

34th CST trained, ready following formal evaluation

The Virginia National Guard's Fort Pickett-based 34th Civil Support Team was evaluated as trained and mission capable after a Training Proficiency Evaluation Nov. 16 and 18, 2021, in Henrico County, Virginia, and at Defense Supply Center Richmond, Virginia. The evaluation was conducted by U.S. Army North, which supervised the exercise and validated the unit's readiness.

The mission of the 34th CST is to support civil authorities in a domestic chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or high-yield explosive incident, and the evaluated tasks included deploying the team, establishing communications and medical support, conducting survey, technical decontamination and analytical functions as well as conducting interagency coordination.

"The mission sets of the 34th CST are complex and require a high degree of technical expertise," said Brig. Gen. James W. Ring, the VNG Director of the Joint Staff. "The performance by the men and women of the 34th CST during this TPE reflects their individual and collective readiness to conduct complex operations. They demonstrated that they remain ready to deploy at short notice in support of local, state or federal requirements."

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



Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen assigned to the Fort Pickett-based 34th Civil Support Team conduct their training proficiency evaluation Nov. 16, 2021, in Henrico County, Virginia.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

VNG cyber protection battalion completes TF Echo mission

The Virginia National Guard's Fairfax-based 123rd Cyber Protection Battalion, 91st Cyber Brigade marked the end of their support for Task Force Echo with a transition of authority ceremony Dec. 1, 2021, at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland.

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

Thunder Soldiers gather for regimental muster, honor Saint Barbara's Day

Field artillery Soldiers past and present gathered for the Norfolk-based 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment's annual Regimental Muster and Saint Barbara's Day celebration Dec. 11, 2021, in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

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

VNG NCO reflects on 20 years of service in Counterdrug Program

First Sgt. Brian Wright's career in the Virginia National Guard's Counterdrug Program started with a 75-day order that started July 23, 2001. Twenty years later, he's the senior enlisted advisor for the program.

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

Course introduces Soldiers to Holistic Health and Fitness program

The Virginia Army National Guard hosted a five-day Total Health and Performance course Dec. 6-10, 2021, in Virginia Beach, Virginia, focused on the five domains of fitness: physical, nutritional, mental, spiritual and sleep.

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

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Ceremony marks official start of TF Thunder mobilization

Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Norfolk-based 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team marked the official start of their federal active duty mission at a deployment ceremony Dec. 13, 2021, in Norfolk, Virginia. They were joined by family, friends, fellow Soldiers, state and federal elected leaders and senior VNG leaders.

During the ceremony, Lt. Col. Donald L. Bailey II and Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy G. Perry, the 1st Battalion command team, cased their organizational colors to signify the start of their deployment. They will uncase the colors when they arrive to their duty location and officially begin their mission.

Approximately 300 Soldiers will deploy on federal active duty to the Central Command area of operations in the Middle East to provide personnel and site protection using the Counter-Rocket, Artillery and Mortar System, or C-RAM. The battalion also has units based in Hampton and Hanover.

"I am here for two reasons," said Governor Ralph Northam. "One is to say thank you to the men and women who wear the uniform and also your families, and also to wish you safe deployment, and more importantly, a safe return back to Virginia."

Northam expressed his appreciation for the VNG's support through multiple natural disasters, periods of civil unrest and the COVID-19 response assisting with testing and vaccinations.

"I could not be prouder of what you have done," Northam said. "Not only for Virginia, but for this country."

Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia and former 1st Battalion commander, recalled the battalion's first mobilizations for critical infrastructure protection in the United States soon after 9-11 that marked the beginning of the Global War on Terror and the steady march that lead up to the unit's current deployment.

"As we gather today, you're standing tall as a well-trained and well-led battalion," he said. "Your deployment starts with time at Fort Sill where your combat skills will be honed ensuring that you're ready for any challenge, and I have every confidence that you will be very successful in your deployment."

Williams explained this mobilization is another in a series of overseas missions that will result in the larger number of VNG Soldiers deployed since the Iraq surge of 2007. With the addition of units from Maryland and Kentucky, it is the most 29th Infantry Division Soldiers mobilized since World War II.

The 1st Battalion Soldiers join the VNG's Fort Belvoir-based 29th Infantry Division and Virginia Beach-based 329th Regional Support Group already serving on federal active duty in the Middle East. More than 1,000 Virginia and Kentucky Army National Guard Soldiers just began their federal mobilization as Task Force Red Dragon under the command of the Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. They will provide a security force in support of Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, and it is the largest VNG single-unit mobilization since World War II.

"Thank you to the Soldiers seated before us today," Bailey said.



Lt. Col. Donald L. Bailey II and Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy G. Perry, the 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment command team, case their organizational colors to signify the start of their deployment at a ceremony Dec. 13, 2021, in Norfolk, Virginia.

"You have stepped up to take on a critical requirement at a critical time for the nation's interests in the Middle East. The nation, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Army and the National Guard are depending on us to succeed. You cannot lose sight on how truly important this opportunity is. I have no doubt you will rise to the challenge and perform well."

Bailey said the ceremony marks the start of the first overseas deployment behind the battalion's colors since 1942 and referred to it as a "genuinely historic moment."

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xZFZ5>

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