

Mr. Walz,

Thank you for your service in the Army National Guard and for your work on Veteran's affairs.

I received our local newspaper and noticed you are coming to speak at the Heron Lake Veterans Memorial dedication. The article about you states that you retired as Command Sergeant Major, as every article about you for the last ten years has. As a graduate of USASMA I can no longer remain silent concerning your rank. When a person gets promoted to Command Sergeant Major or Sergeant Major, and is not a graduate of USASMA, the promotion is conditional. I signed, as I am sure you did also, a statement that says I will complete USASMA or I will be reduced to Master Sergeant, and the promotion to E-9 will be null and void as if it had never happened. Also there is another clause that after graduation from USASMA the graduate will hold the position for two years. Promotions to E-9 are the only true conditional promotions. Without the condition of graduating from USASMA the promotion is supposed to be terminated with a reduction to Master Sergeant, which is the retired rank the Soldier would then use. It puzzles me that you walked out of the New Ulm Training & Community Center in the spring of 2005 without that paperwork in hand.

There were four of us on the OIF 4 deployment enrolled in USASMA. Two of us decided to come back and finish the two week resident phase in June 2006, sacrificing our 15 days of family leave to fulfill our obligation. The other two decided to take their family leave and finish the resident phase when they returned from combat.

It saddens me that after your long career in the National Guard, that you did not fulfill the conditions of your promotion to Command Sergeant Major. It is quite a title to have, when it has been earned. I would hope that you haven't been using the rank for political gain, but that is how it appears.

Respectfully,

Thomas H. Behrends

CSM USA Retired