

INSCOM Journal

Best warrior

Winter 2012

BY Tina Miles

780th MI Brigade



Sgt. Robert Stevenson, of the 501st MI Brigade, sprints to the finish line as he completes a six-mile ruck march. (photo by Tina Miles)

The best and brightest Soldiers and noncommissioned officers that the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command has to offer gathered for a grueling weeklong training exercise designed to push the competitors to their limits in an effort to name the command's best warrior.

Having already mastered a series of benchmarks throughout the year, including earning top honors at their respective brigade-level competitions, the 15 candidates traveled from across the globe to Fort A.P. Hill, Va., to compete in INSCOM's 2011 Soldier/NCO of the Year Warrior Competition in June.

The competition consisted of nine events: the Army Physical Fitness Test, a written test with an essay, day and night land navigation, combatives, an appearance before a review board in Class A uniform, rifle marksmanship, a warrior task skills assessment and a mystery event.

The mystery event involved placing awards and decoration on the Class A uniform on a mannequin of the opposite gender, as well as preventative maintenance and service checks on a protective mask.

"Our objective was to provide a true hands-on competition that is consistent with the Army's best warrior competition and one that give our winners the best chance at the next level of competition," said Command Sgt. Maj. David Redmon, INSCOM's command sergeant major.

The competition included several first-time participants, including Staff Sgt. Allen Valentin of the 513th Military Intelligence Brigade.

"I just want to knock it out," Valentin said, when asked about his strategy heading into the weeklong event.

Rather than dwelling on the unknown, Valentin simply wanted to face each obstacle as it was presented to him. With a strong support system in place, his confidence remained high.

“We’ve done all the preparation we can at this point,” said Staff Sgt. Joshua Fresch, who sponsored Valentin.

While Soldiers like Valentin were essentially going into the event blind, the same could not be said Sgt. Benjamin Weston – who was named INSCOM’s 2010 Soldier of the Year as the 66th MI Brigade’s representative.

“I feel like I’m under a bit of pressure because of winning last year as INSCOM Soldier of the Year,” said Weston, who returned this year to challenge for the top NCO honors.

When it was all said and done, INSCOM’s top warriors were Staff Sgt. Adam Beitz, 470th MI Brigade, who earned the title of INSCOM NCO of the Year, and Spc. Ross Patti, 513th MI Brigade, the command’s 2011 Soldier of the Year.

While honored after receiving the recognition, Beitz still thought he could have performed better during the competition.

“My weakest event was the combatives,” Beitz said, wishing he had a better showing. “I always excel on the APFT and keep myself in top physical condition.”

Patti’s strongest event was the combatives, which he won.

“It’s just how it worked out,” Patti said.

Although only one Soldier and one NCO emerge victorious, Redmon did take time to recognize each and every competitor during the closing ceremony.

“Prior to this week, these competitors outperformed their peers at the company and battalion level,” he said. “They have already earned the right to say they are number one in their brigade. Each represents hundreds of Soldiers that can only aspire to achieve what they have already done.

“These great Americans have not rested on their laurels these past five days,” Redmon continued. “Throughout this competition they have given their all. What I noticed that sets these men and women apart from their peers is pride, not only in themselves, but in their profession of arms.”

During the ceremony, each NCO received an INSCOM commanding general certificate of achievement, along with the INSCOM commanding general and command sergeant major coins for excellence.

The winners received mementos from various competition sponsors and were awarded the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious achievement resulting in their selection as the 2011 U.S. INSCOM NCO and Soldier of the Year.

[Back](#)