

National Guard: Unit preparing to depart Horn of Africa

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The Wisconsin Army National Guard's 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (MEB) transferred authority of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) headquarters staff mission to the 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Carolina National Guard, July 14 at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.

The CJTF-HOA headquarters mission includes ensuring strategic partnerships with Djibouti and other partner nations, responding to crises, and enhancing stability and peace in the region by acting as a headquarters support unit to coordinate and facilitate mission accomplishment.

Maj. Gen. Jami Shawley, CJTF-HOA commanding general, presided over the Transfer of Authority ceremony.

"157th, you have my deepest thanks and it's been an honor to serve with you," Shawley said. "To the 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, we welcome you, your diversity, your expertise and your dedication. Your training and preparation will be immediately put to use as you now become the lifeblood of CJTF-HOA."

Shawley recognized the work the 157th MEB accomplished during their time in the Horn of Africa.

"What you have done here is so meaningful, so impactful, so overarching that there will never be enough time to take stock and explain it all," Shawley said. "For the past nine months you have been integral to a mission most Americans know nothing about."

During the 157th MEB's deployment, they supported the CJTF-HOA mission in a variety of crisis response exercises, and played an integral part in the evacuation of

American personnel from the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum, Sudan.

“I want to thank the 157th MEB Soldiers for their dedication, motivation and selfless sacrifice,” said Col. Eric Leckel, 157th MEB commander. “You have left a lasting impact on the citizens of Africa and your commitment has ensured the U.S. interests are better postured for the future.”

The 218th MEB is the fifth MEB to deploy to Africa, and will continue the 157th MEB’s efforts in supporting operations across East Africa.

“It’s an honor to be part of today’s Transfer of Authority ceremony,” said Col. Kenneth Snow, commander of the 218th MEB and the incoming CJTF-HOA chief of staff. “The full weight, significance and responsibility of the mission we are about to assume has resonated with the 218th Soldiers.”

The 157th MEB departed Wisconsin last fall and assumed responsibility for their CJTF-HOA mission Nov. 5, 2022. This marked the first Wisconsin Army National Guard deployment to the African theater on Title 10 status.