

# GUARD

A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI



# DETAIL

ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Fall 2016

## New Leadership, Same Commitment

Boyles assumes new role as  
Adjutant General

Returns to  
150th BEB  
Service

Armed Forces Museum  
Reopens at Shelby

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The Mississippi National Guard appointed its first permanent military judge at the state Capitol Saturday, Oct. 15, 2016.

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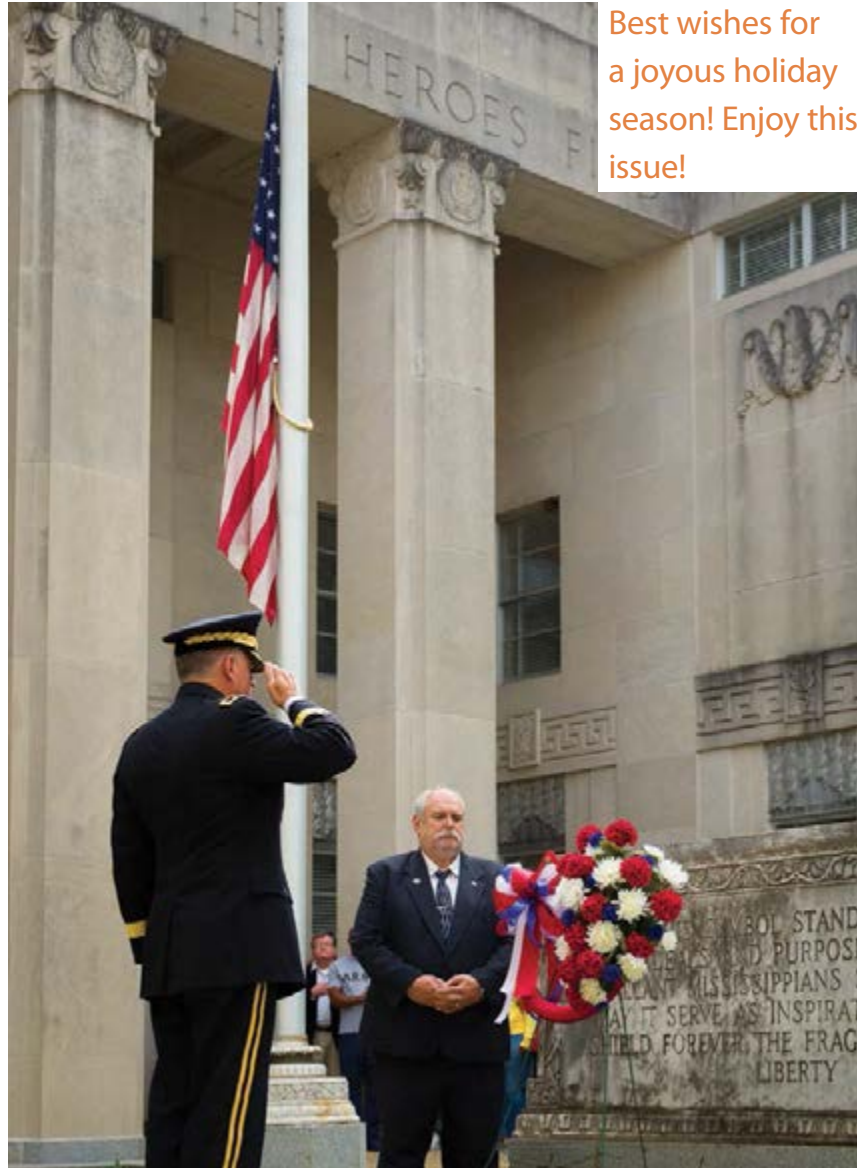
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Best wishes for a joyous holiday season! Enjoy this issue!



Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, pays tribute to fallen service members on Veterans Day at the War Memorial in Jackson, Miss. He is joined by Leonard and Sandra Scardino, the parents of 2nd Lt. Anthony Scardino, formerly of the 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne). (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tim Morgan, JFH Public Affairs Office)

**Correction:** In the Summer 2016, we reported that Lt. Col. Joy Alexander is a teacher at Stone High School. She actually is a teacher at West Harrison High School

# LETTER FROM The Editor



## MUCH ACCOMPLISHED, MORE TO DO

The year 2016 is quickly coming to a close. While reflecting on the many Mississippi National Guard accomplishments since January, numerous team and individual milestones come to mind. Our 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team successfully completed its Multi-echelon Integrated Brigade Training exercise at Fort Hood, Texas; Major General Augustus L. Collins said goodbye as adjutant general and concluded one of the most successful officer careers in Mississippi military history; our Air Guard hosted yet another Southern Strike joint exercise at the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center; and the 1108th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group returned to Mississippi after great service in Kuwait. These are just a few of the many strides made by our Soldiers and Airmen over the past year.

The years ahead offer tremendous benefits for Mississippi National Guard

Service members. Our education, pay, leadership, travel, and growth opportunities are second to none. I've attended several high level meetings recently and the common theme in them has been that our future lies with our young Soldiers and Airmen. A major factor in our force's future success is dependent on their drive towards excellence. A greater focus is now in place to ensure that more junior personnel achieve the requirements necessary for promotion to the next grade. The leaders of tomorrow are in need today. In short, we simply have more to do to help them achieve success for a stellar Guard career.

As we move to guarantee victory with this and other challenges, the Mississippi National Guard Public Affairs community will be there to cover our young Service Members, their accomplishments and others in 2017. We encourage you to contact us with story ideas for the Guard Detail and ask you to follow the MSNG on our official social media platforms. It has been our pleasure to tell your stories and we look forward to seeing you in front of the lens in 2017!

**Best wishes for a joyous holiday season!  
Enjoy this issue!**

Lt. Col. Christian Patterson  
Editor-in Chief



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## PUBLISHER

THE ADJUTANT  
GENERAL

Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles



## EDITOR

Lt. Col. Christian Patterson  
Public Affairs Officer

## ASSISTANT EDITOR

2nd Lt. Rachel Henson  
Deputy PAO

## PRODUCTION

### Graphic Designer

Justin

### Contributing Writers 2nd

Lt. Terry Hill Staff  
Sgt. Michael Williams Staff  
Sgt. Tim Morgan Danielle  
Thomas

For comments or suggestions  
please phone 601.313.6271



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# MANEUVERS



View the Fall 2016 edition of The Mississippi Minuteman for Southern Strike 17 video!



A U.S. Army UH-60 Black Hawk hovers over the water near a Gulfport Fire Department rescue boat in the Gulf of Mexico during Southern Strike 17, Oct. 28, 2016. SSTK 17 is a total force, multi-service training exercise hosted by the Mississippi Air National Guard's Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, Miss., from Oct. 24 through Nov. 4, 2016.

SSTK 17 included joint service personnel from approximately 80 units and 33 states. This year's event focused heavily on Special Operations Full Mission Profiles, Air Superiority, Close Air Support, and Aeromedical Evacuation. Participating forces also responded to scenarios requiring Combat Search and Rescue, Littoral and Riverine Direct Action, Personnel Recovery, and Non-Combatant Evacuation. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Clayton Cupit, 1st Combat Camera Squadron)



# LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP



» On Sept. 1, 2016, I officially assumed responsibility as the new adjutant general of the Mississippi National Guard. Having joined in 1982, it is a tremendous honor to continue service with the thousands of Soldiers, Airmen, Family members, and Civilian employees who keep our Guard strong and among the best military organizations in the nation.

As we move forward into 2017, strong efforts will continue to ensure that exceptional service continues in the years ahead. The tenants guiding us will consist of four fundamentals; a ready posture, a resilient force, future-focused priorities, and a commitment to maintaining valuable relationships with our numerous civilian and military partners.

