



**National Guard Association of the
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General Mark A. Welsh III

As Delivered

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Thank you so much for having us. Frank, thank you and congratulations on your position and thanks for your incredible service really now as a 15 year TAG. Well done. And thank you for what that means to our country.

Thank you so much for letting me be here this morning. You have no idea how much advice I've gotten on what I should say this morning. [Laughter]. And what I should not say this morning. But you know the fact that so many people care is a pretty good starting point, so I'll come back to that thought.

But if I could get the first slide, I'd like to start by saying thank you to somebody. Last Friday General Craig McKinley hung it up. [Applause]. Forty years of service to our nation. The first Air Guardsman to wear four stars. The first National Guard Bureau Chief to be a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. That's a pretty good resume, folks. And you know, that last point's an important one because when the Congress made that appointment of Craig to be a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff over the objections of virtually every active duty leader it sent a very clear message that I think we need to keep in mind moving forward. That's that quite possibly the National Guard today is more important than it has been since you stood the watch at Concord. That's an important data point. [Applause].

Over the last ten years almost half a million Guardsmen have been to the war zone, and for the last four, Craig McKinley has led the charge.

Craig, you've been a role model of mine for a lot longer than you've been the Chief of the Guard Bureau. On behalf of all the Airmen who knew you growing up and followed you for 40 years now, thank you for your service. We are going to miss you. [Applause].

Next slide, please.

I can't say goodbye to Craig without saying hello to Frank and Pat. This is a great looking picture, isn't it? [Laughter]. This is Frank and I relaxing before our confirmation hearing in the Senate.

It doesn't matter how difficult the issues are that we're going to work together. Nothing will be as nerve-wracking as that was. [Laughter].

Frank, congratulations. Obviously a great, great soldier and leader. You and Pat are going to be a fantastic team. Congratulations and best of luck as you lead this incredible group of professionals over the next four years. [Applause].

It's a good thing for me to have Frank moving into the job because it means I keep a role model in the position. Unfortunately I am going to lose one in the building here in the not too distant future.



If I could have the next slide, please.

I'd also like to recognize Bud Wyatt and Nancy. In just a few short months Bud is going to hang it up as the Director of the Air National Guard.

Being the person responsible for developing and coordinating and implementing policy and programs for 106,000 Air Guardsmen in 88 flying wings and 200 or so geographically separated units all over the country and the U.S. territories is not an easy job. I suspect the Judge is thinking a courtroom looks pretty good right about now. Bud's had a pretty good run -- fighter pilot, squadron commander, wing commander, TAG, Director of the Air National Guard. Not too bad for a good old boy from Oklahoma. [Applause].

I think it's important that all of you know that Bud spent some of his most important formative years across the state line in the great republic of Texas, so we had a chance to mold him a little bit before he got into all this great work and so I claim Bud as a half-brother -- except during football season. [Laughter]. Bud, thank you for your service, and thank you for your incredible commitment to Airmen. Thanks for the life you and Nancy have shared with all of us. Best of luck to you. I know you're not going far and we'll continue to use your brain. Bud's been trying to teach me Guard 101 and we're moving on to 201 here shortly. He can't leave just yet because I still have some serious training required and he's the guy to give it.

In a few short months he'll be off to make more money. In the meantime, I'm going to cause him great pain. Bud, thank you for everything you've done to help me out. [Applause].

Next slide, please.

Why am I here? It's actually pretty simple. I've got two things I want to do. First, I don't want to tell you about your history, but I want to tell you how you look through my eyes for just a few minutes, and then I want to ask for your help.

This is my favorite Guardsman. When I look at organizations I don't see wiring diagrams and organizational charts and process flow and all those kind of things. I tend to see faces -- faces of people who are committed to doing the right thing. Faces of people who are willing to risk everything to protect what's important. People like Jim Duane.

Jim was born in the late 1800s. His father died when he was three years old. They lived in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. His dad was trying to rescue one of the neighbors during that famous flood that happened up there in those days and his father was killed, their home was destroyed, and Jim and his mom moved to New York City to kind of forget the pain.

