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For the latest news about the Virginia National Guard, visit <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/>



Photo by Spc. J. Erin Jones, 116th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

Master Sgt. Marshall McDonald (left) and Command Sgt. Maj. Carl Holcomb (right) cover their ears as National Guard driver Joshua Hernandez pulls up to the starting line in his Pro Extreme 1957 Chevy Bel Air, July 24 at the Virginia Motorsports Park in Dinwiddie, Va. Since 2004 the National Guard and ADRL have teamed up to bring drag racing to fans at VMP and other tracks all over the United States while also educating the public about the Guard.



**Virginia Aviation unit  
completes Global Patriot  
exercise**

Virginia  
**GuardPost**  
SERVING THE ARMY & AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF VIRGINIA

JULY - AUGUST 2009



**229th MP Co.  
mobilizes for  
Iraq mission**

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**Youth Summer  
Camp held at  
Virginia Beach**

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FROM THE TOP



# Children in Guard and Reserve families face unique challenges during deployment

In mid-August, more than 80 children from Guard and Reserve families came to the State Military Reservation to take part in the 4th Annual Summer Youth Camp hosted by the Virginia National Guard Family Programs Office. I am very proud of how much this camp has grown and of the services provided to the youngsters who attend the camp. Kids who first attended as campers have now come back to serve as adult leaders, and they are able to share their experience with those who are coming to camp for the first time.

While there is great fun to be had through the many activities, the camp also helps these kids cope with the challenges many of them face with a loved one being deployed and away from home.

For the last year, the Virginia Guard has been in discussions with the Military Child Education Coalition to help develop programs that will address the needs of kids in all branches of service, both active and reserve component. MCEC is a non-profit, world-wide organization that identifies the challenges facing the military child and works to increase awareness of these challenges in military and educational communities. MCEC's goal is to level the educational playing field for military children wherever they are located around the world.

According to MCEC, active duty military children generally move from six to nine times during their K-12 school years and face difficulties with transferring records, adjusting to different academic standards between schools and gaining access to special programs. MCEC's goal is to help families, schools, and communities better prepare to support children during these frequent moves and difficult, and sometimes traumatic, times in the life of military families. Separation from a deployed parent or sibling brings about even more issues and challenges.



Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.

While children of Guard and Reserve families may not face the frequency of

*Our goal is to have a road map for where we want to go and how we will get the resources to help kids in Guard and Reserve families better cope with the realities of being separated from loved ones on a military deployment.*

moving that kids of active duty families face, they have a set of unique challenges. On an active duty installation and surrounding communities, there is likely more awareness about deployments, and children can normally find others in similar situations to theirs. Teachers, counselors and school administrators are also more aware of the

hardships brought on by the prolonged separation of a loved one.

But in the case of the Guard and Reserve, a child could be the only one in their school who has a parent or sibling mobilized, and the community may not fully understand what that child is going through. Programs like the Virginia Guard summer camp can help, but we need to develop programs on a larger scale to help address these issues.

As our overseas rotations continue, we recognize that our Guard and Reserve forces will continue to see duty that takes them away from their families, so this is not an issue that will go away in the near future. Our hope is to bring the success MCEC has had on a national and international level into Virginia.

We are planning a conference and workshop in late October that will bring together teachers, public health professionals, business leaders, local government and civic organizations to make Virginians more aware of the challenges our kids face and work together to develop ideas for how those challenges can be addressed. Our goal is to have a road map for where we want to go and how we will get the resources to help kids in Guard and Reserve families better cope with the realities of being separated from loved ones on a military deployment.

One of the most important things the Virginia National Guard can do to help ensure the continued success of our Soldiers and Airmen deployed overseas is to make sure their families are getting the support they need. Military kids have a unique set of challenges, and we owe it to them and their families to work at raising awareness of the challenges they face. We must also develop well-resourced programs to help them better cope with the hardship of having a loved one serving thousands of miles away, defending the ideals of freedom and democracy in a foreign land.

# News Briefs

## Post 9/11 GI Bill offers new benefits, advantages to Guardsmen, families

The Department of Veterans Affairs' Post-9/11 GI Bill officially went into effect Aug. 1, 2009 providing updated educational benefits to servicemembers and veterans nationwide.

The new GI Bill offers benefits based on the number of days servicemembers have spent on active duty since Sept. 9, 2001.

This tiered design provides current and previously activated National Guard and Reserve servicemembers with the same benefits as active duty servicemembers and veterans.

National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who have served a total of 36 months of active duty will be eligible for the full benefits which include 100% paid tuition to public universities, a monthly housing stipend, up to \$1,000 a year for books and supplies and up

to \$100 per month for tutorial assistance.

Servicemembers may also be eligible for a one time \$500 relocation allowance and up to \$2,000 in reimbursement for a certification or licensing exam. National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who are eligible for the kicker will still receive that benefit; however it will now be a one time payment.

However, not all Guard members are eligible for the new bill. They must have served at least 90 day of active duty, or 30 days if the were injured during duty, to receive the minimum amount of benefits.

The 90 days of active duty does not include Active Guard Reserve duty or ROTC. Title 32 soldiers and Airmen who have not deployed since Sept. 11, 2001 are not eligible for this benefit.

With the new bill servicemembers can transfer benefits to their family as long as they have already served the required amount of years, which are six years for a spouse and 10 years for a dependent.

The servicemember must also have at least four years left on their contract at the time they apply for the bill.

Servicemembers have an eligibility period of 15 years from the end of their last active duty tour to use the benefits or they loss them.

## Air Guard and Defense Force assist with free health clinic

Airmen from the Virginia Air National Guard's Virginia Beach-based 203d REDHORSE Squadron and members of the Virginia Defense Force from the Roanoke-based Highland Brigade provided assistance July 23-26 for the Remote Area Medical Health Clinic in Wise County.

Five Airmen set up two tents with electricity and air conditioning to be used for optical exams, and almost 40 VDF members provided traffic control and distributed numbers to organize patients when the clinic opened at 6 a.m. July 24. VDF personnel also provided

security at the site overnight.

"The services provided by Virginia Air National Guard and the Virginia Defense Force at the RAM WISE operation made an extraordinary difference to the execution of the operation which provided thousands of needy Americans with the health care that they desperately needed," said Stan Brock, founder of RAM. The event in Wise was the 575th event the group has organized.

The Remote Area Medical Health Expedition provides free basic medical care and eye and dental needs.

More than 1,800 volunteers helped run the event, which is celebrating its 10th year in Wise County. Organizers stated it is the largest outdoor free health care event in the nation.

During its 30 hours of operation, the clinic provided vision, dental and medical services to more than 2,700 people.

Health care providers extracted more than 4,200 teeth, and conducted almost 1,100 eye exams.

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
150	229th Military Police Company	Fort Dix, N.J.	Virginia Beach
170	266th Military Police Company	Iraq	Manassas
160	180th Engineer Company	Iraq	Powhatan
5	134th Chaplain Support Team	Southwest Asia	Fort Pickett
17	Det. 26, Operational Support Airlift Command	Southwest Asia	Sandston
200	276th Engineer Battalion	Afghanistan	Richmond
35	192nd Maintenance Group	Japan	Langley Air Force Base
25	192nd Intelligence Squadron	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Langley Air Force Base
40	Various Virginia Army Guard Units	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Various Locations
50	Various Virginia Air Guard Units	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Various Locations

\* All listings for numbers of Soldiers/Airmen are approximate as of September 5, 2009

# Heritage of Virginia Air Guard commemorated with historical marker

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

The beginnings and illustrious history of the Virginia Air National Guard were recently commemorated during a ceremony and the unveiling of a special roadside marker at the Virginia Aviation Museum, located just outside of Richmond.

