

January-April 2006, Volume XIV, No. 1

# GUARD DETAIL

A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD



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A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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BACKGROUND PHOTO: The photo in the background on these two pages is that of the 155th Brigade Combat Team returning home from Iraq. All Soldiers assigned to the BCT were home in time to celebrate New Year 2006 with friends and loved ones. (Photo by Sgt. Maj. Bill “Stump” Jones).

# GUARD DETAIL

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## FRONT COVER



Staff Sgt. Maury Schuh is honored by an Iraqi mother, letting him hold this new born girl following a raid in an isolated group of homes and detaining most of the males for smuggling. Schuh shortly after started delivering food & clothing to help out the affected Iraqi families. (155th BCT photo) See story about Sgt. Schuh on page 19.

## BACK COVER



Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross, the Adjutant General of Mississippi, presents the flag to the widow of Mississippi Army National Guardsman Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Robinson during the Special Forces Soldier's funeral service. Robinson was killed in Afghanistan in March. (Photo by Sergeant Major Bill "Stump" Jones.)

# Global War on Terrorism

## A History Project

By 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Andy Thaggard

We refer to it by many names: institutional memory, heritage, lineage. A select and ever-decreasing few of us are buffs, able to give a dissertation on a particular unit's history at a moments notice.

The rest of us must rely on the record, on the big central file floating around somewhere in the ether. Sure, it is accessible. Sure, it has some of the information we need. Sure, you have to dig in at least three different piles to find what you are looking for.

Truth be told, as an institution we have done a poor job of capturing and organizing our own historical data, even in a time of war. But we are not alone.

To that end, the National Guard Bureau (NGB) has given us, and every other National Guard in the nation, a jump-start by requiring each mobilized unit to complete the Global War on Terrorism Unit History Report (UHR).

Completion of the UHR, the individual unit commander's responsibility, is important. It is important not just to keep NGB happy and fulfill regulatory

obligations, it is important because the document becomes a primary, authoritative source of the unit's wartime service.

With this source in hand, we now have a solid foundation to conduct other necessary but oft-ignored tasks. Such as requesting an update of Army National Guard unit's Lineage and Honors Certificate (LHC), the unit's official record of federal service.

Every Modified Tables of Organization and Equipment unit is authorized a LHC, whose contents are authored by the U.S. Army's Center of Military History (CMH). Each Table of Distribution and Allowances unit and separate detachment can request a statement of service. Every updated LHC and statement of service is based on information extracted from the UHR.

Battle or campaign streamers are authorized solely by the LHC, therefore, the path to get your streamer is dependent on requesting a new LHC, which is dependent on the UHR.

We have been working with OIF / II and OEF units for the past several months, not only to meet NGB's retro-active directive for completing UHRs,

but also to request LHCs and statements of service on behalf of unit commanders. Some of these LHCs and statements cover 30 years of undocumented service, including Operation Desert Storm.

Now we are working with units that deployed with the 155<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team. As UHRs are submitted, we in turn forward the reports to NGB/CMH and begin preparing LHC update request packets.

For many of our transforming units, LHC packets can not be submitted until after the formal reorganization into modularity occurs. Once the NGB Organizational Authority (the NGB order that puts the new name or unit in place) has been issued, the packet will be completed and forwarded.

For those LHC requests that have already been submitted, we are at the mercy of the system. The Center for Military History will not issue a new Lineage and Honors certificate for OIF/OEF service until the Army formally publishes an Order of Battle. The Order of Battle is the official 'this unit was here and was assigned to this unit' document and is currently being drafted.

## State Legislature Supports National Guard

The Mississippi Legislature moved forward during the 2006 session approving Guard legislation that will greatly benefit all members of the Mississippi Army and Air National Guard.

A bill to increase the State Income Tax Exemption from \$5,000 to \$15,000 was passed, signed into law on May 2, 2006, and will become effective on July 1, 2006. This is a huge, financial benefit for our Guard members and will also help with retention issues in our organization.

Our state lawmakers also passed the Consumer Protection Bill for automobile insurance to prevent insurance companies from placing mobilized members of the National Guard and Reserves in an assigned risk category and thereby increasing premiums. Many Soldiers of the National Guard cancelled their automobile policies while deployed in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. Upon return, they picked their policies back up, but at a much higher rate. This law will now prevent any recurring situations.

There were other bills introduced for additional support for the Mississippi National Guard, but did not make the cut. A bill that would provide a \$100 tax credit on license plates for National Guard and Reserve members failed again this year, and a new bill to provide credit for up to four years toward state retirement for National Guard and Reserves with 20 or more years also failed.

I encourage every Guard member to contact their state legislators and give them a huge "Thumbs Up" for passing these bills that benefit our Guard members, and at the same time, ask for their support in future Guard legislation.

Also, thank your associations for their hard work; without them, none of this legislation would have passed.

Each state's National Guard has been given the opportunity to scrub the list and make corrections.

The overall project appears overwhelming, and it certainly could snowball out of control or just get dropped if there were not controls in place.

Fortunately, controls are in place. Letters of instruction have been issued, and units are responding. We make every effort to work directly with units, not only ensure that requirements are met, but that quality products are produced.

There are other components of what we now call the Global War on Terrorism History Project, including an active oral history program focusing on the enlisted perspective as well as the senior leader's perspective. But that is for another issue of the Guard Detail magazine.

Much has been said about Army Guard units, but not Air Guard units.

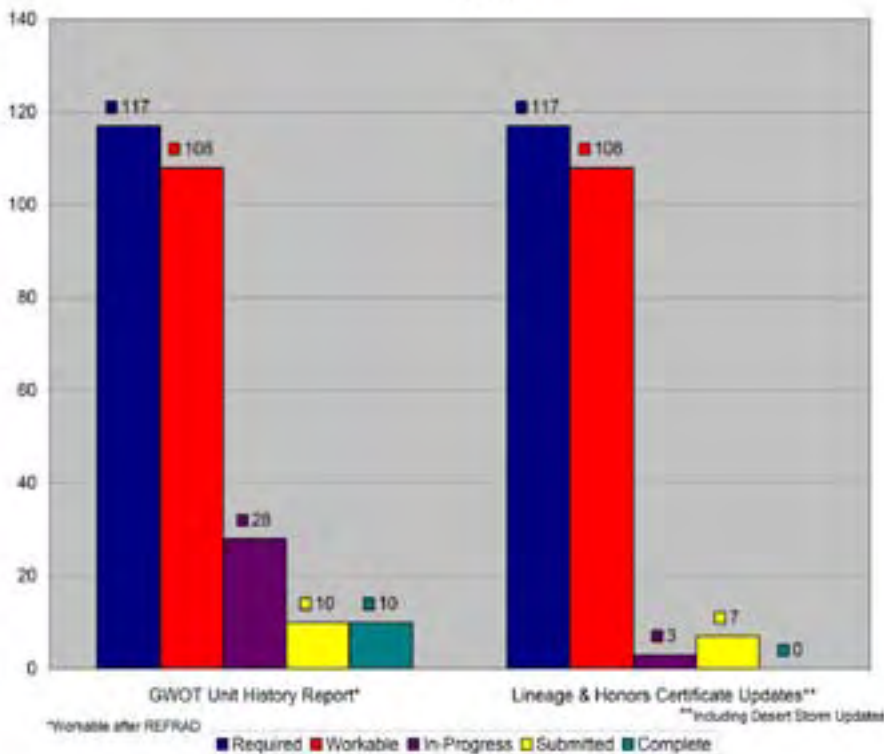
At press time, the letter of instruction for the Mississippi Air

National Guard is an early draft. Highlights include: information on an abbreviated after action report; modified historical reporting procedures; and inclusion of the Air Guard in the Oral History program. Despite the loss of full-time ANG historians, together we will be able to meet NGB/AFI-directed requirements.

So, if you were a deployed unit commander in the Mississippi National Guard and do not already have first-hand experience with these historical requirements and projects (look out engineers), your day is soon coming.

Check out the GWOT History Project's Guard Knowledge Online (GKO) website, which lists all the current LOIs, applicable regulations, current program snapshot, and even archived copies of submitted LHC requests for your educational viewing pleasure. The site can be found at <https://gkportal.ngb.army.mil/sites/MS/gwot>.

GWOT History Project  
Project Summary  
5/1/2006



# The Recruiting Race

## Get Your Game On!



■ By Sandy Ates

One little word that piques the attention of a 16-year-old kid is C-A-R. To a teenager with a brand new driver's license, a car equates freedom and control; that magical age when they begin thinking about their future. And, the National Guard wants to give these young people options for their future.

Recently, the Mississippi Army National Guard opened the state's first storefront recruiting office in Flowood, Miss. To draw a bigger audience of young people, the Guard's recruiting and retention force called on the Mobile Event Team or MET to help kick off the grand opening.

With NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing) fast becoming the nation's number one sport event in the nation, the National Guard Bureau's marketing team joined NASCAR, becoming one of the main sponsors of the #16 car and driver, Greg Biffle. The MET uses the #16 car to advertise the National Guard.

Sergeant Warren Campbell, a MET team leader and Army National Guard member from Atlanta, Ga., said his team of Soldiers represent just one of the bureau's aggressive new marketing programs to promote the Army National Guard (ARNG). The MET noted Campbell is made up of 35 active duty for special work (ADSW) Soldiers, who tour a minimum of 139 days going from city to city deploying a recruiting lead generation system and working some of the largest events in the country.

"The MET is actually seven separate teams consisting of four to six Soldiers each headed by an officer or Non-commissioned Officer like myself," said Campbell. "These Soldiers must be highly skilled communicators with a knowledge and passion for the Army National Guard and who want to

promote it to the American public with a desire to make a difference in a big way."

"With the NASCAR racing season just beginning, and the popularity of the #16 car and its driver, Greg Biffle really hot this year, we felt the car and display would indeed draw some leads," said recruiter Sergeant Keith Dennis, assigned duties at the Guard's new storefront office. "NASCAR is pretty popular in Rankin County and we felt the NASCAR display would be a perfect attention-getter for the grand opening ceremony."

The Guard's new storefront office, according to Sgt. Dennis, is much like that of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps recruiting offices located in business areas.

"The storefront office is available for those students who may feel intimidated by recruiters coming to their school or students who might miss classes or school events in order to talk with a recruiter," said Dennis, adding the storefront on Lakeland Drive in Flowood was the first of its kind in the state.

Dennis said business was a little slow at the storefront location the second day of the grand opening, so the recruiters and the MET team took their displays to the Northwest Rankin High School in Flowood, Miss., and the recruiting force joined them with their displays and gave students there an opportunity to visit with them following lunch break.

"We have a great deal of interest from the JROTC student program here at the school," said Dennis, "many of whom join us after graduation."

Pointing out one particular female JROTC cadet, Dennis said that the young lady's mom was a member of the 113<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company in Brandon, "She is pretty determined to follow in her Mom's footsteps," he said.

"We have three other students in our Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP), including the young lady over there, already in the 113<sup>th</sup> MP Company," said Dennis. "They are all JROTC students and will graduate next year, and then go off to basic training. We have four kids joining us this year, so we average about four students per year from this school."

A young man joined Sgt. Dennis who stood near the #16 car.

"This is Matt Lowe, he's a senior here at Northwest Rankin and will be graduating in May. He is one of the RSP students basic training bound in May," said Dennis as he reached to shake Lowe's hand.

Quite anxious to see the #16 car up close, Lowe bent down to look in the cars' window as Campbell cranked up the engine.



