



Photo by Capt. Lesley Kipling, 91st Troop Command Public Affairs

The 29th Army Band poses in front of the Rotunda at the University of Virginia. The band spent its summer performing in numerous parades, and at local parks and concert halls throughout the state.

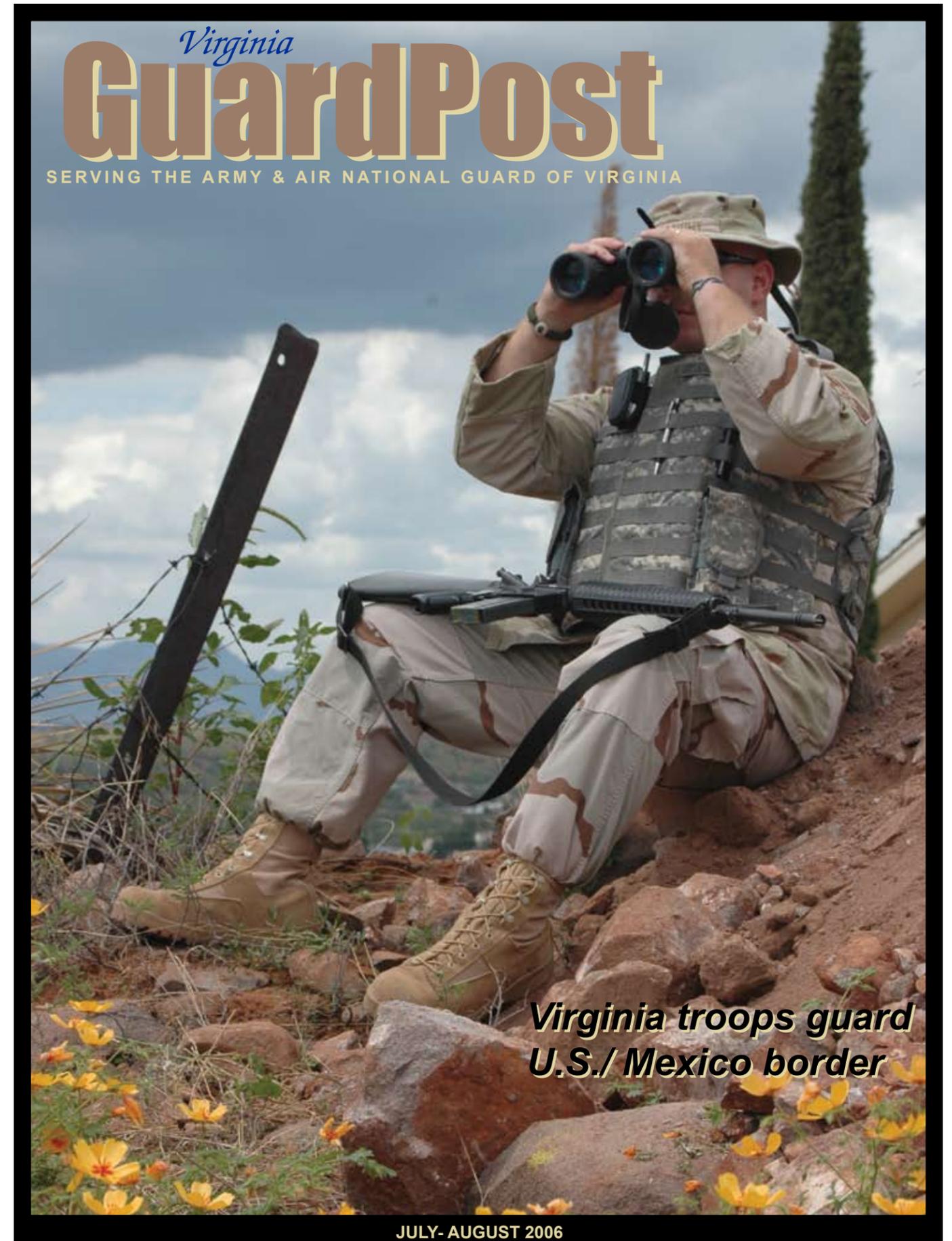
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Virginia troops guard U.S./ Mexico border

JULY- AUGUST 2006



FROM THE TOP



The Virginia National Guard - The Commonwealth's Guardian

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

Governor Timothy Kaine and Secretary of Public Safety John Marshall are extremely pleased with the accomplishments of the Virginia National Guard thus far this year. Those accomplishments are a testament to the professionalism and dedication of each and every Soldier and Airmen in our organization.

I thank you for your contributions in support of this tremendous effort. Let me share with you, the Commonwealth's Guardians, this commentary that recently appeared within the editorial section of the RichmondTimes-Dispatch. This summarizes some of the tremendous changes we have made toward achieving our Vision 2007-

The one year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina has generated many reviews of emergency preparedness in the Commonwealth, and has highlighted many of the dramatic changes in the strategic landscape as a result of some of the lessons learned after Katrina.

These assessments reflect a fundamental change in emergency response across the country - the shift in focus from post-event recovery to pre-event evacuation, and risk mitigation planning.

Learning from these lessons, the Virginia National Guard has made fundamental changes in order to become a full partner in emergency response planning in the Commonwealth.

Since Governor Kaine appointed me as his Adjutant General, the Virginia National Guard has achieved several significant milestones that have better prepared us to serve the Commonwealth in times of disaster.

First, we have reorganized our senior staff and placed significant personnel resources into emergency response planning and operations.

Further, we have relocated the Office of the Adjutant General and my key staff to Richmond, where we can better integrate with other emergency management and public safety agencies.



Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.

Additionally, working with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the broader public safety community we have redefined our role to leverage our tremendous capability to plan and execute large-scale complex operations.

We have also begun to meet with local officials to identify their planning needs.

Finally, we have formed three separate Joint Task Force Headquarters to deal with the most likely threats we might face through man-made or natural events in the National Capital Region, Hampton Roads, or anywhere else in Virginia.

As we are developing our plans, we are also exercising our capability to successfully carry them out.

When we received a request from National Guard Bureau to support President Bush's Southwest Border mission "Operation Jump Start," we contacted our Soldiers and Airmen to determine who would be interested in volunteering for the mission.

Within 24 hours, we were able to identify over 300 Soldiers and Airmen that

wanted to support this effort.

