



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Turney, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

The Honorable John O. Marsh Jr., former Secretary of the Army, addresses members of the HQ 3-116th Infantry and their families prior to their departure for Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Marsh spoke eloquently of their bravery and patriotism as they prepare to enter active duty. See more photos on pages 8 and 9.

For the latest news and information on the Virginia National Guard, visit
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FROM THE TOP



Va Guard: Transformation since 1607

By Maj. Gen. Claude A. Williams
Adjutant General



Maj. Gen. Claude A. Williams

We hear a lot about transformation of the National Guard these days. The first question that probably comes to mind is "Why change, why transform? After all, we are doing well just the way we are!" There are a couple of responses to that. First, organizations that cannot or will not adapt to their environment will fail. And our environment is constantly changing whether we know it or not. Second, transformation is not really new for the Virginia National Guard. Throughout its history TEAM VIRGINIA has changed and adapted to its environment and accomplished its mission. We have continually moved forward so we are not left behind. I am committed to seeing that tradition continue.

Even though the U.S. military went through significant downsizing to reap the benefits of the "peace dividend," it remained configured to fight the Cold War. Cold War doctrine taught us there would probably be political and military events that served as precursors to large scale military build-ups and conflicts. These events would trigger the mobilization of the National Guard and there would be adequate time for post mobilization training after units mobilized. Large formations based on the division would be necessary to conduct the air-land battle which would be fought on highly urbanized terrain in northern and central Europe. Our paradigm of how this nation would fight its next war remained essentially unchanged until 2001. The experience of the past two and a half years teaches us our situation has changed radically.

The events of September 11, 2001 touched so many facets of life in the United States and around the globe. Make no mistake about it: we went to war on that day and that war will continue into the foreseeable future. The Global War on Terror is a war this country and the world must win. We must successfully defend the

homeland. Our enemy is lethal, stealthy, highly mobile, and has no reservation about taking the fight to innocent men, women, and children around the world. Our enemy is capable of executing violent, deadly attacks with minimal command structure. Our enemy uses the Internet and other sophisticated information systems that can be hard to monitor for command, control and information management. Our enemy is exceptionally difficult to detect as he moves across international borders and makes alliances among various groups sympathetic to their cause. While this represents a new environment for our military, the mission remains the same – defend Constituion and the people of the United States.

September 11, 2001 is the catalyst for profound change across our military. Since that date we have seen our own Soldiers and Airmen deployed across the full spectrum missions that may be assigned to the Virginia Army and Air National Guard including guarding our commercial service airports, hunting terrorist in Afghanistan, guarding terrorist in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, supporting Air Expeditionary Force missions, and disaster recovery operations in response to Hurricane Isabel. The variety of missions and the need for flexibility to accomplish the missions facing us is

something that was simply not envisioned when the Berlin Wall was torn down.

Today tactics and the skill sets of each of the services are being leveraged to take advantage of the synergy of joint operations. Special operation units that can deploy around the globe in a relatively short period of time and use technology to bring the warfight to our enemies are becoming more prominent on the battlefield. The brigade is emerging in place of the division as the principal land warfighting formation. And the combat power a brigade can generate in a joint environment is overwhelming.

The F/A 22 Raptor will be coming on line in the next few years to replace the Air Force's F-15. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and other technologies will emerge to take the place of people in harm's way on the battlefield. The Air Guard's VANGUARD program is a model for corporate and cultural transformation in the Air Force. If the National Guard is to remain a crucial partner in the defense of this country we must embrace this change and transform. And we must transform as we continue to defend this country. That means we cannot stand down. Rather we must engage and adopt change as we successfully and professionally execute our ongoing missions.

But transformation is not new to the Virginia National Guard. It is the result of visionary, enlightened thinking and the professional, practical implementation of new concepts. In 1607 settlers established a militia to provide for the common defense of Jamestown and the Virginia National Guard has been changing ever since. We adapted to radical changes in battlefield formations during the Revolutionary War and responded to changes in battlefield technology during the Civil War. Federal legislation and increased federal funding in the early years of the 20th Century through World War I gave rise to how the National Guard would support the defense of this

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On the Cover



Maj Bob Grey returns to the Virginia Air Guard after gaining valuable experience on active duty. (Photo by Tech Sgt. Dave Buttner, 192nd Multimedia Branch)

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General Assembly commends Va Guard

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Army Guard Public Affairs Officer

The Virginia General Assembly recognized the Virginia National Guard with a Joint Resolution commending the men and women of the Army and Air Guard for their efforts in the nation's War on Terror and response to disasters in Virginia as "an expression of the admiration and gratitude of the General Assembly and the people of Virginia." Delegate Kirk Cox presented Maj. Gen. Claude Williams, the adjutant general of Virginia, with a framed copy of House Joint Resolution 314 in the center aisle of the House of Delegates chamber on Feb. 23. Also on hand were members of the Army and Air Guard who have served overseas since September 11, 2001.

Prior to presenting the resolution to Williams, Cox introduced the five Soldiers and Airmen to the members of the House of Delegates and read a brief summary of what role they played during their deployments overseas. The members of the House followed the presentation with a standing ovation.

