

THE STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM ISSUE

THE VOLUNTEER STATE  
GUARD

M A G A Z I N E

**PARTNERS**



**How the State Partnership Program continues  
to provide a key security cooperation.**

CONGRATULATIONS  
THE VOLUNTEER STATE  
GUARD MAGAZINE

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# THE VOLUNTEER STATE GUARD MAGAZINE

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 4



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TENNESSEE  
SNAPSHOT

**LIVE FIRE TRAINING**

June 24, 2015 - Sniper platoon 2/278th Armored Cavalry Regiment conducts live fire training on assigned weapon systems at Camp Shelby, Miss.

PHOTO BY: 278TH ACR



TENNESSEE  
SNAPSHOT

**CHANGE OF COMMAND**

Lt. Col. Bobbie M. Sprouse (above) hands command of 3rd Squadron 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment over to Lt. Col. Roark during the squadron's change of command ceremony at the Mt. Carmel Armory in Tenn. Aug 1, 2015

PHOTO BY: SGT ARTURO GUZMAN



## TENNESSEE SNAPSHOT

### **MEDAL OF HONOR**

Aug 7, 2015 - Nashville Salutes Medal of Honor event at the Tennessee National Guard Joint Force Headquarters. Three Medal of Honor recipients joined us in Nashville to share their stories, take photos and sign memorabilia.

*PHOTO BY: MASTER SGT. ROBIN BROWN*



## TENNESSEE SNAPSHOT

### **A FAMILIAR FACE GETS A MAKEOVER**

July 7, 2015 - An F-104 Starfighter static aircraft on display is being temporarily removed from its perch at McGhee Tyson ANG Base, TN. The aircraft will be remounted at its original location after it receives a remodel and a fresh coat of paint.

PHOTO BY: MASTER SGT. KENDRA OWENBY



# PARTNERS

The State Partnership Program continues to provide a key security cooperation.

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** - July 14 of this year was the 22nd anniversary of the Tennessee and Bulgaria partnership that was created through the National Guard State Partnership Program in 1993.

“Back in 1993, Tennessee was picked for Bulgaria due to many factors similar in nature, one being land mass,” said Lt. Col. Michael Nave, State Partnership Program Director for Tennessee. Bulgaria and Tennessee were about the same size geographically and similar in population.

The first three state partnerships were approved April 27, 1993. Soon after, Tennessee

partnered with Bulgaria on July 14; one of nine more established that day. There would be three more later the same year, two in August and one in September.

Today, there are 68 partnerships with 74 countries.

“The State Partnership Program has evolved from a small program that was virtually unknown outside the National Guard to a program strongly supported by all the Combatant Commands and widely acknowledged by our nation’s executive and legislative leadership,” according to William Boehm, in a 2013 monograph entitled The

National Guard State Partnership Program: Forging and Maintaining Effective Security Cooperation Partnerships for the 21st Century. Boehm is a historian with the Historical Services Branch of the Office of Public Affairs at National Guard Bureau, and was the primary author of the monograph.

“The National Guard SPP arose out of DOD efforts to assist the militaries of the former Soviet bloc nations of Central and Eastern Europe transition to democratic rule following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991,” said Boehm in the 2013 document.

There were several priorities developed



when the program began, mostly focused on improving economic conditions during that time. The three with military relevance were helping to build democracy through the appropriate roles for European militaries including civilian command, pursuing humanitarian assistance for joint exercises with forces of interested nations for national disasters and rescue procedures, and developing a capability to participate with other institutions in strengthening crisis management mechanisms.

The training and exercises in the State Partnership Program initially involved military assistance to civilian authorities in the case of such emergencies and disasters, according to Boehm. Today's efforts are similar, involving more familiarization training.

"We have completed several exercises just this year with the Bulgarian Land Forces," explained Nave. "We usually conduct 12 to 16 events each year."

These exercises include Kabile 15, Joint Reaction, Peace Sentinel, and currently Resolute Castle with Tennessee National Guard engineers.

Tennessee and Bulgaria often exchange subject matter experts and even military units to develop leadership in officers and NCOs, enable modernization of the military, perform disaster preparedness and crisis management exercises, as well as deployment planning and family support program development.

"The events are tied to the Country Campaign Plans within the European Command Theater," said Nave. "Focus can be attributed to such things as professional development, interoperability, consequence managements and defense reform."

"Looking at the Guard as a whole, we can maintain a long lasting relationship with a partner country that our active duty counterparts cannot," said Nave.

The National Guard is able to forge relationships over a long period of time. Many Tennessee Guardsmen have visited Bulgaria on numerous occasions over the past two decades and vice versa. When the State Partnership Program began, the National Guard was in a unique position for aiding in



June 23, 2015 - Chief Master Sgt. Edward Walden, Sr., commandant of the Paul H. Lankford Enlisted PME Center, checks the uniform of Bulgarian Staff Sgt. Bistra Koleva Kumanova during a uniform inspection in NCO academy at McGee Tyson Air National Guard Base in Tenn. (Photo by Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith)

the development of military forces in other countries by matching military organizations of comparable size, focus and mission. For active component personnel, this type of relationship would only last about three or four years, until the end of that tour of duty.

"The concept of military personnel that could work a full-time civilian job and then come to the aid of the population in times of disaster was nor widely embraced in the former Soviet bloc countries," explained Boehm. "Citizens in those countries generally views military personnel with suspicion and not as fellow citizens working for the good of the country."

"Our relationship with Bulgaria has evolved where we have contributed significantly to help them in many areas," said Nave. "Bulgaria joined NATO in 2004 and the European Union in 2008. In consequence management, the Tennessee Na-

tional Guard and our Tennessee Emergency Management Agency have worked with the Bulgarians who have now created a 'Centers of Excellence' that just recently obtained NATO accreditation for emergency management within their Ministry of Defense."

"The Tennessee National Guard, both Army and Air, have supported the Bulgarian communities with school renovations, health assessments, as well as vision and dental screenings," Nave added.

Another unique characteristic is that SPP fosters broader cultural, economic and academic ties at the local and state level through the use of Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams, which began in 2003. OMLTs consists of bi-national units that were initially utilized in Iraq, and later Afghanistan to coach, teach and mentor security forces units in those countries. Tennessee and Bulgaria were the second OMLT pairing and



Bulgaria is bounded by Romania to the north, Turkey and Greece to the south, Macedonia in the southwest, and Serbia in the west. The capital city, Sofia, lies in a mountainous basin in the west.

completed four deployment rotations that year. By the end of 2003, 11 partnerships had completed 54 rotations.

The SPP continues to grow, meeting combatant command objectives and national security goals while maintaining relationships in every corner of the world.

“The program promotes defense reform and modernization, and provides a training venue for our National Guard forces and personnel in meeting Joint and Service doctrine, as well as training requirements,” explained Boehm. “The SPP has proven itself a unique and valuable engagement asset that will continue to pay dividends to peace and security from many years to come.”

In 2005, the Tennessee Army National Guard’s military police conducted an exchange in Bulgaria where 80 U.S. Soldiers trained in Novo Selo, one of the largest small-unit exchanges in the Partnership’s history.

Since Tennessee partnered with Bulgaria, they have conducted more than 1,000 events, to include four deployments to Afghanistan where a joint Bulgarian/Tennessee force trained the Afghani Army.

In 2008, the Bulgarian military made

the transition to an all-volunteer force and underwent a restructuring program aimed to bring the army up to NATO standards, modernize equipment, and fully integrate civilian and armed components.