He grew up in New York City. Got very interested in the arts. He became an actor at a young age. In fact when he was 18 he did two things. The first thing he did was go on Broadway for the first time. He was acting with a guy named Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., in a couple of productions. You may have heard of his son. When he turned 18 he also joined the New York Army National Guard.

A couple of years later Jim and his mom moved to Massachusetts, to Clinton, Massachusetts, and Jim transferred to K Company of the 101st Infantry based in Clinton, Massachusetts at the time, continuing to serve in the Army National Guard. When K Company deployed down to Mexico during



the Mexican Campaign in the early 19-teens, Jim was a young private. He earned promotions during that campaign so that by the time they came home after a relatively short deployment he was a first sergeant.

Shortly thereafter he left the Guard. He opened up a jewelry store and he went back to the stage, formed his own acting troop headquartered in Clinton, Massachusetts and performing in New York City.

In 1917, Jim got a cable, and because of his performance in the Guard the Army had invited him to come back and go to officer training school and become an officer in the Army National Guard. Jim accepted. He headed off to training, only to have that training interrupted when his unit was recalled to active duty and given orders to deploy to France in 1917. Jim requested permission to depart his officer training. He rejoined K Company and he deployed to France as an infantry private. Over the next 15 months he was promoted through every one of the enlisted ranks, eventually to 2nd lieutenant, then 1st lieutenant, then captain, then major, and at the end of World War I he was a major commanding two infantry battalions simultaneously. He was wounded three times. He was gassed in the trenches at Verdun, he never left the line.

He was famous for a couple of things. He was always the first one through the wire; he was always the last one back in; and he never left a young man from Clinton, Massachusetts on the battlefield, usually leading the night-time sorties to recover bodies and seriously wounded himself.

After the war he was actually asked to go back to France as part of the group that started the American Legion. Eventually the damage to his lungs from the gas got to him after the war. He had to move west. He settled in Phoenix, Arizona. During World War II he was the Chief of Police in Phoenix. He married. He had three children. His oldest son was the Vice President of General Electric. His middle child was a girl who worked for the FBI for 15 years, then ran the emergency room at Phoenix General Hospital for 35 years. His youngest daughter married a fighter pilot and they had a son and he got to speak in Reno, Nevada at the NGAUS Convention in 2012. [Applause]. Thank you.

As you can imagine, I'm pretty proud of my grandfather. I never met him. He died before I was born. But to me, he is the National Guard.

Next slide.

So is this. Everybody in this auditorium remembers what you were doing on the day we remember today, more than any other day. All of us know exactly what happened. All of us remember our reaction. Most Americans sat paralyzed either in their office or at home staring at their television in disbelief at what they were seeing. But a few Americans, a few very special people, did what they always do. They ran toward the carnage. They stepped into that chaos to defend American citizens and to protect the nation. Many of those people, as you know, were Guardsmen.

The Minuteman has been maybe the earliest symbol of American pride and possibly still the proudest symbol. But I heard a story this last week that somehow I had never heard, all of you have, and it reminded me -- slide please -- that the Minuteman isn't always a man. I know you have all heard the story of Major Heather Penney from the DC Air National Guard who sat at the end of the runway at Andrews Air Force Base with her flight lead Mark Sasseville, who by the way I believe is



here. Sass are you here? Will you stay standing up for a minute, Sass? I'll embarrass you for just a second.

The two of them sat at the end of the runway with a mission to down Flight 93. Now imagine what's going through your mind when you have no armament on your airplane, when your game plan is to ram an airplane full of American citizens because that's your duty. Sass was going to take the cockpit and "Lucky" Penney was going to take the tail. As the tower cleared them for takeoff they taxied out knowing this was their last sortie. By the way, Major Penney's father was a pilot for United Airlines. He flew 757s. I wonder if in the back of her mind was some thought about what flight was he on today. I can't even imagine that.

My family lived in Washington, DC at the time. Sass, to you and Heather on behalf of that family, thank you for what you were willing to do. [Applause].

