



Photo by Staff Sgt. David Miller, 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

Senior Airman Marcella Mitchell of the Virginia National Guard, a 1st Expeditionary RED HORSE Group material controller, checks inventory and takes accountability of items to be shipped to forward-deployed RED HORSE units in Southwest Asia.

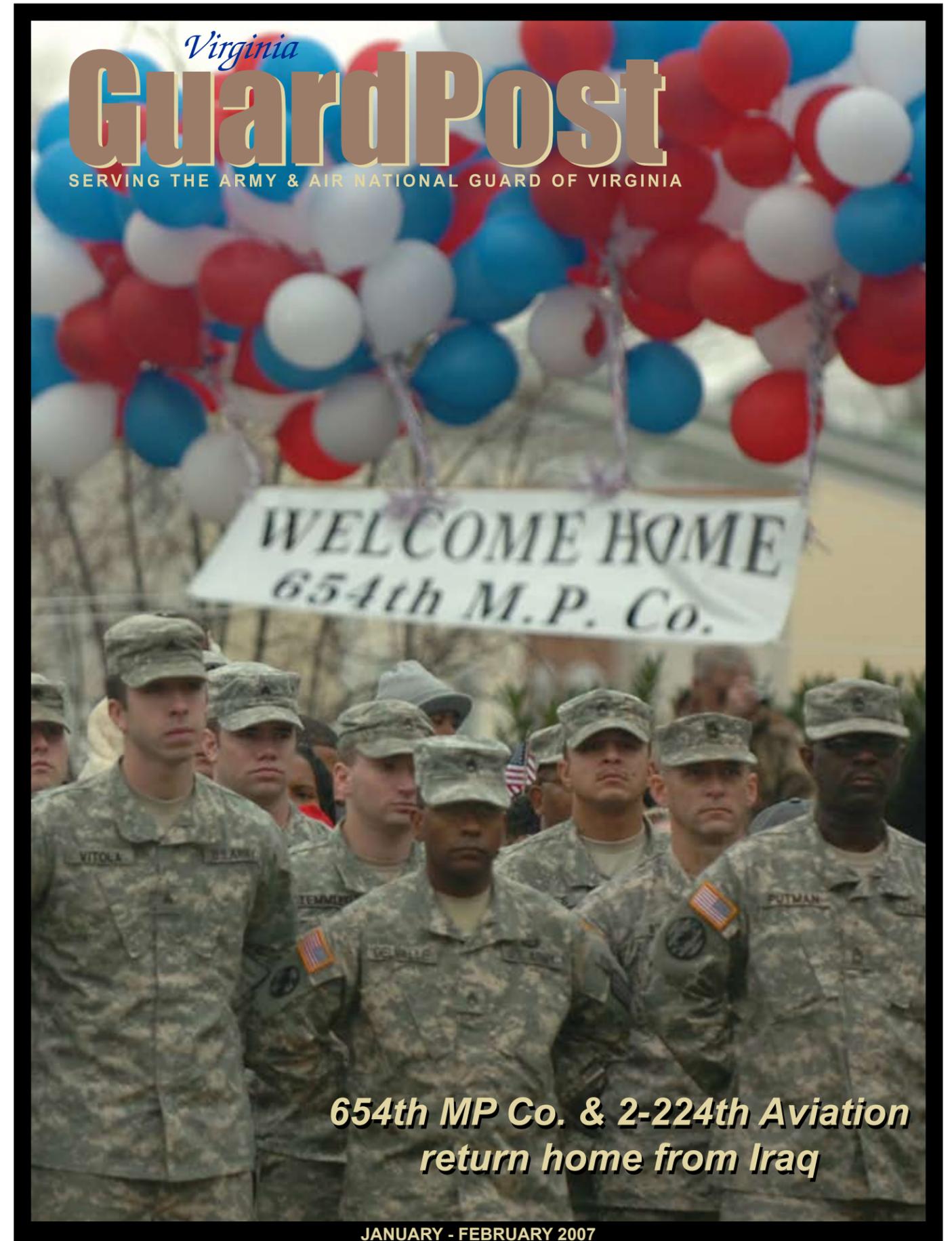
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**654th MP Co. & 2-224th Aviation
return home from Iraq**

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2007



Protecting, assisting and defending- A special thanks to the Soldiers and Airmen of the Virginia National Guard

By Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.
Adjutant General of Virginia

As we move ahead to meet the challenges here at home and around the world it is with deep gratitude that I reflect upon the outstanding performance of our Guardsmen.

