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Trotting into transition

Equine units disband at Fort Irwin, Calif., Fort Huachuca, Ariz., and Fort Sill, Okla. **Page 2**

Sully and Bradley take breaks on the road during their move from Fort Irwin, Calif., to Fort Riley, Kan.
U.S. Army

COVER STORY

Most Army horses sent into retirement

Equine units disband at Fort Irwin, Fort Sill and Fort Huachuca

BY ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

The Army has begun moving horses from three bases directed to save money by ending their equid programs — sending some horses into civilian retirement, others to a new duty station and some into new jobs with Customs and Border Protection.

The Army announced in July that Fort Irwin, Calif., Fort Huachuca, Ariz., and Fort Sill, Okla., had one year to disband ceremonial horse units that brought to life the service's cavalry history through presentations and community outreach.

Units at Fort Hood, Texas, and Fort Riley, Kan., were initially included in the reduction but have since been saved.

The Army projected that cutting all five units — which maintain horses, mules and donkeys — would save \$2 million each year. It pledged to pump the savings into weapons and training.

That estimate is now roughly \$1.1 million, the service said March 10.

Though Fort Sill officials are finalizing plans, forts Huachuca and Irwin have begun rehoming animals and closing operations.

Maj. Gen. Richard Appelhans, commander of the Army Intelligence Center of Excellence and Fort Huachuca, presided last month over a ceremony to formally inactivate the base's horse unit, B Troop.

"B Troop, your journey from a visionary idea in 1973 to a beloved and indispensable organization is nothing short of extraordinary and has left an indelible mark on our Army and Fort Huachuca," he said during the ceremony. "The spirit of this troop is now woven into the very fabric of Fort Huachuca."

Unlike other ceremonial units, B Troop relied on volunteers from active, Reserve and retired military personnel alongside Defense Department civilians and military family members for up to 50 community events each year. It presented the U.S. Cavalry standards of the 1880s and



Photos by U.S. Army

B Troop is inactivated at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., during a ceremony on Feb. 27.

had a Ladies Auxiliary whose members dressed in period-specific dresses and rode sidesaddle during parades.

B Troop had seven horses remaining as of last month's ceremony. Five have transferred to Customs and Border Protection, the base said. A decision has not been made on the future of the remaining two horses — 15-year-old Sherman and 18-year-old Ben.

Fort Irwin did not host a ceremony but has already moved its horses, the base said. Eight horses were transferred to El Centro Customs and Border Protection for duty on the southwest border, two horses went to the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley along with a trailer, and three horses found medically unfit for continued operational service were adopted by local civilians.

The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment kept the horse detachment's trophies and awards and will put unit legacy items into the base's Heritage Museum. A decision on what to do with the stables is pending, according to Fort Irwin.

Capt. Patrick William Gurnow, commander of Fort Riley's Commanding Generals Mounted Color Guard, said that their two additions from Fort Irwin — Scout and Bradley — have transitioned well to their new home and will participate in riding events this summer.

The unit, which honors Civil War-era cavalry soldiers, already had a horse named Scout, so the new horse was renamed Sully in honor of Brig. Gen. Alfred Sully, who led troopers during the Civil War and on the American frontier from 1841-1879.

During the cross-country move, troopers unloaded the American Quarter horses every five hours for 45-minute breaks to stretch, walk and drink water, Gurnow said. Then they had 14 days in quarantine before joining the herd.

"They've already made friends with the current horses and are enjoying the Kansas grass and more than 200 acres of their new home," he said.



