

INFANTRY ★BUGLER★

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL INFANTRY ASSOCIATION

101st AIRBORNE DIVISION (AIR ASSAULT) ISSUE

**Warfighter
Conference Edition**

**DOUGHBOY
AWARDS**

**Restoring
Pathfinder
Capability**



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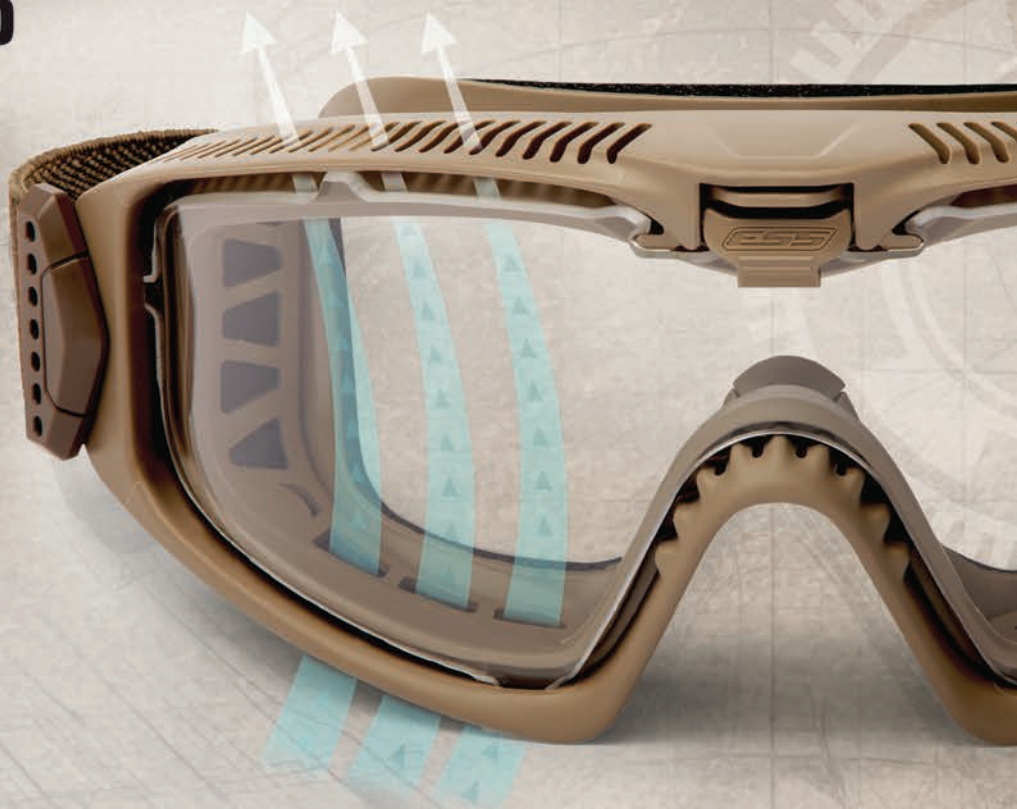
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★ ARTICLES ★

- 6 Message from the Commander of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
- 7 Restoring Pathfinder Capability in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
- 11 Hardening Artificial Intelligence for Ground Combat
- 15 Massed Precision: How Robotics Enabled an Uncontested Breach
- 18 Doughboy Awards: Recognizing Outstanding Infantrymen

★ DEPARTMENTS ★

- 4 Messages from the NIA Chairman, NIA President and Chief of Infantry
- 21 National Infantry Museum Foundation Update
- 23 News & Awards

ON THE COVER: Soldiers from the 1st Mobile Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), execute a Large Scale, Long Range Air Assault (L2A2) mission to the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), rapidly deploying brigade-sized combat power across 500 miles under the cover of darkness. UH-60 Black Hawks and CH-47 Chinooks transported troops and gear from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to Fort Johnson, Louisiana, showcasing the reach and readiness of the Army's premier Air Assault force. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Alexander Goff)

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.org.



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From the Chairman From the President



BG (Ret) Larry Burris

Fellow Infantryman and Supporters of the Infantry,

It was wonderful to see so many of our current and past Infantryman and their guests at the Infantry Branch 251st Birthday Ball at the National Infantry Museum in June. Our guest speaker, CSM(R) Frank Grippe's remarks were perfect for our birthday ball, reminding us all of why we volunteer for the Infantry.

This issue's focus unit is the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). Activated on 16 August 1942, the "Screaming Eagles" have served our nation and our Army continuously since activation. The Division's Soldiers served in the most consequential battles of World War II; D-Day, Operation Market Garden and the Battle of the Bulge, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the Sinai and in both Iraq and Afghanistan, during the Global War on Terror. Wherever and whenever the Soldiers of the Screaming Eagle Division have served, they have done so with honor and grit.

The Division and its regiments, the 327th, the 502nd and the 187th, have long called Fort Campbell, Kentucky home as they today continue to deploy to Europe to deter aggression and most recently to our nation's Southwest Border to secure key terrain.

Like many, having had the privilege of serving the 101st on multiple occasions, the Division holds a very special place in my heart. It is where I first led Soldiers and where I last had the opportunity to command Soldiers. I hope that you enjoy this issue of the Infantry Bugler.

In closing, I hope to see as many of you as possible at Fort Benning during the Maneuver Warfighter Conference, specifically at the Doughboy Dinner where will honor those who have made many great contributions to the Infantry Branch. This year we honor GEN (Ret) Robert Brown, CSM (Ret) Rick Merritt and our very own association president, our leader, COL (Ret) Rob Choppa.

Thank you for all you do for our Infantry Soldiers, our Army and our Nation.

SCREAMING EAGLES!
FOLLOW ME!



COL (Ret) Robert E. Choppa

I will receive the Doughboy Award-Civilian at our Dinner in September. I am receiving this award because of all of you. Thank You! Thank you for your support of the Infantry, our Army and America and thanks for your support of the National Infantry Association (NIA). There are many folks that I need to thank who guided me to receive this award.

Most important is my family. My wife Mindy is the most important person in my life. She is beautiful and strong. We have had a great life in the Army where she carried me in every assignment. She raised our two sons. We love our sons, John, his wife Sophie, and Jake. Mindy cares for our six Dachshunds. Finally, I want to thank my bird dog Charlie for listening to all my stories and fixing my challenges.

Special thanks to the Doughboy Awards Committee for their confidence in me. I am humbled by the recognition and I will make you proud!

I would not be eligible for this honor without my team. They produce success. This Civilian Doughboy Award is for them and the NIA. Thank you to my staff—Yvonne Petrasovits (the Chief), Nicole Morrison, Jill Tigner, Brandon Loveless and Brad Skipworth who make everything NIA happen. Thank you to former NIA teammates – Caitlin McLemore, Stephanie Haveron, Brian Nelson, Chelsea Gradzik and Dick Nurnberg.

Thank you to our NIA Board of Directors including our chairman, BG (Ret) Larry Burris, LTG (ret) Tom Metz (for hiring me) and all our board members.