The hallmark of a strong National Guard is its ability to be ready for any contingency, stateside or abroad. A few critical components included

in this effort include individual and collective readiness. Our emphasis will be to ensure Soldiers and Airmen complete all required schools, achieve the appropriate level of physical fitness, promptly address all health issues, and maintain all assigned equipment. We must also continue to build and maintain strong units and teams to respond to emergencies at home and missions forward into the future.

Along with readiness, the MSNG must be resilient in the face of many challenges that can impede progress. Moving forward, our leaders will promote access to programs available to combat life's challenges, place an enhanced emphasis on safety, and work harder to keep our Guardsmen and their families on the Mississippi team. To achieve this, we will increase awareness of employment, educational, and youth program opportunities, and expose our employers to more Guard activities to increase cooperation and support.

In addition to readiness and resilience, we must be committed to planning for the future. It is absolutely essential that we all play a role in building future leaders and making strong decisions to set the MSNG up for success down the road. This will be accomplished through stronger recruiting efforts, and increased career management and leader development opportunities. I am committed to ensuring that our future leaders receive mentorship today for positions of greater responsibility tomorrow.

Finally, the MSNG will continue to strengthen our relationships with our numerous military, state, federal, and non-governmental partners. Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, county officials, our state partnership program partners, and active and reserve component friends across the services are just a few of the organizations with whom we will affiliate. Training exercises and leader exchanges are examples of events in store to fortify current MSNG relationships and develop new ones.

As we celebrate this holiday season, please be sure to spend time with loved ones and thank them, along with your employers, for their support of the MSNG. We simply cannot achieve our mission without them. I look forward to serving with you for what will be another eventful and successful year in 2017! ■

Janson D. Boyles  
Major General, MSNG  
The Adjutant General of Mississippi

# LETTER FROM SENIOR NCO



» Being prepared in a military sense means a lot of different things to different people and organizations. Some believe it means you're physically and mentally ready to go at a moment's notice, while others think of preparedness more in the administrative sense. Being prepared is just another way to describe readiness. Therefore, the question becomes, what does it take to be ready? One needs to be physically, mentally, administratively, and personally ready to meet all challenges, whether they are overseas contingency operations or a state response to a natural disaster.

Being physically and mentally ready means our Soldiers are physically strong enough to do their job. The APFT is a good method for testing, but at the end of the day, a regiment of physical training within the unit is what will make our Soldiers physically ready. Soldiers

must also continuously train in their job field, and hopefully train as they would fight in replicated conditions. Lastly, we need to ensure our Soldiers are also trained in all of the Soldier skills, which are common to all of us. When these things are done, we have Soldiers that can physically do the job and deal with whatever stressors are out there.

Administrative and personal readiness focuses not just on the Soldier, but also on his or her Family. I put these two forms of readiness together because of the inexorable Family linkage to overall readiness. We as leaders need to ensure that our Soldier's Families are ready for deployments. We need to bring these Family's into the units and ensure that we know the issues and problems they face, that we empathize with their plight, and that we take an active role at helping them to find assistance, if need be. If we do this, we have Soldiers that are able to focus on the commander's mission and get the job done without distraction.

We as a National Guard are doing a better job at being prepared than we did 20 years ago. It's a dynamic environment; therefore, being prepared also means being flexible in meeting change. When Soldiers see leaders taking ownership of problems affecting the Soldier and his or her Family, then they say to themselves, "that's an organization I want to be part of and a leader I want to follow." I challenge leaders out there to own readiness in all of its forms and strive to make sure every single unit member is ready to go. ■

Jeffrey L. Dawson  
Command Sergeant Major  
2nd Battalion 20th SFG

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes  
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

» People tend to think of archaeologists as detectives of the deep past, but two sites here barely a century old have captured the attention of historians digging into the camp's origins.

Established in 1917, the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center was one of 16 sites selected to host a national Army camp to train Soldiers at the outbreak of U.S. involvement in World War I. Historians have been delving into the camp's original bakery and training trenches since August.

The general location of the sites has never been a mystery, but precisely what they may reveal about the early years of Camp Shelby still isn't known. Rita McCarthy, the state cultural resources program manager, is intrigued.

"I've actually known about both of these sites for a long, long time and I've always wanted to do ground penetrating radar

## Digging Into the Past

(GPR) at these particular projects, especially the bakery," she said. "The bakery is a wide-open area. There is nothing there. There was very little activity there during World War II, so I knew the archaeological record would probably be intact. So the ground penetrating radar would be the best way to identify if there were intact ovens or remnants of the sewer lines or water lines and things like that.

"As far as the trenches go, I was hoping we would be able to identify some tunnels. I knew the cave shelters were connected via a tunnel system, but I didn't exactly know how big the cave shelters were under the ground and how they were interconnected."

Camp Shelby was chosen as a national training site for several reasons. Its location was once a "vast, open, cut over pine plantation" with hills. It closely resembled the devastated European countryside after years of war in which battles were fought for inches of muddy ground in a "No Man's Land" between trenches dug by the opposing sides, McCarthy said.

In addition, two railroad lines came through it – the Mississippi Central to the north and the Gulf and Ship Island to the south. The railways were vital for the movement of troops and supplies.

The railroad was especially vital to the bakery, which relied on it for the timber, coal, and coke used in the ovens. The ovens were located directly beside the tracks of the Mississippi Central line and the trains would dump coal and coke directly into holding bins there, McCarthy said.

The railways at the camp today are different from those in the early 1900s. There are no tracks at the bakery's location



in the cantonment area today.

Mississippians built Camp Shelby, McCarthy said. The Mississippi National Guard arrived in July 1917 and began constructing the first

buildings.

"The (Army) troops that came to Camp Shelby began arriving in August 1917 and were part of the 38th (Infantry) Division," McCarthy said.

"They were troops from Indiana, West Virginia, and Kentucky. They trained here for a little over a year and then the units began shipping out. The 38th Division's ranks were

then filled with Soldiers from Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama - and neighboring states would come in and work, including an African-American battalion that came in to »





» work with the 113th (Engineer Company) who built the training trenches.”

At any given time, she said, approximately 36,000 troops were training at Camp Shelby on a diet mostly consisting of

bread. The bakery was constructed in early 1918 to meet this crucial need and staffed with Soldiers from the 38th Infantry Division’s Bakery Battalion. On average, 60 Soldiers baked about 14,000 loaves of bread a day in the 14 ovens, which consisted of brick and steel for cooking and a small tent for preparation. Their product was distributed through the bakery

building.

“They were very proud of their work,” McCarthy said. “They were so important they were one of the few battalions that actually had barracks. They had real buildings instead of tents to sleep in.”

McCarthy said she hoped the GPR would identify exactly where the ovens were located so she could target the actual digging at verified oven sites. The GPR, which was conducted in late September, should provide evidence of “features” that are out of place in the existing landscape, such as bricks.

“I get excited because it’s like what is that going to be?



were built by the 113th Engineer Co. Of the 38th ID in 1918. Although Camp Shelby still hosts several sites with collapsed World War I training trenches, this particular site has a unique feature that

sets it apart from even other sites throughout the U.S.

“This is the only location on Camp Shelby, and perhaps the United States, that I am aware of that cave shelters and depots are still in existence,” McCarthy said. “These were used for the storage of ammunition, supplies, and officers’ quarters. They are connected to linear trenches, which were located above ground.” »



But, I guess the really exciting part is being able to dig down because you don’t know what you’re going to encounter,” she said. “As you go down, it may be a trash pit. It may not be an oven.”

While McCarthy hopes to obtain some artifacts at the bakery site, it is information she seeks at the training trenches.

Nestled in the woods off a dirt road near Motor Pool 3, Soldiers passing by have probably never considered that they were training mere yards from where troops defended and made assaults from trenches dug into the earth.

Those particular trenches

**(Spread) Archaeologists focused on two sites of interest – trenches that were used to prepare Soldiers for trench warfare in Europe and a bakery that fed the thousands of Soldiers mobilizing for WWI.**





» The collapsed trenches now resemble dry creek beds and the cave shelters appear to be animal dens. However, McCarthy hopes a combination of GPR and camera probes will determine the entire layout of the site.

