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Hometown News Release

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Michael Owens retires after 38 years of military service

COOKEVILLE, Tenn. – After serving in the U.S. military for nearly four decades, Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Owens, a Celina native, retired from the Tennessee Army National Guard during a ceremony at the Cookeville National Guard Armory on Jan. 26.

Owens was honored for his commitment and sacrifice to the nation and the state of Tennessee after serving for more than 38 years.

“Command Sgt. Maj. Owens is truly an outstanding soldier and person,” said Lt. Col. Richard Stackpole, Recruiting and Retention Battalion Commander, and presiding officer of the ceremony. “He is an amazing leader and has devoted his life to protecting and being ready to always help Tennesseans in need.”

Owens enlisted in the Tennessee National Guard as a supply specialist in 1985. After attending basic training and advanced individual training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, he served for 11 years in Lafayette’s 1175th Quartermaster Company. In 1990, he deployed with the unit to the Middle East for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm where he helped establish petroleum storage facilities and transported fuel throughout Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq.

After returning to Tennessee, he remained in Lafayette and in 1996, the unit became B Troop with the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment. Owens served with the 278th until 1999 and was then asked to become a recruiter with Tennessee’s Recruiting and Retention Battalion. He accepted, and the career change started a new a passion that lasted more than 20 years. He served throughout the state in numerous positions, until becoming the Battalion’s Command Sergeant Major in 2019. As the Command Sergeant Major, he led and mentored all recruiters in Tennessee, more than 200, while ensuring the overall health and strength of the Tennessee National Guard.

“His years of service has touched so many lives,” said Stackpole. “I’m incredibly thankful to have had the opportunity to serve alongside him. He is an amazing recruiter, soldier, and friend.”

Throughout his career, Owens was awarded numerous military decorations and awards, including the Meritorious Service Medal. He also graduated from the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy in 2018 and earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration and management from Grantham University.

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Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Owens poses with his wife Melissa after presenting her with flowers and the Military Spouse Medal during his retirement ceremony held at the Cookeville National Guard Armory on Jan. 26. Owens retired after more than 38 years of service with the Tennessee Army National Guard. (photo courtesy of the Tennessee National Guard)



Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Owens, Command Sergeant Major of the Recruiting and Retention Battalion, Tennessee Army National Guard, retired after more than 38 years of service during a ceremony held at the Cookeville National Guard Armory on Jan. 26. (official Tennessee National Guard photo)

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