



*Photo by Capt. Dayna Rowden, Virginia Guard Public Affairs*

**Sgt. Ross Holsclaw, Spc. Michael Eames, and 1st Sgt. Terry Thompson of B Company, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry are thanked by Gov. Timothy M. Kaine at a ceremony in Roanoke to recognize Soldiers, firefighters, and other personnel who helped battle forest fires throughout the Commonwealth in February.**

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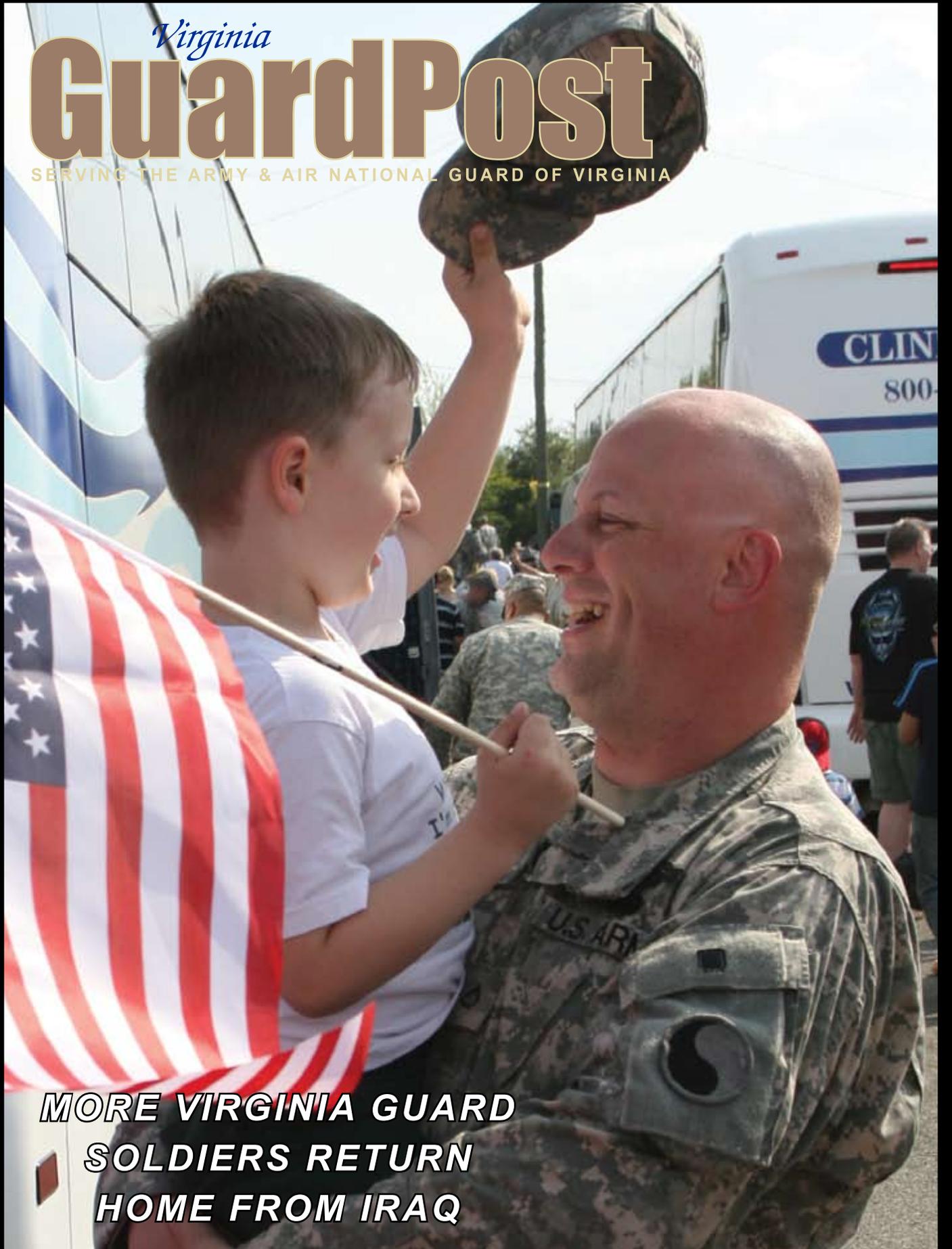
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*Virginia*  
**GuardPost**

SERVING THE ARMY & AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF VIRGINIA



**MORE VIRGINIA GUARD  
SOLDIERS RETURN  
HOME FROM IRAQ**

MARCH - APRIL 2008



## FROM THE TOP



# ***No doubt about the important role of the Virginia National Guard in the Global War on Terror***

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

There should be no doubt that the Virginia National Guard has an important role in the Global War on Terrorism. In early April, two Virginia National Guard Soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in Iraq and defending the ideals of freedom in a foreign land.

Staff Sgt. Jeremiah McNeal of Norfolk and Staff Sgt. Jesse Ault from Dublin were both lost to improvised explosive device attacks within days of each other. McNeal served as a combat engineer with the 237th Engineer Company from West Point, and Ault was a motor transport operation assigned to E Company, 429th Support Battalion.

When I met with the families of our two fallen comrades, I was deeply moved by the strength they showed in this time of tragedy and the pride they felt because of the dedicated service of their loved ones. The strength of these families should serve as an inspiration to us, and we should all share the pride the family felt about of the service of the two great Virginians.

I am certain that this sense of pride extends to the men and women of the Virginia National Guard who are serving their country on combat duty in Iraq. They are being given the toughest missions and they are getting those missions accomplished. The job these two Soldiers were doing was critically important and ensured the safety of other Soldiers working in their area of operations and made sure that vital supplies moved to forward operating bases in support of the war effort.

We grieve for the families and communities of these two great Soldiers, and we ask the people of the Commonwealth and their fellow Guardsmen to remember this tremendous sacrifice.

Now more than ever, we all need to strengthen our resolve and continue to stand behind our men and women serving



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

in Operation Iraqi Freedom. They need our support as the Army continues to call on America's National Guard to defend our country.

As we mourn the loss of these two Virginia Soldiers, we are also given the opportunity to count our blessings and welcome home Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team from Iraq. Three of the battalion's infantry companies returned home in late April, and the rest of the battalion will soon follow.

As with our other Virginia Guard units in Iraq, these companies were doing important work and served seamlessly with the active duty units and Guard and Reserve units from other states. What is particularly noteworthy about the 3rd Battalion, as well as the 116th Infantry Headquarters, is how quickly and efficiently they were able to organize and equip themselves for combat.

