

SPRING 2019

GUARD DETAIL

A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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Operation Spartan
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All submissions should pertain to the Mississippi National Guard and are subject to editing. Contributions and reader comments should be sent to: scott.a.tynes.mil@mail.mil.

COVER PHOTO: Spc. Charles Moseley, of the 1st Battalion, 98th Cavalry Regiment, is welcomed home at Thompson Field in Flowood Feb. 26. Moseley, of Kiln, was part of a contingent of the Mississippi Army National Guard's 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team returning home after serving in Kuwait in support of Operation Spartan Shield for approximately one year. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes)

Letter From THE EDITOR

Be the Change You Seek



Throughout the course of every military career, there are many things that remain constant. "Hurry up and wait" will always be there; a new uniform seems to be always on the horizon; or it's time to complete yet another professional military education requirement. It doesn't take very long to figure out that the cycle is continuous and never seems to end.

During this journey, a few facts are also ever present – everyone must embrace change and be willing to impact it positively. Constructive evolution must occur individually and collectively in our respective organizations.

As service members, it's essential that we're willing to change to reach the potential for our careers. For example, it takes a lot of courage to one day decide to go Special Forces, attend pilot training, or join a tactical air control party. But too many times, dreams are dashed because we're not willing to move on and grow or failure is too big of a risk to face beyond our comfort zones. Be willing to evolve mentally and go for what you really want. Having tried and failed is much better than not reaching for higher pursuits at all.

Next, I've witnessed a few service members point out imperfections within their units, and sometimes the Guard as a whole, over the past year. The majority of these comments were posted anonymously via social media, but also verbally in conversation. The jabs reminded me why I desired to lead early in my career. As a young specialist, I saw how my unit could be better and wanted to be the lead-change agent.

Friends, be the one to step up and make your formation stronger. Communicate openly, answer the call to lead, and display pride in the units you belong to. Your positive influence could be the key to improved operations and heightened morale across the Mississippi National Guard.

Now is the time to escape the trap of contentment and rise to lead if you haven't already done so. Escape from your comfort zones, execute solutions-based leadership, and as Mahatma Gandhi, the late Indian activist said, "Be the change you seek." You will benefit individually and propel the Mississippi National Guard forward into the future.

We hope that you enjoy this issue!

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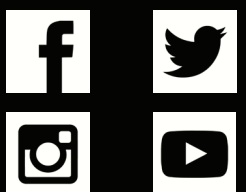
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GET READY FOR FREE TUITION AT JSU

Jackson State University and the Mississippi National Guard have partnered to offer guardsmen free undergraduate tuition at JSU, beginning in the fall of 2019.

Dr. William B. Bynum, Jr., president of JSU, and Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, signed a memorandum of understanding for the Tiger Free Tuition Program at JSU's College of Business, April 16. Jackson State is now the second Mississippi university to offer free college attendance for the state's citizen Soldiers and Airmen.

"The Mississippi National Guard depends on the readiness of our Soldiers and Airmen to perform their duties," said Boyles. "This program will help to prepare the foundation for our future endeavors and rewards the young men and women who will join our ranks. We're thankful to Dr. Bynum and JSU for partnering with us on this program and look forward to taking advantage of it."

To be eligible for the Tiger Free Tuition program, service members must be full-time undergraduate students, in good standing with their unit and cannot be within a year of their expiration of term of service. Soldiers and Airmen can contact the MSNG Education Office at 601-313-6183 for more information. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes)

SNAPSHOTS





Lieutenant Colonel
Derek J. Holland

Managing Your Guard Career

The importance of career management is a common thread across the services and among each rank category. It is helpful to consider National Guard career management in terms of the factors evaluated for professional boards for such purposes as retention, promotion, hiring, or special selection for educational or service opportunities. These factors vary in detail depending upon purpose, but may generally be conceptualized within the categories of education, experience, and general career management factors.

There rarely exists a particularly convenient time to add educational endeavors to an already difficult work-life balance. Professional and personal realities, though, are indicative of how military and civilian educational endeavors necessitate systematic and consistent installments of time and effort. Each career step is generally accompanied by a corresponding set of required training and credentials. It is usually advantageous to attend to such requirements as early as possible within each respective career stage. Additionally, pursuit of diversified opportunities often serve to enhance the effectiveness of one's service as well as their competitive posture within their career field. It is easy to procrastinate, and far too many members have found themselves being surpassed by junior service members, missing promotion opportunities, or struggling to complete degree programs for giving too little or too late attention to their professional education.

Effectiveness in service and in leadership demands that Soldiers and Airmen are professionally groomed through assignment and service within appropriate developmental

experiences. Every occupational specialty requires building technical proficiency. Military position assignments also entail the development of related skill sets in areas such as logistics, administration, communication, leadership, and management. To achieve this, members need to endeavor to learn and contribute in each position for an appropriately substantive duration while posturing themselves for eventual transition to assignments with increased challenge and responsibility.

Professionals in any career field fare are more successful when they are well-rounded and multifaceted. Many of the "general" career-enhancing areas are somewhat compulsory for such aspects as physical fitness, marksmanship, or operation of particular platforms or systems. Other aspects, however, are entirely voluntary and discretionary and may include such examples as broadening assignments, voluntary tours, specialty certifications, and community service.

Mentors and subject matter experts are widely available to advise and assist service members with negotiating the rigors of career management. Rest assured, though, the mantle of responsibility for attending to the key aspects of YOUR career ultimately rests upon YOUR shoulders. As a National Guard member, YOU should be assertive and deliberate in managing YOUR service career while seeking balance, applying sound advice, and taking ownership of YOUR career trajectory.

Derek J. Holland
Commander, AASF2
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Chief Master Sergeant
Jessica E. Green

Knowledge is Power

Balance, it's everything! Education is no exception. Life certainly educates us every day through experience, but what can be said about degrees? To be quite frank, in order to progress in the military or a civilian career, it's a basic requirement. As leaders we are called to be more than basic. We are called to exceed expectations for the sake of mission success.

Mission success applies to the military, but it also applies to our civilian careers. It's so important to balance the two so that we become well rounded in all facets of our lives. As a guardsman, we represent the military to our civilian employer. It is important to educate ourselves with a baseline of practical facts and procedures through our degree, but we must take it a step further and use that education to distinguish the difference between right and wrong as we become proficient in the skills we obtain. As we gain experience, we can become increasingly inventive and imaginative which enables us to be innovative in our fields.

This translates into our military career as much as it does in the civilian sector. We bring the expertise of our civilian degrees to the military and the structure, discipline, and leadership that we gain from the military into our civilian organizations. It's a harmonious relationship that allows us to borrow from one hemisphere of our life in order to improve the other.

As a senior leader, education is required of us. We must EARN our seat at the table. Through education and experience we cultivate our leadership skills in order to help other leaders make informed decisions. We must always be

ready to fully leverage personal experience and acquired knowledge in order to effectively accomplish the mission and meet the challenges that face our organizations.

Today's guardsmen have educational opportunities in abundance. Not only can we access schools online, the great state of Mississippi is leading the way in offering tuition assistance at major universities such as MSU, JSU, and MS University for Women. Knowledge from the combination of life experiences and the education that we obtain along the way is power that we acquire in order to propel ourselves into leadership roles. Being dedicated to our education enables us to be proactive vs reactive leaders.

Knowledge is one of the most valuable things we have. Think about it; money, people, health, things, they can all come and go. The one thing that can never be taken away is knowledge.

Jessica E. Green
Chief Master Sergeant
Chief Enlisted Manager, 172d AW
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TASK FORCE THUNDER:

MISSION COMPLETE

Story by 1st Lt. Terry Hill
155 Armored Brigade Combat Team

The Tupelo-based 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) recently returned from its third deployment to the Middle East in support of the global war on terror. The “Dixie Thunder” brigade completed one of the largest National Guard mobilizations in a decade, spending more than 70 days in an austere training environment at Fort Bliss, Texas. The brigade followed this training by becoming the first National Guard BCT to be the main effort as a part of Operation Spartan Shield (OSS).

