

MEMPHIS WING'S SHILOH BATTLEFIELD LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

THE VOLUNTEER STATE GUARD MAGAZINE

ALL HEART

How this brave little girl's legacy is helping other families in need.

JEFFREY HOLMES
PROMOTED TO
MAJOR GENERAL

PHOENIX
SQUADRON
BEST WAR-
RIOR

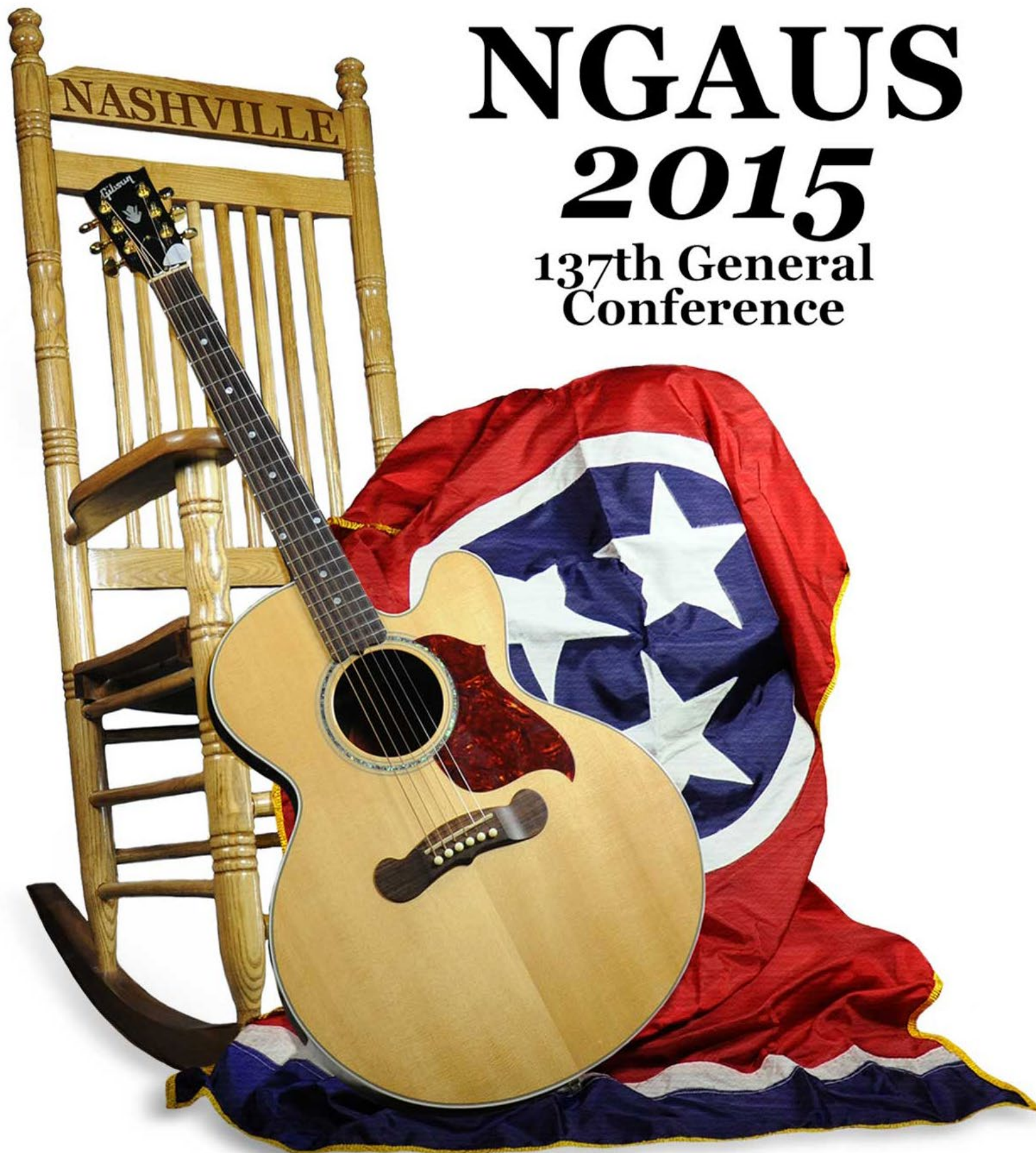
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TENNESSEE
SNAPSHOT

200TH ANNIVERSARY

On Jan. 8, 2015 the Tenn. National Guard participated in a wreath laying ceremony commemorating the 200th Anniversary of The Battle Of New Orleans at the Tennessee Capitol in Nashville.

PHOTO BY: MAJ (Ret) Randy Harris



TENNESSEE
SNAPSHOT

PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

On Jan. 9, 2015, the 134th Air Refueling Wing in Knoxville provided base support to ensure safety during President Obama's visit to Pellissippi State Community College to announce a national education initiative called "America's College Promise."

PHOTO BY: Tech. Sgt. Jonathan Young



TENNESSEE
SNAPSHOT

TRANSPORTATION COMPANY RETURNS

Tenn. National Guard Soldiers from the 1176th Transportation Company, based in Smyrna and Jacksboro, Tenn., arrived home on Dec. 7, 2014 after a nearly 10 month deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

PHOTO BY: Staff Sgt. Edgar Castro



TENNESSEE SNAPSHOT

GOVERNOR HASLAM INAUGURATION

Gov. Bill Haslam gives his inaugural address at the Legislative Plaza on Saturday, January 17, 2015. Members of the Tenn. National Guard were on hand to provide support for the Governor's second term inauguration.

PHOTO BY: MAJ (Ret) Randy Harris

How this brave little girl's legacy is helping other families in need.



