

**Soldiers from across the state return home**

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# Security Force Platoon returns to Va. after Afghan duty

Approximately 40 Virginia Guardsmen assigned to the Hampton-based Provincial Reconstruction Team Security Force Platoon arrived at airports across Virginia March 28 after the Soldiers served on federal active duty in Afghanistan since June 2011.

The Soldiers returned to the United States March 23 and conducted demobilization activities at Camp Atterbury, Ind., to transition from active duty to National Guard status. They officially began federal active duty March 26, 2011, and trained at Camp Atterbury for about two months prior to deploying to Afghanistan.

The members of the platoon performed more than 640 security missions in support of PRT Uruzgan while the PRT was operating in potentially dangerous areas to rebuild infrastructure, assist with agriculture, build wells and provide healthcare to the people across the many provinces of Afghanistan.



Family, friends and senior leaders from the Virginia Guard greet Soldiers from the PRT Security Force Platoon March 28 at Richmond International Airport.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/03/28/792/>

## Virginia National Guard News Headlines

### Best warrior competition held for Virginia

Spc. Stephen Lambros, 31, of Arlington was selected as the Virginia Guard 2011 Soldier of the Year and Sgt. Jimmy Gause, 25, of Alexandria was selected as the NCO of the Year at competitions held March 24-25 at Fort Pickett. Both Soldiers are assigned to the Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/04/03/829/>

### Equipment demob site saves money, time as units return from overseas

The Virginia Army National Guard was able to save money and make life easier for redeploying units by setting up an equipment demobilization site at Fort Pickett recently.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/04/03/851/>

### Secretary of the Army shows appreciation to the Soldiers of the 29th ID

Secretary of the Army John McHugh showed his appreciation during lunch with Soldiers of the 29th Infantry Division April 2 at Fort Belvoir. McHugh spent more than an hour with the members of the 29th during lunch at Fort Belvoir's Officers' Club. The Soldiers returned last fall from being deployed in Afghanistan.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/04/02/820/>

### Virginia Guard's 192nd Fighter Wing receives new F-22 Raptor flagship

The Virginia Air National Guard's 192nd Fighter Wing received F-22 Raptor tail number 09-0192 from Lockheed Martin March 22, and the new aircraft will serve as the wing's flagship aircraft.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/03/22/668/>

## Mark Your Calendars!

### April 14: Fort Pickett Change of Command Ceremony

Lt. Col. William L. Korsen will take command of the Virginia National Guard Maneuver Training Center at Fort Pickett from Col. Thomas P. Wilkinson in a change of command ceremony scheduled for 10 a.m. For more information or to RSVP, contact Maj. Randy Bridger at 434-292-2022 or [randy.bridger@us.army.mil](mailto:randy.bridger@us.army.mil).

### April 15: Freedom Salute Ceremony for Task Force 183

More than 800 Soldiers from the Virginia Guard's Task Force 183 will gather at 10 a.m. in Virginia Beach for a Freedom Salute to honor the unit's service in Iraq from July to December 2011. The task force was the largest single unit mobilization in the Virginia Guard since World War II.

# Va. Soldier honored at Women's History event

Sgt. Monica Beltran of the Virginia National Guard was honored March 29 at the Virginia Women in History program at the Library of Virginia in Richmond. Beltran was one of eight Virginia women recognized by the program for their important contributions to Virginia, the nation and the world.

The Woodbridge resident is the first woman in the Virginia National Guard to receive the Bronze Star Medal for Valor. Beltran received the Bronze Star for her actions on Oct. 26, 2005 while deployed to Iraq with the 1173rd Transportation Company.

"I'm standing here primarily for two reasons," Beltran said from the stage. "The first reason is because of the training and lessons learned in life from childhood to becoming a proud Soldier in the United States Army. The second reason is due to the bravery, courage, leadership and sacrifice of the Soldiers in my unit."

Beltran was serving as a gunner for a gun truck on a combat logistics patrol and was responsible for providing security for equipment and 55 Soldiers and contractors being transported to Forward Operating Base Suse. She was on the convoy's right flank during an enemy attack and returned maximum suppressive fire while taking heavy fire from multiple rounds of small arms, heavy-caliber machine guns, and rocket-propelled grenades. Despite suffering a wound to her left hand, Beltran continued returning fire to ensure that the rear element of the convoy could pass safely through the mile-long kill zone. For her heroic service in the line of duty under hostile fire and adverse conditions, Beltran was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for Valor on December 30, 2005, the first woman in the Virginia National Guard to receive the honor.

Beltran was introduced during the program by Shannon Venable, vice president for Generation Financial Management at Dominion Virginia Power.

"There was a job to do and the convoy needed protection. Both male and female Soldiers were under attack that day," Beltran recounted in her speech. "Without the entire patrol's effort and the ultimate sacrifice which was laid down by my friends, I would not be here today.

"I am forever grateful for what they have done. I carry their memory with me on this stage, standing proud to be a daughter, a sergeant, a woman and a Soldier."

Beltran was nominated for the recognition by John Listman of the Virginia National Guard Historical Collection at Fort Pickett.

The program was a reunion of sorts as a number of friends and family members were there to celebrate Beltran's heroics. In addition, Brig. Gen. Janice Igou, director of interagency operations for the Virginia National Guard, and Brig. Gen. Wayne Wright, Deputy Adjutant General for the Virginia National Guard, were among those on hand for the program.

"I'm honored to be here and it's great to have so many friends and family members here to support me," Beltran said.

Among the people there to celebrate Beltran's honor was Joseph Cormier, a former Virginia National Guard Soldier who deployed with Beltran to Iraq.

"I was honored to know her and be her friend," Cormier said.



**Sgt. Monica Beltran is honored by Shannon Venable (right), vice president for Generation Financial Management at Dominion Virginia Power, during the Virginia Women in History program March 29, at the Library of Virginia in Richmond.**

"She got the Bronze Star for that day but it was a whole year of effort."

Cormier saw first-hand how male and female Soldiers worked together, conducting missions side by side around the clock.

"I'm proud that my 10 years in the Virginia National Guard was at a time when women were not second class Soldiers," Cormier said. "Commanders and first-line leaders were women and it was never an issue of gender. It was mission first."

Beltran was one of eight Virginians honored at the program and one of only three who are living.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/04/03/840/>

## MORE ON THE WEB

### RAW VIDEO: PRT Security Force returns to Virginia

<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10100509130720006>

### Video: Virginia Guard Bronze Star recipient honored

<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10100520520679436>

### Video: Best warrior competition held for Virginia

<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10100515327092426>

### Women in the U. S. Army

<http://www.army.mil/women/>

### Library of Virginia

<http://www.lva.virginia.gov/>

### Secretary of the Army Homepage

<http://www.army.mil/leaders/sa/>

### Virginia National Guard on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/vanguardpao>

### Virginia Guard Public Affairs Flickr Photostream

<http://flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao>

### Virginia Guard Public Affairs YouTube Channel

<http://www.youtube.com/vanguardpao>