The Virginia Air National Guard grew from one flying unit, the 149th Fighter Squadron, which takes its military lineage and heritage from World War II's legendary and heroic 328th Fighter Squadron. The Blue Nosed Bastards of Bodney, flying the P-47 Thunderbolt followed by the P-51 Mustang, took down German interceptors in intense aerial dogfight action and escorted and protected Allied bomber forces as the bombers pummeled the military capabilities of the Third Reich.

From that one unit, the 149th Fighter Squadron, the Virginia Air National Guard has grown into four distinct units that support both commonwealth and federal missions.

Keynote speaker for the July 18 event was Virginia's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., who is a command pilot and member of the Virginia Air National Guard. The dedication was attended by local dignitaries, commonwealth officials, and members of the Virginia National Guard and the Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society.

The marker and the ceremony were spearheaded by the Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society to recognize the 60-year connection between Richmond International Airport (formerly Byrd Field) and the founding of the Virginia Air National Guard in June 1947. The historic marker was provided by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

The ceremony kicked off inside the museum with a welcome and opening remarks by VAHS chairman and master of ceremonies Albert M. Orgain, IV. He discussed Virginia's rich aviation history and touched on many of the aviation accomplishments, milestones and individuals that have been recognized with historical markers over the years. Virginia's historical marker program began in 1927.

James Barrett of the Virginia Department of Transportation (retired) and Randall Burdette, director of the Virginia Department of Aviation, spoke after Orgain.

They thanked those who had or were currently serving in the Virginia Air National Guard – for their service and inspiration – and for their support of national defense missions and natural disaster response for the commonwealth.

Varina Supervisor James B. Donati Jr. was next to the podium; he spoke of the Air National Guard's impact to Sandston and the region over the decades.

Born just a couple years before the Virginia Air National Guard, he grew up with the "sounds of freedom" as Air Guard aircraft regularly flew in and out of Richmond International Airport.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. James R. Orbin, Virginia Air National Guard

**A new roadside marker outside the Virginia Aviation Museum in Sandston recognizes and celebrates the achievements of the Virginia Air National Guard.**

"The Virginia Air National Guard has been a key player in the county's history. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the Guard for its patriotic service," he said. "I've always lived within two to three miles of the airport. I grew up with the sounds of freedom and those memories will stay with me forever."

He thanked the Guard for its strong ties to the local community and for its instrumental part in working with the Henrico County Emergency Planning Commission over several years to develop an emergency response plan.

Next the Adjutant General of Virginia spoke. Newman thanked the individuals and groups that initiated the plaque and the dedication.

He described the National Guard as a distinctly U.S. organization that is trained for and ready to respond to two separate roles: missions supporting the federal government and the Department of Defense and state missions such as responding to natural disasters or terrorist attacks.

Newman recounted the history of the first Virginia ANG unit, 149th Fighter Squadron, and its military lineage with the 328th Fighter Squadron, an ace World War II unit.

The general touched on the many of the aircraft flown by the 149th Fighter Squadron, which became the operational unit for what is now the 192nd Fighter Wing as well as many of the wing's accomplishments.

The event then moved outdoors where Burdette and Newman unveiled the new marker. A reception sponsored by Brink's was held afterward.

The 192nd moved from its longtime home at the Richmond International Airport in October 2007 and now flies and maintains the Air Force's premier fighter, the F-22A Raptor, along side active duty counterparts at Langley Air Force Base, Va.

Sandston remains the home of the Virginia Air National Guard Headquarters and the 200th Weather Flight.

A Virginia Air Guard rapid-response, bare-base engineering unit, the 203rd RED HORSE Squadron, is located on the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach.



# Virginia GuardPost



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## On the Cover



A Blackhawk helicopter from 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment flies over Fort McCoy, Wisc., during exercise Global Patriot '09. (Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard Public Affairs)

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## Virginia Guard network defenders welcomed home

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

Twenty Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Manassas-based Data Processing Unit were formally welcomed home from overseas federal active duty Aug. 24 in a ceremony at Fort Belvoir.

The Soldiers served in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait and Qatar as a Regional Computer Emergency Response Team assigned to the 2nd Information Operation Battalion, 1st Information Operations Command.

“We are a network-centric Army, and we rely on computers to get things done,” said Brig. Gen. Steven Smith, the chief cyber officer for the U.S. Army Chief Information Office and guest speaker for the ceremony. “Our network is constantly under attack, and these Soldiers are our first line of defense.”

The team was formed approximately two years ago when it began specialized training to support 2nd Battalion’s mission

of providing intrusion response, technical expertise and threat analysis in direct support to commanders in the Central Command area of operations.

“We can’t do this mission without the Guard and Reserve,” said Col. Michael A. Miller, commander 1st Information Operations Command. “You played an important part in defending our network.”

During their deployment, the team deployed and upgraded more than 100 specialized intrusion sensors and accomplished dozens of successful computer defense assistance and network assessment missions.

The team was able to identify malicious software previously undetected, mitigate the effects and prevent further intrusions upon Army networks.

“The support we gave CENTCOM was unique, timely and went far above simple computer network defense tasks,” said Lt. Col. Stephen Warnock, the officer in charge of the team. He praised the Soldiers



Photo by Maj Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard PAO  
**Soldiers from the Manassas-based Data Processing Unit cut the cake at their welcome home ceremony conducted Aug. 24 at Fort Belvoir.**

of the team for their original thoughts and deeds, as well as their expertise and experience.

“Rarely did I have to spell out how to do something,” Warnock said. “I just had to point the direction to go with very broad lanes to travel in, and the Soldiers of the team had the technical knowledge, intellectual curiosity and sense of duty to always do the right thing.”

Numerous awards were presented to members of the team during the ceremony, including four Bronze Star Medals and three Meritorious Service Medals.

## Aviation maintenance unit bound for Kosovo

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia National Guard’s Sandston-based Detachment 2, Company B, 777th Aviation Support Battalion conducted a departure ceremony Aug. 9 at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Sandston.

The ceremony marked the official start of the unit’s federal active duty service to support the peacekeeping duty mission of the NATO Kosovo Force 12 rotation as an aviation maintenance unit.

Approximately 20 Soldiers mobilized with the detachment, and they are scheduled to train at Camp Atterbury, Ind., and in Germany for about two months before deploying to Kosovo, and the mobilization is scheduled to last 12 months.

“What a great opportunity it is to be able to deploy and stand for freedom, not only as we serve the commonwealth but also our nation as we stand for peace globally,” said Lt. Col. James Ring, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Battalion. “The mission you are going on is a very important one. For those of you that have not been to Balkans before, you as Soldiers have the privilege of standing for peace and stability in a far away land.”

The helicopters in Kosovo provide a valuable support to the peacekeeping mission, and the Soldiers from the detachment will

be in the lead for aviation sustainment, Ring explained.

“The work you will be doing will make a direct impact on the ability of the command to support stability for Balkans,” Ring said.

He also added that the Soldiers will have a unique opportunity to see first hand how the United States works with NATO partners in conducting peace and stability operations.

