Minnesota’s steadfast commitment to advancing our National Guard priorities have yielded measurable results, and I know that our force is better manned, equipped and trained to take on any challenge that the future may hold for our great team. As I begin my last full year as Minnesota’s Adjutant General, I swell with pride about the incredible results that Minnesota’s Soldiers and Airmen have accomplished on behalf of our state and nation during my seven-year term.

2016 has indeed emphasized that our service members are committed to advancing the journey that began in 2010. By all measurements, we are more diverse and inclusive; not one, but two, female leaders were promoted to general officer in 2016. We are a more competent, ready force; Minnesota has established the standard by which reserve force readiness is measured. We have moved the bar for optimal force structure; Minnesota continues to advance partnerships with major commands to ensure the correct equipment and people can assist our national and state security. We have solidified Beyond the Yellow Ribbon; with support of service members, veterans and military families established in 98 networks, 217 communities and 25 counties. Our sustainable infrastructure is envied throughout the Department of Defense. And lastly our Cyber Security and Response training, collaboration and future force structure has advanced our preparedness to make Minnesota a safer place for generations to come.

The men and women of the Minnesota National Guard have once again distinguished themselves across the globe in 2016: our 148th Fighter Wing assisted in a major deployment of 300 Airmen to the Republic of Korea to train under the guidance of the U.S. Pacific Air Force; the 34th Infantry Division rose above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that U.S. Army Europe had adequate forces to participate in a variety of exercises; the 34th Combat Aviation Brigade provided helicopters and crews for Operation Freedom Sentinel in Afghanistan; and the 2nd Battalion, 135th Infantry, provided security and support to the Multinational Force and Observers on the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt. In addition, the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team completed a successful rotation at the U.S. Army’s National Training Center at Ft. Irwin, California, ensuring its status as the most trained, ready and deployable brigade in the U.S. Army in 2017.

2017 will indeed be an important year for the Minnesota National Guard. The famed 34th Red Bull Infantry Division will recognize its centennial, the 257th Military Police Company will execute Minnesota’s first mission in Cuba since the Spanish-American War, and both the Army and Air National Guard will continue to maintain the standard of “Always Ready, Always There” against the backdrop of yet another peaceful exchange of power at our national level.

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Fellow Minnesotans, it has been an honor to serve as your Adjutant General over the last seven years. It is my distinct privilege to serve alongside such great men and women who are dedicated to service in the armed forces. Your Minnesota National Guard is one of the best in the nation, and that is a fact due to our incredible men and women in uniform. Minnesotans should take pride in their Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen.

Thank you for your continued support of the Minnesota National Guard. It has been an honor to lead these great men and women.

MAJ. GEN. RICHARD C. NASH | THE ADJUTANT GENERAL | MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD
The Minnesota National Guard’s enduring goal is to provide an agile, resilient force, ready 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, working with interagency partners to enhance joint-response capabilities. In order to fulfill its obligations to the state and nation, the Minnesota National Guard focuses on six priorities that guide the organization through decision-making and mission-planning processes, ultimately ensuring a unified and consistent response. The Minnesota National Guard’s six priorities provide a fundamental blueprint that ensures success of the mission while maintaining personnel and equipment at optimal levels.
We value diversity in our organization to broaden our perspective, incorporate a variety of strengths and better represent the communities we serve.

Five years ago, the Minnesota National Guard established a diversity goal that aimed to shape a force with a commensurate percentage of diverse individuals relative to the state of Minnesota’s population; an effort that also focuses on recognizing and embracing the values and skills that come from different sets of opinions, thoughts, attributes and experiences.

In 2011, 7.8 percent of service members in the Minnesota National Guard were from diverse ethnicities, compared to the 16.6 percent that make up Minnesota’s population. In 2016, the Minnesota National Guard closed that gap by attaining 15.5 percent of its force from diverse ethnicities, and is approaching the nearly 19 percent of Minnesotans that currently come from diverse ethnicities.

As the percentage of diverse individuals in the state continues to increase, so to do the Minnesota National Guard’s efforts to close the gap and achieve its goal. The organization has expanded its community outreach, further encouraging units across the state to engage with the communities they serve by participating in various cultural events. By attending Rondo Days, Twin Cities Pride and Cinco de Mayo, for example, Soldiers and Airmen build relationships with other Minnesotans and culturally aware and better prepared to serve the vast array of backgrounds that make up the state of Minnesota’s population. In 2016, the Minnesota National Guard closed that gap by attaining 19 percent of Minnesotans that currently come from diverse ethnicities.

Community outreach from a diversity and inclusion standpoint increased this past year as a result of feedback received from the Minnesota National Guard Adjutant General’s Junior Diversity Council. The council, established in 2016, is comprised of junior service members in the Minnesota National Guard

The Junior Diversity Council also provides unique perspectives, as the youngest generation of Soldiers and Airmen best understand new challenges with technology and shifting demographics, and can help identify solutions. Council members have the opportunity to take these issues back to their units – specifically their peers – to further explore solutions and be advocates for their concerns. By building and fostering an inclusive culture through the council, the Minnesota National Guard seeks to provide every member a path toward success and an opportunity to reach their full potential.

Additionally, the Minnesota National Guard has eight special emphasis councils that focus on diversity: African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Disabled, Holocaust Remembrance, Latino, LGBT, Native American and Women. By facilitating educational opportunities for service members, such as visits to Holocaust memorials, workshops and the Hispanic New Year celebration, the special emphasis councils provide an opportunity for all Minnesota National Guard members to become more culturally aware and better prepared to serve the vast array of backgrounds that make up both the organization and the state.

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.

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 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 civilian agencies, military counterparts and allied countries. Permitted readiness, which is achieved when units ensure that all of their people are administratively and medically prepared, is the final component to building a competent and ready force.

For the Minnesota National Guard — and the Army National Guard as a whole — the past two years were marked by decreased funding for military schools training, challenging the organization’s ability to ensure Soldiers were trained and equipment was maintained. In 2016, however, the Minnesota National Guard saw an increase in military school funding that was nearly double what was received in 2015. The additional funding allows Soldiers to attend both Military Occupational Specialty training or professional development training as well as their Annual Training requirements in the same year, which ensures complete training for the service member and unit without sacrificing one military school or training event for the other.

The organization’s 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, which underwent a National Training Center rotation at Fort Irwin, California in 2016, experienced firsthand the value role players add to a training event. During their rotation in the Mojave Desert, 1/34th ABCT Soldiers were required to navigate political and social challenges in addition to battling both conventional and non-conventional forces.

