



The Bugler

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Virginia Defense Force

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ON MISSION

Our progress as an organization has increased significantly in the last twelve months through your individual participation and dedicated support. The VDF disaster response capabilities are at a much higher level and will contribute significantly to the Virginia Department of Military Affairs operations when we are called to respond within the Commonwealth.



This increase in response capabilities has started at the Company, Battalion, and Brigade levels throughout the Division. With the current high threat hurricane season we are in this year; this response capabilities at all levels will enable the quick and professional support to our Citizens anywhere in the Commonwealth at any time.

Continue your outstanding efforts to complete the required FEMA courses. I have completed the 300 course and will take the 400 course by the end of July. I plan to continue making progress for the next MEMS badge and then initiate courses for the next level of FEMA qualifications.

Leadership in a disaster response will be critical. Continue your individual efforts to take the next level of the leadership courses. Everyone in the VDF is a Leader!!!!!! Always take care of your subordinates as a Leader in the VDF!!!!

Our recruiting goal for this year is 1,200; we have around 200 more individuals to recruit. However, we need to increase our retention of qualified individuals. Everyone can contribute in this effort and ensure we, as an organization, have the maximum number of VDF individuals trained and available for a disaster response.

Safety is everyone's responsibility. Ensure your people conduct training in a safe and productive manner. Summer activities for you and your Family must include safety in all respects. With the current hurricane season in progress, also have a Family disaster plan to execute if a hurricane hits your area of the Commonwealth.

Your individual efforts as a member of the VDF are greatly appreciated by me as the Commanding General. The positive and professional attitudes within all units reflect how our Division has progressed in the last three years. Continue the great work and let's get to 1,200 before the end of this year!!!! Thank you for your individual service in the VDF!!!!!!

Virginia Defense Force an invaluable asset during state snow emergency

By Capt. David Garner
VNG, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team

WINCHESTER, Va. — The Virginia Defense Force is always eager to support the Virginia National Guard during civil support missions. When the Virginia National Guard was placed on state active duty in response to a snow storm on Feb 5, the Virginia Defense Force's communications and command sections were already in action, setting up communications links in Winchester, Warrenton, and Harrisonburg.



Virginia National Guard and Virginia Defense Force Soldiers work side by side during state emergency snow operations. (Photo by Sgt. Oswald Bracero, Virginia Defense Force)

The communications links they established provided redundancy as well as a contingency if any of the primary phone lines or internet circuits went down due to inclement weather.

"I am honored to provide support for the Guard and if there is anything we can do to help you then we will do it," said Sgt. Tom Martin, the communications chief for the Virginia Defense Force's 33rd Battalion. "My goal is to provide the Guard with a permanent radio capability for local emergencies," he added.

Martin is only one of many Virginia Defense Force Soldiers who share that same belief.

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State and federal installations opens facilities in support of VDF mission

By 2nd Lt. Henry C. Howells

Virginia Defense Force Public Affairs

RICHMOND, Va.—On May 1st the Division Headquarters personnel of the Virginia Defense Force held its spring field training exercise at the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and at the Joint Operations Center in the Joint Forces Headquarters. This enabled personnel to become familiar with the facilities and, more importantly, train in support of the VDF mission to provide trained personnel to perform specific duties during periods of emergency operations. Thirty-two Division Headquarters soldiers participated in the exercise.

At the VDEM, the briefing was conducted by Patrick Cox, Chief of the Operations Section, and Jason Eaton, Chief of the Logistics Section/Resource Manager. The VDEM Operation includes a Military function, known as ESF # 16, which will include volunteers from the VDF who are familiar with the VIPER system, which consists of a nationwide network of interoperable databases used in tracking and responding to emergencies.

The Joint Operations Center at the Joint forces Headquarters is located at Mullins Armory in Sandston, near the Richmond International Airport. The Commander is Col. McMillan the J-3 of the Virginia Army National Guard. Col. Thomas A. Smith, Commander of Operational Planning and Training for the Virginia Defense Force is the Liaison Officer for the VDF with the VNG Joint Operations Center. Resource requirements run parallel to those of the VDEM. The VDF will be tasked to provide soldiers to train in the upcoming Irish Heat exercise.