This will be the first deployment for the detachment, said Capt. Michael H. Gregory, the detachment commander. “The 777th ASB just received its federal recognition earlier this year, so this will be a milestone to place in the historical binder for the unit,” Gregory said.

The unit will deploy to Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo and join with Kentucky and South Carolina to form the full aviation unit maintenance company that will support Task Force Mongrel, the aviation task force for KFOR 12.

Gregory said the unit will be responsible for conducting aviation maintenance for the aviation task force’s 12 UH-60 A/L Blackhawk helicopters.

“The UH-60 L models will serve the function of air assault operations and the UH-60 A models will serve the purpose of medical evacuation,” Gregory said. “Without these aircraft being fully mission capable, U.S. troops will be unable to be transported to different regions in Kosovo if called upon.”

## 3-116th Infantry works with civil authorities in exercise

By Capt. Matt Nowak  
Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team trained with civilian authorities as part of a joint, civil-military training exercise at various locations in Virginia Aug. 1-2.

The battalion conducted a company-level civil support exercise in conjunction with the Virginia Defense Force and local first responders at each of the unit’s five locations. This gave the battalion an opportunity to work out details and any issues in working with civil authorities before a real world event happens.

“Our intent with these exercises is to provide each unit an opportunity to work with their local community responders, Virginia Defense Force, and neighbor organizations to conduct relevant civil support exercises. These are the type of missions that we might expect to be called to duty to execute,” explained Lt. Col. William Zana, the battalion commander.

The unit’s priority is to maintain its ability to respond to civil support requests while simultaneously preparing for the next potential deployment. The training pays benefits for both state and federal mission readiness. Both are frequently tasked with establishing cooperative relationships with local leaders and organizations. Many of the basic soldiering tasks that are performed are relevant to both missions.

Each company had an area-specific scenario based on real world events:

Charlottesville’s Company A conducted a response to a notional crash of a small commuter aircraft with the mission of securing the perimeter and assisting with recovery operations.

Woodstock’s Company B worked with the local forestry department and the National Park Service to learn about forest fire fighting techniques. Although they didn’t train with live fires, Soldiers received comprehensive training on equipment and techniques for combating forest fires, along with familiarization on different organization’s roles during a crisis and critical safety considerations.

Leesburg’s Company C was presented with a hazardous material scenario. Soldiers worked with the Virginia Defense Force and Loudon County’s HAZMAT

team. The scenario was based on responding to a localized HAZMAT incident involving mass casualties. They assisted the HAZMAT team in setting up a secure perimeter, controlling access points, assisting with evacuating casualties, and followed up with decontamination training.

Fredericksburg’s Company D worked with the Fredericksburg Police Department, the University of Mary Washington’s Police Department and the local 911 call center. Their scenario was based on the aftermath of a notional hurricane. The call center coordinated calls to the police and fire departments and Company D Soldiers assisted first responders at a variety of locations. Soldiers also trained on establishing civil assistance and presence patrols, much like they would during a real disaster response.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, which is located at the newly opened Winchester Readiness Center, served an important role for the entire weekend. Along with responding to a downed private aircraft with at the nearby Winchester Regional Airport, HHC set up an Emergency Operations Center functioning jointly with the Virginia Defense Force.

Soldiers from HHC, the Virginia Defense Force and the Frederick County Emergency Medical Services Department conducted a mass casualty exercise as part of the downed aircraft scenario. The day began with morning classes taught by Frederick County EMS on mass casualty triage procedures. The afternoon continued at the Winchester Regional Airport in which several of the passengers were injured as part of a simulated crash of a small commuter aircraft. Soldiers responded to quickly cordon the crash site and begin assisting in the triage of patients. The HHC medics provided care and evacuation of the simulated patients, helping them to train on their essential tasks.

Confirming the relevance of this



Photo by Capt. Dave Garner, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team  
**Staff Sgt. David Quinn, a medic from Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team, evaluates and treats a casualty as part of a joint civil-military training exercise at Winchester Regional Airport Aug. 1-2.**

scenario, a private aircraft was involved in a non-fatal crash near the airport location used by the HHC Soldiers just days after the unit’s exercise.

“The training exercise was designed to develop a closer relationship between the Virginia Army National Guard and local emergency services,” said Capt. Ed McMichael, commander of HHC. “This was a great exercise for all involved. It helped all organizations involved to understand each other’s capabilities.”

The EOC staff worked as the command and control element for the exercise. They provided event tracking, identified issues and problems while providing answers for Soldiers operating in their different training locations. The EOC also provided the common operating picture between each unit and the VDF making sure operations run smoothly.

As part of the exercise, the units also conducted communications training to assess their ability to communicate using different types of radio systems.

“This is our primary training opportunity to work closely with the Virginia Defense Force for this year. We’re fortunate to have great working relationships with our VDF counterparts at each of our armories and are expanding our relationship by identifying and conducting training together where appropriate,” Zana concluded.

## Warrant Officer Candidates give back to community

By Staff Sgt. Lauren Martin  
Virginia Army National Guard

Warrant Officer Candidates from the 3rd Battalion, 183rd Regional Training Institute's Warrant Officer Candidate School assisted in a community service project July 25 at Blackstone Primary School in Blackstone.

Candidates spent a half day spreading fresh mulch and pulling weeds in four different playground areas in preparation for the new school year.

The outreach project was designed to help Blackstone Primary School students and improve the appearance around the school.

It was chosen because of its importance to the community of Blackstone and the schoolchildren. Candidates wanted to make a positive impact on the children of the school and contribute to the community where the Regional Training Institute is located.

The candidates were tasked to develop a community outreach project early in their training cycle. As they researched possible projects, they noticed that the

school playground was in need of some work and planned their project around the need.

Warrant Officer Candidate William Bayse, projects officer for the class, said, "Being in the National Guard, we have a state and local mission; part of our job as a citizen Soldier is to assist our communities not only in emergency situations, but also in day-to-day community projects."

This project gave the candidates an opportunity to not only develop a project that had a tangible benefit to the local community and its younger citizens but, to also work with local government officials.

According to Chief Warrant Officer 3 Karl Klugman, senior TAC officer for the 183rd Regional Training Institute Warrant Officer Candidate program, the community service project "not only builds esprit de corps but gives the candidates a sense of being part of the community, and it is also the end of Phase II for them."

All 13 candidates had an active role in planning and executing the community service project.

The Warrant Officer Candidate School program trains enlisted Soldiers to become



Photos by Staff Sgt. Lauren Martin, Virginia Army National Guard

Warrant Officer Candidates work to spread mulch in the playground areas at Blackstone Primary School in Blackstone, Va., July 25.



The Warrant Officer Candidates pulled weeds and spread mulch in four different playground areas in preparation for the new school year.

Warrant Officers. According to the Warrant Officer Career College website, "the school emphasizes officer roles and responsibilities more, and individual activities less.

The goal is to provide candidates the foundation they need to succeed as Warrant Officers in a changing Army, and to be adaptable to the ever increasing challenges of the operational environment."

Candidates have the option to attend the full course at Fort Rucker, Ala., or attend a Regional Training Institute course.

The Regional Training Institute course is divided into three phases with Phase I being Distance Learning and Phase II being conducted at a Regional Training Institute. Phase III is then conducted at either Camp Atterbury, Ind., or Fort McClellan, Ala.

Phase III of the training for the current Warrant Officer Candidate School class is scheduled for Aug. 1-15 at Camp Atterbury, Ind.

