



**The Virginia  
Defense Force**

# Bugler



**DECEMBER 2014**

## **MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL:**



I borrow a quote from Robert Kennedy, "...few will have the greatness to bend history, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. And in the total of all those acts will be written the history of a generation..." And so it is with us, the members of the Virginia Defense Force and a component of the organized militia of Virginia. Colonel Mroczkowski's presentation at the September MUTA portrayed our rich history in service of the citizens of the Commonwealth. The Virginia Militia has evolved over these many years, becoming the VDF of today. Now we must be ever vigilant to position the VDF for continued greatness and new achievements. From the newest member to the most seasoned officer and NCO, every soldier must be alert for new opportunities. An organization that does not evolve is surely destined for obso-

lescence. History and business are replete with examples of organizations that failed to adapt to change or to seek opportunities for continued growth. With the guidance of the new Adjutant General and a well-defined mission set, we have renewed opportunities to hone our skills in a benign environment for that day when we will be called to serve yet again. Outside of natural events, one has to just look at the news to see the possible threats that face our Nation and Commonwealth. If you are in a leadership position, then lead. If not in a leadership position, then give your very best in service to our fellow citizens, for you are the greatest representative of the VDF. I am honored to count myself as one of you and to serve as your Commanding General. We are "Virginians helping Virginians."

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## Virginia Defense Force Welcomes New Commander

By Mr. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs



Brig. Gen. (Va.) Justin P. Carlitti, Sr., takes command of the Virginia Defense Force from Maj. Gen. (Va.) John Taylor in a ceremony Sept. 28, 2014, at Fort Pickett. Va. Brig. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, conducted the exchange of unit colors that signified the transfer of command. (Photo by Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs)

FORT PICKETT, Va. — Brig. Gen. (Va.) Justin P. Carlitti, Sr., took command of the Virginia Defense Force from Maj. Gen. (Va.) John Taylor in a ceremony Sept. 28, 2014, at Fort Pickett. Va. Brig. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, conducted the exchange of unit colors that signified the transfer of command. Carlitti was promoted Sept. 27 and previously served as the chief of staff for the VDF. Taylor is retiring after leading the VDF for eight years and serving in the Virginia National Guard for more than 33 years.

“I appreciate each and every one of you for what you have done while I have been the commanding general,” Taylor told the members of the VDF gathered for the ceremony. He commended them for increasing the number of assigned missions they perform for the Virginia Department of Military Affairs, as well as for the increased standards, professionalism, diversity and overall quality of the force. *Con’t on next page*



**Make a Difference**



### *VDF Welcomes New Commander, con't*

"This month in the 30th anniversary of the Virginia Defense Force, and I feel very honored to be a member," Carlitti said. "There is no truer calling than what these men and women do here today, and that is protecting and serving their fellow citizens of the commonwealth of Virginia. Be proud of yourselves and the history of service of those who proceeded you."

Carlitti also stressed the importance of having the support of families and how the members of the VDF would not be able to do their jobs without that support.

Taylor served for more than 33 years in the Virginia National Guard and retired as a colonel. He took command of the VDF in August 2006. While serving as the commander of the Virginia Defense Force, he worked full time providing contract support at National Guard Bureau conducting strategic analysis and management studies on homeland security, consequence management, homeland defense, civil support operations and reserve component force integration and modernization.

"We wish Maj. Gen. Taylor the best in his retirement and thank him for his decades of service to Virginia and our nation," Williams said. "During his time in command of the VDF, he brought much needed focus to the organization's mission capabilities, promoted the volunteer spirit vital to the organization's success and greatly increased the VDF's role in DMA's overall response plan." Carlitti, a native of Syracuse, New York, attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York with a Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps scholarship. Upon graduation in 1982 with a Bachelors of Science degree in electrical engineering, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. He was designated as a communications officer upon completion of the

Basic School and the Basic Communication Officers Course in Quantico, Va.

"Brig. Gen. Carlitti's wealth of military and civilian experience make him the ideal candidate to lead the Virginia Defense Force and build on the dramatic improvements made to that organization under Maj. Gen. Taylor," Williams said. "He knows the organization well, and I am confident he will maintain the same high levels of readiness and continue to make sure the VDF continues to be an integral part of the Virginia Department of Military Affairs response capabilities."

The VDF is an all-volunteer force authorized by the Code of Virginia and organized under the Virginia Department of Military Affairs reporting to the Adjutant General of Virginia. The members of the VDF volunteer their time for training and are only paid when called to state active duty by an authorization from the Governor of Virginia. Members of the VDF bring a wealth of skills from their civilian careers with many members having military, law enforcement, fire service or telecommunications backgrounds.

