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

Soldiers from Troop C, 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry Regiment demonstrate their air, water and land insertion capabilities to employers during a boss lift June 20 at Fort Pickett.



*116th Brigade Combat Team
trains on new equipment
at annual training*

MAY- JUNE 2009



**Guard tests
ability to help
state respond
to hurricanes**

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battalion
dedicates new
howitzers**

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FROM THE TOP



“Irish Rain” exercise tests Virginia National Guard’s emergency response capabilities

I am glad to report that the “Irish Rain” hurricane preparedness exercise conducted by the Virginia National Guard in June was a huge success. This exercise built on the experience we gained supporting the presidential inauguration in January, and the lessons we learned from the four-day event will help us be better prepared to serve the citizens of the commonwealth in the future.

One of the most important aspects of the exercise was the level of coordination between different military components and state agencies that took place. It was a joint exercise that incorporated the Army Guard and the Air Guard, and it was a multi-agency exercise that incorporated some of our state partner agencies like the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, the Virginia State Police and the Virginia Department of Transportation. The Virginia Defense Force also was an key player in the exercise as that organization continues to grow and further solidifies its role as an important part of the Virginia Guard’s response capabilities.

The Virginia Guard’s senior leaders have developed a response plan that uses modular, pre-scripted mission sets that can be applied to all sorts of scenarios from a natural disaster to a security mission. For example, the Incident Response Force mission currently tasked to the Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team was easily modified to provide support to battle wildfires in Roanoke, stand ready during Tropical Storm Hannah and provide security support to the Secret Service during the inauguration.

During “Irish Rain,” we further tested those mission sets for supporting hurricane evacuation and sheltering as well as security operations, and we have demonstrated the concepts work. We were able to identify gaps and seams as you would hope to in this sort of exercise, and we are working now to modify the plans based on



Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.

those lessons learned.

It is absolutely critical that we continue to conduct these sorts of exercises and work

Such a response would require a well-coordinated effort across a host of military and civil agencies, and to do that effectively, we need to plan, train and exercise with all those different agencies.

side by side with our state partner agencies to prepare for future natural disasters, or even worse, a terrorist attack on the National Capitol Region.

Missions like supporting the inauguration or assisting with recovering from a natural disaster are short notice missions where we would have several days notice to prepare.

We would be able to alert our forces, make the necessary modifications to our existing plans and stand by for the actual mission to kick off. In the event of some sort of terrorist attack, we would have no notice and our response would need to be immediate. There is no more challenging mission the Virginia National Guard would face, and we must be ready.

In the event of such an attack, we would need to immediately pull together a joint force that is capable of working seamlessly in a multi-agency environment. The challenge would be significant as all the organizations worked together to evacuate the region, treat the wounded, provide shelter, food and water, and possibly deal with some sort of decontamination situation as well. Such a response would require a well-coordinated effort across a host of military and civil agencies, and to do that effectively, we need to plan, train and exercise with all those different agencies.

Our ability to plan and work side by side with our partner agencies is so important that we have created a new general officer duty position called the director of interagency operations. Brig. Gen. Bob Tucker is the first officer to serve in the job, and he brings experience both as a field Soldier who has commanded at all levels in the Virginia Guard, as well as being mobilized in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He gives the Virginia Guard a senior officer who is well versed in all the different state agency structures and will help put together plans that make sense.

We will further test these plans in 2010 with an even more ambitious exercise that will validate our updated plans and enable us to make further improvements. The citizens of Virginia are counting on us to be there in their time of need, and we must make sure we are doing all we can to be prepared.

News Briefs

Gate City maintenance shop recognized for excellence

Field Maintenance Shop #9 from Gate City received the award for runner-up in the National Guard’s “Small TDA Unit” category at the Combined Logistics Excellence Award program ceremony June 2 in Alexandria.

Sgt. Joseph Bellamy and Sgt. Ellis Lewis served as the shop’s representatives at the ceremony. FMS #9 is led by foreman Chief Warrant Officer Douglas Spitzer and includes 12 Soldiers, mostly non-commissioned officers.

The two Soldiers who attended were also treated to a day in Washington, D.C. with a tour of the Pentagon and VIP seats at the Twilight Tattoo on the National Mall.

The Assistant Adjutant General – Army, Brig. Gen. Stephen Huxtable attended the ceremony and presented Bellamy and Lewis with his

own coins.

The CLEA program combines the Army Award for Maintenance Excellence, the Deployment Excellence Award, and the Supply Excellence Award. Sponsored by the Chief of Staff of the Army, CLEA honors installations’ and units’ excellence in maintenance, deployment and supply operations.

Students complete drug & alcohol education program

The Virginia National Guard paired with the National Center for Prevention and Research Solutions May 2 at the Motor Mile Raceway in Radford to honor the recent graduates of the Stay on Track program, a positive educational curriculum, during the first annual Stay on Track Graduation Event.

Soldiers from the 1173rd Transportation Company, along with personnel from the state’s Counterdrug Task Force, made

Virginia Guard launches social media sites

The Virginia National Guard public affairs office now maintains four social media web sites in an effort to share more content about the activities of the Virginia National Guard. The sites and web addresses are:

Virginia Guard Public Affairs Flickr Photostream
<http://flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao>

Virginia Guard Public Affairs YouTube Channel
<http://www.youtube.com/vanguardpao>

Virginia Guard Public Affairs on Twitter
<http://twitter.com/vanguardpao>

Virginia Guard Public Affairs Facebook Page
<http://www.facebook.com/vanguardpao>

the trip to Radford to provide four five-ton cargo trucks and a color guard to support the Willis Elementary School’s participation in the nation-wide Stay on Track program.

Loaded up with the more than 40 students, the trucks, decorated with 10-foot “Stay on Track” banners, drove around the racetrack for a spotlight parade lap.

The students waved in excitement as the crowd cheered them on and snapped photographs of the students enjoying their victory lap.

The students were driven to the center stage by the Guardsmen, where they were met by the Virginia color guard. They then sang the National Anthem before the races began.

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

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

2nd Annual Recognition Workshop recognizes Virginia volunteers

By Sgt. 1st Class A.J. Coyne
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia National Guard honored 40 Soldiers, Airmen, spouses and other family members who have volunteered their time and efforts for the Virginia Guard at the second annual Volunteer Recognition Workshop May 29-31 in Virginia Beach.

This year's theme was "Virginia Volunteers, Making a Difference" and Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, was on hand to honor and personally thank the volunteers for their efforts over the past year.

The purpose of the workshop was to recognize and thank volunteers "for their selfless sacrifice in sharing their precious time and commitment to the Soldiers and Families of the Virginia National Guard," said Vickie Sais, director of Family Programs. But the workshop also provided them with additional information and training that they can pass on to other volunteers or families.

It's important to recognize the volunteers and let them know that what they do as a volunteer truly makes a difference, according to Sais.

