demands on the benevolence of the Postal Service, he declined Helmly's offer. After



*CSM Lackey at his retirement ceremony, October 25, 2002, with daughter Jennifer Rae Lackey and son William Greg Lackey*

assisting with the selection and orientation of his replacement, CSM Michele S. Jones, Lackey stepped down on October 25, 2002. In January 2003, he retired from the Army Reserve with more than 32 years of service.

In his return to civilian life, Lackey once again benefitted from the goodwill of the U.S. Postal Service. He initially returned to Fort Knox Kentucky for his assignment as postmaster. Five months later, however,

the postmaster in Bowling Green Kentucky retired. She had held on to her post long enough for Lackey to qualify as an applicant and earn consideration for the position in his hometown. He served at that post office until 2008, when he retired and closed out thirty years of service.

During this period, Lackey turned his attention to education—both as a student and an instructor. He completed his bachelor's degree at Western Kentucky University, then attended additional classes to earn certification as a Professional in Human Resources. Additionally, he completed the requirements for recognition by the Society for Human Resource Management as a Certified Professional. In 2010, Western Kentucky University selected him as a Human Resources trainer and an instructor of Leadership and Strategic Planning. He also established his own business, "Leadership by Example," through which he continues to apply his subject matter expertise on leadership and organizational improvement.

In his retirement, Lackey has continued to provide active support to the Army and his community. He has acted as an Army Reserve Ambassador and as a member of the Association of the U.S. Army, American Legion, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. He also served on the board of directors of the Independence Bank in Warren County Kentucky and as Executive Director of Operation P.R.I.D.E. (Plant+Repair+Improve+Develop+Enjoy), a community improvement organization in Bowling Green.

CSM Lackey's formal military training consists of Artillery Crewman Training, Basic Airborne Course, Infantry (OJT), Basic Leadership Course, Jungle Operation Training Course, Drill Sergeant Course, Nuclear Biological and Chemical Noncommissioned Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, Dragon Trainer Course, Tube-launched Optically-tracked Wire-guided missile (TOW) Missile Course, Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course, Senior Noncommissioned Officer Course, First Sergeant Course, Sergeants Major Academy (Class #31) and the Army Performance Improvement Criteria course.



His awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, with four Oak Leaf Clusters, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal with one Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Reserve Achievement Medal (4th Award), Army Good Conduct Medal (2nd Award), National Defense Service Medal (1 bronze star), Korean Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Ribbon 10 Year (M-Device), the NCO Professional Development Ribbon (Numeral 4), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Parachute Badge, Expert Infantry Badge, Army Staff Identification Badge, Drill Sergeant Identification Badge and U. S. Army Physical fitness Badge.

CSM Lackey and his wife Debbie reside in Bowling Green, KY. They have four children: Jennifer Rae Pelicano, William Greg Lackey, Tammy Lynn Thompson, and Brittany Michelle Dillon. They also have six grandchildren Lori Thompson, Lane Lackey, Makenzie Thompson, Taylor Lackey, Caden Dillon, and Kinley Dillon.

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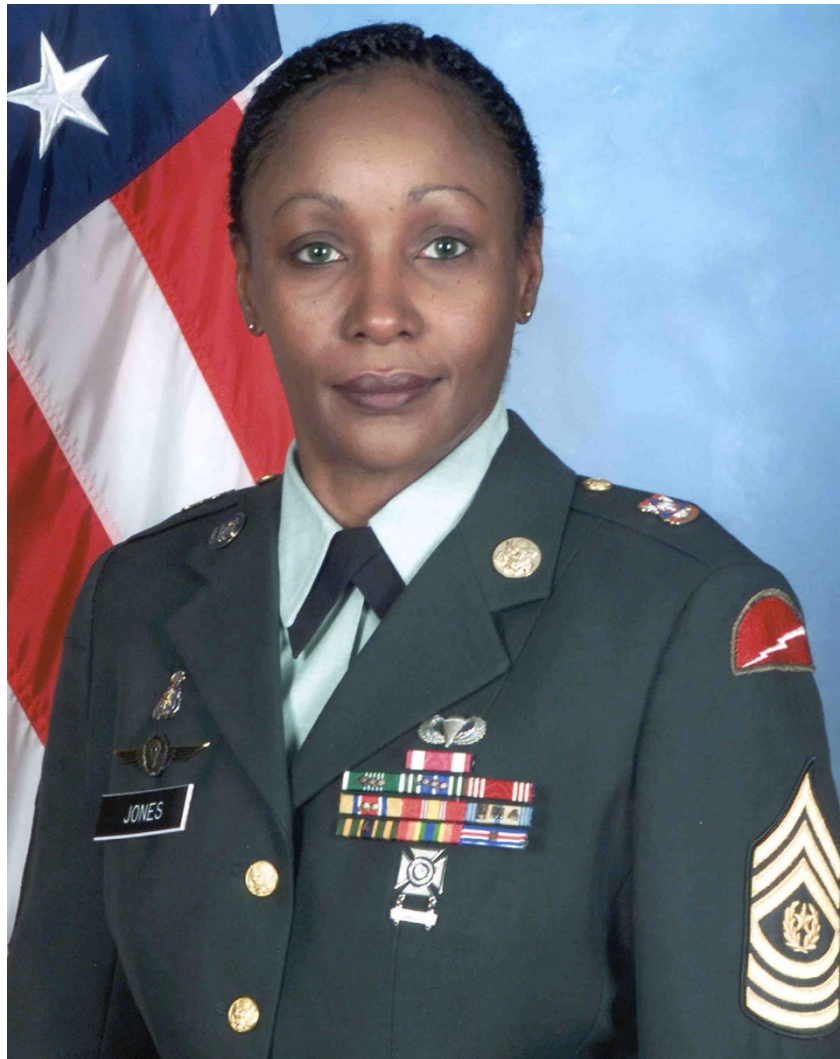
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## **Michele S. Jones**

Michele S. Jones was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on November 24, 1963, the youngest child of Leon and Doris H. Jones. Although Jones only had one brother, Michael, she also was surrounded by a large extended family of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins that helped her parents instill the values that guided her in her career.

She was an excellent student at Milford Mill High School in Baltimore, but Jones had determined by her senior year that she did not want to attend college. Inspired by the “Be all that you can be,” commercials on television at the time, she decided that she wanted to join the Army instead. Her mother and father had different wishes, however, and insisted that she continue her education. Too young to enlist without her parents’ permission she applied to and attended Howard University in Washington D.C. following her high school graduation in 1980.

Despite complying with her family’s wishes, Jones remained firm in her desire to join the military. She attended classes but never really applied herself to her studies and felt that she was following the wrong path. A year and a half into her education, she decided to make a change. Since she was then old enough to act without a signature from her parents, she went to a local recruitment office and enlisted in the Army. In a nod to her mother and father, she chose a Delayed Entry Program that permitted her to complete the academic year before reporting for duty.

Her parents remained firm that she should finish college and questioned her choice. Her father, himself a former Staff Sergeant in the Army, also cautioned her on the hardships of service. But both ultimately accepted the decision and provided their unqualified support when she departed for Fort Jackson in September 1982. That support helped carry her through the Basic Training and her entire extended family journeyed to South Carolina to attend her graduation.

Jones had enlisted with the intent to serve as a Legal Specialist and her Advanced Individual Training for that field next took her to Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. There she received professional instruction, but she learned a more important lesson from her peers. When she fell ill during the last week of classes and was confined to the hospital, her fellow students kept her informed of coursework, shared their notes, and assisted her with preparation for final testing. When examination day arrived, Jones was well-prepared and graduated on time with her class. The gratitude for that assistance and the concept of success through teamwork remained with her throughout her career.



*Jones receiving  
the rank of  
Specialist from  
COL DeJulio,  
Staff Judge  
Advocate, Fort  
Carson,  
Colorado 1982*

With the completion of Advanced Individual Training, Jones received an assignment to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, United States Army Garrison at Fort Carson, Colorado, as a Private First Class. Fort Carson held one of only two consolidated legal facilities in the Army and the placement provided her with an opportunity to gain experience with numerous aspects of military law. This environment also revealed to her some disadvantages of being a female in the Army. There were very few women in the NCO ranks at the time and she struggled to find a role model. Moreover, the NCOs she did encounter treated her differently and often assigned her less-favorable training and opportunities than her male peers.

A few astute leaders did observe her potential and provided much-needed guidance and challenges. In 1984, Sergeant First Class Jerry Suggs recommended her for attachment to the 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized) in Hanau Germany to provide legal support for the annual REFORGER exercises. This opportunity enabled her to greatly expand her professional knowledge and experience and assisted with her career advancement to the rank of Specialist, E-4 promotable. Equally significantly, the assignment placed her in contact with Staff Sergeant Linda Roberson, the first and only female NCO she had encountered in her time in the Army to date. Roberson was fierce, extremely qualified, hard but fair, and compassionate. Jones recognized that Roberson exhibited all the traits of a stellar NCO and relied on her as an example and guide for her own career.

That career would lead her to the Army Reserve. In 1985, Jones left the active component and Fort Carson and returned to her hometown of Baltimore to serve in a Reserve Theater Support Group. She originally intended to resume her college education, finish her degree, and pursue law school or a legal career. However, her excellent performance in an Army training course earned her an invitation to return as an instructor and she once again placed her schooling on hold. During that period, she found the role of the Army Reserve Soldier—serving one weekend each month and two weeks during the year—to be too limiting for her tastes.

In 1987 she welcomed a call back to full-time status and deployed to Honduras in support of the Operation Fuertes Caminos humanitarian mission. That prolonged assignments delayed her return to college for an additional period.

An incident in Honduras also motivated her to develop a broader range of military skills. Although Fuertes Caminos was designed as a peace mission, the country was embroiled in low-intensity conflict. Therefore, on an occasion when Jones and others in her base camp heard gunfire in the surrounding area, they could not be certain if it was harmless or a military threat. The Soldiers reached for their weapons and turned to Jones, then a Sergeant, for guidance. At that moment, she realized that her extensive training as a legal specialist had not prepared her for this type of scenario. She relied on her wits and abilities to resolve the situation, but also vowed that she would develop the skills and knowledge required to become an effective NCO and better qualified to confront situations like this in the future.

That determination led her to accept a posting at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. When she arrived in 1990, she initially served as a Sergeant and legal affairs NCO with the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychology Operations Command (Airborne). She later reclassified as a Civil Affairs NCO and served two terms as First Sergeant with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Operations Command (Airborne).

During this period, she sought to expand her abilities and experience by taking on as broad a range of assignments as possible. She volunteered for many additional duties, including ammunitions NCO and Range NCO In Charge. She organized and developed an NCO of the Year competition. She expanded her training into new areas, earning her Army parachutist badge, German Airborne wings, and Royal Thai Airborne wings despite a fear of heights. Significantly, she also completed her college studies, earning a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Cum Laude, from nearby Fayetteville State University.

In 1997, Jones earned a promotion to the rank of Sergeant Major and selection to attend the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss Texas. Once again, she thrived in a training environment, becoming the first woman selected as class president and receiving an invitation to stay on as an instructor for the non-resident version of the course. She remained with the school until 1998, when she accepted her first Command Sergeant Major assignment with the 78<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Training Support in Edison New Jersey.



*CSM Jones, with Major General Wesley Beal, during a Change of Responsibility ceremony, 78th Division, Edison, New Jersey, April 1998*

Once installed as a Command Sergeant Major, Jones saw her career advance quickly. Her performance as a Battalion CSM, garnered her a nomination for the Division CSM position. By that time, the division mission had shifted from training to mobilization preparation, Defense Support to Civil Authorities, and lanes-based training. Although Jones was junior to many of her peers, she had developed the depth and breadth of experience required for the new position and took over responsibility for an organization of five brigades and 21 battalions with a footprint that extended from North Carolina to New York.



This assignment might have been the endpoint of her career if not for the terrorist events of September 11, 2001. Jones intended to close out her service with the Army after twenty years and was in the process of moving when the first plane hit the World Trade Center in New York. In the immediate aftermath of the attack, she received notification that her retirement had been temporarily delayed. As more details emerged, and as the nation moved into a war footing, it became apparent that the Army Reserve and the 78<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division would be heavily involved in mobilization and response. As her unit began the work it had prepared for over the years, Jones had no interest in leaving. She set aside plans of retirement and continued with her Command Sergeant Major duties.

Her level of responsibility and successful performance of duties made her a leading contender to succeed Ray Lackey as Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve in 2002. When LTG James Helmly employed new selection procedures, designed to ensure equity, measurable standards, and fairness in the selection process, she rose to the top of the list of nominees and was designated as the 9<sup>th</sup> CSM. As Jones stepped into the role in October 2002, Helmly expressed his support for her abilities and assured her that she was not his CSM but the Command Sergeant Major for the entire Army Reserve and its Soldiers. As such, she had a great degree of freedom to make her own decisions, plan her own travel, and set her own agenda.

Although entrusted with the freedom to choose her course, Jones found that her mission and goals were strongly influenced by events of the day. The War on Terror occupied a position of primary importance, but, in 2005, Hurricane Katrina and the need for Army Reserve response, also played a defining role. These events moved the Army Reserve toward unprecedented levels of mobilization that dictated many of her actions. She devoted her efforts to addressing conflicts of policy and regulation, ensuring proper payment for mobilized Soldiers, negotiating with employers on leave issues, verifying the availability of equipment,



*CSM Jones  
conducting a  
briefing on the  
changes in the  
Army Reserve to  
senior leaders, at  
Fort McCoy,  
Wisconsin, circa  
2003*



and numerous other associated matters. She placed particular importance on support for the troops and consistently made time to meet with troops at home and abroad. She looked forward to opportunities to “mentor in a moment”—to impart wisdom, encouragement, and direction during brief one-on-one encounters with service members. She accomplished these actions with a motherly attitude of firm-but-loving guidance. Jones fondly referred to Soldiers as her “babies” and, in return, received the unofficial and respectful title of “Big Momma Army.”

This unofficial title also recognized her status as the first female Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve. This groundbreaking accomplishment—as well as her position as the third African American CSM—stimulated a great deal of attention inside and beyond the Army. Her presence in the highest enlisted position sparked a significant rise in female enlistments. She became the subject of articles in numerous magazines, fielded calls for interviews on national talk shows, and received a Meritorious Achievement Award from the NAACP in 2006.



*CSM Jones visiting Soldiers at TF Cereberus, Bagram Afghanistan, 23 December 2005*

She used this publicity to generate support for the Army Reserve and its troops. When questioned about her career and achievements, she consistently seized the opportunity to promote the contributions of the component and advocate for more modern equipment, better training, and increased funding.

Jones also readily shared credit for her accomplishments with others. She regularly praised the teams that worked with her on the job, crediting them for working tirelessly, keeping her informed, and providing honest opinions and critiques. Likewise, she credited numerous commanders and NCOs for mentorship and guidance that shaped her military career.

That career came to a close shortly after the end of her term as CSM in June 2006. In early 2007 she retired, bringing her Army career of 25 years to a close.



*CSM Jones with the "J Team" from left to right: SSG Janet E. Miller, SGM Karen J Nelson and SFC Juliet Jones at the Office of the 9<sup>th</sup> CSM of the Army Reserve, Arlington, VA 24 December 2005*

Her dedication to service continued. Her first post-military role was as the head of her own company, Bones Theory Group. Through this organization, Jones provided a range of services that reflected the knowledge and leadership skills she had acquired in her Army career. These included consultation on the hiring and management of veterans and workshops to help parents become leaders of their homes. Her focus on motivational speaking to inspire the youth of her community led her to conduct programs for more than 45,000 students.

It was her speaking abilities that drew her back into the national spotlight and another career path. In 2008, she received an invitation to speak at the Democratic National Convention on behalf of Presidential nominee Barak Obama. Following Obama's election that Fall, she was appointed to serve his administration as Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense and White House Liaison. In December 2010, she was

selected for still another post, Special Assistant and Senior Advisor to Clifford Stanley, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. In 2012 she accepted the title of Director of External Veterans/Military Affairs and Community Outreach. In each of these roles, she helped develop programs to expand job opportunities for veterans with limited education and work experience.



*CSM Jones traveled to South Korea in April 2005 to gather information on the challenges for Soldiers, families living abroad.*

In December 2012, CSM Jones left her government position to concentrate on re-launching her consulting firm. That company remains active ten years later. In 2016, she also partnered with Civility Management Solutions, a consulting organization that specializes in administrative, human relations and grants management and leadership development. She currently serves as a primary speaker of the organization and vice-president in charge of training.

Jones has remained committed to her role as an advocate and mother figure for the nation's youth, women and veterans. She was a board member of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial, a monument to women who served in the U.S. Armed Forces. She also served on the boards of Final Salute Inc. and Our Community Salutes. The first organization provides support to homeless women Veterans with children. The latter recognizes and celebrates high school students who enlist in the military. Additionally, she served as Vice Chair for the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service and as Chief Judge for the annual Ms. Veteran America Competition.



*CSM Jones, reflecting on "Soldiers, Families, and challenges both in the U.S. and abroad" in South Korea, April 2005*

Over the course of her career, CSM Jones completed an extensive list of training. This instruction included the Primary Leadership Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course, Battle Staff Operations Course, First Sergeant's Course, and the Sergeants Major Course (Class 48). She also graduated from the Instructor Training Course, Small Group Instructor Course, Civil Affairs Operations Course, Master Fitness Course, and Retention NCO Basic and Advanced Courses.

Jones also has received numerous awards, decorations, and honors, both military and civilian. Army awards include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, with 3d Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Achievement Medal, with 3rd Oak Leaf Clusters, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, with Silver Hourglass, M Device, and Numeral 4 affixed, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon (with Numeral 4), Army Reserve Component Overseas Training Ribbon (with Numeral 2), Army Service Ribbon, Army Parachutist Badge, German Army Forces Airborne Wings, and Royal Thai Airborne Wings. CSM Jones also has received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from National Louis University in Humanities and an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Public Service from Southern New Hampshire University.

Jones is also mother to three daughters, Brittney, Toya, and Naiya, her biological second cousins, who she has raised as her own children.



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## Nicholas Piacentini

Nicholas A. Piacentini Jr. was born in Sacramento, California, on October 3, 1948, the first child of Nicholas Anthony Piacentini Sr. and Jean Julia Piacentini. His parents had a great influence on his life and career. His father, a Navy Veteran of World War II served as a role model for discipline, duty, and athletic achievement that contributed to his choice of a military career. His mother taught him, his brother Dan, and his sister Georgeann always to treat others with dignity and respect—traits that benefitted his rise through the ranks.



*PV2 Piacentini, Fort Ord,  
California, October 1970*

Piacentini devoted much of his youth to athletic pursuits. In elementary school through high school in Sacramento, he played baseball and basketball. He continued his baseball career at the college level as a student at Sacramento City College, where he earned an associate degree in 1968, and at Sacramento State College, where he majored in Physical Education. Piacentini credited his athletic experience with developing a sense of team and fair play that he carried with him into the military.

The Army moved to the forefront of his attention during his final months of college. Midway through his senior year, Piacentini received his draft number for the newly-reinstated draft lottery. Rather than wait with uncertainty for possible selection in the draft, he instead accepted an offer to enlist in the Army Reserve and train to become a drill sergeant. In April 1970, just weeks before he graduated with a bachelor's degree in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, he took the Oath of an Enlisted Soldier.

During this period Piacentini also made another significant life decision. On June 7, 1970, he married Mary Katherine Intfen. The couple had met on a blind date when he was a college sophomore and she a freshman and they dated throughout their university years. Piacentini, who had been promoted to PV2 in August 1970, enjoyed a brief honeymoon period with his new wife before reporting for military duty. The couple then traveled together to Fort Ord in September, where Mary dropped off her husband for his Basic Combat Training.

Piacentini excelled in that training. His athletic skill and conditioning enabled him to surpass the physical fitness challenges. He did especially well with grenades, drawing upon his experience throwing a baseball. He also was selected as "Trainee Platoon Sergeant." And represented his platoon for the title of "Trainee of the Cycle." Even after being called away from his instruction to attend the funeral of his grandfather, he was able to complete his end-of-cycle testing without difficulty. Piacentini remained at Fort Ord for the duration of his active duty for training and Drill Sergeant School. During this period, he also earned a promotion to Private First Class in January 1970. Immediately after Basic Training, he moved on to the Leadership Preparation Course. Next, he attended Advanced Infantry Training. Finally, in March 1971, 179 days after first reporting and having achieved the rank of Corporal/E4, he graduated from the Fort Ord Drill Sergeant School as an Acting Sergeant/E5. He returned to his hometown of Sacramento in March 1971 and began duty as Drill Sergeant with Company E, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 360<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 91<sup>st</sup> Division (TNG)



*Acting SGT Nick Piacentini and SGT Ron Eggian, Graduation Day at Drill Sgt. School, Fort Ord, March, 1971*

With this assignment, Piacentini began a steady climb through the NCO ranks. He earned the rank of Sergeant in January 1972, Staff Sergeant in March 1973, Sergeant First Class in August 1974, and Senior Drill Sergeant in March 1975—all while remaining in Company E. In January 1976 he took on an assignment as Acting Master Sergeant/E8 Operations Sergeant at Headquarters, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 360<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade (BCT), 91<sup>st</sup> Division (TNG) and remained in that role until his enlistment ended in April 1977.

Piacentini reenlisted and continued his advance within the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 360<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 91<sup>st</sup> Division. In June 1977, he was assigned the position of Senior Drill Sergeant for Company B. He remained there until May 1979, when he moved into the role of Acting First Sergeant/E8 for Company D. He subsequently was promoted to the rank of First Sergeant in February 1980 and continued with Company D

until November 1981, when he was reassigned to Bravo Company. By May 1985, Piacentini had served within the same command structure for fifteen years and felt it was time to move on.

He advanced into the Sergeant Major and Command Sergeant Major ranks with a series of assignments and appointments in Troop Program Units. His first opportunity came in June 1985 when 1SG Piacentini was selected to serve as Acting Command Sergeant Major, of the 1st Battalion, 360<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 91<sup>st</sup> Division, Training (TNG) in Lathrop California. His commander at that time was Major Jim Wells, serving in the role of Acting Battalion Commander. Despite the temporary nature of their titles, together Wells and Piacentini transformed one of the lowest performing battalions of the brigade into one of the best.

When Wells earned a promotion to Lieutenant Colonel and took command of the 91<sup>st</sup> Division Leadership Academy at Camp Parks, California in 1986, he was greeted by 1SG Piacentini, who had moved to that organization as Acting CSM and Commandant. The pair continued to serve together successfully for an additional two years.

During this period, Piacentini formally became a Command Sergeant Major. In February 1988 he was laterally appointed to that rank with a date of May 1986. The award of the Primary Military Occupational Skill became effective in December 1987, and Piacentini returned to Sacramento as the CSM of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade in September 1988.

In the first year of his tenure with the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, Piacentini served under Colonel Dan Balough. Balough, a West Point graduate, became a key contributor to Piacentini's later success by offering his CSM key, positive advice regarding a possible future career as an Active Guard Reserve (AGR). Piacentini then remained with the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade under the leadership of Colonel Jim Dyson, and that pairing made positive contributions, built teamwork; and improved communications in the command for the next four years.

*COL Dan Balough,  
SSG Hatchett, CSM  
Piacentini, Ft. Baker,  
California, October.  
1989*



In 1992, Piacentini's reputation for training and leadership ability earned him a nominative interview and assignment as the Command Sergeant Major of the 351<sup>st</sup> Civil Affairs Command of the US Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC) from September 1993 through June 1994. Although Piacentini had little familiarity with the command and its mission, Brigadier General (BG) Robert Lucas had confidence in his leadership abilities and the two became a formidable command team. Piacentini took on his role with accustomed vigor. Over the next year, he exerted his leadership by demanding compliance with standards, emphasizing physical fitness, mentoring subordinates, and serving as an example of military bearing. In a brief period, the unit demonstrated a notable increase in readiness and efficiency that drew attention to Piacentini for subsequent assignments.

As his military responsibilities progressed, Piacentini also navigated a challenging civilian career. He initially entered the workforce during a period of economic downturn and struggled to find a dependable job. In

the months leading up to his basic training in 1970 he eked out a living umpiring baseball games, filling orders part-time for the Russell Stover Candy Company, and working as a seasonal employee on the ketchup bottle line at the Libby McNeil Libby fruit and vegetable cannery in the Sacramento area. The difficult economic climate endured after Piacentini graduated from Drill Sergeant School in March 1971, and he continued to move from job to job. From April to September 1971, he briefly tried his hand at life insurance sales before he finally found a more reliable, full-time position as a sales representative for Kraft Foods.

This position was the first of three for Piacentini as a sales representative in the supermarket industry. After seven years, with Kraft, he served for eight years in the Supermarket Distribution Division at Zellerbach Paper Company and seven years with Advance Packaging Company. He rounded out his civilian career as a sales representative for the Borden Company, from June 1993-June 1994.

During this period, Piacentini learned that employers were not always eager to accommodate his military duty. In his first full-time job with Kraft, he was obliged to use his vacation time or take leave without pay to complete his annual training. Other companies imposed similar rules or required him to take leave without pay to meet his Army Reserve obligations. Nevertheless, he remained committed to his dual responsibilities and juggled his civilian career and TPU service for 24 years.

