



Photo courtesy Virginia Air National Guard Public Affairs Office

The 203rd RED HORSE Squadron members and guests conducted a groundbreaking ceremony for the unit's new Troop Training Quarters building under sunny skies on Dec. 17. Taking part in the ceremony with 203rd Commander Lt. Col. Paul Julian (far left) are (left to right) ARC Design President Ahmed Hassan, 81st District Delegate Terrie Suit, City of Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera Oberndorf, TESORO Corporation President Dennis Gilbert, and Col. Johnny Haikey, Chief Executive Officer for the Virginia Air National Guard.

Air Guard breaks ground on new building

By Maj. Debbie Magaldi
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The 203rd RED HORSE Squadron broke ground in December on a new Troop Training Quarters building. The ceremony -- attended by local and state dignitaries, presidents of the companies contracted to design and build the facility, and Virginia National Guard leaders and members -- took place at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach on Dec. 17.

In his remarks before the actual groundbreaking, 203rd Commander Lt. Col. Paul Julian extended a sincere thank you to everyone who had worked so diligently in securing the \$2.4 million in Congressional funding for this project. "We will now see your efforts come to fruition," he said. "With the 203rd's extended lease of this site, the new Troop Training and Quarters building will provide additional

classroom training space and modern billeting facilities for our HORSEMEN and other joint service users. As a civil engineer and land surveyor by trade, it is exciting to witness a project go from paper to reality."

He then invited the special guests to accompany him into the area where the new facility will be built. For the groundbreaking, Colonel Julian accompanied by 81st District Delegate Terrie Suit; Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera Oberndorf; Col. Johnny Haikey, Chief Executive Officer for the Virginia Air National Guard; Ahmed Hassan, ARC Design Group president; and Dennis Gilbert, TESORO Corporation president, put shovel to dirt to commemorate the beginning of the project.

The 16,000 square foot facility designed by ARC Design Group will provide approximately 1,100 square feet of classroom space and 34 billeting rooms.

The billeting rooms will include 16 single, 16 doubles and two VIP rooms. The design of the new facility will compliment the other 203rd facilities located on the State Military Reservation.

The new building will enhance unit training by providing additional classroom and computer access, according to Colonel Julian. "This will provide an ideal environment for readily training and supervising unit members for their military job specialties as well as wartime training," he said. An additional benefit for out-of-town HORSEMEN will be the billeting facilities within the building. "It will offer our personnel a 'sense of home' here at the 203rd and give the unit 'beddown' capabilities during mobilizations," the commander added.

TESORO Corporation will build the facility and anticipates the project will be completed on or before October 2005.