

# FRONTLINE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE FINEST!

Vol. 1 No. 2

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PUBLISHED BY THE  
**FINEST**  
A G.I. JOE COSTUME CLUB



# WELCOME TO FRONTLINE

**Welcome to Frontline – the official magazine of The Finest: A G.I. Joe Costume Club!**

**Produced every now and then by our Public Relations staff and approved by the Command Staff, the goal of Frontline is to keep you informed of all the comings and goings of the Finest as we continue our bid for world domination! In these pages, you will find breaking news, articles on club activities, upcoming events, resources for current and aspiring members, as well as important tips and facts. Occasionally, you might even find yourself entertained.**

The first issue of Frontline was a resounding success! Thanks to all our members and the general public for the feedback, shares, and content ideas for future issues! You won't be disappointed!

There is SO MUCH going on with this club, all the time, and it's difficult to grasp exactly how much is happening until you see it conveniently collected in one place. That was my reaction to the first issue, and my hope is that Frontline successfully captures all the amazing things going on with the Finest (trust me – it's no easy feat)!

OPERATION YORKTOWN 4 in Charleston, SC was a blast! From the amazing costumes, to the pool parties, cookouts, and after-hours shenanigans, Yorktown never disappoints! Come out in 2019 and join the festivities!

On the first Saturday of May, our members worldwide helped celebrate Free Comic Book Day at comic shops in Ireland, Michigan, Georgia, the Midwest, west coast, and all points in between! We hope you were able to round up the family, head to your local comic shop, and support small businesses!

Ready or not, JoeCon is less than 50 days away! All eyes are on Chattanooga, TN as the annual G.I. Joe Collectors' Convention rolls into town (June 21-24). Whether you're a con veteran or a first-timer, JoeCon can be a lot to process and we field many questions each year. Don't miss Outback's JoeCon Survival Guide in this issue to help you prepare for the upcoming mission!

As a reminder, we are constantly looking for ideas and content. If you would like to submit a write-up for publication, whether it's a multi-page feature article or just a few sentences re-capping your latest costume build, be sure to drop us a line!

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### ON THE COVER

**COSTUMER** Missouri member Chris R. as Snake Eyes

**PHOTO** Chris Dorsey

## MISSION DEBRIEF: OPERATION YORKTOWN 4

**By Justin S. (CO, 31st Carrier Assault Brigade)**

On April 13, Finest members from across the U.S. descended upon Charleston, SC for OPERATION YORKTOWN 4, an epic photoshoot onboard the USS Yorktown and surrounding areas.

For those that may be new to the club or may not know, OPERATION YORKTOWN is an annual event hosted by the Finest at Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum – an amazing venue consisting of a 4-part walkthrough experience.

The first area is a full mockup of a Vietnam support base complete with guard tower, buildings, walkways, and various era-specific vehicles. The other three exhibits are docked in the bay nearby, and consist of the USS CLAMAGORE, a Balao-class submarine built in 1945; the Allen M. Sumner-class USS LAFFEY, which served in WWII; and the crown jewel, the USS YORKTOWN, a massive Essex-class aircraft carrier.

Every year during the spring (usually March or April), Finest members and other G.I. Joe costumers gather in Charleston for a weekend-long vacation/get-together/MASSIVE photoshoot both at the base and aboard the three vessels. The event spans several days, depending on events, with group housing handled by Southern Command members Rebecca H. and Noel W., in the aptly-named “Finest House”. Here, we also celebrated the birthdays of several of our members whose birthdays fall closely together. Rebecca and Noel also supplied dinner and breakfast for the 24+ members staying at the house, and it was delicious!



The photoshoot was managed by the leadership of our Carolina garrison, the 31<sup>st</sup> Carrier Assault Brigade, and took place on Friday, April 13. Following a safety brief with one of the managers at Patriots Point, we proceeded to the Vietnam support base for the first part of our shoot. After breaking for lunch (because fighting Cobras is hard work!) we proceeded to the Yorktown, where Joe and Cobra characters participated in an all-out brawl for the M.A.S.S. Device elements (awesome props supplied by Virginia member Tom W.)!

I'm thrilled to say that each year, more and more people show up from across the country to take part. The last headcount was 40 costumers present for the shoot, nearly a dozen more than last year! The 2018 distance award goes to Kansas member Kantis N. of the 234<sup>th</sup> Tigerhawks, who traveled nearly 1,300 miles from Wichita!

This year was also special in that we held our first ever beach night shoot, dubbed the "Night Force Beach Op". Here, several members of the group debuted new Night Force-themed costumes at the beach, complete with colored spotlights supplied by Stephen R.

