

# Virginia National Guard ends COVID-19 response mission

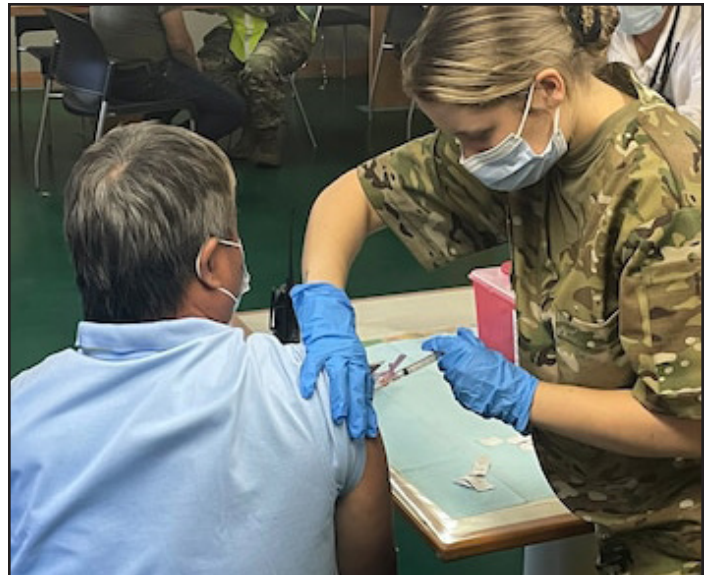
The Virginia National Guard's support to Virginia's COVID-19 response ended July 31, 2021, after more than 460 days of assisting with vaccinations, testing and administrative, logistics and planning support at locations across the state.

"I couldn't be more proud of the tremendous effort from our Soldiers, Airmen, members of the VDF and state and federal civilian workforce in their support to the COVID-19 response," said Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia. "We also can't thank our families and employers enough for everything they have done to make sure our personnel could focus on their missions."

During COVID-19 response operations, nearly 600 VNG Soldiers and Airmen and members of the Virginia Defense Force completed more than 1,100 missions to help keep their fellow Virginians safe during the global pandemic.

"The hundreds of Virginia National Guard members mobilized over the past 16 months to assist with Virginia's efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19 have been critical to fighting the pandemic," said State Health Commissioner Dr. M. Norman Oliver.

Read more: <http://go.usa.gov/xFXgM>



Virginia National Guard Soldiers conduct a mobile vaccination mission on board international ships in Norfolk, Virginia.

## Virginia National Guard News Headlines

### 91st Cyber Brigade participates in Cyber Shield 21

Soldiers assigned to the Fairfax-based 91st Cyber Brigade participated in Cyber Shield 21, the Department of Defense's largest unclassified cyber defense exercise, July 10-23, 2021. VNG's cyber warriors primarily participated in the hybrid in-person and online exercise from the readiness center in Fairfax, Virginia.

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

### 192nd Mission Support Group recognizes new commander

The 192nd Mission Support Group welcomed a new commander during a change of command ceremony July 10, 2021, at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia.

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

### VNG celebrates Unity/Diversity & Inclusion Day

The Virginia National Guard celebrated Unity/Diversity & Inclusion Day July 14, 2021, at the Virginia National Guard Sergeant Bob Slaughter Headquarters at Defense Supply Center Richmond, Virginia.

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

### Lynchburg Army Guard recruiters challenge local lifeguards

Virginia Army National Guard recruiters challenged area lifeguards with the 3rd Annual National Guard Water Sports Challenge, held July 10, 2021, at the Miller Park Pool in Lynchburg, Virginia.

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

## Join the Virginia Army National Guard, Virginia Air National Guard or the Virginia Defense Force

For information about joining the Virginia Army National Guard, the Virginia Air National Guard or Virginia Defense Force, visit the appropriate link below:

### Va. Army National Guard

<http://nationalguard.com/va>

### Va. Air National Guard

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

### Va. Defense Force

<http://vdf.virginia.gov/joinvdf/>

## Join the Virginia Army National Guard Alumni Network

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

# Task Force Red Dragon to mobilize for duty in Africa

The Virginia National Guard's Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team has received a mobilization order to enter federal active duty to provide a security force in support of Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, according to an announcement made July 29, 2021, by Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia. Approximately 1,000 Soldiers will mobilize as Task Force Red Dragon under 1st Battalion's Headquarters with Virginia Army National Guard units from Bedford, Charlottesville, Lexington, Pulaski and Suffolk and a Kentucky Army National Guard unit from Somerset, Kentucky, and they will begin serving on federal active duty late Fall 2021 for approximately 12 months.

The battalion is trained and equipped to accomplish a wide range of missions throughout the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility, but its primary objective is to provide security for the various forward operating bases maintained by the Department of Defense to build partnerships with host nations and improve safety and stability in the region. The task force reports to Maj. Gen. William L. Zana, commander of CJTF-HOA. Zana, a Virginia National Guard Soldier, recently assumed command from Maj. Gen. Lapthe C. Flora, also a Virginia National Guard Soldier.

"Once again the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment are answering our nation's call to deploy overseas, and I am confident they will be very successful in their mission," Williams said. "They are one of our most deployed battalions in the last 20 years, and they carry the rich traditions of the 29th Infantry Division's World War I and World War II service with them today. They are highly-motivated and well-trained Soldiers led by experienced officers and noncommissioned officers, so they are ready to take on the toughest challenges. I also want express our sincere appreciation to their families and employers for their support over the last 18 months and for the road ahead. We can't do our mission without them."

Williams said the Virginia National Guard is on pace to mobilize the most Soldiers and Airmen since 2007, and the 29th Infantry Division will mobilize the most Soldiers since World War II with troops deploying from units in Virginia, Maryland and Kentucky. Approximately 330 Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Fort Belvoir-based 29th Infantry Division are currently on federal active duty and approximately 80 Soldiers assigned to the Virginia Beach-based 329th Regional Support Group are scheduled for mobilization in Fall 2021.

In 2007, about 2,300 VNG personnel were serving in support of Operation Iraq Freedom and peacekeeping operations in Kosovo. Nearly 700 Soldiers mobilized for support to OIF and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in 2008.

Soldiers will conduct training at Fort Pickett for about two weeks in August to accomplish a number of administrative and field training tasks to prepare for the mobilization including weapons qualification, equipment issue and medical evaluation. In the fall, they will report to Fort Bliss, Texas, for approximately 30 to 45 days of additional mobilization training before heading



**Soldiers assigned to the Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team conduct squad attack lanes Aug. 6, 2021, at Fort Pickett, Virginia, in preparation for the upcoming deployment.**

overseas.

"Our Soldiers are ready to deploy," said Lt. Col. James Tierney, commander of 1st Battalion. "Our high operational tempo over the last 18 months protecting and assisting our fellow Virginians has increased our readiness and built adaptive and agile Soldiers who will be ready for almost any requirement in our federal mission."

Tierney also acknowledged the important role of families and employers.

"It is never easy for our Soldiers to put their lives on hold, but we do it as part of our commitment as National Guard Soldiers," he said.

Read more: <http://go.usa.gov/xFK9K>

## MORE ON THE WEB

**Photos: Collection of 116th IBCT Annual Training Albums**

<https://ngpa.us/15078>

**Photos: Virginia's First Lady tours ChalleNGe**

<https://ngpa.us/15243>

**Photos: CST conducts collective lanes training**

<https://ngpa.us/15245>

**Photos: Bailey takes command of Thunder Battalion**

<https://ngpa.us/15241>

**Photos: 88M students practice alley docking**

<https://ngpa.us/15240>

