

INFANTRY ★BUGGLER★

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL INFANTRY ASSOCIATION



2019 DAVID E. GRANGE
BEST RANGER COMPETITION

INFANTRY WEEK
FEATURES BEST OF THE BEST



SUMMER 2019
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CONTENTS

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Cover Photo: UH60 picks up a Best Ranger team and flies to LZ for fast rope insertion. U.S. Army photo by Patrick Albright, Maneuver Center of Excellence, Fort Benning Public Affairs.

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★ ARTICLES ★

- 6 36th Annual David E. Grange Jr. Best Ranger Competition
- 9 Infantry Week Features Best of the Best Competitors
- 14 Paratrooper: Following in My Father's Footsteps

★ DEPARTMENTS ★

- 4 Messages from the Chairman, President and Chief of Infantry
- 16 Hall of Valor: Travis W. Atkins
- 17 Friends of the Museum
- 19 News and Awards

ON THE COVER: SOLDIERS COMPETE IN THE 2019 DAVID E. GRANGE JR. BEST RANGER COMPETITION. U.S. Army photo by Patrick Albright, Maneuver Center of Excellence, Fort Benning Public Affairs

Call for Submissions

Do you have an opinion concerning one of the stories in this issue? We would like to print your responses in our Letters to the Editor column. **Have you researched a topic that is of interest to Infantry Soldiers?** Submit it to us as an article for the *Infantry Bugler*. **Do you have personal experiences or valuable lessons learned that would benefit other readers?** Let us be your vehicle for delivering those thoughts. Send your submissions to bugler@infantryassn.com.



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From the Chairman



LTG (Ret) Thomas F. Metz

The complexity of warfare grew slowly for thousands of years, from which the nine Principles of War (objective, offense, mass, economy of force, maneuver, unity of command, security, surprise and simplicity) slowly took form. The proper use of these principles led to success on the battlefield. The employment of archers, catapults and other indirect capabilities added to the complexity.

Cavalries were formed to flank the enemy and attack quickly, often deep into enemy terrain and their shock effect brought many victories. These and other innovations added complexity to the battlefield. Disciplined Infantry marched shoulder-to-shoulder maneuvering to close with and destroy the enemy was decisive.

Battlefield innovations grew as the Industrial Age ushered in change on a massive scale. An excellent example of these changes in warfighting capability occurred between our nation's Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Rifling made small arms and cannons more lethal, while railways and steam engines quickly moved Soldiers, equipment and supplies in large quantities. Balloons and telegraph systems improved intelligence and command and control. As GEN Ulysses Grant led the Union Army deep into the South, he often received his intelligence from Southern newspapers, which might have been the first hint of Information Operations. The pace of warfare's change began to increase as the Industrial Age matured, but the tactics of World War I did not keep pace with the material changes. The result was 8.5 million Soldiers and 1.5 million non-combatants killed during World War I. An example can be found in the first 10 hours of the Battle of Verdun, when more than one million artillery rounds—27 per second—fell in a space smaller than Columbus, Georgia.

Warfare was changing; the pace of change accelerating. As evidenced by the multi-domains of today's battles, just adding Information, Cyber and Space to Land, Sea and Air domains significantly complicates warfare. Within the land domain, my generation of Army leaders found coordinating the seven Battlefield Operating Systems and synchronizing their activities in time, space and purpose, were daunting tasks.

Although Infantry Soldiers seldom fight shoulder to shoulder, they are still required to close with and destroy the enemy. Their success continues to be dependent on training (for the expected), education (for the unexpected), and mental and physical strength and stamina. The Infantryman's character, courage, competence and commitment remain foundations for success in an ever increasingly complex battlefield.

As I mentor flag officer courses for the Army and Joint Force, I am confident these flag officers will successfully manage the complexity of the future battlefields. I wonder, however, how are we helping the Infantry squad leader be successful on the dynamic and ever-changing battlefields? If you have an answer to this question or if you think we are failing here or are somewhere in between, send your thoughts to rchoppa@infantryassn.com or submit an article for a future *Infantry Bugler* at bugler@infantryassn.com. I'll work on my answer to help Infantry squad leaders for a future *Bugler*.

From the President



COL (Ret) Robert E. Choppa

Greetings from the NIA! We hope you have a great summer/PCS/ETS season. Get your OSM and SOS nominations in early. Please contact Phantom Products and tell them we appreciate their support.

It is my honor to give the rest of my column to CSM Rob Fortenberry. He and Dave Hodne will lead in the development of our future Infantry Officers, NCOs and Soldiers....

I wanted to take this opportunity as your newest Infantry School Command Sergeant Major to introduce myself, outline my philosophy on instructors and training, and highlight a few of the initiatives we have implemented at the Infantry School. I have published my complete biography on the Fort Benning Infantry website, but thought I would highlight a few key points to assist in understanding my leadership style and philosophy on training and instruction. I have spent the past 25 years in the Infantry and have operated in both FORSCOM and TRADOC billets at key developmental times in my career, which has afforded me a unique perspective to fulfill the duties of this position.

I approach training by first leveraging an instructor base that possess three key tenets. Our cadre must be Servant Leaders that inspire our students to achieve and exceed their goals by providing them inspirational leadership and mentorship with a passion for knowledge. Second, they must teach and communicate effectively and possess a professional understanding of doctrine, which provides a baseline for students to develop critical thinking skills and allow for innovation through operational experience. Finally, Character counts. Our instructors must lead from the front and challenge themselves to be the Leader that our students inspire to emulate as they return to the force. Quality training can only be achieved by our instructor population meeting all three tenets. This is my primary focus as the master trainer providing oversight to the entire Infantry School.

The training objective of the Infantry School is clear, regardless of the course of instruction. It is to provide a level of training that challenges our Soldiers to fight and win through overmatch in large-scale ground combat against a near peer threat. It must be challenging both physically and mentally by replicating the most realistic training environment we can produce. Once again, critical to this is our Infantry Instructor Cadre across Fort Benning that must exceed all expectations of professionalism, physical fitness and intellect in order to provide the training necessary to defeat the enemies of our Nation.

