



THE FIELD REPORT

MAY 2012

Training
how we

Fight

WWII veterans honor I Corps Honor Guard | Kids take to track for fitness, fun | MPs dominate combatives

A topographic map of Afghanistan in shades of orange and yellow, showing various locations like Kabul, Kandahar, and Herat. A silhouette of a soldier in full combat gear, including a helmet and carrying a rifle, stands on the right side of the map, looking towards the left. The text is overlaid on the map.

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Sgt. Michael Roland, the 2012 JBLM Combatives Tournament heavyweight champion after his final match. *Photo by Spc. Adam L. Mathis*

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THE FIELD REPORT

Editor in Chief

Capt. Kenneth Stewart

•

Managing Editor

Staff Sgt. Michael Sparks

•

Layout & Design Editor

Spc. Adam L. Mathis

•

Associate Layout & Design Editor

Sgt. Derek J. Nelson

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Anyone desiring to submit an article for consideration in *The Field Report*, should contact Staff Sgt. Michael Sparks at michael.l.sparks@us.army.mil.

Remember



Servicemembers honor victims of the Holocaust

Story and photo by Sgt. Micah VanDyke,
28th Public Affairs Detachment

A somber atmosphere descended upon the audience as a holocaust survivor shared a firsthand story about suffering and survival during World War II.

Robert (Bob) Herschkowitz was a childhood survivor of one of the greatest crimes in human history.

In Hebrew, Holocaust Remembrance Day is called “Yom HaShoah.” It serves as a day for everyone to remember the Jewish genocide that took place over 70 years ago. In July 1979, the U.S. Congress designated one week every year to remember, reflect upon and learn from the horrors that took place.

Herschkowitz, a retired Naval Reserve commander and the guest speaker from the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center, captivated everyone in the banquet hall of the McChord Co-Located Club, April 17, as he spoke about his experiences.

Herschkowitz said he always looks forward to the chance to speak at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. It pleases him to share his story and expand holocaust awareness.

Herschkowitz was well received by the Soldiers, Airmen and civilians in attendance. He left a lasting

impression on the commander of the 593rd Sustainment Brigade, Col. Scott Lofreddo.

“The remembrance ceremony is very important for the brigade and for JBLM,” said Lofreddo. “It allows us to see history over 70 years ago, so we don’t repeat the horrors of the Nazi regime of World War II.”

Lofreddo was very pleased with having a guest speaker of this magnitude help explain the importance of Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Equal Opportunity Advisor Sgt. 1st Class Fernice Morton from the U.S. Virgin Islands, was also moved by Herschkowitz’s story.

“It is important that we are aware of racism and discrimination that still exists, even today. ... We have to make everyone aware that discrimination must be combated and has to be stopped,” said Morton.

“We learned about this gentleman’s plight and his families’ hardships during World War II,” said Lofreddo. But more importantly, we learned through context how not to treat others in life.”

Story and photos by Sgt. Memory Strickland,
17th Public Affairs Detachment



Kids on the RUN

Smiling faces line up at the starting line with one goal in mind, to have fun being healthy and fit.

Approximately 300 children ranging from the smallest runner of 5 years in age to the oldest of 16 years old participated in the 3rd Annual Armed Forces Kids Run.

"The mission of the Armed Forces Kids Run is to promote fitness, health and nutrition for our youth," said Cynthia Williams-Patnoe, the Child, Youth and School Services Sports and Fitness director at Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

"I helped my little brother prepare for the race," said Brian Jones Jr., 7, son of Sgt. Brian Jones Sr. of Boston, 593rd Sustainment Brigade.

Richard Jones, 5, brother of Brian Jones Jr., confidently lined up at the starting line with the rest of

the 5 and 6 year old children. They eagerly waited for the signal to start. When the signal was given, they darted around the track for the long half mile run.

"They love to run," said Jones Sr.

Brian Jr. was jumping around with a smile on his face, ready to run. He did some stretches that his dad showed him and he was ready. His little brother had already ran the half mile race; now, it was his turn to run the mile.

"Yeah, I'm going to win," said Brian Jr.

There were no trophies or medals given, all the children were winners by finishing the race strong. This was an opportunity to enjoy a family event that was more about fitness and less about getting a prize



at the end.

"I have been running in my physical education class and with my parents for a few months," said Angelinez Salgado-Valez, 10, daughter of Maria Velez and Sgt. 1st Class Alberto Salagocalis of New York City with the, 3-2 Stryker Brigade. "I like to run because it gives me energy."

