

Senator Lisa Baker  
Remarks Honoring the National Guard  
March 10, 2009

We rightfully and respectfully honor a variety of individuals and groups for their dedicated service and unique contributions, to their community, to our Commonwealth, and often to our country.

Even in this universe of the talented and the worthy, there is something exceptional about the Pennsylvania National Guard. Theirs is a proud history, going where they are called, when they are called, whether thrown into combat zones, or into cleaning up after natural or man-made disasters.

As is true with so many of our signature institutions, Benjamin Franklin was the organizing force behind the militia, the forerunner of the Guard. Formed originally to defend against the Indians on the frontier, they now fight against terrorism around the globe.

Today, Pennsylvania's National Guard units are highly trained, heavily deployed, and hugely courageous.

The men and women of the Guard display the kind of commitment that fills us with awe and admiration.

They are fully aware of the risks and the sacrifices involved. These citizen soldiers make hard choices – to leave behind spouses, children, parents, jobs, the comforts of home – to protect us and to defend the principles of democracy.

This is self sacrifice, and courage, of a very profound sort. In many ways, they are the best among us. We are proud of who they are. We respect them for what they do. We are grateful for all the good they accomplish.

Such a record does not come without cost. Since 9/11, the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have claimed 43 guardsmen and women in duty. We remember and memorialize these individuals. Our hearts go out to those they leave behind, the families who loved them, and the soldiers who served alongside them. We acknowledge too, our obligation to those who suffer grievous injury in our service.

Today, tomorrow, and every day, we honor the Pennsylvania National Guard for their service, we give thanks for their quality and character, and we pray for their safety.

The quality of the Guard is a reflection of the strong leadership of the Guard. Therefore, it is fitting on National Guard Day, and especially during Women's History Month, that we hear from Major General Jessica Wright – the first woman to hold the important post of Adjutant General of Pennsylvania.

General Wright has attained an impressive record of accomplishments, earned the respect of her fellow soldiers, and served Pennsylvania's veterans community with distinction.

It is my honor and privilege to present the Adjutant General of Pennsylvania Major General Jessica L. Wright.