

VaANG engineers return from federal active duty

More than 100 Virginia Air National Guard engineers reunited with family, friends and fellow Airmen May 5, 2021, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia, after serving on federal active duty in Southwest Asia since October 2020. Virginia National Guard senior leaders were also on hand to welcome them home. Airmen assigned to the Virginia Beach-based 203rd Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers were responsible for 15 engineer projects in six countries in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

While deployed, the Airmen of the 203rd RED HORSE served under the 557th Expeditionary RED HORSE, as part of the 1st Expeditionary Civil Engineering Group, an organization made of up more than 400 personnel from the 203rd and other RED HORSE and Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force, or PRIME BEEF, units that was a mix of active duty and Air National Guard.

The 1st ECEG was responsible for providing theater engineer support for vertical and horizontal construction missions and projects that enhanced operations, safety and quality of life in the Central Command area of operations.

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



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Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Ceremony celebrates Virginia National Guard's 414th birthday

The Virginia National Guard celebrated its 414th birthday May 14, 2021, at the Sergeant Bob Slaughter Headquarters at Defense Supply Center Richmond, Virginia.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xHum8>

Zana succeeds Flora as Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa commander

Maj. Gen. Lapthe C. Flora, the outgoing Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa commanding general, transferred responsibility to U.S. Army Maj. Gen. William L. Zana during a change of command ceremony May 15, 2021.

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

VNG adapts to changing COVID-19 support missions

The Virginia National Guard continues to support COVID-19 response missions across Virginia with task forces conducting administrative and logistical support to vaccine clinics, and providing mobile vaccine teams to help administer shots in support of local, state and federal agencies.

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

VNG "American Korean" talks career diversity & open-mindedness

Capt. John Choi Hemby calls himself an "American Korean," because, he says, he's an American first. Hemby's mother is Korean and his father, who served 20 years in the U.S. Navy, is white.

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

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29th ID cases colors, begins federal active duty

Virginia and Maryland National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Fort Belvoir-based 29th Infantry Division officially begin federal active duty with a casing of the colors ceremony May 15, 2021, in Bowling Green, Virginia, and they will uncase the colors when they arrive in the Middle East. More than 500 Soldiers of the 29th will conduct a 10-month deployment in the Central Command Area of Operations as Task Force Spartan to provide leadership, command, control and in-depth staff analysis for Operation Spartan Shield.

Maj. Gen. John M. Rhodes and Command Sgt. Maj. Daryl Plude, the 29th Infantry Division command team, cased the colors signifying the official start of the unit's mission.

"The blue and grey patch we proudly wear on our left shoulder has its own story, and today we add another chapter to the history of the 29th," Rhodes said. "The 29th Infantry Division is comprised of proven ready forces, and they are carrying on the traditions of those who went before us. We are proud to represent our nation, our home states and the National Guard."

Governor Ralph Northam and Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia delivered remarks during the ceremony, recognizing the service and sacrifice of the troops as they leave their friends, families and jobs to deploy overseas.

"On behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia and on behalf of the state of Maryland, I just want to let you know how proud we are of all of you," Northam said. He acknowledged what a difficult and challenging year it has been for everyone and thanked the National Guard for their COVID-19 response as well as support civilian law enforcement. He also recognized the important support from families and thanked them for their critical role in the VNG's mission.

"This past year has presented its share of challenge, and everyone here in this formation has proven yourself to be determined, agile and more than up to task for which you are presented today," Williams said. "Your mobilization puts us on a path to mobilize more Soldiers since 2007. The Guard's ability to respond relies on three key elements: our great Soldiers, our great families and our great employers. Each plays a key role in our state and nation's defense. Without all of you, the National Guard could not accomplish our missions at home and abroad."

According to their official web site, Task Force Spartan is a unique, multi-component organization, made up of active Army and National Guard units, rounded out by U.S. Army Reserve support units. Through Operation Spartan Shield, Task Force Spartan maintains a U.S. military posture in Southwest Asia sufficient to strengthen our defense relationships and build partner capacity. Units supporting OSS provide capabilities such as aviation, logistics, force protection and information management, and facilitate theater security cooperation activities such as key leader engagements, joint exercises, conferences, symposia and humanitarian assistance/disaster response planning. Soldiers of the Texas National Guard's 36th Infantry Division currently serve as Task Force Spartan.



Maj. Gen. John M. Rhodes and Command Sgt. Maj. Daryl Plude, the 29th Infantry Division command team, case their colors signifying the official start of the unit's federal active duty mission May 15, 2021, in Bowling Green, Virginia.

Soldiers conducted mobilization training in Maryland and Virginia and now report to Fort Hood, Texas, for the final mobilization training and will deploy from there.

This is the second time in recent years the 29th ID has deployed as Task Force Spartan with Soldiers serving on federal active duty from November 2016 to July 2017. They were the first intermediate division headquarters under U.S. Army Central Command and provided mission command for joint training exercises and military-to-military engagements with partner nations to promote regional stability and theater security cooperation.

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

MORE ON THE WEB

NCO induction ceremony held for aviation battalion

<https://go.usa.gov/xHum6>

VNG Youth Program hosts summer activities

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

VDF Cyber Detachment welcomes new commander

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

Photos: 91st Cyber Brigade welcomes new CSM

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vanguardpao/albums/72157719190324404>

Photos: VNG Soldiers compete in regional Best Warrior

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