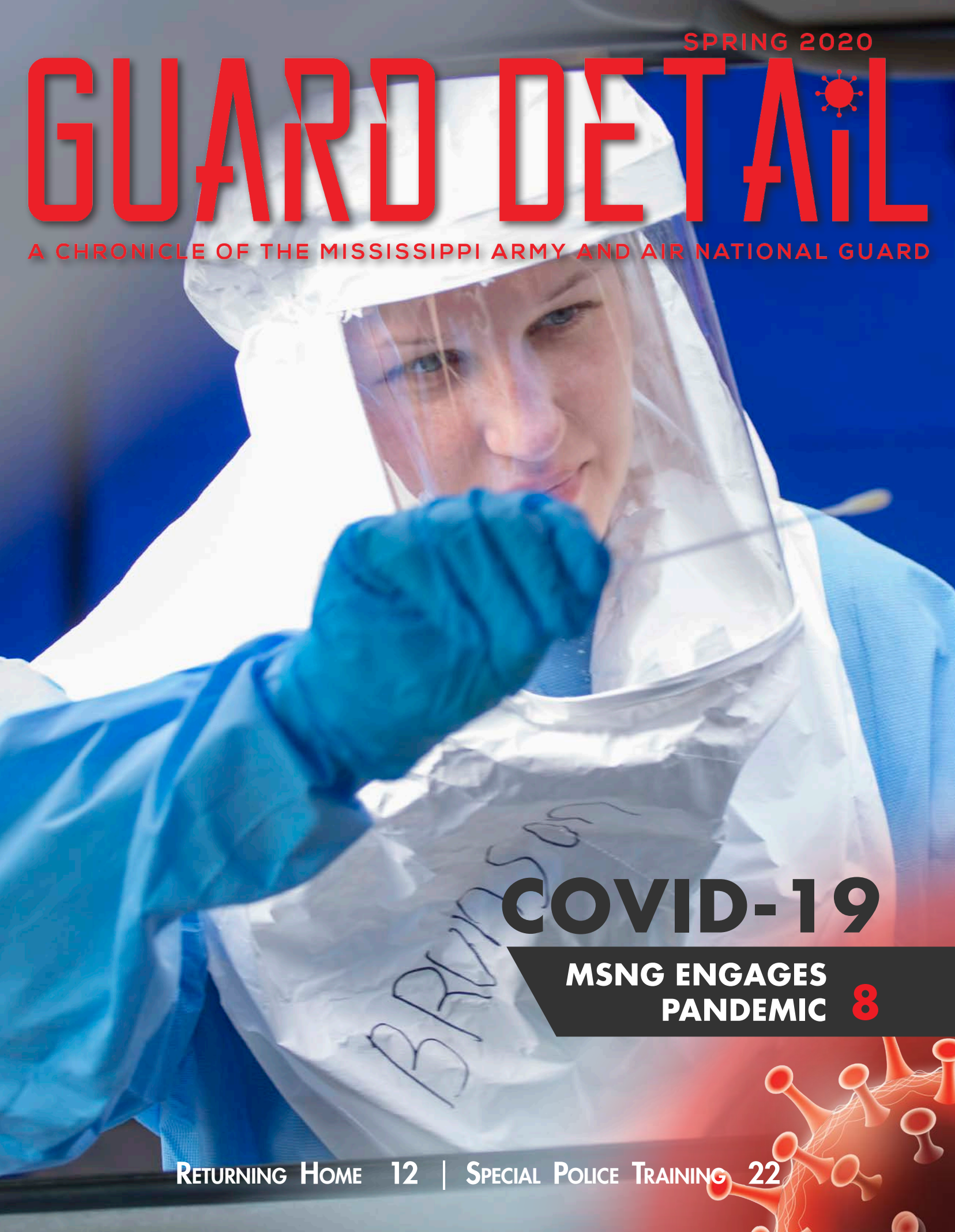


SPRING 2020

# GUARD DETAIL

A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

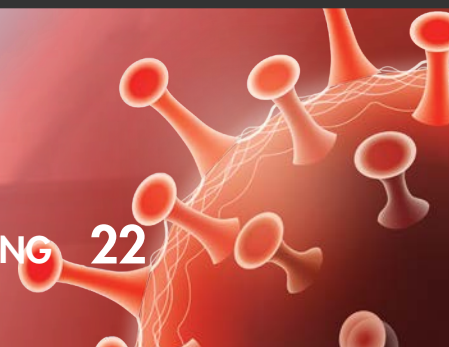


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More than 500 Mississippi Guardsmen are providing testing and screening support as well as supporting warehouse operations and logistical efforts. There are nearly 50,000 Guardsmen providing support nationwide.



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## Diversity Day

Diversity Day honors those who endured the trials of the past to make the U.S. military the diverse organization it is today.



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There is more to a Special Forces team than the operators. We "Lift the Veil" on how enablers are critical to mission success.



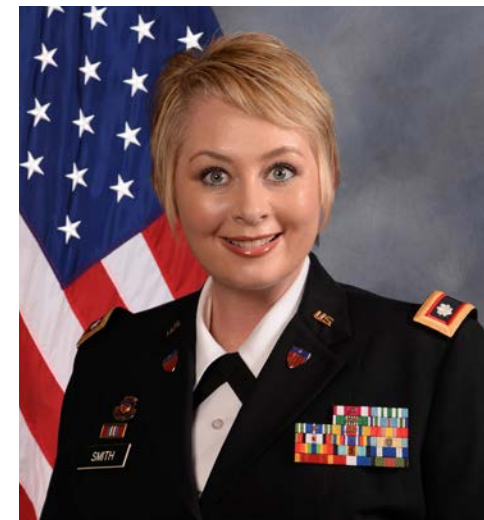
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## Strengthening Partnerships

Southern Strike 2020 engages U.S. military branches and international partners in preparing for future operations through complex operational scenarios staged throughout the state.

# Letter From THE EDITOR

## Leadership During Crisis



**"Hardships often prepare ordinary people for extraordinary destiny"**  
~ C. S. Lewis

As leaders, Soldiers, Airmen, Civilian employees and Family members, we are presented with new challenges every day. In the recent months, we have witnessed history unfold during the global pandemic of COVID-19. This new threat has stretched and tested our resiliency and resourcefulness. In addition to COVID-19, our service members, families and facilities have felt the impact of severe weather ripping through our state on multiple occasions and, in many cases, treacherous weather impacts occurring only days apart. Our resiliency and determination as leaders keeps us strong during these trying times.

The challenges facing our service members, families and communities are part of a global crisis. As of May 6, approximately 46,600 Army and Air National Guard service members begin their day supporting their state governor in response to COVID-19. Our resiliency has enabled us to adapt to a new way of doing business via telework and alternative avenues of approach to accomplish essential training and even accomplish weekend drill. To safeguard personnel, we have shifted from in-person meetings to conference calls. Technology has enabled us to continue our progress toward mission completion while ensuring a lifeline of stability for Mississippi National Guard service members and civilian employees. Our employment with the MSNG has allowed us to continue supporting our families while our friends' and neighbors'

jobs may be in jeopardy. It is amazing to be a part of something bigger and greater than oneself. The peace-of-mind to know your family is provided for allows leaders at all levels to focus on their mission and continued readiness while helping our communities throughout the state.

Our resiliency has continued to be tested as we respond to COVID-19 and damaging severe weather in various locations throughout the state. On Easter Sunday, April 12, Mississippi experienced violent storms ripping through central and south Mississippi causing 15 confirmed deaths and approximately 1,400 homes damaged or destroyed, as reported by the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.

Mother Nature continued her wrath as storms charged through central and south Mississippi yet again on Sunday, April 19. This time an EF4 tornado, confirmed by the National Weather Service, touched down near Dexter and etched a more than 54 mile-long path before dissipating northwest of New Augusta. The tornado's northeasterly path crossed Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center causing minor damage to more than 250 buildings and major damage to two. The minor damage included shingles ripped from the roofs of buildings and an awning torn down between buildings on the 1400 block. A large pine tree fell on a barracks building causing major damage and the side of a warehouse building was torn down by the violent winds, also resulting in major damage. Thankfully, no injuries were reported on Camp Shelby.

Regardless of the challenges, the Mississippi National Guard is ready and resilient. As leaders during times of crisis, I encourage you to take this time to lead by example with honor and integrity. Your actions always speak louder than your words. As we continue to navigate through an uncharted path against an invisible enemy, I encourage you to stay positive during the current changing environment of various challenges. In the words of C. S. Lewis, "Hardships often prepare ordinary people for extraordinary destiny."

Thank you Mississippi National Guard Soldiers, Airmen and Families for your devotion to duty and your continued service to our team, your communities and the great state of Mississippi.

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Editor-in Chief

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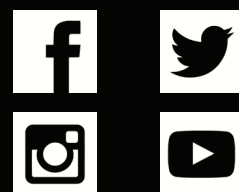
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**COVER PHOTO:** U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Morgan Brunson, an aerospace medical service specialist assigned to the 172d Airlift Wing, Mississippi Air National Guard, currently serving as a member of a COVID-19 mobile testing team, prepares to administer a COVID-19 test at the Pearl River Community Health Department in Carriere, Miss., Apr. 4. The Mississippi National Guard is supporting the Mississippi State Department of Health at testing sites throughout the state as part of Mississippi's COVID-19 State Task Force. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Jovi Prevot)

# SNAPSHOTS



Master Sgt. Nikki Rawson, a boom operator assigned to the 186th Air Refueling Wing, waves goodbye to the pilot of an A-10 Thunderbolt II as she completes a successful air-to-air refueling mission over Camp Shelby, Miss., Feb. 3, during Southern Strike 2020. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Capt. Dusty Culpepper)



Scan the QR code to view Southern Strike 2020.





## Lieutenant Colonel Laura L. Odom

It is my honor to serve as the Mississippi Air National Guard Director of Staff. I have worked many years to attain this position, and I consider having been selected my greatest privilege.

After being raised in Maryland, I attended college in North Carolina intending to apply to medical school when I graduated. After four years of higher education, I realized I needed to do something different and made the best decision of my life—I went to an Air Force recruiter. I truly believe military service is a calling for many of us, so it was not hard to take the step that would shape my life for the next 23 years.

