



**S M D C / A R S T R A T**  
Headquartered on Redstone Arsenal, Alabama



**CSM Eagle Column  
August 2008**

I have decided to put my discourse on Army Values on hold this month in order to discuss our SMDC/ARSTRAT Soldiers who best embody our Values. I'm referring to the men and women who competed for the honor of being the 2008 SMDC/ARSTRAT Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and Soldier of the Year.

Staff Sgt. Charles L. Robinson III (European Command, or EUCOM), Spc. Michael R. Moore (EUCOM), Sgt. Matthew S. Davidson (eastern Continental United States, or CONUS), Spc. Abigail H. Keller (eastern CONUS), Staff Sgt. Randolph R. Brown (western Continental United States), Spc. Matthew S. Caple (western CONUS), Staff Sgt. Christopher L. Barber (Pacific Command, or PACOM) and Sgt. Joseph B. Knece (PACOM) are Regional winners who met in Colorado Springs, Colo. from July 18-25 to compete for the honor of being named 2008 SMDC/ARSTRAT Noncommissioned officer and Soldier of the Year.

Thanks largely to the herculean efforts of Lorronica Hamil, Master Sgt. John Telgenhof and 1st Sgt. Petey Smith from headquarters SMDC/ARSTRAT plus excellent support provided by members of the 100th Missile Defense Brigade, the 1st Space Brigade staff and the Operations Center, we had an extremely competitive and outstanding competition this year. Our NCO and Soldier candidates were subjected to rigorous tests of their physical, mental, and leadership skills. They were also evaluated on their ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing.

During the Urban Orienteering Course lead by Sgt. 1st Class Rene Saiz and his observers and controllers (O/Cs) of the 100th Missile Defense Brigade, our Soldiers were introduced to and tested on the Army's Defense Advanced GPS Receiver (DAGR). For many, this was their first experience with the device. After hands-on training all of the contestants were able to successfully complete the day and night land navigation tests using the DAGR as well as the traditional compass and protractor.

Weapons zero/qualification also presented a new challenge for many of our Soldiers because most had never fired the M-4 Carbine. 1st Sgt. Steve Adams and his Safeties of 1st Space Company coordinated, arranged and executed this event exceptionally and provided extra range time for our Soldiers to allow them to familiarize themselves with the M-4 prior to weapons qualification.

Kudos also to Sgt. 1st Class Marcus Kent and his O/C's of the 100th Missile Defense Brigade for setting up an excellent situational training exercise using sim-munitions and a 2K course that really tested the leadership and warfighting skills of our NCO's and Soldiers. Watching our warrior's successfully work their way through a field medical evacuation, ambush, and hostage rescue was as rewarding for us senior NCOs as I'm sure it was for them.

As stated at the beginning, this year's competition was extremely close. Thanks to 1st Sgt. Carl Torkelson and his evaluators from HHC 1st Space Brigade who started this event by administering the Army Physical Fitness Test, by the end it came down to performance on the written test, written essays, and performance before the formal evaluation board. Selecting the NCO and Soldier of the Year was tough.

In the end, Staff Sgt. Christopher L. Barber from Charlie Detachment, 1st Space Company, 1st Space Battalion, based in Japan was selected as the SMDC/ARSTRAT NCO of the Year and Spc. Michael R. Moore from Alpha Detachment, 1st Space Company, 1st Space Battalion based in Germany won the honor of being selected as SMDC/ARSTRAT Soldier of the Year.

These two Early Missile Warning Operators truly represent the best qualities of today's professional warrior. They, like all of the competitors this year, have fully embraced Army Values and I'm proud to have them as members of SMDC/ARSTRAT. We wish Staff Sgt. Barber and Spc. Moore the best of luck as they represent SMDC/ARSTRAT during competition in the Department of the Army's "Best Warrior Competition" for NCO and Soldier of the Year.

I also want to congratulate all of our Regional competitors for being selected as the best Noncommissioned Officer and Soldier from within their respective AORs [areas of responsibility].

Special thanks to all sponsors, commanders, leaders and staff who assisted and supported our competitors. Each of you has proven to be a winner and outstanding Soldier and extremely valuable member of our Command. I salute each of you!

***SECURE THE HIGH GROUND!***