

# FRONTLINE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE FINEST!

No. 3

## THIS ISSUE:

- ❖ **SPECIAL REPORT:** 2018 Finest Election!
- ❖ History of IRON GRENADIERS!
- ❖ Expansion into EUROPE!
- ❖ JoeCon 2018 wrap-up!
- ❖ New Field Manuals & more!!!

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**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 the comings and goings of the Finest as we continue our bid for world domination! You'll find breaking news, club activities, upcoming events, resources for current and aspiring members, as well as important tips and facts. Occasionally, you might even find yourself entertained!**

This year has been a blur! In terms of membership growth, expansion into new territories, and raising money for veterans, 2018 has undoubtedly been the most successful year in our 11-year history!

Way back in June, Finest forces invaded the very last JoeCon in Chattanooga, Tennessee! The goal for the weekend was to beat our 2017 record and raise more than \$1,000 for K9s For Warriors. Well, we did it... in six hours! By the end of JoeCon we had raised **\$4,100!** Huge thanks to everyone who worked the booth, as well as all the generous fans who donated! Finest members took home top honors in the costume contest, and several hosted panels – including NC member Carson M.'s panel with Hasbro legend Kirk Bozigan on the live action commercials filmed in the early 1990s, which we plan to feature here in a future issue of Frontline!

If you missed JoeCon, be sure to check out the Last JoeCon Podcast, hosted by the Fandom Podcast Network in collaboration with the Finest! Southern Command member Kevin R. and I recorded this LIVE on Friday night of the convention, and with special guests Brian Savage (con organizer), Mark Weber (former Hasbro), Gray Childs, James Kavanaugh Jr., and more, we captured the energy of the last JoeCon! Check it out here: ["Last JoeCon" Podcast!](#)

In this issue:

- Election fever is in the air! The two-term limit of Joe C., the current Commanding Officer, wraps up on December 31<sup>st</sup>, and one of two candidates will seize the Iron Throne in January! We contracted journalist **HECTOR RAMIREZ** to cover all angles of the 2018 election, and you'll find his reporting in this issue!
- 2018 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Iron Grenadiers! If you're a fan of "the black and gold" check out Chris R.'s thorough history of Destro's private army!
- Ever wonder what's involved with launching a new Finest squad or garrison in a country where G.I. Joe is less popular? New member Volker G. reports in from Germany and shares some interesting insights!
- What was your favorite JoeCon 2018 moment? We asked more than 25 of our attending members this very question, and their answers may surprise you!

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!

Happy holidays to all!



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## ON THE COVER

**COSTUMER:** New Jersey member John C. as Destro

**PHOTO:** Douglas Shaune (edit by Alex T.)

# ONLINE CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES!

## Help the Finest Support K9s For Warriors!

We hear it every single year: *I'd love to support the Finest and your charity, but I never get out to conventions to help donate.*

Well buckle-up, buttercup. Here's your chance! After raising more than **\$20,000** (and counting) in 2018 at conventions and events worldwide, we're ending the year with a bang with the launch of our online charity campaign on Indiegogo!



## [CLICK HERE TO DONATE!](#)

For your generous donation, you'll receive one or more of our amazing perks:

- **Coin** – Presenting the first ever Finest club challenge coin! With the images of a soaring Skystriker and K9 head raised in 3D out of the metal, this hot item is going fast! Don't miss out! Dimensions are 1.75 in. x 1.75 in.
- **T-shirt** – We always enjoy seeing so many Finest contributor and supporter t-shirts at conventions and events each year, and our newest shirt won't disappoint! Featuring the iconic Night Raven image and air force logo of your favorite villainous group, wear this shirt with pride and let the world know you supported our veteran charity campaign!
- **Patch** - Show your support with this high-quality patch on your favorite jacket, hat, or costume! 4 in. x 4 in. patch with Velcro hook and loop backing.

All campaign proceeds will be heading directly to K9s For Warriors! Even if you can't contribute financially, please share the link and help us spread the word! Every single dollar helps!





**AWARD-WINNING JOURNALIST HECTOR RAMIREZ HERE, BRINGING YOU A SPECIAL REPORT ON THE 2018 ELECTION FOR THE NEW COMMANDING OFFICER!**

***It's a neck & neck race! With the second consecutive two-term limit of the current Commanding Officer ending, FRONTLINE hired your favorite brave and handsome journalist to cover all aspects of this election! I recently sat down with the two candidates (Ryan B. and Alex T.) to ask them all the tough questions! Both seemed strangely immune to any form of bribery, but both were also obviously jealous of my magnificent mustache. Let's begin!***

Finest trading cards have been wildly successful. As Commanding Officer, would you like to see a Series 4 set in the future or other iteration of member profiles like a yearly Order of Battle comic book ... or both?

- RYAN B - Definitely. The cards have been great at shows and our experience with comic books has been pretty positive too. The more projects to showcase our members and get people involved, the better.
- ALEX T - Series 4 is in progress I'm working on an updated design now. I plan on opening Series 4 up in early (January or February) 2019. Order of Battle might be a fun option to explore.

