

# VOLSTATE GUARD

Official Magazine of the Tennessee National Guard

Winter 2010



**Maj. Gen. Terry "Max" Haston  
takes command as Tennessee's  
75th Adjutant General**

**Tennessee Air National Guard  
Recruiting Team up for National  
Golden Eagle Award**

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Governor Phil Bredesen hands the colors of the Tennessee Military Department to Maj. Gen. Max Haston, formally giving Haston command of the Tennessee National Guard as the Adjutant General. The ceremony was held Jan. 9 at Tennessee National Guard Joint Headquarters in Nashville. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Clint Woods.)



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# Reality Check: TRICARE Is Safe and Sound Under Health Reform

Story By: Matt Flavin , Director of Veterans and Wounded Warrior Policy

In recent days, a particularly disturbing myth about health insurance reform has resurfaced. Opponents of reform have dredged up the baseless charge that reform somehow will affect or increase the cost of the TRICARE benefits on which America's troops and veterans depend.

The President believes our nation's greatest strategic asset is our men and women in uniform. Our servicemen and women and their families have always sacrificed selflessly in defense of our ideals. That is why one of the President's top priorities since coming into office has been to give our veterans "the care they were promised and the benefits that they have earned."

That began with the largest single-year increase in VA funding in three decades, and with initiating the Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record that will follow a member of the Armed Forces through their transition into VA care and stay with

them for life.

And it's why there is absolutely nothing in health reform that will affect TRICARE benefits. The most recent TRICARE fear-mongering comes by way of viral email and relies on a document prepared by the government analysts before President Obama took office which outlined potential options for containing health care costs. But here's the thing: *none of these options have been proposed by President Obama or adopted in health reform legislation.*

In addition, there are reports out there that new taxes will be imposed on TRICARE. That is not true either. There are no new taxes. No cuts in benefits. If you hear a politician telling voters that health reform will hurt TRICARE, don't believe him.

If you rely on TRICARE, you have nothing to worry about.

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## Follow along with the 75th RCAG while they are deployed

The Forward 75th Regional Command Assistance Group, the Rough Riders, has developed a Web site to show the life of a deployed Soldier during the pre-deployment, deployment and post deployment phases while they are stationed in Afghanistan.

The site will give an inside look at all 18 members of the Rough Riders, their responsibilities and contributions to the team.

"We will provide updates to this web site at the very least bi-monthly or as interesting events occur. This site will never compromise the position or location of our troops or discuss classified information. We invite young, old, military and non-military to join us as we attempt to keep the lines of communications open and strong," written by Maj. Ray Griffey on their Web site.

The RCAG is an 18 man team of senior and junior National Guardsman from various areas in Tennessee. This team is comprised of different specialties, capabilities, personalities and rank structures that are vital and beneficial to a military deployment.

A deployment is a very serious and stressful event, but even in life's most difficult times there are events, occasions and times of laughter that the unit would like to share. The unit left for mobilization in December.

To follow along with the 75th RCAG during their deployment, visit [www.tnrcagrr.com](http://www.tnrcagrr.com).

# Maj. Gen. Haston becomes Tennessee's New Adjutant General

Story By: Staff Sgt. Robin Olsen



Maj. Gen. Gus Hargett, (right), pins on the rank of Major General for Tennessee's 75th Adjutant General, Terry 'Max' Haston, (left), Jan. 9. Hargett served as TAG from 2002-2010. (Photo by Nate Crawford.)

Maj. Gen. Gus Hargett retired as Tennessee's Adjutant General after a 46-year career serving in the Tennessee National Guard on Dec. 31, 2009. The Change of Responsibility took place in a formal ceremony held Jan. 9, at the National Guard Joint Force Headquarters in Nashville.

Maj. Gen. Terry "Max" Haston, a native of McMinnville, who previously served as the Assistant Adjutant General, Army, assumed command as the 75th Adjutant General for Tennessee. As TAG, Haston is responsible for the supervision of the Military Department of

Tennessee that includes the Army National Guard, the Air National Guard, the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency, and the Tennessee State Guard.

Hargett, who started his career as an enlisted infantry Soldier with Company A, 3/117th Infantry Battalion out of Ripley, Tenn., will now serve as the President of the National Guard Association of the United States. NGAUS provides the states a unified National Guard representative before Congress. It seeks modern equipment, training, missions and personal benefits for the Army and Air

National Guard by lobbying Congress and the Executive Branch.

