

The Virgin Islands Consortium

'V.I. For Life': Six Pentagon Police Officers From USVI Find Solace in Home During Pandemic and Riots

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From left: Field Training Officer Charles de Lugo and Officer Lori Brown. Upper left: Sergeant Anderson Frederick and Sergeant Jose Rojas. Lower left: Officer Allen Lans and Officer Hector Alexander.

Amidst the threat of the pandemic and the riots that shook the U.S. mainland, six federal law enforcement officers who are natives of the U.S. Virgin Islands based in Washington, D.C. continued to defend the Pentagon, displayed V.I. pride when in each other's company to lighten the mood, protected their families from the novel coronavirus, and maintained an overall sense of normalcy for their children at home.

Pentagon Force Protection Agency (PFPA) Chief of Police Woodrow Kusse confirmed his unwavering support for these officers in a written statement to the Consortium where he said, "Unquestionably, our strength is in our diversity and inclusion of all members. The U.S. Virgin Islands have proud ambassadors in Sergeant Anderson Frederick, Sergeant Jose Rojas, Field Training Officer Charles de Lugo, Officer Lori Brown, Officer Hector Alexander and Officer Allen Lans. Our agency motto is "Protecting Those Who Protect Our Nation." These officers meet every challenge head-on, 24/7. I couldn't be prouder to serve as their Chief."

"In the start of the quarantine, around March, employees of the Pentagon didn't have masks and the right PPE until the agency was able to provide us with better PPE," said Mr. de Lugo. As a result of the national shortage, "We had to make our own masks. It was very frightening and scary because we didn't know how it was spreading," he added.

Half of the Pentagon's employees reported to the jobsite, Mr. de Lugo shared. These officers, who were esteemed as essential law enforcement for the protection of the Pentagon and its personnel, were among the ranks of employees who showed up during a time of grave uncertainty. They continue to do so even as the pandemic is soaring on a national scale.

Like many employees at the Pentagon with families, these officers took extra precaution not to bring the virus home.

"Since I'm out in the elements at work, I take off everything in the garage. Normally my family will have a robe for me to put on. I wipe down my shoes before I bring them in to the house. I go straight to the shower. I don't mingle with the family," Mr. Frederick recounted as his daily routine upon returning home.

During the quarantine, he shared that he was the only one doing all the errands for his household as everyone else stayed at home. The stay-at-home order often left his 13-year-old daughter upset as she expressed that she wanted to return to school. Therefore, he often took time to bond with his daughter, appeasing her love for cooking with a cultural twist.

"I taught her how to make coconut tarts," Mr. Frederick said.

Whether at home or at work, these officers found solace in their faith and their roots as Virgin Islanders.

"I take comfort in my Soca, my Calypso. It brings down my stress. In this time that we're in now with the riots, I lean on my faith. My down time is spent with my daughter. That's what's important to me," Mr. Frederick shared early last month.

Mr. de Lugo shared his sentiments and added, "Most of us from home have a deep root in our religious background. I attend my virtual church services [and] work out on treadmill. I have to stay healthy, can't be sedentary, can't sit down and do nothing."

Sgt. Frederick referred to Mr. de Lugo as his brother and said without hesitation, "When we talking in our dialect, they ask, 'What they talking about?' We respond, 'Don't worry what we talking 'bout; we know what we talking 'bout.' Like we say, 'VI for life.'"

Each officer shared a personalized quote with the Consortium to express their pride in the territory or their commitment to the profession. They are as follows:

“I like to keep up with events, issues and concerns that affect my home and keep in touch with my family and friends who still live there.” –Sgt. Anderson ‘Andy’ Frederick by PFPA

“Through all my experience and travel, St. Thomas will always be home. Both my parents come from large families. I have a large extended family that I enjoy seeing when I go home. My wife and I take our sons home as often as possible, and now our grandchildren will get to experience Virgin Islands life as well.” –Sgt. Jose Rojas by PFPA

“I long to return home, where I can once again swim in the beautiful waters of the Caribbean and enjoy Carnival and the Food Fair.” –Officer Charles de Lugo by PFPA

“I’ve always enjoyed helping others and keeping them safe. When I joined the Pentagon Police Division, this is where my career as a police officer took off. I enjoy the interaction with the personnel of the Department of Defense. I meet so many men and women who defend our nation and make difficult decisions for our nation. Life at the Pentagon is grand.” –Officer Lori Brown by PFPA

“I am proud of my Caribbean heritage. I appreciate the principles and values that were instilled in me, because they reflect my Virgin Island ancestry and culture.” –Officer Hector Alexander by PFPA.

“I am proud to represent the VI whenever I can. I still maintain my connections at home. I have lots of friends and family I keep in touch with over social media.” –Officer Allen Lans by PFPA