



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 2018

Release: 18-036

By Balinda O'Neal Dresel

Army Guard Region VI names top Soldier, NCO for 2018 Best Warrior Competition

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Despite thick rain and looming clouds, 15 Soldiers from across eight states battled it out here to determine the top non-commissioned officer and junior enlisted Soldier for Region VI May 14-17.

At the end of the grueling four-day competition, South Dakota Army National Guard Spc. Bailey Ruff was named Soldier of the Year and Oregon ARNG Sgt. Dane Moorehead was named NCO of the Year. Second place honors went to Wyoming ARNG Sgt. Wyatt Schiermeyer and North Dakota ARNG Sgt. Timothy Sybryant.

The regional competition, hosted by the Alaska Army National Guard, turned up the intensity level from the unit and state competitions. The competitors were tested physically and mentally as their knowledge and abilities were tried under immense pressure in a competitive environment.

"I wanted each competitor to be tested up to their breaking point without breaking any one," said Command Sgt. Maj. Marc Petersen, Alaska Army National Guard state command sergeant major, who also wanted to add an Alaskan flavor to the events when possible. "I wanted safety first and foremost and also for the event to be memorable for the competitors."

From an aerial platform shoot from an Army Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to a canoe race across Otter Lake with reflections of the Chugach Mountain Range in the water and a summer cross country biathlon range complete with a fat tire bike ride coasting at approximately 2,800 feet in elevation down Arctic Valley Road, the competitors were left with several opportunities to reminiscence.

The Soldiers' physical strength and endurance were tried through a series of events requiring technical and tactical expertise, including combat-life saving skills, urban tactics, weapons proficiency, road march, land navigation, obstacle course, drill and ceremonies, uniform inspections, and a modified Army physical fitness test encompassing pull ups and a 5-mile run. Competitors' knowledge was tested on the Army and current events during an essay, exam, on-camera interview and the command sergeant major oral board.

"The competitors had little opportunity to sleep while pushing through multiple events calculated to test the total Soldier concept of shoot, move and communicate," said Sgt. Major Justin Shaffer, the AKARNG NCO in charge of the competition. "We hope that the winners will take away training value from here that will help them to better compete at the national level."

"I hope that experiences gained, friendships formed and possible injuries incurred will help the competitors to become a more complete and resilient leader," added Petersen. "Whether they became the Region VI Best

Warrior or not, I hope the competitors always maintain the warrior spirit they demonstrated and spread that spirit within their squad and beyond.”

The Region VI Best Warrior Competition states included Alaska, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming.

Ruff and Moorhead will advance to the national-level competition this July at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa., where they will compete against winners from other regions that comprise the 54 states and territories. In the event they are not able to compete, Schiermeyer and Sybryant will be ready if called.

###

PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **Flickr link** includes an event album with the complete selection of full-resolution, free downloadable images. (May not be accessible from all military computers.)

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/alaskanationalguard/sets/72157694976721201/with/41456055434/>

3. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/278012/army-guard-region-vi-names-top-soldier-nco-2018-best-warrior-competition>

4. **DVIDS Feature Page link** includes photos, videos, and story of the event.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/feature/BestWarriorRegionVI>



The winners of the National Guard Best Warrior Region VI 2018 competition proudly display their plaques during an awards ceremony held at the Arctic Warrior Event Center on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, May 17, 2018. South Dakota Army National Guard Spc. Bailey Ruff, left, was named Soldier of the Year and Oregon ARNG Sgt. Dane Moorehead, NCO of the Year, after battling through a four-day competition designed to test Soldiers’ mental and physical toughness through a series of events that demonstrate technical and tactical proficiency. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Balinda O’Neal Dresel)



South Dakota Army Guard Spc. Bailey Ruff, front, and Wyoming ARNG Spc. Wyatt Schiermeyer canoe across Otter Lake before carrying items including ammo, water and tire to their next event during the National Guard Best Warrior Region VI 2018 competition on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, May 15, 2018. The four-day competition tests Soldiers’ mental and physical toughness through a series of events that demonstrate technical and tactical proficiency to determine the top non-commissioned officer and junior enlisted Soldier. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Balinda O’Neal Dresel)



Idaho Army National Guard Sgt. Dallin Stout, right, and Montana Army National Guard Spc. Tucker Zimmerman, push their fat tire bikes during the summer cross country biathlon event while competing in the National Guard Best Warrior Region VI 2018 at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, May 15, 2018. Best Warrior Region VI 2018 is a four-day competition that tests Soldiers' mental and physical toughness through a series of events that demonstrate technical and tactical proficiency to determine the top non-commissioned officer and junior enlisted Soldier. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Frank Marquez)



Alaska Army National Guard Spc. Jonathan Holston negotiates an obstacle while competing in the National Guard Best Warrior Region VI 2018 at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, May 15, 2018. National Guard Best Warrior Region VI 2018 is a four-day competition that tests Soldiers' mental and physical toughness through a series of events that demonstrate technical and tactical proficiency to determine the top non-commissioned officer and junior enlisted Soldier. The competitors represent the top Soldiers from Alaska, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming. (U.S. Air Force photo by Alejandro Peña)



Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Michael Norris fires the M136E1 AT4-CS confined light anti-armor weapon while competing in the National Guard Best Warrior Region VI 2018 at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, May 15, 2018. National Guard Best Warrior Region VI 2018 is a four-day competition that tests Soldiers' mental and physical toughness through a series of events that demonstrate technical and tactical proficiency to determine the top non-commissioned officer and junior enlisted Soldier. The competitors represent the top Soldiers from Alaska, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming. (U.S. Air Force photo by Alejandro Peña)



Army National Guardsmen exit an Alaska Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter while competing in the National Guard Best Warrior Region VI 2018 at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, May 15, 2018. National Guard Best Warrior Region VI 2018 is a four-day competition that tests Soldiers' mental and physical toughness through a series of events that demonstrate technical and tactical proficiency to determine the top non-commissioned officer and junior enlisted Soldier. The competitors represent the top Soldiers from Alaska, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming. (U.S. Air Force photo by Alejandro Peña)