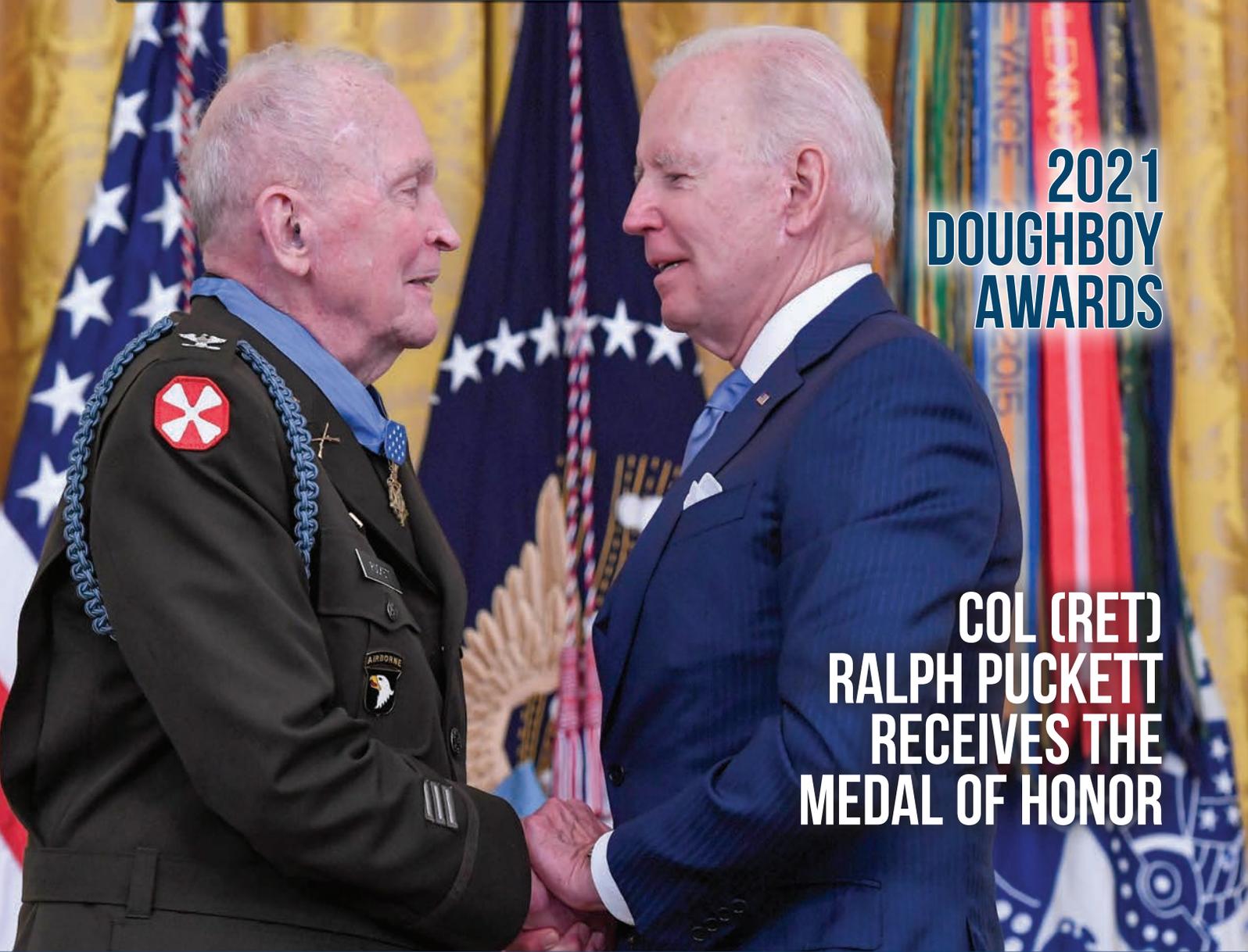


# INFANTRY ★BUGGLER★

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL INFANTRY ASSOCIATION

2021  
DOUGHBOY  
AWARDS

COL (RET)  
RALPH PUCKETT  
RECEIVES THE  
MEDAL OF HONOR



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**ON THE COVER:** COL (RET) RALPH PUCKETT GETS A HANDSHAKE FROM PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN AT THE MEDAL OF HONOR CEREMONY HELD AT THE WHITE HOUSE IN MAY.  
*Photo credit: SPC XaViera Masline*

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## 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](mailto:bugler@infantryassn.com).

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## From the Chairman



LTG (Ret) Thomas F. Metz

As we thin our forces in the Global War on Terrorism, we must remain ready to fight terrorism wherever it threatens us. Although the focus has rightfully moved to Russia and China, we could easily find ourselves in a war with Iran or North Korea, or both. We invested many lives and significant funds fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Iran could be more challenging than our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

North Korea offers challenges especially if they develop nuclear weapons and ways to attack with them. Even if they don't, millions of South Koreans live in range of North Korea's artillery. I'm confident we can defeat North Korea, but the loss of life and destruction of South Korea will be tremendous. The rugged terrain and bad weather will make closing with and destroying the enemy difficult and our Infantry Soldiers must be in very good physical condition to fight the enemy and terrain.

Turning to Russia, they are clearly our most capable WMD adversary who maintains a very large stockpile of nuclear weapons and ways to employ them. As we fought the Global War on Terror, Russia worked on developing a professional Armed Forces and tested it in Georgia ('80), Crimea ('14) and Ukraine and the Middle East. Because their economy is directly proportional to the price of oil, Russia will continue to challenge us in the Middle East and places like Venezuela and the Arctic. With their cyber and space capabilities, their strategies will be global.

And now China! I recommend three books to build your knowledge about the challenges we face with China. *Destined for War* by Graham Allison, *Poorly Made in China* by Paul Midler, and *2034* by Elliot Ackerman and Adm. James Stavridis. Let me quote from Allison's preface: "China and the United States are currently on a collision course for war—unless both parties take difficult and painful actions to avert it." Midler's book helped me understand China's economy.

