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Attendance to The United States Sergeant's Major Academy

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United States Army Sergeant's Major Academy

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Abstract

Priority placement for Senior Leaders selected for promotion and attendance to the residence course United States Sergeant's Major Academy. In the following paper, I hope to share my experience and the process that followed upon selection for promotion and attendance to USASMA Class-55. Senior Leaders and the Department of the Army should make every effort to allow attendance to the United States Sergeant's Major Academy for Senior Enlisted Advisors.

Attendance to The United States Sergeant's Major Academy

Grant Senior NCOs the opportunity to attend the USASMA at the earliest convenience.

The information and experience of USASMA would better prepare future CSMs/SGMs for their awesome responsibility of being the Senior Enlisted Advisor or subject matter expert for the Command. I would like to share a unique experience in an attempt to shed some light on a few difficulties in the selection process for promotion and attendance to the United States Sergeants Major Academy, Class 55. I PCSed to 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, in Aug 03 October 2003 , I experienced the ultimate joy of being selected for both promotion and to attend the top NCOES school. The Army validated that I had demonstrated the potential to represent approximately two percent of E-9s in the U.S. Army. Soon the joy turned into a lot of red tape, play on words or phrases, and battles between the Division Commander, USASMA, and the SGM's Branch.

During my tenure with 25th Infantry Division, I soon discovered that there was a definite disconnect on the term STOP LOSS/MOVE (CSMs and SGMs will be dealt on a case by case basis) A decision was made by the 25th Infantry Division Commander that no one selected to USASMA would attend do to the policy stated above. His decision caused a double slotting of SGMs. As a Senior NCO, the willingness to support commanders is without question. However, assignment instructions were sent out to all concerned. Upon receiving assignment instruction from EPMD, I immediately e-mailed the SGM's Branch and USASMA for further guidance. 25th Infantry Division is authorized 1 92G Food Service SGM and currently filled its obligation. He and I arrived in FY 03, 2 months apart. A move to Ft Bliss to attend USASMA was still a go based on the policy stated above. Several e-mails followed. The issue was the wording attached to the DA message. 25th Infantry Division took a stance of STOP LOSS/MOVE, USASMA took

a stance of report according to assignment instruction, and the SGM's Branch took a wait and see position. Changes to clarify STOP LOSS/MOVE were in the making. One major question was will I deploy? The answer was NO, Rear-detachment operation. 25th ID sent a memo to USASMA requesting operational deferment to Class 56. Deferment to class 56 by the SGM's Branch and USASMA followed.

Ready and willing to accept the decision, I found myself supporting 25th Infantry Division as the Rear Detachment CSM for DISCOM. Wholeheartedly accepting the decision, another battle between SGM's branch and 25th Infantry Division resumed. On or after Aug 2004, SGM's Branch contacted me to inform that I was a no show for USASMA Class 55. I forwarded the deferment memorandum from the SGM's Branch and e-mail endorsement from USASMA. SGM's branch quickly took a stance that it could not afford to double slot SGMs' due to the Global War on Terrorism and a shortage in MSCs across the ARMY.

Senior NCOs or often ask to "Suck-it-up, and Drive on" but in this instance it was unfortunate and very uncomfortable being caught up in the question of who to support, SGM's Branch or 25th ID. I had and will always support Commanders, and made a decision to remain with 25th ID; however, the fight was between the SGM's Branch and 25th ID. The SGM's Branch prevailed and made a decision in Sep 04 for a Permanent Change of Station to 1st Infantry Division, Germany and coordination for attendance to a sister service academy in May 05. I PCSed to Germany in Dec 04, and deletion from the sister academy due to a cut in available slots, followed. I made several inquiries to USASMA and SGM's Branch. Put on hold until a decision on the availability of seats in sister services. I received an e-mail from USASMA, possible seats to the sister services in FY 08. Without doubt, the decision did not pass the

common sense test. I would attend a sister service academy 5 years after selection for promotion and attendance to USASMA.

The decision to return 1st Infantry Division to CONUS ensued. Back to square one, no available slots in Germany for a 92G SGM. Human Resource Command conducted a briefing to provide guidance and insight on the effect of Transformation. I briefly explained my situation to the HRC SGM during the brief. Re-assurance soon followed. The HRC SGM personally got involved and the decision was made, off to Class 57.

I complied with procedures to curtail in order to attend USASMA. I began the communication process with USASMA and the SGM's Branch. Awaiting assignment instruction, I immediately began the process of enrolling and requested clarification of the security clearance procedure. According to USASMA, an interim was not acceptable. I began the process of obtaining a Secret Security Clearance. After further review, I contacted USASMA for further guidance on SSC requirements because our interpretation was at odd. Cleared to attend the system appeared to be on track. USASMA made it clear that arriving prior to 7 Aug 06 was not an option. Orders in hand with a report date of 31 Aug 06, early report authorized. During leave, a death in the family occurred. I complied with instructions my PCS orders to contact HRC in case of emergencies. With a report date of 31 Aug 06, it appeared that a 7 day extension would be in line with reporting instructions. Apparently, my PCS orders read differently from all other Class 57 students.

I reported to USASMA on 14 Aug 06 to discover that I was dropped from the class. Review of my case indicated confusion on the report date. I am not pointing fingers, just an attempt to share my experience. USASMA is very important to Senior Enlisted Advisors. First, it is completion is mandatory; second, it should be priority. If all had failed, I would attend

USASMA or a sister service school in FY 08. In conclusion, make every effort to get Senior Enlisted Advisors off on the right track. Coordination between the command, SGM's Branch and USASMA is crucial and critical to the success of Senior Enlisted Advisors and the United States Army.

References: None