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*Photo courtesy of Virginia Guard Counterdrug Program*

OH-58 Kiowas from the Virginia Guard Counterdrug Program are equipped with special optics, infrared imagers, spotlights, video downlink capabilities, and augmented with civilian communication equipment optimizing them for support to civilian law enforcement agencies.

*Virginia*  
**GuardPost**

SERVING THE ARMY & AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF VIRGINIA



*116th BCT Soldiers  
invade Fort Pickett  
for annual training*

MAY - JUNE 2010



**President  
Obama visits  
with 29th ID  
troops**

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**237th  
Engineers  
prepare  
for CERFP  
evaluation**  
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## FROM THE TOP



## ***Virginia National Guard shows numerous examples of patriotism, teamwork and pride***

First of all, I would like to thank all Soldiers and Airmen for their outstanding support during my brief tenure as the acting Adjutant General of Virginia. It was an honor and privilege to serve the commonwealth in that capacity and a lifelong experience forever ingrained in my memory banks. It was refreshing to see firsthand the outstanding leadership, teamwork and professionalism exhibited at all levels of our Virginia National Guard family.

The last few months have been a very busy time for the Virginia National Guard. We had units preparing to deploy, deployed, performing important state missions and continued family support and volunteer programs and events. I wish I could address each and every unit in this article, but I'm limited on space, so please allow me to highlight only a few.

In the deployment preparation area, Virginia Beach-based 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group received its validation May 3, 2010 approving them for duty in Afghanistan after weeks of training at Fort Hood, Texas. The unit established an expeditionary sustainment base at Shindand Airbase in western Afghanistan. Since there is no Army unit currently stationed at the base, the battalion's Soldiers and leaders prepared for the mission without what's known as the "left seat/right seat ride," where the new unit would gain insights about the mission from the unit it would be replacing.

A short time after their arrival the battalion was combat and survival skills were tested, especially Spc. Rakeitta C. Roeback, Spc. Amber N. Todd and Spc. Melody S. Manlutac. Each was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for actions taken during a May 22 attack on Kandahar. Lt. Col. Michelle Rose, commander of the 529th, recommended them for the Army Commendation Medal for their willingness to put themselves in harm's way to provide medical aid during an ongoing attack.



**Brig. Gen. Wayne A. Wright**  
**Acting Adjutant General of Virginia**

They continued to provide aid until each casualty was moved to the base hospital. "Their dedication to duty and willingness to serve in the face of danger is indicative of what soldiers of the 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion are trained to do," Rose said.

In addition to the 529th's deployment we had medical and military police personnel deployed as well. During these deployments Virginia Guard personnel were called upon to perform not only their respective federally tasked wartime mission, but humanitarian missions, similar to our state missions as well.

Several healthcare providers have deployed attached to Virginia Guard units and as individual augmentees. They were called upon to work with their own units and other Guard units from the Virginia Guard or an unfamiliar unit. Regardless of the tasking or unit of assignment our healthcare professionals are providing outstanding care and support to our warfighters and the

local civilian populations.

The Soldiers from the Virginia Beach-based 229th Military Police Company, 91st Troop Command made a lasting impression and impact on the lives of local children during their deployment to Iraq. The unit returned to the Furat School near Victory Base Complex to continue its humanitarian mission of installing new windows to the classrooms. During its visit, the squad replaced seven broken windows in several of the classrooms which had posed a hazard to the students, according to Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Jones, operations section sergeant for the 229th Military Police Company.

Closer to home, the West Point-based 237th Engineer Company, 276th Engineer Battalion was recommended for validation for its ability to support first responders and civil authorities in the event Virginia was attacked with chemical, high-explosive, radiological or nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Prior to the evaluation the 237th went through extensive rehearsals of their confined space, search and extraction, shoring, breaching and breaking, and rope extraction missions at Fort Pickett's military operations in urban terrain site in preparation for a June 18 external evaluation. The evaluation tested the unit's CERFP mission and was supported by the Henrico Emergency Response Team and the Virginia Defense Force.

As you can see from just a few examples the Virginia Guard continues to set the pace performing our respective state and federal missions. Our Soldiers and Airmen are unhesitant in stepping forward to support and defend the great Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States of America. As I travel around the commonwealth, I marvel at the shining examples of patriotism, teamwork and pride set by the men and women that make up the Virginia Guard. We should all be proud to be members of an organization that is steeped in traditions of excellence and always striving to be the best.

## News Briefs

### Top Virginia troops compete in regional competitions

Spc. George Arvan was named runner-up for regional National Guard Soldier of the Year in a four-day competition May 13-16 at Camp Dawson, W.Va.

Arvan, a Spotsylvania resident assigned to Headquarters Company, 29th Infantry Division as a fire support specialist, received special acknowledgement from the Assistant Adjutant General of West Virginia for his accomplishment.

Arvan will be on stand-by for the national competition in case the winner cannot compete.

Chesapeake resident, Sgt. Lionel Blair, a human resource sergeant assigned to 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team, competed in the noncommissioned officer competition.

"The competition was challenging and both of Virginia's Soldiers performed admirably," Command Sgt. Maj. Carl Holcomb, the Virginia

state command sergeant major, said. "Sgt. Lionel Blair and Spc. George Arvan represented their state well and are commended for the way they performed."

Five states participated in the competition with five noncommissioned officers and five Soldiers from West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Delaware.

### Virginia Guard honors volunteers

Family Programs honored the volunteers that support the families of the Virginia National Guard at the third State Volunteer Recognition workshop. The theme for this year's event was "Virginia Volunteers, The Stars of our Program."

Thirty-six volunteers spent the weekend of May 1-2, 2010 at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel in Staunton, Va. The volunteers represented Family Readiness Groups, the State Leadership Council, the Teen Council and Youth Summer Camp volunteers and committee members.

Many volunteers were

accompanied by their spouse and/or parents. As in past years Family Programs' mission was to educate, inspire, entertain, motivate and thank the volunteers for all that they do on a daily basis to support the families of our Virginia service members.

The overall feedback received from the volunteers and commanders was "mission accomplished." Family Programs succeeded in its objective of educating, inspiring, entertaining, motivating and thanking the volunteers for all that they have done and will continue to do. Family Program's staff is already looking forward to the next year's Annual Volunteer Recognition workshop next year.

### 116th BCT Soldiers relive Gettysburg during staff ride

Senior leaders from 116th Brigade Combat Team spent a day reliving the Battle of Gettysburg during a staff ride June 18.

Soldiers were assigned a key

leader to do an in-depth study on that person and the battle role. The preliminary study helps facilitate the staff ride by each Soldier giving input at each stop on their respective role.

The Battle of Gettysburg was a chance meeting in July 1863 between the General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and the Union Army of the Potomac led by Maj. General George G. Meade.

The Soldiers were able to see what the key leader said the day of the battle at each site. They used the terrain and battle timeline to analyze what their leader was thinking during the battle.

Soldiers were able to see the effects of the decisions on the battlefield and were able to apply this knowledge in their own decision making. They saw how effective leaders can influence subordinates to do great things in dire circumstances.

This was the third consecutive year that the brigade conducted a staff ride and is planning to conduct one staff ride per year in the future.

For more on these stories, visit <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/newsindex.html>

## Virginia National Guard Federal Deployments

# *	Unit	Where Deployed	Home Town
80	529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion	Afghanistan	Virginia Beach
400	1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment	Iraq	Lynchburg
150	229th Military Police Company	Iraq	Virginia Beach
18	Det. 2, Co B, 777th Aviation Support Battalion	Kosovo	Sandston
20	192nd Maintenance Group	Saudi Arabia	Langley Air Force Base
25	192nd Intelligence Squadron	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Langley Air Force Base
75	Various Virginia Army Guard Units	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Various Locations
10	Various Virginia Air Guard Units	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Various Locations

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

# State employees recognized for contributions to Guard

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Virginia state employees supporting the Virginia National Guard were treated to an afternoon of fun and refreshments during the State Employee Appreciation Day celebration at Fort Pickett May 5 and were given the chance to meet with former Adjutant General of Virginia, Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., who thanked them for the hard work and dedication they bring to the Virginia Guard.