"We rely heavily on them to help us complete the mission and support the families and Soldiers as they endure many unique challenges faced by today's

National Guard," she said.

During the three-day workshop, attendees were treated to a number of speakers and hands-on exercises.

Tim Cusack, a speaker, trainer and corporate entertainer from Michigan opened the workshop by stressing the importance of being thankful, grateful and optimistic in life. He also addressed the importance of asking for help when you need it.

Robin Wilson from the Langley Air Force Base Airmen Family Readiness Center spoke to the attendees about how to "Let Your True Colors Shine At Work." Based on his or her personality, someone can be one of four colors. Wilson had the group answer several questions and then had them break up into their respective colors to see if this matched their own personality. She discussed the importance of each color type and how we need all different types of personalities in order to make an organization succeed.

Jacey Eckhart, author, columnist and military spouse, spoke to the group about the difficulties spouses face when someone deploys and she offered up tips to deal with all of the stress.

"Can you leave your home in five minutes in the event of a national disaster?" That was the question asked by Laurie Long, an emergency specialist and author of "My Life in a Box." Long offered tips on how to get organized and be prepared in case of a hurricane, tornado or other disaster.

Chaplain (Maj.) J.D. Moore, Joint Force Headquarters full-time support chaplain, addressed the importance of taking care of yourself and your family before worrying about other issues.

"It's family first, others second. If you turn it around, you might lose your family," he said. "Take care of them before you try to rescue the world."



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class A.J. Coyne, Va. Guard PAO

Chaplain (Maj.) J.D. Moore, Joint Force Headquarters full-time support chaplain, discussed the importance of taking care of yourself and your family before worrying about other issues.

Other speakers included Keith Martin from Military Child Education Coalition Overview, which is focused on ensuring quality educational opportunities for all military children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition; Lt. Col. Thomas Morgan, the Virginia National Guard Director of Manpower and Personnel, who discussed the Yellow Ribbon Program; and Christina Hice, who reported on the Virginia National Guard Family Programs Advisory Council.

Volunteers are an important part of the Virginia National Guard organization. They provide support and information to the families so that the Soldiers can concentrate on the mission instead of worrying about what is going on at home.

"Whether they are part of the family readiness group, youth volunteers or a member of the State Advisory Council, volunteers all provide invaluable services to the families of the Virginia National Guard," Sais said. "I firmly believe that without their assistance we would not be able to support our families with information and resources they need to become self-reliant and Virginia National Guard Family Programs would not be where it is today."



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

Volunteers Crystal Bayless (middle) and Missy Tipton (right) listen to Laurie Long, an emergency specialist and author of "My Life in a Box," speak at the 2009 Volunteer Recognition Workshop May 29-31 in Virginia Beach.



Virginia GuardPost



SERVING THE ARMY AND AIR GUARD OF VIRGINIA

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On the Cover



Soldiers from the 116th Brigade Combat Team splash through the mud during driver's training in the new M1200 Armored Knight June 17 at Fort Pickett. The Knight is one of many new systems the brigade is fielding during annual training. (Sgt. 1st Class A.J. Coyne, Virginia Guard Public Affairs)

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Virginia Aviators team up for Afghan mission

By Capt. Matt Nowak
Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

Seventeen Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Sandston-based Detachment 26 Operational Support Airlift Command are mobilizing to provide C-12 aviation support in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Enlisted personnel will perform administrative and operational support for the fix-wing detachment. Pilots will fly a C-12 twin turboprop, pressurized passenger and cargo aircraft. Crews will provide direct support to ground troops.

The C-12 aircraft are used in Iraq and Afghanistan for general transport of personnel and equipment. The aircraft can be configured for different missions including high priority resupply, movement of key personnel, courier flights, medical evacuation and patient transport.

Training for the mission placed a heavy emphasis on teamwork.

"Working as a crew is all about teamwork," Maj. John Baynham, the company commander, stressed. "Morale is very high because aviators love to fly."

"We are all excited and looking forward to do our mission and do our part," Sgt. 1st Class Paula Betz, a platoon sergeant explained. "The group has really meshed well."



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

Brig. Gen. Stephen Huxtable, Assistant Adjutant General of Virginia - Army, speaks to Virginia Soldiers about their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

Virginia Soldiers will make up a significant portion of the unit. However, Soldiers from nine different states are also included in the unit.

In an informal departure ceremony, Soldiers huddled around Brig. Gen. Stephen Huxtable, Virginia's Assistant Adjutant General for the Army, as he offered words of encouragement and Virginia's support for their mission.

"Great pilots and great crews take care of each other. I know you're all going to do a heck of a job," exclaimed Huxtable.

Virginians pay tribute to fallen military heroes

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Members of the Virginia National Guard joined fellow citizens of the commonwealth in paying tribute to fallen members of the military in the Virginia Wall of Honor Ceremony May 21 in Richmond and during Memorial Day observations across the state May 25.

"It has been said, and we embrace these words today, that a nation that does not cherish the memory of the loved and lost shall not stand long among the great nations of the world," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, the Adjutant General of Virginia. "We gather today not only as Americans, but especially as Virginians, to remember our loved ones and friends who willingly served our nation and paid the ultimate price to secure the freedoms that we enjoy today."

The Virginia Wall of Honor was dedicated in 2007 to honor Virginians who have died in the Global War on Terrorism and this year's ceremony honored 184

Virginians. The Wall is in the lobby of the Virginia Attorney General at 900 E. Main St. All branches of the Armed Services are represented with heroes from the active forces, reserves, and National Guard.

Virginia Guardsmen across the state took part in Memorial Day ceremonies in their local communities.

Brig. Gen. Stephen Huxtable, Assistant Adjutant General of Virginia - Army, presented a wreath from the Virginia Guard to the American Legion at the Virginia War Memorial on May 25.

Capt. Jonathan Toland, logistics officer for the Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat team, was the guest speaker for the American Legion Post 150's 33rd Veterans' Day Memorial Ceremony at the Sterling Veterans' Memorial site in Sterling, Va.

"We are here today in remembrance of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in service of their country," Toland said. "It's all too easy to treat Memorial Day as the first three-day weekend of the summer vacation season, a great day to fire up the

grill, or a long-awaited day at the beach, all things I have been guilty of in the past. But the simple act of your being here, taking time to attend this service, shows that this day is about more, and for this you have my gratitude."

The Wall of Honor brought together military units from across Virginia. Representatives from the Active, Reserve and National Guard components of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard took turns reading all the names of the fallen Virginians.

The Wall is 38.5 feet long and features a framed Virginia State flag, flown in Iraq by Cpl. Jonathan Bowling of Martinsville. Bowling served with the United States Marine Corps Reserve. He was killed in Al-anbar Province, Iraq on Jan. 26, 2005, and the flag was donated to the Wall of Honor by his father, Virginia State Police Master Trooper Darrell Bowling of Martinsville. In addition, a pair of boots, and a rifle with helmet on top, stands in front of a Virginia and American flag, in a traditional military tribute to the fallen.

