

The Office of the Adjutant General  
State of Virginia  
ATTN: Public Affairs Office  
Bldg. 316 - Fort Pickett  
Blackstone, Virginia, 23824

Mail to:

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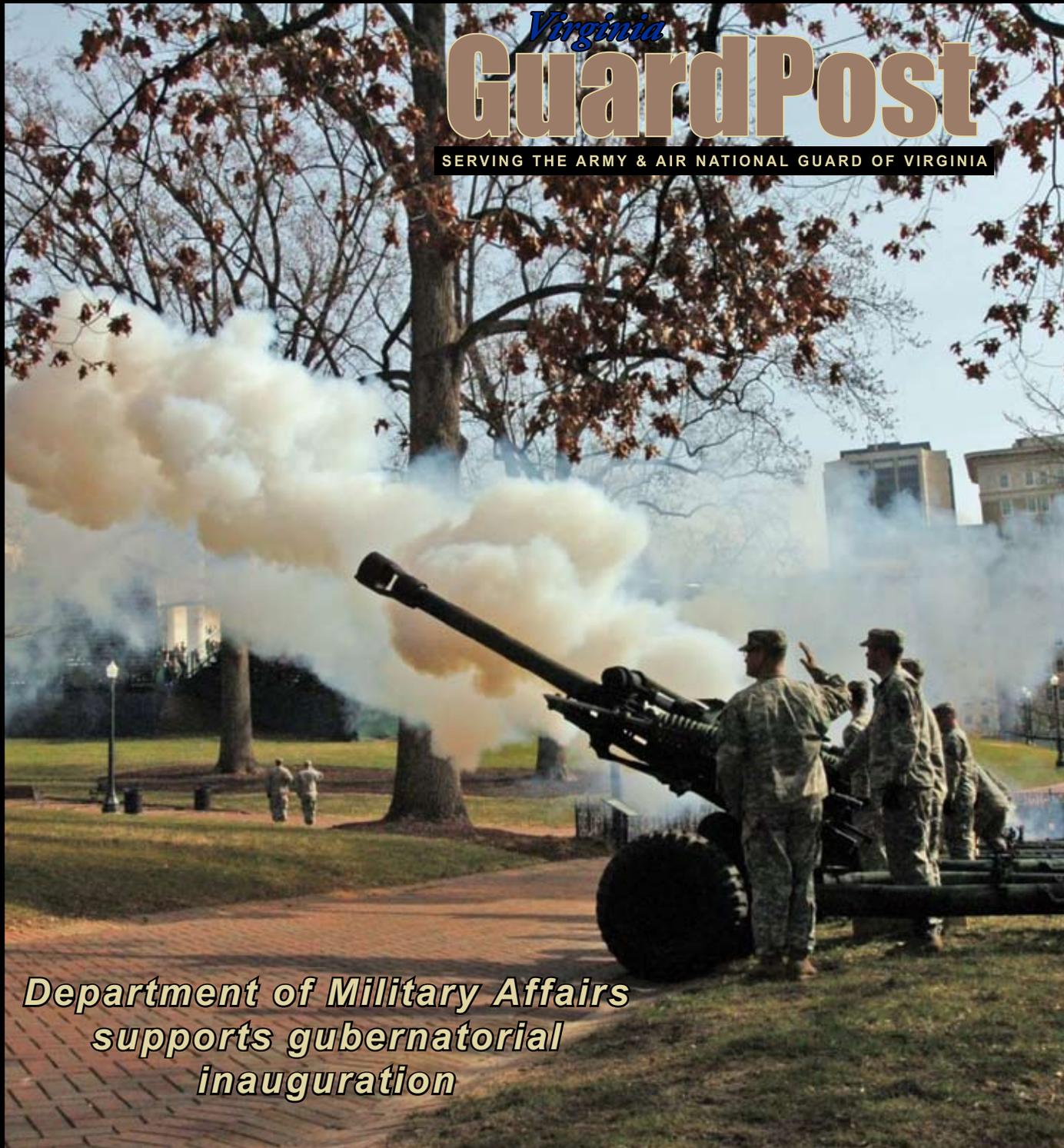


*Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard Public Affairs*

**Soldiers from the Fredericksburg-based 116th Brigade Special Troops Battalion assist first responders from the Stafford County Fire and Rescue Department during a winter storm Feb. 6, 2010.**

# Virginia GuardPost

SERVING THE ARMY & AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF VIRGINIA



*Department of Military Affairs  
supports gubernatorial  
inauguration*

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2010



**Va. Soldier  
gets warm  
welcome at  
Conn. school**

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**229th MPs  
help protect  
VP Biden in  
Iraq**

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## FROM THE TOP



## Virginia National Guard begins and ends 2009 on duty assisting the citizens of commonwealth

When Bob McDonnell took the oath of office Jan. 16 to become the 71st Governor of Virginia, approximately 300 personnel from the Virginia Department of Military Affairs were on duty in Richmond supporting the inauguration. Soldiers from the Virginia Army National Guard, Airmen from the Virginia Air National Guard and members of the Virginia Defense Force conducted a variety of missions including providing ceremonial music, firing a 19-gun salute, conducting a flyover with F-22 Raptors and providing command and control of the inaugural parade elements. A formation of Virginia Guard Soldiers and Airmen also led the inaugural parade.

It wasn't soon after when the governor saw first hand the positive impact of the Virginia Guard in a different situation: on state active duty from Jan. 29 through Feb. 12 assisting with the response effort following a series of historic snow storms that blanketed Virginia. The governor recognized the hard work of the Guard along with many of Virginia's state employees and agencies during the response, and while there were countless success stories, there are a few outstanding stories that really capture the spirit of the Guard's service to the citizens of the commonwealth during their time of need.

In Luray, Sgt. Derek Braswell and Spc. Sean Wheeler from the Woodstock-based Company A, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team and volunteer firefighters from Company 1, Luray Volunteer Fire Department were dispatched Feb. 6 to aid a family of two adults and two toddlers, ages 2 and 3, in Rileyville stranded in their home without power. As they got closer to the family's home, the Soldiers and firefighters realized their military Humvee could not make it through the snow that was two to three feet high and decided to proceed to the house



Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.

on foot. After the long hike to reach the family, the two children were placed in the Soldiers' military backpacks for transport back down the mountain to safety.

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*I think we made a very positive first impression on our new governor, and we have clearly shown how the the Virginia National Guard is a valuable member of the state's emergency response team.*

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In Northern Virginia, Sgt. Teo Ortiz, Pfc. Demetrius Ragland and Pfc. William Martin from the Norfolk-based Battery B and Sgt. Melvin Terry and Spc. Brandon Green of the Hampton-based Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery, 116th Brigade Combat Team exercised their own initiative to assist Fairfax County firefighters as they battled an apartment blaze on Feb. 8. The Soldiers

had completed their dinner meal, heard the sirens and proceeded to the fire scene to offer their assistance. They assisted with the evacuation of a wounded firefighter, carried equipment and dug through the snow to find the fire hydrant used to put out the fire. The Soldiers also assisted with applying salt on the road and at an intersection near the scene and helped drain and roll up 500 feet of hose after the fire was put out.

Also in Northern Virginia, Staff Sgt. Marsha Cox, Sgt. Roger Miller, Sgt. Damion Alexander, Spc. Jordan Amulong, Spc. Brian Esplin, and Spc. Tony McMullen from the Norfolk-based Company G, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team were assigned to recovery operations at the Alexandria Emergency Operations Center from Feb. 9 to 11. During that time they dug out more than 30 fire hydrants, hand pushed civilian automobiles stuck in the snow, gave an elderly man a ride after he had walked 10 blocks in the snow, transported 25 cots to a Red Cross facility for men, women and children seeking shelter because of the storm, and shoveled snow off the roof of several fire houses to prevent a roof collapse, which had already occurred at three similar structures.