Thank you to our Active Duty, National Guard, Reserve, Retired and Veteran NIA Supporters. Thank you for recommending individuals for our NIA Awards. Thank you to the Museum and the Foundation, especially Pete Jones and Jerry Dodson.

Thank you to our sponsors donors, my friends—Jack Wingate and Warren Sessler—and our partner associations: AUSA, CIBA, RRA, USARA, NRME, RCPT, ADT and others.

Thank you to those Leaders that hired, inspired and mentored me. Men like GEN (Ret) Bob Brown and CSM (Ret) Rick Merritt. Others include my dear friend and mentor Carter Ham, Ray Odierno, Dave Petraeus, Stan McChrystal, Dave Rodriguez, Jim Mingus, Mike Garrett, Curt Scappapotti, Hank Keirse, Lawson MacGruder, Bill Steel, Dan Allyn, Chris Donahue, Scotty Miller, Ed Soriano, Dick Cody, William Wallace, Rich Clarke, Ron Clark, Eric Kurilla, Jimmy McConville, Charlie Flynn, John Foss, Eric Shinseki, HR McMaster, Bob Van Antwerp, Dave Grange, Ken Keen, Sam Thompson, Kevin Admiral, Tom Turner, Carmen Cavezza, Ed Lacey, Tom Snukis, JR Vines, Steve Gilland, Ken Hunzeker, Mark Landes, Frank Wiercinski, Steve Lanza, Danny McKnight, Rob Smith, Gordy Flowers, Gary Speer, Fred Schwein, George Fisher, John Maher, Brandon Tegtmeyer, Scott Nauman, Sean Jenkins, Pat Work, John Howard, Bill Brandenburg, Joe Stringham, Joe Inge and Kirk Brinker.

Special thanks to my NCOs, for their patience, for showing me what right looks like and for leading the way including Drill Sergeant Quiros, Art Cobb, Don Purdey, Joe Heckart, Jessie Laye, Pat Hurley, Ralph Beam, John Edmunds, Jimmy Fowler, Andy Pancho, Gerry Klein, Bill Block, Karl Dietrick, Andy Mangosing, Jeff Du, Al Bjerke, Tim Guden, Jeremiah Inman, Jerry Dodson, Chris Lewis, Tom Siter, Rick Weik, Chris Gunn, Will Grant, Alan Gibson, Judson Gee, Jason Dein, Curt Arnold, Bobby Bouma, Jim Snedigar, Jim Kemp, Tom Adams, Ricky Hairston, Bill Dodge, Goose Newbury, Terry Richards, Mike Ramierez, Rob Weir, Jim Kemp, Tom Sadberry, Andy Pancho, Noah Galloway, Ben Mishoe, Chris Donaldson, Danny Barrett, Kevin Van Houten, Kevin Mincio, Jeff Lowery and countless others. Also, my favorite Warrant Officers, Nick Punimata and Tal Williams. I am also honored to join Fellow Doughboy Civilian Recipients Gary Fox and Paul Voorhees.

Thanks to those that I served with and beside: Bill Butler, Rick Carlson, Jim Tully, John Collier, Ed Leo, Shawn Mullholland, John Kress, Barry Huggins, Johnny Grigorian, Phil Mundweil, Joe Katz, Nate Molica, Raffie, Babe Kwazniak, Kevin Shwedo, Jim Lechner, John Riscassi, Len McWherter, Jim Cash, Emmett Schail, and my Ranger Buddy Gunny Paul Moose (USMC). Special thanks to Kevin Mincio, for saving my life. You guys made this ride a fun one. I am sorry for leaving some out. I can see your faces but can't remember names.

I thank my twin brother Rich, who suggested we enlist in the Army in 1983 and for Leading the Way in the Rangers. I thank my younger brother Jack for his support. Thanks to my grandparents, Mom and Dad, aunts, uncles, cousins and childhood friends.

Special thanks to the late COL Ralph Puckett for his sage advice and friendship.

I want to thank all of those who gave their lives for America. I visit you at our Vietnam, Korea and GWOT Wall memorials every week.

From the Chief of the Infantry



BG Jim D. Keirse

I'm honored to assume the role of the U.S. Army's Infantry Commandant. BG Phil Kiniery, along with the Infantry School team and supported training brigades, did incredible work in focusing on the fundamentals while embracing changes necessary for modern warfare. We intend to continue on this path.

At the Infantry School, we will emphasize the enduring fundamentals that enable our close combat fighting force to wage battle and win. These fundamentals include characteristics like toughness, fitness and shared hardship.

They manifest in training activities like marksmanship, casualty care and small unit battle drills. We will not lose sight of those core, unchanging aspects of our mission.

However, warfare continually evolves and it is important that our Infantry School does so as well. We will expose Soldiers and junior leaders to both offensive and defensive tactics relating to drones. They will wrestle with the ubiquity of sensors on the modern battlefield. Our premier small unit leadership school will remain firmly grounded in creating a pressurized environment where pre-combat checks, inspections, troop leading procedures, rehearsals and grit matter most.

Other courses will adapt to the needs of the modern day and will incorporate new weapons, autonomous systems, reconnaissance, and strike capability. We will make changes relevant to the operational force by incorporating their feedback. In the end, our aim is to prepare disciplined, fit and proficient Infantry Soldiers and leaders capable of winning on the battlefield with drones or without.

We are also focused on ensuring noncommissioned officer professional military education and school opportunities evolve to meet the needs of the day. Expect to see professional military education courses shorten in length to ruthlessly prioritize core requirements, followed by the opportunity to attend functional courses designed to improve confidence and competence with exposure to new weapons and training methodologies. We are doing the same to ensure our 11C senior noncommissioned officer training is relevant and efficient. Our professional military education will prepare our NCOs to train, inspect and lead their teams and squads in modern warfare. As always, we are open to feedback from the force on these initiatives.

Thank you for your interest in the Infantry. I strongly believe that it forms the core of our Nation's close combat fighting force, and we at the Infantry School are committed to ensuring we place our Soldiers, noncommissioned officers and officers in the position of best advantage to achieve their purpose. That purpose is to fight and win our Nation's wars.

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From the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)



MG David Gardner
Commanding General,
101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) is the only division in the world specializing in long-range large-scale air assault operations. When our nation calls, we do not wait. We are trained, equipped and ready to fight tonight. Our mandate is to plan, coordinate and execute vertical envelopments under the cover of a single period of darkness, across distances of up to 500 nautical miles, to seize key terrain and destroy enemy forces.

This lethal capability is the direct result of more than eight decades of constant evolution and a refusal to rest on our laurels. We are incredibly proud of our division's historic legacy, from

dropping behind enemy lines in World War II to pioneering rotary-wing combat in Vietnam and executing history's largest air assaults in the Gulf War. Yet, the hallmark of the Screaming Eagles has always been a healthy restlessness and a drive for improvement. We live by a simple standard: proud but never satisfied.

