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Tennessee Military Department celebrates National Guard's 385th birthday in Tennessee style

SMYRNA, Tenn. – Soldiers and Airmen with the Tennessee National Guard gathered at Smyrna's Volunteer Training Site on Dec. 13 to celebrate and honor the 385th birthday of the National Guard in a way that only the country music capital of the world can.

Columbia Nashville Recording Artist Kameron Marlowe performed for more than 300 Tennessee Guardsman during a birthday celebration and cake cutting ceremony to honor the long and storied history of the Guard; America's oldest military branch.

"385 years ago today, citizens of the Massachusetts Bay Colony came together and raised America's first regiments for the common defense of the colony," said Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes, Tennessee's Adjutant General. "They were the first Citizen-Soldiers who were willing to sacrifice their lives at a moment's notice. Their legacy continues with the men and women who are on the front lines today, serving around the globe and at home, protecting us from foreign threats, natural disasters, and helping those in need."

During the ceremony, Marlowe played his new single "Giving You Up," a cover of Johnny Cash's "Folsom Prison Blues," and previewed an unreleased song for the Guardsmen.

After Marlowe's first set, Holmes asked Marlowe, Spc. Dakota Richardson with the 212th Engineer Company, and Master Sgt. Anderson Young with the 164th Airlift Wing to join him for the ceremonial cake cutting. It is customary for the oldest and youngest service member in attendance to cut the cake with a ceremonial saber. Young, the senior Guardsman in attendance, represented the Guard's past, while Richardson, the most junior Guardsman in attendance, represented the Guard's future.

"It was an honor to participate in the ceremony," said Richardson. "I'm proud to be a member of an organization with such a strong history of helping those in need."

For nearly two years, thousands of Soldiers and Airmen with the Tennessee National Guard have answered the nations and state's call. Guardsmen have supported tornado relief, civil unrest, flooding, hurricanes, the COVID-19 pandemic, and deployments around the globe.

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Chief Master Sgt. Kenneth Simmons, Spc. Dakota Richardson, Master Sgt. Anderson Young, Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes, and Columbia Nashville Recording Artist Kameron Marlowe use a ceremonial saber to cut a cake celebrating the National Guard's 385th birthday at Smyrna's Volunteer Training Site, Dec. 13. (Photo by retired Sgt. 1st Class Edgar Castro)



Columbia Nashville Recording Artist Kameron Marlowe performs for more than 300 Soldiers and Airmen with the Tennessee National Guard during a celebration for the National Guard's 385th birthday at Smyrna's Volunteer Training Site, Dec. 13. (Photo by Lt. Col. Darrin Haas)



Columbia Nashville Recording Artist Kameron Marlowe takes a photograph with Maj. Gen. Jeff Holmes, Tennessee's Adjutant General, and Col. James Reed, Tennessee National Guard's Joint Chief of Staff, during a celebration for the National Guard's 385th birthday at Smyrna's Volunteer Training Site, Dec. 13. (Photo by retired Sgt. 1st Class Edgar Castro)

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