



Fort Carson Mountaineer



Word of the month: **Compassion**

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Maj. Gen. Mark A. Graham, commanding general, Division West (First Army), and Fort Carson, administers the oath of enlistment to a group of noncommissioned officers March 17 in front of the post headquarters building.



CG re-ups NCOs

Story and photo by **Randy Tisor**
Mountaineer staff

Sixteen Fort Carson Soldiers from six different units participated in a reenlistment ceremony in front of the post headquarters building March 17. The group, all noncommissioned officers, was sworn in by Maj. Gen. Mark A. Graham, commanding general, Division West (First Army) and Fort Carson.

"2009 is the year of the noncommissioned officer in our Army," Graham said. "I've been in the Army over 31 years now, and I still remember the first noncommissioned officer that I ever served with." Graham recalled that the NCO was indispensable in helping him learn how the Army worked.

"We've talked often over the years that the noncommissioned officer is the backbone of the Army, and you'll

hear the chief of staff of the Army say that the Army is the strength of the nation," Graham said. "My thought is that the NCO corps is the strength of our Army. So the strength of the nation and the strength of the Army is standing before you represented by these 16 noncommissioned officers representing over 150 years of combined service to America's Army."

Graham said the group also represented 23 combined deployments to Iraq, and that 10 of the Soldiers were preparing to deploy again soon.

"Thank you all for loving Soldiers and for being noncommissioned officers and staying with our Army and being great leaders of our Army," Graham said. "We need you. Your Army needs you and America needs you. We thank you for making a commitment to sign up and stay longer. We also thank you for the sacrifices you and your Family

have gone through. This is the land of the free ... because of the brave."

Graham then administered the oath of enlistment to the group.

For Sgt. Michael Jensen, Company C, 4th Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, the ceremony came as something of a surprise.

"It wasn't what I was expecting," Jensen said, adding that he thought his re-enlistment would be much lower key. "It was nice. I didn't realize it was going to be such a big ceremony, but it was good."

Staff Sgt. Leon Patton, Company B, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th BCT, 4th ID, reenlisted for another six years. He's also preparing for an upcoming deployment to Iraq, which will take up about one year of that reenlistment. For his wife, Misty, concerns about her Family

overshadowed the ceremony.

"I'm proud of him because this is what he wants to do," Misty said, adding that "It's hard on the Family. It's his fourth deployment, so (I'm) a 'single mom' for a year. Our kids grow and (they'll have missed) four years of his life. But, it's what he does. It's what he loves, so you have to support him."

Command Sgt. Major Terry Young, Division West (First Army) and Fort Carson, said the ceremony had been planned to coincide with a visit by the Secretary of the Army, but his visit was postponed. The decision was made, he said, to stick to the original date.

"It's an exciting time in the Army — a dynamic time," Young added. "It's a new era of NCOs and they're very adaptive to the changes the Army is continuing to make."