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

NASCAR driver Jamie McMurray, winner of the 2010 Daytona 500, meets Airmen from the Virginia Air National Guard during a tour of Langley Air Force Base Aug. 17, 2010. McMurray was on hand in advance of the Sept. 11 Air Guard 400 NASCAR race at Richmond International Raceway



Virginia
GuardPost
SERVING THE ARMY & AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF VIRGINIA

*Air Assault course
comes to
Fort Pickett*

JULY - AUGUST 2010



Long sworn
in as new
Virginia AG

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Guardsmen
awarded
Soldier's
Medal
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FROM THE TOP



New Adjutant General of Virginia shares his vision for the way ahead for the Virginia Guard

By Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr.
The Adjutant General of Virginia

I am honored Gov. McDonnell asked me to serve as the Adjutant General, and I look forward to sharing my more than four and a half decades of military experience with the Virginia National Guard.

In the time since I was sworn in, I have assessed the current status of the organization and think it is important that everyone in the Virginia Guard know my thoughts on what we need to do in the future to keep our organization ready and relevant.

My vision for our future is not complicated. We will build and sustain an effective and efficient team of top performers dedicated to selfless service. Our primary purpose is to provide a synchronized and unified force that is ready, relevant and rapid responding, and it must be one that is disciplined, professionally led and prepared to meet the expectations of our federal, state and local partners and the needs of our citizens.

Our success depends on many things including an acquired ability to anticipate the future to ensure reasonable predictability. Key here is how well we see ourselves and understand expectations to include our ability to better communicate at all levels. Success demands an unwavering commitment to excellence, leaders who are dedicated to lead, who recognize the right thing to do and have the will to do what is right.

Followers must have explicit trust in us and clearly know we care. People are our most important asset, and they are why we exist. Our job is to make them successful and to ensure they have an environment where they want to serve and work.

I have visited with many of you and spent time with units either preparing to deploy, redeploying or executing our state mission. I am extremely proud of the men and women who continue to heroically serve and support the commonwealth and



Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr.

the nation. Today our ranks are filled with seasoned veterans who have served around the world. Others of you have made equally significant sacrifices selflessly providing support and reach back in units and communities at home, and these contributions are all so vital to the course at hand.

Our units consist of smart, talented, patriotic Soldiers, Airmen and members of the Virginia Defense Force committed to excellence and proud to serve.

We have caring, mature professionals who lead the force, and these leaders are dedicated to a ready, relevant force prepared to respond when needed. They realize the importance of safety and well being of our most important asset: our people.

As I've traveled across Virginia, I have emphasized a need for leaders to have the will to do the right thing, to have a greater commitment to excellence, to care about people and to build trust and confidence from those who want to trust us.

High on my "to do" list is improving our aging facilities. Governor McDonnell has indicated he plans to use some of the

Virginia budget surplus to repair facilities, and we will work with his office to identify where those funds can best be utilized.

We will continue to make taking care of families a top priority. Our Family Programs Office and the Yellow Ribbon Program provide great resources for our family members, and I strongly encourage everyone to take advantage of those resources. We owe it to our Soldiers and Airmen on either state or federal duty to know their families are taken care of while they accomplish the mission.

I am committed to building a Virginia Guard that is a source of pride for all, an organization with solid values and one that is well led by trusted and caring leaders. Our ranks will be filled with skilled, motivated professional future leaders. The Virginia Guard can and will be a top performing National Guard, a national asset, a source of pride for all, known for excellence not just in Virginia, but around the country. This is where I intend to take us.

The end state I see for the Virginia National Guard is to be a premier ready, relevant, rapid response force that is staffed, equipped and trained to respond to federal and state requirements. We must be prepared to deploy and employ as directed by the Governor or President to assist local, state and federal authorities to protect life and property, to preserve peace, order, and public safety as well as relieve suffering. Our partners, agencies and citizens will have an unwavering trust and confidence in us and our ability to perform our mission.

The Virginia Guard will be a place where every member of the team wants to serve and support and that service is a source of pride for them. Leaders accept uncompromising responsibility for the safety and wellness of our force and are committed to excellence.

Thanks to all for your extraordinary service, for your encouraging welcome back to Virginia where I started many years ago.

News Briefs

Batts promoted to major general

The commander of the 29th Infantry Division was promoted to major general Aug. 24 at Fort Pickett. Celestine Batts "pinned" her husband, Frank E. Batts, Sr., with major general rank in front of a large group of family, officers and senior NCOs from the 29th and the Virginia Guard.

"They got it right when they promoted Frank Batts," said Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. "I have known him for a long time, and he has the character and the traits I like in a leader: he cares about people, he is committed to excellence and you trust him."

"I am totally in awe of the blessings and responsibilities that have been bestowed upon me," Batts said. "It is not often that a Soldier has the opportunity to serve at the general officer level and rarer still to have the opportunity to serve as a major general in command of an historic and storied division like the 29th Infantry Division."

Before taking command of the 29th, Batts served as the deputy commanding general

for almost two years. He previously commanded the 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment in Norfolk, Va., and the 54th Field Artillery Brigade in Virginia Beach.

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

He has served in command positions from battery through brigade level. In his last command assignment, Batts served as the commander of the 54th Field Artillery Brigade. When the 54th Brigade Headquarters was mobilized in February 2004, he served as mobile liaison team chief in Kabul, Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom from May 2004 through April 2005.

When not serving with the Guard, Batts works as an electronics engineer at the NASA Langley Research Facility in Hampton, Va. His only time not serving in the Guard was a brief break in service when he pursued his

master's degree in electronic engineering in the early 1980s.

Air Guard intelligence squadron reaches full operational capability

The 192d Intelligence Squadron, 192d Fighter Wing declared full operational capability June 30, 2010, and celebrated the milestone in a ceremony July 10, 2010.

"This unit has a strong future and a proud history," said Lt. Col. Michael J. Lovell, commander of the 192d Intelligence Squadron. "That proud heritage is what makes us capable today."

While the location may have recently changed to a new facility with \$38 million in upgrades to the weapon system on-line, the squadron operations tempo continues to be steady-state.

Since January 2007, the squadron has worked more than 88,160 war-fighting mission hours. In six years, it has grown from the initial cadre of four personnel assigned to Detachment 2 at Distributed Ground System 1 to 114 personnel.

"It's amazing to think of where we've come from to

where we are now," said Master Sgt. Amy Kellerman, a flight chief at the squadron. "We're supporting a war fighter from home." Kellerman was one of two imagery analysts in the Virginia guard in January, 2002. Both analysts were mobilized at DGS-1 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The squadron contributes 16% to the total man power at DGS-1, and 112 of the 114 currently assigned personnel are UTC tasked.

"Does this FOC come with any change? Will you be doing your job any differently tomorrow?" asked Col. Bryan K. Turner, Operations Group commander. "No," he answered. "These are the expectations you have already been living under. You're already operational, already capable."

That understanding prevails throughout the squadron. Our Airmen have been doing this job 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with the knowledge that FOC is just a bench mark, albeit significant, Turner said.

With the declaration of FOC and the continuing growth of the squadron, the 192d Intelligence Squadron will carry on fighting the fight from home 365 days a year.

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
80	529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion	Afghanistan	Virginia Beach
18	Det. 2, Co B, 777th Aviation Support Battalion	Kosovo	Sandston
20	192nd Maintenance Group	Saudi Arabia	Langley Air Force Base
25	192nd Intelligence Squadron	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Langley Air Force Base
75	Various Virginia Army Guard Units	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Various Locations
10	Various Virginia Air Guard Units	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Various Locations

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

Transportation battalion named most outstanding unit in Army National Guard

By Cotton Puryear
Virginia Dept. of Military Affairs

The Virginia National Guard's Gate City-based 1030th Transportation Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group has been recognized as the most outstanding Army National Guard battalion in the country for the 2009 training year. The battalion received the Major General Milton A. Reckord Trophy Aug. 23 at the 132nd National Guard Association of the United States General Conference in Austin, Texas and will be presented the General Walter T. Kerwin Award Oct. 26 at Association of the United States' Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., during the Dwight D. Eisenhower Luncheon.

