

# 29th ID assumes authority of Task Force Spartan

Maj. Gen. John Rhodes, 29th Infantry Division commanding general, assumed command of Task Force Spartan from Maj. Gen. Patrick Hamilton, 36th Infantry Division commanding general, July 31, 2021, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Lt. Gen. Terry Ferrell, U.S. Army Central commanding general, presided over the ceremony. During the same ceremony, Command Sgt. Maj. Daryl Plude, 29th Infantry Division command sergeant major, assumed responsibility from Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Horn, 36th Infantry Division command sergeant major.

Task Force Spartan is a multi-component organization, comprised of Soldiers from all three Army components: active Army, National Guard and Army Reserve. Exercising command and control over Operation Spartan Shield, Task Force Spartan maintains a U.S. military posture in Southwest Asia sufficient to strengthen U.S. defense relationships and build partner capacity.

“Task Force Spartan looks forward to working with the Kuwaiti Land Forces and all of our Arab Gulf partner-nations this upcoming year as we grow, build and learn from each other,” said Rhodes.

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



Maj. Gen. John Rhodes and Command Sgt. Maj. Daryl Plude, the 29th Infantry Division command team, uncasing the 29th's colors during a Transfer of Authority ceremony July 20, 2021, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

## Virginia National Guard News Headlines

### 116th IBCT trains on new Squad Designated Marksman Rifle

Virginia and Kentucky Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Staunton-based 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team trained on and fielded new M110A1 Squad Designated Marksman Rifles July 12-15, 2021, at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

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

### Officer Candidate School Class 64 launches into Phase II

Twelve Virginia Army National Guard officer candidates completed Phase I of Officer Candidate School and launched their training into Phase II July 16-18, 2021, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

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

### 192nd Maintenance Squadron holds assumption of command

The Virginia Air National Guard's 192nd Maintenance Squadron gained a new commander, Lt. Col. Elim H. Sniady, during an assumption of command ceremony July 11, 2021, at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia.

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

### Local recruiters recognized by mayor in Virginia Beach

The Virginia Army National Guard was among those recognized at Local Heroes Day, an event held July 17, 2021, at the Pembroke Mall in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xFBBr5>

## 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

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# VNG Soldiers train on basics of Military Funeral Honors

Nine Virginia National Guard Soldiers completed Level 1 Funeral Honors training June 20-27, 2021, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Led by the Virginia National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program, the course prepares Soldiers to conduct professional military funeral honors in accordance with service tradition.

"There's a whole other level of pride and honor associated with being a part of the funeral honors team," said 2nd Lt. Valerie Hernandez, a Soldier in the class, who is assigned to the Gate City-based 1032nd Transportation Company, 1030th Transportation Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group. "I feel like this is important because every veteran deserves to get their honors and respect when the time comes."

Began in January 2007, the Virginia National Guard Military Funeral Honors Program is composed of six teams located throughout the state which provide funeral details, not just to National Guard Soldiers, but to veterans of the active Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard.

They have performed more than 28,000 funeral services throughout the Commonwealth and average more than 200 services each month.

"I volunteered because I thought it would be an opportune moment to give back to all the veterans who served," said Pfc. William Parker, another Soldier in the course, who is also assigned to the 1032nd. "I feel like I am part of something bigger than myself. I'm taking home a sense of duty."

There are three levels of training in the military funeral honors program. Level 1 is the foundation and how to perform the services. Level 2 goes into instructing and how to become more of a trainer. Level 3 is used as a recertification for anyone who has an expired Level 2 certification.

"Level 1 is a foundation for the Soldiers to move forward," said Staff Sgt. Jason Cain, the senior instructor for the Virginia National Guard Funeral Honors Program. "Most Soldiers who come through Level 1 training have no experience doing funeral honors."

It's important to start with a good foundation and that all begins with drill and ceremony, according to Cain. Funeral Honors does not do typical drill and ceremony movements that Soldiers normally experience in the Army.

"We have to change them to make them flow with what we do," Cain said. "It's all about getting these Soldiers where they know how to go out and honor veterans the correct way."

In addition to drill and ceremony, the Soldiers in the course train on how to do drill and ceremony with the M14 rifle, which they use for ceremonies.

"Then they learn two-Soldier flag folds, two-Soldier details, three-Soldier flag folds, three-Soldier details, and they finish with doing a firing party and pallbearing for a full honors service for retirees," Sgt. Sam Conolly, a Funeral Honors Trainer, said.

"Everything we do builds on something else," explained Cain. "By the end of the course every Soldier should know every single



**Virginia National Guard Soldiers participate in Level 1 Funeral Honors training June 25, 2021, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia.**

position."

There is also a focus on physical fitness and uniform standards during the course.

"It's really important to not only do the part but you have to look the part as well," Conolly said. "We're honoring families and we want to represent the Army the best we can."

But maybe the biggest lesson in the course is how important this duty is.

"We try to teach the Soldiers this is a way for them to be part of something bigger than themselves," Cain said. "We're not here for us, we're here for those families, for those veterans."

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xFB4c>

## MORE ON THE WEB

**Photos: VNG celebrates Unity/Diversity & Inclusion Day**

<https://ngpa.us/14949>

**Photos: 229th MPs, HPD K-9 unit conduct joint training**

<https://ngpa.us/14950>

**Photos: 3647th conducts maintenance mission during AT**

<https://ngpa.us/14951>

**Photos: 11B students train on room clearing at shoot house**

<https://ngpa.us/14952>

**Photos: DMA trade technicians take CPR training**

<https://ngpa.us/14953>