2034 is a novel of the next world war. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis said, "War with China is the most dangerous scenario facing us and the world. Absent a strategic method to manage our differences, Jim Stavridis and Elliot Ackerman's chilling novel presents a realistic series of miscalculations leading to the worst consequences. A sobering cautionary tale for our time."

One more book recommendation: *In the Enemy's House* by Howard Blum who writes about two heroes, a blue collar FBI agent and a geeky, code breaker in the late '40s and early '50s. Very few Americans were aware of our Nation's effort to develop an atomic bomb, but our World War II ally, the USSR, was acutely aware and built a huge spy network to steal how we were solving the physics and mechanics to build such a weapon. As I read this book, I could not understand how we allowed the USSR to employ a spy network in America, which facilitated building the USSR's atomic bomb and testing it before the Korean War. How could the USSR build spy networks in remote parts of America like Oak Ridge, Tennessee or Los Alamos, New Mexico? The Chinese are stealing massive amounts of our intellectual capital to support their efforts in the cyber and space domains.

Infantry Soldiers: We may be closer to a world war than most Americans think we are. Stay well and fit, know your required tasks, train hard, build cohesive units, read and be ready!

## From the President



COL (Ret) Robert E. Choppa

What a great summer to be an Infantryman! We welcome all of the new Non-Commissioned Officers and Officers who have joined our National Infantry Association (NIA) team. We, the NIA, have had a busy spring and summer. We have welcomed the Best Ranger Competition, the Ranger Rendezvous and attended several ceremonies including Memorial Day, D-Day Anniversary and National Airborne Day. We are hoping to shake all of the COVID-19 restrictions as we end summer and go into the fall. As this

edition goes to print, we farewell MG Dave Hodne and his family. Dave has been the most influential Chief of Infantry in a long time. He improved our Infantry OSUT, instituted the First Hundred Yards and improved the Lethality of the Infantry. We will miss you and wish you the best with your Steadfast and Loyal 4th Infantry Division at Fort Carson, Colorado. We hope he stays in touch!

Another highlight of the Infantry was accompanying COL (Ret) Ralph Puckett, along with his wife and family, as Ralph went to the White House to receive the Medal of Honor. The entire week included lunches with both the Department of the Army (Chief of Staff, Sergeant Major of the Army, Acting Secretary of the Army) and Department of Defense (Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) leadership. Tours of the Pentagon, photographs with more than 50 Rangers in their tan berets on the Pentagon lawn. COL Puckett and his team conducted a press panel with correspondents from the Pentagon. The centerpiece was White House Tour, presentation of the Medal of Honor and conversations with the President, First Lady, Vice President, President of the Republic of Korea, and many other dignitaries. COL Puckett was very appreciative of the special treatment he received but reiterated that he owes his Medal of Honor to two groups: his 8th Army Rangers and LTC (Ret) John Lock.

The Rangers followed COL Puckett and faced off with the five waves of Chinese Infantry. John uncovered the paucity and need for Valor Awards during the Korean War. He led the 18-year fight to have COL Puckett's Distinguished Service Cross upgraded to the Medal of Honor. As we departed our National Capital and Arlington National Cemetery, we all prayed for those who had paid the ultimate sacrifice. In June, the NIA sponsored a dinner in Ralph and Jeannie Puckett's honor at the NIM.

This year, the NIA is proud to award the Doughboy Award to GEN (Ret) Dan McNeill and CSM (Ret) Marvin Hill. We regret that we can't hold our popular Doughboy Awards Dinner, but we will ensure that these two great leaders will be presented their awards soon—the impressive chrome replica of a helmet worn by American Expeditionary Soldiers during World War I (WWI) and the early days of World War II.

Finally, we welcome BG Larry Burris as our new Chief of Infantry and Commandant of the Infantry School. The National Infantry Associations primary mission is to support the Chief of Infantry. We stand ready to assist in any means possible to make BG Burris a success.

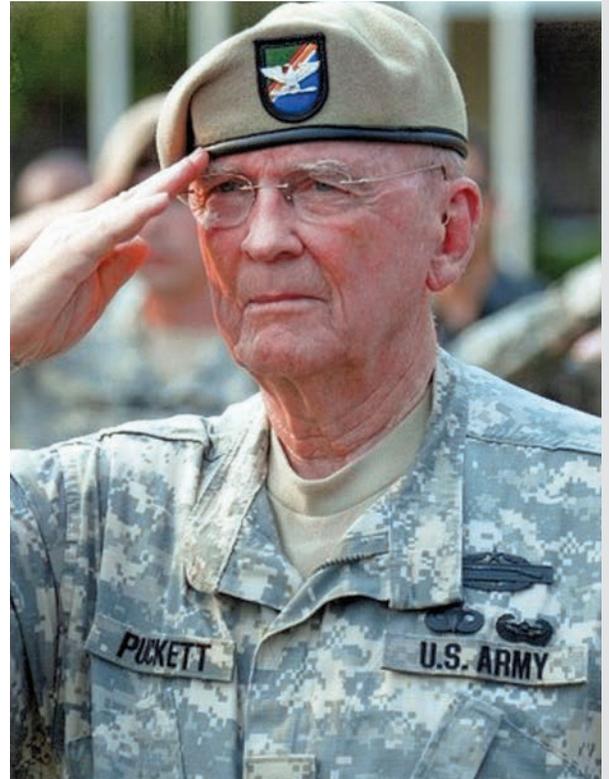


# COL (Ret) Ralph Puckett

## Becomes Most Decorated Soldier



Puckett was awarded his second Distinguished Service Cross and Silver Star by President Lyndon Johnson in Vietnam, 1968.



The most decorated American soldier was not fearless. He was courageous. COL (Ret) Ralph Puckett said in a TV interview, “Sometimes I was so afraid I thought I was gonna vomit, but I had a job to do.” In 1950, he did his job, and in May of this year he was awarded the nation’s highest decoration, the Medal of Honor, for doing it.

