



# DRAGON INNOVATION

## NEWSLETTER



This document provides information to XVIII Airborne Corps Soldiers and Civilians, across all units and installations, about the Corps' focus on building a culture of innovation.

**"You want to innovate?  
Good. You've got smart  
people? Good. You have  
ideas? Good. Now, you  
need the will and grit to  
smash through  
bureaucratic resisters  
along the way."**

**— Dr. Patrick Horse**

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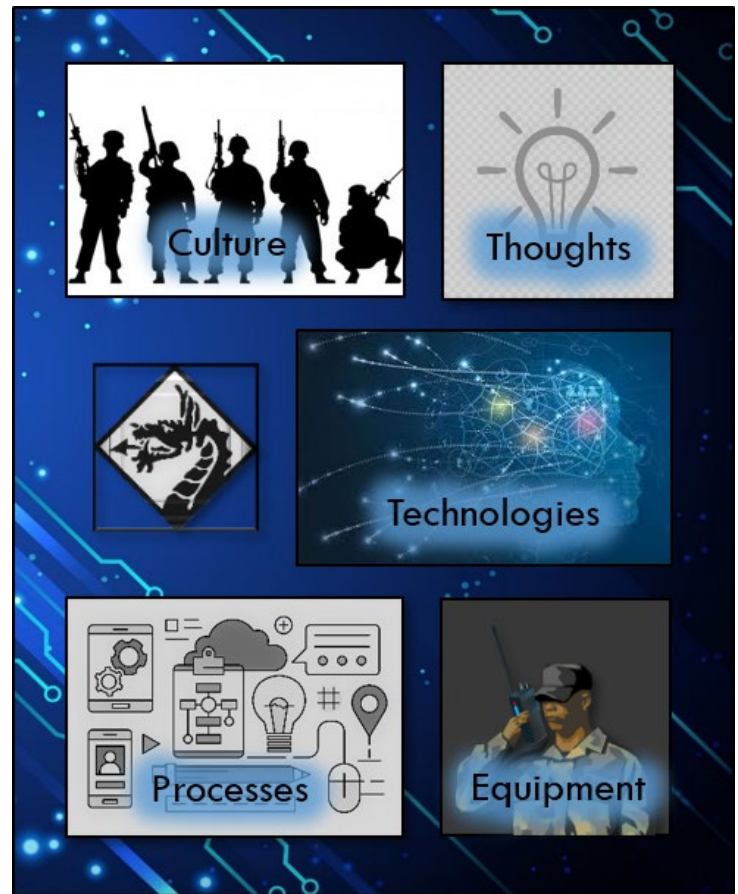
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**JUNE 2021**

# DRAGON INNOVATION PROGRAM

**At XVIII Airborne Corps,** we foster a culture of innovation across all ranks, giving voice and life to novel ideas that support our people, optimize our readiness, and promote modernization for the future force.

By empowering our Soldiers, Civilians, and their Families to innovate, we unleash and celebrate creative thoughts, technologies, processes, and equipment, implementing them at scale and across echelons. We are focusing on innovation by solving today's problems with today's tech to inform Army modernization efforts that seek to solve tomorrow's problems with tomorrow's tech.



## DRAGON INNOVATION PROGRAM WEBSITE ON THE NSIN PORTAL National Security Innovation Network is a community of problem solvers



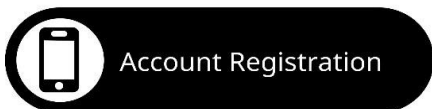
Everyone has an idea on how to make things better in their unit, the XVIII Airborne Corps, and the Army. Whether your idea solves a new problem or makes an old system more effective or efficient, we want to hear from you! There are no limits to the ideas you can submit.



Through the Dragon Innovation Program website, we unlock, uplift and implement Soldier-generated ideas across echelons.

Scan the QR code to the left. Then click the menu at the top left and select 'become a member'. Create an account with just an email and password (no CAC required). Click the activation link sent to your email. Sign in, fill in your skills or scroll down to skip, and then input your name and state. Take a tour of the site or skip it; either way, you are in. Get after it and start innovating!

Or click this link: <https://unum.nsin.us/xviii-airborne>





# INNOVATION AGREEMENTS

In order to inspire and drive a culture of innovation within XVIII Airborne Corps, we have signed Education Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with Vanderbilt University and the University of North Carolina (UNC) System. These relationships provide access to 18 universities.