"The 1030th Transportation Battalion had an incredible training year," said Lt. Col. Doug Messner, commander of the battalion during the 2009 training year. "The success of the battalion came from the desire of the Soldiers and leadership to be ready to deploy. The commitment from the leaders created an environment conducive to training and mentoring Soldiers, and they were given training that was well-planned, well-resourced and executed in a highly safe manner. The end result was highly motivated troops who received valuable, tough and realistic training." Messner relinquished command July 10 to Lt. Col. Doyle Gillis.

The National Guard Association, the Association of the United States Army, and the Reserve Officers Association of the United States present the Walter T. Kerwin Readiness Award jointly to the Army National Guard unit with the highest level of readiness in the country.

The 1710th Transportation Company also received the "Certificate of Victory" award for outstanding accomplishment in unit marksmanship.

"It is an honor and represents the quality of folks we have in Virginia," said Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. "It sets a stake in the ground for what is possible for all of our units to strive to achieve. The units that win awards like this pay great attention to detail, and we need to have leaders who are willing to put in the time and be dedicated to make sure their unit is the very best."

Evaluation criteria for the awards include the areas of assigned personnel strength, percentage of personnel qualified in their duty position, attendance at monthly drill weekends and annual training, individual weapons qualification scores and physical fitness test scores. Battalions also must have an effective maintenance program for all units and must achieve readiness objectives as outlined by U.S. Forces Command.

Significant highlights for the 2009 training year for the 1030th include:

- The Emporia-based 1710th Transportation Company returned from federal deployment to Iraq and the battalion provided Soldiers from the 329th Regional Support Group's logistics advisory mission to Iraq.



Photo Capt. Craig Carpter, 192d Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Capt. Keith McCluskey, commander of the 1710th Transportation Company, receives the Reckord Trophy Aug. 23 in Austin, Texas, on behalf of the 1030th Transportation Battalion from Gen. James D. Thurman, commander of U.S. Army Forces Command.

- The Gate City-based 1032nd Transportation Company and the Martinsville-based 1173rd Transportation Company supported the 1st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division by transporting critical equipment from Fort Drum, New York to Fort Polk, La and back to Fort Drum, travelling more than 2,400 miles.

- The Rocky Mount-based 229th Chemical Company fielded new smoke generators during their annual training, and the Blackstone-based 3647th Maintenance Company conducted annual training at Camp Dodge, Iowa to improve their ability to perform maintenance operations.

- The Virginia National Guard's Gate City-based 1032nd Transportation Company received the Department of the Army's annual Philip A. Connelly Award for excellence in Army Food Service in the National Guard Field Kitchen Category.

- The 1030th's Headquarters Detachment, the 1032nd and 229th all conducted external maintenance inspections, and each unit passed with the lowest overall score being 97 percent.

The Kerwin award was named for retired Gen. Walter T. Kerwin, Jr., who served as the first commander of United States Forces Command and also as Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army from 1974 to 1978. Kerwin was a strong advocate of the "One Army," or "Total Army," concept that recognized the important role of the National Guard and U. S. Army Reserve.

Milton A. Reckord commanded the 115th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division during World War I and was appointed Adjutant General of the Maryland National Guard in 1920. In 1934, while still serving as Maryland's Adjutant General, he assumed command of the 29th Infantry Division. After World War II, Reckord returned to his post as the Adjutant General of Maryland and continued to serve as Adjutant General until his retirement in 1966. During the years between the First and Second World War, Reckord was a leading advocate for increasing the role of the National Guard in the United States' national defensive strategy. In 1933, he authored legislation that permanently gave National Guard personnel status as both state and federal troops.



On the Cover



The National Guard's Fort Benning-based Warrior Training Center sent a team of instructors to teach the 12-day Army Air Assault course to over 140 Soldiers and Airmen at the Fort Pickett Maneuver Training Center in Virginia from Aug. 9-20. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard Public Affairs)

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Virginia GuardPost

The Virginia GuardPost is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense, and the Virginia Army and Air National Guard. It is published bimonthly and in accordance with AR 360-1, Army Public Affairs and AFI 35-101, Public Affairs Policies and Procedures. Contents of the GuardPost are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of the Army, the Department of the Air Force or the Virginia Department of Military Affairs. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Officer. Printed by a private firm under exclusive written contract with the Government Printing Office and the Virginia National Guard in no way connected with the U.S. Government. Printed circulation: 10,000.

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Long takes oath of office to lead Virginia Guard

By Cotton Puryear
Virginia Dept. of Military Affairs

Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr. officially took the oath of office as Adjutant General of Virginia July 14 in Richmond after being appointed by Gov. Bob McDonnell July 9 to lead the Virginia National Guard.

"We are honored that Maj. Gen. Long is assuming command of the Virginia National Guard," McDonnell said. He recognized Long for his more than four decades of military service and his breadth of experience in both peacetime and combat.

Long enlisted at the age of 18 in the Virginia Army National Guard in 1964 in the Fredericksburg-based Company D, 276th Engineer Battalion. He commanded at the company, battalion and brigade level before commanding the 29th Infantry Division from September 2002 until September 2004.

He most recently served as the commander of Joint Task Force - Civil Support at Fort Monroe.

During his more than 40 years of service in the Virginia National Guard, Long has repeatedly been selected for high impact assignments.

He has many years of experience briefing and advising key leaders - government and non-government representatives - on critical issues. Long served as the Senior Military Officer to the Iraq/Afghanistan Study Group where he assessed and recommended solutions on a wide range of political, military, social, and economical issues as well as courses of action for the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State.

After completing Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning in 1967, he went on to serve as a platoon leader and executive officer in Company D, and eventually commanded the company from November 1973 to April 1974.

Long served in numerous staff positions in the 276th Engineer Battalion before taking command of the Fredericksburg-based 229th Engineer Battalion in August



Photo by Cotton Puryear, Va. Dept. of Military Affairs

Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr. takes the oath of office as the adjutant general of Virginia from Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth Christie Heath July 14 at the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond as his wife Diane looks on.

1985. He continued to command the unit until April 1990. From April 1995 to September 1996 he commanded the 2d Brigade, 29th Infantry Division at Fort A.P. Hill.

He served as the assistant division commander for maneuver of the 29th Infantry Division, and deployed with the 29th as the deputy commander of Multinational Division North, Operation Force, Bosnia Herzegovina in September 2001.

He also commanded the 29th Infantry Division from September 2002 until September 2004.

Additionally, Long commanded Task Force Care/Katrina in Louisiana and served as the deputy director and director of the Department of Defense Project and Contracting Office in Iraq, 2004 through 2005.

Long most recently served as the commander of JTF-CS at Fort Monroe. The mission of JTF-CS is to ensure that Department of Defense assets are prepared to respond to requests from a lead federal agency in a time of national crisis following a weapon of mass destruction incident. JTF-CS's specified tasks are to save lives, prevent injury and provide temporary critical life support. Implied tasks run a gamut from command and control, to nuclear, biological, chemical

and radiological response, to providing medical requirements, transportation, and other logistics tasks.

Long regularly briefed the Executive Office of the President, Congressional staff, Customs and Border Patrol leaders, and National Guard leadership while serving at a Special Assistant to Chief, National Guard Bureau. In this role he led and directed a program to secure the 2,700 miles of U.S. and Mexico border. While serving as the Commander of Task Force Care in Louisiana he was responsible for coordinating relief efforts with federal, state and local officials.

