



Photo courtesy of Army Aviation Support Facility

Lt. Col. Bob Tamplet and Jeanie Booker present Jennifer Huebner (right) of the College of William & Mary with the first Staff Sgt. Darryl Booker Scholarship Award at the Army Aviation Support Facility. Booker was one of two Virginia Guard Soldiers killed Jan. 20, 2007 in a helicopter crash in Iraq. The local aviation chapter sponsored a scholarship in his name and the recipients of the award are selected by the National Army Aviation Association of America scholarship committee.

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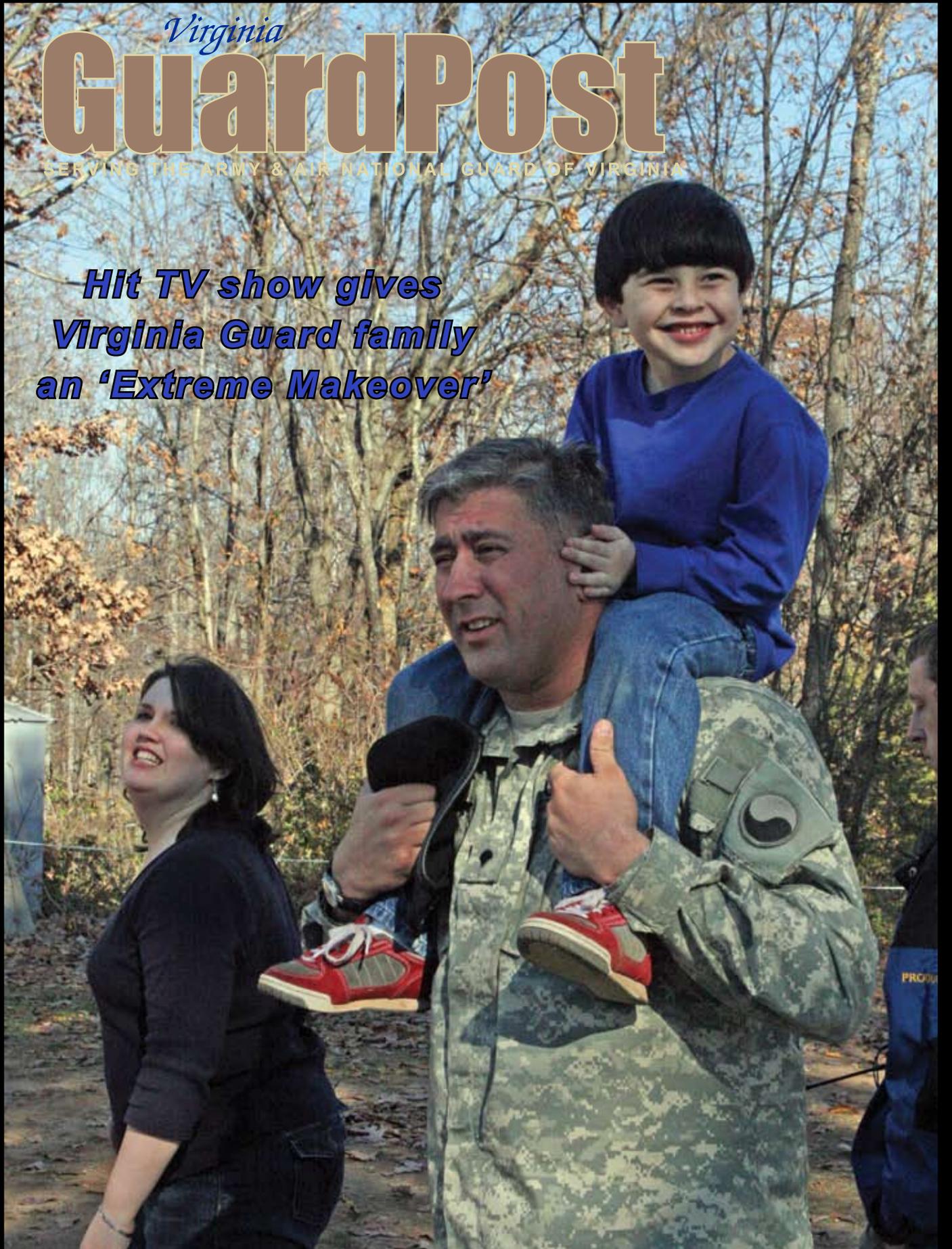
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***Hit TV show gives
Virginia Guard family
an 'Extreme Makeover'***



NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2007



FROM THE TOP



Ordinary people performing extraordinary duties

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

As we look back on 2007, we see numerous examples of how the Virginia National Guard continues to serve not only as the Commonwealth's Guardian but also to defend the ideals of democracy all over the world.

This year was a year of homecomings and departures for Virginia Guard units serving overseas.

In January, we welcomed home the 654th Military Police Company after serving over a year in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation returned home from Iraq in February after flying more than 18,000 flight hours supporting Marine Aircraft Group 16.