What's important to note is that we contacted over 7,000 Soldiers and over 1,200 Airmen in this process. It exercised our capability to instantly communicate with our Soldiers and Airmen.

This same mission demanded that we exercise our planning process to ensure we could muster, organize, logistically support, train, and most importantly command and control Soldiers and Airmen engaged in a complex effort.

We accomplished this while preparing over 400 Soldiers to enter active federal service and deploy to Kosovo. "Operation Jump Start" tested our ability to respond quickly with no notice, and we did.

Nationwide, National Guard deployments in support to the Global War on Terror and the Southwest Border Mission have raised questions about our preparedness to respond at home. It is a fact that we have some equipment shortages; however, these do not materially affect our ability to serve the Commonwealth.

In many ways, the increased tempo of operations over the last five years has better prepared us to plan for and respond to a disaster.

We have hundreds of highly experienced officers and non-commissioned officers who have operated successfully in the most hostile conditions imaginable. We also sent a Battalion to support the Katrina response.

Our leaders know how to adapt to accomplish any mission. They can plan and execute incredibly complex operations and have an infectious positive attitude in the midst of crisis. We are turning that capability inward, working with the Department of Emergency Management to support localities across the Commonwealth.

On the heels of the Katrina anniversary, Tropical Storm Ernesto provided us an opportunity to test our new ways of doing business.

Long before the storm reached Virginia, the Virginia National Guard was working with other state agencies to better anticipate

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"Taking Care of Soldiers First" Award presented at Logistics Workshop

By Lt. Col. Charles Taylor
Virginia Army National Guard

The Donnie W. Clements "Taking Care of Soldiers First" Award was originated in Aug. 2005 as a tribute to Sgt. 1st Class Donnie Clements, due to his pending retirement, for his many years of selfless service to soldiers in his assigned units.

Clements received the award at the closing ceremonies of the 2005 Logistics Training Workshop (LTW).

His charge was to return the next year and present it to the unit level supply NCO voted the honor.

The Logistics Executive Advisory Council was given the responsibility of soliciting nominees from units throughout the state and selecting the winner based on those nominations.

The award would then be presented by the retired Clements at the annual LTW.

Staff Sgt. Samuel Phillips of the Headquarters Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, was selected from among 11 statewide nominees as the 2006 winner.

The trophy was presented to Phillips by Clements, Lt. Col. Charles Taylor and Col. Tim Williams on Aug. 11 at the conclusion of the LTW.

Phillips will keep the trophy for one year and return it in 2007 when it will be awarded to the next winner.

The other nominees were:

- Staff Sgt. Forest Bogan – Headquarters Company, Special Troops Battalion, 29TH Unit of Execution
- Staff Sgt. Charles Carney – Medical



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Stanley Wynn, VaARNG

Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) Donnie Clements presents the "Taking Care of Soldiers First Award to Staff Sgt. Samuel Phillips at the 2006 Logistics Training Workshop.

Command, Joint Force Headquarters

- Staff Sgt. Greg Evans – HHC, 3rd Bn., 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team
- Staff Sgt. Christopher Perdieu – HHC, 1st Bn., 116th IBCT
- Staff Sgt. Anna Price – B Co., 429th Brigade Support Battalion
- Staff Sgt. Daniel Taylor – B Troop, 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry Regiment
- Staff Sgt. John Watkins – D Co, 3-116th IBCT
- Staff Sgt. Sophal Ly - Headquarters Battery, 1-111th Field Artillery
- Staff Sgt. Anthony Mercado – B BTY, 1-111th FA
- Staff Sgt. Shelia Jones – HHC, 1030th Transportation Bn.

From The Top continued from Page 4

support requirements. Our planners and operations managers worked with their counterparts in various state agencies to determine how Virginia National Guard assets could best be used, and we significantly increased our presence in the Virginia Emergency Operations Center.

These efforts enabled us to more rapidly integrate into operations during the event. We had Soldiers ready throughout the Commonwealth and we deployed to assist in evacuating families from the middle peninsula.

Thankfully, Ernesto was only a tropical storm, but it tested our systems enough to show that we are on the right track.

Your Virginia National Guard is responding to a new strategic environment. We have positioned ourselves to gain maximum benefit from collaborating with our sister agencies.

Our planners are coordinating with their counterparts from key regions in the state.

We are exploring new ways of resourcing our efforts, especially in the area of interoperability, and we are strengthening the capability of the Virginia Defense Force.

In short, we are constantly innovating in our determination to protect the Commonwealth, and continue the tradition of success that has long been the hallmark of the Virginia National Guard – The Commonwealth's Guardians.

Virginia National Guard Federal Deployments

| # * | Unit | Where Deployed | Home Town |
|-----|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 170 | HHC, 29th Infantry Division | Camp Atterbury, Ind. | Fort Belvoir |
| 294 | 1st Battalion., 116th Infantry Regiment | Camp Atterbury, Ind. | Various Locations |
| 24 | Company E, 429th Brigade Support Battalion | Camp Atterbury, Ind. | Roanoke |
| 157 | Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 111th Field Artillery | Iraq | Richmond |
| 60 | 192nd Fighter Wing, 200th Weather Flight and 203rd REDHORSE | Various locations | Sandston and Virginia Beach |
| 55 | Various units | Army Guard Readiness Center | |
| 275 | 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation | Iraq | Sandston |

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

News Briefs

RIRP to help activated Guard members with loss of income

In August, the Defense Department kicked off a program to help prevent activated reservists and National Guard members from facing financial hardships.

The Reserve Income Replacement Program will pay eligible National Guard members mobilized for extended or frequent periods the difference between their monthly civilian pre-mobilization income and their current total monthly military compensation.

"RIRP is designed to assist those mobilized Guard and reserve members that are experiencing a loss of income while mobilized," said Tom Bush, principal director of manpower and reserve affairs for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs.

Program payments are not automatic. Guard and reserve members must apply for the RIRP payments through their service personnel offices.

To qualify for RIRP, servicemembers must:

* Be serving on active duty in an involuntary status and have completed 18 continuous months of involuntary active duty, or

* Have completed 24 cumulative months of involuntary active duty within the last 60 months, or

* Be serving on involuntary active duty for a period of 180 days or more that starts within six months of separation from a previous period on involuntary active duty for at least 180 days.

