

203rd RED HORSE honors 20th anniversary of fatal crash

Airmen from the 192nd Wing's 203rd Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers (RED HORSE) came together March 3, 2021, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of what's known as the worst peacetime aviation disaster in National Guard history and the worst loss of life in the Virginia National Guard since World War II.

Family members, friends and former members of the 203rd RED HORSE also attended to gather around a dedicated memorial site for the 18 Virginia Air National Guard engineers and three Florida National Guard aviators who were killed when their plane crashed near Unadilla, Georgia, on March 3, 2001.

This is the first memorial ceremony the 203rd RED HORSE has hosted since 2016 — past ceremonies were held annually. In keeping with tradition, Col. Stock Dinsmore, 192nd Mission Support Group commander, officiated the event as he had in years past. Dinsmore was a member of the 203rd RED HORSE for more than 21 years and served more than four years as the squadron's commander.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xspQb>



Airmen, family, friends and former members of the 203rd Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers gather for a memorial ceremony March 3, 2021, in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Virginia Air National Guard recognizes its state, national-level winners

Leaders from the Virginia Air National Guard recognized the organization's top performers of the year during an annual awards ceremony Feb. 20, 2021.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xspQn>

Facility Management Office recognized with award from NGB

The Virginia Army National Guard Construction and Facility Management Office recently received both the regional and national Fred Aron Award for Excellence in Facilities Programs for Fiscal Year 20 from the National Guard Bureau.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xspQm>

DMA's first mentorship program marks success with graduation

After a year of overcoming challenges in order to learn from each other, the Virginia Department of Military Affairs' first-ever mentorship program class of mentors and mentees graduated during a ceremony Feb. 25, 2021, at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xspQQ>

Chaplains, NCOs provided valuable support to D.C. mission

When Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen headed to Washington, D.C., in January 2021, chaplains and religious affairs specialists were right alongside them to provide support and assistance.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xspQp>

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New VNG task force will help support vaccine clinics

Approximately 250 Virginia National Guard Soldiers from across the state are supporting the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the Virginia Department of Health at COVID-19 community vaccination sites across Virginia. Starting March 1, 2021, the task force began a two-week training period at vaccination sites across the commonwealth. At the end of the training period, the Virginia COVID-19 Unified Command will decide where the task force's Soldiers will be assigned.

The task force will provide logistics and administration support at the sites, where citizens will be administered COVID-19 vaccines in accordance to the commonwealth's vaccine distribution policy. Task force personnel are not currently tasked to administer vaccinations but will provide support to help the sites operate.

The Virginia Beach-based 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group is the mission command headquarters for vaccination site support. The Soldiers assigned to the task force, from the 529th and other units across the state, are on a Title 32 federal orders status. They will provide a variety of wrap-around support at the clinics where they are assigned, including traffic management, sign-in and registration support, data entry and site logistics.

Lt. Col. Juanita Rohler, task force commander, said the opportunity to help during the pandemic is a big deal.

"It's phenomenal. If you walk around and talk to any of the Soldiers, they'll tell you they wanted to be on this mission because they wanted to help," said Rohler. "It's our support to the local community to get vaccinations in arms so we can get through this pandemic. We're excited to help."

Rohler also said she's confident in her Soldiers to rise to this new challenge and meet it head-on.

"They have completed VDH training as well as seamlessly integrated into on-site, on-the-job training," said Rohler. "From day one, they have been working long hours with steadfast professionalism and I have the utmost confidence and trust in them to perform their duties to the highest standard regardless of situation or environment."

Part of making the state's vaccination efforts successful is the seamless integration of support capabilities like the Guard into existing clinics. Jackson Baynard, the Henrico County chief of emergency management, thanked the Guard and called their support vital to the vaccination sites he oversees, including one of the largest in the state at Richmond Raceway. There, Soldiers are helping direct citizens as they park and make their way inside the clinic site, as well as helping get them registered and assisting with data entry to get vaccination information into a database.

"The Guard being here at the Richmond Raceway allows us to keep our capability of providing 5,000 to 6,000 vaccinations per operational period. Without the Guard, I don't think it would be possible," said Baynard. "We rely on our partners to have the resources here to really make it happen. The best thing about having the Guard here is actually the full integration within our team. It's really one team, one mission, we're all focused together



More than 30 Virginia National Guard Soldiers train on providing administrative and logistics support to a COVID-19 vaccination site March 1, 2021, at Richmond Raceway in Henrico County, Virginia.

as one group to deliver vaccinations."

Rohler spoke highly of the partnerships as well.

"The organization, support and depth of knowledge that reside within VDEM and VDH has been exciting to see and be a part of," she said. "Multiple agencies have come together to support local health districts and their vaccination efforts across the state. The inclusion, integration and execution derived from a holistic approach was accepted by all participating agencies. In the Army we live by the 'one-team, one-fight' adage and it has been very rewarding to see the same mentality in the state vaccination effort as well."

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xspQ5>

MORE ON THE WEB

VNG COVID-19 Vaccination Resource Page

<https://va.ng.mil/COVID-19/Vaccine/>

First female VNG two-star thanks family, NCOs

<https://go.usa.gov/xspQf>

Army Guard recruiter recommits to college commitment

<https://go.usa.gov/xspQG>

229th BEB NCO felt destined for military service

<https://go.usa.gov/xspQ6>

Senior leaders visit Soldiers supporting vaccine clinic

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/albums/72157718575441687>



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