



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

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RSP Warrior Challenge prepares Soldiers mentally, physically

Story and photos by Spc. Sam Beavers, 196th Public Affairs Detachment (Mobile)

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Whether climbing over a 10-foot wall, rappelling into a ravine, or crawling through a mud pit, it was not an average drill weekend for about 100 Soldiers who competed in the third annual Ohio Army National Guard Recruit Sustainment Program Warrior Challenge April 24-25 at Camp Sherman and Camp Lazarus.

The challenge started April 24 at Camp Sherman in Chillicothe, where Soldiers tested their proficiency of basic tasks such as land navigation, evaluating a casualty, donning a protective mask and assembling an M-16 A2 rifle. The two-day event continued April 25 with a grueling 2-mile obstacle course at Boy Scouts of America Camp Lazarus in Delaware, Ohio.

“This is the capstone event for RSP,” said Lt. Col. Daniel Shank, Ohio Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion commander. “It builds esprit de corps and encourages working together as a team to help each other.”

Warrior Challenge is an opportunity for new Soldiers to build confidence as well as a chance for leaders to assess how ready they are for the rigors of Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training, Shank said.

“It helps make Basic less of a shock,” said Pvt. Jacob Kenworthy, who has already completed BCT and is drilling with his RSP unit until he begins his advanced training.

Kenworthy's parents agreed and said the challenge is a great event.

"It prepares you mentally and physically," said Brenda Kenworthy, Jacob's mom.

After a severe thunderstorm forced challenge organizers to close down the obstacle course early, RSP Company F, based out of Newton Falls, emerged victorious among RSP teams, earning the title "Top Team" based on total points accumulated from physical fitness tests and Stripes for Skills testing which took place on Saturday. The Ohio State University Reserve Officer Training Corps team, competing as a guest competitor along with two teams from University of Cincinnati ROTC, earned top ROTC team honors.

Covered in mud and filled with enthusiasm, RSP Company A was named "Top Company" since the combined total of both its teams resulted in the highest overall score. Led by First Sgt. David Hunt, the competing Warriors were presented the Spc. Joshua J. O'Bannon Memorial Trophy by Shank, Maj. Gen. Matthew L. Kambic, Ohio's assistant adjutant general for Army and Ohio State Head Football Coach Jim Tressel, who acted as an honorary battalion commander for the day's events.

"It was tough, but it was a blast," said Pfc. Amanda Green of Company A, Recruiting and Retention Detachment.

Another fellow Company A member agreed with visible excitement.

"This was a great experience," said Pvt. Lukas Blantont. "There were so many activities - it was such a rush."

Tressel also promoted numerous Soldiers following Sunday's event and told each of them how much he appreciated their service. Following the ceremony, Tressel stuck around to sign autographs and to participate in several 'O-H-I-O' pictures.

“It was nice that Coach Tressel supported the RSP and the National Guard; it was definitely a morale boost,” said Cadet Elizabeth Mikulka, who is in her second year of ROTC at The Ohio State University. “It was even better because we were representing our college as well as the Army.”

The Ohio Recruit Sustainment Program was created in 2006 to better prepare new recruits to handle the mental and physical challenges of basic training. The program ensures new enlistees are properly prepared to ship and successfully complete basic training. On average, for every 100 enlistments into the Ohio Army National Guard, 94 successfully ship to their basic combat training course. Of those, 89 successfully complete the training.

All 54 states and territories have RSPs, which are tracked by the National Guard Bureau. Since its inception, the Ohio Army National Guard’s RSP has continued to rank in the top two percent among all National Guard Bureau programs.

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Photo Captions:

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New recruits from Company I, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, do push-ups during a “shark attack” by their cadre during the 3rd annual Recruit Sustainment Program Warrior Challenge April 25 at Camp Lazarus in Delaware, Ohio. The RSP prepares new recruits for the rigors of basic combat training. (Ohio Army National Guard photo by Spc. Sam Beavers) (released)

100425-A-8339B-018

New recruits from Company I, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, do flutter kicks during a “shark attack” by their cadre April 25 during the 3rd annual Recruit Sustainment Program Warrior Challenge April 25 at Camp Lazarus in Delaware, Ohio. The RSP prepares new recruits for the rigors of basic combat training. (Ohio Army National Guard photo by Spc. Sam Beavers) (released)

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New recruits from Company E, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, move through the mud crawl obstacle, just one of eight the Soldiers negotiated during the 3rd annual Recruit Sustainment

Program Warrior Challenge April 25 at Camp Lazarus in Delaware, Ohio. The RSP prepares new recruits for the rigors of basic combat training. (Ohio Army National Guard photo by Spc. Sam Beavers) (released)

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New recruits from Company B, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, band together to ensure each team member finishes the obstacle course during the 3rd annual Recruit Sustainment Program Warrior Challenge April 25 at Camp Lazarus in Delaware, Ohio. The RSP prepares new recruits for the rigors of basic combat training. (Ohio Army National Guard photo by Spc. Sam Beavers) (released)

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The Ohio State University Head Football Coach Jim Tressel autographs a patrol cap for Pfc. Brock Bowles, of Company K, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, during the 3rd annual Recruit Sustainment Program Warrior Challenge April 25 at Camp Lazarus in Delaware, Ohio. The RSP prepares new recruits for the rigors of basic combat training. (Ohio Army National Guard photo by Spc. Sam Beavers) (released)

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The Ohio State University Head Football Coach Jim Tressel congratulates new recruits from Company A, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, who took the first place company award during the 3rd annual Recruit Sustainment Program Warrior Challenge April 25 at Camp Lazarus in Delaware, Ohio. Tressel, who acted as an honorary battalion commander, also promoted 13 Soldiers who earned promotions through the RSP's skills for stripes program. (Ohio Army National Guard photo by Spc. Sam Beavers) (released)

For more information contact the Ohio National Guard Public Affairs Office, at (614) 336-7000. Please visit the Ohio National Guard public website at <http://ong.ohio.gov>.