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CONTACT: MSgt Robin Brown
OFFICE: 615-313-0633

Tennessee National Guard Crushes Competition at Regional Marksmanship Match June 26-28 in Tullahoma, Tenn.

Nashville, Tenn. - Tennessee reigned supreme, sweeping up the title as Regional Marksmanship Champions for the second year in a row at the 2015 National Guard Marksmanship Advisory Council (MAC) Region III Competition that took place at the Volunteer Training Site in Tullahoma, Tenn., June 26-28.

This event is held annually across the country and the MAC III Region consists of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

"There is a tremendous training benefit" said Master Sgt. Mike Brumer, a targeting and intelligence analyst at the Tennessee Air National Guard's 118th Wing in Nashville, Tenn. "Not only are we gaining marksmanship skills, compounding on fundamental marksmanship training, but we are building esprit de corps and camaraderie."

"In a joint training environment, the training we do here pays great dividends when we are back at our duty stations and down range," he added.

Teams consisted of members of both the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard; however, the match was structured for both individual and team competition. Participants had to shoot from a variety of distances and positions, including standing, kneeling, crouching and prone.

"It's a good experience to come out here and do engagements that you normally don't get to do on a qualification range," said Staff Sgt. Benjamin Carman, a recruiting and retention NCO with the Florida Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion. This was Carman's first MAC III regional competition. He has participated in state level competitions prior to this event.

Sgt. 1st Class Eric Lawrence, the assistant state marksmanship coordinator for the South Carolina Army National Guard's Marksmanship Training Unit has been doing these for much longer. "Eight years, ten years maybe. I don't know," he said, smiling. "A long time."

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"I always learn stuff at these events, just sharing knowledge and different ideas, different theories on shooting, and the competitive nature of being under time and stress," he added. "It's a great training experience being able to train with the Air National Guard and all the different states; it's great cross training."

Tennessee teams took first and third place aggregate, or overall, for the competition, as well as for the team rifle competition. Kentucky took second place aggregate and team rifle. Tennessee also secured first and second place in the team pistol competition with South Carolina placing third.

The Region Team Grand Aggregate Champion will advance to the National level competition known as the Winston P. Wilson (WPW) match.

Tennessee also claimed several individual awards. Sgt. 1st Class David Keenom, Tenn. Army National Guard (TNARNG) took first place in the individual pistol match. All three places went to Tennessee in the individual rifle match: first was Maj. Glenn Jackson (TNARNG), second went to Staff Sgt. James Cavin (TN Air NG), and third to Staff Sgt. Mark Prince (TNARNG).

Additionally, Tech. Sgt. James Rice earned the Distinguished Gold Pistol Badge, and Capt. Tim Butler earned the Silver Excellence in Competition Rifle Badge.

Participants can earn excellence in competition (EIC) points, also known as leg points, during state, regional and national competitions. A shooter needs to obtain 30 points in order to qualify for the badge, which can be awarded for both pistol and rifle categories.

"During this competition, I qualified for six EIC points, which took me over the 30 required to become a distinguished pistol shooter," said Rice, an aircraft mechanic with the Tennessee Air National Guard's 164th Airlift Wing, Memphis, Tenn., who has been shooting with the program for six years.

"Truly, the pinnacle of success is when you're able to say I am a distinguished pistol or rifle shot," said Brumer. "These training exercises allow us to build on our skills and hopefully obtain our leg points in order to get those badges."

Not every participant earns these points. They are only awarded to the top 20 percent at each competition.

"On average, it could take three to five years. For some, it could be 10 to 15 years of shooting," said Brumer. "It's a long road for most, especially with the level of competition we have had lately."



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Other marksmanship achievements that can be earned are the Governor's Twenty, and the President's 100. Governor's Twenty is awarded at the state level Adjutant General matches. Tennessee does not currently award the Governor's Twenty, but many other states in the region do.

"We do ours a little different than MAC and WPW matches," said Lawrence. "We try to make it a little more interesting and challenging, incorporating the sniper rifle, throwing a grenade, and shooting machine guns."

"The President's 100 is awarded to the top 100 shooters in the nation for both pistol and rifle," he said. This award is not restricted to military. Anyone, whether in the military service, police force, civilian, even youth can participate for a chance to claim this honor.

"It's a permanent award, and a Soldier or Airman can wear it for their entire military career, as long as they earn it one time," Lawrence added.

Earning these achievements is a highlight and a goal for many of the participants, but it isn't what the competition is all about.

"We get to come here and practice our marksmanship and we get to do it with a great bunch of guys," said Rice. "Networking all over the state, region, and country, depending on which match level you are at, you learn from their technique and adopt what works for you. It just makes you better and better."

National Guard marksmanship teams are always looking for new members.

"When you come out to do these, you have to have two new shooters and two old shooters," said Carman. "We always need fresh people to come out and compete; it's just the way the rules are set up."

For more information on the Tennessee National Guard's annual TAG Rifle and Pistol matches, contact Cpt. Tim Butler at timothy.e.butler14.mil@mail.mil.

You can also contact the National Guard Marksmanship Training Center, based in Little Rock, Ark., at (501) 212-4500, or <http://www.arguard.org/mtu/index.html>.

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