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*For the latest news about the Virginia National Guard, visit <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/>*



*Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs*

Vocalists Chelsey Helms, Melissa Carter, Tina Harrison, Capt. Clay Blevins and Cindy Blevins joined the Virginia National Guard's 29th Army Band for the 2009 Virginia Guard Holiday Concerts Dec. 4-5 in Colonial Heights and Richmond. The events featured holiday music, activities for children, a visit from Santa Claus and refreshments. See page 9 for the story.

# Virginia GuardPost

SERVING THE ARMY & AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF VIRGINIA



**Virginia Guard  
responds  
during winter  
storms**

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2009



**29th Army  
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the gift of  
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support flood  
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## FROM THE TOP



## Virginia National Guard begins and ends 2009 on duty assisting the citizens of commonwealth

We ended 2009 much in the same way we started: Virginia National Guard Soldiers, Airmen and members of the Virginia Defense Force on duty supporting local, state and federal agencies as they safeguard the lives and property of the citizens of Virginia. In January, we put more the 1,400 personnel on duty to support the presidential inauguration, and we had more than 700 personnel on duty assisting with the state-level response to the major snowstorm that hit Virginia Dec. 18.

Every time we put personnel on duty, not only does the Virginia National Guard make a positive impact in helping state and federal partner agencies, we also get smarter about how we perform our response mission and gain valuable insights about how we can improve the way we do things. Our duty in January and December are examples of the two major types of events we will support: the planned event and the short-notice or no-notice event.

For the presidential inauguration, we spent weeks planning and coordinating with partner agencies in the state government as well as federal agencies and put together a sound plan, then we executed that plan extremely well. For the December snow duty, we had a very short-notice event, and we quickly acted based on our existing pre-planned mission scripts once we received the emergency declaration from the Governor.

It is essential that we be able to perform both types of missions, and our lessons learned from January and December will help make sure we can. These requests for assistance helped us improve our alert procedures, assess our communications capabilities and help validate our existing plans for responding to requests for assistance.

Our joint staff continues to mature with each mission, as does the staff of the



Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.

Virginia Guard joint operations center in Sandston. The joint staff is a relatively new organization in the Virginia Guard,

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*Every time we put personnel on duty, not only does the Virginia Guard make a positive impact in helping our partner agencies, we also get smarter about how we perform our mission and gain valuable insights about how we can improve the way we do things.*

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and the JOC staff continues to impress me with their ability to maintain the critical situation awareness we need during our state active duty missions.

Part of the success of the joint staff

comes from the improved integration of our "green" and "blue" teams in the Army Guard and Air Guard, as well as our continued integration of the Virginia Defense Force into our response plans. In order for us to be effective, we must respond as a joint team that includes the Army Guard, Air Guard and VDF. That integration is not without challenges due to different communication and computer systems as well as different standard operating procedures, but that is another area we continue to make improvements on with each mission we perform.

In domestic operations like our snow duty in December, our role is to provide support and assistance to emergency response organizations across the state. We are able to effectively respond as part of the well-coordinated state response in part because of the equipment we have because of our federal mission, but our people are the key to our success. Each time we respond, we bring personnel that not only have their military training, but they also bring with them the skills and experience

from their civilian lives that make them even more effective in response operations. Even the experience our personnel gain from overseas deployments into combat zones can be modified and applied in domestic response situations.

As I look back on the high standards of duty performance and mission execution for these missions, I could not be more proud of our Soldiers, Airmen and VDF members and how they put their comfort and safety second to those citizens of the commonwealth who need our

help. We also owe a special thanks to their families and employers, because without their support, none of our Guard personnel could accomplish the amazing things we are asked to do.

## News Briefs

### Virginia ChalleNGe program graduates largest class in program history

The Virginia National Guard's Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy graduated the largest class in the history of the program Dec. 19 in a ceremony at Virginia Beach's Ocean Lakes High School.

"These students came to us seeking a second chance, and we've provided them the guidance and direction they need to succeed in life," said Col. Thomas M. Early, director of Commonwealth ChalleNGe. "I'm proud of them for taking the initiative to make a change for the better."

All cadets are either placed in employment, perform volunteer service, enlist in the military or continue their education. Class 31 enlisted four cadets into the Virginia Army National Guard.

The ChalleNGe program is designed for at-risk teens

from ages 16 to 19. Class 31 graduated 160 cadets who completed the 17½-month co-educational program, which includes a two-part program consisting of a 22-week, quasi-military residential phase followed by a 12-month, post-residential phase.

Commonwealth ChalleNGe is the Virginia component of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, which was authorized by Congress in 1993 and is managed by the National Guard Youth Foundation, a nonprofit organization overseeing 30 programs in 24 states and Puerto Rico.

The staff of the program is composed of current and retired servicemembers of the Army, Air Force, Marines and Navy.

### Civil Air Patrol finds new home with Virginia Army National Guard

The Civil Air Patrol celebrated its 68th birthday

Dec. 1, and the Civil Air Patrol's Winchester Composite Squadron and the Virginia National Guard's Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team are sharing resources with the common goal of developing leadership skills and teamwork in young people.

"We're pleased to continue our close working relationship with the Civil Air Patrol," said Lt. Col. William Zana, commander of the 3rd Battalion. "We have many shared interests and goals, particularly in providing support to the Commonwealth and our local community."

Lt. Col. Charles Gittins, squadron commander, Winchester Composite Squadron, is pleased with the opportunity presented to the squadron. "The armory is the perfect place for our squadron to conduct meetings. We have access to classrooms and a large indoor area that will allow our cadets to do physical fitness training and drill during

inclement weather."

"Both of our organizations seek to develop young people by expanding their skills through training, developing discipline and leadership, and by building teamwork at all levels," Zana continued. "Working together across our organizations is a way for us to build teams and for our staffs to train on joint and interagency interoperability."

The Civil Air Patrol, a volunteer, non-profit organization, was founded on Dec. 1, 1941, less than a week before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor led to America's involvement in World War II.

Civil Air Patrol members soon proved their worth by conducting aerial patrols, vigilance that discouraged and eventually stopped deadly German U-boat attacks on shipping in American waterways. Fifty-nine heroic members died, 26 were lost at sea, and seven others were severely injured while carrying out CAP missions during the war.

