

FALL/WINTER 2018

# GUARD DETAIL



A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

## GRIDIRON GRATITUDE

Mississippi State University  
salutes the Guard on  
Veterans Day 8



MSNG FLORENCE SUPPORT 10 | 1108TH MAINTAINS IN CENTCOM 14

# FEATURES



10

## Starkvegas Salute

The Mississippi State Bulldogs don special uniforms to honor G.V. Sonny Montgomery and the Guard for Veterans Day.



14

## Something's Not Right

Former Regional Counterdrug Training Academy student makes huge drug bust in Oklahoma.



18

## Queen City Homecoming

Key Field Airmen return to Meridian after serving in support of Operation Spartan Shield.



24

## Special Delivery

The 172d Airlift Wing delivers backpacks to Mississippi School for the Deaf students.

The Guard Detail is the official magazine of the Mississippi National Guard. It is published three times a year with a circulation of 12,300 copies and is distributed online via the Mississippi National Guard web and Facebook pages. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Army, Air Force, Army National Guard, Air National Guard or the Department of Defense.

Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Office of Public Affairs, Joint Force Headquarters, Mississippi, State of Mississippi Military Department.

All photographs and graphic devices are copyrighted to the State of Mississippi, Military Department unless otherwise indicated.

All submissions should pertain to the Mississippi National Guard and are subject to editing. Contributions and reader comments should be sent to: [scott.a.tynes.mil@mail.mil](mailto:scott.a.tynes.mil@mail.mil).

**COVER PHOTO:** A hand painted, Mississippi Air National Guard C-17 Globemaster III - inspired Mississippi State University football helmet rests on the sideline of Davis Wade Stadium in Starkville, Miss., Nov. 17, 2018. Members of the MSU football team wore their "Statesman" uniform as a special tribute to Maj. Gen. (Ret.) G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery and service members during the Salute to Service Military Appreciation game. (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Senior Airman Kiara N. Spann)

# Letter From THE EDITOR

## Twice the Service, The Ultimate Sacrifice For Us All



He did his job under the most adverse of conditions," Avants wrote.

Sergeant White retired with 17 years of honorable service in the MSNG in October 2017. Today, he leaves behind his fiancée, two young sons, parents, sister, and other family members.

Almost two months later, Officer LeAnn Simpson, 23, was killed in a single-vehicle crash while en route to assist a fellow officer in Philadelphia, Mississippi, Nov. 24. She was travelling to assist Neshoba County Sheriff's deputies when she lost control of her cruiser on West Beacon Street, hitting a light pole and flipping multiple times. Specialist Simpson served as a Fire Control Repairer for approximately six years within Philadelphia's 367th Maintenance Company.

"We watched Spc. Simpson grow into a model Soldier and leader in our community," said Capt. Kelli Nichols, commander of Philadelphia's 367th MC. "She had a bright future ahead of her in regards to her military and law enforcement careers. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with her family, friends, and colleagues."

As we prepare to draw 2018 to a close, let us remember Sgt. White and Spc. Simpson's exceptional resolve to serve in dual roles for Mississippi and the nation. Let's all be inspired by their examples to protect our freedoms and strengthen our communities even more in 2019.

Please keep their families, friends and fellow Soldiers and Officers in your prayers. We hope that you enjoy this issue.

Lt. Col. Christian Patterson, APR+M  
Editor-in-Chief



James K. White



LeAnn Simpson

Serving in uniform is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but to do so in two major capacities is more rare and highly admirable.

James Kevin White and LeAnn Simpson are two of those heroes who served both as members of the Mississippi National Guard and as law enforcement officers in Brookhaven and Philadelphia, respectively.

Patrolman White, 35, and Cpl. Zach Moak, 31, of the Brookhaven Police Department were both killed during a shootout in Brookhaven, September 29.

They were responding to shots fired at a home on the eastern side of the city. Their deaths marked the second time in just over a year that the law enforcement and military-friendly community lost police officers in the line of duty.

Sergeant White, in his military capacity, served within the MSNG for 17 years. Highlighting his career was service with the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005. On May 18, 2005, he sustained injuries from an improvised explosive device during convoy operations in Iraq. He was awarded the Purple Heart for his wounds received in combat.

Jason Avants witnessed White's actions that day and honored him on Facebook following his death.

"This young man, clearly injured, took a knee beside his friend, wiped the blood, sweat and sand from his eyes and with his weapon at the ready provided security for his injured friend. He didn't lay down. He didn't hide. He didn't cower in fear.

PUBLISHER  
THE ADJUTANT  
GENERAL  
Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles



EDITOR

Lt. Col. Christian Patterson  
Director of Public Affairs

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Daniel Szarek  
Dep. Director of Public Affairs

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Chelsy Ables

CONTRIBUTING STAFF

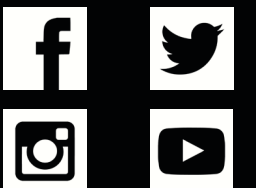
Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes  
Staff Sgt. Michael Needham  
Danielle Thomas  
Amanda Kibble

FOR COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS  
PLEASE PHONE: 601 313 6271



VISIT US AT

[ms.ng.mil/](http://ms.ng.mil/)  
or the following Social  
Network sites under  
Mississippi National Guard





# SNAPSHOTS



Brig. Gen. Clint Walker, commander of Laurel's 184th Sustainment Command, describes the unit's upcoming mission in the Middle East during the group's send-off ceremony at Hattiesburg's Temple Baptist Church, Nov. 3. Approximately 250 Soldiers are deploying to Kuwait for approximately one year to provide sustainment and support for Operations Spartan Shield, Inherent Resolve in Iraq and Syria, Resolute Support in Afghanistan, and the United States Military Training Mission in Saudi Arabia. Also included in this number are troops assigned to Detachment 1, 184th SC, based in Hattiesburg. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Lt. Col. Christian Patterson, APR+M)



Scan the QR code to view sendoff ceremony.