Special thanks to my XO Lance L., who helped spearhead the shoot at Patriots Point; Candice D. for securing additional photographers; Rebeccah and Noel for securing an amazing beach-house for many of our members; Stephen R. for bringing the lights for the Night Force Op; Kantis N. for bringing his 360-degree camera for one of the coolest shots aboard the Yorktown; Tom W. for supplying the sweet Cobra briefcase containing the M.A.S.S. elements; and our dedicated Photo-Vipers Johnny K. and Chuck P., as well as everyone else with a phone, camera, or iPad that snapped photos of this awesome event!

Lance and I are already working on ideas for 2019, and I can't wait to see how many people we get next time. For now, I hope everyone has an awesome and blessed day, and I look forward to seeing all of you who are able next year... at OPERATION: YORKTOWN 5!



*"Operation Yorktown 4 was dedicated to the memory of Justin Alan Jensen: devoted Husband, Father, Soldier, and Man of God... Rest in Peace Brother. Yo Joe."*

# A VISIT TO K9S FOR WARRIORS!

By Kyle S. (CO, Task Force 27)

Last month, Task Force 27, the Florida garrison of the Finest, was honored to visit the headquarters of K9s For Warriors to deliver the proceeds raised by the Finest 2017 charity campaign.

Based in Ponte Vedra, Florida, the K9s For Warriors facility is found in a tranquil area, perfect for the training and healing that takes place there. Each month, a class of up to 12 veterans who suffer from PTSD and injury come to take part in a three-week training course in which they are paired with a service animal. This three-week course is where the dogs and veterans train together and bond. Everything, including the land itself was donated to this non-profit organization, and it is a beautiful location where these veterans begin their journey with their new partner.

The volunteers are all friendly faces who are there to help these veterans, as this is a place of comfort and healing. Not a stuffy classroom, the facility feels more like a vacation home where veterans spend all their time bonding with their provided service dog as they learn to be partners. Along with touring the facility, we learned so much about the program and all they do.



K9s for Warriors has paired more than 400 veterans with service dogs, and it has rescued more than 800 dogs from kill shelters. Even if a dog rescued does not work out with the program, they will make sure to find it a loving home. Despite all their efforts though, it's not enough as there is a more than 15-month waiting list for veterans to get a service dog, and K9s For Warriors is hoping to reduce this and it is with the help of donors and charity that they are growing, with a new facility near Gainesville, Florida to open in the near future!



## NOW YOU KNOW...

From [www.k9sforwarriors.org](http://www.k9sforwarriors.org)

*K9s For Warriors is the nation's largest provider of service dogs to military veterans suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Disability, traumatic brain injury and/or military sexual trauma as a result of military service post-9/11. Our program is unique, and no other organization operates quite like K9s For Warriors. Every warrior that walks through the door is family. We provide them with a service canine, equipment, training, certification, seminars, legal instruction, vet care, housing, home cooked meals, unconditional love and listening, and life-time of wrap-around services (including available life-long healthcare and food for their dogs). The K9s program is 100% free for the veteran. We have our warriors' backs.*

To visit is an emotional experience and truly reinforces our zeal to support this organization, and that all we do is so worth it. We are happy that we can in some way do our part to help this wonderful organization!

**PROUD SUPPORTER OF**  
  
**K9S FOR WARRIORS**

**OVER \$50,000 RAISED!**

As of March 2018, the Finest has raised more than \$50,000, with all proceeds donated to military and veteran charities!

2014:	\$10,250 raised	(proceeds donated to the Wounded Warrior Project)
2015:	\$9,550 raised	(proceeds donated to the USO)
2016:	\$11,583 raised	(proceeds donated to K9s For Warriors)
2017:	\$16,665 raised	(proceeds donated to K9s For Warriors)
2018:	\$3,700 (approx.) raised in Q1	(proceeds to be donated to K9s For Warriors)
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$50,000+</b>	

**THANK YOU!**



# JOECON 2018 SURVIVAL GUIDE

***Yo Joes! Outback here! I've been in some hairy situations, from Rocky Mountain cliffs, to escaping the gulags of Borovia, but navigating JoeCon each year may be my toughest challenge! Here's everything you need to SURVIVE JoeCon 2018!***

The 2018 GI Joe Collectors' Convention is coming to Chattanooga, TN! You will not want to miss the 25th Anniversary celebrating our most beloved action figure! This fantastic family event will take place at the Chattanooga Convention Center June 21-24, 2018. No matter if you collect 3 3/4", 12", vintage or modern figures, you owe it to yourself to attend the very last G.I. Joe Collectors' Convention produced by the G.I. Joe Collectors' Club!



## HIGHLIGHTS

Whether you have attended every convention or if this is your first one, you need to be at this celebration of all things G.I. Joe! Here's what you'll experience at the show...

**Special Guests:** meet and talk to **Kirk Bozigian**, 1980's G.I. Joe Marketing Manager and **Larry Hama**, the original and most prolific writer for the G.I. Joe Real American Hero Comic series. More guests have been added, including designers Kurt Groen and David Kunitz!