Long has managed large and complex budgets. As the deputy director and director of the Department of Defense Project and Contracting Office, Iraq, he managed an \$18.4 billion dollar reconstruction program. He supervised cost control measures, quality assurance, and capacity development.

Long also has extensive experience in business management. He was CEO and owner of his own company, building commercial and residential properties in Fredericksburg from 1980 until 2004.

Long is a graduate of the US Army War College, Command and General Staff College, and received his Bachelor of Science from Liberty University where he graduated Magna cum Laude.



Photo by Cotton Puryear, Va. Dept. of Military Affairs

An Army Soldier hoping to earn the Air Assault Badge navigates the Air Assault Obstacle Course Aug. 10 as part of "Zero Day" at Fort Pickett. A total of 114 personnel started the morning hoping to earn the badge and 67 students graduated Aug. 20.

Warrior Training Center brings Air Assault to Virginia

By Staff Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

A nine-man team of instructors from the National Guard's Fort Benning-based Warrior Training Center taught a 12-day Army Air Assault course to more than 140 Soldiers and Airmen at the Fort Pickett Maneuver Training Center Aug. 9-20.

The course started out slowly but by the second day, the tempo was increased, according to Sgt. 1st Class Brian G. McCarthy, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the course. "Zero day" began with a nine-event obstacle course which forced students up ropes, over 40-foot towers, under barbed wire and through a series of other grueling tasks, finishing with a two-mile run which had to be completed in under 18 minutes.

Those that made it through zero day began learning the several phases that would carry them on to graduation: Air mobile operations, sling load operations and rappelling operations.

According to McCarthy, the students learned all about aircraft safety during the first phase. They are taught the layout of the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, how many people make up a basic flight crew, how much weight a cargo hook can hold, and aero medical evacuation procedures.

Upon reaching the second phase of the course, the students' focus shifted to the sling load operations of the aircraft where they were taught to properly secure items to be hooked to the aircraft for exterior transportation before progressing to the third and final phase of the course.

After learning to properly secure a M119 howitzer and other items to a helicopter for transport, the Soldiers and Airmen prepared for the third phase in which they learned to tie a hip rappel seat to lower themselves quickly to the ground from a hovering helicopter. This is commonly referred to as fast-roping.

The students tested out of the final phase by testing their rappel techniques on a rappel tower and concluded the day with

a jump out of a hovering Black Hawk.

With the final jump from the floating aircraft complete, the course still had one more final test to trip up the students: a 12-mile road march with a full packed load to be completed in three hours or less. The students had a packing list, a rucksack and set of instructions to not fall under a 15-minute per mile pace. They also had to make sure they had everything on their list or else they were eliminated from the course.

When the march was over, only 67 students remained to see graduation Aug. 20 and to pin on the coveted Air Assault Badge, a small depiction of a Huey helicopter wrapped in a pair of feathered wings.

"It's been tough no doubt, but it's been a lot of good training," said said Staff Sgt. Gary Grooms, an Air Assault candidate from Company A, 53rd Signal Battalion at Fort Detrick, Md. "It was a lot tougher than I thought and I probably learned a lot more than I was expecting to learn."

Virginia-based assault helicopter battalion trains at Fort Bragg

By Staff Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Alongside companies from both Virginia and Maryland, the National Guard Soldiers of the Sandston-based 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment, packed their bags and their helicopters and prepared to make their way to Fort Bragg, N.C., to conduct their three-week annual training beginning July 31 where they focused on their aviation skills as well as their basic Soldier skills.

The commander of the battalion, Lt. Col. Neal J. Edmonds, chose the location for the annual training based on his knowledge of the Army post's training areas from being stationed there, and because Fort Bragg could accommodate the entire battalion of UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters with a variety of training opportunities on its ranges, as well as a realistic forward operating base to house the Soldiers which created a life-like deployment experience.

"I was looking for a place where I could keep the battalion in one spot, as close as possible to a number of different types of training areas to minimize the amount of travel time between locations when I chose [Fort] Bragg," said Edmonds. "I



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

Soldiers from the Sandston-based 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment conduct aerial door gunnery training Aug. 10 during their three-week annual training at Fort Bragg, N.C. The Soldiers fired M240-H machine guns from the side doors of UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters.

didn't want to waste valuable training time traveling between training locations."

Throughout their annual training, "the Punishers" slept and worked out of FOB Patriot, a fenced-in area with checkpoints, tents where the Soldiers slept and worked, a vehicle maintenance area, guard towers and a landing zone for helicopters.

While on the FOB, the Soldiers focused on Army Warrior Tasks, which are common tasks that every Soldier is expected to remain proficient in. These tasks include basic marksmanship, first aid, operating in a nuclear, biological, chemical

or radiological contaminated area, and many other core Soldier skills.

"Our training is quite varied. You can pick a topic and we're probably training it out here," Edmonds noted. "The aviation and Soldier skills 'the Punishers' learn here also carry over to our traditional Guard role. These are the same skills we need to be proficient in order

to perform our Defense Support of Civil Authorities (disaster relief) missions as well."

While the aviation maintenance and forward support companies were honing their warrior skills, the flight crews were developing their specific skill sets in the aircraft by training on day and night vision goggle-assisted flight operations, conducting aerial door gunnery, sling load operations, and environmental (dust) landings.

"Our primary focus while we're here is to conduct aviation readiness level progression for our aviation crews, so we can ensure that our new air crews are trained on their base tasks for future operations," said Capt. Steven Jones, assistant operations officer of the 2-224th. "The most important aspect is to gain the necessary aviation skills for the aviators and crew chiefs to perform our basic missions. That is, flying in formation, shooting from a flying aircraft, and landing in a dusty environments since most deployments are going into desert environments."

"Our goal is to maximize the number of aircrews we can launch at a given time," added Jones. "We need as many mission ready aircraft and crews available in order to effectively and efficiently execute our air assault mission as well as our state mission of disaster relief."



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

Soldiers of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment conduct maintenance on UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters Aug. 11 on a flight line at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Mercer takes reins of 91st Troop Command

Staff Reports

Col. Walt Mercer assumed command of the 91st Troop Command from Col. Steve Scott in a change of command ceremony July 29 at Fort Pickett.

"Today I assume command of 91st Troop Command from a great officer," Mercer said. "I can see the great success and growth the unit has had over the last two years, and he was the key to that. This is a great team of motivated Soldiers, experienced NCOs with an excellent staff and group of commanders."

Mercer said the Soldiers of the 91st have a well-deserved reputation of service both during recent deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan as well as during domestic response operations during the winter snow storms. "I look forward to serving with each of you, and it is my privilege to serve as your commander," he said.

Mercer served as the commander of the 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute at Fort Pickett until his selection to attend the U.S. Army War College as a resident student from July 2009 to June 2010.



Photo by Cotton Puryear, Virginia Dept. of Military Affairs

229th MP Company returns to Virginia from Iraqi duty

By Cotton Puryear
Virginia Department of Military Affairs

Senior leaders from the Virginia National Guard joined family, friends and members of the Virginia Beach community July 29 to welcome home Soldiers from the Virginia Beach-based 229th Military Police Company after serving in Iraq since October 2009. Approximately 80 Soldiers from the Hampton Roads and Richmond areas returned to Birdneck Elementary School and approximately 40 Soldiers from the Roanoke and Southwest Virginia area returned to Patrick Henry High School to be reunited with their families. The Soldiers began their tour on federal active duty Aug. 3, 2009.

