

AIR GUARD DORMITORY NAMED FOR RETIRED CHIEF MASTER SGT.

THE VOLUNTEER STATE GUARD

M A G E

MONTH OF THE MILITARY

FAMILY

RAGNAR RELAY
TWELVE SOLDIERS
WITH THE 1/230TH ACS
RUN FOR CHARITY

VOL. 15, ISSUE 5

CONTENTS

PAGE 8

MONTH OF THE MILITARY FAMILY

Military Families Across the Country are Celebrated Annually in November as Part of Military Family Appreciation Month.

PAGE 12

THE 230TH TAKES ON RAGNAR

Twelve Soldiers with the Tenn. Army National Guard's 1/230th Air Cavalry Squadron Participated in the 2015 Ragnar Relay October 23 Through 24.

PAGE 14

HALL HONORS RETIRED CHIEF

Dormitory on the I.G. Brown Training and Education Center Near Knoxville, Named for Chief Master Sgt. Vitzthum.

PAGE 15

ARMORY NAMED FOR FALLEN GUARDSMAN

Lobelville Armory Named in Memory of Sgt. 1st Class Michael W. Braden of the 278th ACR.

PAGE 16

PATH TO TRANSITION

Veterans Often Have A Difficult Time Adjusting Back To The Civilian World. Programs Like Boulder Crest Retreat Are Making The Transition Easier.

PAGE 19

COL BISHOP TAKES COMMAND OF 194TH

Change of Command Ceremony for the 194th Engineers.

PAGE 20

LISTEN UP!

Hearing Protection 101 for National Guard Soldiers.

PAGE 22

DISASTER DRILL

Area Agencies Participate in Airplane Crash Disaster Drill at McGhee Tyson Airport in Knoxville, Tenn.

PAGE 23

CHANGE OF COMMAND AT 118TH WING

Allbritten Takes Command of Tennessee's 118th Wing.

PAGE 24

UNITED THROUGH READING

Program Looks to Ease the Stress of Separation for Some Military Families through Reading.

PAGE 25

10TH ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL SERVICE

278th Holds Anniversary Memorial at Mt. Carmel Armory.

VIDEO CHECK OUT OUR NEW VIDEO ADDITION!!



COVER

Brad Bowlin and wife before his promotion ceremony to LTC on Oct. 18, 2015.

(Photo by SGT Arturo Guzman)

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

MAJ (RET) RANDY HARRIS

ART DIRECTION

ROB PENNINGTON

SENIOR EDITORS

MASTER SGT. ROBIN BROWN

ROB PENNINGTON

PHOTOGRAPHY

SGT ARTURO GUZMAN

SGT TIM MASSEY

STAFF SGT. DANIEL GAGNON

MASTER SGT. ROBIN BROWN

SSG WILLIAM JONES

SSG SHANNON R. GREGORY

MASTER SGT. JERRY HARLAN

SSGT KRISTA HAIR

MARK A. LARGE

WRITERS

MAJ (RET) RANDY HARRIS

MASTER SGT. ROBIN BROWN

MASTER SGT. MIKE R. SMITH

CHER MURPHY

WES WADE

VolState Guard is published to provide command and public information about Tennessee Guard Soldiers and Airmen throughout the world. Views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official view of and it is not endorsed by the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Departments of the Army and the Air Force. This publication does not supersede any information presented in any other official Air or Army publication. Articles, photos, artwork and letters are invited and should be addressed to: Editor, The Volunteer State Guard, 3041 Sidco Dr., Attn: TNPAO, Nashville, TN 37204.

For more information, the staff can be reached by telephone (615) 313-0633, or by email to tnpao@live.com. The Volunteer State Guard reserves the right to edit all material. Published works may be reprinted, except where copyrighted, provided credit is given to The Volunteer State Guard and the authors. Distribution of the The Volunteer State Guard is electronic and can be downloaded at: <http://www.tnmilitary.org>



TAKE THE GUARD WITH YOU



DOWNLOAD YOUR COPY AT
TNMILITARY.ORG



**TENNESSEE
SNAPSHOT**

FAREWELL TO COL DARNBUSH

Oct. 18, 2015 - The 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment says farewell to Col. Darrel D. Darnbush (left). Darnbush will retire after 32 years of service with the Tennessee Army National Guard, including 2 1/2 years as commander of the 278th.

PHOTO BY: SGT TIM MASSEY



TENNESSEE SNAPSHOT

MAKING HISTORY

The Tenn. Army National Guard made history recently by enlisting their first female into a Combat Engineer Military Occupational Specialty. Private Nykia Macklin from Millington, Tenn. is scheduled to attend basic training in June of 2016.

PHOTO BY: RECRUITING AND RETENTION BATTALION



**TENNESSEE
SNAPSHOT**

THUNDERBIRDS TAKE FLIGHT

U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds flying over the tail of the C-17 from the Tennessee Air National Guard's 164th Airlift Wing, during the 2015 Memphis Airshow that took place at Millington Jet Port Sept. 25-27. The demonstration team is composed of F-16 aircraft.

PHOTO BY: U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds



TENNESSEE
SNAPSHOT

WELCOME HOME

Several Airmen with the 134th Air Refueling Wing in Knoxville, Tenn., returned home Oct. 7, from a deployment at Al Udeid Air Base.

PHOTO BY: STAFF SGT. DANIEL GAGNON



MONTH OF THE MILITARY

FAMILY

Above: Tech. Sgt. Christy Gardner, 118th Wing, Tenn. Air National Guard, and her son, Aiden. *(Photo by Master Sgt. Robin Brown)*

STORY BY **MASTER SGT. ROBIN BROWN**



Staff Sgt. Drew Gentry, Information Technology Specialist, and his father Command. Sgt. Maj. Michael Gentry, the State Command Sergeant Major, in front of the Tenn. National Guard Joint Force Headquarters in Nashville. (Photo by SSG William Jones)

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Military families across the country are celebrated annually in November as part of Military Family Appreciation Month.

“The strength of our Soldiers and Airmen comes from their families,” said Maj. Gen. Max Haston, Adjutant General, Tennessee National Guard.

Military Family Month was created by the Armed Services YMCA and began as Military Family Week in 1996. Later, in 2003, it became an entire month dedicated to military families. It has been recognized every year since by the President signing a proclamation.

“Military Family Month is a month long celebration of our military families in which we honor the commitment and sacrifices of that who serve,” said Lt. Col. Jim Reed, director, J9 Tennessee Military and Family Readiness Operations. “With Tennessee being the fourth largest National Guard state in deployments since 2001, our families know this too well.”

There are many services provided during this time to show appreciation to military

families.