During a reception before the presentation ceremony, Cox, Williams and Secretary of Public Safety John Marshall all stressed the critical role of supportive families and employers in the success of the many missions being carried out by the Virginia Guard.

The resolution acknowledged that the 7,500 Soldiers of the Army National Guard and the 1,200 members of the Virginia Air National Guard have "played an increasingly vital role in protecting the nation and pursuing the war on terror" and recognized the service of Guard Soldiers in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Kuwait, Virginia National Guard units deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, as well as being a vital part of the nation's homeland defense.

It also recognized the service of the Virginia National Guard in assisting in flood recovery operations in May 2002, helping local



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Va Guard Public Affairs Office

Delegate Kirk Cox presents a framed copy of House Joint Resolution 314 to Maj. Gen. Claude Williams.

officials in the Valley cope with severe winter weather in February 2003, and, most recently, providing support in recovery operations following Hurricane Isabel in September 2003.

Members of Army and Air Guard participating in the ceremony:

- Staff Sergeant Quinton P. Gillus from Richmond, Va. Gillus served as Special Forces Communications Sergeant for Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Virginia Army National Guard while deployed to Afghanistan.

- Private First Class Djann L. Alexander from Virginia Beach, Va, Alexander served as a Border Customs Agent in Kuwait for all incoming and outgoing military equipment and served as perimeter guard of an Iraqi Enemy Prisoner of War Complex as a member of the 229th Military Police Company, Virginia Army National Guard.

- Specialist Mathew B. Bulloch from Charlottesville, Virginia. Specialist Bulloch was deployed to Guantanamo Bay Cuba and provided external security to the Al Qaida and Taliban detainees as a member of Company A 2nd Battalion 116th Infantry, 29th Infantry Division (Light), Virginia Army National Guard.

- Staff Sergeant Gary F. Pesnell, Jr. from Herndon, Virginia. Pesnell served as the heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) Supervisor while deployed to Thumrait Air Base, Oman. He also supervised the Third Country National escort team. After Thumrait closed, he was moved to Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar and assisted with the installation of the HVAC system for a new 10,000 square foot base theater. He was part of a 10-man team that tore down damaged aircraft hangers and completed minor quality of life construction projects for the base as a member of the 203rd Red Horse Flight, Virginia Air National Guard.

- Senior Airman Holly M. Portillo from Chesapeake, Virginia. Portillo also was deployed to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar as part of a 30-person crew that constructed a new 10,000 square foot base theater for the new base. She was the lead engineering assistant responsible for surveying and layout of the building to include the foundation and steel frame. She was involved in every aspect of the construction from concrete placement, steel erection and wall construction to finish work.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Va. Guard Public Affairs Office

Five Soldiers and Airmen from the Virginia National Guard were on hand during the ceremony to represent their fellow Guard Soldiers stationed all over world and are shown holding up a framed copy of House Joint Resolution 314. From left to right: Staff Sergeant Gary F. Pesnell, Specialist Mathew B. Bulloch, Staff Sergeant Quinton P. Gillus, Senior Airman Holly M. Portillo and Private First Class Djann L. Alexander.

Air Guard names top enlisted personnel

By Maj. Debbie Magaldi
Air Guard Public Affairs Officer

The Virginia Air Guard recently selected its top enlisted personnel for 2003. Earning the VaANG Outstanding Airman of the Year title was Senior Airman Fallon McNeil, a member of the 192nd Fighter Wing. Both the VaANG Outstanding Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and overall Outstanding Virginia Guardsman of the Year titles went to Tech Sgt. Scott Morrill, 203rd RED HORSE Flight. Master Sgt. Stephen Elliott, 203rd RED HORSE Flight, took the VaANG Outstanding Senior NCO of the Year honors.

"Each year we take the opportunity to recognize those individuals that have exhibited the highest levels of airmanship, job knowledge and leadership," said Chief Master Sgt. John Iorio, Command Chief Master Sergeant for Joint Forces Headquarters Virginia (Air Component). "These are people who exemplify our [Air Force] core values."

The recipients of this year's VaANG Outstanding Airman, NCO and Senior NCO honors were chosen by a Headquarters board that convened in December 2003. The board of officers and senior enlisted members were "extremely impressed" with the caliber of all the candidates. The individuals who went before the Headquarters selection board had already been chosen as the best Airmen, NCOs and senior NCOs of their respective units.

McNeil is an enthusiastic member of the 192nd Military Personnel Flight. She helped in the processing of more than 50 awards and decorations for unit members



Senior Airman McNeil



Tech Sgt. Morrill



Master Sgt. Elliott

activated for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. She is a member of the Student Flight Development Program Planning Team and a member of the Commander's Dress and Personal Appearance Advisory Board.

Morrill is a highly knowledgeable, professional structures craftsman, and Team Leader of the 203rd Cantonments Structural Shop. During his 2003 deployment to Southwest Asia, Morrill helped construct a taxiway valued at \$15 million. As Structural Supervisor, he led his crew through the successful completion of multiple mission-essential facilities and systems, and as CE Operation Superintendent, he was responsible for maintaining and repairing all U.S. equipment and facilities for a 1,900-person base.

