



Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

A concrete way to heal

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The low orange bench outside of the Warrior Transition Barracks looks like an easy place to perch if you need to stop a while, sip a cup of coffee or enjoy your lunch in the sun. But it's no ordinary resting spot. Take a closer look. There are stories within this seating.

Embedded in its structure are tiles that memorialize fallen friends, pay tribute to resilient Warriors, honor military heritage and celebrate hometowns, favorite activities and teams. In October, WTB Soldiers teamed up with a non-profit organization based out of Manitou Springs, Colorado, called Concrete Couch to create the bench. The director, Steve Wood, contacted the unit to find out if it would be interested in the project.

"For us to find out more about our military is invaluable. This is a chance to do something with someone who is different. It was really interesting for us to get to know them as people," said Wood.

The non-profit volunteers showed up and handed clay to the Soldiers, telling them to create tiles that were meaningful to them. In the hands of one trooper, a Longhorn steer took shape. Another carved out a parachute rigger crest. Yet another painstakingly wrote "In mem of Sgt Josh Powell KIA 06.4.11".

After curing and firing the tiles, the two groups laid out the forms for the bench and poured the concrete. At a Thursday formation, Wood joined WTB commander Lt. Col. Mechelle Tuttle in unveiling the final product.

"A little piece of a lot of our Soldiers is in this concrete couch," Tuttle told the assembled Soldiers. "There are many different ways of healing. This is one. I encourage you to keep looking for these things."

After the formation concluded, WTB Soldier Staff Sgt. Lorraine Wilkins remained, bending down to the bench to look for her tile. She brushed over the caduceus she created with her fingers and took a few photos.

"I'm really not an artist," mused Wilkins. "Medicine is the only thing I know so that's my legacy. It's so cool. Long after I'm gone, my mark will still be here."



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