



State Family Program Directors Message

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Hello! I am Vickie Sais, your new State Family Program Director and I am very excited to be part of the Virginia National Guard Team. It is an honor and privilege for me to be serving in this position, and to make Virginia my new home.

I'll tell you a little about myself so that you can get to know me better. I retired after serving 25 years in the United States Air

Force. My last 7 years I was an Air Force First Sergeant. My husband is still active duty and I have two sons who are also serving in the military. After retiring, I only dreamed of working with military Families again...well here I am ready to help support YOU, the military members and Families of this great state! I tell you this because I have experience as a military member, a military spouse, and a military parent. Also, prior to joining this team, I was a Family Program Coordinator with the Army Reserve.

As we strive to create a network of support, which functions comfortably at basic structural levels and is yet ready to expand during times of need, the role of Family Programs is crucial. I am committed to unifying the talents of both our Army and Air into a truly joint effort. We are all in this together!

As we move forward, I want to encourage you to call on me or my staff whenever we can be of assistance and to share your ideas and observations freely. Together, we can assure that the needs of our Families are met at all times, but especially during times of separation!

I would like to extend a special "THANK YOU" to 1Lt Karen Guadalupe for all her hard work and dedication while serving as Director of Family Programs. I am so fortunate to have a Family Program Team already in place with knowledge, experience, and hearts that are dedicated to Families and making our Family Program the best in the National Guard. That is what our Families truly deserve!

Proudly Serving Military Families,

Vickie L. Sais

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J1 Message

Family Programs are certainly in the federal forefront. The National Defense Authorization Act signed by President Bush provided the family members of deploying and wounded Soldiers with an entitlement for time from work to support and adjust to their new circumstances. The “Beyond the Yellow Ribbon” program developed by the Minnesota National Guard will become the basis for the national standard for reintegration programs.

The Commission on the National Guard and Reserve made over ninety recommendations to transform the Reserve Components to meet future needs. Six of those directly addressed family services, benefits, education and support. Another nine distinctly address employer related issues for Soldiers and their Families. We will address the recommendations of the Commission as they are discussed in Washington D.C.

Our Family Programs team has returned from their national workshop full of ideas and enthusiasm. I am very optimistic that their efforts will continue to provide our Guard Families with the support you deserve.

State Board of Elections

The Virginia State Board of Elections recognizes that serving as a member of the Uniformed Service presents many challenges. We would like to assist you in overcoming one of them: voting.

The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) is the form that is used by the activated National Guard member to request their absentee ballot, or to register to vote and request their absentee ballot.

The following websites may be of assistance to you: www.fvap.gov or www.overseasvotefoundation.org.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program website (www.fvap.gov) will provide you with the following: downloadable and printable FPCA, instructions on how to complete the FPCA and contact information for Virginia local election officials.

The Overseas Vote Foundation website (www.overseasvotefoundation.org) will provide you the following: downloadable and printable FPCA, web based step by step state specific instructions on how to complete the FPCA and contact information for Virginia local election officials.

The Presidential primaries is February 12, 2008.

If you should require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 804-864-8932 or via email at vickie.williams@sbe.virginia.gov.



New Boxes for Care Packages

The U.S. Postal Service is making it easier for families to send care packages. The new boxes can be used beginning March 3, 2008. They are 50% larger than the current flat rate box and can be sent to any domestic address for \$12.95. The box will carry the “America Supports You” logo and can be shipped to any FPO/APO address for \$10.95. For complete guidelines on mail services to military family member overseas visit the USPS website at:

<http://www.ups.com/supportingourtroops/welcome.htm?from=household&page=troopsupport>

Girl Scout Project Supports the Virginia National Guard

Victoria Carr, a Girl Scout with Troop #5 in Salem, Virginia, and daughter of SFC Richard Carr, Readiness NCO for the 29th Army Band wanted to earn the Girl Scout Silver Award. As this award is the second highest award a Girl Scout can earn, this project needed to be something extra special. Being the child of a National Guard soldier herself, she decided to do something that would benefit other children with in the Virginia National Guard Family.

So Victoria set out to assemble “Kid packs” that she would donate



to the Family Assistance Centers throughout Virginia. These “packs” would contain games, coloring books, crayons, reading books, puzzles and many other toys that children could play with when they visited the Family Assistance Centers with their parents.

Victoria wrote letters to different retailers and community organizations in the Roanoke Area asking for assis-

tance with her project. After a re-sounding reply from the community Victoria was able to assemble 8 “Kid packs”, one for each FAC location. On 19 January, 2008, with her proud parents looking on, Victoria presented the “Kid Packs” to Tina Harrison the FAC Coordinator at a Family Readiness Group Leader Training at Ft. Pickett.

