

FRONTLINE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE FINEST!

No. 5

THIS ISSUE:

- ❖ **EXCLUSIVE:** 3D Printing & G.I. Joe Costumes!
- ❖ **USS YORKTOWN:** A Personal Journey!
- ❖ **Building the Full-Scale J.U.M.P.!**
- ❖ **On the Move in Québec!**
- ❖ **Beachhead's Boot Camp Fitness Group!**

February 2019

PUBLISHED BY THE

FINEST
A G.I. JOE COSTUME CLUB



WELCOME TO *FRONTLINE*

Produced every now and then by our Public Relations Office and approved by the Command Staff, the goal of Frontline is to keep you informed of all things Finest as we continue world domination! You'll find breaking news, club activities, upcoming events, resources for current and aspiring members, as well as tips and facts. Occasionally, you might even find yourself entertained!

Welcome back!

With convention appearances in Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Virginia, hitting 10,000 likes on Facebook, and a special appearance at an NHL hockey game in New Jersey, Finest members worldwide have already had a busy 2019, with lots more on the way!

In this issue:

- Operation Yorktown V is coming! Check out the photo gallery of what's become an annual tradition!
- Not only is Carolina Garrison CO Justin Sharpe the lead planner for our annual Operation Yorktown photoshoot, he also has a deep connection to the *USS YORKTOWN* through his grandfather, who helped build her! Don't miss his family's amazing story!
- Want to 3D print your next G.I. Joe or Cobra costume? Pennsylvania member Gerald W. walks you through the process, from designing your prop in CAD software, to slicing and printing that perfect accessory!
- Did you know there's a Finest subgroup for members interested in health, fitness, and nutrition? Kansas member Josh E. explains how you can enlist in Beachhead's Bootcamp and find that extra motivation!
- Central Defense garrison's full-scale J.U.M.P platform debuted in late 2018! Illinois member Sean C. shows us how this fan-favorite playset was brought to life!
- If you're still not convinced that you should attend Operation Yorktown V, we're giving the last word to New Jersey member Ray E. Check out what he had to say about his first *USS YORKTOWN* experience!

Frontline is constantly looking for ideas and content! If you'd 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, drop us a line!

Johnny K.
Public Relations Officer

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Sean C.
Ray E.
Josh E.
Eric P.
Justin S.
Gerald W.
Garrison COs and Squad Leaders

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Johnny K. (Public Relations Officer)

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Maggie Cogan
Bryan Humphrey
Johnny K. Photography
Brian Marchman
Maze Studio

CONTACT INFO

FinestPublicRelations@gmail.com

WEB

www.TheFinestCC.com
@TheFinestCC
www.facebook.com/thefinestcc

ON THE COVER

COSTUMER: Virginia member Heather M.

PHOTO: Brian Maze of Maze Studio

AROUND THE HORN

Our Squads and Garrisons are always on the move!
Here are the latest reports from the field!

13th CIVIL DEFENSE (NJ, NY, PA)

The Civil Defense 13th Mobile Infantry Division would like to thank BC Print Services in Monroeville, NJ, for providing us with a superb quality print job on our newest Finest posters, featuring artwork by Angela McKendrick. These posters will be available for a donation of \$10 at our appearances throughout 2019 (while supplies last) and 100% of the proceeds will be donated to K9s for Warriors.



The 13th has also added two new appearances to our list of events for the fall of 2019. September 21 & 22, we will be appearing at the Harrisburg Comic & Pop Con, located at Harrisburg Mall in PA. The following weekend, September 29, we will be appearing at WeDiscoverGeeks' C3 Event: Crafters, Creators & Cosplayers, at Macungie Memorial Park, in Macungie, PA.

Be sure to mark these dates on your calendar and follow us on Facebook for more upcoming events:
www.facebook.com/TheCivilDefense13thMobileInfantryDivision