Many Bulgarian villages have been influenced in a positive way by State Partnership Program events through humanitarian assistance initiatives in conjunction with military-to-military interaction. Exercises, such as Vigilant Sentry, have had a positive impact on the civilian population with the purpose of providing medical, dental and pediatric care to the rural population.

Pairing states with other countries is beneficial.

“Many people think some of these partnerships are mature enough that we should move on to other countries to provide support; however, maintaining these relationships is of vital importance both politically and militarily,” said Nave.

Two years ago, the first two Bulgarian students completed the Airman Leadership School and Noncommissioned Officer Academy at Tennessee’s I.G. Brown Training and Education Center in Knoxville, both of which are requirements for enlisted Air Na-

## BULGARIA



Official name  
Republic of Bulgaria

Form of government  
Unitary multiparty republic with one legislative house

Head of state  
President: Rosen Plevneliev

Head of government  
Prime Minister: Boiko Borisov

Military  
The president is the commander in chief of the Bulgarian armed forces, whose main defense capabilities lie in a ground force, an air force, and a navy.

Capital  
Sofia

Official language  
Bulgarian

Official religion  
none - The constitution refers to Eastern Orthodoxy as the “traditional” religion.

Monetary unit  
lev

Population  
7,209,000 (2014 est.)

Climate  
Average temperature is 51°F. Snowfall from mid-October to mid-May, average of 25–30 days of snow cover.

(Information courtesy [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com))



# PARTNERS

tional Guardsmen across the United States during different parts of their professional military education while in service. Bulgarian students still attend training in the United States, with several graduating from the Air Force's Senior NCO Academy at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base in Montgomery, Ala., in June of this year and more attending both ALS and the NCO Academy over the last two years.

In June of 2013, the Tennessee Army National Guard's 117th Military Police Battalion hosted four members of the Bulgarian military police during the Tennessee unit's two-week annual training at the Volunteer Training Site in Tullahoma, Tenn.

"It's been an incredible training experience," said Maj. Wade Reed, the operations officer for the 117th in 2013. "The Bulgarians have been alongside us, trading valuable techniques and learning different ways to look at tactical and technical problems."

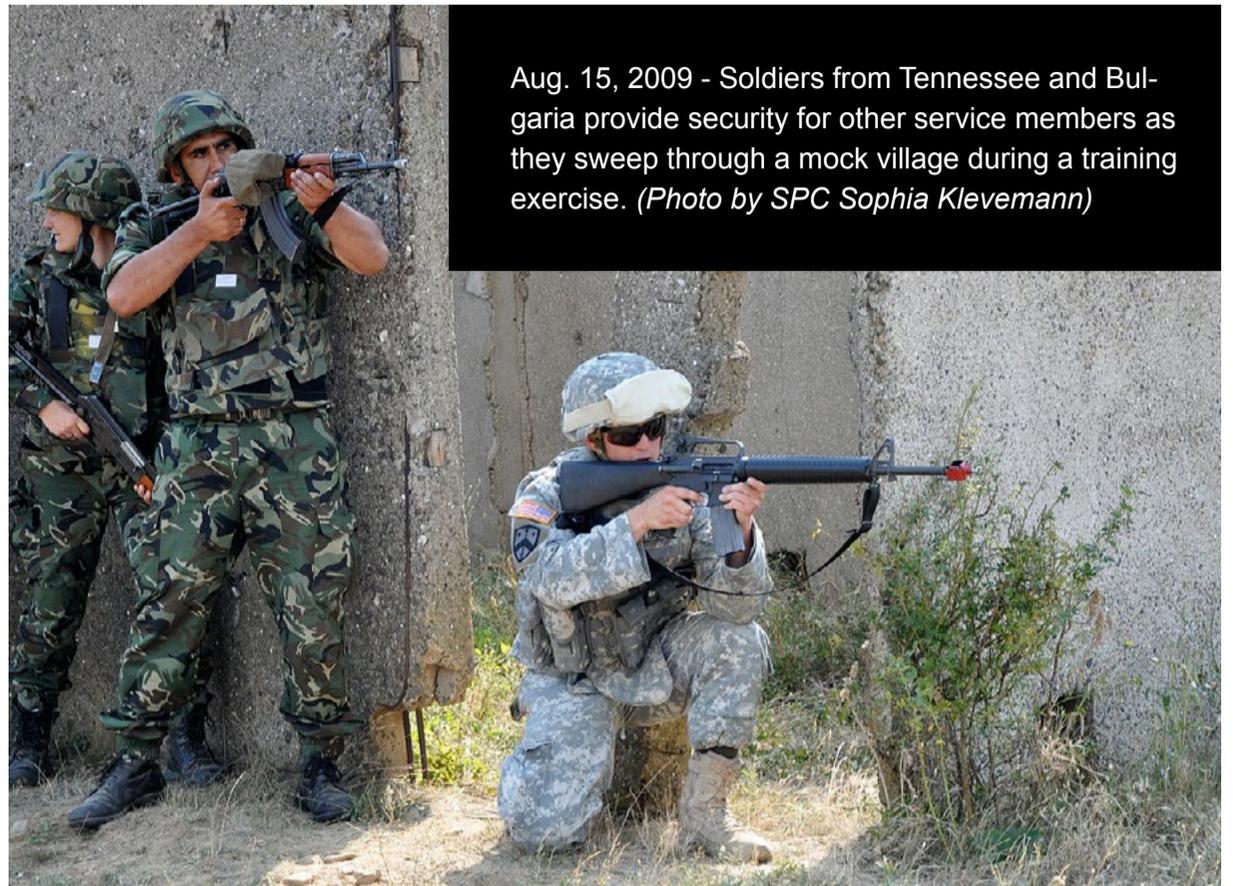
"We've been learning from them, just as much as they have from us," Reed added.

As part of the training, the Bulgarian military police trained on tactics, operations, weapons familiarity, and were able to use several of the combat simulators at the Tullahoma training site, to include the Mobile Armored Tactical Combat House.

In January of 2014, officials from the Bulgarian Armed Forces Information Security Directorate came to Nashville to observe the Tennessee National Guard's Cyber Unit in an endeavor to strengthen their own cyber defense program.

"The relationship between Bulgaria and the Tennessee National Guard is very important for us to maintain," said Bulgarian Lt. Col. Atanas Atanasov, Chief Expert for Bulgaria's Information Security Directorate. The visit centered on establishing methods of instruction to allow the Bulgarian team to better train their own defense force on cyber security measures.

**- MASTER SGT. ROBIN BROWN**



Aug. 15, 2009 - Soldiers from Tennessee and Bulgaria provide security for other service members as they sweep through a mock village during a training exercise. (Photo by SPC Sophia Klevemann)



Aug. 10, 2015 - Members of the 253rd Military Police Company, Tennessee Army National Guard spend their summer working alongside and training with Bulgarian forces at the Novo Selo Range in Bulgaria. (Photo by SGT Nicole Smart)

# RETURNING TO THEIR ROOTS

## Tenn. State Guard returns to Sycamore Shoals.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – On September 25, members of the Tennessee State Guard from across the state will return to the organization’s roots at Sycamore Shoals State Park in Elizabethton, Tenn.