Guard and reserve members serving on involuntary active duty and earning at least \$50 less than their normal civilian income each month must verify eligibility for this benefit through their military service's personnel system, using a new DD form created for this program, DOD officials said.

Financial records submitted with the RIRP application must include the member's most recent federal income tax return or other record of earnings that shows gross income during the 12 months before the member's mobilization.

Applications now accepted for 2007 Soldier Show



Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Soldier Show

Soldier-entertainers have until Dec. 31 to apply for an audition for the 2007 U.S. Army Soldier Show. Audio, video, lighting, costume and stage technicians also are needed for the Soldier Show. Active-duty and reserve-component Soldiers are eligible to participate in the song-and-dance extravaganza that provides "entertainment for the Soldier, by the Soldier" during a six-month tour of Army installations. For more information, visit <http://www.armyentertainment.net/>. Specific questions can be e-mailed to soldiershow@cfsc.army.mil.

Affordable weekly condos for DOD ID cardholders

Department of Defense ID cardholders are eligible for weekly condominium rentals at 3,500 resorts in 80 countries worldwide.

Provided by Morale, Welfare and Recreation and sponsored by Resort Condominium International, the Armed Forces Vacation Club offers space-available condominiums for \$299 a week.

The program gives Soldiers and other DoD workers affordable accommodations in condominiums that would otherwise go empty, according to Verlin Abbott, RCI director of AFVC.

While the program provides low-cost accommodations to vacation resorts across the globe, Abbott stressed that the condos are "space available" only.

"Don't expect to go to Virginia Beach on the Fourth of July. Go about this with the

same approach as a Space-A Hop (flight)," Abbott said, adding that the best time to search for a condo is 45-55 days out.

For such high-demand areas as Hawaii, Las Vegas and Key West, users rarely see openings until a couple of weeks out, especially during peak seasons.

For each reservation booked using a post identification number, the installation MWR program receives \$25 from the club.

The AFVC is available to active-duty and reserve members, adult military dependents, retired service members and their families, Department of Defense civilians, non-appropriated civilians, retired DoD civilians, foreign exchange service members on permanent duty with DoD, DoD dependent school teachers, 100-percent disabled veterans and some contractors working on a military installation.

For more information visit the Armed Forces Vacation Club Web site at www.afvclub.com.



Virginia GuardPost



SERVING THE ARMY AND AIR GUARD OF VIRGINIA

JULY - AUGUST 2006

On the Cover



Staff Sgt. Philip Hunt of the 192nd Fighter Wing scans the border area near Nogales, Ariz., for illegal immigrant activity. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Erick Studenicka, Nevada Army National Guard)

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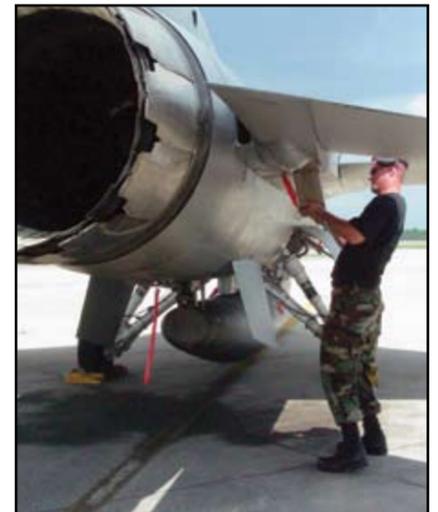
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Virginia GuardPost

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Photos by Maj. Cotton Puryear, KFOR 8 Public Affairs

A Soldier from Task Force Falcon Headquarters (above photo) conducts a search while training on vehicle check point operations at Camp Atterbury. Soldiers from Task Force Red Dragon move along a convoy training lane (below right photo). Both training scenarios are part of theater immersion training to prepare for operations in Kosovo.

Virginia Soldiers training for Kosovo mission

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
KFOR 8 Public Affairs Officer

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard passed the halfway point of their mobilization training in late August as they prepare to deploy to Kosovo for peacekeeping operations in November. Soldiers from Virginia make up about one third of the approximately 1,500 Soldiers in the U.S. contingent of Kosovo Force 8.

Soldiers began arriving at Camp Atterbury, Ind., in mid-July and continued to arrive in staggered groups in the following weeks. After conducting initial medical and dental inprocessing, Soldiers began training focused on individual Soldier skills.

The Soldiers took part in what is called "theater immersion training" where the skills and scenarios are specifically geared

towards situations they could potentially face in Kosovo, said Lt. Col Eric Barr, operations officer for KFOR 8. Besides basic first aid training, Soldiers also gained a familiarization with tasks like basic convoy operations, vehicle checkpoint procedures and how to react to minefields and unexploded munitions.

In September the task force will shift the focus of their training to team building and collective tasks, Barr said. After the senior staff takes part in a decision making exercise at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., the task force will take part in a series of command post exercises that will simulate missions that could be conducted in Kosovo.

After the command post exercises in September, the task force will deploy to Germany and conduct the Mission Rehearsal Exercise, Barr said. The MRX will



be the final training exercise the unit conducts before moving into Kosovo in November.

Barr explained that once the task force arrives in Kosovo they will spend time

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working with the current task force in the KFOR rotation. After this transition period, the task force will assume authority for the mission in Kosovo.

The Virginia National Guard's 29th Infantry Division will provide command and control for one of the five brigade-sized task forces conducting peace-enforcement operations in Kosovo. National Guard units from 17 states and Puerto Rico, as well as units from the active Army and the Army Reserve, will deploy to Kosovo under the 29th Division flag in late November and assume control of the Multi-National Task Force (East).

The Virginia National Guard's 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry is providing Soldiers for Task Force Red Dragon, one of several subordinate battalion-sized task forces in MNTF(E). Besides three infantry companies, Task Force Red Dragon also has a Liaison Monitoring Team Company, a unique organization for the Kosovo mission.

The mission of the LMT Company is to develop close working relationships with residents in different areas of Kosovo to help deter or counter potential conflict situations, explained Lt. Col. Lapha Flora, commander of Task Force Red Dragon. LMTs get a sensing from the local population to identify points of friction that could impact the stability of the area. They can also identify new risks and provide early warning of potential conflicts, Flora said.