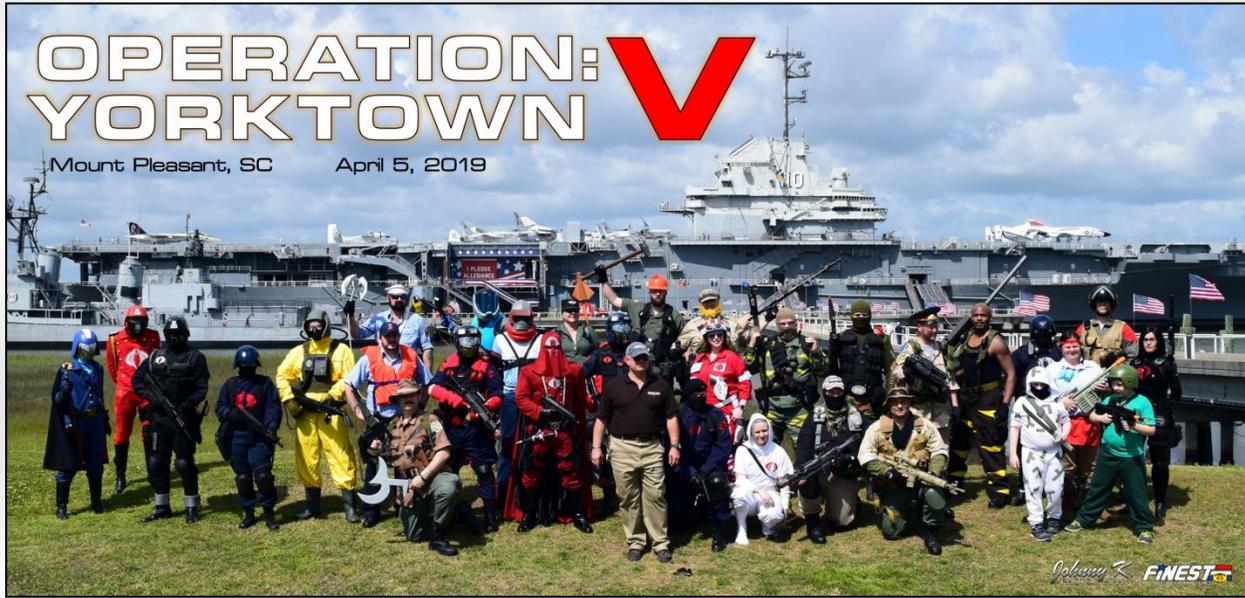
And don't forget our next event coming up March 30. Join us at the Holiday Inn in Morgantown, PA for PA Pop Con 2019. For more details, visit: www.facebook.com/papopcon/

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

CDR is busy planning out the first half of our 2019 calendar! Our events list is filling up quickly, with planned events from southern Virginia to upstate Maryland and everything in between. In February, we'll be found at cons of all sizes, including Big Lick Comic Con (Roanoke, VA) and Katsucon (National Harbor, MD). March doesn't fall behind with us attending Four State Comic Con (Hagerstown, MD). If you have an event in the CDR region you'd like for us to attend, don't wait! Our plate will be full before you know it!

CDR is also very excited for our annual Operation: BIVOUAC III camping trip, tentatively scheduled for early May. We are currently planning the final date and location of this unique photoshoot/camping trip which every year gets better and better! We encourage all Finest members who would like to participate to contact our garrison and join in on the fun!





Finalize your plans now! The **OPERATION: YORKTOWN V** photoshoot kicks off Friday, **April 5, 2019** at Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum near Charleston, SC! Since 2015, Finest members and other G.I. Joe costumers have taken part in this epic one-day photoshoot on board the *USS YORKTOWN* and surrounding areas! As always, our 2019 photoshoot will be open to the public (museum entrance fees apply)! This annual shoot always results in thousands of amazing photos of our members and friends, so don't miss out on the action!

The Finest extends special thanks to the staff of Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum for their continued support, generosity, and hospitality since 2015! Enjoy this special photo gallery from previous years, and we'll see you at the Yorktown on April 5!



DID YOU KNOW...?

The *USS YORKTOWN* (CV-10) was the tenth aircraft carrier to serve in the United States Navy. Under construction as *BON HOMME RICHARD*, this new Essex-class carrier was renamed in honor of *YORKTOWN* (CV-5) sunk at the epic Battle of Midway (June 1942). Built in an amazing 16 ½ months at Newport News, Virginia, *YORKTOWN* was commissioned on April 15, 1943. World War II's famous "Fighting Lady" would participate significantly in the Pacific offensive that ended with the defeat of Japan in 1945. *YORKTOWN* received the Presidential Unit Citation and earned 11 battle stars for service in World War II.

In the 1950s, *YORKTOWN* was modernized to operate jet aircraft as an attack carrier (CVA). In 1957, she was re-designated an anti-submarine aircraft carrier (CVS), and would later earn 5 battle stars for service off Vietnam (1965-68). The ship also recovered the Apollo 8 astronauts and capsule (December 1968). *YORKTOWN* was decommissioned in 1970 and placed in reserve.

In 1975, this historic ship was towed from Bayonne, NJ to Charleston to become the centerpiece of Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum!!

NOW YOU KNOW...









USS YORKTOWN:

MY PERSONAL JOURNEY

By Justin Sharpe
CO, 31st Carrier Assault Brigade

My grandfather, Harrest Eugene King, was a Petty Officer in the U.S. Navy, originally serving on the crew of the John C. Butler-Class *USS HANNA* (DE-449), a destroyer escort that served in both WWII and the Korean War, earning itself 5 Battle Stars. Eventually rising in rank to Metalsmith 3rd-Class, Harrest King demonstrated a talent for metalwork, which would aid him in his post-Naval career.

