

Army Reserve's 100th Division Picks Top Soldiers

By Sgt. First Class Darren Patterson - Public Affairs NCO

The cold wind blew on a clear and brisk November morning at Fort Knox, Kentucky as citizen-soldiers of the Army Reserve's 100th Division prepared for the physical and mental rigors of military style competition. The soldiers, who traveled from various areas in the four state region of Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi, had one thing in mind when they woke up this morning "to be the best soldiers in the division".

The soldiers, referred to as "candidates", stretched, flexed, and warmed up their muscles in preparation for every soldiers' favorite military test: the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). Instructors, mainly qualified Drill Sergeants, kept their eyes peeled on the candidates to ensure that the exacting standards of the APFT were adhered to without question.

The APFT was just the start of the weekend's rigors, which included proficiency with the M-16 Rifle, donning of protective masks and First Aid subjects. The series of tests, which were graded by instructors, allowed the Soldier of the Year Board to pick the best in each category. The best soldiers that were chosen were are in the following categories; Soldier of the Year (E-1 to E-4), Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year (E5 to E-7), Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year (E-8 to E-9), Instructor of the Year, Drill Sergeant of the Year, Retention Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year.

So, why do these citizen-soldiers put themselves up to the challenge? "A sense of duty," noted First Sgt. Charles L. Grim, of Echo Company, 2nd of the 397th Battalion, of the 1st Brigade in Summerset, Kentucky, as he was screened to ensure he met the Army height and weight standards. "I am here to fulfill the obligation of competing on behalf of my unit".

"Promotion potential" enticed Staff Sgt. John A. Mayle, of Headquarters, 3rd of the 397th Battalion of 1st Brigade in Corbin, Kentucky, to the competition. "It's good for the Squadron (to be a winner), because the other units think you have something 'going on'," smiled the candidate, who got the word that he was selected by his unit during Basic Non-Commissioned Officers Course (BNCOC). He previously mentioned to his leaders that he would like to compete if the opportunity was available. His request was honored.

What are the benefits of winning? "I don't exactly know," admitted Spec Larry Dyer, of Echo Company, 1st of the 398th Battalion, of 2nd Brigade in Bowling Green, Kentucky. "You know, I was just curious to see what I could score at the competition – just to say 'I could do it'."



Sgt. First Class Glenn Hance anxiously awaits the board's results.

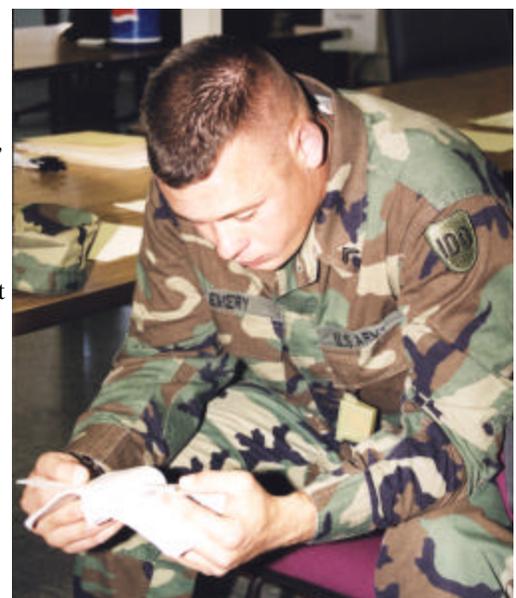
Whatever the motivation was, be it the spirit of teamwork, unit pride or "bragging rights", the candidates for this competition certainly became better soldiers that weekend. "No matter if you win or lose the competition this weekend, you are all winners," explained Command Sgt. Major David Belcher. Belcher is the President of the Soldier of the Year Board and the Division's top enlisted soldier.



Soldier of the Year competitors must meet and exceed all Army Standards, including weight standards. Staff Sgt. John Mayle weighs in at 175 lbs. as he competes for the title.

This Year's Winners Are:

- **Soldier Of The Year:**
Cpl. John Emery, B Co., 2-397th, 1st Bde.
- **NCO Of The Year:**
Staff Sgt. John Mayle, HQ, 3-397th, 1st Bde.
- **Senior NCO Of The Year:**
Master Sgt. Rudolph Stone, C Co., 1-399th, 7th Bde.
- **Drill Sergeant Of The Year:**
Sgt. First Class Gary Bolden, E Co., 3-397th, 1st Bde.
- **Instructor Of The Year:**
Sgt. First Class Glenn Hance, E Co., 2-397th, 1st Bde.
- **Retention NCO Of The Year:**
Sgt. Bryan Dotten, C Co., 3-397th, 1st Bde.



As the competition heats up, Cpl. John Emery studies up with his Soldiers Manual.