The 155th was headquartered in Camp Buehring, Kuwait, with Soldiers spread throughout the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Theater of Operations to include Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Afghanistan,

and other undisclosed locations. With the addition of the California National Guard’s 1st Squadron, 18th Cavalry Regiment conducting the Jordan Operational Engagement Program, and the Arizona National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment, working with Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan; the brigade was nearly 5,000 strong and active in approximately 13 countries and 20 locations conducting theater security cooperation missions, partnership exercises, and maintaining a rapid reaction force. Each task aimed at meeting the intent of the OSS mission: deterring aggression and building stability throughout the region.

The brigade drew and maintained Army Prepositioned Stock from Camp Arifjan. This was a daunting task for logistics and maintenance, but the brigade maintainers demonstrated their capabilities by keep-

Sgt. Gregory Lambert, from Booneville, with the 1st Battalion, 98th Cavalry Regiment, is welcomed home by his family at Thompson Field in Flowood, Mississippi, Feb. 26, 2019. Lambert was part of a contingent of the Mississippi Army National Guard’s 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team returning home after serving in Kuwait in support of Operation Spartan Shield for approximately one year. (U.S. National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes)

ing a 90% operational readiness rate throughout the deployment. This directly contributed to it achieving 100% crew qualification in their tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles, and Paladin self-propelled howitzers.

“We have continued to exceed expectations,” said Col. Robert D. Ferguson, 155th ABCT commander. “Whether it was drawing nearly 16,000 pieces of Army Prepositioned Stock or maintaining a force that was ready to ‘fight tonight’ if needed.”

Soldiers with the 155th conducted multiple partnership exercises and NCO exchanges throughout CENTCOM. Exchanges provided the opportunity for leaders from partner militaries to work and train alongside brigade Soldiers. Exercises included Bright Star in Egypt, Desert Observer in Kuwait, Eastern Action in Qatar, Iron Union in the United Arab Emirates, and Inferno Creek in Oman.

Senatobia-based 2d Battalion, 198th Armored Regiment (AR) conducted exercise Inferno Creek.

“I think it’s important that we’re ambassadors for the U.S.,” said Capt. Charles Woods, commander of Charlie Company, 2-198 AR. “(It shows) that we’re approachable and able to share best practices with our regional

partners if we ever need to work together in the future.”

With the intent of growing “stronger every day,” some missions went down to the individual level as guardsmen pushed themselves to grow as Soldiers and leaders. The brigade graduated 185 Soldiers from the Basic Leader Course (BLC) at Camp Buehring, sixteen Soldiers earned the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge, which consisted of five events testing their physical fitness and marksmanship, and instructors from the 155th led three BLC classes for U.S. Army Central Soldiers. The unit was also instrumental in planning, coordinating, and conducting the first Air Assault course at Camp Buehring in nearly two years, with 54 of the 190 graduates coming from the brigade.

“I am so proud of this brigade,” said Ferguson. “The work we have done throughout the U.S. Central Command Theater has directly contributed to regional stability and enhanced the capabilities of our partners in the Middle East.”

The 155th ABCT continues to be at the forefront of the dynamic demands the U.S. Army requires of the National Guard in order to accomplish strategic missions all over the world.



U.S. Army medics assigned to the 2d Battalion, 198th Armor Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard make final preparations before loading a simulated patient on to a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter in Kuwait, Dec. 11, 2018. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Jovi Prevot)



Infantrymen with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment, clear a trench while conducting squad situational training exercise rehearsals at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, on Aug. 8, 2018. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Brittany Johnson.)



Kuwaiti Land Force soldiers advance on their objective while targets are engaged down range during Desert Observer Two involving Mississippi National Guard’s 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team on December 12th, 2018. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Bill Boecker)

Essayons to Faisons

Engineers from the 287th Engineer Mobility Augmentation Company based in Wiggins, trained in basic life-saving skills including adult and infant cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), as part of the Urban Search and Rescue training and certification course at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Jan. 22 - March 5, 2019. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Capt. Matthew Burt)

Story by Mr. Daniel Szarek
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

The Army engineer motto Essayons (Fr.) translates to “Let Us Try” but Mississippi Army National Guard engineers may have just changed it to Faisons, “Let Us DO.” The 287th Engineer Mobility Augmentation Company (MAC), based in Wiggins, completed the first step in assuming its new mission during a 6-week certification course at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Jan. 22 – March 5.

The roughly 43-day training and certification exercise focused on hazardous material (HAZMAT) handling and decontamination, life-saving skills, and search and rescue operations in a hazardous environment.

The course began during the early morning hours of a cold January day when the engineers reported to the Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) school at Fort Leonard Wood, home of the military engineer. After initial briefs and gear issue, the MAC members trained in basic life-saving skills, adult and infant CPR, and using the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED), becoming American Red Cross certified in all three disciplines.

“Given that this training is now a reality, the leadership is seeing true buy-in from the Soldiers and their teamwork over the first week has been exemplary,” said Capt. Matthew Burt, commanding officer of the 287th Engineer Company (MAC).

He took note early on that his team was already building cohesion, “I expect each Soldier to truly benefit from this training and the team to continue to grow stronger as a unit.”

The engineers continued training as a US&R team through extensive classroom instruction, hands-on training, and practical exercises on the use of the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) and conducting emergency and technical decontamination. These basic yet detailed tasks are all part of becoming the new Command and Control Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Response Element (C2CRE-B); the B designating them as a force package of National Guard Soldiers.

A total of 47 guardsmen were trained and officially certified to conduct technician-level rescue operations in the five US&R disciplines; rope, confined space, structural collapse, vehicle and machinery, and trenches, all within a HAZMAT environment. As the training progressed, Burt said the pieces “kind of just fell into place.”

“We have established our organizational structure and the NCOs have been empow-



The Technical Decontamination Practical Exercise involved the set up and operation of a Technical DECON corridor while wearing the prescribed Level B Hazardous Material. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Capt. Matthew Burt)



Guardsmen from the 287th Engineer Mobility Augmentation Company based in Wiggins, prepare for the Technical Decontamination Practical Exercise portion of the Urban Search and Rescue Course in Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. These 47 Soldiers, now certified, are part of a specialized group within the DoD's CBRN Response Enterprise. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Capt. Matthew Burt)

ered to manage their teams according to the ICS model in which we have been taught,” he said.

The ICS, or Incident Command System, model is a standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of emergency response entities. It establishes a common hierarchy allowing multiple agencies to maintain effectiveness in the field. This is especially helpful in the C2CRE-B realm where multiple states and components (National Guard and Reserve) will be responding to real-life situations. It becomes even more important in a full-scale emergency response when Active Duty elements (C2CRE-A) are also sent in to assist, advise, and control hazardous situations.

“At the end of each week, Soldiers are tested, (on computer) and through multiple hands-on skills tests, on their knowledge of the ICS, site operations, and basic search and rescue techniques. In order to advance in the course and become certified in US&R, each Soldier must receive a ‘go’ at each station.”

**- Captain Matthew Burt
Commander, 287th MAC**

The technical support forces of the C2CRE-B are high priority elements within the Homeland Response Force, Enhanced Response Force, and Defense Response Force;