The three infantry companies will be involved with mounted and dismounted patrolling aimed at maintaining a safe and secure environment for the people of Kosovo. They will be conducting security patrols as well as working with local officials on border security to help deter organized crime operations like smuggling, Flora said.

MNTF(E) is part of a larger NATO-led international force known as the Kosovo Force (KFOR). KFOR is responsible for establishing and maintaining security in Kosovo. The organization entered Kosovo on June 12, 1999 under a United Nations mandate, two days after the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1244. The lead nation for the task force is the United States, and the contributing nations are Armenia, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Ukraine. The United States forces are often referred to as Task Force Falcon.

The objectives of KFOR are to establish and maintain a secure environment in Kosovo, including public safety and order; to monitor, verify and when necessary, enforce compliance with the agreements that ended the conflict; and to provide assistance to the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Diplomats from Kosovo, Serbia and the international community have been actively engaged in talks during recent weeks geared towards determining Kosovo's status either as an independent state or province of Serbia with a high degree of autonomy.

"We don't take sides in the status talks," said Col. Douglas B. Earhart, the commander of MNTF(E). "Our mission is to provide a safe and secure environment for all the people of Kosovo so they can work through the status process without the fear of violence."

For more information about KFOR 8, visit www.kfor8.com.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, KFOR 8 Public Affairs

Soldiers from Task Force Falcon Headquarters train on basic first aid techniques during theater immersion training at Camp Atterbury.

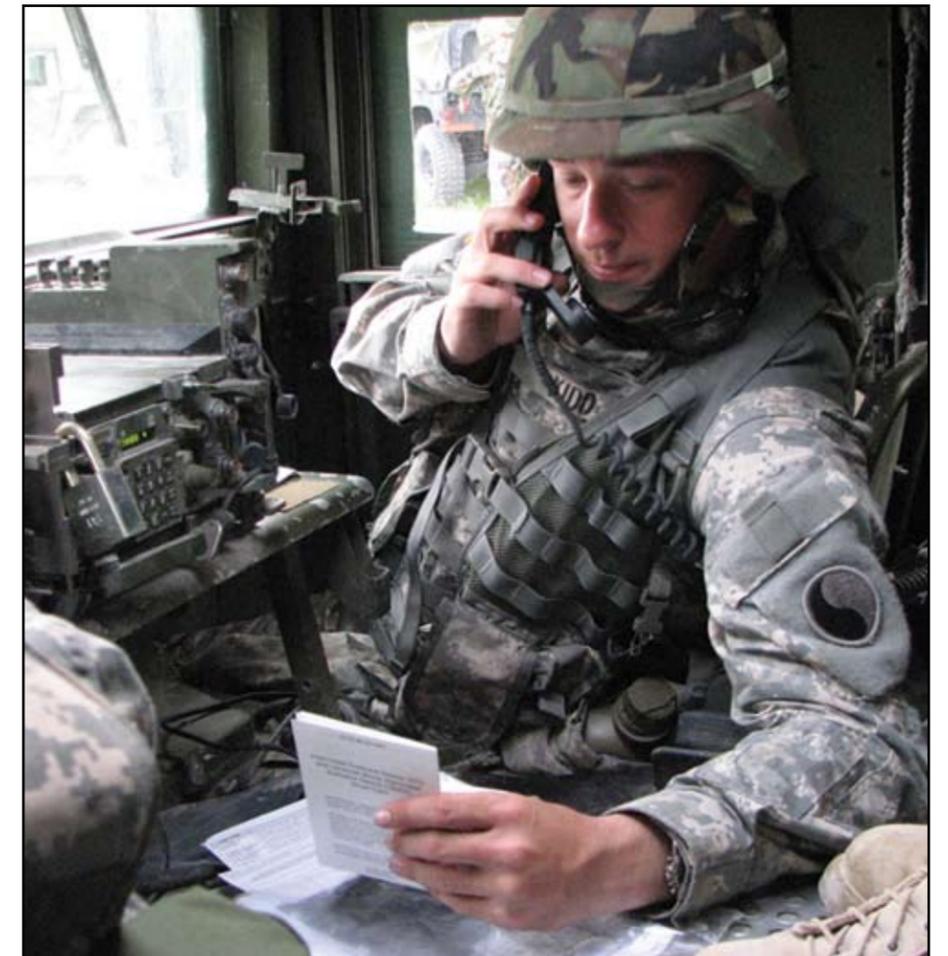


Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, KFOR 8 Public Affairs

A Soldier from Task Force Red Dragon checks his watch as he gathers information for a spot report after making contact with an unexploded munition while on the vehicle convoy lane at Camp Atterbury.

DPU Soldiers monitor Army websites all over the world

By Maj. Pam Newbern
NETCOM

Ten members of the Virginia National Guard's Manassas, Va.,-based Data Processing Unit are actively fighting the Global War on Terrorism without leaving their armory.

Activated for a year, the Soldiers are supporting the Army Web Risk Assessment Cell (AWRAC).

The team, led by Lt. Col. Stephen Warnock, monitors official Army websites and unofficial weblogs written by Soldiers for violations of operational security.

It got off to a fast-paced start with its activation on July 10. Within two weeks, the team had completed most of its training, and had begun tracking web sites, with immediate results.

On the first day, Sgt. 1st Class Albert Young found a list of the locations of secret safes on a military base. Other members have found everything from social security numbers to film clips which show the inner protections of a building in Ramadi.

Team members use many web searching tools and techniques to sift through the sites, looking for keywords such as "top secret" or "for official use only." Analysts then go through the process of sifting real security breaches from background noise.

"There is a lot of noise," said Spc. Shane Newell. "But sometimes something is hidden within the noise. I found an armorer's social security number buried

within a huge (amount of noise)."

Once an item is found, it is reviewed by another team member to determine if it merits further investigation. If it is deemed sensitive, the webmaster of the official site, or the weblog owner, is notified. Most writers are given a few days to respond, unless the item is deemed so sensitive that immediate action is required.

The team is particularly unique, Warnock notes, because of its blend of Guard, Reserve and active-duty Soldiers and contractors. In addition to the DPU Soldiers, Warnock coordinates with Guard and Reserve units in Texas, Washington State, and Maryland to conduct scans.

AWRAC is based in Arlington, Va., and is mostly staffed by contractors. The group falls under the auspices of NETCOM, a direct-reporting unit to the Army's Chief Information Office/G6.

