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GUARD



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DETAIL



Mother Nature keeps Guardsmen on duty

in the Spring

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Major General William L. "Bill" Freeman, Jr.
The Adjutant General of Mississippi

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Front Page

Soldiers with the 113th Military Police Company, Mississippi Army National Guard remove a flood victim with a broken leg from a Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks boat during a preparation exercise in a flooded area of Warren County, Miss., May 17. The exercise prepared state and local agencies for inter-agency search and rescue operations in anticipation of more flooding as the Mississippi River crests in that area. Photo by Staff Sgt. David Hamann, 102nd MPAD



From the Editor: Timothy J. Powell

*“Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.”
– Richard Steele*

In order to succeed in anything, we must read, study, and ready ourselves in the face of adversity, false truths, and sometimes the whole truth and nothing but the truth. This applies especially to us, members of the Mississippi National Guard, who work diligently to perform our missions at home and abroad.

Soldiers enjoy reading, especially about other Soldiers, their plights, their accomplishments, and how the military affects their lives and careers. They like bits of information, not too complicated, but applicable to all in the Guard.

As the State Public Affairs Officer, I have enjoyed bringing these stories to our readership circulation, which now exceeds 13,000 every quarter. Our staff has worked diligently to produce the kind of material that is relevant, to the point, and at times entertaining. I am very proud of our public affairs staff and the products they bring to the table in every issue.

In today’s economy, we all hear, “we must do more with less,” and our publication staff is no exception. In keeping with current trends in modern PA practice, we, like many other states, have to make adjustments and take steps to reduce production costs. Many states are now using commercial enterprise (CE) publishing companies to produce their state National Guard publications. Use of CE publishing reduces layout, proof and printing expenses, and in our case, will produce an annual cost savings of nearly \$60 thousand.

Now, what does that mean for our magazine? Simply, you will see a good deal of advertising in your next issue of the Guard Detail. Advertising generates funds for the CE that enables them to provide these services to help produce our product. You will see the same human interest articles featuring our Mississippi Guard Soldiers and Airmen, and you’ll continue to receive up-to-date information on current and upcoming policy changes that affect our National Guard today.

We encourage everyone to take advantage of your magazine, read it thoroughly each quarter, and be the Soldiers and Airmen who stay in-the-know about the Mississippi National Guard. Knowledge is power for you to share with families, friends and fellow guard men and women.

“Today a reader, tomorrow a leader.” – Margaret Fuller



Back Page

Members of the 298th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion and 367th Maintenance Company of Philadelphia provide ceremonies for the annual Veterans Memorial Service at the Neshoba County Fair in July. (Photos by Sandy Ates, JFH-MS Public Affairs)



NEWS BRIEFS

A collection of information for Soldiers, Airmen, retirees and veterans

Army nixes the beret for ACUs

► By BILL MURPHY JR., Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Hate the beret? The Army listened.

The soft patrol cap will replace the black beret, at least for wear with the Army combat uniform, the Army announced.

Soldiers will continue to wear the black beret with their service uniforms.

Additionally, Soldiers will be allowed to sew some of their insignia directly to the uniform, including name tapes, the service tape that reads “U.S. Army,” their rank insignia and certain skill badges like Airborne and combat infantry badges.

Since the introduction of the ACU (Army Combat Uniform) in 2005, Soldiers have only been allowed to attach these badges to their uniforms with Velcro®.

However, the change doesn’t apply to all add-on uniform items. Combat and unit patches and the U.S. flag patch remain Velcro-only, the Army said.

The changes, announced by Army Chief of Staff Martin Dempsey, came after Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III spoke with “several thousand” Soldiers and reviewed post-deployment uniform surveys.

The top two gripes were the black beret and Velcro®.

The Army adopted the black beret as the headgear for almost all garrison uniforms in 2000. Local commanders can still order the beret be worn with ACUs at their discretion, for example at special occasions such as a change of command ceremony, the Army said.

Separately, the Army announced that Soldiers assigned to the Pentagon, who currently wear ACUs to work, will switch to the Army service uniform in October 2011.



Recently announced changes to the Army Combat Uniform involve allowing Soldiers to sew on certain items to their uniform in lieu of using the provided Velcro.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF THE U.S. ARMY

Obama to move U.S. closer to Afghanistan exit

► By Julie Pace - The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In promising a U.S. military pullout from Afghanistan will begin in July, President Obama is permitting his commanders to decide critical details, including the number of troops to depart first and whether any of those will be combat forces, administration and military officials said Sunday.

Providing that leeway is important to Army Gen. David Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan. It allows him to pace this year’s phase of the withdrawal in a way that preserves combat power through the end of the traditional fighting season in October or November.

Obama said in a national address Wednesday that he was ordering 10,000 troops home by year’s end; as many as 23,000 more are to leave by September 2012.

The 33,000 total is the number that Obama sent as reinforcements in December 2009 as part of an effort to reverse the moment of the Taliban and hasten an eventual political settlement of the conflict. The U.S. and its allies plan a full combat withdrawal by the end of 2014.

“Starting next month, we will be able to remove 10,000 of our troops from Afghanistan by the end of this year,” Obama told the nation in June.

He did not say how many would leave in July.

In congressional testimony recently, neither Petraeus nor Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, provided details on what the July pullout would look like.

Petraeus, who is leaving his post this summer, said he was returning to Kabul to work out details of how he will fulfill the order to reduce by 10,000 by year’s end and by an additional 23,000 next year.

There currently are about 100,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

Mullen indicated that Obama was giving commanders wide latitude to shape the withdrawal, so long as they meet the president’s broad timelines.

Petraeus and his designated successor, Marine Lt. Gen. John R. Allen, “will be given the flexibility — inside these deadlines — to determine the pace of this withdrawal and the rearrangement of remaining forces inside the country,” Mullen told the House Armed Services Committee.

This article has been shortened due to space available.

COLA change could cut retiree benefits

► By Rick Maze - Staff writer, Military Times

A possible change in how cost-of-living adjustments are calculated for military retired pay may sound small — just an average 0.25 percentage point reduction — but it could result in big lifetime losses.

An E-7 retiring this year with 20 years of service would, over 40 years, receive \$109,335 less in retired pay, a 5.6 percent loss.

An O-5 retiring this year with 20 years of service would receive \$207,991 less over 40 years, a 5.5 percent difference.

The potential COLA calculation change has been under discussion by White House officials and congressional leaders as part of a larger package of cuts in federal spending, with talks under way on Capitol Hill and at the White House.

Military retired pay would not be singled out for the change; it would also apply to federal civilian retired pay, Social Security, and most likely to veterans disability and survivors benefits. Unlike military retired pay and other federal entitlements that adjust automatically each Dec. 1 based on changes in consumer prices, veterans-related benefits increase only through an act of Congress, although lawmakers traditionally provide the same percentage increase for veterans that goes to other federal entitlements.

COLAs currently are tied to changes in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners, which surveys the costs of goods and services done by the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics. There has been no COLA increase for the last two years because overall costs have been flat, but historically the index, known as CPI-W, has increased an average of 3 percent a year.

Under consideration is changing to a different index, the Chained Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers, or the C-CPI-U, which includes non-wage earners and uses a different calculation for costs.

Over the last year, the CPI-W has increased 3.6 percent but the C-CPI-U has increased by 3.3 percent. Government economics project that overtime, the difference between the two indexes is about 0.25 percent.

There has been a big outcry over what effect this could have on Social Security recipients, who according to some estimates would receive \$500 less at age 75 than they do under the current formula.

But a change in COLAs has a bigger effect on military retirees because they retire at a younger age and receive COLAs over a longer period, said Steve Strobridge of the Military Officers Association of America. "The longer you live, obviously, the more it compounds," he said.

Gates Thanks Troops, Bids Farewell

► By Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, June 23, 2011 – It's 110 degrees in the shade, and Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates is answering questions from about 200 Soldiers at a bleak U.S. installation near Kandahar, Afghanistan, in mid-June.