Sesame Street created a free app for military families to address topics such as deployments, homecoming, self-expression and injuries. It is available in both English and Spanish. It includes videos, storybooks and more to help support pre-school and elementary aged children manage transitions that many military families experience.

Additionally, Operation Kid Comfort helps military children find comfort with a free custom made photo transfer quilt or pillow through their program for children of deployed service members. Volunteers at the Armed Services YMCA create custom-made photo transfer quilts and pillows. Each child receives a quilt or pillow; children 7 and under receive a quilt, 8 and older receive a pillow. The quilts and pillows are personally handcrafted to help children cope with the emotional stress during a parent’s deployment.

MyMilitaryLife is a app created by the National Military Family Association to help military spouses navigate the many

adventures of military life. This app assists military members and their families with issues such as moving, deployment, parenthood, spouse education & employment, and even transitioning out of the military. Users can also share tips with other military spouses.

The Armed Services YMCA also provides free or low-cost youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility programs for junior enlisted military & their families to make military life easier. For more information, please visit asymca.org.

The J9 Tennessee Military and Family Readiness Operations Directorate also has several events and opportunities to help celebrate military families during November.

“Our families serve too, and when we take time to recognize their commitment and service during one of the many events in November, it is a gentle reminder of our gratitude for their commitment, sacrifice and support,” said Reed.

- MASTER SGT. ROBIN BROWN

HERE ARE SOME MILITARY FAMILY EVENTS HAPPENING IN NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 6 - Conclusion of Christmas ornament contest. The winner's ornament will be on display at the White House, hanging from the National Guard family themed tree there. Two runners up will be presented to the Governor of Tennessee for display in the state. All others will be prominently displayed on the Christmas tree located in the Tennessee National Guard Joint Force Headquarters lobby.

NOVEMBER 7 - MTSU Military Salute to Veterans Day football game. Events will start at 10:30am and the game starts at 2:30pm.

NOVEMBER 8 - Nashville Zoo military appreciation day. 9am to 4pm

NOVEMBER 24 - UT Basketball military appreciation game, UT vs. Army. Tickets are free but limited and you must pre-register to attend. big-orangegivethanks15.eventbrite.com

NOVEMBER 28 - UT Football military appreciation game, UT vs. Vanderbilt. Tickets are free but limited and you must pre-register to attend. <http://www.jotform.us/form/52166755321151>



CYBER SECURITY IS OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

DON'T TAKE THE BAIT



- **Do not open attachments or click on links from untrusted sources**
- **Never send personal information in an email**
- **Keep your firewall and antivirus software updated**

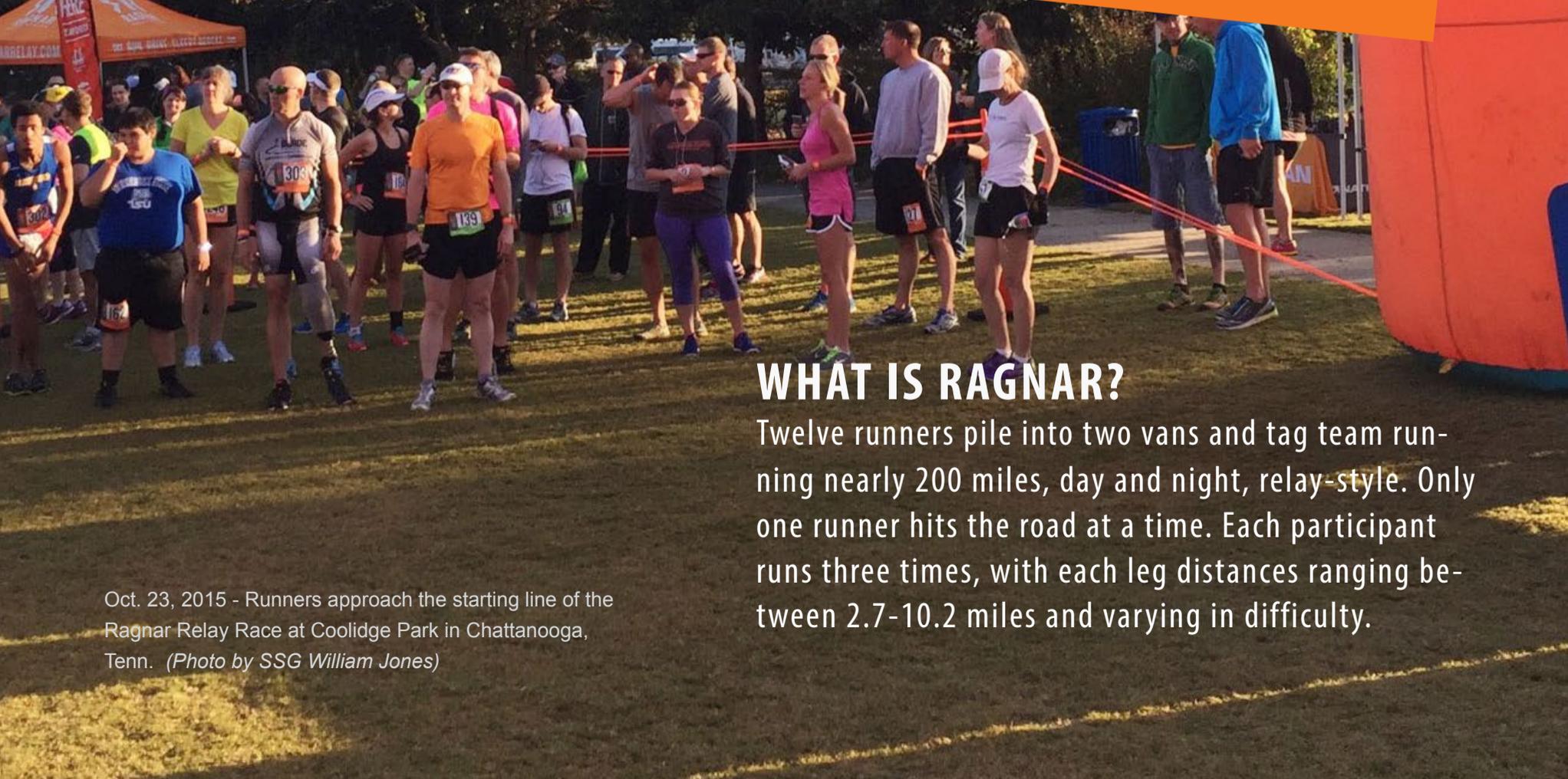


RAGNAR
RELAY SERIES®

THE 1/230TH

TAKES ON

RAGNAR



WHAT IS RAGNAR?

Twelve runners pile into two vans and tag team running nearly 200 miles, day and night, relay-style. Only one runner hits the road at a time. Each participant runs three times, with each leg distances ranging between 2.7-10.2 miles and varying in difficulty.