These Soldiers well represent the outstanding service of all of our Guard personnel who served the commonwealth during the severe winter weather, whether they were out in the field, coordinating for logistics support or tracking the Guard's effort in the operations center. I think we made a very positive first impression on our new governor, and we have clearly shown how the the Virginia National Guard is a valuable member of the state's emergency response team. Thanks to everyone's hard work and a special thanks to the families, employers and communities for their support.

## News Briefs

### 2nd annual Big Daddy 10k helps Soldiers honor fallen comrade

Approximately 120 runners attended the second annual Big Daddy 10k road race at Newport News Park Jan. 23 in honor of fallen Virginia National Guard Soldier Staff Sgt. Darryl D. Booker, who was killed when a UH-60 Blackhawk he was in crashed Jan. 20, 2007 near Baghdad.

The 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment, Booker's unit, sent 15 Soldiers to assist with the race and even provided a UH-60 Blackhawk to remind runners of the reasons behind the race. The Soldiers assisted with race registration, acted as course marshals and handed out awards after the race.

All proceeds from the race will go to a perpetual scholarship created by members of the 224th in Booker's name.

"It was thought by our guys to go out there and raise money for a perpetual

scholarship," said Capt. Windle A. Day, Battalion aero medical physician's assistant and race director. "Our unit did multiple fundraisers. We did a golf outing, we did fun runs and just sought donations."

Overall, more than \$30,000 were raised to start the \$1,000 perpetual scholarship awarded annually. Events such as the Big Daddy 10k were established to increase the amount given.

"We're going to continue this race so we can increase the award that's given to the students," said Day. "He [Booker] was one of our guys; He's one of our brothers, so we're here supporting him."

### 203d RED HORSE travels to Fla. for Operational Readiness Exercise

Nearly 70 Airmen with the 203d RED HORSE Squadron deployed to Camp Blanding, Fla., Jan. 27, ready to take part in an Operational Readiness Exercise with their sister

unit, the 202nd RED HORSE Squadron.

Unit members met before dawn at the 203d Headquarters, located on the State Military Reservation, before being bused to Naval Air Station Oceana for their flight to Florida.

This is the first of two OREs that the units will conduct together in advance of their Operational Readiness Inspection, scheduled for this spring.

The 203d team, led by the 203d RHS commander, Lt.Col. Pete Garner, will join forces with nearly 100 members of the 202nd at Camp Blanding. Every 203d duty section is represented on the deployment – from vehicle maintenance and engineering to equipment operations and support services.

"The goal for each ORE/ORI is to do better than we did last time. We are always striving to improve," noted Lt. Col. Steven Phillips, 203d Base civil engineer.

The 202nd/203d's last ORI took place early in 2006 and

was held at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach.

Unit members were eager to go. Their priorities for the deployment ranged from: "Be prepared" and "get in as much training as possible" to "be safe and stay injury free."

Col. Paul Julian, Virginia Air National Guard State Headquarters, went on the deployment as an observer.

"The units' focus for this deployment is on preparation and practice for the upcoming ORI," Julian said. "This is a great opportunity for the 202nd/203d to practice together and to refine their processes and war skills."

The last time members from both units worked with each other was from November 2006 through May 2007 when the 202nd/203d performed as the lead unit for hundreds of U.S. military engineers deployed to multiple locations across Southwest Asia in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

For more on these stories, visit <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/newsindex.html>

## Virginia National Guard Federal Deployments

# *	Unit	Where Deployed	Home Town
400	1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment	Camp Shelby, Miss.,	Lynchburg
150	229th Military Police Company	Iraq	Virginia Beach
5	134th Chaplain Support Team	Southwest Asia	Fort Pickett
18	Det. 2, Co B, 777th Aviation Support Battalion	Kosovo	Sandston
17	Det. 26, Operational Support Airlift Command	Southwest Asia	Sandston
20	192nd Maintenance Group	Saudi Arabia	Langley Air Force Base
25	192nd Intelligence Squadron	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Langley Air Force Base
75	Various Virginia Army Guard Units	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Various Locations
10	Various Virginia Air Guard Units	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Various Locations

\* All listings for numbers of Soldiers/Airmen are approximate as of *February 5, 2010*

# RTI troops teach MP skills to Guard Soldiers, Reservists

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Instructors from the Virginia National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute have been busy training 12 National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers from across the region to become Military Police at Fort Pickett, Va., since Jan. 31 as part of the RTI's MP reclassification course.

During Phase I of the course, which ran through Feb. 13, the Soldiers learned the basic law and order skills that will transfer them from their current military occupational specialty in to the field of military law enforcement, according to Staff Sgt. Michelle Smith, senior instructor.

The students were given classroom instruction on various incidents they would be expected to react to while working as MPs in the field.

They learned to respond to domestic violence calls, sexual assault calls, individuals driving under the influence, burglaries, traffic control and a myriad

of crimes seen on and off military installations.

Once the students have been given the lessons they must then go out and apply the knowledge in reality-based scenarios designed to test the student's comprehension of the lecture.

"We'll give them a scenario. We have the Provost Marshall Office set up in our office building and we have a desk sergeant and he will dispatch the students to the scene of the crime," said Smith. "They'll have to respond like they are on a real call."

"They'll go through all the necessary procedures, obtain all the information, recording everything and then decide which actions they'll take, who they'll notify and what paperwork they will be filling out."

Several of the situations the students run through have varying outcomes based on how the Soldiers react to the role-players during the scenarios.

"Usually with the domestic we make it an apprehension so that they are learning



**A student at the MP reclassification course takes notes while questioning a detainee while on an assault call during the scenario-based training.**

how to apprehend and handcuff a person then do all their searching techniques," she said. "These are the scenarios you would see on any base. You look at the blotter and there are the domestics and the rapes."

Following the first phase, the 12 Soldiers moved directly into the second phase Feb. 14 where the emphasis shifts from law and order to focusing on more Soldier-oriented skills such as qualifying on squad automatic weapons, crew-served weapons and room clearing techniques.

In phase II, which graduated Feb. 27, the students go to the M-9 range, the Mk-19 range and the M-249 range. They focus on convoy escort lanes, VIP escorts and setting up road blocks and tactical control points, according to Staff Sgt. Danny Warren, a course instructor.

The Soldiers also conduct a multi-day military operations in urban terrain exercise focusing on upper and lower window entry, building clearing, approaching a building and moving as a fire team.

"As highly deployable as we are as National Guardsmen and Reservists, the MOUT training will probably play more of a role than the law and order," said Warren.

"You could be out on a convoy escort 100 miles from a regular base and they may tell you they just had a rape of a Soldier at a location and you need to go work it; these skills will come into play."



*Photos by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard Public Affairs*

**Two Soldiers discuss their plan of action while responding to a call during an exercise during MP reclassification course taught by the 3rd Battalion, 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute at Fort Pickett, Va.**



# Virginia GuardPost



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JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2010

## On the Cover



Soldiers from the Richmond-based Battery A, 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team fire a ceremonial 19-gun salute to welcome the new commander in chief of the Virginia National Guard. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class A.J. Coyne, Virginia Guard Public Affairs)

### **The Adjutant General**

*Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.*

### **Chief of Public Affairs**

*Maj. Cotton Puryear  
cotton.puryear@us.army.mil*

### **Army Guard Public Affairs Officer**

*Capt. Matt Nowak  
matthew.nowak@us.army.mil*

### **Air Guard Public Affairs Officer**

*Lt. Col. Debbie Magaldi  
deborah.magaldi@ang.af.mil*

### **GuardPost Editor**

*Sgt. 1st Class A.J. Coyne  
andrew.coyne@us.army.mil*

### **Public Affairs Staff**

*Sgt. Terra Gatti  
Sgt. Andrew H. Owen*

### **Public Affairs Office location**

**Bldg. 316 - Fort Pickett  
Blackstone, Virginia, 23824  
434-298-6107**

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## Virginia GuardPost

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# Lynchburg-based infantry battalion departs Virginia

**Maj. Cotton Puryear**  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia National Guard's Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team conducted a departure ceremony Jan. 8 at the Schilling Center at Liberty University in Lynchburg to mark the official start of federal active duty service for approximately 400 Soldiers. The unit is expected to have a security force mission in Iraq.

