



# The Canopy

Issue 12 / Volume 33 / Dec 2025

## 11th ABN DIV Drones

That's a big backpack...

**Read more on page 4.**

## Ft. Bragg Turkey Day

BOSS and Warrior Cafe

**Read more on page 6.**

## New Jump Log

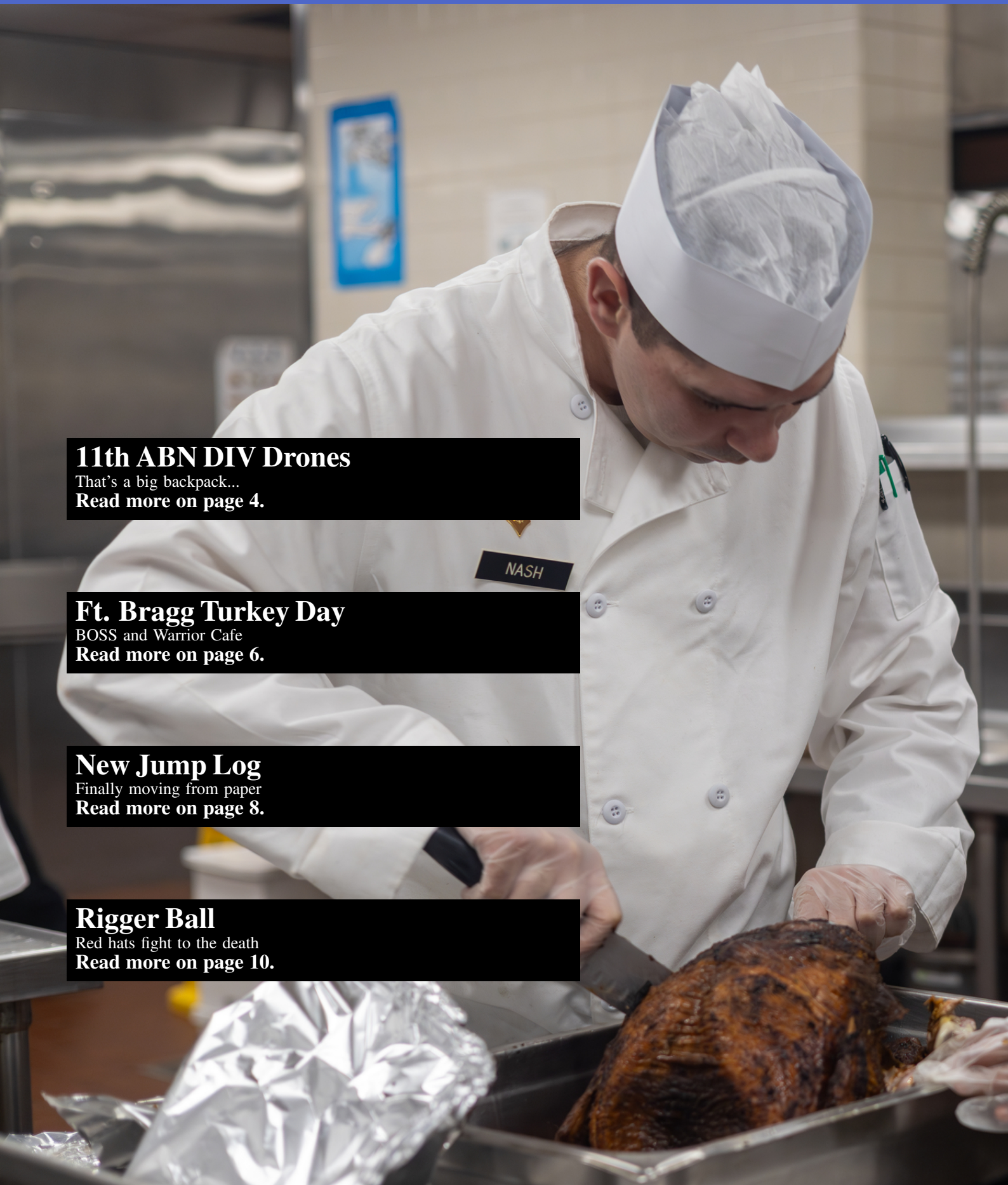
Finally moving from paper

**Read more on page 8.**

## Rigger Ball

Red hats fight to the death

**Read more on page 10.**



## 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

December 13 1300 hrs

Chapter Christmas Celebration

VFW Post 8083

### From the Editor



This month's cover photo comes from Private First Class Alexis Fischer of the 22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment. We see Specialist Nash checking on a bird before it gets sent out to the line.

