

## DDJC Firefighter Brings Home Gold from State Games

By Doug Imberi, DDJC Public Affairs

Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, CA's (DDJC) Mike Whitlock, Firefighter, brought home the gold medal from the California Police and Fire Games held in Stockton, CA recently. Whitlock won the Ultimate Firefighter Competition taking on challengers from throughout California. The annual games attracted more than 5,000 participants from fire departments and law enforcement organizations from throughout California. They competed in more than 60 events including angling, archery, body building, boxing, softball, track and wrestling.

The Ultimate Firefighter Competition is a series of four timed events designed to simulate real world situations for firefighters. Wearing their heavy turn-out coats, a 20-pound air

tank and helmet, they are timed in each event. The first event called for Whitlock to drag a 100-foot length of hose 200-feet, roll it up into 50-foot sections weighing about 30 pounds each, and carrying it to a finish line about 50 feet away. According to Whitlock that was the toughest event. "My legs were screaming and I was taking baby steps approaching the finish line," he said.

The other events included running with extension ladders, scaling towers with bundles of fire hose, hoisting equipment up the tower, swinging a heavy sledge hammer, running through tire obstacles, dragging a 175-pound dummy 175 feet.

Whitlock almost missed the games. "It was kind of a last minute thing," he said. "I didn't sign up until the day before the

event started." However, the 37-year-old former personal trainer, keeps in shape year round. He is a regular at the Tracy site's Fitness Center. "I can attribute my shape and fitness to the DDJC Fitness Center," he said.

Prior to his arrival at DDJC two years ago, Whitlock was a firefighter at Ft Bliss, TX, and participated in a similar contest in El Paso. A company that makes air packs for firefighters sponsors a Firefighters Combat Challenge that attracts participants from across the nation. The event is aired on ESPN.

"I competed a couple of times, but didn't win anything," he said. Although it is a very physical test, Whitlock says mental toughness is the key. "You have to keep pushing

yourself and tell yourself that you can do more."



*DDJC Firefighter Mike Whitlock shows the gold medal he won at the California Police and Fire Games held in Stockton, CA.*



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