



Photo courtesy of Military District of Washington

Maj. Gen. Richard J. Rowe, Jr., commanding general of the Military District of Washington, Brig. Gen. Grant L. Hayden, commanding general of the 29th Infantry Division, and other division leaders pose with the 29th Infantry Division running team on the banks of the Washington Channel. The team took first place for National Guard men's teams in the Army Ten-Miler Oct. 5 with an overall time of 4:46:13

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**203rd RED HORSE  
 TAKES TO THE FIELD**

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2008



**Funeral  
 Honors  
 Program  
 honors fallen  
 Soldiers**

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**Virginia  
 Guardsmen  
 participate in  
 pilot adventure  
 program**

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FROM THE TOP



# Department of Military Affairs plans consolidation of Army and Air Guard headquarters in 2014

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

I met with leaders from Blackstone and Nottoway County, as well as Fort Pickett Soldiers and civilian employees, at Fort Pickett on Oct. 17 to announce my intention to consolidate the headquarters of the Virginia Army and Air Guards, the Virginia Joint Force Headquarters and the Virginia Defense Force in a new headquarters building in Sandston. The projected time for this consolidation is 2014.

The missions of the Virginia National Guard have changed dramatically since the attacks on our country over seven years ago.

These new missions are joint bringing together both Air and Army forces. The missions require us to integrate our planning efforts with other state agencies, the vast majority of which are located in Richmond, and to exercise those plans with regular exercises.

These joint plans and exercises are complex, involve many different government operations, and are vital to the Virginia Guard's ability to respond quickly and effectively to a catastrophic disaster. Additionally, the ability to command and control these joint forces must reside with the governor and his command authority, also located in Richmond. Bottom line up front, the Virginia Guard must be able to respond quickly and effectively with our state partners if we are to assist our fellow Virginians in a large scale disaster.

The Army Guard headquarters location at Fort Pickett does not allow us to accomplish the important goals of coordination with other state agencies and command and control of joint forces. Continuing to operate the Army Guard from Fort Pickett increases the stress on



Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr.

our planning and coordination efforts, costs us time and money, and jeopardizes our ability to protect the Commonwealth.

While the move of the Army Guard headquarters is six years in the future, the DMA's Joint Operations Center will

*"The missions of the Virginia National Guard have changed dramatically since the attacks on our country over seven years ago. These new missions are joint bringing together both Air and Army forces."*

move this fall to immediately optimize our command and control capabilities. In 2014 the directorates that manage personnel, operations, logistics, facilities, information management and fiscal operations will complete the move. These directorates are currently stationed at Fort Pickett in Blackstone.

We value our relationship with the communities of Blackstone and Nottoway County and we understand the importance of Fort Pickett to the local communities.

Fort Pickett is and will continue to be a key training center not just for the National Guard and Defense Force, but for the Active Army and other services as well.

The Fort Pickett Maneuver Training Headquarters will remain at Fort Pickett. Additionally, the DMA will also continue a fiscal operations detachment, a medical detachment, a field maintenance shop and the Mobilization and Training Equipment Site.

Approximately 260 duty positions will move to the new Sandston location, the positions are primarily in the Army Guard's headquarters in Building 316 at Fort Pickett and are a combination of Active Guard and Reserve, federal technicians and civilian state employees.

Numerous construction projects are planned between now and the end of 2013 for Fort Pickett, including a combat pistol range, a new armory for the 183rd RTI, a multipurpose range, a combined arms collective training facility and a Virginia State Police driver training track. The estimated budget for these and other construction projects exceeds \$100,000,000.

Fort Pickett currently has almost 900 employees to support training operations conducted on the post, and more than 630 will remain after the consolidation of the DMA headquarters. With expected increases in staffing to support planned training by the Virginia State Police and other possible increases in units training at Fort Pickett, that number could increase in the coming years.

This is a critically important effort and will result in the Virginia Guard's improved ability to protect Virginia and its citizens. JFHQ will develop plans for the move and will keep the Virginia Guard informed as the next steps are identified. I know I can count on each of you to help ensure that this move is a success.

# News Briefs

## Virginia units ready to act during Pentagon's 9/11 ceremony

Thanks to "behind the scenes" assistance from Soldiers and Airmen of the Virginia National Guard, President Bush honored those who perished in the terrorist attacks of 9/11 with a memorial at the Pentagon on the seventh anniversary of the event.

## Air Guard imagery analyst among top in field

Recently promoted Staff Sgt. Jennilee Gergets, 192nd Intelligence Squadron, was recognized this summer as the Air Force Air Reserve Component Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Airman of the Year (Level II).

## Ceremony kicks off Combined Federal Campaign

The Virginia National Guard marked the beginning of the Combined Federal Campaign, which runs from Oct. 1 to Nov.



Governor signs Iraq veterans license plate into law

Photo by Sgt. Andrew H. Owen, Va. Guard Public Affairs  
Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine signs HB 6022 into law Sept. 25 in Richmond. The bill authorizes the Department of Motor Vehicles to create an Iraqi Freedom Veteran license plate for veterans of the war in Iraq.

18, with key-worker training and a kickoff ceremony held Oct. 1 at Fort Pickett.

## Maneuver Training Center welcomes new commander

Col. Tom Wilkinson took command of the Fort Pickett Maneuver Training Center Oct. 18 in a ceremony held at the Fort Pickett Post Stadium. Wilkinson assumed

command from Col Bob Sparks who commanded the installation since 2004.

## New commander takes over at 329th Regional Support Group

Members of the Virginia Beach-based 329th Regional Support Group observed as Col. Timothy Williams assumed command from Col. Janice Igou during a change of command

ceremony on Sept. 14 at the State Military Reservation, in Virginia Beach, Va.,

## 91st Troop Command conducts change of command ceremony

Col. Steven T. Scott assumed command of the Richmond-based 91st Troop Command in a ceremony held at Fort Pickett Sept. 14, marking the end of a three-year command tour for Col. David A. Archer.