"We thank you for the great work that you do," said Newman. "I look forward to continuing to serve with you. You are recognized, not only in words, but also in tangible ways for the terrific service you have all done."

"The state employees in Virginia do a tremendous amount of work on behalf of the National Guard. It goes often unrecognized," added Newman. "They are behind the scenes guys and gals. They are not only the cogs in the wheel; they are the grease that makes it go. This is just a small way to say thank you."

The approximately 100 state employees

and Guard personnel enjoyed a cookout, complete with desserts baked by volunteers supporting the event.

Following the lunch, they competed in a softball derby where participants competed by hitting five softballs in a home run derby-style event.

After the softball derby the honorees fought for the top spot in the hula hoop competition. The winner of the event was determined by whoever could keep the hula hoop spinning the longest before touching the ground.

"They could spin it on their necks, their heads or their waists. As long as they keep it spinning, they will win," said Lt. Col. Whit Bragg, director of the Department of Public Works.

The day's events were a good way to thank the employees for the work they do, but the cookout also served as a catalyst for the employees to meet up with other employees on Fort Pickett that they may not usually get to mingle and interact with.

"It gives us a chance to see the other employees that work out here," said Jessica York, a range maintenance worker at the



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

**Maj. Randy Bridger flips burgers for the cookout celebrating Virginia state employees at Fort Pickett May 5, 2010 in recognition of their hard work and contributions to the Virginia National Guard.**

Maneuver Training Center's Multi-Purpose Range Complex. "I had fun because I got lunch and I got to hang out with everybody else that works here."

## Counterdrug program makes a difference in kids' lives

By 2nd Lt. J. Erin Jones  
Virginia Guard Counterdrug Program

The Virginia National Guard's Counterdrug Taskforce is making a big impact on communities in Virginia with its Drug Demand Reduction program, which has events scheduled throughout the summer. DDR is a support program for community-based organizations, said Master Sgt. Daniel Dolen, a community outreach noncommissioned officer with DDR.

"We do drug prevention education, mentorship programs and leadership development," Dolen said. "Basically anything that will help keep kids off of drugs."

Over the summer DDR will be supporting four camps, working with kids ranging in age from eight to 15 years old.

"At each camp we will be teaching basic leadership skills, respect and military-type discipline," said Dolen. "We will also be conducting team building exercises, icebreaker activities and a drug prevention presentation."

During the school year DDR worked with local schools to educate and mentor students through programs such as "Stay on Track" and "Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs."

DDR held an end-of-the-year "Hooked on Fishing, Not on

Drugs" event for 15 students from Pole Green, Laurel Meadow and Kersey Creek Elementary Schools, June 25, 2010 at the Courthouse Park in Hanover.

The "Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs" concept was started in 1986 when a Florida teenager wrote to the Future Fishermen Foundation about how he chose to go fishing and think through his problems instead of using drugs. Since then, it has become a nationally-recognized program offered in over 30 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa and Puerto Rico.

"We teach them about making good decisions and how alternate activities such as fishing can help keep them away from drugs," said Dolen.

"I think it's a good way for the children to learn about the National Guard and the benefits they offer to the community," said John Hurst III, grandfather of a participating student. "It teaches the children to respect one another, respect the outdoors and respect fishing. Overall it's just a really good program."

"When they're catching fish you can see they get excited," said Dolen. "They enjoy what they are doing and hopefully they will turn to this in their down time."

"Ideally, I would love to see the kids never use drugs," said Dolen.



# Virginia GuardPost



SERVING THE ARMY AND AIR GUARD OF VIRGINIA

MAY - JUNE 2010

## On the Cover



Soldiers of the Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team conduct air assault operations at Fort Pickett, Va., June 22, 2010 during their three-week annual training period. (Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Virginia Guard Public Affairs)

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## Virginia GuardPost

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

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# McDonnell appoints Wright as acting adjutant general

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Gov. Bob McDonnell will not reappoint Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr. as the adjutant general of Virginia and named Brig. Gen. Wayne A. Wright as the acting adjutant general effective June 11, 2010. Wright most recently served as the chief of staff of the Virginia Air National Guard, and he will lead the Virginia Guard as the governor searches for Newman's replacement.

"The Virginia National Guard is a pretty proud organization, but we need to keep striving to improve and get better. I want us to be a world-class organization," Wright said.

"General Newman is a dedicated public servant who has served Virginia well," said McDonnell spokesman Stacey Johnson. "The governor thanks him for all that he has done for our nation and our commonwealth and wishes him the very best." Gov. Tim Kaine appointed Newman adjutant general in January 2006.

"It has been an honor and privilege to serve as the adjutant general of Virginia for the last four and a half years," Newman said. "I could not be more proud of the Virginia Guard's Soldiers and Airmen and members of the Virginia Defense Force for their outstanding service to both commonwealth and country. I would also like to extend a special thanks to the families and employers of these great Virginians for their support that has been so critical to the Guard's success."

Newman said the Virginia Guard has demonstrated its tremendous capability and professionalism here in Virginia and on federal active duty overseas. "Whether it was fighting fires in Southwest Virginia, rescuing snow-bound motorists along I-81 or delivering food and water to Virginians in need, the Virginia

Guard has demonstrated to the citizens of the commonwealth that the Guard will work with our state and local emergency agency partners to provide a fast, effective and well-coordinated response when called by the governor," Newman said. "As our nation continues to fight the Global War on Terror, our Virginian Soldiers and Airmen are making a significant contribution in defending the ideals of freedom."

Newman wished Wright success in his new role and expressed confidence in Wright's ability to provide "outstanding leadership" during the transition period as the governor searches for the new adjutant general.

Wright most recently served as the chief of staff of the Virginia Air National Guard. He entered the United States Air Force and received his commission in 1981 after graduating from the University of South Carolina. He transitioned from active duty to the Georgia Air National Guard in 1992. He has a Master of Science in International Relations from Troy State University and is a graduate of the Air War College.

Wright has held various leadership and command positions at the squadron, group, wing and major command levels. His past duty assignments have involved operations as well as formal training of United States Air Force and allied Command and Control personnel.



Brig. Gen. Wayne A. Wright

## Johnson named to lead Virginia Air Guard

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Wayne A. Wright, the acting Adjutant General of Virginia, has appointed Col. Zane R. Johnson of the Virginia Air National Guard to serve as the Assistant Adjutant General for Air. The appointment is effective June 21, 2010.

"Col. Johnson brings a wealth of both military and civilian aviation experience as well as command experience with him to this position, and I am confident that his leadership will make a positive impact on the Virginia Air National Guard," Wright said.

As the Assistant Adjutant General for Air, Johnson is responsible for leading

the Virginia Air National Guard, assisting and empowering Virginia Airmen in executing their respective plans, programs and missions. He analyzes and evaluates training programs and operational readiness levels to determine mission capability and unit effectiveness. He is the primary advisor to the Adjutant General of Virginia on Air National Guard affairs at both the state and federal level.

Johnson is a 1984 graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, and he earned his commission through Air Force ROTC.

After an initial active duty tour in the Air Force, he transitioned to the New Jersey Air National Guard in 1991 and then transferred to the Virginia Air National Guard in 1996.

He is a command pilot with more 3,000 flying hours in the F-15, F-16 and F-22 and over 5,000 hours commercial time.

Johnson most recently served as the vice commander of the Virginia Air National Guard's 192d Fighter Wing at Langley Air Force Base.

Johnson is a commercial airline pilot and lives in Williamsburg with his family.



Col. Zane R. Johnson

# Father, son serve together in Iraq on Father's Day

By Spc. Britney Bodner  
103rd Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Father's Day in Iraq is often spent on a phone or webcam talking with family half-way around the world or opening a package sent weeks in advance. But one deployed father in Baghdad had a rare opportunity to spend it with his son.

