

Attendees of the USASMDC/ARSTRAT Senior Enlisted Leaders Training Conference listen to a briefing during the command's Senior Enlisted Leaders Training Conference held March 21-24 at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla.

Photo by Dottie White

# SENIOR NCO VIEW

## The Word from the High Ground

BY MICHAEL L. HOWARD,  
RACHEL L. GRIFFITH  
& SCOTT ANDREAE

Listening to Space and Missile Defense senior enlisted leaders who are responsible for the Soldiers who are primarily involved in the Army's day-to-day grind, there is a clear sense that their Soldiers are delivering critical products. The themes that emerge are expertise, dedication, resilience, certification and knowledge.

"... We have to do it right because if we don't, it could impact a lot of American lives," is how CSM Larry Turner summed it up. Turner, the USASMDC/ARSTRAT command sergeant major, hosted a one-week training conference for the senior enlisted leaders in the command. The conference focused on the Profession of Arms in Space and Missile Defense NCOs training our warriors. During the conference, the ASJ sat down with several NCOs from both disciplines to get their thoughts.

The Warfighter's "ability to communicate, target, and know where they're at on the battlefield is all incumbent upon the capabilities we provide from Space," according to CSM James Ross, 1st Space Brigade command sergeant major. "We are the only unit in the nation that provides the country with deterrence against rogue nations who may be to less likely to use intercontinental ballistic missiles if they know we have the capability to defeat their weapons," said MSG Eddie Negron, 100th Missile Defense Brigade master evaluator.

Excerpts of the interviews follow. →



### CSM Larry Turner USASMDC/ARSTRAT

One of the marching orders I have is to help explain, or make, the rest of the Army understand what SMDC/ARSTRAT is all about. I will say that we have special missions that are handled at the highest level. We have a security mission that protects and defends the American people. We have eyes and ears around the globe. Our mission, even though we're not combat in the normal sense as deployed, I still would consider it a combat mission. Our mission is 24/7, around the globe and we have to do it right because, if we don't, it could impact a lot of American lives.

Our focus is in that arena. So we are in the Space arena, which is a little bit different. We pretty much cover the same areas that the Army covers, we just cover it from the Space perspective. We need to rely on the Training Doctrine avenue to take the Space profession to the next level. The way I see it, in the next five, ten years, the Space and Missile Defense missions are going to grow more. Because of that, you're going to need more Space enablers. So to get to those Space enablers, we need to go to the TRADOC avenue to get there.

### SGM Hohn Wolf

Garrison Sergeant Major, U.S. Army Kwajalein Atoll

With the last ten years of conflict, it has been what has everybody done for the Warfighter? We do that with our Space support elements, where they go out to the combatant commanders and they get that imagery, just continue to refine and develop that information where we can provide the maximum amount of information necessary to the commanders on the ground so the commanders can make an informed, timely decision and aren't operating in a vacuum.

The Profession of Arms to me means being a professional and expert in your career field. The way you become an expert is you are trained and certified in the skill sets that you need at each level as you progress in



Photo by Rachel L. Griffith

*“ We are the only unit in the nation that provides the country with deterrence against other rogue nations who may be less likely to use the ICBMs if they know we have the capability to defeat their weapons.”*

— MSG Eddie Negron  
100th Missile Defense Brigade

seniority. The way we do that is we provide the trained, certified Space professionals who get the information to the combatant commanders and the Warfighters that they need to prosecute their missions.

### **CSM Russell A. Hamilton** 100th Missile Defense Brigade

We bring the only weapon system to bear right now that is able to support U.S. Northern Command in order to defend the nation. Prior to our existence, the only thing they had at their disposal was a warning that something was coming. Now we actually bring, to the strategic level, a means for defense. Our Soldiers take their jobs very seriously. They're highly skilled, they're motivated, and they're resilient and vigilant in the way they conduct their jobs, despite adverse conditions, despite the constant rotation of being on shift. They're able to live up to the challenge, because again, they take what they do very seriously.

Throughout history, it's been debated, are NCOs professionals? And you can offer up evidence from decades past that maybe even supported the answer being “no.” But in the last, probably, 20 years, maybe a little longer, the NCOs have evolved in their way of educating, in their way of discipline to where officers and NCOs alike have the prerequisite knowledge and expertise and dedication that makes them professional warriors. I think it's absolutely outstanding that we're focusing on the discussion of our profession as Soldiers and the professional attributes that each individual Soldier brings to the profession.

