A Message From The President
MG Joseph P. O’Leary (Ret)

A Friend sent me an e-mail recently, dated 13Dec 2011, announcing "Today is the 375th Birthday of the US Army National Guard", formed in Salem, MA in 1636, it is the oldest branch of the country's military. 139 years older than the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps and 311 years older than the Air Force. The Army National Guard has participated in every American war or conflict since the Pequot War of 1637. Recently, Defense secretary Leon E. Panetta addressed the National Guards Joint Senior Leadership conference in Maryland. He pointed out the relationship between the active and reserve components has fundamentally changed in the past 10 years. "All told, more than 370,000 guardsmen have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan since 2001 many of them multiple times. It is simple, and widely recognized reality that we could not have sustained this war effort without the service and contributions of our Guardsmen, more than 670 of whom have paid the ultimate price for their service." All US troops will be out of Iraq by the end of the year, Panetta said, and Afghan Security Forces will take over all security in Afghanistan by the end of 2014. We need to be thoughtful and careful in how we manage the Reserve Components, particularly because it coincides with a time of growing fiscal constraints at home that require tough decisions about Force size and capabilities based on clear strategic priorities he said.

This does not mean that the Active and Reserve components should go back to the old system. The military must not forget the lessons learned about the Guards central role and relevance in the military of the 21st century, Panetta said. "A decade of war has honed the Guard into an effective, lethal fighting force, and it would be a tremendous mistake, in my view, to put that capability back on the shelf," he said. Strong, positive words from the Secretary of Defense concerning the Reserve Components especially in view of the growing fiscal contraints at home which includes the Pentagon, where discussions are ongoing about the future.

Obituaries

LTG (Ret) Robert E. Gray passed away on 23 Nov 2011. He was the 35th Sig Bde Commander who supported the 187th Sig Bde and 101st Sig Bn exercises "Go Between Circuits" at Fort Bragg. He was a good friend of the Brigade and the Battalion.
The 101st ESB hosted their annual Signal Ball at the Polish American Center in Yonkers on DEC 3rd 2011. It was a beautiful event attended by about 200 Signal Soliders and their Guests. SFC Stewart, MAJ Jones, SSG O'Neil, and SGM Lippi take a minute for a photo at the festive event.

Some of the members of the Liberty Chapter who were also in attendance were MG(R) O'Leary, NY Guard MAJ Felicia Lecce, LTC Kim Farrier and BG(R) Paul Suchanyc and his wife Mary. This was a wonderful event to bring together family members and guests of the Battalion prior to their anticipated deployment in 2012. Next year, the goal is to have a Signal Ball in Theatre with family members and guests in attendance from the Yonkers location if possible.

The Liberty Chapter met at the Polish Center in October and enjoyed a chance meeting with SGT Vincent R. Marchionni who was a member of the 101st Signal Battalion when it was activated for the 1961 Berlin Crisis. Pictured left is SGT Vincent Marchionni with his former 1SGT/CSM (R) Edward D'Ana and MG(R) Joseph O'Leary.
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