

Wisconsin At A Glance



Wisconsin National Guard, 2006

Missions and Organization. The Wisconsin National Guard (“Guard”) has dual state and federal roles, and is jointly funded and maintained by both governments. Its federal mission is to provide trained units to the U.S. Army and Air Force in time of war or national emergency. Its state mission is to help civil authorities protect life and property and preserve peace, order, and public safety in times of natural or human-caused emergencies. The governor, who is the commander in chief of the Guard when it is not activated for federal service, appoints the adjutant general who directs the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs, of which the Guard is a part.

Members of the National Guard are typically part-time soldiers and airmen who attend unit drills one weekend per month and serve a two-week annual tour of active duty. All officers and enlisted personnel must meet the same physical, education, and other eligibility requirements as members of the active-duty services.

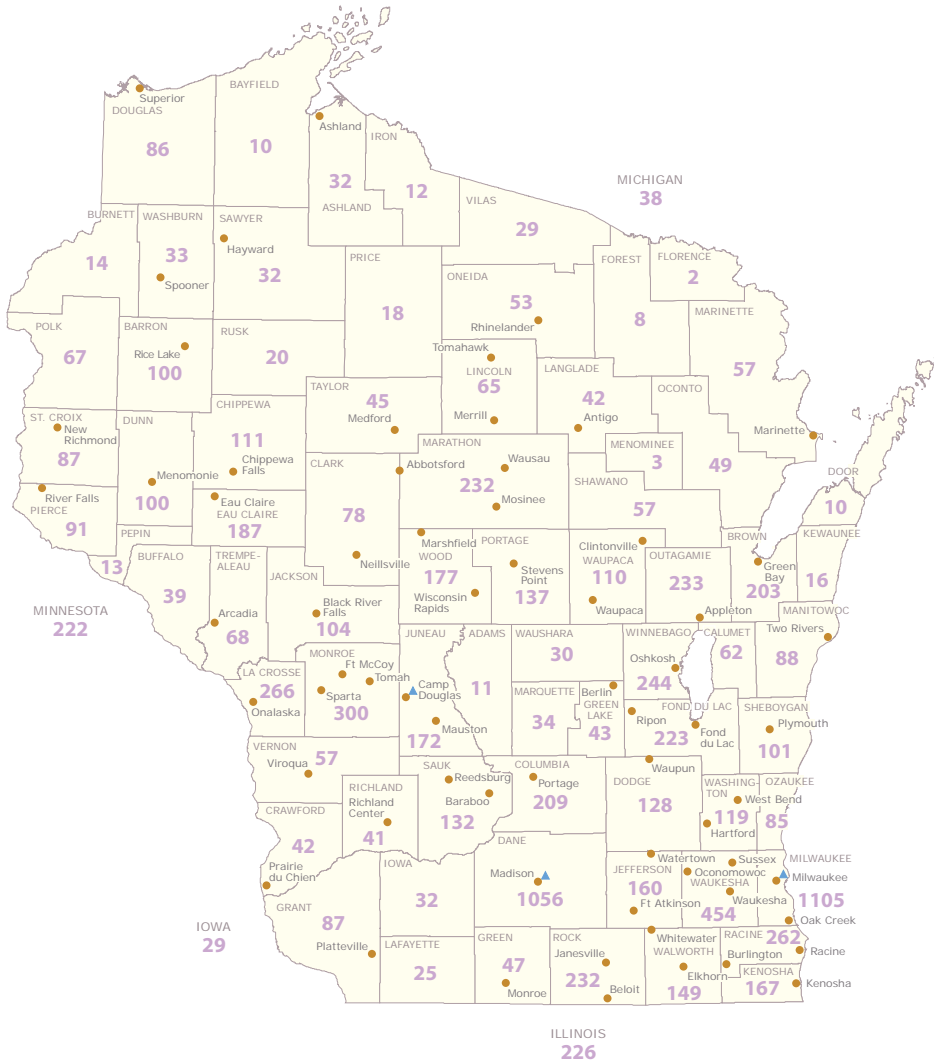
Members Reside Throughout the State. There are currently about 9,600 members in the Wisconsin National Guard. They reside in all of the state’s 72 counties, ranging from less than ten in several lightly populated counties in the northeastern part of the state to about 1,100 each in Dane and Milwaukee counties. Over 600 live in other states, with 70 percent of those residing in Illinois and Minnesota. The approximately 7,400 Army Guard soldiers train in armories located in 67 communities throughout the state. Most of the units are assigned to one of four major commands: the 32nd (Separate) Infantry Brigade, headquartered at Camp Douglas; the 64th Troop Command, headquartered at Madison; the 57th Field Artillery Brigade, headquartered at Milwaukee; and the 264th Engineer Group, headquartered at Chippewa Falls. Most of the approximately 2,200 Air Guard airmen belong to three major units: the 115th Fighter Wing at Truax Field in Madison, the 128th Air Refueling Wing at Milwaukee’s General Mitchell International Airport, and the Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center at Camp Douglas.

History. Guard members continue the legacy of the “Minutemen” of the American Revolution—citizen-soldiers trained and ready to put their peacetime pursuits on hold when called upon to serve their state or nation. Throughout much of its history, the U.S. has maintained only a small standing army. Instead, it has primarily relied on the militia system for security which, formalized in the Uniform Militia Act of 1792, embraced the principle of universal military obligation for most able-bodied males. Militia members participated in periodic compulsory unit training musters, and were responsible for providing their own weapons. In 1848, the first session of the Wisconsin Legislature provided for the distribution of federal arms and military equipment.

Wisconsin Guard troops fought in the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, the two World Wars, and the Korean War. Guard members have been activated on numerous other occasions, including for the Berlin Crisis, the Persian Gulf War, peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, and current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Prepared by Daniel Ritsche

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- Army (location of one or more units).
- ▲ Air unit.
- 32 Number of residents of each county and neighboring state who were members of Wisconsin’s National Guard as of February 2006. In addition, 123 residents of non-neighboring states were also members. (Note that individuals may not have been members of units located in their home counties or states.)

