

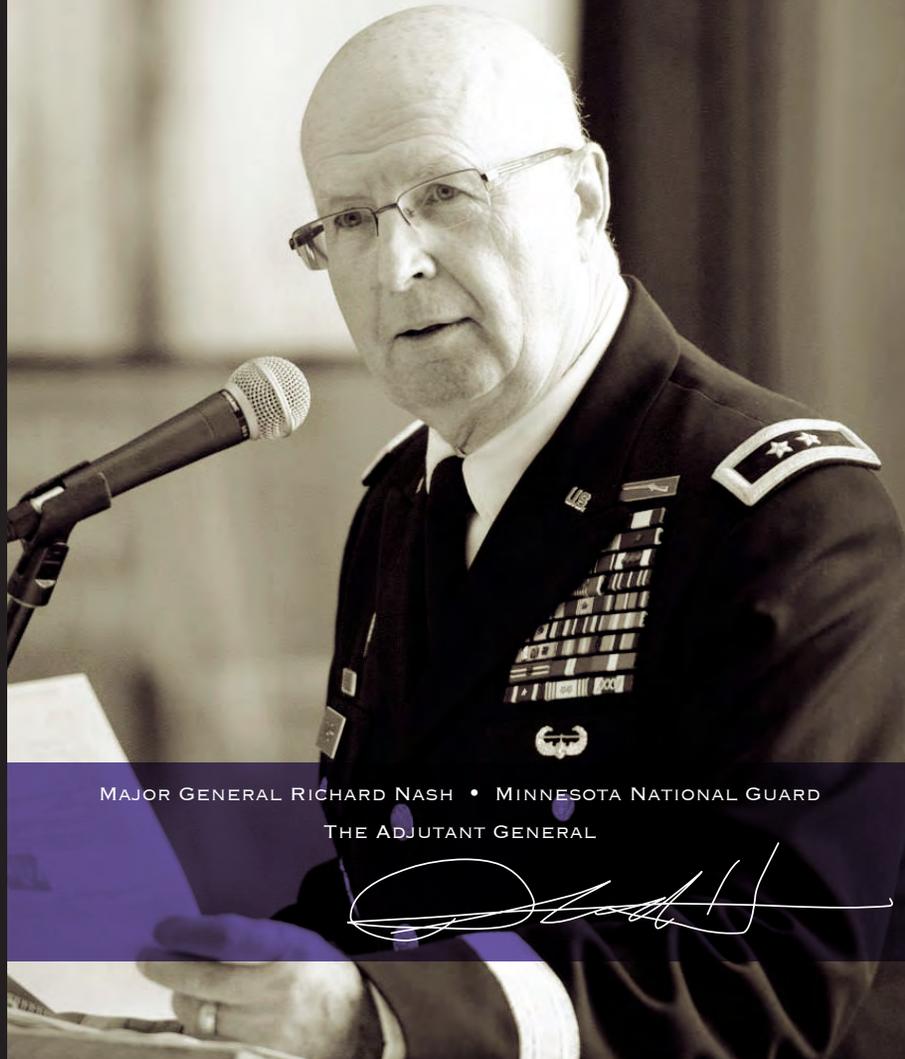


MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD

2014 ANNUAL REPORT / 2015 OBJECTIVES

MMXIV





MAJOR GENERAL RICHARD NASH • MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

(ABOVE) Maj. Gen. Richard Nash delivers the congratulatory speech at the promotion of Brig. Gen. David Hamlar Jr. at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul. Photo by: Sgt. 1st Class Ben Houtkooper

TO THE CITIZENS OF MINNESOTA,

This past year was characterized by fast-paced changes at home and abroad, and the soldiers and airmen of your Minnesota National Guard have proven that they are committed to answering the call of our state and nation.

Globally, the relevance and competence of the National Guard as a military force was validated in 2014, even with the continued drawdown of *Operation Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan. The emergence of ISIL triggered a new military effort, *Operation Inherent Resolve*, and the airmen of the 133rd Airlift Wing and soldiers of the 34th Combat Aviation Brigade expanded their missions overseas to support U.S. efforts to counter this new threat.

A dramatic outbreak of the deadly Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa prompted a unified “whole of government” response to stop the disease from spreading to the U.S. The Minnesota National Guard, the Minnesota Department of Health and numerous other state agencies were convened at the direction of Governor Mark Dayton to ensure that state government has a solid response plan to contain the virus if it is detected in Minnesota.

In order to slow the spread of Ebola at its source, soldiers from the 34th Red Bull Infantry Division were directed by the Department of Defense to deploy to Liberia in 2015 to provide command and control for U.S. forces sustaining *Operation United Assistance*, the military effort supporting the U.S. Agency for International Development. Airmen from the 133rd Airlift Wing will deploy to provide tactical airlift support.

At home in Minnesota, citizen-soldiers and airmen assisted local law enforcement during blizzards and floods in 2014. We provided the governor of Minnesota a unique and versatile force that could immediately apply federal military resources to aid citizens in need.

The Minnesota National Guard’s responses to the state and nation were completed in an environment of diminishing fiscal resources. Our men and women in uniform continue to prove that the Guard is a tremendous value for the taxpayers, and will continue to take every opportunity to be responsible stewards of our resources.

Looking ahead to 2015, we will leverage our capabilities and focus on *Vigilant Guard*, an exercise in August that will further enhance the Minnesota National Guard’s ability to train, partner and coordinate with local, state and federal agencies.

I’m proud of the soldiers and airmen that make up your Minnesota National Guard. They are imbued with values of professionalism, dedication and determination, thus, the Minnesota National Guard’s capability to respond to community needs, fiscal challenges and societal change is unmatched. With them, I can assure you that we remain “always ready.”

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(COVER) Soldiers and airmen unfurl the U.S. flag at the 2014 Minnesota Twins' Armed Forces Appreciation Day at Target Field in July. Photo by: Tara Hawks, used with permission



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(ABOVE) 1st Lt. Timothy Oltman, 109th Airlift Squadron, waits for clearance to taxi in St. Paul during a joint-formation training mission. Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Amy Lovgren



2014 IN FOCUS

OPERATION UNITED ASSISTANCE | EBOLA

In September 2014 President Barack Obama issued an executive order authorizing the Department of Defense to mobilize National Guard personnel in support of *Operation United Assistance*, the military effort to provide humanitarian relief to curb the spread of the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in West Africa.

Nearly 300 Minnesota Army National Guard soldiers from the Rosemount-based 34th Red Bull Infantry Division and 50 airmen from the St. Paul-based 133rd Airlift Wing will deploy to support humanitarian relief in Liberia in spring 2015. The 34th ID will provide command and control of U.S. military forces supporting the United States Agency for International Development's response to the outbreak in the region, and the wing will provide tactical airlift support.

According to November 2014 figures, more than 14,000

people have been infected and more than 5,000 have died of the Ebola Virus Disease in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The Red Bulls will provide specialized staff expertise for the Department of Defense's personnel on the ground. The 34th ID, a versatile force having completed peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Kosovo, and war-fighting missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, has the ability to lead military forces in this type of operation.

All soldiers and airmen deploying to West Africa will receive specific medical training – developed in conjunction with the Department of Defense – and utilize personal protective equipment to ensure they are safeguarded. Personnel will not be directly involved in the treatment of Ebola-stricken patients.

Since the outbreak, Minnesota has been preparing for a verified case of Ebola in the state. The Minnesota National



Guard is collaborating with the Minnesota Departments of Health, Public Safety, Management and Budget, and other state agencies to enhance preparedness for a coordinated state response.

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM | OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE

In May 2014 the St. Paul-based 34th Combat Aviation Brigade deployed its Headquarters Company and the 2nd Battalion, 147th Assault Helicopter Battalion to conduct aviation operations and security cooperation for U.S. Army Central Command in Kuwait.

Military operations against militant groups in Iraq and Syria were authorized in September 2014. Dubbed *Operation Inherent Resolve*, the 34th CAB's mission was expanded to directly support this effort. Members of the 34th CAB are expected to return in spring 2015.

(ABOVE, LEFT) Maj. Gen. Neal Loidolt announces that the Rosemount-based 34th Red Bull Infantry Division Headquarters will deploy in support of Operation United Assistance in spring 2015. Photo by: Staff Sgt. Patrick Loch (ABOVE, RIGHT) A Marine with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit rappels out of a UH-60 Black Hawk operated by C Company, 2-147th Assault Helicopter Battalion, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Photo by: Spc. Jess Nemece



ARMY FORCE STRUCTURE

With the end of combat operations in Afghanistan, the Minnesota National Guard lent a strong voice in support of the formation of the National Commission for the Future of the Army, which will systematically look at the issues surrounding future Army force structure. The Army's initial submission, specifically troop and equipment reductions, would have reduced the National Guard across the country from 350,000 to 315,000 soldiers and stripped the Guard of attack helicopters, rendering the Guard unable to deploy to perform combat aviation operations.

With National Guard soldiers costing one-third as much as active duty soldiers, the Minnesota National Guard has advocated that it doesn't make fiscal or business sense to cut the military's least expensive asset. A disproportionate cut of Guard forces could adversely affect Minnesota, with projected cuts of 1,000 citizen-soldiers from a 13,000-person force, and the possible loss of helicopters

(ABOVE, LEFT) *The 133rd Airlift Wing hosts an event that brought in specialists from the Children's Hospital of St. Paul to train members of the wing's medical squadron.*
Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Paul Santikko



that could be diverted to other states or the Army's other components.

The Minnesota National Guard will continue to focus on ensuring the right force structure includes citizen-soldiers ready to respond to requests by the governor to assist local law enforcement during state emergencies such as floods, fires and blizzards.

2014 DOMESTIC RESPONSE

In 2014 the Minnesota National Guard assisted local authorities in addressing both blizzard and flood emergencies.

During snowstorms in February, armories in Albert Lea, Olivia and Owatonna were made available to shelter civilians. Soldiers assisted local law enforcement by conducting search and rescue missions to aid stranded motorists.

(ABOVE, RIGHT) *The 2014-2015 Senior Advisory Task Force consists of (from left to right): Father Kevin McDonough, St. Peter Claver's Church in St. Paul; Charles Porter, Retired Judge, Hennepin County Veterans Court; the Honorable Al Quie, former Minnesota Governor; Nancy Anderson, U.S. Trust; Steve Tourek, Marvin Windows; Maj. Gen. Richard Nash, Minnesota National Guard Adjutant General; Jim Kosmo, Author; Steve Hunegs, Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota; Don Shelby, former WCCO-TV anchor; J. Robinson, University of Minnesota Head Wrestling Coach; Greg Coleman, Harris Communication and Minnesota Vikings; (not pictured) Karen Diver, Chairwoman of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa; Sara Criger, President of Mercy Hospital; Carolyn Parnell, former Commissioner of Minnesota Information Technology; Dr. Earl Potter, President of St. Cloud State University; and Mark Richie, former Minnesota Secretary of State. Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Lynette Olivares*

In spring 2014, two units from Cloquet and Mankato were activated to support the state's flood response efforts. Both units responded at the order of the governor after local authorities requested state assistance for ongoing flooding in the areas.

Since 2005 Minnesota National Guardsmen have completed more than 22,000 man-days assisting local authorities in response to fires, floods, blizzards, tornadoes and missing person searches across the state.

SENIOR ADVISORY TASK FORCE

Since 2011 a 14-person committee of community leaders from across the state has provided feedback, guidance and insight on Minnesota National Guard long-range strategic issues. In 2014 the Senior Advisory Task Force convened to address such issues as diversity, environmental sustainability and equipment modernization.



PRIORITIES

(ABOVE) *The 55th Civil Support Team conducts a full-scale training exercise on Lake Superior aboard the 730-foot lake freighter American Victory in conjunction with the U.S. Coast Guard, the Duluth Fire Department, the Duluth Chemical Assessment Team and the University of Minnesota.*
Photo by: Sgt. 1st Class Ben Houtkooper



INTRODUCTION TO PRIORITIES

The Minnesota National Guard's enduring goal is to provide an agile, resilient and ready force to fulfill any federal, state or community need. The Minnesota National Guard's success relies on its ability to provide military assets when called upon and working with interagency partners to enhance joint-response capabilities.

