

# Dept. of Military Affairs: Wisconsin Guard members once again support voters during special election

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MADISON, Wis. — Approximately 160 Wisconsin National Guard members supported the May 12 special congressional election in northern Wisconsin as poll workers.

The Guard members were called to state active duty May 10, and received general election volunteer training before election day.

“It was obvious they had been trained, and were tireless during a long day,” said Cindy Bailey, Maine village clerk in Marathon County, who had two Guard members supporting her May 12. She said she had enough poll workers for the April 7 election, but some of her volunteers had other commitments this time around.

“The Marathon County clerk offered Guard assistance, and they were a great help,” Bailey said.

Pfc. Napatsawan Sanguanboon, a food service specialist with the 132nd Brigade Support Battalion’s Company F in Mosinee, Wisconsin, helped Bailey in the village of Maine polling site.

“I did a little bit of everything,” she said. “I helped with the ballot box, checked people into the polls, handed out ballots and sanitized voting stations.”

Spc. Lincoln Meverden also helped out at the village of Maine election, in part by directing voters as they entered the parking lot.

“We only allowed a few people into the polling site at a time,” Bailey said. “He explained that procedure and provided guidance on the use of gloves and pens.”

Sanguanboon, who has been in the Wisconsin Army National Guard for about one year, also supported the April 7 election.

“It is very important to help out our community when in need, and being here to help is what we are known for in the National Guard,” she said.

“It was an excellent experience,” Bailey said. “Both were very personable and very helpful. It was nice to have younger people there who were positive and helpful during a long day.”

Spc. Andrew Kuhnert, an information technology specialist for the 173rd Brigade Support Battalion’s headquarters company, worked at a Rib Mountain, Wisconsin polling place Tuesday. He supported a Wausau polling place for the April 7 general election.

“It was pretty neat,” Kuhnert said. “I enjoy going on state active duty for missions like this. I get to do what I signed up for — helping out the community.”

Kuhnert said he worked poll booths for the first half of the day, and cleaned and sanitized the polling place the rest of the day.

More than 2,400 Wisconsin National Guard members served as poll workers for the April 7 election, the first such use of Guard members during a state emergency in Wisconsin history. While the special election for the 7th Wisconsin Congressional District spanned a large geographic area — covering all of 21 counties and portions of another five — it accounts for about one-eighth of the state population.

Brig. Gen. Robyn Blader, Wisconsin’s assistant adjutant general for readiness and training, coordinated the Wisconsin National Guard’s response and served as a liaison with the Wisconsin Elections Commission in the days and weeks leading up to the election. She helped orchestrate the Wisconsin National Guard’s logistical support to WEC by procuring and distributing supplies needed to ensure polling stations were as safe as possible — hand sanitizer, wipes, spray bottles, and personal protective equipment — before Guard troops mobilized to support the poll worker mission.

“The Wisconsin National Guard stands ready 24/7 to serve our communities and our state,” Blader said. “The elections mission is an illustration of how we can bring our service members on state active duty, train them to be poll workers and send them

out to polling stations within their community and execute the polling mission in a professional manner. Our unique military and civilian skills make us adaptable to execute any mission across every zip code in our state.”

Bailey said both Guard members assigned to her polling station helped gather paperwork and count ballots at the end of the night, as well as put equipment away.

“Great help for clerks who have had a lot to do lately,” Bailey said.

Blader emphasized that the Wisconsin National Guard is part of the community fabric that knits the state together.

“We are your family, your friends, your co-workers and your neighbors who live in your communities,” Blader said. “We could not be prouder to be serving the citizens of our state and being part of ensuring they can cast their vote in this election.”