In most cases, our deploying units receive advance notice about their mobilizations. But in the case of units from the 116th IBCT, they went from a cold start and responded to our nation's call in a greatly compressed timetable.

In the span of four months, the unit was able to staff and equip the battalion for the mission, calling upon Soldiers and equipment from 42 different units across the Commonwealth to form the largest battalion task force the Virginia National Guard has mobilized in support of the Global War on Terror.

The battalion's deployment was also the first time a Virginia National Guard rifle battalion ever deployed from Virginia with the new organizational structure of the Army's new modular brigade system.

One of the major reasons for the success of all of mobilized units is the training we conduct during our drill weekends and annual training period. This training is critical to our readiness for both our state and federal missions, but we have to be sure to make safety part of everything we do. I expect leaders at every level to make safety a priority and emphasize common sense safety procedures during training as well as traveling to and from our training areas.

During our AT season last summer, we had far too many accidents that could have been prevented. We must remember the importance of observing safe speeds on the roads, wearing our seat belts and staying focused and aware of the actions of other drivers.

When we think about the tragedy of losing two Soldiers in Iraq and realize that we have the power to prevent the injury or death of Soldiers and Airmen in a training environment, we must ensure that we are making safety a priority.

The citizens of the Commonwealth depend on the Virginia National Guard during times of crisis and when our nation calls us to duty to serve in a time of war, we owe it our Soldiers and Airmen to make sure we are doing everything possible to prepare them for their service. Tough, realistic training with an emphasis on safety in everything we do will help make sure we fully prepared to meet the demands of both our state and federal missions.

# Women in the Va. Guard continue to blaze new trails

By Capt. Dayna Rowden  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The servicewomen in the past paved the way for today's women warriors. Their path, made more difficult by discrimination and misconceptions by people both in and out of the military, was frocked with challenges that fortified their resolve and showed that these women could rise above and carve out a place for themselves in today's National Guard.

Women in the Virginia National Guard now can serve as pilots, truck drivers, doctors, nurses, military police, mechanics and commanders, just to name a few of the many career opportunities.

Col. Kimberly A. Gugliotta joined the Army in 1991 as a field artillery officer. She was a female platoon leader for an all male platoon.

"Being the only female in an all male platoon was more of an adjustment on the part of the men," said Gugliotta. "Many men have opinions against women in the Army, but I maintained my professionalism and credibility to change those opinions."

Gugliotta now serves as the first female Joint Director of Operations Plans and Training of the Virginia National Guard.

She is proud of her accomplishments and credits her success in part to the number of women served before her.

Today women work balance their roles as wives, mothers and career women. Between 1949 and 1970, Congress barred women with dependant children from serving in the military.

Capt. Antoinette L. Allen of the Virginia Air National Guard, the Virginia state equal employment manager and a mother, recalled that her grandmother was denied entrance in the military because she had children. Now mothers and daughters can serve side by side in the National Guard.

Many women, like their male counterparts, are challenged by balancing work and family.

However, these women work hard to fight the misconceptions that they cannot be good warriors and good mothers.

"Public perception is a challenge. Some people see me as being less of a mother because I'm in the military," said Allen. "I even hear it from other women."

"I came in the Air Force during a time when it was hard for women," said Master Sgt. (ret.) Shirley Cooper, who joined the Air Force 25 years ago. "Right after I joined, we were finally able to stay in and have a family and a career in the military."

Cooper says her family was key to her success in the Air National Guard. Her father inspired her to join the military, her husband is in the military, her mother helps care for her children when Cooper deployed, and her career is just as important to her children as it is to her.

"You really have to communicate a lot with your family so they understand how important your career is," said Cooper.

Women like Cooper, Allen and Gugliotta helped open new doors for women today. Men in the military have become accustomed to working beside their female counterparts, and many young women are stepping up to meet the challenge of filling roles that had once been uniquely male.

"In the last 25 years, I've seen a lot of changes," said Cooper.



Photo by Capt. Dayna Rowden, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, speaks to actresses from "Star Spangled Girls" March 27 at the Henrico Theater in Sandston. The performance highlighted the contributions made by women during World War II.**

"I used to hear a lot of negative comments by men about women in the Guard. Now, I see women in almost every career field."

Women like Spc. Jadee R. Collins, an all-wheel mechanic, are changing the face of the military.

Once women were limited to nursing and clerical duties, now they fill almost every role in the military. Collins, who hopes to one day be an officer in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, joined the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps at her high school after the Sept. 11, 2001.

"No one in my family had been in the military," Collins said. "After 9-11, I felt a sense of patriotism. I know it sounds corny but I was something I felt I needed to do."

"I was accepted into (Virginia Military Institute), but I enlisted so I could pay for college," she said. "I became a mechanic because I wanted the challenge."

Before joining the Virginia Army National Guard, Collins knew nothing about cars. She was a class leader in her advanced individual training class, one of only 10 women in her class of 102, and can now repair humvees.

Right after finishing AIT, Collins deployed to Kosovo with 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Liaison Monitoring Team. It was her first time away from home.

"We have to be as tough, sometimes even tougher, than the men," said Collins. "We have something to prove."

Despite the doubts expressed by some, women in the Guard find that they have the opportunity to do things that they could not have done in the civilian sectors. These women dedicate themselves to setting an example, not only for other women to follow, but for the rest of the Guard.

The women of today's Virginia National Guard serve with distinction and pride, knowing their service and dedication will open doors for future women in the Guard.

"The sky's the limit," said Allen, "no one can put limits on you but yourself."

## News Briefs

### TAG announces senior officer moves

Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, announced April 9 a series of reassignments of senior officer leaders in the Virginia National Guard.

Col. Robert H. Simpson will retire from the Virginia National Guard June 1, and Col. Daryl W. Francis will be reassigned to the position of Chief of the Joint Staff.

Col. Kimberly A. Gugliotta will succeed Francis as the Chief of Staff, Virginia Army National Guard and Col. Robert E. McMillin, II, will succeed Gugliotta as the Director of Operations, Plans and Training. All reassignments are effective April 14.

“These officers bring experience and professionalism to their new positions that will continue the extraordinary successes the Virginia National Guard has achieved,” Newman said. “They have already started transitioning into their new positions, and I am confident that these moves will be seamless and continue to advance the positive progression the Virginia National Guard is currently enjoying.”

### 116th STB takes title at Virginia Small Arms Combat Match

The 116th Brigade Special Troops Battalion won the 2008 Virginia National Guard Small Arms Combat Match April 5

at Fort Pickett. The team was comprised of Sgt. 1st Class Jason Lewis, Master Sgt. Kevin Stewart, Sgt. Stephen Adt, and Cadet William Hall.

