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RELEASE #2009-02-27-3 **2009: THE YEAR OF THE NCO** February 27, 2009

Joint Multinational Training Command ceremony pays tribute to Army's 'Year of the NCO'

By Spc. Gerald Wilson

Joint Multinational Training Command Public Affairs Office

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany -- “No one is more professional than I. I am a noncommissioned officer, a leader of Soldiers. As a noncommissioned officer, I realize that I am a member of a time-honored corps, which is known as ‘The Backbone of the Army.’”

Those words from the Army NCO Creed rang out in the Grafenwoehr Fitness Center as more than 100 active and retired Soldiers gathered Feb. 26 to recognize the achievements of Army noncommissioned officers during the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command kick-off ceremony for the “Year of the NCO.”

Secretary of the Army
Pete Geren announced

last year that during 2009 the Army plans to showcase the NCO story and honor the sacrifices and achievements of its NCO Corps.



SPC GERALD WILSON

Soldiers portraying noncommissioned officers throughout the Army's history take part in a Joint Multinational Training Command ceremony marking 2009 as the 'Year of the NCO,' in Grafenwoehr, Germany, Feb. 26.

During the ceremony JMTC Command Sgt. Major Darius A. ZaGara presented a brief history of the transformation of NCOs from the Revolutionary War to the present.

ZaGara commended the NCO Corps for its professionalism.

“Our NCOs today, from command sergeants major on down, have consistently proven themselves, both within the garrison environment and on the field of battle,” he said. “You have earned the respect of your leaders, the nation you support, and have won the respect and admiration of the citizens of the United States.”

Highlighting the event was a parade of Soldiers in period military uniforms from the Revolutionary War to the present. Sgt. Kenneth Adams of the JMTC Staff Judge Advocate office led the parade in the uniform of an NCO from 1776. Adams said NCOs play a dual role as servant and leader.

“We serve our country, our commanders and we also serve our Soldiers,” Adams said. “At the same time we are called to be the leaders of our Soldiers as well as trainers for the Army.”

The sergeant said he learned the value of being an NCO while serving with Army infantry, and joining the NCO Corps is a goal he worked to reach since joined six years ago.

“I grew up in the infantry, where being an NCO is a big deal,” Adams said. “I really appreciate the opportunity I have had to lead Soldiers.”

Adams said he hopes he has shown his Soldiers the value of integrity and taking responsibility for everything that happens on their watch.

Staff Sgt. Anthony Vernon from JMTC’s range control division portrayed a Civil War Soldier during the event.

“Celebrating the Year of the NCO basically honors the way we do things,” he said. “We are always interacting with the Soldier on a hand-to-hand basis.”

“This celebration shows us that they appreciate everything we have done and will continue to do in the future,” he added.

Adams and Vernon agreed that means taking care of Soldiers.

“The Soldier is the number-one priority to me, whether it is a pay issue or training them up to come back safe from a deployment,” Vernon said. “If we look at the NCO Creed, and live that on a daily basis, we can strive to do bigger and better things.”

