

VOLSTATE GUARD

Official Magazine of the Tennessee National Guard

October 2009



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Two Vietnam
Veterans
retire from
Tenn. Guard

Tennessee is one of 19
states recognized for
100% NGAUS membership

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Wynonna Judd sings at the Grand Ole Opry, Sept. 13, closing the 2009 NGAUS Conference. The 131st General Conference was hosted in Nashville this year. (Photo by NGAUS Public Affairs Staff.)



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**Maj. Gen.
Gus L. Hargett, Jr.**
The Adjutant General



In the July issue of this magazine, I talked about some of the issues affecting recruiting and retention in the Tennessee Army and Air National Guard.

On September 30, we closed out FY 2009 and I am proud to announce that both the Tennessee Army and Air National Guard ended the year at over 100 percent strength.

In spite of the elimination of waivers, bonuses and other incentives to recruiting and retention nationwide by the Department of Defense and the Services, we were still able to fill the ranks of the Tennessee National Guard with quality professionals standing toe-to-toe with our active duty counterparts in a seamless integration of the Total Force.

And when I say quality professionals, that is exactly what I mean. We have reduced the number of "No-Val" Soldiers by more than 81 individuals, bringing out "No-Val" figures to less than .8 percent.

As we continue with the second round of deployments both for the Army and the Air Guard, it is a true testimony to the "Volunteer Spirit" that we are able to maintain strength and force structure while many states are struggling to make ends meet.

I encourage you all to stay the course, to continue to go out and bring those quality individuals into our organization and carry on that time honored tradition of service pioneered by generations of Tennesseans before us.

**Command Sgt. Maj.
Mark A. Breece**
Senior Enlisted Leader



I am pleased to announce that our State Association Conference for the year 2010 will be a combined conference. This means that officers and enlisted from both the Tennessee Army and the Air Guard will host one state conference. Since we will have several thousand Soldiers and Airmen deployed in 2010, the executive council of the State Enlisted Association and the National Guard Officers' Association came together and decided it would be an excellent opportunity to bring the enlisted Soldiers and Airmen together for their annual conference.

For years, we have held separate State Officer and Enlisted Conferences. All of them have been successful, but logistically demanding. Additionally, many officers and enlisted personnel attended both conferences, which resulted in scheduling conflicts and carefully selected choices.

The dates for the combined conference are 26-28 February 2010 at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center in Murfreesboro, TN. Although you will likely notice some consolidation, there will be various separate business portions to address individual concerns of each association, and there are plans to host an enlisted hospitality room. Additional details of the combined conference, to include, guest speakers, are in the planning stages. Expect to see additional information soon.

To show our appreciation and gratitude to our officers, I encourage full participation from our enlisted force from both the Army and the Air. Record the dates on your calendar, inform your fellow service members, and get ready to have a good time. I am looking forward to seeing each of you there!

Tenn. Governor and Secretary of the AF speak at NGAUS

Story by: Staff Sgt. Robin Olsen

Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen, and Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley were just two of the distinguished speakers who addressed the 131st General Conference of the National Guard Association of the United States in Nashville.

"When I took office, I didn't know much about the National Guard and its capabilities," said Bredesen, who previously served as mayor of Nashville and was the first governor in more than a century to win all counties in the state.

"My admiration for the National Guard has grown immensely," he said.

During his time as Governor, Bredesen established the

first ever tuition assistance program for the members of the Tennessee Army and Air National Guard. "As I enter my last year as governor, one of my fondest memories will be as commander and chief of the Tennessee Guard."

"To our National Guard men and women, you stand toe-to-toe with your Active Duty counterparts. You are true professionals," he said, then he asked for a moment of silence for the 8th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

"Since the terrorist attacks, nearly 17,000 Soldiers and Airman have been deployed. I recognize the strain active service can cause and I remain committed to help."

Secretary Donley continued the emphasis on family members and acknowledged that for the Air Force, this was the year of the family.

"Behind successful guardsmen are families," he said.

As Secretary of the Air Force, Donley is responsible for ensuring the Air Force meets current and future operational requirements. "Americans live their lives without fear because of you. We face growing challenges and no one understands these challenges better than the Guard."