## Virginia Guard's top logisticians recognized

Logisticians from around Virginia gathered Aug. 10-14 for the annual Logistics Training Workshop at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach and presented two annual awards to Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard.

The Donnie W. Clements award was presented to Staff Sgt. Gene Simmons, supply sergeant for the 229th Chemical Company. The Charles D. Taylor award was presented to Chief Warrant Officer Raymond Bowles of the 29th Infantry Division.

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

# Virginia National Guard Federal Deployments

# *	Unit	Where Deployed	Home Town
170	266th Military Police Company	Fort Dix, N.J.	Manassas
160	180th Engineer Company	Fort McCoy, Wisc.	Powhatan
170	1710th Transportation Company	Kuwait/ Iraq	Emporia
15	192nd Security Forces Squadron	Kyrgyzstan	Langley Air Force Base
16	Brigade Embedded Training Team	Fort Riley, Kan.	Various Locations
16	Battalion Embedded Training Team	Fort Riley, Kan.	Various Locations
30	Data Processing Unit	Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan	Manassas
40	Various Virginia Army Guard Units	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Various Locations
50	Various Virginia Air Guard Units	Homeland Defense/OIF/OEF	Various Locations

\* All listings for numbers of Soldiers/Airmen are approximate as of Nov. 1, 2008

# R&R Command recognizes top troops at banquet

By Capt. Dayna Rowden  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Command celebrated receiving four national-level recruiting awards and acknowledged its top recruiters at the annual R&R Command awards banquet Oct. 18 in Norfolk.

The R&R Command received awards for overall end strength, enlisted accessions, officer accessions and the Recruit Sustainment Program Ship Rate award at the annual National Guard Strength Maintenance Conference held Oct.8-12 in Orlando, Fla.

The Virginia Army National Guard ended the 2008 fiscal year with 8,086 Soldiers, meeting and exceeding its end-strength mission at 104.7 percent. In 2008, the 144 recruiters and support personnel recruited 1,554 new enlisted accessions, meeting 119.6 percent of the mission goal. R&R Command also recruited 143 new officers, meeting 106 percent of the mission goal.

The Recruit Sustainment Program is an in-house training program that mirrors initial entry training, known commonly as basic training, and advanced individual training in order to prepare young Warriors to become fully qualified in their military occupational specialty. The national goal of the RSP is an 85 percent ship rate. Virginia shipped 749 young Warriors to IET through the RSP, exceeding the national goal with a ship rate of 85.4 percent and earning the RSP Ship Rate Award.

Lt. Col. Anthony Caruso, commander of R&R command, gives credit of the success to the recruiters and supporting staff of R&R command. "They are committed to building a healthy end strength in support of both state and federal missions," said Caruso. "We have the commitment of our leaders and have earned the resources to do a great job."

## Air Guard chaplain assistant provides support in Guam

By Lt. Col Deb Magaldi  
Virginia Air Guard Public Affairs

Master Sgt. Mark Lounello, a chaplain assistant with the 192nd Fighter Wing, served the home-based and deployed communities at Anderson Air Force Base, Guam this summer.

Lounello was deployed to Anderson AFB from July 8 through Sept. 9 as part of a religious support team. The Air National Guard Chaplaincy regularly fills the aerospace expeditionary force flightline ministry at Anderson AFB. Lounello served on the RST with Chaplain (Lt.Col.) Greg Clapper, from the 122nd FW in Indiana. They daily ministered to the deployed aircrews and maintenance personnel on the flightline at Anderson, and provided support for morale-building activities across the base.

In the wake of a tragic B-52 crash off the coast of Guam on July 21, Lounello and Clapper "were where God needed them to be," said Chaplain (Maj.) Keith A. Lingsch, from the National Guard Bureau Readiness Center, in a letter recognizing the men's efforts. "They tirelessly worked to bring God's comfort and peace. In a chaotic situation they did their job and did it well! Thanks for being God's representatives and bringing healing to those that are hurting."

All six aircrew members aboard the B-52H Stratofortress perished when the aircraft went down during a training mission. It had been scheduled to fly over crowds celebrating Liberation Day, which commemorates the U.S. capture of Guam from Japan in 1944.

The aircraft and its crew were based at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., but were

R&R Command announced these awards to the 238 attendees of the annual awards banquet and acknowledged the individual achievements of its top recruiters. Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, was on hand at the banquet to present the Master 7 award to Master Sgt. Mike Bennett, the Chief's 54 award to Staff Sgt. Stephen H. Koptchak, and the Rookie of the Year award to Spc. Joseph M. Compton.

Bennett, of Burlington, N.C., and the noncommissioned officer in charge of Virginia's recruiting area seven, was awarded the Virginia Army National Guard R&R NCOIC of the year and was nominated to represent Virginia to compete for the Master 7 award. The Master 7 is a national award given to the top recruiting NCOIC of each of the seven Regional Recruiting Area Commands.

Koptchak, of Norfolk and a recruiter at Old Dominion University, was awarded the R&R recruiter of the year award, earning him a place on the Chief's 54, an honor reserved for the top recruiters from each of the states and territories. In 2008, Koptchak recruited 41 young Warriors into the Virginia Army National Guard.

Koptchak attributes his success to living the Army Values. "Integrity is the most important to me," said Koptchak. "I focus on customer service and doing the right thing at all times. When I look at a potential recruit, I see a person, not a number."

Compton, of Virginia Beach and a first-year recruiter, earned the Rookie of the Year award, presented to the top first-year recruiter. Compton recruited 21 young Warriors.

"We have the best and most professional Soldiers in the Virginia Army National Guard," said Caruso. "They are the life blood of the Virginia National Guard, and they take that responsibility seriously. Bottom line - the Soldiers are mission first."

at Anderson AFB as part of a four-month rotation.

