



12 December 2008

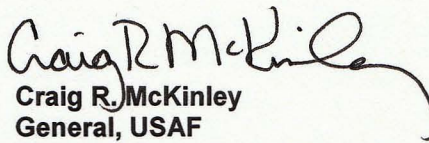
Chief, National Guard Bureau

Tomorrow the National Guard will celebrate its 372nd Birthday and I take great pride in thanking our more than 470,000 Citizen Soldiers and Airmen for their dedication and outstanding service to the Nation. Today's Guard men and women continue the commitment and selfless service of the first militiamen who banded together at a moment's notice to defend their towns and colonies.

An established operational force, the National Guard's duties range from emergency response and defending the homeland to protecting our Nation's freedom and that of countless others through our numerous, ongoing deployments around the world.

I want to extend my deep appreciation to the families and employers of our National Guard men and women; their support is unfailing and, without their sacrifice, our National Guard would not be the strong, agile and vigilant institution that is today.

As we look to the future, we renew our non-negotiable contract with America to answer the call. We pledge to continue our unwavering defense of our communities and our Nation.


Craig R. McKinley
General, USAF
Chief, National Guard Bureau