



# VERTICAL RISE

Volume 1

The Official Newsletter of the Pointe du Hoc Foundation

Issue 1 – April 2016

## 2015's Ranger Regatta a Solid Success



Tacoma Yacht Club and the Nisqually Tribe help raise \$43,000 to benefit Ranger support programs

**T**hursday, August 27<sup>th</sup> was a banner day for the Pointe du Hoc Foundation. At 9AM, Fourteen motor yachts crewed by members of the Tacoma Yacht Club sailed around a sun-drenched Commencement Bay, each carrying a payload of donors and friends of the Foundation.

After two hours of cruising and planned activities, the boats docked at the Yacht Club's Wollochet Outstation, a beautiful inlet near Gig Harbor, Washington. The captains, crews and guests came ashore and were greeted by a catered lunch showcasing grilled salmon and steamer clams, donated and prepared in the traditional way by members of the local Nisqually Tribe. Guests had an opportunity to review displays of silent auction items ranging from an autographed Mariners baseball, to an AR-15 rifle, to art prints signed by Ranger Medal of Honor awardee, Master Sergeant Leroy Petry.

By 3:30 PM, a happy group of donors and friends of the Foundation were asking when next year's fundraiser would be scheduled. And we're ready to commit to a date at this point. So put a note on your calendars and tell your friends that our next event is on **August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016**, with location and theme to be announced!

## Donor Profile: Mike Opitz



Army Ranger turned local businessman gives to benefit brothers in arms

**A** well-known South Puget Sound businessman, Mike Opitz served as an Army Infantry Officer in the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 501<sup>st</sup> Airborne Infantry Battalion in Alaska. He then came to Fort Lewis and served as a weapons platoon leader and as the Battalion Training Officer with 2<sup>d</sup> Ranger Battalion.

After the Army, Mike worked the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Mike moved back to Washington State to found Trans Northwest Construction, Inc., based in Olympia. Mike continues as its CEO.

Branching out in 2005, Mike built the first Wave Carwash in Lacey. The Wave currently has five locations, with number six on the way.

Mike later answered our call to serve as a Board member for the Pointe du Hoc Foundation, and we owe him a great deal for his service and his generosity in offering staff support and meeting space to the Foundation.

Mike is married to retired US Army veteran Katie Opitz. They and their three children live in Olympia, Washington.

Do you have a donor or member you'd like to know better? An accomplishment you'd like to share with other friends of the Foundation? Drop us an e-mail at [info@pointeduhocfoundation.com](mailto:info@pointeduhocfoundation.com) and we'll make sure we get the word out to our family of supporters.



## Follow Pointe du Hoc Online

An easy way to keep up with your Foundation's latest news and activities is to visit us on the World Wide Web. We maintain an active online presence through our website, <https://www.pointeduhocfoundation.com/>, and at the Foundation's official Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Pointe-du-Hoc-Foundation/185950588135423>.



## Around Our Community

Teams of JBLM Rangers and Special Forces "Night Stalkers" joined forces January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 at the Fight for Air Stair Climb, a race up Seattle's Rainier Tower sponsored by the American Lung Association. The Pointe du Hoc Foundation sponsored three Ranger teams in this annual fundraiser, the second year that we sponsored 2d Ranger Battalion soldiers in this very worthy cause.

## What Happens to Your Money?

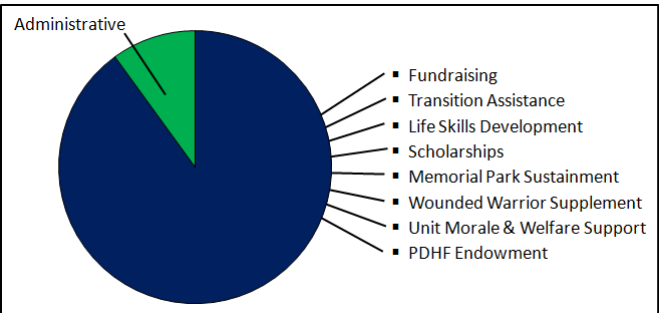
You can be confident that the Foundation is using your donations the way you'd want us to

If you've been reading the news lately, you're probably as disappointed as we are that some popular military charities aren't spending as much as they should on the soldiers who need their help.

We want to assure you that your donations to the Pointe du Hoc Foundation are serving the needs of Army Rangers and their families.

The Foundation is All-Volunteer. From the Chairman down, no one in Pointe du Hoc takes a cent in compensation for his or her work.

You should also know that at least 90 cents of every dollar donated to the Foundation goes directly to the needs of Rangers and their families. Here is our 2016 allocation strategy.



We will be reviewing the prudence of our planned Wounded Warrior supplement in light of recent disclosures.

Thank you all again for your support and your generosity. The Foundation is only a few years old, but we have accomplished some mighty tasks with your help. We are confident that, with you behind us, we will do a lot more for the Army's finest in the years to come.

## More Outreach, Opportunities to Help

In future newsletters, the Foundation will keep you up to date on future activities, fundraising and marketing opportunities, and the work that we and our partners are doing to support JBLM's Rangers and their families. We welcome donations and referrals year-round. If you would like to help us, please drop us a line at [info@pointeduhocfoundation.com](mailto:info@pointeduhocfoundation.com).