"On behalf of the Soldiers of the 229th MP Company, thank you for your support," Capt. David O. Sutton, commander of the 229th, told the family and friends present for the welcome home. "To the Soldiers of the 229th MP Company, job well done. It has been an honor to serve as your commander."

The Soldiers arrived safely at their demobilization station at Fort Dix, New Jersey, and conducted a number of different administrative activities to transition from active duty back to traditional National Guard status prior to returning to Virginia.

While headquartered in Virginia Beach,

the 229th deployed with Soldiers from all over the state. Approximately 60 Soldiers are from the Hampton Roads area, about 20 are from the Richmond and Petersburg area, 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 unit was expected to provide police training to the Iraqi Police, but was task organized and provided additional training to also conduct protection service detail missions. The unit was requested by name to provide route security for Vice President Joe Biden's visit to Iraq on Jan. 22, 2010.

When the Iraqi national elections were conducted in March 2010, Soldiers from the 229th helped maintain security, working side by side with Iraqi Police. During the six-day time period of the elections, Soldiers lived with their Iraqi Police counterparts at the Provincial Division of Police and the Patrol Headquarters.

The unit was also very active in conducting humanitarian missions while in Iraq. On their own initiative Soldiers improved the conditions and safety at a local elementary school in West Rasheed, Baghdad as well as establishing a partnership with the adjoining hospital. In addition to distributing school supplies donated by family members, the company



Photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Va. Guard PAO

A Soldier from the 229th MP Company is welcomed home July 29 in Virginia Beach after nine month deployment to Iraq.

also filled in a sinkhole and installed 26 windows.

Soldiers in the company conducted more than 400 combat patrols and travelled more than 100,000 miles on Iraqi roads. They provided personnel for traffic control points for several high-level ceremonies to make sure they were conducted safely.

No Virginia Guard Soldiers were killed or wounded in action during the tour.

Soldiers from the company were awarded 11 Combat Action Badges, 22 Bronze Star Medals, one Meritorious Service Medal and 107 Army Commendation Medals.

Virginia Guardsman awarded Soldier's Medal for heroism

By Staff Sgt Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

A Virginia Army National Guard Soldier on Title 10, active-duty orders with the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command was awarded the Soldier's Medal at Fort Monroe July 23 for his actions that resulted in the saving of three men following a boating accident in the Chesapeake Bay Oct. 3, 2009.

Chief Warrant Officer Clifford Bauman was presented the Army's highest medal for non-combat related actions by Lt. Gen. John E. Sterling, deputy chief of staff for U.S. Army TRADOC, during a presentation ceremony attended by Bauman's wife, father, and friends and coworkers at Morelli Auditorium on the Hampton base.

"This is a very auspicious occasion. This is my first ever opportunity to participate in an award ceremony for the Soldier's Medal," said Sterling. "It's a big event. It's a very significant event and we need to take notice of it."

The Army has many awards and medals it bestows upon Soldiers for heroism during battle and many for recognizing Soldiers for outstanding work performed in the field and in garrison, but the Soldier's Medal is the highest award a Soldier can receive for heroism not directly related to combat.

"We have lots of awards for and recognitions that we do for valor in the face of the enemy, but from time-to-time there is an opportunity for a Soldier to use the skills that he has...in a life-

Family Programs holds 5th annual Youth Summer Camp

By Staff Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Children of Virginia Guardsmen spent the first week of August making new friends, meeting up with old friends, and filling their days with fun and educational activities during the fifth annual Virginia National Guard Youth Summer Camp at Camp Pendleton in Virginia Beach.

Some days the 55 kids and 18 teen volunteers boarded buses to go to Busch Gardens, Williamsburg or a local water park and sometimes the activities came right to the campers. The Virginia Air and Space Museum and the Virginia Aquarium sent employees to give interactive classes to the Guard youngsters.

While the days were filled with fun activities, this camp was not only about the kids having fun. It was also about

learning, and the kids spent their mornings in classes focused on helping children of military families cope with issues faced by military children, according to Dana Ivory, state youth coordinator and one of 30 adult volunteers at the camp. The classes gave the children the chance to discuss deployment and reintegration issues they may face when a parent gets deployed.

"For these Guard youth to be geographically dispersed, and then bringing them together and giving them training and letting them talk out the different deployment experiences that they have had, and building that relationship with one another, is very key," said Ivory. "Especially when they are going through the deployment and it helps them sustain."

Unlike children of active duty service men and women who live on bases, and have daily access to support groups and

other children dealing with a deployed parent, many children of Guard Soldiers and Airmen are spread out across the state in different communities where they do not have access to other kids who may be going through the some of the same emotions they are when a loved one is deployed, according to Ivory. The Summer Youth Camp brings the kids together once a year to show them that they are not alone.

"One of the things we want to make sure is that the kids understand that there are other kids out there who have parents in the military," said Master Sgt. Daniel Dolan, a volunteer from the Virginia Guard Drug Demand Reduction program. "A lot of these kids' parents are deployed, and it gives them an opportunity to find other kids who are just like they are, because a lot of times kids feel that they are the only ones going through this."



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

Lt. Gen. John Sterling awards Chief Warrant Officer Clifford Bauman the Soldier's medal at Fort Monroe July 23. Bauman was awarded the medal for his selfless service which saved three lives in October.

saving event that doesn't necessarily involve actions in front of the enemy."

Bauman was heralded for his swift actions that saved three men that day. Although one man passed away on the scene, Bauman's quick action and years of Army training gave him the tools he needed to save the other three men.

"With all of the training our Soldiers receive, it's only natural in a situation where life and death was at hand that Chief Bauman stepped in," said Chief Warrant Officer Five Eddie Whitt, Command Chief Warrant Officer of the Virginia National Guard and a mentor to Bauman. "His actions speak highly of the Virginia National Guard Warrant Officer Corps and the Virginia National Guard itself."

Virginia Guard's longest serving aviator retires after nearly 42 years of service

By Cotton Puryear
Virginia Dept. of Military Affairs

The Virginia National Guard's longest serving aviator conducted a final flight Aug. 17 to mark his retirement after nearly 42 years of service. Chief Warrant Officer Norman H. McIntosh officially retired Aug. 18 after taking off for the last time from the Army Aviation Support Facility in Sandston to take a final flight around the Richmond area.

"I'll miss it," McIntosh said at the end of his flight. "I made a lot of good friends. I am going to miss the flying and miss the people. We've done a lot of state duty, I was able to serve in Desert Storm and I just thank everyone."

Before taking the final flight, Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, presented McIntosh with the Virginia National Guard Legion of Merit. McIntosh was awarded the Department of Defense Legion of Merit Aug. 8 at his final drill weekend.

"This is someone I consider to be a legend," Long said. "What a great career he has had for the Virginia Guard and for our nation."

After the award presentation, McIntosh thanked four groups of people: his family, who only knew him as a Soldier with a passion for flying; the state aviation officers, who oversaw the Virginia Guard's flight operations; the maintenance personnel, who kept the aircraft fueled and in the air; and the flight surgeons, who made sure his body kept up with his will to continue flying.

Retired chief warrant officers Davey Crockett and Bill Outlaw joined McIntosh while his daughter Meg read a statement he prepared. Both Crockett and Outlaw served two tours of duty in Vietnam and the three men represented approximately 195 years of aviation experience and more than 33,000 flight hours.

"He may be the last to retire, but his retirement is symbolic of an end of an era for those of his generation who wrote the book on helicopter operations in war," his daughter Meg read. "My dad truly appreciates the events of today and hopes this also brings recognition to the thousands of others who returned from Vietnam, continued to serve and brought aid and comfort to those in need."

Not ready to give up flying, McIntosh said he plans to continue his service to the commonwealth by joining the aviation battalion of the Virginia Defense Force.