Finally, I want to highlight a few of the initiatives that we are currently executing and developing for the future. The new TC 3-20.40 has been signed for implementation across the force. We are currently working with Installations to assist in marksmanship training by leveraging our Master Marksmanship Training Course (MMTC), Mobile Training Teams, Infantry One Station Unit Training (OSUT) and POI revisions to NCOES to assist in TC 3-20.40's well-rounded integration. The 22-week OSUT has completed the second pilot program and is continuing to build momentum as we have added more 22-week OSUT companies, reaching full implementation by 1 October 2019. I look forward to serving you as the Infantry School Command Sergeant Major and assisting in producing the best Infantry Soldiers in the world.

It is great to have a competent, smart, tough, compassionate, fit, courageous and honorable CSM leading our Infantry!

Follow Me!

From the Chief of Infantry



BG David M. Hodne

Where many turn their attention in April to Augusta National Golf Club and the Masters Tournament, another large group of professionals gather in a more remote part of Georgia in a much tougher test of mind, body and spirit. Your U.S. Army Infantry School recently concluded another incredibly exciting Infantry Week at Fort Benning. Normally reserved for the ever-popular Best Ranger Competition, last year we increased the scope of April's Infantry Week to also include the Lacerda Cup Combatives Tournament and the Best Mortar

Competition. These three competitions allow Soldiers to demonstrate excellence across the breadth of Infantry tasks, as well as allow our great instructors the opportunity to showcase their professionalism. I couldn't be prouder of both competitors and cadre alike.

In its second year, the 198th Infantry Brigade's Best Mortar Competition fielded 24 mortar teams from across the Army, including an international team from the Netherlands. SSG James Pennington, SGT Alec Norton, SPC Christian Elliot and PFC Loren Dow from the 82nd Airborne Division won the competition in a showdown with the 1st Cavalry Division only decided during the live mortar shoot on the final day of the competition. The Best Mortar Competition promotes esprit de corps within the mortar community in recognizing superior physical performance, technical and tactical expertise and mental agility to adapt to a continuously changing environment. Our U.S. Army Indirect Fire Mortar Training Company in 1st Battalion, 19th Infantry, 198th Infantry Brigade, leverages this competition to reinforce mortar leader course objectives as well as introduce emerging doctrine and new equipment in a manner that benefits cadre, competitors and the force writ large.

The U.S. Army Combatives School instructors of the 1st Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment, 199th Infantry Brigade hosted the Lacerda Cup Combatives Competition. Named in honor of SSG Pedro Lacerda of the 75th Ranger Regiment, the second iteration of this competition saw the field grow to almost 60 competitors this year. The individual bouts progressed from basic rules, through intermediate rules, and culminated with advanced rules bouts for the finals. The culminating event for the Lacerda Cup was the tactical scenarios conducted on the last day of competition by the top four teams from the individual competitions. CPT Jane Ju, 1LT Lonnie Rickel, 1LT Stephen Bell, PFC Omar Rivera, SSG John Branson, SPC Zachary Adams, SGT Nathan Harpster and SGT Adrien Castaneda

from the 25th Infantry Division won the 2019 Lacerda Cup Combatives Championship by overtaking the 7th Infantry's lead from the individual competitions.

Lastly, the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade hosted 54 teams from across the Department of Defense to compete in the Best Ranger Competition. This year's competition fielded teams from a wide range of Army Divisions, Separate Brigades, the Special Operations community, the United States Air Force, the United States Military Academy and even included a combined team of a U.S. Marine and an Italian Soldier. In honor of the upcoming 75th Anniversary of World War II and D-Day, this year's competition commemorated Rangers who fought in both the European and Pacific theaters. In addition to dedicating each of the competition's 33 events to a specific Ranger battle during WWII, competitors employed WWII era weapon systems including the M1 Garand, trench shotguns, and 1911 pistols. We were honored by the presence of two WWII Veterans in particular, SSG (ret) Robert Passanisi (former Merrill's Marauder) and PFC (ret) Rudolph Huereque (former 5th Ranger Battalion) who fired commemorative 1911 pistols to kick off this 36th edition of the Best Ranger Competition. Another Ranger legend, COL (Ret) Ralph Puckett, joined Rangers Passanisi and Huereque to start off the second day's foot march.

As the final 16 teams completed the last event of the grueling three-day competition, they were met by hundreds of cheering fans and family who joined them for a "super supper" to announce the final standings and awards. By the end of the competition, the final 16 teams pushed themselves over 74 grueling miles in 60 hours with minimal rest ... all while wearing body armor, carrying ruck sacks, combat equipment and weapons. The 101st ABN Division took two of the top three places with CPT John Bergman and CPT Michael Rose placing first and 1LT Nathan Penick and 1LT Edwards VonKuhn placing third. The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team took second place with 1LT Alastair Keys and SFC Ryan Gerber.

I'd like to thank all of the competitors, Soldiers and leaders from across the Army who came to Fort Benning in support of Infantry Week. For those considering the trip to Fort Benning in the spring of 2020, we intend to continue to improving these competitions, additionally adding the popular International Sniper competition to next year's Infantry Week. Infantry Week will continue to demonstrate excellence in Infantry skills in a manner that makes our entire Army proud.

I look forward to seeing everyone at Fort Benning in April 2020.

I am the Infantry! Follow Me!



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The Old Guard team crawls, climbs and runs through the obstacle course.



