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Tenn. National Guard heads to Texas this summer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Nearly 3,000 Soldiers from the Tennessee Army National Guard are headed to Fort Hood, Texas, this summer for a training exercise as part of their Annual Training.

Soldiers from the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 230th Sustainment Brigade, and 30th Troop Command will spend roughly three weeks in July enhancing their war-fighter skills while being evaluated on their performance during high-stress conditions. The exercise, known as the eXportable Combat Training Capability, is designed to test units with realistic deployment scenarios while operating in an austere desert environment.

"We are excited about conducting this collective training event," said Col. Steven Turner, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment Commander. "Even though we had a large portion of the Regiment deployed between 2018 and 2020, this is the largest training event that we've conducted since our National Training Center rotation in the summer of 2018."

The 278th is headquartered in Knoxville, the 230th is headquartered in Chattanooga and the 30th is headquartered in Tullahoma. All the units are comprised of citizen-Soldiers from across the state, most of which have been a part of Tennessee's ongoing COVID-19 operation.

"I'm putting on a different hat now for this training. Before, I was fighting against a virus and helping in the community; now I'll be using those skills I've gained and applying them at XCTC, helping my brothers and sisters around me," said Pfc. William Orton, a cavalry scout with 4th Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, based in Newport. "I feel very confident about transitioning from the COVID-19 mission to my original duty as a scout."

XCTC provides an environment for units to hone in on their combat skills while simultaneously working together, enhancing their lethality as a unified fighting force.

"I am excited to get out there and watch our Soldiers, who continued to train and prepare for this event despite the challenges of COVID-19, continue to build readiness and improve their Soldier skills," said Turner.

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Soldiers assigned to the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment load a Bradley Fighting Vehicle onto a train in preparation for movement to Fort Hood, Texas, June 21. Approximately 1,000 vehicles, tanks and pieces of equipment are being loaded onto trains in preparation for XCTC, a three-week training exercise that will be taking place in Fort Hood over the summer. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Cordeiro)

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