



Veterans Day

Salute
to Service

NOVEMBER 2023

Special Supplement to THE EXPOSITOR



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Kenneth Ray Broyles - Army Signal Corps

RACHEL AUBERGER
Staff Writer

Kenneth Ray Broyles was born Jan. 12, 1932, in White County, to William Ray and Lula Bradley Broyles.

Kenneth received his secondary education, in White County, Bachelor of Science Degree in Agronomy from Tennessee Polytechnic Institute (TTU), in 1954, and a Master's Degree from UT Knoxville.

While attending Tech, he received the 2nd Lieutenant's Commission through the ROTC and entered the Army on active duty, in 1954, with the Army Signal Corps. He was stationed at Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey, and with Korea Military Advisory Group (KMAG) at Pocheon, Korea, as Signal Communications Officer.

Broyles was discharged from active duty, in Oakland, California, in March 1956, and from the Military Reserves, on Sept. 21, 1962, as Captain Signal Corps.

Broyles married Martha Sue Bell from Quebeck, Tennessee. They have four children: Steven Ray Broyles, of Sparta; Sherrie Broyles McCulley, of Sparta; Susan Broyles Harris, of Nashville; and William "Bill" Fearon Broyles, of Nashville. They have six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



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Aaron Johnson credits Army for who he is today

RACHEL AUBERGER

Staff Writer

“It’s funny how life changes your plans.” That’s how Aaron J. Johnson, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S Army Retired explains how he got from his original plans of becoming a law enforcement officer, in Texas, to becoming the Junior ROTC Instructor at White County High School - a job which he values immensely.

“I never planned to serve on active duty, nor did I plan to have a career in the Army,” Johnson explained.

He was originally commissioned June 6, 1998, as a Second Lieutenant through the Early Commissioning Program, at Georgia Military College, in Milledgeville, Georgia,

“I had studied Criminal Justice, in college, and planned to be a law enforcement officer, in Texas, and serve in the National Guard,” Johnson said.

But often the course a person follows isn’t the one originally planned, and that’s how it was for Johnson who served in the 149th Military Police Company, in the Texas Army National Guard, and then served on active duty in the United States Army from September 2000 until he retired in December 2021.

“Had I not served in the Army, I definitely would not be the man I am today,” Johnson said about the change to his life’s plan being one for the better. “My service taught me numerous life lessons. Some of these lessons include to research and to use the knowledge gained to make informed decisions; do the right thing, just because it’s easy doesn’t mean it’s right; life does not owe you anything; and if you work hard, good things will happen to you.”

For Johnson, those lessons were learned over a course of 20-plus years but



also stand out from a handful of moments that made the decision to leave his idea of law enforcement and embrace a life of military service worthwhile.

“Once, while I was redeploying from my first deployment, we landed in Dover Air Force Base, New Jersey,” Johnson said. “For whatever reason, we had to go through security as you would if you were at a civilian airport. After going through

the metal detector, the security person manning the metal detector reached out, shook my hand and told me, ‘Welcome back to the United States of America,’” Johnson said about one of what he says are six or seven significant moments in his career.

“It only lasted a few seconds and may seem insignificant to most people, but, to me and those who have deployed to

harm’s way, this simple ‘welcome home’ meant the world and is one of my favorite moments from my career,” Johnson said.

Another of those moments for Johnson came when he was promoted standing atop the “surrender deck” of the USS Missouri.

“To be honored by promotion in such a

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JOHNSON

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historical location was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience," Johnson said about standing in the place where General Douglas MacArthur had accepted the formal surrender of the Japanese, ending World War II.

The retired Lieutenant Colonel said the next best thing about serving in the Army, besides the various opportunities to travel - which for him included living in nine states, including Hawaii, being stationed in Germany, deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Uzbekistan, and visiting over 50 countries, and having several once-in-a-lifetime experiences - is the people.

"I've had the privilege and honor to work with, and for, some amazing soldiers," Johnson said. "Under normal circumstances, had I worked in a civilian occupation, our paths would have never crossed. However, I believe God puts special people in your life at designated times of His choosing. These people, if you work together toward a common goal, will help you get through Army life's many challenges."

It wasn't always fun and adventure, good times and great memories, however. Johnson said that military life comes with some hard parts, too.

