

329th RSG to deploy to Middle East in Fall 2021

The Virginia National Guard's Headquarters, 329th Regional Support Group has received a mobilization order for federal active duty in the Middle East, according to an announcement made April 29, 2021, by Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia. In Fall 2021, more than 80 Soldiers assigned to the 329th will begin a 10-month deployment in the Central Command Area of Operations under the operational control of Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve serving as the base operating support-integrator for multiple installations.

"The 329th is yet another one of the Virginia National Guard's highly trained and specialized units being called upon to demonstrate their superior skills and provide needed capabilities for a federal mission," said Williams. "In addition to the outstanding state-level COVID-19 related support they have provided over the past year, they have been able to seamlessly shift their focus to prepare for their deployment. And while the 329th has been busy, they've remained resilient, and I believe we have their families and employers to thank for supporting their multiple military missions."

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



Col. Todd Pegg, commander of the Virginia National Guard's 329th Regional Support Group, conducts a television interview about the 329th's upcoming deployment April 30, 2021, in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Funeral Honors Program hosts training for active-duty Soldiers

The Virginia National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program hosted basic funeral honors training for 30 U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to the Fort Eustis-based 7th Transportation Brigade April 19-23, 2021, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xHd5V>

Virginia National Guard welcomes nine new officers

The Virginia Army National Guard welcomed nine new lieutenants from winter accelerated Officer Candidate School Class 64A to their ranks in a ceremony held April 25, 2021, at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xHd5s>

Recruiters team up with Habitat for Humanity to "Raise the Roof"

Recruiters assigned to the Virginia Army National Guard's Recruiting and Retention Battalion saw a great opportunity to support the local Habitat for Humanity's "Raise the Roof" event in Newport News, Virginia.

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

VDF Support Operations Group marks first full year of service

For the past year, the Virginia Defense Force's Support Operations Group has seen multiple state active-duty mobilizations and significant developments in the organization's capabilities.

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

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Va. Air Guard maintainers rebuild F-22 Raptor

For the first time in his more than 20 year career, Master Sgt. Christopher Plath held his breath and felt the intense pressure during the take off and landing of F-22 tail #85 on April 9, 2021. As a flight chief in the 192nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Plath stayed quietly in command of his exclusive team of Virginia Air National Guard maintainers, advising them to stay focused even while a crowd of onlookers started to gather on the Langley flight line in hopes of witnessing the end result of what Plath said were long, tireless hours.

"I knew without a doubt that my team was the best possible team I could've had and that we did everything within our power to make that jet better than it was the day before the mishap," Plath said. "But, there's still doubt in the back of your mind 'did we do everything?' 'did we miss something?'"

In the days leading up, the Guardsmen went to great lengths to double, and triple check their work. They consulted with Lockheed Martin engineers, conducted a high-speed taxi to test any rattling or drag on the brake system and even took the jet into the Hush House, a specialized, insulated facility where jet engines are tested at their maximum performance, to induce any possible points of failure.

Since January 2020, "eight-five" had been sitting in a hangar after an incident upon landing caused the fifth-generation Raptor to skid across the runway.

"As soon as it touched down and collapsed, I was in shock," Plath said. "We kind of just stood there staring at it, praying the canopy is going to open up and the pilot is going to get out."

Once they confirmed the pilot was safe, 1st Fighter Wing and 192nd Wing maintainers immediately got to work ordering parts and formulating a plan to get eight-five back into the fight.

VaANG Airmen train and fight side-by-side with active-duty Airmen as part of the total force integration between the 1st FW and 192nd Wing, contributing to the Combat Air Forces' warfighting capabilities. The partnership was established in 2005 and allows the VaANG to share in the support of airpower worldwide, including the maintenance and operation of the F-22 Raptor.

Guard members working in garrison with an active duty unit are also able to provide home-station continuity during Regular Air Force mobilizations and changes in permanent duty stations. Maintainers from the 1st FW were responsible for the jet until they were tasked with a deployment before parts started rolling in. To maintain continuity, Plath was officially appointed "impound official" in December 2020 to oversee the rebuild. After doing his own inspection of the damage and documentation of initial repairs, Plath said he knew he needed to select a crew to ensure they could all remain on the same shift and be dedicated to nothing more than the task at hand.

Before it could take off, tail #85 required a massive overhaul including new landing gear, a new flight control surface on the right wing and a new wing tip.

More than 130 days of collaborating diverse specialties proved



Virginia Air National Guard Airmen assigned to the 192nd Maintenance Group prepare to launch F-22 Raptor tail #85 April 9, 2021, at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia.

successful for the team. But also, Plath added, the crew was able to learn from each other and gain a certain respect for each other's expertise while working together and offering a helping hand or assistance to their teammates when needed.

"I couldn't be prouder of this team of maintainers," said Col. Matthew Hummel, 192nd Maintenance Group commander. "Through their dedication, expertise and hard work, they resurrected aircraft 85, five months ahead of schedule. More importantly, however, they learned from each other and helped each other across normal Air Force Specialty Code boundaries, making them individually and collectively better."

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xHd5Y>

MORE ON THE WEB

VNG COVID-19 Vaccination Resource Page

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

SMP prepares cadets for future training

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

MTC marks Earth Day with tree planting

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

Photos: 34th CERFP trains on establishing mass decon site

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/albums/72157719147028025>

Photos: 34th CST conducts field training exercise

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