Guard tests ability to help state respond to hurricanes

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

Members of the Virginia Air National Guard took, not to the skies, but to their computers during the Virginia Department of Military Affairs' hurricane preparation and response exercise held June 15-19 at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach.

Dozens of Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers, Virginia Air National Guard Airmen and members of the Virginia Defense Force gathered for Irish Rain - a large hurricane-response simulation exercise - designed to train and test the groups' planning, management, communications, coordination and interoperability capabilities.

Members of the 192nd Fighter Wing, more widely known as the first Air National Guard unit to fly the Air Force's F-22 Raptor, brought a new and increasingly important disaster-management and -response capability to the exercise: Incident Awareness.

"Incident Awareness involves gathering, researching and fact checking information from a variety of sources; analyzing that information and fusing it into a cohesive, useful product," explained Staff Sgt. Lynn Even, 192nd Imaging Analyst, for use by the Department of Military Affairs' Joint Operations Center and for civilian agencies under the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

"An exercise like this allows us to work directly with JOC (Joint Operations Center) staff members to determine what information we can provide that would be beneficial for them, what analysis is helpful and the best formats for presenting that information," remarked Lt. Col. Steve Swetnam, Virginia ANG Headquarters. "An exercise like this also helps us work through hardware and software connectivity issues.

"This was the first time this capability has been used in a Virginia National Guard exercise," Swetnam added. "In the wake of Hurricane Katrina and subsequent hurricanes like Rita and Gustav that ravaged Gulf Coast areas, the need for this capability has become a growing priority across the nation. This marks the first time that Incident Awareness is being used to support a civil mission in Virginia."

These 192nd Intelligence Squadron specialists normally provide military commanders with intelligence, imaging and analysis to support U.S. military operations in locations such as Southwest Asia.

However, in specific situations such as natural disasters, their expertise can be directed to gather, analyze and provide



Photo courtesy of Virginia Air National Guard Public Affairs

During the hurricane response exercise, 192nd Intelligence Squadron members who worked in the geographically separated location got to spend time in the Joint Operations Center so they could see how their information was being used. Here Staff Sgt. Jennilee Gergets, imagery analyst, goes over information with Capt. David Lands, 192nd Intel. Squadron director of operations, while Sr. Airman Michael Green, multi-source analyst, monitors information coming into the JOC.

background and near real-time information and that can help all levels of disaster preparation and response activities.

Having accurate information and insightful assessments of evacuation routes, restrictions on vehicle movement, access to medical facilities and damaged public infrastructure can help commanders and coordinators make decisions more quickly. And it helps disaster responders on the ground, complete missions more quickly and safely.

In some cases they can check out unsubstantiated reports on events like stranded evacuees, flooding, fires and impassable roads and bridges.

This capability, normally used in combat arenas, has the potential to be of invaluable assistance on the homefront to provide near-real-time assessments to state agencies and leaders on a full range of crisis response scenarios: wildfires, floods, hurricanes, terrorist attacks, etc.

For this exercise, teams of intelligence analysts and communications and information technology technicians from the 192nd's Intelligence Squadron set up shop in the Department of Military Affairs Joint Operations Center and in a geographically separated location.

Initially their task was to provide the JOC with "pre-landfall" information and analysis.

After the hurricane made landfall, they worked on search and recovery assessments and initial damage assessments - to help military and civilian disaster responders as they conducted rescue and recovery efforts.

Air Guard HQ dedicated to respected leader and aviator

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

The Virginia National Guard dedicated its Air Guard Headquarters facility, located at the Richmond International Airport, in the memory of a highly-regarded and long-serving 192nd Fighter Wing leader and aviator on May 19.

Nearly 150 family members, friends, and members and leadership of the Virginia Army and Air National Guard gathered to reflect on the life, accomplishments and legacy of Col. John R. Shurley, III, and to dedicate the Virginia Air National Guard headquarters building in his honor.

The key speaker at the dedication was Virginia's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Robert Newman. He said, in part: "...For 50 years the 192nd Fighter Wing occupied these buildings."

Due to actions that re-aligned the 192nd Fighter Wing with the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley Air Force Base three years ago, the unit and its personnel have traveled 70 miles to the east to continue their service to Virginia and our country – now flying America's most advanced fighter, the F-22 Raptor.

"As with any great organization, a sense of our past has been a long held tradition," Newman said. "So it is understandable that while we have changed the jets we fly and the location from which we fly them, we have not forgotten those with whom we served in the past, and that we would seek to honor that service and the friendships that were born from our time together here. And preserving that legacy is what brings us here today."

"With the support of the Capital Region Airport Commission, the Virginia National Guard has reclaimed four buildings here at the Guard base to serve our state mission as the homeland security forces for the Commonwealth," Newman said.

"This building, along with three others close by, will allow the Virginia Guard to preposition forces and equipment that will more quickly enable the Guard to respond to emergencies in Hampton Roads or the National Capital Region of Northern

Virginia.

"The anchor of these buildings is the former wing headquarters building that we dedicate today. This building has now become the headquarters for the Virginia Air Guard and other supporting organizations," Newman added. "Because of the significance of this building to the Virginia National Guard's new mission, I feel that it is important to dedicate it to one of our Air Guard leaders from the recent past who's service was an example that all of us should follow."

"That leader was a decorated war veteran, pilot, commander and friend: Col. John Shurley. I first met John shortly after I signed in to the 149th Fighter Squadron in 1982. He was the squadron commander



Photos by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs
Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, and Page Shurley, widow of Col. John R. Shurley, III, unveil the memorial plaque May 19 dedicating the Virginia Air Guard Headquarters to the memory of Col. Shurley.

and was working hard to bring the 149th Fighter Squadron up to the demanding Air Force standards of the 1980s. He was making a great impact on the squadron and its pilots who were flying the newly assigned A-7 Corsair. John had the attitude that realistic training was essential if we were to be ready to defend our country



A plaque honoring the memory of Col. John R. Shurley, III was unveiled during the dedication ceremony held May 19.

from our enemies.

"I think that if John were with us today, he would be humbled, yet proud that his service was recognized by those with whom he served and that the building from which he led the support group, will continue to serve Virginia in its important new missions."

Chaplain support team departs for mobilization

By Capt. Matt Nowak
Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

In a building packed with family, friends and dignitaries, the Virginia National Guard's 134th Chaplain Support Team participated in a departure ceremony May 3 at Fort Pickett.

Organized in 2006 and one of two five-person chaplain detachment teams in the National Guard, the 134th CST is the first National Guard unit of its kind to deploy into a combat zone.

