

GUARD DETAIL

AUGUST-DECEMBER 2007

A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI AIR AND ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



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AUGUST - DECEMBER 2007, VOLUME XIV NO. 2 • A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD



The Army National Guard will start off the new year sponsoring one of NASCAR's most popular drivers, Dale Earnhardt, Jr., who recently joined Hendricks Motorsports racing team (he used to drive for the Dale Earnhardt Inc. team) and swapped his #8 car for the #88 car which will carry the Guard logo around racetracks across America. Shown here making the recent announcement are (from left) team owner Rick Hendricks, Earnhardt, and Army National Guard director, Lt. Gen. Clyde A. Vaughn. The 2008 NASCAR racing season begins in February. (See the story on Page 8).

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FRONT COVER--Several people assist in unveiling a newly named C-17 Globemaster III assigned to the 172nd Airlift Wing. It was named "Spirit of the Purple Heart", honoring the many Purple Heart Medal recipients in Mississippi.



BACK COVER--Spec. John P. Switzer, Jr., of Pearl and member of the 113th Military Police Company of Brandon, was selected as grand marshal for the 2007 Pearl Christmas Parade in December. With him are his two sons, and wife. The 113th MP Co is currently serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Switzer had previously served with the 155th Brigade Combat Team, Personnel Security Detachment, when they deployed to Iraq in 2005.

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GUARD DETAIL

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

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Guard News and Views

Gate passes for family members of deployed troops

The Transportation Security Administration has issued a directive pertaining to military passengers at U.S. airports. According to Security Directive 4-01-10w, families of military members may be granted access to sterile concourse areas to escort the military passenger to the gate or to meet a military passenger's inbound arrival at the gate.

The family member can go to the airline that the military member is flying on and receive a pass to go to the gate. They will be required to have a pass and a photo ID to get through the security checkpoint. This is a wonderful opportunity for families to stay with the departing military member longer before they depart, or to be able to greet them at the gate upon their arrival.

For more information contact your local airport.

New DoD Predatory Lending Regulation Takes Effect

The Department of Defense has put into effect a new regulation that protects service members and their families from high-cost, short-term loans.

The regulation limits the fees and interest that creditors can charge on three specific types of loans: payday loans, vehicle title loans, and tax refund anticipation loans. These three products were targeted because they have high interest rates, coupled with short payback terms.

Payday loan and vehicle title loans can often lead to a cycle of ever-increasing debt. Refund anticipation loans provide seven to 14-day advances on tax refunds, but at a high cost to the borrower. The financial stress service members and their families suffer in turn causes a decline in military readiness.

The new regulation is part of wide-ranging DoD efforts to increase 'financial literacy' among service members and their families. These

efforts include 24/7 access to confidential financial planning and counseling, a variety of financial readiness training courses, improving the availability of small low-interest loans from financial institutions, promoting the practice of setting aside a \$500 emergency savings account, and educating service members on the availability of counseling, grants, loans and other services from military aid societies.

"We equate financial readiness with mission readiness," said David S. C. Chu, under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness. "This is part of a larger effort to create a culture that encourages our service members and their families to develop sound financial strategies. Preparing for emergencies is an important step forward and vital to avoiding predatory practices and a cycle of debt."

The regulation limits the annual percentage rate charged to service members and their families on payday loans, vehicle title loans, and tax refund anticipation loans to 36 percent. The method for calculating the annual percentage rate encompasses all fees required at the time of obligation, with very few exceptions. All financial institutions – without exception – are subject to the new regulation.

Chu said the process of developing the new regulation also resulted in stronger relationships with federal regulatory agencies. DoD is working with the National Association of State Regulators to develop similar collaborative processes. Currently, 27 states have committed to oversight and enforcement measures.

The regulation also requires that service members and their covered family members receive both a written and oral disclosure statement informing them of their rights before they become obligated on a consumer credit transaction.

"This statement tells members of the armed forces that they have several other options to get emergency funds that are far less financially hazardous than high-cost, short-term loans," said Leslye A. Arsht, deputy under secretary of defense for

military community and family policy. "The protection the regulation offers is not a wall preventing a service member from getting assistance, rather it is more like a flashing sign pointing out danger and directing the borrower to a safer way of satisfying immediate financial needs."



In addition to counseling available through a service member's chain of command, legal assistance office or military aid society, DoD offers several online resources to service members and their families.

"Military OneSOURCE" (<http://www.militaryonesource.com/>) offers free, confidential financial planning; counselors are available toll-free at any time at (800) 342-9647.

"Military HOMEFRONT" (<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/>), offers reliable quality of life information to help service members and their families, leaders and service providers in the 'Personal Finance' section of the Web site.

"Armed Forces Legal Assistance Services Locator" (<http://legalassistance.law.af.mil/content/locator.php>) provides easy access to the nearest legal assistance office.

The final regulation in effect today was released August 31, 2007. It can be viewed online at: <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan2007.1800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/pdf/07-4264.pdf>

New Per Diem Rates for FY 2008 (see chart below)

LOCATION (1)	County and/or Other Defined Location (2)	Seasons (Beg-End)	Max Lodging	Local Meals	Prop. Meals	Incidentals	Max Per Diem	Effective Date
BILOXI	HARRISON	01/01-12/31	86	41	25	3	130	10/01/2007
CAMP SHELBY	FORREST	01/01-12/31	75	46	28	3	124	10/01/2007
COLUMBUS AFB	LOWNDES	01/01-12/31	70	36	23	3	109	10/01/2007
FORREST COUNTY	FORREST	01/01-12/31	75	46	28	3	124	10/01/2007
GRENADA	GRENADA	01/01-12/31	72	41	25	3	116	10/01/2007
GULFPORT	HARRISON	01/01-12/31	86	41	25	3	130	10/01/2007
HATTIESBURG	FORREST AND LAMAR	01/01-12/31	75	46	28	3	124	10/01/2007
JACKSON IAP AGS	HINDS	01/01-12/31	70	36	23	3	109	10/01/2007
JACKSON NAVAL RESERVE CTR	HINDS	01/01-12/31	70	36	23	3	109	10/01/2007
KEESLER AFB	HARRISON	01/01-12/31	86	41	25	3	130	10/01/2007
KEY FIELD AGS	LAUDERDALE	01/01-12/31	70	36	23	3	109	10/01/2007
LAMAR COUNTY	LAMAR	01/01-12/31	75	46	28	3	124	10/01/2007
MERIDIAN NAS	LAUDERDALE	01/01-12/31	70	36	23	3	109	10/01/2007
NAVAL METEOR & OCEAN, STENNIS	HANCOCK	01/01-12/31	70	36	23	3	109	10/01/2007
PASCAGOULA FACILITIES	JACKSON	01/01-12/31	70	36	23	3	109	10/01/2007
ROBINSONVILLE	TUNICA	01/01-12/31	75	41	25	3	119	10/01/2007
SOUTHAVEN	DESOTO	01/01-12/31	86	41	25	3	130	10/01/2007
STARKVILLE	OKTIBBEHA	01/01-12/31	73	41	25	3	117	10/01/2007
U.S. NAVAL HOME	HARRISON	01/01-12/31	86	41	25	3	130	10/01/2007

Active First!

What is it? The Active First Program is helping recruit people for the active Army via the Army National Guard (ARNG). Under the program, the Guard recruits Soldiers who commit to 30, 36 or 48 months' active duty in certain military occupational specialties (MOS), followed by service in the ARNG.

Active First features enlistment bonuses of up to \$60,000; the amount depends on the participant's active duty time:

- 48 months active duty - \$40,000
- 36 months active duty - \$30,000
- 30 months active duty - \$20,000
- Transition from active duty to standard part-time Guard service - \$20,000

The program applies to people with no prior military service who are

placed in select MOS's. Bonuses are paid when a Soldier reaches his/her first duty station after completing Initial Entry Training (IET). After active duty, a Soldier has two options: re-enlist in the active Army or transition back to the ARNG in a drilling status.

The Active First Program has three phases:

- Phase One - Recruit enlists in the ARNG, drills with his/her unit until leaving for basic training, attends basic training, and then Advanced Individual Training (AIT).
- Phase Two - Soldier completes Initial Entry Training (basic training plus AIT) and transitions to the active Army and receives orders for a regular Army unit.
- Phase Three - Soldier completes active duty and either re-enlists in the active Army or transitions to back to a drilling unit in the ARNG for the remainder of

his/her eight year enlistment.

