Pressroom

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Governor Bullock Announces Army National Guard Soldiers Activated to Assist in Transportation of Montanans Returning from Cruise Ship

Monday, March 16, 2020 / Categories: **Governor's Office**, **Montana.gov** / Tags:

Governor Steve Bullock today announced that eight Montana Army National Guard Soldiers were activated for State Activity Duty yesterday to assist in the arrival and transport of eight Montanans returning from quarantine at Dobbins Air Force Base in Georgia. The eight Montanans were quarantined at the Dobbins AFB due to being in proximity of an individual with COVID-19 on a cruise ship.

"During these uncertain times, we must look out for one another and do all we can to ensure the health and safety of our fellow Montanans," said Governor Bullock. **"I'm incredibly grateful to the Guard soldiers who answered their call to duty and took all safety precautions to ensure their health and the health of others in order to deliver these Montanans to their homes."**

Governor Bullock pressured the federal government this past week to implement a plan to safely deliver the Montanans back to the state, while taking all necessary safety precautions to protect all Montanans.

The eight Montanans returned to Montana and were being transported to their homes as of yesterday evening by Montana National Guard Soldiers. All eight are asymptomatic but were tested by the Department of Public Health and Human Services upon arrival at the Montana National Guard's C-12 hangar. The previously quarantined individuals were flown on a U.S. Government contracted aircraft to Helena, arriving yesterday afternoon.

Three different state vehicles driven by Soldiers transported the Montanans to Wise River, Helena and Great Falls, and lastly to Big Timber and Billings.

"This mission is really about Montanans helping Montanans," said Major General Matthew Quinn, Montana Adjutant General and Coronavirus Task Force Leader. **"This is the Montana National Guard assisting in a time of need. We were able to safely transport these folks to their homes after their challenging trip."**

Prior to the transportation mission, all Soldiers received thorough briefings covering items such as personal protective equipment and what is known about the virus now.

"Although there was no indication that Montana passengers were at risk of contracting COVID-19, out of an abundance of caution all the passengers and Soldiers were wearing personal protective equipment that is recommended by the Center for Disease Control for transporting infected persons," said MG Quinn. **"We have exceeded the personal protective equipment necessary and taken all the precautions to ensure the safe transport of these Montanans while ensuring the safety and security of our Soldiers."**

Utilizing this transportation method provides the highest level of safeguard against potential spread of COVID-19. The Soldiers will sanitize the vehicles after the transport and they will not be used for 7 days. The Soldiers will also be monitored following the mission by the Department of Public Health and Human Services to ensure they continue to be healthy.

Two Montanans remain at Dobbins AFB quarantine area at their own request

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