Concurrent to this exercise, spring training for a number of other Virginia Defense Force units was conducted at Fort A P Hill. The MP Battalion of the Division Troop Command, and a number of Division units, including medical, logistics, and communications conducted their exercises at this facility which allowed for broader use of support personnel. The facility was chosen for its central location and enabled increased participation by the all volunteer force. Lt. Col. James M. Head, commander of the Military Police Battalion stated, “the facilities are truly amazing and the support personnel are excellent”.

The training for the MP Battalion focused on civil disturbance training using a simulated disturbance at a medical clinic which had been shut down due to lack of availability of vaccines. The exercise post evaluation emphasized leadership and decision making for the new officers.

Concurrently, the Signal Battalion, through their mobile command post, was engaged in establishing high frequency communications with training exercises for the Black Horse Brigade in Winchester, VA and the Lafayette Brigade at the State Military Reservation at Camp Pendleton.



MP Company en route to simulated civil disturbance (Photo by 2nd Lt. Henry C. Howells)

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Snow Emergency

“The VDF provides us connectivity to the public internet, have civilian radio capability that we don’t have, and they have a great working relationship with civil authorities throughout the valley,” said Sgt. 1st Class Kristian Kindoll, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the communications section for the Virginia National Guard’s 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team. “Bottom line is they have been an invaluable asset for us during these types of missions.”

The interoperability of the Guard and Defense Forces communications sections is only one example of how the two work together during state emergencies. The operations and intelligence sections provided topographic software and assisted in making maps and overlays. VDF Pvt. Amber Becker’s knowledge of the software and her eagerness to serve added value to the operations and intelligence sections during snow emergency operations.

“We had a command and operations presence in the emergency operations center who are both former active duty military personnel with experience in military and civilian emergency operations,” said Capt. Richard Bever, the operations chief of the 33rd Battalion. Additionally, VDF Soldiers assisted in snow removal operations at the Winchester armory, which enabled the guard to not have to dedicate a Soldier to that task.

Emergency snow operations is just the latest endeavor where the 3-116th BCT and 33rd Battalion Soldiers have worked together. Both entities worked closely together during the January 2009 Presidential Inauguration and in July 2009 during a mass casualty exercise at the Winchester Airport.

“We have an exceptional working relationship with our Virginia Defense Force counterparts,” Lt. Col. William Zana, the commander of the 3- 116th BCT said. “They bring a lot of experience and resources to assist us in completing our civil support missions. In the snow emergency response, their communications and operation center assistance allowed us to move additional Soldiers into forward mission locations.”

The Virginia Defense Force is made up of volunteers who donate their time and expertise to the Commonwealth of Virginia. Their support and knowledge during civil support operations is vital to overall mission accomplishment, and they are a true asset to the Commonwealth, Zana said.

Virginia Defense Force volunteer receives National Guard award

SANDSTON, Va.-Chief Warrant Officer 2 Joseph T. Wallace was the recipient of the Virginia National Guard’s Bronze Star at a ceremony held at the Joint Forces Headquarters in Sandston, Virginia. He received this award for effective, professional performance as a member of the Virginia Emergency Response Team during the three major winter storms and amidst changing state administrations.

First soldier in the VDF to complete the Basic Officer Qualification Course

By Lt. Col. Harry Tatum

LYNCHBURG, VA.- Brand new Second Lieutenant Brenda Gay Efford of Lynchburg, VA was promoted to her current rank at the Lynchburg Regional Airport during the opening formation of the Headquarters drill in May.

The ceremony was complete with Color Guard, the playing of the National Anthem, and was followed by a cake and coffee reception at VA Aviation, the primary Fixed Base Operator at Preston Glenn Field. The battalion commander, LTC Harry Tatum, and the Battalion operations officer, Major Jim McGee pinned her new insignia of rank with family members and friends in attendance.

LT Efford began the “Third Lieutenant Program” over a year ago and completed a host of on line courses, a reading and writing program, and several practical exercises to become the first in the entire division to achieve officer rank through this program. Additionally, while completing the stiff requirements, she also became a certified EMT.