### **MSG Eddie Negron** Master Evaluator, 100th Missile Defense Brigade

With the 100th Missile Defense Brigade and the 49th Battalion and detachment at Vandenberg AFB, Calif, it brings to the nation a layer of defense against intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM). We are the only unit in the nation that provides the country with deterrence against

rogue nations who may be less likely to use the ICBMs if they know we have the capability to defeat their weapons.

If we're going to label ourselves the Profession of Arms for Missile Defense that means in order to paint our masterpiece we need to use all the tools that are available to us – all our sensors, all our weapon systems, all our human resources that we have to be able to fight with and develop this profession to include schools and professional development and just continue to train and lead our Soldiers to be the best Soldiers that we can.

To bring Space and Missile Defense forward in the Army, we need to educate the Army more on the Space program. Our Advanced Leaders Course and Senior Leaders Course do not address Space and Missile Defense when they're teaching. Our 14 series Soldiers, when they go to ALC or SLC they're taught generic air defense artillery. They're not taught Missile Defense. I think there's an education process that needs to happen in the Army in general about the capabilities of Space and Missile Defense.

### **CSM John Drew** 49th Missile Defense Battalion

We are responsible for the security of 300 million American citizens. Both the Warfighter and the combatant commanders are extremely important. We stress that importance to Soldiers on a regular basis, ensuring that they understand the importance of their role and the impact it does have. The American people rely on us 24/7.

The Profession of Arms – it's a volunteer basis, but you have to consider that is your current profession. People change their profession; you know, it becomes a life decision. The Space and Missile Defense program will be around for a long time – that is the future. I'm not sure of the road, or the path, that it's going to take. We've evolved from ground conflict to now using the technology to fight our battles.

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# SELTC

## Senior Enlisted Leaders Training Conference

## Promotes Ideas, Professional Development

BY DOTTIE WHITE

PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. — The annual U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command Senior Enlisted Leaders Training Conference was held March 21-24 here.

This year's theme was "The Profession of Arms: Space and Missile Defense Noncommissioned Officers Training Our Warriors."

"The Army is an American Profession of Arms," CSM John Mattie, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command G3 sergeant major, said during comments to

the attendees. "It is defined as a vocation comprised of experts certified in the ethical application of land combat power, serving under civilian authority, entrusted to defend the Constitution and the rights and interests of the American people."

With that theme in mind, the purpose of the event was to carry out a professional forum providing senior noncommissioned officers with the education, knowledge and information about new Army and space programs as well as build esprit de corps within the command for all active, National Guard and Reserve components.

"This year's conference was unquestionably the best one yet," said 1st Space Brigade CSM James Ross, who has attended the past four SELTCs. "Every year we have made adjustments to the agenda, and this year I think we really got it right. I believe the Profession of Arms starts with the NCO Corps and sets the U.S. Army up for continued success well into the next decade."

Presenters from various areas of professional development briefed attendees. USASMDC/ARSTRAT CSM Larry S. Turner kicked off the conference with opening remarks and a command video. Then he inducted SSG Keon Ellison, SSG Tony Lopes, and SSG David Sizemore into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club. Assisting Turner with the inductions were Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Roy; CSM Marvin L. Hill, senior enlisted leader of International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces - Afghanistan; Chief Master Sgt. Thomas S. Narofsky, command chief master sergeant of United States Strategic Command; and COL Timothy Coffin, deputy commander for operations, USASMDC/ARSTRAT.

Next, Roy discussed the relationship between the Army and Air Force and how NCOs for both services have to continue to train the NCO Corps to make it stronger and better.

Other highlights of the week included a video presentation from Army Astronaut LTC Shane Kimbrough. He spoke about his mission to the

International Space Station as an STS-126 Endeavour crewmember (Nov. 14-30, 2008) and answered questions. Following Kimbrough's remarks, Soldiers had an opportunity to speak with him and get autographed photos.

Mattie moderated a discussion panel that included retired SMA Jack Tilley, retired CSM Ralph Borja, and retired CSM Frank J. Mantia - who all served as Command Sergeants Major of USASMDC/ARSTRAT. They each provided opening remarks followed by questions from the NCOs in attendance.

Turner said he was very pleased to see so many outstanding briefs.