This difficult balancing act came to an end in 1994. That year, Piacentini applied for the position of Command Sergeant Major at the US Army Reserve Personnel Center. Before submitting his name, he had sought advice from his previous Brigade Commander, Colonel Dan Balough and CSM Doug Murray, the former Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve. Both encouraged him to expand his horizons and to seek broader opportunities, even if it required moving into an Active Guard Reserve assignment, leaving the comfort of his home and civilian job, and serving at the discretion of the Army Reserve.



*Piacentini with  
CSM Doug  
Murray,  
December 1987*



Piacentini was one of five CSMs to apply for the ARPERCEN position and Colonel John Frost selected him for a duty, with a start date of June 1994. Following the advice of his mentors, Piacentini resigned from his civilian position, gave up his familiar life, and relocated to Saint Louis. His wife Mary joined him in this transition in January 1995. She surrendered her position as a Registered Nurse in California and the couple settled into quarters at the Charles Melvin Price Support Center (Granite City, Illinois). Once again, a full-time Soldier, Piacentini joined numerous others on the daily trek into Saint Louis to care for the Army Reserve population and its records.

As he launched this new phase of his career, Piacentini had the good fortune to cross paths with CSM Jack Rucynski. The two met during Active Guard Reserve Entry Training in 1994. Beginning with an evening at a Super National Truck and Tractor Pull—which Piacentini still recalls as one of the most fun moments of his life—the two forged a life-long bond. Piacentini also credits Rucynski with teaching, coaching and mentoring him with a “stick it out when the going gets tough” mentality that he remembers to this day.



*CSM Jack Rucynski and Piacentini, Ft McCoy, Wisconsin, June 1994.*

Piacentini's orders called for him to serve a three-year assignment at ARPERCEN, but his term was extended for a fourth year, through 1998. During that period, he promoted channels of communication and cultivated a broad base of support for the command. He developed a reputation as a team builder, teacher, and skilled leader that would continue to grow through his career. He also completed the Non-Resident Course of the Sergeants Major Academy. In addition to achieving a superior rating on all requirements and course standards, he was also selected as NRC #21 Class President at USASMA in El Paso, Texas.

In June 1998 was assigned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Medical Command in Decatur Georgia, to serve as Command Sergeant Major alongside the Commander, Major General Ralph Haynes. This new command had an important mission, but Soldiers were unfamiliar with the multi-component nature of the organization. Piacentini sensed that unit was not progressing as rapidly as expected and felt that he had let down his commander, MG Hayes. Determined to overcome the obstacles,

Piacentini set to work to help reform the unit. Over the next two years, he drew upon his personal life experiences, utilized his team-building skills, and took advantage of bonding opportunities afforded by a Bright Star exercise in Egypt, to help forge a more cohesive and functioning organization.

His next assignment, from June 2000 until June 2002 was as the Installation and Garrison CSM at Fort McCoy (WI). There, Piacentini worked closely with installation commander, Colonel Mike Staszak, to ensure that all Soldiers who arrived for training felt welcome and cared for. He also helped maintain the efficiency of that post as it dramatically increased its training program to support the requirements of the expanding Global War on Terror. He and Colonel Staszak were an effective team and all Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard service members who trained there received a top-quality training experience to achieve excellence in their respective components.

In 2002, Piacentini applied for the position of Command Sergeant Major of the United States Army Reserve Command (USARC) and was selected for the role by Lieutenant General (LTG) James R. Helmly. Stepping into the position in June 2002, Piacentini felt an immediate bond. He described the pairing as a complementary one, “like ham and eggs” and proudly noted that together they revolutionized the organization and developed it into a “well-oiled machine during a time of war that was never seen by the US Army Reserve before 2003.”

The War of Terror also influenced Piacentini’s activities as CSM of the US Army Reserve Command. At the time of his arrival at Fort McPherson, Georgia in the summer of 2002, large numbers of Army Reserve troops were actively engaged in key support to the Army missions at home and abroad. Nevertheless, the component confronted the enduring perception that it and its Soldiers occupied a secondary role within the Total Force. Lieutenant General Helmly and CSM Piacentini took numerous steps to change that opinion. This included a change of culture in the ranks, referring to enlisted members as “Army Reserve



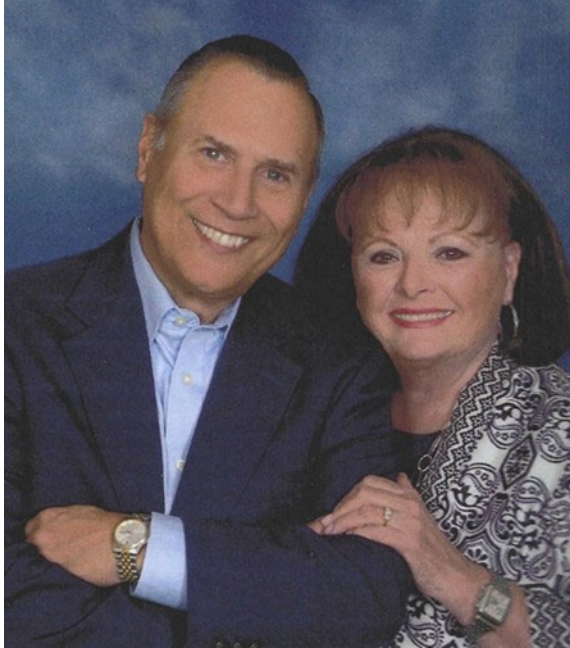
*LTG Ron Helmly and CSM Piacentini, USARC Headquarters, July 2002*

Soldiers” rather than as “Reservists.” They also initiated use of the phrase “Battle Assembly” to describe monthly training, replacing the former term “drill”. These measures, and numerous others, helped to establish a greater awareness that military contributions of the US Army Reserve were on par with those of other components.

Acting on guidance from Helmly, Piacentini also took steps to formally acknowledge the contributions of Army Reserve Soldiers to the War on Terror. In coordination with the USARC G-1 CSM Lana Labay, he directed the development of a “Welcome Home Warrior Citizen Program,” to provide recognition to every Army Reserve Soldier who deployed and honorably returned home from wartime service. Through these measures, and a multitude of other interactions with the troops, Piacentini used his office to contribute to a growing sentiment of *esprit de corps* within the organization while generating increased respect for Army Reserve service from the outside. At the close of Piacentini’s term, responsibility for the program passed to the new CSM Leon Caffie, who continued to develop it into one of the military’s premier welcome initiatives.

During his tenure at USARC, Piacentini also worked closely with Michele S. Jones, the Command Sergeant Major at the Office of Chief of Army Reserve (OCAR). Piacentini and Jones shared a boss, with Jones representing LTG Helmly when he served at the Pentagon as Chief of Army Reserve and Piacentini doing so when Helmly acted as commander of USARC. It was a complicated division of duties and confusing at times, but the two CSMs pooled their talents and cooperated well on common goals. In the early years of their terms, the two often traveled together to meet with the troops, privately referring to themselves as “The Mic and Nic Show.” “We had a lot of fun and got the most out of our time together on stage in front of the troops,” Piacentini recalled. “We had a lot of enthusiasm together and really got the troops excited about the USAR.” As LTG Helmly devoted more of his time to issues at USARC in Atlanta, the joint team met less frequently but continued to coordinate as much as possible.

In June 2006, Piacentini completed his term at USARC and carried his leadership and teambuilding skills to one final command. As CSM of the Military Intelligence Readiness Command at Fort Belvoir Virginia, he worked closely with Brigadier General Greg Schumacher to develop one of the Army Reserve’s first functional intelligence commands into one of the most respected and organizations of its kind, not only in the Army Reserve but throughout the Army. Piacentini also established foundations that enabled his successors, Brigadier General Leslie Purcer and CSM Jim Murrin to lead the command to even greater prestige and respect. Piacentini also notes that SGM Melanie Wrensch did a fabulous job of filling in with CSM responsibilities until Murrin was able to report for duty.



*CSM Piacentini and his wife Mary, 2021, after 51 years of marriage and more than 38 years in the US Army Reserve*

Piacentini retired in October 2008, bringing a military career of 38 years and six months to a close. He and Mary initially settled back in Newnan Georgia but returned to Sacramento California in 2013 to care for aging parents. They remained on the West Coast until 2020, when they relocated to their current residence in Dripping Springs, Texas. The Piacentinis have two children: a son, Brian and a daughter, Nicole. Brian and his wife Kate have a combined family of six children: Claire, Ella, Olivia, Cruz, Everly, and Hope. Nicole has one daughter, Gia (short for Georgia).

Command Sergeant Major Piacentini earned numerous awards and decorations over the course of his distinguished career. These include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal with five Oak Leaf Clusters, the Expert Infantry Badge, and the Drill Sergeant Identification Badge. CSM Piacentini also received the Knowlton Award for “Excellence in Intelligence” from the Military Intelligence Core Association.

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CSM Nicholas Piacentini, Autobiographical summary, April 2021.

### *A Note from CSM Piacentini, 29 April 2021*

When we, the twelve “living” senior Command Sergeants Major of the Army Reserve, were asked to write our biographies for you, our readers, we were asked to introduce ourselves and share information regarding our USAR careers. Why? Because we were: USAR Citizen-Soldiers--just like you who worked full-time jobs and attended TPU weekend Battle Assemblies. We were blessed to move from a TPU status to an AGR, full-time status. And we were blessed even further, to become one of the full-time, senior CSMs of the Army Reserve.

Today, as we speak, three of our senior CSMs are deceased—May They Rest In Peace! There are 10 former OCAR (Office, Chief Army Reserve) CSMs still alive. And there are two USARC (United States Army Reserve Command) CSMs still alive.

My biography was assembled: (1) to share with each of you a personal story about myself, my family, our tradition, and all the people who helped me as a civilian and as a Soldier; (2) to share a military story about myself from my days as a Private all the way to becoming an AGR CSM and serving at the pleasure of my USARC boss, Lieutenant General James R. Helmly.

I hope you enjoy following my journey to becoming the 2nd USARC CSM (2002–2006).







## **Leon Caffie**

Leon Caffie was born on November 8, 1949, in Montgomery, Alabama, the third of seven children of Cleveland and Doshie Lee Caffie. He acknowledges his father, who worked in an iron plant, with instilling in him a strong work ethic. His mother, he credits with giving him a sense of compassion. Together, and with the assistance of extended family and neighborhood network, his parents provided him with a strong foundation of values and discipline that guided him throughout his life. That cooperative family effort continued even after his parents divorced during Caffie's childhood.

Caffie remained in Montgomery with his mother, four sisters, and two brothers for most of his early life. He attended Lomax Elementary and Booker T. Washington Junior High School where he enjoyed a number of activities, including tennis, football, and running. During those years he also experienced the divisiveness of the Jim Crow. He was forced to attend segregated schools and endured numerous racial restrictions. These inequalities lead him to participate in some of the early Civil Rights marches and actions organized by Dr. Martin Luther King.

In 1965, Caffie and his brothers accepted an invitation to live with their father and relocated from Montgomery to Gainesville, Florida. Some of his siblings disliked the move to very different surroundings, but Caffie responded well. Although still obliged to attend a segregated school, Lincoln High School, he performed well as a student and as a middle linebacker on the football team. He found a part-time job, bagging

groceries at a local supermarket, and used to proceeds to help support his mother and to purchase his first car. Perhaps most significantly, he met Sylvia P. Grimes, who regularly traveled to Gainesville, from her home in Macon, Georgia, to visit relatives. The two began dating and became engaged when they graduated from high school.

Caffie's graduation occurred in the spring of 1969, at a time when the United States escalated its involvement in the war in Vietnam. He found full-time employment at a local supermarket and had hopes of pursuing a college education, but recognized that it would take some time to save enough money. When the federal government implemented a draft lottery in December 1969, he realized that his status as a young African-American male gave him little hope of exemption or deferment. He prepared himself for the likelihood of conscription.

To some degree, he even looked forward to an opportunity to do his duty and he was not unduly surprised or disappointed when his draft notification arrived on April 2, 1970. Shortly afterward, he headed to Jacksonville Florida for his induction ceremony and then boarded a bus to Fort Jackson South Carolina for training. Aware that his future was uncertain other than an inevitable journey to Vietnam, he delayed marriage until his eventual return.

Private Caffie had mixed experiences with his initial training. He entered the Army with a simple goal of fulfilling his obligations and took measures to maintain a low profile, do what was expected, and avoid conflict or trouble. Nevertheless, he found basic training to be archaic and demeaning and reacted poorly to drill sergeants who attempted to assert authority over the enlisted troops by breaking them and insulting their families. From that early stage, he decided to pattern his career differently, always seeking to bring out the best in Soldiers by building them up. He found greater satisfaction with Advanced Infantry Training (AIT), also at Fort Jackson. There he appreciated and understood the value of detailed drilling and extensive teamwork which helped to develop his skill as a Soldier.

After completing this training, Private First Class Caffie shipped out to war almost immediately. In September 1970, he traveled to Fort Lewis Washington to join up with the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. Days later, he and his unit landed in Vietnam, touching down after dark as tracer shots poured in and out of camp around them.



*PFC Caffie (left) and an unnamed Soldier, with 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Vietnam, October 1970*

Following a sleepless first night, he quickly adapted to the wartime surroundings. Two weeks of jungle survival training provided him with important skills not taught in basic instruction. He also learned to rely on the wisdom of veteran combat Soldiers who had accumulated a variety of

survival tactics.

His tour of duty in Vietnam lasted for ten months with service in both the 4<sup>th</sup> infantry division and the 23<sup>rd</sup> infantry division. Almost all of his time was devoted to missions in the jungle, with only occasional breaks to remote bases. Nevertheless, Caffie found that he enjoyed his involvement with a diverse force that included draftees of all races and ethnicities. He also appreciated an organization that prized ability and cooperation over background or skin color.

Sometime during his service, he received two Bronze Stars for service and earned promotions to Specialist (E4) and Sergeant (E5). The awards were given with little fanfare and Caffie later insisted that they merely proved his ability to follow directions. The promotions also came without ceremony, and his duties gradually accumulated as he gained wartime experience.



*Drill Sergeant  
Caffie at Fort  
Jackson, South  
Carolina*

Caffie's deployment to Vietnam ended in June 1971 and he redeployed to the United States. Like many veterans of the era, he was disappointed to find that his service in the controversial war was often greeted with scorn rather than celebration. Still, he was happy to return and welcomed 60 days of leave that permitted him to visit his home in Gainesville. Once there, he quickly set a date for his wedding and finally married Sylvia Grimes on August 28, 1971. She would join him in Texas as he served the remainder of his two-year active-duty requirement with the Combat Support Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division at Fort Hood.

When his draft obligation ended on March 31, 1972, Caffie considered signing for another active tour. By that time, however, he and Sylvia were expecting their first child and he did not want to leave his family behind for another year in Vietnam. Instead, he elected to return to Gainesville, Florida, and serve out his remaining four years of enlistment as a member of the Ready Reserve. He found employment as a truck driver with a plumbing and building supply company. He also set his sights on better opportunities by using his GI Bill benefits to pursue an associate degree at nearby Santa Fe Community College.

This full civilian life became even busier in 1974 when he reassessed his military involvement and enrolled in the active reserves. He made the decision for two reasons. The first was practical. Following the birth of his first son, he viewed the Army Reserve as an additional source of money to support his growing family. His second and more pressing motive, however, was the attachment he still felt to the Army. "I missed the esprit de corps," he said. "I missed the brotherhood. I missed being a member of a proud organization. I missed the uniform." Responding to this sentiment, in July he joined the 3396<sup>th</sup> Reception Battalion in Gainesville as a Sergeant.

Although he was pleased with the extra income, he initially found Army Reserve service disappointing. The Soldiers of his unit did not take weekend drills and annual training seriously and accomplished little

during these periods. He also found that he received little personal challenge from his responsibilities. An opportunity to attend Drill Sergeant Academy and changes to the unit mission helped the situation, but Caffie still felt powerless to enact real change with the unit leadership.



*Caffie as  
Headquarters and  
Headquarters  
Company First  
Sergeant, 3396th  
USAREC Battalion  
1980 Gainesville,  
Florida*

A transfer to the 3391st USAR School in Jacksonville, Florida in June 1978 improved Caffie's prospects. With a promotion to Sergeant 1<sup>st</sup> class and assignment as an infantry instructor, he enjoyed an increase in influence and responsibility. He subsequently was reassigned to the 3396<sup>th</sup> in November 1979, serving as First Sergeant of the Headquarters Company. This time, Caffie had more authority over the unit and took advantage of the opportunity. Over the next decade, he enacted measures to significantly improve the professionalism and efficiency of the unit. The experience convinced him that he might have the potential to forge similar changes for the Army Reserve as an organization.



His continued rise in rank provided him that opportunity. Caffie remained with the 3396<sup>th</sup> until the unit disbanded. In May 1990, he transferred to the 257<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion in Gainesville, as Operations Sergeant at the rank of Master Sergeant. In June 1993, he moved once again, accepting a position as Sergeant Major with the G-3 of the 143<sup>rd</sup> Transportation Command in Orlando. A year later, in April 1994, he returned to the 257<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion, this time as Command Sergeant Major.

During this period, Caffie also pursued a significant civilian career. In 1977, he attended law enforcement academy and, soon after graduation, accepted a job as a Deputy in the Alachua County Florida Sheriff's office. He began his service on uniform patrol, then moved on to perform undercover narcotics operations and criminal investigations.



*Captain Caffie at the Alachua County, Florida Sherriff's Office, 1998*

In time, he was elevated to Lieutenant and served with the Crime Prevention Unit, working with local schools, state agencies, community groups, and local youth. He later earned promotion to Captain with responsibility for the uniform patrol division, SWAT team, hostage negotiation, traffic enforcement, bomb team, and other specialty units.

Caffie also pursued a variety of civilian law enforcement instruction. In 1991 he was selected to attend the FBI Academy, where he distinguished himself as a Section Representative before graduating. He also completed a bachelor's degree from Regents College, earned a certificate in criminal justice from the University of Virginia, and attended the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco Georgia. He applied this training to new responsibilities at the Sheriff's Office, first as director of the uniform patrol division and later as head of the criminal investigations division.

Those commitments did not deter Caffie from his growing leadership stature in the Army Reserve. In his first Command Sergeant Major assignment, working alongside LTC Jack Stultz with the 257<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion, he established strong standards—especially for fitness—and helped mold a premier unit. When he transferred to Tampa Florida in August 1996 and took on the responsibilities of Command Sergeant Major of the 32nd Transportation Group, he maintained this momentum. In addition to other improvements, he addressed challenging issues with the civilian staff and significantly improved the work ethic of the unit. In February 1998, Caffie took over as CSM of the 143<sup>rd</sup> Transportation Command and successfully helped guide that unit through exercises at Fort Bliss, Egypt, and South Korea.

His next assignment placed Caffie back in a theater of war for the first time since his service in Vietnam. In August 2002, MG David Kartzner selected him as Command Sergeant Major at the 377<sup>th</sup> Theater Support Command (TSC) in Belle Chase Louisiana. Almost immediately after accepting the position, Caffie learned that the unit would be sent to the Persian Gulf region in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The unit

devoted several months to training and preparing for deployment before landing at Camp Arifjan Kuwait in November.

In Kuwait, Caffie had oversight of the 125 Command Sergeant Majors and 43500 Soldiers of the Coalition Forces Land Component Command, a force comprised of Soldiers from all components as well as from coalition partner nations. He devoted his time to addressing a myriad of concerns that inevitably arose in a military gathering of that size. Issues ranged from basic questions about policing the troops and preventing misbehavior to weightier matters like treatment of prisoners and protection of troops from chemical and missile attacks. Throughout the mobilization process and the advance into Iraq until his redeployment to the United States in July 2003, Caffie effectively maintained the order and smooth operations of the command.



*CSM Leon Caffie with Major General David Kratzer and senior officers of the 377th TSC leadership Team*

His service with the 377<sup>th</sup> also produced results on the home front. While stationed in Kuwait, he coordinated the relocation of the unit headquarters from an aging structure into new, more-secure facilities at a joint reserve base in Belle Chase, Louisiana. In 2005, following landfall of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, Caffie deployed to these facilities to coordinate assistance for Soldiers and military families adversely affected by the devastation of the storm.

In January 2006, at the end of his term as CSM of the 377<sup>th</sup>, Caffie intended to retire from the Army Reserve and concentrate on his civilian job. At that time, however, the Command Sergeant Major of the 87<sup>th</sup> Training Division in Birmingham, Alabama requested his assistance as an evaluator of instructors and training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. Once again, he answered the call. He performed the assigned review and initiated changes that produced a more effective and sustainable training regimen.

During this period, LTG Jack Stultz, Command General of the Army Reserve, requested that Caffie apply for the position of Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve. After an extensive interview, in which Caffie detailed his concerns about Army Reserve training and NCO development, Stultz selected him for the job. In August 2006, Caffie took the oath and assumed responsibility for both the Office of Chief of Army Reserve and the U.S. Army Reserve Command.

The assignment lured Caffie away from his successful civilian position. In 2005 he had been promoted to major in the Alachua County Sheriff Department and established as Director of Law Enforcement Operations. With the opportunity to serve full-time in the Army Reserve, however, he elected to retire and bring his 29-year law enforcement career to a close.

He stepped into his new duties at a complex time for the Army Reserve. The component was still navigating the transition from its role as a strategic force and settling into its function as an operational force. At the time, more than 150,000 component troops were on deployment

and actively serving in trouble spots around the world. In tandem with LTG Stultz, he set his sights on strengthening this essential, involved force by revamping training, improving family care and support, enhancing outreach and partnerships, and developing and retaining talent.

As he pursued these objectives, Caffie recalled his own Army Reserve career. Having experienced the challenges of balancing civilian and Army life, he recognized the need for support networks and coordinators, and he worked diligently to improve access for Soldiers and families. Additionally, he strived to improve communications, clarify services, address complaints, and eliminate surprises that might adversely affect civilian lives and Soldier careers.

His experience with inefficient drills and inferior training in the Army Reserve led him to push for better instructors, facilities, and equipment for the component as well. He advocated for adoption of a single training standard for all components that better reflected the integration of the Army Reserve into the Total Force. Moreover, he strongly believed that Soldiers performing equivalent missions should receive equivalent training. To further demonstrate the growing parity between Reserve and Active component Soldiers, he championed the development of the annual Best Warrior Competition as a showcase of the quality and skill of Army Reserve NCOs.

Enlisted development also necessitated other points of emphasis. He strived to ensure that promotion boards were conducted fairly and selected the best-qualified candidates. He also confronted the problem of Senior NCOs who declined to deploy or actively contribute to the organization. He pushed these Soldiers to step up their participation or move into retirement so that the next generation of leaders could advance.



*CSM Caffie meets with Reserve Soldiers from Multi-National Division-Baghdad, July 26, 2009. (photo by SSG Mark Burrell)*

Like his predecessors and successors in the office, Caffie found that his CSM duties required constant attention. Alongside LTG Stultz, he fielded daily questions and complaints from Soldiers, conducted regular town hall meetings, and responded to an array of political and Army inquiries. By the end of his term, Caffie had visited troops in a multitude of countries in North and South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia, addressing Soldier concerns and maintaining lines of communication.

When his term came to an end on January 22, 2010, CSM Caffie also brought his 39-year military career to a close. He did not, however, end his dedication to service. He has remained an active supporter of veterans and veteran concerns and frequently speaks to Veteran's Groups and Organizations during Memorial Day and Veteran's Day events. From July 2010 through April 2018, he acted as the US Army Reserve Ambassador for the State of Florida. He also served as a senior noncommissioned officer mentor for the University of Florida Army ROTC students and veterans and as senior mentor for US Army Recruitment Battalion in Jacksonville, Florida. CSM Caffie is a life



member of the Disabled Veteran's Association and has regularly advocated to help veterans of Vietnam, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom gain VA benefits.

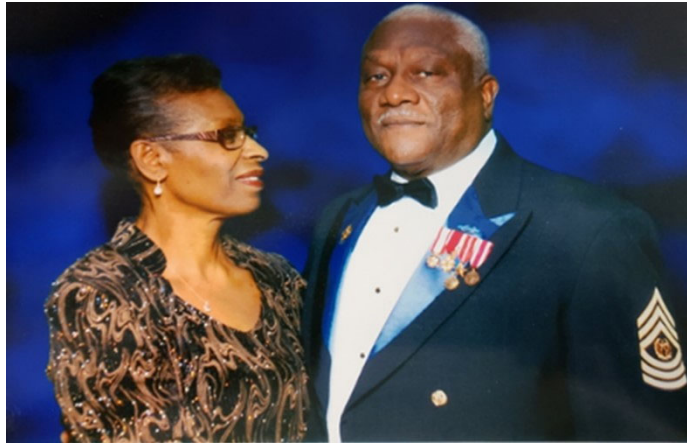
In addition to his military advocacy, Caffie serves on the board of the University of Florida's Webster College of Business Veterans Entrepreneurial Program. This year-long program is fully funded by the university to support military veterans in the development of business concepts. Thirty to forty students attend each session. CSM Caffie also is the vice-president of Focus On Leadership, a program established to encourage African Americans to take political and leadership positions within their communities. In 2020, CSM Caffie was selected to serve as a member of the Fort Stewart Georgia Retired Soldier Council, a body that acts as a proponent for retired Soldiers and their families in that community. Likewise, in December 2021, CSM Caffie agreed to serve as a member of the Chief of Staff of the United States Army Retired Soldiers Council which advocates for all retired Soldiers and their families.

