

= 29th Infantry Division (United States) =

The 29th Infantry Division (29th I.D.) , also known as the " Blue and Gray " , is an infantry division of the United States Army based in Fort Belvoir , Virginia . It is a formation of the United States Army National Guard and contains units from Maryland , Virginia , and North Carolina .

Formed in 1917 , the division deployed to France as a part of the American Expeditionary Force during World War I. Called up for service again in World War II , the division 's 116th Regiment , attached to the First Infantry Division , was in the first wave of troops ashore during Operation Overlord , the landings in Normandy , France . It supported a special Ranger unit tasked with clearing strong points at Omaha Beach . The rest of the 29th ID came ashore later then advanced to Saint @-@ Lô , and eventually through France and into Germany itself . These actions have since been the subject of many motion pictures and video games .

Following the end of World War II , the division saw frequent reorganizations and deactivations . Although the 29th did not see combat through most of the next 50 years , it participated in numerous training exercises throughout the world . It eventually saw deployments to Bosnia (SFOR10) and Kosovo (KFOR) as command elements , and units of the division continue to deploy to locations such as Guantanamo Bay Naval Base and to the War in Afghanistan as a part of the Global War on Terrorism 's Operation Enduring Freedom , and also to the Iraq War , as a part of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn .

= = History = =

The 29th Division was first constituted on paper 18 July 1917 , shortly after the American entry into World War I , in the Army National Guard . The division 's infantry units were the 57th Infantry Brigade , made up of the 113th Infantry Regiment and 114th Infantry Regiment from New Jersey , and the 58th Infantry Brigade , made up of the 115th Infantry Regiment from Maryland and 116th Infantry Regiment from Virginia . Its artillery units were Maryland 's 110th Artillery Regiment ; Virginia 's 111th Artillery Regiment ; and New Jersey 's 112th Artillery Regiment . As the division was composed of men from states that had units that fought for both the North and South during the Civil War , it was nicknamed the " Blue and Gray " division , after the blue uniforms of the Union and the gray uniforms of the Confederate armies during the American Civil War . The division was actually organized on 25 August 1917 at Camp McClellan , Alabama .

= = = World War I = = =

The division departed for the Western Front in June 1918 to join the American Expeditionary Forces fighting in World War I The division 's advance detachment reached Brest , France on 8 June . In late September , the 29th received orders to join the First United States Army 's Meuse @-@ Argonne offensive as part of the French XVII Corps . During its 21 days in combat , the 29th Division advanced seven kilometers , captured 2 @,@ 148 prisoners , and knocked out over 250 machine guns or artillery pieces . Thirty percent of the division became casualties ? 170 officers and 5 @,@ 691 enlisted men were killed or wounded . Shortly thereafter the Armistice with Germany was signed , ending hostilities between the Central Powers and the Allied Powers . The division returned to the United States in May 1919 . It demobilized on 30 May at Camp Dix , New Jersey , though it remained an active National Guard unit .

= = = World War II = = =

At the outbreak of World War II , the United States Army began buildup and reorganization of its fighting forces . The division was reactivated into active service on 3 February 1941 . Elements of the division were then sent to Fort Meade , Maryland for training . The 57th and 58th Brigades were inactivated as part of an army @-@ wide removal of brigades from divisions . Instead , the division was based around three infantry regiments ; the 115th Infantry Regiment , the 116th Infantry

Regiment , and the 175th Infantry Regiment . Also assigned to the division were the 110th , 111th , 224th , and 227th Field Artillery Battalions , as well as the 29th Signal Company , the 729th Ordnance Company , the 29th Quartermaster Company , the 29th Reconnaissance Troop , the 121st Engineer Battalion , the 104th Medical Battalion , and the 29th Counter Intelligence Detachment . On 12 March 1942 , with this reorganization complete the division was redesignated the 29th Infantry Division and began preparing for deployment to Europe .

The division was sent to England on 5 October 1942 on RMS Queen Mary . It was based throughout England and Scotland , where it immediately began training for an invasion of northern Europe across the English Channel . In May 1943 the division moved to the Devon ? Cornwall peninsula and started conducting simulated attacks against fortified positions . At this time it was assigned to V Corps of the U.S. First Army .

