

High-performing Army and Air Guard units recognized

High-performing Virginia Army and Air National Guard units were recognized at the Virginia National Guard Officer and Enlisted Association Conferences April 30, 2016, in Hampton and Newport News, Virginia.

The Christiansburg-based Company C, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team received the Eisenhower Trophy as the top company-level unit in the Virginia Army Guard, and the Martinsville-based 1173rd Transportation Company, 1030th Transportation Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group was presented the Adjutant General's Cup. The Gate City-based Headquarters Detachment, 1030th Transportation Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group received the state-level Pershing Trophy and Certificate of Victory for marksmanship. Multiple units were recognized for earning the Superior Unit Award and Excellence in Training Award.

The Air Force Outstanding Unit Award was presented to the 192nd Fighter Wing and Air Force Meritorious Unit Award was presented to the 192nd Intelligence Squadron, 192nd Fighter Wing.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/05/02/8803/>



Capt. John M. Terry accepts the Eisenhower Trophy on behalf of Company C, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment from **Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams** (left) and **Brig. Gen. Walter Mercer** (right) April 30, 2016, in Hampton, Virginia.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Soldiers train for Military Funeral Honors duty

Soldiers of the Virginia Guard Military Funeral Honors Program conducted Level 1 Funeral Honors training April 28, 2016, in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Eight Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers from throughout the state participated in the 40-hour certification course, April 26-30, which prepares Soldiers to conduct professional military funeral honors in accordance with service tradition.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/05/05/8810/>

Candidates, cadre, graduates celebrate OCS 58th birthday

Officer candidates, graduates and cadre of the Virginia Army National Guard Officer Candidate School celebrated its 58th birthday with a ceremony April 19, 2016, at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College's Downtown Campus in Richmond, Virginia. Officer candidates in Class 58, who are scheduled to graduate in August 2016, organized the ceremony.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/04/26/8786/>

Va. Guard Soldiers help evacuate injured hiker

Virginia National Guard combat engineers put years of military training and experience to work when they helped a volunteer search and rescue crew evacuate an injured hiker off Old Rag Mountain April 24, 2016, in the Shenandoah National Park near Madison County, Virginia. The Soldiers were hiking back down Old Rag when they came up a volunteer search and rescue crew on their way to assist a young hiker who had broken her leg and required evacuation.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/04/26/8800/>

Mark Your Calendars!

June 24: Registration deadline for Va. Guard Youth Camp

The Virginia National Guard Youth Program has opened up registration for the annual National Guard Youth Camp. This six-day camp has a broad range of educational, team-oriented and resilience-building activities. This year the camp will bring out programs that educate through robotics, physics, chemistry and visual art.

For more information and to download the application form visit <http://go.usa.gov/curF5>.

Contact Joe Duerksen by email at joe.m.duerksen.ctr@mail.mil or by phone at 804-236-7866.

VDF supports law enforcement at Winchester festival

Nearly 100 members of the Virginia Defense Force assisted law enforcement to keep traffic moving during the Apple Blossom Festival April 29-30, 2016, in Winchester, Virginia. VDF troops from each of the four regiments came together to form Task Force Shenandoah and volunteered their time by operating traffic control points and providing mission command support at the event.

"I want to personally thank you for volunteering," said the Honorable Terry H. Whittle, clerk of the Winchester Circuit Court, before he swore in the group of VDF troops as special deputies April 28. "This is a big event for the city, and without your participation and willingness to serve this festival doesn't go on. Part of the reason of its success is because of the work that you do, and we appreciate that and thank you for your service."

The Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival is a series of more than 30 events held in Winchester and Frederick County including band competitions, dances, parades and a 10K Race. Crowds in excess of 250,000 attend the festival each year.

"The outstanding success of Task Force Shenandoah and all that participated in the operational Apple Blossom Festival mission demonstrates the training and ability of the VDF," said Lt. Col. (Va.) Bill Robbins, commander of Task Force Shenandoah. "ABF 2016 was a demonstration of the dedication and professionalism of all participants and is a product of the "can do" spirit, a sense of camaraderie and cooperative spirit."

In addition to providing a valuable service to their community, the ABF mission also provides the VDF with an opportunity to train on multiple communication systems and rehearse procedures they would use if they were called to state active duty to augment the Virginia National Guard.

"Traffic control is one of the tougher jobs that we handle on a regular basis," said Capt. Doug Watson, patrol operations commander for the Winchester Police Department. "We don't know what we would do if we didn't have the support of the Virginia Defense Force."

In addition to the traffic control assistance, Watson said VDF leaders have also helped with contingency planning for this year's festival and plan to continue to develop those plans in the future.

The VDF is an all-volunteer force authorized by the Code of Virginia and organized under the Virginia Department of Military Affairs reporting to the Adjutant General of Virginia. The members of the VDF volunteer their time for training and are only paid when called to state active duty by an authorization from the Governor of Virginia.

"I am really proud of the great work of the Virginia Defense Force," said Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia. "It is clear that men and women of the VDF love being out here, and they like having the opportunity to be of service for something bigger than themselves."

In addition to providing service to the community, VDF service helps troops build skills they can take back to their civilian jobs.

"This is fantastic, and I really love coming out here every year," said Sgt. (Va.) Michael Felton, serving at the festival for the



A member of the Virginia Defense Force directs traffic April 29, 2016, at the 89th Apple Blossom Festival in Winchester, Virginia.

eighth year. "The public seems to enjoy having us out here, and we enjoy working with them. Being out here also makes my critical thinking skills sharper, able to observe the environment better and use those skills elsewhere."

Felton credited the classroom training he has received as well as the camaraderie with his fellow VDF troops and leadership skills from his superiors for improving his management skills in his civilian job.

Members of the VDF perform a similar function for the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond when they volunteer their time to assist with traffic control during Memorial Day and Veterans Day events, and they will provide similar support at the Lynchburg Air Show in May.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/05/03/8807/>

MORE ON THE WEB

Va. Army Guard looking to hire recruiting NCOs

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/03/20/8575/>

Photos: Senior NCOs support "Not in My Squad" initiative

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157667588764545>

Photos: Va. Army Guard hosts Command Team Conference

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/albums/72157667773874961>

Photos: 229th MPs provide security at conference

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/albums/72157667981708505>

Virginia Defense Force on Facebook:

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

Va. Army Guard Officer Candidate School on Facebook:

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



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