At the end of the session, he tells them he has one more thing to say: "I've come out here to thank you for the last time for your service and for your sacrifice. More than anybody except the president, I'm responsible for you being here. I'm the person that signed the deployment papers that got you here. And that weighs on me every day."

It's tough for the secretary to get through this statement. He steps away from the microphone, and there are tears in his eyes. The Soldiers in the audience -- from the 4th Infantry Division's 1st Brigade -- are moved, as well. Gates receives prolonged applause. As he hands out commemorative coins to the troops, they thank him for his service and all he has done for them.

"I've told friends that I would be more than happy if the only legacy I took away from this job is those kids out there in the field knew they had someone who was looking after them, all the time," Gates said in a recent interview with American Forces Press Service during his last trip to visit deployed troops.

Gates retired as defense secretary June 30. The U.S. Senate has confirmed CIA Director Leon E. Panetta to take his place. It has been a sacred trust for the secretary to ensure the troops fighting the nation's wars have what they need to succeed.

Gates said to deployed troops, "For four and a half years, I have signed the orders deploying you, all too often into harm's way. This has weighed on me every day. I have known about and felt your hardship, your difficulties, your sacrifice more than you can possibly imagine. I have felt personally responsible for each of you, and so I have tried to do all I could to provide whatever was needed so you could complete your missions successfully and come home safely - and, if hurt, get the fastest and best care in the world.

You are the best that America has to offer. My admiration and affection for you is without limit, and I will think about you and your families and pray for you every day for the rest of my life. God bless you.



Tremendous Training and Hospitality Produce a Joyful Danke Schön

► Story and Photos by Master Sgt Connie Reed, 172nd AW Public Affairs

After training with the 172nd Airlift Wing this summer, German Air Force Reserve officer, Captain Markus J. Jahn-el took back a big Southern helping of military knowledge and Mississippi hospitality to his home in Germany. The intelligence officer was in the magnolia state as a result of the Reserve Officer Exchange program that provides opportunities for United States allies to work and communicate with the military individuals of a host nation.

“It’s amazing how the community respects the military here,” said Jahn-el, who had just benefitted from a restaurant patron paying for the lunch he had just enjoyed with several 172nd members. “The people fully respect the professionalism of their National Guardsmen and I was overwhelmed with how friendly everyone was.”

Besides a free meal, the resident of the German city of Penzing also experienced a lot more he could bite into from a training perspective. Highlights for the foreign officer who serves within a German Air

Transport Wing, included C-17 flights that incorporated a low level combat training landing at Camp Shelby and an in-flight refueling delivered by a KC-135 from Scott AFB. The training mission was an awe-producing experience for Jahn-el whose unit doesn’t have the type of aircraft that can deliver the performance of the C-17. His unit flies a C-160 twin-engine prop transport plane that has no in-flight refueling capability.

While Jahn-el says that he feels the true cores of the German Reserves and Air National Guard are the same, there are stark differences in how they are structured. According to the Capt., German military members do not stay in their units for long periods of time because they have to move often to obtain rank. There are no Guard units in Germany forcing Reservists to perform duties at an active duty base. Not only did Thompson Field serve his training facility needs, Jahn-el believes that his training in Mississippi better prepared him for the future.

“Working with the 172nd has

been a great experience,” Jahn-el exclaimed near the end of his two weeks in Mississippi. “I am much better prepared to work in an international environment with the United States Air Force.”

Along with receiving military training that helps enhance relationships with allied Reserve components, Jahn-el also enjoyed Mississippi’s warm weather after shivering through a harsh German winter. He also had the opportunity to witness part of the state’s history with a trip to the Vicksburg Battlefield Park that featured a Civil War battle reenactment.

“The event was delightful,” said Jahn-el. “I have enjoyed learning so much about the culture our forces draw from their forward presence missions, and the opportunities to establish personal and professional relationships between the Reserves of the respective nations.”

Programs that allow individuals such as Capt. Jahn-el to gain the type of experiences that he had in Mississippi will further enhance the understanding of each other’s Reserve components and the alliances we collectively serve.



(LEFT) Capt. Marcus Jahn-el (center) enjoys a tour of the Vicksburg Battlefield Park with new friends from the 172nd Airlift Wing.

(RIGHT) Capt. Jahn-el sits in the cockpit of a C-17 Globemaster Aircraft located at the 172nd Airlift Wing in Jackson where he recently was part of the Reserve Officer Exchange Program.



COMMAND VIEWS



Comments by Colonel Dane Powell,
Commander 185th Theater Aviation Brigade

Being a commander is a rewarding experience. I've had the privilege to command at the company, battalion, and now, the brigade level. Each level of command has its challenges, but working at each level prepares you for the next higher level of command. I will share some of my key points of command leadership in this article.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Nothing speaks louder than leading by example. Whether it is your appearance, professionalism, work ethic, discipline or physical fitness, setting the example for others to follow is the key. Many times leaders prescribe to 'do as I say', not 'do as I do'. This will lead to problems within an organization. If you want good morale and a unified unit, you must subscribe to the same principles of your leadership guidance. Actions speak louder than words and organizations will tend to take on the personality of their commanders. Many sets of eyes are on you as a commander, so set the example.

SAFETY AND DISCIPLINE

Safety and discipline, to me, are bound together. When you have a unit that has discipline in the way they conduct their missions, you normally find a unit with a good safety record. In aviation you don't get many second chances with safety. Getting it right the first time is paramount to continued safe operations. Discipline within an aviation unit is training to the standards and following the standards throughout the entire mission. Discipline and safety start with the mechanics long before the aircraft is issued for flight to the crew. We have a vast amount of experience in the mechanics and pilots in our formations, and I am fortunate to work and fly with the professionals in these units.

COMMAND CLIMATE

Taking care of Soldiers is a mission for all commanders. Soldiers who get paid on time, get recognized when they excel, and have all personnel records up to date, will be a better Soldier for the unit. Soldiers that have the above items in order can focus on the mission because they know their unit has taken care of them. Mentoring Soldiers and officers on requirements to help further their career path is important. Don't assume that junior officers and enlisted ranks know what is expected or needed of them to progress through the ranks. An organization with good communication between the Soldiers and officers of that command will have a better working climate and less prone to problems with poor morale.





Roll Call for the 185th Theater Aviation Brigade

CHAIN OF COMMAND

This is often preached by commanders but often not understood down to the lowest levels of command. Units must work through their chain of command to have an orderly flow of checks and balances. Subordinate units tend to want the process to work faster and want to bypass the chain of command to get a quicker action. This actually slows down the process. The chain of command is there to assist in working out issues at the lowest level and have quality control on those items going up to higher echelons. Keeping the chain of command informed on working issues will allow them the time and attention to work issues for the units (subordinate units) they support.

LEADERSHIP

One way to define leadership is guiding individuals toward a common goal. Members of any organization, to include the military, work harder and more efficient if they know the end result or the goal. Commanders must share their goals for the unit and provide guidance to accomplish the task. Members of the unit may be working feverishly at a task, but going totally in the opposite direction of the commander's intent, if clear guidance is not given. Commanders are called on to make decisions for the organization. Following the regulations and SOPs allows the commander to consistently make decisions following the guidelines that are published. Applying the rules and regulations fairly and consistently across the board for all Soldiers and officers helps the unit function with less friction.

MSARNG AVIATION TODAY

The 185th Theater Aviation Brigade (TAB) is comprised of over 800 personnel and 38 aircraft. The aviation brigade aircraft include: AH-64D, CH-47D, LUH-72, and the UH-60. Brigade personnel fly out of three different flight facilities located in Jackson, Meridian, and Tupelo. The 185th TAB is currently seeking motivated officers, warrant officers and enlisted personnel to fill flight positions.





Face of Defense:

Guard Pilot Serves Third Iraq Deployment

► By Army Capt. R.L. "Ed" Edwards, 409th Cbt Avn Bde

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq, May 13, 2011 – You can see the twinkle in his eye as he sits down.

