



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

Linda Libertelli, general manager of the Wyndham Virginia Crossings Hotel and Conference Center, hands a box of toiletries to Spc. Kyle Harris, a Soldier in the 276th Engineer Battalion, Aug. 21 in Glen Allen. The Wyndham Hotel and the local chapter of the Lions Club teamed up to donate several large boxes of toiletries to the unit, which will begin mobilization at the end of November.

The Office of the Adjutant General
State of Virginia
ATTN: Public Affairs Office
Bldg. 316 - Fort Pickett
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**VIRGINIA GUARD OCS
CELEBRATES 50TH YEAR**

JULY - AUGUST 2008



**Freedom
Salutes honor
Virginia Guard
Soldiers**

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**Chairman
of the Joint
Chiefs salutes
volunteers**

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FROM THE TOP



Gustav and Hanna serve as reminders of the importance of the Guard's state mission

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

The early part of the 2008 hurricane season has given us a clear picture of the importance of the Virginia National Guard's state mission. As Hurricane Gustav hit the Gulf Coast and Tropical Storm Hanna soaked Virginia, the Virginia Guard once again showed how quickly it can respond, but we also learned some valuable lessons for how we can do things better.

In the last year, our federal mission has had tremendous visibility. The many different units of the 116th Brigade Combat Team returned from duty in Iraq and Kuwait, and we have been fine tuning our reset and reintegration process. These areas are critical to making sure Soldiers and their families are well taken care of, and our equipment is ready for the next mission, whether it is state or federal.

I couldn't be prouder of how we responded in the wake of Gustav and Hanna. We quickly deployed a small group of Soldiers and Airmen to assist with the Joint Operations Center in New Orleans, as well as for duty as planners at National Guard Bureau. Not only will these Guardsmen help the response effort, but they will bring back with them valuable insights that will help us in future operations.

What really impressed me was the ability of the Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team to rapidly deploy as our Incident Response Force Package and stage their forces at Fort Pickett.

With almost no notice, nearly the entire battalion was on the ground at Fort Pickett in about 30 hours. Even though we did not receive any missions for those Soldiers to execute, their quick reaction should send a clear message of our preparedness and provide a feeling of confidence to the people of Virginia that the National Guard will be there when needed.

While the response time of the 1st Battalion was terrific, we also identified



Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.

some shortfalls in equipment and capability that need to be addressed in order to make sure the IRFP can effectively do their job.

For example, we want the IRFP to be able to clear roads of fallen trees and debris. We must provide necessary resources to complete this mission. We have identified gaps such as these, and we are taking steps to close those gaps.

Our goal with the IRFP is to develop a template for our response that will work in almost any hurricane situation. From that template, we will then be able to quickly and effectively modify the response force for other types of incidents that would require our response.

Another key element of our response to Gustav and Hanna has been the Virginia Defense Force. Too often we think of our capability only as the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. But we really need to think of it in terms of the Virginia Department of Military Affairs and remember how vital the VDF is to our ability to respond to the call of our fellow Virginians.

The members of the VDF train as volunteers, spending their own time and

money to better prepare them for a possible call to duty. When on state active duty for emergency response, they do in fact receive pay, but it is those volunteer hours and the vast experience of our VDF members that pays off when we need them.

In addition to bringing additional staffing and a wealth of experience to any response, the VDF also brings capabilities that we don't have in the Army or Air Guard. The VDF has two mobile command posts that have radio communications capabilities that enable us to keep in contact with local first responders and other agencies during a time of crisis.

We are going to take all of these important lessons learned from our response to Gustav and Hanna and use them to improve our plan and increase our ability to respond quickly and effectively. I am confident that we will be better prepared for the next mission, and we will continue to make improvements.

We will continue to revise and update our plans to make sure we give the Commonwealth the support it needs.

We are in the planning phases of a new joint task force organization called Joint Task Force 91 that will be in the lead for missions like these. The core of JTF 91 is the Richmond-based 91st Troop Command, but the JTF organization will be augmented as needed with other Army, Air and Defense Force units in order to function effectively.

We have begun planning for IRISH RAIN, a staff simulation exercise scheduled for early June 2009. As we prepare for this exercise in the coming months, we will focus on our ability to respond, revise our existing plans and validate them in the final exercise.

Our state mission and role as the Commonwealth's Guardian is more important than ever. We stand ready to respond, we do it well and we are going to work hard plan and prepare to make sure we can do it even better.

Family Programs hosts summer youth camp



Photo by Capt. Dayna Rowden, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Campers from the “red team” participate in a game of tug-of-war at the Virginia National Guard summer youth camp Aug. 3-8 at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach.

**By Capt. Dayna Rowden
Virginia Guard Public Affairs**

Nearly 70 dependent children or siblings of members the Virginia Army and Air National Guard, clad in brightly colored t-shirts, splashed and bobbed in the ocean off Camp Pendleton.

These children enjoyed a week of fun in the sun at the third annual Virginia National Guard summer camp held at Camp Pendleton in Virginia Beach, Va., Aug. 3-8.

The camp, hosted by the Virginia National Guard Family Programs Office, provided children the opportunity to meet and play with other National Guard children.

Many of the children live in towns where they are the only military children, said

Dana Ivory, a family programs assistant and coordinator of this year’s camp. At this camp, the children, some of whom have deployed parents, have the chance to meet other military kids.

Guardsmen from around the state volunteered to serve as counselors throughout the week. Soldiers from Drug Demand Reduction gave classes to the children and organized team games, including a tug of war.

The camp organizers planned many activities and trips for the campers.

“This year was the first time we could let the kids swim in the ocean,” said Ivory. “We needed to get lifeguards, and this year we were able to hire two. The kids just love the water.”

The campers raced up and down the beach through obstacles courses, built sand

castles and rode the waves. Their giggles filled the air on Virginia Beach.

