

Guard Detail



*Happy
Holidays*



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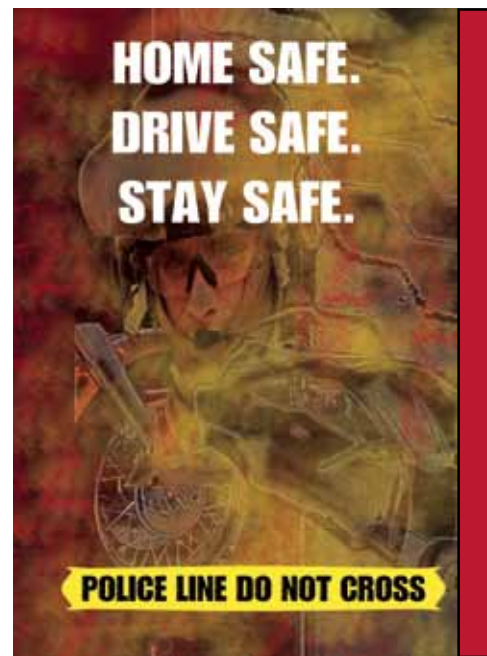
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Members of Mississippi National Guard's 41st Army Band performs during the Annual Biloxi Veterans Day Parade on November 13. Photo by Maj. Christian Patterson, JFH-MS Public Affairs

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Dwell time may increase in 2011, Carpenter says

By Sgt. Darron Salzer,
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va., (11/16/10) -- Dwell time, the time spent at home between deployments, may increase next year for members of the Army National Guard, the service's senior leader said in a recent interview.

"Hopefully, we're going to have fewer mobilizations in 2011, because of the downsizing of our presence in Iraq," said Army Maj. Gen. Raymond Carpenter, acting director of the Army National Guard. "This will give us a chance to ... (give) our Soldiers ... a little more time at home."

He added that the Army Guard will still have a presence in Afghanistan. "We've got a number of National Guard units there, and we see that as steady straight through to at least mid-summer of next year," he said.

The increase in dwell time will take a little bit of the pressure off of the Guard as an organization.

"We've got some great Soldiers that have done some great work over the last nine years since 9/11," Carpenter said. "With an all volunteer force, that's pretty impressive."

In 2011, the Army Guard will continue to put Soldiers first. "Our number one priority for 2011 is end strength across the Army Guard, because frankly, if you don't have the people, then the rest of what we do is a distant second," Carpenter said.

"People are our most important priority, and if we have the right number of people and the right kind of people, we'll have a successful National Guard."

Finally, Carpenter said he believes 2011 will be another "successful" year for the Army Guard.

"We just need to give our Soldiers a chance to take a knee and catch their breath," he said.

VA Launching New Personalized Veterans Health Benefits Handbook

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is piloting new, personalized Veterans Health Benefits Handbooks. The handbooks are tailored to provide enrolled Veterans with the most relevant health benefits information based on their own specific eligibility. In essence, each handbook will be written for the individual Veteran.

"These handbooks will give Veterans everything they need to know and leave out everything that doesn't apply to them," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "Our Veterans will now have a comprehensive, easy to understand roadmap to the medical benefits they earned with their service."

In addition to highlighting each Veteran's specific health benefits, the handbook also provides contact information for the Veteran's preferred local facility, ways to schedule personal appointments, guidelines for communicating treatment needs and an explanation of the Veteran's responsibilities, such as copayments when applicable.

"Enhancing access isn't just about expanding the kinds of services VA provides. It also includes making sure we do everything we can to ensure Veterans have a clear understanding of the benefits available to them so they can make full use of the services they have earned," Shinseki said.

The new handbooks will initially be available only to certain Veterans in Cleveland and Washington, D.C., areas. Following the pilot phase, full implementation is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2011 for across the country.

For additional information, go to www.va.gov/healtheligibility or call VA's toll-free number at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

Education, commitment will get Guard through changing times

By Air Force Tech. Sgt. John Orrell,
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON, (11/19/10) -- Career progression, development and motivation start at the top, and the senior leadership of the National Guard considers those principles to be a priority to keep the Guard moving through an uncertain future, the chief of the National Guard Bureau said here today.

"We are a vibrant, resilient, capable national organization," Air Force Gen. Craig R. McKinley told about 2,000 attendees at the Air National Guard's 2010 Senior Leadership Conference. "We need to take the challenges head-on, but we also need to be proud that our leadership ... will support us in our times of need."