Haley Chasse's Story

ALL HEART

BY MSGT ROBIN OLSEN

Sgt. Ryan Chasse holds up a photograph of his daughter, Haley. (Photo by Master Sgt. Robin Olsen)

“Several hours after Haley was born, the doctor came to talk to us and said something was wrong.”

They were going to call Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital to send Angel One to transport her,” said Tina Chasse, wife of Sgt. Ryan Chasse, training NCO for the Tennessee Army National Guard’s Joint Force Headquarters in Nashville, Tenn. “Ryan went with her and it wasn’t until one the next morning that he returned to the hospital I was at and broke the news to me.”

On May 17, 2005, Ryan and Tina’s daughter, Haley, had been born with a rare heart condition called Ebstein’s Anomaly, a defect that occurs early in fetal life when the right chamber and valve do not form correctly. Basically, blood is not properly pumping to the lungs. Their brand new baby would need to have open heart surgery.

“I was in total shock and disbelief. How could they possibly perform heart surgery on such a little heart?” recalled Ryan. “I was scared because I didn’t know if she would make it through the night and I was 50 miles away from her,” Tina added.

“There is a spectrum to this disease, and in some mild cases, it can be unnoticed into adulthood. But Haley’s Ebstein Anomaly was extremely severe,” said Dr. David Parra, Haley’s cardiologist at Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt. Haley was born looking blue because of her low oxygen levels, he said. With the new baby needing immediate



Haley Chasse in one of her many hospital stays. (Photo provided by Chasse family)

surgery, the Chasse family was even more on edge because Ryan was only home on leave from a deployment to Iraq to be there for her birth. He would soon have to go back overseas.

“I was approved extended leave, giving me another two weeks stateside. Fortunately, Haley was able to come home the day before I had to leave,” explained Ryan.

Over Haley’s short five years of life, she endured multiple trips to the hospital for various operations and cardiac catheterizations, “a procedure in which catheters and wires are placed in the heart through veins and arteries, usually from the leg, to record pressure in the heart and vessels as well

as to perform necessary interventions like balloon dilations or stent placements to improve overall heart conditions,” explained Parra. Even through all of this, you couldn’t keep her spirit down.

“SASSY CHASSE”

“If you ever met Haley, you loved her. There was no way not to,” said Suzanne Gaffney, a friend of the Chasse family. “She was very spunky and demanding, but always very loving and thankful for everything.”

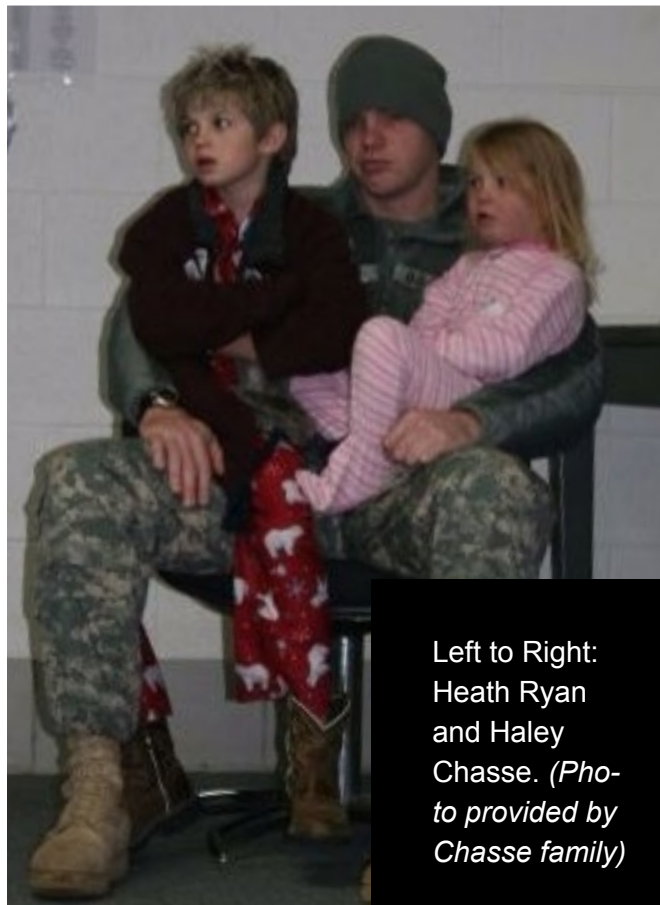
“Her nickname at preschool was ‘Sassy Chasse’; she was so much fun, out-going, full of life, and so thankful for everything she had or was given,” said Tina. “Haley loved to go to pre-school and hangout with her friends, go to her Nanny’s house, and her most favorite thing was eating.”

“Her favorite foods were macaroni and cheese, chicken and dumplings, and ‘big chicken’ (KFC). She loved to play babies and play with her cousin and best friend Mike,” she said.

Dr. Parra remembers her coming into his office pretending to be upset with him. “She would come see me in my office and call me names and pretend to be mean, but smile and eventually give me a high five or a hug,” he said.

Ryan said one of the family’s most memorable times with Haley was a trip to Disneyland provided by Make-A-Wish Foundation. “Being able to take Haley so that she would experience that was amazing!” he said.

Both parents credited the huge support



Left to Right: Heath Ryan and Haley Chasse. (Photo provided by Chasse family)

The last Chasse family photo with Haley.
(Photo provided by Chasse family)



system they had while going through this difficult time in their lives.

“We are from Trousdale County, a small town community. Everybody knows everybody,” Tina stated. “During our stays or any procedure, our community, church, family, friends, coworkers, and strangers prayed for us, brought food to the hospital and helped us pay bills.”