The campers also traveled to a local water park, laser tag and Busch Gardens. On the last night of the camp, they held a special pizza party to celebrate the week spent together.

Though the camp was designed for children ages 8-13, some pre-teens acted as junior counselors.

“These kids have really stepped up,” said Ivory. “They get to enjoy the camp and help out with the younger kids too.”

“This camp is a great way the Guard reaches out to the children and the families,” said Chief Warrant Officer Deborah Kidd, a family readiness program coordinator. “It’s a great chance for these kids to come out and have a great time together. I know I’m having a great time.”

News Briefs

Army announces new service uniform

The Army has made it official; the green service uniform, which has defined the service since the mid-1950s, is on the outs.

In place of the green uniform will be a variation of the blue uniform, something many Soldiers already own. Official word on the new "Army Service Uniform," or ASU, was released Aug. 20 in a message to all Army activities.

The message defines the wear policy and the "bridging" strategy for transition to the new uniform.

"It's a culmination of transformation efforts that started in 2004," said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston of the new ASU. "We had three 'Class A' style uniforms, all the same style jacket, with just a different color -- the policies on how we wore accoutrements on them were different. We asked the question -- if we wear one only, which would it be? And the blue uniform was the most popular of the three."

The new ASU coat, similar to the existing blue coat, will be made of a wrinkle-resistant material and will have a more "athletic" cut.

Other changes to the uniform include authorization of a combat service identification badge to recognize combat service, overseas service bars authorized on the jacket sleeve for both enlisted Soldiers and officers, the wear of distinctive unit insignia on the shoulder loops of the blue

coat for enlisted Soldiers, authorizing paratroopers to wear the black jump boots with the blue ASU, and the decision to transition to a new short sleeve and long sleeve white shirt with shoulder loops.

It is also permissible for enlisted Soldiers to wear both overseas service bars and service stripes on the new blue ASU coat. Officers and Soldiers in the grade of corporal and above will additionally wear a gold braid on their slacks to indicate leadership roles.

"That is kind of a right of passage as you transition from being a (junior) enlisted soldier to a noncommissioned officer," Preston said of the gold braid.

New items for the ASU will be available in military clothing sales after July 2009.

Soldiers will be expected to possess the entire uniform by July 2014.

-Army News Service

Every Monday now blues day for Airmen

Beginning Sept. 8, Airmen now will be required to wear a combination of the blues uniform on Mondays.

At a recent four-star conference, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz discussed the issue with other senior leaders.

"We all agreed that part of our image, culture and professionalism is instilled in our blues," General Schwartz said.

The policy is mandatory for most career fields, with installation commanders retaining the authority to adjust for mission

requirements.

Prior to Sept. 11, 2001, blues were the primary duty uniform for most Airmen.

-Air Force News Service

Va. troops head to Okla. for search & extraction training

Six Virginia National Guard Soldiers spent July 14 - 19 in Oklahoma City participating in a civilian-led basic search and extraction course. Participants in the Enhanced Response Force Package Basic Course are provided opportunities to develop skills with situations involving confined space structural collapses.

Five of the Soldiers are from the Charlottesville-based C Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, and one Soldier serves in the Virginia Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological/Nuclear and Explosive - Enhanced Response Force.

This course deals with basic rescue tool techniques and tactics of confined space entry, rope use, breaking and breaching, lifting and hauling and rigging.

The training provides the Virginia National Guard and the state as a whole with a valuable tool in the event of a terrorist incident or natural disaster, said Maj. Elena Scarbrough, C Co. commander.

The training also covers pre-hospital trauma life support where medical personnel learn how to treat and stabilize patients.

- Staff Reports

Virginia National Guard Federal Deployments

# *	Unit	Where Deployed	Home Town
170	1710th Transportation Company	Kuwait/ Iraq	Emporia
15	192nd Security Forces Squadron	Kyrgyzstan	Langley Air Force Base
16	Brigade Embedded Training Team	Fort Riley, Kan.	Various Locations
16	Battalion Embedded Training Team	Fort Riley, Kan.	Various Locations
30	Data Processing Unit	Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan	Manassas
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 Sept. 4, 2008



Virginia GuardPost



SERVING THE ARMY AND AIR GUARD OF VIRGINIA

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On the Cover



2nd Lt. Aaron D. Pennekamp is sworn in as an officer during the graduation of the Virginia National Guard's 50th OCS class Aug. 23 at Fort Pickett. (Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard Public Affairs)

The Adjutant General

Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.

Chief of Public Affairs

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

State Public Affairs Officer

Capt. Dayna Rowden
dayna.rowden@us.army.mil

Air Guard Public Affairs Officer

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

GuardPost Editor

Staff Sgt. A.J. Coyne
andrew.coyne@us.army.mil

Public Affairs Staff

Sgt. 1st Class Michael Hampton
Sgt. Jesse Houk
Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Sgt. John Slosser
Spc. Geoff Dudley

Public Affairs Office location

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

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Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, TAG salute volunteers

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

Soldiers, Airmen, spouses and other family members who support the Virginia National Guard were honored by both the state's top servicemember and the military's top servicemember at the Virginia National Guard Volunteer Recognition Workshop Aug. 23-24 in Williamsburg.

Saturday morning, the 40 volunteers from across the state received awards and thanks from Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia.

"Family Programs has done a great job taking care of our Soldiers and Airmen," Newman said. "Families are a vital part of our readiness, not just for federal missions, but for state missions as well. We cannot do it without the families."

During the morning session, attendees also heard from representatives from Operation Homefront, Military Spouse magazine and the Military Spouse Corporate Career Network.

Adm. Michael G. Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and his wife, Deborah, joined the group for lunch. He too thanked the family members and volunteers for all their hard work and dedication to supporting the military.

