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# Music City Dedication

## LOCAL ARTIST UNVEILS EXHIBIT AT 2009 NGAUS

By Christian Anderson

**N**ational Guard Soldiers converging in Nashville, TN, for the 131st NGAUS (National Guard Association of the United States) conference will view a special piece of art of which the Tennessee National Guard is especially fond. This isn't your typical painting that goes above the living room couch; this is a painting of the Tennessee flag on top of a guitar, a concept that has brought the artist, Rob Hendon, a great deal of attention lately.

Hendon, a native of Nashville and a popular artist within the community, has strong ties to the National Guard due to his relationship with LTC Jimmie Cole. Cole's and Hendon's wives grew up together, so the two men struck up a friendship.

But it was not until the eve of Cole's deployment that he understood how much Hendon cared for the men and women of the Guard.

"When I deployed back in 2004, Rob and Shannon hosted a dinner over at their house for us," Cole said. "Rob has always been a great supporter of the Guard. He and his wife have always taken care of my family when I was gone."

Hendon always wanted to show the Guard his appreciation through his artwork and realized that the NGAUS conference would be the perfect chance.

"About two years ago, the Tennessee National Guard decided they were going to host NGAUS here at Opryland," Cole explained. "Rob and I were at lunch one day and he mentioned this was something he would like to do."

"So I showed him the logo, and he said he would love to do his interpretation for the Guard," Cole added.

So Hendon went to work and began to paint his interpretation of the Tennessee state flag onto a guitar.

Although he knew what the end result should be, the process wasn't easy. Hendon let his inspiration and appreciation for the

National Guard drive him to create a truly unique and special piece.

"I have always wanted to do something for the National Guard, especially since I met Jimmie," Hendon said. "My painting is a way of showing my support, not only to Jimmie and his family, but to all men and women in the National Guard."

Hendon made his official presentation to the Tennessee National Guard back in March at



**TENNESSEE PRIDE** Artist Rob Hendon presents BG Max Haston of the Tennessee National Guard with his original artwork featuring the Tennessee flag and a Gibson guitar.

the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, TN. BG Max Haston, assistant adjutant general of Tennessee, accepted the painting on behalf of Tennessee and was excited that the 5,000 NGAUS attendees from all 54 states and territories would see it.

"Having a local artist who is embedded in the country music community and having this as part of our 2009 NGAUS conference just adds another special twist to the event that will be held here in September," Haston said. "It is an honor for us to do this in Tennessee, but it is more of an honor just for us to showcase our local talents to the world and show the country just how strong the Tennessee National Guard really is."

This is not the first time one of Hendon's paintings has garnered him recognition. The television shows "Gone Country" and "Nashville Star" have featured Hendon's guitars and the sales office of Gibson Guitars in Nashville displays a 35-foot painting by Hendon. **GX**

### VICTORY MAP



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**AFGHANISTAN** Soldiers from the Georgia Army National Guard's 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team played an integral role in supporting the elections in Afghanistan on August 19. The 48th BCT's mission is to mentor and train Afghan National security forces, including the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police and the Afghan border police and has been in Afghanistan since June. The 48th BCT took over operations from the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the Illinois Army National Guard in late August as they ended their deployment in Afghanistan.

**EL SALVADOR** In early August, 35 medics from the 684th Medical Company of the Ohio Army National Guard traveled to Morazan, El Salvador and treated more than 7,000 patients as part of a U.S. Army Medical Readiness Training Exercise (MEDRETE). The MEDRETE is a medical humanitarian and civic assistance exercise conducted in partnership with the government of El Salvador and U.S. Southern Command. The MEDRETE team visited four different locations during the two-week exercise. The team worked out of local schools in the towns of Corinto, Joateca, Rancho Quemado and Torola. The treatment services offered included: preventive medicine, general medicine, optometry and dentistry.

**VIRGINIA** Thirty-four Virginia National Guard Soldiers from various units spent part of their annual training at Fort Pickett in June trying to earn the Abzeichen für Leistungen im Truppendienst, the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency. To earn the badge, Soldiers had to complete a list of physical requirements such as swimming and track and field events, and Soldier tasks such as demonstrating accurate marksmanship skills and marching with a rucksack.

**WISCONSIN** The Tomah-based Headquarters Company of the 732nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Wisconsin Army National Guard, assumed command of its mission in Iraq in July by settling in at Forward Operating Base Adder. The 732nd has command and control over approximately 1,200 people in seven companies and three detachments, and is responsible for managing supplies and resupply efforts for all of southern Iraq—from Baghdad south to the Kuwaiti border and from the Iranian border in the east to Saudi Arabia in the west.