There has been a lot of judicial activity in the news as of late, and court decisions can have sweeping repercussions on elections. Who do you think would win in a back-alley brawl between Judge Mills Lane and Judge Judy?

- RYAN B - Judy is a tough one, but she's too used to being in control. Mills was on Celebrity Deathmatch, so he probably knows all the tricks.
- ALEX T - In their prime, Judge Mills Lane hands down as he was an actual boxer and a Marine!

I think the both of you underestimate the sheer power of Judge Judy, but I'm not running for CO!

Some people have trouble articulating their concerns in a public forum or have anxiety about how their questions will be received. Do you think the Finest should implement some sort of anonymous way that rank and file members could communicate with Command Staff?

- RYAN B - It's been an idea of mine to start a form where members submit things that they would like to be addressed. It would also prevent things like Command Staff members getting a message and either ignoring it or forgetting about it when they're busy. Basically, a way to hold us accountable.
- ALEX T - I think that in the hustle and bustle of the real-world anonymous concerns might be lost and become unaddressed. I'd much rather encourage members to contact the CO, XO or their garrison CO with any concerns that way we can ensure they get addressed.



Would you be willing to go through a series of trials to cement your position as Commanding Officer of the Finest like in The Trials of Lion-O where you would have to best members in their specialty like a test of strength against Johnny K?

- RYAN B - I accept, so long as I'm allowed to cleverly subvert the process to my advantage, like Captain Kirk and the Kobayashi Maru.
- ALEX T - Sure, but I draw the line at mud wrestling!

As Commanding Officer, how would you help make sure that ideas do not die on the vine? Some ideas seem to have a pretty good momentum at their inception, but then sort of wither away.

- RYAN B - I do think that even the best ideas can hit roadblocks, the most motivated people can get busy, and things can just generally go wrong. Off the top of my head, making sure nothing is dependent on one person alone seems a good idea. Make it a team project, keep them talking and moving.

- ALEX T - There are two things I think we could address to improve this. One, more consistent and frequent communication. Two I think we should designate a project manager role for the command staff.

**Who do you think would win in a rock-off between the real-world horror-punk band The Misfits, and the cartoon glam rock band The Misfits, and why?**

- RYAN B - Cartoon Misfits aren't better than the Holograms, no matter what they say. I met Jem once and she credited the real-world Misfits as an influence for her sound, so take that as you will.
- ALEX T - Real world "Misfits" would win. Why? Cause Danzig. Enough said.

**It has been suggested that some portion of the donations collected at events be held back and used to fund things for future events. Briefly, what are your thoughts on this?**

- RYAN B - I've never been a fan of that. If money is collected, it should go to what it's being collected for and nothing else. If we want fund for our projects, we should fund it ourselves. If that's not enough, we should improve our idea until it is.
- ALEX T - For any money that we raise for charity, 100% of the proceeds need to go to the charity. I think we can develop a system to fund future events but that needs to remain separate from charity funds.

**How would you apply the lessons learned in Monty Python and the Holy Grail to your tenure as Commanding Officer of the Finest?**

- RYAN B - Cato the Elder once said those who take ridiculous things seriously, will take serious matters ridiculously. With that said, the struggles that King Arthur faces on his journey have myriad connections to modern ideas on social conscious, leadership and organization, as well as economic well-being. In scene after scene, the brilliance of it all is fully apparent. King Arthur learns early on never to assume things about a person based on their looks. "I didn't vote for you," a woman says to him later, revealing a deep-seated preference people have in having a voice in decisions. He embraces new learning in every situation, accepting the consul of his wiser followers. He realizes that having a worthy goal is a good idea and a fine motivator for even a diverse group of individual talents. In dealing with the Knights of Ni, he comes to understand that some people will simply ask more and more of you and you have to draw a line that is within the bounds of your own comfort and ability to provide. There's really no end to the importance of these lessons and I can promise I draw from them daily.
- ALEX T - I've actually never seen it all the way through. From what I remember though it's quite a zany film. I think it's important for someone in a leadership role to not take themselves too seriously and to be open-minded. Also count to three, not four or two. Five is right out.

