



NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

1636 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20301-1636

DEC 01 2017

To All Members of the Army and Air National Guard

On December 13, 2017, we celebrate the 381st Birthday of the National Guard. The National Guard has been serving and protecting our fellow citizens since 1636. From "alert and muster" in 1637, to the creation of the "Minuteman" in 1645 as our Nation's first "rapid response force," and through every major conflict in our history, we have relied on, and continue to rely on, the service of our National Guard.

This year marks the 100th Anniversary of U.S. entry into World War I. The National Guard provided the bulk of the initial U.S. forces through the summer of 1918, and was the vanguard of the American might that broke the stalemate and turned the War in Allied favor. Over 100,000 Guardsmen were killed or wounded. The war was also the birth of the National Guard in its modern form; as a dual use force, indispensable both at home and overseas.

Today, the National Guard is an operational partner, integrated with the active Army and Air Force, in meeting the sustained demands of our Nation's security and our local communities. Our soldiers and airmen actively serve at home, *and* overseas. Since 9/11, Guard members have deployed over 850,000 times, and today we have, on average, over 30,000 Guardsmen mobilized around the world in support of our warfighting commanders.

Although our Guard has evolved alongside our country, and our security environment has changed, our organizing principle of part-time Citizen Soldier and Airman remains constant as the core of our strength, and the foundation of who we are. This generation's Minutemen, as an indispensable Operational Force, continue to defend our Nation, and respond in the community during times of crisis. We will be *Always Ready...Always There!*

Happy Birthday, National Guard!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Lengyel", is positioned above the typed name and title.

Joseph L. Lengyel
General, U.S. Air Force
Chief, National Guard Bureau