Sgt. Earnest Carila, noncommissioned officer in charge of the personal security detachment for Lt. Gen. Kenneth Hunzeker, United States Forces-Iraq deputy commanding general for support, spent the day with his son, Spc. Ryan Carila, a chase driver for Hunzeker's PSD team.

Carila and Ryan arrived at Victory Base Complex in September 2009 with the Virginia Army National Guard's 229th Military Police Company and were both chosen for Hunzeker's PSD team.

It's very unusual for a father and son to work together on a PSD team and it surprises everyone who hears about it, said Sgt. 1st Class Edward Kawamura, personal security officer for the PSD team.

"Working together in this instance is a great fit," Kawamura said. "They look after one another and make sure they have

what they need for any mission."

"It's been a great experience," said Carila. "Not many people can often deploy with their son on their first deployment."

Ryan thinks this experience with his father has been a very positive one.

"Our bond as father and son is stronger because of it," he said.

Carila said being deployed during Father's Day is hard for most Soldiers because they are a world away from their families.

"It's reassuring that I have my son with me this Father's Day. The feeling to not only be serving my country, but to be able to serve it together, especially on Fathers day, is great and fills me with pride," Carila said. "He made it a much better day being here with me than if I was alone."

Even though father and son spent the day running missions with the PSD team, Ryan was able to treat his father to dinner at Subway.

For Ryan this has been more than just a chance to spend time with his father, it's been a chance to create lifelong memories that not a lot of children get to share with their parents.

"My son and I have had an opportunity of a lifetime, not only to serve together in



Photo by Staff Sgt. Erica Foley, 318th PAOC

**Sgt. Earnest Carila poses for a photo with his son Spc. Ryan Carila in front of the U.S. Embassy on Father's Day, June 20.**

Iraq, but to serve on the same team," said Carila.

"I am proud of my son and it has been an honor to spend Father's Day with him on this deployment."

## Tajik medical personnel visit Virginia counterparts

By Capt. Matt Nowak  
Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

Members of the Virginia Defense Force and the Virginia Army and Air National Guard hosted medical officers from Tajikistan's Ministry of Defense May 17-21 to discuss emergency medical response operations.

As part of the visit, medical personnel from each organization provided lectures on emergency response operations. This is the first time the VDF played a role in helping to host the Tajiks, and VDF members arranged conference rooms and tours at the Saint Francis Medical Center, Bon Secours Virginia and the Sheltering Arms Hospital South. The Saint Francis Medical Center even hosted a luncheon for the guests with a menu picked especially for the cultural exchange.

Along with the hospital tour, each organization individually presented their roles in an emergency response with an underlying theme of ensuring forces are medically, dentally, and psychologically ready.

Briefers also stressed the training and credentialing of responders for the Defense Support of Civil Authorities and its supporting operations.

"Many of their facilities are in remote areas," said Lt. Col. Bill Mahoney, Virginia State Partnership coordinator. "It means a lot to the Tajiks that we are willing to teach them medical techniques as well as 'buddy care' for critical situations out in the field."

"The visitors really seemed to enjoy the hospitality and even got to observe a med flight evacuation," said Lt. Col. Timothy M. Silver, VDF medical commander and medical director of Sheltering Arms Hospital South. "This was particularly timely in that one of the lecture topics was on evacuations by helicopter of wounded. The hospitals and staff truly recognized the importance and enjoyed being part of such a cultural exchange."

Aside from the medical discussions, the visit became a cultural learning experience. Silver explained he learned a tremendous amount during the week long experience. The cultural exchange continued after hours and during the social times. Each participant exchanged gifts near the end, and finished the visit with an outdoor cookout.

"This is really the first time that the VDF has joined in on this partnership and very important mission," Silver said. "It has been a pleasure and an honor being an integral part of the overall leadership team. As a volunteer physician, I see no better way to give back to the community."

# Virginia Guard Medal of Honor recipient from Charlottesville remembered

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia National Guard remembered the service and sacrifice of Tech. Sgt. Frank D. Peregory, a Charlottesville native who earned the Medal of Honor following the D-Day Invasion, with a rededication ceremony for the barracks and administrative building complex named in his honor. The Guard unveiled a new sign for the area in a ceremony held at Fort Pickett, June 8, 66 years after the actions that earned him the nation's highest award for valor.

"Today we rededicate a historical marker to a hero, to a brigade and to a division," said Col. Tom Wilkinson, commander of Fort Pickett.

Peregory was a sergeant in Company K, 116th Infantry, 29th Infantry Division and on June 6, 1944, he landed with the 116th on Omaha Beach as part of the Normandy invasion. According to his Medal of Honor citation, on June 8, the 3rd Battalion of the 116th Infantry was advancing on the strongly held German defenses at Grandcampe, France, when the leading elements were stopped by heavy machinegun fire from an enemy force on the high ground overlooking the town.

Peregory took it upon himself to move on the position where he encountered a squad of enemy riflemen and proceeded to attack them with hand grenades and bayonet, killing eight and forcing three to surrender. He continued to engage the enemy, forcing 32 more to surrender and opened the way for the rest of the battalion to advance and secure its objective. For his actions that day, he received the Medal of Honor.

Peregory was killed six days later fighting in the hedgerows and was aware he had been recommended for the medal. He is



Photos by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Brig. Gen. Frank Batts, commander of the 29th Infantry Division, and Col. Tom Wilkinson, commander of Fort Pickett, unveil the new sign honoring Tech. Sgt. Frank D. Peregory, a Charlottesville native who earned the Medal of Honor following the D-Day Invasion, as part of a rededication ceremony June 8 for the barracks and administrative building complex named in his honor.**

buried at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Normandy, France.

Even before his bravery earned him the Medal of Honor, Peregory demonstrated his willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty.

Just after the Pearl Harbor attack, Soldiers from the 116th were patrolling the beaches of North Carolina for possible German saboteurs coming from submarines and Peregory rescued a fellow Soldier from drowning. In recognition of his timely action and disregard of danger to himself, he was awarded the Soldier's Medal, the highest award that a Soldier can receive for a non-combat incident.

In 1982, Fort Pickett broke ground on the "Peregory Complex" in his honor, and it opened in 1984. The new sign unveiled June 8 features a base of sand that is 116 square feet in honor of the 116th Infantry Regiment and features a 29th Infantry Division patch that is 29 inches in diameter.

Former Lieutenant Carl "Chubby" Proffit was the special guest at the rededication. Proffit was a close friend to Peregory and the two served together in Company K. He said he was 30 feet from Peregory when he was killed in action.

Proffit was a technical sergeant on D-Day and received a battlefield commission two months later. By the end of the war, Proffit had earned three Purple Hearts, two Bronze Star Medals, a Silver Star and the Distinguished Service Cross.

After the ceremony Proffit promoted Brandon Michael Sweet of Keezletown to private first class.

"It is pretty cool to be promoted by a World War II vet," Sweet said. "It is something special to me. I feel like he has passed some of his honor to me, and I can carry it on when I deploy."

After being presented with a special 3rd Battalion coin from former battalion commander Lt. Col. Bill Zana, Proffit shared his D-Day experience with Soldiers while they ate lunch. Soldiers from Company A were at Fort Pickett conducting their annual training.



**Former Lieutenant Carl "Chubby" Proffit, a World War II veteran who served in Company K with Frank D. Peregory, promotes Brandon Michael Sweet, a Soldier from the Charlottesville-based Company A, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, to private first class.**

# 1-116th scheduled for early return from Iraq

## From Staff Reports

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq — The Virginia National Guard's Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment is scheduled to return early from its federal mobilization to Iraq and should be back in Virginia by early September.

The unit mobilized in January 2010 and was scheduled to serve a 12-month tour of federal active duty.

The unit has not received its official demobilization order but senior leaders in the battalion have been notified by their chain of command in Iraq about the early return for approximately 400 Soldiers stationed in Southern Iraq.

According to Lt. Col. Scott Smith, commander of 1st Battalion, the change is consistent with a long-announced plan to bring an end to all combat operations in Iraq and reduce troop levels to no more

than 50,000 Soldiers by Sept. 1, 2010.