CSM Caffie's military education includes the United States Drill Sergeant Academy, Senior Non-Commission Officer Course (SNCOC), Advanced Infantry Course, First Sergeant Course, and Command Sergeant Major Course. He graduated from the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA) in July 1996. He also attended and completed the National Defense University Keystone Course.

His military awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal (1st Award), Legion of Merit (2nd Award), Bronze Star Medal (3rd Award), Meritorious Service Medal (4th Award), Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal (2nd Award), Army Achievement Medal (1st Award), Army Good Conduct Medal (2nd Award), Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (8th Award), National Defense Service Medal (2nd Award), Vietnam Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal-Gold/M Device, NCO Professional Development Ribbon #4, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Army



Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon (2nd Award), and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal-60 Device. His badges include the Department of the Army Staff Badge, Combat Infantryman Badge, Drill Sergeant Badge, and Expert Marksmanship Badge (Pistol).



*CSM Caffie and his beloved wife, Sylvia Caffie, at the 243<sup>rd</sup> Army Birthday Ball in Orlando, Florida*

Caffie and his wife Sylvia—whom he credits as the source of much of his success—live in Gainesville Florida. The couple, married for 50 years, have three children.

## Sources

SGM Sheldon R. Baker, interview with CSM Leon Caffie, 18 February 2021.

*A Note on the Interview* by SGM Sheldon R. Baker:

CSM Caffie was very open and candid with me as an interviewer. He maintains an extensive knowledge of US Army Reserve affairs, missions, and total strength even after over eight years of retirement. He retains the same dedication to duty and compassion for Soldiers that he demonstrated as the 10th Command Sergeant Major of the US Army Reserves.



He is a great NCO and Leader and a Mentor to many other great NCOs and Officers. It was a pleasure and an Honor to have the privilege to meet, talk and spend time with one of the Greatest CSM's this US Army Reserves has known.

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## Michael Schultz

Michael “Mike” Schultz, the second child of Ray and Kathleen “Jane” Schultz, was born on July 24, 1968, in Chicago, Illinois. Chicago remained his home during his childhood and through his sophomore year at St. Laurence High School. When his father retired from a career with the city police department, however, the family moved to the warmer climate of Dunedin Florida. Schultz subsequently attended Dunedin High School where he played baseball and football and served as captain of the weightlifting team.

After graduating from high school in May 1986, Schultz decided to follow a career example of his father. The elder Schultz had served an active-duty term in the Army during the 1950s, then balanced law enforcement and Army Reserve duties for much of the rest of his career. Michael Schultz initially chose to enlist directly into the Army Reserve. He signed up for a delayed entry program that permitted him to complete his Initial Army Training, then return to school to pursue a college degree in criminology. He expected to find



*Michael Schultz, 1986  
(Courtesy Dunedin High  
School)*

employment with a law enforcement agency in the Tampa Bay area and fulfill his Army Reserve obligations there.

Instead, he ended up more directly retracing his father's footsteps. While attending One Station Unit Training at Ft. McClellan, Alabama to become Military Police Specialist, he discovered that he enjoyed Army life and did not want to head directly to college. Setting aside his initial plan, he shifted his military commitment from the Army Reserve to the Active Component and became a full-time Soldier.



*PFC Scott  
McLaughlin  
and Schultz  
during  
REFORGER  
exercises, 1987*

This service provided him with a range of military experience. During his first two years of duty, he served in Ulm Germany with the 194<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company. With this unit, he performed field training and

law enforcement operations in the local community and progressed rapidly up the ranks from E-1 Private to E-4 Specialist promotable. He was also the only non-NCO in his platoon to earn an assignment as a team leader.

Upon his return to the United States in 1989, he attended several law enforcement schools and participated in Airborne School at Fort Benning Georgia. He earned promotion to Sergeant and was assigned to support garrison law enforcement, first as a Military Police Desk Sergeant at Ft. Meade, Maryland, and later as a Patrol Supervisor at Fort A.P. Hill, VA. He also was selected to join the prestigious Sergeant Audie Murphy Club.

Despite the career progress and accolades, Schultz remained committed to obtaining a college education and seeking civilian law enforcement employment. These interests prompted him to leave the Active Component at the end of his enlistment. Nevertheless, his commitment to the Army remained strong, and he re-enlisted in the Army Reserve without a break in service.

He took his first step toward his civilian goals, by enrolling at the University of South Florida with a major in Political Science and Government. Over the next several years he remained extremely busy, not only with his coursework and Army Reserve responsibilities, but also as a full-time employee at BIC Pen Company in the Special Markets Division.

Despite the heavy load, Schultz successfully completed his Bachelor of Science degree in 1994. That same year, he took the first step toward achieving his other ambition. He secured his first civilian law enforcement position as a Patrol Deputy with the Manatee County Sheriff's Office in Bradenton Florida. He soon earned promotion to the role of Field Training Officer.



*Michael Schultz with the Tampa  
Police Department*

These positions were just the first of many in his extended career as a law enforcement officer. Following two years with the Manatee County Sheriff, he moved to the Tampa, Florida Police Department where he served for the next 15 years. His assignments for that organization ranged from serving on the Street Anti Crimes (SAC) unit conducting plain-clothes drug and prostitution enforcement to acting as a member of the Tactical Response Team (SWAT). During his time in the department, he also

provided a variety of in-service trainings and taught courses on domestic violence and defense tactics at nearby Hillsborough Community College.

The demands of his profession did not deter Schultz from maintaining active involvement with the Army Reserve. He served in multi-operational and training commands in the southeastern United States and steadily enhanced his leadership credentials. He earned the rank of Sergeant Major as the S-3 Operations Sergeant Major with the 2/108<sup>th</sup> Military Police Battalion at Ft. Jackson, SC then achieved his first Command Sergeant Major assignment with the 332<sup>nd</sup> Terminal Battalion in Tampa.

In 2006, Brigadier General Kieth Thurgood selected Schultz to serve as Command Sergeant Major of the 143<sup>rd</sup> Transportation Command. Shortly afterward, the unit deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Schultz was directly involved in that conflict, overseeing transporters along the main supply routes in Iraq and earning the Combat Action Badge for his actions. At the end of this deployment, he briefly took over as CSM of the 641<sup>st</sup> Regional Support Group (BDE) in St.



Petersburg, FL. Then, in January 2009, he returned to the 143<sup>rd</sup>, now designated as an Expeditionary Support Command.

Schultz's second term with the 143<sup>rd</sup> set the stage for another deployment. In January 2009 he traveled to Kandahar, Afghanistan with the First Expeditionary Support Command, sent in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. On this occasion, he acted as the principal advisor to Brigadier General Dan Schultz on matters involving the 4,400 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Civilians of the command. He also served as the top NCO for the Joint Sustainment Command Afghanistan, with responsibility for operations and support for 18,500 U.S. military Soldiers and contractors. He remained in that role until January 2010, when Lieutenant General Jack C Stultz selected him to replace Leon Caffie as the Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve.



*CSM Schultz on patrol in Afghanistan with USAR Military Police Soldiers from the 200th MP Command in 2013*

As the eleventh Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve, Schultz sought to continue and expand upon the actions of his predecessor and mentor, Leon Caffie. He also drew upon experience gained and observations made while on deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan. He focused on the need to revitalize a force that had been strained by multiple deployments of the Global War on Terror and to reemphasize core missions, basic skills, and family support programs and networks. Additionally, he worked to improve Wounded Warrior care for Army Reserve Soldiers.



*LTG Jack C. Stultz and CSM Schultz in Washington, D.C., 2010*

Schultz also pushed to reenergize and refocus the NCO corps. He helped establish the Senior Enlisted Management Office (SEMO) to better utilize the talents of those at the Sergeant Major and Command Sergeant Majors level. He placed even greater focus on development of leadership skills in the junior ranks to ensure that the next generation of leaders received the training and guidance it needed to succeed.

The two-year term as CSM of the Army Reserve led Schultz to additional heights. In January 2012, he was selected to serve as the Senior Enlisted Advisor assigned to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. In his three years in that office, he was responsible for providing guidance to the Assistant Secretary and staff on enlisted affairs. This gave him responsibility not only for Soldiers of the Army Reserve but also for those of the Army National Guard, Air National



*CSM Schultz addresses race fans at Atlanta Motor Speedway, September 5, 2010 (photo by Timothy Hale)*

Guard, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard Reserve forces—more than 1.1 million personnel in total. He also served as the Chairman of the Department of Defense Reserve Forces Senior Enlisted Advisory Council and a member of the Department of Defense Yellow Ribbon Advisory Board.

Schultz closed out his military career with several additional senior-level assignments. In November 2015, he took on the duties of Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Deputy Command General for Mobilization and Reserve Affairs, with U.S. Army Europe. He then returned to his hometown of Tampa, Florida in October 2019 in the role of Senior Strategic Planner. In September 2020, he retired from the Army Reserve, completing 34 years of service.

In retirement, Schultz has continued to make use of his leadership skills and knowledge. In 2020, he established 1 Team 1 Inc, an organization dedicated to helping businesses and organizations become



*CSM Schultz interacts with guest while serving as a guest speaker at a banquet, 2018.*

more effective. As the principal of the company, Schultz provides leadership seminars and presentations, team building and organizational development training, and motivational and inspirational programs. He also continues to provide his expertise to the military by serving as a senior facilitator at the Center for Strategic Leadership at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle Pennsylvania.

Schultz's affinity for service has kept him involved in several additional endeavors. He volunteers with the Allied Forces Foundation, serving as a mentor and counselor to Wounded Warriors and their families. He also offers his services to Project Transition USA, an organization dedicated to assisting veterans in their search for meaningful post-military careers. In addition to these services for Soldiers, he lends his carpentry skills to Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Inc. an organization that builds beds for families in need.



*Retired CSM Michael Schultz dedicates a plaque to fallen Soldiers in Afghanistan, September 2021.*

CSM Schultz's extensive list of training includes the Instructor Training course, First Sergeant Course, and the Battle Staff course. He graduated first in his class from Resident Sergeants Majors Academy Course at Ft. Bliss, TX, completing his course work with an academic score of 99.25 percent. CSM Schultz also attended the National Defense University Keystone Course at Ft. McNair, VA.

In addition to his bachelor's degree from the University of South Florida, CSM Schultz completed a Master's in Public Administration from Troy University and is completing a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership from Argosy University in Tampa, FL.

His awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, three Legion of Merits, two Bronze Star Medals, two Meritorious Service Medals, two Army Commendation Medals, the Combat Action Badge, and various other medals and ribbons. His badges include the Department of the Army Staff Badge and the Department of Defense Staff Badge. He is also a member of the prestigious Sergeant Audie Murphy Club and the Military Police Order of the Marechaussee, as well as the Order of Saint Christopher for Transporters.

CSM Schultz currently resides in Safety Harbor, FL and has three children. His two daughters currently reside in Florida and his son lives in Amsterdam.

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## **James Lambert (Interim)**

James Lambert was born on 25 November 1966 in Evansville, Indiana. He moved to Boonville, Indiana prior to starting the fourth grade and graduated from Boonville High School in 1985.

Lambert made his decision to serve in the Army Reserve at an early age. With the support of his parents, he began talking to Army Recruiters when he was 16 and made his first trip to the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) as a junior in High School--just days after turning 17. On 13 December 1983, he enlisted as an Administrative Specialist, under the Split Training Option program. In accordance with that program, he completed Basic Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, between his junior and senior years of high school. He then completed his remaining high school coursework while simultaneously fulfilling his monthly training obligation with a local Army Reserve unit.

Despite this busy schedule, Lambert remained active in other areas as well. During his senior year, he worked before and after school at a service station. He also worked in an accountant's office as part of a school outreach program. Most notably, just weeks after signing his enlistment papers, he began dating Denise Ranae Scott. The couple began a steady relationship that would lead to their marriage in September 1985.

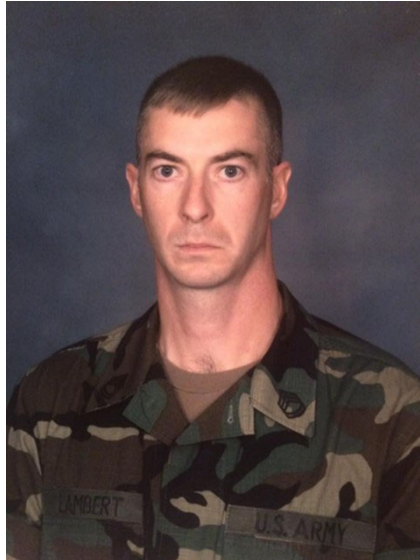


*PV1 Lambert – Basic Training,  
Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri,  
August 1984*

Just days after his high school graduation, Lambert traveled to Fort Jackson, South Carolina to complete Advanced Individual Training (AIT). He thrived in the environment and realized that he had a passion for military life. When he returned home, he found a civilian job with an office supply and printing company. He quickly realized, however, that he found much greater fulfillment in his Army Reserve drills. Because of this, he took on additional military duties during evenings and weekends whenever possible. When the opportunity arose to take on duties in the Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Program, Lambert applied and earned a place. In July 1986, at age 19, he began his first AGR assignment with a transportation battalion. He remained in AGR status for subsequent assignments as well, transferring in sequence to a quartermaster company, an evacuation hospital, and a basic rifle marksmanship detachment over the first portion of his career.

These diverse experiences helped Lambert to rise in the NCO ranks, where he took on an equally diverse range of duties. He initially secured a position as an Inspector General NCO with the 70th Regional Support Command—a role that opened his eyes to the workings of the component.

*CSM Lambert at NCO Academy,  
Advanced NCO Course, Fort  
McCoy, Wisconsin, July 2000*



He next moved to the U.S. Army NCO Academy at Ft McCoy, Wisconsin. There he took on what he viewed as his first real leadership role as an instructor and Small Group Leader.

He subsequently earned the rank of Master Sergeant and transferred to the 100th Division (Institutional Training), where he continued his leadership growth by transitioning from instructor to Operations Sergeant with much greater oversight of the management process.

This increase in responsibility once again permitted Lambert to demonstrate his potential. After two years, he advanced to First Sergeant with the 303<sup>rd</sup> AG Company (Postal). During a brief term with that unit, he enforced standards, encouraged Soldier development, and prepared two platoons for deployment. However, he transferred to the US Army Sergeants Major Academy and did not have the opportunity to deploy himself.

Lambert worked to balance his career with family. On May 15, 1988, he and his wife Denise welcomed the birth of twins, Jessica and Jamie and, like many military parents, the couple attempted to provide their

daughters with stable home life. Nevertheless, the steady string of active-duty positions required them to move multiple times to locations around the United States. After several transfers, the Lamberts turned the obligation into a challenge by declaring the intention of the family to visit every state in the nation. They successfully achieved this goal with an Alaskan cruise to celebrate the graduation of the twins from high school.

Lambert achieved another goal when he earned the rank of Command Sergeant Major. Shortly after completing the Sergeants Major Course, he accepted assignment as a CSM of the 801<sup>st</sup> Combat Support Hospital. He drew heavily on lessons learned from his previous experience with an Evacuation Hospital and adjusted his leadership style to effectively manage this skilled group of medical personnel.

Two years later, his successful fulfillment of these duties earned him a place as CSM of the 3rd Medical Command (Deployment Support). Although he had some initial concerns about moving to a General Officer level command so early in his career, he succeeded at this level as well. His most significant contribution involved assistance with the transition from a deployable headquarters, with no peacetime units under it, to a command-and-control organization with five subordinate medical brigades. In support of that process, during 2009 and 2010, Lambert frequently traveled to Kuwait, where a forward detachment provided support to deployed medical units. He also engaged with troops in Iraq in January 2010.

His next assignment, in 2011, placed him on an even larger stage as CSM of the 377th Theater Sustainment Command (TSC), the largest subordinate command under the United States Army Reserve Command (USARC). In this role, he traveled extensively to visit all units and Soldiers across the command, enforced standards, and addressed concerns. It also provided a venue that established him as a candidate to fill the position of CSM of the Army Reserve when it next came open.

First, however, Lambert attracted the attention of the current CSM, Michael Schultz. Schultz, the eleventh Command Sergeant Major of the

Army Reserve, sought an Executive Officer for the Office of the Chief, Army Reserve and he requested that Lambert temporarily fill the role. Lambert accepted, hoping that the short-term duty would introduce him to component operations at the highest level. He officially remained



*Lambert at US Army Reserve CSM Change of Responsibility ceremony with LTG Jeffrey Talley, Arlington, Virginia, April 2013*

CSM of the 377<sup>th</sup> TSC and anticipated a quick return to that unit. His tenure became more permanent, however, in January 2012, when Schultz was selected Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. Upon Schultz's departure for that assignment in January 2012, LTG Jeffrey Talley named Lambert to fill the CSM vacancy on an interim basis.

The interim tag on his title as Command Sergeant Major placed some restrictions on Lambert. Because he was given no definitive timeline for his service, he hesitated to implement any major changes that might conflict with the vision and goals of the permanent selectee.

Instead, he focused on maintaining continuity, visiting units and Soldiers, and addressing concerns. He also traveled extensively to interact with deployed Soldiers and attend ceremonies and events. His most difficult responsibility involved signing letters to the next-of-kin of enlisted Soldiers who lost their lives while serving. Nevertheless, he conducted this duty, and many others, until CSM Luther Thomas took on the mantle of Command Sergeant Major in April 2013.



*Spending time  
with Military  
Intelligence  
Readiness  
Command  
Family members  
at a Yellow  
Ribbon Event,  
Alexandria,  
Virginia,  
September, 2016*

Although he had served for 30 years and held the highest position possible for an enlisted leader in the component, Lambert was not ready to retire. He eagerly accepted the opportunity, in June 2013, to join the 1<sup>st</sup> Theater Support Command. At that time, the 1<sup>st</sup> TSC had been divided among three locations, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Afghanistan, and Kuwait, and Command Sergeant Major Charles Tobin selected Lambert to go to Afghanistan to sustain the troops, manage the retrograde and redeployment of forces, and oversee base closure and transfer of authority. Over the course of a year in this role, Lambert also made a



concerted effort to visit every Soldier on the battlefield to express his appreciation for their service.

After completion of the twelve-month deployment, in July 2014, Lambert took on a final assignment as Command Sergeant Major of the Military Intelligence Readiness Command. Although he had not previously had direct involvement with Military Intelligence, he applied his broad range of experience to the task. For the next four years, he successfully developed NCO talent of the command and addressed the concerns and needs of its Soldiers.

When Lambert ended his term with the Military Intelligence Readiness Command on March 1, 2018, he also brought his Army career of more than 34 years to a close. He settled into retirement with the other institution in his life, his wife Denise. For more than 30 years, she had shared his Army journey and actively participated in each of his assignments. As a Command Sergeant Major's wife, she regularly served as a unifying figure for the spouses of Soldiers.

CSM Lambert has taken his retirement as seriously as his career. He has devoted his time to family activities, helping to raise grandchildren, and maintaining his fitness. He enjoys a wide variety of active leisure activities, including camping, running marathons, and competing in triathlons.

Command Sergeant Major Lambert completed his career with an extensive list of military achievements. His military education includes US Army Inspector General Course, Battle Staff NCO Course, Total Army Instructor Training Course, Small Group Leader Course, Master Fitness Trainer Course, First Sergeants Course, US Army Sergeants Major Course, Command Sergeants Major Course, Reserve Component-National Security Course, Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education Course, and the Keystone Course.



*CSM Lambert staying fit after the Army, Muncie, Indiana, July, 2019*

His significant military education includes the US Army Inspector General Course, Battle Staff NCO Course, Total Army Instructor Training Course, Small Group Leader Course, Master Fitness Trainer Course, First Sergeants Course, US Army Sergeants Major Course, Command Sergeants Major Course, Reserve Component-National Security Course, Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education Course, and the Keystone Course. He also participated in Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Enduring Freedom.

His list of awards and decorations is similarly extensive. Honors include the Legion of Merit (3rd Award), Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (7th Award), Army Commendation Medal (6th Award), Army Achievement Medal (7th Award), Army Good Conduct Medal (9th

Award), National Defense Service Medal (2nd Award), Southwest Asia Service Medal (with 3 Bronze Stars), Afghanistan Campaign Medal (with 1 Bronze Star), Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal (3rd Award with M Device and Numeral 2), NCO Professional Development Ribbon (with Numeral 4), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, NATO Medal, Kuwait Liberation Medal-Saudi Arabia, Kuwait Liberation Medal-Government of Kuwait, Army Staff Identification Badge, and Driver's Badge.

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## **Luther Thomas Jr.**

Born in Glenn Ridge New Jersey in 1965, Luther Thomas primarily grew up in the community of Laurinburg, North Carolina not far from Fort Bragg. Following his graduation from Scotland High School in Laurinburg in 1984, Thomas signed a six-year enlistment in the U.S. Army. He completed his basic training at Fort Leonard Wood Missouri then reported to Fort Jackson, South Carolina as a Corporal, Medical Specialist 91U.

Thomas served four years active duty with the US. Army Medical Department Activity. In addition to his military duties, he also found time to attend college courses at nearby Midlands Technical College. He completed an associate degree in Human Services in 1987.

*SPC Thomas at  
Primary  
Leadership  
Development  
Course, Fort  
Benning GA  
1987*



In 1988, Thomas transferred to the Army Reserve and resumed his civilian life. He returned to North Carolina and enrolled as a full-time student at North Carolina State University. After completion of his bachelor's degree in Political Science and Government in 1989, he took a job in law enforcement and pursued that occupation for the next eleven years.

Thomas started his Army Reserve career with a number of positions in the 108<sup>th</sup> Training Command. His first assignment was as a Drill Sergeant with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade in Raleigh, North Carolina. He attended the 108<sup>th</sup> Division Drill Sergeant School at Fort Jackson, South Carolina in December 1989 and received light weapons infantry training at the 3388<sup>th</sup> U.S. Army Reserve Forces School at Camp Blanding, Florida, in August 1990.



*SGT Thomas at 11B MOS Course Camp Blanding FL 1990*



*SSG Thomas as 108th Training Division NCO of the Year 1996.*



In May 1993, Thomas returned to Fort Jackson and the 108<sup>th</sup> Drill Sergeant School, this time in the role of Drill Sergeant Leader. He remained in this position until June 1996, earning recognition for his leadership that included his designation as 108<sup>th</sup> NCO of the year in 1996.

During this period, he also marked notable milestones in his personal life. In 1995, Thomas married Deloris Wheeler of Maysville, South Carolina. In time, the couple welcomed a daughter, Sarah, to the family.



*SSG Thomas at ROTC Summer Camp Fort Lewis WA 1997*

Over the next decade, Thomas continued to advance in leadership. In July 1996, he became a Senior Basic Rifle Marksmanship Instructor with the 7th Brigade. In May 1999, he moved on to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, to serve as Operations NCO. In May 2002, he remained with this command but took on the role of Deputy Commandant of the Non-Commissioned Officer Education System.

In December 2002, Thomas earned promotion to the rank Logistical Operations Sergeant Major with the 356th Quartermaster Battalion, 3d Personnel Command. While in that role, from February 2003 until May



2004, he was deployed for service in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Upon his return, in September 2005, he was called to duty once again, this time to provide domestic assistance following Hurricane Katrina.

Thomas's next leadership role came in October 2005, when he took over as Group Sergeant Major, 207th Regional Support Group, 143rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command. Then, in August 2006, he served as Command Sergeant Major of the 310th Adjutant General Group, 143rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command. He held that position until July 2007.



*CSM Thomas conducting pre combat checks, Afghanistan, 2008*

Thomas also served the military in a civilian capacity during these years, as a Supervisory Staff Administrator with the 356<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Supply and Service Battalion. From 2004 to 2006, he completed a Master of Business Administration from Touro University. In May 2008, Thomas once again received the call to active duty. After a period of training, he returned to the Middle East as the Senior Enlisted Advisor for

the Regional Advisory Division in Kabul, Afghanistan. He remained in Afghanistan until April 2009, taking part in phases VII and VIII of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In June 2011 Thomas stepped into the role of Command Sergeant Major, 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 75<sup>th</sup> Training Division (Battle Command), managing the division's senior enlisted forces. He also provided guidance on Soldier care and readiness to all five of the general officer-led brigades and the 15 colonel-led Simulation Exercise Groups located throughout the continental United States.

He next accepted the Command Sergeant Major assignment with the 84<sup>th</sup> Training Command at Fort Knox, Kentucky in July 2012. In addition to his oversight of the enlisted force while in garrison, he managed the conduct of the force and the rigor of training during multiple Combat Sustainment Training Exercises and Warrior Exercises.