For this mission, four Soldiers from the team will deploy to Kuwait for a year, with the possibility of additional missions in the Central Command Area of Operations. The team includes two chaplains and two chaplain assistants.

Del. Vivian Watts from the 39th District in Fairfax County, Mayor Cathy Lawson of Martinsville, Maj. Gen Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, Brig. Gen. Stephen Huxtable, the Assistant Adjutant General for Army, and retired Chaplain (Brig. Gen.) Doug Lee attended the departure ceremony along with friends, family and fellow members of the Virginia National Guard.

"We are thankful for this opportunity to represent the commonwealth and the Virginia National Guard," Chaplain (Lt. Col.) David Gilleran explained.

As the command chaplain, Gilleran will support the 1st Theater Support Command. Along with advising commanders on religious matters, he expects to backfill other chaplains who are in the process of rotating out of theater or taking leave.

Joining Gilleran is Chaplain (Capt.) Carl Hagwood, who will be performing Unit Ministry Team duties in a chapel setting.

Both chaplains are complemented with chaplain's assistants.

Sgt. 1st Class Bum Kim from Annandale, Va., will serve as Gilleran's assistant and the noncommissioned officer in charge of the section.

Rounding out the team is Hagwood's assistant Spc. Lennie Dunlop from Gate City, Va.

183rd RTI and 116th BCT conduct change of command ceremonies



Photo by Staff Sgt. Lauren Martin, Virginia JFHQ

Col. Walt Mercer hands the colors of the 183rd Regional Training Institute to Brig. Gen. Stephen Huxtable, symbolizing the relinquishment of his command with the 183rd RTI. Huxtable will then pass the colors on to the RTI's new commander Col. Marie Mahoney to continue the "passing of the colors" tradition. The ceremony took place June 28 at Fort Pickett. Mercer will become a resident student at the U.S. Army War College's in Carlisle, Pa. Mahoney is leaving her position as the director of fiscal operations to command the RTI.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Col. Blake Ortner, center, receives the colors of the 116th Brigade Combat Team from Brig. Gen. Stephen Huxtable, symbolizing his assumption of command of the 116th BCT. The 116th Brigade Combat Team conducted a change of command ceremony between the outgoing commander, Col. William Phillips, and the incoming commander, Col. Blake Ortner, June 21 at the Fort Pickett Stadium. The 116th BCT is the largest command in the Virginia Army National Guard with more than 3,500 Soldiers serving in armories throughout the state.

116th BCT gets familiar with new equipment at annual training

By Sgt. 1st Class A.J. Coyne
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

When the Soldiers of the 116th Brigade Combat Team conducted annual training at Fort Pickett in June, they trained on and prepared to field more than a dozen new systems designed to increase their efficiency and effectiveness both in and out of combat.

"We're fielding new weapons, equipment and command and control systems," said Lt. Col. Allan Carter, director of operations, plans and training for the 116th Brigade Combat Team. "We've received the latest, most sophisticated versions of Army equipment."

The 116th Brigade Combat Team was chosen to receive the new systems as part of the Army Chief of Staff's Executive Order. According to an Army News story, the Army reset program is one of Gen. George W. Casey Jr.'s four imperatives, and it costs an average of \$16 billion to reset more than 20 brigades each year.

The program, which began more than three years ago, is responsible for recapitalizing or replacing more than 300,000 pieces of equipment.

The program applies to both active

duty and reserve component units. One of its goals is to get new equipment to Soldiers within six months of a unit's return, that way they'll have plenty of time to familiarize themselves with the equipment and train on it before beginning another deployment.

Among the new equipment the brigade received are vehicles, weapons and communication systems.

Among the new vehicles the 116th is fielding are four M1200 Armored Knights, wheeled, armored vehicles that carry the equipment needed to quickly bring in guided bombs, missiles and shells.

The brigade also increased its haul and lift capability thanks to a large quantity of medium tactical vehicles, according to Carter.

Because of recent deployments overseas, many Soldiers throughout the brigade are familiar with many of the Army's newest command and control systems, which are already in use in combat zones. But now they are getting reacquainted with the systems as their units are fielding them here.

The 116th BCT is now fielding a number of components for the Army Battle Command System, a digital command,



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

A Soldier from the 116th Brigade Combat Team trains on a Javelin anti-tank missile. A shoulder-fired weapon, the Javelin has a range of more than 2,500 meters.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class A.J. Coyne, Va. Guard PAO

Spc. Al Bowker, a Soldier with Company A, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team, trains on a new Handheld Standoff Mine Detection System during annual training.

control, communications, computers and intelligence system for the battlefield Army.

But the new systems aren't just important in a combat situation. New water purifying systems received by Company A, 429th Brigade Support Battalion could be used in a domestic capacity should a natural disaster require the Guard to provide potable water to Virginia residents.

In addition to providing information on the battlefield, both Ravens and Shadows, two new unmanned aerial vehicle systems the 116th BCT is now fielding, can also be used to provide information from the air in the event of a hurricane or other natural disaster.

"All of this equipment is federally funded but we can already see how it can help us perform our state mission too," Carter said.

The majority of the new equipment arrived in time for annual training, according to Carter. But some command and control systems won't arrive until later in the year.

The 116th is scheduled to completely finish fielding the new systems by March 2010.

Virginia Guard conducts hurricane preparedness exercise

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia National Guard conducted a four-day hurricane preparedness exercise June 15 - 18 at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach with the goal of improving the Virginia Guard's ability to plan and carry out domestic operations in conjunction with state agencies and local first responders. This particular exercise simulated a major hurricane hitting the Hampton Roads area.

"The world has changed since 9-11 and Hurricane Katrina, and our citizens expect the National Guard to be ready to respond in a time of crisis," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. "The only way we can be properly prepared to respond in a time of need is to plan, train and exercise our procedures in coordination with our state partner agencies. This exercise is an important part of that preparation."

Approximately 500 Soldiers, Airmen and members of the Virginia Defense Force took part in the exercise.

In an incident response situation, 91st Troop Command becomes Joint Task Force 91 and provides command and control for Virginia Guard units taking part in the mission.

The Fort Pickett-based 183rd Regional Training Institute also took part in the exercise and worked on expanding the Joint Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration plan to bring in units from other states during an emergency.

"The Joint Staff and JTF-91 are the primary training audiences, but I want this exercise to include the participation, notional or live, of all necessary elements of the Joint Staff in a way that replicates emergency conditions as accurately as possible," Newman said at the start of the exercise. "The focus of the staff will be on operations and the integration of different staff elements as well as the Virginia Defense Force. We hope to identify equipment, personnel and operational shortfalls related to interaction with joint and interagency organizations so we are better prepared to respond to the real thing."