Meanwhile, Deborah Mullen traveled



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

Deborah Mullen, wife of Adm. Michael G. Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, speaks with volunteers at the Volunteer Recognition Workshop Aug. 23-24.

from table to table to meet personally with many of the attendees, thank them for their service, and share ideas and thoughts on serving the military.

Linda McNeal, wife of an Army Reservist and a representative from Humor Solutions, spoke and interacted with the group following lunch. McNeal talked about using laughter to deal with stress and gave some examples from her own life of how she deals with the stress of her husband being deployed.

Maj. Gen. Michael H. Sumrall, Assistant to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff for National Guard Matters, and his wife, Paula, also attended the workshop. Following lunch, Paula Sumrall spoke to the volunteers about parents who volunteer

when their children are deployed and why it's so important.

"My hat is off to each of you," she told the assembled volunteers. "I cannot say enough thanks for all that you do."

The second day of the workshop included several more presentations and featured Col. Marty Wong, director of family programs for the National Guard Bureau.

"The first State Volunteer Workshop was a huge success and very much overdue," said Vickie Sais, director of State Family Programs. "It was a great time to recognize and thank the volunteers for all they do to take care of families. This weekend was all about the volunteers, the essential piece of our program."

Afghan Battalion Embedded Training Team mobilizes

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

A team of Virginia National Guard Soldiers departed Fort Pickett Aug. 18 for Fort Riley, Kan., to begin training for the deployment to Afghanistan as an embedded training team. The team of 16 Soldiers will work with a battalion of approximately 500 Afghan soldiers. Virginia will also deploy another team to work with an Afghan National Army brigade of approximately 1,500 Soldiers in early September.

"The Brigade and Battalion ETTs will provide training and mentoring to the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police in order to continue to stabilize the police and military forces in Afghanistan," said Maj. Mike Martin of Afton, the senior mentor of the battalion team. "Soldiers will provide mentoring to their Afghan counterparts in logistics, tactics, strategic planning, military decision-making process, and battalion and brigade level

staff operations. The trainers will be embedded with Afghan counterparts and will live, train and fight alongside them."

The team will train at Fort Riley until late October or early November and then deploy to Afghanistan.

"This is probably going to be one of the most challenging assignments you will ever have," Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, told the team before their departure. "We will all be looking after your loved ones back here while you are looking after your mission. You will be supported by your fellow Soldiers back here in Virginia to the utmost of our ability."

Newman stressed the importance of the mission to the future stability of Afghanistan.

"You have a chance to change history with what you are doing," he said. "The mission you will do will add stability and help their government rule in a democratic and free way. It is a long road, but you're going to be laying an important foundation."

Joint exercise offers 1st field test for comms equipment

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

A joint exercise between the Fredericksburg-based 116th Brigade Special Troops Battalion and the University of Mary Washington Police Force, conducted Aug. 3, not only gave Virginia Guard Soldiers and campus police a chance to practice their crowd control techniques, but it also served as the first field test of new communication equipment.

The Joint Incident Site Communications Capability provides communication resources and allows different organizations with different types of radios to be able to talk to each other.

The battalion's Hampton-based signal company operated the equipment and put it into use for the first time in a simulated real-world setting during the exercise. The company set up the equipment during annual training, but this was the first time they actually hooked in with another agency's communication system.

"We can provide internet video teleconferencing, radio interoperability and world wide telecommunications to any site, anywhere," said Capt. Lesley Kipling, commander of C Company,

116th BSTB. "If there was a natural disaster or man-made disaster where there was no communication infrastructure left, we could provide that. We can link different radio networks so police, fire, Red Cross, military can all come in and talk on one network for command and control purposes."

During the exercise, the UMW police provided a radio handset. When it was linked into the JISCC, it enabled them to talk to the leaders of the battalion on their military radio network.

In addition to providing the Virginia National Guard with important communications resources, the exercise also provided Soldiers of the signal company a chance to work on their military specialty skills.

"The training opportunity for the Soldiers is really awesome and the satisfaction of knowing we can accomplish this kind of mission and we have a real world mission," Kipling said. "The company is not just on paper, but we can execute a real-world mission."

The exercise gave Soldiers a chance to practice their crowd control techniques and gave senior leaders of the battalion a chance to work with local law enforcement agencies.

3rd Bn., 116th BCT receives new commander, new battle streamers

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

After recognizing the unit's service in Iraq in Freedom Salutes at company level armories, the 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team conducted a change of command ceremony Aug. 17 in Winchester. Prior to conducting the ceremonial exchange of the unit colors, senior leaders added battle and award streamers to the unit colors recognizing their combat service.

The ceremony began with the promotion of William Zana, the incoming commander, from major to lieutenant colonel. After his promotion, Zana and the outgoing commander, Lt. Col. John Epperly, added streamers for the Army Superior Unit Award, the Combat Infantry Unit Streamer and the Afghanistan Campaign Streamer.

"Together we have lived and made history," Epperly said.

He reflected on how the battalion had supported security operations for the first post-9/11 presidential inauguration and rapidly deployed to the Gulf Coast in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Epperly also complimented the Soldiers on their performance in combat in some of the toughest conditions faced anywhere in

the Global War on Terror.

"The last time we put a battle streamer on those colors was 1944," he said. "What you have done is generational and historic. Thank you for what you do."

A unit earns the Army Superior Unit Award during peacetime or outside a war zone for outstanding meritorious performance of a difficult and challenging mission carried out under extraordinary circumstances. The unit also earned the streamer in 1992 and 1993.

A Combat Infantry Unit Streamer is awarded if 65 percent of a unit's assigned strength have been awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge during military operations. The battalion earned this honor during its 2004 to 2005 deployment to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom.

The final streamer was the unit's Afghanistan Campaign Streamer, which reflects the unit's participation credit for having served in combat in Afghanistan.

