



11 December 2007

On December 13th, 2007 the National Guard will celebrate its 371st Birthday.

On this date in 1636, The National Guard's four oldest regiments were organized in the Massachusetts Bay Colony militia. These are not only the Guard's oldest units; they are also the oldest units of the Armed Forces of the United States, and among the oldest military units in the world.

These first citizen soldiers banded together with their neighbors and their communities – for a common defense. They were the Minutemen who answered the call of liberty during the American Revolution and since have fought in all of our nation's wars.

Today, in the 1st decade of the 21st century, the fight for freedom and liberty continues - at home and abroad. The men and women of today's Army National Guard and Air National Guard continue to answer the call as they have done since those first regiments organized.

I am very proud of our long and distinguished history, but I am just as proud to lead the nearly 460,000 Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen of today's National Guard. Never in our 371-year history has the National Guard been asked to do more to defend our nation and respond to crises here at home.

While more than 50,000 Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen are deployed abroad fighting the Global War on Terror, some 8,500 of their fellow Guard members are answering the call of the Governors as our Nation's first military responders; saving lives during the wildfires in California, and during the floods in Northwest, all while helping protect our Southwest border.

The common thread that binds all generations of Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen is the very same thread that binds us to the future – America's National Guard is Always Ready, Always There.

H Steven Blum  
Lieutenant General, US Army  
Chief, National Guard Bureau