



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

Major General John C. Harris Jr., Adjutant General

The Buckeye spirit:

The Ohio National Guard celebrates its 232nd birthday

This year, the Ohio National Guard celebrates 232 years of dedicated and faithful service to Ohio and the United States of America. The millions of men and women who have stood in our formations since July 25, 1788, have left a legacy of which all of Ohio can be proud.

While time and technology have changed our uniforms, equipment, and tactics, our mission has endured. We remain a group of Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen who stand ready to serve and defend when needed the most. The commitment of the more than 16,000 men and women who currently stand in our formations represent the best of Ohio. I am in awe of their extraordinary service and determination.

Nothing speaks to this commitment like the historic response of the Ohio National Guard to the coronavirus pandemic. Since March, our Soldiers, Airmen, and members of the Ohio Military Reserve and Ohio Naval Militia have responded to the needs of their fellow Ohioans with a wide range of missions. From Lake Erie to the Ohio River, they have passed out an untold amount of food. Vital personal protective equipment was collected and distributed to help front-line responders. In prison facilities and nursing homes we have provided medical augmentation to strained staffs. These are Ohioans serving Ohioans.

In the midst of this, we responded to the call to protect our citizens' right to peacefully assemble while at the same time protecting life and property in Ohio and the National Capital Region. Our response to civil authorities was rapid, decisive, and professional, and embodied the Army and Air Force values our Soldiers and Airmen live by in their daily lives.

While we briefly pause to reflect on our history on this day and our great contributions to the citizens of Ohio, let us not forget those members of our team who are deployed around the world in support of our combatant commands. I expect nothing less for these men and women of the Ohio National Guard. They fully understand the legacy they stand upon.

This year, we also remember the end of World War II. With the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe (V-E) Day in May and Victory over Japan (V-J) Day in August, we proudly reflect on the contributions of our greatest generation. The Ohio National Guard answered the call and was in every theater the American Army fought in and the streamers on our colors reflect that. Our airplanes of the 112th Observation Squadron patrolled the east coast in an anti-submarine mission. Our 112th Engineer Battalion earned the Presidential Unit Citation for heroic deeds on the beaches of Normandy. The Soldiers of our 37th Infantry Division carried with them the Buckeye spirit of thousands of Ohioans. Their record speaks for itself. Five



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years in service, three of those in the Pacific Ocean region, 592 days of combat, seven Medals of Honor and more than 10,000 casualties.

In his post-World War II address to Ohio legislators, the 37th Infantry Division commanding general, Maj. Gen. Robert S. Beightler, powerfully spoke of the importance of Ohioans sticking together to get through difficult times. He said, "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 battlefield 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."

We continue to see that Buckeye spirit throughout the Ohio National Guard today, and our 232-year history of service provides a firm foundation as we prepare for future missions in support of our fellow Ohioans and this great state.

We're in this together, Ohio!

Major General John C. Harris, Jr.
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