



Dragon INNOVATION

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2021



This document provides information to XVIII Airborne Corps Soldiers and Civilians, across all units and installations, about the Corps' focus on building a culture of innovation.

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"Why not use those who identify problems to help find a solution?"

– CW4 Brian Masters,
Project Ridgway



XVIII AIRBORNE CORPS DRAGON INNOVATION PROGRAM

National Security Innovation Network (NSIN): A community of problem solvers.

Have an idea to improve your unit, the XVIII Airborne Corps, or the Army?

Whether your idea solves a new problem or makes an old system more effective, we want to hear from you. Submit your ideas today!

Scan the QR code or click: <https://unum.nsin.us/xviii-airborne>



Access the Dragon Innovation Program!

1. Scan the QR code.
2. Click the menu button.
3. Select 'become a member'.
4. Create an account with an email and password (no CAC required).
5. Click activation link sent to your email.
6. Sign in, fill in your info or skip.
7. Take a tour of the site or skip.
8. Get after it and start innovating!

Culture



Processes



Ideas



Technology



LEADER PRESENCE TOOL



What is it? Originally developed by CW3 Jeremiah Savage for brigades within the 82nd ABN DIV, the Barracks Leader Presence is a reporting and tracking tool that Commanders and Senior Enlisted leaders can leverage to track leader presence in their barracks. Over time, we anticipate the tool will be helpful in assisting leaders to identify and stop harmful behaviors. The user interface queues off a QR code assigned to a Barracks/UIC to interface with a user tool that directs the leader to execute assigned activities on their barracks patrols. The tool is in its ALPHA version, a proof of concept running in Dragon Cloud IL-4 (NIPR). We currently have over 5,000 users.

What is next? SSG Matt Harp from 3/101, as the Program Manager, is moving the Leader Presence Tool to a BETA Version that will add the 18th FA BDE at Fort Bragg, NC and the 1/10th MTN DIV at Fort Drum, NY. Additionally, we are exploring data feeds and layers that may assist in understanding concentrations of serious incidents and criminal behavior. As such, the tool may ultimately help to target leader presence in the barracks to specific times or locations.

Why is this important? These tools help leaders and Soldiers alike while advancing a data-driven culture. They also teach our team how to expand low-code proofs of concept and test whether an idea is valid. Learning from disciplined user-feedback, we will make changes to optimize user experience.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH UNIVERSITIES

Building on our existing relationships with Vanderbilt University and the University of North Carolina Systems, we have recently signed an Education Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Middle Tennessee State University. Our Soldiers can now partner with over 250,000 students from 19 universities to access 3D printing, laser cutting, milling, and AI.



Middle Tennessee State University

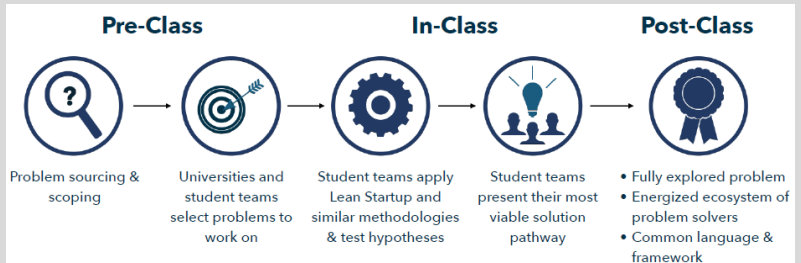
We're also engaged in talks with Duke University, Syracuse University, and Georgia Tech University to reach agreements that will further increase Soldier access across our XVIII Airborne Corps footprint.

If you have an idea that could benefit from university outreach, contact 1LT Nate Schnittger at nathan.e.schnittger.mil@mail.mil.



H4D HACKING FOR DEFENSE

H4D is a DoD program that brings talented engineering, business, and policy students to work on important national security problems over the course of an academic semester.



The next deadline for your H4D problem e-submissions in support of the Spring 2022 academic semester is 15 October 2021. Submit your problem here: <https://www.h4d.us/submit-a-problem>.

Dragon Innovation Team Training (DITT)

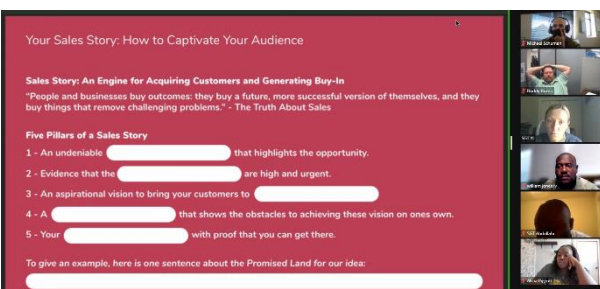


What is DITT?