After an honorable discharge from the Navy, Harrest eventually took to the public school system, becoming Principal of Hiwassee Dam School near my hometown of Murphy, NC. During the summers however (back before yearly salaries for public school employees encompassed the summer months), Harrest worked at the shipyards in Norfolk, Virginia, where his metalwork experience was put to use assembling the major components for the refits of several pre-existing vessels – including, most notably, the *USS YORKTOWN* – which was modified with an expanded flight deck to increase her jet aircraft launching capabilities.



When *YORKTOWN* was placed back in full commission on October 14th, 1955, a very proud Harrest King, his wife Vesta Roberts King (who also worked at the blueprint facility at Norfolk), and a mesmerized daughter Wanda (my mother) were present for the vessel's re-launching ceremony.

Operation Yorktown is always a personal journey for me to make. My grandfather helped build her. My grandmother worked at the shipyards. My mom got to see her re-launch, and now, I get to play on it every year with the Finest! I keep wondering to myself, *how many of these deck plates did Papaw lay? How many bolts of these were put in by his hands?*

It's something that brings me closer to him again as I walk those halls. It makes the experience so much more special to me, and I look forward to the trip, every single year.





Motivated by a mutual love for fitness and G.I. Joe costuming, in 2018, two of our members created a fitness-themed Facebook subgroup for Finest members! Known as Beachhead's Boot Camp, members of this group share workout and nutrition ideas, encourage others, and hold each other accountable for fitness-related goals! Need some friendly fitness support with a G.I. Joe flavor? Enlist in Beachhead's Bootcamp today!

By Josh E. (Kansas member, 234th Tigerhawks)

In 2018, Gerald W. (Pennsylvania member, 13th Civil Defense) and I were discussing fitness and how it is a personal struggle for most. Through multiple conversations, we began to brainstorm ways that we could motivate each other and also impact others.

After much discussion and thought, we decided to create a Facebook subgroup within the Finest that was influenced by our mutual love for fitness and cosplay, and "Beachhead's Bootcamp" was born!



The goal of Beachhead's Bootcamp is to influence and encourage ourselves and other members as it to pertains to fitness goals and healthy lifestyle changes. Though there are great distances between us, I can honestly say that the 20 members currently in the Bootcamp group have made a tremendous impact on my life. We are always looking for more motivated and inspired cosplayers to join, and fitness is more fun when we do it together, so please consider checking out this great group today!



Are you a Finest member looking for a positive support group to help reach your fitness goals? Contact Josh E. or Gerald W.!

ENLIST IN **BEACHHEAD'S BOOTCAMP** TODAY!



Need G.I. Joe/Cobra-themed gear to fuel your fight against the enemy? Don't miss out on these all new SHAKER BOTTLES available from Performa or Amazon.com!

3D PRINTING & G.I. JOE COSTUMING

AN IDIOT'S GUIDE

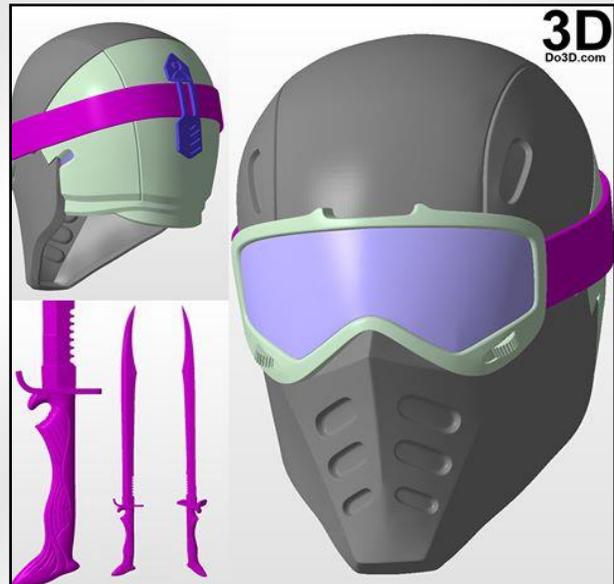
Many props and parts from the G.I. Joe universe simply do not exist in the real world. For years, costumers and prop-makers have long resorted to modifying real-world components, or building things from scratch using proven materials like EVA foam and thermoplastic. With the advent and increasing affordability of 3D printing, hobbyists now have another tool at their disposal to create props, helmets, and weapons to unprecedented levels of accuracy!

By Gerald W. (Pennsylvania, 13th Civil Defense)

3D printing... for some it's mainstream. For others, it's still a complete mystery.

With one exception (a costume I wear with my son), the only costumes I build and wear are from the G.I. Joe universe. The thought of assembling costumes of characters from my childhood memories was very exciting, especially when I'm required to handcraft many of the components myself. I currently have two retired and three active G.I. Joe costumes.