In order to fulfill this obligation to the state and nation, the Minnesota National Guard focuses on six priorities that guide the organization through decision-making and mission-planning processes, ensuring a unified and consistent response.

- COMPETENT READY FORCE
- SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE
- OPTIMAL FORCE STRUCTURE
- BEYOND THE YELLOW RIBBON
- DIVERSITY
- CYBER SECURITY & RESPONSE

(ABOVE) *The 2-147th Assault Helicopter Battalion conducts over water personnel recovery training on the Arabian Gulf near the Kuwait Naval Base.*
Photo by: Spc. Jess Nemec



WE PROVIDE THE REQUIRED PERSONNEL, EQUIPMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS TO ENSURE WE HAVE A COMPETENT, READY FORCE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR STATE AND NATION.



COMPETENT READY FORCE

The Minnesota National Guard is committed to providing the state and nation a trained, prepared and equipped force, capable of responding to any community need or federal mission.

A competent and ready force is achieved by recruiting the right mix of people, then training them to do specific jobs and assigning them to units across the state. Additionally, units are required to ensure their soldiers and airmen are proficient in operating the most up-to-date equipment, and large-scale exercises are routinely executed to evaluate performance and strengthen partnerships with outside agencies.

Personnel readiness, which is achieved when units ensure that all of their people are administratively and medically prepared, is the final component to fielding a competent and ready force.

COMPETENT READY FORCE | TRAINING & PARTNERSHIPS

In 2014 several training events were conducted, including the *Vigilant Vortex* exercise. The exercise gauged the organization's ability to respond to simulated disasters across the state to include tornadoes, chemical spills and power outages. In conjunction with nearly 30 local, state and federal agencies, the Minnesota National Guard was able to fine-tune best practices and prepare for the larger-scale *Vigilant Guard* exercise in 2015.

For the first time in its 41-year history, the Norwegian Reciprocal Troop Exchange was held in the summer. For two intense weeks, Minnesota National Guard members trained alongside Norwegian Home Guard counterparts, sharing military tactics and equipment, fostering partnerships and understanding cultural ties between the two allies. In Croatia, soldiers with the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team trained on tactics with their counterparts.

COMPETENT READY FORCE | THE WAY AHEAD

The financial effect of sequestration will present unique challenges in 2015 and beyond. Funding to send soldiers and airmen to military schools will be significantly reduced. In order to ensure the organization remains trained and ready, leaders will prioritize and identify soldiers and airmen who need Military Occupational Specialty training and additional training that will prepare them for future deployments.

For the past several years the Minnesota National Guard has exceeded personnel readiness standards and will strive to continue that trend in 2015 and beyond. Accomplishing this is critical, and will help ensure Minnesota National Guard soldiers and airmen are prepared to execute their assigned missions when called upon.

(ABOVE, LEFT) The 34th Red Bull Infantry Division operates in a network of modular tents during the successful *Warfighter Exercise* at the Mission Training Complex near Fort Leavenworth, Kan. Photo by: Sgt. 1st Class Ben Houtkooper (ABOVE, RIGHT) Soldiers and airmen participate in the 41st U.S./Norway Reciprocal Troop Exchange in June 2014. Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Rechtfertig



WE INVEST IN SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE TO ENSURE OUR FACILITIES ARE ECONOMICALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND AND REMAIN ASSETS TO SERVICE MEMBERS AND COMMUNITIES.

SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE | ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND

The Minnesota National Guard's Environmental Quality team was the recipient of the 2014 Secretary of Defense Environmental Award for Environmental Quality, team category.

The initiatives began with a commitment to Net Zero, which focuses on reducing energy consumption by changing behaviors and adding energy efficient updates to new construction and existing facilities. To accelerate the organization's Net Zero success, the Minnesota National Guard implemented an energy challenge program. The challenge encouraged eligible facilities to reduce energy consumption by 3 percent. With 41 Minnesota National Guard armories participating in the challenge, energy consumption was reduced by an average of 5.4 percent. Some of the upgrades included geothermal and solar thermal heating, water reuse, solid waste recycling and natural and LED lighting.

In 2014 the Minnesota National Guard partnered with Duluth-based Minnesota Power to construct a 10-megawatt solar array on Camp Ripley. The array, capable of powering more than 1,000 homes beyond the power requirements of the post, is set to be completed by 2016. Additionally,

a request to construct a district heating facility on Camp Ripley was submitted. The facility would be fueled by renewable woody biomass and reduce the post's reliance on natural gas by 90 percent.

SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE | ECONOMICALLY SOUND

The largest force-wide issue looming over the Minnesota National Guard has been the need to address the aging condition of many of the organization's training and community centers – an issue compounded by sequestration, budget cycles and Army decisions on force structure. With hard decisions on the horizon, a years-long study was commissioned to assess facility condition, age, capacity for improvements, demographics and travel considerations for unit members with an eye toward future funding levels. The results of the study found that, if the Minnesota National Guard were to continue on its current trajectory, more than 86 percent of its facilities would be in poor or failing condition by 2030 – conditions that would affect personnel readiness and jeopardize the organization's ability to effectively respond to state and federal missions.

Following the study the Readiness Center Transformation Master Plan was released, recommending new construction, consolidation and closure of some Minnesota National

Guard armories. The RCTMP is a 20-year plan that officially began in 2014, necessitated by predicted reductions in force structure, aging buildings, Minnesota's changing population patterns and continued emphasis on financial austerity following 13 years of war. The plan will ultimately reduce the number of armory locations from the current 61 to 52 by 2034; however, the 2034 end state of the RCTMP projects that 85 percent of the organization's facilities will be in fair or good condition – compared to only 14 percent if the Minnesota National Guard were to do nothing.

Through a coordinated process of renovating existing structures, consolidating nearby facilities, closing outdated buildings and constructing new armories in key communities throughout the state, the RCTMP will put the Minnesota National Guard on a more effective course for sustainable infrastructure. Though the number of facilities the Minnesota National Guard utilizes will be reduced in number, the improvements planned for future construction and remodels will be designed to expand reach and improve the capabilities of units utilizing those facilities, maintaining the organization's presence throughout all of Minnesota. Further, modern armories are being built as shared facilities, co-locating with civilian agencies and departments, and being utilized as community resource and activity centers.

(ABOVE) Architectural illustration of the shared Stillwater National Guard Armory and municipal fire department, to be completed in 2017. Illustration provided by: BWBR Architects, St. Paul

RCTMP

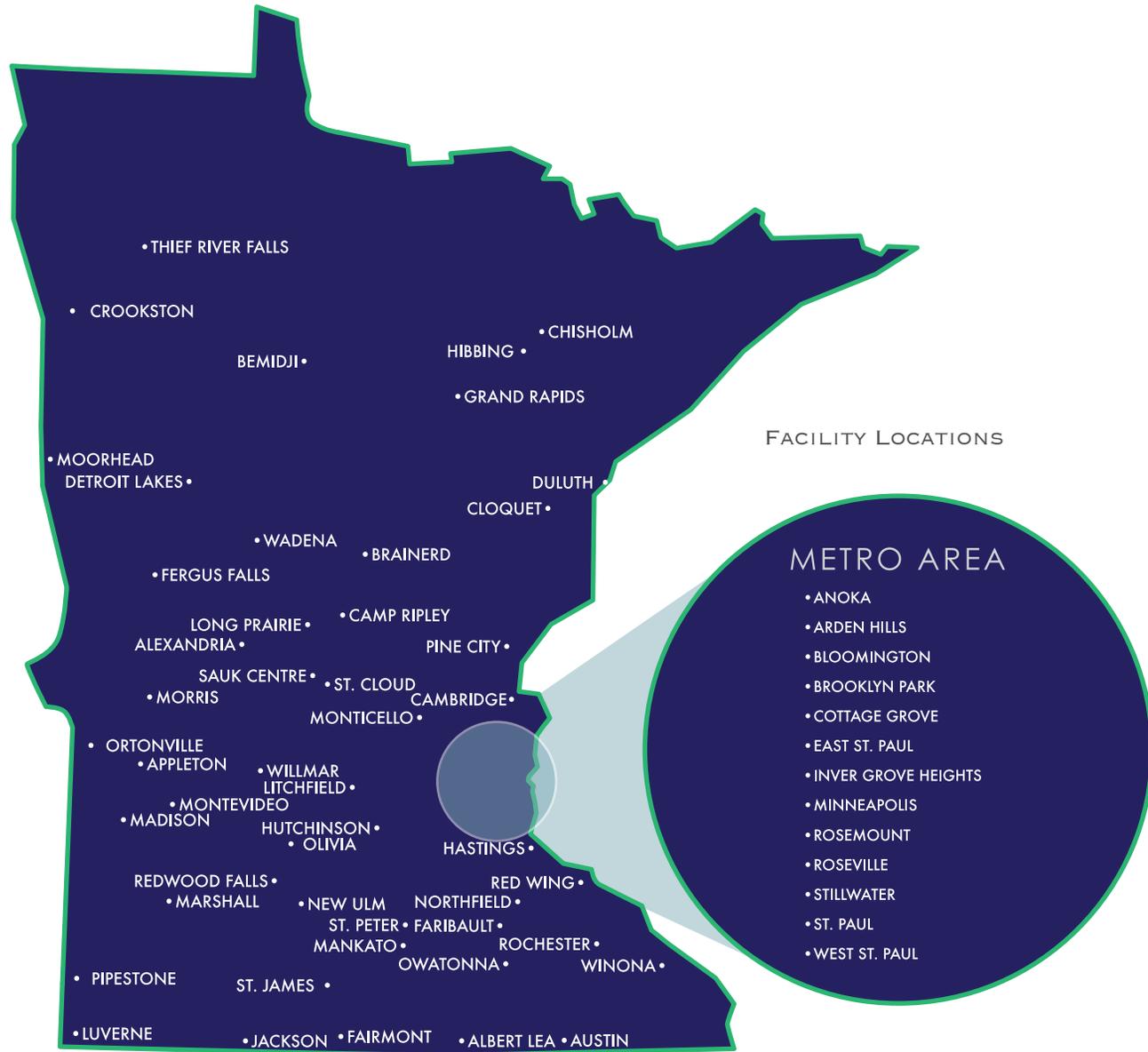
SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE | RCTMP

The Minnesota National Guard has built long and prosperous relationships with Minnesota communities, and citizen-soldiers and airmen will ensure that it remains a community-based organization both now and into the future.

At the direction of the National Guard Bureau, the Minnesota National Guard has thoroughly researched its 64 Army facilities located in 61 Minnesota communities, assessing facility condition, age, capacity for improvements, demographics, diversity, travel considerations for unit members and future federal and state funding projections.

The resulting report – the Readiness Center Transformation Master Plan, or RCTMP – recommends new construction, closing and consolidation over the next twenty years.