The Airmen of the RST provided disaster response and ministry after the B-52 crash. They provided support on the flightline and in the command post, squadron and clinic during the round-the-clock response and recovery efforts. They worked side-by-side with the Anderson chapel staff in planning and carrying out the Anderson AFB memorial service honoring the lives, service and sacrifices of the perished aircrew. The memorial service was attended by more than 2,000.

Clapper and Lounello also ministered to, and supported a memorial service for, deployed Airmen from Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, after the untimely death of their commander Brig. Gen. Thomas L. Tinsley, commander of the 3rd Wing, Elmendorf AFB.



## On the Cover



Senior Airman Richard Engel operates an excavator to clear debris from a simulated bomb crater in preparation for repairing a damaged airfield. (Photo by Master Sgt. Carlos Claudio, 192nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

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## 266th MPs begin Iraq mission

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Friends and family members gathered at the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Washington Oct. 8 to bid farewell to the Soldiers of the 266th Military Police Company before they left for Fort Dix, N.J., where they will conduct mobilization training and a subsequent tour of Iraq to assist training the Iraqi Police.

It was a very emotional day for the Manassas-based Soldiers and their loved ones. Many in attendance had tears in their eyes as they embraced for what will most likely be one of the last times this year. The 266th will be training in the U.S. until early December, and will then spend the next nine months or more overseas.

During the last few months the Soldiers of the 266th have been conducting training at Fort Pickett to prepare for their upcoming mission, and now stand ready to move on to the next phase of training.

"I know I can count on these Soldiers whether its standing tall in Hampton Roads

during hurricane relief, or whether its training the Iraqi police force as they're about to do," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., Adjutant General of Virginia. "They will do a magnificent job and they will represent the United States Army and the Virginia National Guard in an excellent manner."

Although the Soldiers will be gone from their families for several months during this deployment they can rest assured that their loved ones will be well looked after.

"The Virginia Guard works hard to support family during periods of deployment. We will stand with you. We will do all we can," said Governor Tim Kaine. "We can never, as a state, change the conditions of war, but we do have complete control over how we treat families, how we treat veterans, and how we treat others who are here on our soil."

For many of the Soldiers of the 266th this is not their first deployment, and like so many other Soldiers of the National Guard they recognize this as just another opportunity to serve their country.



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

**Spc. Stacey McLanahan of Manassas and her son tristen, 20 months, enjoy a juice drink together before his mommy gets ready to deploy.**

"It will be hard, but I've done it before," said Sgt. Christopher Owen, a member of the 266th and a veteran of a previous tour to Iraq.

## Response for Gustav and Hanna teaches valuable lessons

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia Department of Military Affairs carefully managed the response to Hurricane Gustav in early September to ensure that Virginia would have the necessary resources in case Tropical Storm Hanna created any situations where DMA support would be needed.

According to Col. Rob McMillin, director of joint operations for the Virginia National Guard, the Virginia Guard sent nine Soldiers and Airmen to Louisiana to work in their joint operations center, and they are scheduled to return to Virginia Sept. 15. Six Virginia Guardsmen went on duty at National Guard Bureau to assist with disaster response planning.

Approximately 400 members of the DMA were authorized state active duty by Virginia Governor Timothy M. Kaine for possible mission support related to Tropical Storm Hanna. Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard and members of the Virginia Defense Force began

movement Sept. 5 to Fort Pickett where they were on standby.

Even though the DMA did not receive any missions, the response to Tropical Storm Hanna provided valuable training.

"We exercised our alert procedures and exercised our staff processes," McMillin said. "We safely and successfully moved more than 400 people around Virginia and some outside of Virginia. Through the entire event, command and control of all the units that were called on duty was very well executed."

The response validated many parts of the current response plan, McMillin said. Some shortfalls in resources have been identified, and the overall response plan is being modified based on the lessons learned. Some changes are being immediately put into effect in the Joint Operations Center now, and the response to Hanna has also brought about changes for the hurricane response exercise scheduled for June 2009.

The DMA activated a large portion of its Incident Response Force Package that is

prepared to provide security response and evacuation support, McMillin said.

The majority of the IRFP comes from the Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team. Soldiers from company-level armories in Lexington, Bedford and Christiansburg were part of the response force.

According to Maj. Scott Smith, commander of 1st Battalion, the IRFP was equipped with transport trucks and has personnel who could conduct ground evacuation operations or transport supplies. The unit was also ready to provide a force of about 130 Soldiers to act as a security response force to work with state police or other local law enforcement agencies.

Even though the unit didn't receive any missions, the preparation efforts provided valuable training.

"I think we worked out a lot of the bugs and addressing the way we organize into teams and as a unit to provide support," Smith said. "We will be much better prepared in the event we are called out again."

## South Boston, Roanoke troops gather for Freedom Salutes

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the South Boston and Roanoke areas gathered Sept. 7 to conduct Freedom Salutes in honor of the service of E Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion in Iraq from July 2007 to May 2008. Early Sunday morning, the unit held their Freedom Salute in South Boston, followed by another ceremony that afternoon in Roanoke.

"It is an honor for me to be here today on behalf of Gov. Tim Kaine to say welcome home and thank you," said the Honorable John Marshall, Virginia Secretary of Public Safety. "When I use the term that I am I honored to be here, please know I don't use that in a casual way or figure of speech. Honor is far too important. When I look out at you Soldiers, I see dedication to service duty, I see courage and most importantly, I see honor. Please know that I am as sincere as I can be that I am honored to be with you."

Marshall also saluted the families for their sacrifice and support. "Once again we say thank you to the families for stepping up to the plate as you do time and time again."

Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, congratulated the unit on a job well done for a very tough mission. "My thanks to you and for all you do for our country and Virginia," he said. "My thanks to the families for your service, because your support can never be underestimated."

The unit's service in Iraq and Kuwait earned them special recognition. Maj.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard PAO

**Spectators at the Freedom Salute look over the "American Soldier Defender of Freedom Ring" certificate presented at the E Company Freedom Salute.**



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, presents the Governor's National Service Medal to a Soldier from E Company during the unit's Freedom Salute.**

Tim Epple, the E Company Commander, announced at each Freedom Salute that unit will be awarded the National Defense Transportation Award as the best transportation company in the entire National Guard.

