



Minnesota

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

POMP, CIRCUMSTANCE, AND AN "UNPRECEDENTED" MISSION FOR THE MINNESOTA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

MINNEAPOLIS, MN Feb. 10—Row upon row of the Minnesota National Guard's 34th Red Bull Soldiers stood at attention on the floor of St. Paul's Roy Wilkins Auditorium, with thousands of family members surrounding them in a valley of community support. The event had all the trimmings of a typical deployment: raucous applause for a live rendition of Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA"; the cries of babies breaking the silence of the opening prayer; accolades and salutes from dignitaries.

But all present — many of whom have been deployed more than once — called it the largest such ceremony they'd ever seen. Red Bull emblems, a full two stories high, were projected on the walls, and the event was followed by a steak dinner billed as the "largest single-sitting meal ever served at the River Centre complex," with more than 8,000 people dining, courtesy of the St. Paul-based Serving Our Troops organization.

"Everyone at this hall tonight has heard the phrase 'freedom isn't free.' The heroes in front of us are paying



Over 1,000 soldiers from the 34th Infantry Division in the Roy Wilkins Auditorium at their deployment ceremony. "The scope of this mission is unprecedented for the modern Minnesota National Guard," Maj. Gen. Larry Shellito, Adjutant General of Minnesota.

way more than their share of the tab," said Gov. Tim Pawlenty, commander-in-chief of the Minnesota National Guard.

"War should be the last option. ... But the world also needs to know this: When America goes to war, America wins," he added, garnering his speech's first hearty round of applause. Minutes later, division commander Maj. Gen. Richard Nash appeared emotional when addressing the men and women sitting before him.

"With no disrespect to our predecessors, these soldiers are my greatest generation," Nash said, his voice breaking slightly. "They have stood

up and said, 'Send me.' " In all, 1,037 soldiers will depart this week for Fort Lewis, Wash., to undergo training before heading to Iraq in April. A third of those to be deployed have served in Iraq or Afghanistan before, and a select few have been called up three times or more.

The soldiers include 425 from the Rosemount-based division's headquarters; 350 from the Inver Grove Heights-based special troops battalion; 50 special troops battalion soldiers stationed in Fari-bault; 43 from the Rosemount-based division band; and 169 from the Stillwater-based military police company.

Military officials have touted the mission as the Red Bulls' most important. That means the Red Bulls will direct four U.S. Army brigades and a National Guard aviation brigade from North Carolina. In all, the units will command a roughly 16,000-strong coalition task force in the region — including troops from El Salvador, Lithuania, Romania and Kazakhstan — as well as provide assistance to the Iraqi army.

Award Presentations Around the State

Crutchfield Dermatology Honored with Patriotic Employer Award



ST. PAUL, Jan 30—Dr. Charles Crutchfield, III, M.D. of Crutchfield Dermatology located in Eagan, MN was honored by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and the local General John W. Vessey, Jr. Chapter of Association of the United States Army (AUSA) with the Patriotic Employer Award for his support of employee participation in the Minnesota National Guard.

Dr. Crutchfield was nominated by Major Darrin Rosha, an active member of the Minnesota National Guard, who is employed at Crutchfield Dermatology as a Clinic Administrator. "Dr. Crutchfield wanted to ensure that I was not hindered professionally by my service to the country. He has gone the extra mile in allowing and supporting my need to attend training events leading up to my pending deployment in Iraq in 2009," said MAJ Rosha.

ESGR representative, Paul J. Wagner presented an ESGR certificate, a General Vessey, Jr. Chapter AUSA hat, and a flag that was flown over the U.S. Capitol to Dr. Crutchfield. Wagner stated, "Dr. Crutchfield is a true supporter of the National Guard who recognizes the importance of these men and women to our country."

Presentation of ESGR Flag to US Army Reserve Units

Part of the ESGR mission is education of both employers and service members about employment rights and USERRA. To that end, ESGR and the Chief of Army Reserve (CAR) have entered into an agreement to help "get the word out" about ESGR to members of the US Army Reserve.

Army Reserve units have been directed to fly the ESGR flag at all Reserve facilities, while ESGR provides flags to the facilities. ESGR volunteers around the country have visited their local Army Reserve centers with ESGR flags, making contact with representatives of the second-largest Reserve Component in America's military.

Minnesota's Army Reserve is primarily concentrated at Fort Snelling in Minneapolis/St. Paul, although there are Reserve centers in other parts of the state, as well. Duluth, Rochester and Wabasha all boast Reserve Centers in addition to a substantial National Guard presence.

The photograph below is of ESGR volunteer Norm Hecimovich and CW3 David Clayton of the 417th CS Co in Wabasha, MN.



Miller Felpax of Winona

WINONA, Feb. 9—Miller Felpax of Winona is a maker of railroad locomotive and car parts in Winona, and is the employer of SGT

Michael Attleson of the Iowa National Guard. SGT Attleson nominated two of his employers, Miller Felpax Vice President of Operations Randy Skarlupka and Director of Safety and Manufacturing Rick Spitzer (pictured, with ESGR volunteer Norm Hecimovich) for the "My Boss Is A Patriot" Award.

