

*Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Turney, 3-116th Infantry Public Affairs*

Command Sgt. Maj. Michael D. McGhee, Command Sgt. Maj. of 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry, and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Huffman, Command Sgt. Maj. for the Commonwealth of Virginia Army National Guard, reveal the sign for the newly re-designated Camp Cherry-Beasley during a ceremony on Nov. 19, 2004. Staff Sgt. Craig Cherry and Sgt. Bobby Beasley were killed in action by an improvised explosive device on Aug. 7, 2004 as they returned to Forward Operating Base Ghazni from a combat patrol in Gelan Province, Afghanistan.

For the latest news and information on the Virginia National Guard, visit  
[www.virginiaguard.com](http://www.virginiaguard.com)

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# Virginia GuardPost

Winter 2005





FROM THE TOP



# The Guard makes sacrifices for freedom

By Maj. Gen. Claude A. Williams  
Adjutant General

I am sad to report to you that two of our Soldiers from the 276th Engineer Battalion have lost their lives in support of this country's Global War on Terrorism. Sgt. Nicholas C. Mason, 20 of King George, Va. and Sgt. David A. Ruhren, 20, of Stafford, Va died December 21, 2004 during an attack on their unit in Mosul, Iraq. Both Soldiers served with the 229th Engineer Battalion, Virginia Army National Guard, Fredericksburg, Va. before being assigned to the Virginia Army National Guard's Company C, 276th Engineer Battalion, West Point, Va.



Maj. Gen. Claude A. Williams

Their deaths make it vividly clear that freedom is not free. The freedom we enjoy today has been earned through the sacrifices Americans have made. The ideals and principals that are the very foundation of our nation were challenged even before the Constitution of the United States was written. They are being challenged today like no other time in our history.

As a Soldier or Airman of the Virginia National Guard you continue a long citizen Soldier heritage. That heritage began in 1607 with the establishment of Jamestown and continues today through the contributions you and your family make through the Virginia Army and Air

National Guard. Just as at Jamestown, Yorktown, Chancellorsville, and Omaha Beach, today our citizens have laid down their plowshares and our Soldiers have picked up their weapons as freedom's guardian. You continue the proud tradition of selfless service of this nation's citizen Soldiers. As patriots you have risen to the call to arms. You have left behind families; and you are making tremendous sacrifices, in some cases the ultimate sacrifice, so that

all Americans can live free.

It is through your moral courage and emotional strength that the war on terrorism will be taken to those who would do us harm. Through your dedication and professionalism you are giving all of us a safer, more secure world. Please know that we are deeply aware of this gift and we deeply appreciate what you are doing. We are also aware of the sacrifices your families are making as they support you in your efforts.

Families give the support our citizen Soldiers need. They overcome the fear that comes with uncertainty, and they sustain the day to day activities necessary to keep the family intact. We want you to know that we are indebted to your family for the sacrifices they are making in this heroic effort.

Soldiers and Airmen of the Virginia National Guard are deployed around the world. Each of these patriots is giving of themselves for the greater good of all of us. And their families and loved ones are giving in equal measure. Only through the giving and sacrifice of the brave men and women of TEAM VIRGINIA can we assure the safety and wellbeing of the world we will leave to our children.

God bless each one of you and your family as we continue the fight for freedom.

## Newest member of the 203rd has strong family ties

By Maj. Debbie Magaldi  
Air Guard Public Affairs Officer

The 203rd RED HORSE Squadron conducted a special enlistment on Dec. 17 when Matthew Summerell took the Oath of Enlistment and joined the 203rd and followed in the footsteps of his older brother and his father.

Summerell's father, Technical Sergeant Richard L. Summerell, was of one of the 18 members of the 203rd who died Mar. 3, 2001, in an aircraft crash while returning home from an annual training deployment in Florida. He had served in the unit's vehicle maintenance section. The younger Summerell's older brother Daniel is the 203rd's Combat Arms Training Manager.

Summerell joined the unit to become a Pavements and

Construction Equipment specialist. He hopes to attend Basic Training starting in February and follow that with Technical Training School in May.

Summerell views his enlistment in the Virginia Air National Guard as a way to better his future -- his career, job training, and education benefits. He is currently taking classes at Tidewater Community College. Summerell works in the construction industry.

He notes that the formalized job training, education and experience provided in the military are highly valued in the construction industry. "My brother has been encouraging me to join for a few years," he adds. "Civilian contractors like workers with military experience; they are generally more dependable and better trained.