Oct. 23, 2015 - Runners approach the starting line of the Ragnar Relay Race at Coolidge Park in Chattanooga, Tenn. (Photo by SSG William Jones)

Twelve Soldiers with the Tennessee Army National Guard's 1/230th Air Cavalry Squadron, based at Joint Base Berry Field in Nashville, Tenn., participated in the 2015 Ragnar Relay October 23 through 24.

"I love running and this is a very challenging race," said Staff Sgt. Jessica Wood, Tennessee State Aviation Office Administrative NCO. This was her second time running the Ragnar Relay; last year she said she just ran for fun.

"It's bittersweet," said Capt. David Swan about finishing the race. Swan is the Squadron Training Officer for the 1/230th ACS, and was the team leader for the unit's running team. "Halfway through my last run, it couldn't end fast enough, but we had a lot of good times out there on the roads and in the vans. It's one of those things where it's hard to describe why it's fun to people, but it really is."

The race, which is nearly 200 miles in total from Chattanooga, Tenn., to Nashville, Tenn., usually takes teams between 24 and 36 hours to complete. Each of the Soldiers ran three separate legs to complete the race, ultimately finishing in just over 30 hours. Each of the legs varies in distance, so no two runners run the same distance by the end of the race.

"The shortest overall distance is about ten miles, and the longest one is about 22 miles," said 1st Sgt. Terry Hurley, HHT 1/230th ACS. "The team was broken into

The shortest overall distance is about ten miles, and the longest one is about 22 miles.

two groups of six, and we had two vehicles, one for each team."

"I'm glad it's over. I'm ready for a shower and a nap; but it was a lot of fun," Swan said.



Soldiers with the Tennessee Army National Guard's 1/230th Air Cavalry Squadron, based at Joint Base Berry Field in Nashville, Tenn., practiced running long distances to prepare for the nearly 200 mile Ragnar Relay that took place October 23 through 24 starting in Chattanooga, Tenn., and ending in Nashville, Tenn. (Photo by Master Sgt. Robin Brown)

The Soldiers came together to raise money for the Fallen Aviator Memorial Scholarship Fund, established by the Volunteer Chapter of the Army Aviation Association of America, also known as Quad-A. The fund honors those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

"Everybody dug deep all night, when the rain came in, we just kept at it," said Swan. "I really appreciate all the hard work the team did in the last few months preparing for this. It really represented Army Aviation, the Tennessee National Guard, and the Quad-A chapter."

The group raised over \$4,000 for the scholarship fund.

"This year, we wanted to use that money to start the scholarships honoring Chief Warrant Officer 4 Dan Cole and 1st Lt. Thomas Williams," said Swan. They were on a routine training flight when their OH-58D helicopter went down in Campbell County, Tenn., in 2011.

"I really like that we were running to raise money for a scholarship that helps children of our fallen aviators," said Wood.



One of the 230th's Race Vehicles. Teams competing in Ragnar require 2 vehicles in order to drop off and pick up runners at exchange points. (Photo by SSG William Jones)

The Soldiers were tired after running together all that way, but they were happy to have that experience.

"We had a lot of sore muscles, but it was a good opportunity for team building and camaraderie," said Hurley.

"I thought it was awesome to see how the whole team pulled together, cheering each other on," said Wood. "Now that the race is over, I am ready to do it again next year."

The team finished in 81st place out of 258 teams for the regular 12 person teams. They also finished in 5th place out of 16 in the mixed gender public service division.

For more information about the Ragnar Relay, visit ragnarrelay.com/race/tennessee.

- MASTER SGT. ROBIN BROWN

HALL HONORS RETIRED CHIEF

Dormitory on the I.G. Brown Training and Education Center Near Knoxville, Named for Chief Master Sgt. Vitzthum.



Chief Master Sgt. (Ret.) George A. Vitzthum stands in front of the building named in his honor at McGhee-Tyson Air Base, Knoxville, Tennessee, on Oct. 8. (Photo by Master Sgt. Jerry Harlan)

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. - Retired Chief Master Sgt. George A. Vitzthum never cut ties to the Air National Guard detachment where he oversaw service member's education, and now the I.G. Brown Training and Education Center secured his memory on campus.

The TEC dedicated a dormitory building in Vitzthum's honor here Oct 8 with a ceremony in Wilson Hall.

The dedication included remarks from Vitzthum; from his daughter, retired Col. Carmella Lawson; from TEC's third commander, retired Col. Larry Martin; and from TEC's current commander, Col. Jessica Meyeraan.

"Because of our heritage and our traditions, we have come together to honor a great man and his legacy," said Meyeraan.

Vitzthum Hall, or Building 406, provides temporary lodging for 98 students and guests and finished construction in April

1993 during a multi-million dollar campus building project. The TEC plans to renovate it sometime next fall.

Vitzthum served for more than 15 years with the TEC as a curriculum developer, as an instructor, as a training director and as its second commandant between 1970 and 1985. He retired from military service in 1993.

Air National Guard officials credited Vitzthum as a key figure in establishing the Airman leadership school, as well as the officer preparatory academy. He graduated the TEC's NCO academy in 1970 before he returned to help write and instruct those curriculums, among others.

"What we did is we found out what the Air National Guard needed ... and that's what we based it on, and then the student was always number one, everything revolved around the student," said Vitzthum.

The TEC's Paul H. Lankford EPME Center since graduated more than 20,000 Airman leadership school students. More than 14,600 officers earned their commissions.

Vitzthum spoke for nearly 30 minutes on his career and experiences.