Sully takes a water break during a stop near Albuquerque, N.M.

thayer.rose@stripes.com
@Rose_Lori



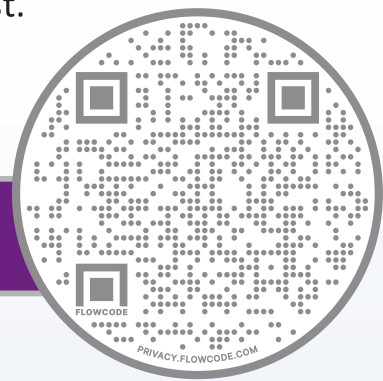
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MILITARY

'Toughest man alive' reenlists

51-year-old former Navy SEAL quietly joins Air Force

By LYDIA GORDON
Stars and Stripes

Retired Navy SEAL David Goggins built a brand on his refusal to quit, and now the 51-year-old is doubling down by signing up for the armed forces yet again.

A military fitness icon and author whose followers and the Defense Department have dubbed "the toughest man alive," Goggins recently reenlisted in the Air Force at the rank of master sergeant.

He was assigned to the Special Warfare Training Wing, service spokeswoman Ann Stefanek told *Military Times*.

"It's worth noting that the Air Force has welcomed special operators from other services to cross train into Special Warfare for decades," Stefanek said.

Goggins is the only service member who has completed SEAL training, Army Ranger School and the Air Force's Tactical Air Controller training, according to his website.

He is well-known on various platforms for his grueling training feats, dramatic transformation to become a SEAL and former status as a Guinness world record holder. To achieve that feat, he did over 4,000 pull-ups in 17 hours.

Goggins began his military career at 19, when he enlisted in the Air

Force as a tactical air controller with aspirations of becoming a pararescuer, he told the Navy's *All Hands* magazine in 2018.

However, he took a medical drop option after being diagnosed with sickle cell trait, according to his memoir "Can't Hurt Me." He continued his career as a tactical air controller until his discharge in 1999.

He followed that by becoming a Navy SEAL in 2001 and spent about 15 years in that role.

An age waiver was required for Goggins to reenlist, Stefanek said, though it is unclear what accommodations were made for him. According to the pararescue program website, candidates must be no older than 41 on the date of enlistment.

On a popular Air Force forum on Reddit, one user wrote, "Dude failed out as a youngin'. Bless him for trying again... at this age."

Pararescue training, which the service says has an attrition rate of roughly 90%, follows a nearly two-year training pipeline.

The program includes emergency medical technician and paramedic training, Army airborne school, the combat divers course, parachutist school, and Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape school, or SERE, among other rigorous requirements.

Although he has long been active on social media, Goggins hasn't posted to his Instagram account of 14 million followers since November. The caption of his final video read "Time is running out ... you better stop thinking and start ... doing."

Speculation about his return surfaced last week through an Instagram post from the account Come.Sit.And.Relax, which frequently shares pararescue-related content.

A picture in the post shows Goggins in a camouflage uniform standing alongside a group of airmen wearing black berets. An accompanying message said the page creator had "kept quiet on this for months."

Stefanek said details about Goggins' training could not be released because of policy restraints on status and progression of current trainees, *Military Times* reported.

Goggins is not the first high-profile former military icon to return to service.

Medal of Honor recipient Dakota Meyer reenlisted last April as a sergeant in the Marine Corps Reserve during a ceremony hosted by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, 15 years after receiving the nation's highest military honor.

gordon.lydia@stripes.com
@lydia_stripes



BRANDON ROGERS/U.S. Navy

Then-Navy Petty Officer 1st Class David Goggins crosses Death Valley in California during an ultramarathon.

House legislation aims to exempt drill pay from taxes

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A House bill is seeking to exempt pay earned by members of the National Guard and Reserve during their drill weekends from federal income taxes.

The legislation, introduced by Rep. Andy Barr, R-Ky., would ensure Inactive Duty Training pay, which service members receive during drills they typically take part in one weekend a month, would not be taxed federally.

Current law requires guardsmen and reservists to pay federal income taxes on compensation for drills as

well as additional readiness activities throughout the year.

Barr said ending federal taxes on such pay will reward the more than 800,000 members of the Guard and Reserve who balance civilian careers and family responsibilities with military service and provide other benefits for the military.