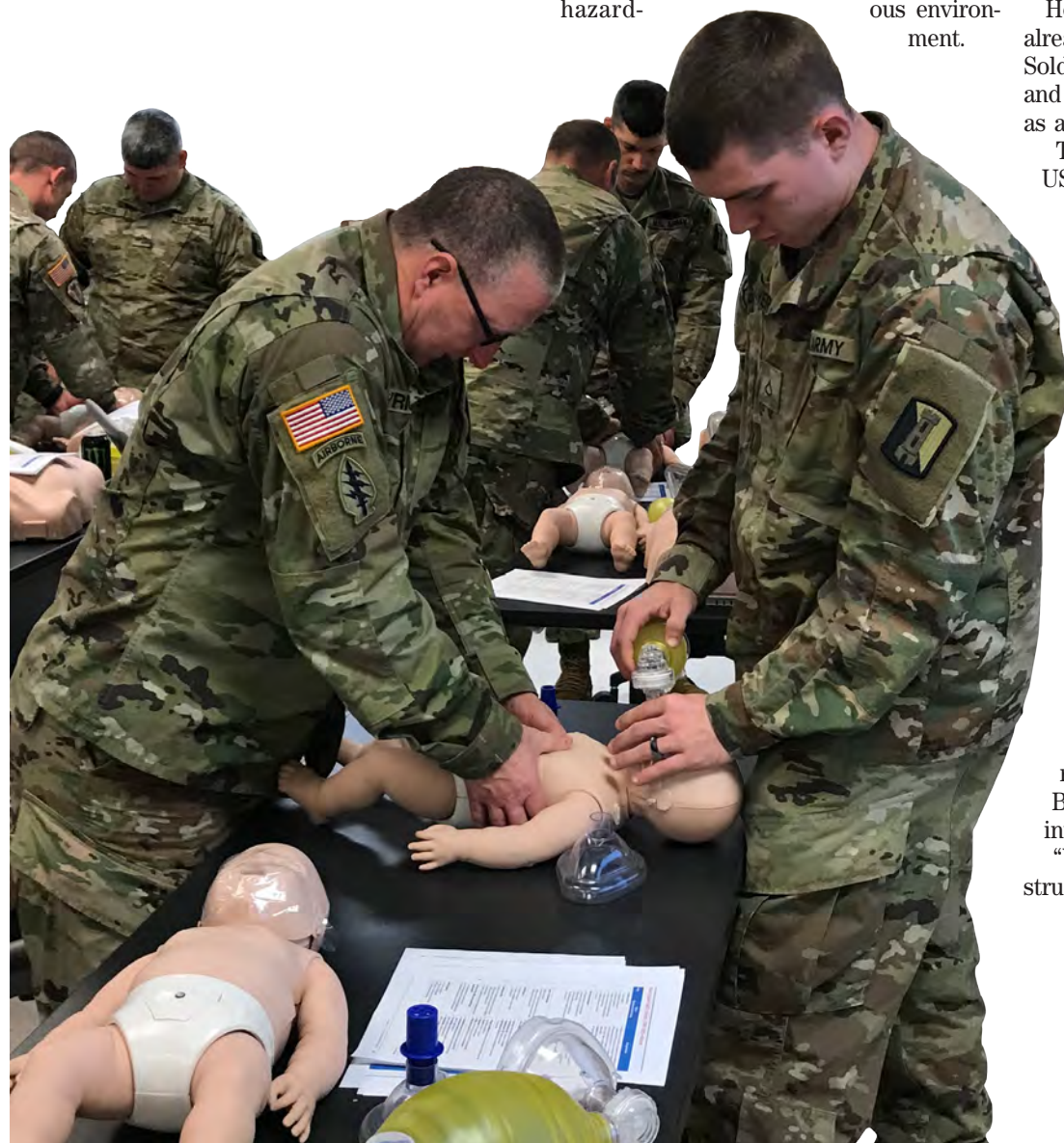
all part of the Department of Defense’s CBRN Response Enterprise and under the command and guidance of the Secretary of Defense.

Upon completion of their training and certification, the 287th MAC, with the assistance of 13 combat medics from the 209th Medical Company of the Iowa National Guard, were evaluated by leadership from the U.S. Army North (ARNORTH), a formation within the U.S. Northern Command.

With the successful validation by ARNORTH, the engineers of the 287th MAC are more than ready to assume their new mission on June 1, becoming the new “go-to” team of C2CRE-B professionals and adding to the strength and expertise within the Mississippi Army National Guard.



Soldiers from the 287th Engineer Mobility Augmentation Company, based in Wiggins, receive hands-on instruction for properly rigging the Stokes Rescue Basket for low-angle rescue operations during the Urban Search and Rescue course at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Capt. Matthew Burt)





UZBEK SOUTHERN STRIKE DEBUT

Left: (L-R) Uzbekistan Minister of Defense General-Major Adusalom Adumavlonovich Azizov, Assistant Adjutant General (Air) of Mississippi Brig. Gen. Mike Nabors, and the Director of Air National Guard, Lt. Gen. L. Scott Rice, visit troops and share experiences during the Southern Strike 19 exercise. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Maj. Amanda Villeret)

Right: An Uzbek and U.S. Soldier discuss tactics, techniques, and procedures during a Southern Strike 19 mission. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Capt. Shane Medley)

**Story and photos by Ms. Danielle Thomas
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office (Gulfport Bureau)**

Southern Strike provides opportunities for the Mississippi National Guard to foster stronger working relationships between United States forces and ally nations in a training environment before potentially having to participate in actual joint combat operations.

Southern Strike 19 took place Jan. 15 -30 at the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center, Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center and Camp McCain Training Center. Among the nearly 1,800 participants were service members from the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Uzbeks joined in the action after a few years of observing the full mission profile exercise. Southern Strike includes the planning and execution of diverse, high level tactical skill scenarios like commercial vessel seizures, hostage response, and non-combatant evacuation operations. The two week exercise centers on providing a type of training that will prepare participants for real world crises.

The MSNG has partnered with the Central Asian country as part of the National Guard State Partnership Program since 2012. The SPP aims to build defense relationships that promote U.S. security interests.

Colonel Muzafar Rakhmatullaev, the Uzbekistan Military Attache to the United States, laid out his

country's main training objectives for Southern Strike as improving the professional skills of the Uzbek soldiers and using the acquired knowledge in future exercises and combat activities.

"It is always vital to learn tactics, techniques, and procedures of exercises carefully to participate in it successfully. That is why first we observed the Southern Strike exercise in detail, then decided to participate in the exercise this year," he said.

The Uzbeks trained alongside and under the supervision of the Mississippi Army National Guard's Company C, 2d Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne). These Soldiers utilize a unique, nonconventional method for waging combat operations and successfully complete counter-terrorism missions, earning them the reputation as "quiet professionals."

Special Forces troops helped to sharpen the Uzbeks' skills in shooting, close-quarters battle, urban combat, medical training, communication training and various insertion methods, including fast roping. The Uzbek soldiers also learned limited marine operations, vehicle training, explosive breaching, hand-to-hand controlling techniques, and mission planning. Also important, the National Guardsmen gave the Uzbeks guidance on how to effectively share their new skills with fellow soldiers once returning to their home country.

"We also trained some of their specialists, such as their medics, to train themselves while they were here," said Capt Shane Medley, Special Forces Oper-

ational Detachment Alpha commander. "Their snipers received more advanced training, as well as their machine gunners. They can all instruct their counterparts back home on what we taught them."

While both the Uzbeks and the MSNG call the training a success, there were numerous challenges along the way. The difficulties were created by language barriers and cultural norms, unfamiliarity with equipment and tactics, and limitations on information sharing based on each nation's security procedures. Participants viewed the obstacles as opportunities for growth.

Maj. Daniel Anderson, the commander of C-2/20 SFG (A), said every nation will face challenges when working with each other in a coalition environment. He believes the importance of utilizing exercises like Southern Strike is to identify the challenges and find resolutions so they are familiar when they occur during real-world operations.

"Aside from developing a relationship built on trust, working with a partner nation during peacetime military exercises allows each partner to better understand the other's tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs)," said Anderson. "The hope is that when we work together in the future during real-world operations, the learning curve will be less steep

and synchronizing our efforts will be more efficient and effective."

Two groups of soldiers from two different countries training together will hopefully create a more effective performance if ever they join forces on the battlefield, he said. In the meantime, the Uzbek's debut in Southern Strike can serve as a significant step in fortifying the bond between that country and the MSNG.

Uzbek Minister of Defense General-Major Adusalom Adumavlonovich Azizov traveled to south Mississippi to personally see what his soldiers acquired in training. He also brought handcrafted gifts from his homeland as tokens of appreciation to MSNG leaders.

"All the annual events held in the framework of Mississippi National Guard State Partnership Program are very important, especially exercises and training," said Rakhmatullaev. "They contribute a lot for strengthening cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United States. It would be a great opportunity for us to participate in future Southern Strike exercises in order to consolidate our skills and achievement."

Uzbekistan wasn't the only country sending military members to Mississippi to improve and expand their combat capabilities. The Chileans have been involved in the annual ex-

ercise for several years, and leaders say they can see the growth and development that has taken place over time.

"For the Chilean Armed Forces, it has been a tremendous experience to have participated in Southern Strike Exercise 2019," said Col. Ricardo Santander-Benavente, Chilean Joint Staff Delegate. "The interaction between our soldiers and sailors with their U.S. peers has allowed us to prove our level of training and interoperability year after year and also strengthen ties at all levels of the chain of command."

The Netherlands and Canada also participated this year.

