

# 29th ID concludes tour as Task Force Spartan

Maj. Gen. John Rhodes, commanding general of the Virginia National Guard's 29th Infantry Division, relinquished command of Task Force Spartan to Maj. Gen. William Blaylock II, commanding general of the Kansas National Guard's 35th Infantry Division, March 20, 2022, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. The transfer of authority ceremony, officiated by Lt. Gen. Ronald Clark, commanding general, U.S. Army Central, signifies the passing of the torch from the 29th to the 35th. During the same ceremony, Command Sgt. Maj. Daryl Plude, 29th ID command sergeant major, relinquished responsibility to Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Stuenkel, 35th ID command sergeant major.

"I'd like to thank the citizens-Soldiers of the 29th ID, your efforts and contributions have made a lasting impact on this region," said Rhodes. "The blue and gray patch we wear on our left shoulder reflects our proud history and the American flag on our right shoulder represents our dedicated service to our country, our home states and our partner nations."

During the ceremony, the outgoing division command team cased the unit colors, signifying the end of their tour.

Read more: <https://go.usa.gov/xzw3F>



Maj. Gen. John Rhodes and Command Sgt. Maj. Daryl Plude, the 29th Infantry Division command team, case the unit colors during a Transfer of Authority ceremony March 20, 2022, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

## Virginia National Guard News Headlines

### 185th Cyberspace Operations Squadron returns after federal mobilization

The Virginia Air National Guard's 185th Cyberspace Operations Squadron, 192nd Operations Group, 192nd Wing was recognized for their recent federal mobilization in support of United States Cyber Command's 856th Cyber Protection Team at ceremony Feb. 25, 2022, in Hampton, Virginia.

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

### Infantry Squad Battle Course open for business at MTC

After months of renovations, one of Maneuver Training Center Fort Pickett's live fire ranges is back open for business after a short ceremony March 10, 2022, at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

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

### Class 56 graduates from Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy

The Virginia Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy conducted a graduation ceremony for the cadets of Class 56 March 5, 2022, at the State Military Reservation in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

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

### VNG conducts infantry tactics, UAS exchanges in Tajikistan

Virginia National Guard Soldiers conducted an infantry tactics exchange and countering unmanned air systems exchange with the Republic of Tajikistan March 7-11, 2022, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

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

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## VNG battalion takes responsibility for air defense mission in Iraq

The Virginia National Guard's Norfolk-based 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team took responsibility for the U.S. Central Command Counter-Rocket, Artillery, Mortar Intercept Land-based Phalanx Weapon System mission from the Massachusetts National Guard's 1st Battalion, 101st Field Artillery Regiment during a transfer of authority ceremony March 13, 2022, at Al Udeid Air Force Base in Doha, Qatar.

"Operational missions such as the C-RAM build and sustain readiness in our citizen-Soldiers and enhance our warfighting capabilities," said Lt. Col. Donald L. Bailey II, commander of the 1-111th, also known as the First Virginia Artillery. "We have been preparing for months, and now is our time to execute this important mission. We will execute it with the tenacity and character each of you are already known to possess."

C-RAM is a set of systems used to detect and/or destroy incoming rockets, artillery, mortar rounds and other ordnance in the air before they hit their ground targets. During the TOA ceremony, the 1-101st was credited with shooting down "countless unmanned aerial vehicles" and other threats.

Bailey said he is impressed with the ability of the 1-111th Soldiers to transition in just a few short months from their standing mission in the field artillery to a short range air defense artillery mission. The unit began federal active duty Dec. 13, 2021, and reported to Fort Bliss, Texas, to conduct their initial mobilization training. Then they spent approximately two months training on the C-RAM system at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, before deploying to Iraq.

Soldiers of the 1-111th will staff multiple C-RAM sites in key locations across Iraq.

"You truly represent the best of our commonwealth, and it is demonstrated by your willingness to selflessly serve in an imminent danger area on the forward edge of freedom.," Bailey said. "I have every confidence that First Virginia Artillery will prove itself ready and perform with distinction in support of Operation Inherent Resolve."

Bailey noted that the recent ballistic missile strikes in Northern Iraq are evidence of the serious nature of the unit's mission and a reminder the battalion is now a force in contact each and every single day.

He recognized the outstanding duty performance of the 1-101st and thanked the unit leadership for the invaluable assistance during the train up and transition.

"You have set the bar extremely high, and we are anxious to continue the legacy of excellence established by each of the previous Army National Guard field artillery battalions performing this mission," Bailey said to the leadership of 1-101st. "I want to personally thank each of you, your staff and your subordinate commands not just for this expertly conducted relief in place, but also for the way your team reached out to us even while we were back in Virginia to assist in preparation for this mission."

The 1-111th is the fourth Army National Guard field artillery



**Lt. Col. Donald L. Bailey II and Command Sgt. Maj. Rhonda L. Williams, the 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment command team, uncasing their organizational colors during a transfer of authority ceremony held March 13, 2022, at Al Udeid Air Force Base in Doha, Qatar.**

unit to perform this mission starting with the Hawaii National Guard's 1st Battalion, 487th Field Artillery Regiment, followed by the Iowa National Guard's 1st Battalion, 194th Field Artillery Regiment and then the 1-101st.

"This mission is complex," Bailey said. "It is worthwhile and many of our joint, combined and interagency mission partners will be depending on us."

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

### MORE ON THE WEB

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#### Recruiter talks family, career and women's strength

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#### NCO recounts career moves from band geek to section chief

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#### CD TF facilitates human trafficking awareness event

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#### Course provides training, resources for company-level XO's

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