Continuous improvement is not a buzzword for us; it is an operational necessity. We do not wait for solutions to modern battlefield challenges. Instead, the Screaming Eagles actively find solutions within our own capabilities and formations. Our Soldiers, NCOs and officers put new concepts to the test in the mud, find the friction points and adapt our tactics.

This edition of the *Infantry Bugler* features articles from our own leaders who

are driving these grassroots solutions at the tactical edge:

- COL Ryan Bell writes on the recent Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) Rotation 26-06, demonstrating how the "Rakkasans" leveraged our own organic assets to execute a fully robotic deliberate breach. By combining commercial drone capabilities with standard Infantry tactics, they solved a high-risk operational hurdle using the tools already in their hands.
- MAJ Michael A. Zequeira presents a practical case study from the 3rd Mobile Brigade Combat Team's JRTC rotation. He argues that while artificial intelligence can enable the tactical edge, we must maintain robust internal maintenance and realistic training to remain self-reliant on a degraded battlefield—ensuring our formations command the technology, rather than rely on it.
- WO1 Zachary Raschke reminds us that when electronic warfare degrades our technology, we must rely on our highly trained, organic specialists. He highlights how our Pathfinders deploy forward to bring the critical human element back to ground navigation and landing zone coordination, ensuring our first lift lands safely on the objective even when GPS and communications are jammed.

These articles reflect hard-earned lessons from recent operations and demanding exercises. They showcase a division that constantly looks inward, evaluates our gaps and refines our warfighting skills.

We innovate to ensure absolute lethality by marrying new technology with brilliance at the basics and fundamentals. By constantly seeking self-improvement and solving tactical problems within our own ranks today, we ensure our Screaming Eagles remain well-equipped, highly trained and fully prepared for our next *Rendezvous with Destiny*.

Air Assault!

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RESTORING PATHFINDER CAPABILITY

in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

A UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter from the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division slingloads an Infantry Squad Vehicle from the 1st Mobile Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at the Alexandria, Louisiana airport on the night of 8 May 2025. This air movement represents a Large-Scale, Long-Range Air Assault (L2A2) that moves a brigade worth of combat power over 500 miles, from Fort Campbell, Kentucky to Fort Johnson, Louisiana. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Alexander Goff)



Enabling Decisive First-Lift Air Assault Operations

The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) has served as the U.S. Army's premier air assault division, capable of projecting combat power deep into enemy territory with speed and precision. As the Division prepares for large-scale combat operations (LSCO) against near-peer adversaries, its transformation initiatives demand a careful re-examination of every element that enables decisive first-lift operations. Among these critical enablers are the Pathfinders, small teams of highly trained Soldiers who specialize in establishing drop zones (DZs), landing zones (LZs), and helicopter landing zones (HLZs) in contested or unfamiliar environments. Once a hallmark of the Division's air-mobility capability, most Pathfinder units were inactivated during the counterinsurgency era. Yet the return of LSCO—characterized by degraded communications, sophisticated electronic warfare (EW), and rapid maneuver—makes a compelling case for restoring and modernizing the Pathfinder mission.

The First Lift as the Decisive Operation

Air assault doctrine holds that the first lift of troops and equipment is often the decisive operation in any air assault. For the air assault to be successful, the first wave must be able to swing the tide of battle on the likely chance that no subsequent lifts can penetrate enemy airspace. The success of follow-on lifts, and thus the entire operation, depends on the secure and timely landing of the initial force.

Pathfinders are indispensable in this process. By infiltrating ahead of the main body to identify and mark LZs, they ensure aviation assets can deliver the first lift precisely on time and on target—even in degraded or denied environments. In a future conflict where GPS signals may be jammed and communications disrupted, the ability of human Pathfinders to provide accurate ground navigation and dynamic landing-zone coordination will be a decisive advantage.

A Proven Capability

The lineage of the 101st Airborne is one of constant adaptation. Activated during World War II as an airborne division, the "Screaming Eagles" demonstrated the power of vertical envelopment in Normandy, Operation Market Garden and the crossing of the Rhine River. By the mid-1960s, the Division became the Army's experimental test bed for helicopter-borne assault, developing the tactics and techniques that would define the modern air assault concept.

The creation of dedicated Pathfinder units was central to this evolution. Pathfinders provided ground-based navigation and signaling to guide aircraft into small or concealed landing areas. Their mission was to insert ahead of the main force, conduct rapid reconnaissance of potential LZs, and establish the visual or electronic cues pilots needed to land safely. These tasks required mastery of both Infantry fieldcraft and aviation procedures, producing Soldiers who could bridge the gap between air and ground operations.

History continued to demonstrate their value. During Vietnam, Pathfinders scouted and marked landing zones under enemy fire, enabling successive lifts while operating in terrain where aerial reconnaissance was often unreliable. During Operation Desert Storm, Pathfinder teams infiltrated ahead of the main body to establish forward arming and refueling points and confirm landing zones for the division's helicopter fleet. In Iraq and Afghanistan, Pathfinders operated in complex urban and mountainous environments where terrain, weather, enemy activity and limited landing areas challenged aviation operations. Even as GPS, unmanned aerial systems, and satellite imagery improved, their human judgment and ground-truth assessments remained critical.

Preparing for Large-Scale Combat Operations

The Army's renewed focus on LSCO against near-peer adversaries places a premium on speed, flexibility and resilience. Potential competitors field sophisticated integrated air-defense systems and advanced EW capabilities designed to degrade U.S. command and control. In such environments, reliance on satellite navigation and long-range communications is hazardous.

Pathfinders offer a human solution to these technological vulnerabilities. Their ability to conduct ground reconnaissance, mark landing zones, and provide precise air-ground coordination allows aviation forces to insert and resupply units even when GPS signals are jammed or communications are disrupted. This directly supports the Army's Multi-Domain Operations 2028 concept, which envisions highly dispersed forces maneuvering across land, air, cyber and space domains.

Modernization of Army aviation, including the Future Vertical Lift (FVL) family of aircraft, will enable faster, longer-range air assaults. However, technological advances cannot fully mitigate the risks posed by adversary EW capabilities. Large-scale combat operations will involve operations in a denied, degraded, and disrupted space operational environment (D3SOE). Far from rendering Pathfinders obsolete, advanced aircraft increase

their importance. As aviation platforms range deeper into enemy territory, the requirement for accurate, on-the-ground assessment of landing zones grows more acute.

Training and Integration

To meet these demands, the 101st must invest in Pathfinder training pipelines that emphasize both traditional fieldcraft and emerging technologies. Core skills such as map-and-compass navigation, terrain analysis, and HLZ marking remain foundational. At the same time, Pathfinders must master the integration of unmanned aerial systems, secure digital networks and real-time intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance feeds. The goal is a Soldier who can integrate seamlessly into multi-domain operations while retaining the ability to operate independently when technology fails.

Modern Pathfinder teams should not exist as isolated enablers but as integral components of Infantry brigade combat teams within the 101st. Embedding Pathfinders within each brigade ensures commanders have immediate access to specialized air-assault expertise during planning and execution. The Division should also consider Pathfinder liaison officers within its aviation brigades to facilitate continuous coordination between ground forces and aviation assets.