Lieutenant Colonel

## David A. Kendrick

My thanks to Guard Detail for the opportunity to offer some comments on my experiences and thoughts on leadership.

I was commissioned through ROTC and served the first few years of my career on active duty as an Army Air Defense officer. I joined the 255th Air Control Squadron in 1996 as an Air Battle Manager. I have served as an Air Weapons Officer, Exercise Director, Chief of Weapons and Tactics, Director of Operations, Detachment Commander and currently the 255th ACS Commander since May 2015.

The 255th has deployed overseas six times during my time here. Most recently, 110 members of the unit served in Southwest Asia from November 2017 to May 2018 with the 727th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron, 380th Air Expeditionary Wing, Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates. The squadron's call sign is Kingpin.

The main component of the 727th is at Al Dhafra Air Base. It includes nine detachments in seven countries throughout the area of operations. Kingpin is the premier ground-based weapons platform in the Air Force and provides a persistent, reliable 24-hour-a-day air picture to the Combined Air Operations Center.

It is made up of over 360 personnel from the U.S Air Force, U.S. Army, U.S. Marines, Royal Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force, Royal Danish Air Force, Belgium Air Force and a Canadian Air Component. The squadron serves as the eyes and ears for the Combined Forces Air Component Commander for the U.S. Air Forces Central Command. This includes 944,000 square miles of airspace and operations in and around Iraq,

Syria, Jordan, Afghanistan and the Arabian Gulf.

It is a very complex and demanding mission set and it can be intimidating, especially for younger Airmen and first time deployers. Approximately fifty percent from our group were first timers. I am always impressed by how well our Airmen perform on these missions. It is a credit to our NCOs and young officers who lead from the front and instill this confidence and commitment to excellence. They understand the importance of their mission, and their role in it, both as individuals and collectively.

Our training and preparation are top-notch and very realistic.

Training is the cornerstone of an Airman's career and key to their future success.

When stressful and difficult situations occur, having a broad knowledge base to rely on leads to success which in our career field keeps ground and airborne personnel safe and saves lives.

I encourage each of you to always strive for continuous improvement and excellence. Not only at work or when engaged in high profile missions, but always. Make it a way of life in all things. As our 18th chief of staff, Gen. T. Michael Moseley, once said: "Never walk by a problem. Stop, fix it and move on."

With this simple yet effective advice, we can ensure that the Air Force and Air National Guard are poised to meet any threat and ultimately keep our nation safe.

David A. Kendrick  
Commander, 255th Air Control Squadron  
Mississippi Air National Guard

Sergeant Major

## Jacqueline A. McDonald



"Emotional Intelligence or EI is the ability to understand and manage your own emotions, and those of the people around you. People with a high degree of emotional intelligence know what they're feeling, what their emotions mean, and how these emotions can affect other people."

Emotional Intelligence is very important in becoming an effective leader. It is absolutely essential that we're able to work with fellow Soldiers and Airmen to reach mission accomplishment. Tactical, technical and administrative skills are only a small portion of performance because we are depending on others for success in a team setting. As a leader, being able to effectively communicate with others while keeping our emotions in check is a challenge. With the stresses of everyday life, it is easy to let our emotions get the best of us.

Daniel Goleman is the author of Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ. According to Goleman, there are five key elements to EI: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Let's see how these elements help develop us as leaders.

Self-awareness is knowing yourself. You need to always know how you feel, and you need to know how your emotions and your actions can impact the people around you.

Self-regulation is staying in control of yourself. You are aware of your triggers and we need to be proactive in developing controls. When people learn your triggers, they often try to pull them. Don't let people control you. Think before you act, by taking a moment to defuse the situation in your mind before it is verbalized.

Self-motivation sets the stage that you are a willing participant. You have to be motivated, in order, to motivate others. Self-motivated leaders work consistently toward their goals, and they have extremely high standards for the quality of their work.

Empathy requires you to effectively listen and relate to others. For leaders, having empathy is critical to managing a successful team or organization. Leaders with empathy have the ability to put themselves in someone else's situation. Don't down grade issues that may seem simple to you. When you let people know that you care about them and their problems, they develop trust and confidence in you and your leadership.

Finally, social skills are critical in developing leaders. Those with these skills are also good at managing change and resolving conflicts diplomatically. They're rarely satisfied with leaving things as they are, but they don't sit back and make everyone else do the work: they set an example with their own behavior.

Emotional intelligence is a crucial part of a leader's foundation. Having the ability to understand and manage your own emotions, and those of the people around you is imperative. Utilizing and developing these six elements: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, are will help to maintain morale and esprit de corps in our formations statewide. I encourage everyone to use these tools in both your personal lives and in your military career!

Jacqueline A. McDonald

# MSU SCORES

## WITH MISSISSIPPI MILITARY SALUTE UNIFORM



Courtesy Photo

Story by Master Sgt. Ed Staton  
172d Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Mississippi State University donned special tribute uniforms for their November 17, game against the Arkansas Razorbacks to honor the legacy of the late G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery and Mississippi military veterans.

Instead of their traditional maroon and white, the Bulldogs hit the field in gray uniforms with special markings that mirrored a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft flown by the Mississippi Air National Guard's 172d Airlift Wing. The uniforms were based on the paint scheme of the aircraft that is named "The Spirit of 'Sonny' Montgomery."

"This is our military appreciation game and the uniforms are patterned after the late, great G.V. 'Sonny' Montgomery," said Brian Locke, director of the Center for America's Veterans at MSU.

Montgomery graduated from MSU in 1943 and served in Europe during

World War II. While climbing to the rank of major general following the war, Montgomery was elected to Congress. During his decades of political service, he drafted numerous pieces of legislation supporting veterans, including his namesake act, the Montgomery G.I. Bill, which has and continues to assist many veterans with higher education benefits.

