



# Rising to the CHALLENGE

MP WARFIGHTER COMPETITION 2011

By Melissa Buckley  
Fort Leonard Wood Guidon

**M**ore than 100 Soldiers signed up for the challenge of the Military Police Warfighter Competition, but after 11 daunting events spread across 65 grueling miles on foot, three Soldiers proved their superiority.

The winning team, from the 93rd Military Police Battalion at Fort Bliss, Texas is: Sgt. Dennis Jones, Spc. James Bagby and Spc. Christopher Tees.

“True hard work really does pay off,” Bagby said. “We have a good team with a strong heart.”

Jones contributes winning to chemistry.

“If you don’t get a team that works well together, it doesn’t matter,” Jones said.

This was the third year in a row Sgt. 1st Class Shon Dodson has served as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the

competition.

“Every year we have different routes,” Dodson said. “We never stay the same.”

Dodson said the events are designed to challenge Soldiers on specific military police knowledge.

“They get tested from everything they learned on day one as a private to the knowledge they have now,” Dodson said, “They have to be the best of the best, not just out of the company, but from their battalion, and represent their unit. They are coming from different military occupational specialties. They have to put all of their experience together.”

Dodson said all of the competitors are elite because, “just to be on a team is a remarkable feat.”

The challenges are designed to push Soldiers past their mental and physical breaking points.

Bagby said staying motivated during the extensive ruck march was the hardest thing for him and his teammates, who

trained for months for the competition.

“You can’t come here and half step it. I know teams that come here that have trained for six months or longer to get here,” Dodson said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Charles Kirkland, regimental command sergeant major, agreed.

“They have to be well-rounded; they are physically fit and smart,” Kirkland said. “Every event is designed to be almost impossible to achieve 100 percent. We don’t want to identify the average Soldiers — we want the best.”

Kirkland and other command leaders were present for each challenge the warfighters were faced with.

“These warfighter teams have put in so much time and energy to prepare for this. Out of respect for them, I need to be here to experience this with them,” Kirkland said. “I am so proud. They are pretty amazing; they put their heart and soul into this.”

The Soldiers who competed in the competition are the future of the Military Police Corps, Kirkland said.

“You prove to us daily that our regiment is in good shape. I am not concerned; there is somebody here who is going to fill my shoes,” he said to the competitors. “You will do great things. You are seasoned. You have more experience than I did at your age.”

Brig. Gen. Mark Inch, the Military Police Regiment chief and U.S. Army Military Police School commandant, felt the same way.

“I am amazed at what I have watched over the last few days. I, at my best, don’t think I could have done it,” Inch said.

Inch told all of the warfighters they have a lot of courage for competing.

“You took on a challenge that most of your peers chose not to do,” Inch said.

Kirkland said the competition is always evolving, and so are the MPs who take on the MP Warfighter challenge.

“We continue to raise the bar, and they continue to rise to meet it,” Kirkland said. “It’s a great event to showcase our best to the rest of the Army.”

Thinking about his fellow Soldiers got Jones through the hardest portions of the competition.

“We are trying to inspire our Soldiers,” Jones said.

The winning team is excited to return to Fort Bliss.

“I can’t wait to get home and work with the other Soldiers again,” Bagby said.



Photo by Melissa Buckley

The winning team, Spc. James Bagby, Sgt. Dennis Jones and Spc. Christopher Tees, takes the lead during the endurance march, the final event.

**Left:** Spc. Ernest Trujillo drags a dummy casualty to safety during the 2011 MP Warfighter Competition Sept. 18–21 at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Trujillo is a member of the Joint Base Elmendorf, Alaska, team.

**Background:** From the top of a 35-foot tower, Soldiers rappel immediately after firing weapons during the reflexive fire event.

Photos by Michael Tolzmann

