



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

Mike DeWine, Governor

Major General John C. Harris Jr., Adjutant General

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Aviation support company Soldiers honored during call to duty ceremony

**Story by Staff Sgt. Michael Carden
Ohio National Guard Public Affairs**

NORTH CANTON, Ohio — More than 100 Soldiers from Company B, 638th Support Battalion (Aviation Support) said goodbye to family and friends during the unit's call to duty ceremony Feb. 8 at the Faith Family Church, which was filled with Soldiers and well-wishers before the unit's deployment overseas to Kuwait.

"On behalf of a grateful nation, we want you to know we recognize that without you, there would be no democracy," said Maj. Gen. John C. Harris, Jr., Ohio adjutant general, as he addressed the deploying Soldiers. "When they said, 'Welcome our heroes,' I'm sure most of you thought 'I'm no hero, I haven't gone anywhere yet,' but please recognize that to the rest of us, you are."

While the day was about the Soldiers deploying, the families staying behind were also included in the outpouring of support and encouragement from leadership.

"Today is about support," said Capt. John Yahnert, the commander of the deploying unit. "Support for the families, support for your Soldier, and your Soldier's support of the mission."

Also in attendance was Gov. Mike DeWine, who wanted to wish them a safe mission in person. Company B is the first Ohio National Guard unit to deploy since DeWine took over as the state's commander-in-chief after being sworn into office in mid-January.

"We appreciate your expertise. We appreciate what you're giving up — a year away from your family and friends," DeWine said. "Thank you for your willingness to serve our country, and thank you to your families who are also making tremendous sacrifices in honorable service to our nation."

This will be the unit's first deployment as a company in its 71-year history. The unit is trained to conduct field maintenance, damage assessment and repair, and to dispatch downed aircraft recovery teams for many types of military helicopters. Company B will be joined on the

deployment by detachments from the Massachusetts and Indiana National Guards, as well as the Army Reserve's 244th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade from Fort Dix, New Jersey.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Stephanie Beougher, public information officer, at 614-336-7369 or stephanie.k.beougher.nfg@mail.mil.

EDITOR'S NOTE: High-resolution photos to support this story are available on the [Defense Video Imagery Distribution Site \(DVIDS\)](#). Click on photos under the "Connected Media" section, located on the right-hand side of the page.

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