Army Chief Warrant Officer Wayne Wade — father, husband and pilot — would rather spend this interview talking about his 18-month-old twins, Ross and Sydney, or his wife, Samantha, and how he is going on two weeks of rest and recuperation leave.

"I'm going back to Fulton, Miss., spending time with my wife and kids," he said. "I think we are getting a family portrait done, but that is it."

Wade is on his third tour to Iraq — this time with the Mississippi National Guard's 1st Assault Helicopter Battalion, 185th Aviation Regiment. The battalion is attached to the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, which is deployed to Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn.

Wade has flown a different type of helicopter on each of his tours in Iraq. On his first tour, he flew OH-58 Kiowa Warrior scout helicopters. He then moved over to AH-64 Apache attack helicopters, and now he flies UH-60 Black Hawk utility helicopters.

When he enlisted in the Army Reserve in 1987, Wade spent five years as a crew member and crew chief onboard UH-1 Huey helicopters. This was enough, he said, to start him down what he called "the road to ruin" to becoming an accomplished helicopter pilot.

He flew as a UH-1 medical evacuation pilot for the Army Reserve in Mississippi, followed by specialized training on the OH-58. After moving from the Reserve to the Mississippi National Guard, he was cross-trained on the AH-64 Apache.

Wade finished his training on Apaches just in time for the buildup before the start of the Iraq invasion in 2003. But the Army's needs took precedence, and Wade became an individual augmentee with 3rd Infantry Division, flying OH-58s.

"Ten months of boots on the ground and in the air as a scout for tanks was very different from today's environment," Wade said. "Back then, there was almost no electricity in Iraq," he explained. "We would land next to a [heavy expanded mobility tactical truck], fill up the bird and take off again. When we got tired, we would stop, sleep in the dirt, get up and do it again."

Wade said he was part of the invasion all the way to Baghdad.

"I looked at one of my journals from that time a while back and saw that it was several weeks into flying missions before there was an entry of, 'Didn't get shot at today,'" he said.

In 2006, he was deployed as an Apache pilot with the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade at the height of the surge. His flight company was based in Balad, but as a core asset, they were moved around a lot. Wade said he worked everywhere from Contingency Operating Base Speicher and south.

He also spent some time in Basra supporting the British, he said.

"In '06 and '07, there were aircraft and people everywhere," he recalled. "There were so many aircraft in the air you had to be careful that you didn't run into each other."

"I looked at one of my journals from that time and saw that it was several weeks into flying missions before there was an entry of, 'Didn't get shot at today'."

**Chief Warrant Officer
Wayne Wade**



Following his second tour in Iraq, Wade attended the Black Hawk transition course at Fort Rucker, Ala., eventually becoming an instructor pilot at a flight facility in Tupelo, Miss. He flew a civilian helicopter ambulance for a while out of Oxford, Miss. "But I decided that with the little ones on the way, the Army made better sense for us as a family," he said.

This third tour has been spent at the controls of a Black Hawk utility helicopter. As a senior aviator with more than 3,400 hours, Wade said, he likes the theory behind the use of the Black Hawk to move assets around the country instead of by convoy.

Wade became reflective when asked the differences between now and the beginning of the war in Iraq.

"Now it seems that there is really a much greater sense of normalcy throughout the entire country," he said. "The people in the country seem to be moving forward. Now it seems like the land is lush and there is farming, whereas before, when there was no electricity, all of the irrigation was gravity-fed, and there was a lot less farming going on."



DENTAL HYGIENIST HEADS TO IRAQ

HATTIESBURG - Lauren Michelle Williams received her dental hygienist pin Tuesday, May 3, at Pearl River Community College but military obligations will take her out of her chosen field for more than a year.

Williams began a 400-day deployment Wednesday with the 1st/204th Air Defense Artillery of the Mississippi National Guard, ultimately headed to Iraq.

"I'm anxious and excited," Williams said. "I think it's going to be a great

Williams and 15 other sophomores completed the two-year dental hygiene program at PRCC's Forrest County Center. College officials scheduled the formal pinning ceremony earlier than usual so that Williams and her family could attend.

The educational benefits and promise of adventure lured Williams, 21, to enlist in the National Guard while a senior at Clarksdale High School near Meridian. She came to PRCC in Poplarville four years ago on a soccer scholarship with plans to become a dental hygienist.

"When I was through with school and soccer there, I applied and got in," she said.

Williams received the Mississippi Dental Association award for Outstanding Dental Hygiene Student and was inducted into Sigma Phi Alpha, the Dental Hygiene Honor Society.

"She's a good student, in the classroom and the clinic," said Dr. Stan Hill, program director. "I would love to have more like her."

Williams, who now lives in Hattiesburg, has juggled school, weekend drills and summer training with apparent ease and holds the rank of sergeant.

"I got lucky," she said. "The school and my unit have been amazing, working with me. I've gotten everything done I needed to. Everybody's been really understanding."

She is an early warning air defense radar operator in the National Guard. Her unit, headquartered in Newton, will spend three months training at Fort Sill, Okla., before deploying to Camp Victory in Baghdad.

"I really believe we'll be fine," she said.

experience."



Article and Photo submitted by guest writer, Janet Braswell of Hattiesburg.



"TGIF"

Retirees know that 'The Guard is Family'

By Maj. Deidre Musgrave and Sgt. Latasha Williams, Camp Shelby Public Affairs Office

Camp Shelby welcomed more than 350 Mississippi Army and Air National Guard retirees from across the state to celebrate their service during the annual Retiree Day on June 16.

Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr., adjutant general of Mississippi was host and keynote speaker for the celebration.

"Today is a day that we can recognize the Army and Air National Guard for their efforts that make the National Guard what it is today," said Freeman.

While addressing the audience, Freeman informed veterans and their families of the current and future operations of Camp Shelby.

Some of the plans for Camp Shelby include the remodeling of the gym and the construction of a new battalion-sized building which will hold up to 500 people. He also said there are plans of enlarging and improving the All Ranks Club.

Advising the crowd of the direction in which Camp Shelby is headed, Freeman updated everyone on the mobilization numbers and upcoming training for troops who will be coming through Camp

Shelby and preparing for the mission downrange.

To date, approximately 158,810 troops have mobilized through the Camp Shelby Joint Force Training Center in support of overseas contingency operations.

Former battle buddies could be seen embracing each other and exchanging stories of events which happened during their time while serving.

"Today is so important because the people here today was the leadership that trained the force serving today. Their legacy is what this organization is built on," said Command Sgt. Maj. George Miller, Mississippi National Guard Command Sergeant Major.

Some of the retirees even brought along their grandchildren who had a chance to view and explore the insides of antique military vehicles as well as the latest and greatest vehicles in today's military arsenal.