"In the past eight years, the Guard and Reserve operations tempo has increased immensely. The Guard has provided 250% more video surveillance than it was just 18 months ago, and has flown over 300 combat missions. We will continue responding to the needs of the joint team," he said.

Donley added that in 2010 he plans to accelerate the retirement of 250 fighter jets while sustaining the funding for the new F-35, which he called the workhorse of the 21st Century fighter force.

"Demands are rapidly changing and innovative Guardsmen are already exploring these new missions," he said. "Success depends on versatility. Ultimately unwavering commitment will bind us together in the years of work ahead."



Gen. Craig McKinley, Chief, National Guard Bureau, delivers a speech to the 2009 NGAUS Conference attendees during the first business session of the Conference, Sept. 11. McKinley serves at the National Guard Bureau's official channel of communication with governor's and Adjutants General. (Photo by NGUAS Public Affairs staff.)

19 states recognized for having 100% membership in NGAUS

Story by: Staff Sgt. Robin Olsen

The 131st General Conference of the National Guard Association of the United States State Recognition Awards ceremony honored 19 states for achieving 100% membership in NGAUS. The average is 62% nationwide.

Wisconsin and Mississippi topped the list with 29 consecutive years of 100% membership, while three were added to the list this year, Oregon, Utah and Guam. Guam was also awarded for having the most improved membership, which increased to 100% from only 75% last year.

Tennessee, Ohio, and Pennsylvania were credited for bringing in the most 2009 revenue.

In all, there were 19 states on the list. The others were Iowa, with 25 years consecutive 100% membership; North Carolina, 23; Kansas, 21; South Dakota, 10; Louisiana, 10; Hawaii, 10; Georgia, 8; Tennessee, 7; North Dakota, 5; Arkansas, 4; New Mexico, 3; Puerto Rico, 2; and the Virgin Islands, 2.

The Association serves as the primary voice

on Capitol Hill for the National Guard. More than 45,000 officers formed the organization in 1878 with the goal of obtaining better equipment. Since then, it has been credited with the enactment of the new post 9/11 G.I. Bill, making G.I. Bill benefits fully transferable to family members, and for securing funding for aircraft modernization. NGAUS is also responsible for making changes in National Guard retirement that enable some retirees to begin collecting their benefits before the age of 60; for making TRICARE available to Guardsmen and for keeping the cost of TRICARE down.

Today, with increased National Guard deployments, equipment levels are critically low. NGAUS brought the message to Congress and the result is billions in appropriations over the next five years and 30 billion more for equipment.

NGAUS is currently working on attaining shorter, more efficient mobilizations for National Guard members.



Attendees of the 2009 NGAUS Conference begin a 5K run that took place at sunrise Sept. 11, as part of the conference.

(Photo by NGUAS Public Affairs staff.)

Troops in Afghanistan receive new equipment

Story by: Staff Sgt. Robin Olsen

The MRAP All-Terrain Vehicle (M-ATV) is now in the hands of American troops in Afghanistan.

It is a tactical armored vehicle designed to be more IED resistant than the Humvee or the medium tactical vehicles currently in operation overseas.

A request for the new vehicle was made in 2008. The Pentagon originally ordered 2,244 M-ATVs to be constructed by Oshkosh Defense Corporation in June 2009. Later, more were ordered, bringing the total to 4,296.

The new blast-proof trucks will provide protection against roadside bombs, which are a major threat for US Forces in Afghanistan. Oshkosh Chief Executive Robert Bohn says the ATVs are designed to provide Soldiers better mobility on Afghanistan's off-road terrain. The previous MRAP vehicles in Iraq often proved too heavy for Afghanistan's roads and mountainous terrain. Ken Juergens, MATV Program Director, Oshkosh Defense, says the suspension system is what makes the vehicle so unique.



"When you are going over heavy rocks and boulders, then the wheel moves up 16 inches both ways, so it rides fairly smooth for a military vehicle," he said.

The M-ATV is lighter, more mobile and maneuverable than previous MRAPs. It is powered by a diesel engine, developing 370hp. It has a full-time all-wheel drive. It incorporates rugged and durable automotive systems and has an independent suspension system.