GPR was used to determine how the cave shelters and depots were connected to the linear trenches and connected to one another,

as well as determine the size of the shelters. Cameras were then used to see inside the portions of the shelters and trenches that have not collapsed.

A concrete bunker slightly off to the side of the trench site is believed to be part of it, but its purpose is unknown, she said. No one had officially been in the bunker in nearly a century so she was excited

when cameras revealed it was safe to enter Sept. 28.

What was thought to be a large bunker was instead a small area approximately 6 ft. long by 2 ft. wide slowly giving way to the nature of time and revealing its age with cracks and rotting concrete. Its purpose is still a mystery, but McCarthy said she believes it was most likely an ammunition cache.

The clues continue to mount as the investigation continues, but the historian said she expects to publish her findings within the next year. ■



**Soldiers mobilizing for World War I dig trenches at Camp Shelby in 1917. The trenches were used to prepare them for trench warfare in Europe.**



**Soldiers sprint across "no man's land" at Camp Shelby during World War 1 in 1917. "No man's land" was a term used in WWI to describe the scarce and dangerous area between two opposing trenches.**

Story by Tech. Sgt Ed Staton  
172nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

» For several years Mike Rowe skyrocketed to success by performing a series of difficult, strange, and disgusting occupations on his Discovery Channel show, “Dirty Jobs.”

Although there is much less fanfare, the 172d Airlift Wing’s Staff Sgt. Michael Hamilton is also making a career of doing jobs that others may shy away from.

The Mississippi Air National Guardsman is a water and fuel systems maintenance specialist in the 172d AW’s Civil Engineer Squadron.

That assignment makes him responsible for being able to install, inspect, maintain, and troubleshoot plumbing, water distribution, wastewater collection and treatment systems, as well as natural gas and liquid fuel storage and dispensing, and more.

Whether performed at Jackson’s Thompson Field or at a deployed location, these duties often put Hamilton in a messy situation.

“A lot of people don’t want to come into contact with stuff I

## Cleaning Up With Dirty Jobs

have to work on,” Hamilton said. “Sometimes I have to clear stoppages out of sewer lines and urinals. You don’t want that mess to get on you, but sometimes it does.”

One might think that this would be the last type of Air Force job that an individual would sign up for. Hamilton, however, actually cross-trained from his electrical power position within the wing to his current Air Force Specialty Code.

“It’s actually an awesome career field to be in,” said the nine-year Guardsman, who is married and expecting his first child.

“Instead of spending your time flipping a lot of switches, you get to go out and put your hands on things,” Hamilton said.

Hands on opportunities for members of the wing’s civil engineer squadron extend far beyond the local projects they work on. Its Airmen have recently completed overseas deployments in Kuwait and have completed construction projects in Australia.

“We work hard, but we get to do a lot of cool things as well,” said 172nd CES Unit Training Manager Master Sgt. Kimberly Varnell, who emphasized that there are plenty of morale-building moments as well.

“On our way to Australia, we had stops in Guam and Hawaii,” Varnell said. “Because of these assignments, a lot of our Airmen get to see places they might not have been able to



Members of the 172d Airlift Wing’s Civil Engineering Squadron prepare to drain water from a pond to process it through the Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit. (Photo by Tech Sgt Marsha Williams, U.S. Air Force)

ever see otherwise.”

Another benefit associated with skills gained by Hamilton and other members of the wing’s CES are how they correspond with careers on the civilian side for the

communities for skills we develop here. Whether you’re a plumber, do fuel system work, or another one of our jobs, you can make money with those skills.”

traditional Guardsmen.

“Our members are getting a trade that you don’t get from some of the positions we have,” said Varnell, who also serves as the squadron’s Prime Base Emergency Engineering Force Manager. “There is a big need in our

**To qualify as a Water and Fuel Systems Specialist:**

- Obtain membership in MSANG
- ASVAB Requirements – Mechanical 47, Electrical 28

For more information, contact MSgt Edward Davenport, 172d Airlift Wing recruiting office at 601.405.8127

**REQUIREMENTS**



Staff Sgt Michael Hamilton connects a hose to a Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit while training at March Air Reserve Base in California. (Photo by Tech Sgt Marsha Williams, U.S. Air Force)

# McCormick takes her patrols to sky

Story by Pfc. Christopher Shannon  
102d Public Affairs Detachment

» Warrant Officer Jessica McCormick has a rich military career, now highlighted by becoming the first female Apache helicopter pilot in the Mississippi Army National Guard.

McCormick graduated from the Army Aviation School at Fort Rucker, Ala., on Sept. 29, 2016.

"I never set out to be the first female to do something. I've always been really headstrong," she said. "It was a lot of weight on my shoulders because if I failed it would be like all females failed because I was the one and only from Mississippi."

McCormick is stationed with Company A, 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment in Tupelo, Miss., which flies the AH-64D Apache Longbow.

"I can see her having a great impact on the Alpha Company, Punishers, and the Mississippi National Guard," said 1st Lt. Rudy James Pyron, company commander.

McCormick did not always want to be a Mississippi National Guard Apache pilot.

"I guess I always wanted to be a police officer," said McCormick, an Amory, Miss. native. "I talked to a Marine recruiter one day. He said, 'You

know you can be a police officer in the Marine Corps,' and before I knew it I enlisted in the Marine Corps."

She started her Marine Corps career in 2003 as a military police officer stationed at Camp Pendleton, Calif., and deployed twice in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 to Iraq during her four years of active duty.

She enlisted in the Mississippi National Guard as a military police officer a year after her separation, said McCormick, known as Jessi to her peers.

"I missed that sense of family and camaraderie (that you find in the military)," she said.

During her time in the National Guard, McCormick has deployed twice - to Iraq in 2009-2010 as a military police officer with the Clinton-based 114th Military Police company, and to Afghanistan in 2013 as a public affairs sergeant with the Jackson-based 102nd Public Affairs Detachment.

As a public affairs sergeant, McCormick patrolled with the infantry and documented key leader meetings with photographs, some of which were published in national and international publications, which helped keep



“I missed that sense of



Photo by Pfc. Christopher Shannon



of family and camaraderie that you find in the military”



» media attention on the U.S. mission in Afghanistan.

“On my Afghanistan deployment, I was flying around, feet dangling out the side of a Blackhawk (helicopter),” said McCormick.

She decided then she wanted to be a pilot and began to plot her career path to get there. Since only officers could become pilots, her first step was to become one.

Her future plans for civilian life will be to put her piloting skill to use for a law

enforcement agency, said McCormick. She will finish her Bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of Mississippi in 2017. Her hope is to one day work with combat veterans.

McCormick has served in the armed forces for nearly 14 years. While she has held a variety of positions with the military, her recent achievement of becoming the first female in MSARNG to be an Apache helicopter pilot stands out as one of her biggest accomplishments. ■



# Armed Forces Museum Reopens

» A door reopened Oct. 27, welcoming a fallen hero to its shrine of history and knowledge.

A day after Navy pilot Lt. Joe Gatewood was laid to rest, the museum with an exhibit in his name reopened at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center after nearly two years of renovations.

The Mississippi Armed Forces Museum opened

Olive, where he was raised. A graduate of Mississippi State, he joined the Navy in 1962 as a pilot with Navy Attack Squadron 212, the "Rampant Raiders," and flew more than 100 missions over Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Bonhomme Richard (CV-31). He served with the Navy from 1962-1967.

A display at the museum honoring Vietnam-era pilots features the flight helmet

for perhaps the first time.

"I kind of went to pieces," she said. "This may be the first time I've cried. This couldn't be more descriptive of Joe. He always said he wanted to land one more time, just not at night."

Joe Gatewood's son, Lance Gatewood, of Tucson, Ariz., said he will likely be visiting the museum every time he returns to Mississippi.