A recent West Point graduate, 1LT Ralph Puckett’s first combat assignment was to lead his Ranger company of 50 men to take Hill 205 in Korea. To get to the hill, he had to locate a Chinese machine gun that was pinning down his Rangers in a field at the hill’s base. He deliberately walked across that field three times to attract machine gun fire in order to spot the machine gun emplacement so his soldiers could destroy it. Then, he led his men to take and hold the hill. In doing so, he was wounded three times, but continued to command the attack. Though outnumbered a hundred to one, his Rangers held the hill against five assaults by Chinese troops. Deciding that the Chinese with their superior numbers would overpower his men, he ordered them to withdraw and, since he couldn’t move, to leave him behind. PVT Billy G. Wells and PVT David L. Pollock

disobeyed that order and carried him to safety.

What motivates a man to risk his own life to save others? Love.

“I said to myself, please God, don’t let me get a bunch of good guys killed,” Puckett said.

His actions in his first combat assignment earned him, at that time, the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest military decoration. Fifty-three years later, historian LTC (Ret) John Lock, doing research for a history of the Rangers, came across what Puckett did on Hill 205 and decided the Distinguished Service Cross should be upgraded to a Medal of Honor and started a petition. Eighteen years later, President Joe Biden called Puckett and told him he had approved the nomination. When he told Puckett, 94, that he would get the medal at a White House ceremony, Puckett said he didn’t have to make a big fuss over it, to just mail it to him.

The President said, “I told him I would walk it to him.” At the moving award ceremony at the White House, among the president’s praises of Puckett was, “Today we are hosting a true American hero and awarding an honor that is long overdue.”

Because of his serious wounds, Puckett was offered a medical discharge, which he refused. And later, when he was assigned to serve in Germany, the Vietnam War broke out, so instead of going to Germany, he volunteered to serve in that conflict. Because of his bravery in Vietnam he was awarded another Distinguished Service Cross and so many other decorations that Lock said, "He is the most decorated soldier in the history of the United States Army." That meant he had earned more decorations than World War II hero Audie Murphy, who had been the most decorated.

Who is this extraordinary man and why was he so willing to risk his life so often? The explanation goes back to when he was four years old. He told me he would visit his best friend who lived about half a block away on a dirt road in Tifton, Georgia. "I had to cross the street," he said. "I would stand on one side and wait until I would see a car coming, and I would dash in front of it. I knew I could be hit, but it never caused me to be cautious. It was just the adrenaline. I am going to beat that car across, and, one day, I didn't."

The driver got out, moved him to the side of the road and left. The family cook took young Ralph to the hospital. As he matured, he felt sorry for that man. "I just thought that man must have been scared to death, and it was my fault. And I don't race cars anymore, but I liked that adrenaline rush that came in and comes in later." That love of a challenge set the stage for his distinguished Army Ranger career.

He had a normal small town childhood, with strict, but loving parents. "It was clear to the three children, my older sister, my



In recent years, Puckett could be seen around Fort Benning cheering on his fellow Rangers in training.

younger brother and me, what we were expected to do and to be," he said.

As a young boy, he wanted to be an Army Air Corps pilot. He would read the latest issue of magazines about World War I fighter pilot aces. He started taking flying lessons when he was 15.

"I was really behind the controls of an airplane before I was ever behind the wheel of a car," Puckett said. "I soloed when I was 16, and it was a great experience."

In 1943, while attending Georgia Tech, he joined the U.S. Army Air Corps Enlisted Reserve. His dad got a congressman to get him an appointment to West Point, which was still training Army pilots.

When he graduated in 1949, after a tour of the different branches of service, he signed up for the U.S. Air Force, which had become a separate service in 1947. However, after seeing a bloody propaganda film about World War II action in Italy, and sampling 82nd Airborne Division training, he changed his mind. The 82nd had tight discipline and stayed strictly on schedule. The Air Force, he decided, was a lot looser. That experience, plus seeing the propaganda film, made him ask himself, "Do I have the guts and brains to be a combat Infantryman?" He deliberately flunked the pilot's eye exam to find out. The record shows that he found out that he did have what it takes to be a combat Infantryman.

Upon his retirement from the Army, he became program coordinator for Outward Bound in Virginia, which uses outdoor challenges to develop individual confidence and teamwork for young people. Two years later, he started his own company, Discovery, eventually relocating it to Atlanta. After a few years, he and his wife moved to Jeannie's hometown, Columbus, and he became a vice president of a computer software company.

Columbus has been a good fit for him. He likes to inspire



In the White House prior to his Medal of Honor presentation  
Photo by SPC XaViera Masline

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### ★ MEDAL OF HONOR CITATION ★

First Lieutenant Ralph Puckett, United States Army, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty on 25-26 November 1950 while serving as Commander, Eighth Army Ranger Company, Task Force Dolvin, North Korea. As the Rangers commenced the daylight attack of Hill 205, the enemy directed mortar, machinegun and small arms fire against the advancing force. To obtain supporting fire, LT Puckett mounted the closest tank exposing himself to the deadly enemy fire. Leaping from the tank, he yelled, "Let's go!" and began to lead his Rangers in the attack. Almost immediately, enemy machinegun fire threatened the success of the attack by pinning down one platoon. Leaving the safety of his position with full knowledge of the danger, LT Puckett intentionally ran across an open area three times to draw enemy fire thereby allowing his Rangers to locate and destroy the enemy machinegun and enabling the company to seize Hill 205. Later that night, the enemy counter-attacked in the near zero weather. During the next four hours the 57-man company, inspired and motivated by the extraordinary leadership and courageous example exhibited by Lieutenant Puckett, repulsed five human wave attacks by a 500-man battalion assaulting behind intense mortar barrages. Continually directing 'danger-close' artillery support that decimated attacking enemy formations, repeatedly abandoning positions of relative safety to make his way from foxhole to foxhole to check the perimeter, interceding at each point of decision in the battle, redistributing ammunition and keeping only one eight-round clip for his own rifle, LT Puckett's encouragement and dauntless will instilled in his men an unflinching desire and perseverance to resist. Although wounded in the thigh by a grenade fragment during the first assault, LT Puckett refused evacuation. During the course of battle, LT Puckett once again intentionally exposed himself three more times to an enemy sniper before the sniper was killed. Unable to obtain artillery support to repel the sixth enemy assault, LT Puckett and his command were overrun by the fanatical enemy. Two mortar rounds detonated in LT Puckett's foxhole inflicting severe wounds to his feet, buttocks, and left arm. Thought the wounds to his right foot were so severe the doctors considered amputation for several months, LT Puckett maintained the presence of mind to report that his command was being overrun by the enemy. Grievously wounded and unable to move on his own, LT Puckett ordered his men to leave him behind. Later two of his Rangers fought their way to his position killing three enemy who were only 10 yards from where LT Puckett lay defenseless. Although LT Puckett ordered his Rangers to leave him behind, they refused. Later as the enemy fired at the rescuers LT Puckett again ordered his men to leave him to ensure their safety. Finally secure at the bottom of Hill 205 and despite the seriousness and pain of his wounds, LT Puckett maintained the presence of mind to direct a heavy concentration of artillery fire on the enemy now on top of the hill. LT Puckett's extraordinary courage and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