What has the Army done? Since the Active First Program launched on Oct. 1, it has produced 97 enlistments through Oct. 31. This fiscal year the program is expected to bring in approximately 1,600 Soldiers to the regular Army. That will help it make its recruiting mission this fiscal year in a tough recruiting environment, and contribute to the active component's growth over the next three years by 65,000 Soldiers to achieve a total force of 547,000.

And because of the Active First Program the Army National Guard will receive a stream of highly skilled and experienced Soldiers after they complete their active duty.

For more information: www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com/activefirst/ or www.goarmy.com. The Active First Web site is <http://rs6.net>

Home for the Lakotas

By Sandy Ates, Staff Writer

The Lakota was a very proud and powerful tribe of Sioux Indians. Crazy Horse, in particular, was a respected war leader of the Lakota, who fought to preserve hunting lands, traditions and values of the Lakota way of life. So, too, the Lakota UH-72 helicopter will also serve to protect the traditions and values of the United States homeland.

The UH-72A Lakota is the Army's new light utility helicopter selected primarily for the National Guard to perform homeland security missions.

Mississippi will be the first in the nation to receive the Lakota into its aviation inventory.

The UH-72 is a product of EADS-Eurocopter-North America and is manufactured in Columbus, Miss. The aircraft features twin engines, modern avionics and state-of-the-art performance. It will accommodate two pilots with nine passengers, has a lift capacity of over 3,000 pounds and can fly speeds up to 268 km per hour.

The Lakota is designed to replace the UH-1 and OH-58A/C aircraft, which are older light utility helicopters, and supplant other types of domestic use.

According to military sources, the first Lakota was unveiled in Columbus, Miss., by Gen. Richard A. Cody, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, and Joe RedCloud, a chief of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Lakota Nation, last year.

"We're pleased that you honor our tribe by naming this helicopter Lakota. You are not only honoring our past, you

are recognizing that we are still here, joint partners in the heritage of the promise of America," said RedCloud during the unveiling ceremony Dec. 11, 2006.

The Army has a long-standing tradition of using American Indian names, such as terms, tribes and chiefs for its helicopters. In the case of the lakota aircraft, the linkage is between the Lakota legacy as stalwart defenders of their homeland and the nature of the aircraft's intended domestic missions.

Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour and Maj. Gen. Harold Cross, the adjutant general of Mississippi, are excited about receipt of the new helicopter.

"It is significant and historic that the Mississippi National Guard will be the first in the country to receive this very capable new aircraft, which is manufactured in Mississippi," Barbour said. "I am very proud of the men and women whose skills are helping build such a versatile helicopter and contributing to our growing economy."

General Cross is excited about the Lakota's capabilities. "This is another testament of the quality of our aviation units in Mississippi," said Cross. "Having these new aircraft will better enable us to respond to security missions, disaster relief, search and rescue, medical evacuations, counterdrug and other missions."

The first four UH72As will be delivered to the Mississippi Army National Guard in May 2008, with the remaining four in 2010. They will be based with the 1st Battalion, 114th Service Support in Tupelo, Miss.

General characteristics

- Crew: 2 pilots
- Capacity: 8 troops or 2 stretchers and medical crew
- Length: 42 ft 8 in (13.03 m)
- Rotor diameter: 36 ft 1 in (11.00 m)
- Height: 11 ft 4 in (3.45 m)
- Disc area: 1023 sq ft (94.98 m²)
- Empty weight: 3,950 lbs. (1,792 kg)
- Useful load: 3,953 lbs. (1,793 kg)
- Max takeoff weight: 7,903 lb (3,585 kg)
- Powerplant: 2x Turbomeca Arriel IE2 turboshafts, 738 shp (551 kW) each

Performance

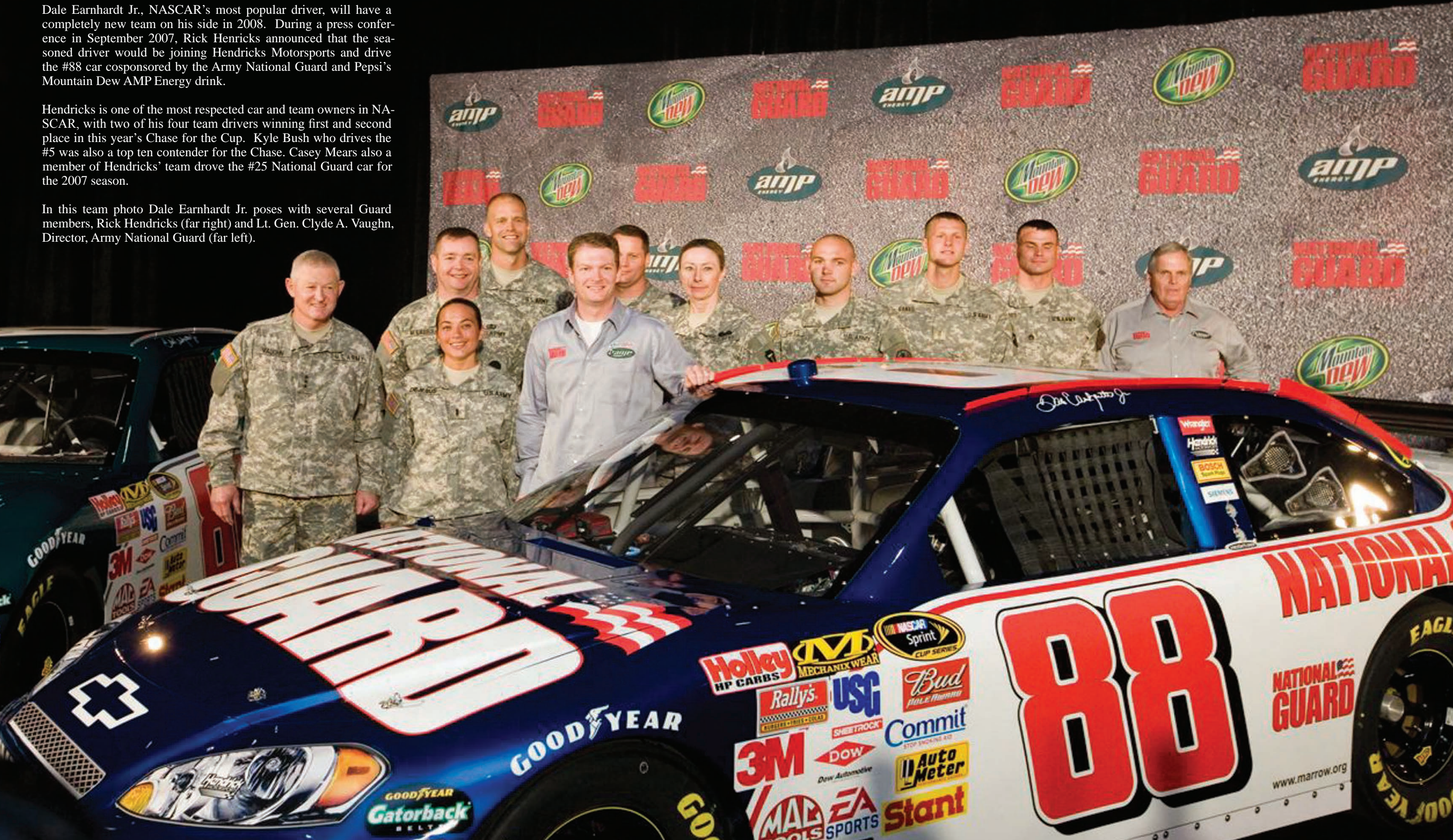
- Maximum speed: 145 kts (167 mph, 269 km/h)
- Range: 370 nm (426 miles, 685 km)
- Service ceiling: 18,000 ft (5,791 m)

A WINNING TEAM

Dale Earnhardt Jr., NASCAR's most popular driver, will have a completely new team on his side in 2008. During a press conference in September 2007, Rick Hendricks announced that the seasoned driver would be joining Hendricks Motorsports and drive the #88 car cosponsored by the Army National Guard and Pepsi's Mountain Dew AMP Energy drink.