McIntosh joined the Army Oct. 16, 1968 and completed his pilot training Dec. 1, 1969. He served in Vietnam from March 1970 to March 1971 where he served as an aircraft commander for both Huey and Cobra helicopters in the 229th Aviation Battalion of the 1st Cavalry Division.

During his service in Vietnam, McIntosh flew a total of 1,334 combat hours and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star Medal and 54 Air Medals. He was also awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm and was presented the award by then-Vice President Spiro Agnew.

After he was released from active duty in 1971, McIntosh



Photo by Cotton Puryear, Virginia Dept. of Military Affairs

Chief Warrant Officer Norman H. McIntosh prepares for his final flight as an Army warrant officer Aug. 17 after nearly 42 years of service. McIntosh joined the Army Oct. 16, 1968 and served in Vietnam from March 1970 to March 1971 where he served as an aircraft commander in the 229th Aviation Battalion of the 1st Cavalry Division.

joined the Virginia National Guard. During his years of service in Virginia, he volunteered and participated in rescue and relief efforts for numerous disaster responses including Southwest Virginia floods in 1976, Shenandoah Valley and Southwest Virginia floods in 1985, Madison County flood in 1995 and Hurricane Dennis and Hurricane Floyd in 1999.

McIntosh flew medical evacuation missions from 1978 to 1995 and assisted in establishing the 986th Medical Detachment in 1978. The detachment was one of the first Army National Guard units mobilized from 1990 to 1991 for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and he deployed with the unit. The 986th was consolidated with the Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment effective Sept. 1, 1995, and the Headquarters Company carries the two campaign streamers and Meritorious Unit Commendation earned by the 986th.

After the Army created the new chief warrant officer 5 rank, in 1996 McIntosh was the first aviator and the second warrant officer in Virginia to be appointed to the rank. Of his 41 years and 10 months of service, he spent 40 years and nine months as a rated aviator.

McIntosh is a native of Portsmouth and graduated from Cradock High School and graduated from Old Dominion University in 1974.

During his career, McIntosh has flown the Hughes TH-55, the Bell UH-1 Huey, the Bell AH-1G Cobra, the Hiller OH-23D Raven the Sikorsky CH-34 Choctaw and the Sikorsky UH-60 Blackhawk. He has a total of 5,600 flight hours. He is a UH-1 Instructor Pilot, a UH-60 Instructor Pilot and an Instrument Flight Examiner.

192d Security Forces train outdoors to amplify knowledge

By Master Sgt. Carlos Claudio
192d Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Virginia Air National Guard Security Forces took their traditional classroom training and ratcheted it up a few notches by applying realistic, outdoor scenarios at Fort Eustis June 7- 18 as part of their annual field training.

“This outdoor training gives us hands-on, real-world type of experience,” said Lt. Col. Scott A. Hill, 192d Security Forces Squadron commander. “In addition to what the 192d Fighter Wing offers, the added intensity provided by the 633rd Air Base Wing trainers gives us a different perspective in how to execute training by taking our Security Forces out of the classroom and preparing them for when we do deploy.”

Security Forces also conducted training on military operations in urban terrain.

“This training teaches you how to deal with bad guys that have taken over a city or town,” explained Master Sgt. Jesse Lee, Jr., training noncommissioned officer. “MOUT trains you how to go into dangerous towns, buildings and rooms, and neutralize the situation.”

RTI OCS retains Learning Institution of Excellence title

By Capt. Matt Nowak
Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

The Fort Pickett-based 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute’s Officer Candidate School earned the U.S Army Training and Doctrine Command’s highest level of accreditation for a training course during a March 2010 inspection. Subject matter experts from Fort Benning’s Officer Candidate School rated the OCS as a “Learning Institution of Excellence” during their inspection conducted March 26-28.

“This rating is a direct result of the high level of support the OCS program has received and continues to receive from our higher headquarters, 183rd RTI, notably the S1 (personnel) and S4 (logistics) sections working through administrative and logistical issues and looking past their own staff sections to ensure the success of the Regiment as a whole,” said 1st Lt. Carlos Maldonado, Virginia’s OCS training officer.

The inspection is a comprehensive look at all of the accreditation standards

with emphasis on conduct of training and training support. During the process, inspectors interviewed some of the staff and candidates. They observed training on Army Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills, as well as administration of the tactics exam. The accreditation record was conducted in accordance with the TRADOC Record of Evaluation of Accreditation Standards.

Scoring is based on how well the school meets the standards set by the officer candidate school proponent at Fort Benning, Ga., which also conducts the evaluation.

The inspection is a comprehensive look at all of the accreditation standards with emphasis on conduct of training and training support. There are 18 standards under 6 categories: Doctrine, Organization and Proponent Function, Training, Leader Development, Personnel and Facilities.

The OCS received the rating by successfully meeting all criteria for all 18 standards and received an overall rating of 98%.

This achievement was not an easy task

for the OCS. The organization had its share of obstacles to overcome. The OCS changed commanders in 2009, hired a new full time training officer in February 2010 and incurred a 100% staff turnover within a few months prior to the inspection.

“This accomplishment is even more notable in light of the OCS company change of command and reassignment of the full time OIC this year,” said Col. Marie Mahoney, commander of the 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute. “This is a testament to the strength of the Virginia OCS program, as well as to the dedication and hard work of the entire 183rd RTI team.”

The RTI has a campus full of new buildings currently under construction on Fort Pickett. As the final stages of construction are complete, the RTI with the OCS is scheduled to move into their new buildings this fall.

“OCS is looking forward to hanging this rating proudly in our new building this fall,” said Maj. Thomas Klump, OCS commander.



U.S. Air Force Photo by Master Sgt. Carlos J. Claudio

Tech Sgt. Bassam T. Taha, 192d Security Forces Squadron, rotates from rifle to “handgun” as part of a defensive course at Fort Eustis June 9.

The team challenge course presented another engaging situation where Airmen needed to think and travel as a team to get from one place to another.

The training at Fort Eustis also included land navigation and map reading, searching and handcuffing, and search and rescue.

In all, about 50 Security Forces personnel participated in this highly active outdoor training. The 192d Security Forces Squadron is part of the 192d Fighter Wing and is based at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia.

91st Troop Command conducts AT across Va.

By Staff Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers from assorted units within the Sandston-based 91st Troop Command trained across the commonwealth in a multitude of locations July 17-31 for their two weeks of annual training. The units trained in many of their unit specific missions, such as engineer operations at Fort Pickett and Richmond, and Military Police operations at Fort Pickett. In addition to the military occupational specialty-specific training, many of the Soldiers of the 91st participated in a week-long readiness exercise known as Irish Heat in Sandston that honed the Virginia Guard’s homeland defense preparedness and ability to respond to natural disasters.

“Annual training is important to conduct as Guardsmen because other than deployments or state emergency missions this is the only time we can come together for more than two to three days and accomplish a larger project,” according to 1st Lt. Adam Provost, assistant operations officer of the 91st Troop Command. “It helps us maintain and remain proficient through an extended operational tempo that can’t be created during a drill weekend.”

The high tempo training period kept Soldiers occupied working on their specific roles in the Guard. Engineers of the Cedar Bluff-based 1033rd Engineer Company, 276th Engineer Battalion spent several days improving berms on multiple ranges at Fort Pickett while engineers from the Powhatan-based 180th Engineer Company, 276th Engineer Battalion began work on the first phase of improvements to clear undergrowth in the Cannon Creek Parkway in Richmond as part of an ongoing community reclamation project.

“The training was relevant to Guardsmen maintaining their particular fields because it was kept MOS specific rather than Army centric,” said Provost, who also commands the 1033rd Engineer Company. “Equipment operators, bulldozer drivers and dump truck drivers were actually running equipment rather than just doing battle drills.”

