



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers from the 276th Engineer Battalion got a warm welcome home from family, friends and community members upon their return from Iraq in Feb. See more photos of their return on pages 8 and 9.

For the latest news and information on the Virginia National Guard, visit
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Virginia GuardPost

Spring 2005



FROM THE TOP



TEAM effort makes Virginia Guard a success

By Maj. Gen. Claude A. Williams
Adjutant General

I am very pleased to report to you that the Soldiers of the 276th Engineer Battalion and the 3647th Maintenance Company have returned from Iraq and are now back here with their families and loved ones. These brave Soldiers and their families accomplished monumental tasks both at home and in Iraq in support of this country's Global War on Terrorism. I know I speak for all when I say their sacrifice and patriotism is deeply appreciated and has been critical in securing the safety of our community, commonwealth, and country.



Maj. Gen. Claude A. Williams

As I reflect on our accomplishments since 9-11, I cannot help but be so very impressed by the outstanding men and women of the Virginia Army and Air National Guard. Because of the dedication of our people and their willingness to give of their time, talent, and skill the Virginia National Guard has met every state and federal mission assigned to it. Our Soldiers, Airmen, and their families

systems and logistical support activities are in place, functioning, and support all operational aspects of the Virginia Army

have assured the tradition of excellence and the "Spirit of Normandy" that is the Virginia National Guard continues. And I believe that tradition and spirit that has sustained us in the past will sustain us in the future.

Not only are our Soldiers and Airmen instrumental to our success but our civilian workforce is deserving of recognition for a "job well done." Without our dedicated federal and state employees we simply could not have gotten the first Soldier or Airman "out the door." These employees accomplish a diverse array of

Each member of TEAM VIRGINIA contributes in someway to the overall success of the team. Each team member is important, has worth, and brings value to our organization. There is simply no way that the Virginia Army and Air National Guard could have accomplished all of its missions without the professionalism, dedication, and determination of each and every member.

tasks ranging from processing security clearances to overseeing the operations of our facilities. These employees give freely, just as our Soldiers and Airmen do, of their time, talent, and skill. Because of their good effort our communication

and Air National Guard.

Just as I know I speak for the citizens of the Commonwealth when I thank our Soldiers and Airmen for their effort, I am equally confident when I say the citizens of the Commonwealth are deeply

appreciative of the efforts of our federal and state employees in assuring the success of TEAM VIRGINIA. TEAM VIRGINIA includes our Soldiers, Airmen, state and federal employees, and their families. Each member of TEAM VIRGINIA contributes in someway to the overall success of the team. Each team member is important, has worth, and brings value to our organization. There is simply no way that the Virginia Army and Air National Guard could have accomplished all of its missions without the professionalism, dedication, and determination of each and every member.

I would be remiss in not mentioning a key member of TEAM VIRGINIA, the employers of our Soldiers and Airmen. Many of our employers have gone well out of their way to care for our Soldiers, Airmen, and families. Some have made up the difference between military pay and the civilian wage our Soldiers and Airmen were earning prior to entering active federal service. Others have reached out to our families to assist in dealing with the day to day issues that our families face.

Having said that I want to ask every member of our team to help us with our number one priority which is strength maintenance. Whether you are a Soldier, Airman, family member, or employer I ask that you provide referrals for our recruiters to make the same great benefits we enjoy available to all eligible Virginians.

Once again, let me thank each and every member of TEAM VIRGINIA, our Soldiers, Airmen, civilian employees, their families, and employers for all of their dedication, commitment, and loyalty. I look forward to continuing to work with each and every one of you as we actively support this great nation's war on terrorism. Remember, we cannot do it without each and every one of you.



On the Cover



Soldiers from the 276th Engineers were welcomed home by family, friends and community upon their return home from over a year of deployment to Iraq. (Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs)

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Virginia GuardPost

The Virginia GuardPost is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense, and the Virginia Army and Air National Guard. It is published quarterly and in accordance with AR 360-1, Army Public Affairs and AFI 35-101, Public Affairs Policies and Procedures. Contents of the GuardPost are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of the Army, the Department of the Air Force or the Virginia Department of Military Affairs. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Officer. Printed by a private firm under exclusive written contract with the Government Printing Office and the Virginia National Guard in no way connected with the U.S. Government. Printed circulation: 9,000.

General Assembly commends Guard

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Army Guard Public Affairs Officer

The Virginia General Assembly recognized the efforts and sacrifices of the Virginia National Guard with a center-aisle presentation of House Joint Resolution 853 commending the Virginia National Guard on Feb. 22, 2005.

Delegate Kirk Cox presented the Resolution to Maj. Gen. Claude A. Williams, Adjutant General of Virginia, in front of the House of Delegates.

The Resolution recognized the more than 4,000 Soldiers and 1,800 Airmen of the Virginia National Guard who entered active federal service in support of the nation's Global War on Terrorism since September 11, 2001, as well as the Virginia Guard's efforts in responding to natural disaster recovery operations, community support programs such as drug demand



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

Maj. Gen. Claude A. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, shakes hands with Del. Kirk Cox after the presentation of the Resolution.

reduction and Commonwealth Challenge and the Virginia Guard's support of the State Partnership Program with the Central Asian country of Tajikistan.