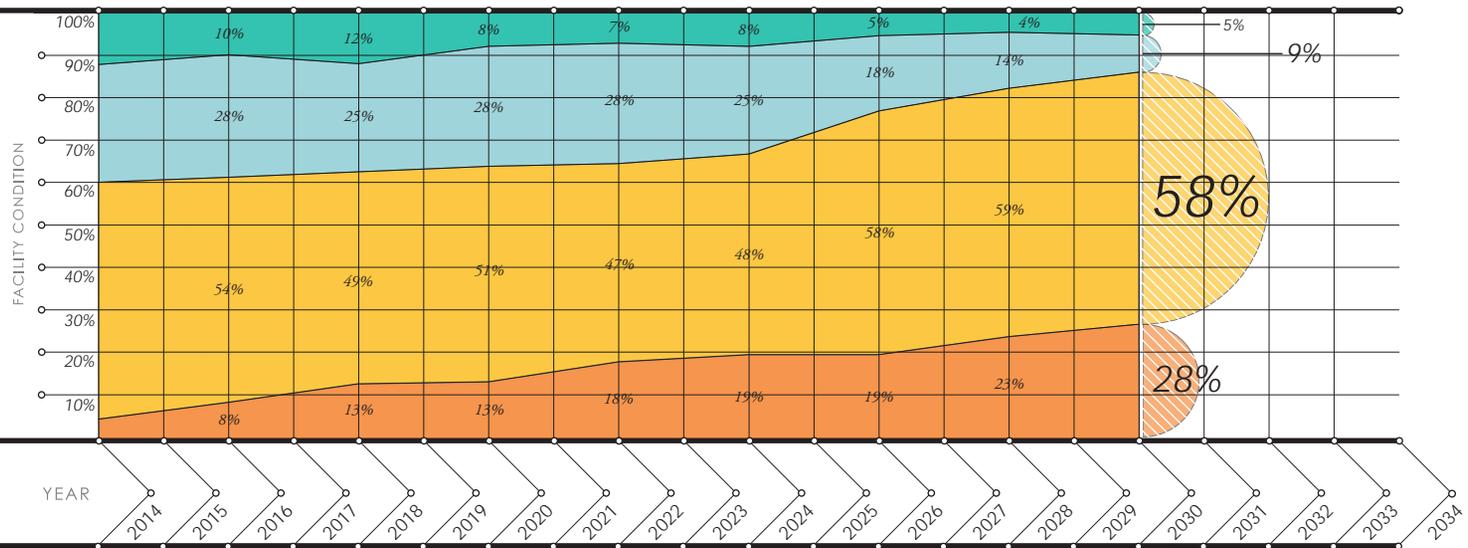
Currently, the Minnesota National Guard operates in 61 communities. Based on current budget and military construction fund projections for the next two decades, in 2034 the Minnesota National Guard will operate in 52 communities. The Guard has begun initial planning to close, construct and expand facilities.



20-YEAR PLAN

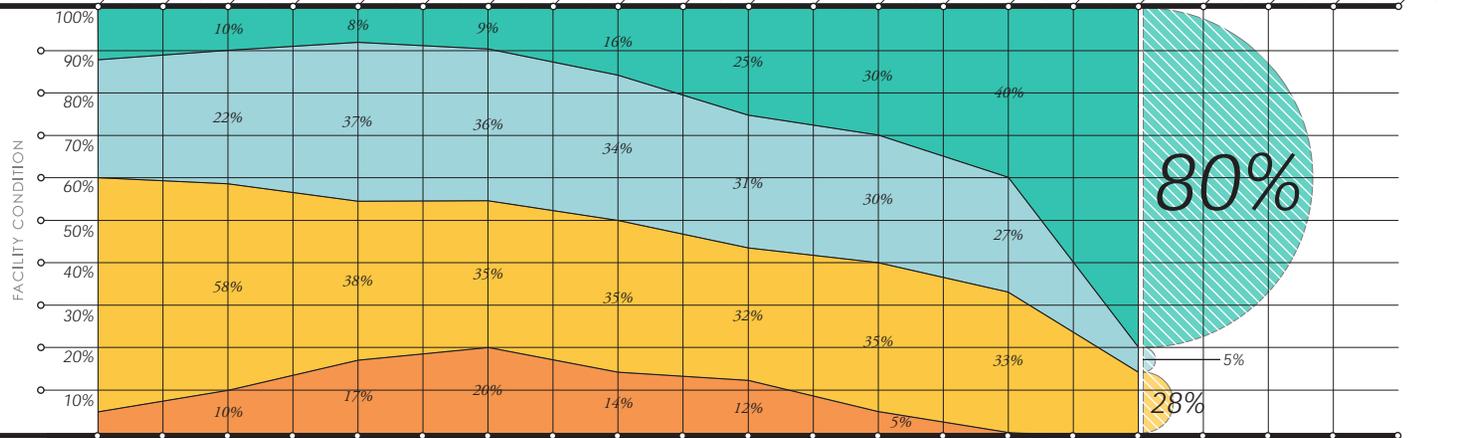
WITHOUT RCTMP

Based on a thorough assessment of Minnesota National Guard facilities, only 14 percent of readiness centers would be sufficient to meet the needs of the unit and community in 2034.

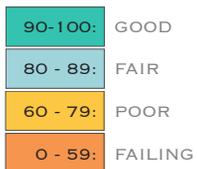


WITH RCTMP

Through the deliberate and proactive process of remodeling existing structures, consolidating nearby facilities, closing outdated buildings and constructing new armories, the Minnesota National Guard will be on a course to establish sustainable infrastructure for the next generation of citizen-soldiers.



FACILITY CONDITION RATING

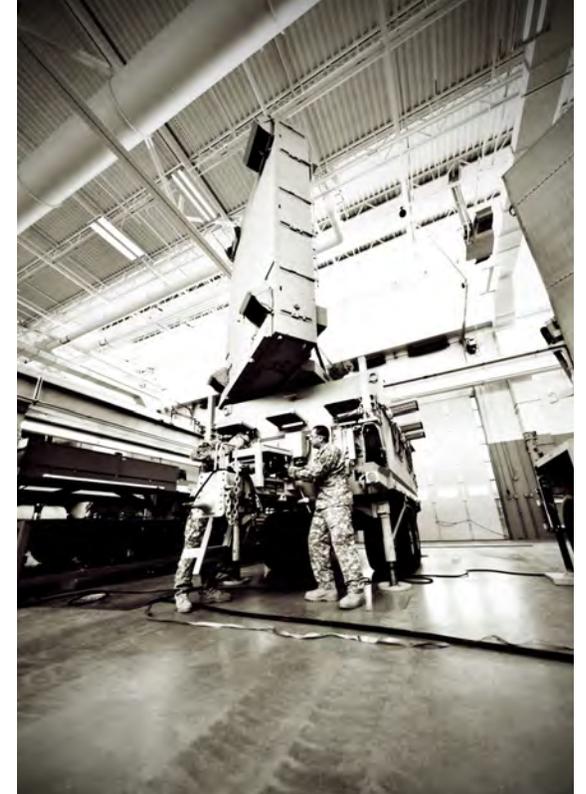


RCTMP IN ACTION

The end state is that future new construction, divestiture and consolidation will ensure that 85 percent of the organization's facilities will be in fair or good condition, compared to only 14 percent if the Minnesota National Guard were to do nothing over the next 20 years.



WE OPTIMIZE OUR FORCE BY STRUCTURING OUR PERSONNEL,
EQUIPMENT AND CAPABILITIES TO ACCOMPLISH CURRENT AND
ANTICIPATED MISSIONS.



OPTIMAL FORCE STRUCTURE

Ever-changing budgets, strategies and mission requirements – both state and federal – necessitate that the Minnesota National Guard constantly evaluates the composition and location of units. This assessment ensures the Minnesota National Guard is best positioned to respond to state needs and properly train for anticipated missions.

In 2014 the Minnesota National Guard realigned the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team by reorganizing existing Minnesota National Guard units. The brigade incorporated engineer, forward support, military intelligence, signal and headquarters companies into the newly formed 334th Brigade Engineer Battalion. The move integrates all of the brigade's required assets under one command.

Additionally, some Minnesota National Guard units are preparing to field new or upgraded equipment in the coming years. The 347th Regional Support Group will add

20 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles and 18 Heavy Equipment Transport systems to its fleet, and the 34th Combat Aviation Brigade will upgrade its UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, significantly enhancing their capabilities. In order to safely and effectively operate the new equipment, these units will undergo extensive training.

OPTIMAL FORCE STRUCTURE | FUTURE ARMY FORCE STRUCTURE

In 2014 and beyond, Minnesota National Guard leaders responsible for ensuring an optimal force structure remain focused on two actions.

The first action is to enhance cyber capabilities by adding a platoon-sized, information technology team to provide additional cyber security and response.

The second action is beginning to implement the Readiness Center Transformation Master Plan, a 20-year plan

recommending new construction, consolidation and closure of some Minnesota National Guard facilities.

RCTMP was the result of a years-long study enacted to assess facility condition, age, capacity for improvements, demographics and travel considerations for unit members.

The RCTMP end state projects 85 percent of the organization's facilities will be in fair or good condition by 2034 – compared to only 14 percent if the Minnesota National Guard were to continue on its current path.

(ABOVE, LEFT) 1st ABCT Commander Col. Robert Intress presents the new colors of the 334th Brigade Engineer Battalion during a reorganization ceremony at Camp Ripley Training Center. Photo by: Spc. William Boecker (ABOVE, RIGHT) Soldiers inspect an artillery radar at the Field Maintenance Shop at Arden Hills Army Training Site. Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Paul Santikko



WE CONNECT SERVICE MEMBERS, FAMILIES, EMPLOYERS AND COMMUNITIES TO ENSURE THE RESILIENCE OF THOSE WHO SERVE THROUGH BEYOND THE YELLOW RIBBON.

BEYOND THE YELLOW RIBBON | YELLOW RIBBON NETWORKS

Since the first Yellow Ribbon Network was proclaimed in 2008, 95 networks encompassing more than 270 Minnesota communities have emerged. These self-sustaining networks strive to support the service members, veterans and military families – of any age and from any era – that reside in their area. In 2014 the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program saw the cities of Cloquet, Cosmos, Crystal, Elko New Market, Flensburg, Genola, Golden Valley, New Hope, Pipestone, Redwood Falls and Robbinsdale join the effort. Additionally, the counties of Carlton, McLeod and Pipestone earned the governor’s official Yellow Ribbon Proclamation.

The Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program also recognizes Minnesota companies that make a commitment to supporting the service members, veterans and military families that they employ. In 2014 the Mall of America,

Northwestern Mutual – The Bohannen Group, Southwest Minnesota State University, Cargill, Minnesota Twins, SuperAmerica/Northern Tier and McGough Construction were proclaimed, bringing the total number of Yellow Ribbon Companies to 40.

After nearly six years of community outreach, the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program accomplished its goal of having Yellow Ribbon Networks in each of the Minnesota National Guard’s 61 communities.

The success of Minnesota’s Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program has garnered national attention. The program has been presented as a premier, community-capacity building model to other states looking to emulate the program.

BEYOND THE YELLOW RIBBON | RESILIENCE

In 2014 the Minnesota National Guard implemented

new skills training. Taught by certified master resilience trainers, the unit-focused training is designed to bolster service members’ mental toughness and enhance their duty performance and overall well-being. Additionally, partnerships with state agencies and organizations have resulted in increased holistic support for service members when they are not in military duty status.

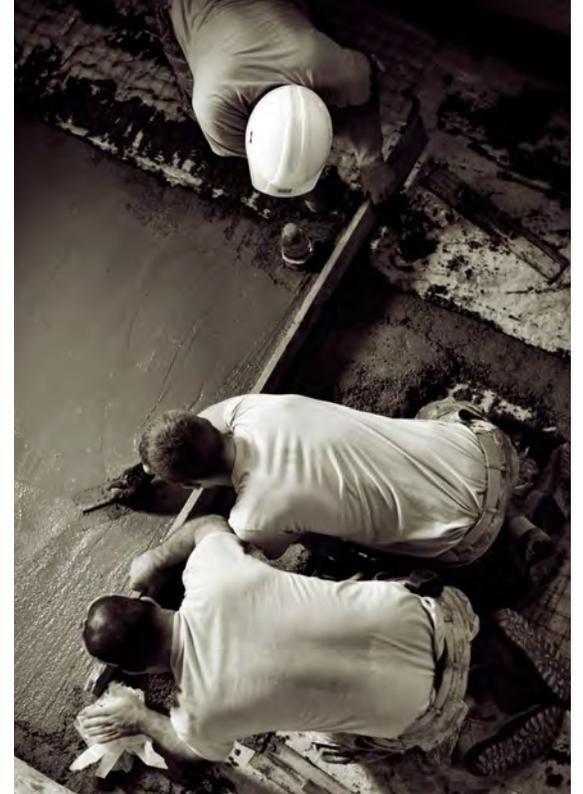
In 2014 the Minnesota National Guard recorded the lowest number of suicide and suicide ideation since internal tracking began in 2007. The Guard’s relationship with the Minnesota Suicide Prevention Planning Task Force confirmed that suicide trends in the organization have been consistent with those across Minnesota.