### On the Cover



Capt. Michael Gilligan, Company Commander of Company C, 3rd Battalion 116th Infantry, receives the Combat Infantry Badge from Maj. Gen. Claude A. Williams, The Adjutant General of Virginia, during a ceremony held at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, on Nov. 19, 2004. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Turney, 3-116th Infantry Public Affairs)

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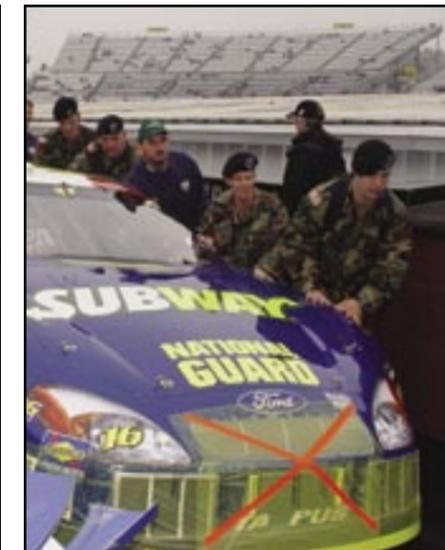
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### Virginia GuardPost

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# Soldiers honor fallen comrades

By Spc. Blair Larson  
139th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

MOSUL, Iraq – They were two friends having lunch together in a dining facility in Mosul, Iraq. With their trays of dinner in front of them, they could have been talking about anything – their families, the video games they liked to play, or an upcoming mission that night to secure bridges in the city.

It was a scene Sgt. Nicholas Mason and Sgt. David Ruhren had played out many times during the last 10 months of their deployment with Company C, 276th Engineer Battalion. On Dec. 21 however, an unidentified Iraqi man was somewhere near them with a vest full of explosives, preparing to take out as many people as he could.

The explosion ripped through the dining facility, spraying shrapnel and thousands of tiny metal ball bearings, leaving 22 dead and more than 70 injured, including Virginia natives Mason and Ruhren.

Soldiers gathered for a memorial service December 27, almost a week after the two Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers lost their lives. Many of the Soldiers were still bandaged from the injuries they received that day and many more still carried the unseen emotional scars from the scene of the tragedy.

In an emotional tribute, the commanders and comrades of the two men spoke of their courage and commitment to the Army and their fellow Soldiers.

“Their example of citizenry is a model for all to follow,” said Company C commander Capt. Dave Kaulfers. “With their spirit, we must continue to succeed in what we together have started.”

Both Soldiers turned 20 while in Iraq. Both enlisted in the Army in 2001 at the age of 17 and completed their military training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., in 2003. Both Soldiers were assigned to Company A, 229th Engineer Battalion from Fredericksburg, Va., and were mobilized



Photo by Spc. Blair Larson, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**The commander of Task Force Olympia, Brig. Gen. Carter Ham (left), and the Task Force Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick Pacheco (right) pay their respects during a memorial service for Sgt. David Ruhren and Sgt. Nicholas Mason of the 276th Engineer Battalion.**

with the Richmond-based 276th Engineers to come to Iraq at the beginning of 2004. Both were posthumously promoted to the rank of sergeant.

Mason’s squad leader, Staff Sgt. Joel Miller, remembered his proudest moment when Mason received a coin from the sergeant major of an infantry battalion the engineers had accompanied on a mission. The sergeant major was impressed with Mason’s calm and quick reaction during a tense situation and joked that he didn’t hold it against Mason for being in the National Guard.

Capt. Chris Dunn, Company B commander, spoke of Mason’s positive attitude toward his mission and the Iraqi people. He also talked about Mason’s impressive skills in welding and construction which have helped the

battalion in its engineering mission.

Spc. Joseph Vitola remembered Ruhren’s generosity, his skillful handling of the .50 caliber machine gun and his love for motorcycles and well-shaped patrol caps.

“There’s some of him in every man in this platoon,” he said.

Ruhren’s dedication to his fellow Soldiers was well-known.

“You wouldn’t have to worry about him not being there for you,” said Vitola.

These Soldiers’ lives and dedication to the mission will not be quickly forgotten. A piece of each of them will live with their fellow Soldiers as they continue their mission here.

“What makes such a great loss easier to bear is being able to take these memories with us,” said Vitola.