174 DAYS IN THE HOSPITAL

“During her last hospital stay, some friends created imprinted wrist bands that said ‘Praying for Haley’ and sold them \$5 each. All of the money went to Tina and Ryan to use for whatever they needed,” said Gaffney.

In June 2010, Haley had surgery to replace her internal pacemaker that had

become damaged.

“Two days after the pacemaker surgery, they found a huge life-threatening blood clot in her abdominal aorta,” explained Tina, adding, “she spent the next three weeks on extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) going through several surgeries.”

“ECMO is a machine that works as the heart and lung,” explained Dr. Parra. “Blood from the patient is directed into the machine, which oxygenates the blood and pumps it back into the body. It is very invasive, but allows the heart and lungs to rest and gives them time to heal.”

During this stay, the couple realized everyone wasn’t as fortunate as they had been.

“When you stay in a hospital, you often see the parents of other children as you pass by their room, in the halls, or on the elevator. You talk about your children and bond with the other families,” stated Tina. “There was one parent in particular in the room next door. She was a single mother from Alabama who was there alone most of the time. Her son, Jaxon, also had a heart defect, multiple surgeries and had been on ECMO a couple times. He was born in June and was admitted a few days before us and we became friends.”

She added “Ryan and I would always ask if she needed anything. We realized how we were blessed to have each other, people to call, text, visit, bring food and pray for us.”

“We spent a total of 174 days in the hospital during her life,” said Ryan. A majority of this occurred in July of 2010.

“Haley had many procedures throughout her life: operations, catheterization, long periods in the ICU and hospitalized with chest tubes and IVs,” recalled Parra. “Seeing her in her last days was truly difficult for the family and the team of doctors and nurses who took care of her. She and her family endured all of these moments with great courage and dignity.”

At one in the afternoon on August 2, 2010, Ryan and Tina had to make a decision no parent should ever have to make.

“We had to decide to leave her on the ECMO machine (life support) or take her off,” said Ryan. “We decided to take her off and leave it in God’s hands so that he would

do what was best for her.”

“It was so difficult to know that she had taken her last breathe and her little heart beat for the last time. But there was also peace knowing that she wouldn’t suffer anymore,” he said.

“Holding her hand and watching her take her last breath, and realizing that this was it, my baby girl wouldn’t be going home with us, was the most difficult moment for us,” added Tina. Then they had to relay the news to Haley’s older brother Heath, that his little sister had passed away.

HALEY’S HEARTS FOUNDATION IS BORN

“We had talked about starting a foundation before Haley passed, and then when it happened, we knew immediately it was something we wanted to do!” Tina exclaimed. To date, the family has raised over \$150,000 and helped more than 200 others financially during times of need.

“We don’t have an exact number of people because we don’t always get the names or meet the families we help. We supply social workers with gift cards to hand out as needed,” she said.

The Haley’s Hearts Foundation was established as a charitable organization that donates proceeds to families, patients and hospitals in financial need due to sickness or death. The Chasse family holds two fundraisers each year, a Chili Supper/Winter Carnival in February and a Forever 5K Run/Walk in October.

“Haley’s story could have stopped with her death and only those of us who knew and loved her would know her story. But Tina and Ryan made the selfless decision to create the foundation and now they help other families and Haley lives on through their work,” said Gaffney.

The Foundation donates to Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital each year, but it provides support in other ways as well.

“They give gas cards to families who drive back and forth to the hospital, they’ve helped pay rent and utilities, they even purchased a headstone when the family could not afford it,” explained Gaffney. She added



Chasse family and friends at the most recent Haley’s Hearts Foundation 5K. (Photo provided by Chasse family)

that one of the biggest ways the foundation helps has nothing to do with money. “Who knows what it feels like to go through all of these things better than someone who has been through them? Tina and Ryan are huge emotional supporters as well.”

The first person the Foundation was able to help was Silas Smith, who received a heart transplant in November 2010. “He has been in the hospital for four months. In March 2011, he was able to go home to the apartment our Foundation obtained for his mom,” explained Tina.

That same year, to honor what would have been Haley’s sixth birthday, family and friends got together at the cemetery and released balloons.

“Tina wanted to do something to celebrate, so she purchased 100 balloons and invited family and friends to where Haley was laid to rest,” said Ryan.

“Haley was the bravest and toughest little

girl I have ever known. She taught me what life is truly about,” exclaimed Tina. Haley’s older brother, Heath, is now 12. In 2013, the family gave birth to another little girl, named Crimson, who is now almost two years old.

For the Chasse family, Haley’s battle for life was a very difficult and stressful time in their lives. “Losing a child is something you never get over. You just learn to cope with it,” said Tina.

The next fundraiser for the Haley’s Hearts Foundation will be a winter festival and chili cook-off, which is scheduled for February 2015.

About one of about every 100 babies has some type of congenital heart defect. For more information, visit Haley’s Hearts Foundation online on Facebook, Twitter, or at haleyshearts.org.

- MSGT ROBIN OLSEN



MAJ. GEN. JEFFREY H. HOLMES



Brigadier General Jeffrey H. Holmes of Lascassas, Tenn., was promoted to the rank of Major General in a ceremony on December 12th at the Tennessee State Museum. Maj. Gen. Holmes currently serves as the Deputy Adjutant General for the Tennessee National Guard.

In this position, Maj. Gen. Holmes assists the Tennessee Adjutant General in his responsibilities in maintaining the readiness of both Army and Air National Guard units. Additionally, Maj. Gen. Holmes is designated by the Adjutant General, the Governor of Tennessee and the Secretary of Defense as a Dual Status Commander with the capability to command both Active Duty and Reserve forces in response to domestic support operations. Maj. Gen. Holmes also holds the position of Deputy Chief of Engineers for National Guard Affairs in Washington, D.C. His duties include assisting the Chief of Engineers in carrying out his responsibilities to the Army Chief of Staff and serves as the senior Army National Guard Engineer representative to the Chief of Engineers.