Upon successful completion of Phase III, the candidates will be appointed as warrant officers in either the Virginia or North Carolina Army National Guard.

## Afghanistan mentor team returns to Virginia

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

A team of 16 Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard returned to the United States Aug. 9 after serving on federal active duty since Aug. 15, 2008 with the mission of mentoring battalion-level Afghanistan security forces. The Soldiers arrived at Fort Riley, Kan., to conduct demobilization activities and returned home to Virginia Aug. 13. Because the Soldiers flew back individually to their hometowns, no formal welcome home ceremony was conducted.

The unit conducted three months of pre-deployment training at Fort Riley that focused on cultural awareness, mentoring techniques and counterinsurgency operations. Six of the Soldiers are from Staunton, two from Charlottesville, two from Northern Virginia and the rest came from other areas of Virginia including Roanoke, Blackstone and Hampton Roads.

As mentors, the Virginia Soldiers dispersed around the second week of November throughout the Eastern Paktika Province and worked side-by-side with various elements of the Afghan National Security Forces comprised of the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police and the Afghan Border Police, said Maj. Michael Martin, the officer in charge of the team.

Martin said the circumstances were far from the ideal training environment. "All of the training conducted by the team had to take place in a real combat environment because the Afghanistan security forces could not afford to cease operations for training," he said. "While American forces often use the term 'train like we fight,' this deployment was more of a 'train while we fight' situation."

The Virginia Soldiers quickly bonded with their respective Afghan counterparts, Martin said. "We lived, ate, slept and fought hard beside their companions for the common goals of 'clearing,

### Significant Accomplishments

- Conducted more than 600 mounted and dismounted combat patrols.
- Discovered and seized more than 50 Taliban weapons caches with AK-47 rifles, rocket propelled grenade launchers, mines, grenades, home-made explosives and improvised explosive device components during joint coalition operations.
- Arrested more than 120 suspected Taliban fighters.
- Logged more than 240 humanitarian aid missions that provided food, water, radios, tools and essentials to the villagers in remote locations.
- One team uncovered a broad-reaching corruption scandal that involved the theft of food, fuel, firewood, and soldier pay, as well as the existence of illegal checkpoints that extorted money from the citizens of Afghanistan and undermined the reputation of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

holding and building,' the three key tenets of the commander's strategy for stabilizing Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan," he said. "The Virginians spent their tour on the absolute front line of the counterinsurgency fight, many times outside of the protective umbrella of coalition forces."

Martin said the Soldiers were able to put to work both their civilian and military experience to become a valuable resource for training and mentoring the Afghanistan Security Forces.

Members of the team were awarded one Bronze Star Medal for Valor, one Army Commendation Medal for Valor and 12 Combat Infantryman Badges.

## Virginia Air Guard unit watches weather for Patriot

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia Air Guard's 200th Weather Flight was attached to the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment for Global Patriot, a joint coalition exercise at Fort McCoy, Wis., in July.

The team of 11 Airmen worked in consecutive eight-hour shifts with two men on each shift to monitor the weather and was available around the clock to provide reports to pilots and commanders, said Senior Airman J.C. Clark, a combat weather technician.

"It is our job to monitor the weather and provide them with the forecasts ahead of time, so they know what to expect," said

Air Force Maj. Jeff Leising, 200th Weather Flight commander. "We can provide them the actual warnings when things are either occurring or are imminent.

"We have equipment that can pretty much go anywhere in the world and set up our weather sensing equipment," said Leising.

In addition to the weather sensing systems, the team can pull information directly from the National Weather Service and from a satellite through high-tech computer systems to help accurately predict the weather.

Providing accurate weather information to pilots is not the only important role of the Weather Flight. They were also able to provide real time weather updates to

company commanders performing Warrior Training Tasks such as individual weapons qualification.

"If you've got folks out on the ranges, and you've got some thunderstorms rolling in, we put out the warning on that and it gives them enough time to recover out of the area and do what they need to do to get out of the line of fire," Leising said.

With the fair weather the units experienced during Global Patriot some of the weather technicians were feeling a little frustrated.

"I personally like bad weather, so I've been disappointed with the lack of bad weather," said Clark. "It has been pretty slow, but I'm sure the pilots have been pretty pleased."

## 229th MP Co. mobilizes for Iraq mission

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Friends and family of the Soldiers of the Virginia Beach-based 229th Military Police Company gathered at the State Military Reservation for a departure ceremony Aug. 3.

The ceremony was held to say farewell to the approximately 150 Soldiers before they departed to Fort Dix, N.J., where they will spend the next few months training to prepare for mobilization to Iraq, where they are scheduled to train Iraqi police forces.

The ceremony, which marks the beginning of the unit's federal active duty service to support Operation Iraqi Freedom, was attended by Gov. Tim Kaine, Secretary of Public Safety John Marshall, and the Adjutant General of Virginia, Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.

The governor pointed out that this will not be the first deployment to Iraq for the 229th and commended the unit for a job well done early on its previous deployment to Iraq in 2003 and 2004, as well as for its outstanding contributions to the hurricane relief efforts in Louisiana in 2005.

"This is a challenging day," said Kaine, the commander-in-chief of the Virginia National Guard. "Yet we are deeply honored by your commitment to the commonwealth, which you have shown by becoming a part of the Virginia Guard, and by your commitment in being deployed in this mission."

The governor also commented on how this mission is not just about the Soldiers going overseas to train the Iraqi police force, but how it is also about the families they leave behind that support them from home. He also vowed to help those families in every way he can.

"I want to pledge on behalf of the Virginia Guard and the commonwealth of Virginia, that we will do all we can during the time of deployment to lighten the burden," said Kaine.



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

**Spc. William Sweet gives his six-year-old son, Patrick, a hug following the 229th Military Police Company departure ceremony Aug. 3 at Camp Pendleton.**

Newman, the adjutant general, echoed the governor's sentiments by saying, "Keep your minds focused and we're going to take care of the folks back home. Our family readiness group is poised and ready, and has been tested to make sure that your families are well cared for during your deployment."

While headquartered in Virginia Beach, the 229th is made up of Soldiers from all over the state.

Approximately 60 Soldiers are from

the Hampton Roads area, about 20 are from the Richmond and Petersburg areas, approximately 40 are from the Roanoke and Southwest Virginia area, about 10 are from the Northern Virginia area and the other Soldiers are from various locations across the state.

The mobilization orders call for an active duty period not to exceed 400 days, but the Secretary of Defense can extend tours for operational needs not to exceed 24 months or 730 days.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine, the commander-in-chief of the Virginia National Guard, greets family members of Soldiers from the 229th Military Police Company at the unit's mobilization ceremony Aug. 3 at Camp Pendleton.**

## Guard engineers bridge the gap for local community

By Capt. Matt Nowak  
Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Bowling Green-based 189th Engineer Company watched as leaders from the town of Big Stone Gap hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony to signify the unit's contribution in building a vehicle bridge as part of their annual training Aug. 3.

Working alongside a local contractor, engineers from the 189th, a multi-role bridge company, helped construct a temporary bridge that was used while the existing bridge was dismantled and a new bridge was constructed. Vehicle traffic was not slowed as a result of this bridge project.

Along with spectators and Soldiers, Big Stone Gap's mayor, town manager and town council members were all on hand to show their appreciation for the unit in completing the majority of work on the bridge.

