



MEDIA RELEASE

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Tennessee Celebrates National Guard's 378th Birthday: Ceremony includes 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration

NASHVILLE, Tenn. –The military organization we know today as the National Guard came into existence with a direct declaration on December 13, 1636. On this date, the Massachusetts General Court in Salem, for the first time in the history of the North American continent, declared the existing militia companies of the time were to be organized into three elements: the North, South and East regiments.

The Tennessee National Guard traces its history back to a militia mobilization organized by Capt. Evan Shelby on August 17, 1774. Men from the region, slated to become the state of Tennessee in 1796, were needed to fight in Lord Dunmore's War. Thus, Shelby rallied his company of 49 militiamen, including his son, Isaac, and many prominent citizens of the self-governing Watauga settlement (Tennessee's present day Sullivan and Carter counties) into service. This marked the first time settlers soon to be called "Tennesseans" deployed for war as a militia and stands as the Birthday of the Tennessee National Guard.

On **Friday, December 12**, the Tennessee National Guard will celebrate this long and historic legacy with a birthday ceremony in the **National Guard Headquarters "Hall of Flags,"** 3041 Sidco Drive, in Nashville, Tenn., beginning at **1:30 p.m. CST.**

During this event, the Tennessee Military Department will also conduct an opening ceremony to initiate its participation in the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration. Over the next several months the Department will conduct a series of public events in remembrance of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. The events are designed to thank and honor all who served and sacrificed during that prolonged military campaign.

Today's Tennessee Military Department consists of the Army & Air National Guard, the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency and the Tennessee State Guard. More than 15,000 Soldiers, Airmen, civilian employees and volunteers work to safeguard the welfare of the citizens of Tennessee and protect this great nation against all enemies, foreign or domestic.

Much has changed since 1636, but the one constant is the National Guard still consists of Citizen-Soldiers and airmen providing protection from natural disasters, training regularly to uphold high standards of readiness, and deploying to far-away countries defending United States' interests abroad. Although the country's growth and expansion has made it a large military force around the world, the National Guard remains a community cornerstone – just as it did upon its inception in 1636.

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