My initial interest in 3D printing started as some fellow members and I embarked on a year-long project to bolster the ranks of Iron Grenadiers in the Finest, requiring the "mass production" of identical costume parts and props. I was suffering through hours of foam-smithing bracers and baldric armor from EVA foam for multiple members in my 875-square-foot apartment, and I thought to myself, *there has to be a better way!*

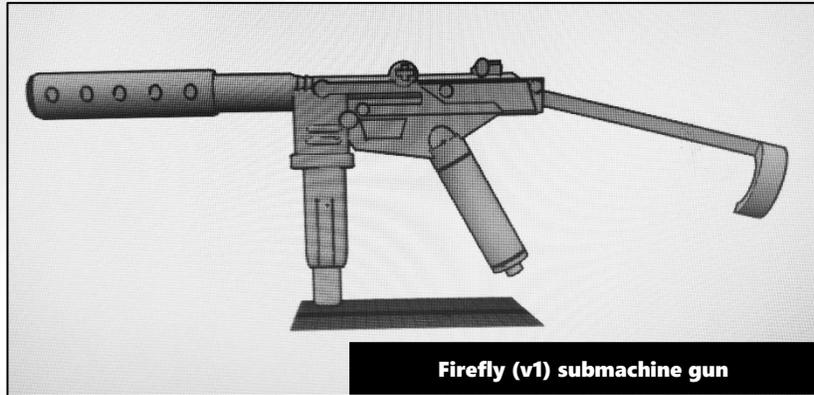


Snake Eyes (Sideshow) Helmet and Sword



Beachhead (v1) WASP submachine gun

3D printing was becoming more popular in the costuming community. I asked opinions from fellow costumers about the hobby but was quickly deterred. You see, the *idiot* in the subtitle of this article is me. As a child of the 1970s, I am the first to admit that I am computer- and electronics-illiterate, and it was evident that



Firefly (v1) submachine gun

I would need some of these skills to successfully 3D print. Discouraged, I went back to my utility knives, straight edges, and hours of sanding.

I hate sanding.

Fast-forward one year. For less than \$200, a non-costuming friend purchased the Anet A8 FDM (fused deposition model) with a 210mm x 210mm x 240mm buildplate printer, and one of the first things he printed was Dr. Strange's "Eye of Agamotto." It looked amazing, so I once again became interested in 3D printing. I was picking my friend's brain constantly. My wife picked up on my interest in the hobby, and bought me the same printer later that year for Christmas.

I learned so much on that little printer, and within six months, I had outgrown it and moved on to a larger machine with a 300mm x 300 x 400mm buildplate - the Creality CR-10S. I researched my next printer purchase and discovered that this was the unit used by 80% of costumers and many 3D printing professionals on YouTube.

ANYONE CAN 3D PRINT

You can, she can, it can, anyone can! 3D printers have become very affordable. Much of the designing and slicing software is free to hobbyists, and sub-\$200 printers have gotten so much better in quality, as well as easier to use and maintain. Printing material like polylactic acid (PLA) filament is very affordable, with 2.2kg/1lb rolls selling for around \$15, and can be purchased in hundreds of colors!



The real investment is your time spent learning the process. I promise there will be frustration, anger, depression, tears, blood, feelings of failure, and a slew of other emotions as you learn how to model and print.

But you'll get it! Just give yourself time and be patient as it is a massive learning curve. Printers are by no means plug-and-play.

Below is an extremely brief step by step process on how to get going and create that impossible-to-find part for your next G.I. Joe or Cobra costume!

EQUIPMENT

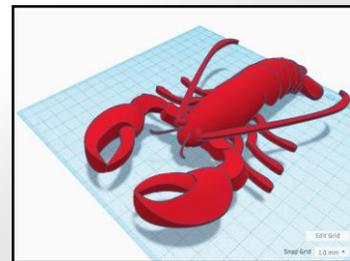
A refurbished corporate desktop with a decent graphics card can be bought for \$169 on eBay or Amazon, or maybe you already have a newer Mac or laptop. A 3D printer like the Creality Ender 3 can be bought for \$189. In addition, you'll need a sturdy, draft-free working surface and a significant other who is very understanding. Printers can be noisy.

YOUR MODEL (CAD DESIGNING)

You'll need to start by creating your digital model. The file format for 3D models is called an STL file. In my limited world, there are two kinds of models, organic and inorganic. As a crude example, organic is something like a lobster, while inorganic would be something like a sky-scraper.

Building these models requires a Computer-Assisted Design (CAD) program. Software like Fusion 360, Sketchup and Blender will help you if you understand them. Tinkercad is an extremely friendly web- and cloud-based program for inorganic modeling, and there are dozens of YouTube tutorials on how to get going with it. As basic as Tinkercad is, I've seen people do amazing things with it.