Volunteers from all over the Appalachian region gathered at Sycamore Shoals on September 25, 1780, to join with Isaac Shelby and John Sevier in fighting the British and Loyalists during the American Revolution. The Tennessee State Guard, the state’s only authorized militia, recognizes that gathering of the Overmountain Men as the foundational event.

The State Guard will join with re-enactors to commemorate the 235th anniversary of that first muster as an essential element of the State Guard’s 3-day annual training event. Among the activities, State Guard members will cross the Watauga River, weather permitting, as their predecessors did to participate in the muster. They will gather in formation in the park’s amphitheater for the commemoration ceremonies led by members of the Overmountain Victory Trail Association, to swear in new members of the Tennessee State Guard, present awards and commendations, and conduct promotions of serving members. State Guard members who are direct descendants of original Overmountain Men will be presented with certificates recognizing the participation of their ancestors in this foundational event.

The original Overmountain Men gathered at the Sycamore Shoals site during the American Revolution in response to the threat from British Colonel Patrick Ferguson, an aide to General Cornwallis, to cease resistance or face dire consequences. Ferguson threatened to march his troops over the Appalachians and “hang your leaders, and lay waste the



Members of the TNSG practice map-reading skills in anticipation of the command, communication, and control exercise scheduled to take place at Sycamore Shoals State Park in Elizabethton, TN. (Photo by TNSG)

country with fire and sword.” Colonial Colonels John Sevier and Isaac Shelby sent out the call to the men of the region to gather at Fort Watauga near Sycamore Shoals to pursue Ferguson and his loyalist troops. The pursuit through North Carolina and Northern Georgia culminated in the Battle of Kings Mountain, a decisive Colonial victory during which Ferguson was killed by a militia marksman.

### Sycamore Shoals

As part of the ceremonial events, Tennessee State Guard members will form an honor guard on Saturday, September 26, through which members of the Overmountain Men

Victory Trail Association will pass as they depart Fort Watauga on their traditional commemorative march to Kings Mountain. State Guard members will then turn to an extensive training exercise in command, control, and communications in the event of the predicted massive earthquake along the New Madrid Fault.

“This is a unique opportunity,” said Tenn. State Guard Brig. Gen. Kenneth Takasaki, Commander.

“The State Guard will return to the site of our initial formation, celebrate our heritage, and exercise our response to a future event. We’ll be saluting our history and planning for the future. It will be an exceptional weekend.” - **2LT STEVEN ESTES**

GUNNERY SGT. THOMAS SULLIVAN

STAFF SGT. DAVID A. WYATT

SGT. CARSON A. HOLMQUIST

PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS RANDALL SMITH

LANCE CPL. SQUIRE K. WELLS



Our thoughts and prayers are with all the victims and families affected by the terrible events that occurred in Chattanooga on July 16, 2015.

“And they who for their country die shall fill an honored grave,  
for glory lights the Soldier’s tomb, and beauty weeps the brave.”

*Joseph Rodman Drake, early American poet*

# MYVECTOR PROGRAM

Air Force Launches MyVector, Mentorship Resources for Airmen.



**U.S. AIR FORCE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Air Force recently launched an improved and re-branded Career Path Tool, called MyVector, which encourages mentorship between Airmen at all levels.

The first step in the success of MyVector is for Airmen to volunteer to be mentors and share their experience and expertise with other Airmen.

“Mentoring and networking are two of the most important things for leaders to embrace,” said Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James. “Mentoring represents an investment -- one where we may not know the impact until many years later.”

The reconfigured online platform supporting mentoring has a modern look and feel. These new configurations support not

only the traditional by-name request method of requesting a mentor, but also provide a mentor-matching capability based on weighted characteristics identified by the Airman searching for a mentor.

MyVector has a real-time mentoring plan, discussion forums, a bullet tracker to document accomplishments, and the ability to dialogue online with your mentor. A resource page is also available to assist both parties with mentoring questions and relationships.

“Air Force mentoring fosters a culture of inclusion for all Airmen while maximizing their strengths, and is aligned with the culture of the Air Force for mission accomplishment,” said Dr. Patricia McGill, the doctrine, institutional competencies and mentoring chief. “MyVector captures Airmen experi-

ences within and across Air Force specialty codes and occupational series. Mentors will be able to provide feedback on their mentees’ career progression.”

Mentorship requires time, effort and dedication. To assist with this process, there is a “Mentoring Checklist” in Air Force Manual 36-2643, “Air Force Mentoring Program,” which outlines how to plan for the different mentoring sessions.

“No matter your age, it’s important to help each other,” James said. “Seek a mentor and be a mentor.”

For more information and to register for an online profile, go to <https://afvec.langlely.af.mil/myvector>

**- TECH SGT. TORRI HENDRIX**



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# NCO HALL OF FAME

For a Retired Colonel, the NCO Academy's Hall of Fame.

MCGHEE TYSON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Tenn. - Maj. Edmund C. Morrisey awards the NCO academy honor flight ribbon on the flight line in 1969. (U.S. Air Force file photo/Released)



**MCGHEE TYSON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Tenn.** - As usual, he drove to the I.G. Brown Training and Education Center, retired Col. Edmund C. Morrisey arrived early to exercise among the other retirees and Airmen in Wilson Hall. He parked in his usual parking spot and wished good mornings to passersby.

The 86-year-old Morrisey then walked on the treadmill, pulled on the rowing machine, lifted weights and pedaled on the stationary bike. He tries to do these exercises two or three mornings a week, and credits it partly for his trim waistline.

He left the base as he normally does: with

no fanfare. Sometimes he stops to talk with an Airman who asks for his mentorship. Sometimes he discretely drops off baskets of fresh local strawberries, or corn, or peaches, in the staff break rooms -with modest amusement, like a secret admirer.

If there's an NCO academy or an Airman leadership school graduation, Morrisey arrives in his business attire to applaud the accomplishments at the ceremony from his favorite spot: in the back of the auditorium. He attends only if invited - he always attends.

The TEC's first commander and commandant, Morrisey said that he's still reassured in what he calls the Air National Guard's

"crown jewel" for learning and leadership, and that it has not stultified. It has been 47 years since its start - he retired more than 31 years ago - but he stays attentive to the TEC's energy and image."I think I'm identified as the resident geezer, but I don't know if it's on their staff briefing," Morrisey joked, while taking a break from his workout.

It's not like Morrisey has nothing else going on in retirement - he will tell you how he and a friend enjoy gathering golf balls around the area to give to kids. He has other interests that keep him busy.

In conviction, the silver-haired veteran - the only colonel that the Air National Guard

ever inducted into the Air Force Order of the Sword- likes to keep a low profile when on the campus."I'm a strong believer that every dog has its day," said Morrisey. "I have a great respect for the commander and staff here."

An only child from Connecticut, and

"I think I'm identified as the resident geezer, but I don't know if it's on their staff briefing."

an all-American prep-school swimmer, Morrisey received his commission in 1952 through ROTC at Hartford's Trinity College. He left the regular military for some time before he rejoined the Connecticut Air National Guard as an operations officer. He later served in Germany and Colorado. He had a memorable encounter while serving with the Texas Air National Guard when he swore 2ndLt. George W. Bush into service.

It was also during those days that Morrisey first experienced how World War II and Korean War veterans were changing the image of the Air National Guard - in one assignment, supporting a 1963 win in the Air Force's William Tell aerial gunnery competition.

"What really blindsided us was that civilian and military members considered us less than professional," Morrisey recalled in 2001, during the classroom building's dedication in his name.