Uzbek soldiers clear a building using the stack technique during an urban operations exercise. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Capt. Shane Medley)



Bryan Fedrick sets a prescribed fire used in assisting the military to condition the firing range at Camp McCain on March 19. The prescribed fires assist in hazardous fuel reduction to prevent wildfires. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. DeUndra Brown)

Guard Biologist Named State Conservationist of Year



Bryan Fedrick, of Clinton, Mississippi, receives the 2018 Wildlife Conservationist of the Year Award, Feb. 21. (U.S. National Guard photo by Chelsy Ables)

**Story by Sgt. DeUndra Brown
102d Public Affairs Detachment**

Bryan Fedrick, wildlife biologist with the Mississippi Military Department, has developed spearheaded initiatives in the Natural Resources Conservation (NRC) program over the past seven years.

His conservative vision was rewarded in February when he received the 2018 Wildlife Conservationist of the Year award.

One of the most critical projects Fedrick introduced on land managed by the MSNG is an aggressive preventative response to the threat of chronic wasting disease (CWD). The illness is 100 percent fatal to afflicted deer and spreads most rapidly in large deer populations.

The first reported case of CWD was in Arkansas in 2015. Mississippi identified its first instance in January 2018 in Issaquena County.

“With the threat of chronic wasting disease moving steadily to-

wards our state. I knew we had to do something,” said the Clinton, Mississippi native. “We had to drastically lower the numbers of deer inside cantonment, and so what I did was figure out the best way to go about doing it.”

To get the most out of a harvesting program designed to bring the deer populations at Camp Shelby to a safe level, Fedrick partnered with the Mississippi Wildlife Federation to provide meat to feed the homeless and monitored harvested deer for CWD.

“My day never looks the same two days in a row. I may be working on whitetail deer today and I may be working on gopher tortoise stuff tomorrow,” he said.

Fedrick’s conservation effort is more expansive than creating ideal habitats for wildlife and endangered species, he also assists in realigning forestry goals and increasing use of prescribed fires.

“Our prescribed fire program has many reasons,” he said. “Down at Camp Shelby, longleaf pine is an ecosystem that evolved with fires, so it has to have fire in order for it to thrive. The longleaf pine habitat is one of the most endangered ecosystems in the world, so we have to use fires in trying to promote our restoration of that habitat.”

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks award also acknowledges Fedrick’s educational accomplishments. He teaches herpetology courses to Mississippi State University students for the Mississippi State Extension Service and assists in hosting hundreds of area school children that visit Camp Shelby each year.

Fedrick said the award recognizes his many years of experience of conservation work and is also a testament to the quality of partnerships he has benefited from.

“It really is a pleasure to work with some of the people that I’m fortunate enough to work with. Before coming to work for the military department, I had no idea that wildlife conservation was as important to the military as it is,” he said. “It’s always a lot of fun to share the work and share the accolades when you accomplish the mission.”

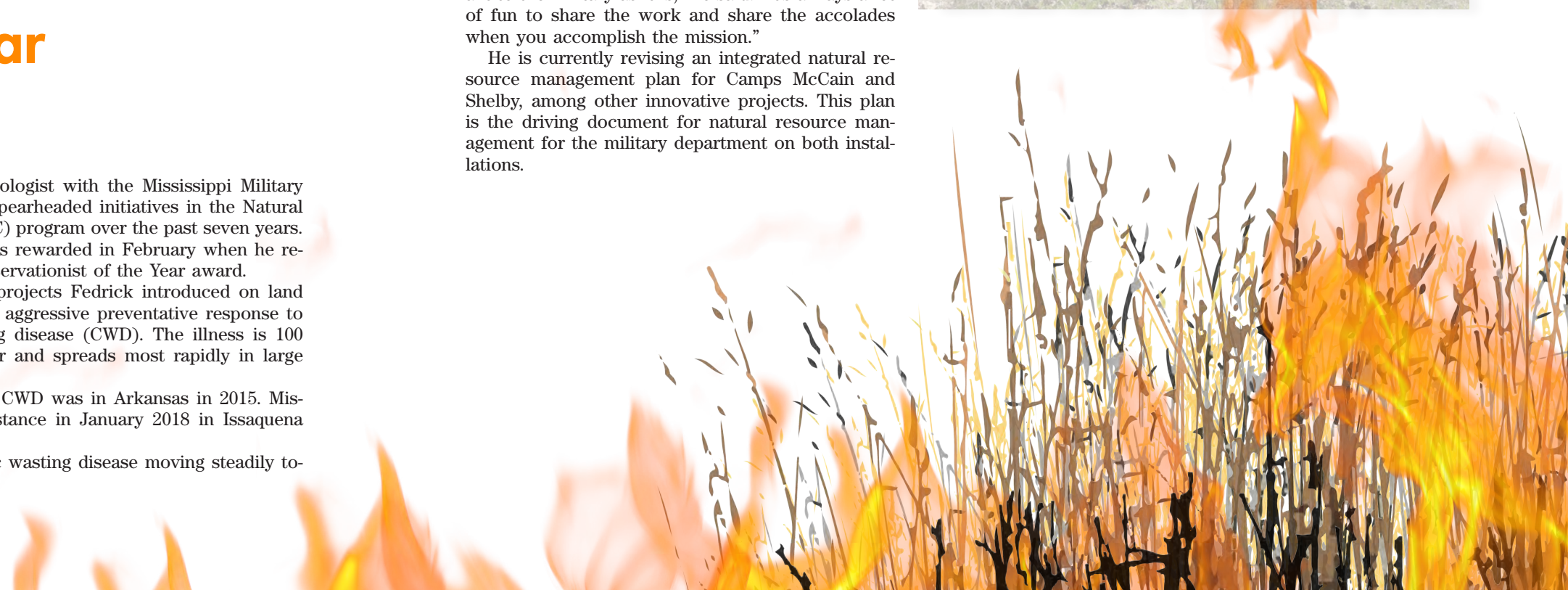
He is currently revising an integrated natural resource management plan for Camps McCain and Shelby, among other innovative projects. This plan is the driving document for natural resource management for the military department on both installations.



A prescribed fire is set on range at Camp McCain in March to reduce the risk of wildfires during tactical exercises and operations. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. DeUndra Brown)



Bryan Fedrick sets a prescribed fire used in assisting the military to condition the firing range at Camp McCain on March 19. The prescribed fires assist in hazardous fuel reduction to prevent wildfires. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. DeUndra Brown)



MONUMENTAL COMPETITION

MISSISSIPPI'S BEST WARRIORS BATTLE FOR HONORS



Mississippi Army National Guard Sgt. Darrell Washington paces up the hill during a 12-mile road march April 11 at the Vicksburg National Military Park. The Best Warrior Competition showcases each competitor's Soldier skills, physical endurance, and knowledge in order to advance to the regional competition held at Camp Butner, North Carolina May. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. DeUndra Brown)

Story by Sgt. DeUndra Brown
102d Public Affairs Detachment

Mississippi's best Soldiers and Airmen were emboldened by the spirits of the warriors of yesterday as they strove to win their individual conflicts on the battlefield of the Vicksburg National Military Park during the 2019 Mississippi Best Warrior Competition April 8-11.

The competition left an imprint on many military installations this year. The event started and ended at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, with event stops at Camp McCain and Vicksburg National Military Park.

Competitors started with the check-in process at Camp Shelby, where they were later hit with a mystery event of escaping a simulated jail at the Combined Arms Collective Training Facility. They also took the Army Physical Fitness Test, participated in a stress shoot event and were tested on other basic warrior tasks.

Sgt. Darrell Washington, assigned to Company I, 106th Support Battalion, competed last year in the Soldier category and returned to the competition this year in the NCO category.

"They kind of changed things up this year. I think the transition from last year to this year was pretty smooth, with all the new events, even from day one with it being different than what we are used to. I think that was pretty cool."

The Soldiers were then flown to Camp McCain on a CH-47 Chinook helicopter so in preparation for the day and night land navigation courses.

Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Napper, assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, a Bradley Fighting Vehicle platoon sergeant, assisted as one of the cadre on the land navigation course.

"I would figure that land nav is the toughest event because it's (approximately) 3,500 meters and they have to find roving tasks in the process of doing the land navigation course. At that point they complete a critical task or an (Army Warrior Task)," he said.

