



NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD

NEWS RELEASE

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**NEBRASKA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
SENIOR ENLISTED LEADERS CHANGE
DURING CEREMONY IN LINCOLN**

**Released by
Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

By Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen
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Public Affairs Office

LINCOLN, Neb. – The Nebraska Army National Guard’s senior enlisted leadership saw a changing of the guard, Aug. 8, during a State Command Sergeant Major Change of Responsibility Ceremony in the Joint Force Headquarters Building.

Soldiers and Airmen, senior Guard command staff, family and friends assembled to say goodbye to outgoing Command Sgt. Maj. Eli Valenzuela and to welcome Command Sgt. Maj. Marty Baker, the newly appointed state command sergeant major. The state command sergeant serves as the principle advisor to the Nebraska adjutant general and senior Nebraska Army National Guard leaders on all matters affecting the state’s enlisted Soldiers.

“He’s been my battle buddy in leading the Soldiers in the Nebraska Army National Guard,” said Maj. Gen. Daryl L. Bohac, the Nebraska adjutant general about Valenzuela, who had served in the senior enlisted leader post since February 2010. “You have served with distinction, honor and integrity. So while not retiring today, it will be a distinct privilege to say ‘I served with you, sergeant major’—I’m a better officer, a better leader and a better person.”

Valenzuela enlisted in the Nebraska Army National Guard and attended basic and advanced individual training at Fort Sill, Okla. in 1979. During his military career, Valenzuela served as an artilleryman, signalman, noncommissioned officer education system (NCOES) instructor, drill sergeant and military policeman. He earned a bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Management from Concordia University.

Valenzuela’s military career includes a deployment to Bosnia and Herzegovina in support of Operation Joint Forge in 2002, and a deployment to Iraq in 2006 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Among his several awards and decorations, Valenzuela has been awarded the Bronze Star Medal and four Meritorious Service Medals.

“It has been an honor to serve as your state command sergeant major over the last five and a half years,” said Valenzuela, who will be assuming a senior enlisted National Guard leadership post at Fort Leavenworth’s Combined Arms Center. “You’re a National Guard that is ready to serve.”

Valenzuela was appointed to the position of state command sergeant major in 2010 by then Brig. Gen. Judd Lyons, former Nebraska National Guard adjutant general. Prior to serving as the state’s top enlisted Soldier, he spent 25 years with the Nebraska State Patrol. There, Valenzuela worked in the traffic division of the Nebraska State Patrol Training Academy and on the executive protection detail.

The incoming state command sergeant major, Marty Baker, is a Nebraska native with more than 34 years of military service. His recent positions include serving as command sergeant major for the 92nd Troop Command and 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade.

“First and foremost, I would like to thank (Major General) Bohac for the opportunity to serve as the 8th State Command Sergeant Major of the Nebraska Army National Guard,” said Baker. “Soldiers of the Army National Guard, we are a part of an organization with remarkable history. The future holds new challenges, but the opportunities that lay there are even greater.”

Baker earned a bachelor of Science degree in Marketing and Management from Wayne State College. He has been awarded several awards and decorations including the Bronze Star Medal and Meritorious Service Medal, and he is a graduate of the U.S. Army Airborne School in Fort Benning, Georgia. He is a veteran of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

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Photo cutlines:

Command Sgt. Maj. Eli Valenzuela, the 7th Nebraska Army National Guard state command sergeant major, looks at the state command sergeant’s major ceremonial sword before passing it to Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska National Guard adjutant general, formally ending his tour as the Nebraska Army National Guard’s state command sergeant major. (Nebraska National Guard photo by Lt. Col. Kevin Hynes)

Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, passes the state command sergeant’s major ceremonial sword to Command Sgt. Maj. Marty Baker, the Nebraska Army National Guard’s 8th state command sergeant major, during the change of responsibility ceremony held Aug. 8 at the Guard’s Joint Force Headquarters in Lincoln, Neb. (Nebraska National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Koan Nissen)