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## **MEDIA RELEASE: National Guard Team Wins 2016 Best Ranger Competition**

**DATE:** April 17, 2016

**FORT BENNING, Ga.** – The National Guard team of Capt. Robert Killian and Staff Sgt. Erich Friedlein has won the 2016 Best Ranger Competition, according to officials with the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade. The team clinched the top spot after a strong showing overnight and through the final day of events, which included the Darby Queen obstacle course, water confidence course and the final buddy run. They were able to push inch out 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. David Floutier and Staff Sgt. Joshua Rolfes of the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade, who finished in second place.

Rounding out the top three is the Maneuver Center of Excellence team of Capt. Michael Blanchard and Capt. Brian Slamkowski. At the beginning of day three, just 16 points separated the top three teams.

Killian, from the Colorado National Guard, was on teams that finished second in the previous two years. This is his fifth year competing. He is also the reigning Spartan Race world champion. Friedlein, from the Pennsylvania National Guard, previous best was 11<sup>th</sup> place. Friedlein was supposed to team up with Killian last year but could not due to an injury. This is his third year competing.

Of the original 50 teams to begin the competition, only 23 made it into the final day of competition.

U.S. Army Ranger teams from around the world competed in the annual David E. Grange Jr. Best Ranger Competition at Fort Benning over the weekend. The three-day Best Ranger Competition has been compared to Ironman and Eco-Challenge competitions. The competition challenges two-man Ranger teams in events that test their physical conditioning, Ranger skills and team strategies. The events are purposely scheduled back-to-back and around the clock for 58 hours, allowing little time for rest and meals.

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