The decision by Mississippi State to execute this military salute was three years in the making.

"We went through several versions

**"We started working this process about three years ago to try to do something that would be special for Sonny Montgomery."**

**- Brian Locke**

of the helmet style to make sure it would well represent him," Locke said.

The uniform helmets were hand-painted with similar markings

to the C-17's tail. Medals earned by Montgomery and National Guard insignias also adorned the back of the helmet. The bottom of each Mississippi State helmet had raised letters which read, "G.V. 'Sonny' Montgomery." The uniform pants featured the words "Spirit of G.V. 'Sonny' Montgomery" on the right hip.

"The effort that Mississippi State put forth in honoring veterans was quite impactful.

Many service members on hand were in absolute awe," said Senior Master Sgt. Mike McQueen of the Wing.

"They did a phenomenal job with how they honored our veterans," he said. He said it was the experience of a lifetime and added that he was fascinated with the whole day's events.

"I was so impressed with the intricate details of the uniform and how perfectly the day's events took



place," McQueen said.

A tribute to Mississippi's military members was woven throughout the Bulldogs 52-8 victory over of Arkansas.

The uniform's namesake, the "The Spirit of G.V. 'Sonny' Montgomery" C-17 conducted a pregame flyover. Major General Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Davis-Wade Stadium crowd and Boyles and Brig.

Gen. Billy M. Nabors, the assistant adjutant general - Air, used Boyles' adjutant general coin for the pregame coin toss to open the in-game activities.

Members of the Mississippi Army and Air National Guard also marched onto the field for the patriotic halftime show while the flight crew of the "The Spirit of 'Sonny' Montgomery" were recognized on the field for their earlier flyover.

(Left) Aircrew members from the 183d Airlift Squadron are recognized during the Salute to Service Military Appreciation game at Mississippi State University in Starkville, Miss., Nov. 17. The aircrew, commanded by Maj. Wesley Carter, performed the pregame flyover. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Kiara N. Spann)

(Right) Assistant Adjutant General - Air, Brig. Gen. Billy Nabors, of the Mississippi Air National Guard, poses alongside players of Mississippi State football team members. The players wore a uniform that honoring the late G.V. 'Sonny' Montgomery during the game against Arkansas, on Nov. 11. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. Victoria Miller)



Courtesy Photo

# Carolina Crisis

## Helping Our Neighbors Recover



Courtesy Photo



Master Sgt. Sheri Burkes and Capt. Jonathan Washburn, personnel professionals with Meridian's 186th Air Operations Group, are deployed to the Air Forces Northern Contingency Action Team at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. for Hurricane Florence Disaster Support to Civil Authorities assistance. Several members of the 186th AOG are among nearly 40 Airmen deployed to support the Hurricane Florence DSCA mission. (U.S. Air Force photo by Mary McHale)



Soldiers assigned to Meridian's Company B, 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment, offload food and water from a CH-47F Chinook helicopter near Wilmington, N.C., Sept. 20. The Mississippi aviators conducted emergency resupply efforts in North Carolina in support of Hurricane Florence relief efforts. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Chief Warrant Officer 3 Russ Williams)

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

For many in the Carolinas, September was a test of their coping abilities that was only lessened by the support of emergency agencies, including Mississippi National Guardsmen who descended from the skies to provide critical supplies to cut-off residents or helped provide coordination among military and civilian assets during relief efforts.

Within hours of Hurricane Florence moving out of the area, eight Soldiers and two CH-47Fs of Company B, of the 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment, along with nearly 40 Airmen of the Mississippi National Guard arrived to assist in relief operations.

"Everyone was jumping at the opportunity," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Russell Williams, mission commander for the 1-111th. "Everyone wants to help in those situations. I'm thankful I got

to be a part of it."

Hurricane Florence was a powerful and lasting hurricane that ravaged the region, primarily as a result of freshwater flooding. Despite making landfall as a significantly weakened Category 1 hurricane, Florence still had enough strength to uproot trees and cause widespread power outages throughout the Carolinas. More importantly however, was that it stalled for several days after landfall and continued to dump heavy rain along coastal areas from September 13-15 and from September 15-17 crawled through the inland areas at 2-3 miles per hour to inundate inland areas, causing severe river flooding and isolating cities and communities.

"Mostly for us it was resupply," Williams said. "There were others that went to evacuate people, but for us it was all resupply. There were a lot of rural areas and some small towns that had been cut off by the flooding."

The only hope of reaching those people lay with the 111th

and other aviation units.

"We were landing in softball fields or farmer's fields – wherever we could find that was dry and we could fit comfortably in," Williams said. "They were very appreciative when they would see us. When you see how many aircraft were flying and you see them land in your community you realize you're not alone."

Most of the time, the helicopter's crew would assist in unloading the three pallets of food and three pallets of water by hand because no equipment was available.

Based at a small airport in Kinston, N.C., which also served as a supply point, the aviation Soldiers worked 12-hour shifts, inspecting the aircraft at daylight and flying until dark.

"It was an amazing thing to see all the entities come together and work together to help everyone out," Williams said.

Master Sgt. Sheri Burkes, with the 186th Air Operations Group, was one of nearly 40 Airmen ensuring that coordination between military and civilians was a smooth process.

Some Airmen joined the 1st Air Force staff at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida to ensure Search, Air and Rescue and other assets were receiving all the support they needed to provide efficient support. Others went to the stricken area to provide local joint air operations liaison between the military and the state.

"We are the ones who work directly with higher command and we work with (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) and the states. Our teams tell (the agencies) what assets the Air Force can provide," Burkes said.

At least 55 deaths were attributed to the storm. Property damage and economic losses in North and South Carolina reached at least \$17.9 billion with estimated insured losses ranging between \$4.8-5 billion. One estimate for North Carolina is nearly \$17 billion, more than the damage from Hurricanes Matthew and Floyd in that state combined.