The MP units of the 91st, the Manassas-based 266th MP Company and the Virginia Beach-based 229th MP Company rear detachment, also worked hard to maintain proficiency in their field by building on convoy movement operations, cordon and search techniques, reacting to contact, and principles of law and order, according to Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Gomez, noncommissioned officer in charge of readiness for the 229th. The Soldiers also spent a day navigating the Air Assault obstacle course and rappel tower at Fort Pickett.

“The training during AT was relevant for a Military Police Soldier to stay proficient in all tasks,” said Gomez. “The tasks of a Military Police Soldier need to be diverse in all areas of their assigned MOS due to the Military Police being called upon to work in different situations around the world.”

Also actively working on their combined skill sets in the 91st were the Soldiers of the Bowling Green-based 189th Engineer Company (Multi-role Bridge Company), who conducted bridge and boat training at Fort A.P. Hill July 28. “Using boats, Soldiers pushed dropped ribbon bridge bays together to form a raft. The



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

Engineers of the Cedar Bluff-based 1033rd Engineer Company and the Powhatan-based 180th Horizontal Engineer Company conduct Engineer operations at Fort Pickett June 26. The Soldiers leveled land and borrowed dirt and moved it from one location to another location to build a berm for a firing range during their two-week annual training.

rafts can be used to ferry vehicles across a water obstacle, or they can be fastened to together to form a floating bridge,” according to Capt. Matt Nowak, who took command of the 189th during AT.

While most units of the 91st trained specifically in their MOS during annual training, Soldiers of the Petersburg-based 276th Engineer Battalion trained to take over the state’s Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, High-Yield Explosive Emergency Response Force Package, or CERF-P (pronounced surf-pea).

“It’s a homeland security mission we have here in Virginia,” said Capt. Jonathan York, commander of the West Point-based 237th. “We assist the local authorities whenever there is any type of natural disaster or manmade incident that happens within the commonwealth of Virginia and beyond.”

Soldiers of the 276th’s 237th Engineer Company conducted their annual training at Fort Pickett in June in preparation for an external evaluation June 18 at the Henrico Fire Academy where they worked in conjunction with more than 350 emergency responders.

In addition to the warrior training that was held during the two weeks, the 91st Troop Command also conducted a change-of-command ceremony at Fort Pickett between outgoing commander, Col. Steven Scott and incoming commander, Col. Walter Mercer. The unit also held a welcome home ceremony for the main body of the 229th in Virginia Beach, which returned from a year-long federal tour to Iraq.

“Having the opportunity to command at this level is an honor. It’s great to come back from the War College to this position,” said Mercer. “During our AT, we were able to welcome home the 229th, and we are glad to have them back, and we are ready to help them get reintegrated with their families and civilian careers.”

Freedom Salute recognizes 3 Virginia units

By Staff Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Virginia National Guard Soldiers from three different units gathered alongside family members, loved ones and employers July 11 at the Lexington Hotel, George Washington Inn & Conference Center in Williamsburg to conduct a Freedom Salute in honor of their service in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait.

The Freedom Salute honored the service of the approximately 40 Soldiers from Virginia Beach-based 329th Regional Support Group's Logistical Military Advisory Teams, the four Soldiers from the 134th Chaplain Support Team and the approximately 17 Soldiers from the Sandston-based Detachment 26, Operations Support Airlift Command.

The Soldiers and families were welcomed home and thanked for their hard work while they were deployed overseas by Marla Decker, Virginia Secretary of Public Safety. She not only recognized the Soldiers, but the family members for their sacrifices.

"Virginia Citizen-Soldiers make us proud every day, whether it's being deployed to far-away lands or whether it's helping in snow storms and natural disasters and situations at home," said Decker. "We are always proud that our National Guard is here and represents Virginia well. I want to thank all of you today on behalf of the governor and the Office of Public Safety."

"Thank you all because while you loved one, whether it be dad, mom, sister, brother, employee, while they're away, you're here, you're thinking about them, and you're without them."

Virginia Guard assists with National Scout Jamboree

By Staff Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Virginia Guard Airmen and Soldiers were among the hundreds of National Guard troops activated to help with the 2010 National Scout Jamboree July 26 to Aug. 3 at Fort A.P. Hill, Va.

Approximately 600 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen from 19 states worked as part of the 2,000 men and women that comprised Joint Task Force – National Scout Jamboree.

The JTF was responsible for emergency services and provided medical support, air and ground medical evacuation and a 60-bed expeditionary hospital, while Airmen from the Virginia Guard's 200th Weather Flight provided around-the-clock weather forecasting to assist with aviation operations and help ensure the safety of the Scouts, Scout leaders and visitors.

Although it was not in its mission statement, one of the JTF's key tasks was

to provide program support by manning stations at the Merit Badge Midway, where scouts could come and test for and earn badges.

Virginia Guard units supported several of Merit Badge tests. Soldiers from the 29th Infantry Division Band provided testing at the Music Merit Badge, and Airmen from the 203d RED HORSE Civil Engineer Squadron taught the Plumbing Merit Badge, where Scouts learned to cut and thread pipe, solder and conduct repairs on sinks and toilets.

"It has been absolutely packed and standing room only," said Spc. Jonathon Sublett of the 29th Division Band. "We have had about 120 Scouts a day come through here."

The Plumbing Merit Badge class takes about two and half hours to complete all the requirements, and it was estimated that more than 100 Scouts per day were earning the badge.

"We are teaching the Scouts something

The Freedom Salute is just one step of the reintegration process Soldiers returning from overseas go through as part of the Army's Yellow Ribbon Campaign.

"These reintegrations are very, very important us, because this is our time, on our nickel I'll call it, that we can bring the families together," said Brig. Gen. Stephen Huxtable, Assistant Adjutant General for Army. "You can have some time with the leadership of the Virginia National Guard, get some time with other agencies, other organizations, so you can get yourself reintegrated back in your day-to-day lives because we realize for the last year, we've kind of disrupted that."

The LMATs returned to Virginia in March 2010 after serving in Iraq since June 2009 where they provided training oversight of Iraqi military schools and logistical advice to several Iraq Army Location Commands.

The 134th CST mobilized in March 2009 and returned in May 2010. While mobilized the Soldiers operated throughout Afghanistan and Kuwait, and they were the first chaplain support team to ever mobilize from the Virginia National Guard. The team provided a wide array of chaplain support services including counseling, worship services and Bible studies.

The Soldiers of Detachment 26, OSACOM mobilized early in 2009 for duty in Afghanistan and returned to Virginia in March 2010. The detachment conducted around the clock operations by providing pilots and systems operators for aerial reconnaissance used for analyzing and disseminating real-time battlefield intelligence and targeting information to ground commanders and other organizations throughout Afghanistan.



Photo by Cotton Puryear, Va. Dept. of Military Affairs

Senior Airman Daniel Hertzog of the Virginia National Guard's 203 RED HORSE Civil Engineer Squadron instructs Scouts on the proper way to thread pipe Aug. 2 as part of the Plumbing Merit Badge on the Merit Badge Midway of the National Boy Scout Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill.

they can use in real life," said Senior Airman Daniel Hertzog. "If they get home and have a clogged sink, they will have the knowledge to fix it."

Virginia Guard Airmen given Hometown Heroes Salute

By Tech Sgt. James R. Orbin
192nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Eighty Virginia National Guard Airmen were recognized for their service while deployed in support of federal contingency operations at a Hometown Heroes Salute held at London Bridge Baptist Church in Virginia Beach on Aug. 7.

Those recognized – members of the 203rd RED HORSE Squadron and the Virginia Air National Guard Headquarters – had deployed at least once between Sept. 11, 2001 and December 2008 – in support of operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Hurricane Katrina and other U.S. contingency operations.