The Minnesota National Guard’s eight Family Assistance Centers served more than 62,500 military family members and coordinated 144 grants, totaling \$315,000, from independent charitable foundations to support military members in need.

(ABOVE, LEFT) *The 850th Horizontal Engineer Company returns from an eight-month deployment to Afghanistan.* Photo by: Master Sgt. Daniel Ewer
(ABOVE, RIGHT) *Members of the 133rd Airlift Wing say goodbye to family and friends in St. Paul prior to departing for a deployment in Southwest Asia.* Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Lynette Olivares



WE VALUE DIVERSITY IN OUR ORGANIZATION TO BROADEN OUR PERSPECTIVE, INCORPORATE A VARIETY OF STRENGTHS AND BETTER REPRESENT THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.



DIVERSITY

The Minnesota National Guard benchmarks its success in recruiting and retaining a diverse force against current and future demographic projections in Minnesota.

By increasing diversity in terms of race, ethnicity and gender, the Minnesota National Guard will maximize its potential as an organization and help it better address complex issues. In 2014, 25 percent of new recruits were from diverse populations, exceeding the Recruiting and Retention Battalion's 20 percent goal. By meeting this standard, service members in the organization will develop and continue their careers as mid- and senior-grade leaders.

In 2014 a historic gain in achieving a diverse force was realized when Brig. Gen. David Hamlar Jr. became the first African-American to achieve the rank of general officer in the Minnesota National Guard. A highly respected individual for both his civilian and military

accomplishments, Hamlar will serve as an inspiration to other service members. During his promotion ceremony, Hamlar said, "If the reality of all of this is that if I am the first, then there should be a second and a third."

DIVERSITY | INCLUSION

In 2013 the Department of Defense rescinded the Ground Combat Exclusion Rule, which prevented women from being assigned to combat units below the brigade level. Shortly after, the Minnesota National Guard enacted the Female Inclusion Pilot Program to place female service members in leadership positions in previously all-male units. As of September 2014 there were three female officers and nine female non-commissioned officers assigned to these units. Additionally, Army National Guard female officers were accepted into and completed courses they were once barred from, including the Bradley Commander Course and Field Artillery Basic Officer Leadership Course.

2014 marked the second consecutive year that the Minnesota Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion was awarded the top National Guard Bureau diversity recruiting award.

DIVERSITY | MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

However, while the Minnesota National Guard continues to have success in recruiting diverse individuals, the organization recognizes there is a challenge in retaining diverse service members beyond their first enlistments. The issue is most prominent regarding females and African-Americans, as the number of people ending their military service early is greater than the number being recruited.

By reinforcing the Minnesota National Guard Mentorship Program – enabling not just diverse individuals but all members of the force to benefit from direct mentorship in order to further their careers – the organization can visualize a method to reverse to the trend.

(ABOVE, LEFT) Col. David Hamlar Jr. is promoted to brigadier general at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul. Photo by: Sgt. 1st Class Ben Houtkooper
 (ABOVE, RIGHT) Airmen from the 133rd and 148th Civil Engineering Squadrons work with members of the Croatian Army to renovate an elementary school in Croatia. Photo by: Staff Sgt. Austen Adriaens



WE SECURE OUR STATE'S MILITARY NETWORK AND COLLABORATE WITH INTERAGENCY PARTNERS TO ENHANCE OUR RESPONSE TO AND RECOVERY FROM NEGATIVE CYBER EVENTS.

CYBER SECURITY & RESPONSE

Working with federal, military and state partners, in particular the Minnesota Department of Information Technology, the Minnesota National Guard is working to maintain and defend its communications and improve its ability to react to a cyber event.

The Minnesota National Guard defends its information infrastructure as outlined in the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002, which requires all federal agencies to develop, document and implement agency-wide plans to ensure information security. As part of its recovery strategy, the Minnesota National Guard monitors for indicators that could possibly degrade its information network and require action as outlined in established Communication Response Plans.

The Minnesota National Guard initiates exercises to evaluate its critical information infrastructure, and tests alternate

forms of communication to minimize dependence on technology that could be compromised by outside factors. This work is done routinely with city, county, state and federal agencies to expand the Minnesota National Guard's understanding of the information systems and defensive postures used by its partners.

CYBER SECURITY & RESPONSE | PARTNERSHIPS

Under the auspices of the State Partnership Program, the Minnesota National Guard has partnered with Croatia's Cyber Response Team and has conducted cyber training events for several years. In 2014 the University of Minnesota's Technological Leadership Institute collaborated with the Minnesota National Guard to provide training and certification for Croatia's Cyber Response Team.

CYBER SECURITY & RESPONSE | THE WAY AHEAD

The Minnesota National Guard's emphasis on creating a Cyber Protection Team would expand its capabilities to meet emerging cyber needs. The team would consist of 39 service members trained in information technology and intelligence, and would enhance the Minnesota National Guard's ability to ensure intrusion detection and prevention, and capability to monitor for threat indicators.

In 2015 the Minnesota National Guard will participate in large-scale exercises, including *Vigilant Guard*, *Cyber Guard* and *Cyber Shield*, in addition to attending cyber security summits and other relevant training.

(ABOVE, LEFT) Master Sgt. Bryan Druar, 148th Fighter Wing, sets up and tests communication equipment at a remote location northwest of Grand Marais. Photo by: Master Sgt. Ralph Kapustka (ABOVE, RIGHT) Minnesota National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Richard Nash poses with (from left to right) Chief Warrant Officer 2 John Pelto, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Frankie Orr, Col. Jasenko Krovinovic, Croatian Ministry of Defense, and other Cyber Team leaders in Croatia. Photo by: Master Sgt. Daniel Ewer



UNITS

(ABOVE) Senior Airmen Samantha Leebens, 133rd Airlift Wing loadmaster, stands on the flight line prior to a C-130 Hercules departing for a deployment to Southwest Asia. Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Lynette Olivares



INTRODUCTION TO MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD UNITS

The men and women who serve in the Minnesota National Guard do so under 10 major commands, covering all corners of the state with a physical presence in 61 communities. The Minnesota National Guard supports both state and federal missions with more than 13,000 soldiers and airmen from across the state. When directed by the president, the Minnesota National Guard deploys mission-trained soldiers, airmen and units to support overseas missions. The resources of the Minnesota National Guard are also available to the governor to support domestic response missions in communities throughout the state.

(ABOVE) Soldiers from the 34th Combat Aviation Brigade prepare for a year-long deployment to Camp Buehring, Kuwait, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Inherent Resolve. Photo by: Tech Sgt. Paul Santikko



JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS

HEADQUARTERS LOCATION

St. Paul, Minn.

UNIT STRENGTH

748 soldiers and airmen

COMMANDER

Maj. Gen. Richard Nash

ENLISTED LEADER

Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas Wortham

WEBSITE

MinnesotaNationalGuard.org/jfhq

2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Located in St. Paul, the Minnesota National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters is a joint Army and Air National Guard unit tasked to oversee operations for all state National Guard forces. Joint Force Headquarters coordinates military support at the request of the governor in the event of a disaster or state emergency. The Joint Force Headquarters can also provide a dual-status commander, specially qualified to command state and federal forces operating in Minnesota.

This year the Minnesota National Guard welcomed a new senior enlisted advisor, who reports directly to the adjutant general on matters involving all enlisted members. Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas Wortham assumed the role from Command Sgt. Maj. Cynthia Kallberg, who retired after nearly 30 years of military service. Wortham will focus on continuing to advance personnel readiness priorities and professionalism, increasing mentorship opportunities and

integrating female service members into units and positions that were previously all male.

The Minnesota National Guard also hosted the Region IV Best Warrior Competition at Camp Ripley in May, which pitted the best soldiers and non-commissioned officers from seven states against one another. Staff Sgt. Michael Walker and Sgt. Corbin Routier from the Minnesota National Guard came out on top, with Routier placing second and Walker placing fourth at the Army National Guard-level competition in Arkansas.

In 2014 domestic response was the primary focus for Joint Force Headquarters. The unit administered a functional exercise called *Vigilant Vortex*, a scenario simulating multiple tornadoes throughout the state. *Vigilant Vortex* is one of several exercises leading up to the *Vigilant Guard* 2015 full-scale exercise which will be hosted in Minnesota in August. Additionally, Joint Force Headquarters refined its continuity of government plan, an all-hazards response plan that would

ensure the continued functioning of state government if it should need to move out of St. Paul.

2015 OBJECTIVES

In 2015 the Joint Force Headquarters will focus on preparing for the upcoming *Vigilant Guard* exercise and maintaining its readiness to respond to domestic emergencies. Additionally, the unit will stress personnel readiness as it continually prepares service members for mobilization and deployment in support of state, federal and community needs.

(ABOVE) Soldiers from seven states compete in the Army National Guard 2014 Region IV Best Warrior Competition at Camp Ripley Training Center. Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Paul Santikko



34TH INFANTRY DIVISION

HEADQUARTERS LOCATION

Rosemount, Minn.

UNIT STRENGTH

814 soldiers

COMMANDER

Maj. Gen. Neal Loidolt

ENLISTED LEADER

Command Sgt. Maj. Joel Arnold

WEBSITE

MinnesotaNationalGuard.org/34id



2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Rosemount-based 34th Red Bull Infantry Division provides command and control for ten National Guard brigades in seven different states. In Minnesota the 34th ID includes the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 34th Combat Aviation Brigade, 84th Troop Command and the 347th Regional Support Group.

After more than 12 months of planning and preparation, the 34th ID conducted a Division Full Scale Exercise, also known as a *Warfighter* exercise, at the Mission Command Training Complex at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., in June 2014. The massive *Warfighter* exercise, which involved more than 2,500 service members, 10 brigades and 20 units training at four locations, tested the ability of the 34th ID's command staff to operate in a combat theater.

The 34th ID's performance during the *Warfighter* exercise was distinguished by its ability to conduct the largest-ever

Warfighter at Fort Leavenworth, executing the required tasks well above the established standard. This led to the 34th ID receiving the top rating for readiness for an Army division headquarters.

In addition to *Warfighter*, the Red Bulls participated in the *Vigilant Vortex* exercise, which was designed to gauge the Minnesota National Guard's ability to respond to a series of unprecedented simulated disasters.

2015 OBJECTIVES

Nearly 300 soldiers from the division will deploy in spring 2015 as part of *Operation United Assistance*, the military effort supporting the United States Agency for International Development's response to the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in Liberia. The 34th ID will provide command and control of U.S. military forces in West Africa and are expected to return in fall 2015.

In addition to the deployment, the 34th ID will use the experience garnered from its *Warfighter* exercise to support subordinate brigades participating in *Warfighter* exercises in 2015.

Best practices learned during *Vigilant Vortex* will be applied to the even larger *Vigilant Guard* exercise, which will take place in August 2015.

(ABOVE) Sgt. Corbin Routier, an infantryman with A Company, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 136th Infantry, participates in the Urban Assault Course at Camp Ripley Training Center. Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Paul Santikko



34TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE

HEADQUARTERS LOCATION

St. Paul, Minn.

UNIT STRENGTH

1,200 soldiers

COMMANDER

Col. Greg Thingvold

ENLISTED LEADER

Command Sgt. Maj. James Kampsen

WEBSITE

MinnesotaNationalGuard.org/34cab

2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The St. Paul-based 34th Combat Aviation Brigade is an Army National Guard unit that supports the 34th Infantry Division and the state of Minnesota by providing aviation capabilities – both UH-60 Black Hawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters – for federal and state missions.

