



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 4, 2024

MEDIA CONTACTS: Joseph Butera, DMVA, jobutera@pa.gov

DMVA Hosts Guard-Veterans Day at the Capitol, Highlighting it's Past, Present and Future

Special Guest Was a Surviving Veteran Who Fought in the Battle of the Bulge

Anncville, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) hosted a Guard and Veterans Day event at the state capitol, showcasing its dual mission of supporting the Pennsylvania National Guard and Pennsylvania veterans.

The PNG is the nation's third largest Guard with approximately 18,000 members, while Pennsylvania is home to more than 700,000 veterans, the fourth largest veteran population in the country.

"Together we serve! On display today was an example of how our past, present, and future members do just that," said **Maj. Gen. Mark Schindler, Pennsylvania's adjutant general and head of the DMVA**. "Supporting Pennsylvania servicemembers, veterans and their families is a top-priority for this department. I am thankful to everyone who worked to make this event informative, interactive, and fun for the public."

The day featured a special guest: Benjamin Melvin Berry (Quartermaster Corps 3rd US Army) of Philadelphia who fought in the Battle of the Bulge: Berry participated in an enlistment ceremony for 20 recruits.

The WWII veteran talked about the value of freedom and how he is looking forward to the 80th anniversary of the anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge in December. The Battle of the Bulge was the last major German offensive campaign on the Western Front during World War II.

The PNG played a significant role during the Battle of the Bulge. Battered and recently reconstituted from the Battle of the Hurtgen Forest, the 28th Infantry Division bore the brunt of the German attack, and successfully delayed the oncoming German 5th Panzer Army. This allowed Allied forces to reposition and set the framework for the allied victory that hastened the end of World War II.

2024 is a big year for historic military anniversaries. June 6 will mark the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings along the Normandy coast during World War II. This event ultimately led to the liberation of Europe.

Guard-Veterans Day also included table-top displays featuring military uniforms, medical equipment and weapons, demonstrating how the PNG and DMVA work to serve our nation,

commonwealth, veterans and community partners. Army and Air Force vehicles, including Humvees, jeeps, all-terrain vehicles and a cargo truck, were on display outside of the capitol for visitors to enjoy.

With a combined state and federal budget of over \$1.1 billion, DMVA is one of Pennsylvania's top 10 employers with approximately 2,800 commonwealth employees and 17,000 National Guard members/federal employees throughout the commonwealth. Our economic impact exceeds \$1.5 billion.

To learn more about the DMVA, visit www.dmva.pa.gov or follow us at www.facebook.com/padmva or www.twitter.com/padmva.

To learn more about the PNG, visit www.pa.ng.mil or follow us at www.facebook.com/PANationalGuard or www.twitter.com/PANationalGuard

#