In November, the 29th Infantry Division colors returned home, and more than 400 Virginia Citizen-Soldiers were reunited with friends and family after the successful completion of the KFOR 8 peacekeeping mission in Kosovo.

Nearly 2,000 Soldiers and Airmen are deployed all over the world in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and other Homeland Defense missions. Each of us should keep these great patriots and their families in our thoughts and prayers until they return.



Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.

The Virginia Air Guard reached a major milestone as the 192nd Fighter Wing completed its move to Langley Air Force Base and its integration with the 1st Fighter Wing.

Here at home, the Virginia National Guard continues to prove its readiness to respond to any threat to our homeland security. We continued our close coordination with state and local governments to make sure the Virginia Guard is always ready to respond in the event of natural disaster or to defend Virginia and the rest of our nation.

The 29th Infantry Division conducted an exercise in April at the State Military Reservation to practice a response to a hurricane scenario with local authorities and first responders, and in September, the Virginia Guard held the Vigilant Guard exercise to better prepare for any possible threat to the National Capital Region.

These exercises are critical to our ability to effectively respond when called, and we will continue these types of exercises in 2008. We will even broaden the scope, and to improve our ability to assist fellow states, we plan to coordinate with South Carolina for another Vigilant Guard exercise.

In 2008, the Virginia National Guard will continue to be a vital part of our nation's Global War on Terror, and we will continue to train and prepare for our homeland defense mission.

I want to thank each and every Soldier and Airman, as well as our civilian staff, for your continued service. I also ask each of you to remember to thank your families and employers for their continued support of our service, which is critical to our success.

Each of us should feel a great sense of pride when we reflect on the many accomplishments of the Virginia National Guard in 2007, and we should look forward to 2008 as an opportunity to continue our service as the Commonwealth's Guardians.

Virginia National Guard Federal Deployments

# *	Unit	Where Deployed	Home Town
160	A Co., 116th Brigade Special Troops Battalion	Iraq	Fredericksburg
140	HHC, 116th IBCT	Iraq	Staunton
170	A Co., E Co., 429th Brigade Support Battalion	Kuwait	South Boston and Roanoke
420	2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry	Kuwait	Various Locations
750	3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment	Kuwait	Various Locations
110	237th Engineer Company	Iraq	West Point
1	192nd Fighter Wing	Antarctica	Langley Air Force Base
1	192nd Operations Support Flight	Qatar	Langley Air Force Base
1	JFHQ Virginia Air	Iraq	Sandston
25	Various Va. Air Guard Units	Homeland Defense/OIF/OER Support	Various Locations

* All listings for numbers of Soldiers/Airmen are approximate as of January 5, 2008

Remembering Virginia Guardsmen in World War I

By CW2 John W. Listman, Jr. (Ret.)
former Virginia Guard Command Historian

As we all follow the progress of fellow Virginians who are serving on battlefields in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is important to also reflect on those who served in the past and honor their sacrifice too.

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the Commonwealth's participation in combat in France in World War I. To do this the Virginia National Guard Historical Collection located at Fort Pickett has produced a traveling photo exhibit of seven panels highlighting each of the major commands that served during the war.

These commands were the 29th Division, first organized during the war and perpetuated today by the 29th Infantry Division (Light), and the 116th Infantry and 111th Field Artillery, which also currently serve.

In addition there were several units organized during the

conflict whose designations are unfamiliar today. These were Batteries B and F, 60th Artillery Battalion, neither of whom are perpetuated; and the 117th Train and Military Police, 42nd (Rainbow) Division, elements of which continue to serve in the Virginia Guard today.

In addition to the units that served, one panel describes some of the men who earned awards for their valor in battle. Foremost of these was Sgt. Earle D. Gregory, the first Virginia Guardsman awarded the Medal of Honor.

Along with him are cited the names and some of the stories and images of the 34 Guardsmen awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

The exhibit features copies of period photographs, artwork and images of objects held in the Virginia National Guard Historical Collection. It is currently on display at the Joint Force Headquarters, Building 316, Fort Pickett.

The exhibit is available for loan. For more information contact Beverly Boyko at (434) 292-1912 or bboyko@vt.edu.

Funeral Honors Program serves those who served

By Alfred T. Grigler
Virginia Funeral Honors Program

Virginia has a new and growing program. The Virginia Funeral Honors Program ensures that all that all eligible members of the military, whether veteran, retiree, active duty, National Guard, or Reservist, receive all the military honors they so justly deserve.

The Virginia funeral honors teams are the most professional, highly trained, dedicated and committed Soldiers in the United States Army and the National Guard.

These Soldiers train and prepare themselves and their uniforms to a high state of readiness. Their meticulous attention to detail doesn't go unnoticed by family members.

When speaking with any of the team members, the first thing that emerges from the conversation is a dedication, commitment, respect, and a devotion to duty. These Soldiers provide the most professional and dignified honors a family member could ever imagine.

The funeral honors team attended the Virginia Funeral Directors Convention in Virginia Beach and demonstrated its abilities and capabilities. The funeral directors and attendees were truly impressed. The team cohesion, precision and professionalism



Courtesy photo

Soldiers from the Virginia Funeral Honors Program are prepared to honor military members who have served their country.

were truly exemplified.

