

Division names top NCOs for 2003

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The countdown is on as the clock steadily ticks; nine seconds to take care of business, or else — clear the mask, or become a casualty — the stopwatch is running, and all eyes are watching.

This scenario and many more just like it were some that many of the 100th Division's (IT) finest soldiers recently faced. One might think these scenarios would be played out on a battlefield, but Jan. 25 and 26, they decided who would walk away with the title of 100th Division Soldier of the Year.

The 100th Division's annual Soldier of the Year competition was held at Fort Knox, Ky., recently, with 7th brigade playing host to soldiers from around the division who came to compete. Not only was the soldier of the year award on the line, but the division also named its top junior and senior non-commissioned officer's of the year, as well as its top instructor and Retention NCO.

This year's closely contested competition involved an Army physical fitness test, an evaluation of several common soldier tasks, and an appearance in Class A uniform in front of a board of senior 100th Division NCOs.

At the close of the appearance board portion of the competition on Jan. 26, the winners were announced by competition NCOIC, Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Clark, the command sergeant major of 7th Brigade.

Cpl. Russell Falkenburg of E Co., 2/397 of 1st Brigade was named the 100th Division Soldier of the Year in the E-1 to E-4 category. In the NCO of the Year competition, Sgt. James



Falkenburg



Thompson



Duncan



Browning



Coots

Thompson, a drill sergeant at the 6th Brigade's Drill Sergeant School, was named the winner. Both Thompson and Falkenburg will go on to represent the 100th Division at the U.S. Army Reserve Command's Soldier and NCO of the Year competitions in Atlanta this summer.

Falkenburg expressed his anticipation for this summer's competition after being named the winner. "I believe in this uniform and I'm going to keep moving forward, whether it's in boards or in the field."

In the instructor of the year competition, Staff Sgt. Kelly Duncan of E Co., 2/392 of 1st Brigade was the winner. Duncan felt his competition experience and victory was not only beneficial to him, but to his entire unit.

"It brings a lot of prestige upon my unit, because there are a lot of great

instructors in my unit... it just adds on to what all of us can bring as far as training soldiers," said Duncan.

In the Retention NCO of the Year competition, Sgt. 1st

Class Danny Browning of 4th Brigade's 1001st Training Detachment was named the winner.

In the Senior NCO of the Year competition, 1st Sgt. Ronald Coots of D Co., 3/397 of 1st Brigade was named the winner. Coots is a former winner of the Ralph E. Haines Award, given annually by the Army's Training and Doctrine Command to recognize the most outstanding reserve component drill sergeant.

After the competition, Command Sgt. Maj. Clark expressed his opinion on not only this year's winners, but on all participants in this year's competition.

"I've been in the 100th division for over 20 years, and I've been coming to these boards for that long. The competitors today are the best trained, best equipped, best soldiers the Army has any place today," said Clark.

Clark deemed this year's competition a success, and added, "The 100th Division has over 3,500 soldiers, and when you're selected as the best, it has to give you a sense of accomplishment... I couldn't be prouder of all these soldiers today."