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Recommendations for the 101st Airborne Division

To capitalize on these lessons, the 101st Airborne Division should pursue a multi-pronged approach to modernizing its Pathfinder capability.

First, reestablish dedicated units. The Division should reconstitute Pathfinder detachments at the brigade or battalion



Soldiers from the 1st Mobile Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), execute a Large Scale, Long Range Air Assault (L2A2) mission to the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), rapidly deploying brigade-sized combat power across 500 nautical miles under the cover of darkness. UH-60 Black Hawks and CH-47 Chinooks transported troops and gear from Fort Campbell, Kentucky to Fort Johnson, Louisiana, showcasing the reach and readiness of the Army's premier Air Assault force. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Alexander Goff)

A U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter is shown in flight, hovering over a field of tall, dry grass. The helicopter is a dark olive green color with "U.S. ARMY" visible on its side. Its main rotor blades are blurred from motion. In the foreground, several soldiers in camouflage uniforms are lying prone in the grass, looking towards the helicopter. The background consists of a line of bare trees under a clear blue sky. The overall scene depicts a military training exercise.

Soldiers assigned to 1-187 and 3-187 Infantry Regiment deploy into the field after conducting an air assault for Operation Lethal Eagle 26.1 on 22 January 2026, at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The training exercise focused on sharpening warfighting skills, validating tactics and ensuring readiness and lethality on the modern battlefield. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Marisol Romo Franco)

Finally, institutionalize joint interoperability. Pathfinder teams should train with Air Force combat controllers, Marine reconnaissance elements and allied aviation units to ensure interoperability during coalition operations.

Restoring Pathfinder capability is not merely a matter of nostalgia; it is a strategic imperative. Potential near-peer adversaries possess advanced EW tools capable of jamming GPS signals, spoofing communications, and degrading satellite-based intelligence. In such an environment, the human expertise

As the 101st Airborne Division transforms to meet the challenges of multi-domain operations in LSCO and prepares for long-range air assault operations, restoring and modernizing its Pathfinder capability is essential. Dedicated Pathfinder units will ensure that the first lift—the decisive opening move in any air assault—lands exactly where and when it is needed, securing the lodgment from which the Screaming Eagles can once again strike deep, fast and decisively.

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Hardening Artificial Intelligence for Ground Combat

For 36 hours, artificial intelligence transformed how 3rd Mobile Brigade fought at the Joint Readiness Training Center. The brigade's SALT-R extraction tool processed enemy reports from chat to map in less than 15 seconds. A three-person intelligence current operations team used AI to manage thousands of messages across multiple chats and radio nets.

Then the system crashed.

During the rotation, the brigade S2 section processed 22,514 messages. When automated tools failed, the current operations team returned to manual data entry, copying chat logs between systems and rebuilding a process that previously took seconds but now took minutes. The failure did not prove that AI has no place in tactical formations. It proved something more important: the brigade was enabled by AI, not reliant on it. That distinction must shape how the Army fields, trains and sustains artificial intelligence before the next war.

JRTC Rotation 26-06 demonstrated both the promise and fragility of AI at the tactical edge. AI helped the "Rakkasans" accelerate planning, manage information and reduce staff burden. It also failed under realistic conditions: high data volume, degraded connectivity, fragmented tools and limited organic maintenance capacity. Four requirements emerged: AI must improve spatial reasoning; brigades need resilient edge nodes; AI should be integrated into common operating picture systems through a single graphical user interface; and brigades need trained personnel who can maintain AI during operations.

AI in Planning

The Rakkasans integrated AI and machine learning during training leading to JRTC. One of the clearest successes came during the military decision-making process, where AI accelerated planning and orders production. AI ingested higher headquarters orders, extracted relevant content and gave planners a starting point for refinement. During Rotation 26-06, the brigade turned an order in 23 hours, preserving time for subordinate units to refine plans and rehearse.

AI did not replace the staff. It accelerated the staff.

Its limitations were equally clear. AI was most useful for



U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to 3rd Mobile Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), operate an ABE 1.01 unmanned aircraft system (UAS) during a Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation at Fort Polk, Louisiana, 20 April 2026. The system supports reconnaissance and provides real-time information. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Sandy Vera Vazquez)

text-heavy tasks such as summarizing orders, drafting warning orders and extracting facts from doctrine. It was less useful when planners needed spatial reasoning, tactical judgment or commander-driven decision-making.

This limitation is especially important for maneuver and intelligence. They struggle to interpret tactical graphics, understand terrain from map features, reverse engineer enemy overlays or translate a concept sketch into a coherent tactical picture. Until spatial reasoning matures, the Army will still need trained S-2 and S-3 personnel to interpret graphics, assess terrain and explain enemy courses of action.

The Current Operations (CUOPS) Fight

If planning showed AI's promise, current operations revealed its fragility. Today's sensor-dense environment produces more information than small staffs can efficiently process. During JRTC, the intelligence team received more than 1,000 messages in one 24-hour period and processed 22,514 messages across five chats, while also monitoring another chat on SIPR and four radio nets.

That is exactly the problem AI should help solve. Before JRTC, an auto-extraction tool identified structured SALT-R reports in chat and populated the common intelligence picture after S-2 confirmation. The process took less than 15 seconds from chat report to map icon.

At JRTC, the brigade expanded the effort with a large language model in Maven Smart Systems and a separate CUOPS

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Then the volume and velocity of data, a network outage, system-interface problems and improperly structured model inputs caused the tools to fail. The brigade shifted to its PACE plan. Soldiers manually entered enemy reports into Excel so they would populate the common intelligence picture. The process now took two to 10 minutes instead of less than 15 seconds. The team also copied chat logs between separate AI systems.

These failures are not reasons to abandon AI. They are evidence that tactical AI must be hardened for scale, degraded communications and mobility,

First, AI spatial reasoning must mature. If the Army reduces brigade staff sections, AI must become better at map-based analysis. Otherwise, reducing human capacity before AI can interpret overlays, terrain and course-of-action sketches risks making staffs less effective.

Second, the Army should field brigade-level edge nodes that allow AI to function during degraded communications. Local inference could preserve capability when networks are disrupted while reducing dependence on constant connectivity.



U.S. Army Soldiers, assigned to 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Mobile Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) set up the AeveX Atlas precision guided drone system the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, Louisiana, 5 April 2026. The Atlas is a Group II autonomous precision strike system engineered for tactical dominance, delivering standoff reach, accuracy and reliability in contested and denied environments. (U.S. Army photo by MSG Anthony Hewitt)

Third, AI should be integrated into common operating picture systems through a single graphical user interface. During JRTC, soldiers had to move data between Maven and a separate LLM ecosystem. Manual transfers increase the risk of selecting the wrong chat, missing information or using stale data. A single interface would reduce system switching, maximize data available to the model and simplify employment.

