

**Soldiers served as advisors and mentors to Afghans**

On page 2: Governor thanks Va. Guard

# Freedom Salute honors 29th ID Soldiers

A Freedom Salute was held Sept. 16 on Fort Belvoir, Va., to formally welcome home the approximately 30 Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the Fort Belvoir-based 29th Infantry Division who recently returned from a tour in Afghanistan. The Soldiers were assigned to NATO's International Security Assistance Force Joint Command Afghan National Security Force Development Team and served as advisors and mentors to senior Afghan leaders. The Freedom Salute honored the Soldiers as well as their families for their support and sacrifice during the deployment.

Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, the Adjutant General of the Virginia, Maj. Gen. Frank E. Batts, commanding general of the 29th Infantry Division, and Brig. Gen. Charles Whittington, Jr., 29th Infantry Division deputy commanding general and ANSF-DEV director, shook hands and presented Soldiers and spouses with commemorative items as small tokens of gratitude for a job well done..



Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr., presents a Certificate of Recognition signed by Gov. Bob McDonnell to Brig. Gen. Charles Whittington and Sgt. Maj. Christopher Brock Sept. 16 at Fort Belvoir.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/09/17/2103/>

## Virginia National Guard News Headlines

### Data Processing Unit conducts cyber defense exercise

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Fairfax-based Data Processing Unit evaluated their proficiency levels in computer network defense during the unit's capstone "Obsidian Horde" exercise Sept. 15.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/09/18/2110/>

### Virginia Guard Soldiers, Airmen train at CERFP University

Members of the Virginia Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package, or CERFP, spent the week of Sept. 9-15 at Fort Pickett teaching their newest Soldiers and Airmen the basics of incident response as part of CERFP University.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/09/17/2118/>

### Food, dance featured at Virginia Guard Hispanic Heritage Month celebration

The Virginia Guard's Equal Opportunity Office hosted a Hispanic Heritage Month celebration Sept. 8, 2012 at Fort Pickett, Va., to celebrate the history, culture and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/09/11/2083/>

### Air Guard Recruiters meet potential recruits at Oceana Air Show

Virginia Air National Guard Recruiters spoke with potential recruits at the Naval Air Station Oceana Air Show, Sept. 14-16, 2012, with the assistance of the Air National Guard's mobile events team and assets.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/09/18/2139/>

## Mark Your Calendars!

### Sept. 29: Drug Take-Back Day

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has scheduled another National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day which will take place on Saturday, September 29, 2012, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This is a great opportunity for those who missed the previous events, or who have subsequently accumulated unwanted, unused prescription drugs, to safely dispose of those medications.

General public inquiries can be made at 1-800-882-9539.

For more information and to search for a drop off location near you, visit [http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal/takeback](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback).

# Governor and First Lady thank Va. Guard

Governor Bob McDonnell and First Lady Maureen McDonnell expressed their appreciation for the service of Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, members of the Virginia Defense Force and civilian employees Sept. 11 during a visit at Mullins Armory in Sandston.

"The First Lady and I wanted to come out today primarily to offer our thanks on behalf of the 8.3 million Virginians for the phenomenal work you do day in and day out not only to protect Virginians, but the lives of Americans around the country and all over the world," McDonnell said. During his remarks, he talked about the impact of the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C. and said the Guard has made a "remarkable effort" in defending freedom in the wake of those attacks.

Since September 11, 2001, the Virginia National Guard has successfully mobilized almost 15,000 Soldiers and Airmen for missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo and other locations across the world as well as homeland defense missions in the United States. Virginia Guard missions overseas have included convoy security and base defense operations, command and control headquarters for active U. S. Army and NATO forces, combat aviation support, training and mentoring senior Afghan and Iraqi military and police leaders, logistics and sustainment operations and chaplain support.

"All of you who where the uniform know how much your lives have changed since 11 years ago," he said, and added the Guard had performed their different missions "cheerfully, willingly and effectively."

The Virginia Guard has lost 10 Soldiers to hostile enemy activity since beginning combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

McDonnell explained that his family knows first hand the difficult times families face during a military deployment. His daughter deployed to Iraq in 2005.

"Your families have endured a tough time as a result of what you had to do for your state and for your nation, and we are incredibly grateful," he said.

He also commended the Virginia Guard for their response to severe weather during his time as governor whether is was during snowstorms, floods or severe thunderstorms. "I couldn't be any more pleased," he said of the Guard's support for state active duty missions.

After the severe thunderstorms struck Virginia in June, the Virginia Guard brought more than 200 personnel on state active duty to support recovery operations. Soldiers distributed water and ice in Bedford, conducted reconnaissance patrols in the Fredericksburg and Lexington areas and Soldiers, Airmen and members of the Virginia Defense Force provided mission command and sustainment support in Sandston and Fort Pickett. Last year during Hurricane Irene, more than 350 Virginia Guard Soldiers, Airmen and members of the Virginia Defense Force helped clear fallen trees, rescued stranded motorist and maintain communications capabilities. After the storm has passed through



**Governor Bob McDonnell shakes hands with Warrant Officer 4 Shane Leipertz of the Sandston-based 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment Sept. 11 in Sandston.**

Virginia and impacted Vermont, 20 Soldiers helped with the effort to rebuild roads damaged by the storms.

"At the end of the day, what is great about our country is that we have men and women like you that care so much about freedom and so much about the ideals of what our country stands for, that you are willing to go halfway around the world to fight for people you don't even know," McDonnell said. "It really is an extraordinary thing."

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/09/13/2093/>

## MORE ON THE WEB

### Gov. McDonnell sends thank you letter to Va. Guard

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/08/29/1976/>

### Heritage - Hispanic Americans in the United States Army

<http://www.army.mil/hispanicamericans/english/about/about.html>

### Photos: Va. State Police dedicates new driver training complex adjacent to Fort Pickett

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157631583942871/>

### Photos: Virginia Guard Soldiers test new aircraft-mounted video downlink system

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157631528451560/>

### 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>