



Photo by Gary Watts, Unit Public Affairs Representative

Wasting no time once they arrived at Fredericton International Airport, the Blackhawks of the 224th Aviation immediately received a tasking to support the Canadians. They are seen here arriving at Gagetown fully prepared to support the exercise. See the story on page 10.

For the latest news and information on the Virginia National Guard, visit
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FROM THE TOP



Reflecting on the loss of our Soldiers

By Maj. Gen. Claude A. Williams
Adjutant General

There are times when I believe it is important to purposefully reflect upon events that take place in an organization and to think about how those events impact on the organization. This reflection is necessary to ground oneself in the purpose of the organization and to understand what the purpose of the organization may demand of its members. Now is one of those times. The purpose of the Virginia National Guard is to support the cause of freedom and to serve our communities, commonwealth, and country. Supporting that purpose can demand the ultimate.



Maj. Gen. Claude A. Williams

This past August the 116th Infantry suffered its first combat losses since World War II when an improvised explosive device claimed the lives of Staff Sgt. Craig W. Cherry and Sgt. Bobby E. Beasley in Ghazikel, Afghanistan on August 7, 2004. Both soldiers were assigned to Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion. The loss of these brave citizen soldiers is a sharp reminder of the very real dangers our Soldiers and Airmen face as they deploy in harm's way across the United States and around the world in support of this country's war on terrorism.

There is little in life that is as painful as the loss of a fellow Soldier in battle. The tragic loss of these brave Virginians is a chilling reminder of the dangers our troops face on a daily basis. We must remain vigilant and resilient, and we must understand the key role our Soldiers have in working to create stability in Afghanistan, Iraq, and wherever they travel in support of freedom's cause. It is only through the sacrifice and dedication of our Soldiers

and Airmen that the dream of freedom will be realized.

As the loss of a fellow Soldier is painful, the pain from the loss of a loved one; a husband; a father; a son; a brother; a friend is so very profound and so very deep. Staff Sgt. Cherry and Sgt. Beasley were all of these and so very much more to the people they have touched in this life. Their actions impacted others in positive ways. Just as these patriots unselfishly answered freedom's call they were equally unselfish as they gave to their families and friends. The loss of these Soldiers has created a void in the lives they touched.

The families of these Soldiers will be the paramount focus for the Virginia National Guard. We will do everything within our power to care for the families of these Soldiers who have given all in support of freedom's cause. We will do everything within our power to honor and remember these Soldiers and to bring comfort to their families. We ask that the citizens of the Commonwealth keep the loved ones of these Soldiers in their thoughts and prayers.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Va. Guard PAO

A memorial for the fallen soldiers was created at the Winchester army.

In Memoriam

Staff Sgt. Craig William Cherry, 39, of Winchester, Va., and Sgt. Bobby Edward Beasley, 36, of Inwood, W.V., died August 7 in Ghazikhel, Afghanistan, when their vehicle struck an improvised explosive device. Both Soldiers were assigned to the Virginia Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 29th Infantry Division (Light) from Winchester, Va.

Cherry enlisted in the Army and served on active duty from 1983 to 1987. He served in the Missouri National Guard from 1987 to 1998, and joined the Virginia National Guard in 1998. He attended Green Run High School in Virginia Beach, Va. He is survived by his wife, two sons, daughter, father, mother and brother.

Beasley enlisted in the military in 1980 and served in the United States Navy from 1980 to 1992. After spending one year in the Navy Reserve, he joined the Virginia National Guard in 1993. He attended James Wood High School in Winchester, Va. He is survived by his wife and father.



On the Cover



A member of the Virginia Guard's 34th Civil Support Team gets help from other members of his unit in securing his protective gear before going into the contaminated area for recon and survey operations. (Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office)

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REDHORSE responds to Florida hurricanes

By Maj. Debbie Magaldi
Air Guard Public Affairs Officer

Fifty-six members of the 203rd Red Horse Squadron, based at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, headed for Florida on Sept. 4. But, relaxing and soaking up the sun at the beach were the last things on their minds as they headed for the Sunshine State in a convoy of two busses and 11 military vehicles. Instead they were called up for state active duty: humanitarian assistance and hurricane relief in the aftermath of Hurricane Frances.

The squadron received the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) request about 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 3. Yes, Labor Day weekend. By 7:00 that evening Maj. Pete Garner, 203rd Operations Officer, and his team were calling unit members and putting the deployment in motion. The 56 individuals asked to respond to the disaster assistance request reported for duty at 7 the next morning, and by noon they were heading south. "I think our response speed surprised the Joint Emergency Operations Center at Ft. Pickett," Garner said. "But we have motivated, energized people, who wanted to help the people of Florida. This is part of what we are here to do."

