

Farewell to a True Dragon Soldier

By Captain Herschel H. Flowers



Sergeant Major Tussey

This year brings a bit of sadness to many Chemical Corps members, as we see one of our leaders take his final stroll through the halls of the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. After more than 41 years of service to our Nation, Sergeant Major Jack Tussey is retiring.

Tussey joined the Kentucky Army National Guard (ARNG) as a private in 1970; and throughout his career, his dedication to duty, service, and leadership has been recognized again and again. By 1972, he had been promoted to the grade of E-5. In 1975, while serving in the 103d Forward Support Battalion, he was selected as the Kentucky National Guardsman of the Year. Tussey continued to rise through the ranks, distinguishing himself at every assigned duty position. From receiving the Association of the U.S. Army Plaque for Leadership—to earning Distinguished Honor Graduate recognition when training to become a nuclear, biological, and chemical specialist—to achieving the highest retention rate for any company in the entire Kentucky ARNG while serving as the Headquarters Company recruiting/retention and safety noncommissioned officer for the 103d Support Battalion from 1986 to 1988—he exemplified the true meaning of dedication to Soldiers.

In 1991, Tussey joined the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) and immediately displayed his leadership skills as a nuclear, biological, and chemical (now chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear [CBRN]) instructor for the USAR Forces School in Lexington, Kentucky. After his promotion to master sergeant in 1995, he was reassigned to the 4/100th Chemical Battalion, Huntsville, Alabama, where he coordinated all Military Occupational Specialty 74D training for the USAR and Kentucky ARNG.

Master Sergeant Tussey's career came to a brief halt in 1999, when he reached the mandatory removal date and was transferred to the Individual Ready Reserve; but a shortage of qualified 74D instructors allowed him to almost immediately return to the 4/100th Chemical Battalion in 2000. At a point in life when many Soldiers just want to enjoy retirement, Tussey was once again earning accolades by taking care of Soldiers and leading through example.

After more than 30 years of service in ARNG and USAR troop program units, Master Sergeant Tussey applied for, and was accepted into, the Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) Program in 2002 and was detailed to the Noncommissioned Officer Academy at Fort Leonard Wood. There, he was chosen first sergeant and chief of the 74D Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course. In November 2006, he was selected for, and promoted to, the rank of sergeant major and subsequently moved to the Reserve Component CBRN Captain's Career Course, where he served as the senior noncommissioned officer responsible for training all ARNG and USAR CBRN captains. During his tenure in that position, he has been a calm, steady source of leadership and wisdom, which has allowed for the successful training of nearly 400 students in 16 training cycles—with no injuries to students or staff.

His quiet demeanor and caring attitude make Sergeant Major Tussey an unforgettable leader—not only to those who have had the honor to serve with him, but also to those who have encountered him while training at Fort Leonard Wood. The time he spent as sergeant major of the Reserve Component CBRN Captain's Career Course will continue to positively impact the Corps for years to come.

As the two-time Pulitzer Prize winner and intellectual Walter Lippmann once said, "The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him, in other men, the conviction and the will to carry on." Sergeant Major Jack Tussey has passed this test with flying colors.



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