



69TH ADA BRIGADE INDUCTION CEREMONY HAILS NEW NCOs

Article and photos by Sgt. Maria L. Kappell,
69th ADA Brigade Public Affairs

At left, Sgt. Joshua Eckert is formally welcomed into the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs) by the Air Defense Artillery Regimental Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Jerome Wiggins, and the 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery (4-5 ADA), Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Phifer, at Fort Hood's Howze Theater on 4 April 2013.

FORT HOOD, Texas – The 69th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Brigade welcomed dozens of new noncommissioned officers (NCOs) into its ranks during the Noncommissioned Officer Corps Induction Ceremony held on 4 April 2013 at Fort Hood's Howze Theater.

The ceremony greeted newly (within the last quarter) promoted NCOs of the Lightning Brigade with open arms, and formalized it with the traditional ceremonial welcome to the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers.

"Making my stripes was a big deal, but getting inducted into the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers made things more realistic in my journey as an NCO," said Sgt. Jadja Bernard, a tactical communications NCO assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery (HHB), 69th ADA Brigade.

The Air Defense Artillery Regimental Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Jerome Wiggins, was the guest speaker at the event. He encouraged the newly inducted NCOs to ponder the question – what exactly is a noncommissioned officer? He followed that by saying, that the way noncommissioned officers lead their troops and represent themselves, on and off duty, makes all the difference in how other Soldiers perceive them as leaders.

"It's a journey many are willing to take and few are willing to endure," Wiggins said.

Adding that it is important for leaders to do their part, to make Soldiers successful through training and preparation, Wiggins said, and the success of the Soldiers starts with the examples of the noncommissioned officers who lead them.

Noncommissioned Officers have come to be known as the backbone of the Army. Wiggins compared this essential part of the body to the Corps, stating that the backbone serves as the center of the organization, providing support and stability by training, coaching and mentoring Soldiers, as well as, being the tools that are used to accomplish a mission.

"You are the strength and stability of our organization," Wiggins said to the newly inducted and young NCOs in the audience.

At right, Soldiers from the "Lightning Brigade" (4-5 ADA) recite the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer during the NCO Corps induction ceremony on 4 April 2013 at the Howze Theater, Fort Hood, Texas.