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.

The Freedom Salute recognizes the Soldiers, their families, employers and organizations that contributed significantly to supporting the unit during its deployment.

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

Approximately 170 Soldiers from the Roanoke-based E Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion returned home May 13 after serving in Iraq since July 2007.

Approximately 60 of the 170 Soldiers are from the South Boston-based A Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion. Soldiers from the South Boston unit were organized into Detachment 3 of A Company to serve with E Company for the mission.

The unit mobilized in May 2007 and conducted mobilization training at Camp Atterbury, Ind., before arriving in Iraq in July 2007.

E Company was attached to 1144th Transportation Battalion from Illinois National Guard while they were deployed. E Company is a medium truck company that hauled supplies in theater.

The 1144th was assigned to 4th Sustainment Brigade headquartered in Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

The unit had no Soldiers wounded in action, but had one Soldier killed in action during the deployment.

Staff Sgt. Jesse A. Ault, 28, of Dublin, Va., died April 9 in Baghdad, Iraq, from wounds suffered in Tunnis, Iraq, when his vehicle encountered an improvised explosive device. The unit held a moment of silence in Ault's honor at each Freedom Salute ceremony.

## Military Funeral Honors Program honors Soldiers

By Sgt. Jesse L. Houk  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The sound of a bugle and the crack of 21 rounds being fired from the rifles of Soldiers in their dress blues pierced the silence of a remote farm located near Bedford, Va., Oct. 19 in memory of a fallen Soldier.

The former Virginia Army National Guardsman being honored was Jason Maxey. Maxey lived a life of service to his country and that included careers in the Guard, the Navy and as a police officer in the Rocky Mount Police Department.

"Anyone who wears the uniform should have the privilege and the right to have this honor," said Sgt. 1st Class Richard A. Carr Jr., readiness NCO of the 29th Army Band.

The honor he referred to is the funeral detail service offered by the Virginia Army National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program. The program is operated by retired Command Sgt. Maj. Robert W. Huffman.

The Military Funeral Honors Program is a service that provides funeral details for all Army veterans and present and past National Guard members.

Each Soldier that is a part of the program goes through an intricate screening process because of the high visibility of the position and the serious nature of the service provided.

"I would say we all take it serious and we recruit people who are serious because we want to give each fallen comrade and their families the respect that they deserve," said Sgt. Stephen G. Glass, noncommissioned officer in charge for the Roanoke Military Funeral Honors Team.

That respect for the ones left behind leads to the high level of professionalism within the program. Soldiers are trained to perform to the standard of the Arlington National Cemetery.

## New Joint Family Assistance Program comes to Virginia

Courtesy of Virginia Guard Family Programs

The Joint Family Assistance Program provides mobile, high-quality family services to augment current family programs' ability to meet the needs of active duty, Guard and Reserve family members. The primary focus of support is for those families who are geographically dispersed from a military installation.

The Virginia JFSAP team consists of three full-time staff members who travel throughout the state providing assistance and support to military service members and their families.

Pat Thorne, as the Military Family Life Consultant, is available to provide

confidential, non-medical, solution-focused consultations for military members and their families; provide psycho-educational groups addressing life skills and military lifestyle topics; support mobilization, demobilization and reintegration activities; and develop community capacity by reaching out to community agencies and groups.

Kaye Carney, the Military OneSource Consultant, serves as specialist on resources, programs and services for military families. She conducts outreach and partners with organizations to develop resources to address unmet needs. She also identifies, catalogs, and publicizes resources to the eight regional Family Assistance Centers as well as family readiness groups

The new Child and Youth Consultant will provide outreach out to families with children to assess their needs and offer parenting and child development education, support, counseling and referral. They will also facilitate the connection of families to supportive military and civilian resources, raise family awareness about the effects of deployment and reunification on children and youth, and brief school staff and other community groups about the issues impacting military children, e.g., deployment stress, and family separation.

Partnering with the full time staff are representatives from the American Red Cross, Operation Military Kids as well as close coordination of services with the Transition Assistance Advisors.



Photo by Sgt. Jesse L. Houk, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Spc. Philip J. Reddick, Sgt. Stephen G. Glass, and Pfc. Harold A. Good operate as one team in the completion of the flag folding procedure. The Soldiers are a part of the Virginia Army National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program.**

The program's five teams are located in Gate City, Roanoke, Fort Pickett, Petersburg and Fort A.P. Hill and its service extends throughout the entire commonwealth of Virginia.

Soldiers involved in the program view their position as much more than just an occupation. They see their participation in the funeral service as something they can do to pay tribute to the families and friends of the fallen.

"You look at some of the faces of the family members who lost loved ones and you see yourself, you see your family and that makes you want it to be as close to perfect as possible," said Spc. Philip J. Reddick, noncommissioned officer in charge for the Petersburg Military Funeral Honors Team.

Although the names of the fallen and the faces of the families change, one thing is sure- the Military Honors team will always be available to pay one lasting tribute.

## 180th Engineers depart for Iraq train up

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Family, friends and members of the community packed the bleachers at the Powhatan High School football field Oct. 13 to bid farewell to approximately 160 Soldiers from the Powhatan-based 180th Engineer Company. The ceremony marked the official start of the unit's federal active duty for service in Iraq.

The unit conducted a formal departure ceremony, then the Soldiers boarded buses to start their trip to Fort McCoy, Wisc., for their final mobilization training and will remain there through late November. They are expected to arrive in Iraq in early December and be stationed in Central Iraq, North of Baghdad.

The 180th Engineer Company is expected to perform their doctrinal engineer mission when they deploy to Iraq. The unit is trained and equipped as a horizontal construction company, and they expect to be building force protection berms, hauling dirt and other engineer material, emplacing protective barriers and maintaining roads in their area of operations.