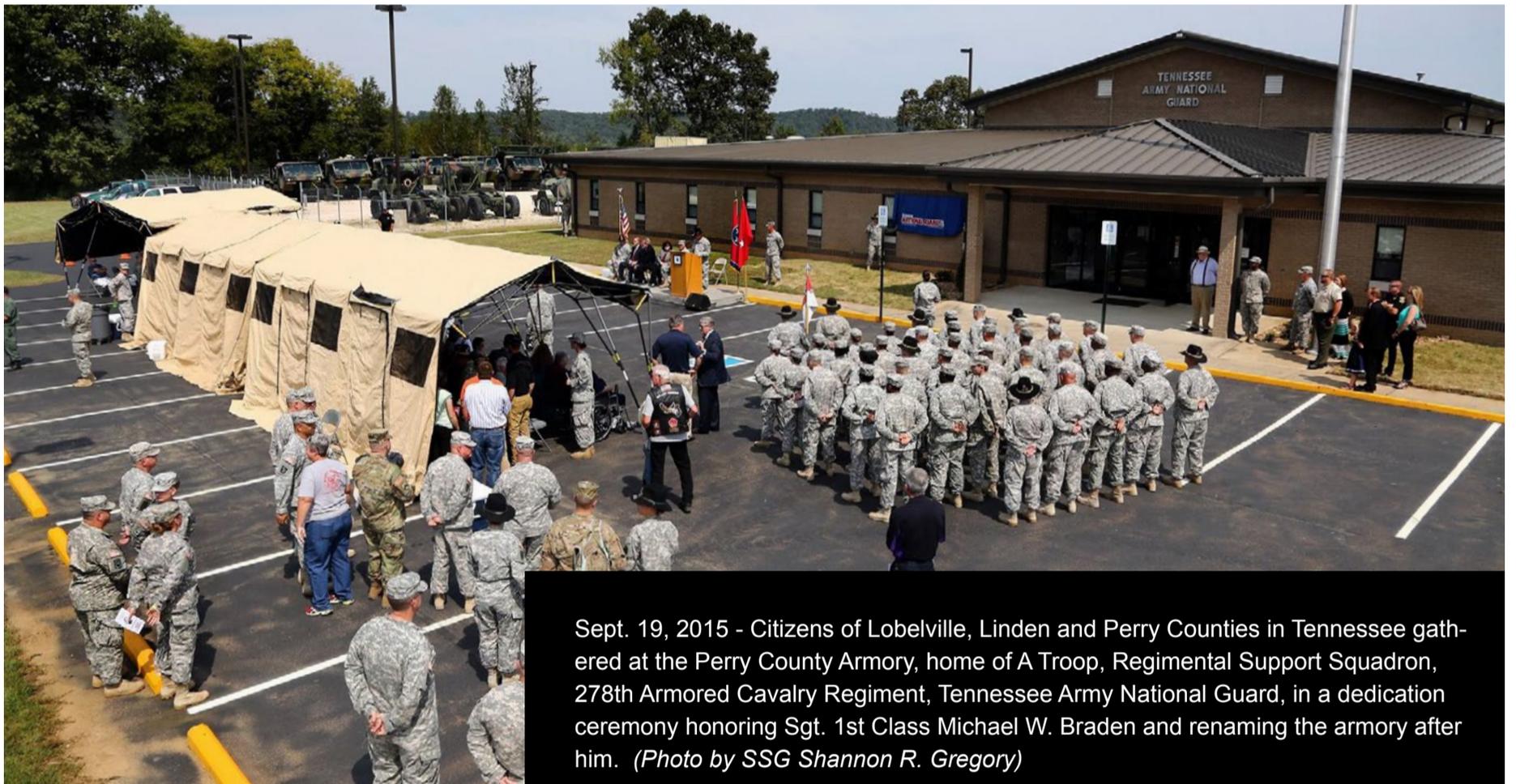
"I've been very fortunate," said Vitzthum to family, friends, veterans and Airmen. He thought back through his early career, when he served in Germany, and when he worked as junior electrical engineer on the space program with the first astronauts: "I've come a long ways."

Vitzthum joined the regular Air Force in 1955 and the Reserves in 1959. He joined the Missouri Air National Guard in 1963. He was a ground equipment technician, a first sergeant, an aircraft production scheduler and an honor guard, among many other duties, experiences and positions.

- MASTER SGT. MIKE R. SMITH

ARMORY NAMED FOR FALLEN GUARDSMAN

Lobelville Armory Named in Memory of Sgt. 1st Class Michael W. Braden of the 278th ACR.



Sept. 19, 2015 - Citizens of Lobelville, Linden and Perry Counties in Tennessee gathered at the Perry County Armory, home of A Troop, Regimental Support Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Tennessee Army National Guard, in a dedication ceremony honoring Sgt. 1st Class Michael W. Braden and renaming the armory after him. (Photo by SSG Shannon R. Gregory)

LOBELVILLE, Tenn. - The Tennessee National Guard Armory in Lobelville, Tenn. was renamed Sept. 19 for a Guardsman who was killed on July 9th, 2014 at the Armory.

The armory was named in memory of Sgt. 1st Class Michael W. Braden of Ripley, Tenn. who was shot and killed after allowing a teenager he thought was a possible recruit. into the armory. Braden served as the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of Readiness for Troop A, Support Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

Maj. Gen. Max Haston, Tennessee's Adjutant General, was in attendance, as well as numerous other state and local officials.

- MAJ (RET) RANDY HARRIS



Maj. Gen. Max Haston, Adjutant General, Tenn. National Guard, along with the wife of Sgt. 1st Class Michael W. Braden, unveil a sign naming the armory in Lobelville, Tenn. in honor of Braden. (Photo by SSG Shannon R. Gregory)

VETERANS

THE PATH TO TRANSITION

Veterans often have a difficult time adjusting back to the civilian world. Programs like Boulder Crest Retreat are making the transition easier.



THE PATH TO TRANSITION

According to the PTSD Foundation of America, one out of every three combat Veterans are dealing with serious post-traumatic stress symptoms. Add to that the other common challenges that Veterans face when trying to transition to a civilian life, and there are a lot of potential problems that can arise. Veterans transitioning to civilian life often have a difficult time adjusting to the lack of structure and change in pace of life. They feel isolated, have difficulties re-connecting to family and friends, and feel stress as they seek jobs and worry about financial issues. “Any transition in life can be challenging. Leaving the military is very stressful for many of us,” explains Ken Falke, chairman and founder of Boulder Crest Retreat. “Our work at the Retreat focuses on establishing

clarity around transition. Understanding where you want to be, how much money you need to make, and what is most important to your quality of life is very important. Once you gain clarity, the fundamentals all seem to come together.”

Research conducted by the Pew Research Center found that 27 percent of Veterans reported finding it difficult to transition back into civilian life, but that number rises to 40 percent when you poll Veterans who have served in the last 10 years.

“We know that returning Veterans can be as productive at home as they were in the military and on the battlefield,” added Falke. “Now more than ever, our great nation needs the strength and leadership of our combat veterans here at home.”

At Boulder Crest Retreat for Military and Veteran Wellness, combat Veterans and

Tips for helping Veterans transition to civilian life:

Pay attention to the veteran's behavior to see how well they are adjusting. If there are problems and stress, identify those issues and seek out help for them. Speak with your family doctor or a mental health therapist for advice on the best route to helping.

Give the veteran some space and time to adjust. Making the transition isn't something that is going to happen overnight, so being patient and supportive is going to be the most effective route.

Suggest treatment programs that can help, such as the one offered by the Boulder Crest Retreat. Being exposed to a variety of therapeutic tools can help during the transition so they have ways to reduce stress and anxiety.

Join or build a community. There is help in having good social support. Seek out other Veteran groups or families that can be social together. Some of these groups already exist in communities, but if they don't then don't shy away from starting one.