During domestic operations, the VDF deploys different response teams that provide a variety of functions including communications support with Incident Management Assistance Teams, High Frequency Radio Teams, State Agency Radio System Teams and Mobile Communication Platform Teams. Other VDF missions include providing augmentation teams to the Virginia Guard Joint Operations Center and Virginia Emergency Operations Center as well as resources for chaplain support and access control.

Carlitti served on active duty until 1991 when he joined the Marine Corps Reserve and accepted a civil service position with the Department of the Army in Washington, D. C.

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## VDF Welcomes New Commander con't



**Three Generals: TAG, Brigadier General Timothy P. Williams, retiring VDF Commander Major General John D. Taylor and incoming VDF commander, Brigadier General Justin P. Carlitti**

*Photo courtesy of Mr. Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs*

Through his career as a Marine reservist, he served in multiple assignments including a mobilization in 2003 in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom serving as an operations officer and deputy communications officer for II Marine Expeditionary Force Augmentation Command Element based on Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Upon demobilization, he assumed command of the Marine Wing Communications Squadron-48, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing based in Chicago, Ill. While in command, he deployed detachments to Iraq and supported recovery operations in response to Hurricane Katrina. In 2006, Carlitti assumed command of a Joint Military Reserve Intelligence Group, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, DC.

Upon retiring from the Marine Corps in 2009, Carlitti joined the Virginia Defense Force serving as its VDF communications officer, operations and training officer and chief of staff.

Carlitti is a senior civilian with the Department of the Army where he is serving in a joint duty assignment.

Carlitti is a 1996 graduate of the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, a 2003 graduate of the U. S. Army War College earning a masters degree in strategic studies, and a 2009 graduate of the Joint Forces Staff College Advanced Joint professional military education course. He has completed FEMA's Professional Development Series, its Community Emergency Response Team course, and holds a Military Emergency Management Specialist designation. Carlitti is also licensed by the FCC as an amateur extra class radio operator and is a trained adult Boy Scout leader.





## EXERCISE FORWARD GUARDIAN 2014



The Virginia Defense Force conducted a "first ever" exercise of its total communications capabilities on Saturday, 8 November. Across the state, all four regiments and their subordinate MRGs participated in Exercise Forward Guardian 2014, a two-phased operation designed to test the Force's communications equipment and the abilities of the Force's individual soldiers and response teams.

Brigadier General Justin Carlitti noted in his guidance for the exercise that it was to provide a "benign environment" in which the true capabilities of the Force to respond to a state emergency could be tested and fully evaluated.

The day began with a commex at 0800, with the various communications platforms coming on-line and connecting with each other. Mobile Command Posts, TACPAKs, HF radios and the Statewide Agency Radio System (STARS) all took part. Shortly after noon the second phase of the exercise began, with the regiments deploying teams to various stations. While these deployments were only "constructive," they did allow the units to go through all the procedures necessary to bring a team onto State Active Duty (SAD), have it report to the Joint Operations Center for attachment, perform its work, and then be released and report back to its parent regiment.

*Con't on p3*





### *Exercise Forward Guardian, continued:*

The exercise was controlled from the Joint Operations Center at Mullins Armory, by Colonel Gary Butler, the G-3 and Lieutenant Colonel Bentley, the G-7. There were also evaluators who were stationed with the regiments and many of the MRGs. These evaluators worked from standard task steps and performance measures to ensure uniformity in grading the work of the units. Overall the exercise was very successful in its goal of appraising the VDF's readiness. While there were some issues regarding equipment readiness, personnel who took part were well-trained and capable for their tasks. At all levels, commanders gained an appreciation for the intricacy and need for timeliness in the administrative and personnel functions of bringing a team onto SAD and deploying them. Several officers and SNCOs commented on the value of the exercise in focusing them to the importance of command and control at all levels. Lessons from this exercise will be used to identify weaknesses in our readiness, training and capabilities and help us to be even more prepared for a real emergency striking our Commonwealth.





## WINTER STORMS & EXTREME COLD: ARE YOU PREPARED?

While the danger from winter weather varies across the country, nearly all Americans, regardless of where they live, are likely to face some type of severe winter weather at some point in their lives. Winter storms can range from a moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind-driven snow that lasts for several days. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and sometimes by strong winds, icing, sleet and freezing rain.