**I just died a little on the inside ... but onwards!**

**Obviously, the inner workings of the Command Staff don't need to be fodder for everyday conversation among members on the Members Facebook page, but would you be averse to some sort of regular announcement system where members could check on things like the status of major upcoming projects, new membership votes, etc.?**

- RYAN B - I don't think anyone should be against that. Communicating to our members should be a priority at all times. Check the Q&A for our thoughts on such things, specifically Question 5 of the Q&A.
- ALEX T - Not at all. In fact, it's one of the steps I think we need to take in order to improve our current system of communication. Some form of regular announcement would be great to help keep everyone informed. But the announcements would need to be focused and spread out to not get lost in the clutter

## TALES FROM THE CHARTER

(Charter available at [www.TheFinestCC.com](http://www.TheFinestCC.com))

*The term of office for The Finest CO is two full years (voted in November, office taken in January). Finest Members may vote to re-elect the presiding CO to continue for one additional consecutive term (two years). If a consecutive term is not granted, the CO must wait two years to run for the CO position again.*

*If the CO does not wish to run for re-election following the completion of one term, they must wait two years to run for the CO position; or one year for a Command Staff position. The Finest CO may only serve two consecutive terms (a total of four years); then they must wait two years to run for the CO position; or one year to run for a Command Staff position.*

*The Finest XO is appointed by the Finest CO. Command Staff Officers are appointed by the Finest CO and can retain their position indefinitely, unless they resign their position, or are asked to step down. A new Finest CO may choose to retain members of the Command Staff, or appoint new officers of his/her choosing.*

### **NOW YOU KNOW!**

# AROUND THE HORN

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

## 234th TIGERHAWKS (KS/MO)

On November 10, 234<sup>th</sup> Tigerhawks members attended Code Name: Iowa's one-day all-G.I. Joe convention in Des Moines, known as Assembly Required. For the fifth consecutive year, we had a great showing at the event. The theme for this year's convention was Tiger Force, so obviously the Tigerhawks decided to join in that fun with Tiger Force costumes. The event is always great fun, with several cool vendors, some really neat custom action figures and vehicles, and the organizers, Brian, Steve, and Travis, are great guys running this free event. The Finest costumers are always appreciated by the Joe-fans, and this year the Tigerhawks took their life-size Watch Tower to the event, which is always fun to see the looks on peoples' faces when they see it for the first time. The Tigerhawks also got to hang out with '80's ARAH Comic artist **Ron Wagner**, which is always enjoyable to spend time with those G.I. Joe-celebrities that had an effect on all of our youthful years.



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

At the first annual Retro-Toy Con in Greenville, SC (Nov. 17-18), a joint task force of 31<sup>st</sup> and Southern Command members raised \$255 for K9s for Warriors! Special thanks to Southern Command members Rebeccah H., Noel W., and Brian H., as well as 31st member Kevin K. for helping with the setup and running the table. At the con we met voice actor greats **Michael Bell** and **Alan Oppenheimer**, as well as **Neil Ross**, who debuted his very own Shipwreck costume!

We also met several new potential new recruits for the 31st, who are in various stages of putting together their own costumes. We hope to add them to the team soon!





We're also close to finalizing a date for Operation Yorktown 5 in 2019! For those who may not know, Operation Yorktown is our annual photoshoot onboard the USS Yorktown and other vessels at Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum near Charleston, SC! With a huge turnout of Finest members from multiple garrisons, as well as other GI Joe costumers, it's always a blast!

Stay tuned for more info!

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

The Capital Defense Regiment continued to grow in 2018. By the end of the year, we added seven new members to our ranks, extending our reach further into Virginia than ever before. The garrison had several strong showings throughout the year, such as AwesomeCon in Washington, DC (our biggest show of the year), Dover Comic Con in Delaware (with the debut of our vintage USS Flagg display!) and joint operations with our sister garrison, the 13th Civil Defense, for the Great Philadelphia Comic Con. We continued the later part of the year with our largest final appearances at Retro Con (Oaks, PA) and Thy Geekdom Con 5 (in Delaware). Both shows were a huge success in terms of donations collected for K9s for Warriors.

As 2018 comes to a close, the garrison is getting into the holiday spirit with an upcoming merch run to gear up both older and newer members with not just shirts, but long sleeve tees and hoodies as well, perfect for the colder days ahead!



## CENTRAL DEFENSE: THE FIGHTING 5th (IL/IN/OH/MI)



(by Ryan B.: CO, Central Defense) The last month has been the exclamation point to an already incredible year for Central Defense! The string of successes, which has taken us above and beyond our wildest goals for the year, continued into November on all fronts for the garrison. Almost right off the bat, Grand Rapids Comic Con in Michigan broke our garrison record by becoming our most successful weekend ever, raising over \$1,400 over Veteran's Day weekend.

GRCC was also a notable weekend as the unveiling of two brand new props for the garrison:

A life-sized Cobra **A.S.P.** and **J.U.M.P.!**

These projects were the result of many months of planning and effort by our members and brought a great amount awe when they were revealed! It wasn't just fans in-person who were getting on board, CDFF's Facebook page also surged past 1,000 likes, after starting the year with just over a couple hundred. The icing on the cake was over Thanksgiving weekend, when the garrison raised enough money at Chicago Pop Culture Convention to break over \$13,000 for the year raised for K9s for Warriors.