Morrisey's journey with the TEC began as a major in July 1968, when he traveled from Texas to take command of a new school that taught leadership to enlisted Guardsmen. He said that his mentor and boss, Maj. Gen. I.G. Brown, the director of the Air National Guard, was his inspiration for a goal that never left him: that the perception of the Air



TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. - Capt. Edmund Morrisey, top center, pictured here in 1963 with personnel from the Pennsylvania Air National Guard's 146th Fighter Interceptor Squadron and members of the Colorado and Utah Air National Guard who were among the first Air National Guard teams to win the Air Force's William Tell aerial gunnery competition. (U.S. Air Force file photo/Released)

National Guard must change.

"His advice was very simple, he said 'make this work,' and little did I know the extent that 'make this work' would spread to," Morrisey said during the TEC's 45th anniversary celebration.

But back at the fitness center, Morrisey remembered the enormous challenge they had in earning the school its reputation;

nevertheless, it took them just five years to become known as "the premier institution."

They produced an NCO academy, an Airman leadership school and the officer preparatory academy (forerunner of today's Academy of Military Science). They also garnered accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges - the first Air Force professional military education center to do so, he said.



Brig. Gen. Tony McMillan, Commander of the 145th Airlift Wing in Charlotte, N.C. , presents a command coin to Col. (retired) Edmund C. Morrisey, Jr. after speaking to the Noncommissioned Officer Academy Graduates Association of North Carolina. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Rich Kerner, 145 AW Public Affairs)

“That did not happen accidentally,” said Morrisey.

In some ways, General Brown’s challenge carried on long after the NCO academy’s first staff of six instructors, two administrators and Morrisey’s Commandant, Chief Master Sgt. Paul H. Lankford. From their first 103 graduates to about 40,000 graduates today, Morrisey said that the Air National Guard shaped its image as a professional organization with those formations of Airmen.

Today the TEC’s Paul H. Lankford Enlisted PME Center runs the Air Force’s largest, continually running total force NCO academy.

“I finally determined that regardless of whether you are a Guardsman, or a Reservist or on active duty status, you are now all brought into the expected level of performance,” said Morrisey. “I’m just so pleased, and that’s why you see as much of me here as you do. It’s just a pleasure to see the things that are happening.”

The Air National Guard’s NCO Academy Graduates Association formed from the first graduating class, and its present-day members recognized Morrisey this week with a

lifetime achievement: they inducted him into their Hall of Fame.

“That is our top award,” said retired Chief Master Sgt. Janice Richardson, association president, who oversees 106 chapters, nationwide.

“He was the driving force that motivated the graduates to build our organization, add value to our units and communities and get more of our enlisted members to attend PME,” cited Morrisey’s nomination.

But Morrisey could not travel to their annual conference, so the TEC’s commander invited the association to present their award to him on a recent morning in Patriot Hall. The ceremony was just as he preferred - a simple presentation by the association’s president in the lobby, with just a handful of people. “I am just tickled to death of the quality of the staff as well as the quality of the

students coming here, and that makes my day happy,” said Morrisey when applauded. “I hope everyone knows that I was a creation of really sharp noncommissioned officers.”

Morrisey said that he is also pleased to join Chief Lankford among those honorees. Lankford - a World War II POW and a Bataan Death March survivor - served as commandant until 1981. He passed away in 2008 at the age of 89 with more than 42 years of regular Air Force and Air National Guard service.

“We had an agreement: I didn’t know about enlisted PME and he was going to lead me there, and I was going to raise his perception of what the Air National Guard was all about,” said Morrisey.

Morrisey then smiled and returned to his workout. - **MSGT MIKE SMITH**

# TURNING DELAY INTO OPPORTUNITY

Tennessee Engineers get extra training in Bulgaria.

**NOVO SELO, Bulgaria** - In early June, members of the Tennessee Army National Guard arrived in Bulgaria as the first of many rotations from Tennessee who will be supporting Resolute Castle, which is a component of Operation Atlantic Resolve. Operation Atlantic Resolve is ongoing in Eastern Europe, emphasizing the ironclad treaty commitment of the United States to its NATO allies by providing a persistent presence in NATO's Eastern European members.

Sgt. 1st Class Michael DeMorato of the Tennessee Army National Guard's 212th Engineer Company out of Paris, Tenn., explains his unit's mission at the Novo Selo training range.

"The mission tasked to us was come to Novo Selo training area in Bulgaria, to construct some covered shelters and ammo breakdown pads. We are also going to construct some operations and storage buildings for the training center here that the Bulgarians and Americans share for all their tank and live fire exercises," said DeMorato, adding "We actually had to break the dirt, kinda get a general rough area for us to work freely and then we have to put up our batter boards constructed to a level ground so we can start forming up for concrete to construct these building in future rotations"

When faced with a delay in receiving some of their basic operating materials, or BOM, the 212th Engineers turned the events into a training opportunity.

"We had the delay in the BOM, which gave us time to teach these Soldiers that when they come in its not just having a general rough area so we can start forming concrete, but some of the lower enlisted were actually able to get out there when they see just grass and dirt and get into the horizontal side of



(Above) SFC Michael DeMorato of Tennessee's 212th Engineer Company. (Left) Soldiers with the 212th work to prepare the ground for future construction projects. (Photos by SSG Lila Walker)

it and see what needs to be done before we can even do our job. They got to understand the planning phases, the recons we had to do and actually start turning dirt just so they can plan on doing batter boards and start forming our stuff up," said DeMorato.

"We are engineers and we always adapt and overcome. They gave us an area where we found some materials to reconstruct and get some other training so these guys can tear something down and not just build something. It was just miscellaneous rough lumber, a bunch of stairs and platforms. We are going ahead and tearing enough down so not just our rotation can be employed, but the next rotation can come in and al-

ready have that stuff completed so that way they don't have to come here and tear things down, start over. Kinda like a production assembly. The more we start and the more we do since we are already on ground-tearing everything up and getting it ready for the next rotation when they come in, they will already have some stuff pretty much ready for them to start rolling on," he added.

Work continues for the 212th and other members of Tennessee's 194th Engineer Brigade's first of many rotations here in Bulgaria; in support of Tennessee's partner in peace and Operation Atlantic Resolve.

- **SSG LILA WALKER**

# MILITARY AWARDS

## REG UPDATE - ARMY

### Numerous Changes in Revision of Army Regulation.

An updated version of Army Regulation 600-8-22, Military Awards, was published June 25 and went into effect July 25.

The revised version features numerous changes, including clarification for Soldiers who are flagged for fitness test failures and their ability to receive awards, updated guidance regarding awarding the Purple Heart according to the Defense Authorization Act of 2015, and guidance on obtaining missing medals.

Soldiers who are flagged may be recommended for and presented an award based on valor and heroism, even posthumously when assigned to a unit engaged in combat against hostile forces and the Soldier died as a result of injuries sustained during combat.

Flagged Soldiers are still ineligible to be recommended for other types of awards. Once the flag is lifted, the Soldier will become eligible at that time.

Awards to flagged Soldiers requires a waiver that will accompany the award recommendation. The Purple Heart does not require exception or waiver for presentation because this award is an entitlement and different from all other awards.

In addition, under the Defense Authorization Act of 2015, those Soldiers who were killed or wounded in attacks by foreign terrorist organizations because of their status as military members are now eligible for the Purple Heart. This is retroactive to September 11, 2001.

If you are missing a medal, Army or other branch of service, you can get it replaced, and possibly for free.

