

Volume 1, Issue 2 Sapper Roundup Newsletter

From

Ernest M. Urquieta President and Rick Leistikow Vice President of the Sapper Association



Message from the President: Hello and welcome to the long overdue edition of the **Sapper Roundup!** As President of the Sapper Association, I'm proud of the work our Board

members do to advance and preserve the Sapper Legacy! As an all-volunteer organization, our Board members work tirelessly to obtain and improve support for annual Sapper events and functions. After the completion of the 18th Annual 2025 LTG (R) Robert B. Flowers Best Sapper Competition, Board members went to work and have begun planning for 2026. In June, Board members held their internal AAR and discussed changes to ensure success of the Association.

Congratulations Team 27, CPT James Mitchiner and 1LT George Madden of the 3rd Ranger Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment on winning the 2025 BSC!



The Sapper Association is coming off our 8th Annual Sapper Rendezvous and supporting the 18th Annual 2025 LTG (R) Robert B. Flowers Best Sapper Competition. This year we celebrated the 40th Anniversary of the Sapper Leader Course and acknowledged a list of those critical to the validation and formation of the course, where over 40 years of extraordinary leaders have been trained and developed. Like any course, the Sapper Leader Course has gone through changes, manning challenges, budget cuts, critical task list revisions, mission changes and several ups and downs, but through it all, Instructors have developed

leaders and quietly turned the Sapper Leader Course into one of the most prestigious small unit courses in the U.S. Army and our military! #SLTW!!



During the 2025 Annual Black Card Muster, key Board Members were vetted, reelected and solidified for the next two to three years. Rick Leistikow, Vice President; Daniel Ochoa, Membership Director; Mike Johnson, Treasure / Partnership Director and Harold Reynolds, Secretary were approved until 2028. Joe Toth and Kevin Golinghorst were appointed as the Association's History Team and will now lead the preservation of Historical Data Initiative. During the Black Card Muster several past and current instructors,

Commanders and First Sergeants provided key input and recommendations for the 2026 Fiscal Budget, Agenda and Membership costs. The Membership costs revisions were immediately instituted and can be found at www.sappersfirst.org. Huge shot out to Victoria Martinez, owner of Tori's Tees for stepping up and executing a remarkable job on short notice. With a month prior to the BSC, Victoria worked tirelessly to fulfill our mission requirements for merchandise in support of the Rendezvous and BSC. We would like to welcome Victoria and Tori's Tees, as our primary merchandise vendor for all Association events and functions, in the Fort Leonard Wood area.

Turnout for the Rendezvous was great, this event makes it possible to connect past, present and future Sapper Instructors, as well as their families. The Vice President, Rick Leistikow who oversees operations led the FLW Team to yet another successful operation. Mike Johnson, Partnership Director did an outstanding job securing partners in support of our mission, the BSC and most importantly offsetting cost for

awards

and recognition. Mike, also coordinated with Glock for an additional weapon system to be raffled off to attendees and gave away door prizes donated by Cabela's Bass Pro Shop in Springfield and numerous other partners. LTG (R) Robert B. Flowers surprised everyone by donating a map case, map and his Two-Star flag to the Sapper Leader Course. The Association will pay to have these items encased professionally, so the SLC can display it for all Sappers to see!

The Board once again came together from multiple States to create a welcoming environment for all those attending the Rendezvous. Daniel Ochoa, Membership Director, has done an extraordinary job ensuring membership cards and certificates are mailed out within 24 hours after joining; Bill Rostad, Event Coordinator, ensured the St. Robert Community Center and our vendor position at the park was reserved in support of our mission; our Historian Team was able to display a timeline and framework of the SLC since its inception, while simultaneously coordinating videotaped interviews of past and present instructors. If you would like to contribute to our Historical Initiative

Please contact tothlkf@outlook.com or kevin.golinghorst@gmail.com for further details.