"This is great," Lance

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes-  
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office



Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles and Gov. Phil Bryant officially reopen the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby with members of the museum's board of directors on Oct. 27, 2016.

Oct. 27, 2001, reopening on its 15th anniversary after 20 months of renovations that added more than 7,500

square feet of additional display area.

The day before, Joe Gatewood, 76, of Hattiesburg, was laid to rest at the Mt. Olive Cemetery in Mt.

and survival knife "Gator" wore during the war, along with Joe Gatewood's picture.

The display was certainly emotional to the Gatewood family. It broke through the barriers Marcia Gatewood,

his wife, had erected and allowed her to truly grieve

Gatewood said. "His service to his country is one of the things I'm most proud of. Going to the cemetery is one thing, but this is special. I

think he knew he wouldn't be able to make it (to the reopening ceremony), but he got to see some photos (of the display)."

Lisa Gatewood, of

»

» McKinney, Texas, said her father would have liked the display. “He would be tickled about this attention on him,” Lisa Gatewood said. “He was humble.”

“One of the major additions to the museum has been adding more personal stories of the Mississippians who served in the various conflicts,” said Chad Daniels, museum director. “Over the past 15 years we’ve been open, we’ve collected so many of these. This new exhibition gallery really gives us a chance to tell those stories.”

Joe Gatewood’s display is one of many that chronicles the role of Mississippi Service members from the Revolutionary War to present conflicts.

The \$2.3 million renovation project added approximately 7,500 square feet of display area through a public-private partnership.

“The displays inside are absolutely incredible,” said Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi. “There are some things in there that are national-type exhibits that we have right here in Mississippi at Camp Shelby.”

The Armed Forces Benefit Association 5-Star Life Grand Gallery is the largest new addition. It spans 5,000 square feet and provides multi-use space for military ceremonies, civic events, and large-scale traveling exhibits.

Additionally, the Hall of Honor has been expanded to three times its previous size. Mississippi has 27 Service members who have earned the Medal of Honor under the museum guidelines. The Department of Defense recognizes 19, but Daniels said the museum’s honorees include those born in the state, current residents, long-term residents, and those who may not have lived in the state, but are buried here.



The Camp Shelby Armed Forces Museum opened to the public on Oct. 27, 2016 after 20 months of renovations that added more than 75,000 square feet of additional display area.

The Hall of Honor is split to also feature Mississippians who did not earn the Medal of Honor, but have significantly contributed to national defense. It will include men such as John Quitman, a Natchez militiaman at the start of the Mexican War, who as a major general led the U.S. Marines assault on the fabled Halls of Montezuma and accepted the surrender of the citadel. Then there are Maj. Gens. Buford Blount, a University of Southern Mississippi graduate who led the capture of Baghdad in 2003 and served as its first military governor, and Jeff Hammond, also a University of Southern Mississippi graduate, who succeeded Blount and oversaw the country’s first democratic election.

“So you had two Mississippians as the governors of Baghdad back-to-back,” Daniels said.

Larger public restrooms have been added to accommodate the increased traffic at the museum. When it first opened in October 2001, the expected amount of traffic was estimated at 20,000 a year.

“We got that in the first three months,” Daniels said.

Earl and Lorna Steadman, of Loxley, Ala., happened to see the museum after the ceremony. They had been visiting military museums on the Gulf Coast and staffers there recommended they visit the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum. Until they arrived, they had no idea it was reopening on the day of their visit.

“It’s great,” Earl said. “You see a little bit of it all. There’s a lot of scenery and good details about it all.”

Renovation delays prohibited the opening of the World War II gallery with the rest of the museum, but will open soon.

“We’re going to come back to see the World War II exhibit,” Earl said. ■



Marcia and Lisa Gatewood share a moment with their loved one’s artifacts at the Camp Shelby Armed Forces Museum on Oct. 27, 2016. The museum reopened after 20 months of renovations that included the additional personal stories of the Mississippians who served in the various conflicts.

# Airmen call in close support

Story by 1st Lt. Sabrina Dalton, 186th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

» When envisioning images of military special operations, one typically goes down a list to include Navy Seals, Army Rangers, and Marine Raiders.

Unbeknownst to many, Tactical Air Control Parties (TACPs) are one entity of the Air Force's special operations force. TACPs have the enormous responsibility of calling in air strikes.

Air strikes, also known as close air support (CAS), are paramount on the battlefield in taking out the enemy and saving innocent lives. A TACP has the ability to facilitate both. TACPs embed with the Army on the front line and ensure the right target is engaged at just the right time.

To train and practice their craft, TACPs from the 238th Air Support Operations Squadron (ASOS) assigned to the 186th Air Refueling Wing, Key Field Air National Guard Base in Meridian, Miss., participated in Southern Strike 17 at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center from Oct. 24 to Nov. 4.

Every U.S. military branch convened for the large-scale conventional and special operations exercise hosted by the Mississippi National Guard at the Combat Regional Training Center in Gulfport. It allowed participants to build partnerships and maintain combat readiness for future missions.

A symbiotic relationship exists between the Air Force's TACPs and other ground forces.

"We are liaisons to the Army – that's who we support," said Tech. Sgt. James Buckley, 238th ASOS TACP/JTAC. "We go out and embed with Army teams using a two man JTAC team, and we control the air strikes for them."

JTAC, or Joint Terminal Attack Control, is an additional certification that a TACP can attain. It gives a TACP the authority to tell the aircraft to release its ordinance. The Army's ground forces commander is the approving authority for the targeting process.

"It's a checks and balance system, so we can't strike targets that aren't valid, and the ground commander can't tell us to strike something that's not valid," Buckley said. "In the end, the ground forces commander on the Army side



Staff Sgt. Sean King, assigned to the 238th Air Support Operations Squadron with the 186th Air Refueling Wing in Meridian, Miss., provides assistance to a fellow Airman during live fire training at the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center during Southern Strike 2017, Oct. 27, 2016. (Mississippi Air National Guard Photo by Master Sgt. Richard L. Smith)

owns any ordinance that comes off an aircraft."

Meeting the physical and academic requirements is no easy feat, which is why this career field needs recruits who are mentally and physically strong and can make it through the TACP pipeline.

"You may fast-rope once just to live on the ground for 30 days,"

said Staff Sgt. Sean King, 238th ASOS TACP/JTAC. "The cool stuff is over, and now you're living like the Army, eating with the Army, sleeping less like the Army, marching like them. You have to take it serious."

"I think that someone who wants to do this job needs to do their homework," Buckley said. »



U.S. Air Force joint terminal attack controllers survey an ongoing raid scenario at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center at night. (Clayton C. ...)

MSNG Public Affairs



# for Army battlefield success



A U.S. Air Force joint terminal attack controller prepares his gear prior to a raid scenario at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Miss., during Southern Strike 17, Oct. 31, 2016. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Clayton Cupit)

» “You have to really have it in your heart that your mission is to ultimately advise the Army, and drop ordinances to save lives on the battlefield. If you don’t have the mission in your heart, you’re not going to make it through.”

To become a TACP, an Airman must attend basic training, four months of job skills training,

survival training, and then return to their unit for mentorship by a JTAC.

“You really are going to be challenged at the school house,” Buckley said. “They’re going to weed out the weak. Our motto is “The strong shall stand; the weak will fall by the wayside.”

The 238th linked up with the

Army’s 3rd Special Forces Group during the exercise at Camp Shelby.

“What we’re doing with them is a multi-echelon exercise where they are training us on their tactics and procedures so that we can integrate better when we do go out with a special operations forces team or another scout team,” Buckley said. “We’ll know what they’re baseline procedures are so we can integrate seamlessly with them.”

Common character traits indicative of a TACP are self-confidence, determination, and self-reliance.

“A no-quit attitude is a must,” King said.