These men and women have stepped forward to protect, assist, and defend against both a relentless enemy determined to do us harm and the forces of nature that know no boundaries.

Already this year we have seen our Guardsmen respond in the wake of a severe snow storm that struck the western part of the state.

Our Guardsmen are serving throughout Southwest Asia and in Bosnia and we know more deployments are coming.

Still our Guardsmen remain vigilant, dedicated and ready to serve the Commonwealth and our nation. There is no wonder that the Virginia Army National Guard enjoyed a net gain in assigned troop strength of 432 Soldiers in 2006, the largest gain in recent years.

When people see and hear about the great things our Guardsmen are doing, they want to be a part of it.

Those who serve are a special kind. No matter what we ask of them, they do it, and do it well.

This was apparent when, with a week's notice, over 400 Guardsmen volunteered to deploy to the Southwest



Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.

“When people see and hear about the great things our Guardsmen are doing, they want to be a part of it.”

- Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.
Adjutant General of Virginia

Border to assist border patrol agents in securing the boarder with Mexico in the southern part of Arizona.

It is this kind of dedication that enables the Virginia National Guard to rise to the occasion. Time after time, our Guardsmen have proven themselves, exhibiting the true essence

of the Warrior Ethos.

Earlier this year we welcomed home Guardsmen of the 654th Military Police Company and the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation who served meritoriously in Iraq.

The joy and happiness of that homecoming was tempered by the news of Staff Sgt. Darryl Booker and Col. Paul Kelly, who made the ultimate sacrifice in support of the war on terror.

While we mourn the loss of these brave Soldiers, we find comfort in knowing that they understood the danger, yet were willing to do whatever it took to protect home and country.

This serves as a startling reminder of the magnitude of what it is we are called upon to do.

Our mission success depends on Guardsman who despite the hardship and strain associated with deployment, step up to the plate and make things happen.

In his State of the Union Address President Bush said that our work in the world is based on a “timeless truth;” that is, “To whom much is given, much is required.”

There is no question that our Soldiers and Airman have given much, now it is up to us to do our part.

I encourage all of us to remember our Guardsmen, support them in every way that we can, and keep them in our prayers that they might be successful in their missions, victorious in battle, and return home safe and sound to their families and communities.

Kosovo continued from Page 7

and Massachusetts provide almost two thirds of those Soldiers, while other National Guard Soldiers from 28 different states and Puerto Rico provide personnel, as well as Soldiers and Airmen from the U.S. Army Reserve and active Army.

The U.S contingent of the task force is made up of an infantry battalion task force, a cavalry squadron task force, an aviation battalion task force, a military police battalion task force, and also has public affairs, medical support, explosive ordnance disposal, civil affairs, and military intelligence elements.

Kosovo has been under the protection and administration of the United Nations since 1999 after a NATO bombing campaign halted a Serbian crackdown on ethnic Albanian separatists in the southern province. The Kosovo Albanian majority in Kosovo wants nothing short of independence, while Serbia has vowed it will never allow for Kosovo's secession.

Compromise talks in Vienna ended March 10 in a stalemate, so a final status plan drafted by special envoy Marti Ahtisaari will be sent to the United Nations Security Council for approval by the end of the month. If approved, the plan would set Kosovo on the path to independence.

“We are Soldiers, not politicians,” Earhart said. “Our mission here is to make sure the people of Kosovo feel safe and secure while the final status process runs its course. While the international community debates what shape the final status will take, we are doing everything we can to make sure the people maintain their patience and confidence in the process.”

Earhart said MNTF(E) has not experienced any violence in their area as a direct result of the plan put forth by Ahtisaari. On Feb. 10, there were demonstrations in Kosovo's capitol of Pristina that turned violent, and two demonstrators were killed during the response from the United Nations Mission in Kosovo Police and the Kosovo Police Service. No MNTF(E) forces were involved in the response.

“We have had several explosions take place in our area of operations, but all indications point to the explosions being tied to intimidation by organized crime factions or infighting amongst political rivals. There is no evidence that any of the explosions were ethnically motivated or tied to a response to the Ahtisaari plan.”

Day to day operations for MNTF(E) involve sending out security patrols. Their presence shows the local population that KFOR is capable and ready in case they are needed.

MNTF(E) also has specially trained Liaison Monitoring Teams who work directly in a community with citizens and leaders to try and help them solve day to day problems they might be facing. LMTs also give the task force commander a sense of what is happening in the communities. The LMTs are a crucial element in gauging the “mood on the ground,” and often provide the commander with early warning indicators of any civil unrest.