I earned my commission through Officer Training School and followed on to Air Battle Manager school at Tyndall Air Force Base. After nine months, I took my first assignment as an Airborne Weapons Officer on the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) aircraft at Robins AFB, Georgia. After four years of active duty and several short deployments, I went across the runway and joined the 116th Bomb Wing of the Georgia Air National Guard as a Command Post Officer. Just after 9-11, the Bomb Wing re-missioned to the JSTARS aircraft, so I went back to flying for four more years.

When my husband's job moved us to Mississippi, I pursued a position in the MSANG—but it was not easy! After a time, and a lot of persistence, I was finally assigned as a Logistics Readiness Officer, then to Logistics Readiness Squadron Commander and finally 172d Airlift Wing Chief of Staff.

I write this introduction in the midst of Women's History Month. As the first female MSANG Director of Staff, I understand the contributions of the many women who have come before me. In fact, America has just lost a woman I consider spectacular - Mrs. Katherine Goble Johnson.

Many of you may know her from the popular film "Hidden Figures." Mrs. Johnson was part of a pioneering group of African American women employed by National Aeronautics and Space Administration as mathematicians during the onset of the United States space program. As she made her many contributions to the space program, she also validated the merits of diversity in the workplace, a feature I consider critical to maximum productivity and innovation.

Although many often define diversity in terms of skin color, ethnicity, culture, or birthplace, I feel these characteristics lead to the most crucial diversity trait—diversity of thought. In order to have the most creative, the most innovative, the most resourceful workplace, we must have Airmen who think differently from one another, enabling them to examine a problem from all different angles. Only then will we achieve the best, most rewarding solution.

We must strive to build teams of individuals from different places, with different backgrounds and different life experiences. I believe the more an organization embraces this paradigm, the more successful it will be.

Today, there are women being lauded for earning their Ranger tab, flying in aerial demonstration teams, leading combatant commands, and completing Navy Sea, Air, and Land Team training. However, behind the scenes are the roughly 200,000 women of the United States military who make amazing (although less public) contributions to the country's full-spectrum readiness simply by offering a different frame of reference to the many problem sets presented to the U.S. Military.

Lt. Col.  
Laura L. Odom  
Director of Staff  
Mississippi National Guard

# CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



As this is being written, America is sheltering-in-place due to COVID-19. We are learning to live with less activity and live with each other more. The positive side is families are spending more time together. They are enjoying each other's company and getting to know one another again. We have, for the first time in a long time, slowed down.

We are taking time to talk and visit. We are resting more while getting more home projects completed. These are the good things coming out of our time together, but a cloud with a silver lining is still a cloud. Some are struggling financially, while others struggle with the fear of catching the virus or what will happen next. Some may have started to have too much time with each other! Regardless, for everyone, these are different days that are certainly testing our resilience.

Thankfully we don't have to carry the load by ourselves. We can reach out to our faith group, local minister or chaplain. Military and Family Life Counselors and Army One Source are still functioning. We can use technology to tie into our own support group, whether it be fishing/hunting partners, motorcycle riding buddies or that group of friends you normally hang out with.

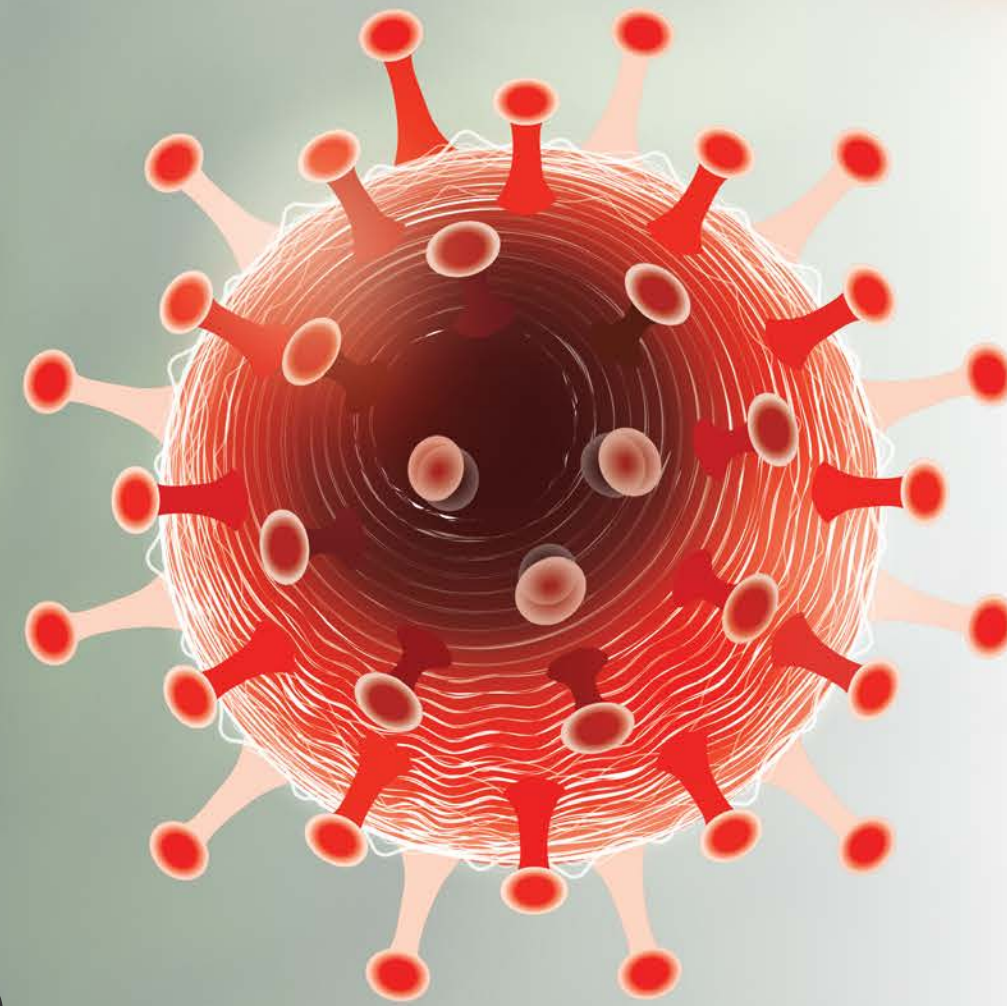
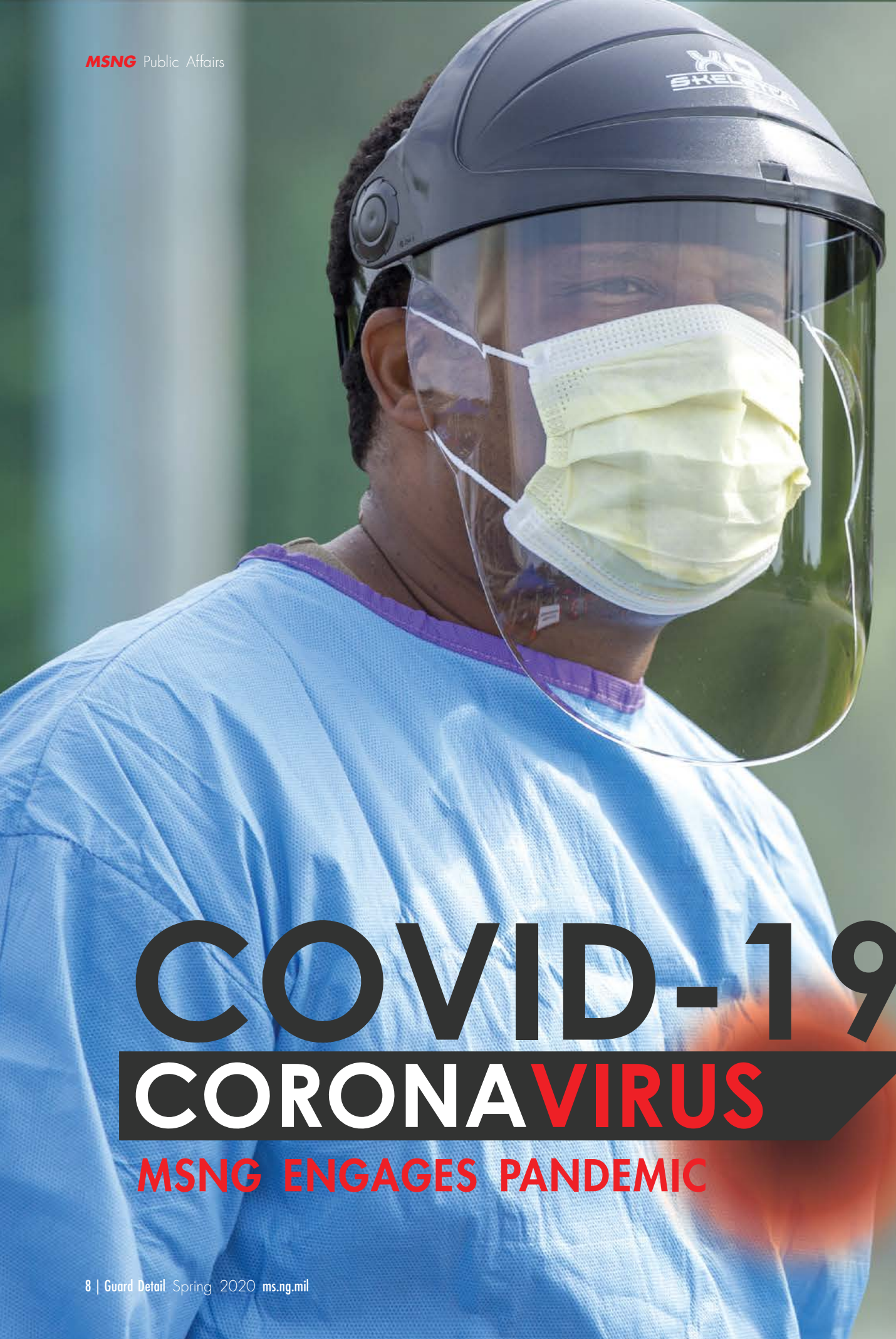
Whatever you do, don't just sit there. Do something to strengthen your resolve to overcome. Get outside. Do something for someone else. An easy way to connect is to make a phone call. Find someone who cannot or may not be able to get out due to the risk of exposure, and pick up their groceries for them. See what they need. Drop a loaf of bread at their door. Bring them a takeout meal. Do something for someone during this time.

