

Testimony

**Adjutant General Nomination Confirmation Hearing
Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committees
June 28, 2016**

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Brigadier General Anthony J. Carrelli

Acting Adjutant General

Good morning, Chairmen Vulakovich and Costa, Members of the Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee. Thank you Senator Greenleaf for taking the time to be here this morning and your kind introduction. I am grateful for Governor Wolf's nomination and the strong support I have received throughout this process from both chambers of the General Assembly to expedite this proceeding.

I am humbled by everyone in attendance especially our Veterans, our leaders of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), and the Pennsylvania National Guard (PNG) as well as the Civil Air Patrol. Your support is appreciated. I especially want to thank my wife Paula for being here. She and my two daughters are the reason I am able to appear before you today. I want to thank my family and recognize all of our families for the support, love, and sacrifice they give, allowing us the opportunity to serve.

The day after Governor Wolf made me the Acting Adjutant General, I assembled the DMVA and PNG staff and let them know that we would continue to press forward and stay focused on our missions. Since that time, we have remained busy; caring for our Veterans, responding to the needs of our citizens on the turnpike during winter storm Jonas, supporting the nation's largest National Special Security Event with the Pope's visit in Philadelphia, planning for the transition of the 55th Armored Brigade Combat Team to an Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (MEB), fighting the Army's Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI), receiving our returning Soldiers and Airmen back to Pennsylvania and to their families and sending others to support contingency operations all over the world. We have not slowed, waived or faltered and will continue to move forward.

If confirmed as the next Adjutant General, I am not anticipating any overarching changes. We will work to remain efficient and effective in achieving success in our two primary missions: Caring for and supporting our Veterans and ensuring the Pennsylvania National Guard is equipped, trained and led to win our national wars, build global partnerships and safeguard our homeland.

Providing resources and assistance to Pennsylvania Veterans and their families, we do this by providing quality care for aging and disabled Veterans. I am happy to report that all six State Veteran Homes are fully accredited. We will continue to improve and make any necessary changes to ensure high standards of care and dignified treatment are upheld. I am committed to the unique and critical services our Homes provide our Veterans who have given so much. Our Veteran outreach priority is to ensure that all eligible Pennsylvania Veterans receive the appropriate services and benefits. To this end, we have created and are marketing a Pennsylvania Veterans' registry, which will help identify our Veterans needs and link them to services to meet them. We must always remember that Veterans received promises through service to the nation and the federal government is accountable for these benefits, we must hold them to task. The state Veteran programs we administer are statutorily mandated and do not address the changing needs. I am interested in exploring opportunities to empower our partners and Veteran Services Organizations to develop agile and flexible programs that identify and address emerging Veteran needs.

Preparing the Pennsylvania National Guard to fulfill the three missions of the National Guard. The Guard Fights America's Wars by performing worldwide combat and combat support operations providing global reach and the projection of U.S. military power in support of

national objectives. Soldiers and Airmen are the backbone of our fighting force, recruiting and retaining the best of the Commonwealth is essential to victory. We are fortunate for the support of the Governor and the General Assembly for the Pennsylvania National Guard Education Assistance program. This program is the envy of other states and helps Pennsylvania exceed our authorized strength, compete with other states for emerging missions, (most recently a cyber-security mission) while providing technical skills, experience and leadership through their military obligation. Our units are better trained, equipped and more experienced than ever seen in our history. The Army transformation of the 55th Armored Brigade Combat Team to the Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (MEB) will take some time but we will focus on resourcing these units to achieve personnel and equipment readiness, training and being ready to deploy when needed. Overall, the Pennsylvania National Guard will continue to seek out opportunities to train, support and fight on behalf of our nation. We build global partnerships to strengthen ties with allies and become a stronger force in alliance. For example, our military partnership with Lithuania is as strong as ever. I see opportunities to expand this partnership as we have in the public safety areas into economic partnership and other areas of mutual interest.

We protect the homeland, at the command of the governor, by providing trained personnel to support state and local authorities in times of natural disaster or civil strife. We have proven repeatedly our ability to respond during natural disasters and major events. We do big responses very well; however, there are times when a large response is not needed but other National Guard resources and support may be appropriate to assist local communities. We will begin focusing on these small capabilities based opportunities to explore how we can integrate this into our Military Support to Civilian Authorities all hazards plan.

I want to thank the Veteran Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today and the incredible support you provide our Military members, Veterans and their families. I appreciate your consideration and support in the confirmation process. I look forward to answering any of the committee's questions.