The team won first place overall and second place in match 306. Lewis earned trophies for being first in match 301, first place in match 321 and first place overall. Adt earned third place overall. Stewart earned second place novice overall.

The team will now go on to represent the Virginia National Guard at the Winston P. Wilson National Shooting Competition in October at Camp Robinson in Little Rock, Ark.

### Training for Soldiers to begin soon on DIMHRS

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard will soon begin training to learn about the new Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System or DIMHRS.

“DIMHRS is coming,” said Lt. Col. Eric Barr, the Virginia National Guard DIMHRS project officer. Barr explained the original fielding date of October 1, 2008 has been pushed back to March 1, 2009 in order to make sure the system is fully capable to support the needs of Soldiers.

The Virginia National Guard is waiting for release of online training materials for Soldiers, but Barr said the target for making the training available to Soldiers is June 1.

Each Virginia Army National Guard Soldier will be required to take eight hours

of online training to understand what they will be able to do with the new system.

For now, the most important thing Soldiers can do is make sure their pay and personnel records are up to date so the most accurate information is migrated into the new DIMHRS system when it comes online.

As more information about the system becomes available, Soldiers will be informed by their chain of command.

DIMHRS is a Congressionally-mandated program focusing on the Army’s personnel and pay functionality.

It will provide the Army with an integrated, multi-component, personnel and pay system. The personnel and pay functionality addresses major deficiencies in the delivery of military personnel and pay services, such as incorrect pay and inaccurate credit of service, which are caused by a myriad of systems with multiple complex interfaces.

DIMHRS will provide each Soldier with a single, comprehensive record of service that will feature a self-service capability that allows the Service Member to update portions of their personal information. Personnel records will be available to Human Resource (HR) professionals, combatant commanders, personnel and pay managers, and other authorized users throughout the Army. This web-based HR tool will be available 24 hours a day.

DIMHRS will result in the largest, fully-integrated HR system in the world and will deliver timely and accurate pay and benefits to all Soldiers and their families.

## Virginia National Guard Federal Deployments

# *	Unit	Where Deployed	Home Town
170	1710th Transportation Company	Capt Atterbury, Ind.	Emporia
170	A Co., E Co., 429th Brigade Support Battalion	Kuwait	South Boston and Roanoke
420	2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry	Kuwait/ Iraq	Various Locations
110	237th Engineer Company	Iraq	West Point
1	192nd Fighter Wing	Guam	Langley Air Force Base
1	JFHQ Virginia Air	Iraq	Sandston
1	203rd RED HORSE Squadron	Kuwait	Langley Air Force Base
47	Various Va. Air Guard Units	Homeland Defense/OIF/OER Support	Various Locations

\* All listings for numbers of Soldiers/Airmen are approximate as of May 12, 2008



# Virginia GuardPost



SERVING THE ARMY AND AIR GUARD OF VIRGINIA

MARCH - APRIL 2008

## On the Cover



A Soldier with A Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team is welcomed home to Charlottesville April 24 after seven months in Iraq. (Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs)

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## Virginia GuardPost

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## Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen mourn one of their own

Courtesy of 4th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait – Several hundred service members filled the chapel here April 15 to pay their last respects to Staff Sgt. Jesse A. Ault, who died of injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device struck his vehicle April 9.

Tears fell from the eyes of Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen who knew Ault, as they gathered to listen to several speakers at the memorial.

“I did not have the opportunity to know Staff Sgt. Ault beyond his firm handshake and smile,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Benoit, the the Joint Logistics Task Force 28 battalion commander.

“His death again reminded me of the great sacrifice we are prepared to make for one another, our families and our country.”

Ault, a native of Dublin, Va., was a husband, father and son. He previously deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom twice.

After being notified that his comrades from a previous deployment were



Photo by Spc. John D. Ortiz, 4th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

**Members of E Company, 429th Forward Support Battalion of the Virginia National Guard salute the memorial centerpiece for Staff Sgt. Jesse A. Ault, April 15.**

mobilizing again, Ault pledged his services once more to the Virginia National Guard to take his wife’s place for deployment.

“One day, Staff Sgt. Ault approached me and asked to be considered for the lead vehicle commander,” said Thompson. “It was apparent with his prior experience in Iraq, determination, ability to navigate, and his desire to be in front; he was [the right person for the job.]”

“He was always there to help members of his platoon and did whatever had to be done to standard and without any hesitation,” said Thompson.

Ault graduated from high school in 1998 and enlisted into the Army Delayed

Entry Program. He finished his active duty tour in 2002 and volunteered to serve with the Virginia National Guard. Ault’s tour was nearly complete when he volunteered to lead his fellow Soldiers again into Iraq.

“It was an honor to have served with him and a privilege to call him a friend,” said Staff Sgt. Jarrett Souza, Ault’s platoon sergeant.

“Though his unit’s time was short, he was doing his duty that night. Because he was there, one of you did not have to be,” said Capt. Erik Grambling, the JLTF 28 battalion chaplain. “Jesse truly laid down his life for another.”

## Fallen guardsman’s high school pays tribute to him

Courtesy of WVEC.com

A fallen guardsman’s high school held a tribute for him April 11.

Just six years ago, 23-year-old Staff Sgt. Jeremiah McNeal graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in Norfolk. The Virginia National Guardsman died near Baghdad, Iraq April 6 when his vehicle hit an improvised explosive device.

His high school wanted to do something to pay tribute to one of its own. So, on April 11, with McNeal’s mother and brother looking on, the JROTC cadets raised the flag and lowered it to half-staff in his honor.

“I think he reflects the positive patriotism that we look for in our individuals, recognizing that their country is giving them something and then want to give something back to it,” said Capt. Bob Gumpright, JROTC senior instructor. “I think that’s the message they’re going to get from this.”



**Staff Sgt. Jeremiah McNeal**

“The legacy should be that students stop and say, this is somebody who is here, who is a local product, who was doing, ultimately, what we have to be prepared to do,” said assistant principal Louis D’Angelo, himself a 19-year member of the Virginia Air National Guard 203rd Red Horse Flight engineering battalion.

The cadets, though just in middle school when McNeal graduated said it was their privilege to render him honors.

“Anyone who’s gone to Booker T., or is from Booker T., is a brother or a sister to all of us,” said JROTC cadet Ewart Fraser. “For him to go overseas to protect our way of living, make sure we’re happy, he’s a hero to us. That’s very honorable.”