Also, stop and be thankful. As much as we "may not have" and "may not be able to do things," we can be thankful and focus on what we do have. We can be thankful for those first-responders, medical personnel and fellow service members who are filling in the gaps.

Finally, take a moment to pray. Pray for your fellow Guardsmen who are fighting on the front lines against this virus. Lift up those who you know are serving, your family, those in leadership and even lift up yourself. Take this time to strengthen your spiritual resilience even as you strengthen your physical and emotional resilience. Take this time to renew yourself.

Chaplain (Col.) Terry Partin  
MSG State Chaplain





# COVID-19

## CORONAVIRUS

### MSNG ENGAGES PANDEMIC

# MSNG ENGAGES PANDEMIC

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

In the unprecedented pandemic of COVID-19, the Mississippi National Guard has displayed versatility in conducting operations with the state's COVID-19 Task Force; all while adapting normal tasks following federal and state guidelines to mitigate the spread of the disease.

As of May 6, more than 46,600 Air and Army National Guard professionals nationwide have been called up to active duty to provide support against the invisible enemy, including more than 500 in Mississippi.

Mississippi Guardsmen are providing testing and screening support as well as supporting warehouse operations and logistical efforts to distribute life-saving medical equipment and critical supplies.

MSNG is also serving in areas of JAG support, Chaplain assistance, and Public Affairs coverage as our formation and state responds to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Testing and screening sites are conducted throughout the state in partnership with the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) in cities from Natchez to Tupelo, Southaven to Gulfport and everywhere in between.

"We're trying to increase the availability of the testing throughout Mississippi," said Alisa Williams, a strike team leader with MSDH. "Mississippi is still a very rural state. We're going to different areas to increase availability of the test."

"Ultimately, our responsibility is to come in and assist the Mississippi Department of Health with setting up and operating a mobile testing site," said Air Force Maj. Kyle L. Waller, 172d Airlift Wing, serving as

the officer in charge of a COVID-19 mobile testing team. “We follow their lead on this project. They provide all the equipment and our team of 20 comes in and sets it up and runs the test site. We guide the cars in, make sure they are registered and we are actually administering the tests.”

The dynamic situation caused by COVID-19 has the MSNG adapting to a new operational tempo while prioritizing safety for Guardsmen, civilian employees, family members and the surrounding communities.

“And that is what we are here to do, to support our communities,” said Waller. “We have families that live in these communities. We care about these communities and that is why we are here supporting what the health department is doing – we are trying to do our part in taking care of our families, our neighbors and our friends.”

Many of those working the testing and screening sites are grateful for the opportunity to help.

“This is my tenth deployment, but I actually volunteered for this,” said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Kevin Hopson, a 172d aerospace medical service specialist. “I wanted to be able to protect my family, let them know what is going on. This deployment is different for me because the people I am dealing with have the same accent as me. They are people that may know me, or may know someone I know.”

Response to the pandemic reaches further than simply providing direct support to the communities they serve. As Citizen Soldiers, Guardsmen are also affected by the ripple effects of the spread of the virus and the mitigating measures taken to counter it.

In order to help counter COVID-19, the MSNG partnered with Rep. Trent Kelly, the Mississippi State University Extension



Top: U.S. Army Master Sgt. Dennis Page, a warehouse distribution noncommissioned officer in charge assigned to the 184th Sustainment Command, speaks with Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, on points of distribution (PODs) operations for supplies across the state at a warehouse near Jackson, Miss., March 23. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Victoria Miller)

Middle: U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Qadry Burrage, of the 186th Air Refueling Wing based in Meridian, Miss., helps fellow medical technician Staff Sgt. Jade McDonald adjust her personal protective equipment at a COVID-19 mobile testing site in Moss Point, Miss., Apr. 4. (U.S. National Guard photo by A. Danielle Thomas)

Bottom: Soldiers with the 298th Support Battalion, Mississippi Army National Guard, palletize vital supplies at a warehouse in Jackson, Miss., to transport to a Mississippi Emergency Management Agency point of distribution site April 29. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Christopher Shannon)



Service, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation and the Mississippi Veterans Affairs Association to provide job opportunities. Through the creation of the Mississippi Farm and Ranch Mission (FARM) Corps, service members, Veterans and their Families furloughed by civilian employers are matched with the agricultural entrepreneurs of the state who need assistance with harvesting their crops.

However, reaction to the virus doesn't stop the military wheels from continuing to roll. In the midst of pandemic response, normal operations must continue.

Even while under Gov. Tate Reeves' stay-at-home order, service members of the MSNG have to continue training to maintain combat readiness. This found many conducting their March, April and May drill weekends while sheltered-in-place at home. This is the first time the Mississippi Guardsmen have conducted drill from their homes.

Maintaining the readiness of the entire organization is a tall task - there are yearly physical requirements, marksmanship requirements and annual briefing requirements that must be met by all service members. Annual briefings may not seem like something that can affect readiness, but these briefings cover a myriad of topics from resiliency to health care for service members and their families.

“This provided a twofold benefit,” said Col. Bobby M. Ginn, Camp Shelby post commander. “One, it allowed us to help prevent the spread of COVID 19 by

not having large numbers of personnel in formations, classrooms, etc. It also allowed Soldiers much needed time to take online educational and professional development courses.”

Additionally, access to workplaces for those required is limited, and necessary visitors and all people entering the facilities are screened and their temperatures are taken. Work areas are sanitized several times a day and all personnel are required to wear masks.

**“I am excited to be helping my community out here, trying to help others that are sick or trying to find out if they are sick. It gives me a sense of pride to do what I joined the Guard to do.”**

**- Spc. Timothy Reynolds, Combat Medic  
1st Squadron, 98th Cavalry Regiment  
155th Armored Brigade Combat Team**



Soldiers of the 1st Squadron, 98th Cavalry Regiment, assist operations at a Food Distribution Center at the Pontotoc Agri-Center in Pontotoc, Miss., April 22. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Jovi Prevot)

# BRINGING THEM HOME



Story by 2nd Lt. Kiara Spann  
172d Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Imagine getting the ride of your life. U.S. citizens seeking to return home amid the Coronavirus pandemic got just that when a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III, assigned to the 172d Airlift Wing, brought them back home.

Ninety U.S. citizens, who were previously unable to return home from South America, were transported to Duke Field, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., April 1 and 2.

The mission was part of an ongoing interagency effort led by the U.S. State Department to assist American citizens unable to return home from countries around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This has been a difficult time for the entire world,” said Maj. Jimmy Balcom, a pilot assigned to the 183d Airlift Squadron. “Our crew was able to provide a crucial service which directly impacted not only our

passengers but all of the family members that were waiting for their return.”

The aircrew of six had only a few days to prepare for their mission. “We didn’t know the locations until the morning of departure,” said Balcom. “Even then, locations changed as the mission progressed.”

Amid the crisis, the aircrews took extra precautions to prepare for their trip, such as packing extra water and food.

The mission spanned the course of two days. On the first day, 48 American citizens were transported from Bogota, Columbia. On the second day, 42 were transported from Panama.

“Every one of the citizens was grateful to have a ride,” said Balcom. “The entire crew felt that if anyone was going to support this mission, we wanted it to be us.”

These missions are just another way the 172d Airlift Wing accomplishes its vision “to be the most responsive, resourceful and respected airlift wing in the nation” and is referred to as “The Wings of the Deep South.”

Once the citizens deplaned, they were screened and bused to a local hotel to begin the rest of their journey.

The Mississippi National Guard is working alongside the Centers for Disease Control, the Mississippi Coronavirus State Task Force and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency in response to COVID-19. We remain committed to the health and safety of our men and women in uniform, their families and the communities in which we serve.

Top: Capt. Michael Viator (left) and 1st Lt. Travis Pollet, pilots assigned to the 183d Airlift Squadron, look over plans in the cockpit of a C-17 Globemaster III, April 1. The aircrew was a part of a U.S. Southern Command mission transporting 90 U.S. citizens from South America to the United States. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Maj. Jimmy Balcom)

Bottom: A member of the United States Embassy briefs U.S. citizens returning to the United States from South America on board a C-17 Globemaster III assigned to the 172d Airlift Wing, April 1. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Maj. Jimmy Balcom)



Lt. Col. Freddie Robinson, A3 operations planning team, 186th Air Operations Group, studies handover documents early into his shift at Key Field Air National Guard Base, Miss., April 4. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Capt. Dusty Culpepper)

## 186th Air Operations Group

### Provides COVID-19 Support to AFNORTH

Story and photo by Capt. Dusty Culpepper  
186th AOG Public Affairs

More than 40 Airmen from the 186th Air Operations Group (AOG) in Meridian, Miss., have been tasked by Air Forces Northern (AFNORTH), in support of USNORTHCOM, to assist in the DoD’s response to the COVID-19 threat.

The AOG members are running distributed operations from the operations center at Key Field. Other AOG Airmen are at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, functioning as a Joint Air Component Coordination Element (JACCE) team and as liaison officers (LNO) assigned to U.S. Army North (ARNORTH) while supporting the lead federal agencies. The AOG members were officially asked to support AFNORTH’s Crisis Action Team (CAT) at the end of March, but had already been supporting the 186th Air Refueling Wing with CAT actions. The AOG transitioned to support distributed operations once the request came from AFNORTH.

Col. Lauralee Barnes, commander of the 186th Air Component Communications Squadron, says the AOG personnel manning the CAT are working to achieve seamless transitions of the shared duties from AFNORTH personnel.

Force protection is a top priority and the AOG members are doing everything they can to stay healthy and minimize the spread of COVID-19, while supporting AFNORTH and U.S. NORTHCOM’s COVID-19 response efforts.

“We are following all DoD, CDC, federal, state and local guidelines,” Barnes said. “We all do a health assessment

that includes taking all crew members’ temperature each day prior to the start of their shifts, as well as wearing protective face coverings when working within six feet of each other.”