Two Airmen and two Soldiers were on hand to represent the Virginia Guard:

- Master Sgt. Lori W. Flinn, a member of the 200th Weather Flight, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia Air National Guard, was assigned to the 19th Expeditionary ASOS supporting the 101st Airborne during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

- Master Sgt. Angus A. Garner, a member of the 192nd Tactical Fighter Wing, Virginia Air National Guard, Sandston, Va., was assigned to the 379th Expeditionary Force during Operation Enduring Freedom.

- Sgt. Valorie M. DaCosta and Spc. Alonzo Chandler, both of the 229th Military Police Company, Virginia National Guard, Virginia Beach, Va., and were mobilized from February 2003 to April 2004 and performed customs officer duties in Kuwait and security duties in Iraq.

New budget increases Guard benefits

From staff reports

Virginia Governor Mark Warner has signed a new budget and legislation that provide greater support and increased benefits for the Virginia National Guard.

The key budget items are:

- An additional \$240,000 for the Commonwealth Challenge program. The additional funding allows future classes to increase by 50 students and provides funding for additional staff and building space
- An additional \$650,000 for tuition assistance that allows funding of tuition to include fees and books and miscellaneous education expenses
- A recruiting incentive bonus of \$85,200 to provide \$200 for all referrals who enlist in the Virginia Army National Guard.
- An additional \$229,167 for armory maintenance and repair.
- An additional \$350,220 for payment of Federal Life Insurance Premiums (SGLI) for deployed members: Insures that deployed members of the National Guard and their families have life insurance coverage up to \$250,000.

The key legislative items are:

- Children of members of the Virginia National Guard are eligible to receive a waiver for tuition and required fees at any education or training institution of collegiate or secondary grade in Virginia when a parent is killed or missing in action or was a prisoner of war in an armed conflict.
- Members of the Virginia National Guard and Virginia State Defense Force will be provided workers' compensation coverage when traveling to their place of duty when called to state active duty.
- An additional death benefit of \$20,000 will be paid if an employee of the Commonwealth or any political subdivision is killed in action in any armed conflict while serving in the National Guard or Reserves after Oct. 7, 2001 the beginning of the armed conflict in Afghanistan.
- Any vehicle safety inspection sticker issued for any vehicle whose registered owner is a person in the armed services of the United States will not be held to have expired during the period of the owner's official absence from the Commonwealth in the armed services of the United States.

Air Guard earns "Excellent" ORI rating

By Chap. (Maj.) Edward Moran
192nd UPAR

If the purpose of the Virginia National Guard is to support the cause of freedom by serving our communities, commonwealth and country, the 192nd Fighter Wing has shown itself ready, willing and able. The result of their recent Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) Mar. 17-23, 2005, was a grade of 'Excellent'. From assessed areas of Fit to Fight, Retention/Recruiting, management of the Student Flight, Family Program Office, Community Support and the Chief's Group, inspectors complimented the unit for its "extremely sharp military image and proud standards and tradition of the Air National Guard."

Col. Pete Bonanni, commander of the 192nd, was especially pleased with the



Photo by Master Sgt. Carlos Claudio, Air Guard Public Affairs Office

Firefighters from the Civil Engineers Squadron trained on aircraft personnel egress.

results. In noting that there has not been any unit in the Air Combat Command (Guard, Reserve or Active) since 2001 to be graded an Excellent, he focused on the road to that success. In his written comments to the unit, he said that "it was the leadership of the commanders and senior NCO's during many of the Operational Readiness Exercises (OREs) that paved the way."

From July, August and September of 2004 into January and culminating in a 12 hour March drill ORE, both the practice and the lessons learned contributed significantly in identifying and strengthening critical

areas of operation to be graded. It was the ability to recognize, adapt and overcome the myriad of obstacles both planned and unplanned that played such a role in the overall outcome.

Bonanni remarked that ORIs "burn a brand on both individuals and organizations ... lasting a very long time." The rating of Excellent should provide the kind of successful momentum that will carry the 192nd well into its projected transition to Langley AFB and participation in flying the newest fighter in the Air Force's inventory, the F-22.

Fighter Wing to integrate with Langley

By Capt. Mark Widener
192nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs Officer

The commander of the Air Combat Command (ACC) and director of the Air National Guard have signed an operations plan that directs functional integration of the Virginia Air National Guard's 192nd Fighter Wing, based in Sandston, with the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley Air Force Base.

Lt. Gen. William M. Fraser III, commander, ACC, and Lt. Gen. Daniel James III, director, Air National Guard, approved the plan, called Continuity of Operations or CONOPS, to enhance the combat capability of both the 1st FW and the 192nd FW. The 1FW at Langley is the first operational unit for the F/A-22 Raptor.

Supported by Headquarters United States Air Force and developed by members of both wings, the plan describes the structure of the combined units as a design that improves operational capability and preserves the Air National Guard framework. The makeup of the 1st FW upon integration will preserve the unit-based advantages of Air National Guard organizations, allowing easy modification to support other organizational requirements.

