

# SUNCOAST BATTALION

## Ranger Challenge Competition

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Ranger Challenge is more than just a team competition that tests nine personnel's physical and mental capabilities as soldiers. It tests a team's organization to work as a well oiled machine to balance on the thin line of time management with critical thinking under stress. Many people who have earned the right to be called themselves a member of Ranger Challenge will attest that it has affected almost every aspect of their life. From waking up every day at 4 a.m. to go on a grueling ruck run with MS IVs, to falling asleep in class because of it, the opportunity to be a Ranger Challenge member comes at many sacrifices and costs. Ranger Challenge, in my opinion, has tested what works and does not work when it comes to leadership abilities, as well as tested the motivation, determination, and respect of all who have tried to stand in its path.

From 24-25 January 2014, the University of South Florida sent two Ranger Challenge teams to compete against 48 other schools across 6th Brigade (which includes states such as Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Puerto Rico) at Camp Blanding in Stark, Florida. Ranger Challenge has created such an honored legacy for many schools' ROTC programs, that the cadre and cadets put it in the highest echelons of importance for representing their program. At the University of South Florida, we look forward to creating that revered representation year after year.

On 24 January, the competition began with four different events. Marksmanship came first, followed by hand grenade assault, a four mile ruck run, and finished off by a land navigation course. Teams were presented detailed descriptions of high value targets to capture along the way, quizzed on essential soldier skills and army history, and tested under the stress of finding more than forty land navigation points in less than three hours. On the second day, the competition became even more intense. Teams worked together to complete an obstacle course, a triage lane, a one rope bridge course, a zodiac boating race, as well as a "Classified Commander's Challenge". All five events were encapsulated by a 14 mile road march around the perimeter of the course. In the end, USF placed first overall in the triage lane, as well as earning top five and top ten spots in events such as the zodiac, the 4 mile ruck run, and the overall 14 mile ruck time.

Ranger Challenge has become more a family than a team each year. Those who made the team were presented with a sense of pride and honor that are equally precious and rare. The opportunity to work with some of the most physically capable and intellectually sound cadets is something that few Ranger Challenge cadets will ever forget. Respectfully from members of the Ranger Challenge, we say to you: Rangers lead the way! All the way!



Suncoast Battalion Ranger Challenge Teams



*Left* The teams prepare to embark on the Zodiac boating competition event. *Right* RC cadets run by as they mentally prepare for their next challenges.