# Wyman assumes command of 29th Infantry Division

By Pfc. Ocoless Trotter  
29th ID (L) Public Affairs Office

Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long Jr., passed the 29th Infantry Division (Light) colors to Maj. Gen. Arthur H. Wyman, during a change of command ceremony at Fort Belvoir, Va., on Nov. 6.

Long had been the division commanding general since August 2002. He has assumed the position of Department of Defense, deputy director for operations, Iraq Project and Contracting Office Baghdad, Iraq.

Wyman began his commissioned officer career upon graduation from Artillery Officer Candidate School in 1967 as a second lieutenant. After seven years as an active duty officer, he furthered his career in the Massachusetts Army National Guard beginning in January 1974. Wyman began serving with the 29th Infantry Division in October 1997 as a brigade commander for the 26th Infantry Brigade. Wyman had worked as the Assistant Division Commander (Troops) for the 29th Infantry Division since July 2000.

“I couldn’t feel better,” said Wyman about taking command of the 29th Infantry Division. “It’s a great honor and a great privilege.”

Lt. Gen. Roger C. Schultz, director of the Army National Guard, described Wyman as a seasoned leader and someone who will make an outstanding commander.

“When you think about leading Soldiers, we keep standards pretty high,” said Schultz.

He further emphasized the importance of having a leader that



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

**Maj. Gen. Arthur H. Wyman, Col. David Wrenn and Maj. Gen. Daniel Long review the troops during the change of command ceremony.**



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

**Maj. Gen. Arthur H. Wyman receives the colors of the 29th Infantry Division as a symbol of his assumption of command of the division.**

is “fully capable of commanding the division should there be a wartime deploying mission for the 29th ID (L). The 29th is in good hands.”

Col. David G. Wrenn, chief of staff for the 29th ID (L) said he looks forward to developing a relationship with Wyman and called him a “very detailed man.”

Wyman dedicated the change of command ceremony to the memory of 1st Lt. Alfred Schofield, a friend of Wyman and fellow infantry officer, who lost his life while serving in South Vietnam in 1968.

“Today, I accept this honor in your name,” said Wyman. “And in so doing celebrate your sacrifice made for our nation.”

The ceremony was modeled after the 1st Army tradition for change of command ceremonies, which involved 14 representatives and guidon bearers for each of the division’s subordinate units, as opposed to having all members of the units attend. This format prevents disruption of scheduled missions and enables Soldiers to continue their training.

As division commander and with the cooperation of five state adjutants generals, Wyman is responsible for the readiness, operations and training of more than 11,000 Soldiers from Virginia, Maryland, Connecticut, Massachusetts and North Carolina. Wyman is the 29th Infantry Division’s eighteenth division commander.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Turney, 3-116th Infantry Public Affairs

A large element of the 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, together with elements of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, conducted a week-long combat patrol and village assessment in the southeastern Afghan district of Nawa often times in sight of the Pakistan border.

## Infantry unit patrols Nawa District in Afghanistan

By Staff Sgt. Mark Turney  
3rd Bn., 116th Inf. Rgt.

NAWA, Afghanistan – Enduring sub-freezing temperatures, hostile forces and six hours of driving over rugged terrain, Soldiers of Task Force Normandy returned to the Nawa District of southeastern Afghanistan.

This journey also marked the first time that the unit had returned to this district since two of its' members were killed there in early August.

That changed Dec. 16 when a large contingent of Task Force Normandy, mainly comprised of 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment and nearly 400 members of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police joined forces and rolled into Nawa.

“This is the first time that we have had the opportunity to join forces with the ANA and the ANP on such a large scale,” said Maj. Edward Smith, Task Force Normandy’s operations officer. “This is also the first time that we have seen them in action side-by-side with our men.”

The mission was to meet the villagers, assessing the needs of the villages and bringing humanitarian aid while conducting combat presence patrols and routing out the Anti-Coalition Militants known to be operating in the area.

“One of our most important missions

down there was to deny the known ACM elements in the region the sanctuary they have enjoyed until now,” said Smith.

Combat patrols were conducted daily to ensure a constant presence was maintained throughout the region. Alpha and Bravo companies maneuvered throughout the region; stopped and talked to the village elders; and conducted village assessments while the scout platoon provided over-watch for the maneuver elements. The ANA and ANP provided both more maneuver elements and security patrols for the 3rd Battalion headquarters element monitoring the patrol elements.