Attending the event were many family members and fellow Virginia Air Guard members. Guest speakers included Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness, Terrie L. Suit; Adjutant General of Virginia, Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr.; and Assistant Adjutant General for Air, Col. Zane R. Johnson. Also attending to thank the service members were Chief of Staff for Air, Brig. Gen. Wayne A. Wright and State Command Chief Master Sgt. Barry S. Coleman.

The 203rd RED HORSE Squadron, based in Virginia Beach, is a rapid-response, self-contained, civil engineering force capable of performing a full range of construction activities: heavy equipment operations, road grading and paving, facilities construction, airfield runway repair, drilling wells and setting up operational military bases in remote or undeveloped areas.

"Every Air National Guard family member has proudly served and supported the Air Guard mission," said Lt. Col. Peter S. Garner, 203rd RED HORSE commander. "We hope that every spouse, child, and extended family member knows the important role they have in what we do."

The 203rd has deployed twice in the last nine years: the first deployment to Southwest Asia was from April through October 2003 in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. The unit returned to Southwest Asia, from October 2006 to May 2007. This deployment had them dispersed across Qatar, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait once



Photos by Cotton Puryear, Virginia Department of Military Affairs
Assistant to the Governor for Commonwealth Preparedness Terrie L. Suit (far left) joined senior Virginia Guard leaders in thanking members of the Air National Guard at the Hometown Heroes Salute held Aug. 7.

again in support of OEF and OIF.

The 203rd has also deployed for construction, humanitarian, and disaster relief projects to locations throughout the United States and around the world, including Honduras, Panama, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Israel, Italy, Azores, Spain, Germany, England, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates and South Korea.

Members of the Virginia Air National Guard Headquarters who have also been deployed took part in the event.

Each Airman being recognized received a letter of appreciation and commemorative coins enclosed in a cherry wood case.

In addition, Air Guard spouses were presented with a rosewood pen and pencil set, engraved with the Hometown Heroes Salute logo, and children were presented with engraved dog tags.

The Hometown Heroes Salute campaign is an Air National Guard-wide program to recognize and thank Air Guard Airmen, and those who supported them, as they carried out national contingency operations since September 11, 2001. This was the first Hometown Heroes Salute to take place within the Virginia Air National Guard.

A program called The Freedom Salute honors Army National Guard Soldiers who have been deployed.



Each Airman being recognized receives a letter of appreciation and a commemorative coin enclosed in a cherry wood case. Family members will also be recognized for their sacrifices and service. Spouses will receive a Hometown Heroes Salute-engraved pen and pencil set, and their children will receive a set of personalized dog tags.

Virginia chaplains serve Soldiers responding to Gulf oil disaster

By Bob Donaldson
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

Army Chaplain (Capt.) Jeffery Hicks of Elkton, Va., and Pfc. Robert Mathis, a chaplain assistant from Spotsylvania, Va., navigate their way through southern Louisiana as they serve the spiritual needs and improve morale to responders of the Deepwater Horizon Response Gulf Coast oil spill.

On this particularly hot day in July they traveled to the work site of the Louisiana Army National Guard's 843rd Engineer Company, where large sandbags are filled and transported to a helicopter pick-up site.

As the chaplain and his assistant, both from the 1030th Transportation Battalion, approached it was obvious that the troops had been awaiting their arrival. They first spoke to individuals and then invited them all to pray together underneath the camouflage tent that provided some relief from the direct rays of the sun.

As they arrive at the helicopter pick-up site, Soldiers migrated toward the Humvee as if a general assembly had been called. Some came alone and some in small groups. As they stood in the burning sun Hicks asked if they would like to pray.

Hicks speaks of his gratitude to those who have helped him, especially his family and employer, in his efforts to serve.

"It's all about the troops," he said. "This is a ministry of presence; you have to be with the troops." He and Mathis continue to serve wherever they are needed, traveling in their 25 year old Humvee.



Photo by Bob Donaldson, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

Chaplain (Capt.) Edward Paul of the Virginia National Guard speaks with Staff Sgt. Timmie Kinsey of the Louisiana National Guard near Gonzales, La.

Across the state another chaplain team arrives at the Boom Operations and Distribution Center just outside of Gonzales, La. Chaplain (Capt.) Edward Paul, 29th Special Troops Battalion from Virginia Beach, Va., and Staff Sgt. David Paulson, a chaplain assistant with Headquarters Company, 116th Brigade Combat Team of Staunton, Va., are greeted by Capt. Bryan Bridges of Bossier City, La.

This small detachment receives and ships to local destinations literally hundreds of thousand feet of boom that is used to create a barrier to trap the oil before it washes onto the shore.

Upon his arrival, Paul begins to visit with the troops. One of the first was Staff Sgt. Timmie Kinsey of the 1083rd Transportation Company, Menden, La.

"In a situation like this, you often feel alone," Kinsey summed up after speaking with Paul. "The chaplain lets you know that you are not alone and that the Army cares."

Next, the team establishes a temporary church in an unused portable building. The Soldiers begin to arrive from locations throughout the compound. It is an extremely hot day and the air conditioned building welcomes them with comfort and a few minutes to reflect on their spiritual needs.

Paul greeted the troops with prayer and the music. He speaks to the troops about sharing, forgiveness and the Army values. Their faces reflect the strength of his message.

"I love my job," Paul said later. "It's my passion. To encourage the troops, to bring the Word of God and share the Gospel are my love."

The chaplains and their chaplain assistants continue to travel the highways and back roads of the affected oil spill area bringing a message of respect and concern for all those who are serving Operation Deepwater Response.



Photo by Bob Donaldson, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

Chaplain (Capt.) Jeffery Hicks (center) of Elkton, Va., provides chaplain services to Louisiana National Guard Soldiers responding to the Deepwater Horizon Gulf Coast oil spill.

Engineers begin local park project

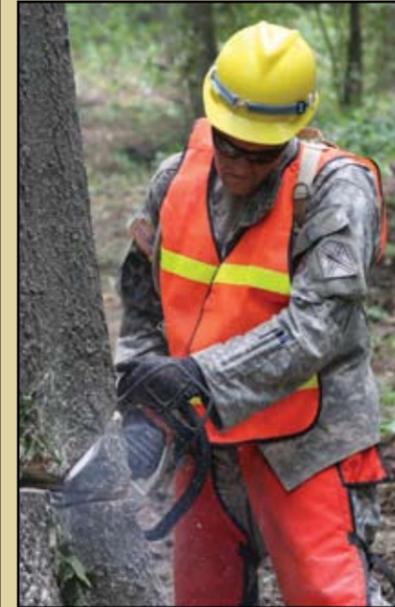


Photo by Cotton Puryear, Virginia DMA

Approximately 20 Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Powhatan-based 180th Engineer Company, 276th Engineer Battalion begin the first phase of a project to clear undergrowth in the Cannon Creek Parkway in Richmond during their annual training period from July 22- 27.

The project is a continuation of ongoing community reclamation and improvement of the 1.4 mile area that comprises the Cannon Creek Greenway.

The work of the 180th Engineers came about through National Guard Bureau's Innovative Readiness Training program. The project also helps the 180th prepare for its mission as the Virginia Guard's emergency response force package for debris removal, explained 1st Lt. Jessee Kopczynski, officer in charge of the project.

Homeland security exercise improves Virginia readiness

By Cotton Puryear
Virginia Dept. of Military Affairs

The Virginia National Guard conducted a five-day simulation exercise July 26-30 to focus training readiness on the Guard's ability to respond to homeland security threats and work with interagency partners at the local, state and federal level. Based out of the Virginia Guard's Joint Operations Center in Sandston, the exercise involved more than 200 personnel from the Virginia Army National Guard, Virginia Air National Guard and Virginia Defense Force.

