

GUARD

DETAIL

Volume XVII, No. 2

April-August 2009

A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

DIXIE THUNDER

155 BCT RIDES AGAIN



GUARD DETAIL

A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Number 2

Volume XVII

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FRONT PAGE

Design by Sandy Ates, Public Affairs Staff. (Shield is artwork from the hood of the #25 Car belonging to Hendrick Motorsports, Inc., during a Nationwide NASCAR race in Memphis in 2005, when members of the 155th Brigade Combat Team were deployed to Iraq.)



Guard Detail

The Guard Detail magazine is an authorized unofficial publication produced three times a year by the Joint Force Headquarters, Mississippi National Guard, Public Affairs Office, under the provision of AR 360-81. The opinions expressed in the Guard Detail are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Joint Force Headquarters, Mississippi National Guard or the National Guard Bureau unless so indicated.



The Adjutant General of Mississippi

Maj. Gen. William L. "Bill" Freeman, Jr.

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This issue of the Guard Detail is dedicated to the Soldiers of the 155th Brigade Combat Team. Our thoughts and prayers go with each of you and to your families during your deployment. You have proven your professionalism and determination on the battlefield before, and we know that your success will be no less during this deployment.

NEWS BRIEFS

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE RECOGNIZES GUARD NCOs

2009 Regular Session
To: Rules
By: Senator Hewes

Senate Concurrent Resolution 667

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE
AND DEDICATION OF THE NON-
COMMISSIONED OFFICERS IN THE
MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD
AND DESIGNATING FRIDAY,
APRIL 17, 2009, AS "NCO DAY IN
MISSISSIPPI."

WHEREAS, Non-Commissioned
Officers are considered the backbone
of the military; and

WHEREAS, the Mississippi National
Guard NCOs stand well-trained and
prepared to serve both the state
and nation in cases of all types
when requested by the Governor or
the President of the United States.
They also have and will continue to
serve where needed for disasters,
emergencies or threats, foreign or
domestic, for the safety of our state
and nation; and

WHEREAS, Soldiers and Airmen
must remain well-trained and prepared
at all times. It is the NCOs who are
providing the leadership and training
skills needed for our military to
continue to remain strong now and in
the future; and

WHEREAS, the Mississippi National
Guard Non-Commissioned Officers
Association is proud to be the
strongest NCO Association in the
Enlisted Association of the National
Guard of the United States; and

WHEREAS, it is altogether appropriate
that a state flag fly over the State
Capitol in recognition and honor of
all Non-Commissioned Officers and
their families in the Great State of
Mississippi and be placed on display



Mississippi Lt. Gov. Phil Bryant (left) presents Senate Concurrent Resolution 667 to Mississippi National Guard NCO Association President, Sgt. Maj. Aaron "Matt" Martin during the 2009 conference of the NCO Association's conference in Tupelo, Miss., April 17-19.

at the National Guard Museum at
Camp Shelby, Mississippi, in honor
of the service of all Mississippi Non-
Commissioned Officers and their
families:

Auxiliary along with the said state
flag to be placed on display at Camp
Shelby, Mississippi, and made
available to the Capitol Press Corps.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT
RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF
THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
CONCURRING THEREIN, That we
do hereby recognize the service and
dedication of the Non-Commissioned
Officers in the Mississippi National
Guard, designate Friday, April 17,
2009, as "NCO Day in Mississippi"
with a state flag to fly over the New
Capitol Building in recognition and
honor of all Non-Commissioned
Officers and their families, and
join the Governor and Lieutenant
Governor and all citizens in extending
our best wishes to all NCOs and
their families in the Great State of
Mississippi.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,
That this resolution be presented
at ceremonies on April 18, 2009, to
the Mississippi National Guard Non-
Commissioned Officers Association



Post-9/11 GI Bill Transferability Fact Sheet

The following is the official Department of Defense Fact Sheet on Post-9/11 GI Bill Transferability. This fact sheet outlines the proposed policy and is subject to change.

TIP

Be sure to contact the VA for any specific questions about your eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Call them at 1-888-GIBILL-1.

Post-9/11 GI Bill Transferability

While the Post-9/11 GI Bill offers a very generous post-service education benefit, a special provision of the program allows career service members the opportunity to share their education benefits with immediate family members.

Allowing career service members to transfer their GI Bill benefits to family members has long been one of the most requested items among military family readiness and advocacy groups.

The rules for Post-9/11 GI Bill transferability are in the final stages, but have not been signed. The following information represents proposed policy, which is subject to change.

Eligible Individuals

Any member of the Armed Forces (active duty or selected reserve, officer or enlisted) on or after August 1, 2009, who is eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and

- Has at least 6 years of service in the Armed Forces on the date of election and agrees to serve 4 additional years in the Armed Forces from the date of election.
- Has at least 10 years of service in the Armed Forces (active duty and/or selected reserve) on the date of election, is precluded by either standard policy (service or DoD) or statute from committing to 4 additional years, and agrees to serve for the maximum amount of time allowed by such policy or statute, or
- Is or becomes retirement eligible during the period from August 1, 2009, through August 1, 2013. A service member is considered to be retirement eligible if he or she has completed 20 years of active duty or 20 qualifying years of reserve service.
- For those individuals eligible for retirement on August 1, 2009, no additional service is required.
- For those individuals who have an approved retirement date after August 1, 2009, and before July 1, 2010, no additional service is required.
- For those individuals eligible for retirement after August 1, 2009, and before August 1, 2010, 1 year of additional service after approval of transfer is required.
- For those individuals eligible for retirement on or after August 1, 2010, and before August 1, 2011, 2 years of additional service after approval of transfer are required.
- For those individuals eligible for retirement on or after August 1, 2011, and before August 1, 2012, 3 years of additional service after approval of transfer required.

Eligible Family Members

An individual approved to transfer an entitlement to educational assistance under this section may transfer the individual's entitlement to:

- The individual's spouse.
- One or more of the individual's children.
- Any combination of spouse and child.

Continues on next page

- A family member must be enrolled in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS) and be eligible for benefits, at the time of transfer to receive transferred educational benefits.
- A child's subsequent marriage will not affect his or her eligibility to receive the educational benefit; however, after an individual has designated a child as a transferee under this section, the individual retains the right to revoke or modify the transfer at any time.
- A subsequent divorce will not affect the transferee's eligibility to receive educational benefits; however, after an individual has designated a spouse as a transferee under this section, the eligible individual retains the right to revoke or modify the transfer at any time.

Nature of Transfer

An eligible Service member may transfer up to the total months of unused Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, or the entire 36 months if the member has used none.

Family member use of transferred educational benefits is subject to the following:

- Spouse:
 - May start to use the benefit immediately.
 - May use the benefit while the member remains in the Armed Forces or after separation from active duty.
 - Is not eligible for the monthly stipend or books and supplies stipend while the member is serving on active duty.
 - Can use the benefit for up to 15 years after the service member's last separation from active duty.
- Child:
 - May start to use the benefit only after the individual making the transfer has completed at least 10 years of service in the Armed Forces.
 - May use the benefit while the eligible individual remains in the Armed Forces or after separation from active duty.
 - May not use the benefit until he/she has attained a secondary school diploma (or equivalency certificate), or reached 18 years of age.
 - Is entitled to the monthly stipend and books and supplies stipend even though the eligible individual is on active duty.
 - Is not subject to the 15-year delimiting date, but may not use the benefit after reaching 26 years of age.

**For more information about your GI Benefits,
call 601-313-6183 or see your education office.**



High Rollers share ISR expertise with other Guard, Active Duty

Story and Photos by Master Sgt. Tori Windsor,
152nd AW Public Affairs

The Nevada and Mississippi Air Guard have partnered with the active duty Air Force for Project Liberty, a two-year program designed to increase intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities for Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

Project Liberty will train approximately 1,000 students, including pilots and sensor and systems operators in support of ISR operations aboard MC-12 aircraft at the 186th Air Refueling Wing in Meridian, Miss. The Mississippi Guard unit, flying KC-135R Stratotankers, was part of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process and had been scheduled to close in 2011 but the new program could breathe new life into their unit.

The platform is a modified C-12 Huron, a lightweight, twin-turboprop aircraft, designated as MC-12W for Project Liberty. It has a specialized crew of four, including a flight crew of two, and is the Air Force's newest manned ISR platform. The C-12 was previously chosen by U.S. Army for use as intelligence-gathering aircraft.

For Nevada's High Rollers Project Liberty means an expansion of the 152nd Intelligence Squadron's mission. The program allows squadron members to train active duty Airmen for four weeks in Reno on its Scathe View camera system, which is similar to the camera system Airmen will use on the MC-12. The unique Scathe View system includes advanced electro-optical and infrared sensors mounted on the 152nd Airlift Wing's C-130 Hercules. It provides real-time visible and thermal imagery, including full-motion video. A modified, roughly half-size version of the camera system will be used on the MC-12.

The first class consisted of seven Meridian Airmen. Subsequent classes have included a handful of Guard members, but mostly active duty troops retraining into Project Liberty sensor operator positions.

Expertise and experience

with Scathe View, used in combat operations since 2003, made the High Rollers a perfect choice for the new ISR training regimen. The unit was asked to take part in the program in December, moved quickly to set up a training plan for its first class in January, and has the capacity for 104 students in fiscal year 2009. About 40 Airmen at the Reno base, including aircrew, aircraft maintenance, life support and others, are dedicated to the project and are on active duty orders to support the training.

"The war is shifting to ISR," said Senior Master Sgt. Craig Madole, 152nd IS coordinator for Project Liberty, "and using fewer bombs. Our focus is to get this capability operational and to the desert ASAP."

Reno-based C-130 pilot Maj. Allan Renwick, agreed. "The mission is more about supporting the Army guys and providing the best situational awareness to troops on the ground."

Renwick added that Project Liberty has another benefit for the Nevada Air Guard members and their families. "After five years of rotations (deployments), this will keep our guys on active duty at home."

The seven boom operators assigned to the Mississippi refueling wing who made up the first Reno class became instructors for the second phase at their home base in Meridian. Follow-on classes continue the cycle of the four-week course in Reno followed by phase two in Mississippi.

The Nevada training includes classroom instruction three days a week and five C-130 flights. On a recent flight, four of the students took turns at the Scathe View console as a scenario played out on the ground. Nevada intel Airmen acted as both bad guys and friendly forces on the ground.