I hope everyone had a chance to get together with the people that matter to them over the Thanksgiving break. We had a pretty big extended family meal.

**Make sure you RSVP for the Chapter Christmas Celebration! It's our most attended event each year!**

**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

Hope everyone has a great Thanksgiving. Lots to be thankful for. Remember our troops stationed in faraway places around the world who won't be with their families. We're eating at the Shades of Green Military Resort at Disney World again. It reminds me a little of my family's Thanksgiving at military Bases when I grew up as a military dependent (BRAT). It was also a great break for my mom since she didn't have to cook for 5 hungry boys.

Our water jump went well with four members jumping from the Tico Belle C-47 aircraft but this time into Lake Eustis. It was well attended with 16 members from the Chapter at different intervals showing up to watch our 4 members blast the sky and splash the water. The jumpers were Chris Fyfe, Heath Davenport, Chris Adams and Gary Blasczienski. We now have eight in the chapter who have exited this C-47 over water! Many of us had lunch at the Crazy Gator restaurant in Eustis after the jump. The next water jump is in May at Lake Dora, Tavares, FL. I plan on making my 3rd jump with Phantom Airborne. If you want to partake in a jump, sign up is in January. When they open up the slots they go within an hour or two so be sure and sign up as fast as possible or you will be on standby. Remember - you have join Phantom Airborne to be able to jump with them.



We had a great Belk's Charity Days Fund Raiser thanks to Rich Troop organizing it. Special thanks to those that made the effort to show up and help us raise funds for the chapter. We did very well for two hours work.

Finally, 15 members from the Chapter showed up for Dale Noble's 100th birthday party at Mission BBQ in Lady Lake. We awarded him an Airborne Centenarian certificate. His son told me that he really loved the attention and meeting all the people that showed up.

Please remember that our last meeting of the year is our Christmas Celebration at VFW Belleview at 1:00 pm, however show up early and catch up with your friends and have a drink at social hour beginning at 12:30. The VFW will cater our meal again like last year and the Color Guard from West Port High School will post colors at 1:00 pm. There will be Raffle Baskets and 50/50. Hope and I will be there by 11:00 to set up. If you're available we could use some help with set up. The deadline for the meal form is Nov 30. If for some reason you want to come, but didn't send in the payment, please call me ASAP.

Hoping to see you on the manifest,  
Airborne All the Way, and Merry Christmas!

**Airborne!**

**Tony Alger**

*Chairman*

North Central Florida All-Airborne Chapter

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

John Kinney  
Thurston Helmes  
Ken & Linda Hall  
Galen Mitchell  
Jerry & Robby Brust

Heath Davenport  
Christopher Adams  
Nick Harty  
Regis Rossa  
Darla & Jay Tatman

# 11th Airborne Division Drones

November 25th



*A very big backpack.*

Image by Maj. Ian Roth, 11th ABN DIV

## Arctic EW vs. Drones: 11th Airborne Takes the Fight to the Invisible Battlefield

FORT WAINWRIGHT, Alaska — The 11th Airborne Division just wrapped a first-of-its-kind electromagnetic warfare and counter-drone training push at the Joint Pacific Alaskan Range Complex near Fort Greely. EW teams from across the division linked up with Defense Innovation Unit partners and industry vendors to put new sensors and C-UAS tools through their paces in legit Arctic conditions.

### Why this mattered

1. The team fused division EW systems with the latest counter-UAS tech to sharpen TTPs for a contested electromagnetic spectrum.
2. Soldiers practiced finding and fixing enemy drone operators by hunting radio-frequency fingerprints and command-and-control links.
3. Everything happened in real cold—freezing temps, deep snow—so the gear got stress-tested the way we’d actually fight up here.

