

# OHIO NATIONAL GUARD

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## Press Release

### Ohio Air National Guard increases unit size and capability

COLUMBUS, Ohio - The Ohio Air National Guard is increasing the state's engineering capabilities with the addition of a Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers (RED HORSE) unit at the Mansfield-based 179th Airlift Wing.

Part of the Air Force Total Force Integration initiatives, the new unit will augment the current Port Clinton-based 200th RED HORSE, adding about 200 Airmen to the unit and about 150 new positions at the Mansfield location.

The additional mission will mean about \$11 million in construction at the Mansfield base, once slated to close under the Base Realignment and Closure process, said Wing Commander Col. Mark L. Stephens. The 179th has also been identified as the future home of a wing of Joint Cargo Aircraft.

"This truly shows the Air Force's commitment to keep the Air National Guard involved in future missions," said Maj. Gen. Harry "A.J." W. Feucht, Jr. "And we owe a great deal of thanks to the leadership and personnel at the 179th whose hard work and great skills justified reversal of the original BRAC recommendation to close the base. We also owe thanks to former Congressman Mike Oxley, Congressman Dave Hobson, former Senator Mike DeWine and Senator George Voinovich, all of whom worked hard to ensure that base stayed open and received new missions."

Experienced Ohio Airmen will train the new RED HORSE members on missions such as providing damage/requirements assessment, heavy damage repair, bare-base development, and heavy construction operations including aircraft parking ramps and munitions pads.

Lt. Gen. H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, is encouraged by this development and will continue to ensure that the Air National Guard remains an important partner in the nation's defense.

"This move is one of many developments showing the Air Force is committed to involving the Air National Guard in all missions," he said.

"We're excited not only for the Mansfield community, but also for the state of Ohio because this puts us in a much better position to respond to incidents such as natural disasters or terrorist attacks," Stephens said.

“In a situation like Hurricane Katrina, our aircraft enable us to get assets on the ground quickly. They help us exploit those capabilities.”

The increase at Mansfield-Lahm Airport also allows the Ohio Governor to maintain critical skills to meet homeland defense and homeland security missions.

Several Ohio Army National Guard and Army Reserve units are also scheduled to be relocated to the Mansfield air base, bringing an additional \$20 million or more of federal military construction money to the Mansfield area.

“We’re very excited about this development,” said Maj. Gen. Gregory L. Wayt, Ohio’s adjutant general. “It’s great for the Mansfield community and great for the unit. And it all ties into a very bright future with both Air and Army Guard and Reserves, making the base very much a joint operation.”

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Mark Wayda at 614-336-7174 or cell at 614-496-3807. Please visit the Ohio National Guard website at [www.ohionationalguard.com](http://www.ohionationalguard.com) for current news stories.