Role players are injected into scenarios as city mayors, tribal chiefs, non-government organizations, religious figures and other key leaders that a Minnesota National Guard unit would potentially interact with during a deployment.

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In 2016 the Minnesota National Guard also began a process to enhance readiness at its premier facility, Camp Ripley Training Center, by planning for complex, multidimensional events that include role-playing participants in collective training events. Role players are inserted into scenarios as city mayors, tribal chiefs, non-government organizations, religious figures and other key leaders that a Minnesota National Guard unit would potentially interact with during a deployment.
The priority of ensuring the Minnesota National Guard has the right units, in the right locations, trained to do the right job, requires constant evaluation and organizational Redefine. Coupled with budget, strategies and mission requirements — both short and fateful — that change from year to year, the Minnesota National Guard is continually focused on fine-tuning its force structure, upgrading equipment and improving training efficiency.

In 2016 the Minnesota National Guard fielded dozens of new pieces of equipment, weapons systems and information technology enhancements in the form of tactical communication systems and software upgrades. Because the Minnesota National Guard has gained a reputation for quickly training service members on proper use and maintenance of new equipment, the organization’s physical property has moved to the forefront of military-issued equipment. This effort also aligns the Minnesota National Guard with the Department of Defense’s Total Force Policy, an effort to enhance the interoperability of active and reserve units in order to seamlessly combine efforts to accomplish both domestic and overseas missions.

In 2017 the Minnesota National Guard will continue to develop and maintain its relationships with the National Guard Bureau to keep abreast of new equipment offerings and national policy changes that may affect the Minnesota National Guard’s force structure.

Additionally, the organization will continue to implement the Readiness Center Transformation Master Plan, a 20-year plan implemented in 2015 that guides the Minnesota National Guard through a process of contracting, consolidating and closing some of its facilities. The plan was the result of a years-long study that assessed long-term facility condition, capacity for improvements, demographics and travel considerations for unit members — all of which will ensure the Minnesota National Guard’s force structure is prepared for changes in the years to come.

New equipment in 2016 included the addition of two retrofitted Small Unit Support Vehicles, a tracked vehicle designed to support small teams during operations in all types of environments and terrains. With the increase of inventory allocated to units across the state, the Minnesota National Guard has enhanced its ability to support local responders in emergency response utilizing a vehicle that can navigate snow, ice and water.

A total of 11 units moved geographic locations in 2016 to ensure specialized trains are stationed as close as possible to where their skills will be best utilized, while taking advantage of new building openings and armory renovations. The 454th Chemical Company, which was based out of the now-closed Northfield armory, moved to the recently-screened Hastings armory allowing a more robust work space while shortening unit distance to the 5th Civil Support Team in St. Paul — a unit the 454th often works and trains with. Additionally, as preparation efforts for the implementation of additional cyber defense teams into the organization continue, the Minnesota National Guard is exploring the most robust and tech-savvy communities as potential homes of these new areas.

Since the first Yellow Ribbon Network was proclaimed in 2008, 98 networks in 237 communities and 25 counties have emerged in Minnesota. These self-sustaining, cross-community networks, which draw together agencies, community leaders and volunteers, serve to support the service members, veterans and military families of any age and from any era — that reside in their areas. In 2016, the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program saw the city of Lino Lakes join the effort.

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. Yellow Ribbons Companies go above and beyond in their efforts to hire and retain veterans in addition to connecting with military-support efforts in their local communities. In 2016 Blue Crows and Blue Shield of Minnesota, ALLIANCE/MnPower, United Parcel Service, North Hennepin Community College and Minnesota Sports & Entertainment were proclaimed, bringing the number of Yellow Ribbon Companies to 53.

Additional, the State Family Programs office increased its family outreach efforts to build resilience and cement relationships.

In 2017 the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program looks to add another Family Program to its family outreach efforts to provide more opportunities for military-connected families to connect and build stronger bonds. With the demands of military service straining families due to time spent apart and other stresses, family outreach efforts such as the “Minnesota Military Family Challenge” and overnight stays at the Minnesota Zoo provide structured programs that allow families to build resilience and connect relationships.

The State Family Programs office created a directory of resources in Minnesota for service members and military families, allowing military-connected families to easily find professional support for their specific needs. Whether the need is related to finance, insurance, employment or housing, support can now be found through the Service Provider Network hosted online by Joint Service Support, the national advocate for National Guard service members, families and veterans.

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon is one of several programs housed under the Minnesota National Guard’s State Family Programs office. Through a massive synchronization effort that ties military-connected families to employers, communities, resources, providers and other service-support organizations, Beyond the Yellow Ribbon furthers resilience among Service members and families while creating awareness of the challenges of military service and providing an opportunity for Minnesotans to support service members, veterans and their families.

In 2016 the Minnesota National Guard’s State Family Programs office was nationally accredited by the Council on Accreditation, an organization that promotes and recognizes excellence in community-based support. The accreditation not only highlights the strength and effectiveness of Beyond the Yellow Ribbon, but also ensures the program has sound financial management principles, ethical decision-making practices and provides high-quality service with positive outcomes.

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SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

We invest in sustainable infrastructure to ensure our facilities are economically and environmentally sound and remain assets to service members and communities.

Sustaining the infrastructure that facilitates training and maintenance for a 13,000-member force with thousands of pieces of equipment is more than a priority – it is a necessity. By exploring ways to harness renewable energy and identifying the right solution for outdated facilities that are too costly or no longer viable to maintain, the Minnesota National Guard continually invests in good stewardship and modernization.

The Minnesota National Guard’s key emphasis in terms of sustainable energy was the construction of a 90-acre sole array at Camp Ripley Training Center. The array, owned and maintained by Minnesota Power, is capable of producing enough electricity to power all of CRTC while saving the Minnesota National Guard Renewable Energy Credits. Earned through the lease agreement with Minnesota Power, REGA applies toward the organization’s goal of becoming Net Zero, which would mean the Minnesota National Guard produces as much energy as it consumes.

In 2016 CRTC reached another milestone toward its Net Zero goal after receiving funding from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources for the construction of a biomass heating facility. In conjunction with the Minnesota National Guard’s own budget, the additional funds will move this long sought-after plan from vision to reality with design work for the facility to begin in 2017 and construction beginning in 2018. The heating facility, fueled by woody biomass abundant on the 53,000-acre post, would significantly reduce the installation’s reliance on natural gas.

