



SGT Aaron Hengst lights a candle symbolizing the Non-Commissioned Officer igniting the eternal flame of dedication and determination during the NCO induction ceremony hosted by the 1st Space Battalion on Peterson Air Force Base on Mar. 7.

Photo by DJ Montoya

SOLDIERS BRING LIGHT TO CORPS

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1st Space Brigade Welcomes New NCOs into the Fold



Headquarters and Headquarters Company Marcus Calhoun uses "rocket fuel" to wash the newly-earned sergeant stripes of 1SG William Bassat. The 22 new non-commissioned officers (NCOs) had their rank washed with several symbolic substances, including the blood of fallen comrades and sweat from Kevlar, during the NCO induction ceremony hosted by the 1st Space Battalion. *Photo by Rachel L. Griffith*

By DJ Montoya,
1st Space Brigade Public Affairs

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. – A specially crafted candelabra with 22 flames signified the number of newly promoted sergeants from the 1st Space Brigade, U.S. Army's Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command, during an induction ceremony into the ranks of the time-honored Non-commissioned Officers Corps performed at the Base Auditorium on Peterson Air Force Base, March 7.

According to narrator SSG Maricris Remigio from the 1st Space Battalion, "The lighting of a candle by each Soldier symbolizes the NCO igniting the eternal flame of dedication and determination serving our Soldiers and this great country with pride, honor, courage, and commitment."

The ceremony began with a brief history of the NCO Corps and followed with Soldiers from the 1st Space Brigade showcasing the various NCO ranks beginning with sergeant, then proceeding to staff sergeant, platoon sergeant,

and ending with first sergeant. Three brigade NCOs read the Noncommissioned Officers Creed.

Afterwards, 1st Space Battalion CSM William C. Baker, host for the day's ceremony, introduced guest speaker Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Thomas S. Narofsky, U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Neb. Narofsky broke protocol and left the stage to impart some words of wisdom to the new inductees in the audience.

"The question is, 'How are you going to be a successful NCO?'"

"One, there is strength in the stripes you wear. Know yourself so that when you go through this time of growth you can bring that to bear for the 1st Space Brigade, the United States Army, and the joint world.

"Secondly – know your people. You have to know your folks because that is going to impact the mission. If you don't know what is happening with your folks you are failing as a leader.

"The last one is know your mission. Know everything about what we are asking you to be a part of, because I'm going to ask you to grow up to become Command Sergeant Major Turner and Command Sergeant Major Ross. You have got to know those three."

He concluded by saying, "Thank you for your service to our country. Thank you for serving in a time of war. Thank you for being the leaders you are. I look forward to your leadership. I look forward to serving with you day to day. And I would be honored to serve with you in the defense of our Nation anytime."

Those inducted into the NCO Corps during the ceremony were: SGT Herman Ada, SGT Dustin Bungart, SGT Damion Carrcarter, SGT Matthew Cater, SGT Marshall Farris, SGT John Ford, SGT Aaron Hengst, Sgt. John Lopez, SGT Stefan Lucas, SGT Robert Miller, SGT Adam Orsborn, SGT Steven Pearson, SGT Anthony Sanchez, SGT Robert Sanders, SGT Brian Stracek, SGT Kimberly Urban and SGT Nelson Villanueva, all from the 4th Space Company, 1st Space Battalion; CPL Gerald Genus, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Space Battalion; SGT Sean Beverly and SGT Marc Frazer from the 53rd Space Battalion; and SGT Victor Dance, 1st Space Brigade.

Each inductee received the Creed of the NCO and the NCO Guide from USASMDC/ARSTRAT CSM Larry S. Turner, 1st Space Brigade CSM James Ross, and Baker.

After the inductees lit their candles on the specially crafted candelabra, the three command sergeant majors in turn lit theirs symbolizing the experience and continuous commitment to the NCO Corps and the country.

The Charge of the NCO was then given to the inductees by Baker, host for the ceremony. Afterward, brigade members came forth to perform "The First Sergeants' Request" involving the new inductees. This "wetting of the stripes" included the symbolic "spirit" of a sniper's round, the essence of rocket fuel, lubricant from an obsolete Army electronic warfare program known as "Big Crow," the sweat from Kevlar, and blood.

The ceremony ended with PFC Gabriela Fernandez reciting "A Soldier's Request."



CSM William C. Baker, 1st Space Battalion, administers the charge of the noncommissioned officer to the 22 new NCOs inducted into the NCO Corps.
Photo by Dennis Hawk, USAF