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
150	229th Military Police Company	Iraq	Virginia Beach
5	134th Chaplain Support Team	Southwest Asia	Fort Pickett
18	Det. 2, Co B, 777th Aviation Support Battalion	Kosovo	Sandston
17	Det. 26, Operational Support Airlift Command	Southwest Asia	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 *January 5, 2010*

## Air Guard pilot named top Weapons School graduate

By Master Sgt. Carlos J. Claudio  
192nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Maj. Michael D. "BOK" Schaner, 149th Fighter Squadron Weapons Officer, acting 27th Fighter Squadron Weapons Officer and F-22 Raptor pilot, was selected as the F-22 Outstanding Graduate for the elite United States Air Force Weapons School.

Not only did Schaner win the top honor, he was also the first Air National Guard pilot selected to attend the F-22 program.

Lt. Col. David R. Nardi, commander of the 149th FS, said there was an excellent reason why the major was the best selection for attending weapons school.

"He was unanimously selected by the Air Force as the first choice for the Weapons Instructor Course across the community because he is one of the most highly experienced Raptor pilots, with great depth of experience in both the operations and the test communities," the commander explained. "He is one of the very best pilots and instructors in the F-22 and in the Air Force total force".

Class 09 Bravo Instructor Course ran from July 9 through Dec. 13, 2009 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., and was designed to take top instructor pilots to new zeniths using the latest technology and instructor guidance available.

Schaner, who compared what he learned at this school to a graduate-level course on "projecting air power in a time of need," said he is not sure why he was chosen as the outstanding pilot. What he humbly vouched for was his performance uniformity.

"If there's one thing about me, it is that I just try to be consistent and adhere to the basics... It's not so much that I feel that I am top graduate by any means," Schaner explained. "It's just a matter of trying to strive personally to do the best job that I can."

The class was made up of four F-22 pilots. They flew over 27 actual flights, all with Dissimilar Air Combat Training



Photo by Master Sgt. Carlos J. Claudio, 192nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

**Maj. Michael Schaner of the Virginia Air National Guard's 149th Fighter Squadron, was selected as the F-22 Outstanding Graduate at the United States Air Force Weapons School.**

assets and engaged F-15s, F-16s, and F-18s. Fighting dissimilar assets provides much more realistic training, Schaner made clear.

"Not only did we fight dissimilar, but we fought outnumbered; in most cases by a ratio of 4-to-1, adversary to F-22," Schaner explained. "This is the only place in the world where you get that specific F-22 training. Not even flag exercises can provide such training."

In addition to live flying, Schaner also traveled twice to Marietta, Ga., for additional training using F-22 Air Combat Simulators. High fidelity simulators provide the next best thing to actual flying without leaving the ground.

"In the simulator we can get a lot of repetitions before we do the real thing in the air," Schaner explained.

Teamwork is a huge part of the class, said Schaner. Four F-22 pilots shared information and worked with four F-15C pilots.

"It was great having another student in the flight to bounce ideas off and help with the mission planning," he explained.

Col. Mark McCauley, 192d Fighter Wing Commander said "We are extremely fortunate to have BOK in the 192d and we're very proud of him. He'll be the continuity here at Langley which will

maintain and improve our capability to effectively employ the Raptor into the future."

"BOK exhibits all the core values expected of a weapons school graduate," the commander continued. "That's why he graduated at the top of his class and it's a vital part of why the 192d is such an awesome team."

Schaner, a Michigan native, parallels attending Weapons School to an athlete breaking out of a set exercise routine in order to achieve a higher performance level. He acknowledges that taking one's performance to the next level is always hard but worth the difficulty and challenges.

"I always wanted to fly fighters and go to weapons school, so I knew if I could put everything I have into it, it would get me out of that plateau and get to another notch," he said. "I think if you do that with everything in your life, eventually you continue to get better."

Nardi called the award a milestone and said it shows how the ANG plays a significant role in total force.

"It demonstrates how the Guard is integrated into the leading edge and what it brings to the fight today," he explained. "It shows the tremendous combat capabilities that our unit and the ANG provide to our nation."



# Virginia GuardPost



SERVING THE ARMY AND AIR GUARD OF VIRGINIA

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2009

## On the Cover



Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the Charlottesville-based Company C, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team load 100 blankets provided by the Dillwyn Correctional Center and transported them a shelter in Nelson County late in the evening Dec. 19. (Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard)

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## Virginia GuardPost

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## 276th Engineer Battalion returns from Afghanistan

Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Approximately 85 Soldiers from the Richmond-based 276th Engineer Battalion returned to Virginia Nov. 15 after serving in Afghanistan since February 2009. The group was the first wave of Soldiers from the battalion to return to Virginia, and two more groups will return to Virginia in the next 10 days.

“This was a tough mission, and you accomplished it with the highest skills and dedication to purpose,” said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. “You made Virginia proud.”

Approximately 75 Soldiers returned to the Virginia National Guard Aviation Facility in Sandston and approximately 10 Soldiers returned to Tri-Cities Airport in Blountville, Tenn.

“We commend you for a job well done,” said Virginia Secretary of Public Safety John Marshall. “Without a doubt you have made a difference in Operation Enduring Freedom and ultimately in ensuring our freedom in this great nation.”

The Soldiers arrived safely Nov. 10 at



**Approximately 85 Soldiers from the Richmond-based 276th Engineer Battalion returned to Virginia Nov. 15 after serving in Afghanistan since February 2009.**



*Photos by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs*

**A Soldier from the 276th Engineer Battalion poses for a group photo at the unit's welcome home in Sandston Nov. 15.**

their demobilization station at Camp Shelby, Miss., and conducted a number of different administrative activities to transition from active duty back to traditional National Guard status prior to returning to Virginia. The battalion mobilized for active federal service Nov. 28, 2008.

The 276th Engineer Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. James Zollar, is comprised of two companies from Virginia, the Headquarters Support Company and Forward Support Company, three National Guard engineer companies from three different states and one active duty engineer company. Both Virginia companies are made up of Soldiers from all over the state, including Richmond/Petersburg, the Hampton Roads area and Northern Virginia. Approximately 20 Soldiers from Southwest Virginia deployed with the 276th Engineers.

The battalion, also known as Task Force Pirate, conducted a variety of missions to include route clearance patrols, route security, route reconnaissance, combat logistics patrols, area clearance and recovery operations as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

While mobilized, route clearance platoons from Task

Force Pirate cleared more than 70,000 kilometers of roads while conducting more than 1,070 missions. They were responsible for removing over 15,000 pounds of explosive hazards from Afghanistan.