"I believe the hardest thing about my time in the Army was the times I deployed while I was married. Leaving my wife for a year at a time, twice, was insanely hard," he said. "However,

God blessed me with my amazing wife, Pam. She is undoubtedly my biggest supporter and cheerleader. She is unbelievably strong, and had it not been for her unwavering resiliency, I'm not sure if I would have had the successful life and career that I had in the Army."

Johnson continued, "Now, as a Junior ROTC Instructor at White County High School, I'm often asked by my cadets if they should serve in the military,"

Johnson said he values the opportunity he had to be a Senior ROTC Instructor at both the University of Illinois and New Mexico Military Institute with cadets who are pursuing commissioning as Army officers but is happy to be in Tennessee helping to shape the lives and futures of another generation of citizens and soldiers alike.

"I am a firm believer that ALL who are capable should serve but only if they WANT to serve," Johnson said. "The military is definitely a calling; however, I believe if you do serve, you have to go 'all in' and give 100 percent. It's not just a job, it's a lifestyle."

Johnson is not where he thought he would be when he was originally commissioned, in 1998, but he knows he is exactly where he was always supposed to be.

"There are plenty of nights, weekends, and holidays that while I worked, I often asked myself 'is it worth it?'" he said. "The answer is always a resounding 'Yes!'"



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Jason Moore hopes to teach lessons he learned in the Army

RACHEL AUBERGER
Staff Writer

For Jason Moore, Sergeant First Class, Army - Retired, life has come full circle.

"I joined the Army because of the influence of my JROTC instructors in my high school, in Lincoln Park, Michigan," Moore said.

He was an active member of the United States Army from 1998 until 2021 when he retired as a Sergeant First Class.

"That is why I wanted to teach JROTC after I retired - so I can have a similar effect on future generations," Moore said.

Moore now serves as an Army Instructor with the US Army JROTC, at White County High School, where he hopes he can mold the lives of the students he works with every day, teaching them, as the Army taught him: what it means to be a citizen and a sense of responsibility to self, others, and community.

"The Army taught me responsibility. It taught me what it means to be a citizen," Moore said. "I was able to grow into a leader by following examples set by my leaders."

Moore said some of the most impor-

tant lessons he learned are the ones he hopes he teaches every day.

"The best part of life in the Army was that I always felt that my leaders wanted me to succeed," Moore said. "I felt that they cared for me and wanted to see me grow."

Moore continued, "There is an expression that I learned that I try to live my life by - 'Never stop improving your foxhole.'"

Moore said the expression, which has become his motto, means that no matter where you are, for however long you are there, you can make improvements.

"In doing this, I try to leave a place better than when I got there," he said - hinting that places could also be the lives of students. "I am always looking for ways to improve my foxhole."

Moore is also always looking for the positive in his situations, even ones that might be difficult - like the time he called his wife from Iraq to tell her about what he claimed was the best baklava he had ever had.

"I told her the story about how we were conducting a foot patrol in the

MOORE 7



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MOORE

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market are of the city of Tikrit when a window broke out in the shop that was 10 feet in front of me," Moore said, as he set the scene saying that the shop owner told them that a bullet had been fired from a four-story hotel across the street. "As we were investigating the shop, which turned out to be a bakery, I noticed that there was a tray of baklava in the shop. I asked our interpreter to ask the shop owner if it was baklava, and, when he did, the shop owner ladled up a huge piece of it and set it in my hand, still dripping with honey. I was not about to turn away his hospitality, so I ate it!

Moore continued, "After telling my wife this story, she exclaimed to me, 'Wait! You were shot at by a sniper?' Moore recalled the telephone conversa-

tion with his wife. I said to her, 'Yeah, I guess I was - but the baklava was amazing!'"

For Moore, it was all about seeing the good in the people where he was. And now it is about seeing the good in the people where he is. About helping to shape their lives and helping them find their own paths to the things that make them good citizens and good leaders building good futures.

"Find something to do wherever you go," Moore stated, saying that's his advice to anyone following a similar path to his and considering a military career. "The military will send you to some amazing places, but, if you sit in your barracks room or don't leave the base, you will never see the good in the location that you are."



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Nancy Ward Benningfield encourages others to serve

RACHEL AUBERGER
Staff Writer

Nancy Benningfield is an amazing teacher, a true champion for her students while they walk the halls of White County High School and an even bigger supporter of their continued lives when they leave her classroom and head out into the world.