In April 2013, Lieutenant General James Talley selected Thomas to take charge as Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve. He took the reins during an important transitional period for the organization. Troop had grown increasingly weary from a decade of repeated mobilizations and deployments in support of the Global War on Terror. Those Soldiers and the component also faced the uncertainty of budget cuts and drawdown as the nation refocused its attention and resources.

Thomas approached this challenging situation with a strong emphasis on communications with the troops. He maintained a heavy schedule of town halls, information sessions, unit visits, and other outreach to keep the field informed about important decisions and changes. He especially turned to social media platforms and technology to connect with the junior Soldiers of the force and ensure that their voices were heard.



*CSM Thomas meets with troops of the 1<sup>st</sup> Sustainment Command, Kabul Afghanistan, September 2013. (photo by SSG Rachel Copeland)*

He also acted to improve leadership opportunities for these young Soldiers. He acted to reduce the substantial backlog of requests for professional military education, clearing the path to advancement for many. He introduced Command List Integration, a program that automatically placed Corporals and Sergeants on promotion recommendation lists if they fulfilled all requirements specified in Army regulations. This process prevented qualified Soldiers from being overlooked and quickly resulted in promotions for thousands of Army Reserve specialists and sergeants.

These accomplishments on behalf of Army Reserve troops earned Thomas additional attention. In January 2016, he was tagged for the position of Senior Enlisted Advisor to Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. From his office at the Pentagon, he provided guidance on readiness, force structure, training, mobilization, manpower, enlisted personnel policy, equipping, and strategic planning. His decisions now influenced not only the 1.1 million troops of the Army Reserve and National Guard, but also more than 1.2 million Active-Duty Soldiers, and 680,000 civilians.



*CSM Thomas speaks at a Veteran's Day ceremony, Laurinburg, North Carolina, 2015.*

When he completed this assignment, in August 2017, Thomas returned to the Army Reserve as the Senior Staff Officer of the 84<sup>th</sup> Training Command at Fort Knox Kentucky. There he served as the senior staff officer of the Training Directorate and program manager for the Combat Support Training Program (CSTP). He remained in this position until December 31, 2018, when he brought his military career to a close.

He soon transitioned to a civilian role with the Army. In October 2020, he moved into the position of Deputy Chief of Operations for the First Army in Rock Island, Illinois. In this office, he has responsibility for the mobilization, deployment, and redeployment of more than 70,000 reserve component Soldiers each year.

CSM Thomas' military education includes the Primary Leadership Development Course, Drill Sergeant School, Infantry Basic Non-Commissioned Officers Course, Infantry Advanced Non-Commissioned Officers Course, Battle Staff Non-Commissioned Officers Course, Sergeants Major Course, Class 55, Command Sergeants Major Course,

Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education Course, and the Transition Training Team Course. He also has completed the Keystone Course at the National Defense University and the Senior Leaders Course at George Washington University.

His awards and decorations include the Army Distinguished Service Medal, (two awards) Legions of Merit, Bronze Star, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal (six awards), Army Achievement Medal (four awards), Army Good Conduct Medal, Army Reserves Components Achievement Medal (six awards), National Defense Medal w/Bronze Star, Afghanistan Campaign Medal w/Campaign Star, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, NATO (ISAF) Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Non-Commissioned Officers Ribbon with the number four, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Ribbon (two awards), Armed Forces Reserve Medal w/M and Silver Hourglass, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, and the Drill Sergeant Badge.

Thomas has also maintained membership in the Association of Quartermasters, been inducted into the Order of Saint Martin, and served as the National Vice President and Executive Director of the Army Reserve Association. He currently lives in Moline, Illinois, but he and his wife maintain a family home in South Carolina, where their daughter Sarah serves as a member of the South Carolina Air National Guard.

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## James P. Wills (Interim)

James Wills was born in Beckley, West Virginia on 13 September 1967, the only child of Frank H. Wills and Malinda J. Lindsey. He remained in Beckley and the surrounding area throughout his childhood, moving to the nearby communities of Fairdale, Peterstown, and Lester, West Virginia at various times during his middle school and high school years.



*PFC Wills at Basic Training,  
Fort Jackson, SC, 1985*

While in school, Wills enjoyed playing sports—including football, and wrestling—and also participated in band.

He was not just an avid musician; he was a skilled one as well. Upon his graduation from Liberty High School in Glen Daniel, West Virginia in 1985, Wills received a partial scholarship offer from Dr. Charles Martin, the dean of the music department at West Virginia University.

Wills declined this offer, choosing instead to enlist in the Army. He was influenced in this decision by his family's long tradition of military service. His maternal great grandfather (Edgar Wilson Hatfield) had served in the West Virginia Army National Guard during World War I. His maternal grandfather, (Aaron Phillip Lindsey) served in the US Army as a Combat Engineer in France during World War II and had been

awarded the purple heart for a combat injury. His paternal uncle James Earl Kessinger, who had raised Wills' father, also served in the U.S. Army in World War II. And his father (Frank) served in the WVARNG. Throughout his early life, these relatives also had counseled him on the value of a military career. With this lineage and advice as his guide, Wills delayed plans for college and musical training and signed up for the Army delayed entry program.

Nevertheless, his musical ability provided an immediate benefit to his military service. Following a music audition for CW3 Danny Jaynes of the 101<sup>st</sup> Air Assault Division, Wills entered the Army as a PFC/E3 because of his ability to perform with the band. His career path, however, was as a Traffic Management Coordinator. This choice of Military Occupational Specialty was also influenced by family ties. His father owned an asphalt paving company, Beckley Asphalt and Paving, and Wills had developed an appreciation of heavy equipment and horizontal engineering from his interactions with the business.

Upon completion of his basic and advanced individual training, Wills received his first assignment, to Garrison Command, Directorate of Logistics, Transportation Branch at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. While serving there he was selected to attend the ASI M6 Port Cargo Systems Operators Course at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

During this period, Wills once again received the offer of a music scholarship. This time Dr. Martin offered a full scholarship and assistance in securing a separation from the Army. Instead, Wills elected to complete his tour of duty, remained at Fort Leonard Wood, and left behind his opportunity to attend college as a traditional student.

He did pursue his college education, but as part of a far busier life. Upon completion of his tour of duty, in September 1990, he enrolled as a full-time student while also working third-shift receiving at Wal-Mart. He also remained committed to the Army and signed up to serve in the Army Reserve. His initial assignment was in the 934<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Detachment located at Fort Leonard Wood, MO.

Initially, Wills has some regrets about his decision. The Army Reserve unit had not lived up to his expectations and he questioned if he had made the right choice to reenlist. But a phone call received in December 1990, while he was busy studying for finals, proved to be the turning point of his Army Reserve career. He received notification that his unit would deploy in support of Operation Desert Storm.



*SPC Wills with CW3 Jerry W. Bethurem at Log Base Echo in Saudi Arabia during the Persian Gulf War (Desert Storm) in 1991*

At the time, Wills had not yet had the opportunity to reclassify his career path to a maintenance specialty. However, his detachment commander, CW3 Jerry W. Bethurem, recognized his potential and helped the young Soldier gain access to a 10-day course to earn reclassification as a Heavy Wheel Mechanic. Chief Bethurem also mentored him on the essentials of taking care of a team, including never leaving anyone behind, showing compassion as a leader, and refusing to say “no” in pursuit of the mission. These lessons influenced Wills for the remainder of his career and became the core values of his leadership.

CSM Wills deployed with the 934<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Detachment as Specialist E4 63H, but he soon became the Commander's go-to for organizational and administrative tasks. Then, when the unit redeployed to Fort Leonard Wood, the full-time Unit Administrator position opened. Wills was placed on Active Duty for Operational Support and took on responsibility as the Unit Administrator of the 934<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Detachment under 102<sup>nd</sup> ARCOM. He jumped into the role, learned as much as he could about unit operations, and earned himself a promotion to Sergeant, E5.

In 1991, Wills became a Unit Administration Technician with Battery C, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 75<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery in Jefferson City, MO. This military assignment required him to qualify as a Cannon Crewmember, and he attended reclassification school once again. He subsequently served for a year as a member of an M1009 Howitzer Artillery Crew.

Wills moved to another Military Technician position in 1993, as Unit Administrator for Service Battery, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 75<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery at Fort Leonard Wood. This represented a promotion for him on the civilian front and, after he qualified as the Battalion's Assistance Supply NCO, brought him a promotion to Staff Sergeant, E6. It was also a challenging



*Wills as Unit Administrator, 3d Bn, 75th Field Artillery, Service Battery with SFC Bill Gaddis*

position that required knowledge of all aspects of operations and support. As a result, Wills developed a broad understanding of Army logistics.

In 1995, Wills applied for a vacant Sergeant First Class Battalion Supply NCO position and gained the promotion with a Time-in-Service waiver. This advancement occurred just as the Army made the decision to transfer all combat arms units to the Army National Guard. Consequently, the Army Reserve deactivated the unit to which Wills was assigned and moved him into a newly-activated

955<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company for pipeline construction—one of only four such units in the entire Army.

This transition soon produced additional challenges. Some in the Army leadership questioned the value of a company with such a unique focus. Within six months of activation, the new unit had already been identified for deactivation. In response, the Force Management Officer of the 89<sup>th</sup> Regional Support Command sent Wills to the 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command to provide a briefing on the capabilities of Pipeline Construction companies. Wills made a compelling case for the units, and they were ultimately removed from the deactivation list.



*First Sergeant Wills with the 955<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (Pipeline Construction) and USARC CSM, CSM Piacentini, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, 1997*

Wills also was selected to be the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge during the unit's first Annual Training. Over the course of that mission, Wills, a First Sergeant, and 40 other unit members successfully retrieved more than 22 miles of inland petroleum distribution pipeline, an amount normally recovered by two units. The Sergeant Major of the

FORSCOM petroleum division commended the 955<sup>th</sup> for its accomplishment and recognized Wills for his leadership and commitment to demonstrating the operational capabilities of the Pipeline Construction Companies.

In 1997, Wills was promoted to First Sergeant of the 955<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company and transferred to the unit as its mil-tech administrator. In that capacity, he worked to win the unit exposure in every possible training opportunity. The company soon was building school athletic fields, playgrounds, septic systems, weapons qualification ranges, range maintenance on installations, and other facilities throughout the state of Missouri. The active schedule made the unit a desirable destination, and it grew in personnel strength by more than 130 percent.

This assignment also permitted Wills to develop his skills for building a team. For example, when units were given 60-days to prepare for a mandatory Veteran's Day parade in St. Louis, Missouri, many units scrambled to avoid the tasked event. Wills, by contrast, immediately began developing a plan that would benefit leadership and Soldiers alike. As he prepared the troops for the parade, he also coordinated with the local Association of the United States Army organization to recognize the Soldiers after the event. When the unit's bus rolled into downtown St. Louis on Veteran's Day, the Commanding General of the 89<sup>th</sup> Regional Support Command came on board and apologized for the tasking. Wills informed him that there was no need for an apology. Following the parade, Command Sergeant Major Jack Rucynski, the USARC CSM, delivered coins to the entire unit to thank the Soldiers for their commitment. Wills further rewarded them with tickets to a St Louis Cardinals baseball game and a celebratory meal.

In 2000 the 1<sup>st</sup> Engineer Battalion, 95<sup>th</sup> Division (Institutional Training) relocated from St. Louis, MO to Fort Leonard Wood, MO and the 1st Battalion (EN), 95<sup>th</sup> Division (IT) took over the vacated building. That unit also had a Staff Administrator position vacant. Because Wills had reached the end of his tenure as a unit First Sergeant and also was

looking for a promotion in his Military Technician career, he applied for the role. He received the position and transferred to the battalion as the operations NCO. Shortly afterwards, he was promoted to Senior Instructor Writer Sergeant Major and became the unit's Military Technician Staff Administrator. He pursued both roles diligently, attending every instructor course and guiding the battalion through its relocation and an accreditation review.

His role in the unit had an enormous impact. At the time, the Command General, Douglas Dollar considered trading the battalion to the Missouri Army National Guard for a Regional Training Site Maintenance unit. But, as the 1/95<sup>th</sup> achieved accreditation and significantly raised its end strength and Military Occupational Specialty Qualification, the General decided to retain the unit. It became a model for other training centers. In 2001, Wills was rewarded for his contribution to this success with his selection as the Command Sergeant Major of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (EN), 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade (CS), 95<sup>th</sup> Division (IT). He successfully ensured that the unit's operational readiness never fell below established goals even as TRADOC guidance and army training processes shifted dramatically.

As he completed his tenure as the CSM of the battalion in 2005, Wills started a new civilian job at the Army Reserve and Readiness Training Center (ARRTC), Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. His position as an Instructional Systems Specialist (ISS) made him responsible for writing and developing courseware and training material.

During this time, Army leadership expressed concern about the rising casualty rates from High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) roll-overs and encounters with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Wills took on the challenge of reducing these rising numbers. Working closely with Command Sergeant Major Terrance Murphy of the Countermining and Explosives Directorate of the Engineer School at Fort Leonard Wood, MO, he studied thousands of transcripts to determine methods to prevent



roll-overs and counter IEDs. He then applied lessons learned to develop training and doctrine to confront these threats and reduce loss of life.

In 2006, Wills' military career took a significant detour. Physicians diagnosed his father with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Simultaneously, his mother suffered the after-effects of a stroke. As an only child, Wills felt a strong call to assist his ailing parents. He made the difficult decision to retire from the Army Reserve and his mil-tech position and return to his hometown in West Virginia. To support himself, he established several businesses. Once again following the example of his father, he established Appalachian Paving and Excavation and several associated firms. He also created AP&E Properties, LLC, an investment company.

Having immersed himself in family and commercial responsibilities, Wills appeared to have firmly transitioned to civilian life. Then, in 2007, he received a call from the 84<sup>th</sup> Training Command, asking him to consider applying for a senior civilian mil-tech position as the Deputy G7. Initially, he rejected the request. As his parents' health status improved, however, he reconsidered. Eight months later he accepted the challenge. He transferred out of the Retired Reserves into the Individual Ready Reserve and then into TPU status and the position of Operations Sergeant Major of the 70<sup>th</sup> Division under the 84<sup>th</sup> Training Command, Fort Knox, KY. He took on this responsibility while still managing his personal businesses back in West Virginia.

Following this return to military duty, a temporary assignment next set him on course to become a nominative Command Sergeant Major. In 2010, he was asked to stand in as the WAREX CSM for BG Bryan Wampler, of the 78<sup>th</sup> Training Division. Mike Schultz, the current USARC Command Sergeant Major stopped by to observe, and Wills served as his guide for the visit. As Schultz prepared to depart, he asked if Wills had ever considered applying for a nominative CSM position. He noted that a Command Sergeant Major assignment was currently open and that the Commanding General had reviewed numerous candidates without finding a suitable choice. Schultz insisted that Wills submit a

consideration packet by the close of the week. Wills did so and, shortly afterward, MG William Gerety called to offer him the job of Command Sergeant Major of the 81<sup>st</sup> Regional Support Command.

His term as CSM of the 81<sup>st</sup> was relatively short. Wills appreciated the opportunity to serve in one of the Army's oldest commands and worked hard to advance the mission. General Gerety noted that enthusiasm and recognized Wills' extensive background with training. Soon afterward, however, Gerety himself was selected for a new posting, as the commander of the 80<sup>th</sup> Training Command (Institutional Training). At that time, the general notified CSM Schultz of his desire to bring Wills onto the command team of the 80<sup>th</sup> as well. Just eleven months after taking on his first Command Sergeant Major assignment, Wills transferred to his second one with the 80<sup>th</sup>.

Over the next several years, Wills worked closely with MG Gerety to make the 80<sup>th</sup> Training Command a more efficient and results-oriented organization. In addition to his role as CSM, Wills once again accepted the job of G7 of the command. In this dual assignment, he helped to generate a significant shift in the alignment and structure of the Army Reserve training force. He was especially instrumental in establishing Total Army School System (TASS) Training Centers and consolidating resources so that all three divisions, sixteen brigades, and subordinate battalions of the 80<sup>th</sup> attained full or marginal accreditation. This progress continued when MG A.C Roper assumed control of the 80<sup>th</sup> and Wills continued to work well with his new commander through the end of his CSM term.

In 2015, Wills received his next assignment, as Command Sergeant Major of the 99<sup>th</sup> Regional Support Command at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. He had met MG Margie Boor, the Commanding General of the 99<sup>th</sup> RSC during a Best Warrior event and respected her leadership style. For her part, Boor welcomed Wills' depth of experience with facilities, budget, and training and made him an integral part of her leadership team. Wills took on the difficult task of bridging differences

between civilian and military leadership while also focusing on improving the Yellow Ribbon and Strong Bonds programs and maintaining communications with Major Subordinate Commands.



*CSM Wills, his wife Lisa, and LTC Jeffrey W. Talley at USARC HQ Fort Bragg, North, January 2016*

This experience led Wills directly to the office of Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve. In late October 2015, CSM Luther Thomas left that role to serve as the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. At

that time, LTG Jeffrey W. Talley, Chief of Army Reserve, was preparing for retirement. Although he wanted to fill the CSM position, he announced he would do so on an interim basis to allow his successor to make a full-term selection. MG Boor encouraged Wills to apply for the opportunity and he was chosen to fill in when Thomas departed in January 2016.



*CSM Wills (center) and other Senior Enlisted Advisors, advocate for education before the Senate Armed Forces Committee*

Despite carrying the interim label, CSM Wills took on his new duties with energy and undertook important actions and policies. He sought to reform the senior enlisted promotion process, overhaul the AGR promotion and slating process, and improve technology training for CSMs and First Sergeants in

the field. He worked with the Sergeant Major of the Army and his counterpart in the National Guard to increase the number of training seats available to the Army Reserve in senior executive courses for enlisted Soldiers. He also coordinated with the other components to develop more focused, joint messaging on safety, suicide prevention, and additional areas of concern. Wills remained in the CSM position for the entirety of 2016, helping bridge the transition of the Chief of Army Reserve from LTG Talley to LTG Charles Luckey.

Following his tenure as interim Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve, Wills returned to the 80<sup>th</sup> Training Command to serve a one-year detail before bringing his 25 years in the Federal Technician Service and 33 years of active and reserve service to a close. He initially returned to his home and business in Beckley West Virginia and even ran for the office of Mayor of the community. In 2021, however he retired from his civilian companies and sold off his real estate investment company. He then turned his passion to developing and managing Global Leadership 2000, a consulting firm for organizational development, motivation, and leadership.

Wills, his wife Lisa, and their three youngest children, Paige Riley, Jace, and Aaron currently live in Rural Retreat Virginia. Their oldest daughter, Courtney, is married to an active-duty Soldier and resides at Fort Jackson, SC.



*The Wills family,  
Grandview, West  
Virginia, 2019:  
(l to r) wife Lisa  
Wills, Jace, Paige,  
Aaron, and CSM  
James Wills.*

CSM Wills has an extensive and varied military education. His courses include; the National Defense University Keystone Course, Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education Course, CSM/SGM Force Management Course, National Defense University-RC-National Security Course, United States Army Sergeants' Major's Academy, CGSC Pre-Command and Command Sergeants Major Course, ARRTC Brigade/Battalion Command Course, TRADOC Systems Approach to Training Course, Small Group Instructor's Course, Army Basic Instructor's Course, TASS Leader's Course, TRADOC Middle Manager's Course, Advanced Non-Commissioned Officer's Course (63H); Basic Non-Commissioned Officer's Course (13B), Heavy Equipment Repairer Course (RTUP)(62B), Primary Leadership Course, ASI-M6 Port Cargo Systems Specialist Course, 88N Traffic Manager's Course, numerous Army Reserve Readiness Training Command Courses, and Initial Entry (Basic) Training. He is also a graduate of Drury University in Springfield Missouri, with a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in Education

CSM Wills' decorations and badges include the Legion of Merit (2nd Award), Meritorious Service Medal (5th Award), Army Commendation Medal (3rd Award), Army Achievement Medal (5th Award), Army Good Conduct Medal (1st Award), Army Reserve Commendation Medal (8th Award), National Defense Service Medal with Star, Southwest Asia Campaign Medal with Star, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Silver Hour Glass, M-Device, and Number 2, NCO Professional Development Ribbon with number 4, Army Service Ribbon, Kuwait Liberation Medal, Kuwaiti K-Medal, Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon, Unit Shoulder Sleeve Insignia for Wartime Service, Driver's Badge for Wheel and Mechanic Bars, and Expert Rifleman's Badge. He is also the recipient of the Artillery's Order of St. Barbara and the Engineer Bronze De Fleury Medals.

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## Ted L. Copeland

Ted Leroy Copeland was born on August 11, 1965, in Wapakoneta, Ohio—hometown of Neal Armstrong, the first astronaut to walk on the moon. Raised on a family farm by his parents, Robert and Mary Copeland, he remained in this community for the entirety of his early life. He attended Wapakoneta High School, where he participated in numerous activities and excelled as a student. During that period, he also began dating Grace Shoffstall and would marry his high school sweetheart in December 1983, shortly after their graduation. Over time, the couple raised a family—a daughter, Anna, and two sons, Travis and Trevor.



*High School portrait,  
Wapakoneta High  
School, 1983*

In October 1984, Copeland entered the Army under the delayed enlistment entry program. He attended Military Police One Station Unit Training at Ft. McClellan, Alabama in January 1985 and graduated with honors from advanced individual military police training.

Following his completion of this training program, he was assigned to the Law Enforcement Activity Company, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Kentucky from June 1985 until November 1986. While at that

post, Copeland quickly advanced in rank, achieving the ranks of private first class two months early and specialist (SPEC 4) eight months early.



*Private Copeland, Advanced Individual Training, Fort McClelland, 1985*

With the completion of his deployment to Korea, Copeland also closed out his three-year term of active services. He returned to Wapakoneta and sought civilian employment. Initially, he worked at several factory jobs in the area, but in 1989 he took on a role as a security guard. He transferred to the Army Reserve and began military service with the 342<sup>nd</sup> Military Police Company (Escort Guard), Detachment 1, Dayton Ohio.

In November 1986 he made a permanent change of station to the 55<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company, Camp Market Korea, where he would remain until December 1987. The senior specialist in 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon, he served as a squad leader and team leader for ten of the thirteen months of his assignment. Unit leaders noticed his performance and soon recommended him for the rank of Sergeant, E5. He became promotable with 32 months of time-in-service, an unusually-accelerated rate of advancement for the military police corps of the time.



*SPC Copeland, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, 1985-1986*

While assigned to the 342<sup>nd</sup> MPCO, he continued to advance and experienced another deployment. Early in his term, he received his promotion to Sergeant. Then, in November 1990, he rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant and mobilized with his unit in support of Operation Desert Shield/ Desert Storm. Sent to Saudi Arabia, he served as a squad leader with responsibility for escorting and transporting more than 25,000 enemy prisoners of war from forward collection points to rear camps.

Following the conflict, Copeland returned home and moved forward in his civilian job. In Oct. 1994, he became an officer with the police department of Saint Marys Ohio, not far from his hometown of Wapakoneta. Starting as a road patrol officer, he would remain with the department for 22 years. Throughout his career, he also served as a firearms instructor for pistol, semi-revolver, shotgun, patrol rifle, range officer, police motorcycle officer, and background investigator. In December 2003, he earned the rank of Sergeant in the Department.



*Staff Sergeant Copeland with the 342<sup>nd</sup> MPCO, Operation Desert Storm*

He advanced with his military career as well. Still a member of the 342<sup>nd</sup> MPCO, he achieved the rank of sergeant first class and, by 2001, became first sergeant of the unit.

These responsibilities led to another overseas assignment. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, Copeland assisted with the deployment of the 342<sup>nd</sup> Military Police Company (MP CO) for the period from December 2001 to December 2002. The unit was assigned to Fort Dix, New Jersey, Incirlik, Turkey, and Guantanamo, Cuba. In addition to performing security operations at all three locations, the 342<sup>nd</sup> MP Company took on the challenging mission of transporting some 400 detainees from Afghanistan to Guantanamo, Cuba.



*First Sergeant Copeland, 11 September 2001*

Completion of this assignment led to additional obligations and opportunities. In the year following his deployment, Copeland attended the non-resident program of the Sergeants Major Academy. He also assisted the new company commander of the 342<sup>nd</sup> MP CO in the reorganization and training of the unit in preparation for another deployment.

That mobilization came in December 2003, when the 342<sup>nd</sup> MPCO was sent to Ft Riley, Kansas to back fill for the post Military Police companies which had been deployed

forward. At that time, First Sergeant Copeland was selected over several of his peers to serve as the acting Battalion Command Sergeant Major.

Despite this increased responsibility, Copeland also found time to advance his education. In addition to finishing the non-resident phase of the Sergeants Major Academy, he completed an associate degree in criminal justice and political science from Vincennes University. After his return from mobilization in December 2004, Copeland achieved still another milestone with his selection for the residence phase of the Sergeants Major Academy. He once again set his civilian career aside and traveled to Fort Bliss, Texas to attend the course in June 2005.

In February 2006 Copeland was promoted to Command Sergeant Major and assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 391<sup>st</sup> Military Police Battalion (MP BN), Columbus, Ohio. In this role, he mobilized once again and deployed to Camp Bucca, Iraq in 2007. The Battalion's primary responsibility was for detainee operations, managing up to 10,000 internees at any given time.

