

# Air assault troop shows spirit in 2011 combatives championship

BY SPC. NATHAN BOOTH

4th PAD

"Vibrations; vibrations going through your whole body."

That's how Spc. Christopher Rosado, a fighter from 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division representing Fort Campbell, Ky., described being punched in the face.

Rosado, along with more than 100 other fighters, endured that feeling multiple times while training for the 2011 U.S. Army Combatives Championships at Fort Hood July 21 through Saturday.

Unlike his competitors, however, Rosado had only three weeks to ready himself for the contest.

"I just wanted to be the best," Rosado said. "I made the team, and I figured why not come out and represent my base. It's what I gotta do. I've wrestled before, so I figured I would give it a shot."

Rosado used his wrestling background to secure a spot fighting for Fort Campbell, home of the Army's only Air Assault Division, with little Army combatives training.

"I wrestled in high school and college, and it just seemed like a natural next step," he said. "This is a lot more intense. Wrestling is controlled and really sportsmanship oriented. There's sportsmanship here, but once you start striking, all bets are off. It's a lot different."

According to his coach, Sgt. 1st Class Brian Marvin, the Jiu-Jitsu coach for the 5th Special Forces Group at Fort Campbell, Rosado's lack of training wasn't his only disadvantage.

"Not only did he only have three weeks of training leading up to this tournament, but he was outweighed by most of the people he was competing against," Marvin said.

But Rosado was working with something that couldn't be weighed on a scale.

"If you give him direction, he follows it to a T. Give him a game plan to stick to, and he works his game plan. He's mentally tough and mentally focused," Marvin said. "He's one of the most mentally tough kids I've met."

Corporal Eric Reyes, Rosado's



training partner from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Abn. Div., boiled Rosado down to one word.

"Relentless would be the best way to describe him," Reyes said. "Basically, he never quits."

Despite weighing in at 212 pounds, only six pounds over the minimum for the heavyweight class, Rosado advanced to the semifinals.

"I think he just wanted to prove himself," Reyes said.

Though he made it to the semifinals, one win away from the championship bout, Rosado was knocked out of the tournament with back-to-back losses in the closing hours of the second day.

"It's disappointing. I made it to the semis and figured one more win and I'd be done for the day," he said. "But that didn't happen."

Rosado is resolved to make sure this is not the last time he feels those stinging vibrations.

"Right now, I'm just focused on recovery," he said. "Slow down and maybe listen to my music for a little bit and get back onto the mat."

While Rosado's title hopes have ended for this year, other fighters continued competing in an event that gets tougher each year, accord-



Photos by Spc. Nathan Booth, 4th PAD

**TOP**, Specialist Christopher Rosado, 1-508th PIR, 101st Abn. Div. from Fort Campbell, Ky., (right) begins a match with Sgt. Bradens Simont, Minnesota National Guard, on Day Two of the 2011 U.S. Army Combatives Championship Friday. **ABOVE**, Simont is declared the winner of the bout against Rosado during the second day of action at the 2011 U.S. Army Combatives Championship.

ing to a former flyweight champ.

"The competition as a whole seems like it keeps getting better every year," said Sgt. Francisco Mercado Jr., a 2010 U.S. Army Combatives Champion from Fort Bragg, N.C., and a combatives instructor for the 82nd Airborne Division. "A lot of guys are so legit here. If you do well here, you can go anywhere

else and be phenomenal."

Mercado survived the preliminary and semifinal rounds despite being a target for other fighters.

"I saw a lot of faces that I remembered from last year," he said. "Anyone coming as a champion from the past, there's always a small target. If I had lost today ... (the) first thing they're going to say (is) 'Dude, you

beat the champion."

Mercado said he put in extra training in order to defend his flyweight title Saturday against Sgt. 1st Class Jesse Thornton of the defending champion III Corps squad from Fort Hood. The 36-year-old Thornton, however, knocked Mercado out in 20 seconds in the flyweight finale.

# Neighbor: Fort Hood honors voice of Central Texas with top honor

Continued from C1

take sole credit for his achievements, the general noted.