Soldiers from the battalion also trained French soldiers and members of the Afghan National Army Corps on route clearance operations and provided support to the second-ever Afghan National Elections. Route clearance platoons provided safe routes for the transport of election officials, election security forces, election materials and completed ballots.

Three Virginia Guard Soldiers were wounded in action, but their injuries did not require medical evacuation outside of Afghanistan and they were returned to duty. No Virginia Guard Soldiers assigned to the unit were killed in action.

The battalion headquarters provided command and control, logistics and maintenance support for five engineer companies: the 951st Engineer Company from the Wisconsin National Guard, the 1431st Engineer Company from the Michigan National Guard, the 235th Engineer Company from the California National Guard, and the 541st Engineer Company, an active duty unit from Germany. The 541st Engineer Company was replaced by the 41st Route Clearance Company from Fort Riley, Kan., in August 2009.

# Artillery battalion celebrates Saint Barbara's Day

By Capt. Fred Moore  
1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery  
Regiment

The 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment celebrated its traditional Saint Barbara's Day celebration and ceremony Dec. 5 at Langley Air Force Base.

Festivities started with the roar of cannon fire in front of the Langley Air Force Bayside Enlisted Club.

The purpose is to honor Saint Barbara, the patron saint of artillerymen, protector from thunderstorms, fires and sudden death. She became the patron saint of artillerymen from the early development of artillery pieces as early cannons were unreliable and, at times, would explode, wounding and killing their crews.

Every December field artillery units across the U.S. Army and Marine Corps celebrate St. Barbara's protection over crewmembers from the fate of the early cannon crews. This is traditionally recognized by a formal military dinner, often involving presentation of the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara.

The Honorable Order of Saint Barbara recognizes those individuals who have demonstrated the highest standards of integrity and moral character; displayed an outstanding degree of professional competence; served the United States Army or Marine Corps Field Artillery with selflessness; and contributed to the promotion of the field artillery in ways that stand out in the eyes of the recipient's seniors, subordinates and peers.

Six Virginia National Guard field artillery candidates were inducted into the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara including Capt. John Kowalski, Command Sgt. Maj. Terry Gibbs, 1st Sgt. Michael Fitzgerald, Sgt. 1st Class Stanley Britton, Sgt. 1st Class Larry Cuffee and Sgt. Maj. Ken Lamon (posthumously).

Prior to induction of the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara it is customary to swear all non-field artillery guests with a light-hearted oath of secrecy.

The new members of the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara were welcomed by Scott and Howell with a medal of Saint Barbara, a certificate, and a customary draw from a brass 105 mm shell casing



Photos by Capt. Thomas Fleming, 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment

**Inductees take the oath for induction into the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara Dec. 5 at Langley Air Force Base. Saint Barbara is the patron saint of artillerymen.**

containing the afore-mentioned punch. The ceremony was concluded and guests spent the evening at Langley Air Force Base.

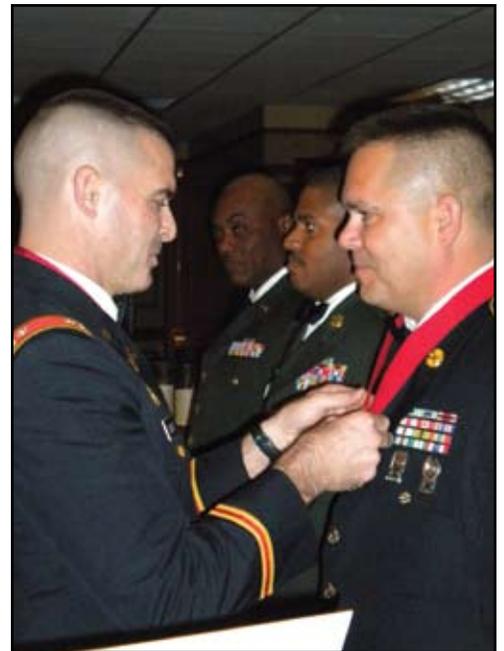
The Order of Saint Barbara is an honorary military society of the United States field Artillery.

Both U.S. Marine and Army field artillery, along with their military and civilian supporters, are eligible for membership.

The order is managed by the U.S. Field Artillery Association and two levels of recognition exist.

The most distinguished level is the Ancient Order of Saint Barbara and those who are selected for this honor have achieved long-term, exceptional service to the field artillery, surpassing even their brethren in the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara.

The order links field artillerymen of the past and present in a brotherhood of professionalism, selfless service and sacrifice symbolized by Saint Barbara.



**Lt. Col. Preston Scott inducts 1st Sgt. Michael Fitzgerald into the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara. Scott was one of six Virginia Guard inductees Dec. 5.**

# Virginia Guard honors Native American heritage in November

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

“Friend, do it this way that is, whatever you do in life do the very best you can with both your heart and your mind. And if you do it that way, the power of the universe will come to your assistance if your heart and mind are in unity,” said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Stewart, reading from the Lakota Instructions for Life during the Virginia National Guard’s National American Indian Heritage Month program Nov. 10 at Fort Pickett.

The Virginia Guard Equal Opportunity Office presented the program in honor of Native American Heritage Month to Soldiers and Airmen from across the commonwealth as well as students from Parkview Senior High School’s Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps.

The guests were treated to a musical performance and question and answer session with Eagle Warrior, a Lenape Indian of the Turtle Island Chautauqua tribe. Eagle Warrior played a selection of songs on his wide variety of flutes, which were all made specifically for him.

“I play this instrument to the best of my knowledge and experience as it was played in the villages hundreds, even thousands, of years ago,” said Eagle Warrior, who is a classically trained musician with a background in music theory, clarinet and conducting. “The Native American flute, in my opinion, is one of the most beautiful and haunting of all instruments.”



The staff of the Virginia National Guard Equal Opportuntiy Office serve Native American cuisine at the Native American Heritage Month celebration at Fort Pickett. The food was prepared by local business Yellow Ribbon Catering.

“As the Native American drum is the heartbeat of the American Indian, the Native American flute is the soul, and it cries out what we have endured here for these hundreds of years since Columbus landed on us some 500 years ago.”

