



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
4 JUNE 2009  
09-30

CONTACT: DARRIN HAAS  
615-313-0793(OFFICE)  
615-397-5948(CELL)

## **Murfreesboro Guardsman awarded Purple Heart in Iraq**

**MOSUL, Iraq** – Staff Sgt. Thomas Hoffelt, a squad leader in the Tennessee National Guard’s 269th Military Police Company from Murfreesboro, was awarded the Purple Heart during a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Mosul on May 28 for injuries he sustained while serving in Iraq.

On February 24 of this year, Hoffelt and his squad were conducting an inspection visit at an Iraqi Police Station in Mosul when two men wearing Iraqi police uniforms opened fire on the team with AK 47 assault rifles. While shot in the right side of his face and in his upper left shoulder, Hoffelt returned fire as the assailants fled the scene. He then administered first aid to the wounded, and coordinated with other units to secure the area and transport his soldiers to the hospital.

1st Lt. William E. Emmert, from Fayetteville, was killed during the attack and three other Tennessee Guardsmen, including Hoffelt, were wounded. Hoffelt’s injuries allowed him to remain in Iraq and return to duty. The other two wounded Guardsmen are currently receiving medical care in the United States and received their Purple Hearts at earlier ceremonies.

“I’m proud of the job our soldiers are doing in Iraq, and I’m especially proud of this young Tennessean,” said Brig. Gen. Max Haston, Assistant Adjutant General of the Tennessee Army National Guard. “Without hesitation, Hoffelt placed himself in harm’s way to help his fellow soldiers.” Haston was in Mosul last month visiting Tennessee Guardsmen and personally presented the Murfreesboro soldier with the award.

The Purple Heart is one of the most widely recognized and respected medals. It was established by General George Washington at Newburgh, New York, during the Revolutionary War on August 7th, 1782. Originally created as a Badge of Military Merit, the Purple Heart is awarded in the name of the President of the United States to any member of the U.S. Armed Forces who has been wounded or killed during combat with a declared enemy.

“I was just doing my job,” said Hoffelt. “I volunteered to deploy and I’m proud of the job that the 269th Military Police Company is doing in Iraq. But the real heroes of that day were my squad.”

The 269th Military Police Company is scheduled to return to Tennessee in November 2009.

### **CUTLINES:**

**Photo #1: Staff Sgt. Thomas Hoffelt, is presented the Purple Heart by Brig. Gen. Max Haston, Assistant Adjutant General of the Tennessee Army National Guard, at Forward Operating Base Mosul, Iraq.**

**Tennessee Army and Air National Guard press releases can be found at**

<http://www.tnmilitary.org/PressReleases.htm>

PO BOX 41502  
NASHVILLE, TN 37204  
615.313.3001