Thanks for honoring them, folks.

This is the essence of the National Guard. But you do so much more than homeland defense.

Next slide.

These numbers aren't that important, but let me hit a couple of them for those of you who can't see them. I have trouble seeing lines between components of services because I believe on the Air side we have an Air Force. It has three components but we all are working together. We have to or we can't be successful. None of us can be. We have about 700,000 people in our Air Force. At any given time about 135 or 140,000 of those are supporting operations around the world in the types of missions you see in that box -- airlift, ISR, command and control, things they do from home station and from the road. About 70,000 of those Airmen are based overseas at any given time. Thousands more are responding to disasters or humanitarian assistance efforts within their states. About 30,000 Airmen are deployed to contingencies in the Middle East at any given time, and of that 30,000, 6,000 of them are always Air Guardsmen.

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Like Mike. I had the great privilege of watching Craig McKinley present the award for being one of the National Guard's of the United States' 12 Outstanding Airmen and Soldiers of the Year to Mike McCaffrey here a couple of weeks ago. He's a member of the Tactical Air Control party. He actually works with the Oregon Army National Guard with the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Over the last year he's done 200 outside-the-wire missions. He's responded to 180 requests for air. He's helped deliver 32,000 pounds of ordnance. And he and his Joint Terminal TAC controller teams have guaranteed that 240 or more enemy fighters don't fight again.

He's a pretty special guy. He's a great warrior. And as his picture shows, he understands something that the Guard seems to intuitively understand. It's not just the fighting that's important. It's the connection to the community. It's the partnership that allows nations and relationships to move forward.



Here you've got an Air National Guardsman working with an Army National Guard unit providing strategic and tactical military and diplomatic effects for the nation. To me, this is the National Guard.

Next slide.

So is this. This is the Air Operations Center at Ramstein Air Base in Germany. The old one. There's a beautiful new one. I was at Ramstein as the operations against Libya began. You probably remember there was a very short timeline between the United Nations Security Council Resolution and the actual beginning of activity. The Resolution was passed on the 17th of March. The first allied bombs dropped on the 19th of March. Admiral Sam Locklear who was leading the task force was very concerned about what he was seeing from his air component as the 17th of March approached. He was very frustrated because he wasn't seeing the options he thought he should be provided.

Our Air Operations Center was up and running as fast as they could go but they were missing a very critical piece because there is a habitual relationship between this Air Operation Center and members of the 217th Air Operations Group in Michigan and the 152nd Operations Group as well in Syracuse, New York.

On the 16th of March we called them and said it doesn't matter whether we have a resolution or not, we need you. We'll find the money. Come help. About 85 or 90 of those folks within 48 hours arrived at Ramstein on the evening of 17 March. Right after a VTC in which Admiral Locklear lost his cool a little bit and made it very clear he wasn't getting what he needed from his air component.

Those Guardsmen walked in the door, decided sleep was for the weak and went right to work. They brought with them the guts of our Strategy Division which is key to developing an air campaign and executing it successfully. Within 24 hours we presented another brief to Admiral Locklear that he called, "The best military briefing I've ever seen." Maybe it was a coincidence, but I don't think so. Bringing expertise that we don't have on the active force, bringing experience we sadly lack, filling a gap we can't fill no matter how much money we pull out of our pocket. To me, that's the National Guard. [Applause].

The day after that happened I flew to Morón Air Base in Spain to meet with the folks of what became known as the Calico Wing. The Calico Wing was the air refueling operation that provided 80 percent of the fuel to support Operation Odyssey Dawn and Operation Unified Protector. It was stood up in about 48 hours. I got there when Colonel Chad Manske who worked for me as the wing commander at RAF Mildenhall in the UK was turning the operation over to Brigadier General Roy Uptegraff from the Pennsylvania Air Guard. Roy and his team had just arrived as very quick volunteers to take over this operation. The Calico Wing ended up having six Guard units, six active duty units, and two Reserve units included and they got their name from those diverse colors sitting on their ramp.