In an effort to improve the Guard's inter-agency cooperation, more than 70 representatives from other state, federal and local agencies, such as the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Joint Task Force - Civil Support, Joint Task Force - National Capitol Region, the Department of Homeland Security and Stafford County, also took part in the exercise.

"Our response to domestic emergencies is one of the most important functions the Virginia National Guard performs in service to the citizens of the commonwealth," said Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. "It is critical that we are prepared to act when called upon by the Governor to protect the lives properties and interests of Virginians in partnership with our civilian counterparts in the response community."

A year ago the Guard conducted a simulation exercise based on the scenario of a major hurricane hitting the Hampton Roads area. This year's exercise scenario picked up where last year's scenario left off and terrorists have decided to launch a series of attacks in the aftermath of the hurricane.

As part of the simulation scenario, terrorists detonate a radiological dispersion device in the National Capitol Region, and it triggered further deployment of Virginia National Guard resources in coordination with the Virginia Emergency Response Team and other local, state and federal

agencies.

"One of the big things we learned from last year's hurricane response exercise was that we needed to improve our level of training with our interagency partners, so we are glad to have the participation of local, state and federal organizations in this exercise," said Col. Rob McMillin, director of joint operations for the Virginia National Guard who now serves as the Virginia Army National Guard chief of staff.

McMillin said the exercise simulated working through the process of responding to an RDD event in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the Virginia Guard's existing plans and what steps need to be taken to close any gaps once they have been identified.

The exercise focused on command and control, resource sustainment and how Virginia Guard forces would integrate into local, state and federal response organizational structures.

One of the big lessons learned was the improvement of mutual understanding of agency capabilities between DMA and other state agencies, and McMillin said the Guard will develop a continual education process to help improve the level of understanding with partner agencies.

In addition, the Virginia Guard will try to put more liaison personnel at the incident site to help first responders better understand what capabilities the Guard can provide.

The Guard also identified improvements that can be made on the process from bringing in forces from outside of Virginia, and the process will be tested on a quarterly basis, McMillin said. He said the Guard also identified ways to improve how operational information is shared among different staff sections and will look at ways to simplify some of the information sharing processes.

"The Virginia National Guard doesn't operate on its own in a state emergency response, but as part of joint interagency team," McMillin said. "Every opportunity we have to train with these other agencies means we will be better prepared when we are needed by the citizens of Virginia."

Lynchburg-based infantry battalion returns from Iraq

By Cotton Puryear
Virginia Dept. of Military Affairs

Approximately 300 Soldiers from the Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team returned to the United States Aug. 25 after serving in Iraq since March 2010. The Soldiers flew into the Roanoke Regional Airport where they were greeted by senior leaders of the Virginia Guard as well as World War II veterans from the 29th Infantry Division Association and then travelled by bus to be reunited with their family and friends in their home armories in Bedford, Christiansburg, Lexington and Lynchburg.

"They went for five straight months without a break, every day, without a fault," Lt. Col. Scott Smith, commander of 1st Battalion, said of the Soldiers in the unit. "They never had an accident, they never got blown up, and I attribute that to their discipline and to the leadership of the NCOs and young officers."

The Soldiers arrived in the United States Aug. 19 and conducted a number of different administrative activities at their demobilization station at Camp Shelby, Miss., to transition from active duty back to traditional National Guard status prior to returning to Virginia. The Soldiers began



Photo by Cotton Puryear, Virginia Department of Military Affairs

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry returned to Virginia Aug. 25 after serving on federal active duty in Iraq since March 2010.

their tour on federal active duty Jan. 5, 2010, after having just over sixty days notification about their deployment.

"The 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry has a rich tradition of service here in Virginia and overseas, and your success in this mission adds another chapter that should make every member of your unit feel a great sense of pride," Gov. Bob McDonnell wrote in a letter to the Soldiers of 1st Battalion after they ended their mission Aug. 8.

A group of approximately 70 Soldiers from the battalion returned Aug. 17 to Virginia.

The battalion operated out of Contingency Operating Base Adder in Southern Iraq with the mission of securing resupply convoys along the main supply routes in the central, southern and northern sectors of Iraq in order to prevent anti-Iraqi Forces from disrupting theater sustainment operations.

The unit was scheduled to be on federal duty until December, but their mission was curtailed as they were tasked to assist in the responsible draw down of U.S. forces in Iraq.

"No other unit, active or reserve, is asked to deploy with only 60 days notice and then performs a difficult and dangerous

mission without incident or injury," Smith said. "As we were leaving, both the general officers who served as our division-level commanders told me that they regretted we were included in the draw down because of our excellent record and professionalism. This is a reputation that should make the Commonwealth proud and is worthy of our battalion's rich history."

Soldiers were organized into convoy escort teams operating Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, and the teams provided security for convoys that transported hundreds of personnel, supplies and equipment from different units in United States Forces-Iraq to other destinations such as combat outposts, convoy security centers and COBs throughout the country.

The battalion completed 278 convoy escort missions travelling more than 172,300 miles and transported in excess of 120 million gallons of fuel and 900 thousand short tons of supplies without any injuries. Convoy escort teams reacted to 22 enemy attacks from small arms fire, indirect fire and IED detonations.

"We had one of the highest utilization rates in theater and we kept our CET's out on the road every day, despite the challenge

of not having our own organic mechanics or motor pool section," said Maj. Christopher Samulski, the battalion operations officer. "In a way, we did what every Guard unit [does], we took advantage of the fact that many of our riflemen have civilian training as mechanics. Despite the fact that none of them had ever worked on an MRAP before, we ended up with a 90% operational readiness rate during our time here. This is an amazing accomplishment, and I am very proud of the work they have done here."

The 1st Battalion headquarters is in Lynchburg, and the Bedford and Farmville-based Company A and the Lexington and Clifton Forge-based Company B were officially mobilized for duty. Soldiers from the Christiansburg and Radford-based Company C and the Pulaski and Martinsville-based Company D also took part in the mobilization.

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

Soldiers from 1st Battalion are no strangers to stepping up to answer the call of duty. Right after the unit's drill weekend in February 2008 welcoming Soldiers back from a year of duty in Kosovo, more than 100 Soldiers went on state active duty to assist with the firefighting efforts in Southwest Virginia.

Soldiers from the battalion also geared up to provide support in anticipation of Tropical Storm Hanna in early September 2008. Approximately 250 Soldiers assisted the Secret Service with the operation of security checkpoints along the President Obama inauguration parade route.

Approximately 130 1st Battalion Soldiers from Bedford, Clifton Forge, Covington, Christiansburg, Lexington, Pulaski, Salem, Radford and Roanoke were assigned to Company C, 3rd Battalion, 116th



Photo by Cotton Puryear, Virginia Department of Military Affairs

Members of the 29th Infantry Division Association who served in World War II greet Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Aug. 25 at the Roanoke Regional Airport. The Soldiers returned to Virginia after serving in Iraq since March.

Infantry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team for combat duty in Afghanistan from March 2004 to July 2005. Other individual Soldiers from the battalion have taken part in mobilizations throughout the state.



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

Staff Sgt. Justin Owen receives a long awaited hug at the Lexington-based Company B, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment welcome home ceremony Aug. 25 at the Lexington armory.



Photo by Cotton Puryear, Virginia Department of Military Affairs

Children and other family members await the arrival of Soldiers from Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Aug. 25 in Lynchburg. After being greeted by senior leaders from the Virginia Guard at the Roanoke Regional Airport, Soldiers boarded buses for their home armory in Lynchburg to be reunited with their families.