

Alumni Speech September 27th 2012

Thank you for having me here with you today. I'm happy to be here with my fellow Guardsmen and Women representing the more than 17,000 Soldiers and Airmen of the Ohio National Guard.

The first thing you should know is that the Ohio National Guard is in very good hands. The quality of our leaders and our young men and women serving is outstanding. I often travel around the state and nation and can tell you without a doubt, that I am proud to be part of an organization that is second to none.

The National Guard has transformed from a strategic reserve into an operational force. That transformation brought new roles and responsibilities. We have accepted and are successfully completing a wide spectrum of missions encompassing a variety of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

As I speak to you today, more than 2,700 Ohio National Guard Soldiers are serving abroad or domestically.

Please keep our troops in your prayers. Many have deployed multiple times in face of much adversity.

State of the Guard

Our Air Defense units are protecting the National Capital Region, our Air National Guard C27Js are providing much needed movement of supplies while other Soldiers are training side-by-side with the Hungarian Defense Force as they cooperatively train and assist in the development and sustainment of an effective Afghan National Army. These are but a few of our missions.

Since 9/11 more than 20,000 Ohio National Guard Soldiers and Airmen have answered the call to serve. This number includes Soldiers and Airmen who have deployed multiple times which shows their true dedication to service.

As with everything in life, the National Guard is ever evolving and is quite different from when I first joined the "One weekend a month, two weeks a year" Guard. Then we were a strategic reserve and were underfunded and underequipped. Today we are equipped with state of the art equipment.

Let me take a few minutes to recognize some of the accomplishments of our units and individuals as well as some of our emerging missions that you may not be familiar with.

Awards/Recognition

Our Soldier and Airmen do not take their jobs lightly. Though most perform their duty on a "part time" basis, they strive for excellence in all they do. In the past year, the members of the Ohio National Guard have been recognized at both the State and National levels with 14 unit awards and 8 Individual awards. I won't state each award but I wanted to let you know that the accomplishments and dedication of our Soldiers and Airmen are recognized throughout the nation.

Homeland Response Force

One of the cornerstones of the Ohio National Guard is its ability to respond quickly during domestic emergencies and providing needed support to civil authorities. For this domestic mission, the Ohio National Guard stood up and validated the first of ten newly created Homeland Response Forces (HRF). Its primary purpose is to respond to any chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (CBRN) event. Comprised of 566 Soldiers and Airmen, the HRF provides command and control, area operations, and specialized CBRN consequence management capabilities to local, state, or federal authorities. The core of the unit is an enhanced response force package that contains the capabilities for medical triage and initial treatment, search and rescue, security, mass decontamination.

Air Control Alert Mission

As part of the NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense Command) defense system, the Ohio Air National Guard's 180th Fighter Wing in Toledo is one of 18 units nationwide that have a 24-hr Air Control Alert intercept mission. Pilots, maintainers, and fully armed F-16's stand ready to intercept aircraft that might be lost or have bad intentions.

OMLT

The Operational Mentor & Liaison Team (OMLT) program is a key NATO contribution towards the development of the Afghan National Army (ANA). Ohio National Guard personnel train ANA forces jointly with members of the Hungarian Armed Forces. They train in Hungary and Germany before deploying to Afghanistan. The OMLT mission is to provide training and mentoring to the ANA forces. The joint Ohio-Hungarian mission is a continuation of a relationship formed in 1993 between the Ohio National Guard and the Republic of Hungary as part of the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program (SPP). We are embarking on our 20th anniversary of this successful State Partnership.

National Capital Region

Members of the 2-174th Air Defense Artillery are in Washington D.C. as they continue the mission of protecting lives and ensuring the airspace remains clear in the region. Currently, Soldiers of the 174th Headquarters Headquarters Battery are in the National Capital Region as part of Task Force Grant, working cooperatively with the Air Force and leading airspace operations within the National Capital Region.

37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

Ohio's 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team has deployed over 1,900 Soldiers to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom; this is the second time the brigade has deployed to support OEF and is the largest mobilization for the 37th since the Korean War in 1952. Most have recently returned home from this important mission after a year of supporting freedom in an area of hostile territory.

179th Air Wing

Though this mission has recently been completed, I would like to make note of it due to the precedent set.

Airmen from the 179th Airlift Wing made Air National Guard history by deploying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom for the first time with the C-27J Spartan. This joint mission was conducted with aircrews from the 179th AW and Soldiers from the

Oklahoma and Georgia National Guards. The 179th AW was the first unit in the Air Force to receive this new aircraft.