With 203rd Commander Lt. Col. Paul Julian in the lead, the group tackled its first job on Sunday. Less than 24 hours after leaving Virginia Beach, the group was clearing downed trees and storm debris at Camp Blanding's Joint Training Center. As the group finished up work on the military facility, they used the local (Bradford County) emergency operations center to identify how they could be of assistance in the surrounding community. The EOC provided information on local roads that were impassable because of fallen trees and downed utility lines, as



Photos courtesy Florida Guard Public Affairs Office

Members of the 203rd REDHORSE use heavy equipment (above photo) to clear debris in the wake of hurricane damage and then load it up (below photo) to be hauled away.

well as debris or drainage problems from localized flooding. The unit then set up an equipment staging area for their heavy equipment within the city of Starke, Fla., and began debris removal operations in both the city and the county. Two 203rd power production specialists were asked to assist Florida's 202nd Red Horse Squadron -- working to ease electrical problems in the West Palm Beach area.

"Frances was still blowing through when our team arrived. It was kind of a slow start," Garner noted, "but once they were engaged they felt they were truly contributing to Florida's communities and its people. Helping people is the key to our state mission."

Some of the areas where 203rd Red Horse members worked were extensively damaged by the hurricane and are among the lowest-income areas in the state. "We felt we were really able to make a difference for those communities," Garner added. "Without the budget or the equipment to handle a clean up effort of this size, this work could have taken them a long time."

As they continued their mission, weather forecasters began predicting the landfall track for Hurricane Ivan along the panhandle of Florida. The decision was made to keep the deployed 203rd members in place pending additional damage from this powerful storm. After riding out Hurricane Ivan, 203rd members moved into the Pensacola area, they

assessed damage and prioritized work and began cleanup at the Pensacola airport. The impact of the storm was so severe and pervasive that the teams had trouble staying in communication with each other due to massive power failures and disrupted internet access and cell phone service.

They spent the next few days conducting debris removal at the Pensacola Regional Airport -- removing fallen trees and limbs that were preventing access to the airport, removing building materials from damaged hangars that had blown onto the parking apron and parking lots, and helping airport trucks in the ongoing relief effort. The 203rd safely returned home on Sept. 20.

During the recent NGAUS (National Guard Association of the U.S.) 126th General Conference in Las Vegas, Florida's Assistant Adjutant General for Air, Brig. Gen. Emmett R. Titshaw, Jr., sought out Virginia's Deputy Adjutant General for Air, Brig. Gen. John D. Dornan, to personally thank him for the outstanding work done by the 203rd, and to voice his deep appreciation to the men and women of the 203rd for all they had done to help Florida at a time of such overwhelming devastation.

While in Florida, the 203rd reported to the Task Force Engineer for the State of Florida, which is led by Col. Jack Paschal, Commander of the 202nd Red Horse Squadron, which is the 203rd's sister unit.

Infantry unit wins Reckord and Kerwin awards

The 2nd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division was recently awarded the prestigious Maj. Gen. Milton A. Reckord Trophy. Lt. Col. Tom Wilkinson and Maj. John Epperly traveled to Las Vegas, Nev. the week of Sept. 19 to receive the award, which was presented during the annual conference of the National Guard Association of the United States. Wilkinson was the battalion commander of the 2nd Battalion when the criteria for the awards were achieved and Epperly is the current commander. The unit also will receive the Walter T. Kerwin, Jr. Readiness Award on Oct. 26, 2004 in Washington, D.C.

In a letter to the Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, Maj. Gen. Claude A. Williams, the adjutant general of Virginia, wrote:

"I am particularly proud of and applaud the accomplishments of the Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 116th Infantry in their earning the Walter T. Kerwin, Jr. Readiness Award and the Maj. Gen. Milton A. Reckord Trophy. This achievement speaks volumes about the dedication, professionalism, and patriotism of the Soldiers and leadership of the battalion. The recognition of these awards is directly the result of the accomplishments of the soldiers at all levels of the battalion. The effort put forth by these soldiers assures that the Virginia Army National Guard continues to lead



Contributed Photo

Maj. John Epperly (far left) and Lt. Col. Tom Wilkinson (center) receive the Reckord Trophy from Brig. Gen. Robert V. Taylor, (Michigan) former NGAUS Vice Chairman, Army.

the pack!"

The Walter T. Kerwin Readiness Award is presented jointly by the National Guard Association, the Association of the United States Army, and the Reserve Officers Association of the United States to the Army National Guard unit with the highest level of readiness in the country. The Major General Milton A. Reckord Trophy is presented annually to only the very best Army National Guard unit.

"Show Me The Soldier" program offers cash

By Staff Sgt. Tammy Spence
GuardPost Staff Writer

The Virginia Army National Guard has a recruiting incentive program that allows soldiers to help themselves while helping their unit. The program is called "Show me the Soldier".

"Show me the Soldier" started in September of 2003 as a result of the Personnel Readiness Focus Campaign which was the Adjutant General's campaign to increase the number of soldiers in the VaARNG by 10% in three years. Since its beginning, approximately 230 soldiers have received this incentive.