From the sky instructors Master Sgt. Jeff Best and Staff Sgt. Lewis Dix helped the students learn to read the terrain below as well as with the nuances of controlling the cameras with what looks like a flight stick. With the C-130 at 15,000 feet, the exercise required each student to

locate a suspect vehicle, then observe and report to forces on the ground.

With years of experience in the U.S. Central Command theater of operations, Madole said the training scenarios developed here locally are as realistic as they can make them. From identifying static vehicles on the ground to watching bad guys carrying fake rifles and digging as if planting an improvised explosive device, the



Tech. Sgt. Tim Garrison of the Mississippi Guard's 186th Air Refueling Wing adjusts the camera joystick aboard a NVANG C-130 Scathe View system as part of the four-week training for Project Liberty.

training includes many details the students should be able to discern and pass on to friendly forces.

"We look for sites to set up ground simulations as if in theater," Madole said. Nevada's vast desert environment and mountainous regions, similar to that of Iraq and Afghanistan, add to the realism.

Master Sgt. Glenn Hancock, a student in the initial class, praised the training and looks forward to the coordination between the two Guard units.

"It's been a great working relationship," Hancock said. "We're in this together."

Nevada Air Guard officials hope to continue being part of Project Liberty into the next fiscal year.



COMMAND VIEWS

◆ **By Lt. Col. Joe Hargett,
Commander, 890th Engr Bn**

An important part of commanding a unit includes knowing the organization and making an operational assessment of the unit's capabilities. This assessment is critical to the unit's success in both a training and operational environment. Commanders should assess the resources and leadership at ALL levels to ensure command emphasis is placed on unit shortfalls. In leading an organization, the commander must add value to the organization. Commanders should be technically and tactically proficient. Commanders **MUST** be the Subject Matter Expert for the organizations they command.

Vision for the Organization.

Probably the most important action that the commander can take is to clearly articulate his or her vision to the junior leaders of the organization. This vision must be understood by subordinate leaders. The commander can use multiple venues to accomplish this, including basic leadership forums such as commander's calls, mission briefs, confirmation briefs, and last but not least—direct command involvement in the unit decision support cycle. The most valued opportunity that we have to impact our units is simply spending time with Soldiers while on mission and articulating our vision to the Soldiers at all levels.



NCO dependability. Officers must trust in the capability of the Non-Commissioned Officers and enable the NCOs capacity to guide the unit. The NCO is where the missions will succeed or fail. Trust in the abilities of the Soldiers that the leadership has trained. If the command doesn't trust the unit's NCO abilities, then we have failed as unit Commanders to set conditions for success. Trust subordinate leaders, but verify that their performance is in accordance with command guidance.

Leadership must remain relevant and ready for any contingency. The Commander must stay educated on current doctrine, current tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). Most importantly, the unit leadership must be informed of the requirements and situations associated with the current operational environment. Professional leadership can remain relevant and ready by exploiting one of the most important pillars

of an officer's career—self study! Challenge subordinate leadership using the three pillars of development, with self study the most important of these three. Never stop learning and researching. Today's operational shift generates many challenges for command teams; therefore, leadership must remain educated on battlefield systems technology in order to increase the unit's capabilities whether in a domestic or deployed environment. Know the operating environment, know the people, their culture, and understand both the intended and unintended effects of your unit's actions on the battlefield.

Employ the unit. Each headquarters must receive, analyze, and disseminate clear and concise guidance to subordinate units. Do not just pass information through the unit headquarters without applying some analytical processes to the information or orders. Remember, every commander is charged with accomplishing a mission and must achieve mission success as an end state! However, we must never forget that in doing so, we are simultaneously sustaining the Soldiers so that they are ***Relevant*** and ***Ready*** for the next mission, under the next command team, in the next order of battle, wherever it may be.

NOTE: Lieutenant Colonel Hargett just recently returned from his second deployment in Iraq, and was commander for the 890th Engineer Battalion.

We are simultaneously sustaining the Soldiers so that they are *Relevant* and *Ready* for the next mission, under the next command team . . .



Photos on this page are compliments of Lt. Col. Joe Hargett, and an assigned combat cameraman, taken when Hargett's unit, the 890th Engineer Battalion, was deployed to Iraq in 2008.



First Star . . . First Female General In Mississippi



Story by Sandy Ates, Staff Writer

Photo on this page courtesy of Bob Alexander;
other photos used in this article courtesy of the
Lutz family.

Those who know Catherine Smith Lutz describe her as being beautiful, intelligent, focused, mild-mannered, persevering, dedicated and family-oriented.

“If you really know Cathy Lutz you also know there is little she can’t do. She has been successful in accomplishing several milestones in her military and civilian careers” said former co-worker, Colonel (Ret.) David Buck.

Transporting wounded Sailors following the U.S.S. Cole bombing, commanding a medical unit in Saudi Arabia and even meeting her husband are just a few things Cathy Lutz said she has accomplished during her 29-year career with the Mississippi Air National Guard.

She now adds another hallmark milestone to her career.

In March 2009, she was promoted to the rank of brigadier general, and at the same time made history by becoming the first female general officer in the Mississippi National Guard. Only five of the 82 National Guard general officers are female.

It hasn’t been a fast track for the 53-year old Flora, Miss., native.

Cathy Lutz grew up in Jackson, graduated from Wingfield High School in 1973, and from the University of Southern Mississippi, in 1977, where she earned her bachelor degree in Nursing and a masters degree in Nursing Administration in 1985; she also received her doctorate in Philosophy and Education at the University of Mississippi, Oxford, Miss., in 1998.

She said she learned the value of the nursing profession while reading Civil War history and the role of Clara Barton, the nurse who helped organize the Red Cross in 1881.

Her self-sufficiency was a learned habit and encouraged by parents Marjorie Jaap of Jackson and William Hugh Smith Jr. of Brandon.

“While attending college, I held five part-time jobs. I was a waitress. Worked at a movie theater. Worked as a telephone operator. Anything to help earn some extra money for school,” she said.

After graduating with a nursing degree, she took her first full time job at the then Veterans Administration Medical Center in Jackson, Miss., in



Catherine Smith Lutz (left) joins the Mississippi Air National Guard in Jackson; helping her make a military commitment is recruiter and her former commander, Lt. Col. Bill Wardlaw (Wardlaw provided this photograph).

1978.

The reality of responsibility really came into play at the VA hospital where she would often find she was the only one on duty with a patient load of 40 or more on her floor. “I couldn’t believe they would give me such important responsibilities at 21 years old,” she said.

But life was just starting for Cathy.

She said that her decision to join the military came after a week-long vacation to Panama City, Fla., in 1982.

“I saved money all year to go on that trip with a bunch of girlfriends from college, and blew every cent,” she said. “I’d always wanted to travel, but I figured there had to be a better way. That’s when I considered the Guard.”

She said she still remembers how excited she was the day she drove out to the Air Guard Base to sign on the dotted line. She was commissioned in 1982 as a flight nurse and in 1987 was recommissioned as a Medical Service Corps Officer. She also pursued whatever military education she could graduating from Squadron Officer School (in residence) in 1986, Air Command and Staff College in 1995, and finished up her military education at the Air War College in 2000.

It also wouldn’t be a long wait



Lieutenant Colonel Bill Lutz and Captain Cathy Lutz at the 172nd Airlift Wing, posing in front of an awards show case where Cathy had just been selected Junior Officer of the Year in the late 1980s.

after she joined the 172nd before she signed on another dotted line—a marriage license.

Cathy and William J. Lutz, met while she was playing in a volleyball match on base in 1984. “The first time I saw him, I knew he was the one and I thought I would marry him in a couple of years,” she said. They were married in 1986.

A young pilot, Bill was in the same flying wing as Cathy. “I can remember our first flights together, our missions spread across the country and many into Germany. What impressed me most was not only was she smart and dedicated, she always took care of the people on her crew before taking care



Cathy Lutz is surrounded by Jackson area media following her return home from a rescue mission and evacuation of injured sailors aboard the U.S.S. Cole in 2000 after a terrorist act upon the vessel.

She says one of her most impressive missions was commanding three units of an Air Expeditionary Group medical unit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

“It was the most stressful, but most rewarding job I’ve ever had,” said Lutz. “This was during Operation Southern Watch, and al Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden, was offering rewards for people to destroy rescue vehicles, helicopters or ambulances. We were always on high alert.

Instead of ambulances, we switched to unmarked Suburbans to transport patients.”

When traveling off base, Lutz said she would try to blend in with other Saudi females. This meant wearing a full-length robe, always sitting in the backseat of a vehicle, always walking at least 10 feet behind the males in her traveling group.

Lutz also had the duty of bringing wounded U.S. troops home following the terrorist bombing of the U.S.S. Cole, a Navy destroyer, attacked by terrorists in 2000.

“It was very emotional when you open up the back of the plane and off load patients on stretchers,” Lutz said. “It was very touching to see them reunited with their families in addition to the reception of the public.”

While she no longer worked with wounded patients, she served

as assistant to the commander of the 59th Medical Wing at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, which she said gave her pride in the young men and women who volunteer to serve their country.

“That is where we send all our enlisted for basic training,” Lutz said. “We graduate thousands every Friday, and I got a chance to go to their parades. These were just kids--18, 19-years old. And they had just

completed probably the toughest thing they had never done in their life, something built around discipline and loyalty.”

While in high school, she remembers her brother Hugh who joined the U.S. Army and did not understand his decision. Now with a life fully emerged in the military, she



Cathy Lutz stands by patriotically as a post Desert Storm parade celebration goes on in New York. She and husband, Bill, who earlier took part in a parade in Washington, D.C., made the trip for the pomp and patriotism.

said, “I wish I had realized it at the time, but you live and learn.”

Cathy said her husband Bill is her biggest fan, in helping her move forward in her military career.

“What brought us together was the military,” Bill, a recently retired two-star general, said. “Being retired, I miss wearing the uniform, going on flights, and being the morale booster. I guess I got some of that vicariously through her.”

His military career began much earlier than Cathy’s.

