



**The Virginia
Defense Force**

Bugler



DECEMBER 2015

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL:



This year we have made significant strides in demonstrating our operational capabilities as a force provider. Building on the inaugural State Defense Force Communications Exercise (COMMEX) and our participation in the American Radio Relay League Field Day in June, we continued to build momentum with our training MUTA in September. From this, we planned and executed FORWARD GUARDIAN last month, a full-fledged exercise with participants from federal, state and local governments. With an underlying scenario depicting a hurricane impacting the Commonwealth, VDF units demonstrated the full gamut of operational range as a force provider to the Department of Military Affairs.

The level of operational reach that we had achieved was very evident to the Adjutant General (TAG) in his visit with the 4th REGT at Lynchburg. He saw first-hand the unique command, control and communication capabilities that we could bring in responding to any contingency. With his continued appreciation of our organic capabilities, he has earmarked select events over the next several months in which to showcase the VDF to state legislatures, other state agencies, the National Guard Bureau and USNORTHCOM. We will continue to build smartly on our achievements as we display our increasing capabilities as we plan for a challenging 2016 exercise and training schedule, which will include forging new operational partnerships.

Justin Carlitti

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VDEM Training Schedule Current as of: 18 Nov 2015

Registration for classes is through the following website:

<https://covkc.virginia.gov/vdem/external>

ICS 300 (B) Intermediate ICS

Dates	Location	Deadline Date
Nov 18-20, 2015	Roanoke	Nov 17, 2017
Nov 18-20, 2015	Fairfax	Nov 17, 2015
Jan 11-13, 2016	Chesapeake	Jan 10, 2016
Feb 24-25, 2016	Chesapeake	Feb 23, 2016
Mar 8-9, 2016	Fairfax	Mar 1, 2016
Mar 30-Apr 1, 2016	Fairfax	Mar 7, 2016
Jun 22-23, 2016	Chesapeake	Jun 2, 2016
Jul 6-7, 2016	Fairfax	Jul 5, 2016
Oct 26-27, 2016	Chesapeake	Oct 25, 2016

ICS 400 (B) Advanced ICS

Dates	Location	Deadline Date
Dec 7-8, 2015	Fredericksburg	Dec 6, 2015
Dec 9-10, 2015	Roanoke	Dec 8, 2015
Dec 15-16, 2015	Chesapeake	Dec 14, 2015
Jan 20-21, 2016	Gloucester	Jan 19, 2016
Feb 27-28, 2016	Richmond	Feb 26, 2016
Mar 2-3, 2016	Fairfax	Mar 1, 2016
Apr 27-28, 2016	Chesapeake	Apr 26, 2016
Jun 8-9, 2016	Fairfax	Jun 7, 2016
Aug 24-25, 2016	Chesapeake	Aug 23, 2016
Dec 7-8, 2016	Chesapeake	Dec 6, 2016





VDEM SCHEDULE con't

VDEM Emergency Management Classes:

PER304: Social Media for Natural Disaster Response & Recovery**

Jan 25, 2016 at Norfolk. Deadline Jan 11, 2016

Jan 28, 2016 at Roanoke. Deadline Jan 14, 2016

** -- Prerequisite course to attend "Intermediate Social Media Tools & Techniques."

Intermediate Social Media Tools & Techniques

Jan 26, 2016 at Norfolk. Deadline Jan 11, 2016

Jan 29, 2016 at Roanoke. Deadline Jan 14, 2016

V450: ICS Train the Trainer. Dec 14-15, 2015 at Fairfax. Deadline Dec 7, 2015

G386: Mass Fatalities Incident Response. Dec 16-17, 2015 at Fairfax.

Deadline Dec 7, 2015

G358: Evacuation & Re-Entry Planning. Dec 17-18, 2015 at Fairfax.

Deadline Dec 7, 2015

G557: Rapid Needs Assessment. Dec 18, 2015 at Fairfax. Deadline Dec 7, 2015

G556: Local Damage Assessment. Jan 12-13, 2016 at Lexington.

