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Norwich University names Alvin York biographer winner of 2015 William E. Colby Award

NORTHFIELD, Vt. – Biographer Colonel Douglas V. Mastriano, PhD is the 2015 William E. Colby Award winner for his book, “Alvin York: A New Biography of the Hero of the Argonne.” Norwich University awards the Colby annually to an author of a first book.

A veteran of the first Gulf War and Afghanistan, Colonel Mastriano was commissioned in the United States Army in 1986 and began his career with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment serving along the German Iron Curtain. With the end of the Cold War, he deployed to Iraq for Operation Desert Storm, where his regiment led the main attack against Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard. Colonel Mastriano subsequently served in tactical, operational and strategic assignments during his ongoing career in the army. He also served four years in NATO Land Headquarters in Germany, and deployed three times to Afghanistan, where he was director of the ISAF Joint Intelligence Center.

In the book, published in 2014 by the University Press of Kentucky, Mastriano uses archival research, military terrain analysis and forensic study to reconstruct the events of October 1918 and sort fact from fiction in the account of the act of heroism that earned Sergeant York the Medal of Honor in the First World War. Mastriano details York's early life in Tennessee, his service in the war up to and including the famous October 8, 1918, engagement, and his return to a civilian life dedicated to

charity. As the centennial of American involvement in World War I approaches, this book shares the story of one of the war's most notable heroes.

“Superbly researched and splendidly written, Douglas V. Mastriano’s work on Alvin York recounts not only the incredible story of a Tennessee mountain boy who won the Medal of Honor and became the greatest American hero of the First World War, but also of how, through years of investigation and exploration, he located York’s battle site and was instrumental in the creation of two permanent monuments and an historic trail,” said Carlo D’Este, executive director of the William E. Colby Military Writers’ Symposium.

“I am humbled by the distinction of being the 2015 William E Colby Award recipient. The Colby Award represents the highest caliber of works published in the United States since 1999. It is a privilege to have the book “Alvin York: A New Biography of the Hero of the Argonne” recognized worthy of this honor,” said Mastriano.

A \$5,000 author honorarium is provided through a grant from the Chicago-based Tawani Foundation. The award and honorarium will be presented at Norwich University during the 2015 Colby Military Writers’ Symposium at the “Meet the Authors” Dinner on April 9, 2015. The [2015 Symposium](#) will take place April 8-9, and is open to the public.

Named for the late ambassador and former CIA director William E. Colby, the Colby Award recognizes a first work of fiction or non-fiction that has made a significant contribution to the public’s understanding of intelligence operations, military history or international affairs. The William E. Colby Award began at Norwich University in 1999.

In June 2012, Mastriano joined the faculty of the U.S. Army War College to teach in the Department of Military Strategy, Planning,

and Operations. He earned a Ph.D. from the University of New Brunswick, in Fredericton, Canada.

Mastriano is the co-founder of [The Sergeant York Discovery Expedition](#) (SYDE) and led the effort to locate the exact spot where Alvin York eliminated a machine-gun nest and captured 132 German soldiers. The group's research has been endorsed by U.S. and French authorities. SYDE organized the construction of a five-kilometer historic trail in France's Argonne Forest for visitors to experience a piece of World War I history.

Previous recipients of the Colby Award include Thomas McKenna, James Bradley, Nathaniel Fick, Col. Jack Jacobs, Dexter Filkins, Marcus Luttrell, John Glusman, Karl Marlantes and Logan Beirne.



Norwich University is a diversified academic institution that educates traditional-age students and adults in a Corps of Cadets and as civilians. Norwich offers a broad selection of traditional and distance-learning programs culminating in Baccalaureate and Graduate Degrees. Norwich University was founded in 1819 by Captain Alden Partridge of the U.S. Army and is the oldest private military college in the United States of America. Norwich is one of our nation's six senior military colleges and the birthplace of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). www.norwich.edu

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ABOUT TAWANI FOUNDATION

Founded by COL (IL) J. N. Pritzker, IL ARNG (Ret.), Tawani Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) grant-making organization whose mission is: to enhance the awareness and understanding of the importance of the Citizen Soldier; to preserve unique sites of significance to American and military history; to foster health and wellness projects for improved quality of life; and to honor the service of military personnel, past, present and future, through an awards program that includes the JROTC/ROTC Award for Military Excellence, the William E. Colby Award and the [Pritzker Military Museum & Library](#) Literature Award for Lifetime Achievement in Military Writing.