

Command's senior enlisted leader moving up to USSTRATCOM

Chemical Corps CSM first selected at the four-star level

By Anne Marek
DTRA/SCC-WMD Public Affairs

Command Sergeant Major Patrick Z. Alston, command senior enlisted leader of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and U.S. Strategic Command Center for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction has been selected as the new command senior enlisted leader, U.S. Strategic Command. Alston will join USSTRATCOM as the first-ever, Army Chemical Corps command sergeant major working for a four-star commander.

Serving at the four-star level "was something that I never strived for and something I thought I'd never have the opportunity to do - it's just unheard of for a chemical guy to make it to the four-star level, much less at one of the 10 COCOMs," Alston said. "COCOMs are historically combat arms guys - to be a non-combat arms guy and make it to a COCOM level, it is really, really a distinct privilege."

Alston said the selection of a chemical corps Soldier for this post shows how much the mil-

itary has changed from the Cold War, when the U.S.'s adversary was a large, known, fixed country. "Those days are gone; now we're fighting terrorists. You really don't know who the enemy is. You don't know where the enemy is coming from," Alston said. "I think selecting individuals that are not traditional command sergeants major does send a message to the world that the times are changing; our policies and procedures are changing; our engagements are changing; and that what the President has preached - that the greatest threat to our country is a terrorist with some type of weapon of mass destruction - lines up to this selection."

"Command Sergeant Major Alston's selection for this position is a true reflection of his leadership ability, judgment, hard work, many contributions and 'can-do' reputation," said Ken Myers, DTRA/SCC-WMD director. "No one has a background that is better-suited for the USSTRATCOM position than CSM Alston."

Alston's Army career began as a medical specialist at Fort



Courtesy photo

Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick Z. Alston, command senior enlisted leader of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and U.S. Strategic Command Center for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction, has been selected as the new command senior enlisted leader, U.S. Strategic Command.

Belvoir, Va., and he later reclassified into the U.S. Army Chemical Corps. In 1993, he was selected as the detachment sergeant for the contingency support detachment responsible for then-President Bill Clinton and his administration in any incident caused by weapons of mass destruction. He was then selected as the lead instructor for the U.S. Army Chemical School Contingency On-site Inspection Training Department, facilitating the training of more than 700 on-site inspection agency inspectors.

He was assigned the duty position of command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Technical Escort Unit in 1999 and rewarded for his duties by being selected to attend to U.S. Army Sergeants Majors Academy, where he earned the rank of command sergeant major.

After completing the academy, he was assigned to the 23rd Chemical Battalion, the most forward-deployed chemical battalion in the Army. He served as the brigade command sergeant major of the 23rd Support Command - the largest

area support group on the Korean peninsula - until he was selected to become the Chemical Corps' 10th regimental command sergeant major.

As senior enlisted leader at DTRA/SCC-WMD since 2008, he offers an enlisted perspective on operational issues and missions in the global effort to counter and eliminate WMD.

Alston is married to Sgt. 1st Class Felicia Alston, the equal opportunity adviser for Fort Belvoir, whom he credits for the success of his military career. Alston said, "When God brought her into my life, it made me a better Soldier, husband and man."

Once Alston joins STRATCOM, there will be only two enlisted positions senior to his that he could assume: sergeant major of the Army, and senior enlisted adviser to the chairman.

Alston said that thought was a bit overwhelming, "but you have to stay grounded. And, you have to remember that it's only by the grace of God that you were able to move to that level - He saw something in you to say, 'You are ready for this.' Then, you have to use that in a positive aspect. You really have to use this opportunity to reach back and help others."