Barnes also said that AOG members have dedicated workstations more than 10 feet apart and are vigilant in disinfecting common areas and equipment before, during and after shifts.

When Hurricane Michael struck Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., in 2018, AFNORTH was able to run defense support of civil authorities operations almost exclusively from Key Field.

“Rooted in a long-standing partnership, the 186th has been steadfast in the past and are enabling our successful operations now,” said Lt. Gen. Marc Sasseville, CONR-1AF (AFNORTH) commander. “This is the ‘always ready, always there’ spirit of the Guard that our communities should be proud of.”

Col. Billy Murphy, vice-commander of the 186th AOG, said the most current need from AFNORTH for COVID-19 response is for operations and logistics support.

“We’ve got operations team members doing future operations planning and future operations tracking as well as logistics personnel working supply chain issues for both civilian medical teams and FEMA,” Murphy said.

The augmentation that the AOG provides allows AFNORTH to run 24-hour operations, supplying critical information to the AFNORTH commander to support relief efforts and the CONR-1AF’s no-fail homeland defense mission.

“We will be here as long as needed,” Murphy said.



# CRTC DIVERSITY DAY HONORS GULFPORT VETERAN

Bottom: Chief Master Sgt. Jasper Edwards, left, Master Sgt. Crystal Morgan, both of the Combat Readiness Training Center, along with Master Sgt. Demetrius Baldwin of the 209th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron, present a token of gratitude to Marine Cpl. David Potts. The 95-year-old WWII Veteran from Gulfport served as guest speaker during a Diversity Day program hosted by the Mississippi Air National Guard Jan. 11. (U.S. National Guard photo by A. Danielle Thomas)

Story and photos by A. Danielle Thomas  
CRTC Public Affairs

Marine Cpl. David Potts addressed Mississippi Air National Guardsmen during the CRTC's Diversity Day program themed "Black Americans in the Military: Then and Now." The 95-year-old World War II Veteran shared his story of being subjected to racism and harsh living conditions as part of the first group of African Americans in the United States Marine Corps.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, allowing African American men to join the military. The Marines started recruiting in 1942 and Potts was drafted the following year. After being denied entry into the Army, since his brother was already serving, Potts chose the Marines.

Enlistees weren't allowed to go through boot camp on Parris Island, S.C. or Camp Pendleton, Calif., at the time. Instead, the Marine Corps created a boot camp on the grounds of Camp Lejeune, N.C. called Camp Montford Point. The men who trained there came to be known as the Montford Point Marines.

Potts describes the living conditions as "unfit" with dilapidated, overcrowded buildings. He once waited for hours outside the mess hall for a meal, just to be denied entry because of his race.

Racial discrimination also caused hardships during military transport. Montford Point Marines traveling by train were limited to designated sections and not allowed in the dining areas. During one layover in New Orleans, they had to stay outdoors all day while their white counterparts went to the USO.

Potts feels he has an obligation to share his experiences with younger generations of service members.

"It feels great to be invited to speak. I'm 95, but I've got a good story," said Potts. "My story could help someone who is in the military now, because young people don't know what we went through in this country. My story will help them understand. They think things have always been the way they are now, but someone had to pay a price."

Col. Berry McCormick, CRTC commander, spoke about how guardsmen from different backgrounds benefit and strengthen the Mississippi National Guard.

"We are smarter through diversity because it helps us see the world through a different lens," said McCormick. "To make informed decisions, we need diversity. Diversity makes us smarter."

Potts is delighted at the military's evolution into a force that is more diverse and offers more advancement opportunities to minorities than during his tenure. He says Montford Point Marines drew strength and support from one another. They felt determined to persevere through all obstacles because they were not only proving themselves capable as Marines, but opening a door for future generations of black Americans wanting to serve.

"It's not the way it should be, but it's way better than it was," said Potts. "I went through a lot of struggles in this country, but I say America is still the best country to be living in."

Montford Point trained more than 20,000 Marines before deactivating in 1949 after President Truman signed Executive Order 9981 requiring the desegregation of the military.

*Editor's Note: The CRTC Diversity Day was held in January 2020. The guest speaker, Cpl. David Potts, Sr., passed away April 8, 2020 prior to the publication of this article. The courage and sacrifice of Potts and other Montford Point Marines will not be forgotten.*



From left: Command Chief Master Sgt. Scottie Cole, State Command Chief Master Sgt. Lynn R. Cole and Master Sgt. T.J. Rushing continue a family legacy of service to state and nation as members of the Mississippi Air National Guard. (U.S. National Guard photo by Amanda Kibble)

# T.G.I.F. The Guard is Family

Story and photo by Amanda Kibble  
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

In many circumstances, the military community is considered family. In the Mississippi National Guard, the guard is family. That legacy of service is seen throughout our formation and this family sets the standard of excellence as they continue their tradition of service.

The Rushing-Cole family legacy and the promise of a rewarding career motivated them to join the Mississippi Air National Guard. A combined total of 94 years of distinguished military service is divided among a husband, a wife and a brother. Command Chief Master Sgt. Scottie Cole is married to the State Command Chief Master Sgt. Lynn R. Cole. Master Sgt. T.J. Rushing is Lynn Cole's brother.

"I joined on June 2, 1980," Scottie Cole said. "I've been full time for 37 years. It's a family type of feel that we have at the 172d that's kept me there for so long."

Family ties helped Scottie Cole maneuver through the obstacles of nearly four decades of service, but it was his family's legacy of service that encouraged his decision to join the military. "My dad and seven uncles were all in the military during WWII," said Scottie Cole. "My cousins were in Vietnam."

His wife, the state command chief master sergeant, made her decision to join the guard at the age of 14. She had friends who joined the 186th Air Refueling Wing in Meridian.

"I decided then that's what I wanted to do so as soon as I came of age," said Lynn Cole. "I told mom and dad to get in the car, took them to the 186th and told them to sign the papers. Because I was only 17 at the time, I had to have their signature." She took her Oath of Enlistment on Feb. 9, 1985. She has served for over 35 years.

Her brother, Master Sgt. T.J. Rushing, joined on March 3, 2000, recently passing the 20-year benchmark.

"It's always been something on my mind to serve," he said. "It's just the camaraderie. It's a lot of good friends and a lot of good memories. That's pretty much why we stay. Not only to serve the country, but the family atmosphere that we have."

The three senior enlisted Airmen agree that having each other's support during deployments or during career transitions has helped them tremendously in both their professional and personal lives.

Scottie Cole explained that the navigation of military service was easier since he could learn the tricks of the trade from his family.

"It's been easier learning to lean on one another. Especially with family issues that arise during deployments," said Scottie, citing a deployment when T.J.'s wife gave birth to their son while T.J. was deployed.

"We're just family. You just help each other out. You just do what needs to be done," Lynn Cole said.

"It helps a lot when you have a family member who can call another family member that is in the military for questions for things that are going on. That makes a big difference, having family with a military background," said T.J.

"Do the best that you can possibly do. It lays the foundation for the rest of your life," said Scottie Cole.

This family is an example of resiliency and encouragement as they support each other during the demands and successes of military service in the MSANG. They continue to honor their family's military legacy and encourage others serving to strive for excellence through honorable service.



# THE MYSTERY OF SPECIAL FORCES,



Story by Col. Sean Klahn  
Deputy Commander, 66th Troop Command

The mystique surrounding Special Forces (SF) is often misunderstood by those outside of the organization. Some myths of a Special Forces Battalion (BN): It's an organization filled with covert spies like Jason Bourne; every Soldier is a MMA fighter like Randy Couture; it is an organization filled with Cowboys; and SF BNs only perform secret operations no one can know about. In fact, SF Soldiers choose their professional career path because they want more physical, mental and operationally challenging opportunities not found elsewhere in the Army. The journey to accomplishing those goals can be attained by both traditional-MOS enablers and prospective Green Berets. This article will lift the veil of secrecy around who can join SF units, training requirements, mission sets and opportunities to serve.

Traditional Military Occupation Specialties (MOS); 12, 25, 29, 35, 42, 56, 65, 68, 74, 88, 91, 92, and 94 series jobs, help SF Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) teams execute one of several SOF core missions when deployed. If a Soldier wants to join SF, they do not have to be a Green Beret, but to be an enabler, they must be airborne qualified or able to become airborne qualified, obtain a secret security clearance and meet Army airborne standards. Enablers train, deploy and execute missions at the tactical and operational level in support of 1st Special Forces Command's strategic objectives. An enabler package deploys and trains with an ODA team and the SF Advanced Operational Bravo (AOB) team – a company level unit. Each SF Battalion in the National Guard has a Battalion Support Company and a Forward Support Company. These enablers are totally integrated into the teams and deploy all over the world with ODA's, helping to support and accomplish the mission.

The minimum training requirements for the enabler MOS's are Basic and Advanced

Individual Training, Airborne School and any necessary Professional Military Education (PME). Once assigned to a unit, Soldiers must maintain at least 70% on the APFT, remain Airborne Qualified and duty MOS (DMOS) qualified. There are many training opportunities available for Soldiers, including advanced parachuting courses, Ranger school, mountain warfare school, etc. All this training increases survivability, lethality, and MOS proficiency of SF Regimental Soldiers for worldwide deployments unseen by traditional Army forces.

Soldiers wanting to become a Green Beret will need to attend a BN Special Forces Readiness Evaluation (SFRE); these are normally 10 days in length and conducted twice annually. The Soldier does not transfer to the SF BN until they have passed the Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) Course at Ft Bragg, NC. Upon completion of SFAS, the Soldier is transferred to the SF BN, placed in a BN billet, and given optional dates to attend the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) at Ft Bragg, NC. Additionally, Soldiers pursuing the 18 Series MOS are eligible for a \$20,000 bonus, with a six year

Special Forces Soldiers conduct medical training and evaluation to maintain skills and proficiency. (Courtesy photo)



Combined exercise with Special Forces Soldiers and enablers on a target take down. (Courtesy photo)



Special Forces Soldiers training at the range in preparation for a mission. (Courtesy photo)



enlistment, upon completion of SFQC.

