

From Military Intelligence to the Caisson: Always Serving Others

by First Sergeant David Scott



SSG Iron C. Thomley joined the U.S. Army on 11 January 2010 as a 35M (Human Intelligence Collector), a job he chose because of his lifelong goal to become a detective. Following Advanced Individual Training, SSG Thomley arrived at Fort Hood, Texas, where he was assigned to the 303rd Military Intelligence Battalion, 504th Expeditionary Military Intelligence Brigade, from 2010 until 2016. SSG Thomley honed his skills as a human intelligence collector during three deployments to Regional Command-East, Afghanistan.

SSG Thomley followed his operational time with 3 years of service as an instructor at the 35M 10-Level course at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. There he developed a passion for teaching and positively impacting young Soldiers and the future of the Military Intelligence Corps. This is also where SSG Thomley was introduced to B Troop, 4th U.S. Cavalry Regiment (Memorial), one of the most famous and most decorated regiments in the U.S. Army. SSG Thomley's roots, having been born on a peanut farm in Ozark, Alabama, and growing up around horses, along with his dedication to honoring the history and traditions of the military, led to his applying for the all-volunteer unit, ultimately changing the trajectory of his career. He was selected as a trooper within the regiment and sacrificed countless hours of his personal time assisting around the stables and performing in ceremonies.

As a result of his contributions to B Troop, SSG Thomley was given the opportunity to reenlist and transfer to the Fort Sam Houston Caisson Section in November 2018. This is one of only two active duty, full-time caisson units in the Army. It performs several ceremonies per week honoring fallen

heroes at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery. Since his arrival, SSG Thomley has completed his horsemanship training and is assisting in standing up a second team within the section.

While SSG Thomley loves the work he is doing with the section and what he calls the "equine therapy" of working around horses, he is very clear about his true motivation and mission. "The caisson is the last interaction with the military for Families of the fallen...that is what is important. It's all about the Families and honoring their loved ones."

SSG Thomley plans to continue his Army career until retirement and will complete his bachelor's degree in intelligence studies with an emphasis in human intelligence later this year. He also hopes to continue serving in ways that allow him to employ his passions for teaching and working with horses. ✨



Photo by Lara Polmier

CPT Ariel Alcaide, SGT Iron Thomley, SSG Phillip Lovato, COL Keith McVeigh, SGT Kascia Vigil, and CPT Omar Padrocortes, the five graduates of B Troop, 4th U.S. Cavalry Regiment (Memorial) Cavalry Riding School, are presented with their spurs May 5, 2017, at Brown Parade Field.

1SG David Scott is the First Sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 470th Military Intelligence (MI) Brigade (Theater). His previous assignment was MI company observer-coach-trainer at the National Training Center. 1SG Scott holds an associates of applied science degree in intelligence operations and is a digital intelligence systems master gunner. His operational experience includes three deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.



A caisson is a two-wheeled cart designed to carry artillery ammunition. Caissons are also used to bear the casket of the deceased in some state and military funerals, for example, for burials at Arlington National Cemetery and for state funerals for U.S. government dignitaries, including the President of the United States.