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Hometown News Release

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Cleveland Guardsman utilizes medic skills during COVID-19 mission

CLEVELAND, Tenn. – Spc. Alexander Smith, a combat medic with Smyrna’s 230th Sustainment Brigade, was pursuing his degree in history from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga when COVID-19 was discovered in Tennessee.

“With the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the state, I knew that my training as a combat medic would be an asset to the National Guard’s mission to combat the pandemic,” said Smith. “Even though I knew that I would have to put my studies on hold, I wanted to be part of the solution.”

Smith postponed his education and volunteered for duty. He joined the Tennessee National Guard’s COVID-19 mission in March 2020 and was assigned to the Harden County testing site in the western part of the state. He then utilized his combat medic training to administer tests for the COVID-19 virus.

Smith completed his tour in June 2020 and then re-enrolled at UTC. However, in December 2020, Tennessee started administering the COVID-19 vaccine and Smith was still interested in serving. Because his classes were now virtual, he volunteered to take part a second time while continuing to pursue his degree.

Smith rejoined the COVID-19 mission in February 2021. He was assigned to the Bradley County Department of Health in his home town of Cleveland. He initially provided administrative support there by controlling the flow of traffic at the site, confirming the information for people receiving the vaccines and monitoring vaccine recipients for potential allergic reactions. After receiving training from the health department, Smith began administering COVID-19 vaccinations at the site. He has personally provided several hundred vaccines.

“The large number of people getting vaccinated made the importance of the Tennessee National Guard’s mission that much more visible,” said Smith. “Participating in the COVID-19 mission allowed me to be a part of the solution. It was nice to see my actions make a difference.”

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Spc. Alexander Smith, a combat medic with Smyrna's 230th Sustainment Brigade, prepares a COVID-19 vaccine in Cleveland. Smith has participated in the testing and vaccination phases of the Tennessee National Guard's COVID-19 task force mission since March 2020. (Photo by Sgt. Finis L. Dailey, III)

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