

USASMA Bulletin

The United States Army Sergeants Major Academy

Educating Today's Leaders For Tomorrow



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An Institution of Excellence

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USASMA's Mission

To provides professional military education that develops enlisted leaders to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world.



We are committed to producing the right Soldier with the right skills at the right time in support of the Army and a nation at war.

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Huggins assumes duties as USASMA's deputy commandant

Story and Photos by David Crozier
Command Communications

The U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy held a change of responsibility ceremony October 6, when Command Sgt. Maj. Tedd J. Pritchard relinquished his duties as deputy commandant to Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Huggins in the academy Cooper Lecture Center.

Command Sgt. Major Dennis Defreese, USASMA commandant, presided over the ceremony and gave remarks after the passing of the Academy colors.

"These two outstanding command sergeants major and Soldiers have dedicated their entire adult lives to our country and to the sons and daughters of our Nation. They have both taken on the most difficult jobs the Army has for NCOs and have never shied away from leading Soldiers," Defreese said. "[Being] the deputy commandant at USASMA is [very different from] other command sergeant major jobs. He is not just an advisor, but a part of the chain of command and absolutely vital to the operations of this academy."

Defreese lauded Pritchard's career and thanked his family for their support of their Soldier in the Army and then turned his attention to the incoming deputy commandant.

"I have known Command Sgt. Maj. Jeff Huggins for a while and have seen him at conferences and venues around the Army. He is well-known as a professional Soldier and a great leader," Defreese said. "He has a sterling reputation. ... I am absolutely confident that he will do an outstanding job and help lead this academy into the future."

Defreese then turned the podium over to Pritchard for his outgoing remarks who thanked all those in attendance and lauded the support of the staff, cadre and faculty.



The U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy held a Change of Responsibility ceremony Oct. 4 which saw Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Huggins assume the responsibility of deputy commandant from Command Sgt. Maj. Tedd J. Pritchard. Above, Huggins accepts the Academy colors from Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Defreese, USASMA commandant, as a symbol of his assumption of responsibility as the deputy commandant of the Academy.

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From the Commandant

I would like to start this bulletin off with an Academy Welcome to Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Huggins. He assumed the responsibility of Deputy Commandant from Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Pritchard on October 6. While I am losing a great Battle Buddy in Joe Pritchard, I couldn't have asked for a better replacement than Jeff Huggins.

I have known Jeff for a while and have seen him at conferences and venues around the Army. He is well-known as a professional Soldier and a great leader. He has a sterling reputation. I am absolutely confident that he will do an outstanding job and help lead this academy into the future.

The deputy commandant job at USASMA is unlike any other command sergeant major job in the Army. He is not just an advisor, but a part of the chain of command and absolutely vital to the operations of this academy. The deputy position touches about 100,000 Soldiers a year either directly or indirectly. I cannot emphasize enough just how stressful a job it is. Not only does he have the latitude to design and develop his own initiatives for our courses and staff and faculty, but he has to support mine as well.

Joe Pritchard did that job extremely well and can be proud of his contributions to Leader Development as well as what he was able to accomplish with the NCO Heritage and Education Center. His work there stands as his legacy at USASMA and to the Army.

We also saw the changing of the guard within the Resident Sergeants Major Course where Sgt. Maj. Maurice Thorpe accepted the responsibility from Sgt. Maj. Robert Deblois on October 8. Here again two great Soldiers who give it all for leader development and I have full confidence in Sgt. Maj. Thorpe as we move forward and wish Robert and his family a happy retirement.

We do have a lot of other things going on besides changing of responsibility ceremonies. Our DOT is conducting the Master Leader Course Pilot Class to the first 33 students at USASMA and will conduct two more pilot courses, one at Camp Williams, Utah, in January then the final pilot course at Fort Knox, Kentucky in March. At the same time, the DOT is working on the distance learning modules for both MLC and SSD IV as well as developing the common core for the Advanced and Senior Leader Courses. The Master Leader Course, when complete, will fill that gap of NCOPDS between the Senior Leader Course and the Sergeants Major Course and will better prepare sergeants first class for their roles as senior NCOS in today's Army. The expected release of the course to the Army is October of next year.

The Soldiers Guide is in its final review stage and should be ready to be sent to the Army Publishing Directorate for publication and distribution to the field.

Finally, if you hadn't heard already, NCOES has changed to NCOPDS, or the NCO Professional Development System. Along with this change comes the renaming of the Warrior Leader Course to the Basic Leader Course, it adds the Master Leader Course, establishes mission command at USASMA for Basic Leader Course NCO Academies, adopts new NCOPDS deferment policies, adds the Numeral 5 for the NCOPD Ribbon and it applies to all components. It is all spelled out in the HQDA EXORD 236-15 Army-wide Implementation of Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development System (NCOPDS) dated 16 July 2015. As the stewards of Leader Development, Team USASMA is going to play a large role in the development of what NCOPDS will ultimately look like. I am confident that we will continue to show what right looks like. 🌱

Ultima!!