“You have to be really self-reliant, because you’re going to be out there on your own,” Buckley said. “We have guys that are Senior Airmen that are JTACs who are talking to full-bird colonels and advising them how to use close-air support. There’s a lot of responsibility because you control multi-million dollar aircraft, dropping 100 thousand dollar bombs. There are lives on the battlefield. There are civilians on the battlefield. So, those are the considerations you have to take in.”

Being in the 238th ASOS is likening to family for the TACPs.

“It’s the brotherhood,” Buckley said. “Honestly, I love these guys. I was prior Army, and I felt that brotherhood there. But this is like a whole new level. They’re like family to me. We train close together, and we rely on each other.”

“It’s just great comaraderie with everybody,” King said. “Plus, the job brings in a whole bunch of fun.”

Being a TACP at the 238th ASOS is just as rewarding as it is exciting.

At Southern Strike 17, the 238th trained with the National Guard’s 3rd Special Forces Group from North Carolina, Naval Special Warfare Team, the 122nd ASOS from Louisiana, and the 165th ASOS from Georgia, as well as the Air Force’s 11th ASOS from Ft. Hood, Texas. ■



Forces Training Center, Miss., during Southern Strike 17, Oct. 31, 2016. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Clayton Cupit)

# MSNG appoints Thaggard as first military judge

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes, JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

» The Mississippi National Guard appointed its first permanent military judge at the state Capitol Saturday, Oct. 15, 2016.

Col. Lee Thaggard was sworn in by Judge Virginia Carlton, District 4 Mississippi Court of Appeals and a former lieutenant colonel in the Mississippi Army National Guard, during the investiture ceremony.

“I’m honored and humbled to be selected to represent the National Guard in this capacity as a military trial judge,” Thaggard said. “I’ll do that with professionalism, integrity, and fairness and apply the law to the facts as they are presented to me.”

Similar to a civilian judge, a military judge presides over



Southwick said Thaggard’s integrity, military experience, and sound judgment set him apart.

The investiture ceremony was a custom of the court, Carlton said. It includes the swearing of the oath and the donning of the judge’s robe. The robe is evidence of his authority and a symbol of impartiality.

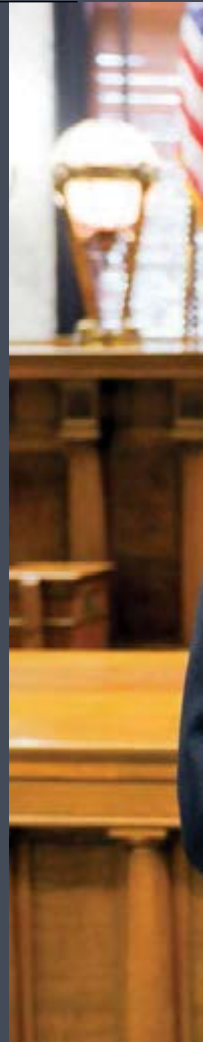
Col. E. Barney Robinson III, the state judge advocate, said a military judge provides service members with judicial independence and impartiality. Certain types of court-martials can only be adjudicated by a military judge, which is separate from the military command structure and therefore cannot be influenced in their decisions.

“Not every state has »

the courtroom and determines sentences for Service Members accused of a crime under the Uniformed Code of Military Justice. They cannot preside over civilian proceedings or service members who commit crimes while not in service.

Mississippi has had military judges appointed in the past for brief periods or to preside over a particular case, but Thaggard is the first appointed to the position permanently.

“We have not had a military judge in Mississippi in 35 years,” said Leslie Southwick, a Fifth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals judge and a former lieutenant colonel in the Mississippi Army National Guard, in his remarks during the ceremony. “I am confident our new judge is setting the right tone. There are going to be very important things for you to do. Welcome to the judiciary.”





» a judge of this level,” said Maj. Gen. Janson Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi. “It provides a level of impartial governance for our Soldiers as well as Soldiers that come through Camp Shelby. I’ve worked with (Thaggard) and he has always been an excellent JAG officer. I will miss having him by my side.”

Thaggard is a graduate of the 59th Military Judge Course at the Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center and School in Charlottesville, Va. He is certified as a military judge by the Judge Advocate General of the Army.

His career did not start in the courtroom, however. Thaggard joined the MSARNG as a cadet in the 2d Battalion, 114th Field Artillery Regiment in Starkville. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant, field artillery, in May 1987 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps at Mississippi State

University, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Professional Accountancy.

He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 185th Aviation Regiment, in Tupelo after graduation. He served in aviation leadership positions from platoon leader to company commander and, later, as the battalion intelligence officer.

He earned a Juris Doctor cum laude from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 1992 and was appointed as a major in the JAG Corps in 2003. Since then, he has served as trial counsel for the 114th Area Support Group; judge advocate for the 184th Transportation Brigade; brigade judge

advocate for the 185th Aviation Brigade; command judge advocate for Special Operations Detachment – South; and command judge advocate for the 184th Sustainment Command.

His overseas experience includes service as the chief of military justice for the 377th Theater Support Command (Provisional) in Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and as the command judge advocate for the Afghan National Army Special Operations Advisory Group in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

His personal awards include the Bronze Star Medal; Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster; the Afghanistan Service Medal with one campaign star; and the Meritorious Unit Commendation; among others. He has also earned the Senior Army Aviator Badge; Parachutist Badge; Air Assault Badge; and the Chilean Parachutist Badge.

He is a partner in the law firm of Barry, Thaggard, May, and Bailey, LLP in Meridian, where he has a general civil practice with emphasis on governmental law, insurance defense, and employment law. ■

# Guardsmen Respond When Help Is Needed

Story by Sgt. Connie Jones

102nd Public Affairs Office Detachment

The National Guard is full of fascinating jobs. There are jobs for mechanics, who are good with their hands. There are jobs for computer wizards, who enjoy plenty of technical time. There are even jobs for those who love to cook. But the main job of any Guardsmen is to serve and protect.

In recent months there have been several real world situations where Mississippi Guardsmen were the first responders and their quick thinking and military training was key to saving lives. Three of the Army values are echoed throughout each of these heroic stories: duty; personal courage; and selfless service.



## 2016 Louisiana Floods

In August this year when floods rushed over parts of Louisiana, Staff Sgt. Joshua Braly, of Company B, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, and his Family were evacuated to high ground in Denham Springs. Braly could have remained with his Family, but he chose to join the search-and-rescue efforts in the area.

Braly worked with others to organize a makeshift shelter in a local elementary school and housed up to 300 people.

"He organized groups of people to boil water, consolidate, cook, and ration what little food was available at the school cafeteria," said Sgt. 1st Class Calvin Newman. "He created a makeshift shower for evacuees and provided first aid."

Newman, the first sergeant of Headquarters Company, 177th Armored Brigade at Camp Shelby, has relatives who were rescued by Braly.

Braly also worked with the Louisiana National Guard to evacuate the severely injured civilians.

"As the days moved on, I continued to receive more details of the heroic actions of Braly during the disaster," said Newman. "His actions inspired all around him and saved the lives of countless others."



## Lending a Helping Hand

On the morning of September 6, when Chief Warrant Officer 4 Cecil Crawford walked up his driveway to retrieve his garbage can, a speeding vehicle carrying five passengers collided with a Lee County sanitation truck, pinning one of the sanitation workers between the two vehicles.

"I noticed that a car was coming up pretty fast and I thought to myself, I don't think I would be driving that fast on this road," said Crawford, of Headquarters Company, 185th Aviation Brigade. "I looked forward to see if any vehicles were approaching from the other direction. By the time I looked back, they'd struck the back of the garbage truck and one of the men on the back had been hit and was bleeding."

Crawford called 911 and rushed to the scene to help.

He used the belt of the other sanitation worker as a tourniquet to stop the bleeding of the severed leg of the injured sanitation worker. He also used his own truck to separate the vehicles involved in order to provide further medical attention to the victim, who was then airlifted to the North Mississippi Medical Center.

"My wife and I went to visit him and he was in good spirits," said Crawford. "He was very thankful. I was just glad to be able to contact him and see him."



