

SPRING 2021

GUARD DETAIL

A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD



COMBATING THE VIRUS 8 | FIRST FEMALE CAVALRY SCOUT 16

FEATURES



10

Apache: Effective & Necessary

Mississippi's attack helicopters have supported many missions over the years, but did you know that they were almost taken away? Find out why and what changed to keep Mississippi effective and necessary.



14

Service & Sacrifice

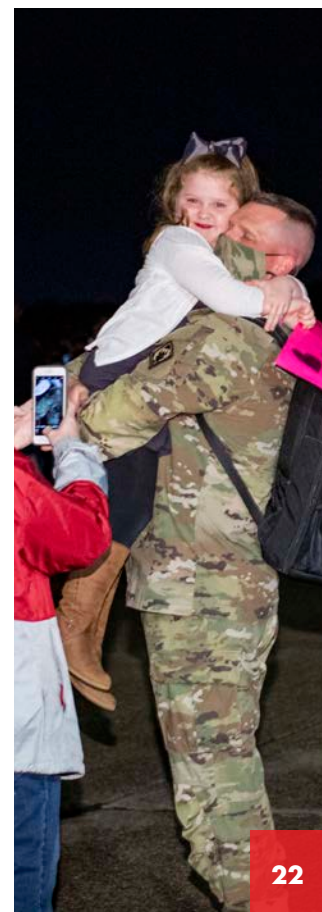
Serving in the armed forces for 20 years is a career, serving for nearly 40 is a lifetime. Chief Master Sgt. Jasper Edwards sacrificed a lot to become the best, breaking down barriers in the process.



20

For Families, By Families

National Guardsmen serve their state, its citizens and the communities in which they live. Some Guardsmen not only serve the families of their state, but do so alongside their own. Brothers by blood. Brothers in arms.



22

Multiple Missions Complete

Members of the 204th ADA returned home from a deployment where missions spanned two countries an ocean apart, all while fighting a pandemic.

The Guard Detail is the official magazine of the Mississippi National Guard. It is published three times a year with a circulation of approximately 12,500 copies and also distributed online via the Mississippi National Guard web and Facebook pages. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Army, Air Force, Army National Guard, Air National Guard or the Department of Defense.

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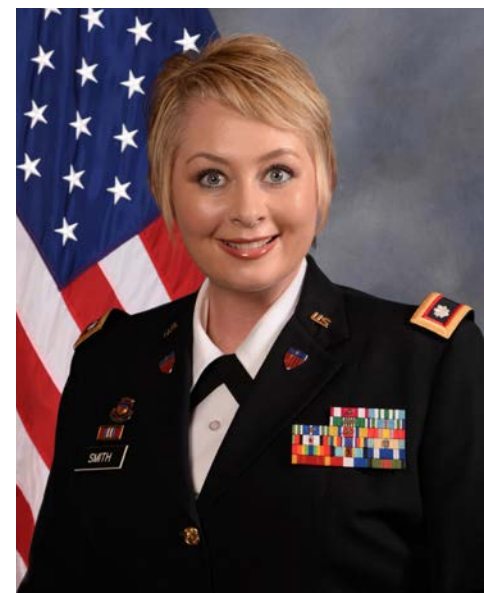
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All submissions should pertain to the Mississippi National Guard and are subject to editing. Contributions and reader comments should be sent to: ng.ms.msarng.list.public-affairs@mail.mil.

COVER PHOTO: U.S Army Soldiers Chief Warrant Officer 2 Johnny Lockert and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Cameron Beard assigned to Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment, 185th Aviation Brigade, Mississippi Army National Guard perform aerial maneuvers in an AH-64 Apache near Tupelo, Miss., March 29, 2021 (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)

Letter From THE EDITOR

We are the Next Greatest Generation



“There is a mysterious cycle in human events. To some generations much is given. Of other generations much is expected. This generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny.”

~ President Franklin Delano Roosevelt

President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered a remarkable acceptance speech during his Renomination for the Office of the Presidency in Philadelphia, Pa., June 27, 1936. He was speaking about the extraordinary character of the men and women representing our nation during that era. Little did he know the extent of sacrifice the men and women serving in the armed forces would face during that crucial time in our nation's history. These brave souls would later be known as the “Greatest Generation” to be called into action to defend our nation and our freedoms. I believe that every generation faces a certain challenge with an opportunity to excel. Our response in the battle against COVID-19 is saving lives and will forever be a part of our ‘rendezvous with destiny.’

The Mississippi National Guard continues to set a standard of excellence in every mission. Our men and women are setting the example for others to follow in the continued fight against COVID-19. Mississippi celebrated the administration of the one millionth

COVID-19 vaccination given by the governor's COVID-19 Task Force March 22nd. This inter-agency partnership is led by the Mississippi Department of Health and supported by the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and the Mississippi National Guard.

The MSNG continues to surpass expectations with the ongoing COVID-19 response. Through logistical support, the MSNG has driven over 528,600 miles, completed approximately 6,000 deliveries of personal protective equipment to hospitals and clinics around the state, and administered more than 400,000 vaccines in 2021 alone. This valiant effort streamlines efficiency for communities around our state while building a foundation for safety and normalcy for our future.

In addition to the ongoing COVID-19 missions, we recently welcomed home deployed Soldiers from the 204th Air Defense Artillery Regiment who were deployed to the National Capital Region and contingency locations overseas. Thank you to the Soldiers of the 204th for your service and sacrifice, and thank you to the Families supporting them from the home front. Job well done!

Regardless of the challenges, the Mississippi National Guard remained ready and resilient during Southern Strike 2021. This training exercise celebrated its tenth year of superior counterinsurgency, close air support, and special operations training. It's an international, multi-state, multi-component exercise that challenges the skills and readiness of our men and women in uniform as well as our interagency partners. Southern Strike has proven itself to be an excellent platform to sharpen the battlefield skills for international and multi-component missions while providing visibility to the training opportunities offered in the South Mississippi Corridor.

Thank you Mississippi National Guard Soldiers, Airmen and Families for your devotion to duty and your continued exemplary service. You are the Next Greatest Generation!

Lt. Col. Deidre D. Smith
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Colonel T. Glen Flowers

As the State Army Aviation Officer (SAAO), I appreciate this opportunity to address my fellow Guardsmen in highlighting the significant aviation assets we have within the Mississippi Army National Guard.

I assumed SAAO duties in October 2019 and I greatly enjoy working with the team to ensure we safely execute all full-time training and mission support requirements. The role of the SAAO is to serve as the principal advisor to the Adjutant General of Mississippi on all matters related to Army Aviation and coordinate requirements with the full-time aviation facilities throughout the state. So, let's discuss our full-time aviation facilities which include three Army Aviation Support Facilities, an Unmanned Aircraft System Flight Center (UASFC) and a Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group (TASMG).