Hendricks is one of the most respected car and team owners in NASCAR, with two of his four team drivers winning first and second place in this year's Chase for the Cup. Kyle Bush who drives the #5 was also a top ten contender for the Chase. Casey Mears also a member of Hendricks' team drove the #25 National Guard car for the 2007 season.

In this team photo Dale Earnhardt Jr. poses with several Guard members, Rick Hendricks (far right) and Lt. Gen. Clyde A. Vaughn, Director, Army National Guard (far left).



Start your engines—next year’s racing season is already shaping up to be one of the most thrilling yet. During a press conference September 19, 2007, Hendrick Motorsports announced Dale “Junior” Earnhardt Jr. as the next Army National Guard car driver, with Pepsi’s Mountain Dew AMP Energy drink as cosponsor.

On press day, GX met up with LTG Clyde A. Vaughn, director, Army National Guard, and the excitement was contagious. We asked for his thoughts about Dale Junior racing for the National Guard.

“It’s [historic],” the general said. “His name is synonymous with racing, and the fans love him. We are proud to be on his team, and we’re proud that he’s on ours. The way we look at it, he has selected one of the defense cars. We are in the Department of Defense, and we are just proud that he is part of our culture.”

The Soldiers in attendance were also eager to be part of the announcement and knew this was a remarkable day not only for the driver, but also for the National Guard.

2nd Lt. Dustin Banks, 56th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, TXARNG, said, “I believe this is going to benefit us by getting us more publicity, showing there is a lot of public support behind the Guard and overall...helping our public image. The ordinary citizen out there will give us more support.”

On hand to greet press and supporters, and to discuss the decision to create this exciting team, were Rick Hendrick of Hendrick Motorsports; Dawn Hudson, president and CEO of Pepsi; Dale Earnhardt Jr.; and LTG Vaughn.

The thrill surrounding this momentous event included Dale Jr.’s announcement of his new number and unveiling the cars. He announced he would be driving the number 88 for the Army National Guard.

Marshall Carlson, general manager of Hendrick Motorsports, said, “While we were getting for this press conference, Mr. [Rick] Hendrick and I were talking about how the National Guard traces its roots back [nearly] 370 years. We both kind of stopped and looked at each other. There aren’t many things in this country, that I

am aware of, that...go back 370 years. The Guard pre-dates our nation.

“When I was in high school,” he continued, “we had a hurricane come through the town I lived in and you couldn’t move 100 yards either way down my street. There were trees down everywhere, and by the next afternoon the Guard was there to help my neighborhood. From that day forward, I have had an appreciation for the dual mission the Guard accomplishes for us, and then to learn that a tremendous amount of the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan are Guard Soldiers—it’s just an incredible



organization to be a part of.”

When GX caught up with Dale Jr., we had questions for him different from those he’d fielded earlier in the day. One of the first things we wanted to know was what America meant to him and what he thought made it great.

“In America,” he said, “you can live how you want to live. You have so many choices that it’s really up to you how you create and mold your life. I like having the freedom to make the choices that we do. I think that’s also what makes it great. We have the chance to choose and not be restricted to one thing. We get an opportunity every day to make life what we want to make it.”

He also mentioned his deployed racing

fans. “I get a lot of letters from service men and women [who say that] to catch the races, they sometimes have to stay up late or watch it taped. That gives me a lot of pride, that we bring them joy by competing on the race track. In turn they make it possible for us to compete every weekend by serving in the military, protecting our country and giving us the chance to live our lives as we see fit.

“It does mean a lot to me that they enjoy that and even though they are over there in a tough situation, as many things as they have going on, they still find the time to tune in and keep up. You get pictures sent to you of tanks that are painted with your number. Those things are awesome and mean a lot...they really do. I get a big kick out of that.”

GX learned he had recently been to a rifle range with the Navy seabees, so we wanted to know if he looked forward to getting to the range with some Guard Soldiers.

“I do enjoy doing that. I shoot AR-15s from time to time. Sniper rifles...competition sniper rifles, up to a thousand yards—those types of things are a lot of fun for me. I enjoy going to the range...shooting a target for me is fun and competitive, as is hunting.”

His all time favorite military movies? “*Saving Private Ryan* is definitely one,” he said. “I think you could say that Forrest Gump would be one too. I’m a big [Tom] Hanks fan.”

We were curious about which car he thought he might win in first—the ARNG car or the Mountain Dew AMP car. “Whichever one I can,” he said, adding that he was getting ready to meet with his sponsors to discuss which car he would drive first.

Although many details have yet to be hammered out, one big point was clear: for the Army National Guard, next year’s NASCAR season will be amazing.”

Article by SSG Heather G. Allen

GX Magazine.

Photos courtesy of National Guard Bureau

Guard hauls equipment for trapped miners

By Lt. Col. David Buck, 172 AW

It was a routine day at the 172nd Airlift Wing in Jackson, Miss. until the phone rang around 1:50 p.m. The call was an emergency airlift request to transport equipment to the trapped miners in Utah.

Immediately, wing personnel organized an effort to get a C-17 Globemaster III in the air to get the needed equipment to the miners as quickly as possible.

One of the first calls after the initial request came in was to George Rollins, the truck driver delivering the equipment. The task was to coordinate the nearest airfield to the trucker to pick up this precious cargo and driver. The location chosen was Forbes Field in Topeka, Kansas, home of the 190th Air Refueling Wing of the Kansas Air National Guard.

Wing personnel coordinated efforts across the base and nation to get the mission off the ground. Aircraft availability, trip feasibility (will the truck fit in the plane), authorizations, coordination with the Kansas unit and higher headquarters were just some of the call and coordination made to get the mission off the ground. Finally, at 4:30 p.m. the mission took off from Thompson Field in Jackson, Mississippi.

Col. William Crisler, air commander at the 172nd Airlift Wing in Jackson noted that, “This mission is typical of what the National Guard is all about. We’re always ready to respond in a moments notice to help our citizens in a time of need.”

In the early stages of organizing the mission, Senior Master Sgt. Anthony Best, 172nd Operations Support Flight, had to ensure the vehicle would actually be allowed to travel aboard the C-17, as well as knowing if the vehicle would physically be able to be loaded on the aircraft. Best said, “It was quite hectic for a while. We had to scramble to find all the information from multiple sources and put it all together.”

The high-tech equipment delivered to the mine in Utah was underground video equipment. Substrata Camera Services of Knoxville, Tenn., specializes in providing underground video surveys for routine and emergency situations. Mr. Avery Clark, owner of the company, had flown out earlier to provide smaller cameras to the scene. The bulk of the equipment was flown on the Mississippi C-17.

During the three and a half hour flight to Utah, things went



Sensitive equipment is loaded aboard the aircraft and secured for its flight west to assist in rescuing trapped miners in Utah.

Members of the 172nd Airlift Wing in Jackson work quickly to load and deliver equipment to help rescue six miners trapped after a mine collapsed in Utah. (Photos by the 172nd AW/VI)

like clockwork. The weather was perfect and the C-17 had no problem hauling the 19,580 pound vehicle. Loadmaster Senior Master Sgt. Allen Randall said, “It was a privilege to assist on this mission that may help save the miners’ lives.”

Likewise from the pilots’ perspective, aircraft commander, Lt. Col. James Hartline said, “The support we received from both the Forbes unit and the Utah Air Guard was superb. We could not have completed the mission this fast without everyone’s support.”

GUARDSMAN WINS TRIP TO MEET AUTHOR J. K. ROWLING



By Sandy Ates, Staff Writer

The odds of winning anything are often to one's disadvantage, however, sometimes a freaky thing happens and you overcome the odds. That's what happened to Maj. Steve McCraney of Clinton, Miss., recently when he won a trip to meet Harry Potter series author, J. K. Rowlings in an Open Book Tour Sweepstakes.

McCraney was one of two Mississippians among 1,000 people whose names were selected in a Scholastic Inc. sponsored drawing.

While excited about winning tickets and the honor of meeting Rowling, McCraney was unsure he would be able to make the scheduled trip. Prizes for the contest winners included tickets to attend the J. K. Rowling Open Book Tour at New York City's historical Carnegie Hall on October 17, and an autographed copy of Rowling's seventh and last book in her series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*.

