

SENIOR ENLISTED LEADERS TRAIN, BOND, SHARE YEARS OF EXPERIENCES



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VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — Senior non-commissioned officers of the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command gathered here March 23-26 for the 2008 SMDC/ARSTRAT Senior Enlisted Leaders Training Conference.

“We are gathering together this week for a little bonding, teamwork, socializing and sharing of experiences with our brethren who are here at today’s conference,” said SMDC/ARSTRAT CSM Ralph C. Borja. “This is what it’s all about — dialoguing and interacting with one another, getting advice and input ... the whole nine yards.”

LTG Kevin T. Campbell, commanding general, SMDC/ARSTRAT, spoke to the group about the importance of their mission. He remarked about their great courage and enthusiasm and how they know there is no giving up on the battlefield.

“We have these detachments spread around the world operating 24/7 — whether it’s providing communications or imagery or a special Space capability, which we have within our combat formations — these things are ongoing all time, so there is no stopping or shutting down for the weekend,” said Campbell.

Left, SFC John Bruce, 2nd Space Company, 1st Space Battalion, poses a question during the 2008 Senior Enlisted Leaders Training Conference, May 23-26 at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.

Top Right, SMDC/ARSTRAT Leaders, CSM Ralph Borja, left, and Commanding General, LTG Kevin T. Campbell, center, catch up with 82nd Airborne Division CSM Thomas Capel.

Bottom Right, SMA Kenneth O. Preston, center, takes a moment to talk to SMDC/ARSTRAT Soldiers during a break at the conference. *Photos by DJ Montoya*

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“I can say after a year and three months in this business, not once have we failed a COCOM or an Army Unit in providing a service we said we were going to provide,” Campbell said. “A lot of that is about you in this room. It’s about you leading the troops making sure they are trained and ready day in and day out. I commend you for what you do every day, and your mission is every day, 24/7.”

The Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston spoke to the group about the big picture of what is going on in the Army. He also focused on the current pace/tempo of deployment that the Army is currently under and what the future holds as it’s tied to predictability and stability for Soldiers and their Families and also strategic messages about telling the Army story.

Other sessions on day one included an overview briefing on the Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System (DIHMRS) by MSG Marlin Simms; a research, development and acquisition overview brief by Michael Schexnayder, deputy to the command for RDA; and a Future Warfare Center brief by Terry Nelson, SMDC/ARSTRAT Battle Lab.

Day two sessions kicked off with a war fighter overview brief by CSM Thomas R. Capel, 82nd Airborne Division, who recently returned from a 15-month tour in Afghanistan.

Day two also included briefings from SGM Thomas S. Gills and SGM Arlita Crawford from the Human

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Resources Command who discussed NCO and enlisted promotions; Lorese Dudley, SMDC/ARSTRAT Safety Office provided a safety overview briefing; and COL Kendal Cunningham, SMDC/ARSTRAT G-3 discussed command priorities and objectives for fiscal years 2008-2009.

The second day concluded with a former SMDC/ARSTRAT Command Sergeants Major discussion panel with SGM Randall Williams as the moderator. Then former CSMs Wilbur V. Adams (April 2000-March 2003) and William O. “Bill” Morgan (February 1996-June 1997) provided opening remarks followed by questions from the NCOs in attendance.

On the final day of the conference, the senior NCOs split into two groups to go on a staff ride and tour at the Satellite Development Plant in El Segundo, Calif. The attendees received briefings and were able to see up-close how this unique facility operates and produces satellites.