The 391<sup>st</sup> MP BN performed this mission in exemplary fashion. During its tenure at the camp, the battalion did not allow a single detainee to breach its fence line. Moreover, the unit made significant advances in humanitarian support, teaching Iraqi family members to read and write in English and conducting rehabilitation training for detainees prior to their release. Copeland's role in achieving these unit results also raised his personal reputation. Upon return from deployment, he was selected over three other battalion Command Sergeants Major to serve as the acting Brigade rear detachment Command Sergeant Major.

In 2009 he was selected as Command Sergeant Major of the 300<sup>th</sup> Military Police Brigade. Over the next three years in this capacity, he revived the military police warfighter competition. His actions resulted in three MP teams traveling to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri to compete with teams from around the world in the Military Police Regiments' yearly competition. One team placed fourth and the other captured seventh. He also revived the best Soldier and NCO competitions and his

Soldiers placed either first or second at the two-star level several years in a row.

Despite these responsibilities and frequent mobilizations, Copeland continued to thrive in his civilian career as well. A notable example occurred in 2009, when the Saint Mary's Police Department selected him to attend the 10-week FBI National Academy in Quantico Virginia. His acceptance into the program was a first for his department and he was only the third law enforcement officer from his county ever to participate.

In the fall of 2011, CSM Copeland transferred to the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 75<sup>th</sup> Training Division (MC). His tenure there was short-lived, however, and soon after his Commanding General asked him to transfer to the 311<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Sustainment Command to assist that unit with its mobilization for a tour in Afghanistan.



*Copeland assumes responsibility as CSM of the Army Reserve, 18 April 2017. (photo by Timothy Hale)*

This led to still another deployment for the well-traveled Command Sergeant Major. In September 2012, he deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan with the mission to manage all military logistics in that country. This included responsibility for \$7 billion in contracts and the drawdown of equipment from the country. He and his unit quickly earned recognition for the ability to consolidate and reduce contracts—a process that saved the United States approximately one hundred million dollars over the course of ten months. During the ten-month deployment, the unit also reduced waste and theft of supplies, producing substantial additional savings.

In 2015, Copeland transferred once again, this time to serve as the Command Sergeant Major of the 79<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Support Command. This was a full-time AGR position, and the move obliged him to bring his civilian police career of 22 years to a close and relocate from Ohio to Los Alamitos, California.

He immediately made his presence felt in the new role. Working closely with the Commanding General, he made great strides to improve the readiness of the troops. In a very short amount of time, the 79<sup>th</sup> rose from the bottom third of the twenty major commands to take a place among the top four commands in readiness. He also determinedly worked with other senior Non-Commissioned Officers to improve the command's NCO corps. This effective leadership helped Copeland reach the highest level of leadership and earn selection as the Thirteenth United States Army Reserve Command Sergeant Major in April 2017.

As Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve, Copeland supported the priorities of Commanding General LTG Charles Luckey while also leaving his own distinct mark on the organization. He aggressively pursued improvements to the NCO school process, improving attendance rates and promotions for the component. In coordination with teams USARC, he advocated for development of a tool to track both Soldier educational needs and school seats available for the courses.





*CSM Copeland interacts with Soldiers at the Non-Commissioned Officer Academy. (photo by SSGT Jae Jung)*

The resulting system provided the Army Reserve commands and units with a clearer understanding of organizational training status and exceeded the capabilities of both the National Guard and the Active Army. As a result, school attendance and course seat usage rates increased substantially, saving the Army Reserve more than ten million dollars per year.

Copeland pursued other initiatives with similar enthusiasm. He championed physical readiness among the force, encouraging Soldiers to adopt healthy lifestyles and embrace a culture of fitness. Toward that end, he consistently challenged top enlisted leaders to support and participate in the new Army Combat Fitness Test. He also regularly stressed the vital role of the Ready Force X initiative and its importance as a catalyst for better training, medical readiness, and NCO leadership.

Perhaps most significantly, Copeland brought to the office an understanding and appreciation of the trials faced by the Soldiers of the Army Reserve enlisted force as they tried to juggle civilian and military careers. He noted that he had stepped away from his civilian employment for more than three years of deployments and expressed gratitude at having an employer that accommodated his absences. He realized, however, that other Soldiers were not as lucky and encountered significant stress in their personal lives. "We're gone a lot," he noted. "That saying, 'two days a month and two weeks in the summer,' really isn't realistic anymore, even for the most junior soldier. It's more than that."



*CSM Copeland speaks to Army recruits in his hometown of Wapakoneta Ohio, 26 Feb 2020 (photo by 1st SGT Joel Quebec)*

He recognized that the evolution of the Army Reserve into a true peer institution to the Regular Army had placed great demands upon its Soldiers. Those unable to strike a balance between their duties as Soldiers

and as regular citizens were likely to quit the Army in favor of their main source of livelihood. Throughout his term, therefore, he strived to help enlisted Soldiers adapt to the changing nature of the organization and achieve a more harmonious balance of responsibilities.

After a busy term, Copeland restored the balance in his own life as well. In June 2020, he turned the responsibilities as Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve over to CSM Andrew Lombardo and retired from service. He ended a military career of thirty-five years and ten months and returned to his hometown of Wapakoneta, Ohio, to enjoy retirement with his wife Grace.

CSM Copeland served in every leadership position from team leader to CSM and twice as a company 1SG. While serving in these positions he participated in five mobilizations and operational deployments to Saudi Arabia (Operation Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and Cease Fire); Turkey, Afghanistan, and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (OEF, OCONUS); Ft. Riley, Kansas (OEF, CONUS); Iraq (OIF 07-08), Afghanistan (OEF 12-13).

CSM Copeland's formal military training consists of Primary Leadership Development Course, MP Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course, MP Advanced Noncommissioned Officers Course, TATS First Sergeants Course, the USASMA Sergeants Major Course, Non-resident Class 30, Command Sergeants Major course, and Army Substance Abuse Program. He is a retired Police sergeant, and his civilian education includes an associate degree in Criminal Justice from Vincennes University. He is also a graduate of the Ohio Peace Officers Training Academy, and the Federal Bureau of Investigations National Academy and has a combined total of over 1300 hours in civilian law enforcement training. He is certified as a Firearms Instructor, ASP and PR24 Instructor, Background Investigator, Police Motorcyclist and Police Carbine, Shotgun, Revolver, and Semiautomatic Instructor.

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## **Andrew J. Lombardo**

Andrew J. Lombardo is a first-generation American born in New York, NY, on October 2, 1967, to Livio and Lietta Giuliani and spent his infant years in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, New York. He was raised by foster and adoptive parents Marie and Salvatore Lombardo in North Massapequa, New York.

After graduating from Plainedge High School in North Massapequa, in 1985, Lombardo enlisted in the Army and traveled to Fort McClellan, Alabama for One Station Unit Training. He completed instruction at the U.S. Army Military Police School in 1986 and received an active-duty assignment to West Point, New York. Over the next two years, he served as a law enforcement MP and traffic accident investigator at the U.S. Military Academy. During this period, he began to develop a reputation for effective service, earning recognition as Soldier of the Quarter.

*SPC Andrew Lombardo,  
before guard mount at  
West Point New York,  
1987*





In 1988, he transitioned from Active Duty to the Army Reserve. His intent was to pursue a career in civilian law enforcement, but he initially found employment with Thomas Nationwide Transport, an international shipping and transport company. This position supported him as he enrolled as a student at Nassau Community College and completed an associate degree in Criminal Justice.

He also took on his first Army Reserve role, as a Sergeant with the 423<sup>rd</sup> Military Police Company, Combat Support, based at Uniondale, New York. This led to his first overseas assignment as well. He served as a Team Leader when his unit provided area security operations for Operation Fuertes Caminos in Honduras in 1989.



*Staff Sergeant Lombardo, Annual Training Fort Dix, New Jersey, 1994*

In 1990, Lombardo mobilized once again, this time for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. As a Staff Sergeant with the 402<sup>nd</sup> Military Police Prisoner of War Camp, under the 800<sup>th</sup> Military Police Brigade, he helped establish the facilities and perimeter of the prisoner of war camp and was a compound leader at Camp Brooklyn, near Hafir Al Batin, Saudi



Arabia. When fighting commenced in 1991, the camp was used for the custody, care, and control of more than 16,277 enemy prisoners of war—23 percent of all prisoners taken in the conflict.

Following his return home from the Middle East, Lombardo moved forward with his ambition to pursue a civilian law enforcement career. He resumed his college education and, in 1993, received a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice with minors in business and psychology from Saint John's University. In 1992 he attended the New York City Police Department (NYPD) Law Enforcement Academy. Following graduation, he landed employment with the New York City Housing Authority Police Department (NYC-HPD).

Lombardo's position as a Project Community Officer carried a great deal of responsibility. The NYC-HPD conducted a full range of policing activities to reduce crime in the city's numerous public housing areas. As a member of that force, Lombardo patrolled the projects, conducted community outreach, and served as a member of a unit specifically geared toward addressing gang-related activities. He entered the force at a time of high crime and rising violence, and proudly contributed to efforts to bring some of the city's most dangerous areas under control.

In 1995, the NYPD absorbed the Housing Authority Police Department and Lombardo became a Narcotics Investigator in the combined larger force. He soon earned the rank of Sergeant and was assigned to the 75<sup>th</sup> precinct, Brooklyn. In addition to his continued policing and community outreach, he took over responsibility for COMPSTAT—a newly-developed computerized statistic and tracking system used to determine crime hot-spots, develop strategy, and better direct police activity—and implementation in his precinct patrol squad. With Lombardo as supervisor, the new program contributed to a dramatic rise in arrests and an equally significant drop in crime in one of the most violent precincts of the city.

Lombardo was obliged to put his developing law enforcement career on hold once again in 1997 when he received orders to deploy to Bosnia

and Herzegovina with the 423<sup>rd</sup> Military Police Company (Combat Support) as part of NATO's Operation Joint Guard. Then a Sergeant First Class in the Army, he was assigned to serve as Platoon Sergeant, providing area security and traffic control at the Sava River Bridge, a remote but vital linkage between northern Bosnia and supply bases in Germany. The platoon also escorted convoys and assisted with law enforcement for the city of Brod, Bosnia.

When his deployment ended in 1998, Lombardo returned to New York and was promoted to First Sergeant of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company 800th Military Police Brigade. He also resumed his interrupted career with the New York City Police Department and received a promotion there as well. As an NYPD Lieutenant and Platoon Commander, Lombardo moved to the upper west side of Manhattan. He continued his management of the COMPSTAT program for that high-profile portion of the city and was selected as a candidate for the department's elite Emergency Service Unit.

He set aside these duties in March 2001, when he received still another call to mobilize. This time he served as Master Sergeant of the 340th Military Police Company (Combat Support) which was deployed to Kosovo as part of the continuing mission of Operation Joint Guardian. Less recognized than the 21<sup>st</sup> Military Police Company (Airborne), the 340<sup>th</sup> joined the 21<sup>st</sup> in the 716 Military Police Battalion and conducted more missions than its more famous counterpart. Lombardo, as Operations Sergeant, ran many of those missions, including all peacekeeping patrols and security escorts in the provinces of Uroševac (Ferizaj), Kacanik, and Štrpce.

Lombardo was still in Kosovo in 2001 when terrorists struck the twin towers of the World Trade Center. He watched helplessly from afar as many of his brother officers of the NYPD sacrificed their lives during the response. He resumed his duties with the police force in November 2001 when the 716<sup>th</sup> Military Police Battalion turned over its responsibilities to the 504<sup>th</sup> Military Police Task Force.

His return to his civilian life was brief. The Global War on Terror had created a high demand for Military Police Soldiers and units, in January 2003, Lombardo received a call to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as a Sergeant Major de facto of the 310<sup>th</sup> Military Police Battalion, Internment/Resettlement (I/R).

In the initial phase of his deployment, he served as Battalion Operations Sergeant Major under the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division, headquartered at Al Diwaniyah Iraqi. He oversaw detention operations, provided training, guidance, and mission assistance to Iraqi police units, and conducted operations in Al Kut, Al Hillah (Babylon), and Al Najaf. The 310<sup>th</sup> was eventually placed under the auspices of a Polish Multinational Division because the unit included so many Polish, Spanish, and Greek-speaking personnel. Lombardo was later awarded a Combat Action Badge for his service during this period.



*MSG Lombardo, near the border of Iran and Iraq, 2003*

In the final months of its deployment, the 310<sup>th</sup> was reassigned to Camp Bucca Iraq, under the 800<sup>th</sup> Military Police Brigade. Lombardo served as Camp Operations Sergeant Major. It was a difficult time to manage the internment camp. News of the mistreatment of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison had made international news and created considerable disorder among the detainees in all facilities. Lombardo and his understrength police unit were required to work closely with civil affairs and psychological operations teams on special efforts to maintain order while also performing the foundational duties of care, custody, and control of prisoners.

Following demobilization in June 2004, Lombardo received a brief respite from the frequent calls to military duty. Over the next four years, he used this time to pursue additional development opportunities. Returning to duty with the NYPD, he transferred to the Emergency Services Unit and became an integral part of a team that provided special tactical and rescue support to police officers throughout the city. He also continued to expand his military and law enforcement education,



*CSM Lombardo, as Lieutenant with the NYPD Emergency Services Unit, participating in jumper rescue training with the on the Verrazano Bridge.*

graduating from the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy in 2006 and the University of Louisville Southern Police Institute in 2007.

The ongoing Global War on Terror resulted in still another deployment for Lombardo in 2008. As the Command Sergeant Major of the 306<sup>th</sup> Military Police Battalion, I/R, Lombardo returned to Camp Bucca, Iraq, where he conducted oversight of security for a location that housed some of the most radical detainees from the conflict. He also had responsibility for air transfer of detainees between Camp Cropper, near Baghdad, and Camp Bucca, on the border of Kuwait.

With the completion of this tour of duty, Lombardo once again returned to his civilian responsibilities, and continued to advance in the NYPD. In 2010, he earned a promotion to the rank of Captain, serving as the Tenth Precinct Executive Officer in Chelsea, Manhattan.

He also advanced to the position of Brigade Command Sergeant Major in the Army Reserve, selected for that role in the 800<sup>th</sup> Military Police Brigade. Shortly after he accepted this position the brigade was reflagged as the 333<sup>rd</sup> Military Police Brigade, to separate the unit from negative associations with the Abu Ghraib incident. Nevertheless, Lombardo took a lead role in efforts to retain the unit insignia and motto of the 800<sup>th</sup> for the new organization. This move reflected his belief that it was important to preserve and honor the positive lineage of the brigade. Success in this endeavor produced an important boost in morale throughout the headquarters and its units.

In October 2012, the distinctive Gold Sword, now assigned to the 333<sup>rd</sup> Military Police Brigade, mobilized once again, this time in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. As Command Sergeant Major of the brigade, Lombardo embarked upon his sixth deployment, to Camp Sabalu-Harrison, Afghanistan. The primary missions of his unit were to run the Parwan Detention Facility near Bagram Air Base and to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Army's Military Police Guard Command.



*CSM Lombardo (left), Camp Sabalu-Harrison, Afghanistan, 2012*

Lombardo and his Soldiers first had to resolve a controversy that they inherited upon arrival. The previous unit in control of the camp had tried to prevent detainees from communicating with each other by burning copies of the Quran in which they had written messages. When word spread about the destruction of the holy books, outraged Afghan citizens rose in violent protests that resulted in the deaths of 30 people—including four Americans. More than 200 others were wounded.

The 333<sup>rd</sup> resolved the issue by working with the Afghan National Army to devise a more respectful disposal process. CSM Lombardo vigilantly enforced these new standards and played a significant role in preventing additional errors and reactions. His firm leadership of the enlisted force also contributed to the smooth transfer of responsibility to Afghan forces when the 333<sup>rd</sup> —with its tradition of honor and pride restored—returned to the United States in June 2013.



In keeping with the aftermath of previous deployments, Lombardo returned to civilian life at full speed. He resumed his career with the New York Police Department and performed his civilian duties with a dedication that matched his military service. He also completed a Master of Science degree in Administration of Justice at the University of Louisville in 2013. These efforts were rewarded in 2015 with his promotion to the rank of Deputy Inspector on the NYPD.

In his military career, he was assigned to a series of Command Sergeant Major roles. In April 2015 he took over as Command Sergeant Major of the 100<sup>th</sup> Training Division at Fort Knox Kentucky, overseeing actions of the 83<sup>rd</sup> and 97<sup>th</sup> Training Brigades, with direct responsibility for the individual training, readiness, discipline, welfare, morale, and safety of more than 1700 Soldiers. In April 2018, he moved to the position of Command Sergeant Major of the 99<sup>th</sup> Readiness Division at Fort Dix, New Jersey. In addition to direct responsibility for training and guidance of 600 Soldiers and 2000 civilians across 24 units, he worked closely with the Division Commander to manage logistics and readiness for more than 43,000 Soldiers, in 497 units, spread across thirteen states.

In July 2019, Lombardo became Command Sergeant Major of the 200<sup>th</sup> Military Police Command, Fort Meade Virginia—one of only two military police commands in the United States Army and the senior law enforcement unit in the U.S. States Army Reserve. His responsibilities in this command involved oversight of more than 14,000 Soldiers assigned to 22 battalion headquarters and 53 companies dispersed across all U.S. states.



*CSM Lombardo, 99th Readiness Division, during a tribute to fallen soldiers of 77th Infantry Division, 9 June 2018, (photo by Staff Sgt. Shawn Morris)*



With his considerable law enforcement background and extensive experience on active duty, CSM Lombardo was the ideal figure to lead the non-commissioned troops of the 200<sup>th</sup>, but he was destined for an even greater role. In May 2020, as CSM Ted Copeland came to the end of his term, Lieutenant General Charles Lucky selected Lombardo to serve as the 14<sup>th</sup> Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve. Lombardo took his oath of office on June 29, 2020.

He commenced his new responsibilities with a broad and detailed perspective of the issues facing the force. For almost two decades, he had experienced the pressure to sustain operational readiness that had expanded the traditional mission of the Army Reserve. After more than thirty years of service, he had become intimately familiar with the sacrifices and challenges involved in balancing civilian and military responsibilities. His six deployments clearly demonstrated the demands of service on the life of a part-time Soldier.

He took office with a determination to provide the support and services required to help Soldiers cope with the demands of duty and achieve a civilian/military integration. Nevertheless, his experiences had also shown him the importance of readiness, and he placed equal stress on the importance of preparedness. Asserting that the individual Soldier remains the “only indispensable instrument of war,” he embarked upon his duties with a determination to ensure that the enlisted force would be highly trained, disciplined, fit, equipped, and prepared for its next missions.

He began his pursuit of these goals during a period of unique challenge. As the COVID-19 epidemic swept across the country and around the world, the Army Reserve was obliged to limit travel, suspend collective trainings and battle assemblies, and postpone certain activities. CSM Lombardo himself was forced to forego the traditional Change of Responsibility ceremony in favor of a virtual transition program.



*CSM Andrew Lombardo speaks to Soldiers at a Town Hall meeting, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, September 10, 2020. (Photo by MSG. Michel Sauret)*

Simultaneously, the component faced heavy demands to provide support in the battle against the disease. Most notable was the activation of Urban Augmentation Medical Task Forces and mortuary teams to assist hard-hit cities with response to the crisis. These requests placed even more strain on an already stretched organization.

During his first year in office, Lombardo focused on helping Soldiers of the components overcome the obstacles and meet the demands of the COVID environment, while also reassuring them that they were valued and supported. He appeared with Commanding General Jody J. Daniels in frequent virtual presentations to keep Soldiers informed about decisions, requirements, and processes. He worked with commands to develop creative methods to reinstate and continue collective training in a safe manner. These included such innovations as virtual battle assemblies or hybrid training that permitted some Soldiers to report in person and others to participate via media. He also coordinated with

activated commands to ensure that they received the resources needed to complete their COVID-19 relief missions. All the while, he advocated for support structures to assist Soldiers and families during a difficult period.



*CSM Lombardo, at the Pentagon,  
2022*

Many of Lombardo's efforts were developed in close coordination with the Sergeant Major of the Army. He and SMA Michael Grinston focused on addressing matters that confronted Soldiers of all components, including hot-button subjects like extremism, suicides, and ever-present organizational change. To effectively resolve concerns, they emphasized the need to move beyond "putting out fires" as they arose. Instead, they advocated for a more proactive stance in which leaders "move upstream" of

issues to diagnose and eliminate the root causes of problems before they trickle down to the individual level. They also agreed that effective changes must be implemented at the squad level and require empowerment of squad leaders.

Entering his second year as Command Sergeant Major, Lombardo faced a somewhat more favorable environment. Although the effects of COVID-19 have lingered and restrictions continued, the implementation of safety protocols and the easing of travel restrictions permitted training to resume on a greater scale. These changes also permitted Lombardo to conduct more in-person visits to facilities and units and to initiate more direct engagements with the troops. As he used these engagements to pursue the longstanding goals of fitness, readiness, life balance, and appreciation of the Army Reserve enlisted force, Lombardo continued to

draw from his wealth of knowledge and experience acquired over a 36-year military career.

That knowledge includes extensive military training. In addition to his numerous university credentials, CSM Lombardo is an Honor Graduate of the Primary Leaders Development Course, Basic NCO Course and First Sergeants course. In 2006 he graduated from the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. In 2015, he graduated from the Army Force Management School and the National Defense University Reserve Component National Security Course. The following year, he completed the University of Kansas, School of Business Army Leader Strategic Broadening Program. In 2017 he became an honor graduate of the United States Army War College Nominative Leader Course and in 2019, he completed the National Defense University Keystone, Command Senior Enlisted Leader Course.

His awards and decorations are equally numerous. These include the Bronze Star (two times), the Meritorious Service Medal (three times), the Army Commendation Medal (seven times), the Army Achievement Medal (five times), the Navy Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal (with two Campaign Stars), Air Assault Badge, the German Armed Forces Badge for Weapons Proficiency in Gold (Schützenschnur Gold), and the Meritorious Unit Citation (two times). He has also been awarded the Order of Marechaussee in Silver and has been nominated for—pending his retirement—the award in Gold. This is the highest honor awarded to a military policeman by the Military Police Regimental Association.

In addition to his other qualifications, Lombardo is a New York State licensed emergency medical technician and a nationally certified emergency medical technician. When not working, he enjoys running marathons, hiking, diving, motorcycling, traveling.

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## **Ten Questions for the CSMs**





## Favorite Motto

*What was your favorite motto that you used to inspire your Soldiers?*

**CSM Reilly:** Be all that you can be.

**CSM Murray:** While I was CSM, most of my correspondence, especially to the field, usually ended with: “Through NCO Leadership: Tomorrow’s Readiness Today” Depending on the circumstances, I often ended my comments to audiences with variations of phrases I picked up from those I admired, like SMA Bill Gates who frequently told us all to “Stay on the High Ground” and from a Colonel that I served with, “Life is good.”

**CSM Younger:** “There are no chairs on the road to success so don’t sit down.”

**CSM Rucynski:** My motto, “TLC” was one that told a story about how we should act as leaders and soldiers. The civilian version “Tender Loving Care” has sugar added. Rephrased as “Training, Leadership, and Caring” in the Soldier’s vernacular, it offers a framework for what we must do to provide for our soldiers and their families. My other motto, “None of us is as smart as all of us,” captures the essence of working together as a team to accomplish the mission.

**CSM Spangler:** “If it is worth doing, it is worth doing right.” My Grandmother taught me that.

**CSM Lackey:** “Leadership by example.”

**CSM Jones:** My motto was engraved on my Coin of Excellence, and I stated it every time I spoke with my Soldiers. “I am who I am because of my Soldiers, I am where I am because of my Soldiers. Because of my Soldiers, I promise today, tomorrow, and always to train and take care of my Soldiers.”



*Coin of Excellence for CSM  
Michelle S. Jones, including her  
motto*

**CSM Piacentini:** “Soldiers don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care!”

**CSM Caffie:** "Lead from the front."

**CSM Schultz:** TAKE CHARGE...It is not about YOU, it is about YOUR Soldiers!

**CSM Lambert:** “It’s all training...for now.” It was intended to allow Soldiers and Leaders to make honest mistakes without fear of punishment. Making honest mistakes during training—non-life-threatening events—allowed them to learn from their mistakes so that when they went to war they would be better prepared.

**CSM Thomas:** When I had the privilege of serving as the CSM of the Army Reserve, I would always ask Soldiers, “Are you ready?” This question tied into one of my favorite mottos as a Soldier, which was, “If you stay ready, you don’t have to get ready!” I wanted to motivate and inspire Soldiers to stay ready—to “Deploy, Fight, and Win!”

**CSM Wills:** I had various mottos which I was proud to use, but the one I used the most was “Teamwork is the fuel that allows common people to produce uncommon results” by Andrew Carnegie. I also was an avid user of “Essayons,” a French word used by Engineers meaning “Let Us Try!”

I wanted my Soldiers to always feel that they could conquer any mission and I challenged them to achieve their very best in all that they accomplished.

