

Abbott competes in ARNG Best Warrior Competition

The Virginia National Guard's Staff Sgt. Dan Abbott, a 12N horizontal construction engineer assigned to Fort Barfoot, competed in the 2023 Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition, hosted by the Alaska National Guard, July 8 - 13, 2023, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

Abbott, representing the Virginia National Guard and Region II as Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, competed with six other NCOs and seven Soldiers over a series of physically and mentally demanding tasks at the installation just outside of Anchorage, Alaska. At the competition's conclusion, the Wyoming National Guard's Spc. Luke Harrison and the South Dakota National Guard's Sgt. Bailey Ruff were named Army National Guard Soldier and NCO of the Year. Three other competitors were chosen to join Harrison and Ruff to compete at the U.S. Army's Best Squad Competition later in 2023, and Abbott was chosen as an alternative for that squad, along with two other NCOs.

The competition featured 25 events over the course of a week, to include marksmanship, obstacle courses, fitness tests, a ruck march, interviews and written examinations.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/26268>



The Virginia National Guard's Staff Sgt. Dan Abbott competes in the 2023 Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Johnson presented Order of Martin of Tours award

Lt. Col. Brett Johnson, the Virginia Army National Guard full-time support chaplain, received the Order of Martin of Tours award from Col. Seung Lee, the VNG state chaplain, as part of his promotion ceremony May 14, 2023, at the Virginia National Guard Headquarters in Richmond, Virginia.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/26271>

Humility, teamwork keys to success for Sapper honor grad

Following four fierce weeks at the U.S. Army's Sapper Leader Course, Staff Sgt. Borys Vargas, a combat engineer assigned to the Virginia National Guard, was named distinguished honor graduate for Course 23-005.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/26272>

Volunteers restore Korean War-era M7B2 'Priest' at VNG headquarters

A group of volunteers dedicated to restoring artifacts and military vehicles for display have turned their attention to a Korean War-era tracked vehicle, plowing through paint, rust and grime to expose and preserve the history underneath.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/26273>

Voices of the VaANG: Master Sgt. Karrie Santiago

July's Voices of the VaANG is Master Sgt. Karrie Santiago, 192nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron weapons standardization superintendent, who evaluates load crews to ensure they stay proficient in their job.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/26270>

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VNG troops supporting Operation Lone Star in Texas

Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen completed their second full week supporting Operation Lone Star July 24, 2023. The troops are staffing observation posts and conducting roving patrols along the border between Texas and Mexico to observe and detect potential illegal border crossings and criminal activities and report to Texas law enforcement authorities.

According to the website of Texas Governor Greg Abbott, the Texas Department of Public Safety and the Texas National Guard are continuing to work together in OLS to secure the border and stop the smuggling of drugs, weapons and people into Texas as well as prevent, detect and interdict transnational criminal behavior between ports of entry.

The VNG and National Guard troops from multiple states are assisting with the mission, and as of July 21, Operation Lone Star's multi-agency effort with multi-state National Guard support has led to more than 394,200 illegal immigrant apprehensions and 31,300 criminal arrests, as well as more than 29,100 felony charges reported. In the fight against fentanyl, Texas law enforcement has seized more than 422 million lethal doses of fentanyl during this border mission.

The VNG assembled Joint Task Force Cardinal, a group of approximately 110 Soldiers and Airmen, and they arrived in Texas July 8 for the border security support mission that is expected to last about 30 days.

"I could not be more proud of how Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen have conducted themselves while on mission here in Texas," said Maj. Sidney Leslie, commander of Task Force Cardinal. "They have been vigilant, provided timely and accurate reporting to Texas law enforcement agencies, followed all the prescribed procedures for the appropriate use of force and treated everyone they encounter with dignity and respect."

Leslie said troop morale remains high, and they are being well taken care of.

"Our Soldiers and Airmen have bonded into strong team, and they are in high spirits knowing their time here is well spent and making a positive impact on the border security operation," he said. "Our Texas hosts are taking good care of us, and we are taking all the proper precautions for staying safe while we conduct operations."

Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin approved the VNG troop deployment to support OLS after Virginia received requests for support to Texas via the Emergency Management Assistance Compact process. They are deploying to Texas in a state active duty status funded by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

"I am inspired by all of you. I can't put it any other way," Youngkin said when he visited the troops July 6 at Fort Barfoot before their departure to Texas. "On behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia, I just want to say thank you. Thank you for your commitment, thank you for your love of nation, and thank you for your love of the commonwealth."

Youngkin also thanked families and acknowledged the Soldiers and Airmen will be missing out on time with loved ones while



Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen staff observation posts in support of the Texas National Guard and Operation Lone Star in Texas, completing their first two weeks of support July 24, 2023. The troops are also conducting roving patrols along the border between Texas and Mexico.

they are gone.

"I want to thank you for the sacrifice you are undertaking as we head into an extremely important mission," he said.

Youngkin explained that when a state needs help, they "send up a flare" and say they need help via EMAC, and Virginia will answer that call.

"Someone called for help, and we are going to go help them," he said. "That's what this is all about. I firmly believe this is a worthy mission."

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/26235>

MORE ON THE WEB

ChalleNGe grad pursues Coast Guard Scholars program

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/26275>

192nd in 90 Seconds - July 2023

Video on YouTube at <https://ngpa.us/26274>

AG visits 529th CSSB Soldiers at JRTC

Photos on Flickr at <https://ngpa.us/26243>

Cyber Fortress 2.0 tests Virginia's cyber response plan

Photos on Flickr at <https://ngpa.us/26241>

Gallagher visits 1173rd TC at Letterkenny Munitions Center

Photos on Flickr at <https://ngpa.us/26159>