### What the teams did

1. Ran EW detection drills to pick up UAS signals, then triangulated likely control sites.

2. Checked how well their organic systems play with vendor gear, from initial detect to target handoff.
3. Logged how the cold hits performance—battery life, start-up times, and how sensors behave after hours in the snow.
4. Confirmed they could see UAS activity in the spectrum and used that picture to refine how we’d counter real threats in the air littoral—the slice of air from the ground up to around 10,000 feet.

### What Soldiers are saying (minus the sound bites)

1. Leaders called it a rare chance to get all the EW players on the same field, watch drones behave in extreme cold, and figure out exactly how to beat them when the spectrum gets noisy.
2. NCOs emphasized what recent conflicts have already shown: EW isn’t a side quest anymore—it’s central to large-scale combat operations, and this division intends to be out front.
3. Crews described the kit as letting them “see” the invisible fight. With cleaner data and better integration, they can give commanders faster, sharper advice and turn that into a tactical edge.

### Arctic lessons learned

1. Cold soaks crush batteries faster than any slide deck will admit. Teams built that reality into their timelines, load plans, and power management.
2. Mobility matters. Deep snow changes how you emplace, camouflage, and sustain EW systems—so TTPs got tweaked on the fly.
3. Integration beats isolation. The best results came when EW, UAS, and C-UAS systems were synced from the first detect through the final decision.

### What's next

1. The data from this event feeds straight into improving division EW and C-UAS capabilities and informs broader Army efforts aimed at closing gaps identified in the Arctic Strategy, *Regaining Arctic Dominance*.
2. Bottom line: Electromagnetic warfare is shaping the next fight. The 11th Airborne is treating the spectrum like terrain—and learning how to own it, even when the mercury drops and the snow's up to your ruck.



## Ft. Bragg Turkey Day

November 24th



*Cutting one of many cakes.*

Photo by Pfc. Alexis Fischer, 22nd MPAD

Thanksgiving on Fort Bragg: A Week of Food, Tradition, and Airborne Camaraderie

FORT BRAGG, North Carolina — Thanksgiving on Fort Bragg didn't show up as a single day this year; it unfolded like a weeklong field exercise in connection. It began on November 21 at the Iron Mike Conference Center, where the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program set a long table for more than 250 troops who might otherwise have spent the holiday on their own. It ended four days later across dining facilities post-wide, when the XVIII Airborne Corps turned its annual Dragonsgiving into a full-spectrum celebration of service, pride, and the craft of feeding an Army.

The BOSS gathering felt less like a formal banquet and more like a barracks buddy inviting the entire company to a Friendsgiving. Single Soldiers, single parents, and geographic bachelors drifted in from across the installation, drawn by the promise of turkey and ham, candied yams and greens, cheesecake and red velvet cake. What started about five years ago during the COVID-19 pandemic as a simple solution to a hard problem has matured into a dependable tradition. Organizers, backed by Fort Bragg MWR and local sponsors, planned for months to make

sure the night felt warm, not just warm-hearted. The result wasn't just a free meal; it was a pressure release. Soldiers swapped stories, met new friends, and found themselves networking across units and ranks in a way that felt natural rather than forced. In a big Army, the room made the installation feel smaller.

Four days later, Dragonsgiving delivered the other half of the holiday story: leaders trading command voice for serving spoons. The Corps carried forward an Army custom that stretches back more than a century. Thanksgiving is a time when command teams and senior leaders literally serve their formations. It's not written into regulation, and that's partly why it matters. For Soldiers who are far from home, the sight of commanders behind the line ladling gravy says as much as any holiday message ever could.

The heart of Dragonsgiving, though, beats in the kitchens. Culinary specialists, the often-invisible force multipliers of daily garrison life, turned quiet professionalism into spectacle. In dining facilities across post, they scaled up for what could be twice the usual crowd, working overnight to make sure every tray was hot and every carving station stayed moving. Nowhere was that push more visible than in the 82nd Airborne Division's

2nd Brigade Combat Team dining facility, where an all-hands, 24-hour sprint prepared the space for nearly a thousand hungry Paratroopers. Decorations went up. Roast after roast came out perfect. And in a flourish that would make any pastry chef grin, the team rolled out a centerpiece cake shaped like a football stadium, 82nd insignia and all.

