

## **COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR (Retired) RICHARD E. MERRITT**

Command Sergeant Major (CSM) (R) Rick Merritt retired from active duty in the U.S. Army after serving almost 36 years since he entered the military in March of 1984.

He and his family returned from South Korea in December 2018 after he served as the Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) (for all US Army Forces) advising the Commander, EIGHTH US ARMY for 3 ½ years.

His last assignment before retirement was with the US Army Special Operations Command with duty at Hunter Army Airfield, attached to the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment.

His first duty assignment in the Army after becoming an Infantryman was with Company C, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, Illiesheim, Germany as a Rifleman and M60 Machine Gunner.

CSM (R) Merritt served 25 years in the 75th Ranger Regiment. His initial service started with Company B, 3rd Ranger Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning, Ga., as a Squad Automatic Rifleman, Fire Team Leader, Rifle Squad Leader, Weapons Squad Leader, and Rifle Platoon Sergeant. A follow-on assignment included one year with the Ranger Indoctrination Program at the 75th Ranger Regimental Ranger Training Detachment.

In 1996, he was assigned to the Jungle Operations Training Battalion as a Senior Instructor and Team Sergeant at the U.S. Army Jungle School, Fort Sherman, Panama. He served there for 17 months and then was assigned to 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, GA as a Rifle Platoon Sergeant with Company B, the Battalion Intelligence and Operations Sergeant in Headquarters Company and as the First Sergeant of Company C.

In 2002, he attended and graduated the US Army Sergeants Major Academy and returned to 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment in 2003 as the Battalion Operations Sergeant Major (SGM). In 2005, he became the Operations SGM for the 75th Ranger Regiment; six months later he returned once again to 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment as the CSM. In January 2009, he was selected as the CSM to the Regimental Special Troops Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment.

In 2010 he was selected as the 14th Regimental Sergeant Major for the 75th Ranger Regiment; during combat he also served as the CSEL for two US Joint Special Operations Command Task Forces, US JSOTF 17 in Iraq and US JSOTF 3-10 in Afghanistan for a cumulative time of four years.

In 2012 he became a nominative CSEL, serving as the Division Command Sergeant Major for the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Fort Drum, NY.

He was then reassigned to the Office of the Sergeant Major of the Army at the Pentagon in Washington D.C. in 2014 as his Liaison for special military projects. In 2015 he was selected as

the CSEL to the Commanding General, Eighth US Army Korea, Camp Yongsan and later to their new HQs on Camp Humphreys; during this time he also served as the acting CSEL for US Forces Korea for six months.

Command Sergeant Major (R) Merritt has attended all the standard Basic and Advanced Noncommissioned Officers Courses to include: the Battle Staff Course, First Sergeant Course; U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy- Class 53; and the British Section Commander's Course in Brecon, Wales. He has also completed various Army and Joint Nominative Senior Enlisted Leader Courses. CSM (R) Merritt graduated from Shawnee State University and was a Paramedic/ Firefighter before joining the US Army.

Command Sergeant Major (R) Merritt's awards and decorations include: the Army Distinguished Service Medal; Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters; Bronze Star Medal with four oak leaf clusters; Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal with arrowhead and star; Army Commendation Medal with four oak leaf clusters; Joint Meritorious Unit Award; Valorous Unit Award; Combat Infantryman's Badge, 2nd award; Expert Infantryman's Badge; the Global War on Terrorism Medals, and numerous other awards and badges. He has fought over five years and conducted over 1,500 raids under JSOC with the 75th Ranger Regiment during numerous combat operations. His multiple combat deployments over his career include Panama, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

In 2009 he was awarded the highest level of the Order of Saint Maurice, the Premicerius, by the National Infantry Association.

Rick was also honored in 2014 as he was inducted as a Distinguished Member of the 75th Ranger Regiment by order of the Secretary of the Army.

In 2020 at Fort Drum, NY he was inducted into the first 10th Mountain Division "Warrior Legends" Hall of Fame.

Command Sergeant Major (R) Merritt is married to the former Elizabeth Henderson, of Savannah, Ga.; they reside in Richmond Hill, GA with their two children; a 17 year old son, Lindsey and their daughter Bonnie, 16.

As a Soldier and Ranger for Life Rick continues giving back to his Army volunteering as a keynote speaker and participates in unit Leadership Professional Development. He also serves as the 75th Ranger Regiment Association Unit Director for the 1st Battalion (Savannah- HAAF, GA) and volunteers as a board member on the Sua Sponte Foundation, an advocacy/support group for veterans, active duty Rangers and their Gold Star Families.

He is currently consulting as the Director, US Army Special Operations Programs for Republic Mission System, INC. and a Military Consultant with Daniel Defense.