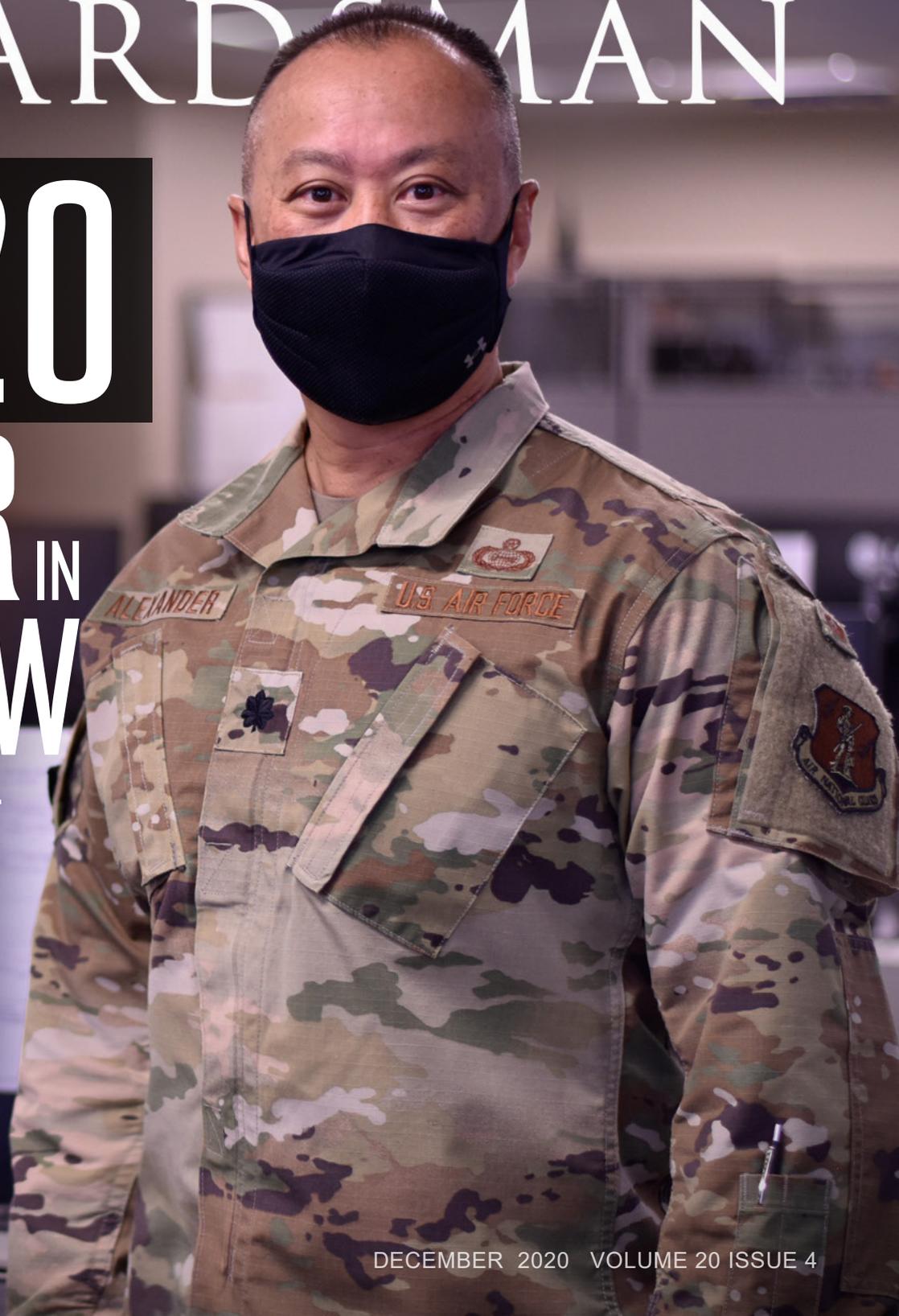


# TENNESSEE GUARDSMAN

# 2020

# YEAR IN REVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT  
AN INCREDIBLY  
ACTIVE YEAR FOR  
THE TENNESSEE  
NATIONAL GUARD



## ■ FROM THE EDITOR

LT. COL. DARRIN HAAS  
MANAGING EDITOR

To say that the Tennessee National Guard has been busy this year is a gross understatement. Since tornadoes hit Middle Tennessee in early March, the Tennessee National Guard has removed tornado debris, tested over 700,000 Tennesseans for COVID-19, supported law enforcement during civil unrest, and helped during the presidential debates and election. We did this, and many other missions, as we maintained readiness, continued to train, and deployed overseas and along the U.S.-Mexico border. It has been a historic response and it is not over yet.

In this issue of the *Tennessee Guardsman*, our staff continues to report on all the hard work you have done. From deployments to training and everything in between, we tried to cover the stories that showed you at your best. In the last few months the 168th Military Police Battalion, the 194th Engineer Brigade, and Det. 1, Company C, of the 2-135th Aviation Regiment all returned from highly successful overseas deployments in a COVID-19 environment. Other units, like the 1129th Finance Detachment, 913th Engineer Company, 269th Military Police Company, and Company C with the 2-151st Aviation Regiment have deployed throughout the world in the midst of a global pandemic. Selfless service does not begin to describe these units.

While Soldiers and Airmen were training and mobilizing, the state was still fighting against COVID-19 and testing thousands of Tennesseans daily. It has been a massive undertaking that has involved hundreds of guardsmen across the state. In our feature article for this issue, Staff Sgt. Tim Cordeiro and Capt. Kealy Moriarty looks at all that we have accomplished this year and interviews one of the key players who manages all of our domestic responses, Lt. Col. Guy Alexander, the Executive Officer for the Joint Adaptive Battle Staff. Alexander and the JABS have been the brain and nerve center for everything we have done and are still managing all of our stateside missions. The JABS activated in March when the tornadoes hit and have been working non-stop since with no sign of slowing down.

Lastly, in our previous issue, we looked back to 1968 to see how the Tennessee National Guard responded to civil unrest during the Memphis sanitation strikes followed by the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It was one of our state's largest mobilizations for civil support in our history, with more than 8,200 guardsmen on State Active Duty. During the crisis, one of our key leaders was Brig. Gen. Hugh Mott who commanded Task Force Bravo in Nashville, a force of more than 3,300 guardsmen. Mott kept the peace during the unrest and protected firefighters and law enforcement. He heroically led guardsmen throughout the entire crisis and would later become Tennessee's 68th Adjutant General. Our Joint Force Headquarters bears his name. However, there is so much more to his story as you will see in our article about his role in World War II at the battle of Remagen Bridge.

As Col. Jason Glass, Assistant Adjutant General, Air, refers to in his *Letter from Leadership*, the Soldiers and Airmen of the Tennessee National Guard are masters of the unpredictable, and we hope that the stories in this issue demonstrate that.



ON THE COVER: Lt. Col. Guy Alexander in the Tennessee National Guard's Joint Emergency Operations Center. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Cordeiro)



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COL. JASON W. GLASS



## You were prepared to step in when your state needed you

We hear the word hero used a lot in our nation. Whether to describe a police officer rescuing a fellow citizen, a soldier performing courageously under fire, or a nurse who volunteers to work back-to-back shifts during a pandemic; there are heroes all around us. The term has different meanings to different people, but most can agree that a hero has personal qualities we should honor and replicate.

Hero originates for the Greek *hērōs*, which means protector or defender. The Greeks believed heroism was not some mysterious inner virtue only a few people possessed. Instead, it is a collection of skills any man or woman can master and use. According to Christopher McDougall in *Natural Born Heroes*, the art of the hero “was a multidisciplinary endeavor devoted to optimal nutrition, physical self-mastery, and mental conditioning. The hero’s skills were studied, practiced, and perfected, then passed along from parent to child and teacher to student. The art of the hero wasn’t about being brave; it was about being so competent that bravery wasn’t an issue.” They learned to be masters of the unpredictable.

That may be why many heroes, when confronted, are humble and do not think of themselves as such. For them, they were just doing what they were trained and prepared to do.

Over this past year, much has happened in our state and much was asked of you. You responded to tornadoes, hurricanes, a pandemic, and nationwide civil unrest. You did this while still deploying to Cuba, Kosovo, the Middle East, the Pacific, and the U.S.-Mexico border. Thousands of Tennessee Guardsmen sacrificed their careers, school, and time with their families to help our fellow neighbors and citizens during these difficult times. Whether it is testing Tennesseans for COVID-19, removing tornado debris, responding to civil unrest, or supporting the Presidential debates, you always answered your state’s call.

This was asked of you because like our motto, “Always Ready, Always There,” you were prepared to step in when your state needed you. Each one of you have gone through countless hours of training with the military and you sacrificed countless hours of your personal time. You mastered your civilian professions as well as your military specialties. You lost time with your families and friends to be ready for when your community needed you. All of these sacrifices prepared you for situations like this, and your state and country are better for it.

You are so competent in your field that all our state and national leaders were confident that the National Guard was the organization needed to help during these trying times, and you exceeded their expectations. This was because, as the Greeks believed and so do I, you are masters of the unpredictable, and that makes you heroes.

I can’t express enough how thankful I am to serve with professionals such as you, but on behalf of me and my family, thank you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jason W. Glass".

Col. Jason W. Glass  
Assistant Adjutant General, Air

## 168th Returns Home

Dyersburg's 168th Military Police Battalion Returns Home from Iraq

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Nearly 60 Soldiers assigned to the Tennessee National Guard's 168th Military Police Battalion in Dyersburg returned home Saturday, Sept. 26, after a 10-month deployment to the Middle East.

"Our Tennessee Soldiers did a phenomenal job," said Lt. Col. Mark Tyndall, the commander for the 168th. "Their resiliency and professionalism during the deployment exemplifies the caliber of the men and women who serve in the National Guard."

Originally mobilized in November 2019, the Tennessee Soldiers first traveled to Fort Bliss, Texas, where they conducted additional training and preparation for the deployment. Once their training was completed in early 2020, they flew to Kuwait and later convoyed north into Iraq.

When the 168th arrived, they served as the base defense operations center for Camp Taji, a U.S. led coalition training center 12 miles north of Baghdad. The Tennessee Soldiers were responsible for protecting the military base from enemy attacks and managing the base response with coalition forces from various nations.

"The 168th rapidly took command of a combat base in Iraq with over 4,000 personnel from 16 different countries. Their efforts directly led to the accomplishment of strategic-level objectives," said Tyndall.

In April 2020, the 168th transferred base defense responsibility to another unit and became a part of the base closure team. The Soldiers then spent the next few months closing down and preparing to transfer Camp Taji to Iraqi Security Forces. The unit had to ensure thousands of U.S. and multinational forces were safely relocated as they transferred \$347 million in equipment and property to the Government of Iraq.

"We're all really excited to be home," said Tyndall. "And I am incredibly proud of all the hard work our Soldiers did this past year and the difference they made. They truly represented everything that is great about Tennessee."