"The Warfighter brief has always been the best briefing that we have on the schedule," said Turner. "This year's brief was no different. CSM Hill (who presented the brief) touched on several areas — from how we, as Space NCOs, support the Warfighter, to being better NCOs and the don't ask, don't tell policy."

CSM William C. Baker said, "As a senior NCO, it was a great opportunity to have senior command sergeants major who have served at the highest levels of the Army and Air Force present. To learn from their experiences will only enhance our NCOs and ensure success in the future."

Following the morning briefings on the final day of the conference, the senior NCOs went on a staff ride and tour of Cape Canaveral and the Kennedy Space Center. There were many positive comments from the attendees regarding the success of the conference.

"This year's Senior Enlisted Leaders Training Conference was the best I have ever seen," Baker said. "It set a high standard for all other units to follow. I know our senior noncommissioned officers are better informed and have a better understanding of the demands and challenges ahead."

"I think we had a lot of experience ... a lot of knowledge shared," Turner said. "I think all of the NCOs left here a lot more educated, more knowledgeable as Space professionals, and just more professional NCOs." 





SMA (ret) Jack L. Tilley looks on with COL Timothy R. Coffin during a SELTC year in review briefing.  
*Photo by Dottie White*

## 1SG William Ray

Headquarters and Headquarters Battery  
100th Missile Defense Brigade

Seven years ago, we didn't have a defense against intercontinental ballistic missiles. Now we do. There are people out there now who don't believe the system works. I'm an operator and I will tell you, it works. And I have faith it works. My family, my friends, they know they are guarded at nighttime. When they're sleeping, we are manning the system. We aren't going to let anything happen at night or daytime.

In the 100th and the 49th, I believe we have the most professional Soldiers we could have. We come to work every day, we do the rough shifts, two days, two swings, two mids – then you get your off-cycle, then right back to two days, two swings, two mids. There are Soldiers out there standing in those gun turrets at 40, 50, 60 below zero and wind 30 to 40 miles an hour. It's cold. You've got cold-weather gear, but it's still cold. And they do it day in and day out, and again there's just no one more professional than those guys, I believe.

## CSM James Ross

1st Space Brigade

It's very simple: The Warfighters need to understand that their ability to communicate, target, and know where they're at on the battlefield is all incumbent upon the capabilities that we provide from Space. Warfighters need situational awareness to be effective, and the majority of tools they utilize to understand the operating environment are provided through Space assets. The Soldiers of the 1st Space Brigade are working tirelessly to ensure that the Warfighters have up-to-date imagery, satellite communications, warning from missile threats, and protected data links. Only about nine percent of the brigade personnel are actually located in the Central Command area of operations, but 100 percent of our Soldiers are supporting the efforts in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation New Dawn, and other major operations across the globe.

For me, the Profession of Arms is really geared toward making sure that we understand that we have a responsibility to provide the most well-trained and best-resourced Space forces to our supported commanders. We need to analyze the past ten-plus years of conflict and continue to grow more resilient Soldiers and families and focus a lot of thought to how we want to train, man, and equip our Space forces in the future.

Not only appreciating what we're doing today, but taking a good hard look and trying to figure out what we need to look like 10 years from now and trying to be as close to right as we can possibly can. I don't know if we'll ever get

it right, but I can tell you right now we are not postured the way we need to be to keep up with our growing mission areas. I believe the missions of the 1st Space Brigade are going to continue to grow. I believe it will eventually take more than just one Space brigade to do the job in the future. I also believe that as the mission grows it is not too far off from starting some dialogue about the feasibility of an enlisted Space career field to support the growing demands.

## SSG Benjamin Sharp

JTAGS Master Gunner, 1st Space Battalion

It's very important to certify our crews. Our crews are the only in-theatre direct downlink element that pushes out theater missile warning and early missile warning to the combatant commanders. Instead of having to wait for missile warning to come in from different elements, the combatant commander has his own direct link into missile warning so he can know what's coming almost instantaneously. They have the peace of mind while the Warfighter is focused on kicking in doors, completing the mission, making sure the fuel and the food gets to the troops. They don't have to worry about theater missile warning because we're on mission 24/7/365.

