



Maine National Guard Report

July 22, 2008

Across the United States, far too little is known of the great sacrifices that members of our National Guard – and their families – have made in recent years, the sacrifices they continue to make, and the sacrifices that will be required of them in the future, unless dramatic changes are not made in National Guard deployment policies.

Maine's National Guard – which numbers over 3,100 Soldiers and Airmen/Airwomen overall – has greatly contributed to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Since September 11, 2001, approximately 3,000 members of Maine's National Guard (both Army and Air) have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, with a further 700 expected to deploy over the next two years.ⁱ Eight members of the Maine National Guard have given their lives in OEF and OIFⁱⁱ and numerous others have suffered physical and psychological wounds.

Maine's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. John "Bill" Libby (USA), acknowledged the strain on the force last year, saying, "There's no question in my mind that a second deployment is going to put a significant strain on National Guard organizations, including ours...I must admit that I did not anticipate (back in 2003) that we'd be doing what we're doing today."ⁱⁱⁱ

Of the 54 National Guards across the country,^{iv} Maine's Army National Guard ranks in the top ten in frequency of deployment.^v Two of every three of the Maine Army National Guard's 250 female servicemembers have deployed to OEF and/or OIF.^{vi} The deployment of the 133rd Engineer Battalion (Portland), whose first tour in Iraq lasted from July 2004 to July 2005, was the largest deployment of Maine's National Guard since World War II. The 500 Soldiers of the 133rd Engineer Battalion are scheduled to return to Iraq in 2010. Approximately 75% of 133rd Engineer Battalion's Soldiers have deployed before.^{vii} In addition to the Maine National Guard's overseas deployments, units have also deployed to assist with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and to patrol the U.S. border with Mexico.^{viii}

These deployments have taken a toll on Maine's Citizen Soldiers. Maj. Gen. Libby has spoken candidly about the mental impact the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have. He asked the Soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry's Bravo Company upon their return from Iraq several questions regarding their relationships, their demeanor, and their responses to civilian life's stimuli. Libby told the Soldiers, "All of us are changed by our experience in the theater...Honor them [those who perished and those serving] by seeking the help that you need when you need it."^{ix}

Studies conducted by the Department of Defense have found that about half of the members of the National Guard and Reserves develop some form of post-combat mental



health issue after they return from Iraq or Afghanistan and are more than 25% more likely to develop such an issue than their active-duty counterparts.^x A study conducted last year by the Community Counseling Center of Portland found that 43% of Maine's Guardsmen who had deployed reported problems with anger, 35% reported problems with their relationships, and 22% reported problems with abusing alcohol. The study also determined that 27% suffered from significant depression and almost 13% suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); one in ten reported having had thoughts of suicide.^{xi} The magnitude of these figures is understandable given that fully 75% of those deployed had been in life-threatening situations, had seen dead bodies, and/or knew someone who had been killed.^{xii} In addition to these psychological wounds, 60 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are being treated for traumatic brain injuries (TBI's) in the Togus VA Medical Center in Augusta.^{xiii}

The families and employers of the members of the National Guard have also borne great burdens. Families not only face the emotional hardships of having a loved one deployed to a war zone but also the loved one deployed is often the family's main breadwinner, creating financial hardships. Employers, especially the small businesses that make up over 97% of Maine's economy,^{xiv} must compensate for the loss of valued employees for extended periods of time.^{xv} According to estimate produced by Veterans for America, the cost of lost productivity for Maine caused by the deployments of the Maine National Guard is \$99 million, with a further \$23 million being lost over the next two years as 700 more Guard members are deployed.^{xvi}

The National Guard's ability to respond to natural disasters and other emergencies is also a concern exacerbated by the rate of deployments. Prior to September 11, 2001, the Maine National Guard had over 90% of its equipment available for use. Now, it only has between 45 and 53% of its authorized equipment on hand.^{xvii} While Guard officials assert that "[w]e believe we are capable right now of responding to any state emergency," they acknowledge that the capability may be dependent on utilizing other states' resources through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact.^{xviii}

The members of Maine's National Guard are fortunate that their state has been at the forefront of providing the means by which its Soldiers can reintegrate into their civilian lives. Maine was among the first in the nation to screen all of the members of its National Guard prior to their deployment in order to make the identification of TBI's easier and more accurate when they are screened again upon their return. This program is conducted in partnership with the Dartmouth Medical School and was made possible, not with funding from the Federal Government, but through a \$300,000 grant from the Maine Health Access Foundation.^{xix} Maine has also established the Military Adjutant Program (MAP), a program that combines access to the resources of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, Health and Human Services, and the Maine Veterans' Services, along with private clinicians such as brain injury experts, psychologists and psychiatrists, to ensure that its servicemembers have the services they need.^{xx}



It is clear that the state of Maine – and the people of Maine, in general – are working diligently to support their Citizen Soldiers. It is up to the Bush Administration to relieve the immense stress placed on the Maine National Guard by implementing more humane deployment policies.