“All the feedback we get is pretty positive,” said 1st Lt. Scott Drugo, the leader of one of MNTF(E) LMT teams. “People that have a problem come to us, and while we can't solve all the problems, we can help. If we help one person fix their problem, then others will be able to fix their problems. I was kind of surprised by



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, MNTF(E) Public Affairs
Soldiers from Task Force Red Dragon take up security positions outside a Serbian Orthodox Church in Biti e Poshtme/Donja Bitinja Feb. 12 as part of a capabilities demonstration.

how we were welcomed here. People are glad to see us.”

In addition to patrolling, MNTF(E) has a robust civil affairs program involved in a wide variety of humanitarian assistance projects ranging from school adoptions to medical assistance programs.

“Everywhere we go in our area of operations, we see Kosovo Serbian and Kosovo Albanians working together, living together and shopping together,” Earhart said. “We feel like the majority of people want peace, and they want to have jobs and a stronger economy. They realize that living in peace is the best way to accomplish those goals.”

Virginia National Guard Federal Deployments

# *	Unit	Where Deployed	Home Town
130	203rd RED HORSE Squadron	Southwest Asia	Virginia Beach
170	HHC, 29th Infantry Division	Kosovo	Fort Belvoir
294	1st Battalion., 116th Infantry Regiment	Kosovo	Various Locations
24	E Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion	Kosovo	Roanoke
60	192nd Fighter Wing, 200th Weather Flight and 203rd REDHORSE	Various locations	Sandston and Virginia Beach
55	Various units	Army Guard Readiness Center	
177	A Co, 116th Brigade Special Troops Battalion	Iraq	Fredericksburg

* All listings for numbers of Soldiers/Airmen are approximate.

News Briefs

Va. Guard Environmental Department honored with two national awards

The Virginia Army National Guard's Environmental Department was recently awarded two major national awards and one state award as a result of its commitment to the environment.

The Environmental Office manages the natural resources, cultural resources, and compliance programs at Fort Pickett, as well as all statewide facilities.

The office won two Department of the Army Environmental Security Awards, one for Cultural Resources and the other for Pollution Prevention.

The Cultural Resources Award recognizes the Cultural Resource Program's effectiveness and integrated approach by working with local, state, and academic partners. The Virginia Army National Guard has an "in-house" cultural resources team that does archaeology, historic building studies, cemetery surveys, local histories, and military history.

The other national award is for Pollution Prevention, which was unique because the team of the Environmental Office works together with the Fort Pickett Department of Public Works and Fort Pickett Range Operations Office to administer a very successful and innovative recycling program. Many pollution prevention measures are implemented at every National Guard facility, but the bulk of the pollution prevention measures takes place at the Fort Pickett Recycling Center which is operated by the Department of Public Works.

One of the many innovative measures employed at Fort Pickett is reconstituting and the subsequent reuse of spent anti-freeze at the Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site (MATES) facility. The Fort Pickett Recycling Center sells many miscellaneous supplies and equipment that are still in good condition to the local public.

The Virginia Army National Guard was also awarded an Environmental Excellence (E2) certification by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality for overall environmental excellence in all program areas at Fort Pickett as well as all

Virginia Guard recognizes Osbourn High School with trophy presentation



Photo courtesy of Virginia Army National Guard Recruiting

The Virginia Army National Guard and Maxpreps teamed up to award a trophy to Osbourn High School (Manassas) in recognition of the Eagles' football team ranking number one in the state of Virginia (Virginia High School League Division 6 Champions) and number 26 in the nation by Maxpreps. The trophy was presented on Feb. 6 during halftime of a home basketball game. The Virginia Army National Guard and Maxpreps firmly believe the Eagles' dedication, hard work, and ability to work as one cohesive team should be rewarded.

statewide facilities.

The E2 award recognizes organizations that are committed to environmental excellence through proactive management and continuous improvement. As a result of the E2 Award, the Virginia Army National Guard will receive state recognition, regulatory incentives, and permit cost savings.

The Virginia Army National Guard is proud of its excellent environmental program as the Guard works towards a sustainable future for its military mission at Fort Pickett and statewide.

'Here's to the Heroes' program returns to Busch Gardens

Any active duty, activated or drilling reservist, or National Guardsman is entitled to free admission under the "Here's to the

Heroes" program.

The servicemember just needs to register. They can do so by visiting http://commerce.4adventure.com/store/os_application.asp and submitting his or her information.

Or they can register by showing a Department of Defense photo ID in the entrance plaza of participating parks.

As many as three direct dependents of military personnel also are entitled to free admission. Dependents may take advantage of the offer without their service member, though an adult must accompany minor dependents.