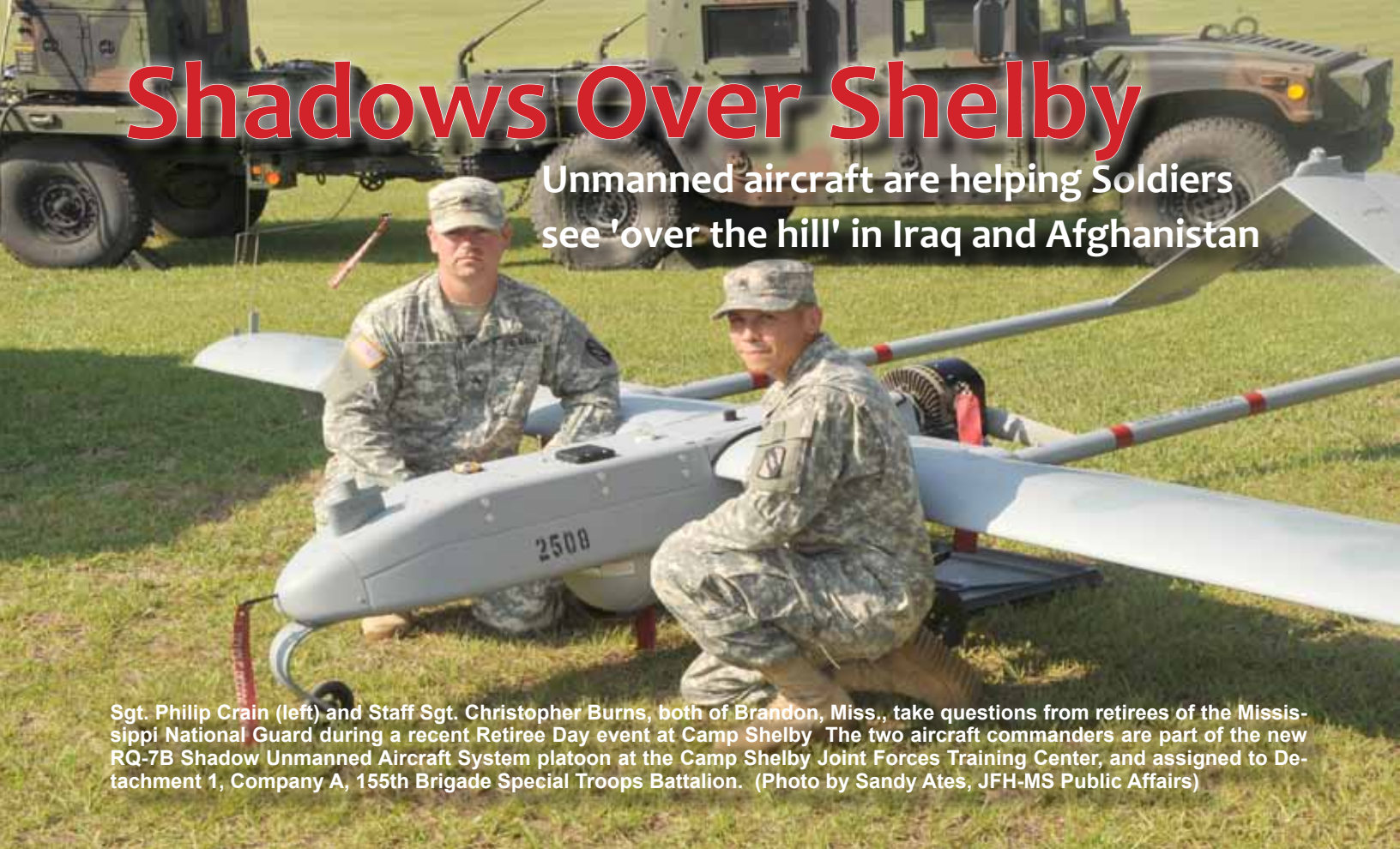
Retiree Day also offered retired service members and their families the opportunity to visit the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum, the new Exchange events, such as a base-wide Commissary Case Lot sale, and the opportunity to visit with comrades.



RETIREE DAY JUNE 16, 2011 -- Nearly 400 Mississippi National Guard retirees come back to Camp Shelby June 16, to see old comrades and to see how the camp had changed since they made annual training there. The retirees came from all over Mississippi to join in the annual event. Several equipment displays were set up for retirees to see modernization of equipment, while many others stated that air-conditioning in the barracks was something they wished they had during their training there over the years. (Photos by Sandy Ates, JFH-MS Public Affairs)

Shadows Over Shelby

Unmanned aircraft are helping Soldiers see 'over the hill' in Iraq and Afghanistan



Sgt. Philip Crain (left) and Staff Sgt. Christopher Burns, both of Brandon, Miss., take questions from retirees of the Mississippi National Guard during a recent Retiree Day event at Camp Shelby. The two aircraft commanders are part of the new RQ-7B Shadow Unmanned Aircraft System platoon at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, and assigned to Detachment 1, Company A, 155th Brigade Special Troops Battalion. (Photo by Sandy Ates, JFH-MS Public Affairs)

► By Sandy Ates, JFH-MS Public Affairs

Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center (CSJFTC) lies nestled among the pines of the Desoto National Forest in south Mississippi. On any given day you may notice a Shadow just above the treetops of the sprawling military post.

Upon seeing the Shadow, you might assume you're seeing some hobbyist's remote-controlled airplane, but, in fact, it is the RQ-7B Shadow 200 Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS), one of the most sophisticated weapons on today's battlefield.

Why is it flying above Camp Shelby?

Detachment 1, Company A, 155th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, located at Camp Shelby, was given the mission as an RA-7B Shadow platoon to conduct mobilization training for other National Guard and active duty Army brigades coming through the CSJFTC and on to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The 22-man platoon includes

aircraft and payload operators who fly the vehicles and man the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance gear (ISR), and maintenance staff to fix the equipment.

According to one of the platoon's aircraft commanders/instructors, Staff Sgt. Christopher Burns of Brandon, Miss., a Shadow platoon deploys its four-aircraft system in theater using several vehicles, one of which is the main control center. After the aircraft are launched from the launching platform, operators in the shelter take over and guide the vehicles and operate the onboard video equipment. Unlike some other UAS aircraft, the Shadow is purely for (ISR). It has no mounted weapons.

Burns says this is a relatively new mission for the 155th, and unique in that it is basically a training program involving for the most part, enlisted troops. He also noted that the UAS platform is an aviation asset organic to a ground maneuver unit.

Theoretically, a UAS platoon is a small element of a brigade combat

team (BCT) or Stryker BCT. So far, 22 units across the Army Guard are equipped with the Shadow and more will soon have the system says Army National Guard officials.

The system can recognize tactical vehicles day and night from an altitude of 8,000 feet and at a slant range of 3.5 km, according to an online article by the UAS command at Fort Huachuca. Because of its compact size, little noise and a very low radar and infrared signature can be detected. With a wing-span of 14 feet (aircraft length is 11 feet), the Shadow is used to locate, recognize and identify targets up to 125 kilometers from a brigade tactical operations center.

These systems have not been used for domestic missions because the Federal Aviation Administration regulation restricts units from flying outside restricted airspace. Restricted airspace is usually found on military installations.

Members of the 155th platoon were qualified as instructors after 21 weeks at Ft. Huachuca, Ariz., and

continued specialized training prior to Camp Shelby receiving the first four RQ-7B packages in July 2010. Burns said the Shadow platoon is a designated unit, which means that all personnel are trained specifically for this task. For the past several years, the Army National Guard has listed tactical unmanned aircraft systems and trainers (RQ-7B Shadow and Shadow Crew Trainer) on its top 25 equipment modernization shortfall lists. And, according to National Guard Association of the United States, they have worked to obtain funding from Congress for these systems. This has resulted in fielding many Guard brigade combat teams, two Special Forces units in fiscal 2010 and a planned nine additional Guard infantry brigade combat teams in fiscal 2011.

Recently, Camp Shelby's platoon had an RQ-7B Shadow 200 on display during the annual Retiree Day at Camp Shelby, which quickly became a crowd pleaser to the former Mississippi National Guard Soldiers.

"It's amazing to see the kind of equipment these Soldiers are taking to the field with them today," said former retired member, Col. Buddy Lindsey to Sgt. Philip Crain, Noncommissioned Officer In Charge of flight operations and also aircraft commander for the Shadow.

"It is one of the coolest jobs in the 155th," said Crain, also a Brandon, Miss. native. "We have people waiting for a slot to open in our platoon. The prestige of this aircraft system is a great feeling."

"We are quite proud that as enlisted members we are called aircraft commanders and fly one of the Army's most elite aircraft," said Burns.

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PREPARE TO LAUNCH



LAUNCH



IN FOR A LANDING

New ESGR program helps returning troops get jobs, stability

Highly Deployable

Story and Art by
Sandy Ates, JFH-MS Public
Affairs

Highly Employable

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click

Employment Initiative Program



While a junior at Brandon High School in Brandon, Miss., 17 year-old Edward Gathman made up his mind that he was going to serve his country after seeing the movie, "Saving Private Ryan." Upon making that decision, he joined the Mississippi Army National Guard and life then moved quickly for him.