Warnock, who serves as AWRAC's government lead, coordinates with team leads in other units to either bring the teams to Manassas to conduct drills and annual training, or to send the results of scans via e-mail. He said he has several groups drilling on the weekends at Manassas, and plans to expand his mission by using 20 additional M-day Soldiers from the DPU.

The DPU brings a vast technological background to the mission. Members include Young, a software salesman; Capt. Gerald Mazur, a technical operations manager for the FBI, and Sgt. 1st Class Irwin Walters, an information technology



Photo by Maj. Pam Newbern, NETCOM

Lt. Col. Stephen Warnock leads the team that monitors Army websites.

procurement officer for the IRS.

"It's a big thing for me," said Walters. "I don't think the Army has fully engaged the information operations side."

Other Soldiers volunteered for the mission to gain experience. Young, who has children, said he wanted to be stabilized for a year while still being able to fight in the war on terrorism.

"I think we are just kind of scratching the surface of the mission," he said, noting he hopes the mission will expand to where the team actually travels to military bases to perform scans. "There's a lot of room for us to make some impact on how we do this."

began to reach out to the public safety community in Virginia, they weren't sure how they would be perceived. But what they soon found was that the hard work and dedication of its members has earned them a great reputation.

"What we found is there is a good appreciation out there for the capabilities we have, for the quality of our Guardsman, for the experience of our leaders," Simpson said. "That reputation is earned by all those Soldiers and Airmen that have deployed. It's been incredible the way our Guardsmen and their families have adapted to every one of those missions."

"People talk about how the War on Terror has strained the National Guard, but I think we are stronger now as an organization than we've been in my 28 years in the Army," Simpson said. "We have more combat experience, we have more real world experience and we have people who really know how to make things work. They're adaptive and innovative and our job at the joint staff level is to harness that incredible capability of our Guardsmen."

Changes Continued from Page 10

But in looking to serve the commonwealth, the adjutant general knows he has resources beyond just the men and women of the Virginia National Guard. In fact, Newman is technically the commander of the Virginia militia, which includes four distinct elements- the Virginia National Guard, the Virginia Defense Force, the Virginia Naval Militia and the Virginia Militia Unorganized.

The Virginia Militia Unorganized is made up of every citizen of the commonwealth between the ages of 16 and 55. And while the state doesn't have a Virginia Naval Militia anymore, leaders are looking to see if one is needed.

"One of the key partners that we're strengthening our relationship with is the VDF," Simpson said. "We're working closely to more fully integrate them into our operations. They're a great resource and we really want to work with them to make them a full member of the team."

When members of the joint staff moved to Richmond and

192nd FW holds its own during TDY at Tyndall

By Master Sgt. Peter Martens
192nd Fighter Wing

The 192nd Fighter Wing deployed to Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., Aug. 4- 25 for its final temporary duty in fiscal year 2006.

With eight planes and approximately 128 people, unit members once again proved how easily they could 'pull chocks,' head out and do well in a deployed exercise environment.

It was a busy three-week schedule. F-16 pilots flew 12 sorties a day during the first week and nine sorties each day there after.

"We served as a training aid and fulfilled all obligations as requested by the 43rd Fighter Squadron," said Col. Jay Pearsall, commander of the 192nd FW.

Virginia Air Guard pilots and planes flew as aggressors for F-22A student training.

In the air, they engaged the larger and very capable F-15 as either aggressors for large force flights or more one-on-one basic fighter maneuvers skills training.

They also took on the Air Force's most advanced strike fighter, the F-22 Raptor.

"We were always mission ready and 'on time' for take off," commented Lt. Col. Brian Turner, a pilot for the 192nd FW.

"The sorties provided exactly the training aid required, mixed dissimilar aircraft engagement, and we fulfilled those requirements well," said Col. Bobby Sanford.

However, as Sanford went on to point out, "against the Raptor, it's really the dominating fighter and a plane that benefits from 25 years newer technology."

There can be little doubt that the Air Force's new plane fills its role so well.

A superior aircraft in many respects, the F-22 has shown the capable advantage one would expect in a next generation fighter.

For a few fortunate members, this deployment was most special as they finally 'took to the skies' and a long-

awaited 'incentive flight' became reality.

During the three-week period the 192nd FW was there, 10 such flights were accomplished for both officers and enlisted personnel.

"There isn't any other thing that compares to the experience," said Tech. Sgt. Steven Edwards, who received one of the first incentive flights. "When the pilot 'throttles-up,' our jets are just plain fast!"

Off duty, guard members enjoyed time in Panama City, at the beach, and on the water boating or fishing.

During the midpoint of the deployment, two after-hour activities were scheduled and well attended.

On the night of Aug. 16, the base bowling alley remained open after hours to support an evening of good spirited, friendly competition.

Thursday evening, members gathered for a party held at the bases' outdoor recreational pavilion.

Pearsall addressed the unit after dinner and spoke of the good work done in the fulfillment of all mission objectives.

"We've provided exactly what was required of us," Pearsall said, "and this unit can feel a great sense of accomplishment in a job well done!"

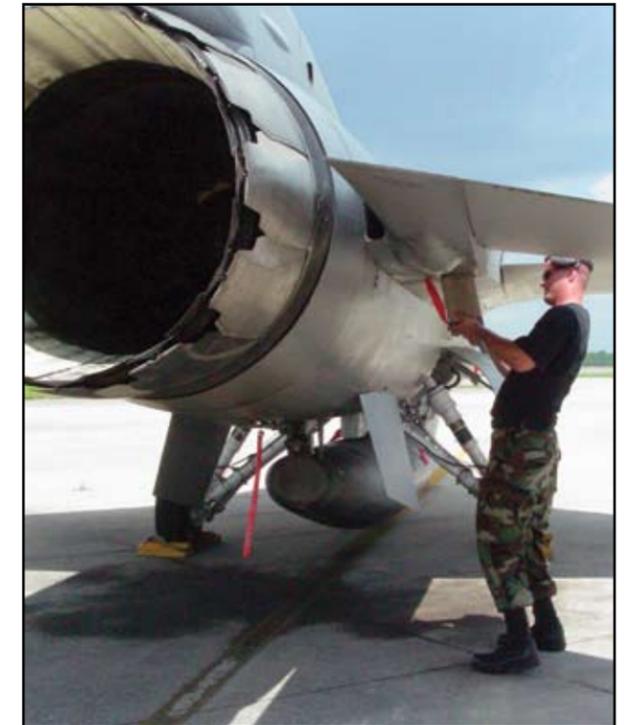


Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Susanne Dates, Virginia Air National Guard

Tech. Sgt. Stephen Breeden installs a chaff cannister on an aircraft during the 192nd Fighter Wing's three-week training mission in Florida.



Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Susanne Dates, Virginia Air National Guard

Staff Sgt. Jonathan Walker services an aircraft with liquid oxygen.

Youths enjoy 1st Virginia Guard Summer Camp

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

More than 50 sons and daughters of Virginia National Guard troops from around the state participated in the first Virginia National Guard Summer Camp Aug. 7- 11 at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach.

"We want them to have fun but we also want them to develop resiliency for during deployments," said Maj. Leslie C. Myers, the state family programs director. "About half of these kids have experienced their parents being deployed."

The 52 participants were divided into two age groups- 8-12 years old and 13-16 years old.

During the weeklong camp they participated in everything from team building exercises and youth sports to responsibility and leadership training and "Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs."

The campers not only learned about digital photography, how to create their own websites and how make a scrapbook, they also took part in seminars on improving self esteem, solving conflicts, staying stress free, and "how deployments affect you."

In addition, they had the opportunity to travel to Ocean Breeze water park in Virginia Beach and Busch Gardens in Williamsburg.

Although the Virginia National Guard Child and Youth Program put on the camp, other parts of the Virginia Guard also participated.

Personnel from the Virginia National Guard Counterdrug Program not only bought along their "Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs" program, they also organized a GPS treasure hunt and spoke to the children about drug intervention.

Meanwhile, Recruiting and Retention provided a rock climbing wall for the campers to try.

But volunteers and counselors also came from partner organizations outside the Virginia Guard.

A large group from the Hampton Veterans of Foreign Wars taught the campers about flag etiquette, while three people from Connect and Join were on hand to show campers how to use their software to create websites and online journals.

Managed Health Net provided six people to talk with the youths about peer pressure, responsibility and solving conflicts.

In addition, two staff members from Operation Military Kids were there to help with the camp.

"It was incredible for our first camp," said Kay Baber, the Virginia National Guard's state youth director. "We had tremendous partnerships and the kids got incredible support all weekend."

"We originally had more than 120 kids interested in the camp," Myers said. "So we hope to have even more participants next year."

This is the first year in Virginia for the National Guard Child and Youth Program. Myers said that attendance and participation has increased at each event.

In the future, the goal is to expand the program and partner



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

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Counterdrug Task Force introduced the campers to fishing as part of the "Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs" program.



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

The first-year camp exposed the youths to everything from arts and crafts and digital photography to team building exercises and leadership training.

with other organizations such as Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA and veteran service organizations. This way they can reach more and more children from National Guard families and, maybe in the future, expand to include children from other military families, such as Army and Air Force reservists in the state.

Baber said they are already planning next year's camp and are looking for volunteers.

Servicemembers and family members interested in volunteering for next year's camp can contact Baber at 434-298-6129 or by email at kay.baber@va.ngb.army.mil.

Virginia Airman joins Air Force cycling team for Ride Across Iowa

By Senior Airman Meaghan McNeil
192nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

No, he isn't the seven-time Tour de France champion. He's no professional biker with a larger lung span than the rest of us.

But Senior Airman Peter Bleignier is, however, the first junior enlisted member of the 192nd Fighter Wing to participate in Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa.

He, along with Chief Master Sgt. Susanne Dates and Capt. Mark Widener, was sponsored by the Chiefs Council of the Virginia Air Guard to participate in the cycling event, July 23-29, as part of the Langley Air Force Base team and the Air Force team as a whole.

Together, they cycled roughly 500 miles and climbed 17,500 feet vertically over the course of the seven-day event.

"I'd really like to extend a special thanks to the Chiefs Council for providing me the opportunity for this experience," Bleignier said. "I wouldn't have been able to participate without their support."

The Air Force team is made up of about 100 cyclists chosen from approximately 10 bases around the nation.

Bleignier heard of this event through the Junior Enlisted Council. After expressing interest to Dates, completing the application process and corresponding with Col. Joseph Robinson, Langley team leader, Bleignier was selected to the team.

It's a high-visibility environment, as those wearing the Air Force cycling uniform are being watched by civilians and dignitaries alike.

One such dignitary that cycled with the Air Force team, Undersecretary of the Air Force the Honorable William Anderson,



Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Susanne Dates, Virginia Air National Guard

The Honorable William Anderson, Undersecretary of the Air Force, poses with Senior Airman Peter Bleignier of the 192d Fighter Wing between rides across Iowa.

personally commented on Bleignier's positive attitude and enthusiasm, Dates said.

Bleignier said during the ride that he maintained focus on why the Air Force team was there, and had a good time getting to know the civilians and military members.

"One invaluable experience was the opportunity I had to talk to a civilian from Virginia about the Air Guard," Bleignier said. "Maybe I'll see him as a member of our unit in the future."

"Senior Airman Bleignier was an outstanding representative of our total force cycling team," Dates said. "I was extremely proud to introduce him as a member of the Virginia Air Guard."

In 1994, this annual bicycle ride was deemed an "Air Force recruiting support activity."

And that's no wonder because, though only 8,500 can participate for the entire week, some individual legs of the journey are numbered by more than 20,000 riders.

As you can imagine, physical fitness was required to join the ranks of the Air Force team.

Bleignier's strategy was to train over time. The bicycle being his main mode of transportation in Richmond, Bleignier also tried as often as possible to ride to the unit from "The Fan" in Richmond, and back again at the end of the day.

On top of his concerted effort to make cycling a part of his everyday lifestyle, Bleignier paced himself and rode roughly 500 miles between June 15 and July 15.

With that preparation, he found the hardest days were the first two.

On the first day, he was sore because he'd never ridden that long at one time, and the second day there were so many hills, he said.

"After that, I found the first two days and my training set me up for success during the rest of the event," said Bleignier.

"And if given the opportunity for future participation, I would definitely take advantage of that. It was one of the best experiences the Air Guard has afforded me."



Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Susanne Dates, Virginia Air National Guard

Seven time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong rides alongside Air Force cyclists during the Great American Bicycle Race Across Iowa July 23-29.

Changes at top as Virginia Guard gains expanded mission

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

When the Virginia National Guard moved the offices of key leaders from Fort Pickett to downtown Richmond earlier this year, it wasn't the beginning of a change in the structure of the Virginia Guard. It was actually just one more step in a long process of transformation that began with the terror attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

"Sept. 11 really changed the National Guard, as much as, if not more than, any institution in the country," said Col. Robert Simpson, director of the joint staff. "We spent five years involved every single day in getting Soldiers to Iraq and Afghanistan and supporting the war effort."

But that support of the war effort came at a cost. According to Simpson, it severely affected the Virginia Guard's domestic role of supporting the commonwealth.

So when Maj. Gen. Robert Newman was appointed the new adjutant general in January, Gov. Tim Kaine told him to focus on supporting the commonwealth. The Virginia Guard leadership then decided to take a new look at its responsibilities and ability to respond to a crisis.

"One of the clear messages from the transition assessment was that we were not confident in our preparedness for a domestic event," Simpson admitted. "We weren't ready if a major hurricane or terrorist event occurred in the commonwealth."

At the same time, Newman decided that, since he's responsible for the entire Virginia National Guard, both Air and Army, his office should be located centrally, where he can work day-to-day, side-by-side with other state government agencies.

"He needs to be where he can work day to day with the cabinet and other agencies like the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, state police, Department of Health," Simpson said. "That's what led him to move his office to Richmond."

To support the idea of a Richmond-based office, senior leaders got together and decided that a new, joint staff should be created. Although states had been charged with replacing State Area Commands with Joint Force Headquarters a few years

before, Virginia, like many other states, had a JFHQ that existed in theory only. It was really still the old State Area Command, just with a new name.

"We did do some joint stuff but we didn't put a lot of resources into it," Simpson said. "Now we now have a pure, 'J' staff, distinct from the Army Guard's 'G' staff at Fort Pickett and the Air Guard's 'A' staff at Sandston."

According to Simpson, Fort Pickett will remain the center of gravity for the joint staff and that's where the majority of the staff will remain. But the joint staff will continue to evolve as time goes on.

"Working in Richmond really makes us a part of the state government and it's an incredible learning experience," he said. "Every day we're translating the needs of the governor and secretary of public safety into military actions."

So now that this joint staff has been established and it is up and running, how will this affect members of the Virginia National Guard?

Simpson stressed that its federal mission is still the Virginia Guard's training focus.

"Warfighting missions are still our number one priority," Simpson emphasized. "We still need to do individual weapons qualification, we still need to train to attack a known point and fire on a target from an F-16."

Those warfighting missions are still the number one training mission because the Virginia Guard's leadership firmly believes a Guardsman who can do his or her warfighting mission will be able to adapt to do anything.

"But at the same time, we are also making Virginia better prepared to plan and respond to large scale disasters," Simpson explained. "We have a tremendous amount of talent and our Soldiers and Airmen are better trained and prepared than any other agency in the state to plan and execute large scale, complex operations."

The biggest change for the Virginia National Guard is making it better integrated into state emergency response planning and disaster assistance. For example, in the past, the Virginia Guard had a small presence in the state's emergency operations



Photo by Sgt. Jesse Houk, Virginia Guard PAO

Col. Robert Simpson discusses some of the changes within the Virginia Guard.

center. But that's quickly changing and an increased presence there will better allow the Virginia Guard to anticipate the requirements for forces during a crisis.

Other changes that Soldiers and Airman will see is in terms of integrating into their community disaster planning. For example, every armory will have to develop a community disaster response action plan. This will encourage them establish relations with the local city manager, emergency manager, police chief and fire chief.

If the local leaders know the armory is there as a resource, Simpson reasons, the Virginia Guard can help them assist in planning in coordination with VDEM.

Plans are also underway to restructure the Incident Reaction Force.

"We're going to be restructuring the IRF into smaller force packages that are distributed across the commonwealth," Simpson said. "That'll make it easier to rotate so a Soldier isn't on the IRF for six months."

The ultimate goal is for "every Soldier and Airman in the commonwealth to know what he or she is likely to do if there's a Category 4 hurricane heading towards Tidewater before the storm hits."

"If we have a terrorist event in the capital region, every Soldier should know where they're supposed to go and what they're going to be doing," Simpson explained. "They shouldn't have to wait to get called."

If Guardsmen have a good idea of what they're going to do before a crisis occurs, they'll be better able to serve the citizens of the commonwealth when it does happen.

See Changes on Page 12

Operation "Rust Breaker" a success for 1-111th FA

By Capt. Fred Moore
1st Bn., 111th Field Artillery

The 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, roared back to life during Annual Training 2006.

Operation "Rust Breaker" followed four years of transformation, reorganization, and deployments for the unit.

Firing 494 high explosive point detonating rounds in less than 48 hours, the combined A and B batteries provided indirect fire support through periods of heavy rain and high temperatures.

Even while supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Southwest Border Mission, and having Soldiers at military occupational specialty schools, the battalion accomplished a commonwealth milestone—the first completely digital fire mission from forward observer to the artillery gunline.

With the assistance of a representative from Raytheon, the battalion fire direction center successfully deployed the latest field artillery technology software upgrades which resulted in improved accuracy and speed of mission processing.

"Virginia's field artillery is on the verge of a breakthrough in fire support," said Sgt. 1st Class Charlie Taylor, a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom. "Our Soldiers are experienced war vets, our



Photo by Capt. Fred Moore, 1-111th Field Artillery

2nd Lt. Jason Remington prepares a Mark VII laser rangefinder for service.

technology is off the shelf and state of the art, and our equipment is light and mobile. Force XXI is here and we are jumping on board."

Fires Battalion was supported through annual training by G Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, and a forward observer team from 3rd Bn., 116th Infantry.

The unit also completed a host of secondary training events to include rapid

field issuances and instruction, Mark VII Laser Range finding training, and Q-36 radar version 8 fielding.

The 1-111th FA's training schedule was crammed with warrior task events including tactical road marches, Engagement Skill Trainer 2000, individual weapons qualifications, indirect and direct safety certification, Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System instruction, and communication and field exercises.



