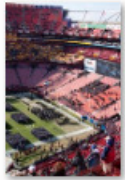


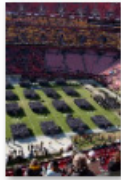
Behind the Scenes on the 2011 Army Panorama

Preparing this Army panorama has been my biggest challenge since I started making the images. I'll share some of the steps that I have taken, because you will now know the "secrets" about the image when people ask about your poster hanging on your wall.

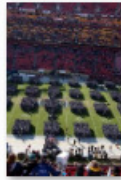
First, I started with 6 images that were shot with the exact same conditions:



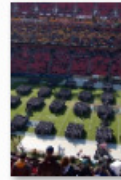
IMG_6955a



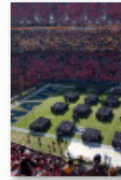
IMG_6957



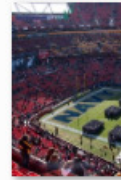
IMG_6959



IMG_6960



IMG_6961



IMG_6962

and I merged them using a specialized panoramic software program called PTGui. I could have stopped at that point since the shadows on the panorama were not too bad. But, I chose to export the file into a High Dynamic Range (HDR) software program where I created a HDR version of the panorama so that the 4th Battalion companies would be more visible. The work is not too difficult and can easily be done in an hour or so... but I repeatedly tried different combinations of noise reduction and sharpening software in addition to the HDR processing until I found "the right combination." A good balance of light and dark...

The result is a panoramic TIFF file that measures 11.6 inches tall by 42 inches wide at 300 dots per inch (139 MB of data). I have not cropped and resized it to 20.75 inches wide for the poster at this point... that will be one of the last steps.



Now the fun begins... roughly, there are 319 people on the field or the sidelines, and more people in the stands that are blocking the view. Time to get to work....

Challenges:

a) Giving legs and creating shadows for the Brigade staff.

Unfortunately, the staff ended up in the football team crates because they were "forced off" the field to get all the "second reg" staffs in line on the 50 yard line. Here is where I started:



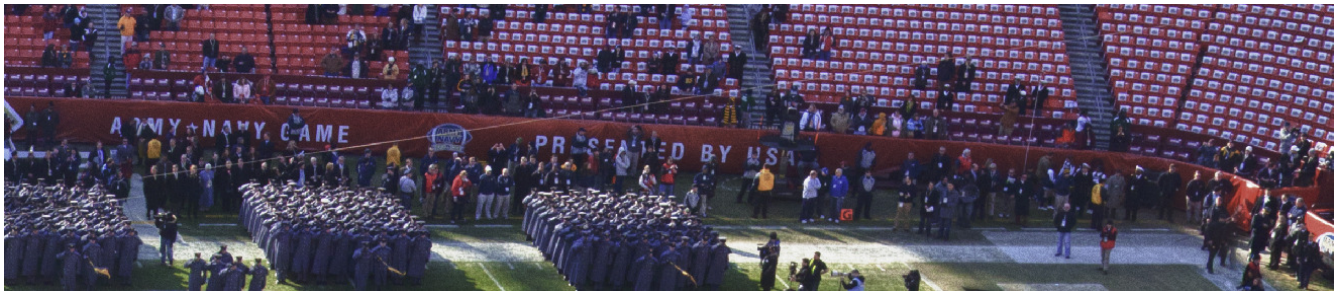
You can also see the white box camera in the foreground that blocked my preferred position for taking the image. So I climbed a little higher and hoped to get a better angle. Not an attractive view, so I cleaned up the sidelines, and stole their actual legs and shadows from another image on my son's camera - a real time saver ! I just had to change the size and spacing of each set of legs, change the colors, and adjust the shadow texture.

Now, this is the challenge where I could have used a real Photoshop pro as I slowly worked through it, pixel by pixel, at a rate of an hour per set of legs. Later I added the shadows, and put in some texture... so this one single section of the image took about 8-10 hours. Here's what it looks like now, without the crates, the yellow line, the camera men, the sound gear, and the orange drink coolers...



Looks like a March On to me ! On to the next challenge:

b) Why is everyone waiting by the Navy tunnel ?



Argh... more than 100 unnecessary people in that corner of the field, and worse.. they are covering the stadium signs with writing on them. Before I show you the results, I'll point out another nearby challenge:

c) Tarps on the field in the Army end zone.

Every year I work to enhance the logo in the endzones, and this was very disappointing to see:

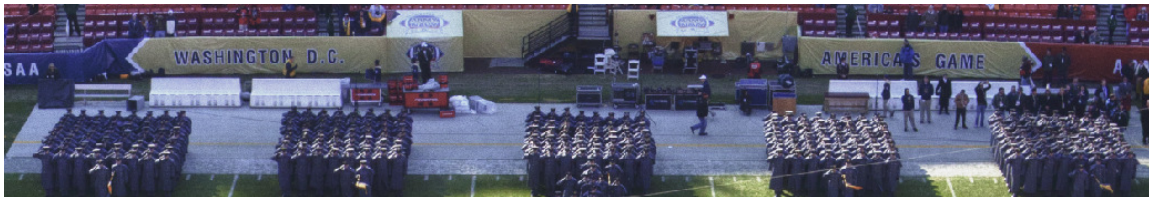


I will confess that I drew the line at fixing the logo UNDER the band, but I did restore the A and the R in the endzone, "emptied" the sidelines, and then restored the logo on the wall. I have a little more work ahead on color matching, but this is a good start:



d) Clean out the clutter on the Navy Sidelines:

Once I cleaned up the Army side, removing those boxes and drink coolers, the Navy side looked pretty bad. I mean... white folding chairs, more bright orange drink coolers, etc.