"The No Tax on Drill Pay Act will boost recruitment and retention, strengthen military readiness, and continue our commitment to treating our military better than any in the world," he said in a statement.

Lawmakers have floated several measures in recent years to make

military pay tax-free, including a sweeping proposal late last year to eliminate federal income tax on all active-duty and reserve pay, including enlistment, retention and education bonuses and all special and incentive pays.

Republican Reps. Max Miller of Ohio, a former member of the Marine Corps Reserve, and Zach Nunn of Iowa, a colonel in the Iowa Air National Guard, originally cosponsored a bill focused on drill pay that Barr has now reintroduced.

Nunn said he often hears complaints from Iowa guardsmen and their families about the financial strain of serv-

ing part time in the military while holding full-time civilian jobs.

"If we truly value the service of our Guardsmen and reservists, the least we can do is let them keep every dollar they earn while preparing to defend our country," said Miller.

The National Guard Association of the United States has endorsed the legislation, saying it will help recruit and retain the force and provide recognition for the time citizen-soldiers and airmen spend training for emergencies at home and deployments abroad.

shkolnikova.svetlana@stripes.com
@svetashko

MILITARY

DOD plans to expand Stripes oversight

Pentagon wants to limit content, shift away from print

BY ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon has released a modernization plan for Stars and Stripes that affirms the publication's independence while expanding Defense Department oversight, introducing new restrictions on content and transitioning away from a print publication.

An eight-page memo, dated March 9 and effective immediately, limits the use of wire services, bars comics and other syndicated features and states that content must be consistent with "good order and discipline," a phrase borrowed from the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The memo is the first formal explanation since Pentagon chief spokesman Sean Parnell said in a Jan. 15 social media post that the Defense Department intended to "refocus" the news organization "from woke distractions that syphon morale."

On March 13, Parnell in a statement provided the first direct comment to the organization since Jan. 15. He said the department is "returning S&S to its original mission: an independent news source for service members stationed overseas that is by the warfighter and for the warfighter."

Parnell said the effort includes "a transition from print to digital, transition to uniformed staff at locations outside the continental U.S., and other efficiency measures that will eliminate redundancies and ensure smart use of DOW resources."

Stars and Stripes staff currently includes service members on one- to three-year assignments who are mentored by civilian journalists.

The service members are typically trained by the services in public relations.

Parnell did not answer questions about how his office is coordinating with the news organization to implement these changes or if the decisions are based on any formal review or evaluation of Stars and Stripes operations.



Reader-submitted photo

A service member reads Stars and Stripes in 2024. A March 9 memo affirmed the independence of the publication while announcing new restrictions.

No coordination

Stars and Stripes Publisher Max Lederer told U.S.-based staff of the memo March 12 and said he would begin meeting with the organization's leadership to discuss implementation of the memo.

Lederer said he has not been contacted directly by anyone from the Pentagon about the changes, despite reaching out to them. The memo, which was sent to Pentagon leaders and combatant commanders, was written without Stars and Stripes' input.

Stars and Stripes was not notified about publication of the memo, which was found during a search on a DOD website.

"It is unlikely that the Pentagon was aware of the extensive modernization that Stars and Stripes had already begun," Erik Slavin, Stars and Stripes editor in chief, said in a statement on March 12. "Over the past year, the changes to our digitally produced news and information have resulted in significant increases in pageviews, engagement and subscribers."

Reader feedback and real-world usage drove the efforts, said Slavin, who became the organization's top editor late last year after more than 20 years stationed with the company in

Japan, Iraq, South Korea and Germany.

Business operations and funding remain largely unchanged by the memo.

Threat to First Amendment

Press freedom advocates said the memo shifts authority over content decisions in a way that risks undermining the newsroom's independence.

"This clearly shows that the Pentagon is trying to increase its influence over content decisions at Stars and Stripes," said Timothy Richardson, program director of journalism and disinformation for PEN America, a nonprofit that protects free expression.

