



PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE  
82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION  
Fort Bragg, NC 28310-5000  
Phone (910) 432-0661/0662 or (910) 813-3891

Beyond the Basics  
By: Staff Sgt. Andrew T. Alfano  
82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs

Since making it through tryouts, his main purpose has been training. Week in and week out he spends about 6 hours a day working out. He swims, conducts heavy weight ruck marches for twelve-mile stretches, and runs any obstacle courses he can find. He ruck marches to ranges then does sprints carrying water cans before he picks up a weapon to shoot in various positions. He regulars the gym for various cross-fit routines pulling weighted sleds, jumping rope and lifting weights. Also, he jumps from planes every chance he gets to maintain proficiency and improve his techniques.

Why would 25 year old Cpl. Eric Bell from Scout Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division put himself through all this for more than seven months?

He's doing it for the Best Ranger Competition. Army's Best Ranger Competition held every year at Fort Benning, Georgia. This year the competition will be held on Apr. 15th -17th.

"To say that this competition is not for the weak or faint of heart would be an understatement," said MAJ Michael Scarpulla, a Ranger Training Battalion Operations Officer of the 2010 competition.

The competition tests the grit of the best of the best in Army with events chosen at random and unknown distances. Bell, a Houston native, will be the most junior member of the eight paratroopers the 82nd Airborne Division will be sending to this historically tough competition.

"It feels good that we were the ones picked to represent Division," Bell said. "It's an honor. I wanted to do this so I can be the best at what I do. This isn't something that is given to you; you have to go and take it."

Those who know him agree that he is the right choice for this competition.

"He's very dedicated", said Spc. Joe Simpson of the same scout platoon as Bell. "He has been training since before he got his (Ranger) tab. He spends all of his time training. He definitely has the heart and drive to win. He doesn't let anyone do anything better than him," Simpson said.

Despite the fact that he has only been in the Army for a little more than two years, he has already earned the respect of those senior to him.

"He passed Ranger school as a P.F.C.," said Sgt. Adam Podway, also in the scout platoon with Bell. "He went straight through with no recycles. He has always

shown great potential. His team seems like they have a strong chance at winning the competition.”

Bell’s drive to accomplish the mission has started to become well-known. Members of his platoon saw firsthand the type of fight Bell is able to take to the enemy at the Joint Readiness Training Center.

Podway said, “one time we were at JRTC, in a platoon assault of an OPFOR (Opposing Forces) objective. Bell and his squad pushed ahead alone. He was mercing (eliminating) enemy left and right with his M-249 in the dark with no night vision equipment. They also stole an enemy truck. He was all about accomplishing the mission.”

Bell’s perseverance and dedication has inspired his team members.

Sgt. Anthony Hurajt, of the same scout platoon as Bell, said “He’s never going to quit. No matter how tired or hungry, I look over at Cpl. Bell and see if he’s doing it then so can I.”

“Since he’s been here we have been the best platoon,” Hurajt said. “Bell makes everyone around him better. The first time I met him in Ranger School, even though I outranked him, he yelled at me because I was doing the wrong thing.”

“I’m not doing this (competition) for the pistols (prize for winning), Bell said. “I’m doing this to test myself. Also, I want to pick up some pointers to make myself better.”

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FORT BRAGG, NC – Training for the Best Ranger Competition scheduled for Apr. 15-17 at Fort Benning, Georgia, Cpl. Eric Bell, a Houston native, of 3rd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division pulls a weighted sled as part of his cross-fit routine. Since making the cut at tryouts to be one of the 82nd representatives at the competition, Bell, one of the most junior ranking on the team, has been working out 6 hours a day nearly every day since October. The Best Ranger Competition has a reputation of being one of the most physically and mentally demanding competitions in the U.S. Army. (110323-A-A0583-011, U.S. Army photo by: Staff Sgt. Andrew T. Alfano, 82nd Airborne Division



Public Affairs.)

FORT BRAGG, NC – Expertly clearing “the weaver” on an obstacle course (Lil Nasty), Cpl. Eric Bell, a Houston native, of the 3rd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division trains for the Best Ranger Competition scheduled for Apr. 15-17 at Fort Benning, Georgia. Since making the cut at tryouts to be one of the 82nd representatives at the competition, Bell, one of the most junior ranking on the team, has been working out 6 hours a day nearly every day since October. The Best Ranger Competition has a reputation of being one of the most physically and mentally demanding competitions in the U.S. Army. (110323-A-A0583-017, U.S. Army photo by: Staff Sgt. Andrew T. Alfano, 82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs.)

