



Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel A. Dailey, then the command sergeant major of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, stops by a checkpoint in Baghdad on Oct. 30, 2008, during his fourth combat deployment. It was announced Nov. 3 that Dailey will become the 15th sergeant major of the Army in January 2015. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

The Next SMA: ‘You Just Have to Work Hard, Take the Hard Jobs and Do the Right Things’

By Michael L. Lewis

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After 25 years as a Soldier and three years as the command sergeant major of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine command, the Army still managed to surprise Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel A. Dailey last month when its chief of staff, Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, told Dailey he had been chosen to become the 15th sergeant major of the Army. Dailey’s appointment to replace the office’s incumbent, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III, was announced Monday and is expected to take effect at the end of January with Chandler’s retirement.

“I was extremely humbled,” Dailey said. “It’s really tough to realize that you would ever be selected for such a prestigious position that requires a great amount of responsibility and accountability to the Soldiers of the U.S. Army. I was surprised and shocked, but mostly I was humbled by the fact that the chief of staff of the Army has chosen me to represent Soldiers. But I tell people that anybody can be the sergeant major of the Army; you just have to work hard, take the hard jobs and do the right things.”

Dailey, originally from the eastern Pennsylvania town of Palmerton, enlisted as an 11B infantryman in



Gen. Robert W. Cone, commanding general of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, and Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel A. Dailey, TRADOC's command sergeant major, salute the colors as the flag is lowered during Dailey's welcome ceremony at Fort Eustis, Va., in December 2011. (Photo by Sgt. Angelica Golindano)

1989. During his first assignment as a radio telephone operator and rifleman with 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, at Schweinfurt, Germany, he deployed to Saudi Arabia and Iraq in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Upon returning to Germany, he continued with the 1-15 as a team leader and as a commander's gunner, and was soon promoted to sergeant.

"I attribute my success to great leadership at the start of my career," Dailey said. "I had the best squad leader in the battalion — it was Staff Sgt. Davis — and he did everything he could to make sure we were brought up right. The first leader a Soldier has is critically important and sets the foundation of success for that Soldier. That's why I say first-line leadership is the most important leadership the Army has."

At his next assignment, as a Bradley Fighting Vehicle commander and battalion master gunner with 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, he rose to the rank of staff sergeant. In 1996, he spent 12 months with 2nd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, at Camp Casey, South Korea, where he served as a section leader and was promoted to sergeant first class.

"I spent a lot of time taking the hard assignments," Dailey said. "I always went where the Army told me to go — even when it was tough to leave your family and go to Korea, or to the other theaters of operation."

After his tour in Korea, Dailey served as a Primary Leadership Development Course instructor and later as a platoon sergeant at Fort Stewart, Ga. During his time as an instructor, Dailey says he grew much as an NCO professional, which is why he recommends such work to all noncommissioned officers.

"The NCO of the future has to have a broad range of assignments," Dailey said. "We've got to get out of the traditional mindset of staying in the operational domain. [NCOs] have to go out there and be a drill sergeant; they have to go out there and be an instructor. It builds subject-matter expertise and, in the end, is a payback to the organization while broadening the capabilities and skills of noncommissioned officers."

In 2001, Dailey was reassigned to the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, at Fort Carson, Colo. There, he was promoted to first sergeant of C Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, and later of the battalion's Headquarters and Headquarters

Company, with whom he deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2003 to 2004. He was a member of Class 54 of the Sergeants Major Course at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, in 2004 before returning to the 1-8 to serve as the battalion's command sergeant major and again deploying to Iraq.

He was selected in 2007 to become the command sergeant major of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, with whom he deployed a fourth time from 2007 to 2009. In March 2009, he was selected as the 4th ID's command sergeant major, serving also as the command sergeant major of Fort Carson and of U.S. Division-North in Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn during his fifth combat deployment.

He began his most recent assignment at TRADOC in December 2011. As the top enlisted leader at the command in charge of Soldiers' professional development, Dailey said he has relied on his educational experiences to be successful.

"I always took my institutional education very seriously," he said. "I always tried to do the best that I could and maintain focus on staying in the books. What I also attribute to my success was going to Ranger School. That's a very, very good school that develops leaders and produces the type of Soldier that can sustain over time. Also, the Master Gunnery Course — in my field, it's a very challenging course that a lot of noncommissioned officers stay away from. But that really helped me advance my career as a young, junior noncommissioned officer.

"I also always encourage noncommissioned officers to go out and get their civilian education," said Dailey, who graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree from Excelsior University. "Though the NCO Education System will provide the fundamental skills necessary to perform NCOs' duties and responsibilities, NCOs also have to be well-rounded, and college

is going to give them that level of expertise. It's definitely something that noncommissioned officers need to pursue on their own."

Though he has not begun his tenure as the senior enlisted advisor to the chief of staff of the Army, Dailey said he will continue pushing forward the Army's focus on leader development.

"I told the chief that I fully believe in his strategic priorities," he said. "NCO 2020 really identified for us where we need to take the NCO Corps for 2025. We need to take a look at our curriculum and add rigor and relevance to the levels of NCOES. We need to do a better job synchronizing our Structured Self-Development levels with the institutional training and experience they are supposed to complement. We're getting ready to add another level of NCOES — there was always a gap at Skill Level 5 and master sergeant. We're also looking to maximize the equivalency for accreditation for what Soldiers do in their MOSs and how that translates to civilian and academic equivalency.

"But overall, I think we are postured for success in the future. We have to make sure our noncommissioned officers realize that, in order to maintain the pace of staying ahead of our adversaries, we have to embrace



Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel A. Dailey

change. Change is always going to occur, and sometimes it's the toughest thing to do because it's not how we've done things in the past. But if we want to stay ahead of the game, we're going to have to continue changing."

As he looks ahead toward being sworn in as the 15th sergeant major of the Army at a Pentagon ceremony Jan. 30, Dailey said he couldn't be more proud of where the NCO Corps is and where it's headed.

"We are heading into a world that is complex and we know the challenges we face in the future. But we remain the best NCO Corps in the world," he said. "We're going to be faced with challenges, and they're going to be different. It's going to continue to take sacrifice, as it does now. It's not going to get any easier. But I think the future is bright for the noncommissioned officers of our Army." ■

The Sergeants Major of the Army

1. William O. Wooldridge July 1966–August 1968
2. George W. Dunaway September 1968–September 1970
3. Silas L. Copeland October 1970–June 1973
4. Leon L. Van Autreve July 1973–June 1975
5. William G. Bainbridge July 1975–June 1979
6. William A. Connelly July 1979–June 1983
7. Glen E. Morrell July 1983–July 1987
8. Julius W. Gates July 1987–June 1991
9. Richard A. Kidd July 1991–June 1995
10. Gene C. McKinney July 1995–October 1997
11. Robert E. Hall October 1997–June 2000
12. Jack L. Tilley June 2000–January 2004
13. Kenneth O. Preston January 2004–March 2011
14. Raymond F. Chandler III March 2011–January 2015 (announced)



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