He celebrated his 19th birthday in Afghanistan, after he voluntarily raised his hand to serve with the 287th Engineer Company MAC (Mobile Augmentee Company) from Lucedale, Miss. He originally enlisted with the 155th Infantry Battalion, headquartered in McComb, Miss., and remains a member of the unit today.

Gathman was still a teenager when he earned the Bronze Star medal (along with four other members of his unit) when an IED (Improvised Explosive Device) and enemy fire hit the vehicle that he was convoying in.

The young infantryman was 20 years-old when he returned home in March 2011 as a hero, and had his 21st birthday recently at home with family after four years of missing birthdays at home.

He returned with an experience few young men of his age witness, haunted by leaving war and fitting back into civilian life. To complicate the situation, Gathman returned home without a job.

As National Guard troops return from deployments as many as 22 percent across the country can't find jobs when they get back home. Particularly now, when Mississippi's unemployment rate is hovering around ten percent

and everyone is having trouble finding work, but National Guard troops are hit especially hard.

Recently, Edward Gathman told Mississippi Public Broadcast host Daniel Cherry that he had a difficult time getting a job because some employers were afraid he would be unstable after seeing combat.

"When they tell you they can't hire you for that reason or they don't even call you back or anything...I know it gets a lot of people angry who were over there with me," said Gathman.

But Gathman recently found a job installing security systems with the help of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) in Mississippi.

Mississippi ESGR Chairman, Jack Wallace, says the task for ESGR is to work through a nationwide network of volunteers and a small, full-time support staff to inform and educate thousands of Reserve Component members and their employers regarding their rights and responsibilities, best practices, and to develop and maintain relationships with employers.

"Recently ESGR implemented the Employment Initiative Program (EIP) which is part of the Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces, and it appears to be successful as a resource for Mississippi Reserve Component members who have exhausted efforts in finding employment upon return from deployment," Wallace said, adding, "state employers are also glad to hire respectable and highly trained personnel--it is a great match."

Jackie Sharp, Program Support Manager for the Mississippi ESGR office, says returning from deployment, then being unsure of how they'll support their family, can be emotionally draining.

"Employers can now sign up with the Employer Support of the Guard to post job openings which are available to all Guard and Reserve personnel," Sharp said. "We were extremely fortunate when Mr. Jack Torrence joined his security business up following a recent boss-lift and Yellow Ribbon Program he had attended at the encouragement of his current National Guard employees."

Torrence says in the past 18 months half his new hires have been veterans.

"I think that they've done something for the country



Members of the Mississippi Committee of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Office in Jackson, join local business representatives recently to talk about the new Employment Initiative Program that helps redeploying Soldiers/Airmen connect with local job opportunities. Pictured here from left are Mr. Jack B. Torrence, President, Global Sector Services, Inc., Flowood; Mr. Joe Buckner, Special Projects Director, SuperTalk Mississippi, Jackson; Mr. Jack Wallace, Chairman, Mississippi Committee of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (MSESGR) and Mrs. Jackie Sharp, MSESGR Program Support Manager. (Photo by Sandy Ates, JFH-MS Public Affairs)

that money can't really repay. It's a lot of sacrifices there so, I feel like where I can assist, I feel a very small part of making their life a little better in any way, then that's what I want to do." said the local businessman.

Torrence says he likes hiring troops because they're dependable and well trained for security work.

"I was very impressed with Ed, he seemed so very mature and extremely responsible for his age in relation to others of his same age," Torrence said of Gathman's first interview with his company. "I talked with him a very

long time about many things, and before he left he asked if it meant he'd have to come back, and I told him then that he was hired when he walked in for the interview."

As a Guardsman, Spc. Ed Gathman said, "Being in the military four years of my life, and raised to never talk back, well...are the same principals I apply to my job, and the military taught me to respect the people you work under," said Gathman.

"I'm very grateful to have a job such as this, where I can add to my learning experience and still have potential for growth in this business," said Gathman. "I would encourage all my other Guard friends and Reserve personnel to visit the website and to contact the ESGR of-fice. I like the fact that they are creating a much better relationship between the military and civilian workforce."

Bringing together the employer and employee to see how the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Employment Initiative Program works, began with an interview between employer Jack Torrence (left), with the Global Sector Services, Inc., of Flowood, Miss., and Spc. Edward Gathman, a Mississippi Army National Guardsman who recently returned from Afghanistan. Gathman is currently employed with Global Sector Services, Inc.



**Mississippi Guard and Reserve Troops can call
(601) 313-6508 for further info**

Mississippi National Guard Responds to Record Storms and Flooding



► Story by SSgt Ed Staton, JFH-MS Public Affairs

The spring of 2011 saw Mother Nature wreak havoc across Mississippi as the state was tormented with a string of devastating tornados and flooding that reached historic proportions. Mississippi's first EF-5 tornado since 1966 struck Smithville on April 27, and its estimated 205 mph winds killed 14 people. The storm garnered national headlines after it ripped through the heart of the city leaving a destructive path that stretched nearly three miles.

In keeping with their long tradition of being citizen Soldiers, Mississippi's National Guardsmen responded and brought relief to the area that in a few horrific moments had been left unrecognizable. With many of the activated troops from nearby communities, they responded with heavy hearts as their boots hit the ground.

"Everyone's been real supportive of us being here," said Spc. Stanley of the 1-98th Armored Regimental Squadron (ARS). "They are glad we're here and it's great to be here giving back to the state." Stanley added, "It's our state. This is us."

With lives, property and emotions scattered throughout Smithville, the city's mayor, Gregg Kennedy, felt a strong reassurance with the National Guard's strong presence that saw the troops assisting with distribution of food, water and ice and also helping maintain security.

"We had National Guard people working everywhere," Kennedy said of the 1-98th ARS and the 47th Civil Support Team (CST). "They helped us regain our normalcy and helped our citizens."

The first echoes of the Mississippi Guard's next state mission were unveiled during Gov. Haley Barbour's Smithville press conference when he spoke of overcoming the destruction in Northeast Mississippi and preparing for the upcoming Mississippi River flooding that would soon strike.

While in Smithville to console victims and to personally witness the destruction, Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour briefly turned his attention away from the tragedy to warn citizens across the state that record-setting floodwaters were approaching the State rapidly.

"Over the next few weeks on the Mississippi, we're expecting what could be record levels of flooding in the western part of the state" said Gov. Barbour. "The river is going to crest higher than it did in 1937 and perhaps as high as 1927 when we had an epic flood in the Mississippi Delta."

As the governor continued to speak, he stressed to citizens the importance of taking the necessary steps before the flood to protect life and property. Once the expected flooding surged over the banks of the Mississippi River and its tributaries, the National Guard moved forward.

With a state of emergency declared by Gov. Barbour, Mississippi Guardsmen were activated May 14 for various operations. They conducted security operations and were on standby for any necessary search and rescue missions that may have been needed. The Guard also provided aerial support and levy patrols and communicated their findings with state emergency management agencies.

A combination of Mississippi's Air and Army National Guard resources were utilized in the operation that focused on the creation of key command centers at key areas affected by the Mississippi River. The force structure included elements from the 112th MB BN, 31st ROC, 102nd MPAD, 1-155th CAB, 2-198th CAB, 172nd Security Forces Squadron, 186th Security Forces Squadron, 155th BSTB, 106th BSB and the CMTS. While the Mississippi Guard continues to be active with overseas deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait, the state's troops are quick to note how important it is to take care of their fellow Mississippians.

"We're trained on the military side to assist and defend," said Sgt. Maj. Darrell Masterson "But when you're helping the local community, you have a special warm spot in your heart for it."

More than 200 Mississippi Guardsmen were activated for the flooding. They continued to serve until late June when receding waters caused the state of emergency to be lifted.