### The Right Place at the Right Time

Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Burns, of 2d Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, and his wife were driving through Ruddock, Louisiana, October 21, when traffic came to a halt on Interstate 55.

He noticed that a dump truck had somehow run off the Interstate and was submerged under water.

"I was getting ready to jump when I saw the man pop up out of the water," Burns said. "He yelled that his family was in the truck."

Burns jumped off of the bridge and swam to the site.

"The cab was all the way submerged and there was only a little of the trailer out of the water. I dove down to find the door. I couldn't see because of the muddy water," Burns said.

A fellow good Samaritan lowered a crowbar down using an extension cord. Burns was able to break a window.

"I used a sledgehammer and broke the passenger window," Burns said. "I pushed the rest of the glass with my hand and pulled the lady out. Luckily, she was holding her daughter."

Burns swam the family safely to the shore where medical personnel were standing by.

"I did miss my (Veterans Administration) appointment," Burns laughed, "but in my opinion I was just doing the right thing at the right time."



### Halloween Hayride Horror

On Halloween evening on Highway 80 in Chunky, Miss., Maj. Andrew Birmingham, commander of Company G, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, and Staff Sgt. Justin T. Cox, a standardization instructor of the same unit, provided assistance to a gruesome wreck.

Birmingham and Cox, pictured left, were gearing up for an afternoon hunt when they heard a pickup truck slam into the back of a small utility trailer carrying 10 people on a hayride.

"We were the first ones there and Cox immediately started triage and treatment on multiple victims," said Birmingham.

Cox is a full-time emergency room nurse at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and a flight medic in his unit.

"I took my lead from him. We were working on two children in the middle of the highway when the volunteer fire department arrived," said Birmingham.

Cox worked on six of the 13 victims involved in the crash. Unfortunately, three victims did not survive the accident.

Even though Birmingham was present and assisting, he said that Cox was the real hero.

"I highly recommend that Cox be awarded the Soldier's Medal," said Birmingham. "I have no doubt that if not for his quick action, calm under pressure, and skill, more would have died."

### South Mississippi Rescue



Spc. Nia Davis and Pvt. 1st Class Sebastian Belk were headed North on Highway 59 to Petal on Wednesday, Aug. 17 when they noticed vehicles traveling southbound that looked to have been involved in an accident. The Camp Shelby Soldiers saw people standing around taking pictures and talking on their phones. Davis and Belk immediately parked their vehicle and ran across the median to the other side of the highway to see if they could help. Upon approaching the accident, they noticed a small blue car that had been rammed into the railing in the median and it still had a

person in it. The back of the car was completely wrecked and there was a strong smell of gas from leaking fuel. The pair immediately went over to the vehicle to try to help the lady. The driver's side was completely pinned against the rail and the passenger side door was also stuck, but the window was broken. Spc. Davis climbed through the broken window to start assisting the lady. Belk took his uniform top off and handed it to Davis, who applied pressure to a gash under the lady's chin that was bleeding excessively. Davis and Belk also began to talk to her about family in order to try and keep her calm. Both Soldiers remained on the scene until the paramedics arrived and left the scene.

# Cobra Strikes Nostalgia at CRTC



Members of the 1108th Aviation Group restore an AH-1 Cobra helicopter to its original paint color.



The finished product is ready to be displayed after numerous hours of hard work and craftsmanship by 1108th personnel.

Story and photos by Danielle Thomas, Public Affairs Office (Gulfport Bureau)

The Mississippi National Guard wants Veterans to sense how much their service is appreciated every time they drive past the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport.

The 1108th Aviation Group is restoring an AH-1 Cobra so it can be among

the helicopters in a display planned at the CRTC.

A section of the United States Army Aviation and Missile Command, known as the Program Manager Attack Helicopter Division, donated the Cobra to the 1108th.

“This is an AH-1S production,” said Chief Warrant

Officer 4 Allen Letort, Aircraft General Foreman. “It holds 76 rockets or 36 rockets and eight Hellfires. It also has a 7.62 mini gun in the front and a grenade launcher.”

Since its arrival in January, Master Sgt. Cliff Long has invested hundreds of man-hours into the rebirth of the Cobra, which arrived stripped down into pieces and without many of the needed parts. So the aircraft mechanic began reaching out for help from other units and Department of Defense

agencies.

“I’ve been fixing helicopters for 32 years,” said Long. “I talked to people who I hadn’t spoken to in years because I needed parts.”

Some of that help came from the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation. Long calls that relationship crucial to the success of the project.

“Through talking to them, we found out we had parts they needed for their projects, and they had parts we needed for ours. So we ended up doing a big swap,” said Long.

The AH-1 Cobra is one of three Vietnam-era aircraft that will be on display. Others include a UH-1 Huey, an OH-6 Little Bird, a Blackhawk, and a Chinook

The aircraft will not be fully operational, however, they will look like they can fly.

“We’re going to make it original just like it was ready for combat operations,” said Letort.. “We also plan on putting some shark teeth on the front because this is an attack helicopter. It’s like a shark and it’s always in the attack mode.”

The hope is to one-day give Veterans a sense of nostalgia as they ride along Hewes Avenue.

“It’s truly a great tribute to those who’ve served in the Army,” said Long. “We have an immense number of Veterans on the Mississippi Coast. For them to see helicopters we’ve restored will truly be touching to them.”

# Gulfport home to specialized civil engineers

Story by Danielle Thomas, Public Affairs Office (Gulfport Bureau)

» Highly skilled and immensely trained, the 209th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron (SOCES) ranks among the best the Air Force has to offer when it comes to decontamination and aircraft firefighting.

The unit's mission is strictly a mobility effort with half of its members tied directly into supporting the Active Duty Air Force Special Operations Command and related Special Operations Forces (SOF) around the globe.

"The 209th SOCES is a unique Civil Engineer unit with a mix of traditional and specialty CE skills and missions," said Senior Master Sgt. Joe Wood, Operations Superintendent. "The bulk of the unit is made up of traditional CE craftsman such as electricians, plumbers, carpenters, power production, and firefighting to name a few. In addition to their primary Air Force skill, many of them have been trained in more specialized Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) skillsets as well."

Unit members are intensively involved in CBRN detection and decontamination leading them to be considered as a premier Air National Guard CBRN unit.

They provide a specialized "play-book option" to any branch of SOF tasked with working in such an environment. The 209th SOCES gives Service members a toxic free area to operate in and a toxic free area to return to if

exposed to CBRN elements in the field.

Another instrumental component of the 209th SOCES is the fire department with its continual training and practical exams. This portion of the unit operates at the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport.

Firefighters work on the same installation as the Mississippi Army National Guard's 1108th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group (TASMG).

The 1108th TASMG and the 209th formed a partnership through the years that fosters extending firefighter development beyond the required training. Because of that, the 209th firefighters have an in depth knowledge of the Army Rotary Wing aircraft that is more advanced than most Air Force or Air National Guard fire departments.

The 209th SOCES Commander, Lt. Col. Kathleen Vaughn said, "We could not have achieved the level of training in nearly all of our career fields we've been able to accomplish without the continued and selfless support afforded to us by the Mississippi Army National Guard's 1108th TASMG and their leadership."

She said the core commitment is ensuring 209th SOCES members and assets are always ready to deploy anywhere world-wide within hours.

Firefighters of the 209th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron (SOCES) practice their firefighting skills on various aircraft at the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, Miss. (Photograph courtesy of the 209th SOCES)



A member of the 209th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron (SOCES) of the Mississippi Air National Guard uses the High Mobility Decontamination System to decontaminate a vehicle during a recent training exercise in the western part of the U.S. (Photograph courtesy of the 209th SOCES)

» In the ever-evolving climate of modern warfare, force structure is an ongoing process to help units adapt to best support the fight.

The U.S. Army has been deployed to the Middle East for over a decade and a half. In that time there have been many changes in the organization of units at every level.