Haston was commissioned as an Armor Officer in the U.S. Army in 1979 from Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tenn. Upon completion of the Armor Officer Basic Course at Fort Knox, Ky., he was assigned to the XM-1 project and subsequently to 2/5 Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, Texas, as a Tank Platoon Leader. After leaving Active Duty in 1983, Haston joined the Tennessee National

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Maj. Gen. Terry 'Max' Haston signs the Oath of Office document in front of Tennessee Governor Phil Bredeson Jan. 9. The document officially certifies Haston as the Adjutant General for Tennessee.

(Photo by Nate Crawford.)

#### **Cont. from page 4.**

Guard as Commander of Company M, 3/278th Armored Cavalry Regiment in Rockwood, Tenn. In 1987, he became the 3/278th ACR Training Officer, where he served until he joined the 278th Regimental staff in 1989.

Haston later became the 7th Commander of the 278th ACR, headquartered in Knoxville. Following that position, he was assigned as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations at Joint Force Headquarters in Tennessee.

In May, 2005, Haston mobilized and deployed as the Chief of Reserve Components, Multi-National Corps Iraq (XVIII Airborne Corps).

Haston has a Masters Degree in Strategic Studies. He has been awarded the Legion of

Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, four Meritorious Service Medals, four Army Commendation Medals, two Army Achievement Medals, the National Defense Service Medal, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Iraq Campaign Ribbon, the Global War on Terrorism Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the Army Parachute Badge, the Indonesian Parachute Badge, and the Order of Saint George, Bronze. His state awards include the Tennessee National Guard Distinguished Service Medal, the Tennessee National Guard Commendation Ribbon, three Tennessee Army National Guard Service Ribbons, and the Tennessee Army National Guard Volunteer Ribbon.

# Tenn. Legislatures fight to expand National Guard Budget

Story By: Pvt. 1st Class Brittney N. Springs and Sgt. Melissa Thornhill Wood, 118th MPAD

As debate rages in Washington over funding for health care reform and homeland security, three Tennessee legislators are fighting to protect and expand the budget for the Tennessee Army National Guard.

The Tennessee state senate will convene Jan. 12, to a host of budgetary cuts and talks of layoffs, Senator Bill Ketron of the 13th district said at Houston Barracks Jan. 9, after a change of responsibility ceremony for the Tennessee Adjutant General.

“My hope is to protect the National Guard budget within the state of Tennessee,” he said.

In light of the huge deficit, Ketron said it is inevitable that sacrifices will have to be made, but he will fight to protect the Guard’s interests at all costs.

“The Guard is a complex institution,” said Congressman Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.) “Its dual role is complicated but vitally necessary.”



Congressmen Zach Wamp (R-3rd) and Jim Cooper (D-5th) listen to remarks by the state’s new Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Terry M. “Max” Haston, during a ceremony at Houston Barracks today. Both representatives are working to bolster support for the Tennessee Army National Guard within Congress.

(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Walter E. van Ochten, 118th MPAD.)

Cooper described the Guard as a parody. He said that because its Soldiers are expected to perform at the same level as those on active duty, they should also be entitled to an equal level of respect, pay, training, and most importantly, funding.

“We’re in a long-term era of persistent conflict where we have unsustainable deployments where the tempo is higher than a volunteer force can sustain over a long period of time,” added Congressman Zach Wamp (R-Tenn.). “Therefore, the Guard and reserve component is equal to active duty, yet the pay and the benefits are still not in line.”

“There is widespread support to bring the Guard and reserve up and to give them a stronger position in terms of the funding apparatus,” he said.

Since 9/11, the Guard and reserve have played an active duty role, because all components of the Army are one force, Wamp said.

“It is not the old paradigm of weekend warrior or the Guard is a support organization. It is one force, unified. Everyone is on par, yet we all know that from military construction to pay and benefits, even Chief of Staff recognition, the Guard is not yet where it needs to be,” he said.

“The Guard and reserve play a complete role as a full team member with our active duty components, and that is unprecedented in the history of our country,” Wamp said. “It speaks to the value of the Guard. It speaks to the importance of the Guard to sustain our quality of life and our freedoms.”

