



21st Theater Sustainment Command
16th Sustainment Brigade
Public Affairs Office
USAG Bamberg, Germany
DSN 469-7117
Commercial from U.S.: 011-49-951-300-7117

16th Sust. Bde. top Soldiers compete for Warrior, Warrior Leader of the Quarter

By Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin
16th Sust. Bde. Public Affairs

BAMBERG, Germany – Soldiers from the 16th Sustainment Brigade competed in a heated battle of wits, tactical skills and physical endurance during the first Warrior and Warrior Leader of the Quarter competition of the 2011 fiscal year at Warner Barracks here Nov. 16-17.

Ten Soldiers from the brigade's five battalions stretching across Germany and from as far as Italy came together for two days of spirited and intense competition.

The event kicked off promptly at 5:30 a.m. with opening remarks of motivation and a few words of wisdom from Command Sgt. Maj. Ismael Rodriguez, the 16th Sust. Bde. command sergeant major, and moved right into the competition with a grueling physical fitness test. The competitor's gave it their all as they endured the cold temperature and pouring rain to prove their physical capabilities, endurance and determination.

The participants then faced a formal board of sergeants major who tested their knowledge of Army subjects, their attention to detail and assessed their ability to focus under pressure.

On day two, the competitor's skills and endurance were pushed to the limit beginning with a 5 a.m. 6-mile foot march in full battle gear, weapon and rucksack weighing 25 percent of their individual bodyweight.

With a brief break to eat, the participants were off once more to test their marksmanship skills at the M16 rifle range.

A written examination followed and then a day- and night-land navigation course, which concluded long after the sun had set.

On the morning of Nov. 18, the smell of anticipation filled the brigade conference room as the Soldiers awaited the announcement of the winners by Rodriguez.

Taking home the title of Warrior Leader of the Quarter was Sgt. Brandon Parker, a cargo specialist from the 1st Inland Cargo Transfer Company, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

“Anytime I get a chance to step out and prove myself, I’m all for it,” said Parker about why he wanted to participate in the competition.

“The military’s got plenty of people who just like to get by,” Parker added. “Any time you have an opportunity to do something better than getting by, you should take it; and so I did. I won (the company board). I won battalion – then got lucky enough to be here.”

“I think the competition was good as a whole,” said Parker. “It was nice to network and get to know a bunch of people from all over the brigade. I don’t get a chance to do that very often.”

“The events were very challenging, said Parker about the competition. “It was the toughest PT test I’ve ever taken. (It was) raining outside while we were running; all the graders were very, very hard.”

“I came here thinking it was going to be a breeze, but yesterday ... that was a long, hard day,” Parker added.

Parker also had a message for other Soldiers thinking about accepting the challenge of competing to be the brigade's best. "Do it. Compete. Get out there and prepare for it, do your best and see if you can make it."

Spc. Keith Howse from the 70th Transportation Company, 391st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion was announced the Warrior of the Quarter.

"This is something that I wanted to do ... for recognition, career advancement – just to prove that I could do it," said Howse.

"Just a month and a half ago I had gone to the promotion board, so I had been studying already," said Howse about how his preparation for the competition. "I do everything I can to stay physically prepared. I play football, softball; I take PT really serious. I know I need to stay in shape."

Out of all the events, Howse said he feels he did the best in the marksmanship and land navigation portions of the competition.

"I think nerves kind of affected my APFT. I usually do better than what I did here. Land (navigation), for some reason, came really easy. I'm former infantry, so maybe that's why," said Howse.

Staff Sgt. Axel Rivera, the logistics movement noncommissioned officer for the brigade's Support Operations Transportation section, was hand-picked by Rodriguez as the NCO in charge of the competition and was instrumental in putting it all together.

The plan for the competition is based on what the Soldiers will see at the 21st Theater Sustainment Command competition, said Rivera.

"We always look at what the highest competitions do and then we create our competition based on that," he said.

“If the Soldiers have issues throughout the competition, we fix it for the next time so every time we do the competition it’s even better and better,” Rivera added.

“This quarter’s competition was good,” said Rivera. “It’s challenging, it’s tough, and it takes a lot of pride to win it.”

As the command sergeant major and the spearhead of the brigade program, Rodriguez said that being selected as Warrior or Warrior Leader of the Quarter takes much more than answering board questions.

“Without hesitation I share that potential, desire, drive, physical fitness, determination and will are what I look for in those who should achieve the honor to compete against the very best the brigade has to offer,” said Rodriguez.

“The competition is important to me because there is more to the competition than just determining a winner,” Rodriguez added. “The competition contains many other ancillary effects that are lost in the translation, such as building esprit de corps, instilling pride, professional development, building character, fostering confidence in Soldiers’ abilities, exerting positive stress in order to enhance resiliency, challenging Soldiers, etc. This happens for all who compete, not just those declared the Warrior and Warrior Leaders of the Quarter.”

Each participant was presented with a newly designed 16th Sust. Bde. command team coin, and Parker and Howse were awarded the Army Achievement Medals by the 16th Sust. Bde. commander, Col. Keith Sledd , for their outstanding performance by the 16th Sust. Bde. commander, Col. Keith Sledd. Both Soldiers will go on to compete in the 21st TSC Warrior and Warrior Leader of the Year competition in 2011.



Spc. Keith Howse from the 70th Transportation Company, 391st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, runs on the track outside the Freedom Fitness Facility on Warner Barracks Nov. 17 as part of the Army Physical Fitness Test during the 16th Sust. Bde. Warrior and Warrior Leader of the Quarter competition. (Photo by Spc. Kevin Alex, 16th Sust. Bde. Public Affairs)



16th Sustainment Brigade commander, Col. Keith Sledd, congratulates Spc. Keith Howse from the 70th Transportation Company, 391st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, after awarding him the Army Achievement Medal Nov. 19. Howse was named the 16th Sust. Bde. Warrior of the Quarter following the two-day competition. Howse will go on to compete in the 21st Theater Sustainment Command Warrior of the Year competition in 2011. (Photo by Spc. Kevin Alex, 16th Sust. Bde. Public Affairs)