

FASTC officially opens doors at Fort Pickett

Officials from the U.S. Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service and the General Services Administration formally opened the Foreign Affairs Security Training Center during a ribbon-cutting ceremony Nov. 14, 2019, at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

Senior leaders from state government, the Virginia National Guard and Maneuver Training Center Fort Pickett attended the event, including Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Carlos Hopkins and Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia. VNG Soldiers from the Troutville-based 29th Infantry Division Band provided ceremonial music for the ribbon-cutting.

FASTC is now the nation's largest training facility dedicated to overseas safety and security, and will train about 10,000 personnel from the U.S. foreign affairs community annually, including DSS special agents, security engineers, technicians and couriers, according to a release from the U.S. Department of State.

The facility consolidates training previously completed at 11 different facilities across the country into one 1,350-acre training complex that will provide critical, important and realistic training to Diplomatic Security personnel.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/11/22/14368/>



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Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Va. Army Guard recruiters recognized as top in region

Virginia National Guard recruiters took the top spots for both regional recruiter of the year and regional recruiting supervisor of the year following a board held Nov. 7, 2019, in West Virginia. Master Sgt. Donnie Brizendine and Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Fretwell competed against their peers from neighboring states.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/11/22/14381/>

116th Infantry Regiment holds 52nd Annual Muster

Veterans of the 116th Infantry Regiment and Soldiers of the Virginia National Guard's Staunton-based 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team gathered for the 52nd annual muster Nov. 9, 2019, in Staunton, Virginia.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/11/14/14346/>

Exchange program benefits VNG Soldiers, partnerships

Several Virginia National Guard Soldiers were able to participate in the Military Reserve Exchange Program in 2019, traveling abroad and attaching to foreign armies in a unique opportunity for military professional development.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/11/22/14354/>

Virginia National Guard to host Military Ball in February 2020

The Virginia National Guard 2020 Military Ball is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 29, 2020, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Richmond, Virginia. A reception begins at 6 p.m. with the Military Ball formal dinner at 7 p.m.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/11/21/14352/>

Join the Virginia Army National Guard, Virginia Air National Guard or the Virginia Defense Force

For information about joining the Virginia Army National Guard, the Virginia Air National Guard or Virginia Defense Force, visit the appropriate link below:

Va. Army National Guard

<http://nationalguard.com/va>

Va. Air National Guard

<https://www.192fw.ang.af.mil/join>

Va. Defense Force

<http://vdf.virginia.gov/joinvdf/>

Join the Virginia Army National Guard Alumni Network

<https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/vngan/>

203rd RED HORSE Squadron conducts FTX

Virginia National Guard Airmen assigned to the 203rd Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers Squadron held a four-day field training exercise Nov. 14-17, 2019, at State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Airmen across more than 20 specialties in the RED HORSE Squadron trained for tasks they would be responsible for during deployments.

“The main goal is just for each [job specialty] to experience what they will do in a deployed environment,” said Lt. Col. Jeffrey E. Getz, 203rd RED HORSE Squadron commander. “When we are tasked for a real world deployment, they have experience that helps us get ready [and] hit the ground running and not have to do training once we’re on site, so we’re prepared for our wartime mission.”

More than 150 Airmen participated in the exercise which simulated a deployed environment with a command center and three additional locations acted as off-site operating bases.

“You give these guys a book of matches and they’ll build you a house,” said Command Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Amburn, 192nd Wing command chief. He isn’t the first to echo this sentiment but the truth is more incredible. Give these Airmen some land and water, and they will enable air power.

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

“The way that we remain the greatest Air Force in the world is through our training,” said Col. Mark D. Piper, 192nd Wing commander. “Doing real world training like this and watching our Airmen perform at the top of their game is really what makes us the greatest warfighters that America has to offer.”

Piper got to experience the expeditionary power of RED HORSE first hand.

“In December of 2001, I showed up at Al Udeid which was not really a base at that point,” said Piper. “I think the only people who were there before us were RED HORSE.”

A collaboration of active duty and Air National Guard units deployed in October 2001 to upgrade the base infrastructure including concrete taxiways, a ramp for aircraft and other structures. Now Al Udeid has a reputation for being a mega base replete with fast food restaurants, a swimming pool and, at times, host to over 10,000 United States military personnel.

Bringing together reserve components and active duty units to create an expeditionary squadron is a common practice for RED HORSE deployments. Another common practice is to cross train in other shops to increase the knowledgebase of the unit. Some units only award the iconic red cap, unique to RED HORSE squadron uniforms, after new members have done some sort of training in every shop.



Virginia National Guard Airmen assigned to the 203rd Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron set up a mobile aircraft arresting cable Nov. 16, 2019, during a four-day field training exercise at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

“For example, bringing in contract services folks to the dining facility so that the folks that are normally doing that can actually go out and do some other things as well,” said Piper. “It’s a better exercise, better training, which ultimately gets us more ready to do the mission downrange.”

Readiness is a critical component to military strategy, which is especially true for rapid deployable units like the 203rd RHS. The Airmen have to be ready at a moment’s notice for deployments and are expected to have the necessary knowledge and skills needed to execute the mission.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/11/21/14342/>

MORE ON THE WEB

Photos: VNG Soldiers get creative with ACFT training

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/albums/72157711891546348>

Photos: TRADOC leaders get first-hand look at 183rd RTI

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/albums/72157711875689226>

Photos: 34th CST conducts training proficiency evaluation

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/albums/72157711862183841>

Photos: VNG Soldiers support William & Mary football game

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/albums/72157711861283767>

Photos: Guyer takes command of Officer Candidate School

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/albums/72157711838730871>

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