Deadline Jan 5, 2016

L146: HSEEP Training Course

Feb 10-11, 2016 at Fairfax. Deadline Feb 3, 2016

Apr 6-7, 2016 at Fairfax. Deadline Mar 30, 2016





OPERATION FORWARD GUARDIAN 2015:



Members of the Virginia Defense Force's Lynchburg-based 4th Regiment take part in Forward Guardian 2015, a multi-state, multi-agency communication exercise Nov. 7, 2015, in Lynchburg, Va. (Photo by Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office)

SANDSTON, Va. — More than 150 members of the Virginia Defense Force deployed to locations across the state Nov. 6-7, 2015, to conduct Forward Guardian 2016, a multi-state, multi-agency communication exercise. VDF personnel installed and operated both mobile and fixed short and long range radio communication systems to link simulated mission command nodes with the Virginia National Guard's Joint Operations Center and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management as well as federal and local exercise participants. The exercise incorporated state defense force units in Ohio, Illinois, South Carolina, Tennessee and California and established radio contact across four time zones.

“Forward Guardian 2016 represented a huge step forward for the VDF in terms of exercise complexity combined with a first ever intrastate state defense force communications exercise,” said Lt. Col. (Va.) Stewart W. Bentley, Jr., operations officer for the VDF. “This exercise continues to grow each year and pushes our capabilities to simulate our response to support the Virginia Army National Guard and agencies of the commonwealth during a real-world disaster.”

Bentley said the VDF accomplished a number of key training objectives including operating on the Department of Homeland Security's Shared Resources High Frequency contingency communications network with FEMA Region III, conducting ground-to-ground radio tests with the Civil Air



Operation Forward Guardian 2015 con't

Patrol, activating the Virginia Department of Emergency Management's Old Dominion Emergency Network and utilizing the Statewide Agencies Radio System to provide redundant connectivity for mission command nodes. They also participated with Fairfax County's Emergency Operations Center HF radio base and deployed a mobile communications platform along Skyline Drive to Pinnacle Labs in Rappahannock County, an elevation of 3,300 feet.

"We know that our ability to use high frequency radio will ensure that, if all other means fail, we can maintain communications over extended distances, as we demonstrated by making contact with California during the exercise," he said.

Providing interoperable communications is one of the many different missions sets the VDF provides as the all-volunteer auxiliary to the Virginia National Guard. That mission set, along with others like operations center augmentation and operational planning, take advantage of the wide variety of public safety, military and civilian skills that VDF provide.

"The skill sets that VDF members bring to the National Guard civil support playbook were evident in our recent ability to staff a future operations planning cell to support VDEM during Hurricane Joaquin as well as various civil support operations at the Camp Pendleton to augment the Virginia State Police," Bentley said.

Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, and Command Sgt. Maj. Alan Ferris, Virginia National Guard Senior Enlisted Advisor, visited the VDF's 4th Regiment in Lynchburg to receive an operations update and to thank the VDF members for volunteering their time to conduct the exercise.

"This was a great opportunity to partner with state defense forces across the nation and exercise communications and mission command, which are key components of our support to civil authorities mission," Williams said. "The VDF are subject matter experts, and they are providing us with long term experience we can dedicate to this capability. They take it seriously, and they have such tremendous pride in what they do."

From Lynchburg, VDF members were able to make contact with 10 different states during the exercise, including Los Angeles, California, nearly 2,200 miles away.

"This exercise was a good stretch of our operational capabilities, and allowed us to further demonstrate our ability to support the long and short range communications needs of the Virginia National Guard," said Lt. Col. (Va.) Philip R. Smith, commander of the 4th Regiment.

The VDF is an all-volunteer force authorized by the Code of Virginia and organized under the Virginia Department of Military Affairs reporting to the Adjutant General of Virginia. The members of the VDF volunteer their time for training and are only paid when called to state active duty by an authorization from the Governor of Virginia.