The schedule was confirmed in an open letter to all Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines in Iraq from Commanding General Raymond T. Odierno.

Virginia's leaders learned soon after their arrival in country that a curtailment was possible and have been preparing for the formal announcement for changes in the 256th Brigade Combat Team, with whom they are currently deployed, Smith said.

Most of the Soldiers in the battalion expected to be away from home for at least a year.

"We are certain that our families will welcome the news that their Soldiers will be returning home early," Smith said. "We do understand that this change will fall hard on some families who didn't expect to be job hunting this fall. As guardsmen, they asked their employers to hold their job for a year and in some cases our Soldiers

left their job to come on this deployment. For those Soldiers and families facing potential financial hardship as a result of the curtailment, I have promised that we will do everything we can to assist them in this difficult transition."

The leadership of Task Force Overlord is working hard to ensure a smooth transition back home for the Soldiers.

"We have dozens of college students in our battalion who were planning to miss the fall semester, and we plan to do everything we can now to try and get our college students back home in time to start school in the fall," said the battalion Command Sgt. Major John D. Braziel of Ferrum, Va.

"We are doing outreach to the universities to help ease the transition and set these guys up for success. When their country needed them, they dropped everything and headed off to war. We owe it to them to get this right."

# 529th Soldiers aid casualties in Afghanistan

By Capt. Jeff Beck  
529th CSSB

Three Virginia National Guard Soldiers serving with the Virginia Beach-based 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in Afghanistan were awarded the Army Commendation Medal for their swift action to provide medical treatment when Kandahar Air Base was attacked by mortars, rockets and ground forces May 22.

After the initial attack was over, the word came that Soldiers in the next building were injured and needed medics. Spc. Rakeitta C. Roeback and Spc. Melody S. Manlutac grabbed their combat lifesaver bags and, with the assistance of Spc. Amber N. Todd, rushed to provide medical aid to the wounded.

When they arrived on the scene they found American and British medics and a physician assistant treating the wounded.

"When I walked into the building I saw blood on the floor, two civilian male casualties laying on the floor, one civilian casualty sitting upright on the right side of the wall and another one on the left," said Manlutac.

Each assisted medical personnel with IVs, tourniquets, gauze, tape and other first aid measures. Todd was placing an IV into one of the wounded while trying to calm another casualty by letting him know that an ambulance was on the way and that he was going to be okay. Roeback had her own worries as she was assisting with the most critically wounded by applying a tourniquet to his injured leg. Then, having stopped the bleeding, she quickly moved over to the next casualty and started to clean and dress his wounds.

Each of these Soldiers received Combat Lifesaver Training in



Photo courtesy of 529th CSSB

**Spc. Rakeitta C. Roeback, Spc. Amber N. Todd, and Spc. Melody S. Manlutac were each awarded the Army Commendation Medal for their actions during a March 22 attack on Kandahar.**

November 2009 during their annual training at Fort Pickett, Va., in preparation for the upcoming deployment.

Lt. Col. Michelle Rose, commander of the 529th, recommended them for the Army Commendation Medal for their willingness to put themselves in harm's way to provide medical aid during an ongoing attack. They continued to provide aid until each casualty was moved to the base hospital.

"Their dedication to duty and willingness to serve in the face of danger is indicative of what Soldiers of the 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion are trained to do," Rose said.

# 29th Infantry Division remembers D-Day on 66th anniversary

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia National Guard gathered alongside World War II veterans June 5 at the Cherry-Beasley Readiness Center in Winchester and June 6 at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford to pay tribute to the sacrifices made by the Soldiers of the 29th Infantry Division, the 116th Infantry Regiment, and all the men who fought in the largest amphibious assault in the history of modern warfare 66 years ago.

At the event in Winchester, Delegate Bev Sherwood of Frederick County unveiled a joint resolution passed by the Virginia General Assembly to honor the Soldiers from more than 20 communities across Virginia that participated in the assault on June 6, 1944, that led to the liberation of German-occupied Europe.

The resolution reads: “the Commonwealth of Virginia and its citizens are indebted to and thankful for the D-Day soldiers, their successors in the ranks of the Virginia National Guard today, and their families for their valiant service and enormous sacrifice.”

“Many Virginians may have forgotten, and many may never have known, that the 29th [Infantry] Division was the only Guard unit selected to participate in the initial invasion of France at Normandy on that pivotal day in June of 1944,” said John O. Marsh Jr., a World War II veteran who served in the Virginia National Guard and retired as a lieutenant colonel. He served as the secretary of the Army between 1981 and 1989.

The Soldiers of the Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th



Photos by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**The Virginia National Guard joined World War II veterans and the community of Bedford, Va., at the commemoration ceremony for the 66th anniversary of the D-Day Invasion at the National D-Day Memorial June 6 in Bedford.**

Infantry also recognized the accomplishments of an individual Soldier for his sacrifice and courage by naming a classroom in the readiness center after Maj. Thomas D. Howie of Staunton. The battalion also planted a tree outside the facility in his honor.

The tree planting was conducted by Howie’s daughter and her family using soil from Howie’s hometown of Abbeville, S.C., as well as soil from the parade fields of the Citadel and Staunton Military Academy, sand from Omaha Beach and soil from Saint Lo, France.

Howie became a “symbol of courage and sacrifice after newspapers flashed to the world a picture of his flag-covered body in the ruins of a St. Lo church,” Marsh said.

Howie, a graduate of The Citadel’s Class of 1929 and a teacher and coach at Staunton Military Academy, is best known as “the Major of Saint Lo.” He was killed in action on July 17, 1944, while in command of the 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry, during its final drive to capture the strategic city of Saint Lo. Some have even speculated that Tom Hanks’ character in the film “Saving Private Ryan” was modeled after Howie.

“It’s just so nice for the veterans and their families and for me to be asked to participate. I’m proud to know that the citizens here have named this wonderful room in the armory for my father and remembered him in that way,” said Sally McDevitt, Howie’s daughter. “If you have to lose someone, it’s so nice to have them remembered this way.” McDevitt was barely 4 years old when her father was killed in action.

At the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Va., Guard Soldiers joined hundreds of guests to honor and pay tribute to the handful of remaining veterans of D-Day in attendance.

Keynote speaker Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, spoke about the importance of remembering the sacrifices of the men who fought and how their bravery is reflected by the military men and women of today.

“The greatest tribute we can pay to the fallen and to the missing from every generation is not only to hold ceremonies and erect monuments, but to look after their families and embrace their brothers and sisters in arms when they return,” said Mullen.



**Lt. Col. Paul Gilman, commander of the 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, Charlie Lillis, a 29th Infantry Division veteran, and Maj. Thomas Howie’s great grandson Mason Godek of Louisa add soil from Normandy. The red oak tree was donated by the Citadel Alumni Association and was planted June 5, 2010 in Howie’s name at the Cherry-Beasley Readiness Center in Winchester.**

# Fallen Virginians remembered in ceremony

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Virginia National Guard Soldiers killed in the Global War on Terror were among the 206 Virginians remembered at the 2010 Wall of Honor Ceremony held May 27 in Richmond. Representatives from the active, reserve and National Guard components of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard, including retired Col. Frank Pedrotty of the Virginia Air National Guard and Lt. Col. James Ring of the Army National Guard, took turns reading all the names of the fallen Virginians.

"Today we gather for the solemn duty of remembering and honoring those who have given their lives so that we may live in peace and security," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., former Adjutant General of Virginia. "May this great commonwealth always rise to salute their sacrifice, give comfort to their loved ones they left behind and hold them up as models for the great citizens and patriots they were for this generation and for generations to come."

Virginia Guard personnel provided escorts for family members of the fallen from the Wall of Honor in the Pocahontas Building to the ceremony on the South Portico of the capital. Virginia Guard personnel provided the ground control element for the F-18 flyover and also passed out water to attendees. The Fort Lee Army Band provided music and Langley Air Force Base Honor Guard posted the colors and provided a 21-gun salute.