The Minnesota National Guard’s ongoing initiative to reduce waste has come through both physical and behavioral changes. In 2016 the organization identified one-star citations with waste-based citations that did not require recycling. The Minnesota National Guard allowed facility managers the flexibility to re-work existing contracts, or find ways to close or consolidate other outdated buildings and freeing them up for remodel or divesture.

In 2015 the Minnesota National Guard published the Readiness Center Transformation Master Plan, a 20-year vision that recommends new construction, consolidation and closure of some Minnesota National Guard emplacements. The plan took into account changing population trends, the practicality of maintaining decades-old buildings and projected military requirements to ensure each of the organization’s redundant centers remain in the right community.

Though the plan has yet to receive federal funding – which would guarantee financially responsible and environmentally sound rates for the facilities – the results of the study are utilized to prioritize spending and address redundancy centers that will now be unable to meet the needs of the military unit and community.

One such example was the 94-year-old building in Stillwater, which exceeded its useful life for modern-day military use. A new facility in Stillwater – shared with the city’s fire department – was completed in 2015 and still accommodates additional units, consolidating other outdated buildings and finding them up for removal or divesture.

The Minnesota Air National Guard base in Minneapolis decreased its total annual energy intensity by 40 percent from 2003 to 2015, and its total annual water usage by nearly 50 percent from 2007 to 2015. The 135th Airlift Wing collaborated through a comprehensive strategy that includes local policy, community partnerships, employee education, high-efficiency remote upgrades, submetering and Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning controls.

In 2016 the Minnesota National Guard, in partnership with the Minnesota Information Technology Services, the Minnesota National Guard maintains and defends its communications infrastructure while improving 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, such as unusual weather, that could possibly degrade its information network and require action as outlined in established Communication Response Plans.

In 2016 the Minnesota National Guard participated in its largest cyber capabilities exercise to date, the National Guard Bureau-led Cyber Shield exercise. Held at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, this two-week, joint exercise included nearly 900 service members from 47 states. By bringing together professionals from around the country, in addition to industry experts representing water, utility and other critical infrastructure companies, the exercise enabled the training for cyber warriors to defend against the ever-growing threat posed by cyber warfare.

Additionally, the Cyber Shield exercise provided the unique opportunity for Minnesota National Guard Soldiers to be the larger audience in the training event – something not always possible, as they are usually needed to provide network support for the scenario. As such, the Minnesota National Guard’s Cyber Network Team participating in the exercise finished fourth out of 12 teams evaluated during the execution phase of Cyber Shield.

cyber security & response

We secure our state’s military network and collaborate with interagency partners to enhance our response to and recovery from negative cyber events.

Working with federal, military and state partners, in particular the Minnesota Information Technology Services, the Minnesota National Guard maintains and defends its communications infrastructure while improving its ability to react to a cyber event.

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In 2016 the Minnesota National Guard sent three information security envoys to Croatia, forming an ongoing partnership to bolster both countries’ ability to combat cyber threats. Since the two countries’ first cyber engagement in 2012, the partnership has quickly grown into a mutually beneficial relationship grounded by the sharing of ideas, strategies and information. Engagements this year were focused on building a three-to-five year plan for continued collaboration and planning for a cyber symposium that will bring together industry professionals, academics and military leaders to further develop cyber strategy.

In 2017 the Minnesota National Guard will once again benchmark in participation in large-scale cyber exercises by participating in the U.S. Cyber Command’s Cyber Shield exercise. The organization’s participation in the exercise – as one of only nine National Guard teams to be selected to attend – is significant in that it will bring together nearly 50 organizations representing a variety of civilian, government and military agencies, as well partners from allied countries, with the goal of coalescing the many stakeholders interested in maintaining a safe and secure cyber infrastructure in a joint, multinational effort.

In 2017 the Minnesota National Guard continued taking steps to implement its Cyber Protection Team – which will be fully operational in the coming years – to enhance the Minnesota National Guard’s ability to conduct defensive cyberspace operations, including vulnerability assessments, critical infrastructure assessments, theater security cooperation and Federal Emergency Management Agency support.
MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD | MAJOR COMMANDS

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.
The Minnesota National Guard is relied upon by the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force as part of the operational force. This map depicts the countries Minnesota Guardsmen traveled to outside of the continental United States.
2016 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. Joint Force Headquarters can also provide a dual-status commander, specially qualified to command state and federal forces operating in Minnesota.

The year 2016 marked the 20th anniversary of the Minnesota National Guard’s State Partnership Program with Croatia. The relationship, which has evolved in scope and significance over the years, provides an opportunity for Soldiers and Airmen to connect with Croatian counterparts and affirm the U.S.’s commitment to its allies.

Because of the complexity of moving more than 6,000 Soldiers and hundreds of armored and tactical vehicles, the Adjutant General’s directors of logistics and the Minnesota National Guard’s Joint Force Headquarters coordinate state and federal forces operating in Minnesota.

Nearly 700 service members from the Minnesota National Guard join together to display the U.S. flag before the inaugural game at U.S. Bank Stadium, home of the Minnesota Vikings, on Sept. 18, 2016.

In 2017, Joint Force Headquarters’ Training Support Unit will deploy two Soldiers from the 47th Chaplains Detachment to support the Black Sea Area Support Team, which provides base camp operations for U.S. forces in the Black Sea theater of operations. While deployed, the ministry team will coordinate religious services for all faith backgrounds, provide morale and welfare programs, and conduct religious engagements with the local populace.

2017 OBJECTIVES

In 2017 Joint Force Headquarters’ Training Support Unit will deploy two Soldiers from the 47th Chaplains Detachment to support the Black Sea Area Support Team, which provides base camp operations for U.S. forces in the Black Sea theater of operations. While deployed, the ministry team will coordinate religious services for all faith backgrounds, provide morale and welfare programs, and conduct religious engagements with the local populace.

Not only does the high readiness rating ensure a swift, effective response by the Minnesota National Guard, but it also helps to protect the Minnesota National Guard’s force structure – of particular importance during a time of military drawdown.

Joint Force Headquarters continues to support units, if requested, to support law enforcement efforts related to the National Football League’s Super Bowl LII.

