

Proclamation recognizes Va. Guard and VDF

On page 2: Va. Guard Soldiers bridge the gap

Governor declares December as Va. Guard Month

Governor Bob McDonnell ceremonially signed a proclamation designating December as “Virginia National Guard Appreciation and Recognition Month” Dec. 7, 2012, in Richmond. Secretary of Public Safety Marla Graff Decker and Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, joined him in recognizing members of the Virginia Guard and Virginia Defense Force.

“This proclamation, in a small way, recognizes the incredible sacrifice and service of the Virginia National Guard and the Virginia Defense Force,” McDonnell said. “For the first time since 9/11 all Virginia Army Guard and Air Guard units are home with their families and loved ones for the holidays. Time and time again the Virginia National Guard and Virginia Defense Force have selflessly answered the call of service. Whether defending our freedoms abroad or securing our communities during times of natural disasters at home these courageous individuals have demonstrated what it means to serve with honor.”

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/12/07/2624/>



Governor Bob McDonnell signs a proclamation designating December as “Virginia National Guard Appreciation and Recognition Month” Dec. 7, 2012, in Richmond.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Last Virginia Guard air crew returns from Southwest Border mission

After supporting the Texas National Guard by providing aerial reconnaissance support to deter illegal immigration along the Southwest Border, the final Virginia National Guard air crew, comprised of both pilots and maintainers, returned to Virginia Dec. 6, 2012.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/12/11/2647/>

Va. Guard works to improve sustainability efforts

Representatives from various Virginia National Guard units, sections and facilities from across the commonwealth gathered Dec. 4, 2012, at Fort Pickett for the Virginia Guard’s first Internal Sustainability Workshop.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/12/11/2643/>

Change of command held for Winchester-based Va. Guard infantry battalion

Lt. Col. Erik Gordon took command of the Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team from Lt. Col. Paul Gilman in a change of command ceremony held Dec. 1, 2012.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/12/01/2594/>

AG, Va. Guard staff on hand as Governor receives keys to new center

Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, Col. Thom Morgan and representatives of Va. Guard Family Programs joined Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell and his wife, First Lady Maureen McDonnell, for the passing of the keys to the Freedom Support Center Nov. 30, 2012, at Fort Monroe, Va.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/12/04/2652/>

Mark Your Calendars!

Jan. 15, 2013: Va. National Guard Day at the General Assembly

Members of the Virginia Guard and Virginia Defense Force will display equipment outside the General Assembly Building from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to demonstrate some of the Guard’s capabilities.

Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, will host a reception for members of the General Assembly from 10 to 11:30 a.m. in the 5th Floor West Conference Room of the General Assembly Building.

Jan. 18, 2013: Commonwealth’s Guardian newsletter resumes publication

This is the last issue of the 2012 Commonwealth’s Guardian newsletter. Publication will resume Jan. 18, 2013.

Va. Guard supports Fredericksburg reenactment

Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Bowling Green-based 189th Engineer Company, 276th Engineer Battalion provided the latest in military mobile bridging technology in support of Civil War reenactors during the observation of the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Fredericksburg Dec. 8, 2012. Members of the Virginia Defense Force also supported the event with traffic control and visitor assistance, and the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team provided a color guard and howitzer for the weekend's final events Dec. 9.

"This is a great training opportunity for the Soldiers of the 189th to be able to assemble the bridge on a flowing river," said 1st Lt. Marianne E. Heldmann, commander of the 189th. "This mission also required coordination with multiple civilian agencies which is what we do when we are on state active duty. We are glad to be able to support this important community event that provides great training for our Soldiers, and it will make us better prepared to perform our bridging mission."

Soldiers assembled most of the bridge on Friday, then completed the final structure early Saturday morning to be ready for the event. The final bridge spanned approximately 100 meters and consist of 12 bridge bays and two ramp bays, and the mission was executed successfully and safely.

"Anytime we can conduct a major training exercise without any injuries, accidents or damage to our equipment, it is a success," Heldmann said. "I would like to thank the event committee for the opportunity to conduct a very valuable training exercise for the benefit of the community. This was a great morale boost for the company, and they will never forget this event."

The bridging system used by the 189th is officially known as the Improved Float Bridge (Ribbon) and it consists of interior bridge sections about 22 feet long and almost 27 feet wide. The interior bridge sections are linked together, then special ramp bays are connected at either end to allow vehicles and personnel to enter and exit the completed bridge. Bridge and ramp bays are carried by special M812 military 5-ton trucks that can launch the bridge sections into the water, then Soldiers use propulsion boats to maneuver the bridge sections in the water as it is assembled. In addition to being used as a bridge to span a body of water, the bays can be assembled together as a free-floating structure then can be used to ferry personnel or equipment across the water.

According to event organizers, the bridge helped recreate the first amphibious landing under fire in American military history and allowed the Union army to once again cross the Rappahannock and assault the city.

Approximately 30 members of the VDF Military Police Battalion volunteered their time to provide support for the event in the form of traffic control, area access and visitor assistance. The battalion headquarters is located at Waller Depot in Richmond, with subordinate companies in Petersburg, Powhatan and Bowling Green, but VDF members from across the commonwealth took part in the support mission. VDF members were on site from Dec. 7 to 9.



Civil War reenactors cross a bridge assembled by Virginia Guard Soldiers Dec. 8, 2012, during the observation of the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Fredericksburg.

On Dec. 9, Soldiers from the Sandston-based Battery A, 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team and the Fredericksburg-based 116th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team also participated in the sesquicentennial celebration of the Battle of Fredericksburg with a howitzer firing and color guard. Elements of the New York-based Company A, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry and the color guard from the 116th BSTB greeted each other on the Sunken Road where they met 150 years ago, then as enemies, today as friends. The ceremony ended with a canon salute fired by Battery A and the playing of Taps. Afterward attendees were invited to lay flowers on the wall in honor of those who fought during the Civil War.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/12/13/2675/>

MORE ON THE WEB

Va. Guard establishes group for employment resources

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/12/14/2698/>

Video: Governor and AG Holiday Video Message

<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10151314775236131>

Video: AG and SEL Holiday Video Message

<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10100864180302796>

Va. Guard Soldier honored at Veterans Gala

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/10/31/2631/>

Photos: Va. Guard displays musical talents tree lighting

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/7215763222781916/>

Photos: ChalNge hosts 3-day invitational

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157632213306939/>

Virginia National Guard on Twitter

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

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Virginia Guard Public Affairs Flickr Photostream

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