"The building of this bridge increases the capabilities of utilities and emergency responders. The bridge services 27 homes and an apartment complex," said Mayor Barbara Orndorff. "We have had to use smaller vehicles such as pickup trucks to pick up trash and haven't been able to send a school bus across in a long time."

As part of the ceremony, the unit presented Town Manager Pat Murphy with a certificate of appreciation. Murphy coordinated all aspects of the project with civilian organizations and the 189th. His coordination took over five months and allowed the 189th to work seamlessly with the civilian contractor.

Jim Vernon, a resident of Big Stone Gap was also presented a certificate of appreciation. Vernon donated the use of a big screen TV with cable and a soft serve ice cream machine and ice cream



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

**Soldiers from the 189th Engineer Company sit in a 5-ton dump truck as it becomes the first vehicle to cross the newly-constructed Proctor Street Bridge Aug. 3rd. The 189th spent its annual training in Big Stone Gap gaining real world construction experience.**

to the unit for the duration of annual training.

Soldiers spent about 85 daylight hours through weather to complete their portion of construction on the bridge. It rained everyday except for three days while on the site. The civilian contractors do not normally work in the rain but were willing to stay because of the dedication and time constraints of the 189th.

"We were willing to work 24/7 but, the contractors aren't able to," explained Capt. James Morris, commander of the 189th. "The contractor informed us it would have taken them three months or longer to complete the work, but the unit did it in the two weeks. We also saved the town over \$100,000."

Planning for this project began in early March. The initial concept was to use a military bridge owned by the 189th as a temporary bridge while the permanent bridge was refurbished. Unfortunately, due to many constraints a military bridge was not a viable option.

A plan was finalized for the unit to assist in the construction of a temporary steel beam and concrete decking "Work Bridge." The bridge had a 42-ton capacity and has also served as a platform to work from with the engineers' heavy equipment.

As part of military bridging tradition, the commander of the unit jumps in the water of the bridged gap. However, the stream was too shallow so the unit improvised. Morris and 1st Sgt. Earnest Outten were drenched by a bucket of water held over their heads from the excavator.

Brig. Gen. Stephen Huxtable, Assistant Adjutant General for the Army, and Col. Steven Scott, commander of the 91st Troop Command, made the trip from Richmond to attend the event. Scott presented awards and coins to Soldiers of the 189th for their performance during the bridge construction.

The ceremony was concluded with the first vehicle crossing the bridge, a dump truck full of Soldiers.



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

**Big Stone Gap's Mayor Barbara Orndorff cuts the ribbon to signify the opening of the bridge to vehicle traffic. The ceremony was attended by the Town Council, Town Manager - Pat Murphy, Capt. James Morris, Brig. Gen. Stephen Huxtable, and Col. Steven Scott.**

## Virginia troops support 10th Mountain Division

By Pfc. Blair Neelands  
1st BCT, 10th Mountain Division Public Affairs

Truck drivers from the Virginia Army National Guard took to the open road recently and conducted a mission that not only helps them train for possible deployment to South West Asia, but also supports one of the Army's most deployable combat units – the 10th Mountain Division.

Nearly 60 Guardsmen from the 1032nd Transportation Company left their armory in Gate City, Va., July 25, and made the two-day trek to Fort Drum in northern New York in order to load equipment for the 10th Mountain Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team, and carry out a long-haul mission to the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for our Soldiers," said Lt. Col. Doug Messner, commander of the 1030th Transportation Battalion. "Normally we'll do local moves supporting civil agencies and only travel a few miles."

For this move the Virginia Guard is actually using two of its truck companies; the 1032nd will move the equipment to Fort Polk, and the Martinsville, Va., based 1173rd Transportation Company will return it back to Fort Drum after the exercise. In total, the Guard truckers will travel more 3,000 miles and log-in nearly 60 hours of road time.

"These guys are getting phenomenal road time," added Messner. "Plus, they're able to work on their loading and unloading skills."

Using 27 M915 trackers, a truck built by Freightliner and based on a commercial long-haul rig, the Guardsmen will load, transport and unload 40 pieces of the 1st BCT's equipment that range from trucks, to trailers, to storage containers.

One of the company's truck drivers, Sgt. Kent Tucker, says a lot of planning has gone into their mission supporting 1st BCT and safety is always their number one priority.

"Safety is our first concern," Tucker said. "We have two drivers



Photo by Pfc. Blair Neelands, 1st BCT, 10th Mountain Division Public Affairs

**Making sure his load is tightly shackled to his truck's trailer, a Soldier from the Virginia Army National Guard's 1032nd Transportation Company prepares to leave Fort Drum, N.Y., for a 1,500 mile line-haul to the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La.**

per truck. We like to make rest stops often and switch drivers. It gives everyone a break. That's one of the reasons it takes us four days to get to Louisiana."

During the movement the drivers are only allowed to travel at a top speed of 50 mph and are limited to 10 hours of driving time a day.

Pfc. Christopher Dickenson, another truck driver in the company, says he has enjoyed supporting the 1st BCT and getting the chance to experience a little bit of northern New York.

"It's been an experience to come up here and see Fort Drum and the 10th Mountain Division and get the chance to help out with their mission," Dickenson said.

The 1st BCT will be at JRTC throughout the month of August as they prepare for their eventual deployment back to Iraq early next year.

## Virginia National Guard units leaving Roanoke

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia National Guard will relocate four units currently stationed at the Roanoke Readiness Center to Virginia Guard facilities in Petersburg, Danville, Lynchburg and Virginia Beach, Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, announced Aug. 14. The city of Roanoke plans to destroy the building where the units are currently stationed in order to make room for future development.

"The city offered another building in exchange for the current building, but it was not sufficient for our needs, so we are relocating units to different locations in Virginia," Newman said. The units are expected to be out of the building by late December. The number of Soldiers and units impacted by the move are:

29th Army Band, consisting of approximately 40 Soldiers, will relocate to the Petersburg Readiness Center

229th Chemical Company, consisting of approximately 60 Soldiers, will relocate to the Danville Readiness Center

Company E of the 429 Brigade Support Battalion, consisting of approximately 125 Soldiers, will relocate to the Lynchburg Readiness Center

Detachment 1 of the 229th Military Police Company, consisting of approximately 50 Soldiers, will relocate to the Virginia Beach Readiness Center and consolidate with the rest of the company

Newman said that any Soldier who would have to drive more than 50 miles to their new duty location would be given the option of being reassigned to a unit closer to Roanoke.

## Virginia Engineers, Iraqi Soldiers build up military base

By Sgt. Jeffrey A. Ledesma  
Special Operations Task Force – Central Public Affairs

BAGHDAD — U.S. Soldiers with the 180th Engineer Company and Iraqi Soldiers with the 3rd Support Battalion have been manning numerous projects over the last three months in an effort to better the military compound situated in the Iraqi capital.

Through an Arabic interpreter, the support battalion's command sergeant major highlighted some of the projects during an interview near a recently opened fuel station.

According to the senior enlisted leader, key priorities for the brigade include the building up of the gas station and the extension of the ammunition holding area. The 28-year-old command sergeant major added that the team effort also helped combat wild fires that often spring up during Iraq's hot and dry summers.

"Having the engineer support in clearing fields all around family housing and the ammunition holding area is a huge success for all members of the area," said Capt. Michael Zdrojesky of Philadelphia. "This decreases the chance of grass and weeds catching fire, which would relate into family homes or the AHA [ammunition holding area] catching on fire. All I have heard is praise from the families who live in this area."

