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**Condition of the Iowa National Guard address to the  
Iowa General Assembly by Maj. Gen. Timothy E. Orr**

Good morning Ladies and gentlemen – thank you for that wonderful welcome. Speaker Paulsen, President Jochum – thank you for the opportunity to once again address this joint convention of the Eighty-Fifth General Assembly of the Iowa Legislature.

Governor Branstad, Lieutenant Governor Reynolds, members of the General Assembly, distinguished guests and fellow Iowans. Today, I deliver my fourth Condition of the Guard address and it is indeed an honor and a privilege to be here.

Governor Branstad and Lieutenant Governor Reynolds, thank you for being here today. For the past two years you both have done a tremendous job leading our Iowa National Guard. You have demonstrated from the very beginning your strong support for and commitment to the men and women of the Iowa National Guard, our families, and employers.

I would also like to give a special thank you to our citizen-legislators, who have done so much to honor and support the Iowa National Guard over the 175-year history of our organization. The state of Iowa has one of the strongest traditions of any state for its commitment to their National Guard and veterans. Our success is directly attributed to what you have done for your Iowa National Guard – we humbly thank you.

And I want to especially thank the people of Iowa. Your support of our Soldiers, Airmen, and families has been absolutely incredible.

Today, I am proud to report that the Iowa National Guard continues to be Mission-Focused and Warrior Ready.

**IOWA NATIONAL GUARD**  
Mission Focused – Warrior Ready

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Through all the efforts of our Soldiers, Airmen, families, employers, elected leaders, communities, and our citizens, we have demonstrated that Iowa is a state that truly serves together.

This is a story that began in 1838 and has transcended generations of Iowans, and is now carried so proudly by the 9,400 Iowa National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who serve today.

Here in Iowa, we're a vital link between our communities and the military, particularly as the size and the footprint for our active duty forces begin to shrink over the next several years. With a presence in 725 Iowa communities, men and women of the Iowa National Guard have demonstrated to their neighbors a sense of commitment and service that is the very best our state has to offer.

And the performance of these men and women over the past decade, both in combat overseas and emergency response here at home, has written a new chapter in this organization's storied legacy and proven without a doubt that the National Guard is full and equal partner with our active duty counterparts.

Tough, reliable, capable, resilient, adaptable, and above all, ready when called, we have fulfilled our statutory and constitutional responsibilities to help defend the nation and provide the governor with a state emergency response force for approximately one-third the cost of an active duty Soldier or Airmen, making the National Guard truly the best value for America.

The most logical option for the nation to preserve its military capability, capacity, and depth in times of fiscal constraints is through continued reliance on the National Guard.

The demand for National Guard forces over the past two decades has required almost continuous use of Iowa's Soldiers and Airmen in order to execute our nation's defense and meet the operational requirements of our armed forces, and this year is no exception.

During this past year, the Iowa National Guard played a crucial role in overseas operations. Approximately 180 Iowa National Guard Soldiers and Airmen deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and I'm happy to report with the exception of that number, the rest of our Soldiers and Airmen were home for the holidays.

Today we have approximately 260 Soldiers and Airmen currently deployed, which is among the lowest number of deployed service members from the Iowa National Guard since the start of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom. Over this last year we mobilized Soldiers and Airmen for overseas contingency operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Qatar, Honduras, and Kuwait.

As part of these deployments, approximately 50 Soldiers from Company C, 2-211th (MEDEVAC) General Support Aviation Battalion based in Waterloo were mobilized in July. These Soldiers are supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan with aerial medical capabilities, providing rapid evacuation and medical treatment for wounded and injured coalition personnel.

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The 1034th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion from Camp Dodge deployed 60 Soldiers in August to Afghanistan, where they are providing area logistical support for all types of military units.

Recently, the 186th Military Police Company deployed 40 Soldiers to Honduras as part of Joint Task Force Bravo, where they provide security and law enforcement support for Southern Command operations.

The 132nd Fighter Wing, Des Moines experienced a very busy 2012 supporting overseas combat operations on its tenth overseas deployment since 1996. The unit deployed 300 Airmen to Afghanistan last winter in support of an Air Expeditionary Force rotation and returned to Iowa in April.

In Sioux City, 360 Airmen of the 185th Air Refueling Wing deployed around the globe in 2012 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, executing aerial medical evacuations of our wounded and injured warriors and conducting refueling missions.

And just this past Monday, approximately 100 Soldiers from the 833rd Engineer Company in Ottumwa said goodbye to their families, friends, and communities for a year-long deployment to Afghanistan. This is the 833rd's third combat deployment since 9/11.

While we are grateful that so many of our Iowa National Guard Soldiers and Airmen have returned home after a busy year of deployments, we must not forget about those still recovering from wounds, injuries, or illnesses related to their mobilizations.