Fourth, brigades need personnel dedicated to maintaining AI systems. When the Rakkasans' tools failed, the CUOPS team did not have time to rebuild the models or repair overwhelmed data connections. A few soldiers possessed the necessary knowledge, but they were engaged in other mission-critical duties.

In conclusion, the Rakkasans' experience at JRTC should give the Army confidence in AI, but not blind faith. AI can increase speed and reduce staff burden, but it also creates dependencies that must be trained, sustained and hardened.

The Army should continue improving spatial reasoning, invest in resilient edge nodes, integrate AI into a single graphical interface and assign trained personnel to maintain tactical AI.

For 36 hours, AI helped transform how the brigade planned, processed information and fought. When it failed, soldiers carried the fight forward because they knew their doctrine, systems and jobs. That is the model the Army should build toward: formations enabled by AI, not reliant on it. Done correctly, AI can make ground combat units faster, smarter and more lethal; done poorly, it can become another fragile system that works in training and fails in war.

The next war will not wait for the Army to figure this out after contact. The time to harden AI for ground combat is now.

[illegible]



A U.S. Army civilian contractor supports the Multi-Functional Reconnaissance Company, 3rd Mobile Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), by preparing an Aerosonde unmanned aircraft system for flight during a Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation at Fort Polk, Louisiana, 9 April 2026. The Aerosonde provides continuous aerial surveillance and real-time reconnaissance, supporting mission planning and tactical operations for ground units. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Mariam Diallo)

MASSED PRECISION:

How Robotics Enabled an Uncontested Breach

THE BREACH

At Peason Ridge in spring 2026, a Group 3 unmanned aircraft released two precision-guided attack munitions against an enemy electronic warfare complex. Twenty additional one-way attack drones then launched in pairs, striking fortified positions, crew-served weapons and vehicles according to a target sequence developed during shaping.

Reconnaissance quadcopters dropped smoke along the obstacle belt. First Person View (FPV) drones cut triple-strand concertina wire. Two ground robots then delivered their charges and opened two lanes. The enemy covering the breach had been suppressed or destroyed before the assault force closed.

Eight Soldiers executed the robotic breach: five from the Multi-Purpose Company's assault platoon and three from the Multi-Function Reconnaissance Company's UAS integration section. They employed a Group 3 mothership, ground robots, one-way attack drones, obstacle-reduction drones, smoke-dropping quadcopters, and reconnaissance aircraft.

This was the culminating event of 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment's JRTC Rotation 26-06, conducted as part of 3/101 MBDE, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). It was the first fully robotic

deliberate breach in a U.S. Army combat training center rotation—and exposed remaining gaps.

The “Rakkasans” learned that drones are a new form of mass: massed precision that enables maneuver by shaping or defeating the enemy at distance before the close fight begins. Drones do not replace the Javelin, AT4, or rifleman. The fundamentals of combined arms remain. What changes are the ranges, timing and task organization.

A NEW FORM OF MASS

The Army has often treated drones as one-for-one substitutes for existing weapons. Drones are better understood as a new form of mass: layered effects delivered against multiple targets in the same window. A single drone is a weapon; 20, sequenced against a target list, become a breaching preparation.

The war in Ukraine has demonstrated this at scale. In 2025, Ukrainian forces conducted more than 100 drone-swarm operations, with packages of eight to 25 airframes coordinating navigation and targeting under artificial-intelligence software that reduced operator burden. The lesson is broader than any individual platform: the drone system is the weapon.

The United States is not Ukraine. American warfare remains grounded in combined

A LAYERED SYSTEM, NOT A SILVER BULLET

The 3/101 MBDE approach treats robotic systems as an ecosystem. The reconnaissance layer provides surveillance, target development and battle-damage assessment. The strike layer consists of one-way attack drones, from squad-portable FPV aircraft to larger precision-guided systems. The effects layer includes ground robots, smoke-dropping quadcopters and obstacle-reduction drones. The integration layer binds them through common control software, fires integration and airspace-management tools.

No single platform wins. Drones must be procured, trained and employed as an integrated capability.

THE BREACH AT JRTC 26-06

The mission was a deliberate breach against a mechanized Infantry platoon with electronic warfare and counter-UAS capabilities. The eight-person team employed two robotic breaching platforms, 20 one-way attack drones, a Group 3 mothership with two precision-guided munitions, obstacle-reduction FPV aircraft, smoke-dropping quadcopters and reconnaissance aircraft.

During reconnaissance, the Group 3 mothership and quadcopters established



U.S. Army 1LT Tim Boulet, assigned to the Multi-Functional Reconnaissance Company, 3rd Mobile Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), develops a route plan using the Android Tactical Assault Kit during a Joint Readiness Training Center rotation at Fort Polk, Louisiana, 8 April 2026. Boulet uses ATAK to plan movement and coordinate operations. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Sandy Vera Vazquez)

overwatch and prioritized targets, addressing enemy electronic warfare and counter-drone capability first. The strike phase then used the mothership and 20 smaller drones against the target list, with operators and maneuver forces sharing a common voice-net vocabulary. As the maneuver force approached, smoke obscured the breach area, FPV drones reduced the wire obstacle and ground robots delivered their charges. Both breaches succeeded.

Eight Soldiers and 30 machines created effects that traditionally required multiple elements while reducing Soldier exposure. The event validated the concept but exposed friction.

WHAT WE LEARNED

First, operator proficiency is the decisive variable. Several capabilities arrived late in the training cycle, leaving limited time for mastery. Vendor support was appropriate during development, but combat capability cannot depend on vendor presence. Units need structured home-station training from familiarization through mission employment and live fire.

Second, one-to-many swarm employment is the future, but is not yet mature. An attempted capability failed during a blank iteration and was withdrawn before live fire. The lesson is not that swarming does not work; it must be deliberately developed, progressing from one-to-three airframes to one-to-five and beyond as software and proficiency improve.

Third, the force fought too slowly. Maneuver elements sometimes waited on the drones. Safety requirements, slow ground robots and high risk-acceptance authority constrained concurrency. Units need better safety tools, faster robots, and a process for moving routine risk authority downward as proficiency improves.

Fourth, interoperability is a hidden constraint. A brigade profile should establish standards for drones, robots, control stations, data formats, radio waveforms and airspace inputs, with common control software as the baseline. Across the Army, open data standards and application programming interfaces should be procurement requirements. Proprietary systems that require vendor engineers to integrate new payloads or radios cannot keep pace with modern adaptation cycles.

Fifth, commander task and purpose remain the point of departure. Leaders sometimes treated robotic systems as adjuncts rather than integrated effects. A technology-to-task matrix should pair each capability with a doctrinal task, purpose and risk-reduction outcome, then be published in the operations order and rehearsed.

Sixth, attritable munitions are being consumed faster than industry can deliver them. The Army must communicate demand clearly through training and operational evidence so the institutional Army and industry can respond.

BUILDING CAPABILITY OTHERS CAN REPLICATE

This capability is not proprietary. Brigades can build it through two lines of effort.

