

VNG stages for possible severe weather response

The Virginia National Guard staged Soldiers with tactical trucks capable of high water transportation Aug. 8, 2024, at VNG facilities in Lynchburg, Danville and Petersburg in order to support the response to impacts of Tropical Storm Debby.

The personnel were ready to conduct missions Thursday morning and would link up with local emergency managers to provide assistance if needed. VNG troops will also have chain saw teams to conduct debris reduction operations, and helicopter rescue hoist capabilities were also on standby. With no requests from localities for assistance, VNG troops transitioned to routine operations late in the day Aug. 9 and all personnel were released Aug. 10.

“With just over 24 hours notice, our Virginia National Guard Soldiers answered the call to be ready to help their fellow Virginians,” said Brig. Gen. Todd Hubbard, VNG director of the joint staff. “It is really impressive how quickly and safely they responded, and we owe a special thanks to their families and employers for their critical support. I am incredibly proud of the great team effort that went into getting everyone in place and ready to go before the weather impacts begin.”

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30527>



Virginia National Guard Soldiers prepare for possible severe weather response operations related to Tropical Storm Debby Aug. 8, 2024, in Danville, Virginia.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Fallen VNG Soldier receives new recognition 86 years later
 On the 86th anniversary of his passing, a former Virginia National Guard Soldier's grave received a plaque commemorating his service and sacrifice thanks to the efforts of the Virginia National Guard's Enlisted Association and Historical Foundation during a ceremony Aug. 3, 2024, in Richmond, Virginia.
 Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30528>

192nd Wing, Chesterfield County PD conduct joint training
 The Virginia Air National Guard's 192nd Wing and the Chesterfield County Police Department's Special Response Unit partnered to conduct Rapid Response Force training Aug. 1, 2024, at Joint Base Langley-Eustis in Hampton, Virginia.
 Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30529>

Voices of the VaANG: Master Sgt. John David Eaves
 On March 10, 1984, 18-year-old John David Eaves took the oath of enlistment and joined the Virginia Air National Guard. Fast forward 40 years, four months and five days, and the now Master Sgt. Eaves' military career comes to an end.
 Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30530>

Virginia Defense Force supports TS Debby response
 Members of the Virginia Defense Force provided logistics distribution, administrative, operations center augmentation and communications support for possible severe weather response operations Aug. 7-10, 2024.
 Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30531>

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Cyber Fortress 3.0 builds resiliency, enhances partnerships

The Virginia National Guard brought together multi-national and inter-agency partners to execute Cyber Fortress 3.0, a water management cyber incident response, to exercise the Commonwealth of Virginia's cyber incident response process July 7-20, 2024, at the State Military Reservation, Virginia Beach.

"Every organization and individual in the state is a target," said Col. Gerald A. Mazur, exercise director and commander of the Information Operations Support Center. "We do what we can to prevent cyber attacks, but ultimately it is not a matter of 'if' we get attacked, it is 'when.' We need to be able to detect and respond swiftly to cyber attacks to restore critical services to the citizens of the commonwealth."

Mazur said that responding to cyber attacks is about training, building partnerships and exercising the response process.

"That is why the National Guard is well suited to support the commonwealth in a time of cyber crisis, and Cyber Fortress is just one way we prepare for that," he said.

The Cyber Fortress 3.0 exercise aimed to foster private-public collaboration and assess the cybersecurity readiness of energy and transportation stakeholders, explained Maj. Andres Slonopas, the exercise planner with the IOSC. The event brought together a diverse group, including water utilities as the critical infrastructure partner. The goal of the exercise was to enable stakeholders to understand how multiple levels of industry and government respond and work together to mitigate a cyber-attack against commercial critical infrastructure, he said.

During the exercise, military and civilian cyber operators were partnered with a county water authority representative in enclaves to simulate the process they would follow to respond to and mitigate a cyber attack.

"The exercise provided valuable insights into the current state of cybersecurity readiness and helped stakeholders develop more effective disaster recovery procedures," Slonopas said. "By bringing together cyber operators from the 91st Cyber Brigade, the Virginia Air National Guard, more than 12 different federal Partners, multiple state organizations, two NATO partners and multiple utilities, the exercise provided a more comprehensive view of the cybersecurity landscape and the potential impact of a cyber-attack on critical infrastructure. Overall, the Cyber Fortress exercise was a valuable opportunity for stakeholders to collaborate, learn, and improve their cybersecurity posture."

Mazur said Cyber Fortress 3.0 exercised the Commonwealth's Cyber Incident Response process with all the state, federal, local, and private partners and also trained about 135 personnel including VNG and private partners on protecting and defending ICS/SCADA networks. The exercise was based on actual historical malicious cyber incidents on United States-based water systems.

"Cyber Fortress exposed uniformed personnel to evolving technology influencing the way the Army will fight in the future, including artificial intelligence and solar," Mazur said. "The exercise also engage senior leaders and legislators in order to gain buy in and support for future Cyber Fortress exercises."



A member of the Finnish Defense Forces collaborates with a Virginia National Guard cyber operator July 15, 2024, during Cyber Fortress 3.0 in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

International partners taking part in the exercise include Estonia and Finland, and Finnish Defence Forces were able to take part in the exercise remotely from Finland. The Virginia National Guard and Finland are partners in the National Guard's State Partnership Program, and Mazur said the exercise continued to solidify that partnership from a cyber context.

VNG units taking part in the exercise included the 91st Cyber Brigade along with the 123rd and 124th Cyber Protection Battalions, each with a cyber warfare and cyber security company, the Defensive Cyberspace Operations Element from Joint Force Headquarters - Virginia.

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30535>

MORE ON THE WEB

149th Fighter Squadron welcomes new commander

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30532>

192nd Wing couples strengthen relationships

Read more at <https://ngpa.us/30533>

Mason succeeds Kobernik as 183rd RTI commander

Photos on Flickr at <https://ngpa.us/30534>

DJS visits troops staged in Lynchburg

Photos on Flickr at <https://ngpa.us/30536>

Virginia Guard youth enjoy 19th annual Youth Camp

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