



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Alaska National Guard Soldiers named Best Warriors**

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska**—Two members of the Alaska Army National Guard earned honors as top contenders for the 2018 Alaska Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition.

During a Sept. 10 awards ceremony, Sgt. Bryan Gonzalez, Alpha Company, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, was named winner of the noncommissioned officer category and Spc. Jonathan Holston, Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, took top honors for the junior enlisted category.

The Best Warriors had to demonstrate mastery of multiple skills through a series of more than 15 events designed to challenge their physical and mental toughness during the state-level competition.

“It's about competition, esprit de corps, and it's actually to identify the most well-rounded soldier and noncommissioned officer out there,” said Master Sgt. Xavier Bird, deputy commandant, operations noncommissioned officer in charge of the 207th Multifunctional Training Regiment. “It's not just the most physically fit, but you have to be the most well-rounded Soldier out there because there are a lot of physical events, but there are also technical events and knowledge events.”

Among the events designed to test the participants were an Army Physical Fitness Test, a five-mile run, live-fire weapons ranges, casualty evacuation, day and night land navigation, obstacle course, cross-country run, road march, high-physical demands test, written exams and state command sergeant major board.

“There are some things that all soldiers should know,” said Spc. Allen Hansen, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, and a competitor in this year's competition. “The great thing about having a sergeant major board is it gives you the opportunity to shine a light inside your own head. They're not tough questions, but they're honest questions. It makes you want to work harder to be better and do better.”

Six Soldiers tested their skills and knowledge in this year's competition.

“I think this year, the motivation among the Soldiers is a lot higher than it was in the past,” said Bird, describing the competitors who entered each task with renewed enthusiasm.

“The winners of the competition will be Soldier of the year and noncommissioned officer of the year,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Marc Petersen, Alaska Army National Guard state command sergeant major, and host of the Best Warrior Competition awards ceremony. “They’ll move on to compete in the Army National Guard’s Region 6 competition.”

The 2018 Army National Guard Region 6 Best Warrior Competition is scheduled to be hosted at JBER in May 2017.

Should the winners not be able to compete, they will be replaced by the runners-up from the state competition. This year, Sgt. Carlos Otero, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, is the noncommissioned runner-up, and Spc. Hansen is the junior enlisted runner up.

“Any National Guard Soldier can enter, enlisted or NCO,” said Bird. “The deadline to have your packets in is usually by the first of August.”

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### PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **Flickr link** includes an event album with the complete selection of full-resolution, free downloadable images. (May not be accessible from all military computers.)  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/alaskanationalguard/albums/72157688856889045>
3. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://dvidshub.net/r/x96wfg>



An Alaska Army National Guardsman competes in the 2018 Best Warrior Competition on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Sept. 7, 2017, to either represent Alaska as Soldier or noncommissioned officer of the year in the Northwest Regional Best Warrior Competition held here in the spring of 2018. These events showcase a Soldier’s physical prowess and mental agility. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Heidi R. Kroll)



Spc. Jonathan M. Holston, Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, participates in a road march during the 2018 Alaska Army National Guard’s Best Warrior Competition on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Sept. 9, 2017. The winners of this competition will represent Alaska as Soldier or noncommissioned officer of the year in the Northwest Regional Best Warrior Competition scheduled to occur here in May of 2018. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Mike Risinger /released)



Spc. Allen Hansen, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, performs three-to-five second bounds during the 2018 Alaska Army National Guard's Best Warrior Competition on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Sept. 9, 2017. The winners of this competition will represent Alaska as Soldier or noncommissioned officer of the year in the Northwest Regional Best Warrior Competition scheduled to occur here in May of 2018. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Mike Risinger /released)



Sgt. Carlos Otero, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 49th Missile Defense Battalion, throws a training grenade at targets during the 2018 Alaska Army National Guard's Best Warrior Competition on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Sept. 9, 2017. The winners of this competition will represent Alaska as Soldier or noncommissioned officer of the year in the Northwest Regional Best Warrior Competition scheduled to occur here in May of 2018. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Mike Risinger /released)