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CONTACT: James Reed

OFFICE: 615.313.0662

james.reed@tn.gov

Tennessee National Guard Honors Former President Polk

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Tennessee National Guard celebrated the life and legacy of former President James K. Polk in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tennessee State Capitol, Nov. 2, in honor of Polk’s 228th birthday.

Each year, a representative of the current president is responsible for placing a wreath on the tomb of past presidents to honor them and their service on their birthday. Col. John Kinton, commander of Jackson’s 194th Engineer Brigade, represented President Joe Biden at the ceremony.

“It was a privilege and honor to represent the president today,” said Kinton. “As a Tennessean, I’m flattered to be able to commemorate President Polk for all he has done for our state and country.”

During the ceremony, Kinton and Jaryn Abdallah, the education and outreach coordinator for the President James K. Polk Home and Museum, laid a wreath on Polk’s tomb. In addition to laying the wreath, Kinton also spoke about Polk’s legacy and his contribution to the state and nation.

“Polk devoted his life to making Tennessee and the country a better place,” said Kinton. “As President, Polk directed the country's efforts in the Mexican-American War and shaped the nation into what it is today. There are many parallels with what he endured during his time as president and what we are going through in modern times. We can learn much by studying his life and presidency.”

Also participating the ceremony was Col. Mark Phillips, the Tennessee National Guard’s State Chaplain, who gave the invocation, Sgt. 1st Class James Tate with the 129th Army Band, who played Taps following the wreath laying, and Soldiers from the Tennessee National Guard’s Joint Forces Headquarters who served as honor guards.

Polk was the 11th President of the United States, serving from 1845 to 1849. Throughout his career he also served in the Tennessee State Legislature, as a U.S. Congressman, Governor of Tennessee, and served in the Tennessee Militia as a Captain and then as a Colonel on Tennessee Governor William Carroll’s staff.

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Col. John Kinton, commander of Jackson's 194th Engineer Brigade, represented President Joe Biden and was the keynote speaker during a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tennessee State Capitol, Nov. 2, in honor of President James K. Polk's 228th birthday. (photo by retired Sgt. 1st Class Edgar Castro)



Col. John Kinton, commander of Jackson's 194th Engineer Brigade, and Jaryn Abdallah, the education and outreach coordinator for the President James K. Polk Home and Museum, lay a wreath on Polk's tomb during a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tennessee State Capitol, Nov. 2, in honor of President James K. Polk's 228th birthday. (photo by retired Sgt. 1st Class Edgar Castro)

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