"From our founding in 1776 to today, men and women in uniform have always been willing to take up the call to arms for principles they believe in," said Gov. Bob McDonnell.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Virginia National Guard Soldiers killed in the Global War on Terror were among the 206 Virginians remembered at the 2010 Wall of Honor Ceremony held May 27 in Richmond.**

The Virginia Wall of Honor was dedicated in 2007 when McDonnell was attorney general to honor Virginians who have died in the Global War on Terrorism and is located in the lobby of the Virginia Attorney General's office building at 900 E. Main St. All branches of the Armed Services are represented, including the United States Coast Guard, with heroes from the active forces, reserves and National Guard.

The wall itself is 38.5 feet long. Each block frame contains 12 individual profiles. Each individual profile is 7 inches by 14 inches, and each photo is 5 inches by 7 inches.

# Asian Pacific American Heritage Month celebrated

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Approximately 60 people attended the Asian Pacific American Heritage Month program presented by the Virginia Guard's Equal Opportunity Office at Fort Pickett, Va., May 6. Among the attendees were approximately 30 Soldiers currently enrolled in the equal opportunity leaders course, also being held at Fort Pickett.

"These events are important due to the changing demographics in America, the diverse leadership and the diverse workforce that makes up the National Guard," said Capt. Antoinette Allen, state equal employment manager. "It helps us to be a better force; it helps us to be more inclusive and it helps us to get to know our peers."

The celebration began with a special performance from the Fairfax Chinese Dance Troupe. The three dancers began

with a Chinese dance followed by a Mongolian dance and a Malaysian dance. After completing the first set of dances, the performers took a break and Allen introduced special guest speaker Lt. Col. Lapthe Flora, executive officer of the 116th Brigade Combat Team.

"I feel very honored and thankful that our nation set aside this beautiful month of May to honor the Asian Pacific American heritage," said Flora, who was selected as the speaker for the second year in a row.

"I am very proud of my Asian heritage, but most importantly I am extremely grateful to be simply called an American."

Flora, who is a native of Vietnam, spoke about his life growing up in Saigon in the 1960s and 1970s. When he was 13 years old he and his brothers fled the city and spent three years living in the jungle. They eventually moved to refugee camps before coming to the United States, where he graduated high school and the

Virginia Military Institute. He became a vice president of ITT Geospatial Systems.

"The Asian Pacific Islander's story is one that teaches us to overcome persecution," said Allen. "It is a story that is the American story. It is the one of achieving dreams, reaching your goals and serving your nation."

After the conclusion of Flora's speech, the dancers performed three more traditional dances from Mongolia, China and even performed an interpretation of an Indian, Bollywood-style dance. The dancers then invited the Soldiers to come to the front and join them in a flash mob-inspired dance routine.

Flash mob is a group of people who assemble suddenly in a public location to perform an unusual act for a brief time and then disperse. The dancers taught the Soldiers the routine they intend to use in an upcoming flash mob the troupe has planned in D.C.

# Virginia Guard response force conducts external evaluation

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

A special response force of the Virginia National Guard has been recommended for validation to provide support to first responders and civil authorities if Virginia was attacked with a high-explosive, chemical, radiological or nuclear weapon of mass destruction.

The unit conducted an external evaluation at Henrico County Fire Training Center June 18 and was rated as “fully trained” on all 16 of the major tasks they had to accomplish.

The Virginia National Guard’s special response force is the Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear High Yield Explosive Emergency Response Force Package, known as the CERFP (pronounced “surf-p”).

The CERFP can conduct tasks associated with incident management, search and rescue, mass decontamination and medical triage and treatment. The force is made up of Soldiers and Airmen from units based in Richmond, West Point, Hampton, Norfolk, Rocky Mount, Danville, Virginia Beach, and Langley Air Force Base.

“This is a great exercise,” said Lt. Col. Preston Scott, commander of the CERFP. “Every two to three years we go through a validation process to evaluate our skills and capabilities to accomplish the mission, and we have had the opportunity to incorporate our civilian counterparts who we would be interacting with if it were an actual emergency. Once we get on scene we would have personal knowledge of who we would be working with and how they operate.”

Personnel from National Guard Bureau and the Joint Interagency Training and Evaluation Center conducted the evaluation, and the adjutant general of Virginia makes the final validation decision based off their evaluation.

“The feedback from the evaluators was very positive,” said Capt. Shawn Talmadge, operations officer for the unit. “The evaluators were impressed with our ability to operate with so many other first

responders.”

More than 250 Virginia National Guard personnel trained for a week prior to the evaluation alongside an additional 150 from seven other state and local emergency response organizations including the Virginia State Police, the Henrico County Division of Fire and the Virginia Defense Force.

The American Red Cross and Salvation Army provided meals for participants during the week as well.

The unit was evaluated on 16 different major tasks including conducting search and Extraction deployment Operations, conducting rope extraction operations, establishing a response decontamination site, conducting ambulatory and non-ambulatory decontamination, conducting military personnel and equipment decontamination, conducting casualty collection and medical triage and providing treatment and emergency care for casualties.

For the medical personnel taking part in the exercise, the training augments their real-world medical skills, as well as gives them training to take back to their civilian jobs.

According to Lt. Col. John Karmack, a doctor with the Virginia Air National Guard’s 192d Medical Group from Langley Air Force Base, even though the training scenario presented casualties with chemical-related injuries, basic trauma care skills are tested as well. Karmack works as an emergency room doctor in his civilian career.

“It gives me the opportunity to train the medics and nurses on advanced trauma life support, and it refreshes me on some of the chemical and biological hazards we are always at risk for,” Karmack said. “I can bring my civilian experience and training here, and then I can take the training I receive here back to my civilian job.”

The units making up Virginia’s CERFP include:

- the incident management team from the Hampton-based Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery.
- the mass casualty decontamination element from the Rocky Mount-based



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Va. Guard Public Affairs  
**A Virginia National Guard Soldier assists a simulated casualty during the CERFP external evaluation held June 18 at the Henrico Fire Training Center.**

229th Chemical Company

- the search and extraction element from West Point-based 237th Engineer Company
- the mass casualty medical triage and treatment element from the 192d Medical Group, Virginia Air National Guard stationed at Langley Air Force Base

The concept is that when an incident occurs, Guardsmen of the CERFP are alerted through the Joint Force Headquarters – Virginia and mobilized on state active duty. If the incident is located within Virginia they would proceed to the incident when directed by the Joint Force Headquarters. If the incident is located outside of Virginia, the Joint Force Headquarters - Virginia would coordinate with the receiving state under the terms agreed to in the Emergency Mutual Aid Compact.

After arriving at the incident site, the incident management team and element commanders coordinate with and support the local incident commander.

The exercise demonstrates a WMD consequence management capability that exists in the National Guard within one of 17 CERFP organizations and showcases the ability of the CERFP to integrate with a civilian Incident Command System.

## President Obama makes surprise visit to 29th ID officers

By Maj. Tim Donnellan  
29th ID Public Affairs

President Barack Obama made a surprise visit to the 29th Infantry Division Officers' Association's Hail and Farewell May 16, 2010, at the Fort Belvoir golf course, where he shook hands and thanked the officers for their service.

"I appreciate what you do," Obama said. "Thank you for your service. As Soldiers lined up to shake hands, camera phones were everywhere as the officers tried to get a photograph of the President.

More than 70 officers and guests attended the event to welcome new officers and honor the departing members of the 29th Infantry Division.

The commander in chief was golfing at Fort Belvoir and graciously accepted an offer to stop by and visit with the officers of the 29th.

"The first nine were great, but the back nine killed me," joked the president when asked about his golf performance.

When the president finished shaking everyone's hand he walked away only to return with a special gift for recently-promoted Lt. Col. Scott Bartlett.

"Where is that officer who just got promoted?" asked the president as he walked back to the patio outside the clubhouse. Obama greeted Bartlett and gave him one of his presidential golf balls. Most golf balls have numbers stamped on them, usually numbers 1-4. The president explained to Bartlett that the ball was a Titleist 44, made especially for the 44th president.

