



MEDIA RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY

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Army Guard Aviation Moves to Nashville's Berry Field

NASHVILLE - If you have noticed increased helicopter traffic around the Nashville International Airport you may have wondered what's going on.

The first UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters belonging to the Tennessee Army National Guard touched down last week at Joint Base Berry Field in Nashville. The helicopters are part of the 1/230th Air Cavalry Squadron (ACS) formerly headquartered at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Smyrna.

Berry Field has been the home of the Air National Guard's 118th Wing for more than 90 years. Since losing the C-130 Hercules aircraft due to the 2005 Base Closure and Realignment Commission, the base became a C-130 training site for Allied aircrew members, and has since transitioned to a dominant force in intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and support missions. The last C-130 left Nashville in December 2012.

Losing the C-130's left an empty ramp and a multi-million dollar hanger only a few years old without any aircraft to use it. Immediately upon learning of the loss of the C-130's, planning began on the efficient utilization of the facility. The perfect fit was Army Aviation who were operating in antiquated facilities, just a few miles down the road.

In Smyrna, UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters belonging to the Army National Guard were housed in World War II era buildings needing renovations that would cost the American taxpayers more than 70 million dollars.

To Maj. Gen. Max Haston, Tennessee's Adjutant General, the prudent choice was obvious. Move the helicopters to Nashville and utilize an existing facility saving the taxpayers 70 million dollars.

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"Moving the helicopters to Berry Field utilizes a state of the art facility that is less than 12 years old," said Maj. Gen. Haston. "We have an obligation to the citizens of Tennessee to be good stewards of taxpayer monies, and using an existing facility in a joint Army and Air Operation does just that."

The National Guard began planning for this transition more than 5 years ago, but sometimes the Air Force and Army Aviation don't mix, so after crossing many bureaucratic hurdles, environmental studies and other administrative obstacles, final approval was received earlier this year.

"Renovation of the existing Smyrna facilities and new construction was just not feasible under the current budget," continued Haston. "The reality to move to an existing facility that was not being fully utilized and sitting just a few miles down the road made perfect sense."

"Increased traffic during this time is due to the training the pilots receive on approach and departure lanes in and out of the airport," said Lt. Col. Gene Reece, the Army Guard State Aviation Officer. "This training will continue through May when you will see the helicopter traffic dramatically reduce."

For further information, contact the Tennessee Military Department Joint Public Affairs Office at 615-313-0633.

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PHOTO CAPTIONS:



REO_4119: Tennessee Army National Guard UH60 Blackhawk helicopters on the tarmac at Joint Base Berry Field, Nashville.



REO_4138: Tennessee Army National Guard UH60 Blackhawk and UH-72 Lakotas fill the main hangar at Joint Base Berry Field, Nashville.

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