"Today is a pretty special day," said Spc. Rudolph Crowther, the unit's guidon bearer. "We have friends and family coming out to give us support, being there for us. Today is about unity, and I couldn't ask to go over with a better bunch of guys."

The Powhatan-based engineer combat served a previous year-long tour of duty in Iraq that began in December 2003. At the time, the unit was designated as Company A, 276th Engineer Battalion and deployed to Mosul and Talifar, Iraq. Under the Army Transformation process, the unit went from a wheeled company to a horizontal construction company and was redesignated at the 180th Engineer Company in 2006.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Va. Guard PAO

**A Soldier from the 180th Engineer Company gets a final hug goodbye before boarding a bus to begin their final mobilization training.**

In addition to friends, family and members of the community, local elected officials as well as senior leaders from the Virginia Guard and the Secretary of Public Safety were on hand to send off the unit.

"We go with you," said State Senator John C. Watkins. "You are a part of us, and we are honored at what you represent. You are the hand of freedom that reaches out from this country around the world. Freedom is a huge responsibility. It is not something that is taken lightly. As you reach out, we go with you."

While based in Powhatan, Soldiers from



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Powhatan High School Athletic Director Jim Woodson presents Capt. Edward Lewis, the unit commander, with a football on behalf of the Powhatan High School football team.**

all over Virginia are deploying as part of the 180th.

"Whether you come from near or far, we here in Powhatan feel closely connected with you and with your success," said Delegate R. Lee Ware, "The attendance this morning and the hospitality that we offer are the testimony of the best wishes and continued prayers that we send with you."

Ware referenced the many community service construction projects the 180th Engineers have been involved over the years as part of the Virginians for Virginia program.

"We know that with your skills and your equipment, you carry the constructive best of our nation to the Middle East," Ware said. "What we hope for is that we will leave that torn up region a better place tomorrow a better place tomorrow than it has been. As you go from here today carrying the torch of freedom, please know that you carry with you our hopes for a constructive future in Iraq."

Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, the Adjutant General of Virginia, told the crowd that the 180th's departure ceremony was one of the most well attended and well represented from the community that he had ever attended.

"The Virginia Guard occupies a special place in the history of our Commonwealth, and I think it is illustrated by the many families and organizations that have turned out here today," Newman said. "From the Boy Scouts to the Veterans of Foreign Wars to the football team, it shows the connection that each one of these Soldiers has with the community."

Powhatan High School Athletic Director Jim Woodson presented Capt. Edward Lewis, the unit commander, with two footballs on behalf of the Powhatan High School football team. Woodson said the footballs signified "our belief and support in you and your company. May it also serve as a symbol of appreciation of your Soldiers and their families commitment and sacrifice so we can continue to enjoy our freedom and quality of life."

"Goodbyes are always difficult," said Lewis at the conclusion of the ceremony. "I will do all I can to make sure these Soldiers are taken care of."

## VDF conducts field exercise at Fort Pickett

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia Defense Force conducted a field training exercise at Fort Pickett Oct. 4 and 5 that had the largest participation ever of any training exercise at the division level.

"This is the most demanding exercise we have ever attempted," said Maj. Gen. John Taylor, commander of the VDF. "It is the only way to train. We train like we are going to respond, and we respond like we trained."

The Virginia Defense Force is an all-volunteer force authorized by the Code of Virginia and organized under the Virginia Department of Military Affairs. "Our mission is to provide direct support to the National Guard after a major disaster to help our fellow citizens in a time of need," Taylor said. "There is no more noble mission than that."

The training exercise focused on the VDF's three core functions of communications, security and medical triage. Three different training sites were established that simulated responded to a downed aircraft, an overturned bus and providing search and medical triage after a tornado. In addition to those scenarios, the VDF also conducted security training



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**The Virginia Defense Force conducted training with their mobile command posts during a field training exercise at Fort Pickett Oct. 4.**

and basic instruction training for new VDF members.

VDF units are located in over 38 Virginia Army National Guard installations throughout the Commonwealth. The division headquarters is located in Richmond and there are three operational brigades: Lafayette in the Tidewater area, Black Horse in Northern Virginia and Highland in Roanoke.

The division currently has a total of more than 800 members and in 2007 they contributed over 7,500 mandays of volunteer service. This resulted in a financial contribution to the Commonwealth of over \$1,000,000. The VDF's goal is to reach 900 members by the end of 2008, and the long-term goal is to have 1,200 volunteers in four to five brigades and 12 to 15 battalions.

The VDF maintains and operates three mobile command post trailers that provide long range, high frequency radio communications capability for the VDF and the Virginia Guard. Two of those MCPs and almost 30 VDF members were on state active duty on stand by for possible missions in response to Tropical Storm Hanna.

During the FTX, each

MCP was dispatched to the training sites and went into operation. At the tornado response site, the Highland Brigade's MCP was staff in part by Staff Sgt. Eldridge Allen, a Lynchburg native and the senior communications operations sergeant for the brigade, and provided operational updates on the status of the fluid situation and communicated additional resources requirements to operations command.

The mobile communications center provides long-range communications using HF, VHF and UHF. The center is also capable of downloading satellite television for weather updates, lap top link-ups, etc. and has interoperable capability with other emergency agencies. "We did what we had to do," Allen said. "We found the problems that existed, overcame the hiccups and executed well." Allen recently retired from the communications industry as a field service communications engineer.

The FTX provided VDF members a chance to evaluate their skills and determine how to focus their training in the coming months.

"This training gave us a chance to test ourselves and see how well we can perform the skills we have been training on for the last year," said 2nd Lt. Heather Welsh, the executive officer for the Manassas-based E Company, 23rd Battalion, Black Horse Brigade. "This was a very intense weekend, and the training was worthwhile."