Bill Lutz entered the Air Force after graduating from the Reserve Officer Training Corps at Mississippi State University in 1968. Upon completing pilot training at Webb Air Force Base, Texas, he served combat tours in Laos and Vietnam as a forward air controller. He then served tours instructing air to ground gunnery and air ground operations at the 1st Special Operations Wing, and flew the A-7D for the 355th Fighter Wing, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. He then joined the Mississippi Air National Guard as a pilot in 1979. He commanded a flying squadron, group and wing, and served as chief of staff of the Mississippi Air National Guard. Later he also served as the Air National Guard assistant to the commander, Air Force Materiel Command before assuming final duties as the assistant adjutant general for Air, and commander of the Mississippi Air National Guard. He ended his career as a command pilot with more than 8,000 flying hours including over 900 combat missions and 1950 combat hours.

Bill, retired, owns his own mediation and arbitration service in Canton, while Cathy now serves as special assistant to the Chief Nurse of the U.S. National Guard in Washington, D.C.

They find their relationship unique. Two people with near exact drives and desires, fitting together neatly like a hand in a glove.

“I think that things have a way of working together as far as how you grow up as a child, your education and where you decide to go in life,” Cathy said. “Everything that I have done to this point has prepared me to be a

general.”

Cathy says that any roadblocks to her goals would have been within herself, though Bill exclaimed that those were few and far between.

“She is a very smart, very determined woman,” said Bill with a chuckle. “But she is only a one-star, so she still has some catching up to do.”

With more adoring words he adds, “The thing is, I have always saluted her, and I always will.”



(Above) Maj. Gen. William J. “Bill” Lutz lays a wreath for a Canton Academy patriotic ceremony in 2005. He retired as the assistant adjutant general and commander for the entire Mississippi Air National Guard in 2006, and at one point during his career was the most decorated officer in the Mississippi National Guard.

(Right) With a new star on her cap, Brig. Gen. Catherine S. Lutz walks from the Headquarters, Air National Guard building, with hundreds gathered to greet the first female brigadier general in the history of the Magnolia State.



Pastor Has Special Calling Praying for the Wounded Warriors

By Bryan Davis
Herald Reporter, Madison

Pastor Sam Smith has been around the military all his life.

Growing up in a military family, the institution has always been an important part of his life. It was during Smith's service in the Air Force in the early 1990's where he discovered the most significant part of his life, Jesus Christ.

"I became a Christian in the Air Force," explained Smith. "A guy shared the Lord with me in a laundry room at a hotel in Ankara, Turkey. I had been going to church for a while, but that was the first time I really understood the Gospel."

Smith's father was in the Air Force which made him well traveled from an early age.

"I've lived all over the country from California, Missouri to Florida," Smith said.

Smith graduated from high school while the family was living in Montgomery, Ala., where his parents still reside.

"I was enlisted in the Air Force after that," Smith said. "I lived in the Republic of Turkey for a year and a half."

Smith was not in Turkey long before he was converted to Christianity.

After four years in the military, Smith returned to Alabama to attend Auburn University.

During this time he met his wife, Jodi.

I met my wife at a college ministry," Smith said.

He and Jodi were married in 1992.

They now have four kids together, Collin, Kaitlynn, Christopher and Kaebrie.



In 1995, Smith answered the call to ministry by starting seminary at Westminster in California.

After a couple of years, Smith took a break to go to work at a church in Montgomery. After an extended internship as a youth pastor in Alabama, Smith went back to school at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson.

He graduated in 2002, and began his full time ministry at First Presbyterian Church in Louisville. It wasn't long before Smith received the calling to return to his roots in the military.

"I had a real desire to go back into the military," Smith said. "I wanted to do the Air Force chaplain thing. I became a Christian in the Air Force, and it was kind of important for me to go back, especially with the war going on, to be part of ministering."

Smith would spend the next three and a half years of his life as an Air Force chaplain.

Today, Smith still remains a member of the National Guard, stationed with the 172nd Airlift Wing in Jackson as a chaplain.

"Their primary mission is that they do medivac flights out of Iraq and Afghanistan," Smith said of his squadron. "I want to go and minister to wounded Soldiers coming out of Iraq and Afghanistan."

Smith's main calling is still ministering a church here in the states.

In November, the Smith family came to Yazoo City to join the family at First Presbyterian.

"First Presbyterian Church has a long history of preaching the gospel," Smith said of the body which was founded in 1841. "It was a long history of strong biblical teaching in the community."

Smith's goal is to continue to hold forth the Gospel and to reach out."

"Stay anchored to the past," Smith said of his main objective. "We do that via our confessions. We have to maintain a clear and fresh understanding of who we are, and try not to get too far away from our history and our roots. At the same time we want the gospel message to be relevant for people living in the 21st century."

For the Smiths, who have children ranging in ages from 4 to 12 years old, First Presbyterian is a good fit.

"One of the unique things about this church is that we have young families, families that are in



Pastor Sam Smith with his family at First Presbyterian Church in Yazoo City, Mississippi. Photo taken from church's website.

the middle of life, older couples, widows and widowers," Smith said. "You see the whole span of life in a congregation like this. Me and my family appreciate that."

The Smith children are very active in the church community as well as the community as a whole, considering their education past.

"We home school," Smith said. "For us it's not an attempt to not be a part of the community."

The Smith's decision to home school came about when Collin was about to enter kindergarten.

"Collin, my oldest is a type 1 diabetic," explained Smith. "Because of the regular shots and the insulin and our desire to be very aggressive with his care, we decided to keep him at home. We had thought about home schooling, but that really moved us in that direction."

Smith's adult life has always been hectic, going back and forth between his ministry abroad and his home

church.

"It became something that is good for our family," Smith said. "I don't think everyone needs to home school. I'm not a zealot for everybody having to do it that way. It fits our lifestyle and the way we like to be flexible with things, and our kids are thriving at it."

Collin has not only overcome the adversity of Type 1 diabetes, which is incurable, he is active in multiple sports including baseball, basketball, hockey and soccer.

In school, he is doing ninth grade math in the sixth grade.

Living with Type 1 diabetes, Collin has had to grow up faster than most kids, learning the responsibilities of taking care of himself.

"He manages his day to day care by himself, Smith said. "He counts carbohydrates and takes care of his insulin, and he does a really good job. His blood sugar numbers are very good and he is very responsible."

Collin takes his illness very

seriously, and last April he became active in the fight against diabetes.

Jodi and Collin went to Washington with the American Diabetes Association, and he was a part of lobbying senators and representatives from Mississippi and Idaho.

"It was a unique opportunity for him to be selected for that," Smith said. "He made sure the senators understood the disease so that they could continue a high level of funding for research."

While the Yazoo community has much to offer the Smiths, the young family brings a wealth of knowledge, and experience to the people as well as a living example of perseverance.

"Magnolia Warrior 2009"

Photos and Story by Sgt. Charles Brice, Staff Writer

The 238th Air Support Operations Squadron (ASOS) acted as host coordinator and planner for a four-day joint force close air support exercise at the Camp Shelby Joint Force Training Center near Hattiesburg, Miss.

Magnolia Warrior 2009 is a continuing effort to join numerous units in a synergistic joint force environment.

The Mississippi National Guard's 155th Brigade Combat Team cosponsored the event. It features a number of flying and ground battle elements from other units in the state of Mississippi; along with other participants from the southeastern region of the United States.

"The exercise is this unit's attempt at developing, hosting, and coordinating a joint force, multi-state, multi-unit event that can be done effectively in a four-day period without requiring additional man days or training dollars," said Lt. Col. John "Duke" Parrett of Pascagoula, Miss., and a member of the 238th ASOS, based in Meridian, Miss.

"The exercise included; preparation of teams and material (Humvees, etc) for insertion into the battle space by a number of aerial elements, along with Tactical Air Control Party teams with inserted Army Scout team members by Army CH-47 helicopter and a C-17 Globemaster aircraft," said Parrett.

All of these combined elements created a robust and dynamic environment, which lead to successful artillery and bombs on call and on target.

"We provided the necessary air assets, along with the Army ground assets to prevent fratricide from friendly fire," said Master Sgt. Brian Rittenhouse, of Meridian, Miss., a Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) in the 238th ASOS.

Some of the tools ranged from Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) (E-8 Bombers) by Close Air Support

aircraft (B-52) Bomber from Barksdale Air Force Base, Bossier City, La. (T-38) from AFB Columbus, MS and (F-16 Fighter Jets) from Montgomery, Ala. Aerial refueling support was proctored by aircraft (KC-135) from Meridian, Miss. Additional ground elements from the 155th BCT provided Tactical Operations Center support (to include Intel and Fire Support Cells).

"We also have our JTACs on the ground with the Soldiers on the front lines of the battle," Rittenhouse said. "JTACs are qualified military service members who, from a forward position, direct the action of combat aircraft engaged in close air support and other offensive air operations."

"The team is trying to prevent the JTACs from accomplishing their jobs by playing the role of the enemy in preventing them from discovering the necessary information in order to call in the close air support needed to take out the weapons cache and possible major enemy targets," he said. "The Air Force element can bring a lot of force and power to the fight in a much needed support role to the Army."

The exercises are constructed in such a way, that if any individual participating agency drops out, training for all remaining participants can still be accomplished.

Coordination between ground and aerial fire support resources originates in the Tactical Operation Center (TOC) and is maintained with both safety and realistic goals in mind. The joint forces can use the results of these exercises to further refine tactics, techniques, and procedures for future exercise and real world missions.

"With the combined experience of the squadron, at least every JTACs been deployed at lease once, either to Afghanistan or Iraq," said Lt. Col Bruce Strickland commander of the 238th ASOS. "The wealth of experience within the squadron, plus the scenarios we conducted, helps refine our planning, deployment and execution of the mission under stress, so in actual combat we can perform as we should."



Staff. Sgt. Frank Monterrosa and Staff. Sgt. Lewis Mitchell, team up to gather intelligence on a suspected weapons cache and enemy activity in the area during Magnolia Warrior 2009. (Photo by Sgt. Charles Brice, 102D MPAD)



Staff Sgt. Frank Monterrosa searches enemy forces during Magnolia Warrior 2009 at Camp Shelby. (Photo by Sgt. Charles Brice, 102D MPAD)



From the left, Staff. Sgt. Frank Monterrosa and Staff. Sgt. Lewis Mitchell call in close air support during the exercise. (Photo by Sgt. Charles Brice, 102D MPAD)



The team completes the mission and calls in an extraction from a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter. (Photo by Sgt. Charles Brice, 102D MPAD)



(Left) Lt. Col. Bruce Strickland commander of the 238th ASOS issues orders during a Troops in Contact scenario during Magnolia Warrior 2009. (Photo by Sgt. Charles Brice, 102D MPAD)

BACKTRACK

By Sandy Ates, Staff Writer

With most Americans hoping troops would be coming home from Iraq before 2010, other insurgency operations in the region have forced military officials to keep an eye on Iraq, while expanding military operations in other countries such as Afghanistan.