Our three AASFs are located in Jackson, Tupelo and Meridian. Their mission is to execute the required full-time aviation support, flight training and organization maintenance of assigned aircraft, and ensure the supported personnel and resources are postured to safely meet their mission requirements.

Our significant fleet of rotary wing aircraft include 14 UH-60 Black Hawks in Jackson, seven UH-72 Lakotas, and six AH-64 Apaches in Tupelo, and six CH-47 Chinooks in Meridian. Additionally, we have one C-12 Huron fixed-wing aircraft operating from the 172d Airlift Wing in Jackson. Each aircraft provides unique capabilities, which greatly enhances our ability to support state, national and unit deployment requirements. These capabilities include: passenger movement, medical evacuation, surveillance, counterdrug, reconnaissance, cargo commodity movements and Special Operations

Forces mission sets.

The UASFC located at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center is the only one of its kind in the National Guard, supporting RQ-7B Shadow training and maintenance. The Camp Shelby UASFC provides full-time training and maintenance support to four RQ-7Bs assigned to the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team. An additional eight RQ-7Bs "training set" aircraft are utilized to provide nationwide support of National Guard and active component units, as they travel to Camp Shelby to conduct individual qualification, proficiency and collective training events.

The MSNG TASMG, located in Gulfport, is one of only four in the United States. The TASMG provides required higher level sustainment maintenance, supporting more than 250 aircraft across 10 states. The skilled artisans of this unique organization make-up what is referred to by some as the "crown jewel" of Mississippi and they provide a critical resource for aviation maintenance.

The significant MSARNG aviation assets stand ready to meet all state, national and overseas requirements.

"Above the Best"
T. Glen Flowers
COL, AV
State Army Aviation Officer
Mississippi Army National Guard

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



One of my greatest honors in life is to stand among Soldiers and encourage them during training. Recently, my battalion conducted our annual individual weapon qualification. As I observed Soldiers firing their M4 rifles, some thoughts occurred to me that mirror our paths through life.

First, I realized that zeroing a rifle is incredibly important! Sometimes misses occur because the sights, or optics, are not looking where the rifle bore is pointing – meaning that the rifle is not zeroed. Clearly, slight mistakes in your zero have huge consequences over long distances. Zeroing your rifle means aligning the sight's point of aim with the bullet's point of impact.

I believe that the same is true in our spiritual lives: God has a plan for you, but you will miss that every time unless you are zeroed with God. Align your sights (i.e., your lifestyle and actions) with God's plan by making sighting adjustments (i.e., corrective behaviors, prayer, sacred text study, meditation, etc.), then your life will be zeroed.

Secondly, I realized that some targets are easier to hit than others! On rifle ranges, targets at varying distances pop up and fall down when hit. Closer targets are easier to hit, while distant targets require more concentration and precise aiming.

The same is true in our personal lives! You encounter targets popping up in the form of choices you must make, many of which have moral implications. Just like your goal on the rifle range is to score as many hits as possible, your score on the range of life will often be determined by how you make choices that are consistent with your personal core values. Some targets you encounter are "close" to you and easy to hit. When faced with choices to lie, cheat, or steal, do you instead act with integrity, truthfulness, and honor? Even though these targets are close, you can still miss them if you are not careful!

Other targets are "distant" and require more concentration in order to make a good shot. Are you a good leader? Are you faithful with your money, time, and relationships? Do you always keep your promises? Far targets are harder to hit on the rifle range because they require more determination and focus on marksmanship fundamentals. In life, these distant targets may be challenging as well, but you can be successful when you wholeheartedly focus your efforts to hit these important targets.

I encourage you to apply these lessons learned from the rifle range to your personal lives so that you may "shoot" your highest score possible. For God and Country!

Chaplain (Capt.) Scott Edwards
Battalion Chaplain, 106th BSB, 155th ABCT





SNAPSHOTS

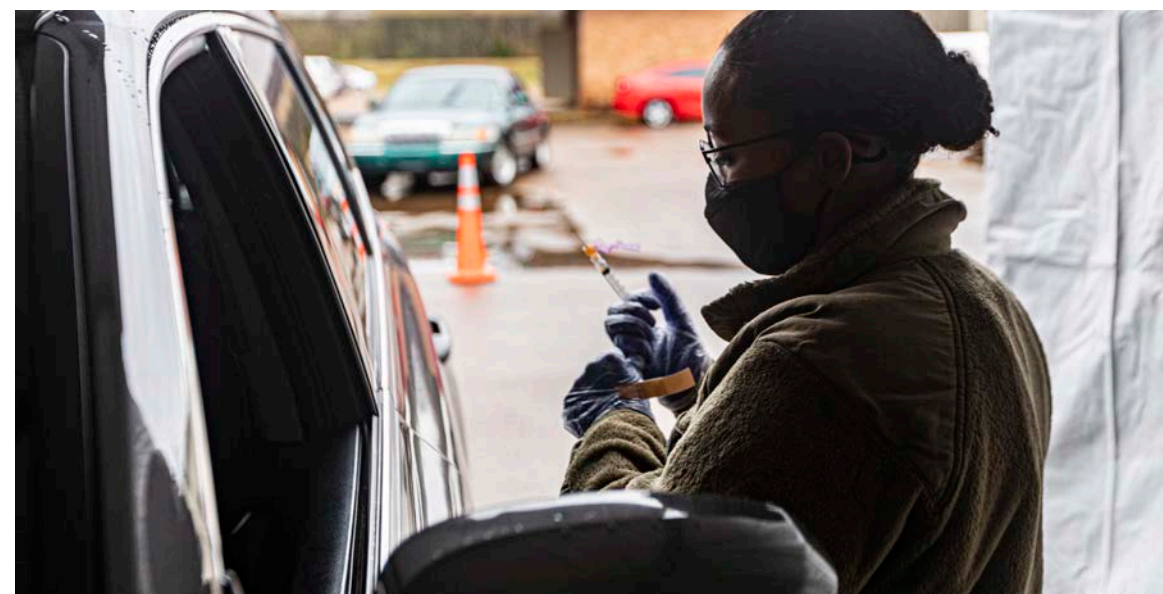
U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Bradley Adams, a UH-60 helicopter repairer assigned to Company D, 2nd Battalion, 151st Aviation Regiment, Mississippi Army National Guard, performs a maintenance inspection on a UH-72 Lakota at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Tupelo, Miss., March 3, 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)





U.S. Army National Guard photos by Sgt. Jovi Prevot

COMBATING THE VIRUS



Story by Spc. Christopher Shannon II
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

The Mississippi National Guard's largest domestic deployment in its history is not the typical mission of responding to the upheaval of nature; rather, it's a pandemic that has changed nearly every aspect of life as we know it.