The Virginia funeral honors teams will provide honors at the family member's request through their local funeral director.

There is no financial obligation to the family, just a simple phone call from the funeral director to the funeral honors coordinator.

Currently there are two funeral honor teams. One is stationed at the Gate City Amory and the other at Fort Pickett.

In the near future there will be additional teams formed in Martinsville, Tidewater, and the Pulaski/Christiansburg area.

The program is always attempting to recruit Soldiers with enthusiasm, integrity, and a zest to be the best to provide an opportunity to give back to others.

If any Soldiers want additional information on the program they can email Alfred Grigler at alfred.t.grigler@us.army.mil or call (434) 298-5331 or (434) 294-0954.

News Briefs

F-22s at Langley receive full operational capability status

F-22 Raptors at Langley Air Force Base reached full operational capability Dec. 12, said Gen. John D.W. Corley, the commander of Air Combat Command.

The announcement officially makes Langley's F-22 squadrons combat ready.

FOC for the F-22 means the aircraft are now ready for global engagement, said Lt. Col. Mark Hansen, the Air Combat Command F-22 integration officer.

"Crews are now (fully) organized, trained, equipped and ready for the joint fight," he said.

Since the F-22s reached initial operational capability two years ago, the 1st Fighter Wing and the Air National Guard's 192nd Fighter Wing have dedicated time and resources into finding how to best use and maintain the world's most advanced fighter. The fighter has deployed and trained across the world to define and refine its capabilities and tactics.

The 1st FW has been training for the wartime mission since the F-22 went IOC, said Brig. Gen. Mark A. Barrett, the 1st FW commander. Langley AFB's F-22s were declared IOC in December 2005, making them capable of some combat operations such as homeland defense.

"We are available to be tasked at any time, to do whatever our nation requires," General Barrett said. The 1st and 192nd Fighter Wings will continue to baseline the F-22 so the rest of the fleet can learn from their experience, he said.

Even though the F-22 has reached FOC, Airmen at Langley AFB will continue training to get better every day, said Col. Jay Pearsall, the 192nd FW commander.

"There's no change in training," he said. "Everybody is working hard, and we're ready to go to war, (on) deployments or on exercises."

The F-22's unique combination of stealth, speed, agility, precision and situational awareness, combined with air-to-air and air-to-ground combat capabilities, gives the airframe numerous advantages over any potential adversary.

-(Air Combat Command Public Affairs)

2nd, 183rd Cav commander spreads holiday cheer



Courtesy Photo

Lt. Col. Walt Mercer, commander of 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry, greets one of his Soldiers during the unit's Christmas Reception Dec. 15 in Kuwait. The reception was held in the squadron conference room which had been cleared out and decorated for the season. It was organized by the unit's ministry team. Soldiers of the squadron were greeted by the commander and command sergeant major, received a Christmas card from unit leadership and received a Task Force Saber t-shirt donated by Virginia Dominion Power. Soldiers were also treated to holiday music, food and a slide show of photos from the unit's activities since they arrived in theater.

Defense Dept. engages Congress for full 3.5 percent troop pay raise

Military members will receive a 3 percent pay raise effective Jan. 1, 2008, as President Bush urges Congress to revise some provisions regarding Iraq contained in the fiscal 2008 National Defense Authorization Act.

The president authorized the 3 percent pay raise in an executive order. The act includes authorization for a 0.5 percent additional pay raise for U.S. troops, but the president has, for now, elected not to sign the defense authorization bill in its present form while Congress is adjourned, a practice known as a "pocket veto."

On Dec. 28, President Bush announced his displeasure with some language pertaining to Iraq in the current version

of the act, according to White House documents released that day. The president said he won't sign off on the bill until it is revised. Congress is now on its holiday recess.

In a statement, the president urged Congress "to ensure that any provisions affecting servicemember pay and bonuses, as well as provisions extending expiring authorities, are retroactive to January 1, 2008."

The (Defense) Department will work closely with Congress toward the 3.5 percent pay raise effective Jan. 1, as originally envisioned in the bill," Bill Carr, deputy undersecretary of defense for military personnel policy, said in a statement.

"Likewise," Carr's statement continued, "we will work to ensure the final bill features no interruption of bonus authorities."

-(American Forces Press Service)



Virginia GuardPost



SERVING THE ARMY AND AIR GUARD OF VIRGINIA

NOVEMBER- DECEMBER 2007

On the Cover



Spc. Michael Lucas and his family celebrate after finding out they were chosen by "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" to receive a new home. (Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Va. Guard Public Affairs)

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29th Army Band concerts help ring in holiday season

From Staff Sources

The holiday spirit arrived a little sooner this year thanks to the Virginia Army National Guard's 29th Army Band. The Soldiers of the band were joined by the Fishburne Military School's Men Chorale and two local singers for the "Virginia National Guard Holiday Celebration," a series of holiday concerts Nov. 27-30 in four Virginia communities.