**Why is this important?** These partnerships allow us access to 3D printing, laser cutting, milling, entry-level AI robotics, and most importantly, over 232,000 students and professors. If you think your idea could benefit from these resources, then contact 1LT Nate Schnittger at [nathan.e.schnittger.mil@mail.mil](mailto:nathan.e.schnittger.mil@mail.mil) to discuss your idea.

Additionally, we've signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Army Research Laboratory (ARL). As part of that agreement, ARL will work with the XVIII Airborne Corps, and specifically the 82nd Airborne Division and the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), to establish Soldier-Academic teams to solve problems fast.



## Dragon Innovation Team Training (DITT)

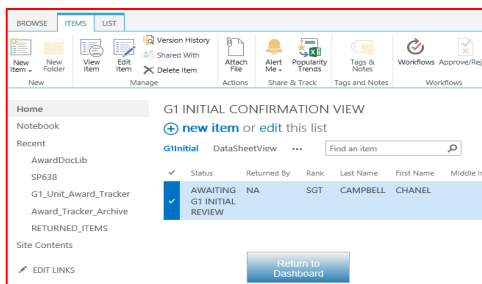


### What is DITT?

DITT is an eight-day virtual course partnered through NSIN to connect our Soldiers and Civilians with the nation's brightest academics. During DITT, Corps personnel learn creative thinking, problem solving, and solution development skills. Each DITT serial has a unique course problem statement to solve a real problem for the Corps. DITT makes us better by educating our people, solving problems, and driving an innovative culture across XVIII Airborne Corps.

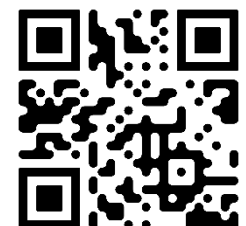
### October 2020: Honors and Recognition

Last year, DITT focused on the age-old issue of accurately tracking awards and administrative documents. Teams developed an app to digitally track and move awards through the Chain of Command to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability. People first!

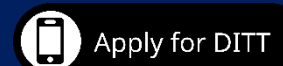


### Want to join? Next DITT Serial is 7-17 September 2021

**Apply Now!**



**If selected:**  
You will receive joining instructions one week before the start of DITT.



# MEET THE DRAGON INNOVATION TEAM



BG Bob Ritchie is the director of the XVIII Airborne Corps Innovation Program. An exchange officer from Canada, BG Ritchie has commanded from platoon to BCT level.

"We must innovate to support our people and optimize our readiness. Our Soldiers and Civilians are fully empowered to innovate by introducing new thoughts, technologies, processes, and equipment. Please get involved to make your Corps better."

**BG Robert T. Ritchie, Director, Dragon Innovation Program, [Robert.t.ritchie12.fm@mail.mil](mailto:Robert.t.ritchie12.fm@mail.mil), (910) 396-9209**



As the lead for our AI-Enabled Corps, COL Dan Kearney engages with Army Futures Command and the tech industry to bring the latest data analytics, machine learning, and AI technologies to our tactical units.

"The AI-Enabled Corps concept isn't about some future scenario. It's here now. This program is about using today's technology, today's data analysis for today's fight."

**COL Daniel P. Kearney, Director, AI-Enabled Corps, [Daniel.p.kearney.mil@mail.mil](mailto:Daniel.p.kearney.mil@mail.mil), (910) 432-6969**



MAJ Bethany Landeck, a Medical Service Corps Officer from Hudson, Ohio, is a project officer for our AI-Enabled Corps. Bethany, who entered the Army in 2005 after receiving a commission from Purdue University, sees innovation as key to identifying requirements and informing modernization.

"Educating our formations on data literacy and fostering an organizational culture of innovation will cultivate agility and resiliency in the face of change."

**MAJ Bethany G. Landeck, Staff Officer, AI-Enabled Corps, [Bethany.g.landeck.mil@mail.mil](mailto:Bethany.g.landeck.mil@mail.mil), (910) 396-9039**



MAJ Evan Adams is an Information Systems Engineer from Houston, Texas. Evan serves as an action officer for our AI-Enabled Corps, conducting capability gap analysis and proposing solutions to modernize the Corps staff for the integration of current and emerging technologies.

"I see innovation as the key to developing an adaptive force centered around technology and smart Soldiers to go beyond the industrial age Army."

**MAJ Evan N. Adams, Technical Specialist, AI-Enabled Corps, [Evan.n.adams.mil@mail.mil](mailto:Evan.n.adams.mil@mail.mil), (817) 994-5342**



CPT Javon Starnes, from Wilmington, North Carolina, is an Army Public Affairs Officer who organizes, plans and produces each episode of Dragon's Lair. Originally a Logistics Officer, he transitioned to Public Affairs a year ago.