2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Rosemead-based 34th Red Bull Infantry Division provides command and control for four National Guard brigades and is aligned for training with six others, across seven different states. In Minnesota the 34th ID includes the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 34th Combat Aviation Brigade, 84th Troop Command and the 547th Regional Support Group.

The 34th ID once again successfully completed a series of joint and multinational exercises. By steadily ramping up involvement and expertise in these exercises during the past several years, the Red Bulls have become globally respected and proficient in maintaining a sustained readiness model that allows them to deploy in support of operations around the world quickly and effectively. The sustained model the division supports the Department of Defense’s Total Force Policy, a principle that recognizes that global challenges are greater than what one component of the Armed Forces can meet alone.

One such exercise the division participated in was Saber Strike, which took place throughout Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The long-standing, U.S. Army Europe-led exercise is designed to improve joint interoperability by partnering with allied forces to conduct live-fire, command post and other warfare training, to include the integration of U.S. close-air support with multinational ground forces.

In 2016 the 34th ID provided command support for the 1/34th ABCT’s training event at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, California. The opportunity to undertake the rigorous training at NTC is limited to only one National Guard brigade per year. The division commander defined the training objectives to ensure the best training for the brigade, resulting in the 1/34th ABCT being unequivocally ready to deploy and engage in decisive action.

2017 OBJECTIVES

While building on a cooperative relationship and becoming instrumental in ‘3 Corps’ success in exercises such as Joint Warrior and Enhanced Saber, the division was requested by U.S. Army Europe to join 3 Corps on another large-scale event dubbed Saber Challenge, which the 34th ID has not participated in since 2011. During Exercise Saber Challenge, which will take place in Germany, major commands will establish a Joint Land Force and exercise Unified Land Operations in a contested and degraded environment.

Also of great importance will be the successful completion of the Talisman Saber exercise – an event that ultimately validates the corps-level command in terms of being a combined-arms land component headquarters. Talisman Saber will be the division’s largest exercise this year and will lay the foundation for a future AfgStar exercise, which is an essential training event that ensures the division’s ability to provide command and control of units conducting combat operations.
The 34th Infantry Division was created from National Guard troops of Minnesota, Iowa, the Dakotas and Nebraska in late summer 1917, four months after the U.S. entered WWI. Training was conducted at Camp Cody, near Deming, New Mexico. Dusty winds swept daily through the area, giving the new Division a nickname: the “Southwest Division.” So the men arrived at Camp Cody other than from the Midwest and Southwest joined them. Many of the Guardsmen had been together a year earlier at Camp Elmo Grande, near Mercedos, Texas, where they had conducted border patrol duties on the U.S.-Mexican border. Companies, batteries and regiments, which had developed unit cohesion, were broken up, and within two months nearly all personnel were reassigned to other commands in France.

Field Artillery, 135th Infantry, and 136th Infantry also earned a WWI streamer with 1918, Champagne-Marne, Lorraine, Meuse-Argonne, and St. Mihiel. The 125th went to France, but by the time it arrived in October 1918, it was too late to see action. The 151st Field Artillery and the 168th Infantry Regiment, serving under which had developed esprit de corps and cohesion, were broken up, and within two months nearly all personnel were reassigned to other commands in France.

Training went well, and the officers and men waited anxiously throughout the long fall and winter of 1917-18 for orders to ship for France. Their anticipation turned to anger and frustration, however, when word was received that the 34th had been chosen to become a replacement division. Companies, batteries and regiments, which had developed esprit de coeur and cohesion, were broken up, and within two months nearly all personnel were reassigned to other commands in France.

Rushed to a skeleton of units and officers, the 34th remained at Camp Cody just long enough for new draftees to fill its ranks. The inconstant Division then went to France, but by the time it arrived in October 1918, it was too late to see action. The 151st Field Artillery and the 168th Infantry Regiment, serving under which had developed esprit de corps and cohesion, were broken up, and within two months nearly all personnel were reassigned to other commands in France.

The 34th Infantry Division coordinate for a human portrait of the unit’s shoulder sleeve insignia, which was designed by American regional artist Marvin Dusty wind squalls swirled daily through the area, giving the new Division a nickname: the “Southwest Division.” So the men arrived at Camp Cody other than from the Midwest and Southwest joined them. Many of the Guardsmen had been together a year earlier at Camp Elmo Grande, near Mercedos, Texas, where they had conducted border patrol duties on the U.S.-Mexican border. Companies, batteries and regiments, which had developed unit cohesion, were broken up, and within two months nearly all personnel were reassigned to other commands in France.

The Division then landed in Salerno, Italy, before pushing up the Italian boot to Monte Cassino. As a result, they sustained losses of about 80 percent in the infantry battalions. They were relieved from their positions Feb. 11 to 13, 1944. Eventually, it took the combined force of five allied infantry divisions to finish what the 34th nearly accomplished on its own. The performance of the Red Bulls in the mountains is considered to rank as one of the finest feats of arms carried out during the war.

After rest and rehabilitation, the 34th Infantry Division landed in Anzio on March 25, 1944, where they held defensive positions until May 23, 1944. At that point, it was a race to Rome and then to the French border. Pursuit of the ruined enemy to the French border was halted by order on May 24, 1944, upon the German surrender in Italy.

"Attack, attack, attack" had become the Division’s slogan early in its fighting career. With that barhicitry Soldiers of the Division saw frontline combat in five major campaigns that resulted in 21,562 casualties (5,737 killed. 14,165 wounded, 3,340 missing in action). Individual awards included 11 Medals of Honor, 98 Distinguished Service Crosses and 13,000 purple heart.

In addition to the personal awards and decorations, the Division garnered three Presidential Unit Citations, 35 Unit Commendations and 925 separate division citations. The French government awarded the 34th the Croix de Guerre with Palm for gallantry in action alongside French troops.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, more than 13,000 Red Bulls have deployed on missions supporting the Global War on Terror, including: Operation Joint Forge (Bosnia); Operation Joint Guardian (Kosovo); Operation Vigilant Hammer (Europe); Multinational Force Observer (Egypt); Joint Task Force Brun (Honduras); Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan); Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq); Operation Freedom Sentinel (Afghanistan); Operation Inherent Resolve (Iraq and Syria); Operation Spartan Shield (Kosovo); as well as multiple homeland defense missions for Operation Noble Eagle.

In 2004, the 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 34th Infantry Division, and with nearly 100 key positions held by members of the 1st Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 34th Infantry Division, commenced combat operations throughout Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, returning the Red Bulls to combat after 93 years and earning the battalion the distinction of becoming the first unit in the 34th Infantry Division to wear the Red Bull patch at a right-shoulder combat patch since WWII.

