



The Canopy

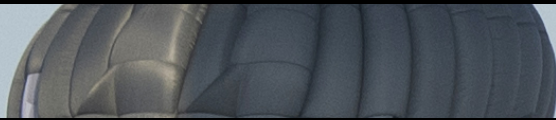
Issue 4 / Volume 33 / April 2025

Arctic Airborne

Experience next-level cold weather warfare
Read more on page 4.

From The Chapter

March meeting
Read more on page 7.



Chapter Officers

Position	Name
Chairman	Tony Alger
Vice Chairman	Gary Blasczienski
Treasurer	Heath Davenport
Secretary	Stephen Fern
Service Officer	Joyce Damon
Recruiting / Villages	Tony Alger
Recruiting / Ocala	Tig Blackman
Canopy Editor	Ron Dahlgren

Upcoming Events and Historical Notes

All Month	All American Week registration	http://82.sw.gy/aaw
April 12th, 1300 hrs	Annual Airborne Picnic	17300 SE 58th Ave, Summerfield, FL
May 10th	C-47 Water Jump	Wooten Park, 100 E. Ruby St, Tavares, FL 32778
May 19th-22nd	All American Week 2025	Fort Bragg, NC
May 24th, 1900 hrs	Rockie Lynne Concert	The Sharon

From the Editor



This month's cover comes from Staff Sgt. Emily Farnsworth at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. Seen here are troopers descending onto Malemute Drop zone, sometime in 2020. Thank you to the boosters that helped out last month! The \$2.50 subscription code is at the end of the issue. Sign up!

Airborne! All The Way!

Ron Dahlgren

Editor, The Canopy

<https://www.the-canopy.org>

Our 2025 Booster Goal is \$500



Start

50%

Complete!

Chairman's Message

The Annual Airborne Picnic is April 12 (Sat) 1:00 p.m. Come early if you want. The venue is a private residence on farmland so we are not restricted with any of the rules associated with an Organization or Eating Establishments. Friday Apr 11, I'll need 2-3 volunteers to help me and Hope clean up and set up the venue for our picnic. It's lots of work setting up and bring stuff to this event so if you can lend a hand I thank you.

The address is:

1) 17300 SE 58th Ave, Summerfield, FL 34491. Please put it in your GPS. It is about 10 minutes south of VFW in Belleview or 15-20 minutes north of the Villages off Hwy 301 near Oxford Downs and the Villages Soccer Club. 2) It is outdoors with plenty of shade. 3) Please bring a side or dessert to share since our Chapter will have Hamburgers, Brats, Hot Dogs, buns, flatware, sodas, and water. 4) Bring your beer or favorite libation if you want. 5) If you have a favorite lawn chair bring it otherwise we have plenty. 6) Please wear something AIRBORNE or better yet, wear your vest and Hat since we want to get a Group Picture. Hopefully the Golf Cart Tank will be there. 7) Dan Marrin will provide entertainment with his piano.

I need a good headcount so please let me know if you are coming. So far there are 12 confirmed. Call or text me or Joyce Damon.

Easter is coming late this year (Apr 20). The children love this time because of the Easter egg hunts and sweets involved but remember the true meaning, a celebration to remind us of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Happy Easter to all.

The St. Patrick's Day Parade was a big success. We had 6 golf Carts representing our Chapter. A total of 43 organizations were represented. I heard lots of Airborne and All the Way shouts from the spectators. I along with Rich Becker, Leo McInnis, Chris Adams, Mike Devlin, Adrian Stocker, Mark Mayer and some of our spouses and friends drove our "Airborne" carts in the parade. Also saw a few troopers on the sidelines cheering us on. Always lots of fun.

On Apr 22 at West Port High School in Ocala our Chapter will present a JROTC Cadet the 82nd Airborne Medal and Certificate to one of their Outstanding Cadets. Show time is 6:00 pm at the Performing Arts Center on campus. You are invited to attend.

Our Chapter will introduce our "new" website this month. I'll let Ron, our Canopy Editor talk more about it in his comments. It looks Airborne!

