Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

10th Mountain Division inducts new members into Hall of Fame

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- Three names have been added to the 10th Mountain Division (LI) Warrior Legend Hall of Fame, following an induction ceremony June 20 at The Peak during Mountainfest.

Since 2020, the Hall of Fame has recognized 28 individuals who have supported the 10th Mountain Division (LI) through their exceptional contributions. A Warrior Legend is defined as one who has exhibited the best qualities and characteristics of the 10th Mountain Division through a lifetime of service.

This year’s inductees were Jeff Fox, Keli Schmid, and retired Master Sgt. Francisco Morales.

Maj. Gen. Scott Naumann, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum commander, described the three recipients as remarkable individuals who have demonstrated excellence and dedication in their public and private lives.

“They are the embodiment of sacrifice, service, and selflessness,” he said. “They are pillars of the 10th Mountain Division community. These individuals have demonstrated their commitment with deeds not words, the qualities we value in the best of our mountain warriors.”

Fox retired from the Directorate of Public Works in July 2023 after more than 33 years of service as a painter and illustrator. He was instrumental in the designs and installation of many historical exhibits on post. His work is displayed within Hays Hall, the Command Sgt. Maj. Southern “Buddy” Hewitt Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Monti Physical Fitness Center, and the Heritage Center, to name a few.

One of the last projects Fox worked on before retirement was ensuring all the signage and displays within the new 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Museum were installed before the grand opening at its new location.

His dedication to researching each subject in detail and with personal interest in storytelling is why the Fort Drum community can take pride and find inspiration in their history throughout the installation.

“I’ve met a lot of great people along the way, a lot of great leaders, and I can’t say enough good things about them,” Fox said.

Fox said he had the opportunity last year to share a meal with Maj. Gen. Milford Beagle Jr., former 10th Mountain Division (LI) commander, in Iowa. He was impressed by all the division memorabilia Beagle had displayed in his office, but that wasn’t as memorable as what happened next.

“When I went to introduce my daughter to him, she reached her hand out to shake his,” Fox said. “He said, ‘We don’t shake hands when we’re family. We hug.’ And that’s what the 10th Mountain Division means to me.”

Schmid has served as the 10th Mountain Division archivist at the Denver Public Library since 2015. She oversees the 10th Mountain Division Resource Center art, manuscript, and audiovisual collections, while assisting students, authors, filmmakers, and journalists with their research needs.

In February, Schmid helped a division Soldier on a project during Operation Mountain Legacy. His great grandfather, an original member of the 10th Mountain Division, was killed in action during the Po Valley offensive. Schmid located an original Bronze Star Medal citation for Cpl. Wayne Peters within the center’s archive.

Schmid serves on the advisory board of the Ninety-Pound Rucksack podcast, created and hosted by another Hall of Fame inductee Christian Beckwith.

When she accepted the archivist position, Schmid said she also gained a family as she worked with numerous 10th Mountain Division (LI) Soldiers, veterans, family members, and fellow historians.

“I have said, and will continue to say, this is by far the most rewarding job I’ve ever had,” she said. “On a daily basis, not only do I get to preserve an incredibly important piece of history, but I get to work with members of my newer family to connect their present to their personal histories.”

Retired Master Sgt. Francisco Morales served more than 20 years in the U.S. Army, having deployed five times overseas where he demonstrated extreme courage and gallantry in the face of the enemy. In 1995, he was among the first American Soldiers to enter Bosnia and Herzegovina.

During his second deployment to Afghanistan, Morales served as a platoon sergeant and acting platoon leader with 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI).

He risked his life multiple times while exposed to rocket and small-arms fire to save the lives of wounded Soldiers when his mounted patrol was attacked.

Morales joined the faculty at St. Bonaventure University in 2007 as a military science instructor in the Army ROTC program there. He also founded the Student Veterans Association.

After graduating from the university’s Master of Education in Counseling program, Morales worked as a mental health counselor for Catholic Charities, and as a guidance counselor at Bolivar-Richburg Central School. In 2017, he returned to St. Bonaventure University as the Military Aligned Students director.

“I didn’t prepare a speech today,” Morales said. “But I’m forced to speak quite often in the last 10 years, and what I talk about most is how important it is for us to continue the mission of supporting those who serve.”

Morales brought two of his students to the ceremony to experience a little of what being in the 10th Mountain Division (LI) meant to him. He said the honor of being inducted would be impossible if it weren’t for the teammates he served with – some who never made it home but remain in his thoughts.

“I want to thank all of you for what you do, everybody who is part of this team,” he said. “It is great to be brought back home, and it is honor to be a part of this great division.”

Inductee plaques will be added to the Hall of Fame wall inside the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Museum.

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Photo Captions:

10MTN Hall of Fame 01 - Retired Master Sgt. Francisco Morales is inducted in the 10th Mountain Division (LI) Warrior Legend Hall of Fame during a ceremony July 20 at The Peak during Mountainfest. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

10MTN Hall of Fame 02 - Keli Schmid addresses the audience after his induction in the 10th Mountain Division (LI) Warrior Legend Hall of Fame during a ceremony July 20 at The Peak during Mountainfest. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

10MTN Hall of Fame 03 - Jeff Fox addresses the audience after his induction in the 10th Mountain Division (LI) Warrior Legend Hall of Fame during a ceremony July 20 at The Peak during Mountainfest. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

10MTN Hall of Fame 04 - The 10th Mountain Division (LI) Warrior Legend Hall of Fame inductee plaques adorn a wall inside the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Museum. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)