It's been an amazing run, over the span of dozens of events as a garrison across all our states and more, we've been humbled by the amount of support we've received from the public. We've picked up a lot of fans along the way and grown our member ranks in every state as well. To be certain, it took the efforts of many people to make these things possible. As Garrison CO, I'd like to personally extend my congratulations to all the hard-working members of this garrison. I'd also like to extend all our gratitude to the show promoters who gave us the tables and spaces to work from, the fans who found us there and those who followed us online, all of the members of the Finest who pitched in at our shows or helped boost our signals when it mattered most, and to those people who chipped in however they could to make this a reality. It goes without saying that we couldn't have done this without you, but we'll say it anyway: You are what made us successful.



The garrison now turns its focus to closing out the end of the year on high notes, including supporting the ongoing online Finest Fundraiser and planning our holiday garrison celebration. Although we have no more scheduled tables for the rest of the year, there may be yet more opportunities to see us in action before the end of the year, so stay tuned! We still have more work to do, as we begin planning our events for the next year as well, but we have much to celebrate together in this happy time. We greatly look forward to what the future may bring and look back proudly on what truly was the Year of the Dog and our best one ever!

## REVOLUTIONARY GUARD (NEW ENGLAND)

For the second consecutive year, squad members from the Revolutionary Guard and our southern neighbors from the 13<sup>th</sup> Civil Defense invaded Rhode Island Comic Con in November!

Together, we raised a record-breaking \$2,237, with all proceeds headed to K9s For Warriors!!! This amount more than doubles our unit's previous single-event fundraising record, and thank you to all our RI fans for your amazing generosity, year after year!

See you in 2019!



## SOUTHERN COMMAND (GA)

The Southern Command had a fantastic year in 2018, attending shows in Georgia, Tennessee, and South Carolina. From Toylanta to JoeFest to the final JoeCon, our garrison worked in conjunction with other garrisons and members of the Finest to raise money for charity and recruit new faces into the fold! Newest member Charles P. joined us in October, and we most recently joined our Carolinas garrison at Retro-Toy Show in Greenville. We look forward to having an even bigger year in 2019, with plans to build a memorable display for JoeFest in June, and hope to see a few new Joes and Cobras joining our ranks in the near future!



## TASK FORCE 27 (FL)

Florida garrison has had a great year in 2018! We more than doubled the amount of events attended in the state along with a huge gain in membership, adding nine members to our team! Along with the new members, many more are in the works with plans to join the garrison soon which will help us further our reach in the state! Task Force 27 in 2018 is also happy to report that we nearly tripled the amount of donations raised by our garrison for K9s for Warriors compared to 2017, and we still are hoping to squeeze out some more using our successful new charity **silicone wrist bands** that have been a hit locally!

Moving into 2019, the Task Force is now in planning stages for upcoming events and potentially some new big prop builds to exhibit with. We have a big show in Miami in April with Ultracon, which will also have us once again hanging out with GI Joe legend Ron Rudat! Talks are in the works for many shows and conventions, with more details to be posted on our Facebook page once we are confirmed. For our approved members, we got some new gatherings in the works, including another big photoshoot! If you are in Florida, we would love to have you join our ever-growing garrison!



# IRON GRENADIERS

## A BRIEF HISTORY

**Iron Grenadiers made their debut 30 years ago, and since the creation of our first Detachment in late 2017 – the 1<sup>st</sup> Castle Guard Battalion (“Destro’s Anvil”) – the Finest has seen an explosion of Iron Grenadier-related costumes! Missouri Grenadier Chris R. brings us this exciting history of Laird Destro’s private army!**

The Iron Grenadier, labeled as Destro’s Elite Trooper, was first released in 1988 as part of Wave 7 for the G.I. Joe toyline. As we know from file-cards and the writings of Larry Hama, the Iron Grenadiers were handpicked from the Guard of Castle Destro to become soldiers in the Iron Grenadier Army.

*Grenadier* is a term first used in the 17th century for the most experienced and senior troops chosen to specialize in the use of grenades. As the proliferation of grenades occurred in the 18th century and beyond, *grenadier* was applied to soldiers chosen for their physical abilities to lead an assault. In the modern era, the term can be used to denote a veteran soldier.

Fans commonly point out that the packaging of the figure features the BattleForce 2000 logo, prompting speculation that Iron Grenadiers were intended to be a direct enemy of the futuristic G.I. Joe sub-unit - BattleForce 2000. This face-off between units never occurred in Marvel’s *G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero (ARAH)* comic or Sunbow cartoon, however, many futuristic elements can be found in the action figure.



The 1988 figure features a unique combination of design elements, including ceremonial, tactical, and futuristic. The helmet

combines a ceremonial top crest and ornate facepiece with the tactical element of a gas mask canister attachment at the “mouth.” Black, with red and gold accents, the uniform has a slightly futuristic design. The weapons are similar in that aspect with a ceremonial gold sword, a futuristic laser pistol, and a tactical sub-machine gun believed to be a M.A.R.S. Industries weapon similar to the durable Israeli Uzi designed in the late 1940s.