First, institutionalize a home-station training pipeline managed by a master trainer. Operators should progress from familiarization to mission employment, integrated live fire and degraded-environment operations. Advanced certification should include diagnostics, radio and antenna configuration, maintenance and field repair. Combat training center rotations should integrate a capability built at home station, not provide basic familiarization.

Second, rehearse concurrency and move the risk framework forward. Monthly controlled fly-offs should assess accuracy, latency, electromagnetic-interference resilience, concurrency and integration with the common operating picture. Demonstrated proficiency should support moving routine risk authority downward.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE INFANTRY

The rifleman remains decisive. Infantry's mission has not changed: close with and destroy the enemy through fire and maneuver, defeat or capture him or repel his assault. New technologies have changed how Infantry accomplishes that mission without replacing its fundamentals. Drones are the next tool. They enable Infantry; they do not replace it.

At Peason Ridge, eight Soldiers and 30 machines shaped the fight before the assault force closed. Suppression, obscuration, security, reduction and assault remained; the range, timeline and task organization changed. This is massed precision.

Company commanders can integrate drones at scale, assign task and purpose as for any weapon system and own training through live fire and maintenance. Battalions and brigades should enforce interoperability standards, demand open systems and build proficiency for lower-echelon concurrency authority. The institutional Army should update doctrine and training to make drone-enabled breaching routine.

Fundamentals do not change. Systems, capabilities, tactics, techniques and task organization do. In modern war, the Army that adapts fastest wins.

★★
COL Ryan Bell commands the 3rd Mobile Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division Air Assault. He conducted a fellowship at Duke University researching artificial intelligence and autonomous weapons systems previously commanded an Infantry battalion in the 101st Airborne Division.

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2026 DOUGHBOY AWARDS

Recognizing Outstanding Infantrymen

The Doughboy award was established in 1980 by the then Fort Benning Chief of Staff, COL Edward “Shy” Meyer for purpose of honoring Infantrymen and civilians that have made significant and lasting contributions to the Infantry and the Infantry community. These honors are rendered through the presentation of the Chief of Infantry’s Doughboy Award, at the Doughboy Awards Dinner. The Doughboy Award is the highest honor the Chief of Infantry can bestow on an Infantryman. The first recipient of the award was Mr. Bob Hope. The award was presented to him at a Navy Shipyard in San Diego by Meyer’s wife and then MAJ Ton Konitzer.

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 become covered in the dusty, white adobe soil and were called “adobes” by mounted troops. This changed to “dobies,” which became doughboys.

This year’s recipients are: GEN (Ret) Robert Brooks Brown, CSM (Ret) Rick Merritt and COL (Ret) Robert Choppa. This year’s awards will be presented on 15 September at the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center.

GEN (Ret) Robert Brooks Brown

GEN (Ret) Robert Brooks Brown is a proven and innovative leader with distinguished leadership experience at the highest levels of the military. Well known for building trust in organizations, he is an authentic leader and team builder with impeccable integrity and broad experience in the operational, strategic and educational areas of the military.

GEN Brown is a 1981 Graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. While at West Point, he played men’s basketball under Coach Mike Krzyzewski, was a co-captain and scored more than 1200 points in his NCAA career.

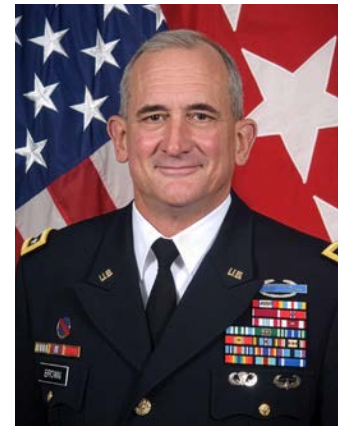
He has had the honor to lead and serve in various Army units at every level from platoon to the largest service component command, the U.S. Army, Pacific. He’s been the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, responsible for doctrine, education and leader development across the Army enterprise; the Commanding General of I Corps and Joint Based Lewis-McChord, an operational command responsible for 70,000 Soldiers and

their families, focused on the Indo-Pacific area of operations; Commanding General, U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence and Fort Benning, the Army’s center for education, training and leader development of all Armor and Infantry Soldiers and leaders; most recently he was the Commanding General of the U.S. Army, Pacific, from 2016-2019 with responsibility for 106,000 Soldiers, Army Civilians and their families throughout the 100 million square mile area of the strategically important Indo-Pacific region.

GEN Brown has the unique experience of leading innovation and change during several crucial transitions in the Army; he worked developing the Air Land Battle doctrine that would define how the Army operates as a warfighting organization; he developed, tested, formed and deployed the Army’s Stryker Brigade Combat Team concept that validated the Army’s change to modularity; he wrote the first ever Field Manual (FM 6-22) on Army Leadership Development; he developed the Army’s first ever Human Dimension Strategy that focused on developing leaders to thrive in ambiguity and chaos; most recently, he has led the Army in developing the future Joint Operating Concept of Multi-Domain Operations which is the largest doctrinal change in more than 30 years. He led the concept, development, design and implementation of the first ever Multi-Domain Task Force in the U.S. Army.

His 38 years of service has taken him to more than 28 countries throughout the Indo-Pacific region, which is unique among Army leaders. He’s held diverse assignments that have enabled him to travel all across the United States, Europe, the Pacific and the Middle East. He’s deployed in support of: Operation Uphold Democracy, Haiti; Operation Joint Forge, Bosnia-Herzegovina and two combat deployments to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

GEN Brown holds a Bachelor of Science from the U.S. Military Academy; a Master of Education from the University of Virginia; and a Master of Science in National Security and Strategic Studies from the National War College, where he was



GEN (Ret) Brown

a Distinguished Graduate.

His decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal (three Oak Leaf Clusters), the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (Oak Leaf Cluster), Bronze Star Medal (Oak Leaf Cluster), Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (Oak Leaf Cluster), Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal (three Oak Leaf Clusters) and the Army Achievement Medal. He has earned the Combat Infantryman Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge and the Army Staff Identification Badge.

GEN Brown is currently serving as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Association of the United States Army. He's been married to his wife, Dr. Patti Brown, for 44 years and they have three daughters and seven grandchildren.

CSM (Ret) Richard "Rick" Merritt

CSM (Ret) Rick Merritt retired from the U.S. Army in October 2019 after serving almost 36 years on active duty.

His first duty assignment in the Army, after becoming an Infantryman was with Company C, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, Illesheim, Germany as a Rifleman and M60 Machine Gunner.

CSM Merritt served a total of 25 years in the 75th Ranger Regiment as a Squad Automatic Rifleman; Team Leader; Squad Leader; Cadre, Regimental Assessment and Selection Program and after serving two years as a Platoon Sergeant he was assigned to the Jungle Operations Training Battalion as a Senior Instructor and Team Sergeant at the U.S. Army Jungle School, Fort Sherman, Panama.

He then returned to the 75th Ranger Regiment as a First Sergeant; Battalion and Regimental Operations Sergeant Major; CSM for the 3rd Battalion and then the Regimental Special Troops Battalion.

