

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Departure of Major General Lisa J. Hou and Intent to Nominate Colonel Yvonne L. Mays as Next Adjutant General and Commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

06/27/2024

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today announced his intent to nominate Colonel Yvonne L. Mays as the next Adjutant General and Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA) following the departure of Major General Lisa J. Hou, D.O., who has accepted a new assignment as the Director of the Office of the Joint Surgeon General, National Guard Bureau, effective July 1st, 2024. Beginning July 1st, Colonel Mays will serve as Acting Adjutant General and Acting Commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs pending confirmation by the Senate. She will be the first Black woman to lead the New Jersey National Guard in the state's history.

"Leading her teams through some of the most demanding times in our history, Major General Hou demonstrated an unwavering and unrelenting commitment to serving the people of New Jersey. I am deeply grateful for her years of service," said **Governor Murphy**. "Colonel Mays' depth of experience over 40 years in service to our state and nation, and her firsthand knowledge of the day-to-day operations of the New Jersey National Guard and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, make her an exceptional candidate for this position. I am confident that she will continue to support our efforts to serve our Garden State heroes."

Since Major General Hou assumed her duties in October 2020, more than 3,400 Soldiers and 1,400 Airmen have deployed overseas or mobilized domestically, including to support New Jersey testing sites and vaccine distributions during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Major General Hou also led the successful effort to establish a veterans service office in each of the state's 21 counties.

Currently, approximately 1,500 New Jersey Army National Guard Soldiers are deployed to the Middle East. More than 200 Soldiers and Airmen are mobilized to support domestic missions ranging from cybersecurity to securing America's Southwest border.

"This has been the honor of my professional life," said **Major General Hou**. "I am proud of the dedicated service of the Soldiers and Airmen of the New Jersey National Guard and the devoted civilian staff of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs."

"This is a time of transformation for the New Jersey National Guard and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and we are ready to meet the challenge," said **Colonel Mays**. "Together, we will continue the critical work of defending our state and nation and supporting Garden State heroes through robust state-delivered veterans benefits, programs, and services."

Colonel Mays enlisted in the Air Force in 1983, beginning a long, decorated career in the armed forces. Prior to commissioning, while on active duty, Colonel Mays participated in numerous operations, including Operation Just Cause, and deployed in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, she provided active duty support to Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom.

Colonel Mays most recently served as the Deputy Adjutant General of New Jersey, the Assistant Adjutant General, and Chief of Staff of the New Jersey Air National Guard. As Deputy Adjutant General, she acted as 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. As Assistant Adjutant General of the New Jersey Air National Guard, she commanded two flying wings performing fighter and air refueling missions, as well as oversaw the development and training of over 2,400 Airmen.

As the 34th Adjutant General of New Jersey, Colonel Mays will be the first Black woman, second 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 resides in Lumberton Township in Burlington County.

For a photo of Colonel Mays, click [here \(https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20240626/cb/c2/98/30/45bf3a1f7fd127f55fbffe98/231227-Z-AL508-1005.jpg\)](https://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20240626/cb/c2/98/30/45bf3a1f7fd127f55fbffe98/231227-Z-AL508-1005.jpg).

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Economy & Jobs (</governor/initiatives/#Economy>)
Education (</governor/initiatives/#Education>)
Environment (</governor/initiatives/#Environment>)
Health (</governor/initiatives/#Health>)
Law & Justice (</governor/initiatives/#Justice>)
Transportation (</governor/initiatives/#Transportation>)

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