**Panels and Seminars:** led by special guests and experts in the G.I. Joe community. These presentations will totally immerse you in all things G.I. Joe. Learn inside information, hear special guests, watch demonstrations and more!



**Sales Room:** featuring over 200 tables of G.I. Joe merchandise for sale. There are thousands of items each year that trade hands at this GIJoeCon focal point.

**Parachute Drop:** featuring 300 G.I. Joes! Friday morning, join us for another special parachute figure drop event! Watch the fun as the 3 3/4" action figures parachute from 10 stories up!

**G.I. Joe Filmfest** - featuring "The Best of the Best". Come watch some of the best features from past conventions.

**Contests:** demonstrating the incredible skills of G.I. Joe craftsmen everywhere. Start designing your entries today as you could be a big winner in one of the five different GIJoeCon contests. G.I. Joe Customizing Class- a fantastic opportunity to learn about customizing your 3 3/4" figures. Not only will you learn how to customize, attendees will also build their own custom figure with parts made just for this show (extra charge).

**Pre-Convention tours** are the best! Join your fellow convention attendees for two fun filled days of tours in the Chattanooga area (extra charge).

**Room-to-Room Trading:** provides collectors with a chance to swap, buy and sell items from their personal collections in the evenings after the Exhibit Hall is closed. Do you have just a few extras you want to swap? This is your chance to trade with other collectors.

**Casino Night Awards Dinner and Auction:** the culmination of our weekend celebration with a dinner, costume contest and fabulous auction items. This is a terrific evening with great food, fun and camaraderie you won't forget!

**The Last Panel:** will be the final panel of this 25 year run. Plan to stay for this Sunday afternoon event that will be a walk down memory lane with photos from every Hasbro International G.I. Joe Convention and narration from the G.I. Joe Collectors' Club Staff.

## IN-DEPTH

### WEDNESDAY: Lookout Mountain and Battlefield Tour

For many, the festivities will begin on Wednesday, June 25<sup>th</sup> (7:30am – 5pm) as the first pre-convention tour kicks off with the Lookout Mountain and Battlefield Tour! Join us for an amazing day in the Chattanooga area. First we will depart for the Chickamauga Battlefield to learn about the Civil War battles for control of the area. We will visit the museum (which has a world class rifle collection) and then depart with a National Park Service Ranger for a driving tour of the battlefield. Next, we will go to Rock City for lunch on your own and touring of this famous southern tourist attraction! Rock City is a true marvel of nature featuring massive ancient rock formations, gardens with over 400 native plant species, and breathtaking "See 7 States" panoramic views. We will end the day at Ruby Falls for a guided tour to see the magnificent 145-foot underground waterfall. We will arrive back at the hotel between 4:30-5 PM. Adults: \$95 Youth 3-12 \$75.



## PRO TIPS

### Don't miss:

- FRIDAY Morning: parachute drop (open to everyone)
- FRIDAY Night: Finest social meetup at the hotel bar (open to everyone)



### THURSDAY: Downtown Chattanooga Tour

The second tour commences on Thursday, June 21, (9:00am – 5pm). We will depart at 9:15 on the downtown electric shuttles for our 10am entrance at the Tennessee Aquarium. Your ticket allows reentry for the entire day. Come see for yourself why visitors rate the Tennessee Aquarium the best aquarium in America for overall guest satisfaction. You will tour the aquarium at your own pace but be sure to be at the Southern Belle Riverboat (6-7 minute walk) by 11:20 for our 11:30 Lunch (included) Cruise down the Tennessee River. Enjoy picture perfect views of Lookout Mountain and all the beautiful nature this great city has to offer! We will

be back at the pier at 1:30 so stop back at the aquarium or visit the other downtown attractions. Be sure to take the electric shuttle (about 25 minutes) to the Songbirds Guitar Museum for our 2:50 check-in. We will have guided tours of this fantastic museum that will teach and inspire as you embark on a remarkable journey through the history of the guitar and its impact on pop culture. Your tour will conclude by 4:30 where you can take the 15 minute walk back to the Chattanooga Convention Center. Electric shuttles depart approximately every 7 minutes from each station downtown. Adults: \$95 Youth 3-12 \$75.

### WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY: Customizing Classes

Not going on a tour and want to learn how to customize your G.I. Joe figures? This year, JoeCon has two classes (same each day). With the help of John Russell, learn how to create a custom figure using parts that have been created just for your class! In addition, Bobby Vala (Hasbro Designer) will be assisting with the class! Don't miss spending time one-on-one with him! Class is limited to 50 participants per day. You can only sign up for one class. Cost is \$90.

Order an exclusive package set? Package pick-up is Wednesday or Thursday night, depending on your tour/class selection. Be the first to own the 2018 JoeCon exclusives!