Angelinez was participating in the two mile portion of the race with children ages 9 to 16.

Angelinez sped to the finish line with a look of relief on her face.

"I had lot of fun," Angelinez said. "I just wanted to finish."

The crowd cheered as each child finished the race. They were rewarded with high-fives and hugs from their parents.

"I'm so proud of you," said Staff Sgt. James Lang, 1-168 GSAB of Greenville, S.C., and father of Tristan Lang, 6.





Story and photos by Sgt. Jacqueline Fennell,
28th Public Affairs Detachment



Strong-spirited military children, dressed in bright Easter clothes, demonstrated their physical fitness by dashing from the 20-yard line in an attempt to gather as many eggs as their little hands could carry toward the finish line.

Waiting for them at the end of the field was a tent where they could cash in their eggs for bags of candy and toys.

It didn't matter if the children could walk or stand, the little ones found satisfaction in absorbing the warm sun and enjoying the excitement.

Although this was not your traditional egg hunt at Memorial Stadium, April 8, smiles still lit the children's faces with every egg picked up during the Easter Egg Dash. Local community members enjoyed the day with their children.

"We feel that kids are a big part of the military and are a boost to Soldiers' morale," said Sgt. William May, a petroleum supply sergeant assigned to the 606 Forward Support Company, 17th Fires Brigade, and this year's president of the JBLM Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers program. "Making them happy makes our service members happy."

Children enjoyed the time spent with their families running for Easter eggs, candy and toys donated by local sponsors.

"They might have not signed up for it, but they definitely have to do a service for their country," said Spc. Monique Miranda, the installation BOSS team

representative assigned to Joint Base Garrison, Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

Military children often have to deal with deployments, being away from their moms and dads, or both, for extended periods of time.

"I really looked forward to bringing my son to the Easter Egg Dash," said Melissa Thomas, whose husband is currently on his fifth deployment to Afghanistan. "I am glad to be here."

BOSS is part of Family Morale Welfare and Recreation, which allows military families, like the Thomas family, to stay engaged in events and recreational activities.

Bill Strock, the recreation specialist supervisor at the FMWR said it's important to show military families that we are part of their community and "that means giving back to it."

Families were grateful for the opportunity to spend quality time and have fun together under the bright blue sky.

"There's a lot to do here with the family at JBLM and there's a lot of support groups," said Crystalynn Dannemiller, the mother of 6-week-old, Ryder Dannemiller. "I really like it here."

A man is running on a rocky, hilly trail. He is wearing a blue jacket, black shorts with a red number '39' on the side, black socks, and a black beanie. He has a hydration pack and is holding a trekking pole. The word 'TOUGH' is written in large, white, bold letters across the bottom of the image. The background shows a dry, hilly landscape with some green shrubs and tall grass.

Story and photos by Sgt. Jacqueline Fennell,
28th Public Affairs Detachment

“A little after three in the morning my senses were not at 100 percent,” said Paige. “I completely lost all sense of direction.” It cost Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Paige time,

added more miles to his already sore body and forced him to confront the thought of defeat.

“I was going to finish this race on my own two feet, even if I ended up coming in after the 32 hour time limit,” said Paige.

All of this was part of Paige’s journey through the steep trails, rock and mud of the Badger Mountain Challenge, a 100-mile ultramarathon held in Richmond, Wash.

Where many would have found misery on the muscle-burning trails, Paige found a sense of clarity.

“Everyone has their own way they go about trying to attain some sense of clarity, some sort of connection with a higher being,” said Paige, a retention noncommissioned officer assigned to Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Special Forces Group.

“There is just something special about pushing your body to its physical and mental limits while at the same time being away from the hustle and bustle of modern day society as you tromp through the woods by yourself or with a good running friend.”

In spite of wind, cold rain, exhaustion and poor visibility at night, Paige completed the run. He proved to himself he could complete the run, and arrived at a new understanding of the human spirit.

After returning from Afghanistan in July 2010, Paige injured himself and was unable to work out on a consistent basis. A former colleague and friend, Maj. Jonathan Shark of the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, encouraged him to enter the marathon.

Sharing the experience, Shark ran the 100-mile ultra-marathon with Paige.

“He’s got heart, more than anybody I’ve ever seen,”

said Shark. “He’s got this no quit attitude, and you can see it because he never quits and never surrenders.”