In March 2006, the 1st Brigade of the 34th Infantry Division commenced combat operations in Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, marking the largest single unit deployment for the 34th Infantry Division since WWII. With its return in July 2007, the brigade became the second-longest serving military unit (22 months total deployment) with 36 in combat in Iraq.

In addition to those wartime roles, the 34th has continued its responsibilities during national disasters and Homeland Security events, such as providing security for the Republican National Convention in 2008.

In 2017 the Red Bulls will mark their centennial year with a series of events to celebrate 100 years of proud service. The year-long celebration, punctuated by several events throughout the year, will be highlighted by a day of fanfare honoring current and former Red Bulls during Military Appreciation Day at the Minnesota State Fair on Aug. 29, 2017.

Additionally, Red Bull subordinate units will celebrate the 100th year of the Division through training and other recognition events during 2017.
The St. Paul-based 34th Combat Aviation Brigade is an Army National Guard unit that supports the 5th 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 2016, the 34th CAB deployed 20 Soldiers and four of its Chinooks from B Company, 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment, to a year-long deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom Sentinel. Incorporated into an aviation task force with the 1st Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, aviation members logged more than 1,000 hours of combat flight time in support of operations in Afghanistan.

Additionally, 40 Soldiers from both B and C Companies, 834th Aviation Support Battalion, returned from a seven-month deployment in support of Operation Spartan Shield.

In 2016, members of B Company, 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 11th Aviation Regiment, conduct sling load training at Army Aviation Support Facility #2 in St. Cloud on Dec. 18, 2015. MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY: Capt. Melanie Nelson

Lastly in 2016, the 34th CAB strengthened ongoing relationships with its active duty counterparts under the Army Total Force Partnership Program, which directs commanders from all components to undertake collective training to improve integration and readiness. Working with the 4th Combat Aviation Brigade out of Fort Carson, Colorado, the 34th CAB executed four training events, including a division Winfly exercise, to enhance its own readiness and ensure the two brigades’ ability to support one another in future operations.

2017 OBJECTIVES

In 2017, the 34th CAB will undergo two major training events: Talisman Saber, an annual training event with R Corps and the Australian Defense Force to prepare for worldwide combat operations and humanitarian aid missions; and an Exportable Combat Training Capabilities exercise, an intense, platoon-level field training event at Fort Hood, Texas.

Additionally, C Company, 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment, will deploy an element of medical evacuation aircrews and medics to support an aviation task force undergoing a National Training Center rotation at Fort Irwin, California.

Lastly, in 2017, the 34th CAB continues working with the 4th Armored Brigade Combat Team to prepare to enter “The Box” and begin short-term National Training Center rotations in the Mojave Desert at Fort Irwin, California. MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY: Capt. Melanie Nelson

In 2017, the 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 136th Infantry Regiment, will participate in the Saber Strike exercise, an annual, U.S.-led exercise conducted in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Joining several nations in the multi-national training exercise, including Bulgaria, Canada, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovakia and the United Kingdom, the 2-136 IN (CAB) will help improve interoperability and readiness of participating nations, enhance freedom of movement within the Baltic states and demonstrate U.S. Army Europe’s speed of assembly and operational reach in the area.

In addition to executing its second-consecutive large-scale training event, the 2-136 IN (CAB) will undergo another massive logistical operation in moving all of its assigned equipment from the continental U.S. to the Baltic region by rail and boat.

Lastly, the brigade’s 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 136th Armor Regiment, will participate in this dynamic exercise, a Swedish-led training event, across a multinational exercise that is projected to include approximately 19,000 participants from Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, France, Poland, Germany, Norway and the U.S. 2017 will mark the first year of participation for the U.S.

2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Bloomington-based 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team of the 5th Infantry Division consists of eight major subordinate commands. More than 9,600 Soldiers make up the brigade’s combined arms, cavalry, artillery, engineer and brigade support battalions, constituting more than half of the Minnesota National Guard’s total force structure.

After two years of intense planning and preparation, the 1/34th ABCT finally executed its National Training Center rotation at Fort Irwin, California. By completing the preparatory Winfly and Exportable Combat Training Capabilities exercises in 2015 – intense and complex exercises in their own right – the brigade was finally able to facilitate movement of more than 6,000 Soldiers and 1,400 pieces of equipment to Fort Irwin to conduct the U.S. Army’s premier training event for armored brigade combat teams.

Equal in weight to the logistical operation of moving an entire brigade’s worth of personnel and equipment across the country was the execution of the 14-day force-on-force maneuver exercise in the Mojave Desert. While in “The Box,” the brigade was tested on its ability to move, communicate and conduct decisive action against an enemy nearly equal in size, role-played by the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, an active duty regiment dedicated to contesting brigades that enter Fort Irwin’s massive training area.

The brigade’s rotation was significant in that it brought 91 percent of its assigned equipment to Fort Irwin, a number not normally surpassed by units undergoing a NTC rotation. And reporting only minor injuries, the brigade executed one of the safest and most successful rotations at the training center. Lastly, with a coordinated effort among several other major commands in the Minnesota National Guard, the 134th ABCT was able to return all of its equipment back to home station for repairs and maintenance before the end of the fiscal year – ensuring the brigade’s status as the U.S. Army’s most ready brigade for 2017.

In 2016, the 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry, deployed 200 Soldiers to the Sinai Peninsula in support of the Multinational Force and Observer’s mission to enforce the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Working closely with the Colombian and Fijian military, the unit provides force protection, serves as a quick reaction force and observes and reports violations of the treaty in support of the 37-year-old agreement.

2017 OBJECTIVES

In 2017 the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team of the 5th Infantry Division will deploy to the Sinai Peninsula in support of the Multinational Force and Observer’s mission to enforce the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Working closely with the Colombian and Fijian military, the unit provides force protection, serves as a quick reaction force and observes and reports violations of the treaty in support of the 37-year-old agreement.

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The mission of the 347th Regional Support Group is to deploy to provide life support and command and control of base operations. Responsibilities include providing logistics, services, transportation, human resource management, and one of its contract acquisition teams. The 347th RSG's logistic specialists from the 114th and 224th Transportation Companies undertook the monumental task of moving a brigade's worth of equipment – valued at more than $750 million – from Camp Ripley to Fort Irwin, California. The 347th RSG's logistic specialists from the 114th and 224th Transportation Companies undertook the monumental task of moving a brigade's worth of equipment – valued at more than $750 million – from Camp Ripley to Fort Irwin, California.

