

Sgt. 1st Class Allen Leonard scales the 60-foot Prusik tower.  
(Photo: Bridgett Siter)



# BEST OF THE

## Rangers Square Off BRC Honors

**T**wenty-six two-man Ranger teams from around the Army converged on Fort Benning April 21-23 to take part in the 23rd annual Lieutenant General David E. Grange Best Ranger Competition. After 60 hours of physically and mentally challenging events, Spc. Mikhail Venikov and Sgt. 1st Class John Sheaffer of the 75th Ranger Regiment earned the top spot.

During the three days of competition, the Ranger teams competed in more than 15 separate events. During the first day alone, the teams completed a Ranger Physical Readiness Assessment, push up and chin up event, pugil stick competition, spot jump, machine gun and stress shoot, litter carry and 20-mile foot march.

It takes "talent, toughness and a call to duty" to step up to the challenge of combat *and* Best Ranger, said Gen. Richard A. Cody, the Army's vice chief of staff, who greeted the winners during an awards ceremony April 24 at the Ranger Memorial.

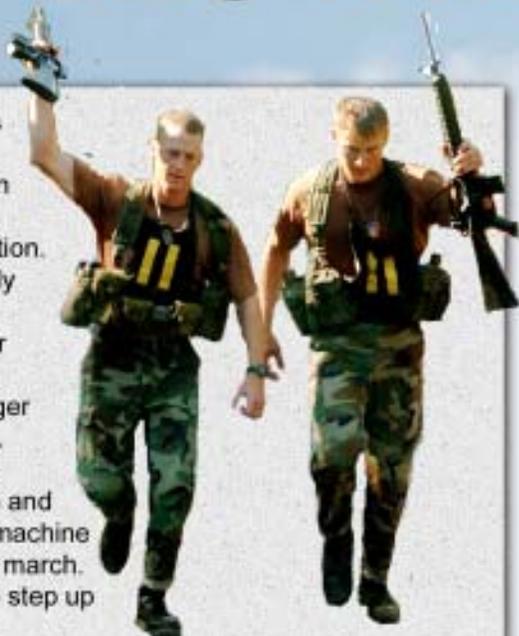
"You've accomplished what to others would seem impossible," he said.

Sheaffer, who placed second in the 2004 competition with Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Wilson, was partnered with Venikov only a week before the competition began after Wilson suffered a back injury. With Wilson out of the race, speculation then centered on the possibility that this year's competition might produce rookie winners, something that hasn't been done since the competition began in 1982.

Venikov's performance put an end to that. The Regiment's dark horse came out strong in the opening events and captured the pugil championship, putting him and Sheaffer in the early lead. The two "felt good" throughout the competition, Sheaffer said, confident they could win but never willing to let up, even after winning night foot march -- even after learning they'd secured an 88-point lead.

"We didn't want to take it easy, even on the last day, even when we knew we were out ahead," Sheaffer said. "It wasn't until we heard our standings prior to the Buddy Run (the final event) that we knew we'd accomplished our mission."

*(Adapted from an article by Bridgett Siter that appeared in Fort Benning's Bayonet newspaper.)*



Sgt. 1st Class  
John Sheaffer

Spc. Mikhail  
Venikov



Rangers drop into Victory Pond during the helocast event. (Photo: David Dismukes)

# THE BEST

## f for

Spc. Andrew Wallace and  
Sgt. Matthew Carey  
evacuate a casualty  
during Ranger Stakes.  
(Photo: David Dismukes)



### 2006 Best Ranger Results

#### 1st Place -

Spc. Mikhail Venikov  
and Sgt. 1st Class

John Sheaffer, 75th Ranger Regiment

**2nd Place -** Capts. Joshua Eaton and Wesley  
Davidson, Infantry Captains Career Course,  
11th Infantry Regiment

**3rd Place -** Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Young and  
Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Pittman, 75th Ranger Regt.

**4th Place -** Sgts. 1st Class Steven Viands and  
Travis May, Ranger Training Brigade

**5th Place -** 2nd Lts. Donovan Duke and John  
Agnew, Infantry Officers Basic Course, 11th Inf.  
Regt.

Additional results and information can be found  
on the Ranger Training Brigade Web site at  
<https://www.benning.army.mil/rtb>



A Ranger team descends onto  
Lee Field on Fort Benning  
during the spot jump event.  
(Photo: Bridgett Sizer)

Spc. Mikhail Venikov performs pull-ups on day  
one of the Best Ranger competition.  
(Photo: David Dismukes)