The original card artwork by Mark Pennington features a different helmet design, but most other elements are consistent with the figure. The primary SMG was altered from a standard Uzi to the MARS-designed SMG.

Upon release in 1988, Iron Grenadiers were a perfect pairing to the second version of Destro - military commander, arms dealer, and Scottish laird. Destro and his grenadiers complemented each other well with the base black

attire and red and gold accents, bringing ceremonial, tactical, and futuristic elements together into this all-new faction.

Laird Destro has been a staple in the ARAH comic series since debuting in issue #11 in May 1983. Destro and the Baroness frequently pop up in modern comics, including appearances in the prelude to the Cobra World Order, issue #219. In #254, readers received a special issue on Destro, and we see him in all his combat glory with a full-armored suit, and wrist rockets and grenades flying.





All Scottish lairds need an epic castle, and we were first introduced to Castle Destro (ARAH #57) after a failed Cobra attack on 'The Pit' that left Cobra Commander and Destro presumed dead. Destro returns to the British Isles and Castle Destro, where we are introduced to his force of private guards wearing kilts and glengarry garrison caps while primarily carrying SMGs similar to the British Sterling. When Destro solidifies his private guards a short time later and dons his new attire, Duncan - his trusted Sergeant Major - also changes uniforms from the kilt and brown jacket to the iconic Iron Grenadier black, red, and gold (ARAH #69 & 70).

We get our first glimpse of the full Iron Grenadier army when Destro gloriously leads an amphibious assault during the Cobra Island Civil War. During this conflict, Destro's DEMON tanks and AGP aircraft are tasked with attacking and securing the airfield of Cobra Island (ARAH #74).

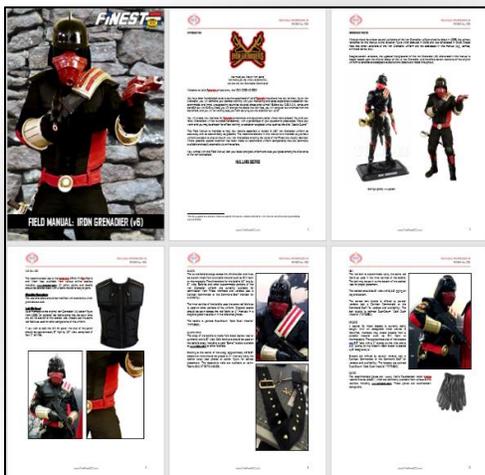
In addition to occasional appearances of Iron Grenadiers in the 250+ issues of ARAH comics, two issues of the *G.I. Joe: Special Missions* spinoff series are worth noting. In Special Missions #23 (July 1989), Scoop was assigned to Stalker's team in Sierra Gordo where they tried to rescue or capture El Jefe from the Iron Grenadiers. The

mission was a failure, and the injured Joe team barely escaped an Iron Grenadier assault. Special Missions #26 is the sad issue that seals the fate of the majority of the original Oktober Guard, as they face off against an Iron Grenadier force after recovering El Jefe from a base in Sierra Gordo. This issue also saw the first use of the Razorback vehicle, depicting it as a modular unit which could be quickly assembled from crates. This vehicle later unleashes a hail of bullets from its twin cannons riddling the truck Colonel Brekhov and Horror-Show are in. These are a few of the really good classic issues of G.I. Joe I recommend reading for all Iron Grenadier fans.

In 2008, the Iron Grenadier figure (version 6) was updated as part of Hasbro's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary toys. This new figure kept many design elements as an homage to the 1988 original, while adding a more-angled helmet design and additional details. Iron Grenadiers received another resurgence in 2012 with several exclusives available at the International G.I. Joe Convention in New Orleans, LA. This popular theme set of figures included several variations of Iron Grenadiers, Voltar, Sergeant Major Duncan, and more, once again facing their adversaries from Special Missions #26 – the Oktober Guard.



Due to the popularity of Iron Grenadiers, as well as release of the Iron Grenadier helmet from Pit Viper Studios, in 2017, the Finest launched the first ever faction-specific "Detachment," or sub-unit.



The "1st Castle Guard Battalion ('Destro's Anvil)" launched with immediate success as a string of new and veteran costumers assembled their very own Iron Grenadier costumes. Members of the detachment are spread over several garrisons, and have been seen at several events for the last twelve months. For more information on the Iron Grenadier costumers, check out the page at <https://www.facebook.com/destrosanvil/>

The official Finest Iron Grenadier Field Manual is currently under final Command Staff review and is expected to be published by the end of 2018, no doubt further surging the growth and expansion of Iron Grenadiers within the club. It's been 30 years since their original release, the Iron Grenadiers continue to be one of the most important factions in the G.I. Joe universe!

*The above is compiled from various sources, including second- and third-hand knowledge as well as my own personal interpretation. I would like to give credit to Ron Rudat, Len King, YoJoe.com, JoeBattlelines, and Hasbro. – Chris R.*

# THE UNCHARTED TERRITORY

**Reporting in from Germany, member Volker G. provides a unique insight on starting a Finest squad in areas of the world where G.I. Joe is less popular!**

**By Volker G. (aka Joseph B. Colton)**

It may come as a surprise to many fans of the franchise, but there are parts of the civilized world in which G.I. JOE is not a part of pop culture.