The 192nd FW will send one pilot and two maintainers to their

respective technical schools as a part of the first wave of students to learn how to fly and work on the F/A-22.

Lt. Col. Phillip Guy will be the first Air National Guard pilot to ever fly the new F/A-22 and Tech Sgt. Dwayne Browning and Tech Sgt. David Dehart will be the first Air National Guard maintainers to work on the new airframe. This marks an historic milestone as members of the Air National Guard train alongside their active duty counterparts on a brand new airframe during its initial adoption.

Members of the 192nd FW begin their training on the Raptor this month along with members from the 1st FW. Training for F/A-22 pilots takes place at Tyndall Air Force Base and is approximately three months long. It includes both academics and flying sorties. Training for the maintainers takes place at Langley for approximately two to three months and involves both academics and hands-on exercises. After the three finish their training they will be stationed at Langley as part of the first wave of guardsmen from the 192nd to migrate there permanently.

The integration is part of the Air Force's Future Total Force effort to increase its capabilities while looking for efficiencies within the way the Air Force is organized.

Infantry unit conducts air assault in Afghanistan

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
CTF Thunder Public Affairs Office

As the sun peeked over the mountains early on the morning of Apr. 15, three CH-47 Chinook helicopters packed with U.S. and Afghan Soldiers sped toward their target in Wardak province.

When the helicopters landed, the Soldiers raced out the back ramps. While the Afghan National Army Soldiers formed a perimeter around the compound, Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment from the Virginia Army National Guard searched for three men suspected of having ties to the Taliban.

The men were not home at the time, and thus evaded capture. However, the Soldiers were able to locate and confiscate some weapons, and they gained valuable intelligence during questioning of others.

The air assault mission was the first mission of Operation Vigilance. The operation was expected to last several days and included humanitarian aid drops in several villages, said Lt. Col. Blake Ortnier, commander of 3rd Bn., 116th Inf. Rgt.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen, CTF Thunder Public Affairs

A Soldier from 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment scans the distance for possible enemies during Operation Vigilance Apr. 15 in Wardak province, Afghanistan.

“The objective this morning was going after three targeted individuals that we were trying to kill or capture,” Ortnier said. “From here on out, we’ll have some additional targeted operations, but also a lot of patrolling and other operations within Wardak to set conditions for the future.” Due the large amount of snow and the bad road conditions, the mission was delayed several times, Ortnier said.

“This was essentially an operation we wanted to kick off to disrupt any of the spring attacks that may be going on up

here,” Ortnier said. “We seem to have a larger threat up in Wardak than we do in other areas, so we wanted to kind of preempt some of that.”

The mission came nine days after a CH-47 Chinook helicopter crashed in Ghazni, killing all 18 people aboard. Many of the Soldiers who took part in the Operation Vigilance mission are based at Forward Operating Base Ghazni, which is just a few miles from the crash site, and participated in the recovery effort of the crashed helicopter.

Employers see MOUT training first hand

By Capt. Timothy R. Brooke
2nd Bn., 116th Inf. UPAR

Employers of Soldiers from C Company, 2nd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment from Harrisonburg, Va. were recently recognized by 2nd Battalion for their important contributions to the readiness of the unit. They were invited on Apr. 2, 2005 to observe the unit’s Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) training at Fort Pickett, Va.

Employers were given a chance to observe first hand the rigors of training endured by the Soldiers on a typical drill weekend before retuning to work for them the following Monday.

Seven employers were present for the day’s events. Their first stop in the MOUT village was the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) where Maj. Walter Mercer, the battalion’s executive

officer, explained the concept of the training that was taking place in the village.

During their stay at the MOUT village, the employers were treated to infantry weather of cold temperatures and rain showers. However, the weather did not cool their enthusiasm for the realistic training they were witnessing. Soldiers from the battalion proudly displayed their knowledge of tactics used in urban terrain such as conducting a traffic control point, vehicle search, and reaction to sniper fire.

After the employers enjoyed some meals ready to eat (MRE) in the ruined remains of a building, the weather broke into what turned out to be an ideal day. The afternoon brought the beating of a Blackhawk helicopter’s rotors, and employers were treated to an orientation flight around Fort Pickett’s training area by a crew from 224th Aviation Battalion from Sandston, Va.

Canadians conduct exercise at Fort Pickett

By Sgt. John Slosser
Virginia National Guard Public Affairs

It was a new and different country. The climate was warmer than the homeland the troops had left so far behind. Like any experienced Soldiers, they surveyed the foreign terrain and immediately began setting up defensive positions and establishing communications. Opposing forces would be along shortly. Their mission in the rolling hills of Virginia was set. Operation South Bound Trooper V was ready to begin.

More than 300 Canadians from the 36th Canadian Brigade Group deployed from Gagetown, Nova Scotia, to train at the National Guard Maneuver Training Center at Fort Pickett, Virginia. American Soldiers and Sailors received plenty of northern exposure as they contributed to the maple leaf scenario and met many of their own training objectives along the way.

“The reason we came down is the facilities,” said Lt. Col. Marcel Boudreau, Commander for Canada’s Princess Louis Fusiliers.