The path to becoming a Green Beret includes: SFRE, SFAS, Airborne School, SFQC, Survival Evasion Resistance Escape (SERE) course, language school, and the Military Freefall (MFF) course. The SFQC is 95 weeks long for the Special Forces Medic (18D), and 53 weeks long for the Officer, Weapons, Engineer, and Communication Sergeants (18A, 18B, 18C, 18E). This time line includes the MOS, SERE, Language, and MFF courses. The common core requirements at the SFQC are: shoot, move, communicate, weapons familiarization, field craft, MOS cross training, patrolling, air operations and emergency close air support training. This training is the beginning of a career spent learning and teaching. Depending on the ODA specialty skills, a Green Beret can expect to attend SCUBA, mountaineering, or other advanced training requirements necessary to meet Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) ongoing and emerging mission requirements.

As a Green Beret, you will be expected to teach, train, lead and advise host nation forces, work in the joint interagency intergovernmental and multinational (JIIM) environment and become an expert planner using the troop leading procedures (TLP) and the military decision making process (MDMP). The charge of the Green Beret is applying these crafts, training and expertise to accomplish missions having operational and strategic impacts.

The Green Beret is a Soldier that has chosen a career path encompassing different training requirements, cognitive aptitude and a desire to give above and beyond what is asked of them. There are men and women in SF, and if you think it is a career path you want to pursue, whether as an enabler or Green Beret, you need to pursue this endeavor. Contact the SF BN full time staff and they will assist you with any questions you may have. We would like to talk to any Soldier that is interested in being a part of this outstanding organization and team, and we can help you through the process.



# SPECIAL FORCES TO GREEN BERET:

# Uncovered



The mystique surrounding U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) is often misunderstood by those outside of the organization. The SF Soldier chooses their professional career path because they want more physical, mental and operationally challenging opportunities not found elsewhere in the Army. In order to be in a SF battalion (BN), the Soldier must first be an "enabler" - someone who will train, deploy and execute missions with a SF battalion in support of the 1st Special Forces Command's strategic objectives.

## SF ENABLERS

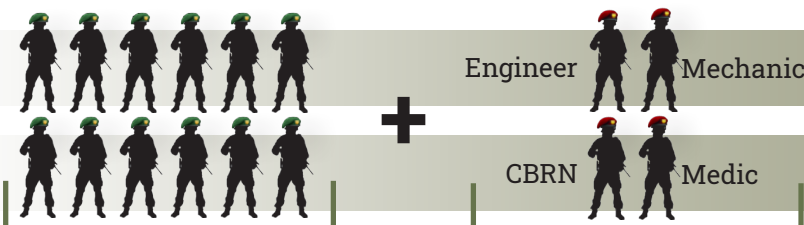
- 12 - Construction & Engineering
- 25 - Signal
- 29 - Electronic Warfare
- 35 - Intelligence
- 42 - Human Resources
- 56 - Chaplain Assistant
- 65 - Medical Officer
- 68 - Medical
- 74 - CBRN
- 88 - Transportation
- 91 - Mechanical Maintenance
- 92 - Logistics
- 94 - Electronic & Missile Maintenance

These MOSs support SF Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA), or "Green Berets," teams in executing one of several SOF core missions when deployed.

## REQUIREMENTS:

- ✓ Graduate Basic & AIT
- ✓ Maintain or Obtain Security Clearance
- ✓ Professional Military Education
- ✓ Be or Become Airborne Qualified
- ✓ 70% on the APFT

The members of a SF BN are varied, and the Enablers are a necessary element in ensuring full unit readiness. All Airborne and MOS qualified, their skills are put to use as often as the Green Berets they support.



SF Operational Detachment Alpha

"Enablers" / SF Unit Members

## Transitioning to a Green Beret

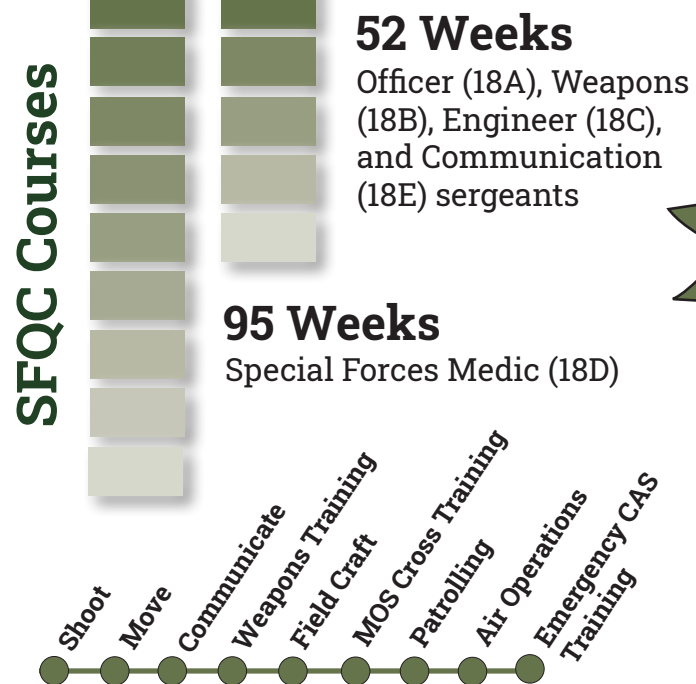
Soldiers wanting to become a Green Beret will need to attend a BN Special Forces Readiness Evaluation (SFRE). These are normally 10 days in length and conducted twice annually in the state with the attending Soldier's unit authorizing the Soldier to split train. The Soldier does not formally transfer to the SF BN until they have passed the Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) Course at Ft Bragg, NC. Attending SFAS only occurs when the Soldier passes the BN SFRE and the SF cadre load the Soldier into Army Training Requirements and Resourcing (ATRRS) system for an upcoming SFAS course. Upon completion of SFAS, the Soldier is transferred to the SF BN, placed in a BN billet and given optional dates to attend the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) at Ft Bragg, N.C.

Soldiers pursuing the 18 series MOS are eligible for a \$20,000 bonus with a six year enlistment upon completion of the SFQC.

*Did you know?*

- SFRE
- SFAS
- Airborne School
- SFQ Course
- SERE Course
- Language School
- Military Freefall Course

## SFQC Courses



## Future Opportunities for Battalion SF Soldiers



As a Green Beret, you will be expected to teach, train, lead and advise host nation forces, work in the joint interagency intergovernmental and multinational environment and become an expert planner using the troop leading procedures and the military decision making process.



# "DE OPPRESSO LIBER" - TO FREE THE OPPRESSED

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# Mississippi Stands Ready

## for Natural Disaster After Exercise

Airmen with the 123d Contingency Response Group, Kentucky Air National Guard, sling load a HMMWV to a CH-47 Chinook during Patriot South 2020 at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Miss., March 2. When roads are impassable in disasters, sling loading equipment allows rapid response by transporting vehicles by air to the impacted area. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. DeUndra Brown)

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

It's been almost 15 years since Hurricane Katrina ripped through Mississippi with high winds and lashing sheets of rain causing billions of dollars in structural damage and impossible-to-calculate emotional costs. Those memories drove the Soldiers and Airmen of Joint Task Force Trident, most of whom weathered the storm, during Patriot South 2020 Feb. 28 to March 6.

Patriot South is a Domestic Operations disaster-response training exercise conducted by National Guard units working with federal, state and local emergency management agencies and first responders.

The scenario for the fourth Patriot South exercise held in Mississippi was a simulated Category 4 hurricane, named Amber, making landfall near Gulfport and devastating the state's coastal region with colossal damage as it passed north through the state as a tropical storm. Most of the training sites were in Mississippi, but also

conducted at sites in Georgia and Tennessee.

The mission of JTF Trident, led by the Mississippi National Guard's 66th Troop Command, is to conduct mission command of National Guard units conducting security operations; assisting in search and rescue missions; hospital evacuation; removing debris from lines of communication; hazardous material identification and removal; providing communications support; conducting commodity distribution; and conducting other Defense Support to Civil Authority operations.

"Patriot South is a great joint training opportunity that allows not only Mississippi Army and Air Guardsmen to train together, but we also have an opportunity to train with Guardsmen from other states as we prepare for hurricane season," said Brig. Gen. Stan Budraitis, commander of JTF Trident and 66th TC. "It's also a phenomenal opportunity for us to work with our civilian partners from the federal, state and local levels."

Approximately 700 National Guard members from nearly 20 states participated alongside first

responders and emergency partners from the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team, Team Rubicon, Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks Emergency Response Team, and many others.

"We start planning early – a year in advance typically," said Lt. Col. Joy Alexander, chief of staff of 66th TC. "We start putting together the [Standard Operating Procedures] based on what we've done previously, putting the staff together and rehearsing battle drills. Those who have not actually attended the [Joint Operations Center] training course, which is usually about half to a third of our people, will come attend the course and integrate with those who are experienced from previous exercises, such as Ardent Sentry or previous Patriot South exercises. They can share those experiences with the newly trained staff on JOC procedures and processes as the exercise is going on."

Task force elements were also able to take advantage of the unique training opportunities provided by the Guardian Centers of Perry, Ga. The Perry campus can create realistic disaster landscapes, including a severely damaged and flooded city, complete with wrecked vehicles and structures for rescuers to conduct search and rescue, aquatic and dry roof rescue and other emergency missions.

"The training that we are able to accomplish here ... we can replicate pretty much every scenario that we will run through whether we're talking a flood, extracting off of rooftops, or isolated personnel. It allows us to consolidate all those training events to one single, solitary training environment," said Maj. Chris Foley, commander of Co. C, 2nd Battalion, 151st Aviation Brigade, Louisiana Army National Guard.