Elliott, superintendent of the 203rd Airfields Shop, is an exceptionally knowledgeable pavement/construction professional and supervisor of the 40 people in his shop. While deployed with his unit to SWA during 2003, he helped construct a 500 seat, 10,000 square-foot theater, which greatly improved the quality of life for

thousands of deployed U.S. military people. He was a key member of his unit's advance team to SWA, and was responsible for planning the work, obtaining the required materials, and receiving the troops.

He oversaw the excavation of over 500 cubic yards of rock for the building's foundation and directed the assembly of the structural steel and metal roofing and siding for the facility -- the largest vertical accomplishment of any RED HORSE team. Before deployment, an internal Unit Compliance Inspection review of his shop showed that it met or exceeded all Air Force standards. "Congratulations go out to each of Virginia's outstanding Airmen. They are motivated, energetic individuals who are constantly working to make things better, within their unit and their community," Iorio said.

"All of the candidates were outstanding and each one of them should be proud. The competition was very keen and the board felt each candidate did a great job of representing his or her unit," Iorio added, "making the board's job very difficult."

Soldiers from 54th Field Artillery Brigade set to deploy

By Lt. Col. Chester Carter, III
Public Affairs Officer

Maj. Gen. Claude Williams, the adjutant general of Virginia, and Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Bob Huffman, State Command Sergeant Major, recently visited Soldiers of the 54th Field Artillery Brigade at their mobilization station, Ft. Dix, N. J. The Soldiers of the brigade are going through the final stages of training in preparation for their deployment to Afghanistan.

Only 25 Soldiers of the field artillery brigade headquarters have been ordered to active federal service, and most of them

are support specialists such as logisticians, administrators and operations specialist. Their mission will be to function as a liaison team for military activities in Afghanistan. Williams told the Soldiers their unit was selected for the mission because the brigade has consistently maintained a high level of readiness.

While visiting the Soldiers, Williams presented Col. Frank Batts, commander of the brigade, with a Virginia state flag that had been flown over the Capitol in Richmond. Williams asked that the flag be flown wherever the unit was located as a reminder of home and the appreciation the citizens of Virginia have for what their Soldiers are doing in the war on global terrorism.



Photo by Lt. Col. Chester C. Carter, III, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

Capt. Mike Gilligan reflects on the moment during the invocation of the 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry mobilization ceremony held at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Va.

Bedford community gathers to send off soldiers

**By Lt. Col. Chester Carter, III
Public Affairs Officer**

Every journey, regardless of how short or how far and regardless of direction, begins with the first step. On March 4, 2004, the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry took their first step together as they marched from the National Guard Armory to the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Va. to join in America's war on terrorism. These Soldiers marched together just as other Soldiers from this rural community nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains marched together almost 63 years ago in the name of peace and to preserve freedom.

The Soldiers of today's 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry, Virginia Army National Guard, came together from communities across the Blue Ridge, Roanoke Valley, and the New River Valley of central Virginia. The towns of Roanoke, Pulaski, Radford, Christiansburg, Clifton Forge, and of course Bedford sent their sons to rally around the flag here in Bedford. Bedford, which is

the home of Company A, 116th Infantry Regiment, the Virginia National Guard unit which lost 19 Soldiers during the invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, hosted the send off of the 1st Battalion Soldiers. From here they travel to Ft. Bragg, N. C. where they will be integrated into 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry and begin preparing to join this country's war on terrorism.

Just as their predecessors did in 1941, the Soldiers of the 116th Infantry marched through the city of Bedford. But this time rather than marching from the armory to the Bedford County Courthouse, they marched through Bedford to the National D-Day Memorial where the unit's departure ceremony took place. But similarities between the two send offs remain. People lined the streets in 1941 as the "Bedford Boys," as they came to be known, marched off to war. And people lined the streets today. Flag-waving children from the local elementary school lined the drive leading up to the D-Day Memorial chanting "USA, USA, USA!" The band from Jefferson Forest High School was on hand to provide

patriotic and uplifting music as Soldiers, families and friends milled about the memorial awaiting the arrival of Gov. Mark Warner and other dignitaries.

The weather was perfect for the event and possibly served as an omen of good things to come. Although the day began as overcast and gloomy the weather transformed into a warm, clear, beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains late winter morning. Off in the distance the Peaks of Otter and the skyline of Bedford were shrouded in the morning mist. But on the plaza of the memorial the sun was warm and bright; almost a balm to sooth the worry and anxiety about the unknown that looms in the future and must be overcome by these Soldiers, their families, and their communities. Bedford knows full well the price of freedom: on June 6, 1944, 19 Soldiers from Bedford perished during the invasion of Normandy. That is the highest per capita loss suffered by any community and that is why the National D-Day Memorial is located in Bedford.

Walking around the plaza watching



Photo by Lt. Col. Chester C. Carter, III, Va Guard PAO

Gov. Mark Warner addresses soldiers and their families and others gathered during the mobilization ceremony for 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Va.

soldiers and their families, friends, and supporters mingle, exchange stories, trade smiles, share hugs, and shed tears one gets a sense of a great episode in history that took place almost 60 years ago and the contribution that citizen soldiers from these mountains and valleys made to that episode. Seeing the bronze statues of soldiers, which convincingly portray the emotion that must have been felt by the soldiers as they crossed the beaches of Normandy, freezes that event in time.