ROTC cadet James Robbins said he would call it, “bravery.”

“A lot of people really wouldn’t have volunteered,” he said. “A lot of people would say, that’s a dangerous thing. But, it’s something he had an ambition on doing.”

# General Assembly passes important legislation in 2008

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The 2008 Virginia General Assembly session passed a number of pieces of legislation that either impact or benefit members of the Virginia National Guard and the military in general.

"We had a very fruitful General Assembly session," said Col. Robert H. Simpson, Director of the Joint Staff of the Virginia National Guard. "The Governor and the General Assembly were very supportive of veteran's issues. In particular, Senator Mark R. Herring was especially helpful in shepherding the bill to protect our deployed single parents. Without exception, the members of both houses once again demonstrated their support of the Virginia National Guard."

The key legislation that passed both the House of Delegates and the State Senate are:

**Senate Bill 188:** Creates the Virginia Military Parents Equal Protection Act which limits a court's ability to permanently modify orders regarding the custody or visitation of a child. The bill provides that a parent's deployment for military service shall not, by itself, constitute a material change in circumstances warranting a permanent modification of a custody or visitation order. A court may enter a temporary order modifying custody or visitation based on a parent's deployment.

**House Bill 839 and Senate Bill 520:** Codifies the State Interoperability Executive Committee, which assists the Commonwealth Interoperability Coordinator. These bills allow the Department of Military Affairs to be a significant player in the development of interoperability processes and procedures for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**House Bill 2:** Provides for special license plates for immediate family members of persons who have died in military service to their country; fees. Eliminates the one-time \$10 surcharge imposed for issuance of these plates.

**House Bill 521:** Requires, if it is shown that the owner of a vehicle is an active duty member of the military, the Department of Motor Vehicles to include that information when lienholders inquire into vehicle ownership for the purposes of satisfying a lien. Also, the bill requires persons having a lien to comply with the federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

**House Bill 523:** Provides that any vehicle safety inspection approval sticker issued for any vehicle that is principally garaged outside the Commonwealth while its registered owner is a person in the armed services of the United States will be deemed not to have expired during the period of the owner's official absence from the Commonwealth in the armed services of the United States, regardless of whether such vehicle is operated in or through the Commonwealth during the owner's official absence from the Commonwealth in the armed services of the United States.

**House Bill 524:** Clarifies existing rules for eligibility for in-state tuition. Provides that in determining the domiciliary intent of retired military personnel residing in the Commonwealth at the time of their retirement, or the domiciliary intent of their dependent spouse or children who claim domicile through them, who voluntarily elect to establish Virginia as their permanent residence for domiciliary purposes, the requirement to prove



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

**Virginia Gov. Timothy M. Kaine signs one of several General Assembly bills that will have a direct and indirect impact on Virginia Guard Soldiers, Airmen and their families April 4 at the Virginia War Memorial.**

domiciliary intent in Virginia for one year is waived.

The bill allows the Virginia Adjutant General to establish regulations that extend eligibility of a Virginia National Guard servicemember that has deployed so that they can utilize tuition assistance benefits even though they have less than two years remaining on their contract with the Virginia National Guard.

**House Bill 525:** Exempts from the additional registration fees vehicles being registered in a jurisdiction subject to either the Northern Virginia Transportation or the Hampton Roads Transportation Authority by a member of the armed forces of the United States if the vehicle had previously been registered in a foreign country while the member of the armed forces of the United States was deployed overseas.

**House Bill 469:** Allows the Department of Motor Vehicles to waive the fee that would have otherwise been imposed by the DMV for issuance of a duplicate driver's license if the person subject to the fee is on active duty with the armed forces of the United States outside the boundaries of the United States.

The General Assembly also passed five resolutions :

- **House Joint Resolution 249:** Celebrating the life of Sergeant David Eugene Lambert
- **House Joint Resolution 360:** Commending the Virginia National Guard
- **House Joint Resolution 373:** Celebrating the life of Sergeant Derek Ramond Banks
- **House Joint Resolution 470:** Commending Command Sgt. Maj. Robert W. Huffman
- **Senate Joint Resolution 143:** Commending the Virginia National Guard

# Pickett protects the planet at Earth Day

By Capt. Dayna Rowden  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia Army National Guard environmental programs office hosted the 6th annual Earth Day celebration at the Twin Lakes recreational area on Fort Pickett April 22.

The Virginia Guard partnered with the local community and state agencies for the event to give guests the chance to learn about the ways in which the Army National Guard is working to sustain the environment.

The Army National Guard has a commitment to preserving the natural environment not only to sustain current installation operations but to improve training lands and recreational opportunities, make healthier communities and to forge new partnerships.

One new partnership is the Army Compatible Use Buffer program. The Virginia Army National Guard is partnering with the Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation, Virginia Tech's Conservation management Institute and Conservation partners to encumber land development around Fort Pickett to protect habitat and training without acquiring any new land for Army ownership.

The program allows the Army to contribute funds to the partner's purchase of easements or properties from willing landowners. These partnerships preserve high-value habitat and limit incompatible development in the vicinity of military installations.

"We have to think about the part we play on this Earth," said former NASCAR driver Ward Burton and founder of the Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation. "We all can play a part, no matter how big or small, to make this a better place for our children and their children."

Guests at the Earth Day celebration learned more about the ACUB, the diverse environmental resources at Fort Pickett and ways in which they could help sustain the environment.



Photo by Capt. Dayna Rowden, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**At the Fort Pickett Earth Day celebration April 22, James Daniel, 4, looks on warily as Capt. Jaycee Shaver holds a cornsnake.**

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries collected fish from the Twin Lakes and showed to curious onlookers the variety of aquatic life that inhabit the lake. American eels, large-mouth bass, red-eared brim, blue gills and catfish were on display. The lake was even being stocked with hundreds of catfish for "Fishing is Fun Day" to be held in June.

Bev Boyko, a curator from the Fort Pickett artifact facility, brought archeological items found on Fort Pickett including pre-historic arrowheads, Spanish coins and bottles.

"This is our chance as Soldiers to let our communities know what we do to help the environment," said Capt. Jaycee Shaver, Virginia Army National Guard Environmental officer. "We're all tied together."

Over 200 Earth Day celebrations and observances were scheduled at Army commands and installations around the world.

These efforts help foster increased awareness of environmental progress among Soldiers, Families, installation staff and community neighbors.

"Earth Day is a chance for us to give a voice to something that doesn't have a voice," said Burton.