A major with the Mississippi National Guard's 47th Civil Support Group, McCraney is on call for the unit in charge of emergency response to weapons of mass destruction for the state.

"We're on call every day for the state of Mississippi," he explained to media anxious to get a story. "If something happens here, we are the primary unit." A few times a year he's on national call.

At the time he learned of his prize, McCraney said that the 47th was in a management cycle, and either he or his commander had to be on duty. The commander had just returned to duty from shoulder surgery and other factors weighed his decision to personally accept the prize.



"I called the folks at Scholastic and told them I was planning on being there if everything worked out," McCraney said. "It was going to be a very tight time line for me."

McCraney a father of two sons, age 12 and 15, said he shares the adventure and fantasy of Harry Potter books/movies with his sons. He's read all the books and seen all the movies, but admits he's undecided on a favorite.

"Of course, watching Harry Potter grow up through the series was a joy," he said, comparing Harry Potter with himself and his two sons growing up into manhood.

The Harry Potter series consisting of seven books with the last book/movie released in September 2007.

Harry James Potter is the title character and main protagonist of the Rowling series. The books cover seven years in the life of a lonely orphan, Harry Potter, who, on his 11th birthday, learns he is a wizard and the son of two magical parents. He enters the secret wizarding world to attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry to learn magic.

According to Rowling, the Harry Potter character came to her while waiting for a delayed train in 1990. She was inspired to make him an orphan following her own mother's death.

Rowling maintains that her character Harry Potter is a suitable real-life model for children. McCraney said he wants to be a real-life role model to his own children, and because of that, there came a strange twist at the end of his story such as it is at HogWarts.

"I did not go to the event, my son is a sophomore at Clinton High School and that was the first weekend he was the starting kicker for the football team," McCraney explained. "I was able to give the tickets to a friend who picked up a signed copy of the book for me."

First National Guard students complete distance degrees at MSU

By Kenny Billings, MSU News Bureau

When Capt. Donna Phillips graduated with a business degree from Belhaven College in Jackson, she planned to continue her education. In spite of her best intentions, she saw life get in the way with military service, wartime deployments and a child.



Donna Phillips

Last weekend, however, Phillips and two of her National Guard colleagues marked a milestone by earning their master's degrees in business administration as the first graduates of the Mississippi State University Distance MBA National Guard Program.

Phillips, of Brandon, along with 1st Lt. Amanda Villeret of Madison and Capt. Gregory Cato of New Hebron, were the first graduates of a program implemented by MSU President Robert H. "Doc" Foglesong in 2006. It is designed to give military personnel in Mississippi the opportunity to continue their education while making it both convenient and affordable, said Barbara Spencer, MSU business professor and director of the graduate studies in business.

"The Distance MBA Mississippi National Guard program requires the same academic coursework as the equivalent degree earned on campus and online," she said. "But, members of the Mississippi military qualify for reduced tuition costs."

Courses are taught by College of Business and Industry faculty at the Starkville and Meridian campuses.

"The beauty of the distance MBA is that you can come into the program regardless of academic background, learn basic business skills and have the flexibility to develop any career," said Spencer.

She added: "It is ideal for active-duty military because they can start the program in any semester, complete the coursework from anywhere in the world with Internet access, and take up to six years to finish."

The first three graduates are part of a group of about 25 members of the Mississippi Army National Guard who have participated since the program's inception.

Phillips said she had often thought about returning to continue her education, but it wasn't until learning of the distance MBA program's convenience that she decided to pursue her master's degree.

"I had thought about going back to school, but things just never fell in place," said the 35-year-old mother of one. "When I heard about this program, it was a lot more affordable and convenient because of the agreement

between the National Guard and MSU."

The year-old program is an outgrowth of MSU's successful distance MBA program, which allows students to earn their master's degree in business administration completely online.



Amanda Villeret

Villeret said the convenience of an online degree backed by a credible institution is what lured her to the program.

"I had looked into getting my master's degree, but money was really a consideration and this came along at the right time," said the 28-year-old Greenwood native. "The reduced cost made it easy, but I also liked that it was being offered from an established university and not some online college."

For more information about MSU's distance MBA National Guard Program contact Tamra Swann, coordinator at MSU (662) 325-2655.

You may also find out more by visiting MSU's web site:

<http://www.distance.msstate.edu/mba/>

or

Guardsmen can visit their education offices to find out more about the MBA program.

Visit the State Education Services Office at:

www.ngms.state.ms.us/edu

[ms.us/edu](http://www.ngms.state.ms.us/edu)



Sgt. Jesse Lindsey strains to complete an obstacle during the 15-Obstacle Course event during the Soldier/NCO of the Year competition at Fort Benning in August 2007.

First Class Product of Opportunity

Article by Sandy Ates, Staff Writer
All photos by Capt. Tim Irwin, GX Magazine

Amory resident Jesse Lindsey was clueless that 2007 would involve one of his life's greatest experiences and make his boyhood dream come true in a very big way.

Proceeded by a long ancestral line of military heroes, Lindsey grew up dreaming of being in the military and traditionally accomplishing great things. So, it didn't seem strange to his parents Dian and Eddie Wilemmon that he would join the Mississippi Army National Guard at the age of 17, while still attending high school in Hatley, Miss., just a short distance from the Army National Guard armory in Amory.

He found a home with the Soldiers of Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 198th Armor Reconnaissance Squadron (ARS) and eagerly ready for advanced individual training (AIT) as soon as he graduated so he could get on track with his dream.

Lindsey's training was timely because shortly after returning from AIT his unit was called to active duty for Operation Iraqi Freedom as part of the 155th Brigade Combat Team (BCT).

While deployed (2004-2005) Lindsey received plenty of hands-on time in supply/logistics to keep his acquired skills honed. The beans and bullets position is a very important role when a team as large as his is on the battlefield. In a highly visible position, Lindsey's skills were put to a big test.

BCT commander, Col. William Glasgow, said he exhibited exceptional qualities on a daily basis.

"He is smart, well spoken, in fine physical shape and cares about the Soldiers in the unit," Glasgow told media inquiring about Lindsey's abilities. "He is a task oriented Soldier who needs very little supervision. He always does the hard right instead of the easy wrong. He is a credit to his unit, his family and the community."

He gained the admiration of fellow BCT Soldiers because he kept track of the needs of every Soldier during the long deployment. He became the Soldier's Soldier, and successfully earned a position in family tradition as well. But more would follow in his drive to become the best Soldier he could be.

Shortly after the return of the BCT, Lindsey was selected for the AGR (active guard/reserve) supply sergeant position and continued to take care of the Soldiers of the unit in Amory. It was an unexpected opportunity to do the job he enjoys most—taking care of Soldiers.

He was also given another opportunity.

"When Command Sergeant Major Ronald Coleman (CSM for the 155th BCT) approached me over a year ago about representing the 198th ARS as NCO of the Year, I was clueless of what the future would hold," said Lindsey, shocked by the request. "As soon as it was decided that I would represent the 155th BCT (only one selection per category and major subordinate command) in the state's 2007 Soldier of the Year competition, reality really sat in."

Having little time to prepare for the competition Lindsey said he focused on basic Soldier skills but really didn't know what to expect.

He performed very well in the state competition and earned the title of AGR Soldier of the Year for 2007. As a result, he would represent the state of Mississippi at the next higher level.

"When State CSM (Donald) Cooley announced that I was the winner of the State's competition at Camp Shelby, and said that I would be representing the state at the regional level, I, again, was in shock," said Lindsey, thankful for the opportunity to be a contender.

He said the state competition was difficult, but with the title came more stress and pressure for him.

"It was a great honor to compete at the regional level, but it also came with much more stress. Not only was it hard sustaining high standards on my job as supply NCO during reorganization, but also training mentally, physically and emotionally to standards for the 155th BCT and the state," said Lindsey. "My family, unit, the brigade and the state were of the utmost help and support in everything, on a daily basis."

Realizing how tough the regional competition was he sought help from many individuals.

"I may never pay back the debt owed to my co-worker and best friend, Staff Sgt. Keith Pate (now 2nd Lt. Pate)," said Lindsey. "He helped me hours before work, during duty hours and many hours late into the night studying basic warrior skills and physical training."

