



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
12 August 2014
14-37

CONTACT: NIKI GENTRY
615-313-0793 (OFFICE)
615-948-5773 (CELL)

Tennessee National Guard Engineers assist in tornado debris removal

SPEEDWELL, Tenn. - On the evening of July 27, an unusually strong storm system ravaged areas of Campbell and Claiborne Counties in northeast Tennessee. Significant damage occurred in and surrounding the town of Speedwell, Tenn., where an EF-3 tornado with winds exceeding 140 miles per hour damaged or destroyed several structures along its path. According to the National Weather Service Office in Morristown, Tenn., the tornado lofted wreckage as high as 10,000 feet into the air as it moved through the area. Upon inspection by local and state authorities, the Tennessee Army National Guard was requested by the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency to provide heavy equipment and personnel to assist in recovery operations beginning on August 3, in the impacted area under Operation Task Force Engineer.

“The Tennessee National Guard’s 230th Engineer Battalion, located in Trenton, Tenn., is leading the operation with 16 Soldiers from the 190th Mobility Augmentation Company located in Russellville / (Morristown), Tenn., and Jefferson City, Tenn., 10 Soldiers from the 212th Engineer Company located in Paris and Camden, Tenn., six Soldiers from the 913th Horizontal Engineer Company from Union City, Tenn., one Soldier from the 230th Headquarters / Headquarters Company and five Soldiers from the Forward Support Company located in Trenton also participating in the effort.”

“Our mission is to clear roads and provide support to civil authorities in response to the natural disasters in Claiborne and Campbell Counties. This is but one of the state missions that we have the honor to conduct to help our fellow Tennesseans and is one of the primary reasons my Soldiers joined the Guard as engineers,” said Capt. Eric Madison, officer in charge, with the 190th Mobility Augmentation Company. During the first week of the mission over 3,400 cubic yards of storm debris have been removed by the Guard and other supporting agencies according to Madison.

“The mission has been a model domestic support to civilian authorities operation,” said Madison. “All of our efforts have been fully integrated with the local civilian authorities and the help of the Tennessee Department of Transportation, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Tennessee Department of Forestry and the Tennessee Department of Safety. Additionally, the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief Team of Tennessee provided meals for those supporting the overall mission.”

“The Tennessee National Guard response, along with all the support agencies, has been very efficient. We were very glad they were able to assist and have been instrumental in clearing a debris swath that spans approximately 40 miles,” said Gina Breeding, the Public Information Officer for the Claiborne County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Breeding indicated 30 structures had been damaged with 11 homes and two businesses completely destroyed.

Due to the extensive damage in the region the mission has been extended from a one-week to two-week completion phase with a planned end date of August 14.

-(more)-

2-2-2

Photo Captions:

14-37-01: A vehicle staging area on August 3, located at the Campbell County Tennessee Department of Transportation. The Tennessee National Guard's Task Force Engineer utilized M1157 10-ton dump trucks to assist Campbell and Claiborne County clear debris from an EF-3 tornado that impacted the area on July 27.

14-37-02: SPC William Bolds of the 913th Horizontal Engineer Company based in Union City, Tenn., operates the wheeled Indus backhoe to load brush into the back of a dump truck on Old Highway 63 in Claiborne County during August 4.

14-37-03: From left to right: Spc. Karin Cathey, 212th Engineer Company; Pfc. Tyheim Wright, 913th Horizontal Engineer Company; Spc. Matthew Nunnery, Forward Support Company; and Spc. Kevin Porter, 212th Engineer Company, pile brush to be loaded and taken to a debris collection site on August 4.

14-37-04: Tennessee National Guard Soldiers worked closely with the Tennessee Department of Forestry to clear brush from the Claiborne County, Tenn., tornado of July 27.

14-37-05: Spc. Cody Short, 190th Mobility Augmentation Company, directs Spc. Kevin Porter and Spc. Karin Cathey, both with the 212th Engineer Company at the site of a devastating tornado that impacted Campbell and Claiborne County, Tenn., on July 27.

14-37-06: Sgt. Eddie Branum, of the 190th Mobility Augmentation Company, utilizes a National Guard chainsaw to cut a downed tree for removal from the tornado disaster site that devastated areas of Claiborne and Campbell County, Tenn., on July 27.

14-37-07: Three M1157 dump trucks, one wheeled Indus backhoe, one armored humvee, and a Tennessee Department of Transportation GRADALL are stationed at the Campbell County worksite near Hays Lane. The amount of debris deposited by a tornado on July 27, and the compact roads at this site proved to be the most difficult to clear during the mission.

14-37-08: Aerial photo of tornado damage in Eastern Tennessee following the rare July 27, EF-3 tornado that impacted the Campbell and Claiborne County area. (Photograph courtesy of the Civil Air Patrol and Tennessee Emergency Management Agency.)

####

All Tennessee Army and Air National Guard press releases can be found at <http://www.tnmilitary.org>

PO BOX 41502
NASHVILLE, TN 37204
615.313.3001