===== Operation Overlord =====

The cross @-@ channel invasion of France finally came on 6 June 1944 , D @-@ Day , Operation Overlord , the invasion of Normandy . The 29th Infantry Division sent the 116th Infantry Regiment to support the western flank of the 1st Infantry Division 's 16th Infantry Regiment at Omaha Beach . Omaha was known to be the most difficult of the five landing beaches , due to its rough terrain and bluffs overlooking the beach , which had been well fortified by its German defenders of the 352nd Infantry Division . The 116th Infantry Regiment was assigned four sectors of the beach ; Easy Green , Dog Red , Dog White , and Dog Green . Soldiers of the 29th Infantry Division boarded a large number of attack transports for the D @-@ Day invasion , among them Landing craft , Landing Ship , Tank and Landing Ship , Infantry ships and other vessels such as the SS Empire Javelin , USS Charles Carroll , and USS Buncombe County .

As the ships were traveling to the beach , the heavy seas , combined with the chaos of the fighting caused most of the landing force to be thrown off @-@ course and most of the 116th Infantry missed its landing spots . Most of the regiment 's tank support , launched from too far off @-@ shore , foundered and sank in the channel . The soldiers of the 116th Infantry began to hit the beach at 0630 , coming under heavy fire from German fortifications . A Company , 1st Battalion , 116th Infantry , from the Virginia National Guard in Bedford , Virginia was annihilated by overwhelming fire as it landed on the 116th 's westernmost section of the beach , along with half of C Company , 2nd Ranger Battalion which was landing to the west of the 116th . The catastrophic losses suffered by this small Virginia community led to it being selected for the site of the National D @-@ Day Memorial . The 1st Infantry Division 's forces ran into similar fortifications on the eastern half of the beach , suffering massive casualties coming ashore . By 0830 , the landings were called off for lack of space on the beach , as the Americans on Omaha Beach were unable to overcome German fortifications guarding the beach exits . Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley , commander of the United States First Army , considered evacuating the survivors and landing the rest of the divisions elsewhere . However , by noon , elements of the American forces had been able to organize and advance off the beach , and the landings resumed . By nightfall , the division headquarters landed on the beach with about 60 percent of the division 's total strength , and began organizing the push inland . On 7 June , a second wave of 20 @,@ 000 reinforcements from the 1st and 29th divisions was sent ashore . By the end of D @-@ Day , 2 @,@ 400 men from the two divisions had become casualties on Omaha Beach . Added to casualties at other beaches and air @-@ drops made the total casualties for Operation Overlord 6 @,@ 500 Americans and 3 @,@ 000 British and Canadians , lighter numbers than expected .

The entire division had landed in Normandy by 7 June . By 9 June , Omaha Beach was secure and the division occupied Isigny . On 14 July , the division was reassigned to XIX Corps , United States First Army , Twelfth United States Army Group .

===== Breakout =====

The division cut across the Elle River and advanced slowly toward Saint @-@ Lô , fighting bitterly

in the Normandy hedge rows . German reserves formed a new defensive front outside the town , and American forces fought a fierce battle with them two miles outside of the town . German forces used the dense bocage foliage to their advantage , mounting fierce resistance in house to house fighting in the ravaged Saint @-@ Lô . By the end of the fight , the Germans were relying on artillery support to hold the town following the depletion of the infantry contingent . The 29th Division , which was already undermanned after heavy casualties on D @-@ Day , was even further depleted in the intense fighting for Saint @-@ Lô . Eventually , the 29th was able to capture the city in a direct assault , supported by airstrikes from P @-@ 47 Thunderbolts .

After taking Saint @-@ Lô , on 18 July , the division joined in the battle for Vire , capturing that strongly held city by 7 August. it continued to face stiff German resistance as it advanced to key positions southeast of Saint @-@ Lô It was then reassigned to V Corps , and then again to VIII Corps . Turning west , the 29th took part in the assault on Brest which lasted from 25 August until 18 September . After a short rest , the division returned to XIX Corps and moved to defensive positions along the Teveren @-@ Geilenkirchen line in Germany and maintained those positions through October . On 16 November , the division began its drive to the Roer River , blasting its way through Siersdorf , Setterich , Durboslar , and Bettendorf , and reaching the Roer by the end of the month . Heavy fighting reduced Jülich Sportplatz and the Hasenfeld Gut on 8 December .

From 8 December 1944 to 23 February 1945 , the division was assigned to XIII Corps and held defensive positions along the Rur and prepared for the next major offensive . The division was reassigned to XIX Corps , and the attack jumped off across the Rur on 23 February , and carried the division through Jülich , Broich , Immerath , and Titz , to Mönchengladbach by 1 March 1945 . The division was out of combat in March . In early April the division was reassigned to XVI Corps , where 116th Infantry helped mop up in the Ruhr area . On 19 April 1945 the division , assigned to XIII Corps , pushed to the Elbe River and held defensive positions until 4 May . Meanwhile , the 175th Infantry cleared the Klotze Forest . After V @-@ E Day , the division was on military duty in the Bremen enclave . It was assigned to XVI Corps again for this assignment .

