



Dragon Soldiers Battle for Honors

By Mr. Christian DeLuca

Twenty-two of the top enlisted Soldiers and noncommissioned officers that the Chemical Corps had to offer made their way to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, in June 2007 to compete in the Third Annual Dragon's Peak Competition. The competition tested physical and mental skills over a two-day period of challenging and grueling Chemical Corps-based events.

Chemical Corps Regimental Command Sergeant Major Patrick Alston said that the Dragon Soldiers, who were selected by their unit commands based on their overall job performance, competed in the toughest Dragon's Peak to date. "Every year, the competition gets better and better," said Regimental Command Sergeant Major Alston. "These Soldiers faced major stepping stones in the competition that are putting it [the competition] in line with the best Ranger competition. These are some of the hardest-working Soldiers, Army-wise. That's why they were picked to represent their units."

The competition began at 0400 on 23 June 2007 with a physical training (PT) test that included push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups, and a two-mile run. While carrying 35-pound backpacks, the competitors then completed a 6-mile road march to Ranges 2 and 3, where they qualified with their M16A2 rifles.

Specialist Matthew Matosic, 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Fort Benning, Georgia, said that the road march—which took advantage of the hilly terrain of Fort Leonard Wood and the hot, muggy weather of the Missouri summer—was arduous, tiring, and . . . just how he wanted it. "It [the weather] was a smoker," Specialist Matosic said. "It [the road march] was challenging and very difficult. Plus, we did the PT test right before it. It was great!"





Following rifle qualifications, contestants completed a 2-mile road march, stopping at four checkpoints along the way to complete mission-based events, such as reacting to, identifying, and reporting a biological agent or treating a casualty under hostile conditions. The group then completed the Physical Endurance Course at Training



Area 89. The course is a high-speed obstacle course where Soldiers climb; crawl; shimmy; and swing over, under, and through a number of obstructions. Staff Sergeant Travis Chipley, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 3d Chemical Brigade, Fort Leonard Wood, said that the nonstop pace of the competition is what tested him the most. “Going from one event to the other with no rest in between [events]—it’s very physical and very challenging. It’s outstanding.”

A nighttime land navigation course, where Dragon Soldiers had to locate four checkpoints, ended Day 1 of the competition. Day 2 presented more of a mental challenge, with written tests and a board of sergeants major conducting interviews that covered topics such as leadership; chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear reconnaissance and decontamination operations; smoke operations; the Biological Integration Detection System; physical fitness; and first aid procedures.

Awards were given to the top competitors during the Green Dragon Ball on 27 June. The winner in the NCO category was Sergeant Kenneth Delano, 701st Main Support Battalion, 12th Chemical Company, Grafenwoehr, Germany. The winner in the enlisted Soldier category was Specialist Matthew Matosic, 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, Georgia. ●●●

Mr. DeLuca is a reporter for the Fort Leonard Wood Guidon.