Shaver reminds Soldiers to consider the impact they make on our environment. Each Soldier can make a difference by thinking about how their actions impact the world we live in.

## ***Financial assistance available in tough economic times***

### **Courtesy of Family Programs**

The Virginia Military Family Relief Fund grants are intended to help our service members and their families defray the costs of living expenses and emergencies that become a challenge when the service member temporarily leaves civilian employment to report for extended active military duty.

In 2006, with support from the Virginia Legislature, Governor Tim Kaine established the Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF).

This is a quick response grant program

to assist military and family members of the Virginia National Guard and the United States Reserve Components who are residents of Virginia, and, who are called to active duty for periods in excess of 90 days in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom and up to 180 days after their return.

This fund is administered by the Adjutant General of Virginia and disbursed by the State Treasurer.

The MFRF assists military families with urgent or emergency needs relating to living expenses including but not limited to food, housing, utilities, and medical

services. Each need is considered on its own merit.

You may contact one of the strategically located Family Assistance Center (FAC) Specialists for assistance-

Abingdon: 276-634-7386

Chatham: 434-432-7228

Manassas: 540-718-2417

Powhatan: 434-294-5764

Roanoke: 540-718-5888

Sandston: 804-380-6343

Staunton: 540-292-2636

Virginia Beach: 757-353-96210

You may also call the Family Assistance Center toll free at 1-800-542-4028.

## Virginia Guard Soldier helps save Iraqi girl's arm

By Maj. Phil Wentworth  
2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry

SOUTHWEST ASIA — Medical care provided by a Virginia Army National Guard Soldier in Iraq was a major factor in preventing an infection that could have cost a young girl her arm. Capt. Jon Brillhart, a physician's assistant assigned to the Virginia National Guard's Portsmouth-based 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry, treated an Iraqi Bedouin girl's injuries in late 2007 and in mid-March was able to evaluate her injuries and determine she had recovered from the burn injury to her arm.

In November 2007, Soldiers from 2nd Squadron came across an Iraqi Bedouin family with a daughter, Fatma, with severe burns to her right arm and hand. From what the Soldiers could learn, the child had evidently fallen into the family's cooking fire and caught herself with her right arm.

The Soldiers contacted Brillhart, a native of Roanoke, and he came to Fatma's



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Peacock, 2nd Sq., 183rd Cav  
**Capt. Jon Brillhart of the Virginia National Guard's 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry treats the burn injury of an Iraqi child in November, 2007.**

location so he could make an assessment. He determined that the child's arm would become infected and have to be removed without immediate treatment. Brillhart's treatment consisted of debridement of the eschar, or removal of the dead skin, a tedious and extremely painful process.

"Fatma never flinched," Brillhart said. "She is an extremely brave little girl."

Unfortunately the family moved on, as Bedouins do, and the unit lost contact with Fatma and her family. For several months the unit had no clue as to what the end result was for her arm. Brillhart said he was afraid that he had not had time to provide adequate treatment and that Fatma's arm would ultimately get infected and have to be removed.

Recently Fatma's family moved back into the unit's area of operation in Iraq and made contact with members of the squadron. Brillhart inspected her injuries, and it was evident that her arm had healed completely. Except for some slight scarring no evidence of the burn injury could be observed.

"I am thankful for the opportunity to positively impact this little girl's life and family, and I know the rest of the Soldiers in the squadron feel the same as I do," Brillhart said.

## Virginia Guard end strength exceeds 8,000 Soldiers

From Staff Reports

The Adjutant General of Virginia was on hand April 29 at the Fort Lee Military Entrance Processing Station to enlist five new Soldiers into the Virginia Army National Guard.

With the five enlistments by Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Virginia Army Guard ended the month of April with more than 8,000 members for the first time since 1994. Danielle Miller, a senior at Kempsville High School in Virginia Beach, was the 8,000th Soldier.

"I chose the National Guard because I always wanted to do something with my life to help others," Miller said. "I also chose the National Guard because I see it as a way to serve my country as well as the Commonwealth of Virginia."

"What you're doing now is something you're doing of your own free will," Newman told the new recruits. "I want to thank you as a citizen of our country and as a citizen of Virginia for joining an organization that's sole mission is to protect our way of life. It's great to have you on board."

The last time the Virginia Army National Guard had more than 8,000 members was in 1994, and the end strength hit a low point in 2005 with just short of 6,900 members. Since that time, the Virginia Guard almost doubled the number of recruiters, reorganized their operation and developed new programs for recruiting Soldiers.

"This important milestone is a result of a tremendous effort



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

**Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, swears in new recruits at the Fort Lee MEPS April 29. Danielle Miller, far right, was the 8,000th Soldier in the Virginia Guard.**

on the part of our recruiters throughout the state, but also speaks highly of the young men and women who are choosing to serve the Commonwealth and our nation during a time of war," Newman said.

"We increased our recruiters from 60 to almost 108," said Capt. John Davis, the production commander for the Virginia Guard's Recruiting and Retention Command.

In addition to having recruiters working out of National Guard Armories throughout the state, the Virginia Guard also has six "store front" recruiting offices in Virginia Beach, Newport News, Chester, Chesterfield, Woodbridge and Mount Vernon.

## 1710th Trans. Co. departs for Camp Atterbury

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia National Guard's 1710th Transportation Company held a departure ceremony March 11 to recognize the start of their federal mobilization for duty in Iraq.

After the ceremony, Soldiers from the company traveled by bus to board planes that will fly them to Camp Atterbury, Ind., where they will train for about six weeks before deploying to Iraq.

In addition to families of the Soldiers, community members packed the Greensville Elementary School auditorium for the send-off ceremony.

The 1710th headquarters is in Richmond and the unit also has elements from Emporia, Va. Detachment 2 of the 1173rd Transportation Company from Onancock will also deploy as part of the 1710th.

The unit's mission in Iraq will be to provide line haul truck support and move critical supplies from logistical support areas out to different forward operating bases in theatre.

The unit is organized with about 170 Soldiers in a headquarters



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

**Family members, friends and members of the local community came out to show their support for the Soldiers of the 1710th Transportation Company as they prepare to mobilize to Iraq.**

section that provides administrative, maintenance and logistical support, and three truck platoons each equipped with 20 M915 tractor trucks and 40 flatbed trailers. The unit's trailers are 40 feet long and can haul up to 64,000 pounds of cargo.