For more than a year, the Mississippi National Guard has been assisting the Mississippi State Department of Health and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency as part of the governor's COVID-19 State Task Force. Back in March 2020 we were squarely focused on testing, but in late December we began to switch our primary focus to vaccinating while still maintaining our testing mission.

"For an entire year, we have conducted this mission with an all-volunteer force comprised of every specialty within the Mississippi National Guard," said Lt. Col. Jeremy Parker, commander of the Mississippi National Guard COVID-19 joint task force and deputy director of military support. "We have more than 1,200 Soldiers total with the joint task force. Now, of that, about 800 are actively on vaccine sites." The remaining personnel comprise the logistics, administration, and command teams.

Since the start of the mission with testing operations last year, the Mississippi National Guard has been training the members of its team, said Parker.

"We put everyone we bring on [COVID-19 orders] through the Army Combat Lifesaver (CLS) training program," said Parker.

The task force has met and overcome various obstacles since the beginning of Mississippi's efforts in battling COVID-19.

"We have faced a number of challenges," said Parker. "Initially, when we started to stand up vaccine sites, we were only vaccinating at health departments."

"We went from having 200 appointments per site, per day, to 1,200 per day on average. The health departments did not have the space for us to ramp up productivity to this level, so we had to move our entire vaccination operation out of the nearly 80 health departments across the state to larger sites," said Parker.

"Additionally, we did not have enough personnel qualified to administer vaccines," said Parker.

"We brought in a significant num-

ber of medical personnel from both the Army and Air Force, as well as working with the Mississippi State Department of Health to develop an immunization training to combine with the CLS training program to get non-medical personnel qualified to give the vaccine."

"Another challenge the task force faced was meeting the logistical demand of the mission," said Col. Jeffery Files, COVID-19 logistics officer.

"We are responsible for much more than just delivering necessary supplies to our 20 daily drive-thru testing and vaccination sites across the entire state every day," said Files.

"We are the logistical backbone to the whole mission, including: transporting the testing samples to the Mississippi State Department of Health lab for processing; assisting

with warehouse operations at two warehouses in the Jackson-Metro area; and the delivery of personal protective equipment to facilities across Mississippi."

Files added that, "The COVID-19 logistical operation is critical to ensure vaccine and testing remain operational and facilities get the necessary PPE."

Overcoming those challenges is a critical part to the task force's battle against an invisible enemy.

"This has been an enormous success and really highlights the versatility of our personnel to learn and execute a difficult task," said Parker.

Since April 2020, the PPE delivery teams have traversed more than 500,000 miles providing over 50,000,000 pieces of equipment throughout the state and have deliv-

ered more than 160,000 vials of vaccines containing multiple doses for use.

"As of April 1, 2021, the Mississippi National Guard has vaccinated more than 490,000 citizens," said Parker.

"We have administered as many as 14,000 shots in a single day," said Parker. "We have done as many as 81,000 in a week."

"This is an incredible accomplishment in our ten weeks of vaccination operations," said Parker.

"I attribute our success to the men and women of the [Mississippi] National Guard that have been on these sites. They have absolutely done an outstanding job and they have made this mission happen." **Since the writing of this article, the COVID taskforce has grown to more than 1700 Service members.

U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment, 185th Aviation Brigade, Mississippi Army National Guard perform aerial maneuvers in an AH-64 Apache near Tupelo, Miss., March 29, 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)



AH-64 APACHE REMAINS EFFECTIVE, NECESSARY FOR MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD

Story by Mr. Justin Dixon
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army's AH-64 Apache helicopters continue to be a necessary and effective asset for the Mississippi National Guard. Soldiers train every week in Tupelo at the Army Aviation Support Facility to maintain the aircraft and to ensure the Guard's readiness at a moment's notice.

The attack helicopters have been used to support several wars, including Oper-

ation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom. The Mississippi National Guard continues to use the helicopters for ongoing missions and training purposes.

Captain Harris Bryan, commander of Company A, 1-149th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (ARB), said the Apaches are critical for Soldiers in the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, who may not otherwise have the opportunity to work with this type of aircraft.

"Just like active duty or any other attack reconnaissance battalion, our role in defending the nation is to go to war when we're called to go," said Bryan. "But on top of that, it's also for training. Like here in our state, we have the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team. Their chance to work with these aircraft is very slim if we're not around to do that."

In 2014, the Apaches were almost phased out of the National Guard and integrated only into the active duty component. The

process was called the Army's Aviation Restructure Initiative, or ARI, which was designed to rebalance the Army's force structure into a smaller, more capable and sustainable aviation force. The Army proposed removing all Apache helicopters from the reserve unit into the active component as a cost-saving adjustment.

"They were trying to downsize and yet kind of compact the Army into a better operational state. And so, at that time, they had divested the OH-58 Kiowa Delta Fleet, which was your premier reconnaissance and security platform. They did away with that, which created a void," said Bryan. "So, their answer to that was to try to pull all attack aviation under the active duty component and take the Guard out of the fight, but that turned into a three to four-year ordeal."

The National Guard Bureau opposed this effort as officials said the removal of the helicopters would degrade the Guard's role as a combat reserve, establish a precedent to remove other combat capabilities and disrupt other National Guard units across 20 states.

During those years, several Mississippi congressmen and former Gov. Phil Bryant advocated for the Mississippi National Guard to retain some of the Apaches.

In 2018, a final decision was made to downgrade the eight battalions of Apache aircraft to four. The Apaches are now stationed in Utah, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas with a company detachment in Tupelo.

Congressmen Trent Kelly, who also serves as Maj. Gen. Trent Kelly, Mississippi's assistant adjutant general - Army, explained the importance of maintaining Apaches in Mississippi as a vital means of security and defense for the Nation.

"Maintaining the Apache battalions within the National Guard to include the Detachment in the Mississippi Army National Guard is strategically vital to our Nation's defense," said Kelly. "This past year's mobilization in support of domestic and overseas missions is a testament to the importance of readiness of the National Guard. If the Army had phased out AH-64's in 2014, there would have been significant security and capability gaps that would have degraded the proficiency, readiness and lethality of our force."

Kelly also explained the Apache Detachment in Tupelo was chosen because of the superior performance of Guard members that equally match the active component.

"The MSARNG Apache Detachment in Tupelo has a proven track record of performance as some of the best-trained pilots, flight teams, and maintenance teams across the Total Army. As the role of the National Guard continues to expand, and as our Nation competes with near-peer threats, the Guard must be as equally trained and equipped as the active component," said Kelly.

