

# VNG's search and extraction team proves capabilities

More than 200 Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen conducted multiple mass casualty response drills during a collective training exercise May 20 - 24, 2024, at Fort Barfoot, Virginia. The Soldiers and Airmen are assigned to the Richmond-based 34th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High-Yield Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package, which provided search and extraction, decontamination, medical support and fatality management during the mock CBRNE response exercises.

During the CTE, the CERFP's search and extraction team underwent a Mission Confirmation Assessment, and were assessed as "Trained" on the team's seven critical tasks associated with their mission, joining the rest of the CERFP's elements, according to Maj. Andrew J. Czaplicki, commander of the 34th CERFP.

"Our task force is validated every three years, but due to unexpected weather last year, our search and extraction element did not finish their portion of the evaluation."

Over the five-day exercise, service members worked through a variety of scenarios stressing their knowledge and skills in a simulated disaster environment.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30156>



Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airman conduct mass casualty training ahead of a collective training exercise May 21, 2024, at Fort Barfoot, Virginia.

**Virginia National Guard News Headlines**

**29th Infantry Division leads multinational wet gap crossing in Poland**  
 Polish, British and United States military forces came together for a wet gap crossing under the command and control of the Virginia National Guard's 29th Infantry Division May 8, 2024, at the Drawsko Combat Training Center in Poland as part of U.S. Army Europe and Africa's DEFENDER 24 exercise.  
 Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30158>

**Unit certification a key accomplishment during Cyber Shield**  
 As the Cyber Shield 24 exercise took place from May 31 to June 15, 2024, the Virginia National Guard's 91st Cyber Brigade conducted CERTEX 24 to validate multiple units for future Title 10 active-duty federal mobilizations.  
 Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30159>

**ChalleNGe undergoes a number of changes, gears up for Class 61**  
 Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy has made cultural, physical and organizational changes, and now the staff is preparing for Class 61 to hit the ground July 16, 2024, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach.  
 Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30163>

**BAAF improvements benefit military, civilian operations**  
 The Blackstone Army Airfield has undergone significant enhancements over the past four years. Managed by Walter Tisdale, the airfield now hosts new facilities and improved infrastructure to support military and civilian operations.  
 Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30173>

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# VNG aviation battalion hosts ESGR Boss Lift

More than 50 civilian employers joined their employees for an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Boss Lift, hosted by the Virginia National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment June 15, 2024, at their Army Aviation Support Facility near Richmond International Airport in Sandston, Virginia.

The event aimed to thank employers for their support while providing them a first-hand look at what their employees experience when in a military duty status. The experience included orientation flights on board the battalion's UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, as well as static displays that included weapon systems and various pieces of commonly used equipment.

Before the helicopter blades started turning, Lt. Col. Ryan Strait, 2-224th battalion commander, addressed the employers and provided insight into the world of Army aviation and what it takes to succeed as a National Guard Soldier.

"These Soldiers are maintaining the same level of proficiency as their active duty counterparts on a budget that is way, way smaller," explained Strait. "You should be very proud of what they've done."

Col. Paul Gravely, the Virginia Army National Guard's chief of staff, also addressed the crowd and provided an overview of the capabilities of the organization, explaining that the Virginia National Guard includes around 7,300 personnel serving in units spread across the state.

"The Virginia Army National Guard's leadership is very grateful for your patriotism as employers who support this unit and the multiple other units throughout our formation," Gravely said. "More than 90 percent of this battalion is employed in the civilian sector, so we recognize that none of what we do would be possible without your patriotic service."

Following remarks from Strait and Gravely, and a quick



Civilian employers board a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Boss Lift hosted by 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment June 15, 2024, in Sandston, Virginia.

safety brief and explainer on the aircraft's four-point seatbelt, the employers were broken into small groups and escorted to the flight line where they boarded a UH-60 Black Hawk that took them on an approximately 20-minute orientation flight around the Richmond area, showcasing the city skyline and the James River.

The was held in conjunction with ESGR, which is a U.S. Department of Defense program that promotes cooperation and understanding between reservists and their civilian employers. ESGR advocates for the rights of military members in the workforce, while also providing resources and support to their employers.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30157>



Civilian employers receive an equipment orientation during an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Boss Lift hosted by 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment June 15, 2024, in Sandston, Virginia.

## MORE ON THE WEB

### Fort Barfoot leaders join Fort Gregg-Adams cleanup

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30174>

### 116th IBCT Annual Training 2024 Photo Collection

Photos on Flickr at <https://ngpa.us/30152>

### 229th BEB, 429th BSB tackle squad competition

Video on YouTube at <https://ngpa.us/30123>

### 229th BEB, 429th BSB Soldiers helocast at Warrior Stakes

Video on YouTube at <https://ngpa.us/30122>

### 1-111th Soldiers fire M777s during annual training

Video on YouTube at <https://ngpa.us/30155>



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