Everyone who has had Benningfield as a teacher knows they have a friend, a supporter, a mentor - for life. They all also know that she would shrug off any accolades or claims that what she was doing was significant. She does what she does because that's what someone in her position is supposed to do - love her students for the people they are.

Teaching wasn't Benningfield's first career, and, by her own admission, while she was serving her country as a member of the United States Navy, she had the same outlook - that what she was doing wasn't anything extra special, it was just what one did while in her position.

"I would have to say at the time of my service, I didn't appreciate all that I did or the importance of my duties, but, looking back, I see that I did play a critical part in

the big picture while serving the Pacific Fleet and loaded out supplies and food to the fleet," Benningfield, who served three years (1983-1985) as a Petty Officer 3rd Class in the US Navy, said.

Benningfield said her time in the Navy began because she was unsure about her future, so, with a military background throughout her family, it just made the most sense at the time.

"My father, both of my brothers, and my sister were all in the military," she said. "Now my son, my son-in-law, and my nephew have continued in the family tradition."

Despite a family history deep in military tradition, despite thinking that a military stint made the most sense, it wasn't always easy, and missing family was often the hardest part of Benningfield's service time.

"Boot camp was awful, but being away from family was the worst part," Benningfield admitted, saying that she was stationed in Guam.

To say that missing family was the worst thing shows just how much Benningfield pours into those she loves and

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BENNINGFIELD

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cares about. While in Guam, Benningfield experienced more than one typhoon, saying there was nothing to do but wait it out. She also drove a used car that became known as the "Guam Bomb."

"I had to start it with a ratchet tool touching the starter," she said. "The radiator leaked so badly that I carried gallons of water with me in the back seat. When I drove uphill, the water would squirt out so much, I had to use the windshield wipers."

Still, Benningfield said the worst part was being away from the ones she loved.

Just like her work in the classroom, Benningfield viewed her work in the Navy as just what she was supposed to be doing.

"My job was working on loading docks at the Naval Supply Depot," she explained. "We unloaded refrigerator stock as well as freezer and dry stock. We inventoried every single thing in the warehouses. During our loadout to the Pacific Fleet, I rode out to sea in a helicopter to drop supplies off to a ship."



You have to press her a little harder to find out that while "just doing her job" Benningfield also won a Sailor of the Quarter Award and was also visited by President Ronald Reagan.

"During the time I was serving, I was proud of myself because some days were just hard," she admitted. "After being out a few years, I started to realize what an honor it was to serve in the Navy, and the only regret I have now is that I didn't take advantage of more of the benefits of military service while I was still active duty."

Benningfield said she would encourage anyone who was in the same situation she was in when she finished up high school to consider a few years - or maybe longer - in the military.

"If you are unsure of what you want to do with your life, take the ASVAB test and just see what your interests are and what kind of jobs you can fulfill in the military," she said. "You might be surprised at the experience you will gain while you serve or could even make a career out of military service."



The military helped shape Scott O'Dell's life

RACHEL AUBERGER

Staff Writer

Scott O'Dell is a Lieutenant with the White County Sheriff's Department where he works as a Supervisor and School Resource Officer, but he credits his time in the United States Army for helping him get where he is today.

"The military helped shape my life by teaching me a great sense of both honor and respect as well as instilling a strong work ethic in me," O'Dell, who served in the US Army from July 1992 through July 1995 and was a Specialist E-4, said, although he was also quick to add that his reason for joining the military wasn't about gaining respect but about gaining experience. "I joined the military to serve my country, but also because I wanted to travel and see places and things I might not otherwise get to see in my lifetime."

And so things he did.

"I was deployed for a time to Haiti while they were having issues with their government," he said. "Seeing the living conditions there for those people - that really made me appreciate the lifestyle and freedoms that we have here in America."

While he enjoyed his travels and seeing parts of the world he had never seen, being a member of the United States Army wasn't a travel tour or vacation for O'Dell and he took the opportunity to serve his country seriously, putting in all of the hard work that is required of an American soldier.

During his tour of duty, O'Dell was



awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and twice received Army Achievement Medals.

O'Dell said that while being away from family and friends, traveling from the home you grew up in and a town and traditions and customs so familiar that it's hard to imagine anything else isn't always the easiest thing to do, he would recommend it to anyone.

"I would encourage anyone who is thinking about joining the military to do it," he said. "It provides a sense of honor and pride that you just really can't describe."

