

Dept. of Military Affairs: Wisconsin Guard soldiers reach Horn of Africa deployment milestone

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CAMP LEMONNIER, Djibouti — Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) held a combat patching ceremony for Soldiers with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (MEB) at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, on Dec. 30, 2022.

The 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade assumed responsibility of the CJTF-HOA headquarters staff mission in early November. The combat patching ceremony brought together Soldiers for the time-honored military tradition that distinguishes those who have deployed to a combat zone.

"This is just a small representation of the honor and courage you possess, and the sacrifices you make every day and put on display by your mere presence here," said Maj. Gen. Jami Shawley, CJTF-HOA commanding general. "Here you decisively help achieve our mission from America's only enduring military installation in Africa."

The combat patch commemorates a unit's service in a combat zone and is authorized to be worn by Soldiers who serve with the unit during their deployment. The combat patch is worn on a Soldier's right shoulder, immediately below the American flag.

The Soldiers were presented with the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) combat patch, which CJTF-HOA has been aligned with since the combatant command's establishment in 2008. The 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade is the fourth MEB to take on the CJTF-HOA headquarters mission. As a self-contained, modular

and multifunctional support unit, Soldiers within the MEB are integrated to all staff directorates in CJTF-HOA.

“CJTF-HOA continues to engage with international partners to defeat violent extremist organizations and successfully execute geo-political competition in Africa,” said Maj. Joy Staab, the master of ceremonies. “CJTF-HOA remains the tip of the spear in either scenario.”

The combat patching ceremony unites Soldiers in deployed environments with a sense of camaraderie.

“You now wear the AFRICOM patch just below our glorious United States Flag as a badge of your courage, an indicator of your experience and a token of passage,” Shawley said. “You join thousands before you as accomplished men and women, as distinguished Soldiers in the United States Army.”