The offer is valid for one complimentary single-day admission per person, per year, to one of the following Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks: SeaWorld Orlando, San Diego, or San Antonio; Busch Gardens Tampa Bay or Williamsburg; Sesame Place; Water Country USA; and Adventure Island.



Virginia GuardPost



SERVING THE ARMY AND AIR GUARD OF VIRGINIA

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2007

On the Cover



Soldiers from the 654th Military Police Company stand in formation during their homecoming ceremony Jan. 7 at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond. (Photo by Staff Sgt. A.J. Coyne, Virginia Guard Public Affairs)

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2-224th Soldiers, families get Valentine's treat



Photo by Capt. Dayna Rowden, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

1st Lt. Benjamin Cichorz gets a hug from his daughter at the 2-224th Aviation "welcome home" ceremony Feb. 15 in Sandston.

By Capt. Dayna Rowden
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

On the day following Valentine's Day, Feb. 15, the hearts of over 300 families beat wildly in anticipation of the return of the Virginia National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation, which had served over a year in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

After redeploying in Fort Dix, N.J., following their mission in Iraq, the Soldiers arrived to a cheering crowd of family, friends, and loved one at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Sandston.

The 2/224th entered active federal service on Oct. 18, 2005 and deployed to Fort Dix to prepare for its overseas deployment. The unit then deployed to Iraq in January 2006 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The Soldiers of the 2/224th flew over 18,000 flight hours supporting Marine Aircraft Group 16. As the only Army Aviation Unit supporting the Marine Corps in Iraq, the unit was recognized by U.S. Marine Corps Col. J.C. Kennedy as being "irreplaceable in theatre" and the "reason behind the success in the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force's Mission."

Maj. Gen. Robert Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, ceremoniously removed the "Punisher" patch from his shoulder, symbolizing the unit's safe return home.

Governor Timothy M. Kaine was present to express the gratitude of over 7.5 million Virginians for the dedication of the Soldiers and commended the unit for its exemplary service.

The anticipation reached a fever pitch as the families of the Soldiers waited in reverent silence as Sgt. Maj. Susan Bentley extolled the accomplishments of the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation and proudly exclaimed, "Punishers Rock!"

Lt. Col. Robert McMillin ordered the Soldiers to, "Hug your families. Go Home, and put your feet up." As soon as he dismissed his Soldiers, they excitedly followed those orders. After being separated for more than a year, they deserved it.



Family members and friends were on hand to welcome the "Punishers" home after more than a year away.



Photos by Capt. Dayna Rowden, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Chaplain honors fallen heroes with "field of flags"

By Petty Officer 3rd Class John Magsipoc
JTF Civil Support Public Affairs

A miniature forest of flags began unfurling on the front lawn of a Virginia Beach church last month.

Placed one by one, the field of more than 3,000 flags was assembled to honor service members killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Bell, pastor of Providence Presbyterian Church and chaplain at Joint Task Force Civil Support on Fort Monroe, Va., said the field of flags outside his church door serves as a symbol of appreciation to troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Next to the flags is a display board that bears the rank, name, hometown and state of each American death.

"Each flag represents a life lost in the Afghanistan and Iraq war as well as that person's loss to their family and community," Bell said. "A few of the flags here represent the men I conducted memorial ceremonies for while I was in Iraq."

In 2005, the Virginia Army National Guard chaplain deployed to LSA Anaconda/Balad, Iraq for nine months and served with the 40th Corps Support Group of the California Army National Guard.

He first saw the flag exhibit in Iraq in a picture sent to him in December 2005 by his church members, who hosted the display last year. He shared the emotionally moving picture not only with the commander of his unit but also with the general under whom he served.

"They were all very impressed by a congregation that would honor in a specific and visual way the sacrifice we were all making at that time while we were in Iraq," Bell said. "I was honored to be the pastor of a church that, while divided in its opinions on the war, is united in its support of the men and women who have been sent to fight in it."

Nancy Lindgren, a church member who helped bring the "field of flags" to Virginia Beach, hopes the display gets people's attention as they go down Providence Road.

"It's very touching," Lindgren said. "I've talked to many who found loved ones



Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class John Magsipoc, JTF Civil Support Public Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer William J. Outlaw has logged over 10,000 flight hours since his military career began in 1966. He is currently serving with 2-224th Aviation in Iraq.

on the board and I know it's very difficult for them to see that here, but I can't even begin to understand the grief that they feel."