### FRIDAY

Friday morning kicks off with the infamous figure Parachute Drop- featuring 300 G.I. Joes! Watch the fun as the 3 3/4" action figures parachute from 10 stories up! This event is open to everyone! Don't miss the G.I. Joe Filmfest and other panels, as well as the preview opening of the dealer hall!

On Friday night, the annual Finest social takes place at the hotel bar! Part reunion, part meet & greet, and all fun, the social is open to everyone and we hope to see you there!



### SATURDAY

On Saturday, the dealer room opens and panels run throughout the day. Seek out that missing figure, filecard, or vehicle to complete your collection, and lose yourself digging through parts bins! Also be sure to stop by the Finest booth where our members will be busy raising money for K9s For Warriors! Help us shatter last year's record of raising \$1,000!

On Saturday night, the Casino Night Awards Dinner and Auction is back! Featuring casino games, costume contests with casino night point prizes and our annual rare item auction using your winnings from the evening! This truly will be a fun and memorable event. Evening attire is business casual or your favorite costume for the contest! Remember, this event is not open to General Admission ticket-holders!

### SUNDAY

Catch all those last-day sales in the dealer room, and be sure not to miss the last JoeCon panel, which is sure to be an emotional event as we remember the last 25 years of JoeCon! The Last Panel will be the final panel of this 25 year run. Plan to stay for this Sunday afternoon event that will be a walk down memory lane with photos from every Hasbro International G.I. Joe Convention and narration from the G.I. Joe Collectors' Club Staff. Bring your tissue boxes!

For hotel info, admission packages, and more, please check: <http://www.gijoecon.com/tn2018/index.cfm>.

## See you in CHATTANOOGA!

### NOW YOU KNOW...

At JoeCon 2017, The Finest set a new club single-event fundraising record in Orlando, Florida by raising a whopping \$1,000 at our booth throughout the weekend!

Our JoeCon 2018 goal is to raise more than **\$1,000**, and we'll need your help to do it!



# IN THE LIFE OF A COBRA TROOPER

## Impressions of a somewhat new Finest member

**By Dan N. (aka, Central Ohio Trooper)**

I have been going to various gaming and popular culture conventions for quite a while, and I was always struck by the creativity and enthusiasm that people put into their cosplay. I debated doing a cosplay costume myself for a couple of years, but I was always held back by the fact that I am not very good with crafts (which is a euphemistic way to say that I am clumsy and have no artistic ability). At one point, I even considered getting one of those white suits of armor from a galaxy far, far away, but dismissed the idea because I was sure that I would ruin the kit.

I stumbled upon The Finest one day while browsing various social media sites for costume ideas, and I immediately knew that I was going to try for membership. After spending a few weeks gathering together gear and aggravating my mother-in-law to do some sewing for me, I was ready to reveal my Cobra Trooper to the world. I had my wife take a few pictures in my garage with handy heavy metal poster backdrops for additional flavor and sent them in to recruitment. After a few days, I received an acceptance letter, and it was full steam ahead from there.



My very first troop was a small anime convention in my hometown with J. Bohanan; or, as my wife refers to him 'the Giant Viper.' That was quickly followed by another convention in Indianapolis where I met our new CDFE CO Ryan B. and J. Bishop. What followed was a whirlwind year of photoshoots, 35 conventions in six states, and a lot of new friends. I have even started to get to know some of the vendors and artists that I see frequently at conventions.

Every member of the Finest I have met has been nothing but cordial and supportive, even though my own social skills are a match for my costume. It still amazes me when I see a Finest member pull off an amazing costume, not that I doubt their ability, just that I could never hope to do something similar. I had heard dark and evil tales of costume group snobbery in hushed whispers while trooping, but I saw none of this in The Finest. I have also started work on my next two (obviously not for The Finest) costumes (A Matter of Life and Death Eddie the Head, and Countdown to Extinction Vic Rattlehead) which I never would have considered without the help and encouragement of Finest members.

Finally, I love the charity aspect of the group. I come from a military family, so the fact that The Finest has been working with military charities for years was like red crystal for my M.A.S.S. device. K9s for Warriors is, in my opinion, the perfect charity because not only are you helping a veteran, you are also helping a dog. I have had a lot of fun in the past year and a half, and I look forward to a lot more.