Army Warrior Tasks are basic skills in which all competitors are required to be proficient, such as first aid, maneuvering under fire, and reacting to direct and indirect fire.

Camp McCain has many training ranges that the Soldiers used during weapons qualification and the stress shoot events. The obstacle course was also completed at this installation.

Pfc. Ramon Ogden, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 185th Aviation Regiment, a first time competitor, was exhausted after completing the obstacle course.

"Don't you come out here if you know you are not ready or if you are not physically capable of enduring a lot of strenuous activity because this right here, whew," he said.

The Vicksburg National Military Park was added as an event site for the first time. Participants engaged in a 12-mile road march through the historic and hilly grounds of the park.

Command Sgt. Maj. John Raines, senior enlisted leader for the Mississippi National Guard, said the new environment and terrain was included this year to add to the level of difficulty of the event.

"We always want to challenge our Soldiers and our Airmen so we can see who is the best," he said. "The only way we can do that is to put them under tough realistic conditions, so that's what we tried to do. Every year the Soldiers and Airmen get tougher and tougher, so we've got to

make the competition tougher and tougher for them. The terrain here is a little tougher than the terrain that they faced in Camp McCain last year."

The Soldiers and Airmen are not only getting tougher, they are competing with more experience making the traditional competition obsolete.

"A lot of the same guys that are here this year were here last year," Raines said. "So when you know what's going on and you know what's going to happen, you have got to keep changing it and keep challenging them. That's why we changed locations and changed events."

Airman Trung Nguyen, assigned to Gulfport's Combat Readiness Training Center, said they succeeded.

"It's a tough competition! But it shows you what you are made of, you know. It brings the best out of you," he said. "I would recommend it for any young Airman or Soldier to go forth and try to compete."

Raines gives encouragement to every Soldier who has or may ever participate in the Best Warrior.

"I would just say be the best you can be, continue to challenge yourself and push yourself. There are three things that I always tell every Soldier and if you can concentrate on these three things you will be successful," he said. "That's in any endeavor, whether it be in Best Warrior, whether it be on the battlefield, whether it be in your civilian career field; it's be mentally alert, physically strong, and morally straight. If you can do those three things, you're going to be successful. But in this competition you have got to do it better than the second place guy!"

The BWC tests for the best, well-rounded Soldier and Airman in two categories, Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) of the Year and Soldier of the Year. Mississippi Army National Guard Sgt. Darrell Washington won the NCO category and Mississippi Air National Guard Airman Trung Nguyen won the Soldier of the Year category.

Washington will compete for the regional Best Warrior title in May at Camp Butner, North Carolina with the opportunity to advance to the national competition. Nguyen will not be able to advance to regionals as an Airman, Spc. Marina Grage, 890th Engineer Battalion, will advance in his place as the top Soldier.

"In any endeavor, whether it be in Best Warrior, whether it be on the battlefield, whether it be in your civilian career field; be mentally alert, physically strong, and morally straight."

- Command Sgt. Maj. John Raines

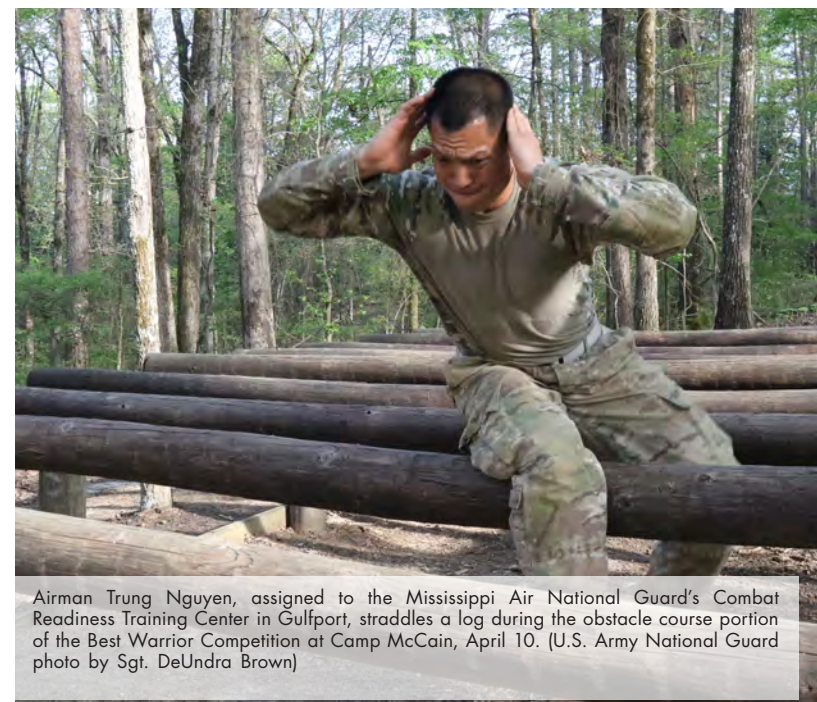
FOLLOW THE CODE TO VIEW
BEST WARRIOR HIGHLIGHTS



Mississippi Army National Guard Sgt. Jasmine Ivy holds on to keep from falling off the inverted rope obstacle, April 10, during the Best Warrior Competition at Camp McCain. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. DeUndra Brown)



Spc. Marina Grage tosses a medicine ball backward during the practice trial of the Army Combat Fitness Test April 8, during the Best Warrior Competition at Camp Shelby. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Victoria Miller)



Airman Trung Nguyen, assigned to the Mississippi Air National Guard's Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, straddles a log during the obstacle course portion of the Best Warrior Competition at Camp McCain, April 10. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. DeUndra Brown)

MANAGING CHANGE

Story by Maj. Andy Thaggard
184th Sustainment Command

Just as Brig. Gen. Clint E. Walker and Soldiers of the 184th Sustainment Command started the process of assuming mission command, the priority of effort shifted. The U.S. would withdraw over 2,000 troops from Syria. Rapidly.

So began the mission, managing change.

The 1st Theater Sustainment Command (1TSC) is responsible for sustaining U.S. military operations in the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility, the most dynamic on the planet. Maj. Gen. Flem B. “Donnie” Walker, Jr. is the 1TSC commander, as well as the deputy commanding general — sustainment for U.S. Army Central, the Army component of CENTCOM. Based at Ft. Knox, Ky. The 1TSC relies on expeditionary sustainment commands like the 184th to rotate through Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, to serve as their operational command post (OCP), charged with day to day mission command and sustainment operations in countries with familiar names — Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

And names that may not be so familiar, like Yemen, Tajikistan, and Mississippi’s State Partnership Program country, Uzbekistan.

Now dual-hatted as the deputy commanding general, 1st Theater Sustainment Command, and commanding general, 184th Sustainment Command, Brig. Gen. Walker and his 250-plus Mississippi Guardsmen began the OCP daily grind of managing change in a footprint that spans 20 nations, 18 languages, 22 ethnic groups, and 550 million people.

“It’s truly a dynamic area. From combat operations in Afghanistan, to helping the Jordanian Army professionalize their NCO corps, to medical subject matter expert exchanges in former Soviet-bloc countries, operations here never stop. And it’s our job to make sure American troops, partners, and allies have what they need to do the job, every day.” said Brig. Gen. Walker.

Change is expected, and to a reasonable extent planning mitigates potential risk.

But unexpected change, like where to put 2,000 troops, and all their trucks, weapons, spare parts, food, undelivered mail, undeliv-



Maj. Kimberly Bishop and 1st Lt. Lashaundra Dishmon, 184th Sustainment Command, monitor ongoing operations at the 1st Theater Sustainment Command’s Syrian Logistics Cell in Erbil, Iraq, April 24. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Veronica McNabb)



ered supplies, bulk fuel, and so on, requires quickly determining the best course of action to meet commander’s intent while also serving as a good steward of the nation’s resources.

Where exactly does all of that go, how exactly does it get there, and who makes those decisions?

“We call it a ‘Team of Teams.’ There are 27,000 U.S. military, civilians and contractors working together. Each one is important, for each one has an important job supporting the warfighter in the field” said Brig. Gen. Walker. “Together, the team plans and executes the sustainment mission.”