For the Profession of Arms, when it comes to early missile warning, the main thing that I take from it is that as the over watch for the entire Army we are providing peace of mind so the Warfighters can actually go out and do their mission, accomplish what they need to do, and not be worried about what's going on. They'll always be protected because Joint Tactical Ground Station is on watch. With the improvements in technology and the ever-changing landscape in battle, Space is used by everyone from the lowest private to the highest general. They may not know they're using it, they may not understand they're using it, but Space is everywhere, and as long as we keep putting it out there, providing it to the Warfighter, then we'll keep winning all of our battles.

## 1SG Robert Pennebecker

1st Space Battalion

We have strategic and tactical elements that are currently deployed all over the world to provide Space-based support enhancement to the Warfighter on the ground. To offer those commanders who are going out into theater an opportunity to say, "Hey, we have these Space elements or support elements that will offer early missile detection, that will provide you that backbone communication system, that will help make an analysis of the Space and the capabilities of the enemy?"

I just want people to remember in the Profession of Arms, we need to remember our Army values. That's what



CSM Larry S. Turner, SMA (RET) Jack L. Tilley, CSM (ret) Ralph Borja and CSM (ret) Frank Mantia discuss the progression of USASMDC/ARSTRAT. Photo by Dottie White

got us here to the point. We need to be honest brokers with the public. Because we work hard, but we also have to earn that paycheck. They rely on us to defend the Constitution of the United States. We must also continue to be professionals, leaders, train our subordinate leaders, train our subordinates to make sure we're all falling in line to uphold the standards of conduct, our Army values, and keep the trust of the American people.

We must go out and advertise what we do, because the whole Army does not know, or our sister services do not know, what we do. And we must advertise to promote, because our theme is to go joint. If we go joint with other services then they know our capabilities. Those commanders will know what we offer and they'll utilize our services.

### **SFC Charles Mercier** Training NCOIC, 1st Space Brigade

As a result of being in constant conflict for ten years, we're involved quite significantly. We've had to adapt to the war on terrorism, Operation New Dawn, Operation Enduring Freedom, and a multitude of different operations worldwide. It's changed the way we do business. We've had to adapt along with the Army. We've had to come up with new ways to engage the enemy, to support those who are directly engaging the enemy, to ensure there is 100 percent mission success as well as Space support to the ground users.

Soldiers need to maintain their craft as riflemen first, that's what we all are. Prior to engaging in our specific technical skill set – whether it comes to warrior battle drills, standard warrior training, weapons proficiency, making sure Soldiers are attending their career progression schools – making sure the Soldiers are maintaining their core skill set, that's essential to every Soldier regardless of their specific skill.

It's essential for us to be technically and tactically proficient. Whether we're supporting combat operations in Iraq from anywhere in the globe, our Soldiers still need to maintain the capability to go downrange and get in the fight. Our brigade is unique; we have a very unique skill set. However, these Soldiers do not spend their entire career here. They'll spend maybe three years, and they might go back into a combatant command, where they'll have to reengage in the specific MOS skill they were taught. So we need to make sure our Soldiers

maintain that tactical proficiency. They're capable of going back into the fight, per se, in their traditional skill set.

### **1SG William Edwards** Headquarters and Headquarters Company 53rd Signal Battalion

Our wartime mission is to basically make sure the equipment sets that we use, that Defense Satellite Communications System certification facility itself and the HHC Company as well as the wideband satellite communications operations centers, meet the requirement in order for the Army to perform the satellite control mission. It reaches not just here in the United States, it reaches across the entire globe. It does not affect just individual entities, but also the Warfighter itself, the ones who are actually on the ground performing their mission either at the forward operating bases or the contingency operating bases or any location that may be an austere environment where they're away from major communication systems. It allows them to communicate back to the higher echelons and provide situational awareness, get permission to do any kind of target acquisition, things of that nature. The Department of Defense, homeland security, any of the joint services, we reach out and touch just about everybody.

The big thing that is really important for us to realize in Space command in general is that the Profession of Arms is not just a Warfighter attribute. It's something that extends across the entire Army as a whole and specifically to us, because if we're not professional at what we're doing and the experts in our field, we don't affect just our local company. It affects everyone from the ground fighter all the way up to the combatant commanders to the President and Joint Chiefs of Staff. All those individuals will suffer if we fail at what we're doing.

I really think we need to focus on maintaining the awareness of what our job does and how it affects the Warfighter, the civilians, the nation as a whole. Because if we lose that focus, then no matter how we set ourselves up in the future as far as how technology goes, we will not be able to support those guys in the way they need, to be able to maintain our national security, as well as assist with international security.

