

Excellence in the Face of Challenge  
335th Signal Command (Theater)  
Courtesy Story  
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When Staff Sergeant Preston Hough stepped into his role in the U.S. Army, he was driven by a hunger to excel and a commitment to serve the nation. Today, we trace his journey as the latest recipient of the Expert Soldier Badge (ESB) – an honor that symbolizes the epitome of professionalism and competence in the U.S. Army.

The ESB, introduced in 2019, recognizes soldiers who demonstrate a mastery of critical tasks. These tasks build a foundation of professional skills that promote readiness and lethality. Earning the ESB is no easy feat, and it's a testament to Hough's dedication, skill, and unwavering commitment.

Born and raised in Pittsburg, PA, Hough enlisted in the Army after graduating from high school, driven by a sense of patriotism and a desire to challenge himself. He is assigned to the 335th Signal Command (Theater), as the Chief Paralegal NCO.

"When I was competing for the ESB, I felt nervous, motivated, and determined, in that order," said Hough. His pursuit of the ESB was motivated by his dedication to himself and a desire to lead by example. "I didn't join the Army for anything else than to be the best person I can be. So, to showcase my skills at being the best, at being an expert at soldier level skills. I jumped on that opportunity. I wanted to be able to display that", he said.

The path to the ESB is a demanding one, requiring soldiers to pass a physical fitness test, day, and night land navigation, a 12-mile foot march, and more than 30 individual tasks covering a broad range of skills. Hough's unwavering determination and meticulous attention to detail carried him through these challenges.

Among his many achievements during the ESB testing, Hough excelled notably in every facet of the competition, being one of only 3 soldiers to obtain a first time pass in each event. Showcasing his ability to perform at a high level under stressful conditions.

Presented with the ESB by Major General Eugene J. LeBoeuf, Deputy Commanding General of U.S. Army Reserve Command, Hough stood proudly representing the embodiment of the 335th Signal Command (Theater) and the Army's commitment to readiness and excellence.

While the ESB is a significant personal achievement, Hough views it as a shared victory. "My advice would be this. Do it. Don't be afraid to risk failure. Go to it. Give it your best shot. And if you don't get it, do it again." he said.

"When I went to Expert Soldier Badge, I had unwavering support from my command team, Major General Tina Boyd and Command Sergeant Major Russell Price." Said Hough. CSM Price commented. "Events like this remind me why I'm in the Army Reserve. Right? So, I love the team that we're on, the 335th representing very well, we always represent very well."

"Now that I've got my expert soldier badge and knowing that not very many people in the United States Army Reserve have it. It makes me feel motivated. It also makes me feel pressured. I feel pressured as a leader to encourage other Soldiers in the United States Army Reserve to compete for

it.”

As we celebrate Staff Sergeant Hough’s remarkable achievement, we're reminded of the Army Reserve core values and the exceptional individuals who live them every day. His journey to the ESB embodies the Army Reserve and the 335th Signal Command’s (T) commitment to readiness, professional growth, and the relentless pursuit of excellence – qualities that make the U.S. Army Reserve lethal and ready to accomplish any mission stateside and abroad.