Encourage healthy living habits, such as eating healthy, exercising, getting enough sleep, and doing things to help reduce stress.

Have a plan with some goals, so that you can help the Veteran work toward meeting them. They can include goals regarding engaging in therapy, obtaining a new job, etc.



A wounded warrior spends the afternoon on the archery range at Boulder Crest Retreat in Bluemont, Va.

THE PATH TO TRANSITION



Boulder Crest features four, fully ADA-accessible cabins dedicated exclusively to combat veterans and their families.

their families receive a free of charge, week-long therapeutic program. The retreat is located on a 37-acre, offering a serene nature setting just 50 miles outside of Washington, D.C. This innovative program, known as PATHH (Progressive and Alternative Therapies for Healing Heroes), focuses on providing education about PTSD and other combat-related stresses, group therapeutic sessions, recreational therapy, and the creation of a game plan for life, inclusive of individualized goals, which ensures that the benefit of PATHH is sustained for months and years to come. The program is delivered by a unique blend of world-class therapists and trained military mentors. The retreat founder, Ken Falke, is a 21 year wounded Navy Veteran.

The Retreat welcomes wounded active-duty, reserve and National Guard personnel, Veterans, their family members and caregivers, and Gold Star families. Boulder Crest Retreat is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that is funded entirely by private donations by individuals and organizations from around the country. For more information about the retreat, please go to bouldercrestretreat.org.

- **CHER MURPHY**

ABOUT BOULDER CREST RETREAT

Boulder Crest Retreat for Military and Veteran Wellness is a rural sanctuary that provides free accommodations, recreational and therapeutic activities and programs to help our nation's military and Veteran personnel and their families recover and reconnect during their long journey of healing from physical and invisible wounds of war. The 37-acre retreat is located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Bluemont, Virginia, just 50 miles west of Washington, D.C. The Retreat is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and is entirely funded through private donations from individuals, foundations and corporations. For more information about Boulder Crest Retreat, please visit www.bouldercrestretreat.org.



COL BISHOP TAKES COMMAND OF 194TH

Change of Command Ceremony for the 194th Engineers.

JACKSON, Tenn. - The Tennessee National Guard's 194th Engineer Brigade, headquartered in Jackson, received a new commander on August 8. Brig. Gen. Tommy Baker, Assistant Adjutant General-Army, Tennessee National Guard officiated a formal change of command ceremony at the Frankland-Tay-

lor National Guard Armory on Dr. F.E. Wright Boulevard, where Col. Lyndon C. Johnson relinquished command to Col. James B. Bishop, a Brownsville native.

Col. Johnson took command of the Brigade on September 1, 2013. He retired at the end of August 2015.

Col. James B. "Brad" Bishop graduated from Haywood High School in 1983 and holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. He enlisted in the Tennessee Army National Guard as a Private First Class in 1984, and later went on to receive a commission from the Tennessee Military Academy in 1988 as a second lieutenant.

Bishop brings over 30 years of military experience to the new position. He has deployed twice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom throughout his career, first as the Branch Chief, Multi-National Logistics, for the 377th Theater Support Command, and later, on his second tour, as the Commander of the 168th Military Police Battalion.

Col. Bishop's military education includes both the Armor Officer Basic and Advance Courses, Engineer Officer Advance Course, Combined Arms Service Staff School, Military Police Officers Pre-Command Course, and he is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. His numerous awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the



Meritorious Service Medal, and numerous awards of both the Army Commendation and Army Achievement Medals.

Col. Bishop currently serves as the Deputy Chief of Staff, Engineers at the Joint Forces Headquarters, Tennessee National Guard. In this capacity he is responsible for all real estate actions, new construction, and maintenance of all Army National Guard facilities across the state.

The 194th Engineer Brigade has approximately 2000 Soldiers, and is considered one of the Army's most diverse multi-functional engineer brigades consisting of an engineer battalion, an engineer detachment, and two military police battalions.