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard PAO

**Members of the Virginia Defense Force conduct medical triage on a simulated casualty during their field training exercise at Fort Pickett Oct. 4.**

## Soldiers, families gather in Williamsburg for Yellow Ribbon Program

By Capt. Dayna Rowden  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

More than 800 Soldiers and families from 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry gathered in Williamsburg, Va., Sept 13-14, to participate in the Army National Guard Deployment Cycle Support Yellow Ribbon Program.

The Soldiers and families traveled to Williamsburg by charter bus and stayed in local hotels. Once there, they attended informational briefings on Saturday morning and spent the rest of day bonding with family members at Busch Gardens. At a picnic there, Soldiers and families had the opportunity to talk directly to community service providers to get more information regarding available programs and benefits. Most Soldiers and families used the Busch Gardens "Here's to the Heroes" program that allows servicemembers and their dependents one free ticket each.

The Yellow Ribbon Program is a robust, preventative, proactive support program for Soldiers and their families that provides the continuum of care needed to ensure the Soldiers and families receive the care and services they need to support a normal life through the entire deployment cycle.

The briefings offered by the YRP focus attention on the health and wellbeing of the Soldier and family as a total package in order to fully address the complex and ongoing needs resulting from fulfilling military commitments. The briefings are designed to help the Soldiers and Families navigate through the benefits, entitlements and programs available.

"As important as the briefs are, it is equally important for the Soldiers and families to get to know each other," said Lt. Col. William L. Zana, the battalion commander. "The relationships that are established during this weekend between spouses and between Soldiers are just as important to us as anything else we do here. It is a huge challenge to get those connections normally. This is a rare opportunity for us to make connections with the Soldiers in our unit. Busch Gardens is just a magnet to get everyone here."

The weekend was an opportunity for the battalion to focus its energy on its Soldiers and its families.

"Active duty has the time and resources to do this with the families. In the Guard, we have to use our drill weekends for training. There is not much time for the fun stuff with the families," said Sgt. 1st Class Kris Kindoll.

The YRP is still in the developmental stages in the Virginia National Guard, but according to many of the Soldiers and families, the weekend was a success.

"The Yellow Ribbon and Freedom Salute programs are amazing," said Liz C. Sweeney, wife of Sgt. 1st Class Darren J Sweeney. "It is a great opportunity that we can connect not only as a family, but also to spend time with the people who became his family while he was gone. This gives me an in to a different side of his life."

The YRP is tailored for the specific needs of National Guard



Photo by Capt. Dayna Rowden, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Families from 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry speak with community service providers at the command's Yellow Ribbon Program held at Busch Gardens Sept. 13.**

Soldiers and families. Active duty Soldiers and families have the benefit of being located near a post. The YRP brings many of the services provided on a military installation and makes those services available to the Soldiers and families.

Many active-duty Soldiers do not have to worry about looking for a job when they return from a deployment. But the Virginia National Guard has partnered with the Virginia Employment Commission to assist returning Soldiers to find jobs in Virginia.

"That's a big hit," said 1st Lt. Scott A. Nivens, Virginia Yellow Ribbon Program project officer. "One of the biggest problems Soldiers face when returning from deployment is finding a new job."

The program also gives families and Soldiers, who might not otherwise meet, a chance to get to know each other better.

"It's not like it used to be. Our units were localized in one community," said Command Sgt. Major Alan M. Ferris, the battalion command sergeant major. "Now, we're spread out across the entire Commonwealth of Virginia, even some in Pennsylvania, West Virginia and North Carolina. Now families rarely meet, unless you do something like this. These kinds of events make huge difference."

The YRP also serves to recognize the role that families play in the support of the National Guard.

"I felt appreciated and supported. Just meeting the Soldiers he deployed with to Afghanistan and Iraq, made me feel really, really happy," said Jina Kindoll, wife of Sgt. 1st Class Kris Kindoll.

"That appreciation is a key to retention," said Sgt. 1st Class Wayne R. Springer. "A lot of the time Soldiers want to re-enlist, but if their wives don't think they should, because they don't feel appreciated or supported, you end up losing a lot of good people."

Though 3rd Battalion enjoyed many of the benefits of the YRP, the program is still under development, and the Virginia National Guard is working to perfect the program to offer a great program that will help address the unique needs of the National Guard and its families.

"We have to integrate the families, especially with the Guard. If you don't integrate the families in the Guard, you'll lose the Guard," said Sgt. 1st Class Kris Kindoll.

## Virginia Guard battalion wins top readiness award

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

The Virginia National Guard's Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team received the Walter T. Kerwin, Jr. Readiness Award for Army's Most Outstanding National Guard Unit at the Association of the United States Army's Eisenhower Luncheon Oct. 7 in Washington, D.C.

"These citizen soldiers have been chosen as the nation's best," said retired Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, president of AUSA, as he read the inscription of the plaque. "Knowing the competition, every member of the winning unit can take pride in his or her contributions to the Army's readiness."

Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., Chief of Staff of the Army, and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston presented the award to Lt. Col. John Epperly, commander of 3rd Battalion during the unit's deployment to Iraq and Kuwait from September 2007 to April and May 2008, and Command Sgt. Maj. Alan Ferris, the battalion's command sergeant major. Lt. Col. William Zana, executive officer of 3rd Battalion during the deployment, was also on stage for the presentation. Zana assumed command of the battalion from Epperly in August 2008.

Zana said that the award represents readiness on paper in the sense that a review board went through looked a series of readiness statistics, but added that the true measurement of the effectiveness of all the hard work on the part of Soldiers, noncommissioned officers and officers was the success of the deployment.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

**Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., Chief of Staff of the Army, presents the Walter T. Kerwin, Jr. Readiness Award for Army's Most Outstanding National Guard Unit to the senior leaders of 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team Oct. 7 in Washington, D.C. From left to right, Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., Lt. Col. John Epperly, Command Sgt. Major Alan Ferris, Lt. Col. William Zana and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, Sergeant Major of the Army.**

"We successfully deployed, took 800-plus Soldiers down range from more than 40 different units, and brought them all back safely," Zana said. "These Soldiers, with the support of their families and outstanding leadership at the team and squad level, were able to pull that off."

