

Dept. of Military Affairs: Sendoff ceremony set for deploying Wisconsin Army National Guard infantry battalion

Posted on Thursday, Jul 11, 2019

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Contact: Capt. Joe Trovato | ngwi.pao@mail.mil | 608-242-3048

MADISON, Wis. — Gov. Tony Evers and senior Wisconsin Army National Guard leaders will join family and friends in sending off nearly 400 Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers deploying to Afghanistan at a noon ceremony July 14 at the Johnson Fieldhouse on the UW-Stout campus in Menomonie.

The Eau Claire-headquartered infantry battalion and its subordinate companies, which are all part of the 32nd “Red Arrow” Infantry Brigade Combat Team, will deploy as a security element for coalition forces operating in the region.

Soldiers from each company that make up the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, including Company A in Menomonie, Company B headquartered in New Richmond with a detachment in Rice Lake, Company C headquartered in Arcadia with a detachment in Onalaska, Company D in River Falls, and the battalion headquarters in Eau Claire with a headquarters detachment in Abbotsford will all deploy as part of the mission.

The 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry has deployed numerous times since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, including multiple tours from 2004-06 and 2009-10 in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The 128th has a long and distinguished lineage of service to Wisconsin and the nation dating back to its origins during the Civil War as part of the famed Iron Brigade made up of three Wisconsin infantry regiments as well as one from Indiana and one from Michigan. The 128th Infantry traces its lineage to the 1st and 2nd Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiments which earned battle streamers at places like Bull Run, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Fredericksburg, Antietam, Spotsylvania and Cold Harbor among many others. The same units would later serve in the Spanish-American War before reorganizing at the outset of World War I, when the 1st and 2nd Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry reorganized as the 128th Infantry within the famed 32nd Division.

The Wisconsin National Guard commemorated the [centennial of the 32nd Division's](#) formation over the past two years. The now famous "Red Arrow" earned its moniker after piercing every enemy line it encountered in Europe during World War I, including the famed Hindenburg Line. The 128th played a starring role in the Red Arrow's four major campaigns during World War I when it earned the Croix de Guerre from the French government for its tenacity in combat. It played a key role again during World War II when the 32nd fought in brutal campaigns in the Pacific Theater across New Guinea and the Philippines, where it earned the distinction of serving more days in combat - 654 - than any other American division in the war.

In the early 1960s, the 128th and the rest of the 32nd Division again mobilized to active duty at the height of the Berlin Crisis before reorganizing into a brigade in 1967. Since that time, the 128th and the rest of the Red Arrow have played a pivotal role in fulfilling the Wisconsin National Guard's dual mission as the primary combat reserve of the Army while simultaneously serving as the state's first military responder during times of emergency. The 128th and the rest of the Red Arrow have mobilized numerous times during the Global War on Terror and on many occasions to support civil authorities here in Wisconsin or elsewhere such as in 2017 when the battalion deployed to Florida to assist civil authorities with security, traffic control, and humanitarian assistance in the wake of [Hurricane Irma](#).

The unit's upcoming deployment marks the 128th's first to Afghanistan, where the 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, a fellow Red Arrow infantry battalion deployed in [late 2018](#), marking the first Red Arrow deployment to Afghanistan.

The Wisconsin National Guard continues to maintain a high operational tempo with worldwide deployments in support of its federal mission. The nearly 400 Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry remain in Afghanistan and the Middle East, while

more than 350 Soldiers from the Milwaukee-based [1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery](#) returned from their deployment to the Middle East and Afghanistan in May. Another 25 Soldiers from the 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade's [Military Engagement Team](#) returned from their Middle East deployment in February, and a team of Soldiers from the 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment also returned in February from its mission to U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. In addition, Soldiers from the [248th General Aviation Support Battalion](#) returned from a Middle East deployment in September 2018.

Approximately 70 Airmen from the Wisconsin Air National Guard's [128th Air Refueling Wing](#) in Milwaukee celebrated the completion of a series of successful global deployments in October 2018, and a group of Airmen from the 115th Fighter Wing are currently deployed in support of global contingency operations.

The Wisconsin National Guard simultaneously stands ready to complete its state mission of assisting civil authorities during times of emergency as the state's first military responder.

Last fall, UH-60 Black Hawk medevac crews deployed to the North Carolina to assist civil authorities there in the wake of [Hurricane Florence](#), and hundreds of Guardsmen assisted with [sandbagging](#) efforts in south central Wisconsin after torrential rains soaked the state in late August and early September.