In 2016, Soldiers of the 347th RSG mobilized to support the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, during a National Training Center rotation at Fort Irwin, California. The 347th RSG's logistic specialists from the 114th and 224th Transportation Companies undertook the monumental task of moving a brigade's worth of equipment – valued at more than $750 million – from Camp Ripley to Fort Irwin and eventually back to home station. The task began at CRTC, where more than 1,200 pieces of equipment were loaded onto more than 400 railcars, building a total of eight trains for movement to Fort Irwin, California. Upon arrival at the 4th Infantry Division at Fort Irwin, California, the transportation companies assisted in the second stage of the long journey, off-loading the equipment onto the Matra Trail. The task then began at Camp Ripley, where more than 250 pieces of equipment were loaded onto more than 400 railcars, building a total of eight trains for movement to California. The task was completed at CRTC, where more than 1,200 pieces of equipment were loaded onto more than 400 railcars, building a total of eight trains for movement to Fort Irwin, California.

2017 OBJECTIVES

2017 in the 1903rd Acquisition Team, which plans and coordinates contracting functions up to the corps level and supports the U.S. Property and Fiscal Office, will deploy to Kuwait as part of a contracting support brigade executing theater support contracting plans.

The 347th RSG will prepare for and conduct a Combat Support Training Exercise with units at Camp Ripley Training Center and Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. The training will include the brigade's human resources, medical, headquarters and financial management companies and one of its contract acquisition teams. The CSTX, which builds upon the experience garnered at NTC, will be held at Camp Ripley Training Center and Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. The training will include the brigade's human resources, medical, headquarters and financial management companies and one of its contract acquisition teams. The CSTX, which builds upon the experience garnered at NTC, will be held at Camp Ripley Training Center and Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. The training will include the brigade's human resources, medical, headquarters and financial management companies and one of its contract acquisition teams.
2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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

Each year hundreds of Soldiers from both the reserve and active components travel to the Camp Ripley Training Center to attend one of 31 courses offered by the 175th RTI. The institute ensures the courses offered meet all requirements for all components, drawing students from across the country and supporting the One Army School System. The One Army School System is a force-wide, national effort that aligns course content with demands to maximize training across the Army to ensure Soldiers are prepared to fight.

Also during this year, 115 officer candidates graduated Phase I of OCS, the highest number to date. This increase in training capacity is due to ongoing initiatives to complete the phase II training facility and to the Camp Ripley Training Center to attend one of 31 courses offered by the 175th RTI.

In 2016, as part of the Minnesota National Guard’s State Partnership Program, the institute’s Regional Training Site Maintenance team sent three instructors to Croatia to conduct Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected maintenance training. The five-day training event enabled the Croatian military to operate and maintain its newly-acquired fleet of MRAP vehicles.

Soldiers attending the 175th RTI courses in 2016 have done so at CRTI’s premier Education Facility, which offers four classrooms, two computer labs, conference rooms and an auditorium. The building maximizes training by offering a dining facility and state-of-the-art technology, enhancing the 175th RTI’s educational offerings with the goal of maintaining the Institute of Excellence rating it received in 2012 and 2015.

2017 OBJECTIVES

In 2017 the 175th RTI will continue to improve on its current plan to support the One Army School System. Additionally, the RTI-M will support international training initiatives by sending fire teams to Croatia for a three-week MRAP recovery course, building on the relationships and training that was fostered in 2016.

Lastly the 175th RTI will continue its efforts to enhance the professional conduct and organizational expertise of its cadre to provide the best trained Soldiers and professional military education. In its effort to maintain its ranking as one of the top training facilities in the nation, the 175th RTI will continue to seek out exceptional Soldiers to become quality instructors that produce agile and adaptive leaders.

Additionally, the Arden Hills Army Training Site continued to expand opportunities for training to interagency partners as well, and in 2016 provided a venue for law enforcement to train on close-quarter engagement skills and riot control.

2017 OBJECTIVES

Building off of a 2016 visit by Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, CRTI leadership will continue to foster Minnesota’s State Partnership Program through coordination with Croatian Army counterparts in development of Croatia’s Joint Training Range, which will ultimately replace the capabilities on CRTI and become a regional training center for NATO forces.

CRTI leaders also worked to expand opportunities with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Camp Ripley is committed to success in the fields of natural and cultural resource management, highlighted by the construction of the 10 megawatt solar field in conjunction with Minnesota Power – efforts aimed at making CRTI a Net Zero installation.

In July 2016 CRTI was federally recognized as a Sentinel Landscape, which is a conservation and encroachment effort that builds off of the Department of Defense’s Army Compatible Use Buffer program. The designation creates a partnership between state and federal agencies to conserve natural habitat, maintain landscapes and prevent incompatible development that would inhibit military training.

During the 2016 training year, CRTI oversaw approximately 254,000 days of military training and 60,500 training days for local and state interagency partners. Additionally, CRTI provided direct support to organizations deploying at home and abroad for training or missions, such as the 1st ABCT’s rail movement to California.

In 2016, 58 company commanders and first sergeants graduated from the Company Command/First Sergeant Pre-Command Course, which provides company-level leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to manage and improve unit readiness and training.

Also during this year, 115 officer candidates graduated Phase I of OCS, the highest number of graduates in more than a decade. Soldiers attending Phase II will return to their units in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois and Indiana – states that make up the entire officer candidate region that the 175th RTI supports – and continue their progression toward becoming a commission in their home states.

Of the 18 Minnesota officer candidates to move on from Phase I of OCS, all completed Phase II with the 175th RTI and eventually Phase III, which is held at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. This was not only a 100 percent graduation rate, but also the highest number of candidates to make it all the way through the challenging course since 2012. And, after years of women being barred from serving in combat roles, the institute commissioned its first female Soldier into the armor branch. Lastly, nine warrant officer candidates graduated WOCs in 2016.

In 2016, the institute continued to prioritize, professional military education. In its effort to maintain its ranking as one of the top training facilities in the nation, the 175th RTI will continue to seek out exceptional Soldiers to become quality instructors that produce agile and adaptive leaders.

