

The Air Force Senior NCO Academy produces enlisted leaders ready for the next century.

Lessons in Leadership

Photographs by Paul Kennedy



CMSAF RICHARD D. KISLING
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The central building of the Air Force Senior NCO Academy at Maxwell AFB, Gunter Annex, Ala., is named for the third Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, the late Richard D. Kisling. Some of the academy's Class 96-D members chat near a statue of the Chief in the lobby of Kisling Hall (l-r): SMSgt. Luther Ponder, SMSgt. Susan B. Vanvactor, MSgt. Randy E. McFadden, SMSgt. Stephen M. Fenwick, and SMSgt. Steven D. Stucky.

KISLING HALL



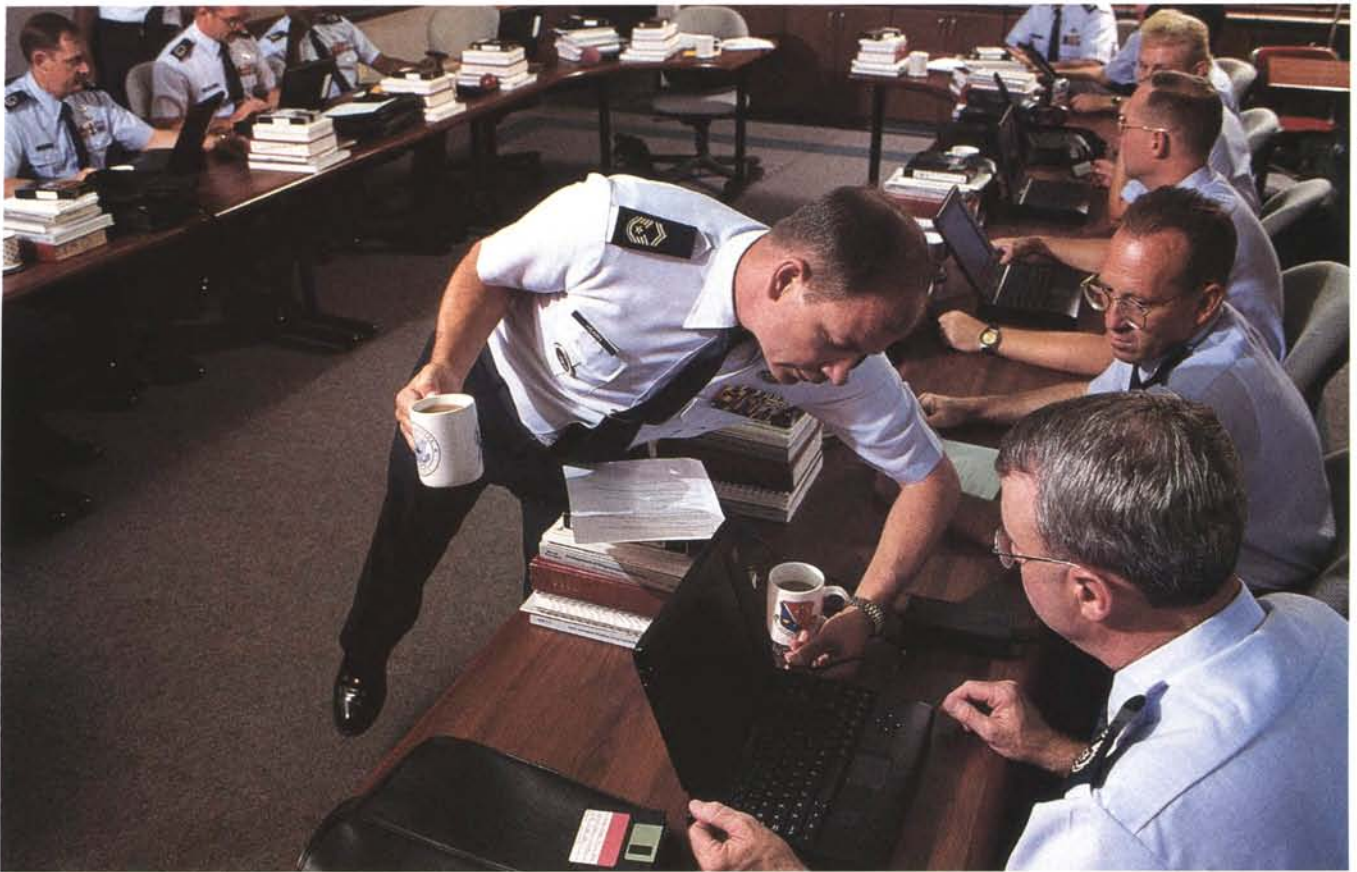


Long before these senior enlisted men and women lined up on Class 96-D's July graduation day at the academy (left), they had proven their leadership abilities and met the high standards for admission into the program considered the capstone of enlisted professional military education. Most have about nineteen years of active-duty service. Attendance at the academy is a prerequisite for promotion to chief master sergeant.