## Ranger Profile: Mariano Leon-Guerrero

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**R**etired Command Sergeant Major Mariano Leon-Guerrero was born on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1948, on the island of Guam, a United States Territory. He enlisted in the Army on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1966 and completed Basic Combat Training at Fort Ord, California. After two tours in Vietnam, he served as Drill and Senior Drill Sergeant of the same Training Company he took Basic training with at Fort Ord, California.



After these assignments, CSM Leon-Guerrero served as an Assistant Operations Sergeant, Platoon Sergeant, First Sergeant, and Command Sergeant Major of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>d</sup> Ranger Battalions, 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment. To conclude an honorable and distinguished military service that span the Vietnam and Desert Storm era, CSM Leon-Guerrero concluded his distinguished career as the Command Sergeant Major of his beloved 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment in February 1993.

During his career, "L.G." was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medals, Combat and Expert Infantryman's Badges, the Ranger Tab, Senior and Master Parachutist Badge with Bronze Star, Drill Sergeant's Badge, the Israeli, Jordanian and Canadian Parachutist Badges, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal with arrowhead, and numerous campaign service medals.

CSM Leon-Guerrero was inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1997 at Fort Benning, Georgia. This award honors and preserves the memory, spirit and contributions of America's most extraordinary Rangers.

Pursuing another dream vocation, "Mr. L.G.," as his students fondly called him, taught Social Studies at Puyallup's Governor John R. Rogers High School from 1994 – 2000, and is now a School Counselor for Puyallup's Emerald Ridge High School from 2001 to present.

Mr. Leon-Guerrero holds a Bachelor of Arts, a Teacher Certification, and Master of Education Degrees in Guidance and Counseling and Educational Technology.

For the academic year 2009-2010, Mr. LG was selected as Educator of the Year at Emerald Ridge for the Daffodil Pageant.

Since the incorporation of the Pointe du Hoc Foundation, L.G. has continued to serve the Ranger community as the Board Treasurer, and now as our senior military advisor.

CSM Leon-Guerrero is married to the former Jayne Scharff. They have four children, twins Roy & Robert, RinaMarie, and Mario. L.G. and Jayne live in DuPont, WA.

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### Rally Point 6 Links Rangers with Jobs



Local non-profit leads the way in  
serving JBLM's separating soldiers

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**T**he Pointe du Hoc Foundation is pleased to support the work of Lakewood, Washington's own Rally Point 6. This non-profit organization provides job training, search and referral services for soldiers leaving the service.

Many soldiers with valuable job skills leave the services every year, for a variety of reasons. As the services downsize over the next several years, many young men and women will seek assistance in transitioning to civilian life. This includes soldiers and airmen separating at JBLM and staying in the area, as well as soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines separating and returning to Western Washington. RP6 provides a valuable bridge to civilian life for these men and women.

RP6 was founded by retired Army Colonel and former Lakewood Police Chief James "Larry" Saunders and retired Army Aviator, CW4 Anne Sprute. Both recognized the need for a one-stop resource center for departing veterans. RP6 even provides day care for veterans with children.

The RP6 model has been so successful that in mid-2015, the USO announced its intention to emulate their example in setting up their own outreach centers at military bases through the United States.

Learn more about Rally Point 6 at <http://rp6.org/>.

## Spring 2016 Events



Check your availability for these upcoming PDHF-sponsored activities

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The Pointe du Hoc Foundation has events scheduled for Ranger families, and for our sponsors, donors and friends.

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### LIFE SKILLS - FINANCIAL PLANNING



First up, on May 3rd, 2016, we will be sponsoring a financial planning seminar for JBLM Rangers and their families at the 2/75 headquarters building on JBLM.

Our presenter is Mr. Charles Hartford, a Merrill Lynch Wealth Management financial planner and former Army Ranger with the 1/75 Battalion, Fort Benning, GA.

Mr. Hartford joined Merrill Lynch in 2009. He holds a bachelor's degree from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and two master's degrees — in history from the University of Kentucky and in diplomacy and international commerce from the Patterson School, University of Kentucky.



The seminar starts at 6 PM.

Future seminars are in the works for family members and Rangers who are new to 2/75 or unable to make the first scheduled date.

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### RANGER OPEN HOUSE



Next up, for our donors and guests, we have a Ranger Open House scheduled for June 1<sup>st</sup> at the Ranger headquarters, Joint Base Lewis-McChord. The open house will run from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

Activities scheduled include Ranger unit capability briefings, a tour of the Ranger Complex, a close look at the Rangers' unique special operations equipment, and a visit to the Second Battalion Memorial, built through the sponsorship of the Pointe du Hoc Foundation and its donors and partners. The memorial honors those 2/75 Rangers who have fallen in the line of duty.

We hope that you can make this event, and get to know the soldiers and families that your generosity helps to support.

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The Pointe du Hoc Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization commemorating and supporting the Rangers of Second Battalion and their families.

We provide academic scholarships, transition assistance, life skills counseling, wounded warrior family support and unit activity assistance.

The Pointe du Hoc Foundation is not officially endorsed by the Department of Defense or the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment.

Contributions to the Foundation are tax deductible. The Foundation respects the privacy of its donors and will not share or sell donor information.