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The Best of the Best

NCO and Soldier of the Year

This edition of Army Space Journal introduces you to the 2008 SMDC/ARSTRAT Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and Soldier of the Year.

This year's competition for NCO and Soldier of the Year was extremely competitive, and I'd like to personally congratulate all the regional winners who earned the honor of competing. The regional winners are:

EUROPEAN REGION: SSG Charles L. Robinson III
and SPC Michael R. Moore;

EASTERN REGION: SGT Matthew S. Davidson
and SPC Abigail H. Keller;

WESTERN REGION: SSG Randolph R. Brown
and SPC. Matthew S. Caple; and

PACIFIC REGION: SSG Christopher L. Barber
and SGT Joseph B. Knece

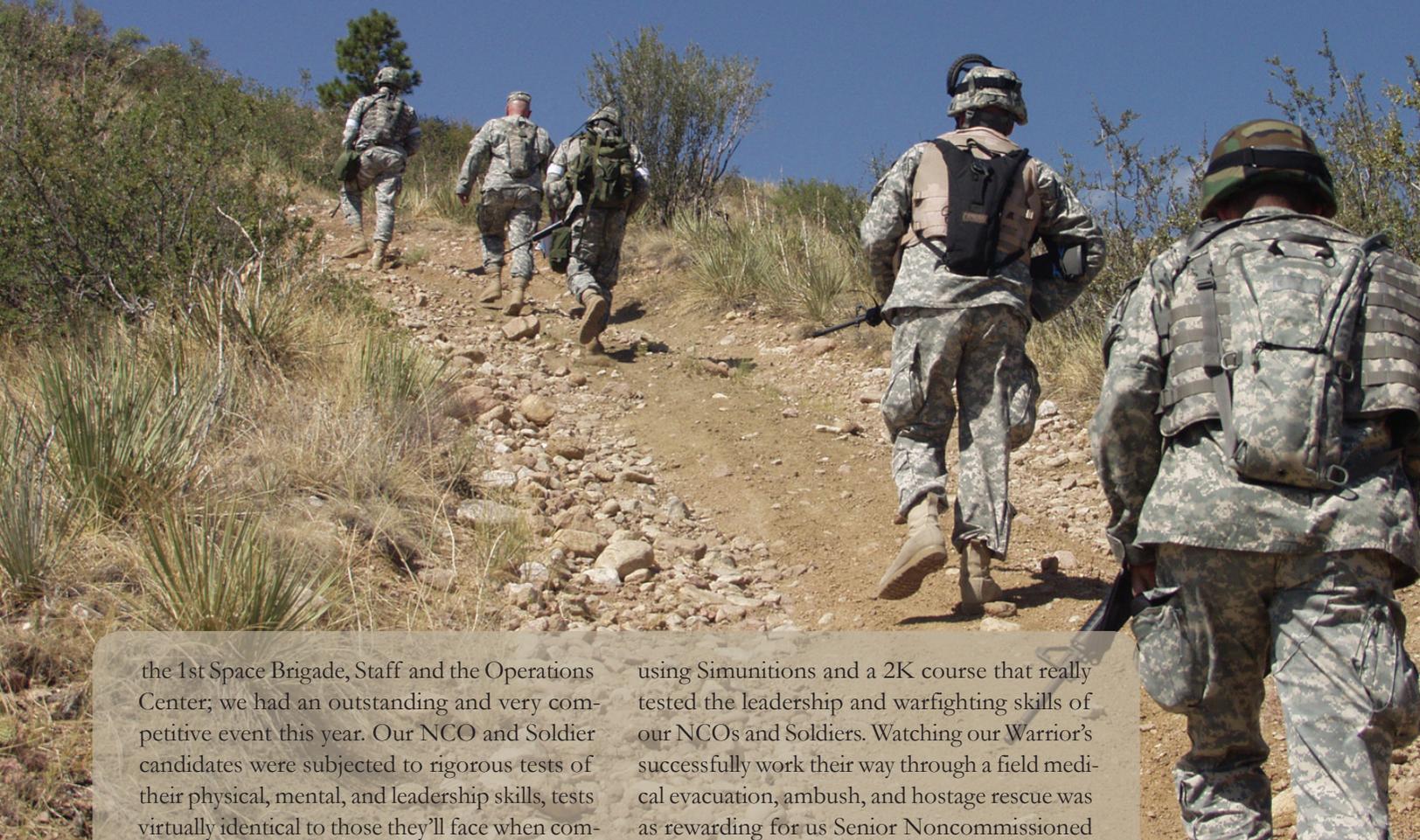
These Soldiers are all exemplary of the outstanding men and women who are part of the SMDC/ARSTRAT team.