"My focus in producing Dragon's Lair is in finding diamonds in the rough – those ideas that can spark cultural change across the Army. What's the next RangeFinder App? That's what I'm looking for."

**CPT Javon Starnes, XVIII Airborne Corps, Dragon's Lair Producer, [Javon.starnes.mil@mail.mil](mailto:Javon.starnes.mil@mail.mil), (910) 833-4217**



1LT Nate Schnittger, a Missouri native, is responsible for managing and tracking Unbounded Entries on our National Security Innovation Network (NSIN) Portal.

"There are Soldiers all across XVIII Airborne Corps with ideas to improve how we do things. I see the NSIN Portal as a way for those Soldiers to speak up and be heard. Anyone of any rank can submit an idea; any idea can be heard."

**1LT Nate E. Schnittger, Unbounded Entries on NSIN Portal, [Nathan.e.schnittger.mil@mail.mil](mailto:Nathan.e.schnittger.mil@mail.mil), (910) 570-0458**

# PREVENTING SOLDIER SUICIDE: DRAGON'S LAIR, Episode 4



Dragon's Lair 4 was one of the most emotional episodes thus far. The episode, focused on preventing Soldier suicide, featured five Soldiers from within XVIII Airborne Corps who presented realistic and thought-provoking ideas to prevent soldier suicide. Each Soldier presented their idea to LTG Kurilla, CSM Holland and a panel of experts from the Pentagon and the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS).



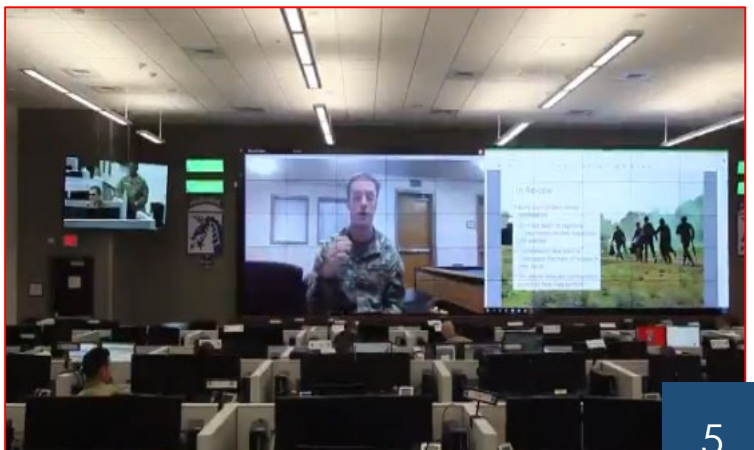
COL Will Bimson, the outgoing Corps Surgeon, proposed a program addressing the spiritual needs of each Soldier. The program prioritizes spirituality in the same manner the Army emphasizes physical fitness.

CPT Kristen Bell, an operations officer with the 7th Transportation Brigade (Expeditionary), developed an organizational suicide prevention program based on the suicide of a Soldier assigned to her unit.

SGM Emmanuel Emekaekwue, the Senior Logistics non-commissioned officer for the XVIII Airborne Corps, developed a tiered program to aggressively address behavioral health issues before a crisis.

SSG Meese Brockman, a communications non-commissioned officer, developed a program based on a personal tragedy in her life. Her concept would bridge an information gap between behavioral health and a Soldier's command.

PFC Skyler Boyer, a Soldier attending the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, suggests gathering qualitative data about unit morale to create a metrics-based evaluation of unit morale and emotional resilience.



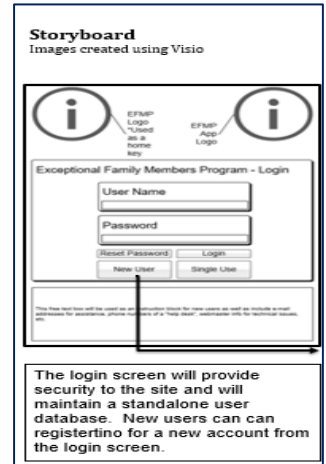
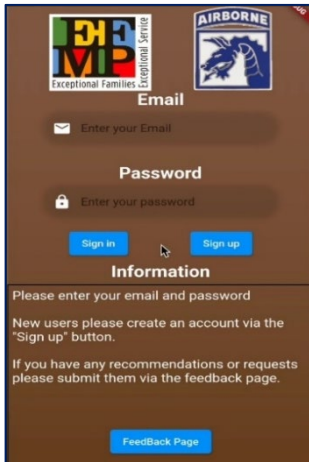


## DRAGON'S LAIR – IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

While we are moving out on new Dragon's Lair episodes, we are aggressively working to implement the great ideas from past episodes. "The long-term viability of Dragon's Lair rests on our ability to push through the innovations that have already come through the program," said Captain Javon Starnes, the producer of Dragon's Lair. "We've promised that we will uplift these ideas and implement them across all Corps units. The XVIII Airborne Corps is making good on that promise."

