

# NCO of the Year Credits Preparation and Mentorship in Achieving New Title

*Compiled from press releases  
by Captain Heather Stone*

*On 3 October 2005, the Department of the Army named Sergeant Jeremy S. Kamphuis the Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) of the Year. The squad leader from the 127th Military Police Company in Hanau, Germany, credits his success in the competition to an enormous amount of preparation and the mentorship of his leaders.*

“The reason I’m standing here today is because of the outstanding leadership I have had from my unit,” he said. “I had all sorts of mentors throughout the competition, from my supervisor to first sergeant to battalion sergeant major. Anytime they could cheer me on or pass on information to make me a better leader, they would.”

“It’s a big confidence booster ... knowing the small part I played had a big impact,” Staff Sergeant Scott Potter, Sergeant Kamphuis’s former supervisor, said. “He said I had a lot to do with it, but honestly, all I did was put together training events for him. He put in massive amounts of studying ... it’s all on him.”

Staff Sergeant Potter is not exaggerating. Spending the previous year deployed to Iraq with the 127th, Sergeant Kamphuis competed in his first competition above company level only two weeks after returning from block leave. Although he had a good base as a result of the tactical and technical skills he internalized over the previous year, he still had a lot of preparatory work to do in a short time. The competition focused on a variety of mentally and physically taxing events. Over the course of the six-day September event in Fort Lee, Virginia, Sergeant Kamphuis showed excellence and consistency. In addition to appearing before a board presided over by Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston, an experience Sergeant Kamphuis describes as “nerve-racking,” he and nine other NCOs faced a number of challenges. They were required to—

- Take an Army physical fitness test (APFT).
- Complete day and night land navigation courses.
- Take a written test on map reading.
- Write an essay.



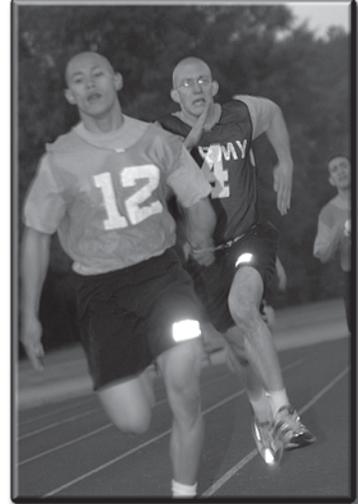
**Sergeant Jeremy S. Kamphuis (center) receives the Noncommissioned Officer of the Year Award from Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston (left) and General Richard Cody, Army Vice Chief of Staff.**

- Zero in and qualify on unfamiliar M16 rifles during day and night fire.
- Race to complete a 10-kilometer road march.
- Complete missions on situational training exercise (STX) lanes where they were graded on their ability to complete the mission using the warrior tasks.

“My favorite parts of the competition were the hands-on tasks. I enjoy getting out into the field and performing tasks,” Sergeant Kamphuis said. And it showed. His preparation for the competition resulted in consistent top performances.

With assistance from Staff Sergeant Potter, Sergeant Kamphuis and his leaders developed a diverse and intense schedule of fitness training and book studies. The fitness training focused on three areas: shorter speed- and strength-based events, such as the APFT; combined strength and endurance events, such as ruck marching; and agility events, such as those in the obstacle course and warrior ethos STX lanes.

During twice-a-day workouts, Sergeant Kamphuis covered traditional exercises like push-ups and sit-ups, plus alternative training events. He also focused on rope climbing, pull-ups, chin-ups, and weight lifting to build upper body strength for the 35 to 45 pounds the competition would require him to carry in his rucksack. He marched with the rucksack twice a week, building from 4 miles to 12 miles, and devoted three days a week to running. His running schedule consisted



**The competition included tests of ability in land navigation (left), weapons (center), and physical training.**

of two days of shorter-distance speed work, running 4 miles with quarter-mile sprints every mile, and one day of endurance training, running up to 8 miles.

Sergeant Kamphuis readily admits that the competition was much more involved than he initially anticipated. “I’d never heard of the competition. As far as I was concerned, it was nothing more than a board appearance. I quickly found out it entailed a lot of hands-on training.”

In addition to spending his spare time studying field manuals and Army regulations, he buried himself in studying and familiarizing himself with the warrior tasks, weapon systems (such as the M240B medium machine gun), and call-for-fire procedures. Following the Army’s crawl, walk, run model, Sergeant Kamphuis studied books and principles in the morning and transitioned to hands-on training in the afternoon and evening.

“You never know if they’re going to throw something at you—an obstacle course, weapons disassembly in the dark,” he said. “You have to be proficient at everything.” Sergeant Kamphuis went to the 130th Engineer Brigade’s competition for additional practice and to test himself at another level of competition. Each event the trainers coordinated for Sergeant Kamphuis was an attempt to replicate the next higher level of competition and push him to new limits.

Master Sergeant Ramon Domenech is not surprised at Sergeant Kamphuis’s success. “He’s truly

a professional noncommissioned officer,” Master Sergeant Domenech said. “[He’s] a true warrior and very deserving individual. He put his heart and soul and body into this.”

Sergeant Kamphuis echoed that in his personal philosophy. “To succeed in the Army, Soldiers need to live the warrior ethos. If you live like that, you’re doing the right thing. You have to look to better yourself every chance you get.”

In the end, Sergeant Kamphuis’s innate drive to better himself succeeded beyond his expectations. “To be honest, it was a big shock,” he said. “It was an honor to compete with the best of the best. To come out on top was an awesome feeling.”

Sergeant Kamphuis, along with Sergeant Chad H. Steuck, the Army’s Soldier of the Year, and the other 18 NCO of the Year finalists, was honored at the Association of the US Army awards luncheon. He received a notebook computer, a \$1,000 savings bond, and a family vacation to Shades of Green at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. Additionally, all finalists received a Palm Pilot, an MP3 player or camera, a Swiss army knife, and a commemorative ring. Sergeant Major of the Army Preston commented on the by-product of the competition. “Why do we do this?” he asked. “It helps us grow and motivate our young Soldiers into leaders. This is one of the things that sets our Army apart from any in the world.”

At the very least, it set one young military police Soldier apart.