

Iowa Guard Continues to Serve

Currently, with less than 200 Soldiers and Airmen deployed overseas, the Iowa National Guard is at its lowest number of personnel deployed since the beginning of the Iraq war in 2001. However, the Iowa National Guard is preparing for the largest deployment, over 3,000 members, in the 170 year history of the Iowa National Guard.

This week, Adjutant General Timothy Orr presented his first Condition of the Guard Address to the Iowa Legislature. He has served as Adjutant General for the past ten months.

Preparing for Future Needs

In preparation for future deployments and homeland security needs, General Orr began development and implementation of the Iowa National Guard Campaign Plan. The goal of this plan is to develop the future Iowa National Guard; a force that is capable of responding to a full spectrum of military and domestic operations.

As part of this plan, the Iowa National Guard will conduct its first State Annual Training Exercise in more than 30 years, involving all Iowa National Guard units. The training exercise will provide logistical and training support to assist the 2nd Brigade in their mobilization preparation.

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team and the 734th Agribusiness Development Team are anticipating deployments to Afghanistan later this year. The 2nd Brigade deployment will be the largest single unit call-up of its type since World War II. Almost every community in Iowa will be affected in some way by this deployment.

The 734th Agribusiness Development Team is the first ever joint overseas deployment between the Iowa Army and the Air National Guard. The intent of the team is to promote the revitalization of the agriculture sector within Afghanistan.

On the home front, the Iowa National Guard, along with many partners, hosted a Midwest regional emergency response exercise. The multi-state, multi-simulation exercise included over 1,000 personnel from several states. It was the largest, most complex disaster exercise of its kind ever conducted by the Iowa National Guard.

Supporting the Troops and Families

With the ongoing war and the upcoming deployment, General Orr spoke about taking care of guard members and their families. To address the mental health issues of soldiers and recent veterans, the Iowa National Guard is implementing a program to develop the strengths of its members in all areas. This includes providing immediate support of Iowa's soldiers on deployment, as well as at home.

The Guard also has added additional Family Assistance Specialists to help individuals with family issues, and help them connect to military, community, and veterans' resources. Currently there are seven specialists located around Iowa.

General Orr concluded his remarks saying, with the support of all Iowans, the Iowa National Guard is continuing to move from a Strategic Reserve to an Operational Reserve that is ready to take on any military or domestic operation.