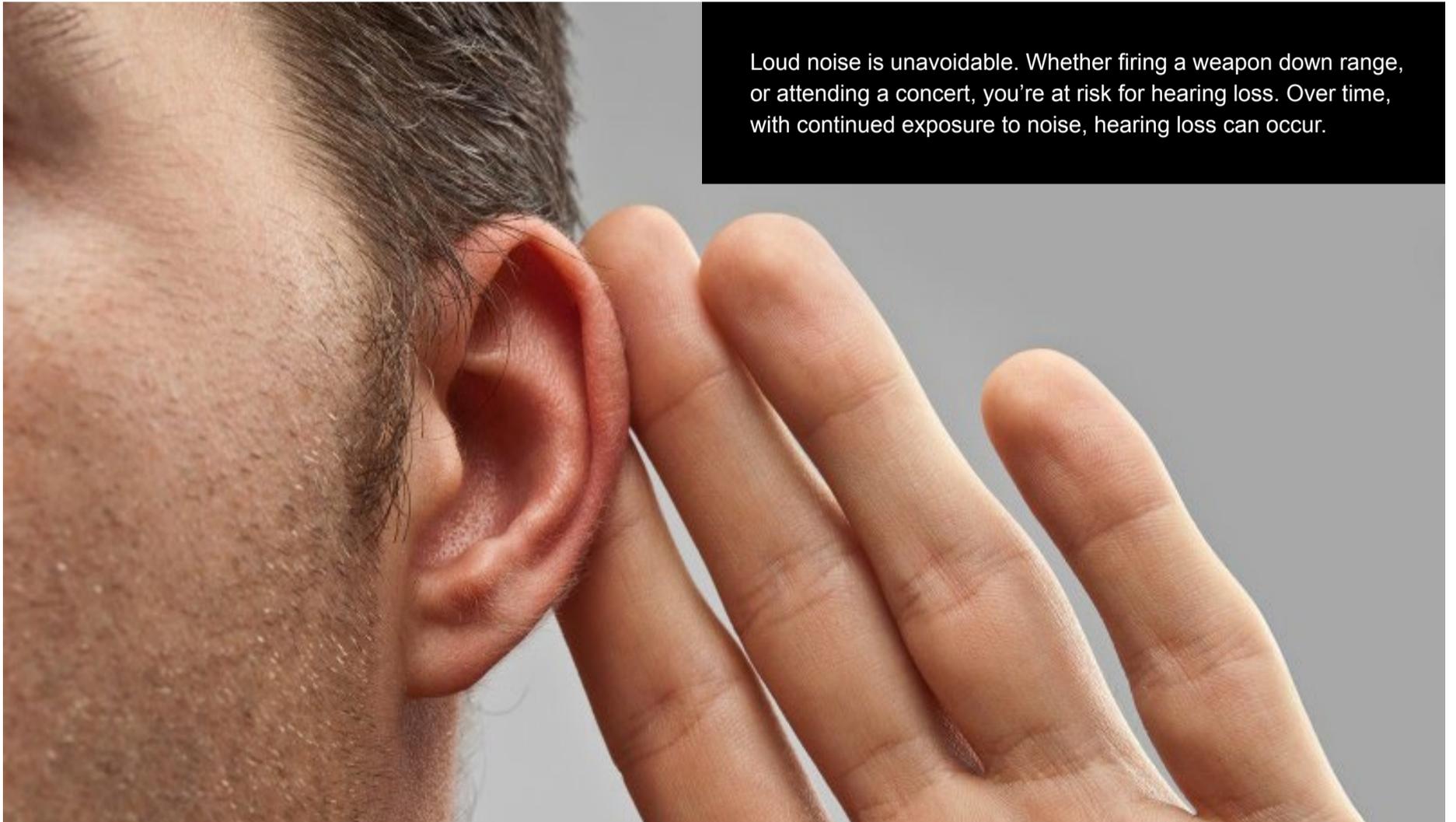
- MAJ (RET) RANDY HARRIS



Brig. Gen. Tommy Baker (Left), The Assistant Adjutant General-Army, Tennessee National Guard, is shown here as he transfers the guidon to Col. Brad Bishop (Center) during the formal change of command ceremony at the 194th Engineer Brigade Headquarters in Jackson, Tenn. on August 8. *(Photo by 194th Engineer Brigade)*

LISTEN UP!

Hearing Protection 101 for National Guard Soldiers.



Loud noise is unavoidable. Whether firing a weapon down range, or attending a concert, you're at risk for hearing loss. Over time, with continued exposure to noise, hearing loss can occur.

Hearing loss among service members has risen substantially in the last few years. The Department of Defense Hearing Center of Excellence reports that tinnitus (ringing of the ears) and hearing loss are two of the most prevalent service-related injuries among veterans.

In response to hearing health concerns, the Army National Guard (ARNG) changed their hearing test policy from testing Soldiers once every five years to annually. More frequent hearing tests will help Soldiers identify, treat, and reduce the impact of hearing loss earlier.

When Soldiers take steps to protect their hearing, it keeps them safer on the battlefield, during trainings, and throughout everyday life. To help Soldiers better understand the importance of hearing protection and hearing loss prevention, ARNG's health and wellness campaign, Guard Your Health, offers tips on how to prevent hearing loss. Tactics like wearing noise canceling ear muffs while riding in a helicopter or wearing noise activated or electronic earplugs while shooting can keep ears safe.

Guard Your Health also features information on how hearing loss can affect a Soldier's life, how to cope with and manage

hearing loss, and the signs to look out for, such as a muffled feeling in your ears, sensing a prolonged ringing or buzzing in your ears, or straining to hear someone.

Service members may be at risk for hearing injuries when exposed to high noise levels of vehicles, gun shots, and other deafening sounds. For example, a helicopter has a noise level of 85 decibels (dB), and flying one without appropriate hearing protection can cause gradual and permanent hearing loss. Gunfire and other impulse sounds can be loud enough to cause hearing damage as well.

Soldiers can learn more about the deci-

bel scale, safe volume limits, and appropriate hearing protection with Guard Your Health’s “How Loud Life Should Be” infographic. Soldiers are encouraged to review Guard Your Health’s hearing health resources and speak to their medical readiness NCO as soon as possible if they are concerned about their own hearing.

5 WAYS HEARING LOSS CAN AFFECT YOUR LIFE

Imagine this: you’re hanging out with your buddies and you can barely hear what they’re saying. You see their lips moving but you’re struggling to keep up with the conversation. Unfortunately, this is the everyday reality for more Soldiers than you may think.

The Department of Veterans Affairs reports that more than 445,000 Veterans have service-related hearing loss. Seventy one percent of Soldiers returning from Iraq or Afghanistan have reported some level of hearing loss. The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) (<http://www.hearingloss.org/>) shares insight on five ways hearing loss can affect your life:

1. Hearing loss can affect relationships. If your friends and family don’t know about your hearing loss, they can’t help you understand what they are saying. Bottom line: be upfront. Tell them the best ways to communicate with you so your relationships don’t suffer.
2. Social situations can be frustrating. It’s common for individuals with hearing loss to prefer being alone than risk misunderstanding someone because they can’t hear them. Remember that you can always find a quiet place to have a one-on-one conversation. You can also use a personal Assistive Listening Device (ALD), such as a hearing aid, to help you hear better.
3. Completing tasks at work can be difficult. Hearing loss can make hearing details and instructions needed to complete work tasks challenging. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA),



Some common hearing protection options:

- Foam earplugs that you hand-form to fit in your ears
- Pre-formed earplugs
- Ear/Noise muffs
- Ear canal caps
- Custom made earplugs

employers with 15 or more employees must make adjustments in the workplace for an employee with a hearing loss. Speak up, work with, and educate your employer about hearing loss so that you can perform your job better.

4. Hearing loss can affect your safety. Our ears help us identify danger such as a beeping smoke alarm. Living with hearing loss means you need to rely on your other senses to alert you to sounds you might not hear. For example, an ALD such as a vibrating pager can let you know when a baby cries or a doorbell rings.
5. Enjoying some of your favorite activities may become harder. You might find it difficult to hear the dialogue during a movie or other events. ALDs expand the functionality of hearing aids and co-

chlear implants (<http://hearing.health.mil/DiagnosisTreatment/TreatmentOptions/CochlearImplants.aspx>) by helping you separate the sounds you want to hear from background noise. The ADA requires most public venues to provide them. So next time you visit a movie theater, ask for one!

Although hearing loss can affect your life in numerous ways, there are just as many ways to treat and reduce the impact of hearing loss. Talk to your Medical Readiness NCO or health care professional to make an appointment for a hearing evaluation if you feel you may have some hearing loss. You’ll be surprised at all the options available – hearing aids, cochlear implants, and more! Review your options and decide what makes the most sense for you.

- GUARD YOUR HEALTH

Guard Your Health (www.guardyourhealth.com) is a health and medical readiness campaign for Army National Guard Soldiers and their families sponsored by the Army National Guard Chief Surgeon’s Office. Guard Your Health provides Army National Guard Soldiers with information, motivation, and support to overcome challenges and make healthy decisions for themselves, their families, and their units. To learn more about improving your health, visit the Guard Your Health website, LIKE “Army National Guard Health” on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ARNGHealth>), and follow @ARNGHealth on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/ARNGHealth>).

DISASTER DRILL @ MCGHEE-TYSON

Area Agencies Participate in Airplane Crash Disaster Drill at McGhee-Tyson Airport in Knoxville, Tenn.

