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2019 Best Warrior Competition concludes with crowd-pleasing ceremony

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Two members of the Alaska Army National Guard were announced as winners of the 2019 Alaska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition at an awards ceremony here Sept. 9.

During the ceremony, Sgt. Trent Marnell, 103rd Civil Support Team, was named Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and Spc. Sychelle Gonsalves, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, was named Soldier of the Year.

“The Best Warrior Competition recognizes Soldiers who demonstrate commitment to the Army values, embody the warrior ethos and represent the force of the future,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Grunst, 38th Troop Command command sergeant major.

Among the 16 events designed to challenge the physical and mental toughness of the Soldiers were an Army Physical Fitness Test, casualty evacuation drills, day and night land navigation, an obstacle course, a cross-country run, written examinations, an essay and a road march.

Marnell, who finished first in the road march, summarized his success by stating, “Speed kills.”

Marnell and Gonsalves will continue to represent Alaska at the 2019 Army National Guard's regional Best Warrior Competition in the spring of 2019.

“I'd like to point out that Gonsalves is the first female winner of either the NCO of the Year or Soldier of the Year for the Alaska Army National Guard,” said Grunst.

Eight Soldiers from across Alaska were selected at the unit level to compete in the state competition.

“When I first got here, looking at the competitors, I felt a bit intimidated knowing that [so many] came from infantry,” said Gonsalves. “They are very smart, very physically and mentally tough Soldiers.”

Should the winners not be able to compete, they will be replaced by the runners-up from the state competition. This year, Staff Sgt. Joshua Austin, 297th Military Police Company, and Spc. Justin Kompkoff, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, are the runners-ups.

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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/albums/72157700787705274>

2. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/291997/2019-best-warrior-competition-concludes-crowd-pleasing-ceremony>



From the left, Noncommissioned Officer of the Year Sgt. Trent Marnell, 103rd Civil Support Team, Soldier of the Year Spc. Sychelle Gonsalves, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, Soldier of the Year runner-up Spc. Justin Kompkoff, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year runner-up Staff Sgt. Joshua Austin, 297th Military Police Company, are recognized for the achievements during a 2019 Best Warrior Competition awards ceremony on Lestenkoff Plaza outside of the Alaska Army National Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Sept. 9, 2018. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. Grace Nechanicky/Released)



The 2019 Alaska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition participants are recognized for their accomplishments during a awards ceremony on Lestenkoff Plaza outside of the Alaska Army National Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Sept. 9, 2018. The BWC is 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 officer. The winners will continue on to represent Alaska in the Northwest Regional Best Warrior Competition scheduled for spring 2019. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. Grace Nechanicky/Released)



The winners of the 2019 Alaska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition stand with command sergeants major from across the organization during an awards ceremony on Lestenkoff Plaza outside of the Alaska Army National Guard armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Sept. 9, 2018. During the ceremony, Sgt. Trent Marnell, 103rd Civil Support Team, was named Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and Spc. Sychelle Gonsalves, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, was named Soldier of the Year. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. Grace Nechanicky/Released)