

One last 'Hooah' at 1,500 feet

Keith Desbois, CASCOM Public Affairs | Posted: Thursday, November 13, 2014 12:00 am



CW5 Joe Jimenez Ready To Make His Last Jump.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Joseph Jimenez, Aerial Delivery and Field Services Department command airdrop advisor, waits on the ramp of a C-130 Hercules aircraft for the signal to jump Nov. 6. Jimenez has participated in more than 1000 jumps during his 39 years as an Army parachute rigger and this was the final jump of his long career. (Official Army photo by Keith Desbois)

FORT LEE, Va. (Nov. 13, 2014) -- For Chief Warrant Officer 5 Joseph Jimenez, Aerial Delivery and Field Services Department command airdrop advisor, rigging parachutes has been a way of life the last 39 years. Jimenez felt there was no better way to say goodbye to the Army than with a last jump from a C-130 Hercules aircraft at 1,500 feet during a Nov. 6 training exercise at Fort Pickett.

Jimenez joined the Army in 1975 and after attending Airborne School he went on to graduate from the Parachute Rigger Course later that year.

Over his many years of service, Jimenez has seen many changes in his military occupational field. One of the greatest, in his opinion, was the introduction of the T-11 parachute. Jimenez helped with the development of the chute drawing on his many years of experience.

“When the Rangers jumped into Panama, they weighed over 400 pounds with all their gear. The older T-10 couldn’t sustain that much weight, so the Soldiers had a higher rate of descent,” Jimenez said. “The Army decided it needed a new system that could handle the weight and the T-11 began development.”

The 10,000th T-11 parachute manufactured for the Army was created with a stars and stripes pattern and is the only one of its kind produced. It had previously been taken off of jump status and donated to the ADFSD, but Jimenez brought the chute out of retirement for his final jump.

“I jumped the T-11 because I was involved in the developmental and operational testing of the parachute,” he said. “To me, it was only fitting I jump the parachute I was involved with during development and testing.”

After a rigorous inspection, the parachute was cleared for service. Jimenez packed his own chute with the assistance of Sgt. 1st Class Merv Terre, an Inspector Processor, to ensure everything was a go for his last jump.

At the Fort Pickett drop zone, Jimenez boarded the C-130 but the takeoff was delayed due to weather. After several hours of delays, and the possibility that the jump way not take place, the sky turned blue and the wind subsided as if to say, “you are cleared for take off chief.”

Jimenez stepped off the back of the aircraft and those still on board were treated to the sight of the stars and stripes as the parachute unfurled, carrying him gently to the ground below. Jimenez was delighted that he was able to fulfill his wish of one last jump.

“It was exhilarating and peaceful while I was in the air,” Jimenez said. “I was saddened after the landing that this would be my last jump.”

When he retires in May 2015, Jimenez will have 40 years and 10 days of active duty service. He is planning on calling Fayetteville, N.C., home for the time being.