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Tennessee Army National Guard commissions new officers

SMYRNA, Tenn. – Seven Tennessee Army National Guardsmen were commissioned as U.S. Army 2nd Lieutenants during a special ceremony at Smyrna’s Volunteer Training Site on August 18.

These new officers, who graduated from Smyrna’s 18-month-long Officer Candidate School at the Tennessee National Guard’s 117th Regional Training Institute, will now join the Tennessee Army National Guard as platoon leaders and junior staff officers.

“It is always a proud day when we get to commission these young men and women who have worked so hard, for nearly two years, to become 2nd Lieutenants and a part of the Army’s officer corps,” said Maj. Gen. Warner Ross, Tennessee’s Adjutant General, who presided over the ceremony. “They are true patriots and leaders, and I look forward to what the future holds for them all.”

The new officers include Logan Cedotal of Knoxville, Dominique Diller of Nashville, Steven Downs of Chattanooga, Charles Mitchum of McKenzie, Josh Porter of Nashville, Kyle Waters of Chattanooga, and Booth White of Jackson.

During the ceremony, Maj. Drew Caplin, the Officer Candidate School commander, administered the Oath of Office to each new officer and discussed the new roles they are about to embark on.

“After today, you will now be responsible for our nation’s most valuable asset, the men and women you will be asked to lead,” said Caplin. “There is no greater calling than serving your country and leading Soldiers. It is a powerful responsibility and privilege, and I am confident every one of you will excel at it.”

Next, Caplin and Sgt. 1st Class Jason Martin, the Officer Candidate School’s senior non-commissioned officer, presented awards for excellence during training. Luke Mitchum earned the Physical Fitness award for having the highest fitness scores and Dominique Diller was presented with the award for leadership excellence for having the best leadership evaluations throughout the course. Booth White was announced as the class’s Distinguished Honor Graduate and recipient of the Erikson Trophy for having the highest overall grades in all areas of training during OCS.

“This has been a challenging journey that has taught me more about myself and being a better leader,” said White. “Today, the Tennessee Army National Guard will be receiving some of the finest officers ready to take on any challenge.”

Following the presentation of awards and the Oath of Office, each candidates' family were given the honor to pin on their graduate's new 2nd Lieutenant rank. They then conducted the time-honored tradition of the first salute ceremony, where the newly commissioned officer receives their first salute from an enlisted Soldier, and in return, the officer presents them with a silver dollar. It is a tradition that represents the symbolic relationship between officers and enlisted servicemembers, and the deep sense of gratitude they have for the non-commissioned officers who pass on their knowledge and training.

After commissioning, each officer, who was a part of Tennessee's OCS Class 67, will now be assigned to various units in the National Guard, and will attend courses needed to be qualified in the branch they were selected to serve in.

- Logan Cedotal, from Knoxville, branched Military Police and will serve as a platoon leader with Cleveland's 252nd Military Police Company
- Dominique Diller, from Nashville, branched Adjutant General and will serve as a platoon leader with Nashville's 105th Personnel Support Company
- Steven Downs, from Chattanooga, branched Armor and will serve as a platoon leader with Newport's O Troop, 4th Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment
- Charles Mitchum, from McKenzie, branched Infantry as a platoon leader with Headquarters Company for the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry Regiment in Lubbock, Texas.
- Josh Porter, from Nashville, branched Adjutant General as a platoon leader in Chattanooga's 1-181st Field Artillery Regiment
- Kyle Waters, from Chattanooga, branched Military Police as a platoon leader with Cleveland's 252nd Military Police Company
- Booth White, from Jackson, branched Medical Services and will serve with Jackson's 194th Engineer Brigade



Seven newly commissioned Tennessee National Guard officers take the oath of office during a special ceremony at Smyrna's Volunteer Training Site on August 18. The new officers graduated from Smyrna's 18-month-long Officer Candidate School at the 117th Regional Training Institute and will now join the National Guard as platoon leaders and junior staff officers. (photo by retired Sgt. 1st Class Edgar Castro)

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