"I'm confident in the MSARNG Apache Detachment's ability to respond to these growing global threats. The AH-64's serving in Mississippi are vital resources to our Nation's strategic defense."



U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer II Joseph Taylor, an AH-64 Apache pilot, with Company A, 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment, adjusts his helmet at an Army Aviation Support Facility in Tupelo, Miss., March 3, 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)



U.S. Army Sgts. Steven Fairley and Christopher Greer, armament/electrical/avionic systems repairers, inspect the weaponry on an AH-64 Apache helicopter at an Army Aviation Support Facility in Tupelo, Miss., March 29, 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)



Soldiers with the Mississippi Army National Guard tow an AH-64 Apache helicopter to the flight line at an Army Aviation Support Facility in Tupelo, Miss., March 3, 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)

MISSISSIPPI'S New District Attorney

Story by Ms. A. Danielle Thomas
CRTC Public Affairs

Mississippi's new District Attorney for the Second Circuit Court is also a Mississippi Air National Guardsman. Gov. Tate Reeves appointed Crosby Parker as District Attorney for Harrison, Hancock, and Stone counties. Parker, who is a lieutenant colonel in the 172d Airlift Wing, was sworn in during a ceremony at the Harrison County Courthouse in Gulfport Jan. 19, 2021.

Prior to the appointment, Parker served as Chief Assistant District Attorney. His duties as Chief ADA included handling high profile violent crimes, crimes against children, and corruption cases, among others. He also supervised office personnel and all aspects of the district's criminal prosecutions.

"I'm honored to be appointed by Gov. Reeves to be the District Attorney for Harrison, Hancock and Stone counties," Parker said. "As District Attorney, I promise to work tirelessly to ensure justice is upheld and protected for the citizens of our district. The District Attorney's Office will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to identify and prosecute those who commit felony crimes in order to protect our communities, and at the same time, ensure that the rights of all are safeguarded."

Lt. Col. Crosby Parker also has an extensive legal career in the military. He is currently the Staff Judge Advocate assigned to the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, 172d AW. Crosby received his undergraduate degree from Mississippi State University with a Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarship. He graduated from Baylor Law School in 2001 under the United States Air Force's Educational Delay Program. He completed law school as a member of both the nationally ranked moot court and mock trial teams. Parker was then accepted into the U.S. Air Force Judge Advocate General Corps.



"I have been blessed in my military career to provide counsel and advise some incredible leaders. I have taken advantage of those opportunities over my 17 year career to learn," said Parker. "I have applied those leadership qualities as the Chief Assistant District Attorney and now as District Attorney. At both the 172d Airlift Wing and the District Attorney's Office, there are incredible men and women who truly live by the core value of Service Above Self."

His appointment comes after Gov. Reeves appointed the previous District Attorney, Joel Smith, to the Mississippi Court of Appeals.

"I am so thankful to be able to serve the citizens of Harrison, Hancock, and Stone Counties in my civilian capacity and then to put on my uniform to serve the people of Mississippi in the Mississippi Air National Guard."

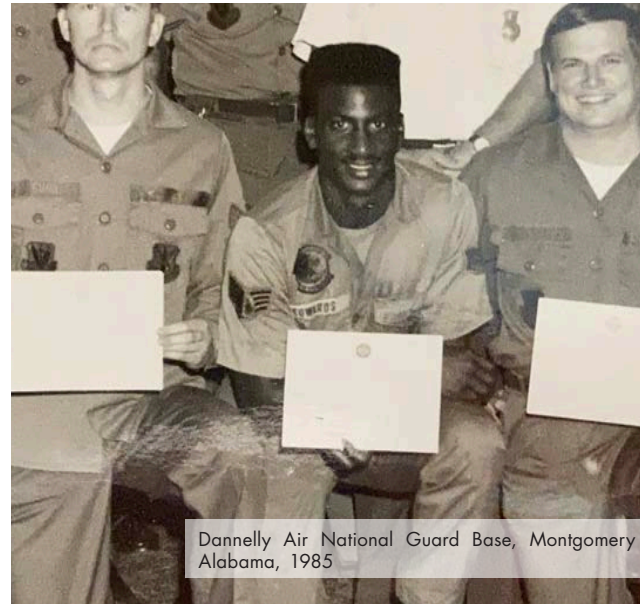
- Crosby Parker, District Attorney



Crosby Parker, left center, poses with Col. Berry McCormick, left, commander of Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC), Lt. Col. Jeff Wyatt, right center, director of support, Gulfport CRTC, and Lt. Col. Jeff Kirby, right, director of operations, Gulfport CRTC, after swearing in as the District Attorney for Mississippi's Second Circuit Court, Gulfport, Miss., Jan. 19, 2021. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by A. Danielle Thomas)



Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas, 1982



Dannelly Air National Guard Base, Montgomery, Alabama, 1985

A LIFETIME OF SERVICE

Story by Ms. A. Danielle Thomas
CRTC Public Affairs

In April 2021, Chief Master Sgt. Jasper Edwards of the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center, retired after nearly four decades of service in the Air National Guard. Over those 39 years in the military, Edwards rose through the ranks to become the first African American to serve as chief enlisted manager of the Gulfport CRTC, an accomplishment he achieved by both hard work and stepping out on faith.

“It’s a great honor to be the chief enlisted manager and to be the first African American at the Gulfport CRTC to achieve that position,” said Edwards. “Hopefully, I have set a standard for the younger generation that if you put your mind to something, you can achieve it.”

Edwards’ military career began in December 1981 when he joined the Alabama Air National Guard as part of the 187th Fighter Wing in Montgomery. He spent the next 25 years working in Petroleum, Oil,

and Lubricants (POL).

“My supervisor in POL was one of the biggest mentors to me even though we bumped heads, and we didn’t get along,” said Edwards. “He saw something in me that I didn’t see in myself. He pushed me and kept pushing me. I always thought while he was pushing me that he was just picking on me. But come to find out when he retired, he recommended me for his position as the superintendent of POL.”

Edwards went on to become the 187th FW superintendent of traffic management and superintendent of vehicle maintenance. He reached the rank of senior master sergeant, but his ultimate goal was to follow in the footsteps of his older brother George Edwards with a promotion to chief master sergeant. However, Edwards realized to achieve his dream he’d have to make some sacrifices and leave the wing he’d been a part of for so long.

In 2013, Edwards transferred to the Mississippi Air National Guard. He joined the Gulfport CRTC as

the superintendent of material management. In taking the position, he also gave up a stripe in the hope of later having the opportunity to once again rise in rank. In time, not only did Edwards regain the rank of senior master sergeant but in February 2018, Edwards was promoted to chief master sergeant and named Gulfport CRTC Chief Enlisted Manager.