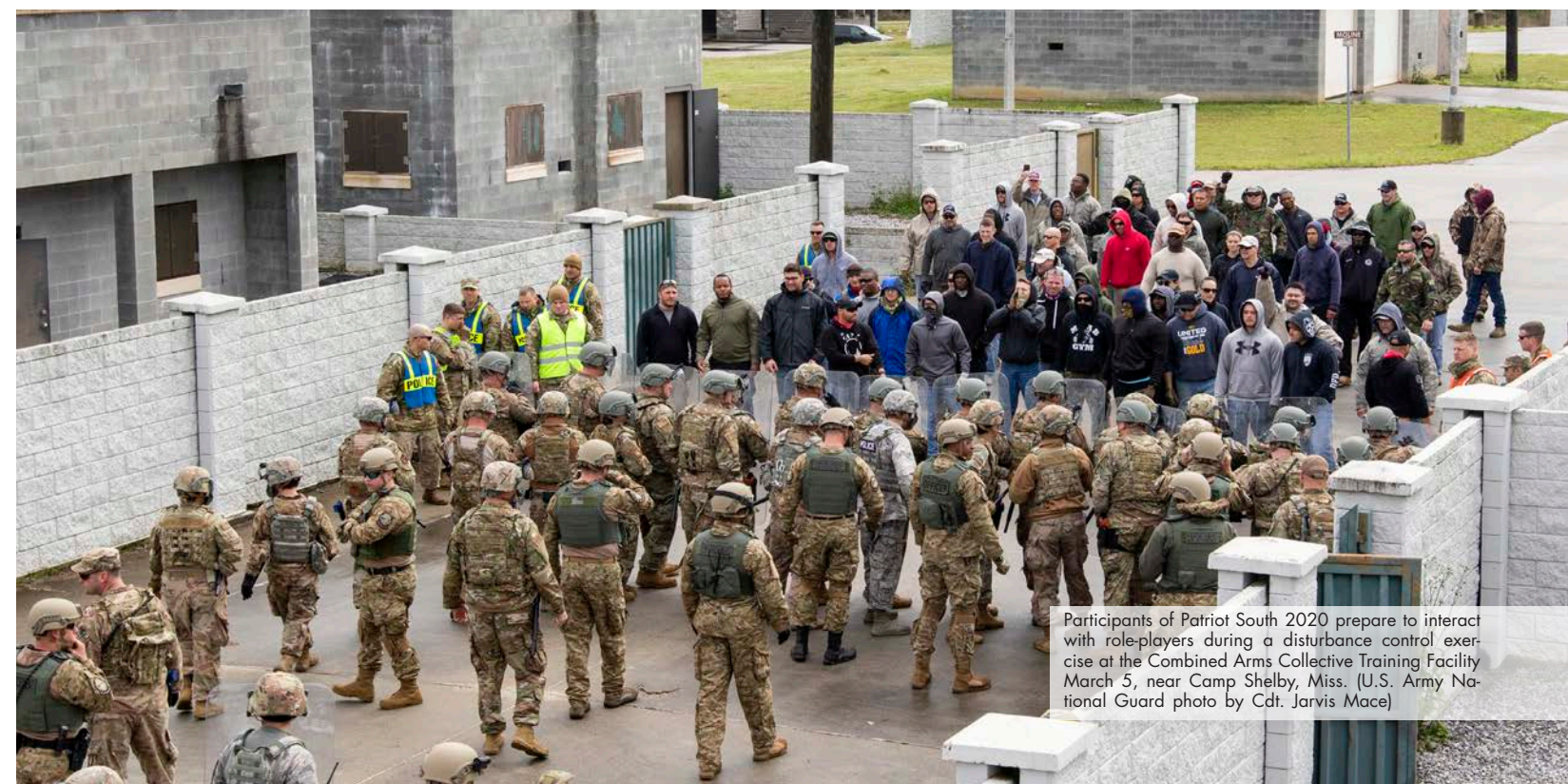
One of the key lessons learned during Hurricane Katrina is that readiness and planning are essential to an efficient and appropriate response. Training like Patriot South 2020 is an invaluable aid in preparing the state and its federal and regional partners for the next major natural disaster.



A firefighter with Mississippi Task Force Urban Search and Rescue performs hoist exercises during Patriot South 2020 at Guardian Centers in Perry, Georgia, February 29. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Pfc. Christopher Shannon)

"Patriot South is a great joint training opportunity that allows not only Mississippi Army and Air Guardsmen to train together, but we also have an opportunity to train with Guardsmen from other states as we prepare for hurricane season."

- Brig. Gen. Stan Budraitis



Participants of Patriot South 2020 prepare to interact with role-players during a disturbance control exercise at the Combined Arms Collective Training Facility March 5, near Camp Shelby, Miss. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Cdt. Jarvis Mace)

# FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS TRAIN KUWAITI COUNTERPARTS

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

In a room covered with floor mats, police officers wrestled and tossed each other to the ground using hand-to-hand combatives, trained in the use of handcuffs for uses besides restraint and practiced other trade skills. These first responders were Kuwaiti women training with female American Army military police officers in a region whose culture does not treat genders equally.

Members of the Mississippi Army National Guard's 114th Military Police Company, based in Clinton, are currently deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

Capt. Margaret Krisle, commander of the Clinton Rifles, and the females of her unit were selected to be the first Army trainers of Kuwaiti female police officers. Krisle and MSARNG MPs were ideally suited to tackle the monumental task of pioneering the equality of women in this

high-profile unit.

"There are difficulties in every career," said Staff Warrant Officer Hadeel Alkandari, a member of the Kuwaiti Police Special Forces Unit (KPSFU). "However, the police in a conservative country like Kuwait needs a woman component for arrest and search processes that policemen can't do. As a policewoman, I only deal with women."

Krisle said her unit is the first Army unit to lead the training, but the KPSFU has received American training once before.

"This is actually just the new group of instructors to take over the VIP team," she said. "The only other U.S. force to train them was a group of female Marines in 2016. This is the first time the Army has trained them. Their leadership has changed since 2016 and these girls were selected to be the new instructors."

The Female VIP team, as the KPSFU is also called, was created in 2010.

"Their main purpose is to protect the prin-

Sgts. Maj. Nourah Alrandi (left) and Eiman Alseheeb (right), both with the Kuwaiti Police Special Forces Unit, trained with Sgt. Danielle R. Lewis, the traffic accident investigations non-commissioned officer-in-charge, 114th Military Police Company, during the medical evacuation portion in February. The female-only KPSFU works with Kuwaiti women because of the cultural gender dynamics of the country. (Courtesy photo)



Staff Warrant Officer Hadeel Alkandari (center), Kuwaiti Police Special Forces Unit, practices a hand-to-hand combatives technique with Capt. Margaret Krisle, commander of the 114th Military Police Company, during training in February. (Courtesy photo)



Sgt. Danielle R. Lewis, the traffic accident investigations non-commissioned officer-in-charge, 114th Military Police Company, demonstrates a hand-to-hand combatives move with Sgt. Maj. Nourah Alrandi, Kuwaiti Police Special Forces Unit, during training in February. (Courtesy photo)

cesses or any other important females in Kuwait they are ordered to protect. They're multi-faceted. They pretty much do anything that requires interaction with the females since the males can't do it," Krisle said.

Krisle said the women officers don't train a lot because they don't have the opportunity to and really only have themselves to train with. Working with the women of the Clinton Rifles was a good opportunity for them.

"Our purpose was getting them all on the same page and extend their certifications to the ones we have so they could pass them down," Krisle said. "The group of girls we trained were excited to be there and eager to train. They also wanted to develop personal connections. It's been a friendship, but also a good training opportunity."

In addition, they learned of the advantages of handcuffs over flexcuffs, which is their primary tool for restraint. Handcuffs can also be used as a non-lethal weapon option. The officers had also never been trained in the use of a Taser, only the males had that training.

"We showed them how to do take downs with handcuffs and to maintain control of unruly subjects. It became another tool in their tool belt," Krisle said. "They want more of this so they can build on it and keep getting more advanced as our time here continues."

"The training event was strong and useful," Alkandari said. "By practicing [we] will improve our skills and we will be able to provide great training to our team. The training was not difficult, but we needed more [time to] practice. Our goal is to move forward and improve ourselves. We are not going to stop at any point."

Classes were only held from February 2-6 and 9-13 for a total of 10 days of training.

It was during a Key Leader Engagement when Sgt. Danielle R. Lewis, the traffic accident investigations non-commissioned officer-in-charge, was approached and asked about the possibility of training the female officers within the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior. Lewis has civilian law enforcement training as a Hattiesburg police officer and Instructor Certification in women's self-defense, as well as military training, and was selected to lead the mission.

"I have not personally taught a class in approximately three to four years," Lewis said. "This was a good opportunity to revisit training individuals in something I am very passionate in. It also helped me refresh my teaching skills."

"I thoroughly enjoyed working with the Kuwaitis and continuing the relationship that I've built while doing traffic investigations."

Krisle said it was an experience that broadened her understanding of the U.S. mission in the Middle East.

"It was great for me," Krisle said. "It's probably one of the best things I've done. It made me realize that what we're doing here is larger than law enforcement on the post. It opened a whole new dynamic to what we're trying to do here."



Sgt. Danielle R. Lewis, the traffic accident investigations non-commissioned officer-in-charge, and Capt. Margaret Krisle, commander of the 114th Military Police Company, pose with the Kuwaiti Police Special Forces Unit they trained in February. The female-only KPSFU only manages arrests and cases involving Kuwaiti women because of the cultural gender dynamics of the country. (Courtesy photo)



# Southern Strike 2020

## Provides Unique Opportunities

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

Southern Strike 2020 rumbled across Mississippi Jan. 30-Feb. 11, allowing units to coordinate missions across a wide area of the state and to practice joint operations with other branches of service as well as international partners.

Southern Strike is a large-scale, conventional and special operations exercise hosted by the Mississippi National Guard at several locations throughout the state. During the combat exercise, participating units train in counterinsurgency, close air support, non-combatant evacuation and maritime special operations. More than 2,000 service members from active and reserve components from approximately 22 states, increase combat readiness and build relationships while conducting missions designed to enhance their effectiveness.

“The missions we do at home are what we’re tasked to do,” said Capt. Nicholas Simpson, 106th Assault Helicopter Battalion, Georgia Army National Guard. “That’s usually moving somebody from one place to another - VIPs or some Soldiers. It’s not always the missions we need to train on to better prepare us for a fight.”

“When we come to Southern Strike, we get to do missions that are more out of the ordinary – working with Special Forces and other ground units that get to train us on different tasks that we don’t get to see very often,” said Simpson.