“Fort Pickett offers facilities that we can’t get back home. The MOUT (Military Operations in an Urbanized Terrain) city is what really brought us down here to begin with. It allows us tremendous training opportunities”

The Canadian forces conducted more than a week of intense urban scenarios throughout the streets and buildings of “Moutville.” The mock city came complete with mock residents, both civil and hostile, as U.S. Quartermaster Soldiers from Fort Lee filled in as roll playing local nationals. Trouble in Moutville ranged from civil affairs missions, to all out simulations of urban warfare with street to street shootouts.

Another major training attraction for the northern allies was the amount of U.S. military aircraft involved with South Bound Trooper V. Helicopters, like the Navy’s MH-53 Sea Stallion from HM-14 Squadron, Norfolk and the Army National Guard’s UH-60 Blackhawks from the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment, gave the Canadians the ability to rehearse extractions, insertions, and static load training.



Photo by Sgt. Jerry Kean, LFAA PAO Imaging Tech

Soldiers with the 1st Bn. Nova Scotian Highlanders and the Princess Louise Fusiliers get checked out on rappelling from a Blackhawk helicopter at the approximate height of a 10 story building. Trainers from the Virginia National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 183rd Regional Training Institute led the troops through their drills.

“This was a great chance for us to train, it gave us a opportunity to conduct company level tactical missions under day and (night vision goggle) conditions,” said Capt. Kevin Warfield, a U.S. Blackhawk Pilot for the 224th Aviation Regiment.

When asked if the 36th Canadian Brigade Group would send units stateside again in 2006, the commander replied, “(South Bound Trooper) is a big undertaking, but is well worth it! We are coming back to Fort Pickett by hook or by crook!”

Communities and families welcome home deployed Virginia Guard units

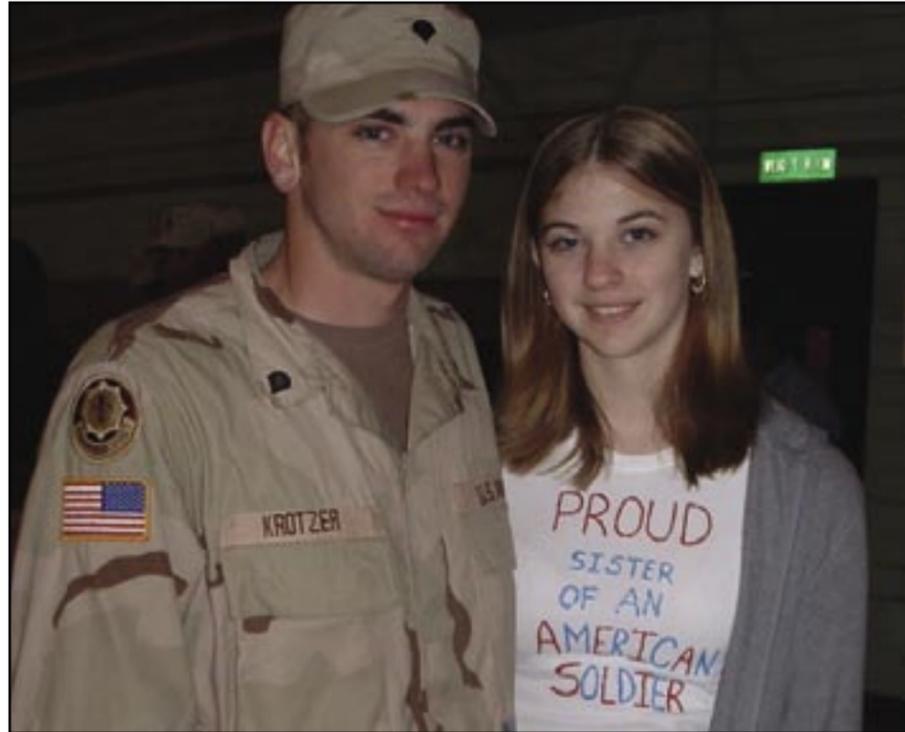


Photo by Capt. Lesley Kipling, 91st Troop Command Public Affairs Officer



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

Ashley Krotzer (left photo) wore a special t-shirt to show her love and support of her brother Jason. In bright red and blue puffy paint, it read "Proud Sister of an American Soldier." Spc. Jason Krotzer, 22, and the rest of the 3647th Maintenance Company, based out of Blackstone, returned home on Mar. 4 after a year-long deployment to Iraq. At their welcome home ceremony on Mar. 5, the gym at Fort Pickett was filled with proud family members, proud friends and proud Soldiers, and the members of the unit also took part in a parade down the main street of Blackstone (above and right photos).



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office



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

Friends, family and community members from Powhattan turned on in force to welcome home the 276th Engineers (above photo). Lt. Col. Ed Morgan, commander of the 276th, welcomed Virginia Governor Mark Warner (right photo) to an appreciation ceremony for the 276th held at the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond on Feb. 24.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

Family members had big hugs and signs to welcome home the 276th Engineers in Richmond (above photo) and West Point (right photo). The 276th spent over a year deployed in Iraq and returned home on Feb. 23.