"Like you Soldiers of today, we were well-trained, tough and ready to do our duty," said Bob Slaughter, a World War II veteran who served in the 116th Infantry on D-Day. "Our country was behind us all the way, and so were our hometowns and families. We did our jobs as best we could, and to have done less was unthinkable. I know you feel the same way. You make this citizen-Soldier proud."

Slaughter served in Company D of the 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division and was in the first wave of troops to storm the beaches of Normandy on D-Day. He was also instrumental in establishing the D-Day Memorial in Bedford. More than 10 other World War II veterans were on hand for the ceremony.

"My message this morning is very simple: thank you," said Rep. Tom Perriello, D-5th District. "Thank you to all of our troops for your courage, for your sacrifice and for standing up to defend the freedoms that all of us back home enjoy." Perriello was the first of the speakers at the ceremony that included Rep. Bob Goodlatte, R-6th District, Lynchburg Mayor Joan Foster and Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia.

"I can't tell you how proud I am of each one of your Soldiers," Newman said. "What these guys have done is nothing short of amazing." Newman explained that the unit received only about 75 days notice to mobilize for the mission and he commended both the unit's leadership and their confidence in the ability of the unit's Soldier to be able to perform the mission.

"This is not an easy mission," Newman said. "It wasn't on your calendar, but I can

tell you that we have had each one of you stand tall to make this mission a success. It increases my pride and confidence in the Virginia Soldiers that make up this unit and others throughout the commonwealth of their ability to take on any mission whether it is in Iraq or in the valley of Virginia like we did in the recent snow storm."

After the departure ceremony, the unit reported to Camp Shelby, Miss. to conduct mobilization training for approximately 45 to 60 days before deploying to Iraq. The battalion will be attached to the Louisiana National Guard's 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team for the deployment.

Goodlatte explained that he has visited Iraq three different times and has seen the results of the work of those who have served there. "I see each time the great work to make that country a stable place, to make that country free, and your work has gone a long way to make a brighter future not only for the people of the Middle East but to make the entire world a more secure place," he said.

The mobilization order calls for the official mobilization of the Lynchburg-based Headquarters Company, the Bedford and Farmville-based A Company and the Lexington and Clifton Forge-based B Company. Soldiers from the Christiansburg and Radford-based C Company and the Pulaski and Martinsville-based D Company were also alerted to support the mobilization.

"I am not going to speak to the Soldiers, but I am going to speak on their behalf," said Lt. Col. Scott Smith, commander of 1st Battalion. "They would say they count themselves lucky to be Americans, to be citizens of the greatest nation on earth ... how blessed we are to have the support of our friends and families and



*Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs*

**A Soldier with 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team receives a goodbye hug Jan. 8 in Lynchburg before departing for Camp Shelby, Miss., where the unit will train before heading to Iraq.**

communities. The men would describe to you the honor it brings to wear the uniform of the United States and serve our country. They would tell you they serve in the greatest communities the nation has to offer."

Smith thanked the families for their support. "Without you and your unparalleled support we could not do this," he said. "Everything we accomplish this year will be as a team and accomplished with you."

The battalion last mobilized for peacekeeping duty in Kosovo from August 2006 to November 2007. Many Soldiers in the battalion were previously mobilized for duty at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba from November 2002 to September 2003 when the unit was designated 2nd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment.

Approximately 130 1st Battalion Soldiers from Bedford, Clifton Forge, Covington, Christiansburg, Lexington, Pulaski, Salem, Radford and Roanoke were assigned to Company C, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team for combat duty in Afghanistan from March 2004 to July 2005. Other individual Soldiers from the battalion have taken part in mobilizations throughout the state.

# Joint Sustainment Center supports Virginia National Guard state emergency response operations

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

In a conference room of the Virginia National Guard Joint Operations Center three colonels from the joint staff set up shop to provide sustainment to all Department of Military Affairs personnel serving on state active duty in response to winter storms that made many areas of the commonwealth inaccessible in the early days of February.

The J-1 (joint director of manpower and personnel), J-4 (joint director of logistics) and J-8 (joint resource officer) took control of the conference room to carve out a space where they could work hand in hand and in close proximity to one another in a new cell they are calling the Joint Sustainment Center.

In the cell they work closely with the director of the JOC determining together what missions are being directed and how the Guard will provide pay, food, equipment, shelter and fuel for the Soldiers, Airmen and Defense Force personnel responding to the winter storm mission, and how the Guard will be reimbursed for these operations.

"You have a natural disaster, to do these response operations, both joint centers have to operate together to be effective," said Army Col. Timothy Mantz, director of the

JSC. "The Joint Operations Center receives mission assignments from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. The mission assignments drive the JSC planning staff to determine how best to support response operations to any type of disaster."

The JSC takes the information it receives from the JOC and the three joint staff officers along with their planning teams formulate a plan based on the amount of personnel required and the type of equipment they will need to carry out the operations for the duration of the missions.

"We have to look at the mission assignments and say, what do we need to do in sustainment operations to accomplish the mission, to help the director of the JOC and the Virginia National Guard state active duty forces on the ground be successful," said Mantz. "We have all these key players in the JSC and we huddle several times daily with our planners to make course corrections to sustainment operation in support of mission assignments."

The first step in the JSC is determining how many Soldiers, Airmen, and Defense Force personnel are available throughout the state to send on missions to support the operation. The number of people allowed to support operations is determined by the maximum set by the Governor in his declaration of a state emergency. The J-1 can provide the JOC with updates on how many troops are available and how close the state is to reaching the limit of personnel authorized currently serving in a state active duty capacity.

"The main thing we do every day is track the number of personnel that are out on duty and the status of those personnel," according to Army Col. Thomas L. Morgan, III, director of manpower and personnel. "We work closely with the J-3 (operations) on the number of personnel on state active duty because the governor sets the cap. We look at what's there, what they're planning on doing, and let them know if they are going to go over if they need more personnel."

"My numbers drive how many people he (Mantz) feeds and they drive how many

the J-8 needs to worry about paying," said Morgan. "The control is there so that the resources are there from the J-4 and that the pay is being tracked and the governor understands how much money is being spent on DMA assets and support.

Once the numbers of personnel and all the requirements for sustaining the operations are calculated the next step is to make certain that everything is paid for and that the appropriate funds are sent to the right agencies and departments and the Soldiers and Airmen are properly paid for their time and efforts.

"We're just trying to make sure everything gets annotated correctly and Soldiers can get compensated for the great work they are doing," said Army Col. Janice Igou, joint resource officer.

Requests for the funding typically begin as soon as the Guard is notified of an emergency, and everybody wants to know right away if there is going to be money available immediately to support bringing a large number of Guard members on duty to support state emergencies.

"The reason you hear the governor declare a state of emergency ahead of the bad weather is two-fold: not only are critical assets pre-positioned, but the funding is established," said Igou. "They're asking me for estimates right away, 'How much is it going to cost to bring 500 Guardsmen on?'"

Although the National Guard is commanded by the governor, the money it takes to operate the Guard and the Guard equipment is federally funded.

When the governor declares a state emergency and activates the Guard for duty it is then the responsibility of the state to compensate the federal government for the use of the personnel and equipment used in the operations. The J-8 ensures that the money is repaid through the proper channels.

With the combined efforts of these three joint staff officers and their teams the missions of the Virginia National Guard are being completed and they will continue to be able to sustain operations indefinitely as long as these teams are coordinating to provide supplies and resources.