Paige prepared for the race with a determination that proved it could be completed.

“My conditioning started about August of last year and I ran anywhere from eight to 12 hours a week,” said Paige.

The mental challenges of the marathon included the rigors of running in the dark and the constant battle against sleep deprivation.

“By the time I reached the 85 mile marker, my feet were on fire, and I was tempted to quit until I thought of my son,” said Paige. “How would I look him in the eyes?”

After reaching the final decent on Badger Mountain, he was greeted by smiling faces. Ryan and Alana, his 6 and 10 year-old children, ran the last 100 yards, crossing the finish line with their dad. He finished the marathon with a time of 31:36:17.

At the finish line, Paige’s family was joined by spectators.

Steve Hall, a teacher from Whidbey Island, Wash., and father of Megan Hall, who placed fourth in the same ultra-marathon, asked to shake Paige’s hand in appreciation of how well he overcame the temptation to quit and about the message he sent to his family.

Hall said he admired Paige because, “What he did is a testimony to the human spirit and what we can accomplish if you put your mind to it, so if it requires over the top physical conditioning to do the job, then that’s what we’ll do because we can’t deny the human spirit of the American.”

Family TIME



Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Antwaun J. Parrish,
5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Spc. Vincent Reyes held his daughter in his arms as his son and wife walked alongside him at Kids Fest. Hundreds of families from Joint Base Lewis-McChord

attended the event finale April 5 that included static vehicle displays, free bowling and various activities for the participants.

"The environment is fun and welcoming to families," said Reyes, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division.

Kids Fest is an annual event held in conjunction with the Clover Park School District spring break. Some kids attended a weeklong theatre workshop to prepare a performance for the event. This year's performance was based around the festival's theme "Into the Woods," which featured songs and dances. There was also an educational show teaching kids about different reptiles.

"We offer theater workshops as a confidence builder for the children," said Kate Laverents, JBLM Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation's special events director. "If they have any special talents, we place that into the show as well."

JBLM community agencies representatives from local park and recreational programs were there to provide information to the families and hands-on activities for the children.

Laverents feels that Kids Fest is beneficial because it provides kids with something to do during spring break instead of doing nothing around the house.

A couple of families in attendance cherished the precious moments when they get to participate in activities with their family.

Reyes came to the event with his wife, Liana, and their two children to share some fun family moments before his deployment to Afghanistan.

"I'm moving my family back to California so they will have their familiar support net while I'm away," said Reyes.

Since Liana has been at JBLM, her kids have participated in many of the activities that FMWR offers.

"My son played basketball, and my daughter was a part of the dance academy," said Liana.

Reyes said that he will have more peace of mind while in Afghanistan, knowing his family is taken care of.

Liana, on the other hand, looks forward to him returning.

"We have been waiting a while for this deployment," said Liana. "I am ready for him to complete it and come back home."

Sgt. William Mrozek, assigned to Headquarters Support Company, 1 Corps and his family came out to the fest to enjoy the beautiful weather and festivities. His wife, Jennifer, Family Readiness Group leader for HSC, 1 Corps, appreciates the community programs offered here.

"The program keeps my children involved when they're not in school," said Jennifer. "When my spouse is deployed, I participate more to keep my mind occupied."

Jennifer was happy to see the room filled with so many decorative tables offering goodies and activities for the families.

"Today, we planted flowers and received free books for the children," said Jennifer. "All the activities were fun and well planned."

HONORING THE GUARD

World War II veterans paid tribute to members of the I Corps Honor Guard for their recent service to those who fought and died

Story and photos by Sgt. Micah VanDyke,
28th Public Affairs Detachment



The veterans in the room were giving back to those who serve and had recently served in a very special moment.

Unit pride and esprit de corps were seen throughout the room April 12 when members of the I Corps Command Honor Guard from Joint Base Lewis-McChord received Congressional Gold Coins for their role in a Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony.

Ten members of the Honor Guard performed at a historical ceremony which honored World War II veterans from the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, 100th Infantry Battalion and the Military Intelligence Service on Jan. 14. During the ceremony, distinguished veterans were awarded the highest civilian award in the U.S., the Congressional Gold Medal.

For some veterans, it was their first time watching the Honor Guard perform in years. The veterans seemed honored to have the colors presented by the I Corps Command Honor Guard.