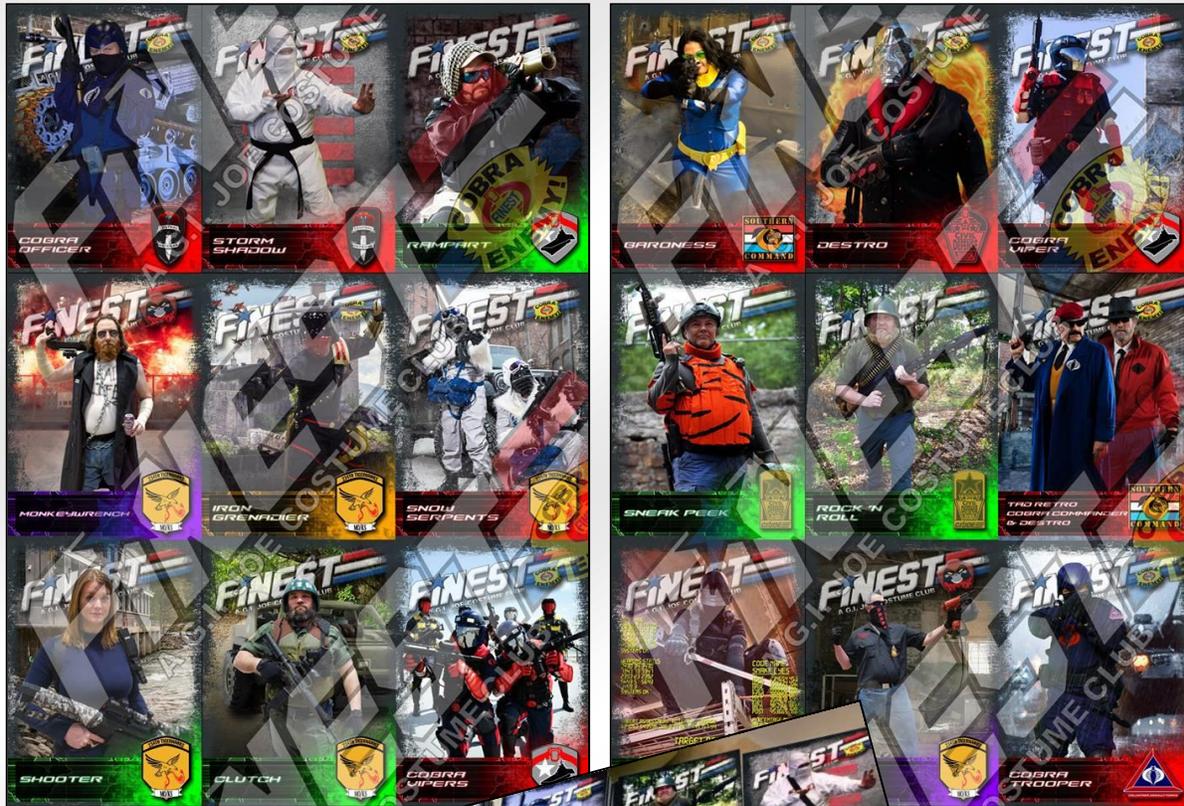
***Since joining the Finest, Central Ohio Trooper Dan N. has had a wild ride. Follow his adventures at "Central Ohio Trooper" on social media (@centralohiotrooper)***

# INTELLIGENCE REPORTS

The news you need, when you need it!

## FINEST SERIES 3 TRADING CARDS ARE HERE!

The third series of Finest member trading cards are here! This set includes 36 all-new trading cards! With the addition of Series 3, there are now 117 official Finest trading cards plus two special chase cards! Find our members at conventions and events worldwide to begin assembling your set, and be sure to check out our annual online fundraising campaigns for your chance to donate for a complete set! Pro-tip: complete sets are rare, but a complete *autographed* set is nearly impossible! Who will be the first?



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: MIKE R. (VA)

Congratulations to Virginia member Mike R. for being featured as our latest member spotlight!

Representing the Capital Defense Regiment, Mike first crossed paths with The Finest at AwesomeCon in Washington, DC in 2015. He was a lifelong GI Joe fan and was already sporting an awesome Bazooka costume. Since then, Mike has been a staple of the CDR and a frequent attendee of many club-wide events.

In 2017, Mike helped set up the CDR's first OPERATION BIVOUAC, the garrison's annual camping trip. He has also been a positive member, always happy to lend a hand to his Finest family. Mike holds the distinction of having the only Strato-Viper costume in the club, among Low Light (V3), Beachhead, and many others.

Most recently, his desire to help his fellow members has manifested by working on designing and producing small runs of custom patches for designs which may not exist in any other form. For all he does, we salute Mike, aka, "the Czar."



## JOIN THE FINEST FORUMS TODAY!

Been to the Finest Forums lately? Working on an epic costume, or just want to share your love for GI Joe with other fans? Finest Forums are open to everyone! Head to [www.theFinestCC.com](http://www.theFinestCC.com), sign-up, and join the community!