One such battalion that knows a great deal about change is the 150th Brigade Engineer Battalion, of the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard.

The sappers have had the distinct responsibility of transitioning from a combat engineer battalion, to a special troops battalion, to a brigade engineer battalion most recently.

The rich history of the engineer battalion dates back to World War II when the unit was part of the regular Army and made up of mostly New Englanders who had been drafted.

In 1954, the number 150 was allotted to the MSARNG, and since then the battalion has fulfilled the roles of a transportation battalion and a quartermaster battalion before transitioning to an engineer battalion in 1994.

The next decade saw the sappers exceed expectations in support of the 155th ABCT through a National Training Center rotation in Ft. Irwin, Calif. and a year-long deployment to Iraq in 2005 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III.

In order to meet the mission needs at the time, the unit operated as a provisional infantry battalion with engineer capabilities. The 150th also performed multiple civil affairs and intelligence missions.

Over 1,500 combat patrols, 150 logistical patrols, and 150 company-sized operations were carried out by the sappers.

Despite its success during the deployment, the engineer battalion was not without its share of tragedy. Four Soldiers were lost during the deployment, three to improvised explosive devices and one to a vehicle accident: Sgt. 1st Class Sean M. Cooley, Sgt. Larry R. Arnold Sr., Spc. Terrence Lee Sr., and Spc. Robert McNail.

The memories of these men are honored in the hallways of the battalion headquarters in Meridian, Miss., as well as in the battalion crest.



The original 150th Combat Engineers bridging the Rhine River during World War II.



Combat Engineer Battalion at the National Training Center in Fort. Irwin, Calif.

1943

2004

Story by 2nd Lt. Terry Hill, JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

# Honor is The

The four pillars at the top of the engineer tower represent the four fallen Soldiers. The Bouie knife harkens back to the connection with the 155th ABCT and the “Mississippi Rifles.”

The white represents a railroad track, paying homage to Meridian, Miss., where the battalion is headquartered. The gauntlet represents engineers and the two stars pay tribute to the WWII and Iraq deployments.

The red, white, and blue reflect the state and national colors. The battalion motto, “Honor is Our Strength,” is at the bottom of the crest and serves as the foundation for everything the engineers do.

Staff Sgt. Paul Lampton, a member of the 150th BEB from 1994-2015, was tasked with creating the battalion’s crest when it transitioned to the 155th Brigade Special Troops Battalion in 2006, after returning from Iraq.

“Coming up with the motto was probably the hardest thing to do,” said Lampton. “I looked at the crest and how it honored our past and what a strong family we were as a battalion, and it just





at the National 150th Combat Engineer Battalion, OIF III, Al  
rwin, Calif

Anbar Province, Iraq

155th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, Taji,  
Iraq

150th Brigade Engineer Battalion transition

2005

2009

2016

# Our Strength



came to me - honor is our strength.”

The unit made the transition in 2006 from a combat engineer battalion to the 155th BSTB. It lost two of its Engineer companies, but gained military intelligence and signal companies, as well as detachments of military police and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) specialists.

In 2009, the BSTB deployed to Iraq for a second time and the Guardsmen once again showed their ability to adapt and overcome. It was tasked with three main missions: convoy escort, base defense, and a personal security detail for VIPs.

In October 2016, the 155th BSTB transitioned to the 150th BEB. The new battalion maintained the signal and military intelligence units while adding more engineers to meet the needs of the brigade.

“The BEB gives that commander a little more flexibility than they had with the special troops battalion, because over the years, commanders across the Army had recognized that they just didn’t have enough engineer assets (within the BSTB) to effectively sustain their support of the brigade,” said Lt. Col. Kendrick L. Cager, the outgoing 150th BEB commander.

Cager was a former company commander in the battalion during its first deployment to Iraq. He is transferring his command to another former company commander from the 150th BEB, Maj. (P) Paul Lyon.

“This assignment is especially meaningful to me as I have served the 150th in numerous assignments over the years, culminating with a deployment to Iraq in 2005 as a company commander,” said Lyon. “I have seen, first hand, the caliber of Soldiers within this command and I look forward to serving with them again.”

The history of the 150th will continue to be written as the U.S. globally defends freedom.

In true engineer fashion, the 150th BEB will strive to help its fellow units over, under, around, or through any obstacle to insure success, for today and generations to come. ■

# Smith recognized as Eagle Rising

Story by Staff Sgt. Michael Williams  
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

Chief Warrant Officer Two Sarah Smith is soft-spoken about her career and accomplishments. Her fellow Soldiers aren't so modest when describing her.

Smith was one of seven Army National Guard warrant officers to receive the Eagle Rising Award for warrant officers Sept. 12 at the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) 2016 Conference in Baltimore, Md.

The Eagle Rising Award recognizes outstanding achievements and service by National Guard warrant officers. This is the fifth year in a row a MSARNG warrant officer has won the award.

**“Chief Warrant Officer Smith is a talented warrant officer,” said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Bobby Tanksley, command chief warrant officer of the Mississippi Army National Guard. “She has always strived for excellence as is evidenced by her receiving the Distinguished Honor Graduate Award from her Warrant Officer Candidate School course.”**

Channeling her dedication and care for Soldiers through her work, Smith became the second MSARNG female warrant officer to receive the award.

“I can honestly say I am stunned,” said Smith, who is a standard installation division personnel system (SIDPERS) interface branch chief for the MSARNG. “I never would have dreamed winning it at state level, let alone to be one of those selected at national level. It was a completely surreal moment where I had to keep reminding myself it was happening.”

Smith said that persistent personal growth and being a recipient of the award is a testament to her military-career accomplishments.

“Constantly making improvements on my own self-development and winning this really opened my eyes to what I have achieved,” said Smith. “It’s very easy to get so caught up in your work and performing your job duties that you often don’t even realize the accomplishments you have made along the way.”

“The warrant officers of the MSARNG have always been in the spotlight,” said Tanksley. “As quiet professionals, we don’t draw attention to ourselves or our accomplishments, but when placed beside our peers nationwide we will be very competitive every time!”

Juggling big responsibilities as a mother, wife, and Soldier, Smith stands out to others as a good example of leading from the front.

“To win this award and be recognized as a good leader is one of those life accomplishments you dream of,” said Smith. “I will just ensure I do not falter and continue to improve on my self-development and career.”

The Ohio native began her Army career in 2002 when she enlisted as a health care specialist. In 2013, she decided to submit her warrant officer packet.

“I wanted to be able to perform my job duties assisting other Soldiers so that they could focus on their MOS and job without having to worry about the administrative portion of their career,” she said.

Smith finds fulfillment knowing that she’s helping Soldiers who also wear the same uniform.

“I strongly believe in helping others and get extreme satisfaction out of doing things for other people,” said Smith. “That is what truly makes me happy. I love my job, thoroughly enjoy working, and

I am so proud to wear this uniform every day.”