One of the primary concerns is the winter weather's ability to knock out heat, power and communications services to your home or office, sometimes for days at a time. Heavy snowfall and extreme cold can immobilize an entire region.

The National Weather Service refers to winter storms as the “Deceptive Killers” because most deaths are indirectly related to the storm. Instead, people die in traffic accidents on icy roads and of hypothermia from prolonged exposure to cold. It is important to be prepared for winter weather before it strikes.



Winter storms can range from a moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind driven snow that lasts for several days. Some winter storms are large enough to affect several states, while others affect only a single community. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and sometimes by strong winds, icing, sleet and freezing rain.\*



*To prepare for a winter storm you should do the following:*

Before winter approaches, add the following supplies to your emergency kit:

Rock salt or more environmentally safe products to melt ice on walkways. Visit the Environmental Protection Agency for a complete list of recommended products.

Sand to improve traction.

Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.

Sufficient heating fuel. You may become isolated in your home and regular fuel sources may be cut off. Store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for your fireplace or wood-burning stove.

Adequate clothing and blankets to keep you warm.

Make a Family Communications Plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency.

A NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts alerts and warnings directly from the NWS for all hazards. You may also sign up in advance to receive notifications from your local emergency services.

Download FEMA's Be Smart. Know Your Alerts and Warnings for a summary of notifications at: [www.ready.gov/prepare](http://www.ready.gov/prepare). Free smart phone apps, such as those available from FEMA and the American Red Cross, provide information about finding shelters, providing first aid, and seeking assistance for recovery.

Minimize travel. If travel is necessary, keep a disaster supplies kit in your vehicle.

Bring pets/companion animals inside during winter weather. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas with non-frozen drinking water.

*Information courtesy of FEMA and the Red Cross*

### **Winter Storm Outlook**

Winter storm conditions are possible in the next 2 to 5 days.

### **Winter Storm Watch**

Winter storm conditions are possible within the next 36 to 48 hours. People in a watch area should review their winter storm plans and stay informed about weather conditions.

## **WINTER STORMS:**

## **KNOW THE DIFFERENCE!!**

### **Winter Weather Advisory**

Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. When caution is used, these situations should not be life threatening.

### **Winter Storm Warning**

Life-threatening, severe winter conditions have begun or will begin within 24 hours. People in a warning area should take precautions immediately



## ***Virginia Defense Force Personnel Participate in a Simulated Emergency Test (SET)***

*Article Courtesy of the Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office*

Two communications personnel from the Virginia Defense Force volunteered to put their radio communication skills to the test on a chilly Saturday. On 4 October 2014, CPT Randy Lilly and CPL Taylor Seigler took their private communications trailer up on Big Walker Mountain in Wythe County, Virginia to take part in the annual Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)/Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) simulated emergency test (SET). From their lofty vantage point, they operated as regional net control for three linked Very High Frequency (VHF) radio repeaters providing coverage from Marion to Roanoke and as far south as Boonville, NC.

The statewide event was a test of the preparedness of local amateur radio operators or “hams” and the Emergency Communication (EmComm) Association interacting with local governmental agencies, hospitals, the National Weather Service, the Virginia Department of Health, local Red Cross chapters, and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. The scenario was that of a large hurricane named “Echo” striking the eastern Atlantic coastal area with locally severe flooding as far inland as southwest Virginia. The radio traffic consisted of weather reports, requests for assistance, logistical support for shelters, and staffing reports. Over 200 pieces of radio traffic were routed through the two VDF participants. Most of this traffic was handled digitally by VHF and High Frequency (HF) packet radio. The emphasis was on utilizing the ICS formats for requesting and reporting information.

The two VDF soldiers are not only members of the VDF’s communications cadre, but also belong to RACES and the new Virginia EmComm Association. CPT Lilly has been a general class ham since 1979 and CPL Seigler just passed his general test in June of this year.



**CPL Taylor Seigler inside the communications truck.**



# DRILL CALENDAR 2015

10 JAN

7 FEB

7 MAR

*28-29 MAR: TRAINING MUTA/COMMEX/EDRE @ FORT PICKETT & POSSIBLY DISPERSED SITE OPS*

*2 MAY: CONTINGENT ON FORHQs ABF PARTICIPATION*

6 JUN

11 JUL

8 AUG

12 SEP

*3 OCT: TRAINING MUTA/COMMEX/EDRE @ FORT PICKETT. VDF FTX SCENARIO DEPENDENT*

7 NOV

5 DEC