Now for O'Dell he is taking that honor and pride, that honor and respect, along



with that work ethic he gained from his time in the United States Army to the halls of White County Schools. Along with ensuring the safety of the community's greatest resource - their children - O'Dell is providing an example of what they could be, what they could accomplish, who they

can become. And, maybe, he will inspire them to spread their wings and fly to new places and see new things and experience new cultures so that they too can both appreciate all they have while learning to appreciate how much more the world has to offer them.



Frequently asked questions about Veterans Day

Each November, millions of people recognize the service and sacrifice of military veterans on Veterans Day. Initially commemorated as Armistice Day but renamed Veterans Day in the United States in 1954, the holiday is a federal holiday throughout the country.

The first Armistice Day was observed in 1919. Despite that lengthy history, the general public may still have questions about Veterans Day.

WHEN IS VETERANS DAY OBSERVED?

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs notes that Veterans Day is always observed officially on November 11, regardless of which day of the week that happens to be. In 2023, Veterans Day is Saturday, November 11. Because Veterans Day falls on a Saturday in 2023, the federal observation date is Friday, November 10.

WHY IS NOVEMBER 11 SO SIGNIFICANT?

November 11 is a significant day in world history because it marks the signing of the armistice between the Allies of World War I and Germany at 5:45 a.m. on November 11, 1918. Though the



formal peace treaty, the Treaty of Versailles, was not signed until 1919 and hostilities between the sides continued for hours after the armistice was signed, the day is still viewed as the end of World War I.

WHAT DISTINGUISHES VETERANS DAY FROM MEMORIAL DAY?

The VA notes that Veterans Day honors all those individuals who served honorably in the military during both wartime and peacetime. Memorial Day is a day to honor and remember military personnel who died in the service of their country, particularly those who lost their lives in battle or as a result of wounds sustained in battle.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RED POPPIES?

Red poppies are ubiquitous on Memorial Day, but they're also visible on Veterans Day. Though it's not taboo to wear red poppies on Veterans Day, it's a tradition that aligns more with Memorial Day. That's because the poppies are typically worn to honor fallen military personnel. A 1915 poem written by a Canadian Lieutenant Colonel named John McCrae referred to the fields of poppies growing around the graves of World War I soldiers in Flanders.

DO OTHER COUNTRIES HONOR THEIR MILITARY VETERANS?

Many countries across the globe honor their military veterans, and many do so on November 11 as well. For example, Canadians and Australians observe Remembrance Day in honor of their nation's respective veterans on November 11. Great Britain observes Remembrance Day on the Sunday nearest to November 11.

Veterans Day is a day to honor and commemorate the brave men and women who have honorably served in the U.S. military during wartime and peacetime.

Gestures anyone can embrace in support of veterans

Veterans Day (United States) and Remembrance Day (Canada) are commemorated each year on November 11. Both holidays honor the individuals who served in the armed forces for their respective countries.

Community-wide events tend to be held on November 11, but any day of the year is a good time to pay respect to veterans. On a local level, people can do much to thank veterans for their service and sacrifice.

- Provide a free restaurant meal. Offer to take out a veteran for breakfast, lunch or dinner. If you see a veteran eating in a restaurant, anonymously pay the bill for that person.

- Send care packages. Communities can gather resources and chip in to make care packages for veterans who live in town, and even to send to troops stationed elsewhere. Include foods and comforts from home.

- Buy from veterans. Seek out veteran-owned businesses in the area, and then make purchases from their retail stores or utilize their services.

- Volunteer at a VA hospital. Spend time with veterans where they receive care for

current health needs or past injuries suffered in combat.

- Decorate cemeteries. Honor fallen veterans by placing flowers or flags by their gravesites.

- Participate in a parade. If your town hosts a Veterans Day or Remembrance Day parade, find out how you can volunteer or be a part of it. Oftentimes parade officials enable youth groups, such as high school marching bands or scouting troops, to participate in the parade.

- Write to the newspaper. Write an op-ed or highlight piece to submit to the newspaper about veterans in the community. Mention local veterans who have unique stories, or speak about the importance of veterans to the community.

- Ask a veteran to speak. If you work in a school or a community center, ask veterans to share their experiences with area youth.

- Visit local memorials. Spend time visiting memorials nearby and paying homage to the veterans who devoted their time, or even their lives, to service.

Community members have plenty of opportunities and ways to give back to veterans in the area.





Thank You