The Battle Field			
Forum	Topics	Posts	Last post
Getting Started - Read This First How to get up and running. What to read, mistakes to avoid, resources...	1	1	Thu Jan 15, 2015 11:19 pm Mindbender
Sound Off! Whether new to the Finest, or already a member, all are encouraged to post an introduction here.	246	2126	Fri Jan 27, 2017 7:03 pm Builder13
GI Joe/Cobra General Discussion Discuss anything related to GI Joe or Cobra not covered in other forums	74	967	Mon Jan 30, 2017 1:45 pm wjay
Off-Topic Forum Everything not related to GI Joe or costuming	52	451	Tue Jan 17, 2017 1:26 pm wjay

Costumes			
Forum	Topics	Posts	Last post
Field Manuals A collection of The Finest's costume visual guides.	6	6	Sat Aug 27, 2016 10:10 am GIJoeEternal
Costumes, Props & Armor From armor to weapons to uniforms, get your costuming fix here	188	2417	Mon Jan 30, 2017 11:15 pm VfSniper
Costume Showcase Post pictures of your FINISHED costumes for feedback and praise	41	358	Sat Jan 14, 2017 10:07 pm Hobby Viper
Other Uniforms Non GI Joe and Cobra Costumes	22	181	Tue Jan 24, 2017 9:40 pm Gruut
Quartermaster Looking to sell or trade items?	17	104	Mon Jan 30, 2017 11:15 pm NegativeEleven

## ARTIST SHOUTOUT !

Shoutout to artist Corey Landis for the awesome custom art he has produced for our Central Defense: Fighting Fifth garrison!

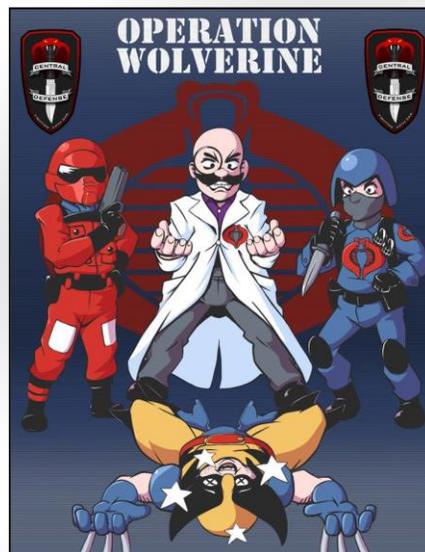
Corey is an independent artist that specializes in pop culture art such as The Transformers, The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and Swat Kats. He has helped the Finest by producing the McGuffin Device style 'Operation Wolverine' fliers which were passed out by CDFF to convention-goers at Grand Rapids Comic Convention. He is currently working on the art for CDFF's retro tin lunch boxes, which will surely be a hit!

The Finest thanks Corey for his awesome contributions! Be sure to check out his sites!

<https://coreylandis.deviantart.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/SkitterpunkHellsprite>

<http://deathortoise.tumblr.com/>



## CRIMSON GUARD/IRON GRENADIER SHOWDOWN IN PHILLY!

There were plenty of epic GI Joe-themed costumes on display at the Great Philadelphia Comic Con (April 27-29, 2018), and one highlight was the confrontation between Cobra Commander's elite Crimson Guard and Destro's dreaded Iron Grenadiers! Choose your side!



# AROUND THE HORN

Finest Squads and Garrisons are always on the move! Here are some reports from the field!

## 31st CARRIER ASSAULT BRIGADE (NC/SC)

After the recent success of OPERATION YORKTOWN 4 last month, we're looking into extending the Yorktown experience to provide even more photoshoot opportunities in the coming years. STAY TUNED!!!

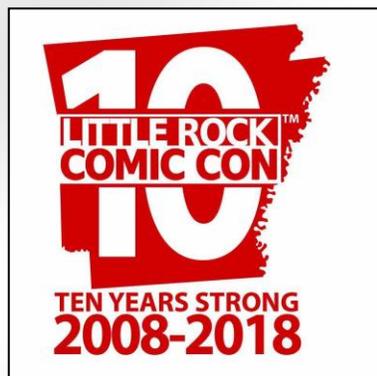
Also, we are looking into expanding our convention coverage to cons in the NC/SC areas starting this year. More on that as details become available! We are also working on getting a patch run for our garrison together (we have had a lot of folks asking about that).



## 234th TIGERHAWKS (KS/MO)

Some members of the 234th Tigerhawk Garrison will be maneuvering south to discover & meet G.I. Joe fans in Arkansas. For those in that area, the Little Rock ComicCon is coming up on May 19th and 20th, be sure to come by the Finest booth to get a picture and talk G.I. Joe with our members.

Congrats to 234th member Kantis N. for winning the Operation Yorktown 2018 Distance Award! He traveled nearly 1,300 miles to Charleston, SC from Wichita, Kansas to join in on the Operation Yorktown festivities!



