

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR DEBRA E. SMITH

US Army, Retired



CSM Smith entered the Army in 1973. She attended basic training at Fort McClellan, Alabama and Morse Code Operator training at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. Her first assignment was at Field Station Korea in 1975. After her tour in Korea, she returned stateside and was assigned to the Military Intelligence Group, Fort Meade, Maryland. While there she served as a Morse Operator and attended the Cryptologic Course for Service Supervisors.

In 1978, CSM Smith was assigned to Field Station Augsburg. She served as a Signals Search and Development Operator and Section Supervisor. Her next assignment returned her to the Intelligence School, Fort Devens, where she served as an Instructor and Platoon Sergeant. She was reassigned to Field Station Berlin in 1983 as a Platoon

Sergeant and subsequently as the Non Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) of the NCO Development Course. During her assignment in Berlin, CSM Smith was selected to the Sergeant Morales Club. She transferred to the 714th MI Battalion, Augsburg, Germany in 1985 where she was again given the opportunity to serve as Platoon Sergeant and NCOIC, Manual Morse Division.

CSM Smith departed Augsburg in 1986 to attend the Cryptologist Course for Senior Supervisors en route to an assignment at Fort Huachuca as an Advanced NCO Course (ANCOC) Instructor in the MI NCO Academy. In 1987 she was assigned to Field Station Panama to the 747th MI Battalion as a First Sergeant. In 1989, she departed Panama and attended the US Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas. Her next assignment was with the Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) as the Career Management Field 98 (Signals Intelligence) Training Manager.

On 18 July 1991, CSM Smith was appointed to the rank of Command Sergeant Major, becoming the first female in the MI Corps to attain that rank. She initially served as the Command Sergeant Major of the 731st MI Battalion and then with the 733rd MI Battalion in Kunia, Hawaii. As the Command Sergeant Major of both of these units, she established a highly regarded NCO Development Program which was modeled throughout INSCOM. She was singled out to be the Command Sergeant Major of the 733rd MI Battalion during its activation. Her efforts resulted in putting the newest battalion within INSCOM on a sound operational footing in record time.

Her next assignment sent her to the 344th MI Battalion, Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas. Her personal leadership during an unprecedented kidnapping and murder of a Soldier within the unit served to focus efforts and provide much needed stability to the unit. She later used this experience to train and teach others on how to deal effectively with "Trauma and Serious Incidents in Units."

In February 1996, she again returned to Fort Huachuca as the Command Sergeant Major of the 111th MI Brigade. During a period of serious personnel turbulence resulting from downsizing and realigning the forces across the Army, she continued to instill pride in the unit and to build Intelligence Soldiers second to none.

Her final assignment began in May 1997 as the Command Sergeant Major for the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) and Presidio of Monterey, California. She continued to emphasize soldierization skills for linguists and was instrumental in bringing drill sergeants to DLIFLC to assist in this vital process.

CSM Smith retired in August 2000. Her awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and NCO Professional Development Ribbon.

CSM Smith was inducted into the MI Hall of Fame in 2004.