DITT is an eight-day virtual course partnered through NSIN to connect our Soldiers and Civilians with the nation's brightest academics. During DITT, participants learn creative thinking, problem solving, and solution development skills. Each DITT serial has a unique course problem to bring positive change. DITT makes us better by educating our people, solving problems, and driving an innovative culture across XVIII Airborne Corps.

DITT Serial 2103: 7-16 September 2021

We just completed DITT Serial 2103 to optimize the readiness, resilience, health, conduct, and retention of first-term Soldiers in their first 180 days. As a result of the creative ideas pitched by participants, our Soldiers will be better supported. People first!



DITT students learning how to pose new ideas in ways that are tailored to their audience.

Want to join?

DITT Serial 2104 is scheduled 30 November to 9 December 2021

If selected:
You will receive joining instructions one week before the start of DITT.



Apply for DITT

MEET THE DRAGON INNOVATION TEAM



BG Bob Ritchie is the director of the XVIII Airborne Corps Innovation Program. An exchange officer from Canada, BG Ritchie is working to foster a culture of innovation across the Corps. “We must innovate to effectively support our people and optimize our readiness. Our Soldiers and Civilians are fully empowered to innovate by introducing new thoughts, technologies, processes, and equipment.”

BG Robert T. Ritchie, Director Dragon Innovation Program, robert.t.ritchie12.fm@army.mil, (910) 396-9209



As the co-lead for our AI-Enabled Corps, COL Dan Kearney engages with Army Futures Command and the tech industry to bring the latest data analytics, machine learning, and AI technologies to our tactical units.

“The future is in data. If we don’t build a data-literate force, we’re sunk. If we want to compete and win, we’ve got to invest in data.”

COL Daniel P. Kearney, Co-Director Project Ridgway, daniel.p.kearney.mil@army.mil, (910) 432-6969



As the co-lead for Project Ridgway within for our AI-Enabled Corps, COL Molly Solsbury engages with the entire ecosystem of data and technology experts within our Divisions and Separate Brigades.

“Start with People – Levering AI begins with a commitment to delivering for users, identifying and developing our most talented Soldiers, and re-shaping our organizations.”

COL Molly Solsbury, Co-Director Project Ridgway, melissa.a.solsbury.mil@army.mil, (910) 908-9722



MAJ Bethany Landeck, a Medical Service Corps Officer from Ohio, is a project officer for our AI-Enabled Corps. Bethany sees innovation as key to identifying requirements and informing modernization.

“Educating our formations on data literacy and fostering an organizational culture of innovation will cultivate agility and resiliency in the face of change.”

MAJ Bethany G. Landeck, Staff Officer, AI-Enabled Corps, bethany.g.landeck.mil@army.mil, (910) 396-9039



MAJ Evan Adams is an Information Systems Engineer. Evan is an action officer for our AI-Enabled Corps, conducting gap analysis and proposing solutions to modernize for the integration of current and emerging technologies.

“I see innovation as the key to developing an adaptive force centered around technology and smart Soldiers to go beyond the industrial age Army.”

MAJ Evan N. Adams, Technical Specialist, AI-Enabled Corps, evan.n.adams.mil@army.mil, (817) 994-5342



MAJ Louis Crist is a Military Intelligence Officer from New Jersey. Lou serves as an action officer for our AI-Enabled Corps and supports numerous chain of command initiatives throughout the Corps.

“Innovation isn’t about technology, gimmicks, or spending a lot of money. It’s about persistence, culture, and the ability to fight through organizational lethargy.”

MAJ Louis J. Crist, Chain of Command Entries on CAC-Enabled Site, louis.crist6.mil@army.mil, (910) 570-0455



1LT Nate Schnittger, a Missouri native, is responsible for managing and tracking Unbounded Entries for the Dragon Innovation Program on our National Security Innovation Network (NSIN) Portal.

“There are Soldiers all across XVIII Airborne Corps with ideas to improve how we do things. I see the NSIN Portal as a way for those Soldiers to speak up and be heard. Anyone of any rank can submit an idea; any idea can be heard.”