The display arrived Dec. 16. Bell, Lindgren, church members and volunteers spent a day planting the two-foot-tall flags. Lindgren said the display has attracted hundreds of visitors across Hampton Roads region in Virginia. She said visitors left gifts and mementos: heartwarming notes, letters, condolence cards, and personal possessions.

"We had a mother of a fallen soldier come back and give me a bracelet of her son with his name engraved on it," Lindgren said. "It's so wonderful to know that strangers are thinking of our soldiers and honoring them in such a patriotic way."

Norfolk resident Evelyn Hill, a widow of a World War II and Vietnam veteran, was impressed and touched by the display. She drove to the Providence Presbyterian church to take pictures of the display after seeing it on a local TV news report.

"This is a way of taking a stand and showing patriotism to support our troops as much as I can and I don't mind showing it," said Hill, who was attending a church service at the Providence Presbyterian Church for the first time. "I commend this

group for putting up this display."

The display was dedicated in October 2005 by Members of the Memorial Garden Committee of the Somers Congregational Church in Somers, Conn. Lindgren's sister is a member of that congregation.

Lindgren's sister came up with the idea of loaning the field of flags to the Providence Presbyterian Church after conditions in Somers made the ground too hard to insert new flags and was difficult to maintain.

The exhibit has been traveling to different locations, mostly in the east coast. The congregation put out a flag each time a soldier has been killed in Iraq or Afghanistan. They check the Defense Department's website to update their numbers.

Lindgren said she welcomes everyone to visit the display, which is scheduled to remain at the Providence church lawn until mid February. The field of flags exhibit is displayed at the Providence Presbyterian Church at 5497 Providence Road in Virginia Beach.

"I tell them how brave I think they (the servicemembers) are," Lindgren said. "They're heroes in my eyes that they have given a sacrifice and everybody has been so positive and appreciative when they see the flags."



Photo courtesy of Virginia Marksmanship Training Unit

Sgt. Stephen G. Adt, Headquarters Company, 116th Brigade Troops Battalion, negotiates an obstacle as part of the combat rifle portion of the 2006 Winston P. Wilson matches.

Marksmanship Training Unit Soldiers aim for excellence

Courtesy of Virginia National Guard Marksmanship Training Unit

The Virginia National Guard Marksmanship Training Unit recently sent 12 Virginia Army Guard Soldiers to the 35th annual Winston P. Wilson Championships Nov. 13-17, 2006 at Camp Robinson, Ark.

The Soldiers, hailing from Joint Force Headquarters, Virginia and the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, competed against over 350 other shooters in combat rifle and combat pistol matches throughout the week.

Maj. Anthony Caruso distinguished himself by winning the second place novice trophy in Match 221, Combat Pistol Excellence in Competition Match. Caruso was part of the four-Soldier Joint Forces Headquarters team that won the 2006 TAG Combat Pistol Match for Virginia.

Maj. Mike Martin, State Marksmanship Coordinator for Virginia, was awarded the Chief of the National Guard Bureau "Chief's 50" badge by placing in the top 15 pistol shooters in the nation. The "Chief's 50" is awarded annually to the top 35 rifle shooters and the top 15 pistol shooters at the national competition. Martin was the first Virginia National Guardsman to earn this coveted marksmanship award in over six years.

The objective of the WPW Championships is to promote the growth and development of state level marksmanship training by providing an ultimate goal for the states to participate in high level competition. The first WPW Rifle and Pistol Matches were conducted at Camp Robinson, North Little Rock, Ark., on Sept.

4 - 9, 1971. Thirty-two states and Puerto Rico each participated that year.

The WPW Championships have grown a great deal since their inception. During the 1976 matches, the light machine gun was added as a discipline, and in 1991 a sniper competition was added to the match program.

For the first time since its' beginning, the matches were cancelled in 2005 due to the nationwide mobilization of military troops and equipment in support of Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

Now that the competition is over, the MTU begins the yearly process of selecting and training competitive shooters to represent the Commonwealth during the 2007 training year. The Adjutant General's Sniper match will be conducted March 3-4, the TAG Combat Rifle match will be conducted April 14-15, the TAG Combat Pistol Match will be conducted May 5-6, and the TAG Machine Gun Match will be conducted June 16-17. All matches will be held at Fort Pickett, Va.

"All matches are conducted in a [competitive learning] environment, with the ultimate goal of the competitive process being to improve readiness, battlefield effectiveness and survivability," Martin said. "Our ultimate goal at the MTU is quite simple; we want to train the Commonwealth's Soldiers and airmen to be the most lethal marksmen in the world."