He was then selected as the 14th Regimental Sergeant Major for the 75th Ranger Regiment; he also served as the Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) for two U.S. Joint Special Operations Command Task Force (US JSOTF) 17 in Iraq and US JSOTF 3-10 in Afghanistan.

In 2012, he became a nominative CSEL, serving as the Division Command Sergeant Major for the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Fort Drum, NY. He was then reassigned to the Office of the Sergeant Major of the Army at the Pentagon in Washington D.C. in 2014 as his Liaison.

In 2015, he was selected as the CSEL to the Commanding General, Eighth US Army Korea, Camp Yongsan and later to their new HQs on Camp Humphreys. During this time he also served as the CSEL for U.S. Forces Korea for six months.

CSM Merritt has attended all the standard Basic and Advanced Noncommissioned Officers Courses to include: the

Battle Staff Course, First Sergeant Course; U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy- Class 53; and the British Section Commander's Course in Brecon, Wales. He has also completed various Army and Joint Nominative Senior Enlisted Leader Courses.

His awards and decorations include: the Army Distinguished Service Medal; Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters; Bronze Star Medal with four oak leaf clusters; Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal with arrowhead and star; Army Commendation Medal with four oak leaf clusters; Joint Meritorious Unit Award;

Valorous Unit Award; Combat Infantryman's Badge, 2nd award; Expert Infantryman's Badge; the Global War on Terrorism Medals, and numerous other awards and badges. He has conducted over 1,500 raids under JSOC with the 75th Ranger Regiment during numerous combat operations. His multiple combat deployments over his career include Panama, Somalia (after 3 October), with multiple rotations in Afghanistan, and Iraq.

In 2009, he was awarded the highest level of the Order of Saint Maurice, the Primicerius, by the National Infantry Association. He was also honored in 2014 by his induction as a Distinguished Member of the 75th Ranger Regiment by order of the Secretary of the Army.

In 2020, at Fort Drum, New York, he was inducted into the first 10th Mountain Division "Warrior Legends" Hall of Fame.

Rick is an Honorary Member of the Lucasville Valley Fire Department and was recently inducted into the Lucasville Valley High School Hall of Fame for his exceptional military career.

In 2022, he was also inducted into "The Order of the General Robert L. Eichelberger Distinguished Alumni of the Eighth U.S. Army for exceptional military service in the defense of the Republic of Korea.

In 2023, he was inducted into the U.S. Army's Ranger Hall of Fame at Fort Moore, Georgia. Rick was also inducted as the Honorary Sergeant Major of the Army in October 2025.

Rick is married to his wife Elizabeth and they reside in Richmond Hill, Georgia. They have two children.



CSM (Ret) Merritt

COL (Ret) Robert "Rob" Choppa

COL (Ret) Rob Choppa was born in 1961 and grew up in Glens Falls, New York. After college, he enlisted in the Army

with his twin brother and commissioned through the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School as an Infantry Officer.

COL Choppa served in several Infantry units in Command and Staff assignments at the Platoon through Army level. He served in six different types of Infantry units including Mechanized, Light, Airborne, Ranger, Stryker and Long-Range Reconnaissance Infantry Units around the world.

He led as Rifle and Ranger Platoon Leader, Company Executive Officer, Company Commander (Rifle Company and Long-Range Surveillance), Battalion Commander, Brigade Operations Officer, Brigade Commander and Chief of Infantry, Commandant of Infantry.

COL Choppa had staff assignments at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Combined Arms Center, Maneuver Center of Excellence-Fort Benning, U.S. Army Europe and Seventh Army.

His professional development schools include the Officer Candidate School, Infantry Basic Course, Infantry Advanced Course, Canadian Land Forces Staff Course, U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, U.S. Army Command and Staff College, Joint Advanced Warfighting School/National Defense University and a National Military Strategy Fellowship at Syracuse University.

His awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (with three oak leaf clusters - OLC), Bronze Star Medal (two OLC), Purple Heart, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Army Meritorious Service Medal (five OLC), and Army Commendation Medal (six OLC). Unit awards include: Joint Meritorious Unit

Award, Valorous Unit Award with oak leaf cluster and Army Superior Unit Award with two oak leaf clusters. Badges include Air Assault, Ranger Tab, Expert Infantryman Badge, Jungle Expert Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Military Free Fall Parachutist Badge, Pathfinder Badge and the Master Combat Infantryman's Badge.

Choppa married Mindy Allen in 1987 at the Infantry Chapel on Fort Benning. In 2014, he retired as the Chief of Infantry that the couple settle in Columbus, Georgia. Starting as a defense contractor in 2014, he went overseas to the United Arab Emirates. In 2017, Rob, was a contractor in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In July of 2018, he became the president of the National Infantry Association at the National Infantry Museum in Columbus. The NIA supports the Chief of Infantry and all of the Infantrymen, past, present and future. Rob and Mindy have two sons, John, an Infantry Officer, and his wife, Sophie who live in Columbus, and Jake who is an Artillery Officer stationed in Hawaii.

He serves on the board of directors for many organizations in Columbus and the Chattahoochee Valley. ★



COL (Ret) Choppa

Past Doughboy Award Recipients

2025 GEN (Ret) Vincent K. Brooks CSM (Ret) Gerald E. Klein Mr. E. Paul Voorhees	2017 GEN (Ret) William W. Hartzog CSM (Ret) Gary R. Carpenter	2011 GEN Edward C. Meyer CSM William H. Acebes Mr. Joe L. Galloway	2004 LTG John Norton SMA William A. Connelly	1997 GEN William B. Rosson SGM Frank C. Plass	1987 The Honorable John O. Marsh, Jr.
2024 GEN (Ret) George W. Casey Jr. CSM (Ret) Iuniasolua T. Savusa	2016 GEN David A. Bramlett CSM Kenneth J. "Rock" Merritt Mr. Ben F. Williams, Jr.	2010 MG Jerry A. White CSM Andrew McFowler	2003 GEN Edwin H. Burba SMA Glen E. Morrell	1996 GEN James J. Lindsay SGM Theodore L. Dobol	1986 Sen. Robert Dole
2023 GEN (Ret) Daniel B. Allyn CSM (Ret) Michael A. Kelso	2015 GEN Barry R. McCaffrey CSM Jeffrey J. Mellinger Mr. Gary Sinise	2009 GEN John W. Foss CSM Jimmie W. Spencer	2002 Sen. Daniel Inouye CSM John Pearce	1995 LTG Harry W.O. Kinnard	1985 GEN Matthew Ridgway
2022 GEN John F. Campbell CSM Frank A. Grippe	2014 GEN Carl W. Stiner CSM Steven R. England	2008 GEN Henry H. Shelton SGM Gary L. Littrell	2001 GEN Paul F. Gorman SMA George W. Dunaway	1994 GEN Colin L. Powell	1984 Sen. John Tower
2021 GEN (Ret) Dan K. McNeill CSM (Ret) Marvin L. Hill	2013 GEN William F. Kernan CSM George D. Conrad The Honorable Ike Skelton	2007 COL Ralph Puckett SMA Robert E. Hall	2000 LTG Harold G. Moore SGM William T. Mixon	1993 LTG David E. Grange, Jr.	1983 MG Aubrey Newman, Retired
2019 GEN (Ret) Stanley A. McChrystal CSM (Ret) Michael T. Hall	2012 LTG Robert F. Foley CSM Tadeusz Gaweda The Honorable Les Brownlee	2006 GEN John A. Wickham, Jr. SMA Richard A. Kidd	1999 GEN William R. Richardson SGM Basil L. Plumley	1992 Sen. Warren B. Rudman	1982 Mr. William Mauldin
2018 LTG (Ret) Robert L. "Sam" Wetzell CSM (Ret) Autrail Cobb Mr. Gary L. Fox		2005 GEN Gary E. Luck SMA Julius W. Gates	1998 GEN Fred C. Weyand SMA William Bainbridge	1991 GEN Richard E. Cavazos	1981 Mr. H. Ross Perot
				1989 GEN William E. Depuy	1980 Mr. Bob Hope
				1988 GEN Frederick Kroesen, Jr.	