= = = Losses , decorations , demobilization = = =

During World War II , the 29th Infantry Division was commanded by Major General Charles H. Gerhardt . The division had such a high casualty rate that it was said that Gerhardt actually commanded three divisions : one on the field of battle , one in the hospital and one in the cemetery . The 29th Infantry Division lost 3 @, 720 killed in action , 15 @, 403 wounded in action , 462 missing in action , 526 prisoners of war , and 8 @, 665 non @-@ combat casualties , for a total of 28 @, 776 casualties during 242 days of combat . This amounted to over 200 percent of the division 's normal strength . The division , in turn , took 38 @, 912 German prisoners of war .

Soldiers of the 29th Infantry Division were awarded five Medals of Honor , 44 Distinguished Service Crosses , one Distinguished Service Medal , 854 Silver Star Medals , 17 Legion of Merit Medals , 24 Soldiers ' Medals , 6 @, 308 Bronze Star Medals , and 176 Air Medals during the conflict . The division itself was awarded four distinguished unit citations and four campaign streamers for the conflict .

The division remained on occupation duty until the end of 1945 . Camp Grohn near Bremen was the division headquarters until January 1946 . It returned to the United States in January 1946 and was demobilized and inactivated on 17 January 1946 at Camp Kilmer , New Jersey .

= = = Reactivation = = =

On 23 October 1946 , the division was reactivated in Norfolk , Virginia . However , its subordinate elements were not fully manned and activated for several years . It resumed its National Guard status , seeing weekend and summer training assignments but no major contingencies over the next few years .

In 1959 , the division was reorganized under the Pentomic five battle group division organization . Ewing 's 29th Infantry Division : A Short History of a Fighting Division says that several Maryland

infantry and engineer companies were reorganized to form 1st Med Tank Bn , 115th Armor ; the 29th Aviation Company was established ; and the 1st Reconnaissance Squadron , 183rd Armor , was established in Virginia as the division 's reconnaissance squadron . In 1963 , the division was reorganized in accordance with the Reorganization Objective Army Divisions plan , eliminating its regimental commands in favor of brigades . The division took command of 1st Brigade , 29th Infantry Division and 2nd Brigade , 29th Infantry Division of the Virginia Army National Guard , as well as 3rd Brigade , 29th Infantry Division of the Maryland Army National Guard . The division continued its service in the National Guard under this new organization .

In 1968 , in the middle of the Vietnam War , the Army inactivated several National Guard and Reserve divisions as part of a realignment of resources . The 29th Infantry Division was one of the divisions inactivated . During that time , the division 's subordinate units were reassigned to other National Guard divisions . 1st Brigade was inactivated , while 2nd Brigade was redesignated as the 116th Infantry Brigade , and the 3rd Brigade was redesignated as 3rd Brigade , 28th Infantry Division .

On 6 June 1984 , 40 years after the landings on Omaha Beach , the Army announced that it would reactivate the 29th Infantry Division , organized as a light infantry division , as part of a reorganization of the National Guard . On 30 September 1985 , the division was reactivated at Fort Belvoir , Virginia , with a detachment in Maryland . The 116th Infantry Brigade was redesignated the 1st Brigade , 29th Division , while the 58th Infantry Brigade became the 3rd Brigade . That year , the division also received its distinctive unit insignia .

= = = Post Cold War = = =

At the end of the Cold War , the Army saw further drawdowns and reductions in spending . The 29th Infantry Division was retained , however 2nd Brigade was inactivated in favor of assets from the inactivating 26th Infantry Division , which was redesignated the 26th Brigade , 29th Infantry Division .

The largest National Guard training exercise ever held in Virginia took place in July 1998 , bringing units from the 29th Infantry Division together for one large infantry exercise . The Division Maneuver Exercise , dubbed Operation Chindit , brought together Guard units from Virginia and Maryland , as well as Massachusetts , New Jersey , Connecticut and the District of Columbia . The exercise began with the insertion of troops from the 29th Infantry Division 's 1st and 3rd Brigades by UH @-@ 60 Blackhawk helicopters into strategic landing zones . NATO @-@ member forces trained with the 29th Infantry Division throughout the exercise . In December 2008 , the division also dispatched a task force to Camp Asaka near Tokyo , Japan for exercises with the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force called Yama Sakura 55 , an bilateral exercise simulating an invasion of Japan .