Soldiers and airmen needing information about participating in the 2007 TAG Marksmanship Matches should contact Maj. Mike Martin, Virginia National Guard State Marksmanship Coordinator, at michael.martin22@us.army.mil for details.

Virginia welcomes home 654th MP Company from Iraq

By Sgt. 1st Class Michael Hampton
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

More than 150 families received belated holiday gifts Jan. 7, when members of the 654th Military Police Company returned home after serving over a year in support of "Operation Iraqi Freedom."

Families, friends and love ones were all smiles when Soldiers arrived at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond on several buses from Fort Dix, N.J., where the Soldiers redeployed after completing their mission in Iraq.

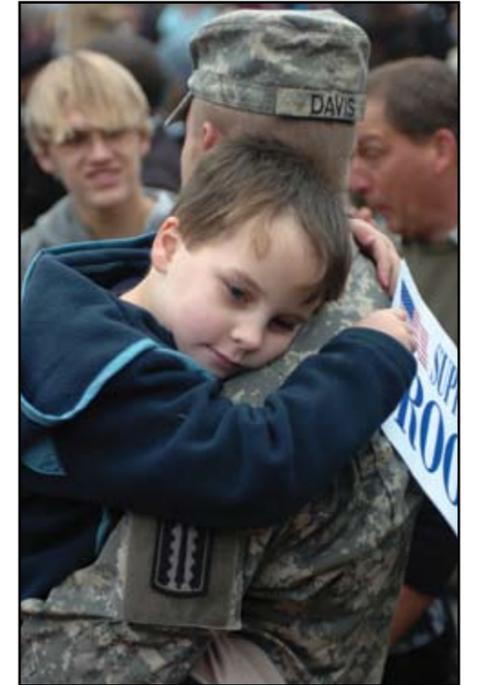
The 654th entered active federal service on Oct. 18, 2005. After completing several months of intensive training at Fort Dix, Soldiers of the 654th headed to Iraq where they served as security forces for dignitaries, VIP's and others, in and around the "Green Zone," as well as other parts of Baghdad.

The 654th entered Baghdad at a time when an escalation of violence had been seen in the area, making the mission that much more important and dangerous.

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine, who visited the Soldiers in March of 2006, was on hand for the event. Kaine said the Soldiers were proud and felt good about what they were doing. He expressed gratitude for their contribution and thanked the families for their sacrifice.

U.S. Rep. Eric I. Cantor, R-7th was also on hand for the event and thanked the Soldiers for answering the call when America needed them the most.

Families of the Soldiers waded through several brief speeches and the retiring of the colors in great anticipation. Once the order to dismiss was given, a wave of hugs flooded the pavilion as Soldiers and families were reunited after being separated for more than a year.



Photos by Staff Sgt. A.J. Coyne, Virginia Guard PAO

Family members and friends were on hand to welcome home Soldiers of the 654th Military Police Company as they returned home to Virginia Jan. 7.



Tears shed, hugs shared as nearly 200 Virginia Guard Soldiers head to Iraq



Photos by Staff Sgt. A.J. Coyne, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Wives, children, other family members and friends said goodbye to the nearly 200 Soldiers of the 116th IBCT as they shipped out to Fort Dix, N.J., to begin their 18 month deployment.



By Staff Sgt. A.J. Coyne
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

It was an emotional scene Jan. 7 as a throng of friends, family members, and other loved ones gathered to say goodbye to nearly 200 Virginia National Guard Soldiers activated in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Approximately 177 troops from the Fredericksburg-based Headquarters Company, 116th Brigade Troops Battalion and A Company, 116th Brigade Troops Battalion, and the Leesburg/Manassas-based C Co., 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team are being ordered to active federal service for 18 months.

Following a brief formation and ceremony at the Fredericksburg armory, which featured Secretary of Public Safety John Marshall, Maj. Gen. Robert Newman, the Adjutant General of Virginia, and local mayors, the Soldiers exchanged hugs and kisses with their loved ones before boarding buses bound for Fort Dix, N.J. From there they will prepare for overseas deployment.

The Guardsmen are being ordered to active federal service for 18 months and the Secretary of the Army may extend this period up to a total of 24 months based on operational needs or other requirements of the service.



Soldier's imagery scores in Army Arts & Crafts

By Tim Hippi
U.S. Army Family and MWR Command
Public Affairs

A Soldier combined her military experience and passion for art to win several awards in the 2006 Army Arts and Crafts Contest.

Sgt. 1st Class Anne Burnley photographed troops at the Army National Guard Maneuver Training Center on Fort Pickett, Va. She later enhanced the digital photos with paint, computer technology and her fascination with texture and geometric asymmetry to create award-winning images.

