

## Rep. Comstock visits Winchester STARBASE Academy

Rep. Barbara Comstock visited fifth-graders from Indian Hollow Elementary School taking part in activities at the STARBASE Academy Jan. 30, 2015, at the Virginia National Guard's Cherry-Beasley Readiness Center in Winchester, Va. Hands-on activities included completing an electrical circuit and programming robots.

Science and Technology Academies Reinforcing Basic Aviation and Space Exploration, or STARBASE, is a Department of Defense educational program, where students participate in challenging activities in science, technology, engineering and math. Students are immersed in a unique classroom experience for five days where all activities are student-centered, hands-on, encourage higher order thinking and incorporate STEM applications in the real world.

"We know these are the jobs of the future, and STEM education is essential to a 21st century economy," Comstock said.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/01/30/6769/>



Rep. Barbara Comstock visits fifth graders at the Winchester STARBASE Academy Jan. 30, 2015, at the Virginia National Guard's Cherry-Beasley Readiness Center.

### Virginia National Guard News Headlines

#### 183rd RTI trains transporters

At the Fort Pickett-based 183rd Regiment, Regional Training Institute, National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers learned basic and advanced motor transport skills during the 88M Motor Transport Operator course, taught in two, two-week phases Jan. 10-Feb. 7, 2015.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/02/10/6829/>

#### Combat medics sharpen skills during refresher course

Thirteen Virginia Army National Guard combat medics completed a four-day medical skills refresher course hosted by the Virginia Army National Guard's Medical Command Feb. 6, 2015, at Fort Pickett, Va. The four-day course provided combat medics with mandatory continuing medical education.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/02/10/6837/>

#### Personal financial counseling available to Va. Guard members through April

Personal financial counselors are available to assist Virginia National Guard Airmen, Soldiers and family members with free, confidential, personal financial counseling until April 13. The PFCs are located in Sandston, Charlottesville, Fredericksburg and Norfolk.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/02/09/6822/>

#### 116th IBCT conducts communications exercise

Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the Staunton-based 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team conducted a communications exercise Feb. 8, 2015, at locations across the state. The exercise took place in advance of the brigade-level Multi-echelon Integrated Brigade Training Exercise, or MIBT, scheduled for June.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/02/11/6862/>

### Mark Your Calendars!

#### Virginia Guard License Plate Renewal

As mandated by the DMV, 2015 is a National Guard license plate reissue year for all officers, chief warrant officers and senior NCOs. License plates numbered 1-1500 will expire March 31, 2015. To meet the expiration deadline, all applications must be turn in to unit POCs by Feb. 20, 2015.

The 1-1500 series license plates will be reassigned by the Va. Guard headquarters according to date of rank. Applicants should place their rank and date of rank on the right-hand corner of the DMV 10 form and their preference of plate number 1-100 or 101-1500 on the upper left-hand corner.

Personnel should not go online or visit a DMV office to renew 1-1500 license plates. For questions, please contact Shirley Cooper at 804-236-7879 or by email at [shirley.l.cooper.nfg@mail.mil](mailto:shirley.l.cooper.nfg@mail.mil).

# Fort Pickett offers engineer project opportunities

Constant dust and noise coming from the Fort Pickett Maneuver Training Center are not just “loud booms” from canon fire, but sounds of progress. Construction contractors, employees and military engineers have built and renovated 53 buildings, roads and training areas throughout the 42,000-acre facility. Crews have demolished outdated or unneeded existing structures, renovated 1940s era barracks, upgraded and refurbished dining facilities and built advanced environmental controls over the past year. The Fort Pickett Directorate of Public Works aims to identify, evaluate, design, bid and award construction contracts, totaling over 75 projects during 2014 valued at more than \$2 million. As the needs for fiscal efficiency increased, DPW looked for alternative measures to reduce costs.

“The best place to look was staring at us every morning in the mirror—the military. The military has thousands of engineers with the required skill sets to do all sorts of construction,” said Lt. Col. Chrystor Atkinson, director of public works for the Fort Pickett Maneuver Training Center.

Capt. Michael Schaeffer, deputy director of public works, and Atkinson began pulling project ideas after talking with the garrison command and tenant organizations. Then they loaded projects into the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer Reachback Engineer Data Integration portal, becoming the first Army National Guard MTC to use the system. The system provides a common database, a robust user interface and fully integrated mapping tools for receiving, managing, tracking and archiving all data and engineering reachback support conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The REDI portal allows users to submit information requests, receive updates and track the status of requests.

The DPW team started identifying and building projects in November 2014 and now upload new projects every week.

Atkinson explained that it's a three-step process. First they look at their day-to-day operations, identifying appropriate projects. Then, they conduct environment and real property management review to assess the environmental impact of each project. Lastly, the project is uploaded and published to the website where coordination with units can begin.

“Within the Army's engineer regiment, there exists two thoughts of engineer training; one that focuses solely on training, missions and deployments, the other which focuses around facilities engineering and civil works,” explained Atkinson. “I think we can merge these two things.”

“We have roads that need to be graded or re-crowned, culverts that need to be installed, electrical and plumbing retrofitting, pretty much everything that a military engineer is trained to do, we have a project to match,” Atkinson said. “What's even better, is that the website allows us to upload a very generic scope of work for each project, which allows us to custom tailor each project to meet the training needs of the supporting unit.”

Beginning next year, Atkinson plans to load projects at Camp Pendleton, Collective Training Center, Virginia Beach, Va., onto the REDI system, so that units can complete a variety of projects



**Virginia Guard engineers prepare to install culverts June 25, 2013, at Fort Pickett, Va. The engineers worked to improve roads and install new culverts along Fort Pickett's roadways.**

in a different environment.

“We realize that from our seat, that there is a ‘cost of doing business,’” Atkinson said. “We have got to provide the [Bill Of Materials], maybe additional fuel to get the mission done or something like that. Let's say we have a haul mission and there's a unit out there that trains to do haul missions—they can do this stuff for us, we get to maximize our limited resources and they get some really good, hands-on training. It's a win-win.”

Five units have already downloaded and accepted projects at Fort Pickett using the REDI system.

“I look at it as one nail driven, is one nail less that we don't have to drive,” Atkinson said.

Read more: <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/01/27/6743/>

## MORE ON THE WEB

### 192nd FW welcomes new Command Chief Master Sergeant

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/02/11/6860/>

### 192nd FW hosts 3rd annual awards banquet

<http://vanguard.dodlive.mil/2015/02/11/6858/>

### Photos: AG, SEA view field artillery crew certification

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/72157650650058606/>

### Photos: 429th BSB conducts weapons range, CLS training

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/sets/7215764838535513/>

### 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Facebook Page

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



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