The other option is to simply hire a CAD design artist to make it. There are several companies and individuals that can do this for you. Some of these individuals use software that costs several thousand dollars, and their skills are simply amazing... so much so that their models are exact replicas of the source material.



The costs for hiring a CAD artist is usually reasonable when you compare it to how many frustrating hours you may spend at your computer seeking absolute accuracy. The other option is a STL hosting website like myminifactory.com or www.thingiverse.com. There are literally *millions* of models on these websites available for free, but in my experience, anything for G.I. Joe is rare to come by.

SLICING YOUR MODEL

Slicing software turns your model into Gcode, which is the language your printer speaks. This is how a digital model becomes physical matter. The term “slicing” comes from the way the software slices your model into hundreds of thousands of layers, which are stacked on top of one another to bring your model to reality. Like the CAD software, many slicers are free and open source, including programs like Ultimaker Cura, Slic3r, and Ideamaker.

The most common slicer I've found used by many YouTube printers is Simplify3D. This program costs around \$175, and after using the free trial, I found it to be much more reliable than the über-popular and free Cura, so I bit the bullet and bought it. It's worth every penny. Once your model has been sliced, the Gcode is ready to be transferred to a micro SD card and moved to your printer for printing.

THE PRINTER

The printer could be an entire article unto itself. Mods, upgrades, bed temps, nozzle temps, speeds... these can go on forever, but, a 100% stock out-of-the-box Ender3 or CR-10S will build absolutely stunning models once you learn your machine and upload a solid printer profile into your slicer that works well with your machine. There are tons of Facebook support groups for all 3D printers and many helpful people that are ready to answer your questions. Take your time and research machines that will fit your budget and production needs. A CR-10S can print a helmet in one shot, whereas an Ender 3 or Anet A8 will need to have the model split into multiple pieces in a program like Meshmixer, and then glued back together. Both systems have advantages and disadvantages, but whatever you choose, just have patience and take the time to learn your machine. It won't happen overnight but it will happen!

RANGE VIPER HELMET

MODEL DESIGNER:	Do3D
CAD PROGRAM USED:	Fusion 360/Netfabb
SLICING SOFTWARE:	Simplify3D
PRINTER USED:	CR-10S w/ Bondtech BMG Extruder Drive
FILAMENT:	2kg Inland PLA
TOTAL PRINT TIME:	99 hours at .2 layer height and 60mm/second



JUNE 21-22
2019
JOEFEST
 AN AUGUSTA TOY & COMIC SHOW



AND MORE!



FINEST
 A G.I. JOE COSTUME CLUB



DoubleTree Hotel
 2651 Perimeter Pkwy
 Augusta, GA

www.augustatoyandcomicshow.com

www.TheFinestCC.com



Photo: Bryan Humphrey

Augusta, Georgia! JoeFest is coming - June 21-22, 2019!

Don't miss what's shaping up to be THE premier G.I. Joe event of 2019!

Finest members from around the country will converge at this epic event! Stop by our booth and help us raise money for K9s For Warriors!

An AMAZING lineup of special guests includes Larry Hama, Ron Rudat, and Sgt. Slaughter; voice actors Keone Young (Storm Shadow) and Hank Garrett (Dial-Tone); artists Robert Atkins, Tom Feister, and Adam Riches, and so much more!!!

Don't miss out on over 15,000 square feet of toys, comics, collectibles, and guests!

SEE YOU AT JOEFEST!



GET TO KNOW...

QUÉBEC MEMBER ERIC P.!

WHAT ARE YOUR EARLIEST G.I. JOE MEMORIES?

I still remember to this day, I was 9 or 10 years old (I'm now 44) in 5th grade, playing with my younger brother and friends, making up stories or missions, with our G.I. Joe figures and vehicles and getting all excited seeing the new stuff come out in the TV commercials and watching the first animated series.

Like any kid growing up in the 1980s, I would get up early, sometimes too early, on Saturday mornings to watch the cartoons. What was great about those days is that each of us were getting characters and vehicles that the others didn't have, so when we got together we could pick and play from all of our lots (I still have a bag of Joes from BITD and some from my old friends).

Some funny memories are of a friend (that I still see to this day) that used to really throw his VAMP jeep off our front porch and throw his Falcon glider in the middle of the street with cars parked.

...I still have so many great memories associated with Joes that I could go on and on.

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO JOIN THE FINEST?

Probably a mix of wanting to be part of something 'bigger', relating with others who have the same passion for G.I. Joe and looking for approval with my costume-making. I was lurking on the Finest site for a while, and was amazed when reading the WIPs and completed builds and knew I had to build myself a costume. I chose the basic Cobra Trooper and used the Field Manual as a template. The Trooper was a pretty straight-forward build and was somewhat easy even as a first time cosplayer like me. After completion I sent it in and got approved.

WHAT'S THE G.I. JOE LANDSCAPE IN QUEBEC (THEN AND NOW)?