In June 2014 the 34th CAB deployed its Headquarters Company and the 2nd Battalion, 147th Assault Helicopter Battalion, in support of *Operation Enduring Freedom*. The units are stationed at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, to conduct aviation operations and security cooperation in support of U.S. Army Central Command. Since being deployed, members of the 34th CAB have also been tasked to support *Operation Inherent Resolve*, the U.S. military's effort against militant groups in Iraq and Syria.

For the first time in several years the 34th CAB was not called upon to assist in state missions. The extra time

allowed the brigade to refine its personnel readiness by logging hundreds of flight hours and conducting several interagency training events. Soldiers in the brigade flew the UH-60s and CH-47s a combined 4,005 flight hours, and worked with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to gain proficiency in wildfire support by conducting helicopter bucket and well operations.

The brigade's readiness helped B Company, 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment, to be selected to support a National Training Center rotation in 2015, marking the first time a National Guard Aviation Task Force was selected for a NTC rotation.

2015 OBJECTIVES

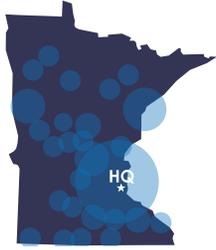
Beyond preparing for its NTC rotation, 34th CAB soldiers will spend 2015 focusing heavily on new equipment training to ensure pilots, crew chiefs and mechanics are proficient in flying the upgraded UH-60M model. In 2015

soldiers will train at the Western Army National Guard Aviation Training Site, Ariz., with the goal of having all flight crews trained by the end of the year.

In 2015 the brigade will deploy 12 soldiers with C Company, 1st General Support Aviation Battalion, 171st Aviation Regiment, to provide medical evacuation support in Kuwait. Lastly, the 834th Aviation Support Battalion will complete its move to the Arden Hills Army Training Site.

In January 2015 the brigade will host the ninth annual *Hockey Day Minnesota*, an event that showcases the hockey tradition found throughout the state, in conjunction with the St. Paul civic group *Serving Our Troops*. This year will feature an outdoor rink at Holman Field, and honor those in military service while connecting with the deployed 34th CAB soldiers stationed in Kuwait through video and social media.

(ABOVE) Pilots with the 34th Combat Aviation Brigade prepare to land a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter on the deck of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Lyme Bay in the Arabian Gulf. Photo by: 1st Lt. Holly Elkin



1ST ARMORED BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

HEADQUARTERS LOCATION

Bloomington, Minn.

UNIT STRENGTH

5,589 soldiers

COMMANDER

Col. Robert Intress

ENLISTED LEADER

Command Sgt. Maj. John Lepowsky

WEBSITE

MinnesotaNationalGuard.org/1abct

2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Bloomington-based 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team of the 34th Infantry Division consists of eight major subordinate battalions. More than 5,500 soldiers make up the brigade's combined arms, cavalry, artillery, engineer and brigade support battalions, constituting 51 percent of the Minnesota National Guard's total force structure.

In 2014 the 1st ABCT underwent significant realignment by adding a third artillery battery to the 1st Battalion, 125th Field Artillery, standing up the 334th Brigade Engineer Battalion – which replaced the Brigade Special Troops Battalion – and entering an aligned-for-training relationship with the 1st Battalion, 145th Armor Regiment, of the Ohio Army National Guard.

As part of the U.S. Army's 2020 Force Structure Realignment, the 1st ABCT transitioned from a traditional combat brigade into a self-contained combined arms

formation. The new force structure has expanded the brigade's capability and increased its engineer assets with two engineer companies and a battalion-level staff capable of engineer planning and command and control. The aligned-for-training relationship with the 145th Armor Regiment has increased the brigade's combat power and maneuverability by adding a third combined arms battalion. Additionally, the brigade completed more than 25 tactical system upgrades and fielding of new equipment in 2014. The new equipment and upgrades include radar, tactical data systems and modernization of its armored vehicle fleet.

In 2014 the 1st ABCT focused heavily on personnel readiness while simultaneously improving individual soldier training and collective training at the squad and section levels. This led to the successful qualification of 110 out of 112 Bradley Gunnery crews within the first year of operating the new Bradley Fighting Vehicles.

Another noteworthy training accomplishment in 2014

involved the former BSTB Unmanned Aerial System platoon in A Company. After increasing the number of hours flown during an annual training period by more than 60 percent and becoming more proficient at providing reconnaissance and aerial observance support to sister units, the UAS platoon is poised to be ranked as one of the top UAS platoons nationally.

2015 OBJECTIVES

In 2015 the brigade will conduct a *Warfighter* staff training exercise and an *Exportable Combat Training Capability* exercise at Camp Ripley Training Center to strengthen platoon maneuver and live-fire capabilities in preparation for the brigade's National Training Center rotation at Fort Irwin, Calif., in 2016. The training focus in 2015 will shift from squad- and section-level training to platoon training. The brigade will refine its core competencies in combined arms maneuver and wide-area security through offensive, defensive and stability operations.



(ABOVE) The 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team conducts its annual training at Camp Ripley Training Center. Photo by: Spc. William Boecker



347TH RSG



2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The mission of the 347th Regional Support Group is to deploy and provide contingency and expeditionary base operations, with responsibilities for managing facilities, providing administrative and logistical support for troop services and ensuring the security of personnel and facilities on a base camp. The brigade provides command and control of assigned units during homeland security, homeland defense and other civil support missions within the U.S. to include managing the reception, staging, onward movement and integration of supporting forces.

The Chisholm-based 114th Transportation Company, responsible for line haul, local haul and resupplying mobile combat units, returned from a nine-month deployment to Afghanistan in September 2014. The 114th's mission in support of *Operation Enduring Freedom* was both to escort host-nation contractors delivering supplies and to assist in the end of combat operations in Afghanistan. The 144

soldiers performed nearly 40 combat missions – traveling more than 85,000 miles – without incident and were awarded the National Defense Transportation Association Company of the Year Award.

In 2014 the 347th RSG deployed more than 40 soldiers from the Cottage Grove-based 204th Area Support Medical Company to the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt, in support of the Multinational Force and Observers. The 204th will support the MFO's mission – to enforce the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel – by providing health service support, medical care and health protection measures to maintain the strength of the force.

Several of the administrative support and transportation companies that make up the brigade participated in the *Combat Support Training Exercise* and *Diamond Saber* at Fort McCoy, Wisc. The exercise was used to strengthen the 347th RSG's competencies in providing administrative support, financial services and logistical assistance to help

347TH REGIONAL SUPPORT GROUP

HEADQUARTERS LOCATION

Roseville, Minn.

UNIT STRENGTH

737 soldiers

COMMANDER

Col. Johanna Clyborne

ENLISTED LEADER

Command Sgt. Maj. Marcus Erickson

WEBSITE

MinnesotaNationalGuard.org/347rsg



service members orient themselves at unfamiliar duty and training stations.

2015 OBJECTIVES

The 347th RSG will use 2015 to familiarize operators on new equipment and ensure readiness by participating in three major training exercises. The brigade will add 20 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles and 18 Heavy Equipment Transport systems to its fleet. It will also join several of the Minnesota National Guard's major commands in the *Vigilant Guard* exercise, a large-scale, interagency exercise designed to gauge the organization's ability to respond to disasters across the state.

Additionally, the 347th RSG will support the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team's *Exportable Combat Training Capability* exercise by employing the 224th Transportation Company's capability to provide local haul and resupply operations in June 2015.

(ABOVE) 114th Transportation Company and 730th Transportation Company halt their convoy escort team momentarily while traveling the Salang Pass in the Parwan Province, Afghanistan. Photo by: Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra



84TH TROOP COMMAND

HEADQUARTERS LOCATION

Minneapolis, Minn.

UNIT STRENGTH

1,777

COMMANDER

Col. Troy Soukup

ENLISTED LEADER

Command Sgt. Maj. Rollyn Wold

WEBSITE

MinnesotaNationalGuard.org/84trc



2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 84th Troop Command, headquartered in Minneapolis, maintains control of field artillery, military police, engineer and civil support forces, providing a force capable of performing a wide variety of missions. A specialized command with a unique mission, the 84th Troop Command maintains traditional training standards to remain ready to support federal missions in addition to being challenged with the responsibility of conducting domestic operations throughout the state.

A large portion of the 84th Troop Command's domestic operations are the responsibility of the very specific Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear response capabilities within the 55th Civil Support Team and the CBRN Enhanced Response Force Package.

The 84th Troop Command maintains the Quick Reaction Force, which deploys within six hours to assist in incidents

across the state, and the National Guard Reaction Force, which responds within 72 hours.

In 2014 the 84th Troop Command's 682nd Engineer Battalion welcomed home the Cambridge-based 850th Horizontal Engineer Company and the Litchfield-based 849th Mobility Augmentation Company after both were deployed to Afghanistan in support of *Operation Enduring Freedom*. The 850th provided heavy equipment, hauling and maintenance support for several forward operating bases, and the 849th conducted route clearance missions.

2015 OBJECTIVES

The 84th Troop Command's top priority in 2015 is to train for domestic operations. This training will lead up to *Vigilant Guard*, a large-scale, interagency exercise which will simulate multiple disasters across the state. The event will improve readiness by evaluating the 84th Troop Command's ability to respond to challenging scenarios and reinforcing

existing relationships with leaders from local, state, federal and private partners also participating in the exercise.

The CERFP will undergo its biannual certification process during a joint, multi-state exercise evaluated by the National Guard Bureau.

Lastly, the 682nd Engineer Battalion will prepare another unit for deployment.

(ABOVE) Members of the 55th Civil Support Team participate in an incident response exercise with the U.S. Coast Guard, the Duluth Fire Department and the University of Minnesota. Photo by: Sgt. 1st Class Ben Houtkooper



175TH RTI



175TH REGIMENT REGIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE

HEADQUARTERS LOCATION

Camp Ripley, Minn.

UNIT STRENGTH

84 soldiers

COMMANDER

Col. Michael Funk

ENLISTED LEADER

Command Sgt. Maj. John Wood

WEBSITE

MinnesotaNationalGuard.org/175rti

2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Camp Ripley-based 175th Regiment Regional Training Institute provides combat arms, Military Occupational Specialty and leadership training to prepare soldiers and units for deployment at maximum combat readiness levels.

Each year hundreds of soldiers from across the country travel to the Camp Ripley Training Center to attend one of 31 courses offered by the 175th RTI. The courses offered qualify soldiers as infantrymen, cavalry scouts, health care specialists, wheeled vehicle mechanics and tracked vehicle repairers.

The 175th RTI also offers Advanced Leader Courses for several Military Occupational Specialties and more than 10 functional courses, including Company Commander/First Sergeant Course and Army Basic Instructor Course. The institute also contributes to the commissioned ranks by offering Phases 0, I and II of Officer Candidate School and

Warrant Officer Candidate School. In 2014 the 175th RTI qualified 807 soldiers, achieving a 97 percent graduation rate among all soldiers attending the various schools.

The institute also earned the Supply Excellence Award for the state and region, and will compete for the national award in 2015.

2015 OBJECTIVES

Soldiers attending the 175th RTI's courses in 2015 will do so at CRTC's new Education Facility, which will provide a more conducive learning environment. The building offers a new dining facility and classrooms to enhance the training and ensure the 175th RTI retains the Institute of Excellence rating it received in 2013.

In 2015 the institute will sustain the professional conduct of its cadre to provide the best trained soldiers. In its effort to become one of the top training facilities in the nation,

the 175th RTI will continue to seek out premier soldiers to become quality instructors that produce agile and adaptive leaders.

(ABOVE) Soldiers from seven states compete in the Army National Guard 2014 Region IV Best Warrior Competition at Camp Ripley Training Center.
Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Paul Santikko



CAMP RIPLEY TRAINING CENTER

HEADQUARTERS LOCATION

Camp Ripley, Minn.