# Health and Fitness



Over 30 members of the Mississippi National Guard ran in the Army's thirty second Army Ten Miler race Oct. 9, 2016, in Arlington, Va. The group is photographed with Gen. Mark A. Milley, chief of staff of the Army. The mission of the Army Ten Miler is to promote the Army, build esprit de corps, support Army fitness goals, and enhance community relations. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. Maj. Michael Jackson, 66th Troop Command)



## 66th Troop Command Best Warrior Competition

Sgt. Katelyn Turner bounds back during the rappel event of the 66th Troop Command Best Warrior Competition Nov. 9, 2016, at Camp McCain Joint Forces Training Center in Elliott, Miss. Turner, of the 1108th Aviation Group in Gulfport, Miss., was one of winners of the competition. The Best Warrior Competition is a series of events to test Soldiers' mental agility, physical toughness, and technical proficiency over the span of three days. (Mississippi National Guard photo by Pfc. Christopher Shannon, 102nd Public Affairs Detachment)



## Emergency Preparedness 5K

The Mississippi National Guard (MSG), the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, the Mississippi Civil Defense Emergency Association (MCDEMA), and the Mississippi State Fire Academy hosted an inaugural Emergency Preparedness 5K Run/Walk and one-mile Fun Run Nov. 5, 2016, at the Mississippi State Fire Academy in Pearl, Miss. The MSG 47th Civil Support Team, of 66th Troop Command, provided a static display for the event. All proceeds from the event benefited the MCDEMA College Scholarship program. (Photo contributed by MEMA Public Information Office)

# Missions a



Friends, Family, and fellow Guardsmen paid tribute to Maj. Gen. Allen E. Brewer, the assistant adjutant general, Army, at his retirement dinner Nov. 11th, at the Jackson Country Club in Jackson, Miss. Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, presented Maj. Gen. Brewer with the Distinguished Service Medal in recognition of his 39 years of faithful service to the Mississippi National Guard. Maj. Gen. Brewer officially retired Aug. 31st, 2016. Among the guests celebrating his retirement were his wife LeeAnne, son Will, and daughter Shelby.

Fifty-five Members of the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team recently provided support to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division's training rotation at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Ca. Brigade members are preparing for the 155th's upcoming rotation at the training center in the summer of 2017. (Photo courtesy of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division)



Work has started to build a new Columbia, Miss. Army National Guard Readiness Center on Dec. 23, 2014. The new readiness center will cover 42,881 square feet and include a parking lot for 100 vehicles. The center is being built by the 150th Brigade, Company A.

# at a Glance



1st Lt. Samantha Snabes, an intelligence officer in the 186th Air Component Operations Squadron in Meridian, Miss., was selected as the first team member of the newly developed Defense Innovation Unit Experimental program in Austin, TX. Defense Secretary Ash Carter recently announced the new program with the goal of increasing technology in the military in order to bring the latest advances to the front lines. Snabes, a former NASA employee, is the current CEO and co-founder of re:3D, an Austin based company that specializes in 3D printing. (Photo courtesy of the Engineer Society of Detroit)

A Mississippi Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook helicopter delivers sandbags to the levee near Louisiana's Elayn Hunt Correctional Facility during flood response operations in St. Gabriel on Aug. 15, 2016. More than 20 inches of rain fell on southwest Mississippi and coastal Louisiana in early August, causing massive flooding in Baton Rouge and Lafayette, La. The crew is a mixture of Soldiers from the 66th Troop Command, 185th Aviation Brigade, and the 1108th Aviation Group. (Photo courtesy of Maj. Andrew Birmingham, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment)



Readiness Center! The old facility was damaged during a deadly EF3 tornado and is scheduled to be completed in September 2018. It will be the home of brigade Engineer Battalion.



# Behind The Patch

## 185th Aviation Brigade

Army Aviation was first organized in Mississippi in 1948 to support artillery units in the northern part of the state and Hattiesburg in the south. These aviation units were located at Grenada Airport 100 miles north of Jackson. In January 1951, all army aviation units in Mississippi were ordered to active duty and sent to Fort Jackson, S.C. Six of the original 10 aviators saw combat duty in Korea. The Grenada facility was closed during this time leaving no active army aviation programs in Mississippi.

In early 1953, the Mississippi Aviation program was reorganized at Hawkins Field in Jackson. Mississippi received its first helicopters, two Bell OH-13s, in 1954. By 1958, the program had expanded to include a total of 40 aviators.

The Mississippi Army Aviation program began operations as separate companies in 1959 and continued until 1968. During this time, full time maintenance support facilities were opened in Tupelo and Meridian.

The state's first aviation battalion, the 131st Aviation Battalion, was formed on Feb. 15, 1968, as the result of a major reorganization. The 131st was in service until 1986 when it was restructured to be the state's first aviation group (131st Aviation Group). In 1987, the 131st was redesignated as the 185th Aviation Group.

In 1992, Company E, 185th Aviation, in

Meridian, was redesignated Company G. This resulted in the company's CH-54 Sky Cranes being replaced by the twin-rotor CH-47 Chinook medium lift helicopter. In 1994, the mission of Co. C, 1-185th Aviation, in Tupelo, was changed to armed aerial assault using the OH-58D/I Kiowa Warrior. Company C was then redesignated Co. H, 185th Aviation. During 1996, Companies C and D, 1-185th Aviation in Jackson replaced their aging UH-1Hs with the MH-60 Blackhawk.

Company H was reformed as Co. D, 1-159th Aviation, Fort Bragg, N.C., on Oct. 1, 1999. They are one of the first reserve component units in the nation to be part of an active component aviation battalion. The company is still located in Tupelo.

Headquarters Company, 185th Aviation Group was deployed to Iraq and stationed at Balad, Iraq, for Operation Iraqi Freedom-2 from November 2003 to December 2004. The 185th served as the Aviation Brigade and controlled all aviation assets in the country of Iraq during their deployment. The 185th Group returned on Dec. 24, 2004.

The 185th Aviation Group was redesignated to the 185th Theater Aviation Brigade in September 2006.

The shoulder sleeve insignia above was approved on March 1, 2007.



Ultramarine blue and golden orange are the colors traditionally used by aviation units.

The wings further represent the 185th Aviation Brigade as an aviation unit.

The red trident signifies its aerial firepower.

# Burning Questions



Do you have questions about upcoming changes that will affect our armed forces? Each issue will feature a question & answer section with Mississippi National Guard leadership, both Army and Air, to answer questions from the force.

This issue we met with the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team Commander Col. Robert D. Ferguson.

Q - What should be expected after the upcoming training rotation at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.?

A - I view the NTC rotation as a training exercise intended to test our warfighting skills and capabilities. Although we

are working hard with the expectation of performing well, my hope is that we will learn a lot while there. My expectation afterwards is to capitalize on what we have learned and to continue training at the same operational tempo in order to maintain our readiness posture as we enter training year 18.

Q - Is the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team deploying, and if so, when?

A - The 155th ABCT does not have a mobilization order at this time. Until a mobilization order is received, nothing is official in regards to a deployment. We will continue to train for any possible future mission in Mississippi or locations forward.

Q - What is the outlook of the 155th ABCT's operational tempo?

A - The current force structure plan of the Army is to reduce its Active Duty forces to 450,000 Soldiers by the end of fiscal year 17. Therefore, the Army is looking closely at the readiness of the National Guard as a force capable of meeting the emerging needs of combatant commanders. The 155th ABCT, one of only two modernized

brigade combat teams in the National Guard, must maintain a level of readiness required to meet the needs of the Army.

While we will make every attempt to minimize the number of Multiple Unit Training Assemblies in an Inactive Duty Training period, it is necessary that we seize every opportunity to train the warfighting skills of our profession on the modernized equipment the Army has provided. A policy has been enacted in the 155th ABCT to limit IDT training to a MUTA 6 or lower to ensure that Soldiers, their families, and employers, are not unnecessarily inconvenienced by the readiness requirements of the 155th ABCT. Occasions will arise where a MUTA 7 or greater is required, but those occasions will be the exception, no longer the norm.

If you have questions you want answered, please contact us at [ng.ms.msarng.list.public-affairs@mail.mil](mailto:ng.ms.msarng.list.public-affairs@mail.mil).

Joint Force Headquarters  
Mississippi National Guard  
P.O. Box 5027  
Jackson, MS 39296-5027



Members of the 3rd Special Forces Group transport a simulated casualty to a medical evacuation zone at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Miss., during Southern Strike 17, Oct. 27, 2016. SSTK 17 is a total force, multi-service training exercise hosted by the Mississippi Air National Guard's Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, Miss., from Oct. 24 through Nov. 4, 2016. The exercise emphasizes air-to-air, air-to-ground and special operations forces training opportunities. These events are integrated into demanding hostile and asymmetric scenarios with actions from specialized ground forces and combat and mobility air forces. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Clayton Cupit)