

Largest single unit mobilization since World War II

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Freedom Salute honors Task Force 183 service in Iraq

Approximately 825 Soldiers assigned to the Virginia Army National Guard's Task Force 183 gathered at the Virginia Beach Convention Center April 15 to conduct a Freedom Salute in honor of their service in Iraq. The Soldiers officially began federal active duty June 1, 2011, and they served in Iraq from August to December 2011.

Task Force 183 was organized specifically for this mission of providing convoy security in Iraq and was the largest single unit Virginia Army National Guard mobilization since World War II. The Soldiers mobilized under the command of the Portsmouth-based 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry Regiment with units in Norfolk, Suffolk and Virginia Beach as well as units in Fredericksburg and Christiansburg joining them for the mobilization.

Secretary of Public Safety Marla Graff Decker joined Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia, in recognizing the Soldiers and their families for their service.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/04/15/915/>



Secretary of Public Safety Marla Graff Decker presents a certificate of recognition signed by Gov. Bob McDonnell to Lt. Col. William Korsen, commander of Task Force 183, during the Freedom Salute held April 15 in Virginia Beach.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Chemical Company gains proficiency on new detection equipment

The Rocky Mount-based 229th Chemical Company, 276th Engineer Battalion sent a platoon to the Biological Identification/Detection System New Equipment Training at Fort McClellan, Ala., March 5-21 to become proficient in operating the joint biological point detection system, or JBPDS.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/04/14/936/>

Va. Guard hosts Community Leadership Conference in Leesburg

Community leaders from Leesburg and Loudon County learned more about the capabilities of the Virginia National Guard during the first-ever Community Leadership Conference held April 12 in Leesburg.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/04/14/942/>

116th Brigade Special Troops Battalion conducts combined arms exercise

The 116th Brigade Special Troops Battalion conducted a combined arms exercise April 13-15 at Fort A.P. Hill. In a simulated forward operating base, the battalion's companies worked seamlessly together to exercise their Army warrior skills and military occupational specialties.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/04/16/961/>

Virginia Guard hones less-than-lethal training skills

Soldiers from the Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment conducted training in less-than-lethal operations April 13-15 at Fort Pickett to increase their proficiency in supporting civil authorities in a time of crisis.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/04/15/930/>

Mark Your Calendars!

April 27: Fort Pickett Earth Day

Fort Pickett will host its annual Earth Day observation from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Building 1702 on East Parade Street on Fort Pickett. For more information, call 434-292-2606 or 434-292-8503.

May 5: 329th RSG Change of Command

Col. Michelle M. Rose will assume command of the Virginia Beach-based 329th Regional Support Group from Col. Timothy P. Williams in a change of command ceremony on the parade field of the State Military Reservation at 1 p.m. Please contact Maj. Matthew Lutz at 757-961-6509 or matthew.lutz@us.army.mil for more information or to RSVP if you plan to attend.

New commander takes charge of Fort Pickett

Lt. Col. William L. Korsen took command of the Virginia National Guard Maneuver Training Center Fort Pickett from Col. Thomas P. Wilkinson April 14 during a change of command ceremony held at the Post Stadium. Brig. Gen. William R. Phillips, II, the Virginia National Guard land component commander, presided over the organizational colors exchange that began and ended with Fort Pickett Command Sgt. Maj. Michael "Doc" McGhee signifying the transfer of command from Wilkinson to Korsen.

Phillips recounted the many accomplishments by the MTC staff during Wilkinson's tenure as commander. Under his leadership, the installation underwent millions of dollars in facilities improvements including new buildings to improve Soldier care and state-of-the-art ranges to improve on Fort Pickett's already impressive array of training venues. Phillips also commended Wilkinson and his wife Pat for their commitment to community involvement and morale, welfare and recreation events.

"It has been a great honor and privilege for me to be the 48th commander of Fort Pickett," Wilkinson said. He thanked his leaders and team members for their support during his three and half years of command where the installation amassed more than three million man days of training, third in the nation behind mobilization centers Camp Shelby and Camp Atterbury. He also gave particular thanks to McGhee for his mentorship and friendship, and to his wife and three daughters for their unwavering support as he referred to them as the "real builders of my success."

In addition to the training accomplishments, Wilkinson also recalled the effort made during his time in command to recall the history and traditions of Fort Pickett. He led the efforts to rededicate Mullins Corner and the Peregory Training Complex, as well as to dedicate the post chapel in memory of Chaplain Thomas Bulla and to establish the site for the proposed Virginia National Guard museum.

Wilkinson was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal and the Virginia Legion of Merit as part of the ceremony.

After the organizational colors exchange, Wilkinson presented



Lt. Col. William L. Korsen receives the organizational for Fort Pickett from Brig. Gen. William R. Phillips, II, signifying his assumption of command from Col. Thomas P. Wilkinson April 14 during a change of command ceremony.

Korsen with the new Maneuver Training Center shoulder sleeve insignia. Soldiers from the Fort Pickett MTC designed the insignia, and Soldiers serving in National Guard training centers across the country will soon wear the patch.

Phillips told the Soldiers of the MTC that they would be in good hands as the command of the post changed hands. "As the staff passes from Col. Wilkinson to Lt. Col. Korsen, I am confident that the Maneuver Training Center's proud heritage, superb record and dedicated service to our nation will continue unabated into the future," he said.

Read more: <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/04/16/950/>

MORE ON THE WEB

Video: TF 183 conducts Freedom Salute for service in Iraq

<https://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=10100541014769116>

Photos: MPs conduct check points on Fort Pickett

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157629473653390/>

Youth Programs trains teens on "Safe Social Networking"

<https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2012/04/13/976/>

Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

<http://www.yellowribbon.mil/>

Virginia Secretary of Public Safety

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

Army Earth Day

<http://aec.army.mil/usaec/newsroom/earthday00.html>

Virginia National Guard on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/vanguardpao>

Virginia Guard Public Affairs Flickr Photostream

<http://flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao>

Virginia Guard Public Affairs YouTube Channel

<http://www.youtube.com/vanguardpao>



Brig. Gen. William R. Phillips, II, presents Col. Thomas P. Wilkinson with the Meritorious Service Medal and the Virginia Legion of Merit during the change of command ceremony.