

Dept. of Military Affairs: Wisconsin Guard's historic 'Red Arrow' brigade gains new commander

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CAMP DOUGLAS, Wis. — The Wisconsin Army National Guard's 32nd "Red Arrow" Infantry Brigade Combat Team held a change of command ceremony Aug. 6 at the unit's headquarters, with Col. Matthew Elder taking charge of the historic brigade after a successful term by outgoing commander Col. Jeffrey Alston.

Alston reflected on all the Red Arrow Soldiers had accomplished during his time as commander — numerous domestic operations, civil unrest, election support, and preparing for training exercises such as Warfighter and XCTC, or exportable combat training capability.

"Service is not an easy thing, but you continue to exemplify what is best about the Citizen-Soldier and make Wisconsin proud," Alston said. "We keep doing it because this country and our way of life is worth protecting for our children and all future generations. Freedom is not free."

Maj. Gen. Paul Knapp, Wisconsin's adjutant general, spoke of the brigade's legacy and thanked Alston for carrying on those traditions, while also preparing the brigade for the future.

"It is our responsibility to carry on the legacy of the Red Arrow by preparing our Soldiers for what is to come," Knapp said, challenging Elder to continue keeping the 32nd Brigade prepared for both domestic and large-scale combat operations. "Because our world is no safer now than it was then."

Elder greeted the brigade by saying he was honored and humbled to take command

because of its people.

“The 32nd Brigade is a professional organization that honors the legacy of its past, while constantly striving to adapt and improve into the future,” Elder said. “We do this by taking care of our people, training and developing Soldiers to fight and win, and doing things the right way in order to foster a culture of trust and excellence in an organization that people love and are proud to be a part of.”

Alston had one final request of the Red Arrow as he left command.

“Continue your service,” Alston said. “Continue training. Tell your story, and know that whatever your specialty or formation is, what you do is so incredibly important and appreciated.”