According to Sgt. Major John Owens Recruiting and Retention Sergeant Major for the VaARNG, "Strength in personnel and readiness make units available to National Guard Bureau for various mission assignments. The Adjutant General surveyed other states such as West

Virginia and Georgia and noticed they have similar programs in place to increase unit strength."

When the program first started in Virginia, the state funded award was \$100.00 for each referral. A soldier recommended a friend for enlistment giving his/her name and phone number to their recruiter. Once the referral enlisted in the VaARNG, the referring soldier was given a check for \$100.00. The program was so successful that the Adjutant General decided to raise the amount to \$200.00 per referral.

Soldiers transferring from other states do not count as referrals. Referrals can be prior service individuals or non prior service so long as they are not currently enlisted in a military unit. Referrals can also be officers and warrant officers.

Those not eligible for the stipend are soldiers working in or for recruiting as a technician, AGR or ADSW.

Another incentive is the Virginia

National Guard Strength Maintenance Ribbon awarded for three referrals that enlist within an 18 month period. So far 10 soldiers have been awarded this ribbon.

Another incentive program was the Victory Challenge which ran from June 18 to Nov. 30, 2003 and was hosted by National Guard Bureau. Under this program soldiers that referred three individuals who enlisted, were given the Director's Victory Challenge Coin in a case, a framed certificate and letter and either a leather Victory jacket or a jacket with the #54 printed on it.

If the soldier referring the individuals was the rank of private, he or she was also eligible for promotion to private first class. There were numerous other awards also given. Incentives under the Victory Challenge even included a "Gold" level for five enlistments which included additional awards. Other incentives will be coming out mid October 2004.



Photo by Spc. Stephanie Willer, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment stand ready during a recent Homeland Defense training exercise held in Roanoke.

Infantry unit conducts Homeland Defense training

By Spc. Stephanie Willer
GuardPost Staff Writer

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, headquartered in Roanoke, Va., conducted a joint Homeland Defense training exercise on Aug. 7 with police departments from Roanoke, Danville, Salem and Christiansburg, the Roanoke Fire Department and the Virginia Defense Force (VADF). The local media also participated in a training exercise at the William Fleming High School in Roanoke.

“We’ve been planning and coordinating with local Emergency Services to do joint operations and prepare for future emergencies that would involve our agencies working together,” said Lt. Col. Eric Barr. “Normally, we don’t even know each other before we are thrown into civilian

emergencies on very short notice. Now we know each other both professionally and, in some cases personally, and we better understand how our respective agencies function, and what each of us brings to the event.”

The scenario consisted of three truck bomb attacks, with two being simulated in the City of Roanoke. One was at the Depoff Federal Building while the other was at the Wachovia Tower Building. The actual training exercise took place at the high school which was designated as the Valley Shopping Mall.

During this simulated scenario, the Roanoke City Emergency Services assessed the situation and put in a request to the Governor’s Office that the National Guard be activated to assist in the disturbance. A Mutual Aid Agreement was also put in place, so other police departments could be

brought in for assistance.

According to 1st Sgt. Vincent A. May, when the Governor authorizes the Guard to come in, “We would be 24 to 36 hours into the problem.” The soldiers’ involvement would consist of securing check points, conducting vehicle searches and managing crowd control situations. The Virginia Defense Force was also present to aid in the operation of check points, as well as supplying a communications vehicle.

The exercise began in the early morning. By 8:00 a.m., the Emergency Operations Center in Roanoke City was up and running and the Incident Command Post (ICP) was established on site. Maj. Lapthe Flora, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Executive Officer, was in-charge of relaying information to the designated company commander so he could move his troops through the exercise. Flora was also involved in interacting with

the local responders and handling logistics for equipment placement.

According to May, “Everything needs to be as real as possible. We have agitators and an opposing force. We have an outline for them to follow and simulate a civil unrest.”

May explained that the plan for the day was to detain the aggressors and arrest them.

During an interview with the local media, Channel 13, based in Lynchburg, May was asked the question as to why this type of training was being conducted in Roanoke. May said, “The folks in Oklahoma City never thought it could happen to them.” He added, “No one is exempt from terrorist attacks. It could happen in our hometown.”

May explained that with all the intelligence updates that have developed over the recent week, “The timelines have been real world for our part-time soldiers.”

When referring to the National Guard’s previous level of training May said, “We’ve taken it a step further.” In years past the civil disturbance response was a ‘stomp and drag’ with the baton.” With the increased level of terrorist threats he said, “We are going to have to do a little more ... the situations and times have changed. This is a proactive approach to training.”

Approximately 30 aggressors, which were comprised of police officers as well as guardsmen, confronted the response teams. Their plan was to take control of the situation by disarming the aggressors and taking them into custody while avoiding any type of casualty.

The local police department moved in first with batons and shields in-hand. Some of the aggressors made their way to the roof tops of the complex creating a threat from above as well as from ground level. At one point, the police had secured a section of the complex when several aggressors tried to advance on the law enforcement positions.