The Senior NCO Academy is part of the College for Enlisted Professional Military Education, also located at Gunter Annex. The college carries out Air University's responsibility for educating the Air Force's future enlisted leaders. It also commands nine NCO academies, USAF Enlisted Heritage Hall, and the Educational Programs Cadre. The cadre develops resident and nonresident course curriculums for seventy-three airman leadership schools and fourteen NCO academies as well as for the Senior NCO Academy. Through its efforts, an average of 26,000 resident and nearly 13,000 correspondence course students graduate each year.



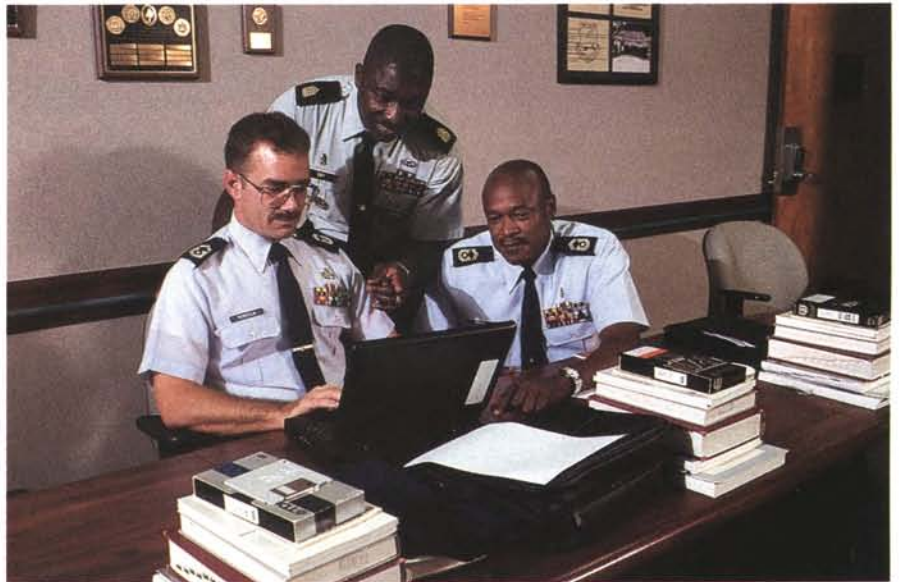
The college's Educational Programs Cadre is developing a CD-ROM version of the Senior NCO Academy correspondence course. Here, CMSgt. Larry E. Keith (left), the college's chief of Management Information Systems Support, records audio files for this interactive courseware project, while MSgt. John L. Cannady, Jr., works on audio-video support. Another project at the college aims to refine the NCO Academy and leadership school curriculums to emphasize communication, leadership, and management skills.



Once the curriculum is developed, it is up to Senior NCO Academy instructors, such as SMSgt. (CMSgt. selectee) John P. Hearn (above), to teach it. The instructors are selected for a four-year tour at the school and receive extensive training before they begin teaching.