Retired Maj. Weldon Lee represented the Seattle Nisei Veterans Committee during the presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal Coins. His committee's foundation was proud to conduct the ceremony for the Honor Guard.

"It is my esteemed pleasure to be here today to present a token of our appreciation to your I Corp's Command Honor Guard who did such a superb job," said Lee. "It went beyond everybody's expectations."

Spc. Donovan Dean, an infantryman currently assigned to the Honor Guard,

said he was honored to be selected and enjoyed performing in the ceremony. He mentioned that he was ecstatic to learn details about the veterans who were recognized for their service.

Those in attendance were clearly proud of their accomplishment.

"They took part in something that was very significant ... (it) wasn't just another typical ceremony," said Sgt. Maj. John Pack, battalion rear detachment command sergeant major, HHB, I Corps.



COMBA



ACTIVES

Preparation.
Practice.
Pain.

An inside look at the
2012 JBLM Combatives
Tournament.



T H E

R E

FS

Bloody noses, cuts and strained joints, amidst all of this, these Soldiers were responsible for keeping everyone safe

Story and photos by Spc. Adam L. Mathis,
17th Public Affairs Detachment





They had been wrestling for a few minutes when one of the combatants achieved the rear mount, a hold from behind that exerts a lot of control over an opponent. With victory near, he brought his arms around her neck and attempted to end the match by choking.

Confident that he was cutting off his opponent's airway, he told her to submit. She replied, with a clear voice, "It's not working."

Laughter erupted from the Modern Army Combatives referee and judge students. Here, in the relaxed environment of a classroom, they could appreciate the humor of it, but come the tournament they were training for, that cannot be tolerated. Opponents speaking to one another can raise the tension, leading to deliberate illegal and harmful moves, said Sgt. 1st Class James Rogers of Antioch, Ill., the Joint Base Lewis-McChord Combatives Academy director with Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, I Corps.

"So, when you have competitors in the ring and they start talking to one another, you as the ref need to own the ring ...," said Rogers.



It was one of many practical lessons for the students preparing to oversee the JBLM Combatives Tournament. All of them had already been trained to engage in Army combatives, but this class was

designed to help prepare them for being referees and judges. Paramount to them proctoring the tournament was

learning how to deal with the uncertainty that comes with two Soldiers fighting in the ring and protecting the combatants.

There are two basic ways to win in combatives: points and forcing an opponent to quit, called a submission, by putting pressure on a part of his or her body. Both of these come from domination.

Everyone from Call of Duty gamers to basketball

players talks about domination, but in Army combatives, achieving dominance is both a technical term and an uncertain one.

"If they are demonstrating control in a specific

position, then that's how we deem that they've earned the points,"

said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Andrew Molina of Vacaville, Calif.,

"It's one of those gray areas that sometimes we have to live in as a ref."

-Sgt. 1st Class James Rogers

the chief combatives instructor with the combatives academy from the 4th Stryker Brigade.

Knowing who is in control during a fight is not always certain. While being on top of your opponent is often a good indicator, small things can lead to the person on top not receiving points. As an example, Rogers said that even if someone is on top, if the person below has a grip on the leg, then the top person

does not have total control and that creates “a gray area.”

“Don’t be too quick to award points, make sure the dust settles,” said Rogers. “I say it all the time, let the dust settle, let the little scramble figure itself out, and then if there’s points to award, award the points, but don’t be really hasty with the points, let them earn the points.”

Of course, the more direct way to end a combatives bout is to lock the opponent in a submission. Submissions can consist of pinning an arm or leg and putting pressure on it (other submissions involve choking). The opponent either resigns, or the referee has to end the fight to preserve the safety of the fighters.

One of the responsibilities of the referee when it comes to submissions is to make sure the competitors do not engage in illegal submissions. Submissions such as twisting knee bars—where a person’s knee is held and twisted—are illegal to protect competitors, said Molina.

“Your knee will break before you actually feel pain, so you severely damage joints before you’re actually able to recognize, ‘I need to tap out,’” said Molina. “They’re (these moves) illegal to ensure the welfare and safety of the competitors.”

This is one reason why the referees and judges have experience in combatives, said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Ralph Alfonso of Key West, Fla., a representative of the 4th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, who participated in the class. By knowing when certain moves are going to be applied, the referee can anticipate when a submission will be used and prepare to stop the match for the safety of the combatant.

