

More than 160 personnel quickly respond to duty

On page 2: Plane crash memorial held

Va. Guard supports snow response operations

More than 160 Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team mobilized on state active duty March 6, 2013, in the Central Virginia, Northern Virginia and Shenandoah Valley areas of Virginia in direct support to the Virginia State Police and other state and local emergency response agencies. Before they were released from duty March 7, Virginia National Guard personnel assisted with chain sawing operations for debris reduction, rescuing motorists stranded in heavy snow, clearing a disabled vehicle and conducting incident awareness assessment patrols.

“On short notice, the Virginia National Guard responded quickly when called upon by the state,” said Col. James Ring, Virginia National Guard director of joint operations. “The Virginia National Guard accomplished all missions assigned and had forces on duty within hours of notification in direct support of the Virginia State Police and other emergency response agencies.”

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/03/07/3101/>



Soldiers from the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team work with Va. State Police and Virginia Department of Transportation to clear an abandoned vehicle March 6, 2013, near Nellysford.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Guard giving program raises nearly \$4,000 for family in need

The Virginia National Guard Partners in Care Program, an initiative that links faith-based and non-profit organizations with Soldiers and Airmen in need, helped make possible a spaghetti dinner held Feb. 23, 2013, that raised more than \$4,000 for a Virginia Guard Soldier in need.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/03/04/3115/>

Military Funeral Honors Team honors veterans in Amelia ceremony

Seven Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Military Funeral Honors Program assisted March 5, 2013, with the funeral and internment of four Virginia veterans at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia, Va.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/03/09/3158/>

192nd Operations Group welcomes new commander

The Virginia Air National Guard's 192nd Operations Group, 192nd Fighter Wing, bid farewell to Col. David R. Nardi as he relinquished command to Col. William J. Butz during a change-of-command ceremony held March 3, 2013, at Langley Air Force Base.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/03/07/3137/>

Exercise improves 116th IBCT communications system readiness

Signal corps Soldiers from across the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team gathered at Fort Pickett Feb. 19-March 3, 2013, to conduct a communications exercise to improve the readiness of the brigade's communications systems.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/03/06/3169/>

Mark Your Calendars!

March 16: Executive Mansion 200th Birthday Celebration

The Virginia National Guard's 29th Division Band will perform at the 200th Birthday Party for Virginia's Executive Mansion in Richmond from 4 to 7 p.m. The event is free to the public, but registration is encouraged.

Visit <http://ow.ly/iVV66> for more information.

March 23: Registration Deadline for Virginia Guard Youth Night

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

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

203rd RED HORSE holds memorial for plane crash

The Virginia Beach-based 203rd RED HORSE Squadron held a brief ceremony to lay an honor wreath March 3, 2013, at Camp Pendleton in Virginia Beach to honor the 18 unit members and three Florida Army National Guard aviators who were killed in a military transport crash 12 years ago.

The Virginia Guard engineers and three Florida aviators from Detachment I, Company H, 171st Aviation Battalion were killed on March 3, 2001, as the 203rd members were returning home after completing a two-week military construction project at Hurlburt Field, Fla. The C-23 Sherpa they were flying in crashed in a cotton field near Unadilla, Ga.

The C-23 crash was the worst peacetime aviation disaster in the history of the National Guard, and the worst loss of life in the Virginia National Guard since World War II.

Lt. Col. Stock Dinsmore, 203rd RHS Deputy Commander reflected, "This memorial service is all about remembrance, providing the opportunity for the young members of our unit to know about the loss we all experienced...it's important to honor our fallen Soldiers and Airmen, and show them what they mean to us." Dinsmore has been with the 203rd RHS for 16 years and knew many of the fallen Airmen personally. "We work hard together, we are just like a family and we stand by each other and support each other, so the loss was hard on everyone."

The ceremony took place at the memorial built for the fallen Airmen. The memorial takes the form of a reflection or meditation garden complete with the unit's mascot: a life-size, rearing red horse. The 30,000-square-foot memorial also includes a large bronze Minuteman statue rising up from a clear pool in front of a waterfall, and a second red horse. This horse kneels in front of a memorial made from a 7,000-pound, black granite boulder with the names of the 21 National Guardsmen etched into its one polished surface.

Encircling the border of the memorial is a winding path embracing 22 Bradford pear trees, and a plaque at the base of each tree honors each one of the Guardsmen. The 22nd tree bears a plaque honoring those who died during the terrorist acts of Sept. 11, which took place four days before the groundbreaking of the



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203rd's memorial on Sept. 15, 2001.

The memorial incorporates ideas from several 203rd members and used a range of the construction skills found in RED HORSE units. Members of the 203rd, assisted by RED HORSE units from Ohio, Pennsylvania, Florida, Washington, Montana and Texas, built most of the memorial.

Master Sgt. Alfred Dirosa, the 203rd RHS Structures Supervisor lost his brother-in-law, Master Sgt. Dean Shelby to the crash. "We joined the Air Force together," said Dirosa. "He brought me to the RHS." Dirosa remembered, "Master Sgt. Shelby had a great attitude and was a hard worker. In 2001, I almost left the unit but after his death I felt a renewed commitment to the unit and my family to finish my service with the 203rd RHS." Dirosa volunteered to help build the memorial. "It was good to work with a great group of Airmen on such a meaningful memorial."

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/03/07/3110/>

MORE ON THE WEB

Exercise Southern Raider takes Fort Pickett by storm

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/03/13/3149/>

1-111th Field Artillery live-fire exercise provides opportunity for section-level certifications

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/03/07/3132/>

Photos: Martinsville-based transportation Soldiers prepare for line haul mission to Canada

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157632974100948/>

29th Infantry Division Band to play at Virginia Executive Mansion 200th Birthday Celebration

<http://www.executivemansion.virginia.gov/News/viewRelease.cfm?id=1659>

Artillery Soldiers to support reenactment at Jamestown

<http://historyisfun.org/2013-MTA-PR.htm>

Va. Guard Youth Programs on Facebook

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

Virginia National Guard on Twitter

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

Virginia National Guard on Facebook

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



A bugler from the Virginia Air National Guard's Virginia Beach-based 203rd RED HORSE Squadron plays taps during a memorial service March 3, 2013, at Camp Pendleton.