The four concerts, which were free and open to the local community, were held in Abingdon, Staunton, Danville and Richmond.

Each of the performances was an opportunity for the Virginia Guard to express their sincere appreciation for the community's support during the past year, according to Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia.

The community's care, concern and outreach to Virginia Guardsmen and their families have been instrumental in the Virginia Guard accomplishing its mission, both overseas and at home, according to Newman.

Newman and his wife Becky attended the concerts and personally thanked many of those in attendance for their support.

The music included such popular holiday tunes as "Sleigh Ride," "White Christmas," "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer," "Deck the Halls," and "Jingle Bells."

Following each hour long concert, the churches hosted a reception with drinks, snacks and a visit from Santa Claus.



Concertgoers in Danville packed North Main Street Baptist Church for the performance by the 29th Army Band.



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Hampton, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The 29th Army Band performs holiday music Nov. 29 at North Main Street Baptist Church in Danville. It was the third of four consecutive nights of performances by the Soldier musicians.



Santa and Mrs. Claus surprise the crowd with an appearance at the Nov. 30 performance at Swift Creek Baptist Church in Richmond.

School opening brightens the future for Iraqi children

By Spc. Jaime Avila
1st BCT, 82nd Airborne Division PAO

MUHAMMAD AL MANSHAD, Iraq – The children of Iraq are the future and a leading factor in developing the country. The opening of a new school is always a sign of aspiration for Iraq and her people.

“For the children and parents it means hope, hope for the children’s future... education is the key to them having a quality and prosperous future,” said Lt. Col. Gregory M. Barrow, a Fort Worth, Texas native and commander of the 3rd Battalion, 144th Infantry Regiment.

In addition to giving the children optimism for their future, this event also helps them see that Iraq and Coalition Forces are trying to make their future better. It shows them how a government is supposed to work for them.

“More than anything, I think this gives the children the chance to see how the system is supposed to work with a direct impact on them. I also hope that they can see that having a clean, functional school helps them learn and enjoy going to school,” said Capt. Ryan E. Thompson, a Richmond, Va., native and commander for A Company, 116th BSTB.

Virginia National Guard troops from A Company, 116th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division recently had the opportunity to help with the opening of a school in Muhammad al Manshad, Iraq.

“I thought the school opening was a success. It displayed how with the cooperation of the local government, the sheiks, school officials and the assistance of coalition forces, they can produce a quality end result, which these children will be able to enjoy for



Photo by Spc. Jaime Avila, 1st BCT, 82nd Airborne Div. PAO

Iraqi children sing for coalition forces at the new school opening in Muhammad al Manshad, Iraq. During the ceremony, children sang songs, read poems and handed cake and candy to the Soldiers and guests in attendance.

several years,” said Barrow.

The opening of this school gives the children of Muhammad al Manshad an education to look forward to in a new school.

“I think it certainly is a step in the right direction. The fact that the local population asked for this project, conducted the construction work and had so many of the local sheiks in attendance, demonstrated that they truly are trying to make a difference in this particular area of operations,” said Thompson.

The Iraqi people took the lead in this project, showing Iraq is becoming a more independent and resourceful country.

“Alpha Company, 116th BSTB, who is attached to us, has been assisting and facilitating the contracts and the construction of that school, but it is a 100 percent funded and built Iraqi project,” said Barrow.

Thompson and his men also helped with opening of the school by providing security while the children, school personnel and Soldiers attended the school’s opening ceremony.

“I think it is important to remember why we are here in Iraq. Our purpose is to help provide security so that Iraq can build their government and eventually take over all of the functions of government that is expected of them. Any helping hand we can give them is always encouraging,” said Thompson.

During the ceremony, children sang songs, read poems and handed cake and candy to the Soldiers and guests in attendance.

“I thought it was absolutely incredible. I was impressed by the presentation that the principal, teachers and school children put on. You could see the pride in their faces and how excited they were to show off their school and what they have learned. It was done very well and it was very rewarding to see that kind of progress in this area,” said Thompson.



Photo by Spc. Jaime Avila, 1st BCT, 82nd Airborne Div. PAO

A young Iraqi boy sings for coalition forces at the new school opening ceremony.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Raul Rivera, JASG Public Affairs

More than 200 runners participated in the 116th Infantry Brigade 5K run Nov. 10 in Baghdad. The run was held as part of the celebration of the 116th Regimental Muster.

116th Inf. Regimental Muster celebrated in Virginia, Iraq

By Staff Sgt. Raul Rivera
JASG Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – On Nov. 10, with “A Tribute to the Military Family” as the theme, the annual 116th Infantry Regimental Muster was celebrated at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel in Staunton, Va.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Muster. Since the last Muster the brigade has organized and deployed 15 units making up two battalions and three separate companies from across the state.

This year’s muster was a celebration to the family members and friends left behind by all those deployed Soldiers and that have been supporting them throughout their deployments.

The Muster tradition started 265 years ago when the able-bodied men of the Shenandoah Valley met to organize what has become one of the most recognized

and historical units in the United States Army.

