

Top VNG units recognized at Va. Military Ball

Virginia National Guard senior leaders recognized the top company-level units in the Virginia Army National Guard and the 192nd Wing of the Virginia Air National Guard for high levels of readiness at the third annual Virginia Military Ball April 27, 2019, in Newport News, Virginia.

The Gate City-based 1032nd Transportation Company, 1030th Transportation Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group received the Eisenhower Trophy as the top company-level unit in the Virginia Army National Guard, and the Troutville-based 29th Infantry Division Band received the Adjutant General's Cup. The Woodstock-based Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team received the state-level National Guard Pershing Trophy and Certificate of Victory for marksmanship.

The 192nd Wing was recognized for having received the Air Force Meritorious Unit Award. This was the first time the wing as a whole received this award, which was first authorized by the Secretary of the Air Force in March 2004. The 192nd Intelligence Squadron received the award in 2015.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/04/29/13043/>



Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams and Sgt. Maj. Mical L. Seaton present the Eisenhower Trophy recognizing the Gate City-based 1032nd Transportation Company April 27, 2019, in Newport News, Virginia.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Virginia National Guard Soldiers join multi-state Cyber Shield exercise

VNG cyber warriors joined more than 800 National Guard personnel from 40 states and territories for Cyber Shield 2019 to test their skills in response to cyber incidents along with civilians from state government agencies, federal agencies, industry partners and academia April 5-20, 2019, at Camp Atterbury, Indiana.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/04/18/13022/>

116th IBCT rangers test their limits at Best Ranger Competition

Fifty-three two-man teams started the Best Ranger Competition early on the morning of April 12, 2019, at Fort Benning, Georgia, with four of the six National Guard Soldiers assigned to Virginia's 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/05/01/13024/>

Virginia Defense Force celebrates 35th anniversary

The Virginia Defense Force celebrated its 35th anniversary with a cake-cutting ceremony April 18, 2019, at the Virginia National Guard Sergeant Bob Slaughter Headquarters at Defense Supply Center Richmond, Virginia.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/04/20/13034/>

Virginia National Guard hosts Diversity and Unity Day

The Virginia National Guard Equal Employment Opportunity hosted a Diversity and Unity Day April 24, 2019, at the Virginia National Guard Sergeant Bob Slaughter Headquarters at Defense Supply Center Richmond, Virginia.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/05/02/13057/>

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/>

Thunder Soldiers conduct historic waterborne artillery exercise

Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Norfolk-based 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team conducted a historic waterborne artillery live-fire exercise during Operation Gator April 24-25, 2019, at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The exercise marked the first riverine artillery fire mission for the Army since the Vietnam era.

The 1-111th partnered with active duty Soldiers from the Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story-based 11th Transportation Battalion, 7th Transportation Brigade for the exercise. The teams met at the Mile Hammock Bay boat docks, with the 1-111th loading one M119A3 howitzer and two Humvees onto the 11th's mechanized landing crafts before making the 90-minute boat ride up the Intracoastal Waterway to the designated fire point. That journey wasn't as simple as just moving equipment and troops.

"With today's weapons, the gun will actually track its location and know its direction at all times," said Lt. Col. Shawn Talmadge, commander of the 1-111th, also known as the Thunder Battalion. "The gun had no issues initializing, finding its location, understanding where true north is. We went underway along the Intracoastal Waterway and the gun continued to track its GPS location and direction, which is a huge win."

Once at the firing point, the LCM, or "Mike Boat," carrying the howitzer was anchored against a mud flat to provide stability to the craft, while the support vessels staged a safe distance away. After a day of rehearsals, planning and adjustments, the 1-111th began their live fire missions the morning of April 25.

The unique setting provided some unusual challenges for the gun crew on board the LCM.

"Every time we shoot, we get a certain amount of recoil, called displacement. Being on the boat, we had to situate sandbags behind the tires as well as the spade," said Staff Sgt. Ryan Turner. "It's definitely a challenge. What we've rigged up seems to work."

Turner said any turbulence in the water can also impact their fire missions.

"We've blocked off each side of the channel so we don't have any kind of traffic making wakes, which has helped out a lot," said Turner. "It's pretty calm today, and that helps as well."

Those first shots made history as the first U.S. Army artillery fire missions from a landing craft since the Vietnam War. The 1-111th hopes it's a capability that catches on.

"In Vietnam, this was a doctrine that was not only developed, but actually utilized and employed," said Talmadge. "Today is a proof of concept to say hey, we can still do this. We'll provide information to the Fires Center of Excellence down at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and the Picatinny Arsenal in New Jersey to start taking a look at this to determine if we need to develop new doctrine using today's weapons."

"Reaching back to veteran doctrine and utilizing it in today's military environment, to be on the forefront of operational change, and to potentially affect how the Army fights is extraordinary,"



Soldiers assigned to the Norfolk-based 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, conduct waterborne artillery live fire exercises April 25, 2019, at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

added Lt. Col. Damien Boffardi, 11th Transportation Battalion commander.

The historical significance doesn't end with Vietnam. For the 1-111th, it's a first that dates back to World War II.

"I tell this story all the time. In a couple months, it will be 75 years since D-Day," said Talmadge. "What's really unique – the gun that is on the LCM is from the 1-111th Field Artillery Regiment. Technically, the last time this battalion had guns on a landing craft was D-Day."

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2019/04/30/13010/>

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