The last time members of the 155th Brigade Combat Team (BCT) deployed to Iraq (2005), they entered into the thick of fighting, losing 14 of its warriors along with Soldiers from other states' units attached to the 155th. This time the environment will be quite different—less deadly and dangerous.

"They are well trained and ready to go," said 155th Brigade Combat Team (BCT) commander, Colonel William "Bill" Glasgow to a large crowd gathered for the 'Farewell Ceremony' at Camp Shelby, Miss., June 9.

Glasgow will lead 3,200 Soldiers back to Iraq to carry out a security mission, which was quite different from their first deployment in Iraq when the 155 BCT carried out a full spectrum of operations.

Many members of the 155th BCT are new, but still quite a few of the top leaders are battle-hardened and familiar with terrain, weather, people and cultures in Iraq. The experience, according to Glasgow will serve to strengthen the entire BCT.

Glasgow served with the 155th during it's first deployment under the leadership of Brig. Gen. Augustus L. Collins in 2005.

Most Soldiers say they are more prepared and know what to expect this time around. They have completed extensive training at Camp Shelby Joint Force Training Center over the past several months, and say like any other person who has seen combat, that they hope they don't see it again but that they won't back down if it presents itself.

"The people of Mississippi are very proud of you and so are we," Gov. Haley Barbour told the troops at the farewell. "This unit has a long history of service to our nation and to our state," he said, paying tribute also to the Soldiers in the brigade from Kentucky, Washington, D.C., and Ohio.

Barbour told the troops that their efforts will help the country win the war on terror.

"All Mississippians admire the way you have responded without hesitation," Barbour said.

Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman Jr., adjutant general Mississippi National Guard, reminded the Soldiers of his awareness of their bravery and valor during their first deployment, and noted the number of awards earned by unit Soldiers.

"I know that when you go into harm's way, you'll make the right decision at the right time," Freeman said, but reminding brigade leaders to lead from the front and "take care of your Soldiers."

TO IRAQ



Colonel William Glasgow is flocked by reporters upon the conclusion of the June 9, Farewell Ceremony for the 155th Brigade Combat Team at the Camp Shelby Joint Force Training Center near Hattiesburg, Miss. Glasgow will command about 3200 Soldiers during the 155th BCT deployment to Iraq.

All Photos by
Sgt. Charles Brice,
102nd MPAD



Not just a piece of cloth anymore

The Mississippi National Guard Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

“That is what the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is all about not just the service person, not just the family, but the whole unit that makes up the Mississippi National Guard.”

When most people see a yellow ribbon they remember seeing them tied around trees during the first Gulf War. Some people think of the United States Cavalry or John Wayne riding across some lonesome valley floor as his love interest, wearing a yellow ribbon and bonnet, watches him go. A yellow ribbon has been and done many things: it signifies prayers for a Soldier at war, it signifies part of our military lineage, and it represents separation, longing, love and a variety of emotions everyone in the Mississippi National Guard has experienced as we continue to fight in Afghanistan, Iraq, and here in Mississippi. Yes, I said Mississippi.

You weren't aware we were fighting here in Mississippi?! Well we are. For every man or woman deployed there is a little boy, a wife, a boyfriend, a mentor, a teammate, or a friend that is waging the war of filling that person's roll, carrying their weight, or simply missing them while they are gone. Families left behind during deployment don't suffer mortar attacks, go on night raids, or spend tense hours in a command center, but they do suffer broken water pipes, midnight trips to the emergency room, and the burden of wondering how their

loved one is doing overseas.

“That is what the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is all about: not just the service person, not just the family, but the whole unit that makes up the Mississippi National Guard,” said Chaplain (CPT) Dwayne Kelly, a staff member of the MSNG Yellow Ribbon Program. “Everyone that serves will tell you they couldn't do it without the support, understanding, and love of their family and friends, so they are included in this concept of reintegration and a united front to tackle the difficult issues that come along with deployments.”

In the summer of 2008, Congress passed into law the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008. Within that document, Section 582 took the image of a yellow ribbon tied around a tree and movies of the noble John Wayne riding across a prairie and put them in modern day terms, for a modern day military. A yellow ribbon today has evolved from a piece of cloth into a concept. This concept is bigger than any John Wayne movie, goes beyond honoring and simply praying for our deployed service personnel, and does far more than just wait for their safe return.

“The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is a one stop shop for services, training,

and resources to help, not only our service men and women, but their families as they go through the entire life cycle of a deployment,” explains Maj. Joe Hardman, State Program Director for the Mississippi Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program takes a proactive attitude when dealing with the numerous deployments many service members have endured since 9/11. Instead of simply tying a ribbon around a tree or getting finances in order before you leave, families can now take advantage of resources such as: Tricare health systems, legal assistance, contacts for counseling, how to deal with stress, wills, and powers of attorney. Families are an integral part of the Yellow Ribbon Program and are strongly encouraged to come to all events. In many cases, when the family lives over 50 miles from the venue location, they are eligible for reimbursement of their gas, food, and lodging expenses spent to attend the event. The family is literally put on military orders and then is reimbursed on an individual travel order filled out at the event. All that is needed is hotel receipts.

All of this training and preparation before a unit deploys

allows the unit to focus on the mission at hand, knowing the families have the tools and resources they need back home. While the unit is gone, the Family Program staff of the MSNG hosts events to aid spouses and families with issues they face while their service member is gone. Once the unit returns, the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration really kicks in as the celebration of the safe return to Mississippi is augmented, not with just a parade or party but, with assistance in the form of counseling, finding a job, how to use veteran benefits, and how to recognize symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder.

“The Yellow Ribbon Program isn’t about switching quickly from being a citizen to a service member and then from deploying to being back in Mississippi like nothing ever happened. This is a process that assists service members and families with preparation for deployment and starting a new chapter in their lives, reunited and prepared, once the unit is back from deployment,” explained Chaplain (Ret.) Bobby Cook, a member of the MSNG Yellow Ribbon Program staff.

The MSNG Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program has been up and running since early Fall of 2008. To date the program staff has hosted over 20 weekend events and thousands of families have been educated on resources, contacts, and ways to better their lives and assist their service member in reintegrating back into life as a citizen of Mississippi. Units and families have received valuable training on what to expect during their separation, how to utilize benefits, and tools to quickly move on with life after deployment. The Yellow Ribbon events have been hosted in venues such as the Bancorp South Convention Center in Tupelo, Bass Pro Shop

in Pearl, the Mid-South Convention Center in Tunica, the Natchez Convention Center, and even local high schools. Events are catered and often comedians or bands have played for entertainment during lunch. A rock climbing wall, children’s arts and crafts, youth activities, and location specific events, such as museums and fishing, are often integrated into the childcare activities to allow parents to focus on each other and the information, resources, and interaction designed for them.

So how does this program work?

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is broken down into 3 main phases: before, during, and after deployment events. This is a summary of what occurs at each event, what to expect at each event, and who should attend.

Phase 1: Pre-Deployment Snapshot

The goal of the Pre-Deployment Yellow Ribbon Event is to educate the family, unit, and individual service member on what resources they can use and what they can expect while the unit is deployed. The initial alert and pre deployment mobilization phase is a stressful time for everyone. Service members are worried about leaving families behind, worried about leaving jobs, and deploying into harm’s way while families are concerned with the void that will be left when their Soldier or Airman leaves. Questions about finances, being away from their service member, and wondering what the service member will be doing are just a few of the issues family members face. The Pre-deployment briefs and assistance offered by the MSARNG Yellow Ribbon Program are a huge help

to the unit, family, and individual service member.

These events are typically held at a conference center, hotel, or school close to the unit armory over a weekend. Service members, spouses, parents, and children are all strongly encouraged to attend. These events consist of representatives from the State Family Programs Office, Chaplains, Tricare, Veterans Affairs/Veterans Center, Military One Source, and a Judge Advocate General who give small presentations and are on site all day to help with paper work, questions, and assisting the unit and family in any way possible with the upcoming deployment.

Phase 2: Deployment Snapshot

Once a unit has deployed the Yellow Ribbon deployed events are a chance for the families and rear detachment Soldiers to gather for a 1 day event much like the Pre-Deployment event. Representatives from all the agencies available to military families are present to assist with pay issues, legal issues, and education benefits just to name a few. These organizations and representatives are available throughout the deployment cycle, but these events are a chance for families to regroup after adjusting to the unit being gone and get assistance for any issue or problem they might have.

The second event, the Family Reunion and Reintegration Brief, is done within 60 days of the unit returning. This event will focus on how to prepare families for the reunion and give them resources for a smooth reintegration of the service member and family. The focus is on the effects of combat stress and how to recognize the signs, understand and help your service member, and seek help if it is needed.

Snapshot – 3 Parts



A. The first phase is the 30 day post deployment event. This event focuses on allowing the unit to get together, with their families, and reconnect. (Typically most service members will have at least 30 days leave to take as soon as they return from overseas. This is a good opportunity for them to visit.) This event focuses on connecting the service members and families with providers in Mississippi that can help them in overcoming the challenges of reintegration. The focus is on legal issues, drug use, safety, veteran benefits, and enrolling the Soldier's in the Veterans Administration.