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, Virginia Guard Public Affairs Office

For more photos from the welcome home events from both units, visit www.virginiaguard.com.

Air Guard recognizes top airmen

By Maj. Debbie Magaldi
Air Guard Public Affairs Officer

Four Virginia Air National Guard members have been selected as Outstanding Airmen of the Year.

"The backbone of the U.S. military is our enlisted force," says Brig. Gen. R. Anthony Haynes, Deputy Adjutant General for Air of the Virginia Air National Guard, "and I consider our Virginia Air Guard enlisted members to be among the best of the best."

"Competition to select the 2004 Virginia Air National Guard Outstanding Airmen of the Year was stiff. Every person that went before the Headquarters' board had already been selected as an outstanding Airman in their respective units. I salute each of these highly skilled and motivated individuals," he added.

Taking top honors this year was Tech Sgt. Andre Davis, a 203rd RED HORSE Squadron power production craftsman, who was named overall Virginia Air National Guard Outstanding Guardsman of the Year for 2004, as well as the VaANG Outstanding Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. Senior Master Sgt. Robert Laws, 203rd RHS vehicle maintenance superintendent, was chosen as the VaANG Outstanding Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. Senior Master Sgt. Antonia Vincent, 192nd Security Forces Squadron, received the title VaANG Outstanding First Sergeant of the Year title. And Senior Airman Margaret Koerner, 192nd Mission Support Flight personnel journeyman, was awarded the VaANG Outstanding Airman of the Year award.

"These individuals represent the very best within the Virginia Air Guard. They bring incredible energy, passion and knowledge to their jobs and are quick to identify ways to make their respective duty sections better and better. Please keep up the great work," Haynes says.

Davis, both the VaANG Outstanding Guardsman of the Year and Outstanding



Tech Sgt. Andre Davis



Senior Master Sgt. Robert Laws



Senior Master Sgt. Antonia Vincent



Senior Airman Margaret Koerner

NCO, is described by superiors and subordinates alike, as a leader who inspires confidence and respect. In August 2004 he was recognized as a Superior Performer during the Unit Compliance Inspection, for the CA/CRL book he developed to track his shop's accountable equipment items. Other 203rd shops adopted his book as their model. He is the equipment custodian for the electrical and power production shops and manages resources valued at \$1.5 million.

In addition to his many regular duties, Davis is also a Unit Fitness Manager. In that capacity he established a physical training program to ensure his unit reaches and maintains 100 percent participation; and as a health care instructor, he maintains his yearly qualifications and certifies unit members on cardiovascular pulmonary resuscitation.

Laws, the VaANG Outstanding Senior NCO of the Year, supervises both full-time and traditional Guard members as the 203rd's Vehicle Maintenance Superintendent and Chief of Transportation. He is responsible for more than 100 vehicle and equipment assets valued in excess of \$3 million. Under Laws' supervision, the unit's fleet of vehicles has maintained a commission rate of 84 percent, and his section accomplished this despite losing two full-time maintenance technicians due to force-reduction requirements. And with Laws' leadership and guidance, his shop received no Findings or Does Not Comply ratings during last year's Unit Compliance Inspection. To prepare his troops, he developed a comprehensive vehicle maintenance training booklet so personnel in upgrade training could better track their personal progress.

First Sergeant of the Year Vincent is widely trusted and admired for her directness, professionalism and integrity.

As Security Forces first sergeant, she deals with problems and concerns in a timely manner. She holds individuals accountable for their behavior, but constantly works to preserve and increase the welfare of all unit Airmen. She is an excellent listener and consistently advises her commander on the health, morale and welfare of the squadron.

Vincent developed an awards training package and trained flight sergeants and an awards monitor on writing effective awards packages, enhanced the unit's Dependent Care and Family Care Programs by discussing the impact of military life to family members and assisting them in adjusting to military life, and she has spearheaded the base's participation in the Christmas For Tots Stocking program. The result of her ability is a squadron that has responded numerous times and in a most professional manner to repeat calls to service — that have surpassed the frequency, duration and intensity of any other unit on base.

As a younger member of the Military Personnel Flight, Koerner has already been making her mark as an outstanding airman. She enthusiastically contributed to the Student Flight Development Program Planning team by helping to develop and implement innovative ideas and strategies to educate non-prior service enlistees of their unit and Air Force responsibilities. After completing her 5-level upgrade training in minimum time, she volunteered to attend Personnel Support for Contingency Operations (PERSCO) training at Keesler AFB, Miss., and earned the 297 Special Experience Identifier.

According to Capt. David Schlagel, MPF commander, she provides flawless support for customers — ensuring their successful enrollment in the Virtual MPF computer system.

Governor meets with Tajik Ambassador

By Maj. Neal Edmonds
State Partnership Program Officer

Virginia's State Partnership Program with the Republic of Tajikistan took a new and significant path on Mar. 3, 2005 with a meeting between Governor Mark Warner and Tajikistan's Ambassador Khamrokhon Zaripov, arranged by Maj. Gen. Claude Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia.

