

Fort Sill Hosts Inaugural Best Redleg Competition May 6-16

By Monica Wood, Fort Sill PAO

FORT SILL, Oklahoma (May 16, 2024) — Fort Sill, home to the United States Army Field Artillery School, played host to the inaugural Gen. Raymond T. Odierno Best Redleg Competition on May 6-16.

The six-day competition showcased the expertise and skills of 35 teams of Field Artillery Soldiers in the 13B, 13F and 13J military occupation specialties on the M119 howitzer, the M109 Paladin and the M777 weapon systems from U.S. Army units around the world.

The competitors endured a rigorous six-day competition that challenged sections with various physically and branch-specific demanding artillery section and Soldier skills evaluations.

The purpose of the Army's first annual Best Redleg competition is to identify the best artillery sections from across the force and their ability to deploy, fight, and win, according to BRL Challenge organizers.

"We wanted to create an opportunity for our Soldiers to showcase their skills and dedication to the Field Artillery mission," said MG Phil Brooks, commanding general, Fires Center of Excellence

and Fort Sill. "The Best Redleg competition not only highlights the professionalism of our Soldiers but also fosters camaraderie and *esprit de corps* within the artillery community."

The competition began with an Army Combat Fitness Test, equipment transfer, and an OPORD brief.

Subsequent days included, both indirect and direct live-fire events and various section-level tasks. Competitors were graded on crew drills, target acquisition, time-on-target, rapid deployment exercises and locating and providing correct coordinates and correction to Fires.

The competition culminated with a 12-Mile ruck march ending at Fort Sill's Old Post Quadrangle with the final awards ceremony.

Each event was meticulously evaluated by a panel of expert judges comprised of seasoned artillery officers and non-commissioned officers.

The closing ceremonies drew a crowd of spectators, including senior military leaders, veterans, and family members, who gathered to



Candidates in the Best Redleg Competition conduct an Army Combat Fitness Test as part of their evaluation in the competition. The ACFT is a six-event physical fitness test; the test events are administered in the following order: 3 Repetition Maximum Deadlift, Standing Power Throw, Hand-Release Push-up, Sprint- Drag-Carry (SDC), Plank and 2-Mile Run. (Photo by Judith Oman)



The five winning teams in the Best Red Leg Competition met with Maj. Gen. Phil Brooks, commanding general, Fires Center of Excellence and Fort Sill, at Snow Hall. Pictured is the 2024, 13J Best Redleg Team from the 25th Infantry Division. (Photo by Monica Wood)

cheer on the participating teams, both in-person and online.

SGT Kamarean Stratman, a member of the winning team for 13 Bravos or cannon crewmembers on the M119 Howitzer, who is from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Field Artillery, 428th Field Artillery Brigade, expressed his pride in being part of the competition.

“It’s an honor to represent my unit and showcase the skills we’ve honed through rigorous training and dedication,” Stratman said. “Events like these not only challenge us to push ourselves further but also highlight the importance of our role in supporting ground forces.”

Stratman added he knew he was going to win and is not surprised his team did.

The five top-performing teams were recognized for their excellence and presented with trophies and commendations by Brooks.

Brooks spoke to the winning teams about how some competitors complained about all the physical events and the structure of the competition which included ruck marching.

“The physical stuff is not going to come out of this competition because the leadership is determined to push his or her section to go places they didn’t think they would or could go, otherwise, we could have come out here and did a table five certification just like we do in

the motor pool,” said Brooks. “We really would not have depicted who was the best section and the situational training exercise given combat environment, we would have been shortchanging ourselves.”

According to Brooks, the competition will become an annual event and he hopes the competition becomes a building block for something much bigger for the competitors.

“You’re out here pushing yourself and you’re hanging in and you should have in the back of your mind when you leave this week like ‘You know what? Maybe there’s an opportunity or a regiment that I’ve never thought about before,’” he said. “It’s all about pushing yourself and your career after this, not just what you did this week.”

“The events were challenging but we also had a lot of fun doing it,” said PFC Zachery Nichols, 3rd Infantry Division and a member of the winning team for 13 Bravos on the M109. “One of the things I enjoyed the most was just the camaraderie of everything. That’s one of the reasons I joined the military in the first place. Being out there with all the guys, all events, pushing each other and having each other’s back – that was probably the best part of it.”

Nichols said he also had a least favorite part.

“My least favorite part was probably the ruck march. We don’t usually do that much rucking so about mile six in there, I was staring at the ground,



Best Redleg competitors at Fort Sill participated in various challenging events, including medical proficiency tests, pugil sticks combat, and the Enhanced Physical Fitness Assessment (EPFA), demonstrating the wide range of skills critical for artillery personnel on May 13, 2024. (Photo by Monica Wood)



Thirty-five teams of Artillery Soldiers from across the Army are at the Fires Center of Excellence and Fort Sill to find out what team is the Best Red Leg team. The competition ran from May 8-16, 2024, with a variety of events to prove which team is the Best Red Leg. Participants for the competitions are in the 13B, 13F and 13J MOS’s. (Photo Credit: Monica Wood)

keeping my head down and just trying to make it to the end,” he said.

The winners of the inaugural Gen. Raymond T. Odierno Best Redleg Competition 2024 are:

13B – Cannon Crewmember:

M119 Howitzer:

2-2nd Field Artillery Battalion,
428th Field Artillery Brigade

M777 Howitzer:

2nd Field Artillery Squadron,
2nd Cavalry Regiment

M109 Paladin:

1-9th Field Artillery Battalion,
3rd Infantry Division

13F – Joint Fire Support Specialist:

The 75th Ranger Regiment

13J – Fire Control Specialist:

2-11th Field Artillery Regiment,
25th Infantry Division

The week was full of sweat and perseverance. Congratulations are in order for all the competitors for their hard work and dedication to being the *King of Battle*.

As the sun set over Fort Sill, organizers hailed the inaugural Best Redleg competition as a resounding success and expressed optimism for its continuation as an annual tradition, further strengthening the bond among artillery Soldiers and units across the Army.



The Fires Center of Excellence and Fort Sill hosted the Opening Ceremony for the first Best Red Leg Competition. The opening ceremony was held on the Fort Sill Polo Field on May 9, 2024. (Photo by Monica Wood)

Field Artillery

Professional Bulletin

**THE FIELD ARTILLERY
PROFESSIONAL BULLETIN
AND WEBSITE ARE UNDER
CONSTRUCTION!**

Our path forward is a web first/mobile friendly publication available across multiple platforms

Rolling Publication—weekly digital publication

Will continue to maintain one to two printed versions a year

Thank you to all our authors, you are what makes our publication successful and create the discourse that drives change within the Field Artillery!

KING OF BATTLE