After giving the golf ball to Bartlett and congratulating him on his promotion, the President left the clubhouse.

"What a day! I got to promoted and got to meet the President," said Bartlett.



Photo by Maj. Tim Donnellan, 29th ID PAO

**President Barack Obama shakes hands with newly-promoted Lt. Col. Scott Bartlett as Bartlett displays a presidential golf ball presented to him by the Commander in Chief May 16 at Fort Belvoir.**

## Spirit of D-Day lives on with Va. Soldiers in Iraq

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

As the service of the 29th Infantry Division and 116th Infantry Regiment will be remembered June 6 on the 66th anniversary of the D-Day Invasion that helped bring the end to World War II, Soldiers from the Virginia Guard's Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment are serving the cause of freedom in Iraq.

"As we pause to remember the incredible sacrifices of the greatest generation on D-Day, I can assure you that we need no reminders here about the courage and character of Virginia's sons," said Lt. Col. Scott Smith, commander of 1st Battalion. "I am privileged to serve with them. Their dedication and commitment to this mission makes for a daily reminder of the character of today's military men and women."

After mobilizing for federal active duty with just over 70 days advance notice, the battalion, also known as Task Force Overlord, conducted a transfer of authority ceremony April 9, 2010, to officially begin their mission of convoy security for logistics convoys consisting of food and fuel. The battalion serves with the Louisiana Army National Guard's 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

"Our missions consist of escorting commodity vehicles of food and fuel to and from major U.S. operating bases within Iraq," Smith said. "A typical convoy consists of approximately 30-40 tractor trailers and fuel tankers, and every day Soldiers from Task Force Overlord conduct convoy security operations with the shortest route spanning over 200 miles one way."

Smith said a normal day lasts between 18-20 hours when executing a convoy security mission, and on average a Soldier

conducts one of these missions every five to six days. When the Soldiers are not on the road they are preparing and maintaining their vehicles and weapons for the next mission, he said.

Despite the grueling hours, morale in the task force is high. "I've traveled several times with our convoys, and I'm always impressed with the steadfast professionalism and focus of our units and their Soldiers," Smith said. "Laughter and a sense of humor is another indicator of the morale of a unit and we have both in spades, and all this in spite of the sand storms and temperatures in excess of 100 degrees."

The battalion has collectively traveled more than 30,000 miles and delivered over 1,500 trucks to various locations without incident.

Smith said each mission is treated like it is the very first time to ensure everyone stays focused. "Great care is given to preparing the security vehicles for the lengthy move and ensuring all systems are operating as they are intended to ensure the safe delivery of both the cargo being escorted and the Soldiers manning our escort vehicles," he said.

One of the biggest challenges for the unit has been maintenance on the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles Soldiers drive on a daily basis, and mechanically-inclined Soldiers were identified to form a makeshift maintenance team. "To date they have maintained our vehicles to a standard that has exceeded other units with qualified and trained Army mechanics," Smith said.

Support from family, friends and communities back home has been a key element of the unit's success by organizing food drives, preparing and sending morale packages and keeping family members informed. "Our Family Readiness Group and State Family Programs have provided a world-class support program for our Soldiers and their families," Smith said.

## 203d RED HORSE helps with project on Arizona Navajo Reservation

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Virginia National Guard Airmen from the Virginia Beach-based 203d RED HORSE Squadron kicked off a special civil engineering project May 18 for renovation and construction work at St. Michaels Association for Special Education in Window Rock, Ariz. The 36 Airmen spent their two-week annual training period working on the project and returned to Virginia May 29.

“When you work on a project like this, you enjoy doing it because of why you are doing it and who you are doing it for,” said Lt. Col. Peter Garner, commander of the 203d RED HORSE.

The project is part of the National Guard’s Innovative Readiness Training program, a civil-military affairs program which links military units with civilian communities for a variety of humanitarian projects.

The SMASE campus serves as a school and home for approximately 80 Navajo children and young adults with severe debilitating conditions. This school is the only certified special education school on the Navajo Reservation and is continuing to draw students from the four corners region of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah.

The groundbreaking ceremony conducted May 18 featured the unveiling of a Virginia flag that represented the move from the design phase of the project to the actual construction, Garner said. Civil engineers from the Colorado Guard spent months developing the project plans, and Virginia Guard engineers are the first of five different teams that will work on the project over the next 12 weeks.

Garner said the groundbreaking ceremony was a touching and emotional event that featured several speakers from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and also included a parent of a student who spoke about the importance of the school in their child’s life. The ceremony also featured remarks from a former Navajo code talker.

For the Airmen of the 203d, the project

started with a four-day, 2,200-mile convoy from Virginia to Arizona to get important engineer equipment and tools on site. The other equipment needed for the project was rented locally.

According Maj. Jeffrey E. Getz, officer in charge of the project, work was completed on the demolition of a condemned dining facility and most of the debris was sorted and removed from the site. The Airmen also met their goal for the excavation, site grading and pouring foundation for a new nurse’s station for the school.

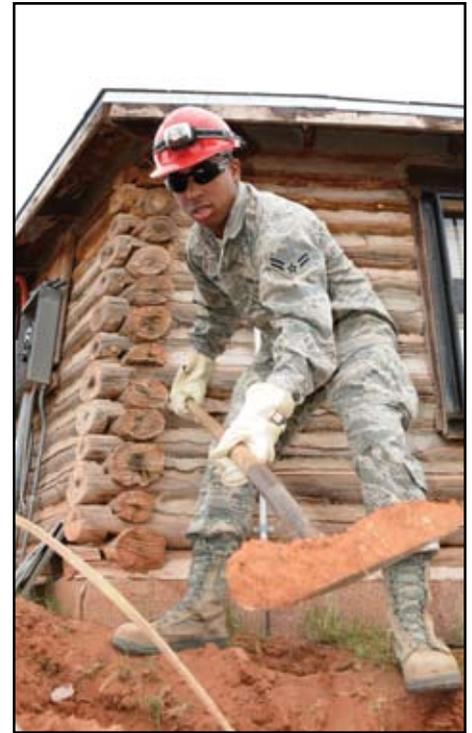
In addition to the work on the nurse’s station, Airmen from the 203d upgraded wiring in existing facilities that in some cases was more than 30 years old, put new shingles on existing buildings, relocated three sheds from nurse’s station site to other sites on campus, graded approximately two miles of roadway and cleared and graded around eight culverts.

The IRT program leverages hands-on proficiency training to benefit both the Air Guard and the community. The Air Guard receives much needed on-the-job training which ensures they are ready to perform when called upon for local or overseas missions.

This arrangement involves support from the Air Guard IRT teams who provide design support, labor, and equipment while SMASE provides the materials for the infrastructure projects.

“Our engineers get great hands on training in all the different career fields, and we get training on our war-time tasks of construction projects,” Garner said. “Electricians are pulling wire and redoing electrical boxes, plumbers are reworking plumbing lines and sewer lines, structures troops are renovating buildings and constructing concrete walls and footers, and equipment operators are getting much needed stick time on heavy equipment.”

“The best IRT marriage is when it satisfies several different mission essential task lists training requirements and has the secondary benefit to large impact to the community that we serve in that’s the perfect marriage for an IRT marriage,” said Master Sgt. Charles Stoyer, IRT Project Coordinator, ANG Readiness Center.



U.S. Air Force Photo by Master Sgt. Jerry Bynum

**Airman First Class Avian Jones of the 203rd RED HORSE Squadron digs a trench for a power conduit May 18 at St. Michaels Association for Special Education campus in Window Rock, Ariz.**

“We are helping people that truly can’t help themselves in an area that has a depressed economy we are stimulating the local economy just by our presence here and also helping the customer, everything we do here will certainly touch and improve their quality of life,” said Stoyer.

The IRT mission at SMASE will help the campus continue to play a vital role in the Navajo community. Without this educational campus and the special care it provides, many special need children and young adults of the Navajo Nation would not receive the education and treatment they require.