The 184th serves also only as the 1TSC operational command post in Kuwait, but leads and directs the Syrian Logistics Cell in Erbil, Iraq, who provides dedicated sustainment support to Combined Joint Task Force — Operation Inherent Resolve as they conduct operations to defeat Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Other 184th Soldiers also serve at the U.S. Embassy in Iraq, and in direct support to the Multinational Force and Observers in Egypt.

Change happens every day, and everywhere.

“Just after we arrived in Kuwait, Maj. Gen. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, announced that several Mississippi Guard units would relocate. For us, that means consolidating our operations from Laurel and Hattiesburg to our new home in Monticello. Our rear detachment has been doing a great job of moving and getting ready for us to return later this year, and we look forward to getting to know our new neighbors soon,” said Brig. Gen. Walker.

But that’s part of change management. Events occur, plans are reviewed, revised, or created, informed decisions are made, and the mission succeeds. Daily.

Professional sustainers understand that change is a constant, and complacency leads to mission failure.

“I can say with absolute confidence that we have the right team here. Their civilian and military experience fits the mission, and I am so proud of the work they do every day. My boss, Maj. Gen. Walker, likes to say keep chopping wood. He means to keeping getting after it, every day. I like to say keep pulling the wagon, keep the sustainment wagon moving. Push it, pull it, drag it, do anything but sit on it, and you are moving the sustainment mission forward. That’s why we are here,” said Brig. Gen. Walker.

Top: Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kim Ralston, 184th Sustainment Command, briefs members of the 1st Theater Sustainment Command’s Syrian Logistics Cell in Erbil, Iraq, April 24, 2019. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Veronica McNabb)

Bottom: Brig. Gen. Clint E. Walker, commanding general of 184th Sustainment Command, Lt. Gen. Terry Ferrell, commanding general of U.S. Army Central, and Maj. Gen. Flem B. “Donnie” Walker, commanding general of 1st Theater Sustainment Command, during Ferrell’s visit to the 1st Theater Sustainment Command’s Operational Command Post at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, April 23, 2019. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Connie Jones)





MAINTAINING THEIR OWN

FMS SOLDIERS ASSIST FELLOW MAINTAINER FOLLOWING A POWERFUL MORTON TORNADO

Story and photos by Lt. Col. Christian Patterson
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

For the past 42 years, Sgt. 1st Class John Paul “JP” Wallace has been in service to thousands as a loyal member of the Mississippi Army National Guard.

But on Friday, April 19, he was the recipient of emergency assistance from fellow Soldiers from the MSARNG maintenance community. It was the day after an EF-2 tornado ripped through his Morton, Mississippi neighborhood, damaging his home and property.

“I got here about 2:30 p.m., quarter to 3 p.m. My wife had a doctor’s appointment, she got here about 3 p.m.,” said Wallace, who serves



as the assistant facility commander at Field Maintenance Shop 9 in Florence. “We had been in the house for only about 15 minutes when it came through. The sirens went off and I grabbed my wife. The electricity went off and we got in the hallway. It didn’t take but about a minute and it was over with.”

Wallace, his wife Melanie, dog, Loretta, and cat, Cash (named after country music stars, Loretta Lynn and Johnny Cash), survived the storm, as well as everyone in their neighborhood, but the damage to his property and the surrounding community was extensive. The tornado’s power ripped a large portion of Wallace’s metal roof off; uprooted numerous trees, and damaged several vehicles, including his golf cart after being tossed from the back yard to the front.

“[Afterwards] I thanked God that we didn’t get killed,” said Wallace. “We stood there for about 10 minutes, just trying to gather ourselves up. I was trying to calm my wife down. The next thing I know, folks were everywhere!”

Sgt. 1st Class John Paul “JP” Wallace (second from left and inset) pauses for a photo at his Morton, Miss. home with Soldiers from the Mississippi Army National Guard’s Field Maintenance Shops 7 and 9 in Decatur and Florence, respectively, April 19. The personnel were present to assist their fellow maintainer and his family following an EF-2 tornado that damaged their home and property the day before.

Included in those folks were shocked Dummy Line Rd. neighbors, state and local first responders. Approximately 10 maintainers from Field Maintenance Shops 7 and 9 cleared debris the day after.

They were aware of the severe weather system that killed three Mississippians and spawned 44 tornadoes, April 18. The storms tied the state record for the number of weather events in one day, according to the National Weather Service.

The Soldiers knew Wallace’s community was hit hard.

“The Guard and the people you work with are just a brotherhood. We’ve been here since 9:30 this morning with chainsaws and piling up brush to clean up his yard to allow the excavators to reach the house.”

**- Chief Warrant Officer 3 Norman Carey
Shop Chief at Florence’s FMS 9**

The MSARNG maintenance community is a close group of professionals who maintain thousands of vehicles and equipment throughout the guard’s elaborate force structure. The FMS Soldiers’ respect for Wallace fueled their desire to assist their friend, a professional described by many as a “salt of the Earth kind of guy who would help anyone.”

“This is what the Mississippi National Guard is all about. It makes you feel really good to lend a helping hand to a fellow Soldier and brother,” said Staff Sgt. Jerry McBeath, an FMS 7 mechanic who has known Wallace for approximately 20 years. “You never know, it could be you one day in need of a helping hand. It’s a blessing to be here and to do the will of God to provide assistance.”

Wallace and his wife have a challenging road ahead to make repairs to their home, replace vehicles, and restore the landscape of their property. The Operations Desert Storm/Desert Shield and Enduring Freedom Veteran says it’s humbling to be on the impacted side of a disaster, but is thankful for the outpouring of support from his Mississippi National Guard family.

“I appreciate the guys taking time out of their busy schedules at work to come out and help,” Wallace said proudly. “They called me last night and said they would be here tomorrow at daylight and they were!”



Wallace’s Morton home sustained extensive damage to its metal roof. The awning on the back porch was also destroyed during the tornado. He credits his Guard and Church families with assisting in recovery efforts.



Sgt. William Grayson, a mechanic with Field Maintenance Shop 9 in Florence, works with emergency responders to remove uprooted trees on Sgt. 1st Class John Paul “JP” Wallace’s property in Morton, April 19. Grayson, along with fellow Mississippi Army National Guard maintainers were present to help Wallace recover from an EF-2 tornado that damaged his home the day before.

TORNADO PREPAREDNESS



SCAN FOR TIPS



CYBER TEAM SETS GUARD RECORD



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

The seven members of the Mississippi Army National Guard's Detachment 2, Cyber Protection Team (CPT) 178, were part of an historic mobilization with Task Force Echo II. This was the first Army National Guard task force mobilization of this size with full-time support of U.S. Cyber Command operations, earning the team the Full Operational Capability (FOC) designation two years ahead of schedule.

The Mississippi detachment was mobilized in March 2018 for a year-long deployment to Fort Meade, Maryland. They joined with team members from Louisiana and Texas to form the 39-Soldier CPT 178 assigned to the task force's 125th Cyber Protection Battalion. The battalion also includes cyber warriors from South Carolina and Utah as well as CPT 173, comprised of Guardsmen from New York and New Jersey, according to Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kevin Carwyle, Detachment 2's senior cyber operations technician.

"For a normal cyber unit not in a (mobilization) cycle, it would take two or three years to get that FOC certification," said Maj. Bobby Freeman, detachment commander.

For the past year, Task Force Echo II (TFE) has worked with the 780th Military Intelligence Brigade to conduct cyberspace op-

erations in support of U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) and the Cyber National Mission Force. The Echo task forces are aligned under the 780th, which in turn falls under the operational control of U.S. Army Cyber Command (ARCYBER).

The task force is part of the 91st Cyber Brigade, the Army National Guard's first and only of its kind, established in September 2017. According to the mission statement, it provides training, readiness and oversight of all Army National Guard Cyber Protection Battalions in order to provide ready, fully resourced, and proficient forces capable of conducting cyberspace operations in support of state and federal requirements. The brigade, comprised of Soldiers in 30 states, conducts cyberspace and information operations, as authorized or directed, to ensure freedom of action in and through cyberspace and the information environment, and to deny the same to any adversary.

"This team didn't exist until the notice of funding," Carwyle said. "We had 12 months to fill slots and receive the basic training we needed to complete the mission. It was quite a task."

The team's three primary missions are to defend Department Of Defense networks and ensure their data is held secure, support joint military commander objectives, and, when directed, defend U.S. critical infrastructure.

