Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum inducts Hall of Fame members, honors Man and Woman of the Mountain recipients

FORT DRUM, N.Y. (Aug. 30, 2022) -- Fort Drum leaders, community members and invited guests applauded the newest members of the 10th Mountain Division Warrior Legends Hall of Fame, as well as Man and Woman of the Mountain inductees, during a ceremony Aug. 30 in the Multipurpose Auditorium.

Susan Grant Raymond, sculptress of the Military Mountaineers Monument and two other tributes at Memorial Park, and retired Chaplain (Brig. Gen.) Robert F. Pleczkowski, former 10th Mountain Division chaplain, formed the 2022 Hall of Fame class.

Since 2020, the Hall of Fame recognizes people who have supported the division through their exceptional contributions and who have exhibited the best qualities and characteristics of the division through a lifetime of service.

Raymond, a nationally known sculptress from Boulder, Colorado, has been instrumental in telling the 10th Mountain Division story through her work at Fort Drum and in the North Country.

She created the Military Mountaineers Monument and the Fallen Warrior Memorial at Fort Drum’s Memorial Park. She also created the bronze reliefs on the North Country Honors the Mountain Monument at Thompson Park in Watertown.

When she was commissioned to design the 10th Mountain Division’s monument in 1989, the selection committee was unaware of her personal connection to the historic unit. Her father, Ned Grant, was the former secretary-treasurer for Groswold Ski Company in Denver, which provided the wooden skis for the 10th Mountain Division during World War II. She also is a former ski patrol member in Colorado, who taught on-hill first aid and served as secretary of the Geneva Ski Patrol.

Raymond has maintained a connection to numerous World War II veterans and current service members, visited Fort Drum several times for special events and donated historical materials to the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Museum. She is the first civilian inductee into the Hall of Fame.

“It’s wonderful to be back here, it always is,” she said. “And it’s because of those three monuments. They span many years, and there are so many variables with each of them – the purposes, the funding, the teamwork. The division changed a lot, the division saw losses, I had losses, but the one thing that threads through is the generosity behind all these monuments.”

The Military Mountaineers Monument was largely funded by donations from World War II veterans of the 10th Mountain Division, the Fallen Warrior Memorial was funded by the Fort Drum civilian workforce through a monetary award received for garrison excellence, and the North Country Honors the Mountain Monument was funded by the local community – businesses and individuals demonstrating their support for Fort Drum.

“This generosity speaks to the bonds of the community, and it is the reason (these monuments) happened,” she said. “Personally, I’m so grateful to have had the opportunity to push my clay around and stay up late to do this. The more I did for these monuments and the closer I came to Fort Drum, the more awed I was at this community, and the bonds and spirit that bring out the best in people.”

Pleczkowski served as the 10th Mountain Division Support Command chaplain during Operation Enduring Freedom IV. He served nearly 30 years in the U.S. Army Reserves at all levels from battalion chaplain to deputy chief of chaplains, and at every echelon of religious support. He continues to serve as an Army Reserves ambassador, carrying a protocol status equivalent to major general as he conducts strategic outreach.

Pleczkowski continues to build bridges between the military and civilian communities across the nation by seeking support from elected officials, building and sustaining relationships with business and industry, and educating and informing the public about the Army. His ministry and leadership continues to inspire new generations of citizen-Soldiers.

“I was a typical Reserve chaplain, working my one weekend a month, two weeks here and there,” he said.

Pleczkowski was called for a deployment to Iraq with the 1st Cavalry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas, but then he was reassigned to Fort Drum for a deployment to Afghanistan.

“That was a turning point in my chaplaincy and my military career to really understand what ministry as a chaplain is and what being a Soldier is,” Pleczkowski said. “I learned so much.”

He credited several colleagues who taught him what it meant to be a full-time chaplain in a combat environment.

“The 10th Mountain Division patch is special,” he said. “People would take notice of it, and people would comment about it and ask stories. It is a great legacy and a great history. You are amazing Soldiers and an amazing division. I am proud to be a part of it.”

Maj. Gen. (P) Milford H. Beagle Jr., 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum commander, joined Command Sgt. Maj. Nema Mobar, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum senior enlisted adviser, and retired Command Sgt. Maj. James Redmore, president of the 10th Mountain Division Association, to present each recipient with a plaque and certificate.

“In this division, we talk about excellence a lot,” Beagle said. “What does excellence mean? Not only do you meet the standard, but you exceed the standard, consistently. The individuals who we recognize today represent excellence.”

Following the awards presentation, four new members were inducted as Man of the Mountain or Woman of the Mountain. This is an honor bestowed upon civilians who have contributed significantly to the quality of life of Fort Drum Soldiers and families.