Friendly rivalry sharpened the edges. Dragonsgiving doubles as a showcase. Food quality, presentation, and festive décor become the metrics, and bragging rights the prize. Teams improvised art with whatever supplies they had, proving that resourcefulness in a field kitchen translates just fine to a holiday table. Pride mattered, not as a vanity project but as an expression of craft and teamwork. For many specialists, this is the rare day when their work steps into the spotlight and the formation pauses long enough to applaud.

As the last plates were cleared, the celebration spilled beyond the dining rooms. The XVIII Airborne Corps Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion hosted a Turkey Bowl. Nothing cements camaraderie like a unit football game on a holiday week afternoon. It was a simple capstone: eat well, laugh hard, compete a

little, and carry that energy back to the mission on Monday.

Threaded through both events was a single through line: people first. It was shown in practice rather than slogan. The BOSS dinner reminded newcomers and seasoned jumpers alike that nobody at Fort Bragg goes it alone. Dragonsgiving put servant leadership on display as leaders showed up not to be seen, but to serve. Together, they bridged the gap for soldiers spending their first holiday away from home and gave the entire post a shared memory to carry into the winter.

That's the quiet power of traditions like these. They're not just about nostalgia or pageantry; they're about readiness. An installation that eats together, laughs together, and looks out for its most junior members is an installation that moves faster when the phone rings and the paratroop door opens. This Thanksgiving, Fort Bragg proved once again that the strength of the formation lives in the spaces between missions—over a plate of turkey at Iron Mike, in a DFAC buzzing with pastry-sugar creativity, and on a muddy gridiron where teammates became a little more like family.



# New Jump Log

November 21st



Image by US Army Combined Arms Command

## AirborneReady: The Jump Log That Finally Matches What Your Knees Remember

Every Paratrooper has a jump log story. Ink smeared by rain. A number written in a hurry that never got fixed. A bird type you meant to correct and didn't. Full disclosure from the editor's desk: my paper log proudly lists a CH-47 I never boarded and somehow leaves out a warm-Saturday UH-60 hop I still won't shut up about. Multiply that kind of "creative nonfiction" across a division and you start to see the problem our community has lived with for decades.

The 82nd Airborne Division and the Army Software Factory decided to kill the drift between memory, paper, and reality. They built AirborneReady: a soldier-made, soldier-tested system that replaces the mess of hand-scribbled entries and after-the-fact spreadsheets with clean, accurate, auditable records. It began as a proof of concept inside the Army Software Factory, where paratroopers who actually live this world designed the tool around how we plan, jump, and certify. Now it's grown up and moved into the Army Training Information System.

What changes on the ground? For starters, no more waiting



on an air NCO to reconcile three versions of your last five jumps. AirborneReady pulls airborne training data into one place leaders can trust, in real time, through ATIS. The scale matters: the system is built to manage records for more than 355,000 Soldiers and is projected to save over 64,000 Soldier-hours every year. That's more time jumping, training, and getting the Immediate Response Force sharper without the paper chase.

The accuracy piece is the quiet revolution. For years, our "system" depended on good intentions, good memory, and a steady pen. Paper gets wet, signatures slip a day, and a rushed manifest becomes gospel. AirborneReady closes those gaps. It gives air staff, jumpmasters, and commanders a single source of truth for who's current on what, when, and how. If you've ever argued with a spreadsheet about whether that night, combat-equipment C-130 door exit actually happened on the 14th or the 15th then you know why this matters.

If you're sentimental about the paper log, you're not wrong. The dog-eared pages, the coffee rings, and the scribbled writing - they're part of the culture. But the mission is the mission. Nobody wants their currency or qualifications to hinge on whether a page got torn out of a binder two duty stations ago. AirborneReady means the record that follows you actually reflects the jumps you did.