Photo by ZLT-Andy Thaggard

As a short rev of the engine kicked back down to a lower roar, Matt Lowe was heard saying he always wanted to be a Soldier.

"I'm proud to be serving my country and want to be a member of the Special Forces," the 12<sup>th</sup> grader said, adding his family history. "My grandfather served in Vietnam and I had a great aunt that served in World



Mississippi Army National Guard Recruiter, Sergeant Keith Dennis (left) and new recruit, Matt Lowe, a senior at Northwest Rankin High School in Flowood, (center), talk with Mobile Event Team (MET) leader, Sgt. Warren Campbell, during a recent MET expo for the Guard's new storefront office grand opening in Flowood, Miss.

War II, she was one of the veterans who marched in Truman's parade after the war (World War II)."

As student lunch period ended a steady stream of curious teenagers emerged from the school doors and into the parking lot to check out the displays and to speak with recruiters and MET team members.

Campbell, sitting in the driver's seat of the #16, started the race car's engine and revved its motor. A very loud thundering sound seemed to draw students like a magnet, and shake the quiet of a warm Mississippi afternoon. One student was heard later saying that the noise was still quieter on the

school parking lot than at Talledega or Daytona motor speedways where the sounds of racing are deafening and where the #16 is usually found up front in the race.

Over the sputter of the now quieter engine, Campbell answered many questions about the car and asked if anyone was interested in the National Guard. Three young men quickly responded with "Yes, sir!"

The MET sponsors other programs besides NASCAR driver Greg Biffle and the #16 car.

"We also participate in the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) FAN AXXCESS, Adrenaline Jam which

is a dynamic gaming program much like PlayStation® or X-Box® video gaming devices and programs," noted Campbell, and adding, "one of our most popular sponsorship programs is "Hoop It Up", the largest 3-on-3 basketball tournaments in the world."

'Guard Fishing' is a brand new program already making a big splash. To find out more information about Guard Fishing and other mobile marketing programs go to [www.virtualarmory.com](http://www.virtualarmory.com).

How well did the storefront grand opening do? "238 total leads," exclaimed Dennis.



# Guard Benefits for Bright Career

## Army National Guard

•FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
SFC Timothy G. Harper (601) 313-6320 or visit  
<http://virtualarmory.com>

### Educational Assistance

- Montgomery GI Bill up to \$297 per month, full time
- Federal Tuition Assistance-100% tuition payments (up to \$4,500 per FY & \$250 per semester)
- Montgomery GI Bill Kicker eligible Soldiers get additional \$200 (\$350 for ROTC Soldiers) per month.
- Student Loan Repayment Program - back pay up to \$20,000 in existing eligible college loans.
- Health Professional Loan Repayment up to \$50,000
- Specialized Training Assistance Program provides up to 1,279 per month to help train those in critical wartime shortage medical specialties

### Bonuses

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- Some officers up to \$10,000 upon commissioning
- Health professionals accession bonus of up to \$50,000

### Skills & Training

- Troops to Teachers
- Leadership/Management training and experience
- Decision making and survival skills training and experience
- Computer use and repair training and experience
- Formal electronics and mechanical training and practical experience
- Satellite Communications training
- Medical specialties and First Aid Training
- Physical training

### Other Incentives

- Commissary/Exchange Use
- \$15,000 State Tax Deduction
- Tricare
- Family & Employer Support
- Space Available Travel and traveling destinations
- 20-year Retirement
- Good Pay and allowances
- VA Home Loan & Other VA benefits

## Air National Guard

•FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
Air National Guard Recruiting (601) 313-6265 or  
visit <http://www.goang.com>

### Educational Assistance

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- Montgomery GIB Kicker -- \$12,600
- State Educational Assistance Program
- Community College of the Air Force (CCAF)
- Student Loan Repayment -- \$20,000
- State Educational Assistance Program (SEAP)
- Grants, Scholarships

### Bonuses

- Enlistment Bonus -- \$15,000

### Skills & Training

- Air Force Specialty Career (AFSC)
- Basic Training at San Antonio, Texas
- Leadership School
- Online Training Now Available
- Nearly all MOS have equal civilian-related jobs

### Other Incentives

- Commissary/Exchange Use
- \$15,000 State Tax Deduction
- Tricare
- Family & Employer Support
- Space Available Travel and traveling destinations
- 20-year Retirement
- Good Pay and allowances
- VA Home Loan & Other VA benefits

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(see page 31)



# “Top Gun Recruiters”



(Left photo) Sergeant 1st Class Missy Fritz gets strapped into a T-38 by her instructor pilot, Capt. Sean Canfield, of the 50th Flight Training Squadron, while Captain Brad Gilley (left) poses with trainees Sergeants 1st Class Donald Whitfield and Terry Adair, and fellow pilot Capt. Brad Gilley of the 41st FTS before takeoff in their T-38 aircraft.

## Story by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Upton, Marketing NCO

On Dec. 17, 1903, near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, Orville and Wilber Wright became the first people to experience sustained flight in the United States. Over 100 years later, three Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers became the first recruiters to fly jets.

Sergeants 1st Class Missy Fritz, Donald Whitfield and Terry Adair, part of the Recruiting and Retention Battalion of the Mississippi Army National Guard all earned incentive flights as “Top Gun” recruiters for the state by exceeding their yearly recruiting mission. These three Soldiers were sent to Columbus Air Force Base, Columbus, Miss., to attend two days of flight training, culminating with a training jet flight.

After their flight physicals, they attended egress training monitored by Airman Lynette McCarrier. She explained to the new flyers the importance of exiting a jet, should an unlikely malfunction occur as well as normal exiting procedures. Later, the recruiters broke into two teams, with Adair and Whitfield going to the 41st Flight Training Squadron (FTS) and Fritz going to the 50th FTS. Senior Airman Stephen Bonner and Airman 1st Class Jennifer Montalvo of the 41st FTS Life Support Squadron (LSS) equipped Adair and Whitfield with helmets, oxygen masks and parachutes, while Fritz was fitted by Senior Airmen Steven Parker II and Derrick Pipper, and Staff Sgt. Byron Travers of the 50th FTS LSS.

Once the “Top Gun” recruiters were completely outfitted and had completed their orientations, they paired up with their instructor pilots to begin their flights. Adair was paired with Captain Brad Gilley and Whitfield was paired with Major Keith Terrell, both instructor pilots for the 41st FTS. Fritz was paired with Capt. Sean Canfield of the 50th FTS.

Once the trio had completed over an hour each of aeronautical acrobatics, they were deposited safely back to earth by their pilots. In the afterglow of their experience the Top Gun recruiting team stated what a great time they had, as well as giving

high marks for the professionalism and great attitudes of everyone who helped make this endeavor a huge success. Fritz described her flight as “totally awesome, one of the most exciting experiences of my life.” Whitfield said, “it was the experience of a lifetime”, while Adair stated “It was humbling and extremely motivating to receive an award of this caliber.”



Sergeant 1st Class Terry Adair (right) gets egress training by Airman Lynette McCarrier at Columbus Air Force Base, Miss.



Sergeant 1st Class Missy Fritz (right) gets in a quick picture with her instructor pilot, Capt. Sean Canfield with the 50th Flight Training Squadron, Columbus AFB, Miss.

Lt. Col. Bert Gilmore, commander of the recruiting and retention for the Mississippi Army National Guard expressed his pride in his recruiters for their excellent work and thanks to the 41st and 50th FTS for their contributions. He also said, “We have a difficult job to do, but we cannot lower the bar nor our standards. This is why awarding these recruiters is so gratifying to me. They not only met, but exceeded an extremely difficult goal. I can only challenge all Mississippi Army National Guardsmen and women to do their best in all things.”

# Black History celebrated with special flight

▪ By Senior Airman Jeffery Gibson  
172nd AW Public Affairs

Five members of the 172nd Airlift Wing, Jackson, flew a very special mission during February in honor of Black History Month. An all African-American C-17 flight crew, departed Thompson Field on February 24, flew to Balad, Iraq, and returned five days later--mission accomplished in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"The significance of this mission was that we were able to put together a crew of African-Americans and fly our mission in honor of Black History Month. This gesture showed the progress the wing has made over the years to come to this point in history. It shows how far we have come. It makes a great statement for the wing," said Maj. Edward Evans, aircraft commander for the flight.

In addition to Evans, members of the crew included co-pilots Maj. Charles Smith and Capt. Benjamin Salley, and loadmasters Senior Master Sgts. Marcel Pilate and Lloyd Burton.

A Gulfport native and graduate of Mississippi State University, Evans has a historic connection to African-American military aviation. "My grandfather was an aircraft mechanic for the Tuskegee Airmen. He was in the 332nd Fighter Wing (FW). Ironically, we worked with the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing in Balad, Iraq, which is a derivative squadron of the original 332nd FW. I was pleased to take this plane to my grandfather's wing during Black History Month," said Evans.

The first African-Americans to qualify as military pilots in any branch of the armed forces were the famed Tuskegee Airmen. Before the establishment of an aviation course at Tuskegee Army Air Field in 1939, African-Americans were continuously excluded from aviation training programs in the military. However, by the end of World War II, almost 1,000 African-Americans had earned their wings at Tuskegee.

The Tuskegee Airmen have a more than respectable record.

Approximately half of the Afri-



**HISTORIC CREW**--This 172nd Airlift Wing aircrew group flew a recent mission in honor of Black History month on Feb. 24, 2006. It was the first such mission flown by the Jackson-based Air National Guard unit. The aircrew flying the historic mission are from left, Maj. Charles Smith, co-pilot, Capt. Benjamin Salley, co-pilot, Maj. Edward Evans, aircraft commander, and Senior Master Sgts. Marcel Pilate and Lloyd Burton, loadmasters. (Photo by Master Sgt. Andy Miller, 172 AW)

can-Americans that graduated from Tuskegee fought in the European and Mediterranean wars as combat mission fighter pilots. They flew more than 15,000 sorties, destroyed over 1,000 German aircraft, received hundreds of Air Medals and more than 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses.

Maj. Smith, a Madison, Miss., native and graduate of the Air Force Academy said that because the unit was able to assemble an all African-American crew, it is a testament that shows the 172nd AW leadership has provided ample opportunity for all qualified and highly motivated persons regardless of creed, color, gender or religious background.

Capt. Salley, a native of Columbus, Miss., and a graduate of Louisiana Tech University, said, "I have wanted to be a pilot ever since I knew what an airplane was. But, what really made up my mind was in the first grade when my teacher flew to Acapulco and met the pilot. When she returned from her trip, she had us write the pilot letters and he actually wrote me back. I was about six years old and I knew then that I really wanted to be a pilot."

Regarding the significance of this

flight, Capt. Salley, who has been a member of the unit for 11 years, added, "This mission is a literal testament of our unit, being that we were able to crew the entire flight with all African-Americans is testament to the wing's leadership and that we in Jackson are in a very good situation--that Jackson has good people."

According to leading minority publications, the United States military today is often viewed as an excellent example of prestigious institutions providing upward mobility opportunities to African-American and other minorities.

Burton, the oldest person of the crew, has been in the unit since 1981 and has been a loadmaster since December 1986, said, "I was glad to be on the mission and glad to be a part of the team at the 172nd."

This flight was a first for the unit. "It was symbolic, showing we have competent and confident people from all walks of life who can accomplish the unit's mission," said Pilate.

Evans added, "I could not be more proud to fly with this group of guys. These guys are among the best in the unit."

