



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 3, 2022

DVIDS

**CONTACT: Lt. Col. Darrin Haas**

**OFFICE: 615.313.0662**

**Darrin.w.haas.mil@army.mil**

## **Year in Review: Tennessee National Guard is Always Ready**

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** Over the past year, the Soldiers and Airmen of the Tennessee National Guard have been involved in one of the most eventful and historic periods in its 246 year history. Thousands of Guardsmen volunteered to serve their state and country throughout 2021, ensuring the National Guard's promise to be "Always Ready and Always There."

Maintaining their time-honored volunteer tradition, Tennessee Guardsmen have continued fighting the COVID-19 pandemic alongside Tennessee's Department of Health while Soldiers and Airmen deployed overseas, served along the Southwest border, and assisted with disaster relief in Humphreys County and New Orleans, Louisiana. They have also provided support for the presidential inauguration and rescued hikers in the Smoky Mountains all while continuing to train and maintain readiness.

"I'm very proud of the challenges our Soldiers and Airmen have overcome, and the work they have been doing this year is remarkable," said Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes, Tennessee's Adjutant General. "They continue to be a part of the largest, multi-faceted, domestic operation response in the Tennessee National Guard's modern history and continually display Tennessee's volunteer spirit."

In January, 750 Tennessee Guardsmen joined the 25,000-member National Guard task force to support the 59th Presidential Inauguration in Washington, D.C. Approximately 700 Soldiers from the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 194th Engineer Brigade, and the 230th Sustainment Brigade joined law enforcement to provide security and crowd management. Fifty Airmen from the 118th Wing, 134th Air Refueling Wing, and 119th Cyber Operations Squadron supported the inauguration with logistical, communications, food service, and religious support.

"The ability for the National Guard to rapidly alert, mobilize, and deploy this size of formation from all 54 states and territories in less than a week is unprecedented and a testament to the commitment to duty of our citizen soldiers," said Holmes. "Furthermore, it demonstrates we are an apolitical organization that is responsive to the needs of our nation in whatever mission is directed by our civilian authorities."

While Guardsmen were supporting the inauguration, the Tennessee National Guard also transitioned from primarily supporting COVID-19 testing to supporting vaccination efforts. Similar to the way COVID-19 swab tests were distributed, Tennessee Guardsmen began vaccinating the public in phases, starting with those most vulnerable and at risk. Drive-thru testing sites, led by Tennessee Health Department, were rapidly converted into vaccination sites.



In the fall, the Tennessee Department of Health and Tennessee Emergency Management Agency requested COVID-19 support in various medical facilities across the state. More than 300 Soldiers and Airmen from the COVID-19 medical task force deployed to 32 different facilities around the state to assist hospitals inundated with COVID-19 patients.

Over the last 18 months, anywhere from 250-700 Guardsmen have actively supported the testing and vaccination efforts. Combined with state and local agencies, Tennessee Guardsmen made over 780,000 patient contacts, administered over 1 million vaccinations, and conducted over 930,000 COVID-19 tests statewide.

To further the vaccination efforts, Col. Jason Glass, Tennessee's Assistant Adjutant General, Air, was appointed as the dual-status commander in April 2021. In partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and local agencies, he led a team of approximately 130 Navy and Marine Corps personnel with the 2nd Marine Division and more than 30 Army and Air National Guard personnel to help vaccination efforts in Memphis. Glass would again activate as the dual-status commander in September 2021 in response to the increase of positive COVID-19 cases.

"I'm honored to serve in this role," said Glass. "Any opportunity to command is a blessing, but to be able to have four branches of the service under one command is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and one that I don't take lightly."

In late February, Tennessee experienced a historic winter storm causing water and electrical outages across the state. Lobelville's A Troop with the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment provided a 2,200-gallon water tanker to Saint Francis Hospital in Memphis due to freezing temperatures and water outages. Their efforts enabled the hospital to operate as normal and allowed patients to receive life-saving care.

Nashville's 118th Wing, in coordination with the Tennessee Department of Transportation, delivered a 100-kilowatt generator to a communications tower in Rutherford County that supports Tennessee Highway Patrol and first responders. Their efforts helped restore power and communications for first responders, enabling them to continue assisting citizens. The 45th Civil Support Team transported two Red Cross trailers to Lynchburg and Manchester, which provided shelter for displaced civilians during the winter storm.

