



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Alaska National Guard
Release: 16-084

Oct. 16, 2016

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Army National Guard infantry unit stands up

The 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment marks milestone

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — The 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, Alaska Army National Guard, activated during an Oct. 16 ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Armory here.

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Roberts assumed command of the newly formed organization during the ceremony.

Additionally, 1st Squadron, 297th Cavalry Squadron, also deactivated during the proceedings.

Col. Moses Kaoiwi, commander of 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Hawaii Army National Guard, presided over the ceremony. The new battalion is tactically a subordinate unit to the 29th IBCT, though it also reports to the Alaska Army National Guard's 38th Troop Command.

Kaoiwi's brigade has units in three states and the territory of Guam, and the colonel spoke about his command's diversity.

"The 29th now is composed of you, the 1st of the 297th, with your unique Alaska frontier toughness, culture and heritage," Kaoiwi said. "You now will stand alongside the Chamorro warriors of Guam, our American Southwestern warriors from Arizona, and our Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander and Asian warriors of Hawaii.

"We are bred for battle and bred for peace," Kaoiwi continued. "We are a clear representation of what the Army National Guard is all about. We are diverse, yet uniquely American. We are many, yet we are one in purpose and duty. We are loyal to our home states, yet maintain a strong sense of duty to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Lt. Col. Peter Mondelli, commander of the 1-297th Cavalry spoke about how the Bible prophet Isaiah had a "send me" attitude.

"That embodies what we all do, what you all do on a daily basis," Mondelli said pointing to the formation of infantry Soldiers. "I salute you."

During his remarks, Roberts spoke about his expectations of the new battalion, beginning with defining an infantry unit's role.

"Our trade is to use fire and maneuver to close with and destroy the enemy," Roberts explained. "That is our job, and so we must start training to do that job now, for we do not know when the crucible of combat will be forced upon us. That must be your mindset as we conduct training, so we will be ready when our nation calls."

Roberts also laid out what 1-297th Infantry Soldiers can expect from him and Command Sergeant Maj. Donald Ramey.

“One thing that sets National Guard Soldiers apart from all others is that you volunteered to serve our country and the great state of Alaska on your weekends,” Roberts said. “Command Sergeant Major Ramey and I appreciate that, and we will honor that commitment by training you hard and not wasting your time. I am proud to be your commander, and I look forward to seeing what we will accomplish together.”

The battalion comprises a headquarters company, three rifle companies (A, B and D), and a forward support company. A fourth rifle company, C Company, belongs to the Wyoming Army National Guard.

The 1-297th Infantry was originally constituted Oct. 21, 1939, in the Alaska National Guard and was organized and federally recognized Jan. 11, 1941, with its headquarters at Juneau.

During the course of the next 70 years, the battalion would inactivate, reactivate, and take on infantry and scout roles before transforming into 1st Squadron, 297th Cavalry Regiment, in 2009 with a battlefield reconnaissance mission. The Oct. 16, 2016, ceremony marked the battalion’s return to its infantry roots.

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1. **Attached PDF** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **Flickr link** includes an event album with the complete selection of full-resolution, free downloadable images. (Flickr is not generally accessible from .mil computers.)

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/alaskanationalguard/albums/72157671789639234>

3. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos, free downloadable images. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.)

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/212160/army-national-guard-infantry-unit-stands-up>



Lt. Col. Peter Mondelli, commander of 1st Squadron, 297th Cavalry Regiment, and Sgt. Maj. James Nyquist, 1-297th Cavalry operations sergeant major, case the squadron colors, signifying the unit's deactivation Oct. 16, 2016, at the Alaska National Guard Armory at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. The unit transformed into the 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment during the ceremony. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. David Bedard)



Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Ramey, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment command sergeant major, and Lt. Col. Jeffrey Roberts, 1-297th Infantry commander, uncase the battalion colors, signifying the unit's activation Oct. 16, 2016, at the Alaska National Guard Armory at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. The unit transitioned from the 1st Squadron, 297th Cavalry Regiment during the ceremony. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. David Bedard)



First Lt. James Tollefson, commander of A Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, affixes the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat team patch to mortarman Spc. Drew Gatlin, Oct. 16, 2016, at the Alaska National Guard Armory at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. The 1-297th Infantry activated during the ceremony and became a subordinate unit to 29th IBCT, Hawaii Army National Guard. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. David Bedard)