“The National Guard is a vital part of national defense,” Cooper added. “They’re not just weekend warriors anymore, and I hope the American public wakes up to that.”

# 168th MPs change command in January

Story By: Staff Sgt. Lee Elder, 118th MPAD

Citizen-Soldiers of the 168th Military Police said farewell to the commander who led them to war while welcoming back a longtime friend during a change of command ceremony held at its headquarters in Dyersburg.

Col. James B. "Brad" Bishop relinquished command to Lt. Col. Barry Collins during the afternoon ceremony that featured the traditional passing of the colors. Representatives of the headquarters and each of its subordinate units stood in formation as the unit changed leadership.

Bishop, who took command on May 7, 2007, presided over the deployment of four of the battalion's five companies. The Brownsville native personally led the headquarters' mobilization and deployment to Iraq where it oversaw detainment operations in Buka prior to its return from the Middle East in October.

"I wouldn't have traded anything for the two-and-a-half years I had in command," Bishop said. "I don't think there's anybody standing here who has had more fun than I did."

Bishop thanked both his wife of 26 years, Kim and his top NCO, Command Sgt. Maj. James Smith, for their support during his tenure in command. However, he focused most of his gratitude on the unit's staff and its Soldiers.

"I could not have been successful without you and the Soldiers of the 168th," Bishop

said. "You are the best trained, most experienced unit that serves the state of Tennessee."

Prior to relinquishing command, Bishop was presented with a Meritorious Service Medal.

A former battalion commander, Col. Patty Jones, commander of the 30th Troop Command, presided over the ceremony that featured the unit's Soldiers and their subordinate units standing in formation. She also heaped praise on the unit for its performance in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq.

In Iraq, the headquarters' unit oversaw operations at the world's largest detention camp, Jones said. More than 5,000 detainees passed through the

camp during the 168th's stint there.

"You've done a lot," Jones said. "You've proven time and time again that you are standard bearers."

Since the unit's return, it has entered the reset phase with a focus on individual Soldier skill qualification and unit equipment maintenance. Collins will now lead the unit.

Although he's new to the command, Collins is no stranger to the unit. He began his career serving as a platoon leader in Ripley with the 268th MP Company in 1988.

"This is a big day," Collins said. "The unit is back home; I'm back home; Col. Bishop brought the unit back home and it's a good day."



Lt. Col. Barry Collins (right) grasps the guidon of the 168th Military Police Battalion signifying his assumption of command during a Jan. 10 ceremony in Dyersburg. (Photo by Pfc. Brittney Springs, 118th MPAD.)

# Maj. Gen. Gus Hargett, Jr., awarded DSM

Story By: Randy Harris

In a ceremony held Dec. 1, Maj. Gen. Gus L. Hargett, Jr., Tennessee's 74<sup>th</sup> Adjutant General, was awarded the nation's highest peacetime award, the Distinguished Service Medal, "for exceptionally meritorious service in positions of great responsibility." The medal was presented by Lieutenant General Thomas G. Miller, Commanding General, First U.S. Army.

Maj. Gen. Hargett was appointed to Tennessee's top military position in 2002 and reappointed by Governor Phil Bredesen in 2003. The Adjutant General is responsible for the supervision of the Military Department of Tennessee that includes the Army National Guard, the Air National Guard, the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency, and the Tennessee State Guard. The Military Department comprises more than 14,000 Soldiers, Airmen, and civilian employees.

The Distinguished Service Medal is awarded to any person who, while serving in any capacity with the United States Army, has distinguished himself by exceptionally meritorious service to the government in a duty of great responsibility. The criteria for the Distinguished Service Medal specifies that, "The performance must be such as to merit recognition for service which is clearly exceptional."

Maj. Gen. Hargett has



Lt. Gen. Thomas Miller, Commanding General, First U.S. Army, awards the Distinguished Service Medal to Maj. Gen. Gus Hargett, Jr., in a ceremony at Tennessee National Guard Headquarters in Nashville. Hargett retired as the 74<sup>th</sup> Adjutant General of Tennessee on Dec. 31, 2009.

(Photo by Nate Crawford.)

served 47 years with the United States Army and Tennessee National Guard in various positions of increasing responsibility, culminating as the Adjutant General of Tennessee. Under his leadership the Tennessee National Guard faced the most challenging time in this nation's history, mobilizing nearly 20,000 Soldiers and Airmen in the Global War on Terrorism since September 11, 2001.