Following the presentation by Eagle Warrior and his wife, Spirit Tracker, guests were invited to partake in some authentic American Indian foods and drink provided by local caterer Yellow Ribbon Catering. The foods included turkey,



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

**Eagle Warrior plays an American Indian flute for guests of the Virginia National Guard Equal Opportunity Office’s Native American Heritage Month program at Fort Pickett Nov. 10.**

succotash, Indian fry bread (hoe cakes) and mint tea.

Native Americans have been serving alongside and within the U.S. military for hundreds of years since the conception of the nation. They have served as code talkers during World War II and continue to provide service in the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“American Indians have served with distinction in the military dating back to the War of 1812. During World War II these brave patriots used their native languages to create an unbreakable oral code,” according to Stewart. “The valor and dedication of American Indians is further visible in the decorations received in battle- 25 Medals of Honor, 71 Air Medals, 51 Silver Stars, 47 Bronze Stars, and 34 Distinguished Flying Crosses.”

“The celebration of American Indians is very important, as they were this nation’s first people,” said Capt. Antoinette Allen, equal opportunity manager. “They once walked, hunted, and lived on or near what we now call Fort Pickett.”

“The American Indian has a proud heritage that should be celebrated and shared with future generations of Soldiers and Airmen,” she said. “This country has always acknowledged the warrior spirit that Native Americans have been historically known for.”

“While history is not always pleasant to reflect upon it is imperative that we learn from the past to ensure a brighter future.”

# Ceremonies mark closure of 2 armories

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Army Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia National Guard conducted ceremonies to mark the official closure of the Roanoke armory Dec. 5 and the Richmond armory Dec. 6. Soldiers who had been serving in those armories, as well as retired Soldiers who served at the facilities in the past, attended both ceremonies.

"We are sad to leave something like this," said Landon G. Wilkes, a retired sergeant first class who served in the Roanoke armory when it was opened in 1955. "I spent a lot of time here. Times move on, and hopefully we move with it."

While the armory closings have a sentimental impact on the part of Soldiers who served there over the years, there is no real impact on the level of support the Guard can provide the communities of Roanoke and Richmond. "Our capabilities have not changed at all," said Col. Steven Scott, commander of the 91st Troop Command. "We have the same equipment, the same Soldiers and the same training, just in a different location. There is no real impact on the time it would take to respond."

The number of Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers and units impacted by the Richmond closing are:

- Headquarters, 91st Troop Command, consisting of approximately 40 Soldiers, will relocate to the Sandston Readiness Center.
- Headquarters Company, 276th Engineer Battalion and Company A, 276th Engineer Battalion, consisting of approximately 175 Soldiers, will relocate to the Petersburg Readiness Center.
- Headquarters Company, 1710th Transportation Company, consisting of approximately 65 Soldiers, will relocate to the Emporia and Virginia Beach Readiness Centers.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Soldiers lower the flag one last time at the Richmond Armory during a closing ceremony Dec. 6.**

- Battery A, 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, consisting of approximately 95 Soldiers, will relocate to the Sandston Readiness Center.

The number of Soldiers and units impacted by the Roanoke closing are:

- 29th Army Band, consisting of approximately 40 Soldiers, will relocate to the Petersburg Readiness Center.
- 229th Chemical Company, consisting of approximately 60 Soldiers, will relocate to the Rocky Mount Readiness Center.
- Company E of the 429 Brigade Support Battalion, consisting of approximately 125 Soldiers, will relocate to the Lynchburg Readiness Center.
- Detachment 1 of the 229th Military Police Company, consisting of approximately 50 Soldiers, will relocate to the Virginia Beach Readiness Center and consolidate with the rest of the company.

The decision to close the Richmond facility was part of Virginia Gov. Timothy M. Kaine's 2010 budget reduction plan. Closing the Richmond facility, along with closing the Roanoke armory, will result in a projected 2010 budget reduction of \$115,000. The city of Roanoke plans to destroy the building where the units are currently stationed in order to make room for future development.

The Richmond armory, often referred to as the Dove Street armory, was built over a two-year period, from 1964 to 1965, and the dedication was held on May 10, 1965. The Roanoke armory was dedicated on Sept. 17, 1955, and served as the home for the 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment up until 2005 when the battalion headquarters moved to Lynchburg as part of the Virginia Guard transformation approved by Gov. Mark Warner.

As part of the closing ceremony in Roanoke, 1st Lt. Aaron Wallace received the last flag flown at the armory as well as the armory time capsule to be placed in the 1st Battalion archives.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**The Roanoke Armory was dedicated on Sept. 17, 1955. The building will be demolished to make room for future development.**



*Photo by Sgt. Eric Watson, 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry Regiment*

**Virginia National Guard Soldiers drive a 5-ton truck through high waters Nov. 13 in Portsmouth, Va. Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Portsmouth-based 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team assisted emergency response personnel with rescue of nine people overnight, Nine Soldiers were on duty in Portsmouth with a Humvee and 5-ton truck.**

## **Va. Guard Soldiers support flood response operations**

**By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs**

Virginia National Guard Soldiers served on state active duty in support of flood response operations Nov. 12, 13 and 14 with approximately 50 Soldiers on duty operating in the Portsmouth area and approximately 55 on duty in the Danville area.

Soldiers from the Portsmouth-based 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry, 116th Brigade Combat Team supported local fire department and law enforcement personnel in Portsmouth and Gloucester. Nine Soldiers were on duty in Portsmouth with a Humvee and 5-ton truck, and two Soldiers were on duty with a 5-ton truck in Gloucester. The unit had inflatable Zodiac boats available for mission support, but did not employ them in their response.

Soldiers in Portsmouth assisted emergency response personnel with rescue of nine people overnight Nov. 12, including a mother and her young daughter with a high fever who was evacuated to Portsmouth Naval Hospital.

Soldiers in Gloucester assisted emergency response personnel with damage surveys and inspections, and those Soldiers were released Friday afternoon.

Soldiers from the 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team in the Danville area were on standby to assist, but did not received any missions.

The Virginia National Guard had personnel working at the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to coordinate for requests for assistance by local first responders and also had personnel on duty at the Joint Operations Center in Sandston coordinating the efforts of units on the ground.

# Leesburg honors 116th BCT unit on Veterans Day

By Maj. Nevin Blankenship  
116th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

Company C of the 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team was honored at the fifth annual Veterans Day commemoration at Dodona Manor in Leesburg.

Members of the unit marched from the county courthouse along Market Street to the Manor, where they were greeted by a standing ovation by elected representatives, area families, retired veterans and patients from the Veterans Administration hospital in Martinsburg, W.Va.

