

Va. National Guard wraps up firefighting support

Approximately 30 Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen wrapped up ground support to firefighting efforts Nov. 17, 2023, in Madison County, Virginia, after assisting the Virginia Department of Forestry with mop up operations at the Quaker Run Fire. VNG aviation crews who previously supported the fire in Madison County ended their aerial fire suppression support Nov. 11 after assisting in Patrick County.

“What a fantastic opportunity it is for all of you to stand in a formation with people from Army and Air Guard units from across the state as well as the Virginia Defense Force and our partners in the Virginia Department of Military Affairs,” said Col. Paul C. Gravelly, the Virginia Army National Guard chief of staff.

“It was a great learning opportunity, but it also showed the capabilities of the Virginia National Guard and how we help our fellow Virginians when they need our assistance. I am proud of you, and our senior leaders are proud of you. You completed rigorous training, went out and did what you were asked to do and came back safely. I can’t say enough about what an awesome job you did.”

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/27733>



A Virginia National Guard Soldier assists the Virginia Department of Forestry with mop-up operations Nov. 16, 2023, at the Quaker Run Fire in Madison County, Virginia.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

116th Infantry Regiment holds 55th Annual Muster on Veterans Day

Veterans of the 116th Infantry Regiment and Soldiers of the Virginia National Guard’s Staunton-based 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team gathered to honor the unit’s history and enjoy an evening of camaraderie at the 55th annual 116th Infantry Regiment Muster Nov. 11, 2023, in Staunton, Virginia.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/27732>

Native name inspires strength, pride for 1-116th platoon leader

First Lt. Gavin Steel, whose grandmothers came from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the Coharie Indian Tribe, says one thing he wants people to know about Native Americans is that they’re all unique.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/27695>

Voices of the VaANG: Airman 1st Class Chelsea De Avila

This edition of the Voices of the VaANG is Airman 1st Class Chelsea De Avila, 192nd Comptroller Flight travel technician. She joined the VaANG after more than 12 years in the hospitality industry in the Washington area.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/27735>

Virginia Defense Force conducts multi-day unit training assembly

Virginia Defense Force personnel volunteered their time to conduct training focused on civil support security and communication capabilities during a multi-day unit training assembly Nov. 4, 2023, at Fort Barfoot, Virginia.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/27734>

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Exercise sharpens 203rd RHS's expeditionary skills

Virginia National Guard Airmen assigned to the Virginia Beach-based 203rd Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers, 192nd Mission Support Group, 192nd Wing, trained on their expeditionary skills during a field training exercise Nov. 2-5, 2023, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Over four days, the Airmen prepared for deployment, set up two separate sites, established a security perimeter and conducted security operations such as responding to demonstrations outside the gate, assaults on the base and other hostile situations.

“As we transition out of the Middle East and look to the next wars, the concept of how we support the Air Force’s mission is changing,” said Maj. Scott Harman, 203rd RED HORSE deputy commander. “We are training to build bases in a contested environment where every airman will be needed to do tasks outside of their assigned jobs. The training we do now will prepare the Airmen of the Virginia Air National Guard to successfully accomplish those future missions.”

The 203rd provides highly-mobile civil engineering teams to support contingency and special operations worldwide. They are self-sufficient with rapid response capabilities for independent operations in remote, high-threat environments and can create or repair runways and erect permanent structures in a matter of weeks from concept and design to engineering and construction.

“We’re conducting a field exercise to exercise our capabilities for military engineering capabilities to do force bed down as well as our site security and practice our CBRNE [Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and high yield Explosives] defense capabilities,” explained Senior Master Sgt. Philip McLawhorn, lead inspector for the exercise. “The site scenario is actually two different sites working in conjunction with our headquarters building to simulate what we call the ‘spoke and hub’ method of deployment, where we actually take the unit and separate it based off the engineering tasks that are assigned but still can maintain our self-sufficient capabilities.”

On Thursday they simulated the actual deployment process. Airmen were issued gear, received briefings they would get prior to deployment, and they built up cargo to simulate mobilizing the unit to go out the door.

On Friday they set up the two sites, including numerous tents and perimeter security. That evening they conducted security operations and dealt with hostile actors.

On Saturday they conducted CBRNE response operations as well as other defensive postures.

Finally, on Sunday, they redeployed.

The 203rd last conducted an in-place field exercise about four years ago, prior to its last deployment, estimated McLawhorn.

Since that last exercise, the Air Force has implemented Agile Combat Employment. ACE is an operational concept designed to support joint all-domain operations.

According to U.S. Air Force doctrine, ACE teams consist of unit-assigned Multi-Capable Airmen. These teams are tailored



Airmen assigned to the 203rd RED HORSE train on their expeditionary skills during a field training exercise Nov. 3, 2023, in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

portions of force packages able to provide mission generation, command and control, and base operating support as the mission dictates. The use of Multi-Capable Airmen can reduce the number of people who must be put in harm’s way to generate airpower relative to traditional manning models.

“The idea is to have Multi-Capable Airmen, which means Airmen can do multiple tasks to support any type of Air Force area wherever we go,” McLawhorn explained. “It reduces manpower and the ACE program says we have multiple AFSCs [Air Force Specialty Code] so we interchange them. Instead of working in shops who are only along their specialty, now they are working together in small teams, almost like an Army platoon, where everyone has their own AFSC but they are all subject matter experts working together to accomplish their goals.”

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/27736>

MORE ON THE WEB

Ceremony marks VDF awards, promotion

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AG visits VDF training at Fort Barfoot

Photos on Flickr at <https://ngpa.us/27693>

203rd RHS trains on expeditionary skills during FTX

Photos on Flickr at <https://ngpa.us/27521>

VNG deploys Soldiers, Airmen to assist with firefighting

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Troops recognized for firefighting support

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