

# Regan Inducted Into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club

By Capt. Stephen Rooney, Company D, 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment

Sgt. Audie Murphy once said, "You lead from the front." That's exactly where you'll find Sgt. Daniel Regan, a squad leader in Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment based in Baghdad, Iraq. Regan is one of a few noncommissioned officers in a brigade of more than 3,500 Soldiers who will soon be inducted into the prestigious Sergeant Audie Murphy Club after meeting the daunting challenge of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Board.

According to Forces Command Regulation 215-7 and Training & Doctrine Command Regulation 600-14, the SAMC is an elite organization of NCOs whose demonstrated performance and inherent leadership qualities and abilities are characterized by those of Sergeant Audie Murphy.

The purpose of induction into the SAMC is a means of recognizing those NCOs who have contributed significantly to the development of a professional NCO Corps and a combat ready Army. Members exemplify leadership characterized by personal concern for the needs, training, development and welfare of Soldiers and concern for families of Soldiers.

The abbreviated SAMC history reveals that the original club was started at Fort Hood, Texas, early in 1986. The club spread in 1991 to III Corps, and in 1993, it was FORSCOM-wide. Finally, in 1994, at a Sergeant Major of the Army conference, the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club spread Army wide. All commands, including the National Guard and Reserves, would retain the selection process for their own NCOs. In 1998, it was estimated that club membership was more than 3,000 NCOs. There are no quotas for the SAMC; the final selection board does not select candidates if they do not meet the required standards.

"Sgt. Regan was extremely impressive," said Command Sgt. Maj. Drew Craig, Command Sgt. Maj. of the 720th Military Police Battalion, and also a member of the SAMC, "He stood out amongst a talented, competitive and well-prepared field."

Regan was first asked to compete in the board by his platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Michael Lawson. "When you need something done, whatever it may be, you go to Dan Regan," he said.

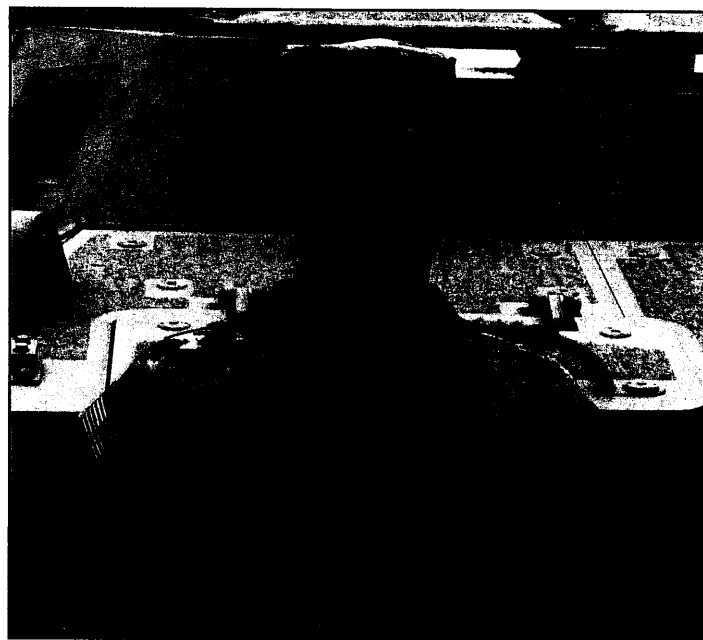
1st Sgt. Richard Sheehan, long an admirer of Regan's talent, made it easy, "You're competing," said Sheehan.

Regan, busy conducting personal security details for the U.S. Embassy Chief of Mission, as well as numerous combat patrols in and around Baghdad, felt that it was an opportunity to show younger Soldiers the value of competition.

"Every Soldier has the responsibility to compete in every task they undertake," Regan said. "Competitive Soldiers ensure mission success."

Of course, all NCOs, regardless of their qualifications, have to be tested before marching into the qualification board. Regan had to first win a company board against several other well-trained and motivated NCOs. Next was the battalion board, led by Craig.

"The boards definitely became progressively harder as I moved forward," says Regan. "While the company board was focused on basic soldiering skills and mission-specific tasks, the battalion board really gave me an idea of what the actual Sergeant Audie Murphy Board would be like."



*Sgt. Daniel Regan in Iraq. Photo: Courtesy of Company D, 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment*

When competing for induction into the SAMC, the NCO does not compete against other NCOs, like he or she would during other boards, but rather against the impossibly high standards set by Murphy. A Soldier in the famous 15th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Infantry Division, Murphy was wounded three times as he fought in nine major campaigns across North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France and Germany during World War II. Given a battlefield commission for his courage and leadership ability, he was credited with killing more than 240 of the enemy, while wounding and capturing many others. His citations included every Medal for Valor that America gives, including the Medal of Honor, and numerous medals and decorations from France and Belgium. By the end of the war, Lieutenant Murphy was the most decorated Soldier in American history.

"The process of preparing for the SAMC develops NCO knowledge and makes them a better leader," says Craig, "The SAMC is unique in that it separates an average NCO from a superb NCO. A superb NCO goes beyond his regular duties and does them without being asked. He is truly the 'Backbone of the Army.'"

To do well, NCOs have to memorize and recite verbatim the Soldier's Creed, the NCO Creed, SGT Audie Murphy's biography and the history of the club. Then there are dozens of Iraq-based situational questions focusing on ethics, leadership, training and tactics. The highly-decorated and previously inducted command sergeants major use an array of tactics to test the candidate; interruptions, distractions and unanticipated questions are used throughout the board.

"I was in there for an hour," said Regan. "They attacked my confidence and judgment. They came at me from all sides with some tough questions, expecting intelligent answers."

When told by Command Sgt. Maj. Bernard McPherson, 18th Military Police Brigade, that he passed and would be inducted, Regan was justifiably, "thrilled, ecstatic, relieved," he said. "While we spend a lot of time preparing for tactical missions, I spent every available minute over the last three weeks preparing for this board." ★