“My ultimate challenge to myself in my military career was not to retire until I achieved the rank of chief and I followed that through,” Edwards said. “That was the biggest step, to be the base chief enlisted manager, it was just overwhelming.”

Edwards reached his aspirations through patience, perseverance and always being ready to take the next step. His experience shapes the advice he gives to young Airmen.

“Anything that you can control on your own, make sure that you do it. Always be ready for the promotion. Never have the promotion waiting on you,” Edwards said. “Do not procrastinate because

life brings about changes. Even though you might not see [yourself] achieve something right off, who knows? Things happen. You just need to be ready whenever the promotion comes.”

As his retirement nears, Edwards reflects on his time in the military, saying that there are many fond memories he will carry with him.



“I would sum up my time in the military of 39 years, that in all those years, I’ve never regretted one day of it. I really enjoyed it. I was able to see parts of the world that I never would have on my own.”

- Chief Master Sgt. Jasper Edwards



Chief Master Sergeant John Turner (left) and Chief Master Sgt. Michael Cooper (right) present Chief Master Sgt. Jasper Edwards a retirement gift on behalf of the members of the Combat Readiness Training Center at a ceremony in Gulfport, Miss., April 10, 2021. (U.S. National Guard photo by Ms. A. Danielle Thomas)



(U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)

FIRST FEMALE CAVALRY SCOUT

Story by Mr. Justin Dixon
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Shelbi Constancio made history when she became the Mississippi Army National Guard's first female Cavalry Scout. A cavalry scout bears the responsibility of being the eyes and ears of the commander during battle. They also lead, serve, or assist as a member scout crew, squad, section, or platoon in reconnaissance, security, and other combat operations.

Constancio had dreams of serving in a combat role when she was in high school in the early 2000s. However, during that time,

women were not allowed to serve in those positions. Although it was not possible for women to serve in a combat role, Constancio still enlisted in the Army as an Intel Analyst in 2004.

"It was a dream of mine from when I was 15 or 16 years-old, I wanted to have a combat in arms MOS just to follow along the lineage of my cousin and grandfather," Constancio said.

Constancio's parents served in the Army and her cousin and grandfather served in the Army Special Forces. Her cousin, Col. Roger Donlon, was the first Medal of Honor recipient from the Vietnam War. The accomplishment of Donlon was one of her biggest motivators to enlist.

Constancio served in the Army from 2004-2007 but later enlisted in the Army National Guard in June 2015. Just months after her enlistment, former Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced that all combat roles in the military would be opened to women.

"This means that as long as they qualify and meet the standards, women will now be able to contribute to our mission in ways they could not before," Carter said during the press briefing in 2015. "They'll be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars, and lead infantry soldiers into combat. They'll be able to serve as Army Rangers and Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps infantry, Air Force parajumpers, and everything else that previously was open only to men. And even more importantly, our military will be better able to harness the skills and perspectives that talented women have to offer."

After this announcement, questions arose if the military was truly ready for women to serve in combat. The opposition motivated Constancio as she was able to finally pursue her dream of entering a combat role. She prepared herself by maintaining the same level of readiness as her male counterparts, but she knew there would be other challenges.

"Some of the challenges that I've prepared myself for is acceptance into a male dominated field, especially the combat arms," Constancio said.

"The trust that comes with, 'Well, can she carry her weight?', 'Can she perform the way that we can?', so I've had to go above and beyond to make sure that I can."

Her efforts paid off as it was revealed in February 2021 that she would become the Mississippi National Guard's first female cavalry scout. While she cherishes this accomplishment, her focus remains on being the best leader for the Soldiers under her supervision.

"Leading Soldiers is leading Soldiers, no matter what job you choose," Constancio said. "If I'm out there leading a group of Intel Analysts to perform briefings for a colonel or out leading a squad of dismounts, leading is leading."

She hopes this accomplishment will inspire other females to serve in the National Guard, but she hopes her four daughters are the most inspired.

"I want them to know that they can be whatever they put their minds to, and they can achieve that within the limitations of who they are, as far as their minds or abilities, the sky is the limit."



(U.S. National Guard photo by Justin Dixon)



(U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)

SCAN HERE 

AIRBORNE RANGER

Story by Sgt. Jovi Prevot
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Ranger Course, also known as “Ranger School” is one of the Army’s premier leadership schools. With a pass rate of 42%, the 61-day course is among the U.S. Army’s toughest a Soldier can attend. Many Soldiers aim to wear the coveted ranger tab, but few earn the honor.

U.S. Army Sgt. Derrick Day, an infantryman assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard is one of Mississippi’s newest Rangers.

As an infantryman in the National Guard, one of the best ways to show your commitment to training and readiness is to attend military schools to learn skills and make the organization better.

“Ranger school is something that I have always wanted since basic training when I saw my drill sergeants wearing a Ranger Tab,” said Day. “I asked my drill sergeants what it was all about and they said it’s a Ranger tab - it’s a leadership school - that’s what infantry is all about.”

From the beginning of his career as a light infantryman in the 10th Mountain Division, to his time as a team leader in the Mississippi National Guard, some of Day’s most influential leaders wore a Ranger tab.

“To me, tab bearers present themselves differently. They are inspiring - the type of Soldier I wanted to follow, the type of Soldier I wanted to be,” he said.

As a traditional Guardsman, Day understands how hard it can be to get physically ready for Army courses like Ranger and Airborne and Air Assault School, all classes he attended as a Guardsmen.

“I was active duty for three years before transitioning to the Guard and I feel as much as a Soldier in the Guard, as I did when I was with 10th Mountain,” said Day. “I also feel that personally, it is harder in the Guard. I still must make the time to maintain the standard the Army tells us we need to meet as well as having to manage my civilian career.”

After a few years in the Guard, Day finally got his chance to prove he was worthy of attending Ranger School.

“I went for a first attempt about four months before our 2018 deployment. I went and I made it through Ranger Training Assessment Course (RTAC). Then I went to Ranger School and I failed out of the 12-mile ruck march during Ranger Assessment Phase (RAP) week,” said Day. “I wasn’t as prepared as I thought I was, I was sent home and went on the deployment.”

Day never let his failure affect his resolve.

“Failing and having to come back to my unit facing that I didn’t make it, it was a self-issue. It made me want to go through and earn my tab that much more,” he said.

“I never let it fall out [of] my sight. I still wanted to finish Ranger School. While I was deployed, I had time to study, prepare, and time to learn and maintain myself and get ready for my next chance.”

