



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson Expresses Concern as New Mexico National Guard Troops Activated for Iraq Duty

SANTA FE — New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson recently confirmed that President Bush has authorized the Department of Army to order to federal active duty approximately 150 members of the New Mexico National Guard's "A" Company, 1st Battalion, 200th Infantry.

The unit, commanded by Captain Ali Dipour, is headquartered in Rio Rancho, however the soldiers represent communities throughout New Mexico. The unit will be mobilized for a period of up to 400 days to support Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"New Mexicans have always served our country with honor and I am confident the soldiers of 'A' Company will continue this long, proud tradition," said Governor Richardson. "However, I am very concerned with the critical federal funding and equipment shortages our guard is experiencing. States like New Mexico have met our responsibilities and made our guard troops available, now the federal government needs to step up and get them the funding and equipment they need to do their job effectively. The National Guard is being forced to survive on Army hand-me-downs. This is hard in peacetime and impossible when we are at war. The National Guard is being treated as second class soldiers and that is simply wrong."

New Mexico was recently ranked worst in the nation for percentage of federally funded dual use equipment on hand for National Guard Units (33%). The national average is 35%.

Following the “Yellow Ribbon” departure ceremony scheduled for May 16 at the Rio Rancho Armory, the soldiers will depart for Ford Dix, New Jersey where they will receive a few weeks of additional training before departing for Iraq.

Since 9/11, over 2000 New Mexico Army Guardsmen and 500 Air Guardsmen have been deployed in support of Operations Nobel Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom in the global war on terrorism. Today, there are no New Mexico National Guard units in Afghanistan or Iraq. The last unit returned in November 2006.

For additional information contact Major Ken Nava, cell 417-1751.

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