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By Balinda O'Neal Dresel

Passing the Non-Commissioned Officer's Saber

Alaska National Guard welcomes new senior enlisted leader

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Chief Master Sgt. Winfield Hinkley, Jr. assumed responsibility of the senior enlisted leader position of the Alaska National Guard through the passing of the Non-Commissioned Officer's Saber to Maj. Gen. Laurie Hummel, the adjutant general of Alaska, during a change-of-responsibility ceremony here Aug. 13.

The symbolism and history of the ceremony illustrates the importance upon which a commander places on the position of the senior NCO.

"We're gathered to demonstrate the health and vitality of the Alaska National Guard, and to show respect for the backbone of our – and any – American military organization, the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps," said Hummel, while highlighting the accomplishments of Chief Master Sgt. Paul Nelson's time as the senior enlisted leader and recognizing the potential of Hinkley's future service. "NCOs provide experience, leadership, technical expertise, and valuable counsel to officers on issues of importance to our Soldiers and Airmen, and their families."

Hummel's description of NCOs parallels the duties of the SEL as her advisor on all matters including joint and combined total force integration, utilization, health of the force, family matters and joint development for enlisted personnel.

"The SEL is my sounding board and confidante, always helping me remember what's most important," said Hummel, resonating on the importance of taking care of people by creating conditions for their success.

For the past two and half years, Chief Master Sgt. Paul Nelson, the outgoing SEL, led the AKNG enlisted force by advancing priorities of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs with legal, moral and ethical focus. Nelson helped establish the Ethical Fitness Program, expand the Senior Enlisted Development Program, and exposed NCOs to experiences outside of their core competencies.

"You took initiative, motivated everyone around you, and represented us well across the state and nation," said Hummel. "When I had a hard decision to make, you always were able to explain the Soldier's or Airmen's perspective, and that of their NCO leader chain."

Hummel summed up Nelson's service as simply being a rock star and embraced Hinkley's capacity to lead by virtue of a great reputation and tremendous qualifications.

As the third AKNG senior enlisted leader, Hinkley comes to the organization from being commandant of the Chief Master Sergeant Paul H. Lankford Enlisted Professional Military Education Center at McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base in Tennessee. Hinkley also has roots in the AKNG with prior service as a comptroller flight superintendent for the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Wing.

Hinkley's closing remarks led with gratitude to many individuals, starting with Hummel for taking a leap of faith on his selection followed by an appreciation for Nelson's legacy.

"What a great honor to follow Chief Nelson in this position and to serve the Soldiers and Airmen of this great state," said Hinkley. "It is through sheer excitement that I'm happy to be here and can't wait to see what tomorrow brings."

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PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **Flickr link** includes an event album with the complete selection of full-resolution, free downloadable images. (May not be accessible from all military computers.)
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/alaskanationalguard/sets/72157694357552120>
3. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/288904/alaska-national-guard-welcomes-new-senior-enlisted-advisor>



Chief Master Sgt. Paul Nelson formally relinquishes the Senior Enlisted Leader position of the Alaska National Guard through the passing of the Non-Commissioned Officer's Saber to Maj. Laurie Hummel, the adjutant general of Alaska, during an Aug. 13, 2018, change-of-responsibility ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. The symbolism and history of the ceremony illustrate the importance upon which a commander places on the position of the senior NCO. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Balinda O'Neal Dresel)



Chief Master Sgt. Winfield Hinkley, Jr. assumes responsibility as the senior enlisted leader to the adjutant general of Alaska, Maj. Gen. Laurie Hummel, through the passing of the Non-Commissioned Officer's Saber during an Aug. 13, 2018, change-of-responsibility ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. The symbolism and history of the ceremony illustrate the importance upon which a commander places on the position of the senior NCO. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Balinda O'Neal Dresel)



Chief Master Sgt. Paul Nelson gives remarks after formally relinquishing the senior enlisted leader position of the Alaska National Guard during an Aug. 13, 2018, change-of-responsibility ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. During the ceremony, Chief Master Sgt. Winfield Hinkley, Jr. assumed responsibility as the senior enlisted leader to the adjutant general of Alaska from Chief Master Sgt. Paul Nelson. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Balinda O'Neal Dresel)



Chief Master Sgt. Winfield Hinkley, Jr. gives remarks after formally accepting the senior enlisted leader position of the Alaska National Guard during an Aug. 13, 2018, change-of-responsibility ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. As SEL, Hinkley is responsible for advising TAG on all matters involving joint and combined total force integration, utilization, health of the force, family matters and joint development for enlisted personnel. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Balinda O'Neal Dresel)



From the left, Chief Master Sgt. Winfield Hinkley, Jr., Maj. Gen. Laurie Hummel and Chief Master Sgt. Paul Nelson celebrate the accomplishments of Nelson's time as the senior enlisted leader and recognize Hinkley as the new SEL during an Aug. 13, 2018, change-of-responsibility ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. As SEL, Hinkley will be responsible for advising Hummel on all matters involving joint and combined total force integration, utilization, health of the force, family matters and joint development for enlisted personnel. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Balinda O'Neal Dresel)