

Wisconsin National Guard: Waukesha-based medic unit slated for overseas deployment this spring

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WAUKESHA, Wis. — Nearly 60 Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers from the 135th Medical Company will deploy to the Middle East this spring.

The Waukesha-based unit will mobilize to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility – including Kuwait and Iraq – in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

The unit, comprised largely of combat medics along with other medical specialists, will provide medical support to U.S. service members and allied forces operating in the theater.

Soldiers from the 135th Medical Company were among the first to mobilize in March 2020 as part of the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and they played an integral role in the Wisconsin National Guard's initial efforts to establish testing sites and staff basic medical roles in a variety of missions across Wisconsin.

The unit last deployed overseas to Iraq in 2004-05, when it was known as B Company of the 118th Medical Battalion. The unit's history dates back to 1930 when it became a medical detachment of the 32nd Infantry Division, with which it served in World War II in New Guinea and the Philippines. In 1967, it became the 135th Medical Company until an Army-wide reorganization re-named the unit in 1995 as B Company, 118th Medical Battalion, but it resumed its original 135th Medical Company name again in 2006.

The Wisconsin National Guard continues to maintain a high operations tempo with

nearly 600 troops mobilized for the state's response to the pandemic.

Meanwhile, dozens of Airmen from the Wisconsin Air National Guard continue worldwide mobilizations, and approximately 35 Soldiers from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's West Bend-based G Company, 2nd Battalion, 104th Aviation remain in the Middle East conducting medevac missions across the theater after deploying last summer.

The 176th Cyber Protection Team also remains mobilized to Fort Meade, Maryland in support of U.S. Cyber Command and Cyber National Mission Force requirements.

Those mobilizations follow on the heels of an historic year for the Wisconsin National Guard that saw more than 1,700 Citizen Soldiers and Airmen mobilize at some point for the COVID response, which began March 12, 2020. The COVID mobilization represents the largest sustained domestic mobilization in Wisconsin National Guard history, which dates to 1837.

More than 4,000 troops mobilized to support four separate state elections where they served as poll workers when the pandemic resulted in a shortage of traditional poll workers, and more than 5,000 troops mobilized to help preserve public safety in Wisconsin cities on multiple occasions in Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay, Kenosha, Racine, and Wauwatosa.

Another 550 mobilized to support security efforts at the presidential inauguration in January, and others deployed to California to assist efforts to battle wildfires there last fall.

The Wisconsin National Guard also welcomed home hundreds of other troops from overseas deployments over the past year, including 400 Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry that completed a deployment to Afghanistan, 160 Soldiers from the 32nd "Red Arrow" Infantry Brigade Combat Team that deployed to Ukraine, the 1967th Contracting Team, which deployed to Djibouti, the 924th Engineer Facilities Detachment, which deployed to Kuwait, and approximately 150 Soldiers from the 829th Engineer Company that returned last fall from a deployment that spanned several countries across the Middle East and Southwest Asia.