USAREUR’s top Soldiers named 'Best Warrior'

August 23, 2013

By Sgt. Daniel Cole, U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs

(Left to right) 2nd Lt. Phillip Hoying, Sgt. 1st Class Sergio Velazquez and Sgt. Ian Pocklington were named Best Warrior in the Junior Officer, NCO and Soldier, respectively, at U.S. Army Europe's 2013 Best Warrior Competition, held Aug. 19-23, in Grafenwoehr, Germany. Pocklington was recently promoted from specialist to sergeant. The U.S. Army Europe Best Warrior Competition is a weeklong event that tests Soldiers' physical stamina, leadership and technical knowledge and skill. The competitors represent the best in their units and exemplify the USAREUR imperatives of teamwork, comprehensive fitness, leader development, training, discipline and standards. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Glenn Anderson, U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs)

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – U.S. Army Europe named its top Soldier, noncommissioned officer and junior officer here today after a weeklong competition which tested 32 competitors on a variety of events from Aug. 18-23.

The U.S. Army Europe Best Warrior Competition is a weeklong event that tests Soldiers' physical stamina, leadership and technical knowledge and skill. The competitors represent the best in their units and exemplify the USAREUR imperatives of teamwork, comprehensive fitness, leader development, training, discipline and standards.

Sgt. Ian Pocklington of Winthrop Harbor, Ill., a combat engineer assigned to Headquarters Company, 18th Engineer Brigade, 21st Theater Sustainment Command in Kaiserslautern, Germany won the title of "Best Warrior" as USAREUR's top junior-enlisted Soldier.

Sgt. 1st Class Sergio Velazquez of Santa Cruz, Mexico, an Infantryman assigned as a Platoon Observer Controller-Trainer at the Joint Multinational Training Command here won the title of "Best Warrior" as USAREUR's top NCO.

2nd Lt. Phillip Hoying of New Hartford, N.Y., and the executive officer for Alpha Company, 24th Military Intelligence Battalion, 66th Military Intelligence Brigade in Wiesbaden, Germany won the title of "Best Junior Officer." The Best Junior Officer Competition is unique to U.S. Army Europe, and highlights the best lieutenants and captains from units across USAREUR.

"Regardless of who takes the top spot, the fact that your unit selected you to represent them and to carry their standard in to this battle speaks volumes as to your unit’s chain of command confidence in you and your abilities,” said USAREUR Deputy Commanding General Maj. Gen. Richard Longo in his remarks during the ceremony announcing the winners. "They believed in you and you did not let them down."
During the course of the week, competitors moved through the entire competition in three-person teams consisting of a Soldier, NCO and officer. In addition to traditional events such as the Army Physical Fitness Test, weapons qualification, obstacle course and a foot march, competitors were also placed into unique scenarios such as dealing with a potentially suicidal Soldier and taking correct measures to investigate an alleged sexual assault and safeguard the victim.

“These Soldiers in front of us, much like those who have gone before, have stood a little taller, they have fought a little longer and they have led a little better,” Longo said.

Poklington and Velazquez will go on to represent USAREUR at the Department of the Army-level competition Oct. 16-18 at Fort Lee, Va.

Check out all the Best Warrior competition action on the Best Warrior microsite and Flickr.

About us: U.S. Army Europe is uniquely positioned to advance American strategic interests across Eurasia and has unparalleled capability to prevent conflict, shape the environment and, if necessary, win decisively. The relationships we build during more than 1000 theater security cooperation events in more than 40 countries each year lead directly to support for multinational contingency operations around the world, strengthen regional partnerships, and enhance global security.