Following the deadly flash flood in Humphreys County in late August, Tennessee Guardsmen were activated to partner with state, county, and local emergency responders. More than 80 Soldiers and Airmen assisted emergency responders by supporting rescue and recovery operations. Nearly 50 Soldiers from units in Dickson, Lexington, Trenton, and Waverly provided search and rescue support. Nashville's 1-230th Air Cavalry Regiment provided a UH-60 Blackhawk along with Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team crewmembers to assist with hoist rescue operations. The 194th Engineer Brigade, headquartered in Jackson, provided bulldozers and



dump trucks to help restore roadways and clear debris. Medical personnel from Smyrna's Medical Command flew to Waverly to support the Three Rivers Hospital. Nashville's Joint Force Headquarters activated its Mobile Communications Center to establish emergency communications in the affected area by providing emergency cellular, internet, and radio communications.

In August, units partnered with the Louisiana National Guard to support the clean-up following Hurricane Ida. More than 320 Soldiers from the 251st Military Police Company in Lexington and Savannah, 1172nd Transportation Company in Memphis and Waynesboro, and the 1176th Transportation Company in Dresden, Jacksboro, and Smyrna deployed to Louisiana to assist with recovery operations. The units provided vehicles and personnel to transport supplies, support law enforcement, and assist with clean up.

At home, Knoxville's Detachment 1, Company C, 1-171st Aviation Regiment, conducted three emergency air-rescue missions in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park area this year. All three rescues required hoist operations, mid-flight medical care, and medical evacuation. Two of the rescues involved hikers suffering from medical emergencies while the third rescue was for a bear attack victim; the victim and rescue team later reunited in December 2021.

For each of these missions, the crewmembers were notified and assembled in under an hour.

"Once we are notified of the mission, the flight crew immediately jumps into action," said Col. Jay Deason, the State Army Aviation Officer. "They are a well-trained and experienced crew that are true professionals at what they do."

During the summer, Soldiers from the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 230th Sustainment Brigade, and 30th Troop Command collectively trained for three weeks in Fort Hood, Texas. The exercise, eXportable Combat Training Capability, evaluated units' combat capability during stress-induced, realistic deployment scenarios. During the training, the 230th and 30th provided logistical and medical support for the force, while the 278th conducted squad and platoon maneuvers.

In August, following the completion of XCTC, the Tennessee National Guard and Tennessee Emergency Management Agency hosted a multi-state, multi-agency exercise; Vigilant Guard 2021. More than 600 Soldiers and Airmen from the Tennessee National Guard, along with 400 emergency professionals from 50 federal, state, and local agencies, trained alongside one another while responding to multiple emergency scenarios.

Vigilant Guard took place primarily in Nashville with several large-scale, multi-agency exercises happening throughout Tennessee. In Lebanon, the 1-230th Assault Helicopter Battalion joined local first responders to simulate water rescues. In Chattanooga, the 118th Wing joined local emergency responders to provide emergency power to facilities. In Nashville, the 45th Civil Support Team, alongside local first responders, responded to a simulated train derailment



containing hazardous material. In Memphis, nearly 300 National Guard personnel from multiple states and the Memphis Fire Department responded to a simulated building collapse at the Memphis Fire Department Training Academy. In addition, the 118th Wing practiced MQ-9 Reaper missions to expand partnership with local agencies.

“Locally, we work with emergency personnel pretty much daily,” said Lee Bowling, Williamson County EMA Shift Commander. “The ability to incorporate the Tennessee National Guard, and all they can offer, makes us that much more effective in saving lives.”

While all of these missions were taking place throughout the year, the Tennessee National Guard still supported its federal mission to provide ready and deployable forces. Soldiers deployed throughout the world to include the Middle East, Horn of Africa, and Europe. Units with the Air National Guard conducted mission throughout the globe. More than 300 Guardsmen were deployed near Laredo, Texas, to support U.S. Customs and Border Patrol along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Over the last year, the Tennessee National Guard has operated at historic levels. Not only have they completed every mission asked of them, but also continue to build their relationship with Bulgaria as part of the State Partnership Program. Whatever the mission – fighting America’s wars, securing the homeland or building partnerships – the Soldiers and Airmen of the Tennessee National Guard are “Always Ready, Always There,” for their communities, state, and nation.

- (30) -

**All Tennessee Army and Air National Guard press releases can be found at**  
<https://www.tn.gov/military/news.html>

####