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★
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Brigadier General
Adjutant General

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Governor Murphy Promotes The Adjutant General of New Jersey

Lawrenceville—U.S. Air Force Col. Yvonne L. Mays, The Adjutant General of New Jersey and Commissioner for Veterans Affairs, was today promoted to the rank of brigadier general in a ceremony officiated by Governor Philip D. Murphy.

“Brigadier General Mays is an exemplary leader who has served our country with honor for more than four decades,” said Governor Murphy. “Our Garden State heroes are in the best possible hands with her at the helm of DMAVA.”

“Today, the National Guard faces unprecedented challenges, but we are not alone, nor is this the first time we have encountered such difficulties,” said Brig. Gen. Mays, addressing more than 500 supporters and well-wishers in attendance from the New Jersey Legislature, National Guard, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and Veterans Memorial Homes. “Our legacy is built on the foundation laid by the leaders present in this room. Throughout my tenure, I will take full responsibility for continuing and enhancing the excellent work done by these remarkable Americans.”

Governor Murphy selected Brig. Gen. Mays to serve as The Adjutant General on June 27, 2024. She was confirmed by the New Jersey Senate on October 28, 2024.

At today’s ceremony, Governor Murphy and Brig. Gen. Mays’ husband Walter pinned the stars on her shoulders. The organization’s two senior enlisted advisors, State Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Leonard and State Command Chief Master Sgt. Wayne Miller unfurled her blue Air Force one-star flag for the first time, symbolizing her leadership.

Then, in her first act as general officer, Brig. Gen. Mays awarded state service medals to nearly a dozen World War II Veterans from the department’s three Veterans Memorial Homes.

“It is only fitting that our World War II heroes form a part of this ceremony, as their service to our nation formed so much of our organization’s history and lineage,” Brig. Gen. Mays said. “And as we speak, more than 1,500 Soldiers of the 44th Infantry

Brigade Combat Team are preparing for redeployment home, back to their families and most in time for the holiday season. Additionally, nearly 700 more Soldiers and Airmen from the 42nd Regional Support Group, 177th Fighter Wing, and 108th Wing await their turn in 2025 to relieve other units which remain downrange.”

Brig. Gen. Mays enlisted in the Air Force in August 1983, supported Operation Just Cause and deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm.

Brig. Gen. Mays earned her commission from the Palmetto Military Academy, Fort Jackson, South Carolina, in 1999 and subsequently began her New Jersey Air National Guard career as the Director of Personnel and Commander of the Mission Support Flight, 177th Fighter Wing, Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey.

In 2003, Brig. Gen. Mays went on to be the 177th Fighter Wing Executive Officer before becoming the Deputy Chief of Staff, New Jersey Air National Guard in 2008. In 2009, she was appointed as the Public Affairs Officer for the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. In 2010, she was assigned as Bilateral Affairs Officer to the New Jersey National Guard’s first State Partnership Program with the Republic of Albania, later becoming the New Jersey National Guard’s State Partnership Program Manager. Upon her return from Albania in 2011, Brig. Gen. Mays served in numerous special staff roles to The Adjutant General. She supported Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom, and served in multiple senior roles including Director of Staff and Deputy Joint Task Force Commander supporting New Jersey’s COVID-19 Response Operations.

Prior to selection for her current position, Brig. Gen. Mays served as the Deputy Adjutant General of New Jersey where she was the principal advisor to The Adjutant General and Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs on all matters concerning military readiness, mobilizations, homeland security, defense support to civil authorities, human resources, logistics, training, and financial management. The duties include the supervision and management of the Department’s 3,200 full-time State and Federal employees, and more than 30 armories and associated properties.

As the 34th Adjutant General of New Jersey and Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Brig. Gen. Mays commands the more than 8,400 Soldiers and Airmen of the New Jersey National Guard and leads, directs, and manages the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs in the execution of federal and state missions. In addition, she manages all state veterans’ programs, commissions, and facilities in New Jersey.

Brig. Gen. Mays is the first Black woman and the third Air Force officer to lead the New Jersey National Guard since the passage of the Militia Act by the first New Jersey General Assembly in 1668. She succeeds Maj. Gen. Lisa J. Hou, the first Asian-American woman to serve as The Adjutant General of New Jersey.

Brig. Gen. Mays resides in Lumberton Township in Burlington County.