



# Ohio Adjutant General's Department

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## **Ohio National Guard to celebrate 20th anniversary of State Partnership Program pairing with Hungary**

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Hungary and the Ohio National Guard mark the 20th anniversary of their National Guard State Partnership Program pairing with a formal ceremony at 2:30 p.m. Friday, May 17, 2013, at the Maj. Gen. Robert S. Beightler Armory, 2825 West Dublin Granville Road, Columbus, Ohio 43235.

Csaba Hende, Hungarian Minister of Defense, and György Szapáry, Hungarian Ambassador to the United States, will join Maj. Gen. Deborah A. Ashenurst, Ohio adjutant general, for the ceremony to celebrate a partnership that has included numerous military, socio-political and economic exchanges over the past two decades.

“In 20 years the Soldiers and Airmen of the Hungarian Defense Forces and the Soldiers and Airmen of the Ohio National Guard have gained valuable lessons of military strategy, tactics and operational procedures,” Ashenurst said. “However, more importantly, we have gained valuable lessons in our beliefs, our cultures and our shared experiences.”

Ohio and Hungary have been partnered together since the beginning of the State Partnership Program (SPP) in 1993. Throughout the years, they have conducted more than 170 SPP events in a host of security cooperation activities ranging from bilateral familiarizations, small unit exchanges, exercises and senior military and civic leader visits.

Also during that tenure, Hungary has become a full partner in NATO, in 1999, and the Hungarian Defense Forces have deployed with ONG members for several successful joint rotations to train and advise the emerging Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Since 2008, Hungary is one of only 14 SPP nations that have participated in multiple International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) co-deployments with their National Guard partner state.

“We have formed a bond that goes beyond the partnership, beyond the comrade-in-arms and have built a true friendship between our people,” Ashenhurst said.

The SPP is a U.S. Department of Defense program managed by the National Guard that links U.S. states with partner countries around the world for the purpose of supporting the security cooperation objectives of the geographic military combatant commanders.

All SPP activities are coordinated through the geographic combatant commanders, the U.S. ambassadors' country teams, the partner state, and other agencies as appropriate, to ensure that National Guard support is tailored to meet both U.S. and country objectives. The unique civil-military nature of the National Guard allows active participation in a wide range of security cooperation activities, such as:

- emergency management and disaster response
- border and port security
- leadership and noncommissioned officer development
- medical capacities
- economic security
- natural resource protection
- peacekeeping operations
- counter trafficking
- counter proliferation
- counter terrorism

Today, 50 U.S. states, two territories, and the District of Columbia are partnered with 65 countries around the world. Ohio is one of a few states with multiple state partnerships, having also been paired with Serbia since 2006.

-30-

**NEWSROOM NOTE:** News media are encouraged to arrive at least 30 minutes in advance of the scheduled start time.

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