## Defense Force Brigade practices disaster skills

By Maj. Rick McCraw  
Highland Brigade Public Affairs

The Highland Brigade of the Virginia Defense Force (VDF) challenged its troops with a full-blown emergency and disaster exercise April 12-13 at Camp Powhatan in Pulaski County.

The training exercise focused on search and rescue of a simulated downed aircraft, rescue and first aid for a bus accident, and providing assistance to local authorities on dealing with an unruly mob after a natural disaster.

The exercise also was designed to train on skills that supported cooperation with various disaster organizations, communication and the use of the Incident Command System that has been recommended for use by Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Homeland Security.

"The training was comprehensive, outstanding, interesting, and enabled all troops to have an outstanding day," said Brig. Gen. John Eberhardt, deputy division commander of the VDF.

In addition to Eberhardt, who was on site for the entire training event, Maj. Gen. John Taylor, the commander of the VDF,

also visited the training site.

Almost 100 VDF troops participated in the exercise that included triage of simulated crash victims, search and rescue of a downed aircraft that included the evacuation of the injured pilot and passengers as well as civil disturbance training in fictional town of "Eberhardtville."

Local Boy Scouts provided simulated victims and rioters.

While the training focused on the triage, communications, civil disturbance, and security training, VDF troops also for the first time received hands on training with integration of the Incident Command System (ICS).

"The integration of ICS was the training that held the most value," said 1st Sgt. Randal Light, a Bedford resident assigned to A Company, 24th Battalion. "Using the Incident Command System to gain a working knowledge of it (ICS) so when we interact with civilian authorities we can understand what is going on was invaluable."

Given that interoperability was the real mission objective, Highland Brigade assistant training officer Maj. Charles Law also integrated the exercise with the local Emergency Operations Center. The VDF

Tactical Operations Center was in touch with the Regional Hospital Coordination Center in Roanoke during the drill scenarios.

The Virginia Department of Health was also kept informed via special web-based database software that was updated with information dynamically during the drill.

"Lessons learned from past disasters tell us that the inability of various agencies to effectively work together during times of need represent some of our greatest opportunities for improvement," Law said. "These obstacles often arise from standalone systems that do not work together. Drills such as these, where interoperability and the integration and practice with generic command plans like ICS can help us move the VDF towards being a better team player with local and state counterparts."

The Highland Brigade is composed of volunteers from all over southwest Virginia and is organized into three battalions.

Each battalion has a headquarters in local National Guard Armories in the communities of Rocky Mount, Gate City and Lynchburg.

The Highland Brigade Headquarters and the Headquarters Company is located in Roanoke.

## Top Army Guard NCO, Soldier and Young Warrior selected

### From Staff Reports

The Virginia Guard recently recognized the top Soldiers in three different categories: Young Warrior of the Year, Soldier of the Year and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

Staff Sgt. Sharon D. Averhart was selected as NCO of the Year, Pfc. Patrick M. Wise was selected Soldier of the Year and Pfc. Harold A. Good was selected as the Young Warrior of the Year.

Averhart is assigned to Headquarters Detachment, 329th Regional Support Group, Wise is assigned to the 183rd Personnel Services Detachment, 329th Regional Support Group and Good is assigned to Company C, 1st, Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in Christiansburg and is attached to Recruit Sustainment Site # 3 in Roanoke.

The State NCO and Soldier of the Year boards were held at Fort Pickett from March 28- 30.

The first phase of competition was a variety of Warrior Tasks, including first aid, map reading, the Army Physical Fitness Test and Engagement Skills Test (EST) with the M-16 rifle. Both Averhart and Wise scored expert on the EST.

After competing in those tasks, the next phase was an appearance board made up of a panel of command sergeants major. In this phase, Soldiers and NCOs were scored in appearance in Class A uniform, general military knowledge and current events.

Averhart and Wise will represent the state in Region II events, comprised of six states.

The Virginia Army National Guard Recruit Sustainment Program held it's first ever Young Warrior of the Year competition March 28 to 30 at Fort Pickett. Each of the competitors is a new Soldier who has not yet completed their Initial Entry Training.

All Young Warriors are assigned to one of 10 RSP sites where a cadre of Non-Commissioned Officers trains them to be physically fit, mentally ready and administratively correct for their Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training.

In February 2008 each of the 10 RSP sites held a competition to determine who would be the Young Warrior of the Year for that site.

After two levels of competition, Good was selected over 876 other Young Warriors to be the Virginia Army National Guard Young Warrior of the Year for 2008.

All of the competitors at the state level were recognized in front of their command sergeants major by the Virginia National Guard Senior Enlisted Advisor, Command Sgt. Maj. James Rogers.

Good was awarded the Army Achievement Medal and a coin by Rogers.

"These Young Warriors should be well on their way to success in their Initial Entry Training and off to a very good start in their military career," Rogers said.

## 34th CST responds during D.C.-based scenario



Photo by Capt. Dayna Rowden, Virginia Guard PAO

**Staff Sgt. Aaron Mutter, survey team chief with the 34th CST, performs ambient air quality monitoring with a multi-gas/ photoionization detector and gamma spectrometer.**

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

Soldiers and Airmen from the Virginia National Guard 34th Civil Support Team took part in a three day, multi-state training exercise called Capital Spear from March 4-6.

During the exercise, the 34th CST conducted realistic, scenario-driven training exercises that required the team to work jointly with other civilian agencies at several venues in a chemical, biological, radiological, and/or nuclear environment.

Approximately 140 Soldiers and Airmen from National Guard Civil Support Teams from Virginia, Washington DC, Delaware, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan and West Virginia took part in the exercise along with Joint Forces Headquarters National Capital Region, the Department of Energy, Metro Transit Authority and the Naval District of Washington.

The goal of the training was to improve information flow among civil support teams and with civil authorities, test ability of teams to interact and function jointly, implement lessons learned from previous

real-world operations and build on past successes.

In one scenario, the 34th CST "discovered" a terrorist cell torture chamber and improvised explosive device manufacturing site. In another, the team answered a call for help from the Metro Transit Authority after a bomb containing radioactive material exploded on a Metro train.

CST members undergo between 550-750 hours of individual training upon joining a CST.

Once certified, units participate annually in training exercises with the local emergency responder communities they support.

"The individual and collective training that the Soldiers and Airmen in the 34th CST receive prepares them to better protect the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia," said Lt. Col. Bill Mahoney, commander 34th CST.

"The 34th CST has in the past, and will continue in the future, to work with our interagency counterparts," said Mahoney. "Cooperation is the key to success in any mission."