The meeting, conducted in the Governor's offices at Virginia's capitol in Richmond, was the first between Tajikistan and Virginia government officials. Also in attendance were Secretary of Public Safety John Marshall, his deputy Bob Crouch, and Matt Erskine, the Governor's Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Trade.

Zaripov thanked Warner and Williams



Photo courtesy Virginia Governor's Office

Maj. Gen. Claude Williams, First Secretary Nazir Sharipov, Governor Mark Warner, Ambassador Khamrokhon Zaripov, and Secretary of Public Safety John Marshall at the first meeting between the governments of Virginia and the Republic of Tajikistan.

for the valuable work that the Virginia National Guard has done with their counterparts in the Tajik military during this first year of the State Partnership Program (SPP), and positively commented on how quickly the partnership has matured.

Of particular note to Zaripov were the issues of his country's border security against terrorist groups as well as narcotics traffickers from Afghanistan.

The conversation quickly moved to the

possibility of a new economic partnership between Virginia and Tajikistan with Warner pointing out that the Commonwealth of Virginia is ranked second among all of the states (behind only New Jersey) in exports to Tajikistan. Zaripov invited the Governor to send an economic delegation to Dushanbe this May to participate in an international economic forum with the goal of attracting foreign businesses and investors to the Central Asian republic.

Engineers deliver supplies to Iraqi school

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Army Guard Public Affairs Officer

Soldiers from the 276th Engineers Battalion took time out from their missions in Iraq on Jan. 9 to deliver school supplies to Iraqi children at Tal Afar just west of Mosul.

The majority of the school supplies came from Short Pump Elementary School, and the project got started by one of the daughters of unit member Capt. Chris Doss. "My oldest daughter, Courtney, thought of the idea earlier in the deployment," Doss said. "She took it to her 2nd grade teacher, and they ended up turning it into a school-wide project run by the Student Council."

Doss said the supplies made it to Iraq in late May 2004, but operational requirements and security concerns made the delivery a challenge. "I had tried several times to get them out to a school," he said, "but every time I would get a mission scheduled it would get cancelled due to hostile activities or an upcoming offensive. So, it is good to finally complete the mission!"

The 276th Soldiers visited an all-male middle school and an all-girls primary school. Doss said he was impressed by how well behaved and polite the students were. One girl in particular was standing away from the crowd during the delivery of the supplies



Photo courtesy 276th Engineers

Capt. Chris Doss of the 276th Engineers poses with a group of Iraqi school children and a sign of thanks for the school supplies the children received.

just watching the activity, and Doss delivered a box of supplies right to her. "Once she knew what it was, she didn't let it out of her sight," he said.

NASCAR technology saves Army dollars

By Debra Bingham and Will Daniel
DSC-Richmond Public Affairs

Local media representatives got a firsthand look Feb. 22 at how the Army is protecting helicopter windscreens using a new system developed by Defense Supply Center Richmond engineers. A tear-off windshield laminate, based on a product used by NASCAR, protects windshields from damage and cuts down on costly replacements.

The initiative began with a submission to the Army Suggestion Program by Sgt. 1st Class Paul Kagi and Sgt. Mike "Moon" Mullen, helicopter mechanics assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment of the Virginia Army National Guard at



Photo by Will Daniel, Defense Supply Center Richmond Public Affairs Office

Sgt. 1st Class Paul Kagi, a helicopter mechanic assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment of the Virginia Army National Guard at Richmond International Airport, applies a Defense Supply Center Richmond-developed laminate to the windshield of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.

Richmond International Airport.

In the Feb. 22 demonstration, Mullen and Kagi helped apply the laminate to one of the Guard unit's UH-60 Black Hawks. Media representatives and a Defense Logistics Agency video team recorded the demonstration. DSCR officials, contractor employees and Navy acquisition officials

who are also interested in the technology witnessed the demonstration.

"It's a lot easier to peel this off and put another on than it is to replace the windscreen," said Mullen, a 29-year veteran of Army aviation, and it saves the Army nearly \$14,000 each time a windshield replacement is avoided.

Guard Soldier helps nab "handshake man"

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON - A Virginia Army National Guard Soldier helped the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Capitol Police score a touchdown on "Game Day," better known as the 55th Presidential Inauguration, on Jan. 20.

Spc. Jonathan Clark identified one Richard C. Weaver, nicknamed the "Handshake Man" because of his uncanny ability to penetrate security and shake the hands of presidents and other important people, and reported Weaver's presence to a Capitol Police officer that Thursday morning.

Weaver, 59, was arrested a short time later, at 9:45 a.m., on an outstanding Secret Service warrant for unlawful entry and was taken to the Metropolitan Police Department's central cellblock, reported Secret Service spokesperson Lorie Lewis.

Clark also reaffirmed the National Guard's ability to play a critical role in homeland security, including high security events such as this presidential inauguration, acknowledged Maj. John Epperly, commander of the Virginia Army Guard's 2nd Battalion, 116th Infantry which is part of the 29th Infantry Division. Clark is a member of the 2nd Battalion's Company C based in Harrisonburg.