"He understands that everything is a team effort and that all the

great things that have happened here must be attributed to the team spirit of the local leaders and the great people of the community," Campbell said. "It is that attitude, understanding and unwavering devotion to

the military and their families that make him such a deserving inductee to the Good Neighbors of Fort Hood."

Though he never served in the military, Edwards served the Soldiers and Families of Fort Hood and held their same standards and ideals as his own in Central Texas and Washington.

"He has and continues to epitomize our Army Values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage," Fort Hood Garrison Commander Col. Mark Freitag said.

For Edwards, a self-proclaimed left-handed Aggie Democrat, just being back at Fort Hood was an honor.

"It was an honor just to be a neighbor of Fort Hood," Edwards said.

Being recognized as a Good Neighbor was an even higher honor, the former Congressman said. He was humble in his acceptance.

"This award means a great deal to me," Edwards said. "But, I will never forget who the true heroes are." The Soldiers he met at Fort Hood over the last two decades reminded

Edwards that the American spirit is alive and well at Fort Hood, he said.

"Every trip here, I have always felt humbled and inspired by the Soldiers and Families I've met here," Edwards said. "I wake up every morning grateful."

Through mentors such as former III Corps Commanding General retired Lt. Gen. Pete Taylor and late Killeen businessman Tommy Joe "T.J." Mills, Edwards was tutored about the importance of trying to give a little bit back to these magnificent Soldiers, he said.

"I constantly think about the young Soldiers sacrificing to make life better for my own sons," Edwards, who attended the dinner with his wife, Lee Ann, and their two sons, said. "It is my great hope that elected officials remember we cannot cut back on our investment in the quality of military lives."

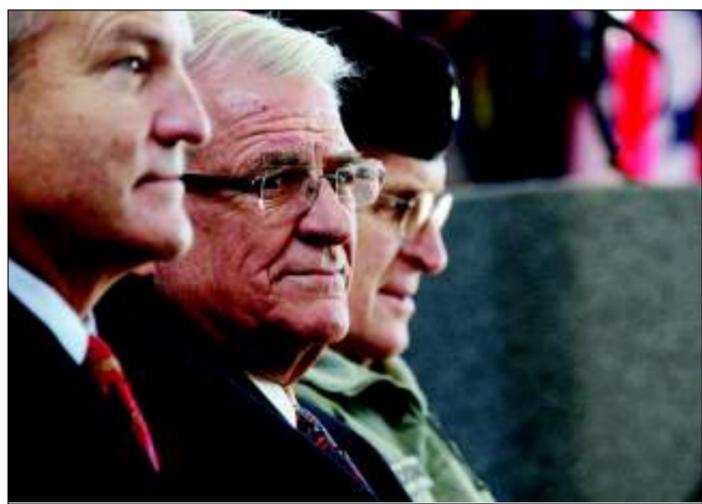
Fort Hood's Good Neighbor Program began in 1996 as a way to give back to community members whose contributions have significantly enhanced the lives of Fort Hood

Soldiers and Family members. Since the program's inception, 42 individuals have been designated as Good Neighbors.

Some notable previous inductees include Mills, for whom Fort Hood's main thoroughfare is named; Taylor, Bernice "Bernie" Beck, for whom the post's main gate is named; former III Corps Commanding General retired Gen. Robert Shoemaker, retired Lt. Gen. Donald Jones, and Killeen Mayor Timothy Hancock.

Good Neighbors represent several fields of business and community service, both military and civilian, but all have made a positive impact on Soldiers and Families at the Great Place.

"Each Good Neighbor in their own special way has selflessly served our nation, our Army and the Soldiers, Families and civilians of Fort Hood," Freitag said. "Equally, our Good Neighbors represent tireless and boundless energy - giving of themselves so that the needs of others are met and their lives are made better."



Sentinel file photo

U.S. Rep. Chet Edwards, U.S. Rep. John Carter, and Lt. Gen. Eric B. Schoomaker, U.S. Army surgeon general and commander, U.S. Army Medical Command, wait to address Fort Hood Dec. 13, 2010, at the CRDAMC groundbreaking ceremony.

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