By this time the National Guard’s presence was visible as they approached the disturbance. The mounted police were bringing up the rear. As they were seated atop their horses waiting to show force if necessary. However, when the condition escalated, the response teams decided to bring in the K-9 unit who successfully captured and detained several of the



Photo by Spc. Stephanie Willer, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment worked in close coordination with local law enforcement during the training exercise.

aggressors.

During the commotion some of the aggressors spread out and were now all over the complex. There was a call in from the ICP advising of a casualty in one of the buildings. The Roanoke Emergency Medical Service (EMS) responded quickly. In spite of this, the unit left their vehicle unprotected, which later became part of the aggressor’s possession.

Firefighter Toby Bedwell from the Roanoke Fire Department was in charge on the Unified Command. He said that the one thing he would have changed was, “In the future we would secure our vehicles. When I heard the sirens, I said, ‘Oh no! They took our vehicles, this isn’t good.’” This comment created some laughter among the group during their After Action Briefing. May interjected by saying, “This is something that would happen in a real-world attack,” He added, “but that’s what these missions are intended for. It’s our job to identify the problem and make corrective actions in the future.”

As the day’s exercise continued, arrests were being made throughout the complex and the number of aggressors was diminishing. Yet, the response team was still faced with removing the few remaining men from the roof tops. This was a job for the fire department who brought in two fire trucks in an attempt to bring the aggressors to submission. Battalion Fire Chief, Jeff Becker explained to the group during their briefing that in a real world situation they would be using larger hoses and hydrants. “If we hooked up to a hydrant, those men would have been taken off the roof.” He added that the hydrants have the capacity to push 2000 gallons of water-per-minute. “We were using 150 gallons-per-minute, you do the math.”

Barr said the exercise was very successful. “For the soldiers and junior leaders it was a great learning experience working with EMS personnel and figuring out how National Guardsmen coordinate operations with policemen, firefighters, VADF, etc.”

Virginia hosts major Homeland Defense exercise

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Army Guard Public Affairs Officer

Virginia's ability to respond to a series of terrorist attacks has been put to the test during "Determined Promise 04", a major homeland defense exercise hosted by Virginia that began on Aug. 5. The exercise is a series of simulated and field training scenarios designed to test the ability of first responders to react to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) attacks and coordinate the response efforts of state, local and federal authorities. The Virginia National Guard is one of the many organizations at work in the exercise, providing an Incident Response Force (IRF) to augment law enforcement operations and deploying the 34th Civil Support Team to help with a simulated WMD attack in Chesterfield County.

The exercise began on Aug. 5 with a series of simulated attacks in the Richmond and Hampton Roads areas where thousands of citizens were killed or injured, and

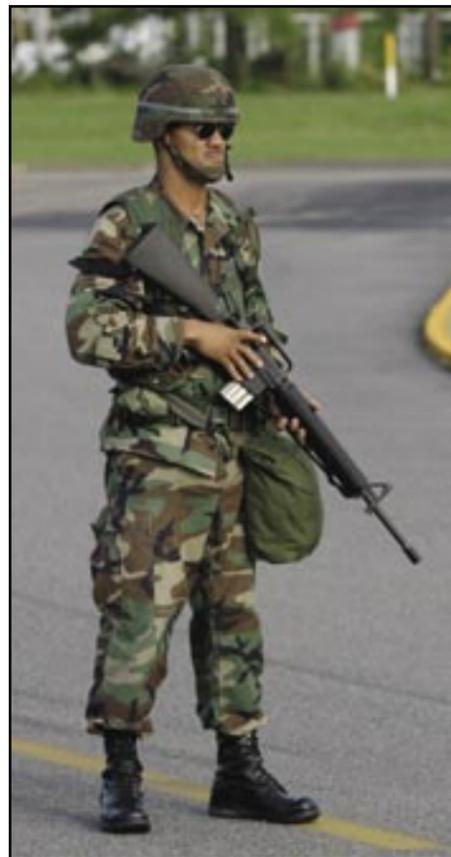


Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

Before the training event in Chesterfield, Virginia Governor Mark R. Warner spoke about the importance of such exercises as Determine Promise while Maj. Gen. Claude Williams and Sen. John Warner looked on.

continued on Aug. 6 with a field training exercise in Chesterfield County. After the initial simulated attacks, the Virginia Guard mobilized the IRF, consisting of nearly 500 soldiers from 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery and 3rd Battalion, 111th Air Defense Artillery, to augment state police traffic control and security operations. These units actually activated their alert rosters and conducted a field training exercise, moving the soldiers to locations in Richmond and Hampton Roads.

Before the training event in Chesterfield, Virginia Governor Mark R. Warner spoke to the people on hand that were observing the training about the importance of such exercises as Determine Promise. He stressed that the event has been in planning for 18 months and was not a response to the recent elevation of the threat level in some parts of the country, but does reinforce the importance of the exercise.

"It is our hope and prayer that we will never have to confront the kind of scenarios we have been gaming out and planning out over the last couple of days," Gov. Warner said. "But should it ever happen, it will be the planning that goes into these kinds of events that makes sure that Virginians are both prepared and are able to respond in

the most effective manner possible."

