

Emporia-based Soldiers serving on federal active duty

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# 1710th Trans. Co. presented combat patches

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Emporia-based 1710th Transportation Company, 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group received the Shoulder Sleeve Insignia Former Wartime Service, also known as the "combat patch," to recognize them as combat veterans in a ceremony held June 26, 2013, at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan.

Lt. Col. Don Gillespie, commander of the Montana Guard's 495th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, presented Capt. Rodney Rhodes and 1st Sgt. Frank Mitchell, commander and first sergeant for the 1710th, the 1889th Regional Support Group patch, symbolizing the authorization of all Soldiers assigned to the 1710th to wear it. Rhodes and Mitchell then presented the patch to each member of the company. For many of the Soldiers, it was their first time participating in a Combat Patch Ceremony.

"It shows that the Soldier has made the sacrifice for his or her country," Rhodes said.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/30/4079>



Lt. Col. Don Gillespie presents Capt. Rodney Rhodes with the 1889th Regional Support Group patch during a Combat Patch Ceremony held June 26, 2013, in Afghanistan.

## Virginia National Guard News Headlines

### Virginia Guard celebrates 5th Annual Diversity Day

The Virginia National Guard celebrated its 5th Annual Diversity Day June 20, 2013, at Fort Pickett, Va., with ethnic cultural displays and presentations, along with a sampling of traditional Irish and Polynesian foods.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/27/4066/>

### 29th Division Band polishes up on Soldier skills, entertains troops

The Virginia National Guard's Clifton Forge-based 29th Division Band trained on Soldier skills and performed for audiences around the state during their annual training June 14- 25.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/29/4048/>

### 429th BSB continues to build on tactical sustainment skills at AT

Soldiers from the Danville-based 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team continued to build on their past training successes with a challenging annual training period focused on tactical field operations at Fort Pickett from June 8-22, 2013.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/28/4084/>

### 200th Weather Flight supports 2-224th Aviation during annual training

The weather ran the gamut from strong winds, torrential rains, flooding, and possible tornados to sunny and clear skies, for the Sandston-based 200th Weather Flight as the Airmen provided support to aviators from the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment throughout annual training held June 1-15, 2013.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/20/4106/>

## Mark Your Calendars!

### July 13: South Boston Readiness Center Dedication

The Virginia National Guard will hold a ceremony at 10 a.m. July 13, 2013, at the South Boston readiness center to dedicate the facility to the memory of the late Maj. Gen. Carroll Thackston, former Adjutant General of Virginia. Thackston, the Adjutant General of Virginia from July 1994 to September 1998, passed away Feb. 17, 2013, at Lynchburg General Hospital at the age of 79.

After serving as adjutant general, Thackston was very active in his community and served on the town council and as mayor of South Boston. He was elected mayor in 2004, and was serving his third term at the time of his death.

# ChalleNGe Academy graduates 102 cadets

The Virginia Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy graduated 102 cadets during a commencement ceremony for Class 38 June 22, 2013, at Ocean Lakes High School in Virginia Beach. Virginia Rep. Scott Rigell was the guest speaker for the event. Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, and Brig. Gen. Wayne A. Wright were all on hand to represent the Virginia National Guard and recognize the graduates after the completion of the 22-week quasi-military residential phase of the program.

The ceremony marked the final graduating class for retired Col. Jimmy J. Chandler, Director of ChalleNGe. Chandler is retiring later this summer and received the Virginia National Guard Legion of Merit as recognition for his hard work and dedication while leading the ChalleNGe program.

The Virginia National Guard's 29th Division Band provided music for the ceremony. "Just like this 22-week academy, life is tough," Rigell told the graduates. "But anything of value takes great effort to accomplish." Rigell also told them that a key to their success after ChalleNGe will be based on who they spend time with and who they let into their lives.

"Be deliberate, be careful and be thoughtful on who you bring to your inner circle," he warned.

Cadet Ian Hyland gave the graduation address on behalf of Class 38. He began by reminiscing about the first day at ChalleNGE and the difficulties he and his fellow cadets faced.

"Although it was stressful we all started to evolve into something we had never thought possible- adults," he said. "Before ChalleNGe, a lot of us were, to put it nicely, troublemakers. We did what we wanted, when we wanted. We were disrespectful and full of doubt. But today we stand tall with the knowledge we can do anything we put our minds to."

The cadets were also recognized by various organizations for their community service time. Class 38 performed more than 23,000 hours of community service with an estimated market value of \$176,000. Among the places they volunteered were at two fitness centers, the Commonwealth Attorney's office, NAS Oceana commissary, Lynnhaven Elementary School, Virginia Beach SPCA and Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation.

The highest award a ChalleNGe cadet can achieve is to become a "gold phase" cadet. On behalf of the cadets and the staff, retired Lt. Cmdr. Richard Guzman, Deputy Commander of ChalleNGe, made Chandler an honorary "gold phase" cadet. "From all of us at the Department of Military Affairs, we appreciate your leadership," Wright told Chandler. "You took on a pretty good program and made it better." Wright then presented Chandler with the Virginia National Guard Legion of Merit.

"This job's exhibited the highest of highs and the lowest of lows I've felt since Vietnam," Chandler said of his two years as ChalleNGe director. "I ask you to applaud not only the fortitude of the cadets to succeed and complete the program but also applaud the staff of ChalleNGe for all the sacrifice on a daily basis to see the cadets to graduation."



The Virginia Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy graduated 102 cadets during a commencement ceremony for Class 38 June 22, 2013, in Virginia Beach.

Commonwealth ChalleNGe is the Virginia component of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, which focuses on preparing teenagers that have dropped out or are on the verge of dropping out of high school with skills, discipline and academics to become a productive citizen. As an alternative education program they also have the opportunity to prepare for and take the General Educational Development test. Teenagers also prepare for future employment, military or higher education opportunities during the residential phase. Offered free to teenagers 16 to 18 in Virginia, Commonwealth ChalleNGe is a statewide alternative educational program with two components: a 22-week quasi-military residential phase and a 12-month post-residential phase.

With this class, more than 4,000 teens have now graduated from Commonwealth ChalleNGe since it began in 1994.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/28/4035/>

## MORE ON THE WEB

**WOCs present song and sign, become the Purple Knights**

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/28/4070/>

**116th IBCT Family Readiness Group hosts resource fair**

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2013/06/24/4038/>

**Photos: AG and 29th ID Band support Army birthday event**

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157634133000277/>

**Photos: AG, SEL visit 229th MP Co. Soldiers, present Certificate of Recognition from Gov. McDonnell**

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157634380168882/>

**Photos: Teens enjoy Wilderness Adventure Camp**

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157634378979118/>

**Photos: Engineers repair and improve Fort Pickett roadways**

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157634372526593/>

**Photos: Soldiers, Airmen honored by Stafford County**

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157634315884668/>

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