Puckett is surrounded by his family, South Korean President Moon Jae-in and President Joe Biden and First Lady Dr. Jill Biden following the presentation of the Medal of Honor. The South Korean President attended the ceremony to pay his respects to Puckett, his family and the Eighth Army Ranger Company. *Photo by SPC XaViera Masline*

Ranger School students, new second lieutenants and others at Fort Benning. He would tell Officer Candidate School candidates to keep telling themselves, "I can do it. Look at the guys—me and others—who have gone before you. You are just as good as we are. We did it. You can do it."

He was a fixture on the first day of Ranger School, which is a physical training test, starting at 5:45 in the morning. On their five-mile run, he would walk with them for about a mile out and a mile back, cheering them on. "They really seemed to appreciate it," he said. "They'd be running by saying, 'Thank you for being out here, COL Puckett.' 'Thank you, sir.' 'Good morning, sir.' You know, it was very fulfilling for me to have those youngsters say 'thank you very much.'"

Ranger training is tough. Half of them won't graduate, but the reward is significant. He asks them what is the most important thing they learned and they reply, "Sir, I learned about myself. I learned I can do a lot more than I ever thought possible."

He paraphrases sociologist-philosopher William James, who said, "Most of us go through life without ever knowing the great strength that we have within us. We don't know about that because we are never challenged. Life is too easy. War is the greatest challenge that exists. Unfortunately, war is destructive. It kills people, and it destroys property. What we need is the moral equivalent of war."

"What would you say is the moral equivalent of war?" I asked him.

"Ranger School."

"What else?"

Laughing, he said, "Probably, having a baby."

The honors kept coming after he retired. He was appointed Honorary Colonel for the 75th Ranger Regiment and was an inaugural inductee into the U.S. Army Ranger Hall of Fame. A parkway at Fort Benning is named for him. He received the Distinguished Civilian Service Award and The Mary Reed Service Above Self Award, the highest honor the Rotary Club of Columbus can bestow on a member.

Responding to such honors, he often quoted President Eisenhower, who said, "Humility must always be the portion of any man who receives acclaim, earned in the blood of his followers and the sacrifices of his friends." When I asked what being awarded the Medal of Honor meant to him, he said, "This medal is in recognition of the soldiers who, although not trained as Infantrymen, fought courageously facing five assaults from an overpowering Chinese force."

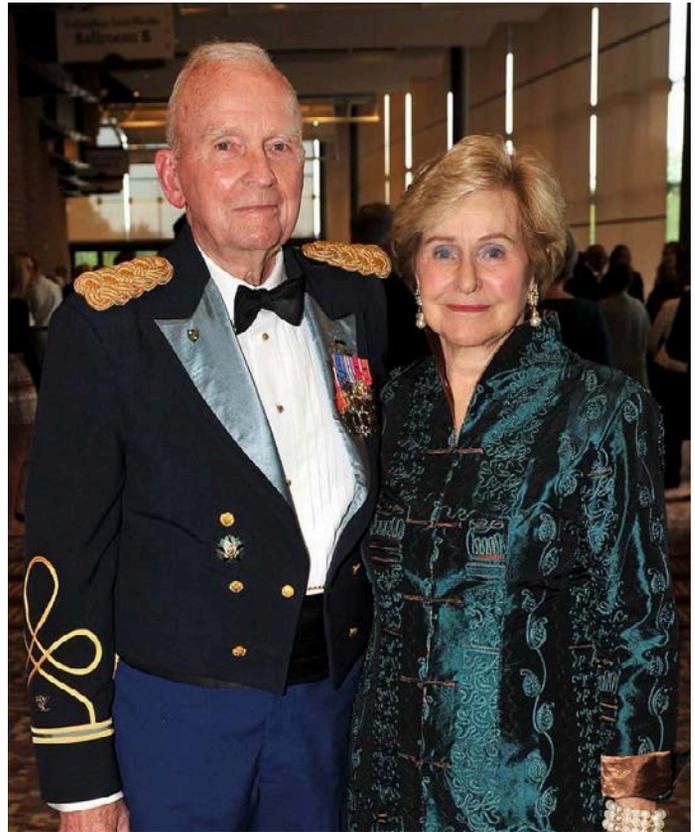
His support of Fort Benning's Rangers and Officer Candidates has never stopped. "I really consider myself very fortunate," he said. "I've had a lot of good luck, and I really do believe in giving something back. I enjoy what I am doing. I enjoyed being out there with the soldiers. And I see what they are doing, and how hard they are working. That's a worthwhile effort."

Married for 69 years, Jeannie said she was grateful that he was able to receive the award.

"Ralph has always been my hero," she said. "There is no one else. He has been a role model for the whole family. We all look up to him. He is a very helpful man."