36TH ANNUAL DAVID E. GRANGE JR. BEST RANGER COMPETITION

As early as 0400 on 12 April 2019, family members, fans and team supporters of Best Ranger Competitors began to line the roads adjacent to Camp Rogers. There, they eagerly awaited the announcement of all 54 teams and the firing of a pair of commemorative 1911 pistols which would start the mass buddy run and the overall 60+ hour competition. As the clock slowly crept closer to 0545, the color guard, garbed in WWII era uniforms and represented by the 3d Infantry Regiment—The Old Guard—conducted final rehearsals and assumed their positions for the opening ceremony. Two WWII Veterans and American heroes, SSG (Ret) Robert Passanisi—a former Merrill’s Marauder—and PFC (Ret) Rudolph Huereque—a former 5th Ranger Battalion member—walked beneath the Ranger Tab that hangs just outside the well-known Camp Rogers combatives pit. Once appropriate honors to our nation were complete, these two WWII warriors fired the pair of pistols into the air, thus

beginning the 36th Best Ranger Competition.

This year, the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade hosted 54 teams from across the Department of Defense, competing for the title of “Best Ranger.” The competitor field was diverse, with teams represented by the special operations community, units both stationed within the continental U.S. and abroad, the United States Air Force, the United States Military Academy, a team consisting of a U.S. Marine and an Italian Soldier, a team with two Soldiers represented by two different divisions and finally a pair of twin brothers competing against each other on separate teams. Given the 75th Anniversary of World War II and D-Day, this year’s competition was dedicated to the memory of those Rangers—both living and deceased—who fought in the European and Pacific theaters. Each of the 33 events during the competition was dedicated to a specific Ranger battle during WWII, a key piece of

information that would prove valuable to competitors later on during a written examination event. Competitors would also find themselves employing WWII era weapon systems such as an M1 Garand, trench shotguns and 1911 pistols during marksmanship events.

The first day of the competition included events that would force competitors to demonstrate proficiency between physical fitness, basic Soldier skills and marksmanship. Following the initial buddy run, competitors tackled the infamous Malvesti obstacle course and immediately picked up litters for a weighted movement to Victory Pond. Upon arrival, buddy teams donned life preservers and swam across the pond, retrieved their gear and ran off-road to Fort Benning’s Selby Combined Arms Collective Training Facility (CACTF) to execute an Urban Obstacle Course. During this event, competitors moved casualties through urban terrain, scaled urban structures and cleared complexes using simunitions. Once

complete, teams moved to Pickup Zone (PZ) posture for rotary wing air movement to the Oscar Range Complex and enter via Fast Rope Insertion. There the competitors would execute five separate marksmanship events, to include a three-gun event, M4 qualification with the latest Army standard and a long gun event. Once complete with the marksmanship events, competitors prepared themselves for the unknown distance foot march and the first cut of teams to 28.

The two WWII heroes who initiated the competition were joined by Ranger legend COL (Ret) Ralph Puckett who counted down and fired the commemorative pistols initiating the foot march. Throughout the night, Puckett could be found walking up and down the foot march route, encouraging teams to dig deep and continue. Close to midnight, teams completed the foot march with the top 28 teams continuing on to Night Stakes. During Night Stakes, competitors again would have to demonstrate a balance of skills to continue. Throughout the night teams executed a night marksmanship engagement using M1 Garands and parachute flares, demonstrated proficiency in military demolitions and executed a mystery event requiring them to transmit and receive a message via Morse Code. Though exhausted at this point and having moved nearly 30+ miles,



2d ID team prepares equipment for fast movement.

competitors would not receive much rest before they began the Day Stakes events.

Twenty-eight teams tackled Day Stakes on Day 2, which consisted of seven mentally and physically challenging stations. At the first range event, competitors found themselves in a replicated Higgins Boat leading into a challenging complex consisting of obstacles, moving targets and more

WWII-era weapon systems. Other stations included the Army's new physical fitness test—the Army Combat Fitness Test or ACFT, a tri-tower event dedicated to the memory of the battle at Point Du Hoc which consisted of a rock wall, prussik ascent, rappel and fast rope, a combat-realistic Ranger First Responder lane and a combat assault lane. Upon completion of day stakes, competitors raced to Babbitt Drop Zone (DZ) where the second and final cut to 16 competitors was made.

The night leading to the third and final day of the competition would truly test the physical and mental fortitude of competitors. That evening they were flown to Camp Frank D. Merrill, home of the Mountain phase of Ranger School and 5th Ranger Training Battalion, to execute night orienteering in the grueling terrain of the Tennessee Valley Divide. Teams moved throughout the night, attempting to navigate as many points as possible, prior to air movement back to Fort Benning. After a very short period of rest and an opportunity to repack their equipment, competitors found themselves at Camp Darby to begin the final few events of the competition.

The 16 teams began the day by executing the well-known Darby Queen



Best Ranger obstacle course tests teamwork, balance and coordination.

Infantry Week Features Best of the Best Competitors



Combatives tournament participants fight to win.

Every April Fort Benning serves as the hub for all Senior Infantry Leaders to gravitate to as April was and will continue to serve as the month for the execution of Infantry Week at Fort Benning, Georgia. Infantry Week highlights the best Infantryman from across the force in multiple disciplines of an Infantryman's trade. This year's Infantry Week was composed of the Lacerda Cup combatives competition, the Best Mortar Competition and The Best Ranger Competition. Each of these competitions allowed for individuals and teams to showcase their abilities in specific Infantry tasks as well as their overall lethality as Infantrymen. Infantry Week allows every competitor, team and representing unit to put their best on the field of competition in an effort to leave

Fort Benning being able to call themselves the best of the best from across the force.

Lacerda Cup

The 2019 all Army Combatives Tournament, also known as, the Lacerda Cup was executed from 9-12 April. There were a total of 49 competitors from 13 units across the Army. The tournament was executed at Freedom Hall and included individual bouts and a tactical scenario. The individual bouts allowed for competitors to use open hand striking during the initial bouts and closed hand striking for the final round of bouts.

