



MEDIA RELEASE

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Memphis National Guard unit returns from mission in Italy

NASHVILLE – It has been less than a year since the 130th Military Police Company in Memphis came back from Kosovo, where they worked with international law enforcement agencies and the Kosovo Police to provide security for the newly independent country.

More recently, the National Guard soldiers got the chance to use that experience in a completely different part of the world.

From May 19 through June 13, the unit conducted training at the Caserma Ederle military complex in Vicenza, Italy, 25 miles from Venice. Their primary mission was to assist the U.S. Provost Marshal's Office in law and order operations on the main post and the Villagio base-housing areas.

"After a year-long deployment at Camp Bondsteel, we already had some good law enforcement experience," said Spc. David Parrish, from Cordova, a Military Policemen with the 130th. "This was a great opportunity to work with the Italian Police and learn the differences in Italian law enforcement procedures."

The Guardsmen worked side by side with the Carabinieri (Italian National Police) and Italian Security Guards. "We shared skills and taught each other the different techniques our countries use," Parrish said.

The Tennesseans also worked hand-in-hand with their active-duty counterparts in a variety of missions. They were first responders for emergencies, on crime scene and accident containment and much more. Additionally the soldiers conducted 24-hour operations to secure the post.

"This mission was valuable to us," said Sgt. Gitanja Williams, from Memphis, a Military Police Officer in the 130th and a full-time policeman with the Memphis PD. "We honed our law enforcement skills by doing a real-world assignment keeping service members and their families safe."

The soldiers also got the opportunity to conduct patrols unlike those they were accustomed to.

"For two weeks, we roamed the Villagio housing areas on bikes," Williams said. "It was different. It was my first time trying to patrol on mountain bikes and it took a little getting used to."

In 2005, following Hurricane Katrina, the company deployed to Gulfport, Miss., to enforce curfews and deter looting. Then in 2006 they deployed to augment U.S. Border Patrol agents in Yuma, Ariz., where they assisted in securing the southwest border for Operation Jump Start.

"We never know when our skills will be needed or what our next mission will be," Williams said. "We have to stay sharp, well trained, and get as much experience as possible."

The 130th Military Police Company is currently scheduled to return to Italy in 2010.

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

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

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