"That's a threat to the First Amendment, certainly, and the independence that the Congress has long guaranteed for the newsroom," he said after reviewing the memo.

PEN America and five other press-freedom organizations sent a letter to Congress last month in support of Stars and Stripes' editorial independence.

Stars and Stripes, which is owned by the Defense Department, was first published by Union troops during the Civil War and has been published continuously since World War II. The newspaper publishes print editions

overseas and a U.S. weekly edition. It distributes to combat zones as needed.

Its website and other digital offerings have gained readership among troops stationed across the U.S. and among veterans.

The news organization has been threatened with closure over the years but has repeatedly garnered support from veterans and bipartisan members of Congress.

The Pentagon in January withdrew a federal regulation that underpinned the mandate set by Congress for Stars and Stripes to provide independent journalism to the military community under the principles of the First Amendment.

The new memo confirmed that Stars and Stripes' editorial operations are "independent of the military chain of command, military public affairs activities or other external influences," but makes no mention of First Amendment freedoms.

It moves the defense secretary's public affairs office into an oversight role. Previous guidance gave it an administrative role to help with funding, military manning and other regulatory steps. It also calls for an advisory board of Defense Department personnel.

Content overhaul

The memo bars purchased content on the assumption that all service members overseas have online access to all commercially available news on their own. Exceptions for purchased content can be approved by Parnell, according to the memo.

Stars and Stripes uses wire services to provide more complete world coverage of interest to the military community.

Jacqueline Smith, Stars and Stripes' ombudsman, said wire services add value because they fill gaps and make a news outlet a "one-stop shop."

"A complete newspaper should include national sports and entertainment ...," she said. "Stripes does not have the resources to do its own reporting in those areas. Yet sports and entertainment contribute to the morale of troops."

Losing this "will reduce the quality and breadth of information available to

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MILITARY

'Wild Weasel' pilot receives Silver Star

Major earned award for mission in 2025

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Maj. Michael "Danger" Blea was awarded the Silver Star for his actions on a night involving high G maneuvers and missiles detonating within feet of his aircraft.

At a ceremony this month at Ramstein Air Base, Blea was awarded the Silver Star for "extraordinary heroism in combat" during a Middle East deployment in 2025, U.S. Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa said in a statement.

Blea and his fellow F-16 "Wild Weasel" pilot, Lt. Col. William "Skate" Parks, each earned a Silver Star for a harrowing mission they flew together on March 27, 2025.

Fewer than 100 airmen have earned the military's third-highest valor award, after the Medal of Honor and service Crosses, in the post-9/11 era, according to USAFE-AFAFRICA.

Blea and Parks were deployed with the 480th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron out of Spangdahlem Air Base at the time. Parks, the squadron's former commander, received his Silver Star at the Pentagon in November, according to the Air Force.

Blea is also moving on. He has orders to Luke Air Force Base in Arizona, where he's transitioning to the F-35, the Air Force's most advanced fighter jet.

He volunteered for the assignment, even though the F-16 will "forever hold a piece of my heart," he said Wednesday. "It's the jet that kept me alive and taught me to be a 'Wild Weasel.'"

The Spangdahlem fighters train as "Wild Weasels," a mission to suppress enemy air defenses that dates back to the Vietnam War and the one that Blea and Parks were conducting on the night they earned their Silver Stars.

The Air Force statement does not specify the enemy or country involved in the mission, but at least two public accounts of the event say the actions occurred against the Houthis over Yemen and the Red Sea.

Blea said he could not confirm those details, either.



ALEXANDRA LONGFELLOW/U.S. Air Force

Air Force Maj. Michael A. Blea, 480th Fighter Squadron assistant director of operations, is awarded the Silver Star during a ceremony at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on March 3.



