

Fort Leavenworth Hall of Fame

19 MAY 2009

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

CSM Philip F. Johndrow

It is a great honor to induct CSM Larry Smith into the Fort Leavenworth Hall of Fame. It means a great deal to me to have the opportunity to give remarks about a leader who has personally meant so much to me.

In 1982, there was a tough, hard-nosed 1SG with a reputation for high standards who bumped into a tall lanky kid from Montana who had gotten into some trouble, “You’re a combat Soldier, but you’re not going to make it if you don’t shape up!”

Well, today the lanky kid gets to stand up here for a few minutes and tell you how my tough 1SG was able to mentor and shape me.....on his way to eventually becoming the CAC CSM, and joining us on the stage today as our second HOF inductee. CSM Smith, I’m still hoping to turn out all right, and live up to your tough standards! You got me going down the right road and you channeled my energy, and for that I’m very grateful.

Most of us came back from Germany with a cuckoo clock, a beer stein, and some great memories....but not CSM Smith. He came back from his first tour with a beautiful German wife – Barbara. He and Barbara have been married for 41 years. Barbara helped lead numerous Family readiness groups at every level, and she has been a wonderful advocate for Soldiers and their Families. She still continues to serve our Soldiers and their Families here at Fort Leavenworth through her volunteer work at Army Community Service. Barbara, thank you for your years of sacrifice and service. Their daughter Michele, son-in-law Todd, and grandchildren Aidan and Sean are in the audience today. Please join me in a round of applause for the Family. (Lead applause).

CSM Smith tells me he spends his time golfing and playing with the grandkids. The grandkids call him “O-Pa” which is German for grandpa, and “O-Pa” loves to take them to Legends, and the littlest boy loves cars.

This new hobby of golf has really taken on new proportions for CSM Smith. He just bought a new set of clubs. By his own admission, he “eats and sleeps” golf, and even loves to watch it on television. He just loves the analysis, but apparently Barbara thinks he must be “brain-dead” to find this boring stuff so interesting.

I don't know what it is about the CAC CSM position and golfing. As some of you may know, I played in the CAC CDR's Golf Tournament last year and I had really never played golf before. I borrowed the necessary tools of the trade and put a smile on my face, but you can ask poor Mr. Ormond who was on my team – we didn't win! CSM Smith, if you ever find any of those "Reenlist 1<sup>st</sup> CAV" golf balls in the woods....or in the lake....or up by Harney Gym.....please bring them back to me.....I still owe Mr. Ormond a few! Looks like I could still stand to have you mentor me on the next phase of life.

CSM Smith wasn't always the easy going golfer without a care in the world. CSM Smith had a tough reputation – he wasn't a real "sunshine" guy....he wasn't going to give you a hug! He was.....a little gruff....a little "old school." If he loves you, you won't know it.....it's love, but it's tough love!

We all knew that CSM Smith had served in Vietnam with the 11<sup>th</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment, and he'd "seen the elephant" as they say. In April of 1970, he found himself as a PSG in F Troop, 11<sup>th</sup> CAV, and his unit was reassigned from a relatively quiet sector to an area called Tay Ninh close to the Cambodian border, an area Americans referred to as "The Iron Triangle." On 15 April, his unit drove their M113s and M60 tanks to the region and got settled in on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Over the next two weeks, the 11<sup>th</sup> CAV, who had backfilled an area once occupied by two infantry divisions, suffered over 300 casualties.

Looking back on it now, CSM Smith knew what we couldn't possibly know at the time – what it took to survive and win in combat. All that "tough love" he gave us wasn't pointless harassment or callousness – he was preparing us for places we'd later serve – places like Iraq and Afghanistan. CSM, thank you for taking your profession seriously. My being here today, and the way I approached leading in combat for over 42 months, is a testimony to your development and training.

CSM Smith approached every job with precision, seriousness, and a focus on creating lethal warfighters who could fight and win our Nation's wars. He developed quite a reputation for being a no-nonsense leader who commanded incredible respect from the Troops with whom he served.

I first met CSM Larry Smith in Schweinfurt, Germany, when he took over Delta Company, 2-64 Armor. Back then, he was 1SG Smith, and he came from an HHC Company where he'd "cleaned house" of the riff-raff, and we'd all heard about him by reputation. We knew he could run....and he didn't let us down. Six-mile runs every Monday morning was the standard and that kept more than a few of us honest over the weekend. We all knew we'd better finish!

1SG Smith could get your attention! I recall he had two notebooks – the one that set quietly on his desk, and the one that he threw and that exploded – it was like a Hollywood prop!

If you ask CSM Smith what he's most proud of in his 34 ½ years of service, he'll tell you being a 1SG. He was a 1SG eight times for a total of 11 years. This exemplifies the type of Soldier CSM Smith was. He never shied from the tough jobs, and he always wanted to be where he could have the greatest personal impact on our Soldiers. He once shared with me a few take aways from those years that he never forgot:

1. Have standards and enforce those standards.
2. Know your profession.
3. Take care of your Soldiers and their Families.

One thing that strikes you when you talk to CSM Larry Smith about his time in the Army is that our Army is a Family.....and it's really a small, interconnected group of people. Just take a look at the picture of the commanders and senior staff while he was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division CSM – there in the back row – a COL named Shinseki – perhaps you all have heard of him? COL Chilcoat later retired as a LTG. COL Ellis later became the FORSCOM CDR, and then there was a young major who was a BDE S3 – some guy named Dave Petraeus – wonder where he ended up CSM?

I don't mention these names just to name drop, but to highlight the role that CSM Smith and other NCOs had in shaping our Army by mentoring these great officers who later went on to lead at the highest levels in our Army. Speaking of the "Family" – we have a picture of LTG Caldwell's father, LTG William B. Caldwell, III, "the real Bill Caldwell" as he likes to say, pinning SFC on CSM Smith. (show picture of C3's father pinning E-7 on CSM Smith). It really is a small Army...and things come full circle.

CSM Larry Smith is a modern hero. He served in Vietnam with the 11th ACR and held the line in a divided Germany with a host of armored units. Along the way he led and mentored at every possible enlisted leadership position, culminating in service as the Combined Arms Center CSM from 1991-94.

He fondly recalls the two big initiatives while he was the CAC CSM:

- Beginning dialogue with the Russians again.
- Introducing computers to the Combined Arms Center.

After retirement, CSM Smith continued his selfless service as the President of the Henry Leavenworth Chapter of the Association of the United States Army, the Executive Vice President for Enlisted Affairs for the 5th Region AUSA, a member of the Fort Leavenworth Retiree Council, and a recent member of the Army's Chief of Staff Retiree Council.

Along the way he touched the lives of thousands of young men and women....and he continues to do so. Two times in the last week he was here on post supporting programs that benefit Soldiers and their Families. Truly, we are fortunate to have such a selfless public servant in our community. You are a wonderful example to so many.