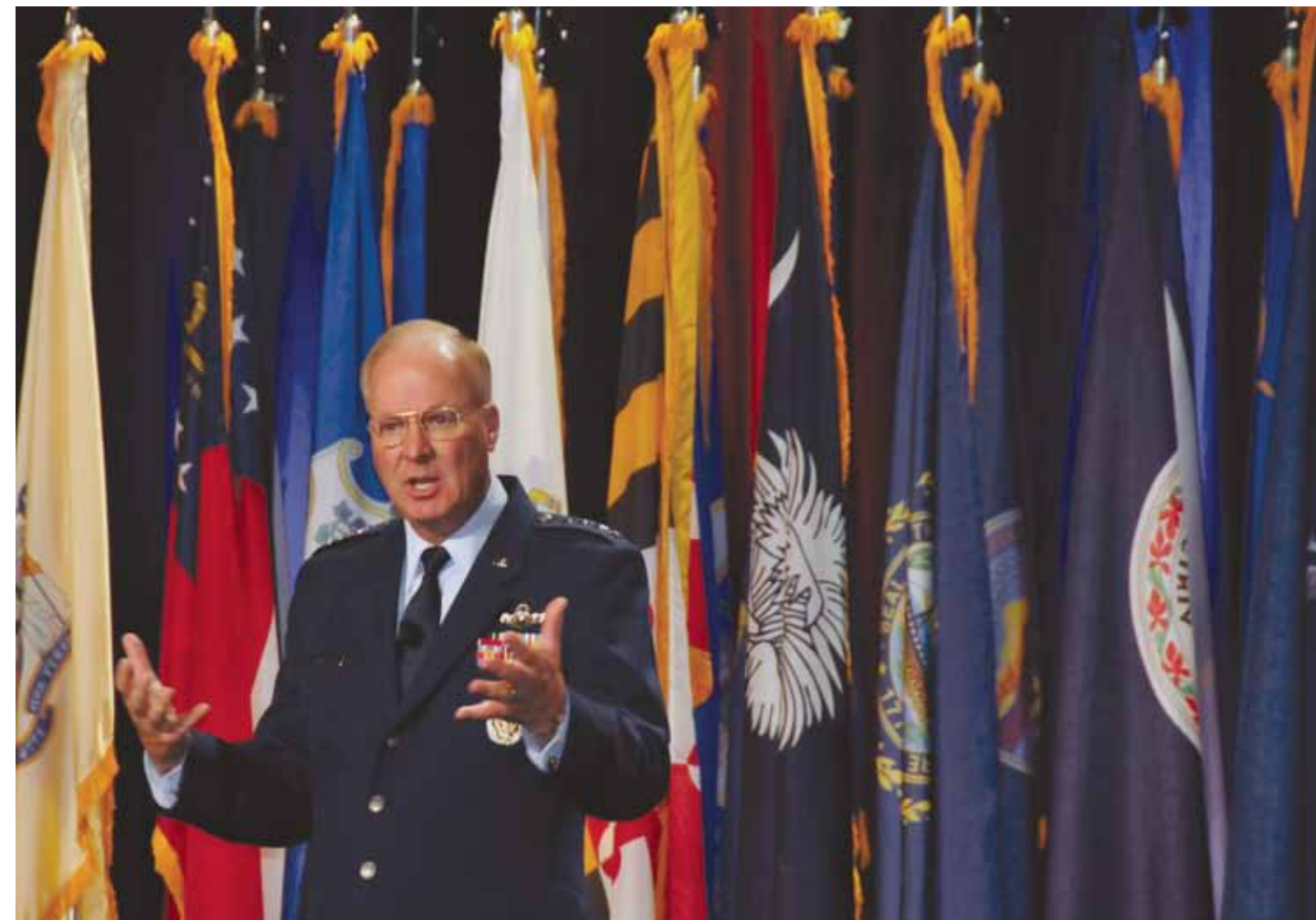
"Let your folks know there is a way through these tough times, economic times, transition times, base re-alignment and closure times," he said. "There is something on the other side that's equally challenging and equally rewarding, but it will take ... resources so that young people, at the mid-points of their careers, get the tools so they can succeed and compete during these challenging times."

"It's going to take education and commitment."

McKinley encouraged the Guardsmen to let their people learn, develop and be creative, so "that when you send someone to the National Guard Bureau they can get some new ideas, they can bring the field perspective to Washington and we can stay integrated."

The Guard's senior leadership will have to continue to translate what we do in the National Guard into language the active component can understand, McKinley said.

"Channels of communication mean that we translate, that we arbitrate, that we fight for, but at the end of the day, we as a nation, as a Department of De-



Air Force Gen. Craig R. McKinley, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, speaks to about 2,000 members at the Air National Guard's 2010 Senior Leadership Conference in Washington D.C., Nov. 18, 2010. This year's conference was about preparing for future challenges the Air Guard will face in 2025. Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Orrell, National Guard Bureau.

fense, have to move forward," he said.

Command Chief Master Sgt. Denise Jelinski-Hall, the senior enlisted advisor at the National Guard Bureau, also spoke about what the enlisted corps needs from senior leaders within the National Guard.

"Our men and women, our Soldiers and our Airmen are looking to us ... to lead us through these times of change," she said. "When you hear words like re-rolling a mission, suicide, sexual assault, MPA tour changes, efficiencies, budget cuts, financial struggles, relationship challenges - what do those words

all have in common - they are opportunities for leadership. Everything rises and falls on leadership."

When a senior leader, officer or enlisted, leads from the front and shows others that it's okay to step out from that comfort zone, that encourages others, she said.

"You are battle-tested, you are warriors, you are experienced leaders, committed leaders, and I know without a shadow of a doubt that you will lead our Soldiers and Airmen through this change," she said. "They have a deep sense of commitment and a warrior spirit, and it's ...that warrior

spirit that allows us to be so successful in what we do as a National Guard."

McKinley followed up Jelinski-Hall's comments with a challenge to the leaders of the National Guard.

"What the people back home want to hear is optimism and a fresh outlook," he said. "It's going to take some people in this room to motivate and to lead."

He added that today's threats will not go away soon. "The only thing our adversaries want us to do is grow tired, grow weary, go broke and just throw in the towel," McKinley said. "That's not the American spirit, that's not the American nation that you represent, and so we won't give them that satisfaction over time."

COMMAND VIEWS



Capt. Micah Taylor
Commander
114th Military Police Company



Many American Soldiers come from families with a proud history and long line of ancestors who have served. Like them, I too come from a family with a proud history. I had a Grandfather that was a First Sergeant and two Great Aunts who served as nurses during World War II. My father served in the Army during the Vietnam era. Most recently, my Uncle served in Kosovo and the Afghanistan war. I am the third person in my family to have received the Bronze Star, and the third female officer to have served her country over a three generation period. When I was a child, if someone had told me that I would've grown up to fight for my country during a time of war, I would have disagreed.

I grew up on a tobacco and beef cattle farm in the small, rural town of Glasgow, Kentucky. As a young child, my dream was to be a veterinarian and own my own farm. I became a leader in almost all activities I participated in, and have always been very goal oriented. My parents instilled in me a willingness to work hard for what I wanted and to have a strong work ethic. I strive to do everything I do to the best of my abilities.

Like many young Soldiers today, I joined the Army National Guard in 1998 for the benefits. After attending one semester of college and seeing the debt accumulating, I made the decision to join the Army National Guard and receive both a civilian and military education. Completing Basic Training at Fort Jackson, S.C. in October 1998 was my most proud accomplishment. Afterwards, I went to Redstone Arsenal, Ala., for my advanced individual training where I completed 27M (Multiple Launch Rocket System Repairer) school and graduated as the Honor Graduate. I later joined ROTC at Western Kentucky

University and received my commission as an Officer and a bachelor's degree in Social Work in December 2002.