Epperly also announced that the unit has earned special recognition with the Walter T. Kerwin, Jr. Readiness Award and Milton A. Reckord Trophy for 2007.

The Walter T. Kerwin, Jr. Readiness Award recognizes outstanding Guard and Reserve unit readiness.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard PAO

Lt. Col. William Zana, incoming commander for 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team, adds a streamer to the unit colors.

The Milton A. Reckord Trophy is awarded to the outstanding battalion in each of the Army areas.

The Milton A. Reckord Trophy will be presented in Baltimore Sept. 22.

The Walter T. Kerwin, Jr. Readiness Award will be presented Oct. 7 in Washington, D.C.

34th CST trains with local first responders

By Sgt. John Slosser
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The opening scenes involve a mysterious and dangerous liquid at an international airport, then there is a police raid at a secret suburban bomb factory, and then the climax comes during lap five at a massive racing sports complex. No, this is not a movie script, it is multi-agency training in action where Virginia state agencies and first responders are training for the worst.

Soldiers and Airmen from the Virginia National Guard's 34th Civil Support Team concluded a three-day training exercise called "River City Guardian 08" July 23 at the Richmond International Raceway. The goal of the training was to improve the Virginia Guard's ability to work with other state agencies and local first responders.

"This is part of a multi-day, multi-jurisdictional exercise," said Maj. Terry Thiem, deputy commander for the 34th CST. "The scenario we are conducting today is a simulated terrorist attack during a race here at the raceway."

Thiem explained that during the first day of the exercise at the Richmond International Airport, a package was discovered that was leaking an unknown liquid that caused a adverse reaction from



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Tech. Sgt. John Nature from the Virginia National Guard's 34th Civil Support Team, scans a mock disaster sight for possible threats during a multi-day, multi-jurisdictional training event at the Richmond International Raceway.

one of the airport employees. Intelligence from that package lead the Virginia State Police to conduct a raid on a civilian residence on day two of the exercise, where they found a clandestine laboratory for making bombs and chemical devises.

Scenario planners chose the RIR for the training because it is one of the largest sports venues in the Commonwealth of Virginia, at times brining in as many as 120,000 people for a single event. Since the civil support team is pre-positioned at the RIR during most races, they would have to be ready to respond accordingly.

"It helps us because you don't want to be meeting your first responder friends the first time you go to an incident in a real situation," said Thiem. "What you want is to be training with those people, knowing who they are, knowing what their techniques are prior to the race, that way if something happens you work just like one team.

The training event gave elements from the Virginia National Guard, the Virginia State Police, and the Henrico County Fire Department a chance to plan and coordinate how best to react to a range

of situations. The scenario forced the agencies to work together in addressing the possibility of high-levels of civilian casualties in chemically and radioactively contaminated environments with several mock-improvised explosive devises.

For most of the hot summer day, Soldiers, Airmen, police, and firefighters, some of in full chemical suits, could be seen scouring the ocean of seats and bleachers, helping casualties, looking for threats, and gathering evidence.

"Certainly the relationships developed in multi-agency, multi-echelon training will always help us should something unforgivable happen here in the commonwealth or the nation," said Lt. Col. Bill Mahoney, commander for the 34th CST.

"But more importantly we understand our capabilities so as we develop the plans to mitigate the hazards and save human lives, we know what each other can do."

After the exercise was over, Thiem identified several important lessons learned from the event.

"Developing communication interoperability early in an event is key to the event being successful," he said. "Knowledge of the first responder personnel and the techniques they use is critical prior to an actual event. Exercises, like River City Guardian 08, are critical to gaining that knowledge in a training environment."



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Personnel from the Henrico County Fire Department, the Virginia National Guard and the Virginia State Police discuss response options during the first day of River City Guardian at the Richmond International Airport July 22.

Airmen leave for 6-month mission in Kyrgyzstan

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

More than a dozen members of the Virginia Air National Guard's 192nd Security Forces Squadron left Langley Air Force Base well before dawn July 27 to begin a six-month deployment to Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan.

While there, the Airmen are expected to conduct security operations to protect U.S. Air Force resources and personnel. It's a mission that they are both familiar with and well trained for, according to Senior Airman Michael Tiller of Mechanicsville.

"It's the same mission we have here, it's just in a different location," he said. "We all volunteered and we're ready to go."

At Langley the Airmen squared away some last minute paperwork and loaded up their gear and weapons before boarding a bus to Norfolk Naval Base. From there, they were scheduled to fly to Europe and, eventually, to Manas Air Base.

The majority of the Airmen volunteered for the mission and, while this is the first deployment for many of the younger troops, for some of the members of the unit it's a second or third

deployment.

Tech Sgt. Bill Bryce previously deployed with the 192nd SFS to Iraq in 2006.

"This group all volunteered, so it's a good group of people to be going with," he said.

Master Sgt. Wayne Cole has been in the 192nd SFS for 15 years and deployed with the unit to Kyrgyzstan in 2003.

"This is a very good group of Airmen," he said. "Most have less than four or five years experience and are very eager to go over there."

"It's one of the most positive groups I've seen," Cole added, "and I hope it's a safe deployment for all of us."

Manas Air Base is home to the 376th Air Expeditionary Wing and serves as the air mobility hub for the International Security Assistance Force and Coalition military operations in Afghanistan. The wing's around-the-clock missions include aerial refueling, combat airlift and airdrop, aeromedical evacuation and strategic airlift operations.

The base also provides support for Coalition personnel and cargo transitioning in and out of Afghanistan.

237th Engineer Company returns to Virginia from Iraq

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Approximately 105 Soldiers from the West Point-based 237th Engineer Company returned to Virginia July 20, after serving in Iraq since September 2007. Families, friends and members of the community of West Point packed the gym at West Point High School to welcome the unit home.

