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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Release No. 14-072

Aug. 19, 2014

Soldier loses 107 pounds to become TRADOC Soldier of the Year, compete for Army Soldier of the Year

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – For Spc. Joshua Roberts, the journey to becoming the 2014 U.S. Army’s Training and Doctrine Command Soldier of the Year was by no means a small feat.

In fact, Roberts journey to winning TRADOC’s Soldier of the Year began some two years ago, where it took him almost 12 months to lose enough weight to even join the military.

Weighing about 208 pounds now, Roberts lost 107 pounds in order to enlist in the Army.

Roberts weighed 285 pounds in high school, and he went on to play football at Rochester Community and Technical College in Rochester, Minn., where he gained 30 more pounds before deciding he wanted to do something more meaningful.

“I tried going to a recruiter. The recruiter told me I was too big, and I would have to lose a lot of weight,” Roberts said.

The recruiter didn’t really seem to take Roberts seriously. His friends and coworkers said he’d never make it in the military. They told him he didn’t like waking up early, and he didn’t like change. “So, I wanted to prove them wrong,” Roberts said.

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“Since then I (have) dropped 107 pounds, and here I am today (TRADOC Soldier of the Year),” Roberts said.

Losing the weight was difficult. Roberts said it took a little less than a year to lose the weight to join the Army.

“I ate healthy. I used to eat whatever I wanted. I decided enough is enough. I stopped drinking pop (soda); I stopped going out for fast food. I started eating less, and I did a lot of running. It slowly started shedding off,” Roberts said.

Roberts is a military police Soldier, whose platoon sergeant became the driving force behind him going to boards and competing for company, battalion and brigade Soldier of the quarter, month and year.

He finished his One Station Unit Training here in August of 2012, and a few days after arriving to his new unit, the 988th Military Police Company, 92nd MP Battalion, he was told he was going to the Soldier of the month board.

Although he lost board after board, he never gave up due to the encouragement of Sgt. 1st Class Kyle Riley, his platoon sergeant.

“My platoon sergeant talked me into going one more time. He told me I was really intelligent; ‘you know what you’re talking about; you are like the total Soldier concept. I need you to keep going to these boards. You can do it,’” Roberts said.

Thanks to the support from Riley and others, Roberts won battalion, brigade, Maneuver Support Center of Excellence and now TRADOC Soldier of the Year.

At the TRADOC competition, Roberts had the feeling that he was really doing (well), especially after the first day.

“We had a 12-mile ruck (march). There were 17 competitors between the Soldiers and the noncommissioned officers. Only three of us finished the whole thing. I was the only Soldier to finish, and the other two were sergeants first class, who were Ranger qualified,” Roberts said. “I had a good feeling that I got a good gap on my competitors at that time. From then on, I felt like I was acing every test, and I felt great and confident throughout the whole competition.”

Even though the competing Soldiers referred to Roberts as “Soldier of the Universe,” Roberts kept his game face on throughout the competition.

And the MSCoE command sergeant major said that his concentration and preparation were evident.

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“Spc. Roberts had an attitude of preparedness and absolutely impressed me throughout the entire competition. He was first in most, if not all events, and he never let it go to his head,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Terrence Murphy. “He was a team player until the end. This young trooper is a shining example of what right looks like.”

Murphy was extremely proud of Roberts being named TRADOC Soldier of the Year.

“He worked extremely hard for this and represented Fort Leonard Wood and the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence in a grand fashion,” Murphy said. “He also represented himself extremely well as a Soldier, showing not only himself that he has what it takes to be the best but anyone who sees him.”

Roberts will represent TRADOC at the U.S. Army Best Warrior Competition in October at Fort Lee, Va.

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

Encl(s): Photos (4)

Photos 1 and 2: Spc. Joshua Roberts, TRADOC and MSCoE Soldier of the Year, lost 107 pounds to enlist the Army. *(Courtesy photos)*

Photo 3: Spc. Joshua Roberts, photographed in his Army Service Uniform, will represent TRADOC at the U.S. Army Best Warrior Competition in October at Fort Lee, Va. *(U.S. Army photo)*

Photo 4: From left to right: Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Dailey, TRADOC's command sergeant major; Spc. Joshua Roberts, U.S. Army TRADOC Soldier of the Year; and Command Sgt. Maj. Terrence Murphy, Fort Leonard Wood and MSCoE command sergeant major. *(U.S. Army photo)*

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 more than 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, one of only five reception stations in the Army, and the Army's largest Noncommissioned Officers Academy.

Over the past several years, Fort Leonard Wood has received numerous additional responsibilities to include supporting the 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, a large Forces Command unit that is responsible for all deployable capabilities at Fort Leonard

Wood. 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.