There is a fine balance between ensuring the safety of the combatants and allowing combatants to work their craft on the mat.

“It can be stressful because you have two Soldiers in the ring that are competing, and you don’t want them to get hurt, but you want them to do as good as they can, you want them to be champions, you want to build esprit d’corps ...,” said Alfonso.





NOT YOUR

TRAIN



AVERAGE ARMY

NING

Story and photos by Spc. Adam L. Mathis,
17th Public Affairs Detachment

“Just fight every second.”

Private 1st Class Paul Gallo of Tom’s River, N.J., had already put up a lot of fight by the time this thought went through his head. It was only his first bout of the day,

but already blood marked his face as he pulled and strained to choke the man on top of him.

That man’s job had given Gallo some butterflies in his stomach before the fight. The bracket listed his opponent as part of a special forces unit, while Gallo serves as an air defense management system operator with the 5th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery Regiment. Plus, an injury kept Gallo from doing any serious training for the fight until a week and a half before his time on the mat.

But all the reasons he should lose didn’t matter in the moment. Gallo had his opponent from behind, baring his teeth with the effort of tightening his hold on the other man’s neck. And instead of thoughts of why he shouldn’t win going through his head, Gallo was focused on the basics of what makes a warrior when the referee called the fight for him.

“Never quit, just fight every second, that’s what we came out here to do,” said Gallo.

Creating the kind of mindset Gallo had was part of the purpose of his fight in the 2012 Joint Base Lewis-McChord Combatives Tournament. Sure, the tournament offered prizes and a chance to compete in the Army-wide combatives tournament, but it also provided a chance to hone the warrior mentality.

“It’s about training a mindset not just a technique,” said 1st Sgt. Bart Larango of Missoula, Mont., commandant of the Warrior Training Academy. “It’s training a mindset ... as a warrior, both internally in our confidence and our aggressiveness. The hope is that you would never have to engage in hand-to-hand combat, however, if you did these skills would

enable a Soldier to truly dominate every facet of their battle space.”

“She’s a tough chick; she’s really good.”

That’s probably a tough admission to make after fighting an opponent who is allowed to slap and kick you. It’s probably an even tougher admission after a fight that goes for the entire three rounds, but for Sgt. Desiree Taylor, that admission was part of a learning experience about dominating and the true nature of combatives.

“That second wind pretty much came from my teammates on the side, I heard them yelling and telling me, you know, ‘There’s only 10 seconds left,’ ‘finish it out, finish it out,’ and I wanted to kind of leave that lasting impression on the judges that, ‘Hey this is my fight, I’m going to win this fight, and I’m going to do what I have to do,’ so definitely, it was my team on the side that helped me have that second wind,” said Taylor of Perryville, Md., an analyst with 1st Special Forces Group.

Making an impression on the judges was one of the ways day two of the tournament differed from day one. Day one was about grappling: combatants looked for positions that would give them points and a chance to lock their opponent in a choke or some kind arm or leg bar. Day two introduced striking, making it more practical for the fighters to spend time on their feet as they traded kicks and slaps. Instead of referees awarding points, a panel of three judges determined the winner by deciding who



dominated most of the fighting, if the fight did not end in some kind of submission.

Taylor's awareness of this, and her ability to think about it while in the heat of the match, is exactly the kind of thinking needed during combatives. Assessing a situation to take advantage of it tactically is the reason for combatives, and the tournaments provide an opportunity for servicemembers to develop the warrior instincts and mindset to win. This is exactly what Taylor's training did.

"(The training is) just kind of to keep yourself from having a mental block when you're out there on the field," said Taylor.

A training program that produces a well-rounded, thinking fighter did not just happen for the Army. In fact, that kind of laissez faire approach was what the Army used until roughly the late 1990s. According to Staff Sgt. James Hanson of Peoria, Ill., the chief trainer for the United States Army Combatives School at Ft. Benning, Ga., no one started to develop a standardized program until 1995.

So, they looked to the Russians.

The committee commissioned by the Army to research a standardized fighting program found that countries with an indigenous martial arts program usually excelled at hand-to-hand training, wrote Matt Larsen, a former Soldier who worked on the committee to develop the MAC program. The notable exception to that rule was the Russians, whose program was believed to be so successful because they had competitions.

However, what the Army did not want was a program that was all about competition. Competition can encourage Soldiers to train for winning the tournament rather than training to survive.

