Governor Abbott Announces National Guard Deployment in Support of COVID-19 Response

March 27, 2020 | Austin, Texas | Press Release

As part of the state's ongoing response to COVID-19, Governor Greg Abbott today announced the deployment of three National Guard Joint Task Force Brigades. The 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, the 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, and the 176th Engineer Brigade will operate ten general support units located throughout the state.

"Whether it's overseas combat, major storms, or deadly viruses, the Texas National Guard is always quick to defend and serve their fellow Texans," said Governor Abbott. "Texans can be grateful that these troops are now standing their post alongside healthcare professionals and first responders on the front lines of this crisis."

The Governor has ordered an initial focus on two critical missions that will directly benefit from Texas National Guard's unparalleled logistics capabilities, medical expertise, communications support, infrastructure maintenance, and transportation assets: assisting drive through testing sites and bolstering the state's healthcare infrastructure.

Over the past week, Guard members have practiced erecting and running drive through testing site locations alongside medical staff to ensure a well-coordinated process that allows Texans to access COVID-19 screenings in a safe, efficient way that also limits contact with potentially infected members of the public.

The Guard is also rolling out support for the state's healthcare infrastructure with medical providers, equipment, and supplies needed to provide access to care. As the response advances, Guardsmen will continue working with partners at the local, state, and national levels to identify and develop additional locations that can be converted to healthcare facilities.

"We are citizen soldiers and we find our highest calling in serving our fellow citizens, no matter where duty calls us," said Major General Tracy R. Norris, the adjutant general of Texas and commander of the Texas National Guard. "This will be no easy task but we have faced difficult times before. With the commitment of our soldiers and support of the community we will show the world that we are Texas strong and Texas proud, and together we will overcome this challenge."

Governor Abbott also stressed that these taskings will not diminish the Guard's ability to meet operational commitments including the Texas border mission and overseas deployments.

To ensure responding Guard members are healthy, trained medical staff will be attached to each unit and provide screenings before each Guard member is approved for the mission. Any Guard member showing signs of illness will receive treatment and the needed resources to recover while following all requirements outlined by the CDC. This measure will keep responding units healthy and reduce the potential spread of COVID-19.

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