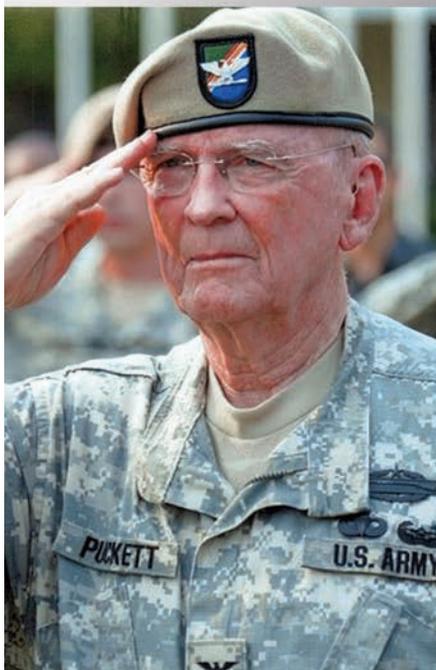
And now this helpful man has the Medal of Honor, making him the most decorated Soldier in the Army.

★★  
*Jill Tigner contributed to this article. Reprinted with permission from Columbus and the Valley magazine.*



COL (Ret) Ralph and Jeannie Puckett

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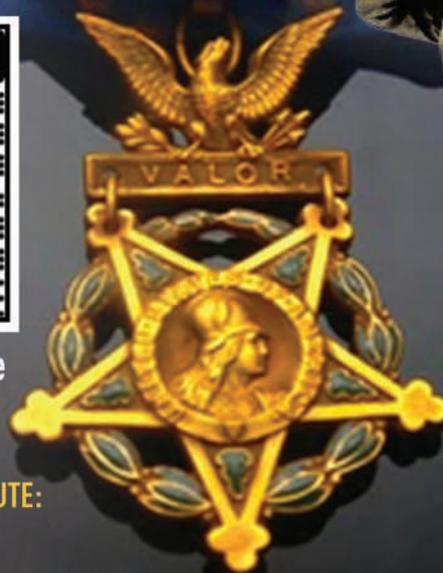
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## 2021 DOUGHBOY AWARDS

## Recognizing Outstanding Infantrymen

Each year, the Chief of Infantry presents the Doughboy Awards to recognize individuals for outstanding contributions to the United States Army Infantry. The award is presented on behalf of all Infantrymen—past and present. The award is a chrome replica of a helmet worn by American Expeditionary Soldiers during World War I (WWI) and the early days of World War II.

The term doughboy originated in Texas where soldiers trained along the Rio Grande in preparation for WWI. The Soldiers became covered in the dusty, white adobe soil and were called “adobes” by mounted troops. Over time this term transitioned to become doughboys. The Doughboy Award is the highest honor the Chief of Infantry can bestow on any Infantryman. This year’s recipients are: GEN (Ret) Dan K. McNeill and CSM (Ret) Marvin L. Hill.

Under normal circumstances, the National Infantry Association hosts the Doughboy Award Dinner at the National Infantry Museum. Due to COVID-19—like last year—there can be no in-person event.



**GEN (Ret) Dan K. McNeill** was born in Goldsboro, N.C. and grew up in Warsaw, N.C., about 50 miles from Fort Bragg. He remembers visiting the post as a young boy and a Cub Scout. One of the first experiences he recalls with great fondness is a trip to what is now called the “old division area”

where he ate at an 82nd Airborne Division mess hall and watched paratroopers jump at Sicily drop zone. Little did he know at the time, he would one day become one of those paratroopers as well as a four-star general in the United States Army.

He graduated from North Carolina State University in 1968 and believing he owed a debt to his country, was commissioned a second lieutenant in the United States Army. He is a graduate of the Infantry Officer Basic Course, Infantry Officer Advanced Course and the United States Army War College.

McNeill’s assignments include Commander, International Security Assistance Force, North American Treaty Organization, Afghanistan; Commanding General, United States Army Forces Command; Deputy Commanding General/Chief of Staff, United States Army Forces Command; Commanding General XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg to include duty as Commanding General, Combined Joint Task Force-180, OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM, Afghanistan; Commanding General, 82D Airborne Division and Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Deputy Commanding General, I Corps and Fort Lewis, Fort Lewis, Washington; Chief of Staff, XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Assistant Division Commander, 2nd Infantry Division, Eighth United States Army, Korea; United States Army

John F. Kennedy Center for Military Assistance, Fort Bragg, North Carolina with duty in Vietnam; Aide-de-Camp to the Commanding General, 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley, Fort Riley, Kansas and numerous others.

Before retiring in 2008, McNeill’s last assignment was as commanding officer of the 40-nation International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, making him the highest-ranking U.S. general in that country and one of only 11 four-star generals in the U.S. Army. Over the 16 months McNeill was in charge, troop levels rose from about 20,000 to more than 50,000 service members.

McNeill’s awards and decorations include; Defense Distinguished Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters; Distinguished Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters; Defense Superior Service Medal; Legion of Merit with four Oak Leaf Clusters; Bronze Star Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters; Meritorious Service Medal; with three Oak Leaf Clusters; Army Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters; Army Achievement Medal; Expert Infantryman Badge; Master Parachutist Badge with Bronze Star; Army Aviator Badge and the Special Forces Tab.

Those who know McNeill describe him as intense and energetic yet confident and competent. He completed more than 300 parachute jumps throughout his career, including a combat jump into Panama on 20 December 1989. As an operations officer for Operation Just Cause, McNeill was a paratrooper on one of two night parachute jumps conducted to pave the way for a freely elected government in Panama.

He was featured in the Academy award-winning documentary *Taxi to the Dark Side* in 2007.

After nearly 40 years of active duty, on 1 August 2008, McNeill retired from the United States Army to his native North Carolina.



**CSM (Ret) Marvin L. Hill** retired

from the United States Army as the senior enlisted advisor to the commander of U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan on 31 January 2013. Hill advised United States Army GEN David H. Petraeus, United States Marine Corps GEN John Allen and the top NATO, Afghan and international commanders on training, combat operations, morale and welfare of 140,000 military and civilian personnel serving in Afghanistan.

