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Smyrna Based Medical Company Returns from Middle East

SMYRNA, Tenn. – More than 50 Soldiers from the Tennessee Army National Guard’s 208th Medical Company (Area Support) returned to Tennessee from a nearly year-long deployment overseas on Oct. 4.

The 208th, which is based in Smyrna, is comprised of medical professionals covering a wide range of specialties to include combat medics, dentists, physicians, and behavioral health specialists.

“We have an excellent team of medical professionals who did a remarkable job during this deployment,” said Maj. Heather Real, 208th Commander. “I couldn’t be prouder of all that they accomplished over the past year.”

The 208th departed Tennessee in December 2021 to support Operation Spartan Shield and Operation Inherent Resolve and deployed to four different countries in the Middle East: Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. Most of the company was stationed at Al Asad Air Base in Western Iraq where they operated a medical clinic and provided advanced trauma care for the nearly 3,000 Soldiers and contractors stationed there as well as anyone in need. During the nine months they ran the facility, the 208th helped over 7,400 patients.

“We were the primary medical providers in the area, and we treated everything from basic illness to serious injuries that occurred on and around the base,” said Real. “We ran a world-class trauma center that could handle anything sent our way.”

In Kuwait, the Tennessee Guardsmen managed a COVID-19 isolation facility and trained the Kuwaiti military on basic and advanced combat lifesaving techniques. These Tennesseans also traveled to bases throughout the Middle East as part of the Physical Therapy Extender Program where they performed physical therapy and injury rehabilitation to Soldiers. Over 650 engagements were made in less than three months, greatly expanding Soldier care.

“Our team has a tremendous amount of talent in various medical specialties, so we did everything we could to find creative ways to provide the best health care possible to everyone in theater,” said Real.

The 208th Medical Company spent the last two weeks at Fort Hood, Texas, where they completed their demobilization and out-processing procedures. After a long deployment, the Soldiers flew back to their hometowns and were welcomed home by their fellow Soldiers, families, and friends.

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Soldiers from the Tennessee Army National Guard's 208th Medical Company conduct a departure ceremony at Smyrna's Volunteer Training Site in December 2021 prior to deploying to the Middle East. (photo by Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Cordeiro)