"We are here to celebrate Veterans Day, a time when we pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of the men and women who in defense of our freedom have bravely worn the uniform of the United States," said Giancarlo Brizzi, master of ceremonies and former commander of Company C.

Retired Brig. Gen. Theodore G. Shuey recalled the history of the unit dating back to the Revolutionary War. He talked of the actions the unit was involved in including the War of 1812, the Civil War under the leadership of Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson and World War I.

Shuey said Gen. George C. Marshall handpicked the 116th Infantry to participate in the Omaha Beach landing in Normandy, France. He said Marshall felt it was important to have a unit of volunteer Guardsmen participate in the liberation effort.

Shuey then talked of the accomplishments of Company C by laying the groundwork for deploying Guardsmen in today's operating environment. Company C was the first unit from Virginia to deploy overseas since World War II. It proved to active duty counterparts that Guardsmen can do the same missions effectively both then and today in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"In the 1990s, we got into peace enforcement and stabilization and the Army was getting spread throughout the world. They decided it was time to get the National Guard back involved in securing peace throughout the world. So they came to the National Guard and said, 'Give me a company.' There was no doubt in my mind that that company would be Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion out of Leesburg, Va. I want to say to you that these gentlemen distinguished themselves in Bosnia and began the process that we enjoy today involved with the Army that is just tremendous as we join in their ranks around the world," said Shuey.

The unit also had a key role in securing Dulles and Reagan National airports following the 9/11 terrorists attacks. Company C has also completed recent deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq.

Congressman Frank Wolf of Virginia's 10th District in the House of Representatives discussed how the plans of Gen. Marshall had a lasting impact in the war. He also talked of the sacrifices that this country's veterans have made in battle, specifically more than



Photos by Maj. Nevin Blankenship, 116th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

**Soldiers from Company C, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team march from the county courthouse along Market Street to the Dodona Manor in Leesburg where they were greeted with a standing ovation by elected representatives, area families, retired veterans and patients from the Veterans Administration hospital in Martinsburg, W.Va. The Soldiers were honored at the fifth annual Veterans Day commemoration at Dodona Manor.**

one million casualties over the past two centuries.

"Still today we must stay vigilant against tyranny in whatever form it takes. Although patriotic Americans may disagree about particular calls to arms, the honor of those who have put on their uniform in our nation's behalf should never be questioned. Many have given their lives because they believe in the basic goodness of their nation and the dream that it embodies," said Wolf.

A wreath was placed at the base of the statue of Marshall by Lt. Col. William Zana, 3rd Battalion commander, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Marshall's death Oct. 16, 1959. Jim Winn, grandson of Marshall, and Ann Brown helped Zana with the laying wreath.

Other dignitaries who participated in the ceremony were Shuey, Fred Morefield and Leesburg Mayor Kristen Umstadt. Matthew Kuldell followed the procession with the playing of the bag pipes.

The Veterans Day commemoration concluded with a moment of silence honoring the fallen warriors who gave their lives in defense of our great nation.

"The cost of war in human lives is constantly spread before me, written neatly in many ledgers whose columns are gravestones," Marshall once said.

A replica of the jeep station wagon that Marshall was given in 1947 and an actual jeep from World War II were on display along with military vehicles from the unit. Dodona Manor was George and Katherine Marshall's residence from 1941 until the General's death in 1959. The Manor is an 1820s, Federal-style house with mid-19th century additions and is situated on 3.8 acres of gardens on the eastern end of Leesburg's Historic District.

## VDF trains on the ground, in the water, in the air

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia Defense Force conducted its annual division-level field training exercise at Fort Pickett Nov. 6-8 and the all-volunteer force trained on its ability to provide support to the citizens of the commonwealth on the ground, in the air and on the water.

The training scenario for the exercise focused on mock disaster drills based on the National Incident Management System including search and rescue training, mass evacuation and medical triage techniques. These ground response forces were supported by the aircraft from the VDF's aviation battalion, and the VDF's Riverines Detachment took to the water for the first time with the unit's newly refurbished boat.

The VDF trained side-by-side with emergency civilian response agencies from Blackstone and Nottoway County. Nearly 600 members of the VDF took part in the training.

The Virginia Defense Force is an all-volunteer force authorized by the Code of



*Photos by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs*

**The Virginia Defense Force Riverine boat is water-tested for the first time during the VDF's annual field training exercise Nov. 7 at Fort Pickett. The exercise provided an opportunity for the all-volunteer organization to train on its ability to provide support to the citizens of the commonwealth via air, land and water.**

Virginia and organized under the Virginia Department of Military Affairs reporting to Maj. Gen. Robert Newman, Adjutant General of Virginia.

"The Virginia Defense Force primary mission is to augment the Virginia National Guard," said Maj. Gen. John Taylor, commander of the VDF. "The average volunteer is here to serve the

commonwealth."

Taylor compared the VDF to the volunteer fire fighters and rescue squad the VDF trained with in Bduring the exercise.

"The only difference is that we are structured as a military organization with extensive FEMA training qualifications as part of the Virginia Department of Military Affairs, and in a disaster situation, we can be called up on state active duty," he said.

The VDF's Lynchburg-based aviation battalion has companies in the Hampton Roads area, Orange and Danville. All of the battalion's 15 aircraft are privately owned, and the pilots pay almost all the costs of operating the aircraft other than fuel.

"Flying is fun under any circumstance," said Maj. Raymond Matthews, Jr., one of the VDF's pilots. "If you have a meaningful reason to fly, it is much better. We are going to fly anyways, so we might as well put it to good use."

The aviation battalion is capable of conducting flight operations for missions such as damage assessment, aerial reconnaissance and search and rescue.

With a new boat, the Riverine Detachment is capable of conducting inland aquatic search and rescue operations as well as transport and security operations, explained Maj. Tom Guthrie, commander of the Riverine Detachment.



**A pilot from the Virginia Defense Force's aviation battalion conducts preflight checks Nov. 7 at the Blackstone Airfield during the VDF's annual field training exercise.**

## Virginia Guard troops part of newest Kosovo task force

### From Staff Reports

A new U.S.-led KFOR (Kosovo Forces) task force, made up of Soldiers from 37 states, officially took over responsibility of Multi-National Task Force-East (MNTF-E) on Nov. 14, 2009.

