

# 229th MPs begin customs operations during federal duty

The Virginia National Guard's Hanover-based 229th Military Police Company, 276th Engineer Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group took responsibility for a U.S. Central Command customs operations mission from the Missouri National Guard's 1175th MP Company, 205th MP Battalion during a transfer of authority ceremony July 6, 2025, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

More than 100 Soldiers assigned to the 229th arrived in the CENTCOM area of operations and began conducting customs operations by July 4.

"The 229th MP Company has demonstrated a consistently high level of professionalism, adaptability and effectiveness throughout the first few weeks of this deployment," said the 229th's 1st Lt. Austin Smith, currently the CENTCOM Customs commander. "They have successfully balanced a demanding operational tempo with a commitment to building positive relationships with all units requesting CENTCOM Customs operational support."

Prior to arriving in the CENTCOM area of responsibility, the 229th MPs finished training and preparing for their mission at Fort Bliss, Texas.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/3227hwmj>



The 229th Military Police Company takes responsibility for a U.S. Central Command customs operations mission during a ceremony July 6, 2025, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

### Virginia National Guard News Headlines

#### Plus One Day brings morale boost to 276th Engineers

Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Petersburg-based 276th Engineer Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group conducted a Plus One Day with their loved ones July 18, 2025, at Fort Pickett, Virginia, during the unit's annual training.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/5da35293>

#### Ceremony planned for Roanoke Regional Readiness Center expansion

The Virginia National Guard will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the expansion of the Roanoke Regional Readiness Center Aug. 2, 2025, in Troutville, Virginia.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/5n7dvn46>

#### VNG Soldiers, Airmen participate in Regional Cooperation 25

Seven Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen participated in U.S. Central Command's annual Regional Cooperation exercise June 15-27, 2025, at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/bddbwek6>

#### VNG launches integrated wellness training for Soldiers

A groundbreaking effort to unify medical, spiritual, and behavioral care in the Virginia National Guard took shape June 25, 2025, at Fort Pickett, Virginia, as Soldiers gathered for an integrated training event.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/2p8uyv6x>

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# 1033rd constructs parking areas, walking trail at national park

Approximately 40 Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Cedar Bluff-based 1033rd Engineer Support Company, 276th Engineer Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group constructed two parking areas, a walking trail and installed a split-rail fence during their annual training July 12-25, 2025, at the Cedar Creek & Belle Grove National Historical Park in Middletown, Virginia. The project was part of the Innovative Readiness Training program where engineers put their military skills to work on community service projects approved by National Guard Bureau.

“This project was an amazing opportunity to train Soldiers for their planned overseas annual training in 2026 and a great way for junior noncommissioned officers and Soldiers to work on a project and for senior NCO’s to be able to project manage,” said 1st Lt. Garret Shultz, commander of the 1033rd. “Soldiers love to do their job and create something that benefits local communities. IRT projects represent an innovative way to accomplish training and be a benefit to the local community.”

Soldiers built a 3,850-square-foot parking lot and 1,600 linear feet of walking trail at the Cedar Creek site, and also installed 120 linear feet of split rail fence around the abutment at the old bridge site. At a second location, they constructed a 800-square-foot parking lot.

Shultz said the project benefitted from the extensive construction and engineer experience Soldiers bring from their civilian careers.

Karen Beck-Herzog, the Cedar Creek & Belle Grove National Historical Park site manager, said VNG support helps the NPS create visitor service infrastructure much more quickly and will allow them to open the parcel to the public for recreation and to learn the history of the area sooner than originally planned. The NPS still needs to develop information and interpretive signage before the area is open to the public, but a soft opening could happen as soon as Fall 2025 she said.

“We were able to do this much more quickly and at a significant cost savings to the Park Service,” she said. “The Virginia National Guard has been terrific to work with, and they have been very professional. It’s been wonderful.”

The real-world experience for Soldiers supports training on several company-level mission essential tasks required for their federal mission like providing general engineer support for mobility operations, performing construction operations and conducting expeditionary deployment operations. Both the vertical and horizontal construction platoons trained on 22 supporting collective tasks and 27 supporting individual tasks included in the three mission essential tasks.

Planning for the project began in 2024 after the National Park Service received approval for their requested IRT project, and a formal agreement between the VNG and NPS was signed outlining the scope of the project. Only minor changes to the overall plan were required once the project actually began.

“The National Park Service will benefit from the completion of this project because they will be able to showcase this site to the public,” Shultz said. “Visitors to this site will be able to have



**Soldiers assigned to the 1033rd Engineer Support Company construct a parking area July 16, 2025, at the Cedar Creek & Belle Grove National Historical Park in Middletown, Virginia.**

accessibility to the walking trail and tours at the bridge abutment site, which was a decisive structure in the Battle for Cedar Creek during the Civil War.”

He said he hopes the improvements will encourage the public to get outside and learn more about the history of the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley.

“A sign is currently being planned for the park service with a tribute to the hard work dedicated by the National Guard,” Shultz said. “This project has great publicity for the recruitment and retention of Soldiers throughout the state that come to visit this site.”

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/52yde862>

## MORE ON THE WEB

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~ Photos on Flickr at <https://vngpao.info/yckt4xm3>

### 329th Soldiers head to Finland for maintenance exchange

~ Photos on Flickr at <https://vngpao.info/yckrczz4>

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### HART trains on advanced hoist techniques

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