

USAEUR and Seventh Army Soldier of the Year Credits Supporters

By Sergeant Adrienne Killingsworth

Specialist (now Sergeant) Daniel Micek, a military police Soldier with the 615th Military Police Company, 709th Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade, was named the U.S. Army Europe (USAEUR) and Seventh Army Soldier of the Year on 27 August 2009.

Sergeant Micek's journey seemingly began almost a year ago, when he was named Soldier of the Month for his company. But Micek's quest to live up to his own potential actually began long before that—in his hometown of Silver Creek, Nebraska. According to Sergeant Micek, it was there that he decided to push himself to his limits. "I just wanted to do something with my life, make something of myself. I wanted to do something that people don't normally get to do," he said.

To that end, Micek enlisted in the Army as a military police Soldier and pushed himself to do more and to be more. With just a little more than two years in the service, it is safe to say that he has accomplished more than most and that he has earned the opportunity to do things that many do not get a chance to do.

After his success at the company level Soldier of the Year selection board, Micek tried out for his company warfighter team—an experience which he says gave him the push that he needed to reach his current level of success.

The warfighter team trains heavily for the annual Warfighter Challenge competition held at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri—home of the U.S. Army Military Police School. "Training six days a week on warrior tasks and drills, obstacle courses, Army knowledge, and physical training is not for the weak-hearted," Micek said.

But Micek's success at the Soldier of the Year board meant the postponement of his warfighter team status; he was able to train with the team only under the affectionate title of "boardfighter." He credits the team for his ability to do so well in the Soldier of the Year competitions.

With every competition, the requirements and intensity increased. Micek said that his teammates and his sponsor, Staff Sergeant Jason Nepa, pushed him and motivated him through it all. "The USAREUR [competition] was pretty intense," Micek said, noting that at one point, "They didn't give us a standard [for completing a task] because they wanted to see what our own personal standard was."

Micek said he sees his Soldier of the Year title as something more than an individual accomplishment. "I really don't feel like I'm the best Soldier in USAREUR," he said. "I know there's a lot of people 'downrange' fighting the war. For me, I'm just trying to represent them." The sergeant also gives more credit to those around him—particularly his warfighter team—than he takes for himself.

Looking back over the past year and ahead to the future, Micek said the entire process that has led him to where he is now has been a blessing and a rewarding adventure. "Personally, it's a really good experience," Micek said. "I mean, I've enjoyed every moment of it. Everybody is really proud of me—the warfighter team, the company, my family back home, and friends." "Honestly," he says, "I'm kind of humbled by it."

Micek is now ready to tackle another challenge—testing his warrior skills downrange. He has extended his tour with the 615th Military Police Company so that he can accompany them on their upcoming deployment.



Sergeant Killingsworth is a public affairs specialist with the 18th Military Police Brigade, Mannheim, Germany. She holds a bachelor's degree in English literature from California State University–Northridge.