

Family, friends, leaders bid farewell to Red Dragons

Senior leaders from state government and the Virginia National Guard, family, friends and fellow Soldiers bid farewell to the Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team at multiple departure events May 14-16, 2016.

Approximately 450 Soldiers from the battalion, also known as the Red Dragons, began serving on federal active duty May 13, and the mobilization is expected to be for about 12 months. They are scheduled to replace the Virginia National Guard's Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, also known as Task Force Normandy, currently conducting security operations in Qatar.

Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, First Lady of Virginia Dorothy McAuliffe, Virginia Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran, Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, and Col. William J. Coffin, the commander of the 116th IBCT, shook hands with Soldiers May 16 in Roanoke before they boarded a plane to their mobilization station in Texas.



Governor Terry McAuliffe, First Lady of Virginia Dorothy McAuliffe and Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran bid farewell to Lt. Col. Chris Samulski, commander of the Red Dragons, May 16, 2016, in Roanoke, Virginia.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/05/18/8831/>

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Cake cutting marks 409th birthday for Va. Guard, Jamestown Settlement

Senior leaders gathered to celebrate the 409th birthday of the Virginia National Guard and the founding of the Jamestown colony with a cake cutting May 14, 2016, at Jamestown Settlement in Williamsburg, Virginia. The Virginia National Guard traces the heritage and traditions of Citizen-Soldier and Citizen-Airmen service to the founding of the Jamestown colony more than 400 years ago when Capt. John Smith organized a militia to defend the colony.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/05/19/8853/>

Dept. of Military Affairs recognizes, thanks state employees

Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, Brig. Gen. Paul F. Griffin, Virginia National Guard Director of the Joint Staff, and Walter L. Mercer, Director of Personnel and Administration for the Virginia Department of Military Affairs, recognized and thanked state employees at luncheons and awards ceremonies May 10, 2016, at Fort Pickett and May 12, 2016, at Camp Pendleton in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/05/18/8839/>

Transfer of Authority Ceremony held for 116th MET

Soldiers of the North Carolina National Guard's 30th Military Engagement Team transferred authority to the Virginia National Guard's 116th Military Engagement Team in a ceremony held May 8, 2016, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Maj. Gen. William B. Hickman presided over the ceremony.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/05/11/8838/>

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.

Va. Soldiers take first at 37th BEB Sapper Stakes

A squad of Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Fredericksburg-based 116th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 116th IBCT took first place in the Sapper Stakes competition conducted by the Fort Bragg, North Carolina-based 37th Engineer Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division May 7, 2016, at Fort Pickett, Virginia. The team navigated multiples stations including emplacement of a wire obstacle, leadership reaction course, obstacle course, rope bridge urban breach and M4 rifle qualification. A total of 18 teams took part in the competition, and the Virginia Guard engineers completed the course in seven hours and five minutes, 14 minutes ahead of the second place team. Soldiers from the 116th BSTB joined engineers from the 37th BEB for numerous training opportunities at Fort Pickett that was part of an ongoing partnership between the two units.

“We are very proud of Staff Sgt. Newton and his squad,” said Lt. Col. Charles Martin, commander of the 116th BSTB. “They performed exceptionally well and brought home the trophy. It was great to witness first-hand the determination, drive and resiliency of the BSTB Sappers as they competed head-to-head with 17 active duty squads.”

Martin said that each team member at some point in the competition had a key moment that contributed to the overall squad success. They now have a special, shared sense of accomplishment that they will treasure for years to come, he said.

The following Soldiers made up the winning squad: Staff Frederick Newton, Sgt. Steven Fletcher, Sgt. Daniel Foltz, Spc. Matthew Davis, Spc. Zachary Rook, , Spc. David Ha and Spc. Nicholas Shidlovsky,

In addition to the competition, Soldiers spent two weeks working with the 37th as part of a training partnership between the two units that has been beneficial to both, Martin explained.

“One example is training with our engineer equipment,” he said. “In several instances, we have newer model dozers and graders that the 37th BEB has not yet fielded as well as having more experienced operators. Many of those operators bring additional experience from their civilian occupations. When we train together, we share that expertise, and we get additional training time.”

While Virginia may have greater experience with certain types of engineer equipment, the engineers from the 37th has significant practical experience with demolitions and explosives.

“The 37th is using the most up to date techniques, tactics and procedures,” Martin said. “By embedding some of our NCOs and Soldiers into their formations over the last three weeks we are able to incorporate some of those TTPs into our future training events.”

Martin said they laid the cornerstone for what they hope will be a solid foundation to build upon, and he also hopes to expand the partnership to include the battalion’s signal company and the brigade’s unmanned aerial system platoon.

The training between the two units is the foundation for future combat interoperability between the National Guard and active duty units, explained Lt. Col. Sebastian Pastor, commander of the



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37th BEB. “There are a lot of lessons that we learned and that they learned from us in the past two weeks,” he said.

“We share our skill set with our brothers and sisters in the National Guard and the Army Reserve because you never know when you’ll deploy and work with them hand-in-hand,” he said. “The BEB provides 25 to 30 percent capability that the engineer regiment can employ in support of a [BCT], so we have to rely on our partners to provide the other 75 percent.”

The Sapper Stakes competition was designed to be a memorable culminating event for the two weeks of training at Fort Pickett with both individual and collective tasks. Pastor described it as “a grueling, challenging event in order to determine the best sapper squad within the battalion or the BSTB.”

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/05/10/8848/>

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

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Photos: Va. Guards haul supplies for DLA

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Photos: 34th CST conducts night ops training in Lynchburg

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116th IBCT on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/116thIBCT/>

1st Battalion, 116th Infantry on Facebook:

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