

LOCKLEED NEWS



| Minnesota National Guard

The Minnesota National Guard takes great pride in being a vibrant participant in shaping Minnesota's history. Since the days before statehood, the National Guard has served in many roles in support of federal and state objectives: protector of settlers; guardian of freedom; provider of relief; peacekeeper to nations; and homeland defender.

Deep History

While we cannot capture everything here, you can see the whole story at: [Minnesota National Guard – The Official Minnesota National Guard Website \(ng.mil\)](http://Minnesota National Guard – The Official Minnesota National Guard Website (ng.mil))

The concept of citizen soldiers (separate from career soldiers) came from England and dates from 1636 in America. Before the country's constitution was written, there were three regiments formed within colonized Massachusetts Bay. Eventually it spread

and became the country's primary defense force. These militia served General Washington in support of the Continental Army for short-term and short-notice battles. The state-based militia system was formalized later in the U.S Constitution.

In Minnesota, the Territorial militia formed with volunteers in St. Paul and other towns along the rivers from Stillwater to Winona in 1856. Those 10 companies of the Minnesota Pioneer Guards were the early foundation of the Guard we know today. During the Civil War, Minnesota's governor Ramsey was the first to offer troops to Lincoln in support of the Union Army. The First Minnesota Regiment was pivotal in winning the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863 but suffered huge casualties with 82 percent of soldiers killed or wounded.

Following the Civil War, the Minnesota Militia re-organized and became the Minnesota National Guard. There were 22,000 men comprising infantry, cavalry, artillery and sharpshooter volunteer troops. During the Spanish American War (1898) one regiment was called to service in the Philippines and suffered more casualties than all the other regiments combined. As a result, the state armies were formalized by legislation as part of the U. S. Army Reserve.

Formation of the 34th Infantry Division

The 34th Infantry Division, known as the Red Bulls, comprises about 2/3 of the soldiers in the Minnesota National Guard. It was created with troops from Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and the Dakotas in 1917 just after the U. S. joined World War I. The Division's slogan is "Attack! Attack! Attack!" and they've been setting military records ever since. The earliest 34th Infantry Division was "Sandstorm" and some of its soldiers fought in France during WWI. After that, another period of reorganization settled on the Guard and the first air unit in the country was established in Minnesota. Camp Ripley was opened as a field training facility in 1931.

World War II and Beyond



Minnesota was tapped to participate on several fronts during WWII and began training in 1941. The 34th Infantry Division was the first American unit to go to Europe in 1942 and some troops were sent to North Africa and the Philippines. They followed Japanese soldiers to the Bataan Peninsula, famous for its "Death March". Following WWI, the 47th Infantry Division (dubbed "Viking") and its airmen became part of a newly organized Air National Guard. The 34th was nicknamed the "Red Bull Division".

Following a brief lull, the Minnesota National Guard was called to replace troops fighting in the Korean War. Many of the soldiers fought in WWII and were tapped to lead a training division. In the 1960s threats from the Soviet Union prompted mobilization of the MN Air National Guard, and they flew supply and transport missions during the Vietnam War. During this period, Fighter Squadrons from Duluth and St. Paul were on alert at all times. Once the Draft ended and the U. S. adopted an all "volunteer" policy, Guard units across the country were called to active duty more often in support of initiatives like Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. About one-quarter of the troops were National Guard and Reserve soldiers, including over 600 from Minnesota. They supported U. S. troops in the Balkans and here at home during the flood of 1997.

September 11

Immediately after the 9/11 attacks on New York, Washington DC and Pennsylvania, Minnesota provided combat air patrols and airport security services. Since then, troops have been deployed to the Balkans, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait. More than 8,000 troops were deployed in Iraq alone, and we lost 16 soldiers there between 2003 to 2011. Many others were wounded in body and spirit. The 34th Infantry Division played a large role in the "Surge" of 2007 and served the longest tour of duty ever (22 months) for the MN National Guard. Our Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program was created to assist in service members' reintegration after those deployments.

Thanks and Blessings

Minnesota National Guard forces remain heavily engaged in the War on Terror and we are forever grateful to them and their families for their service and sacrifice. God bless our military service members and God Bless America!



Jason Rehn Pictured With Family

| A Patriot's Journey

In our ongoing series, The History of the Red Bulls, we highlight soldiers with extraordinary stories. This is one of them. Jason Rehn "was always a patriot" and as early as 9th grade, he knew he'd go into the military to fight for our country. He decided the Marine Corps was best for him, went to Camp Pendleton after graduation (where he met LockLeed founder John Henka) and became an Infantryman. He was fully aware of the potential for deployment and danger. He participated in two stints with 3/1 in the Marine Corps.

After four years, Jason followed his plan, and returned to Minnesota and attended Vermillion Community College to study Forestry.

Even though he was very happy, was married and had two daughters, he missed the camaraderie and sense of community he



experienced in the military. When he heard about the Minnesota National Guard's "Try 1" program, he thought he'd check it out. That allows someone to sign up for a year and see how it goes. That was in August 2001, a month before 9/11. After a few years, his guard commander recommended Jason for OCS – and he attended the Officer Basic Course for combat engineering.

He was assigned to the 682nd Engineering Battalion, part of the 34th Infantry Division. Three months later, they were sent to a six-month training program before being deployed to Iraq. His role involved escorting convoys of five to six armored vehicles transporting supplies such as food and fuel through the country from Camp Adder in Tahlil just north of Kuwait to the forward operating base at Camp Anaconda near Baghdad, our northernmost post in Iraq. The main freeway they took was the well-traveled Route Campa, and the enemies would ambush our convoys often. They relied heavily on Intel reports to identify potential problems before getting on the road, but they were only so good.

Jason learned in training that tactics, and readiness (for situations you might encounter), are key. This proved useful during the 300+ combat missions his team took. Jason estimates that about one-third of the time they were attacked with either arms fire or IEDs and had to respond. One thing they noticed was that the hotter it was, the more attacks they suffered. They were constantly on the lookout for debris on the road, suspicious buildings and random people standing by the road. Sadly, Jason saw one of his soldiers killed in action and several suffered casualties due to EFBs (like an IED on steroids) which are capable of penetrating armored vehicles. Later, aviation and airlift resources were used to minimize losses on the ground until the last mission in 2011.

Jason's deployment was extended another six months during the "surge" and you can imagine how the troops felt about that. It turned out to be the longest deployment in history for the Minnesota National Guard – 22 months overall. They returned to Minnesota in August 2007 and Jason left the Guard the following summer.

The hardest part for many returning soldiers is the reintegration into families and friends who have sacrificed so much in supporting each other. There are rough times for loved ones during and after deployment which can lead to alienation, divorce and suicide.

Jason missed his son's second and third birthdays, and his family worked through several issues when he returned. Eventually they decided to add to their family and adopted two girls. Today he works as the District Conservation Officer at the Hinckley field office of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Jason's philosophy is that God allows us to go through some situations so that we can learn – about ourselves, others, our purpose and Him. Despite the controversy over the Iraq war, Jason knows he was sent to do a job and they did their best. He's proud to have served our country.

