

Dept. of Military Affairs: Wisconsin Soldier competes with National Guard All-Endurance Team

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Staff Sgt. Marguerite Zaepfel, a supply noncommissioned officer with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry Regiment, competed in the Jacksonville Spartan Race Feb. 25-26.

Zaepfel placed first in her age group in the Spartan Super, a 6.2-mile course with obstacles, finishing with a time of 1 hour, 16 minutes 50 seconds — 160th overall. She also ran 3.1 miles in 41:18 during the Spartan Spring race, placing third in her age group and 162nd overall.

The Edgerton, Wisconsin resident was one of more than two dozen National Guard Soldiers from 16 states to compete in the Jacksonville Spartan Race as part of the National Guard's All-Endurance Team.

"I have always been huge into health and wellness — any outdoor activities," Zaepfel explained. "I've competed in body building shows, Tough Mudders, marathons, triathlons and other obstacle course racing events on the civilian side for fun."

Zaepfel said she applied for the National Guard All Endurance Team as soon as she learned about it.

"This was right up my alley," she said. "I love the atmosphere of people and challenge."

This was Zaepfel's first Spartan race event — a type of race that embraces difficult challenges — and she said she had "an absolute blast."

“I prefer marathon events for time,” she said, “but Spartan races I find more fun. It’s like you get to be a kid all over again, and it is more of a well-rounded fitness that I enjoy.”

Zaepfel placed first in her age group in the Spartan Super, a 6.2-mile course with obstacles, finishing with a time of 1 hour, 16 minutes 50 seconds — 160th overall. She also ran 3.1 miles in 41:18 during the Spartan Spring race, placing third in her age group and 162nd overall.

Zaepfel — who has served in the military for 12 years — has qualified for this April’s Boston Marathon, and said she wants to compete in the world’s top five marathons.

To compete in the Spartan Race, service members had to qualify for the All Guard Endurance Team at the DEKA Fit competition in Austin, Texas.

Competitions such as the Spartan Race allow National Guard members to build camaraderie with fellow Soldiers and athletes from around the country, and give added motivation to meeting and exceeding physical fitness standards that keep them ready for whatever mission awaits. The All Guard Endurance Team also operated a booth at the Spartan Race, where service members spoke with other runners and handed out promotional materials to share more about the National Guard and its unique dual mission, with members serving in their communities as well as supporting national security efforts.