As a result of the U.S. and Iraqi combined effort, extensive work was also done on two motor pools.

A total of five fields were leveled, approximately 11,550 cubic meters of fill material was hauled, and an area more than 300 thousand square feet was cleared, according to a native of Fairfax, Va., 1st Lt. Phillip Johnson.

In addition, the engineers and Iraqis filled and emplaced 417 seven-foot tall and 524 four-foot tall Hesco barriers. However, building something out of nothing didn't come effortlessly.

"The main challenge was keeping the heavy construction equipment fully operational," said Johnson, a platoon leader who helped head the multiple projects. "We overcame this challenge by always having a maintenance support team on site, conducting thorough PMCS [preventive maintenance checks and services] and always providing good supervision."

Despite minor set-backs, much was accomplished. At the conclusion of each project, most of which took approximately two to three weeks, Johnson said he felt a strong sense of accomplishment.

"I believe that the fuel point force protection and the grub and clearing of fields by family housing have improved their overall quality of life," said Johnson. "Now the fuel point has proper protection from theft and is compartmentalized to reduce the risk of fire."

During the three months, the U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers worked directly with one another to accomplish their goals.

"I like the way they were able to work together like it was one job, one hand," said the battalion command sergeant major. "It was great seeing Soldiers of different uniforms work together and watching their friendship grow."

"It is like a brotherhood," he continued. "We felt like there was no difference between American and Iraqi. We were one Army – the same Army and we helped each other the whole way through."



Photo by Sgt. Jeffrey A. Ledesma, Special Operations Task Force – Central

**1st Lt. Phillip Johnson, a platoon leader with the 180th Engineer Company, and Lt. Col. Adel, the Iraqi Special Operations Forces' 3rd Support Battalion commander, open the gate to the new fuel station on a military compound in Baghdad July 30. U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers have been working to improve the Iraqi Special Operations Forces military complex for the last three months.**

Zdrojesky, the U.S. advisor to the 3rd Battalion commander, said that the most rewarding part of the building up process is seeing Iraqis use the finished product the very next day. He added that it is important to constantly improve the base for the same reason U.S. infrastructure is constantly being improved. More specifically, he explained that military members must always improve and expand to maintain current operations.

"We want to make sure that the Iraqis can sustain their facilities and operations long after we leave the area," the 25-year-old said.

Johnson, who is a technical analyst with Northrop Grumman Corporation when he is not on active duty, agreed.

"It is extremely important to improve their compound and ensure that they are self-sustainable, everything and anything that we can assist the ISOF with as far as improvements will leave them in a better spot as U.S. forces prepare for eventual reductions in forces," Johnson stated.

Although most construction projects that the 180th Engineer Company does are temporary structures, Johnson said that it was great to build something that is going to be used by the people who live and operate here.

"I hope that the Iraqis do not simply settle for these structures, but constantly improve on them and develop them further," Johnson added. "I feel confident that the impressions that we made there will encourage the ISOF to always improve upon their situation, be it their base, living conditions, or themselves."

As Johnson's deployment comes to an end, he said the one thing he will remember is coming onto the ISOF complex and being impressed. He added that it was by far the best Iraqi base he has seen during this tour.

"I think what makes this place is that the ISOF Soldiers take great pride in who they are and what they do," said Zdrojesky. "If you have been here and have had the great pleasure of working with them, you understand where I am coming from."

## Virginia troops tackle one final mission in Iraq

By Maj. John Strahan  
555th Engineer Brigade

BALAD, Iraq — The mid day August sun bore down on the Soldiers as they dismounted from their armored vehicles.

The warm breeze gave no relief from the 114 degree heat.

“Remember, drink plenty of water,” said the patrol leader. “We’ll be walking seven kilometers today.”

With final checks complete, Soldiers from the 266th Military Police Company moved out for another Counter Indirect Fire Patrol.

This Virginia Army National Guard unit recently arrived at Joint Base Balad, Iraq and assumed a new mission designed to increase force protection.

Joint Base Balad has received indirect fire attacks since U.S. forces first took control of the former Iraqi air base in 2003.

In the early days of Operation Iraqi Freedom this camp earned the name “Mortar-Rita-Ville.”

Through the efforts of units like the 266th MP Company, attacks against the camp have been greatly reduced over time.

“Mortar and rocket attacks present a constant danger to personnel stationed here,” said 1st Lt. John Hinton. “Our patrols are designed to deny insurgents the ability to conduct attacks against the base,” said the 27 year old platoon leader.

“These patrols are also an opportunity for us to interact with the area residents,” Hinton added. Hinton, from Newport News, Va., is a member of the 266th MP Co. He has been serving with the unit in Iraq for nearly 11 months.

The daily missions are a combination of mounted and dismounted patrols. This gives Soldiers the ability to investigate suspected launch sites and look for possible caches of mortars and rockets. Patrols encompass the small villages and farm lands that surround the base.

“We walk for several hours and look for



U.S. Army photos by Maj. John Strahan, 555th Engineer Brigade

**While on a foot patrol, 1st Lt. John Hinton of the 266th Military Police Company speaks with farmers about suspected indirect fire launches in the local area.**

signs of a recent launch,” said Sgt. James Reed, 32 years old, of Staunton, Va. Reed is a team leader in 1st. Platoon.

“Burn marks on the ground, or trails leading into the brush, are the type of things we check out,” explained Reed.

Patrol locations and times are determined on intelligence analysis and local observations.

Spc. Jesse Miller, a 30 year-old team member, from Montclair, Va., understands the necessity to conduct these patrols.

“We get our information, and act on it to deny the enemies’ indirect fire capability,” said Miller.

The force protection mission is the final assignment in Iraq for this National Guard unit.

Previous assignments included providing police training teams and convoy security operations.

Although nearing the end of their deployment, the Soldiers of the 266th MP Co. embraced this last mission with commitment and dedication.

“We’ve been here for nearly a year, and this is a good mission to end our tour with,” said Miller.



**Sgt. James Reed of the 266th Military Police Company stops to check a burn mark he discovered while on a foot patrol near Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Such burn marks in the ground are an indication of a possible rocket launch site.**

## EO Advisors enthusiastic to begin new assignments

By Capt. Matthew Nowak  
Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

Four Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers graduated the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute June 24 at Florida’s Patrick Air Force Base to become Virginia’s newest Equal Opportunity Advisors and are eager to start their new role. The following Soldiers graduated the course:

Sgt. 1st Class Patricia Bunns of the Fort Pickett-based 183rd Regional Training Institute, Master Sgt. Anthony Bombay of the Fort Belvoir-based 29th Infantry Division, Sgt. 1st Class Clara Vargas of the Virginia Beach-based 329th Regional Support Group and 1st. Lt. Kervin Sider of the Fort Pickett-based Joint Forces Headquarters-Virginia.

“At DEOMI, we learned about racism, sexism, extremism, and religious discrimination. We worked in small groups and did activities to reinforce what we have learned. I learned about my own personal biases and barriers and how to overcome them to be an effective equal opportunity advisor,” said Strider. “This training will help me identify policies or actions that will be counter productive to a healthy EO environment. EO is a force multiplier for a unit because if Soldiers know they are valued and the unit is genuinely concerned about them, then the Soldier will give the unit everything they have got.”