Holmes received his commission from the Tennessee Military Academy in 1984 and has had multiple company, troop, squadron, regimental and brigade level commands of armor, cavalry and engineers. He has commanded at the battalion and brigade level during two combat deployments in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Maj. Gen. Holmes has been awarded a certificate of completion for the Senior Executives in National and International Security Program from Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government and holds a master's degree in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College.



BRIG. GEN. MARK HART

Brig. Gen. Mark Hart, of Louisville, Tenn., was promoted on November 21, 2014 by Maj. Gen. Max Haston as the Director of the Joint Staff, Tennessee National Guard. Hart reports directly to the Adjutant General for Joint Force matters and assists in the external affairs functions including presenting and enforcing National Guard policies, plans, and programs.

The Director of the Joint Staff presides over the National Guard Staff and represents Army and Air capabilities, requirements, policy, plans, and programs in joint operations. Under the authority of the Adjutant General, the Director of the Joint Staff also designates personnel and resources.

Before his assignment as the Director of the Joint Staff, Hart served as the commander of the 230th Sustainment Brigade in Chattanooga. He commanded the Brigade during its 2011 deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation New Dawn. He also previously commanded the 1st Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment during its deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III in 2004.



FEMALE FIRST FOR BRADLEY COURSE

Minnesota Soldier Becomes First Female to Complete
Bradley Commanders Certification Course.



Capt. Tara Robertson, the first female to complete the BC3 Course. (Photo by SPC Chris Daley)

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Capt. Tara Robertson may be accustomed to the idea of being a pioneer, but it is not how she chooses to describe her service in the Army National Guard. When asked she is obviously uncomfortable with the idea and stated, "I'm a Soldier just like everyone else." That may be a true statement, but it's more than noteworthy that she earned an "A+" recently by becoming the distinguished honor graduate of the Bradley Commanders Certification Course (BC3), a combat arms centric course historically attended only by men.

Taught by the instructors of the 117th Regional Training Institute (RTI), Tennessee Army National Guard, BC3 is a two

week resident course that is technically intensive and designed to reinforce Bradley Gunnery Training. The course provides our fighting force with confident Bradley Fighting Vehicle (BFV) crewmembers who display developed and sustained tactical skills which allow them increased survivability, efficient and effective maneuver and engagement of threats on the battlefield.

U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) administers The Army School System (TASS) and recently honored the 117th RTI, through their accreditation process, as an "Institution of Excellence", the highest possible rating attainable by Army schools. TRADOC describes

TASS as a composite system made up of Army National Guard (ARNG), U.S. Army Reserve (USAR), and active Army (AA) schools. TASS conducts initial military training (IMT), reclassification training, officer, warrant officer (WO), noncommissioned officer (NCO) and Department of the Army civilian professional development training. Training and education are accomplished through standard resident, active duty for training (ADT), inactive duty training (IDT), and distributed/distance learning (DL) courses.

Soldiers who attend BC3 can be a member of any of the Army's three components (i.e. Active Duty, National Guard

or Reserves). Members must be assigned to positions of BFV Gunner or BFV Commander as a matter of priority. That is the specific focus of the training. A second priority, as in Robertson's case, is afforded to Commanders with BFVs as part of their unit's equipment inventory. She commands a combat engineer company with newly assigned BFVs. The course awards an additional skill identifier (ASI) of 3X for officers and B9 for all enlisted Soldiers.

"There's a lot of heavy lifting involved in this course and you have to be really physically fit in order to complete a lot of the tasks that are associated with operating this vehicle", said Robertson. One of the tasks she is referring to is operating the 25MM gun, or 25 "Mike-Mike" as it is affectionately known by all the students.

While BC3 is a short course, a great amount of tasks and lessons are jammed into the two week duration. Week one is marked by classroom instruction on topics such as range operations, fratricide avoidance, ammo ID, send/receive a digital SPOTREP, bore sight weapons on the BFV, and training on the 25MM gun. By week's end, all students have had an opportunity to practice the tasks taught to this point which will prepare them for the Gunnery Skills Test Live Fire, the culminating event of week two.

Staff Sgt. Truett Tolbert, an active duty Soldier assigned to the Rakkasans at Fort Campbell, Ky. said, "The training here is really structured—they've done a great job presenting this class for individuals who have no experience at all on Bradleys." Tolbert should know, a veteran cavalry scout on the BFV, he needs this course as a refresher before attending the Bradley Master Gunner course where he will receive the qualifications necessary to assist his unit in the conduct of Table VI Gunnery.

No course in today's Army would be complete without the use of virtual simulation. Week two begins with time in the Close Combat Tactical Trainer (CCTT). A system of computer-driven combat vehicle multi-scale simulators, CCTT provides the students with training from the viewpoint of one mounted crew on the BFV. With nearly endless scenarios and mission sets in

The Bradley fighting vehicle was named after World War 2-era General Omar Bradley. (Photo by CW4 Nick Atwood)



the virtual realm, the students begin to get a feel for the capability of the machine and how it is employed on the battlefield, all the while under careful observation of certified Master Gunner instructors.

Wrapping up week two everyone heads to the range at Fort Campbell to conduct training, something everyone has looked forward to since the beginning. "This is very much a hands on course like what I would expect to receive during annual training vice being in a purely schoolhouse environment, and it's great!" stated Staff Sgt. Shawn Myrick. Myrick is assigned to the 278th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Tennessee Army National Guard and believes this course is exactly what he needs as part of his professional development.

