



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

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MAJOR GENERAL MARK E. BARTMAN, ADJUTANT GENERAL

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On Tuesday, July 25 the Ohio National Guard will celebrate its 229th birthday. Organized as the Northwest Territory Militia at Marietta in 1788, countless Buckeyes have stood ready to answer the call to our nation, the great state of Ohio and our fellow citizens in our communities and neighborhoods.

This year we also take time to reflect on the centennial of World War I. On July 15, 1917, more than 25,000 Ohio National Guardsmen entered federal service when President Wilson ordered the Buckeyes to join the budding American Expeditionary Force.

It was on July 18 of that year our 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team was constituted in the Army as the 37th Division. The Buckeye Division fought in France and Belgium in World War I, spent 592 days of combat in the Pacific in World War II, and provided thousands of individual replacements from its ranks to Korea. Reorganized as the 73rd Infantry in 1968, it remained ready for its mission to defend the Aleutian Islands during the final years of the Cold War. The Soldiers remained flexible as the 37th transitioned to an armored brigade in the last decade of the 20th century and its units were the first from Ohio to answer the call after 9/11. Since taking on its current form in 2007, the 37th IBCT has deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and is preparing to return home from a yearlong deployment to Kosovo.

Across this century of service, on innumerable occasions, its men and women have helped protect life and property when storms and disasters have struck our own communities. Additionally, the 37th Division Aviation constituted the first flying units of the Ohio National Guard when it was organized in 1927 and is the foundation that many of our Ohio Air National Guard units stand on today.

In a 1945 speech to the Ohio General Assembly, Maj. Gen. Robert S. Beightler, commander of the 37th Division during World War II, summed up the significance of this unit to its state. *"We Buckeyes are a neighborly people, but we are also clannishly Ohio. It has never been better shown than in the way Ohio soldiers stick together and fight together ... the Ohio spirit at home and the Ohio spirit on the battle-front is an unbeatable combination ... the 37th is, and will remain, a strong and stalwart piece of Ohio wherever it goes. The Buckeye spirit has infused the 37th. It will never be eradicated if we preserve the fundamental virtues and strengths that have always characterized Ohioans."*

The people of Ohio and of the entire nation will always be able to look with pride on the record of the 37th. The record that has been made and the record that is yet to be written. The tens of thousands of men and women who served in the Buckeye Division represent the finest in America's heritage.

Major General Mark E. Bartman,
Ohio National Guard, The Adjutant General