Students rehearse breaching techniques and room clearing during an Emergency Narcotics Operations training class held with the Mississippi Regional Counterdrug Training Academy in Meridian.

# RCTA COUNTERS DRUGS

## Training Leads to Win for Oklahoma Law Enforcement

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

A simple observation by a police officer coupled with newly-acquired knowledge obtained through Mississippi's Regional Counterdrug Training Academy recently resulted in one of the largest methamphetamine busts ever to occur in Oklahoma. Approximately 1,262 pounds of liquid methamphetamine with an estimated street value of \$4.4 million was found in the passenger fuel tank of a commercial vehicle in a hotel parking lot.

"It was literally textbook from that class," said Det. Darin Morgan, a Norman, Oklahoma, police officer assigned to the District 21 Drug Task Force.

Morgan noticed an inconsistency with the U.S. Department of Transportation registration number on an 18-wheeler commercial vehicle parked in a hotel parking lot, October 22. When the driver approached from inside the hotel, Morgan began questioning him using training he had received in a Commercial Motor Vehicle Interdiction class only two months prior through the RCTA. The conversation led to several "red flags" and prompted officers to search the vehicle.

"I learned about the trucking industry. That's what is unique about the class," he said. "They taught me how to interview the truckers and it went perfectly."

The RCTA is a counterdrug-focused law enforcement training academy hosted and staffed by the Mississippi National Guard. Classes are taught both on campus at Naval Air Station Meridian, Camp Shelby, and through export classes, where instructors travel to law enforcement agencies to

provide training.

Morgan, who has been in drug interdiction since 2006, attended the CMVI export class in Tulsa, but he has also attended other courses in Meridian.

"It's made a tremendous impact," he said. "It was the best commercial interdiction class I've ever been to. I plan to go to as many (classes) as I can because of the quality of the training."

The Mississippi RCTA offered more than 250 classes in over 50 subject areas last year, said Mississippi Army National Guard Capt. T.J. Stoute, the facility's training officer.

"This past (Fiscal Year 2018) we had just over 13,000 students from 45 states and territories," he said. "That includes federal, state, local and military law enforcement officers. About 50 percent of our training takes place outside of the RCTA classrooms through export classes."

Founded by Congressional charter in 1992, Mississippi's



Courtesy Photo

RCTA is the oldest of five National Guard Counterdrug Training Centers, with others located in Florida, Pennsylvania, Iowa and Washington. The MSNG provides the facility and staff to facilitate training while teaching a few courses, but classes are predominately taught by instructors who are recognized nationally in their law enforcement fields. All classes are Peace Officers Standards and Training accredited. Because it is federally funded, the classes are provided at no cost to the officers.

**"Our goal is to continue to provide the most realistic, up-to-date training to help the officers build strong cases and make arrests resulting in solid court convictions"**

- Lt. Col. James McGraw

"We're constantly refining our product based on what law enforcement officers say they need relating current crime trends," said Lt. Col. James McGraw, RCTA commandant.

Stoute said the National Guard facilitates the training because it already has the facilities, training aids and equipment, thereby saving law enforcement from building and staffing a separate facility for each agency. Additionally, the National Guard is already invested in constant training.

"We are leveraging different assets for law enforcement to utilize," he said. "That training mindset that we have in the military? That's what we are building in law enforcement. We fill that training void that most of these agencies have."

"Our reach is national," Stoute said. "The network we have built here is unlike any other. Guardsmen and law enforcement interact on a daily basis here. That also improves coordination during State Active Duty missions."

Local, state and federal agencies from California to the East Coast have trained at Mississippi's RCTA. National Guard units and Soldiers are also welcome to attend classes.



(Top) Mississippi Counterdrug Program Personnel Primary Instructor Staff Sgt. Bradley Thomas and Assistant Instructor Spc. Daniel Hooper of 2d Battalion 20th Special Forces Group, train students on how to treat multiple casualties with various traumatic injuries during a mass casualty scenario in August.

(Bottom) The Mississippi RCTA offered more than 250 classes in over 50 subject areas last year. All classes are Peace Officers Standards and Training accredited.



# FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM

## Gulfport's 1108th Maintains Aircraft in Southwest Asia



1108th TASMG Task Force 21 Soldiers prepare an AH-64 attack helicopter for transport aboard a C-5 Galaxy during their mission in Rota, Spain.

Story by Danielle Thomas  
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office (Gulfport Bureau)

For some Mississippi Army National Guard aviation maintenance technicians, transitioning into their overseas deployment duties provided an opportunity to demonstrate the skilled artisan capabilities they perform here in the United States.

In August 2018, the 1108th Theater Aviation Support Maintenance Group (TASMG) returned to Gulfport, Mississippi after their 80 Soldiers served in Southwest Asia. The unit provided joint theater-level aviation field and sustainment maintenance for the aviation units operating in the United States Army Central Command (CENTCOM) Area of Operations (AOR).

The TASMG Task Force was headquartered in Kuwait, but its deployed support area extended into Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt and Jordan. Additionally, the group coordinated with Europe-based Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Outside Continental United States (TASM-O) to conduct an aircraft transload operation from Naval Air Station Rota, Spain.

The 1108th TASMG Soldiers operated from seaports and airports preparing helicopters for transport by surface and air. As aircraft arrived or departed theater, the TASMG maintainers folded and unfolded blades and completed other procedures required to transition the Chinooks, Black Hawks, and Apaches through the CENTCOM AOR. One of the 1108th TASMG transload missions coordinated the movement of approximately 90 aircraft operating in support of Operation Freedom Sentinel (OFS). These aircraft transitioned through NAS, Rota Spain on their way to Afghanistan or the United States.

The 1108th TASMG Theater Aviation Maintenance Program (TAMP) duties included training and assisting Army aviation units deployed to CENTCOM AOR on field maintenance efforts. The TASMG logisticians also tracked the parts and special tools required to complete scheduled and unscheduled aircraft repairs.