EMPLOYED

782 soldiers and airmen

COMMANDER

Col. Scott St. Sauver

ENLISTED LEADER

Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Worden

WEBSITE

MinnesotaNationalGuard.org/crtc



2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Camp Ripley Training Center, located near Little Falls, Minn., is a 53,000-acre regional training installation featuring numerous ranges and state-of-the-art facilities to support military and civilian agency training requirements. In addition to providing premier training opportunities, CRTC remains committed to stewardship of the land through environmental initiatives, partnership with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and working toward becoming a Net Zero installation.

Over the years the demand for the post's facilities has greatly increased as CRTC has expanded its ability to meet the training needs for a variety of organizations. In 2014 the installation oversaw more than 320,000 days of training, including 60,000 training days for local and state authorities. With new construction being completed and additional classroom space and lodging becoming available, CRTC will be able to support additional demand.

By supporting the deliberate archaeological clearing of training areas on CRTC and turning over inadvertent discoveries along the Mississippi River – a critical natural resource that ties the modern-day installation to the indigenous population – Camp Ripley was able to help preserve Native American culture and strengthen its relationship with the community.

Camp Ripley proudly shared its ties to the Native American community with 100 visiting Norwegian soldiers – part of the Norwegian Reciprocal Troop Exchange held annually at CRTC – by participating in a Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe competitive powwow.

Camp Ripley continued its relationship with the Morrison County Yellow Ribbon Network to provide resources and support to the service members, military families and veterans in the area. Through the network, local institutions increased their capability to support service members and their families.

2015 OBJECTIVES

In 2015 CRTC, which also oversees the Arden Hills Army Training Site, will continue to provide premier training facilities. Leadership will identify additional opportunities to add amenities, such as the laundry facilities added in 2014, and fund new construction to further enhance the post's training capabilities.

New construction initiatives at CRTC include the Joint Emergency Response Training Center, which will facilitate interagency training, and a short-term ordnance storage facility, which will help support the increase of requests for weapons training on Camp Ripley with an eye toward safety and security.

(ABOVE) *The Minnesota Medical Detachment conducts cold weather training at Camp Ripley. Photo by: Staff Sgt. Anthony Housey*



133RD AW



2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 133rd Airlift Wing is a Minnesota Air National Guard flying wing headquartered at the Minneapolis - St. Paul International Airport. Utilizing the C-130 Hercules, the wing provides the U.S. Air Force with tactical airlift capability to transport troops, cargo and medical patients across the globe, in addition to providing the citizens of Minnesota with domestic operations and disaster response support. Established in 1921, the 133rd is known as the first federally recognized National Guard flying unit in the country.

In 2014 the wing deployed airmen stateside for domestic operations and abroad for global contingency missions.

The 133rd was directly involved in an effort to drop food and water to Iraqis trapped on a barren mountain range in northwestern Iraq. More than 5,000 gallons of water and 8,000 meals were air dropped out of two C-130Hs,

providing much-needed relief to the Iraqis fleeing militant groups in Iraq and Syria, in support of *Operation Inherent Resolve*.

In 2014 the 133rd deployed 227 airmen in support of *Operation Enduring Freedom*. An additional 66 airmen deployed in support of other contingency operations in Guam, Tonga, Puerto Rico and Antarctica. These operations supported *Pacific Angel*, U.S. Southern Command and *Operation Deep Freeze*.

The wing rolled out the Air Force's Commander's Inspection Program, which focuses heavily on self-assessment of the organization's ability to manage resources, improve operations, lead its people and execute the mission.

2015 OBJECTIVES

The 133rd Airlift Wing will continue to pursue additional relevant missions, while maintaining a balance of world-

wide deployments, domestic training and operational support. The 133rd Airlift Wing will also prepare for an upcoming deployment in support of *Operation United Assistance*.

The wing, after participating in the *Vigilant Vortex* exercise in 2014, will be a key participant in the *Vigilant Guard* exercise in 2015. *Vigilant Guard*, coordinated by the U. S. Northern Command and National Guard Bureau, provides an opportunity for Minnesota to improve emergency coordination, response and recovery management with federal, regional, local, civilian and military partners in the event of a disaster.

The 133rd Airlift Wing will increase efforts to modernize their aging C-130H aircraft fleet as a bridge to recapitalize with newer aircraft. It will continue to partner with wings flying similar aircraft throughout the Air National Guard to accomplish these goals and remain viable for decades to come, as well as a valuable resource for Minnesota.



133RD AIRLIFT WING

HEADQUARTERS LOCATION

St. Paul, Minn.

UNIT STRENGTH

1,206 airmen

COMMANDER

Col. James Johnson

ENLISTED LEADER

Chief Master Sgt. Paul Kessler

WEBSITE

MinnesotaNationalGuard.org/133aw

(ABOVE) Airmen from the 109th Airlift Squadron conduct airdrop training in Yuma, Ariz. Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Amy Lovgren



148TH FIGHTER WING

HEADQUARTERS LOCATION

Duluth, Minn.

UNIT STRENGTH

1,011 airmen

COMMANDER

Col. Frank Stokes

ENLISTED LEADER

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Rukavina

WEBSITE

MinnesotaNationalGuard.org/148fw



2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 148th Fighter Wing, headquartered in Duluth, operates the F-16C Block 50 Fighting Falcon. The full wing structure, which includes the headquarters, communications, logistics, civil engineer, maintenance and security sections, is comprised of airmen prepared to rapidly respond to support federal and state missions and community needs.

As of 2014 the wing was the ninth-largest employer in Duluth, employing more than 1,000 airmen and maintaining 22 fighter aircraft. The F-16Cs the wing operates are the most advanced F-16s in the U.S. inventory. The 148th is one of two National Guard wings operating the aircraft and flying Suppression of Enemy Air Defense missions. The wing exceeded all of its goals in regard to personnel strength, retention, aircraft capability and pilot readiness. Additionally, pilots flew a total of 3,402 hours.

In 2014 the wing deployed 64 airmen in support of *Operation Enduring Freedom*. An additional 113 airmen deployed in support of other contingency operations in Alaska, Bulgaria and Estonia.

Contingency operations in Bulgaria included participation in the *Thracian Star* exercise to train on interception and air combat with a multitude of aircraft, including Bulgaria's MiG-29s. Following *Thracian Star*, members of the 148th Fighter Wing traveled to Estonia to participate in joint training exercises *BALTOPS* and *Saber Strike* to facilitate cooperation among U.S., Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian forces and enhance maritime capabilities and interoperability in the larger Baltic region.

In 2014 the 148th Fighter Wing completed its one-year Aerospace Control Alert mission, with personnel and F-16s operating from the California Air National Guard Base in Fresno. The alert mission, in support of U.S. Northern Command, saw wing personnel execute 190, around-the-

clock sorties totaling more than 280 flight hours with zero mishaps. The wing also established a branch of the Distributed Training Operations Center, which facilitates realistic simulations to maintain personnel readiness.

2015 OBJECTIVES

Airmen will prepare for three training exercises, which will include Suppression of Enemy Air Defense training in Georgia and Alaska, and ordnance delivery training in Utah.

The 148th was designated as an 18 Primary Aircraft Authorization Active Associate wing in 2012, and the wing will continue to work with the National Guard Bureau to make up the shortfall of approximately 50 airmen.

The wing anticipates the approval of a plan to extend the Duluth International Airport Crosswind Runway. The runway would be mutually beneficial and enhance operations for the 148th Fighter Wing.

(ABOVE) Maj. Ryan Kaspari and Master Sgt. Jeremiah Graves conduct repairs on the main runway at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.
Photo by: Airman 1st Class Bobby Cummings



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2014 STATE LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Department of Military Affairs requested capital bond funding of \$10.3 million to extend facility life throughout the state. Governor Mark Dayton recommended the bonding bill include \$7.625 million for Military Affairs, and ultimately the legislature provided \$3.244 million in asset preservation and renovation funds for the department.
- State funding supported the essential hire of a second Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor to provide chemical health assessments, substance abuse awareness training, treatment resources, referrals and outreach.
- The Minnesota State Bar Association took a lead role in advocating for the Uniform Deployed Parents Custody and Visitation Act, which would align Minnesota with the rest of the country and create a level playing field for deployed parents and military families in regard to child custody procedures. The legislature is expected to address the adoption of the UDPCVA during the 2015 session.
- Through the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, the Minnesota Legislature passed laws appropriating \$1.2 million for Phase IV of the Camp Ripley Army Compatible Use Buffer program. Additionally, the council moved to recommend \$1.5 million in funding for Phase V of the ACUB program. If approved, the funding would be leveraged with other state and federal funds to acquire additional conservation easements around CRTC.
- The Department of Military Affairs submitted a request to construct a district heating facility at CRTC fueled by renewable biomass using wood chips from the post (\$1.97 million). Military Affairs is pursuing both state and federal funding to complete this project over a multi-year time line by working with the Commissioner of Commerce and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installation, Energy and Environment.
- The Minnesota National Guard supported the Department of Education's proposed legislation requiring schools to include a block on student enrollment forms for parents or guardians to voluntarily self-identify their children as military-connected youth. The legislation passed, and now enables schools to provide support services to more military families. Additionally, the State of Minnesota adopted the Interstate Compact on Education Opportunity for Military Children, which removes barriers to educational success imposed on military-connected youth because of their parents' service.
- The Minnesota National Guard educated state legislators, staff, government officials and others from multiple states at the National Conference of State Legislatures Summit about Camp Ripley's ACUB program. This engagement showcased the Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program's effort to protect military sustainability.

(ABOVE) A 133rd Airlift Wing crew chief salutes as a C-130 Hercules takes off for a deployment to Southwest Asia. Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Lynette Olivares



2014 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

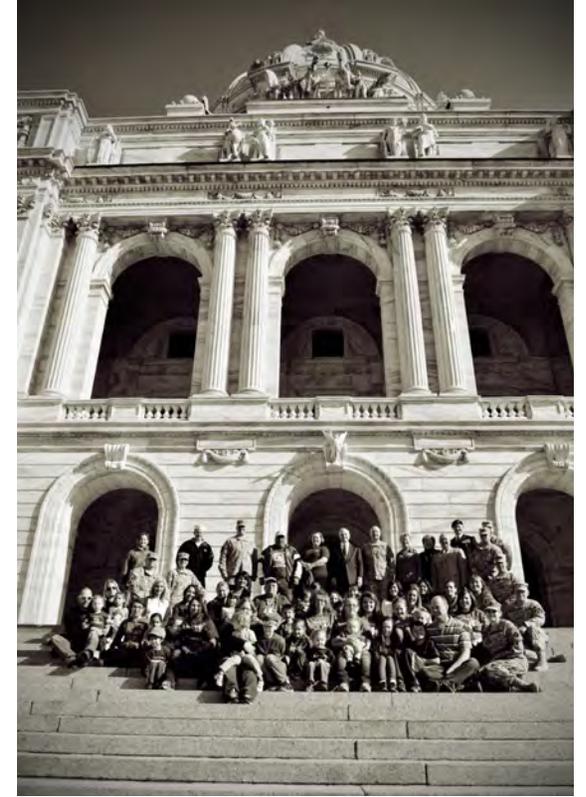
- The Minnesota National Guard proposed funding for military construction projects, including the Stillwater Armory (\$18 million) and a Qualification Training Range at Camp Ripley (\$9 million). The Stillwater Armory project was approved, and construction began in November 2014.
- An independent study of Minnesota National Guard training facilities led to the release of the Readiness Center Transformation Master Plan, which outlines a process of remodeling existing structures, consolidating nearby facilities, closing outdated buildings and constructing new armories in communities throughout the state.
- The Minnesota Air National Guard's number one priority is the Load Crew Training and Weapons Release Shop at the 148th Fighter Wing in Duluth (\$8 million). With design of the mission-critical shop already 50 percent complete, it could be constructed before 2017 if funding becomes available.
- The 34th Infantry Division Headquarters Armory project was restored to the Future Years Defense Program for execution in 2017 (\$39 million). The armory will be constructed at the Arden Hills Army Training Site.
- The 133rd Airlift Wing completed 70 percent of a sustainment, restoration and modernization project to repair its aging water distribution system (\$4.1 million). The project to renovate fire, electrical and mechanical systems for the hangar is anticipated to be funded in 2015 (\$6 million).
- The 148th Fighter Wing completed the following construction projects: the fiscal year 2012 Munitions Storage Igloos project (\$1.7 million); renovations to the operations building to accommodate new requirements due to aircraft conversion (\$2.3 million); design, award and construction of the fiscal year 2014 Master Construction Cooperative Agreement project with the City of Duluth to reconstruct an alternate entry roadway (\$2.7 million); and design of a fiscal year 2015 project to renovate and add to the Jet Engine Intermediate Maintenance facility (\$2.5 million).
- The 148th began construction to renovate and add to an existing facility to provide a corrosion control clean room (\$0.6 million) and awarded project design to renovate a consolidated Logistics Readiness and Supply facility (\$4.7 million).
- The Minnesota National Guard collaborated with other agencies to demonstrate the organization's capability to assume future cyber related missions. A nomination packet was submitted to pursue one of 10 Cyber Protection Teams to be fielded throughout the National Guard in 2017.
- The Minnesota National Guard continues to support initiatives toward modernizing the C-130 Hercules airframes for the 133rd Airlift Wing. Upgrades to the aging fleet are needed, as production of the new model of aircraft, the C-130 Super Hercules, is projected to take nearly 20 years. In 2014 congressional legislation directed modernization of the current C-130H aircraft.
- The legislative and command emphasis on the Medical Evaluation Board process significantly improved the efficiency of packet submission and resolution of cases. There was an increase of medical board cases attaining final adjudication from 82 in 2013 to 117 in 2014.
- The 148th Fighter Wing has successfully worked with the National Guard Bureau to achieve additional manpower and has received some full-time workforce authorizations for fiscal year 2015 and beyond.
- The bipartisan National Guard and Reserve Access to Counsel Act was introduced to ensure survivors of sexual assault receive support services if there is any connection between the crime and their service. The bill requires the branch service secretary to provide Special Victims Counsel to the member regardless of when the assault occurred.