The answer was a three-tiered tournament, said Hanson. An Army combatives tournament forces every competitor to go through three stages of fighting: basic, intermediate and advanced rules of competition. Each stage involves different aspects of fighting and compels someone interested in winning the tournament to study everything.

Moreover, the rules during a tournament are designed to reward only behaviors that work in real combat. In a mixed martial arts fight, judges would

award points to a combatant laying on the ground who wrapped his/her legs around the opponent, bringing them into a position known as "in the guard"—a move that would be ridiculous in combat and is not given points in Army competition.

"In combat, I'm in full kit," said Hanson. "In combat, if I pull you on top of me, I'm kind of like a turtle."

Things like this are what the Army wants and needs Soldiers to be able to think about during combat. This training allows Soldiers to survive, said Hanson, and is exactly why Taylor was able to think about how to win the fight with her opponent.

"The hope is that you would never have to engage in hand-to-hand combat, however, if you did these skills would enable a Soldier to truly dominate every facet of their battle space."

-1st Sgt. Bart Larango

While fighting was about more tactical thinking for Taylor, for Sgt. Michael Rowland of Tampa Bay, Fla., it was about something more instinctual.

"I'm just a beast," said Rowland after he won the heavyweight championship.

That championship was by no means certain for him during the fight. Not long into the bout, Rowland with the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, found himself on the ground and his opponent in control. Rowland "really wasn't thinking," but he made the smart play: he ran.

This is not the first time instinct has played a part in Rowland's career. His first experience in combat came in Iraq, when his unit was tasked with clearing a building. En route near the objective, he came under fire. Instead of panicking, he stopped being aware of his emotions. His leader told him to move and he did it without question.

"I think it was the training just kicked in," said Rowland.

And that is exactly what pulled him through in the tournament. Rather than try to fight in a losing situation, Rowland was able to untangle himself from his opponent and back away, getting back into a position where neither had dominance. What would have happened at that point, however, will remain a mystery since his opponent tried to get up and suddenly fell back to the mat. The referee awarded Rowland the match.

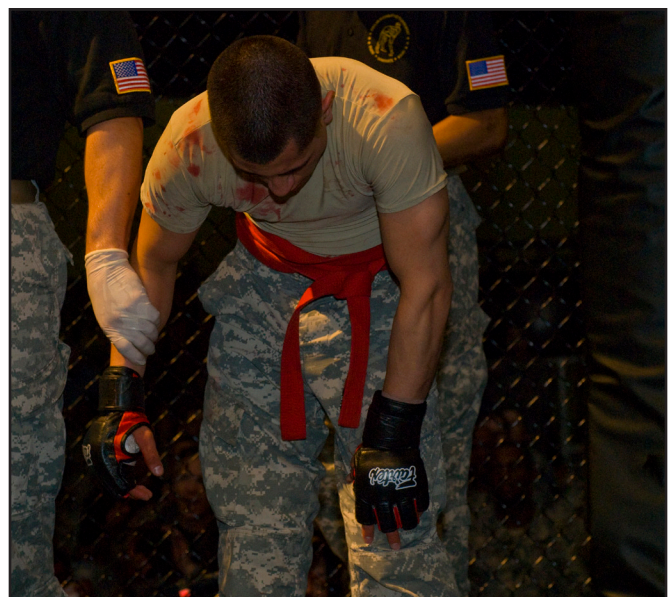
"I hope I get to fight him again some time," said Rowland.



Though his victory was more through circumstance than besting his opponent, Rowland's attitude may be just what this competition needed to impart to all of the contestants: that drive to carry the fight—in the combatives ring or downrange—through and desire to test those skills.

That attitude was reflected in an interesting statistic: 90-95 percent of the three days worth of fighting ended in submissions, said Larango, meaning very few went the whole time and were decided by points or judges. In point of fact, none of the championship fights were decided by a judge.

"It's not a point system in combat," said Larango. "You have to finish the fight, so being able to close, engage and destroy your enemy in that close quarters combat was clearly demonstrated throughout the tournament with the number of submissions."



Teaching at the

the school

of

Hard
Knocks

Recess is over and look
who's got your lunch
money.







Story and photos by
Sgt. Christopher M. Gaylord,
5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

As day two of the third annual Joint Base Lewis-McChord Combatives Tournament came to a close April 12, Staff Sgt. Clifton Roberts sat down on a rise of empty bleachers at Soldiers Field House.

