



3d Brigade Station Commander of the Year

Sgt. 1st Class Cedric White
 Indianapolis Battalion
 Lafayette Station



5th Brigade Station Commander of the Year

Sgt. 1st Class Herman Jurgens
 Kansas City Battalion
 St. Robert Station

It only took a few months on recruiting duty for Sgt. 1st Class Cedric White to realize he loved it and wanted to stay. He considers it extremely rewarding to share his Army story with young men and women who don't know anything about the Army and, through the Army interview, inspire them to follow in his footsteps.

In addition to enjoying the recruiting experience, White said his first two first sergeants in USAREC made an impact on him and were integral in influencing his career path as a recruiter and now station commander with a 13-man team.

"It was the love of what they did and the belief that what we do is more meaningful than anything else in the Army," said White, who commands the station where he was a recruiter.

He said the transition wasn't too difficult because the Soldiers already respected him and he respected them, but it is a challenge with such a large team.

The father of three, who spends a great deal of time volunteering with and mentoring youth in his community, said he tries to foster a family environment in his station because they are the Army in his area of Indiana.

"When we talk to these young men and women about how the Army is a family, I like them to see that when they see my Soldiers.

"You've got 13 different personalities, you're away from the flagpole — you really have to use your counseling skills as a noncommissioned officer, as a leader, to ensure Soldiers and families are taken care of," said White.

White said he tries to ensure Soldiers are not only taking care of their families, but they are also taking care of their own personal and professional development, especially now while recruiting is going well.

"I definitely push continuing education and learning because whether you're going to be a recruiter for life or you're going to be here for a three-year tour, you have to leave with more than you came with," said White, who is seven credits short of his bachelor's degree. He wants his Soldiers to become better NCOs under his leadership and to ensure they are well-prepared to move on.

"I refuse to let any of my Soldiers not achieve their best."

Sergeant 1st Class Herman Jurgens is passionate about leadership and views his role as a leader in USAREC no differently than his role as an infantryman.

"I'm all about my Soldiers. I take care of Soldiers and we accomplish the mission. There's no difference between doing that and being an infantryman. You take care of Soldiers and you take care of their families and, in doing so, they will take care of the mission.

"Leadership should not change from the operational environment to our environment."

The job satisfaction in helping others is one of the key reasons Jurgens decided to stay in USAREC. He also considers himself fortunate to have had the opportunity to watch his 4-year-old son grow during the past three years.

Though it's his first year at the USAREC board, Jurgens, who earned the Morrell Award in two years, was brigade runner-up for recruiter of the year his first year on recruiting duty and runner-up for brigade station commander of the year last year.

"It's a great opportunity for lateral communication among your peers," Jurgens said of the board process. "You are here among successful people from across the command. That in itself is valuable — everyone does things a little bit differently, every recruiting market is different and you can learn from that."

Jurgens said his biggest challenge in assuming station command in July 2009 was improving the climate. The quality of life was not at the level he thought it should be and the mood was tense and confrontational. He strives to create an environment in which his Soldiers know he cares about them, they are comfortable coming to him for help and learning from him.

He said having a successful recruiting station means nothing. "It's how you go about accomplishing the mission, it's how you go about taking care of your Soldiers. It's about setting the standard and leading by example."

His success is evidenced by the fact that one of his recruiters, Sgt. Shawndelin Hall, was the battalion's top new recruiter for FY 09 and recruiter of the year in FY 10. She's got a lot of good things headed her way, and Jurgens said he'd like to think he had something to do with it.



6th Brigade Station Commander of the Year

Sgt. 1st Class Jose Hernandez
 Fresno Battalion
 Merced Station



Medical Brigade Station Commander of the Year

Sgt. 1st Class Jorge Larez
 5th MRB
 San Antonio MRS

Though he was “voluntold” to come to USAREC in 2005, Sgt. 1st Class Jose Hernandez said it was the leadership, environment and camaraderie at his first recruiting station, as well as the opportunity to help others in a new way, that made his decision to convert to recruiting duty easy.

Now as a station commander himself, he said he strives to foster that same camaraderie, teamwork and esprit de corps within his station. Hernandez said he considers his recruiters his extended family and it seems to be catching on within his own family. When his daughter was preparing invitations for her 8th birthday party in early October, she had all his recruiters on her guest list.

“We all are a family; we operate on that level,” said Hernandez, who’s been in the Army since 1998. “People come with strengths and weaknesses and you’ve got to give and take to make it work.”

Hernandez, who keeps in close contact with many of the recruiters and station commanders he “grew up with” in recruiting, said it’s important for recruiters to build networks maintain those connections across the command to share ideas and seek advice. He looks at the board process as a new avenue to add to his network and continue to develop as a Soldier and leader.

“You get out of your comfort zone and you increase your knowledge by digging into the regulations,” he said.

The former Marine said he came to the Army in 1998 for professional development. “They didn’t have what I needed [in the Marines] — that next step. I took to the Army – I found my niche and I stayed. Til my wheels fall off hopefully I’ll be able to stay in the Army.”

His leadership philosophy: Do your job, but don’t just do the minimum. “Go above and beyond, put in a little extra effort and everything comes out even better.”

He added that working hard, doesn’t mean working long.

“Take care of your Future Soldiers and their family members, because they will make your mission if you take care of them.” He said they will bring referrals and help establish a community environment for success.