Over the years the Muster has continued to grow and approximately 500 people attended this year, including 15 D-Day veterans.

“I started attending the Muster 15 years ago,” said Maj. Allan W. Carter, Joint Area Support Group deputy chief of staff for personnel. “It was held in the armory with about 150 to 200 in attendance.”

This year’s Muster included various activities; there was a parade in downtown Staunton, a 5k race, a book signing, a social dinner and entertainment.

Authors Bob Slaughter and Joe Balkowski were present to sign their recently released books “Omaha Beach and Beyond” and “Beyond the Beachhead,” respectively.

“There are usually people who attend from as far away as Texas and Ohio, and

sometimes other countries. We had the mayor of a city in France attend four years ago,” said Carter.

The Muster is a long-standing tradition for the 116th Infantry Regiment and every year it is attended by former division, brigade and company commanders and sergeants major, retirees, retired dignitaries and at least 10 general officers.

On the same day, the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team currently deployed in the International Zone in Baghdad, Iraq was having its own 116th Regimental 5k Shadow Run as part of the celebration in Virginia.

The run was open to everyone that wanted to participate. In total 214 runners participated.

After the race there was a picnic for the Joint Area Support Group servicemembers hosted by Col. William R. Phillips II, the JASG Commander.

TAG visits with 116th troops in Baghdad

By Sgt. John Slosser
JASG Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General (TAG) of Virginia, and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Huffman, the state's senior enlisted advisor, touched down on Joint Area Support Group (JASG) territory on Nov. 15th.

The TAG's day-long visit to downtown

Baghdad centered on seeing the men and women of the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team stationed there.

He and Huffman traveled throughout the International Zone (IZ) in order to see the various roles and responsibilities Virginia Guardsmen fulfill for the JASG. Later in the day he spoke with the entire unit at an awards ceremony.

"It seems like only yesterday you guys

were all back home in Virginia with your feet propped up by the fire, not a thought of deploying in your mind. Then this mission came down...and Col. (William) Phillips said you could do it," said Newman.

"I'm proud that Col. Phillips and Command Sgt. Maj. (Carl) Holcomb foster a positive joint atmosphere here on your mission. When you guys come home you'll be experts in understanding and working in joint operations.

"That's just the kind of cooperation we need back home in Virginia," he added, "especially since we sit so close to our nation's capital."

Newman also took the opportunity to congratulate various award recipients.

The TAG pinned medals on the chests of several IZ Police Airmen. The fact that some of these Airmen received Army awards was of note to the "joint" minded general.

"I'm glad to see Airmen receiving Army Commendation Medals," Newman said. "I would love to see some of our Soldiers wearing Air Force Commendation medals in the future."

He also expressed sorrow for the recent loss of one of his fellow Virginia National Guardsmen due to a recent roadside bomb attack.

"Please be safe, all of you. We will be waiting for all of you to return safely home, when spring is blooming back home in Virginia."



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs

Command Sgt. Maj. Carl Holcomb presents Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman (left) and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Huffman (center) with gifts during their day-long visit to the International Zone.

New senior enlisted advisor named

From Staff Sources

Command Sgt. Maj. James D. Rogers has been selected to succeed Command Sgt. Maj. Robert W. Huffman as senior enlisted advisor for the Virginia National Guard, Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr, the Adjutant General of Virginia, announced.

Rogers will be responsible for advising the Adjutant General on all enlisted issues for the Army and Air National Guard.

He will assume his full duties on or about Feb. 1, 2008.

Rogers will be dual hatted as both the senior enlisted advisor and command sergeant major of the Virginia Army Guard, according to Newman.

Rogers spent the past six years on active duty at the United States Joint Forces Command where he deployed several times as a member of a joint staff conducting combat operations, according to Newman.

Huffman is retiring after 38 years of military service.

"Since June 1, 2001, I have served you as the state command sergeant major and more recently the senior enlisted advisor," Huffman said. "During this period our nation experienced the horrific actions taken by terrorists on 9-11 and our nation's military was called to our nation's defense. I am proud to have played my part as the senior NCO in the state during this historic period."



Command Sgt. Maj. James D. Rogers

3-116th Infantry takes over Kuwait mission

By Spc. Jason Kemp
3-116th Infantry Correspondent

CAMP PATRIOT, Kuwait – The traditional casing and uncasing of colors took place on Oct. 1 signifying a transfer of authority.

The 2nd Battalion, 142nd Field Artillery, Arkansas National Guard handed its mission over to the 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry, Virginia National Guard at Camp Patriot.

The 2nd Bn., 142nd F.A., is being replaced by 3rd Bn., 116th Inf., due to regular troop rotations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Virginia Soldiers' primary mission in Kuwait will be to provide force protection to strategic assets such as the deep water ports used as a conduit for supplies coming into theater.