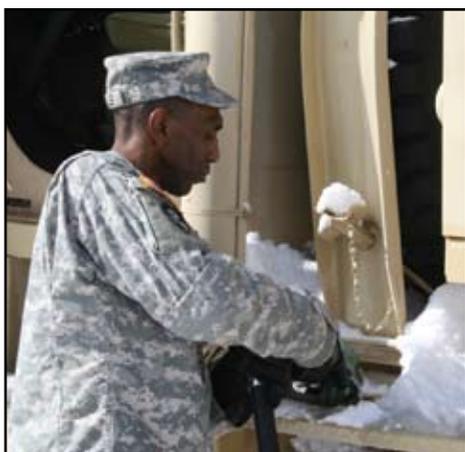


Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Va. Guard Public Affairs

**The Virginia National Guard Joint Sustainment Center makes sure that Soldiers in the field have the fuel, food, lodging and other logistics support they need to sustain operations.**

# Virginia Air Guard unit forecasts the weather

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

When the Virginia National Guard has a weather-related state emergency it calls on the expertise of the internal weather forecasters from the Virginia Air National Guard.

The 200th Weather Flight, based out of Sandston, is a unit of Airmen trained to track weather systems and provide real-time and projected forecasts to operational units throughout the Virginia Guard.

During the winter snow storms that plagued the commonwealth in the early months of 2010, the weather flight was busy day and night providing intelligence to the Joint Operation Center by working in 12-hour shifts with a 30-minute overlap, according to Senior Master Sgt. Stephen Gamache, a meteorological technician with the 200th Weather Flight.

The unit is staffed with 20 meteorologists who can accurately access the weather and provide forecasts to any number of audiences using various methods to track and predict weather systems across the globe.

“We provide ground forecasts, aviation forecasts, impact to personnel and snow total forecasting for the entire state,” said Gamache. “We acquire weather information through a myriad of different avenues. During a hurricane, by federal law, we are required to use National Hurricane Center products. In a lot of cases, especially on a state mission, we’re required to use National Weather Service products as baseline forecasts.”

While tracking the weather during the snow storms in early February, the weather flight was instrumental in providing the JOC with critical information that helped the Guard make decisions to keep vehicles in place to assist citizens in Northern Virginia.

“Virginia Department of Emergency Management wanted to redirect some of [the Guard’s] bigger vehicles from north to south, but our forecast was for pretty significant snowfall up there,” he said. “Based on our forecast, the [joint] staff said, ‘let’s keep the vehicles in place’ and because of that after the storm dumped most of its snow, they were positioned in place.”

“They sent the big movers up and down the main thoroughfares



Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Senior Master Sgt. Stephen Gamache and Senior Airman Christopher Tuck of the Virginia Air National Guard’s 200th Weather Flight track weather systems moving across Virginia during the snow storms that ravaged the region in February 2010.**

and were providing real-time rescue and recovery of stranded vehicles and civilian personnel.”

In addition to supporting the Guard during state active-duty missions, the weather flight also provides its expertise to many other customers throughout the Guard and around the country and the world.

“We have personnel deployed down range to Iraq. Concurrently, we’ve got folks deployed to March Air Force Base supporting remotely piloted aircraft missions, as well as one in Nebraska,” Gamache said.

“I went to Manas, Kyrgyzstan, to an international forces base there,” said Senior Airman Christopher Tuck, a combat weather forecaster recently back from an overseas deployment. “It was 24-hour operations and we saw everything from thunderstorms and 55 mile per hour gusts that came out of nowhere, dust fronts and snow storms.”

“We really encompassed every type of weather imaginable there.”

They have already been tasked to support the Boy Scout Jamboree, Irish Heat (a National Guard preparedness exercise) and the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment’s annual training later this year.

“For a week period, I’ve got three different missions going just within the unit,” said Gamache. “Plus we’ve got to keep the weather flight operational for state level missions.”

## Virginia Soldier gets warm reception at Conn. school



*Photo courtesy Spc. Kyle Harris, 276th Engineer Battalion*

**Spc. Kyle Harris hugs Ashley DeMazza's second graders as he arrives at North Canaan Elementary School in North Canaan, Conn., Dec. 18, 2009. The second graders corresponded with Harris during his deployment to Afghanistan in 2009. Harris gave each student a certificate to make each second grader his "battle buddy."**

**By Capt. Matt Nowak  
Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs**

Spc. Kyle Harris from the Virginia National Guard's 276th Engineer Battalion paid a visit to North Canaan Elementary School in North Canaan, Connecticut, Dec. 18, 2009, to meet a class of schoolchildren he corresponded with during his yearlong deployment to Afghanistan.

While deployed, Harris was contacted by second grade teacher Ashley DeMazza through anysoldier.com and began corresponding with her class.

DeMazza chose Harris because he asked for items for female Soldiers and other male Soldiers first rather than for himself.

"They had to coax me into saying what I wanted," Harris said. "It took me a while to tell them my favorite thing is chocolate covered pretzels. Since I told them that, I've gotten more than I could eat so I ended up giving some away."

Harris became a popular figure within the school's students and faculty. He became known as "Soldier Kyle" because the second graders thought saying Specialist Harris was too long.

As the second graders would wait to hear from Harris, students behaved well as part of a deal they made. Harris told the class to be good or else he wouldn't check in as often. The students listened to their teacher and were well disciplined while waiting for Harris to check in.

Halfway through the deployment, Harris decided to ask DeMazza if he could visit when he returned.

But while he was sending the email, he received an email from DeMazza asking the same thing. Harris had to do a double take because he thought he sent the email incorrectly.

The 276th Engineer Battalion returned from Afghanistan in November and Harris set the visit to the school in December.

Harris thought he would be meeting just the students he corresponded with, who are now third graders. But he was surprised with an all-school assembly in honor of him that included many parents and local community leaders.

During the ceremony, he was presented with a good citizenship award from the school's principal Rosemary Kielty, a key to the town from First Selectman Douglas Humes, and an honorary diploma from Superintendent Patricia Chamberlain.

Also during the ceremony, a shy student read a poem that was written by a collaboration of students that put "Soldier Kyle's" experiences together into words.

After the ceremony, Harris met with every class individually. He showed each class photos of his experiences and answered questions.

At the end of the day, Harris was treated to a pizza party and a cake with his name on it.

He presented each of the original second graders with a certificate to say they are officially his "battle buddy."

# Virginia Guard responds as more winter storms hit commonwealth

## From Staff Reports

The Virginia Department of Military Affairs provided support to state agencies as a series of winter storms hit Virginia in January and February.

Gov. Bob McDonnell declared a state of emergency Jan. 28 and authorized up to 250 members of the DMA be brought on duty. Soldiers, Airmen and members of the Virginia Defense Force were called to duty in Richmond and throughout Southern Virginia where they provided assistance with transportation, evacuation and rescue operations and general support to state and local emergency response organizations.

Approximately 75 Soldiers and Airmen from the Joint Staff and the Sandston-based 91st Troop Command were on duty in Richmond and Sandston conducting planning, command and control functions and coordinating logistical support.

Approximately 65 Soldiers from the Portsmouth-based 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry were on duty in Portsmouth, Norfolk and Emporia. They conducted reconnaissance missions to assess road trafficability and look for stranded motorists

in Portsmouth, Norfolk and Emporia.

Approximately 25 Soldiers from the Danville-based 429th Brigade Support Battalion were on duty in Danville. Soldiers there assisted emergency services personnel Jan. 30 and 31 with 10 assistance calls in Brosville, Ringgold, Gretna, Chatham and Blairs. Virginia Guard Soldiers accompanied fire and rescue vehicles with a Humvee and two Soldiers to make sure the emergency response vehicles could make it to their destination, and in several instances the EMS personnel would not have been able to reach the residents without the assistance of the Guard. In addition, the Virginia Guard Soldiers assisted with 20 vehicle recovery operations as they moved to or from the first stations or squad buildings.

Approximately 80 Soldiers from the Gate City-based 1030th Transportation Battalion were on duty in Abingdon, Gate City, Christiansburg and Cedar Bluff.

Five members of the Virginia Defense Force served in the state Emergency Operations Center assisting with command and control operations.