"Even though this training scenario is based on a hurricane



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers assigned to the Virginia National Guard review simulated requests for assistance being funneled into the Virginia Guard's Joint Operations Center.

response, the lessons we learn here would apply to any kind of mission we might receive," said Col. Rob McMillin, joint operations officer for the Virginia Guard.

The exercise tested the procedures the Guard uses to respond to requests for assistance that are funneled through the Virginia Department of Emergency Management into the Virginia Guard's Joint Operations Center.

Representatives from VDEM as well as the Virginia State Police were involved with the exercise along with other key agencies like the Virginia Department of Transportation are being simulated by the exercise control agency.

McMillin said that in a hurricane response situation the Guard would be prepared to execute a number of preplanned missions such as assisting the Virginia State Police if the Governor of Virginia authorized lane reversal for Interstate 64 to evacuate citizens from the Hampton Roads area and assist in the operation of the shelters for those citizens once they were evacuated. The Guard has also planned to conduct security operations to help the State Police secure areas damaged by the storm, and Virginia Guard personnel could also assist with debris removal and road clearance.

For JTF-91, this was the first time the organization was able to work together as a combined staff. As 91st Troop Command, the headquarters provides command and control for a number of different units throughout Virginia, but providing command and control for a large-scale incident response is a new mission.

"The exercise has gone very well for us," said Col. Steve Scott, commander of JTF-91. "Since we have never worked together in this type of organization, there were a number of things for us to learn. While we still have areas we need to work on, after this exercise I am confident we could execute this mission if we needed to."

Not all of the staff positions needed for the JTF-91 position exist in the 91st Troop Command organization, so the unit integrated members of the Virginia Defense Force into staff positions like chaplain, communications officer, medical officer and incident awareness officer.

"The Virginia Defense Force has been invaluable," Scott said. "They bring a wealth of experience with them, along with great enthusiasm and energy for the mission."

In a large-scale incident response, National Guard units from other states could be brought in to assist with recovery operations or other missions.

The 183rd RTI started the exercise with an operations plan for the JRSOI mission, and they were able to revise that plan based on lessons learned as the exercise progress, said Lt. Col. Colt Puryear, operations officer for the 183rd RTI.

"When a unit arrives in Virginia, we need to immediately provide assistance to fix, feed and fuel them in order to get them into the mission as quickly as possible," Puryear said.

In order to do that, the staff of the 183rd developed a plan to establish reception points at truck stops along major road intersections along probable routes of entry into Virginia.

As part of the exercise, the 183rd simulated receiving more than 850 Soldiers into Virginia to assist with hurricane recovery operations.

229th Chemical Company seeks zero visibility at AT

By Sgt. 1st Class A.J. Coyne
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

As part of their two-week annual training, Soldiers from the Roanoke-based 229th Chemical Company laid down a large blanket of fog June 15 during mobile smoke operations at Fort Pickett.

“Smoke is used to obscure your movements or whatever operation you don’t want the enemy to have eyes on,” said Capt. Chris Troesh, commander of the 229th Chemical Company.

During the training scenario, his Soldiers had to lay down a blanket of smoke with less than 50 meters of visibility to keep enemy forces from observing a friendly airfield. They accomplished this by conducting both static smoke operations and mobile smoke operations using 12 humvees loaded with M56 Smoke Generators.

The M56 Smoke Generator is a large-area smoke generator system that is mounted on the humvee and can obscure everything from airfields and bridges to convoys and troop movements.

To create the smoke, vegetable oil is burned at a high temperature so it creates a big white cloud. The generator can shoot out nearly three times as much smoke as the unit’s old smoke machines could, according to Troesh.

“The difficulty with smoke is that it’s all weather related,” said



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

A humvee from the 229th Chemical Company releases a cloud of smoke during mobile smoke operations June 15 at Fort Pickett.

Troesh. “Smoke operations in the chemical corps are the hardest thing you can do because it’s all art. The only science to it is how much oil you’re burning or how much diesel you’re burning.”

This was the first opportunity the 229th has had to employ the equipment in a tactical environment, according to Lt. Col. Doug Messner, commander of the 1030th Transportation Battalion. The unit received the equipment following last year’s annual training and has been gaining familiarity with it throughout the year, he said.

MTC’s ‘Mullins Corner’ rededicated

By Sgt. 1st Class Anne B. Burnley
MTC Public Affairs

Soldiers and civilians gathered at the Virginia Army National Guard Maneuver Training Center, Fort Pickett on the 65th anniversary of D-Day to rededicate “Mullins Corner,” the historical marker honoring Lt. Col. Thornton Loquette Mullins.

Mullins, commander of the 111th Field Artillery Battalion, of Richmond, Va., died leading Soldiers into battle on Omaha Beach, June 6, 1944.

Col. Thomas P. Wilkinson, commander of the Maneuver Training Center remarked, “President John F. Kennedy once said, ‘A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it remembers.’ Fort Pickett has a proud and distinguished history. I am pleased that we continue that history today by rededicating this site to the memory of Lt. Col. Thornton L. Mullins.”

Brig. Gen. Stephen L. Huxtable, Assistant Adjutant General, Army, Col. Blake C. Ortner, incoming commander

of the 116th Brigade Combat Team, Lt. Col. Todd H. Hubbard, commander of the 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery, and Wilkinson stood together and unveiled the new historical marker, which reads:

“Mullins Corner,” named in honor of Lieutenant Colonel Thornton L. Mullins, Distinguished Service Cross. 111th Field Artillery Battalion, 29th Infantry Division, Killed in action, Omaha Beach, Normandy, France, June 6, 1944.”

Mullins is the only member of the Virginia Army National Guard to receive the Distinguished Service Cross.

In 1952, the Commonwealth of Virginia recognized Mullins’ selfless service with its highest award - the posthumous Virginia National Guard Virginia Distinguished Service Medal.

While conducting annual training in 1953, the 111th Field Artillery dedicated Artillery Firing Point 52 Alpha, at the corner of Camp Pickett’s Range and River Roads to Mullins. Over the course of more than 50 years, the elements took a toll on the original historical marker, leading to its replacement and rededication in 2009.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Anne B. Burnley, Maneuver Training Center Public Affairs

Spc. James P. Burke, of Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team, from Lynchburg, Va., assumes the exact pose recorded in a 1953 archival photo of a Soldier playing “Taps” during the first “Mullins Corner” Ceremony.

34th CST, Tajiks exchange emergency response info

Maj. John W. Lewis
Joint Task Force for Civil Support

Members of the Virginia National Guard’s 34th Civil Support Team traveled to Dushanbe, Tajikistan on June 20 to participate in the Virginia National Guard State Partnership Program military exchange with Tajikistan.

This was the fifth visit since 2004 for members of the 34th CST to exchange information with the Tajik Ministry of Defense emergency response team and the Committee for Emergency Services response team.

The purpose of the exchange was to share information and knowledge regarding disaster preparedness with the goal of

helping the Tajik government prepare to respond to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive incidents within the country that are military, terrorist or natural-disaster related.

