

**More than 160 Soldiers prepare for Afghanistan deployment**

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## Transportation company heeds the call, prepares to haul

At training sites across Fort Pickett, Soldiers from the Emporia-based 1710th Transportation Company, 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group are honing their warrior skills as they conduct pre-mobilization training in advance of their spring deployment to Afghanistan.

“We’re going to be doing convoy security and support for the host nation’s trucks, as well as for U.S. and allied forces, and we’ll also be performing our normal transportation movements,” explained Capt. Rodney C. Rhodes, commander of the 1710th Transportation Company. “Our motto is ‘You Call, We Haul,’ so now that we’ve got the call, the Soldiers are ready to haul.”

The company arrived at Fort Pickett in early February and will spend much of the month training there before heading back to their readiness center in Emporia to conduct individual equipment inspections to ensure all Soldiers in the unit are suitably equipped for the upcoming mobilization, expected to last 12 months.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/02/13/2930/>



Soldiers from the Emporia-based 1710th Transportation Company conduct battle drills Feb. 13, 2013, at Fort Pickett as they prepare for mobilization to Afghanistan.

### Virginia National Guard News Headlines

#### Chief Master Sergeants tackle tough questions from 192nd FW JEC

Airmen from the 192nd Fighter Wing Junior Enlisted Council hosted their first “Ask the Chiefs Panel” at Joint Base Langley-Eustis Feb. 10, 2013, where they asked a variety of questions directly to senior state and wing enlisted personnel.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/02/14/2941/>

#### Adjutant General recognizes state employees at Fort Pickett

Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, recognized seven state employees for their outstanding service to the Virginia National Guard in an informal ceremony held Feb. 13, 2013, at Fort Pickett.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/02/14/2970/>

#### Loudoun County VFW conducts job training for Va. Guard Soldiers

Soldiers of the Leesburg-based Company C, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team received a resume building and career development workshop Feb. 9, 2013, courtesy of the Loudoun County Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1177 at their armory in Leesburg.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/02/12/2924/>

#### ChalleNGe Youth Academy begins Class 38 with 145 cadets

Cadets in class 38 of the Virginia Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy finished the two-week long pre-ChalleNGe phase of the 22-week course recently and are now in the academic phase of the program, where they will focus on schoolwork with a goal of earning their GED certificate by their June graduation.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/02/13/2939/>

### Mark Your Calendars!

#### March 23, 2013: Registration Deadline for Virginia National Guard Youth Night

The Virginia Guard Youth Programs, in partnership with the Richmond Flying Squirrels, will honor Virginia Guard Youth and Families with a special “Field of Dreams” program in Richmond on April 6, 2013 at 6:05 p.m.

To celebrate the Month of the Military Child, the youth will have the opportunity to run onto the field with the players and stand with them while the national anthem is played. After the game the youth will be able to run the bases and enjoy a firework display. Discounted tickets are available for \$5.00 each.

Visit <http://ow.ly/gWp9T> for more information.

# Honors team performs 10,000th funeral

The Virginia Army National Guard Funeral Honors Program performed at its 10,000th military funeral on Feb. 13. The program, begun in January 2007, provides funeral details not just to National Guard Soldiers but to veterans of all branches of the military across the state.

"I am extremely proud of the great work by the members of the Virginia National Guard Funeral Honors Team and how well they represent the Virginia National Guard," said Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. "I know from talking to them how proud they are a part of honoring the men and women who served before them. I think there is some comfort to the families to know that our Funeral Honors Team will help make sure their loved ones will be laid to rest in a highly respectful and professional manner that pays tribute to their great service to our country."

The program has grown considerably over the past six years. In fiscal year 2007, it provided 157 funerals. It now averages 230 funerals a month, according to Bob Huffman, the director of the program and retired state command sergeant major of the Virginia National Guard. In January 2013 the program had its busiest month ever, providing services at 284 funerals, which more than 14,000 people attended.

"Most of our requests come from funeral homes who, once they work with us on a veteran's funeral, ask to work with us again," Huffman said.

The Virginia Guard Funeral Honors Program also gets great support from the three state veterans cemeteries in Amelia, Dublin and Suffolk, he said.

In addition, they work with many veteran service organizations and have established relationships with them.

"That's a really good partnership," he said. "Our guys really enjoy being around them and I think they really enjoy being around our guys too."

The Army National Guard now performs 85% of Army funerals across the country and that doesn't appear to be decreasing any time soon, according to Huffman.

"We're still at a growing stage," he said. "We average 230 ceremonies a month and we still only cover about two-thirds of the state."

The program recently established a new office in Woodstock, which will cover the Shenandoah Valley area and increase their numbers in that part of the state. They are also beginning to see more requests from the Northern Virginia area. The Northern Virginia team has recently doubled the number of funerals it performs each month, from 30 to 60.

"They now perform all the basic Army funerals at Quantico," Huffman said. "That's three to four funerals a day."

Although there are 104 traditional Guard Soldiers serving in the program and 12 Soldiers on temporary orders, Huffman and his team are always looking for additional Soldiers to serve in the program.

"They're highly dedicated and professional," Huffman said



**The Virginia Army National Guard Funeral Honors Program performed its 10,000th funeral on Feb. 13. The program now averages more than 200 funerals a month.**

of the Soldiers in the program. "They put a lot of hard work into what they do. But we still need about 60 more Soldiers in order to meet our need."

All members must meet Army height and weight standards and must have passed the Army Physical Fitness Test. New members are then trained by certified instructors who have been to the Military Funeral Honors Course at the National Guard Professional Education Center in Little Rock, Ark.

For more information on the Virginia Army National Guard Funeral Honors Program or for Soldiers interested in joining the team, please contact Huffman at 804-722-8902 or by email at Robert.w.huffman6.ctr@mail.mil..

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/02/14/2937/>

## MORE ON THE WEB

**Former 29th Infantry Division Commander praised during retirement dinner at Fort Lee**

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/02/12/2990/>

**Photos: AG and SEL visit 1710th Trans. Co. training**

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157632702611046/>

**Photos: Transportation Soldiers unload equipment from Canadian haul mission**

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157632771405090/>

**Photos: Soldiers from 329th RSG welcome Canadian reservists**

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157632771622344/>

**Photos: Chaplain section hosts cookout for Soldiers on AT**

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157632766809751/>

**Va. Guard Youth Programs on Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/VANGYouthProgram>

**Virginia National Guard on Twitter**

<http://www.twitter.com/VaNationalGuard>

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