The culminating event for the Lacerda Cup was the tactical scenario and was conducted on Day 4 of the event. The tactical scenario was executed by the top

two teams which were compiled from the points total from individual bouts and included the removal of a high value target (HVT) from a vehicle in a Military Operation in Urban Terrain (MOUT) environment. The tactical scenario captured the skills showcased during the individual bouts and required teams to apply hand-to-hand combat while in combat uniform with full personnel protective equipment. The tactical scenario consisted of having to subdue and remove a hostile HVT in a MOUT environment, while refining movement techniques and communication skills in a high stress environment. Overall the tactical scenario served as a terrific example for applicability of combatives skills.

The overall champion for the 2019

Lacerda Cup was the 25th Infantry Division and second place was awarded to 7th Infantry Division.

The following are the results from the individual championship bouts:

Bantam Weight - 2LT Erica Forktus, (7th ID)

Fly Weight - SSG Jesse Sablan, (7th ID)

Light Weight - DRAW PFC Hunter Missildine, (7th ID) and SGT Jonuel Rivera, (25th ID)

Welter Weight - SSG Dillion Fraley, (ARNG)

Middle Weight - SSG Jacob Grove, (3rd ID)

Cruiser Weight - CPL Alex Nuanez, (101st)

Light Heavy Weight - SSG Rafael Brewster, (7th ID)

Heavy Weight - SPC Jackson Fuamatu, (7th ID)

Best Mortar Competition

The Best Mortar Competition was organized by 1st Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment and the 198th Infantry Brigade in 2017 to promote esprit de corps within the mortar community, recognize superior physical performance, technical and tactical expertise, test competitor abilities to adapt to a continuously changing environment and to identify the United States Army's top mortar team. The competition has since expanded to include international competitors. Next year, the Best Mortar Competition is attempting to incorporate sister services and teams from the Army National Guard.

Competitors were tested on a wide range of events including the new Army Combat Fitness Test, Mortar Gunners Exam, Declination of an M2A2 Aiming Circle, High Physical Demands Test,

Medical Trauma Lanes and a night occupation of a mortar firing point. After the night occupation of a mortar firing point, competitors initiated a Land Navigation Course, the Downing Mile and Obstacle Course. Additionally, all competitors executed the new M17 Pistol Qualification and the new M4 Carbine course-of-fire qualification.

Competitors completed day two with five stations consisting of: Conduct First Aid to control bleeding, M240 Machine Gun disassembly and re-assembly, place the AT4 Light Anti-Armor Weapon into operation, determine grid location using resection and Synchronized Pre-Deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) Report testing. The final competitive events included an 81mm Live Fire Exercise, testing competitors on their team's employment of the mortar system in the direct-lay and hip shoot methods of engagement.



1-505th Parachutes Infantry Regiment, 82d Airborne Division was the winning team in the U.S. Army Best Mortar Competition.



Best Mortar competitors live fire 8/mm mortar to complete their three-day competition.

The top three teams for this year's Best Mortar Competition were:

1st Place - Team 11: 1-505th PIR, 82nd Airborne Division;
SSG James Pennington, SGT Alec Norton,
SPC Christian Elliot, PFC Loren Dow

2nd Place - Team 4: 2-7th CAV, 1st Cavalry Division;
SSG Gary Stewart, CPL Ty Frame, SPC Kyle Bunnell,
PFC John Schweinshaupt

3rd Place - Team 1: 4-17 IN, 1st Armor Division;
SSG Jerome Urias, SGT Justin Peyton, PFC Bailey Hamilton,
PV2 John Mlynarek

This year the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade hosted 54 teams across the Department of Defense to compete for the title of Best Ranger. For more information on this competition see MAJ James Bithorn's article in this issue of the *Infantry Bugler*.

In addition to improving these competitions informed by feedback and lessons learned, we intend to align the International Sniper competition, traditionally held later in the fall, to occur during this same week next year in 2020. This will provide all Infantry Senior Leaders from across the force an opportunity to observe their Soldiers during one week here at Fort Benning as well as allow the Infantry School to "reblue" on changes and updates to period of instructions (POIs) used in functional courses taught here at Fort Benning. The Infantry School is looking forward to continued support and even more growth of this already extremely professional and world-class event. Infantry Week is the "Super Bowl" of competitions for our Infantry and all Infantrymen should be proud to be a part of it. ★

LTC Scott Basso is currently serving as the Infantry Commandant Executive Officer. He has served in light and airborne units and has served in the Infantry for 18 years.



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FORWARD VISION

RAYTHEON & RHEINMETALL USE EXPERIENCE TO DEVELOP NEW COMBAT VEHICLE

Two companies that are partnering on a proposal for the U.S. Army's forthcoming Next-Generation Combat Vehicle have experience outfitting a different combat vehicle: the Abrams main battle tank.

Raytheon has been equipping the Abrams tank and Bradley fighting vehicle with its Forward-Looking Infrared, or FLIR, sights for decades, and is now upgrading the Abrams tank with next-generation thermal sights.

Rheinmetall designed two key components of the Abrams tank: the 120mm cannon and NATO 120mm ammunition.

FLIR is an advanced targeting system that uses heat, not light, to see through darkness, smoke, rain, snow or fog. This new version will allow soldiers to see more accurately from farther away than the current system.

"Key to survivability of the tank and the unit is he who sees first, shoots first," said John Long, a program manager for Raytheon's Land Warfare Systems and resident expert on FLIR technology. "And typically, the FLIR allows us the ability to reach out and see things, in all combat conditions, before we can be seen."

Raytheon and Rheinmetall are offering the existing Lynx Infantry Fighting Vehicle as a replacement for the Army's aging Bradley vehicle. The design will incorporate Raytheon technologies for combat vehicles – including sights, sensors, fire-control systems and missiles. Lynx, a prototype fighting vehicle built by Rheinmetall, will provide the foundation. Raytheon's work on its next-generation thermal sights will pave the way for installing it on Lynx.

"We have a number of video-processing, image-stabilization algorithms, in addition to other design expertise, that really helps set Raytheon's FLIR systems apart," said Jonathan McAfee, principal systems engineer for Raytheon's FLIR program.