Everywhere they went, throngs of villagers would rush to the streets to watch as the Americans drove through and often times stopped in their towns. Many of the villagers would come out in hopes of receiving the shoes, jackets or food brought out by each of the American elements.

“As we drove into the villages,” said 1st Lt. Sean W. Hoover, the Task Force intelligence officer, “we met with the village elders to asses how we could best help the people. It is so important to foster a good relationship with them as they are the best sources of information about what is happening in the areas.”

The individual village’s elders often had similar concerns. Wells are needed to provide water, schools and school supplies are needed to provide education for the

children and medical attention was needed universally by all as there are no hospitals or health clinics in the region.

The medical situation was so bad in some of the towns that twice during the week long mission, the unit medics conducted “tailgate medicine” stops where medics would diagnose and treat anyone who came to the back of their ambulances.

“It is often frustrating for us to try and treat someone who we know needs more long-term, systemic care,” said 2nd Lt. Terry Schiffbauer, a physician’s assistant assigned to the task force and the medic’s leader during this mission. “We can only hope they will take the medicines we give them and seek longer term care.”

A constant patrol force was kept throughout the week as Alpha and Bravo continued to “stir things up for the ACM,” said the commander of Task Force Normandy, Lt. Col. Blake C. Ortner.

“Our mission includes denying the ACM the ability to recruit, re-train, refit and rebuild his forces for a spring offensive,” said Ortner. On Dec. 22, the combined task force made preparations to leave the region that had called home for nearly a week.

“We hope to show the people of Nawa they are not forgotten,” said Hoover. “As we prepared to leave, you could see the fear in the villager’s eyes as we tried to prove to them we will be returning again soon.

## Infantry unit embeds media in local training

By Maj. Cotton Puryear  
Army Guard Public Affairs Officer

Anyone watching news coverage of military operations in Afghanistan or Iraq should be familiar with the concept of embedding media into a military unit, but 2nd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment has applied the concept to their training right here in Virginia. The unit invited media to embed with them during their squad live fire training at their November drill at Ft. A.P. Hill.

The intent of commander Maj. John M. Epperly was threefold. First he said he wanted his Soldiers to be comfortable with the media because they will be likely to have them with the unit in combat operations. Secondly, he wants to tell his local community about the great things that are going on in the Virginia Guard. Finally, he said the media embed helps with his unit’s retention efforts.

“I firmly believe if we tell our story to the community we will improve our recruiting environment and position in the community,” Epperly said. “The media I have worked with so far have been very positive and very willing to tell our story. They universally have appreciated being



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

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment conducted live fire training during their November drill.

asked to embed with us.”

At the end of the November drill, a local radio station set up at the armory in Lexington and did a live broadcast as the unit returned to home station via Blackhawks carrying Soldiers AND reporters.

“Because of the media embeds, we got radio advertising that drew a crowd to a superb training event that showed

the Guard staying ready to defend the Commonwealth and the nation,” Epperly said. The unit received eight referrals as a result of the event.

Epperly said there is no doubt he will continue to involve the local media in his training. “They are important to my training,” he said. “Ignoring media is ignoring how the modern battlefield looks.”



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

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment prepare to board helicopters to fly to their squad live fire range.

# Virginia Guard continues to service community, Commonwealth and country



Photos courtesy 276th Engineer Battalion

Soldiers from Virginia's 276th Engineer Battalion support the Stryker Brigade (above photo) in Iraq. Soldiers from the 276th Engineers show their Hokie Pride with a banner signed by coaches and players from the Virginia Tech football team that was sent to them in Iraq (right photo).



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

Commonwealth Challenge is a National Guard community outreach training and mentoring program for at-risk youth that develops the life skills, educational levels and employment potential of 16-18 year old high-school drop-outs. The program recently hosted the Challenge Invitational which gave cadets from different states the chance to compete in events like volleyball (left photo) and drill and ceremonies (above photo). For more information visit <http://www.vachallenge.org>



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



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

The Virginia Guard provided personnel and vehicles to support the movie production "War of the Worlds" being directed by Steven Spielberg and starring Tom Cruise. Location photography (above photo) for the movie took place just outside of Lexington. Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 111th Field Artillery successfully completed their post mobilization training requirements at Ft. Dix, N. J. and returned home to Virginia for a well deserved Christmas holiday. They gathered at the Petersburg Armory on Dec. 20 to receive final instructions about their return to Ft. Dix before New Years to begin their deployment to Iraq. Gov. Mark Warner (left photo) took time out of his schedule to travel to Petersburg to meet with the Soldiers and to tell them that he and the citizens of the Commonwealth appreciate what the Soldiers are doing to protect our way of life. Warner stayed to chat with Soldiers and express their heartfelt thanks for the sacrifices they and their families are making in support of this country's Global War on Terror.

