



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hometown News Release

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Manchester Guardsman volunteers to serve on COVID-19 task force

WOODBURY, Tenn. –When the Tennessee National Guard needed volunteers to help Tennessee’s Department of Health fight the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of Soldiers and Airmen volunteered. One Soldier that immediately answered the call was Sgt. Jessie James, a motor transport operator with Tullahoma’s 1175th Transportation Company. A Manchester native, James was not going to miss the opportunity to serve.

“I have always wanted to give back to the community,” said James. “When this opportunity to help with the response to the COVID-19 pandemic came up, I knew I needed to volunteer. Times like these are why I joined the National Guard.”

With the encouragement of his employer, James began working with the COVID-19 task force in February 2021. He praised his employer, Saia LTL Freight, based in La Vergne, for their support of his volunteering for the COVID-19 mission.

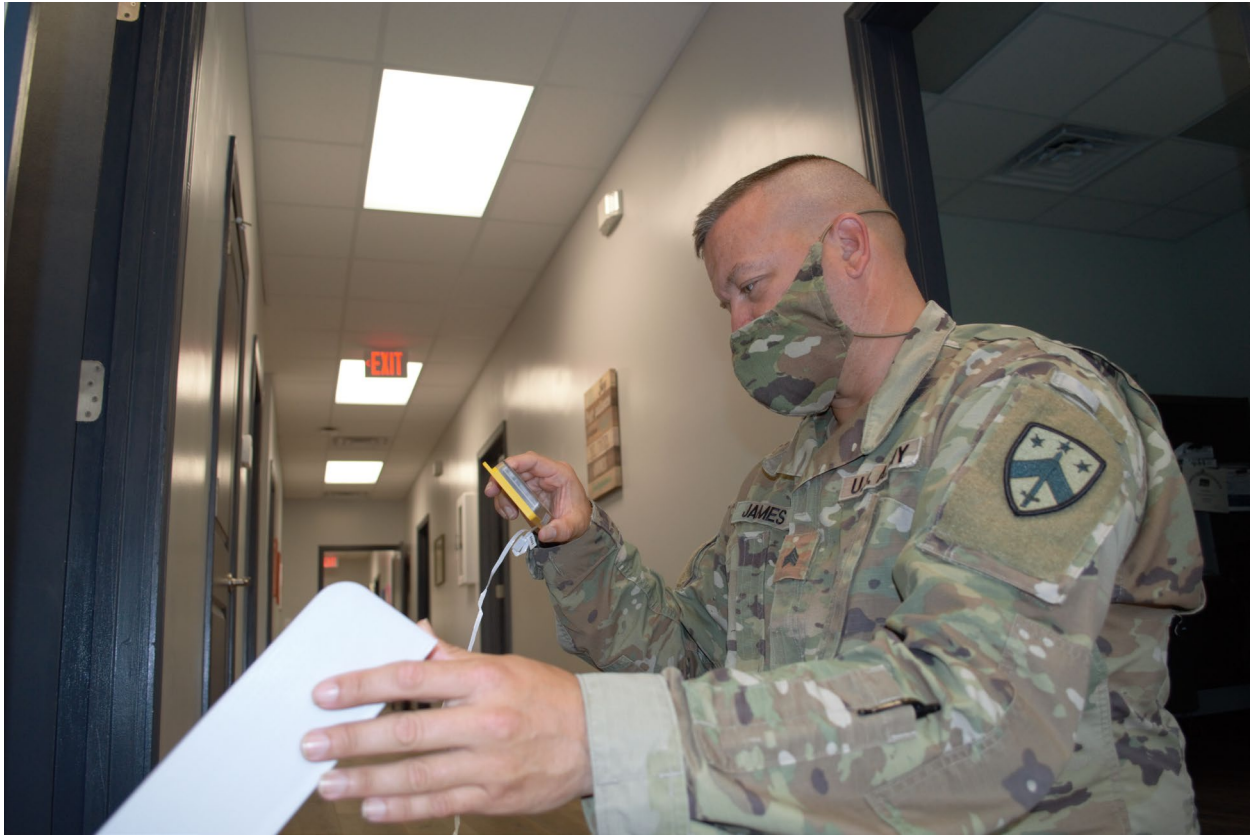
“Saia is a big supporter of the Guard,” said James. “Once I let them know about this mission, they encouraged me to take part in it. They also said they would only need a couple weeks’ notice to get me back in my position there. I really appreciate their support for both myself and of the Guard.”

Since May, James has been serving as the acting noncommissioned officer in charge of the COVID-19 testing and vaccination site at the Cannon County Health Department and Community Health Center in Woodbury. He sees that the site is properly staffed, assists the health department employees complete vaccination recipient registrations, and ensures everything runs safely.

James says that one of the most rewarding parts of this mission is being told that his presence reassures those receiving their COVID-19 vaccinations.

“When people came to get their first shot, I could tell that a lot of them were nervous,” said James. “But those same people were a lot calmer when they came to get their second shot. Many of them said that the Guard being there gave them confidence in the vaccine. With the Tennessee Department of Health working to get the state back to normal, I’m happy to do my part by earning the trust of the community.”

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Sgt. Jessie James, a motor transport operator with Tullahoma's 1175th Transportation Company, checks the temperature of COVID-19 vaccines at the Woodbury testing and vaccination site. James has supported the Tennessee National Guard's vaccination efforts since February 2021. (Photo by Sgt. Finis L. Dailey, III)

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