Lindsey says he was asked by one Soldier how he personally prepared to meet the challenges for the competition. "I told him the best thing I did to prepare for the competition was to unplug my television," said Lindsey with a no-joking tone of voice.

He remembered the regional competition with Soldiers from Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and also, Mississippi Soldier and state NCO of the Year 2007 winner, Staff Sgt. Terry Armstrong.

"After being blessed with a great performance on the PT test the first morning, I felt very confident and felt that I had a great chance at winning," he said. "After a few long wet days of land navigation, weapons qualification, Warrior Tasks, and board appearances, I found myself standing with CSM Cooley, his wife, Gloria, and CSM Coleman at the regional awards banquet and being announced winner of the 1st Army South (Region III) NCO of the Year."

It felt wonderful for him to win the title, but immediately the next day the celebrating was over and Lindsey started training for the national event, which would have even greater challenges to be conquered at Fort Benning, Ga.

The national competition was more like survival or ranger training for the 14 National Guard regional winners competing for NCO and Soldier of the Year at Benning.

Capt. Tim W. Irvin who covered the event for GX magazine, said eyes were blackened, lips busted and noses bleeding, but the Soldiers loved it.

Irvin said he considered every one of them winners.

"Every last one of them, no matter the outcome of the competition, is a winner," he said in his article. "And to even get this far is definitely a testament to these Soldiers' skill and dedication."

Many of the competitors had completed special training courses that prepared them for the challenge, and some had just returned from tours on the battlefields, while some came to the National Guard from active Army components. Lindsey was one of the youngest competing.

(Story continues on Page 26)



This obstacle is harder than it looks for Sgt. Jesse Lindsey, who does a great job during the Warrior Skills training portion of the 2007 NCO/Soldier of the Year Competition.

Spirit of the Purple Heart



Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross, the adjutant general of Mississippi, addresses hundreds of Purple Heart Medal recipients during a naming ceremony for one of the 172nd Airlift Wing's C-17 Globemaster III aircraft. The massive aircraft was named "Spirit of the Purple Heart" and was named in honor of the many who have been wounded or killed as the result of an act of a hostile foreign force and been awarded the Purple Heart Medal. The new name, according to Cross is relevant to the units' C-17s airlifting more than 22,000 wounded American warriors from the battlefields of Iraq since 2001. (Photo courtesy of Boeing, Inc.) MORE on next page ►

C-17 named “Spirit of the Purple Heart”

By Sgt. Scott Tynes, 102nd MPAD

A wounded Soldier is brought into the field hospital in Baghdad, but his injuries are too severe and immediate for the hospital. Even a few years ago, such a situation would have resulted in the death of the Soldier, but the adaptation of the C-17A Globemaster III to ferry wounded men and women directly from the battleground to hospitals overseas and stateside has saved many lives.

In recognition of this enormous achievement, of which the 183rd Airlift Squadron of the 172nd Airlift Wing, based in Flowood, Miss., has played a significant role, local, state and national dignitaries gathered at the wing's base Tuesday, Nov. 20, for a unique ceremony.

Wounded veterans of the past and air ambulances of the present became intertwined when the National Guard commissioned one of 172nd's eight C-17A Globemaster III the “Spirit of the Purple Heart.”

The C-17, tail number 3113, is the first and only aircraft in the U.S. military to carry the designation. It was selected because of the missions these planes are flying evacuating our wounded Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and Sailors from the combat zones in Iraq to hospitals in Germany and the United States.

The 183rd Airlift Squadron of the 172nd Airlift Wing has flown more than 340 evacuation missions over the past three years, transporting more than 22,000 patients to more comprehensive medical facilities.

Recently, the 172nd flew directly from Baghdad to Andrews Air Force Base with two in-flight refuelings to save the life of a Soldier, said Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross, the adjutant general of Mississippi.

The financial cost of the effort was enormous, but the general said he refused to tally the figures because it was not important when weighed with the life of a Soldier.

“We’re the only nation in the world

that would have done that,” he said. “We will not leave a wounded Soldier on the battlefield. We will take care of our wounded – always – because they have taken care of us.”

Many of them were in the audience. More than 200 members of the Order of the Purple Heart and their families attended the event to witness the commemoration.

“The people we honor today received wounds ...but it’s more than that. It’s true American spirit that we commemorate on the nose of this aircraft today,” Cross said.

The adjutant general said he well understood the sentiment behind the

“We will sign the vivid air with your honor as this Purple Heart slices through the sky...and we will take care of our wounded, always, because they have taken care of us.”

Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross

commemoration after personally awarding more than 50 purple hearts to Mississippi veterans wounded in Iraq or Afghanistan.

“And some, unfortunately, to the brave wife or parents whose son or daughter sacrificed their lives,” Cross said.

Gordon Mansfield, acting secretary of the Department of Veteran Affairs, called the Purple Heart “a uniquely American honor” and those who have received it the “lifeline of our democracy.”

The C-17A is also serving as a lifeline for the men and women wounded overseas. While on a medical

evacuation in March 2006, aircraft 3113 set a prestigious record when it topped one million miles for the aircraft type.

The “Spirit of the Purple Heart” will continue its mission with medical evacuation flights from overseas.

Mansfield, who earned two Purple Hearts during tours in Korea and Vietnam, said he was honored to speak during the commissioning because it was likely he would represent its passengers in the future.

“Every service man or woman that that plane brings home will some day belong to the Department of Veterans Affairs,” he said.

Mississippi State Auditor Phil Bryant, the lieutenant governor-elect and a former senator, said he took an oath each time he took office to serve the people of the state, but added a new oath on the stage to protect the rights of the veterans of Mississippi “so help me God.”

“I don’t feel like I should lead this group anywhere, but I would follow you anywhere,” he said.

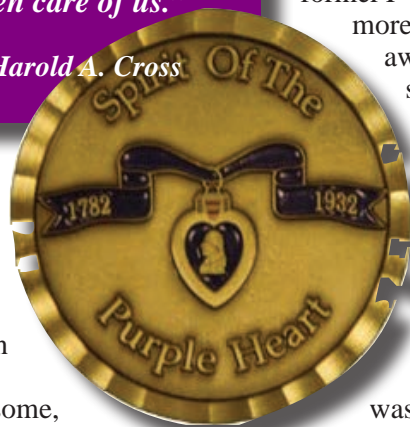
Lt. Col. Thomas Collins (ret.), a former F4 pilot who was a POW for more than seven years and was awarded two Purple Hearts, said he was impressed with the ceremony.

“The dedication itself, to me, was very appropriate,” he said. “The ability to fly from the battlefield straight to the hospital is tremendous.”

Collins said when he was wounded, it took him a week to make it to a major medical facility.

The Purple Heart is the oldest military award. It was established by George Washington and was known as the Badge of Military Merit. It now is awarded to anyone serving in the armed forces who received combat-related injuries. Since its inception in 1782, it is estimated that 1,700,000 Purple Heart medals have been awarded to members of the United States military.

Members of the Patriot Guard Riders of Mississippi show their respect to the many Purple Heart recipients attending the November C-17 naming ceremony at the 172nd Airlift Wing. The inset is an up close view of the name placed on the C-17 aircraft. Photos courtesy of Boeing, Inc.



NOTEWORTHY



BLUM AND CRAIG: Sgt. 1st Class John Craig, 41, center, receives congratulations from Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum and his wife Mitzi on Aug. 2 at the Rayburn House Office. He received the Bronze Star for Meritorious Service for his work in Iraq from Blum and Mississippi Congressman Gene Taylor. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Erick Studenicka)



Army Aviation Magazine recently announced winners of its 2006 Photography Contest winners in its second annual photography contest. Twenty-seven Army Aviation Association of America (Quad-A) members submitted a total of 44 photos, completed during the 2006 calendar year. The 1st Place winner called "Night Ops Sherpa" by CW4 David D. Guffy of the Indiana Army National Guard submitted the photo featured to the left. It is a C-23 Sherpa from Company I, 185th Aviation Regiment, Mississippi Army National Guard, awaiting her crew for another night mission in Iraq.



