

529th CSSB Soldiers gain valuable training during JRTC rotation

Approximately 60 Soldiers assigned to the Virginia Beach-based 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group conducted Joint Readiness Training Center rotation 23-8.05 July 6 to Aug. 6, 2023, at Fort Johnson, Louisiana. Conducted in support of the Hawaii Army National Guard's 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, the 529th was in charge of running the division support area, where they provided command and control of more than 400 National Guard Soldiers from five different units from five different states providing food, water, fuel, ammunition and other supplies.

"JRTC has been a great culminating training event," said Lt. Col. Carlos Maldonado, commander of the 529th. "The reps and sets gained during JRTC has enhanced the unit's understanding and capabilities of its mission essential task list. That will better prepare it for any future missions."

The training rotation included "force on force" activities from July 16-30. During this time, leadership stressed the importance of convoys hitting their start point times, security, and communications.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/26794>



A Soldier assigned to the Virginia Beach-based 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion takes part in Joint Readiness Training Center rotation 23-8.05 July 28, 2023, at Fort Johnson, Louisiana.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Commonwealth ChalleNGe graduates 66 cadets from Class 59
 The Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy graduated 66 cadets from Class 59 Aug. 26, 2023, in Virginia Beach, Virginia. ChalleNGe is a 17-and-a-half-month program designed to promote academics, attention to detail, time management, and leadership while promoting self-esteem, confidence and pride.
 Read more at <https://ngpa.us/26793>

Virginia Defense Force chaplains support Bulla Chapel at Fort Barfoot
 Virginia Defense Force chaplains volunteered their time during the 2023 summer annual training season to conduct Sunday services at the Fort Barfoot Bulla Chapel in order to provide religious support to Soldiers.
 Read more at <https://ngpa.us/26790>

VDF Medical Services support VaARNG medic recertification
 Members of the Virginia Defense Force assigned to the Medical Services Section, Support Operations Group assisted with instruction at the 68W combat medic recertification course Aug. 5-10, 2023, at Fort Barfoot, Virginia.
 Read more at <https://ngpa.us/26789>

60 campers enjoy 18th annual Virginia National Guard Youth Camp
 Children of Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen enjoyed a variety of activities at the 18th annual Virginia National Guard Youth Camp July 23-28, 2023, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia.
 Read more at <https://ngpa.us/26791>

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Earn \$1,000 with the VNG Referral Enlistment Program
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229th BEB Soldiers compete for German proficiency badge

More than 70 Soldiers assigned to the Fredericksburg-based 229th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team earned the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge after three days of competition during their drill weekend Aug. 18-20, 2023, at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia.

The GAFPB is a decoration of the Bundeswehr, the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Germany, and is awarded in gold, silver and bronze versions depending on the success level of the Soldier competing for the badge. To earn the GAFPB, the individual must pass pre-set minimums in events testing their physical fitness, marksmanship and military knowledge.

Ninety-one Soldiers competed for the badge, and 72 met the requirements to earn the GAFPB. Of the 72, 11 Soldiers earned the gold badge, 42 earned the silver and 19 received the bronze.

“The battalion performed extremely well,” said Maj. Stephen Holden, the battalion’s S3 operations officer and full-time officer-in-charge. “Overall, there was an 80% pass rate, which exceeded expectations. The Germans usually see a 60 to 70% pass rate when they facilitate GAFPB events. I’m proud of the Soldiers’ determination, grit and intestinal fortitude to do their very best.”

The event kicked off with a swimming challenge, during which Soldiers had to swim 100 meters in uniform, then doff their uniform top and bottom and throw them out of the pool, all while treading water. Soldiers also had to pass a physical fitness challenge, which included a flexed arm hang, sprints and a 1,000-meter run. Other events include a pistol marksmanship test, a medical test, a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear drill and a ruck march, all conducted under the tutelage of host members of the German military.

“I think it’s a very good event. It’s been competitive,” said Spc. Bryce Moore, one of the BEB’s engineers. “Swimming in the pool was different, with the uniform on, that was a first time. It’s good training on stuff we haven’t done before.”

In addition to the individual awards, Holden said the entire battalion will benefit from this unique event.

“The biggest benefit for the Soldiers competing in the GAFPB Event and events like it is it exposes Soldiers with our foreign NATO allies and to build professional relationships,” said Holden. “It’s very seldom you get to work with foreign soldiers stateside unless you’re mobilized overseas. This event provided the Soldiers an understanding of the significance of building relationships with our foreign partners and the significance of building and maintaining those relationships for future missions.”

In addition to the 229th engineers, a handful of other VNG Soldiers also participated in the GAFPB events, including the former commander of the 229th BEB, Lt. Col. Beau Mason. For Mason, competing for the badge is a career highlight.

“Ever since I was at VMI and commissioned as a second lieutenant, one of the things I wanted to do when I heard about this badge was compete for it,” said Mason, currently the Virginia Army National Guard’s G1 personnel officer. “Through deployments, operational tempo and schools, whenever the opportunity came



Soldiers assigned to the 229th Brigade Engineer Battalion conduct an M9 pistol marksmanship assessment as they compete for the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge Aug. 20, 2023, at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia.

up, I haven’t been able to compete for it. Throughout my career, it’s just been a goal I’ve had. Just getting out here with the guys and being able to compete means two things. One, never let go of your goals. Two, anyone can compete for this, it’s not restricted by rank or MOS.”

Overall, Both Mason and Holden said the event was great for battalion readiness and morale.

“Being out here, seeing these guys do it, seeing their level of motivation, is phenomenal,” said Mason. “This is what it’s all about: Taking care of Soldiers, training Soldiers and giving them the opportunity to succeed.”

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/26792>

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VNG REP manager provides info brief to VaANG recruiters

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