From the outside, the Abrams tank looks large and spacious, but inside, the turret is filled with multiple interactive systems inches apart, which makes it challenging to upgrade the technologies it uses. To bring the next-generation thermal sights aboard, company engineers began with a computer-aided design model and then physically inspected a tank to see how they might best install the new tech.

"You can't cut a new hole in the tank," McAfee said. "We have to package the additional technology and features that are required into the same form factors and volume as was there previously."

The next-generation thermal sights will enable users to see across long- and mid-wave bands

simultaneously. It will also give soldiers four fields of view: wide, medium, narrow and ultra-narrow. Current systems only offered wide and narrow fields of view in the long-wave infrared band.

The additional fields of view and infrared band choices combined with a higher resolution picture will allow soldiers to better optimize the field of view for the conditions they face, resulting in a sharper, more detailed picture. For example, it could help a soldier determine if the subject is holding a shovel or a long gun.

"It's really a game-changer in a war-type environment," said Carrie Bradley, a program manager for Raytheon's Land Warfare Systems.

Raytheon has delivered more than 20,000 2nd GEN FLIR sensors to the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps and allies. The company expects to provide next-generation thermal sights technology to the Army this year.



"The advantage of being able to see farther for the soldier is that they have information, and they're able to act faster than the enemy," Bradley said. "It's that simple."

Paratrooper: Following in my Father's Footsteps



SPC Heath Hansen waits to board the aircraft before airborne operations at St. Mere Eglise Drop Zone.

I looked up into the big, blue sky. Far in the distance, I spotted a C-130 Hercules headed towards the open grass field I waited in. For a few moments, I watched as the plane continued in my direction. Suddenly, from the tail end of the aircraft, paratroopers jumped out into the open air. The parachutes expanded sideways as they became caught in the wind and fully inflated, pulling the soldiers swiftly with them. Dozens of troops poured out of the fuselage and descended to the ground. I saw the first jumper hit the grass and quickly sprinted to him.

"Dad?" I asked. "No kid, your dad is still coming down; we put a white band on his helmet so you could recognize him." Looking up, he extended his arm and pointed to a spot about 200 feet in the air at a fast descending grunt with white sports tape lining the outside of his helmet. "There he is."

I was 4 years old when I ran toward my father and reached him as he hit the drop zone. In BDUs and Army equipment, he was a green giant towering over me. As he bent down to collect his parachute, I started helping him pick up the soft, shiny, green canopy. "Wow!" I exclaimed. "I wanna jump out of airplanes when I grow up!"

"Maybe one day you will, son," he smiled.

Several years later, I found myself at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. "Hey, Hansen, formation is at 0500. If you forget your air-items, I'll smoke your ass in the front-leaning-rest position," my squad leader warned.

"Roger, sergeant."

My buddy and I walked toward our rooms after being released. "This jump is gonna suck," my squad mate complained. "There's supposed to be high wind and cold temperatures."

"If it doesn't suck, this isn't the 82nd Airborne," I sarcastically replied. "I love it. Livin' the dream."

I arrived at the company the following morning. We loaded onto large, white buses and headed to Pope Air Force Base. Our battalion went through the pre-jump rituals, using C-130 mock doors, required before all airborne operations—obeying jumpmaster commands, proper exit, proper parachute landing fall, etc. Later, we entered the "pax shed," a large open bay, donned our parachutes and transformed into paratroopers. After the Jumpmaster Personnel Inspection (JMPI), we waited. And waited. And waited. Hours passed until we got word the aircraft had

engine issues, stalling our departure. Soon all were fixed and the planes were ready for take-off. The show was about to begin.

We approached the C-130 and boarded using the rear ramp. The propellers spun furiously, blasting us with a continuous stream of hot wind while we loaded up (which we welcomed on this frigid day). As our group packed in, I found a spot on the red, cargo-net jump seat in the middle of the aircraft. I would ride "inboard" today before jumping. We continued to cram into the plane until 64 of us were tightly squeezed into its big, grey belly. The ramp closed and the pilots began the taxi for takeoff. The guy in front of me was using an empty Gatorade bottle to spit his tobacco dip into. I made eye contact with him and he passed it to me. I made my contribution and passed it to my squad leader. The bottle continued making its way to the rear of the plane, each soldier taking his turn. The engines roared as the pilots increased the throttle, and our bird took flight.

A few feet away from me a private was sweating profusely and dry heaving. A crew member passed him a vomit bag which he immediately hyperventilated into. As we climbed higher and higher, he breathed harder and harder. Before we reached cruising altitude, he puked. Laughter swept through our section of the plane.

"Five-jump-chump!" my team-leader yelled. "Cherry!" I shouted. A "five-jump-chump" is someone fresh out of Airborne School, with no jumps in Division. To receive your parachutist's wings, you have to complete five jumps from an aircraft. Until you've jumped 10 times, you're considered a cherry—a new guy, a fresh, untested, inexperienced virgin to the ways of the Airborne.

As we approached the Drop Zone (DZ), the jumpmasters shouted the jump commands at us to get ready to jump. "Hook up!" We grabbed our static lines and

hooked them to the anchor cable (steel cables suspended about a foot above our heads, running the length of the cargo bay). The Air Force loadmasters opened the paratroop doors and violent wind rushed into the plane. Heavy turbulence knocked jumpers off balance. It was almost go time.

There was a nervous looking butter-bar second lieutenant standing next to me. I patted him on the shoulder.

"Hey, sir," I yelled in his ear. He looked back.

"What's going on?" he asked. My squad mate saw me talking to the lieutenant and listened in, smirking.

"There's a small piece of canopy hanging out of your pack tray. I wouldn't jump this." A look of horror came over him.

"Can you fix it?" the butter-bar pleaded.

"Negative, sir. I'm not a chute rigger."

As the lieutenant's trepidation increased, my buddy chimed in, "Your parachute's screwed, sir, but you've got a reserve. You'll be fine." I reflected briefly, wondering if my father's generation of paratroopers enjoyed messing with junior officers as well. I'm sure they did.