A year later, I was deployed to Iraq as a Platoon Leader with the 617th Military Police Company out of Bowling Green, Ky. We were stationed in Baghdad where the main missions for MP's included convoy operations, security along the main supply routes, and detainee operations. I also served as a Public Affairs Officer. When I returned home, I obtained a Masters Degree in Social Work and began working for the Vet Center where we provide counseling to Combat Veterans for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and readjustment.

In 2009-2010, I deployed as the Commander of the 114th Military Police Company from Clinton, Miss. The mission consisted of providing Police Transition Training to the Iraqi Police in Mosul, Iraq, and outlying areas. The journey began at Camp Shelby, Miss., where we completed our Mobilization Training. The instruction was our largest challenge at the time based on the ever changing and evolving mission. The 177th Armored Brigade helped to provide our mobilization training and modify it when possible to better prepare us for our Military Police mission.

We arrived at Camp Beurhing, Kuwait, in late September. The goal was to complete our Theater Specific training and other mandatory training events. This was spread out over two weeks sporadically to allow the troops acclimation time for the equipment and heat conditions.

We arrived in Mosul in October, and began our relief in place with the outgoing unit. The mission was changing every day for Military Police in Iraq due to the complexity of the Police Training

"I was able to persevere and overcome these adversities with the support of my strong subordinate leaders, and a never quit attitude."

— Capt. Micah D. Taylor

mission and the Responsible Drawdown of Forces (RDOF) that was already in the planning phase. What was known as the Provincial Police Transition Teams became the Stabilization Transition Teams (STT) which were smaller and rank heavy. Ensuring a successful mission battle handoff to the incoming unit became increasingly difficult due to units being diverted, the evolving mission dynamics, and the combat environment. We began to turn in the unnecessary equipment that was not needed for mission accomplishment. This was great news at the time, but also a challenge. We had to plan carefully so that we would still be able to complete the mission with minimal equipment. Planning had to be taken into consideration for keeping the Soldiers safe and making their return home to their families even more enjoyable. The key to the success of our mission was flexibility and adaptability.

The leadership challenges consisted of personnel management, limited equipment and resources due to the drawdown, and working under multiple command staffs for various higher echelon units. As the commander, I relied heavily upon my subordinate leadership to oversee the numerous combat patrols, resourcing and fielding of equipment and track personnel and administrative issues. Learned confidence, flexibility and humility dealing with the push and pull of multiple command elements became a necessity. Over 900 combat patrols were completed in the most dangerous and second largest city of Iraq. In the end, over \$35 million in property was turned in and accounted for throughout the deployment. We left the area of responsibility safer and more secure with another step toward police primacy. We also assisted our Iraqi counterparts with the 2010 elections ensuring success with their mission. Now, the citizens of Mosul have a higher faith and trust in their Iraqi Police keeping them and their community safe after assisting them with community policing efforts. Finally, all War Eagles came home safely to their families.

It isn't for everyone to command in a combat environment. There are adversities that a female commander leading a Military Police company in combat that others do not have to strive to overcome. Most female leaders have to earn the respect and trust versus it being present with a new male leader. This is a challenge that we all face differently, but one that is not a defeat. I was able to persevere and overcome these adversities with the support of my strong subordinate leaders, and a never quit attitude. Another asset was my experience as a platoon leader and staff time. These previous experiences helped me to be successful with the dynamic mission now set behind us. It takes all Soldiers doing their part in any line company to ensure a successful mission completion. It is an asset being able to utilize the many special talents and skills that the National Guard Soldiers bring to the fight.

Overall, many things and many people made the year successful to include our families and Family Readiness Group members. Our success is contributed to the great Soldiers, both men and women, of the 114th Military Police Company. It took everyone being a team and putting aside their differences, coming together to complete the hundreds of combat patrols in Northern Iraq, our Contingency Operating Environment. All of these Soldiers have brought special skills and expertise with them that made this possible.

Thanks to the sacrifice and dedication of the "War Eagles," Mosul, Iraq is a safer and secure environment. Your loved ones and Soldiers did a GREAT job in a demanding and stressful environment.



On May 9, 2005, 1st Lt. Micah D. Taylor of the Mannheim, Germany-based 18th Military Police Brigade, receives a kiss of thanks from a girl at the Iskandariyah school. Taylor was part of the humanitarian mission to provide the kids with school supplies. Soldiers received the materials from an organization called Operation Iraqi Children, through which Americans donate book bags, school supplies, and toys. Photo by Spc. Jeremy D. Crisp, U.S. Army.



Soldiers stand in formation to witness the Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan transfer of authority on Oct. 17, 2010.

184th Takes Command of JSC-A

Story and Photos by Spc. Edward Garibay, 16th MPAD

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan—Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan (JSC-A), the senior supply and logistics command for all U.S. forces in Afghanistan, changed hands between two National Guard units, Oct. 17, during a transfer of authority ceremony.

The Alabama National Guard's 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC) handed over the JSC-A to the Mississippi National Guard's 184th ESC.

"It's a historic time here in Afghanistan," said Army Brig. Gen. Reynold N. Hoover, 135th ESC commander. "It's the first time that two expeditionary sustainment commands and all of their down traces (all of the units they support), here in country, will change command."

Both ESCs worked closely with each other for more than a year, sharing information and techniques to prepare for the hand-off.

"We're ready to go," said Army Brig. Gen. Philip R. Fisher, 184 ESC commander. "We're ready to start our mission running. These men and women want to be here and are proud to be here."

The JSC-A is under new leadership, but its mission remains the same. The command is set to build on the foundations laid by previous units and plans to progress the sustainment mission in Afghanistan even further, he said.

"We've got to take the ball and move it down the field," said Fisher. "We want to leave this place better than we found it. I think it's the inherent responsibility of any unit."

JSC-A operates throughout Afghanistan and in countries such as Qatar, Kuwait and Kyrgyzstan. They supply troops in these areas with items ranging from water to ammunition.

"As I look back," said Hoover, "I'm especially proud that we clearly made a difference—making sure that every Soldier, Sailor, Airman and Marine al-

ways had a full canteen, hot meals, a bed to sleep in and ammunition, in case they ever need it."

Hoover said they have provided U.S. forces with more than 100 million meals and delivered more than 32 million pounds of mail. The JSC-A has done a lot to supply the service members in Afghanistan and the 184th ESC will continue that support.