JESSICA SANCHEZ-CHEN/U.S. Air Force

An F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter flies over Germany. The 480th Fighter Squadron is capable of performing the "Wild Weasel" mission of suppression and destruction of enemy air defense.

But he was able to describe what it looked and felt like when the ground lit up underneath him and Parks, the flight lead, on a moonless night as they prepared to head out while low on fuel.

"We were doing an escort," Blea said, making sure the aircraft they were accompanying were "protected throughout the night."

It was toward the end of the sortie, and Blea needed to get to the tanker since he was low on fuel.

"We turn around to start heading

back," he said. That's when the night took a sudden turn.

"I look outside and just see the ground light up," he said, the first indication that the enemy was launching surface-to-air missiles under their location. "It's pitch black, we're on (night-vision goggles), the moon is completely obscured."

"The missile lighting up the ground is one of the images that will forever stick with me," Blea said.

His medal citation says Blea's "self-

less decision to act as a decoy, drawing the full fury of the enemy's integrated air defenses, including four radar-guided missiles and a barrage of anti-aircraft artillery, ensured the success of the critical bombing mission, which aimed to cripple enemy ballistic missile storage facilities."

During the course of about 15 minutes, Blea used a combination of defensive measures and high G maneuvers to evade the missiles, which detonated within feet of his aircraft, his citation says.

Blea described one missile that sailed within 20 to 30 feet of him, so close the smoke plume behind it lit up his aircraft canopy and he watched it explode "just as it flies past me."

While still within enemy territory, "Blea calmed his nerves and expertly rejoined on an emergency air refueling tanker operating lights out and in low illumination," his citation reads.

Blea said he's honored to receive the Silver Star but the award to him is recognition of the teamwork by his squadron during the entire deployment.

"Between the maintainers that gave us jets night in and night out that we never questioned were going to work to the tanker crews that we had, I owe them a huge debt of gratitude," he said.

Another reward was being greeted by maintainers, a few pilots and other crew when he landed back at base that night. "I had so much support at my jet waiting for me," he said.

The enormity of the moment, however, didn't sink in until he opened the jet's canopy and felt a rush of fresh air, he said. "That's when it kind of hit me, that I'm safe, I'm on the ground; we lived through it and we had mission success."

One of his good friends climbed up the ladder and put his hand on his chest, Blea said. "He said, 'Dude, you're back, take a deep breath.' That's the first time I realized I hadn't taken a deep breath in the last three hours."

In that moment, Blea said he felt "just the gratitude to be alive, and the rewarding feeling that the training worked and we were able to do what we set out to do."

MILITARY

Chaplain's coffee quest leads to rescue

By ALISON BATH

Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — A twice-thwarted attempt to satisfy a craving for cappuccino ended up turning an Italy-based U.S. Army chaplain into a godsend for two men seriously injured in a truck fire along an Austrian highway.

Chaplain (Maj.) Brian Bailey credited the timing to divine providence in explaining what recently led him to a rest stop in Angath, Austria, where a parked semi-truck had exploded into flames.



Bailey

On March 8, Bailey was returning to U.S. Army Garrison Italy in Vicenza after attending

a training class in Germany. He pulled into a roadside commercial area seeking a cappuccino.

The establishment was jammed with travelers, so Bailey drove on. To his disappointment, the next rest area where he stopped did not offer the beverage he was seeking.

"I thought, 'Let me try to do this one more time because I really want the coffee,'" Bailey said.

He continued down the highway, pulling into a third rest area at Angath Nord, about 42 miles northeast of Innsbruck, when he soon saw black smoke billowing near the building.

A closer look revealed a panicked



BRIAN BAILEY

Chaplain (Maj.) Brian Bailey, center with glasses, attends to a man who was burned when the cab of the truck he was driving exploded into flames March 8.

scene, with the cab of a semi-truck in flames, its badly burned driver lying on the pavement and a second injured man closer to the burning vehicle. That's when the 41-year-old Iraq War veteran's experience kicked in.

