

# 116th IBCT welcomes new brigade command team

Col. Jared D. Lake and Command Sgt. Maj. Duane D. Wolfe took charge as the new command team for the Staunton-based 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team from Col. Christopher J. Samulski and Command Sgt. Maj. Irving N. Reed Jr. March 5, 2023, in Staunton, Virginia. Maj. Gen. John M. Rhodes, 29th Infantry Division Commanding General, presided over the ceremony where Lake took command of the 116th from Samulski and Wolfe assumed responsibility from Reed as the brigade's senior enlisted leader.

"This is a historic moment for all of us," Rhodes said. "I want to thank all the Soldiers of the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. You are carrying on the proud tradition of those who served before you. Thanks to you and your families for your service to the nation, the Commonwealths of Virginia and Kentucky, the National Guard and the 29th Infantry Division."

He noted the 116th IBCT is the largest unit in the Virginia Army National Guard and is "comprised of highly-trained Soldiers with various specialty skills who are capable of conducting any assigned mission."

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/24562>



Col. Jared D. Lake and Command Sgt. Maj. Duane D. Wolfe take charge as the new command team for the Staunton-based 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team from Col. Christopher J. Samulski and Command Sgt. Maj. Irving N. Reed Jr. March 5, 2023, in Staunton, Virginia.

## Virginia National Guard News Headlines

### Reich named new VNG command senior enlisted leader

Chief Master Sgt. Kelly B. Reich succeeded Chief Master Sgt. James J. Profita as the Virginia National Guard's command senior enlisted leader, according to an announcement March 14, 2023, by the Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/24567>

### Wynn steps into new role, stresses fairness, dignity and respect

What first drew Maj. Kim Wynn to military service was the Army uniform of the 1980s and 90s. Catchy "Be All You Can Be" ads were filling the commercial breaks of her TV time, and she thought the BDUs looked pretty good.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/24563>

### 116th IBCT Headquarters recognized for federal active duty in Kosovo

Maj. Gen. John M. Rhodes, 29th Infantry Division Commanding General, presented the Governor's National Service Medal to Soldiers assigned to the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Headquarters March 5, 2023, in Staunton, Virginia.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/24568>

### VNG Honors Program hosts Soldiers from 7 states for training

Ten National Guard Soldiers from seven states participated in Military Funeral Honors Level 2 training Feb. 26 - March 11, 2023, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/24566>

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# 329th RSG, MTC Soldiers earn Best Warrior honors

Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Virginia Beach-based 329th Regional Support Group and Maneuver Training Center Fort Pickett took top honors at the Virginia Army National Guard's 2023 Best Warrior Competition, held March 16 - 19, 2023, at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

The 329th's Spc. Jared Bergman was named Soldier of the Year and MTC's Staff Sgt. Dan Abbott was named Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. Pfc. Mercer Love and Staff Sgt. Jake Harvey, both assigned to the Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, were named runners up. Bergman and Abbott will now have a chance to represent the VNG at the Region II Best Warrior Competition, which will be hosted by the Virginia Army National Guard at Fort Barfoot in May 2023. Fort Pickett will be redesigned as Fort Barfoot March 24, 2023.

Ten VNG Soldiers participated in this year's competition, as well as two soldiers from the Republic of Tajikistan, who participated in the BWC in support of the Department of Defense's State Partnership Program, in which Virginia and Tajikistan have been partners since 2003. The two Tajik representatives, Warrant Officers Saidamir Isramov and Khamza Sharifov, as well as their interpreter, Khurshed Zakharov, were recognized during the awards ceremony.

During the ceremony, Command Sgt. Maj. Irving Reed Jr., the Virginia Army National Guard's command sergeant major, presented the winners with Army Commendation Medals. Reed said the Best Warrior Competition is an important event for the organization.

"These kind of events showcase the Soldiers who want to show their expertise in the job," said Reed. "It's a good motivational tool, because these Soldiers don't have to be out here. They're putting in this extra work. It's just a good, good event for them to showcase what they're good at."

Reed also said participating can help make them better Soldiers and leaders down the road.

"It helps them learn what their areas of opportunity are, and go back, hone those skills, become better at what they do," he said. "It makes them better overall. As a Soldier, regardless of my MOS, I have certain things I should be good at. So this takes all the MOSs and brings them here so they can focus on being a Soldier."

Abbott, a former active duty Soldier who has been in the VNG for about five years, said it was a terrific event.

"I thought it was a blast. It was an outstanding competition. I think it was really well built, really well structured by the state," said Abbott. "It was extremely physically demanding, very challenging. It was also a lot of fun."

Bergman said he was surprised at how demanding the four days were.

"It's honestly a surprise to me. The competition was really tough. I wasn't expecting this to challenge me as much as it did, but it really took it out of me," said Bergman. "I learned a lot, that's for sure."



**Virginia National Guard Soldiers representing the Virginia Beach-based 329th Regional Support Group and Maneuver Training Center Fort Pickett claim top honors at the 2023 Virginia Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition March 19, 2023, at Fort Pickett, Virginia.**

Bergman and Abbott will now advance to face Soldiers and NCOs from Delaware, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and the District of Columbia National Guards. The Soldier and NCO who are named Region II champions will have the chance to compete at the national-level competition.

"I'll be training very hard until then," said Bergman.

"This is my state, my Guard, and I plan on winning when I go to regionals," added Abbott.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/24564>

## MORE ON THE WEB

### VNG conducts Tactical Combat Care exchange in Tajikistan

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/24565>

### VNG training center to be redesignated Fort Barfoot

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/24569>

### VNG NCO receives \$1,000 for REP participation

Photos on Flickr at <https://ngpa.us/24535>

### Soldiers represent modern military at history event

Photos on Flickr at <https://ngpa.us/24536>

### WOCs learn to lead and give back

Photos on Flickr at <https://ngpa.us/24570>

