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21ST THEATER SUSTAINMENT COMMAND NAMES ITS TOP TROOPS FOR 2008

By Angelika Lantz

21st Theater Sustainment Command Public Affairs Office

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany -- A military police NCO and a transportation management Soldier have been named the best Soldiers in U.S. Army Europe's 21st Theater Sustainment Command for 2008.

Maj. Gen. Yves J. Fontaine, commander of the 21st TSC, announced the top troops during an award ceremony and dinner at Armstrong's Club here, July 18.

The command's NCO of the Year honors went to Staff Sgt. Mark Lewis, a military police squad leader and shift supervisor for the 630th Military Police Company. Pfc. Jason Hancock, a transportation management leader for the 1st Cargo Transport Company was named Soldier of the Year.

Fontaine said all 13 competitors in the event achieved their first measure of success simply by participating in the physically and mentally exhausting three-day competition at the Grafenwoehr (Germany) Training Area.

"Just to be invited to compete makes everyone a winner. These Soldiers and NCOs are the best



SPC JON PRUETT

Pfc. Jason Hancock, 1st Cargo Transport Company, throws a practice grenade during the 21st Theater Sustainment Command's Soldier of the Year competition at the Grafenwoehr Training Area, July 10. Hancock's performance in the competition earned him the Soldier of the Year title.

of the best in their own organizations," the general said.

Hancock credits earning the Soldier of the Year title to the "fun factor."

"I really enjoy doing these things -- all of the Soldier stuff like marches, fire ranges, weapons training -- all of it. This is why I joined the Army. Of course, there is some drive and determination on my part, too. Like most Soldiers, I'm trying to progress in my Army career and become a leader," he said.

"Believe in yourself and train hard; you'll be surprised at how far you can go," Lewis said of earning his title, modestly attributing his success to a "never give up mentality."

Lewis's supervisor was far less reserved about listing the sergeant's qualities.

"Staff Sgt. Lewis is the model for Soldiers in the U.S. Army and a great asset to the MP Corps. He lives Army values every day and sets the best possible example for his Soldiers to reach. He never asks something of them he's not willing to do himself. He is the prime example of selfless service and dedication," said Sgt.

1st Class Jeffrey Mosier, 2nd platoon sergeant for the 630th.



SPC JON PRUETT

Staff Sgt. Mark Lewis, 630th Military Police Company, fires a .50-caliber machine gun during the 21st Theater Sustainment Command's NCO of the Year competition at the Grafenwoehr Training Area, July 10. Lewis was named the command's top NCO for 2008 as a result of his showing in the competition.

The competition tested the 13 Soldiers in physical fitness, weapons training, land navigation, combat skills and leadership.

The competition tested the 13 Soldiers in physical fitness, weapons training, land navigation, combat skills and leadership. Competitors wrote an essay; faced a board of command sergeants major who evaluated their military bearing, confidence and knowledge of military topics; completed a 12-mile road march wearing full body armor and a 40-pound rucksack and carrying an M-16 rifle; fired the M16A2 rifle, M9 pistol and M249 Squad Automatic Weapon; prepared and fired a .50-caliber machine gun; used land navigation to locate five points during the day and another four at night; demonstrated applying first aid techniques; threw hand grenades; set up and using a radio to call for a medical evacuation; and took part in hand-to-hand combat.

Leadership skills were tested on a leadership reaction course and a mystery task that required competitors to reassemble three weapons from a mixed pile of parts while wearing a blindfold.

"The command sergeants major told me the toughest part was choosing only one Soldier and one NCO, because everyone performed so well," Fontaine told the competitors.

"We have a fantastic bench of great, great warriors and great leaders. I know our Army, more importantly our country, is in great hands with you in charge."

Staff Sgt. Bobbi Manning, 240th Quartermaster Company was named NCO of the Year runner-up, and Spc. Nathan Dunston, 554th Military Police Company, was named Soldier of the Year runner-up.



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