At all.

In Germany, for example, it is hardly known, mainly, because war toys have always been demonized in order to push a certain political agenda of pacifism and turning boys into girls – supposedly all to prevent Germany from becoming a Fourth Reich again.



Thus, a military action toy line had to be forced into being an adventure toy line when the German company Schildkröt marketed the 12" Joes as ACTION TEAM in the early-mid 70s.



That's how I got exposed to something of which I later learned was called G.I. JOE in other countries.

However, there were no Joe cartoons on TV and no 3.75" Joes on the pegs in the toy stores and, of course, no Joe comics, except if carried by specialized comic shops through direct import or in the newspaper shops at international airports.

You can now imagine how little impact, if any, G.I. JOE had on German kids besides maybe those happy few who lived next door to GIs or British soldiers and played with their kids.

Only with the availability of the internet and – believe it or not- the movie THE RISE OF COBRA, a limited interest was generated and toys started to make an appearance on the shelves.

Need I say that there were next to no toys marketed for RETALIATION over here?

To make a long story short: if you want something Joe-related you will have to get it from the USA by your own initiative and Joe fans are still few and far in between.

All this makes establishing a foothold for G.I. JOE costuming in this country a challenge to say the least.

Facebook is a nice tool, but it certainly is not the be-all, end-all.

It helps to contact people who MIGHT have an interest in the Joe-verse, but not everybody who gives one of your photos a 'like' will rally around the flag and put a costume together if they have no idea what the story behind the franchise is, who the characters are, etc.

There are some who cosplay Call of Duty or something along those lines, but even if you can install an interest in Joes in them, it takes a while to familiarize them with a rather complex and sometimes confusing system of story lines, characters and all that.

Attending conventions dressed as Joes is one thing, getting recognized as what you represent is another. So we slap branch tapes embroidered with G.I. JOE on our uniforms and add patches to increase recognition value, but setting up tables at conventions requires manpower and funds to finance flyers, stickers, backdrops and banners – something a one or two man operation may not be able to shoulder despite all enthusiasm on their part.

A large group attracts more members, even if the quality is mediocre.

So how to approach this Catch-22?

Hang on and try to infest everybody who might remotely be interested with Nanomites. If so, for how long are you going to do this until people start avoiding you?

Or shrug it off and be the Lone Ranger until you hang up the costume and look for something else to do? Or recruit Ghost, Lara Croft, Sheriff Rick, McGarrett, Hannibal Smith, Peggy Carter - deep six the idea of a pure G.I. JOE costuming squad and enjoy the company of each other?

Well, there I was. Alone and unafraid.

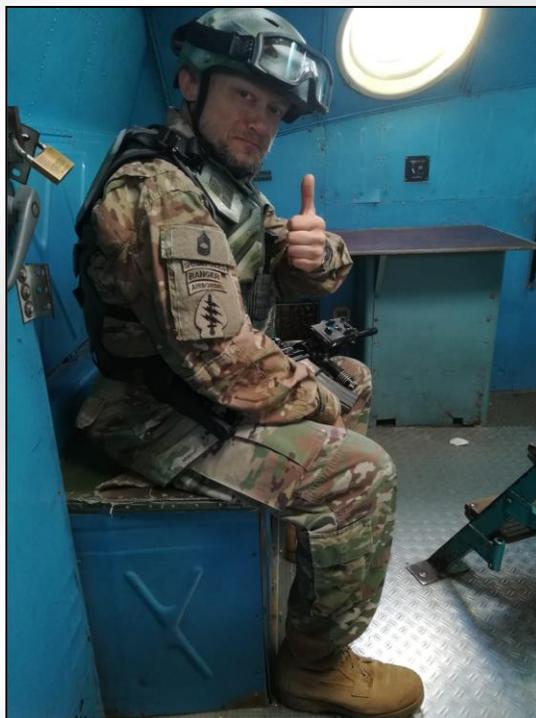
Actually, I'm not all alone. My son has a "green-shirt" costume, and then another chap showed up who's recently finished his classic Cobra Commander outfit. Yay! So technically I'm not a One Man Show any longer.

There's a young woman who's doing a great Black Widow and who might start a Baroness costume in 2019, then there's a guy I picked up on Facebook who was showing a generic Sheriff's Office SWAT kit who seemed happy to meet likeminded people and who looks like Clutch...and a Ghost cosplayer who could turn into Beachhead.

Will they be able to get a costume approved based on what items they already have? Is it more important in a country like this to get a group of people together who enjoy the Joe-verse and the company of other fans?

Who said this was going to be easy...