In the early/mid 80s G.I. Joe was part of the 'big 4', along with Transformers, MOTU (He-Man and the Masters of the Universe) and of course Star Wars. We all had toys from those lines and watched them on TV. Every kid in our age group at school and in the neighborhood had Joes; we had something in common to talk about or play with.



Today, a lot of smaller conventions are specialized in vintage toys and comic books, like 'Nostalgie Montreal', 'FantasticonMTL', and a few others...there's a strong G.I. Joe collecting community in the province. Larry Hama was a guest at the 2018 Montreal Comicon, and I noticed he had a long lineup of names for drawing commissions and had fans regularly stop by his booth. Of course I took the time to present myself as the sole Finest member in the province and to get a Trooper drawing commissioned and get a couple of key G.I. Joes comic book issues signed by him. I would say the Joe landscape today is strong but more underground compared to Star Wars.

THERE HAVE BEEN SOME INITIAL STEPS TOWARD STARTING A QUEBEC FINEST SQUAD. WHAT HAS THAT PROCESS BEEN LIKE?

The process is slow. Let me explain, I'm not part of any other costuming club, so my access to others in the region with the same (G.I. Joe) interest is limited. At the moment I am the sole member of the Finest in QC. If I were a member of other groups the process would be smoother and communication with other likeminded people could be done on a more regular basis. That being said, I have been in touch with others from the province that are in the building process of their costumes and will soon send it for approval, hopefully in time for the Montreal Comicon.

I will start appearing solo at a local comic book shops during the 'Free Comic Book Day' and promote the Finest, then with future Finest members we can start showing up at local cons, big and small. Maybe someday we can grow enough in size to have our own booth at cons and build backgrounds and props, like some garrisons south of the border, to further promote the Finest.

As a former professional graphic artist and trained Photoshop wizard, I still like to play around with Photoshop on various projects for friends and family members, so of course I will try to help the best I can in the visual aspect of the future QC garrison. I already took the liberty of making some rough drafts of what I think would be a cool name and logo for a QC garrison that I will submit to future QC members. You can say the ball is slowly rolling.

WHO'S YOUR FAVORITE JOE/COBRA AND WHY?

That's a hard one; there are so many. As a kid I always loved the master of disguise, Zartan (my younger brother had Zandar). Zartan had the best crew with the Dreadnoks, and he could change color - how cool was that? Now that I'm older, I have an appreciation for all the faceless characters, be it Troopers, Vipers, CGs, Snow Serpents, etc. They could be your supervisor at work, a banker, your neighbor... anyone! Without them Cobra Commander would have no army!



BUILDING THE J.U.M.P.

Debuting in 1982, the G.I. Joe Jet Mobile Propulsion Unit (J.U.M.P.) was first released boxed in U.S. toy stores without a pilot. It was repackaged in 1983 and sold with a pilot - GRAND SLAM! Illinois member Sean C. and other members of our Central Defense garrison have brought this fan-favorite Joe battle station to life!

By Sean C. (Illinois, Central Defense)

Central Defense garrison knew that 2018 was going to be a record-breaking year. As the year progressed, our own expectations were exceeded and new ground was paved almost after every show we completed. I wanted to do something different for 2018. I had a stockpile of lumber in my garage and felt I needed to do something with it.

During the summer, we received notice that we were going to have a large space at Grand Rapids Comic Con in Michigan in November, so I decided to make something to bring. It couldn't be too crazy as I still had to consider travel, etc.

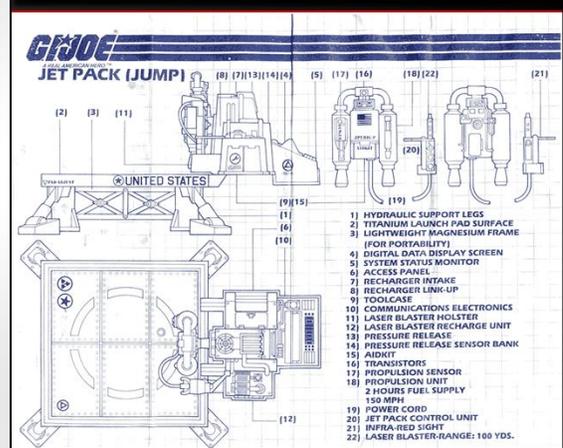
There had already been some pretty awesome playsets constructed in the Finest - the 234th Tigerhawks Watch Tower and the Capital Defense Regiment's Missile Defense Unit came to mind, so my bar had been set. I decided to build a J.U.M.P. launch pad. I hadn't seen one in the Finest yet, and it looked like a fairly simple build. With Johnny K's help, I procured a series of pictures of his original toy and I went to work.