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With the increase in available training space, additional agencies and out-of-state units took advantage of CRTI’s training capacity, providing valuable and effective opportunities for several new organizations. CRTI’s ranges and facilities were made available to military units regionally and internationally to include Canada, Croatia and Norway — as well as the State Highway Patrol, Department of Natural Resources and law enforcement agencies from across the state.

Additionally, the Arden Hills Army Training Site continued to expand opportunities for training to interagency partners as well, and in 2016 provided a venue for law enforcement to train on close-quarter engagement skills and riot control.

2017 OBJECTIVES

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2016 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 systems across the globe in addition to providing the citizens of Minnesota with domestic operations and disaster response support. The 133rd is known as the first federally recognized National Guard flying unit in the country.

In 2016 the 133rd Airlift Wing participated in the Saber Junction exercise, the wing’s second rotation with the Joint Multinational Readiness Center with U.S. European Command. During the exercise, which provided a large-scale venue to exercise interoperability with allied forces while integrating air and land components, the 133rd Airlift Wing conducted 17 missions, flying 49 sorties and airlifting 515 personnel and 17,000 pounds of cargo. Additionally, aviators transported 140 passengers and 61,000 pounds of cargo.

The 133rd Airlift Wing also deployed its Airmen to support the Pacific Air Forces’ Pacific Angel exercise, which provided a large-scale venue to exercise interoperability with allied forces while integrating air and land components. The 133rd Airlift Wing conducted 17 missions, flying 49 sorties and airlifting 515 personnel and 17,000 pounds of cargo. Additionally, aviators transported 140 passengers and 61,000 pounds of cargo.

In 2016 the 133rd Airlift Wing was the seventh-largest employer in Duluth, Minnesota with domestic operations and disaster response support. The 133rd is comprised of Airmen prepared to rapidly respond to support federal and state missions and community needs.

2017 OBJECTIVES

In 2017 the 133rd Airlift Wing will continue to build on its gains in unit readiness for the 2017 event and beyond. As such, the 133rd Airlift Wing will continue to participate in training events and humanitarian missions around the globe, both improving its ability to conduct the assigned mission and gaining familiarity with cultures and geographies in a variety of regions around the world.

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2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 148th Fighter Wing, headquartered in Duluth, operates the F-16CM Block 50 Fighting Falcon to provide Suppression of Enemy Air Defense. The full wing structure, which includes headquarters, operations, maintenance, medical and mission support, is comprised of personnel trained to rapidly respond to support federal and state missions and community needs.

As of 2016 the 148th Fighter Wing was the seventh-largest employer in Duluth, Minnesota.

In 2016 the 148th Fighter Wing deployed more than 300 Airmen and 10 F-16s to South Korea to provide U.S. Pacific Command and Pacific Air Forces with Theater Security Packages, which help maintain a deterrent against threats to regional security and stability. In addition to flying more than 600 sorties in support of the mission, the 148th Fighter Wing enabled the regional commander’s mission by providing maintenance, fuel and other flight operations support.

In 2016 the 148th Fighter Wing also conducted the Northern Lightning exercise at Volk Field, Wisconsin. The two-week training event brought together Airmen from more than 10 states, flying five different aircraft to perform counter-air, SEAD and close air support missions.

In 2017 the 148th Fighter Wing will deploy its F-16s to South Korea to support U.S. Pacific Command and Pacific Air Forces with Theater Security Packages, which help maintain a deterrent against threats to regional security and stability. The wing will also support the Active Associate Program, which provides a unique opportunity to gain experience and training for Airmen of the U.S. Air Force. The wing not only has the capacity to maintain and support active duty pilots that require flight time in the F-16, but could also support training on the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter – the next generation of fighter jet.

The 148th Fighter Wing continues to maintain the resources and infrastructure to support the Active Associate Program, which provides a unique opportunity to gain experience and training for Airmen of the U.S. Air Force. The wing not only has the capacity to maintain and support active duty pilots that require flight time in the F-16, but could also support training on the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter – the next generation of fighter jet.

2017 OBJECTIVES

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20TH ANNIVERSARY: State Partnership | Minnesota National Guard & Croatia

The Minnesota National Guard marked a significant milestone in its partnership with Croatia in 2016, celebrating 20 years under the National Guard’s State Partnership Program.

The National Guard established the State Partnership Program in 1993 to assist several countries in Central Europe during their transition to democracy in the Post-Soviet era. The end of the Cold War marked a decrease in U.S. military’s presence in Europe in the 1990s, but provided an opportunity for strategic partnerships with those former Soviet States. The National Guard was a good fit for the mission at the time as it was viewed as less aggressive than sending regular army units.

Minnesota’s partnership with Croatia started in 1996 when Croatia was still considered a combat zone for Soldiers who traveled there. The relationship began with familiarization events which have over the years developed into hands-on training and military exchanges involving the sharing of tactics, engineer support to build infrastructure in Croatian villages and combined multinational training exercises like GuardEx and Immediate Response.

In 2009 Croatia became a full member in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a recognition of the transformation that occurred in modernizing their military and going from training partners to allies in combat.

In 2013 Croatia was also invited into the European Union. The partnership has also grown to include civilian exchanges between Minnesota state agencies, including the 1st, 2nd and 4th Parachute Divisions, the Hermann Goering Division, and 10 Panzer and Parcer Grenadier Divisions.

IN MEMORIAM: General John W. Vessey Jr. | 10th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff | Minnesota Red Bull

Jack was asked once by a reporter if he was disappointed when Rome was liberated and then overshadowed by the D-Day events in Normandy a couple of days later. Was he disappointed to have participated in great battles which some historians later had characterized as antiparallel? Jack told the reporter, “If he would have a member of the warrior class, if he wasn’t a Guardian, he wouldn’t understand the answer so there was no point in my telling him.” The Red Bulls know our contribution to success at Normandy was keeping 36 good German divisions engaged far from Normandy including the 1st, 2nd and 4th Parade Divisions, the Hermann Goering Division, and 10 Panzer and Parcer Grenadier Divisions.

Jack was laid to rest Sept. 1, 2016 in his Minnesota birthplace next to Avis, his high school sweetheart. The Red Bulls are proudest of our service during WWII. We have a recognition of the transformation that occurred in modernizing their military and going from training partners to allies in combat.

From the Soldiers of the 34th Red Bull Infantry Division.

The Minnesota National Guard’s relationship with Croatia remains important as stability in Europe and to deter further aggression from Russia.