"We knew it would be a dangerous mission," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, the adjutant general of Virginia. "The training was tough, the mission was tougher. But I can tell you on behalf of your fellow Guardsmen and your fellow citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia, we are truly proud in the way you conducted yourself in your combat tour."

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine was also in West Point to welcome the Soldiers home.

"Celebrations like this are some of the most memorable and powerful days in this job as Governor, and I am honored to be here with you today," he said. "The service you provide is truly exemplary, both to our nation, but also to our state. We are so thrilled to be here today to welcome you back to Virginia."

While serving in Iraq, the 237th Engineer Company was tasked to conduct route clearance missions. During route clearance operations, patrols search for

improvised explosive devices along main and alternate supply routes for maneuver elements within their assigned areas.

"Soldiers from the 237th Engineer Company were instrumental in spearheading the shaping and isolation operations within Sadr City during its peak in violence and their efforts directly lead to the peaceful resolution of hostilities within Sadr City," said 1st Lt. Jonathan York, an operations officer for the company.

The 237th Engineers conducted route clearance operations throughout Eastern Baghdad in support of the 82nd Airborne and 4th Infantry Divisions. During their time in Eastern Baghdad, the unit successfully cleared more than 16,000 miles of routes, finding and clearing more than 60 IEDs and unexploded ordnances, of which many were the deadly explosively formed penetrators.

The 237th Engineer Company lost four Soldiers during the mobilization and deployment:

Staff Sgt. Jonathan M. Forde died of illness on Aug. 13, 2007, during mobilization training at Fort McCoy.

Sgt. David E. Lambert was killed Oct. 26, 2007 when an IED struck his vehicle.

Sgt. Derek R. Banks died of wounds suffered from the same incident on Nov. 18, 2008 at Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard PAO

Soldiers from the 237th Engineer Company received warm welcome homes from friends and family upon their return home to Virginia.

Staff Sgt. Jeremiah McNeal, who was on his second tour in Iraq, was killed on April 6, 2008 when his vehicle was struck by an IED.

A statuette honoring these Soldiers has been erected outside of the Armory doors in West Point.

Freedom Salutes honor Soldiers of 3rd Bn., 116th BCT

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Virginia National Guard Soldiers from Charlottesville, Woodstock, Leesburg, Fredericksburg, and Winchester gathered in multiple locations Aug. 16 and 17 to conduct Freedom Salute ceremonies to honor the service of 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team during its successful mission in Iraq and Kuwait from September 2007 to April and May 2008 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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

The Freedom Salute recognizes the



Photo by Capt. Dayna Rowden, Virginia Guard Public Affairs
Spc. Steven Hart received the Governor's Service Medal from Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr. This was his third combat tour. Hart, a five-year National Guard veteran, deployed to Afghanistan in 2004, Iraq 2006 and Iraq 2007.

Soldiers, their families, employers and organizations that contributed significantly to supporting the unit during its deployment.

"Without your support, we wouldn't have been able to complete our mission," said Lt. Col. John Epperly, commander of 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team. "You're proud of them, but they're proud of you too."

To show their gratitude for continued support from the community, D Company presented an American flag flown over Camp Arifjan, Kuwait to Jeffry Fitzpatrick, owner of Blue & Gray Brewing Co.

"Your sacrifice was not in vain or an empty one," said Epperly, conveying his gratitude for all the support from families and the community that helped make the mission a success.

"We had two objectives- to do our jobs and do them well, and to bring everyone home alive," said Epperly. "We completed both objectives."

"I know it's tough on families to see their Soldiers go downrange but without your support they wouldn't be able to accomplish their mission," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, during his remarks to the Soldiers and their families at the Fredericksburg Freedom Salutes.

At the Freedom Salute for the Headquarters Company in Winchester Aug. 17, the Honorable John O. Marsh, Jr., former secretary of the Army, and the Honorable John Marshall, Virginia secretary for public safety, joined senior leaders from the Virginia Guard.

"You have made a difference, a positive difference," Marshall told the Soldiers from 3rd Battalion. "I especially want to thank the families. Their love, their support has been so critical in your being able to complete your missions successfully."

Marshall added that the importance of the unit's mission went beyond Virginia, but to the entire nation.



Photo by Staff Sgt. A.J. Coyne, Virginia Guard PAO
Sgt. Patrick Franks, a Virginia Guardsman with D Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team, and his son were among the Soldiers and family members honored at a Freedom Salute ceremony Aug. 17 in Fredericksburg.

"We thank you, we salute you. As we salute you, we salute freedom," he said. "You are not just Virginia heroes, but American heroes."

Marsh served as Secretary of the Army from 1981 to 1989, and he also was elected to four terms as a Representative in Congress from the Seventh District of Virginia from 1963 to 1971.

Marsh told the crowd that from his service as Secretary of the Army and being a Guardsman, he recognized how vitally important the families are to our national defense.

"I can't tell you how much you contribute to the success of these missions," he told the families. "We couldn't have a strong National Guard or Army without your support. Let's never forget what they do for our country."

As part of the Freedom Salute campaign, each Soldier received an American flag in a wood display case, a Defender of Freedom certificate as well as commemorative coins and medallions.

Soldiers of multiple deployments were given a commemorative clock to keep or give to their spouse as a token of their support during the deployment.

The ceremonies were held in multiple locations across the Commonwealth based upon where the individual companies' home armories were near.

Bosslift shows employers military life

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
29th Infantry Divison Public Affairs

Civilian employers of Virginia National Guardsmen were given a rare treat Aug. 3 at the Army Aviation Support Facility at the Richmond International Airport. These employers participated in the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve's Bosslift program with aviation support from the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment.

The battalion provided several UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters to take the approximately 40 employers on an aerial tour of the greater Richmond area.

The day began with a series of briefings, including an extensive safety briefing to familiarize the civilian employers with the Blackhawk. They were educated on what the battalion does and where they have been in the past few years in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, as well as how their air support helps the community here in the United States with homeland defense roles.