→→→

# Freed Iraqi hostage gets lift on Mississippi C-17

■ Story by Sandy Ates

Members of the 172nd Airlift Wing performing a routine air evacuation mission from Balad, Iraq, in March were quite surprised to learn that they would have an extra-special distinguished visitor on board their C-17 flight from Iraq to Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

Jill Carroll, the young journalist captured in Iraq in January 2006, and released by insurgents in March, was whisked aboard the "Spirit of the Choctaw Warrior" quickly and without much adieu.

Shocked to realize that their passenger was such a worldwide celebrity, aircraft commander, Captain Fred die Brown, said that this would be the most memorable mission he had flown since becoming a C-17 pilot with the 172nd AW.

"Security man came up to me while we were uploading 20 injured patients and some cargo and said we would be having a distinguished visitor boarding," said Brown, noting the tight security involved. "They didn't say who, but pointed to a name on a sheet of paper. Of course we all had heard about her release on television that morning, because she had become a worldwide celebrity. But, we never thought that she would be on our plane, simply because she was only released that morning and I was sure there would be a lot of questioning by security. So, actually the entire crew was very surprised to see her -- I said to myself, 'That's her! That's her from the television this morning!'"

Brown noted the importance placed on Carroll's safety and security. "An SUV drove up and she got out with a military escort (US Air Force Colonel Kurt Lohed), three body guards and friends from the Christian Science Monitor magazine," explained Brown, "She was pretty much sequestered to the front of the plane, that is the cockpit and the crew rest area."

Other of the flight's aircrew members described the experience with WLBT-Channel 3, Jackson, Miss., anchor Rolsyn Anderson on April 4.

While standing in the cockpit of the C-17 while he was being interviewed by Ms. Anderson after he arrived home, co-pilot, Captain Trevon Miller, pointed to a seat and said, "She actually sat up on the flight deck with us for about 45 minutes."

"I believe this was her first flight on a military aircraft," chuckled Brown recalling Carroll's impression of the flight deck, "she was extremely impressed with the plane's numerous buttons and knobs, and also impressed with the plane's tactical maneuverability. We gave her a briefing, pro-



Freed Iraqi hostage, Jill Carroll, steps off a Mississippi Air National Guard C-17 upon its landing at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, and greeted by base commander, Colonel Kurt Lohed in April after her 12-week captivity in Iraq. (AP photo)

vided her with night goggles and pointed out various cities as we made the five-and-half hour flight to Ramstein. She said that was the coolest."

In the cockpit when Carroll boarded was Captain Trevon Miller of Madison, Miss., an 11-year pilot with the 172nd Airlift Wing, and one of the mission's co-pilots.

Miller told Anderson, "It was just a little bit something extra to be able to obviously get this civilian out of the war zone after being detained for three months."

Both Miller and Brown said Miss Carroll was very gracious obviously for them carrying her out of Iraq and very, very, very personable.

Having heard that the young journalist had been up about 36 hours, Brown said about 30-45 minutes after takeoff, she went back to the crew rest area behind the cockpit and the loadmasters fixed her up a spot where she could get a nap on the airplane.

"She woke up as we made our landing approach at Ramstein," said Brown. "We landed and she was quickly escorted off the aircraft, but not before she thanked us all individually and left her autograph on my flight plan which read, 'Thanks for all your help,' Jill Carroll."

"There was a big reception waiting for her at 9:15 the next morning when we landed. All these people were lined up television cameras all over the place, but she was hurried to a waiting limousine and that's the last we saw of her," said Brown.

It was a memorable journey for the young journalist, and one the entire Mississippi Air National Guard crew will not soon forget.

Brown said after getting back to Germany, he watched the news of Jill's arrival at Ramstein on television. "She was on every channel, and I knew that our Air National Guard crew had made history," said Brown. "I called my Mom and squadron commander and told them all about it and so did most of the other guys."

Captain Kurt Deaton was also a co-pilot on the flight, as were Senior Master Sergeants Marcel Pilate and Johnny Gressett and Chief Master Sgt. Robert Evan, who served as load masters.

"They were filming and that's the first thing I noticed on CNN was the Mississippi Emblem on the side of that plane," said Meridian native, Johnny Gressett. "I was really proud that you know we were a small part of her repatriation home."

**Continued on Page 27**

## THANKS A MILLION

# Mississippi Air Guard C-17 makes historic moment

■ *By Sandy Ates and excerpts from Boeing, Inc.  
Photos by Master Sgt. Andy Miller,  
172 AW and Boeing, Inc.*

At 30,000 feet—on a flight from Balad, Iraq, to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, a Boeing C-17 Globemaster III aircraft's unseen time clock struck 1,000,000 hours. That's equivalent to one C-17 flying every minute of every day since before the Wright Brothers made their first historic flight at Kitty Hawk in 1903, without stopping. An impossibility to aviation pioneers whose first flights lasted merely seconds or minutes.

It is certainly not impossible for today's aircrew aboard the Air Force's premiere C-17 Globemaster III—a plane that has shown its capability the world over and reached its one-million-hour mark nearly 15 years after its first flight.

Recently, one C-17 belonging to the Mississippi Air National Guard's 172<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing in Jackson, Miss., crossed that one-millionth flying hour mark and made history for the workhorse aircraft of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

"This was a regular mission for us," noted 172<sup>nd</sup> wing commander and the mission commander, Col. William Hill.

"The aircraft first delivered 43,000 pounds of cargo to Al Asad, Iraq. Then it flew to Balad to pick up 16 patients, including some critically wounded," said the colonel, "It was the same type of mission four of our wing aircraft have been flying in and out of Ramstein since late last year."

This was an extra special accomplishment for the 172<sup>nd</sup> AW because this particular mission was the first war-time mission for the wing since it completed its aircraft conversion process from the C-141 to C-17 aircraft about three years ago.

"We would not have been able to reach this milestone nor successfully complete the mission without the help of active-duty personnel and other Guard and Air Reserve unit personnel all working together as a team," said Hill.



Aircrew members celebrating the C-17 Globemaster's one millionth hour are (from left) Maj. David Ball, Master Sgt. Allent Randall, Senior Airman Sarah Zehringer, Col. William Hill, 172<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing commander, Lt. Col. Jim Conway, Capt. Andy Netterwood, Master Sgt. Robert Bratton and Tech. Sgt. Paul Walter.

On board this flight was an eight-person flight crew, seven members of an aeromedical evacuation team, a dozen news media and their escorts and a handful of Soldiers on their way to fight the Global War on Terrorism, and a civilian contractor. Since the flight was restricted to minimal passengers, Boeing, Inc., public affairs representative, Mr. Gary Lesser was on board to document the historic flight. His documentation follows:

### **March 19, 11:53 p.m., Al Asad Air Base, Iraq**

After flying five hours and crossing two time zones, it was nearly midnight when the C-17 touches down on the 14,000 foot runway at Al Asad Air Base in northern Iraq, about 120 miles west of Baghdad, not far from the Euphrates River.

About four hours into the flight, Master Sgt. Allen Randall, loadmaster on the million-hour mission, makes an announcement: fasten your seat belts and prepare for descent into Iraq. With the airplane eerily darkened and the pilots using night-vision goggles, this is the most dangerous part of the

mission. The airfield is protected by a security perimeter, but insurgents with shoulder-fired missiles can strike at any time. To make itself less of a target, the C-17 makes an unconventional approach, zig-zagging its way into Al Asad. Immediately after landing, the C-17's huge cargo ramp opens as the aircraft taxis into total darkness. The only illumination comes from runway lights, and from the forklifts that unload 21 tons of cargo pallets, including barrels of oil—to support military operations throughout the region.

An hour and 20 minutes later, the C-17 is now headed to Balad Air Base, where it will pick up wounded patients at the Air Force Theater Hospital, about 50 miles north of Baghdad, near the Tigris River.

### **March 20, 2:01 a.m., Balad Air Base, Iraq**

When the C-17 lands in Balad, it is literally, the middle of the night. The Balad Air Base is a unique creation, a small American-made town in the middle of the most hostile part of Iraq. Twenty-thousand troops are based

there, and it is a very temporary home to wounded Soldiers on their way to Landstuhl Regional Medical Hospital near Ramstein. “If a Soldier arrives here, they’ve got a 96 percent chance of surviving,” said Col. Tip White, vice commander of the 332<sup>nd</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing. “During the Vietnam conflict, it often took several weeks for us to get an injured Soldier out of theater. Here, we can do it – sometimes in as little as 24 hours.”

**March 20, 4:35 a.m., Balad Air Base Iraq**

The C-17 leaves Balad at “Oh-dark-thirty,” as this time of day is often called. One of those in a patient litter on the aircraft is Spc. Jeff Reedy of the Army’s 103<sup>rd</sup> Armor Regiment. The day before, Reedy was in a tank on the main supply route from Ramadi to Fallujah, keeping the road open and free of improvised explosive devices. His tank was providing security for a group of infantrymen on the ground. Reedy was standing in the hatch, and without warning, a car pulled up next to him. Next thing he knew gunmen in the car shot Reedy in his left hand. Now in cheerful spirits in the skies over Iraq—and happy to be on his way home—Reedy learns he’s on the million-hour mission.

“If these planes have flown that many hours, it means they’ve taken care of an awful lot of my brothers out here,” said Reedy. “The care I’m receiving is fantastic. This is like flying in a hotel. The C-17 is like a Cadillac.”



Maj. David Ball is the medical crew director for the 791st Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, who was aboard the C-17 as it reached its historic one-millionth hour on a flight from Iraq to Germany.

**March 20, 7:32 a.m., Ramstein Air Base, Germany**

Fourteen and one-half-hours after the million hour mission begins, 16 patients arrive at Ramstein, where they were carried onto a bus for the



**SIGNING IN**--Capt. David Strickland of the 183rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, Mississippi Air National Guard, signs the One Millionth Hour poster on board the aircraft as it surpasses the millionth flight hour of a C-17 Globemaster III. (Photo courtesy of Boeing, Inc.)

short journey to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center. With 162 beds, it’s the largest American-run hospital outside the United States. Here, their recovery continues, and the wounded warriors are one-step closer to home, and an often emotional reunion with their families.

The final leg of the million-hour mission left the next day for Andrews Air Force Base, near Washington, D.C., and from there, most patients were taken to Walter Reed Army Hospital or Bethesda Naval Hospital for further care.

With the news media on board--including CNN -- the entire mission was extraordinarily well documented. But it is not an extraordinary mission. “It was pretty routine,” said Lt. Col. Jim Conway, the aircraft commander. “All in all, the mission went as planned.”

“Reaching this milestone is an incredible accomplishment for the entire C-17 team,” said Dave Bowman, vice president and C-17 program manager for Boeing .

“Hitting one million flight hours more than a year ahead of plan is astounding,” Bowman said. “It’s truly a testament to the quality, capability


and reliability built into the aircraft, and it demonstrates our customers’ unwavering confidence in the C-17 Globemaster.

The Mississippi Air National Guard’s 172 AW has been fortunate in being the first Air Guard unit to receive this awesome aircraft. Some of the wing’s C-17s have been given a name beginning with “Spirit of”, and it is easy to understand why these aircraft were named so, because of the spirit of the men and women who are dedicated to the missions given them.

Mississippi is always on the go, carrying out the missions assigned by their higher headquarters, Air Mobility Command (AMC) at Scott Air Force Base. Among some of these missions included a mission to rescue men on a Russian submarine, transporting a young reporter taken hostage in Iraq to safety with her family in the United States, and most importantly, transporting sick and injured Soldiers, marines and others as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom III. Again, a job well done by the Mississippi Air Guard.