"The training that I've received in the Army and the relationships I've had from people in my life, I felt like those were driving me to get out of the car, to run towards the fire and to run towards the burned man, not knowing what was going to come next," Bailey said.

Soon, Bailey was helping a Polish passer-by move the second injured man to safety. The 37-year-old Lithuanian had injured his leg while trying to res-

cue the truck driver, Bailey said.

Using his medical training, Bailey checked both men's vital signs and stabilized them while directing bystanders to call emergency services.

At one point, the Polish man on the scene feared that the truck driver had died, but Bailey noticed he was still breathing, so he tilted the man's head back to help clear his airway.

Fearful that the truck driver might go into cardiac arrest, Bailey ran into the rest stop asking in his "best German" for an automated external defibrillator, he said. He obtained the device and went back to rendering first aid.

Bailey and the Polish helper contin-

ued their efforts, cutting away burned clothing, monitoring his pulse and administering chest compressions when necessary.

"It was kind of hard to feel for (a pulse) because his arms were burned," Bailey said. "(It was) like just gently touching his neck to make sure he was still with us."

They also talked to him and occasionally raised his legs to help the blood flow back down to his chest as they waited for emergency medical personnel to arrive, Bailey said.

Eventually, the truck driver was flown by helicopter to a Bavarian hospital. The injured Lithuanian man, who also suffered burns, was taken by ambulance to a local hospital, the online news site Unsertirol24.com reported.

Firefighters extinguished the truck blaze, which was caused by a technical defect, according to the Unsertirol24 report.

After the injured were evacuated, Bailey got back in his car, called his wife to explain what had happened and continued back to Italy.

He also thanked God for the injured Lithuanian man who pulled the driver from the burning truck and other people who helped at the scene.

"In that moment, you realize how fragile life can be," Bailey said.

bath.alison@stripes.com
@alisonbath_

Oversight: Pentagon says Stripes 'should' republish DOD-created content

FROM PAGE 6

readers," Slavin said.

The memo calls on Stars and Stripes to be a "hometown-style" publication for the increasingly niche U.S. military community" and says it "should" republish content created by the Defense Department public affairs offices with a label describing its origin, though it grants the publisher latitude to determine whether such content serves readers' needs.

The memo does not specify which publications should include public affairs content.

"We have no plans to commingle military public relations offerings with our independent reporting," Slavin said. "Stars and Stripes remains com-

mitted to balanced and accurate reporting on behalf of the military community we serve."

Other changes require the ombudsman to send information bound for Congress through the Defense Department Legislative Affairs Office.

"The House Armed Services Committee created the independent position in 1990-91 with the requirement the ombudsman report to the committee on matters of importance to maintaining Stripes editorial independence," Smith said. "If that report must go through the Pentagon's legislative affairs staff, then there is no assurance it would be complete and unchanged and there would be no opportunity to ask the ombudsman

questions."

The memo also bars reporters from requesting public records through the Freedom of Information Act in an official capacity and prohibits the organization from publishing "controlled unclassified information." This label has often been used to limit the release of information under broadly defined terms.

Last year, the Pentagon asked all reporters working within the building to sign a pledge that included a similar demand. Dozens of journalists turned in their access badges, while a new group of reporters signed the agreement and replaced them.

"The obstacles that the Pentagon continues to throw in the way of cred-

ible reporting are growing, and [the memo] is another clear example of that," Richardson said.

As plans to change the publication come together, Slavin said readers will be informed at each step.

"We will let readers, particularly print readers in remote locations and situations where unsecure internet is spotty or prohibited, know that comics, national sports, state-by-state roundups and other content may soon no longer be published due to the limits of the memo.

Feedback from deployed troops tells us that this will not be a popular decision," he said.

thayer.rose@stripes.com

MILITARY

Marines to require more time in water

By LYDIA GORDON
Stars and Stripes

Marines will soon be expected to spend more time in the pool in line with the service's plans to overhaul its water survival requirements beginning later this year, according to a recent message to the force.

