Press Release

Release Nr: 2010-02

October 13, 2020

Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum first responders awarded for actions taken during search-and-rescue

FORT DRUM, N.Y. (Oct. 13, 2020) -- When a 10th Mountain Division (LI) Soldier went missing from his unit, it was the concentrated response of Fort Drum’s first responders that resulted in a quick and fortunate outcome.

On Sept. 17, Fort Drum Directorate of Emergency Services, 91st Military Police Battalion and Criminal Investigation Division personnel responded to a 911 call about a potential missing Soldier on post.

According to DES officials, a distressed Soldier had left his unit into an adjacent wooded area on foot. Within minutes of receiving the 911 call, several patrols were dispatched to that area to conduct a search. This included Military Police investigators, K-9 teams from the 8th Military Working Dog Detachment, and CID agents.

“Our main concern was for the safety of that Soldier, especially considering the rough terrain and close proximity to the Black River,” said Lt. Col. Matthew LeBlanc, DES director and 91st MP Battalion commander.

Lt. Kenneth Teske, Directorate of Emergency Services, established an on-site command post to coordinate the search teams. Minutes later, Staff Sgt. Tyler LaFlamme, 23rd Military Police Company patrol supervisor, identified and relayed the location of the Soldier.

LaFlamme and Sgt. 1st Class Ryen Rascon, 62nd CID special agent, went into the Black River to retrieve the Soldier. Waist deep in mud and chest deep in water, the first responders struggled to get the Soldier free and back to the shoreline where responding personnel assisted with the extraction.

The Soldier was brought safely to shore and transferred to a local hospital for further evaluation.

“Without hesitation and concern for their own safety, the team executed a successful rescue and potentially saved this Soldier’s life,” LeBlanc said. “I’m tremendously proud of what each and every one of them did that day, and what they do every single day.”

The first responders were recognized Oct. 8 during an awards presentation in Memorial Park, with LeBlanc, Col. Jeffery Lucas, Fort Drum garrison commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Mario Terenas, 10th Mountain Division (LI) senior enlisted adviser, officiating.

The following individuals were recognized for their efforts:

Staff Sgt. Tyler LaFlamme, 23rd Military Police Company; Sgt. 1st Class Ryen Rascon, 62nd CID special agent; Sgt. 1st Class Michael Clounch, 62nd CID special agent; Staff. Sgt. Aldo Clavijo, 62nd CID special agent; Staff Sgt. Jesse Boudreau, 62nd CID; Spc. Jamie Hutson, 62nd CID; Sgt. Glenn Hill, Military Police investigator, 227th MP Detachment; Sgt. Zachary Biondi, Military Police investigator, 227th MP Detachment; Spc. Kayla Garcia, K-9 handler, 8th Military Working Dog Detachment; Det. Anthony Rivelli, DES; Lt. Kenneth Teske, DES; Sgt. Johnathan Cortes, K-9 handler, 8th MWD Detachment; Pvt. Terry Robinson, 23rd MP Company; and George Turner, DES dispatcher.

“Without regard for their own lives and safety, their first thought was to save a life,” Terenas said. “It just makes me proud every single day that we have these kind of folks watching over our community, over our families, over our Soldiers every single day, and I couldn’t be happier.”

Among the 14 first responders awarded, LaFlamme and Rascon each were presented the Army Commendation Medal for their actions. They credited teamwork with the successful outcome, saying that everything went according to protocol.

“We back each other 100 percent, so if one goes, we all go together,” Rascon said.

“We’re just happy that the Soldier got the help that he needed,” LaFlamme added. “We come together in a time of need, and we’re willing to put our lives on the line to make sure that person gets the assistance they need.”

###

Media with inquiries regarding this press release should contact Fort Drum Public Affairs, Valerie Schneider, Valerie.m.schneider2.civ@mail.mil, 315-783-5828.

Caption: Lt. Col. Matthew LeBlanc, DES director and 91st MP Battalion commander, (center), recognizes personnel from Fort Drum's Directorate of Emergency Services, Criminal Investigation Division and 91st Military Police Battalion Oct. 8 during an awards ceremony at Memorial Park. When a 10th Mountain Division (LI) Soldier went missing from his unit in September, it was the concentrated response of Fort Drum’s first responders that resulted in a quick and fortunate outcome. (Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)