

SMDC/ARSTRAT conducts senior NCO conference

By SFC Dennis Beebe

FORT CARSON, Colo. — Senior Non-commissioned Officers from across U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command gathered at the Elkhorn Conference Center on Fort Carson, Colo., from Jan. 25-28. They were assembled for the 2005 SMDC/ARSTRAT Senior NCO Conference, which was sponsored by the command's Command Sergeant Major, David Lady.

"SMDC Senior Non-commissioned Officers wanted to come to this conference and were rewarded by coming," said Lady.

"Through this conference, they received a great deal of information about the command and were given the opportunity to further their development as non-commissioned officers."

Lady graciously spoke of the support received from the Officer Corps at the very highest level of the command to ensure senior NCOs were able to attend.

"I was surprised that so many came from our companies and detachments from overseas. I gave leeway by saying that I knew all of the senior NCOs might not come, but they brought them all and I now believe it was critical to do so. I believe it will be the correct thing to do again next year, to bring them all in," added Lady.

"The greatest value from this conference will be when all the senior NCOs return to their home stations and spread the word about what they heard and experienced here. So I ask each of you to carry the message home."

SMDC's Commanding General, LTG Larry J. Dodgen, appeared as the keynote speaker for the

event. He also spoke of professional development and taking the messages from the conference home.

"SMDC's global presence is on four continents and an atoll, providing Space-based products to the warfighter," said Dodgen.

"When I have gone to visit these places, I have witnessed something I really like to see — Soldiers concerned about professional development and professional advancement. That's something I believe is the charge of the non-commissioned officer: to make sure their Soldiers are thinking about how they can become better servants of our nation, how they can progress and what they can do to work toward that end. You need to train them to think that their lives are their responsibility and they can be as good as they want to be. It's a pretty solid responsibility that we as leaders have — to ensure that our Army continues to serve our nation the way it has for well over 200 years," said Dodgen.

COL Jeffrey C. Horne, deputy commander for Operations, speaking on transformation of the Army said, "Forty years from now, you will be reading about this period in history that you lived through, as one of the greatest periods of change since the 1930s. Perhaps even earlier in the 1860s or 1870s with the introduction of the repeating rifle, then, in the 1930s, moving to armored vehicles and aircraft from horse cavalry. That was a whole different way of doing business. This is happening again now and is going on in a global scale," said Horne.

In addition to Dodgen and Horne's comments, the senior sergeants were given overviews of various sec-

Attendees of the 2005 Senior NCO Conference converse during one of the breakout sessions. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Beebe



tions of SMDC by speakers such as Michael C. Schexnayder, deputy to the commander for Research, Development and Acquisition; COL Patrick Rayermann, SMDC G-3; COL Gary Baumann, commander, 100th Missile Defense Brigade (GMD); LTC Eric Henderson, Executive Office of the 1st Space Brigade; and Kirby Brown of the Future Warfare Center. Even U.S. Strategic Command's Senior Enlisted Adviser, Command Master Chief William Nissen, (U.S. Navy), and U.S. Northern Command's Senior Enlisted Adviser, SGM Scott Frye (U.S. Marine Corps) were present to discuss SMDC/ARSTRAT's role within their organizations.

Command sergeant major of the Signal and Air Defense Regiments and sergeant major of the Non-commissioned Officer Education System and Enlisted Promotions at the Pentagon were present to brief the transformations of their branches, and to discuss professional development within the Army.

Former Sergeant Major of the Army (Ret.) Jack Tilley gave a presentation on financial planning, MSG David Atchison of SMDC G-1 spoke on counseling and assessing enlisted troops, and Rob Holmes of the Veterans Administration presented a detailed briefing on Veteran Affairs and programs available to retirees. A very familiar face to some of the members of SMDC was that of SGM Tammy Coon of Enlisted Promotions at the Pentagon, who gave a briefing and presided over one of the breakout sessions concerning promotions and other Adjutant General concerns. Coon was the former first sergeant for the 1st Space Brigade's Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

On the final day of the conference, the senior NCOs split into two groups to go on tours of the Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center (CMOC), and were able to see up-close and

firsthand how this unique facility operates and how closely many of their jobs interact with the facility's mission.

"The 2005 SMDC Senior NCO Conference was a unique opportunity for SMDC NCOs from across the globe to come together in one location and talk about Space and our role in it," said 1SG Darren Hamilton, 1st Space Company, 1st Space Battalion. "For my unit in particular (JTAGS), it was the first time in many years that senior NCOs from all of our forward and CONUS-based detachments were assembled face to face," Hamilton said. "The cross talk and discussions ranging from operational lessons learned, the conduct of weekly warrior based training and the professional briefings from truly exceptional leaders highlight the many milestones achieved during the week. From my standpoint I can say for our unit that the conference was an overwhelming success."

With the conference concluded, Lady gave his overall comments on the event following the after action review.

"I was gratified with the positive reaction of all my NCOs to this conference," said Lady.

"We wanted a conference that would bring them up to date on the issues of the transformation of the Army, and of the transformation of this command ... to be more ready and relevant in support of warfighting organizations. My NCOs have indicated to me that the mission was accomplished. By looking at their critique sheets and listening to their comments, I know now that we gave them the right level of briefings, we briefed them on the right subjects, and provided them a fitting capstone to this year's NCO Development Program within Space and Missile Defense Command. They received a MACOM level view of this organization and an Army issues level view of what our service is going through right now. A very successful conference!" concluded Lady.