Her new military assignment is as the battalion chemical officer with ancillary duty as battalion recruiting officer. Prior to her promotion, Staff Sergeant Efford very ably served as the Non Commissioned Officer in charge of battalion recruiting.

LT Efford is a college graduate and former teacher and has held key posts with local not for profit organizations.

Military Medical Delegation Tours St. Francis and Sheltering Arms

By Joan Scoville, Communications Assistant
Bon Secours St. Francis Medical Center

If you were wondering why troops both foreign and domestic were coming through Bon Secours St. Francis Medical Center and Sheltering Arms on Monday, May 17, 2010, it's because of a medical exchange between these facilities, the Virginia Army National Guard (NGVA), the Virginia Air National Guard (VANG), the Virginia Defense Force (VDF, and visiting medical officers of the Tajikistan military.

The tour was initiated by the Virginia Army National Guard state partnership program, which endeavors to strengthen formal relations with countries around the world. "Most of the states and territories of the United States have such partnership programs, which began following the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the Soviet Union," said William Mahoney, LTC, NGVA, state partnership program director.

The Virginia Army National Guard state partnership program focuses on the following:

- Medical exchanges
- Operation 'Provide Hope'
- Combat Life Saver seminar
- Non Commissioned Officer development/ education
- Civil Support Team development
- Staff development
- Border security
- Peacekeeping operations development
- Senior leader visits
- Emergency preparedness and disaster response



Tajikistan military medical delegation; VANG, NGVA, and VDF medical delegations with civilian translator

The theme of the medical exchange in May was Emergency Medical Response Operations. "This includes public health collaboration; medical readiness and training support; disaster management; and activation of non-uniformed civilian professionals in a disaster or public health emergency," said Elena Scarbrough, LTC, VANG, one of the coordinators.

Those hosting the tour are also familiar faces on campus: Timothy M. Silver, MD, LTC, VDF, of Sheltering Arms and Michael G. Hickey, PA-C, 1LT, HHC 3/116 IBCT, VANG, of St. Francis. Speaking through translators, the delegation discussed the functions of the different units, unit personnel, and medical equipment as they maneuvered through SFMC and Sheltering Arms.

"This is really the first time that the VDF has joined in on this partnership and very important mission," said Dr. Silver. "It has been a pleasure and an honor being an integral part of the overall leadership team. As a volunteer physician, I see no better way to give back to the community."

The all-volunteer VDF provided medical briefings from its doctors and had some support personnel available including translators and emergency operation specialist. The National Guard (both Army and Air) gave briefings from medical providers, medical and dental, as well as on many other related topics. "One of the many highlights of the weeklong event for me, was the cultural exchange that took place in the evenings where we were all in civilian clothing," Dr. Silver said. "This is where friendships were initiated and strengthened throughout the week. I really look forward to the next exchange with the State Partnership program." *continued on Page 3 "Medical Delegation"*

The Virginia Defense Force prepares across Southwest Virginia

By Brig. Gen. John C. Eberhardt

Over two weekends in April, three Battalions of the Highland Brigade as well as the Brigade Headquarters acted in support of local events in their areas of operations to hone their skills and expand their presence.

From April 23rd through April 25th the Brigade Headquarters supported civilian authorities during Radford Universities annual Quadfest. Operating out of the Radford armory were The Virginia State Police, the Red Cross and the VDF. All were acting in support of the Radford City Police. The Brigade used this time to train with the Red Cross in shelter management as well specific VDF training programs.

Concurrently, the 24th Battalion of the Highland Brigade conducted training at the Lynchburg armory. Classroom training was initially conducted in preparation for State Active Duty. The training included command post operations, less than lethal security, drill & ceremonies, knot tying, and communications. The Virginia Game and Inland Fisheries provided a six hour classroom and field exercise on Saturday, April 24th in Wilderness Survival Training. Also, on Saturday a land navigation course was conducted at the Regional Emergency Services Training Center. Security training was conducted on a 24 hour basis during the weekend.

The 34th Battalion trained a Gates City over the same weekend. Classes were provided in first aid, leadership, drill and ceremonies, and communications. During the weekend, memorial service was conducted for the friends and family of SSG William G Stokes who recently passed away. A Change of Command Ceremony was conducted appointing Maj. Michael B. Hickman as acting Commander to replace the retiring Lt. Col. William B. Cole. Lt. Col. Cole was presented with the Distinguished Service Medal.