It was Simpson’s second Southern Strike experience. The pace of the exercise often challenges units because they have to adapt from their normal operational standards, he said.

“The missions we get at home are set up in advance, we have days to plan and it’s a very rigid schedule. When we

come here and work with these units, they do change things on a regular basis,” Simpson said. “Sometimes it’s the mission they are getting that changes and then they pass on those changes to us. It helps us learn to be flexible and to work on the fly and that better suits the needs of a real war-time mission.”

It also emphasizes the need to train jointly with other guard and reserve components as well as active duty units.

“The joint training scenario is great. It’s something we never get to see at home. We’ve been able to work with TACPs [Tactical Air Control Party] on the radio, have Navy aircraft above us, and Predators above that watching everything that’s going on; so we’re sharing the airspace with more people and it puts more of a workload on our pilots just to train them better,” Simpson said.

The forces on the ground also benefit from the exposure provided by a joint environment.

“I thought it was a really great training exercise for everybody involved. I think it provides a great venue to integrate with partner nations. It is truly joint and inter-agency and multi-nation ... so having a venue to do that, in a training (operational) environment, simulates well with what we are going to do down range,” said an active duty Special Forces officer. “It’s hard to organize events like that, so accomplishing that organization and being able to train in that sort of environment is very beneficial to both SF Teams, foreign partners and all the aircraft.”

Foreign partners participating in Southern Strike 2020 included forces from Uzbekistan, Bulgaria and the Netherlands. Uzbekistan’s 6th Special Operations Battalion led U.S. Special Forces in an assault on Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center’s Combined Arms Collective Training Facility (CACTF)

Feb. 11. The unique operation was the exercise’s culminating mission and was watched by Javlon Vakhobov, the Uzbekistan ambassador to the U.S., and other dignitaries.

“I was really impressed with all the different objectives and the CACTF in particular. It is very good, very good,” said the U.S. special forces officer. “The only reason I could tell (this was a National Guard post) is because it was a little bit smaller ... As far as the training areas, they are up to par with what I’ve seen anywhere else.”

In a first for Southern Strike, in its ninth year, exercise directors were able to integrate the use of the MQ-9 Reaper. Its first mission was to launch from Gulfport’s Combat Readiness Training Center and fly to Camp Shelby to drop a GPS-guided inert bomb (GBU). The MQ-9s were piloted by service members from five different states, another unique first for Southern Strike.

Col. Rick Weaver, exercise director, said the addition of the MQ-9, an armed multi-mission, remotely piloted aircraft is enormous because of the integration with the different ground troops and air assets that the service members get to train with.

It took nearly two and a half years to coordinate with the Federal Aviation Administration and other agencies for the approvals necessary for the mission, he said.

“Southern Strike is one of the few platforms that the MQ-9 can train in multiple locations in a joint environment with three branches of the military, Special Forces and almost 20 fixed and rotary wing aviation platforms,” Weaver said.

The MQ-9 airframes belonged to the 119th Wing in Fargo, N.D., one of only five Launch and Recovery Elements in the National Guard. They were transported from their home to Gulfport in Mississippi C-17’s flown by the 172d Airlift Wing.

The joint training has highlighted some of the differences in the way each service branch conducts their operations. Sgt. DeAngelo Mitchell of Company E, 1st Battalion, 185th Aviation Regiment, said refueling procedures are the same for the services, but there are differences in the techniques used. He was among a contingent of Company E that set up a Forward Arming and Refueling Point at Camp Shelby’s Hagler Army Air Field for helicopters conducting missions there.

“The Navy wants to see a visual sample of the fuel every time they fuel up,” Mitchell said. “Other than that, the refueling is basically the same.”

In addition to their helicopters, the Navy also employed its Fast Attack Craft/Fast Inshore Attack Craft in the joint environment provided by Southern Strike.

The KC-135 Stratotankers of the Mississippi Air National Guard’s 186th Air Refueling Wing provided extended stays in the air above operations for various joint service aircraft, including B-1 bombers and A-10 Warthogs, which are a rare sight in the southern state.

Top Left: A U.S. Navy MH-60R Seahawk aircrew member assigned to the Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 60, conducts live-fire close air support during a training scenario as part of Southern Strike 2020 at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Miss., Feb. 4. Southern Strike is a large-scale, joint and international combat exercise, featuring counter insurgency, close air support, non-combatant evacuation, and maritime special operations. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Trevor T. McBride)



A U.S. Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt II receives fuel from a Mississippi Air National Guard KC-135 Stratotanker assigned to the 186th Air Refueling Wing during a refueling mission as part of Southern Strike 2020 over the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center, Miss., Feb. 7. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Trevor T. McBride)



U.S. Army Special Operations Soldiers with 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) rehearse medical evacuation procedures with a U.S. Navy MH-60R Seahawk Helicopter during Southern Strike 2020 at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Miss., Feb. 1. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Jovi Prevot)



Pfc. Bobby M. Ginn III compares the weight of an ammo can and kettle bell at the U.S. Property and Fiscal Office warehouse in Flowood, Feb. 26. The equipment is part of the new Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) being implemented Army-wide by October 2020. Due to COVID-19, Mississippi Army National Guard has postponed its transition to the new test until further notice. (U.S. National Guard photo by Amanda Kibble)

# ACFT & COVID-19

Story by Amanda Kibble and Sgt. Scott Tynes  
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

The Army will completely transition to a new physical fitness test by October 2020. However, the onset of the COVID-19 has caused ripple effects in Mississippi National Guard's implementation.

In the wake of COVID-19 mitigation measures, which have closed gyms and limited the options for Soldiers preparing for the ACFT, the official transition to the ACFT in October has been postponed until further notice, said Col. Brent McCullouch, director of operations for the Mississippi Army National Guard.

Accordingly, he said, all valid APFT scores will remain valid until further notice; including instances where a Soldier is past the 12-month requirement due to pregnancy, injury or other mitigating circumstances. Soldiers flagged for APFT failure may request to take the test to overcome the restrictions.

Although most physical training requirements have been lifted or postponed, units were still

able to receive their fielding of the equipment necessary to conduct the Army Combat Fitness Test.

The United States Property and Fiscal Office in Flowood received 421 lanes from the Army Materiel Command in February. The Mississippi National Guard issued all of the units in the state their allotted equipment Feb. 25-28. Each battalion received 16 lanes of equipment, excluding Camp McCain Training Center and Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, which both received 32 lanes.

"We're supporting the three major subordinate commands, [Joint Force Headquarters] and overhead units, 18 battalion-level entities, and 146 units," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jesse Lindsey, property book officer, MSNG.

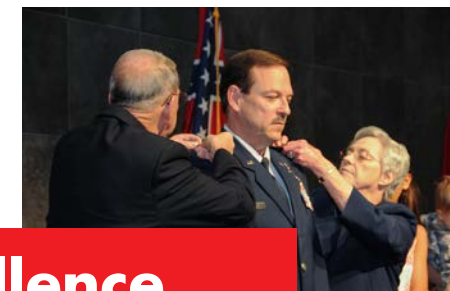
The entire Army has been issued over \$73 million worth of equipment for this fitness test transition. Equipment fielding for the MSNG has cost roughly \$800,000.

For MSNG Soldiers, the change is an unavoidable challenge. The ACFT is designed to better prepare Soldiers for the battlefield than its predecessor, the Army Physical Fitness Test.

"The ACFT is more physically demanding than the APFT and tests more physical attributes," said Lindsey. "They're going to have to embrace the change. They're going to have to look at the big picture and understand the intentions of it and the positives behind it, versus the negatives."

The ACFT has six events that simulate physical requirements from a readiness standpoint. While some parts of the ACFT can be trained anywhere – such as the two-mile run and hand release pushups – events like the sprint-drag-carry or medicine ball throw are difficult to properly train for without equipment.

"While [physical fitness] testing requirements are currently suspended, units and Soldiers are encouraged to continue preparing for the ACFT," McCullouch said. "In the past few months, we fielded the ACFT equipment to all units and training sites so that Soldiers can begin to train on the equipment and excel once ACFT testing begins."



## Continuing A Legacy of Excellence

Story by 2nd Lt. Kiara N. Spann and Senior Master Sgt. Jeannine M. Smith  
172d Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The proud parents of Brig. Gen. Billy M. Nabors pinned on his new rank of major general in front of a crowd at the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum March 16.

Rank is commensurate with duty, responsibility and the ability to perform at a higher level, and as the Assistant Adjutant General – Air for the Mississippi National Guard, he took it up a notch.

Nabors decided to take on some programs that had been dormant for many years. Specifically, he directed the Force Management directives that now govern how the Mississippi Air National Guard's force and development are managed.

This type of work comes as no surprise, he made significant changes in many of the positions he has held, such as working with Airmen at the 186th Air Refueling Wing in the positions of Operations Officer of the 186th Operations Group and Commander of the 186th ARW.

His career has given him deployed and home station assignments including Flight and Squadron Commander, Operations Officer and many project officer duties.

"For 36 years I've had the privilege to serve my country as a member of the United States Air Force, the last 28 years as a member of the Mississippi Air National Guard," said Nabors. "I serve with the finest men and women this country has to offer. It's through their hard work and sacrifice over the years that I've been able to progress to the rank of major general and have the opportunity to lead these outstanding Airmen. I can think of no higher honor."

Along with those accomplishments, his record boasts many awards and decorations including the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal and many more.

This feat has not been accomplished by many in the Air National Guard so we are proud to have Nabors as a leader, mentor and force driver.

