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Last Roll Call for Soldier in 230th Sustainment Brigade

SZCZECIN, Poland- The Tennessee National Guard's 230th Sustainment Brigade held a memorial service on June 15th in Poland to honor Spc. Ashley McKenzie, who was killed in Chattanooga on June 13th. The 230th, headquartered in Chattanooga, was deployed to Szczecin, Poland at the time of her death as part of Operation Anakonda 16 and held the ceremony there.

She had been deployed with them and returned to Chattanooga five days before the shooting occurred. The Chattanooga Police Department is investigating the shooting as a homicide and to date no arrests have been made.

Spc. McKenzie was a human resource specialist at the Brigade Headquarters in Chattanooga. She participated in the Brigade's first rotation of Operation Anakonda 16 in Szczecin, Poland. She had returned home from Poland on June 8th.

The ceremony in Poland took place in the Polish military chapel in Szczecin. Chaplain (Capt.) William Holcomb of Memphis, Tenn., presided over the memorial. "There is no higher honor for a chaplain than to memorialize a fallen Soldier. I feel privileged and humbled to be part of this service that honored such a beloved Soldier and friend."

"She was willing to be part of something larger than herself, and be part of the less than one half of a percent of American society that is willing to wear the cloth of this country" said Col. Steven Barney, 230th Sustainment Brigade Commander.

"She was very smart, energetic, funny and thoughtful, putting others before herself. Ashley was many things to many people, a loving daughter, caring friend, and dedicated Soldier. She truly represented everything that is right about our nation, state and community; and that we should continue to honor this Soldier, her family and her beautiful life that was cut too short through our continued service," he added.

Several Soldiers took time to remember her with stories.



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“She was always looking for snacks, so if you ever had any snacks around you better hide them because she would eat them all up. She would be sneaky about it too, like a little ninja. She was a dedicated Soldier and she was so proud of the work she did in the unit. Her hard work never went unnoticed. She was always full of life and always happy,” said Staff Sgt. Patricia Justice, signal NCO with the 230th Sust. Brig.

“When she came to us three years ago, she was shy and timid and as she found her place she transformed into the McKenzie we all fell in love with,” said Staff Sgt. Amanda Carter, Administrative NCO with the brigade.

Sgt. Kevin Price, administrative NCO with the unit, also spoke and simply said “she was the sister I’ve always wanted.”

The emotional ceremony concluded with 1st Sgt. Michael Warren doing the traditional “last roll call” of a fallen Soldier. The last roll call is a time honored ceremony in which the First Sergeant of the unit calls the unit member’s name three times. The first time is with rank and last name. The second call is with the rank, first and last name. Finally with rank and full birth name. With no final response, a bugler begins to play taps to signify the Soldier has passed. Since the 230th Sust. Brig. was in Poland, the Polish military supported the unit with a Polish bugler who played taps.

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PHOTO CAPTION #1: The Battlefield Cross symbolizes Soldiers of the 230th Sust. Brig. as they mourn the loss of their fellow Soldier Spc. Ashley McKenzie during the "last roll call" ceremony in Poland.



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PHOTO CAPTION #1: A Polish Soldier plays Taps during the "last roll call" ceremony for Spc. Ashley McKenzie.