Nucor Steel Jackson Vice President and General Manager James Sheble receives the 2007 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award during the annual award ceremony Sept. 12 in Washington, D.C. (From left to right) Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Dr. David Chu, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Thomas Hall, James Sheble, and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. James Cartwright. (Photo by Army Multimedia and Visual Information Directorate)



Many Recognized for service during NGAUS conference

Several individuals, military and civilian, recently were recognized and presented awards during the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) conference. Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross, the adjutant general of Mississippi, presented the awards during a special presentation ceremony at his office in Jackson.

(Photo 1) Master Sgt. William C. Reid of Union was posthumously presented the Distinguished Service Award and accepted by his wife, Susan. The award was presented to the Reid family in recognition of the significant contributions given by Sergeant Reid. Reid was a member of the 106th Support Battalion for 27 years, serving and excelling in numerous positions. While deployed to Iraq in 2005, he was recognized for his heroism while involved in an ambush. He took change and helped care for wounded wile under intense direct and indirect fire.

(Photo 2) Constance L. Myers of Newton is presented the Meritorious Service Certificate for her tireless and dedicated efforts in supporting the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States.

(Photo 3) Mississippi Brig. Gen. (Ret.) James R. White of Newton is presented the Distinguished Service Medal for his outstanding and exceptional service to the United States, the Armed Forces of the United States or to NGAUS.

(Photo 4) Staff Sgt. Kim L. McCoy, Jr., of Vossburg is presented the Meritorious Service Certificate. A communications telephone maintenance craftsman with the 186th Air Refueling Wing, Meridian, was on his way to work when he noticed a vehicle belonging to a fellow Airman on the side of the road. He stopped and found the Airman in dire

need of immediate medical assistance. Without hesitation or reservation, he drove the Airman to needed, critical emergency medical care.

(Photo 5) The Honorable Charles E. Ross of Brandon is presented the Charles Dick Medal of Merit on behalf of NGAUS. Ross served Madison and Rankin Counties in the Mississippi Senate, and served 26 years with the Mississippi Air National Guard. As a public servant, he drafted, introduced, and championed the senate version of a bill allowing an exemption of up to \$15,000 in Reserve Pay for all Mississippi National Guard members. He continues to support the National Guard by serving as a strong and articulate public advocate while serving as a member of the Mississippi Senate's Veterans and Military Affairs Committee. The Charles Dick Medal of Merit was established in 1988 by NGAUS to recognize the contributions to the National Guard by an elected representative at the state and national levels and is NGAUS's third highest award.

(Photo 6) Beth Milling Graham of Union is presented the Patrick Henry Award on behalf of NGAUS. The award was created by NGAUS in 1989 to provide recognition to local officials and civic leaders, who in a position of great responsibility, distinguished themselves with outstanding and exceptional service to the Armed Forces of the United States, to the National Guard or NGAUS.

Photos by 1st Lt. Andy Thaggard, JFH

SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN . . . IN THE NEWS

Mississippi Soldier saves lives of family



SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico - Staff Sgt. Danny Stanley served a year in Iraq, but the awards for heroism came for what the National Guard Citizen-Soldier did back home.

Staff Sgt. Stanley is credited with saving the lives of three people after the Mississippi Army National Guard member drove upon a fiery car crash.

His decision to stop and help - he says it was more unquestioning reflex than a choice - and risk his life to pull a father, mother and daughter from a car engulfed in flames earned him: the Soldier's Medal, the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States Award for Heroism and now the Valley Forge Cross for Heroism from the National Guard Association of the United States.

Staff Sgt. Stanley received the Valley Forge Cross at the 129th NGAUS General Conference here Aug. 25.

In Iraq, he ran convoy escorts, worked checkpoints and performed more than 300 missions. But a unique challenge awaited him back home in Mississippi, when he drove upon a burning car on rural Munford's Crossing Oct. 5, 2006.

With emergency responders still not on the scene and other drivers not stopping, Staff Sgt. Stanley, who was en route to a mission at the Kosciusko Armory, did.

"A vehicle had overturned off a bridge down onto the road below," he said. To this day, he remembers only that the car was white. "It burst into flames. I got out and thought maybe the car had been cleared, but it hadn't."

Staff Sgt. Stanley signaled passing cars for help, but no one would stop.

He had seen crashes before, riding in his daddy's wrecker as a boy. He had seen even more in Iraq, where he served as a combat lifesaver.

When a burned and bruised man with broken bones emerged from the car, Staff Sgt. Stanley pulled him to safety. The man pointed back at the burning car.

"My family," he said. "My babies."

As the flames grew hotter, Staff Sgt. Stanley ran toward them.

"I opened the door," he said. "There was a woman lying there."

Burned and cut, she had compound fractures to both legs. But when Staff Sgt. Stanley reached for her, she pushed his hands away and said, "My babies."

"I didn't know, exactly ..." he recalled, words failing him.

"The fire was roaring. A little girl jumps over from the back seat into my arms. I just grabbed her and threw her onto my back, and grabbed mom. She was about 2. I can see her. She had little pigtails and a white shirt on. I pulled her and her mom out and drug her over to the ditch."

A teen-age girl walked up. "Can I help?" she said. Staff Sgt. Stanley gave her the baby and a desert camouflage uniform shirt from his car. The girl wrapped the child in the shirt.

"My babies," the woman said, again.

"I got the baby," Staff Sgt. Stanley said.

"No, I have two in the back," the woman said.

"My heart sank," Staff Sgt. Stanley recalled. "The car just ... flames were everywhere."

He went back to the car. He was wearing his Army fitness uniform, and the heat singed all the hair off his legs.

"You could hear the paint just cracking," he said. "You couldn't touch the car anymore. I dropped to my knees and just prayed right there that God took them before they felt the flames, you know? Maybe the smoke took them before - they died in their sleep."

"If they would've cried, I would've died."

Of the five people in the car, Staff Sgt. Stanley saved three. Had the 2nd Battalion, 114th Field Artillery Regiment, Soldier not stopped, everyone in the car would have died, authorities said.

The awards that came later were a surprise - one that quietly delights this unassuming Guardsman, his wife, DeAnna, and their 8-year-old son Colby.

"I was told 'thank you,'" Staff Sgt. Stanley said. "And that's all I wanted. I did what any Soldier would do. What any man would do. I didn't expect anything out of it."

Staff Sgt. Stanley's chain of command, his support chain and accident investigators made sure his heroism was recognized.

"I appreciate it," he said, turning a coin from the chief of the National Guard Bureau in his fingers.

"As a Soldier, I'd seen so much in Iraq, I felt like I couldn't do enough for them, you know?" he said. "I couldn't give them enough. I couldn't help enough. Which I knew down in my heart that's all I could do, but I just felt so vacant."

"I didn't think about it. I saw it. I went into action. It started, and it didn't stop until it was over. When the firemen and the policemen and the sheriffs and the coroners and everyone got there, I felt I could breathe again. I was still in shock at what had happened as far as the babies, but I knew in my heart I had done all I could do."

Staff Sgt. Stanley now works at Camp Shelby as an observer-controller running ranges.

(Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill, author of this article, writes for the National Guard Bureau.)

General Cross visits deployed Mississippi troops

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait -The Adjutant General of the Mississippi National Guard, an Air Force Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross, toured the 67-09 Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot here on Dec. 11, where half of the approximately 200-member unit is deployed from the 1108th AVCRAD, Gulfport, Miss.

Cross was briefed on the unit's mission by the AVCRAD Commander Col. James G. Young, Gulfport, who recently arrived for a year-long deployment with his unit to service and repair rotary aircraft for all Southwest Asia.

The Mississippi Guard chief was accompanied by his Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Cooley.

"The command Sergeant Major and I are visiting Mississippi National Guardsmen, about 650 of whom are in Iraq and Kuwait and a few in Afghanistan. We're here at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait with Gulfport's 1108th AVCRAD, Colonel Young's detachment, who has the flag for the AVCRAD mission, which also includes Guard units from three other states . . . looking at their individual tasks and watching how hard they're working.

They are really committed to this mission and doing a great job for America," said Cross.

"We brought a message from the governor and the people from Mississippi — that we support our deployed Guard Soldiers 100 percent back home. We realize that they are winning this war and that they will be home soon. They are the best we've got and we are so proud of them," Cross said.