Medals are initially presented at no cost to the service member. Replacement medals are issued on a one-time basis and without charge to the recipient or immediate next of

kin if the recipient is deceased. The next of kin can be any of the following: surviving spouse that has not remarried, father, mother, son, daughter, sister, or brother.

Subsequent replacement medals will cost money. Next of kin cannot receive duplicate medals if the service member has already requested one.



*Photo by SFC Anthony L. Taylor*

Issue or replacement of World War I Victory Medals or earlier medals is no longer possible, but they can still be purchased from outside, private vendors.

Active duty, National Guard, and Reserve personnel should submit requests for medals to their unit commanders.

#### ARMY

For medals on behalf of individuals having no current U.S. Army status or deceased prior to 1 October 2002 requests should be

submitted to: National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, MO 63138-1002.

Requests for medals for individuals who retired, were discharged (or have a Reserve obligation), or died after 1 October 2002, and request for retired general officers should be submitted to: Commander, U.S. Army Human Resources Command (AHRC-PDP-A), 1600 Spearhead Division Avenue, Fort Knox, KY 40122-5408.

#### AIR FORCE

Headquarters, U.S. Air Forces Personnel Center, ATTN: AFPC/DSPSIDR, 550 C Street, Randolph Air Force Base, TX 78150-4712.

#### MARINES

Commandant, United States Marine Corps, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Code: MMMA, 3280 Russell Road, Quantico, VA 22134-5103.

#### NAVY

Chief of Naval Operations (DNS-35), Navy Pentagon, Washington, DC 20350-2000.

#### COAST GUARD

Commandant (G-PS-5/TP41), U.S. Coast Guard, Washington, DC 20593-7238.

More information about replacing medals can be obtained at the NPRC website: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/replace-medals.html>.

Additional service records can be obtained here: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/militaryservice-records/index.html>.

**- MASTER SGT. ROBIN BROWN**

# 2998TH ENGINEERS GATHER FOR REUNION

Korean War vets remember friends and fellow Soldiers.



**MILAN, Tenn.** - Korean War Veterans who were also Tennessee Guardsmen from the 2998th Engineer Treadway Bridge Company, gathered together one more time to reminisce and remember their friends and fellow Soldiers who have passed away.

In 1951, 71 men from a small town in rural west Tennessee were activated and sent overseas to help turn back the communist threat. Of those 71 men who returned home in 1952, 14 remain.

"This is our 65th reunion since we landed in Pusan, Korea," said Bill McClean one of the remaining Veterans who organized the event. "We have celebrated our 50th, 56th and 60th reunion. On our 60th reunion, Governor Phil Bredesen proclaimed August 19, 2010, as the 2998th Engineer Treadway Bridge Company Day". Today, that proclamation is on display at Troop C, 1st Squadron, 278th Regimental Combat Team, in Milan.

"We went from Japan over to Korea; it was an overnight trip. We were actually on a Japanese ferry boat. It had no kitchen, but they did have C-rations on board for

emergencies. We got into the C-rations and threw everything overboard except the franks and beans. The officer in charge of the ship got mad and he called us all together.

He said that we all acted like a bunch of kids. I chuckled and said, 'We are kids, Sir'. We were 17, 18 and 19 years old. And he said, 'well, you're going now where it's going to separate the men from the boys,' said McClean.

"I remember when we got there. It was raining, it was cold, and it was muddy. One of my buddies threw his duffle bag down in the mud and he started laughing. It was quite a sight. He said crying won't do us any good, so I might as well laugh," he added.

The unit's mission was to construct bridges that consisted of rubber pontoons that supported steel roadways. The bridges were fast to set up, usually taking less than a day and all the equipment necessary was brought to the worksite on trucks. The unit accomplished its mission and returned home a year later without a single casualty or serious in-



**ABOVE:** Four surviving spouses received roses in memory of their late husbands and to recognize their personal sacrifices during the war. From left to right: Jean Cole (Ralph W. Cole), Jane Powers Montgomery (L.L. Powers), Mildred Hill (G. Edwin Hill), and Margie Hilliard Holt (David B. Hilliard)

**LEFT:** Six of the surviving members of the 2998th Engineer Treadway Bridge Company. Back row: Aaron Long, Guy T. Taylor, Mary Taylor, Billy F. McLean, Jimmy L. Watson, Louise Watson. Front row: Melva Long, Glen R. Hall, Suzanne Fuqua, John B. Fuqua. (Photos by SSG William Jones)

jury. McClean said the one of the highlights upon returning home were meals with fresh vegetables, milk and drinks with ice in them.

"The Korean War is the 'Forgotten War'. You go to the VA and there all kinds of pictures on the wall for the Vietnam War and WWII, but there's hardly anything for Korea," said McClean. "We just went and did our duty, came home and went back to work". Six Veterans and their spouses attended the 65th reunion at Northside Baptist Church in Milan. Additionally, four surviving spouses received roses in memory of their late husbands and to recognize their personal sacrifices during the war.

Bill McClean has chronicled the history of the 2998th and has dedicated it to the Soldiers and family members of the unit. It's available at: [http://tn-roots.com/tngibson/WAR/2998/Page\\_2.htm](http://tn-roots.com/tngibson/WAR/2998/Page_2.htm)

- SSG WILLIAM JONES

# 3000TH HIRE

## Tenn. Guard Jobs Program Crosses 3,000th Hire Mark.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Maj. Gen. Max Haston, Tennessee's Adjutant General, today recognized Dollar General Vice President of Government Affairs Steve Brophy and Dollar General for hiring Spc. Josh DeRoisa as the 3,000th hire through the Job Connection Education Program (JCEP).

DeRoisa's employment represents yet another milestone in the nearly four year old business partnership program assisting Tennessee National Guard members and their families in finding jobs across the state.

Joining Maj. Gen. Haston were Burns Phillips, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Melinda Kelsey, Communications, Constituent and Government Relations Administrator and Jann Dower, Director of Constituent Service, both with Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Also in attendance were Capt. Michael Riley, Section Chief of the Army National Guard Transition Services and Employment Outreach, National Guard Bureau, and Dinetha Thompson, the National JCEP Program Manager.

"Today we recognize an initiative that only a short time ago was in its infancy and now, just over three years later, has contributed to the hiring of over 3,100 National Guard members and family members in the Tennessee National Guard resulting in over \$105 million in salaries!" exclaimed Haston.

While jobs and salaries are critical, Haston went on to say, "more importantly, the program has provided the security and stability we all need that comes from having a good job and career."



Maj. Gen. Max Haston, The Adjutant General of Tennessee, recognizes the 3000th hire through the JCEP program. (Photo by CW4 Nick Atwood)

JCEP helps Guard and Reserve service members, and their spouses, who are unemployed or under-employed, to find careers. The program, which is offered by the Army National Guard, provides dedicated training and development specialists and a skilled business advisor to assist participants in making their job connections.

"Our Veterans have a proven ability for success in the workplace and the one statement I hear the most from business leaders is that hiring veterans just makes sense," said retired Tennessee National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Bill Marley, who administers the JCEP Program for Tennessee.

"I was looking for a career, not just a job, and Dollar General evaluated my total military experience to do the job--now I'm a manager," said DeRoisa, who also serves as a member of the 1st Airfield Operations Battalion, 107th Aviation Regiment in Tullahoma, Tenn.