"I told the students from day one that our instructors were here to make sure they receive the best training possible and I think they have proven that throughout the course", stated Master Sgt. Andrew Caravello, Chief Instructor for the 2 Battalion, 117th RTI.

Many Americans are familiar with the challenges young women face in the Army as more opportunities become available for them to serve in warfighting positions historically occupied by men. It is a multi-faceted challenge where doors must first be opened and then one must walk

through them. The dictionary defines a pioneer as "one who ventures into unknown or unclaimed territory to settle". Most will consider themselves familiar with that definition, but according to Robertson, "that's an interesting word."

"I think it's an incredible opportunity to be the first to do something . . . I know that there are many females who, had they been given an opportunity to do the same things that I've been able to do, they would've done it," she said.

For those who aspire to follow in her footsteps, Capt. Robertson has a few words of advice, "If you know you can do the job, then you have to be willing to put in the extra effort to prove that you can. Absolutely go for it!"

One final word of encouragement from Robertson speaks to the essence of leadership, "I've had a lot of great mentors throughout my career and, I'm looking forward to being able to provide that in return for young female officers in the future and female Soldiers that are just now entering into positions that they were never afforded entry in the past." A fitting culmination for an officer, a Soldier, and a leader who has demonstrated, most convincingly, that actions speak louder than words.

- CW4 NICK ATWOOD

MUSIC CITY BOWL & WOUNDED WARRIORS

Wounded Warriors recognized during Music City Bowl.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Eight wounded warriors, their families, and two Gold Star families were invited as special guests through Humana's Wounded Warriors Program to the Franklin American Mortgage Music City Bowl in Nashville. The group arrived at the Renaissance Hotel in downtown Nashville on Sunday, Dec. 28 and attended bowl game festivities the next two days.

Franklin American Mortgage provided several tables for the group at the Franklin American Mortgage Coaches Luncheon, held at the Wildhorse Saloon on Monday, Dec. 29. Both teams participating in the bowl game, the Louisiana State University Tigers and the Notre Dame Fighting Irish, attended the luncheon with their coaches. Several of the team members and even Les Miles, head coach for the LSU Tigers, approached the group to thank them for their service, sign autographs, and snap photos. During the opening remarks for the luncheon, the wounded warriors received a special welcome from the commentator as well as a standing ovation from the crowd.

That evening, the group went to Broadway for the Franklin American Mortgage Music City Bowl 2nd Annual Hot Chicken Eating World Championship and the Battle of the Bands with a special performance by country singer Trace Adkins. Adkins met the wounded warriors and posed for a group picture before they were escorted on stage where they received a loud "thank you" from thousands of spectators in the crowd. The group enjoyed the rest of the night watching each school's band perform from the Hard Rock Café.

On game day, the crew was escorted directly onto LP Field. The young children and teenagers gleamed with excitement. For



Wounded warriors and their families stand on the field during the singing of our national anthem. (Photo by SSG Melisa Washington)

some, it was their first time stepping onto LP Field. Others were all too familiar with representing the wounded warriors during various sporting events.

Sgt. Kevin Downs from Kingston Springs, Tenn., has attended the Music City Bowl for the last four years. While serving with the Tennessee Army National Guard, Downs suffered an IED blast in 2005 that took both his legs, mangled his hands, and burned 60 percent of his body. He describes the importance of attending these events.

"The public likes to show their appreciation. Some people hear about wounded warriors, but never see the individual," Downs said.

The group stood in the middle of the field to be recognized, receiving cheers from both teams' fans. They remained on the field for the singing of "God Bless America" and the national anthem. Shortly after, they were escorted up to their suites

to enjoy the game with complimentary food and drinks provided by Delta Dental of Tennessee.

John Patterson, the Tennessee National Guard family assistance coordinator, has arranged the logistics for the group during the Music City Bowl for four years. Patterson hopes that this event will encourage other organizations to sponsor wounded warriors.

"When organizations like the Nashville Sports Council, Humana Health, Delta Dental of Tennessee, and last but not least Franklin American Mortgage Company get involved, the warriors get the exposure for the sacrifices they made for our country," he said. "If other organizations see this then hopefully they will join the cause and keep our wounded warriors and all servicemembers fresh in everyone's mind."

