

Parrish passes the sword to the new US Army War College command sergeant major

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Parrish passes the sword to a new command sergeant major

Command Sgt. Maj. Malcolm D. Parrish passed the ceremonial Noncommissioned Officer Sword to signify the transfer of responsibility and authority to new US Army War College Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Mark Martinez during a ceremony, June 26 at Bliss Hall.



Command Sgt. Maj. Malcolm D. Parrish relinquished his authority and responsibility of all enlisted assigned to Carlisle Barracks back to Maj. Gen. William E. Rapp, U.S. Army War College Commandant, during the Change of Responsibility, Bliss Hall, June 26.

Members of the Carlisle Barracks and U.S. Army War College community gathered to bid farewell to Parrish as he

prepares to retire and welcome his successor as the Army War College newest senior-enlisted advisor.

"I will talk about four aspects of Command Sgt. Maj. Parrish that have made him so valuable to Carlisle Barracks over the past two years," said Maj. Gen. William E. Rapp, USAWC Commandant. "First is his judgment in picking a life partner. You know that I am talking about his wife, Sharon, and the positive impact that she has had on the community. Second is his

collegiality, being a good colleague and someone who is approachable, helpful and value-added. Third is his vision and drive, which resulted in the Executive leader Course being stood up, tested, and accepted as part of the Army program. The final trait is that of his judgment and candor.

"I have come to trust his advice explicitly and that he is giving it to me straight," Rapp said about Parrish.

Command Sgt. Maj. Malcolm Parrish was charged by the Army Chief of Staff and Sergeant Major of the Army with many tasks when arriving at the US Army War College. One was to determine how the educational programs at the college can be adapted for Senior NCOs. With this mission, Parrish helped guide the development of strategic level education for Army noncommissioned officers.



USAWC Command Sgt. Maj. Malcolm D. Parrish unsheathes the ceremonial sword for inspection before passing it to Maj. Gen. William E. Rapp, the incoming Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Martinez stands ready to receive the sword during the

Parrish collaborated with the Sergeant Major of the Army, key leaders and education designers at TRADOC's Institute for NCO Professional Development, the Army Sergeant Major Management Office, the US Army Sergeants Major Academy, and the Army War College. The Army War College supported the effort by piloting The Executive Leader Course for the Army's most senior NCOs.

The Executive Leader Course is a two-week course that enhances the education of senior nominative-position Command Sergeants Major/Sergeants Major who are either currently assigned to, or projected for assignment to key positions as senior enlisted advisors and staff sergeants major at the 1-2 star command (executive) level. The ELC offers an experience that is both broadening and educational, focused on increasing attendee preparation for service at the executive and strategic levels.

"First sergeants and command sergeants major never get to pick their commanders and we wonder how the relationship will be. We get our authority from our commanders: that's what enables us to do what we do," said Parrish. "That relationship determines how effective we can be. If all that is good, [if we] share the same insights, opinions, and like each other -- we consider that a lightning strike."

"I have been fortunate to have had three, back to back," said Parrish. "Sir, I would like to thank you and Debbie, for your leadership, trust, faith, and consider this year to be a down payment on a lifelong friendship," he said to the commandant and his wife, Debbie.



Parrish, who served as the US Army War College command sergeant major since August 2013, will retire after 33 years in the Army. Before coming to his final post, he served as a command sergeant major with the 2d Cavalry Regiment, Vilseck, Germany.

Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Martinez is a native of Colorado Springs, Co. He began his career in the United States Army in 1989 upon the completion of Infantry



Basic Training (OSUT) at Ft. Benning, Georgia. Martinez's previous assignment was

Command Sgt. Maj. 1st Brigade U.S. Army Cadet Command, Fort Knox, Kentucky.

USAWC new Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Martinez accepts the sword, representing the transfer of responsibility and authority of all enlisted service members and their families, from Maj. Gen. William E. Rapp during the Change of Responsibility, Bliss Hall, June 26.

“To the officers, Soldiers, DoD civilians, contractors and families of Carlisle Barracks, it's truly and honor to serve alongside of you in the outstanding community,” Martinez said.

“Greatness is not something that just happens. It comes from being great every day, from treating each other with dignity and respect every day, from giving 110 percent every day and when you put enough great days together you are able to achieve greatness as a community,” he said.

Martinez has held every leadership position in infantry units. He holds a bachelor's degree from Excelsior College and is a graduate of the Army Sergeants Major Academy. Combat tours include OPERATION JUST CAUSE, OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM and three tours for OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM.

Martinez's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal with V device, Bronze Star Medal (3 oak leaf clusters) Meritorious Service Medal (5 oak leaf cluster), Army Commendation Medal (1 oak leaf clusters) and the Army Achievement Medal (2 oak leaf clusters). Command Sergeant Major Martinez is also a member of the prestigious Sergeant Morales Club and Sergeant Audie Murphy Club.

The passing of the sword signifies the transfer of responsibility and authority from the outgoing to incoming command sergeant major. In 1840, The War Department adopted the unique noncommissioned officers sword. It is a completely functional weapon, not intended for display, but rather for hard and dedicated use. While no longer part of the Army's inventory, American sergeants wore it for over 70 years



during a period of time that included the Mexican-American war, the Civil War, and the Spanish-American War.

Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Martinez, US Army War College inspects the sword before he returns it to its scabbard during the Change of Responsibility, Bliss Hall, June 26.

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