The team was comprised of four Virginia National Guard members, including Capt. Chris Troesh, the 34th CST deputy commander, Staff Sgt. Ann Olson, the CST survey team lead, and Sgt. Winston Obermuller, a survey team member.

The SPP provides an exciting opportunity for Soldiers of both nations to learn about each other’s military and culture.

The Tajik officers share the excitement of the Virginia Guardsmen and are eager to learn about new and different ways to perform their mission of responding to natural and man-made disasters.

Soldiers use combat medical knowledge to provide aid

By Capt. Chris Joyner
91st Troop Command Public Affairs

Two Virginia National Guard Soldiers were recognized in Virginia Beach June 15 for using their combat life saving skills to save a Virginia girl suffering a medical emergency at a restaurant in Richmond June 11. The Soldiers diagnosed and treated a young girl for symptoms of heat stroke and stabilized her until Emergency Medical Technicians arrived on the scene.

Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, the Adjutant General of Virginia, presented Virginia Bronze Stars to Spc. Ronald G Leftwich Jr. of Headquarters Detachment, 91st Troop Comand and Staff Sgt. Larry D. Pleasants of Rear Detachment Headquarters Company, 276th Engineer Battalion, during a Virginia Guard training exercise.

The two Soldiers were dining near Midlothian when they witnessed a female fall and begin labored breathing. According to Pleasants, people immediately came to the female’s aid but had little idea what to do. Pleasants approached the female and asked if he could help and was immediately told yes by the girl’s mother.

“The first thing we did was assess her condition,” said Pleasants. “Leftwich helped me with crowd control getting people away so we could work quickly.”

Pleasants explained in a report to his military superiors that he immediately noticed the female’s skin was clammy and her heart rate was low.

“I checked her capillary refill and noticed that her skin was not responding with rapid color return after squeezing her hand. This gave me the first indication that



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, the Adjutant General of Virginia, presents the Virginia Bronze Star to Spc. Ronald G Leftwich Jr. of Midlothian June 15.

the girl was suffering from some type of heat injury,” said Pleasants.

Pleasants and Leftwich are both Combat Lifesavers in the Army National Guard and have received advanced life saving training designed for combat scenarios.

“Heat injuries are common in the Army, and we could see signs in the injured girl similar to that of other situations we’ve seen in the Army,” said Leftwich.

Pleasants observed the girl’s breathing and heart rate and was able to determine the girl was suffering from heat stroke, a life threatening condition if untreated.

“We recognized the most important thing was to reduce her body core

temperature and get fluids in her to combat dehydration,” said Pleasants. Ice bags were quickly placed under the armpits of the girl to get the ice closest to her body’s core.

Once medical personnel arrived, they rapidly continued with advanced care starting an IV to provide badly needed fluids to the injured girl, and the injured was taken to an area hospital.

The name of the girl is not available.

Leftwich and Pleasants both served in Iraq, and Pleasants has deployed twice to Iraq.

“[In Iraq] we had plenty of experience with heat injuries so we knew exactly what to do,” added Pleasants.

1710th Transportation Company conducts Freedom Salute

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers of the 1710th Transportation Company, 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group, joined friends and family to celebrate their homecoming during a Freedom Salute ceremony at the Golden Leaf Commons in Emporia June 14 in honor of the unit's service in Iraq.

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

During the ceremony, special guest speaker John W. Marshall, Virginia Secretary of Public Safety, spoke on the importance of recognizing the hard work these Soldiers perform not just during combat missions abroad, but also to the important role Guardsmen play domestically.

"We should never take for granted our Virginia National Guard and all that you do to keep us safe here across the commonwealth and when called upon across the nation and around the world," said Marshall. "Not only are you Virginia heroes; you are American heroes."

The Freedom Salute was also an opportunity to thank the families and the friends of these Virginia National Guard Soldiers for all the hard work and sacrifices they had to make while their loved ones were away.

"They can't do their job without you doing your jobs," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, the Adjutant General of Virginia, in regards to the family members in attendance. "We recognize it's often times tougher on you than it is on them. This is one unit, one family together."

Following the Freedom Salute, the 1710th awarded 14 Bronze Stars, four Meritorious Service Medals, 123 Army Commendation Medals and two Army Achievement Medals for their outstanding efforts supporting the Global War on Terrorism.

While in Iraq the unit provided medium lift transportation that moved critical supplies from logistical support areas out to different forward operating bases, traveling supply routes all through Iraq. The 1710th conducted more than 75 missions, traveled more than 900,000 miles and was evaluated as the best of nine companies in the battalion. The unit had no Soldiers wounded or killed in action.

The 1710th was organized with about 180 Soldiers in a headquarters section that provided administrative, maintenance and logistical support, and three truck platoons



Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard PAO
Sgt. 1st Class Ravon Canaday from Williamsburg proudly displays his Bronze Star Medal during the 1710th Transportation Company's Freedom Salute in Emporia, Va., June 14.

each equipped with 20 M915A3 tractor trucks and 40 flatbed trailers. The trailers are 40 feet long and can haul up to 64,000 pounds of cargo.

Soldiers from the Individual Ready Reserve augmented the company during the mobilization to bring to full strength.

The 1710th conducted a departure ceremony in Emporia March 11, 2008 to recognize the start of their federal mobilization for duty in Iraq.

They spent about six weeks training at Camp Atterbury, Ind., before deploying to Iraq.

New commander takes reins of 203rd RED HORSE

During a change-of-command ceremony June 6 at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Lt. Col. Peter S. Garner, right, took the reins of the Virginia Air National Guard's 203rd Red Horse Squadron, a rapid-response engineering unit, from Lt. Col. Scott A. Hill, left.

Senior Virginia Air Guard leadership, former unit commanders and past and current unit members and family members attended the ceremony that was officiated by Brig. Gen. Charles L. Smith, of Headquarters, Virginia Air National Guard, center.

Garner is the fifth commander of the 24-year-old unit Air National Guard engineering unit. He previously served as the 203rd's deputy commander. He is also the unit's fulltime director of operations.

Hill, who served as commander for the last two years, has been tapped to become a squadron commander within the 192d Fighter Wing.



Photo by Capt. Craig Carper, 192nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Virginia Guard thanks Short Pump Elementary for Afghanistan donations

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia National Guard recognized Short Pump Elementary School in Richmond May 29 for its efforts in gathering used sporting goods to send to children in Afghanistan.

Leaders from the Virginia Army National Guard and the Richmond-based 276th Engineer Battalion greeted students as they arrived at school to say "thank you" for their efforts and also presented certificates of appreciation to the school.