"30 seconds!" the jumpmasters yelled. The Gatorade bottle made its way back to me. It was now about a quarter full of brown, slimy dip-spit. I used it once more and passed it forward. The small, circular light next to the doors changed from red to green. We were over the DZ.

"Go!" the jumpmasters screamed. One by one, doing the Airborne shuffle, the paratroopers handed their static lines off to the jumpmasters. After he took the lines, the troopers faced right and vigorously jumped from the aircraft. I watched as all the outboard jumpers exited the C-130—all but the last one.

The soldier, a private, handed off his static line, turned to the door and froze. The jumpmaster had turned the opposite direction to collect the used lines. When he looked back, he saw the private standing in the door. "What the hell?" he exclaimed.

The private shouted back, "I'm not jumping, sergeant! I refuse to jump!"

Within a second of the private's response, the jumpmaster grabbed the static line anchor cable with both hands, yelling over the roaring wind "GET THE

HELL-," —he lifted his feet and slammed them into the private—"OUT!" kicking him out of the aircraft. There was no room for the faint of heart on this plane.

Inboard personnel headed for the door. Gripping the static line in my left hand, with my arm fully extended, I made eye contact with the jumpmaster, handed off my line, faced right 90 degrees and jumped out the door. I was immediately smacked by the wind. Keeping my feet and knees together and my chin to my chest, I counted in my head, "One-one thousand, two-one thousand, three-one thou." My parachute canopy deployed and violently spun me around. After a couple of seconds, I was able to get the parachute cords untwisted and look up at my canopy. My parachute was fully inflated; I had made a good exit and cleared the plane.

My descent towards Sicily DZ was underway. I looked at the other soldiers descending and caught a glimpse of a jumper above me, oscillating back and forth, very close to my canopy. Being that close in the air could result in entanglement, followed quickly by our chutes deflating. The paratrooper—a private, with little jumping experience—swung outward, then inward again, and stopped about two feet away from my face, his parachute canopy now touching mine. I looked at him and shouted, "Slip away, dumb ass!"

Distraught, the soldier quickly grabbed his rear risers and pulled as hard as he could. His parachute cleared mine and he began heading away from me. I pulled my risers and made extra space between us; I could now focus on landing.

Looking down, I could see the ground quickly approaching. Ensuring my feet

and knees were together, legs slightly bent, I looked back up and stared at the horizon, trying not to anticipate my landing. I could feel the cold wind on my face and pulled the risers on my parachute into the wind attempting to reduce my velocity. My body collided with the ground. I took a second to process the impact, but everything was okay. I stood up and took a few steps. Any jump you can walk away from is a good jump.

I collected my parachute and headed over to the parachute turn-in point. Making my way to the logistics trucks, I passed a paratrooper being treated by medics. He was writhing in pain and bemoaning a broken ankle. He had a bad jump.

I looked up into the big, blue sky; a cool breeze brushed across my face. I saw another C-130 approaching. Paratroopers poured out the back and slowly drifted toward the earth. I remembered being a child, two decades earlier, waiting on a DZ and watching my dad jump out of a perfectly good airplane. Patriotism, a desire for adventure and a deep admiration for my father had led me to this moment. We all have dreams about what we want to be when we grow up, but not all of us realize that dream. I was an Airborne Infantryman, following in my father's footsteps, and livin' the dream. ★

Heath Hansen joined the Army in 2004. After being assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division, he deployed to Afghanistan in 2005 and Iraq in 2007. Upon completion of his military career, he attended San Diego State University and received a B.S. in Business.



Heath Hansen holds the reserve parachute for his father, CPL Richard Hansen.

Atkins' Selfless Act Saves Fellow Soldiers



SSG TRAVIS W. ATKINS

Travis W. Atkins was born on 9 December 1975 in Great Falls, Montana and moved with his parents to Bozeman, Montana in 1981. Growing up, Atkins was an avid outdoorsman, who loved to hunt, fish, snowmobile and camp.

Prior to enlisting, Atkins worked for concrete and painting contractors, and as a small-engine mechanic, but his athletic nature and desire to serve ultimately led him to the U.S. Army. He enlisted on 9 November 2000 and attended basic Infantry training at Fort Benning, Georgia. He was assigned to Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and deployed with the 101st to Kuwait in early March 2003. Atkins participated in the invasion of Iraq later that month as an Infantry fire team leader.

Atkins was honorably discharged from the Army in December 2003 and returned to Montana where he attended the University of Montana in Missoula and worked as a painting and concrete contractor. Two years later, Atkins once again answered the call to serve. He reenlisted in the U.S. Army in December 2005 and was reassigned to D Company, 2-14 Infantry, 2d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division and deployed to Iraq again in August 2006.

He was killed in action on 1 June 2007 and for his actions that day, he was awarded the Medal of Honor.

The citation reads:

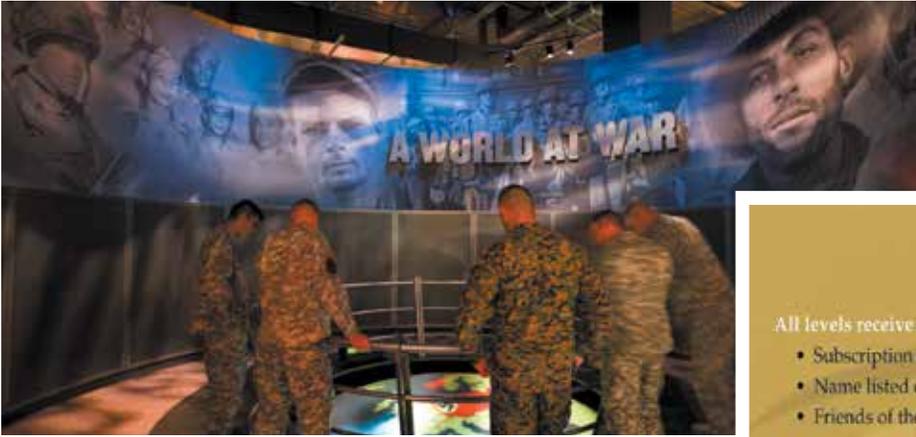
Staff Sergeant Travis W. Atkins distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty on 1 June 2007, while serving in the position of Squad Leader with Company D, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. While manning a static observation post in the town of Abu Samak, Iraq,