**CSM Copeland:** “Move Out! Draw Fire!” and “Get it Done!”

**CSM Lombardo:** I have always preferred units to use unit mottos from the Unit Distinguished Insignias. These mottos have legacy and history and transcend changes of command. I always loved the 99<sup>th</sup> Readiness Division’s motto “Checkmate!” I loved “Soldiers of the Century” for the 100<sup>th</sup> Training Division. The 200<sup>th</sup> Military Police Command was “Commanding the Best!” The 333<sup>rd</sup> MP BDE motto was “Vires In Arduis” which means “Strength in Difficulties.” This really spoke to me considering the difficulty the 333<sup>rd</sup> MP BDE had to overcome following Abu Graib and our victory in restoring our honor! Perhaps my favorite motto was from the 420<sup>th</sup> MP CO which was “Anytime, anywhere!”

*Unit Crest and motto of  
the 333<sup>rd</sup> Military Police  
Brigade*



## Words of Wisdom

*When you were a young Soldier, what was the most important phrase or words of wisdom your NCO leadership told you in a time of need?*

**CSM Reilly:** SFC Michael Zifchak, my Platoon Sergeant in basic training and a member of the 5<sup>th</sup> Ranger Battalion in WWII, SFC Michael Zifchak always stressed, “Don’t ever give up.”

**CSM Murray:** It was instilled in me from my Drill Sergeants in basic training that you never stop learning. As I look back, that has proven so true. I was told, “If you learn one new thing every day, at the end of the year you will have learned at least 365 new things!” I became an information junkie, soaking up as much as I could and striving to be a subject matter expert in my field. That was a pivotal factor as I climbed the ladder of advancement in both my military and civilian careers.

**CSM Younger:** “Tell the truth.”

**CSM Rucynski:** Having served in the Marine Corps and the Army I was fortunate to receive good mentoring from different points of view. My first NCO Leader, Sergeant Lewis, a true Mustang, advised me to choose friends wisely. Some are looking to have fun but the ones who will make you grow as a Soldier display leadership.

In Vietnam, the best advice came from 23- and 24-year-old Marines. These “old-timers” did not have all the answers. But were wiser than their age and gave simple advice like “keep your ass down or it’s going to get blown off.” Truer words of wisdom were never spoken.

Sometimes it is actions, not words, that matter. That was the case with 1SG Walt Brown (USAR), a leader who provided wisdom through his leadership persona. And when I was at FORSCOM, CSM Oscar Barker never demanded fanfare or puffed out his chest, but there was no one I respected more. He demonstrated that you don’t have to be a pompous ass to be a great NCO and a great Command Sergeant Major.

**CSM Spangler:** When I was growing up, my dad—a Supply Sergeant—taught me the importance of following those above me. In Army Basic Training, I had a Drill Sergeant who said, “Mashed potatoes, mash.” Not sure why we said it, but we knew what he meant and moved out. That humor got me through boot. That Drill Sergeant could have said anything and I would have done it. He was big and loud. It concreted in me to follow those above me.

**CSM Lackey:** “Be on time, be in the proper uniform, in the absence of orders take initiative, and in the absence of leaders take charge!”

**CSM Jones:** “Be you—excellent leadership knows no gender.” You will always encounter people who put obstacles in your way, attempt to hold you back, and try to devalue what you did, what you do, and what you can do only because you are a female. This pearl of wisdom came from CSM Foust, Fort Bragg, N.C. (Special Forces and Ranger NCO).

**CSM Piacentini:** “When the going gets tough—the tough get going!” “Never take the easy way out—have the integrity to always do the right thing--not the popular thing!”

**CSM Caffie:** “Stay focused on the mission.” “Trust your fellow Soldiers.” “Keep your equipment in operational order.” “Follow the orders defined by NCO and officer leadership.”

**CSM Schultz:** “Always place the Soldiers in your Charge first” and “The NCO always eats last,” (after the Soldiers). Other great words of wisdom from my previous NCOs: “SHOOT, MOVE, and COMMUNICATE!” (Timeless!)

**CSM Lambert:** Looking back, I can say that I was critical of myself. Others saw potential in me and encouraged me to pursue things I never thought possible.

**CSM Thomas:** As a young Soldier, my Platoon Sergeant, told me to “Plan your career, don’t leave it to chance.” This advice was among the

best I received as a young Soldier. He told me to plan my assignments, my NCOES, and never stay in one assignment too long. All great advice!

**CSM Wills:** As a young Soldier, I was blessed to have had Senior NCOs who had served in Vietnam. These Leaders represented the kind of steadfast commitment that never allowed them to quit or to think a mission couldn't be accomplished. I was inspired by these Senior NCOs as their philosophy was always focused on being and collectively performing as a team. This experience always kept me focused on building a solid "winning" team!

**CSM Copeland:** "If you are going to do something, always do it to the best of your ability."



*CSM Ted L. Copeland speaks at a town hall meeting, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, July, 2017. (photo by Scott Sturkol)*

**CSM Lombardo:** It was the actions of my leadership rather than the words that really made the difference. The willingness of Senior NCOs to guide and back my decisions helped me throughout my career and showed me how to develop myself as a leader. Interactions with negative leadership also had an influence, leading me to take an opposite approach with my leadership style. In the Gulf War, I observed leadership who were not prepared to lead Soldiers in a CBRN environment, and it made me ensure that my Soldiers were trained better.

## **Mentoring an Officer**

**Every senior NCO had that one officer that needed a little extra mentoring. You know the type. Without using their name (unless you want to), tell us about the situation and the outcome?**

**CSM Reilly:** There was a young Lieutenant serving as detachment commander at the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade. He was fresh out of college, had received his doctorate in history, and worked as a professor at a local community college. He tried to bring his college collegial experience to his Army activities, and he became way too friendly with other officers. I had to tell him to leave it alone or else.

**CSM Murray:** Over my 36-plus years of active and reserve service, I served with many fine junior and senior officers. Occasionally you would run across one who had a bad experience with an NCO as a junior officer and never got over it. I quickly realized that NCOs could fix that. I would tell members of our Junior NCO Corps that when they welcomed new officers to the company, it was their role to help develop them and get them off to a positive start in the unit. One day those officers will be Commanders and you will be their First Sergeant or Sergeant Major. If you want a favorable decision on a critical issue from an Officer, you will get it a lot more easily if NCOs did their job early in that Officer's career.

During my first tour as the CSM, ARPERCEN, a Lieutenant Colonel refused to accept a Sergeant Major position in his Division. I sent up several SGMs for him to interview and he refused them all. I had a chat with him and discovered that he had nothing but disdain for SNCOs. I worked with him to undo an earlier bad experience and he finally accepted, provisionally, a SGM that I knew would win him over (former OCAR SEA William Foley). Eventually, the LTC asked that SGM to pin on one of his Eagles at his promotion ceremony. A proud day all around.



**CSM Younger:** I had a few such situations. One was a Colonel, my brigade commander, who asked me to support something, that was totally wrong and unlawful, concerning a submission of a reimbursement claim for a trip. He stated I was on the trip with him (I was not, nor was I on the military orders). This issue was investigated and the Colonel found guilty.

Another time, I worked for a BG who was married and was romantically involved with an enlisted person in the front office. He would schedule trips and ensure the enlisted NCO was on the travel orders with us. I spoke with him several times to remind him what he was doing was wrong, against regulation, and obvious to others. He eventually divorced his wife and married the NCO, avoiding scandal for the Unit and himself.

**CSM Rucynski:** On the negative side, I served with a Colonel who knew it all and felt it was below him to take advice from his CSM. His autocratic tenure sent several Officers and NCOs to career-ending evaluations—none of which I feel they deserved. I received a poor evaluation too, but I outlived it. He was the only Officer I served with who refused to listen to his Officers or NCOs.

On the positive side, I worked with a 2LT who, I could see, had immense potential but needed guidance. I took him behind the barracks one day and gave him both barrels. I told him that he was surrounding himself with NCOs who were leading him on a path of destruction. They wanted to be his friends, but he needed to be a leader. Our paths separated, but over the years he would call me and ask for advice which he took and applied. I always have said be kind to 2LTs as they grow up to be Generals, he retired as an active-duty BG.

**CSM Spangler:** While serving as a CSM with an aviation unit, there was a very talented female officer pilot who was a civilian skills hire. She routinely walked around with her jacket unzipped and not in the proper uniform. I confronted her, told her that female Soldiers looked up to her and explained the importance of being in proper uniform. She did not take this so well and immediately went to see the Colonel. This did not go well

for her, as the Colonel truly supported me. The next time I saw her she was asking me if her uniform was correct. Knowing the importance of good order and discipline and ensuring you have the support of the boss are very important aspects of being a Command Sergeant Major.

**CSM Lackey:** I am very blessed to have been surrounded by great NCOs and officers. When new junior officers arrived at my unit, I told them Congress may have given them commissions but, to be successful, they needed to watch, listen, and learn from their officers and NCOs. I also told them to remember that they had responsibility for America's greatest resource: our sons and daughters. This required them to be accountable and to always lead by example. If I observed them doing something wrong, I tactfully corrected them.

**CSM Jones:** One incident that I will never forget involved an LTC. He had the bad habit, and yes it was intentional, to call me Sergeant when I was a First Sergeant. Even worse, he did it in front of the Soldiers. I corrected him on three separate occasions, both verbally and by showing him proper titles of address in Army Regulation 600-20. Yet he continued. Finally, after one time too many, I asked him, "You are a Lieutenant Colonel, how would you like it if I called you Lieutenant?" It never happened again.

**CSM Piacentini:** There was a young officer who thought it was cool to use swear words during a combined Officer Development Program (ODP) and Noncommissioned Officer Development Program (NCODP) briefing. When it was over, I hung back and when no one else was left in the room I asked him "How do you feel the briefing went?" He said, "I think it went well CSM. How do you think it went?" I told him, "I felt professionally embarrassed by your style of communication."

I proceeded to share with him that if he really wanted to impress an audience, he needed to take out the swear words and be professional. He got the message; thanked me; and became an incredibly good Officer.

**CSM Caffie:** As a CSM who has served at battalion, brigade, two divisions, and OCAR level, I have had the honor and pleasure to mentor many junior and senior officers on maintaining the standards on dress and appearance, seeking deployment assignments, trusting their NCO staff and holding the NCO staff accountable, and reminding them that they are officers, ladies and gentlemen, and subject to the Code of Conduct.

**CSM Schultz:** As a CSM at my first battalion, the battalion commander was the most brilliant technical leader/officer in his field that I had ever met in my career. But he did not include the previous CSM or me in the loop, on various activities, or as part of the “Command Team”. I was very frustrated, to say the least. Unlike my predecessor, who just took the back seat his entire tenure, I confronted the officer with my concerns.

I came to find out that things were much different than they appeared. The battalion commander stated he was not doing it intentionally but wasn’t really sure how to use a CSM. After mentoring and working through leadership challenges together, we began to build a great team. I believe I was able to show him the value of the CSM position, the power of the NCO Corps, and the value of a strong command team. We became great personal and professional friends and remain that way to this day.

From this experience, I learned early in my CSM journey that things may be a lot different than they appear on the surface when dealing with interpersonal relationships. We must always engage and shape the relationships with the Command team and Staff. If we take a “back seat” like my predecessor, the command and the NCOs within it will suffer.

**CSM Lambert:** I understand the purpose of this question, but really don’t have a good example to present.

**CSM Thomas:** I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work with and mentor some very talented officers. However, I also have served with some officers that I had to spend a little extra time mentoring. In most cases, these occurred during deployments. In one instance, my unit was

about to re-deploy when we received an order that our tour would be extended for 356 days, boots on the ground. When I brought the order to the battalion commander and told him he needed to tell the Soldiers, initially he did not want to. I was able to convince him that the Soldiers needed to hear it from him and not through the “rumor mill.” I called a formation for the unit, and he delivered the messages. Afterward, I told him he had done the right thing by the Soldiers and they would appreciate him for being upfront with them. He told me that was the hardest message he ever had to give in his life.

**CSM Wills:** I was blessed to have great officers throughout my active and reserve career in the Army, but some required prompting, coaching and mentoring. When I was a 1SG, I received a newly promoted Captain who had spent the majority of his career in the Regular Army. One evening, he needed some help with memorandums and policy letters. When he reviewed my memos, he commented “1SG, you write well for an NCO!” I spent the remainder of my evening coaching him that many of our USAR Soldiers—although they may be Specialists, Sergeants, etc.—also held master’s and doctoral degrees. He couldn’t fathom the difference in the caliber of educated individuals he was experiencing in the USAR compared to what he had seen in the Regular Army.

Another example occurred on annual training at Fort Pickett, Virginia. One of our Platoon Leaders was quick to take credit for his Soldiers’ accomplishments while he sat back and did nothing. I challenged him to outwork his Soldiers in picking-up Inland Petroleum Distribution System “Pipe.” He stayed and worked as hard as anyone trying to set an example but after a few days decided to resign his commission after Annual Training. This was for the best. If our Officers can’t lead by example in training, they won’t be able to lead in combat.

I also worked for a Colonel who had placed some hard requirements on his command team and had us stand before the 2-star Commander to give our Yearly Training Briefs. I was a stickler for accuracy and never tried to inflate my qualification numbers. When asked why my numbers

looked lower than other battalions in the command, I showed that it was impossible for the other units to achieve the levels presented because there was not enough ammunition available to meet those projections. I was taken to the hallway by the Brigade Commander and scolded. I asked the Colonel if he would allow one of his daughters to mobilize and deploy without receiving the proper training. He stopped to think about it and recognized my point that Soldiers could not be considered “trained” just because they had fired weapons. They needed to be proficient and to qualify on actual pop-up targets. The Colonel walked back into the YTB and strongly supported my argument. Good leaders don’t cut corners when it comes to training Soldiers!

**CSM Copeland:** When I was a Company 1SG, the Commander assigned me to mentor a 1LT as a part of my evaluation. This man was a severe procrastinator. When he would complete the task it would be excellent, but he needed to speed up the process as it would always be late. I would always piss him off by holding him accountable to do things the right way rather than the easy way. He did develop into a good Company Commander later. He left the Army Reserve after his command time.

**CSM Lombardo:** I had a really good line of MP Platoon Leaders and Commanders. When I was a HQ, CO 1SG of a BDE, I saw an Officer experience an emotional breakdown in front of the Soldiers. I had to help the Officer regain emotional control and recover from the experience. I don’t know if that Officer ever had a foundational relationship with a Platoon Sergeant. I believe these formative relationships at the platoon level will determine how Officers view the NCO Corps. It is very important to make that time frame impactful to develop the trust and mutual respect between Officers and NCOs at the foundation.

I also had many times when I required extra mentorship and there were great officers that helped me out. It is a two-way street.

## Becoming CSM

*Did you ever think you would become the senior enlisted Soldier in the Army Reserve and what was the defining moment that led you towards that goal?*

**CSM Reilly:** No. I never thought it would be me, but I never gave up. It became a possibility when I met CSM Boykin at Fort Indiantown Gap and he advised me that he was going to retire. I decided to put in for the job.

**CSM Murray:** It never occurred to me while serving that I would one day be the CSM, Army Reserve, never. I always focused on my Reserve job at hand, never looked back, and always let the chips fall where they may for the future. I never thought I would spend 20 years in the USAR. Before I knew it, I was there, and I had reached the pinnacle as a CSM of the 102<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Army Reserve Command. By then, I considered leaving at what I thought was the top of my Reserve career because of the demands of my civilian career and college-bound children. But as fate would have it, my Reserve career was to get more active than I ever had imagined.

**CSM Younger:** No, I did not think I would become the Senior Enlisted Soldier in the Army Reserve. Early in my military career, all I wanted to become was a First Sergeant. My personal experience with my First Sergeant was horrible, filled with unwarranted punishments, additional duties, accusations of being a wise ass and know it all, and other publicly embarrassing moments. In my opinion, his actions were racially motivated, and I wanted to let Soldiers know there were better First Sergeants in the Army. As I progressed through the system and attained higher ranks, I learned that I could contribute even more to the development of the NCO Corps.

**CSM Rucynski:** Hell no!! I'm having a hard time determining a defining moment. "Defining moments" fits better. I served in four active CSM

positions prior to OCAR and each assignment provided a part of the road map forward. My first CSM position, at the Army Reserve Readiness Training Center, helped me learn teamwork and brought exposure to leaders within the Army Reserve. My assignment as the CSM of Task Force Badger in Panama reminded me where I came from, what it means to have boots on the ground, and gave me insights as to who I was as a soldier. As the Commander/Commandant of the First Army NCO Academy and hit from all sides with contradictory guidance, I learned to set aside competing views and do what was necessary to train Soldiers and mentor the cadre.

The closest I came to a defining moment was when I was the installation Sergeant Major at Fort McCoy. I had missed out on several applications for nominative positions and decided to stay at Fort McCoy until eligible for retirement. The Army Reserve position came up again and I did not feel inclined to apply. Then, a great and trusted mentor, former FORSCOM CSM Oscar Barker, in his old Soldier way, threatened to do me bodily harm if I did not apply. He said I was being selfish and forgetting Soldiers and convinced me to submit my name.

That was an important moment, but the bottom line is that there is no defining moment when doing your job as a soldier. It is all about building on your “moments,” being a strong leader, and remembering that you can accomplish anything as you don’t care who gets the credit.

**CSM Spangler:** No, I had no clue. I really did not even consider it until my wife, a Master Sergeant in the Army Reserve, counseled me to interview for the position. I applied and the rest is history. I have had a slew of outstanding senior leaders in my career. LTG Plewes, the USARC Commander, MG Lane, who selected me to be his CSM at 63<sup>rd</sup>, MG Paulsen, and MG Gregg Bambrow were all great mentors. I learned from each of them and am, to this day, grateful for their mentorship.

**CSM Lackey:** The best job I ever had was as a Drill Sergeant or a Platoon Sergeant in Korea. As I moved up the ranks, I just wanted to take care of Soldiers and their families. That meant making sure they were physically



fit, trained on their individual or crew-served weapons, and mentally tough. When I became a Brigade CSM, I had O-6s who told me I needed to look at becoming the Division CSM. When I became the 100th Division CSM, the position came open at the end of my tenure and my two-star boss MG Bill Barron supported me in the endeavor.

**CSM Jones:** Absolutely not! My intentions were to retire after 20 years. I had been a CSM for six of those years and had reached the position of Division CSM. However, one of my greatest supporters and mentors, CSM Roosevelt Sills, highly encouraged and nominated me for the CSM of USARC position. Unfortunately, I had just lost one of my other great supporters, my grandfather, and was losing another, my uncle. As the oldest granddaughter, I had to put the needs of my family first and withdraw my nomination. When my family was in a better place, my mentor again encouraged my nomination for CSM of the Army Reserve. I knew what my capabilities, skills, experience, and God-given gifts were and I knew I could perform the duties and handle the responsibilities, but the competition was fierce, and I was the most junior of the final selectees.

**CSM Piacentini:** To be honest with you, no I did not. I did not think I had a particularly good chance due to my lack of active-duty time. I thought the other candidates—especially those who served on active duty in Viet Nam—would have the advantage over me.

**CSM Caffie:** No, I never expected to be selected to this assignment. My goal was to be a First Sergeant. This was primarily because of the positive influence of First Sergeant Miller, my last First Sergeant on active duty. He was the backbone of the Army in its truest form.

The defining moment was when I met LTG Jack Stultz and became a member of the Command team, as Battalion Command Sergeant Major.

**CSM Schultz:** Absolutely NOT! I believe in setting high goals, but the USARC CSM was never one of mine. I have always taken my career and life just like going to the range: concentrate on the 15-meter target first. After knocking that down, move on to the 100 meter, etc. Do the best job you can in your current position and do not worry about anything else.

Eventually, everything will take care of itself. Well, it certainly did!

Leon Caffie was my defining moment. He continued to watch my career after I became a CSM and provided great mentorship and oversight from the USARC CSM position and encouraged me to apply for his position. I will always be grateful to him and his valued mentorship. All NCOs need mentors that see something bigger in them and encourage them to continue to stretch their boundaries!

**CSM Lambert:** I remember when I first enlisted in the Army Reserve my goal was to someday become a Sergeant. When I entered the Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) Program, I was pretty sure that I would never exceed the rank of Sergeant First Class.

Probably the defining moment was being assigned to the NCO Academy at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. Perhaps for the first time, I saw myself as a leader. As time went on, more opportunities came available. I had one of the limited opportunities to be a First Sergeant and ultimately a senior Command Sergeant Major.

**CSM Thomas:** As a young Soldier, I never thought about being the CSM of the Army Reserve. My goal was to be the 108<sup>th</sup> CSM. In 2001, I was in a goal-setting class and I wrote down that I would be the CSM of the Army Reserve in the next 10 years. Then I forgot all about it. When I was selected for SGM and eventually received my first appointment to CSM, my thoughts were, if I could be the 335<sup>th</sup>, 377<sup>th</sup> CSM, or CSM of the Army Reserve I would have had a great Army Reserve career. After I was selected CSM of the Army Reserve, I found my book with the goal to become CSM. It actually took twelve years, but it just reinforced the power of writing out your goals.

**CSM Wills:** I never thought I would have been promoted to Sergeant much less to Sergeant Major and to CSM of three different Major Two-Star Commands and interim CSM of the USAR. I believe the defining moment was when LTG Talley took over as Chief and Commander of the Army Reserve. As he worked to develop an Operational Force, he wanted to ensure that every Senior Officer and NCO had served in multiple types

of Operational and Support Command assignments and mobilized/deployed for relevant experience. I had worked for him as the Deputy G3/5/7, when he was a MG with the 84<sup>th</sup> Training Command. When he became CAR he corresponded with me on my operational and support assignments as a Command Sergeant Major and considered my mobilization and deployment experience. I realized that I was under consideration as CSM and was humbled when I was recommended to apply for the Interim position.

**CSM Copeland:** I did not have that goal or expect that to occur. I thought I would retire as a Platoon Sergeant. I loved to be around Soldiers and thought that was the place to be as an NCO. I was excited to make the Two Star level and Major General Mark Palzer, my commander at the time, strongly encouraged me to apply for the USARC CSM position. My philosophy on promotions or increased level of responsibility is that if I thought I could make a difference or have an impact I would go for it.

**CSM Lombardo:** I never believed I had a chance to become the Army Reserve CSM. I was the first person in my family to serve in the American military. I began my career mostly concerned with not being sent home or not being able to meet the standard of a Soldier. Once I overcame this apprehension and received my first assignment, my goal was to become a Sergeant. I took my entire career assignment to assignment. I became eligible while the CSM of the 100<sup>th</sup> Training Division. As the CSM of the 200<sup>th</sup> Military Police Command I submitted my packet. I didn't think I was the best candidate, but LTG Charles Lucky did. I was called while at a multinational senior enlisted conference and was extremely honored. I have always told Soldiers not to look too far forward but to master the fundamentals and responsibilities where they are. Lead in the moment. Enjoy it. Time goes fast.

## Supportive Officers

*Which officer did you work for that fully supported your efforts and backed the NCO corps beyond reproach? How did he or she go about doing this?*

**CSM Reilly:** MG Harley Pickens of the 78<sup>th</sup> Division. He would sit down and ask why you were doing something and made an effort to understand the process for each task. His staff made several huge mistakes, but he did not blow up, he just talked out the issue with each of them.

**CSM Murray:** No question in my mind that MG William F. Ward, Jr., the Chief, Army Reserve, my boss, was 100 percent behind me in my role as his Senior Enlisted Advisor and Command Sergeant Major. My job was to execute the CAR's vision for our Army Reserve through our NCO Corps. When I would discuss with him our NCO Corps initiatives on readiness training, professional development, personnel management (TPU, IMA, IRR and AGR) and quality of life issues, among others, he would be unwavering when it came time for decisions and execution.

A huge early influencer in me getting to that level of leadership was MG Bill C. Branson, the CG of the 102<sup>nd</sup> ARCOM, St. Louis, MO. He was a work-oriented, issue-driven role model who pushed his staff to lead and excel and he took it upon himself to mentor me. As his CSM, I tried hard to emulate his drive and work ethic.

When I returned to active duty in 1984, Colonel Ross Pickus, the First Commander, ARPERCEN gave me the challenge of spreading the word of a new command in the Army Reserve designed to serve Soldiers and upgrade personnel management of the force. His leadership made it easy for me to tell our story worldwide to every major command in the Army. His charge to me provided me a depth and breadth of experience in the Total Army that benefitted me as the Fifth Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief, Army Reserve, and CSM, Army Reserve.

**CSM Younger:** Again, I will have to name Gen Knapp as being the one officer who supported the NCO corps 100 percent. He was also the Superintendent of VMI during this time. Every request that I had for the NCO Corps he supported and approved. He encouraged the enlisted Soldiers to attend training and continue their education to further develop and advance.

**CSM Rucynski:** I was fortunate in a long career to have worked for so many great Officers but there is no one who can compare to MG Max Baratz. Simply said, he was a great Soldier who loved Soldiers and treated all of them with dignity and respect. He led by example on the many trips we made together I was always amazed at his interaction with Soldiers. He was never afraid to shake hands with a Soldier, dirty hands or not, or to walk through a sea of mud to talk to a Soldier. For a Soldier on the ground that defines leadership. We made numerous trips together and he never once tethered me to his side. He always said we learned more by talking with more Soldiers. I can think of no finer Officer I ever worked for. Every Soldier he ever encountered is better off having met him.