Task Force AVCRAD provides limited depot level maintenance support to all rotary aircraft units in Southwest Asia. The task force is also supported by Company B of the 935th Battalion out of Chicago, and Guard members from Missouri and California.

The Soldiers provide supply parts and intermediate maintenance support by rebuilding rotary aircraft engines, rotary blade repair and avionics equipment support. Task Force AVCRAD also receives and ships aircraft back to the U.S. through air and seaports in Kuwait as aviation units deploy and redeploy under the Third/U.S. Army Central area of responsibility. *(See more photos on next two pages).*



Key leaders of Task Force AVCRAD gather with the Adjutant General of the Mississippi National Guard, Air Force Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross during an outside tour of the rotary aircraft repair facility at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Dec. 11. Mississippi has approximately 650 National Guard members deployed to Southwest Asia. (Left to right) Maj. Daryl Gilbert, product control officer; Command Sgt. Major Johnny Williams, AVCRAD Command Sergeant Major; Col. James Young, AVCRAD commander; Maj. Gen. Cross; Lt. Col. David Williams, deputy commander; Chief Warrant Officer Charles Hildebrand; supply supervisor and Maj. Gregory Hargett, supply officer. U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Crystal Porter.



Air Force Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross, the Mississippi Adjutant General and Col. James Young, Task Force AVCRAD commander, visit with Specialist Christopher Volpe, a rotary engine repairman from West Chicago, Ill., during a tour of the rotary aircraft facility at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Dec. 11. U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Crystal Porter



General Cross dines with Soldiers of the 1108th before returning home. U.S. Army Photo by Chuck Sprague.

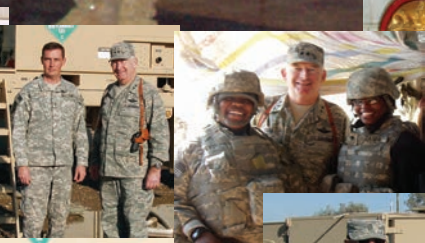
Merry Christmas from Overseas

And A Happy New Year!



From the Soldiers of the 1108th AVCRAD,
288th Sapper, 1387th QM "Water Dogs",
113th MP Company and others currently
serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS





Sgt. Jesse Lindsey (2nd right) poses with other competitors of the NCO of the Year national competition in front of the Minuteman at the National Guard Bureau offices in Washington, D.C.

Continued from page 15

The competition outline at the Army National Guard Warrior Training Center was tough for Lindsey, but the experience he said was unforgettable.

Following the events, all competitors were treated to a huge party hosted by LTG H. Steven Blum at his home overlooking the Potomac. Several awards were presented and several top enlisted leaders were present to include CSM David Hudson from the National Guard Bureau, and CSM John D. Gipe, Army National Guard of the United States, who said national competitors far surpassed their expectations particularly in the 15-obstacle course events.

While it may have been a treat for the competitors, CSM Cooley said Lindsey had large blisters on his feet as he accepted awards during Blum's celebration gala for the Soldiers. "But, I never heard any gripes or complaints from him," said Cooley.

Overall, Lindsey said 2007 has been indescribable. "I have made many sacrifices that I looked at as investments. There have been many hours of frustration, but certainly many of joy as well. Competing for NCO of the Year will be without doubt, the highlight of my career, if not, my life," said Lindsey. There have been many awards, accomplishments, and memories throughout this journey. I learned more about leadership, mentorship, sacrifices, the feel of achievement, and more about myself than words could explain. Because of the

blessings of God and the versatile abilities He has given me, I have had an experience that will be the highlight of my career from now on."

He did not win either of the two titles to advance him to the Army's Best Warrior Competition, but was very proud of his accomplishment and also gathered the admiration of the leadership in Mississippi, especially his mentors who stayed the courses with him.

"I told a mentor, SFC Pres Foster, that I was only a product of opportunities," said Lindsey, "and he corrected me by saying that I capitalized on the opportunities. Since the national competition, I have completed Warrant Officer School. It was all because of the doors that were open for me through the NCO of the Year program, supporters, endorsers and others who gave me the opportunity.

For all the leaders that endorse, support and control programs, I sincerely appreciate everything they do. The support and vision of our leaders in this great state are like none other. They truly do go beyond to support their subordinates in every way. And for all the Soldiers who would like the experience and opportunities of a lifetime, the Soldier/NCO of the Year program is a great way to get there."

Military Confronts Combat Stress at Front Lines

By Donna Miles American Forces Press Service

As troops here deal with stressors ranging from road-side bombs to checkpoints where it's hard to tell friend from foe, the military is ensuring they get the mental health support they need to remain with their units and avoid long-term problems.

Everyone in a combat zone experiences some degree of stress, Army Maj. Dara Josiah-Howze, a psychiatrist with the 55th Medical Company (Combat Stress Control) in Baghdad told the American Forces Press Service. "You have a normal person in an abnormal environment, and you're exposing them to abnormal situations."

When the Iraq operation began two years ago, the biggest source of stress was the combat operations, she said. Now it's the more elusive threats-improvised explosive devices, vehicle-borne IEDs and suicide bombers, among them.

Symptoms run the gamut, Josiah-Howze said, from eating and sleeping disorders to irritability or anxiousness. Some people startle easily; others demonstrate low energy levels or wake up with nightmares. Others have trouble maintaining focus or following through on a project or just feel generally down, she said.

Army Col. Thomas Burke, DoD director of mental health policy in Washington, said troops have experienced these symptoms throughout American military history. During the Civil War, they were called "nostalgia" or "Soldier's heart," he said. During World War I, the affliction was "shell shock" and during World War II, "combat fatigue" or "battle fatigue."

Today, these symptoms are called "combat and operational stress reactions," the result of the extreme stress troops are exposed to in combat as well as the unpredictable counterinsurgency operations currently taking place in Iraq.

Sleep deprivation during extended operations, exposure to noise, heat or smoke and the danger of being hurt or killed or seeing others get hurt or killed, "all take a toll on a person's mental state," Burke said.

But this doesn't mean affected troops are mentally ill, Burke stressed. "What they are experiencing is a normal human reaction to an abnormal situation," he said.

And experience and research proves that the best way to treat these troops is to offer care as close to their units as possible, rather than "labeling them as broken" and evacuating them from the region. The latter approach actually puts them at higher risk of developing longer-term problems, Burke said.

"The whole approach to mental health is different than it once was," he said. "We're not pulling people out of line and sending them back to the states. Now the philosophy is to treat these symptoms early, treat them far forward, treat them aggressively, and get these Soldiers back to their jobs."

This proactive, preventive approach to treatment keeps troops as close to their unit as possible so their friends and chain of command can maintain contact with them until they return to duty. And the treatment offered is relatively simple: sleep, rest and workshops rather than elaborate psychoanalyst techniques and procedures, Burke said.

"We refer to it as PIES," he explained. "Proximity, as close to the unit as possible. Immediacy, providing treatment now, not evacuating them to the rear and treating them in a week. Expectation, maintaining the assumption that they will return to duty. And simplicity, keeping the treatment simple."

Combat stress control teams are fanned out throughout Iraq to provide mental health care to service members experiencing combat and operational stress reactions, and to help prevent others from developing them. In addition, behavioral health teams are embedded in units in Iraq as well as Afghanistan.

Much of the mobile teams' focus is on prevention. They educate service members and their chains of command about symptoms of combat and operational stress reactions, self-help techniques and exercises they can use to counter these reactions, and professional services available to help them.

Troops who request it or appear to need extra help are typically referred for "restorative care," Josiah-Howze explained. This care, offered at fixed locations, is generally limited to 72 hours and includes more intensive stress and anger management, relaxation training and counseling through individual and group sessions.

During their unit visits, combat stress teams emphasize that nobody is immune to combat stress, regardless of their rank or position in the unit. "It affects everyone," said Josiah-Howze. "We've treated everyone from the single teenager to senior officers."

Josiah-Howze said she's convinced that treating combat stress quickly and in the environment can help prevent the condition from evolving into more serious acute stress or post-traumatic stress disorders.

"Through the years, the military has realized that if you wait too long (to provide care), it can have negative effects," she said. "The best way to deal with the issue is to keep (the affected troops) in the environment and to address the problem then and there."