## CAPITAL DEFENSE REGIMENT (DE/DC/VA/MD/WV)

April marked the Capital Defense Regiment's 4th year exhibiting at Washington, DC's largest pop culture convention, Awesome Con. CDR had a varied representation of characters from the franchise, from Tiger Force all the way to The Finest's very first Gyro-Viper, by Maryland member Steven S.! When all was said and done, the garrison raised over \$500 at AwesomeCon for our charity efforts!

After our joint invasion of the Great Philadelphia Comic Con in late April along with members of the 13<sup>th</sup> Civil Defense, the next event on the CDR schedule is our annual camping trip, OPERATION BIVOUAC II. Last year, the garrison organized our first OPERATION BIVOUAC, a photoshoot/camping trip which was a huge success for all those who attended. Members built and brought props (such as a bivouac), simulated jungle ops, and even had a Viper perform recon in the river! After photos were done, cooking and hanging out by the campfire ensued until the wee hours of the night. This year CDR hopes to outdo themselves with OPERATION BIVOUAC II in rural Virginia on May 19.



## CENTRAL DEFENSE: THE FIGHTING FIFTH (IL/IN/OH/MI)



It's already been a busy spring for CDFF! After members attended C2E2 in Chicago at the start of April, it was back to the fundraising trail at Out of this World Festival in Columbus, Ohio. This was followed the next week by tabling at Tulip City Comic and Toy Fare in Holland, MI, the second ever CDFF event in the Great Lake state. That momentum was carried forward when Indiana was added into the mix! On Free Comic Book Day, CDFF members performed a tri-state operation, tabling at comic book stores across the region. BC Comix in Battle Creek, MI, Hometown Comics in Greenfield, IN, and Skylarks Toys and Comics in Columbus, OH were the battlegrounds, and the winners were K9s for Warriors and the Finest!

CDFF is riding high on that note, having already raised over \$2,600 this year, with all proceeds to be donated to K9s for Warriors, and with most of the convention season and the largest shows still to come. At the start of the year, CDFF had

established a goal of \$5,000 as our garrison's charitable watermark for 2018. On the current pace, CDFF is not only poised to make that mark, but to blast on by it! With the early summer lineup shaping up, CDFF readies for yet more shows like Multiple Alternative Realities Convention (MARCon) and Wizard World Columbus in Ohio and has even received an invitation to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Indiana State Convention at the end of May! Members are also preparing now for various expeditions, with a garrison photoshoot on May 20th near Louisville, KY and with Joe Con in Chattanooga, TN not far off in June!

To meet the increasing number of events on the calendar, CDFF has been bringing in more convention specialists! Most recently added to the garrison was Andrew K. from Chicago, with an amazing Retaliation Storm Shadow. You can follow their Finest adventure on the CDFF facebook page or their own cosplay page, WraXden Cosplay. Andrew joins the Finest at an exciting time and you could too! Whether G.I. Joe or Cobra, CDFF is growing the ranks of the Finest in the Midwest, we all hope to see you out there!



## REVOLUTIONARY GUARD (NEW ENGLAND)

The Revolutionary Guard has begun the 2018 season and looking forward to our upcoming event line up! We set up a FOB at Rubber Chicken Comics in Bellingham, MA on May 5th-6th for Free Comic Book Day Weekend. It was a great time and our newest member Sean P. reported for his first duty station (event) in his Cobra Soldier and demonstrated initiative, enthusiasm, professional ability and keen foresight in performing his duties as a member of The Finest!. It was a small, one day event but it was a great opportunity to interact with the local community, celebrate GI Joe fandom and raise money for military and veteran charity.

In the coming months we have several events scheduled to include Lock City Anime + Comic Con in North Haven, CT on July 28th where we will attend alongside **RON RUDAT** (original designer of the GI Joe action figure line from 1982-1986), Super Megafest in Framingham, MA on Oct 12th-14th and Rhode Island Comic Con in Providence, RI on Nov 2nd-4th.

We also completed several prop builds to enhance our event booths. The RGNE now has an anti-aircraft prop gun in its arsenal as well as a life sized classic GI Joe Mortar Defense Unit Kit display! We look forward to the 2018 season and hope to meet up with other garrison members this year.

We also have a surprise which will be revealed in the next month or so that will be quite an exciting announcement for The Finest! Stay tuned! Now you know and knowing is half the battle!



## SOUTHERN COMMAND (GA)

Southern Command followed spring's Toylanta with a guest appearance at the first Augusta Toy and Comic Show, also known as JoeFest. The show was a huge success, with the garrison raising over \$100 in just a few hours. JoeFest 2019 has already been announced for next year in a larger venue, and the Southern Command has agreed to appear again.

On May 5, several members also appeared at Teahouse Comics in Atlanta for our third year to celebrate Free Comic Book Day! Comic fans young and old were excited for photo opportunities with their favorite Joes and Cobras. Thanks again to Teahouse for their hospitality, and we look forward to next year.



