



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

Major General John C. Harris Jr., Adjutant General

Veterans Day: A salute to all who've served their state and nation

Veterans Day is a day to honor the patriotism, service, and sacrifice of the men and women who are serving or have served in the U.S. military. The holiday is rooted in our country's history. It was 101 years ago — on the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month in 1918 — the cease-fire agreement took effect to end World War I.

The United States has the largest population of young veterans since the Vietnam War. Ohio has an active veteran population of more than 800,000 former military members. There are thousands more who are currently serving, including more than 16,000 Ohio National Guard Soldiers and Airmen. As the commander of the Ohio National Guard, I am humbled by their resilient leadership and dedicated service to their community, state, and nation. Each has a unique story about the opportunities their service has provided them, as well as the skills they've gained during their military career.

Ohio Air National Guard Capt. Ashley Klase is one example. Klase, the supervisory engineer at the 200th RED HORSE (Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineer) Squadron Detachment 1, located in Mansfield, Ohio, has received national recognition for her leadership and professionalism. She has traveled across the country and to more than a dozen foreign countries for missions as part of humanitarian and relief efforts, community infrastructure projects, and military construction. Klase joined for many reasons, including family tradition and patriotism. The biggest reason was the sense of purpose and serving something greater than herself.

Sgt. Emily Sherlock recently returned from Kuwait after a yearlong deployment with the Ohio Army National Guard's 637th Chemical Company. Sherlock put her college education on hold to gain new skills as a team leader, including making a presentation to members of the Kuwait Ministry of the Interior during a joint training exercise. She calls the deployment experience the most rewarding of her five-year military career, and it will help her résumé stand out from other job applications as she prepares to graduate and get a full-time job in the civilian sector.

Haraz Ghanbari is a former Ohio Army National Guard enlisted Soldier who has deployed several times overseas during this military career. Ghanbari is a first-generation American who was born to Iranian immigrants. He was inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame last year for his work to help veterans, and has taken the leadership skills he learned from his military service to go into public service as a member the Ohio House of Representatives.

Staff Sgt. Michael Ginikos, a crew chief in the fire department at the 121st Air Refueling Wing in Columbus, Ohio, is an active member of his community and volunteers for Habitat for Humanity. During the 4th of July parade in Westerville, Ohio in 2018, Ginikos became a local hero when the lifesaving skills he learned as a National Guard firefighter helped him save a 2-year-old girl from choking to death. If you were to ask him about that day, he would deny being a hero and would say he was just doing his job.

These are just a few of the current and former Ohio National Guard members who have embraced the ideas of discipline, leadership, and teamwork. They are productive members in the private and public sector who serve as leaders in our communities. They continue the legacy of the generations of patriots who dedicated themselves to the defense of our great state and country.

This Veterans Day, I salute the selfless service of our veterans who have made this a strong and resilient nation.

Major General John C. Harris, Jr.
Ohio National Guard, The Adjutant General