

**Virginia Military Police to train Iraqi Police**

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**Manassas-based 266th MPs say goodbye as Iraq deployment begins**

Friends and family members gathered at the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Washington Oct. 8 to bid farewell to the Soldiers of the 266th Military Police Company before the unit left for Fort Dix, New Jersey where they will conduct mobilization training and a subsequent tour of Iraq to assist training the Iraqi Police.

It was a very emotional day for the Manassas-based Soldiers and their loved ones. The 266th will be training in the U.S. until early December, and will then spend the next nine months or more overseas.

During the last few months the Soldiers of the 266th have been conducting pre-mobilization training at Fort Pickett to prepare for their upcoming mission, and now stand ready to move on to the next phase of training. "I know I can count on these Soldiers whether its standing tall in Hampton Roads during hurricane relief, or whether its training the Iraqi Police Force as they're about to do," said Maj. Gen. Robert B. Newman, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia.



**A Soldier from the Manassas-based 266th Military Police Company grabs a final farewell kiss before boarding a bus bound for Fort Dix, New Jersey. The unit conducted a departure ceremony Oct. 8 to mark the start of their federal duty in Iraq.**

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/oct2008/266thmob.html>

**Virginia National Guard News Headlines**

**Winchester-based Virginia Guard battalion wins top readiness award**

The Virginia National Guard's Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team received the Walter T. Kerwin, Jr. Readiness Award for the Army's Most Outstanding National Guard Unit at the Association of the United States Army's Eisenhower Luncheon Oct. 7 in Washington, D.C.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/oct2008/kerwinaward.html>

**Governor signs Iraq Veterans license plate into law**

On Sept. 25 Gov. Tim Kaine signed HB 6022 into law which authorizes the Department of Motor Vehicles to create an Iraqi Freedom Veteran license plate for veterans of the war in Iraq.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/oct2008/IraqPlate.html>

**Powhatan-based 180th Engineer Company ready to mobilize**

Approximately 160 Virginia National Guard Soldiers of the Powhatan-based 180th Engineer Company have finished up their pre-mobilization training here in preparation for their upcoming deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/oct2008/180thEng.html>

**Ceremony kicks off Combined Federal Campaign**

The Virginia National Guard marked the beginning of the Combined Federal Campaign, which runs from Oct. 1 to Nov. 18, with key-worker training and a kickoff ceremony held Oct. 1 at Fort Pickett.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/oct2008/CFCkickoff.html>

**Mark Your Calendars!**

**Oct. 13: 180th Engineer Company Departure Ceremony**

The 180th Engineer Company will conduct a Departure Ceremony at 10 a.m. at Powhatan High School located at 1800 Judes Ferry Road in Powhatan.

**Oct. 18: MTC Change of Command**

The Fort Pickett Maneuver Training Center will conduct a Change of Command Ceremony at 1 p.m. at the Post Stadium.

**Nov. 1: Tuition Assistance Deadline**

The Spring 2009 State Tuition Assistance application deadline is Nov. 1. Submit applications through your chain of command to the Education Services Office. For more information, contact Capt. Hogsten, the state education officer, at 434-298-6222.

# Virginia Defense Force conducts FTX at Fort Pickett

The Virginia Defense Force conducted a field training exercise at Fort Pickett Oct. 4 and 5 that had the largest participation ever of any training exercise at the division level.

"This is the most demanding exercise we have ever attempted," said Maj. Gen. John Taylor, commander of the VDF. "It is the only way to train. We train like we are going to respond, and we respond like we trained."

The Virginia Defense Force is an all-volunteer force authorized by the Code of Virginia and organized under the Virginia Department of Military Affairs. "Our mission is to provide direct support to the National Guard after a major disaster to help our fellow citizens in a time of need," Taylor said. "There is no more noble mission than that."

The training exercise focused on the VDF's three core functions of communications, security and medical triage. Three different training sites were established that simulated responding to a downed aircraft, an overturned bus and providing search and medical triage after a tornado. In addition to those scenarios, the VDF also conducted security training and basic instruction training for new VDF members.

VDF units are located in over 38 Virginia Army National Guard installations throughout the Commonwealth. The division headquarters is located in Richmond and there are three operational brigades: Lafayette in the Tidewater area, Black Horse in Northern Virginia and Highland in Roanoke.

The division currently has a total of more than 800 members and in 2007 they contributed over 7,500 mandays of volunteer service. This resulted in a financial contribution to the Commonwealth of over \$1,000,000. The VDF's goal is to reach 900 members by the end of 2008, and the long-term goal is to have 1,200 volunteers in four to five brigades and 12 to 15 battalions.

The VDF maintains and operates three mobile command post trailers that provide long range, high frequency radio communications capability for the VDF and the Virginia Guard. Two of those MCPs and almost 30 VDF members were on state active duty on stand by for possible missions in response to Tropical Storm Hanna.

During the FTX, each MCP was dispatched to the training sites and went into operation. At the tornado response site, the Highland Brigade's MCP was staff in part by Staff Sgt. Eldridge Allen, a Lynchburg native and the senior communications operations sergeant for the brigade, and provided operational updates on the status of the fluid situation and communicated additional resources requirements to operations command.

The mobile communications center provides long-range communications using HF, VHF and UHF. The center is also capable of downloading satellite television for weather updates, lap top link-ups, etc. and has interoperable capability with other emergency agencies. "We did what we had to do," Allen said. "We found the problems that existed, overcame the hiccups and executed well." Allen recently retired from the communications



**Members of the Virginia Defense Force conduct medical triage on a simulated casualty during their field training exercise at Fort Pickett Oct. 4.**

industry as a field service communications engineer.

The FTX provided VDF members a chance to evaluate their skills and determine how to focus their training in the coming months.

"This training gave us a chance to test ourselves and see how well we can perform the skills we have been training on for the last year," said 2nd Lt. Heather Welsh, the executive officer for the Manassas-based E Company, 23rd Battalion, Black Horse Brigade. "This was a very intense weekend, and the training was worthwhile."

Welsh said the leadership from her company will use the feedback from the FTX to chart the course for the unit's training in the coming months in preparation for the brigade's FTX in the spring.

For more information about the Virginia Defense Force call the Division Headquarters in Richmond at 804-228-7018 or 866-791-9164.

Link: <http://vko.va.ngb.army.mil/VirginiaGuard/news/oct2008/VDFFTX.html>

## MORE ON THE WEB

### Combined Federal Campaign

<http://www.opm.gov/CFC/>

### Virginia Iraqi Veterans License Plate

[www.myspace.com/ifvplate](http://www.myspace.com/ifvplate)

### Virginia Defense Force

<http://www.vdf.virginia.gov/>