= = = Present day = = =

Hundreds of soldiers from the 29th Infantry Division completed nine days of training on 16 June 2001 at Fort Polk , Louisiana , to prepare for their peacekeeping mission in Bosnia , as the second division headquarters to be deployed as a part of SFOR 10 . In all , 2 @,@ 085 National Guard soldiers from 16 states from Massachusetts to California served with the multinational force that operated in the US sector , MND @-@ N. Their rotation began in October 2001 and lasted six months .

The 29th Infantry Division completed a two @-@ week warfighter exercise at Fort Leavenworth , Kansas in late July 2003 . Nearly 1 @,@ 200 soldiers of the division participated in the training , which was overseen by First United States Army . Also engaged in the simulation war were about 150 soldiers of the New York Army National Guard 's 42nd Infantry Division . The exercises covered a variety of operations , ranging from large scale contingencies to airborne and civil affairs operations .

In March 2004 , the 3rd Battalion 116th Infantry of 500 + soldiers was mobilized for 579 days in support of Operation Enduring Freedom , Afghanistan . Following 4 month train up , the battalion

deployed to Bagram Air Base Afghanistan where the unit split into two operational elements . One element was stationed at Bagram where they were responsible for near base security and the theater @-@ north Quick Reaction Force . They executed 5 , 10 , and 20 kilometer ring patrols to increase force security and stayed ready to react at a moments notice to deploy anywhere in Afghanistan to react to " troops in contact " that requested support . The other element moved south with the Bn Commander to control and shape operations in the Wardak and Ghazni provinces . It was here that the 116th would take its first casualties by enemy contact since WWII . SGT Bobby Beasley and SSG Craig Cherry were killed in an IED attack on a patrol in southern Ghazni near Gilan . Within the first three months , the unit would deploy nearly every soldier around Bagram , and throughout the Wardak and Ghazni provinces during the first Afghan elections in which President Hamid Karzai was elected . The unit would redeploy back to the United States in July 2005 highly decorated for its efforts during their mission following hundreds of successful combat patrols and engagements .

In 2005 , 350 veterans , politicians , and soldiers representing the division went to Normandy and Paris , in France for the 60th anniversary of the D @-@ Day landings . The Army National Guard organized a major ceremony for the 60th anniversary , as many of the veterans who participated in the invasion were in their 80s at that time , and the 60th anniversary was seen as the last major anniversary of the landings in which a large number of veterans could take part .

The division underwent major reorganization in 2006 . A special troops battalion was added to the division 's command structure , and its three brigades were redesignated . It as organized around three brigades ; the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team of North Carolina , the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of Virginia , and the Combat Aviation Brigade , 29th Infantry Division of Maryland .

In December 2006 , the division took command of the Eastern region of Kosovo 's peacekeeping force , to provide security in the region . The division 's soldiers were part of a NATO multi @-@ national task force consisting of units from the Ukraine , Greece , Poland , Romania , Armenia and Lithuania under the command of U.S. Army Brigadier General Douglas B. Earhart who concurrently served as the 29th 's Deputy Commanding General . The division returned to Fort Belvoir in November 2007 .

After a three @-@ month pre @-@ deployment train @-@ up at Camp Shelby , MS , the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team deployed to Kuwait and Iraq in September , 2007 , as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom , returning home in May 2008 .

Approximately 72 Virginia and Maryland National Guard Soldiers with the 29th ID deployed to Afghanistan from December 2010 to October 2011 . As part of the 29th ID Security Partnering Team , the Soldiers were assigned to NATO 's International Security Assistance Force Joint Command Security Partnering Team with the mission of assisting with the growth and development of the Afghan National Security Forces where they served as advisers and mentors to senior Afghan leaders . They were part of a NATO Coalition of 49 troop @-@ contributing nations that Security Partnering personnel interacted with daily across Afghanistan .

They were replaced in November 2011 by a new team from the 29th Infantry Division . A team of 65 29th ID Soldiers served in Afghanistan as a Security Partnering Team until July 2012 .

The 29th ID suffered one casualty during this deployment . Maj. Robert Marchanti of the Maryland Army National Guard , was killed on 25 February 2012 .