**Frontline wishes Volker G. the best of luck in starting a new Finest squad in Germany, and we're certain he'll succeed! If you're interested in applying for Finest membership and starting a new unit in your country, take a look at our [Resource Document on Forming Squads and Garrisons](#) to help you on your way!**



# INTELLIGENCE REPORTS

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

## EXCLUSIVE: NEW FIELD MANUALS COMING SOON!!!

UPDATE: As we've previously reported in Frontline, NEW FIELD MANUALS are coming soon! Creating high-quality costumes with uniformity in mind is a daunting task! Fortunately, the Finest provides Field Manuals for several popular characters to capture best practices and keep uniformity among the ranks! How else are we to build an army?

Frontline has learned that several all-new Field Manuals are currently under final Command Staff review, including the long-awaited guides for Alley Viper, Iron Grenadier, Steel Brigade, and more, with some expected to be published in December 2018!



## FACEBOOK: RECRUITMENT CENTER

Earlier this year, in an effort to provide a more-accessible place for approved members to interact with aspiring members building their very first costume, we launched the Finest [Recruitment Center](#) page on Facebook!

In just a few short months, our all-new Recruitment Center has gained nearly 500 members representing GI Joe costumers from all around the world documenting their costume builds with a goal of Finest membership. Be sure to check it out today!



## K9S FOR WARRIORS UPDATE !

In November 2018, our charity of choice, K9s For Warriors, announced some amazing new statistics! The organization has now rescued 940 dogs and 499 warriors! As always, we are happy to support such an inspiring cause!



## PIT VIPER STUDIOS - BLACK FRIDAY SALE!

Our friends at Pit Viper Studios have announced their 2018 Black Friday Sale!

All production helmets, gear, and kits are **25% off** through December 1<sup>st</sup>!

If you've been tempted to pull the trigger on your helmet and start a new costume, now is the time. It won't get cheaper than this for top-quality gear!

Contact them directly through their Facebook page or email them at [info@pitviperstudios.net](mailto:info@pitviperstudios.net), and be sure to tell 'em we sent you!

**BLACK FRIDAY SALE!**  
 Nov. 23 – Dec 1, 2018  
[INFO@PITVIPERSTUDIOS.NET](mailto:INFO@PITVIPERSTUDIOS.NET)  
**25% OFF!**

## BREAKING NEWS: FINEST TRADING CARDS – SERIES 4!

**FRONTLINE EXCLUSIVE:** As award-winning mustachioed journalist Hector Ramirez revealed earlier in this very issue, our Card-Vipers are currently hard at work on an updated design for finest trading cards... **SERIES 4!** There are currently **167** official Finest trading cards in existence (and some unofficial ones, but we don't talk about those!). Collectors already know the difficulty of finding them all!

### Finest Trading Cards:

- Series 1: 27 cards
  - Series 2: 54 cards plus 1 chase/sketch card
  - Series 3: 36 cards plus 1 chase/sketch card
  - Girls of the Finest Series 1: 12 cards (ultra-rare)
  - Girls of the Finest Series 2: 12 cards
  - Girls of the Finest Series 3: 12 cards
- TOTAL: 167 CARDS!**

Get your favorite photos and file-card description ready! Series 4 card submissions are expected to open in early 2019!



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

# THE HOT SEAT

**Frontline ambushed more than 25 Finest members after JoeCon in Chattanooga and asked a single question:**

**“What was your favorite JoeCon 2018 moment?”**

**This is what they said...**

My favorite moments were hanging out with friends after hours. They are why I come, year after year. It is like a family reunion, with the exception that I am happy to see everyone!

- Joe G., 31<sup>st</sup> Carrier Assault Brigade

Just seeing everyone! It made me really happy.

- Cindy P., Southern Command

Playing craps with Gray Childs during casino night was so much fun. I'll never forget it. But just spending time with friends, new and old, was special.

- Roger B., 13<sup>th</sup> Civil Defense

My favorite moment was recording the [Live “Last JoeCon” Podcast](#) with Johnny K. in the Marriott lobby with my extended family, the Finest! That was so much fun and unforgettable.

- Kevin R., Southern Command

Seeing all you guys again. It's all about the people. Cosplay comes second.

- Chuck P., Southern Command

Seeing the love and camaraderie that people have for each other. My favorite moment was two-fold. The casino night where everyone got dolled up for the last casino night and we stood around talking and reminiscing and laughing. The other was at the end of the con on Sunday - people were hugging and taking pictures and crying. People were pouring their hearts out but also determined they would see each other again. We would not lose this family. It was not going to be the end, just the end of this particular chapter.

- Joe C.; CO, Finest

Getting to see old friends from around the country and being able to help raise money for a great charity with the Finest.

- Erik N, Central Defense

Getting to hang out with my Finest family, the photoshoot. And seeing the great costumes.

- Tom W., Capital Defense Regiment



My favorite Joecon moment would have to be the first day I get to see all my friends. We are here for G.I Joe but the friendships and people we meet... nothing beats that.

