

# 10TH MOUNTAIN LIFE

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## Symbol of grit returns

### 10th Mountain Division to wear crossed ski insignia

By MAJ. GEOFFREY CARMICHAEL  
10th Mountain Division

Soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division can once again don the division's historic crossed ski insignia on their Army Green Service Uniform garrison caps, restoring a visual link to the unit's World War II roots and reinforcing the Alpine spirit that resonates across the formation.

The insignia was first adopted in 1943, when the Army created the 10th Mountain Division as a specialized alpine force. The symbol represented the unit's ability to fight in harsh winter conditions and rugged mountain terrain. Today, leaders say bringing the emblem back to everyday uniform wear honors that legacy while reminding Soldiers of the division's high standards.

Maj. Gen. Scott Naumann, commanding general of the 10th Mountain Division, said the decision carries real meaning for the force. "The crossed skis are more than a symbol from our past," Naumann said. "They represent the toughness, adaptability and spirit that define this division. Seeing them



**Sgt. Maj. Daniel Brooks, 10th Mountain Division command career counselor, dons the newly recognized ski trooper insignia on his Army garrison cap. Never officially recognized, this insignia was commonly worn in place of branch insignia and was custom manufactured by local civilians at the expense of individual 10th Mountain soldiers while at Camp Hale, Colorado, during their time there preceding their deployment to the Italian Alps during WWII, and was officially authorized for wear by Maj. Gen. Scott Naumann in an effort to represent and preserve the heritage and legacy of the 10th Mountain Division.** U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Sam Shomento

on our Soldiers' caps connects who we are today with the mountaineers who built our reputation."

The division's origins trace back to Camp Hale, Colorado, where Soldiers trained on steep slopes, icy ridgelines, and snow covered trails before deploying to Italy. Their assault on Riva Ridge and the breakthrough of the German Gothic Line became defining moments in U.S. military history. Although today's 10th Mountain

Division no longer fights on skis, its mission as a rapidly deployable light infantry force still demands the same warrior spirit, readiness, and grit.

Command Sgt. Maj. Brett Johnson, the division's senior enlisted leader, said the return of the insignia helps reinforce that identity. "When a Soldier puts on that cap and sees the crossed skis, it's a reminder of the legacy they're part of," Johnson said. "It tells them, 'You belong to a division known

for going where others dare not go, and you're expected to carry that forward."

Leaders say the change not only strengthens esprit de corps but ensures that the division's heritage remains visible in modern formations. For those across the formation, the crossed skis serve as a proud reminder of the unit's identity and the generations who shaped it.



**Above: Sgt. Maj. Daniel Brooks holds his garrison cap displaying newly recognized ski trooper insignia.**

**Left: Soldiers assigned to 10th Mountain Division traverse the Chilean Andes.** U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Sam Shomento

## Human performance programs recognized for excellence at symposium

By HUNTER RHOADES  
U.S. Army Center for Initial Military Training

Leaders from the Department of the War convened at the Hampton Roads Convention Center for the annual Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F) Symposium, held May 12-14. The event brought together experts from the five readiness domains, Army senior leaders, industry, and academia to share lessons learned and best practices for enhancing warfighter readiness.

"H2F is transforming the way our warfighters are prepared to dominate the modern battlefield," said Lt. Gen. David Francis, the Army's Proponent for H2F. "As we see in the current operational environment, the battlefield is rapidly evolving, and the subject matter expertise within our H2F teams is evolving to ensure our warfighters are prepared to meet the needs of the battlefield at a moment's notice".

The "Best-in-Class" H2F awards recognize excellence in the design, implementation, and execution of H2F Performance Team initiatives across the Army. These awards honor teams that demonstrate measurable impact on Soldier readiness and lethality, while supporting brigade commanders' objectives and the Army's strategic priorities.

This year, the Army's Proponent for H2F recognized five outstanding H2F teams in the categories of Physical, Non-Physical, Interdisciplinary, Army National Guard, and U.S. Army Reserve.

The 2026 H2F "Best in Class" program winners include:

**Best in Class for the Physical Domain: 1st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 11th Airborne Division, Fairbanks, Alaska, and their innovative Wolf Recovery Program.**

The "Wolf Recovery" initiative prioritized integrating Soldiers who return from an exercise, deployment,



**Members of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, accept an award presented by Command Sgt. Maj. Michael McMurdy, far right, for "Best in Class for the Non-Physical Domain" at the 2026 Holistic Health and Fitness Symposium (H2F) at the Hampton Roads Convention Center in Virginia on May 13-14. The award recognizes their Performance Under Pressure Protocol (PUP2) initiative which is focused on preparing soldiers for the rigors of the U.S. Army's Air Assault School and the high failure rate of the phase II sling load hands-on examination.**

Photo courtesy of Christopher Jones

or rotation by mandating that each warfighter who spent over two weeks forward, participate in a standardized 90-minute session incorporating all five domains of the H2F System. This 90-minute session provides immediate, actionable feedback to subject matter experts within the H2F Team, enabling them to provide key insights to the Brigade command team on the readiness of their formation post-exercise. During the Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center (JPMRC) 26-02 recovery, H2F

personnel conducted 149 on-the-spot injury evaluations, expediting the typical 7-10 day access-to-care delay and keeping soldiers with their units. Within one week, leaders across the Brigade received an anonymized roll-up of their survey data, providing actionable insights down to the platoon level into their formation's holistic status and well-being.

"I am exceptionally proud of our Brigade's H2F team. They've proven that the most important aspect of building a strong H2F program is to

build strong relationships with the chain of command", said 1st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, commander, Col. Christopher Brawley. "I speak to our Brigade H2F Director, Dr. Elsie Van Luit, multiple times every day. She understands my intent and translates it into results. I could not be prouder of what our H2F team has accomplished and I'm grateful for the Army's recognition. It's great to see their hard work and commitment to our soldiers recognized. The Army is recognizing what we already know:

We have the best H2F team in the Army."

**Best in Class for the Non-Physical Domain: 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, New York, and their Performance Under Pressure Protocol (PUP2).**

The PUP2 initiative is focused on preparing Soldiers for the rigors of the U.S. Army's Air Assault School and the high failure rate of the phase II sling load hands-on examination. The course's cadre noticed that candidates were falling apart mentally, panicking, and losing composure during the hands-on examination, leading to both high first-time failure rates and high overall no-goes. To address this, the cognitive performance specialist within the H2F team developed a workshop for Soldiers who were slated to attend Air Assault school and outlined what performance anxiety is and how to combat it. The workshop included three deliberate practice sessions. As a result, the cadre saw a 50% reduction in first-time failure rate and a noticeable decrease in candidate mental shutdowns during the examination process.

"The 10thCAB's mission demands absolute precision under the most unforgiving conditions. The PUP2 program is critical to our readiness because it equips our Soldiers with the skills necessary to conquer performance anxiety, whether in the sling-load yard at Air Assault School or in the aircraft on mission", said Col. Jesse Blanton, commander 10th Combat Aviation Brigade. "By integrating specialized mental conditioning directly into our training pipelines, our H2F team has proven cognitive performance can be deliberately trained, just like marksmanship or physical fitness. The long-term goal is for every Soldier to carry this cognitive agility forward throughout their career."