The design of the vehicle has an impact on the major causes of IED related

casualties.

Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Michael Brogan said the vehicle protects from the blast wave getting inside the vehicle and it protects from shrapnel and debris that is ejected from the blast.

"The vehicle is rapidly accelerated upward when an explosion occurs underneath it. Having a very heavy vehicle with a hull that sits high off the ground helps defeat those blast mechanisms," he said.

The Crew Cab is a v-shaped armored hull that dissipated the force of a bomb blast. Its durability comes from rails that protect the cab and thick armor plating on its body. It can hold a crew of four, plus the gunner. It has a payload capacity of 1,800 kg and can be fitted with a remotely controlled weapon station, armed with a heavy machine gun or automatic grenade launcher.

Juergens said that as of September, workers are building about 100 vehicles a month. Production will increase to about 1,000 a month in December.



Trace Adkins shoots new video at 118th AW



The 118th Airlift Wing, Nashville, hosted Trace Adkins and his crew on Sept. 2 to use the facility and one of the C-130 aircraft for his newest music video "All I Ask For Anymore." The video was released to the public on Sept. 28, and featured Soldiers from the Tennessee Army National Guard and Fort Campbell, KY. Several family members and Air National Guard servicemembers were also featured in the video.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Robin Olsen.)

Right: PFC Cherie Henderson, Army Aviation Support Facility #1, Smyrna, gets an auto-graph from Trace Adkins during a break in shooting his video. Henderson had a part in the video as one of the Soldiers coming off of the aircraft.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Robin Olsen.)



Ground Breaking Ceremony for Air Guard's 241st Engineering Installation Squadron

Story by: Nate Crawford

The Tennessee Air National Guard hosted a ground breaking ceremony in Chattanooga Sept. 1 to commemorate the start of construction on a new installation for the 241st Engineering Installation Squadron.

Construction begins on the 241st Engineering Installation Squadron's new \$8-million facility that will be utilized to train Airmen to meet the mission of the Tennessee National Guard and the United States Air Force. The unit's Air Force mission is "to accomplish the engineering, installation, reconstruction, and replacement of communications-computer systems, and air traffic control and landing systems."

The facility will provide engineering, administrative, and training space for the 241st as they prepare for the critical mission they provide to the state, the nation, and the nation's military facilities. It will allow the 241st maximum utilization of space with better visibility to its community as well as returning their current property to the Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport Authority for use by the airport.



Above: A tractor drives over a dirt pile after the groundbreaking, Sept. 1. A new facility will be built there to train Airmen of the 241st Engineering Installation Squadron.

Below: Shovels are dug into the Earth to mark the beginning of construction of the 241st EIS's new facility in Chattanooga. (Photos by Randy Harris.)



2 Vietnam Vets from Tennessee to retire after return from year long Iraq deployment

Story by: Staff Sgt. Robin Olsen

The Beatles' *Let It Be* was playing on the radio, *Catch 22* was playing on movie screens, and college students at universities across the Nation were in the campus streets protesting the war in Vietnam.

For two of Tennessee Army National Guard Soldiers, this was also the start of military careers that would later end after their shared a 2009 deployment to Iraq.

Master Sgts. Dennis Proctor, 60, and Robert Potts, 59, with the Tennessee Army National Guard's 30th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, were the first two Soldiers to step off the plane that brought the unit home July 29, after a year-long deployment to Iraq. These two ruggedly matured men will be retiring after several years and several deployments serving our country.

"How many of today's Soldiers can say that they have been in two major conflicts?" asked Proctor, who retired in September after nearly 40 years in service. "Only in the National Guard is that possible."

GETTING INTO THE MILITARY

The start of their careers didn't portray their two paths ever crossing.

"My mom told me that I had gotten a letter in the mail to be drafted into the Army," exclaimed Potts. He said he did some research and found out that he had 15 days to respond or else the police would be looking for him. He went to different military recruiting offices to check out his options. After the Air Force and Navy fell through, he was on his way to the Army recruiter to enlist.