In the Flipside section you'll get to meet SSG Christopher L. Barber, the SMDC/ARSTRAT NCO of the Year who is from Charlie Detachment, 1st Space Company, 1st Space Battalion, Misawa, Japan, and SPC Michael R. Moore, the SMDC/ARSTRAT Soldier of the Year who is from Alpha Detachment, 1st Space Company, 1st Space Battalion, Stuttgart, Germany.

I'd like to expand upon the Army Space Journal article by discussing the incredible amount of effort that goes into planning for and implementing the tests used to measure these outstanding men and women. The evaluation criteria must closely mirror what the SMDC/ARSTRAT NCO and Soldier of the Year will face when they compete at the Department of the Army level against the best of the best from throughout the Army.

Thanks largely to the herculean efforts of MSG John Telgenhof, 1SG Petey Smith and Lorronica Hamil from Headquarters SMDC, and to the excellent support provided by members of the 100th Missile Defense Brigade,

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the 1st Space Brigade, Staff and the Operations Center; we had an outstanding and very competitive event this year. Our NCO and Soldier candidates were subjected to rigorous tests of their physical, mental, and leadership skills, tests virtually identical to those they'll face when competing at the Department of the Army level. They were also evaluated on their ability to effectively communicate both orally and in writing.

During the Urban Orienteering Course, led by SFC Rene Saiz and his Observers/Controllers (O/Cs) of the 100th Missile Defense Brigade, our Soldiers were introduced and tested on the Army's Defense Advanced GPS Receiver (DAGR). For many, this was their first experience with the device. After hands-on training, all of the contestants were able to successfully complete the day and night land navigation tests using the DAGR as well as the traditional compass and protractor.

Weapons zero/qualification also presented a new challenge for many of our Soldiers because most had never fired the M-4 Carbine. 1SG Steve Adams and his Safeties of 1st Space Company coordinated, arranged and executed this event exceptionally and provided extra range time for our Soldiers to allow them to familiarize themselves with the M-4 prior to weapons qualification.

Kudos also to SFC Marcus Kent and his O/Cs of the 100th Missile Defense Brigade for setting up an excellent Situational Training Exercise

using Simunitions and a 2K course that really tested the leadership and warfighting skills of our NCOs and Soldiers. Watching our Warrior's successfully work their way through a field medical evacuation, ambush, and hostage rescue was as rewarding for us Senior Noncommissioned Officers as I'm sure it was for them.

As I said at the beginning, this year's competition was extremely close. Thanks to 1SG Carl Torkelson and his evaluators of HHC 1st Space Brigade who started this event by administering the Army Physical Fitness Test. By the end, it came down to their performance on the written test, their written essay, and their performance before the formal evaluation board.

We wish SSG Barber and SPC Moore the best of luck as they represent us in competing for Department of the Army "Best Warrior Competition" NCO and Soldier of the Year. I'd also like to congratulate all of our Regional competitors for being selected as the best NCO and Soldier from within their respective Areas of Responsibility.

Finally, I'd like to offer a special thanks to all sponsors, commanders, leaders and staff who assisted and supported our competitors. While we could only select one NCO of the Year and one Soldier of the Year, each of you have proven to be winners and outstanding Soldiers who are extremely valuable members of our Command. I salute each of you! 🇺🇸

Competitors had to climb steep and rough terrain during the Situational Training Exercise portion of the 2008 SMDC/ARSTRAT Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier of the Year Competition.

Photo by Sharon L. Hartman

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