

Dept. of Military Affairs: Covington promoted to brigadier general

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MADISON, Wis. — Gov. Tony Evers promoted Col. Timothy Covington to the rank of brigadier general during a formal ceremony Nov. 1 in the Senate Chamber of the Wisconsin capitol building.

“Today we celebrate a lifetime of service and accomplishment in both the Army and the Wisconsin National Guard,” Evers said. “You’ve served Wisconsin and the nation well from your days on active duty in the Army to your decades of experience here in Wisconsin. I know you also made a lasting impact on the Wisconsin National Guard’s domestic operations.”

Covington, who recently served as Wisconsin Army National Guard chief of staff, also served as the commander of the 54th Civil Support Team — an expert team of Soldiers and Airmen who specialized in disciplines related to weapons of mass destruction and chemical and biological hazards — and director of domestic operations for the Wisconsin National Guard Joint Staff. He returns to domestic operations in his new role as deputy adjutant general for civil support.

Evers acknowledged the Wisconsin National Guard’s role in serving the state the past few years.

“I know Tim will continue this great legacy of service to the state of Wisconsin,” Evers said.

Maj. Gen. Paul Knapp, Wisconsin’s 31st adjutant general and commander of the Wisconsin National Guard, reminded Covington he was stepping into an important, no-fail mission.

“But I know you’re up for this challenge,” Knapp said. “I’ve had the pleasure of

seeing your work and dedication first-hand over the past couple years.”

Knapp also awarded Covington the Legion of Merit — one of the military’s top awards for his tour as the Wisconsin Army National Guard chief of staff, given for superior or exceptionally meritorious service — during Monday’s ceremony.

Covington’s wife Sonja and son Kele replaced his colonel shoulder boards with brigadier general shoulder boards during the promotion ceremony. His sister Ann Oliphant held their father’s Bible, which he placed his hand on as Evers administered the oath of office.

Covington said he honored his father — an aircraft machinist mate in the Navy — and his mother by using his father’s Bible and having his sister stand in for his mother, who could not attend the promotion ceremony.

“I lost my father in 1991, but he was always — and continues to be — a shaping figure in my life,” Covington said.

He also thanked Evers and Knapp for the opportunity to serve as the deputy adjutant general for civil support.

“I will do my best to ensure your trust was well-placed,” Covington said.

Covington’s military career began in 1979 when he enlisted in the Army. Well into his fourth decade of military service, he acknowledged the support of his family by bringing his wife a bouquet of flowers during the ceremony.

“Our journey continues,” he said.

Knapp underscored that statement.

“As you know, we don’t promote officers in the Wisconsin National Guard based on what they’ve done,” Knapp said. “We promote them based on the potential they have to serve in more challenging assignments. Promotion to general officer is reserved for those with an even greater aptitude and potential for highly strategic leadership and vision. You possess those qualities.”

Covington observed that we are a product of all our experiences.

“Whether we choose to be or not to be, we are all part of something larger than

ourselves,” Covington said. “We are all part of the American experience, and contributing members of what is referred to as the democratic experience.”