## House of Delegates resolution honors fallen Va. Guard Soldier

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia National Guard Public Affairs

Family and friends of a fallen Virginia National Guard Soldier gathered in West Point, Va., April 21 to honor his memory with a resolution from the Virginia House of Delegates.

The Honorable Phillip A. Hamilton, Delegate of the 93rd District representing the City of Newport News and County of James City, presented the widow and mother of Sgt. Derek R. Banks with the resolution during a ceremony at the West Point High School Auditorium.

Banks was assigned to the West Point-based 237th Engineer Company when his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device Oct. 25, 2007.

He later died of wounds Nov. 14 in San Antonio.

Sgt. David E. Lambert of Cedar Bluff, Va., was also killed in the same attack.

Before presenting the framed resolution to Banks' widow, Sheena Banks, and his mother, Renee Person, Hamilton read the resolution.

"Sgt. Banks' death is a reminder of

the perils faced daily by the thousands of brave Americans who serve in our armed forces overseas and whose devotion to duty places them in harm's way," he read.

The Honorable John Marshall, Virginia Secretary of Public Safety, attended the ceremony on behalf of Virginia Gov. Timothy M. Kaine.

"Today we are here to remember somebody who was a hero, somebody who is a hero," Marshall said. "But it is important to remember that he did not become a hero on Nov. 14, 2007. Rather, Derek Banks became a hero the day he raised his right hand and joined the Virginia National Guard and swore and pledged to put himself in harm's way to protect the citizens of this community, the Commonwealth and our nation."

The Honorable Jim Hudson, the Mayor of West Point, closed the program by sharing how important the service of Soldiers like Banks is to our way of life.

"We also remember Sgt. Banks and

celebrate his life as we go about our daily lives when we assemble, when we speak freely and openly, when we vote, when we attend the church of our choice, these and many other freedoms are so natural to us that we tend to take them for granted," he said.

"We should be ever mindful that these are the freedoms that Sgt. Banks held dear, so dear that he was willing to place himself in harm's way and ultimately to pay the greatest sacrifice. He did this so that the people he loved and the country he loved could continue in the way of freedom and honor."



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Delegate Phillip A. Hamilton presents the Virginia House of Delegates resolution to Sheena Banks and Renee Person April 21 in West Point.**

## General Assembly presents resolutions commending Virginia Guard



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



Photo by CW3 (Ret.) Amir M. Pishdad, Virginia National Guard Association

**Virginia Del. John Cosgrove presented the House of Delegates Joint Resolution at the Virginia Enlisted Association Conference in Portsmouth (left) and Virginia Sen. Mark Herring presented the Senate Joint Resolution commending the Virginia Guard at the Virginia Officer's Association Conference in Fredericksburg (right). Both events took place April 25.**

# Preparing for the worst while providing the best

By Tech. Sgt. Amanda Callahan  
447th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

SATHER AIR BASE, Iraq—Improvised explosive devices, vehicle-borne IEDs, mortars, rockets and small arms fire are among the risks some Airmen, Soldiers and civilians at Sather Air Base and the surrounding Victory Base Complex potentially come in contact with. Add to that the everyday injuries from the high operations tempo of the flightline, sports and fitness injuries and tripping hazards, and it's easy to come to the conclusion that performing medical care in a combat zone can be an overwhelming task at times.

To help alleviate the stress put on the 11 doctors, nurses and medics at the 447th Expeditionary Medical Squadron, Col. Gregory Biernacki, 447th EMEDS commander, has implemented training for the other 11 members of EMEDS who don't have a clinical background.

The medical logistics, administration, public health, dental and bioenvironmental engineering personnel recently went through two weeks of training to teach them basic medical care, such as inserting an IV, assessing injuries, the proper use of a gurney and emergency room standard operating procedures.

"The idea is to get everyone up to a level that they can provide trauma care, stabilization and transport," said Biernacki, a Williamsburg, Va., native and member of the Virginia Air National Guard.

The 447th EMEDS sees about 20 emergency room patients a day, and about 10 to 20 patients with other types of appointments. Although the number of trauma patients varies, the squadron's commander knows it can go from crickets to chaos almost instantly.

"When you get real trauma, it's usually several people coming in," Biernacki explained. "You're getting two or three people with serious injuries. It just depends, just like any emergency room; you could be doing nothing or you could be doing a lot."

During the training, the physicians provide classroom training for the non-clinical personnel, followed by training scenarios, including simulated unexploded ordnance accident response and two



U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Amanda Callahan

**Col. Gregory Biernacki (right), the 447th Expeditionary Medical Squadron commander, leads his medical team as they stabilize a simulated patient during training.**

emergency trauma cases.

"The training has been amazing," said Staff Sgt. Jalayne Powers, a bioenvironmental engineer technician. "I never dreamed I would have the opportunity to put an IV in someone, nor did I think that if given the opportunity I would actually be able to do it. They are great skills to learn on top of just being an overall confidence booster."

The members of EMEDS rotate in and out every two months due to their volunteer status with the Air National Guard, so this training is especially important for continuity and getting new personnel familiar with situations they may see while assigned here.

According to Biernacki, after a new rotation of medical personnel arrives, they conduct trauma training everyday, except Sunday, for the first two weeks.

"The whole idea is, for a lot of people, this is way out of their lane," he said. "For example, I'm a family practitioner, but I haven't had to work in the ER in a long time. So, even though I've done this before, I haven't done it regularly for a long time. You get everybody dusted off and ready to go. We've made our motto here 'preparing for the worst while providing the best.'"

Although he admits that he is not the first to implement training for non-clinical

personnel who work in a clinic in the deployed area of responsibility, Biernacki is confident that the training plan he has devised is one of the most comprehensive.

"We put all our training on discs and will be passing it out at our annual National Guard meeting," he added. "We're trying to make it a benchmark."

The training also provides a key fringe benefit – how to work as a newly formed team. With a staff of mostly Air Guard members, the background of each member varies significantly. When a new member arrives, he meets with his section chief. A sort of gap analysis is done to find out how the new member can add to the EMEDS team.

Biernacki added that teamwork is an important aspect anytime a group that hasn't worked together is brought together.

"Even if we had everybody who worked full-time in an emergency room, I'd still want to see how they function as a team," he said.

Biernacki doesn't see the current training program dying off with the next rotation of medical professionals. He plans to make this a long running curriculum.

"I've already talked with my replacement and the person who's replacing him," he said. "We all agree that it's important to keep."