- Tina Harrison (FAC Coordinator)

New VA Policy for Military Veterans

Veterans and their families need to be aware of a recent change in Veterans Affairs policy. It was previously stated that all veterans who return from Title 10 overseas service would be granted 2 years of health care from the Veterans Health Administration (VA Hospitals) and 90 days of dental. These benefits have been upgraded. All returning veterans will now receive 5 years of free health care and 180 day of free dental. This applies not

only to those who are going to be returning in the upcoming months, but also to all veterans who have returned and are still in the 5 year window from the day they returned home. These timeframes are retroactive for all those who have returned during this time period. However if you are over 180 days of returning you will not be eligible for the dental.

With this new change of policy I urge all veterans to enroll into the VA health system and request an initial

physical. Any identified issues that are a result of a mobilization are taken care of at no charge. Information on how to enroll into the VA health care system can be obtained by contacting Dorian Bell at 434-298-5315 or by email at:

dorian.m.bell@ng.army.mil.

- Dorian Bell

Virginia National Guard Foundation

There are many reasons that we, as a people, might want to contribute or donate funds to a charitable organization. These reasons range from general values that have been instilled within our fabric by the generations before us, to a specific situation or emergency someone is experiencing that may touch our heart and cause us to want to help. The Virginia National Guard Foundation, an IRS 501(c)(3) organization, is one of the charities through which we can make such financial gifts. Our mission is to provide emergency financial assistance in the form of no-interest loans, grants, and/or scholarships to Virginia National Guard service members, employees and their families to enhance their health, well-being, and or welfare.

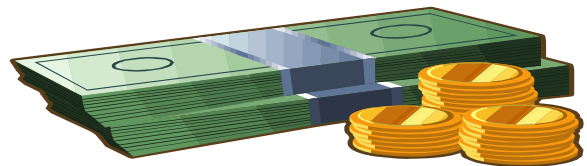
If one desires to make a general gift toward the mission of the Virginia National Guard Foundation they may do so in several ways: Depending on the source of their employment and philanthropic desires, an individual can give through payroll deduction to the Combined Federal Campaign, the Combined Virginia Campaign, or the Local Governments & Schools Campaign within their geographic area. Our charity codes are published annually and can be provided by the employers campaign key personnel.

An individual, organization, or business can give directly to the Virginia National Guard Foundation by cash, check, or money order, made payable to **Virginia National Guard Foundation**, and mailing it to the Foundation at P.O. Box 119, Blackstone, Virginia

23824. They can also give it in person to one of our employees at Building #316, Fort Pickett, Virginia or one of our directors as listed on our web site www.vangfoundation.org. All cash donations should be accompanied by either a donation card as found on our web site, or a written and signed statement.

If one desires to make a contribution or donation to a specific need or cause, dealing with the health, well-being and/or welfare of the Virginia National Guard, their service members, employees, or their families, they can do so by cash, check, or money order made payable to **Virginia National Guard Foundation**, with their designated cause annotated in the memo block or line of the check or money order. Again, all cash donations should be accompanied by either a donation card as found on our web site, www.vangfoundation.org, or a written and signed statement.

If you have any questions or want to discuss your proposed contribution or donation with a Foundation representative, please contact our Executive Director, LTC (Ret) Kent Carter at (434) 591-0942 (home office), (434) 953-7277 (Cell), or cpeace777@earthlink.net (e-mail). We look forward to helping you meet your philanthropic needs and desires.



NMFA Military Spouse Scholarship

The National Military Family Association's Joanne Holbrook Patton Military Spouse Scholarships are awarded to spouses of Uniformed Services members (active duty, National Guard and Reserve, retirees, and survivors) to obtain professional certification or to attend post secondary or graduate school. Scholarships range in

amount from \$500 to \$1,000, and the number awarded each year varies depending on funding. Scholarship funds may be used for tuition, fees, and school room and board.

Scholarship selection is based on completion of some survey questions that will help NMFA

advocate for education changes on your behalf, short-answer questions, and an essay question that will help us get to know you better. To be considered, applications must be completed by midnight March 15, 2008.

www.nmfa.org

Cub Scouts Partner with Operation Military Kids

Cub Scout Pack 521 from Mechanicsville, Virginia enjoyed stocking "HERO" packs for children who would be missing a parent at Christmas. The entire Pack agreed that they found the project to be one of the most worthwhile service projects they have done, and look forward to doing it again. Each Den in the Pack filled one or two backpacks and used the event to discuss the sacrifices made by the Guard and their families. The Pack has 52 boys who now have a better appreciation of the Guard's duty and sacrifice, and who hope they have made a small difference in a child's life."

