



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 6, 2022

LTC ROBERT K. BEALE '02 SELECTED FOR 2022 NININGER AWARD

West Point, NY: The West Point Association of Graduates is pleased to announce that Lieutenant Colonel Robert K. Beale, Class of 2002, has been selected to receive the 2022 Alexander R. Nininger Award for Valor at Arms, which will be presented on October 20, 2022 at West Point, New York.

On September 14, 2011, then Captain Beale displayed exceptional valor, courage, and leadership as the Pilot and Air Mission Commander (AMC) for 3rd Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) while assigned to the Combined Joint Special Operations Air Component in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Beale was returning from a planned operation leading five Chinook helicopters when he heard a nine-line medevac request come over an open channel. As the AMC, he did a quick calculation and determined his helicopter was 12 minutes away from a wounded service member. After receiving approval from his chain of command, he diverted to what turned out to be a Navy EOD tech who had been wounded by an improvised explosive device. Beale decided to conduct an immediate daylight hoist extraction without fire support while under heavy RPG fire. After hoisting the flight medic to the wounded EOD Tech, he repositioned his Chinook to a nearby field, successfully extracting him and (per medical personnel) saving his life. According to citation of the Silver Star that Beale received for his actions on that day, "His calm demeanor and poise under fire instilled confidence in his crew, allowing them to maintain their composure and situational awareness while evacuating the casualty."

In addition to his Silver Star, Beale has been awarded four Bronze Stars, five Meritorious Service Medals, three Air Medals, the Combat Action Badge, the Master Aviator Badge, the Parachutist Badge, and the Army Staff Badge.

Beale, who has been deployed more than a dozen times during his career, is currently serving at U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and completed a Master of Arts in International Relations from Webster University.

About the Nininger Award for Valor at Arms

The West Point Association of Graduates Nininger Award is presented annually to a graduate who is an exemplar of heroic action in battle. The Alexander R. Nininger Award is funded by a generous endowment from E. Doug Kenna '45 and his wife, Jean. The Nininger Award is named in honor of Lieutenant Alexander R. "Sandy" Nininger Jr. '41, the first recipient of the Medal of Honor in World War II. On January 12, 1942, Nininger voluntarily attached himself to another company in his Philippine Scouts regiment that was under heavy attack by Japanese forces near Abucay, Bataan. Wounded several times, he continued to advance in a counterattack and destroy enemy positions until he was killed.

About the West Point Association of Graduates

The West Point Association of Graduates (WPAOG) is among America's oldest educational alumni associations. Founded in 1869, the Association was established "to cherish the memories of [its] Alma Mater, and to promote the fraternal fellowship of its graduates," many of whom had recently fought against each other in the Civil War. Today, WPAOG has evolved into a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to furthering the ideals and promoting the welfare of West Point, and to serving and supporting the more than 55,000 living West Point graduates. Its philanthropic pursuits maintain a Margin of Excellence for cadets attending the United States Military Academy. For more information see WestPointAOG.org.

About West Point

The U.S. Military Academy at West Point is a four-year, co-educational, federal, liberal arts college located 50 miles north of New York City. It was founded in 1802 as America's first college of engineering and continues today as the world's premier leader-development institution, consistently ranked among top colleges in the country. Its mission remains constant—to educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the nation as an officer in the U.S. Army. For more information, go to WestPoint.edu.

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