At the picnic, I'll talk about the meeting at Wooton Park (Airborne WATER JUMP) May 10. Right now 4 of us are confirmed on the Phantom Airborne's Manifest. Hope to see you at the picnic. Airborne!

Airborne!

Tony Alger

Chairman

North Central Florida All-Airborne Chapter



10 Most Recent Canopy Boosters – Thank you for your support!

Thurston Helmes
Ken & Linda Hall
Galen Mitchell
Jerry & Robby Brust
Heath Davenport

Christopher Adams
Nick Harty
Regis Rossa
Darla & Jay Tatman
John Kinney

Arctic Airborne

March 26th



Jumpers exit the aircraft into the cold blue.

Photo by Tech Sgt. Benjamin Sutton, 62nd Airlift Wing

The Airforce Loadmaster looks at you and says, "Army, your door!". It's taken hours to get to this point. The airborne timeline. You're thankful that none of the guys busted their ass on the slippery walk from the pax shed - there's always the risk. It's been hot in the aircraft for this quick turn to Malemute Drop Zone. You've been mentally willing yourself not to sweat, but now that the door is open it's less of a risk. The stick is ready, gloved hands holding their static lines. Malemute Drop Zone is tight, the one minute marker is actually 47 seconds out. You've got sixteen seconds to get that door check completed. As the last jumper exiting, you don't want to miss the DZ. Don't miss that green light. After three scratched jumps in a row, you're happy it's finally happening. This jumpmaster duty will earn you your senior wings.

The door check goes off without issue. You give the thirty second command, tell your number one jumper to standby, and wait on that amber light to turn green, swaying with the aircraft.

Down below, the drop zone safety team is in their two-compartment tracked vehicle, a SUSV, keeping themselves thawed out while they wait. They watch the aircraft approach and dismount the vehicle into the crunchy snow below.

The Context

The Arctic is a brutal environment. Everyone I spoke to about the topic highlighted that the environment is more dangerous than any opposing force. The Arctic is defined by its extremes of cold and colder, ice and snow, and long stretches of daylight and darkness. The temperatures can fall to -20, -30, or lower. The threat

of frostbite is not something that can be overcome by toughness. The chill drains batteries and breaks equipment. Special gear must be taken - this is in addition to the bullets, water, and food needed by default. The many expressions of snow and ice can lead to all sorts of drop zone experiences. Tactics are guided by the weather conditions. Every activity takes much, much longer to perform.

Learning to excel in this environment truly requires specialized focus from the troops.

Paratroopers are trained to be "comfortably chilly" in the Arctic. Too much warmth can lead to sweat, that sweat can freeze or soak you and your heat right out into the environment. This can be tricky when the Air Force has the heat cranked up on the C-17 on the ride out to Malemute.

Rough Edges

The weather conditions are brutal for aircraft. Fog in the area can create a visibility condition the aircraft refuse to fly in. The drop zone is so small and so close to a body of water that adverse weather adds to much risk. In one instance, an officer chasing his 65th jump to get his wreath was on scrubbed jumps 12 times in a row. 12 times. The people I interviewed gave me the impression that scrubbed jumps happen more often than successful ones. Imagine the impact on the psyche of the paratrooper living through the airborne timeline with a coin flip to decide if he exits an aircraft or not.

Even the walk to the aircraft can present a number of risks. Usually a non-event, this walk must be planned for in the Arctic.

Fighting

The tarmac can be iced over. The aircraft ramp can ice up as the heat inside melts the snow or ice outside and freezes again. The whole ramp can ice up, making it very challenging to walk up with combat equipment. In one case, a young trooper slipped on the walk to the aircraft and broke his back.

Inside the aircraft, the troops do their best to keep from sweating. They need to keep their level seven jacket on for the environment they are jumping into, but the aircraft is heated. That sweat will freeze instantly once they hit the breeze outside.

On the drop zone, the snowshoes will need to come out right away. They are packed on top of the ruck for easy access. As Jon Huff puts it, "Breaking trail is not a fun task". If the legendary vapor-barrier boots are being worn, they have to be repressurized to compensate for the pressure difference between the aircraft and ground-level. Recall back to the fact that everything takes much longer in this environment.