One gets the feeling that this place is guarded by the spirit of those who gave all on those beaches on June 6, 1944. The plaza is a solemn and serious place that reminds us of the sacrifice so many made so that so many more could live free. The emotion of that spirit permeates this place and generates a profound feeling for the mission these soldiers of a different generation are about to embark on. The mission these soldiers leave for today is no less daunting than the mission facing yesterday's "Bedford Boys."

As Warner and his party entered the plaza the band played "This is My Country"

followed by "America the Beautiful." Musical reminders of why the crowd is here today and what these soldiers are about. As Warner made his way to the podium, he shook hands with those gathered along his way. Capt. Mike Gilligan ordered his soldiers into formation and then marched them to the center of the plaza. Family and friends gathered around with their soldiers and drew near to hear words meant to inspire, encourage, comfort and give solace.

Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Robert Huffman challenged the soldiers of the 116th Infantry to rely upon their soldier skills and each other. He told them they are well trained now and will be even better prepared for their upcoming mission after completing their training at Ft. Bragg, N. C. The crowd enthusiastically cheered when Maj. Gen. Claude Williams said "It has been said that America's greatest generation fought World War II. But I believe America's greatest generation is standing before you in the ranks of the 116th Infantry." Williams emphasized, his prayer is that all the soldiers standing on the plaza today

return to this place in 18 months for the unit's welcome home celebration.

When Warner took the podium, he told of Virginians who since 1607 when Jamestown was founded have been citizens in peace and soldiers in war; of great people who have risen to great challenges. He spoke of Virginia's long history and tradition of patriotism and dedication to liberty; that Virginians understand peace and freedom require sacrifice. Warner said it was fitting to acknowledge the contribution and sacrifice being made by these citizen soldiers today in this place dedicated to the sacrifices made by citizen soldiers of an earlier time. He said "These soldiers go forward today in the very spirit that motivated their brothers and comrades in arms to cross those beaches on June 6, 1944. Their mission is just as vital to our way of life as the mission was for the soldiers of the 116th Infantry Regiment 60 years ago." He acknowledged the other Virginia patriots that have answered the call to duty in this same struggle the soldiers of the 116th Infantry are about to enter.

Warner said the soldiers standing in formation represented "the best of Virginia." He praised the soldiers and said, "We owe these great patriots our gratitude and admiration for their sacrifice, commitment, and devotion." And he also pointed out that just as the "Bedford Boys" did not cross the beaches of Normandy alone, neither did these soldiers leave Bedford alone. He noted the soldiers "have the unyielding and enduring support of their family, their community and the Commonwealth." He concluded by saying "you go forward with our prayers."

The ceremony honored these citizen soldiers, who in the tradition of the Minutemen, have laid down their plow shares and picked up their weapons to defend our nation and what it stands for and to pay tribute to the families that support these soldiers. It recognized the contribution of skill and talent of these soldiers and their families and praised their patriotism. Just as those at Jamestown, Yorktown and Bedford have done earlier, these citizen soldiers and their families are rising to overcome the fear of what the future may bring and the challenges that future will certainly offer up. And just as earlier generations have persevered to overcome hardship, so will this generation.

3-116th Infantry departs for Fort Bragg for deployment

Family, friends and local dignitaries gathered at the National Guard Armory in Winchester on March 4 to send off the soldiers of 3rd Bn., 116th Infantry Battalion scheduled for deployment in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

The soldiers took advantage of this last opportunity to say farewell to their loved ones before embarking on the estimated 12-hour road convoy to Fort Bragg where the unit will conduct mobilization training prior to moving on to their assignment.



First Lt. Heath Phillips (above photo) hands out the final strip maps detailing the long drive to Fort Bragg on the morning of March 4. Spec. Delmas Brabson (above right photo), a member of 3rd Bn., 116th Inf. Regiment's Scout Sniper platoon, hugs his fiancé Tammy Blake goodbye just minutes before loading up the units vehicles for the 12-hour trip to Fort Bragg and another 18 months of active duty.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Mark Turney, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

Staff Sgt. Todd Peer (left photo) give a final hug as he says goodbye to his family seconds before leaving for his 12-hour convoy to Fort Bragg. Lt. Col. Blake Ortner (above photo) receives a flag that had hung over the state capital from Brig. Gen. Sayers, Deputy Adjutant General prior to the 3-116th's departure. Spec. Ronald Creswell (right photo) holds his 2-year old daughter Sarah while listening to speeches from members of the Winchester City Council, The Honorable John Marsh and Brig. Gen. Sayers.



Air Guard welcomes return of seasoned pilot

By 1st Lt. Mark Widener
192nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs Officer

There is a new face at the Virginia Air National Guard. You may have seen him climbing into an F-16 and, if you've been in the unit awhile, you may have felt a strange sense of deja-vu. Well, your eyes aren't playing tricks on you. After flying several aircraft on active duty, most recently the F-15C at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska, like the prodigal son, Maj. Bob Grey has returned.

