



The Citizen-Soldier: The National Guard's 375th birthday

"When we assumed the Soldier, we did not lay aside the Citizen."

--George Washington's June 26, 1775, letter to the Provincial Congress.

Born from humble beginnings in 1636, our National Guard has served admirably throughout our Nation's history -- in both peace and war. From the first muster in Salem, Massachusetts through today, the National Guard has been steadfast in its service to our Republic by defending us against foreign enemies and assisting in domestic emergencies.

Since 9-11, the National Guard has transformed from a strategic to an operational force. Our Citizen-Soldiers have developed unsurpassed tactical expertise as well as displayed amazing courage and commitment. Your capabilities and accomplishments have been essential to the success of our Army and our Nation.

As we look to the future, we recognize the challenges of this dynamic international security environment and know that the National Guard will continue to be a critical part of our Total Army. You will continue to play a prominent role in our Nation's security and your Citizen-Soldiers will remain a model of sacrifice and valor for all Americans.

On this occasion, we pay tribute to the courage, compassion, and sacrifice of all Citizen-Soldiers and their Families, past and present, whose dedication and commitment help make our Army the "Strength of our Nation." We commend all of you who have been "Always Ready, Always There." Happy Birthday!

Raymond F. Chandler III
Raymond F. Chandler III
Sergeant Major of the Army

Raymond T. Odierno
Raymond T. Odierno
General, United States Army

John M. McHugh
John M. McHugh
Secretary of the Army