



Above: An EFMB candidate assembles a radio during the Survival Lane portion of the competition. Below: Capt. Gregory T. Krieviel assembles an M16A2 before proceeding to the next station of the Survival Lane. Right: With a look of determination, Spc. Alicia D. Puccia grits her teeth, pushing ever onward to the end of the 12-mile road march.

Finally, after two weeks of relentless challenges, 26 of the original 300 EFMB candidates remained. With heads held high, jaws clenched in determination and 30 pounds in their rucksacks, the finalists moved to the final hurdle — the 12-mile road march.

“This is the number-one thing I’ve wanted to do since I became a medic. It’s very important to me,” said Spc. Alicia D. Puccia, a medic assigned to 1AD’s Company C, 47<sup>th</sup> Forward Support Battalion, in Baumholder. “It

sets people out from everybody else.”

This was Puccia’s fifth EFMB attempt. A different task proved Puccia’s undoing in each previous attempt. This time, it would be the road march as she hustled toward the finish line just three minutes over the three-hour time limit.

As exhausted competitors crossed the finish line, looks of joy, pain and disappointment flashed across the weary faces of the 26 finalists. The realization of success or failure unleashed smiles and



tears from candidates and cheers from onlookers.

Some of Puccia’s supporters ran alongside her while others hugged her in consolation as she crossed the finish line, spent. She was not alone in the end. Two other candidates failed to endure the mountainous terrain of the road march through Baumholder in the allotted time, but they pushed hard and never stopped until they crossed the finish line.

A very emotional and satisfied Krieviel, along with 22 others, finished the rugged 12-mile road march, earning the right to wear the EFMB. Moving through the crowd, Krieviel, exuding an obvious air of confidence. He didn’t have anything to say. He just smiled proudly, basking in the glow of his accomplishment.

For many of the EFMB candidates, this was not their first attempt at the EFMB. For some, this year’s success meant never having to go through the grueling competition again; it was also the birth of an EFMB mentor. For those who didn’t make it this time, there is always next year’s competition.