CSM Dennis Defreese
Commandant, USASMA



USASMA News

MLC on track

The Master leader Course is on track to launch the first pilot course October 19 at USASMA. This 15-day course will fill the education gap that exists between sergeant first class and sergeant major. There will be two more pilots conducted, one at Camp Williams, Utah in January and at Fort Knox, Kentucky in March. It is expected the course will be relaxed Army-wide in October of next year.

New Soldiers Guide

The USASMA has been hard at work updating and putting the finishing touches on the next edition of the Soldiers Guide. It is out for the final review and should be sent to the Army Publishing Directorate sometime in November.

NCOPDS drives change

HQDA EXORD 236-15 Army-wide Implementation of Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development System (NCOPDS) dated 16 July 2015, established the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development System, or NCOPDS. It replaces NCOES, renames Warrior Leader Course to the Basic Leader Course, establishes the Master Leader Course and gives mission command for BLC NCO Academies to USASMA.

Thorpe assumes responsibility for Resident SGM Course



Sgt. Maj. Maurice Thorpe assumed the responsibility for the Resident Sergeants Major Course during ceremonies held 8 October at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. He succeeds Sgt. Maj. Dennis Deblois who will be retiring after a 30-plus year career.

**By David Crozier
Command Communications**

The Sergeants Major Course of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, held a change of responsibility ceremony October 8, where Sgt. Maj. Robert R. Deblois handed over the duties and responsibilities of deputy director to Sgt. Maj. Maurice A. Thorpe.

Command Sgt. Maj. Harold Reynolds, director of the Sergeants Major Course, officiated the change of responsibility and spoke a few words about both of the sergeants major during the event.

“When I thought about what I wanted to talk about today, all of these ceremonies it is really bittersweet, we’ve got the new coming in with new ideas and revamping the organization but you also have that have that historical knowledge – that operational knowledge that is also leaving, that’s why it is a bittersweet thing,” Reynolds said. “If I could pick one word to describe SGM Deblois, it would be dedicated. He has been dedicated to the Army and every unit that he has been in, he has dedicated to them and what they are doing. But first and foremost he has been dedicated to his family. ... He has also been dedicated to the mission at USASMA of providing professional military education to senior leaders. He has been an astute asset in accomplishing that mission. And he has accomplished that mission.

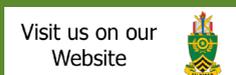
Turning his attention to Thorpe, Reynolds said the one word that described him is “Commitment.”

“He is committed to his family, to the Army, to every unit that he has served. It is a hard balancing act to do, but he has done it. He is committed to the mission, and he is committed to education, the pursuit of it, the teaching of it, and the importance of it,” Reynolds said. “Now that he takes these reins he will also ensure that you know, and he will give you, the best curriculum that he can possibly give, as well as supporting all of the staff and students and instructors. You can’t do that without commitment.”

Following Reynold’s remarks both Deblois and Thorpe were given the opportunity to address the gathered crowd.

Deblois thanked the Academy and the staff for their support singling out several individuals,

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and specifically highlighted the work of the Sergeants Major Course Instructors and department chiefs and deputy chiefs.

“To my SMC instructors – you are world class, the best jobs in this academy. Your daily contact with the students, you are leading by example, your professionalism is phenomenal. Thanks for doing the heavy lifting,” Deblois said. “SGM and Mrs. Thorpe, I wish you good luck and congratulations. You are the right team to lead the resident course down the field.”

Deblois saved his closing remarks to the students of Class 66.

“Class 66 – you were selected to come here based off your past demonstrated abilities and potential. The goal is graduation,” he said. “Help each other out, don’t fret or worry about your assignments, first sergeant and the cadre will help you through that process. Remember the goal is graduation. Come June everything is going to work itself out.”

Thorpe likewise thanked everyone for attending the ceremony and also thanked Deblois for his dedication and leadership.

“On today, the 8th of October, 2015, I have been given the privilege of accepting responsibility of the Sergeants Major Course. SGM Rob Deblois has done a great job as the leader of the corps and has performed with honor and distinction, not only here for the last two years, but for the 32 years of his career since 1984,” Thorpe said.

Using a quote from famed baseball player Jackie Robinson who said, “A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives,” Thorpe said that in assuming the position as deputy director of the resident Sergeants Major Course provides him a platform to impact and the educators, students, their families and our Army. He added that the ceremony was not about him, but “about preserving the tradition the history and legacy that has existed here in this institution since 1972.

I am humbled by such a responsibility and I am thankful to work with such a great team. I recognize that our educators, staff and faculty play a huge role in not only your success, but the success of the team.”

Thorpe ended his remarks by asking everyone to remember the “Flag.”