Cyber teams are a relatively new component in the Army structure. The first active duty team was rated as initially capable in 2014 and it wasn't until September 2017 that all 41 of the Army's active duty Cyber

Mission Force teams were validated FOC by USCYBERCOM. They have since been incorporated as part of a coordinated military strategy around the world, performing both defensive cyberspace and combat support missions.

"It allowed us the opportunity to work with the Cyber National Mission Force and gave us a good top-down perspective of how cyber is going in the military," said Freeman.

"This is a huge honor for us," Carwyle said. "We got to grow our knowledge base and bring it back to Mississippi."

The achievement required completion of thousands of courses in structured and progressive cyberspace training. This demanding training included cyberspace operations planning, network operations and architecture, as well as technically-detailed software analysis and development skills. Validation of this cyber training baseline will continue to sustain Cyber Mission Force readiness.

Gen. Paul Nakasone, commander of U.S. Cyber Command, and director of the National Security Agency/Chief, Central Security Service, said TFE II performed admirably and thanked them for their service during a Transition of Authority ceremony in Fort Meade March 11.

"We are only as good as all the components – Active, Reserve, and National Guard – and that is important to us," Nakasone said. "On behalf of all of us at the United States Cyber Command and U.S. Army Cyber, which I had the pleasure of commanding before, and the Department of the Army, 'well done, well done.'"



Left: Detachment 2, Cyber Protection Team 178, From Left- Back row- CW3 Kevin Carwyle, MAJ Bobby Freeman, SFC Randy Pierce, SSG Carl Pierce From Left-Front Row- SGT Sam Perry, SFC Brian Mitchell, MAJ Brandon Pritchard (Courtesy Photo)

Below: Army National Guard (ARNG) Soldiers of Task Force Echo II and III stand in formation during a transition of authority ceremony, hosted by the 780th Military Intelligence Brigade (Cyber), at the McGill Training Center on March 13. (Photo by Steven Stover)



A University of Southern Mississippi football player signs a football for Brantley Morgigno, a military child from Pearl, attending an Operation Teammate event in Hattiesburg, April 6.



goals is to instill this mentality into his athletes so they can confidently handle challenges encountered on and off the field. After answering various questions, Makovicka paraded the youngsters around and gave them the chance to test their own strength and mobility.

“This event is an awesome experience because it shows us that someone else cares,” said Joyce Robinson, a retired master sergeant and mother of two children. “They are teaching them how to be teammates, teaching them how to be determined, and how to have the mindset of an athlete.”

After the kids enthusiastically clapped and expressed awe at footage of historical football plays in the film room, they were given the chance to sport team jerseys while exploring the locker room. The families then headed to the sidelines to watch a scrimmage and were surprised by Seymour d’Campus, the Golden Eagle mascot.

Afterwards, the team members huddled around the military children and presented them with USM footballs. They signed autographs and spent time talking with the kids about the importance of making good grades in school and following their hopes and dreams to be the next football star.

“I think its amazing anytime that a business or organization wants to open up for military kids to be able to (have that) experience,” Spicer said. “I think anytime you get other military kids around your kids, it helps.”

Melanie Sutterfield, youth coordinator for Family Programs at JFH, jumped at the opportunity to collaborate with Operation Teammate during the month of April, which is also the Month of the Military Child.



Micah Rogers, a military child from Hattiesburg, slaps hands with University of Southern Mississippi football players during an Operation Teammate event in Hattiesburg, April 6.

Sutterfield said this event will foster positive youth development by focusing on teamwork. She says the children will learn that having a good work ethic and attitude will help contribute to the main goal, which is a victory for the entire team.

“It offers an outcome-based activity, that supports the unique challenges that military children face,” she said. “It gives them an opportunity to bond with other kids that have military parents and build relationships.”

Family Programs is looking forward to assisting others with recognizing military kids for their sacrifice and bravery by participating in future events like Operation Teammate.

OPERATION TEAMMATE TO THE TOP!

Story and photos by Ms. Chelsy Ables
JFH Public Affairs Office

Christin Spicer and her sons were cheering for their favorite players at a spring football practice in the University of Southern Mississippi’s M.M. Roberts Stadium in Hattiesburg, April 6. The sentiment was reflected later in the day when the Golden Eagles honored the audience for their sacrifices.

The exchange of gratitude occurred as the USM football team hosted children of military parents from the Mississippi National Guard in partnership with the Operation Teammate program.

Operation Teammate is a military child focused organization that aims to provide memorable sporting experiences to help children and their families through those difficult times.

“We just went through a deployment with my husband being gone for a year to Afghanistan,” said Spicer, who

is married to Sgt. Benjamin Spicer of the Joint Force Headquarters, MSNG. “I think it’s a learning experience no matter what age [your children are] or what you’re going through.”

The parents of the 14 children participating have been deployed for a total of 345 months, equaling almost 29 years of separation.

Families like the Spicers were able to tour the training facilities with USM football coaches throughout the day.

Coach Wes Turner, director of player personnel and football operations, escorted families into the weight room, the team film-viewing room, the locker room, and the stadium.

“We just want to be able to give back to those kids,” Turner said. “We greatly appreciate their time and their service.”

While touring the weight room Todd Makovicka, assistant strength and conditioning coach, spoke on how important a resilient mindset is in overcoming challenges similar to those that military children face. One of his main



Seymour d’Campus, the Golden Eagle mascot, surprises military children at M.M. Roberts Stadium during an Operation Teammate event in Hattiesburg, April 6.



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RECONNECTING ISN'T ALWAYS AUTOMATIC

Story and photos by Ms. Danielle Thomas
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office (Gulfport Bureau)

Deployments can be a stressful experience for Mississippi National Guard families, especially children. In 2019, MSNG Family Programs launched a partnership with the American Red Cross to bring the Red Cross' Reconnection Workshops to Guard families. The events are free, confidential individual and small group discussions run by licensed mental health staff. The goal is to guide families to positive reconnection once veterans return.

Reconnection Workshops conduct separate activities for military spouses and for children. The children's workshops are: Roger That! Communication Counts, which focuses on the importance of developing quality interpersonal communication and listening skills, and Operation 10:4, which is about helping children manage stressful situations.

Why does the American Red Cross include Reconnection Workshops among its services?

Callie Bunter, American Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces Program Specialist - "The program helps families with their psychological resiliency so they have effective ways to cope during deployments and after. In the military, there is a big need for reconnection assistance after a long deployment because service members can be gone six months to a year. The family dynamic changes."

"We help families learn how to be understanding about what military members go through during deployments and how to help them integrate back into the home."

How do Reconnection Workshops help children struggling during a parent's deployment?

Kalisha Baptiste, Licensed Mental Health Counselor - "I help children by teaching them to identify and express their emotions using strategies like pictures and diagrams. The important thing is to

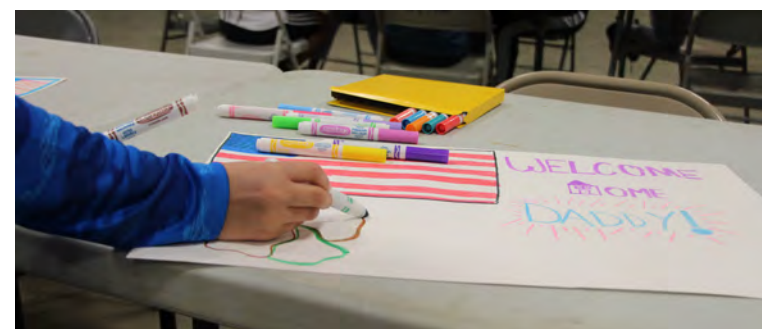
work on their level. When kids act out in school or home and it's not their normal behavior, it's usually a symptom of an underlying issue. Are they withdrawn, aggressive, or reverting to regressive behaviors based on age? Sometimes kids don't talk as much. Allow your children to do activities like writing or painting as a way to show their emotions. However, if nothing at home is working, consider seeking a licensed professional because sometimes kids will open up to us more than to their parents because they don't feel they have to worry about hurting our feelings."

What is it about Reconnection Workshop that appeals to parents?

Melissa Niemeyer, wife of Mississippi Army National guardsman Staff Sgt. Dustin Niemeyer - "I wanted my children to have an opportunity to express their feelings because I don't think they truthfully express to me everything they are feeling when I ask. So I thought they would be more comfortable to open up around kids in the same situation. I'm thankful for this program. If my got kids got one tenth of what I did, then we are all going to feel uplifted."

