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Governor Doyle Makes Surprise Visit to Iraq to Visit Wisconsin National Guard

Joins Bipartisan Delegation of Governors at the Invitation of U.S. Government

BAGHDAD, IRAQ – Governor Jim Doyle is in Iraq with a delegation of Governors to visit Wisconsin National Guard troops at the invitation of the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of State.

Governor Doyle, joined by Governors Mike Huckabee (R-Ark.), Rick Perry (R-Tex.), and Dave Freudenthal (D-Wyo.), began his trip Sunday with classified briefings at the Pentagon and a meeting with Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. The delegation departed later Sunday from Andrews Air Force Base and visited National Guard troops Monday at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait yesterday.

"It's an honor to have the opportunity to visit with our troops and see the work they are doing firsthand," Governor Doyle said. "I want them to know how incredibly proud we are of them in Wisconsin, and we look forward to welcoming them home as soon as possible."

At Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Governor Doyle had dinner with soldiers from Wisconsin. His visit to Iraq included stops in various parts of the country, meetings with Wisconsin troops, and a meeting with Major General Thurman, Commanding General of the 4th Infantry Division.

Details of the rest of the Governor's trip will be released as conditions permit.

Governor Doyle met with Wisconsin National Guard soldiers at four locations throughout Kuwait:

- At Camp Arifjan, Governor Doyle met with soldiers from the Camp Douglas-based 32nd Brigade Headquarters;
- At Kuwait Naval Base, Governor Doyle met with soldiers from 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, from Wisconsin Rapids and four other Central Wisconsin communities;
- At Camp Navistar, Governor Doyle met with soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, from Appleton and five eastern Wisconsin communities; and
- At Camp Buehring, Governor Doyle met with soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry, from Madison and other communities in southern Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Guard currently has 1,970 soldiers and airmen on active duty. 1,750 of those are currently deployed overseas (supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom) and another 100 are training for missions in Afghanistan. Since September 11, 2001, just over 70 percent of the Wisconsin Guard's soldiers and airmen (about 6,650) have served on some kind of active duty of some form or another.

Photos and additional information on the trip will be available at www.wisgov.state.wi.us.