Additional equipment is always needed. Infantry squads bring a sled and a squad tent, along with some other equipment. Although these are jumpable, in practice they are pre-positioned for field exercises. This is to save unnecessary wear and tear on the equipment. They are too big for a door bundle and would need to be heavy-dropped.

Leading

I spoke with Rob Williams about his time in the Arctic. He was an infantry NCO - up through platoon sergeant - with the 25th Infantry Division before it was reflagged to the 11th Airborne. As he talked about the challenges, he had an interesting perspective as his next duty assignment was with the 82nd Airborne Division out of Ft. Bragg. He mentions an example of getting on the privates to make sure they have their fleece caps if it's below freezing, "I don't want you to lose your ears man, put that on".

Frostbite was a constant and real threat. Rob recalls the command taking it very seriously. If a private gets frostbite, the whole chain of command would report to the CG to explain themselves. During a 12-miler for the expert infantry badge, one trooper rolled his knit cap up above his ears - a common practice. Unfortunately, the frostbite took parts of his ears.

The cold is not something that can be powered through. In more temperate environments, a soldier can trade some chill for a lighter pack. In the Arctic, that is not the case. The bulk of the required gear requires a different pack. While the 82nd was still using the ALICE pack, the northern troops were using the MOLLE, and later another pack, to allow for the extra packing space that is needed. Every piece of issued cold-weather gear is going to be needed for stays in the field.

Part of that equipment is the squad sled, tent, and stove. The stove, as many campers know, is dangerous if used irresponsibly. The risk of explosion is high. To cope with this, every winter every soldier has to get certified on the operation of that stove. It's noted on their military driver's license. Bringing your weapon into the tent is a bad idea though - the weapon will sweat and the moisture will freeze inside of it and malfunction when you need it.

That weapon can also cause problems if you get a cheek-weld going the wrong way. Rumor has it that the skin can get stuck - like a tongue to a piece of frozen metal.



A trooper walks off the DZ.

Photo by AIC Emily Farnsworth.

In the Arctic, nobody is sneaking up on anyone else. Bulky gear like snowshoes and skis leave behind clear, detectable footprints. Maneuvering with snow shoes is a slow and noisy affair. There's not an opportunity to be sneaky.

In the Arctic, nobody is speedy. There is a slowed operational tempo. Everything takes longer and requires pushing through a lot of friction. That friction is both literal when breaking trail and figurative when controlling as much risk as possible. A cautious, deliberate pace is required to prevent slips or falls (which can seriously injure a person). This pace delays movements.

In the Arctic, you must adapt to the conditions. Occupying a patrol base is much different in extreme cold than the textbook standard. Even the cold-weather rangers would need to adapt. Top of the line cold-weather gear can protect the wearer down to very low temperatures, but only for so long. The troops pulling security can't lay down in the prone when it's 30 below zero. One way to handle this is the use of roving patrols. This keeps the security element moving - to stay safe in the cold - while also monitoring and maintaining security around the perimeter.

In the Arctic, your weapons and gear need special attention. Weapons can sweat and freeze up. Special lubricants are needed. Sweat can get down into components and freeze, causing lock-ups or pressure issues. Cold temperatures sucks the life out of batteries. Even the lithium-ion batteries suffer when the temperatures plummet. Extra batteries are always packed and any chargers available from vehicles are always in use.

A historical example of adapting was mentioned by both Rob Williams and Jon Huff. They describe the Finns during the Winter War of 1939-1940 pressing through objectives to immediately establish warming shelters for casualties and getting their kitchens running to serve warm food. This focus on regaining heat allowed their forces to stay operational longer than their Soviet enemy.

Details

I truly got a wealth on information from the people I interviewed for this article. I want to try and share every detail I can to help convey the experience to you. It's difficult to weave these into an artful narrative so instead you get a list. Y'all like lists, right?

1. There's a tracked vehicle, the SUSV (aka the Bandvagn 206) that is in common use up north. The two sections are joined by an articulated link and it allegedly handles like a dream on the snow.
2. Jumpers wear gloves while jumping. They must be leather-palmed gloves, however.
3. Water containers are stored upside down. As the ice forms, it floats to the top of the container, leaving the valve / mouthpiece free from ice when you need it.
4. Due to snow and ambient conditions, even the darkness can be very bright. Many movements can be done without

NVGs lowered.

