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FLW military police Soldier wins Army's Drill Sergeant of the Year Competition

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – For the second consecutive year, the Army's Drill Sergeant of the Year hails from Fort Leonard Wood, is a military police and again answers to Miller.

After four days of intense competition, the Army named Staff Sgt. Jacob Miller of Fort Leonard Wood as this year's Drill Sergeant of the Year.

Miller is a member of the 14th Military Police Brigade, 787th Military Police Battalion.

Staff Sgt. Jonathan Miller, formerly of Fort Leonard Wood, was the 2014 U.S. Army Drill Sergeant of the Year.

Staff Sgt. Jacob Miller received the Meritorious Service Medal and was recognized at an awards ceremony, Sept. 10 at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

Since 1969, Fort Leonard Wood has won the Army's Drill Sergeant of the Year Competition 14 times, including a five-year-consecutive streak of winners from 1998 to 2002.

The Drill Sergeant and AIT Platoon Sergeant of the Year event is a four-day, "best-of-the-best" contest that puts competitors through physical and mental tests, according to information from the Army.

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Competitors must battle fatigue, weather and surprise events to earn the coveted titles. They must perform and instruct more than 50 tasks and drills, including unknown distance runs and foot marches, rappelling, orienteering, obstacle courses, physical readiness training and appearances before a board of command sergeants major to demonstrate their knowledge of leadership and training tasks.

While the Drill Sergeant and AIT Platoon Sergeant competition is similar to other competitions across the Army, this event focuses on competitors' ability to teach, as their day-to-day job requires them to effectively teach the Army's newest Soldiers.

Miller:

As Drill Sergeant of the Year, Miller will be moving to Fort Eustis, Virginia, where he will work at the Center for Initial Military Training. There, he'll have a chance to provide input and help shape the way the Army trains new Soldiers.

Miller, 30, joined the Army in November 2006. He completed Military Police One Station Unit Training at Fort Leonard Wood in April 2007 and has served in MP units at Fort Carson, Colorado, Fort Wainwright, Alaska, and Fort Leonard Wood.

Miller, who is working on his bachelor's degree in criminal justice, has deployed twice to Iraq.

His awards and decorations include an Army Commendation Medal with Valor, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal and the Combat Action Badge.

Miller, who has been a drill sergeant since March 2013, was in disbelief that he won.

"It's unreal," he said. "It was definitely a long competition, a long week of hard, intense training."

To prepare for the competition, Miller trained hard, including lots of foot marches, long-distance running and sprints. He also studied up on Army drill and ceremony and all the other tasks Soldiers must know.

"This competition was very intensive," Miller said. "Everybody that came here were all winners. Going up against the top of the top here was just unreal."

At the same time, the Soldiers shared a common camaraderie, Miller said.

"We all came together, we helped each other out, pushed each other," he said.

His advice for those looking ahead to next year's competition: "Prepare for anything. You need to be fully well rounded when you come here."

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For more information, contact the Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office at 573.563.4145.

(Editor's note: Michelle Tan, Army Times senior staff writer, wrote this article. The article is reprinted with permission from the Army Times. Guidon staff contributed to this article.)

About Fort Leonard Wood

Fort Leonard Wood is a thriving and prosperous installation that has evolved from a small basic training post 70 years ago to a premier Army Center of Excellence that trains about 80,000 military and civilians each year.

Home to the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Fort Leonard Wood now trains and educates service members and develops doctrine and capabilities for the Training and Doctrine Command's U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School, U.S. Army Engineer School, and U.S. Army Military Police School, three gender integrated Initial Military Training brigades, and the Army's largest Noncommissioned Officers Academy.

Over the past several years, Fort Leonard Wood has received numerous additional responsibilities to include supporting a colonel-commanded Marine Corps Detachment and an Air Force Detachment, which are both the largest on any Army installation, are located on Fort Leonard Wood; a large Navy Seabee Detachment and elements of the Coast Guard train here as well.