# THUNDER

## Leaving Iraq a brig

A silhouette of a soldier in profile, facing right, holding a glowing, spherical object in both hands. The background is a gradient from dark to light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

In January 2004 Soldiers of the 155th Brigade Combat Team (BCT), nicknamed Dixie Thunder, left home in small groups to Kuwait and then convoyed to seven forward operating bases (FOBs) in Iraq to replace troops that had been there several months.

By February 2004 the 155th BCT was handed over authority in Iraq, and Brig. Gen. Augustus Leon Collins holding the reins.

While they trained-up for war-time scenarios, BCT Soldiers quickly realized that they would have new rolls and have to use different skills to accomplish their mission in Iraq. Soldiers had to stay vigilant and focused because mortar shelling and improvised explosive devices (IED) were unpredictable and deadly.

"We fought for the freedom of Iraqi people," said 155th BCT commander, Brig. Gen. Augustus Leon Collins, during a taped interview midway through the team's deployment. "We are denying a safe haven for terrorists to carry out the dreams of another 9-11. We are fighting to ensure this never happens again.

We are fighting an insurgency, a complicated enemy, an enemy that doesn't stand and fight but plants IEDs and hides. They are not as skilled, intelligent nor as well-trained as the Soldiers in the brigade," said Collins. "Each day we were winning the war, and they know it."

Collins noted some of the logistical strengths of Operation Iraqi Freedom III.

"Since arriving in February, the BCT has taken several thousand terrorists and insurgents off the streets of Iraq. We have also confiscated several thousand weapons and numerous tons of explosives," noted Collins. "We are doing this by taking the fight to enemy, they don't want to face us but we give them no choice. Through daily searches, raids, and ongoing presence patrols, we were able to take back towns, cities, neighborhoods, taking it away from the terrorists and giving it back to the honest people of Iraq."

### **Building A Democracy**

"Our Soldiers are working very hard to give a future of promise to the youth of Iraq," said Collins, adding "we are working with the new Iraqi government mentoring them and teaching them new ways of freedom and democracy. We are helping them build a government of the people and for the people and by the people of Iraq."

The BCT accomplished that mission when the first primary

Article by Sandy Ates  
Photo courtesy of the 155 BCT

# fighter future HOME

election was held in May 2005, and later in 2006, a government was elected to lead its people.

## **Building People**

"We are helping to establish the essential needs of all people of Iraq," said Collins. "Electricity, water and fuel that are taken for granted in our country are scarce here, and we are working with the Iraqi government to change that."

Iraq is an agricultural country devastated by international sanctions brought on Iraq through the tyranny of its dictator, Saddam Hussein. Mississippi National Guard troops were among those to capture Hussein in 2004. He now faces court proceedings to determine whether he lives or dies for his crimes.

"Thanks to the expertise of the brigade we're making great strides to build the agricultural base here and bring them from a socialist to market-based economy," explained the Booneville native. "We are doing this by establishing co-ops, offering educational opportunities and establishing micro-loan institutions to help farmers get back on their feet."

Stigma still exists in Iraq today, but a new generation can change the way the varied social and religious cultures view each other.

"We are not lost to the future of Iraq; its children," said Collins, himself a father of two sons, William, 20, and Benjamin, 13. "Each unit in our brigade has adopted at least one school in their area and will help them with much needed supplies, furniture and facilities."

"When new school year starts I would like to expand this by offering a cultural exchange between Mississippi students and Iraqi Students through a pen-pal program," he said. "This will go a long way to remove stigmas associated with each culture and help build a foundation of trust and understanding between the two for generations to come."

## **Building Infrastructure**

"We are working with the Iraqi media to remove the mouth piece of a biased dictatorship to an independent source of information for the people of Iraq," said the 48-year-old veteran. "A free press is important to a developing democracy and we are educating and empowering journalists in Iraq to fill that roll."

Security and trust felt among those who live in Iraq will not be overnight solution, but clearly, the actions of the 155th BCT has brought about much hope in that direction.

Without a doubt, the success of our Brigade Combat Team and the leadership of General Collins and others within the

brigade did not go unnoticed.

State Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross noted that Collins' people-oriented qualities was what prompted him to charge Collins to lead the 3,500-member strong BCT in the beginning.

Under Collins' command the brigade was nominated for the Presidential Unit Citation, an honor equivalent to awarding the Distinguished Service Cross to an individual. The BCT included a joint force team made up from Mississippi, Vermont, Arkansas, Utah and Puerto Rico Soldiers, as well as a cavalry squadron of active duty Army Soldiers from Fort Irwin, Calif., and a cell from the 238th Air Support Operations Squadron, Mississippi Air National Guard.

What does this mean for Mississippi? There never is a simple solution to war, but the war in Iraq will have far-reaching implications on their children and their children. We live in a world without borders and a threat to freedom anywhere, stated Collins, is a threat to freedom everywhere.

"I envision a free democracy for Iraq," said Collins. "We are planting the seeds of democracy out of which will grow stronger relations and shed its shade of freedom over this sun-baked land that has been plagued by war since the beginning of time."

"We are hoping freedom replaces hate and terror that exists to day," he said. "We are fighting the fields of Babylon today, so our children won't have to tomorrow."

One commander talked about the Soldiers in his command.

"I have had the privilege of serving with the best that America has to offer. It is truly remarkable what these great soldiers have accomplished. They endured being away from their families for almost 18 months; served in a hostile environment where they encountered hostile attacks regularly; mourned the loss of their comrades; and suffered through the devastation of Hurricane Katrina," said Lt. Col. John Rhodes, commander of the 155th Infantry Battalion. "Yet through it all, they remained dedicated to their mission. Iraq is a better country because of their efforts. The Iraqi citizens will always remember the generosity demonstrated by these professionals. These soldiers crossed the forward edge of freedom and faced the dangers of war to preserve America's way of life. They did not risk their lives for fame or fortune. They did it because this is who they are, and what they represent. America is the "Home of the Brave," and I've had the honor of serving with them. These soldiers are the modern day "Mississippi Rifles" who have carried on the great traditions of this proud Infantry Regiment."



Members of the 155th Brigade Combat Team began arriving home from Iraq on December 15, 2005, and all were returned home by January 20, 2006. Most of the returning Soldiers came home by way of the Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC), Mississippi Air National Guard, in Gulfport, and were taken by bus to Mobilization Center Shelby, Camp Shelby, for demobilization processing before being dismissed to their families. While many Mississippi communities have held welcome home ceremonies, the Mississippi National Guard will hold an official welcoming ceremony on June 3, 2006, at the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson. In the next issue we will feature a pictographical sketch of the 155th BCT in Iraq. The above photographs were taken upon arrival at the CRTC. (Photos by Sgt. Maj. Bill "Stump" Jones, MSARNG)





HQ, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry, McComb  
 HC(-), 1st Bn, 155th Inf., McComb  
 Det. 1, 1st Bn, 155th Inf., Natchez  
 Det. 2, HHC, 1st Bn, 155th Inf., Brookhaven  
 Co. A (-), 1st Bn, 155th Inf., Tylertown  
 Det. 1, Co. A(-), 1st Bn, 155th Inf., Mendenhall  
 Co. B(-), 1st Bn, 155th Inf., Poplarville  
 Det. 1, Co. B, 1st Bn, 155th Inf., Bay St. Louis  
 Co. C(-), 1st Bn, 155th Inf., Biloxi  
 Det. 1, Co. C(-), 1st Bn, 155th Inf., Ocean Springs



**155th Brigade Combat Team  
 "Dixie Thunder", Tupelo, Miss.**

HQ, 155th Separate Armor Brigade (Hvy), Tupelo  
 HHC, 155th SAB (H), Tupelo  
 Det 1, HHC, 155th SAB (H), New Albany, Miss.  
 255th Military Intelligence Company, Jackson  
 1st Cavalry Division Detachment (Rear CP OP Cell), Tupelo



Troop A(-), 98th Cavalry Troop, Hernando  
 Det 1, Trp A, 98th Cav, Holly Springs



HQ, 1st Battalion, 198th Armor, Amory  
 HHC, 1st Bn, 198th Armor, Amory  
 Det. 1, HHC, 1st Bn, 198th Armor, Fulton  
 Det. 2, HHC, 1st Bn, 198th Armor, Ripley  
 Det. 3, HHC, 1st Bn, 198th Armor, Nettleton  
 Co. A, 1st Bn, 198th Armor, Pontotoc  
 Co. B, 1st Bn, 198th Armor, Booneville  
 Co. C, 1st Bn, 198th Armor, Iuka



HQ, 2nd Battalion, 198th Armor, Senatobia  
 HHC (-), 2nd Bn, 198th Armor, Senatobia  
 Det. 1, HHC, 2nd Bn, 198th Armor, Batesville  
 Det. 2, HHC, 2nd Bn, 198th Armor, Cleveland  
 Co. A, 2nd Bn, 198th Armor, Oxford  
 Co. B, 2nd Bn, 198th Armor, Indianola  
 Co. C, 2nd Bn, 198th Armor, Sardis



HQ, 106th Support Battalion (Forward)  
 HC, 106th Spt Bn (Fwd), Monticello  
 Co. A, 106th Spt Bn, Magee  
 Det. 1, Co. A, 106th Spt Bn, Prentiss  
 Det. 2, Co. A, 106th Spt Bn, Collins  
 Co. B, 106th Spt Bn, Camp Shelby  
 Det. 1, Co. B, 106th Spt Bn, Taylorsville  
 Det. 2, Co. B, 106th Spt Bn, Grenada  
 Co C, 106th Spt Bn, Crystal Springs



HQ, 2nd Battalion, 114th Field Artillery, Starkville  
 HHC, 2nd Bn, 114th FA, Starkville  
 Battery A, 2nd Bn, 114th FA, Columbus  
 Btry B(-), 2nd Bn, 114th FA, Ackerman  
 Det. 1, Btry B, 2nd Bn, 114th FA, Eupora  
 Btry C(-), 2nd Bn, 114th FA, Kosciusko  
 Det. 1, Btry C, 2nd Bn, 114th FA, Durant  
 Det. 2, Btry C, 2nd Bn, 114th FA, Corinth  
 Service Btry, 2nd Bn, 114th FA, Greenville  
 Det. 1, Svc Btry, 2nd Bn, 114th FA, Louisville



238th Area Support Operations Squadron,  
 Mississippi Air National Guard



HQ(-), 1st Battalion, 150th Combat Engineer  
 Battalion, Meridian  
 HC, 150th Cbt. Engr. Bn, Meridian  
 Co. A, 150th Cbt. Engr. Bn, Carthage  
 Det. 1, Co. A, 150th Cbt. Engr. Bn, Union  
 Co B(-), 150th Cbt. Engr. Bn, Lucedale  
 Det. 1, Co. B(-), 150th Cbt. Engr. Bn, Quitman  
 Co. C(-), 150th Cbt. Engr. Bn, Houston  
 Det. 1, Co. C, 150th Cbt. Engr. Bn, Okolona



Approximately 3,500 soldiers gathered at armories in the 49 Mississippi communities shown on the map to the right before traveling to Camp Shelby for training. The brigade served at seven forward operating bases near the five Iraqi towns shown on the Iraq map above.

**The 155 BCT was comprised of:**

- Mississippi's 155th Separate Armored Brigade
- Vermont's Company B, 1st Battalion, 172nd Armor,
- Co. C, 212th Signal Battalion, Pine Bluff, Ark.
- Puerto Rico's 1st Battalion, 296th Infantry Company (served four months)
- 800 Soldiers of the 211th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Ft. Irwin, Calif. (Active duty unit).

