Oregon Governor Kate Brown presented Oregon National Service Members with 1st Battalion, 168 Aviation Regiment, Oregon Army National Guard, based out of Pendleton, with medals and recognition for their service during Oregon’s largest search and rescue operation, Feb. 14. Thanks to the efforts of the Oregon Army National Guard flight crews 54 people, 10 dogs, one cat and one rabbit were rescued and transported from the flooded areas via helicopter during the search and rescue efforts in Umatilla County over the past week.


Oregon Governor Kate Brown visited with Oregon Army National Guard service members involved in the search and rescue efforts in Umatilla County over the past week. Gov. Kate Brown declared a state of emergency Friday afternoon for Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa counties because of flooding in those areas. Three Oregon Army National Guard helicopters were initially called out by the county to support search and rescue operations. Two Pendleton based CH-47 Chinooks provided aerial reconnaissance and an HH-60M MEDEVAC. Black Hawk based out of Salem arrived on scene supporting a rescue of five civilians the first evening.

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“I couldn’t be more proud of your Oregon National Guard members and their efforts supporting flooding this month,” said Maj. Gen. Michael Stencel, Adjutant General, Oregon. “They truly embody our core values of Character, Competence, Courage and Commitment, while demonstrating that we truly are part of our communities.”

Gov. Brown presented the flight crews in both Salem and Pendleton with recognition and awards for their efforts.

“Oregon National Guard Members took part in the largest search and rescue operation in Oregon’s history,” said Stephen Bomar, Director of Public Affairs, Oregon Military Department. “They did an amazing job supporting the community and saving lives.”

In Salem, members of G Company, 1-189 Aviation, Capt. David Sous, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Brian Roche, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Corey Wadsworth, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael Newgard, Staff Sgt. Dan Cleveland, Sgt. Joey Brixey, Sgt. James Gale and Sgt. Johnny Kilroy were presented Oregon Meritorious Service Medals.

In Pendleton, members of Detachment 1 B, 1-168 Aviation, Capt. Taylor Frye, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Ray Talkington, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jeremiah Williams, Staff Sgt. Steven Kirkpatrick, Sgt. Joseph Ford, Sgt. Marcus Hickman and Sgt. Skylar Lesney were presented with the Oregon Meritorious Service Medal.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Steven McDaniel, Staff Sgt. Matthew Taylor and Sgt. Katelyn Shurts, also members of Detachment 1 B, 1-168 Aviation, were presented with Oregon Commendation Medals.

The Oregon Army National Guard has six CH-47 Chinooks and 12 HH-60M Black Hawks. We also have four UH-72 Lakota’s, which are often used in search and rescue operations.

Elements from the 1st Battalion, 168 Aviation Regiment, CH-47 Chinooks are scheduled to mobilize and support overseas this spring.

The Oregon Office of Emergency Management was essential with search and rescue coordination efforts as well as providing inter-agency coordination to support sustained operations throughout.