According to Lt. Col. James Ring, battalion commander, the regiment played an integral role to the success of U.S. Soldiers in Iraq. The battalion returned from a tour in Iraq last year.

After the briefings concluded they were taken across the tarmac to where the pilots and crew chiefs were going through their pre-flight checks and inspections. The Guardsmen's civilian employers were then given one final safety briefing, and buckled into the helicopter. The pilots then took off in a group of three Blackhawks, and flew the employers on a 30-minute tour around the city of Richmond and the James River.

Upon their return many of the employers were grinning from ear to ear. One such happy rider was Eric Howard, a network operator at Yahoo, who said, "That was the coolest thing I've ever done... I had a ball."

Howard is a coworker of Sgt. David Testa, an avionics technical inspector with D Company, 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment.

While the first group was touring the city from the sky, the second group was given a complete tour of the maintenance hangars. They were given a closeup view of how Soldiers work to keep the Commonwealth's aviation assets up and running.

Following the flights they were given a final briefing about how the ESGR works and what they do for both the Soldiers, as well as the employers.

"We not only serve the National

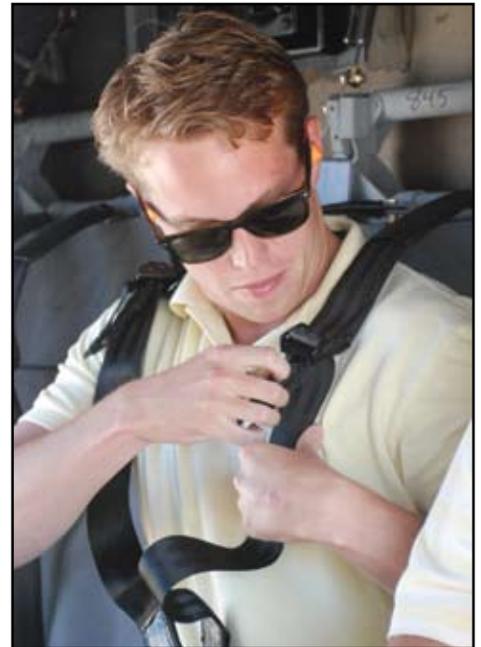


Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard PAO

Jaime Naughton, a supporter of the ESGR, straps into a UH-60 Blackhawk for a tour around the city of Richmond.

Guard, but all seven services and reserve components of the Department of Defense," said Thomas Stephen Jr., executive director of ESGR, Virginia Committee.

Stephen thanked them all for their continual support of the Virginia National Guard.

"Without your support the whole volunteer concept is not going to work."

VDF trains with Va. Guard on civil disturbance response

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Members of the Virginia Defense Force's Petersburg-based military police company conducted joint civil disturbance training with the Virginia National Guard's Virginia Beach-based 229th Military Police Company July 19 and 20 in Virginia Beach. It was the third year in a row the two units came together to share different techniques for effective crowd control.

Civil disturbance training and employing different non-lethal crowd control techniques is an annual training requirement for the Virginia Army National Guard, explained Capt. David Sutton, commander of the 229th. Sutton is a Williamsburg native who works as a police lieutenant in Newport News.

"We invite the Virginia Defense Force because they have a similar mission," Sutton said. "We like working with them because if we get a state activation, they have certain assets that we don't have in the area of communications and extra manpower."

The 229th also has a detachment in Roanoke, and those Soldiers were training with members of the Defense Force as well. The first day of the training focused on formations and movement

techniques for crowd control, and the second day featured a scenario where the two units had to push back a simulated crowd of rioters. During the training, the 15 members of the Defense Force stood side by side with Soldiers from the 229th.

"If we every get called to support the Virginia National Guard, we want to be on the same page," said 2nd Lt. James Stanley of Richmond, a retired Henrico police officer and the platoon leader for the Defense Force members conducting the training.

The Virginia Defense Force is an all-volunteer organization, so the members who participated in the training had to coordinate time off work from the civilian jobs. Training with the Guard is a real motivator, said 1st Sgt. Alan Grandis of Hanover County, a retired Richmond fire captain and former marine.

Both leaders agreed that people join the Defense Force out of sense of service. "My country is at war, and I think there could be some danger to the homeland," Grandis said. "I think the defense force has a role to play to help defend our homeland, and I can't sit by and not be a part of that."

The VDF plans to form additional military police and security companies in the near future, with one planned for Fredericksburg and another in Richmond.

VFW motorcycle ride honors troops, benefits families

By Sgt. Jesse Houk
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Bikers from around the Commonwealth traveled from Richmond to Bedford Aug. 2 to honor servicemembers and raise money for the Virginia National Guard's Youth Camps. The group was mostly comprised of Veterans of Foreign Wars members, but the ride was open to anyone who wanted to participate.

The mission began with a wreath ceremony at the War Memorial in Richmond earlier that day and concluded with a wreath ceremony at the D-Day Memorial.

The true mission and the central focus of the ride was to raise money for the Virginia National Guard's Family Program Youth Camps that would benefit the children of Virginia Guard Soldiers and Airmen.

"Anything you can do something for the dependants back home, the men and women serving appreciate it," said Harold Roesch II, Virginia VFW commander. "We may not hear the 'thank you's,' but we know they're there."

Roesch, a veteran of Desert Storm and retired Air Force master sergeant, is fully aware of the importance of strong family programs during times of deployment.

"We have all been there," said Roesch. "We have all been deployed and in combat areas. We know what it's like to have kids at home; husbands and wives at home. Anything that we can do to help them out is in our blood."

According to Roesch, the concept for the ride started when Maj. J.D. Moore, chaplain in the Virginia Guard and a VFW member,



Photo by Capt. Dayna Rowden, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Hal Roesch, Virginia VFW commander, places a wreath at the Virginia War Memorial Aug. 2, marking the commencement of the memorial ride to Bedford.

approached him about a fundraising idea that would benefit the children of Guard families.

