

Virginia National Guard celebrates 418th birthday

The Virginia National Guard celebrated its 418th birthday May 14, 2025, with a ceremonial cake cutting at the Sergeant Bob Slaughter Headquarters at Defense Supply Center Richmond, Virginia. Spc. Brett Shropshire and Lt. Col. Brett Johnson cut the cake flanked by Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Joyce Reed and Brig. Gen. Todd Hubbard, VNG Director of the Joint Staff. Reed also presented a Governor of Virginia proclamation recognizing the VNG's birthday to Hubbard.

The VNG traces the heritage and traditions of citizen service to the founding of Jamestown when Capt. John Smith organized the colonists for defense. Since the colony's founding May 14, 1607, there has not been a day without a military presence in Virginia to defend freedom at home and overseas.

"I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart," Reed said. "You continue to keep the door open and to make the sacrifice for all the right reasons, and you set a standard for all of us continue to follow. I am proud to be part of this celebration."

Hubbard commended the dedicated service of those Soldiers and Airmen attending the cake cutting.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/2p8untpe>



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Virginia National Guard News Headlines

29th ID partners with Army researchers to capture EM signatures

National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 29th Infantry Division took part in a command post training exercise to sharpen their readiness for real-world missions April 26 to May 10, 2025, at Fort Barfoot, Virginia. The event allowed division staff to rehearse their duties in a simulated combat environment.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/2p9dytra>

VNG's World War II MIA includes sergeant serving with Air Corps

With the recent 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day, the Virginia National Guard History Program is highlighting the seven Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers who mobilized in 1941 who are still listed as missing in action.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/2p8t6hbw>

State tuition assistance application window open for Fall 2025 semester

The State Tuition Assistance Program awards conditional grants each semester to eligible Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who apply. The application window opened May 15, 2025, and closes July 11.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/3d2f228b>

Military Spouse Appreciation Certificates available

There is still time to register your spouse for a Military Spouse Appreciation Certificate signed by the Adjutant General of Virginia. Please visit the application web page and provide the requested information by May 24, 2025.

~ Register your spouse at <https://vngpao.info/2e9medeu>

Join the Virginia Army National Guard, Virginia Air National Guard or the Virginia Defense Force

For information about joining the Virginia Army National Guard, the Virginia Air National Guard or Virginia Defense Force, visit the appropriate link below:

Va. Army National Guard
<http://nationalguard.com/va>

Va. Air National Guard
<https://vngpao.info/3n7hr67a>

Va. Defense Force
<http://vdf.virginia.gov/joinvdf/>

Join the Virginia National Guard Alumni Network

<https://vngpao.info/5c4h4pxx>

VNG Soldiers impress at Regional Best Warrior Competition

Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Rocky Mount-based 229th Chemical Company, 1030th Transportation Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group and the Lynchburg-based Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team made a strong showing at the Region II Best Warrior Competition May 5 - 9, 2025, at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania.

Spc. Nicholas Warren and Staff Sgt. Ivo Garner, the VaARNG Soldier and NCO of the Year, both placed second in their respective categories, competing against other Soldiers and NCOs from the region, including Washington, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Pennsylvania's Spc. Robert Ruiz-Rhoades and Maryland's Sgt. Miles Crawford took first place as the Region II Soldier and NCO of the Year and advance to the national-level competition. Warren and Garner will serve as their alternates.

"I feel very proud being able to represent my state well," said Warren. "Virginia has a history of doing well at these competitions and I'm very honored to continue that legacy."

"I left it all out there," said Garner. From my experience at the state competition, I knew I couldn't be sure I'd win any technical events due to factors I can't always control, like weapons qualification, land nav or the medical event, so I had to give it everything I had on the physical stuff. Overall, I'm happy with my performance and I feel like I made my leadership and the State of Virginia proud."

The two VNG competitors more than held their own, only finishing a few points behind the winners, with much larger gaps between them and third place.

The four-day competition pushed the Soldiers' limits of strength, speed, endurance and knowledge. Events included a Ranger Physical Assessment, a kayak-foot race event, marksmanship and land navigation. The group also conducted a ruck march, written exam and a medical simulation event.

Some of the events were held either very late or very early in the day, adding more difficulty to already-tough events.

"The hardest part of the competition was the very early mornings and late nights specifically for the unknown distance ruck," said Warren. "The lack of sleep definitely made each event much harder and took a lot more effort."

That "unknown distance" ruck turned out to be 17 miles, and immediately proceeded one of the competition's toughest events.

"The hardest event for me was the mystery event," said Garner. "It started with an open-water swim across a lake, then we got out and ran about half a mile, mostly uphill, to a station where we were tested on the M249 squad automatic weapon. From there, we loaded a casualty into a litter and dragged the litter up a 200-meter hill, then immediately ran to another station where we assembled a radio and called up a nine-line medical evacuation."

"My favorite event was traditional marksmanship it was a nice break after the prior very physically demanding events, and being able to use a bunch of weapons that you usually don't get to use



Staff Sgt. Ivo Garner and Spc. Nicholas Warren, the Virginia National Guard NCO and Soldier of the Year, both placed second in their respective categories at the Region II Best Warrior Competition held at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania.

was super cool," added Warren.

In March, Warren and Garner won the VaARNG's Best Warrior Competition after four days of intense challenges, earning the chance to compete at the regional event.

Now, preparations are already under way to plan for next year's VaARNG Best Warrior Competition. Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Hawley, the VaARNG command sergeant major, said any Soldier considering competing should pursue the opportunity through their chain of command.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/yckj7p9k>

MORE ON THE WEB

Commonwealth ChalleNGe Class 62 celebrates Family Day

~ Photos on Flickr at <https://vngpao.info/2tn7uxpx>

VNG Soldiers recognized during Military Signing Day

~ Photos on Flickr at <https://vngpao.info/ecwmmwaw>

VNG hosts annual marksmanship match at Fort Barfoot

~ Photos on Flickr at <https://vngpao.info/3cn3pd9y>

429th Soldiers hone sling load skills at Fort Barfoot

~ Photos on Flickr at <https://vngpao.info/mr2ut46p>

Virginia National Guard Resiliency Resources

~ Read more at <https://va.ng.mil/Resiliency/>



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