- **SSG MELISA WASHINGTON**

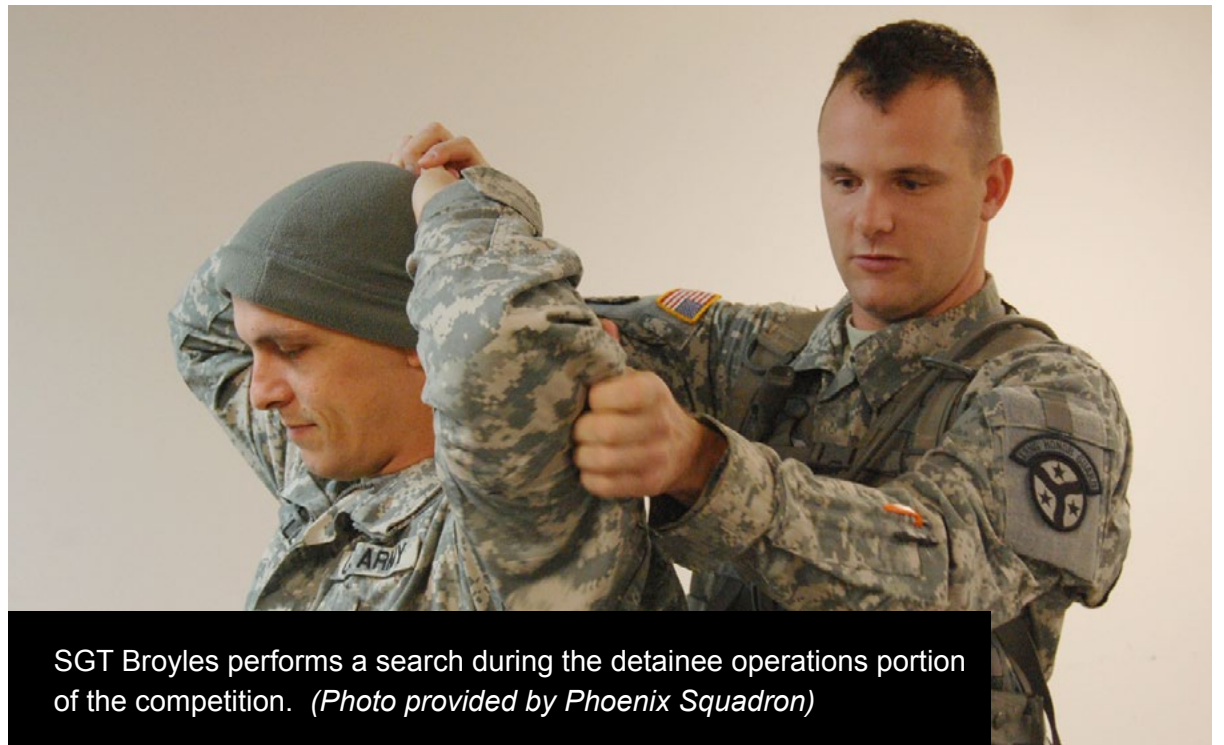
BEST IN SQUAD

Phoenix Squadron conducts it's annual Best Warrior Competition.

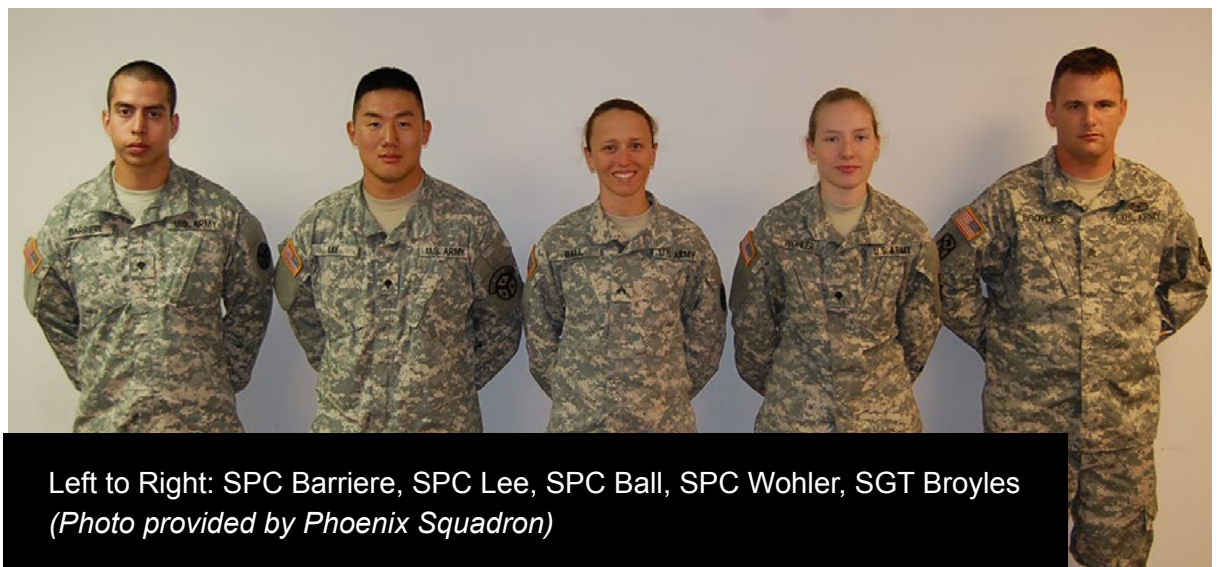
NASHVILLE, Tenn. - The Regimental Troops Squadron, headquartered in Lebanon, Tenn. conducted its annual Best Warrior Competition at the Volunteer Training Site in Smyrna on November 14 -16, 2014. Competing in this year's competition were Spc. Bailey Wohler of Jefferson City, Tenn., Spc. Jayme Ball of Phoenix City, Ala., Spc. Christopher Barriere of Murfreesboro, Tenn., Spc. Jaehyeon Lee of Clarksville, Tenn. and Sgt. William Broyles of Nashville, Tenn. Each of these competitors previously won their individual unit level competitions and were selected from among their peers to move forward to the second round.

During this level of the competition the Soldiers were pushed and tested both mentally and physically. These warriors had to complete a written essay and exam, the three event Army physical fitness test, a 10K ruck march and various other Army warrior tasks. They were tested on their ability to operate weapons, navigate with the use of a map and compass, radio communications and detainee operations.

Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Reagan has envisioned having a Squadron level competition of this nature for over three years. He's always known that the Soldiers of the Phoenix Squadron are some of the best in the Tennessee Army National Guard and let each of our competitors know how proud he is of them for accepting the challenge and not only completing the competition but doing it while maintaining a high level of motivation and team work. Spc. Lee and Sgt. Broyles, both of C-Troop,



SGT Broyles performs a search during the detainee operations portion of the competition. (Photo provided by Phoenix Squadron)



Left to Right: SPC Barriere, SPC Lee, SPC Ball, SPC Wohler, SGT Broyles (Photo provided by Phoenix Squadron)

were selected to move forward in the competition and compete at the upcoming Regimental Best Warrior Competition.