"About nine months ago the VFW wanted to get more involved with the National Guard and support them," said Moore. "So they talked about promoting it through a motorcycle ride."

Donations were accepted and each biker paid a fee of \$50 to participate in the ride. The VFW hoped to see future fund-raiser events and other opportunities working with the Guard become a reality.

"This may become an annual event," said Roesch. "We love helping the Guard and active duty. That's why we are here; to help out active duty, guard and reserve."

"It would be great if this created a stronger interest among Guard members," said Roesch. "It would be like icing on the cake if our efforts here lead to more people joining the VFW, but we aren't out here actively recruiting anybody. It's a great organization. It's the greatest combat veteran's organization in the world."



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

Maj Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, accepts a check for \$10,000 from Hal Roesch (left) and Kim A. DeShano (right) from the VFW Aug. 27 in Richmond. The money raised by the VFW Freedom Ride on Aug. 4 will now be donated to the Virginia National Guard's Youth Camps.



Photo by Capt. Dayna Rowden, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Maj. J. D. Moore salutes a wreath laid by members of the VFW at the Virginia War Memorial Aug. 2.

Virginia hosts Tajiks for Disaster Response Information Exchange

By Capt. Dayna Rowden
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

In an effort to foster mutual interests to establish a long-term relationship that will link the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Republic of Tajikistan across all levels of society, the Virginia National Guard hosted a Disaster Response Information Exchange in Richmond, Va., on July 21-25.

As part of the National Guard State Partnership program, six officers from the Ministry of Defense and Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense of the Republic of Tajikistan traveled to Virginia to observe Civil Support Team exercises.

The State Department had a program to fund and train Tajik emergency responders in a HAZMAT-type response unit. The State Department purchased about \$600,000 worth of equipment similar to the equipment the Virginia National Guard CST uses. Through the State Partnership Program, Virginia National Guard Soldiers traveled to Tajikistan three times to train

them on the new equipment.

This visit was a follow-on for the officers to observe the CST exercises, at the Richmond International Airport and the Richmond International Raceway, and how the team demonstrates interagency cooperation between the Virginia National Guard, the police and fire departments and other state emergency responders.

The State Partnership Program evolved in Europe 1993 with the break-up of the former Soviet Union. The Secretary of Defense tasked the National Guard to establish a military to military contact program. These partnerships expanded globally.

The Virginia-Tajikistan partnership was established in 2003. Tajikistan is one of the smallest and poorest of the former Soviet republics in the Central Asian States region. The U.S. is the largest bilateral donor and the key supporter of an independent and stable Tajikistan.

The Virginia National Guard helps out by providing medical exchanges through Operation 'Provide Hope' and Combat Life



Photo by Capt. Dayna Rowden, Virginia Guard PAO

Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the 34th Civil Support Team explain their equipment to Tajik officers through an interpreter.

Saver training; non-commissioned officer training, development, and education; CST development; staff development; border security; senior leader visits; and emergency preparedness and disaster response.

The Tajik officers were treated to visits to local shopping malls and Virginia Beach.

"The country is double landlocked, and many of these officers haven't seen anything bigger than a lake or a river," said Maj. Tim Pillion, Virginia State Partnership director. "I'm pretty excited about showing them Virginia Beach and telling them about the historical sites along the way."

Hampton Roads-area Soldiers conduct Freedom Salute

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the Hampton Roads area gathered Aug. 10 to conduct a Freedom Salute in honor of the service of 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry Regiment in Iraq and Kuwait from September 2007 to May 2008. The day before, they conducted a family picnic and other activities that were part of the first-ever Virginia National Guard Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach.

"We owe each of you a tremendous debt of gratitude for your service, but we also have to recognize and honor the families," said Congressman Bobby Scott of Virginia's 3rd Congressional District at the Freedom Salute ceremony. "Families are critical to our success, so I want to thank the families for their tremendous sacrifice."

Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, echoed Scott's praise for the families and recognized the unique contribution of the Soldiers of the squadron.

"These are wonderful Soldiers who went in harms way, I can't thank you enough," Newman said. "You are a very unique group of men, and you have chosen a different calling. What you do on a daily basis is awe inspiring, not only in your service to your

country, but also to your Commonwealth. We appreciate and thank god that we have young men like you who are willing to serve."

The Soldiers who took part in the Freedom Salute were assigned to the Portsmouth-based Headquarters Troop, the Norfolk-based A Troop, the Suffolk-based Troop B and the Virginia Beach-based C Troop.

The goal of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is to help family members with the homecoming of their Soldiers, and to inform them on what they can do to make this transition as easy as possible. The program is being developed to increase the Soldier and family member's knowledge of the reintegration process, and to provide resources to them as they go through the steps of reintegration.

The Yellow Ribbon program brought representatives from a wide number of military support organizations into one location to answer questions and provide information about services available to Soldiers and their family members. Some of the areas covered were health care, legal assistance, education benefits, veterans' assistance, employer relations and tax assistance. Representatives from the state chaplain office were also on hand.

The program also featured briefings on reconnecting with children after deployment, anger management, substance abuse prevention and compulsive behavior prevention.

Virginia OCS celebrates 50th year

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

History was made in the Commonwealth this year when the Virginia National Guard's Officer Candidate School graduated its 50th class in its 50th year of operation. The Commonwealth welcomed 19 newly appointed second lieutenants to the ranks of the Virginia National Guard Aug. 23 at the post theater on Fort Pickett.

The majority of the graduates, 16 of them, were from OCS class 50. The remaining three graduated from class 51B, an accelerated class.

