

180th ESC officially begins Horn of Africa mission

The Virginia National Guard's Powhatan-based 180th Engineer Support Company officially begin their mission to support Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa with a transfer of authority ceremony Oct. 20, 2025, at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. The 180th replaced the New York Army National Guard's 152nd Engineer Support Company.

"To the senior leaders across CJTF-HOA and Camp Lemonnier, thank you for the support you've provided not only to the 152nd, but also in preparing the 180th for success," said Capt. Catherine M. Bean, the 180th ESC commander in her TOA remarks. "We are eager to continue building on the strong foundation already established, and to uphold the high standards of discipline, safety and quality that this mission demands."

In their first four weeks on the mission, Soldiers of the 180th partnered with Air Force and Marine Corps counterparts to move \$750,000 worth of equipment and completed 28 engineer projects with a estimated \$300,000 value in troop and labor costs.

Bean extended gratitude on behalf of the entire 180th ESC to the 152nd ESC and their leadership team.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/mpz5nwx5>



The 180th Engineer Support Company command team unfurls their unit guidon to mark the official start of their federal active duty mission in the Horn of Africa Oct. 20, 2025, at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.

Virginia National Guard News Headlines

Red Dragon Soldiers compete for scout platoon selection

Fourteen Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Mobile Brigade Combat Team spent the week ending Nov. 16, 2025, pushing their limits during a demanding Scout Selection Board designed to identify the battalion's next generation of reconnaissance leaders.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/5db8rshn>

VDF chaplain joins Virginia Army National Guard ranks

A Virginia Defense Force chaplain formally swore in and was commissioned a first lieutenant in the Virginia Army National Guard Oct. 29, 2025, at Defense Supply Center Richmond, Virginia.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/2u5k94vu>

Registration open for 2025 Fort Pickett 5K Turkey Trot

Maneuver Training Center Fort Pickett will host its annual 5K Turkey Trot Nov. 26, 2025, the day before Thanksgiving. The events open to the public, but participants must have a RealID or a federally-issued ID to access the installation.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/y4kmac67>

VaANG Medical Det. conducts joint training with Suffolk firefighters

The Virginia Air National Guard's Medical Detachment 1, 192nd Medical Group, 192nd Wing, trains with the Suffolk Fire Department during a joint training exercise Nov. 7, 2025, in Henrico, Virginia.

~ Photos on Flickr at <https://vngpao.info/2p88rhv7>

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116th Infantry Regiment Soldiers gather for Muster

Currently-serving and veteran Soldiers of the 116th Infantry Regiment gathered with loved ones and invited guests for the 57th Annual 116th Regimental Muster Nov. 8, 2025, in Staunton, Virginia. Col. Arthur Moore, commander of the 116th Mobile Brigade Combat Team, provided an update on the 116th's ongoing transformation, recognized the company-level unit with the highest state of readiness and presented the Order of Saint Maurice.

The Charlottesville and Harrisonburg-based Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th MBCT was recognized as the company-level unit with the highest readiness in the brigade and received the 2025 Superior Unit Award.

Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Spring Jr., the senior enlisted leader for the Fredericksburg-based 229th Brigade Engineer Battalion, received the Order of Saint Maurice. The award is given to individuals who demonstrate the highest standards of integrity, moral character, professional competence and have made significant contributions to the U. S. Army Infantry.

Moore explained that in November 2024 the Army selected the 116th as one of two National Guard infantry brigade combat teams to transform as part of the U.S. Army's Transformation in Contact initiative.

"This started the brigade on a journey that involves significant changes to our unit formations, plenty of new equipment and changes in how we fight," he said.

The biggest change for the 116th is to our unit force structure, Moore said. The new MBCT consists of the headquarters company and three organic infantry battalions with the addition of a new brigade multi-functional reconnaissance company. The 429th Brigade Support Battalion transformed to a light support battalion and fires and engineer support will be provided by division-level units in direct support roles as transformation recentralizes several capabilities from the brigade level up to the division level.

As part of the transformation, the brigade's cavalry squadron and engineer battalion will inactivate in September 2026 and be replaced functionally by smaller Army organizations, Moore said.

The cavalry squadron's role as the brigade's reconnaissance element is fulfilled by the new MFRC which now holds mounted and dismounted reconnaissance units, the brigade's drone platoon and electronic warfare element.

As the Army restructures their engineer force, brigade engineer battalions are being replaced by division engineer battalions that consist of combat engineer companies - infantry, or CEC-Is.

"These are intended to be attached to brigades to provide the engineer support," Moore said. "Our military intelligence and signal companies remain intact within the brigade, but will eventually move to division or corps level pending future Army force structure guidance."

Moore said the rifle battalions and their organic companies remain largely unchanged, but the heavy weapons companies are transforming to Multi-Purpose Companies that concentrate ground and drone reconnaissance, snipers and mortars in the battalion.



Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Mobile Brigade Combat Team is recognized as the company in the 116th with the highest state of readiness with the 2025 Superior Unit Award Nov. 8, 2025, in Staunton, Virginia.

The artillery battalion structure remains largely unchanged as well but will eventually fall under the 29th Division Artillery after it comes online.

The 429th Brigade Support Battalion also undergoes significant change as it converts to a light support battalion, Moore said.

He said the rifle and rucksack remain central, but now they are joined by sensors and platforms that give the infantry more reach, awareness and options.

"Our fundamental job to close with the enemy as light infantry remains unchanged," Moore said.

~ Read more at <https://vngpao.info/mrp7p6n6>

MORE ON THE WEB

First Formation officially welcomes new Soldiers

~ Photos on Flickr at <https://vngpao.info/3p842msu>

Virginia National Guard Resiliency Resources

~ Read more at <https://va.ng.mil/Resiliency/>

116th Infantry on Facebook

~ Read more at <https://www.facebook.com/116thInfantry>

Fort Pickett on Facebook

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