

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Thomas Native Promoted At National Guard Bureau To Lieutenant Colonel

VIC News / **Published On October 18, 2018 11:35 AM /**

Staff **October 18, 2018**



ST. THOMAS -- St. Thomas native, Major Sekou O. Richardson, was promoted from the rank of Major to Lieutenant Colonel in Washington, DC on October 12, 2018, roughly one year after Hurricanes Irma and Maria turned both his professional and personal lives upside down, according to a release issued Wednesday.

According to the release, months before the hurricanes hit the territory, Lt. Col. Richardson, who was employed full-time with the Virgin Islands National Guard (VING) as the former Commander of the 23rd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team, was approved for a tour of duty at the National Guard Bureau (NGB) so his youngest son could receive vital medical care not available in the territory.

On August 21, 2017 and prior to his official transfer, his son underwent 13 hours of surgery at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, while his elder son remained with him on St. Croix. Richardson was preparing to depart St. Croix and reunite his family at the end of September awaiting NGB orders for his tour. However, when Hurricane Irma destroyed his brother's home on Tortola, B.V.I., Richardson opened his home to his brother's family including his wife and twin toddlers. His brother also brought another family whose house was completely destroyed to stay with them. Little did anyone know that Hurricane Maria would hit St. Croix less than a week after they arrived by boat causing further disruption and delay in Richardson's reunion with his family on the mainland.

Richardson's sister-in-law and nieces returned to Tortola one month after the storms, which is when he learned his tour at the NGB would not materialize. Subsequently, Richardson was forced to transfer from the VING to the District of Columbia National Guard (DCNG), where his military career coincidentally began in October 1988 as an enlisted soldier. Attorney Marise James, who served as the VING Staff Judge Advocate, provided Richardson with legal assistance, which enabled him to transfer to DCNG without any repercussion.

As a DCNG member, Richardson was assigned as the special security officer. He later became the Supply & Services Division Chief for the USPFO before taking a tour on the NGB Joint Staff. Currently, he serves as an Inter-Agency Liaison Officer and worked 12-hour shifts to assist the Carolinas after Hurricane Florence. Additionally, he is presently working to monitor the National Guard's response in Florida and Georgia in the aftermath Hurricane Michael.

Although Richardson desired to remain a VING member while on tour at NGB, he has come full circle to where he first entered the military.

"It is truly a "circle of life" story from despair to hope and what happened to me appears to be the silver lining behind a dark cloud," Richardson said. "Psalm 75:6 says 'for promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. It is God who judges.'"