

KUTZTOWN RECRUITING STATION DEDICATION

Good afternoon ... I would like to personally thank Lt. Colonel Richon and his Public Affairs Specialist ... Mr. Bill Irwin ... for the invitation to be a part of the dedication of this United States Army Recruiting Station in Kutztown.

I am indeed honored to be amongst your ranks here today ... as we cut the ribbon on a facility which will indeed be another intricate component of the United States Army's Harrisburg Recruiting Battalion Command. (PAUSE) A command which, I was quite impressed to learn ... is comprised of five recruiting companies with 33 recruiting stations. As well, the Harrisburg recruiting battalion is responsible for all Army recruiting efforts in 36 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties.

With all of this in mind, ... today's dedication of this new facility indeed reaffirms the Harrisburg Recruiting Battalion's commitment to success ... and further signifies this command's commitment to do their very best in providing our armed forces with Pennsylvania's best and brightest sons and daughters.

This task, though, ... is not always easy. As Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, ... I recently attended a meeting in Washington, D.C. with our Pennsylvania Congressional delegation. At this meeting, a portion of the agenda was oriented toward our country's national defense. (PAUSE) It was pointed out by Congressman Curt Weldon that current enlistment figures are somewhat lower than in previous years.

In short, ... fewer of our younger citizens, for various reasons, are answering the call to serve their country.

Therefore, the challenges that lie ahead for Station Commander, Sgt. 1st Class Melvin Mathews and Staff Sgt. Thomas Hammond will be formidable ... but nonetheless ... not insurmountable.

The establishment of this recruitment center, today, ... will no doubt greatly enhance the United States Army's ability to showcase the many great benefits our military has to offer our youth, ... as well as a chance to educate the community on the proud and rich history the United States Army has accrued over the past 225 years. (PAUSE) I truly wish you Godspeed in the important work you have "cut out" for you.

Once again, thank you for allowing me to be a part of this special occasion today, ... and I would like to be the first one to say ... Sgt. 1st Class Mathews, ... Staff Sgt. Hammond, ... “Welcome to the Neighborhood.”

On behalf of myself and the entire Pennsylvania House of Representatives, I would also like to congratulate the United States Army on its forthcoming 225th anniversary this summer.

Through the future efforts of this recruiting station in Kutztown, ... we can be assured the U.S. Army will indeed achieve further success, well into the 21st century. Success ... which will be achieved, in part, by our local sons and daughters of Kutztown ... and the surrounding area.

Thank you.