

Fort Pickett Fire Dept. helps lead large fire response

Firefighters assigned to the Fort Pickett Fire Department helped tackle a large fire near the installation April 21, 2022, marking one of the department's largest response operations in recent memory.

"I am very proud of our Fort Pickett firefighters' quick response to the recent fire at Nottoway Biofuels," said Col. Timothy Pillion, MTC Fort Pickett's garrison commander. "This has been a very busy year for them and this is just another testament to their professionalism and value to not only Fort Pickett but the surrounding community."

Fort Pickett firefighters were first on the scene after calls about a fire at a biofuels facility operated by FDCE Conservation and Bioenergy, adjacent to Fort Pickett on Butterwood Trail, involving large amounts of switchgrass being stored in an expansive, open storage shed. The firefighters first at the scene quickly realized this would be bigger than most of their operations.

In addition to firefighters from Fort Pickett and rescue crews from Nottoway County, fire crews from Blackstone, Crewe, Kenbridge, Farmville, McKenney and South Hill all descended on the scene to help control the fire.



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

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

MTC marks Earth Day with trail dedication, garden planting

Staff assigned to multiple directorates at Maneuver Training Center Fort Pickett gathered to rededicate the Joy Nature Trail after extensive renovations April 22, 2022, at Fort Pickett, Virginia. The event was part of the installation's Earth Day commemoration.

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

VNG officer talks motivation, training to become Army aviator

In August of 2005, then eight-year-old Jonathan Murray was on the playground of his Baton Rouge, Louisiana, elementary school when he heard the distinctive hum of a fleet of UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters for the first time.

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

RSP NCO paves pathway for success for Leesburg area recruits

Ever since he was a kid, Staff Sgt. Shane Williams knew he'd join the military. On his dad's side, military service dates back all the way to the American Civil War.

Read more: <http://go.usa.gov/xuVAe>

"Three Things" Spring 2022 – VNG LCC Update

Brig. Gen. K. Weedon Gallagher, commander of the Virginia Army National Guard, talks about the recent changes to the ACFT, focusing on fieldcraft during annual training and growing the VaARNG team in his latest quarterly update.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xuVs4>

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State leaders, CoDel reps visit aviation support facility

Robert Mosier, the Virginia Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, and Eric Moeller, the Virginia Chief Transformation Officer, along with representatives from Governor Glenn Youngkin's office and the Virginia Congressional Delegation, visited the Virginia National Guard's Army Aviation Support Facility April 21, 2022, in Sandston, Virginia.

During their visit, the group, which included representatives from the offices of Sen. Tim Kaine and Representatives A. Donald McEachin, Abigail Spanberger and Jennifer Wexton, listened to presentations from key Virginia National Guard senior leaders highlighting the complex mission of VNG's aviation elements and the need for a new AASF. Afterwards, the group toured the existing AASF and took an aerial tour aboard UH-60 Black Hawks of the proposed location for the future facility, as well as key VNG facilities in the Richmond area.

Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, spoke to the group first, giving an overview of the Virginia National Guard, highlighting the organization's force structure and state and federal missions. Williams also spoke to the group about the urgent need for congressional funding to build a new support facility before the lease on the current AASF expires in 2032.

"As we are sitting at the home for aviation, it is important to acknowledge its prominence in our operations. In fact, aviation as a whole is one of the highest called-on formations that we have. The air crews are turned to extensively," said Williams. "If we don't have a new facility, we will lose our aviation capability, and that's just a nonstarter."

"If you don't have a facility that can support the helicopters, they don't want you to have the helicopters," added Charlton Dunn, Virginia National Guard construction and facilities management officer. "If the Army is reorganizing aviation structure and also fielding new airframes at about the same time that you are missing and fighting for a structure, they're going to get two birds with one stone. We are at risk of losing some or all of our aviation force structure if we don't solve this in a timely manner."

The current AASF was constructed in the 1960s and is not suited to properly maintain the VNG's current or future fleet of airframes. One of the biggest issues is a lack of adequate indoor storage space for the organization's helicopters.

"It's an 8-bay hangar, in which they also have to do maintenance on 28 aircraft, both fixed and rotary wing," explained Brig. Gen. James W. Ring, the VNG Director of the Joint Staff. "So, we're severely under-structured. Back in the mid-90s, the Army recognized that these multi-million dollar aircraft with high-end electronics need to go under roof, and have to have allocated the maintenance bay space for it. So, starting in the mid-90s, we began to put infrastructure into our aviation support facilities across the 50 states. The vast majority of them have already been built, and Virginia's just catching up."

Despite the shortcomings of the aging current facility, the Virginia National Guard's aviation personnel have maintained



Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, leads a group of state government leaders and representatives of the Virginia Congressional Delegation on a tour of the Virginia National Guard's Army Aviation Support Facility April 21, 2022, in Sandston, Virginia.

exemplary aircraft maintenance and readiness standards. Col. William X. Taylor, the State Aviation Officer and commander of the AASF, said it's the state's experienced leadership and aviators who have led the charge to make sure they're ready for any state or federal missions.

"We've got a lot of senior aviators with thousands of hours and multiple deployments. We're very strong on the pilot side and on crew chiefs," said Taylor. "The relationship between the aviation battalion and the support facility is great. We understand our role as an AASF, as a support facility, to make sure the units are deployable and ready."

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

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