"A large part of our unit performs their military specialties during the week as full-time technicians. Their maintenance experience gained while providing support to the southeast region



An AH-64 attack helicopter is unloaded from a C-5 Galaxy by 1108th TASMG Task Force 21 Soldiers in Rota, Spain.

allows the TASMG to deploy forward and perform duties at the highest level," said Col. Glen Flowers, group commander.

The 1108th TASMG routinely deploys to the CENTCOM AOR, but leaders say no two deployments are exactly the same. During this latest deployment the Aviation Missile Command (AMCOM) directed the requirement to change certain AH-64E Apache transmissions. TASMG AH-64 mechanics assisted the 449th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) with changing out multiple transmissions, as the North Carolina CAB maintained operational requirements. This in-theater undertaking by the 1108th TASMG and 449th CAB successfully completed all required AH-64 transmission upgrades. Additionally, the TASMG coordinated the maintenance and logistical processes needed to comply with several safety-of-flight messages published for the AH-64.

In another first for the 1108th TASMG, Soldiers assisted Task Force Sinai in Egypt by providing the Multi-national Forces and Observers (MFO) with UH-60 subject matter experts to assist in scheduled and unscheduled maintenance. These Mississippi National Guardsmen also participated in a partnership mission with Jordan in support of Operation Spartan Shield.

Logistical subject matter experts provided the Jordanians with insight on establishing an aviation Supply Support Activity (SSA). Additionally TASMG maintenance test pilots confirmed the airworthiness of Jordanian helicopters used to transport U.S. forces.

At home, the Gulfport-based 1108th TASMG provides maintenance support for hundreds of Army National Guard rotary wing aircraft across the southeastern U.S. and two U.S. territories; it is one of four TASMGs all ARNG, that supports ongoing CENTCOM AOR rotations.

"Throughout the Army aviation community, the 1108th has a reputation for quality and efficiency," said Chief Warrant Officer 5 James Clark, aviation maintenance technician. "This is due to the numerous deployments of the 1108th over the past 13 years and the skill level of our Soldiers. As a result of our successful performance during past deployments, the 1108th has also had the opportunity to work various special projects for the Aviation and Missile Command."

The 1108th TASMG task force successfully completed their recent CENTCOM AOR rotation and returned stateside in August 2018.



1108th TASMG TF-21 Soldiers painted a T-Shirt for display at Patton Army Airfield, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.



Col. Glen Flowers and Command Sgt. Maj. Teddy James case the unit colors during the Transfer of Authority ceremony in August 2017 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.





# 155 ABCT

## CONTINUES REGIONAL STABILITY EFFORTS IN MIDDLE EAST

U.S. Army Sgt. Alfonso Perea, an infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion, 198th Armor Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Spartan, demonstrates the proper hand position for his designated marksman rifle with a Qatar Emiri Land Forces soldier during sniper training as part of Exercise Eastern Action 19, Nov. 6. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Jovi Prevot)

Story by Staff Sgt. Michael Williams  
155th ABCT Public Affairs

After a transfer of authority from 2d Brigade, 1st Armored Division, in July, the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team made history by becoming the first National Guard ABCT to become a decisive effort for Operation Spartan Shield.

“Since arriving in theater, the 155 Armored Brigade Combat Team has strengthened regional stability,” said Col. Robert D. Ferguson, 155th ABCT commander. “We’ve done this through building host nation partnerships, sustaining readiness as well as shaping transitions for units to follow.”

In October 2017, the Mississippi Na-

tional Guard announced that the Thunder Brigade would be deploying to Kuwait in support of Operation Spartan Shield to assist the U.S. Army Central Command theater of operations.

After months of training at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center and at Fort Bliss, Texas, the brigade demonstrated their readiness through several validation exercises to ensure they were ready to do its job.

Since boots hit the ground, the 155th has participated in numerous events to include drawing military equipment from the Army’s Pre-Positioned Stock, Basic Officer Leaders Course for Kuwaiti officers and several partnership exercises within the Middle East region.

“Over the past few months, the 155 has participated in numerous host nation exercises, increased readiness through gunnery and other combat skills as well as drawing over 15,000 pieces of equipment of pre-positioned stock,” said Ferguson.

The APS is a program that consists of prepositioned sets of equipment in different places in the world so military units can fall-in on what they need to help speed response time for a deploying unit and save on cost.

One of the key missions of the largest Mississippi Army National Guard unit is to continue building partnerships with regional allies and interoperability.

“My main objective for this deployment is to sustain our readiness and to increase our credibility, not only with our host nation partners, but also with our readiness as well,” said Ferguson.

Through partnerships, the brigade is working toward the ultimate objective of regional stability. For more than six months, the brigade presence has reached 11 countries in 20 different locations.

The brigade has participated in several bilateral exercises including Operation Bright Star with the Arab Republic of Egypt in Egypt, Iron Union 9 with the Kuwaiti Land Forces, and Eastern Action 18, located in Qatar.

With enhancing regional stability through partnership being one of the 155th’s important tasks, the 2d Battalion, 198th Armored Regiment, teamed up with the Kuwait Land Forces Institute (KLF) to conduct a Basic Officer Leaders Course (BOLC) for approximately 80 lieutenants.

“The battalion has already done a lot of great stuff since being here,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Cooksey, 2d Battalion, 198th Armored Regiment commander. “This exercise without a doubt has been the highlight of our time here in Kuwait.”

Cooksey says the goals of the battalion were based off three things. They were to teach small unit tactics to Kuwaiti lieutenants at squad level, learn how to fight and communicate together and deepen the bond between countries.

“Friendships and relationships were built to last a life time during this training,” he said.

For a majority of the Thunder Brigade Soldiers from the 155th ABCT, their deployment is almost coming to an end and they will be home soon.