Discover 250 Years of Infantry History at the National Infantry Museum

For 250 years, the Infantry has stood at the center of our nation's story. From the first Continental Soldiers who fought for American independence to the Infantrymen serving around the world today, generations have answered the call with an unwavering commitment to defend our freedoms.

This year, as America commemorates its 250th anniversary, the National Infantry Museum invites visitors to experience that remarkable legacy through two new exhibits that explore the traditions, symbols and uniforms that have defined the United States Army for generations.

One of the Museum's newest displays traces the evolution of the Infantry Branch insignia, revealing how a simple symbol became a powerful representation of service and shared identity. While today's crossed flintlock muskets are instantly recognizable to every Infantry Soldier, the insignia has changed alongside the Army throughout its history.

The earliest Infantry insignia reflected the military traditions of the 18th century, featuring white facings and silver "I" buttons before Saxony blue was adopted as the official Infantry branch color in 1851. During the War of 1812 and the Civil War, the hunter's horn bugle became the defining emblem of the Infantry, symbolizing the mobility and



Explore the evolution of Army uniforms from the Revolutionary War into the modern era.

readiness of Soldiers on the battlefield.

As military technology evolved, so did the insignia. Crossed Springfield rifles became the official branch device in 1875 and were later updated to reflect the Army's changing weapons. In 1924, however, the Army looked to its origins rather than its newest equipment, adopting the crossed Springfield Model 1795 flintlock muskets that remain the Infantry insignia today. More than a nod to history, the crossed muskets honor the Soldiers who established the Infantry's enduring legacy during the Revolutionary War and continue to connect today's Infantrymen with every generation that has served before them.

Visitors can continue that journey through history in the National Infantry Museum's newest temporary exhibit, *Uniforms of the Army of the United States*. Created in celebration of America's 250th anniversary, the exhibit explores how Army uniforms evolved from the Revolutionary War through the Civil War, the World Wars and into the modern era. More than changes in fabric and design, these uniforms tell the story of the people who wore them and the conflicts that shaped our nation.

Among the stories highlighted in the exhibit is that of the American Doughboy—the nickname given to the Soldiers of the American Expeditionary Forces who fought in World War I. Wearing the iconic olive drab uniform, steel helmet and equipment that carried them across the Atlantic, more than four million American Soldiers served during the First World War, helping shape a new chapter in the history of the United States Army. The enduring nickname "Doughboy" also reflects the close connection between these Soldiers and the American public, becoming a familiar and enduring symbol of the young men who left their homes to serve during a pivotal moment in the nation's history. The Doughboy uniform represents a generation of Soldiers who carried the traditions of the Infantry into the modern age while answering the nation's call during a defining moment in world history.

Together, these exhibits offer a unique opportunity to see history from a new perspective. Explore these new additions as the museum continues to celebrate America's 250th anniversary. Discover the stories that continue to inspire future generations. ★



The National Infantry Museum's newest temporary exhibit, *Uniforms of the Army of the United States*.

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On 5 May 2026, MSG Pedro Castanonchavez and MSG Nathaniel Hopkins received the Order of Saint Maurice (Cohort) at Fort Bliss, Texas, for their exceptional contributions to the Infantry. They are currently enrolled in the Sergeants Major Course.



On May 10, 2026, CH (CPT) Adolphus Muoghalu presented the Order of Saint Maurice (Cohort) to SGM Christopher Becker at Fort Bliss, Texas.



On 20 March 2026 at the Virginia Tech Army ROTC Dining Out, MSG Sean Embler presented the Order of St. Michael - Airborne to SFC Joseph Banfield. His presentation was made in the presence of 118 graduating and commissioning cadets and their guests as well as the New River Battalion Cadre. These cadets were the last that would commission under Banfield's mentorship prior to his retirement.



On 2 June 2026, COL (Ret) Rob Choppa presented the Order of St. Michael awards to MAJ William R. J. Cooper and COL Iraklis Koskeridis at the Ranger Memorial at Fort Benning Headquarters Bldg.



On 7 May 2026, 1SG Messan presented the Order of Saint Maurice (Cohort) to CPT Vargas at Fort Jackson, SC. Shown are SSG Christian Katakis, SSG Michael De Luna, 1SG Folly Messan and CPT Xavier Vargas.

★ NEWS & AWARDS ★



On 1 June 2026 at the U.S. Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, MSG Brian Field presented the Order of Saint Maurice (Peregrinus) to MSG Enrique Meza Alvarez of the Paraguayan Army.



On 27 May 2026 at Ft. Bliss, Texas, MSG David Walik was presented with the Order of Saint Maurice (Cohort) by SGM Jarrett Bearden.



MSG Richard Williams was presented the Order of Saint Maurice (Cohort) by MSG Lynch Allen on 21 May 2026 at Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois.



On 20 May 2026, leaders from FLF-BG Poland were presented the Order of Saint Maurice and the Order of Saint Michael by 1SG Bello the HHC ISG in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the Infantry, the airborne community and the profession of arms. The presentation took place at BPTA, Poland. (L-R): Bello, SFC Joshua Adams, SSG Taylor Hunt, SSG Gregory Bourne, CPT Ian Hinson CPT Nathan Charron, Order of Saint Maurice; MAJ Adam Eshom, 1SG Julian Haynes, Order of Saint Michael.



On 7 May 2026, SGM Jarrett Bearden presented the Order of Saint Maurice (Peregrinus) to MAJ Gavin Paton. Both soldiers are currently assigned to the United States Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy (USANCOA) at Fort Bliss, Texas.



On 15 May 2026 at WHINSEC, LTC Yandy Orozco was awarded the Order of Saint Maurice by LTC Donald Sapp and MSG Damian Olivera in recognition for his contributions to the Infantry and the profession of arms.



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