## 34th CST conducts exercise

By Will Daniel  
Defense Supply Center Public Affairs

RICHMOND, Va. -- The 34th Civil Support Team of the Virginia National Guard conducted a joint exercise Oct. 6 with the Defense Supply Center Richmond (DSCR) Fire Department here. According to Fire Capt. George McNamara, the exercise scenario involved a white powdery substance that caused serious illness to a military member.

"Members of the National Guard stationed here brought back some souvenirs from the Middle East — arms, grenades, etc.," McNamara said of the exercise. "A canister tipped over and white powder fell out. The service member went home and complained of nausea and convulsions. He called a local emergency medical service and was taken to Medical College of Virginia for treatment."

In the exercise scenario, the hospital emergency room notified installation officials that they had a military member



Photo Will Daniel, Defense Supply Center Richmond Public Affairs

**Members of the 34th Civil Support team prepare their equipment to deal with a weapons of mass destruction threat Oct. 6 during an exercise with Defense Supply Center Richmond fire officials.**

sick with symptoms of poisoning from a nerve agent, McNamara said. "We went in and confirmed the presence of the powder," he said. "We have the ability to test the powder here, but because weapons were found, we called the 34th CST."

The 34th Civil Support Team consists of 22 full-time members of the Virginia Army and Air National Guard. Its mission is to augment local, state and regional terrorism responders in events known or suspected to involve weapons of mass destruction. The team identifies chemical, biological or radiological agents; assesses the consequences of the event; advises civilian responders; and assists with requests for

additional state and federal assets to help save lives.

Fire Capt. Mark Shreve said the 34th Civil Support Team initiated the training for its members, but that DSCR firefighters stood to gain from the training as well. "It's an opportunity for us to see their capabilities and them to see ours," Shreve said. "We're going (into the contaminated area) with them wearing (hazardous material) suits."

The team's commander also emphasized the benefits of joint training. "It's an excellent way for us to share what we have available," said Air National Guard Lt. Col. Colleen Chipper.

## 183rd bids farewell to family and friends

By Sgt. First Class Michael Hampton  
GuardPost Staff Writer

The 183rd Personnel Service Detachment (PSD) of the Virginia Army National Guard said goodbye to over 200 family members and friends during their mobilization departure ceremony held on December 14, 2004 at their home station in Richmond Virginia. The 183rd was ordered to active federal service on December 11, 2004 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. However, since receiving their warning order in April 2004, the 183rd has been gearing up for their impending deployment.

In May 2004, the 183rd conducted their initial Soldier readiness processing. Then in June, they began the first phase of their pre-mobilization training at Fort Pickett that included live fire on various weapon systems. Soldiers of the 183rd also received land navigation, combat lifesaver and field survival training.

The ceremony gave Soldiers and families the opportunity to commemorate the important roles that they both play in the defense and freedom of our nation and recognized the sacrifices

that Soldiers and families make when deployments occur.

Spc. Tanya Coppage of the 183rd understands this very well. As a senior at Virginia Commonwealth University she was within months of graduation but feels the needs of the many often outweigh those of the few. "I was looking forward to graduation in May," she said, "but when I think about the work that we are called to do as Soldiers, there was never any question of what it was that I needed to do."

Capt. Robin Branch, the 183rd Commander is encouraged by the level of commitment of her Soldiers, many of whom are in college. "As a commander, it is encouraging to know that your Soldiers not only understand their mission, but accept it as reasonable service," she said. "There are always those that have to be brought along, and they will, but overall I'm really proud of my Soldiers."

The ceremony culminated as the Soldiers of the 183rd boarded their buses headed for their mobilization station in Fort Bragg North Carolina where they will spend several months before deploying to their final destination.

## Virginia Guard celebrates Native American culture

By Maj. Elisah Ramsey  
State Equal Employment Manger

The Virginia National Guard celebrated American Indian Heritage on Nov. 18, 2004 in the newly renovated Fort Pickett officers club.