“By maintaining special education best practices and keeping a family and Navajo centered environment, St. Michaels provides a home close to home for handicapped children and adults on the reservation who otherwise would have to trek to Phoenix to get the level of education, therapy, and medical care needed,” concluded Gillis Chapela, director of SMASE.

*Additional reporting by by Air Force Master Sgt. Jerry Bynum, National Guard Bureau*

## Va. Medical Command supports war, 1 Soldier at a time

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

When Soldiers in the Virginia Army National Guard get deployed, it is usually at the company, battalion or brigade level surrounded by peers with whom they have developed strong camaraderie and esprit de corps. But this is seldom the case for the Soldiers who augment these deployments as healthcare providers.

The Virginia Army Guard has deployed 11 healthcare providers overseas since January 2009 and several more are scheduled to be deployed this year. Only three of them were attached to units from within the Virginia Guard.

The doctors, dentists, physician assistants, flight surgeons and many other healthcare providers of the Virginia National Guard deploy as individuals, meeting up with their units overseas, where they must assimilate into the units in a short period of time. Oftentimes, they are attached to other units from other states or active duty units where they know almost no one.

"The challenge for us is that we are with the unit for such a short period of time. The unit is really set in place by the time we arrive," said Col. Thomas McCune, the Virginia Guard state surgeon who recently returned from his third deployment to Balad, Iraq with the Indiana-based 38th Combat Aviation Brigade. "We're asked to join the unit and become part of the unit very quickly, do our mission as best we can during that time and then we get pulled back off the mission."

"Deploying as a healthcare provider means being attached to whatever unit needs a doc. Sometimes that's your own unit, sometimes it's another Guard unit from your state and sometimes it's a unit you've never heard of," said Lt. Col. Robert Mancini, a flight surgeon from Virginia who has deployed four times. "No matter who you are assigned to, you always deploy as an individual – you never deploy with the unit, you meet them in theater."

The typical deployment period for these Soldiers with unique skills sets is 90 to 180 days, according to 1st Lt. Natalie Olson, operations officer for the Virginia



*Courtesy photo*

**Lt. Col. Robert Mancini looks into the mouth of an Iraqi villager during a Medical Civil Affairs Patrol in Iraq in Feb 2005. Mancini is one of 11 Virginia Guard healthcare providers who have deployed overseas to support military operations.**

Medical Command. Doctors and dentists are usually deployed for 90 days and physician assistants 180 days, compared to the average 12-month schedule for traditional Guard Soldiers.

Another difference in the deployment cycle is the mobilization period of the doctors, dentists, and PAs. The provider's mobilization period is seven days, while the average Soldier will spend approximately one to two months at a mobilization station somewhere in the United States preparing for combat before heading overseas.

"The pre-mob training is a one-week process at Fort Benning [Ga.]," according to Mancini. "It involves equipment issue, qualifying on the shooting range, a Soldier Readiness Program to get your family, financial and legal affairs in order and medical screening including vaccines. It also involves a lot of briefings relevant to the theater you're deploying to."

"The demobilization process is simply the reverse; equipment turn-in, medical screening and briefings on benefits."

As with every Soldier that deploys overseas, the health care professionals also leave their civilian jobs and businesses behind. When they return it is important to integrate the experiences they had overseas into their daily lives back home in Virginia.

"The most [being deployed] has done," said Mancini, "is to help put things in perspective; no matter how bad a day it is at work today, it beats being shot at. It has made me a calmer, more mature and more confident person."

"I'm more likely to deal with stress and the decision-making process in a professional manner and less likely to get caught up in the rat race."

Virginia has continually provided able-bodied Soldiers to fill these roles for the last 10 years and will continue to meet mission requirements until the mission is complete.

"Most of our MDs have deployed at least once since 9/11. Several have deployed three times and one deployed for a total of 18 months," said McCune. "We have supported all but one of the in-state medical deployment requirements. Our MDs have mostly supported the medical needs of other states' National Guard units. Several of our dentists have deployed and our PAs are deploying at increasing rates."

"The majority of the health care providers in the military are out of the Reserves and the Guard," McCune added. "You can't have the full mobilization of America without the medical assets of the Guard and Reserve."

## Engineers crush rock, learn to cut down trees

By Capt. Matt Nowak  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The 157th Engineer Platoon (Quarry Detachment) conducted its annual training at Fort Pickett, May 9-19 to work on a variety of engineer specific tasks.

The Fort Pickett-based platoon has only been in existence since 2006 but is making strides in its growth, with both manpower and its skill sets.

Many of the Soldiers from the platoon deployed as part of the 180th Engineers to Iraq in 2009. They are now getting reintegrated with the unit and will continue their military educational requirements.

“Our primary mission is to provide crushed stone for MTC (Maneuver Training Center). If we are ever in theater, then we would provide such materials to our area of operations and higher command,” said platoon leader 1st Lt. Michael Schaeffer. “We are currently trying to build on basic soldiering skills and engineer skills.”

The unit ultimately works for the MTC commander, Col. Tom Wilkinson, but will get tasks from the installation’s Department of Public Works. Like many units in the Virginia Guard, the 157th can be called into state active duty and be deployed overseas.

The platoon’s two primary jobs are 21E (Heavy Construction Equipment Operator) and 21G (Quarry Specialist).

“Filling the unit has been a challenge in itself,” Schaeffer said. “With no maintenance attached organically to the unit, my main focus has been on selecting two or three current Soldiers with working knowledge and expertise in the maintenance arena. I have also tried tying in on the 21B (Combat Engineer) specialty to bring their experience in the big picture. I personally feel that by combining the different specialties, the unit will be better prepared when it comes to facing challenges.”

For their annual training, Soldiers of the 157th trained on a



*Photos by Capt. Matt Nowak, Virginia Army National Guard*

**Soldiers from the 157th Engineer Platoon (Quarry Detachment) learn proper chainsaw safety and usage as part of their annual training May 14 at Fort Pickett.**



**Representatives from Fort Pickett’s Fire Department and Forestry Department taught the day-long course on chainsaw use and safety.**

wide variety of events and had a packed training schedule. They completed weapons qualification, convoy operations, quarry operations, heavy construction equipment operations, basic weapons familiarization, mission briefings, an operations order class, and drivers training.

Included in the list of engineer tasks was conducting a chainsaw familiarization class. The class was taught by Hylton Haynes from the Fort Pickett Forestry Department and Edwin Foster from the Fort Pickett Fire Department. The full-day class provided the Soldiers with basic knowledge of chainsaw use with an emphasis on safety. The purpose is to add to their capabilities for working on Fort Pickett and potential state active duty missions, similar to what the 276th Engineer Battalion did during Hurricane Isabel in 2003.

As their annual training came to its final days the 157th Soldiers were able to get a day performing their primary mission of operating heavy equipment and quarry operations. Their annual training was capped off with close quarters marksmanship at the urban assault course.

Every Soldier that attended will follow on and attend the Combat Lifesaver Course at Virginia’s 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute.

# 237th Engineers prepare for CERFP evaluation

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The West Point-based 237th Engineer Company rehearsed their confined space, search and extraction, shoring, breaching and breaking, and rope extraction missions at Fort Pickett's military operations in urban terrain site from June 5-11 in preparation for an external evaluation June 18 at the Henrico Fire Academy where they worked in conjunction with more than 350 emergency responders.

"We're down here this week proving our skills and doing our final last shakedown," said Capt. Jonathan York, commander of the 237th.

The Soldiers of the 237th trained at Fort Pickett for their two-week annual training period with the exercise as the culmination. They have been training as a key element of the commonwealth's Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear High Yield Explosive Emergency Response Force Package, known as the CERFP (pronounced surf-p).

"It's a homeland security mission we have here in Virginia," said York. "We assist the local authorities whenever there is any type of natural disaster or man made incident that happens within the commonwealth of Virginia and beyond."

