



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Alaska National Guard
Release: 16-074

September 12, 2016

By Staff Sgt. Balinda O'Neal Dresel

Alaska Guardsmen compete, earn Best Warrior titles

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Two members of the Alaska Army National Guard were recognized as top contenders for the Alaska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition during an awards ceremony here Sept. 10.

The victors had to demonstrate mastery of multiple skills through a series of 15 events designed to challenge their physical and mental toughness during the state-level competition.

"The Best Warrior Competition recognizes Soldiers who represent their unit with distinction, demonstrating their proficiency with warrior tasks, physical fitness ability and endurance," said State Command Sgt. Maj. Marc Petersen, host of the Best Warrior Competition awards ceremony. "This three day event tested the competitor's ability to operate in stressful conditions while battling pain and fatigue."

Among the events designed to test the participants were an Army Physical Fitness Test, live-fire weapons ranges, casualty evacuation, day and night land navigation, an obstacle course, cross country run, written exams and state command sergeant major board.

"We would like to recognize all the competitors for their motivation, hard work and tenacity during this demanding competition," said Petersen, before recognizing and congratulating each of the 10 competitors from units across the state.

During the ceremony, Cpl. Anthony Luiken, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, was named winner of the noncommissioned officer category and Spc. Trent Marnell, 49th Missile Defense Battalion (Ground-based Midcourse Defense), took top honors for the enlisted category.

"The winners will move on to compete in the Army National Guard Regional Best Warrior Competition in Washington this May 2017," said Petersen. "The regional winners will then move on the Army National Guard's national-level Best Warrior Competition, testing their mettle against Soldiers in the other six regions of our Guard nation."

Should the winners not be able to compete, they will be replaced by the runners-up from the state competition. This year, Spc. Jonathan Holston, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, was the runner-up in the enlisted level.

###

PHOTOS and links, next page

PHOTOS:

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **Flickr links** includes an event album with the complete selection of full-resolution, free downloadable images. (Flickr is not generally accessible from .mil computers.)
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/alaskanationalguard/albums/72157673555704736>
3. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution, free downloadable images. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <http://dvidshub.net/r/scoouh>
4. **DIVDS Video A and B-roll link** <http://dvidshub.net/r/vghnae> and <http://dvidshub.net/r/h3gi9b>



160908-Z-QK839-0028

Spc. Trent Marnell, a military policeman with the 49th Missile Defense Battalion, Alaska Army National Guard, participates in the casualty evacuation event during the Best Warrior Competition at the POW Range, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Sept. 8, 2016. Winners of the competition will earn the distinctions of Soldier of the Year and Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year, and will move on to compete in the National Guard's regional Best Warrior Competition. (Army National Guard photo by Officer Candidate Marisa Lindsay)



160909-Z-CA180-0030

Alaska Army National Guard Spc. Jonathan Dasta and Sgt. Nathan Williams, both from the 49th Missile Defense Battalion (Ground-based Midcourse Defense), canoe across Otter Lake during the cross country run portion of the Best Warrior Competition on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Sept. 9, 2016. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Balinda O'Neal Dresel)



160910-Z-CA180-0009

Alaska Army National Guard Spc. Anthony Luiken, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, right, and Spc. Trent Marnell, 49th Missile Defense Battalion (Ground-based Midcourse Defense), are recognized as the winners of the state-level Best Warrior Competition during an awards ceremony on Joint Base-Elmendorf Richardson, Alaska, Sept. 10, 2016. The BWC was designed to test Soldiers in a series of mentally and physically challenging events over the course of 72 hours to determine who the best junior enlisted and noncommissioned officers are in the Alaska Army National Guard. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Balinda O'Neal Dresel)