"The strength of our program is built on the partnerships we have throughout the state with both government and business leaders like Labor and Workforce Development and Dollar General," stated Marley. "They understand that the hiring of our Soldiers and Airmen is not just a feel good initiative but rather a sound business decision that contributes to the bottom line of their organization."

Haston went on to praise Commissioner Phillips and Dollar General for their efforts in support of Paychecks for Patriots, another initiative that puts Veterans back to work across the state. Occurring normally in the fall, last year the Paychecks for Patriots event will be held on October 1, across the state at various locations.

- CW4 NICK ATWOOD

Questions about the Job Connection Program? Contact Bill Marley at (615) 678-3373 or [Bill.Marley@jcep.info](mailto:Bill.Marley@jcep.info)



# CYBERGUARD 15

## Train. Advise. Assist.

**BERRY FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Tenn.** - Members from the 218th Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group (ISRG) participated in Cyber Guard 15, a three week exercise in Suffolk, Va. The joint exercise, co-led by U.S. Cyber Command, DHS, and the FBI, included participation from the private sector, DOD, international allies, and U.S. federal and state government entities to include National Guard elements from multiple states. Participants exercised a whole-of-nation approach to identify, defend, and protect our domestic critical infrastructure.

Col. Jason Glass, commander of the 218th ISRG, said, “Without terrestrial boundaries the cyber dimension transcends throughout all domains. These exercises allow the National Guard to engage and train with all partners to include the private sector. The enhancement of such training is critical as we address the threat of the 21st century, and the environment it presents.”

The cyber domain is an all-inclusive realm, posing an equal opportunity threat to any device with an internet connection. The cyber vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure affect the federal, state, and private sectors, therefore all sectors, or a whole-of-nation effort, is necessary to mitigate a potential cyber-attack from becoming a national emergency. The National Guard has proven its worth time and time again in times of catastrophic events, and it’s becoming evident that augmentation in the cyber world is no different. Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) outlines the use of military forces to augment state, territory, tribal, local, and private-sector authorities in a catastrophic event where assigned resources are overwhelmed. This concept is at the heart of DOD’s role in Cyber Guard.

According to the Department of Defense Cyber Strategy 2015, “DOD will draw on the National Guard and Reserve Components as a resource for expertise and to foster creative solutions to cybersecurity problems.”

An exercise player from the 218th ISRG said, “Unlike our active duty peers, the Air National Guard must be prepared to respond to a multitude of federal and state incidents, ranging from natural disasters and civil disturbances to kinetic and non-kinetic [cyber] aggression toward U.S. interests both at home and abroad. Because of the vast array of incidents that we have to be prepared to respond to; participating in multi-organizational training events, like Cyber Guard, is

critical to ensuring that the Air National Guard can maintain the public trust in our ability to defend and protect the critical infrastructure of the state and the nation.”

Participants from multiple organizations were grouped into adversary and defender teams to emulate a realistic cyber battlespace. During the exercise, players on the blue team (the defenders) were tasked to deny adversarial presence, identify scanning, spear phishing, and malware residency on the network. The teams were able to exercise actual operations in a closed network environment. With the persistent cyber battle format of the exercise, the National Guard was able to train in a real world scenario against an expert adversary, and strengthen its communication procedures as a joint team. An emphasis on the importance of a whole-of-nation effort enhanced the cyber team approach to cyber threats and vulnerabilities. Annual training exercises such as Cyber Guard maintain ready National Guard force capabilities to conduct cyberspace operations.

Relationships built during Cyber Guard have provided collaborative opportunities outside of the exercise. At the local level, the 218th ISRG continues a strong working relationship with the Tennessee Joint Force Headquarters J6 Computer Network Defense team, and have participated jointly in this exercise for the past two years. National Guard units from Tennessee, Alabama, and Kentucky have been multi-year partners during Cyber Guard, and continue communication and synergistic training efforts throughout the year.

An exercise player from the 218th ISRG said, “I believe the relationships we forge in joint exercises, like Cyber Guard, create multiple benefits. By knowing the key stakeholders, it enables our responders to more effectively communicate and information share. In addition, by having a relationship with our personnel, there is an environment of trust established with the other services and agencies which strengthened their communication with our responders.”

The act of preparing, securing, and defending our nation’s networks, systems, and information is a team effort. As we partner with other Departments and Agencies, international allies and partners, state and local governments, and the private sector, we continue to gain global strategic stability to defend against cyber-attacks, and hold the strategic advantage against adversaries. [Click Here for Cyberguard15 Video](#)

**- SSGT KRISTA HAIR**

SOLDIER-ATHLETE

WITH STRONG DETERMINATION AND A DEVASTATING RIGHT HOOK, BIRCHWOOD, TENNESSEE NATIVE SGT. 1ST CLASS LASHANDA JOHNS IS A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH IN BOTH BOXING AND KICKBOXING.

# READINESS FOR THE RING

# READINESS FOR THE RING

SGT. 1ST CLASS LASHANDA JOHNS

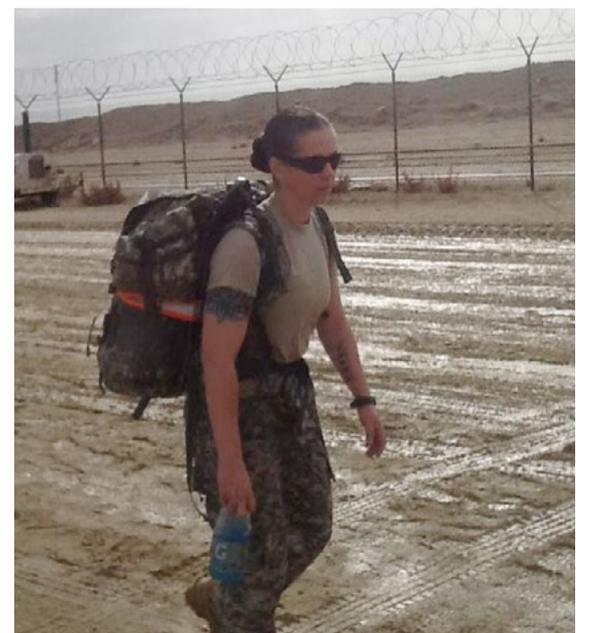


**Clockwise from top:** July 2015, Johns works on her kickboxing in the gym; Johns receives an award at the Bataan Death March; Johns rucking in the Bataan Death March in 2014. (Top photo by Master Sgt. Robin Brown, bottom photos Courtesy Photos)

**W**ould you last more than 34 seconds with Ronda Rousey? “No,” said Sgt. 1st Class Lashanda Johns. “Ronda is very experienced in all forms of martial arts. I am only experienced in two of them.”

Johns is the readiness NCO for the Tennessee Army National Guard’s Headquarters, Headquarters Troop, Regimental Training Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment. She has been in the National Guard for 13 years. During this time, she has participated in six boxing matches and four kickboxing matches, boxing off and on since 2009.

“I compete as much as I can, but I also do it for fun,” said Johns. “It is really difficult



at times to manage boxing and the National Guard; most of my tournaments usually fall during annual training or drill weekend.”

The National Guard has kept her busy. Johns has deployed three times, twice to Iraq and once to Kuwait. She even received a Bronze Star during her first deployment to Iraq. Training didn’t stop when she deployed.

“The friends I have made throughout the years in the Guard are like my family,” she said. “I just recently returned from a deployment [to Kuwait], but I trained over there almost every day.”