“Family, always take care of your family. For some of us that is your battle buddy to your left or right. Leadership, always set the example and be that leader that you always wanted. Leadership is more than being a servant leader, it is about followership as well. Ambassadorship, find ways around the Army, find ways around the academy, your community, to always lend a helping hand. Because to some you are the only Army they know. As far as Growth, I want you to do more than be lifelong learners. I want you to encourage others to grow and remain open-minded to all things new so we all grow too,” he said. “So simply put, remember the FLAG – family, leadership, ambassadorship and family.”

Additional photos can be found on the USASMA flickr site at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/133821783@N02/albums>. 📷



Sgt. Maj. Maurice Thorpe accepts the unit colors from Command Sgt. Maj. Harold Reynolds, dean of the Sergeants Major Course, signifying his acceptance of the responsibility for the Resident Sergeants Major Course, during ceremonies held Oct. 8. At the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

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"I was bold in the pursuit of knowledge, never fearing to follow truth and reason to whatever results they led."
Thomas Jefferson

HUGGINS Continued from Page 1



Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Huggins addresses the crowd during the Change of Responsibility ceremony Oct. 4 which saw Huggins accept the responsibility as deputy commandant from Command Sgt. Maj. Tedd J. Pritchard.

"I have had the privilege to serve this great organization and tried hard to make it better. I've served with the best of the best; the top one percent; the top dogs of their profession; the A-type personalities; the OCD department; the perfectionists and theorists. What a great combination of experience to serve by, with and for and I would not trade (it) for anything in the world," Pritchard said. "Command Sgt. Maj. Huggins, this institution is in the best position it has ever been and the professionals within USASMA are totally and completely dedicated to keeping USASMA on top. The team anxiously awaits for you to get on board."

Thanking the commandant for the confidence in selecting him, Huggins also thanked the crowd for their attendance and promised everyone that he would not let them down as he takes over as the new deputy commandant.

"I look forward to being a part of Team Bliss and the team of teams that is here," Huggins said. "Let's do some good things. ... Commandant thank you for the opportunity and I take this challenge on. Ultima, Army Strong."

Additional photos can be found on the USASMA flickr site at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/133821783@N02/albums>. 🐣



The Pritchard family unveils Command Sgt. Maj. Tedd J. Pritchard's official wall plaque depicting him as the Deputy Commandant of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy from 7 November 2013 through 6 October 2015. This plaque sits among the other former Command Sergeants Major and Deputy Commandants throughout the Academy's history.

Perkins provides clarity on future Army

By David Crozier
Command Communications

In an age of uncertainty, faced with the realities of sequestration and a downsizing Army, Gen. David G. Perkins, commanding general of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, spent the morning of Sept. 30 providing clarity on the Army's operating concept and the role of the senior NCO in mission command, to the 454 students of Sergeants Major Course Class 66.

TRADOC does a lot of things, Perkins explained, but what it is for is to be the architect of the Army, the designers of the future Army, who are currently looking at 2025 to 2040 and what capabilities the Army needs to have. TRADOC is the "design-build firm" for the Army.

As the designer of the Army Operating Concept, Perkins said the institution took a look at past concepts and found the 1981 Airland Battle Operating Concept to a powerful example of what the operating concept does – ask the big question.

"The first question it asked was what echelon of war are we going to design the United States Army to operate in? That is a big question. It didn't get wrapped around small questions," he said. "So remember that when you are in charge of an organization, your job is to ask big questions and not get wrapped around the axle with small answers."

The second thing an operating concept does, he said, is describe the operating environment. Airland Battle was designed to go to battle with Russia in the central plains of Europe with NATO, a well-known coalition. Everything was known in Airland Battle Concept.

"Before you march off on small answers, the most important thing you have to do is define the problem. Define the problem you are trying to solve before you spend all night trying to solve it," Perkins said. "Beware of people who define the problem by taking the answer they want and rewording it in the form of a problem."

The problem the Airland Battle Concept identified was "Fight outnumbered and win." Using that template, Perkins said, TRADOC came up with "Win in a complex world," complex being defined as unknown, unknowable and constantly changing.

"As an NCO you have to understand the logic of how we get to where we are," he said. "Words have meaning and the good thing about doctrine is you get to define what the meaning is. All I need to know is do you want me to build an Army for a known world or an unknown world. Because those are two different armies. If it is unknown you design, build and buy things differently."

In order to win in a complex world, Perkins said the Army must conduct unified land operations and then asked the question, "But what are we for?" It is very powerful once you decide what you are for because you can start grading what you do, he added.



Gen. David G. Perkins, commanding general of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, spent the morning Sept. 30 at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas, talking to the 454 students of Sergeants Major Course Class 66. The general discussed the NCO's role in Mission Command and the Army Operating Concept of Win in a Complex World and lauded them for being the stewards of the profession.