The first thing was to appropriately scale the toy to 'real life' proportions. After we determined the true size, I had to look at concessions in order to make it practical. I decided to scale the pad down to 4' x 4', in order to:

- A) Be made using a standard 4' x 8' sheet, and
- B) Fit in most minivans/truck beds

The build was straight-forward, but some things were clear right off the bat. Not only would the pad itself be smaller, but the overall height would be shorter to accommodate for a friendlier step height for people of all sizes (kids) to easily step on and off without issue.





The feet were made from blocks of wood and the pistons were a combination of PVC pipe and 3D-printed components to give it some character.

To give the top surface panels the look of the toy, I cut six panels out of thin plywood and bolted them onto the surface of the pad. This gave the look of the separate panels as well as the rivets.

The decals were done using my Cricut cutter and stencil material. I researched all of the stickers and recreated them in Photoshop. From there, I was able to transfer the designs to the Cricut and cut stencils in any size I wanted. From there, I was able to place the stencils on the JUMP pad and

paint. I took a few liberties and made the G.I. Joe logo into the Central Defense logo, but the majority of the decals are accurate to the toy, including the designation numbers.

The launch pad is not 100%. The circle on the top had stencils created, but not painted yet, and the command console was not made, but in time, I think these are things that can be added to the JUMP 2.0.

With the launch pad in full swing, the actual Jet Pack now needed to be made. I contacted Ryan B., (then the CDFF CO), and he coordinated a team of garrison members, including Ryan M. and Matt W., who between them, made the pack and created the decals that completed it in time for Grand Rapids Comic Con in November 2018.

Special shout-out to 'Easy' Eric W., who helped me transport the JUMP pad to the convention. This project, to me, was the epitome of how a team project is supposed to run, from conception to completion!



INTELLIGENCE REPORTS

The news you need... when you need it!

10,000 LIKES ON FACEBOOK!

It's been a long road, but on January 30, 2019, the Finest Facebook page hit **10,000 likes!** To celebrate this awesome achievement, we drew random winners who shared our "Special Mission: 10K" contest posts, and some amazing prizes were shipped out to five lucky fans, including:

- A copy of G.I. Joe #1 comic, autographed by LARRY HAMA!
- A Palisades Toys Baroness bust!
- Cobra Commander "Vote 2020" posters by artist Angela McKendrick!
- Several action figures, patches, coins, trading cards, magnets, dog-tags, gift certificates, and more!

A huge thanks to our contest sponsors, Farpoint Toys and Collectibles, Kokomo Toys, Patch Czar, as well as our garrisons and squads for donating these awesome prizes!

Congratulations to our five lucky winners!

- Dave Fields, Jr. (TN)
- Jeffrey Francis (FL)
- Andy Ryan Hesselbart (OH)
- Gene Jackoviac (ND)
- Kyle A. Thompson (IL)

Just because we hit 10,000 doesn't mean our work is done... 20,000 likes are just around the corner!

UPDATE: CHARITY CAMPAIGN PERKS SHIPPING SOON!

Did you donate to our 2018 Indiegogo online charity campaign to benefit K9s For Warriors? Perks are starting to arrive at Finest Headquarters and will be shipped out soon! So far we have received the patches, and shirts should be here any day. Once we have the coins and shirts in-hand we will start shipping to you, our amazing supporters. Thank you again for all your support!



UPCOMING EVENTS



The Finest rolls into 2019! This list will be updated as more of our Squads and Garrisons from around the world report in! SEE YOU ON THE ROAD!

FEBRUARY

- Feb 8-10 Astronomicon – Sterling Heights, MI
- Feb. 9-10 Big Lick Comic Con - Roanoke, VA
- Feb 15-17 KatsuCon - National Harbor, MD

MARCH

- Mar 2-3 Comic Con Revolution - West Palm Beach, FL
- Mar 23-24 Four State Comic Con - Hagerstown, MD
- Mar 29-31 Planet Comicon - Kansas City, MO
- Mar 30 PA Pop Con - Morgantown, PA
- Mar 30 Middletown Comic Con - Middletown, DE

APRIL

- Apr 5 Operation Yorktown Photoshoot - Charleston, SC
- Apr 12-14 The Great Philadelphia Comic Con - Oaks, PA
- Apr 12-14 UltraCon - Miami, FL
- Apr 26-28 AwesomeCon - Washington, DC
- Apr 27 Camden Comic Con - Camden, NJ

MAY

- May 18-19 Tidewater Comic Con - Virginia Beach, VA
- May 24-26 Thy Geekdom Con - Oaks, PA

JUNE

- Jun 8 All-Star Comic Con - Tysons, VA
- Jun 13-16 Wizard World Comic Con - Philadelphia, PA
- Jun 21-22 JoeFest/Augusta Toy and Comic Show - Augusta, GA
- Jun 29-30 Garden State Comic Fest - Morristown, NJ