"We are so proud of what Short Pump Elementary has done to help support families in a war-torn country and very proud of the 276th Engineer Battalion to play a significant role in delivery of the clothing and sporting equipment to help improve the quality of life for the families living in the 276th Engineers area of operations," said Brig. Gen. Stephen L. Huxtable, Assistant Adjutant General of Virginia for Army.

"We are very happy to have the Virginia

National Guard here today," said Melissa Passehl, principal of Short Pump Elementary School.

Passehl said the school has been working all year on community service projects with their PTA and told the students "What a great opportunity to finish with this one so you understand and know what impact you have not only in Richmond, but across the entire world."

Maj. Chris Doss, the operations officer for the 276th Engineer Battalion, contacted the principal and Parent Teacher Association from Short Pump in late 2008 to let them know about his pending deployment to Afghanistan.

The school conducted a similar project in 2004 when Doss was deployed to Iraq, and students donated over 30 boxes of school supplies that were handed out to two schools in Tal Afar, Iraq.

Doss said the school came through again, this time with donations of used sporting goods like soccer balls, soccer and football jerseys, baseballs, footballs, soccer shorts and socks.

In addition to this particular project, Doss said the school has always shown great support to deployed Soldiers by sending letters, care packages and pictures.

Doss has a daughter who currently attends Short Pump Elementary.

In early April, Doss visited the villages Margah and Balay Kalay in the East



Courtesy photo

An Afghan child displays a football jersey donated by Short Pump Elementary School in early April. The school collected soccer balls, baseballs, footballs, soccer and football jerseys, soccer shorts and socks for the children of Afghanistan. Maj. Chris Doss, the operations officer for 276th Engineer Battalion (left), handed the donations out in the villages of Margah and Balay Kalay in the East Paktika province.

Paktika province to deliver the 13 large boxes of donated equipment and athletic clothing.

"We were mobbed by the children, but there were lots of smiles and much appreciation from both the adults and the children," Doss said. "We paired up with the Afghan National Army for our visits and talked with the village elders about how conditions were in their village and what the ANA and U.S. forces could do to help."

During the visit, Doss said the locals noticed the unit's medic and asked for medical assistance.

"There was a little child, about 18-20 months, who had injured his hand pretty badly, so our medic cleaned up his hand, re-wrapped it in clean gauze, and gave the little child a Blow-Pop - that was all it took to gain a smile," Doss said.

"Overall it was a great day and much thanks goes to the students at Short Pump Elementary for making it possible," he said. "The children of Afghanistan do not lead easy lives and to have received these gifts from fellow children more than 7,100 miles away is simply amazing."

About 200 Soldiers from the 276th Engineer Battalion mobilized for federal active duty in early December 2008 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Senior leaders from the Virginia National Guard and the Richmond-based 276th Engineer Battalion presented certificates of appreciation to Short Pump Elementary School in Richmond May 29 for their efforts in gathering used sporting goods to send to children in Afghanistan. Front row from left to right, 1st Lt. Bennie Urban, Melissa Passehl and Brig. Gen. Steve Huxtable. Back row from left to right, Maj. David Kaulfers and Master Sgt. Michael Higgins.

Artillery battalion dedicates new howitzers at AT

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

On the field of the Fort Pickett stadium, the Soldiers of the Virginia Army National Guard's Hampton-based 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment held a dedication ceremony May 1 to christen their new howitzers as a culmination of the unit's two-week annual training.

In a traditional ceremony in front of family members and distinguished guests, the artillerymen of the Richmond-based Battery A and Norfolk-based Battery A broke bottles over the barrels of their 16 new artillery pieces as the guns were given their new names.

With names like "Apocalypse" and "Bad Boy," all names beginning with an A or B for each battery respectively, the guns were welcomed to the unit.

The unit, which had not fired in two years due to its state mission as the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, High Yield Explosive Emergency Response Force, or CERF, spent the previous two weeks training on the new M119A2 howitzers.

From the tactical operations center, to the forward observers in the field calling for fire, to the firing batteries, the Soldiers were tested through an external evaluation, by a "new equipment team," according to Maj. John Winkler, battalion operations officer.

The guns were then certified by the battalion themselves, said Winkler. "Even though an outside agency said they were



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

A Soldier from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment smashes a bottle over the tube of "Big Ben" marking the guns official dedication by the unit. The unit held a dedication ceremony at Fort Pickett, Va., May 1 to welcome their new M119A2 howitzers to the unit.

good...We wanted to make sure they met our standards"

Throughout the unit's AT there seemed to be one common goal: To land a 105mm round in an approximately eight kilometer impact area. While this may seem like a simple feat it gets harder as one starts to look at all the factors working against the battalion.

According to Capt. Jon Fair, fire direction officer, the Soldiers must factor in direction to the target, distance to the target, wind speed, air pressure, temperature, weather, even the rotation of the earth.

According to Fair, all those factors and more will affect the trajectory of the shell. "We have to take all of that in to consideration," said Fair. "Otherwise, instead of a round landing over there where the houses are, they may land on us or our observers."

After all the external circumstances are factored into the coordinates, the battery then manages to fire the round within a 10-meter proximity of the target, said Winkler.

By the end of the two weeks

and the day of the dedication had arrived, the Soldiers had already been given the opportunity to work with another service in a joint force environment. The Soldiers worked closely with Marines of the 2nd Marine Division, according to Lt. Col. Todd Hubbard, battalion commander.

"It was nice to exercise, not only how to shoot the guns, but also how to coordinate the fires with the infantry on the ground," said Hubbard.

The Marines used their mortars, and flew in F-28 Hornets, as well as Harriers. While the planes would come in and drop their bombs, the battalion provided suppression of enemy air defense, according to Hubbard.

After the planes would exit the impact area, the firing batteries would rain artillery onto the targets.

"It was the first time we did a joint mission with the Marines," said Hubbard. "We worked really well together and tried to accomplish the objectives."

"The Strike Battalion is very excited about receiving these new guns. Our Soldiers love the challenge of the Artillery mission," said Hubbard. "Our forward observers work with the gun crews to hit targets over eight miles away."



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment fire one of the unit's new howitzers during a dedication ceremony May 1 at Fort Pickett.

Guard participates in I-64 evacuation demonstration

By Sgt. 1st Class A.J. Coyne
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the Portsmouth-based 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry Regiment joined a number of state agencies for a hurricane evacuation demonstration June 9 at two exits along Interstate 64.

"It was a good opportunity to practice our response capability and work with the Virginia State Police and Virginia Department of Emergency Management to ensure we're prepared for future situations," said Lt. Col. Bill Korsen, commander of the 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry Regiment.

The Soldiers joined the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Virginia State Police, and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management for the demonstration, which simulated the

closing of two interstate exits in the event the governor orders a lane reversal in the Hampton Roads area.

"It's a great exercise that demonstrates the interagency synchronization when it comes to natural disasters, especially hurricanes," said Col. Paul Griffin, director of joint training and exercises for the Virginia National Guard.