Formerly Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation • Co-founder of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize-winning Campaign to Ban Landmines

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Post-9/11 Deployment History of Maine National Guard Units

- 86th Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 172nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Battalion, Bravo Company (Brewer, 170 members)
 - Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF): January 2006 to April 2007
 - 15-month mobilization
 - 2 fatalities
 - Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF): Possible deployment in 2010
- 1-126th Aviation Regiment, Charlie Company (Bangor, 134 members)
 - Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF): 2003
 - 12-month deployment
 - Informed of deployment 14 days before departure^{xxi}
 - Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF): March 2008 to Present
 - Estimated 10-month deployment
 - Approximately half the unit's Soldiers have deployed before^{xxii}
- 1-152nd Field Artillery Battalion (Caribou, 182 members)
 - Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF): April 2005 to April 2006
 - 12-month deployment
 - 1 fatality
- 133rd Engineer Battalion (Portland, 500 members)
 - Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF): July 2004 to July 2005
 - 12-month deployment
 - 4 fatalities, 43 wounded^{xxiii}
 - Unit notified three months before deployment
 - Largest deployment of Maine National Guard since WWII
 - Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF): Expected to deploy 2010



- Estimated 75% of the battalion has deployed before^{xxiv}
- Unit also deployed to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and the U.S.-Mexico border, and assisted with the 1998 ice storm and local flooding
- 152nd Maintenance Company (Augusta, 147 members)
 - Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF): April 2005 to April 2006
 - 12-month deployment
 - Formerly the 1-152nd Field Artillery Battalion
- 169th Military Police Company, Detachment 1 (Brewer, 36 members)
 - Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF): June 2007 to June 2008
 - 12-month deployment
- 240th Engineer Group (Augusta, 82 members)
 - Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF): 2005 – 2006
 - 12-month deployment
- 286th Combat Support Service Battalion (Bangor, 78 members)
 - Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF): September 2008 to July 2009
 - Estimated 12-month mobilization
- 399th Combat Support Hospital (Portland, 42 members)
 - Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF): July 2006 to October 2007
 - 15-month mobilization
- 1136th Transportation Company (Bangor)
 - Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), 2003
 - Four-month deployment
- Embedded Training Team (16 members)
 - Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF): January 2008 to January 2009
 - 12-month mobilization



Post-9/11 Maine National Guard Statistics/Facts

The Maine Army National Guard has approximately 2,100 Soldiers and 1,000 Air National Guard members.

Approximately 2,500 Maine Army and Air National Guard members have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan since September 11, 2001. Approximately 700 more are expected to deploy in the next two years.^{xxv}

The Maine National Guard, in cooperation with the Dartmouth Medical School, screens all of its members prior to deployment. The program is funded by a three-year, \$300,000 grant from the Maine Health Access Foundation.^{xxvi}

The VA hospital in Togus is currently treating over 60 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans for brain injuries.^{xxvii}

Of the approximately 250 women serving in the Maine Army National Guard, about 165 have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.^{xxviii}

“Maine's MAP -- Military Adjutant Program -- combines the resources of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Maine Veterans' Services along with private clinicians, including brain injury experts, psychologists and psychiatrists.”^{xxix}

“Maine is in the top 10 states as far as the percentage of National Guard deployments, even though there are only 2,100 servicepeople.”^{xxx}

According to Maj. Gen. Bill Libby, Maine's Adjutant General: “There's no question in my mind that a second deployment is going to put a significant strain on National Guard organizations, including ours...I must admit that I did not anticipate (back in 2003) that we'd be doing what we're doing today.”^{xxxi}

In summer 2007, the Maine Army National Guard had only 53% of its equipment on hand. In the event of a natural disaster or other emergency, a spokesman said that the Guard could handle any emergency but that it might need assistance from other states through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact.^{xxxii}



List of Acronyms

BCT: Brigade Combat Team

MAP: Military Adjutant Program

OEF: Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan)

OIF: Operation Iraqi Freedom

PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

TBI: Traumatic Brain Injury

ⁱ Meg Haskell, "Brain injuries' effect on troops topic of forum," *Bangor Daily News* (Maine), June 12, 2008.

ⁱⁱ United States National Guard Bureau, "Some Gave All..." July 14, 2008, <http://www.ngb.army.mil/features/somegaveall/index.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Bill Nemitz, "War weighs on Guard commander," *Portland Press Herald* (Maine), July 29, 2007.

^{iv} National Guards exist in each of the United States' 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

^v Sharon Kiley Mack, "Chaplain gives vital support to returning veterans," *Bangor Daily News* (Maine), March 15, 2008.