5. Conditions can make the snow stick to your snow shoes, making it an exhausting slog to move distances.
6. Staying comfortably chilly reduces water needs on a day to day basis.
7. A hazardous terrain type is muskeg, look it up.
8. It takes an entire fire team to pull the squad sled.



Parachutes descending.

Photo by Maj Jason Welch, 2nd BCT 11th ABN DIV



Weapons raising hell in a snowy night.

Photo by Maj Jason Welch, 2nd BCT 11th ABN DIV

From The Chapter

March 30th



NCFAAC Representatives at St. Patrick's Day Parade

Photo by T. Alger

The March meeting of the North Central Florida All Airborne Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association was held on Saturday, March 8th, 2025. We had 14 members, 3 spouses, and 4 guests present. Secretary Stephen Fern was out for travel, so past secretary, Rich Troop, stepped back into his historic role. Ken and Linda Hall provided our lunch (thank you!). It was nice to see some new faces among those present. The upcoming Annual Airborne Picnic was discussed with much anticipation.

On Tuesday, April 22nd, our Vice Chairman will present an 82nd Airborne Medal and Certificate of achievement to a designated ROTC student from Westport High School. This is an annual tradition that takes place during their annual awards ceremony. Members may attend the ceremony if they coordinate with the JROTC commander by Monday, April 14th.

The current website hosting challenges were presented. Ron Dahlgren provided an option for hosting through SWGY, Inc, a Florida-based SDVOSB. The members voted and approved the move. The new website is now live at <https://ncfaac.org>. Please contact Mr. Dahlgren with requests for changes or additions to the chapter's web presence.

St. Patrick's Day Parade

On Monday, March seventeenth, at three on the dot,
The Villages Golf Cart Parade sure hit the spot!
Our chapter—already giggling—lined up in slot six,
An hour beforehand, cooking up mischievous tricks.

Visit the NCFAAC site if you yearn for more scenes,
(the photo gallery - where the fun truly gleans).
You'll spy Rich Becker's face, so delightfully dour,
Eyeing a green leprechaun with mysterious power
(Which, rumor suggests, is our Hope in disguise,
In a shamrocky outfit sure to dazzle the eyes).

The carts were decked out in paratrooper style,
Leaving no question who claimed the Emerald Isle.
Though laughter abounded, we paused to recall
Our dear Fran Dolan, who once cheered us all,
A writer and reveler, remembered today-
Tony reminded us in his own thoughtful way.

Yes, mischief and memories blended so well,
With shamrocks and smiles our story we tell.
So lift up your spirits and toast with delight,
For on St. Paddy's and always, we rally so bright!

Passing of Ed Kory

trooper was as a parachute rigger. His funeral service is Apr 8 at 8:30 St Timothy's Church in the Villages and will be laid to rest at Bushnell National Cemetery.

Rockie Lynne



Tony Alger with Ed Kory

Photo by T. Alger.

Thurston Helmes and his wife pose with Rockie Lynne. Photo by T. Helmes.

Written by Chairman Tony Alger. A member of the Greatest Generation has made his last jump. Ed passed away Mar 19, 2025. Ed Kory was born on January 4, 1928 in Queens NY. Ed was a graduate of New York University and worked in educational sales for most of his life. He loved baseball and coached little league and girls softball. He also loved golf. Ed was a proud American and dedicated veteran. He served with the 11th Airborne Division in occupied Japan. Most of his time as a para-

Rockie Lynne is a musician, veteran 82nd Airborne Division paratrooper, and chapter member that has enjoyed some success in the country music scene. His website indicates several projects aimed at supporting American veterans. Based on his age and a statement that he "joined after high school", I would estimate he was in division in the early to mid 1980s. Chapter members are encouraged to attend. Supporting our fellow airborne veterans is always a good use of your time.

Support The Canopy

Your booster donations help to cover expenses related to reporting and publication. Your \$25 covers a month of website hosting, or a half-tank of gas, or a day's worth of meals on the road, or 20% of a hotel stay. Please consider sending a donation to:

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