"Of course our work is not done here," said Army Maj. Gen. Timothy P. McHale, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan deputy support commander. "We face a determined enemy. Success will take continued commitment and outstanding leadership, and we have just the right command team with Brig. Gen. Phil Fisher and Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffery Riggs."



Brig. Gen. Philip R. Fisher, incoming commander of Joint Support Command - Afghanistan, unfurls his unit's colors during the Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan transfer of authority ceremony, Oct. 17, at Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan. Photo by 1st Lt. Tyler N. Ginter, U.S. Army.



The Bazaar School Kids



Lt. Col. Randall Mantooth, 184th ESC, completes a puzzle and shares a laugh with a student of the Bazaar school.

Soldiers of Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan volunteer to support the KAF Bazaar School during its morning activity period on Oct. 8.

The students are the children of bazaar market vendors, and the school gives them a way to channel their energy into school activities," said school Coordinator Andy Carnegie. "It also gives the military personnel at KAF a chance to interact with the kids while the children practice their English skills."

"They've done a lot for the kids here, like building the school and pavillion," said Lt. Col. Randall Mantooth of the 184th Expeditionary Sustainment Command. "They spend time with the kids, teaching them about different cultures and languages, as well as giving them some good quality time to play and interact. It's a great thing."

The school takes volunteers from different units on KAF on a rotating basis each week, and the waiting list is more than two months long, according to school coordinators.



Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Fintan Kilmurray poses for a pic with children from the Bazaar school.

MISSISSIPPI
Air National Guard



*C-27J Lands in the
Queen City*



Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr., Congressman Greg Harper and 186th Air Refueling Wing commander, Col. Franklin Chalk exit the C-27J Spartan after the October flight.

Photos and Story by Brian Livingston, The Meridian Star

MERIDIAN - As the twin-engine aircraft leaped off the runway, the 30 or so guests sitting in the cargo hold gave out a collective wild-eyed yelp.

The C-27J Spartan doesn't need a long, concreted takeoff or landing strip. This plane, which looks like a miniature C-130J Hercules, can do just about the same work at a fraction of the cost.

"This is a great plane," said 186th Air Refueling Wing Commander Col. Franklin E. Chalk Wednesday, October 13 as he departed the aircraft after taking the demonstration ride. "We hope we will get more of them here to enhance our flying mission."

L3 and Alenia North America representatives arranged a media tour at the 186th where local service members, politicians and media could get their first look at the Joint Cargo Aircraft developed for the United States Air Force. The Spartan is a mid-range multifunctional and interoperable aircraft capable in performing multiple tasks: logistical re-supply, MEDEVAC missions, troop movement, airdrop operations, humanitarian assistance and homeland security missions. The same type of aircraft has been flown by other nations such as Greece and Italy. Italian aircrews are currently flying this type of aircraft in Afghanistan in support of troops and military operations.

The hope of local military representatives and politicians representing Mississippi is that the C-27J flying mission will become a staple of the 186th ARW just as the KC-135 Stratotanker mission was in years past.

"This is a great day for Meridian to see a C-27J on the tarmac," said Adj. Gen. William "Bill" Freeman, the Adjutant General of the Mississippi National Guard. "We are still in the hunt for the flight training unit and we are negotiating hard for that addition."

Lamar McDonald, who is a member of the Meridian Military Committee that lobbies for flying missions at the G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery National Guard Complex, said the site selection committee was in Meridian last week and came away from their tour impressed with what they saw.

"We have been working with our political representatives, the Mississippi National Guard and local representatives who want to have a complete flying mission here in Meridian," said McDonald. "We hope to hear something late this year or early next year in regards to the FTU."

The FTU, or flight training unit, would add more aircraft and crews to Key Field. It is a mission the 186th ARW has proven it can handle given the recent successes of the MC-12 "Project Liberty" mission that is ongoing at the base now. "This is a great looking place and I'm excited about this flying mission," said U.S. Rep. Gregg Harper, R-Miss., who participated in the flight. "The sooner we get these planes here the better. We are working hard to get the training mission here."

The Spartan has been in production in Italy since 2001. The current final assembly and manufacturing line is Turin, Italy. Once the aircraft is brought to the United States, equipment is installed to meet specifications for US Air Force missions and operations.



Media and Meridian dignitaries load up into a C-27J Spartan in October for a flight to demonstrate the capabilities of the aircraft.



Passengers get a look out the back ramp of the C-27J Spartan while flying over the City of Meridian in October.

Multinational Saber Strike II Exercise Gains Mississippi Influence

By SSgt Ed Staton, JFH-MS Public Affairs

Thanks to the efforts of the Mississippi Air National Guard, more than 1,500 multinational forces are now better prepared to effectively utilize precision close air support on the modern battlefield. Leading the Magnolia State influence was 10 Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTAC) from the 238th Air Support Operations Squadron in Meridian whose mission was to conduct this essential training at the Saber Strike II military exercises that took place in Latvia, just 50 miles from the Russian border.

The two week event that ended October 29, combined troops from Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and the United States. The countries converged to conduct exercises that would better prepare their forces to operate more effectively together. These nations are included in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which is a NATO led structure that includes armed forces from 38 countries that have been involved in Afghanistan combat operations for the past nine years.

Mississippi's JTACs were the only Air Force personnel in the exercise. Not only did they have to learn new terms and acronyms, but they also faced challenges associated with instructing foreign Soldiers from former Soviet-Bloc nations.

"We taught key leaders from these foreign units in separate classes than the U.S. Striker Brigade personnel that we also trained," said the 238th ASOS', 2nd Lt. Frank Monterrosa. "We had to teach at a very methodical pace and stay away from colloquiums that would cause confusion. They take our expressions such as 'water under the bridge' and 'dead in the water' literally."

The 238th personnel conducted classroom and field training aimed at helping these partner units to effectively engage fixed or rotary winged aircraft against hostile targets that are close to friendly forces. This type of instruction has emerged as attack helicopters, fighter jets and attack aircraft like the A-10 Thunderbolt II have become the favored weapons for providing close air support with rockets, missiles, small bombs and strafing guns.