The nine-month deployment has demonstrated that the brigade can maintain readiness and set the bar high as the first National Guard armored brigade to take on such a mission.



Soldiers of Company A, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, conduct a Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise as part of Exercise Bright Star 2018 at Mohamed Naguib Military Base, near Alexandria, Egypt, Sept. 11. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Jovi Prevot)



U.S. Army Spc. Charles Pegues, an armor crewman assigned to Company A, 2d Battalion, 198th Armored Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, performs a swim test as part of the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency competition at the Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Oct. 15. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Jovi Prevot)



U.S. Army and Qatari Emiri Land Forces soldiers fire Javelin shoulder-fired anti-tank missiles during a combined arms live fire exercise as part of Exercise Eastern Action at Al-Ghalail Range in Qatar, Nov. 14. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Jovi Prevot)



# A WARM RETURN

## at Key Field

Story by Bianca Moorman  
The Meridian Star

When Master Sgt. Joel Jones was deployed a few months ago, he was worried his young daughter wouldn't recognize him when he returned.

During his time away, the father and daughter stayed connected though Facetime, but communicating electronically couldn't replace the real thing.

Joel Jones' worries were in vain. On November 14, Brynlee Jones's tiny pink rain boots hit the tarmac at Key Field in Meridian as she scrambled to greet her father, disappearing in his embrace.

Joel Jones, clad in fatigues, joyfully smiled as he knelt to pick up the little girl, hoisting her in the air.

The master sergeant was one of many 186th

Master Sgt. Joel Jones is greeted by his daughter in Meridian, Mississippi after returning from a deployment, Nov. 14. The service members were deployed to CENTCOM (Central Command) in support of Operation Inherent Resolve as part of a 120 day rotation. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Adam Vance)



Master Sgt. Josh McDonald is greeted by his wife, Kristen McDonald, and their two children in Meridian, Mississippi after returning from a deployment, Nov. 14, 2018. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Adam Vance)

Air Refueling Wing Airmen coming home just in time for the holidays. Some members of the group have been deployed for as long as 120 days.

It was a good day for the Jones family, who will celebrate Brynlee's second birthday on Thursday.

"That's daddy's best friend," said Charity Jones, Brynlee's mother.

Now back home, Joel Jones will get a chance to be a dad again, celebrating his wedding anniversary with his wife and spending time with his little one.

"I couldn't wait to get off the airplane," he said.

Nearby, Margaret Duncan stood waiting for her husband, Lt. Col. James Duncan, as their daughter, Isabella, held up a welcome home sign. "I am beyond excited," said Margaret Duncan.

Her eight-year-old daughter shared that feeling, saying she was looking forward to playing video games with her dad. James Duncan's mother, Linda, said they planned to celebrate Thanksgiving early, eating turkey on Wednesday night instead of waiting until next week.

Master Sgt. Joshua McDonald's family was also glad to see him return after a three-month deployment,

his longest time away since they've had children.

His wife, Kristin McDonald, said they planned on taking a trip to the Great Smokey Mountains in Tennessee after Thanksgiving.

"Being [home] during the holidays it makes it very special," she said.

Col. Britt Watson, commander of the 186th Maintenance Group, has seen his share of fellow service members return home from deployments.

The one thing he enjoys the most is seeing families reconnect after being apart.

"It's fun to watch their expressions on their faces," he said.



Members of the 186th Air Refueling Wing (ARW) return home to Meridian, Mississippi after being deployed to CENTCOM (Central Command) in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, Nov. 14, 2018. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Adam Vance)

**#WELCOMEHOME**



Family members of 186th Air Refueling Wing (ARW) members await the return of their loved ones in Meridian, Mississippi, Nov. 14, 2018. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Adam Vance)



# JOY IN A PACK

## Airmen Partner to Help Deaf Students

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Betsy J. Winstead  
172d Airlift Wing Public Affairs

A fifth grade girl full of excitement virtually bounces into the library at the Mississippi School for the Deaf in Jackson. Fingers fly with excited animation as she eagerly waits for the teacher to answer her, “Are they coming yet?”

Betty A. Williams smiles and lifts her hands to respond both verbally and in American Sign Language, “They will be here next week!” The child beams a bright smile and her fingers fly with an, “I can’t wait!”

Each year for the past 11 years, the 172d Airlift Wing executes their Backpack and School Supply drive for the Mississippi School for the Deaf in July to deliver to K-12 students in October. The Wing and Boeing partner to promote community outreach for both organizations.

As the only school for the deaf in Mississippi, many of the students at the Mississippi Schools for the Blind and Deaf are far from family for the first time and stay in school dormitories. In addition, many also come from financially disadvantaged homes and can’t afford to purchase school supplies.

All Wing base personnel who have school supply lists for their own children are reminded to pick up backpacks and school supplies for those less fortunate and deliver them to “Boeing Boxes” placed around the base. The 172d and Boeing volunteers divide and load paper, pens, pencils, colors, and other supplies into backpacks for more than 100 students who are eager to pick out their own backpack.

“As soon as the school year starts, the kids start asking when the ‘Soldiers’ are coming so they can pick out a backpack,” Williams, the school librarian said. “It’s one of the most anticipated events of their school year.”

On delivery day, wing and Boeing volunteers load box-



A student at the Mississippi School for the Deaf is excited to pick out a backpack filled with school supplies, Sept. 13. It is one of the most anticipated events of the school year, according to teachers. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Ed Staton)

es into trucks for the trip to the school. As the volunteers arrive, MSD students eagerly come out with carts to help get the Boeing boxes up the ramp. As the kids come into the auditorium, grade-by-grade, beginning with Kindergarten, the Airmen help the small, shy children who haven’t learned to lip-read yet select a backpack and resupply the stage with backpacks as the kids make their choices. Their reward are the smiles, hugs of thanks, signs of “thank you,” and the return gifts of hand-drawn pictures.