The Virginia National Guard's Detachment 2, Company B, 777th Aviation Support Battalion (AVUM) is part of KFOR 12 and is responsible for conducting scheduled and unscheduled maintenance on U.S. aircraft in the country, according to Capt. Michael H. Gregory, commander of the unit.

"The elections just took place which not only was a milestone for the people of Kosovo but set the stage for further stabilization in the region," Gregory said. "Our mission is to assist in the implementation of UNSCR 1244 pending a final settlement in Kosovo and I think that we are starting to see more signs of that."

"This is a very beautiful country and the local populace is very supportive of our mission," said Staff Sgt. Danny J. Conwell.

"The Kosovars have immediately befriended us and made every effort to show their gratefulness for our service with kindness and warmth," said Sgt. 1st Class Jorge L. RiveraDiaz.

"The journey here was easy and the transition from KFOR 11 to KFOR 12 was smooth," said Spc. Robert V. Burkhead. "Task Force Arctic Eagle, the KFOR 11 Aviation Task Force, was from Alaska and gave us a quality mission hand off setting us up for success."

Many of the Soldiers from Virginia, Kentucky and South Carolina that now make up Det. 2, Co. B, 777th ASB (AVUM) have made friends with Soldiers from other parts of the United States, according to Gregory.

Brig. Gen. Alan S. Dohrmann, Bismarck, N.D., 141st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade of the North Dakota National Guard, and the Soldiers who make up his task force, accepted responsibility of MNTF-E from Brig. Gen. Keith D. Jones, 40th Infantry Division (Forward), of the California National Guard, and the Soldiers under his command.

"We've trained very hard for this mission, really, for more than 18 months



Photo by KFOR 12 Public Affairs

**Spc. William C. Ralston of Centreville, Va., makes final adjustments on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter repair job. Ralston is a Virginia National Guard Soldier with Detachment 2, Company B, 777th Aviation Support Battalion, which is currently serving in Kosovo as part of KFOR 12.**

now," Dohrmann said. "We're all ready for the mission; I know the Soldiers are excited to get things started with the mission, and I'm very excited to get things started too."

More than 1,300 Soldiers comprise Task Force Falcon, the U.S. contingent of MNTF-E. Though its headquarters is based out of North Dakota, units that make up the task force come from 14 states and territories: Arizona, California, Georgia, Kansas, Minnesota, Hawaii, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, South Carolina, Michigan, Utah, and the Virgin Islands.

In all, 37 states have Soldiers represented.

Nearly 2,200 Soldiers from several NATO countries, including the U.S., make up the total MNTF-E force.

Stretching along Kosovo's eastern Administrative Boundary Line, MNTF-E is one of five sectors, where NATO peacekeeping forces conduct patrols and engage with people and institutions.

The incoming KFOR 12 Soldiers started arriving in Kosovo in late October.



Photo by KFOR 12 Public Affairs

**Spc. William C. Ralston, Centreville, Va., Sgt. Keith L. Lang, Greensboro, N.C., and Sgt. Shawn R. Wall, Williamsburg, Va., of the Virginia National Guard work on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter in Kosovo.**

## Governor awards service medal to Afghan advisors

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine presented the Governor's National Service Medal to 27 Virginia Guard Soldiers for their service in Afghanistan at a Freedom Salute held Dec. 13 in Richmond. The event is one of the last for Kaine in his role as commander in chief of the Virginia National Guard with his term as governor coming to an end in January 2010.

Kaine shared the impact of a trip he made to Afghanistan soon after he became governor where he met Virginia Guard Soldiers and saw first hand the efforts of the U.S. military in the region.

"I certainly derived from my time in Afghanistan a belief in the nobility of the cause, and the challenge of it," Kaine said. "We are here to honor you for being part of what America has done in that very difficult part of the world to hopefully bring about better days ahead for the people in Afghanistan."

The Virginia Guard fielded two 16-Soldier advisory teams that served at the brigade and battalion level.

The teams mobilized in August and September 2008 and returned to Virginia after serving a year on federal active duty where they served as advisors and mentors for the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police and the Afghan Border Police.

"As President Obama has announced the surge going to Afghanistan, you know what he is talking about," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. "You have been there, you have been on the front lines."

Newman also thanked the families for supporting their Soldiers during the time they served overseas.

"You willingly and selflessly placed the protection of our nation and our commonwealth above your own safety and comfort, and you did it in a very difficult place far from home," Kaine said. "It was not only your sacrifice, but the sacrifice of your family members as well.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Gov. Timothy M. Kaine presents the Governor's National Service Medal to Maj. Jim Contreras at the Freedom Salute held Dec. 13 in Richmond to recognize the service of two Virginia National Guard Afghanistan embedded training teams.**

Your willingness to place the greater good over your own convenience and comfort speaks volumes about you and makes all Virginians proud."

The two teams logged over 1,000 combat patrols, conducted nearly 500 humanitarian missions where they distributed food, water, tools and supplies, as well as assisting in the construction of wells.

Kaine also recognized the ultimate sacrifice of 1st Sgt. Kevin Dupont, a Massachusetts National Guard Soldier who joined the Virginia teams at Fort Riley and died June 17, 2009 from wounds he sustained from an improvised explosive attack.

"We were embedded and working, breathing, sleeping and fighting side by side with Afghan National Police and the Afghan National Army. It was difficult, but it was also very rewarding," said Maj. Jim Contreras of his service in Afghanistan. "The best part of the job was the reward we felt. There are people there who believe in their country, believe in what they were doing that they would volunteer to join the police or join the army and fight for their freedom from the Taliban."

The brigade advisory team was responsible for training and mentoring Afghanistan police and military forces and returned to Virginia Sept. 2.

The team of 16 Soldiers served as mentors for the Regional Police Advisory Command – South and the Regional Corps Advisory Command – South beginning Dec. 24, 2008.

The battalion advisory team of 16 returned to Virginia Aug. 13 after serving on federal active duty since Aug. 15, 2008 with the mission of mentoring battalion-level Afghanistan security forces.

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

As part of the Freedom Salute campaign, each Soldier is scheduled to receive an American flag in a wood display case, a Defender of Freedom certificate as well as commemorative coins and medallions.

Governor Mark Warner directed the creation of the Governor's National Service Medal in 2005 so that he and future governors may publicly acknowledge the sacrifice and patriotism of the men and women of the Virginia National Guard who serve not only under the command of the governor but who also serve in an active federal status.