- Story by Lt. Col. Darrin Haas



## Partners in Training

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. The 118th Wing and Middle Tennessee State University signed a new partnership agreement, which will allow our Airmen and MTSU students and faculty to collaborate on future training and courses. Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes, Tennessee's Adjutant General, Col. Todd Wiles, commander of the 118th Wing, and Dr. Mark Byrnes, MTSU provost signed the historic agreement at the University on Nov. 4. (Photo courtesy 118th Wing)



## Gold Star Family Tribute

COLUMBIA, Tenn. The Tennessee National Guard participated in a highway dedication for Gold Star Families, Sept. 11, in Columbia. A section of Bear Creek Road, right off of Interstate 65, is now commemorating family members of military personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving our country. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Cordeiro)



## Water Salute for Lt. Col. Steven Todd

NASHVILLE, Tenn. Lt. Col. Steven Todd, former commander of the 1-230th Assault Helicopter Battalion, was given a "water salute" to commemorate his final flight while taxiing down the runway one last time, Sept. 23, at Berry Field in Nashville. The water salute is an air tradition to honor military veterans or senior pilots by propelling plumes of water in an arch for the aircraft to drive through. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Cordeiro)



## Change of Command at 2-278th

COOKEVILLE, Tenn. Change of command ceremony for Lt. Col. Donny Hebel (outgoing commander) and Lt. Col. Damon Bradford (incoming commander) who assumed command of 2nd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, on Saturday, Sept. 12, in Cookeville. (Photo courtesy 278th ACR)



## 1129th Finance Detachment Deploys

NASHVILLE, Tenn. The Tennessee National Guard's 1129th Finance Management Support Detachment in Nashville left in September for a 10-month deployment in the U.S. European Command area of operations in support of Operation Joint Guardian. They will be responsible for government contracting and commercial vendor services, disbursing and funding support, and providing full financial support to Soldiers within their area of responsibility. (Photo by retired Sgt. 1st Class William Jones)



TENNESSEE  
SNAPSHOT

#### **DEDICATION CEREMONY AT THE 134TH**

Oct. 10, 2020 - The 134th Security Forces Squadron unveil a plaque to honor Master Sgt. Gabriel Griffin after he passed away unexpectedly last year. His wife, Jessica, and daughter, Berkley, pictured here were onhand for the ceremony.

PHOTO BY: SENIOR MASTER SGT. KENDRA OWENBY



TENNESSEE  
SNAPSHOT

**TRAINING IN TULLAHOMA**

Oct. 16, 2020 - Soldiers with the Tennessee National Guard's 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment conduct basic infantry movements while training at the Volunteer Training Site in Tullahoma.

*PHOTO BY: SGT. ARTURO GUZMAN*



## TENNESSEE SNAPSHOT

### **SOCIALLY DISTANCED GUARDSMEN**

Nov. 8, 2020 - Several Tennessee National Guardsmen were socially distanced at the the Tennessee Titans home game against the Chicago Bears for their Salute-to-Service game.

PHOTO BY: TENNESSEE TITANS



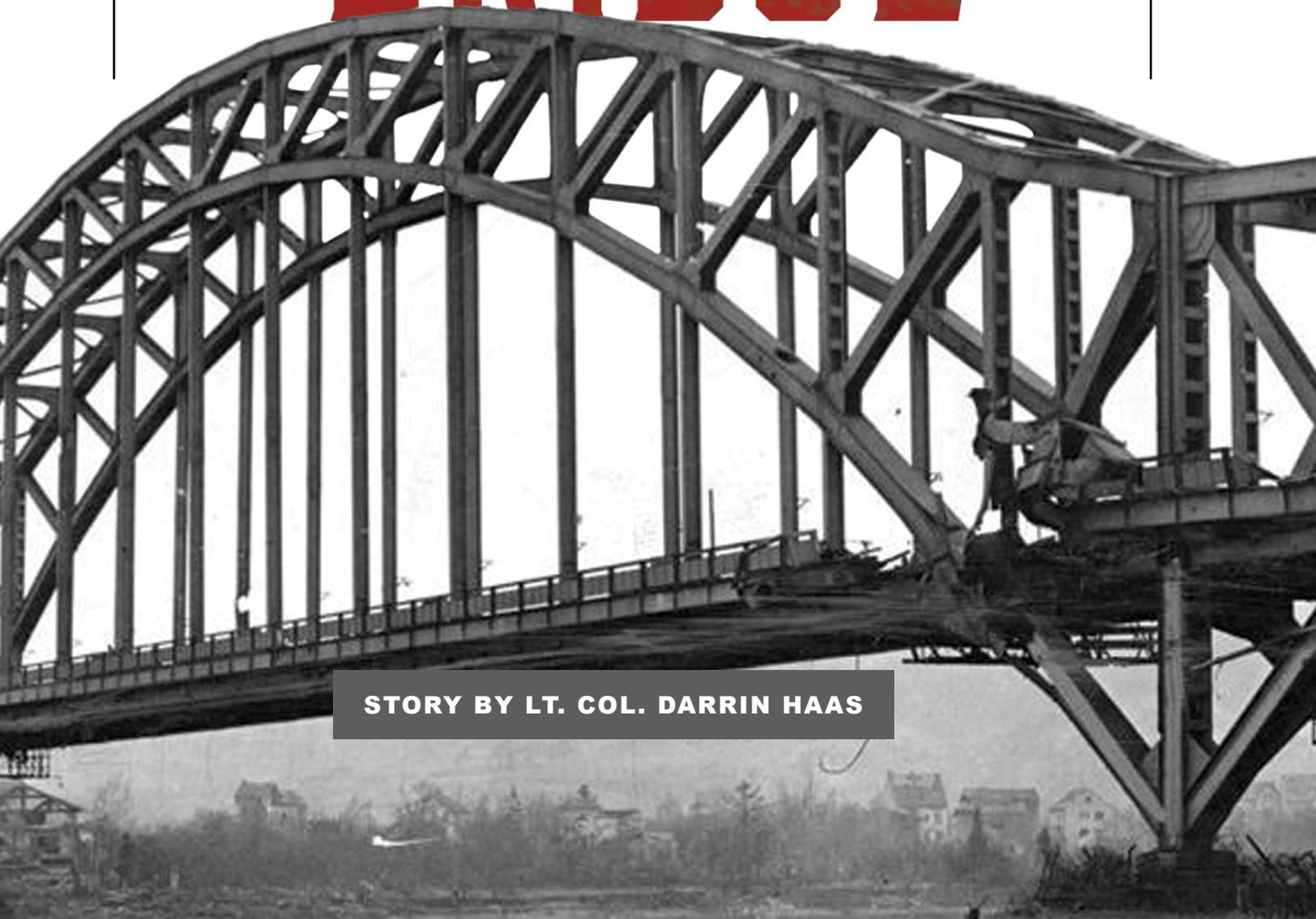
TENNESSEE  
SNAPSHOT

**A QUICK PIT STOP**

Oct. 7, 2020 - A KC-135 Stratotanker from Tennessee's 134th Air Refueling Wing conducts an aerial refueling mission with F-16 Falcons provided by the South Carolina National Guard's 169th Fighter Wing.

PHOTO BY: MASTER SGT. DANIEL GAGNON

HUGH MOTT AND THE  
**BATTLE OF  
REMAGEN  
BRIDGE**



STORY BY LT. COL. DARRIN HAAS

*In the spring of 1945, Hugh Mott, a young engineer officer from Tennessee was with the U.S. Army's 9th Armored Division fighting across Europe. He fought in some grueling battles, but in early March, he arrived at the Ludendorff railroad bridge in Remagen, Germany, where he would become a part of Tennessee and U.S. military history.*

Ruby and John Mott's only son, Hugh Mott, was born on August 14, 1920 in Nashville, Tennessee. Raised in Nashville, Hugh Mott had two sisters and attended East Nashville High School and helped his father after school running a lumber business. In 1939, Mott had his first taste of the military as a captain in his school's Reserve Officer Training Corps. After graduating from high school, he attended the Marion Military Institute in Alabama, a preparatory school for the various military service academies. There, he studied and planned to attend West Point.

Mott was a great student and he was quickly recognized as an industrious and talented young man. After graduation, Bob Neyland, the legendary University of Tennessee Football Coach and engineer with the Corps of Engineers, helped Mott obtain a temporary job as a rodman with the United States Corps of Engineers. Mott worked on the Wolf Creek Dam from August 1940 to January 1941, while applying for admission into West Point.

As war swept through Europe, Mott finished his assignment at the Wolf Creek Dam and started a job at the Vultee Aircraft plant in January 1941. He worked 70 hours a week as the company raced to build dive bombers for the Allies.

When the United States entered World War II, Mott continued working at the Vutlee Aircraft Plant and applying for West Point until he enlisted in the Army on November 1, 1942. Pvt. Mott reported to Fort Eustis, Virginia for basic training and specialized in anti-aircraft artillery. Before graduating, he was promoted to corporal and then selected to attend Artillery Officer Candidate School. On March 1, 1943, he attended officer candidate school at Camp Davis, North Carolina.



The Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen, Germany, five days after it was captured and crossed by U.S. Army Soldiers.  
(Photo courtesy U.S. Army / National Archives)



Quickly completing OCS, Cpl. Mott was commissioned a second lieutenant on June 3, 1943. He remained as an instructor at the facility for nearly a year until he was transferred on February 10, 1944, to the engineer branch and attended Engineer Basic Officer School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Mott completed engineering school in six weeks and was assigned as a platoon leader in the 9th Armored Division Engineer Battalion at Camp Polk, Louisiana. As a combat engineer, Mott and his platoon were responsible for working with combat troops in numerous capacities, from construction and repair of roads and bridges, to the demolition and deployment of mines, explosives, and assorted booby traps.

He deployed with the 9th Armored Division to Europe on August 20, 1944, to take part in the liberation of France, eventually landing at the beach in Normandy on October 9, 1944. Throughout October, Mott moved east across France, engaging in fierce combat in the Battle of the Bulge. The Germans eventually lost ground and retreated into Germany, destroying bridges and crossing over the Rhine River to halt the American advance.

On March 7, 1945, the 9th Armored Division and recently promoted 1st Lt. Mott, arrived at the town of Remagen as the division was heading to Sinzig. Needing bridges to cross the Rhine River, U.S. forces were surprised to see that the Ludendorff railroad bridge was



Top: Maj. Gen. Hugh Mott (left), circa 1970.  
Bottom: Maj. Gen. Hugh Mott, Command Photo.

## BATTLE OF REMAGEN BRIDGE

MOTT LED HIS  
PLATOON UN-  
DER HEAVY  
SNIPER AND  
MACHINE  
GUN FIRE,  
PATCHING  
THE GAPING  
HOLES IN  
THE BRIDGE  
PLANKING.

still intact. As German troops were still retreating across the bridge and destroying their positions along the way, Col. Engeman, commander of the 14th Tank Battalion, ordered that the bridge be taken intact. He deployed his troops to attack and secure the bridge and the approaches on either side, but he soon learned that the bridge was rigged with explosives and could be destroyed within minutes.

Engeman ordered Mott to prevent the destruction of the bridge, which had already been weakened by German soldiers through a series of explosive charges, artillery and mortar fire. With the help of Mott's two most reliable soldiers, Sgt. Eugene Dorland and Staff Sgt. John Reynolds, he received his mission and heroically led his team under fire to the bridge approach. The Germans had blown a huge crater in the approach to the bridge, prohibiting the use of tanks, but giving some cover for the small team.

After a quick visual reconnaissance from the crater, Mott and his team raced across the entire length of the bridge, cutting the wires leading to a multitude of explosive charges, all the while under intense fire from snipers, machine guns, and 20mm guns. As the team was cutting various wires to the explosives, Mott witnessed a tremendous explosion on the far side of the bridge. He thought he may have been too late, but the explosion was a minor blast only causing some structural damage on the far side.

The team continued, with Mott discovering four packages of TNT weighing 30-pounds each, as well as one 600-pound charge rigged to explode. They disabled the charges and threw them into the river. Dorland discovered the main cable to the explosives, but could not cut them with his pliers. Without hesitating, he shot the cable with his carbine, completely severing the line.

As the final charges were being disabled, an infantry platoon arrived to secure the bridge. Mott then called for his platoon to be brought up to begin repairs on the structure in order to move tanks across. When they arrived, Mott led his platoon under heavy sniper and machine gun fire, patching the gaping holes in the bridge planking. They worked frantically on their hands and knees to repair the damaged bridge, eventually allowing tanks to cross and ensuring the Allies an eastern foothold on the Rhine.

The skill, speed, and boldness of their successful mission won resounding congratulations and praise from high-ranking military officials. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower was reported to be jubilant.