A year after he returned from his deployment supporting Operations Spartan Shield and Inherent Resolve, Day was given a shot at redemption.

“When we got back, another opportunity arose and I was able to make it through without being recycled. I made it all the way through.”

Though he knew what to expect, Ranger school was no easier



the second time around.

“It was rigorous training. It was mentally and physically exhausting. I learned what I am capable of,” he said.

“Every day, I told myself ‘I’m going to quit tomorrow’, that is what got me through.

By passing Ranger School, Day took home more than just a Ranger Tab.

“The main thing I was able to take away from Ranger School was learning that I’m capable of keeping Soldiers alive even when sleep deprivation, hunger and physical exhaustion kicks in. I know I am able to accomplish a mission and motivate Soldiers during a mission - no matter how hard it may be,” he said. As a true NCO, Day plans to pass on what he learned throughout the course.

“My biggest hope is that I’m a good mentor for Soldiers. I want to be the leader that I have had the privilege of having,” said Day. “I want to inspire these guys to go to Ranger School and I want to be there to help prepare them to be ready for the school.”

Now after passing the U.S. Army Ranger Course, the 155th has Sgt. Derrick Day to count on to inspire and lead its Soldiers wherever missions may take them.

** (Since the writing of this article, Derrick Day has been promoted to the rank of Staff. Sgt.)

NEW REGULATIONS

U.S. ARMY

Female Soldiers are authorized the following:



Ponytails



No minimum hair length



Multiple Hairstyles



Earrings

All Soldiers are authorized to wear nail polish.



Male Soldiers are authorized to only wear clear nail polish.



Female Soldiers are authorized to have American manicures.

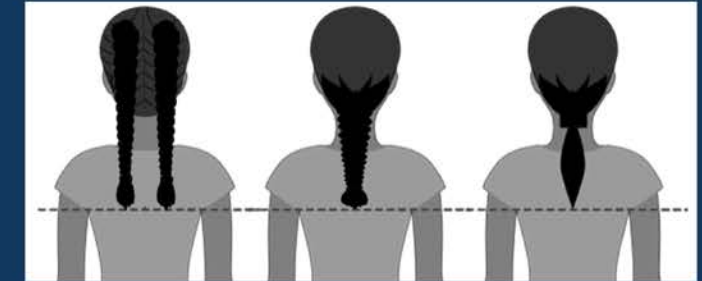


Refer to Army Regulation and Department of the Army Pamphlet 670-1 for complete details.

SCAN HERE FOR MORE INFO

U.S. AIR FORCE

Female Airmen are authorized the following:



- Single braid or double braid ponytail
- Single ponytail
- Must not extend past underarm sleeve

All Airmen have more options for colored socks, glasses frames, and bags.



All Airmen are allowed to wear headphones or bluetooth devices.



Refer to Air Force Instruction 36-2903 for complete details.

SCAN HERE FOR MORE INFO

BROTHERS BY BLOOD, BROTHERS IN ARMS

Story by Ms. A. Danielle Thomas
CRTC Public Affairs

The Lindley brothers of the Mississippi Army National Guard have both led an exemplary military career that's elevated them to the position of battalion commander and beyond. Lt. Col. Scott Lindley (left) and his younger brother Lt. Col. Brent Lindley are from Petal, Mississippi.

Scott is currently the deputy commander of the 154th Regiment Regional Training Institute and the previous commander of the 2d Ordinance Training Battalion. In 2020, Brent took command of the Medical Battalion under the 154th Regional Training Institute. One of the highlights of their careers came in 2009 when the Lindley brothers, as part of the 106th Brigade Support Battalion, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, deployed together to Camp Taji, Iraq.

"I was a little nervous. I couldn't imagine what my parents went through seeing two of their three kids deploy to Iraq at the same time," said Scott. "I was proud to do it, honored to do it, kind of lucky to do it and the reason we do this every day is for our wives and our kids."

Scott was the first to enlist in 1989 with a military occupational specialty that began in administration and progressed into maintenance and logistics. Scott commissioned and went on to command several companies before being given his first battalion command in 2017. Before Brent graduated from high school, he'd already decided to follow in his brother's footsteps.

"I look up to him. He definitely had an influence," Brent said. "I've seen him not only progress through the ranks, but it's what other people say about him that is so impressive to me. He is that guy that truly is concerned with the welfare of others and wants to see others succeed."

The admiration among the Lindleys is a two-way street. Scott has marveled at Brent's accomplishments in the years since he enlisted in 1993 as a pharmacy specialist.

"When people say Lindley in the Guard, it's usually not



me. They're usually talking about him," said Scott. "So I've always kind of looked up to him because not only is he in the Guard, but he's also a doctor of pharmacy. He is also a pilot. He also has his own business. He juggles all of that better than I ever could."

Brent says becoming a battalion commander was a proud moment in his life.

"As an officer, it was always a goal of mine to be a leader and be the most effective leader that I can. To achieve that position is a dream come true, really. Everything I had done previous to that day I feel had led up to that," said Brent.

There is a legacy of military service among the Lindley men. Their grandfather served in World War II and their father spent time in the Army.

"We were raised a certain way. We believe in patriotism. We believe in freedom," said Brent. "We believe in standing up for the rights of others. That sense of duty and responsibility is passed down from grandfather to father to sons."

To which Scott added, "We both feel lucky and honored to serve our God, serve our nation, and serve our fellow Soldiers in the Mississippi National Guard."



The Kirby Brothers

Story by Ms. A. Danielle Thomas
CRTC Public Affairs

More than 30 years ago, two brothers embarked on very different career paths within the Mississippi National Guard, but both tracks led them to leadership positions within the 172d Airlift Wing.

Lt. Col. Jeff Kirby recently took command of the 255th Air Control Squadron. His brother, Col. Patrick Kirby, is currently the commander of the 172d Medical Group.

The Kirby brothers grew up in Gulfport, and although Jeff is the younger brother, he was the first to join the Mississippi Air National Guard. He enlisted in the 255th ACS in 1988 as a surveillance operator and commissioned eight years later. After 26 years with the unit and multiple deployments, Jeff had hopes to one day become commander. He realized to take the next step, he'd need to expand his military knowledge. So he transferred to the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center as the Director of Operations (DO).

"I wanted to make sure that the state-level command could possibly get to know me and hopefully see some potential that would lead into other leadership positions," said Jeff. "The CRTC DO position has been very broadening. It tackled a lot of new tasks that I was not familiar with. It gave me a better understanding of how the National Guard in Mississippi works, both Army and Air."

The move paid off in early - 2021 when Jeff became the 255th ACS commander. His immediate goal is to prepare members for an expected overseas deployment, his first as a commander.