This approach will likely reduce the number of Soldiers who will need Veterans Affairs Department mental health services later on, she said, and has the immediate advantage of keeping military units intact during their operations.

Our motto is to "Conserve the Fighting Spirit," Josiah-Howze said. "We're not here to remove Soldiers," Josiah-Howze said. "We're here to help them with the problems they're having so they can return to their units and keep fighting."

OUR HISTORY

Reflections of a Soldier

This was a Veterans Day address given at the G.I. Museum, Gautier Mississippi, November 11, 2007 by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Keith Davis

It is 06:00 A.M. A staff officer hands a message from Field Marshall Foch to the commander of the American Expeditionary Force, General John J. Pershing. It states that an armistice had been reached with Germany. At the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918, the once proud armies of Kaiser Wilhelm would lay down their arms. From Verdun to the Argonne Forest, peace was restored and all *was* truly quiet along the western front.

In the year that followed, a massive demobilization of the AEF would return the Soldiers of the “Lost Generation” back home where, like their grandfathers before them, they would pick up the pieces of their interrupted lives. As a song of the era went “How you gonna keep them down on farm after they had seen Parieeee!” These veterans eventually would settle in, with the knowledge that they had helped *win the war that would end all wars*. Or so they thought!



Eddie Rickenbacker and of a devout Christian hunter from the hills of Tennessee, Sgt Alvin C. York, would capture the imagination of America’s youth for years to come.

In 1919 President Wilson signed into law establishing each 11th day of November as Armistice Day as a national holiday in order to remember the tragedy of the war and of the sacrifices made by our Soldiers “*Over There*”. Some 35 years later it would be changed by Congress to Veterans Day in order to remember all Soldier’s of all our nation’s conflicts.

As time passed our Doughboys of the AEF grew older but the memories and hidden scars of war, the after effects of shell shock remained. This condition would be known to a later generation as Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome.

As the world gravitated toward another World War, Hollywood came calling to remember these heroes in films such as the *Fighting 69th* and *Sergeant York*. Alvin York not wanting to cash in on his Medal of Honor, felt it would be dishonorable to himself and his fellow comrades to make a profit on a movie that celebrated the taking of human life. “*This uniform ain’t for sale!*” he would say. Only after being convinced that it was his patriotic duty, to awake the American

people of the growing dangers of Hitler’s Fascism in Europe, did he consent. And with the provision that Gary Cooper would play the role. Good choice Alvin! I

always liked Gary Cooper!

As the world turned, new campaigns, new names and legends would be added to our history. Midway, Anzio, Normandy, the Ardennes, Iwo Jima, The Chosen Reservoir, Pork Chop Hill, the A Shau Valley, the Mekong Delta, Desert One, Grenada, Beirut, Panama, Kafji, Somalia, Fallujha, and Roberts Ridge would in effect become the Altars of Freedom for our best and brightest, who would lay down their lives. It is for these and for my brethern who returned home, that we gather here today to honor and celebrate their lives.

Growing up in the Fontainebleau Area, I played in the nearby woods and fields of my grandparents farm. Fished in the blue holes to the south and helped my daddy cut wood along these dirt roads. I never imagined that I would be speaking to this distinguished group here one day 11 November 2007.



For those who can, think back with me to that first day that you joined the service. You arrived from the MEPS Station or recruiter, bused across Kansas, or some Louisiana rice field, arriving at a training depot at San Diego, the Great Lakes or Parris Island. You may have

been in a Pullman car traveling 3 days thru Texas. Can you remember the hot Georgia days at Sand Hill or Harmony Church at the Benning School for Boys? Perhaps it was an Air Training Command Base out west. Or were you one of the fortunate ones who joined the Long Grey Line up the Hudson River as a plebe, learning of duty, honor country?

Then it happens, the cattle car, bus, or truck stops, and you hear:

“YOU GOT 10 SECONDS TO GET OFF OF MY BUS! MOVE! MOVE! MOVE! DROP GIVE ME 50!”

And so it begins...

Now one of the first things that a Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine learns is to be flexible!

Change is constant and where two or more gather together for any length of time the first sergeant, gunny or master chief will surely have a detail!

Police Call! Pick up them butts!

Be flexible! If your orders state: Assigned Yong-Son Garrison Seoul, that means you’re going to the DMZ!

Now, I am a product of the Ocean Springs Public School System, and a graduate of Mississippi State University. **THANK YOU LAUD!**

I never was taught that, in order to communicate, all one really needed was to use slangs, terms and acronyms! Be sure to say **HOORAH!**

TOO EASY, FUBAR, BOHICA, ASAP, ALICE PACKS, MOPP GEAR, BDU, DCU, ACU, PICKLE SUITS, MICKEY MOUSE BOOTS, FLIPLS, RUPERTS, HUEY HOGS, PUFF THE MAGIC DRAGON, SCREAMING MEAMES, FORTY AND EIGHTS, MENIE WUFFERS, DONALD DUCKS, MULBERRYS, VICTOR CHARLIE, WILLIE PETER, DOPES ON A ROPE, ROTOR-HEADS, TREAD-HEADS, SOS, THE BIG HEAT TAB IN THE SKY, MEDEVACS, LZ, DUST OFF and PRCs (That’s a radio), HAJIES?

But always remember that your rifle is a weapon and not a gun! Forget this commandment, and you incur the wrath of TOP!

Then it’s time to see the SKY PILOT!

Who could forget that good food and the KP that went with it?

Hard tack, Embalmed Beef, K-Rations, C-Rations, Boil in Bags, Jimmy Deans, John Wayne Bars, and for those of you who remember the late unpleasantness of two years ago...

The *Brown Bag Special*, the MRE! Don’t forget the Tabasco Sauce! Thank goodness! You did not get the early



we washed ours in a 5 gallon pickle bucket and hung out to dry on a line or humvee for a few minutes.

And what veteran could forget the early mornings spent with a cut in half 55 gallon drum, a can of diesel, an old tent pole and a match.

Just remember! Take care of that before the wind shifts and blows the soot and other material onto the Senior CW4’s uniforms hanging on the line.

One of the worst cussings I ever got!

Finally, I grew up surrounded by veterans. My daddy and uncle were in Korea. I had relatives in both World Wars and in Southeast Asia. And not one, ever glorified war!

They always spoke fondly of their buddies and the what it took to get thru



the hard times.

Hollywood does not always get it right.

As a kid I often imagined myself on a Southeast Asian beach strutting around with a big black Stenson hat with Huey’s flying around and giving a speech about the wonders of napalm!

Or like Audie Murphy, burning up the barrel of a machine gun on top of a tank, taking out the bad guys!

Well let’s chalk those up to the inpertinance of my youth.

Wisdom Comes with Age!

As I tell my son it’s not about the medals, it’s not about the glory. War is for real!

You don’t get a do over, you don’t hit the reset button, and it’s not over in 30 minutes even with the commercials!

It’s about doing one’s duty, doing what he or she has been called to do!

Continues on next page



As in the heroic Greek traditions, stories of valor and courage permeated the national consciousness. Tales of Major Charles Whittlesey’s Lost Battalion, the Harlem Hellfighters of the 369th Regiment, of Air Ace Captain

But aren't we blessed
to have those such as
these?



OCS Class 49 graduates twelve new officers

Not pictured are: 2nd Lt. Donald Smith, Company E, 1/185th Aviation, of Saltillo; 2nd Lt. Brandon Russell, 114th Army Liaison Team, of Brookhaven; and 2nd Lt. Robert Clark, Company B, 2/198th CAB, of Clarksdale.



A funny look at Pfc. Smith in the 1970s (top) and Smith serving today (bottom). Firing in the kneeling position went out in the late 70's, and due to recent events the Army went back to the kneeling position.



Continued on next page



I LOVE A PARADE--Specialist John P. Switzer, Jr. prepares to toss some candy to a large crowd of parade-goers during the 2007 Pearl Christmas Parade Dec. 1. Switzer was selected as grand marshal for the parade by members of the Patriot Guard of Mississippi and the Pearl Chamber of Commerce, and represented his Mississippi Army National Guard unit, the 113th Military Police Company currently serving in Iraq. With him are son, Logan, wife, Jan, and son, Luke. The family resides in Pearl. (Photo by Sandy Ates, JFH-Public Affairs)



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