

100 Soldiers, 100 Years; Reenlisting in the Army Reserve

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Camp Victory, Iraq – In a ceremony here today more than 100 mobilized Army Reserve Soldiers deployed in Iraq and Kuwait raised their right hand and recited the oath of enlistment in commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Army Reserve.

In the grand rotunda of the Al Faw palace at Camp Victory, General David Petraeus, Commander, Multi-National Force-Iraq issued the oath of enlistment and remarked on the continued commitment Army Reserve Soldiers make in reenlisting. “In places like Iraq, Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, the Phillipines and Latin America, Army Reservists are bringing their warrior skills and their civilian trades to the fight. As everyone here knows, that combination is particularly effective in the exceedingly complex environments we face today. Environments that require our troopers to be not just warriors but also diplomats, builders, trainers, advisors, intelligence gatherers, service providers, economic developers and mediators.”

“Citizen-Soldiers perform these diverse roles expertly and in so doing they demonstrate the critical role members of the Army Reserve play in safeguarding freedom at home and defending it abroad. Indeed I cannot think of a better way to honor the Army Reserve’s first century of service than being part of a ceremony where so many great Reservists raise their right hands and commit themselves to continue serving our nation,” said Patraeus.

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Also attending the ceremony was Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz, and Command Sgt. Maj. Leon Caffie, commanding general and senior enlisted advisor for the U.S. Army Reserve Command. In his remarks Stultz commented on the transformation of the Army Reserve over the past 100 years. “The Army Reserve was founded in 1908 but, I can tell you that the Army Reserve of 2008 is vastly different than the Army Reserve of 1908”.

“The Army Reserve today really is an operational force, an integrated part of *the Army*. . . And there’s no better way for us to kick off our 100th Anniversary year and to symbolize what the Army Reserve today really is than to be able to conduct a reenlistment ceremony here – in Baghdad, in the Palace, with a hundred of our Army Reserve soldiers.”

For many of the Soldiers here today, the opportunity to participate was about more than just re-enlisting for themselves. It was a way to honor the service of those who came before them. “I’m just one soldier, just one average joe,” said Sgt. Jonathan Britt, a 25 year old medic mobilized with the 535th MP Battalion, who hails from Fayetteville, NC. “I’ve only been in for two years, so for 98 years there were people upholding these traditions, and that’s one of the reasons for me to re-enlist, to uphold the tradition, honor and integrity behind that. Not for my own personal sake but for those that served before me.”

Soldiers selected to participate in the commemorative ceremony are a sampling of the more than 1,876 Army Reserve soldiers who have reenlisted over the past 12 months while deployed in Iraq and Kuwait; that according to the Army Reserve Retention and Transition Office (RTO) here at Camp Victory. According to the RTO, Army Reserve reenlistments in Iraq and Kuwait reflect approximately 20 percent of all reenlistments for the Army Reserve worldwide.

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080118-A-1971B-030 / 080118-A-1971B-032 / IMG_6303

General David Petraeus administers the oath of enlistment to more than 100 Army Reserve soldiers at the Al Faw palace at Camp Victory, Iraq. Soldiers gathered for the ceremony in celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Army Reserve.