It was a phenomenal organization and I took three things away from watching Roy Uptegraff take command of that organization and watching it perform over the next couple of months. First, was how rapidly a volunteer force can deploy and provide capability to the warfighter. The second was the incredible ability of a commander who had both the talent and the experience to do the job and the willingness to step forward and take command of that remarkable team -- at literally a moment's notice. And third was how smoothly our total force can operate together when we want to.



Next slide.

This is an Army Guardsman. Miguel Deynes Acevedo is from Puerto Rico. He has two young daughters. He comes from a very proud military family. One of his uncles fought in Germany in World War II with the infantry. Another one fought in Korea as a rifleman. A third fought as a Marine in Vietnam, eventually retiring as a sergeant major. Deynes himself fought in 2003 in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Now he works in a uniform store. Not really. This is a very special uniform store. For the last three years he's been the NCOIC of the Uniform Section at the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Office in Dover Air Base in Delaware. Deynes and his two Army Guard and one Marine and one Navy enlisted compatriots have a very sacred responsibility. Here's how he described it to me.

"Sir, my job is to make sure that every one of our fallen leaves this facility wearing a perfect uniform." And then he added, "When I say perfect, General, I mean perfect. We don't have work hours here, we just have perfect uniforms. If the remains don't allow the uniform to be worn, they're covered by one."

Deynes believes this is his final way to respect the fallen -- a way to honor his brothers and sisters. He believes it's respect to their families. He believes this is what the United States military is all about, and I believe him. [Applause].

To me, this is the National Guard.

Next slide.

You guys do all these things, I don't need to tell you about it. You do fight fires. By the way, thank you for the incredible effort this last year. You do airlift, you do aeromedical evacuation, you fly unmanned aircraft, you do chemical and biological response stuff, you do airlift and mobility stuff around the world, you do humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, you defend the nation in the air. You do all those things. You do it very, very well. You do a whole another set of things on the Army side of the Guard that you do equally well. And all of it costs money.

Next slide.

So there it is. [Laughter]. I love this slide.

Next slide.

When Frank and I went through a number of meetings with various Senators on the Senate Armed Services Committee before our confirmation hearings, which by the way was a very, very positive experience overall. Seriously, it was. And in the hearing itself it was made very clear to us that where we are today in terms of cooperation and communication on our resource issues was not acceptable to the Congress of the United States. There was no doubt in either of our minds about the message that we received.

So here's the bottom line as I see it. We have to communicate better. There has to be more transparency. We have to fight and argue and throw emotion on the table and debate the tough issues.



We have to include Title 32 state requirements at the front end of this process, not at the end. [Applause].

We have to understand that we are not going to agree on everything. States won't agree with each other on everything. But we've got to have the debate. We've got to understand that the only way -- the only way -- we can move forward successfully is together.

Next slide.

Many of you have been to the Air Force Memorial in Washington, D.C. I drove by it last week and I kind of started chuckling because I looked at it and I went, for the first time ever, hey look, it's the Air Force. It's not three airplanes. It's the Reserve, the Guard and the active duty. We're flying along in formation and all of a sudden we started to diverge. [Laughter]. But there's an important thing to notice from this slide. We're not outside visual range. We can still see each other. We know that we can't be as strong individually as we are together.

This has nothing to do with the Guard but it's kind of an interesting thought I had as I was looking at this when I drove by. My dad once flew for an aerobatic team called the United States Air Forces in Europe Acrojets, back in the mid-1950s. They were one of the forerunners of the Thunderbirds. The bomb burst pattern the Thunderbirds do now was actually done by a couple of other acrobatic teams before, some version of it. One of those teams was the Acrojets. The problem they had when they first implemented it was once they did that climb and split at the top they couldn't figure out how to get back together. So my dad and a guy named Roger Jellison who flew right wing, my dad flew left wing, sat down one day over a beer and they drew out the rejoin plan -- the objective. Because they had to try and do it in clear view of the crowd, and they had to do it smoothly, and they had to get back together as quickly as possible. Hmmm. They figured it out. So will we.

Next slide.

