



National Commission on the Future of the Army

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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National Commission on the Future of the Army Wraps Up Visit to Minnesota

The National Commission of the Future of the Army (NCFA) was in Minn. for a full day of engagements as part of its congressionally-mandated mission. Commissioner Gen. (Ret.) Carter Ham and NCFA staff started the day by having breakfast with Governor Mark Dayton and then began a series of meetings and briefings with Adjutants General from throughout the region (Ind., Wis., Iowa, Minn., S.D., N.D., and Ill., the 34th Division Commander, ARNORTH TF-51, the 34th Combat Aviation Brigade, and the 103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command.

They also observed a joint exercise – Vigilant Guard – which is designed to improve emergency coordination, response and recovery management with federal, regional, local, civilian, and military partners. Organizations taking part in Vigilant Guard include the Coast Guard, Army National Guard (Ohio, Va. and Minn.), Red Cross, Canadian Pacific Rail Road, several Fire Departments, NORTHCOM, ARNORTH, Army Reserve, and over 500 civilians.

Vigilant Guard exercises test the large-scale disaster response of the Minnesota National Guard at the state level and other response agencies to a variety of scenarios, including an oil train derailment and severe weather event. The Army National Guard and several fire department rescue organizations worked together in a simulated weather event disaster conducting rescues of civilian personnel trapped in buildings and cars. This portion of the exercise was conducted on a fully instrumented urban training range where sounds and smells are piped in to increase the reality level of the training.

Observing the exercise and associated briefings gave the NCFA the chance to assess the process to prepare civilian and military first responders to be ready should disaster strike. "Talking with the Guard, community and industry leaders and seeing this training firsthand is critical to our mission of making recommendations on the future force mix," said Commissioner Ham. "It was an informative visit and we thank everyone for taking the time to share their views with us."

The NCFA has been charged by Congress to examine the structure of the Army and policy assumptions related to the size and force mix. The Commission will make recommendations on modifications to the structure of the Army based on anticipated mission requirements and acceptable levels of national risk, consistent with available and anticipated future resources. The Commission will also specifically examine the transfer of Army National Guard AH-64 Apache attack helicopters from the Army National Guard to the Regular Army. The Commission will issue its report no later than Feb. 1, 2016.

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