Illustration Graphics by Sandy Ates

## “DECOMPRESSING”

# Life After Iraq

• By Sandy Ates

Soldiers of the 155th Brigade Combat Team (BCT) were thoroughly prepared when they were called up under presidential orders for mobilization in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in 2004. Preparation time was nearly six months long with specialized training and preparations taking the 3,500 member team from Camp Shelby, Miss. to Fort Irwin, Calif., back to Camp Shelby, and then to the battlefield in Iraq.

Life changed immediately for the BCT Soldiers as they hit the ground at Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) in Iraq. Austere conditions, unfamiliar terrain, unrelenting desert conditions, little known religions and cultures, thousands of miles from home and loved ones, and dealing with detonations from improvised exploding devices (IEDs) and mortar rounds. Death and destruction haunted many like a daily shadow.

The men and women that left Camp Shelby in January 2004 to proudly fight a war, weren't quite the same upon their return. The term 'decompression' was used to describe releasing some of the stresses they may or may not have realized would or could affect them when they returned home, in particular, when they had lost a fellow Soldier to mortar attack or IED.

Speaking with several returning BCT veterans, one particular interview with Staff Sgt. Maury Schuh of Tupelo, a BCT member with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 114th Field Artillery, and Mississippi Army National Guardsman for 18 years, explained much about a Soldier's state-of-being in relation to war.

The general emotion and attitude in forming bonds with Soldiers in the unit is according to Schuh, a double-edge sword.

"I was cross leveled into the 155<sup>th</sup> for this deployment. I was one of the new guys. I didn't know anyone but the battalion commander and I couldn't hang out with him," said Schuh. "I was nervous joining the unit, kind of like the first day of school. I was very proud to be given the opportunity to finally 'earn my pay' after all these years. Can I say I was 'damn proud?'"

Bonds develop during the train-up as you share experiences with your fellow Soldiers. Living in close confines (barracks), you really get to know each other. Look, when you eat every meal with someone and they sleep just 3 feet away for months, plus you are with them all day while you train, you get to know them pretty darn well," laughed Schuh.

"When you are in combat, you become so close to the guys ... your life depends on someone else, you learn to trust them," explained Schuh. "You start to depend on them. You have to depend on them and they have to depend on you if you want to come home again.

During the process, you develop bonds that are closer than any you have ever had before.

"I became closer to these guys than my kids. I got to know them better than my wife--I'll catch hell over that comment," joked Schuh, father of two children and married to the former Susan E. Thomas of luka, Miss. "There were two crusty old master sergeants (both with well over 30 years of service) that really became like fathers to me and other Soldiers."

Schuh says there is a different state of mind when a Soldier is either injured or killed in the unit.

"When someone is wounded, it is not that troubling because you have a firm belief they will 'make it'. The quality of our medical care is phenomenal. I just believed that as long as you weren't killed instantly, the "docs" could pull you through. We even used to tease guys that were wounded that they were just trying to get a free car tag," chuckled Schuh, and then quickly turning somber, and quietly continuing, "Losing a Soldier is hard. It is similar to losing a brother. The chaplain and his assistant are there if you want to talk, but what



### ON THE READY:

Staff Sgt. Maury Schuh with the Soldiers of his unit considered 'his family' for more than 18 months. (Photos courtesy of Staff Sgt. Maury Schuh)

are they going to say that takes the pain away. You have to suck it up and 'charlie-mike' (continue mission) because you have a job to do and Soldiers' lives depend on you. In my mind, I handled the loss of a Soldier by acting like they had moved on to another FOB. I just shut it out and built a wall. Unfortunately those walls develop cracks and the memories come back, especially in your dreams."

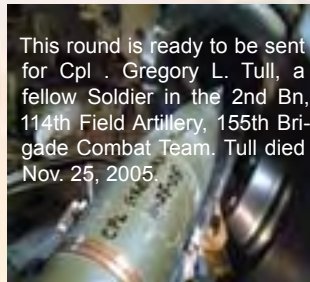
Unit Soldiers honor each lost Soldier with a ceremony and prayers for the family the deceased Soldier has left behind.

"The brigade commander hosts a big memorial service for each Soldier," explained Schuh. "They are very nice, but I didn't want any part of them."

Schuh said that each Soldier of the battalion killed in action had a 'big one' with his name on it sent down range and honoring them as heroes.

Most of the action witnessed by the Soldiers of the BCT remained with them even when they all returned home in January 2006.

This round is ready to be sent for Cpl . Gregory L. Tull, a fellow Soldier in the 2nd Bn, 114th Field Artillery, 155th Brigade Combat Team. Tull died Nov. 25, 2005.



"I was so happy to see my loved ones, but I felt so out of place back home," explained the Baldwyn Police Department officer of 19 years, and currently serving with Warrior Trainer Program at Camp Shelby. "I still do. I feel like Iraq is where I belong. God, I hated that place, but it was my home, my comfort zone. Also, it is tough leaving the surrogate family I made in the unit. It is hard knowing that after being with someone 24 hours a day for 18 months, you'll probably never see them again."

Living life on the edge of danger had other complications for returning Soldiers who had left jobs and families in Mississippi for 18 months.

"When I first came home, loud noises startled me," said Schuh who had once served as a psychophysicologist with the Baldwyn P.D. "Plus, it is so different not having my weapon with me. It was part of me that I was never without for so long. Also, I catch myself staring at Arabs now. Seeing them can bring back memories."

Schuh offered advice for returning Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers serving in Iraq. "I would strongly urge grief counseling for the Soldiers. Their families also need counseling on how to facilitate a Soldier's transition back into the family and how to assist him with coping with his experiences," offered Schuh.

About 35% of returning vets are experiencing some form of PTSD. The Veterans Administration has an outreach program because they realize the stresses of war can and does have a different effect on different people. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an individualized problem. There is no "right" response to a traumatic event.

Soldiers, if you have any letters from friends, your employer, your pastor or anyone else who has seen the changes that you have gone through, seek professional help. While there may be stigma in seeking help, it is the person who recognizes the problem and seeks help that can successfully adjust to what seemingly is a strange environment when they return home.

For more information please contact the Veterans Administration Regional Office and speak with a Veterans Service Officer by calling (800) 827-1000 or you may visit the VA web site at <http://www.va.gov>.

# A March to Remember

By Sandy Ates, Public Affairs Office



**“Twenty-six miles seems like a walk in the park compared to what the Soldiers of the Bataan march endured. I have water, food and if I get sick, someone will help me. It wasn’t at all like that for those Soldiers marching some 100-miles through sultry heat and exasperating humidity; and I don’t have someone beating me or torturing me and not letting me stop to rest without food or water,”** said Capt. Jamie Jackson, who was participating in the 17th annual Memorial Bataan Death March held at White Sands Missile site in New Mexico.



**W**orld War II ended over 60 years ago. Today’s armed forces personnel weren’t even born, much less remember what happened back that many years ago. So many of those G.I. Joes from the mid-forties are gone now and much of the heroic legacies from that horrendous war have been laid to rest in history books and on grave markers.

One young officer of the Mississippi Army National Guard recently learned more about history and experienced a special reverence for a special group of World War II Soldiers known as the ‘Battling Bastards of Bataan’.

“I didn’t know too much about Bataan, until I heard other members of my unit talk about the Bataan Memorial Death March” said Capt. Jamie Jackson, assigned to the medical section of the 154<sup>th</sup> Regional Training Institute, Infantry Regiment at Camp Shelby. “I told them that I would join their team, but that I wasn’t going to run in any marathon.”

As the 17th anniversary event neared, Jackson said that he and other members of his 154<sup>th</sup> team had done the work of building up their bodies for the event at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico on March 25. “Unfortunately, deployments and other emergency situations evolved before they could register for the memorial march, and the rest of the team couldn’t make it for the 2006 event,” said Jackson.

“I thought about not going and then, after talking with my wife, Comelene, we decided we’d just go and make it a mini-vacation for the two of us and leaving behind our three children,” explained Jackson. “I didn’t know if they would let me participate when I got there because I hadn’t sent in my registration. I just showed up and told them I had trained for this and could I do the event as an individual instead of part of a team. They told me to get over and register.”

In his mind, Jackson said he never thought of the event as a marathon, but was focused more on what the Bataan prisoners of war must have suffered over the 100-plus miles they were driven by their Japanese captors.

“I was just glad that I had gotten the opportunity to participate in this worldwide event,” said Jackson. “I guess it didn’t dawn on me that the 26-mile march route was exactly the same distance as any marathon. It was quite humbling to realize that we made the distance of 26 miles with rest stops, food, clean water, emergency medical personnel, and no one torturing us.”

The Bataan Memorial Death March honors a special group of World War II heroes. These brave Soldiers were responsible for the defense of the islands of Luzon, Corregidor and the harbor defense forts of the Philippines.

The conditions they encountered and the aftermath of the battle were unique. They fought in a malaria-infested region, surviving on half or quarter rations with little or no medical help. They fought with outdated equipment and virtually no air power.

On April 9, 1942, tens of thousands of American and Filipino Soldiers were surrendered to Japanese forces. The Americans were Army, Army Air Corps, Navy and Marines. Among those seized were members of the 200<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery, New Mexico National Guard.

They were marched for days in the scorching heat through the Philippine jungles. Thousands died. Those who survived faced the hardships of a prisoner of war camp. Others were wounded or killed when unmarked enemy ships



## Bataan Memorial - Epitaph

You are dead. The easy words contain  
No sense of loss, no sorrow, no despair.  
Thus hunger, thirst, fatigue, combine to drain  
All feeling from our hearts. The endless glare,  
The brutal heat, anesthetize the mind.

I can not mourn you now. I lift my load,  
The suffering column moves. I leave behind  
Only another corpse, beside the road.”

Lt. Henry G. Lee...A Soldier Poet.

transporting prisoners of war to Japan were sunk by U.S. air and naval forces.

According to information provided Jackson about the event, the Army ROTC Department at New Mexico State University began sponsoring the memorial march in 1989 to mark a page in history that included so many native sons and affected many families in the state. In 1992, White Sands Missile Range and the New Mexico National Guard joined in the sponsorship and the event was moved to the missile range.

In 2003, for the only time in its history, the memorial march was canceled. Operation Iraqi Freedom required extensive deployment among the units that usually support the march and event could not be safely and efficiently conducted.

Since its inception, the memorial march has grown from about 100 to some 4,000 marchers from across the United States and several foreign countries. While still primarily a military event, many civilians choose to take the challenge.

“Marchers come to this memorial event for many reasons — personal challenge, the spirit of competition or to foster esprit de corps in their unit. Some march in honor of a family member or a particular veteran who was in the Bataan Death March or was taken a prisoner of war by the Japanese in the Philippines,” noted Jackson. I came out of curiosity, reverence for Soldiers who fought past wars and to honor our brothers and sisters at arms in Operation Iraqi Freedom.”

Jackson said the course is tough, spanning 26.2 miles through desert



Capt. Jamie Jackson still looks fresh after the first 13 miles of the 17th annual Bataan Memorial Death March event held at the White Sands Missile Range March 25, 2006. The Mississippi Army National Guard Soldier was the only participant in the march but is part of a team from the 154th Regional Training Institute at Camp Shelby, Miss.

trails and washes and at some points on the trail, elevation can reach 4,100 to 5,300 ft.