*Assistant Editor's Note: The two-star rank used in the ceremony was worn by the late Maj. Gen. G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery during his last assignment with the Mississippi National Guard. Montgomery, a WWII and Korean War Veteran and Mississippi native, is admired by many for his leadership in and out of uniform and his dedication to Veterans and Veterans' rights. A state legislator for 10 years and a congressman for 30, he established the Montgomery G.I. Bill, negotiated with the North Korean government to bring home the first set of remains of U.S. servicemen killed during the Korean War and has a C-17 Globemaster III and a VA medical center named after him. The Spirit of G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery, flown by the 172d Airlift Wing, is only the third aircraft in American history to be named after an individual.*

Top Left: Maj. Gen. Billy M. Nabors, the assistant adjutant general – Air, poses next to a photograph of Maj. Gen. G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery in the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum, Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Miss., March 16. (U. S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Adam Vance)

Top Right: Maj. Gen. Billy M. Nabors assists his grandchildren with pinning new rank on his cover during his promotion ceremony at the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum, Camp Shelby, Miss., March 16. (U. S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Adam Vance)

Right Bottom: Mississippi National Guard's Assistant Adjutant General - Air and Commander of the Mississippi Air National Guard, Billy M. Nabors, is pinned his new rank of major general by his parents Billy and Marjorie Nabors at the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum, Camp Shelby, Miss., March 16. (U. S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Adam Vance)



## Camp Shelby Damaged After Major Storm

A storm tore through the Hattiesburg area April 19 impacting Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center where more than 250 buildings sustained minor damage and two buildings received major damage, including a pine tree that fell through the roof of a barracks located in the 2700 block. The barracks building was unoccupied at the time of the incident. The Camp Shelby Installation Support Unit cleared debris, fallen trees and metal awnings that once hung above the Soldier Readiness Processing site. Damages are estimated to be approximately \$8.5 million. (U.S. Army National Guard photos by 2nd Lt. Michael Needham)



## Armorbearers:

### Serving Those Who Serve



A desire to help their brothers in arms led a group of Mississippi Army National Guardsmen to create a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of Veterans. Staff Sgt. Ron Laabs of the 1108th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group, started the organization aptly named *Armorbearers*; a faith-based charitable group that provides free home repair work for disabled or low-income Veterans.

"I always thought God had a bigger

purpose and mission for me. I wanted to give back," said Laabs.

The largest project to date is a new house for former Guardsman Jack Walker. In 2005, Walker was injured in Iraq in an IED explosion that left him an incomplete quadriplegic and a left leg amputee. Then in 2018, tragedy struck again when his house burned down.

"I'm very thankful and know it's a blessing from the good Lord," Walker said. "Sometimes these days you wonder about society in general. This makes you know there are folks with their hearts in a good spot."

"We've gone through things that your average civilian or average American probably won't ever go through," said Command Sgt. Maj. Jarriet White, 1108th TASMGM and vice-chair of *Armorbearers*. "So we not only provide those tangible resources but also that relationship [building]."

In March 2020, Walker and Laabs stood on the slab of what will become Walker's new home in Hattiesburg. The two men were joined by relatives, government officials and invited guests for a check presentation ceremony from two community banks.



#EmpoweredWomen

Wiladean "Tootsie" North is officially retiring after working for over five decades for the Mississippi National Guard.

She has been working for the MSNG for 53 years, both as a Soldier, and as a Civilian working in Family Programs.

"They raised me," North said when referring to her years working with in the National Guard.

Her small frame, no taller than 5 feet, has become a familiar sight at Joint Force Headquarters. This is a little lady who has defied odds, overcome gender barriers and continued to lead the way for future generations of women in the Mississippi National Guard.

## Leadership Mississippi

### Congrats Maj. Heath Morgigno



Congratulations to Maj. Heath Morgigno, Mississippi National Guard, Leadership Mississippi 2019 graduate.

Leadership Mississippi is a state-wide program designed to develop, strengthen and connect emerging leaders throughout our state. Employers select an applicant from the talent serving in their organization to compete against other industries in our state. The result is the best-of-the-best connecting together for a greater Mississippi.

"This was a great experience and I was honored to represent our organization. I worked with 52 amazing leaders from across the state who were eager to keep Mississippi thriving in a compet-

itive job market," said Morgigno. "This class enabled me to promote our greatest asset, our people! I would highly recommend this program to my peers and encourage them to get involved at their local level as well."

The overall goal of this programs is to keep our state competitive, look for future challenges and retain our best talent. Leadership Mississippi has been investing in future Mississippi leaders for over 40 years.

## 204th Sendoff

### The Air Defense Mission Continues

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 204th Air Defense Artillery Regiment held a sendoff ceremony at the East Central Community College in Decatur, Miss., March 6. The Newton-based battalion deployed for nine months in support of two missions – one in the National Capitol Region and the other in the European area of operations.

Lt. Col. Anthony Morgan, commander of 1-204th ADA, said the Soldiers of the battalion are more than ready to excel at their newest missions.

"The Soldiers before us today are the finest and best air defenders in the Army inventory," said Morgan. "They are record breakers."

The battalion achieved 100 percent readiness in three separate benchmarks of pre-mobilization training, a first for any National Guard air defense battalion in all three mission sets.

"You set the bar high ladies and gentlemen, and I'm very proud of you," he said.

Brig. Gen. Stanley Budraitis, commander of 66th Troop Command, showed his support of the Soldiers, their mission and their



(U.S. National Guard photo by Chelsy Ables)

dedication.

"I'm supremely confident that on your deployment, you will continue the tradition of excellence," said Budraitis. "Each one of you are a critical member of the greatest Army our world has ever seen. And we are great because of Soldiers like you who are willing to protect it."



## 1st Battalion, 204th Air Defense Artillery Regiment Newton, Mississippi

- January 16, 1953 – Constituted in the Mississippi Army National Guard as the 154th Infantry Battalion.
  - January 16, 1956 – Organized and federally recognized as the 154th Infantry Battalion with Headquarters at Newton.
  - March 1, 1956 – Converted and designated as the 415th Field Artillery Battalion.
  - May 1, 1959 – Reorganized and designated as the 4th Howitzer Battalion, 114th Artillery.
  - September 30, 1962 – Ordered into active Federal service for the integration of the University of Mississippi.
  - November 1, 1973 – Reorganized as the 4th Battalion, 114th Field Artillery.
  - October 1, 1994 – Reorganized and designated as the 204th Air Defense Artillery, with Headquarters at Newton.
  - May 1, 2003 – Ordered into active Federal service for missions in the National Capitol Region.
  - October 1, 2005 – Designated as the 1st Battalion, 204th Air Defense Artillery Regiment.
  - January 1, 2008 – Ordered into active Federal service for missions in the National Capitol Region.
  - May 4, 2011 – Ordered into active Federal service for a deployment to Iraq.
  - September 16, 2015 – Ordered into active Federal service for missions in the National Capitol Region.
  - February 23, 2020 – Present – Ordered into active Federal service for missions in the National Capitol Region and the Middle East.
- The Regiment is authorized to display the honors of the former 204th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion "as a challenge and trust"
- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| • World War II    | • Rhineland      |
| • Normandy        | • Central Europe |
| • Northern France | • England 1944   |
- Battery C (Morton), 1st Battalion, additionally entitled to the following campaign participation credits and unit awards for service in the Korean War:
- Second Korean Winter
  - Korea, Summer-Fall 1952
  - Third Korean Winter
  - Korea, Summer Fall 1953
  - Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), Streamer embroidered KOREA 1953-1954



# BURNING QUESTIONS

## The 2020 Census and What It Means For You

Maj. Gen. (Ret.) William "Bill" Freeman Jr.  
Military Liaison, Mississippi 2020 Census



### What is the 2020 Census?

The census is conducted every 10 years to count everyone living in the United States and its citizens abroad. Your response helps determine how billions of dollars in federal funding are distributed to states, counties and local communities. This decennial count is required by the Constitution and is a foundation of our democracy, because the population of each state determines the number of representatives it has in the U.S. House of Representatives.

### Am I required to respond to the 2020 Census?

Yes, you are required by law. We are conducting the 2020 Census under the authority of Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193 and 221.

### Are my answers confidential and private?

Yes. The Census Bureau is required by law to protect your information. Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, your data is protected from cybersecurity risks through screening of the systems that transmit your data. All web data submissions are encrypted in order to protect your privacy.

### Who should complete the 2020 Census questionnaire?

The 2020 Census questionnaire should be completed by the person who owns or rents the living quarters or serves as the head of household.

### How long will the 2020 Census questionnaire take?

The Census Bureau estimates that completing the questionnaire will take 10-15 minutes on average. The survey has four parts; address verification, household questions, people questions and final questions.

### Why is it important that my family gets counted?

The results of the 2020 Census will help determine how billions of dollars in federal funding flow into communities every year for the next decade. That funding shapes many different aspects of every community, no matter the size, no matter the location.

### How can I complete the 2020 Census?

There are three ways you can complete the census.

1. Online by going to [2020census.gov](https://www.census.gov)
2. Calling toll free at 1-844-330-2020
3. By mailing a completed census form to 1201 E. 10th Street, Jeffersonville, IN 47132 (census forms will be mailed by the end of May)

### How are people in group quarters such as barracks and military vessels counted?

If you live or stay in group quarters, the Census Bureau will identify a group/quarters administrator at your location to ensure that you are counted in the 2020 Census.

### How are people on deployment counted?

When your family is filling out the census form, list your service member as a resident of your home of record, as noted in DEERS.

### Will the results be published?

The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify you or your household. Results will be presented in aggregate form and no personally identifiable information will be published. Information quality is an integral part of the pre-dissemination review by the Census Bureau; fully described in the Census Bureau's Information Quality Guidelines at <https://www.census.gov/about/policies/quality/guidelines.html>.

### Do I have to complete the 2020 Census questionnaire for my household members?

Yes, you will be asked to provide information for each household member, regardless of age or gender. If the individual lives in the household or on the property and would receive mail at the same address, they must be reflected on your census questionnaire. Some circumstances, like deployments, are unique to service members and their families. Make sure you know how to get counted correctly so you can support your community and state. For more information on how the census counts military members and their families, visit [www.2020census.gov](https://www.2020census.gov) and search "military."

### What happens if I don't do the Census?

You would be in violation of Title 13 U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193 and 221. Starting in late May, the Census Bureau, in person, will begin following up with homes that have not responded to the census.



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*"Heroes Honoring Heroes"*  
MSNG Soldiers and Airmen honored the University of Mississippi Medical Center Nurses and medical staff on the first day of Nurses Week, May 6, in Jackson. It was an honor to pay respect to the UMMC medical personnel who have been fighting on the front lines against our invisible enemy, COVID-19, during this global pandemic. (photo by UMMC Communication Staff)