He gave in to a smile and a chuckle, but the truth was clear: The outcome for his 16-man team of Soldiers from the 42nd Military Police Brigade looked grim in comparison to his expectations two months prior, when he swore his fighters would take first.

"Didn't turn out quite the way I wanted it to," said Roberts, the team's coach, his hands in his lap.

The light heavyweight fighter who Roberts had favored to at least make it to the finals was in the hospital, and his top middleweight had been eliminated on a technicality in a fight that lasted less than a minute.

But the efforts of three of Roberts' competitors who made it to the finals of the three-day tournament proved strong enough for the team to secure top honors in the end, putting Roberts' money right where his mouth was.

"A lot of guys on the team didn't believe me at first when that was the only thing that I would settle for," said the Roy, Wash., native the following day just minutes after accepting the team's trophy. "And they learned it pretty quick after the first couple days of prac-



tice that that was my intent.”

One of the team’s lightweight fighters, 1st Lt. Benjamin Townsend, took first in his weight class; a cruiserweight, Pfc. Jaime Hutcheson, placed third in his class; and welterweight Spc. Elliot Garrido placed fourth in his class.

Townsend placed second last year in his weight class after a disqualification during his match, but the months of training he put in this year gave him the upper hand.

“To come back from last year, and to actually get first this year means a lot,” said Townsend. “The hard work pays off.”

Townsend will travel to Fort Benning, Ga., in July to represent JBLM at the All-Army Combatives Tournament.

The 42nd MPs began their training in late January. Only four of more than 45 Soldiers trying out for a spot on the team had spent any time on a wrestling mat.

“At the start of the year, there were four people on the team total who were level one certified,” Roberts said. “Everybody else had never stepped foot on a mat.”

Last year, Roberts coached his brigade’s combat-ives team to a third-place finish. With the end to his term of service just around the corner, he prepared to go out on that note.

But a medical evaluation the Army started on him kept him in long enough to train a team again this year.

Now, he’s going out with a win under his belt.

“There’s nothing I would want more,” Roberts said. “I love training Soldiers, and to train them to do what I love, and now they love it, because they’ve felt the thrill of victory.”

But despite his dedication as a coach, that victory, he said, has little to do with him.

“Those guys out there did all the hard work. I just pointed the direction they needed to go.”

The Final Report From: The Editor

As a native Washingtonian, I am no stranger to rain. I grew up near one of the most beautiful (and wettest) pieces of real estate in North America, the Olympic National Forest.

I joined the Army in 1992 and said goodbye to the lush, green mountains of my childhood. For years I longed to come home and walk the mountain trails of my youth, but the chance to return never materialized until 2009 when I received orders to Fort Lewis. Home at last!

When you grow up in Washington State, the rain is not an issue. The rain is so common that you forget it's even there. I have picnicked, played tennis and caught basketfuls of cut-throat trout in pouring rain without giving the precipitation a second thought. It seems that native Washingtonians have evolved to live in a semi-aquatic environment. But something happened in the 17 years I spent outside the state. My gills retracted. The webbing between my hands and feet was gradually replaced by calluses and hangnails. My body became addicted to a strange, stellar substance that non-Washingtonians call, "sunlight."

My first winter at home was rather depressing. It rained and rained, and then it started raining. My daily fix of solar radiation was blocked by an endless canopy of gray. From deep in my primordial past, I knew that rain was good and that sunlight was the crutch of weak Californians, but I started to feel down anyway. Then something miraculous began to happen.

It was early last week when a strange yellow orb appeared in the sky. An obnoxious tweeting and fluttering began to fill the air. Spring had arrived.

I dusted off my binoculars (I suffer from a terrible bird watching habit; I have sought treatment but was deemed incurable.) and headed outdoors.

If you too suffered a bit of the Washington Winter Blues, take heart. The cure has arrived. Get off your couch, grab your kids (if you have any) and head outdoors.

One of the nice things about living in and around Joint Base Lewis-McChord is its central location. A day to trip to Ocean Shores, Mount Rainier or Victoria, Canada, requires very minimal planning and not a lot of money.

So again, get off your couch! Shake the cobwebs off your hiking boots and get outside. Winters in Washington State are not a lot of fun, but if you haven't experienced spring in Washington, than you're missing out on one of the most beautiful places in the country, perhaps the world.

*Capt. Kenneth A. Stewart
Commander, 17th Public Affairs Detachment*



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