Staff Sergeant Atkins was notified that four suspicious individuals, walking in two pairs, were crossing an intersection not far from his position. Staff Sergeant Atkins immediately moved his squad to interdict the individuals. One of the individuals began behaving erratically, prompting Staff Sergeant Atkins to disembark from his patrol vehicle and approach to conduct a search. Both individuals responded belligerently toward Staff Sergeant Atkins, who then engaged the individual he had intended to search in hand-to-hand combat. Staff Sergeant Atkins tried to wrestle the insurgent's arms behind his back. When he noticed the insurgent was reaching for something under his clothes, Staff Sergeant Atkins immediately wrapped him in a bear hug and threw him to the ground, away from his fellow soldiers. Staff Sergeant Atkins maintained his hold on the insurgent, placing his body on top of him, further sheltering his patrol. With Staff Sergeant Atkins on top of him, the insurgent detonated a bomb strapped to his body, killing Staff Sergeant Atkins. Staff Sergeant Atkins acted with complete disregard for his own safety. In this critical and selfless act of valor, Staff Sergeant Atkins saved the lives of the three other soldiers who were with him and gallantly gave his life for his country. Staff Sergeant Atkins' undaunted courage, warrior spirit and steadfast devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 2d Brigade Combat Team and the United States Army.

President Donald J. Trump posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor to Atkins which was accepted by his family on 27 March 2019.

Atkins' Army awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Cross, the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal with four Bronze Service Stars, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Valorous Unit Award with one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, the Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Combat Infantryman Badge and the Air Assault Badge. ★

Friends of the Museum



It took a brigade of big corporations, generous foundations and wealthy individuals to raise the \$110 million needed to build the National Infantry Museum. Now, as the museum celebrates its 10th anniversary, it's starting to build an Army of everyday supporters to make sure the mission of honoring Soldiers past, present and future is never compromised.

The museum has launched a Friends of the Museum program, and is seeking your support. As a member, your monthly contribution, no matter what size, will be used to enhance and upgrade this 190,000-square-foot tribute to the Infantry Soldier. It will help us develop programs and events that serve both the military community and the civilians who see the museum as a place to express their appreciation for the sacrifices made on their behalf. It will go toward new exhibits and displays that tell the story of the Infantry far better than any book can do.

In return, you'll receive a membership card and a subscription to the Infantry Heritage newsletter. Your generosity will be recognized on the museum's website. You'll receive benefits depending on the level of your donation, that may include free movie tickets, discounts at the museum's DownRange Combat Simulator and Rally Point Canteen, discounted gala tickets and a membership to the National Infantry Association.

But more importantly, your contribution will benefit you in less tangible ways, too. It will demonstrate your patriotism and your pride in the Infantry, and will serve as a salute to your brothers-in-arms for their selfless service to the nation. You will rest assured that your branch's storied history will never be forgotten, and will be shared with a grateful nation for generations to come.

Donation levels range from \$10 to \$20 a month. If paid on a credit card, you won't need to do anything more. We'll charge your card each month, and you can ask us to discontinue the charge at any time.

The National Infantry Museum is more than a museum, it's a living memorial. It is a place to remember, a place to experience. Please consider honoring the National Infantry Museum on its 10th anniversary by becoming a Friend of the Museum today! ★

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All levels receive the following:

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On 11 February 2019, MSG Steven Baldwin (right) presented the Order of St. Maurice to SSG Thomas Cashman in John Day, Oregon.



On 8 February 2019, WO1 Larry Norred (far left) and LTC Heath Lewis (far right) of NIA Chapter 78 presented the Order of St. Maurice awards to (left to right) SGM (Ret) John Dean, 1SG (Ret) Joe Tierce, SSG Phillip Turner and Ms. Chrysta Westmoreland of the Veterans Administration at the 20th Special Force Group Annual Dining-Out.



On 9 January 2019, COL Lance Oskey (left) presented the Order of St. Maurice to Harry Dodson at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Dodson is the 7th Bde, ROTC deputy brigade officer and Oskey is the Chief of Staff of Cadet Command.



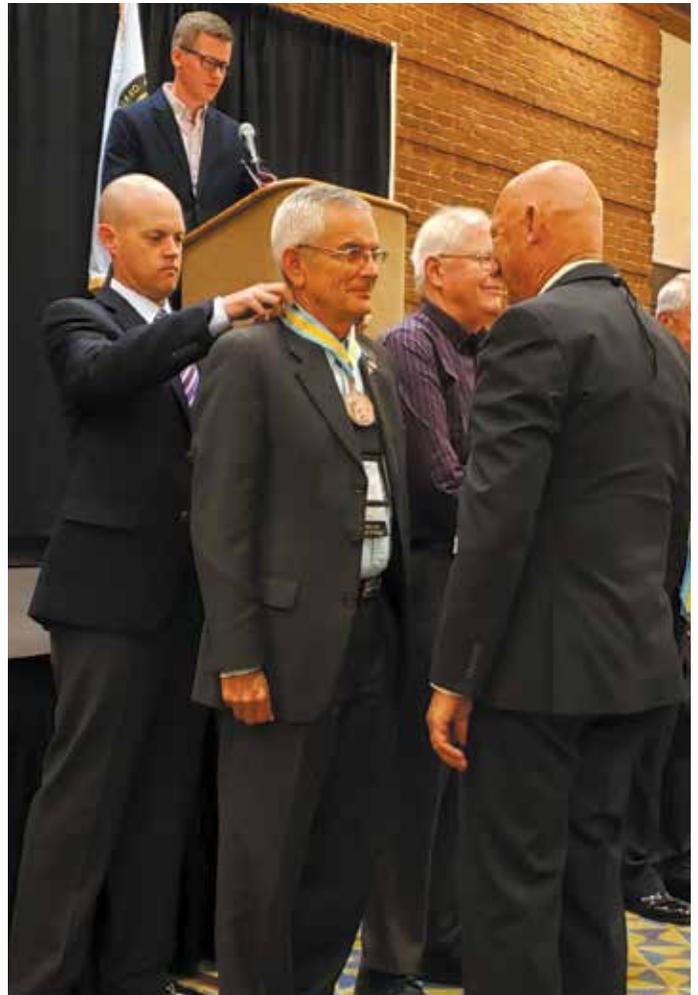
On 20 June 2018, CSM Jose Palomino Ponce (right) and CPT Jose F. Elizabeth Jr. (left) awarded the Order of St. Maurice to SGM Mauricio Suarez, of Colombia, at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas.



