



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

Mike DeWine, Governor

Major General John C. Harris Jr., Adjutant General

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Top achievements of 2019: Cybersecurity a major focus of efforts

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Legislation creating a new cyber defense force and expansion of the state's ability to develop cybersecurity talent are among the top achievements this year, according to the Ohio Adjutant General's Department.

Gov. Mike DeWine signed Senate Bill 52 on Oct. 25 to create a volunteer [Ohio Cyber Reserve](#) (OhCR) made up of trained civilians. The OhCR will be a part of the state defense force under the command of the adjutant general, and will be available for the governor to assist eligible municipalities with cybersecurity vulnerabilities and provide recommendations to reduce cyber threats. The first teams are expected to be created by the end of January 2020.

The Ohio Cyber Range, a virtual cybersecurity training ground that opened in May 2018 with a demonstration site at the [University of Cincinnati](#), doubled in capacity in 2019. The ribbon was cut Dec. 9 on a second site at the [University of Akron](#). The range is available for cyber competitions; training; and as a testing environment for schools, governments, and businesses.

A cybersecurity threat to the city of Akron led the Ohio National Guard, under the authorization of Gov. DeWine, to activate an eight-member cyber team of Soldiers and Airmen for state active duty on Jan. 25. The team secured the city's network and core services against a ransomware attack.

"I am proud of what the more than 16,000 men and women of the Ohio National Guard have accomplished this year," Gov. DeWine said. "Whether it was a deployment halfway around the world or providing free health care to fellow Ohioans, Guard members have consistently provided selfless service to this great state and nation."

More than 900 Ohio Air and Army National Guard members deployed across the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Antarctica for overseas operations, and the U.S. capital region in support of the federal homeland defense mission.

"The homeland defense mission today encompasses a digital battlefield where an adversary can cause harm with the click of a mouse," said Maj. Gen. John C. Harris Jr., the Ohio adjutant general. "With the addition of the Ohio Cyber Reserve and the Ohio Cyber Range, Ohio is

taking an innovative approach to cybersecurity to enhance capabilities to secure critical information technology infrastructure from attack.”

Additional achievements during the year:

Training and deployments

- The Ohio National Guard co-hosted [Vigilant Guard 19-4 in August](#), the largest disaster response exercise in state history with more than 3,000 personnel from 90 organizations participating;
- Members of the Ohio Air and Army National Guard teamed with local medical personnel from Tuscarawas County to provide free health care services in August to more than 500 residents of the surrounding area as part of [GuardCare 2019](#); and
- Gov. DeWine activated members of the [Ohio Military Reserve](#) in August to assist with tornado cleanup efforts in southwestern Ohio.

State Partnership Program

- The Ohio National Guard celebrated 26 years of partnership with Hungary and 13 years of partnership with Serbia as part of the [State Partnership Program](#);
- In the 2019 training year, the Ohio National Guard sent about 600 Soldiers and Airmen to Hungary and Serbia to train with its partners and conducted roughly 25 engagements with each country, including [Breakthrough](#), [Platinum Wolf](#), and [Capstone](#); and
- [Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabić](#) visited Ohio in January and met with Gov. DeWine, Ohio National Guard, academic, and business leaders to promote mutual relations and discuss areas of potential economic cooperation.

New leadership

- [Maj. Gen. John C. Harris Jr.](#) was sworn in as Ohio’s 83rd adjutant general in January;
- [Col. David Johnson](#) became the commander of the 121st Air Refueling Wing in Columbus in January;
- Col. Matthew S. Woodruff became commander of the 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in Columbus in April;
- Col. Andrew Stone became commander of the 16th Engineer Brigade in Columbus in May;
- [Col. Francisco J. Dominguez](#) took command of the 251st Cyberspace Engineering Installation Group in Springfield in June;

- Col. Jeff Watkins became commander of the 73rd Troop Command in Columbus in July;
- Brig. Gen. Stephen L. Rhoades became commander of the Special Troops Command (Provisional) in July;
- [Col. Todd K. Thomas](#) took command of the 179th Airlift Wing in Mansfield during a change of command ceremony in August;
- Col. Mark Hatfield became commander of the 371st Sustainment Brigade in Springfield in October;
- [Col. Kimberly Fitzgerald](#) became the first female commander of the 178th Wing in Springfield in November;
- [Col. Michael DiDio](#) assumed command of the 180th Fighter Wing in Toledo during a ceremony in November; and
- Lt. Col. Bryan Moore became commander of the 123rd Air Control Squadron in Blue Ash in December.

Awards and recognition

- The Ohio National Guard earned the Ohio History Connection's [Preservation Merit Award](#) for historic renovations to the Hough Auditorium at Camp Perry Joint Training Center in Port Clinton;
- The 251st Cyberspace Engineering and Installation Group, located in Springfield, won the [Lt. Gen. Harold M. McClelland Award](#) for the unit's commitment and dedication in handling cyberspace operations and supporting missions;
- The Ohio Army National Guard Recruit Sustainment Program was named the nationwide [Recruit Sustainment Program of the Year](#);
- Ohio Army National Guard Capt. Bryan Andrews, Ohio Air National Guard Capt. Ashley Klase, and the 251st Cyberspace Engineering Installation Group received honors from the [National Guard Association of the United States](#); and
- The 179th Airlift Wing, 180th Fighter Wing, 123rd Air Control Squadron, 200th Red Horse Squadron, 220th Engineering Installation Squadron (EIS), 251st Cyberspace Engineering Installation Group (CEIG), and 269th Combat Communications Squadron (CBCS) were each honored with the [Air Force Outstanding Unit Award](#).

The adjutant general is a member of Gov. DeWine's cabinet and is responsible for the command and military readiness of the Ohio National Guard. The Ohio National Guard

consists of the Ohio Army National Guard, Ohio Air National Guard, Ohio Military Reserve, and Ohio Naval Militia, totaling more than 16,000 personnel.

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

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