**CSM Spangler:** LTG Plewes. LTG Plewes and I conducted many one-on-one sit-down meetings discussing where we were going and what we were doing. LTG Plewes asked my opinion, respected it, and often acted upon it. He understood my role and truly respected it.

**CSM Lackey:** I demonstrated hard work and motivation for every officer I worked for. In return, they supported me 100 percent in the accomplishment of our mission and common goals. In the long run it paid off for them, my Soldiers, and me.

**CSM Piacentini:** LTG Ron Helmly, Commander, United States Army Reserve Command (USARC) made it perfectly clear to me from day one that I was not only the senior Noncommissioned Officer of all USARC Soldiers, Families, and Civilians, I was his right-hand-man and 'Battle Buddy' as well. He never made a final 'enlisted' decision without consulting with me for my opinion, suggestion, or recommendation.

**CSM Caffie:** LTG Jack Stultz, MG Michael Gaw, MG Richard Wightman, and MG David Kratzer. These distinguished General Officers selected me to be their Command Sergeant Major and half of their Command teams. They clearly understood the rules and responsibilities of a strong NCO Corps and guided my focus on building a command climate, practicing the professional Army ethic, enforcing Army standards on appearance and conduct, supervising maintenance of equipment, and instilling discipline and *esprit de corps* with the organization.

**CSM Schultz:** My big three: LTG Jack C. Stultz, MG Rich Wightman, and MG Kate Leahy

LTG Stultz is/was a legend in the USAR and across the Army. Going to work in Washington D.C. was intimidating but he treated me with great respect and listened. I learned so much from him. He was always supportive of all my strategic NCO initiatives, a true sincere Soldier's-Soldier. I was always at the table. Thus, the NCO Corps was too. Our Soldiers and their families were in every conversation as a result.

I had the honor to work for Mr. Wightman after he left the USAR as an SES for the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. He is a true professional who valued the NCO Corps and the CSM Position. I watched and respected how he operated in the Pentagon and at the OSD. He treated everyone with dignity and respect, a true class act and an incredible leader.

MG Kate Leahy is the real deal who cares about Soldiers and their families and respects the NCO Corps and her CSM. I enjoyed watching her stop a meeting to avoid keeping Soldiers waiting for her in formation. Once she took a PT test with an injured arm. She was in a lot of pain, but ended up maxing the event—part of her commitment to doing her best and always leading the way.



*Lieutenant General Jack Stulz and CSM Michael Schultz pose with a Soldier during a reenlistment ceremony at the National Archives, April 21, 2011.*

**CSM Lambert:** I would say that each of my Commanding Generals did this really well, by word or action. They trusted me as a confidant; they knew the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer as well, or better than, many NCOs; they valued my input; and they fully backed my decisions

**CSM Thomas:** I had the opportunity to work for a lot of great officers who backed the NCO Corp by being available, accessible, and approachable and by going out of their way to speak to Soldiers and listen to their issues and concerns. One of my favorite memories of an officer backing the NCO was when I was the Brigade CSM at the 4<sup>th</sup>/75<sup>th</sup> in Birmingham, Alabama. BG Joseph Chesnutt was the commander. During this period, we were drawing down our senior NCO population and it was brought to my attention that some commanders were keeping Soldiers who were not among the best qualified. I spoke with BG Chesnutt and told him that I thought this was not the right thing to do and that commanders were not listening to their CSMs. BG Chesnutt brought together all the commanders and told them that they were going to go



through a list of NCOs, name by name, to ensure we kept the best-qualified Soldiers in the command. He asked the commanders if they understood the task. They said they did. He responded: “Good, CSM Thomas is going to be in charge,” and left the room.

**CSM Wills:** Hands down LTG Jeffrey W. Talley. He gave me full trust to train and lead the NCO/Enlisted Corps. He gave his guidance and essentially told me to “move out” to get the job done! I started conducting Brigade-level Command Sergeant Major training events once a quarter where I would bring the OCAR/USARC staff together to train and give the Brigade-level CSMs access to Operational and Support experience. These events helped the CSM population become effective trainers, mentors, and battle buddies to their Commanders.

The CAR also supported exposing the Senior Command Sergeants Majors to Strategic Levels of Command Experience with quarterly events at Strategic Commands such as STRATCOM, TRANSCOM, and CENTCOM. This gave them a higher view and strategic understanding of how our USAR units played into support on the battlefield and a greater understanding of a Theater of Operations.

**CSM Copeland:** MG Scotty Carpenter, MG Megan Tatu, and MG Mark Palzer all gave me guidance and the authority to get after educating and improving the NCO corps within each of their commands.

**CSM Lombardo:** I have been blessed with excellent officers. I have worked as part of a Command team for twelve General Officers, six Officers at the Brigade level, two at Battalion, and two at Company. All these Officers were professionals beyond reproach. Some supported the NCO Corps more than others. The good ones didn’t confine me to a lane but limited me only to the confines of my ability. They didn’t see me as the leader of only the enlisted side of the force but rather the Senior Enlisted Leader of the entire force.

## Importance of NCO History

*Why do you think telling your history/story is important to the Army Reserve NCO Corps and the public at large?*

**CSM Reilly:** Maybe it will give some aspiring young Soldier the motivation to keep trying and to go as far as possible.

**CSM Murray:** The Army Reserve NCO Corps has proven over and over again throughout its history—especially as part of a viable operating force of the Army today—that its leadership is crucial to the success of the mission and welfare of our Soldiers. The NCO Corps has evolved from an important role in a Strategic Reserve Force to a clearly critical one as an Operational Reserve Force that today serves in a much more complex national defense world. That evolution did not occur in a vacuum, but by pioneering NCOs leading the way during the end of the Cold War into the world in which we live today. In a complex, diversified world replete with high technology and instant awareness of events, today's NCOs must reach higher than ever before and to paraphrase an old Army Brand- "Be all YOU can Be, to ALL you can Be."

**CSM Younger:** We learn from history, as times change, the world change so does the Army/Military. I believe it is important for new Leaders in the Army to understand where we came from, how we have evolved in so many areas, and how the needs of the Soldiers have changed as well. I always believed that if the amount of change outside your organization is greater than the change inside your organization, the end for your organization is near.

I believe the Army provides an opportunity to the Soldiers to become and achieve a level of success that others can only dream of. I joined the Army and got started in the Foxholes of Fort Jackson and advanced and retired from the top floor of the Pentagon at OASD/RA.

**CSM Rucynski:** History is becoming a lost art, schools and colleges fail to emphasize the importance of history. Few people in the Army Reserve could tell you today that the two brothers who are famous for the Mayo Clinic both served in the Army Reserve in WW1, or that the only pension that President Truman retired with was for his Army Reserve pay and that Audie Murphy completed his career as a member of the Army Reserve.

This project will provide insights about the men and woman who, through leadership, reached a pinnacle of success. No doubt many will read it, but I think few will grasp its significance.

I am an avid reader. I only read history books, almost exclusively military history. I would encourage Soldiers to read *Twice the Citizen, A History of the U.S. Army Reserve 1908-1995* by Colonel James T. Currie (USAR) and Colonel Richard B. Crossland (USAR). A note in my book from Colonel Currie: "With appreciation to one who understands the NCO and the enlisted Soldier are the heart and strength of the Army Reserve". Colonel Currie has it right and because we are being swallowed up by a social media world, we must do everything to continue to educate our Soldiers and the public. We are remiss if we do not do our utmost to learn about the great history of our Army Reserve, especially about our dedicated Soldiers. TLC.



*CSM John Rucynski (front, left) with SMA Robert Hall (center), ARNG CSM John Leonard and senior Command Sergeants Major of the Army, SMA Conference 1997*

**CSM Spangler:** Honestly, my personal story is not that important, however; my USARC CSM story does give insight into the role of the Army Reserve, the briefings, and the planning that goes into leading the organization. When I was a younger Soldier, I was in an aviation unit. When I would go back to work, my partner would talk to me about the painting and yard work he did, then ask what I did. I would say, “hang out of a Huey and shoot at a Buick.” These are the important stories that build the Army Reserve.

**CSM Lackey:** I think that the Army does a great job of recognizing the efforts of senior leadership. I was present when the SMA received a new insignia., I was there when they received their flag. And I was there when they received their three-star protocol. This is great for the NCO CORPS as a whole. However, there has been very little change for the CSMs of the Army Reserve. The National Guard Bureau has its own enlisted association and their rank and file know and remember, for the most part, who served in those positions.

When I retired, I stopped receiving the Army Reserve Magazine and all communication until I became an Army Reserve Ambassador. It is sad to say that I receive more information now as an Ambassador than as the retired CSM of the Army Reserve. That’s why I followed up with the CSM of the Army Reserve and USARC roster. So, I could reach out to the new CSMs, add them to our communication, and hopefully get some feedback. It paid off when CSM Mike Schultz and CSM Luther Thomas invited us to participate in some of their events, like I did when I was in that position. Now at least someone can look and see who we were and what we did to make a difference in the Army Reserve!

**CSM Jones:** It is imperative that Army Reserve Soldiers know their history. There is so much information/history stored, shared, and printed for the Active Component NCO, yet extraordinarily little for the USAR NCO. NCOs can see and learn much from the past and find some common ground or identify with one or more of us. Many NCOs form a perspective, based on our public persona, but often do not see or

understand our personal journey. The public does not understand the Army Reserve, the unique challenges we face, and our commitment, determination, and tenacity to be Twice the Citizen. These are just a few reasons it is important to tell our story.

**CSM Piacentini:** I think by telling my story, I give all USAR Soldiers and NCOs--and perhaps even someone in the public at large, a hope and a dream that if they too really want to 'shoot for the moon,' they have a chance to reach it. As long as there is a flicker on the flame of your dream candle, you still have a chance--and a chance is sometimes all you need.

If someone had said to me after I did not get selected as the CSM of the 91<sup>st</sup> Division in 1992: "Don't worry CSM 'P', this temporary setback is actually in your best interest because in May of 2002 you are going to be selected the USARC CSM, Ft. McPherson, GA.," I would have told them, "Uh, I don't think so." When, what I should have said was: Tell me more!" Because in June 2002--that's exactly what happened!"

**CSM Caffie:** I think it's important for those who follow us, to understand the path of leadership within the NCO Corps. We can take the Weekend Warrior out of our Lexicon. Today's Army Reserve is no longer a strategic reserve; instead, it is an operational force and an integral part of the world's greatest Army. Tens of thousands of Soldiers have contributed to our success with commitment and devotion, and I thank them and their families for their support and sacrifices.

**CSM Schultz:** Telling my story NO. Telling OUR story YES. My story is/was built upon the backs of legends with names like Stultz, Wightman, Leahy, Caffie, and the tons of other leaders and Soldiers that I crossed paths with over my career. They made me be a better person and helped me earn the opportunity to help OUR Army Reserve. They showed me what right looked like!

**CSM Lambert:** Few of us start out in the military thinking we will be the top Noncommissioned Officer in the Army Reserve. I'm proof that a simple guy with no glorious beginnings can do well and rise to the top. Don't limit yourself based on how things are at a point in time. Policies,

regulations, and philosophies all change. Be open to change and do the best you can in every duty assignment you have.

**CSM Thomas:** Telling my story shows Soldiers and NCOs, that if I can become CSM of the Army Reserve, they can too. I was never the fastest, strongest, or smartest, but I was among those who worked the hardest.

**CSM Wills:** When it comes to getting the job done, it really comes down to the NCO Corps accomplishing training and readiness. The Army, regardless of component, wouldn't exist today without the structure and efforts of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps. The NCO Corps is rich, with historical lessons on how to be an effective leader—which is what our military is all about. Understanding and knowing the importance of investing in our NCOs and enlisted members is the difference in winning or losing in combat. There is no disputing the importance of understanding this extremely important line of leadership.

I also want to provide awareness that, from time to time, you may be called to as a stand-in and not necessarily to be the one appointed or confirmed to a tenured job. There is no shame in this. You must stand tall and do your level best in the job you were called to perform. Never let status get in the way of making a difference in leading, mentoring, and supporting Soldiers and their families.

**CSM Copeland:** We stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. If we don't know the history of those before us, how can we learn from the mistakes of the past or to learn from the successes to build upon? This is the NCO Corps. If we don't document it, who will? We should not be a footnote in the Army History.

**CSM Lombardo:** This is really the story of the NCO Corps and its responsibility for maintaining the standards, discipline, and traditions of the military. As for my personal story, it shows that all leadership positions are attainable. Even a first-generation American from humble beginnings, like myself, can rise to this position. I hope this inspires Soldiers from all walks of life to set their own goals and achieve them through hard work.

## Areas of Improvement

**Looking back, what is the one thing you wished you could have done better for your Soldiers?**

**CSM Murray:** As the saying goes, “so much to do and so little time” played out well for me too. In the Reserve, changes come hard and take long to affect. Don’t overload the changes you want to make. Pick two or three that will deliver the absolute most benefit to the mission and Soldiers, and to their Families, and spend your limited time in your role to get the job done.

**CSM Younger:** One thing I wish I had done more for the Soldiers was to make them more aware of the medical benefits available to them throughout their time in the Army. If you are sick, go to sick call and keep records of all your visits to the hospital. One day after you retired, you may need those records.

**CSM Rucynski:** I look at this a little differently, I did not do as much for Soldiers as they did for me. They were the key to my success. If anything, I wish I had learned this earlier in my career.

To answer the question, I wish I could have done a better job of instilling Army values in Soldiers. All too often they tweaked a value rather than adhere to it in the fullest. I used to tell Soldiers that if you see a violation, uniform or disciplinary, and let it slide, you have made that your standard. There is but one standard and that is the Army standard.

I also wish there had been more time in the day to mentor soldiers. Though many snuffed off the NCOER, I found it one of the best tools to counsel the Soldiers on how they performed. As the Commandant of the First Army NCO Academy, I did two relief-for-cause NCO-ERs based on performance (or lack of performance). I never regretted either of them.

**CSM Spangler:** I can honestly say, looking back, I have no regrets. It was the opportunity of a lifetime. It was incredible to do site visits and



get to sit down and meet the Soldiers, hear their stories, and talk about their journey in the Army Reserve.

**CSM Lackey:** I worked hard every day in every leadership position I ever held. I demanded a lot from myself and a lot from my Soldiers, NCOs, and even officers when it came to individual training (that I was responsible for in the unit). I have never second-guessed my decisions and, for the most part, I am happy with the results and outcome.

**CSM Jones:** Walking into the position, there are so many things you want to do. However, with critical missions, limited time, lack of resources, circumstances, and obstacles you cannot fix or implement everything that you desire. The one thing I truly wished I could have done better was to get resources for TPU members who were not mobilized or deployed.

**CSM Piacentini:** As I look back, I wish I could have done better for my Junior Soldiers—especially those at E3, E4, E5, and E6—having them realize the value of patience. There is so much to be gained by having the patience to become truly proficient in one’s occupational specialty. Yet it is so difficult to get a consensus on this issue. There are a couple of old sayings that go like this: “Patience is a virtue.” and “Be careful what you wish for-- you might actually get it!”

**CSM Caffie:** I wish I could have met with more Congressional Leaders and expressed to them that the men and women of the Army Reserve are valued members of the best-trained, best-led, and best-equipped fighting force our nation has ever fielded. Even more importantly, would like to have our leaders understand the depth of the professional and personal sacrifices that our Soldiers, their families, and their employers have made.

**CSM Schultz:** I wish I could have done more for the USAR population of Wounded Warriors and for our Gold Star families. I would try to reach out to the family of every Soldier killed while serving in the Army Reserve and offer my condolences and support. But it just cannot stop there. There is always more I could have done!

**CSM Lambert:** Experience is a great teacher. I can say, there were many times that I did what I thought was right based on the information I had available. After seeing the bigger picture and gaining new experiences, it is common to reflect and say I wish I would have handled a given situation differently. I wish could have done better to assist Soldiers in seeing and understanding things from a bigger picture.

**CSM Thomas:** As I look back throughout my career, the one thing I wish I could have done better is help deserving Soldiers receive recognition for their contributions and earn promotions. Too many Soldiers, leave the Army Reserve because their contributions are not recognized, and they are not promoted when eligible and ready.

**CSM Wills:** The one most important element of any position I held was the need to communicate effectively. I wished that I could have streamlined methods and efforts of communication from the spear to the rock to help Soldiers educate themselves, understand fundamentals of the Army, and recognize just how important they and their families are to the defense of our great nation.

**CSM Copeland:** Whenever I was mobilized, I would always ask myself if I had trained or provided the most training opportunities for my Soldiers so they could succeed in a combat environment. It's too late to learn when you are on the ground.

**CSM Lombardo:** One of the challenges of the Army Reserve is that there is limited time to accomplish all that needs to be done. I would have liked more time to get to know my Soldiers, mentor them, and develop them for their future careers. If I were to be a squad leader again, I would give more in-depth counseling and really focus on family life and finances. I would also advise Soldiers that there really is no balance in the Army Reserve life. It is all about integrating military service into your already demanding civilian career and family life. I also could have been stricter in preparing Soldiers for combat. It took the 1990 Gulf War to really open my eyes to how important it is to ensure that Soldiers are lethal and well trained. It was a life lesson.

## Youthful Indiscretions

*Most of us, as junior enlisted Soldiers, got into trouble for something as simple as forgetting to shave before PT to more severe infractions. What can you share from your experiences that you can pass on to help Soldiers today avoid youthful indiscretions or lapses in sound judgment?*

**CSM Murray:** Staying fit, physically and mentally, is critical in life and even more so in the military. I was never a fitness buff or fanatic and did what I had to do to continue to serve. Occasionally I would lapse and slack off the fitness scale (too many Dining-Ins, Outs, and road trips as a CSM). My rude awakening came one sluggish period when the CG, ARPERCEN BG Tom Kilmartin referred to me in a staff meeting as the “Pillsbury Doughboy” CSM! Wow, that hit home like never before!! So, the Retention NCO started me back onto the fitness trail, and shortly thereafter I was reenlisted by the General. I eventually moved on to become the SEA, OSD (RA) having learned my lesson that slacking off only hurts me. I did many more Army Ten Milers and Run the River Bridges events after that.

**CSM Younger:** One Sunday afternoon when I was a PFC in Ft Sill, OK someone spread the word that they were looking for a detail to do some work in the motor pool. When I heard that, I sneaked away and went downtown to the movies, because no one had told me officially that they were looking for such detail. I was able to see two movies and upon my return to the unit found no one around. The First Sergeant came and asked, “Where do you think everyone is”? I responded with, “I don’t know First Sergeant. I was told we had the afternoon off”. “How do you think everyone got the word but you”? He asked. My response was, “I don’t know First Sergeant”. There were four of us that did not take part in the detail and each one of us received a different punishment. I had 14 days of extra duty. So, this experience taught me, for the rest of my

military career, to look around my area and be aware of Soldiers coming and going and be inquisitive about what's going on so I wouldn't get left out and miss something important.

**CSM Rucynski:** I received an article 15 while in the Marine Corps and all it would have required to avoid it was a phone call. I was late coming back from pass and had I called my unit it would have been overlooked. Call it a lapse in sound judgement. I used that as an example over the years to tell people that in many cases the phone can be your best friend, make sure you have emergency phone numbers with you.

Leadership needs to understand that not every indiscretion is grounds for disciplinary action. In many cases, it is the time to mentor and build on Army Values. I once wrote a letter for a young soldier who had applied for OCS and was turned down because of a previous minor scrape. My letter hit on his great attributes as a soldier, not the infraction. Today he is a LTC in the Minnesota Guard with a couple combat tours under his belt.

**CSM Spangler:** When you are a leader, you often look to your top Soldiers to complete tasks, the path of least resistance. Leaders need to know their Soldiers and what they are capable of. I always looked to the one who was the squeaky wheel. This developed them and showed them what they were capable of.

**CSM Lackey:** I remember when I was a Brigade CSM, escorting some dignitaries to a range. We had just enough LBE and Kevlar helmets, but one of them had a cover with two stars on it. Instead of taping over it or covering it up, I allowed the senior person to wear it. The division commander just happened to come out to the exercise and asked the individual about his general officer assignment. Needless to say, I was embarrassed. I took the easy way out instead of correcting the issue. It should not have taken a general officer for me to do the right thing!

**CSM Jones:** Fortunately, I did not get into trouble as a junior enlisted Soldier. I enlisted as a Legal Specialist and knew that if I stepped out of line I could be reclassified. I valued my MOS and loved the career field I

was in at the time and did not want to take any risks in losing it.

However, an area I needed to work on was my negative reactions and displays of displeasure toward others. I have always been outspoken—even as a child. I learned from a wonderful mentor, COL James V. Kennedy (deceased), a Vietnam Veteran and Special Forces Officer, that a female cannot forcibly show any external display of negativity. A male can yell, kick trash cans and cuss up a storm, and his outward display will be forgotten. A female who does the same will be labeled as hysterical or emotional. Learn to keep the external negativity hidden, never raise your voice, and be clear, concise, and controlled in your external display. Another pearl of wisdom.

**CSM Piacentini:** I always felt an error in youthful indiscretion could be settled with a simple, nonpunitive counseling session. However, a lapse in sound judgment was a different situation because the Soldier's choice of free will resulted in the "wrong choice" which could indeed be profoundly serious. I was fortunate in my career, especially at the Junior Soldier level of getting a break from my First Sergeant. I feel the only reason I got a break was because I was an overall, good Soldier. I also immediately owned up to the mistake; asked for and showed genuine remorse. Most of all, I promised never to let it happen again.

**CSM Caffie:** I never got into any type of trouble, I lost focus doing basic training and got lost doing procession and received the rant of my Drill Sergeant. He forced me to drop and kick out fifty pushups in the rain. I never lost focus again.

**CSM Schultz:** I had many when I was a young Soldier that could take up pages and pages. My suggestion to our Soldiers and leaders today is that you must take ownership of those hiccups along your journey and have the personal courage to stand up and admit when we are wrong.

Our leaders must also understand that we/our Soldiers are not perfect. Leaders must correct, mentor, and coach their Soldiers on what right looks like, but never make it personal. Luckily for me, my NCOs showed me what right looked like. They made the investment in me!

**CSM Lambert:** Probably my biggest problem, as a young NCO, was displaying non-verbal communication. I had a problem with “rolling my eyes” when frustrated by someone. I was confident in my knowledge and abilities, and it frustrated me when seniors would disregard what I had to say, just because I was lower ranking. I was fortunate to have a First Sergeant recognize what was happening. He cared enough to let me know that my actions were inappropriate and taught me how to stay calm, remove myself from the situation, and find the appropriate time to let one of my leaders know what was going on.

**CSM Thomas:** Associate yourself with good people in and out of the Army. Do not frequent places where you may get into trouble. For sure, do not drink and drive. And stay away from drugs and those that use them.

**CSM Wills:** When I was a young Soldier, priorities standards, morals, and some aspects of ethics were much different than in today’s Army. I think it is important to live by the advice of General Martin Dempsey, retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and always understand the difference between ethical right and moral right. Sometimes the ethical right doesn’t align with the moral right. But if you can look yourself in the mirror or tell your mother and father that you are doing something, then you will stand tall when it comes to being judged on your character.

**CSM Copeland:** My dad was pretty hardcore and screwing up was not an option. I was always in the right place at the right time. My advice is to pay attention to instructions and orders. Take pride and demonstrate self-discipline. Show up at the right place at the right time in the right uniform ready for the task assigned.

**CSM Lombardo:** Nothing. I was an absolute angel. Really though, nothing I ever did rose to the level of non-judicial punishment. That is probably because I had good NCOs who gave me the stick and rudder when I needed it. Listen to your NCOs.

## Advice on Weight and PT

*For the Soldier that struggles with height/weight or PT, what advice would you give them to keep them in the ranks?*

**CSM Reilly:** Do not give up and if you need help, ask.

**CSM Murray:** Find a Battle Buddy, no matter where you are assigned, and develop a mutual training regimen that will maintain your fitness and train together. Each will inspire the other, leading to greater levels of fitness and well-being.

**CSM Younger:** Join and attend a PT class conducted by CSM Younger. One example, when I arrived at a unit in Baltimore, only a few Soldiers would attend PT. Therefore, there was a height/weight issue in the Battalion. I was able to find and recruit a Soldier, in the Battalion, who had a Disc Jockey business in his civilian life. We began having additional PT sessions and soon most of the Battalion was participating. A little creativity and encouragement kept Soldiers active. In a few months, we could see a vast improvement in the height/weight category.

**CSM Rucynski:** I recall another FORSCOM CSM who was in outstanding physical condition. At AFPT time he would go up and down the line and say, “give me two minutes, just two minutes and pass or fail and I will get you the help you need.” He meant it and lived by it and would get other Soldiers to help those that lagged. I never forgot that and always encouraged Soldiers to give me two minutes. Leadership must recognize the shortfalls and provide guidance for the Soldier. And Soldiers must recognize their own shortfalls and work to improve. Self-discipline and determination.

