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Former track stand-out turned Soldier wins Army bodybuilding competition

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CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq — From a high school and college track star to a Soldier, and now a competitive bodybuilder, Sgt. Erica Rinard has ventured into new experiences not many have attempted nor accomplished in their lives.

Rinard accomplished a personal goal when she won “best overall” in a bodybuilding contest judged by Billy Blanks, creator of Tae Bo, held at Speicher, April 25.

“It was a personal accomplishment, I was out to beat myself and no one else,” Rinard said.

On her second deployment to Iraq, Rinard mobilized with Co. C, 1st Battalion, 185th Armor, a California Army National Guard unit from Palmdale, Calif. She grew up in Myrtle Creek, Ore., but currently resides in Victorville, Calif., and works out of Ft. Irwin, Calif., as a wheel and track mechanic.

Rinard led her South Umpqua High School, Myrtle Creek, Ore., 4x400 meter relay team to win the state championship, and broke the university’s 200-meter dash record as an athlete at Southern Oregon University, Ashland, Ore.

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RINARD/2-2-2

She began training for the Army's bodybuilding competition in December. Already a very petite build at 119 pounds, she had to plan and monitor her diet and weight training regimen.

Rinard had to stack on massive slabs of muscle in a short time.

Rinard's training began early in the morning prior to going to work; she would make her way to the gym twice-a-day for five days a week.

She would spend two hours throwing around weights in the morning and then head for a big meal for breakfast prior to starting her work day. At the end of the work day she would head over to the gym for the second time that day to train for three more hours.

The day of the competition her nerves began to kick in. With last minute words of motivation from a work-out partner, she stepped onto the stage. As she performed her routine the music started to play, but was muffled by the cheers from the crowd. Rinard, at 127 pounds and seven percent body-fat, placed first in her weight class and placed first overall.

“Some chances only come once a life time, so I took this chance to step out of my comfort zone and overcome my fear of standing before a large crowd,” said Rinard. “I guess that's the true reason why I took on this challenge to prove to myself that I could do it.”