A new five-level qualification program, set to begin Oct. 1, will replace the current three-tier system of basic, intermediate and advanced swim qualifications. Additionally, swimming proficiency level will now be factored into Marines' performance evaluations, the March 5 message said.

The change is intended to ensure that Marines are more comfortable in the water and better prepare them for amphibious missions, the service said.

The new progression will include a basic level for recruits, followed by novice, competent, proficient and advanced levels.

Changes to swimming qualifications at boot camp will be "minimal," though recruits will be expected to complete both the basic and novice levels, according to the message.

Recruits who do not meet the novice standard before graduation will require a waiver from the recruit depot's commanding general, and the basic qualification will be valid for only one year, the announcement said.

Each qualification beyond the basic level introduces more demanding requirements than the previous system,



YOSEMITY CARRERO BAEZ/U.S. Marine Corps

A Marine recruit conducts a 25-meter pack swim during a water survival qualification event in February.

including time increases for treading water and a greater number of swimming strokes and techniques, according to the Marine Corps' fitness site.

The push to strengthen water survival standards dates back to the Corps' Training and Education 2030 planning guidance released in early 2023.

Previously, Marines who completed the basic water survival course in boot camp had to requalify every two years, while those holding intermediate or advanced qualifications were required to requalify every three years.

Under the new guidance, Marines with a requalification requirement after Oct. 1 will have six months to complete the appropriate course under the new program before being considered unqualified.

gordon.lydia@stripes.com
@lydia_stripes

Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher
Erik Slavin, Editor in Chief
Brian Bowers, U.S. Edition Editor
Scott Foley, Revenue Director

CONTACT US

633 3rd Street NW, Suite 116, Washington, D.C. 20001

Editorial: (202) 886-0005

Advertising: (202) 886-0014

Additional contact information: [stripes.com](https://www.stripes.com)

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PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER ARTHUR/U.S. Army

The M111 hand grenade will augment the M67 and replace the Mk3A2 series, which is restricted because of its asbestos body. The M111's plastic body is fully consumed during detonation.

Army OKs issue of 1st new hand grenade since Vietnam

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

U.S. soldiers have a new baseball-sized weapon in their arsenal designed to give them an advantage in close-quarter fighting.

The Army on March 10 approved for full release of a hand grenade built for urban combat, marking the first new grenade to enter the service since the Vietnam War era.

According to the service, the M111 will provide an advantage in confined spaces while augmenting the M67, which is the primary hand grenade American soldiers have fought with since 1968.

Unlike the M67, which replaced the older "pineapple" grenade and releases steel fragments in all directions to inflict injury, the M111 leverages blast overpressure, the force generated by an explosion that can lead to severe injuries, according to an Army statement.

The M67 is more suited to fighting in open terrain, a key lesson the Army learned during door-to-door urban combat in Iraq, Col. Vince Morris said in the statement.

Inside a building, M67 shrapnel can be limited by enclosed spaces or barriers, the Army said. Fragments can pierce a thin wall and risk the lives of American service members on the other side, Morris said.