It was ten years ago when Grey first arrived as a young first lieutenant fresh out of pilot training, he was assigned to fly the 192nd Fighter Wing's C-26 support aircraft. As an Air Force Academy graduate who won a scholarship to Harvard for a Master's degree right out of the Academy, this was his first flying assignment. "It was a great opportunity. I got to fly a lot, and with some very talented pilots. They had a huge diversity of experience, having flown everything from cargo planes to fighters to tankers. It was a great place to learn the flying business, one of the best first assignments anyone could hope for. It was awesome."

When Grey wasn't busy flying members of the 192nd around in the C-26 he was "sand-bagging" rides in the back seat of the F-16D. "It seemed like a crime to me if the back seat of the D model ever went empty." Bob had always wanted to fly a fighter, but attended pilot training during a time when the Air Force was undergoing a massive draw-down and a reduction in the number of pilot requirements, particularly in fighter pilot cockpits. The Virginia Air National Guard felt that same sting as it shrunk from 24 aircraft to only 15. "I was just happy to get a flying assignment. A lot of my friends were banked," (a three year non-flying assignment).

Relocation of 192nd Fighter Wing explored

By Lt. Col. Chester Carter, III
Public Affairs Officer

Maj. Gen. Claude Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, announced the Virginia Air National Guard and the U.S. Air Force are exploring the possibility of consolidating the Richmond-based 192nd Fighter Wing with Air Force units at Langley Air Force Base in the Hampton Roads area.

While it has had a presence at Richmond International Airport since 1947, the need for the Air Guard to remain a relevant, ready contributor to the national defense effort has necessitated this review. This consolidation would significantly improve the likelihood that Virginia will retain the

current mission and resources of the 192nd Fighter Wing.

Many factors are being considered regarding the potential relocation of the 192nd including its impact on people, communities, local economies, and the Air Guard's ability to successfully accomplish its mission. Members of the Virginia General Assembly and Virginia's congressional delegation representing districts affected by the proposed relocation were briefed earlier this week. It is anticipated "town hall" style meetings will be conducted by the Virginia National Guard in the near future to receive input from citizens regarding this proposal. It is critical to gather information to determine how this proposal will impact on the communities

affected by the relocation of the 192nd.

In an effort to meet Department of Defense plans for reductions in flying units, the Air Guard may see a significant reduction in the number of flying squadrons throughout the country. The possible relocation of the 192nd Fighter Wing to Langley Air Force Base supports this plan for reduced infrastructure, takes advantage of the 192nd Fighter Wing's proximity to Langley Air Force Base, and provides the Virginia Air National Guard a relevant mission in support of this nation's defense effort for the next thirty years. This potential move would result in the retention of almost 1,000 full time and part time positions and the opportunities for growth of the Virginia Air National Guard.



Photo by Tech Sgt. Dave Buttner, 192nd Multimedia Branch

Maj. Bob Grey returned to the Virginia Air National Guard with a wealth of experience.

But Grey's desire to fly a fighter never waned. When the Air Force realized it had cut the ranks of fighter squadrons too severely it opened the opportunity for young cargo and tanker pilots to cross train to a fighter. He was selected to fly an F-15C only three months after leaving the Air Guard for his next active duty assignment. "I had just started flying the C-141 when the results of the cross-flow board came out. I spent about a year flying the C-141 waiting for an F-15 class to open up."

Grey's career in the active duty took him to five major commands, with assignments spanning the United States and overseas as well. He has flown missions in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Pacific Rim. "About the only places I haven't been TDY are Australia and South America." And now, seven years later, he has come full circle. Maj. Bob Grey is another reason while the best people that have ever served in the long and proud history of the Virginia Air Guard are serving now.

1-246th FA conducts live fire exercise

By Capt. Michael Booker
1st Bn., 246th FA Bn. UPAR

In June of 2002, the soldiers of 1st Battalion, 246th Field Artillery had just returned from annual training when they were notified of a deployment to Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Md. as part of Operation Noble Eagle II. Until now, this was the last time any of the artillerymen had fired their 105mm Howitzers since their deployment.

With nearly a two-year break, the soldiers of battalion returned to the field in March 2004 and conducted an extremely successful live fire exercise. With safety and procedures in mind, the battalion fired 180 rounds without incident, proving that their two year break had only interrupted their artillery training, it did not extinguish their desire to succeed.

Since returning from active duty, the soldiers spent countless hours reacquainting themselves with their guns. The months that preceded the live fire exercises were filled with training on gunners; testing and section certification. The soldiers of the Fire Direction Centers (FDC) of the



Contributed photo

A gun section from Battery A, 1st Bn., 246th Field Artillery begins loading the 105mm howitzer after receiving a fire mission. Pictured (left to right) are: Section Chief Staff Steve Fitzgerald, ammo handler Spc. Aaron Austin and assistant gunner Spc. Justin Hylton .

firing batteries familiarized themselves with their computer system. Everyone felt comfortable heading back out to the field. Staff Sgt. Jonathon Rhew, a section chief with C Battery, 1st Bn., 246th Field Artillery, put things in perspective when he said "We feel that consistent fire missions not only helps unit morale, but also unit retention." He added, "A lot of the time we focus on training to fire but when the smell of powder is in your face there is nothing else like it. This weekend's success was a morale booster for years to come."