The success of this year's program can be attributed to several internal and external resources. Nottoway County employers were instrumental in the setup of the facility. The Hermitage High School Marine Corps ROTC posted the colors while members of the Nottoway County High school choir sung the National Anthem.

Sgt. 1st Class Cindy Hawthorne gave the invocation for the program. After the invocation, Col. Stephen Huxtable gave opening remarks for the 128 in attendance at the program.

The guest speakers for this year's program were Mr. & Mrs. H. Curtis Smith from the Nansemond tribe, which is located in Chesapeake and Suffolk Va. The Smith's gave an enlightening presentation on the history and culture of their tribe.

In the middle of the presentation, Huxtable was invited to participate in one dance that the Nansemond tribe performs.

After the benediction, the Hermitage High School ROTC color guard retrieved the colors and the attendees were able to try different food samples.



Photo courtesy Virginia Guard Equal Employment Office

**Guest speakers Curtis "Silver Fox" Smith (far right) and Juanita "She Who Hugs" Smith (center) of the Nansemond Tribe pose with State Equal Opportunity Manger Major Elijah Ramsey.**

## Virginia Guard and Central Command provide medical seminar to Tajik Forces

DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN - Six members of the Virginia National Guard Medical Detachment and officers from the U.S. Army Central Command provided military medical training to Tajik Armed Forces from Nov. 7 to 19. In addition to practical exercises, the training provided information on the U.S. Army's Combat Lifesaver Course and the Army's overall health service support system.

The seminar, led by Maj. Challis H. Smith, supported the developing relationship between the Virginia Army National Guard and the government of Tajikistan under the State Partnership Program, and was held at the Tajik Ministry of Defense's Military Institute in Dushanbe.

The "Level 1 Military Medical Support Training" results in the trainee becoming a "combat lifesaver." A combat lifesaver is a non-medical Soldier trained to provide emergency care as

a secondary mission. The combat lifesaver receives training in enhanced first aid procedures and other medical procedures such as initiating an intravenous infusion.

This training is a bridge between first aid training given to all Soldiers during basic training and the medical training given to combat medics. Upon completion of training, combat lifesavers can assist in providing immediate enhanced first aid and evacuating casualties. Tajik seminar attendees also provided information on their military health care system and expressed their desire to learn about other levels of medical care within the United States Army.

Smith complimented the participants for their willingness to share information and hosted a tour of their military medical facilities. Information sharing will continue through future visits and training.



Photo courtesy Virginia Air National Guard Public Affairs Office

The 203rd RED HORSE Squadron members and guests conducted a groundbreaking ceremony for the unit's new Troop Training Quarters building under sunny skies on Dec. 17. Taking part in the ceremony with 203rd Commander Lt. Col. Paul Julian (far left) are (left to right) ARC Design President Ahmed Hassan, 81st District Delegate Terrie Suit, City of Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera Oberndorf, TESORO Corporation President Dennis Gilbert, and Col. Johnny Haikey, Chief Executive Officer for the Virginia Air National Guard.

## Air Guard breaks ground on new building

By Maj. Debbie Magaldi  
Air Guard Public Affairs Officer

The 203rd RED HORSE Squadron broke ground in December on a new Troop Training Quarters building. The ceremony -- attended by local and state dignitaries, presidents of the companies contracted to design and build the facility, and Virginia National Guard leaders and members -- took place at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach on Dec. 17.

In his remarks before the actual groundbreaking, 203rd Commander Lt. Col. Paul Julian extended a sincere thank you to everyone who had worked so diligently in securing the \$2.4 million in Congressional funding for this project. "We will now see your efforts come to fruition," he said. "With the 203rd's extended lease of this site, the new Troop Training and Quarters building will provide additional

classroom training space and modern billeting facilities for our HORSEMEN and other joint service users. As a civil engineer and land surveyor by trade, it is exciting to witness a project go from paper to reality."

He then invited the special guests to accompany him into the area where the new facility will be built. For the groundbreaking, Colonel Julian accompanied by 81st District Delegate Terrie Suit; Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera Oberndorf; Col. Johnny Haikey, Chief Executive Officer for the Virginia Air National Guard; Ahmed Hassan, ARC Design Group president; and Dennis Gilbert, TESORO Corporation president, put shovel to dirt to commemorate the beginning of the project.

The 16,000 square foot facility designed by ARC Design Group will provide approximately 1,100 square feet of classroom space and 34 billeting rooms.