Burnley took first place in the mixed media two-dimensional category for accomplished artists with "Field Artillery." Her water-base painting, "Firing," earned second-place honors, and her drawing, "Moment," received an honorable mention.

"I work to capture fleeting moments and the essence of an experience when I paint and draw," said Burnley, who is working on a master's of interdisciplinary studies in art at Virginia Commonwealth University. "I love to use paint, prismacolor pencils and



Photo courtesy of Charles A. Harris

Sgt. 1st Class Anne Burnley, standing beside her water-based painting, "Firing," holds a certificate of recognition issued by the United States Army MWR for winning entries in the 2006 Arts and Crafts Contest.

the emulsion-transfer process to convey my ideas.

"The images that I create represent visual artifacts of condensed, synthesized, transformed and crystallized fragments of authentic personal experiences," continued Burnley, who said she feels fortunate to incorporate images of Soldiers into her artwork. "This privilege is exciting, fascinating, rewarding and challenging. I



Sgt. 1st Class Anne Burnley's "Field Artillery" earned first place in the mixed media two-dimensional category for accomplished artists in the 2006 Army Arts and Crafts Contest.

give viewers telltale glimpses of moments that I experience as an artist, an observer and a Soldier."

The Army Arts and Crafts Contest is an annual, juried competition of two- and three-dimensional artwork with separate categories for novice and accomplished artists and craftspeople. Their work is entered in categories for ceramics, drawings, fibers and textiles, glass, metals and jewelry, oil-base painting, water-base painting, wood, and mixed media, both two- and three-dimensional.

The accomplished division is for competitors who have gained skills and knowledge through formal courses leading to credit in college or art schools. Those whose skills have not been acquired in formal education leading to college credit or a degree can compete in the novice division.

There were 385 entries from military installations around the world, including 253 in the novice division and 132 from accomplished artists. First-place winners received \$300, runners-up \$200, and third-place finishers \$100.

For details, write to USAFMWRC Attn: FMWR-CR (Arts & Crafts), 4700 King Street - 4th floor, Alexandria, VA, 22302-4418 or send an e-mail to art@cfsc.army.mil.

34th CST trains alongside other Va. responders

By Lt. Col. Jeffrey Hice
34th Civil Support Team

The 34th Civil Support Team conducted Catastrophic Incident Response Training Feb. 5- 9 with personnel from the Virginia State Police Counter Terrorism and Criminal Interdiction Unit, Chesterfield County Hazardous Materials Team and the Virginia State Medical Examiner's office. The week-long drill conducted at the Center for National Response (CNR) in West Virginia focused on a scenario involving an explosive and chemical incident producing widespread damage, casualties and death.

This training, conducted in freezing temperatures during a significant snow storm, fully integrated these resources into a combined response team under a unified



Photo courtesy of 34th CST

Personnel from the 34th Civil Support Team, Virginia State Police and Chesterfield HazMat return from a combined entry for reconnaissance of the blast scene.

command.

The 29 personnel participating from the four State Agencies practiced HazMat incident reconnaissance, technical decontamination, casualty evacuation and decon-

tamination, deceased body decontamination and recovery, crime scene evidence preservation and collection, laboratory analysis and chemical - biological agent identification.

Virginia Air Guard Raptors head to Red Flag

From Staff Sources

The 94th Fighter Squadron deployed in February for Red Flag at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. Red Flag is an air combat training exercise designed to test pilots' and air support crews' ability to affectively respond to real-world combat scenarios.

This was the first deployment to Red Flag for the 94th FS with F-22s.



U.S. Air Force photos by Staff Sgt. Samuel Rogers

Above- Lt. Col. Dirk Smith (far right), commander of the 94th FS, and Capt. Merrick Baroni, a pilot in the 94th FS, begin start up procedures in their respective F-22 Raptors Feb. 3 at Langley Air Force Base.

Right- Maj. Patrick Deconcini performs a preflight inspection of an F-22 Raptor Feb. 3 at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia. Deconcini is a 192nd Virginia Air National Guard pilot with the 94th Fighter Squadron.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, MNTF(E) Public Affairs

Above- Soldiers from Task Force Red Dragon take up positions outside a Serbian Orthodox Church in Mogilla / Mogila Jan. 19 as part of a capabilities demonstration conducted by Multi-National Task Force (East). The purpose of the demonstration was to show the ability of MNTF(E) to rapidly deploy anywhere in their area of operations. Bottom - Staff Sgt. Stanley Britton (right) and 1st Lt. Scott Drugo assist in pulling up a water pump in the Viti/Vitina municipality Jan. 17. Britton and Drugo are members of Liaison Monitoring Team 4 whose mission is to assist communities in the task force area of operations as well as act as the eyes and ears of the MNTF(E) commander. For more photos of MNTF(E) in action, visit www.kfor8.com.