During the prior weekend, from April 16th to April 18th, the 31st Battalion trained at Smith Mountain Lake in support of

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the Bassmasters Elite Tournament. The Battalion provided security, crowd control, and ceremonial support. The daily posting of the Colors was broadcast on National TV via ESPN. The Division's Riverine Detachment also supported this event. Franklin County provided the Battalion with a houseboat that was used for billeting, messing, and as the local Headquarters. In addition to the support operation, the Battalion conducted training in search and rescue operations utilizing the Riverine boat as transportation. This was a successful training event that was well received by the community, unit members and resulted in an enlistment for the Battalion during the weekend.

Installations open facilities

A unique opportunity came about with the Maryland National Guard 128th Base Support Battalion which was also conducting exercises at Fort AP Hill. Food service operations for both groups were operated out of the same facility; which allowed for an exchange of operational methods and joint training. Warrant Officer 1 Randy Screen was the acting Division Food Service Offer for the VDF. Cpl. Marvin Pitts, the Food Service NCO, stated the VDF used this opportunity to "evaluate the Maryland National Guard personnel allocation, teamwork and communication methods to apply to VDF operations for improved efficiency and time management."



Food Service Operations soldiers of the Virginia Defense Force, G-4, and Maryland National Guard 128th BSB at Fort A P Hill

The spring field training exercises, across the Division units, provided a focused opportunity to build the skills necessary to support the VDF mission having prepared personnel to support emergency operations.

The Virginia Defense Force is in full blossom

2nd Lt. Henry C. Howells

Virginia Defense Force Public Affairs

WINCHESTER, Va.--How does a city with a tenfold increase in population over a two day period accommodate the infusion of people? The Virginia Defense Force. On the weekend beginning April 30th, the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival was held in Winchester, Va., a city of 25,000 that experienced attendance approaching 250,000 people. The VDF acted in support of civilian authorities. Using elements of the 13th Battalion, 23rd Battalion and 33rd Battalion of the Black Horse Brigade, the VDF provided a force of approximately 140 personnel.



Lt. Col. Gary W. Butler, Commander of the 33 Bn. and Winchester Police Capt. Douglas Watson review operations at the EOC (Photo by 2nd Lt. Henry C. Howells)

The VDF's mission for the event was traffic control, crowd control, support of emergency operations and communication. They functioned from the emergency operation center (EOC) in the Timbrook Public Safety Center with police, firefighters, public works, and search and rescue. The VDF also maintained a mobile command center just outside the parade route.

The Virginia Defense force has been acting in support of the Apple Blossom Festival for well over a decade and has dealt with a range of situations including last year's train derailment. The opportunities to support civilian authorities during these situations are a primary mission of the VDF.

Sgt. Steven Conway, of Herndon Va., and platoon leader for the composite force, was tasked with providing manning for the blockades around the parade route. He stated that generally, "the operation was running smoothly for what can sometimes be a very chaotic situation."

Sgt. Steven Conway and Sgt. Sharon Blachetor work the situation board at the staging area (Photo by 2nd Lt. Henry C. Howells)



The Apple Blossom Festival uses a combination of experienced and new VDF personnel. It serves to integrate command, medical, communication, logistics and other units in a mission that is critical to the smooth operation of the largest annual event in Winchester. The Apple Blossom Festival is another example of the volunteer effort of the VDF and its credo...*Virginians helping Virginians.*

Medical Delegation

Virginia and Tajikistan, an Asian country directly above Afghanistan and about the size of Wisconsin, have partnered since 2003. "The medical exchanges especially are seen as the language of friendship," said LTC Scarbrough.

"Many of their facilities are in remote areas," LTC Mahoney said. "It means a lot to the Tajikis that we are willing to teach them medical techniques as well as 'buddy care' for critical situations out in the field."

Special thanks to the administrators and staff of Bon Secours Saint Francis Medical Center and Sheltering Arms Rehabilitation Center for the kindness and hospitality shown to our special guests and the Virginia Department of Military Affairs in support of this cultural exchange.--Dr. Timothy Silver