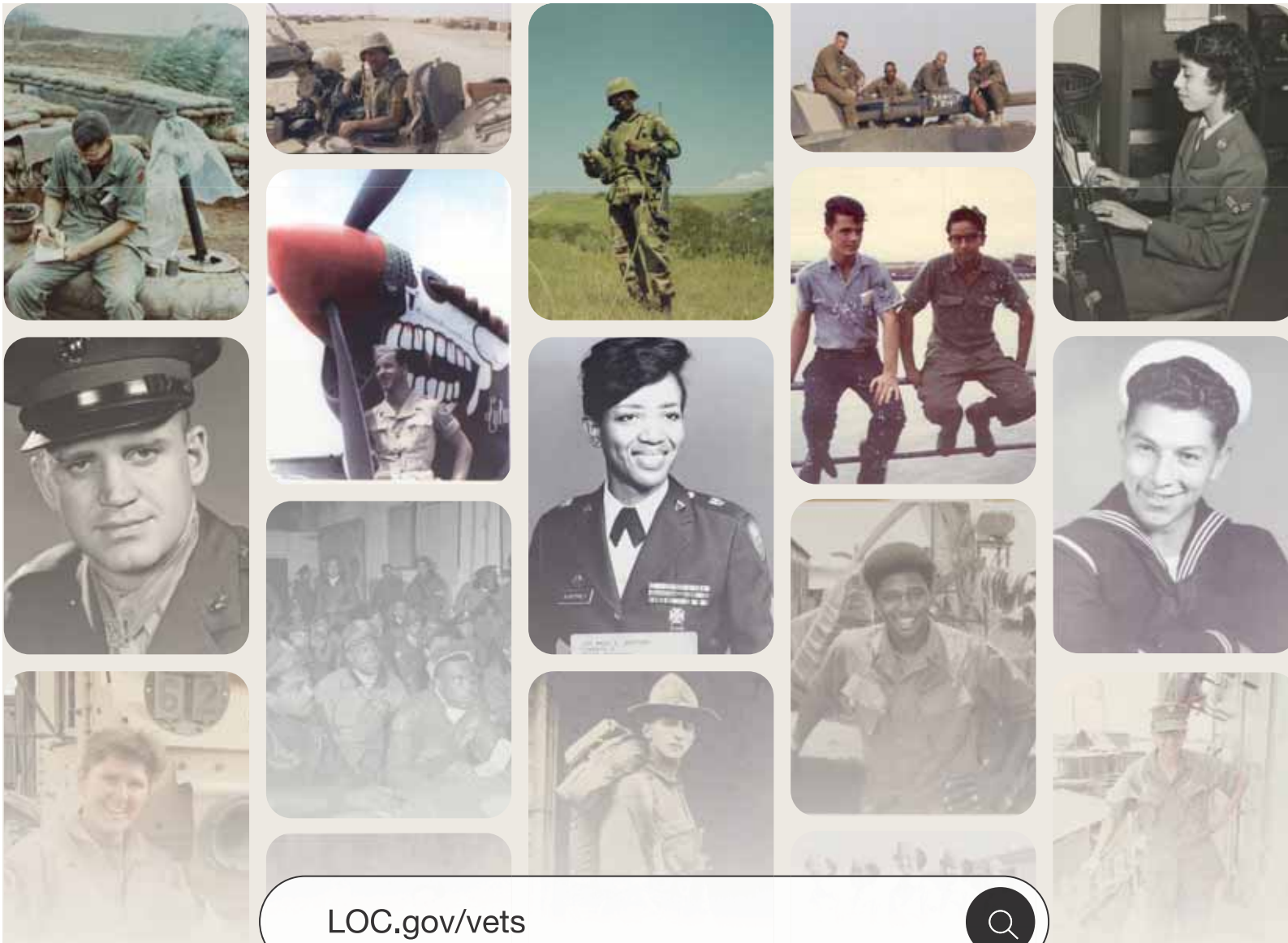
The M111 will be the first new grenade for the Army since 1968.

The blast overpressure generated by the M111 "can clear a room of enemy combatants quickly, leaving nowhere to hide while ensuring the safety of friendly forces," said Morris, project manager for Close Combat Systems at the Capabilities Program Executive Ammunition and Energetics.

The canister-shaped M111 was developed by Army engineers at Picatinny Arsenal in New Jersey.

It replaces the obsolete Mk3A2 hand grenade series, which stopped being issued in 1975 due to asbestos in its exterior coating. The M111 uses a plastic body that is fully consumed during detonation, according to the Army.

svan.jennifer@stripes.com
@stripesktown



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