

The Draper Combat Leadership Award

The annual Draper Combat Leadership Award recognizes the outstanding armor company or cavalry troop in each division, separate brigade, and armored cavalry regiment in the U.S. Army, to include Army Reserve and National Guard units. It is not a new award. The history of the prestigious program is the legacy of LTC Wycliffe P. Draper. In 1924, LTC Draper developed a plan to test and recognize combat leadership in small cavalry units. The first tests were held at Fort Riley, Kansas, then the Cavalry School.

Since that start nearly 70 years ago, the award has evolved. In 1928, LTC Draper created a trust fund to ensure the performance of the award and the competition expanded from Fort Riley to posts throughout the United States. In 1939, cavalry regiments that had been mechanized began to compete for the award, thus ensuring its continued relevance in a modernized Army.

During World War II, the competition was suspended, but was resumed in 1944 under the title of the Armored Cavalry Leadership Award to reflect the new reality of the force. Since then, the competition has continued to evolve.

Today the Draper Combat Leadership Award, represented by the "Goodrich Riding Trophy," is awarded not on the results of a test, but on the overall performance of a unit. This was done for both practical and economical reasons. Economically, it is no longer necessary to allocate funds for a "Draper Test"; the results of all of a unit's field exercises are considered during the competition. Examining the functioning of a unit throughout the calendar year (Jan-Dec) gives a better evaluation of the true performance of a unit and its leaders than a one-time test.

All company-sized armor/cavalry units assigned to divisions, separate brigades, armored cavalry regiments, or U.S. Army Reserve Readiness Regions are eligible



for consideration for the award. Air cavalry troops and attack helicopter companies organic to armored and cavalry ground units are also eligible. The program is open to U.S. Army, Army Reserve, and National Guard units. Troop/company winners of the Draper Leadership Award need to be identified NLT 31 March of the following year by memorandum to the Draper Custodian. Troop/company commanders, first sergeants, and the unit will receive the Draper plaque. Army Regulation 672-73 will answer most questions concerning the award process.

The Draper Award Program also recognizes individuals for their demonstrated leadership in courses at Fort Knox, recognizing the outstanding leadership graduates in both ANCOC and AOBC for their contributions and efforts while students.

The point of contact for any questions regarding the Draper Leadership Award Program is USAARMC, ATTN: ATZK-ARP (Draper Custodian), Fort Knox, KY 40121, phone: DSN 464-1321/1439 or commercial (502) 624-1321/1439. FAX: DSN 464-7585, commercial (502) 624-7585.