The battalion also received the Milton A. Reckord Trophy at the 130th National Guard Association of the United States General Conference in Baltimore, Md., Sept. 22.

## Virginia chaplains train, plan for the future

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Chaplains and chaplain's assistants from across Virginia gathered at Fort Pickett Oct. 4-5 to conduct training on the concept of a Joint Task Force and to discuss how a JTF would stand up under certain operations. The training brought together chaplains and their assistants from the Virginia Army and Air National Guard, and the Virginia Defense Force.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) John Weatherly, Virginia National Guard state chaplain, brought the chaplains together to pull together a true Joint Force Headquarters Chaplain Force to respond to any contingency that may face the Commonwealth, the National Capital Region or the nation.

Throughout the weekend the chaplains and their counterparts were given briefings from unit ministry teams that have recently returned from Iraq on how to

better understand and implement current concept plans and operations. The UMTs also expanded the chaplains' knowledge on responding to alerts and how to man emergency operation centers when called upon in a JTF environment.

The chaplain's assistants were given several classes as well. They were given instruction on techniques to protect their respective non-combative chaplains from direct and indirect fire, and how to liaison and coordinate with other military agencies.

According to Chaplain (Maj.) J.D. Moore, JFHQ full-time support chaplain, the mission of the Chaplain Corps has always been viewed as a force multiplier but since since 9/11 the Chaplain Corps and its mission have seen high visibility. The chaplains and chaplain assistants' non-tangible attributes have been sought after by both military and civilian leaders.

Another key point of the training was

to provide some fundamental skills for chaplains and assistants serving primarily domestic issues in the Commonwealth.

"The training also provided a time for chaplains and assistants to familiarize themselves with the ministries of the other branches, and to plan support operations for the future," said Weatherly. "I believe it was an effective time of training because it was the first time that we have had representatives from the Air, Army Guard, and the Defense Force, working together, which would be a very strong possibility in the future."

"The training magnified the continued need for chaplains and assistants, from all sources within the Guard family, to educate, train and to be prepared to execute when called to action," said Moore. "The training revealed our need to work together with other agencies, outside our comfort zone, to reach the common goal of recovery from disasters."

## Va. Guardsmen participate in pilot adventure program

By Sgt. Andrew H. Owen  
Virginia Guard Public Affairs

A company of Virginia National Guard Soldiers were bussed to Pennsylvania this weekend to participate in an Army pilot program known as Warrior Adventure Quest. The program is designed to curb high-risk behavior in redeploying Soldiers by giving them an outlet through high-adventure activities in an outdoor environment such as, skydiving, paintball, rock climbing, mountain biking, skiing, and other activities.

Soldiers of C Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team, based out of Leesburg and Manassas, Va., were the second unit to participate in the WAQ program on Sept. 13 in Ohio Pyle, Pa. The program was first tested earlier this week in Vicenza, Italy by Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry.

After the long trip from Virginia to Pennsylvania, the infantrymen arrived at Wilderness Voyageurs, a white water rafting tour company. There they changed out of their Army Combat Uniforms and in to their Army Physical Fitness Uniforms, were given a safety briefing, and sent down the Youghiogheny River in the provided rafts.

Meeting the rapids head-on, many Soldiers were tossed from the rafts into the Yough. The Soldiers quickly paddled their way over to the ejected crewmembers and recovered them from the rough waters with ease. According to Spc. James Anderson, 1st Platoon, the teamwork was so strong that Soldiers from other boats were recovering lost men from other teams.

After many adrenaline boosting hours of fun the Soldiers returned to Wilderness Voyageurs' base of operations to conduct a Battlemind After Actions Review in accordance with the WAQ guidelines. The Battlemind AAR is a debriefing session designed to assist in mitigating the cumulative effects of sustained operations while mentally preparing the team to reintegrate and begin focused training for the next requirement. The concept was developed by behavioral health professionals in the Army's Battlemind program based on recommendations from an Integrated Process Team that included health professionals in the offices of the Surgeon General, Combat Readiness & Safety Center, National Guard, Morale Welfare and Recreation, Installation Management Command Chaplain and the Army Reserve component.

During the AAR Soldiers were asked to discuss the day's events and point out the connections between the activities and the everyday missions of being deployed in a combat environment.

The Soldiers of first platoon agreed that the main thing they observed during the trip was the amount of teamwork that was involved just as it would be in combat.

"There were numerous times I almost fell out of the raft, but my buddy reached out and grabbed me... Not only was he focused



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

**Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team travel down the Youghiogheny River in Pennsylvania Sept. 13.**

on the mission, but he was focused on my well being," said Staff Sgt. Bennie Jost, platoon sergeant of 1st Platoon.

As a testament to the unit's strong sense of teamwork, Pfc. James Self said, "We flipped our boat in the first five minutes. We never flipped it again because we built a good team quickly and learned from our mistakes."

"This weekend's event was a great success, not just by its conduction but also by its demonstrated linkage to Battlemind," said Sgt. Maj. Tammy Coon, senior enlisted advisor for the Soldier and Community Recreation Directorate. "The day's events were enjoyed by all and provided a viable avenue for high adrenaline activities."

This event provided the Soldiers with an opportunity to identify both strengths and shortcomings in not only self, but others; the adjustments were to capitalize on strengths and minimize shortcomings.

According to Staff Sgt. Joshua Gowdie, if it is known that an individual cannot shoot very well, you don't make them a sharpshooter. Instead you utilize them in the areas that they are strong in; in this way personnel can better serve the team.

This weekend marked the first time the WAQ program was tested on Army National Guard Soldiers. The Soldiers of the 116th met the challenge with great enthusiasm.

"It gives Soldiers a controlled release," said Gowdie.

"The combination high adrenaline team building activity with Battlemind training and small group discussion has a lot of potential to help combat units achieve a smoother reintegration," said Capt. Arthur Moore, commander of C Company.

