
Regimental Command Sergeant Major

In this, my first article as the 10th Regimental Command Sergeant Major (RCSM), I would like to begin by sharing with you a little about my military career. First, let me begin by saying that I am a leader of soldiers, and I will always put my soldiers' needs before my own.

I began my military career as a medical specialist at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, where I was selected as the Fort Belvoir Soldier of the Quarter. I went on to attend and graduate from the Airborne School before my next assignment as a medical specialist in the 3d Battalion, 325th Infantry Regiment, 82d Airborne Division, where I deployed to Operation Urgent Fury (in Grenada) and earned my Combat Medical Badge. From there, I reclassified to the best corps in the Army—the Chemical Corps—and received a follow-on assignment to the most forward-deployed chemical company in the Army—the 4th Chemical Company, 2d Infantry Division. While there, I was named Division Support Command (DISCOM) Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) of the Quarter. Following this, I was assigned to the 3d Battalion, 73d Armor, 82d Airborne Division, where I attended the Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) and was named to the Commandant's List.

My next assignment took me to the 21st Chemical Company, the only airborne chemical company in the Army. There, I attended Air Assault School and was the Distinguished Honor Graduate. Next, I was assigned as a platoon sergeant with the 34th Support Group, Korea, where I was selected as the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) Outstanding NCO of the Year. I was then assigned to Fort McClellan, Alabama, where I attended Drill Sergeant School and graduated on the Commandant's List, attended the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (ANCOC) and graduated Distinguished Honor Graduate, and was assigned to A Company, 82d Chemical Battalion, and later to the Contingency Support Detachment (White House Team).

After attending several schools, to include Honor Graduate from the Technical Escort Course, I was assigned to the Total Army Personnel Command (now the US Army Human Resources Command [HRC]) as the branch manager for the Chemical Corps. While there, I attended the First Sergeant Course, graduating on the



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Commandant's List. Next, I was assigned as the first sergeant of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Soldier and Biological Chemical Command, Technical Escort Battalion. As a master sergeant, I served as the first Technical Escort Battalion Command Sergeant Major (CSM) and was selected to attend the US Army Sergeants Major Academy.

Following graduation from the Sergeants Major Academy, I was assigned as the division chemical sergeant major for the 2d Infantry Division in Korea. There, I was selected as the CSM for the 23d Chemical Battalion and later as the brigade sergeant major for the 23d Area Support Group. This brings me to my current position, for which I am honored to have been selected.

During my military tenure, I have received the following awards: Legion of Merit with first oak leaf cluster, Meritorious Service Medal with first oak leaf cluster, Army Commendation Medal with third oak leaf cluster, Army Achievement Medal with seventh oak leaf cluster, Airborne Parachute Badge, Air Assault Badge, Combat Medical Badge, Driver's Badge (Wheeled), Drill Sergeant Badge, German Armed Forces Military Efficiency Badge, and NCO Professional Development Ribbon (fourth award). Additionally, I was awarded the "Order of the Dragon," the Chemical Corps highest award.

As your RCSM, I want to continue to foster effective communication with the units in the field and the soldiers and civilians throughout the chemical community, support the heritage of the Corps, be a role model to all, share the great work we do as chemical soldiers and, where possible, improve identified weaknesses. I intend to share the Department of the Army vision of people, readiness, and transformation with everyone:

- People/soldiers, not equipment, are the centerpieces of our formation. We will take care of soldiers, civilians, and leaders. I always keep in mind that we have been trusted with our nation's greatest asset—its sons and daughters.
- Readiness is our mission. The Army has a nonnegotiable contract with the American people to fight and win our nation's wars. We must maintain near-term training and readiness to ensure that we

are prepared at all times to carry out our obligations. This is our daily mission; we will continue to work hard and improve our readiness. As NCOs and leaders, we are the standard bearers for readiness.

- Transformation is an imperative. Army transformation represents the strategic transition we will need to undergo to shed our cold war designs and prepare ourselves for the crises and wars of the 21st century.

This is a very critical time for our country. We will encounter many challenges that we will conquer together, working as a team. In closing, I must reiterate my focus for soldiers and leaders. I am an NCO; we are the backbone of the Army. I expect all leaders to lead by example, train from experience, maintain and enforce standards, and take care of soldiers. Remember, we are adapting to a changing environment.

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Certainly, our soldiers today should have a desire to serve our great nation and protect the freedoms guaranteed by our previous generations. In the Roman Army, the officers and NCOs were truly the standard bearers. Do our leaders today inspire us to achieve excellence? If not, why not? Our leaders should set the mark for their soldiers to follow. This should not just encompass physical and mental attributes, but rather it should include word and deed. Leaders should be the moral compass for their organizations.

Discipline. Discipline is what set the Romans apart from other armies in their time. Army Regulation 670-1, *Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia*, reminds us that “the Army is a uniformed service where discipline is judged, in part, by the manner in which a soldier wears a prescribed uniform, as well as by the individual’s personal appearance.” Our appearance and the proper wear of our uniform is part of it, but what else can we learn from the Romans? Notice how Josephus’ words on the Romans’ obedience and their actions are viewed as if a single organism. How did they get that way? Self-discipline was woven through every aspect of the Legionnaire’s life. Through daily drills and rehearsals, they became a team. They became one in everything—from marching, to establishing a campsite, to making contact with the enemy. They were obedient, not when the mood hit them, but immediately. Josephus saw this as an exceptional trait. But is that trait unobtainable today? Didn’t we all raise our right hand and take an oath to do just that? It was Aristotle who said, “We are what we repeatedly do, excellence then is not an act, but a habit.” As chemical soldiers, let’s make excellence our habit.

Excellence. One of our greatest temptations is to settle for something less than our absolute best. The US Army ushered in our Army values—*loyalty, duty, responsibility, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage*—in the late 1990s, but these values

were certainly imbedded in the daily life and routine of the Legionnaire. These values should be second nature to us; living them can’t help but push us to the next level. Not a lot separates mediocrity from excellence, just the will to do something and the pride to do it right. Pride should be an individual’s personal commitment to quality, a mind-set that separates excellence from mediocrity. Should our goal be to achieve the minimum standard on the Army Physical Fitness Test or should it be the maximum, with the thought that we may have to carry a buddy out of a fire? When you go to the range, is it to just wait your turn and hope to qualify so you can get back to work, or do you give an honest attempt to hit every target that comes up, knowing that the skill to do so may save someone’s life someday? Some of the watchwords from our Soldier’s Creed—*member of a team; mission first; never quit; disciplined, physically and mentally tough; trained; and professional*—were undoubtedly etched into the mind of the Roman Legionnaire. History has judged the Romans among the best; they took pride in their uniforms, their equipment, and their training. How will history judge us? Professionalism for the chemical soldier is not just doing the right thing when your subordinates and leaders are watching. It is doing the right thing when no one is watching!

I want to take this opportunity to recognize the Dragon soldiers of our Regiment who are serving our nation in the Global War on Terrorism. I particularly want to commend those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. I want you to know that the professionalism you demonstrate each day makes the entire Corps very proud of you. I also want to personally thank all who are serving in our great Corps for your hard work and dedication; through my Army travels, I see the great accomplishments you have made. As a Corps, we must remain vigilant and prepared to meet the Army’s commitment to our nation’s security.