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. - If you heard about an airplane crash this weekend that left 32 dead and 98 injured, the good news is it was just a drill.

It was all part of a full-scale emergency preparedness exercise Saturday morning at McGhee-Tyson Airport to test area agencies in their response to a plane crash.

As first responders arrived, they learned 130 people were aboard the “plane” — simulated by three school buses parked front-to-back — and that 32 were dead and 20 critically injured.

The passengers were, of course, all volunteers tapped to portray mortally wounded and injured passengers.

And, as Rural/Metro Ambulance Service paramedic David Blanton explained, patient conditions were subject to change throughout the course of the drill, as would be the case in an actual disaster scenario.

In addition to the 32 fatalities and 20 critically injured passengers, another 30 were injured, but stable, and the remaining 48 had sustained minor injuries.

“That’s what we were given initially,” Blanton said. “But that changed during the course of the drill, constantly. It changed constantly.”

The “patients” for this drill were young and old, kids and adults. Their injuries — represented by some creative makeup choices — ranged from minor flesh wounds to gaping holes in arms and faces. An unlucky few were pulled from the wreckage with metal rods sticking out of their heads.

Blanton was one of several Blount County-based Rural/Metro paramedics to participate.



Tennessee Air National Guard Firefighters Ryan Bailey (left) and John Wand participate in a mock plane crash during an emergency drill Saturday at McGhee Tyson Airport. (Photo by Mark A. Large | The Daily Times)

The Alcoa, Blount County and Knoxville fire departments were also there, as were fire departments for the Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority and Tennessee Air National Guard.

They were joined by the Blount County Sheriff’s Office, Blount County Rescue Squad,

Rural/Metro Ambulance Service and the Maryville, Alcoa and Knoxville police departments. The group was rounded out by emergency management agencies from Blount County, Knox County and the state. Blanton, who’s worked with Rural/Metro for the past 15 years, said Saturday’s exercise was the latest to showcase the cohesiveness of Blount County’s police, fire and emergency services organizations.

“All the agencies in Blount County conduct regular drills,” Blanton said. “We had representatives of all agencies here, and that’s what’s notable about Blount County. Every-

one helps each other. It’s just unique and it’s a working cooperation amongst everybody.”

Blanton said at least one emergency response drill is conducted in Blount County each year.

Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority spokeswoman Caitlin Darras said they hold an airplane disaster drill every three years. Saturday’s outing was the ninth such exercise held at McGhee Tyson Airport.

Even in years without a drill, they hold a “table talk” conference where area police, fire and emergency responders sit down and discuss their response plan for such a disaster, Darras said.

It’s that regularity, and a high degree of collaboration, that keeps Blount County’s agencies ready for anything, Blanton said. “On any given day, you don’t expect this to happen, but you’re prepared,” Blanton said.

- WES WADE | THE DAILY TIMES

CHANGE OF COMMAND AT 118TH WING

Allbritten Takes Command of Tennessee's 118th Wing.



NASHVILLE, Tenn. - The Tennessee Air National Guard's 118th Wing, headquartered in Nashville, received a new commander October 3. Col. Thomas Echols, of Franklin, Tenn., relinquished command to Col. Keith Allbritten, a native of Murfreesboro, Tenn., during a formal ceremony at the base.

Col. Allbritten has served as the Vice Commander for the Wing since April 2012. Col. Echols had served as the Wing commander since October 2012. His retirement ceremony was held the same day, shortly after the official change of command.

Col. Allbritten graduated from Murray State University in Murray, Ky., in 1988, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics. He entered the Air Force in 1989 as a navigator, serving at Mather and Castle Air Force Bases in California. He transferred to the Tennessee Air National Guard in March 2000, serving as a navigator instructor/evaluator for the 118th Airlift Wing in Nashville, Tenn.



Col. Keith Allbritten, right, accepts the 118th Wing guidon from Brig. Gen. Donald Johnson, the Assistant Adjutant General of the Tennessee Air National Guard, left, during an official change of command ceremony October 3 at Joint Base Berry Field in Nashville, Tenn. The guidon exchange is a military tradition to demonstrate the transfer of command from one person to another. *(Photo by Staff Sgt. Krista Hair)*

While working with the 118th, he has served as the Operations Officer and Squadron Commander for the 105th Airlift Squadron, 118th Airlift Wing, as well as the Deputy Commander for the 118th Operations Group prior to becoming the vice commander for the base.

Allbritten is rated as a Master Navigator with more than 6,200 flight hours in multiple aircraft, including the T-37, T-43, KC-135A/R, C-130E/H2, and WC-130H. He has over 340 combat hours and has flown in support of numerous Operations while de-

ployed, to include Northern Watch, Southern Watch, Deny Flight, Restore Hope, Joint Guard, Joint Forge, Joint Endeavor, Coronet Oak, Noble Eagle, Iraqi Freedom, and Enduring Freedom.

His numerous awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Aerial Achievement Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal with Valor, Army Commendation Medal and Joint Meritorious Unit Award.

- MASTER SGT. ROBIN BROWN

UNITED THROUGH READING PROGRAM

Program Looks to Ease the Stress of Separation for Some Military Families through Reading.

One of the most difficult things a child can experience is having a parent separated from them for an indeterminate period of time. United Through Reading helps ease the stress of separation for military families by having service members who are separated from the children they love read children's books aloud on video for the child to watch at home.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

The Organization

United Through Reading offers military service members who are away from their families the opportunity to be video-recorded reading storybooks to their children at home, creating positive emotional connections.