Over the past two years, more than 130 of our wounded, injured, or ill warriors have received medical care, either at military treatment facilities across the country or from health care providers in their local communities.

Today, I am proud to say we continue to make progress with only 14 Soldiers still receiving treatment at military facilities. However, for me, those deployments are not truly over until all of our men and women have returned back home to their families.

Last year, President Obama announced his intention that the United States military would be withdrawing out of Afghanistan by the close of 2014, while transitioning the combat mission back over to the Afghanistan government and military. Since this announcement, the demand for forces in the Iowa National Guard has begun to decline. We are now at a point where current and projected demands for Army and Air Force assets for Operation Enduring Freedom will decrease over the next several years. As evidence of this drawdown, we currently have just one Iowa National Guard unit that has received notification for potential deployment to Afghanistan next year.

But regardless of the drawdown in Afghanistan or the global security requirements, U.S. interests will ultimately dictate future force requirements, whether for operational missions, peacekeeping responsibilities, or support to regionally-aligned forces around the world. I would anticipate that

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the Iowa National Guard will continue some form of limited global engagement for the foreseeable future.

In addition to the drawdown of forces, we are working the looming federal budget challenges and military drawdown associated with a potential sequestration and budget shortfalls. It is anticipated that the budget reductions will significantly impact the military now and for the future. However, with all of these challenges, we are very fortunate to have a voice with the Department of Defense on these matters. Governor Terry Branstad currently serves as the co-chair for the President's Council of Governors in the Department of Defense.

The council provides a forum for governors to discuss matters of mutual interest with the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies, including issues concerning the federal budget, National Guard, homeland defense, and civil support activities.

Through this council, Governor Branstad was able to strengthen the voice of all 50 states and their respective governors on Department of Defense issues that affected the National Guard, and particularly the Iowa Air National Guard's 132nd Fighter Wing in Des Moines.

The Governor, while serving in his Council of Governors capacity, worked tirelessly with the National Governors Association, all governors and their Adjutants General, and our Iowa

congressional delegation to minimize the disproportionate 59% cuts placed on the Air National Guard for Fiscal Year 2013.

Through his leadership efforts, we were successful in minimizing the proposed personnel cuts. Significant to these efforts was the opportunity for the 132nd Fighter Wing to pick up three enduring, replacement missions for the loss of the F-16 fighter mission.

The 132nd Fighter Wing will transition from F-16 fighter aircraft into three new missions: a Reconnaissance Group, which includes a Remotely Piloted Aircraft squadron; an Intelligence Group; and a cyber security mission. Out of the nearly four hundred personnel positions subject to elimination last February at the 132nd, these three new missions will allow us to keep approximately 970 personnel at the Des Moines Airbase, a loss of only 32 personnel, which will be managed through retirements and transfers.

Another way we're supporting and adapting to the changing global and operational environment is through the National Guard's State Partnership Program, or SPP. The Iowa National Guard's State Partnership Program with Kosovo continues to make great progress since its inception in March 2011.

The current focus of the program is on non-commissioned officer and officer development activities, as well as cooperative initiatives in the disaster response and emergency management arena. Partnering with Kosovo is a natural fit for the Iowa National Guard and the state of Iowa. Last year, Kosovo President Jahjaga made the first-ever visit to Iowa for Kosovo's head of state and met with Iowa leaders from across the public and private sectors.

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We have taken on a vision of a “Whole of Iowa/Whole of Kosovo” relationship and have conducted more than 30 engagements between Iowa, the Kosovo Security Force, and Kosovo’s Ministries of Defense, Business, Agriculture, Health, and Education over the past two years.

One of our near-term goals with our partnership is to establish a sister city relationship with a Kosovo community. Our first sister city effort is between the City of Johnston and Peja, Kosovo. We are in the process of finalizing the agreement and will be signing the proclamation between the two cities in the near future.

Today, I am honored to introduce Kosovo’s Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Ismaili; Kosovo Minister of Defense, Minister Ceku; Kosovo Security Force Land Forces Commander, Maj. Gen. Rama; and the Kosovo Defense Attaché assigned to the United States, Brig. Gen. Gashi, who are with us this morning as my honored guests.

Please join me in giving our guests from Kosovo a warm Iowa welcome. I asked these gentlemen to join us today to help highlight this critically important relationship between Kosovo and Iowa, observe our legislative process, and meet some of our key leaders. We are honored to partner with Kosovo and we look forward to a strong and productive relationship in the years ahead.

Another critical partnership for the Iowa National Guard is right here in Iowa with our civilian employers. As nearly 80% of our Soldiers and Airmen serve part-time in the Iowa National Guard and full-time with Iowa businesses and governmental entities, finding quality jobs with employers that understand and appreciate military service is key to the continued service and well-being of our men and women, and their families.