(ABOVE) 2015 governor and federal elected officials: Governor Mark Dayton, Senator Amy Klobuchar, Senator Al Franken, Representative Tim Walz, Representative John Kline, Representative Erik Paulsen, Representative Betty McCollum, Representative Keith Ellison, Representative Tom Emmer, Representative Collin Peterson, Representative Rick Nolan



2015 STATE LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVES

- Seek funding to support treatment of service members and their dependents for substance abuse and chemical dependency treatment that is not covered by TRICARE or other programs.
- Explore legislation to enhance eligibility of service members and their dependents for funding for treatment of existing substance abuse and mental health treatment.
- Request an adjustment to the Department of Military Affairs budget in order to more properly balance funds without increasing the total agency request.
- Work with the governor's office to identify means to fund asset preservation and repair requirements, estimated at \$10 million.
- Propose a revision of statute that allows payment of a death gratuity from the general support appropriation for soldiers and airmen who lose their lives in service to the state. The revision will instead align the amount of a death gratuity to the comparable federal payment amount and to fund the payment from the State Active Duty emergency appropriation.
- Propose a revision of statute to allow the use of enlistment incentives funding to offer bonuses to officers and enlisted members for reclassification into certain specialties that are determined to be critical to the readiness of the Minnesota National Guard.
- Designate Sentinel Landscape properties to advance federal and state interagency cooperation toward common goals of protecting land use practices and prevent future encroachment.



2015 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVES

- The Minnesota National Guard supports the request to establish a National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriations account with a separate line in the president's budget for National Guard Military Construction. Military Construction on Future Years Defense Program for the Minnesota Army National Guard is projected to cost \$48.8 million through 2017. For the Minnesota Air National Guard, the cost is projected at \$28.8 million through 2019.
- Request \$1.5 million to fund Phase V of the Camp Ripley Army Compatible Use Buffer program and \$4.5 million to fund the Minnesota Buffer for Wildlife and Water.
- The Minnesota National Guard intends to grow or maintain force structure. Current force structure organizes and equips the organization to respond to natural disasters, provide

(ABOVE, LEFT) 347th Regional Support Group Commander Col. Johanna Clyborne, Cottage Grove Mayor Myron Bailey and Sen. Al Franken during the 204th Area Support Medical Company departure ceremony at Park Hill High School in Cottage Grove. Photo By: Staff Sgt. Patrick Loch (ABOVE, RIGHT) Military families take part in Purple Up! day at the state capital in April. Photo by: Staff Sgt. Johnny Angelo



OBJECTIVES

assistance to local law enforcement or respond to an attack on the homeland. The Guard's major commands, including the two air wings, are positioned to meet the governor's state requirements through ten essential capabilities, including cyber response, for homeland readiness.

- The Minnesota National Guard has submitted a nomination packet to pursue one of 10 Cyber Protection Teams to be fielded to the National Guard starting in 2017. The nomination packet emphasizes the Minnesota National Guard's strengths, past mission performance, unit readiness and the Adjutant General's Cyber Response Strategy.
- Continued emphasis will be placed on the Medical Evaluation Board process to further reduce the case backlog and sustain the efficiencies made in individual packet submission and adjudication throughout 2014.
- The 148th Fighter Wing was designated as an 18 Primary Aircraft Authorization Active Associate wing in 2012, with a

portion of manning to be supplied by the active component. Delays in assigning active airmen have left the wing short of its manpower requirements for the Suppression of Enemy Air Defense mission. The Minnesota National Guard will continue to work with the National Guard Bureau to make up the shortfall of approximately 50 airmen.

- Support the Duluth Airport Authority's long-range plan to extend the Duluth International Airport Crosswind Runway, which would be mutually beneficial and enhance operations for the 148th Fighter Wing.
- Encourage efforts to modernize the avionics in the current C-130 Hercules fleet to meet the 2020 world-wide Air Traffic Control deadline. This, along with other structural upgrades, will continue to enhance the C-130H fleet for the 133rd Airlift Wing.
- The Minnesota National Guard supports efforts to pursue the C-130 Super Hercules model aircraft as a future,

versatile airframe for the 133rd Airlift Wing.

- Continue to pursue next-generation equipment for upgrades to the C-130H3 simulator at the 133rd Airlift Wing.
- Champion efforts to fortify and simplify service members' access to mental and behavioral health and substance abuse and chemical dependency services by enforcing TRICARE compliance with the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act.
- The Minnesota National Guard supports efforts to find an alternative to sequestration and automatic spending cuts which would result in a loss of readiness for both domestic emergencies, such as floods, and overseas combat missions.
- Support the recommendations in the Readiness Center Transformation Master Plan, including long-range funding to support replacement modification and consolidation of Minnesota National Guard facilities.

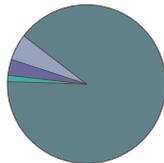
(ABOVE, LEFT) *The 114th Transportation Company returns to Minnesota after a nine-month deployment to Afghanistan.* Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Paul Santikko
 (ABOVE, RIGHT) *The 114th Transportation Company holds its 30-day reintegration event and welcome home ceremony at Chisholm High School.* Photo by: Master Sgt. Daniel Ewer

FISCAL YEAR 2014

CITY	ASSIGNED PERSONNEL	CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT	STATE DISTRICT	FEDERAL TUITION ASSISTANCE (PERSONS PER UNIT)	FEDERAL MASTER COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT (DOLLARS)	STATE IMPACT (DOLLARS)	FEDERAL IMPACT (DOLLARS)	FEDERAL TUITION ASSISTANCE (DOLLARS)	STATE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT (DOLLARS)
ALBERT LEA	97	1	27A	3	21,528	136,287	2,031,659	8,196	23,737
ALEXANDRIA	118	7	08B	19	14,900	28,262	2,471,503	51,906	52,220
ANOKA	213	6	35A	23	8,709	27,674	4,461,272	62,834	75,957
APPLETON	67	7	20A	6	50,627	107,457	1,403,311	16,391	18,989
ARDEN HILLS	592	4	42A	41	820,278	48,924	12,399,404	112,008	275,344
AUSTIN	93	1	27B	10	5,453	30,252	1,947,879	27,319	37,979
BEMIDJI	108	7	05A	10	8,725	29,836	2,262,054	27,319	33,231
BLOOMINGTON	499	3	50B	55	24,987	82,771	10,451,525	150,255	227,871
BRAINERD	146	8	10A	19	12,712	41,816	3,057,961	51,906	75,957
BROOKLYN PARK	191	3	36B	17	3,519	38,091	4,000,484	46,442	71,210
CAMBRIDGE	189	8	32A	13	25,374	71,688	3,958,594	35,515	14,242
CHISHOLM	29	8	06A	3	14,877	40,682	607,403	8,196	4,747
CLOQUET	120	8	11A	16	44,038	60,586	2,513,393	43,710	28,484
COTTAGE GROVE	296	2	54A	28	39,303	63,118	6,199,702	76,493	189,893
CROOKSTON	111	7	01B	17	20,809	59,910	2,324,888	46,442	18,989
DETROIT LAKES	67	7	04B	10	21,449	30,121	1,403,311	27,319	14,242
DULUTH	469	8	03B	25	32,033	100,510	9,823,177	68,298	75,957
DULUTH AIR BASE	1,011	8	03B	N/A	4,383,909	239,183	70,374,954	N/A	1,115,619
FAIRMONT	102	1	23A	8	25,607	52,459	2,136,384	21,855	9,495
FARIBAUT	146	1	24B	16	59,436	148,817	3,057,961	43,710	47,473
FERGUS FALLS	88	7	08A	10	7,033	30,998	1,843,155	27,319	23,737
GRAND RAPIDS	83	8	05B	8	13,135	33,768	1,738,430	21,855	14,242
HASTINGS	70	2	21A	13	6,830	35,855	1,466,146	35,515	28,484
HIBBING	113	8	06A	N/A	44,894	38,897	2,366,778	0	23,737
HUTCHINSON	89	7	18B	N/A	10,333	31,078	1,864,100	0	18,989
INVER GROVE HEIGHTS	120	2	52B	19	98,349	72,199	2,513,393	51,891	47,473
JACKSON	84	1	23A	6	17,389	37,284	1,759,375	16,387	18,989
LITCHFIELD	158	7	18A	28	6,508	19,840	3,309,301	76,493	14,242
LITTLE FALLS (CAMP RIPLEY)	1,025	8	09B	77	46,145,768	16,425,443	21,468,564	210,356	341,807
LONG PRARIE	70	7	09B	7	9,669	27,594	1,466,146	19,123	18,989
LIVERNE	59	1	22A	9	13,964	126,474	1,235,751	24,587	23,737
MADISON	80	7	16A	5	11,384	30,059	1,675,595	13,660	33,231
MANKATO	190	1	19B	29	61,369	99,911	3,979,539	79,225	99,694

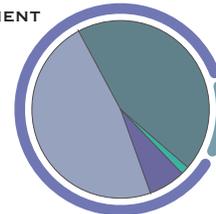
STATE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT BY ETHNICITY

- ASIAN/BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN/WHITE - 0.5%
- AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKAN NATIVE - 2%
- ASIAN - 3%
- BLACK - 5%
- WHITE - 89.5%