Sider will serve as the Virginia Army National Guard’s full-time EOA, reporting directly to Assistant Adjutant General for the Army, Brig. Gen. Stephen Huxtable. His first task will be to conduct a statewide EO climate survey. He will also become a force multiplier and assist in training Equal Opportunity Leaders for battalion or lower commands. At the EOA course, Sider was named to the Commandant’s List for placing in the top 20% of his graduating class.

“An effective equal opportunity program is essential to the success of any unit in today’s military,” said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. “Mutual courtesy and respect between Soldiers and Airman is critical to unit cohesion, and anything less than that puts a unit’s ability to accomplish their mission at risk. These newly-trained advisors will help our senior commanders make sure they are taking the right steps with our equal opportunity programs.”

Since EO is not just a one-weekend-a-month subject, Sider will provide assistance to his fellow EOA graduates who are traditional Soldiers, regardless of the command.

After completing the four-week course, each student will be serving as an Equal Opportunity Advisor to an O-6 commander or higher. The advisor’s responsibilities include assisting to prevent, reduce, or eliminate discriminatory practices within the command. They are also subject matter experts assessing the organizational climate and identifying human relations concerns and issues that pose threat to command climate, unit cohesion, readiness, mission accomplishment, Sider said.

If not already completed, one of their first tasks will be updating or determining their unit’s equal opportunity climate in order to establish a baseline, and if necessary, offer the best course



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

**Four Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers graduated from the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute June 26 at Patrick Air Force Base. From left to right are Master Sgt. Anthony Bombay, Sgt. 1st Class Clara Vargas, Sgt. 1st Class Patricia Bunns and 1st. Lt. Kervin Sider.**

of action to improve the climate, Sider said.

One tool to gauge the climate is conducting an online survey. A link to the survey will be sent via email to Soldiers for completion. This is one of the easiest and simplest ways for an EOA to get information on the climate and it offers an anonymous and private response, he said.

Equal Opportunity is the Commander’s program, which the unit commander gives guidance and direction to. Successful programs are based on command emphasis, leader modeling, and effective training at the unit level, Sider said.

To show the importance of Virginia Army Guard’s commitment to EO, Huxtable flew to Patrick Air Force Base to attend the graduation. He presented each soldier with a coin to reward them for their excellence and let them know he had high expectations for them.

“I feel it is important for the graduates, and commands, to know how serious I (the TAG and myself) believe in a strong EO program,” Huxtable stressed. “A strong readiness program needs a strong equal opportunity program. They go hand and hand. If all of the Soldiers feel that they are respected and treated fairly, they will give to the mission and to their fellow Soldier all that they can to be successful.”

In order to be able to attend the four-week course each student had to complete Phase I, an intensive online course consisting of nine components which helped prepare students for the Phase II resident course.

Phase II prepares Equal Opportunity Advisors to perform their mission by providing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with their job requirements.

The curriculum develops a base of knowledge and skills that allow graduates to assess human relations climates in the organizations they serve, and to provide advice and assistance to commanders to prevent, reduce, or eliminate discriminatory practices.

In-resident training also includes instruction in presentation skills, organizational assessment and complaint processing; all vital in preparing an EOA to perform their mission.

Additionally, other lessons like Education, Training, & Awareness will provide students some basic knowledge and practical skills to design, develop, and deliver training programs.

## Youth Summer Camp held at Virginia Beach

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Nearly 80 children spent a week at Camp Pendleton State Military Reservation Aug. 2-7 for fun in the sun as well as educational classes designed to help them cope with the day-to-day struggles unique to children of service members at the fourth annual Virginia National Guard Youth Camp.

The 75 Virginia Guard children and four Reservists' children, ages 8-12, spent the week as if they were at any summer camp. They spent their afternoons going to the beach, playing with their friends, and even learning first-aid, according to Dana Ivory, state youth coordinator.

The children woke up early every morning and got ready for the day. At 7:45 they held a flag ceremony and then they would go enjoy breakfast. Following the morning meal the children and the 11 junior volunteers (13-14 years old) and the teen leaders (15-17 years old) would attend three, one hour long classes.

The classes were focused on helping the children of military families cope with issues the average child would not typically face. They attended classes discussing deployments and reintegration. This year was unique because the staff brought in a few Military Life Counselors to assist in the classes and answer any questions the campers may have had about their loved-one's professions and how they affected them, according to Vickie Sais, state family program director.

The camp was not all lectures and classrooms though. The youngsters were given plenty of time to let their hair down and have some fun. Some of the classroom time included a lesson on beach creatures presented by the Virginia Aquarium, as well as a presentation from the Virginia Air and Space Museum. The children were even given a presentation by the Virginia Drug

## Virginia Defense Force membership now 1,000 strong

By 1st Lt. Henry C. Howells  
Virginia Defense Force

The Virginia Defense Force has met its 2009 recruiting goal and now has more than 1,000 members ready to respond to assist their fellow Virginians in all facets of disaster response.

"The Virginia Defense Force has significantly increased the volunteer force in the last two years by reaching the 1,000 goal," said Maj. Gen. (VA) John Taylor, commanding general of the Virginia Defense Force.

"With a broad range of training in communications, security, emergency response and other areas, more Virginians

are taking an active role in protecting their homeland."

Noting the VDF's enhanced mission capabilities, Taylor states, "This significant increase in personnel has improved the overall response capabilities to augment the Virginia National Guard for disaster assistance to the citizens of the commonwealth in local communities throughout the state. We will continue to increase the volunteer force into next year to reach 1,200 members as directed by the Virginia National Guard Adjutant General."

In 2008, the VDF volunteered more than 85,000 hours in support of the people of the Commonwealth in civilian assistance and

Virginia National Guard operations. The value of those volunteer hours is estimated to have saved the Commonwealth of Virginia nearly \$1.6 million.

"The Virginia Defense Force has grown and matured into an extremely capable organization and is an integral part of the overall response capability of the Virginia Department of Military Affairs," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr. "The volunteers of the VDF bring skills and capabilities with them that will be invaluable to the commonwealth in a time of crisis, and the tremendous recruiting effort on the part of Maj. Gen. Taylor and his leaders will continue to increase that capability in the months to come."



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Tug of war was one of the many team-building activities that took place at the Virginia National Guard Youth Camp Aug. 3 at the State Military Reservation.**

Demand and Reduction unit.

After classes were finished each day, the kids participated in scheduled day trips. Included in the day trips were opportunities to visit Busch Gardens theme park, Ocean Breeze Water Park and a trip to a local laser tag venue, according to Ivory.

After returning from the day trips and finishing dinner, the youths partook in team building activities and the occasional game of kickball before heading to their bunks for lights out.

While the children were at camp they were afforded many opportunities to have fun, but they were also given a chance to spend some time with kids their own age who face similar experiences based on the unique bonds they share because of what their parents do for a living.

"The camp brings geographically dispersed youth together and provides them the forum to communicate and interact with one another in a safe environment," said Ivory. "The camp is important to the kids because it allows them to interact with kids who understand what it is like to have a parent in the Guard."

## Winchester readiness center to be named in honor of fallen Virginia Guard Soldiers

Governor's Office News Release

Governor Timothy M. Kaine announced Aug. 14 that the new Virginia National Guard Readiness Center in Winchester will be named the Cherry-Beasley Readiness Center in honor of Staff Sgt. Craig W. Cherry and Sgt. Bobby E. Beasley, two Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers killed in the line of duty while serving in Afghanistan in 2004.

