The National Guard, the oldest component of the Armed Forces of the United States and one of the nation's longest-enduring institutions, will celebrate its 372nd birthday on December 13, 2008. The National Guard traces its history back to the earliest English colonies in North America. Responsible for their own defense, the colonists drew on English military tradition and organized their able-bodied male citizens into militias.

Today, these devoted citizen-soldiers are tremendous partners in helping to secure the homeland. The men and women of the National Guard have recently assisted at risk youth with job training, provided care for wounded warriors, tested missle defense systems, and commanded active-duty forces in Iraq.

For more information on the National Guard please click here .