The weather was being cooperative on the day of the exercise. The soldier's spirits were high. They couldn't wait to

get back on the gun-line, sit on the hill, or direct the fire from the FDC trucks. The two year hiatus that they had experienced didn't seem to faze them. Personnel had seen some changes, which brought new faces to the unit. As the live fire began, Charlie Battery sent the first round down range. The rumble of the howitzers made the soldier's adrenaline kick-in to high gear. Once the first rounds were delivered safely to the target, a succession of rounds followed. Now it was Alpha Battery's turn to shoot. The forward observers had a sight to see with a total of five-105mm howitzers pounding the impact area with shells.

By the end of the day the soldiers were tired, but they were exhilarated. The most important part of the day's event were that everything was accomplished safely and no injuries had occurred.

The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Steven Scott, summed it up best when he said, "This was a significant training event for us as a battalion getting back to its traditional role and mission of providing fire support." He expressed his initial concern though, by saying "Although I was confident in the skills of the battalion's soldiers, there was some trepidation over not having conducted live fire exercises in two years. However, the exercise went great. The gun crews and observers looked like they had not missed a beat. It could not have been better."

Journalists Needed

The Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Section currently has several vacancies for Army journalists. While experienced MOS-qualified journalists are preferred, any soldier who has an interest in photography and writing is encouraged to apply.

To qualify, a soldier must have a minimum GT score of 110 and meet Army height and weight standards. Non-MOS qualified soldiers must be able eligible to attend the basic journalism course. The Public Affairs Section creates content for the *Virginia GuardPost* magazine and the command information web site located at www.virginiaguard.com.

For more information, contact the Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Officer, Lt. Col. Chester C. Carter, by phone at 434-298-6107 or by e-mail at chester.carter@va.ngb.army.mil.

Fort Pickett hosts Joint Forces training exercise

By Gary Watts
Fort Pickett UPAR

The sun had set hours before; the temperature was plummeting in the darkness of the February night. It would not be long now, for the moonrise was near and the mission was almost complete. In the distance, the snaps and pops of rotor blades beating the chilly night air were growing more strident by the moment and echoing across the barren landscape.

Conscious of the cold but acutely aware of the record setting weather back home in Canada, the company commander checked with his radioman for any revisions to the plan that had been worked and reworked for months. In a matter of minutes, the helicopters, the venerable CH-46 and the more modern UH-60, would have completed the infantry company extraction from the dusty pickup zone. A successful extraction aided by night vision goggles would signal the end of the fourth deployment to the United States by the Princess Louise Fusiliers. Exercise Southbound Trooper IV was drawing to a close.

Why would the Canadians travel over 1200 miles, spending thousands of dollars for transporting personnel, equipment and ammunition? Why would a light infantry battalion from Nova Scotia make this effort? After all Canadian Forces Base Gagetown is about 200 miles away from Halifax and is six times larger than Fort Pickett.

The answer is as simple as it is complex. Facilities unique to Fort Pickett, such as the MOU site at the National Guard Maneuver Training Center are not available at CFB Gagetown. As land forces of most western nations prepare for future armed conflict or peacekeeping missions, it is critical that the modern military adequately train in urban settings.

Keeping the Soldier well trained, interested and challenged leads directly to



Photo by LT Mike Drindak, HM-14, U.S. Navy

A United States Navy MH-53 supporting Southbound Trooper IV gets ready to land with humanitarian relief items.

individual motivation, thereby contributing immeasurably to esprit de corps. Pride in the unit forges a direct path to retention while retention assures mission accomplishment and the effective use of national defense resources. Keeping the Soldier motivated is not particularly difficult but challenging in that it requires innovative thought, extensive prior planning, long-range goals and careful execution. A Soldier that has been removed from his own country, transported across an international border and afforded the opportunity to practice his skills in new environment with Soldiers, sailors, Airmen and Marines from the host country cannot help from being positively influenced. For these reasons and the unique opportunities available to them at Fort Pickett, the Canadian Forces have elected to train in the United States.

The Fusiliers have crossed the border before to train on National Guard facilities. In doing so, they have incorporated training activities with aviation, infantry and transportation units from the New

Hampshire, Virginia, North Carolina and Pennsylvania Army or Air National Guard. Unit deployments prevented some units from participating in Southbound Trooper IV. The Fort Pickett staff coordinated with units from the United States Marine Corps Reserve, as well as active duty units from the United States Navy and the United States Army.

A direct outcome of the Southbound Trooper exercise is a National Guard Bureau concept known as United States – Canada Twinning. Conceptually the Twinning idea will provide the opportunity to prepare for wartime tasks on new terrain, present the possibility for new training partners and expedite cross border movements for units on both sides of the longest unguarded border in the world.

The weeklong exercise, the most aggressive and complex attempt at integrated, joint, and combined training by the Fusiliers, was so dynamic that the

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New recruiting program nabs high school senior for Special Forces

By Lt. Col. Chester Carter, III
Public Affairs Officer

Andrew Jenkins is accustomed to being in a leadership position. As a sophomore student he played varsity lacrosse at Thomas A. Edison High School in Alexandria. This year as a senior at Thomas A. Edison he is the captain of the lacrosse team. Jenkins is also proving to be a leader in the Virginia Army National Guard.