# 329th RSG welcomes 25 Soldiers into NCO corps

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

Noncommissioned officers from the 329th Regional Support Group welcomed more than two dozen Soldiers into the NCO corps during a special ceremony Nov. 11 at Fort Pickett.

A number of speakers addressed the NCOs on hand, reading everything from the history of the NCO corps to passages such as "Boots of the NCO" and "A Soldier's Request."

Three ceremonial candles were then lit by Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Smith, the command sergeant major of the 329th RSG. The red candle represented the blood sweat and tears spilled by NCOs throughout the years. The white candle symbolized the pure spirit and integrity required of the NCO corps. The blue candle represented the strength and mettle of the corps.

Finally, the 25 inductees were brought on stage where they recited the NCO Creed and joined the NCO corps.

"I cannot tell you how proud I am of every NCO sitting in this room right now," Smith said. "You make the difference because the officers are planning but we're executing."

Smith charged every NCO in the group to live up to the foundations of what the NCO corps was built upon and to take to hear the words in the NCO creed.

"It is so easy to turn a blind eye but it takes a real leader to stand up and make a corrective action," Smith said. "We need to make sure we instill that pride, that dedication and that discipline in all our Soldiers."

"You are the future of the Virginia Army National Guard and the United States Army," Command Sgt. Maj. Carl Holcomb, the Virginia National Guard command sergeant major, told the inductees. "You're the

ones who are going to come up and take our place. Never be afraid as NCOs to do the hard right over the easy wrong."

Holcomb explained that the NCOs now have one of the greatest obligations that can be put on a person's shoulders- the responsibility of taking care of Soldiers. He asked them to teach and mentor their Soldiers so that when the time comes, they can step up take the place of the current NCOs.

"The NCO creed is your charge," Holcomb explained. "Read it and make it a part of your life. Congratulations to you all and welcome to the corps."

Sgt. Dustin Thompson of the 1032nd Transportation Company was one of the Soldiers inducted into the NCO corps at the ceremony.

"I was honored to be here," the Abingdon resident said. "As a new NCO you go from being supervised to being a supervisor. This symbolizes the importance of taking on that responsibility."



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

**1st Sgt. Gary Calhoun hands Sgt. Tracey Goldsmith a copy of the NCO creed at the conclusion of the NCO induction ceremony Nov. 11 at Fort Pickett.**



**Twenty-five Soldiers from the 329th Regional Support Group were inducted into the NCO Corps during an NCO induction ceremony Nov. 11 at Fort Pickett.**

# 116th honors lineage at annual muster

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers of the 116th Brigade Combat Team dressed to the nines in their formal uniforms to attend the 42nd Annual Regimental Muster Nov. 7 at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel in Staunton to honor the unit's service to the commonwealth, the nation, the Soldiers, and the unit's long and rich history.

The 116th "Stonewall" Brigade of the 29th Infantry Division was first organized in November 1742 as the Augusta County Regiment, Virginia Militia and the unit has served in almost every major U.S. conflict since.

In attendance at the muster were Soldiers of the unit both past and present. There were several veterans of the unit from World War II, some whom stormed the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944, and some whom drove from as far as Florida to be in attendance.

"The muster's an opportunity for Soldiers to come back together every year, you get to see a lot of old friends who you might not have seen in a while," said Capt. Heath Phillips, commander of Company B, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th BCT. "It's an opportunity to remember Soldiers from the past and see our World War II veterans. One of the highlights for me is honoring those individuals every year."

"The connection tonight when you muster the Augusta county regiment, and the 116th and the Stonewallers goes back to 1742, it goes way back. So tonight we're all well served, said Marine Corps Lt. Gen. John M. Paxton, Jr., Joint Staff Director of Operations. "Not only if we connect ourselves historically to the past, but also a little bit maybe to some other services, some other conflicts, and certainly to what those connecting files mean in the days ahead."

Historically, a muster was the day designated each year when all able-bodied men were assembled on the village green



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

**Marine Corps Lt. Gen. John M. Paxton, Jr., Joint Staff Director of Operations, speaks to attendees at the 42nd Annual 116th Regimental Muster in Staunton Nov. 7.**

for a roll-call. Thus, in every community, it was known exactly how many men could be counted on in the event of an emergency. As the nation moved away from using militias, the Guard ceased to muster.

According to retired Brig. Gen. Theodore G. Shuey, Jr., Honorary Colonel of the Regiment, in 1967 the veterans of WWII felt the need to again muster, so for the last 42 years they have come together to celebrate the rich heritage of the unit.

Following the dinner the Soldiers were reminded of the rich history of the the unit as well as the more recent accomplishments performed by the brigade.

"The brigade maintained personnel and equipment readiness while improving our duty MOSQ [training qualifications] to the highest level in ten years while reconnecting with the community by supporting numerous community support activities," said Col. Blake Ortner, commander of the 116th BCT.

Following the presentation of the colors and the introduction of general officers in attendance, the chaplain held a memorial to honor the fallen warriors affiliated with the regiment lost in the past year. An impromptu roll call, a moment of silence, and a bugle playing "Taps" solemnly paid tribute to the departed.

Seeing extensive action in France during



**Brig. Gen. Stephen Huxtable, Virginia Assistant Adjutant General - Army, meets with veterans of World War II at the 42nd Annual 116th Regimental Muster.**

WWI, the regiment earned a reputation of never giving up ground in battle and during the Second World War the 116th spearheaded the invasion of Normandy at Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944.

"When you gather today, to talk about the lineage and the tradition of this regiment, you go back, to the fact that you're the sixth oldest regiment in the lineage of the United States Army," said Paxton. "So that might and that fighting power you earned, you earned those stripes. Every single day."

"You know your history, and you're proud of your history, you've lived your history and for everyone in the audience, in one way shape or form, you've made that history."

## 29th Army Band shares the gift of holiday music



*Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs*

**The Virginia National Guard's 29th Army Band performs during the final 2009 holiday concert Dec. 5 at St. Paul's Baptist Church in Richmond. This was the third year vocalists joined the band for holiday music at local churches.**

### From Staff Reports

The Virginia National Guard's 29th Army Band shared the sounds of the holiday season with the Colonial Heights and Richmond communities during the third annual Holiday Concert Series Dec. 4-5.

