

Rod was born in northern Illinois, and spent his youth bouncing between there and southern Texas where he lived in the ranches outside of Laredo. Having such extreme cultural variances molded him into a very flexible person understanding the need to adapt to various situations as he learned to navigate public transportation in the north, or saddled up and rode horseback between villages in the south. Growing up in a family with a rich military heritage it only seemed right join the Army when after graduating high school his decision on life was uncertain. In 1995 he enlisted in the US Army as an 11B Infantryman, he would spend the next 7 years doing this from Asia, to Alaska to Europe, the whole time though understanding there was a greater calling in military. In 2002 he would join the "training team" with the 20th Special Forces Group, where he prepared for and completed the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC). This course left him at a crossroads of options, in the end he decided to move to 1st BN 10th Special Forces Group to work alongside good friend Fred Lewis. At 1-10 Rod operated as an 18D (Special Forces Medic), completing several trips to Africa, Afghanistan and in Europe. In 2010 he was transferred to the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare and School where he works for 3 years helping to mold and care for students tempting their fate at the SFQC. After this 3 year tour Rod was blessed with yet another opportunity to work at 1-10, however this time was different as he was a seasoned soldier with a lot of information to share, and with that helped develop several other junior medics until the call was needed for an 18Z (Special Forces Operations Sergeant/"Team Sergeant"). This job would take Rod away from the medical field and instead put him directly in charge of a Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha, also known as an ODA. For the next 2 plus years Rod served as the Team Sergeant for ODA 0115 completing deployments in both Afghanistan, central and eastern Europe, then finally making a final move back to Colorado to serve in a staff role for his final years of service. It was after this time the "adrenaline" started wear off as this slower pace of life started to make injuries and limitations more noticeable. In the years prior the drive to go further and faster distracted him from injuries and breakdown, mostly because acknowledgement would cause a halt to operations. As it worked out the timing was ok, this slowdown of pace allowed Rod to start seeking the overdue medical treatment he long needed, and that would later help him to better transition to a civilian environment. Despite this there is a still a fire that burns for competition and comradery in him, which is what has ultimately brought him to U.S. Veterans' Rowing & Kayaking Team where he hopes to compete in Hungary in the 2020 competitions.