

Combat Aviation Brigades (CABs) within the Army National Guard

What is it?

The Army National Guard has eight Combat Aviation Brigades (CABs) aligned with the eight ARNG Divisions. ARNG CABs are generally structured like the eleven CABs currently in the active component. A CAB typically has about 2600 Soldiers including 350 aviators with an assortment of UH-60A/L/M Black Hawks, CH-47D Chinooks, AH-64A/D Apaches, and UH-72A Lakotas, totaling 110 to 118 aircraft. Two of the eight CABs, the 28th CAB headquartered in PA and the 29th CAB headquartered in MD, are configured as Heavy CABs with an ARNG Attack Battalion and an Army Reserve Attack Battalion. The other six CABs headquartered in MN, MO, TX, IN, CA, and NY are Expeditionary CABs with a Security and Support Aviation Battalion in lieu of the second Attack Battalion. The other Battalions in a CAB are an Assault Helicopter Battalion, General Support Aviation Battalion, and Aviation Support Battalion (Maintenance).

What has the ARNG done?

About every nine months the Army mobilizes an ARNG CAB Task Force (TF) to deploy; usually to Iraq. California's 40th CAB TF with over 260 helicopters is the largest Army Aviation brigade formation to deploy in the last six years. The 40th CAB TF is composed of units from twelve states and includes the first National Guard aviation unit to complete the transition to the UH-60M Black Hawk. CAB Task Forces stagger their deployments over six to eight months to ensure a seamless transition with the replaced unit. About half of the 40th CAB TF is in Iraq and the remainder is completing training and certification with First Army's 166th Aviation Brigade at the Fort Hood Mobilization Station.

What continuing efforts does the Army have planned?

The 29th CAB TF, very similar to the 40th CAB TF with units from across the Nation, will follow the 40th CAB through pre and post mobilization training and certification. The 29th CAB TF is executing its "home-station" pre-mobilization training in December 2010. The first battalions from the 29th TF will begin post-mobilization training at Fort Hood in February 2011, while the majority of the CAB TF will go to Fort Hood in August 2011. The similarly-configured 35th CAB TF has been alerted to follow the 29th CAB TF nine months later. Although Army sourcing requirements for an early FY13 rotation have not been determined, the ARNG Directorate staff has begun planning the follow-on CAB TF under the command and control of the 42nd CAB headquarters in accordance with the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) strategy.

Why is this important to the Army?

The Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) is the Army aviation equivalent to the Brigade Combat Team (BCT). Similar to the BCT, the ARNG CAB is lethal, mobile, experienced and accessible. The deployment of ARNG CAB TFs on a rotational basis demonstrates the Army National Guard's readiness, relevance, and availability for Overseas Contingency Operations.