- Josh E., 234<sup>th</sup> Tigerhawks

Staring at our table crew on Sunday afternoon, speechless and in disbelief, when we realized that we had just raised \$4,100 for K9s For Warriors.

- Johnny K., Capital Defense Regiment

Sunday, when I was kitted out in full Snow Serpent gear and grabbing a couple of pictures. While I was standing there a little girl wandered up to our prop rocket launcher intrigued but skittish. She posed and the photographer grabbed a quick picture before she ran off.

- Alex T.; XO, Finest

Probably that moment when we counted Saturday's donations...

- Ryan B.; CO, Central Defense

Spending time at the blackjack table with family and friends during the Casino Night. It was awesome doing my part to give to charity, while at the same time getting to act all diabolical in my Cobra Commander suit

- Erik N., Capital Defense Regiment

I can't limit it to one moment, nor can I say it in a few sentences. I hate to admit that my favorite parts of JoeCon had nothing to do with GI Joe, other than the love of all things Joe happened to be a common thread. I had the best time waiting in lines because I met some really cool folks (plus, Maggie snuck me a Zima in a thermos!). I had a blast hanging out with the caravan crew and going on adventures. Hell, William even became my con husband! There were tons of shenanigans! I REALLY enjoyed hanging out and meeting new people in the lobby each night, too! All the dinners were fun, and I had a blast in costumes. Raising a sh\*t ton of money was amazing! Even the long-ass car rides were a blast!

- Heather S., Capital Defense Regiment

There were many big moments in 2018: showing collectors the newly completed boxed book set, presenting a panel with Kirk Bozigian, and competing in the costume contest with some wacky 1983 gliders. But nothing tops the time spent with friends, and if I had to pick a single moment it would be the family dinner on Sunday night.

- Carson M., 31<sup>st</sup> Carrier Assault Brigade

My favorite part of JoeCon was nervously counting out Saturday's donations while four people watched.

- Dan N., Central Defense

Around closing time for the table on Saturday; we pulled in an even higher donation amount than Friday, proving the \$1,000 we raised at JoeCon last year wasn't just a fluke and that the community was all in to help with our efforts.

- William J.; CO, Capital Defense Regiment

It was lunch with Joe, Maggie and Lynne. It was good to see them slow down and breathe. They're usually all over the place!

- Chris S., Southern Command

Being in awe of the sheer number of people in the main hall for the Last Panel on Sunday, hearing all of the reactions and feeling the emotions of this community.

- Noel W., Southern Command

It's too early for me to think; I'll be brainy by lunch. (Later...) Just the moments of getting to enjoy the company of fellow Joe enthusiasts both in the club and at the show. Getting told by the designer of the original toxo zombie that he liked my costume and cheered for me in the costume contest was a great ego inflator.

- Rhudy W., Capital Defense Regiment

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**40TH**

**ANNIVERSARY**

**1985-2025**

JoeCon 2018 was a great year for the Finest in many ways, but one thing that stuck out to me was the awesome level of impressive costumes that our members brought to the event. I feel like we went all out with a plethora of costumes that covered a huge variety of components of the G.I. Joe Universe and done with great quality.

- Chris R.; CO, 234<sup>th</sup> Tigerhawks

Meeting Zartan and his family was pretty cool; it's great when families do stuff together.

- Kantis N., 234<sup>th</sup> Tigerhawks

Every time we get together it's like a family reunion. Toys and costumes come and go, but nothing tops those first hugs and handshakes I get when seeing members of my Finest Family for the first time in a while.

- Justin S.; CO, 31<sup>st</sup> Carrier Assault Brigade

My favorite moment was posing for a picture with the children and putting a smile on their faces. My second favorite moment was meeting fellow members of the FINEST for the first time.

- William E., Volunteer Assault Force

My favorite moment was walking through the doors and see all the smiling faces of my friends. Lots of hugs, lots of handshakes to start my weekend the best way!

- Stephen R., Southern Command



## **NOW YOU KNOW...**

**At JoeCon 2017 in Orlando, the Finest set a new club single-event fundraising record by collecting \$1,000 for K9s For Warriors at our booth throughout the weekend!**

**Our JoeCon 2018 goal was to raise more than \$1,000.**

**We succeeded... by raising a whopping**

# **\$4,100!**

**Thank you JoeCon for your generosity! A new club record is born!!!**

# THE ARMORY

**Need weapons or gear? Here are some Finest members and vendors to help you on your way!**

## 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](mailto:chris@negativeeleven.com)

## Patch Czar

Custom patch design and small production runs  
[www.facebook.com/patch.czar](http://www.facebook.com/patch.czar)

## Pit Viper Studios

Helmets, shields, armor, and more  
[www.pitviperstudios.net](http://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/](http://www.facebook.com/XeroProps/)  
[www.shapeways.com/shops/xeroprops](http://www.shapeways.com/shops/xeroprops)

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## COSTUME FIELD MANUALS



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