Gen. Omar Bradley said, "This bold advance, characterized by able willingness to chance great risks for great rewards, speeds the day when our full forces

## BATTLE OF REMAGEN BRIDGE



The Ludendorff bridge at Remagen, shortly after it was captured, on March 7, 1945. The bridge collapsed 10 days after it was seized because of bomb damage. (Photo courtesy Bundesarchiv/Creative Commons)

can come to grips with the enemy.”

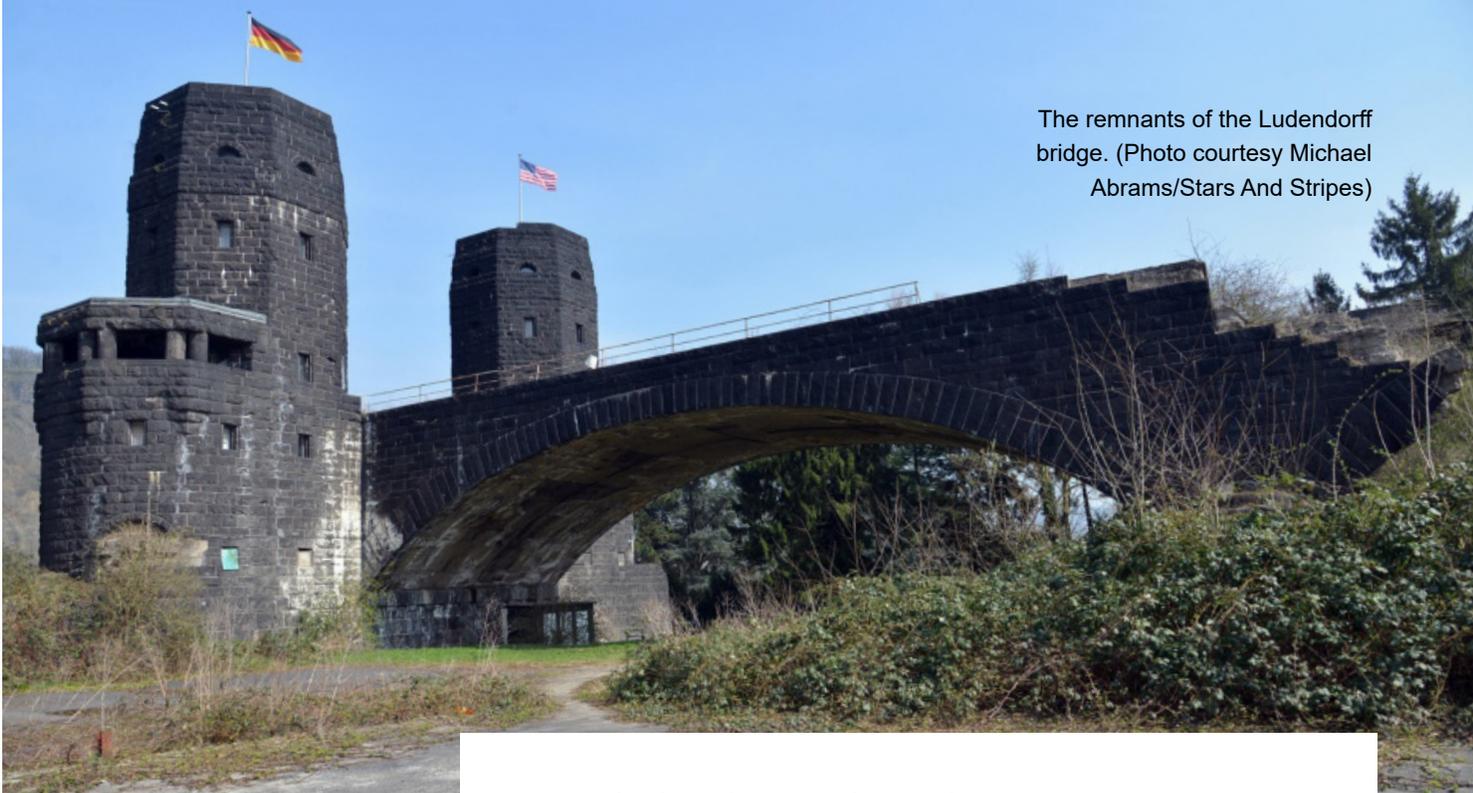
For this heroic act, Mott was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the commendation citing his unhesitating action and courage amid intense enemy fire aimed directly at him. Dorland and Reynolds were also awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Officials at the time said the war was probably shortened by about six months due to his action, perhaps preventing 5,000 to 10,000 Allied casualties.

After the battle at Remagen Bridge, Mott continued to fiercely engage the German Army, pressing into Germany, fighting in the capture of Limberg, Frankfurt, Leipzig, and heading into Czechoslovakia just before V-E Day. At the end of war, he was assigned to the engineer battalion of the 90th Infantry Division. He served in the Army of Occupation as a platoon leader and company commander until returning to the United States in 1946. Mott was separated from active military service on June 9, 1946 and entered the Army Reserves at the rank of captain.

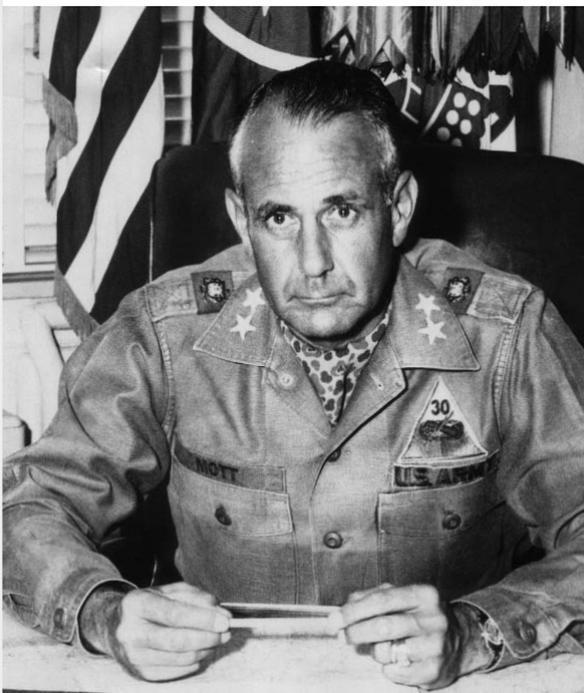
Hugh Mott returned home to Tennessee after the war as a highly decorated soldier and initially started working with his father at his lumber business. Being greatly admired, Mott was soon called to run for public office. He won election to the Tennessee House of Representatives in 1948 and served until 1951.

After three years in the Reserves, Mott decided to join the Tennessee Army National Guard. On March 15, 1949, he was assigned as the operations and training officer of the 173rd Armored Group in Jackson, Tennessee. He quickly rose through the ranks and was

HUGH MOTT  
RETURNED  
HOME TO  
TENNESSEE  
AFTER THE  
WAR AS A  
HIGHLY  
DECORATED  
SOLDIER.



The remnants of the Ludendorff bridge. (Photo courtesy Michael Abrams/Stars And Stripes)



Maj. Gen. Hugh Mott as the Commander of the 30th Armored Division

promoted to brigadier general in April 1964.

From April 4-14, 1968, Brig. Gen. Mott commanded Task Force Bravo, a force of over 3,300 Guard members, during civil disturbances in Nashville following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. Miraculously, without loss of life, Mott led Guard members, city police, and state troopers into Tennessee's A & I University dormitories while under sniper fire. He searched and confiscated weapons and tools used to set fire to the school's Air Force ROTC building.

Following the civil unrest throughout the state, Mott was selected to be the commanding general of the 30th Armored Division at the end of April and then promoted to major general on June 28, 1968.

This assignment didn't last long, because on December 1, 1968, Maj. Gen. Mott was named the Adjutant General for the State of Tennessee by Gov. Buford Ellington. He simultaneously acted as Commander of the 30th Armored Division until February 1969. As the Adjutant General, Mott worked tirelessly at his post during a period of continual civil unrest. He would stay the head of the Tennessee National Guard until May 26, 1971 and then he was released from the Tennessee Army National Guard on May 31. He continued working for the National Guard Directorate until retiring from the military in November 1975.

Hugh Mott died in June 2005, at the age of 84. In tribute to Mott, the U.S. Army Engineer School, located at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, named the Bachelor Officers Quarters building Mott Hall in his honor. The building showcases a beautiful portrait of him with an impressive display of his World War II exploits. The Tennessee National Guard Joint Force Headquarters was also named after him in 2006.

# WELCOME HOME 194TH

## 194th Engineer Brigade Returns from Deployment



**SMYRNA, Tenn.** – Approximately 116 Soldiers from the Tennessee National Guard's 194th Engineer Brigade has returned home after a successful deployment to the Middle East. Before returning to Tennessee, the Soldiers conducted a two-week quarantine period and a de-mobilization process in Fort Bliss, Texas.

Based out of Jackson, the 194th was activated October 2019 and has spent the last 10 months as the U.S. Central Command Theater Engineer Brigade Headquarters, performing the functions of a corps level engineering strategic assist. They were responsible for directing the efforts of 3,400 Soldiers con-

Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes, Tennessee's Adjutant General, and Maj. Gen. Tommy Baker, Deputy Adjutant General, greet Soldiers from the 194th Engineer Brigade following a year-long deployment to the Middle East. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Cordeiro)



Loved ones greeted Soldiers from the 194th Engineer Brigade at a homecoming ceremony in Smyrna. Extra distancing measures were implemented to ensure everyone's safety. For two weeks, Soldiers quarantined and demobilized in Texas prior to returning to Tennessee. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Cordeiro)

ducting engineering operations and projects in eight different countries throughout the U.S. Army Central Command area of operations in the Middle East region. They served as an integral part of Operation Inherent Resolve, Operation Spartan Shield and Operation Freedom Sentinel, making this deployment especially historic. With the COVID-19 pandemic peaking during their deployment, daily operations became trickier, but the mission was greatly successful.

“While dealing with COVID-19 certainly proved challenging, this

is a mission-oriented team who met those challenges through their care and concern for one another,” said Col. Warner A. Ross II, Brigade Commander. “We dealt with the constraints and restrictions of COVID by constantly adjusting our safety protocols to ensure we were mitigating exposure risks and developing contingency plans. This team was determined to finish the deployment strong and they did just that.”

“The 194th successfully continued a proud legacy of serving as the ‘Theater Engineer Brigade,’” said Ross. “Throughout the deployment

our engineers served at the tip of the spear engaged in efforts supporting some of the highest priority strategic level missions. I am proud of the professionalism and leadership this team brought to the fight each day.”

**- STAFF SGT. TIMOTHY CORDEIRO**

# SPOTLIGHT ON LEADERSHIP

An Interview with Chief Master Sgt. Mark Harris

In light of his recent retirement, Capt. Kealy A. Moriarty sat down with 31-year veteran and previous Senior Enlisted Leader for the state of Tennessee, Chief Master Sgt. Mark Harris, to discuss his accomplishments and advice for future young leaders.



Chief Master Sgt. Mark Harris Command Photo.

**Capt. Moriarty: What are your expectations for the men and women in the Tennessee National Guard, and what should they expect from their senior enlisted leaders?**

*Chief Master Sgt. Harris:* Ensuring that our standards and expectations are clear is critical. Just like knowing your purpose in life, Soldiers and Airmen need to know and understand their purpose and value to the organization. Our NCO Creed and core values make it simple: Integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do. It's not the complex mission statements that ensure standards and discipline are held high, but they adhere to a person's values and principles. I am known to ask our service members questions such as, "What do you believe in?" or "Where do you want to be in five years?" or "Are you a value-added to your organization?" These questions, along with others, spark great conversations about meeting and exceeding standards and expectations. I am excited about Tennessee's

enlisted force structure moving forward. We have a robust development plan, which cultivates equal opportunity and rewards performance, work ethic, and a great attitude towards fellow guardsmen. We have a structure that provides oversight and accountability without judging them for life, a culture that offers a fair promotion process, strong mentorship, pride in serving, and respect for all. With this great future and the enlisted leaders available to our force today, this culture will continue to grow. I am excited about the opportunities being made available for our Soldiers and Airmen in the Tennessee National Guard.