He also acknowledged the importance of first responders at the local level. "When



Photos by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

After meeting with Chesterfield local responders, 34th CST Commander Lt. Col. Colleen Chipper (above photo) begins troop leading procedures with unit leaders. Nearly 500 Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery and 3rd Battalion, 111th Air Defense Artillery (far left photo) were deployed to augment state police traffic control and security operations during the exercise.

an event like this takes place, it is always the first responders at the local level – the local EMTs, the local police, the local firefighters that are first on the scene and first to respond to the needs of the people."

Virginia Senator John Warner pointed out that the training taking place in Determine Promise could have far reaching benefits outside of Virginia. "We are here to conduct this exercise so that if a tragedy not only befalls Virginia, the learning curve can be applied to the other 49 states."

Warner explained that exercises like Determine Promise are designed to overwhelm the capabilities of local first responders and force them to seek additional resources, and test the ability of the those different organizations at the local, state and federal level to work together.

"This is a magnificent drill because it was not set up to be easy," said National Guard Bureau Chief Lt. Gen. H Steven Blum. "It was set up to stress the system ... to force the system that is in place to fail. It was set up to deliberately test the



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

An Airman (above photo) from the Virginia Air Guard's 200th Weather Flight takes weather readings for the 34th CST. A member of the 34th CST (below photo) takes readings during a recon and survey mission.

response capabilities at the local, state and federal level, both civilian and military, and identify the seams and the places we need to improve."

The National Guard is experienced with the types of operations and scenarios in place for Determine Promise, but the exercise is providing an opportunity to test the coordination ability between the Guard and civilian agencies. "People that don't normally get to work together are working together on these issues that we face," said Maj. Gen. Claude A. Williams, Adjutant General of Virginia. "It gives us in the military the opportunity to work closely with emergency managers and law enforcement, not only at the state level, but at the user level with the EMTs and local police department. We want to work together and make sure we take care of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia."

The scenario for the Chesterfield training event is an attempted WMD attack against the Defense Logistics Agency that ends up inflicting damage and casualties on a teacher's conference at an adjacent school. After the attack, Chesterfield firefighters, police and EMT personnel responded to the scene of the attack to treat casualties and work to bring back some order to the chaos.



After realizing the WMD attack went beyond their ability to effectively handle, the call went from Chesterfield to the state Emergency Operations Center, who in turn made the request to deploy the Virginia National Guard's Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team.

The 34th CST is a federally-funded

Aviators support Canadian training

By Gary Watts
Unit Public Affairs Representative

SANDSTON, Va. - Virginia Army Guard aviators of the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation recently deployed to and returned from Canadian Forces Base Gagetown, New Brunswick, Canada. Soldiers of the 224th Aviation traveling by C-17 left their home station in Sandston, Va. on Aug. 21 and aircrews traveling in the unit's UH-60 Blackhawks left Sandston on Aug. 23. All of the aviators returned to Sandston the Aug. 28. Their mission while at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown was to support and train with members of 35 and 36 Brigade which are reserve components of Canada's Land Force Atlantic Area Formations.

The Soldiers of the 224th had been invited to participate in Area Reserve Concentration (ARCON) 04 by the Canadian Land Forces Atlantic Area commander. The 1,600-Soldier live fire exercise is an annual event at Gagetown but was unique this year with the integration of Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers with the traditional part-time Soldiers of Land Force Atlantic Area. Military airlift from the US Air Force, along with the increased capability of the Army's Blackhawk helicopters added a new dimension to Canada's ten-day training event. The deployment challenged the Virginians with not only learning to work with the military of another country but also with the difficulties that only Mother Nature can create.

The aviators of the Virginia Army National Guard are not strangers to Canadian forces. They have supported the Princess Louise Fusiliers with their UH-60 Blackhawks for the past three years at the Army National Guard Maneuver Training Center Fort Pickett. The time came when



Photo by Lt Ed Stewart, 36 CBG PAO

Canadian canoneers rig a C-3 cannon to a 224th Aviation Blackhawk during the exercise.

the t's had been crossed and the i's had dots, so the unit headed for Gagetown in late August as part of the continuing National Guard Bureau effort to refine cross border training opportunities. The 224th was the first unit of the Virginia Army National Guard to go north of the longest undefended border in the world and participating in a training exercise of this nature. The Virginia Guardsmen soon found it was not the same as attending annual training at an installation in Virginia.

The 172d Airlift Wing, Mississippi Air National Guard, provided a C-17 Globemaster III to airlift the majority of the Soldiers and all the vehicles used in the exercise between Sandston and Fredericton International Airport in New Brunswick, Canada. The weather proved to be the most significant obstacle at both the 2nd Battalion's home station and Fredericton International Airport. Loading and unloading the C-17 in the rain confounded the efforts of the Soldiers and frustrated the normally unflappable Capt. Kevin Warfield, battalion assistant operations officer. Delays in leaving Sandston severely impacted the 224th aviators' ability to meet mission timelines once they arrived in Canada. Once the C-17 was loaded it departed Sandston and arrived at Fredericton without incident, although

weather continued to play a role.