“This year for the first time you got to choose from two routes but both can be difficult at higher levels which was something you can’t build for in Mississippi,” he said. “There are both civilian and military categories. I entered the lightweight category, which meant I wore a complete military uniform, web belt with canteen and other items.”

There was also a military category with a full 70-pound ruck to carry Jackson said, adding that civilian

marchers wore typical running regalia.

“My wife wanted to complete the march with me, but I told her not this year because she had not built up her body for the course,” quipped Jackson. “But she said she’d be ready for it next year and we’ll do it together.”



**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ON NEXT YEARS' EVENT,  
PLEASE VISIT:  
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# Reporting in Kosovo

Story by Pfc. Ingrid Y. Norvell  
102nd MPAD



## 102nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Members from the 102nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment team up with members of the 135th MPAD, Iowa Army National Guard to provide public affairs support to troops in Kosovo. Shown here are from left: Sgt. 1st Class Bobby Grishby, Capt. Christian Patterson, Staff Sgt. John Makemson and 1st Sgt. Floyd Jones.

During a year full of deployments for the Mississippi Army National Guard, with over 3,500 Soldiers from the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team deployed to Iraq, Mississippi also sent four Guardsmen on a peacekeeping mission to Kosovo in support of Operation Joint Guardian.

Members of the 102nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment (MPAD), based in Jackson, recently returned from a year of capturing history in the war-torn province of Serbia. They supported Multi-National Brigade East (MNB(E)) which was composed mostly of Soldiers from the 40th Infantry Division, headquartered in Los Alamitos, Calif.

As members of MPAD Falcon, the public affairs unit for Joint Guardian, the 102nd brought a wealth of broadcast and print journalism and public affairs experience to the Balkans.

"Our mission was to provide public relations, broadcast and print journalism support to the Soldiers of Multi-National Brigade East said," Capt. Christian Patterson, Executive Officer for the 102nd MPAD and the Executive and Broadcast Officer for MPAD Falcon.

With the unit's staff made up of National Guard Soldiers from the 135th MPAD from Iowa, the 34th Infantry Division Public Affairs Section of Minnesota, and 102nd MPAD of Mississippi, together the composite team produced print and broadcast products varying from a bi-monthly magazine to the creation of the first online newscast in the history of U.S. KFOR. The group also handled all press releases, media advisories, and media facilitation requirements as well as the coordination

of monthly press conferences for the MNB(E) commanding general.

As managing editor, Sgt. 1st Class John Makamson, of Hattiesburg, Miss., produced the "Guardian," which began as a bi-monthly magazine highlighting the work of Soldiers and Airmen supporting the peacekeeping mission in Kosovo.

"We were privileged to tell the Soldier's story, written by Soldiers for Soldiers. We produced a 24-page color magazine which was printed by a local printer in Ferizaj and Pristina, Kosovo. The "Guardian" chronicled what was happening in our sector and with our international partners from other countries who also served in MNB(E)," said Makamson.

Features ranged from articles on training, combat patrols, cordon and searches, to what Soldiers did on their off duty hours, interactions between Soldiers and Kosovo's citizens and the humanitarian aid the Soldiers provided.

Sgt. 1st Class Bobby Grishby, of Jackson, Miss. provided some of the photographs illustrated in the magazine in each publication and left Kosovo with over 20,000 pictures of the people of the province and the Soldiers working to help them.

"It was a great experience working on this deployment, because in my civilian job I don't get a chance to develop the same skills that I use in the Army. This deployment allowed me to work on photo editing programs and to work on my Soldiering skills," said Grishby.

Kosovo is located in the former Republic of Yugoslavia. It is not a country; it is considered a province

of Serbia. Because of the violence and crimes against humanity that happened there, the United Nations intervened under UN council resolution 1244 in 1999 to preserve peace and restore order to the province.

"This was our second deployment to the Balkans," said First Sgt. Floyd Jones, the MPAD Falcon First Sergeant.

"Our first trip was during SFOR 7 with the 49th Armored Division of the Texas Army National Guard. So, we were familiar with the problems of the area and the things that needed to be done to support a safe and secure environment in the area."

Following the rotation, MPAD Falcon received many accolades for their service in Kosovo. Kudos that have elevated the unit to be the best public affairs unit ever to serve in Kosovo.

"We escorted more than 120 media representatives, did eight newscasts, published 18 Guardian magazines, and appeared on the American Forces Network (AFN) and the Pentagon Channel more than fifty times," said Capt. Patterson.

"In addition, one of our Soldiers anchored at AFN for one month, we received two DA level awards for broadcasting and more than 10 other NGB level awards for journalism, as well. No one else has been able to do that to this point."

When asked how the 102d MPAD (FWD) did as far as contributing to the overall MPAD Falcon mission, Major Michael Wunn, commander of Mobile Public Affairs Detachment Falcon (135th MPAD from Iowa) said, "The 102nd MPAD (FWD) was an integral part of MPAD Falcon's success during its Kosovo deployment. They brought critical skills to the table, such as much needed broadcasting and photography know-how, which really rounded out our team. Looking back, there is no way we could have accomplished our mission in the manner we did without the outstanding contributions of these four great Mississippians. It was an honor to serve with them, and I wouldn't hesitate to do so again."

Wunn was also asked how big of a challenge was it to build one team with Soldiers from three different public affairs units?

"When I first learned what the make up of our team would be, I was a little worried how we would integrate



everyone into one cohesive unit,” Wunn explained. “I was especially concerned given our abbreviated post mobilization training period. We hadn’t worked together before. We were from different parts of the country, had different social and economic backgrounds and different expectations. Yet from the first time we were all together, those differences, in many respects, seemed to melt away. It went from being a potential concern to something I viewed as one of strengths. Our diversity enabled us to approach and solve problems in ways that wouldn’t have been possible without it. It opened doors and allowed us to operate in a much broader capacity than I could have ever imagined. As it turns out, it really wasn’t a challenge

**Top left photo:** Capt. Christian Patterson video tapes a sporting event held at the camp.

**Photo bottom left:** Staff Sgt. John Makamson takes photos of a command ceremony.

**Photo top right:** MPAD first sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Floyd Jones gets in position for a perfect shot with his camera.

**Photo bottom right:** Sgt. 1st Class Bobby Grishby speaks with children from a local village.

at all to build a strong cohesive team. We took advantage of the training opportunities we had, kept an open mind and worked together to ensure mission success. Even when we had differences - and trust me, you can’t spend more than a year together doing the work we were doing and not have some major disagreements – we were able to work through them in a positive way. The fact that we crystallized into a single cohesive unit as quickly as we did was in no small part to the quality Soldiers we had on our team. We had solid leadership, skilled public affairs practitioners, experienced NCOs and energetic Soldiers. But the most important thing was that we all had the right can-do attitude. And that made all the difference in the world.”

# SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN . . .

## Charles L. Sullivan Leadership Award and Airmen of the Year 2006

The 2006 Charles L. Sullivan Leadership Award goes to Master Sergeant Kelly W. Ezell of the 186th Medical Group, Meridian, Miss. The Charles L. Sullivan Leadership Award was named in memory of Brigadier General Charles L. Sullivan, a former Mississippi Assistant Adjutant General for Air.

The award is presented annually to an enlisted member who had demonstrated outstanding skills and superior performance of leadership duties. Sgt. Ezell is a full-time Public Health Journeyman assigned to the 186th Medical Group. He and his wife, Brandie, have two sons, Steven Wayne and Cameron Bryce.

Ezell began his military career

in April 1990 with the 186th Mission Support Flight, assigned to customer service. As a traditional guard member, he enrolled at Meridian Community College and the Alabama Fire College, where he studied Emergency Medicine. Upon graduation, Sgt. Ezell obtained his license as a Nationally registered Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic and began work with Emergystat Ambulance Service.

Sgt. Ezell transferred to the medical group in 1995. He has been selected by the AFIA Heal Services Inspection Team as an "Outstanding Performer" for the 186th Medical Group in March 2005. All programs under his control received a perfect score during the inspection.



Master Sergeant Kelly W. Ezell  
Charles L. Sullivan  
Leadership Award



### AIRMAN OF THE YEAR

Senior Airman Winfred I. Munn III  
248th Air Traffic Control Squadron  
186th Air Refueling Wing, Meridian



### NCO OF THE YEAR

Tech. Sgt. Theresa R. Williams  
248th Air Traffic Control Squadron  
186th Air Refueling Wing, Meridian



**SENIOR NCO OF THE YEAR**  
Master Sgt. Miles E. Farrgut  
186th Security Forces Squadron  
186th Air Refueling Wing, Meridian



# IN THE NEWS

By Sandy Ates

## Soldiers of the Year 2006

Selecting Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers to hold the top three spots in the Soldiers of the Year competition for 2006 was not an easy task according to State Command Sergeant Major Donald Cooley.

"We have some exceptional Soldiers vying for these spots," said the sergeant major. "They come from all over the state to take part in the competition and even if they don't earn one of the titles, they were chosen to compete because their commanders thought they were made of the right stuff."

Competing for the titles of Soldier of the Year, Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and AGR (Active Guard/Reserve) of the Year is much different that it was a couple of years ago.

In 2005 when Cooley became the state's top enlisted Army National Guard member, he made the competition more of a challenge, and more in keeping with other states' competitions for naming Soldiers for the year. Now, commanders of each major command element select Soldiers from within their command to compete with Soldiers from other commands around the state. Chosen Soldiers then attend a two-day competition at Camp Shelby, with the final event culminating in announcement of the categorical winners.

"The Regional Training Institute (RTI) at Camp Shelby volunteered to sponsor the event in 2005, which included hosting the event and instructing activities," said Cooley. "They do an outstanding job of observing and putting these Soldiers through the paces."

Soldiers meet at Camp Shelby on a Thursday evening and 'break the ice' with the state's sergeant majors and unit com-



**BEST OF THE BEST 2006**--Proudly displaying their Eagle Trophies are Mississippi's top three Soldiers in the Army National Guard. They are from left: Spc. William L. Reeves, Soldier of the Year, Staff Sgt. Keven L. Parker, NCO of the Year, and Sgt. 1st Class Michael E. Jackson, AGR Soldier of the Year. Jackson was also named the 1st Army South Soldier of the Year for 2006 in an April competition in Puerto Rico. (Photo by Sgt. Major William R. "Stump" Jones, HQ, JTF Pubic Affairs.)

manders. On Friday, nominees began with an Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), perform individual weapons qualification, complete both a written and physical land navigation course. They must also perform Common Task Testing (CTT), a written essay and a timed written exam to qualify for the next day's formal interview with a board consisting of RTI personnel and select leaders within the Mississippi National Guard. On Saturday evening, all competing Soldiers and their spouses attend a banquet where the winners are then announced.

"We have a nice formal dinner with guest speaker," noted Cooley. "This year we were fortunate to have last year's winner of both the state and 1st Army South Area Soldier of the Year, Sergeant 1st Class Donald Harrod from the 154th RTI at Camp Shelby. Sgt. Harrod competed with winners from the 1st Army South area which includes Mississippi, Georgia, Puerto Rico, Alabama, Florida, Indiana and the Virgin Islands."

The winners of the three awards and eagle trophies this year and from which two will represent the state in the 1st Army South Competition later this year were Specialist William L. Reeves, Soldier

of the Year, 1st Battalion 185th Aviation Group; Staff Sgt. Keven L. Parker, NCO of the Year, 154th Regional Training Institute, Camp Shelby, and Sergeant 1st Class Michael E. Jackson, also a member of the 154th RTI at Camp Shelby.