Johns returned from Kuwait at the beginning of July 2015. She attended the World Amateur Kickboxing Tournament in Orlando, Fla. July 24-26.

“Tony Alston, who is still deployed, trained me while I was in Kuwait to get ready for my most recent kickboxing tournament here in the United States,” Johns added. Alston is a Staff Sergeant with the Indiana National Guard’s 1313th Engineer Company. “He teaches boxing part time back home.”

“In combat sports, you have to be very disciplined; this is the same with the National Guard. To be a good Soldier, boxer or kick boxer, you have to stay disciplined and focused,” she said. This focus is evident in her training.

“I do a lot of sparring, speed bag work, heavy bag work, running and circuit training,” Johns said. “Since I also kick box, I do a lot of kick pad drills and stretching.”

“You have to train hard and be ready to get hit, and sometimes hit really hard,” she added.

Johns said she participates in the sport for herself, but she got an interest in boxing at an early age.

“As a kid, I watched boxing with my father every Tuesday night. I told him I would love to do something like that, but he told me no,” Johns said. “Many years later, after my second deployment, I went to a kickboxing gym and it all started there.”

“I thought it was awesome and looked like fun,” she added. That enthusiasm hasn’t

Johns (bottom left) in Iraq. - 2004  
(Courtesy Photo)



Sgt. 1st Class Lashanda Johns running at a 5K event in Kuwait. - 2015  
(Courtesy Photo)

changed for Johns, but her father’s opinion has.

“My father loves the fact that I compete now. He comes to every event he can attend,” she said. “I asked him what changed, and he said he hasn’t seen me get beat up yet. He said if the day ever comes that I am taking a beating, it will be hard for him to watch.”

“I feel really good when I box, it relieves a lot of stress and is an adrenaline rush,” she

said. “Boxing and kickboxing are very rewarding. You see results in every aspect of your life. It makes you look great, feel great, and feels even better when you win.”

Johns has advice for anyone who is interested in boxing.

“Do not listen to people who say you can’t do it, or that it’s dumb,” she said. “If you have a dream, you should go after it!”

**- MASTER SGT. ROBIN BROWN**

# AIRMEN HELPING HUMANITY

## Local Airmen Measure, Saw, Hammer for Community.



Tech. Sgt. Kalon Pang and Master Sgt. Cindy Dickson assemble a doorframe that will be used in a home building project. (Photo by Master Sgt. Mike Smith)



Master Sgt. Don Pierson cuts lumber inside a wood shop to fabricate window and door frames. (Photo by Master Sgt. Mike Smith)

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. - About a dozen military volunteers took part in a Habitat for Humanity project August 18-19 to pre-fabricate utility sheds as well as door and window frames.

The I.G. Brown Training and Education Center's instructors and staff from McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base spent several hours in Habitat's wood shop in North Knoxville each day cutting wood and nailing together shed, window and door sections for assembly during home construction projects.

"It's outstanding to have the help," said Ken Cruikshank, a volunteer crew leader for Habitat for Humanity.

Cruikshank said that fabricating the shed sections at their Washington Avenue office cuts the time building them on site by about 50 hours.

The Knoxville Habitat builds and donates an average 25 homes each year, he said. There's no garages built, but each home gets a shed for storage. Habitat's web site calls their homes decent and affordable for people in need.

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Kalon Pang, an enlisted professional military education instructor, said that he hopes to expand his assistance with the organization. He contacted them initially and organized the effort because of his own interest to volunteer.

"Being from Oklahoma, I see these projects a lot because of the tornados, so I always wanted to do this," he said. "It's a good feeling to see people who need these houses get them."

Pang said that the volunteers also strengthened their camaraderie from building together.

**- MASTER SGT. MIKE SMITH**

# GUARDSMEN ASSIST IN SWIFT RESPONSE

## 118TH MPAD and 194th Engineers lend a hand in Bulgaria.

**NOVO SELO, Bulgaria** - Soldiers from the Tennessee Army National Guard deployed to Novo Selo Training Area here with a continued support of Operation Resolute Castle 15, and provided support for the multinational exercise Swift Response 15, on August 24.

Swift Response is a multinational training exercise involving more than 4,500 service members from 11 NATO nations taking place in Bulgaria, Germany, Italy and Romania. The training event, a component of Operation Atlantic Resolve, provided participants with the opportunity to integrate high-readiness forces from multiple allied nations to train as a cohesive and interoperable team and demonstrate NATO's ability to quickly respond to a crisis. This was NATO's largest U.S. led airborne exercise since the Cold War.

To support the exercise, public affairs personnel from the Nashville-based 118th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment assisted in capturing the imagery from the parachute assault by the Italy-based 173rd Airborne Brigade and elements of the 82nd Airborne Division into nearby Tenevo Airfield.

The 118th MPAD is deployed here to support the state's 194th Engineer Brigade in Operation Resolute Castle 15, a readiness training exercise designated to assist U.S. Army Europe and Bulgarian allies in building roads and other infrastructure to provide world-class training facilities at Novo Selo for exercises such as Swift Response and the United States Marine Corps' Black Sea Rotational Force.

"We were fortunate to have the 118th MPAD here," said Maj. Michael Weisman, the 173rd Airborne Brigade's public affairs officer. "They provided some great photos of



Photo Courtesy NATO

training and it was great to work with public affairs professionals from both the active and Guard forces."

U.S. Army Europe employs State Partner National Guard forces to facilitate the provision of theatre support and services and to enhance partner capacity and capability. The 194th Engineer Brigade is responsible in Bulgaria and Romania to provide support of general engineering by strengthening and enhancing allied capacity and improving installation infrastructure.

"Working with components within U.S. Army Europe has been proof to us that our work is a united effort for supporting a greater cause," said Col. Brad J. Bishop of Brownsville, Tennessee, commander of the 194th Engineer Brigade based out of Jackson, Tennessee. "Our labor spent in improving the buildings, roads and other forms of infrastructure for the training site here at Novo Selo is not just in benefit for the Ten-

nessee National Guard but is a large contribution toward the foundation of training for all components of Operation Atlantic Resolve, that includes active duty U.S. Army Europe as well as our NATO allies."

The general engineering support provided by 194th includes horizontal and vertical engineering, survey and design, quality assurance and installation status report inspections as well as maintenance support.

"The construction work by the 194th will be huge for units from any country that come to train here at Novo Selo," said Weisman. "They are helping to make this a world-class training area that can support everything from airborne and air assault operations to heavy tank gunnery."

The 194th EN BDE began the rotation of troop construction projects to the Novo Selo training area on May 1st and are scheduled to return home on the 30th of September.

**- SGT SARAH KIRBY**

# A VIEW FOR THE FUTURE

## Army Surveyors Drafting the Look of the Land.



Sgt. David Parham and Spc. Justin Cobb with the 194th Engineer Brigade support base development for training sites in Novo Selo Training Area located in Eastern Bulgaria on August 27, 2015. (Photos by SGT Shannon Ball)

**NOVO SELO, Bulgaria** - "It's hot, it's cold and sometimes it's wet," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Anthony Clark, a construction engineer technician with the 212th Engineer Company, "but they are out there in every environment and it is tough."

From May through September Soldiers in the Tennessee and Alabama Army National Guard are building roads and constructing training sites in Bulgaria and Romania in part of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

Before any work is performed, technical engineers survey existing site conditions, prepare detailed designs of roads, and provide drainage solutions for water, said Clark.

