

U.S. Army Military History Institute
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Non-commissioned Officers

THE SERGEANT MAJOR

A Working Bibliography of MHI Sources

The position of sergeant major predates the US Army, extending at least as far back as the 16th century British Army, when that title pertained to a field grade officer. Later, the British sergeant major reverted to noncommissioned status and in the 1880s became a warrant officer, which it remains. See:

Campbell, E.S.N. A Dictionary of the Military Science. London: Baldwin & Cradock, 1830. p. 231.
U24C21.

Edwards, T.J. "The Sergeant-Major." Canadian Military Gazette (14 Jan 1930): pp. 4-5. Per.
Same in Journal of the Royal United Service Institute (RUSI) (1929), pp. 594-96.

The sergeant major title and position have always been part of the noncommissioned officer structure of the U.S. Army, but the present so-called supergrade E-9 did not appear until 1958. See:

Farrow's Military Encyclopedia. Vol. III. NY: Farrow, 1885. p. 51 Ref.

"The Reason Why." Army Information Digest (May 1965): p.21. Per.

Details of the sergeant major's duties in the early 1900s appear in James A. Moss, Noncommissioned Officers' Manual (Mensha, WI: Banta, 1909; U123M92), pp. 61-64. For more recent descriptions of their functions, see the following articles, all written by sergeants major:

Begg, Robert B. "Sergeants Major." Army (Jan 1966): pp. 37-39. Per.

Elder, Daniel K., et. al. The Sergeants Major of the Army. Wash, DC: CMH, 2003. 228 p.
UB408.5S47.

Gillis, John W. "The Command Sergeant Major." Armor (Mar/Apr 1979): pp. 30-32. Per.

Williams, Bob L. "The Sergeant Major." Infantry (Sep/Oct 1969): pp. 16-19. Per.

Clarke, Bruce C. "A British Sergeant Major as Walking Authority'." Army Times (23 Aug 82):
p. 21. Per.

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Dobbs, John R. "They Major at Being Sergeants." Army (Dec 1974): pp. 18-22. Per.

LaVoie, John F. Papers. 3 Boxes. Arch.

Correspondence & reports cover his 1973-77 service as TRADOC's CSM.

OTHER

Bainbridge, William G. "U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy: The Founding." Army (Jan 2005): pp. 40-49. Per.

Gillespie, Mark E., et. al. The Sergeants Major of the Army. Wash, DC: CMH, 180 p. UB408.5S47.
History of the office (pp. 1-44) and biographies of first nine holders.

U.S. Army Materiel Command. AMC Command Sergeants Major Perspectives and the Global War on Terrorism. Fort Belvoir, VA: AMC Historical Office, 2007. 187 p. UB408.5A52.