The battalion will also conduct numerous other missions in conjunction with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense. The 3rd Bn., 116th Inf. also has three



Photo Sgt. David A. Begley, 3rd Bn., 116th Infantry

Lt. Col. John Epperly (right) and Command Sgt. Maj. Alan Ferris (left) uncasing the colors of the 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry at the transfer of authority ceremony Oct. 1 at Camp Patriot, Kuwait. They replaced an Arkansas National Guard unit.

of its rifle companies, roughly half the battalion, assigned to combat operations in Iraq. Their primary mission is to provide security to convoys of supply trucks.

The outgoing commander, Lt. Col. Michael Merritt, told of the unit's accomplishments.

The Arkansas troops improved the alliance with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense and Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior. They also improved upon the security of both the Kuwaiti Naval Base and the seaport of Debarkation at Ash Shuaybah according to Merritt.

Lt. Col. John Epperly, the incoming commander of the 3rd Bn., 116th Inf., said his Soldiers were up to the challenge of taking over the mission of SECFOR South.

"I look forward to working closely with our Kuwaiti friends and allies so that we can forge an even stronger alliance," Epperly said. "We deeply appreciate your hospitality, support and professionalism and you may expect our deepest commitment to be a strong partner to you as well. We also look forward to forming a great joint team with our fellow Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines over the next year so that we can defeat the enemies of freedom."



Photo Sgt. David A. Begley, 3rd Bn., 116th Infantry

Virginia Senator Jim Webb (center) speaks with Lt. Col. John Epperly (right), commander of the Virginia National Guard's 3rd Bn., 116th Inf., during a recent visit to Kuwait Naval Base.

Twins remember fallen Marine's contributions to military

By 2nd Lt. David E. Leiva
3-116th Infantry Correspondent

AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq – Two Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers were recognized here this month for their video portrayal of Ira Hamilton Hayes, one of the Marines immortalized in a Pulitzer Prize-winning photo of the American flag-raising at Iwo Jima.

Twins Eli and Seth Lovell, of B Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry, earned second place Dec. 1 in the annual American Indian Heritage Month contest, beating out six other entries with a 10-minute long montage of Hayes, the only Native American member of the six-man group captured in Joe Rosenthal's 1945 award-winning snapshot.

The event, a program of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, took place in November. It was sponsored by the 507th Corps Support Group (Airborne), a subordinate unit of the XVIII Airborne Corps. First place went to the 541st Transportation Company, a subordinate unit of the 101st Airborne Division.

The Lovells, of Staunton, Va., chose Hayes as an anecdote to introduce the contributions of Native Americans to the armed forces.

Using the late Johnny Cash's rendition of "The Ballad of Ira Hayes" as a backdrop, the video went through the highly-decorated Marine's life, whose battles with Japanese fighters were as well-documented as his fight years later with alcoholism.

"The song was so controversial, we knew it was kind of a bold presentation," said Eli Lovell, a medic and recent graduate of Bridgewater College in Bridgewater, Va. "We didn't how it was going to be received."

Immediately following their presentation, though, Command Sgt. Maj. Sultan Muhammad, the top enlisted Soldier of the 507th, hand-delivered two of his minted coins to the Lovells, a symbol



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Moore, 3rd Bn., 116th Infantry

used to improve morale, foster unit esprit de corps and honor their work.

"I don't know if you're going to win, but that was excellent," said Muhammad, one of four judges, which included the 507th commander, Col. James G. Currie Jr.

"The Ira Hayes story is an American story," said Seth Lovell, a gunner on the Armored Security Vehicle and student at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va. "There was so much information about his life; he was as familiar as Brad Pitt in the 1950s."

The Lovells had just finished reading about Hayes' exploits in James Bradley's book, an account of the six Marines whose photo on Mount Suribachi came to symbolize World War II.

Aviation troops make holiday visit to McGuire

Staff Sources

Members of the Army Aviation Support Facility visited the McGuire Veterans hospital Dec. 11, as part of their annual Christmas Party.

After the meal, Soldiers were able to visit the disabled veterans in their individual rooms and spread the Christmas cheer.

"We're often called heroes or patriots by the public," said 1st Lt. Dennis Harding. "But the men and women that are here today are the real heroes. They all put it on the line and have no regrets about answering their nation/s call."



Photo courtesy of Army Aviation Support Facility

Members of the Army Aviation Support Facility visited the McGuire Veterans hospital Dec. 11 to spread the holiday cheer with patients there.

New commander takes over 192nd Medical Group

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

In the midst of conducting physicals, giving vaccines and getting the 192nd Medical Group's functional areas up and running at Langley Air Force Base, medical group personnel, family members and distinguished guests took time out on Dec. 9 for a change of command. During a ceremony officiated by 192nd Fighter Wing commander Col. Jay Pearsall, Col. (Dr.) Gregory J. Biernacki turned over command of the 192nd Medical Group to his successor, Lt. Col. (Dr.) Thomas E. Koertge.

After passing the guidon, Biernacki took a few minutes to reminisce on his two stints as 192nd Med. Group commander and his military career as a flight surgeon that had come full circle with his return to Langley Air Force Base.

"I have the best job in the world," he said as he recalled his days as a flight surgeon for the 71st Tactical Fighter Squadron.

