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CONTACT: MSGT ROBIN OLSEN
615-313-0838 (OFFICE)

TN Air National Guardsman sings during World Series

Nashville, Tenn. -- Tennessee Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Angie Johnson belted out "God Bless America" during the seventh inning stretch at the World Series the night of October 28. Only two days later, her video had already been viewed more than 80,000 times on the Tennessee Military Department Facebook page alone.

Comments on the video include:

"Awesome job! Great representation of the Tennessee Air National Guard," said Tennessee Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Nykeah Williams;

and "This is doing things right! This is representing country, colors, and uniform with grace and pride! Good choice MLB!" according to Malcolm Moe, an Air Force Veteran.

So, where did she come from?

You may recognize Tech. Sgt. Johnson from her viral YouTube video singing "Rolling in the Deep", or even from her appearance as a contestant on season two of *The Voice*. Since she joined the Tennessee Air National Guard earlier this year, we took this opportunity to get to know her better.

She joined the Active Duty Air Force in 2000. "Mostly because I was at a transitional place in my life and wanted to venture out into the world. I was proud of my father's 27 years of service and I wanted to make a difference, like I felt he had. The military felt like a calling," said Johnson. She transferred to the Missouri Air National Guard in 2006 and to the Tennessee Air National Guard in 2014.

Johnson says her fondest memories in the military have been doing shows for troops during eight separate tours in the Middle East.

"The military has enriched my life in so many ways," she said. "Joining the military was the best decision I have ever made. It has always helped me keep my priorities straight. It's hard to let your head get too far in the clouds when you are constantly reminded that your comrades are off fighting a war."

Her most memorable moment was when she traveled to Israel in 2010 and was baptized in the Jordan River. "It felt like such sacred and holy ground. I was overjoyed and couldn't hold back my tears."

Singing isn't the only thing Johnson likes to do. "I hike a lot, do yoga, read, and hang out at my church," she explained. I have a great group of friends in Nashville. We sit around bonfires and solve all of the world's problems one s'more at a time. Good friends, who really know you, are very important."

She is also excited about volunteer work.

"Most of my volunteering is focused on Veterans. I'm passionate about the sacrifices they made and how we can repay them for their service," she said, adding "I'm crazy about servicemembers and what remarkable and selfless people they are. I never want them to feel forgotten or unseen."

So who exactly is Angie Johnson and where did she come from? She grew up in Missouri and didn't leave there until she joined the military. "Go Cards!" she exclaims.

"My earliest memory was when I was about three years old. My Dad had gone into an old supply closet to get something and found a slew of baby sparrows all over the floor. The parents had found a tiny hole in the roof and made a nest. My Dad got a couple pieces of bread, dipped it in water, and fed the babies with a pair of tweezers. He showed me how and we fed them for at least an hour. His love of nature definitely rubbed off on me," she recalled.

This love of nature is also evident in her childhood nickname, which was given to her by her dad, 'Squirrel's Tail.' "He said I was fidgety like a squirrel's tail."

Johnson was the youngest of five children growing up and says she spent a lot of time alone when she was the last one left in the house.

"I had a big imagination and loved to pretend. I would write songs and stories and read them to my parents. I also wrote scripts and made all of my stuffed animals actors. I loved making my parents laugh."

She added, "My Dad would say I'm the best at everything, my Mama would say I have a big mouth. So there's balance there."

Growing up, Johnson always knew she wanted to perform.

"There was a smidgen of time when I thought I wanted to be a veterinarian, but that was only if I couldn't be a singer first," she said.

Johnson even remembers her first concert, "Alabama," when she was eight years old.

"I was in love with Randy Owen. My Dad took me and we had third row seats, but we made some friends with some people in the front row and they let me sit on their shoulders. I nearly started crying when Randy wiped the sweat off his forehead with a towel and threw it right at me! He was my version of Justin Bieber. I still have that towel."

Johnson kept busy all the way through high school.

"I ran track, sang in choir, was on the cheerleading squad, student council, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. I was also the president of my class my junior year. I lived every bit of my high school experience and loved it!"

Her favorite music then was country. "I loved, and still love, Alabama. Their music takes me to a happy place."

She said that her favorite subjects were music and English. When asked how she would describe herself as a student, her response was "Diligent. I got distracted at times, but I always pulled my focus back to what needed to be done."

Eventually, she had to get a job.

Johnson said "my first job was a hostess and server at an Italian Restaurant called *The Pasta House Company*. Mmmm, spaghetti..."

Johnson can't say that she has ever had a bad job. "I try to make the most of every situation, and also try not to employ myself with doing things I hate."

This is only one of the lessons she has learned in life, so far.

"We are human, and we need to allow ourselves room to be human. We are not in control of anything," she explained. "We are each uniquely gifted and beautiful, and our gifts are best used when shared. I can't believe what the world would be like if everyone dared to believe in and seek out their true calling."

Reaching her calling, several people had an influence on her career choices. Her father had an influence on her military career, but others influenced her music.

"All of the female country artists of the 90s: Reba, Wynona, Trisha, Martina, Faith, Shania, have all had a big influence on my career," she stated. "Then there's Patsy and Dolly. Elvis was a big influence during my formative years. Outside of country music, I was hugely inspired by Whitney, Mariah and Celine."

She added, "they have all managed to maintain sparkling reputations while having mega careers that could have easily driven them over the edge. Not to mention they all have incredible vocal talent and ability. I admire those women immensely."

"Most about singing, I like being able to be the narrator to a story. I get to be an interpreter of emotions. That's really awesome!"

We also reached out to our social media audience to see what they wanted to know. When asked if she used music to relate or deal with stressful situations in life, she said "Absolutely, music is much cheaper than therapy! Sometimes the process of writing or singing can draw out emotions you wouldn't have otherwise let come to the surface."

If she had to trade singing for one thing in life, she said "I would go around healing the sick and brokenhearted. I suppose I could live without singing, but it is my way of doing just that."

Her super-human power would be mind control. "I'd go around hypnotizing everyone to have more compassion, and just be nicer to each other overall."

Just in case anyone was wondering, she did find out who posted the viral video. "I found out a few days after it was posted. He was one of the logistics troops who helped us palletize our gear. We are Facebook friends now!"

As a final point, Johnson explained how singing and music make her feel compared to other talents she has.

"Singing gives me comfort, and I believe it lets me bring comfort to others. People go through pain every single day. The struggle of life is real. Being able to sing someone out of a negative place gives me the most incredible joy."

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CAPTIONS:

001- Angie Johnson in front of the Ziggurat of Ur, in Iraq, during her second tour in the Middle East in November 2005. (Photo provided by Angie Johnson.)

002- Angie Johnson rests on 571st Air Force Band equipment deployment cases, following a rehearsal with rock ensemble Sidewinder in March 2012. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III.)