- Meredith Bondurant



President Bush Signs Family Medical Leave Act

The President signed into law H.R. 4986, the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008 (NDAA). Among other things, section 585 of the NDAA [amends the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 \(FMLA\)](#) to permit a "spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin" to take up to 26 workweeks of leave to care for a "member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness." Additional information and a copy of Title I of the FMLA, as amended, are available on the [website](#). (January 28, 2008)

The Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division published a [Report](#) on the comments received in response to the Request for Information on the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The Federal Register Notices and related documents are also available on Wage and Hour's [website](#). (June 27, 2007)

[The Family and Medical Leave Act Public Service Announcement](#)

[Covered employers](#) must grant an [eligible employee](#) up to a total of 12 workweeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons: for the birth and care of the newborn child of the employee; for placement with the employee of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care; to care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition; or to take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition.

[Upcoming Events](#)

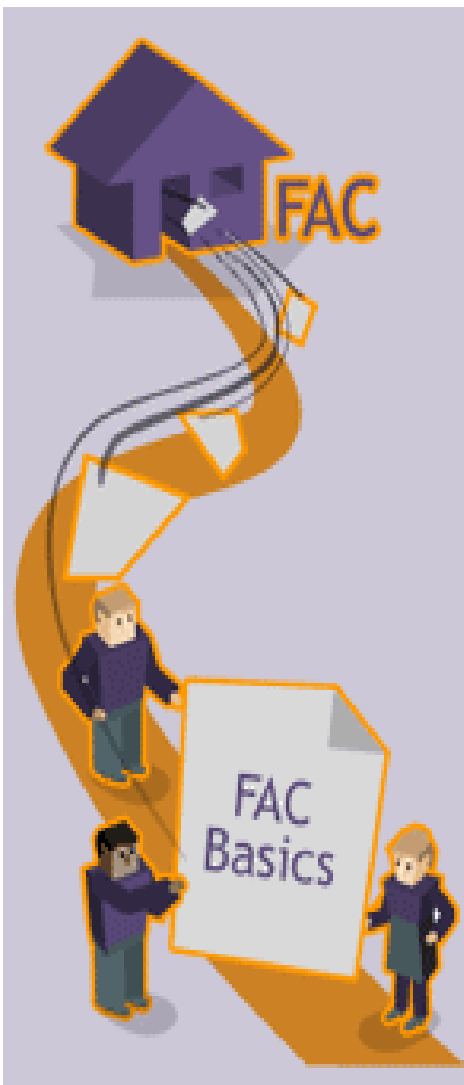
Pre-deployment Brief	23 Feb 08	Sandston Amory	11:00 to 1:00
Pre-deployment Brief	23 Feb 08	Emporia Amory	3:00 to 5:00
Pre-deployment Brief	24 Feb 08	Onancock Amory	1:00 to 3:00
Marriage Retreat	8-9 March 08	Alexandria, Virginia	

Family Assistance Centers

Family Assistance Centers (FAC) were originally established to provide assistance and support to soldiers and their families at times of contingency call-up, mobilization and large scale deployment. However over the past years the FACs have branched out to assist any and all military members and their families during times of need regardless of deployment status or branch affiliation. Each FAC is staffed with a professionally trained FAC Specialist who is dedicated to providing assistance to service members and their families. Each of Virginia's FAC specialists has the added first hand experience of what it means to be either a military service member or member of a military family.

The FACs are considered one-stop shopping for those who need services and support. Through partnerships with agencies such as Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), The American Legion, The Red Cross and other local and national organizations and working closely with military personnel such as chaplains, commanders, JAG officers and family readiness group leaders, the FAC specialists are able to provide the very best assistance possible. Some of the areas in which a FAC specialist can provide assistance includes but is not limited to; TRICARE, DEERS, ID cards, financial and legal assistance, service and family member employment/re-employment and crisis intervention referral.

Family Assistance Centers are located through out the state. FAC specialists are available to soldiers and family members experiencing a crisis or emergency no matter when it may occur.



State FAC Coordinator

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Abingdon FAC

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Chatham/Southwest VA FAC

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Manassas FAC

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Powhatan FAC

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Sandston FAC

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Emergency

1.800.542.4028