

Certain CSMs to receive pay raise as an incentive

By Sean Naylor
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The Army is giving its most senior NCOs a pay raise in an attempt to persuade more of them to stay in the service.

The raise, which went into effect Oct. 1, will benefit only those command sergeants major who are rated by general officers, said Army spokesman Capt. (P) Joe Piek.

In other words, command sergeants majors of divisions, corps and higher echelons, as well as those who serve in units commanded by brigadier generals, such as corps support commands, will get the raise. But those who serve as the top NCO in battalions and brigades will not see their paycheck fatten, although they hold the same pay grade — E-9 — as those who work for their division commanders.

Piek said the raise will affect 112 active-duty NCOs: 33 who work for brigadier generals, who will receive an extra \$55 per month; 54 working for major generals, who will receive an extra \$110 per month; 15 working for lieutenant generals, who will receive an extra \$165 per month; and nine working for four-star generals, who will receive an extra \$220 per month.

Sergeant Major of the Army Gene McKinney will receive an extra \$275 per month, Piek added. The decision also means a pay raise for reserve command sergeants major in similar positions, but their pay structure was not available at press time.

The decision to reward the Army's top enlisted soldiers was made by Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Sara Lister, Piek said.

He said part of the rationale for the decision was that a colonel who commands a brigade will see his pay increase if he continues to ascend the commissioned officer rank structure. But, prior to the latest initiative, his brigade command sergeant major would not receive any pay increase for being appointed to the position of division command sergeant major. The only pay increases E-9s received until now were for longevity in service, he said.

The new pay increases will serve as an incentive to the Army's top NCOs to stay in the service and give the Army the benefit of their experience. He noted that many NCOs retire upon reaching battalion command sergeant major status.

"By then they've been in 20, 22, 24 years," he said. "For a command sergeant major to then get selected and remain as a brigade command sergeant major, and a division (command sergeant major), and continue that upward mobility, they are actually having to stay in the Army a long time for, maybe, no pay increase."

"Therefore, they are staying in the Army because they love the Army, but (although) they are working for people who have much greater levels of responsibility —, one-stars, two-stars and on up — they're not seeing any monetary reward for that," he said.

"I look at (the pay raise) as a small reward for sticking around that much longer, as opposed to retiring and going and doing something else, where they might get a higher paying job, or getting out and enjoying retirement," Piek said.

Fair to all?

The fact that the raise only applies to command sergeants major who are rated by generals is not a slight to the Army's hard-working battalion and brigade command sergeants major.

"This is in no way to lessen the amount of hard work and long hours that are put in by battalion and brigade command sergeant majors, because they do carry a great brunt of the work load," he said. "But command sergeants major must work through those positions and remain in the Army long enough to be rewarded with the positions where they are working for one-stars and division commanders."

However, another Army source predicted that battalion and brigade command sergeants majors would "hit the roof" when they found out they were being excluded from the pay raise.