Because of our key supporters, members and partners, we were able to provide excellent support for the Best Sapper Competition, providing

numerous awards, mission essential equipment for lanes, food and drinks for cadre and support staff on lanes. The winners of the 18th Annual LTG (R) Robert B. Flowers Best Sapper Competition are from the 75th Ranger Regiment, CPT James Mitchiner and 1LT George Madden received custom made AR-15s from Archangel Guns, Jeremy Jones; 2nd Place received Glock pistols from Glock Inc., and 3rd Place received 9mm pistols from Springfield Armory, in Springfield, Missouri. As part of our support, we also recognized teams 4 thru 10th place with a Sapper Kit bag in recognition of their accomplishments.

This year's financial contributions for the 8th Annual Sapper Rendezvous, Fifteen Sapper Leader Course Classes and support the Best Sapper Competition was upward of \$65k in awards, material, equipment, food, beverages and venues. Our contributions were made possible through Mike Johnson and our team's tenacity and professionalism securing partners to donate monies and gifts to offset the cost for the Association and its members.

Throughout the year we provide the Harold A. Reynolds, Leadership Award and the Jon R. Stanley, Academic Award for the 30 recipients selected by their peers and instructors of the Sapper Leader Course.



Pictured above: COL (R) Kevin Golinghorst, LTC William Boyd, COL Anthony Barbina and COL Scott Preston.

Memberships continue to grow. Currently we have the following: BC- 121 former Instructor, CDRs, 1SGs; RC- 258 graduates of the SLC; WC- 13 specifically for family members to support and contribute on an annual basis; Hall of Fame- 6; for a total of 396 Members!

This is your Legacy, our mission! In the month of July 2025, we welcomed 14 new members to the Association including 1LT Aron Carrow, XO and SFC Estevan Garcia, of the SLC.

Merchandise, our primary vendor for the Fort Leonard Wood area is Tori's Tees, owned by Victoria Martinez. St. Robert, Missouri and Torri's Tees primary focus will be all local Sapper Association events and functions and Grammy J's, owned by Pat Johnson, providing her unique glass etching in support of the Associations merchandise mission.

Since the inception of the Sapper Association we have been able to create, obtain and accomplish the following: historical preservation, improved awards for the BSC, improved awards for Instructors, improved awards for students, Cubs of Sapper's Initiative, Corporate partnerships, continue the Annual Sapper Rendezvous, Community Service Outreach, Community Special Projects, Economical Membership Fees, Sapper Merchandise, multiple social media platforms, website www.sappersfirst.org, serve as the primary supporting effort for the BSC and highlight past/present Sapper's. This is not all inclusive and we'll continue to develop lines of effort, improve our messaging and marketing in support of the Association and Sapper Leader Courses mission.

Because of our team's effort we have increased vendor participation during the BSC and brought in numerous partners such as [Glock](#), [Springfield Armory](#), [Old Glory Forge](#) in order to provide weapon systems to the top three teams and substance support for the BSC from TKs pizza, Dominos, Jersey Mikes, Vidi's and Grellner's to name a few.

The Association continues to position itself to support and serve Sappers and with our dedicated all volunteer staff we continue to improve awards for the Best Sapper Competitors and our support for the Sapper Leader Course itself!

As President, it's an honor to continue to give back to Sappers with our all-volunteer team of professionals, who continue to steward the profession. We're honored to represent Sapper's, Instructors and our Legacy. And because of our members, partners and donors, we'll continue to Make A Difference and accomplish our mission.

Final note, if you're not a member join now, because you're proud to steward the profession! There are no gifts, individual accolades or agendas, only the prestige of being a Sapper!

I'd also be remised if I did not thank the Sapper Instructors and Sapper Leader Command Team for their continued support and exceptional mission accomplishment! Their sacrifice, does not go unnoticed and we are grateful for their contributions in preparing a highly qualified Sapper and force multiplier to the Maneuver Commander and Joint Forces.

Thank you for all the support!
Ernest M. Urquieta
Sapper Association
President
Sappers Lead the Way!



COL (R) Golinghorst (Historian); 1SG (R) Daniel Ochoa and CSM (R) Harold "HRK" Reynolds.



LTG (R) Robert B. Flowers opens up the 2025 BSC with words of encouragement.