"Having these capabilities within the commonwealth will give the first-responders and civil authorities' additional enhancements to conduct a myriad of operations in multiple environments including chemical, biological, and radiological affected areas to rescue citizens of the commonwealth," he added.

The CERFP can conduct tasks associated with search and extraction, mass decontamination, medical triage and treatment and incident management.

The force is made up of Soldiers and Airmen from Virginia Guard units based in Richmond, West Point, Hampton, Norfolk, Rocky Mount, Danville, Virginia Beach, and Langley Air Force Base.

While at Fort Pickett, the 237th had the opportunity to test their skills and equipment in actual rubble and debris piles at the MOUT site where Soldiers portraying trapped victims lay waiting to be discovered and rescued by the unit.

"This is some of the most realistic training these Soldiers have ever done," York said. "The facilities here at the MOUT site are outstanding. We have all the equipment and tools that we would be using during a real incident."

While maneuvering across the rubble pile, the Soldiers donned full suits complete with hoods, boots, masks, gloves and respirators to protect them from potentially contaminated environments while searching the area for potential survivors.

They used equipment such as thermal imagers, acoustic listening devices, specialized pole/snake cameras, acetylene torches, pneumatic scissors or "the jaws of life," jackhammers and sledgehammers to locate and free the victims from their simulated confinements.

"We got fully suited up and went out there," said Spc. Darrell Busquets, a Soldier in the 237th. "We are the recon team, so we're the first ones out conducting reconnaissance and making sure that



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

**A Soldier from the 237th Engineer Company uses an acetylene torch to cut through steel during a search and rescue operation at Fort Pickett June 10. The Soldiers discovered several role-player casualties while searching the rubble pile during the exercise.**

we find who is alive and prioritize the likelihood of them surviving, and getting the rescue team out here as soon as possible."

The Soldiers understand the magnitude of their role in these operations and are fully ready to respond in case of a serious natural disaster or should the commonwealth witness another terrorist attack as it did on Sept. 11, 2001.

"We have plenty of examples of why [we train for this]. The Oklahoma City bombing is a good example," said Busquets. "At the World Trade Center they had a lot of individuals go up there and dig through rubble piles."

"We are always expecting another event to occur and it's always good to be trained prior to the event."

"The question isn't if, but when another incident will occur. As Guardsmen of the commonwealth we must be vigilant and stand ready to answer our citizen's call in their darkest hour," York said.



**A Soldier from the 237th Engineer Company uses high tech equipment to search for survivors in a rubble pile after a simulated disaster during annual training June 10 at Fort Pickett.**

# 116th BCT units wrap up annual training a

## From Staff Reports

Virginia Guard Soldiers from various units throughout the Staunton-based 116th Brigade Combat Team converged on Fort Pickett June 5- 25 for three weeks of annual training. All units also participated in new equipment fielding and training, Equal Opportunity classes, Unit Movement Officer classes, driver's training and Combat Lifesaver training, among others. In addition to individual weapons qualification and individual Army Warrior Tasks, Soldiers from the BCT trained on a number of different skill sets at the squad, platoon and company level.

"I don't recall an AT where we've been able to successfully complete this many challenging and relevant training events," said Lt. Col. William Zana, former commander of the 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team and brigade officer in charge for the Fort Pickett training. "In part because of having three weeks instead of the normal two, but more importantly because the junior leaders and Soldiers really made great use of excellent training facilities, available time and resources, and seized the opportunity."

Because much of the BCT's senior staff was at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa., for training, the three weeks at Fort Pickett offered a great opportunity for junior leaders to assume additional responsibilities and perform at higher levels, according to Zana.

"Everyone has really done a superb job and stepped up their performance," he said.

Soldiers from the Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry



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

**Soldiers from the Danville-based Headquarters Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team compete in the Connelly Competition for excellence in food preparation during annual training at Fort Pickett, Va., June 14, 2010.**

Regiment conducted a mortar live fire exercise, a convoy live fire exercise and improvised explosive device training. The unit offered its Soldiers the opportunity to work on land navigation skills, Humvee rollover training and the rappel tower. The battalion's units also participated in live-fire shoot-house training, road marches, and its Scouts trained on their sniper weapon systems.

"When we went to the shoot house, we were there until we couldn't be there anymore. You could really see the progression," said 1st Sgt. Charles Lathrop, Company C, 3-116th. "By watching the video in the after action review you could see how good they looked. You would never know they were National Guard and they do this only one weekend a month."

Troops from 3-116th also had the opportunity to conduct an air assault operation, where they flew in on CH-47 Chinook helicopters to secure their objectives. The operation was the culmination of their training and focused on multiple companies working together.

"This annual training has been pretty much up to the company commanders to take their units and work them from individual level training all the way up to collective level training at platoon level," said Command Sgt. Maj. Alan Ferris, command sergeant major of the 3-116th. "As an infantry battalion, this is where we make our money. We have junior leaders, our NCOs, out and they have a chance to actually run their teams and run their squads and their platoons, especially in live-fire exercises. That's where they really learn to do what they need to do in combat operations."

"This is probably, at the company level, one of the best annual trainings we've had," Ferris added.



**Soldiers of the Charlottesville-based Company C, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team practice loading and unloading casualties on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter in preparation for a mass casualty exercise June 16.**

# at Fort Pickett

In addition to their Army Warrior Tasks, such as land navigation, individual weapons qualification and urban operations, Soldiers of the Hampton-based 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery performed weapons emplacement drills, urban tactical training, including an urban IED lane, and entry control point operations. The battalion also conducted Army Combatives training during the annual training period, where its Soldiers had the opportunity to improve their hand-to-hand combat skills.

The Danville-based 429th Brigade Support Battalion offered its Soldiers the opportunity to become familiar with a number of different weapons. Soldiers from the battalion fired the M-2 .50 caliber machine gun, the M-240B machine gun, the M-249 squad automatic weapon and the new M-320 grenade launcher.

Soldiers from Headquarters Company, 429th BSB also used their annual training to stake their claim as one of the Army's best food service organizations. The unit competed in the Philip A. Connelly Competition for excellence in Army Food Service.

The Charlottesville-based Company C, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, used annual training to prepare the company for combat health support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. During the second week of AT, the Soldiers of Charlie Med deployed to the military operations in urban terrain site, where they established field medical operations. They also conducted a mass casualty exercise, where nearly 40 "casualties" were triaged, transported via air or ground, treated, and transferred to higher echelon. Two days later, the Soldiers also conducted a night time mass casualty exercise. Company C also conducted combat medic lanes and graduated 41 combat lifesavers for the 429th BSB.

The Soldiers of Company C also provided real-world medical support to other 116th BCT units on the ground at Fort Pickett. In all, they treated more than 250 real-world patients during the three-week period while simultaneously conducting training operations and support missions.

The 429th BSB performed an incredible amount of maintenance and services on many equipment items helping to improve the overall readiness rate of the BCT, according to Zana. The unit also completed all of its training while continuing to provide logistic support to all of the other units in the brigade. As an example, Soldiers from the 429th BSB completed 107 vehicle repairs, served more than 9,000 meals, and drove more than 20,000 miles during annual training.

"The units have really enjoyed an incredible variety of great training opportunities, ranging from live-fire shoot-house, urban training, and complex collective training scenarios, to weapons qualification, counter-IED, and a myriad of other tasks," Zana said.



**Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery, 116th Brigade Combat Team put down their howitzers and picked up their rifles to qualify on their individual weapons during annual training at Fort Pickett, Va., June 16, 2010. The Soldiers of the 111th focused on Army Warrior Tasks during the annual training.**

"They've also worked in close cooperation with one another to cross-level workloads and opportunities - benefitting all."

"Our Soldiers possess outstanding deployment experiences and we see them leveraging what they've learned in combat operations to ensure they get the most out of their limited training time," he added. "The investment they're making during AT through their continued hard work and dedication will definitely pay great dividends during their next activation."



**Soldiers of the Hampton-based 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery, 116th Brigade Combat Team engage in hand-to-hand combat at Fort Pickett June 22, 2010 during their three-week annual training.**