

Sergeant Major bids Division farewell

By Command Sgt. Maj.
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Farewell. At the time of this writing, we are only a few weeks following the Division Change of Command and Maj. Gen. John Tindall's farewell. But, by the time you are reading this, we will be very close to my departure from the 100th Division. I will take a few minutes of your time to reflect on my experiences as a Centurymen and the last four years as your command sergeant major. I will also speculate on the challenges the future may hold for the premier division of the Army Reserve.

It has been my privilege to serve with the great soldiers of the 100th Division for a total of 26 years of my 32 years total service. Though it has not always been easy and I, like all of you, have faced trial and discouragement at times along the way, the rewards have been great; not in material wealth, but in friendships that will last a lifetime; the satisfaction of seeing a soldier I counseled and mentored succeed; the expression on the face and the light in the eyes of a recruit when he or she finally succeeds and realizes, "Oh! Now I get it!!" Perhaps my greatest reward has been knowing that we, as soldiers and trainers, collectively and individually, have been given the opportunity and obligation to make a positive difference in peoples' lives, and, on occasion, we have succeeded.

This Division is strong and has proven its worth repeatedly by excelling in the performance of its



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marvelous, above and beyond the call of duty or the reasonable expectations of the country. I don't have a crystal ball and no one can know what the future may hold for us. We know there will be change, some not to our liking. I feel confident the 100th Division will survive, and even flourish, in whatever the new environment may be. I caution each of you to refrain from being frightened or intimidated by the "rumor mill." You will hear all sorts of scenarios, some of which you won't like. When asked for your input, provide it, and be willing to embrace change even when it may not be what you expected or preferred. Change is inevitable and without it we will not survive. The Army and the 100th Division will look very different in five years. Both will need adaptive, resourceful, energetic soldiers and leaders to carry out their missions. This is not really so new. The 100th Division is much different than it was when I first walked into the Reserve Center in Murray, Ky., in 1976.

Though I might have chosen to continue serving, at this writing I am making plans to close this chapter of my life and move on to new challenges and other adventures. I have no regrets about my choice to

many varied missions. The past four years have seen many changes and improvements. We have transitioned from peace into war and our support of those operations has been

serve, or of that service ending with this assignment. I first joined this Division in 1976 following my discharge from the U.S. Marine Corps and decided to leave less than a year later, thinking this wasn't for me. Three years went by and I was recruited, for the second time, by the same soldier who had recruited me the first time, Marvin Wilson, my greatest and most respected soldier mentor. I struggled with that decision and even sought the counsel of my church pastor. He advised me that God needed people to serve him in arenas other than the church and, if that was my calling, I should pursue it. With that in mind and heart, I rejoined the 100th Division. I was almost certain I would be able to make sergeant first class before I retired. While admitting that I am far from faultless, I have let God lead me through this, and I credit Him with all success that I may be perceived with accomplishing. I know and accept that God's purpose for me in this uniform, whatever it may have been, is finished and He has something else for me to do. I have been blessed.

People who have never worn the uniform, or been the spouse or child of someone who does, will fail to understand or appreciate the feeling and bond we have for one another. It is a fraternal relationship born of adversity, shared hardships, and peril. It is love in its purest form, expressed without shame or embarrassment. I have no feelings stronger than those I have for each of you, except for my own family. That is what makes leaving so difficult.

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