

# The Bandera PROPHEET

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Bandera Honors Veterans features Purple Heart Keynoter

By Susan Junker

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Infantryman, Sergeant (Retired) Scott Gossett, the keynote speaker for the Nov. 7 Bandera Honors Veterans celebration, will share his amazing journey from Army infantry recruit to surviving the impact of a 200-pound Improvised Explosive Device (IED) on a 19-ton Stryker vehicle. A “Stryker” is a highly deployable, eight-wheeled armored vehicle used by the U.S Army infantry. It can sustain speeds of 60 mph with a 350 horsepower Caterpillar engine and sports several machine guns. Since 2002, its firepower, battlefield mobility, survivability and versatility, with reduced logistics requirements, has deployed worldwide. This vehicle is four tons shy of the weight of the average school bus.

The Purple Heart medal is presented to service members who have been wounded or killed as a result of enemy action while serving in the United States military. It is a solemn distinction and means a service member has greatly sacrificed themselves, or paid the ultimate price in the line of duty. The Purple Heart medal features George Washington’s likeness on a purple background which represents courage and bravery. It is the oldest military award still presented to American service members. Gossett received the Purple Heart medal in 2010 recognizing his extensive wounds and sacrifice after that IED exploded his Stryker in Afghanistan.

“I always wanted to go into the Army,” Gossett said.

He did join the Army – twice, in fact: in 2003 and again in 2006: active duty six years and the National Guard for three. His service included overseas deployments, hurricane relief missions and resulted in

numerous awards recognizing his performance excellence. Gossett was a senior in high school when the 9-11-2001 attack occurred, attended college, worked in banking, served his country and is a decorated combat veteran and community leader today. Gossett was medically retired in 2010 after spending over six months in several hospitals including the San Antonio Military Medical Center (SAMMC) recovering from extensive injuries.

We are honored to have Sergeant Gossett and his family in our community. His story of service and sacrifice is the real meaning behind the annual 'Bandera Honors Veterans' celebration. This is a very special warrior whose remarks should not be missed.

Scott, his wife Jennifer and their three daughters make their home in Bandera. He is the Headmaster at Pipe Creek Christian School and a leader at White Rock Christian Fellowship. Among his many charitable endeavors, on Memorial Day 2020, Scott organized and led the first annual Fallen Soldiers Texas Hill Country Ruck: a 12-mile hike from Medina to Bandera.

The Nov. 7 Honors Program on the Courthouse Lawn will begin at 10:30 a.m., followed by the parade starting from the Bandera City Park at noon. All veterans are invited to join Gossett and his family on the special float loading on Pecan Street next to the Courthouse. Family displays and information will be open for viewing at 9:30 a.m.

A free barbeque lunch for veterans and their spouses will be served on the Courthouse lawn (Hackberry St side) at 1 p.m.

For more information on any of the events, call 830-796-7528, 210-788-9160 or Facebook pages for the American Legion Post 157 and Bandera Military and Veterans.