Not only did Monterrosa sense appreciation from the foreign Soldiers for the enhanced battlefield techniques that they gained, but he also felt an added connection from these troops who still relish having escaped communist rule.

"They are so thankful to now be partnered with American troops," said Monterrosa. "They deeply respect America and seemed to take what we said as the gospel." The 2nd Lt. added, "Although you can tell that they're enjoying their independence very much, they're still very serious."

Mississippi's influence on these foreign units will not diminish any time soon. The Latvian military is scheduled to send two personnel to the 238th in Meridian for continued close air support training. The state's ASOS Airmen will also extend their global influence to France as a participant in the Noble Ardent exercises scheduled for April 2011.



172ND AIRLIFT WING NAMED THE AIR NATIONAL GUARD'S TOP UNIT

By: SSgt Ed Staton, JFH-MS Public Affairs

Because of their ability that enabled them to set impressive performance benchmarks in key flying categories, the 172^d Airlift Wing has been honored with the 2010 Air National Guard (ANG) Airlift Tanker Association's Maj. Gen. Stanley F.H. Newman Outstanding Unit Award. The wing was recognized for successfully performing 2,174 sorties that totaled 9,627 flying hours while delivering a worldwide departure reliability rate of 93%.

"It's an honor to be associated with these Airmen that continually go the extra mile towards completing our missions," said Wing Commander, Brig. Gen. William J. Crisler. "Although it's the unit that's named in the award, the honor truly goes to our wing members who put in so much time and effort. I also thank the families who have been so willing to sacrifice time with their loved ones so that they could carry out these essential missions."

Known for being the ANG's first wing to receive the C-17, the 172^d has been a workhorse for the nation's air operations since the wing's activation in 2005. The five-year span has witnessed the wing return more than 38,000 patients to the U.S. while transporting over 9,800 tons of cargo. In addition to those missions, the Jackson based unit delivered relief supplies to Haiti in support of Operation Unified Response and supported the Task Force during the Vigilant Horizon response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill on the Gulf Coast.

A primary mission for the 172^d AW, that is assigned eight C-17 Globemaster II aircraft, is providing global air mobility for the delivery of critical supplies and personnel to remote locations and providing unparalleled support to the war fighter. Consistency in excelling in those missions has enabled the wing to capture the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 13 consecutive times.

"It's amazing the respect that this unit has across the country," said the 172^d's Command Chief Master Sergeant, Joseph Moss. "I thank the wing members for their hard work through these years. The accomplishment of these professionals is truly impressive and their recognition is well deserved."

Along with their vital air mobility missions, the 1,100 Airmen of the 172^d make a tremendous impact on the community that extends far beyond the positive economic impact generated by the unit. Their role as Citizen Airmen is demonstrated with the annual "Flight to the



Children take their toys off the C-17 Globemaster II following a "Flight to the North Pole" with 172^d Airlift Wing crew members. Photo provided by 172^d AW Public Affairs.

North Pole" that provides needy children the opportunity to visit Santa and receive gifts at a make-shift North Pole. Additional community activities have been responsible for the Wing earning the "Doing the Most Good Award" from Salvation Army and the "Challenge Award" from the Brain Injury Association of Mississippi.



Thirteen Soldiers from the 155th BCT met at the Camp McCain Training Center on November 13-14, 2010, to compete for the title of "Soldier of the Year".

To earn the title, Soldiers had to perform their best during the Army Physical Fitness Test, six-mile road march, individual weapons qualification, medical tasks, combatives, land navigation, and a board interview with all the Command Sergeants Major from the 155th BCT.

The competition helped each Soldier prepare for the upcoming Mississippi Army National Guard Soldier of the Year Competition.

Winners of the competition were:

Soldier of the Year (E-4 and below)
Spc. Jason C. Young, Belden, Miss.
1-98th Cavalry Regiment (top right)

NCO of the Year (Traditional)
Sgt. Nakomus T. Oliver, Coldwater, Miss.
2-198th Armor Regiment (top left, third Soldier)

NCO of the Year (AGR) & Overall Winner
Staff Sgt. Richard R. Williams, Coldwater, Miss.
2-198 Armor Regiment (top left, first Soldier)



155TH BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM



SOLDIER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION



Sgt. Donald W. Harrod, of Company C, 155th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, sends a round downrange while zeroing his weapon during the individual weapons qualification portion of the competition. Photo by Capt. Andy Thaggard, 155th BCT.

SOLDIERS & AIRMEN IN THE NEWS



Story by Sandy Ates, JFH-MS Public Affairs
State Command Sgt. Major Donald L. Cooley of Brandon, retired as the oldest enlisted Soldier in the National Guard on Dec. 3, 2010.

Cooley was appointed as the fifth state command sergeant major for the Mississippi Army National Guard (MSARNG) on April 4, 2004. His military service began in 1972 when he joined the MSARNG in Newton, Miss., serving with the 4th Battalion, 114th Field Artillery, and after it's redesignation as the 1st Battalion, 204th Air Defense Artillery. He served as the battalion's command sergeant major, until his appointment as State Command Sergeant Major at the Joint Force Headquarters in Jackson.

He is a 1968 graduate of Enterprise High School, Enterprise, Miss. After high school, he continued his education at Jones County Junior College, graduating in 1970 with an associates degree in Science. Cooley attained his bachelors degree in Biology/Chemistry from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1972. He furthered his education at Mississippi State University where he earned his masters degree in Educational Administration in 1983.

Prior to his full-time position with the Mississippi National Guard, he was a teacher and later, administrator/principal at Pachuta Academy, Pachuta, Miss.