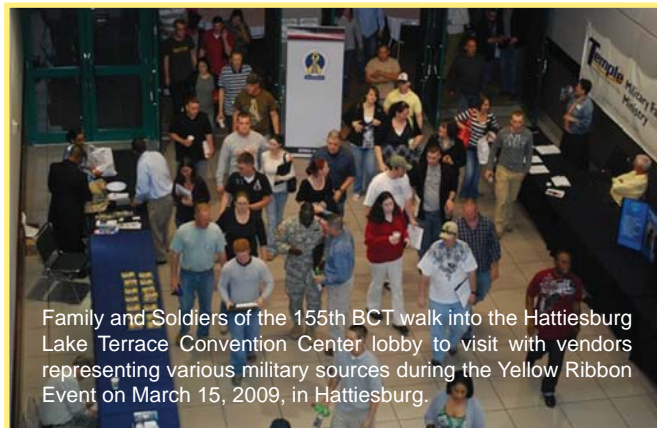
B. The second phase is a 60 day post deployment event. This event focuses on getting service members and families together with the service providers they may need for reintegration. This event will consist of one on one time with counselors, financial advisors, assistance with job placements/ applications, and the mental health of service members who are dealing with combat stress factors.



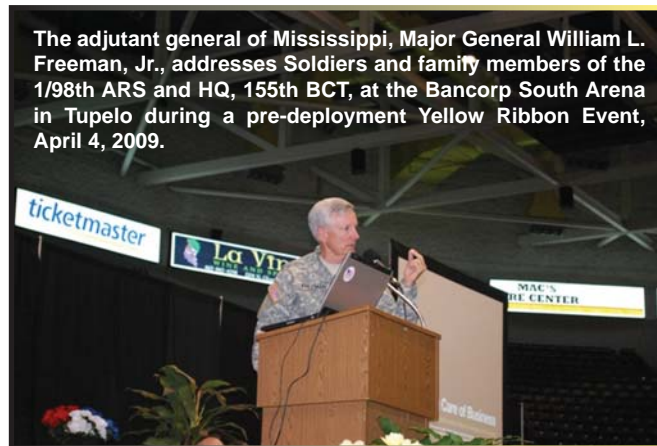
C. The third phase is a 90 day post deployment event. This event is for the unit to conduct a thorough mental and physical health assessment of each service member. This is the only event where family is not allowed to attend.



Members of the 155th Brigade Combat Team wait on a briefing to start March 15, 2009, at their pre-deployment Yellow Ribbon Event at the Hattiesburg Lake Terrace Convention Center in Hattiesburg.



Family and Soldiers of the 155th BCT walk into the Hattiesburg Lake Terrace Convention Center lobby to visit with vendors representing various military sources during the Yellow Ribbon Event on March 15, 2009, in Hattiesburg.



The adjutant general of Mississippi, Major General William L. Freeman, Jr., addresses Soldiers and family members of the 1/98th ARS and HQ, 155th BCT, at the Bancorp South Arena in Tupelo during a pre-deployment Yellow Ribbon Event, April 4, 2009.



A wife and daughter pose for a picture during a pre-deployment Yellow Ribbon Event at the Bancorp South Arena in Tupelo April 4.

What they are saying—

The following are anonymous quotes from service members and family members who have filled out a survey at the end of a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Event.

1. "I think it was a wonderful event and is very important. I just wish I could get a recording of this event so I could show my family and fiancée because they were not able to make it. I would pay for them to receive this information."
2. "This information was very helpful and all this stuff is something Soldiers and families should pay attention to, even if it doesn't concern them now, it will someday."
3. "I am just glad we have people like all of you to help us take care and take into consideration what we have to face to help our loved ones. I just want to say thank you for everything!"
4. "This program is great! It helped me and my family tremendously. So thanks for all your help and support and continue the good work because it really helps and provided a sense of peace as far as the family is concerned."
5. "We were very impressed with everything. The lunches were really nice and the childcare was excellent. I enjoyed the worship service and all the information that was put out."
6. "This is very informative and needed. I am glad to see the military doing this. Thank you for the investment in our families."

New Resource for Guard Members and Their Families: Director of Psychological Health

We all have daily life concerns: marital issues, family time management, parental responsibilities, stress or even depression and anxiety. But, there is no need for Guard members or their families to deal with these issues alone. The Mississippi National Guard has hired a Director of Psychological Health who is trained to listen to your particular needs.

I am Jessica Cole, a Licensed Professional Counselor, who has years of experience and a great level of respect for military members. I provide assessment and therapeutic case management to make sure the Soldier or Airman and family have the tools and resources they need to maintain a healthy life.

When service members or their families are experiencing problems, it may be the result or symptom of another issue. I help them to recognize the difference. I also help educate and normalize some of the symptoms guard members and their families may be dealing with.

Stress can come from many different sources. Deployment in times of conflict isn't the only way a Soldier or their family can be adversely affected by high levels of stress. A low level chronic stress can occur when a service member is continuously trained to be prepared for deployment. When a person acquires that much training and effort, and then in 20 years it's over (retirement), this can cause a certain level of stress as well.

Service members and their families may contact me directly to discuss these issues. This is confidential. (There are a few limits to confidentiality that I will go over before beginning any conversation- no surprises!) After discussing, if appropriate, I can assist in making referrals. My hope is to be another part of the tool box, to ensure overall readiness, whether in combat, at a civilian job, or at home.

I am available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to any service or family member who is in need of assistance. For help with leadership training and consultation, grief and loss, stress management, assessments and other services, contact me:

Jessica Cole, LPC
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jessicacolepc@gmail.com

Military Family Life Consultant

The Military Family Life Consultant which is also known as MFLC partners with and augments activities of Service Family Centers, Guard and Reserve programs (including Inter-Service Family Assistance Committees), unit family support staff officers, other programs and services to build coalitions with Federal, State, and local resources as well as non-profit organizations to support Active Duty, Guard and Reserve families. The services provided are direct short-term, non-medical, solution-focused counseling services to individuals, couples and families, and groups for situations resulting from commonly occurring life circumstances such as parenting, relationship conflicts, stress, personal loss, and deployments as well as reunions. MFLCs may also provide on-site, mobile, and/or telephonic non-medical problem solving counseling to families when other resources are not available. When appropriate, referrals to military and community resources according to the needs of families and service members will be made. The MFLC travels throughout the state to meet with families and unit family support staff to assess needs and provide or arrange for counseling services. Additionally the Child and Youth MFLC reaches out to families with children to conduct non-medical needs assessments and provide supportive, non-medical counseling services for families/parents. Child and Youth MFLCs also collaborate with their state's education department to provide information on cycles of deployment as well as military impact on children. MFLCs are Masters and Doctorate level mental health professionals. They are mandated reporters of child abuse, domestic abuse, and duty to warn situations. All other services are otherwise confidential and private.

Kerry Johnson, Psy.D., LPC is the Military Family Life Consultant for the state of Mississippi which is also part of the Joint Force Support Assistance Program located at Joint Force Headquarters in Family Programs.

For more information send an email to: Kerry.C.Johnson@Healthnet.com

Back around the world

Photos and Story by Sandy Ates, Staff Writer

“I couldn’t believe my eyes,” said the Soldier, convinced he was seeing a mirage of someone he had befriended in a far-off land.

“It wasn’t a mirage,” Sergeant First Class Kevin Conner said about an Afghanistan native he and other members of his Army National Guard unit had met years earlier while serving in Afghanistan. “It was a happy moment, for both him and me when we happened to find each other in the Post Exchange (PX) at Camp Shelby. I couldn’t wait to tell the others in my unit about finding our long lost friend.

A reunion was staged as soon as others from Conner’s unit, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 198th Armored Cavalry, heard that their former Afghanistan interpreter (Soldiers refer to him as Nas) was in America—at Camp Shelby.

“Actually, Nas was more than any working friend, he actually saved our lives, many times,” said Specialist Mark Beck of Grenada.



Mississippi Army National Guardsmen from Company B, 2nd Bn, 198th Combined Arms Battalion, headquartered in Greenwood, discuss their former Afghanistan interpreter and friend from a 2005 deployment and whom they again met up with recently at the Camp Shelby Post Exchange. They are from left Specialist Mark Beck, Grenada, Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Conner, Starkville, Staff Sgt. Bobby Mullen of Morgan City, Miss. and Sgt. Jonathan Parks of Grenada. Photo by Sandy Ates.

In October 2005, units of the 155th Brigade Combat Team were mobilized in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, however, one unit of the team, Co. B, 2nd Battalion, 114th Field Artillery, was sent to Afghanistan and when they arrived, were assigned native interpreters. Nas was assigned to Sgt. 1st Class Conner’s group of Soldiers.

“Nas was a very funny guy. He was quite young and acted very boyishly prankish at times, but when the bullets began flying, he’s the one you wanted to be with,” Conner’s Soldiers said of their body guard, interpreter and friend.

“We’d have to constantly remind Nas to wear his helmet or other protective gear,” added Sergeant Jonathan Parks of Grenada, and then laughing. “We lived together did everything together; he gave us 24-hour service like a true brother would.”

The group said Nas repeatedly told them that he wanted to come to the United States and be an American citizen, but didn’t know how or if he could since he was a citizen of Afghanistan.

“It was hard leaving Nas behind when we redeployed with the 155th BCT in 2005,” said Conner. “Nas, which was just a short title to his ethnic name and a nickname we gave him, was one sad friend, and really wanted to come back with us.”

When the 155th BCT redeployed, there was an immediate restructure and the 114th FA Battalion was redesignated the 2nd Bn, 198th Armored Cavalry.

Nas, who became a citizen of the United States, joined the Army National Guard and became a member of the 108th Armored Cavalry headquartered in Georgia. Nas, and others of his unit will be attached to the 155th BCT when the entire brigade deploys in June 2009. His unit was going through train-up when Conner met up with him in the PX.

Nas will assume interpreter duties while the 155th BCT is deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and they all intend to get together and get reacquainted again.

“It is such a great opportunity to work alongside some of the people from other countries and cultures, you just learn so much more about the world around you,” noted Conners, as an after-thought to saying good-bye to Nas at Camp Shelby. “I’m glad we had the experience of having Nas as a good friend, he seemed just like part of our

Guard family and we entrusted our lives to him and his to us.”

Author’s Note: We are unable to provide photographs or full name and details for Nas because of extreme security to protect his family who are still living in Afghanistan.

D-Day VET: NO HERO HERE



Pfc. Charles W. Eubanks stands beside his WWII jeep during operations in Europe. He was a driver with the 29th Infantry Division's, Company B, 116th Infantry Battalion.

By Sandy Ates, Staff Writer

Charles William Eubanks a resident of West Point, Miss., wants to be remembered—not as a hero, but as a survivor of D-Day.