The Airmen of the 179th AW returned to Ohio on 7 May 2012, after completion of a successful mission, however Ohio's aircraft are still being utilized in Afghanistan.

UAS

There has been much discussion in the past couple of years in the area of Unmanned Aircraft Systems or UAS. Often called "drones" in the media, the military uses the term UAS. They are also known as Remotely Piloted Vehicles, or RPAs, a name that recognizes the fact there is always a pilot in the operational loop. The Ohio National Guard is at the forefront of this technology.

The Ohio Army National Guard is now in possession of a small hand launched UAS called the "Raven." This is a portable system carried in a backpack. It can be set up and flown within minutes. This can give the soldier the opportunity to see what is beyond the visible horizon by transmitting video images to a laptop computer. It can also be equipped as a radio communications relay for beyond-line-of-sight communications. There are also significant opportunities for this technology to be incorporated into the Domestic Operations mission.

The Ohio Air National Guard operates the MQ-1 "Predator" out of the Springfield Air National Guard Base with the 178th Fighter Wing. The 178th was an F-16 training wing, but that mission was lost during the 2005 BRAC round. The Predator mission evolved through the Air Force Total Force Integration initiative.

No Predator aircraft are based at Springfield. They are located in theater but are controlled by members of the Ohio Air National Guard via secure satellite communications. This is a 'real world' 24/7/365 operation. An additional outcome of this new mission tasking is the robust increase of our nation's intelligence capabilities with the standing up of the Intelligence Group at the 178th. Members work hand-in-hand everyday with the National Air and Space Intelligence Center (NASIC) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, dealing with matters at the highest levels of our national security.

State/Local Support:

In addition to our emerging missions, the Ohio National Guard continues to support our State and community. We stand ready to protect life, property and preserve peace, order and public safety (Respond to floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, civil disturbances, snow removal, and tornados). After the storms of 29 June in which over half of the citizens of Ohio lost power, 200 of your Ohio National Guard Soldiers and Airmen were deployed to Franklin and Montgomery counties to do "knock and talks" with citizens. They went door-to-door to check on the health and welfare of residents in affected areas providing them basic information and telephone numbers if they needed assistance. Though these checks were important to all those suffering through the immense heat, there was one couple in particular that I believe showed the true importance of this mission. Upon knocking on the door of an older couple, it was found that the wife was beginning to significantly suffer from heat injuries. Paramedics were called and I do feel that a life was saved that day.

In March we had Engineers assisting the Ohio Department of Transportation with debris removal in Clermont County caused by the tornado and high winds that devastated the area.

Not only do we support Ohio but other states as well. In September of 2011, we sent Soldiers and Airmen to Vermont helping to repair roads and infrastructure after the effects of Hurricane Irene.

We continue to support our community mission by participating in local, state, and national programs that add value to America (Counter Drug, Guard Care – medical services to medically underserved counties in Ohio).

ATAG-Army Report:

- The 37th IBCT was the biggest deployment in the history of the OHARNG. Over 2000 Soldiers from the 37th IBCT went to Camp Shelby to complete pre-mobilization training prior to their deployment to Afghanistan. The OHARNG had over 1000 Soldiers travel to Camp Shelby to conduct/support PPMT for the 37th IBCT.
- The OHARNG had a DMOSQ rate of over 95%, which was in the top ten in the country for TY12.
- The OHARNG supported the annual National Matches competitions held by the NRA at Camp Perry in July and August with over 6500 man days.
- OMLT Missions: MAT 1 is currently in Hungary training for their upcoming deployment. MAT2 and MAT3 have started pre-mobilization training in preparation for their upcoming deployments.

What you can do to help the Ohio National Guard:

Our Ohio National Guard Alumni are important to us and it's why we're here today. Your involvement can make a difference. We need your commitment. Whether it's with our Ohio National Guard Association (Officers) or with the Ohio National Guard Enlisted Association, your support can and will make a difference for Soldiers, Airman and the resources they need to be effective in training for combat. Your support also makes a difference for Soldier and Airmen benefits (TRICARE, IDT Pay, Retirement Pay, Tuition Assistance, Life Insurance and Space A). To get more involved, please contact my Community Outreach Office at 614-336-7002 or the ONGA and the ONGEA at 614-486-4186 x3. Both organizations need your participation in order to be the STRONGEST advocates for our Ohio National Guard Soldiers and Airmen.

I appreciate your support and I thank you for letting me share a few moments with you of what our Soldiers and Airmen of the Ohio National Guard are accomplishing.