## Charlottesville, Leesburg

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs



Photos by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Soldiers from C Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team got a warm welcome home with they returned to the Woodstock armory April 26.**



**Friends and family waved flags and held up welcome home signs at the Charlottesville armory April 24 to greet Soldiers from A Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team.**

The first wave of Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team returned to their home armories April 24, 25 and 26 and were met with warm welcome home greetings from family, friends and communities. Soldiers from A Company returned home to Charlottesville April 24, the Leesburg-based C Company returned April 25 and Soldiers from Woodstock's B Company got home April 26.

The Soldiers returned to the United States April 20 and 21 after serving in Iraq and Kuwait since September 2007. The Soldiers flew into the demobilization station of Camp Shelby, Miss., and conducted a number of different administrative activities to transition from active duty back into traditional National Guard status prior to returning back to Virginia. Approximately 150 Soldiers are assigned to each company.

The Honorable John Marshall, Virginia Secretary of Public Safety, and Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, were on hand to welcome the Soldiers back to Virginia at each of the three events.

Marshall, speaking on behalf of Virginia Gov. Timothy M. Kaine, thanked the Soldiers at each welcome home ceremony for their service and courage during their deployments. He also stressed the importance of the support of families that was critical to the Soldiers being able to focus on doing their jobs, and he thanked the families for their service and sacrifice.

Newman shared a common theme at each of the three ceremonies, and he thanked each company for their outstanding service.

"We are thrilled to have you back from a very dangerous and hazardous deployment," Newman said in Leesburg. "We are glad to have you back on Virginia soil."

Newman also stressed the importance of seeking help if the Soldiers or their families experienced any difficulties in the reintegration process.

"As we go forward over the next several months, expect some challenges," he said. "We all adjust to changes in a different way, and you if notice something that is not quite normal, you need to push it back to us. We have resources to help make sure you get back on track."

Each company commander thanked their families for their support, as well as the communities for the care packages and other efforts to help Soldiers during the deployment.

"When you are being thanked for your service, be sure to thank those that have done so much for you," Capt. Giancarlo Brizzi, the C Company Commander, told his Soldiers.

"This is a bittersweet moment for me because while I am returning to my family, I am also leaving a family," Brizzi said. "All of you my brothers and sisters in arms. We accomplished every mission asked of you, well above and beyond the call of duty. I couldn't be prouder of you guys."

During the deployment, 10 Soldiers from the battalion were wounded in action and all returned to duty. There were no fatalities.

"When we set out on the 26th of June, 2007, I had

# Woodstock-area Soldiers return from Iraq



Members of the Virginia Defense Force were on hand at the Leesburg armory April 25 to assist with the unloading of bags for Soldiers from C Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team.

three goals,” said Capt. Chris Samulski, the A Troop Commander. “One was to train them hard, two was to take them over, complete the mission and three was to bring everybody back home alive. We accomplished all three.”

The theme of teamwork and pulling together to accomplish the mission was echoed by each company commander.

“Everybody keeps saying, ‘Thank you, Capt. Sink’ for bringing them home,” said Capt. Jeffrey Sink, the B Company Commander. “What I am going to say is, ‘Thank you, Bravo Company, for bringing me home.’ They did an outstanding job, and it is a credit they deserve.”

All three infantry companies were assigned to convoy escort duty in Iraq and had numerous enemy engagements via improvised explosive devices, small arms fire and complex ambushes.

A and B Companies operated in Al Anbar Province or Multi-National Division West. A Company operated in some of the most dangerous areas in Iraq, to include Fallujah and Ramadi, and B Company operated in hot spots west of the Euphrates River and the far western portions of Iraq near the Syrian border. C Company provided convoy escort in Multi-National Division North and operated in some of the more recent danger areas around Mosul and Kirkuk.

In addition to the three infantry

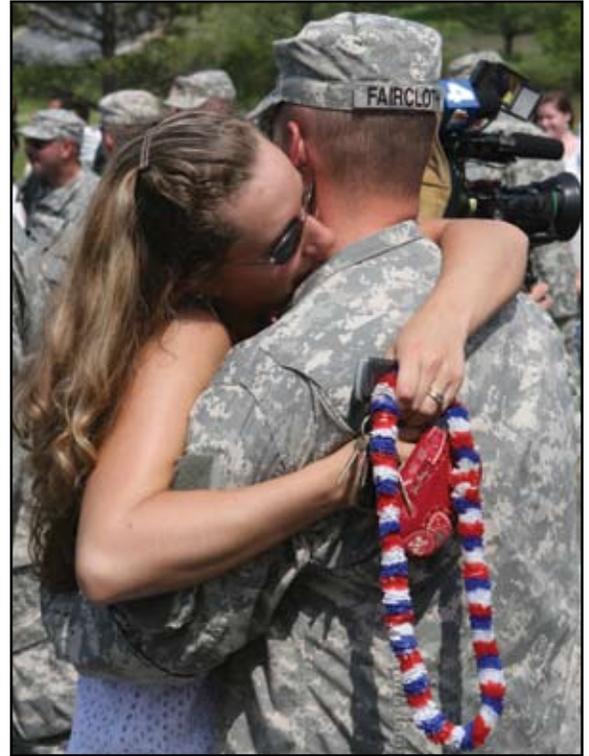
companies, the battalion is made up of approximately 100 Soldiers from the Winchester-based Headquarters Company, approximately 125 Soldiers from Fredericksburg-based D Company, and approximately 125 Soldiers from Fredericksburg-based F Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion. The remaining units were scheduled to return home in early May.

The battalion entered active duty in late June 2007 for mobilization training prior to leaving the United States.

In the span of four months, the unit was able to staff and equip the battalion for the mission, calling upon Soldiers and equipment from 42 different units across the Commonwealth to form the largest battalion task force the Virginia National Guard has mobilized in support of the Global War on Terror. The battalion numbered nearly 800 Soldiers when they embarked upon their mission.

The battalion deployed with its Headquarters Company, three rifle companies, (A, B and C Companies), a special weapons company (D Company) and a forward support company (F Company).

Both A and C companies successfully completed six back-to-back collective training exercises



After seven months in Iraq and Kuwait, the Soldiers of C Company were welcomed home to Leesburg with hugs April 25.

with no rest in between.

Upon departure from mobilization station, Task Force Normandy deployed to both Iraq and Kuwait. The three rifle companies were assigned to convoy escort duty in Iraq. Each rifle company was assigned to a Combat Sustainment Support Battalion and provided convoy escort to an area of operations ranging from 750 to 1,000 square kilometers.



Soldiers from A Company were greeted with personalized signs and warm welcomes on their return to Charlottesville April 24.