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## Guard members returning from deployment

Oregon National Guard citizen soldiers from across the state are returning home from overseas deployment.

The latest group arrived in Medford on Tuesday and included a team of 100 Oregonians who had deployed to Djibouti, Africa, for nine months. Other units deployed to Jordan, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Djibouti and Kosovo.

The mobilizations of the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team are part of the second largest mobilization of Oregon troops since World War II.

The last mobilization of Oregonians this size was in 2009-10.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., along with Forest Grove Mayor Peter B. Truax, greeted the troops Wednesday as they arrived in Portland.

## Airport: Manager replacement must wait

*Continued from Page 1*

comes down to dollars," said Will Isom, the Port of Astoria's executive director.

Kobes has agreed to stay on for a few more months. On Tuesday, port commissioners approved extending his contract through Dec. 1.

After that, Kobes could be retained as a consultant one or two days a week for up to a year, Isom said. Duties such as billing and bookkeeping would move to the main office.

"Because of Gary's expertise, the airport is probably the area of the port I've spent the least amount of time on," said Isom, who became executive director in December. "From our side, over the last few years, we've really streamlined and digitized a lot of the processes we do here at the port, and the airport has been left out of that."

Commissioners James Campbell and Robert Stevens



The McGowan triplets, L-R, Sgt. Ian McGowan, Spc. Aiden McGowan and Rand McGowan pose for a selfie with their mother, Stephanie Salas, after returning from Africa.

John Hughel,  
Oregon Military  
Department

"On behalf of all Oregonians, I thank the members of the Oregon Army National Guard for their service, commitment and sacrifice," Merkley said. "The support they provide allows the rest of us to live in a safer, more secure country. I know the loved ones of our brave service members will be overjoyed to have them home."

Oregon National Guard members will arrive home throughout the month of August.

The final group of soldiers from the 41st, who are in Kosovo, are expected to return shortly before Christmas. Each group goes through a two-week quarantine at a demobilization site in Fort Bliss, Texas.

both wanted to begin searching for Kobes' replacement immediately.

"Twelve to 18 months without an airport manager is too much," Stevens said.

"I think at this period in time we need to start looking for someone who knows the ropes," Campbell said. "We need to make sure we don't let this thing fall back into the gutter where it was before."

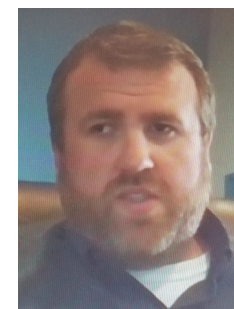
Development of the industrial park is vital to the port's future stability, he added.

"Stay on top of it, Campbell said. "Once you get one thing in there, I think it will attract another and another and another."

It makes more sense to keep Kobes on in an interim basis to complete projects, such as renovation of the runway

apron, establishment of the first business in the industrial park, and facilitating the Federal Aviation Administration grants the port recently received, Isom said.

Also on Tuesday, Isom announced the promotion of port Operations Manager Matt McGrath to assistant executive director.



Isom

McGrath was hired by the port in 2014, only to resign five years later after calling then-Executive Director Jim Knight incompetent, dishonest and incapable of managing the agency. When Knight left in December, McGrath was rehired to his former post.

The promotion, effective immediately, reflects the increasing role McGrath has taken on, Isom said. No pay raise accompanies the new title, however.