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Idaho Air National Guard Receives New Cyber Mission

Idaho National Guard Public Affairs



(BOISE) -- In a recent Department of Defense memorandum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau Gen. Frank J. Grass announced that the Idaho Air National Guard has been selected as one of six Air National Guard units to receive a new Cyber mission.

These cyber squadrons are part of a new force structure designed to support Department of Defense local and regional responses for cyber contingencies. "Our goal for cyber-defense is to train, equip and provide highly skilled forces responsive to the needs of the nation," Grass said.

These six Air National Guard units will optimize national access to National Guard cyber assets in the 10 Federal Emergency Management Agency regions.

"The Squadron will be a great resource for our efforts to protect a vital piece of our State infrastructure," Governor

C.L. "Butch" Otter said, during his January 11, State of the State address.

The Idaho National Guard is uniquely positioned to respond quickly in situations where federal response may not have appropriate authority and set conditions for other response elements, as situations may require.

"This decision to house a cyber squadron in Idaho is based on the caliber of our personnel and the dedication and track record of protecting Idaho and our nation," Maj. Gen. Gary L. Saylor, commander of the Idaho National Guard said. "The Idaho Air National Guard's unique placement within our community makes us the perfect fit for the mission."

A cyber mission in Idaho not only means a safer Idaho and a safer nation, it also means more jobs and more opportunities far into the future.

"The Idaho Cyber Operations Squadron will include 71 Air Guard personnel, including 15 who will be working full-time on this important new mission," Otter said during his address. The unit will operate on an on-going, every day, nationwide effort to combat cyberattacks on the United States, its defense systems and its people.

As part of ongoing growth of cyber forces throughout the Department of Defense, the National Guard plans to



activate a total of 13 cyber units spread throughout 23 states by the end of fiscal year 2019. Idaho's Cyber Squadron is set to be funded in fiscal year 2017.

"This is the beginning," said Air Force Col. Kelly Hughes, chief of the Space and Cyber Warfare Operations Division at the Air National Guard Readiness Center. "This is a massive amount of force structure the Guard has laid into this mission, but this is just the first layer," Hughes said.

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