

# HQ WEST VIRGINIA AIR NATIONAL GUARD



**LINEAGE**

**STATIONS**

Charleston, WV

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **COMMANDERS**

Brigadier General James B. Crawford, III  
Brigadier General Loda R. Moore  
BG William Fleshman, #1996

### **HONORS**

#### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

#### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

### **EMBLEM**

### **EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

### **MOTTO**

### **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATIONS**

In August, 2005, nature dealt the Gulf Coast a devastating blow that would test our nation and potentially redefine the role of the National Guard. When hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck, Guard personnel from all 54 states and territories responded in the largest domestic National Guard mobilization in U.S. history. West Virginia's response to Hurricane Katrina began more than a week before the storm made landfall. The Guard's Emergency Operations Center in Charleston was manned around the clock, monitoring the storm's progress and identifying assets and resources. Leaders began developing plans should the storm drive north and threaten West Virginia. Next, the staff developed a response plan to support the gulf region. National Guard Bureau was well aware of West Virginia's experience in flood operations. "When the magnitude of the devastation became evident, we received a call from the joint staff at NGB requesting our assistance," recalls Col. Johnnie L. Young, deputy commander, land component, West Virginia National Guard. West Virginia's first response was to launch C-130's from the 130th and 167th Airlift Wings to assist in the evacuation. Maj. Kevin Meagher of the 130th Airlift Wing piloted the first C-130 from West Virginia into New Orleans' Airport. "We didn't know what to expect," tells Meagher. "There was a lot of disjointed information both in the air and on the ground." This flight was also significant because it delivered battery powered lights allowing the airport to conduct twenty four hour operations. Even a C-17 grounded by nightfall was now able to continue its lifesaving mission. In addition to delivering critical lighting equipment, the plane also brought in an Air medical crew from Pope Air Force Base to establish an initial triage at the airport. The aircraft was reconfigured and loaded with medical evacuees who were transported to San Antonio for treatment. Additional West Virginia aircraft would soon follow suit bringing in more forces

and supplies and evacuating the victims. Brig. Gen. John E. Barnette, West Virginia's assistant adjutant general for Army and land component commander, was returning home from Korea when he received a call from Adjutant General Allen E. Tackett asking him to lead a West Virginia task force into Louisiana. The first West Virginia ground forces arrived at Belle Chasse Naval Air Station on Sept 3. Minutes from downtown New Orleans, the small reserve airfield soon became a critical hub in the relief effort and the staging area for Task Force West Virginia. Barnette was on the flight deck as the C-130 approached New Orleans. He brought additional staff members forward for their first look at the flooding. "At first there was no point of reference. Everything was still under water," said Barnette. "It probably took us 48 hours on the ground to even begin to comprehend the level of devastation. It was much deeper than the media had represented." The first aircraft arrived carrying security and staff personnel with enough food, water and equipment to sustain themselves for 15 days. A ground convoy arrived in Belle Chasse later that day with 62 vehicles and 120 personnel.

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Air Force Order of Battle  
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Sources