

Green berets get new top warrant officer

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After six years on the job, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Lawrence Plesser handed over his responsibilities as the U.S. Army Special Forces Command's chief warrant officer to Chief Warrant Officer 5 Roy Tolbert.

The change of responsibility took place Friday inside the Maj. Gen. Robert G. McClure building on Fort Bragg, N.C., during a ceremony in which Plesser also was awarded a Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service and achievement.

"The history of the Special Forces warrant officer program is significant, and it has been a success," USASFC commander Maj. Gen. Thomas R. Csrnko said in a press release. "Plesser has been a big part of that success."

During his tenure, Plesser advised seven Special Forces commanders and was instrumental in placing senior warrant officers at the Special Forces battalion and group levels, the release said.

He oversaw the quality and growth of Special Forces warrant officers since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

After graduating from the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1977 as a weapons sergeant, Plesser was assigned to the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne).

In 1985, he was selected to become a Special Forces warrant officer and was the first warrant officer assigned to the 7th SFG (A) in 1989. During Operation Just Cause in Panama, Plesser was instrumental in the first deployment of a Special Forces Group into a combat zone since Vietnam, the release said.

"My vision when I took this job was to place warrant officers where they can best influence the command," Plesser said in the release. Before Csrnko offered him the job, he said, he had planned to retire.

"Special Forces warrant officers come from within the ranks of Special Forces non-commissioned officers, we grow our own."

Tolbert, a native of Brewton, Ala., enlisted in the Alabama National Guard in 1969. In 1972, he joined the 20th SFG (A) and completed the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1975. He was asked to come on active duty with the 5th SFG (A) at Ft. Bragg, N.C. in 1982.