He was personally selected by Petraeus to serve as the top non-commissioned officer and as his senior enlisted advisor in Afghanistan, and earlier at the United States Central Command Headquarters, at the Multinational Forces-Iraq headquarters in Baghdad and at the 101st Airborne Division. He also served as LTG Russel L. Honoré’s top non-commissioned officer and

senior enlisted advisor during Honore's leadership of the U.S. Government response to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, as the command sergeant major of First United States Army.

Petraeus, Honore' and other top military leaders relied on Hill to energize their organizations, expand their personal impact and protect and build cultures.

Hill energized organizations by creating and implementing new solutions when leadership teams saw themselves as "out of options." He did this in Iraq, when injuries, combat losses and high operating tempo created serious shortages of experienced noncommissioned officer leaders. He re-energized the leadership team and solved the problem by designing and implementing a program for battlefield promotion, changing Army-wide policy and bolstering leadership capabilities for Army units in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa.

Hill's battlefield circulation in Afghanistan allowed him to spot a need for accelerated fielding of a new weapons system, and to expand the commander's impact by working directly with authorities in the U.S. to field the weapon at high volume and ahead of schedule. As the Command Senior Enlisted Leader for United States Central Command, he helped champion the policy of "Non-chargeable Leave" for troops taking R&R leave.

At First Army, CSM Hill established a culture of caring for wounded soldiers by spearheading the first Medical Holdover Units and community-based healthcare, supporting the transition to the Department of Veterans Affairs and setting the stage for today's Warrior Transition Brigades.

In more than 35 years of military service and 15 years at the highest enlisted rank, Hill held increasingly responsible assignments in the U.S., Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo and Sinai. He served as a First Sergeant, a Battalion Operations Sergeant, a Tactical Noncommissioned Officer at the United States Military Academy, a Drill Sergeant, a Drill Sergeant Instructor and as a Faculty Advisor at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy. He also served as Task Force Command Sergeant Major

for Multinational Force and Observers, Sinai, Egypt and as the Task Force Falcon Command Sergeant Major in Kosovo (KFOR-3A). As the Division Command Sergeant Major of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), he deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. During that tour, He enabled the division's capabilities by spearheading 10 Air Assault School classes resulting in over 1500 qualified graduates. Hill took the lead in reducing the division's Primary Leadership Development Course Order of Merit List (PLDC OML) by piloting a two-week long PLDC course which became the model for the Army wide Warrior Leader's Course.

He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Sergeant Major Academy and earned a bachelor's degree at St. Thomas Aquinas College, as well as the Master of Education degree in Organizational Leadership, with honors, at North Central University. His military awards and decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Bronze Star, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with Silver Oak Leaf Cluster, the NATO Meritorious Medal, the Joint Services Commendation Medal for Valor, the Army Commendation Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Joint Service Achievement Medal, the Army Achievement Medal with Silver Oak Leaf Cluster, the Good Conduct Medal (11th award), the National Defense Service Medal (2nd award), the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Arrowhead, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Kosovo Campaign Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal with Campaign Star (2nd award), the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon (4th award), the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon (2nd award), the NATO Medal, the Multinational Force and Observers Medal (2nd award), the Expert Infantryman Badge, the Combat Action Badge, the Air Assault Badge and the Drill Sergeant Badge.

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Mr. Gary L. Fox

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GEN (Ret) William W. Hartzog  
CSM (Ret) Gary R. Carpenter

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GEN David A. Bramlett  
CSM Kenneth J. "Rock" Merritt  
Mr. Ben F. Williams, Jr.

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CSM Jeffrey J. Mellinger  
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**2014**  
GEN Carl W. Stiner  
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## Function Fitness: The Case for the Army

In 2018, I had a rare opportunity to attend a functional fitness coaching certification course. After years of strict weight lifting and good old fashion Army PT, I was naturally skeptical. I would often cite unfounded evidence in order to attempt to disprove the functional fitness phenomenon, really only to justify my own fitness programming. More than two years later, I have remained committed to functional fitness, in large part because of the amazing support community I found, as well as the drastic improvements in my health. Old injuries and unneeded weight disappeared. To my surprise, my strength improved, I gained improved range of motion and mobility, and completely revolutionized my cardiovascular endurance. Functional fitness changed my life, work performance, fitness and overall wellbeing for the better. I am confident that had I stayed on the course I was on, I would have ended up nearly immobile at an early age. This article aims to make the case for an increased presence of functional fitness in the Army in order to help change our fitness culture and improve the mental, physical and emotional resilience of our formations by correlating the nuances of functional fitness to the everyday demands of Army life and combat.

As the Army implements the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT), which is inherently functional in nature, our Physical Readiness Training (PRT) strategies have begun to shift. Although the average Army formation can still be found doing the same old things like long distance running, ruck marching and pushups and sit-ups, there has certainly been a shift in our culture as units begin to try to prepare their Soldiers for the functional nature of the ACFT. As we think about the rigors of combat however, it is fair to say that in battle, Soldiers are required to move rapidly, conduct a high intensity activity and then repeat

this process. Those activities often require agility, speed, balance, strength, mobility, power, skill and even a certain degree of gymnastics ability, like climbing a wall or jumping through a window. Further, the daily rigors of garrison training require a great deal of resilience, mental fortitude, endurance, confidence and adherence to high standards. Functional fitness, as a comprehensive program, provides Soldiers with the tools to be successful in both contexts.