With summer on the horizon, we look forward to JoeCon in nearby Tennessee in June and hosting fellow Finest members from around the world at DragonCon! We also are looking forward to ConFuzion in Muscle Shoals, Alabama in the fall, and possibly adding additional events in the next few months.

## TASK FORCE 27 (FL)

Another busy month for the Florida Garrison as we just took part again in Free Comic Book Day. Our explosive growth in the past year has allowed us to tackle three different comic shops on the same day, as we had multiple requests for appearances this year. Our members deployed and set up tables at three locations in the state and worked as a team to collect a good chunk of funds for charity!

Membership continues to grow, as a new member joined the team a few weeks ago, bringing us up to four new recruits this year already, with more Florida locals in talks with us to join our ranks in the near future! As we grow, we have been able to cover more territory, attend more events, and we are seeing big gains in our charity collection efforts.



Coming up at the end of the month is Florida's biggest convention, Megacon! For the third year in a row we will be hosting a gathering and photoshoot of GI Joe costumers at this massive fan con in Orlando, and it's open to all GI Joe costumers, even non-members. So come join us on Saturday morning May 26th, at 11am to meet Finest members, learn about our club, and take some cool photos. We had a big showing last year and hope to draw an even bigger crowd this year! Follow our page for more info about the event at <https://www.facebook.com/taskforce27/>

One person. One question. You're in...

# THE HOT SEAT

Frontline ambushed former Central Defense garrison CO Sean C., with a single question:

**'AS A FORMER COMMAND STAFFER, WHAT GOES ON BEHIND THE SCENES THAT YOU WISH MORE MEMBERS KNEW ABOUT?'**

**This was his response...**

"As a former member of Command Staff, I definitely see things differently. The politics are the same with almost any costume group. When dealing with large groups of people in a club, there is bound to be conflict. This can take the full range from the most minute occurrence, to something that can get a member expelled.

"The main thing I wish more members would realize is that first and foremost, we try to keep drama out and focus on what is most important: having fun trooping. We do it as a hobby, we do it as a way to give back to the community... we won't do it if it's not fun. For the most part, the Command Staff is the front line of keeping things that may otherwise cause a bad experience away from members and help ensure that the Finest remains a premiere costuming group and is held to a high standard of costume quality and community.

"Our increased exposure with higher charity donations year after year places The Finest under more watchful eyes than ever before. I believe The Finest has grown significantly since the years I have been a member and it will only increase stress levels for the Command Staff. Fortunately the CS usually deals with these stresses so other members can enjoy what they came to do - a fun day of trooping."



Did you know PIT VIPER STUDIOS offers a 15% discount to active Finest members?

**NOW YOU KNOW...**

# CROSSFIRE

BY DEEP SIX



So you're a Joe fan? Let's find out!

Across	Down
4 Gen. ___ Austin	1 The ___ Clown
6 ___ Show	2 Cobra Driver
7 X-19	3 Sgt. Franklin E. ___
8 Big ___	5 Sierra ___
9 There's No Place Like ___	10 "___ Interlude"
10 High Speed ___	11 Countdown to ___
12 Marauder	
13 Hydrofoil	

**Get the answers right? Be sure to post a screen-cap of your work for your chance at winning your very own "no-prize"!**

# THE ARMORY

Need G.I. Joe or Cobra gear? Here are some vendors to help you on your way!

**Alpine Traditions**

Backpacks, Viper kits, 3D print and sewing services  
Etsy: Alpine Traditions

**Cobra Tech**

Backpacks, commissions  
[www.facebook.com/CobraTech](http://www.facebook.com/CobraTech)

**Negative Eleven**

Helmets, belt-buckles, commissions  
[chris@negativeeleven.com](mailto:chris@negativeeleven.com)

**Pit Viper Studios**

Helmets, shields, armor and more  
[www.pitviperstudios.net](http://www.pitviperstudios.net)  
<https://www.facebook.com/PitViperStudios/>

**Xero Props**

Custom belt buckles, 3d Printing services  
[www.facebook.com/XeroProps/](http://www.facebook.com/XeroProps/)  
[www.shapeways.com/shops/xeroprops](http://www.shapeways.com/shops/xeroprops)

**WANT YOUR  
BUSINESS LISTED IN  
THE ARMORY?  
[FinestPublicRelations@gmail.com](mailto:FinestPublicRelations@gmail.com)**

**COSTUME FIELD MANUALS**

 FIELD MANUAL: COBRA TROOPER	 FIELD MANUAL: COBRA STINGER DRIVER	 FIELD MANUAL: VIPER (V1)
 FIELD MANUAL: COBRA OFFICER	 FIELD MANUAL: CRIMSON GUARD (V1)	 FIELD MANUAL: COBRA "FEMME" TROOPER/OFFICER VARIANT

[www.theFinestCC.com](http://www.theFinestCC.com)