

Served in Iraq since September 2007

On page 2: OCS 50th Graduation

## Infantry battalion conducts Freedom Salutes across the Commonwealth



Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, pins the Virginia Governor's National Service Medal on Capt. Giancarlo Brizzi during the C Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team Freedom Salute held in Leesburg Aug. 16.

Virginia National Guard Soldiers from Charlottesville, Woodstock, Leesburg, Fredericksburg, and Winchester gathered in multiple locations Aug. 16 and 17 to conduct Freedom Salutes to honor the service of 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team. The unit served in Iraq and Kuwait from September 2007 to April and May 2008 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The Freedom Salute Campaign is one of the largest Army National Guard recognition endeavors in history, designed to publicly acknowledge Army Guard Soldiers and those who supported them during duty for Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. The event recognizes the Soldiers, their families, employers and organizations that contributed significantly to supporting the unit during its deployment.

"Without your support, we wouldn't have been able to complete our mission," said Lt. Col. John Epperly, commander of 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team. "You're proud of them, but they're proud of you too."

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/aug2008/3-116FS.html>

### Virginia National Guard News Headlines

#### Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, TAG salute Virginia volunteers

Soldiers, spouses and other family members who have supported the Virginia National Guard were honored by both the state's top servicemember and the military's top servicemember at the Virginia National Guard Volunteer Recognition Workshop Aug. 23-24 in Williamsburg.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/aug2008/Volunteers.html>

#### Virginia VFW presents \$10,000 check for Youth Camps

The Adjutant General of Virginia met with the commander and adjutant/quartermaster of the Virginia Veterans of Foreign Wars Aug. 27 to receive a check for \$10,000.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/aug2008/VFWcheck.html>

#### Winchester-based infantry battalion changes command, awards streamers

After recognizing the unit's service in Iraq in Freedom Salutes at company level armories, the 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team conducted a change of command ceremony Aug. 17 in Winchester and added battle and award streamers to the unit colors recognizing their combat service.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/aug2008/3-116thcoc.html>

#### Afghan Battalion Embedded Training Team mobilizes for duty

A team of Virginia National Guard Soldiers departed Fort Pickett Aug. 18 headed for Fort Riley, Kan. to begin training for the deployment to Afghanistan as an embedded training team.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/aug2008/afghanbnett.html>

### Mark Your Calendars!

#### Sept. 6 and 7: Freedom Salutes

Soldiers from Roanoke and South Boston who served in E Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion will hold their Freedom Salutes Sept 6 and 7. The Freedom Salute on Sept. 6 will be held at the Cluster Springs Ruritan Club at 1 p.m. and the Sept. 7 event will be held at the Holiday Inn in Roanoke at 1 p.m.

#### Aug. 31 to Sept. 7: Armed Forces Voters Week

The purpose of this week is to highlight that all citizens voting under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act who have not registered to vote or requested an absentee ballot this year, should do so at this time. Activities scheduled during this week should include voting programs explaining the procedures required to register and how to obtain an absentee ballot.

# Officer Candidate School marks 50th Anniversary

History was made in the Commonwealth this year when the Virginia National Guard's Officer Candidate School graduated its 50th class in its 50th year of operation. The Commonwealth welcomed 19 newly appointed second lieutenants to the Virginia National Guard Aug. 23 at the Post Theater on Fort Pickett.

The majority of the graduates, 16 of them, were from OCS class 50. The remaining three graduated from class 51b, an accelerated class. The 19 newly-appointed officers will go on to many different branches and serve in a wide array of positions within the Virginia National Guard. From Artillery to Quartermaster Corps, all of the graduates are now and will forever be Warriors.

"I am proud you have chosen the path of the Warrior," said Maj. Gen. Carroll D. Childers, a retired general officer of the Virginia National Guard, during his address to the graduates. "It will determine the quality of the rest of your lives."

Childers requested that the new lieutenants go out and do good things for their country and state.

"Make all of us that went before you proud," he encouraged them. "Be the very best Warrior you can possibly be."

Childers served as the commander of the 29th Infantry Division from 1996 until his retirement in 1999. He graduated from the Virginia OCS as the honor graduate of class six and received his commission as an armor officer. He later went on to be a well-known tactics instructor for 19 different classes of OCS.

The 19 new lieutenants are: Eddie D. Bailey, III, John R. Crocker, Robert A. Ellis, George E. Fontaine, III, John F. Grilli, Andrew C. Johnson, Timothy A. Martin, Lamont Q. Ming, Aaron D. Pennekamp, Brian C. Scanlon, Brian A. Todt, Yessika V. Valenzuela, Bonnie L. Van Loon, Peniel R. Vinegas, Jodie L. Warren, Jr., Kim D. Wynn, Aranzamendez, Efren A., Jr., Antonio C. Nash, and Oliver G. Glover, IV.

The OCS program, which falls under the command of the 183rd Regiment (Regional Training Institute), was first accredited April 16, 1958. This year marked the 50th anniversary of the school opening its doors to train Commissioned Officers of the United States Army.

The primary mission of the Virginia National Guard OCS program is to train selected warrant officers, and enlisted men and women to become effective military leaders.

Furthermore, the OCS program's secondary mission is to prepare the students to become branch qualified second lieutenants.

The 22-month long course begins with a two-week Phase I where the candidates learn and master land navigation and Warrior Core Tasks. During the land nav portion the candidates must pass five out of seven daytime points and two of five night points, according to Capt. Crysti Greenway, OCS training officer.

As a part of the WCT training the candidates are expected to give an instructional briefing on one of the many tasks from the book of common Soldier skills.

"They must teach one, and show task mastery in all of them," said Greenway.



**2nd Lt. Aaron D. Pennekamp is sworn in as an officer during the graduation of the Virginia National Guard's 50th OCS class Aug. 23 at Fort Pickett.**

In addition to the land navigation and WCT, the candidates are expected to execute a five-mile forced road march to be able to move on to the second phase of the school.

During Phase II, the candidates attend the school one weekend a month for approximately one year. Throughout the year the students are given classes and leadership tests on military justice, supply management, military tactics, military intelligence, military history, and call for fire techniques.

"It is a lot of classes," said Greenway. After all the classes the potential leaders are tested on their knowledge during a field training exercise.

For the Phase III portion, which is a two-week phase at Fort McClellan, Ala., the candidates are given the opportunity to show off what they have learned by running through lanes that test their ability to lead troops at the squad and platoon levels.

This year the Virginia OCS program had the distinct honor of being awarded the Institute of Excellence award.

"There is only one other company and two battalions that have received the Institute of Excellence award," said Greenway. "It's a highly coveted award."

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/aug2008/OCSClass.html>

## MORE ON THE WEB

### Freedom Salute Overview

<http://www.virtualarmory.com/FreedomSalute/Overview.aspx>

### Virginia Guard Family Programs Office

<http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/familyprograms/index.html>

### Virginia Veterans of Foreign Wars

<http://www.vfsva.org/>