



Ohio Adjutant General's Department

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A legacy of citizens volunteering to protect freedom

The Fourth of July celebrates the birth of our great nation when, on July 4, 1776, our forefathers issued the Declaration of Independence and advocated for a "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

Instrumental in the fight for independence were the minutemen of the colonial militia, the predecessor of the Colonial Army and today's National Guard. These Citizen-Warriors valiantly fought to ensure the formation of an independent state, and laid the foundation for the National Guard's role in service to our nation, state and communities.

The Ohio National Guard will celebrate its 230th birthday this month. Originally established as the Northwest Territory Militia on July 25, 1788, in Marietta, the Citizen-Warriors of the Ohio National Guard have responded when natural disasters have struck our communities, deployed across the world to defend our freedoms and protected the front lines during major conflicts.

One of those conflicts was the Korean War. This summer marks the 65th anniversary of the war's end. On July 27, 1953, the United States, the People's Republic of China, North Korea and South Korea agreed to an armistice, bringing an end to three years of war.

Many Ohio units were called up and were used to backfill active-duty organizations sent to Korea. Ohio's largest organization, the 37th Infantry Division, was federalized in 1952 and sent to Camp Polk, Louisiana.

However, only one Ohio Army National Guard unit was sent to the battlefields of Korea. The 987th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, based in Stark County and known as the "Red Bulls," distinguished themselves in support of various Army, Marine and Republic of Korea forces. The battalion earned campaign credit for seven campaigns and was decorated with the Meritorious Unit Commendation and two Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citations.

By the time the war was over, the 987th had suffered 13 deaths. Of the nearly 1.8 million Americans who served in the Korean War, about 36,000 died.

Today, the 134th Field Artillery Regiment continues the lineage of the 987th and proudly displays its Korean War campaign streamers.

As you celebrate our nation's 242nd birthday this Fourth of July, please take time to remember the brave men and women who, from the Revolutionary War to the Korean War to the present, volunteered to serve. These Citizen-Warriors have sacrificed to protect the freedoms we are celebrating.

Major General Mark E. Bartman
Ohio National Guard, The Adjutant General