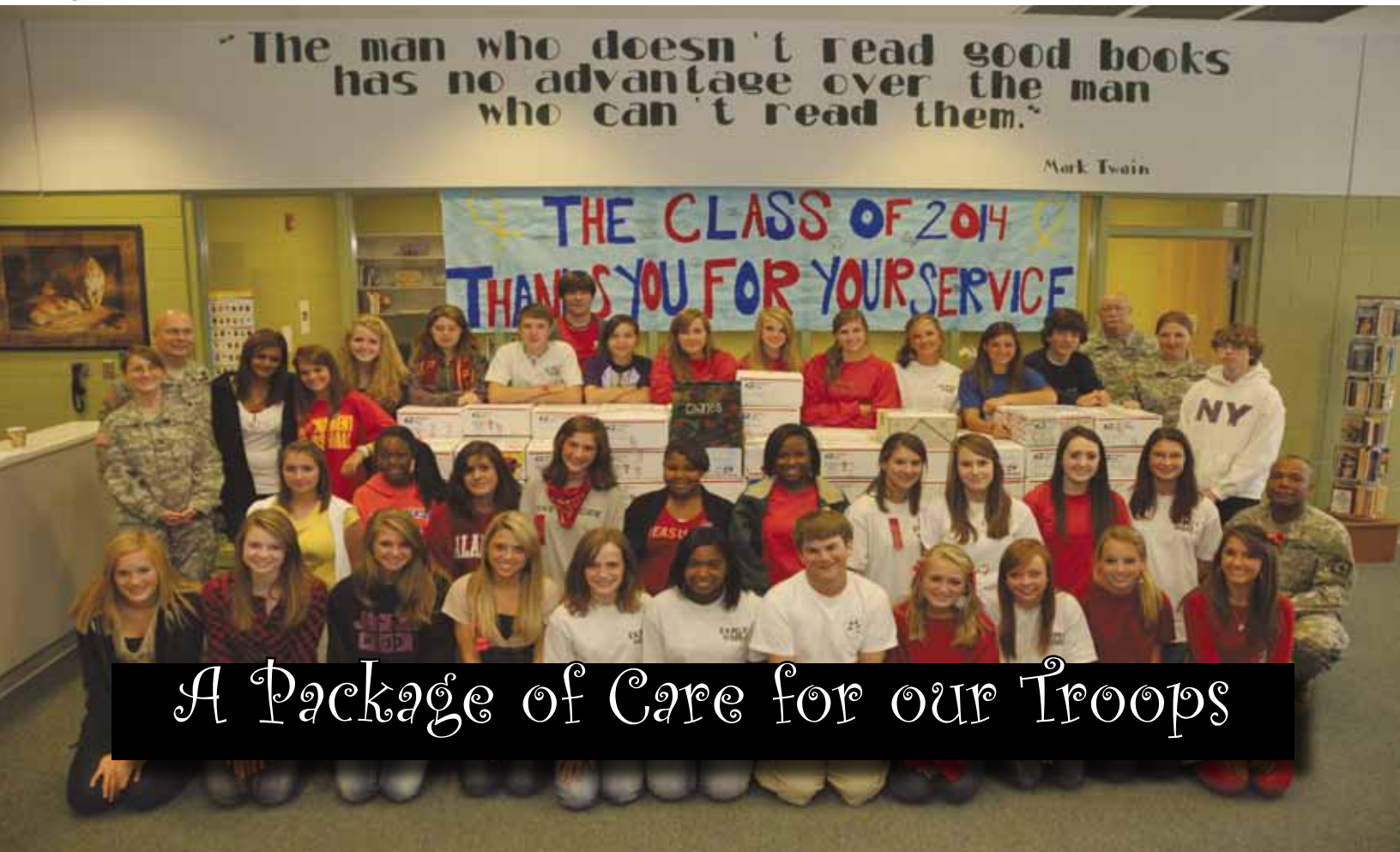
Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr., presents Bolivian visitor, Mr. Fabian Castillo Nina, a book on southern agriculture. Nina, who is interested in agriculture development for Bolivia, was among a large group of Bolivians who visited the Joint Force Headquarters on an exchange tour through the United States Department of State. They met with State Partnership Program coordinator, Lt. Col. Walter Blankenship to exchange information in October.



The Mississippi Army National Guard's Master Sergeant David Spencer, surrounded by the Magnolia State's own, 3 Doors Down, sits on Citizen Soldier III. The chopper-style custom motorcycle memorializes American Soldiers and their many sacrifices throughout the years. Spencer won the bike in a raffle that benefited The Better Life Foundation. He is from Byhalia, Miss., and won the raffle two weeks before being deployed to Iraq.



William L. Glasgow was recently promoted to the rank of brigadier general, and at the same time, was appointed to an Army command role in the Horn of Africa. Glasgow is a former commander of the 155th Brigade Combat Team and returned home from Iraq with the unit in May. Here he poses with his wife Kathy and Lt. Col. Phil Parker following the promotion ceremony in his honor at the Joint Force Headquarters in October.



A Package of Care for our Troops

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

Someone once said the secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, which means never losing enthusiasm for creativity. This is one of the many reasons why children can make anyone smile from just a simple gesture and with that simple gesture, joyfully reach a Soldier through thousands of miles of land and sea to say thank you for what you do.

The Student Wellness Alert Team (SWAT) at Rosa Scott High School in Madison, Miss., recently helped prepare 65 individual care packages for Mississippi Army National Guard men and women serving to protect the freedoms of our nation. This is what the students and staff did in honor of the Mississippi Soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“We gave our students the opportunity to serve those Soldiers, that sacrifice

themselves for our freedom,” said Mrs. Katie Chustz, SWAT program sponsor. . “So, one student Anne Burnside had this idea, to help our wounded warriors.”

In the case of Rosa Scott High School, and Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church, a donation of \$500 was given to the Joint Force Headquarters Medical Section to help prepare five large care packages in support of the school's cause on Veteran's Day.

“There is this book called 'Do Hard Things', that encourages teens to not settle for low expectations,” Chustz said. “So we took her idea of helping a wounded warrior and applied it to our Red Ribbon week tasking for all of our students here at Rosa Scott.”

When a Soldier is at war, they forfeit all freedoms of normal life. Some may even sacrifice their well being, to fight for the American dream and take on the rigorous workload. It is

a task that is well accepted within the confines of each Soldiers thoughts.

“Each homeroom brought in items and wrote letters to their Soldiers,” Chustz said. “We try to challenge our students to take on the tasking of producing a way to deliver the packages once we gathered all the items that we can muster.”

“On top of that, we sold the arm bracelets to support our cause,” she said. “The students raised over \$600 for the care package fundraiser.”