1LT Nate E. Schnittger, Unbounded Entries on NSIN Portal, Nathan.e.schnittger.mil@army.mil, (910) 570-0458

Meet the New Chief Technology Officer for XVIII Airborne Corps



Last month we welcomed our Chief Technology Officer (CTO). Mr. Jared Summers, a civilian executive technology expert, served in a variety of senior executive positions over a distinguished career both in the civilian community and the Department of Defense. Most recently, Jared served as the Chief Digital Officer for ExxonMobil driving global transformations across a Fortune 10 company.

Hiring Mr. Jared Summers, a corporate leader in data, analytics, and technology, as the XVIII Airborne Corps' CTO is a significant step to fulfilling our vision of a data-centric corps. Bringing a distinguished civilian executive who has experience in driving innovation and technology deployments into an XVIII Airborne Corps leadership position demonstrates our commitment to fostering a culture of innovation across all units.

"It is a great honor to serve in America's Contingency Corps where I hope to advance the Corps' technological and innovative efforts across all units and echelons."

INITIAL THOUGHTS FROM THE CTO ON INNOVATION

Innovation in many cases is solving today's challenges with today's technology. We want to get to a place where solutions are being built by our Soldiers, not for them. We need to empower and equip Soldiers *at all levels* to identify solutions that address problems quickly. This will result in faster iterations, more flexible products, and better satisfied customers.

This requires an expectation of leadership to encourage creativity, empower Soldiers, and recognize their efforts. It is also important to note that not all ideas will be successful and THAT IS OKAY; innovation requires courage and resiliency. What matters most is how we respond. You have my commitment and support to ensure we continue to drive our culture forward. ATW!



3ID



The Marne Innovation team hosted its first Think Tank on 13 August. Soldiers from across the division were introduced to like-minded individuals who are interested in using disruptive solutions to solve Army gaps and challenges. This inaugural event kick-started a culture of innovation within 3ID. We doubled down on opportunities to connect this group to free innovation resources such as Coursera courses and GAP fellowship programs. As of September, this population has doubled in size, with new talent being introduced into our effort.



Division Innovation Team

Primary: MAJ Dominic Pileri
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Deputy: CPT Ben McFarlin
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10th MTN DIV



The Fort Drum Installation Master Planning Division has requested support to study facility usage to include an algorithm review, analysis of data sets, and recommendations to improve data collection.



The Mountain Innovation Team has enlisted the help of our Plans, Analysis, and Integration! PAIO has its own set of innovators seeing things from a different perspective leading to innovative ideas and solutions.



Division Innovation Team

Primary: MAJ Mike Fitzgerald
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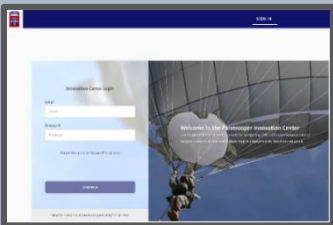
82nd ABN DIV



The 82nd ABN DIV recently hosted an Innovation Boot Camp that walked Paratroopers through the process of developing a sUAS, from coding through to material production.



Additionally, the All American Innovation Team developed a QR code-enabled problem statement/innovation idea submission tool through ARL and ACME that will enable all Paratroopers to submit innovative ideas and problem statements, building the culture of innovation in the 82nd.



Division Innovation Team

Primary: CPT David Matthews
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Deputy: 1LT Christopher Clarkin
christopher.r.clarkin.mil@army.mil



101st ABN DIV (AASLT)



The Screaming Eagle team conducted a soft opening of the EagleWerx Applied Tactical Innovation Center (ATIC), expanded their partnership with Vanderbilt University, forged a relationship with Middle Tennessee State University, and advanced several Soldier-inspired initiatives. The EagleWerx ATIC provides in-house engineering support, additive and subtractive manufacturing, electronic and robotics design, computer-assisted design, design thinking workshops, and much more!



Division Innovation Team

Primary: MAJ Benjie Hall
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Deputy: CPT Lauren Hansen-Armendariz
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DRAGON'S LAIR EPISODE 5



Innovation In Practice: 27 September 2021



1LT Mahdi Al-Husseini, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, proposed an AI-driven pilot feedback ecosystem to optimize pilot performance. 1LT Al-Husseini was declared the winner of Dragon's Lair Episode 5!

LTC Jason Harlan, 3rd Infantry Division, pitched a concept for a M1A2 cable towing system for like-vehicle recovery operations, eliminating the requirement for additional resources to conduct recovery operations.

MAJ Ben Hall, 101st Airborne Division, presented an Arms Room Automation System to digitize weapon sign-in and sign-out using Soldiers' Common Access Cards (CAC).