The unpretentious Clark, who is 27, identified the elusive Weaver from a photograph on a Secret Service lookout sheet that Clark and other Virginia Guard Soldiers had been shown early that morning when they began assisting the Secret Service at security checkpoints around the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue. The public was screened at those checkpoints before attending the day's activities, including the Inaugural Parade.

Weaver was apprehended at the intersection of First Street and Independence Avenue, Lewis said. That is where Clark was on duty.

Weaver, described as a nondenominational Christian minister, is not considered dangerous. But he has gotten through security points often enough to concern those who protect the president. He shook hands with President George W. Bush during his first inauguration four years ago and with President William Clinton during his second inauguration in 1997.

It was the first time that National Guard Soldiers had assisted with the screening mission during a presidential inauguration. It was also the first time that Virginia Guard Soldiers were able to serve in the District of Columbia, thanks to an historic mutual aid agreement that the adjutants general from Virginia and Maryland and the commanding general of the DC Guard signed in Washington last July 15.

Chaplain survives "baptism of fire" in Iraq

By Maj. Cotton Puryear
Army Guard Public Affairs Officer

A chaplain from the Virginia National Guard underwent a "baptism of fire" while serving in Iraq in his first assignment out of the Chaplain Officer Basic. Chaplain Gary Malone completed the course at Fort Jackson and requested to be sent to Iraq as soon as possible, and he ended up deploying to Iraq with a unit from the New York National Guard with several other chaplains from the Virginia Guard. Malone and his assistant, Spc. John Rossi of the New York Guard, were traveling in a convoy that came in contact with enemy forces after they delivered an Easter Service to troops in the field.

"During the past several months, Rossi and I have desperately wanted to visit soldiers in our unit that run supply convoys," Malone explained. "They have had numerous contacts with enemy forces and have proven themselves to be well trained and capable. Rossi came into my room and indicated he had arranged us to travel to another forward operating base (FOB) and spend Easter weekend with these soldiers. We call them the 'Outcast Express,' and Easter weekend provided us with the opportunity to go and minister to them."

Malone and Rossi provided an Easter service that included communion on the hood of their HMMWV. After the service, they loaded up and began to convoy to a more isolated FOB to deliver supplies to soldiers there.

"We arrived there and spent the day enjoying the company of these great soldiers that serve their country," Malone said. "We loaded up in the late afternoon and headed back. There is a little town that had strong ties to Saddam Hussein along the route. Just as we came out of the town, an escort helicopter spotted a vehicle drop an artillery shell in the middle of the road. That allowed us to stop short of where the enemy wanted us to stop. We went into a formation that allows us to maximize our ability to fight from our vehicles. The front gunner reported several IEDs 'daisy chained' in front of his position and they had detonated."

Malone said that Rossi was sitting to his right and was getting ready to get out of vehicle and heard a little voice that said, "Wait." Small arms came from the right and his vehicle took a direct hit from what they later discovered to be a mine. "It appeared to be a bouncing land mine because the shrapnel hit the vehicle in straight lines at shoulder level and below," Malone explained. "The concussion dazed me and I don't remember blacking out, but can't remember the moments right after the detonation. My head was turned and the back of my helmet hit the door and my right ear felt like I was under water."

The unit began to take small arms fire from the right and left simultaneously. "I remember thinking are they ever going to get off of us," Malone said. "The front gunner reported additional IEDs going off adjacent to his position. The choppers were all over us providing good information and fire support in the fight. I now tell pilots how much my mom truly loves them."

An artillery fire mission was called in, as well as additional choppers and F-15s came in to give the unit in contact more fire support. "The fast movers just wanted to turn everything into a



Photo courtesy 42nd Infantry Division Public Affairs Office

Spc. John Rossi and Chaplain Gary Malone stand together on a tank in Iraq.

parking lot," Malone said. "The firefight lasted for 20 minutes, and it took almost an hour for us to get out of the kill zone."

Malone said that there were moments that the sign posted back at base came to mind. "The sign reads, 'Is today the day?' We had several vehicles disabled by enemy fire. I was waiting to hear 'Man Down!' but that never came over the radio."

Several soldiers were injured with ear injuries, burned feet from spilled fuel, and a lower back injury caused when a soldier was taken off his feet from an IED detonation.

"My prayer that morning was that God would wrap his arms around each and every soldier and keep them safe," Malone said. "The prayer included a passage from King David. 'May those who choose to stand up and call themselves our enemy, may they humbly fall at our feet.'"

Malone said the soldiers shared stories of shrapnel going past their ear, in front of their legs and around the inside of their vehicles. "How often do you lose vehicles and not people?" Malone said. "It happens because God listens to our prayers and he answers them. That is what the soldiers told me."

Malone is scheduled to return as the chaplain of 2nd Battalion, 111th Field Artillery upon his return from Iraq.

News Briefs

Free seminars offer marriage assistance to National Guard families

Thanks to a series of free marriage enrichment seminars being offered throughout the summer, Virginia National Guard members and their spouses can learn how to cope with the stress of separation brought on by military deployments. Couples will also learn how to enhance their relationships once deployment occurs and how to deal with the challenges of returning home.

