

Va. Guard Best Warrior Competition names top Soldier, NCO

Spc. Adam Sotelo was named the 2014 Virginia National Guard Soldier of the Year, and Sgt. John Fracker was named Noncommissioned Officer of the Year March 29, 2015, at Fort Pickett, Va. Sotelo, an Arlington resident assigned to Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, and Fracker, who resides in Boones Mill and is assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th IBCT, earned the honors after competing in the two-day Best Warrior Competition at Fort Pickett.

Eighteen Soldiers and noncommissioned officers representing the Virginia Army Guard's major subordinate commands were evaluated on the Army Physical Fitness Test, marksmanship, land navigation, various Army Warrior Tasks and an appearance board. The Warrior Tasks included evaluating a casualty, administering first aid, reporting intelligence information, communicating via a tactical radio and reacting to a nuclear hazard attack.



The 2014 Virginia Guard Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, stand with Virginia Army National Guard State Command Sgt. Maj. Carl Holcomb, March 29, 2015.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/03/30/7207/>

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Va. Guard aviators train with first responders

Virginia Army National Guard aviation crews took to the skies over Chesterfield's Pocahontas State Park March 24, 2015, to assist local first responders during a regional search and rescue training exercise. The exercise brought together first responders from multiple localities and multiple Virginia Guard aviation assets.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/04/07/7245/>

183rd RTI trains military police officers

U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers completed the 31B Basic Military Police Officer course April 4, 2015, after more than 254 hours of training at Fort Pickett's 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute. The MP course included two phases and graduated 11 Soldiers as military police officers.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/04/07/7252/>

Assistant AG leads professional development discussion

Brig. Gen. Walter L. Mercer, the Assistant Adjutant General – Army for the Virginia National Guard, led a professional development discussion with officer candidates from Class 57 of the Virginia National Guard's Officer Candidate School March 28, 2015, at the 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/04/03/7229/>

DHS search & rescue team conducts training at Camp Pendleton

Members of Virginia Task Force 2, a Department of Homeland Security Urban Search and Rescue Team, conducted search and rescue training March 24, 2015, at the Virginia National Guard's Camp Pendleton Collective Training Center in Virginia Beach, Va.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/03/31/7210/>

Mark Your Calendars!

Youth Program Volunteers

The National Guard Youth Program is looking for individuals who are interested in volunteering at summer camps in June and July.

The Teen Wilderness Adventure Camp is June 21-25, 2015 in New Castle, Va., and the 10th Annual Youth Camp is July 26-31, 2015, in Virginia Beach, Va.

If you are new to volunteering with the Youth Program, you will need a full background and security check complete before camp. If you are a returning volunteer, a new set of fingerprints will be the only requirement.

For more information, call Joe Duerksen at (804) 236-7866 or email at joe.m.duerksen.ctr@mail.mil.

192nd FW, RAF participate in fighter integration

The Virginia Air National Guard's 149th Fighter Squadron and 192nd Maintenance Group participated in Western Zephyr, a bilateral fighter integration exercise with the United Kingdom hosted by the 94th Fighter Squadron Feb. 23 to March 13, 2015, at Langley Air Force Base, Va.

Airmen from the 27th Fighter Squadron and 1st Fighter Wing Maintenance Groups also participated in the training exercise designed to utilize a combination of assets, from the United Kingdom and the United States, to better prepare for more seamless war-time integration performance.

Royal Air Force Airmen supported Western Zephyr with eight Typhoon FGR4 combat aircraft and 21 pilots during the exercise.

During the first week, 140 maintainers and support staff attended an orientation and worked one-on-one Raptor and Typhoon missions. The following two weeks, 24 missions were planned and executed. Each mission averaged 12 aircraft, which included Raptors and Typhoons, against 45 different adversaries.

Throughout the exercise, multiple units worked together to play adversaries using aircraft from the Air National Guard, U.S. Air Force and Navy. Aircraft included T-38 Talons, F-15 Eagles, F-16 Falcons, F/A-18 Super Hornets and the B52 Stratofortress. Servicemembers and units that supported came from Barnes Air National Guard Base, Mass.; D.C. Air National Guardsmen; Joint Base Andrews, Md.; Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.; and Minot AFB, N.D. The F/A-18 Super Hornet squadrons from Naval Air Station Oceana, Va., provided additional adversarial support. Airman further supported with KC-10 and KC-135 tankers, for refueling capability.

In addition, Airman from Tinker AFB, Okla. provided surveillance, command, control and communications with two E-3 Sentries, commonly referred to as Airborne Warning and Control Systems or AWACS. Canadian coalition forces assigned to Tinker AFB in a military exchange program also participated.

Western Zephyr 2015 was the second bilateral fighter integration exercise held at Langley AFB between the U.K. and



A British Royal Air Force Typhoon FGR4 takes off during Exercise Western Zephyr at Langley Air Force Base, Va., March 3, 2015.

the U.S. The Royal Air Force intends to host the next bilateral fighter integration exercise.

"It's important for us to train with the Royal Air Force, now more than ever," said Col. Robert Grey, 192nd Fighter Wing commander. "Through this exercise, we are forging both personal and professional relationships that streamline our ability to communicate effectively and accomplish the mission together in times of real crisis."

This exercise and the Red Flag exercise at Nellis AFB, Nev., enhance the capability of coalition forces to respond to global threats as a united front, said a participating project officer from 6 Squadron, Royal Air Force, Lossiemouth, Scotland.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/04/07/7242/>

MORE ON THE WEB

Camp Pendleton hosts runners for Shamrock Marathon

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/04/02/7222/>

Photos: Commonwealth Challenge inducts newest cadets

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157651381455340/>

Photos: Infantry advanced leader course held at RTI

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157651287657258/>

Photos: AG visits with NGB-led "Lightning Team"

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157649494667643/>

Photos: Virginia, D.C. CSTs support each other

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157651380594367/>



www.facebook.com/VaNationalGuard



[@VaNationalGuard](https://twitter.com/VaNationalGuard)



www.linkedin.com/company/vanationalguard



A Virginia Air National Guard F-22 Raptor takes off at Langley Air Force Base, Va. The F-22 was one of several airframes used during Western Zephyr.