This was the second time the DMA



Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Va. Guard Public Affairs

**Soldiers from the 116th Brigade Support Battalion assist first responders from the Stafford County Fire and Rescue Department Feb. 6.**

stood up 91st Troop Command as Joint Task Force 91 to provide the command and control for the units operating in the field. Personnel from JTF 91 made sure information flowed effectively between units conducting missions and the JOC and that all necessary logistics coordination was made to provide food and lodging for personnel on duty.

On Feb. 3, the Virginia DMA was called to duty again after McDonnell declared a state of emergency in advance of another winter storm.

The Guard executed more than 80 missions from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management in Winchester, Harrisonburg, Staunton, Charlottesville, Fredericksburg, Warrenton, Leesburg, Fairfax County and Alexandria. During the peak of operations, there were almost 700 Soldiers, Airmen and members of the Virginia Defense Force on duty.

Virginia Guard Soldiers assisted state and local emergency services organizations by conducting a variety of missions ranging from transporting emergency services personnel, transporting citizens for medical assistance or shelter and recovering stuck emergency vehicles. Many Soldiers were co-located with fire and rescue personnel where they put out car fires, cleared debris and transported patients.

The Virginia DMA wrapped up its missions by Feb. 12.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Spc. Christopher Alberts moves Olive Lewis from his Humvee after transport to a medical appointment for kidney dialysis. Lewis wasn't able to make her appointment because of the winter storm so the Fairfax County Emergency Operations Center dispatched the Virginia National Guard to transport her.**

# Open house showcases Fort Pickett history

By Maj. Tim Donnellan  
Fort Pickett Public Affairs

Fort Pickett held an open house Jan. 14 in Building 318 to highlight Fort Pickett's history and archaeological offerings. The event was co-hosted by retired Chief Warrant Officer John W. Listman Jr., Fort Pickett historian, and Beverly Boyko, historical collections manager.

"The event was a great success," said Listman. "The turnout was more than expected, with over 80 military and civilian personnel attending the event. One of our main goals is to raise awareness, not only of the past but also of what our service members are doing today.

"In 20 or 30 years, I want people to be able to know about those who are currently fighting," Listman added. "We are fighting a war on two fronts and we must protect and honor their service. People are constantly contacting me and trying to learn about a relative who served in the Virginia Guard. I want to make sure we have answers for them in the future."

Many hope that the open house was a precursor to a Virginia National Guard museum.

"The Virginia National Guard needs a museum," said Col. Thomas P. Wilkinson, commander of the Maneuver Training Center. "We owe it to our Soldiers and Airmen past, present and future; there needs to be a place that captures and tells the stories of our history. Whether it is located at Fort Pickett or somewhere else is up to others, but we need a museum that we can call home.

"I would certainly like a museum at Fort Pickett, and perhaps that may happen in the interim as a suitable site is selected," Wilkinson continued. "Fort Pickett itself has a distinguished past and I would certainly like to develop a museum here as well."

There are over 2,000 historical objects and thousands of archeological items housed in the collection which, in addition to the Virginia Guard Historical Collection, includes the Environmental Program's archeological collections from excavations conducted on Fort Pickett and numerous Fort Pickett historical items as well.



John Listman, Fort Pickett historian, reviews one of the exhibits at the history open house.



Photos by Capt. Matt Nowak, Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

## The flag used by the First Virginia Regiment in Mexico.

"Many visitors were very interested in the Native American and historic artifacts and fascinated to learn that they were all found on Fort Pickett," said Boyko.

Two of the most popular military items at the open house were the uniform worn by Spc. Monica Beltran and a Mexican War flag.

Beltran served as a turret gunner in Iraq with the 1173rd Transportation Company. On Oct. 20, 2005, while her team was escorting a civilian convoy, it was attacked with improvised explosive devices, rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns and small arms fire. Beltran, though wounded in one hand, maintained her .50-caliber suppression fire, pinning down enemy fighters and allowing enough time for the convoy to clear the "kill zone" and regroup.

Though one Soldier was killed and several others were injured during the attack, Beltran was credited with saving 54 lives by her quick and determined action in giving effective covering fire. For her actions that day she was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with "V" for Valor and a Purple Heart for being combat wounded. She is the first woman in the history of the Virginia to earn either, much less both awards.

Today, while one other female Soldier has received the Purple Heart since Beltran, no other woman has received another combat decoration equivalent to or higher than her Bronze Star Medal with V device. She remains in the Virginia Guard, and now serves in the 1710th Transportation Company.

"The Mexican War Flag is only one of about 12 volunteer flags from that war in existence today," said Listman. "It was used by the First Virginia Volunteer Regiment during its tour of duty in northern Mexico from 1846-1848.

"While the regiment was raised for foreign service, most of its members, who were all volunteers, were drawn from existing Virginia militia units. Today its lineage is carried by the 276th Engineer Battalion."

"We are only here for a short while, but the history and stories live on long beyond our years," Wilkinson said. "We need to ensure that history and lineage is not lost to time, it's a great story worth exhibiting."

## Engineer, MP companies hold Freedom Salutes

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the Powhatan-based 180th Engineer Company and Manassas-based 266th Military Police Company gathered at the Omni Richmond Hotel Feb. 21 to conduct Freedom Salutes in honor of each unit's service in Iraq.

"On behalf of Gov. McDonnell, I want to thank you all for what you have done both for your commonwealth and for your country," said Marla Decker, Virginia Secretary of Public Safety. "To the families, thank you for taking care of things on the home front while our Soldiers were away doing their duty. We can't ever forget what our men and women in uniform have done."

Approximately 160 Soldiers from the 180th returned to Virginia Oct. 6, 2009 after serving in Iraq since December 2008 and approximately 130 Soldiers from the 266th returned to Virginia Sept. 24 after serving in Iraq since December 2008.

The Freedom Salute Campaign is one of the largest Army National Guard recognition endeavors in history, designed to publicly acknowledge Army Guard Soldiers and those who supported them during the President's call to duty for Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

The Freedom Salute recognized the Soldiers, their families, employers and organizations that contributed significantly to supporting the unit during its deployment. As part of the Freedom Salute campaign, each Soldier received an American flag in a wood display case, a Defender of Freedom certificate as well as commemorative coins and medallions.

Brig. Gen. Stephen Huxtable, assistant adjutant general of Virginia-Army, presented each Soldier with the Virginia Governor's National Service Medal. He also recognized the family members for their important contribution to the success of each unit during their mobilization.

"I can't tell you how much we appreciate what you have done," Huxtable told the family members. "They have done one terrific job, and a lot of it was because of you supporting them and being there for them while they were overseas."

Governor Mark Warner directed the creation of the Governor's National Service Medal in 2005 so that he and future governors may publicly acknowledge the sacrifice and patriotism of the men and women of the Virginia National Guard who serve not only under the command of the governor but who also serve in an active federal status.

The 180th also recognized the efforts of American Legion Post 201 for their support during the mobilization, and the 266th recognized VFW Post 7589 and American Legion Post 28 for their support.

Billy H. Kornegay of American Legion Post 201 presented the 180th with a frame proclamation from Powhatan County recognizing the 180th's service in Iraq.

While the 180th Engineer Company is headquartered in Powhatan, Soldiers from all over Virginia took part in the mission. Approximately 25 are from the Richmond area, about 20 are from



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Brig. Gen. Stephen Huxtable, assistant adjutant general of Virginia - Army, presents the Governor's National Service Medal to a Soldier from the 266th Military Police Company Feb. 21 at the unit's Freedom Salute.**

the Southwest Virginia area, approximately 10 Soldiers are from Northern Virginia, about 10 are from the Hampton Roads area, approximately five are from the Shenandoah Valley area and about five are from the Lynchburg area.

While serving in Iraq, the 180th conducted more than 20 engineer missions, with six of them taking more than two months to complete. The missions included building or expanding small forward operating bases used for joint security patrols with Iraqi forces, unmanned aerial vehicle airstrip construction, training compound improvements for the Iraqi Special Forces, site preparation for a bridge installation and the reopening of the last stretch of Iraqi Highway 1. The unit also conducted joint missions with the Iraqi government.