Capt. Steven Sheets, 16th Military Police Brigade, introduced his idea to conduct an in-depth sleep study of Military Police Soldiers to measure performance and effectiveness of sustained shift work.

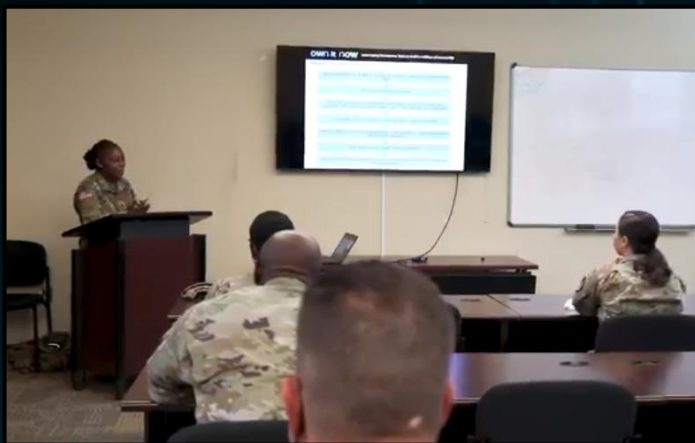
LTC Michael Hefti, 3rd Infantry Division, offered his idea for virtual reality goggles to train Soldiers on vehicle maintenance and repairs.

SFC Michele Rebelo, 2nd Battalion Security Forces Assistance Brigade, presented her SHARP Go-Bag: a go-to for everything a SARC and survivor would need immediately after a SHARP incident.

CW2 Matthew Swift, 82nd Airborne Division, demonstrated his solar panel prototype, a new technology to efficiently charge vehicle batteries on the go.

DRAGON'S LAIR – WHERE ARE THEY NOW? SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION

While we are moving out on new Dragon's Lair episodes, we are also aggressively working to implement the great ideas from past episodes. "The long-term viability of Dragon's Lair rests on our ability to implement the innovations that have already been presented," said Captain Javon Starnes, the producer of Dragon's Lair. "We've promised that we will uplift these ideas and implement them across all units. The XVIII Airborne Corps is making good on that promise."

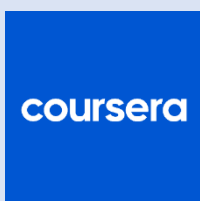


Dragon's Lair Episode 3 focused on the prevention of sexual harassment and sexual assault. Seven ideas were presented and some aspects of each one has already been implemented within XVIII Airborne Corps. Some of the policy adjustments include: changes to the Corps' military justice policy; changes to the way reports are handled; and changes to grade-determination boards following sexual assault cases. The Corps is also implementing SSG Shameka Dudley's idea for Virtual Reality (VR) SHARP training. The testing phase took off in July 2021 with great success!

AI-Enabled Corps



Our innovation efforts focus on building an AI-Enabled Corps. Within this pursuit, we have many educational opportunities for Soldiers and leaders on AI and data. Scan this QR code for opportunities for training and education.



DRAGON INNOVATION IN THE NEWS

With the momentum we've developed over the past year across all arms of the Dragon Innovation Program, we're now dipping our big toe into the information environment. Through targeted media engagements, we seek to share our XVIII Airborne Corps experiences and ensure alignment with the broader Army. Here are the results of the first steps in our media engagement strategy.

FEDSCOOP

DEFENSE

Army's 18th Airborne Corps hires former Exxon executive as CTO

On September 9th, FEDSCOOP had a nice write-up on the hiring of Mr. Jared Summers as our XVIII Airborne Corps CTO (see page 6).



Learn to Use Data or Risk Dying in Battle, New Army Project Teaches

Project Ridgway pushes soldiers to use—and even create—the artificial-intelligence tools that will confer military advantage.

PATRICK TUCKER | SEPTEMBER 22, 2021

We invited Pat Tucker, tech writer from "Defense One," to Fort Bragg to observe our Dragon Innovation Program platforms and initiatives for a multi-day trip last month.

On September 22nd, Pat wrote a great, 1,100-word piece highlighting Project Ridgway. Here's a quote from the article: "If it's successful, Project Ridgway could provide a

blueprint for how the Army – and possibly other services – prepares Soldiers and operators to use and build AI tools."

You can read the entire article on the Defense One website at this link: <https://www.defenseone.com/topic/artificial-intelligence/>



"If you want to
innovate and transform,
change your culture."

– Mr. Jock Padgett,
82nd Airborne Division
Chief Technical Officer