When the Sandston Soldiers arrived at Fredericton International Airport aboard the C-17, the weather there was more representative of the notoriously fogbound Saint John harbor to the southeast than a point 90 kilometers inland. Rain was coming down in Biblical proportions, the ceiling was down on the deck and the visibility was abysmal. A check of the weather showed the same phenomenon from Prince Edward Island down to the deep South in the United States. Not an auspicious start to the \$2.4 million ARCON 04 exercise and for the Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers preparing to deploy from Fredericton to Gagetown. But the wet, foggy, dreary weather up and down the Atlantic coast did not dampen the spirit or enthusiasm of the Soldiers from the 2d Battalion, 224th Aviation. Apparently it didn't lessen the desire of some of our neighbors to the north to come out and see the much heralded US Air Force C-17. The Soldiers of the 224th and the Airmen of the 172nd were greeted by dozens of Canadian aviation enthusiasts whose spirits were not dampened by the heavy rain. The arrival of the gigantic C-17 at Fredericton had been announced in the local media and many people braved the downpour just to catch a glimpse of aircraft.

But the weather would not be the only obstacle for the Old Dominion aviators to overcome. C-17 airlift capacity prevented them from bringing all the ground transportation equipment necessary to be fully mission capable. This dilemma virtually disappeared when the Canadian 36 Brigade learned of the shortfall. What had presented as a problem turned into a viable and real world training opportunity for the Canadian combat service support units involved in ARCON 04 as they provided transportation assets for their American cousins.

In addition to the challenges presented in Fredericton the miserable weather would also thwart launching the Blackhawks as scheduled on their 900-mile journey from Sandston across an international boundary into Fredericton and on to Canadian Forces Base Gagetown. 1st Lt. Aaron Loy was anxious to lead this long cross-country flight as the air mission commander and the weather delay was maddening. After a delay of 24 hours, the Blackhawks were finally departed the Army Aviation Support Facility but were flying into a significant headwind that slowed their progress. There were more weather related delays the next day but the pilots and crews finally joined the main body at Fredericton International Airport and were immediately "thrown into the breach" with the Canadian Griffin helicopters of the 430th Helicopter Squadron leading the first mission with the Canadian infantry.

During the exercise Soldiers of the 224th had an opportunity to sling the Canadian artillery C-3 cannon. They were the first to sling this long-barreled 105 mm howitzer at the Army National Guard Maneuver



Photo by Gary Watts, Unit Public Affairs Representative

Unloading of the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation equipment from C-17 takes place in the pouring rain at Fredericton International Airport.

Training Center Fort Pickett in February 2004 and now it was a novel sight to the infantry as they flew nearby with personnel and equipment from the 1st Field Artillery Regiment and the 84th Independent Field Battery. Flying in a Blackhawk while slinging the howitzer is more fun for the "gunners" than traversing the 1,500 miles of roads and trails on Gagetown dragging the 5,300 pound cannon behind a vehicle.

Soldiers of the 224th were not limited to interaction with the infantry and field artillery. The food service personnel were integrated into the dining facility operation at Camp Petersville, which the Americans shared with personnel from the Royal Canadian Regiment. The unit members were astonished at the quantity and quality

of the food presented at mealtime. Not to be outdone, the communications personnel cross trained with the Canadian Forces signalers in a tactical environment and mandatory helicopter maintenance could not have been completed without the assistance of 35th Service Battalion. In fact, the task force consisted of Soldiers from every line company and staff element within the battalion and each of the specialists and aircrews interfaced with their counterparts at the brigades or the Gagetown staff at some point during the deployment. The level of cooperation received by the Virginians was exemplary and the deployment might have been less successful without the support delivered by the Canadians.

Gagetown fascinated the Soldiers of the 224th. The opportunity to see moose and porcupines in a natural setting, enjoy "October in Virginia" temperatures during August, view magnificent vistas and experience great flying weather provided a unique opportunity for these Virginia Soldiers. This was truly value added and prompted numerous comments about returning to Gagetown in the future and several discussions about re-enlisting. The members of TF 224 returned to Sandston tired but filled with a sense of adventure and a firm belief in their ability to operate in a joint or combined environment as they meet their wartime mission.



Photo by Gary Watts, Unit Public Affairs Representative

Logisticians of Canada's 36 Brigade quickly responded to the 224th Aviation's need for ground transportation assets with these vehicles.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

Leaders from the Virginia National Guard as well as from the town of Blackstone and Nottoway County were on hand for the dedication of the new home of the 34th Civil Support Team. Taking part in the ribbon cutting ceremony from left to right: Larry Palmore, Blackstone Town Manager; Clarence Simpson, Chairman of the Nottoway County Board of Supervisors, Lt. Col. Colleen Chipper, Commander of the 34th CST; Maj. Gen. Claude Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia; Tommy Wright, State Delegate for the 61st District; Brig. Gen. John Dornan, Deputy Adjutant General for Air; and Jerry Wilson, President of the Blackstone Town Council.