Soldiers in the 180th Engineers earned 18 Bronze Star Medals and 135 Army Commendation Medals, and the company was awarded the Meritorious Unit Citation for its service in Iraq.

Just as with the 180th, Soldiers from the 266th come from all over the state. Approximately 40 Soldiers are from the Northern Virginia area, about 20 are from the Richmond and Petersburg area, approximately 20 are from the Staunton and Harrisonburg area, about 15 are from the Hampton Roads area, approximately 10 are from the Roanoke and Southwest Virginia area, about 10 are from the Winchester and Woodstock area and the other Soldiers are from various locations across the state.

The Soldiers of the 266th operated throughout nearly the entire country of Iraq from Basra to Tikrit and into the Diyala River Valley. While deployed to Basra, the 266th, also known by their nickname "the Regulators," supported the 8th Military Police Brigade from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

Before the Freedom Salute, Soldiers from the 266th were awarded 21 Bronze Star Medals, 189 Army Commendation Medals and five Army Achievement Medals.

At the end of the Freedom Salute, Sgt. Joseph Santolla of Lebanon was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds suffered in March 2009, and Spc. Aaron Thompson of Richmond, who was wounded in the same incident, was presented his Purple Heart certificate after having his Purple Heart awarded in Iraq.

## Batts takes command of 29th ID

By Spc. Francis O'Brien  
29th Infantry Division Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Frank E. Batts, Sr., deputy commanding general of the 29th Infantry Division, took charge of the 29th Infantry Division during a change of command ceremony Jan. 5 at the division headquarters on Fort Belvoir.

Batts succeeds Maj. Gen. Grant Hayden as the 20th commanding general of the 29th.

"I'm just a simple guy who grew up just outside of Rocky Mount, N.C., working on tobacco farms. I never imagined I would wake up one morning as the commander of the 29th Infantry Division," said Batts.

Batts, a 32-year veteran of the Army National Guard in three different states, became the first African-American Soldier to command the 29th Infantry Division.

"I'm honored that the Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Robert Newman has confidence enough in my abilities to nominate me, and humbled to command the historic 29th," said Batts. "When I was a platoon leader back in '77, I never thought I'd end up commanding a division."

Batts, a Bronze Star Medal recipient, was deputy commanding general at the 29th for almost two years. He has previously commanded the 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment in Norfolk, Va., and the 54th Field Artillery Brigade in Virginia Beach.

"I'm well pleased with the division's work effort and improvements," said Batts, of his tenure as deputy commanding general. "Thanks to General Hayden's policies and procedures, we keep getting better. I think Soldiers will find that my leadership style is very similar to his."

Batts was commissioned through the Army Reserve Officers'

Training Corps at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro on Dec. 17, 1976. He served in both the West Virginia and Tennessee Army National Guard before joining the Virginia Guard in 1985.

He has served in command positions from battery through brigade level. In his last command assignment, the general served as the commander of the 54th Field Artillery Brigade.

When the 54th Brigade Headquarters was mobilized in February 2004, he served as mobile liaison team chief in Kabul, Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom from May 2004 through April 2005.

When not serving with the Guard, Batts works as an electronics engineer at the NASA Langley Research Facility in Hampton, Va.

"I have full confidence in the abilities of Brig. Gen. Batts to elevate the readiness posture of the 29th Division to even higher levels," said Hayden. "It has truly been a pleasure and an honor to command the division over the past two plus years."

"The lineage and history of the 29th Division is well known throughout the Army and its performance has been flawless since its activation in 1918. Whatever is on the horizon for the division in the near future, Brig. Gen. Batts is the person to lead them; wherever the mission."



Brig. Gen. Frank E. Batts, Sr.

## Virginia Guardsmen, Luray FD team up for rescue effort

By Capt. David Garner  
3rd Battalion, 116th BCT

Soldiers from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team and volunteer firefighters from Company 1, Luray Volunteer Fire Department were dispatched Feb. 6 to aid a family in Rileyville who were stranded in their home without power following a winter storm that hit Virginia on Feb. 5.

The combined Luray Fire Department and Virginia Army National Guard team arrived on the scene at Route 340 and Steep Hollow Road at approximately 11:30 p.m. After a quick assessment, they realized that the home of the family that needed assistance was in a remote location on top of a steep hill.

Snow plows and National Guard

Humvees attempted to traverse the hill, but both were unsuccessful. However, that did not stop a team of two firefighters, Lt. Derek Gaunt and firefighter Phillip Good, and two Army National Guard Soldiers, Sgt. Derek Braswell and Spc. Sean Wheeler, from completing their mission.

The four-person team made the mile-long hike up Steep Hollow Road in over 30 inches of snow to reach the residence.

When they arrived at the house, the team quickly prepared the two adults and two young children for movement back down the hill.

The children were transported down the hill on the backs of the team members in U.S. Army rucksacks, large backpacks used to carry Soldiers' gear. During the descent down the hill, the team took turns



Photo by Sgt. Derek Braswell, 3rd Bn., 116th BCT

**Spc. Sean Wheeler prepares a young girl for the move down the hill by securely placing her in his rucksack Feb. 6 in Rileyville, Va.**

carrying the children.

After safely arriving at the bottom of the hill the family was put in Humvees and moved to a local shelter.

# Virginia Guard Soldiers assist with search for Appomattox gunmen

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard assisted state and local law enforcement officials in the search for a 39-year-old gunman wanted in the deaths of eight people in Appomattox Jan. 19. Using an OH-58 helicopter with thermal imaging equipment, Soldiers from the Sandston-based Detachment A, 2nd Battalion, 151st Security and Support Battalion and the Virginia National Guard Counter-Drug program assisted with search operations until the gunman surrendered.

“The aviation support provided by the Virginia National Guard was most helpful in not only the management of the law-enforcement security perimeter, but also for the protection of our troopers, officers and deputies on the ground,” said Colonel W. Steven Flaherty, Virginia State Police Superintendent. “This collaborative operation truly underscores the importance of partnering the Commonwealth’s available resources in a major incident.”

The gunman disabled the Virginia State Police helicopter supporting the law enforcement response, and the Virginia National Guard received a request to provide interim aviation support to law enforcement while additional law enforcement aviation assets were moved to the scene, explained Maj. Charlton T. Dunn, the Virginia National Guard Counter-Drug Coordinator.

“Shortly after receiving the request, an OH-58 helicopter equipped with Forward Looking Infra-Red optics was on site supporting law enforcement personnel,” Dunn said. “Concurrently, a Virginia National Guard Counter-Drug ground team was in place providing real time video downlink of the aircraft’s imagery to law enforcement personnel on the scene. The presence of the Virginia National Guard helicopter limited the movement of the gunman while law enforcement tightened their perimeter, and the suspect surrendered on the morning of January 20, 2010. The National Guard support is attributed with preventing flight of the gunman and significantly contributing to the safe apprehension of the gunman.”

Dunn provided on-site liaison to law enforcement personnel and noted the mission was a success due to the efforts of all members of the team. Staff Sgt. James Watson, the helicopter crew chief, was critical to maintaining the high readiness rate of the aircraft for immediate launch, and 1st Sgt. Edwin Bonilla deployed with the helicopter as the crew chief to provide onsite maintenance for recovery of the aircraft ahead of approaching poor weather, Dunn said.

Chief Warrant Officer Wayne Martell, the Counter-Drug aviation officer in charge and detachment maintenance officer, quickly translated the mission tasking into action, navigating the complex planning requirements to quickly launch such a mission in a multi-agency environment, Dunn said. He also said that Chief Warrant Officer Jonathan Lindley piloted the helicopter and



*Photo courtesy of the Virginia Guard Counter Drug Program*

**Soldiers from Detachment A, 2nd Battalion, 151st Security and Support Battalion and the Virginia National Guard Counter-Drug program assisted state and local law enforcement officials Jan. 19 in Appomattox.**

demonstrated skill and determination in flying with night vision goggles for over four hours in a threat environment. Dunn credited Chief Warrant Officer John Marsh for demonstrating persistence and technical savvy as the pilot operating the Forward Looking Infra-Red optics for the duration of the mission.