A portion of Maj. Gen. Hargett's citation for the Distinguished Service Medal reads; "Through his masterful balance of compassion and strength, Major General Hargett's decisions were always driven by the welfare of both the individual Soldier and the organization. His steadfast leadership and sincere concern for every Soldier and Airman in the Tennessee National Guard were evidenced in his every action. At one of the most challenging times in our nation's history, Major General Hargett's many years of mobilization and deployment expertise made their mark. He always led from the front, by example, and his untiring dedication is unparalleled."

# Tennessee-Bulgarian Partnership Continues

*Story By: 2nd Lt. John Fesler, Director, Tennessee State Partnership Program*

Continuing one of the longest partnerships in the State Partnership Program, members of the Bulgarian Executive Agency of Social Activities of Ministry of Defense visited Tennessee the week of Dec. 7 to learn about the social care of U.S. military veterans.

Starting in 1993, the Tennessee – Bulgaria relationship has continued to evolve under the National Guard’s State Partnership Program. The program pairs military organizations from different countries with a state’s National Guard organization to familiarize, build relationships

and learn from each other’s strengths. There are currently 62 partnerships in the State Partnership Program.

“The Tennessee-Bulgaria partnership has been one of the most active since we began in 1993,” said Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Gus Hargett, Tennessee’s former adjutant general. “Over the years, we have had dozens of exchanges with our Soldiers and Airmen going to Bulgaria and members of the Bulgarian military visiting Tennessee to learn about our military structure.”

During their visit, led by

Bulgarian Air Force Reserve Major Manol Tentchev, the group visited the Department of Veteran’s Affairs, discussed veteran’s affairs with leadership from the AMVETS organization and toured the Tennessee Spine and Rehabilitation Center.

Through an interpreter, Major Tentchev expressed how impressed he was with how American military veterans are cared for. “While Bulgaria does not have the infrastructure to care for veterans the way America does, I will take the information learned on this trip back to Bulgaria and hopefully implement some of the processes used in Tennessee,” said Tentchev.

Gary Trende, Chief Operating Officer of the Tennessee Valley Veteran’s Affairs Healthcare System believes the exchange of information between Bulgaria and Tennessee can be very beneficial to continuing the strong relationship between Tennessee and Bulgaria. “I am proud to have been asked to take part in this event and was happy to discuss the Department of Veterans Affairs dedication to our servicemembers,” said Trende. “Hopefully in the near future we can take the relationship further and visit Bulgaria and tour their facilities to gain a better understanding of their social care of veterans.”



Tennessee Valley Healthcare system Public Affairs Officer, Christopher Alexander, demonstrates a Veteran’s Affairs Healthcare database to members of the Bulgarian contingent visiting Tennessee as part of the State Partnership Program Dec. 8.

(Photo by 2nd Lt. John Fesler.)

# Tennessee ANG's Troop G Keeps Northern Iraq Aviation 'moving'

*Story By: Sgt. Mike Alberts, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade*

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – Four, 10-ton MRAP's hum in the dark. As motors idle, Soldiers with headlamps crawl in and around each metal beast, conducting oft-performed pre-combat checks and inspections.

Moments later, approximately 20 Tennessee Army National Guard Soldiers of Troop G, 1st Battalion, 230th Air Cavalry Squadron, Task Force Wings, gather around their convoy commander for safety and mission briefs. Some participate in a brief prayer.

Within the hour, additional vehicles join the mission as the troop embarks on another Combat Logistics Patrol, one of dozens conducted since their arrival in Iraq in July, 2009.

The CLPs provide food, water, fuel and fresh personnel to a small outpost near the Syrian border called FOB Nimur where other Troop G Soldiers are engaged in forward arming and refueling operations for the region's military helicopters.

Maj. Daniel F. Pugh, commander, Troop G, and a 20-year military veteran and native of Franklin, Tenn., explained that his Soldiers provide all necessary ground support for over 600 Soldiers of the Tennessee ANG's 1-230th ACS, currently deployed to northern Iraq.

"We are the squadron's forward support troop which includes a maintenance, distribution and headquarters platoon," said Pugh.