Most of our men and women come back from deployment and return to what they were doing before they left or pursue new opportunities. Some members may have been unemployed or underemployed before deploying or returned to find their positions eliminated due to the economic downturn. Others may simply want a new challenge after their deployment experience. However, some find this transition difficult.

Whatever the reason, nearly 28% of our returning Warriors were looking for work at the end of 2011. And we had a solemn obligation to help them.

Through a cooperative effort between the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, the Iowa National Guard’s Job Connection Education Program, Iowa Work Force Development, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Department of Labor, Principal Financial Group, and Greater Des Moines Partnership, we actively worked to assist our Soldiers, Airmen and their spouses find gainful employment and reduced the number of unemployed from 28% to less than 6% today.

One of the reasons for this great success in finding quality jobs is through the Job Connection Education Program, or JCEP. Iowa was the second state nationally selected to participate in this

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National Guard Bureau pilot program. Since November 2011, 150 National Guard members or their spouses have found employment with civilian employers through Iowa's JCEP.

And additional, tangible evidence of Iowa's employer support is the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom award, which is awarded annually to the top 15 employers nationally for their support of National Guard and Reserve members.

This past year, the Nyemaster Goode law firm from Des Moines was selected for this prestigious award. Since 2007, Iowa employers have won this distinguished national award three times, including back-to-back in 2011 and 2012. This is a tremendous testament to the patriotism and support for Reserve Component military members and their families in Iowa.

Another reason we've been able to maintain our position as a national leader in readiness among our fellow states is because of the Iowa National Guard Educational Assistance Program or NGEAP, a program funded in its entirety by the state of Iowa.

This critical recruiting and retention tool helps ensure our readiness and provides an invaluable benefit to our Soldiers and Airmen. This year, more than fourteen hundred of our members received 100% paid tuition at the State Regents' rate to attend Iowa colleges, universities, and community colleges through this program, keeping our young people here in the state and providing them with a high-quality Iowa education.

And the Iowa National Guard is doing our part to stimulate the economy of Iowa. This year, the Iowa National Guard brought in more than \$370 million dollars of federal funding into the state, which is more than 97% of our department's budget. Our Soldiers and Airmen pay more in state property, payroll, and sales taxes than what the state provides in state funding to the Iowa National Guard.

Also this past year, the Iowa Air and Army National Guard executed nearly \$16 million in federal funds for our construction and capital projects program. We completed new construction, renovations or additions in Miller Armory and the United States Property and Fiscal Office on Camp Dodge, the Davenport Army Aviation Support Facility, Fairfield Field Maintenance Shop, and the Iowa Falls and Shenandoah armories.

We currently have renovation and construction projects underway at the Council Bluffs and Dubuque armories. On Camp Dodge we are consolidating the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, Military Records Center, and the State Fiscal Office activities into one updated facility. By arraying these services under one roof, Iowa National Guard members, veterans, and military retirees will see improved veteran services, while Iowa taxpayers receive a greater value through more efficient use of existing infrastructure and resources.

2012 has thankfully been a relatively quiet year for our emergency response operations, particularly after the longest, continuous domestic response operation in Iowa National Guard history on the Missouri River from May to September 2011. We used this additional time to plan, prepare, and exercise for potential disaster response support on a variety of scenarios.

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And that training paid off. During the recent December blizzard, we mobilized 80 Guardsmen to conduct Highway Assistance Team missions in partnership with the Iowa Departments of Transportation and Public Safety and provided assistance to motorists stranded by the blizzard. These assistance teams rescued nearly a dozen travelers from extremely hazardous situations and transported them to safety, including responding to and assisting with a two-fatality, 25-car pileup on Interstate 35 south of Dows, Iowa.

And last week, we just finished supporting the 2013 Presidential Inauguration event in Washington, DC, by sending approximately 120 members of the 1133rd Transportation Company, Mason City, the 185th Air Refueling Wing, Sioux City, and various other Iowa units in support of the inaugural operations.

The additional time we gained over the last year from quieter-than-normal combat, peacekeeping, and domestic operations has allowed our organization to re-focus on organizational readiness, which drives everything we do. We'd like to share the results of these efforts with you.

First of all, your Iowa National Guard is a national leader in personnel strength management – recruiting and retention. Both the Iowa Air and Army National Guard began fiscal year 2012 with more than 100 percent of authorized strength. We have been at or above 100 percent strength for more than ten years in a row – a significant accomplishment considering all we have been asked to do since 9-11 with an all-volunteer force.

We are in the top echelon of the National Guard for the quality of recruits coming into the National Guard for 2012. More than 20% of our basic training, advanced individual training, or technical school graduates are either honor or distinguished graduates, on the commandant's list, or in the top 10% at their respective military schools.