### EZ-EFMP APP

During Dragon's Lair Episode 3, Major Eric Kelly, assigned to 525 Military Intelligence Brigade, presented the EZ-EFMP APP, a mobile application for streamlining, tracking, and managing information regarding care, treatment, and PCS options for EFMP Families. Eric has built a wireframe and has begun moving forward on coding. We plan to have the application available for fielding at the end of this calendar year.



## SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION

The Dragon's Lair Episode 3 supplement focused on the prevention of sexual harassment and sexual assault. The Corps has implemented significant policy changes. Seven ideas were presented and some aspects of all seven have been implemented across the Corps. These include changes to the Corps' military justice policy, changes to the way reports are handled, and changes to grade-determination boards following sexual assault cases. The Corps is also implementing SSG Shameka Dudley's idea for Virtual Reality (VR) SHARP training with a pilot program coming in July 2021.



# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) ENABLED CORPS

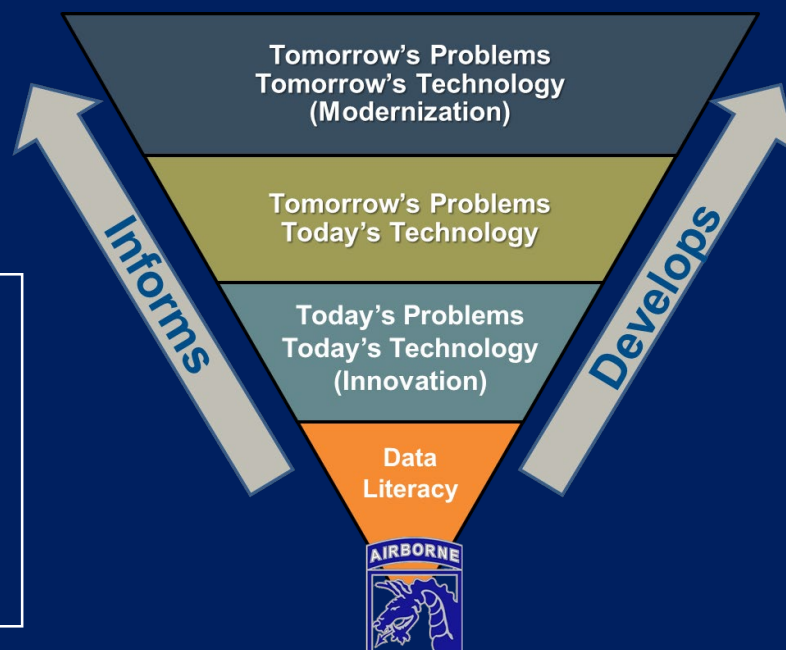


**DO YOU WANT TO MAKE XVIII AIRBORNE CORPS BETTER?**

**DO DATA SCIENCE, SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT, AUTOMATION,  
AI OR CLOUD ENVIRONMENTS INTEREST YOU?**

**DO YOU WANT TO INCREASE YOUR SKILLS AND APPLY THEM  
TO OPTIMIZE HOW THE CORPS FIGHTS?**

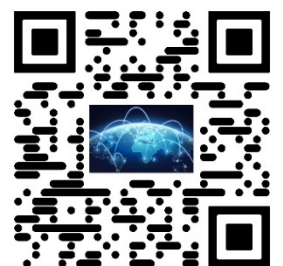
**IF SO, THE AI-ENABLED CORPS WANTS YOU!**




**You can be  
loaded on  
data courses:**

- Coursera
- USMA
- JSOC GAP

**Join the team!  
Scan the QR Code  
to submit your  
application.**







"We tend to think of Army innovation as new trinkets, new technology, and new stuff. Really, Army innovation lives in the mind of the American Soldier. It's in our process, the way we approach daily tasks. You see, Army innovation is about thought and process, not about the next generation gear."

Dr. Daniel O. Mangrove

