

Press Release

Release No: 2506-12

June 25, 2025

Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum Announces 2025 Mountainfest Award Nominations

FORT DRUM, NY –Fort Drum proudly announces its nominations for the 2025 Man of the Mountain, Woman of the Mountain, and Warrior Leader Hall of Fame, recognizing individuals who embody the spirit and values of the 10th Mountain Division and the North Country community.

Man of the Mountain: Mr. Henricus F. Wagenaar

Fort Drum and 10th Mountain Division honor Mr. Henricus F. Wagenaar, Watertown City Manager, as the 2025 Man of the Mountain. Mr. Wagenaar's distinguished career includes service with the 10th Mountain Division (LI) as the Mission Support Element G-3, followed by his role as Deputy to the Garrison Commander. Since assuming the position of Watertown City Manager in 2024, he has instrumentally strengthened ties between Watertown and Fort Drum, notably leading the city's participation in the Army's Partnership for Your Success Program – a testament to his dedication to Soldiers transitioning to civilian life. Mr. Wagenaar's commitment extends to integrating Army celebrations with the community, exemplified by the local 250th Army Birthday celebration featuring a monument rededication and family festivities.

Woman of the Mountain: Patricia Finn Thornton (Posthumous)

The 10th Mountain Division honors the legacy of Patricia Finn Thornton. Ms. Thornton dedicated decades to preserving the history and supporting the families of the Division. She served as President of the National Association of the 10th Mountain Division Delaware River Valley Chapter and the Descendant organization, spearheading initiatives like the establishment of a national descendant organization and the highly successful Return to Italy trips. A lifelong educator, Ms. Thornton's unwavering commitment to the 10th Mountain Division served as a bridge between generations, embodying the values of the Division and serving as a mentor to countless individuals. She passed away in August 2014, leaving behind a lasting legacy of service and dedication.

10th Mountain Warrior Legend Hall of Fame: CSM (R) Jose Vega

Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Vega served with distinction in 2-87 Infantry Battalion from 2004-2007. His bravery was exemplified on June 28, 2006 in Afghanistan, when he personally led the recovery of wounded soldiers from a minefield, risking his own life to ensure their evacuation – an act for which he was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor. Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Vega's 24 years of service, including roles as a Drill Sergeant and Brigade Command Sergeant Major, embody the Army Values and Warrior Ethos, and his continued service to veterans through the Wounded Warrior Project exemplifies his lifelong dedication to service.

These individuals were formally recognized during Mountainfest, a celebration of camaraderie, community, and the rich history of the 10th Mountain Division.

###

Photo Captions:

WLHoF Vega - Maj. Gen. Scott Naumann, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum commander (left) and Command Sgt Maj Brett Johnson, 10th Mountain Division (LI) Command Sergeant Major (right), present the 10th Mountain Warrior Legend Hall of Fame plaque and citation to CSM (Ret.) Jose Vega (center) during a Mountainfest community luncheon.

Woman of the Mountain – The 2025 Woman of the Mountain award was posthumously presented in honor of Ms. Patricia Finn Thornton to her husband Frank Thornton (center) by Maj. Gen. Scott Naumann, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum commander (left) and Command Sgt Maj Brett Johnson, 10th Mountain Division (LI) Command Sergeant Major (right).

Man of the Mountain - Maj. Gen. Scott Naumann, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum commander (left) and Command Sgt Maj Brett Johnson, 10th Mountain Division (LI) Command Sergeant Major (right), present the 2025 Man of the Mountain award to Mr. Henricus F. Wagenaar (center) during a Mountainfest community luncheon.

Media with inquires regarding this press release should contact 10th Mountain Division Public Affairs, Maj. Rachael Jeffcoat at rachael.l.jeffcoat.mil@army.mil.