New building for 34th CST dedicated

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Army Guard Public Affairs Officer

Leaders from the Virginia National Guard as well as leaders from the City of Blackstone and Nottoway County gathered on Oct. 1 to dedicate a new facility for the Virginia National Guard's 34th Civil Support Team.

Built at a cost of \$1.5 million using 100 percent Federal funds, the 11,163 square foot building includes: vehicle bay, supply room, survey team facilities, mechanical/telecommunication rooms, administrative area, classrooms, operations and medical offices.

The 34th CST is a high-priority response unit supporting civil authorities in responding to a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) situation. The unit is jointly staffed with Army and Air National Guard personnel, and encompasses 14 military occupational skills. The unit is Federally resourced, trained, equipped, and sustained, with the State National Guard providing the personnel, stationing, and common support.

Congress has authorized 32 CSTs and the first 10 teams authorized for fiscal 1999. Seventeen additional teams were



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

The new facility for the 34th Civil Support team is an example of the style of buildings that will begin being constructed around Ft. Pickett as part of a long term improvement plan for Guard facilities on the post.

authorized in fiscal 2000, and five more teams were authorized in fiscal 2001. Three of these latest teams were certified as operational on Feb. 5, 2003.

Fighter wing gets new commander

Longtime commander of the 192d Fighter Wing, Col. Stephen R. Hicks prepared for retirement and turned over command of the unit to Col. Peter A. Bonanni during a formal ceremony held in the 192d's main aircraft maintenance hangar on April 25, 2004.

The event, attended by numerous civilian and military dignitaries and guests and hundreds of Virginia Air Guard members, was officiated by Maj. Gen. Claude Williams, Adjutant General of Virginia, and Brig. Gen. John Dornan, Virginia's Deputy Adjutant General for Air.

Williams read the Change-of-Command Order while Hicks passed the guidon – representing command of the Fighter Wing – to Dornan, who then presented the flag to Bonanni, who had been serving as the wing's vice commander. After the ceremony, Williams spoke of the richness and meaning of military tradition, discussed the Virginia National Guard's continued



Photo courtesy 192nd Communications Flight, Multimedia Division

Virginia's Assistant Adjutant General for Air, Brigadier General John D. Dornan, passes the guidon to the new commander of the 192d Fighter Wing, Col. Peter A. Bonanni. Looking on are the retiring Wing commander, Col. Stephen R. Hicks (right) and the 192d's Command Chief, Chief Master Sergeant David J. Kinsey.

involvement and tasking in Southwest Asia and asked those present to keep in mind the many military personnel currently deployed in the ongoing war on terror. He lauded the

dedication of Hicks and his exemplary skill in leading the unit as it patrolled U.S. skies, round-the-clock, for nearly a year after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the nation.

Guard Soldiers help with local high school

By Capt. Lesley Kipling
Unit Public Affairs Representative

Citizen Soldiers demonstrated their commitment to their community by setting up over 600 new computers at Battlefield High School this summer. Soldiers in the Virginia National Guard Data Processing Unit helped set up Prince Williams County's first Information Technology High School.

It felt "good to be part of the community" said Spec. Steven Leo. Leo along with a dozen other soldiers was involved in every step of the installation process, from unloading the boxes off the trucks, transporting them to the classrooms, setting up the hardware, configuring the software, bringing the computers onto the network, installing printer drivers and finally hauling the boxes to the trash.

The school's full time network engineer, Carl Binsted, estimated that a professional crew would have cost the county \$40 to \$50 per computer, over \$30,000 total. Binsted spoke highly of the soldiers he worked with. "They didn't need any training, they new exactly what to do to set up the systems," he said. "Working with the National Guard has been an extremely positive experience."

For the soldiers, many of whom work in the IT industry, this

was not only an opportunity to serve the community, but also to fine-tune their own skills. Staff Sgt. Alexander Fernandez teaches classes on computer software as a civilian. But this mission gave him a chance to enhance those skills by being involved in building a network from scratch. Fernandez pointed out this opportunity is a "great resume builder." While their computer skills were the primary reason they were called to help, the soldiers had ample opportunity to demonstrate their physical fitness as well. In just two days the soldiers unloaded 1600 boxes from the trucks and delivered them to the classrooms.

Principle Jack Parker facilitated the National Guard support through the Virginia Adopt-a-School program, which pairs Guard units with local high schools. At Battlefield High School, Guard soldiers can share their experiences of working as civilians in the IT field as well as the opportunities they've had serving the National Guard.

Parker, who is also the Command Sergeant Major of the Data Processing Unit, sees this arrangement as mutually beneficial. "Not only do the soldiers enrich the students' education and provide assistance to the school, but this program also draws attention to the opportunities available to students who are interested in the National Guard," Parker said.