The readiness center operations center will be named in honor of retired United States Senator John Warner.

"It is fitting that the new readiness center in Winchester be named in honor of two Soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving their country and defending the ideals of freedom," Governor Kaine said. "This new readiness center is the kind of facility that will help our Soldiers better prepare for challenging missions both here in Virginia and overseas, and naming it in the honor of these two Soldiers will serve as a reminder of the serious nature of those missions."

A formal dedication ceremony is scheduled for Oct. 4, 2009, at the new facility.

Beasley and Cherry, both infantrymen assigned to the Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, were killed when an Improvised Explosive Device destroyed their vehicle on August 7, 2004, during a patrol near Ghazikel in eastern Afghanistan.

The Winchester Readiness Center is the headquarters for the 3rd Battalion.

Cherry, a native of Winchester, was 39 at the time of his death and was married with three children. He served in the U.S. Army from 1983-1987, then served in the Missouri Army Guard from 1987-1998 before transferring to the Virginia Guard in late 1998.

Beasley, a native of Inwood, West Virginia, was 36 at the time of his death and married. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1980-1992 and, after spending one year in the Naval Reserve, he enlisted in the Virginia Guard in 1993.

The deaths of Beasley and Cherry



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**The new Virginia National Guard Readiness Center in Winchester is almost 52,000 square feet and cost about \$10 million to build. It is being named after Staff Sgt. Craig W. Cherry and Sgt. Bobby E. Beasley, two Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers killed in the line of duty while serving in Afghanistan in 2004.**

marked the first combat deaths of a mobilized Virginia Guardsman since the end of World War II in 1945.

No Virginia Guard units served in theater during the Korean or Vietnam wars and while eight units served in Desert Storm (1990-1991). (One Virginia Guard Soldier died during Desert Storm as a result of non-combat injuries suffered in a vehicle crash).

To honor the sacrifice and memory of these two Soldiers, their operating base in Afghanistan was renamed from "Camp Bulldog" to "Camp Cherry-Beasley." In addition, an Afghan training village located at Fort Pickett was named "Cherry Village" in 2008 in honor of Cherry.

Naming the readiness center operations center for Senator Warner is in recognition of his efforts to secure the funding for the building's construction, as well as his support for the Virginia National Guard during his years of service as a United States Senator.

"There would be no new readiness center in Winchester without the tireless efforts

of John Warner," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. "Senator Warner was one of the greatest supporters of the Virginia National Guard in Washington, and naming the nerve center of the state-of-the-art facility in Winchester is in recognition of his important contribution to the readiness of Virginia Guard Soldiers serving in Virginia and overseas."

Warner, a veteran of World War II, served as Secretary of the Navy from 1972 to 1974 and as a five-term United States Senator from Virginia from January 2, 1979, to January 3, 2009.

The 51,183-square-foot readiness center building cost about \$10 million to build, compared to the former building that opened in 1940 and measured 15,522 square feet.

The new facility features a number of classrooms, a distance learning center where members of the Guard can take online courses, a gym and a weight room and high-tech virtual weapon training rooms.

# Virginia aviation unit completes Global Patriot exercise in Wisconsin



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

Soldiers and Airmen unload three UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters from a C-5 at Volk Airfield in Wisconsin before unfolding and flying the rest of the way to Fort McCoy for joint exercise Global Patriot.

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers of the Sandston-based 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment returned to home station July 23 alongside Airmen of the 200th Weather Flight after conducting their two-week annual training at Fort McCoy, Wisc.

While in Wisconsin the Soldiers and Airmen participated in a joint exercise known as Global Patriot. According to Capt. Aaron Loy, the exercise is an Air Force-generated mission that focused a lot of attention on homeland defense training. While the battalion was at Fort McCoy, its Soldiers focused their attention toward wartime, mission-based training with the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade during the exercise.

The two weeks spent working in the joint environment was helpful to the unit from both a readiness standpoint, by

giving Soldiers the opportunity to hone their individual military occupational specialties, as well as from a unit preparedness standpoint, by allowing the battalion the opportunity to rehearse the mobilization process.

"It met my commander goals and objectives for the annual training period, which included focus on individual MOS-proficiency training nested with collective unit training in a joint environment," said Lt. Col. James Ring, battalion commander. "It also included exercising both unit preparation for a deployment, unit movement, unit arrival at an intermediate staging base and then going through a full RSOI [reception, staging, onward movement, integration]."

They began their unit movement stage in early July when they started to posture the battalion from both of its states and then began staging their personnel, equipment and aircraft for load out and transportation to Wisconsin by land and by air.

"What replicated that [RSOI] for us included

both air and line haul movement of the battalion from both Virginia and Maryland," said Ring. "It included C-5 and C-17 movement of personnel and equipment, to include load out of UH-60 aircraft from both Virginia and Maryland."

"Then also going through upon arrival at a simulated theater location to reassemble the unit and go through mandatory briefings, environmental training, and then on to conducting the mission."

During the exercise the Soldiers in the battalion were able to focus on their specific aviation missions as an air assault battalion. They focused on their wartime mission as well as their homeland defense and support to civil authorities missions.

"The 2nd of the 224th is an air assault battalion, which means we are medium-lift, which is defined by a medium utility helicopter such as a UH-60," said Ring. "Being Air Assault means we do a full spectrum of medium lift missions, to include tactical insertion, extraction of personnel and equipment in a combat environment."

"Also we focused on other unit specific tasks such as aerial resupply, CASEVAC [casualty evacuation], and aerial command and control," Ring said. "Basically, all of those mission essential tasks that we have as a battalion, we were able to exercise during Patriot '09."

"Patriot '09 afforded us the opportunity to perform those mission essential tasks under a joint and international environment."

During the exercise, the pilots and the crew chiefs were supporting the infantry battalions through insertion and extraction exercises, and assisting medical personnel with CASEVAC operations. Meanwhile, the flight companies were also being supported internally by their maintenance company, their headquarters company, as well as their forward support company.

"While it's easy to look at an air assault battalion and focus simply on our 30 UH-60 helicopters," said Ring, "the reality is that for those helicopters and aircrews to go out and conduct their mission takes a substantial support group behind that."

The forward support company provided the majority of the planning and coordination of their movement, staging of their containers, the staging of their vehicles and aircraft, according to Ring. They also coordinated the ground movement of equipment

"They basically, feed the battalion, fuel the battalion and they resupply the battalion as far as movement," he said. "So it's a critical function of the battalion."

Company D of the battalion provided maintenance to the air crews while the headquarters company provided the battalion staff.

The staff exercised the commander's command and control while providing communications as well as administrative support.

"The training value at the company level was outstanding," said Maj. Keith Nunnally, battalion operations officer. "All in all, it was a great experience for most of the Soldiers involved. Anytime they can get training in their MOS, it's a positive experience."



Virginia Guard Aviators from the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment assist Maryland Guard Soldiers from Troop C, 1/158th Cavalry during special patrol insertion/extraction training at Fort McCoy, Wisc.



Chief Warrant Officer John Anderson conducts pre-flight checks and inspections to a UH-60 before piloting the aircraft in a special patrol insertion/extraction mission.



UH-60 Blackhawks transporting Soldiers of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment arrive at Fort McCoy Airfield July 13 to begin their two-week annual training.