**Capt. Moriarty: What are the basic principles of your leadership philosophy?**

*Chief Master Sgt. Harris:* I've never tried to fit into any one particular leadership style but only sought to be myself. My style of leadership is a mix of service and democracy. My core principles are integrity, trust, work ethic, and leading by example. I feel like I am a good "people person," approachable, and instill confidence in those around me. For our young leaders today, I think they need to understand the difference between leadership and management. The leaders and the men and women who follow them



Chief Master Sgt. Mark Harris (bottom left) in 2003. (Photo courtesy Chief Master Sgt. Mark Harris)

represent one of the oldest, most natural, and most productive human relationships. Leadership is of the spirit, compounded of personality and vision—its practice is an art. Management is of the mind, more a matter of accurate calculation, statistics, methods, timetables, and routine—its approach is a science. So I would ask young leaders to think about the aspects of your positions. Continue to hone your skills of both. Management, continue to manage programs, and build/mentor subject matter experts within your areas. Leaders work to inspire others to carry out their commander's vision and direction because they want to, not just because they are told to do so. Follow through

with what you say you will do and build trust and confidence in your subordinates and co-workers.

**Capt. Moriarty: What do you see as the two most challenging issues facing guard members today?**

*Chief Master Sgt. Harris:* Nowadays, our Guard members face a world like no other. One that a moral compass and simply operating with core values makes you a minority. Growing up and working in the current environment could be an opportunity for Guardsmen. The operational tempo and requirements on today's Guardsmen

**“It’s not the complex mission statements that ensure standards and discipline are held high, but they adhere to a person’s values and principles.”**

- Chief Master Sgt. Mark Harris

## INTERVIEW: CHIEF MASTER SGT. HARRIS

are enormous and a platform to show your work ethic, skill, and abilities. The number one challenge is time; managing the Guard, home life, and a civilian career. As leaders, we must keep this thought in mind when making training and deployment commitments. We ask a lot from our service members, and we must give a lot in return. I feel the second challenge today is retention. Our members need to think that they are genuinely a part of something bigger than all of us, a family. We must treat everyone with respect and fairness and hold ourselves accountable for our actions and decisions. Above all, we belong to a military organization with standards and expectations higher than the civilian population. Tennessee Guardsmen were put to the test in 2020, and they have answered the state and nation's call. What a great feeling to be part of a team that provides security, calmness, and stability in time like these.

**Capt. Moriarty: Is there any advice or lessons learned you would give young enlisted leaders in the Tennessee National Guard?**

*Chief Master Sgt. Harris:* Today, Guardsmen and women must realize the opportunities and values provided while serving in the Tennessee National Guard. Healthcare, full-time employment opportunities, and retirement options alone are essential for today's family. The current and future senior enlisted leaders need to continually balance the organization and mission needs with the Guardsmen's quality of life. My earlier statement about feeling part of something bigger than yourself starts with our senior leaders' culture. You can make great speeches, but only when the Soldiers and Airmen see your words and intentions in action will they honor you with their trust and respect.

*Interview by Capt. Kealy A. Moriarty*

*Photos courtesy of Chief Master Sgt. Mark Harris*



Top: Chief Master Sgt. Mark Harris in 2003.

Left: Harris with his wife Monna. (Photos courtesy Chief Master Sgt. Mark Harris)

# CYBER SHIELD

## Tenn. Guard Participates in Virtual Cyber Security Exercise

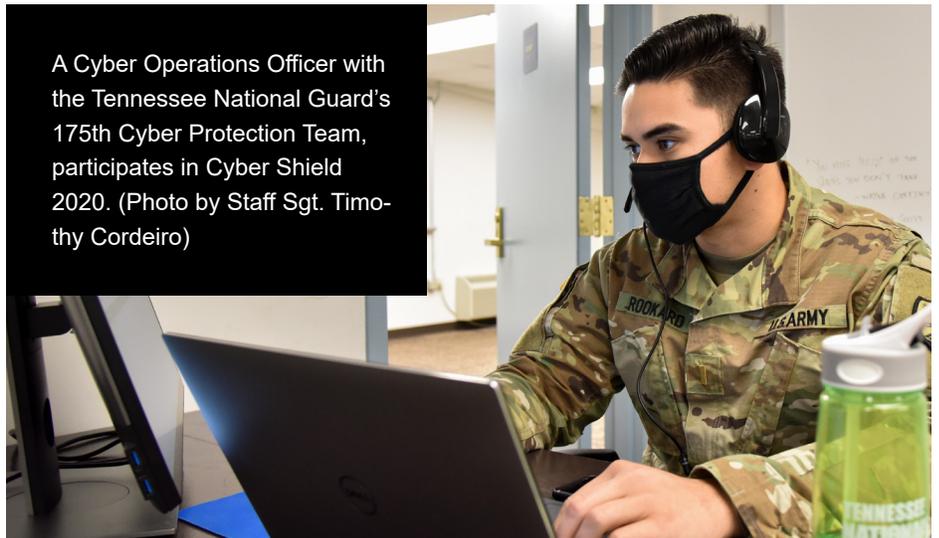
**SMYRNA, Tenn.** – Tennessee National Guard members participated in a joint cyber security training event at Smyrna’s Volunteer Training Site, Sept. 12-25.

Hosted by National Guard Bureau, Cyber Shield 2020 is an annual exercise that brings together more than 540 Army and Air National Guard members across the country, as well as local, state, and federal government agencies. Also involved are industry experts and election and utility officials.

The exercise is designed to increase response capabilities and preparedness by simulating malware, phishing, and other hacking attempts. This year the event has gone virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the quality of the training hasn’t faltered.

“This is some really invaluable training,” said Maj. Ryan Henry, Deputy Chief of the Tennessee National Guard’s Defensive Cyberspace Operations Element. “To be thrown into the deep end in a mock event like this, it gives everyone a sense of realism, which better prepares our Soldiers.”

A Cyber Operations Officer with the Tennessee National Guard’s 175th Cyber Protection Team, participates in Cyber Shield 2020. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Cordeiro)



Originally, the exercise was to be held in Utah, but the pandemic changed it to a virtual event with participants mostly training from where they are based. This year especially, the exercise showcased how National Guard cyber elements can respond to and mitigate future threats despite outside, unforeseen challenges.

“Cyber exercises are uniquely qualified to operate in a distributed environment,” said Maj. Dallas Clements, Team Leader for the Defensive Cyberspace Operations Element. “However, for those cy-

ber Soldiers and Airmen that are defending networks from opposing forces, the view from their screens has not changed.”

With all that has been affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic, training in the Tennessee National Guard is not one of them. The engagement and readiness of Tennessee’s Soldiers and Airmen remain at an all-time high. For these cyber security specialists, they will continue to train and prepare for whatever comes next. - **STAFF SGT. TIMOTHY CORDEIRO**

2020 - YEAR IN REVIEW

LOOKING BACK AT AN INCREDIBLY  
ACTIVE YEAR FOR THE TENNESSEE  
NATIONAL GUARD

# 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

STORY BY: STAFF SGT. TIM CORDEIRO AND CAPT. KEALY MORIARTY

Lt. Col. Guy Alexander in the Tennessee National  
Guard's Joint Emergency Operations Center.  
(Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Cordeiro)



# 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

TENNESSEE NATIONAL GUARD



**Clockwise from top:** Multiple units from the Tennessee National Guard support recovery and clean-up efforts after tornadoes in March. Members of the 278th ACR leave for Washington D.C. to assist in quelling civil unrest in June. Sgt. Leann Roggensack helps test Tennessee residents for COVID-19. (Photos by Sgt. Sarah Kirby)

2020 has been a year like no other for the Soldiers and Airmen of the Tennessee National Guard. Thousands of guardsmen have been mobilized or volunteered to serve the State of Tennessee – something we haven't seen since the early stages of the Global War on Terror.

In the past year, Guardsmen have deployed overseas and within the United States. We continue to battle a global pandemic, and have supported first responders and law enforcement during periods of civil



# 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

unrest, the presidential debates, and the presidential election.

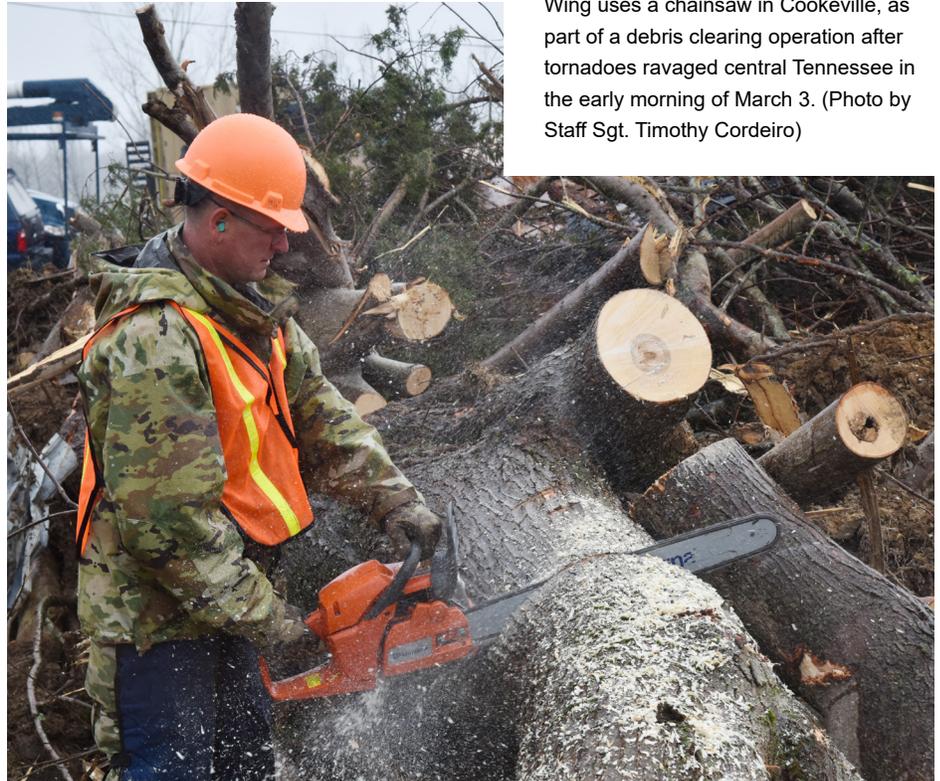
Through all this, we are still maintaining our readiness and training as we prepare for whatever we are called on to do next. Here is just a quick look at some of the many things we accomplished this year.

## **TORNADO RESPONSE IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE**

In the early morning of March 3, multiple tornadoes ripped through middle Tennessee, leaving behind a wake of devastation and destruction. One tornado, just shy of an EF-4 with winds reaching 164 mph, tore through the heart of Nashville. From that same supercell thunderstorm, an even more deadly tornado erupted with wind speeds reaching 175 mph – classifying it as a category EF-4 – headed straight for Putnam County. In total, this middle Tennessee storm spanned across four counties, killed 25 Tennesseans, obliterated many local businesses, and left several homeless.

Within hours, the Tennessee National Guard had “boots on ground,” conducted search and rescue missions in Cookeville; restored power in Gainesboro; aided in debris removal across the mid-state – whatever it took to help restore, rebuild and recover the heavily impacted areas.

Airmen from the Tennessee Air Guard’s 118th Mission Support



An Airman with the 134th Air Refueling Wing uses a chainsaw in Cookeville, as part of a debris clearing operation after tornadoes ravaged central Tennessee in the early morning of March 3. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Cordeiro)

Group, based at Berry Field, moved two 100-kilowatt generators to support a water treatment facility in Jackson County. These generators restored power to critical infrastructure while the power grid was repaired.