The billeting rooms will include 16 single, 16 doubles and two VIP rooms. The design of the new facility will compliment the other 203rd facilities located on the State Military Reservation.

The new building will enhance unit training by providing additional classroom and computer access, according to Colonel Julian. "This will provide an ideal environment for readily training and supervising unit members for their military job specialties as well as wartime training," he said. An additional benefit for out-of-town HORSEMEN will be the billeting facilities within the building. "It will offer our personnel a 'sense of home' here at the 203rd and give the unit 'beddown' capabilities during mobilizations," the commander added.

TESORO Corporation will build the facility and anticipates the project will be completed on or before October 2005.

## Ground breaking Air Guard NCO retires

By Master Sgt. Peter Martens  
192nd Fighter Wing Historian

Senior Master Sgt. Dorothy M. Tatem, the Stock Fund Manager in the 192nd Logistic Readiness Squadron, has retired after 30 years of exemplary service with the Air National Guard. Tatem is recognized for her accomplishments and for being the first black female to enter the unit in November 1973. She also became the first female member to receive full time technician status in the Virginia National Guard the following year in June 1974.

Originally from Elizabeth City, N.C., Tatem moved to Richmond after completing college in Columbia S.C. After working one year with the Bank of Virginia, she answered a classified ad in the paper about the part time job in the Virginia Air National Guard. She had always wanted to join the Air Force and this was the next thing to it. Her first duty assignment was as a traditional guardsman with the Accounting and Finance department.

Her most memorable time in the unit was working with Brig. Gen. Wilbur Rose, 192nd Tactical Fighter Group Commander and Col Basil Evans, 192nd Mission Support Commander who helped give her support needed to organize the first "Flight of the African American Guardsmen of VaANG" Banquet during Black History Month, February 1991. That event was most special to her as it was dedicated to our unit's first black airman, Master Sgt. John 'Pop' Lewis.



Photo courtesy 192nd Fighter Wing

Master Sgt. Gerald Golden makes a presentation to Senior Master Sgt. Dorothy M. Tatem at her retirement ceremony .

## Honor an American Soldier with a "Hero Band"

By Staff Sgt. Tammy Spence  
GuardPost Staff Writer

Master Sgt. Robert Cossel at National Guard Bureau has come up with a new way to show support Soldiers: The American Hero Band. It can be ordered by going to the virtual armory website ([www.virtualarmory.com](http://www.virtualarmory.com)) and clicking on "Hero Band" in the top left corner.

According to the web site, the American Hero Band is a free wrist band worn by Americans to demonstrate their support of the "Defenders of Freedom" who are Army National Guard Soldiers deployed across the globe.

Engraved on the metallic wrist band are the words IN HONOR OF AN AMERICAN HERO, SERVING IN THE

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD. These words are flanked left by the Army National Guard logo and right by the American Flag. There is also an inscription of the National Guard web site, [www.VirtualArmory.com](http://www.VirtualArmory.com), and a unique serial number engraved inside this commemorative wrist band.



Courtesy [www.virtualarmory.com](http://www.virtualarmory.com)

The American Hero Band is available free of charge at the Virtual Armory web site.

# Deploying Soldiers experience NASCAR first hand

By Staff Sgt. Tammy Spence  
GuardPost Staff Writer



Photo by Staff Sgt. Tammy Spence, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

**The Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard help move the car out of the pit area.**

Four lucky Soldiers received a last minute invitation to attend the Martinsville NASCAR race with VIP access to pit row and the pit crew for the number 16 National Guard Car driven by Gregg Biffle. Prior to the race, the Soldiers pushed the car through the various stages of the NASCAR inspection where officials made sure the car was "legal". Once this was completed, they pushed the car down pit row onto the track itself and then watched the race from the pit area.

The Soldiers participating in this event were Sgt. Mike McGrath, Sgt. Erika Weaver, Spc. Mark Fitzwater and Pfc. Lee Mathias. All of them with the exception of McGrath are with the 1173rd Transportation Company. McGrath is from

the 229th MP Company and volunteered along with Sgt. Gerald Clemends to deploy with the 1173rd.