"It's only about 14 months away from now and, in Guard time, that's not very long," Jeff said. "I'm eager. The big difference is now I'm not just responsible for operations, readiness and proficiency, but also making sure that maintenance and support sections are also prepared to go overseas."

Patrick Kirby's time in the Guard took a different path

from his brother's. After starting out in avionics maintenance, Patrick concluded that he wanted to either fly planes or care for sick and injured service members.

"I decided whatever comes first - if I get a pilot's slot, I'll go to pilot's school, if I get a nursing slot, I'll go to nursing school," Jeff said. "The nursing school came first, so that's where I went. Then after I graduated from nursing school, I swapped over and became medical in the Guard."

Patrick commissioned in 1994 and spent approximately 15 years in 183d Air Evacuation Squadron as a flight nurse. He deployed to places like Germany, Iraq, and Afghanistan helping transport injured service members. In the meantime, he also went to law school. With the demands of being a medical malpractice defense attorney, Patrick eventually needed to lessen his Guard travel. He transferred to the clinic where, over time, he became chief nurse, and in 2017, a colonel and commander of 172d Medical group.

"I'm very humbled by the fact that I could make it this far. It's by God's grace that I made it along the way. Every time I thought I was about to reach the end, another door opened," Patrick said. "You never know what's going to happen. I've enjoyed it. As long as I'm having a good time, I'm going to stay."

For more than three decades, Patrick and Jeff have enjoyed watching the other grow in their military careers.

"We've been slightly competitive with each other in a good way. Right now I'm a little ahead of him but I know he's going to get to [colonel] too. I'm proud of that. The motivation he gives me and I think I give him is to stay on track and to reach the next goal," said Patrick.

Jeff said of his brother, "He initially started in the aeromedical squadron as a flight nurse after his commission. Great stories of doing good all around the world flying around with the 172d, helping get injured Airmen, Soldiers and Marines back home. That's always been a source of pride for me. It's fun to run into people who know both of us and who compare and contrast the Kirby brothers."



204TH WELCOME HOME!!!

Story by Spc. Christopher Shannon II
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

In early February, the Mississippi National Guard welcomed home approximately 210 Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 204th Air Defense Artillery Regiment. In March 2020, the battalion conducted mobilization readiness training in Fort Bliss, Texas before conducting their geographically dispersed mission.

The Newton-based battalion deployed for two completely different missions. One mission took them to the National Capital Region, while the other took them across the globe to the European area of operations.

“Most of the battalion deployed to the National Capital Region to provide air defense protection as part of the National Capital Region-Integrated Air Defense System (NCR-IADS) in support of Operation Noble Eagle,” said Lt. Col.

Anthony Morgan, battalion commander. “Their mission focused on protecting our nation’s capital against hostile aerial attacks.”

“Members of Bravo Battery, 1-204th ADA, headquartered in Forest, trained and deployed to Camp Aachen, Germany where they conducted training exercises designed to provide air defense artillery protection over U.S. and other national forces training nearby,” said Morgan. “This is the first time members of the Mississippi Army National Guard’s Short Range Air Defense Artillery (SHORAD) unit deployed to the European Command (EUCOM) to train active duty Brigade Combat Teams on SHORAD air defense protection and maneuver principles.”

The biggest challenge during the deployment was not the simultaneous missions an ocean apart, it was keeping his Soldiers safe from the effects of COVID-19 said Morgan.

“The COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus was agreeably the biggest challenge of all,” said Morgan. “It affected all facets of our operations in the NCR and EUCOM.”

“The NCR Battery Soldiers were tested twice each week for COVID-19 and were on tight restrictions during the entire deployment,” said Morgan. “The Soldiers in EUCOM were challenged more with limited space to live and were not allowed to see their families for over a year.”

“Nevertheless, our Soldiers adjusted very well to COVID-19 mitigation protective measures,” said Morgan. “Being away from your family is always difficult but the Soldiers of the 1-204th are very resilient and found ways to stay in touch with their loved ones through social media and video chats.”

The 204th has an extensive and consistent history of outstanding performance and exceeding the standards in every mission tasked to the organization said Morgan.

“All Soldiers deployed on both of the recent deployments performed extremely well despite the challenges and issues they were presented,” said Morgan. “I am proud that they are receiving recognition for their hard work and dedication to duty to this great nation.”





FIT TO FIGHT

U.S. Army Spc. Douglas Freeman, an infantryman assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, trains daily with a blend of various martial arts disciplines including Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Muay Thai, Judo and Boxing throughout Mississippi including gyms in Ridgeland and Petal, Miss. Freeman began pursuing a career as a mixed martial arts fighter after a deployment with the Mississippi Army National Guard to Kuwait and Syria. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)

Story and photos by Sgt. Jovi Prevot
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

There are countless parallels between the life of a Soldier and an athlete, but the most central is the level of training it takes, both physical and mental.

Spc. Douglas Freeman, an infantryman assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, and a citizen-Soldier with his feet in both worlds, understands life as an athlete more than many Soldiers.

When not serving in the Mississippi Army National Guard, Freeman is training for a career as a mixed martial arts fighter.

For Freeman, training to fight in an MMA match is a perfect way to maintain fitness.

“As an infantry Soldier, I feel I’m ex-

pected to maintain a higher standard physically; for me, preparing to fight for five, three-minute rounds, falls into place with preparing to do anything on a military PT test, it’s just practical for me to train for both.”

Training as a fighter isn’t just throwing a few punches, it means a lot more.

“I run three times a week, usually averaging 15 miles or more,” he said. “I also do a lot of jump roping, sparring, grappling and things like that.”

Physical fitness is a pillar to Army life.

“As Soldiers, we are expected to maintain a certain level of fitness, but for me, as an Infantryman, the minimum often isn’t enough,” said U.S. Army Capt. Nicholas Johnston, commander of Company B, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team. “I need my Soldiers to be well-rounded individuals and fitness

is a key component to that.”

Physical fitness affects mission readiness and lethality, and a poor or subpar fitness level could be detrimental to the Army’s mission.

“The modern battlefield isn’t a David and Goliath scenario, you don’t want to be an underdog. You want to be the strongest, baddest one on the field because in the end, the result of fitness can be the deciding factor in if you come home or not; if your buddies come home or not,” said Johnston.

Freeman has had a passion for MMA fighting for years.

“In high school I was part of an after school program with a Guardsman. He taught us the basics and really ignited my passion for MMA,” said Freeman.

Freeman later joined the Mississippi Army National Guard because of his martial arts mentor.