Airmen return the hugs and respond with the sign for “you’re welcome.” Many Airmen from the base have watched these students grow year-by-year and their open appreciation and excitement keep them coming back.

The same excitement can be found when the 172d Airlift Wing partners with various other organizations to promote community outreach programs.

“We participate in these events to help build relationships and community awareness of the Mississippi Air National Guard as well as giving a little something back to the community that supports us,” said Senior Master Sgt. Connie K. Reed, public affairs superintendent. “Everyone who goes receives a blessing watching the joy on these children’s faces when they get to pick their own backpack.”



The 172d Airlift Wing’s Master Sgt. Betsy J. Winstead and Boeing representative L. Reed Robertson, who is also a major with the 172d, pose with students from the Mississippi School for the Deaf, Sept. 13, in Jackson. This is the 11th annual backpack and school supply drive for the MSANG-Boeing partnership. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Ed Staton)



Members of the 172d Airlift Wing pause for a photo with the Mississippi School for the Deaf, Sept. 13 in Jackson while learning sign language and helping the students improve lip-reading skills. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Ed Staton)



# UP ALL NIGHT?

Story and by 1st Lt. Rachel Henson  
Camp Shelby JFTC Public Affairs

A Google search of “insomnia in the military” returns 15.3 million results. The amount of literature available on the subject indicates the seriousness of the issue. The results shows that we suffer from not only insomnia, but also sleep paralysis, sleep apnea, and nightmares, just to name a few.

There’s nothing worse than a poor night’s sleep. I’ve spent too many nights staring at the clock waiting to fall asleep, only to spend the night counting the hours until I have to get up and start the day. Sleep issues are a common problem among service members, or SMs, so if you have frequent interruptions in your sleep schedule, you are not alone.

Fifty-four percent of military members who have served since 9/11 have reported sleep issues, while only 10% of the general population seek treatment for sleep related problems. Of those sleep issues, insomnia is one of the most frequent reasons for mental health referrals.

Not only is this an issue that can affect daily performance, but studies show there are links between sleep problems and the growing suicide rate within our armed forces. Doctors believe sleep issues are typically a symptom of an underlying problem, such as depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Good news! There is no longer a stigma attached to seeking help and there are ample resources available to military members to help regain control.

Our military health care providers, chaplains, and leadership are here to help guide us to the right treatment options. Military One Source offers a variety of tools for SMs and their family members to seek help.

Veterans with service connected disabilities and Retirees are eligible to seek treatment at Veterans Affairs Medical Centers. They offer one-on-one counseling, group therapy, and Cognitive-Based-Therapy.

I have taken advantage of these services in the last year and I feel better than ever. I sleep better, my mood has improved, and my anxiety has decreased. If you’re dealing with sleep issues, don’t wait any longer to get help. Believe me, you’ll thank yourself later!

## MILITARY ONE SOURCE RESOURCES:

Hotline: 1-877-995-5247  
Online: [online.safehelpline.org](http://online.safehelpline.org)  
Mobile App: Safe Helpline App  
[www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)

## VETERANS AFFAIRS RESOURCES:

Hotline: 1-800-273-8255  
Online: [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat)  
Mobile App: [www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/cbticoach\\_app\\_public.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/cbticoach_app_public.asp)  
[www.mentalhealth.va.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov)

<https://health.mil/News/Articles/2017/09/19/Getting-your-ZZZZs-Military-sleep-clinics-keep-troops-on-their-toes-by-shutting-their-eyes>

Sources:  
Alaska Sleep Education Center, <https://bit.ly/2BTqUUu>  
Reuters, <https://reut.rs/2Eg0pLn>



#ENDINSOMNIA  
ARE YOU SLEEPING?



## DON'T TEXT AND DRIVE

One text can change someone’s life forever.





Photo courtesy of the 255th Air Control Squadron



Photo by Danielle Thomas

## 255th ACS

### Guard Dogs Return Home

A Mississippi Air National Guard unit kept round-the-clock watch to protect Combined Joint Task Force pilots flying over dangerous territories in the Middle East.

The 255th Air Control Squadron, based in Gulfport, returned home after a six month deployment, to the United Arab Emirates in November 2017. During that time, approximately 100 Airmen supported two missions simultaneously from the UAE - Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Iraq and Syria and Operation Inherent Resolve in Afghanistan.

Members of the 255th ACS were on duty day and night to track aircraft fuel levels and monitor air traffic to deliver non-stop situational awareness for pilots within the Coalition Forces.

"The aircraft provide effective air-to-ground weapons employment by airspace de-confliction and facilitate immediate air support to those under hostile attack," said 1st Lt. Brad Worthington, air battle manager. "We were tasked with tactical problems daily. Our job is to find a solution and make it work to keep the fight going."

The Mississippi Air National Guardsmen worked side by side with United States allies from around the world.



U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Don Kazery

## Camp McCain

### Change of Command

The Mississippi Army National Guard Training Center, Camp McCain conducted a promotion and change of command ceremonies, October 14 at the facility south of Grenada.

Lieutenant Colonel Richard L. Weaver was promoted to the rank of Colonel before family, friends and Soldiers just

prior to assuming command of the post. He replaces Col. Michael N. Cleveland who served as Camp McCain's commander since February 2015. Cleveland is now assigned to the Mississippi National Guard Joint Force Headquarters in Jackson and serves as the force's lead engineer.

## Flying, Fighting, Winning!

### 172d, 186th Deemed Outstanding

The Mississippi Air National Guard's 172d Airlift Wing and 186th Air Refueling Wing recently received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. The honor is given by the Secretary of the Air Force to numbered units that have distinguished themselves by exceptionally meritorious service or outstanding achievement that clearly sets the unit above and apart from similar units. It is the 172d's 17th and 186th's fourth Outstanding Unit Awards.