“Forget about what you saw on *“Saving Private Ryan,”* the film footage shown at Omaha Beach was taken from an airplane,” said the 86-year old World War II Army veteran. “It was much worse from our level, the Nazis totally had us pinned down in the sand, all the while, blood, human flesh, body parts, and metal were *raining* down on our Soldiers lucky enough to be alive. We were on our bellies from the time we left the boats (PT) until the time we finally took our objective.”

Eubanks, a native of Troy, Miss., is a decorated Army veteran who survived both the Normandy invasion and Battle of the Bulge.

“I survived because of two things,” he explained, “Divine intervention and the training at Camp Van Dorn. That is why I am a survivor

of the worst battle that there’s ever been. If we hadn’t been successful June 6, 1944, Americans would be speaking German right now.”

He remembers all too well that others were not so lucky on June 6, 1944.

Joining the War Effort

A junior in high school at Pontotoc when Pearl Harbor was bombed, Eubanks recalled how he and friends talked about the war.

“We boys knew we were going to fight,” he said. “But we had discussions among ourselves as to whether we were going to fight for our country, for the politicians, or for the flag. But everybody knew we would fight—the world was in turmoil.”

Eubanks would not join the U.S. Army until Sept. 1943, at the age of 20.

“In the fall of 1943,” he said, “I went to a training school in Tupelo and was trained for factory work. I

then went to Bristol, Connecticut, and worked for \$325 a month as a copper plater, more money than a country boy ever had.”

By this time, the recruiting offices had closed and everybody, including volunteers, went into the military and naval forces through the draft.

“But I didn’t feel right about not going to war, my brother was already serving and most of my friends, too, and I felt it was my time to go, so I volunteered for the draft,” Eubanks said, noting that doing so was something his parents wouldn’t question. “At home, we were told children were seen and not heard in those days, it wasn’t necessary to get permission for me to join the Army.”

“I should have listened to my employer,” Eubanks joked. “He told

*Continues on the
next page.*



(Above) Charles W. Eubanks and wife, Cynthia, share 50 years of bliss. (Right) Cynthia James who later became Eubanks' wife, was a nurse's aid to Eubanks when he was wounded in France. (Below) The Eubanks family.



me he could defer me three times, and when I got into the thick of that hell on earth, I wished I'd listened to him."

Eubanks remembered boarding a school bus and heading to Camp Shelby, near Hattiesburg, Miss., where he was inducted into the United States Army.

The veteran remembers one of the draftees at Camp Shelby taunting training officials.

"Jessie Dearing said, 'you don't need to train us: We've been shootin' squirrels since we were six or seven years old. We can shoot those Germans just as good without training,' and he did."

Eubanks left Camp Shelby and headed for boot camp at Camp Van Dorn in South Mississippi, training with the 63rd Infantry Division.

"We were treated like animals during boot camp. For two weeks, we were 'caged' and purposely driven to think nothing of ourselves, and were taught to keep moving forward," said Eubanks pausing, and raising a withered index finger upwards. "That's how we were trained."

After basic training, Eubanks shipped out from New Jersey and arrived in Liverpool, England, where the war was already in swing.

"We were all so young," he said. "So many of us were uneducated Southern boys, but we knew enough to know it was going to be bad."

From High School to Boot Camp from Stateside to Channel side

After arriving in Liverpool, he became part of the 29th Division and assigned as a first scout.

Eubanks said the first scout is the man who goes out first for about 20 or 30 feet when the

troops are on patrol, and recalling he was often able to pass through enemy lines because Germans were waiting for the Army officers who would come behind him.

On the morning of June 6, 1944, Eubanks was among the 150,000 Soldiers who stormed Normandy's beaches. At three in the morning Eubanks said, "They gave us a back pack and dropped us out. I couldn't swim and I don't know how I made it."

"We were in water over our heads and a lot of the Soldiers drown before reaching the beach," said Eubanks, adding, "The Germans did not intend for the allies to get to the beach (Omaha Beach), they had complete control of the area. On the beach Soldiers found land mines, mortars, small arms fire—the Germans were pretty smart people."

After visiting Normandy years later, Eubanks said of that day, "It was the biggest resistance Germany had. They (Germany) were the most prepared army there was, they had big concrete and steel bunkers, and even today, those same bunkers are as good now as they were in 1944."

He talked a great deal about the American military leadership of those days—the good and the bad.

Remembering some words Patton shared with the troops, Eubanks heard Patton saying: "You old foot Soldiers is the sorriest you could be unless you win this war". Patton also told troops they were bought and paid for by Uncle Sam. "We feed you, clothe you, and give you guns and you're going to fight!"

Eubanks who learned to 'move forward' in basic training, said the words rang clearer when spoken by the notorious General George Patton, "If a Soldier gets hit and you know you're going to die, hold up your rifle and let

another Soldier get it. It's hard to get another rifle, but it's easy to get more dog faces (Patton's nickname for the Soldiers)."

He served under Patton for about two weeks before reassignment under the command of General Omar Bradley, who the young private first class described as a Christian man and a better replacement to Patton. "Patton low graded us to get us to fight. He played on your mind, but it seemed to work because we won the war, but General Bradley was a Soldier's Soldier." Bradley would later go on to become a U.S. Army Chief of Staff and a Five Star General.

Still under Patton's command, Eubanks said that on June 11, five days after the landing, he and other Soldiers dug in at the hedgerows. A German reconnaissance plane flew just above them, the pilot searching

hospitalized in England. The Army, however, would not give her details about the nature of his wounds.

Shrapnel remained in the wound to his left leg, but he learned to walk again with the help of a young nurse's aid at the hospital, 17-year-old Cynthia James, who lived in nearby Birmingham, England.

"The best thing about the war was meeting my wife, the moment I met her in the park one day, I knew that I was going to marry her," Eubanks said, with a large smile and twinkle still in his eye after more than 57 years of marriage.

Eubanks believes the attention of the lovely Welsh nurse's aid had just as much to do with his speedy recovery as the treatment received by doctors. With the war still very much in progress, the same war that brought the two together also separated them.

In the spring of '46, Eubanks sailed back to America, spent two weeks mustering out at Camp Shelby, and took the bus north towards home.

He arrived home in Pontotoc unannounced, his mother who two years earlier thought she had lost him, now had him home for good after two years, nine months and 13 days. She also learned that he had married (March 1946) the sweet young nurse's aid that had brought about a quick recovery for him.

He returned to England to be with her until her country clearances had been approved, and then he returned home to Pontotoc. Traveling from Birmingham, England, to Birmingham, Alabama, she arrived in 1947 and he was waiting there for her.

"She was the best thing that came from my service during World War II," says Eubanks, resting peacefully in the kitchen chair at their home in West Point. "Then we added three beautiful children, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Yes. Life has been very good after all those years of marriage." (Mrs. Cynthia Eubanks passed away August 5, 2004)

Daughter, Annie, says he fills his life now appreciating the family pictures and military awards and decorations. Pictures are everywhere, humanity mixed with inhumanity, real life, and real war. "It wasn't until Mother passed away that he has really started talking about his military service and World War II experiences," she said with deep admiration in her voice.

"On Memorial Day we have a ceremony here to remember the boys from counties like Pontotoc and small communities in the surrounding area. They were behind a plow one day, hunkered down behind a tank the next," says Eubanks. "Those with whom I fought alongside, few returned home, but I think about them every day. The boys from the 29th hunkered down, running behind tanks across Europe, nearly 20,000 of them getting killed, teenagers saving the world, aching for their mothers."

He has many medals, certificates and citations to prove his heroism—the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, still the first thing Charles W. Eubanks tells visitors who see the small museum in his modest West Point home, is that he is not a hero, but a mere survivor of D-Day, because the real heroes never made it back home.

Coming Home A Survivor

Released from the hospital in October 1944, Eubanks was sent back across the channel. The Battle of the Bulge would be Hitler's last great offensive. For one two-week span, Eubanks says, his bunch, which belonged to Gen. Omar Bradley,

was loaned out to George Patton's Third Army for the drive to Berlin.

"Central Europe was bad," he said. "If Hitler hadn't lost his mind we wouldn't have won. But, by the time we got to Berlin, the city had been carved into four pieces." Eubanks said he spent about three months of occupational duty in Berlin after the Bulge and learned to despise the Russians almost as much as he did Hitler.

"The Russians wanted to destroy Berlin, even though the war was over," recalls Eubanks. "The Russians didn't care about human life—they killed children and raped old people; they wanted Berlin destroyed and they almost did."

He was glad to learn his old friend from Camp Shelby made good on his promise as a veteran squirrel hunter.

"Dearing would go out alone at night and stalk Germans. He hunted them just like he did those squirrels—shot them out of bell towers and places like that."



Charles Eubanks (circled) is inducted into the Army at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, near Hattiesburg, for World War II.

for his landing strip under darkness. "All down the line, we told our boys not to fire on the plane because it was a trap set by the Germans," Eubanks explained. "One foolish Soldier took a potshot at the plane and when the pilot saw the light, he laid a strip of bombs right on top of us." Eubanks and many other wounded Soldiers were evacuated to a hospital near Coventry, England.

"The Red Cross broke the news to my mother that I was missing in action, and the Army sent her my dog tags, my watch, and a copy of the New Testament that we were given in basic training," Eubanks chuckled. "All the while I was recuperating at the hospital in England."

A letter from the War Department arrived for Mrs. Louise Eubanks 5 July 1944, expressing the Army's sorrow for their recent erroneous telegram. The letter further explained that her son, Private Charles W. Eubanks, was wounded in action on 11 June 1944 in France, and was



THUNDER

Down in

DIXIE

Soldier Helps Soldiers Through Ride

>>> By Christian Anderson <<<

There's nothing like it on this planet. The sight of 200 motorcycles traveling down the highway at 60 miles per hour. Riding side by side for close to 3 miles, this convoy rolls down the highway for a great cause. They're all here to support National Guard Soldiers and their families. As they pass by, it sounds like thunder rolling through Dixie.

Editors Note: We appreciate the editorial staff of GX Experience allowing us to use this article as it appeared in the June 2009 Issue.

It began as a motorcycle ride to raise money for families of National Guard Soldiers. The brainchild of SFC Tony Shackleford, it was just a few friends getting together, picking a route, planning the logistics and reaching into their wallets to make a small sacrifice for people who had made a larger one.

Little did they know that, over the next few years, it would evolve into a major event.