STATE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT BY RANK & GENDER

- JUNIOR ENLISTED - 42%
- MID NCO - 41%
- SENIOR NCO - 2%
- OFFICER - 15%



- 72% - MALE
- 28% - FEMALE

CITY	ASSIGNED PERSONNEL	CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT	STATE DISTRICT	FEDERAL TUITION ASSISTANCE (PERSONS PER UNIT)	FEDERAL MASTER COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT (DOLLARS)	STATE IMPACT (DOLLARS)	FEDERAL IMPACT (DOLLARS)	FEDERAL TUITION ASSISTANCE (DOLLARS)	STATE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT (DOLLARS)
MARSHALL	88	7	16A	7	29,578	140,645	1,843,155	19,123	28,484
MINNEAPOLIS	71	5	60A	7	21,251	88,626	1,487,091	19,123	18,989
MPLS / STP (AIR BASE)	1,206	5	63B	N/A	2,782,494	372,293	66,131,486	N/A	745,328
MONTEVIDEO	102	7	17A	9	14,497	77,553	2,136,384	24,587	28,484
MONITCELLO	213	6	29B	29	8,883	1,186	4,461,272	79,225	52,220
MOORHEAD	215	7	04A	32	33,230	84,059	4,503,162	87,421	180,398
MORRIS	57	7	12A	8	8,238	28,379	1,193,862	21,855	56,968
NEW ULM	116	1	16B	9	36,953	34,997	2,429,613	24,587	23,737
NORTHFIELD	83	2	20B	6	22,195	44,056	1,738,430	16,391	0
OLIVIA	76	7	17A	9	8,703	24,635	1,591,815	24,587	18,989
ORTONVILLE	75	7	12A	9	14,896	45,176	1,570,870	24,587	33,231
OWATONNA	77	1	24A	12	14,134	39,856	1,612,760	32,783	33,231
PINE CITY	129	8	11B	10	9,619	27,733	2,701,897	27,319	66,462
PIPESTONE	55	7	22A	6	3,896	20,960	1,151,971	16,391	23,737
REDWING	70	2	21A	12	3,469	23,535	1,466,146	32,783	18,989
REDWOOD FALLS	71	7	16B	10	14,244	34,294	1,487,091	27,319	18,989
ROCHESTER	161	1	26A	22	49,986	47,185	3,372,135	60,102	56,968
ROSEMOUNT	548	2	57B	41	104,406	135,080	11,477,827	112,008	294,333
ROSEVILLE	304	4	66A	37	27,507	88,230	6,367,262	109,276.00	161,409
SAUK CENTRE	75	6	14B	12	10,834	30,062	1,571,871	0	142,419
ST. CLOUD	474	7	15B	37	455,795	61,060	9,927,902	101,080	9,495
ST. JAMES	66	1	23B	12	11,594	30,333	1,382,366	32,783	42,726
ST. PAUL	1,093	4	65B	89	2,105,058	4,479,374	22,892,819	243,139	18,989
ST. PETER	64	1	19A	11	46,238	49,933	1,343,476	30,051	455,742
STILLWATER	199	6	39B	24	9,218	52,215	4,168,043	65,566	71,210
THIEF RIVER FALLS	67	7	01A	10	11,975	31,394	1,403,311	27,319	18,989
WADENA	77	8	09A	6	26,434	46,380	1,612,760	16,391	18,989
WEST ST. PAUL	214	2	52A	26	4,785	21,101	4,482,217	71,029	61,715
WILLMAR	196	7	17B	12	49,994	28,949	4,105,208	32,783	56,968
WINONA	115	1	28A	10	11,217	37,523	2,408,668	27,319	52,220
TOTALS	13,250	/	/	1,065	\$58,036,221	\$24,674,648	\$367,595,962	\$2,909,452	\$5,929,395

94.7% FEDERAL FUNDING

5.3% STATE FUNDING

KEY

Note: Financial figures are based on the state fiscal year ending June 30 and the federal fiscal year ending Sept. 30.

Federal Impact - Master Cooperative Agreement: Indirect federal funding that reimburses state expenses for services and goods paid for using state general funds in accordance with an agreement between the adjutant general and the chief of the National Guard Bureau. These funds are accounted for separately from the agency's budget.

State Impact: Services and purchases and that are paid for using funds appropriated by the Legislature to the Department of Military Affairs in the State General Fund, including the state share of maintenance costs for facilities jointly supported by the federal and state governments.

Federal Impact: Direct federal funding of operations, maintenance, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, federal technician salaries, active guard and reserve salaries and pay to service members for military training.

Federal Tuition Assistance: This is a federal benefit for soldiers. Figures are based on average tuition reimbursement per student, by unit.

State Tuition Reimbursement: This is a state incentive provided to service members and their families to reimburse costs for tuition. It becomes available after all federal tuition benefits have been used. Figures reflect the location of the service member's unit.

Federal Impact - Master Construction Cooperative Agreement: Direct federal construction funding. The new Stillwater facility is impacted by \$18,000,000.

HISTORY



OUR HISTORY | THROUGH A SOLDIER'S EYES

To commemorate the 70th anniversary of WWII's Italian Campaign, the commanding general of the 34th Infantry Division traveled to Italy to see first-hand the battlefields that Red Bull soldiers fought for in 1944.

Among those accompanying Maj. Gen. Neal Loidolt on the trip were Staff Sgt. Dillon Jennings, whose great-grandfather served with the 34th ID in Italy, and a Twin Cities Public Television video production crew.

The public television crew documented the trip and ultimately produced the 30-minute documentary, "Through a Soldier's Eyes," which tells the story of a present-day soldier reflecting on his great-grandfather's service in the same military unit.

After arriving in Florence, the travelers began their journey

at Hill 810, retracing the footsteps of their Red Bull predecessors. The German-held Hill 810 was significant because it provided a strategically advantageous overwatch position for the surrounding mountain valleys.

"That's a hell of an uphill battle," Loidolt reflected, taking a brief breather. "If you had to fight all the way to the top of this, you'd have a real appreciation when you finally get there."

Climbing the steep, wet, rocky terrain was appreciated by both Loidolt and Jennings, albeit in different ways. As a commanding general, Loidolt was amazed at the "fortitude it must have taken for leaders to order soldiers up a portion of a hill, that in some places was so steep you might not be able to climb it very well on your own – much less under fire, with a weapon, in adverse conditions."

"The duration of the fight for Hill 810 was three or four days, back and forth, taking the hill then having to give

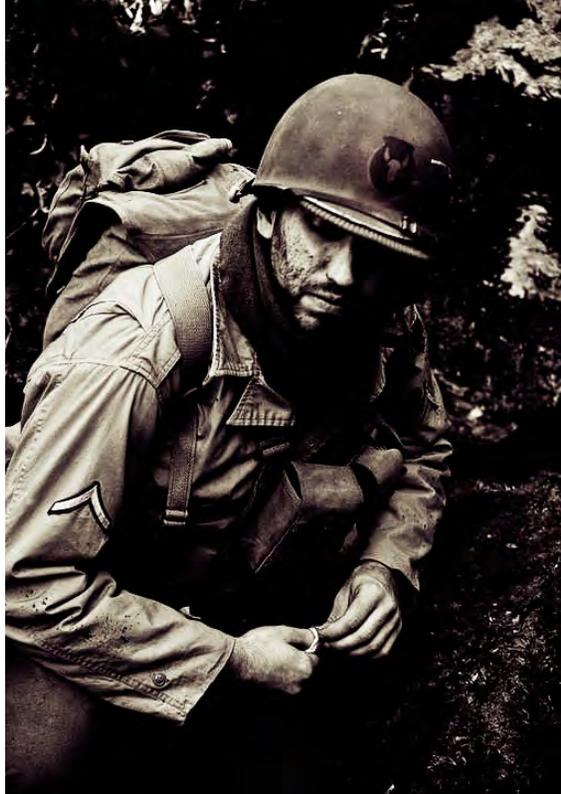
it back after counter attacks by the Germans ... the third time they actually took the hill," said Jennings, who, as an infantryman with the 2nd Battalion, 135th Infantry Regiment, would have been ordered to assault the hill. "I imagine it was a pretty hellacious event, having to give up ground as well as take it over and over again."

Descending the hill and moving to the town of Vernio, the group was invited to a museum dedicated to Hill 810 and the Red Bull soldiers who fought there. During lunch, an 84-year old woman, having recognized the Red Bull patch Loidolt and Jennings wore, told the story of how she and her siblings were saved from starvation by Red Bull soldiers who offered provisions to the young children trying to escape the violence. Kissing Jennings on the cheek, she was finally able to tell an American soldier, "Thank you," after 70 years of waiting to do so.

"It could have been [Jennings'] great-grandfather that took a moment to help this young woman," Loidolt said.

(ABOVE, LEFT) *Red Bull soldiers during the Italian Campaign.* Photo by: U.S. National Archive and Caiazzo Historical Library.

(ABOVE, RIGHT) *WWII historical re-enactment in Italy.* Photo by: Marco Marzilli, used with permission



Later in the trip, the group stopped to observe the Volturno River, which the 34th Infantry Division had to cross three separate times during the campaign. This was no easy task, with the Germans occupying elevated fighting positions that gave clear views of the Allied advance. The crossings were further complicated by the physically imposing high banks and strong currents that characterize the river.

“It’s not that big of a river, but you can see how treacherous it had to be to try to cross a river that is swift, that has been watched by Germans in well dug-in positions with well-registered artillery – with no cover and concealment,” Loidolt said. “It’s just daunting.”

As Loidolt and Jennings visited historic battlefields and towns that maintain historical connections with the 34th ID, they participated in multiple commemorative ceremonies.

One of those ceremonies was at the Abbey at Monte



Cassino, held on the 70th anniversary of the Abbey being liberated by allied Polish forces. To this day, the Abbey remains a symbol of the havoc of war, as it and the surrounding town were completely destroyed in an attempt to dislodge the Germans occupying the area.

Wrapping up the trip, the group made a final stop at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery in Nettuno to pay their respects to the 7,861 U.S. service members buried there.

“It occurred to me that I am one of very, very few who will ever get to show that kind of ceremonial respect to the fallen in this campaign,” Jennings said. “I was walking around the cemetery ... you didn’t have to go far to find 34th soldiers.

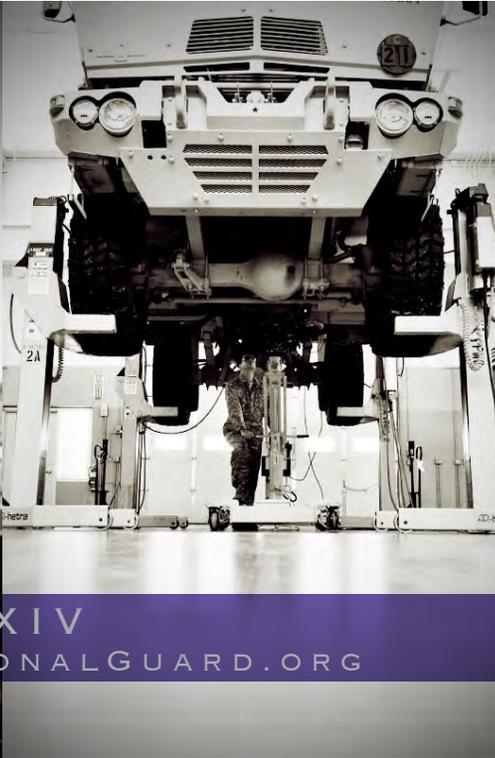
“As we talk about how tough the fighting was, and how much moving they had to do up the peninsula ... the things they must have seen and the things they must have had to do ...” Jennings said while reflecting about the Red Bull soldiers in Italy. “We got a small sense of it.

“I don’t think I will ever understand what my great-grandfather had to go through.”

“Through a Soldier’s Eyes” was produced by Luke Heikkila and is available for viewing at the Twin Cities Public Television website.

(ABOVE, LEFT, RIGHT) WWII historical re-enactment in Italy. Photos by: Marco Marzilli, used with permission

(BACK COVER, LEFT TO RIGHT) Region IV Best Warrior Competition at Camp Ripely. Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Paul Santikko. A service member is recognized at the Minnesota Twins’ Armed Forces Appreciation Day at Target Field. Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Amy Lovgren. A mechanic performs vehicle maintenance at Arden Hills Army Training Site. Photo by: Tech. Sgt. Paul Santikko. 148th Fighter Wing F-16C’s in flight over Bulgaria. Photo by: © John M. Dibbs, used with permission.



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