Jenkins enlisted in Company B, 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group on December 23, 2003. He is the first “non-prior service” enlistment in that elite unit. Prior to his enlistment, Soldiers assigned to the Virginia Army National Guard Special Forces unit came from the ranks of other units. A program for Soldiers to enlist directly in that unit simply did not exist. Jenkins is the first Soldier to take advantage of a new program that allows non-prior service Soldiers to enlist directly in this Special Forces unit.

The Soldiers who wear the coveted

Green Beret of the US Army Special Forces are very selective about who joins their ranks. Criteria for assignment are extremely demanding. Jenkins not only had to meet exceptionally high mental and physical standards to enter the Special Forces program, but he also had to successfully complete a pre-enlistment interview with a Special Forces officer.

Jenkins must meet many more challenges before he can wear the Green Beret. First he must complete initial entry training just as any Soldier entering the Virginia Army National Guard must do. Following initial entry training he must complete airborne training at Ft. Benning, Ga. where he must become qualified as a military parachutist.

Once he is airborne qualified he will attend the Special Forces Pre-Qualification course at Ft. Bragg, N. C. There a cadre of Special Forces Soldiers will put Jenkins through an extremely arduous program to determine if he and other Special Forces candidates have the mental and physical toughness and stamina it takes to be in this



Contributed photo

Andrew Jenkins is the newest Soldier in Company B, 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group. Jenkins is the first Soldier to take advantage of the Special Forces' new recruiting program.

elite unit.

Once Jenkins has successfully completed the Pre-Qualification course he will enter the Special Forces Qualification Course. There he will learn the skills and develop the attributes necessary to be a Special Forces Soldier. The road ahead of him is long and demanding but there is no doubt he will succeed. After all, his father served with the US Army's 11th Special Forces Group (Airborne). It appears Andrew intends to make it a family tradition.

Pickett

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Commander had to enforce mandatory sleep periods on his Soldiers. The operations plan was filled with helicopter internal and external sling load missions, insertions or extractions using dissimilar aircraft, patrolling, platoon and company assaults, defensive operations, range and field artillery firing combined with close air support missions. The individual numbers of military personnel in the exercise may have been relatively low; however the training was conducted at a much higher and more intense level than normally associated with a single battalion.

The exercise taxed the battalion staff and the staffs' of the supporting units, with a myriad of details that required resolution, ranging from equipment (kit, in Canadian parlance) transport over 1,200 miles to the intricacies of airmobile operations and field artillery safety. Even the vagaries of a common language had to be overcome

by the Canadian Forces, Army, Marine and Naval aviation, field artillery and Air Force close air support elements as they discussed operational issues.

Even the Training Center staff, as the host facility, was actively involved in the exercise, having assisted the participating units for nearly a year as the operation was planned. The operations tempo was sufficiently high to cause some concern that non-participating training or mobilizing units would miss some of their scheduled training events. There was not a single organization that scheduled training at Fort Pickett in February, 2004 that failed to reach their objectives. The local community of Blackstone was also involved in helping the Canadians reach their training goals by participating as role players and assisting with transportation and refueling issues.

All members of the combat, combat support and combat service support elements involved in Southbound Trooper learned a great deal; some of it was new and in some cases, it was a matter of honing

skills already acquired. The United States forces refined their procedures, identified questions to be answered in another forum attained a higher level of confidence and precision while enjoying the good-natured inter-service and international rivalries.

The Canadian units gained a new perspective on installation support, maintained a retention rate of nearly 100% and left Fort Pickett motivated, better trained and having experiences that few others, if any, in the Canadian force structure have experienced.

The planning, the revisions to the plan and finally the execution of the plan was not perfect on either side of the border, nevertheless those involved unquestionably obtained a better understanding of planning and execution imperatives. Each Soldier, whether a line infantryman, naval aviator or staff officer departed the Maneuver Training Center with a new enthusiasm and the determination to make Southbound Trooper V even better than the previous training evolutions.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Turney, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

Lt. Col. Faizali Safarov (center), Commander of a Tajikistani Border Guards battalion, leads the delegation through a demonstration of the Virginia Army National Guard's Engagement Skills Trainer (EST).

Virginia Guard partners with Tajikistan military

By Maj. Neal Edmonds
State Partnership Program Coordinator

For the second time in three weeks a delegation of military officers from the Republic of Tajikistan has visited the Virginia National Guard. Escorted by Capt. Larry Waller, this Tajikistani delegation began their visit to the Virginia National Guard headquarters at Ft. Pickett in Blackstone, VA with a flight in two UH-60s from B Co, 2-224th Aviation based out of the Richmond International Airport in Sandston. On the clear and brisk Sunday morning of Feb. 8, the flight crews of CW3 Phil Brashear, CW3 Darel Gallagher, Sgt. Stacey Johnson, CW3 Mark Becker, Capt. Dave Rolls, and Sgt. Troy Patterson picked up the delegation at their Ft. Lee PZ and flew them to Ft. Pickett.

