

ARTB Team Takes Top Honors at 2015 BRC

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For an Army-leading 13th time, a team from the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade (ARTB) earned top honors at the **2015 David E. Grange Jr. Best Ranger Competition**.

SFC Timothy Briggs and SFC Jeremy Lemma were able to best a field of 51 teams, of which 24 made it to the finish line.

The 32nd annual competition, held 10-12 April at Fort Benning, Ga., challenged 102 Soldiers both physically and mentally and recognized the team who could move furthest, fastest, and fight hardest in a matter of 60 hours of strenuous activity.



SFC Timothy Briggs and SFC Jeremy Lemma celebrate having crossed the finish line of the final event of the Best Ranger Competition on 12 April at Fort Benning, Ga. (Photo by Patrick A. Albright)

“Essentially, it’s a state of mind, living the Ranger Creed,” said MAJ John Vickery, commander, A Company, 4th Ranger Training Battalion. “These guys are born with those instincts, it is not something they take on once they start to train for Best Ranger; it is something they live on a daily basis.”

Tabbed and experienced in all events the 51 teams faced in the competition, Rangers and instructors agreed that winning the Best Ranger Competition involved keeping a pace.

“It’s running your own race,” said 1LT David Matthews with Team 25 from the 25th Infantry Division. “One event at a time is all it is.”

From the Malvesti Obstacle Course, Urban Assault Course, a spot jump, a helocast drop from a Black Hawk helicopter into Victory Pond to an unknown distance swim, a foot march and several buddy runs, the competitors are tested on numerous platforms of performance.

“One thing that Rangers pride themselves on is being able to get to an objective through land, sea, or air,” Vickery said.

The competition historically includes 26 events on average which vary year to year. There are legacy events, which have been a part of the competition since its inception, and mystery events. Vickery said on Day 1, competitors are on their feet about 40 miles.

“Day one is all about endurance ... a lot of running, a lot of land navigation, a lot of swimming and then, finally, the foot march, which is the biggest event of the day that’s weighted the most and probably what most competitors train for,” Vickery said.

The foot march was the final event of Day 1, and the top 24 were allowed to advance to Day 2. In days two and three, remaining teams participated in night and day stakes, night orienteering, the Darby Queen, a combat water survival assessment, and final buddy run to end the competition.

“... I watched perseverance beyond what I expected,” said MG Scott Miller, Maneuver Center of Excellence commanding general. “I watched as some people didn’t make it to the finish line, but I didn’t see anybody quit. I saw people who fell over because their body wouldn’t move anymore. I saw partners taking extra weight. I saw that perseverance through adversity, which is something our military needs to know all about.”

SMA Daniel Dailey, who served as the guest speaker at the competition’s award ceremony, said those who finished, no matter their final standing, deserve recognition.

“Not only is the Best Ranger Competition a test of individual strength and stamina, it’s a test of readiness and the resiliency of a team,” Dailey said. “This contest is used to motivate others to exceed the standards. These competitors are expected to return to their units and pass on the skills they’ve learned as a result of the grueling experience they have endured during this competition...”

“Make no mistake, a team that can say it completed the Best Ranger Competition has plenty to boast. That’s why I’m in awe of your fortitude,” Dailey continued. “...These Soldiers have not only achieved something for themselves, but they have ensured the legacy, traditions, and honor of the Rangers will once again endure. I am honored to be among these Soldiers. I am proud to represent them as their sergeant major. After witnessing all of you (this weekend), you have reminded me how proud I am to call myself a Ranger.”

(This article was adapted from articles written by Nick Duke and Noelle Wiehe that appeared in the 15 April issue of the Bayonet and Saber newspaper.)