JULY

- Jul 6 Frets4Vets Fundraiser, American Legion Post 28 - Oak Orchard, DE

AUGUST

- Aug 17 Dover Comic Con - Dover, DE
- Aug 23-25 Keystone Comic Con - Philadelphia, PA
- Aug 29-Sep 2 DragonCon - Atlanta, GA

SEPTEMBER

- Sep 14-15 Retro Con - Oaks, PA
- Sep 21-22 Harrisburg Comic and Pop Con – Harrisburg, PA
- Sep 29 WeDiscoverGeeks' C3 Event: Crafters, Creators & Cosplayers – Macungie, PA

OCTOBER

- Oct 3-6 New York Comic Con - New York, NY

NOVEMBER

- Nov 23 Southwest Florida Con - Ft. Myers, FL

DECEMBER

THE ARMORY

YOUR SOURCE FOR COSTUME WEAPONS AND GEAR!

Battle Gear Depot

Viper and Iron Grenadier parts, 3D printing and sewing services, Viper backpacks, and more
alpinetraditions@gmail.com

Catt Call

Custom enamel pins and more
<https://www.facebook.com/CattCallCo/>
<http://cattcallco.storenvy.com/>

Cobra Tech

Jetpacks, helmets, and more
<https://www.facebook.com/CobraTech-721538184672834/>

Cremeans Creations

Helmets, costume parts, props, and more
<https://cremeanscreations.com/>

Negative Eleven

Helmets, belt-buckles, and more
chris@negativeeleven.com

Patch Czar

Custom patch design and small production runs
www.facebook.com/patch.czar

Pit Viper Studios

Helmets, shields, armor, and more
www.pitviperstudios.net
<https://www.facebook.com/PitViperStudios/>

SkyForge Leather

Custom leather straps, scabbards, belts, pouches, and more
<https://www.etsy.com/shop/SkyforgeLeather>

Xero Props

Custom belt buckles, 3D printing services and more
www.facebook.com/XeroProps/
www.shapeways.com/shops/xeroprops

**WANT YOUR
BUSINESS LISTED
IN
THE ARMORY?
FinestPublicRelations@gmail.com**

COSTUME FIELD MANUALS

www.theFinestCC.com

NEW!!

FROM THE GOOD PEOPLE OF
M.A.R.S. INDUSTRIES

Tired of being picked on? Bullied?
Needing a heavier asset for armored assault?
Look no further than:

**SYSTEM
NEUTRALIZER
ARMED
KLOAKING
EQUIPMENT**

OR....
S.N.A.K.E.!

Our patented and combat proven suit is guaranteed to solve all your problems... from the battlefield to the playground! After a simple 36 week training course you'll be flattening your foes in no time at all with a wide array of vehicle accessories and additional liquid repellent which will make you the warrior you wish and deserve to be! Write today for a special bonus: of our latest new desert attachment... The Flameblower Arm!

THE LAST WORD

To close this issue, we're giving the last word to New Jersey member, Ray E. He attended his first Operation Yorktown in 2017 and his heartfelt words still ring true. See you in SC!

(April 2017)

Thank you all for a fun photoshoot down in South Carolina! I had a great time hanging out with you all. I expected just a normal photoshoot, but it turned out to be quite a unique and deep experience for me.

It was hard not to feel sad at the Vietnam exhibit, seeing and hearing a small, sanitized piece of what that experience must have been like. It sure gives you an appreciation for the work of groups like K9s For Warriors and for those trying to overcome surviving similar experiences. Just being there and imagining it was deeply affecting. I'm sure the reality of it must create an enormous weight. And seeing all those dog tags hanging on the wall was heartbreaking. Those were all someone's family.



And while I was standing on the battleship looking at that stunning aircraft carrier and the submarine, there were so many thoughts running through my mind. While it was fascinating to see all that technological achievement from various points in history, it was also sobering and, admittedly, a little depressing to know that it all exists because human history is rife with conflict. There's an obvious dichotomy in how that conflict can bring out both the worst and the best in people.

In the end, though, I felt a sense of optimism. Because when something as simple as a cartoon, a comic book, or a series of action figures can bring so many different people together to have a good time based on a single shared interest, then it gives you a glimpse of the best of human nature.

When people can be as open, friendly, welcoming, and hospitable as you all were to me, because of one thing we have in common, then it makes me hopeful for what is possible when people take the time to realize they probably have even more in common than they know. They just need to have a willingness to discover it. By talking. By listening. By dressing up in a costume and making people smile or taking pictures with them. By taking that 13-hour road trip, in spite of the inner voice telling you it would be easier to just stay home. And that inner voice is right. It would be easier. It's always easier to do nothing. But it's not nearly as rewarding.

Thanks to everyone for the food, fun, fellowship, and awesome photos.

Ray E.
13th Civil Defense Garrison