



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 23, 2021

Hometown News Release

CONTACT: Lt. Col. Darrin Haas

OFFICE: 615.313.0662

darrin.w.haas.mil@mail.mil

Centerville Guardsman enhances leadership skills on COVID-19 taskforce

DECATUR, Tenn. – Pfc. William Orton, a cavalry scout assigned to O Troop, 4th Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment in Newport, put his college career on hold to help vaccinate his fellow Tennesseans as a member of the Tennessee National Guard’s COVID-19 taskforce.

“I delayed my participation in the commissioning program [at Morehead State University] and joined the task force in order to serve the people of Tennessee while refining my skills as a junior enlisted Soldier,” said Orton. “I felt that it was important for me to get exposure to good noncommissioned officers with different backgrounds while giving back to my state. You must learn to follow before you can lead. This mission gave me the opportunity to do that.”

Orton, a Centerville resident, serves as an administrative specialist on the task force in Decatur. He verifies information of residents as they come to receive their COVID-19 vaccines and then monitors them for potential allergic reactions.

“I could have attempted to take my classes online, but you can’t just step away from this type of work to attend an online meeting,” said Orton. “Choosing to focus on my work instead of splitting my attention between it and my college courses illustrates a key lesson of military leadership: the mission takes priority.”

Orton has worked at several vaccination sites throughout southeast Tennessee. Although his duties have been similar, the lessons he gets regarding leadership are diverse.

“Life changes. Adjusting as I have moved from site to site has taught me how to adapt to those changes and continue moving forward,” said Orton. “This mission has allowed me to learn from other leaders as I refine my own leadership style. It has been very enlightening to be led by Soldiers from many different specialties.”

Orton enlisted in the Tennessee Army National Guard in November 2019.

- (30) -



Pfc. William Orton, a cavalry scout assigned to Newport's O Troop, 4th Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, explains the COVID-19 vaccination process to a resident in Decatur on June 15. Orton has assisted several sites since he joined the COVID-19 Task Force in February. (Photo by Sgt. Finis L. Dailey, III)