

# Best Warrior Competiti

## Western Sol

Story and photos by Capt. Jose



FORT HARRI  
late in the morn  
here, but for th  
Western Medica  
Group's (WE-M  
petition (BWC)

competitive day was begin  
At 5:00 a.m. the BWC  
physical fitness test, the fir  
over two days of bitter win  
took place from February  
U.S. Army Hospital who b  
Montana for the first time

"It was a huge honor  
Sgt. Aaron Butler, a unit m  
Mont.

Butler, the 2009 Army  
officer of the year, helped  
His vision for the competi  
cold-climate operating env

According to Butler, s  
biggest hardships" the cor  
the competitors were asses  
tactical, and technical capa  
lenged their physical and r

The former champion  
ing the honor of winning  
out the sub-freezing temp

"You get the distinct  
our brigade at the division  
reserved for only one ever

Following the fitness  
the urban land navigation  
had increased and the sno  
temperature. The competi  
ered by steady snowfall. T  
with a Defense Advanced  
first point but were requir  
with map and compass. W  
added to the challenge of  
urban terrain.

The competition mov  
in Urban Terrain (MOUT)  
MOUT site, located on a b  
protection from the raw a  
demonstrated their profici  
Tasks and Battle Drills. T  
to set up and direct a 4-ma  
building, maintain voice co  
indirect fire scenario using  
detain an enemy prisoner  
establish an observation p

After transporting fro  
the contestants participate  
event - outside. For the I



# on: WILD WEST STYLE

## Soldiers Brave Snow, Elements for “An Honor Reserved For Only One”

by Stephen Darrah, 4225th U.S. Army Hospital and Sergeant 1st Class Roger Dey, Montana National Guard.

...SON, Mont. - Dawn comes  
...aining during the winter months  
...e competitors of the 2011  
...al Area Readiness Support  
... (MARSG) Best Warrior Com-  
...-light was irrelevant, as the  
...ning – with or without it.  
... Soldiers formed up for a  
...st challenge they would face  
...ter weather. The BWC, which  
...5-7, was hosted by the 4225th  
...rought the competition to  
....

...for the 4225th”, said Staff  
...ember from Three Forks,  
...y Reserve noncommissioned  
...plan and run the 2011 event.  
...tion included it being held in a  
...environment for the first time.  
...snow, ice, and cold were “the  
...testants had to deal with as  
...essed on “their professional,  
...ability” in a climate that chal-  
...mental endurance.  
...n cheered on the group, know-  
...the competition would drown  
...eratures.

...opportunity to represent  
...level and that is an honor  
...y year,” states Butler.  
...test, the Soldiers prepared for  
...course. By 9:30 a.m. the wind  
...w began to fall as well as the  
...itor’s tracks were quickly cov-  
...The competitors were provided  
...GPS receiver to locate their  
...ed find subsequent points  
...Wind, snow, and low visibility  
...navigation through unfamiliar

...red to the Military Operation  
... site in the afternoon. The  
...barren hill-side, offered little  
...fternoon wind as the Soldiers  
...ency on selected Warrior  
...he competitors were required  
...an stack to secure and clear a  
...ommunications and call for  
...y handheld radios, search and  
...of war, initiate an IV, and  
...ost using surrounding terrain.  
...om the cold windy MOUT site  
...nd in the Drill and Ceremony  
...Drill and Ceremony event, con-

testants were required to review a list of 20 movement commands and direct a squad of Soldiers with those commands. The snow and ice added a greater level of difficulty to the event making precise movements challenging.

The evening events included a written and essay test and a mystery event. The written and essay test required 2 hours of the Soldiers’ already lengthy day. The essay question asked the Soldiers what the heritage of the United States Army meant to them and how they are continuing the legacy with their careers. The evening concluded with the contestants participating in the “Mystery Event”. The event consisted of completing 40 correct push-ups and dis-assembling and re-assembling an M-16, all while blindfolded within the ten minute time limit.

Day two of the competition began with temperatures below freezing as the Soldiers were transported to the weapons qualification range at 9:00 a.m. for three hours of weapons zeroing and qualification with the M-16. The wind and raw temperatures made for additional hardships in the competitors’ attempts to achieve the highest scores.

After lunch the BWC contestants were transported to a new location, via CH- 47 Chinook Helicopter provided by the Montana National Guard 189th Aviation Battalion. Upon landing, Soldiers were with the option of using snow shoes to negotiated 3 miles of rough mountain terrain through varying levels of snow and ice back to their starting point.

“The biggest challenge was the ice, that underlying layer beneath the snow” said Spec. Ryan Landa a health care specialist from the 6253rd U.S. Army Hospital. Landa regretted his choice not to use his snowshoes. “Apparently they were a big help to some of the other competitors,” he said.

Sgt. David Bastiansen of the 6252nd U.S. Army Hospital of San Diego, Calif. also found the conditions overwhelming.

“Being a young man from the south and moving to Southern California, it was a very big shock and challenging to overcome the altitude and weather condi-

tions,” he said.

After the competitors completed the winter ruck march they mounted up in five HMMWV’s to convoy along a pre-determined route. As they relaxed and discussed their experiences during the snowy march, the competitors were assaulted with an enemy attack initiated with a simulated roadside bomb and missile attack. They were evaluated on reacting to direct fire, evaluating a casualty, tactical combat casualty care skills, and performance on communicating a 9-line MEDEVAC request.

Physically exhausted and mentally fatigued, the BWC competitors changed into dress uniforms for their final event - the Command Sergeant Majors board.

The Soldiers were dressed in Class A or ASU and presented themselves to the Board. They were evaluated on their uniform and appearance, oral expression, military bearing, military knowledge and understanding of current events. With varying expressions of relief or disappointment in themselves, with respect to their performance on the challenging Board event, the competitors of the BWC had successfully finished the tough and challenging 2011 WE-MARSG BWC.

Spec. Tarissa Vincent stated of the board and competition, “It’s an accumulation of everything that every Soldier should know,” she continued. “It really grills you and makes you want to hit the books.”

Contestants put in two full 18-hour days, operating in snowy, windy, and cold outdoor conditions for most of the time. Fatigue from the physical demands of the events and from the long days outdoors in sub-freezing temperatures hampered contestants, but the Soldiers of the WE-MARSG BWC demonstrated endurance and stamina under demanding conditions while still maintaining positive, upbeat attitudes and even enjoying the challenges.

The 2011 WE-MARSG BWC winners were announced at the awards luncheon with Sgt. Benjamin Reehl winning the NCO of the Year and Spec. Vincent awarded the Soldier of the Year. Reehl is the Chaplain Assistant for the 4225th USAH and is from Helena, Mont and Vincent is a Health Care Specialist for the 5502nd in Westminster, Col.

They moved on to the Army Reserve Medical Command’s division level competition.