"Our maintenance platoon attends to the maintenance needs of all ground support equipment within the squadron, which includes everything from wheeled-vehicles to generators and pumps. Our distribution platoon is responsible for maintaining and operating our three forward arming and refueling points. Our headquarters platoon conducts the CLPs," he said.

Pugh's troop was constituted less than a year before the 1-230th ACS received orders to deploy



to Iraq. It's a unit truly representative of his home state. Troop G consists of about 175 Soldiers who hail from various locations to include Smyrna, Alcoa and Jackson, Tenn., among other cities and towns. Ironically, Pugh's Soldiers now find themselves similarly spread throughout northern Iraq, with Soldiers living and working in Mosul at Forward Operating Base Diamond Back, Tall Afar at FOB Sykes and near the town of Sinjar at FOB Nimur.

"Our Soldiers come from all over the state of Tennessee," said 2nd Lt. Cibeles Ramirez-

**Cont. on page 11**

**Cont. from page 10.**

Rodriguez, platoon leader, Troop G, 1-230th ACS. 2nd Lt. Ramirez-Rodriguez is a resident of Clarksville, Tenn. In Iraq, she's both Troop G's maintenance platoon leader and production control officer, ensuring that the unit receives the necessary parts and equipment to repair and replace anything related to ground transportation.

"Perhaps being from all over explains why we have such a wonderful variety of necessary skills," said 2nd Lt. Ramirez-Rodriguez. "That variety has proven to be helpful given the fact that our support mission in Iraq is so substantial," she continued.

"Whether it's maintenance or refueling, everything starts with the forward support troop. When we fix a generator, for instance, that generator powers certain equipment that's used to fix a helicopter. When we fix a fuel truck, it becomes capable of pumping fuel into a helicopter. And quite frankly, we do it all very well.

We do it well because we've really bonded as a team which is a reflection of the quality of our Soldiers."

The 1-230th ACS deployed with more than 600 soldiers from units in Smyrna, Alcoa and Jackson, Tenn., back in July, 2009. The squadron is task organized with a Headquarters, Headquarters Troop. Troops A, B and C are equipped with the unit's OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopters, whose primary missions are reconnaissance and security operations. Troop D is equipped with Blackhawk helicopters used to transport troops and supplies.

Troops E and F handle the squadron's first level, minor maintenance, and intermediate maintenance, component and specialty repair work, respectively. Finally, Troop G provides ground transportation, downed aircraft recovery capability and fuel and ammunition supply in addition to other forward support functions.

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## **Armory dedicated the Late Russell Newman**

*Story By: Randy Harris*



The Tennessee Army National Guard Armory on Sutherland Ave. in Knoxville, was dedicated on Nov. 8 to the First Colonel of the Regiment, Col. Russell A. Newman.

A Knoxville native and community leader, Newman served as the 278th's First Regimental Commander when it was initially organized in 1977. Today, the 278th stands as the largest unit in the Tennessee National Guard with over 3,700 Soldiers.

Newman graduated from the University of Tennessee in 1953 and received his commission as a Second Lieutenant from the ROTC program. His distinguished career included numerous staff and command positions while on active duty and with the Tennessee Army National Guard. After his 1985 retirement from the National Guard with nearly 32 years of service, Col. Newman joined the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency and was named the first Director of the East Region in March 1986.

Maj. Gen. Gus Hargett, Tennessee's Adjutant General; Brig. Gen. Max Haston, Assistant Adjutant General, Army; and State Senator Tim Burchett were in attendance at the ceremony.

# Tennessee Army National Guard Maintains, Operates Critical Northern Iraq Aviation Asset

Story By: Sgt. Mike Alberts, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade

## CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE

SPEICHER, Iraq – Nestled in a remote location, by design, is a special aviation operation in northwest Iraq.

Soldiers of the Tennessee Army National Guard's 1-230th Air Cavalry Squadron maintain and operate a Forward Arming and Refueling Point, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

According to 2nd Lt. Jason Shaffer, platoon leader and FARP officer in charge, Troop G, 1-230th ACS, Soldiers who work on the FARP are responsible for refueling and rearming various types of helicopters at multiple "points" or helipads.

