

Dept. of Military Affairs: Wisconsin National Guard members supporting southwest border mission

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MADISON, Wis. — Approximately two dozen Wisconsin National Guard members are headed to the southwest border to assist the Arizona National Guard and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol.

Arizona requested the state's support in securing its border with Mexico, and Wisconsin troops will work with the Arizona National Guard as it supports the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol.

In April, President Donald Trump directed the Department of Defense to support the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to secure the nation's southern border. Border states — Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas — mobilized forces from their respective National Guards under the Militia Clause of the Constitution to complete the mission, and subsequently began submitting requests for assistance from other states in order to support the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol.

Wisconsin is one of several states nationwide providing support to states on the southwest border. All will mobilize in a Title 32, 502(f) status, meaning they will operate under state control but with federal funds.

The Soldiers and Airmen from Wisconsin are volunteers from different units around the state that possess a variety of skills requested by Arizona. Additional Wisconsin National Guard members are expected to head to Arizona in the coming weeks and months.

Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general, said the Wisconsin National Guard stands ready to take on the mission of supporting Arizona's National Guard.

"As the nation's first military responder in times of emergency, assisting civil authorities and partner agencies is one of the National Guard's core missions," Dunbar said. "The Soldiers and Airmen in the Wisconsin National Guard are a well-trained, professional force ready to answer the president's call to assist Arizona and the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol."

Wisconsin Guardsmen have supported southwest border security missions in the past. In 2006, then-President George W. Bush called National Guard troops to the southwest border for a two-year mission known as Operation Jump Start. The Wisconsin National Guard provided equipment and approximately 1,000 Soldiers and Airmen in support of Jump Start over a two-year period. The duration of their missions varied from two weeks to two years.

In 1916, the entirety of Wisconsin National Guard — some 5,000 troops — deployed to Texas during the Mexican Border Crisis.

Nearly 1,200 National Guard troops supported the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol during Operation Phalanx in 2010, though no Wisconsin troops participated in that mission.