A package of care includes a few goodies such as, toiletry items, bedding, DVDs, and dry foods that will make the day a little more bearable for the average Soldier. It is a high point for a wounded or deployed service member to receive a gift that is filled with the love and spirit of a child, and to know that the package was put together for the sole purpose of his or her well being.

“There are two types of brace-

lets that the students wear,” Chustz said. “Red and yellow, each bracelet projects a message for the wearer.”

“The red reads “Take Action and Stay Free”. The yellow reads “Expect More and Do Hard things,” she said. “Bracelets were sold at the football games to the proud supporters of our school.”

Brig. Gen. Mitchell Brown of the JFH of Jackson Mississippi presented an award to both Rosa Scott and Pilgrim Rest for their efforts in taking care of our Mississippi Soldiers.

“We at Pilgrim Rest have a military ministry and we wanted to help the students of Rosa Scott in their effort to support our men and women that is serving in our military, in order to preserve our way of life,” said Mr. Curtis L. Colman of the Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church. “It was something that had to be done and taken on by the members of our church.”



Bracelets were sold during fund-raising events in support of Red Ribbon Week from October 25-29 at Rosa Scott High School.



Joint Force Headquarters personnel and members of Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church pause for a photo at Rosa Scott High School.

New Readiness Center Opens on the Gulf Coast

By Sandy Ates, JFH-MS Public Affairs

After the destruction of Mississippi National Guard facilities along the Mississippi Gulf Coast during Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Soldiers of Company A, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry have been given a new place to call home.

The St. Martin Readiness Center was a "Turn Key" Project including everything from telephone sets and routers to physical training equipment. According to the Joint Force Headquarters Facilities Management Office (FMO) in Jackson, the new center is:

- Approximately 40,000 Square Feet.
- 100% Federal Funding of \$11,680,048.41.
- Architect is Studio South Architects, Ocean Springs, Miss. (Mr. Hoppy Allred).
- The Contractor is LaSalle Group Inc., Canton, Mich.
- Facility is designed to meet all Force Protection/Anti Terrorism measures and to withstand a Category 5 hurricane.
- Contract construction time was 629 calendar days or about 22 months.

"The new St Martin Readiness Center is a state of the art facility that will enable A Co 1-155 Inf Bn, to better train, thus enhancing the mobilization readiness of the Company," said Lt. Col. Paul McDonald,

Director, FMO. "The facility was designed as a first responder staging area, and the new structure will also benefit the Jackson County area, providing space and facilities for community events and activities."

McDonald added that the 40,000 square foot facility replaces two readiness centers; Ocean Springs (decimated by Katrina) and the present 40-year old armory which has only 13,880 square feet.

The main facility includes administrative offices, classrooms, a partitioned drill hall, storage spaces and a state of the art commercial quality kitchen. The entire center is sprinkled for fire protection and completely heated and cooled for year round comfort.

Outside the facility includes a maintenance training work bay, a 750 kilowatt generator capable of powering the entire center in case of power loss, and civilian and military parking areas.

The design is in concert with local architecture and will enhance the community and surrounding area.

During the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new St. Martin Readiness Center, head of the Mississippi National Guard, Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr., told participants that the building of this new facility reaffirms the National Guard's commitment to Jackson County as viable members of the community and supporters of the Army National Guard.



Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr., the adjutant general of Mississippi prepares to cut the ribbon at the new St. Martin Readiness Center. He is joined by 1st Bn, 155th Infantry commander, Lt. Col. Phil Parker and a host of local dignitaries. Photo by Sgt. Charles Brice, JFH-MS Public Affairs.



Members of A Company, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry, listen as Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr., the adjutant general of Mississippi, tells them about their new readiness center on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Photo by Sgt. Charles Brice, JFH-MS Public Affairs.



HOME SAFE. DRIVE SAFE. STAY SAFE.

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

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among Veterans in the early years after returning from deployment.

www.safedriving.va.gov

Support for our Mississippi National Guard (MSNG) members who deploy or return from a deployment is tremendous, however, the threat to these Soldiers and Airmen doesn't end when they step off the bus at the readiness center.

Statistics show extreme levels of danger for troops who return home. In particular, increased levels of motor vehicular accidents by Veterans. This has become a major concern for military officials at all levels.

In the first years after returning from deployment, Veterans of the two wars are 75 percent more likely to die in motor vehicle accidents than civilians of comparable age, race, and sex, according to a 2008 Veterans Administration (VA) study. The rate for motorcycle deaths is an astounding 148 percent higher.

The tragic result is that motor vehicle crashes - which already are the top killer of Americans ages 16 to 34, according to the latest federal safety data - are killing returning Veterans at an equally alarming rate.

Concerned about the number of motor vehicle accidents within the Mississippi National Guard (MSNG), Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr., the adjutant general of Mississippi, said the state follows the same trend. During 2009-10 there were over 72 injuries and deaths in the Mississippi Guard, and of those, 16 accidents involved a privately owned vehicle (POV). Four of those accidents were while on official business, and 12 involved a POV not on official business.

"That's just too many," Freeman said, "Lives spared on the battlefield, only to meet death in a motor vehicle accident at home."

"Once Veterans return to the safety of home and loved ones," added Lt. Col. Philip Monaghan, MSNG safety officer, "that tension -- sometimes lifesaving in war, but often debilitating in peace -- can continue for months or years."

The MSNG Safety Office, in conjunction with other federal agencies, have established programs to help prevent accidents involving Mississippi National Guardsmen.

"In this fiscal year, we had four personnel who graduated from the Motorcycle Safety Foundation Coach Rider course," said Monaghan, "And I am encouraged by the efforts of our state's motorcycle driving course, having 624 persons to graduate from this class to date."

Monaghan says there are numerous safety courses available (most are required) for National Guardsmen and all civilian employees.

"We are reaching out to our commanders in the field to stress safety as a top priority among their units," Monaghan added, "The National Guard Bureau has increased it's emphasis not only on the requirements commanders are to undertake in their daily on duty safety programs, but also are being asked to develop new tools and programs to improve the safety of Guardsmen and civilians while off duty and away from the workplace."

These programs are free, and again, most are required initiatives for military and civilian employees alike. To begin a thorough individual program, however, log on to the Mississippi National Guard public website at: <http://ngms.state.ms.us>, select "Directorates" and click on the "Safety Office" site. You'll find a great deal of information, including registration for the Motorcycle Driving/Safety Course.