Shaffer, husband and father of two, is a native of Nashville, Tenn., and has served in the Tennessee ANG for two years, after six years of active duty service. He's responsible for the overall functioning of three FARP's. He ensures that the correct quality, grade, type and amount of fuel is delivered to each FARP, in addition to spot checking the completion of daily service and maintenance tasks.

Shaffer explained why he has a special confidence in his Soldiers handpicked to work on the FARP.

"The Soldiers that we've chosen to work out here must be exceptionally disciplined," said Shaffer. "Quite unlike operations at the more established FOB FARP's, the operations ... run akin to those of a civilian fire station.

"When radios come on out here, wherever the Soldiers are – and I do mean 'wherever' -- they immediately drop anything they're doing, put on their protective equipment, run to the fuel trucks and [service the aircraft]. At other locations, Soldiers are on shift. Here Soldiers work when the aircraft are flying which is all the time, any time."

Staff Sgt. Derrall Tilson is Shaffer's fuel and ammunition platoon section sergeant with 1-230th ACS. The 46 year old native of Knoxville, Tenn., has deployed multiple times with the Tennessee ANG, and also as an active duty



infantryman. He's been in and around FARP's since he transferred to the Guard in 1991.

"My biggest concern with operations on a FARP is always safety," said Tilson. "In this job, we're talking about aircraft that have active weapons platforms with rotors turning and Soldiers pumping fuel into helicopters, often at night. Our guys out here are special."

It was at Fort Sill, Okla., when the unit learned that only about 20 percent of the Soldiers were already school qualified to do the aviation job, Shaffer explained.

"We had cooks and water guys and [personnel with] various other job skills. We had to get everyone trained and properly qualified. And that has been my greatest joy; teaching and training Soldiers who know very little about this job to where they are all proficient," he added.

The squadron's executive officer said the squadron operates three FARP's throughout Task Force Marne's area of operation.

"The Soldiers ... are truly remarkable," explained Maj. Beason Layne, Executive Officer, 1-230th ACS. "They have all performed exceedingly well and have now pumped close to 1.7 million gallons of fuel without incident."

One of those young Soldiers is Spc. David Romano, a food service specialist who was cross trained into FARP operations. For the

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## Cont. from page 12.

young Jackson, Tenn., native, switching from the kitchen to the FARP wasn't a hard choice.

"I like to cook, but I'm from Tennessee; I really like being outside," said Romano. "Getting a chance to meet local Iraqis every once in a while and being out here in nature, getting to look at the hills every day, that's the reason being deployed is okay for me."

The 1-230th ACS deployed with more than 600 soldiers from units in Smyrna, Alcoa and Jackson, Tenn., back in July, 2009. The Squadron is task organized with a Headquarters, Headquarters Troop. Troops A, B and C are equipped with the unit's OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopters whose primary missions are reconnaissance and security operations. Troop

D is equipped with Black Hawk helicopters used to transport troops and supplies.

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## Murfreesboro MP Co. returns home after year deployment

*Story By: Randy Harris*

The Tennessee Army National Guard's 269th Military Police Company from Murfreesboro returned to Tennessee Nov. 6, after a year's deployment to Iraq.

Approximately 170 Soldiers arrived at the Guard's Volunteer Training Site-Smyrna, AASF #1, at 8 p.m. Friday. They were greeted by their families and friends.

The Military Police units began out-processing early Saturday and Soldiers left by bus for the Murfreesboro armory that same day.

Nearly 20,000 Tennessee Army and Air Guardsmen will have deployed by January 2010.



Above: A 269th Soldier hugs his son after arriving home from a year-long deployment to Iraq.



Left: Family members and friends gathered in Smyrna to welcome home the 269th Military Police Company.

(Photos by Nate Crawford.)

# Air Guard Recruiting Team up for National Award

Story By: Staff Sgt. Robin Olsen

The Tennessee Air National Guard Recruiting and Retention Team will compete for the National Golden Eagle Award at the National Recruiting and Retention Conference Feb. 22, in Dallas, Texas.

The National Golden Eagle Award is awarded annually to recruiting teams that demonstrate their ability to work together as a team and who have shown outstanding recruiting efforts. The winners are determined based on the Team's accomplishments, leadership, self improvement and community involvement. A big factor is the number of enlistments and the statewide percentage for membership.

"There are five regions of recruiting and retention that are made up of all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Guam," said Chief Master Sgt. Carol Byerley, Tennessee Air National Guard Recruiting and Retention Superintendent. Tennessee is part of Region Three.