What can cause challenges for children once the deployed parent returns?

Kristina Frazier - Mississippi National Guard State Family Programs Manager - "The return of a parent after a long deployment can be difficult for the kids because they solely relied on one parent for a long time. There is a transition to get them to go to the returning parent when they need help. I think mental health is a big deal that at times gets brushed aside. It's important to bring in mental health experts in to talk to the families, because sometimes there is a stigma in seeking mental health help. By bringing mental health advice to the spouses and children of Mississippi Guard members who are dealing with long separations, it becomes part of an everyday conversation. We make it feel okay and normal."



#RECONNECTION
RETURNING HOME?



Historic Assignment

First Female Flight Chief



Courtesy Photo

The 172d Aircraft Maintenance Squadron's Master Sgt. Donna K. Thomsen, a native of Crystal Springs, has been selected as the first female primary crew chief for the 172d Airlift Wing's C-17 Globemaster III. Thomsen joined the Air National Guard in 1987, but after a few months, transferred into the active duty Air Force where she served 13 years before returning home to the Mississippi Air National Guard. Thomsen

worked in the 172d Maintenance Squadron's engine shop until one day Lt. Col. Wyatt Rives, 172d Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (AMXS) commander, encouraged her to pursue a career route with greater responsibility. Thomsen soon transferred from the engine shop to the flight line, becoming one of the few women currently militarily assigned to the 172d AMXS. She quickly gained respect from her peers by demonstrating dedication to the mission and proficiency in her trade.

"She immediately took a leadership role once she joined our squadron," said Rives. "Her demeanor is so reserved, but the respect shown to her from our team was immense."

Encouraged by her leadership, she applied for the primary crew chief position for the wing's C-17 "The Spirit of America's Veterans" aircraft and officially made history in December 2018 when she was selected.

"When she speaks, the dynamic of the room shifts and everyone is compelled to listen to what she has to say," said Rives.

"Becoming the primary crew chief has been my biggest military accomplishment to date," said Thomsen.



Courtesy Photo

National Prominence

McCarty Recognized by the SECDEF

Rita D. McCarty, Camp Shelby cultural resources manager, has been selected as the winner for the Cultural Resources Management category of the 2019 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards program.

Through her efforts Rita saved resources by establishing a curation facility on the installation allowing public access to all holdings. In order to save money, the Camp Shelby Cultural Resources Department decided to do all the curation in house, which resulted in saving the National Guard approximately \$5,000.

Recipients are chosen based on exceptional environmental achievements and innovative, cost-effective environmental practices. A diverse panel of 58 judges from federal and state agencies, academia and the private sector evaluated nominations from the Department of Defense components to help determine the winners.

#LEADERSHIPMS



The Mississippi National Guard is proud to celebrate the most recent Leadership Mississippi graduate, Lt. Col. Deidre D. Smith. Smith was selected by a review board in 2017 to represent the MSNG during the Leadership Mississippi Class of 2018. She was one of 55 Leadership Mississippi participants chosen by organizations and businesses throughout the state to represent their organization for enhanced leadership development in an effort to forge networking partnerships throughout the state of Mississippi.

Leadership Mississippi is developed by the Mississippi Economic Council in Jackson, and the M.B. Swayze Foundation. The leadership course has been a longstanding foundation to promote networking and economic development between businesses, communities, and the military.

Senior Ball

Meridian-based NCOs and Seniors Cut a Rug

Members of the 186th Air Refueling Wing Non-commissioned Officers Association spent their afternoon dancing with the residents of Aldersgate Retirement Community, Feb. 14. The dance was a community outreach event.



U.S. Air National Guard photos by Tech Sgt. Adam Vance



Courtesy Photo

Overseas Training

114th DLD Completes Exercise in Germany

Members of the 114th Digital Liaison Detachment, a Mississippi Army National Guard unit headquartered in Vicksburg, stand for a photo outside the Joint Multinational Simulation Center in Grafenwoehr, Germany, March 2019. The unit recently participated in Exercise Austere

Challenge 19, an annual joint exercise led by United States European Command. The training event refined, synchronized and evaluated multinational processes for rapid response to contingencies throughout Europe.

Uzbekistan's Armed Forces

MSNG State Partnership Program

Uzbekistan, Central Asia



This patch reads "Uzbekistan Armed Forces" and features the Emblem of Uzbekistan with the National flag in the background.

On the left of the circle there is a cotton plant, and to the right, wheat borders the insignia. Cotton and wheat are the two major agricultural products of the country.

It is surmounted by the star of Rub El Hizb, a symbol of Islam, which a majority of Uzbeks profess.

In the center, a right-facing khumo, a bird symbolizing happiness and love of freedom, is displayed with wings outstretched.

Enclosed by the khumo's wings is a depiction of the rising sun over mountains. Two rivers, the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, flow from the mountains and crepuscular rays emanate from the sun.

The khumo is perched on a banner at the base of the cotton and wheat borders which bears the national colors and the name of the country in Latin (O'zbekiston) script.

" All the annual events held in the framework of Mississippi National Guard State Partnership Program are very important, especially exercises and training. They contribute a lot for strengthening cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United States."

- Colonel Muzfar Rakhmatullaev, Uzbekistan Military Attache to the United States

BURNING QUESTIONS

Soldiers Gain More Control Over Their Personnel Files

Chief Warrant Officer 3
Sara Smith
SIDPERS Interface Branch Chief



What is IPPS-A?

IPPS-A is the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army. The Army realized the need for one system for Soldiers and Human Resource professionals to access in order to make changes and updates to Soldiers records. Currently, there are several systems requiring access in order to accomplish our day-to-day tasks to take care of Soldiers and their families. IPPS-A will merge multiple administrative systems to improve efficiency with operations.

Is the system currently in use?

YES! Pennsylvania was the first state to "Go Live" with IPPS-A in December 2018. Virginia just went live in March. This is real, it is happening and it is coming. There could, of course, possibly be another shift in schedule, but two states are successfully using IPPS-A and have "shut down" the use of SIDPERS!

When will we receive it?

Mississippi is tentatively scheduled to "Go Live" with IPPS-A on November 18, 2019.

I'm not in personnel so how does this affect me?

So for the standard Soldier, IPPS-A is a huge benefit for you! With IPPS-A, you can use the system from your computer or app from your cell phone or tablet to access IPPS-A. Why would you want to do this? Let's say you just got married and you want that BAH changes ASAP so you can see it reflected on your paycheck. With IPPS-A, you can submit a personnel action request, attach the document required and immediately get the process rolling! No longer do you have to wait for the S1 to scan in your documents and initiate the request. To access the app or from your home computer, you will need your DS logon username and password. Also, there are some requests that Soldiers can initiate that automatically update upon request. For example, the Soldier can immediately update his/her mailing address. Once you edit the request, there is no approval required and your address is automatically updated in the system! Soldiers will have to let their unit know of the address change so the DA 5960 can be completed in order to change the address for pay purposes, but it will automatically be updated as their Home of record/ mailing addresses.

Will training be available? When and how do I sign up?

There are various levels of user roles inside of IPPS-A. Your level of access required determines how long training for IPPS-A will be. Training is scheduled November 4-18, 2019, at Camp Shelby. If your level of access requires in-person training, you will be contacted by the G1 Automations team to schedule your training class during that period. Soldiers that are just using IPPS-A to request updates to their records can complete short distance learning and do not require in-person training.

What can I do now?

Human Resource Professionals should be examining their UMR's, examining excess over-grade Soldiers and determining where those Soldiers can be placed. The State UMR Manager, MSG Jimmy James (EPM NCOIC) will be publishing guidance in FRAGO soon to provide dates to each MSC and coordinating instructions.

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The Mississippi Armed Forces Museum teamed with Soldiers from Florence's Facility Maintenance Shop 9 to remove two German Krupp 150mm howitzers from the Mississippi State Capitol grounds and a German Krupp 77mm field gun from the Mississippi War Memorial April 11. The three artillery pieces were captured in 1918 and awarded to Mississippi in 1924 and placed on display. Weather has degraded the artifacts and they were removed for restoration. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes)