Virginia Guard Soldiers stand ready in Kosovo

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
MNTF(E) Public Affairs

As the political leaders and diplomats debate the final status of the Serbian province of Kosovo, National Guard Soldiers from across the country stand ready to help maintain a safe and secure environment in the troubled region.

The United States is the lead nation for the Kosovo Force's Multi-National Task Force (East), which also has units from Armenia, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Ukraine. MNTF(E) operates under the flag of the Army National Guard's 29th Infantry Division, headquartered in Fort Belvoir, Va., and is commanded by Brig. Gen. Douglas Earhart.

The United States contingent of MNTF(E) is made up of approximately 1,500 personnel. The National Guard of Virginia



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, MNTF(E) Public Affairs

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Tajik NCOs learn new responsibilities during U.S.-led exchange

By Staff Sgt. Alex Licea
U.S. Army Central Public Affairs

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan - The saying "old habits never die" could be a good way to describe the current Tajikistan Soviet-style run military. From its troop-leading procedures to its training methods, it's a trend they're slowly continuing to improve on.

As part of that process, 30 Soldiers representing four departments of the Tajikistan National Army gathered here to hone their skills and learn new levels of leadership as part of a Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development information exchange with U.S. Soldiers assigned to the 183rd Regional Training Institute, Virginia National Guard.

The two-week program, which concluded Jan. 30 with a field training exercise, was facilitated by the Atlanta-based Third Army, U.S. Army Central Civil-Military Affairs

section. Third Army works with nations from the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia to organize military training exchanges through its Theater Security Cooperation program.

For this military exchange, the Virginia-based troops give young Tajik NCOs and cadets a first-hand look about the responsibilities of the U.S. Army NCO system. The NCO Corps depends on its senior enlisted personnel training their subordinates on day-to-day operations as well the overall military picture. Currently, the Tajik Army puts all responsibilities on its officers to train its Soldiers on all aspects of the Army.

With help from translators, Tajik Soldiers are taught on a number of NCO duties such as leadership, responsibilities, individual movement techniques, team movement drills and reacting to enemy forces.

According to Virginia National Guardsman

Maj. Neal Edmonds, the establishment of an NCO Corps to the Tajik Army is a slow process that will take time.

"It will take them [Tajik Soldiers] a period to adjust to this type of structure," he said. "I think we have a good partnership, and the Tajik leadership is dedicated to making this system work for them."

For the past three years, Edmonds has been the coordinator for the Virginia National Guard-Tajikistan state partnership program. He works with Tajik officials to synchronize training events and other exchanges between the two.

For Virginia National Guardsman Staff Sgt. Todd Payne this is his third NCOPD. He said it presents the chance to teach and influence a foreign military in something he cherishes.

"It would be a thrill for me if they would one day develop the NCO system," said the native of Amherst, Va. "To think I was part of helping them build an NCO Corps would be an honor."

For Tajik junior Sgt. Bobur Mahmalov, assigned to the Tajik National Guard, the chance to work with American NCOs was an experience to remember.

"They have been teaching us new and useful information that I want to pass down to my Soldiers," said Mahmador. "Because of this training, I have already started my own training program to take back to my unit."

The information exchange between the two nations will continue until 2012, and in the eyes of Edmonds the future is only getting brighter.

"I really see them building an NCO Corps," he said. "It is just a matter of time and precedence."

An advanced NCOPD is scheduled in May. The class will have returning graduates of prior NCOPD classes, and will stress on the roles of an NCO into a force.



Photo by Staff Sgt. A.J. Coyne, Virginia Guard PAO
Junior Sgt. Bobur Mahmalov asks Virginia Guard Soldiers a question during the NCO exchange.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Licea, U.S. Army Central Public Affairs

A Tajik Soldier asks Staff Sgt. Todd Payne a question during the day-long field training exercise that concluded the course.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Licea, U.S. Army Central Public Affairs

Above- Sgt. 1st Class Roger Krause leads a group of Tajik Soldiers in formation before breaking off into tactical formations. Below- Sgt. 1st Class Matt Brown leads a class detailing leadership and its role in the NCO corps.



Photo by Staff Sgt. A.J. Coyne, Virginia Guard Public Affairs