

Staff Sgt. Kevin Simpson

U.S. Army Military District of Washington (MDW)

Assigned Unit: The U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own" Fort Myer, Va.

Military Occupational Specialty: Special Bandsman (42S)

Hometown: Upland, Calif.

Year of Enlistment: 2008



What military awards and achievements have you received or accomplished?

My awards include three Army Achievement Medals, Army Commendation Medal, German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge, and Air Assault Wings.

Why did you join the Army?

I joined the Army because I wanted to use my love of music to support my country and help change people's lives.

Why did you choose your MOS?

I've been a musician all my life and it's the first thing I want to do when I wake up in the morning.

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

I wanted to test myself, to see how far I could push my limits, when competing against some of the Army's best.

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 would aspire to be an example of the professionalism of our Army – its commitment to excellence in every field and the depth of experience demonstrated by all of our soldiers.

Who is your professional mentor?

My mentor is Staff Sgt. Javier Sanz.

How did your mentor help you in your professional career?

Staff Sgt. Sanz has driven me to develop parts of myself that I didn't even know existed. He is always pushing me to find new areas in which to excel, and to never settle for what I had already accomplished.

Who or what inspires you?

As a special bandsman at Fort Myer, I see Soldiers laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery almost every day, and the example of what they were willing to sacrifice is a constant reminder for me of how much more there is to give.

What are your military career goals for the future?

Within two years I hope to be the first member of my organization to attend Ranger School. Ultimately, I hope to be the command sergeant major of "Pershing's Own."

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

Preparing for an event like this takes months of constant training, and my biggest challenge was maintaining my focus and determination in the midst of everything else going on around me.

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

My sponsor is Staff Sgt. Sanz, and he has forced me to stretch myself more than I ever could on my own. He is always pushing me to go a little bit further, or train a little bit harder, and it's that last 10 percent that has made the difference.

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

I haven't met anyone who is truly comfortable with nighttime land navigation, and while I fully intend to rock the course, growing up a city boy means that it has been something that requires constant practice and focus for me.

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

I love taking tests, and I am a performer by trade, so the written evaluations and the board exam are both things that I look forward to in an event like this.

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

Many people don't know that I am a third-degree blackbelt and instructor in Kempo. I am also fluent in French.

What are your hobbies/special interests?

My hobbies are martial arts, language study, cooking, wine tasting, and playing with my dogs.

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

I'm very excited and honored to be a part of this competition, and look forward to making my leadership and my fellow Soldiers proud.