While walking along the sidewalk on the way, Potts passed a Marine. He said he will always remember Sgt. Marshal, the man he passed that day. "He said good morning as we passed, before I ever even got in front of his desk. None of the others recruiters had bothered to speak to me until I was in their office." Potts explained to the recruiter that he had dropped out of school to work and help his father afford to raise his siblings, five in all, and that he had gotten the



Master Sgts. Dennis Proctor and Robert Potts, both with the 30th CSSB, Humboldt, TN, were the first two Soldiers off the plane when it returned the unit home safely, July 29, after a year-long deployment to Iraq. (Photo by Nate Crawford.)

draft notice in the mail, but he hadn't actually seen it yet. This encounter led Potts to join the Marine Corps in 1969.

Potts first day of boot camp started Feb. 12 of that year. "I had never been in an international airport before. This was my first airplane ride," recalled Potts. He said there were a few others going into the Marines waiting with him for the recruiter to show up. "We saw the Navy recruiter come and ask who all was going into the Navy and they followed him away. After a while of waiting, we finally saw the Marine with his campaign cover. Right in the middle of the airport he started screaming 'All of you, who think you'll be Marines...' then the guy next to me leaned over and whispered to me 'We've screwed up.'" Potts said the screaming continued from there for the next 13 weeks of his basic training.

Then Marine Potts served his country in the 11th Motor-T, Charlie Company. He spent two years in the Marines followed by two years inactive reserve before making a career of the Army National Guard.

Proctor was drafted into the Active Duty Army and chose to be a machinist.

"I thought that the day I received my draft notice was the worst day of my life. Most of my

close friends had joined the Guard, had high lottery numbers or had deferments. I had none of the above,” Proctor recalled.

“I was 20 years old when I arrived at Long Binh, Vietnam,” he said. Proctor served there from 1971 through 1972.

“I received an ‘early out.’ The Army was releasing Soldiers from Active Duty so they could be assigned to National Guard or Reserve units,” he added.

VIETNAM

The Vietnam Era spawned many books and movies over the years since the conflict, but these will never truly compare to having actually experienced the carnage of war.

“My first experience in Vietnam was an eye-opener for a 19-year-old kid,” said Potts, recalling the dead bodies that were lying on the ground.



Potts talks with a Veteran.
(Photo by John Evans.)



Proctor.
(Photo by John Evans.)

“We were told, ‘You’re next. Welcome to Vietnam.’ I was scared. I had just seen first hand what the Marine Corps was going to be like there and it happened everyday.”

“I hope no person wearing the uniform has to feel remorse for their service. The blood red stripes in the flag have been paid for and the stars in the blue field honor those who have paid the ultimate price,” said Potts.

“I didn’t want to be around anyone for awhile. I kept to myself and stayed away from crowds,” Proctor said, recalling how he felt when he first returned from Vietnam.

IRAQ

For those who are deployed for the military, there are several differences between then and now.

“The equipment, weapons, uniforms and military doctrine have changed since I first joined,” said Proctor.

“When you went on patrols in Vietnam, you always had to be armed and ready. During my 2008-09 deployment, the 30th CSSB never had to load their weapons to defend themselves,” said Potts.

“The military today is better equipped and better prepared than it has ever been. There are more technological advances and the members are more educated,” said Potts, “Technology has given us the chance to see the battlefield before you’re actually in it. In Vietnam, you got to see the tree in front of you.”

“Most of the changes have been good for the Soldier. The weapons have improved

dramatically, the uniforms are more functional and the vehicles that we operate are more superior to other countries,” said Proctor.

Although Soldiers today join the military voluntarily and return home amidst cheers and honorable glory, this was not always the way. These two Soldiers have seen the vast changes in viewpoints regarding the military and its members that have occurred over the last 40+ years since they originally joined the services.

“During the Vietnam era, a Soldier came and went as an individual. This time we came home as a unit, just like when we went over,” said Proctor.

Now, these Army Master Sergeants reflect on what it was like to return home from war then and now. Potts explained one major difference being the show of support that military personnel receive. “What many people don’t realize is that the Guard has always been involved in conflicts, now they get credit for going,” he said. Previously, units were only recognized as Active Duty.