Photo by Cadet George Kriskos, 1-111th Field Artillery

Soldiers from 1st Bn., 111th Field Artillery arrange M102 howitzers for convoy during annual training at Fort Pickett.

JTF Stonewall keeps eye on Arizona border as part of Operation Jump Start

From Staff Sources

More than 400 Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen were deployed to the U.S./Mexico border this summer as part of the National Guard Bureau's Operation Jump Start.

The primary responsibility of Virginia's Joint Task Force Stonewall is to support U.S. customs and border security operations in the southwest corridor of Arizona. The Virginia Guard Soldiers and Airmen are currently manning 32 entry identification team (EIT) sites.

JTF Stonewall consists of three smaller units. JTF South is located in Nogales, JTF North is split between Sasabe and Ajo, and the JTF Stonewall operations center is located in Tucson.

As of Sept. 4, JTF Stonewall members had reported more than 400 undocumented alien entries to the USCBP. The presence of Virginia Guard members at EIT points has resulted in more than 300 attempted border crossers turning

back south. In addition, EIT reports have resulted in the seizure of nearly 300 lbs of marijuana.

President George W. Bush authorized the use of National Guard troops to assist border patrol agents in controlling the flow of illegal immigrants into the U.S. earlier this summer. Virginia received the mission shortly thereafter and had no trouble assembling a group of dedicated men and women to take on the mission.

Col. Mike Harris, the task force commander, was pleased but not surprised with the response.

"Virginians stepping up to help others is what the National Guard does," he said. "We have the best of the best and it shows in their dedication to duty and their hard work."

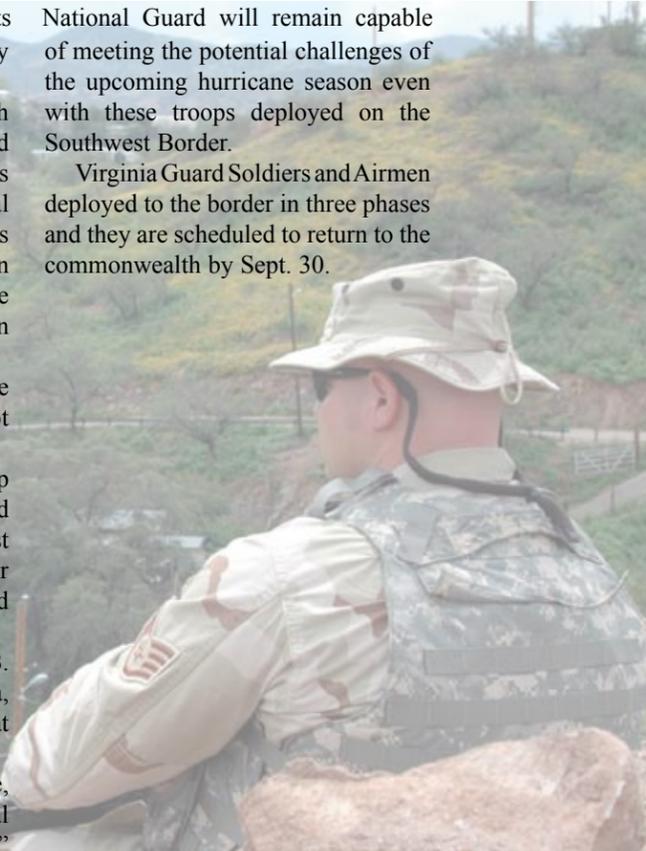
According to Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant of Virginia, the initial plan was to deploy troops at the end of hurricane season.

But when the call for help came, members of the Virginia National Guard in the "strongest tradition" came forward to take on the mission.

Newman said the Virginia

National Guard will remain capable of meeting the potential challenges of the upcoming hurricane season even with these troops deployed on the Southwest Border.

Virginia Guard Soldiers and Airmen deployed to the border in three phases and they are scheduled to return to the commonwealth by Sept. 30.



Staff Sgt. Phillip Hunt of the 192nd Fighter Wing scans the border area in Nogales, Ariz., for illegal immigration activity on Aug. 15

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Erick Studenicka, Nevada Army National Guard



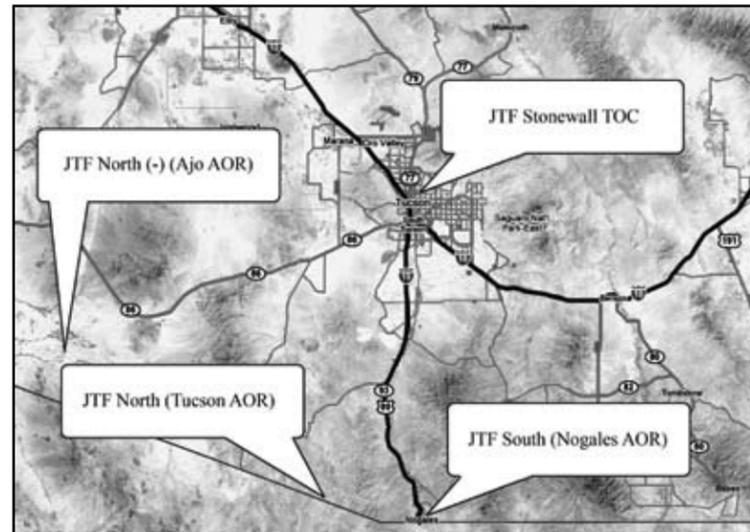
Photo by Maj. Tracy Hughes, JTF Stonewall Public Affairs

Mrs. Virginia Erica Kirwan visits with Virginia National Guard troops participating in Operation Jump Start.



Photo by 1st Lt. Wayde Minami, Maryland Air National Guard

Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers Sgt. Mark Smith (left) and Staff Sgt. Charles Prosser keep tabs on a suspicious vehicle driving on the American side of the U.S./ Mexican border on Aug. 25 near Nogales, Ariz.



Graphic by Pfc. Geoff Dudley, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

(Above) JTF Stonewall Soldiers are manning 32 entry identification team sites in three sectors along the Arizona/ Mexico border.

(Right) Staff Sgt. Charles Prosser of the 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry Regiment, monitors the Mexican border for illegal immigrants and drug smugglers on Aug. 25 from his observation post near Nogales, Ariz.



Photo by 1st Lt. Wayde Minami, Maryland Air National Guard