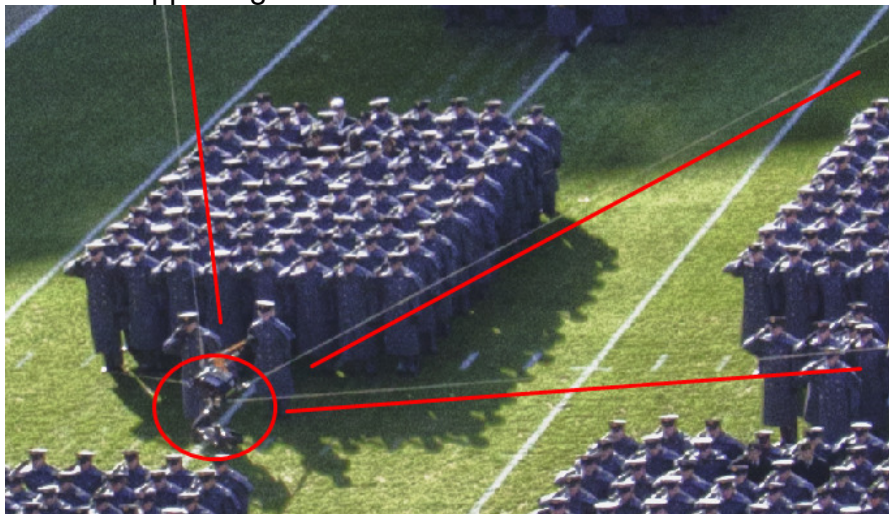


Cleaned up and respectable:



e) Overhead camera and cables:

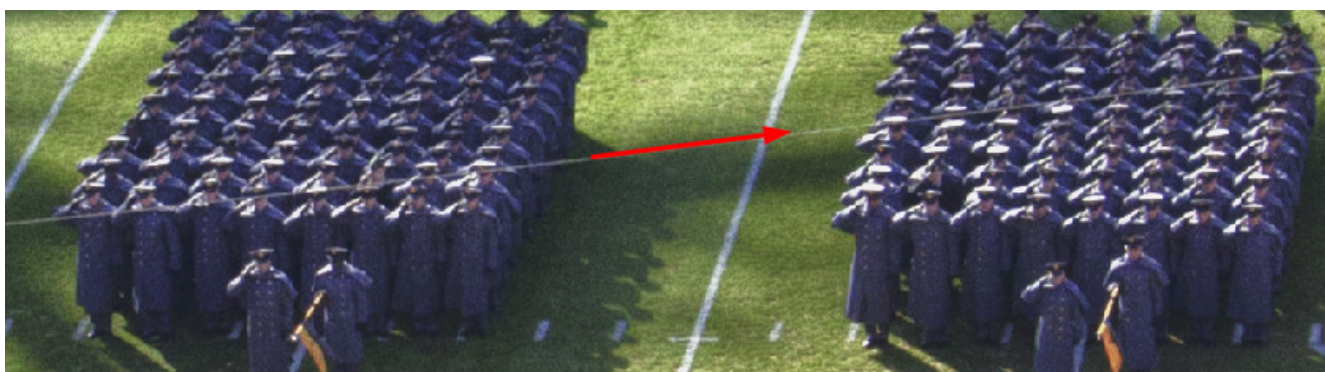
The cables were a real problem for the Third Reg company images. For the pano, the camera was parked in front of Company A-3. I also added some red lines to draw your eyes to the overhead cables supporting the camera.



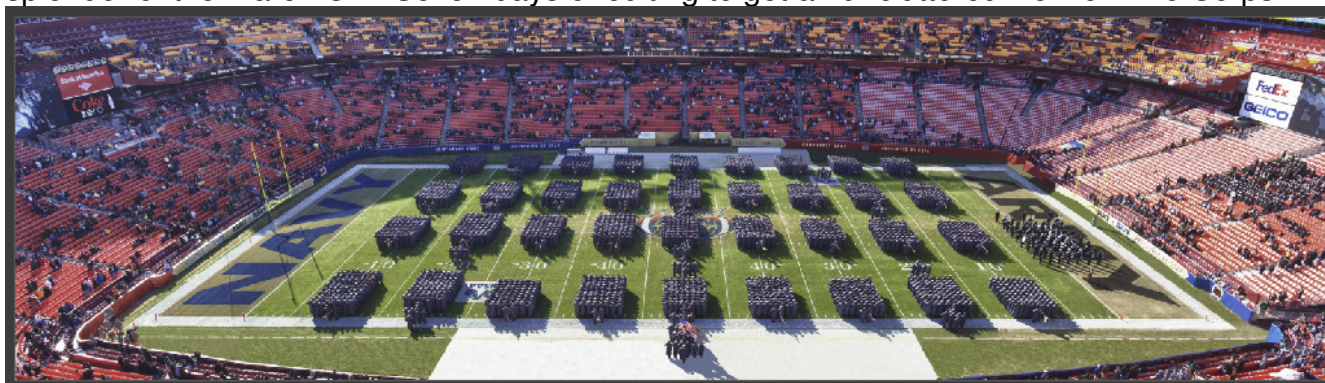
The overhead camera and cables are now gone...



Company A-3 was on the 10 yard line, which meant that the lower right cable stretched from that point completely across the stadium and The Corps. And when a cable crossed a company, I had to remove it, over 100 yards of wire interfering with the image.



And that's it... examining the image section by section, fixing anything that detracts from the splendor of the March On. Seven days of editing to get an uncluttered view of The Corps:



Thanks for your support for the project and our Veterans !

Breck Barker and the AN Project Team