

# Sgt. Robert Cunningham

National Guard Bureau



**Assigned Unit:** West Virginia Army National Guard's 119th Engineer Company (Sapper)

**Military Occupational Specialty:** Combat Engineer (12B)

**Hometown:** Culloden, W.Va.

**Year of Enlistment:** 2010

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## **Do you have any family members who have served or are serving in the military?**

My uncle Brig. Gen. Melvin Burch served in the West Virginia National Guard for 30-plus years before retiring. Maj. Gen. Burch was the person to lead me towards the guard and swear me in to my time in service.

## **What military awards and achievements have you received or accomplished?**

My awards include being named the 2014 West Virginia SOY (Soldier of the Year), 2014 Region II SOY, 2014 National Best Warrior runner up, 2015 West Virginia NCOY, 2015 Region II NCOY, 2015 ARNG Best Warrior NCOY.

## **Why did you join the Army?**

I joined the Army to serve my nation and uphold the Constitution. Also, the Army provides the opportunity to make use of tuition assistance.

## **Why did you choose your MOS?**

I chose my MOS to further the competencies and technical know-how of engineer-related tasks.

## **What motivated you to compete in the DA level Best Warrior Competition?**

My primary motivation to compete in the DA Best Warrior Competition was to have the opportunity to push myself to my utmost limits, and to represent the state of West Virginia and the Army National Guard on a large scale.

## **If successful in accomplishing your goal as one of the Army's Best Warriors, what do you think your role would be in representing the Army?**

I will continue to spread the opportunities, educational benefits, and technical knowledge advances provided by the Army.

## **Who is your professional mentor?**

Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Kincaid is my mentor.

**How did your mentor help you in your professional career?**

Sgt. 1st Class Kincaid provided mentorship and guidance during the early stages of my career. He not only helped improve my performance, but guided me in the principles of being a good person and an even better leader.

**Who or what inspires you?**

My family and friends back home inspire me.

**What are your military career goals for the future?**

I strive to successfully complete the Sapper Leader Course and pursue a long time career in the West Virginia National Guard

**What was the biggest challenge along the way to get to this level of competition?**

The biggest challenge is the day-to-day discipline in all areas of physical fitness, technical competencies, and academic studying.

**Who is your Sponsor? How did they help prepare you for this level of competition?**

Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Kincaid is my sponsor. Through a great deal of experience and wisdom, he was able to push me to and past my limits to achieve goals greater than myself.

**What will be the most challenging event for you? Why?**

Night land navigation will be the most challenging. This event has been a black cloud through my time as a competitor. It requires a great amount of discipline and focus to complete effectively.

**What do you think will be your best/favorite event? Why?**

Stress shoots are my best/favorite event. The physical capacity it takes to perform effectively and provide rounds down range make this event very fulfilling to complete.

**What are some significant facts about you that are not known by others; i.e. interesting stories, unique hobbies or accomplishments?**

I've been an avid skier since the age of 8.

**What are your hobbies/special interests?**

My special interests include skiing, physical training, marksmanship, and hiking.

**Do you have any additional information you'd like to share?**

I would like to thank my leadership in the state of West Virginia for preparing me physically, mentally, and spiritually to perform my best throughout my career. Also, I would like to thank God for keeping my faith strong and enduring through adversity.