The Recruiting Team placed first out of 13 to win the Regional Golden Eagle Award earlier this year. Also, the Region Three Outstanding Recruiting and Retention Superintendent of the Year Award was awarded to Chief Byerley. She will be competing for the National Award in the category as well.

Tennessee had 448 accessions between Oct. 1, 2008 and Sept. 30, 2009. Fiscal year 2008, the Team went from 94 percent to 100 percent.

"We were able to maintain that number and increase to 104.6 percent fiscal year," said Byerley. "It was a record breaking year. We were able to meet our required end strength for the first time in the history of Tennessee Recruiting," she added.

"We are ranked in the top ten nationwide. We use a force management plan to know exactly where the vacancies are, then we recruit qualified individuals to fill those vacancies," said Byerley.

Tennessee has a pre-basic military training course at each of the three wings in Tennessee. The course has positively impacted basic military training completion rates by 40 percent. It makes sure that the recruits are prepared prior to going to BMT.

Another resource the Recruiting Team uses are its three mobile recruiting offices.

"The trailers are used at career fairs, air shows, football games and other community events statewide. They are great for mobile advertising and let the recruiters get out in communities and recruit on the spot," explained Byerley. The trailers were previously FEMA trailers that had to be updated and retooled for the Recruiters to use.

Along with maintaining good recruiting numbers, the recruiters themselves are also held to a certain standard. Almost 85 percent of Team Tennessee's Recruiters and Retainers have completed Associates, Bachelors, or Masters Degrees, resulting in the highest average in state history.

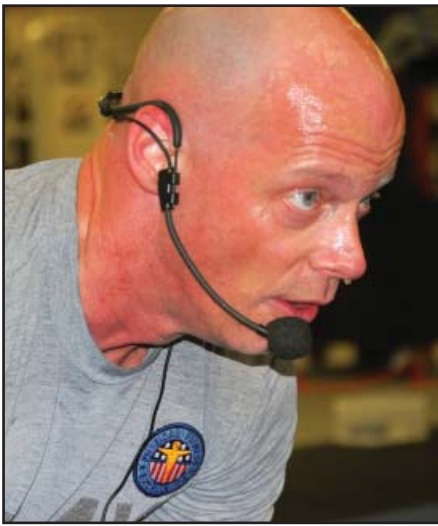
"We have gone above and beyond to complete civilian education. In Tennessee we set the standard for many programs, which numerous states have mirrored," said Byerley.

Other awards the team has won for FY09 are the National Guard Association Tennessee Outstanding Service Award for maintaining 100 percent participation in the statewide program, and the Enlisted Association of the National Guard Minuteman of the Year Award.



Capt. Stephen Kinzer swearing in Jamespatrick Kelly, Jan.20, at the 118th Airlift Wing. Kelly was recruited by Tech. Sgt. Ron Hartley.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Robin Olsen.)



Above: Staff Sgt. Ken Weichert, Tennessee Army National Guard, Recruit Sustainment Program fitness director, sweats it out during his physical training routine at Geronimo Gym on Fort Richardson, Alaska, Jan. 9. Weichert is a six-time Soldier of the year winner and was chosen to be the motivational speaker during the 2009 Alaska Army National Guard NCO Ball. "Sgt. Ken is very energetic, very contagious and made you want to push yourself," said Sgt. Rebecca L. Pilmore, Alaska Army National Guard, Joint Forces Headquarters, human resources non-commissioned officer.

Top Right: Weichert leads members of the Alaska Army National Guard's Joint Forces Headquarters in a physical training routine at Mad Bull training site on Elmendorf Air Force Base Jan. 10.

Right: Weichert leads Soldiers from different units of the Alaska National Guard through his rigorous physical training routine at Geronimo Gym Jan. 9. Weichert, also known as "Sgt. Ken," is featured monthly in the fitness section of the GX magazine called "Fighting Spirit."

Below: Weichert shows those participating in the work out an over-sized playing card symbolizing how many repetitions of push-ups, crunches and jumping jacks to do. "It's this type of training that prepares you for combat," said Weichert, "the motto is fit to fight."

(Photos by Pfc. Karina Paraoan, 134th Public Affairs Detachment.)