Guard car makes visit to Science Museum

By Spc. Stephanie Willer
GuardPost Staff Writer

The race car is meticulously inspected. A few minor adjustments are made before the car and trailer pull away from the garage and leave for the science museum. Once the car is rolled up onto the trailer the hood is carefully put in place by the racing team's general manager and head mechanic. The bold yellow logo on the polished, shiny blue hood reads, "NATIONAL GUARD." Once again, another Guard racecar joins the ranks of the NASCAR racing circuit.

On August 12 2004, The National Guard's Race Team 54's truck and trailer pulled up in front of the Virginia Science Museum (VSM) for guests to get an up close and personal look at the racecar that has been making waves as it rolls through the Commonwealth.

Even the rainy weather didn't keep selected guests, guardsmen and members of the racing team from participating in



Photo by Spc. Stephanie Willer, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

The Virginia National Guard car arrives in front of the Virginia Science Museum.

a charity event at the science museum in Richmond, Va. The event was made possible through the coordination of CW3 Darrel Gallagher, a Virginia National Guard helicopter pilot, whose company sponsored the event. This event was tied together with a special private showing of "NASCAR: The IMAX Experience," which goes behind the scenes of racing.

This was a perfect time to show off Car 54, which has been competing in the Dodge Weekly Series since spring 2004. This summer Car 54 traveled around Virginia to

bring awareness to the racing team as well as support the National Guard's recruiting drive.

"In July, the car was at Ft. Pickett for the 4th of July Festival. We also showed the car at the Armory in Emporia as well as Roanoke," said Rick Townsend, owner and operator of the Townsend Racing Garage where the car was built and is currently being stored.

"It's amazing the response we get when we are on the road," he said. "People are hooting and hollering at us." He added that some of the fans are guardsmen who are following the Dodge Weekly Series, while others are locals who are stopping them at gas stations to say that it makes them proud to be an American.

In the garage, an American flag hangs over the area where the two stock cars are stored. "We asked the Guard for the flag, and they made sure to supply us one," said Townsend. He added that the flag gives a patriotic feel to the garage.

"We try to be wherever the Guard needs us." He added, "Morty Buckles also tries to be there to sign autographs when he can." Buckles is the driver of Car 54. Buckles became part of "Drive for Diversity" when he joined the Driver Development Program that BH Motorsports organized in 2002. The program supports minority drivers and gives them an opportunity to possibly compete at the Winston Cup level.



Photo by Spc. Stephanie Willer, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

The Virginia National Guard car has space for unit emblems like this one from the 29th Infantry Division.

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National Guard unit staffed by Army and Air Guard soldiers. It is one of 32 such teams serving in the United States. The team is organized and trained to augment local, state and regional terrorism response capabilities in events known or suspected to involve weapons of mass destruction, whether they be chemical, biological or radiological. They can support civil authorities by identifying unknown agents and substances, assessing current and projected consequences of attacks, advising civilian responders and assisting with deployment of federal assets to help save lives and mitigate damage from a WMD attack.

The 34th CST has conducted numerous training exercises with chemical reconnaissance and decontamination missions, but it is rare that they get a chance to work on the coordination with local first responders.

According to Lt. Col. Colleen Chipper, commander of the 34th CST, one of the first things they do is educate the local first responders on the capabilities they have and how they can assist. Once they have explained their capabilities to the local authorities, the incident response commander will request support from the team based on the needs of the incident.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

Members of the 34th CST interview members of Chesterfield Hazardous Response team about information they have on the attack.

In the Chesterfield exercise, the 34th CST was given several missions, including monitoring the zone of attack, plotting the possible area of contamination of the attack and providing technical assistance with

Chesterfield's decontamination efforts. All the organizations involved in the exercise will be conducting After Action Reviews to capture the key lessons learned from the exercise.

Virginia National Guard Federal Deployments

# *	Unit	Where Deployed	Home Town
182	Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 111th Field Artillery	Mob station-Ft. Dix	Farmville
17	129th Target Acquisition Detachment	Mob station-Ft. Sill	Sandston
165	1173rd Transportation Company	Mob station-Ft. Bragg	Martinsville and Rocky Mount
48	192nd Fighter Wing, 200th Weather Flight and 203rd REDHORSE	Various locations	Sandston and Virginia Beach
570	3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment	Afghanistan	Winchester, Manassas, Woodstock, Leesburg and Warrenton
25	54th Field Artillery Battalion	Afghanistan	Sandston
30	229th Engineer Battalion	Awaiting overseas deployment	Fredricksburg
9	Joint Force Headquarters - Virginia	Awaiting overseas deployment	Blackstone
180	3647th Maintenance Company	Iraq	Blackstone and Richmond
525	276th Engineer Battalion	Iraq	Richmond, Powhatan, Richlands and West Point
60	various units	Ft. Pickett	
55	various units	Army Guard Readiness Center	

* All listings for numbers of Soldiers are approximate.