Functional fitness is a microcosm for Army life in several ways, to include:

1. Balancing multiple skills to be ready for the unknown
2. High standards and accountability
3. Planning and programming
4. Preparation and recovery
5. Mental toughness and resilience
6. Competition and winning

The most salient of these comparisons, is the multi-modal nature of functional fitness. Readiness in the Army is essentially the ability of a unit or individual to be ready to, with little notice, tackle any mission in all conditions. Units must balance all of their assigned skills, like marksmanship, land navigation, offense, defense and urban operations, to name only a few. Too much focus on one area decreases readiness in others. We prefer our combat arms units to be trained on a variety of skillsets rather than be experts on any singular skill. Functional fitness is the same. In this model, athletes focus on balancing proficiency across all domains (power, agility, balance, strength, etc.). Too much focus in one area lets you atrophy in other areas. Athletes continuously manage this tension, trying to keep as many “plates” spinning as possible, without letting any one drop. The best functional fitness athletes are well trained across a diverse portfolio of activities, in contrast to the marathon runner or body builder who are only highly skilled in one domain. This “ready-for-anything,” approach allows athletes to tackle any fitness challenge with a high degree of ability. They may not beat the marathon runner in a race, or the body builder in a bench press competition, but holistically they are more fit across all



# SNIPERS:

## *Their Role on the Modern Battlefield*

After two decades of conflict, the Sniper continues to be an underutilized asset by the commander who employs them on the battlefield. The problem that plagues the sniper community is: what is the definitive role of a sniper? The Operational Force has failed to define what they want out of a fully qualified sniper. In turn, it has put a tremendous strain on the Generating Force, which has to play catch up in order to sustain sniper training in the 21st century.

When we look to other nations, such as Israel or Russia, their snipers are being trained to support both irregular and conventional war, and are currently deployed along the front lines of Ukraine and Gaza with great success. For them, the sniper is a critical node on the modern battlefield. Yet on our home front, there is talk of sacking sniper institutional training from high-level figures at the Infantry School. The intent of this article is to inform senior leaders on the importance of maintaining an institutional school for snipers at Fort Benning, and to bring attention to combatant commanders on the importance of communicating with the Generating Force on what they need from a sniper on the battlefield.

### Current Mission Statement

ATP 3-21.20, Infantry Battalion doctrine states that during the conduct of decisive action, through the depth of the Infantry battalion's area of operation (AO), the primary mission of the Infantry battalion's sniper squad is to deliver precise long-range fire on selected targets. Sniper fire has a marked effect on enemy troops creating casualties, slowing movement, instilling fear, influencing their decisions, actions, lowering morale and adding confusion to their operations. The sniper squad's observational and navigational skills and specialized equipment help them see the terrain in detail and observe changes.

### Snipers in Modern War, 1969 to Present VIETNAM

In the spring of 1969, the 9th Infantry Division's most successful ambush tactic was the employment of snipers. The sniper program was initiated back in the United States and was set in motion as result of a visit to Fort Benning in January 1968. The Army Marksmanship Unit, led by MAJ Willis L. Powell, cooperated to the fullest extent, and funds were made available to increase the accuracy of rifles and to provide sniper-scopes. The idea was to get a training team from the Marksmanship Unit to train 9th Infantry Division soldiers in Vietnam in sniper tactics.



U.S. Army Sniper School, Known Distance training. Maertens Range, MCoE, Fort Benning, Georgia. Photo by John D. Helms

The first handpicked group of volunteers from each battalion graduated in early November 1968 and the first sniper kill was registered on 19 November 1968 north of Binh Phuoc in Long An Province. The second group of snipers graduated in early December, giving 9th Infantry Division a full complement of 72 snipers, six per battalion and four per brigade.

BG. James S. Timothy was given the task of getting the sniper program off the ground. He set about analyzing equipment, personnel, methods and tactics for snipers. One flaw that he saw in the system was initially that snipers had been parceled out by the battalions on the basis of two per Line Company. The company commanders had the responsibility for the snipers and most company commanders couldn't care less. They would use snipers just as any other rifleman. This was the reason they were not getting results. Consequently, Division directed assignment of the snipers to the battalion headquarters and held the battalion commanders responsible for their proper utilization and for emphasis on the program.

Once the snipers began to get personal attention and could handpick their assignments and fit their talents to the mission, the results were extraordinary. Sniper teams normally consisted of two snipers and two additional Infantrymen armed with an M-79 and an M-16 and carrying a radio. At the start of the war in Vietnam, the United States had no snipers; by the end of the war, Marine and Army snipers had killed more than 10,000 NVA and VC soldiers—the equivalent of an entire division—at the cost of fewer than 20,000 bullets, proving that long-range shooters still had a place in the battlefield.

### IRAQ

In Iraq, small kill teams (SKT) were routinely used to destroy improvised explosive device (IED) emplacement teams, conduct counter-mortar and counter-rocket missions and establish observation posts (OPs). Their success was attributed to the snipers' ability to provide rapid, precise and discriminate fires

onto a target area and to act left of bang in preventing an enemy on carrying out an attack. Similar to the team dynamics of Vietnam, the SKT was made up of four to six personnel, with snipers, FOs, security and communication elements all working in unison.

SKTs were employed by a platoon, generally the Scout Platoon located in HHC. These SKTs were tasked with gathering intelligence, harassing the enemy and destroying enemy personnel and equipment. The SKT typically conducted an attack by fire, with the Quick Reaction Force element closing in and destroying the enemy. The SKT contained both an assault and security element to maximize firepower and maintain enough firepower if decisively engaged.

## AFGHANISTAN

Current operational snipers in Afghanistan are being utilized in small teams embedded at the company level or with special operations forces (SOF) elements. Both day and night operations see the sniper teams moving quickly through the Operating Environment (OE). Snipers are moving with assault elements and positioning in overwatch positions to cover movements.

A report from 2019 from a current operational sniper stated, "I was operating mostly in northern Afghanistan in the mountains (7,000-11,000 ft.) where maneuverability was the most important factor when it came to being able to make successful engagements. If I was static at a blocking position or an observation post as a sniper I wouldn't have even made half of the engagements that I did. Having ISR or fires platform spot personnel close to our force, I'd let the Ground Force Commander know I intended to move to a position to engage them. I'd bring a small security element and maneuver to where I could engage them from, talking back and forth with the ISR or fires platform the whole time, getting updates on the personnel or if they had any recommendations on where I could move to have a decent line of sight. Once I was in position I'd have ISR drop a sparkle if they were capable, and if they weren't, I'd just have them talk me onto target. Having the freedom to maneuver in situations like that was by far the most important thing that produced those opportunities for my team. While there is a time for it, I strongly disagree with the idea of the sniper being locked into a position on the battlefield."

