

VNG supports 60th Presidential Inauguration

Approximately 250 Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team were part of the approximately 8,000 National Guard service members that came together to comprise Joint Task Force-District of Columbia in support of the 60th Presidential Inauguration Jan.18-21, 2025.

National Guard members from approximately 40 states, territories and the District of Columbia supported the 60th Presidential Inauguration at the request of the Secret Service, U.S. Capitol and Metropolitan Police.

“We had Soldiers from all over the Commonwealth of Virginia come together representing multiple different battalions,” said Lt. Col. Kevin Hoffman, commander of the Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Soldiers were sworn in as Special Deputies for the U.S. Marshals Service. By pledging to support and defend the U.S. Constitution, they assumed a vital role in ensuring the safety and security surrounding the 60th Presidential Inauguration.

Read more at <https://vngpao.info/3ct8878c>



Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to Joint Task Force–District of Columbia assist with traffic control in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 19, 2025, in support of the 60th Presidential Inauguration.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

VNG tests response capabilities at Blackstone Army Airfield

As a chill wind whipped across the Blackstone Army Airfield Dec. 12, 2024, the Flight Operations Center buzzed with anticipation. Radios and phones crackled to life as an expected call came through, from a Virginia National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.

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

Enlistment marks return of 29th DIVARTY

After nearly two decades, the Virginia Army National Guard celebrated the return of the 29th Division Artillery with the enlistment of Pvt. Tariq Rahaman in a ceremony held Jan. 14, 2025, at Defense Supply Center Richmond, Virginia.

Read more at <https://vngpao.info/2p98t74j>

Hawley named new VaARNG senior enlisted leader

Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Hawley will succeed Command Sgt. Maj. Irving Reed Jr. as the Virginia Army National Guard State Command Sergeant Major effective Feb. 1, 2025.

Read more at <https://vngpao.info/3h6trbvc>

Red Dragons conduct infantry exchange in Finland

Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team conducted an infantry exchange with Finnish Defense Forces Nov. 16 - 24, 2024, in Finland.

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

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Join the Virginia National Guard Alumni Network

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Governor recognizes VNG for rescues, deployments

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin recognized Virginia National Guard assets, including aviators assigned to the Virginia Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team and Soldiers assigned to the Virginia Beach-based 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group, during his State of the Commonwealth address Jan. 13, 2025, in Richmond, Virginia.

The HART team, including rescue specialists with Chesterfield Fire Department, received recognition for their efforts participating in rescue missions in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene's effects on Southwest Virginia, the first real-world rescues the team has performed.

The governor also recognized the 529th and their commander, Lt. Col. Carlos Maldonado, for their recent deployment to Poland.

"In a world where freedom is not free, we must say thank you," said Youngkin. "Our military heroes make us all so much better. Just returning from deployment in Poland as a member of the Virginia National Guard is one of those heroes, Lt. Col. Carlos Maldonado. And therefore, on behalf of 8.8 million Virginians and a grateful nation, thank you."

Maldonado led approximately 40 Soldiers during the 529th's mission in Poland. The 529th took responsibility for logistics, maintenance, and supply missions based at Forward Operating Site Karliki, Poland, in March 2024, and acted as the headquarters element for Task Force Cavalier. They oversaw operations and training for more than 550 Soldiers from four different subordinate units from active-duty Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard. The unit returned from their deployment in late 2024.

The governor also heaped praise on HART while discussing the rescue missions conducted in Southwest Virginia in September, when rains from Hurricane Helene devastated several communities, including Damascus, Virginia. There, the VNG aviators and rescue specialists from CFD rescued a man who had been swept away from his flooded home, while his wife remained trapped inside.

The aviation team of pilot Chief Warrant Officer 2 Charlie Jackson and crew chiefs Sgt. Ashley Lockmiller and Staff Sgt. Schuyler Burton were on hand for the governor's address, along with their Chesterfield partners, including HART rescue specialist James Bourdon, as well as the couple they rescued, Carl and Linda McMurray.

"I was struck by the story of an amazing couple I met, a couple married for 57 years, Carl and Linda McMurray." Said Youngkin. "They lived in Linda's childhood home in Taylor's Valley, just off the Creeper Trail in Washington County, when the floodwaters split their house in two. Carl was swept away, while Linda was left in what remained of a second-floor bedroom. Carl used his belt to fasten himself to a bush in the middle of the rushing water for hours, until the rescue team in a Black Hawk helicopter spotted and saved him. Neither knew if the other had survived, but when Linda finally walked into Carl's hospital room, their prayers were answered."

For the members of HART, the McMurrays' rescue and other rescues performed during emergency response missions were the culmination of years of intense, realistic training to prepare for these



Members of the Virginia Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team meet with McMurry Family before Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin's State of the Commonwealth address Jan. 13, 2025, in Richmond, Virginia.

exact types of missions.

HART members present at the Capitol were able to reunite with the McMurrays.

"It was great to go down and help people out," said Jackson. "That's what we train on. We don't want it to happen, but when it does happen, we want to be able to go out there and help the people of Virginia."

"It was pretty dire. Where he was at in the river, he was probably not going to survive if he had gone any farther," Bourdon said. "So that was just miraculous in itself."

Read more at <https://vngpao.info/2c744r6p>

MORE ON THE WEB

The Virginia Veterans Network

Read more at <https://vngpao.info/y67bwj7r>

29th ID Soldiers conduct UAS exchange in Tajikistan

Read more at <https://vngpao.info/2p8htdde>

VNG Soldiers recognized for supporting PI60

Photos on Flickr at <https://vngpao.info/2hf678bv>

Virginia AG visits personnel supporting PI60

Photos on Flickr at <https://vngpao.info/yckubu9a>

VNG Soldiers direct citizens, manage traffic at PI60

Photos on Flickr at <https://vngpao.info/2s3ztukr>



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