If a hurricane or other disaster were to hit the Hampton Roads area, the governor could order an evacuation of the region. Then gates would be lowered at exit and entrance ramps on eastbound Interstate 64 so all lanes of traffic would be westbound.

Virginia Guard Soldiers from the 2-183rd would then be positioned at these exits to support the VSP in closing the exits and turning traffic in the right direction.

During the demonstration on June 9 only two exits were used, the I-64/I-295

interchange near Richmond and the I-64/Indian River exit in Virginia Beach and the gates were lowered for less than 30 minutes. But it was still an opportunity for Guard Soldiers to work alongside the other state agencies and see first-hand just what their responsibilities will be in the event of a real-world event.

"It's nice to synch up with the Virginia State Police, VDOT and others since we would work with them in the event of a disaster," said Sgt. 1st Class Rob Purkerson, a platoon sergeant with Troop A, 2-183rd Cav. "We're here to support civilian authorities and it's nice to see them face to face."

"We can't take hurricane stuff lightly when we live in this area," Purkerson, a Virginia Beach resident, added. "We've seen Katrina and we've seen what can happen when a hurricane hits."

429th BSB fields new water purification system

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

A company of Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the 429th Brigade Support Battalion fielded their new water purification system for the first time on the banks of a small lake at Fort Pickett June 24.

Soldiers of Company A, 429th BSB set up and operated the Tactical Water Purification System for the first time at annual training. It marks the first time in Virginia Army National Guard history they will have water purifying capabilities on this scale, according to Lt. Col. Mike Swanson, battalion commander.

The TWPS, which can be set up and operational in six hours, was up and running in four and a half hours by the Virginia Guard, according to Woodbridge resident Staff Sgt. Marie Diaz, section chief.

Once the system is set up and running it incorporates an advanced micro-filtration system to filter out silt, biological materials and disease-causing microorganisms.

It is equipped with high salt rejection, reverse osmosis technology to produce drinking water from extremely salty seawater.

This capability would be very valuable in domestic disaster relief missions, including floods and hurricanes, as well as overseas contingency operations, according to Swanson.

"A lot of people don't realize the bottled water they buy commercially is actually made by reverse osmosis water purifying units," said Swanson. "Unless it is actual mineral spring water, most bottle water is the same water made by this equipment



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Marie Davis fills a 3,000 gallon "onion" bag with lake water that's been purified by the Tactical Water Purification System. Company A, 429th Brigade Support Battalion fielded the TWPS during annual training at Fort Pickett.

here."

Producing up to 1,500 gallons of potable water per hour in environments up to 120 degrees and as low as -25 in a short period of time will be beneficial to the Guard's operational success, according to Capt. Bryan Hamilton, company commander.

According to Sgt. Aaron Britton, section leader for the system operators, the TWPS can produce with the three bags it has for transporting the filtered water, up to 9,000 gallons of water at a time.

As those bags go out to different units and rotate back in they can constantly refill those bags and cyclically send them out.

"The machine can run 20 hours a day with four hours for maintenance," said Britton. "They can run pretty much continuously."

Virginia Guard troops travel to West Virginia to assist with flood clean up



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

A West Virginia Army National Guardsman stops traffic while engineers from the Virginia National Guard fill washed out areas of the road.



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

A Soldier from the Virginia National Guard maneuvers his vehicle into position during flood recovery operations in West Virginia.

**By Maj. Cotton Puryear and Sgt. Andrew H. Owen
Virginia Guard Public Affairs**

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Cedar Bluff-based 1033rd Engineer Company arrived safely in West Virginia May 18 where they began assisting with the state's flood recovery operations.

Approximately 30 Soldiers traveled there to assist with debris removal and other clean up operations and were scheduled to be on duty for up to 30 days.

"We are very excited about this mission," said 1st Lt. Adam Provost of Charlottesville, the commander of the 1033rd. "This is the mission most of us signed up for, and that's to help our neighbors and local communities. Fighting wars overseas is an important part of our job, but supporting our communities is why we joined the Guard."

While in West Virginia the Soldiers worked side by side with their counterparts from West Virginia's 111th Engineer Brigade, as well as with local civilians. The 1033rd worked hand in hand with elements from the West Virginia Air Guard as well as the 151st Military Police Battalion out of Dunbar, W. Va.



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

Engineers from the Virginia Guard's 1033rd Engineer Company clear a washed out road in West Virginia during flood recovery operations.

The engineers were busy cleaning debris and moving rock to fill in the washed-out sections of roads.

Over the course of the mission the Soldiers of the 1033rd removed 489 loads of flood debris and hauled and placed 1,613 tons of rock and soil of support of road repair throughout the western half of Mingo County, according to Provost. That includes one stretch that was over five miles long and rendered near impassable by flood damage.

The Soldiers were welcomed warmly by the West Virginia Guardsmen and integrated well, Provost said. "These guys have been awesome, anything we need they are able to get us," he said.

The local community was devastated by 5-6 inches of rain in a span of 3-4 hours which caused flash floods and water damage to several counties in Southern West Virginia and the surrounding areas. In some areas the water came in and ate the roadways away, according to Provost.

The Virginia Guard Soldiers were equipped with four 2.5 cubic-yard front-end loaders hauled by tractor trailers, eight 5-ton dump trucks and nine chain saw kits. The 1033rd provided the necessary personnel support to operate and maintain the equipment.

"This is one of the more fulfilling missions we have in the Virginia National Guard, but also one of the most devastating when you see where your neighbors have lost everything," said Sgt. 1st Class Claude Dye, acting first sergeant from Richlands.

Dye served on flood recovery duty in West Virginia in 2001, and he saw first hand the impact of severe flooding on the citizens living in flood-damaged areas.

Dye said that about 70 percent of the Soldiers on the mission just returned home from an overseas deployment about five months ago, and he hopes their experience and "mission first" mind set will set the example for the younger Soldiers in the unit.

The goal for the mission is to "hit it hard, get it done, and everyone comes home with 10 fingers and 10 toes," Dye said

The request for assistance came through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, a Congressionally-ratified organization that provides form and structure to interstate mutual aid. Through EMAC, a disaster-impacted state can request and receive assistance from other member states quickly and efficiently.

"We welcome the chance to assist our neighbors in West Virginia during this time of need," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. "It is important that we all know that in a crisis where the health and welfare of citizens are at risk, no one stands alone. I am glad we can provide assistance, and I know if the tables were turned, we could count on assistance from other states here in Virginia."

The 1033rd returned home on June 6 and remained on state active duty until June 10, using the time to clean and reset the equipment used during the mission.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

A Virginia National Guard Soldier digs a drainage ditch during flood recovery operations in West Virginia.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

A tractor trailer carrying a scoop loader departs the Cedar Bluff army May 18 en route to West Virginia.