Shackleford is a humble man. He believes in freedom and patriotism, and recognizes that some have to give a little for the greater good. But just as Soldiers stand up for their fellow Americans, he believes civilians should be there for military families in every way possible.

Born and raised in Tupelo, MS, Shackleford heard the call to join the Mississippi National Guard in the 1980s and has since re-enlisted twice. But it was not until 2002 that he became a part of the history-rich 155th Brigade Combat Team (BCT). The 155th became one of the first units from Mississippi to deploy to Iraq in Feb. 2005.



SUPPORT THAT MATTERS

Dixie Thunder Run president SFC Tony Shackleford presents a check for \$10,000 to MG William L. Freeman Jr., the adjutant general of Mississippi, during a ceremony at Freeman's office July 13.

Shackleford deployed with the 155th to Iraq in 2005 and embarked on a life-changing experience—a pledge, with a few fellow Soldiers, to help military families when they got back to America. “The ride started as an idea and we kind of kicked it around,” Shackleford said. “I started emailing several Harley shops back home and got the ball rolling.”

They named the event the Dixie Thunder Run and would give its proceeds to wounded Soldiers from Mississippi who had fought overseas. The response was larger than expected. Mississippians came

from all corners of the state to support the troops who had served to preserve their freedom.

Shackleford was amazed at how successful the first event was and how responsive Mississippians were in supporting their Soldiers. “On the first ride, we probably had 200 bikes and raised somewhere a round \$8,000,” he recalled. So he and SSG (ret.) David Bland, who had helped organize the event, began plans for a second ride.

Sandy Ates of the Mississippi National

Guard public affairs office worked as the event’s media coordinator to get more attention for the Dixie Thunder Run. She was not only drawn to the cause of the ride, but to the fact that Shackleford is so caring and genuine toward his troops.

At first, it was just a few friends getting together. They picked a route, planned the logistics and reached into their wallets, making a small sacrifice for people who had made a larger one.

“Tony Shackleford is more than a patriot,” she said. “He is an angel on wheels. He carries the Soldiers in his heart wherever he goes. He is a big brother to them. NCOs take care of their troops, and he’s a wonderful example of that.”

To help with distribution of the funds for the second ride, Shackleford decided to look for a charity to help decide where the money should go and who should be eligible to receive it.



PARTNERS IN SUPPORT SFC Tony Shackleford and SSG (ret.) David Bland have worked hard over the past four years to make the Dixie Thunder Run possible.

SFC TONY SHACKLEFORD

155th Armored Brigade

Headquarters – Tupelo, MS

IN SEPTEMBER 2004, the 155th Brigade Combat Team (BCT) was mobilized for deployment to Iraq. Soldiers from Mississippi, Arkansas, Vermont, Utah and the 2nd of the 11th Armored Cavalry regiment trained for four months at Camp Shelby, MS, prior to shipping out in January of 2005 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), where they served with the 1st and 2nd Marine Expeditionary Forces.

Under the leadership of BG Augustus Leon Collins, the brigade performed beyond all expectations. In more than 500 combat missions, they detained more than 1,500 suspected insurgents. They also located and destroyed more than 6,000 small arms, 10,000 mortar rounds, 25,000 artillery rounds, 84,000 pounds of propellant, 71,000 rounds of ammunition and nearly 5,000 miscellaneous weapons in more than 400 explosive ordnance disposal missions.

This unit facilitated three national-level free elections in Iraq, helping to ensure the democratic process with an 83 percent voter turnout rate in the brigade's area of operations.

In addition to its war missions, the 155th conducted numerous humanitarian projects, including rebuilding schools, clinics, hospitals, police stations and critical infrastructure systems such as water, sewer and electrical. Due to their involvement in local communities, almost \$100 million was committed to these vital construction projects.

On Jan. 1, 2006, the 155th turned over its authority to the U.S. Army's 4th Infantry Division, signaling an official end to a year of combat for these brave Soldiers. With the Brigade's return home, the Mississippi National Guard has the most combat Veterans in its ranks since the end of WWII.

The 155th Armored Brigade was recently notified of its impending deployment in support of OIF in 2009. **GX**

PROTECTING FREEDOM

SFC Tony Shackelford poses for a photo with two young Iraqi children during his deployment with the 155th BCT.



"Tony Shackelford is more than a patriot. He is an angel on wheels."

>> **Sandy Ates**, Mississippi National Guard public affairs office

"We decided to start giving the money to the Mississippi Family Relief Fund after the first ride," Shackelford explained. "They would manage it for us."

The Mississippi Family Relief Fund is set up for military families who experience financial challenges while their spouse is deployed. For example, if a Soldier is at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the family can't manage the finances of a visit, the fund might be used to pay for the visit. "The Army doesn't pay for the spouse to travel [to Walter Reed]," Shackelford explained.

"The Mississippi Family Relief Fund kind of took [distribution] off our hands," he continued, "so all we have to do is raise the money. The Dixie Thunder Run is one of their biggest contributors." Although some funds come from donations, they come primarily from merchandise sales—T-shirts and baseball caps.

"After the first ride, the Dixie Thunder Run spread through word of mouth and it has grown a little bit every year," Shackelford said. "We actually only intended on doing one year, but it's in its fourth year now."

"Tony has built up such momentum with this group that it is almost his legacy," Ates said.

The ride grows larger every year. It's no longer just a select group of bikers that come out. People who live in the towns and cities along the route come out to support the bikers and the Soldiers, and many join in.

"People will get up on bridges, waving flags and [cheering us on]," Shackelford chuckles.

To make it official, the Mississippi Highway Patrol escorts the bikers along the whole route, not only to ensure their safety, but to show their support as well.

Seeing all the supporters reminds Shackelford of why he organizes the event in the first place. And he feels his patriotism swell as he mounts his bike and rolls out on the ride.

"It's a good feeling to know that you are actually doing something to help somebody that you might never see," he explained. "It's a good patriotic feeling also."

"The Dixie Thunder Run involves a lot of work, but I know it's going to help somebody down the road," Shackelford continued. "All the hard work is worth it in the end, because I found out that if you don't put a little work into something, it is usually not worth doing."

So again, Shackelford will saddle up to lead another Dixie Thunder Run from Tupelo to Meridian. The ride is set for September 2009. **GX**

For more info on the Dixie Thunder Run, visit DixieThunderRun.net.

Sally Jayne Ro

The Mississippi Army National Guard (MSARNG) has reached amazing heights in the past couple of years. One prime example could be found at this year's Miller Lite Crawfish Festival in Jackson, MS.

In case you are unfamiliar with this festival, it is a two day event that normally brings high profile musicians and attracts an estimated crowd of 25,000. This years line-up included: Framing Hanley, Filter, Red Jumpsuit Apparatus, Flyleaf, Snoop Dogg, Sally Jayne, Black Stone Cherry, Hurt, Theory of a Deadman, Hinder, LL Cool J, and Lynyrd Skynyrd. Wow! You would certainly have to be within recruiting age to appreciate the 2009 line-up, and that's what National Guard Bureau (NGB) realized too.

NGB partnered with advertising agency LM&O to co-sponsor this event, and set up a special recruiting opportunity for the MSARNG: Roadie for a Day. Roadie for Day was a program that allowed the Guard to invite 30 prospects to act as roadies during this event. The Guard entertained potential applicants by allowing them to participate as "Roadies". All that participated received insight and training into the world of music on the road, complete with backstage passes and official roadie tee shirts. The prospects were also exposed to the benefits of belonging to the National Guard by native Mississippi rock band Sally Jayne, and members of the MS recruiting force. In addition to Sally Jayne, National Guard roadies also had the honor of meeting the members of rock bands Hinder and Theory of a Deadman.



Pictured from top left: Erik Beall, Casey Adams, Marcos Rogers, and Rodney McBay
Photograph by: Brian Sakcriska

For more on Sally Jayne, go to www.myspace.com/sallyjayne
Look for their album release Summer 2009

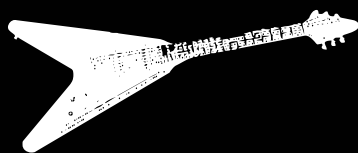
ocks the Guard

Roadie for a Day was not the only benefit to come from this event. The National Guard received positive exposure from all avenues: the stage, the artists, promos on the big screen, and live radio remotes. Local Radio station Z106 interviewed LTC Michel, commander of Mississippi's Recruiting and Retention Battalion, live from the festival where he was able to expound on the recruiting success of the MSARNG.

Sally Jayne has become one of the Mississippi Army National Guard's most exciting assets. Sally Jayne has partnered with the MSARNG and is lead by Marcos Rogers, a former MSARNG Captain. A veteran of Afghanistan where he was deployed with 20th Special Forces Group, he was most recently a member of the 1-155 Combined Arms Battalion. Marcos is armed with 3 very talented musicians: guitarist Rodney McBay, bassist Erik Beall, and drummer Casey Adams. All members of Sally Jayne exhibit an enormous amount of patriotism and support towards the Guard. They set the mood for the day's events by giving recognition to the National Guard while performing on stage and really rocked the crowd.

Although many of these events seem to revolve around recruiting, every soldier benefits from positive exposure of the National Guard. The public is introduced to the "Hometown Hero" concept, which cultivates acceptance and support for all Guardsmen.

The Mississippi National Guard:
Rocking and Rolling Since 1636!



3 National Guard Roadies posing with rock group Hinder.
Article & Photography by: Allison Bullock



IF YOU DON'T GOT IT, YOU'LL GET IT— LET'S GO!

Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr., the adjutant general of Mississippi keeps Soldiers of the 298th Combined Arms Battalion, Mississippi Army National Guard, moving along while at Camp McCain in Grenada, Miss., recently. Freeman wants all Soldiers to know that fitness keeps them and the Mississippi Army National Guard going strong. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Billy Alford, 298th CAB.



FIRST OATH

(L-R) Pvt. Precious Ramsey of Meridian, Miss., and Pvt. Danny Johnson of Magnolia, Miss., recite the Oath of Enlistment for entrance into the Mississippi Army National Guard. The oath was given by Col. Barry L. Price, commander, Eastern Sector United States Military Entrance Processing Command on Monday, March 16th, 2009. Privates Ramsey and Johnson became the first service members to give their oath in the newly dedicated Sergeant First Class Christopher L. Robinson Ceremony Room located at the Jackson Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) in Jackson, Miss. Robinson was killed while serving his country as a member of 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Afghanistan on March 25th, 2006. Photo by Sgt. Charles Brice, 102nd MPAD.