Along with the state's command sergeants major, spouses and participants this year were Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross, the adjutant general of Mississippi Brig. Gen. Ike Pylant, assistant adjutant general-Army; and Brig. Gen. James B. Gaston, commander, 66th Troop Command, Jackson.

## BREAKING NEWS....

It was just announced that this year's 1st Army South winner is Sgt. 1st Class Michael Jackson, said Command Sergeant Major Don Cooley.

"This is two years in a row now that Mississippi has won the 1st Army South Award and that is indicative of the kind of Soldiers you will find in the Mississippi National Guard," he said. "I'm proud of the Soldiers we have in the Mississippi National Guard today."



Sgt. 1st Class Randy Breeland (center with plaque) is joined with Lt. Col. Robert Thornton (far left) and the Breeland family for the presentation of the National Military Family Association's "Family of the Year Award 2005" at Camp Shelby. Daughter Robin is 2nd left, wife, Marianne, daughter, Amber and son, Randy Jr., (far right). Photo Courtesy of Mobilization Center Shelby, Public Affairs Office.

## Mississippi Family winners of the 2005 Family Award

By Staff Sgt. Larry Duncan, MSC

Military families know that military service is not a job, it's a way of life. While this way of life provides endless opportunities for adventure and learning, families must also cope with unique challenges many outside the military will never face. The NMFA Family Award is given to 15 families who exemplify the best of the military family lifestyle and demonstrate the theme of "Strong Family, Strong Force."

This year's grand prize winner is the Roberts family: Jay, Sharon, Kelsey, Lauren, and Sam from Watertown SD. But, Mississippi also had a winner, the Breeland Family: Randy, Marianne, Robin, Amber, Randy Jr., were awarded \$1,000 and the NMFA made a donation of \$500 in each family's name to the charity of its choice.

"We were very honored and ex-

cited to be receiving this award," said Sgt. First Class Randy Breeland. "My children did not believe we had won; my daughter, Amber, shouted for real?"

SFC Breeland is the Detachment Sergeant for the 220th Finance Detachment currently mobilized at Mobilization Center Shelby (MCS). He has been an active member of his unit's Family Support Group serving in various roles. He also is a member of the Mississippi National Guard NCO Association and served for several years as the district 4A director.

Marianne, SFC Breeland's wife, is the Wing Family Readiness Program Coordinator for the 172nd Airlift Wing in Jackson. She is also the 210th Finance Battalion Family Readiness Group chairperson, on the State Family program advisory team and a member of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS) Auxiliary.

Robin, 17, is a senior at Warren Central High School. She is an award-winning honor's art student, member of Warren Central's Art Club and plays baritone in the school's "Big Blue" Band.

Amber, 15, is a sophomore at Warren Central. She is a straight A student, in the National Junior Honor Society, BETA Club, and plays flute and piccolo in the school's band.

Randy, Jr., 12, is in the 6th grade at Sherman Avenue Elementary. He is a Boy Scout, plays little league baseball, and plans to play the drums in "Big Blue".

According to representatives from NMFA, the award will be presented by Nestle Corporation at a later date. The charity selected by the Breeland family is the State Military Family Relief Fund.

## 186th awarded for outstanding achievements

By Brian Kern / staff writer  
The Meridian Star

MERIDIAN — For the third time in 24 years, the Mississippi Air National Guard's 186th Air Refueling Wing won the Air Force Outstanding Unit award.

Mississippi's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Harold Cross, announced the victory Saturday at the 38th annual Mississippi National Guard Noncommissioned Officer's Association conference in Jackson.

Col. James White, the 186th commander, said the unit had a good week: "In addition to the Outstanding Unit award, four of our members won four of a possible five state-level enlisted excellence awards, including Master Sgt. Kelly Ezell of the 186th Medical Group, who won the Charles L. Sullivan leadership award."

The Outstanding Unit award touches nearly 1,000 members of the Meridian-based Mississippi Air National Guard unit, and merits the privilege of adorning their uniforms with a special pin.

"This comes at a good time as we're working toward our next mission," White said. "Gen. Cross said we'll end up with a new mission, and the 186th will be a fighting force for years to come; it looks promising."

Covering a two-year period from July 2003 to June 2005, the 186th set itself apart from the rest of the field by deploying more than 70 percent of the unit's deployable positions to more than 20 countries in support of 17 operations and exercises, including Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Noble Eagle.

White said, during the award period, the 153rd Air Refueling Squadron delivered nearly 30 million pounds of jet fuel to nearly 2,500 receiver aircraft, logging more than 5,700 hours of flight time.

Other factors that contributed to the win included community involvement, citing 33 percent of the wing's registration in the bone marrow donor program and inspection results regarding the counterdrug program's outstanding review.

Executive Officer Maj. Brad Crawford said of 88

flying wing units in the Air National Guard, the 186th was one of nine to receive the coveted award.

Crawford said the 186th won the award in the periods covering 1982-1984, 1992-1994 and 2003-2005.

Another factor contributing to Col. White's "good week" is the unit's above-average recruitment numbers for the March-April timeframe.

"In the two-month period we had a total gain of 20 personnel with a total loss of 11, giving us a net gain of nine," White said. "That puts us within 14 slots of being at 100 percent of our authorized strength."

White said the 186th has four main issues on its plate: "We have a future missions task force in place, we're gearing up for hurricane preparedness with a statewide exercise scheduled for next week, we're preparing for an operational readiness inspection that was postponed until next January due to Hurricane Katrina, and we're working the last bit of recruitment to get it up to 100 percent."

### Continued from Page 11

"I have had about 4,000 hours in this aircraft. We get a lot of stick time because of our ongoing mission as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom," noted Brown. "Our mission is bringing injured Soldiers and cargo from the Iraqi front, to Ramstein."

Brown said that the unit performs this particular mission as an ongoing

deployment with each crew assigned for a four to five week deployment and flying about five missions a week. "I've logged about 700 hours on this mission," said Brown. Brown began his career with the Air Guard when he enlisted in 1992, serving in the maintenance squadron. Later, he earned his commission as an officer and went to pilot training.

"I've been flying for two years now, and I am always impressed with this aircraft," he said, noting that the C-17 is the

best plane with the best capability and maneuverability in the world today.

Brown said he participated in the first gulf war and is experienced in theater. "I'm a high profile person," he quipped, "I fly for ConAir Airlines and work full-time for the Mississippi Air National Guard pretty much flying these air evac missions."

"I was at the right place, at the right time on this mission," said Brown.

## ON MY COMMAND

CARTOON BY SGT. MAJ. WILLIAM R. "STUMP" JONES



# The Nation says good-bye to “Sonny”

Story and photo by Master Sgt. Andy Miller  
172AW Public Affairs

Hundreds of friends and colleagues gathered Tuesday, May 16, to celebrate the life of public service of former Congressman G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery at the Temple Theatre in Meridian. Affectionately known as Mr. Veteran, Mr. National Guard, Mr. Chairman or General by his colleagues on Capitol Hill, Montgomery, passed from this earth Friday, May 12 in Meridian.

Dignitaries speaking during the memorial service included former First Lady Barbara Bush, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson, Under Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, Gov. Haley Barbour, Maj Gen Harold Cross, Adjutant General of Mississippi, Dr. Robert H. Foglesong, president of Mississippi State University, U.S. Senators Trent Lott and Thad Cochran and U.S. Congressman Chip Pickering.

Remembering Montgomery as a close family friend, Former First Lady Barbara Bush said, “George loved Sonny so much that he knew if he spoke today his emotions would overcome him.” She recounted how Sonny and George would play tennis or paddleball together and how Sonny spent many holidays with the Bushes. “We loved this great big son of Mississippi,” she said. “We loved his humor, his patriotism and his faith.”

Maj. Gen. Harold Cross, Mississippi Adjutant General said, “There are two objects on the face of the Earth distinctly visible by the naked eye from space- The great Wall of China and the G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery National Guard Building sign.” Cross praised “Sonny” for his tireless efforts for the veterans and those presently in uniform.

Another close friend, Dr. Robert H. “Doc” Foglesong, president of Mississippi State University said, “Montgomery taught me three things about leadership, be passionate about the path you take, be compassionate about the men and women who you will lead and have the courage to pull the trigger on your integrity.”

Many of the speakers also applauded one of Montgomery’s biggest accomplishments while in Congress, authoring the Montgomery G.I. Bill, a piece of legislation which introduced education benefits to guard and reserve members. It has helped more than two million service members fulfill their dreams of a higher education. It has also been a valuable tool in recruiting for our all volunteer military force.

Montgomery was also the driving force behind modernizing Mississippi National Guard equipment. His tireless efforts over the years to keep modern equipment flowing to guard units in the state has helped to make the Mississippi National Guard, both Air and Army mission ready.

A military burial in the Magnolia Cemetery followed the service with a 19 gun salute and a fly-by of a KC-135 from the Mississippi Air National Guard’s 186 Air Refueling Wing and two T-45 training aircraft from the Naval Air Station Meridian.

Visitation for Montgomery was held at the G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery National Guard Complex in Meridian Monday, May 15 from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m. The hearse carrying Montgomery was greeted by guardsmen lining the street—from the main gate to the hangar—who rendered a salute to the man who championed their cause for so many years.

His body lay in state in the hangar with an American flag hanging from the ceiling as a back drop. Inside the hangar was a KC-135 from the 186<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing and just outside

the open hangar doors was the C-17 from the 172<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing, which was named “The Spirit of the G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery.” A Navy T-45, an Army M1A1 Abrams Tank and a Bradley Fighting Vehicle were also on display.

Family, friends and former constituents filed through the hangar to pay their last respects to the man who represented them in Congress for 30 years. The atmosphere in the hangar was much like a family reunion with many visitors sharing stories about their favorite son.

Born in Meridian in 1920, Montgomery attended Mississippi State University and joined the Army upon graduation in 1943, and served in the European Theater during World War II earning the Bronze Star with Valor. He later joined the Mississippi Army National Guard and was activated as part of the “Dixie Division” during the Korean War. He retired from the National Guard at the rank of major general in 1981.

Montgomery was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1966, and took office in January 1967 to represent an east-central Mississippi district and was re-elected fourteen more times until he retired in 1997. He was Chairman of the House Veteran’s Affairs Committee for 13 years.

After his retirement from Congress, Montgomery operated a lobbying firm in Washington, DC until he retired to Meridian in 2004.

The following is a chronology of Montgomery’s life as published in The Clarion Ledger Saturday May 13.

Aug. 5, 1920: Gillespie Montgomery is born in Meridian, the son of Gillespie and Emily Montgomery.

Fall 1936: Montgomery, a high school student, enrolls in McCallie Military School in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Fall 1940: Montgomery enrolls at Mississippi State College, which later becomes Mississippi State University.

January 1943: Montgomery graduates from Mississippi State College

Feb. 3, 1943: Montgomery becomes an Army private. A week later, he is promoted to corporal as an officer candidate.

May 15, 1943: Montgomery, commissioned a 2nd lieutenant of infantry, is assigned to Combat Command B, 12th Armored Division at Camp Barkley, Texas.

1944-1946: Montgomery’s unit is stationed in France and Germany during the end of World War II and several months afterward.

1951 and 1952: During the Korean War, Montgomery is called to active duty as commander of a tank company in the Mississippi National Guard’s 31st Dixie Division. He does not go overseas.

1954-1968: Montgomery operates Montgomery Insurance Agency in Meridian.