There's some forehead for you, huh? [Laughter]. That's uncle Bud Wyatt on the right and me in the middle and that's JJ Jackson, the new Chief of the Air Force Reserve on the other end. I like these guys. They're both smarter than I am. They've got a lot they can teach me. I will try hard not to be a speed bump for progress for them.

We're going to work together to solve this problem. We are going to solve the problem. And you guys need to be part of the solution. [Applause].

Bud, it strikes me, that's a pretty good looking group of guys here.

Next slide.

But I think the audience might see us more like this. [Laughter]. Yeah, there you go.

Actually, it doesn't really matter how you see us.

Next slide, please.



What's important is how you see this. Not the Purple Heart which is obviously important to all of us, but the banner itself. This is a very special banner. Folks in here from Mississippi will recognize it. This flies in back of the aeromedical evacuation C-17 that the Jackson Guard flies two times a week every week. From the desert to Germany, from Germany home.

Next slide.

Back in February I had the chance to fly in one of these missions. It's a pretty interesting collection of things and people. That banner is hanging on the right side of the picture there. If you look closely you can see it.

On this particular flight I believe there were 17 patients. Seven of them were wounded warriors and one of them was critically wounded and had a critical care team assigned to him. A lot of other patients on there too -- children, spouses, active duty members from three different services. The guy in the Ohio State jacket there, the black and red jacket you can see barely standing in the middle there, it's hard to see from where you are I know, but he's a young Airman, a staff sergeant, a fuels guy from RAF Mildenhall in the UK. He had just been diagnosed with cancer and he was on his way to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base to receive the care he needed to try and beat that disease. A month after we took this picture, he died. But this crew took him home so he spent his last month near his family.

Next slide.

This is the aeromedical squadron team on that flight. They're Reservists from Niagara Falls, New York. As you look at the picture, the guy on your right is Volker. He's a paramedic. Next to him, the ladies in front are Jean and Janine. Jean is an ER nurse, Janine is an ICU nurse. Behind them is Paul. Paul's a nurse practitioner. To his right is Brian. Brian's a psychiatric nurse. The young guy with the dark hair, second from the left, is Scott. He's an EMT. The guy on the end is Matt. He's a college student. Once a quarter for seven days they bring broken warriors home.

Next slide.

The critical care team on that flight was Dr. Sean McDermott who's on the right of your screen. He's a cardiopulmonary doc. Next to him is a young lady named Janie. Janie is a respiratory therapist. Next to her is Christine. Christine is an ER nurse who also doubles as an ICU nurse because she's qualified in both. They were caring for the critically wounded soldier who was on that flight. The guy on your left is just a dumpy old wannabe, basking in their glory.

Next slide.

I got to see them in action during the middle of that flight because somewhere over the North Atlantic this young guy's mother started to have a problem. She had a brain tumor. They were taking her home for treatment that she badly needed. He and his five year old brother were on the airplane with their dad. Somewhere in the middle of the flight his mom had a stroke. His dad was trying to hold her hand while the medical team worked on her. While I was saving his blanket from that tootsie roll pop, that medical team was saving his mother's life.

Next slide.



The guys in the front of the airplane were pushing it up to get them to the nearest medical center as fast as they could. That's Scott Ditto on the right, the aircraft commander. Ed Walsh next to him. On the far end is JP Coon. Then the loadmaster was Master Sergeant John Blakeney. There was one other loadmaster. His name was Mike Holbrooks. Mike is part Indian. He didn't want his picture taken because he's afraid his soul would escape. He's dead serious about it. He was a loadmaster, he could have hurt me, so we let him go. [Laughter].

Next slide.

This is what our total force does. This and so much more. All over the world today total force integration is real. Those people who are operating at the front end of the business are looking back over their shoulder at those of us back here going, 'Fix this problem and let us do our work.' And they're right. We need to do that. We have got to understand, we have got to understand that the only way to move forward is together. I'm committed to that. I need your help. These people deserve it.

Ladies and gentlemen, that's all I've got to say except I'm honored to be here and I'd be glad to answer any questions you have. [Applause].