



U.S. Army North (Fifth Army)

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Press Release

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1400 E Grayson St., Building 44
San Antonio, Texas 78208



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 10, 2021

Release No. 21-02-001

ARNORTH to oversee military COVID-19 vaccination support to FEMA in California

SAN ANTONIO, Texas - At the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, 222 Soldiers from Fort Carson, Colorado, will deploy in the coming days to Los Angeles, California, to support a state-run, federally supported COVID-19 vaccination center there. U.S. Army North, the Joint Force Land Component Command of U.S. Northern Command, will oversee the military COVID-19 response operation in support of state and federal vaccination efforts.

"Getting shots – vaccinations – in people's arms is the mission," said Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, ARNORTH and JFLCC commander. "And this team, here on behalf of the governor and state, has the ability to get thousands more people vaccinated every day."

The 222-member team, which will begin supporting FEMA's California State University Los Angeles vaccination center next week, is one of five teams Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III approved on February 4, to support FEMA, the lead federal agency for the whole-of-government response. The team, which is under the immediate command and control of Fort Carson's 299th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, is comprised primarily of vaccinators, registered nurses and other medical personnel from the Colorado base.

Army North's Joint Task Force 46, formed primarily by the Michigan Army National Guard's 46th Military Police Command, will serve as an intermediate headquarters between the Fort Carson team and the JFLCC. Additionally, the task force continues to manage, on behalf of the JFLCC, 355 military medical personnel from the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force, who are providing ongoing medical support to 14 hospitals in 13 cities within California, Arizona, Texas, and the Navajo Nation.

In addition to TF 46, the JFLCC will work closely with U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Jeffrey D. Smiley, California Military Department Joint Staff director and the dual-status commander for the state's military COVID-19 response.

A dual-status commander is typically appointed in large, complex stateside missions or response efforts involving both National Guard members in state, or Title 32 status, and other service members in federal, or Title 10 status. The dual-status commander has command authority over both elements and is simultaneously a member of the state chain of command and the federal chain of command.

"While a chain of command will always exist in the military, make no mistake, we are not in charge here," said Richardson. "This is a state-run, federally-supported site."

Details regarding the other four teams will be announced at a later date.

For additional information, contact ARNORTH Public Affairs office at usarmy.jbsa.arnorth.mbx.pao@mail.mil or 210-428-9835.