When asked about their thoughts on leadership, the competitors had the following comments:

Wohler said, "Leadership is not an on and off thing. It doesn't stop when we take off the uniform, it doesn't stop when no one is looking because the fact is that someone is always watching their leader."

Ball added, "The days of filling ranks with Soldiers that can fire a weapon when told are over. The Army is looking for people who desire to be more and do more."

Barriere said, "Leadership is about courage, dedication, humbleness and knowledge."

"A leader must possess the knowledge to accomplish their mission. They must also share their knowledge. And leaders must become comfortable with stepping outside of their comfort zone," said Lee.

Broyles concluded, "The best standard for an ideal Soldier is an individual that maintains physical fitness, works hard and above all else strives to apply our core Army Values in every aspect of their life."

- PHOENIX SQUADRON

RIDE TO SHILOH

Memphis Wing's Shiloh Battlefield Leadership Experience.



A Park Ranger speaks to the 164th Mission Support Group at Shiloh National Military Park.



Senior NCO's from the 164th Airlift Wing.

SHILOH, Tenn. - Senior Non-Commissioned Officers from the Tenn. Air National Guard's 164th Mission Support Group, based in Memphis, Tenn., mustered on base for a quick roll call just prior to beginning their two hour journey to Shiloh National Military Park in the early morning hours of a bitter cold day on November 1, 2014. The trip was the culmination of a leadership course in self-development as NCOs in the Tennessee National Guard.

Unit members were divided into teams, and each team researched a General from the Battle of Shiloh. Each General's leadership was evaluated using criteria from the book by Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*. Four major areas of concern were evaluated: communication, trust, vision, and

self-awareness. The day prior to the trip, the teams briefed their findings to each other.

A staff ride was provided by a Park Ranger who spoke specifically about the General each team had researched. The

event was a tremendous experience that enhanced this group of Senior NCO's ability to self-analyze and improve upon their strengths and weaknesses as leaders in the Tennessee Air National Guard.

- COL JOHN TRAUTMAN

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118TH WING TOWN HALL MEETING

Gen. Frank Grass holds town hall meeting at 118th Wing.



Gen. Frank Grass at the 118th Wing in Nashville on January 10, 2015. Members from all squadrons on base were on hand for the meeting. (Photo by Master Sgt. Robin Olsen)

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Army Gen. Frank Grass, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, held a town hall meeting for members of the Tennessee Air National Guard's 118th Wing in Nashville on January 10.

"There is nothing better for the Nation than the National Guard," said Grass, adding "I couldn't ask for a better relationship than what we have with the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and active duty Air Force."

A highlight of the town hall meeting was the announcement of the National Guard being honored with the National Defense

University Foundation's 2014 Patriot Award. Gen. Grass accepted the award on behalf of the entire National Guard on November 13, 2014. The American Patriot Award is given to exceptional leaders who dedicate their lives to enhancing human security and global stability, according to the NDUF.

Upon accepting the award, Grass stated "The National Guard does three things extraordinarily well: we fight America's wars, protect the homeland, and build global and domestic partnerships." This was echoed during his town hall meeting. "This is what

we do every day," he said.

Previous recipients of the American Patriot Award include Gen. Colin Powell, President George H.W. Bush, Sen. John Glenn, Sen. Daniel Inouye, former Secretary of Defense Dr. Robert Gates and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Coinciding with the Patriot Award announcement, Grass presented a video highlighting the National Guard and its accomplishments both in the United States and in deployed locations around the world.

Grass also talked about his concerns for the direction the military is headed.

“My biggest concern is modernization and recapitalization for the National Guard,” he said, adding “our value as a force is unmatched.”

General Grass also expressed concern about the psychological health of the National Guard’s Soldiers and Airmen.

“We don’t know what a 13-year war does to people or their families and it is critical that we monitor this,” he exclaimed.

From an overall funding standpoint, the active duty Air Force gave the Guard full-time federal (GS) positions for permanent psychological health positions so the Guard no longer had to rely on contractors for this function. “Having permanent positions helps us take care of our Airmen and their families,” said Grass.

The National Guard established Joining Community Forces in 2013 to bring all of the private organizations that want to assist members of the military all into one place.

“The National Guard is the perfect organization to take the lead with a great program like Joining Community Forces,” he said, “because that is where we operate every single day – in the community.”

“The key here is you design what you need in your community, or at your base,” explained Grass.

With nearly 15,000 Guardsmen from across the country deployed right now, Grass reminded the Nashville Airmen that part of our job, always, is to tell our Air Force story, which is taking care of our people - not just our own Airmen, but our communities as well.

“You have the connections in your communities to tell the Army and Air Force stories. People know you and know you are from the Guard. Active duty can’t touch that!” said Grass.

The Guard also has community relationships through Youth Challenge Programs. These are funded primarily by the federal government (75 percent), but also by the states (25 percent) and run by the Guard. “This year we graduated 131,000 at risk youth, who will tell you they would be in jail or dead today if not for this program,” he said.

Gen. Grass also touched on Tennessee’s State Partnership with Bulgaria and the oth-



Gen. Frank Grass (center), receives the American Patriot Award on behalf of the National Guard from Cathleen Pearl, the president and chief executive officer, National Defense University Foundation on Nov. 13, 2014. (Photo by: Tech. Sgt. David Eichaker)



General Frank Grass, Chief of the National Guard Bureau. (Photo by Master Sgt. Robin Olsen)

“My biggest concern is modernization and recapitalization for the National Guard.”

er 73 state partnerships that exist across the globe today.

“For the nation to have that relationship with 74 countries is phenomenal,” stated Grass. The State Partnership Program has been successfully building relationships for over 20 years that includes 68 unique security partnerships involving 74 nations around the globe. It links a unique component of the Department of Defense – a state’s National Guard – with the armed forces or equivalent of a partner country in a cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship.