The Virginia National Guard Family Programs Office and the state chaplain are hosting the two-day seminars, which will be held July 15 and 16, August 26 and 27, and September 16 and 17 at various locations throughout the state.

Priority will be given to service members who recently returned home but admission is open to all married couples with a service member in Team Virginia.

The seminars will run from Friday evening until Saturday afternoon and include a welcome dinner, overnight accommodations, and a working lunch. Spouses who participate will be placed on Invitational Travel Orders and mileage will be reimbursed.

For more information about the seminars, please contact 1st Lt. Brown at (434) 298-6114.

Guard offers e-Mentoring program to help careers

The National Guard Bureau is providing a new way of promoting personal and professional development among all members of the Army National Guard including civilian personnel. This new program is called e-Mentoring.

The e-Mentoring program is designed to achieve its objectives through a unique, user-friendly, web-based model.

Mentors provide guidance on career goals and developing short-term strategies for success. The mentor shares knowledge and acquired experience and serves as a personal and/or professional role model. The mentee seeks personal

Virginia Guard supports JROTC Raider Challenge



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

JROTC cadets navigate the stretcher obstacle course during the Raider Challenge held at Fort Pickett. Senior NCOs from 1st Battalion, 183rd Regional Training Institute supported the event. For more photos and information about the Raider Challenge, visit www.virginiaguard.com.

and professional guidance through the mentoring partnership.

Mentors and mentees agree to enter the e-Mentoring program voluntarily and to comply with Army rules and regulations.

For more information regarding participation in the e-Mentoring program login to the Guard Knowledge Online web site and select the "ARNG e-mentoring program" from the applications drop-down menu, or contact Maj. Ramsey at 434-298-6229 or DSN 438-6229 or via e-mail at elijah.ramsey@va.ngb.army.mil.

Guard enters into community partnerships

The Virginia National Guard recently entered into a community partnership with four agencies in the commonwealth. Volunteers from the Virginia National Guard will have opportunities to work with the Department of Juvenile Justice, The Virginia Holocaust Museum, Special Olympics, and Madeline's House.

The purpose of this partnership is to provide needed human resources to these agencies to accomplish their unique missions. It also allows the Virginia National Guard to continue its long tradition of helping our fellow citizens. The organizations need volunteers to serve as mentors, teach or lead classes, provide clerical support, work information booths, serve as escorts, and help with meals. Additional volunteer positions are available through direct coordination with the agency.

All full time employees of the Virginia National Guard will be able to volunteer up to 16 hours in a calendar year to support one of these organizations. The volunteer time must be coordinated with the employee's supervisors to ensure that it does not affect the section's ability to accomplish its daily mission.

For more information regarding this volunteer program contact Maj. Ramsey at COMM 434-298-6229 or DSN 438-6229 or via e-mail at elijah.ramsey@va.ngb.army.mil.

Senator Allen visits Virginia troops

By 1st Lt. Fred Moore
129th FAD UPAR

Virginia Senator George Allen visited the 2nd Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, the 1173rd Transportation Company, and the 129th Field Artillery Detachment on Feb. 5 during a whirlwind tour of Iraq to meet with Virginia soldiers.

Allen had the chance to tour one of the 129th's Q-37 radar sites. He also assisted Spc. Kevin Jordan in the radar control shelter. After visiting those areas, Virginians stationed at LSA Anaconda had the opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns at a town hall-style meeting.

Salary, benefits, and the future of the Virginia National Guard were the main topics for the evening. Allen told those present that he was very proud of all the work Virginians were performing for Iraqi people and for the United States. He also said the Iraqi vice-president had told him he was awed by American's willingness to help Iraq win its democracy by sacrificing 1,400 of her own sons and daughters in Iraq, as well as financial assets and resources of the United States.

Allen told the group he was happy to be in Iraq, and added that this was the farthest he had ever traveled for a town meeting. After the meeting was over, Allen gave away a variety of Virginia grown goodies



Photo courtesy 129th FAD

Virginia Senator George Allen poses with members from the 129th FAD during a whirlwind visit to Iraq.

Virginia National Guard Federal Deployments

# *	Unit	Where Deployed	Home Town
182	Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 111th Field Artillery	Iraq	Farmville
17	129th Target Acquisition Detachment	Iraq	Sandston
165	1173rd Transportation Company	Iraq	Martinsville and Rocky Mount
80	192nd Fighter Wing, 200th Weather Flight and 203rd REDHORSE	Various locations	Sandston and Virginia Beach
570	3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment	Afghanistan	Winchester, Manassas, Woodstock, Leesburg and Warrenton
30	229th Engineer Battalion	Afghanistan	Fredericksburg
9	Joint Force Headquarters - Virginia	Afghanistan	Blackstone
60	Various units	Fort Pickett	
55	Various units	Army Guard Readiness Center	
41	183rd Personnel Service Det.	Mob Station-Ft. Bragg	Richmond
6	Joint Forces Headquarters (ANAI)	Mob Station-Ft. Hood	Blackstone
13	29th Infantry Division Cell	Afghanistan	Fort Belvoir

* All listings for numbers of Soldiers are approximate.