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V.I. National Guard's 661st Military Police Detachment Returns Home From Deployment in Qatar to Warm Welcome

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Family and friends greet soldiers from the Virgin Islands National Guard 661st Military Police Detachment at the Henry E. Rohlsen and Cyril E. King Airports Sep. 13, 2020. The unit returned home safely from a nine and a half month deployment in Qatar . By. LEONA HENDRICKSON

The Virgin Islands National Guard welcomed home soldiers of the 661st Military Police Detachment from deployment at the Henry E. Rohlsen and Cyril E. King Airports on Sunday, V.I.N.G. announced today.

The unit spent approximately nine and a half months on their mission to support Operation Spartan Shield (Enduring Freedom). Their mission at Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar, was to provide Law and Order and Force Protection, V.I.N.G. said.

“I’m immensely proud of the 661st MP Detachment for their hard work and dedication to the mission in Qatar,” said Capt. Marcus Sydney, company commander. “They have set the standards for other MP detachments to emulate. The Virgin Islands National Guard and the territory should be extremely proud of their accomplishments in representing the organization and the territory well.”

Due to the global pandemic with COVID-19, the MP unit supported additional missions that tasked them to conduct physical security operations to quarantine locations and enforce the Department of Defense guidelines in COVID-19 mitigation.

The unit deployed back in October 2019 with 43 members, and successfully everyone made it back safely.

“When this detachment deployed last October, I asked only one thing of them – that they continue to do their duty and make this Territory proud,” stated Governor Albert Bryan. “We are so proud of these National Guard men and women for representing the U.S. Virgin Islands and their country well. We’re so grateful for having them back home safe and sound and able to reunite with their families.”

Before arriving to the territory, the unit members underwent a mandatory 14-day quarantine at Camp Westbrook, New Mexico part of Fort Bliss Mobilization station, V.I.N.G. said.

“We are happy to have our territory’s sons and daughters back home safely,” said Brig. Gen. Kodjo Knox-Limbacker, The Adjutant General. “They accomplished the mission. The 661st MP Detachment’s redeployment from supporting combat operations solidifies a ready, relevant, and responsive member of the Joint warfighting force.”

Due to COVID-19, the V.I.N.G. said it will postpone having a yellow ribbon ceremony to formally welcome back the deployed soldiers and schedule when it’s safe to do so.