On 20 June 2018, CSM Jose Palomino Ponce (far right) and CPT Jose F. Elizabeth Jr. (center) awarded the Order of St. Maurice to (left to right) SGM Frank Guerrero; SGM Andrea Torre and SGM Alex Corraire, both of Italy; SGM Rodrigo Nieto, of Argentina; and SGM Jose Santiago at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas.



On 17 March 2019, Catherine Praino (left) was presented the Shield of Sparta at the Korony American Legion Post 253 and Auxiliary in Bronx, New York. The award was presented by Colleen McCarthy.



On 1 May 2019, COL (Ret) John Ionoff and LTC Matt Chitty awarded COL (Ret) Tom Evans the Order of St. Maurice at the Officer Candidate School's Alumni Association Annual Meeting in Columbus, Georgia.

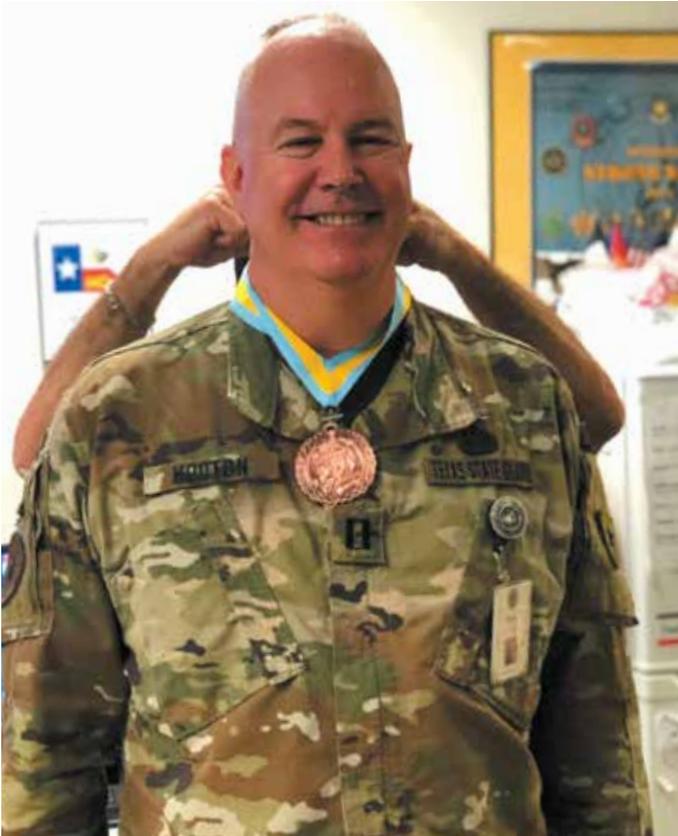
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SSG Robert Van Voorhis was recently presented the Order of St. Maurice. He is shown with Grant County Veteran Service Officer Katee Hoffman and MSG Steven Baldwin at the Grant County Veteran Service Office in John Day, Oregon.



LT Frank Hooton of the Texas State Guard received the Order of Saint Maurice for his dedication and support in Operation Border Star at the U.S./Mexico International Border.



On 8 August 2018, SGT Aubrey Verdell Long was posthumously awarded the Order of St. Maurice. The award was presented to SGT Long's widow, Mrs. Ouida Long, in her Dallas, Texas home on 11 October 2018 by COL (Ret) Jon D. Icenhower. SGT Long served as an Infantryman with the 164th Infantry Regiment, 23rd Infantry Division during WWII and fought in the Pacific Theatre. He was wounded during the invasion of the Philippines as the regiment assaulted the airfield near Dumaguete on Negros Island. Upon his recovery, he was assigned to an Infantry squadron with the First Cavalry Division for the invasion of Japan. After the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, this mission changed to one of occupation.



On 19 April 2019, Sarah Steidl was presented the Shield of Sparta at the Burgess-Osborne Auditorium in Mattoon, Illinois.



On 13 April 2019, CSM Johnny McPeek (right) presented the Order of St. Maurice to SGM (Ret) Gregory Pendel at Coraopolis, Pennsylvania.

Scholarship Benefits Infantrymen

The Harold and Muriel Berkman Charitable Foundation Inc. offers a scholarship that is open to all U.S. veterans enrolled in any in area of study. Veterans who have earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge or who have suffered a serious combat injury while serving, receive priority.

Since 2014, the Foundation has awarded more than \$200,000 in total scholarships and more than \$25,000 to the Student Veterans Resource Center at the University of Georgia. Almost 100 veterans have received the scholarship since its inception in 2014.

Foundation President Harold Berkman is a World War II combat Infantryman who fought in the Battle of the Bulge, Ardennes Campaign, Rhineland Campaign and the Central Europe Campaign. He is a life member of the National Infantry Association and a recipient of the Order of Saint Maurice. He leads the foundation with a focus on charitable giving to Combat Infantrymen.

To apply for a scholarship visit BerkmanFoundation.org.





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