"My cup has runneth over," Biernacki continued. "I've had so many great mentors and colleagues and been given so many incredible opportunities as commander of the Medical Group.... The messier the situation, the more we came together. Many of you shared in those experiences

and memories."

He ended by thanking his many friends and colleagues, his family and especially his wife, Pamela.

"You are the tip of the spear and that is why each of you are here today," he said, looking across the hanger.

Biernacki will be serving in Iraq for the next four months. Upon his return, he will resume his duties as the Air Surgeon assigned to the Joint Force Headquarters-Air Component for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Koertge joined the 192nd Medical Group in 2000. He is a professor of periodontics and microbiology and immunology and vice chair of the Department of Periodontics at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry. He took to the podium saying what an honor and privilege it was to be taking command of the 192nd Medical Group, and how very rewarding it has been for him to serve his country through the National Guard.

Koertge acknowledged the many people that prepared him for his new assignment: especially his parents; Dr. Jim Rubis, who made him aware of the opportunities in the Air Guard; the support of his first Officer in Charge, Dr. Westbrook; his civilian employer Harvey Schenkein; and his wife Linda and their children.



Photo by Master Sgt. Carlos Claudio, Virginia Air Guard
Lt. Col. (Dr.) Thomas E. Koertge took command of the 192nd Medical Group during a ceremony Dec. 9 at Langley Air Force Base.

"Col. Biernacki, your leadership and the accomplishments of the 192nd Medical Group have set the standard that I hope to follow. Thank you for building the Medical Group into a model Air National Guard and Air Force organization, demonstrating how to train and perform multiple missions for both the state and nation....I salute the men and women of the 192nd Medical Group... your outstanding performance and your dedication to the mission and to our country. I look forward to serving with you as we continue the tradition of excellence that you have established."

Since 2000, the 192nd Medical Group has participated in humanitarian assistance missions in Belize and El Salvador, provided medical support during the 192nd Fighter Wing's drug interdiction deployment to Curacao, supported deployments to Southwest Asia, and was activated for a joint relief effort after Hurricane Katrina.

The 192nd Medical Group earned a high rating during its recent Health Services Inspection.

Most recently, the unit added to its response capabilities by standing up a National Guard Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) team.



Photo by Master Sgt. Carlos Claudio, Virginia Air Guard
Airmen of the 192nd Medical Group salute the colors during the unit's change of command ceremony Dec. 9 at Langley Air Force Base.

Virginia attorney works toward a safer Iraq

By Spc. Jeremy Mills
JASG Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – He's seen his fair share of injustice in the world and he's always stepped up to fight against it.

The crusade of H. Cary Payne began more than a decade ago in the courtrooms of Southwest Virginia. As a gifted trial lawyer, he quickly earned "an outstanding reputation across the Commonwealth of Virginia as a passionate and fair prosecutor," said Amherst County Commonwealth Attorney Stephanie Maddox.

Maddox was so impressed she hired Payne to work for her as a Deputy Commonwealth Attorney. Almost instantly, she witnessed a man who did everything in his power to protect those who needed it most.

"His real passion is trying cases in Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court," said Maddox.

Over the years, his tireless devotion to children and battered women has made him a recognized expert on the subject of victim's rights. Maddox calls the silver-haired prosecutor one of the most compassionate she's ever seen with victims.

"Cary is able to put them at ease and make them feel comfortable, they trust him to help them," Maddox said.

Today, Maj. H.C. Payne brings the same sense of altruism to his duties as the Operations Officer of the Joint Area Support Group's Security Directorate. It's a position that includes co-managing the Baghdad Embassy Security Forces and its \$70 Million budget.

Just like back at home, Payne passes on his knowledge to police serving in the International Zone.

"I give advice to law enforcement officials on a daily basis on how to handle crime scenes, how to further investigate cases for successful prosecutions," Payne said.



Photo by Spc. Jeremy Mills, JASG Public Affairs

Maj. H. Cary Payne is the Security Directorate Operations Officer for the Joint Area Support Group. Payne works towards a safer and less violent environment for the Iraqi citizens.

His advice was also invaluable in assisting an Iraqi woman who recently complained of being raped by an Iraqi man.

"No one seemed to want to help her," Payne said.

So in stepped the Deputy Commonwealth Attorney who always champions the cause of defenseless victims.

"The original thought was it's an Iraqi on Iraqi crime, the U.S. shouldn't be involved," Payne said.

But Payne was able to convince the American Security Forces to begin an investigation, which led to the Combat Service Hospital providing an examination and a physical evidence recovery kit. As a result, the FBI has been working with Iraqi Investigators and the suspect will be charged with rape.

"It was gratifying to do something for this young woman who had already been victimized once and didn't need to be victimized again," Payne said.

It was just one more example of his selfless nature with victims. It's a string of goodwill Payne promises will continue through his tour in Iraq and return to the courtrooms of Virginia.

2 Va. Guard troops first to complete drill sergeant course

By Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony D. Price
Virginia Guard Recruiting & Retention Command

The Virginia Army National Guard now has its first two drill sergeants who work for the Non-Prior Service Training Program under the Recruiting and Retention Command.