More than 60 Soldiers assigned to 2nd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, supported state and local police with traffic control and search and rescue missions. Vehicles, drivers, and engineers from the 230th Engineer Battalion in Trenton; 212th Engineer Company in Paris; 913th Engineer Company in Union City; 255th Engineer Detachment in Tennessee Ridge; 890th Sapper

Company from Huntington; and a team of Airmen from Knoxville’s 134th Civil Engineering Squadron all assisted in tornado relief efforts in Putnam County.

“We’re here to do whatever is needed to help those affected by the tornadoes,” said 2nd Lt. Timothy Grissom, a platoon leader with the 212th Engineer Company, who helped in Putnam County. “They suffered a lot of damage, and all of my soldiers are eager to help.”

In total, more than 160 Tennessee National Guardsmen volunteered to assist those communities who suffered the most after tornadoes ripped through middle Tennessee.



A Member of the Tennessee National Guard works to perform COVID-19 testing at a rural testing site in Cheatham County, April 3. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Cordeiro)

## COVID-19

Almost immediately after the tornadoes hit, Tennessee Soldiers and Airmen received another request – to work alongside Tennessee’s Department of Health, Tennessee Emergency Management Agency, and various other State and local agencies to combat the spread of COVID-19. Their primary focus: test as many citizens as possible.

At the Governor’s request, over 1,000 Soldiers, Airmen, and members of the State Guard were activated to form Joint Task Force Medical and support the State’s missions to combat the spread of COVID-19.

On the logistical front: On March 19, Airmen from the Tennessee Air National Guard flew over 500,000 swabs for COVID-19 testing kits from Aviano Air Base in Italy to Memphis International Airport to distribute throughout the country. Guardsmen also created Personnel Protective Equipment donation sites to collect mission-critical equipment for local hospitals, law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and other first responders. They then worked alongside TEMA and distributed over 12 million units of PPE from a Journey’s warehouse as well as shipped PPE to 80,000 classrooms across the state as

schools began to reconvene.

On the frontlines: Tennessee Guardsmen, alongside state and local agencies, conducted COVID-19 testing at 37 Remote Assessment Sites spread throughout the State’s three grand divisions. Teams of trained Guardsmen assisted with administering tests and preparing the testing samples for shipment.

“Our Guardsmen at these sites are well-trained professionals and doing everything possible to ensure that testing is done accurately and safely,” said Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes, Tennessee’s Adjutant General.

At the peak of the COVID-19

# 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

pandemic, Soldiers and Airmen helped establish temporary testing sites in hot spot areas; tested vulnerable populations at long-term care facilities; tested staff members at county and state corrections facilities; provide COVID-19 testing to public housing areas; and many other locations across Tennessee.

An Infectious Disease Team was also established to visit hospitals and alternative care centers and develop plans to prevent and decrease COVID-19 transmissions within the facilities.

“Our Guardsmen have been combating this pandemic since it began and won’t let up until the mission is complete,” said Holmes. “I’m very proud of all that they have done and what I know they will accomplish in the future.”

Although the fight against the pandemic is still far from over, the Tennessee National Guard has been there from the beginning, doing its part to keep its neighbors and fellow citizens safe. As of December 2020, the Guard has administered well over 700,000 COVID-19 tests.

## CIVIL UNREST

As the fight against COVID-19 continued throughout the summer, a national civil unrest movement prompted the Guard’s response in multiple cities across Tennessee, as well as a large-scale activation to the District of Colombia.

Tennessee National Guard Soldiers stand ready to protect lives and property downtown Nashville during periods of civil unrest in June. (Photo by Sgt. Sarah Kirby)



On June 4, over 1,000 Tennessee Guardsmen, primarily from the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, deployed to the District of Columbia to support law enforcement within just 72-hours notice. At the Governor’s request, these Soldiers mobilized to support the D.C. National Guard in protecting lives and property during protests and riots. The rapid deployment and logistical movement of 1,000 Soldiers proved to be an incredible undertaking.

Tennessee Guardsmen were activated to support law enforcement

officers in Nashville and then spread to other cities. During one event in June, Tennessee Guardsmen, equipped with riot gear, were supporting law enforcement at the State Capitol when a large group of protestors approached. The protestors asked the Guard members to lower the shields to show good faith and understanding. Due to the peaceful actions displayed by the protestors, Maj. Gen. Holmes gave the order for the Soldiers to lower their shields, which turned out to be a pivotal moment for the city and reached global

attention.

## PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

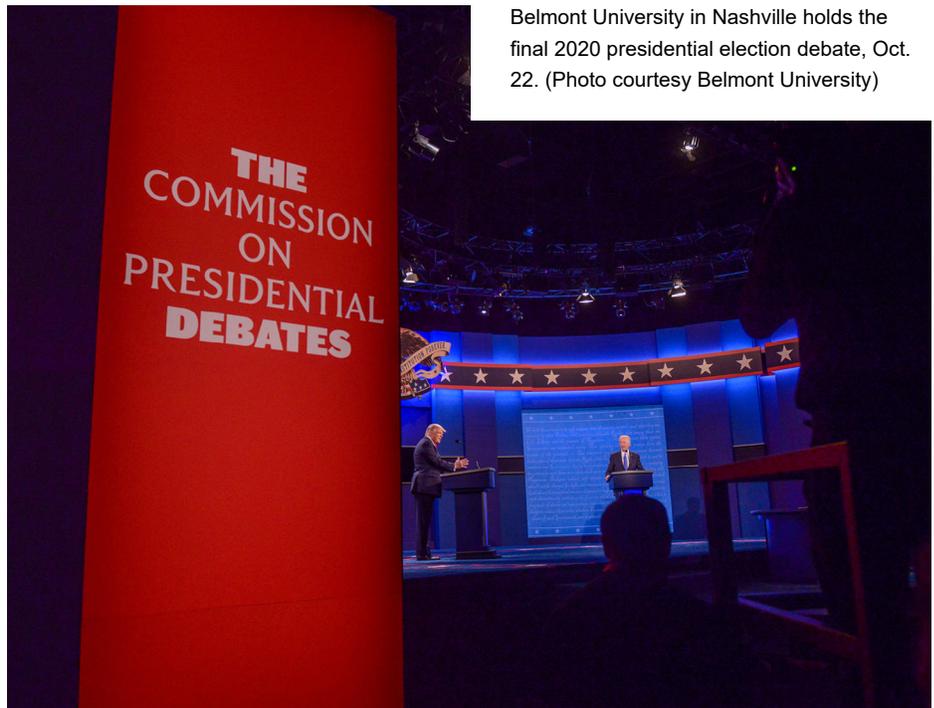
Military Police Soldiers supported local and federal agencies by providing perimeter security support during the Presidential Debate held at Belmont University in Nashville on Nov. 3.

## ELECTION DAY SUPPORT

The Guard, now actively aiding in two primary domestic operations, simultaneously began prepping for election season. While there were still units ready to respond had violence erupted, this mission had a slightly different feel than the others where the focus shifted to the cyber realm. This mission required cybersecurity experts from Nashville's 175th Cyber Protection Team to partner with state and federal agencies and provide IT support to election day voting. Its main priority was to prevent or identify any election interference in the State of Tennessee.

## DEPLOYMENTS

Despite the challenges from COVID-19, the Tennessee Guard continued to provide support around the world. Currently, there are three units deployed overseas, with others scheduled to leave in the



Belmont University in Nashville holds the final 2020 presidential election debate, Oct. 22. (Photo courtesy Belmont University)

upcoming months. Guardsmen are currently stationed in Bulgaria, the Middle East, Cuba, the Pacific, and along the U.S. Southwest Border.

In the past year, several units have returned home amid a global pandemic. Jackson's 194th Engineer Brigade returned from a 10-month deployment to Kuwait on Sept. 17, and Dyersburg's 168th Military Police Battalion completing a 10-month deployment to Iraq, returning on Sept 26.

The 194th served under U.S. Army Central Command, conducting operations in eight different countries while deployed.

"While dealing with COVID-19 certainly proved challenging, this is a mission-oriented team that met those challenges through their care

and concern for one another," said Col. Warner A. Ross II, 194th Engineer Brigade Commander. "This team was determined to finish the deployment strong, and they did just that."

The 168th originally mobilized in November 2019 and served as the base defense operations center for Camp Taji, a U.S. led coalition-training center 12 miles north of Baghdad. The Tennessee Soldiers were responsible for protecting the military base from enemy attacks and managing the base response with coalition forces from various nations.

"The 168th rapidly took command of a combat base in Iraq with over 4,000 personnel from 16 different countries," said Lt. Col. Mark Tyndall, the commander for the

# 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

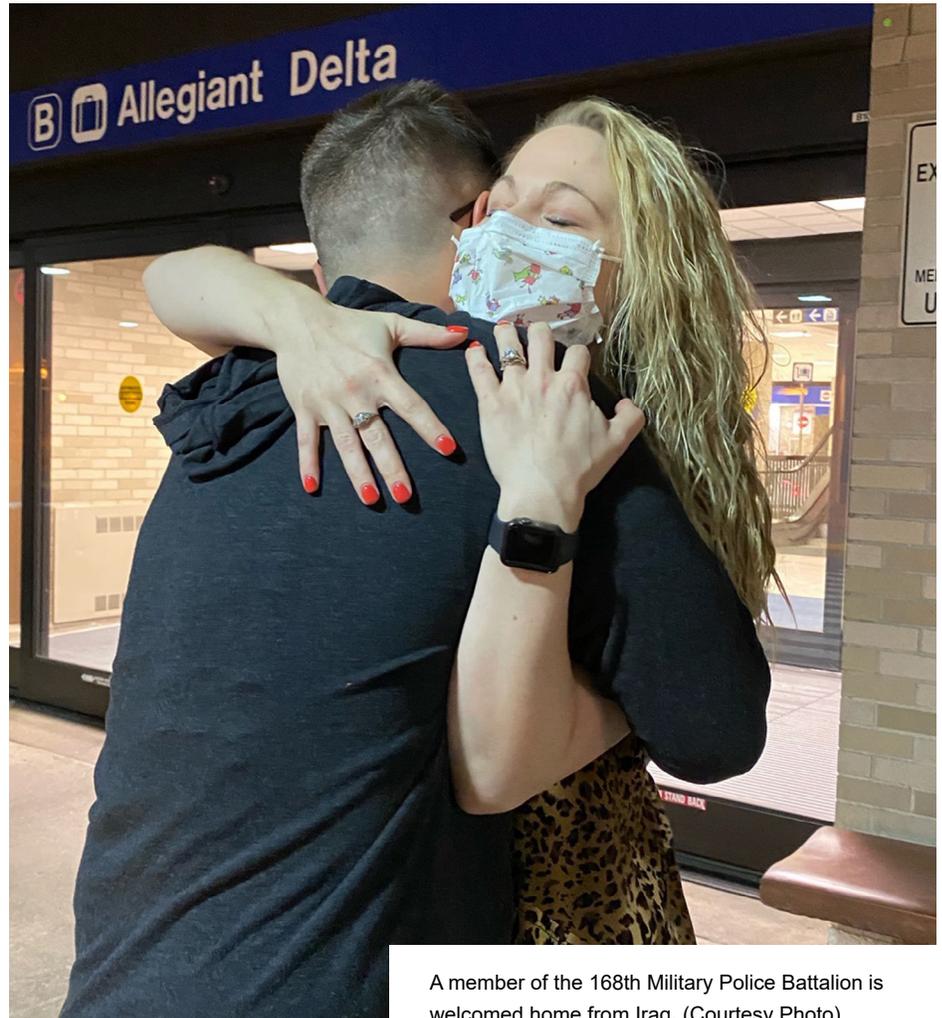
168th. “Their efforts directly led to the accomplishment of strategic-level objectives.”