During their trip to the United States to view primarily logistics systems and supply documentation, the seven Tajikistani military officers were offered the opportunity to tour Ft. Pickett's Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site

(MATES). After a welcoming office visit with Virginia's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Claude Williams, the delegation received a briefing on the Virginia National Guard's capabilities as well as its supply requisition system and maintenance training. Touring the MATES, the Tajikistanis were excited to meet some of our vehicle mechanics and witness their work. They were disappointed to learn that the Virginia National Guard mechanics were not able to work on Russian vehicles.

After their tour of the MATES the Tajikistani delegation was treated to a luncheon of roasted chicken over pasta with steamed vegetables hosted by MG Williams and attended by Brig. Gen. John Sayers, the Deputy Adjutant General, Col. Steve Huxtable, the Virginia National Guard Chief of Staff, and several other staff officers from the Virginia's Joint Forces Headquarters. After drinking some great southern iced tea and eating cheesecake for desert, several of the delegation commented on American food being very sweet.

The Tajikistani visit concluded with an

excellent demonstration of the Virginia Army National Guard's Engagement Skills Trainer (EST) by Maj. Steve Brewer, 2nd Lt. Keith McCluskey, and Staff Sgt. Charles Whitley. After quick lessons on how to operate the M-16, M-60, and M-249 the delegation was ready to shoot. With several scenarios from which to choose, the Tajikistanis grew quite adept at firing our weapons.

After their exciting experience with the EST, the delegation loaded back onto the helicopters for the flight back to Ft. Lee to prepare for their next day's visit of that post and then on to Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland before returning to the Republic of Tajikistan.

This second highly successful interaction between the Virginia National Guard and the Tajikistani military has continued us on the path to an extremely positive relationship and hope for future cooperation between our militaries as well as our countries. The future holds much promise for continued visits both here in Virginia and in Tajikistan.

Virginia National Guard Federal Deployments

# *	Unit	Where Deployed	Home Town
48	192nd Fighter Wing, 200th Weather Flight and 203rd REDHORSE	Southwest Asia	Sandston
570	3rd Bn., 116th Inf. Regiment	Awaiting overseas deployment	Winchester, Manassas, Woodstock, Leesburg and Warrenton
25	54th Field Artillery Bn.	Awaiting overseas deployment	Sandston
155	1st Bn., 111th Field Artillery Bn.	Langley Air Force Base	Norfolk and Hampton
35	Co. C, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry	Ft. Monroe	Roanoke
250	3647th Maintenance Company	Iraq	Blackstone and Richmond
525	276th Engineer Battalion	Iraq	Richmond, Powhatan, Richlands and West Point
60	various units	Ft. Pickett	
55	various units	Army Guard Readiness Center	

* All listings for numbers of Soldiers are approximate.

1032nd Transportation Co. returns from Iraq

The soldiers of the 1032nd Transportation Company, Gate City, Va. returned to the tarmac of Langley Air Force Base, Va. about midnight on April 4, 2004. About 170 soldiers of the 1032nd left this very place on the last weekend of March 2003.

During this year these soldiers traveled to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and they racked up over 2 million miles hauling cargo over some of the most dangerous roads in central Iraq. Their ingenuity and resourcefulness were certainly a "combat multiplier." Although five soldiers of the 1032nd were wounded during the deployment there were no fatalities.



Photo by Lt. Col. Chester C. Carter, III, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

Col. Karl Smulligan and Maj. Gen. Claude Williams greet soldiers of the 1032nd Trans. Co. as they come off the Air Force C-141 from their service in Iraq.

Transform

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country.

World War II brought about profound changes in National Guard divisions as they transformed from four to three brigade formations. These changes were taking place even as our divisions were preparing for war. The late 1950s saw additional changes in division configurations with the 1960s seeing a decline in the overall number of National Guard divisions. The Total Force Policy of the 1970s radically changed the way America would go to war in the future with the 1980s witnessing the result of that policy change as the National Guard became ever more a partner with the active component. In the 1990s the National Guard demonstrated its ability and commitment to the defense of the United

States while simultaneously downsizing. Today the Guard's prominent role in the Global War on Terrorism is obvious.

The United States military has not only witnessed significant changes in core competencies as a result of technology, policy, and other influencing factors since its early beginnings; but it has also served as an engine for social transformation in our society. President Truman's directive to integrate the armed serves after World War II provided leadership and served as an example that in fact all citizens of this country are entitled to fair and equal treatment. Within the span of many of our careers the Women's Army Corps has been eliminated as a separate branch of the Army and all but a few direct combat positions have been opened to women. These changes have had a profound impact

both in military but also throughout our society as a whole.

My point is this; in order to remain ready, relevant, and essential to this nation's defense the National Guard must transform and meet the ever changing demands of our environment. We must be visionary; prepared to leverage advantages; and seek new opportunities to support our state and federal mission. If we do not do these things we will be left behind. TEAM VIRGINIA has a tradition of embracing change and successfully transforming. There has always been the vision to accomplish the mission through innovation and creativity. That vision and the ability to adapt to a changing environment have assured TEAM VIRGINIA has always been and will always be ready, relevant, and essential; Serving Since 1607.