

Ceremonies commemorate 78th anniversary of D-Day

Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, and Virginia National Guard Soldiers, including the Troutville-based 29th Infantry Division Band, participated in the commemoration of the 78th anniversary of the 1944 Allied D-Day invasion of Normandy June 6, 2022, at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia.

While the D-Day legacy was honored in Bedford, a contingent of 29th Infantry Division Soldiers travelled to Normandy to participate in commemoration events there. At Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, National Guard Soldiers assigned to Task Force Red Dragon, Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, hosted a D-Day commemoration ceremony and ruck march.

Two days before the anniversary, also at the D-Day Memorial, VNG Soldiers assigned to the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and alumni from The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, attended a memorial plaque dedication, honoring all graduates and former cadets of The Citadel who participated in the D-Day invasion, including the VNG's Maj. Thomas D. Howie, also known as "The Major of Saint Lô."

Read more: <https://ngpa.us/20216>



The Troutville-based 29th Infantry Division Band participates in the commemoration of the 78th anniversary of the 1944 Allied D-Day invasion of Normandy June 6, 2022, at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Virginia DMA employees honored at annual luncheon

The Virginia Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs and Virginia Department of Military Affairs senior leaders presented awards to DMA employees as part of a State Employee Recognition Day luncheon May 25, 2022, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Read more: <https://ngpa.us/20218>

VNG Soldiers conduct exchanges in Tajikistan

Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 91st Cyber Brigade conducted a mountain warfare exchange and an advanced tactical planning exchange with soldiers from the Republic of Tajikistan May 16 - 20, 2022, in Romit, Tajikistan.

Read more: <https://ngpa.us/20219>

Field Artillery officer highlights trust, teamwork in unit cohesion

Being a field artillery officer is what 1st Lt. Justin Riordan considers the best part of his service in the Virginia Army National Guard. What makes it so great, he said, is the teamwork.

Read more: <https://ngpa.us/20220>

VaANG thanks civilian employers at Boss Lift event

The Virginia Air National Guard hosted a Boss Lift event on June 4, 2022, at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia. Airmen nominated supervisors from 14 civilian employers for exceptional support of their Virginia Air National Guard careers.

Read more: <https://ngpa.us/20224>

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KFOR MedEvac team crosses borders to save lives

When the term MedEvac is mentioned, the thought of injured Soldiers being carried by stretcher and loaded onto Black Hawk helicopters is often the first thought to come to mind. However, a much different story recently played out for one Kosovo Force aircrew who was called out to the rugged landscape of Albania's northern mountain range.

It began as a typical, quiet Saturday morning at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, for the on-call MedEvac crew of Detachment 2, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, Virginia National Guard. That is until a call came in notifying them of a potential MedEvac request from an unlikely source.

"At about 12 o'clock, I got a call from our battalion commander, and he just kind of gave me a heads up and said, 'hey, you know, be prepared, there might be a MedEvac (request) coming through,'" explained Capt. Christopher Jackson, operations officer with 2nd Bn., 224th Avn. Reg. "I went ahead and called our MedEvac, let them know a MedEvac (request) might come through, that way they can get their crews pulled up and get them ready."

The initiating incident occurred earlier that morning, on May 28, 2022, when two Albanian State Police officers were injured when their vehicle rolled down a cliff.

Due to the remote location of the incident and the specialized equipment necessary to extract the injured officers, Albanian officials sent a request for aid to KFOR, who in turn tasked Regional Command East with the vital life-saving mission.

RC-East passed the mission down to the aviation team of Task Force Pegasus, where coordination for the MedEvac began.

Initial information received by Jackson stated the incident in Albania included "two Albanian police officers; where one was critically injured and unconscious, (and) another one was noncritical, but also injured," he said. "They were doing some sort of operation, got in a vehicle accident, rolled down the cliff and were injured. They needed a hoist and a ventilator, which hoist (operations) is something our MedEvac trains with all the time, but never actually done as a real mission."

Upon receiving notification the request would be coming through, the on-call MedEvac team with 1st Bn., 169 Avn. Reg., call sign Samaritan 17, began loading the necessary equipment, developing an action plan, and started spinning up their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.

"You always prepare for what's going to happen; you play through that in your mind," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Brady Lemmon, the team's pilot in command. "It's happened before, but this was my first time I've ever done that and to be able to execute it at the level that we did, I'm very proud of that."

When asked what he thought about conducting a MedEvac in Albania, Lemmon said "that it didn't matter. We had a grid coordinate; we had people to help. It could have been anywhere."

In addition to Lemmon, Samaritan 17 included Chief Warrant Officer 2 William Von Hemert, pilot; Sgt. Christopher Buchanan, crew chief; Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Moore, medic; and Sgt. Ashley Camper, medic.



Virginia National Guard Soldiers who evacuate patients injured after their vehicle rolled down a cliff stand in front of their UH-60 Black Hawk MedEvac helicopter at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, June 2, 2022.

Before departing Camp Bondsteel, the Samaritan 17 crew had a good understanding of what they were flying into, thanks to the information they received from the 9-line MedEvac request. A 9-line is a military system used to relay information about the location, severity of injuries, specialized equipment needed, and more, so MedEvac crews are as prepared as possible when responding to an incident.

The mission's success has been attributed to the training and experience of the Samaritan 17 crew. Additionally, Lemmon said the team dynamic, their communication, and how well they work together ultimately allowed for the evacuation of their patients.

Read more: <https://ngpa.us/20217>

MORE ON THE WEB

"Major of Saint Lô" honored at D-Day Memorial

<https://ngpa.us/20221/>

TF Red Dragon hosts D-Day remembrance ceremony

<https://ngpa.us/20222/>

Task Force Saint Lo Deployment Update - May 2022

<https://ngpa.us/20166/>

Photos: 429th BSB Soldiers train at Camp Dodge

<https://ngpa.us/20185/>

Photos: 116th IBCT Annual Training 2022 Collection

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