Sergeant 1st Class Jorge Larez leads by example. The Medical Recruiting Brigade Station Commander of the Year wasn’t the only NCO in his station competing for honors this year. One of his recruiters was named the battalion NCO of the Year and was runner-up at the brigade and another earned battalion Reserve recruiter of the year.

“I don’t push them to do that stuff. I think by me setting the example they want to do it. It’s one thing to tell your Soldiers to go do it, but if you’re setting the example, you give them something to model after,” said Larez, who prepared for the board with his recruiters as a team, which he said made them all better prepared.

Coming to USAREC through the corporal recruiting program, Larez liked it so much he decided to stay. While he began as an enlisted recruiter, Larez said he finds more enjoyment in the challenge of medical recruiting, which he has been doing for six years now.

“You can’t just find a doctor hanging out at the mall,” he said. He prefers the additional planning and targeting aspects of medical recruiting.

His advice to for success as a station commander: set the example.

“Don’t ask your Soldiers to do something you’re not willing to do, or you can’t show them how to do,” he said. “If you show them that you care, they will do anything for you.”

At this point in his career, Larez said he is not as focused on promotion as he is his personal and professional development.

“I’m going to do what I feel what is best for me and my family,” said Larez, who is working on his master’s degree in business leadership. “You can’t really focus on what everyone else is doing, you can only focus on what you’re doing and hope that it’s good enough.”

Beyond the Army, he wants to ensure he has a good foundation at home — a strong relationship with both family and church. He said the birth of his 15-month-old daughter changed his life and his priorities.

“Now I just want to do stuff so my daughter will be proud of me.”

Articles by Julia Bobick, Editor
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Station Commander of the Year Runner-Up
Sgt. 1st Class Johnny Roman
 2d Brigade
 Miami Battalion
 San German Station



USAREC Station Commander of the Year
Sgt. 1st Class Jessica LaPointe
 1st Brigade
 Baltimore Battalion
 Wilmington Station

After serving 10 years as an infantry Soldier, Sgt. 1st Class Johnny Roman volunteered to become a recruiter both for a new career experience and for the opportunity to return home to Puerto Rico to assist his mom in caring for his father, who is struggling with Alzheimer's disease.

His decision to convert was based on what he felt was the best way to finish his career — go back to the infantry or stay in recruiting. The fact he has been able to recruit in and near his hometown and the countless rewards of recruiting duty made the difference.

"This is the toughest, most difficult assignment I've had, and I've been in combat a few times," said Roman, who'd deployed to Kosovo, Macedonia and twice to Iraq. But he said recruiting is definitely rewarding.

Hearing from the Soldiers he enlisted about how happy they are and how well they are doing makes the hard work worthwhile. "I'm giving them the chance that I had, and it feels good. It is gratifying; you know that you are helping that family or that kid get to college eventually for free using the Army programs and just develop himself into a better citizen."

Roman's basic philosophy is to treat people with respect and always do the right thing. He believes when you treat people well, with dignity and respect, "They will love you, do anything for you, be honest with you, and that way you can create a great network of people who want to help you in your recruiting efforts. I like to ensure that everybody who comes to my station feels they are welcome there, and they want to come back."

He also enforces basic Soldiering skills and physical training to ensure his Soldiers remain well-prepared.

His advice to station commanders: "Know your Soldiers, know their capabilities and make sure you teach everything you know or as much as you can to those Soldiers because that is the way to develop them to become future station commanders." Instead of just answering their questions, Roman said he trains his NCOs by telling them where to go find the information they need.

"That way they will learn. If I just tell them they won't remember. But if they go look for it, they know where it's at, now they know how to do it and they will remember it.

"If they know as much as you do, you're set."

Sergeant 1st Class Jessica LaPointe is not shy about admitting she was upset — angry even — when she got selected for recruiting duty in 2005. With 15 years in the Army she came to USAREC with her mind set against converting, but something changed when, with orders to leave the command, she got extended.

"I became accepting of my assignment and my whole attitude changed," said LaPointe, who really began thinking about how she could make a difference in her community and the world by returning to her previous MOS. She realized she made a difference in recruiting that she couldn't do anywhere else in the Army.

In addition, LaPointe said, with the help of her battalion command sergeant major, she began to see the bigger picture of recruiting and what it can offer. The most important thing she's learned in her 15 months of station command is being humble, putting her ego aside and realizing that her life and career weren't just about her anymore.

"It was about [my Soldiers] and about leaving the station better than when I arrived. I have to teach, coach and mentor ... to get them to the level they need to be. The biggest thing I was trying to bring was making us a team, not to be individuals, because when we work together as a team there's nothing we can't accomplish."

LaPointe is proud of her NCOs and what they've accomplished as a team, and strives to help them realize their potential, just as her many leadership teams and peers have done for her throughout her career.

"I believe in my NCOs, getting them to believe it [is tougher]. One of the greatest things you can do as a leader is inspire others. When you see them start to achieve it, even through the frustrations and the ups and downs — when all of a sudden you see them moving forward — that's huge. It makes you feel like everything we are doing is important and makes a difference.

"We should be training our NCOs to take our spot, and we shouldn't be afraid to do that."

Her advice for success in recruiting, first and foremost: accept it. Be open to new ideas, be willing to take risks, be part of the team, be honest with yourself and others, and be a little bit humble and ask for help.