The 774th Survey and Design Detachment designed the roads that the 194th Engineer Brigade is constructing, as well as the structures here and in Romania, he said.

"It is essential to see that the buildings

are placed properly and in the right location with proper materials to make sure the structure isn't put where there is or will be a water issue," said Clark.

They come in small groups with the skill set to be independent, quick thinkers and proficient in problem solving, he added.

There are 14 total technical engineers in the brigade. With completing 17-day annual training rotations here for Resolute Castle 15, the survey team has to be able to shoot, move and communicate with one another in a team of two for each rotation.

"They go back out to the field and do a final drawing of the 'as built' so they can mark lines, roads, and buildings for the landowner as a record of where everything is," said Clark.

Spc. Justin Cobb, a technical engineer with 774th Survey and Design Detachment is a

surveyor in his civilian career with Southern Consulting out of Dickson, Tennessee, and applies what he knows from his civilian career to complete military assignments accurately.

Wind speeds can throw off the instruments and tools, said Cobb. Problem solving is key to completing a successful mission when surveying.

"Participating in Operation Atlantic Resolve helps to strengthen bonds between the nations," said Cobb. "I hope to see more progress coming from Resolute Castle in the future."

Sgt. David Parham, a native of Germantown, Tennessee, has been a technical engineer for nine years in the Tennessee Army National Guard.

"A sharp mind is most important skill for our job," said Parham, a technical engineer with 774th Survey and Design Detachment.

The sole mission as surveyors is to support base development for the training sites, he said.

"It is a wonderful partnership working with multinational countries," said Parham. "It gives a chance for us to sharpen our skill set, while helping a partnering nation to develop their infrastructure within a military scope." - **SGT SHANNON BALL**

# BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

## Tenn. Guardsmen help boost Bulgarian Communities.

**NOVO SELO, Bulgaria** - While being escorted to our destination, the terrain sends reminders of my home front in Eastern Tennessee with gently rolling plains in between mountains to my left and right. As locals finish plowing rows of sunflower fields, we enter into a quaint city.

Capt. David Lyle, project officer of Resolute Castle 15, and 1st Sgt. Stephen Prather, operations noncommissioned officer in charge of Resolute Castle 15, travel into Sliven, Bulgaria, on August 24 to purchase the materials needed for the construction projects in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR).

“The language barrier is sometimes difficult, but we try to overcome that,” said Prather.

Lyle and Prather, both of the 194th Engineer Brigade of the Tennessee Army National Guard, have been in Bulgaria since May 2015 as part of OAR working with local companies to develop relationships and to purchase large quantities of construction materials.

“Buying materials from local vendors gives us a chance to interact with the citizens and build relationships with them,” said Prather. “It lets the civilians know we are here to try to help and better their community.”

We travel to several different communities to buy materials in order to complete projects, said Lyle.

Many of the locals are happy to work with us because they know we are here to help, said Prather.

“I think it is a good experience as well for us to get out and experience how the local citizens live and work in Bulgaria,” said Prather. - **SGT SHANNON BALL**



Capt. David Lyle, project officer of Resolute Castle 15, uses hand signals to emphasize the size of steel materials needed for construction projects with an employee in Yambol, Bulgaria on August 24, 2015. Language barriers make the purchasing process difficult but soldiers learn to overcome the obstacle.

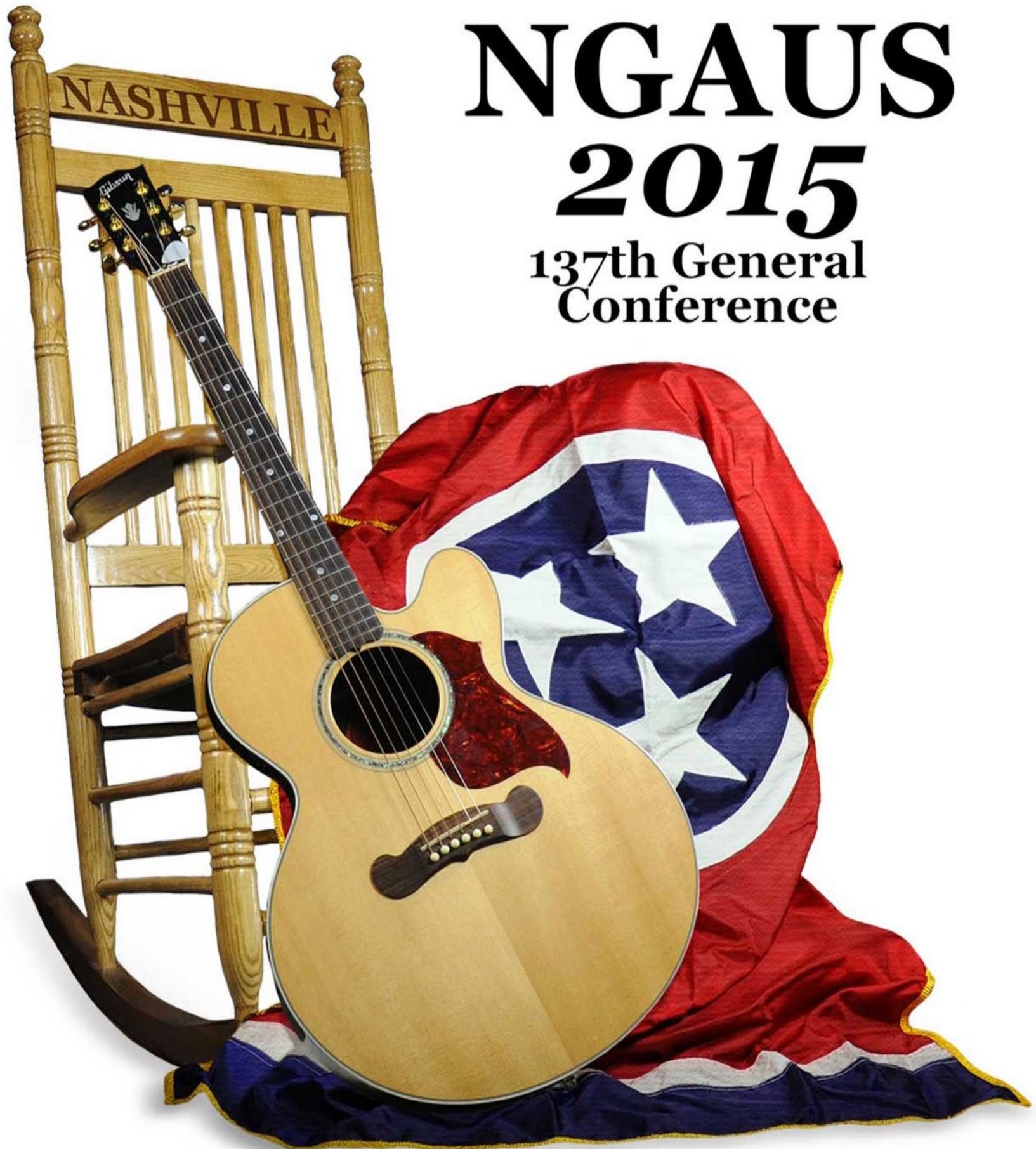


1st Sgt. Stephen Prather, operations noncommissioned officer in charge of Resolute Castle 15, shops for building materials in Sliven, Bulgaria on August 24, 2015 for construction projects at Novo Selo Training Area as a part of Operation Atlantic Resolve. (Photos by SGT Shannon Ball)

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