In April 2020, the 168th transferred base defense responsibility to another unit and became a part of the base closure team. The Soldiers then spent the next few months closing down and preparing to transfer Camp Taji to Iraqi Security Forces. The unit had to ensure thousands of U.S. and multinational forces were safely relocated as they transferred \$347 million in equipment and property to the Government of Iraq. The base transfer ceremony took place on Aug. 23. Once their mission was complete, the Soldiers returned to Fort Bliss to undergo demobilization procedures and perform a 14-day quarantine required for all Soldiers returning from overseas.

## ROUTINE YEARLY TRAINING

Throughout the year, the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges while conducting safe and realistic training for Soldiers and Airmen. But, Guardsmen continued training to maintain readiness for upcoming domestic missions and deployments.

Starting in July, select units with Knoxville’s 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment rotated to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, and Tennessee’s Volunteer Training Site in Tullahoma. Soldiers kept multiple protective mea-



A member of the 168th Military Police Battalion is welcomed home from Iraq. (Courtesy Photo)

asures in place to ensure everyone stayed safe while performing tank gunnery, weapons qualification, and a myriad of other combat-related tasks.

“I’m extremely proud of the tremendous effort our troopers took not only to sustain but to build readiness while mitigating the risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus,” said Col. Brad Bowlin, commander of the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment. “Our adversaries will not wait for a vaccine to be created or the

pandemic to simply pass.”

Because the Soldiers were often close, each unit was required to provide and implement a plan to minimize the virus’s transmission. During the summer heat and humidity, Soldiers socially distanced and wore face masks at all briefings, classes, and meetings. They systematically sanitized equipment, modified routines, and enhanced sanitation procedures.

“We must be adaptable and flexible

1st Lt. Nelson awaits orders during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Photo by Sgt. Sarah Kirby)



in creating new ways to build readiness in this unique and challenging environment,” said Bowlin. “Our readiness is essential to deterrence... our country is depending on us.”

As the pandemic grew back in April, units were initially directed to focus on individual training, which greatly limited their contact with one another.

“We originally had to shift our training plans for the sake of protecting the force from the virus,” said Holmes. “But we knew we had

to quickly get back to group training to fulfill our obligations of providing trained and ready forces for either a state or federal mission.”

Despite the ambiguity of 2020 and the relentless obstacles thrown its way, the Tennessee National Guard remained adaptable and completed Annual Training requirements, regularly scheduled drills, and fulfilled deployments overseas and nationally.

“I’m very proud of the challenges our Soldiers and Airmen have over-

come and the work they have been doing since March is remarkable,” said Holmes. “During these past few months, they have persevered to ensure that our units and formations are trained and ready for our federal mission. They have stayed flexible and vigilant, sacrificing so much to protect our communities, and we are willing to continue for as long as it takes to defeat this enemy.”

## CONCLUSION

So, what is next for the Tennessee Guard, a fighting force of over 12,000 who have had maybe their busiest year ever?

“The Tennessee National Guard will continue to train for upcoming missions, both home and abroad, as safely and efficiently as possible,” said Holmes. “While we don’t know what may lie around the corner, we will be as prepared as possible to take those challenges head-on. I’m extremely proud of the work these men and women have been doing for the better part of a year, and while work continues on the frontlines of this pandemic, I can rest assured knowing we have the most resilient, ready, and capable people on the job.”

Although the future is unpredictable, Tennesseans should rest assured that the National Guard is fully ready and capable of protecting and serving their fellow citizens.

# PERFECT TIMING

## TENNESSEE'S JOINT ADAPTIVE BATTLE STAFF

STORY BY: LT. COL. DARRIN HAAS

Since March, thousands of Tennessee Guardsmen have been working tirelessly across Tennessee supporting various state and local agencies in the fight against COVID-19, tornado recovery, civil unrest, and election support. Volunteers from every unit in the Tennessee Army and Air National Guard have flocked to help their communities and fellow citizens, leaving their families and careers to risk their own health and safety for their neighbors. During the last 10 months, nearly every guardsman has contributed to this effort.

This massive statewide response has been the largest, multi-faceted domestic operation in Tennessee National Guard's modern history. Coordinating this response has also been a tremendous undertaking. Organizing and managing Soldiers, Airmen, and members of the State Guard to work alongside Tennessee Emergency Management Agency, Tennessee's Department of Health, and hundreds of local law enforcement, hospitals, and health

departments across the state has been nothing short of remarkable. However, this coordination did not happen on its own - it was through the effort and tireless work of Tennessee's Joint Adaptive Battle Staff.

As its name implies, the Joint Adaptive Battle Staff consists of highly trained Tennessee Army and Air National Guardsmen, from every major command, that come together to create a modular staff for The Adjutant General. Their purpose: to coordinate joint military support to civil authorities during emergencies.

"The JABS is the eyes and ears for the TAG when emergencies arise needing the Guard's support," said Lt. Col. Guy Alexander, Executive Officer of the Joint Adaptive Battle Staff. "It is a crucial part of our COVID-19 response this year and everyone on our team is working around the clock to ensure TEMA is supported and the TAG has all the information he needs to make informed decisions."

Informing the TAG is not the only

thing the JABS is responsible for. It plans potential and current military operations; it coordinates between various military, governmental, and civilian agencies, as well as within the Military Department; and it assists in resourcing and employing military forces throughout the state.

"One of the greatest capabilities of the JABS is the fact that it is truly joint," said Alexander. "The staff has Soldiers and Airmen representing and fully-understanding the capabilities of every unit in the Guard. We work together to provide the best response to emergencies by accessing the strengths of every unit available."

However, this staff has not always been a part of the Military Department. Just five years ago, it did not exist. Around 2015, Maj. Gen. Terry "Max" Haston, then Tennessee's Adjutant General, and Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes, then Tennessee's Assistant Adjutant General, were looking for ways to strengthen the Guard's preparedness for disasters and improve response to domestic emergencies.

They felt the current structure was inefficient and not collaborative enough.

Throughout the next year, they decided to organize and establish a much needed battle staff. First, they wanted the staff scalable so its size could expand and contract to meet the needs of the emergency. Then, they wanted blended representation of both Army and Air personnel focusing on specific functions. Lastly, they wanted a staff that could operate continuously and act as a Joint Task Force if a Dual Status Commander is activated.

By the summer of 2016, the basic organization of the staff was established and exercised during Tennessee Maneuvers 2016, the largest intra-state domestic operations exercise since World War II. It was a success. Over the next few years, the staff was refined, expanded, and utilized during natural disasters and other domestic operations. The JABS also conducted various training exercises and perfected processes to respond to emergencies.

On March 3, 2020, the JABS activated to manage the Tennessee National Guard's response to a series of tornadoes that struck Middle Tennessee, killing 25 Tennesseans and destroying hundreds of homes and businesses. The staff managed the nearly 200 guardsmen who responded in four counties conducting search and rescue, traffic control, restoring power, and debris removal.



Tennessee's Joint Adaptive Battle Staff in June 2019.  
(Photo By retired Sgt. 1st Class William Jones)

“Our response was immediate to such a sudden disaster happening right here in Nashville,” said Alexander. “Everyone wanted to help. The JABS activated that day and began responding to support requests from TEMA.”

However, an activation expected to last just a few weeks turned into something much more.

Since March, the JABS has been at the forefront of planning and implementing the Guard's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest, and the presidential debate and election. Headquartered out of Nashville's Joint Emergency Operations Center, they have been operating as designed: expanding and contracting their personnel as the missions dictates, providing expert advice to leadership on their current and potential capabilities, and managing all

domestic operations within the Tennessee National Guard.

They have also demonstrated their ability to operate continuously – now passing 10 months of consistent and peak performance at high operational levels.

“Tornadoes, straight-line winds, civil unrest, a worldwide pandemic; this has been something that we've never had to face before especially in such a short period of time,” said Alexander. “What we've been able to do this year, as an organization, is incredible. We pride ourselves on being able to adapt to any situation, even unprecedented ones.”

2020 has been a historic time for the Tennessee National Guard's domestic response and the JABS - and there is still much more to accomplish.



## BULGARIAN OFFICIALS VISIT TENNESSEE NATIONAL GUARD

STORY BY STAFF SGT. TIMOTHY CORDEIRO

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** – After signing a defense roadmap agreement with the United States at the Pentagon, Oct. 6, Bulgarian dignitaries visited Tennessee Oct. 7-9.

The new training agenda, dubbed the U.S. – Bulgaria Defense Cooperation Roadmap, identifies the goals and mission of the Bulgarian military, and where the U.S. can assist them in meeting their goals, and enhancing their military capabilities.

“We’ve had this partnership for 27 years,” said Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes, Tennessee’s Adjutant General. “We have a long history of training together and have maintained a strong relationship over the years. We will continue to train together and share information.”

Tennessee and Bulgaria have been partners since 1993, when they originally became one of the first pairs to team up in the State Partnership

Program. The SPP links together a unique component of the Department of Defense – a state’s National Guard – with the armed forces equivalent of a partner country in a cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship.

After the official signing at the Pentagon, Maj. Gen. Holmes brought Bulgarian officials back to Tennessee, where they spent a few days with their partners.



The Bulgarian delegation observe first-hand the refueling capabilities of the Tennessee Air National Guard's KC-135R Stratotanker. (Photo by Master Sgt. Daniel Gagnon)

realistic view of training U.S. forces undergo on a regular basis, and how Bulgaria Armed Forces training compares to American forces. The Bulgarian delegation also fired the M-17, the Army's new handgun, at a small-arms, pop-up target range in Tullahoma.

"These visits give us an opportunity to learn from each other," said Karakachanov. "I'm positive our joint work will be getting even better and more efficient in the future, in the name of the security of our two great countries."

The Tennessee National Guard also hosted the Bulgarians on a tour of the world famous Jack Daniels Distillery, and took them to eat at "Taste of Europe," a middle-Tennessee restaurant owned and operated by Bulgarian-Americans. The following day, the group received a VIP tour of President Andrew Jackson's Hermitage home, just outside Nashville.

In the last 27 years, Bulgaria and Tennessee have participated in over 600 events together, to include training exercises and community outreach projects, both here in Tennessee and abroad. Tennessee leaders look forward to continuing to build on their relationship with the Bulgarians, in an effort to strengthen strategic interests while increasing mutual warfighting capabilities.



Land Component Commander, Brig. Gen. Jimmie Cole (left) speaks with a Bulgarian Dignitary during their visit to Nashville. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Cordeiro)

On Oct. 7, Tihomir Stoytchev, Bulgarian Ambassador to the U.S., Krasimir Karakachanov, Bulgarian Minister of Defense, and Emil Eftimov, Bulgarian Chief of Defense, and others accompanied Tennessee National Guard leadership onto a KC-135R Stratotanker aircraft from the 134th Air Refueling Wing, based in Knoxville. The Bulgarians then

witnessed an in-flight refueling mission with four F-16 Fighting Falcons, from the South Carolina National Guard, while on their way to Tennessee.

During their time in Tennessee, the Bulgarians were treated to an array of demonstrations at weapons ranges, training facilities and entry control points. They were given a

# SUCCESSFUL NATO MISSION

## Tennessee Soldiers Return from Peacekeeping Mission

**LOUISVILLE, Tenn.** – Approximately 25 Soldiers assigned to the Tennessee National Guard’s Detachment 1, Company C, 2-135th Aviation Regiment from Louisville returned home Nov. 13 and 14, after a successful 10-month deployment to Kosovo.

For nearly a year, the Tennessee Soldiers were a part of a NATO-led international peacekeeping mission known as Kosovo Force, which is responsible for building a safe and secure environment for all citizens in the region.

“Our mission was to provide life-saving medical evacuation coverage and support to all NATO forces serving in the entire area,” said Capt. Hulon Holmes, the detachment commander. “We are a forward support medevac platoon, with three assigned aircraft, so it was our job to swiftly get medical care to those in need.”