Stephen Todd, Jefferson-Lewis BOCES superintendent, has been a steadfast partner and advocate for Fort Drum families and children in the local school districts. With a “Lead by Example” philosophy, he has demonstrated a commitment to supporting military children.

“The people who are being honored here today, I consider heroes, and I would consider myself a humble servant who has been very lucky,” Todd said. “I have worked in school systems that have had the rare joy of being able to interact with a military installation with wonderful people.”

Todd said that many of his colleagues in the state and around the nation find it hard to understand how the civilian-military relationship works.

“They don’t understand the model that we have been able to enjoy here of school and military installation working together seamlessly in service of children and in service of the community,” he said. “It makes all of us better.”

Joseph Butler, a lifelong resident of Watertown, served as its mayor for four years before being appointed as civilian aide to the secretary of the Army (CASA) for New York (North) in 2019. His dedication to Fort Drum Soldiers, family members, retirees and civilian employees was first evident when he served as a member of the Watertown City Council for eight years, and his support and advocacy have grown ever since.

“Being a civilian aide to the secretary of the Army is truly a great privilege and honor,” Butler said. “And it is a great privilege and honor because of the institution I represent, and because I have a front row seat to the greatest division in the U.S. Army.”

As CASA, Butler said he interacts frequently with talented Soldiers and civilians at Fort Drum who represent the best values in America. He said that many deserving individuals have been named Man or Woman of the Mountain, and he is grateful to be among them.

“I may not be as worthy as many who have come before me, but I am as grateful as any and I am as thankful as any,” he said. “This is something I will always cherish.”

James Corriveau served as director of Fort Drum Directorate of Public Works from 2006 until 2015, but his 41-year tenure on the installation began in 1974 as a lieutenant and engineer who arrived at Camp Drum with his wife and son.

Corriveau transitioned to a civil service career at Fort Drum, where he was instrumental in assisting with the $1.4 billion infrastructure expansion on post. He also served as chief of housing for several years and helped to implement the U.S. Army’s Residential Communities Initiative (RCI) at Fort Drum that privatized family housing.

“It was just a phenomenal time, and whatever success I can take credit for was really enabled by the crackerjack team I had around me,” Corriveau said. “I was surrounded by excellence the whole while. Part of the joy in that, for me, was not just the sticks and bricks of building things but knowing that what we did underwrote the success of any operation here on Fort Drum.”

Corriveau continues to support the Fort Drum community through Advocate Drum, and he founded the local chapter of Guitars for Vets, which provides music therapy program for struggling veterans.

“I owe a thanks to the Army and Fort Drum for providing me with over 41 years – it’s been a great run,” he said.

Patricia Cerjan, wife of the late Lt. Gen. Paul Cerjan who was instrumental in the transformation of Fort Drum in the 1980s, was equally vital to the development of the community that thrives today. She is credited with fostering a culture of pride, while establishing a foundation for families living on the Army installation.

Cerjan said that her family first arrived at Pine Camp in 1941. She was 4 years old and played in the snow while her sister attended school in Carthage. Her father, assigned to the 45th Infantry Division, was training on post in preparation for a deployment to Sicily. She would return decades later with her husband to help build “a once in a lifetime dream” called Fort Drum.

“Who gets the opportunity to build a brand new city? How incredible that, once in a lifetime, the Lord puts people together at a specific time, at a specific place with a specific mission,” Cerjan said. “If it hadn’t been the incredible people who were pulled in to that task, with the support of the civilian community, it would have never happened. It was a very historic time.”

Years later, the Cerjan family would return to the area, partly for the recreational opportunities but also to see new developments take shape on post. In 2005, they purchased a summer home in Henderson and kept close with the Fort Drum community.

A day earlier, Cerjan attended the memorialization of the Col. Michael Plummer Gate, which was attended by the late 10th Mountain Division chief of staff’s wife, Miriam.

“I want to be public in thanking Miriam Plummer, who showed military families and civilian families how to nurture children, how to love children and how to set them up for success,” Cerjan said. “I commend her, and I commend this community of helping to love and learn what she had shown over and over again in loving such precious special needs children. And she still carries that on today.”

Cerjan listed the number of people in her family who have served and continue to serve in the military.

“We’re a military and Army family,” she said. “We’re infantry all the way. I haven’t worn the uniform but I love the uniform. And my husband and I loved taking care of Soldiers and families. And you can’t lead Soldiers if you don’t love them. And you all do love them and support them.”

Pictures to support this story can be found here:

www.dvidshub.net/news/428342/fort-drum-inducts-hall-fame-members-honors-man-and-woman-mountain-recipients <http://www.dvidshub.net/news/428342/fort-drum-inducts-hall-fame-members-honors-man-and-woman-mountain-recipients>

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