



# NEWS RELEASE

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Palin resolves to make 2009 Year of the Noncommissioned Officer in Alaska

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FORT RICHARDSON, Alaska, June 18 – History was made at Fort Richardson Thursday when Gov. Sarah Palin signed Senate Joint Resolution 17, proclaiming 2009 as the Year of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps of the United States Army in Alaska.

“Today Alaska joins only a handful of states that officially proclaim 2009 as the Year of the Noncommissioned Officer,” said U.S. Army Alaska Command Sgt. Maj. David O. Turnbull. “This is truly a great state to serve in.”

The resolution was passed in large part through the efforts of the Joint Legislative Veterans Caucus in support of Secretary of the Army Pete Geren’s Oct. 6, 2008, announcement that 2009 would be the Year of the Noncommissioned Officer Armywide. Representing the caucus at the ceremony were state Reps. Wes Keller and Nancy Dahlstrom.

“This resolution is a result of Alaska’s legislators coming together in support of Alaska’s military and declaring 2009 as the Year of the NCO in Alaska; and it is with great pleasure and humble appreciation for our excellent NCOs and all of our military personnel that I’ll add my signature to theirs,” Palin said.

In addition to signing SJR 17, Palin also used the occasion to carry out a ceremonial signing of an executive proclamation designating June 14 as the Day of the Noncommissioned Officer in Alaska.

“It’s a couple days past that, but I wanted to take this good opportunity to present it to you today,” Palin said of the proclamation, which was originally signed June 9. The governor said she has been told that Army leadership needs to look no further than to an NCO to solve a problem.

“America’s NCOs, particularly those in Alaska, are top-notch. Your experience and your integrity get the job done better than any other NCO in any other country’s military,” Palin said. “You make our military better, our country stronger and Alaska the best state in the nation. Thank you for your selfless service and your courage. It is because of you that we are able to enjoy our freedoms.” Senior NCOs from throughout U.S. Army Alaska and the Alaska Army National Guard were present at the ceremony, standing alongside their colors.

“If you ask any of the NCOS present today or the NCOs leading, caring for or mentoring in Iraq, Afghanistan or Kosovo their thoughts on the Year of the NCO, they’ll probably all tell you about the same thing,” Turnbull said. “They’re truly honored and grateful for this recognition, but they’re more honored to lead America’s sons and daughters in the defense of this great nation.” Sgt. Demetrius Terrell, HHC, Warrior Transition Battalion, said there is no greater privilege than leadership.

“Anytime you have Soldiers underneath you looking up to you, expecting you to make that decision for them to lead them in the right direction, it’s very honorable,” he said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Charlie Lane, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, noted the significance of the event for all NCOs.

“It is one year out of all the years of the military that we recognize, are actually given this opportunity to the noncommissioned officers, to show how we are (in the) forefront – how we can take something simple and turn it into something great,” Lane said.

He credits NCOs for making the plans of senior leaders a reality.

“We’re where the rubber meets the road,” Lane said. “The officers, they get the planning portion of it; and once the planning is done, they hand it over to a senior noncommissioned officer, and we will execute that plan.”

Turnbull expressed his appreciation to all those who made the resolution and proclamation possible.

“The gratitude extended to us on a daily basis by our state and local leaders, local businesses and the communities surrounding the posts is unmatched anywhere,” he said. “Your support, hospitality and friendship will never go unnoticed. We are truly grateful for what you have done for us and our families.” Palin made a point of extending her appreciation to the Army in Alaska prior to officially signing the resolution and proclamation.

“It’s Alaska’s Arctic warriors, being that very special kind of service member, (that) make me so proud to get to serve in the capacity that I’m in today serving with you,” she said. “No words can really express, we can’t articulate our gratitude to you, the sacrifices that you and your family make. We do thank you, though.”

The governor closed her remarks by extending her best wishes to the state’s Soldiers.

“Let me say to all of our NCOs, may God bless your honorable service and defense of freedom,” Palin said. “May he pour out his blessing on all of you for all that you do. Keep up the great work, and let’s all celebrate the Year of the NCO together.”

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EDITOR’S NOTE: Cutlines are embedded in the attached photos.