The three free concerts were hosted by Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Colonial Heights Dec. 4, Hunter Holmes McGuire Veteran's Hospital on Dec. 5 and Saint Paul's Baptist Church in Richmond on Dec. 5.

"These celebrations are the Adjutant General's way of saying 'Thank you' to the families and communities," said Col. Thom Morgan, Virginia National Guard

director of manpower and personnel. "It is our gift to them for their commitment and continued patriotic support to the commonwealth's Soldiers and Airmen."

The band's enlisted leader agreed.

"This is the Virginia National Guard's way of saying thank you to Virginia's citizens for their continued patriotic support," said 1st Sgt. Fred Lewis, 29th Army band first sergeant.

The events featured holiday music, activities for children, a visit from Santa Claus and refreshments.

The band performed a variety of holiday songs, such as "White Christmas," "O Holy Night," "The Christmas Song," "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," and Christmas Eve/Sarajevo." Each concert

ended with an audience sing along capped off by an appearance from Santa Claus.

"It's a great opportunity for us as a band to play music that we wouldn't normally get to play," said Lewis, "We get a chance to accompany vocalists in a different setting and for a different type of audience."

Five vocalists joined the band for the performances- Tina Harrison, Chelsey Helms, Melissa Carter, Capt. Clay Blevins, commander of Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team and his wife Cindy Blevins.

Following the concerts, guests and band members gathered for refreshments and visits with Santa.



*Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard*

**Soldiers from the Charlottesville-based Company C, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team meet with Steve Elliott, the battalion chief of Monticello Station 11 of the Albemarle Fire and Rescue Department to discuss the details of a mission to transport rescued motorists from the station to a shelter established at the University of Virginia Aquatics Center.**

# Virginia National Guard

**By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs  
and  
Maj. Nevin Blankenship  
116th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs**

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine authorized members of the Virginia Guard for state active duty to assist state and local authorities with the response to a major winter storm that began Dec. 18, 2009. At the peak of the response, the Virginia Guard had nearly 700 Soldiers and Airmen on duty along the I-81 corridor from Winchester to Danville, and also conducted support operations in Lynchburg, Stafford and Charlottesville. Soldiers continued to operate in the Southwest Virginia area through Dec. 24.

The Virginia Guard conducted a variety of missions including rescuing stranded motorists, delivering food, water and blankets to shelters and snow-bound homes, providing ambulances to the sick and injured, transporting health care professionals to hospitals, conducting door to door checks on the health and welfare of residents and delivering crews to repair downed power lines in the remote regions of Virginia.

Soldiers from the Staunton-based Headquarters, 116th Brigade Combat Team assisted with the transport of more than 30 stranded motorists along mile markers 175 to 195 along I-81, assisted with establishing and operating a shelter in Rockbridge County, transported more than 15 nurses and doctors to hospital facilities and assisted with multiple vehicle recoveries.

Soldiers from South Boston-based Company A, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team rescued nearly 20 stranded motorists along Routes 29, 151, 722, 117 and 6, conducted search and rescue missions along Afton Mountain Road and Stage Bridge Road.

Soldiers from the Charlottesville-based Company C, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team assisted with transporting approximately 35 citizens to shelters, transported 168 gallons of water and 350 heater meals to Lexington, delivered 100 blankets to a shelter in Nelson County and assisted with patient transport from Standardsville to a local hospital.

Soldiers from the Lynchburg-based Company E, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team assisted with sheltering operations in Lexington, delivered supplies to a shelter in Rockbridge County and assisted with transporting rescued motorists stranded along I-81.

Soldiers from the Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (also with Soldiers from Woodstock, and Harrisonburg) assisted local authorities with recovering stranded motorists

Soldiers from the Fredricksburg-based Company D, 3rd Battalion,



*Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs*

**A Soldier from the Charlottesville-based Company C, 429th Brigade Support Battalion cleans the snow off a Humvee in preparation for assistance missions.**

# supports winter storm recovery efforts

116th Brigade Combat Team operated in the Stafford area where they rescued a first responder from a vehicle stuck in a ditch, transported medical professionals and assisted with the recovery of six ambulances and a fire truck.

Soldiers from the Leesburg-based Company C, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team operated in the Leesburg area assisting in the movement of key personnel to critical facilities.

Soldiers from the Portsmouth-based 2nd Battalion, 183rd Cavalry Regiment conducted water distribution missions in Southwest Virginia.

Soldiers from the Hampton-based 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment assisted citizens in Augusta County.

Soldiers from the Gate City-based 1030th Transportation Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group assisted with transporting rescued stranded motorists to shelters in Clintwood and Norton, and conducted search and rescue mission in the Flatwoods National Forest. Soldiers also delivered food and water and conducted door-to-door checks on health and welfare in Wise County and operated water distribution points in Dickenson County.

Airmen from the Virginia Beach-based 203d RED HORSE Civil Engineering Squadron transported cots to Wise County.

The efforts of the Virginia Guard earned high praise from the



*Contributed Photo*

**Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the Harrisonburg-based Company A, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team assist a citizen dig his vehicle out of the snow in Rockbridge County Dec. 21.**

emergency response organizations they supported.

“The group of Guardsmen who were stationed at the command post were the best group of people I have ever worked for, they were helpful, and a great group of men and women. Each and every one of them,” said Raymond Uttaro, Nelson County Emergency Services Coordinator.

“There was 20 inches of snow and trees down everywhere across the road. The governor had declared a state of emergency and I had asked them to call the National Guard to go out there. I figured their equipment would be a whole lot better than what we had,” said Scott County Sheriff John Puckett in response to a vehicle rescue mission.

“We have the Humvees here now from the National Guard to assist us in getting into places, and they’ve been of great assistance to us,” said Waynesboro Fire Department Capt. Kenny Hayden.

Despite the deep snow, cold temperatures and long duty hours, Virginia National Guard Soldiers were glad to have the chance to help their fellow citizens.

“It was exciting. This was my first National Guard emergency operation. I like the experience of helping people out. It was a good way to show people that we are there for them,” said Pfc. Minh Tien Nguyen of Company D, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment.

“That’s why a lot of people join the National Guard instead of the regular Army to stick close to home and help protect their neighbors and families and that’s what we do,” said Sgt. Shaun Gnoffo of 3rd Battalion.



*Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard*

**Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the Richmond-based Company B, 429th Brigade Support Battalion use a heavy wrecker Dec. 20 to assist a tractor-trailer truck out of the snow in Charlottesville.**