^{vi} Toni-Lynn Robbins, "Women in the fight; As battle roles shift, females see more sides of war in Iraq and Afghanistan," *Bangor Daily News* (Maine), March 19, 2008.

^{vii} Ann S. Kim, "133rd faces yet another deployment; The engineering battalion based in Maine is notified of a possible 12-month assignment in Iraq in 2010," *Portland Press Herald* (Maine), June 10, 2008.

^{viii} Josie Huang, "Maine Guard taking skills to Arizona desert; At least half of the 300 soldiers participating in a border-security mission have served in Iraq," *Portland Press Herald* (Maine), March 24, 2007.

^{ix} Nok-Noi Hauger, "Military leader warns soldiers about PTSD," *Bangor Daily News* (Maine), June 25, 2007.

^x Department of Defense Task Force on Mental Health, "An Achievable Vision: Report of the Department of Defense Task Force on Mental Health," June 2007, p. ES-2.

^{xi} Elizabeth Wheeler, PhD, "Self-reported Mental Health Status and Needs of Iraq War Veterans in the Maine National Guard (Summary Version)," Community Counseling of Maine, Inc., March 2007, <http://www.commcc.org/pdf/Veterans%20Study%20Summary.pdf>; David Hench and Gregory Kesich, "Back to Life: Many Maine soldiers say they returned from the war only to battle stress and disconnect at home," *Portland Press Herald* (Maine), March 18, 2007; Judy Harrison, "State vets report ill health; Returning guardsmen report postwar stresses," *Bangor Daily News* (Maine), March 13, 2007.

^{xii} Wheeler.

^{xiii} Josie Huang, "Guard pioneers injury testing; Maine guardsmen are being tested before and after deployment to try to detect brain injuries," *Portland Press Herald* (Maine), May 18, 2008.

^{xiv} Office of Advocacy, "Small Business Profile: Maine," Small Business Administration, 2007, <http://www.sba.gov/ADVO/research/profiles/07me.pdf>.

^{xv} A.J. Higgins, "Program rewards employers," *Kennebec Journal* (Augusta, Maine), May 19, 2007.

^{xvi} Estimates of lost productivity costs were determined by multiplying the number of Maine National Guard deployments by the average annual income for members of the National Guard and Reserves (\$33,000/year), as determined by Wallsten and Kosec; Scott Wallsten and Katrina Kosec, "The Economic Costs of the War in Iraq (Working Paper 05-19)," AEI-Brookings Joint Center for Regulatory Studies, September 2005, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=848408, pp. 7-8.

^{xvii} "A Half-Ready Guard," *Bangor Daily News* (Maine), June 20, 2007.

^{xviii} Ibid; Daniel Hartill, "General: Maine won't be left out," *Sun Journal* (Lewiston, Maine), May 10, 2007.

^{xix} Huang, "Guard pioneers injury testing; Maine guardsmen are being tested before and after deployment to try to detect brain injuries," *Portland Press Herald* (Maine), May 18, 2008.

^{xx} Mack.



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- ^{xxi} Toni-Lynn Robbins, “Brother-sister Guardsmen ready for Iraq deployment,” *Bangor Daily News* (Maine), January 7, 2008.
- ^{xxii} Robbins, “A fond farewell; Families, friends say goodbye to Guard unit deploying to Iraq,” *Bangor Daily News* (Maine), January 9, 2008.
- ^{xxiii} Robbins, “500 guardsmen may go to Iraq,” *Bangor Daily News* (Maine), June 10, 2008.
- ^{xxiv} Ann S. Kim, “133rd faces yet another deployment; The engineering battalion based in Maine is notified of a possible 12-month assignment in Iraq in 2010,” *Portland Press Herald* (Maine), June 10, 2008.
- ^{xxv} Meg Haskell, “Brain injuries’ effect on troops topic of forum,” *Bangor Daily News* (Maine), June 12, 2008.
- ^{xxvi} Josie Huang, “Guard pioneers injury testing; Maine guardsmen are being tested before and after deployment to try to detect brain injuries,” *Portland Press Herald* (Maine), May 18, 2008.
- ^{xxvii} *Ibid.*
- ^{xxviii} Toni-Lynn Robbins, “Women in the fight; As battle roles shift, females see more sides of war in Iraq and Afghanistan,” *Bangor Daily News* (Maine), March 19, 2008.
- ^{xxix} Sharon Kiley Mack, “Chaplain gives vital support to returning veterans,” *Bangor Daily News* (Maine), March 15, 2008.
- ^{xxx} *Ibid.*
- ^{xxxi} Bill Nemitz, “War weighs on Guard commander,” *Portland Press Herald* (Maine), July 29, 2007.
- ^{xxxii} “A Half-Read Guard,” *Bangor Daily News* (Maine), June 20, 2007.