“We have a tremendous force, and I am very impressed by the Air National Guard,” said Grass before taking questions from Airmen in the audience.

One question posed to the General was about social media. Grass warned Airmen to be very cautious on personal sites because anyone with basic computer knowledge can access it and use your information or even your photos.

He finished by stating “thank you for being a member of the National Guard and please thank your families and employers.”

- MSGT ROBIN OLSEN

BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS 200TH ANNIVERSARY

Tenn. National Guard Honors Historic Battle's Anniversary in Ceremonies held at State Capitol and The Hermitage.

General Andrew Jackson's Victory over the British in the battle of New Orleans.



NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Hundreds of people were in attendance as the Tennessee National Guard took part in two separate ceremonies commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans, fought between American and British troops on January 8th, 1815.

Maj. Gen. Max Haston, Tennessee's Adjutant General, joined Governor Bill Haslam, and Nashville Mayor Karl Dean in commemorating the 200th Anniversary by placing a wreath at the statue of Andrew Jackson on the grounds of the Capitol. New Orleans was the final major battle of the War of 1812 and secured victory for the

Americans. The decisive victory at New Orleans restored American confidence in their new republic after the burning of Washington and other defeats during the war. It made Jackson a popular hero and set the stage for him to be elected as the first populist president.

Maj. Gen. Haston compared Jackson's force of regular soldiers; militia from Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi and Louisiana; Indians; Free Men of Color and Lafitte's privateers to the current Soldiers and Airmen of the Tennessee National Guard. Using the slogan, "Volunteer Traditions . . . Modern Missions," Haston em-

phasized how the pivotal battle was a prime example of how military events shape our state and national history, not only in 1815, but currently with today's National Guard.

Haston stated, "General Jackson's actions that day and the weeks preceding, not only determined the fate of New Orleans, but the fate of the war and quite possibly the continued existence of America."

Governor Haslam pointed out that, "the American Army was not supposed to win this battle or the war. The British had just beaten Napoleon, and were the guys who were ruling the world."

"Jackson's motley crew of rag-tag militia,



Maj. Gen. Max Haston, Tennessee's Adjutant General, joined Governor Bill Haslam, and Nashville Mayor Karl Dean in commemorating the 200th Anniversary by placing a wreath at the statue of Andrew Jackson on the grounds of the Capitol. (Photo by MAJ (Ret) Randy Harris)



Members of the Tenn. National Guard at The Hermitage, home of President Andrew Jackson. (Photo by Lt. Col. (Ret) Niki Gentry)

known as the "Dirty Shirts" took on the world's foremost army and in less than an hour won a decisive victory," said Haslam.

The ceremony concluded with a ceremonial rifle salute by the Tennessee Army National Guard and the playing of "Taps" by Sgt. Glenn Tate, of the 129th Army Band.

Maj. Gen. Haston and members of the Tennessee Army National Guard were a part of another ceremony at The Hermitage, home of President Andrew Jackson, later in the day.

A new exhibit at The Hermitage Visitors Center encourages visitors to remember that, in his day, Jackson had the star power of an Elvis Presley, Angelina Jolie or Hugh Jackman. "Andrew Jackson, Born for a Storm" is the first major content change in 25 years and is the first to focus on Jackson

and his legacy.

"Jackson was the next great war hero after George Washington. People really felt like he had saved the country," said Tony Guzzi, Hermitage vice president of preservation who helped craft the new exhibit. "They put his image on everything from plates, to pitchers, to coins, to you-name-it."

The ceremony began with presentation of Colors by a Tennessee Army National Guard color guard, and the national anthem was performed by 1st Sgt. Richard Lutz of Tennessee's 129th Army Band.

Featured speakers were Maj. Gen. Haston, who said, "That decisive American victory at New Orleans restored American confidence in their new republic after the burning of Washington and other defeats in the war. It made Jackson a popular hero and

made him the first populist president."

Following Haston was American journalist and political pundit, Mara Liasson, national political correspondent for National Public Radio, frequent contributor at the Fox News Channel, and Jackson Foundation member.

Liasson spoke of the rich heritage of President Jackson and The Hermitage, and although somewhat controversial, the importance of the Jacksonian era to the development of the United States.

Dr. H. W. Brands concluded as the Keynote speaker for the event. Dr. Brands taught at Vanderbilt University and Texas A&M University before joining the faculty at the University of Texas at Austin, where he holds the Jack S. Blanton Sr. Chair in History. He teaches history and writing to graduate students and undergraduates. He writes on American history and politics, with books including "The Man Who Saved the Union," "Traitor to His Class," "Andrew Jackson," "The Age of Gold," "The First American" and "TR." Several of his books have been bestsellers; two, "Traitor to His Class" and "The First American," were finalists for the Pulitzer Prize.

Dr. Brands began by expressing his belief that although the Battle of New Orleans took place more than two weeks after The Treaty of Ghent was signed on December 24, 1814 (but was not ratified by the US Government until February 1815), it was significant in that it was the beginning of the end for British troops on American soil. He continued stating that Jackson's legacy as a Soldier, Statesman and President lasted long after he left the Presidency and returned to The Hermitage. He spoke of Jackson's mentorship of young Sam Houston who served with Jackson as a young lieutenant, and went on to serve as Tennessee's Adjutant General and Governor, and as the first President of the Republic of Texas.

The ceremony concluded with an attendee processional to the tomb of President Jackson and his beloved wife, Rachael, where commemorative wreaths were laid by members of the Andrew Jackson Foundation.

- MAJ (RET) RANDY HARRIS

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