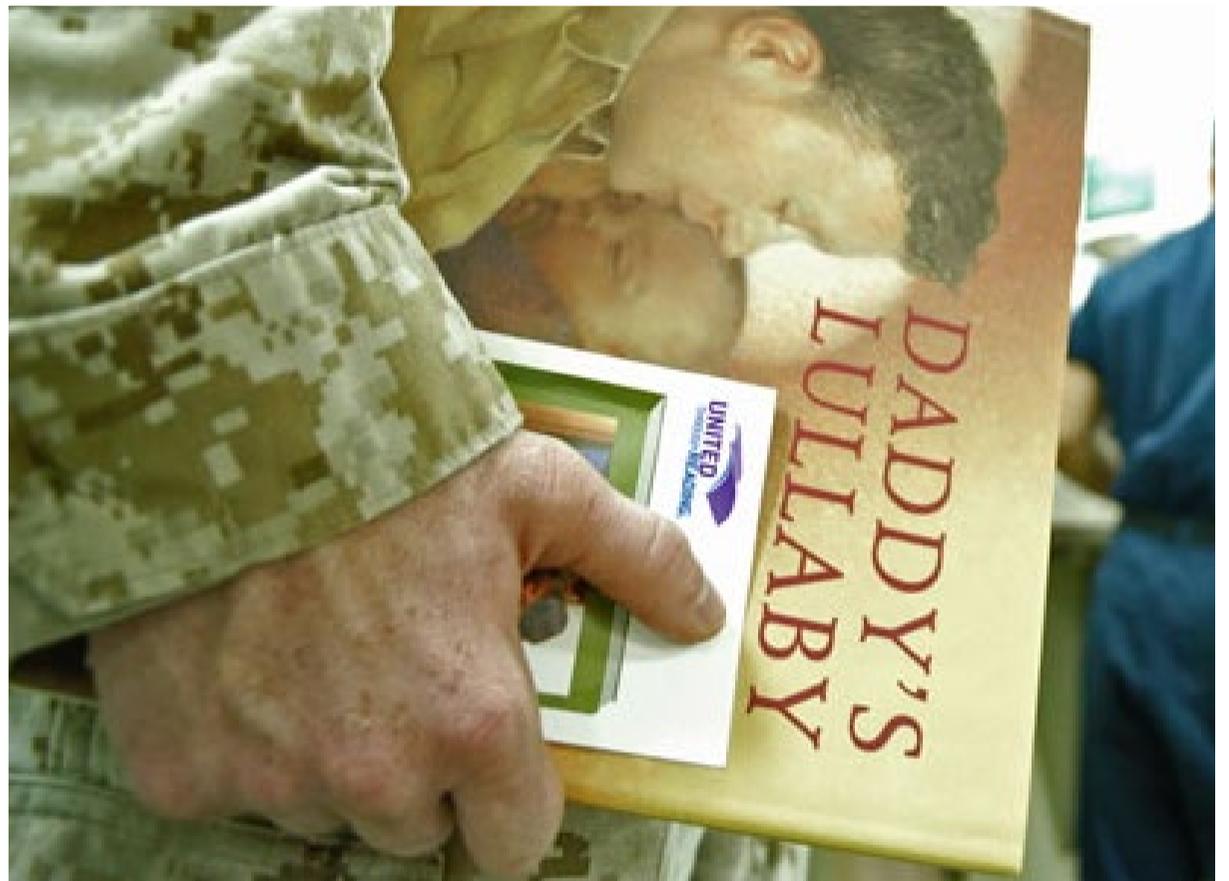
Service to Military Families

This program is available to all military units including reserve components and Coast Guard, hosted at select USO locations, and has served nearly two million beneficiaries since 1989. The UTR Program:

- Eases the stress of separation
- Builds family resiliency
- Makes homecomings easier
- Cultivates a love of reading

Steps to Staying Connected

1. The service member is video-recorded reading a book and sends the video home. 2. The child at home watches the video and follows along with the book. 3. While the child watches, the caregiver at home captures the child's reaction and relates it back to the service member. 4. This feedback encourages the service member to record again.



How to Participate

Contact us at military@utr.org. Once Command Leadership agrees to offer United Through Reading, a Program Manager will provide ongoing training and support throughout the deployment.

United Through Reading Provides

- Command brief
- Active Duty and Homefront Coordinator training
- Free Storytime Kickoff Kit with 33 children's books as a permanent onsite library, 100 DVDs and mailers
- Free Booster Kits with additional supplies
- Free Seasonal Books with DVDs
- Recognition for Command volunteers

Command Provides

- Volunteers, including Command Liaison, Active Duty Coordinator and Homefront Coordinator
- Participation reports to United Through Reading
- Video equipment, camcorder/tripod, lavalier microphone
- Commands may provide: postage, additional DVDs and padded mailers

United Through Reading is available to all deploying military units and at select USO locations. More information is available at www.unitedthroughreading.org

- UNITED THROUGH READING

10TH ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL SERVICE

278th Holds Anniversary Memorial at Mt. Carmel Armory.



Piper Thomason, daughter of Sgt. Paul Thomason, reads a poem during the 10th anniversary memorial service for Staff Sgt. Mark Edwards and Sgt. Paul Thomason. The memorial service was held at the Tenn. National Guard armory in Mount Carmel, Tenn. on Oct. 18. Edwards and Thomason died while deployed to Iraq in 2005.



Capt. Gary S. Allgood, the security officer for 3rd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Tennessee Army National Guard, gives the closing prayer Sunday, Oct. 18, for the 10th anniversary memorial service for Staff Sgt. Mark Edwards and Sgt. Paul Thomason.



Lt. Col. (Retired) James Blevins, former commander of 3rd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, speaks to family members of Staff Sgt. Edwards and Sgt. Thomason.

PHOTOS BY SSG SHANNON R. GREGORY



S E C R E T A R Y O F T H E A R M Y
W A S H I N G T O N

To the Soldiers, Civilians and Families of our Army:

Serving as your Secretary for these past six years has been the honor of my life and—by far—the most fulfilling experience of my professional career.

While many days have certainly been long, the years have been amazingly short because my time here has been so very rich and rewarding. Without question, that is thanks to all of you: the men and women that I have been privileged to call my teammates.

I want you to know that I have an unceasing admiration for your remarkable sense of duty and devotion. The past 14 years of war have been long and painful for our total force, your families and our Nation. But your collective strength, courage and leadership – together with your compassion and commitment – have helped America endure in the face of hardship. You are men and women of character. Trusted professionals. You always do your very best, and have committed your lives to something greater than yourselves.

Gen. Creighton Abrams once said: “There must be, within our Army, a sense of purpose and a dedication to that purpose. There must be a willingness to march a little farther, to carry a heavier load, to step out into the darkness and the unknown for the safety and well-being of others.” I could not agree more. Over the past six years – indeed for as long as I been involved with Army matters – you have shown me such sense of purpose and such dedication day in and day out.

Together, you are America’s indispensable Army. You are part of the rock – the foundation – that holds our great country together. You have shared uncommon lives and challenges and have done what your country has required of you. You have, quite simply, ensured our way of life. I am proud to have served in your gallant company.

I ask that you continue to accept the trust that America bestows upon you and the challenges which it carries. Continue to be the standard bearers of our noble Profession of Arms. The American people are counting on you and I know that you will not let them down.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for who you are and what you do. All of you.

God bless you, God bless your families, and God bless this great and glorious Army that keeps us free. Army strong!

John H. McHugh



Anytime, anywhere access to
Critical Life Resources,
On-Demand Counseling and
On-Call Suicide Prevention.



Call (855) 435-7492
To GET HELP NOW

www.guardyourbuddy.com

Free services to Tennessee National Guard members and their families provided by:



TN National Guard



E⁴ Health

Thanks Adobe!!



The Volunteer State Guard Magazine is proud to have received "Honorable Mention" at the Adobe MAX Conference on October 3-7, 2015 in Los Angeles, California!!