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## PHASE 4 Profile: U.S. Army Specialist John Herold

John Herold, Jr., formerly nicknamed “Hairball”, is now Specialist John Herold of the United States Army. Thanks to PHASE 4 Learning Center providing John with an opportunity to earn his high school diploma, John graduated in 2005 after having dropped out of school during his sophomore year.

John was in a state of crisis as his life was falling apart due to poor decisions which led to severe consequences, including sleeping beneath the 15<sup>th</sup> Street bridge in Pittsburgh for 28 consecutive days.

Realizing that he had no future unless he made big changes, John enlisted in the United States Army Reserves. His career began by completing Basic Training at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, followed by a heavy equipment operators course at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. John remained in the Reserves for seven months. However, he quickly realized that he needed a “routine” that would ultimately provide more exposure to life’s opportunities and a career as an American Soldier.

FC SGT Wiley aided John in going active duty whereby he went to the Airborne Orientation Course at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina. From Airborne School at Ft. Benning, Georgia, John entered a Parachute Rigger’s Course in Virginia where he graduated with honors. He was immediately sent to Germany where he has been stationed since 2007.



John Herold (left) and team at the Rigger Rodeo at Fort Bragg, North Carolina



John Herold (3rd from left) and team accepting the trophy for winning the 2008 Rigger Rodeo



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In two years, Specialist Herold has traveled to eight countries. Among his numerous accomplishments, Herold led his Rigger Team to victory in the 2008 Rigger Rodeo (becoming the first team in over 40 years from outside Ft. Bragg, North Carolina to win), received distinguished honors out of 427 Soldiers at the Warrior Leadership Course, trained at the French Airborne School, and has completed numerous missions in Italy.

One of John's most-memorable experiences was when he was one of over 400 paratroopers to jump into Normandy for the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Invasion of Normandy. President and Mrs. Obama were present for this historical occasion and Specialist Herold had the honor of saluting --- and meeting --- our Commander in Chief.

From a boy beneath a bridge to a Soldier in the sky, Specialist John Herold is grateful to PHASE 4 and to the United States Army for providing him with the means to have a future he never dreamed possible. "I never thought I'd be here. It's important to stay stable in life; the Army gives me that stability. I'm proud of the transition I've made: I'm a Soldier and a great Soldier. One day I'll be a Green Beret because they are the best of the best. Finally, I'm at peace with who I am and who I'll become."



John Herold (back row, far right) and other Paratroopers on Omaha Beach in Normandy France for the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day invasion



John Herold shakes hands with President Obama in Normandy France at the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day invasion