So yes, the editor's paper log still claims a phantom CH-47 and still forgets that perfect UH-60 ride on a sunny weekend. That's exactly why this change matters. AirborneReady is the logbook your body already kept... the one your knees, back, and memory have been trying to reconcile with your paperwork since your first exit. Now, finally, the Army's record can keep up with the paratrooper and let the admin drift stay on the ground where it belongs.

# Rigger Ball

October 20th



Image by Spc Frederico Cardoso, 82nd Sustainment Brigade

**Red Hats, Fast Hands: Rigger Rodeo Marks 75 Years of Getting It Right**

FORT BRAGG, North Carolina — The week started with a sea of red caps jogging down Ardennes and ended with bow ties and toasts at Iron Mike. In between, Fort Bragg's bi-annual Rigger Rodeo packed five days with everything that makes the Parachute Rigger community what it is: precision, pressure, pride and the quiet understanding that every fold and tie can be the difference on a windy day over St. Mere.

This year's Rodeo doubled as a birthday party. Seventy-five years have passed since the Army put the Quartermaster Corps in charge of aerial delivery and, a year later, stood up the Parachute Rigger Course at Fort Lee. Before that, Paratroopers maintained their own canopies. Today, Red Hats carry that responsibility for the force, and they came to Bragg to prove the standard still climbs.

The field was lean but loaded: the 647th Quartermaster Company; a team from the 75th Ranger Regiment; and two squads out of the 189th Division Sustainment Support Battalion's Delta and Echo companies. Units from Fort Benning, Italy, and Germany had to bow out, but the competition never lacked for speed or skill.

The Rodeo kicked off with the Red Hat Run, a formation move down Ardennes led by Brig. Gen. Peter L. Gilbert of 3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command and Col. Jonathan Gre-

gory of the 82nd Airborne Division Sustainment Brigade. Then the real work began. Inside the ADSB's Parachute Issue Facility, the floor went quiet in the way only riggers can make it: focused, careful, ruthless about time. MC-6, T-11, T-11 Reserve: pack, inspect, sign. Between events, teams broke out needle and thread for patch repairs and maintenance tasks that separate craftsmen from dabblers. It wasn't glamorous, and that was the point. The Rodeo rewards clean hands more than fast hands—and the best teams had both.

Midweek, the competition took to the air. Competitors stepped off Green Ramp and rode a lift into St. Mere Drop Zone, swapping tables for turbulence and proving that what happens under fluorescent lights translates when the slipstream hits. From there it was straight to the Heavy Drop Rigging Site for Container Delivery System builds. Pallets, lashing, and checklists live at the heart of the aerial delivery trade. Some teams spend more time on personnel chutes, others live on CDS; by the time graders checked the last tie-down, it was obvious who'd been living in the load plan lately.

Thursday came early at Hercules Field. The Army Fitness Test set the tone, and the Rigger Board set the bar. This was a formal, no-notes, MOS-deep grilling inside the 151st Quartermaster Company. It's one thing to pack fast. It's another to explain, under pressure, exactly why your process is right and how you'll fix it when something isn't. Teams that had been drilling

for a month looked like it. Communication and trust showed up in the scores.

By Friday night the math was done and the tradition took over. At the Rigger Ball, with alumni shoulder to shoulder with today's Red Hats, the winners were announced: Delta Company, 189th DSSB, on top; the 75th Ranger Regiment a close second; Echo Company, 189th DSSB, in third. The margin wasn't a mile; it never is. The edge was teamwork, reps, and the ability to shift from personnel rigs to CDS without losing a step.

If you've ever been sweating in a harness waiting for a green light, you know what this week really celebrated. Riggers aren't

chasing medals or headlines. They're chasing perfection because someone else's life rides on it. Seventy-five years into the profession, the craft is still evolving, but the core hasn't changed: measure twice, tie once, pressure-test everything.

As the ball wound down and the last toast hit the rim, you could feel the continuity in the room—Red Hats from different eras swapping techniques and stories that all end the same way: canopy over head, mission on track, Paratrooper on the ground and walking. The Rodeo was a competition, sure. More than that, it was a recommitment ceremony. The standard is still the standard, and the next 75 years look ready to meet it.

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## Support The Canopy

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