The WAQ program plans to cycle 80,000 Army Soldiers through the program over the next 12 months.

If the program can reduce those statistics it will truly have accomplished its mission.

## 203rd RED HORSE takes to the field



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

RED HORSE members carried out many of the tasks they are faced with when deployed including taking shifts to protect the entry control point to their camp. Here (from left to right) Senior Airman Steven Stribling, Senior Airman Terry Harris and Airman 1st Class Benjamin Sigler perform sentry duty.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Members of the Airfield Battle Damage Assessment Team take soil tests to determine the ground's load bearing capacity before beginning work.

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

More than 160 Airmen from the 203rd RED HORSE Squadron experienced divergent weather and a range of training opportunities during the unit's annual field training exercise at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Oct. 23-26. For 100 of these RED HORSE men and women it was their first field experience: staying in tents, eating from a field kitchen and protecting their compound from mock attacks.

The weather went from dry, sunny and mild to chilly, wet, blustery and overcast. Activities ran the gamut from setting up camp and cleaning and inspecting gear to conducting hours of ancillary and specialized field training. These activities were periodically punctuated with staged attacks on the compound and on the convoy training runs.

The training plan included scenarios similar to what the unit dealt with during its last deployment to Southwest Asia, from which the unit returned from on Mother's Day in May 2007.

"We took this field training slow," said Chief Master Sgt. Chris Valdez, exercise coordinator, whose radio handle for the FTX was Mother Goose. "With so many new members who had either never been in the field, or hadn't previously deployed with the unit, we placed an emphasis on safety and training this year. We're starting with the basics - things like field hygiene, because just taking care of yourself in the field is incredibly important - for the individual and to the success of a mission.

"The unit had a large number of members who were ready for retirement, but they stayed through the last deployment," she explained. "So Recruiting has brought in a lot of motivated, energetic, young, new Airmen. We are crawling and walking now,



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

A training convoy takes fire during a simulated attack during the 203rd RED HORSE Squadron's annual field training exercise held Oct. 23-26 at Camp Pendleton in Virginia Beach.

but we will get back up to speed."

Indeed some of the unit members were so new that they hadn't yet been to basic training. They wore reflective vests and participated where permitted and observed activities they couldn't participate in. "This kind of experience will help them gain a better understanding of what the unit does, and help them better handle warrior week during basic training," Valdez added.

The unit was divided into five groups that rotated through the ancillary training modules: defensive fighter positions; air base defense; communications; chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives warfare and decontamination; and convoy training.

Then mission-specific training got underway with surveying, making airfield damage assessments and repairs, and installing the mobile aircraft arresting system.

In the command and operations tents, planners tracked personnel, equipment and materials; managed event flow, communications and processes; and worked to hone the unit's battle skills including sense of urgency and reaction to the staged attacks. As one of the first types of units to move into a barren or "bare base" environment, it is critical it is to keep close track of all their resources.

Most of the instructors for the FTX participated in the unit's last deployment to Southwest Asia and worked diligently to bring real scenario discussions, examples and responses to their training. "You don't forget those kinds of [deployment] lessons," said Capt. Sarah Handegard, 203rd physician assistant. "And when you enter this type of training environment, those experiences and lessons come back. This is a valuable way to share that experience and knowledge with new unit members. Doing something like this makes the training more relevant and it helps them understand what to expect."

The 203rd RED HORSE Squadron is a self-contained, equipped and trained, rapid-response engineering force capable of doing expedited damage-requirements assessments, heavy-damage repairs, bare-base development, and heavy construction operations such as constructing aircraft parking ramps and munitions pads. RED HORSE units possess special capabilities including well drilling, explosives demolition, quarry operations, materials testing, and concrete and asphalt paving. In addition, the unit has its own internal support personnel, including services, vehicle maintenance, security, supply, logistics and information management.

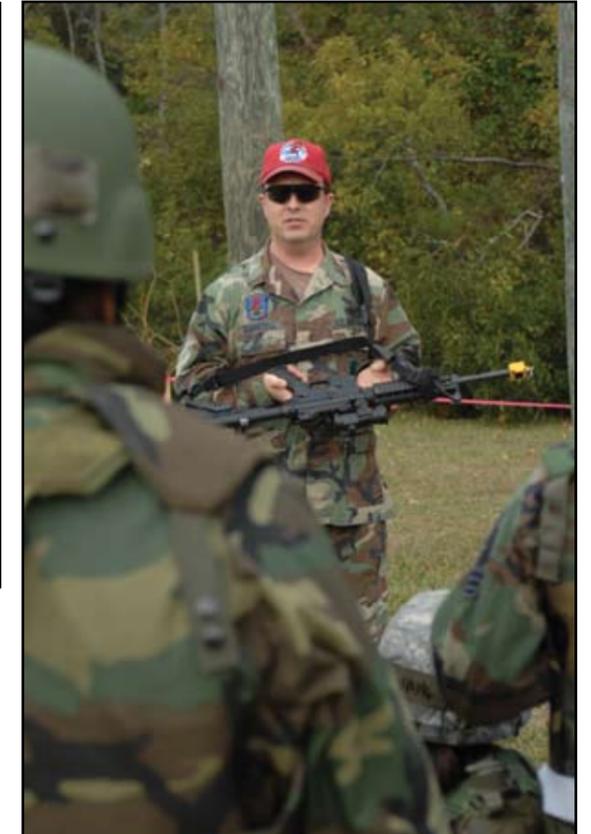


Photo by Master Sgt. Carlos Claudio, 192nd Fighter Wing PAO

Technical Sgt. Dan Summerell instructs fellow RED HORSE Airmen on fire team movements during Air Base Defense training.



Photo by Master Sgt. Carlos Claudio, 192nd Fighter Wing PAO

Staff Sgt. Rawewan Andrews uses an entrenching tool to dig out a fighting position during Defensive Fighter Position training.