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The US Army is introducing a new competition to measure team building and cohesion among its squads. The inaugural Best Squad Competition will take place in September, with the winning squad to be announced during the October's Association of the United States Army conference. The competition will feature team-oriented events such as conducting a squad attack, where part of the squad fires on a target while another element flanks and assaults it. Twelve teams, including one each from the Army Reserve and National Guard, will compete in five-person squads led by staff sergeants or sergeant first classes, with two non-commissioned officers in charge of three junior troops. The goal is to build "organic" teams that work together every day, rather than trying to assemble a "super squad" of the best soldiers. Despite individual evaluations for the winning squad and top performers, the initiative aligns with the Army's emphasis on unit cohesion and leadership development. Sergeant Major Michael Grinston, the service's top enlisted leader, has highlighted the importance of building cohesive teams that are highly trained, disciplined, and fit. The Consortium Best Warrior Competition was held for Army Reserve Soldiers at Camp Bullis in San Antonio, Texas, from March 1 to March 6, 2022. The event featured cadres from eight Army Reserve commands and included various challenges such as the Army Combat Fitness Test, water survival, obstacle course, land navigation, and urban warfare. The competition was a joint effort among Soldiers from different units across the US. Brig. Gen. Joseph Marsiglia emphasized that participating in this competition would make them better soldiers. Spc. Pepe Tekpa advised competitors to take deep breaths and put their best efforts into it. Staff Sgt. Michael Wilson believed that finishing challenges is key, while focusing on the next challenge. The event was part of a series of competitions held by the Army Reserve, National Guard, and Active Duty Army nationwide. Several commands had held competitions beforehand to vet Soldiers who competed at the BWC consortium in Camp Bullis, Texas. The winners from each command would move on to compete at the U.S. Army Reserve Command level, with the opportunity to participate in the Department of the Army BWC later this year. The U.S. Army Best Warrior Competition is the ultimate test of readiness and skill for its Soldiers. Day One began with in-processing and equipment inspections to prepare competitors for the grueling 96-hour challenge ahead. On the second day, competitors faced a demanding schedule of physical events, including a 12-mile foot march, weapons familiarization, and live fire exercises. The third day saw soldiers tackle the Army Combat Fitness Test before dawn, followed by a swim test that pushed their endurance to the limit. The swimming event was particularly challenging, requiring soldiers to tread water, swim with a rifle, and then drop the rifle while navigating through the water. Master Sgt. Brian McNeil noted that this event "challenges Soldiers" in every way. The final day of competition saw soldiers put their skills to the test once again, participating in an oral board interview while dressed in uniform. This was followed by a land navigation course and the Army Warrior Tasks, which tested individual skill levels in basic Soldier training areas. The competition culminated in an awards ceremony on Sunday, March 6, where winners were announced and recognized for their hard work and dedication. The top two winners were Spc. Pepe Tekpa and Sgt. Jessica Betando, who will attend the USARC level BWC at Ft. McCoy in May with hopes of advancing to the Department of the Army BWC. The U.S. Army Best Warrior Competition serves as the definitive measure of readiness for the Army's number one priority - readiness. It pushes warriors to overcome fears, fatigue, mental exhaustion, and uncertainty to emerge victorious. This year's competition took place at Fort Knox, Kentucky, from October 1-5, with this year's event in the National Capital Region set to take place from October 7-13. In a shift towards team-building, the Army has announced the inaugural Best Squad Competition, which will focus on building cohesive teams that are highly trained and disciplined. The competition will feature team-oriented events such as conducting a squad attack, with 12 teams competing in September, including one each from the Army Reserve and National Guard. The Army is redefining its approach to infantry squads, with a focus on organic teams that work together every day. According to General Grinston, units should not try to build a "super squad" of their best soldiers to dominate the competition, but rather aim for cohesive groups where each member knows and cares about the others. The goal is to have a squad that is truly an extension of its leader's personality. In a recent announcement, Grinston highlighted the importance of NCOs in squads, as they are often the ones who most impact junior troops.

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