The partnership between Croatia and Minnesota continues to develop and grow. The Minnesota National Guard provides exercises like GuardEx and Immediate Response.

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## 2016 Economic Impact

### Federal Impact

#### Master Cooperative Agreement

in accordance with an agreement between the Adjutant General and the Chief of the 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, federal and state governments.

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<th>2016</th>
<th>Increase</th>
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<td>Mankato</td>
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### State Impact

#### Tuition Reimbursement

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<td>5,461,953</td>
<td>6,451,686</td>
<td>990,733</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lakeville</td>
<td>68,733</td>
<td>45,404</td>
<td>-23,329</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Federal Impact:

- Direct federal funding of operations and maintenance, Employer tuition assistance per student, by unit.
- Employer reserve salaries and pay to service members for military training.
- Federal Impact: Direct federal funding of operations and maintenance, Employer reserve salaries and pay to service members for military training.

### State Impact:

- Local Economic Impact: Direct federal funding of operations and maintenance, Employer reserve salaries and pay to service members for military training.
- Employer reserve salaries and pay to service members for military training.

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### State Impact:

- Local Economic Impact: Direct federal funding of operations and maintenance, Employer reserve salaries and pay to service members for military training.
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### Federal Impact:

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### State Impact:

- Local Economic Impact: Direct federal funding of operations and maintenance, Employer reserve salaries and pay to service members for military training.
- Employer reserve salaries and pay to service members for military training.
The Adjutant General’s Senior Advisory Task Force and Junior Diversity Council continue to play critical roles in informing the decision making process for the leadership of the Minnesota National Guard.

MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY: Tech. Sgt. Paul Santikko

2017 STATE LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVES

Continue to explore legislation to enhance eligibility of service members and their dependents for funding for treatment of existing substance abuse and mental health treatment.

Support a Department of Public Safety bonding request for a Rail and Pipeline Safety Training Facility at Camp Ripley ($3.1 million).

Seek bonding funds for construction and renovation projects in St Cloud, Detroit Lakes, St Peter, Brainerd and other locations around the state ($10.5 million).

Support a possible Department of Administration legislative initiative to raise the threshold for construction project referral to the Designer Selection Board.

Support Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council legislation, which includes funding for Phase VI of the Camp Ripley Training Center Army Compatible Use Buffer program.

Continue to 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.

2016 STATE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT DEMOGRAPHIC

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

The Minnesota National Guard promotes the use of the educational benefits that are available through state and federal means. These benefits provide an essential resource for professional development and recruiting and retaining highly qualified service members.

RANK

- Jr. Grade NCO
- Sr. Grade NCO
- Other (civilians: extended and survivor)
- Officer

RACE

- White/Caucasian
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- More than one race/ethnicity
- Unknown

SEX

- Males
- Females

The Minnesota National Guard applauds the veterans bill signed into law that expands the legal definition of a veteran, to include Guardsmen and Reservists who have honorably served 20 years. Previously, the definition of a veteran was limited to those who had spent more than 179 days on federal active duty for orders other than training, regardless of how many years they served.

The National Defense Authorization Act passed in late 2016, providing $7.6 million for the 148th Fighter Wing to construct a 23,600-square-foot Lead Crew Training and Weapons Release Facility. The state-of-the-art indoor space will accommodate 70 personnel, one F-16 aircraft, test equipment, storage space and workspace to overhaul and repair fighter aircraft weapon release and gun systems to include bomb racks, weapons pylons, ejection racks and aircraft gun systems.

The U.S. Department of Interior, Agriculture and Defense joined with state and federal partners to designate Camp Ripley Training Center as one of three new Sentinel Landscapes in 2016. Local, state and federal partners have committed over $5.18 million within the Sentinel Landscape to protect or enhance 34,903 acres. The designation will protect Camp Ripley’s training mission, the integrity of the region’s natural resources and provide expanded access to hunting, fishing and recreation for local residents.

In 2017 the State of Minnesota will exempt military retirement pay from state income tax, benefiting 19,000 retired service member and their families, transitioning Minnesota from being one of a handful of states that tax an entire military pension to one of at least 12 that tax none of it.

The Minnesota National Guard appreciates the strong support shown by 100 percent of our federal congressional delegation, all of whom signed a letter to the Secretary of the Air Force in support of future basing of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighters at the 148th Fighter Wing in Duluth.
2017 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Minnesota National Guard continues to support efforts to find an alternative to sequestration and automatic spending cuts which would result in a loss of tradition for both domestic emergencies and overseas combat missions.

The Minnesota National Guard supports efforts to correct the benefit disparities that exist under 12304(b), a federal mobilization authority created in the fiscal 2012 National Defense Authorization Act that makes it easier for the Pentagon to utilize the Guard and Reserve. Currently, active service under 12304(b) does not qualify service members for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. They do not receive pre- and post-mobilization TRICARE, and their service does not count toward early receipt of retirement payments.

The Minnesota National Guard intends to grow or maintain its force structure. Current force structure organizes and equips the organization to respond to natural disasters, provide assistance to local law enforcement or assist during a domestic emergency. The Minnesota National 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 seeks a change to the Department of Veterans Affairs’ interpretation of a Department of Defense instruction that currently does not allow co-use of reserve component GI Bill and Federal Tuition Assistance for Minnesota service members. In addition, Federal Tuition Assistance should be made available to Guard and Reserve service members immediately upon completion of their Advanced Individual Training, rather than the current one-year delay after completion of AIT.

2017 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVES

Pursue an Air National Guard Cyber Operations unit in order to expand cyber capabilities within the Minnesota National Guard and support the adjutant general’s cyber response strategy.

Support efforts to pursue the C-130J Super Hercules model aircraft as a future, versatile airframe for the 133rd Airlift Wing. In the interim, the organization will encourage efforts to modernize the current C-130H Hercules fleet to meet the 2020 worldwide Air Traffic Control deadline.

Continue to work with the National Guard Bureau to make up a personnel shortage of 49 Airmen for the 148th Fighter Wing. The 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 the full complement of active duty Airmen have left the wing short of manpower requirements for its Suppression of Enemy Air Defense mission.

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, which will improve our ability to replace, modify and consolidate Minnesota National Guard facilities as scheduled in our Readiness Center Transformation Master Plan.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD, PLEASE GO TO www.MinnesotaNationalGuard.org
2017 commemorates the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the 34th Red Bull Infantry Division. For more information on centennial celebration events, visit: http://www.34ida.org/reunions/