

Virginia's fallen warriors remembered on Memorial Day

Virginians from all branches of the Armed Forces who gave their lives in service to the United States of America were remembered May 25, 2015, at ceremonies across Virginia including the 2015 Commonwealth's Memorial Day Ceremony at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond, Va., and the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia.

The names of four Virginians added to the Wall of Honor since Memorial Day 2014 were read during the ceremony at the War Memorial, joining 296 fellow citizens of the commonwealth, including Virginia National Guard Soldiers lost to hostile enemy action since September 11, 2001. Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, and his wife Cheryl placed the Virginia National Guard wreath at the Eternal Flame in the Shrine of Memory honoring the Virginia National Guard. Members of the Virginia Defense Force volunteered their time to provide traffic assistance for the event.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/05/27/7505/>



Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams and his wife Cheryl place the Virginia National Guard wreath at the 2015 Commonwealth's Memorial Day Ceremony May 25, 2015.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Ortner to take command of 29th Infantry Division

Brig. Gen. Blake C. Ortner will take command of the Virginia National Guard's Fort Belvoir-based 29th Infantry Division from Maj. Gen. Charles W. Whittington, Jr. effective July 24, 2015, according to announcement made May 28 by Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/05/28/7556/>

Trembs named as new commander of Virginia Air National Guard

Col. Dean A. Trembs is the new commander of the Virginia Air National Guard following the retirement of Brig. Gen. Wayne Wright, according to an announcement made May 27, 2015, by Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/05/27/7533/>

Va. Guard Soldiers recognized for life-saving efforts during winter storms

Four Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Cedar Bluff-based 1033rd Engineer Company, 276th Engineer Battalion received recognition May 16, 2015, for their actions during winter storms earlier this year that slammed the southwestern part of the state.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/06/02/7553/>

Va. Guard RTI builds infantry skills at basic, advanced level

At the Virginia National Guard's 1st Battalion, 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute, cadre and staff hosted two classes concurrently for the first two weeks of May. Both the 11B Infantry Transition Course and the Light Leader Course were on ground May 2 – 16, 2015.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/05/29/7519/>

Mark Your Calendars!

June 6: 71st anniversary of D-Day commemoration

The 71st anniversary of D-Day will be observed in a special ceremony at 11 a.m. at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Va.

Music will be provided by the 29th Division Band and will feature Col. Arnald D. Gabriel as guest conductor. Gabriel was a combat machine gunner with the 29th Infantry Division in Europe during World War II and received two Bronze Star Medals, the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the French Croix de Guerre.

For more information about the ceremony and other events in the area, visit the National D-Day Memorial web site at <http://www.dday.org>.

116th IBCT Soldier wins at Regional Best Warrior Competition

Spc. Adam Sotelo of the Virginia National Guard was named Soldier of the Year at the Region II Best Warrior Competition May 31, 2015, after a three-day competition at Fort Pickett, Va. He is an infantryman from Arlington and assigned to the Winchester-based Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and is currently enrolled in the police academy with the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C. Sgt. Robert Cunningham, of the West Virginia National Guard's 119th Engineer Company (Sapper), earned the title of Noncommissioned Officer of the Year at the competition, and both Soldier and NCO will go on to represent the region at the national-level Best Warrior Competition in Salt Lake City, Utah, later in June.

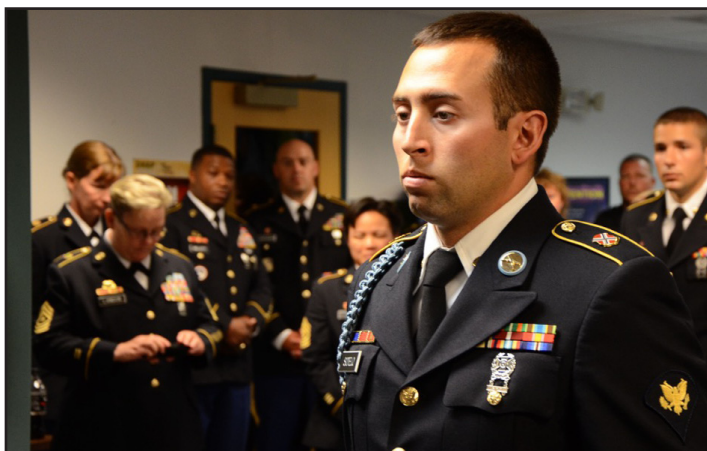
Sotelo and Cunningham beat out five other state-level winners in each of their respective categories to earn the top spot.

Region II includes Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Washington, D.C., and each sent a Soldier and an NCO to compete for a chance to be named best in the region. Sotelo won the state Best Warrior Competition in March, beating out Soldiers from across the state, which earned him a spot at the regional match.

The Soldiers and NCOs were assessed on a variety of basic warrior skills such as individual weapons marksmanship, the Army Physical Fitness Test, a six-mile road march, various Army Warrior Tasks including evaluate a casualty, identify key terrain features on a map and correctly perform various hand and arm signals. On the final day they appeared before a board of sergeants major in their dress uniforms to answer questions and demonstrate their military bearing.

"I did this just to build more experience as a Soldier and learn more skills, stuff that I wouldn't normally get to do at a typical drill weekend," said Sotelo of his participation in the event. "This has made me more disciplined. You have to stay squared away."

Sotelo said he felt "overwhelmed" when Command Sgt. Maj.



The Virginia National Guard's Spc. Adam Sotelo is announced as the winner of Region II Best Warrior Competition May 31, 2015, at Fort Pickett, Va.

Carl Holcomb, the Virginia Army National Guard command sergeant major, announced him as the winner.

"I'm really amazed in the level of professionalism and also the way that you all participate when you all come through these contests," Holcomb said. "Every one who got to this level is a winner."

Holcomb said both the NCO and Soldier of the Year competitions were very close, with Cunningham beating out his closest competitor by five points and Sotelo earning the top spot by just one point, with a score of 203, out of a possible 270 points.

"The effort was put forth and you all did a really excellent job," Holcomb said.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/06/01/7541/>

MORE ON THE WEB

Williams promoted to major general

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/05/23/7501/>

Photos: 34th CST conducts joint HAZMAT exercise at JMU

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157653154370250/>

Photos: ChalleNGe hosts academic, athletic competition

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157653834662176>

Amelia's Memorial Day Ceremony honors fallen Virginians

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157653039257218>

116th IBCT heads to Fort Drum for annual training

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/06/03/7563/>

Wright retires after 34 years of service

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/05/29/7568/>



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The Virginia National Guard's Spc. Adam Sotelo works on plotting his points during the land navigation portion of the Region II Best Warrior Competition May 29, 2015, at Fort Pickett, Va.