

Spanberger, Cline rep tour VNG aviation facility

U.S. Rep. Abigail Spanberger visited the Virginia National Guard's Army Aviation Support Facility March 29, 2021, to learn more about the complex mission of the VNG's aviation assets and the need for a new aviation support facility. Spanberger was joined by a member of Rep. Ben Cline's staff and received briefings from Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, and other VNG senior leaders. The group also toured the current facility and conducted an aerial tour on board a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter of the proposed location for the future facility, as well as key VNG facilities in the Richmond area.

"The Virginia National Guard plays a critical role in keeping our communities safe, and they deserve our strongest possible support. During this week's visit to the Army Aviation Support Facility, I was honored to hear directly from Virginia National Guard leadership about their ongoing missions, current challenges, and future needs," said Spanberger. "I will continue to be an ardent supporter of our Guard members in Congress. Our Commonwealth is fortunate to be protected by these dedicated men and women, and I thank them for their selfless service."

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xHYzW>



U.S. Rep. Abigail Spanberger visits the Virginia National Guard's Army Aviation Support Facility March 29, 2021, to discuss the complex mission of the VNG's aviation assets and the need for a new aviation support facility.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Commonwealth ChalleNGe graduates 72 cadets from Class 54

The Virginia Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy graduated 72 cadets from Class 54 during a ceremony March 20, 2021, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xHYzv>

VaARNG recruiters snag top spots after regional recruiting boards

In mid-March, a select few of Virginia's Army National Guard recruiters traveled to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, for a chance to be named top among their regional peers.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xHYzh>

VNG WOCs check off milestones on way toward course completion

The Virginia National Guard's warrant officer candidates hit a few milestones during their March drill weekend. On March 19th, 2021, candidates volunteered at the Chesterfield Food Bank where they helped sort, load and distribute thousands of pounds of food to hundreds of local residents.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xHYuc>

"Three Things" Spring 2021 VNG Land Component Commander Update

In his latest quarterly update, Brig. Gen. K. Weedon Gallagher encourages Soldiers to accept the COVID-19 vaccination, explains why we can't learn fieldcraft remotely and stresses the importance of political agnosticism.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xHYzt>

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Explosives detection training lane dedicated to fallen VNG Soldiers

Current and former Virginia National Guard Soldiers and guests attended a dedication ceremony for the new Banks-Lambert Handheld Detection Lane March 26, 2021, at Fort Pickett, Virginia. The explosives detection training lane was dedicated and named for Sgt. Derek R. Banks and Sgt. David E. Lambert, who were killed when their vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device Oct. 25, 2007, while deployed with the West Point-based 237th Engineer Company, 276th Engineer Battalion, 91st Troop Command in Iraq.

Three other VNG Soldiers were also injured in the attack: Sgt. James "Andy" Corbett, Spc. Joshua G. Primm and Pfc. Eric T. Holt, all also assigned to the 237th. Corbett and Holt both attended the dedication ceremony. Col. Paul Gravely, Maneuver Training Center Fort Pickett garrison commander, and Lt. Col. Beau Mason, assistant chief of staff for the Virginia Army National Guard and company commander for Banks and Lambert at the time of the attack, both gave remarks during the ceremony.

"We're humbled and honored to be able to share this occasion with everyone. I'm extremely proud to honor these gentlemen today, and also just as proud to honor the staff that put all their effort into this facility," said Gravely. "It should be a very good training asset that will render results for Soldiers for years to come. Most of all I'm very proud to dedicate this to two Virginians who gave the ultimate sacrifice."

"As we dedicate this lane today, I hope and pray that every engineer, infantryman, Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine that trains on this lane is imbued with the spirit, passion, drive, knowledge, courage and selflessness that Derek and Bo embodied," said Mason, referring to Banks and Lambert, who was known as "Bo" to his friends.

After remarks, Mason, Corbett and Holt unveiled a sign designating the site as the Banks-Lambert Handheld Detection Lane, and two smaller signs with information about Banks and Lambert respectively, allowing those training at the site in the future to learn about their stories.

The new lane will provide pre-deployment training in explosive hazard detection, and establishes a site for training with handheld explosives detectors. It's designed to develop and improve skills in locating targets using "LOSS," which stands for lane coverage, operator stance, search head position and sweep speed.

The training site encompasses one familiarization lane and three emplacement lanes, and can use varying types of soil to simulate different terrains. Representatives from the Army Asymmetric Threat Training Support Program gave a demonstration of the training lane after the dedication ceremony.

The capability the training lane will impart on the Soldiers who train there is closely tied to what Banks and Lambert were in Iraq to accomplish in 2007, according to Mason.

"Comanche Company's sole purpose was to provide route clearance in support of Multi-National Division Baghdad, a division-level asset," said Mason. "The mission was to clear the route of IEDs, so that maneuver units, infantry, supply units and



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other convoys could safely move around Baghdad without the possibility of an IED strike."

Mason said it wasn't just chance that Banks and Lambert were in the lead vehicle the day of the strike.

"When a mission came up, Derek and Bo were the first ones to fight to be in the lead vehicle, the most important vehicle in a route clearance mission next to the Husky, and one of the most dangerous vehicles to be in," explained Mason. "They volunteered to be the eyes to spot an IED before anyone else could be placed into its danger zone."

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xHYzE>

MORE ON THE WEB

VNG COVID-19 Vaccination Resource Page

<https://va.ng.mil/COVID-19/Vaccine/>

124th CPB first VNG battalion with all-female staff

<https://go.usa.gov/xHYzp>

VNG Endurance Team seeking team members

<https://go.usa.gov/xHYz8>

Photos: Bissell promoted to major general

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/albums/72157718847313232>

Photos: VNG mobile vaccine team supports Hopewell clinic

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