In 2014 the 29th ID twice sent Soldiers to the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels , Germany to assist in the training of U.S. and multinational Soldiers preparing to head to Kosovo as part of the Kosovo Force mission . The 29th ID Soldiers performed as the KFOR staff , serving as subject matter experts , enforcing KFOR orders , systems and procedures , and working with JMRC to help the deploying troops achieve their training objectives .

The 29th ID currently serves as the Domestic All @-@ Hazards Response Team (DART) in FEMA Regions 1 through 5 (states east of the Mississippi) . In this role the 29th ID is prepared to assist state National Guard in their service to governors and citizens during an incident response . The DART provides defense support of civil authority capabilities in response to a catastrophic event . The DART conducts joint reception , staging , onward @-@ movement and Integration of inbound

OPCON forces and establishes base support installations and / or forward operating bases for sustaining operations .

On 24 July 2015 , Brig. Gen. Blake C. Ortner took command of the 29th Infantry Division from Maj. Gen. Charles W. Whittington .

= = Current organization = =

The 29th Infantry Division exercises training and readiness oversight of the following units ; they are not organic :

29th Infantry Division Headquarters and Headquarters BattalionHeadquarters and Support Company , Fort Belvoir , Virginia (VA NG)

A (Operations) Company , Fort Belvoir , Virginia (VA NG)

B (Intelligence and Sustainment) Company , Annapolis , Maryland (MD NG)

C (Signal) Company , Cheltenham , Maryland (MD NG)

29th Infantry Division Band (VA NG)

30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team (NC NG) 1st Squadron , 150th Cavalry Regiment (WV NG)

1st Battalion , 252nd Armor Regiment (NC NG)

1st Battalion , 120th Infantry Regiment (NC NG)

1st Battalion , 113th Field Artillery Regiment (NC NG)

230th Brigade Support Battalion (NC NG)

30th ABCT Special Troops Battalion (NC NG)

53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (FL NG)

Special Troops Battalion

1st Squadron , 153rd Cavalry Regiment

1st Battalion , 124th Infantry Regiment

3rd Battalion , 124th Infantry Regiment

2nd Battalion , 116th Field Artillery Regiment

53rd Brigade Support Battalion

116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (VA NG) 2nd Squadron , 183rd Cavalry Regiment

1st Battalion , 116th Infantry Regiment

3rd Battalion , 116th Infantry Regiment

1st Battalion , 111th Field Artillery Regiment

429th Brigade Support Battalion

Special Troops Battalion

Combat Aviation Brigade , 29th Infantry Division (MD NG) 1st Battalion , 285th Aviation Regiment

2nd Battalion , 224th Aviation Regiment (VA NG)

8th Battalion , 229th Aviation Regiment

1st Battalion , 111th Aviation Regiment

1204th Aviation Support Battalion

142nd Field Artillery BrigadeHeadquarters & Headquarters Battery , 142nd Fires Brigade : Fayetteville , Arkansas

1st Battalion , 142nd Field Artillery Regiment : Harrison , Arkansas

2nd Battalion , 142nd Field Artillery Regiment : Fort Smith , Arkansas

217th Brigade Support Battalion : Booneville , Arkansas

F Battery , 142nd Field Artillery Regiment : Fayetteville

142nd Signal Company Fayetteville

= = Honors = =

= = = Unit decorations = = =

== Campaign streamers ==

== Legacy ==

The 29th Infantry Division has been featured numerous times in popular media , particularly for its role on D @-@ Day . The division 's actions on Omaha Beach are featured prominently in the 1962 film The Longest Day , as well as in the 1998 film Saving Private Ryan . Soldiers of the division are featured in other films and television with smaller roles , such as in the 2005 film War of the Worlds .

The 29th Infantry Division is also featured in numerous video games related to World War II . The division 's advance through Normandy and Europe is featured in the games Close Combat , Company of Heroes , Medal of Honor : Allied Assault and Call of Duty 3 , in which the player assumes the role of a soldier of the division .

A number of soldiers serving with the 29th Infantry Division have gone on to achieve notability for various reasons . Among them are highly decorated soldier Joseph A. Farinholt , soccer player James Ford , United States federal judge Alfred D. Barksdale , and historian Lawrence C. Wroth , generals Milton Reckord , Norman Cota , Charles D. W. Canham , and Donald Wilson .

Soldiers who received the Medal of Honor during service with the 29th Infantry Division include Henry Costin , Earle Davis Gregory , and Patrick Regan from World War I and Frank D. Peregory and Sherwood H. Hallman. from World War II .

The 29th also lends its name to the prominent online military simulation group that is known as the 29th Infantry Division (or simply 29th , for short) .