

Winter storm duty concludes for Illinois National Guardsmen

Written by Illinois National Guard PAO
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SPRINGFIELD, IL (01/15/2014)(readMedia)-- The last of the approximately 35 Illinois National Guardsmen who assisted the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and other state agencies completed state active duty Jan. 14 following a snow storm that dropped up to 17 inches of snow in some parts of the state.

"Not only am I glad we can help out, but it's a great learning experience," said Sgt. Eric Thrasher of **Clinton, Ill.**, a mechanic with Company B, 634th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) in **Champaign, Ill.** "We get to understand their operation and work on non-military equipment and vehicles."

Approximately 400 vehicles were stranded on three different Illinois roads. The Illinois National Guard recovered eight vehicles, allowing more than 200 stranded motorists to exit the roadway.

"Hundreds were rescued thanks to the dedicated Illinois National Guard Soldiers who worked day and night to help stranded motorists," said Ann L. Schneider, IDOT Secretary. "These individuals went above and beyond the call of duty to provide critical services and assistance in some of the most difficult conditions imaginable."

Soldiers from Company B, 634th BSB in **Champaign**; Company D, 634th BSB in **Galva**; Company E, 634th BSB in **Joliet**;

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Company G, 634th in

Crestwood

; 3625th Maintenance Company in

North Riverside

and 3637th Maintenance Company in

Springfield

; Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 33rd BSTB in

Machesney Park

; 631st Engineer Company in

Lawrenceville

; and the 766th Engineer Battalion in

Decatur

were mobilized to assist in 14 separate locations throughout the state. The Soldiers performed wrecker and maintenance operations of IDOT equipment damaged and stranded during snow removal operations. Wrecker operations concluded on Jan. 8 and maintenance operations concluded Jan. 14.

In all, the Illinois National Guard recovered one IDOT vehicle and repaired 65 IDOT trucks and pieces of equipment. Additionally, 30 trucks were serviced by Illinois National Guard Soldiers.

"There is definitely a need for us here," said 1st Sgt. Corey Heath of **Mahomet, Ill.**, a mechanic with Company B, 634th Brigade Support Battalion in

Champaign, Ill

. "We have kept busy with plenty of mechanical work and saved them many work hours."

This was Heath's second state active duty. His first was Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

This is the second time in less than two months Illinois National Guard service members have assisted their community. In November, several service members assisted following the deadly tornado in **Washington, Ill.**

"While defending our nation in Iraq and Afghanistan, some may not have recognized what our National Guardsmen continually do for their communities," said Brig. Gen. Daniel M. Krumrei of **Springfield**, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard. "From snow and freezing temperatures to flooding and tornados or any emergency, our citizen-Soldiers are here to help their neighbors and protect their community."

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