



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

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Counterdrug Task Force receives Community Champion Award for support in educating youth on making healthy life choices

**Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Chad Menegay
Ohio National Guard Public Affairs**

COLUMBUS, Ohio — A largely unknown team of military-trained support analysts and civil operators that provides support to communities in the fight against illegal drugs has been exposed for what it is — an organization of heroes.

The Union County Drug Free Coalition honored the Ohio National Guard Counterdrug Task Force as the 2019 Community Champion Award winner Jan. 17 during a coalition board meeting in Marysville.

The Counterdrug Task Force (CDTF) is a joint team of approximately 50 Soldiers and Airmen that works full-time to support the fight on illegal drug use and educate youth on making healthy life choices.

“We are grateful to the Ohio National Guard for their commitment to the health and safety of families in Union County,” said Rich Baird, superintendent of North Union Schools and chair of the Union County Drug Free Coalition. “We appreciate their leadership within our community and partnership to help youth remain drug-free.”

Ohio Army National Guard Capt. Bryan Andrews was embedded with the Union County Drug Free Coalition as a civil operator for more than 15 months, contributing his military skills and specialized expertise to Union County youth programs. Counterdrug Task Force civil operators, like Andrews, support or partner with community-based organizations and drug-free coalitions in all 88 Ohio counties, providing resources and training to combat drug abuse across Ohio, including youth leadership retreats and National Red Ribbon Week initiatives.

In addition, CDTF criminal analysts support the seizure of illegal substances. In 2018, the CDTF assisted law enforcement agencies across the state in the seizure of more than \$120 million in property, cash and drugs such as heroin, fentanyl and prescription opiate pills.

“We work as a force multiplier to help out a coalition or a task force,” said Capt. Jeffrey Bolin, executive officer for the Ohio National Guard counterdrug program. “We figure out what military-unique skills we can provide to that task force to enhance and expand their efforts.”

This award and the exposure it brings to the Counterdrug Task Force highlight just how tightly woven the National Guard is into the fabric of everyday communities.

“This award is a recognition that we’re in the fight,” said Andrews, who now serves as the civil operations program manager for the National Guard Bureau. “The Ohio National Guard is assisting and supporting the elimination of the drug threats here at the local level. That’s where we’re embedded — with normal citizens.”

Protecting the homeland through drug seizure support is a strategic role the National Guard undertakes that many people may not be aware of. Community support and recognition like the Community Champion Award go a long way in helping the public understand more fully what the National Guard is and what it does in its communities.

“Organizations like the Union County Drug Free Coalition appreciate that we’re providing value to our communities across the state; that’s what this award also signifies,” Bolin said.

Counterdrug Task Force members understand that they and drug enforcement agencies can’t win the fight on drugs alone; they need help.

“What’s going to change the drug paradigm in Ohio is local-led citizen involvement with kids, with communities and with the state,” Bolin said. “Every citizen doing their part and contributing; that’s the call to action,” he said.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Capt. Jordyn Craft, public affairs officer, at 614-336-7449 or jordyn.r.craft.mil@mail.mil.

EDITOR’S NOTE: High resolution photos to support this story are available on the [Defense Video Imagery Distribution Site \(DVIDS\)](#).

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