2009 SOLDIERS OF THE YEAR



Sgt. Tucker P. Clubine
AGR Soldier of the Year



Sgt. John R. Cochran
2009 NCO of the Year



Spc. Raymond T. Conley
2009 Soldier of the Year



2009 COMPETITORS—The 2009 Soldier of the Year challenge was entered by seven Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers, all of whom did an outstanding job in competition. Command Sgt. Maj. Don Cooley, state command sergeant major, calls them all winners, but only three title winners could compete for the regional competition. Competitors for the state challenge were from left to right—Sgt. Timothy Masterson, 114th MP Company, Clinton; Sgt. Tucker P. Clubine, 154th Regional Training Institute, Camp Shelby; Staff Sgt. Daniel M. Criddle, FSC 223rd Engr. Bn., Aberdeen; Spc. Raymond T. Conley, Camp Shelby Joint Force Training Center, Camp Shelby; Spc. Glen Halbert, HHC 223rd Engr. Bn., West Point; Sgt. John R. Cochran, 367th Maint. Co., Philadelphia and Staff Sgt. Eric T. Holman, 858th Horiz. Engr. Co., Houston. In an awards ceremony held in March, Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr., the adjutant general of Mississippi, thanked each of the Soldiers for showing everyone the professional and outstanding standards of our Mississippi National Guard members. Photos by Sandy Ates, MSNG Public Affairs Office.



Guard Detail · April - August 2009



2009 ARMEN OF THE YEAR



2009 WINNERS--The 2009 Airmen of the Year winners were announced during this year's Mississippi National Guard NCO Association Conference held in Tupelo, Miss., April 17-19. Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr., adjutant general of Mississippi, and Command Chief Master Sgt. C. D. Smith, Mississippi Air National Guard, presented awards to the winners of the Airmen Competition this year during the MSNG NCO Association Conference held in Tupelo, April 17-19. Winners left to right --Senior NCO of the Year, Master Sgt. Michael A. Jamison, NCO of the Year, Tech. Sgt. Macedonio Vera, and Airmen of the Year, Senior Airman Jason C. Arnold. Not pictured is First Sergeant of the Year, Senior Master Sgt. Rodger S. Goodin. (INSET) Also presented was the Charles L. Sullivan Leadership Award, which is presented to Master Sgt. Christopher E. Arthur by Maj. Gen. Freeman. Photos by Sandy Ates, MSNG Public Affairs Office.



G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery Foundation Patriot Leader Awards Presented

Each year two awards are presented to one Mississippi Army National Guard Soldier, and one Mississippi Air National Guard Airman, for their outstanding leadership skills and professionalism. Selected by the G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery Foundation, awards and other valuable gifts are presented to the lucky individuals receiving the leadership award. This year's Patriot Awards were presented to (left) Army Staff Sgt. Mandie C. Ponder of the 154th Regional Training Institute, Camp Shelby and (right) Air winner Senior Master Sgt. Terry Hill of the 186th Air Refueling Wing, Meridian, Miss. With Ponder is Command Sgt. Maj. Don Cooley, state command sergeant major, and Montgomery Foundation Representative, Mr. Robert Bailey, in the left photo with Hill are State Enlisted Advisor-Air, Command Chief Master Sgt. C. D. Smith and Mr. Bailey. Photos by Sandy Ates, MSNG Public Affairs Office.

"You are among the best Soldiers and Airmen in the National Guard. Congratulations on your achievements and continue to develop your professionalism and skills as members of the National Guard."

**– Major General
William L. Freeman, Jr.**



Commended by Police Department

By Sandy Ates, Staff Writer

Mississippi Army National Guard Soldier, Pfc. Tybron E. Calhoun of Ridgeland, Miss., recently was commended for his assistance to the Pearl Police Department, Pearl, Miss.

Calhoun, a member of the Mississippi Army National Guard's 114th Military Police Company (-) in Clinton, Miss., received a letter from Captain Ronnie Conerly from the Pearl Police Dept., which stated:

"This letter is to commend you for your outstanding and voluntary service to the Pearl Police Department on two separate incidents. Your selfless service and willingness to place others above you serves as an inspiration to the Officers and Citizens of Pearl alike."

Captain Conerly noted that on April 22, 2009, at approximately 00:52 hours, Calhoun arrived on the scene of an armed suspect causing a disturbance and rendered aid to all who needed it, including the suspect. Calhoun without knowledge that the suspect involved was armed and dangerous towards everyone in the immediate vicinity, placed himself in grave danger to assist officers and preserve life without any promise of personal or professional gain.

The second incident was April 29, at approximately 23:12 hours, when Calhoun assisted with a suicidal subject and remained on the scene until the Fire Department and emergency personnel arrived on the scene.



Maj. Gen. Bill Freeman presents the Mississippi Commendation medal to Sgt. Dan Adams, 2/20th Special Forces Group. Story and Photo by 1st Lt. David Levia, 2/20th SFG.

Special Forces Soldier Awarded Commendation Medal

A Mississippi Army National Guard Soldier has been awarded one of the state's highest honors for trying to save the lives of two people who briefly survived a head-on collision in March.

Sergeant Dan Adams, 27, a member of 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne), was awarded the Mississippi Commendation Medal for "heroically" performing life-sustaining measures while scores of cars blew past the site of a two-car crash in rural Mississippi.

"Sgt. Adams did what his duty called for him to do – take charge and help those in need. And he did it freely without reservation or concern for his own safety," said Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman Jr., the adjutant general, who flew to Wyoming to hand-deliver the award personally in May.

The two young people, both in their twenties, were pronounced dead at the hospital from their injuries. That fact has been difficult on Adams, a quiet and unassuming Starkville native who is preparing for his second deployment overseas.

"I tried my best, and it didn't work," he said, with a sudden pause, reluctant to finish his thoughts. "It would have been a better story (for all) had they lived."

Adams generally works on communications equipment, but on March 22, he used the training he learned from the Army Combat Lifesaver's Course, a week long demanding combat trauma course designed for nonmedical personnel. At one point, he took a windshield wiper and used it as a tourniquet.

For several days, though, he blamed himself, even calling an old paramedic friend asking whether he followed the

right steps that day he went to the aid of the victims. The incident happened on Highway 25 in Carthage, about 60 miles east of Jackson. His wife, April, remained in the car while he worked for nearly 10 minutes before paramedics arrived.

"I fought it for a while – wondering if there was something else I could have done," he said. "We prayed on the way home that the kids made it." One died that evening, while the other succumbed the next day from injuries.

Staff Sgt. Steven Corley, the top sergeant in the communications section, said he was not at all surprised by Adams' ingenuity, dependability and calm, something he's regularly displayed since joining the unit a year ago.

"He held one of those kid's hands and talked and prayed with him because he didn't want him to die alone," said Corley, pointing with pride to the type of Soldiers he oversees.

The parents apparently agreed: Had Adams not stopped, their child would have died alone.

After discovering his identity, the parents drove nearly two hours to meet him at Camp Shelby, the Mississippi National Guard's major training facility, where Adams was going through mobilization processing.

Not long after, they sent a handwritten letter to Freeman and Lt. Col. Don Randle, the battalion commander, thanking them and pointing to Adams as the quintessential professional, stopping when others didn't.

Now, Adams is convinced there is a silver lining – in the form of a higher power – since the family's church has agreed to remember him regularly in their services.

"Every one of them is praying for me," he said. "Knowing that helps a lot because you can feel the hand of God."

Mississippi Communities Recognize National Guard

Many thanks from an average citizen

Dear National Guard,

My family and I were traveling back from New Orleans this Easter Sunday when stopped off an exit south of Hattiesburg Mississippi at a Starbucks® for a coffee break. And for my little boys, a much needed potty break. In the store were about 10 guardsmen and women. My 3 year old was curious of their uniforms and what they do since he'd never seen any military personnel up close. My wife began to explain when the guardsmen stepped in and provided better detail for my boy.

We got our coffee, said our good-byes and began loading up. As we were about to get the last buckles fastened in the car seats, two guardsmen approached and asked my wife if they could give my son something. As she stepped aside, the guardsmen presented my son with two patches. One for operating a Bradley tank and the other for a Humvee specialist. My son was beside himself and thoroughly elated. Not only from that moment but throughout the trip back to Atlanta.

While this small gesture may not seem like much, it made his day. And we, as parents, were left feeling honored and proud of our military as well. This was very kind of the brave men. It made me re-think about how much the everyday citizen and their families take for granted. And where we'd be if it weren't for all of you. As for my son, it made an indelible and lasting impression, and my job a bit easier when I raise him to respect our men and women in uniform.

All in all, it was the highlight of our Easter journey home, and a cool story I've already shared with many of my friends who are also parents of small tykes. I hope these words have an opportunity to reach the men who bestowed those kind gifts to my son, as well as their superiors who should also know that they are doing a fine job as well. Two patches + two Soldiers + and one act of kindness have generated positive buzz that we'll share with everyone.

Many, many thanks to you all.
Andy Ford

College Fraternity Lends Hand to Military Families



(Above) Sgt. 1st Class Tony Shackleford accepts a check totalling \$16,500 from the University of Mississippi's Sigma Chi Fraternity on April 14, 2009. The amount will go to the Mississippi Military Family Relief Fund to assist Mississippi's military families. Ole Miss is a dedicated supporter of the Mississippi National Guard. (Below) The entire Sigma Chi Fraternity at Ole Miss strike a pose with Shackleford.





OUR HISTORY OUR HERITAGE OUR NATION YOUR GUARD

For 372 years, the National Guard has faced many challenges – challenges that have included natural disasters, civil disturbances and the threat of terrorism. When called on, your Guard was always there. Today, there are new challenges that must be faced, and your Guard is transforming the way it works. As a result, we have never been better prepared to serve our country, with the flexibility to successfully meet the changing demands of the 21st century. No matter what comes next, you can count on the men and women of the National Guard to proudly respond to the calls of their states and nation. As they have been for 372 years, your Guard will remain *always ready, always there.*

Your National Guard.
Established December 13th, 1636.



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