Mobilized in January, the Tennessee Soldiers began their deployment in Fort Hood, Texas, where they

conducted mission specific training and made final preparations to deploy overseas. In just a month’s time, the unit was certified and departed for Kosovo, arriving in mid-February.

“As soon as we arrived, the detachment went straight to work flying missions throughout the country,” said Holmes. “We were always ready and on call 24-hours a day.”

Based at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, the Tennesseans were part of the KFOR 27 rotation and part of Kosovo Force Regional-Command East led by the Oregon National Guard’s 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Specifically a part of Task Force Aviation, the Tennesseans flew UH-60L Blackhawk helicopters in various medical support missions.

“We flew emergency blood transfers for the Camp Bondsteel Hospital, urgent and routine patients to trauma centers, and were called out on medical evacuations,” said Holmes. “Many areas have rough terrain and are inaccessible to



### About NATO’S KFOR Operation

NATO has been leading a peace-support operation in Kosovo since June 1999.

KFOR’s original objectives were to deter renewed hostilities, establish a secure environment and ensure public safety and order, demilitarize the Kosovo Liberation Army, support the international humanitarian effort and coordinate with the international civil presence.

Today, KFOR continues to contribute towards maintaining a safe and secure environment in Kosovo and freedom of movement for all.

(Information from nato.int)



Soldiers from the Tennessee National Guard's Detachment 1, Company C, 2-135th Aviation Regiment based in Louisville conduct emergency medical evacuation training in Kosovo during their recent deployment in support of KFOR. (Staff photo)

ground transportation.”

The unit also participated in multinational cross-training events and exercises with their fellow NATO partners: Austria, England, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Turkey, and others. The continuous training to improve and refine their skills ensured that the Soldiers were prepared to respond anywhere and at any time.

Once their deployment was complete, the Soldiers returned to Fort Hood, completed demobilization procedures, and performed a two-week quarantine required for all Soldiers returning from overseas.

“I’m very proud of the job our Soldiers did while deployed,” said Holmes. “We persevered through some additional challenges brought on by COVID-19, but our professionalism and hard work truly paid off.”

Due to COVID-19, the Soldiers will be returned to Tennessee individually throughout Nov. 13 and 14, and a welcome home ceremony will take place on a later date.

**- LT. COL. DARRIN HAAS**



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# MARATHON

## Guardmembers Represent Tennessee in Omaha Marathon

OMAHA, Neb. – Four service members in the Tennessee National Guard competed against athletes from 34 different states in the 2020 All-Guard Time Trials at the Omaha Marathon, Sept. 20.

The 2020 All-Guard Time Trials is the pre-qualification race for the All-Guard Marathon Team, which is part of National Guard Military Competitions. Athletes must compete in the time trials to earn a coveted spot on the team.

Maj. Tammy Cook, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Victoria Murphy, Master Sgt. Chris Eargle, and Senior Master Sgt. Steven Gill represented Tennessee at the marathon.

“The race in Omaha was hard, much like every other marathon I have run,” said Cook. “What I like about marathon running is the mental challenge - if you mentally check out when the going gets tough, then you will have a bad race. The key is to stay positive and trust that your training will get you through.”

Since becoming a competitive runner, Cook has competed in ten marathons, 50-kilometer trail runs, iron-man triathlons, a century bike



Senior Master Sgt. Steven Gill, Master Sgt. Chris Eargle, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Victoria Murphy and Maj. Tammy Cook represented the Tennessee National Guard at the 2020 All-Guard Time Trials in Omaha, Nebraska, on Sept. 20. (Courtesy photo)

race, and an open water swim competition.

“To run in the National Guard Marathon has been on my bucket list for many years,” said Cook. “I was selected for the Tennessee Army National Guard Team back in 2013 but suffered from knee injuries and was not able to go. Fast forward to 2020, I trained for the 26.2-mile race and was once again selected for the team.”

All four competitors completed the marathon event, with Cook earning second in her age group.

“Taking home the second place trophy for my age group was a bo-

nus. Running with National Guard Soldiers from all over the country was inspiring and motivating. I am grateful to be part of the Tennessee National Guard Team,” said Cook.

Gill, who also raced in the Endurance Team qualifier in August, earned a spot as an alternate on the National Guard Endurance Team.

“It was an honor to run with such an outstanding team and I look forward to participating again in 2021 and improving my time to make the All-Guard Marathon Team,” said Gill.

**- CAPT. KEALY A. MORIARTY**

# MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Tennessee National Guard Aircrew Rescues Injured Hiker



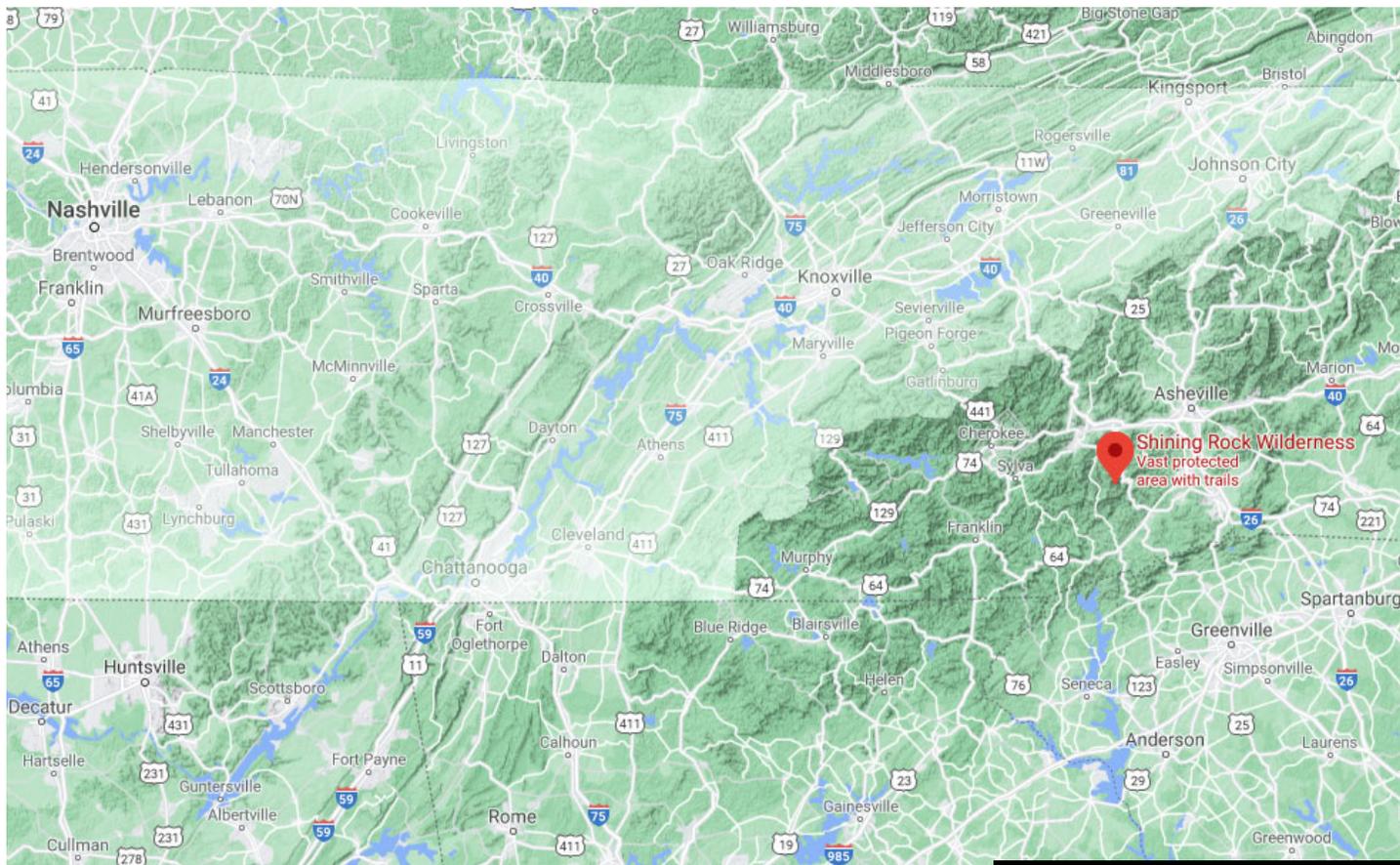
**SMYRNA, Tenn.** – A Tennessee Army National Guard flight crew responded to an emergency air evacuation mission after a hiker suffered injuries in the Pisgah National Forest area, North Carolina, Oct. 28.

At approximately 11:50 p.m. on Oct. 27, the Tennessee National Guard and Tennessee Emergency

Management Agency were notified of an injured hiker in North Carolina in need of assistance. By 1:00 a.m., the Tennessee Guard learned that the North Carolina National Guard attempted a ground rescue but was unsuccessful due to the rugged terrain.

“Once we received the call, train-

A UH-60L Blackhawk helicopter from the Tennessee National Guard's Detachment 1, Company C, 1-171st Aviation Regiment prepares to take-off from Joint Base McGhee-Tyson in Knoxville at approximately 2:15 a.m., Oct. 28. (Courtesy photo)



A map showing the location of Shining Rock, North Carolina in relation to Nashville. (Map courtesy Google Maps)

ing kicked in and our crew was assembled and ready to fly in just two hours,” said Col. Jay Deason, State Aviation Officer. “This was a great opportunity to help our sister state and our fellow citizens.”

At approximately 2:15 a.m., a UH-60L Blackhawk helicopter from the Tennessee National Guard’s Detachment 1, Company C, 1-171st Aviation Regiment launched from Joint Base McGhee-Tyson in Knoxville to assist in the rescue.

The flight crew consisted of Chief Warrant Officer 3 Matthew Jagers, Pilot in Command, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Trailson Moore, Pilot, Sgt.

Christopher Farrar, Crew Chief, and Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Banta, the Flight Paramedic.

After rerouting to the injury site due to low cloud cover, the crew made successful contact with the ground rescue team near Shining Rock, North Carolina. Within minutes, they located the injured hiker and began hoisting him aboard because the victim was located in dangerous, rough terrain on the side of a mountain.

Once the hiker was on board, the patient was flown to Hayward Regional Medical Center in North Carolina, where they received treat-

ment for their injuries.

“This event is a great example of the many aviation support missions our Soldiers conduct throughout the year,” said Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes, Tennessee’s Adjutant General. “The fact that our aviators and flight medics were able to respond so quickly to the request is a testament to their professionalism and selfless service and no doubt has saved many lives over the years.”

**- CAPT. KEALY A. MORIARTY**

# ADAPTING TO THE MISSION

## Murfreesboro Guardsman Testing Community for COVID-19



**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** – Throughout 2020, the Tennessee National Guard has been supporting various foreign operations around the world, as well as domestic emergencies at home. The most pivotal of them all has been COVID-19, and for one Tennessee National Guardsman, it's a battle that serves great purpose.

Sgt. Robert Neal, a member of 2nd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, has been an infantryman since he first joined the Tennessee National Guard seven years ago. Neal just recently deployed to Poland for nearly a year before returning home to Tennessee this past February. A few weeks

Sgt. Robert Neal, an infantryman with the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, conducts COVID-19 testing at a rural assessment site in Montgomery County, Sept. 28. Neal has been supporting the fight against COVID-19 in Tennessee communities since March. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Cordeiro)

later, the Tennessee National Guard began accepting volunteers to help fight COVID-19. Neal knew it didn't matter who or what the enemy was, but that he wanted to be a part of defeating it.

"I had just got back from deployment and it seemed like a great opportunity," said Neal. "Any chance I get to help out my community, I'm going to jump on it."

Neal, a Murfreesboro native, first volunteered to be part of Tennessee's fight against COVID-19 back in March. Since then, he's completed various medical and sanitation training courses prior to being activated to support drive-thru testing sites operated by the Tennessee National Guard and the Tennessee Department of Health.