Photographs continue on next page.

(Background) A rescue team removes victims from the rubble in Smithville, Miss., following a deadly tornado that swept through the area in late April. AP Photo/The Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal, C. Todd Sherman) #



Photo by Sgt. Charles Brice

THE REMAINS OF SMITHVILLE



Photo by Sgt. Charles Brice

Photo by Sgt. Ed Silence





Photo by Sgt. Ed Silence



Photo by Sgt. Charles Brice

Photo by Sgt. Ed Silence





Photos by Staff Sgt. David Hamann



Photos by Sgt. Charles Brice



2011 FLOODING



Photo by Sgt. Charles Brice





SOLDIERS & AIRMEN IN THE NEWS

“Remember Ghraib”

Story & Photos by Sandy Ates, JFH-MS Public Affairs

Eight years ago, amid the chaos of explosions and gunfire, 18 members of the Mississippi Army National Guard’s 114th Army Liaison Team (ALT) arrived in shock at Abu Ghraib Detention Center in Iraq. They found a total lack of security and organization; mountains of garbage, open sewage areas, and deplorable living conditions noted Col. Robert F. Thomas, who headed up the operations there. Under his leadership as the garrison commander at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Abu Ghraib, and the men and women of the 114th ALT, a whole new scene was set and up sprang one of the finest FOBs in Iraq, despite the bad image it previously had owned before their arrival.

On May 19, 2011, 15 Soldiers of the 114th ALT again were called to duty and gathered in Hattiesburg to say goodbye to families and friends. “This deployment,” said some of the Soldiers making a second deployment, “will be similar to the previous deployment, particularly with the danger and austere conditions in Afghanistan.”

As Col. Robert F. Thomas took the podium to speak to the deploying troops of the 114th ALT, his words to them were “Remember Ghraib!”. It was to recall the memories of their former mission and the extraordinary duties they performed to accomplish that mission successfully.

“I know these men and women, and I know they are ready and very capable of any duty presented them,” said Thomas.

Many of the Soldiers being deployed were returning for their second tour of duty. However, there were some that were deploying for the first time.

“This is my first deployment,” said Spc. Kimberly Ayers, an operations sergeant with the 114th. “I believe it will be quite an experience for me and my family,” she said adding, “it will be hard leaving them behind, but we will be okay.”

Serving her fourth year of duty with the Mississippi Army National Guard, she said she may not know much about the last deployment, but she has many around

her who have and said she believes she will learn much.

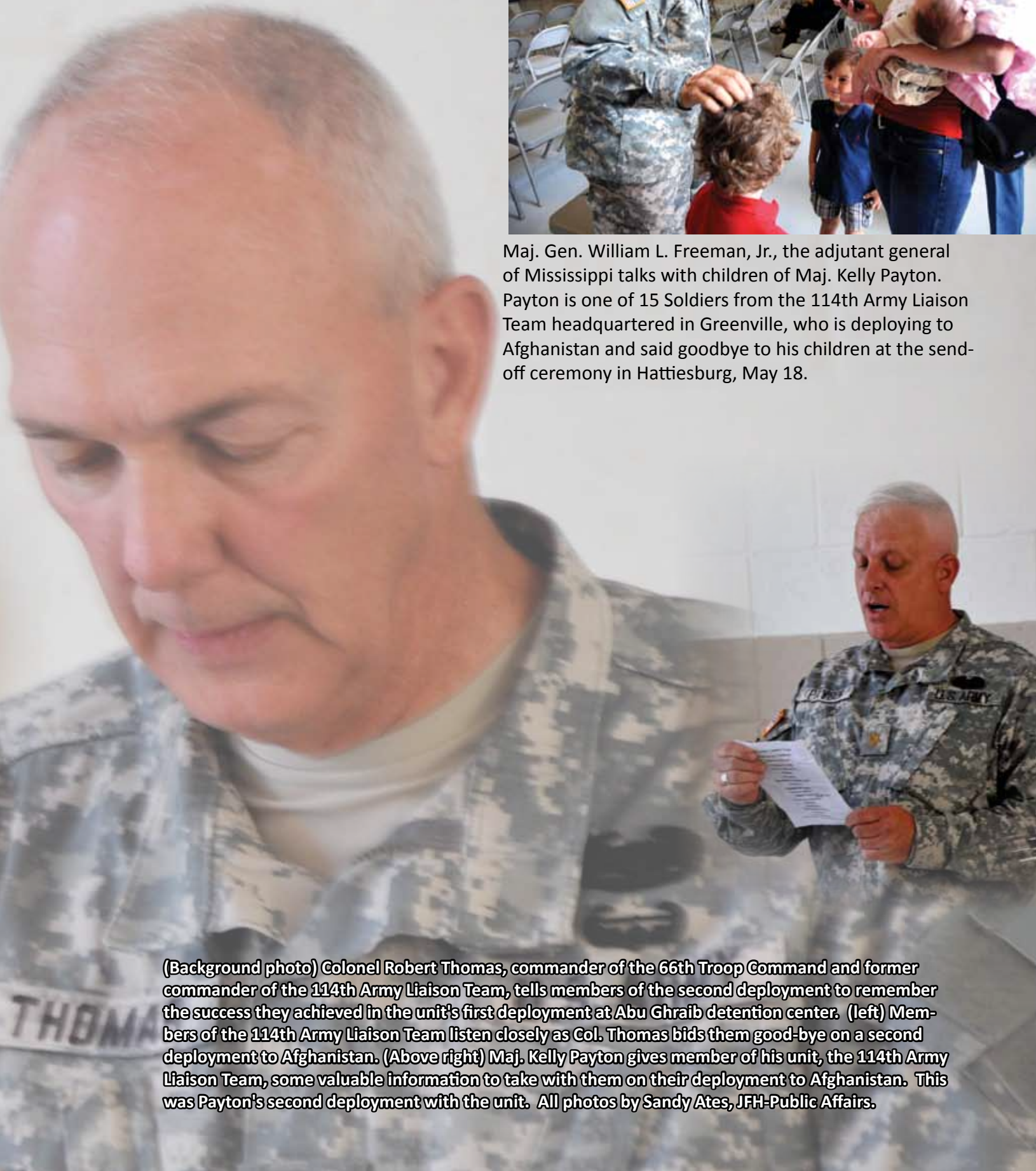
Maj. Kelly Payton, operations officer with the 114th ALT, will be making his second deployment as logistics officer in Afghanistan.

“I’m excited about the deployment because it will be the first time we will actually perform as a liaison team in joint operations with Joint Force Nation operations,” explained Payton. “We will be there to guide and assist the forces of the United States, NATO, Afghanistan and Pakistan. We have trained well enough to deploy and utilize the experience of our personnel, provide guidance and assistance to other units.”

One thing stood out among the deploying troops—morale, it was at the top of the scale for all members of the small team.

Col. Jimmy Stringer, commander of the 114th ALT, said he was extremely proud of his troops because of their preparedness and determination. “We are a small group, but can get any job done that is put before us,” he said.





Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr., the adjutant general of Mississippi talks with children of Maj. Kelly Payton. Payton is one of 15 Soldiers from the 114th Army Liaison Team headquartered in Greenville, who is deploying to Afghanistan and said goodbye to his children at the send-off ceremony in Hattiesburg, May 18.

(Background photo) Colonel Robert Thomas, commander of the 66th Troop Command and former commander of the 114th Army Liaison Team, tells members of the second deployment to remember the success they achieved in the unit's first deployment at Abu Ghraib detention center. (left) Members of the 114th Army Liaison Team listen closely as Col. Thomas bids them good-bye on a second deployment to Afghanistan. (Above right) Maj. Kelly Payton gives member of his unit, the 114th Army Liaison Team, some valuable information to take with them on their deployment to Afghanistan. This was Payton's second deployment with the unit. All photos by Sandy Ates, JFH-Public Affairs.

