



Two Key Decisions Affect NCO Leader Development

Senior NCOs will be affected by two key leader development decisions made by Chief of Staff GEN Gordon R. Sullivan. One decision means first-time first sergeants must complete the First Sergeants Course prior to assuming their duties. The second decision expands the Sergeants Major Course from six months to nine months.

Currently, only 40 percent of the active Army's first sergeants attend the five-week course at the Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas. A smaller percentage of Reserve Component first sergeants attend the RC version of the course taught at several of their schools. RC soldiers must now complete the course within a one-year window beginning six months prior to assuming their first sergeant duties. Overseas commanders were granted waiver authority to deal with cases where the constraints of overseas assignments create special circumstances. The policy is effective 1 May 1993.

GEN Sullivan's second decision, to expand the sergeants major course from six to nine months, represents a significant change in the way the Army intends to train and educate future staff and command sergeants major.

The decision means the resident course will be held once instead of twice a year. The non-resident course will remain a two-year program but will have a three-week resident phase instead of two. The additional week will be spent in a command post exercise.

In the revised course, students will master leadership and warfighting skills needed by staff and command sergeants major using a division activation model which will take them through the full nine-month program. Students will activate, train, deploy,

fight, sustain, redeploy, and reconstitute a round-up division. The purpose of the training model is to uncover the training needed by senior NCOs.

Electives will be offered to sharpen leadership competencies and prepare for next assignments. Opportunities to complete associate and bachelors degree programs will also be offered. Qualified students will be encouraged to complete the Master Fitness Trainer Course while assigned to the Sergeants Major Academy. A spouse leadership development program will be offered to student spouses who elect to participate.

The first nine-month resident course is expected to begin in August 1996. Accompanied students will be able to enroll their children in school for a full academic year. On post housing will be available within walking distance of the academy.

The Sergeant Major of the Army, Army Staff, Guard Bureau, Chief of Army Reserve and all Army major command commanders and command sergeants major participated in the decisions.

The two decisions are aimed at keeping leader development strong and meeting the Army and the Nation's future needs.

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...these decisions clearly demonstrate that we are accommodating change while maintaining our commitment to excellence.
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GEN Gordon R. Sullivan, CSA