These efforts have not gone unnoticed by the U.S. Department of Defense and other military organizations; Iowa units received several significant awards in 2012:

The 132nd Fighter Wing and the 133rd Test Squadron both won the 2012 Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, the tenth time for the 132nd and the sixth time for the 133rd.

The 132nd Fighter Wing received the 2012 National Guard Association of the United States Major General John J. Pesch Flight Safety Trophy, which is awarded annually to the two Air National Guard wings nationally with the highest standards of flight safety. Additionally, the 132nd's Logistics Readiness Squadron won the 2012 Air National Guard Base Logistics Activity of the Year Award.

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team won the Citizen Patriot Unit Award, a national award given by the Reserve Forces Policy Board to only one unit nationally for its substantial contribution to the security posture of the United States.

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And Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1034th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, which is currently deployed to Afghanistan, won the Eisenhower Trophy, given annually to an Army National Guard unit in each state rated the most outstanding during 2012.

While we're humbled by these prestigious awards presented for excellence across the organization, we're also extremely proud of the way in which we have been able to honor and remember those Iowans who have selflessly served our state and nation.

It is projected that Iowa will lose approximately 6,000 of its veterans in this calendar year. In order to meet the increasing demand for military funeral honors, the Iowa National Guard has partnered with Iowa veterans service organizations to provide each eligible veteran and their family these richly-deserved military funeral honors. Since 2000, the Iowa National Guard's Military Funeral Honors program has been rendering professional military funeral honors, in accordance with service tradition, to all eligible veterans when requested by an authorized family member. This past year, our Military Funeral Honors program supported nearly 1,600 Iowa funerals.

And we have been so fortunate to be able to also honor Iowa's living veterans. Last year, through a partnership with the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum and the U.S. Department of Defense, more than 3,200 of Iowa's Korean War era veterans and their families were recognized and presented certificates of appreciation for their honorable service at a ceremony commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Korean War. What a fitting and long-overdue tribute to these tremendous Iowans.

This year is the continuation of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War and the 50th anniversary of the start of the Vietnam War. The Iowa National Guard will participate in both anniversary events over the next two years.

In an effort to assist a grateful nation in thanking and honoring our Vietnam veterans and their families, the Iowa National Guard has signed on to the National Commemorative Partner Program. Through this program, the Iowa National Guard will plan and conduct events and activities that will recognize the service, valor, and sacrifice of Iowa's Vietnam veterans and their families.

There is another group of great Americans that serve our state and nation every day, but are often forgotten. They are the children of our military members who are affected by the multiple deployments and absence of their parents during a critical time in their lives. For most this includes repetitive separation from parents and other loved ones, and for many it includes learning to live the "new normal" necessitated by combat wounds, injury, illness and loss. These children reside in nearly every community in Iowa.

A critical tool in reaching out to military children is the Military Child Education Coalition or MCEC, a program funded by the U.S. Department of Defense.

Over the last four years, MCEC has trained 530 Iowa education professionals and military family readiness personnel how to understand and support military-connected children. By virtue of the

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exceptional participation by Iowans in this program, the Iowa National Guard is a national leader in the MCEC program.

In an effort to elevate awareness of these challenges, Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds hosted the Military Child Education Coalition public engagement seminar in October with Iowa education and community leaders.

The goal of the seminar was to bring together different sectors within the education community to identify capabilities, synchronize existing resources and programs, and develop a plan for military children living in these times of uncertainty.

As I come to a close, I hope that I have left you confident that the Iowa National Guard is in good hands and is moving in the spirit of one. We have executed every mission assigned, served our state here at home, and deployed wherever needed in a moment's notice. And as the challenges of the last ten years fade, we will face new challenges together.

Budget constraints and shifting priorities will impact how we operate, how we are organized, and what we are asked to do in the years ahead, but despite these changes, the Iowa National Guard will remain Mission-Focused and Warrior Ready.

This team will continue to take care of our Soldiers, Airmen, families, and employers as we continue to serve so proudly as your hometown military. And we are so grateful for the continued support we receive from the Iowa General Assembly and the people of Iowa.

On behalf of our men and women and their families, thank you for this opportunity to provide an update and assessment of the Iowa National Guard. Your Iowa National Guard is truly making a difference every day.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

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For questions concerning the operations, training, and activities of the Iowa Army and Air National Guard, please contact Col. Greg Hapgood, Iowa National Guard Public Affairs Officer, at (515) 252-4582 (office), (515) 971-6385 or by email at [gregory.o.hapgood.mil@mail.mil](mailto:gregory.o.hapgood.mil@mail.mil) . You may also contact Master Sgt. Duff E. McFadden at (515) 252-4666 (office), (515) 480-7647 (cell), or by e-mail at [duff.e.mcfadden.mil@mail.mil](mailto:duff.e.mcfadden.mil@mail.mil) (note new email addresses).

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