On Nov. 15, Staff Sgt. Phillip Kershner and Staff Sgt. Richard Chumley graduated from the United States Army Drill Sergeant School at Fort Jackson, S.C.

The school is a 63-day course that is conducted in a basic combat training environment. In order to graduate, Chumley and Kershner had to master skills in physical fitness, drill and ceremonies, marksmanship, individual weapons qualification, instructor skills, combat lifesaver, combatives and situational training exercises.

Kershner is assigned to the Recruiting and Retention

Command and is an Active Guard and Reserve Recruit Sustainment Program training noncommissioned officer in Lynchburg, Va.

Chumley is assigned to the 183rd Regional Training Institute and is an active duty special work pre-ship site NCO at Fort Pickett.

Both drill sergeants will be using their new skills to mentally and physically prepare Virginia's young warriors for their Initial Entry Training.

The Non-Prior Service Training Program trains an average of 1,889 young warriors each year and prepares them to successfully complete basic combat training and advanced individual training. The addition of drill sergeants to the program will move the training to the next level. Chumley and Kershner are the first two graduates, but the goal is to have a drill sergeant at every RSP site

Virginia Guard family gets dream home

By Staff Sgt. Mary K. Flynn
National Guard Bureau Public Affairs

Spc. Michael Lucas received an extra-special homecoming during his mid-tour leave from Iraq recently when he and his family discovered they had been selected for a total-home renovation, courtesy of the popular reality-TV show "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition."

The show's premise involves combining the efforts of a team of designers and hundreds of local workers and neighbors. Together they renovate an entire home - - from furniture to landscaping -- for a deserving family nominated by friends and family -- all within seven days.

The Lucas family consists of Michael, 37, his wife Jean, 33, and boys Michael Henry, 11, and Joseph, 6. Jean studies ancestry and genealogy research and works with a therapist for Joseph, who has been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. She's currently helping to write grants to open a sensory playground facility for autistic children.

Spc. Lucas is currently deployed to Iraq with Company C, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry, Virginia Army National Guard. He



Photos by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

While the television crew from "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" looks on, Lucas is greeted by his wife Jean and two children after arriving on leave from Iraq.

and fellow Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion trained at Camp Shelby, Miss., from June to early August, before arriving in Kuwait in late August. In early September, the unit moved into Iraq to begin its mission, which includes providing convoy security.

Spc. Lucas, a lifelong history buff, had begun construction on a house on property which is the site of the Civil War's Battle of High Ridge near Rice, Va. Unfortunately, Lucas was deployed before he could finish the home, and the family moved into a rental



Joseph Lucas, 6, and his family not only got to see their dad who has been deployed to Iraq, but they also received a new house thanks to the hit tv show.



More than 50 volunteers from the Virginia National Guard came out Dec. 8 to help with landscaping on the Lucas house.

Some thanks to "Extreme Makeover"

property in Cullen, Va.

Jean home schools both of her children, and the nomination for the home makeover came through members of the home school cooperative where she is a member. The deployed Lucas was concerned for his family's well-being, given their somewhat remote location.

"Jean and her family are such a wonderful family," said Nancy Baker, who knows the family through their home-school group. With a husband in Iraq and an autistic child who requires so much of her time and efforts, she has a lot of obstacles to overcome on a daily basis, she says.

Enter the Extreme Makeover team: After surprising the newly-reunited family with the news of their selection, they sent the Lucases off for a weeklong vacation to Disney World as they went to work. Hundreds of local workers and volunteers joined Ty Pennington and the rest of the design team in a total overhaul of the property.

National Guard Soldiers were quick to lend a helping hand. Approximately 50 Soldiers volunteered their time to help build a home for a fellow Soldier.

"I think this is such a wonderful opportunity for the Soldiers to come out and participate in helping another Soldier," said Sgt. Shaena Hall, a Soldier in Company B, 116th Brigade Troops Battalion, who drove more than three hours from her unit's location in Alexandria to help with the project.

Hall has never met any of the Lucas family, but she said that didn't matter.

"All Soldiers are family, so it's great to be able to help out a fellow Soldier."

The big reveal of the new home came on Dec. 10, when hundreds of volunteers, Soldiers, workers, neighbors and curious onlookers gathered on the property and cheered "Move that bus!" allowing the Lucas family a first glimpse of their dream home.



Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard were out in force to join the Lucas family Dec. 10 when they saw their new house for the first time.

"It's wonderful. It's incredible just to see all those people here and what they did this for us," said Jean.

The family also received several substantial gifts from local businesses.

"I can't say how appreciative I am of this community and how much I love these people," Spc. Lucas added. "[I appreciate]

the state and the community for how much they've given me."

The Lucas family episode of "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" is tentatively scheduled to air in February or March on ABC.

The program is produced by Endemol USA, a division of Endemol Holding.



After days of round-the-clock building and the help of hundreds of volunteers, the Lucas family saw their new house for the first time Dec. 10 after host Ty Pennington gave the order to "Move that bus!"