Originally Weaver, Mathais and Fitzwater were from the 229th Chemical Company specializing as 74 D's (chemical operations specialist). When the 1710th and the 229th Chemical company were incorporated into the 1173rd, the Soldiers were reclassified and sent to school for three weeks to become 88M's (Motor Transport Operators). According to Mathias, "the school was actually an MOS school and was six weeks in length but they changed it to three weeks to prepare

them to deploy." When asked how he was chosen to participate with the event, he said, "I was sitting on my cot and one of the guys came over and asked if anyone wanted a free pass to the race. I said sure so I just found out yesterday."

Mathais completed his school in June and when he heard about the mobilization, begged the admin NCO to let him go. His first reason for entering the military was to serve his country. His goal is to become a commissioned officer but he wants "battle" experience first so when he does get commissioned, he will understand how his Soldiers feel and what they go through because he has been there. When asked how his family feels about his deploying he said, "My mom is very torn up about it and my dad doesn't want me to go but he is ex army and understands." Mathais is an only child but has a strong desire to serve his country.

Another Soldier excited about the deployment is Weaver. She worked as a phlebotomist in a hospital lab for 12 years prior to joining the Guard. When asked why she didn't go into a medical unit, she said she wanted something different and there weren't many other options for units that allowed females and when she found out that the 229th accepted females, she jumped at the chance. She has been in the National Guard for seven years and as she excitedly states, "I love driving big trucks." Her husband isn't too happy about her deployment but supports her 100%.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Tammy Spence, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office

From left to right: Sgt. Mike McGrath, Spc. Mark Fitzwater, Sgt. Erika Weaver, Pfc. Lee Mathias.

# DPU recognizes Soldiers and families

By Capt. Leslie Kipling  
Data Processing Unit UPAR

With so many National Guard Soldiers deployed overseas, being able to spend the holidays with family and friends is not something that the Soldiers of Virginia's Data Processing Unit take for granted. In December over 230, Soldiers and family members of the DPU gathered together at Battlefield High School to celebrate the holiday season and recognize the Soldiers who had deployed over the past year.

"We're here today to honor seven members of this unit for their service when called upon by their nation," said Brig. Gen. John E. Sayers, Jr. addressing the unit. Those Soldiers received the Freedom Salute award for their service in Iraq.

"It is designed to publicly acknowledge our Army Guard Soldiers as well as those who've supported them during the recent Military Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom," said Lt. Col. Thomas Powell.

The seven DPU Soldiers were mobilized in 2002 with the mission of establishing the Regional Computer Emergency Response Team-Southwest Asia, a mission the active duty Army did not expect to complete until 2005. The knowledge, skills and expertise of these Guard Soldiers enabled the Army to establish the RCERTE-SWA nearly two years ahead of schedule.

The Soldiers were Maj. Randall Cudworth, Capt. Christopher Rush, Chief Warrant Officer Martin Fontanez, Chief Warrant Officer Ray Cook, Jr., Sgt. First Class Irwin Walters, Staff Sgt. Seace Wendell, and Staff Sgt. Christian Smith.

Master Sgt. Adam Rice also received the Freedom Salute award for his deployment to Afghanistan with the Special Forces.



Photo courtesy Data Processing Unit

**Santa was on hand to help the Soldiers and families of the Data Processing Unit celebrate the holiday season.**

The Soldiers received a folded flag in a wooden display case, a coin and a certificate.

The engraving on the flag reads, "This flag is presented to a true American Hero in recognition for your service and sacrifice in the cause of freedom. Your service will never be forgotten. From the grateful people of this nation."

"The Virginia Guard has two parts. We have our Soldiers and we have the families," said Brig. Gen. Sayers explaining the key role family members play in their Soldier's success. "You give much when you give us away," said Sayers.

Spouses received Freedom Salute lapel pins and children received "Future Soldier Kits," with board games and comic books.

## 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                            |
| 56  | 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 |
| 25  | 54th Field Artillery Battalion                              | Afghanistan                 | Sandston  |
| 30  | 229th Engineer Battalion                                    | Afghanistan                 | Fredericksburg  |
| 9   | Joint Force Headquarters - Virginia                         | Afghanistan                 | Blackstone  |
| 180 | 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 |   |
| 41  | 183rd Personnel Service Det.                                | Mob Station-Ft. Bragg       | Richmond  |
| 6   | Joint Forces Headquarters (ANAIL)                           | Mob Station-Ft. Hood        | Blackstone  |
| 13  | 29th Infantry Division Cell                                 | Afghanistan                 | Ft. Belvoir   |

\* All listings for numbers of Soldiers are approximate.