

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil Web: sd.ng.mil



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

November 9, 2021

SD Army National Guard names Soldier, NCO of the Year

By Pfc. BreAnna Paul – 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The South Dakota Army National Guard selected four enlisted soldiers and six non-commissioned officers to compete in the state’s Best Warrior Competition in Rapid City, Nov. 5-7, to identify the next Soldier and Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year, respectively.

After the three-day competition, Staff Sgt. Jordan Johnson, a member with the Joint Force Headquarters, was named the SDARNG’s Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year. Spc. Jedidiah Vissia, a member with the 115th Signal Company, was named the SDARNG Soldier of the Year.

“The Best Warrior Competition is a chance for the best soldiers from each individual unit to come together here at Camp Rapid and show us their skills and it’s their time to shine,” said Sgt. Maj. Michael Wilkening, the human resources equal opportunity sergeant major with the Joint Force Headquarters. “They will get to come out and try to compete and do the best they can.”

The BWC challenges soldiers academically, mentally, physically and technically using multiple tasks focused on key areas.

“They’re going to be tired,” said Wilkening. “They’re going to be to the point where they’re going to be under some stress. Many of the same things that they may see in a real life job, whatever it is, they’re doing that day. They will be able to draw upon what they learn here and actually be able to take that forward to whatever it is they do on the civilian side.”

The competition and the training involved preparing for it provides the competitors not only with the opportunity to improve themselves, but also to improve their peers and subordinates as well.

“We come out here for about three days and we test them to the maximum of their ability, seeing where all their potential is at,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick Couser, the senior enlisted leader of the South Dakota National Guard. “We want to get one NCO and one enlisted member to shine above everybody else, our best warriors. They will go on to our regional competition.”

Johnson and Vissia will advance to the Region 6 Best Warrior Competition, which is scheduled to be held in May 2022 at Camp Guernsey, Wyoming. They will face competitors from Alaska, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming.

The NCO of the Year runner-up/alternate was Staff Sgt. Matthew Bullis, Forward Support Company, 109th Engineer Battalion, and the Soldier of the Year runner-up/alternate was Spc. Connor Ullrich, Headquarters Company, 153rd Engineer Battalion.

-more-

“They’re not only competing against one another, but there is a bond there too,” said Sgt. 1st Class Chris Peters, a sergeant with the Joint Force Headquarters. “When you get to compete with somebody, especially of your peer group, it makes you want to drive harder, makes you drive better.”

###



211106-Z-DJ400-1090: U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jordan Johnson, Joint Force Headquarters, climbs down an obstacle during the South Dakota Army National Guard 2022 Best Warrior Competition at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., Nov. 6, 2021. Battalions from across the state send soldiers to compete where they are scored in a variety of physically and mentally taxing tasks and assessments. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. BreAnna Paul)



211106-Z-DJ400-1090: U.S. Army Sgt. Wade Lockhart, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, shoots a M320 Grenade Launcher during the South Dakota Army National Guard 2022 Best Warrior Competition at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., Nov. 6, 2021. Battalions from across the state send soldiers to compete where they are scored in a variety of physically and mentally taxing tasks and assessments. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. BreAnna Paul)



211105-Z-DJ400-1049: U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jordan Johnson, Joint Force Headquarters, plots a grid coordinate as part of a virtual training during the South Dakota Army National Guard 2022 Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., Nov. 5, 2021. Battalions from across the state send soldiers to compete where they are scored in a variety of physically and mentally taxing tasks and assessments. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. BreAnna Paul)



211106-Z-DJ400-1304: U.S. Army Sgt. Wade Lockhart, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, shoots a M4 rifle as part of the weapons qualifications during the South Dakota Army National Guard 2022 Best Warrior Competition at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., Nov. 6, 2021. Battalions from across the state send soldiers to compete where they are scored in a variety of physically and mentally taxing tasks and assessments. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. BreAnna Paul)



211106-Z-DJ400-1411: U.S. Army Spc. Connor Ullrich, Headquarters Company, 153rd Engineer Battalion, performs preventive maintenance checks and services on a Humvee during the South Dakota Army National Guard 2022 Best Warrior Competition at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., Nov. 6, 2021. Battalions from across the state send soldiers to compete where they are scored in a variety of physically and mentally taxing tasks and assessments. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. BreAnna Paul)



211106-Z-DJ400-1434: U.S. Army Spc., Jedidiah Vissia, 115th Signal Company, identifies a chemical during the South Dakota Army National Guard 2022 Best Warrior Competition at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., Nov. 6, 2021. Battalions from across the state send soldiers to compete where they are scored in a variety of physically and mentally taxing tasks and assessments. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. BreAnna Paul)



211107-Z-DJ400-1530: Competitors of the South Dakota Army National Guard 2022 Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., Nov. 7, 2021. Battalions from across the state send soldiers to compete where they are scored in a variety of physically and mentally taxing tasks and assessments. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. BreAnna Paul)



211107-Z-DJ400-1531: From left to right: Col. Scott Petrik, Chief of Staff of the South Dakota Army National Guard; Spc. Jedidiah Vissia, SDARNG Soldier of the Year; Spc. Connor Ullrich, runner-up SDARNG Soldier of the Year; Staff Sgt. Matthew Bullis, runner-up Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year; Staff Sgt. Jordan Johnson, Non-Commissioned Officer the Year; Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick Couser, senior enlisted leader of the South Dakota National Guard on Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., Nov. 7, 2021. Battalions from across the state send soldiers to compete where they are scored in a variety of physically and mentally taxing tasks and assessments. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. BreAnna Paul)