

SMDDC/ ARSTRAT ANNOUNCES BEST WARRIORS

By Sharon L. Hartman

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. —

Eight candidates — one Noncommissioned Officer and one Soldier from four different regions — arrived in Colorado aspiring to be the Best of the Best. Each had their own motivation, but in the end only two would walk away with the titles. After an exhausting week long competition, SSG Christopher L. Barber and SPC Michael Moore were selected as U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command's 2008 Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier of the Year respectively.



“JTAGS gives confidence and security to the Warfighter by providing them with early warning. A Soldier who doesn’t have to watch the skies can be more effective on the ground.

— SPC MICHAEL MOORE

SOLDIER OF THE YEAR



SPC Michael Moore — SMDC/ARSTRAT
European Region Soldier of the Year

Barber and Moore both serve in Joint Tactical Ground Station Detachments with 1st Space Company, 1st Space Battalion. Barber is a member of Charlie Detachment, which recently relocated to Misawa, Japan, and provides Theater Missile Warning in the Pacific Area of Operations. Alpha Detachment in Stuttgart, Germany, provides Theater Missile Warning to the European Area of Operations and is where Moore is currently stationed.

“I chose to participate in this competition to be a good example for all Soldiers under my leadership,” said Barber, who met his objective.

Moore decided to participate to “represent Alpha detachment and show the high standards of this unit.” He too was successful in achieving his goal.

The competition, conducted from July 20-25, began with an Army Physical Fitness Test consisting of sit-ups, pushups and a two mile run at an altitude of more than 6,000 feet above sea level. The elevation gave some of the competitors a bit of a struggle, but each of them pushed

“Countries have access and are using Theater Ballistic Missiles as a means of combat, so Space is important in that it is going to be relied on more frequently to provide not only early warning and detection, but also provide defense against impending missile attacks.

— SSG CHRISTOPHER BARBER

NCO OF THE YEAR



SSG Christopher L. Barber — SMDC/ARSTRAT
Pacific Region NCO of the Year

through to the end. The candidates were then weighed and taped, and given time to clean up before heading to the Building 3 training rooms for a written exam. Later in the afternoon, the candidates and their sponsors gathered at Iron Horse Park, on Fort Carson, for training on the Defense Advanced GPS Receiver before heading out for daytime and nighttime urban orienteering courses.

On the second day, the competitors and sponsors were brought to a Fort Carson range to zero their M4s and then attempt to qualify by firing on pop up targets ranging from 50 – 300 meters downrange.

“I’m excited about being out in the field, going out and being able to qualify and shoot weapons, doing urban orienteering and land (navigation) and doing some of the hooah, hooah Army things that we typically do,” said Barber. “In Space we don’t get enough opportunities to do that so we really take advantage of it when we can.”

The highlight of day three was the Situational Training Exercise. In this event, the competitors maneuvered with



their team through vast rugged terrain and were graded on how they handled various combat-like scenarios. In the final phase of the exercise, the Soldiers had to lead their team through a MOUT (military operations on urban terrain) site in search of a U.S. “Soldier” who was being held hostage. As the teams navigated their way through the city, they encountered an occasional Iraqi civilian, but it was not long before they were exchanging gunfire with “enemy combatants” as they worked to free their comrade.

“Having the ability to have our Space Soldiers involved in this competition, as well as any other NCO or Soldier throughout the Army, just shows that our Space Soldiers here at SMDC/ARSTRAT definitely have the ability, the confidence, the physical stamina and the mental discipline to compete and hopefully be selected as this years DA level NCO or Soldier of the Year,” said SMDC/ARSTRAT CSM Ralph C. Borja.

Borja chaired the administrative board, the final event of the competition, but for some it was the most nerve-racking event.

“I’m nervous and excited about the administrative board,” Moore said. “That’s one of the things that I’m looking forward to but also where I’m not so sure about, so I’m looking forward to the challenge.”

Moore obviously had nothing to be nervous about. He and Barber will return to Colorado in mid-September to train for the Department of the Army Best Warrior Competition, which will be at Fort Lee, Va., Sept. 28 – Oct. 3.





SSG Christopher L. Barber —
SMDC/ARSTRAT Pacific Region
NCO of the Year



SSG Charles Robinson III —
SMDC/ARSTRAT European Region
NCO of the Year



SSG Randolph Brown —
SMDC/ARSTRAT Western Region
NCO of the Year



SGT Matthew Davidson —
SMDC/ARSTRAT Eastern Region
NCO of the Year

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SSG Randolph Brown plots
out points during the urban
orienting portion of the
Noncommissioned Officer and
Soldier of the Year Competition.

Photo by Sharon L. Hartman



In the distance, a bullet creates
a puff of dirt as a competitor
works on zeroing his weapon.

Photo by Sharon L. Hartman



Soldiers enter a MOUT site
under the leadership off
SGT Joseph Knece, 2nd from
left. Their objective was to
search for a “prisoner of war”
being held in the “village.”

Photo by Michael Kahl



ARSTRAT NOMINATORS



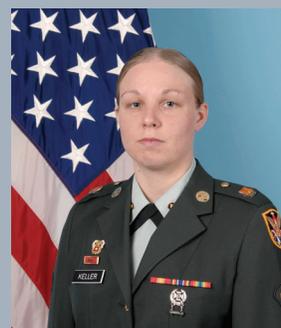
SPC Michael Moore —
SMDC/ARSTRAT European Region
Soldier of the Year



SGT Joseph B. Knece —
SMDC/ARSTRAT Pacific Region
Soldier of the Year



SPC Matthew Cagle —
SMDC/ARSTRAT Western Region
Soldier of the Year



SPC Abigail Keller —
SMDC/ARSTRAT Eastern Region
Soldier of the Year