

Bayonet Brigade hosts EFMB qualification

By Sgt. Christopher Klutts

170th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

“Doc, hurry up they’re dying out here,” yells a clipboard wielding sergeant from an opening in the wood line.

A medic jumps to his feet, grabs his aid-bag, readies his weapon, and runs toward the sergeant. He hears machine gunfire, and a cry for help from a comrade close by. He sees the wounded Soldier huddled behind a berm.

The medic yells over the deafening sound of enemy artillery, “Hold on, I’m coming to you!” He low-crawls, face in the dirt, to the casualty. The

sergeant hits start on his stopwatch and the medic’s Expert Field Medical Badge evaluation begins.

Soldiers from across United States Army Europe competed in the 170th Infantry Brigade Combat Team’s Expert Field Medical Badge qualification here in June. Out of the 264 candidates that started the 20-day qualification, 100 earned coveted the EFMB.

Candidates were tested on common military tasks such as land navigation and physical fitness. Soldiers also had to complete a 60-question written test covering various medical topics. Then, the candidates’ tactical knowledge was put

to the test under the stresses of fatigue and a simulated battlefield.

“For me, adrenaline gets me going,” said Pfc. Jeremy R. Hall, a St. Mary’s County, Md. native, now a medic assigned to 2-18 Infantry Battalion, 170th IBCT. “You’re actually in the field and things are going on [during the qualification] that are going to happen in real life.”

Capt. Michael Destefano, a Spooner, Wis. native, now a medical service officer with 421st Multifunctional Medical Battalion garrisoned in Wiesbaden, said the EFMB qualification was an important training opportunity and, “a nice break

from Power Point.”

“These are very perishable and vital skills,” said Destefano. “You lose it real quick if you don’t practice it. This badge shows others you know the basics of the Army Medical Department. These are life saving medical techniques that all Soldiers should know, [medical personnel] or not.”

Medical personnel weren’t the only Soldiers who pursued the badge during the qualification. Although U.S. Army regulations prohibit non-medical personnel from wearing the EFMB, Soldiers from occupations outside of the medical field competed for the training and experience.

“My platoon sergeant asked me why I wanted to do this,” said Spc. Brian Youngblood, a former emergency medical

technician from Denver, now a mortar Infantryman assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4-70th Armor Battalion. “I told him it was for the challenge. I wanted to see the difference between what a civilian medic does and what an Army medic does.”

According to 1st Sgt. Luis J. Labrador, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the qualification, EFMB is important because “badge holders” stand out from their peers, and more importantly, Soldiers learn skills that will save lives during combat operations.

“Though it was a lot of long hours, it was worth it,” said Labrador. “Even if a Soldier doesn’t get the badge, they went through two weeks of good training that will benefit them and the Army.”



Photo by Pfc. Nathan Goodall

Staff Sgt. Marcellus Jackson, an EFMB candidate, moves through a wired obstacle during the 170th IBCT’s Expert Field Medical Badge qualification here June 3.



Photo by Sgt. Christopher Klutts

Candidates inspect items in their aid-bags, before starting their evaluations on a combat training lane during the 170th IBCT’s Expert Field Medical Badge qualification.