To come up with that answer, TRADOC looked at Google's mission - to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful – and found clarity in purpose. From there TRADOC defined what the Army is for – "To seize, retain and exploit the initiative to get to a position of relative advantage."

"That could be to get the advantage against the Taliban, Hurricane Sandy, some humanitarian disaster, whatever you are dealing with," he said. "(It is) relative advantage because the world is constantly changing; what is an advantage today may be a disadvantage tomorrow. The world you are in today is constantly changing."

Turning his focus to mission command, Perkins said in order to conduct unified land operations we must institute mission command. Mission command, he said, is a multi-warfighting function and a command philosophy.

"In mission command we balance command and control, not to ensure compliance, but to empower initiative. Because you don't know what your subordinates need to do piece-by-piece, so you just give them mission-oriented orders," he said. "(You need to) understand, visualize and describe the mission. Once you do all of that, then you direct. Mission command is all about leadership because if you don't have leadership you cannot execute mission command. If you can't conduct mission command, you can't do unified land operations, and if you can't do unified land operations you probably are not going to win in a complex world."

Perkins urged the class to "never lose clarity in the search for accuracy;" that their job was to conceptualize and not get caught up on the small things and he ended by telling the students that they owned the profession.

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NCOs lend expertise to Army Research Laboratory

By Martha Koester
NCO Journal

Working among the scientists and engineers at the U.S. Army Research Laboratory has given Sgt. Maj. Kevin M. Connor a new appreciation for how much work goes into the equipment he and his Soldiers have used on the battlefield. Before he came to Maryland, and an issue with military equipment arose, Connor didn't know there was an organization in the Army he could turn to, one which links the military and science communities.

As sergeant major for ARL in Adelphi, Md., Connor now has the opportunity to fix those things before they get to the Soldier.

“[As a noncommissioned officer,] I came up through the ranks, knowing certain equipment didn't necessarily work for me,” Connor said. “Hopefully, we [NCOs assigned to ARL] can give Soldiers a better experience with the equipment versus some of the challenges we have faced in our previous assignments and duty stations.”

As the premier laboratory for the United States' land forces, ARL of the U.S. Army Research Development and Engineering Command has touched all NCOs and their Soldiers by providing the enabling technologies in many of the Army's critical weapons systems. NCOs play a direct role in the development of weapons technology, serving as advisers for ARL's directorates and assisting in equipment testing.

“Most of the Army doesn't even know ARL exists,” Connor said. “So, one of the things I do when I'm at other military installations is I try to meet other sergeants major and educate them about ARL and say, ‘Did you know that we can help you solve some problems or issues you have with equipment?’ Or I will talk to Soldiers if they have a better equipment design or something of that nature [so I can pass it along].”

Doing their part

At the Soldier Performance and Equipment Advanced Research facility at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., NCOs such as Connor assist operations by providing the Soldiers who will test equipment. SPEAR puts equipment, which is intended to augment Soldiers, through vigorous testing.

For example, Soldiers may run through an obstacle course to



Army Research Laboratory's Staff Sgt. David A. Hoisington (left) and Sgt. 1st Class John C. Hardwick demonstrate how testing is performed at the Soldier Performance and Equipment Advanced Research facility at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. At the SPEAR facility, researchers examine how equipment affects Soldier performance. Hoisington is an enlisted advisor for Human Research and Engineering Directorate at Aberdeen Proving Ground. Hardwick is senior enlisted advisor for ARL's Simulation and Training Technology Center in Orlando, Fla. (Photo by Martha C. Koester / NCO Journal)

test whether exoskeletons offer improved agility, or Soldiers may test devices developed to assist in carrying their loads as scientists measure their activity on a treadmill, said Philip Crowell, SPEAR biomechanics team leader.

“Our research focuses on how equipment affects Soldier performance,” Crowell said. “For the Soldiers who participate in our studies, it's an opportunity for them to see a different part of the Army. They get to see the research and development side where equipment and concepts are created and refined long before they get fielded.”

“Because we value their feedback regarding the studies, this is also a chance for them to have an influence on things that are being developed for use by Soldiers in the future,” Crowell said.

Soldier participation is important to the scientists who research human factors and the ways Soldiers interact with military equipment. At ARL's Environment for Auditory Research, which is part of the Human Research and Engineering Directorate, or HRED, at Aberdeen Proving Ground, a Soldier is valued for his or her knowledge of jargon and types of cues or commands used in military communication systems during the testing of advanced combat helmets, said Dr. Angelique A. Scharine, EAR auditory research team lead.

Acting branch chief Christopher Paulillo praised Staff Sgt. David A. Hoisington, an enlisted advisor for HRED, and said Hoisington's intelligence background is invaluable when analyzing software data for the Communications-Electronics Command, or CECOM, at Aberdeen Proving Ground.

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