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Induction ceremony a rite of passage that symbolizes new sergeants' dedication to duty

By Sgt. Micah E. Clare

U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs Office

HEIDELBERG, Germany -- While not every day is easy for noncommissioned officers, the U.S. Army Europe NCOs honored at an induction ceremony here Feb. 27 seemed to agree that it was a great day to be a sergeant.



SGT MICAH E. CLARE

A group of U.S. Army Europe noncommissioned officers pledge their commitment to their duties as NCOs during a NCO induction ceremony at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion in Heidelberg, Germany, Feb. 27.

“I wasn’t sure if I wanted to stay in the military, but after seeing this today, I’m know I can continue making an impact,” said Sgt. Jessica Carter, a human resources information system management specialist with the USAREUR personnel division.

Carter was one of 18 USAREUR NCOs honored at the ceremony, which was designed to provide official recognition for the hard

work required to earn the rank of sergeant, and induct the newly promoted in the Army's NCO Corps, said 7th Army Special Troops Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Sal Katz.

After the arrival of the official party and color guard at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion here, unit leaders moved to the front of the audience and took turns lighting three candles, symbolic of valor and hardiness, purity and innocence, perseverance and justice.

Following the candle-lighting, NCOs from corporal to command sergeant major performed a skit, each stating their rank and job duties, and finishing with each participant echoing the words, “I am that NCO.”

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Command Sgt. Maj. Ralph Beam then spoke to the inductees, challenging them to continue their hard work and dedication, maintain physical fitness, train their Soldiers to established standards, and believe in a higher purpose in all they do.



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1st Sgt. Sharon McCann of V Corps' 12th Chemical Company lights one of three candles symbolizing noncommissioned officer values during an NCO induction ceremony at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion in Heidelberg, Germany, Feb. 27.

“The sergeant’s stripes you’re wearing now will probably be the hardest stripes you’ll wear in your career,” Beam said. “The NCO business has now become your business.”

Each company first sergeant then read the names of their sponsored NCOs from a scroll. As the names were read, each NCO pledged to uphold the NCO charge, a vow of dedication to the duties of their new grade.

After sharing a few words of wisdom with the inductees, the first sergeants assembled to create a symbolic arch of sabers through which the inductees passed.

“It’s a rite of passage into the [NCO] Corps when we cross through,” said Carter. “We’re no longer just Soldiers; now we’re noncommissioned officers.”

The new NCOs also spent some time in the days prior to the induction in practice sessions with senior NCOs, getting advice and direction for their new roles, said Sgt. Juan Carreon, a USAREUR human resources specialist.

“We were taught during our practice sessions that we need to mentor those who are coming after us,” he said. “Becoming an NCO is very important for the lower enlisted, and events like this show them what they have to look forward to. It’s important to recognize Soldiers for their hard work and dedication.”

“It’s really exciting that the more we do, the more we’re appreciated,” said Carter.
“This brings new meaning to being an NCO. I want to excel in this path I’m on.”



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