

# VNG Airmen assist with NC hurricane response

Virginia National Guard Airmen assigned to the 203rd Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron, began assisting with hurricane response Oct. 18, 2024, in Burnsville, North Carolina. Approximately 20 RED HORSE Airmen organized as an engineer company with heavy equipment assisted with route clearance, road construction and debris removal as well as assisted with staffing at commodity point of distribution.

As of Oct. 23, the Airmen applied nearly 1,300 tons of road base on one project, completed 100 percent of work on a culvert project and 90 percent on a second culvert. Another team cleared more than 570 yards of road, removed 130 loads of debris and removed four cars and two buses from a creek. A third team helped organized 380 pallets of supplies serving nearly 4,750 people.

“Airmen with the 203rd RED HORSE have significant engineering experience from multiple overseas federal active deployments and an aggressive training plan here in Virginia, and now they get to put that experience to work to help with the hurricane response in North Carolina,” said Brig. Gen. Todd Hubbard, VNG Director of the Joint Staff.

Read more at <https://vngpao.info/2dtcyhu2>



Virginia National Guard Airmen assigned to the 203rd Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron assist with hurricane response operations Oct. 18-19, 2024, in Burnsville, North Carolina.

## Virginia National Guard News Headlines

### Crenshaw, Ring visit 529th CSSB Soldiers in Poland

Retired U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Craig Crenshaw, Virginia Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, and Maj. Gen. James W. Ring, the Adjutant General of Virginia, visited Oct. 7, 2024, with VNG Soldiers assigned to the 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion on federal active duty in Poland.

Read more at <https://vngpao.info/4c58wypr>

### VNG expands relationship with Finnish Army commander

Virginia National Guard leadership hosted Lt. Gen. Pasi Välimäki, commander of the Finnish Army, during a bilateral engagement Oct 12, 2024, at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Read more at <https://vngpao.info/mr2xmnvk>

### VNG leaders observe defense exercise in Finland

Virginia National Guard senior leaders and Soldiers traveled to Finland to observe Exercise Karelian Stronghold alongside key senior leaders within the Finnish Defense Forces Sept. 1 - 7, 2024, at multiple locations in Finland.

Read more at <https://vngpao.info/2s4fz3wr>

### VNG stands up new Directorate of Resiliency

In an effort to improve resiliency and readiness among its troops, the Virginia National Guard recently created the J9 Directorate of Resiliency, bringing together Soldier-care efforts under one umbrella.

Read more at <https://vngpao.info/2druhjf3>

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# VNG ceremony launches new STEM program in Blackstone

The Virginia National Guard hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for the Blackstone STARBASE Academy Oct. 20, 2024, in Blackstone, Virginia. STARBASE is a Department of Defense program with the mission to expose youth to technological environments and positive civilian and military role models by providing 25 hours of hands-on instruction and activities in science, technology, engineering and math that meet or exceed the national standards.

During the ceremony, Maj. Gen. James W. Ring, the Adjutant General of Virginia, and Nikole Johnson, the Blackstone STARBASE Academy Director, explained the impact the program is expected to have for students in the community. Retired Col. Everton Nevers, the Virginia Department of Military Affairs Chief of Staff, joined them for the groundbreaking.

“We are very excited to break ground on the new STARBASE Academy here in Blackstone, and it demonstrates the continued commitment of the Virginia National Guard and Department of Defense in the Southside Community,” Ring said. “I would like to thank retired Col. Nevers and the entire Department of Military Affairs team for their hard work and dedication in bringing this fantastic educational opportunity to the area. I also want to acknowledge the outstanding work of Dr. Susan Corrigan and the Winchester STARBASE Academy staff for the positive impact they have made on students for the last 12 years. I have every confidence we will see similar positive impacts for students in the communities here.”

The Blackstone location will partner with public and private schools in the region to serve students in Blackstone, Nottoway, Lunenburg, Brunswick, Amelia, Dinwiddie and Prince Edward. Instruction is scheduled to begin in early 2025.

“This is such an exciting time for Blackstone and the surrounding community to be establishing a STARBASE program right here in Southside Virginia,” Johnson said. “STARBASE is a premier Department of Defense program that is designed to engage and inspire our students to pursue a future in STEM,” Johnson said. “Its goal is to raise interest and increase student knowledge in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and to see how it relates to the real world, including possible career opportunities for our youth.”

She said that since coming on board as the director, she has been able to visit two STARBASE locations.

“I cannot wait to bring that same hands-on, problem-based learning to Southside Virginia,” she said. “The excitement and curiosity that the students displayed was amazing. You can really see that light, that spark, that point in time when students actually see the purpose for their own education.”

Johnson said the team is very excited to bring these learning experiences to this community and to light a spark and desire to learn for our students.

“After spending 20 years working in the local public school system, our students need to be able to see how their learning connects to the real world, the world beyond the walls of their



**Maj. Gen. James W. Ring, retired Col. Everton Nevers and Nikole Johnson ceremonially break ground on the Blackstone STARBASE Academy Oct. 20, 2024, in Blackstone, Virginia.**

classroom and say wow, I can do that or that’s what I want to do when I grow up,” Johnson said. “Our target group is 5th grade, the best time to inspire students as they make the transition from elementary school to middle and high school. We are enabling our students to see the world beyond Southside Virginia. It is one thing for a teacher to tell our students to have dreams and aspirations, but eye opening when we can show them what that could look like.”

Johnson also thanked the DOD and the VNG for the investment in the students in the community and their future.

Read more at <https://vngpao.info/bdfuhhv2>

## MORE ON THE WEB

### 229th BEB Soldier wraps up an eventful summer

Read more at <https://vngpao.info/2p9am688>

### Commonwealth Challenge Class 61 hosts Family Day

Photos on Flickr at <https://vngpao.info/ezua5ne>

### 34th CST showcases capabilities during course

Photos on Flickr at <https://vngpao.info/mr2azute>

### Dekeyser sworn in as VNG Deputy IG

Photos on Flickr at <https://vngpao.info/4yksp3xj>

### Winchester STARBASE Academy

Read more at <https://www.starbasewinchester.com>



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