The 19 newly-appointed officers will go on to many different branches and serve in a wide array of positions within the Virginia National Guard. From artillery to Quartermaster Corps, all of the graduates are now and will forever be Warriors.

"I am proud you have chosen the path of the warrior," said Maj. Gen. Carroll D. Childers, a retired general officer of the Virginia National Guard, during his address to the graduates. "It will determine the quality of the rest of your lives."

Childers requested that the new lieutenants go out and do good things for their country and state.

"Make all of us that went before you proud," he encouraged them. "Be the very best warrior you can possibly be."

Childers served as the commander of the 29th Infantry Division from 1996 until his retirement in 1999. He graduated from the Virginia OCS as the honor graduate of class six and received his



Photo courtesy of Virginia National Guard OCS

Officer Candidate Timothy A. Martin negotiates an obstacle on the Confidence Course during Phase III of Officer Candidate School at Fort McClellan, Ala.

commission as an armor officer. He later went on to be a well-known tactics instructor for 19 different classes of OCS.

The 19 new lieutenants are: Eddie D. Bailey, III, John R. Crocker, Robert A. Ellis, George E. Fontaine, III, John F. Grilli, Andrew C. Johnson, Timothy A. Martin, Lamont Q. Ming, Aaron D. Pennekamp, Brian C. Scanlon, Brian A. Todt, Yessika V. Valenzuela, Bonnie L. Van Loon, Peniel R. Vinegas, Jodie L. Warren, Jr., Kim D. Wynn, Aranzamendez, Efrén A., Jr., Antonio C. Nash, and Oliver G. Glover, IV.

The OCS program, which falls under the command of the 183rd Regiment (Regional Training Institute), was first accredited April 16, 1958.

The primary mission of the Virginia National Guard OCS program is to train selected warrant officers, and enlisted men and women to become effective military leaders.

Furthermore, the OCS program's secondary mission is to prepare the students to become branch qualified second lieutenants.

The 22-month long course begins with a two-week Phase I where the candidates learn and master land navigation and Warrior Core Tasks. During the land nav portion the candidates must find five out of seven points during the day and two of five points at night, according to Capt. Crysti Greenway, OCS training officer.

As a part of the WCT training, the

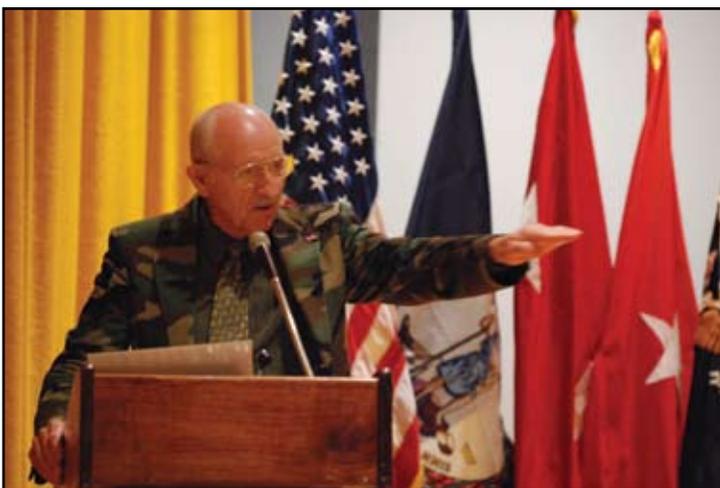


Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Carroll D. Childers addresses the crowd and graduates at the post theater on Fort Pickett. Childers was a keynote speaker for the graduating classes of OCS 50 and 51B.



Officer Candidate Brian (FLX) during Phase III training.

candidates are expected to give an instructional briefing on one of the many tasks from the book of common Soldier skills.

“They must teach one and show task mastery in all of them,” said Greenway.

In addition to the land navigation and WCT, the candidates are expected to execute a five-mile forced road march to be able to move on to the second phase of the school.

During Phase II, the candidates attend the school one weekend a month for approximately one year. Throughout the year the students are given classes and leadership tests on military justice, supply management, military tactics, military intelligence, military history, and call for fire techniques.

“It is a lot of classes,” said Greenway. After all the classes the potential leaders are tested on their knowledge during a field training exercise.

For the Phase III portion, which is a two-week phase at Fort McClellan, Ala., the candidates are given the opportunity to show off what they have learned by running through scenarios that test their ability to lead troops at the squad and platoon levels.

In addition to the leadership testing, the students must pass a combat water test. The combat water test forces Soldiers to jump in a swimming pool with their weapon and all their gear. In order to be successful, Soldiers must hold their weapons above their heads, tread water for five minutes, remove their load bearing equipment, and swim the length of the pool.

The candidates in the OCS program must do everything a Reserve Officers’ Training Corps student or a student at a military academy must do to be commissioned, according to Greenway.

“They have the same requirements for commissioning,” she



Photo courtesy of Virginia National Guard OCS

The 19 newly-appointed officers who recently graduated from the Virginia National Guard Officer Candidate School will go on to serve in a wide array of positions within the Virginia National Guard.

explained.

The staff at OCS is a very diverse group, according to Greenway. There are three officers who received their commission from the Virginia OCS program. They also have an officer who was commissioned through the federal OCS, as well as two who graduated from ROTC.

“We have many different outlooks...several (of us) have been on active duty, and been deployed overseas,” said Greenway. “It brings a lot of different backgrounds to the table.”

This year the Virginia OCS program had the distinct honor of being awarded the Institute of Excellence award.

“There is only one other company and two battalions that have received the Institute of Excellence award,” said Greenway. “It’s a highly coveted award.”



Photo courtesy of Virginia National Guard OCS

C. Scanlon takes aim during the Field Leadership Exercise training.



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

Newly appointed 2nd Lt. Eddie D. Bailey, III has his rank insignia pinned on his epaulettes by his mother and girlfriend following the 50th graduation of Viginia National Guard Officer Candidate School.