U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Richard L. Smith



U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes

## Southwest Mission

### 114th Maintains Border Security

Approximately 25 members of the Mississippi National Guard's Company C, 1st Battalion, 114th Aviation Regiment, based in Tupelo, along with pilot augmentees from other companies, took part in security operations along the U.S. border with Mexico.

The group deployed in May as a part of Operation Guardian Support, a joint secu-

rity operation along the Southwest border. Three Mississippi UH-72 Lakota helicopters provide aerial surveillance support to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the U.S. Border Patrol during the assignment. The mission is ongoing.

This is the fourth time the unit was been sent to support the Southwest border security operations.

## #KENNEDYRETIREES



Major General Gregory L. Kennedy, former assistant adjutant general - Army, retired from the Mississippi National Guard, Dec. 14, 2018. General Kennedy served in uniform for approximately 38 years, completing command and staff assignments at every level. He was appointed as the ATAG-Army, Sept. 1, 2016 and served as a general officer for over six years. His notable positions include commander of the 66th Troop Command, 184th Sustainment Command, 185th Aviation Brigade, and the 1st Battalion, 185th Aviation Regiment. General Kennedy also served as the Deputy Chief of Staff, State Aviation Officer, Mississippi Army National Guard, the Brigade S3 Liaison Officer, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2009, and during Hurricane Katrina recovery operations in 2005 as the Aviation Task Force Commander.

# HARD TO BE HUMBLE

209th Special Operations Civil Engineering Squadron

Gulfport, Mississippi

The color blue denotes the metal iron, hence the mechanical attributes, strong will as well as night-and-day performance of the unit's duty.

Red, white and blue are the colors of the Flag of the United States of America and the Flag of the state of Mississippi; thereby rendering respect and service to the Country and State.

The mythological Minotaur symbolizes strength is a guardian; it also alludes the USAF PRIME BEEF engineering program, symbolized by the bull's head.

The trident is an established symbol for Mississippi and its state forces, as the literal meaning for "Mississippi", "Father of Waters", suggests

the mythological character Neptune (or Poseidon). His weapon is a trident which represents a combat-capable unit.



The lightning bolt represents speed in answering the call to duty and mission response.

The number of lightning bolts (one), stars (seven), and barbs of the trident (three), signifying the unit's original numeric designation.

The single star emblem of pre-Civil War Mississippi State troops inspires the larger star.

The color yellow denotes the golden Gulf Coast of Mississippi.

**"The 209th Special Operations Civil Engineering Squadron is a Squadron of the 172nd Airlift Wing in the Mississippi Air National Guard. Our mission is to be the most ready and relevant Civil Engineering Squadron of the United States Air Force Special Operations Command."**

- Master Sergeant Demetrius Baldwin, 209th SOCES

## BURNING QUESTIONS

### New Shade of "Blue"

#### AF BDUs Retired for OCPs

**Command Chief Master Sgt. Lynn R. Cole**  
Senior Enlisted Advisor - Air

Air Force leaders announced this past summer that the service would move to a single combat utility uniform, adopting the Operational Camouflage Pattern, or OCP, already in use by the Army and Airmen in combat zones and in certain jobs across the Air Force.

#### When is the change effective?

The authorized start date was Oct. 1, 2018. Airmen who had serviceable OCPs could wear the uniform and Airmen could purchase OCPs at Army and Air Force Exchange Services at certain locations.

The service will fully transition to OCPs by April 1, 2021.

#### Why was this change necessary?

Air Force leaders decided to transition to the OCP following feedback from Airmen. It will eliminate the need to maintain two separate uniforms – one for in garrison and one for deployments – and it is a visible reminder of the service's identity as a joint warfighting force.

#### How do OCPs differ from BDUs?

As with the Battle Dress Uniform, or BDU, worn by all services until about 10 years ago, the OCP Airmen wear will have distinctive Air Force features. The name tape and Air Force lettering will be a spice-brown color, and most rank will also be in spice-brown thread.

Squadron patches will also be worn on the OCP. The return of squadron patches was among the recommendations made by Airmen as part of the ongoing effort to revitalize squadrons.

"Unit patches express squadron identity and heritage – something our Airmen are incredibly proud of and want to celebrate," said Gen. David L. Goldfein, Air Force chief of staff. "This celebrates joint warfighting excellence as OCPs will become the joint combat uniform for Airmen and Soldiers while patches and nametapes will identify our respective services," Goldfein said. "We'll maintain our distinctive Air Force uniforms in blues, service dress, mess dress, and PT gear."



#### Where can I find the regulations for OCPs?

All guidance for the new OCP wear can be found in AFI 36-2903.

#### What should I know about OCP care?

Cold water, hold the softener. Use cold-water detergent in cold water, and never twist or wring-dry, or hang the OCP in direct sunlight. Also, stay away from bleach and bleach alternatives, which can lighten the colors from the palette designed to conceal you. Fabric softeners can remove the insect-repellent layer of the uniform.

Washing the OCP won't be much different from laundering your old uniform. If what you have been doing works (and you haven't noticed colors fading or insects bugging you) you can keep your uniform laundering habits. Airmen can basically use any commercially available laundry detergents that don't have bleach or bleach alternatives.

No dry cleaning, no starch. Starching or dry cleaning the uniform will damage it. Dry cleaning chemicals will destroy the insect protection even quicker than fabric softener will. Also, substantial heat is used to set starch, but that can destroy hook-and-loop material, such as Velcro. The new OCPs contain less Velcro, and buttons and zippers have replaced much of it, but there's still some Velcro to hold on unit badges, for

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



The sun rises above an M2A3 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle during Exercise Eastern Action 2019 at Al-Ghalail Range in Qatar, Nov. 11. The Soldiers of Senatobia's 2nd Battalion, 198th Armored Regiment, Task Force Spartan, staged in the darkness in preparation to execute a combined arms live fire exercise with their Qatar rapid reaction force. (U.S. Army National Guard photo illustration by Spc. Jovi Prevot)