



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

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Ohio Army National Guard engineer unit to be deployed to West Africa:
Engineer brigade headquarters will help oversee construction efforts beginning in spring of 2015

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Today the U.S. Department of Defense announced that about 130 Soldiers from the Ohio Army National Guard's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 16th Engineer Brigade, may deploy in the spring of 2015 in support of Operation United Assistance, the U.S. government's mission supporting civilian-led humanitarian efforts to combat the Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa.

Unit Soldiers and Family members of the Columbus-based 16th Engineer Brigade have been notified of the pending mobilization, and the unit is expected to be called to federal service sometime next spring. The Soldiers likely will train at a military installation in the U.S. for a short period before deploying to replace existing U.S. forces in West Africa.

"The Ohio National Guard continues to be a versatile and ready force for the nation and the citizens of Ohio," said Maj. Gen. Deborah A. Ashenurst, Ohio adjutant general. "The Soldiers of the 16th Engineer Brigade have the skill sets and track record to perform their work to the highest standards, and they will receive all the equipment, preparation and training resources necessary to achieve their mission safely and successfully."

The Ohio unit being deployed specializes in overseeing the construction operations of infrastructure and building projects. The 16th Engineer Brigade could be involved in a mission such as oversight of construction of clinics to treat Ebola patients.

The Defense Department has stated that all U.S. service members deploying to West Africa will be provided the proper training and protective equipment, receive medical threat briefings and will learn and follow the highest medical and safety protocols before, during and after deployment.

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As a precautionary measure and to ensure everyone's safety, all Soldiers re-deploying from Africa will undergo an observation program to ensure all returning personnel are healthy and have not contracted the Ebola virus. According to the Defense Department, there currently are no plans for personnel from deploying Army National Guard units to provide direct support to Ebola patients.

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