Also, the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Transportation, along with the Department of Defense, are combining forces to develop short-term and long-term approaches to reduce motor vehicle crashes and their consequences among Veterans, particularly those returning from the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. You can find out more about the Veterans' Safe Driving Initiative at www.safedriving.va.gov. Home safe. Drive safe. Stay safe.

Don't Let It Happen To You.

- Don't drink and drive.
- Don't ride with a drunk driver.
- Always wear your seat belt--driving, in the passenger seat, or in a back seat.
- If you ride a motorcycle, always wear a helmet and ride sober.
- Mile for mile, your risk of a fatal crash is about 35 times higher on your motorcycle than your car.

OUR UNITS

1ST BATTALION, 204TH AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY



Eye on Washington

1-204th ADA Keeps Steady Watch

The 1st Battalion, 204th Air Defense Artillery, headquartered in Newton, watches the skies over Washington, D.C., during their deployment in April 2003. Photo courtesy of the 1/204 ADA.

By Sandy Ates, JFH-MS Public Affairs

In mid-March 2003, the Homeland Security Office increased the Threat Alert Level up to "Orange," and the news media began broadcasting images of Avenger air defense systems and Sentinel radars with the Washington Monument or U.S. Capitol looming in the background. A new phase of Operation Clear Skies, Air Defense Artillery's slice of Homeland Air Security was underway.

The 1st Battalion, 204th Air Defense Artillery (1-204th ADA) was among the defenders of the National Capitol region beginning in April 2003, when 170 Soldiers from the unit arrived at Fort Bliss, Texas for train up.

Since that time they have been called upon twice to provide air defense against low-altitude aircraft over Washington.

According to Lt. Col. Joe Hargett, mobilization readiness officer, the 1-204th ADA is scheduled for a mission in Iraq beginning the summer of 2011. "However," he said. "They will still be an integral part of the national capitol region rotations in the future."

The battalion uses the "Avenger" Air Defense Missile System — and was the first Army National Guard unit to receive the state-of-the-art defense weaponry.

The battalion is headquartered in Newton, Miss., with subordinate units in Bay Springs, Forest, and Morton, and also D Battery and Headquarters & Headquarters Battery in Newton.

Before its redesignation as the 1-204th ADA in October 1995, the unit was recognized as the 4th Battalion 114th Field Artillery (4-114th FA). The 4-114th FA gained a valiant reputation during World War II (as part of the 31st Dixie Division) and again during the Korean War (when nearly 95 percent of the Mississippi National Guard was called to active duty). In addition to the 4-114th's fighting spirit in battle, came great fighting men who later became major leaders in the Mississippi National Guard.

Among the notable leaders to serve with the 1-204th (prior to and after its redesignation) were officers such as Lt. Gen. Mickey Walker Jr. (deceased), Maj. Gen. Denver Brackeen (deceased), both former assistant adjutant generals, with Walker serving as the Chief,

National Guard Bureau; Maj. Gen. William L. Freeman, Jr., currently the adjutant general, and Brig. Gen. Sidney Hester; Colonels Robert Thomas, Joe Farris, Billy Pierce, Mark Valentine, and Bert Gilmore, and enlisted leaders like State Command Sergeants Major Gene Maske, Butch Smith and Donald L. Cooley, all of whom excelled in other leadership roles with the Mississippi National Guard.

Probably one of the most notable quotes ever to be made in the Mississippi Army National Guard was "*Mission First, People Always*," made and always practiced by Maske. He went on to become the first official state command sergeant major for the Mississippi Army National Guard. Many remember the sign with the saying painted on it at Camp Shelby's south gate (by the late Sgt. Maj. William R. "Stump" Jones, another member of the old 114th). The sign now hangs at the Newton readiness center for all new recruits to see.

New recruits and officers must attend Air Defense Artillery training at the ADA Command at Fort Sill, Okla. Here, Soldiers are indoctrinated into the corps with the vision to become the



world's most versatile Fires Force, with agile and adaptive Soldiers and leaders; fielded with integrated and interoperable systems (Avenger and Sentinel Missile System); capable of delivering accurate and responsive fires in any environment, from "mud to space," at any time.

Capt. David Alexander, battalion training officer, was completing basic training when the 4-114th FA became the 1-204th ADA. He said it has been a tough adjustment, but the overall attitude has remained extremely high.

"Our deployments expose us to a vast array of assets available to the National Guard, and we've made a lot of good connections with others in our branch that have helped us," said Alexander. "In every dealing we have had with these other units, we are consistently recognized as one of the best."

Most of the enlisted personnel enjoy working with the unit's weapons systems, because in a lot of ways, it is similar to a video game, and that makes it very popular with new recruits, says Alexander. "However, it is a very technical branch with software and hardware changes being done routinely on equipment. You have to score pretty high to become a 14S (Avenger crew member) or 14J (Early Warning Systems Operator)."

With the technology, training, and leadership available to Soldiers at Newton, it is easy to see why some great future leaders will be seen coming from the 1-204th as their forefathers once did.



The "last round" is fired down range at Camp Shelby by the 4th Battalion, 114th Field Artillery, signifying the end of the field artillery unit and beginning of a new mission as Air Defense Artillery.



- Unit Name:** Headquarters 1st Battalion, 204th Air Defense Artillery (ADA), Newton
- Unit Commander:** Lt. Col. Don Ahshapanek
- Subordinate Units:** HHB, 1-204th ADA - Newton
- Battery A, 1-204th ADA - Bay Springs
- Btry B, 1-204th ADA - Forest
- Btry C, 1-204th ADA - Morton
- Btry D, 1-204th ADA - Newton
- Unit members:** Approximately 400

DUM VIGILO PARO



| Photos on this page courtesy of the 1st Bn, 204th Air Defense Artillery, Newton



Send off ceremonies were held for the 1st Battalion, 185th Aviation (Assault) at Jackson (Nov. 30) and Tupelo (Dec. 1) where approximately 240 Soldiers of the battalion said farewell to families before their deployment in support of Operation New Dawn in Iraq. Members will be deployed for approximately one year to provide aviation operations support within their area of operations.

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