Sgt. 1st Class Brian Wright, the Counter-Drug operations non-commissioned officer, set up the video downlink at the Virginia State Police 3rd Division HQ’s and forward at the tactical command post, Sgt. 1st Class David Waltman, a Counter-Drug criminal analyst assigned to a federal law enforcement agency, drove through the night to deliver hand-held video downlink devices into the hands of the law enforcement tactical teams and provide them with training to operate them, and Sgt 1st Class Spencer Vangils, the Counter-Drug criminal analyst assigned to the Commonwealth Fusion Center, assisted in identifying and developing information about the shooter, Dunn said.

Special Agent Keith Kincaid of the Virginia State Police 3rd Division flew with the aircraft in the area of operations, Dunn said. Kincaid is a trained spotter who flies frequently with Virginia National Guard aircraft on Counter-Drug missions and was indispensable in directing the aerial operation while maintaining communications with the Law Enforcement elements on the ground.

“The Virginia National Guard’s support of law enforcement in apprehending the Appomattox gunman demonstrated dedication, skill, and the ability to work successfully in an interagency environment thanks to the efforts of dedicated Soldiers and other Commonwealth guardians working as a team,” said Lt. Col. James Ring, Virginia National Guard state aviation officer.

The mission of the Detachment A, 2nd Battalion, 151st S&S Battalion is to perform air movement, aerial sustainment, search and rescue, command and control, and reconnaissance / observation in support of homeland security, counter-drug operations and other operations as approved by the office of the Secretary of Defense.

# Virginia Air Guard names top enlisted members for 2009

By Lt. Col. Deb Magaldi  
Virginia Air Guard Public Affairs

The top Airmen from across the Virginia Air National Guard sat before a rigorous review board in December 2009. After evaluating each candidate's accomplishments and professionalism, the board selected and Virginia's Chief of Staff for Air approved the winners of the 2009 Virginia Air National Guard Outstanding Airmen of the Year awards.

The board selects an outstanding Airman, noncommissioned officer and senior NCO, and from them, the overall Outstanding Guardsman of the Year for the Virginia Air National Guard.

The Virginia Air National Guard Outstanding Guardsman for 2009 honor and the Outstanding NCO of the Year title went to Tech. Sgt. Matthew Smith, an element leader and pavement construction equipment craftsman with the 203d RED HORSE Squadron, based at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach.

RED HORSE commander, Lt. Col. Pete Garner, described Smith's performance as "nothing less than outstanding."

"Sergeant Smith has been a leader with the 203d RHS for many years and 2009 was certainly no exception," Garner noted. "He developed outstanding training tracking and safety programs for the [203d's] Airfields Flight while expertly mentoring nine airmen. He was chosen to represent the unit in a state-wide joint natural disaster training exercise and was the NCO in charge of the unit's support to the Remote Area Medical program. He is completely dedicated to the advancement and mentoring of unit personnel, to continuous self-education, and to community involvement. His accomplishments...are a testimony to his total dedication to the mission and military life."

Extending beyond that, he created a comprehensive training tracking process for shop personnel that provides supervisors and trainees with a quick snapshot of training and upgrade requirements. He developed a detailed and comprehensive shop organizational chart, which has enhanced the shop's ability to operate more efficiently.

As the Flight Safety Representative, he revised the entire safety program in preparation for the Unit Compliance Inspection; his efforts led to zero findings during the inspection. Smith tailors monthly safety briefings to current missions, which has been cited as helping to achieve zero incidents during the fiscal year.

Senior Master Sgt. Ivonne Viniard, with the 192d Fighter Wing at Langley Air Force Base, was named the Outstanding Senior NCO of the Year. Viniard is the 192d Operations Group Intelligence Superintendent. "Senior Master Sgt. Viniard's leadership has been critical in establishing standardized Total Force Integration/F-22 operations at Langley AFB," noted 192d Operations Support Flight commander, Lt. Col. Patrick DeConcini.



**Tech. Sgt. Matthew Smith**

"She was integral to the success of the F-22 Phase I Operational Readiness Exercises, which helped prepare the 1st/192d Fighter Wings for success in the upcoming ORI. In addition, her contributions to security management and deployed, reach-back support for overseas operations were outstanding."

As the 1st/192d Operations Groups lead on a \$7 million Operations Group headquarters building project, Viniard coordinated details for a broad range of requirements, ranging from security and communication to space allocation. She identified a design flaw in part of the project and crafted a new plan to meet demands. Viniard also championed a \$500,000 funding allocation to make infrastructure and computer upgrades, and redesigned the integrated workcenter.

Senior Airman Domonique Anderson, a logistics craftsman with the 192d Fighter Wing, was named the Outstanding Airman of the Year. Airman Anderson is a member of the 192d Supply Chain Management Squadron that is integrated with the 735th Supply Chain Management Group at Langley AFB.

As such, she is responsible for handling the ordering and shipment of millions of dollars worth of mission-critical aircraft components and support supplies. While doing her job, she has taken the initiative to streamline processes, cut redundancies, and reduce the rate of rejected transactions and customers' wait times. She has handled large-volume procurements and expedited transactions involving urgent shipments. Her work helps to keep client units doing their mission in locations around the world. She also actively mentors new Airmen.

"Airman Anderson has an intense degree of self-initiative and an unmatched desire to achieve the highest standards in every endeavor undertaken," says 192d Supply Chain Management squadron commander, Lt. Col. John G. Denson.

"All of the candidates that went before the board were outstanding Airmen. And we thank each candidate that they've given to the nation and to Virginia," said Chief Master Sgt. Barry Coleman, Virginia Air National Guard Command Chief. "Each of the 2009 Outstanding Airmen of the Year award recipients displayed the exceptional qualities that make the Virginia Air National Guard such an exemplary organization. I'm proud to serve with each and every one of them. They truly are the best of the best."



**Senior Master Sgt. Ivonne Viniard**



**Senior Airman Domonique Anderson**

## Multinational Reserve units conduct civil military exercise at Fort Pickett

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

International and U.S. Forces teamed up at the Virginia National Guard Maneuver Training Center Feb. 12-22 to participate in Southbound Trooper X, an exercise focusing on civil affairs operations in the war in Afghanistan.

Southbound Trooper is a scenario-based training exercise that brings together civil military cooperation forces and psychological operations teams from the 3 Operational Support Group, Land Force Atlantic, Canadian Army Reserve with civil military cooperation troops of the U.K. Royal Marines and civil affairs Soldiers of the 450th Civil Affairs Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve to focus, in a coalition environment, on the governance and reconstruction aspects of the mission in Afghanistan, according to Maj. Sanchez King, commander of the Canadian contingency.

The Soldiers and Royal Marines worked together to create Provincial Reconstruction Teams to go out in to the field in the Kandahar-based scenarios while on the training sites at Fort Pickett. The troops entered the training areas as the PRT and interacted with role-players to gauge the climate of the different villages and focus on how they could make life better for the inhabitants in the exercise.

“The most important thing for us is the international connection, so getting each of the different countries together is vital,” said King. “Canadian and U.S. Civil Affairs and CiMiC troops are working together now in Kandahar and our British counterparts are next door in Helmand Province, so we are doing this kind of work in the theater of operations.”

“Our objective is to support the maneuver commander as civil affairs operators,” said Lt. Col. John Lawlor, commander of the 450th Civil Affairs Battalion. “We come in and do an assessment of areas and make sure we know what their needs and requirements are to see how we might assist the local populous and see what assets the local populous may have to assist the maneuver unit.”