Parting Shots

184th Expeditionary Sustainment Command Returns Home

Photo Courtesy of the 184th ESC Public Affairs



Photo Courtesy of the 184th ESC Public Affairs



Photos by Sgt. Charles Brice, JFH-MS Public Affairs



In the above photos a member of the Patriot Guard presents the 1/204th commander, Lt. Col. Don Ahshapanek, a flag to be carried with them to their deployment location. Right, a father holds his daughter one last time before loading up and heading out with other members of the 1/204th. (Photos by Sandy Ates, JFH-MS Public Affairs)

1/204TH AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY

Members of the 1st Battalion, 204th Air Defense Artillery, were given a heroic sendoff in May. The unit, 262 members strong, deployed to Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn. It's expected to be a year-long tour of duty. At the sendoff at East Central Community College's auditorium, family members and supporters from all over Mississippi came to say good-bye to the 1-204th ADA.

"Basically what we are going to be doing is a lot of retrograde, pulling back out of Iraq," said Lt. Col. Don Ahshapanek, who commands the unit.

Adjutant General of Mississippi, Major General William L. Freeman, Jr., says the members are going into an improving situation. Their duties will be to guard Forward Operating Bases, or FOBS.

"They will have a counter mortar and rocket mission over there," said Freeman. "Very important to shoot down rockets or mortars as they come into area FOBS, or as they get shot at. So, they play a very important role in defending our FOBS over there."

The 204th is a part of the 631st Field Artillery Brigade, which is located in Grenada. It's part of the Mississippi Army National Guard's 66th Troop Command, and has facilities in Newton, Decatur, Bay Springs, Morton, and Forest.

Rally Round the Troops!

Currently, 396 Soldiers of the Mississippi Army National Guard are serving in overseas locations. Among the units deployed are: Detachment 16, OSA, Jackson; 1108th AVCRAD, Gulfport; 231st Engineer Team (Survey & Design), Gulfport; 1st Battalion, 185th Aviation, Jackson/Tupelo; 114th Army Liaison Team, Greenville; and Headquarters Detachment, 298th Corps Support Battalion, Philadelphia.

On the Mississippi Air National Guard side, the 172nd Airlift Wing, Jackson, 255th Air Control Squadron (ATC) and 209th Civil Engineer Squadron of the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, have 84 individuals currently serving in various overseas locations, which also includes an ongoing medical evacuation mission. The 186th Air Refueling Wing, Meridian, to include the 248th ATC, 238th Air Support Operations Squadron and Det. 1, Headquarters have 14 individuals currently serving overseas.

AMC Commander General Ray Johns Gets Strategic With Mississippi Air Guard

► By SSgt Ed Staton, JFH-MS Public Affairs

With so many of today's military airlift missions involving assets from Mississippi Air National Guard units, it seemed fitting that the U.S. Air Force's Air Mobility Commander, General Ray Johns, recently visited with wing personnel throughout the state.

The four-star general's two-day sweep included a series of meetings held at the 186th Air Refueling Wing (ARW) in Meridian, the Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC) in Gulfport and the 172nd Airlift Wing (AW) in Jackson. General John's venture into the Magnolia State marked the first time in nearly a decade that an AMC commander had visited Mississippi.

Considering the tasks performed by the state's Air National Guard components, General John's May 2011 tour was an important planning event. AMC's mission is to provide rapid, global mobility and sustainment for America's armed forces. The command also plays a crucial role in providing humanitarian support at home and around the world. The men and women of AMC - active duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and civilians - provide airlift, aerial refueling, special air mission and aeromedical evacuation.

Mississippi Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman, Congressman Gene Harper and personnel from the State's air components hosted General Johns and his AMC staff. Along with future planning, and discussions focused on the tremendous global demand for air mobility, Freeman also noted that Johns thanked Mississippian's for their commitment and the sacrifices made by our Airmen and their families.

"General Johns focused on how the consistent achievement and volunteer spirit from Mississippi's Airmen has been a driving force for our nation's AMC mission," said Freeman. "He's very prideful of how we are leaders in bringing our wounded military personnel out of harm's way and how we have flown across the globe when tragedy has struck to deliver life-saving food and supplies."

While meeting with General Johns, Mississippi Air Guardsmen received accolades for achievements that have included the 186 ARW's successful mission conversions, 172 AW airlifts missions to Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, Japan, Chile and other global hot spots and the CRTC's effectiveness in assisting deploying units to further enhance their capabilities and combat readiness. However, it was the future that garnered much of discussions with AMC representatives. Even with continued progress with the War on Terror, there is no sign on the horizon that demand for extensive airlift capabilities will decline.

Although General Johns' tour through Mississippi included extensive briefings that focused on a vast array of facts, figures and visionary planning for the future, much of the communications also centered on the importance of relationships among the ranks of our Airmen. With rising suicide rates throughout the Air Force structure, the AMC commander stressed how vital being a true Wingman is.

"The general spoke with a lot of passion about how we should continue to be there for each other," said Chief Master Sgt. Joe Moss. "He urged us to not only continue to check in on and encourage our fellow Airmen, but to provide support to their families during deployments as well."



General Raymond E. Johns, Jr., Air Mobility Commander (USAF Photo)

General Johns graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1977. His aviation career includes T-38 and C-141 instructor pilot, as well as the chief test pilot and test program manager for the VC-25 Air Force One Replacement Program. He was chosen as a White House Fellow in 1991 where he was a senior staff member in the Office of National Service. The general has served at the Headquarters, U.S. European Command in security assistance and congressional affairs, and at Headquarters U.S. Pacific Command as Deputy Director of Strategic Plans and Policy. Within Headquarters U.S. Air Force, he served as Deputy Director and, later, Director of Air Force Programs. The general commanded a test squadron, operations group and airlift wing, and he was the Director of Mobility Forces for operations in Bosnia. He assumed his present position in November 2009.

Project Liberty MC-12 Mission Qualification Training says “Goodbye” to Meridian

► Capt. Steven Stubbs, 186th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs Office

The last of the familiar gray MC-12 aircraft departed the ramp early 10 June bringing to end another historical event at Key Field Air National Guard Base, MS. The aircraft headed to Beale Air Force Base, California, the new home of tactical manned intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) training.

Designed to augment information gathered by other intelligence collections operations, the MC-12 provides real-time full motion video and signals intelligence allowing rapid decision making and response on the battlefield. Since delivery of the first aircraft to the 186th Air Refueling Wing in late April 2009, the MC-12s have executed over 5,600 accident free training sorties and over 10,000 flight hours in the skies over Meridian.

The “temporary” training program began in earnest in October 2008 when the National Guard Bureau contacted base leadership about the possibility of utilizing Meridian-based crewmembers who possess extensive ISR experience in a similar aircraft, the RC-26 to train active duty aviators. But before this assignment could get off the ground, many tasks had to be completed. A full evaluation of the base facilities, ramp space for aircraft, personnel strength, and weather patterns at Key Field had to be performed. These evaluations normally last anywhere from six months to one year. They had to be completed in two weeks.

“When you think about how (the evaluations) were done in a two week period, as far as the planning stage

goes, it was a mad house,” said Lt Col. Mike Nabors, Wing Air Operations Officer with the 186 ARW. “We had some sharp people that were involved in the planning process.”

The two-and-a-half year training program developed into a “bridge” mission maintaining critical manpower support as the 186th Air Refueling Wing awaited arrival of the C-27J transport aircraft this October. The training was a seven day-a-week effort requiring approximately 100 guardsmen, 25 civilian instructors and up to 50 civilian aircraft maintainers. Upon course completion most of the more than 1,250 graduates immediately deployed to support U.S. and Coalition efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“What the students were trained with at Key Field is what they saw in the field,” said Lt Col. Nabors. “This wouldn’t be possible without all of these pieces coming together.”