“The only thing I hope for, when servicemembers come home, I hope somebody walks up, puts their hand on the Soldier’s back, and thanks them. It may not seem like much, but that Soldier will never forget it,” said Potts. “To a Vietnam Vet, it means a thank you for the last 40 plus years.”

There were no welcome home ceremonies and celebrations during the Vietnam Era. Potts recalled his return home from Vietnam—having

to hitch a ride part of the way and finish his trip home by walking the remaining four-miles.

“There is no child that doesn’t want a pat on the back. When do we grow out of that? Nobody quits wanting to be appreciated. Retired veterans want to be acknowledged and show that for others who are still being deployed today,” said Potts, who has been on three major deployments throughout his career, as well as many other important missions. The first was from 1969-70 in Vietnam, the second 2003-04 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and his last he just returned from also in support of OIF. He was also activated to support Desert Storm in 1990-91 and he was took part in finding missing people during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the huge ice storm that hit Tennessee in 1994. He has been a member of the Tennessee National Guard since 1986.

Another big difference between serving in Vietnam and Iraq is the weather.

“Both countries were hot, but different because one is humid and the other is dust,” Proctor said. He deployed three times during his 39-years and 5-months career. Not only has he served in Vietnam and Iraq, but in 2002 to 2003 he was part of Operation Noble Eagle at Fort Bragg, NC.

RETIRE

In 2005, there were less than 20,000 men and women from the Vietnam era still serving. This number included those who were enlisted but never actually served in country. Now Potts and Proctor hang up their berets for the last time, possibly the last of the fading few who have actually set foot on both soils responding to their nation’s call. Proctor retired Sept. 19 after returning from his last deployment. Potts will follow in July of 2010.

“It’s kind of scary to retire,” said Proctor, “I’ve had to go to work for the past 40 plus years and now I don’t have any certain place to be.”

He added, “I have several hobbies that probably will keep me busy. I hope to find a fun job and work as long as my health allows me.”

“I don’t feel 60. I do a lot of things that 20 year olds don’t even think about doing. It’s important to know that anyone who applies themselves can go somewhere in the military,” Potts said.



Proctor, Potts and a some Veterans watch as the remaining unit Soldiers deboard the plane to greet their family and friends. (Photo by John Evans.)

“It was harder to do some of the physical things that I could do during my first 20 years,” said Proctor.

These two are truly heroes and legends. They are iconic to those serving with them and after them. Many people remember the infamous quote from John F. Kennedy’s inaugural address in 1961, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country”, however, in this same speech, he also stated that Americans shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship to assure the survival and success of liberty; and that is exactly what these two men have personified throughout their military careers.

Not many can say they have fought in defense of our Nation’s freedom in two vastly different, yet major conflicts; and while they will simply be called Veterans, they will forever be so much more.

“JFK totally understood freedom of American personnel, from the lowest civilian to the highest ranking person in his cabinet. That’s freedom,” said Potts, adding “military personnel give their lives for their friends. Being a hero is not a simply a story about the two of us, it is about all six million plus who wear a military uniform.”

“I will always remember the different men and women who I have served with. I might have forgotten some of the names, but the effect they had on me and my career I will never forget,” said Proctor.

Nashville Predators continue “Military Mondays”

Military members can purchase tickets at the gate or online for only \$20 each. The Predators regular season kicks off Oct. 8 at home against #1 ranked Colorado Avalanche, at 7 p.m.



Military Monday Game Schedule

Oct. 12 - Edmonton Oilers @ 7 p.m.
Nov. 23 - Detroit RedWings @ 6 p.m.
Nov. 30 - Calgary Flames @ 7 p.m.
an. 18 - Toronto Maple Leafs @ 7 p.m.

The U.S. Army band will be conducting auditions for talented piano, guitar and electronic bass players.

Auditions will be held Thursday Nov. 12, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Select, Vanderbilt (Ballroom) located at 2613 West End Avenue in Nashville. Walk-ins are welcome.

For more information or to schedule an audition, please call CPT Sharon Toulouse at (301) 741-2750.

