

TF Normandy recognized for federal duty

Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran presented the Governor's National Service Medal to Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Sept. 17, 2016, in Richmond, Virginia, in recognition of their federal active duty service from September 2015 to July 2016. Senior Virginia Guard leaders from the state level as well as the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team were on hand to formally welcome the Soldiers home and thank them for their service.

"On behalf of Governor Terry McAuliffe, his entire administration and 8.4 million Virginians, thank you so much for what you do," Moran said. "We are so proud of you, and I am so excited to present the Governor's National Service Medal as a further display of our commonwealth's appreciation of the job you have done. You make each and every one of us proud to be a Virginian."

More than 450 Soldiers from units based in Winchester, Woodstock, Leesburg and Suffolk provided security for installations in the Central Command area of operations in Qatar.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/09/19/9163/>



Secretary Brian Moran presents the Governor's National Service Medal to Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Sept. 17, 2016, in Richmond, Virginia.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Virginia Army Guard units recognized for maintenance excellence

Brig. Gen. Walter Mercer, Virginia National Guard Assistant Adjutant General – Army, and Command Sergeant Maj. Cheyenne Johnson, Virginia Army National Guard State Command Sergeant Major, presented certificates to Virginia Army National Guard units for outstanding performance in the regional Army Award for Maintenance Excellence Program Sept. 17, 2016, at Fort Pickett, Virginia, during the Army Guard's Command Team Workshop.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/09/18/9171/>

329th RSG command teams learn about Army training management system

Instructors from the Fort Leavenworth-based Army Training Network provided command teams in the Virginia National Guard's Virginia Beach-based 329th Regional Support Group with instruction Sept. 12-14, 2016, in Virginia Beach, Virginia, on new training management requirements the U. S. Army will roll out in 2017.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/09/17/9164/>

Army Reserve Soldiers support Fort Pickett Ammo Supply Point

More than 25 Army Reserve Soldiers from the Cross Lanes, West Virginia-based 261st Ordnance Company, 321st Ordnance Battalion, 38th Regional Support Group received real-world experience as they supported the ammo supply point at the Virginia National Guard's Fort Pickett Maneuver Training Center for their two week annual training period Aug. 6-20, 2016.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/09/06/9174/>

Did You Know?

Financial counselor available

A new personal financial counselor has been assigned to the Virginia National Guard for the next 90 days and is available at no cost to assist with a wide variety of financial planning needs.

A PFC provides direct financial readiness education and counseling services on topics such as personal financial planning, budgeting, saving, reducing debt, retirement planning, deployment financial planning, understanding military pay and understanding state and federal financial benefits.

Visit <http://go.usa.gov/xYuV5> for more information.

116th MET reaches midpoint of overseas deployment

The 26 Soldiers of the 116th Military Engagement Team reached the midpoint of their overseas deployment in August 2016, having completed more than four months in countries including Kuwait, Jordan, Oman and Saudi Arabia while also traveling throughout Central Asia, the Greater Levant and the Arabian Peninsula working with military members of partner nations.

“The 116th MET is exceeding expectations,” said Col. Todd Hubbard, commander of the 116th MET. “We are being very proactive to add missions to our schedule and work with as many partner nations as possible. I am very proud of the hard work and dedication demonstrated by each team member.”

The team is spread through four countries with about half the team in Kuwait, a third of the team in Jordan and liaison officers operating in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oman and Kuwait.

“Overall I think the unit has been highly successful,” said Lt. Col. Jaycee Shaver, the team’s executive officer who works primarily in Jordan. “We have seized the opportunity on several occasions to highlight the Virginia Army National Guard, the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and the Commonwealth of Virginia in our efforts over here in theater.”

So far, members of the MET have conducted engagements in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Qatar, Oman and Uzbekistan, have traveled to Germany and England to participate in a multi-national exercise and have worked with Pakistani and Jordanian Soldiers in the United States. During these engagements, team members have covered a wide range of topics, including effective battlefield communication, disaster response and preparedness, marksmanship techniques, reacting to chemical, biological and neurological attacks and the military decision-making process.

“The work that we have done has been successful and rewarding for all parties involved,” said Sgt. 1st Class David Abbey, who works current operations in Kuwait. “We have been afforded the opportunity to positively impact other nations in several areas where their military forces are trying to improve and advance. The fact that a 26 person team can affect change or assist in improving another country’s military effectiveness has exceeded my expectations.”

In Jordan, the team has continued the work set out by previous engagement teams, building relationships and strengthening partnerships with the Jordanians.

“I knew coming into this that I would be engaging in interesting work that would force me to think outside the box as this is not a traditional mission,” explained Master Sgt. John Rothmann, the noncommissioned officer-in-charge in Jordan. “The responsibility, trust and freedom that has been given to me in order to accomplish the mission has been exceptional.”

In the midst of mission planning, preparation and execution, team members have had the opportunity to experience the unique and varied cultures of the nations they’ve visited and to build relationships with the soldiers of those nations.



Soldiers of the 116th Military Engagement Team and the 335th Signal Command participate in a tactical communications exchange with Uzbek soldiers Aug. 15-18, near Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

“The most enjoyable part of the deployment for me has been experiencing the culture across the Arab world,” explained Capt. Matthew Guyer, who currently works with the team in Jordan, and previously served as a liaison officer in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. “I have been able to immerse myself in Saudi and Jordanian life unlike previous deployments where we were typically bound to a [Forward Operating Base].”

Lt. Col. Carl Engstrom, the team’s chief of operations, said he’d particularly enjoyed the opportunity to try new foods during his travels. “I’ve had the opportunity to sample lamb’s tongue and lamb’s brain in Kuwait, horse plov in Uzbekistan and camel in Oman,” Engstrom said.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/09/16/9160/>

MORE ON THE WEB

Va. National Guard Soldiers and Airmen remember 9/11 in “Why I Serve” video series

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2016/09/12/9151/>

Photos: DMV 2 Go supports returning Virginia National Guard Soldiers

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157674088457995>

3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/3rdBattalion116thInfantry/>

116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team on Facebook:

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

329th Regional Support Group on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/329thRSG/>

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