While the troops were at MTC they had plenty of opportunities to take advantage of the many training facilities the site has to offer.

“There are some really unique training devices that are here. There’s a Humvee roll-over trainer and there are some video-based weapons training systems that we’ll use as fillers for opportunity training,” said Lawlor. “We’re doing those in conjunction with the Canadians and the Royal Marines as well.”

In addition to the virtual training and simulators available, the Soldiers and Royal Marines also had the chance to run through some of the live-fire lanes, including the “kill house.”

“The kill house was obviously the highlight,” said Cpl. Gus Martin, Royal Marines Reserve, Scotland. “Back home they are few and far between. You pretty much have to be Special Forces to get regular training with them, so to get that facility is pretty good to include in the package.”



Photo by Sgt. Justin Paul Howe

**British Royal Marine Commando Pannu Jaskaran pulls security while training during Exercise Southbound Trooper X, Feb. 17, 2010 at Fort Pickett. The Royal Marines are on their way to a meet and greet with a “village elder.”**



Photo by Spc. Justin Cheek

**Canadian soldiers radio in a 9-Line medical evacuation during Exercise Southbound Trooper X at Fort Pickett, Va., Feb. 16, 2010. Southbound Trooper is a training exercise integrating Canadian, British and American troops.**

# 229th MPs help protect VP Biden in Iraq



Photo by Spc. Eddie Siguenza, 49th Military Police Brigade

**Soldiers from the 229th Military Police Company, Virginia Army National Guard, use a map to designate security areas for the arrival of Vice President Joe Biden Jan. 23 at Camp Liberty, Baghdad, Iraq. The 229th manned traffic control points and led Biden's convoy to a dining area on Camp Liberty.**

**By Spc. Eddie Siguenza  
49th Military Police Brigade**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq — Soldiers from the 229th Military Police Company stepped away from normal Operation Iraqi Freedom duties to perform a bigger task: Provide route security here for the United States' second-in-charge.

More than 150 of the Virginia-based Soldiers monitored traffic intersections and designated points on a route Vice President Biden drove through during a brief stop on Jan. 23. Biden and his entourage that included Gen. Ray Odierno, United States Forces – Iraq commanding general, arrived via military helicopters and were convoyed to a nearby dining facility to visit troops.

The 229th staged Soldiers throughout Victory Base Complex (VBC), an operating base covering about 35 square miles.

“When the garrison command was given the mission to provide security and route clearance for the vice president’s visit, I specifically asked for the 229th MP Company from the 49th Military Police Brigade to support that,” said Lt. Col. William Prestage, force protection and anti-terrorism officer for VBC Garrison Command. “We’ve used them before for other missions. I knew the officers and non-commissioned officers can do the job.”

The norm for the 229th is police transition team missions, where Soldiers work with Iraqi Policemen. They train Iraqis in various skills. But the 229th also

performs humanitarian missions, says 1st Lt. Jason Meador, a platoon leader. Biden was in Iraq meeting with key leaders.

According to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the vice president met with top officials “to discuss U.S. and international efforts to support Iraq, with a focus on the national elections scheduled for March.”

When Biden arrived, a 229th element led the convoy that took the vice president to dinner. All remaining 229th teams stationed across VBC re-directed traffic – and kept outsiders away from the main convoy -- until Biden was safely escorted off the compound.

The 229th arrived in Iraq in October. The Virginia Army National Guard unit is based in Virginia Beach.

# Department of Military Affairs plays key role in supporting

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Approximately 300 personnel from the Virginia Department of Military Affairs were on duty in Richmond Jan. 16 supporting the inauguration of Bob McDonnell as the 71st Governor of Virginia. Soldiers from the Virginia Army National Guard, Airmen from the Virginia Air National Guard and members of the Virginia Defense Force conducted a variety of missions including providing ceremonial music, firing a 19-gun salute, conducting a flyover with F-22 Raptors and providing command and control of the inaugural parade elements. A formation of Virginia Guard Soldiers and Airmen also led the inaugural parade.

"I think it was a successful display of the Virginia National Guard at its best," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. "It served as a showcase of our great Guardsmen in their salute to our new commander in chief."

The Virginia Defense Force also had personnel on duty for the mission, and Newman was said he was impressed with the support from the all-volunteer force. "The Virginia Defense Force continues to be a full partner in every operation we conduct," Newman said.

The support mission also provided an opportunity to exercise the Guard's ability to effectively conduct operation with state partner agencies. "Even though this is a ceremonial mission, every time we work together with other state agencies allows us to improve our



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class A.J. Coyne, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**A member of the Virginia Defense Force escorts an entry in the inaugural parade.**

response capability and inter-agency cooperation," Newman said.

Personnel from the Virginia Department of Military Affairs conducted the following missions:

- Approximately 45 Soldiers from the Petersburg-based 29th Army Band provided ceremonial music for all the inaugural activities.

- Approximately 20 Soldiers from the Richmond-based Battery A, 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team fired a ceremonial 19-gun salute.

- Fighter pilots from the 192nd Fighter Wing from Langley Air Force Base conducted a fly over with F-22 Raptors.

- Brig. Gen. Bob Tucker, Virginia National Guard director of interagency operations, commanded the lead marching formation of the inaugural parade consisting of a color guard and 60 personnel from the Virginia Army National Guard and Virginia Air National Guard.

- Approximately 60 personnel from the Virginia Army National Guard, Virginia Air National Guard and Virginia Defense Force provided command and control for the inaugural parade and assisted with staging and marshalling the parade marching elements.

The DMA conducted rehearsals at the state capitol Jan. 15 in order to prepare for the event.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, prepares to present Gov. Bob McDonnell with the final shell casing from a 19-gun salute fired by the Richmond-based Battery A, 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team as part of the 71st Gubernatorial Inauguration held in Richmond Jan. 16. Newman then escorted McDonnell and his family to the Governor's residence.**

## g Governor's Inauguration

"It's just so exciting to be here today as a Virginia Soldier," said Sgt. James A. Harper, a section chief from the 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment. Harper's job was to provide the command to "fire" to his gunner as part of the 19-gun salute. "We're going to be firing our cannons as soon as the governor raises his right hand," he said before the ceremony began.

For Harper, the day was a chance to continue being of service. "This is all about God and country here," he said. "Serving my commonwealth is very important and patriotism keeps bringing me back. "What makes it even better is that most of us have been deployed two and three times and it just gets more exciting as it goes along."

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion received new howitzers last year and trained on them for two weeks, culminating in a dedication ceremony held May. 1, 2009 at Fort Pickett.

"We're excited to be here, and we're excited to be able to show off our new cannons and just support the inauguration," said 1st Lt. Brooks Rembert of the 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment. "Since we got the cannons, we've only been able to do a live fire once. This is a chance for us to show off for the people of Virginia their field artillery. The best part about field artillery is getting to shoot big guns, make lots of noise."

A very different and more pleasing sound came from the instruments of the 29th Army Band before the inauguration and during the ceremony. The band alternated with the Hampton University Choir with music before the swearing in, then played the traditional "Ruffles and Flourishes" to welcome the Virginia Guard's new commander in chief after he was sworn in.

"I love being here, and I'm glad we get to do it," said Staff Sgt. John Reynolds of the 29th Army Band. "It's a wonderful opportunity for us. The best part about doing this is being here with the crowd, all these people, and letting them enjoy some of what we do and getting to be part of history."



*Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs*

**Soldiers from the 29th Army Band perform ceremonial music before the start of the ceremony. The band also performed "Ruffles and Flourishes" to welcome the Virginia Guard's new commander in chief after he was sworn in.**



*Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs*

**Fighter pilots from the 192nd Fighter Wing from Langley Air Force Base conduct a flyover with F-22 Raptors at the inauguration ceremony.**



*Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard Public Affairs*

**Sixty Soldiers and Airmen from the Virginia Army and Air National Guard lead the 2010 Virginia Gubernatorial Inaugural Parade Jan. 16 in Richmond.**