Neal, who had taken some anatomy classes while completing his Animal Science degree at Middle Tennessee State University, began his COVID-19 activation by conducting traffic control. Next, he performed administrative work at various testing sites, and has now worked his way up to being a tester, swabbing members of the community to test for the virus. He has worked in some capacity at testing sites in Colombia, Pulaski, Clarksville, and Murfreesboro. Neal is currently serving at the COVID-19 testing site in Cookeville.

"In the National Guard we have a lot of different roles," said Neal. "Sometimes we are asked to do dif-



Tennessee Guardsmen and Tenn. Department of Health workers testing Tennesseans for COVID-19 at drive-thru testing site in April. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy Cordeiro)

ferent things for the betterment of the team, and as an infantryman, that ability to pivot and focus on the next mission is drilled in you from the start of Basic Combat Training."

More than 2,000 Soldiers and Airmen with the Tennessee National Guard have been activated at some point to fight the COVID-19 pandemic in our communities. In addition to operating drive-thru testing sites across the state, the Tennessee National Guard has also been tasked with testing in prisons and nursing homes, establishing alternate care facilities in vulnerable communities, and performing testing missions in some of the hardest hit areas.

Neal is one of the few that have been activated to fight the pandemic, and also supported law enforcement during periods of civil unrest

both here in Tennessee and in the National Capitol Region back in June.

"Everyone's doing different things in their civilian roles outside of the National Guard," said Neal. "It says a lot about Guard members and our ability to adapt. We've been working through the pandemic and periods of civil unrest, while also completing our annual training requirements. We have a lot on our plate but we're always ready for the next challenge."

**- STAFF SGT. TIMOTHY CORDEIRO**

# GUARD FOR LIFE

How the Tennessee National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion Became One of the Nation's Best



**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** – When it comes to recruiting and retention, keeping the U.S. military as the world's greatest fighting force is of critical importance. American military branches devote significant resources into marketing and incentives aimed at enlisting new recruits, as well as maintaining the strength

of the force.

It wasn't too long ago when the Tennessee National Guard was struggling with their recruiting and retention. Some modern ideas and marketing ingenuity have flipped the script for Tennessee, as they are now one of the top states in the country.

Staff Sgt. Gregory Cosby, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, meets with student athletes at a Riverdale High School football game Oct. 16, in Murfreesboro. Recruiters from the Tennessee National Guard make efforts to be involved in the community to build relationships with potential recruits. (Photo Courtesy Tennessee National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion)



Lt. Col. John Rigdon speaking at his promotion ceremony in March 2019. (Photo courtesy Providence Christian Academy)

Lt. Col. John Rigdon, a Murfreesboro native and commander of the Recruiting and Retention Battalion, explained how Tennessee became a national powerhouse in maximizing the force for the National Guard.

“It came down to doing things differently,” said Rigdon. “We started by changing the culture. We built a family atmosphere for our recruiters and support staff while putting our personnel in the right positions to succeed.”

Every state and territory has a recruiting and retention battalion,

and they are at the forefront of the National Guard’s strength management. The size of state determines how large the force is, and Tennessee’s recruiting staff consists of nearly 200 members spread throughout the state. There are members in each and every county, giving the Guard a personal connection to the community in which they serve. This is another move that made too much sense, explains Rigdon.

“In some of these rural communities you really have to be embedded with the population,” said Rigdon.

“We strategically place recruiters in areas where they can relate to those potential recruits. Some of these small towns aren’t keen to outsiders, so having our team members in these communities building relationships is vitally important.”

So what’s the difference between recruiting and retention? Well, recruiting is the process of getting new members of the community to join the National Guard, and retention is the art of getting current guard members to extend their contract and continue serving in the National Guard.

Retaining the force is just as important as adding to it, so Rigdon and his team put forth a plan to encourage Soldiers to remain in the Guard, starting by educating them on their entitlements and incentives they earn while serving. After all, it is much cheaper to retain a Soldier than to train a new one. This is why so much effort is put into retention in the National Guard. And so, the “Guard for Life” program was born.

In June 2019, the first “Guard for Life” event took place. Members of the recruiting and retention battalion presented to Guard members from around the area, that were coming up on expiring contracts, explaining their incentives and entitlements that they otherwise might not have known about.

“Sometimes younger Soldiers down the ranks may not be aware of all they’re entitled to, and we want to

# RECRUITING

speak to every one of these Soldiers and answer all their questions,” said Rigdon. “Every Soldier has a different story and a different situation. The “Guard for Life” program gives us the opportunity to meet with every single one of those Soldiers and listen to them and talk with them to



New recruit Carissa Farrar recently enlisted with the Tennessee Army National Guard as an military policeman and is waiting to ship to basic training. (Photo courtesy Tenn. Army National Guard)

help figure out what their best options are moving forward.”

To Rigdon’s point, the program is working. Since last year the attrition rate for the Tennessee National

Guard has decreased by nearly 20%, now sitting significantly below the national average. Despite the historic challenges of 2020, the Tennessee National Guard are posting strong recruiting and retention numbers.

However, COVID-19 has certainly hampered the battalion’s ability to meet with recruits one-on-one. School closures and restrictions on public gatherings forced Rigdon and his team to get creative.

“You know we’ve really had to adapt,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Owens, Recruiting and Retention Battalion Command Sergeant Major. “Whether it’s focusing more on social media or finding innovative ways to connect with Soldiers, we’ve had to improvise and overcome challenges and that’s what the military does.”

Going forward, Rigdon, Owens and their team will continue to make sure the Tennessee National Guard is as close to full-strength as possible. At the same time their goal is to have their battalion continue to set a strong example in communities throughout Tennessee.

“Our job is to make sure Recruiting and Retention Battalion Soldiers display professionalism,” said Owens. “We are the face of the Tennessee Guard; the first interaction between a potential recruit and a service member. We will be the standard.”

**- STAFF SGT. TIMOTHY CORD-  
EIRO**



## Cookeville Soldier Named Top Re- cruiting NCO in the Southeast

Staff Sgt. Aaron McDermott, assigned to Alpha Company, Recruiting and Retention Battalion for the Tennessee National Guard, was awarded the Southeast Recruiting and Retention NCO of the Year, after competing against recruiters from nine different states and territories, Nov. 20. The top recruiters competed during a week-long battalion board meeting, hosted by the Florida National Guard, to recognize the top Strength Maintenance Area Group III Recruiting and Retention NCO. McDermott now qualifies to compete in the National Recruiter of the Year Board held in Spring 2021. “This has been the greatest personal achievement in my military career, the amount of work I put into this process was gratifying, and I enjoy every minute,” said McDermott.

*(Story by Capt. Kealy A. Moriarty)*

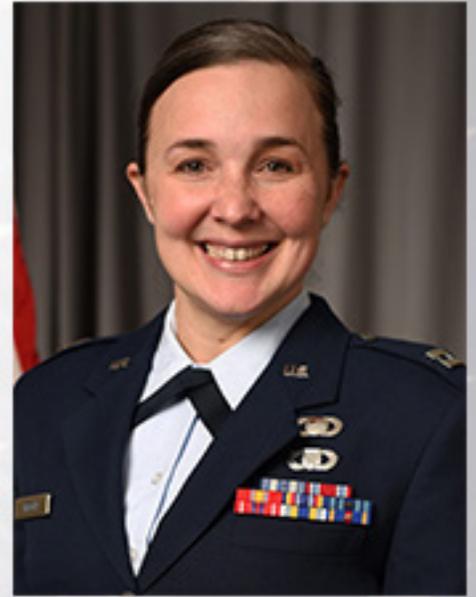
# I N M E M O R I A M



Chief Master Sgt. Scott Bumpus



Lt. Col. Shelli Huether

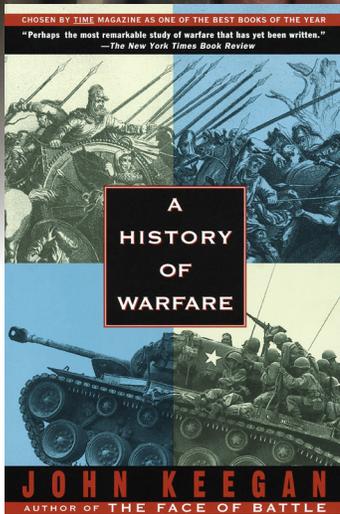


Capt. Jessica Wright

We would like to express our sincerest condolences to the friends and family of three of our Airmen who were killed in a civilian aircraft accident in McMinnville on Sept. 8. The three Airmen were all members of the 118th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Group; Lt. Col. Shelli Huether, director of operations for the 118th Intelligence Support Squadron, Capt. Jessica Wright, assistant director of operations for the 118th ISS, and Senior Master Sgt. Scott Bumpus, chief of current operations for the 236th Intelligence Squadron.

“All three were dedicated to the service of our nation.  
Their families are in our hearts and our prayers.”

*Col. Todd Wiles, commander of the 118th Wing.*



*A History of Warfare*  
By John Keegan

Lt. Col. Darrin Haas Gives his Review of:

# A HISTORY OF WARFARE

Very few authors can tackle a topic as vast and sweeping as an entire history of warfare, but John Keegan is not your average writer. One of the world's foremost military historians and author of the groundbreaking and seminal *The Face of Battle*, Keegan has shifted his attention from examining what warfare looks like from a soldier's perspective to what it all means throughout the course of human history. This was no easy task, but he is just the historian to do it.

In *A History of Warfare*, Keegan examines the very nature and origins of war. He looks at the development of weapons and defenses as well as codes of conduct undertaken by soldiers. In one concise and sweeping volume, he offers an original perspective on armed conflict through the ages which include a series of drastic cultural clashes, gradual cultural evolution, and even technical and spiritual revolutions from prehistoric times until the nuclear era. His

work encompasses hoplites in ancient Greece to infantrymen fighting in Iraq during Desert Storm.

He begins his work by arguing against Carl von Clausewitz's classical tenets in his epic volume, *On War*. Clausewitz's main contention is war is the continuation of state policy by other means. Keegan disagrees. He examines this theory and uses examples to disprove Clausewitz, concluding that, "War may be, among many other things, the perpetuation of a culture by its own means." He also writes that Clausewitz "made no allowance for ... war without beginning or end, the endemic warfare of non-state, pre-state peoples." Keegan feels that there is more to warfare than states disagreeing.

He then explores that cultural concept for the rest of the work. Keegan does this by dividing the book into four main sections: stone, flesh, iron, and fire. Within these vast categories, he jumps through time illustrating

Sir John Keegan at his home in Kilmington, Wiltshire, in 2008.  
(Photo by Rex Courtesy theguardian.com)



the various fundamentals of combat through the ages. Laid out thematically instead of chronologically as most historical narratives are, he tries to understand why men fight and what circumstances are needed for hostilities to commence. Each section, excluding fire, contains an “interlude” where Keegan’s develops the topic in greater detail. He examines how technology and numerous other elements affect warfare in conjunction within that chapter’s theme. He also looks at the political and economic aspects of war and the culture and motivations of the soldiers fighting.

*A History of Warfare* reinforces Keegan’s ideas that the future of warfare does not derive from the western model of warfare proposed by *On War*. It is a culmination of numerous cultures clashing. He also shows that war does not necessarily have to be total, as modern combat has largely become.

Overall, Keegan makes a well-crafted counter-argument against Clausewitz’s critical work about combat and he does it by providing the reader with a sweeping history of the evolving nature of warfare. His writing is easy to read and the thematic layout of the text was successful. *A History of Warfare* is good starting point for Tennessee

Guardsmen who want to dive into the military theory debates presented Clausewitz and Antoine-Henri Jomini’s *The Art of War*. I think it is a must-read for any junior officer or non-commissioned officer who are looking for a broad understanding of their profession.

**- LT. COL. DARRIN HAAS**



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