The name Project Liberty was derived from the Liberty cargo ships built by the United States during World War II. The ships were cheap and quick to build and symbolized U.S. wartime industrial output. The MC-12 is the fastest combat weapon system delivered since the P-51 Mustang during World War II, from funding approval to combat in less than eight months. The entire operational fleet of 30 aircraft was deployed in only 13 months.

Student training at Beale Air Force Base resumed in mid-June.



Update



Lt. Col. Bradley Crawford talks about meeting little Liam, whose life Crawford saved through a bone marrow donation.

► By Lt. Col. Bradley Crawford, 186th ARW

As bad as I hate to confess (because I don't like to draw attention to myself), I have a story to tell.

Back in 2004 I, along with approx 300 others from Key Field, volunteered to be registered in the C.W."Bill" Young Department of Defense Bone Marrow Registry.

In late 2009, I got a call that I was a possible match for a one year old male with a condition called Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis or HLH.

After a series of physical and blood tests, it was determined that I was a suitable match and in Jan of 2010 I traveled to Georgetown University in DC to make the donation.

From January 2010 until January 2011 I was only able to know that the child was doing well and would likely survive. In February, I agreed to let the family contact me by phone and Facebook.

After learning the family is from a town called Pleasant Hill, just east of San Francisco, I realized I had a conference in Reno, Nev., in April. I thought I might be able to see them while I was in the area. So that is just what I did. I was able to spend a few hours with Liam and about

30 members of his immediate family. As you might imagine, they were the most appreciative people I have ever been around. They had been through a terrible emotional rollercoaster as they had gone from finding out about the condition, to finding a donor match, to being told to consider taking Liam home and making him comfortable because he was too sick to receive the donation, to ultimately going through with the procedure. Through all this, the family kept a positive attitude and Liam is now considered cured with a great outlook for a long and productive life.

The family is so appreciative that they have invited (and paid) me and my family to travel to see them on 23 July of this year. They plan to have a meet and greet, marrow registration drive, and silent auction fundraiser on Sunday the 24th.

The whole thing has turned out to be a success story on many levels and obviously one of the best things I have ever done!

Many people get the opportunity to make a difference in someone else's life, but rarely do you get to experience such a dramatic life

saving outcome in such a short period of time.

Most importantly, I want people to know there is a great need for potential donors to sign up in the registry. They can visit www.marow.org or call 800-Marow2. Members of the military and their dependants can also visit www.dodmarow.org

And the answer to the most frequently asked question, 'No, it does not hurt!'

Even though my story has been the most well known here on base, I am only one of four people here who has donated over the past 12 years, with the last one donating just last month.

Check out the links below to read about the plans for the 24th and the caringbridge site that tells the mother's story about their desperate situation.

We will be back the first of August with a renewed appreciation for life!

<http://claycord.com/2011/07/11/liam-brad-the-baby-who-almost-died-and-the-man-who-saved-his-life/#comments>

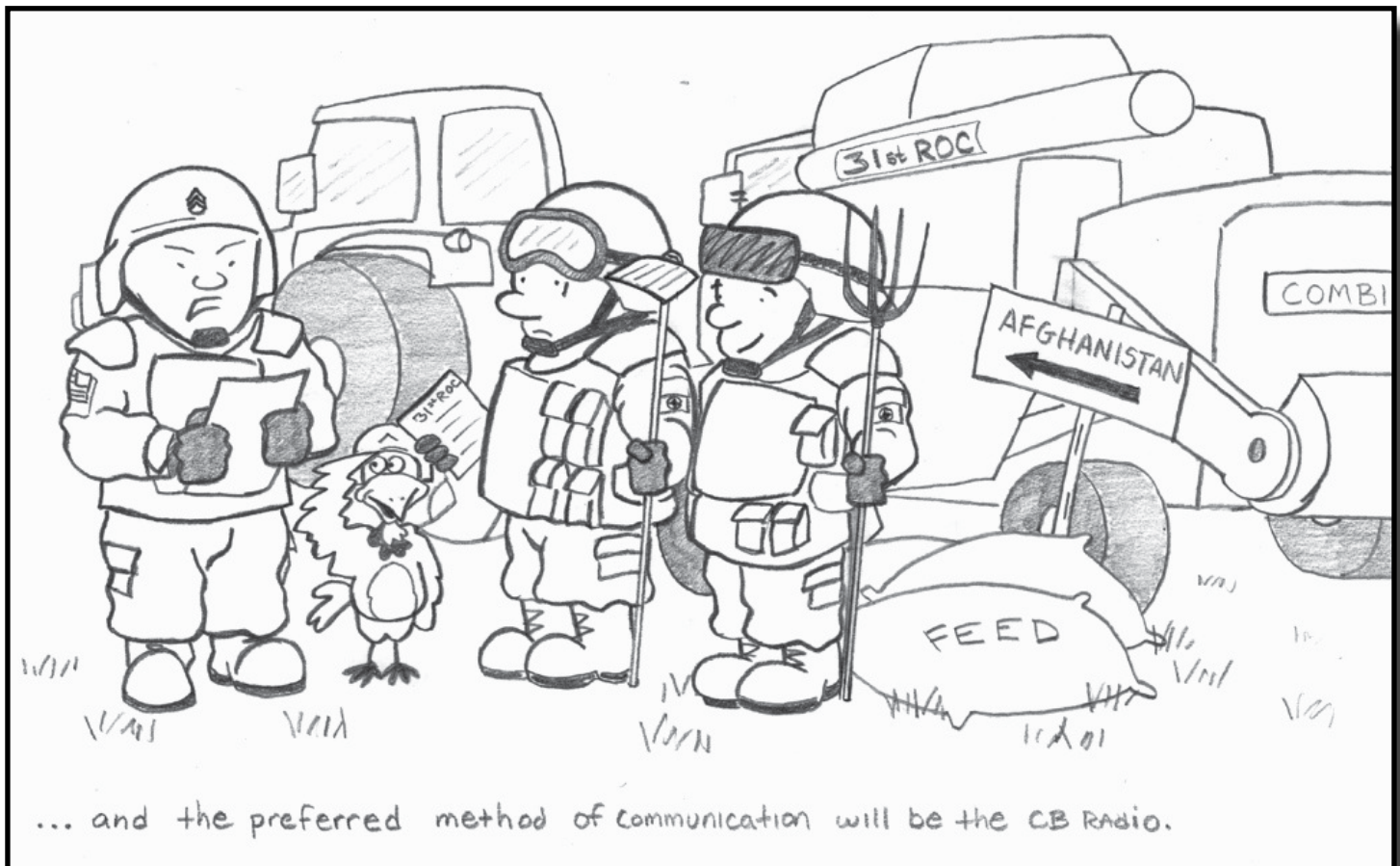
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FIELD CARTOON

Produced by Capt. Andy Kimbrough, JFH-MS-Public Affairs

This cartoon is in honor of the 31st Rear Operations Center's train-up for their upcoming mission in Afghanistan. The unit will serve as an Agribusiness Development Team in theater and promote sustainable farming practices for locals in their area of operations.



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Mississippi National Guard
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(Official Business)

NESHOBA COUNTY SALUTES ITS VETERANS

Staff Sgt. Montoya Rush gives a salute to the veterans of Neshoba County during a memorial service held during the annual Neshoba County Fair in July. Headquarters, 298th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, in conjunction with the 367th Support Maintenance Company of Philadelphia, Miss., conduct the service on the fair grounds each year. Also shown participating in the veterans memorial event this year were: (below left to right) (21 Gun Salute Team) Staff Sgt. Darrell Steele, Sgt. Ashley Anderson, Spc. Chad Lewis, Spc. Jessie Adams, Spc. Antonio Nash, Spc. Brent Comby and Chief Warrant Officer One Jason Pritchard. (Below far right) Sgt. Laquinticy Jones, presents a salute after she raises the flag to the top of the pole. Rush and Jones were the event flag bearers. Two of the Veterans of Neshoba County honored were Mississippi Army National Guardsmen Joshua Ladd and Matthew R. Stovall, who lost their lives while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