An academy class lasts seven weeks, totaling up to 280 hours of instruction, worth thirteen credit-hours from the Community College of the Air Force. Five classes graduate each year, and almost 1,800 students enroll annually.

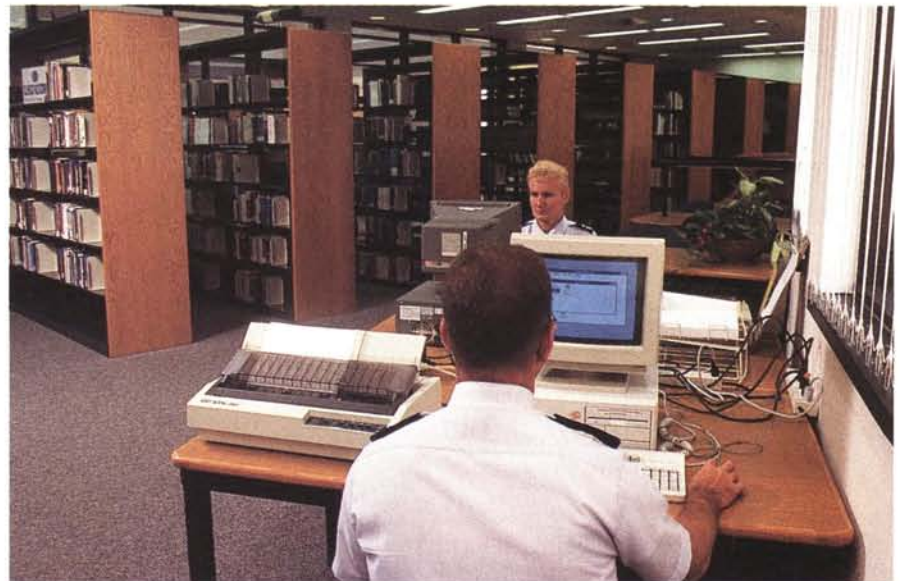
The Senior NCO Academy faculty includes instructors from the Air National Guard, the Air Force Reserve, the Navy, and the Army. At right, Army Sgt. Maj. Willie L. Day, a division chief, guides two Air Force students, SMSgt. Richard H. McCrea, Jr. (left), and SMSgt. Bennie C. Brown. USAF members teach at the Army's Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Tex., and at the Navy's Senior Enlisted Academy at Newport, R. I. There is also an instructor exchange program with the German NCO Academy at Appen, Germany.





In the USAF Enlisted Heritage Hall, CMSAF David J. Campanale prepares to record his part of an interactive courseware video. Adjacent to the Senior NCO Academy and dedicated in February 1984, Heritage Hall highlights many achievements of USAF's enlisted force. The Senior NCO Academy graduated its first class in March 1973. It included three future Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force: Thomas N. Barnes (who held the post from 1973 to 1977), James M. McCoy (1979-1981), and Sam E. Parish (1983-86). Former Chiefs often visit the academy as speakers and special guests, imbuing today's enlisted leaders with a sense of Air Force history.

The school maintains a vast, modern library, open not only to resident students but also linked to other professional military education facilities worldwide. Here, SMSgt. Ila K. Carter makes her way along the information highway. The academy is on the Internet at <http://www.au.af.mil/au/cepme/sncoa/sncoa.htm>.



Having put in long hours in the library and classroom, Sergeant Brown welcomed his graduation day in July. During the course, resident students must live in an on-base dormitory, so Sergeant Brown especially enjoyed this reunion with his son, Curtis, who helped him get ready for the ceremony.



On graduation day, Air Force Senior NCO Academy students take pride in having completed a milestone in their careers: seven weeks of intensive course work in leadership and management, communication skills, profession of arms, and specialized studies. The rigorous academic training they have received will help them better guide their troops. The cycle of training, education, and development will continue, as, just a few weeks later, a new group of students will enter Kisling Hall, ready to expand their leadership capabilities and earn their place among the Air Force's senior enlisted leaders. ■