Article appears courtesy of Virginia National Guard, PAO, Mr. Cotton Puryear

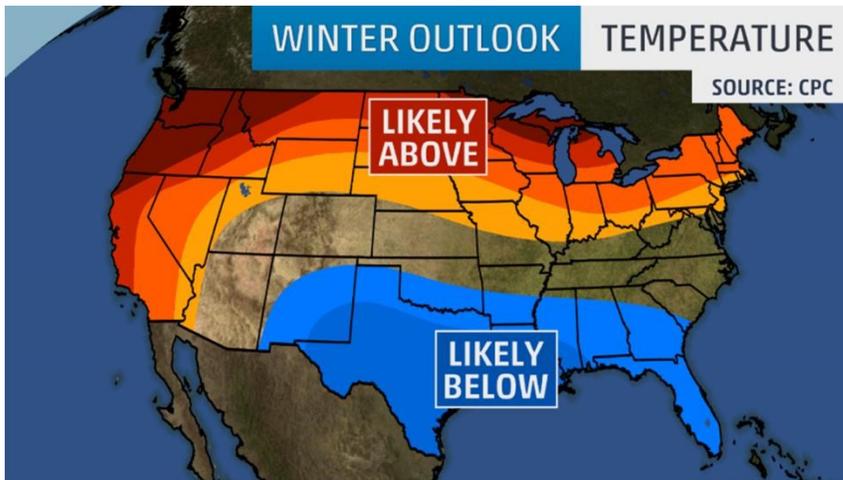




WINTER WEATHER FORECAST 2015-2016, *courtesy of NOAA.GOV*

This year's El Niño, which is forecast to become one of the strongest on record, is expected to influence weather and climate patterns this winter by impacting the position of the Pacific jet stream, NOAA forecasters say.

1. The South Will Be Cooler Than Average, The North Warmer



The southern tier of the nation is likely to be colder than average, particularly in Texas and the Gulf Coast states. Meanwhile, a large swath of the western and northern United States from California into the Pacific Northwest eastward into the Midwest, Great Lakes and Northeast is expected to be warmer than average.

2. The South Will Be Wetter Than Average



NOAA also expects winter to trend wetter than average. The East Coast, from the Southeast into portions of the Mid-Atlantic and into southern New England, may also see a wetter than average winter.



WINTER STORMS & EXTREME COLD: ARE YOU PREPARED?

While the danger from winter weather varies across the country, nearly all Americans, regardless of where they live, are likely to face some type of severe winter weather at some point in their lives. Winter storms can range from a moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind-driven snow that lasts for several days. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and sometimes by strong winds, icing, sleet and freezing rain.

One of the primary concerns is the winter weather's ability to knock out heat, power and communications services to your home or office, sometimes for days at a time. Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region.

The National Weather Service refers to winter storms as the “Deceptive Killers” because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. Instead, people die in traffic accidents on icy roads and of hypothermia from prolonged exposure to cold. It is important to be prepared for winter weather before it strikes.



Winter storms can range from a moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind driven snow that lasts for several days. Some winter storms are large enough to affect several states, while others affect only a single community. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and sometimes by strong winds, icing, sleet and freezing rain.*



To prepare for a winter storm you should do the following:

Before winter approaches, add the following supplies to your emergency kit:

Rock salt or more environmentally safe products to melt ice on walkways. Visit the Environmental Protection Agency for a complete list of recommended products.

Sand to improve traction.

Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.

Sufficient heating fuel. You may become isolated in your home and regular fuel sources may be cut off. Store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for your fireplace or wood-burning stove.

Adequate clothing and blankets to keep you warm.

Make a Family Communications Plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency.

A NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts alerts and warnings directly from the NWS for all hazards. You may also sign up in advance to receive notifications from your local emergency services.

Download FEMA's Be Smart. Know Your Alerts and Warnings for a summary of notifications at: www.ready.gov/prepare. Free smart phone apps, such as those available from FEMA and the American Red Cross, provide information about finding shelters, providing first aid, and seeking assistance for recovery.

Minimize travel. If travel is necessary, keep a disaster supplies kit in your vehicle.

Bring pets/companion animals inside during winter weather. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas with non-frozen drinking water.

Information courtesy of FEMA and the Red Cross

Winter Storm Outlook

Winter storm conditions are possible in the next 2 to 5 days.

Winter Storm Watch

Winter storm conditions are possible within the next 36 to 48 hours. People in a watch area should review their winter storm plans and stay informed about weather conditions.

WINTER STORMS:

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE!!

Winter Weather Advisory

Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. When caution is used, these situations should not be life threatening.

Winter Storm Warning

Life-threatening, severe winter conditions have begun or will begin within 24 hours. People in a warning area should take precautions immediately



DRILL CALENDAR 2016

HQ DRILL SCHEDULE 2016

DATE	LOCATION	TYPE
9 JAN	WALLER	UTA
6 FEB	WALLER	UTA
5 MAR	WALLER	UTA
1-3 APRIL	FORT PICKETT	MUTA
7 MAY	WALLER	UTA
25-26 JUN	WALLER	(TACTICAL) MUTA-COMMEX
9 JUL	WALLER	UTA
6 AUG	WALLER	UTA
23-25 SEP	FORT PICKETT	(TACTICAL) MUTA-EDRE/ COMMEX/TTX
15 OCT	WALLER	UTA
5 NOV	WALLER	UTA
3 DEC	WALLER	UTA