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Tennessee National Guard puts weapon skills to the test Team of four competes in U.S. Army Small Arms Championship

TULLAHOMA, Tenn. – A team of four marksmen left their National Guard units in Tennessee this weekend for the U.S. Army Small Arms Championship, an annual event held at Fort Benning, Ga. The team spent the past week on the ranges at Volunteer Training Site Tullahoma practicing in blustery conditions with pistols and rifles. The team placed well last year and is expected to bring home individual and team awards again this year.

With one double distinguished shooter and a second shooter just points away from another distinguished award, the team of four is strong and ready to put their training and teamwork to the test.

Sgt. 1st Class David Keenom holds an elite place in the marksmanship community with an Excellence in Competition distinguished award for both pistol and rifle - an honor that approximately 800 competitive shooters in the military and civilian marksmanship community have ever achieved. Shortly after his enlistment, Keenom began competing for the Guard with his new commander, Maj. Glenn Jackson.

Jackson is a seasoned marksman himself, merely four points away from an EIC distinguished pistol award and 10 points away from an EIC distinguished rifle award. He hopes to bring at least one home from the competition this year. Jackson consistently places well in the competition year after year and has been competing at the state, regional and national levels since 2006.

Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Cannon has also been shooting competitively since 2006 and is working his way up the standings. With an impressive performance last year, placing in the top 25 percent of each of his events, the team expects that it won't be long before he adds his own EIC to their list of accolades.

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Capt. Tommie Boleyn is a newcomer to the team this year but just as precise. “We’re fortunate to have some of the very best marksmen in the state of Tennessee,” he said. “It’s an honor to be able to go and shoot.”

In addition to his honored place on the team, Boleyn has an innate desire to pass his knowledge and experience on to younger soldiers, giving them an opportunity to refine their skills. In 2010, the marksmen used their experience and designed a program of their own to share their knowledge and passion with other soldiers.

“Marksmanship is the fundamental skill that all soldiers should have,” Jackson said. Their summer clinic aims to assess and improve soldiers’ skills, teach them to compete, and empower them to go back to their units and become teachers themselves.

Their next marksmanship clinic begins in August at the Tullahoma range, but this week the team will be focused on the ranges of Fort Benning, where they will compete against other military marksmen just as fierce. Last year the Tennessee team placed well, and now they are dangerously close to another slew of team and individual awards, solidifying their place yet again among the Army’s best marksmen.

For more information on the U.S. Army Small Arms Championship competition, visit <http://www.usaac.army.mil/amu/index.asp>.

(more)

STORY BY:

Sgt. Nicole Smart, 118th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAPTION FOR ALL PHOTOS:

Members of the Tennessee National Guard and Illinois National Guard battle the cold weather at VTS Tullahoma in preparation for the upcoming U.S. Army Small Arms Championship held at Fort Benning, Ga. The teams practiced multiple distances with pistols and long-range distances with rifles in preparation for this week's event. Tennessee has placed well in previous competitions and is expected to do the same this year. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Nicole Smart/RELEASED)

HI-RES PHOTOS:

<http://www.dvidshub.net/news/119676/tennessee-national-guard-puts-weapon-skills-test-team-four-competes-us-army-small-arms-championship>

VIDEO: Tennessee National Guard Competes in US Army Small Arms Championship

BY: Staff Sgt. Melisa Foster, 118th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

<http://www.dvidshub.net/video/320294/tennessee-national-guard-competes-us-army-small-arms-championship>

B-ROLL: Tennessee National Guard Prepares for US Army Small Arms Championship

BY: Staff Sgt. Melisa Foster, 118th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

<http://www.dvidshub.net/video/320289/tennessee-national-guard-prepares-us-army-small-arms-championship>

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