## Sniper Capabilities Based Assessment

During the height of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), the Army identified that it needed more from its snipers to combat the current threat faced in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. It requisitioned a Capabilities Based Assessment to determine shortcomings and possible solutions.

- 2006 – Tasking from LTG Lovelace, Deputy Chief of Staff tasks TRADOC to advise the HQDA G3 on a way ahead to organize, train and equip Army snipers. Creation of the Sniper Defeat Integrated Capabilities Development Team (SD-ICDT).
- 2007 – SD-ICDT identifies that the current force has an inadequate number of snipers trained personnel IOT conduct effective ISR, sniper employment, targeting and counter sniper

operations.

- 2009 – DOTMLPF (Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities and Policies) gap analysis conducted on Fort Benning identified, prioritized and validated the capability gaps.

Capability Gaps Identified:

- a. Ability to effectively engage personnel with precision out 1500 meters
- b. Ability to conduct surveillance
- c. Ability to conduct patrols
- d. Ability to control supporting arms
- e. Ability to conduct counter sniper operations
- f. Ability to effectively engage hardened or material targets with precision
- g. Inadequate number of qualified snipers in the force

TRADOC began to address these issues with near term fixes. They added Sniper Mobile Training teams (MTTs) and ordered a revision of the sniper manual. They began the development of a Sniper Center of Excellence Concept. Lastly, they directed the Requirements division to begin the development of a new Bolt action Sniper Weapon System (M2010) and soon after a Compact Semi-Automatic Sniper System (CSASS).

## Developments, 2017 to Present Day

### ARMY SNIPER DOCTRINE

The U.S. Army's Maneuver Center of Excellence released an updated Training Circular 3-22.10, Sniper, in December 2017. The sniper training circular was revised and updated in various topics including sniper planning, employment, field craft, marksmanship, ballistic programs and complex engagements. The training circular's intent was to create uniformity within the sniper community and to align sniper training and employment with current U.S. Army doctrine.

### ARMY SNIPER COURSE

With updated doctrine, The United States Army Sniper Course began to align itself to support it. A recent article from Small Wars Journal states, "In late 2018, the United States Army Sniper Course cadre took a hard look in the mirror and asked the all-important question, "What is the role of the sniper when it comes to large scale, ground combat warfare? How do we train the next generation of snipers to be effective force multipliers on the battlefield?"

Collectively, the cadre concluded that Snipers need to focus on acting as sensors, communicators and human weapons systems, supporting enhanced multi-domain command and control from the ground in anti-access area denial environments. The shift from a linear type of training to a more progressive, complex training mindset directly stemmed from reports that cadre were receiving from downrange. Gone were the archaic ways of how snipers were being employed, and because of that, to stay relevant, the schoolhouse needed to adapt and shift their focus to complex engagements in irregular and conventional wars.





★ NEWS & AWARDS ★



1SG Guy-Michael Wycoff awarded the Order of Saint Maurice to CPT Jack Bagdadi at Able, 1-19 IN BN Honor Hill.



On 22 June 2021 at Fort Benning, Georgia, COL (Ret) Paul Longgrear (far right) presented the Order of St. Maurice to 1LT Jose Gutierrez. Also at the presentation were (left to right) Bob Brown and MSG (Ret) Howard "Max" Mullen.



On 29 April 2021, LTC Richard C. Campbell was presented the Order of Saint Maurice after his successful command of C Co, 2nd Battalion, 4th Security Force Assistance Brigade.



On 15 June 2021 at the Land Dominance Center at Fort Stewart, Georgia, LTC Wesley Eminger (far right) was presented the Order of St. Maurice. On hand for the ceremony were (left to right) SFC Michael Askew, CSM John Ballenger and presenter CSM Joseph Shirer.



On 07 May 2021 at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia, CSM Matthew Reed was presented the Order of St. Maurice by COL Scott Brannon.



On 31 May 2021 at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) Headquarters in Hohenfels, Germany, CPT Brandon Shorter (right) presented the Order of St. Maurice to SFC Corey Ogle.



On 8 July 2021, LTC (Ret) Oren Lee Peters was presented the Order of St. Maurice by the University of Central Army ROTC in Edmond, Oklahoma. The 100-year-old veteran of WWII and Korea shared the story of how he enlisted. He was sweeping floors at an armory for a job in high school. Someone asked if he wanted to go to summer training. When he said, "yes," they handed him a uniform and he was in the Army. He made \$2 for a drill. When he deployed for WWII, he made \$22 a month. An Infantryman through and through, LTC Peters still wears his uniform and presents ROTC scholarships.



On 07 June 2021, the following received the Order of St. Maurice for the WHINSEC "SIEMPRE LISTOS" Chapter: Chapter Vice President SGM Jose Bueno, MSG John Martinez, SFC Juan Vargas, COL John Suggs, Chapter XO SFC Daniel Davila, CSM Carlos Perez Mena, MAJ Patrick Kelley, Chapter President SSG Luis Figueroa and Mr. Jose Rivera.



On 07 June 2021, Sara Davila, wife of SFC Daniel Davila WHINSEC HHC Operations NCO was presented the Shield of Sparta.



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- >> 120VAC SYSTEM
- >> NSN 6210-01-552-7806 (KITS ALSO HAVE NSNs)



- >> ALL LED UNIT DOES NOT BREAK OR BURN OUT
- >> ROBUST, RUGGED HOUSING
- >> WHITE/GREEN SWITCH (NO FILTER!) COMING SOON

**CALL OR EMAIL US TODAY AND ASK ABOUT OUR PTOC LIGHT SYSTEM FOR YOUR TENTS.  
WE HAVE LIGHTS IN STOCK AND READY TO SHIP.**

**WE ARE ISO9001:2015 CERTIFIED!**



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