While working for the FORSCOM Engineer, BG John Sobke made it my mission to help a Major who had failed the PT test earn a passing score. In a purely diplomatic way, I ran him ragged. He passed but did



not speak to me for a few weeks. Self-discipline and determination—and the SGM running next to you.

**CSM Spangler:** The trick is to find your individual motivations. You also must follow the doctor’s advice. If you are injured, allow yourself to heal. Above all, find your individual motivation and never give up.

**CSM Lackey:** I have never struggled with height, weight, sit-ups, push-ups, or the two-mile run. I knew the standards and knew that, if I wanted to be successful and get promoted, I had to be physically fit. Today I still exercise, can pass the APFT for my age group, and monitor my calories with my fitness pal app. I also watch my sodium, carbs, sugar, and alcohol. I try my best to stay healthy and physically fit. Because of that, today I feel great and can still do about anything I want to do. So, the short answer is: Choose to be healthy and don’t just maintain! Exceed the Army’s Standards!

**CSM Jones:** Meeting height/weight and PT standards is a job requirement of being a Soldier and one of the major differences from a civilian career. I ask: “Why are you constantly struggling? Is it a medical condition or dietary habits? Do you think it isn’t relevant because you can “do your job?” Or is it a lack of motivation/commitment?” I also state: “If you only want to do a job become a civilian.”

I would often say: It is not just you when you are not fit, the ramifications can be deadly. What if you are deployed and your vehicle is hit, overturns and you are under fire? If you are not fit, how will you get out of the small area of escape? How could you lift and carry an injured battle buddy? How could you carry your equipment and evade capture for an extended period? And if you are a mechanic overweight, not flexible, and not physically on point, how can you expect to get under a vehicle or endure intense weather conditions? The cost of you not maintaining the requirements might be the death of you, a battle buddy, or a vehicle full of Soldiers. That is a price that is too high to pay.

**CSM Piacentini:** My advice used to be that in addition to learning a myriad of Army rules and regulations, everyone who wears an Army uniform must understand there are a couple of regulations regarding meeting height and weight standards and passing the physical fitness test. These have actually been very well thought out and really do make common sense. I always tried to explain that any time we, the members of the United States Army, put on one of our uniforms, we are subject to scrutiny from our fellow Soldiers and from the public at large.

I felt that, if my appearance looked fit and the uniform fit so professionally that it looked tailored, others scrutinizing me and my uniform would know that I exceeded the appearance standard. If I could pass that type of scrutiny, I knew I could meet the height and weight standards and pass my physical fitness test.

**CSM Caffie:** I have always informed my Soldiers that becoming a member of this honored organization requires the ability to perform physically demanding tasks. Soldiers must not only have sound minds but strong bodies as well. Physical training must be the foundation for success of all professional Soldiers. When desired results cannot be achieved, they should seek assistance from medical professionals.

**CSM Schultz:** I lean very hard on this. Being in the Army is a great privilege and an honor. You have to want it! Being a leader of sons and daughters that are entrusted to us comes with a very high price tag. Our Soldiers deserve the very best leadership; my advice is simply this: PT is an ACTION, it involves doing something. You just have to get out and do it! Lead from the front!

**CSM Lambert:** Decide if you really want to be a Soldier. If you do, then think of what motivates you and commit to making a change. Understand that you didn't get significantly overweight or out of shape overnight. It took time to get out of compliance and it takes time to get back into compliance. Don't give up. Ask for help. Some of the most fit people I know struggled with fitness at some point. They decided they wanted a change and they did it

**CSM Thomas:** Get on a good and steady exercise program. You must be consistent with your exercise program, and you must maintain a good diet. If you need to, seek help. Get a trainer and go see a dietician. Workout with others. Join an exercise group like a running group or a biking group. Working out with others can be more fun. You can inspire and they inspire you in return.

**CSM Wills:** First of all, as a leader be an example. I once flew to Seattle to do a 5K with an overweight Soldier. I knew he was struggling and wanted him to know that I was not going to give up on him. I told him that if he dropped 10-pounds, I would be back the following month to do the 5K with him. He dropped the weight and I showed up. It was inspiring the degree that this Soldier dropped weight and longer had to be taped.

My advice was always to not make it about meeting Army standards but to make it a way of life in being a better you. If you tell people what they have to do, most of the time they will never do it. When you help them see the importance of being healthy for themselves and their families, they are more apt to commit to making the difference and getting into and staying in shape.

**CSM Copeland:** When I interviewed new Soldiers, I could see whether they were motivated or not. I asked them if they had grandparents who worked in their yards and traveled. Then I asked who had grandparents who did nothing and had health problems? As a young individual with bad eating and exercise habits, you won't feel it so much, but once you grow old this will impact you so much more. What kind of grandparent do you want to be: the type that sits around all day watching TV or the kind that is active and alive? I could see this register in their faces.

**CSM Lombardo:** Get on a good and steady exercise program. You must be consistent with your exercise program and maintain a good diet. If you need to, seek help. Get a trainer and go see a dietician. Workout with others. Join an exercise group like a running group or a biking group. Working out with others can be more fun. You can inspire and they inspire you in return. Establish "atomic habit," small but compounding.

## NCO Corps Changes

*How do you think the NCO Corps has changed over time, and do you believe those changes made us stronger, or did they weaken the corps?*

**CSM Reilly:** When I first went into the Army Reserve, most of the senior NCOs were World War II veterans. My platoon sergeant, at my basic training, was a member of the fifth Ranger battalion and saw extensive action during World War II. When I was recruited, he was an SFC. We only went up the E7 level then. He remained in the Army; served in Vietnam, was given a field commission, and came out as a major. Opportunities for advancement within the NCO corps have improved since then and the quality of the NCO has increased greatly.

Those leadership opportunities make the Corps stronger, but only if NCOs remember that they do not become some sort of God when they become a CSM. It takes a lot. And to be a good NCO you must listen to your Soldiers, get out with them, and talk to them. I don't mean socializing and stuff like that, but keep adhesion with them and set up programs for them.

**CSM Murray:** I read a lot about our military in numerous journals and magazines and what I read is good. The SMAs are always putting out great leadership advice and leading by example. So too are the CSMs within the Army Reserve of today, at all levels of command.

Today's Army Reserve NCOs are products of personnel changes we made in the 1980s. We established "Best Qualified" principles versus those of yesteryear that were based on "fully qualified" and "good old boy" concepts. During my tenure as a CSM on active duty, we opened promotion opportunities on a geographical basis rather than the center-wide basis as used for years previously.

I am forever proud to have been a driving force behind those policy changes during my tenure. With a great deal of help and support, we

created NCO career progression and tackled management of CSMs. Our CSMs at that time then took those personnel promotion policy changes and made them happen, forever changing the Army Reserve NCO Corps.

We also forged a new temporary policy to manage Command Sergeants Major in the Army Reserve. Stagnation at the top was stifling progression and had become so serious that a new CSM Management Program policy that included nominative positions, was put into effect in 1987. It has had a tremendous effect on the force.

Then I turned to the AGR program as there were only two CSM positions to which AGR SNCOs could aspire, and those usually were filled from the TPU CSM cadre. We set up CSM positions on installations turned over to the Army Reserve via BRAC and added retention schools with a CSM position. These created good career progression opportunities for which the AGR could compete with their brethren from the TPU.

From my Army Reserve CSM vantage point, I was continually on the lookout for SNCO citizen-Soldiers who demonstrated leadership and selfless service qualities and might wish to return to active duty. I encouraged them to apply and commit to making a difference.

My mantra at the time was “We cannot mirror the Regular Army, but we can parallel it when promoting and assigning Soldiers into and up the ranks of the NCO Corps.”

Refinements of the promotion and personnel management policies and CSM Management Program continue to this day and there can be no doubt that today’s Army Reserve NCO is truly the “Best Qualified”!

**CSM Younger:** One major change I have seen in the NCO Corps has been in the education system. Promotions are now tied to education. This encourages Soldiers to obtain educational certification and worldly awareness, giving them a level of knowledge, development, and preparedness that we did not experience in past generations. This is a positive change that I believe has made the NCO Corps and the Army stronger.

**CSM Rucynski:** The NCO Corps has a long history. When the Soldiers lacked discipline during the Revolutionary War, Baron Von Steuben drilled them like a rock-solid Drill Instructor and drew on his expertise to write the Blue Book. That manual became the foundation for the NCO Corps, which became the backbone of the Army. The role of the NCO was limited during the Civil War, but specific MOSs emerged. In ensuing years, on the bloody battlefields of Europe and the Pacific there emerged a solid NCO Corps.

That Corps has always been cut to a small core of lifers between wars and reaches its pinnacle during armed conflict, but only after the first troops are bloodied. Each major conflict has had problems of NCO Leadership at the start. Korea started out as a disaster, and it was fortunate that this hardcore cadre of World War II vets was recalled to active duty to salvage many a battle. We can blame budget cuts, manpower cutbacks or lack of training, but the bottom line here is that between conflicts we have been faced with a total breakdown of the NCOs.

But you can hold the Corps together and build on its foundations as long as you find that few that want to live by Army Standards and T.L.C. (Training, Leadership, and Caring). In my career, 1SG Walt Brown filled that role. During my transition to the Army Reserve, I was placed in a unit filled with long hair and hair nets, college kids, hippies, and those avoiding the draft. It had them all. But we had a foundation. 1SG Brown, a Korean War Veteran, believed in training to standard, leading from the front, and caring for the Soldiers and their families. He helped build a firm base of NCOs. It took time, but it did happen—through hard work and hard training. Let people do their job, guide them, nurture them, lead them and they will amaze you.

The only thing that will weaken the NCO Corps is poor leadership and failure to adhere to the Army Standards. I was on the Senior Enlisted Board of Directors, chaired by SMA Robert Hall, that wrote the Army Values. Those standards and the Creed of the NCO, both contain some good advice to live and train by.

**CSM Spangler:** I believe the changes have made us stronger. Evaluating how NCOs develop, train, and cultivate subordinates is vastly different from when I joined in 1961. In 1961, you were on your own. Now, there are multiple systems in place to assist NCO development and mentorship programs to provide individualized insights. There were times in the 1960s when there was not enough money for ammunition, and we were drilling with broomsticks.

**CSM Lackey:** I can visualize the NCOs when I came in the Army. Most of them were Vietnam veterans or knew they were probably going. I saw the NCOs in the Army Reserve when I got off active duty and how they knew their jobs but were not concerned about being mobilized. I observed the Army Reserve NCOs during Desert Shield Desert Storm and I think that mobilization turned heads and helped the good NCOs understand what it is all about and help prepare them for 9/11. I worked at every level with NCOs after 9/11 and watched them evolve into lean, tough, and physically fit NCOs. I think these changes have kept us strong. Our NCO Corps has always remained strong with professionals, determined to improve us as our Army, Nation, and mission change.

**CSM Jones:** Yes, the NCO Corps has changed over time, and it should. Change is a good thing. In post-cold war era, the NCO Corps is a better and stronger corps - technically savvy, highly educated, and battle-tested. Many in the NCO Corps have excelled and are stronger and better.

However, there are examples of weakness in the corps. So much emphasis is placed on education and schools that some of the core characteristics of an NCO have been neglected. Also, the playing field is not equitable. Advancement depends on your unit, your mission, whether one deployed or not, and the command leadership. All NCOs do not have the same opportunities to grow professionally.

The value of putting Soldiers first is too often forgotten. Developing a succession for positions does not always happen. It is all too common that today's NCOs don't know the history of the Corps; aren't well versed in the customs, traditions, and protocol. Many NCOs don't lead from the



front or hide behind an officer and fail to speak up for the enlisted Soldier. They don't push their Soldiers because it takes too much work or time, and they don't care enough to call someone to task when they are not performing. Finally, members of today's NCO Corps are too willing to let rank define them rather than actions.

**CSM Piacentini:** I believe the NCO Corps has gotten stronger over the years. Each generation of NCOs has gotten physically bigger, stronger, faster, and smarter than the previous generation before them. I've always felt our NCO Corps was similar to a team of professional athletes. And I always felt the key, senior NCO Leader whose charge it was to mold & shape the NCO Corps into becoming the best version of themselves was: The First Sergeant (1SG). The 1SG is the key leader in developing his/her cadre and showing them what right looks like. And each 1SG always sets the example just like a Head Coach of a professional team. The cadre members of the 1SG's team want to wear "NCO pride" as if they are the Army's Super Bowl Champion NCOs; World Series Champion NCOs; or National Basketball Association Finals Champion NCOs--for all to notice—in an almost arrogant or smug pride—always.

**CSM Caffie:** "Today's NCO safeguards, standards, and traditions trains subordinates and is both technically and tactically the backbone of the Army", a statement that was made by Sergeant Major of the Army Jack Tilley In 2002. His words are true today in 2019. Our NCOs are better educated and possess the intellect to adapt to our changing threat assessments from around the world. We are stronger today because of lessons learned from eighteen years of being in combat. Our NCO education system is the best in the world and has evolved over the years with great proficiency.

**CSM Schultz:** I believe there have been many improvements and some setbacks. From the 80s, where I learned my craft of being an NCO in the field and sergeant's time training when we had no resources. I believe some of our setbacks have come about because our formations have everything done for them. The Soldier falls in on equipment/barracks etc.

and everything is already in place for them. “We” is the learning? This set us back! Overall, though, I am especially proud to see where the Army Reserve has come. We have made huge strides!

**CSM Lambert:** I remember my very first, First Sergeant and Battalion Command Sergeant Major. They were high school graduates, smoked all the time, drank excessively, and yelled and cussed a lot. Generally speaking, I think today’s NCO Corps is better educated, more fit, and more compassionate.

**CSM Thomas:** There is no doubt that the NCO Corp has changed, because society has changed. While I believe, today’s NCOs are smarter than when I was a young Soldier, I do not believe they are as “tactically and technically” proficient as when I was a young NCO. I do believe we need to return to the basics of “Shoot, Move, and Communicate” We need to get back to basic Soldiering and having Soldiers do the things they would do in a combat environment.

**CSM Wills:** I think the NCO Corps has “roller-coastered” over the years. You can look through history and see peaks and valleys of when the NCO Corps has been at its best or most influential state.

Technology has had influence on the NCO Corps, with the most dramatic changes occurring since the mid-1990s. As a result, the methods of and expectations for education of the NCO Corps have changed drastically. I think that, until the early 2000s, enlisted and NCO education remained the same despite the changing names of courses. Once TRADOC, under the advice of the SMA and the TRADOC Commanders, started pushing for accreditation of courses, recognition of college credits for leadership courses, etc. the NCO Corps started gaining ground in comparison to what it was in the late 70s, 80s, and 90s.

Our NCO Corps today is the most educated in the history of the US Army. It is empowered by the educational opportunities and the knowledge gained from exposure to schools, academies, and online training. It’s

critical that Senior NCOs remain committed to higher education and strategic experience. Failure to do so will weaken the backbone of the Army and result in an ineffective enlisted corps.

**CSM Copeland:** Vietnam-era NCOs had no authority and were not very good leaders. The institution of the NCO professional military education created an NCO corps with discipline and increased authority in the mid to late eighties. The NCO corps has lost some of this following 9/11 due to continuous mobilizations and high operational tempo. Automatic promotions for the sake of filling vacancies have created leaders that don't know how to do the job required of them. Technology and ever-increasing demands have worsened this situation. It has also decreased the face-to-face interaction, replacing it with a text or email.

**CSM Lombardo:** This is a complicated question. I believe the NCO Corps has changed along with military science and education. This has benefitted the professionalism of our NCOs, but also has consequences. Twenty years of counter-terrorism operations have made us a stronger, more skilled force, but we have lost some of our ability to develop relationships in garrison. While we have become a more educated corps, we have also lost some of our tactical edge. Although our technology has improved and our proficiency in its use has increased, we have sacrificed face-to-face interactions and reduced our ability to confront adversity among our leaders, peers, and Soldiers. Overall, we have made great strides, but we also have much left to accomplish.





## AFTERWORD

*CSM Lawrence M. Leising:*

I have been asked how this project started and picked up momentum throughout the years. I had the pleasure of attending United States Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA) class #62 Team #1 Base Group #206 in 2011. As I was listening to Command Sergeant Major Wendell J. Franklin, CSM (R) Charles E. Kottmyer, and CSM (R) Warren A. Close discuss the past Sergeants Major of the Army and looking through CMH PUB 70-63-1 “The Sergeants Major of the Army” I was amazed how the publication worked as a recruiting tool, served as motivation to excel, and offered talking points about the history of the SMA position.

I Googled “United States Army Reserve Command Sergeant Major,” looking for the history of the position or a list of those who held it. It turned up limited information. I searched again later that night and still found very few details. So, I started a list of names and dates and began to fill in details. I learned that CSM Schultz who had just visited the Academy was the 11<sup>th</sup> Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve (OCAR) CSM. Before him, CSM (R) Leon Caffie had been the tenth and CSM Michele S. Jones the ninth CSM. I could not find anything else. I checked the USASMA library. Still nothing. Time passed and I only managed to add a couple more names to my list.

Fast forward seven years to 18 March 2018, Fort Leavenworth Kansas, and Coach Nick Piacentini’s Pre-Command Course mentoring session.

*CSM Piacentini*

I glanced at my student roster and saw Lawrence M. Leising as my next CSM to coach. We zipped through the first part of our coaching session, and I immediately went to our final requirement. I asked him: “Do you know what you want to do for your “professional” action plan?

He hesitated, then asked me, “Can I do something a little different?” I asked him, “Like what?” He said, “CSM, in our seminar this morning we talked about the legacy that we, as CSMs, will leave. Even though we discussed leaving our own individual CSM legacy--what I’d like to do is document the legacies of all of the living Senior CSMs of the United States Army Reserve (USAR)—of which you are one.”

He described a book with biographies of each Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve and their answers to a set of questions that are relevant to USAR Soldiers still serving today. He continued: “Currently, there is ‘nothing’ available for us to read about those senior CSMs of the USAR who came before us. We have no idea who you are, what you look like, or your military and personal backgrounds. I want to capture that information and make it available to our Soldiers. The balance of military career and your civilian career is a struggle for every Citizen Soldier, so anything we can learn is a plus.”

I was in awe—stunned. I’m pushing for a professional action plan--and he hits me with one of the all-time great ideas I’ve ever seen or heard!

I said, “Mike, This has a chance of being one of all-time greatest Action Plans, not only of the True Growth Command Sergeant Major Course but in the history of the United States Army Reserve! And that is how CSM Lawrence Michael Leising took it upon himself to put together a book about the Senior CSMs of the Army Reserve.



*CSM (Ret.) Nick Piacentini Jr (left) and CSM 'Mike' Leising after their PCC coaching session, Eisenhower Hall, Fort Leavenworth, March 18, 2018*

### *CSM Leising*

After PCC, CSM Piacentini sent me contact information for CSM Alex R. Lackey and the rest is truly NCO history. CSM Lackey had a complete list of all 13 CSMs to that date—to include phone numbers, tenure dates, and email addresses. I started reaching out and got in over my head as I compiled submitted material into a single document.

In late 2018, after talking with my BDE CSM Jason E. Goodman and ESC CSM Robert L. Gessler at a leadership conference at the 79<sup>th</sup> TSC in Los Alamitos, CA, I gave a brief summary of the project and asked for help. CSM Gessler talked with CSM John K. Zimmerman, and next thing I know I got an email from the OCAR CSM Copeland. After several great email exchanges and phone calls with CSM Copeland and his staff, we met at Cold Steel in 2019 and the project gained steam. Then, in 2021, as a compilation of information for each CSM came to completion, CSM Lombardo provided the assistance, energy, and funding to create this publication as the final product.







## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following for assistance along the way.

- CSM (R) Nick Piacentini Jr who jump-started an idea that lay dormant in a green notebook.
- CSM (R) Leon Caffie who gave me more free advice on leadership and motivated me to be better each time we talked.
- CSM (R) Michael Schultz who was always first to send me information I needed for the project
- CSM (R) Collin Younger who was the ultimate professional and with so much knowledge to give
- CSM Alex R. Lackey who helped gather information, acted as my liaison with the CSMs to include putting me on the retired USARC CSM email birthday list (how cool is that?)
- CSM Robert B. Potts, CSM John K. Zimmerman, CSM Robert L. Gessler, CSM Samuel E. Carr, and CSM Jason E. Goodman
- CSM (R) Sheldon R. Baker who interviewed CSM Leon Caffie
- CSM (R) Christopher M. Mulch who interviewed CSM Frank Spangler
- CSM Suzanne B. Polk who interviewed CSM Younger and assisted with the project while I was deployed
- CSM (R) Thomas W. O'Grady who filled in the gaps on CSM Cornelius Boykin and CSM William Foley, which assisted me in finding members of the family Liz Foley and Paloma Boykin

- CSM Jason B. Johnson, 1SG (R) Melvin Tipton, MSG Dave S. Thompson, MSG George Picard III, MSG Luke R. Klein, and MSG Christopher J. Carroll
- SSG Lisa L. Sulenes who provided thorough proofreading and copyediting of the final manuscript draft.
- Dr. Douglas A. Murphy who took a vision and, with little guidance, made it a reality

I am also grateful to have served with several of the finest officers in the United States Army Reserve. Thank you to MG Miles A. Davis, MG Ernest Litynski, BG Charles Gambaro Jr, COL Marc Statham, COL Jimmy W. Boan, COL (R) Christopher J. Wilson, COL Dena R. Goble, COL David M. Newman and LTC (R) Douglas W. Wagner for your confidence in the NCOs and your willingness to empower and allow us to be the trainers of the force.

I give my personal thanks to my beloved wife of 33 years, Angie Leising, who allowed me to spend time working on this project when I should have been paying attention to her and the pugs.

*CSM Lawrence M. Leising*

# APPENDIX A

## Chiefs of Army Reserve and Command Sergeants Major

Date	Command General	OCAR CSM	USARC CSM
1975	MG J Milnor Roberts JUN 1971-MAY 1975		
	MG Henry Mohr JUL 1975-MAY 1979	William Foley * MAY 1975-AUG 1977	
1980		Donald Colombo* SEP 1977-May 1980	
	MG William R. Berkman JUL 1979-JUL 1986	Cornelius Boykin JUN 1980-AUG 85	
	BG Harry J. Mott AUG-NOV 1986	Edward Reilly SEP 85-SEP 86	
1990	MG Wm. F. Ward Jr. DEC 1986-JUL 1991	Douglas E. Murray OCT 1986-AUG 1991	
	MG Roger W. Sandler AUG 1991-JAN 1994	Colin Younger AUG 1991-JAN 1996	
	MG Max Baratz FEB 1994-MAY 1998	John Rucynski FEB 1996-OCT 1999	
	LTG Thomas J. Plewes May 1998-May 2002	Alex Ray Lackey OCT 1999-OCT 2002	Frank Spangler July 1998-JUN 2002
2000	LTG James R. Helmly May 2002-MAY 2006	Michele S. Jones OCT 2002-JUN 2006	Nicholas Piacentini, Jr. JUN 2002-AUG 2006
	LTG Jack C. Stultz May 2006-June 2012	Leon Caffie AUG 2006-JAN 2010	
		Michael Schultz JAN 2010-JAN 2012	
	LTC Jeffrey Talley June 2012-JUN 2016	James Lambert (Interim) NOV 2012-FEB 2013	
2020		Luther Thomas FEB 2013-JAN 2016	
	LTG Charles D. Luckey June 2016-JUN 2020	James P. Willis (Interim) JAN 2016-DEC 2016	
		Ted L. Copeland APR 2017-JUN 2020	
	Jody J. Daniels July 2020-Present	Andrew J. Lombardo JUN 2020-Present	

\*Designated as Senior Enlisted Advisor for OCAR



# APPENDIX B

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFPT	Armed Forces Pre-Recruitment Training
AGR	Active Guard Reserve
AIT	Advanced Individual Training
ARCOM	Army Reserve Command
ARNG	Army National Guard
ARPERCEN	Army Reserve Personnel Center
ATRRS	Army Training Requirements and Resources System
BDE	Brigade
BG	Brigadier General
CAR	Chief of Army Reserve
COL	Colonel
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSM	Command Sergeant Major
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
EPMS	Enlisted Personnel Management System
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FORSCOM	U.S. Army Forces Command
GED	Tests of General Educational Development
IRR	Individual Ready Reserve
LBE	Load Bearing Equipment
LTG	Lieutenant General
MG	Major General
MOS	Military Occupation Specialty
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NCOA	Non-Commissioned Officers Association
NYPD	New York Police Department
OCAR	Office, Chief of Army Reserve

OSD	Office, Secretary of Defense
PFC	Private First Class
RA	Reserve Affairs
REFORGER	Return of Forces to Germany
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
SEA	Senior Enlisted Advisor
SEMO	Senior Enlisted Management Office
SGM	Sergeant Major
SPC	Specialist
SSG	Staff Sergeant
TOW	Tube-launched, Optically tracked, Wire-guided
TPU	Troop Program Units
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
TSC	Theater Support Command
USAR	United States Army Reserve
USARC	United States Army Reserve Command
USAREUR	U.S. Army Europe