

Mustangs earn Excellence in Armor

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2IBCT Public Affairs

Troops with 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, participated in the Excellence in Armor program, Aug. 28-30, 2017, at Fort Stewart, Ga.

The EIA program identifies outstanding Armor and Cavalry Soldiers who perform and lead exceptionally.

To earn the EIA badge, candidates had to take an Army Physical Fitness Test and score 90 points in each event (push-ups, sit-ups, and a 2-mile run); qualify as an expert with an M4 carbine; complete a 12-mile ruck march in three hours or less, and run four miles within 36 minutes.

"It was an excellent opportunity to set myself apart from my peers," said Pfc. Robert Burdekin, a Cavalry Scout with Anvil Troop, 6-8 CAV. "I do 12-mile rucks often, but during this evaluation, I had to push myself to make it back in time."

"In addition to the physical events, candidates were tested on individual tasks," said 1st Sgt. Jovanny Jones, senior enlisted advisor of Bushmaster Troop, 6-8 CAV.

Each candidate was timed on how fast they could assemble, disassemble, perform a function check, and load and unload an M4 Carbine, M240 Machine Gun, M2 Series .50 Caliber Machine Gun, and MK19 Automatic Grenade Launcher.

"They also operated a Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System, sent/received status reports, and conducted a mortar fire mission," said 1st Sgt. Jones.

For their final task, the candidates had to find three out of four coordinates at Fort Stewart's Land Navigation Course within three hours.

"The land navigation points spread over four miles in swamps and dense vegetation," said 1st Lt. Matthew Miller, a platoon leader with Bushmaster Troop, 6-8 CAV.

Six of the 14 Troops who began the program achieved the Excellence in Armor Badge.

Troops who did not succeed in any of the three events were disqualified from the program.

"Each Soldier showed great determination and dedication in pursuing the EIA Badge," said Burdekin. "I wanted to challenge myself and see if it was something I could accomplish and I did."

Recipients of the EIA badge are Pfc. Robert Burdekin, Pfc. Anthony Wentworth, Pfc. Luke Jess, Spc. Zachary Bowman Spc. Ralph Custodio and Spc. Ruben Medina.