

Former 116th IBCT commander promoted to brigadier general

On page 2: NGB Chief visits Va. Guard

Ortner assumes command of Va. Army Guard

Col. Blake C. Ortner was promoted to brigadier general in a ceremony hosted by Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr, the Adjutant General of Virginia, June 16, 2013, at Fort Pickett. With the promotion, Ortner assumes the duties as the Virginia National Guard Land Component Commander and succeeds Brig. Gen. William R. Phillips, II, as the commander of the Virginia Army National Guard.

Phillips is now assigned as deputy commanding general of the Fort Belvoir-based 29th Infantry Division.

Long commended Ortner for his extensive credentials for the position, which include four deployments with one as a battalion commander and one as a brigade commander.

“I can’t think of a better person to meet this challenge, and we have a lot of talented senior officers in the Virginia National Guard,” Long said. “He has a huge portfolio of the things he has done, and I know he will succeed in meeting the challenge.”

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/18/3950/>



Col. Blake C. Ortner is promoted to brigadier general by his father-in-law David Varrelman June 16, 2013, at Fort Pickett.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Va Guard leadership briefs Air Guard director at “State of the State”

Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, and Virginia Senior Leaders delivered the ‘State of the State’ brief to Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke III, Director of the Air National Guard June 12, 2013.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/20/3964/>

29th ID conducts command post exercise during annual training

Soldiers of the Fort Belvoir-based 29th Infantry Division spent annual training engaged in “Operation Valiant Strike,” a test of the division’s capabilities for future combat roles.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/20/3955/>

529th CSSB welcomes new commander, receives recognition from Governor

Maj. Michael Waterman took command of the 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion June 15, 2013, and Deputy Secretary of Public Safety Brian R. Swann presented a Certificate of Recognition signed by Governor Bob McDonnell in honor of the 529th earning the Milton A. Reckord Award.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/20/3938/>

Virginia Guard aviators haul troops & hoist gear during annual training

Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the commonwealth’s Army aviation units stayed busy during their two-week annual training, held June 1-15, 2013, at both Fort A.P. Hill and the Army Aviation Support Facility in Sandston, Va.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/17/3923/>

Mark Your Calendars!

June 22: ChalleNGe Graduation

Cadets in Class 38 of the Virginia Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy will graduate at 9 a.m. at Ocean Lakes High School in Virginia Beach, Va.

Commonwealth ChalleNGe is the Virginia component of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program. Located at Camp Pendleton in Virginia Beach, it focuses on preparing at-risk teens and high school dropouts for the GED test and future employment, military or higher education opportunities.

Offered free to at-risk teens ages 16 to 18, ChalleNGe is a statewide co-educational program with two components: a 22-week quasi-military residential phase and a 12-month post-residential phase.

NGB Chief visits Virginia Guard training sites

Gen. Frank J. Grass, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, visited several Virginia National Guard training locations June 15, 2013, along with Secretary of Public Safety Marla Graff Decker and Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia. During the tour, he visited the 29th Infantry Division as Soldiers were preparing for a command post exercise at annual training, met with families and leaders at a family day for aviation units stationed at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Sandston, toured Fort Pickett barracks facilities, observed live fire training at the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team annual training and wrapped up the trip with an orientation tour of the 192nd Intelligence Squadron and the 192nd Fighter Wing.

"You have to get out and see the troops if you want to see reality, and I saw some great training here today," Grass told a group of Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

He thanked the Soldiers for their service, and also asked that they express his appreciation to their families and employers for the important sacrifices they make to support their loved ones serving in the Guard.

Grass explained to the Soldiers that his job is to make sure that the Va. Guard, as well as the other 53 states and territories, have the resources they need for both their state and federal mission.

"I know everyone is concerned about the budget, but we will get through it and be better in the end," Grass said. "The Guard has the best product going. We are going to do our best to keep the Guard in the fight, both overseas and in our homeland defense mission."

As to the future of Guard mobilizations, Grass said that while the numbers will come down, he still sees opportunities for Guard personnel to volunteer for deployments in the future. He said that while Afghanistan draws down, there will still be a U. S. presence there, along with continued U. S. presence in places like Kosovo and the Horn of Africa, and the Guard will be a part of that.

"It is very important that we keep the dollars in place to do exactly what you are doing here now," Grass said. "We need



Gen. Frank J. Grass (far right) and Virginia Secretary of Public Safety Marla Graff Decker observe 116th IBCT live fire training June 15, 2013, at Fort Pickett.

to keep the ranges going, and continue to have opportunities to train at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk and the National Training Center at Fort Irwin. Having those opportunities and really go out and train at the high level is so important, but it starts right here at annual training. We are going to continue to push to get the dollars in the right place to get great equipment and keep the dollars in place to get to school."

Decker expressed her appreciation for Grass making the time in his schedule to come and see first hand the great things the Virginia Guard is doing.

"I thought this was a tremendous effort that provided General Grass with a snapshot of what the Virginia Guard is doing and allowed him to witness some of the remarkable accomplishments the Guard has made over the last few years," she said. "It was an honor to host the general for the entire day."

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/18/4003/>

MORE ON THE WEB

D-Day speech stresses learning from the 'greatest generation'

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/10/3884/>

116th IBCT conducts Expert Infantryman Badge testing

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/19/3916/>

Va. delegate visits 1-116th during two-week annual training

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/18/3909/>

1-111th FA slingloads howitzers as annual training

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/17/3974/>

Foreign military delegation visits Va. Guard facilities

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/15/3936/>

Va. Soldiers compete in Lincoln National Guard Marathon

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/10/3905/>

Va. Guard Soldiers host British, German counterparts

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/19/3914/>

Virginia National Guard on Twitter

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

Virginia National Guard on Facebook

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Col. Lapthe Flora briefs Gen. Frank J. Grass and Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr., on the 29th Infantry Division's command post exercise June 15, 2013, at Fort A. P. Hill.