(Photo Background) Members of the Mississippi Air National Guard's 186th Air Refueling Wing in Meridian, place the casket of G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery on a pedestal for his memorial service. A final request by Sonny was to have his visitation held at the hangar at the base. In the background is the C-17 Globemaster III dedicated to Sonny, "The Spirit of G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery.

November 1955: Montgomery is elected to the Mississippi Senate.

Summer 1962: Montgomery, then in the Mississippi National Guard, escorts busloads of Freedom Riders from the Mississippi-Alabama state line to Jackson. Among the civil rights activists aboard are two of Montgomery's future U.S. House colleagues, John Lewis of Georgia and Bob Filner, who then lived in Michigan and later is elected from California.

November 1966: Montgomery is elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from what is then Mississippi's 4th District.

January 1967: Montgomery is sworn in for the first of his 15 two-year terms in Congress.

January 18, 1967: Because of federal regulations at the time, Montgomery is separated from the Mississippi National Guard after being sworn in as a congressman. He is transferred to Standby Reserve.

In 1968: U.S. House conducts a 32-hour session. Montgomery is there to answer all 45 roll-call votes, saying later, "The issue before us was too important to be missed for the sake of a few hours' sleep."

December 1968: Montgomery is assigned a seat on the House Veterans Affairs Committee. He eventually becomes chairman.

Oct. 9, 1969: A new ruling on a federal law allows Montgomery

to work in the Mississippi National Guard while serving in Congress. He becomes state guard chief of staff. On Oct. 11, he is promoted to full colonel.

In 1970: Montgomery serves as president of the Congressional Prayer Breakfast, a group of House members who meet for religious services each Thursday morning they're in session.

December 1970: Montgomery is assigned a seat on House Armed Services Committee

June 25, 1974: Montgomery is promoted to brigadier general in the Mississippi National Guard.

1975-1976: Montgomery serves as chairman of the House Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia.

Spring 1977: Montgomery travels to Vietnam as part of the Woodstock Commission to seek information about missing U.S. military personnel.

In 1978: Montgomery serves as chairman of the Special House Committee on Southeast Asia.

In 1980: Montgomery helps organize the Conservative Democratic Forum.

December 1980: Montgomery becomes chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, a position he holds until Republicans win a majority in the House in 1994 elections.

January 1981: Montgomery retires from the Mississippi Army

National Guard after 35 years.

August 1981: G.V. Montgomery National Guard Complex is dedicated in Meridian. During the ceremony, the congressman is promoted to major general in the Mississippi National Guard.

April 1984: Montgomery GI Bill wins congressional approval, giving Montgomery perhaps his greatest legislative victory

May 1984: At President Reagan's request, Montgomery observes El Salvador's presidential election. The helicopter carrying Montgomery, then U.S. Sen Pete Wilson of California and others is shot, but lands safely.

June 1984: Montgomery leads an official contingent to Normandy, France for observance of the 40th anniversary of D-Day.

October 1984: Reagan signs the Montgomery GI Bill into law. It takes effect July 1, 1985.

May 1987: Signing of permanent Montgomery GI Bill.

Sept. 13, 1988: Montgomery leads the U.S. House in the Pledge of Allegiance on the first day the pledge became a permanent part of daily operations.

In 1990: Montgomery leads House delegation that successfully negotiates with the North Korean government to bring home the first remains of a U.S. Serviceman killed during the Korean War.

In 1991: Naval Air Station Meridian and Columbus Air Force Base survive a round



## Gillespie V. "Sonny" Montgomery

Man with a cause  
Statesman for a purpose  
Soldier with a promise  
Hero for freedom  
through it all a Gentleman  
and Officer  
dedicated to serving  
God, Country and Fellow Man. A  
southern soul who gave  
his life as a gift to the nation.

Thank You, Sonny, and God Bless.



of cuts by the federal base closure commission.

December 1992: Montgomery narrowly survives a challenge for the chairmanship of the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

In 1993: For a second time, federal base closure commission votes to spare NAS Meridian. June 1994: Montgomery leads a U.S. House delegation to Normandy, France, for the observance of the 50th anniversary of D-Day.

Nov. 1994: Montgomery wins what would be his last congressional election. He garners 68 percent of the vote against Republican Dutch Dabbs of Brandon - the weakest majority Montgomery had since taking the congressional seat 28 years earlier.

January 1995: As Republicans win the congressional majority; Montgomery becomes the ranking Democrat on the Veterans Affairs Committee.

June 22-23, 1995: Federal base closure commission spares Columbus Air Force Base one day and NAS Meridian the next - another victory for Montgomery and other Mississippi

congressional delegation members and local folks who fought for the base.

In 1995: U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry presents Montgomery the Defense Department Medal for Distinguished Service, the agency's highest civilian award.

Oct. 2, 1995: Surrounded by friends and fans in Meridian, Montgomery announces he will not seek re-election in 1996. "I'm in good health, mentally and physically. It's time for me to move on," he says.

In 1996: New veterans' homes are dedicated in Collins and Oxford. A third home in Kosciusko is to be dedicated in February 1997.

Nov. 5, 1996: For the first time in 30 years, east-central Mississippi voters have a congressional ballot without the name of G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery. They elect Republican Chip Pickering of Laurel to fill the job.

Nov. 11, 1996: Officials and veterans gather in Jackson to dedicate the G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery VA Medical Center.

Dec. 12, 1996: U.S. Secretary of the Army Togo West presents Montgomery the Army's

Distinguished Civilian Service Award, the highest honor that military branch can bestow on a civilian. Also present at the ceremony are Defense Secretary William Perry, Navy Secretary John Dalton and Air Force Secretary Sheila Widnall.

Dec. 13, 1996: Montgomery's staff, with the help of experts from Mississippi State University, finish packing 30 years of papers and memorabilia, moving out of the congressman's office in the Rayburn Building across from the U.S. Capitol. The same day, the National Guard Bureau presents the congressman with its first Maj. Gen. G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery award.

Jan. 3, 1997: Montgomery's last official day as Mississippi's 3rd District congressman.

In 2004: Montgomery retires to his hometown of Meridian.

November 2005: Montgomery receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

May 12, 2006: Montgomery is interred with full military honors. A faithful servant till the very end of his days.

# You're the **RECRUITER!**

**G-WRAP** Guard Recruiting Assistants can earn additional income assisting ARNG recruiting efforts by identifying well-qualified men and women for service in the ARNG. RAs earn \$2,000 for each new recruit who enlists and reports to Basic Training or for each prior service member who affiliates with a unit for four months.

Guard Recruiting Assistants are embedded in their respective communities and are uniquely positioned to identify potential Soldiers in the people they already know. It's the effective way to promote strength from within.

**[Be a Guard Recruiting Assistant.](#)** Qualify to become a Guard Recruiting Assistant through a simple online process. Take the first step toward earning additional income while assisting the ARNG in meeting future manpower requirements.

The Guard Recruiting Assistance Program (G-RAP) is a contracted program designed for individuals who voluntarily apply online at [www.GuardRecruitingAssistant.com](http://www.GuardRecruitingAssistant.com) to become eligible to serve as a part-time Recruiter Assistant (RA). The RA applicant will be verified and hired by a contractor, not the ARNG.

Each RA will cultivate quality potential Soldiers from within their individual spheres of influence. Once a potential Soldier is identified and pre-qualified, the RA will facilitate a meeting engagement with their local Recruiting and Retention NCO (RRNCO). The triad of RRNCO, RA, and potential Soldier will then work closely to process the potential Soldier and move them towards accession.

Upon enlistment, the RA will receive an initial payment of \$1,000, with a second \$1,000 payment upon successful shipment of a NPS to Basic Training. As for a PS recruit, the RA will receive the initial payment of \$1,000 upon enlisting in the Army National Guard with SIDPRS and ARISS having been updated, and the second \$1,000 payment upon successful drilling of 120 days in their unit. *Note: exact payment time lines vary depending upon prior service/non-prior status and availability of training seats.*

## **Goals:**

The Guard launches the Guard Recruiter Assistant Program (G-RAP) to establish a position of strength from which the Guard can achieve its accessions mission of 70,000 enlistments and meet the Guard end-strength goal of 350,000.

## **Purpose:**

- Transform the way the ARNG conducts recruiting and retention operations
- Return to community based recruiting — grass roots
- Reduce the cost of recruiting new Soldiers
- Increase the number of new Soldiers recruited

**ESAR-** Every Soldier A Recruiter (ESAR) is a pilot referral bonus program of the Active Reserve and National Guard components of the Army that provides select Soldiers the opportunity to assist with recruiting efforts, and rewards those efforts with referral bonuses up to \$1,000.

ESAR was established to instill in all Soldiers and leaders that Every Soldier is a Recruiter. ESAR is open to individuals in the ARNG (SELRES), including AGR Soldiers on Active Duty, Military Technicians (MILTECHS) and Active Duty For Special Work (ADSW) personnel. ESAR is also open to Soldiers of the USAR and Active Army.

Eligible Soldiers who make a qualifying referral may receive a bonus of up to \$1,000. Referrals must be non-prior service, and may not be a member of the referring Soldier's immediate family. Referrals may be to any component of the Army (Active, Reserve or ARNG) and do not have to be in the same component as the referring Soldier. Currently, there is no limit on the number of referrals that a Soldier may provide.

The ARNG ESAR program is managed by NGB-ASM, Arlington, Va. Questions regarding any aspect of the program, including the referral process should be directed to Lt. Col. Steven Lund (703) 607-9758 or e-mail at [steven.lund@ngb.army.mil](mailto:steven.lund@ngb.army.mil). The USAR/Army ESAR program, Sergeant Major of the Army Recruiting Team (SMART) is managed by the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC). Questions regarding any aspect of this program, including the referral process, should be made by phone through the USAREC 1-800 line (1-800-223-3735 ext. 6-0473).

The purpose of the ESAR referral bonus is an additional market expander and combat multiplier, which allows select Soldiers the opportunity to assist with recruiting efforts for the ARNG, Army and USAR.

In a memorandum from Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross, the adjutant general of Mississippi, he stated, "To the Soldiers and the families of the Mississippi Army National Guard full-time workforce, I would like to take a moment of your time to say 'Thank You.'" Thank you for making the Mississippi Army National Guard a great success story. Your efforts and support during the recent Hurricane Katrina disaster recovery operations were extremely successful and have received national recognition. Also, through your preparations and training, the Mississippi Army National Guard deployed nearly 8,000 Soldiers abroad, who fought and sacrificed for our nation's security in the Global War on Terrorism. Our nation is stronger and safer because of you and your family's individual sacrifices.

"Our Mississippi Army National Guard is currently engaged on another battlefield in recruiting, and I need your assistance," noted the general. "The Soldier is the heart and soul of our Army National Guard, and today's all-volunteer military is the most capable force in the world. It is the most respected profession in the United States today, but we need your help in referring new recruits to fill vacancies."

Start earning those dollars, share experiences with others and help create a strong fighting force in Mississippi and throughout the nation.



WORDS CAN'T EXPRESS--Maj. Gen. Harold A. Cross, the Adjutant General of Mississippi, bends down to present the widow of Sergeant 1st Class Christopher L. Robinson a flag during a military funeral in March honoring the 36-year old Soldier. Robinson, a member of Headquarters Detachment, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group in Jackson, Miss., was killed March 25, 2006, when his unit received enemy small arms fire. Sgt. Robinson resided in Brandon. (See inset of Sgt. 1st Class Robinson)



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