“When I was deployed in Kuwait, I would go to the combatives mats with guys in my unit whenever we got time off,” he said. “When I got home, I stuck with it. I found a gym and now I am all in. I’m going for it. I even have

a record of 3-and-1.”

Being both a citizen-Soldier and athlete-fighter, his life isn’t split between two worlds, it’s built on a foundation of two unique passions, which just happen to feed off one another.

As an infantry Soldier, I feel I’m expected to maintain a higher standard physically; for me, preparing to fight for five, three-minute rounds, falls into place with preparing to do anything on a military PT test, it’s just practical for me to train for both.”

- Spc. Douglas Freeman





EARNING A FOREIGN SERVICE BADGE, ONE STEP AT A TIME

Two members of the Reserve Officers Training Corps push past mile 8 of the 18.6 mile inaugural Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center Norwegian Foot March, March 6, 2021. The Norwegian Foot March was first held in 1915 as a test of strength and endurance. All participants received a certificate for successfully completing the event, and are now authorized to wear the Norwegian foot march badge.

Story and photos 2nd Lt. Michael Needham
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

Service members from across the U.S. descended on Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center for the opportunity to earn the Norwegian Foot March Badge, a Foreign Service badge service members can wear after completing the event. More than 330 Soldiers, Airmen, and Civilians attempted this test of endurance as Camp Shelby hosted its inaugural Marsjmerket event on March 6, 2021.

The Marsjmerket, or foot march, was first conducted in 1915 as a test of marching endurance for Soldiers in the Norwegian military. The strategic goal was to swiftly move large units over a great distance and in a manner that enabled them to be combat effective even after the march. Each Soldier

was required to carry a rucksack and a weapon that weighed a total of 11 kg (25 pounds) for 30 kilometers (18.6 miles).

While walking 18.6 miles in a single day is easily achievable, the difficult part is the added time limitation for completion of the event. A female Soldier under 34 years of age is given just five hours and fifteen minutes to complete the distance carrying a 25 pound ruck. “It was difficult but very rewarding to accomplish such a formidable task,” said 1st Lt. Molly Hartfield, Camp Shelby Installation Support Unit human resource officer. “We had a tremendous turnout for this event with over three hundred competitors made up of Soldiers, Airmen, and Civilians. The comradery seen here was overwhelming as the competitors and support staff cheered one another on.”

“This is a first for Camp Shelby,” said

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tim Herrington, officer in charge of the event hosted by the Camp Shelby Installation Support Unit. “Approval by the Norwegian Defense Attaché in Washington DC was required for the March to be sanctioned. This event provides an excellent opportunity for Soldiers to earn the Marsjmerket badge while helping fight hunger in Mississippi.”

Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center partnered with Extra Table, a non-profit organization based in Hattiesburg. Extra Table’s mission is to provide food pantries and soup kitchens with new and healthy food they need in order to feed the hungry in their community. Participants filled their rucks with food to be boxed up and donated to Extra Table as soon as the competitors crossed the finish line. More than 250 boxes, or roughly 3,500 pounds of food, was donated to Extra Table. After the event was complete, the committee running the event presented Extra Table with a check for \$3,000 to help feed 18,000 people across Mississippi.

“Not only is our food healthy, but every item is shelf-stable and well within the expiration dates,” said Martha Allen, Extra Table executive director. “We fight hunger and obesity simultaneously, by providing individuals that do not have a choice where their next meal is to come from, with good food that offers HOPE for a better tomorrow.”

“It’s always a great day in the military when Soldiers can get out and give back to our community,” said 1st Sgt. David Brooks. “I came to Camp Shelby today to support this great cause and complete the Norwegian Foot March.”

Staff Sgt. Angel Mercado, a recruiter from the Rhode Island National Guard said, “There are a lot of people out there who don’t have the same blessings that we have and I love to give back to the community in any way that I can.”

Herrington is hopeful that this will become an annual occurrence. “This event could not have gone more perfectly. Given today’s success and the contributions made to help those in need, we need to repeat this event. People are always quick to support Soldiers; it is wonderful that we can give something back to the community while earning a badge that signifies a person’s ability to endure severe physical exertion.”



Two Soldiers and a Civilian make the turn at mile-three of the inaugural Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center Norwegian Foot March, March 6, 2021. All participants were encouraged to pack their ruck sacks for the event with non-perishable, shelf-stable food that was donated to Extra Table at the conclusion of the march.



Sgt. Joseph Collins, Camp Shelby Installation Support Unit, closes a box filled with non-perishable, shelf-stable food during the inaugural Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center Norwegian Foot March, March 6, 2021. All participants were encouraged to pack their ruck sacks for the event with non-perishable, shelf-stable food that was donated to Extra Table.



Sgt. 1st Class Chris Dumont (left) and Capt. Jake Jensen (right), both from the First Army Best Ranger Team, cross the finish line as a team during the inaugural Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center Norwegian Foot March, March 6, 2021. All participants were encouraged to pack their ruck sacks for the event with non-perishable, shelf stable food that was donated to Extra Table at the conclusion of the march.

A Champion for Army Aviation

Story by Lt. Col. Deidre D. Smith
MSNG Public Affairs

Mississippi National Guard celebrates the exemplary service and continuing legacy of Brig. Gen. Stanley E. Budraitis as he transitions from the Commander of 66th Troop Command to the Deputy Commanding General, U. S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence at Fort Rucker, Alabama. He has served with exemplary honor and dedication at every command level from Lieutenant to Brigadier General in the Mississippi National Guard.

Brig. Gen. Budraitis is an Army Aviator with over 28 years of experience and over 2,000 flight hours in the UH-1, OH-58, and UH-60 helicopters. He has received numerous awards and decorations for his exemplary service to our state and nation.

MSNG Aviators from across the state celebrated Brig. Gen. Budraitis's contributions to our formation during his change of command ceremony on December 5, 2020, where he relinquished command to now Brig. Gen. Michael Cleveland, at the Raymond Road Readiness Center in Jackson. During the ceremony, Brig. Gen. Budraitis was presented the Order of St. Michael by Lt. Col. Mark Johnson, deputy commander of the 1108th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group.

The Order of St. Michael Gold Award, established in 1990, recognizes individuals who have contributed significantly to the promotion of Army aviation through a lifetime of service. This prestigious award represents bravery, courage and justice, all characteristics of Saint Michael and represent the standard of excellence championed by Army Aviators. MSNG's Soldiers and Airmen celebrate Brig. Gen. Budraitis and wish him well in his new assignment. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Victoria Smith)



Polar Vortex

Freezing temperatures halted operations throughout the state from Feb 15-19. Guardsmen tasked with various missions were sent throughout the state to support ongoing operations. Soldiers from various units throughout the Mississippi National Guard also assisted the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency in distributing non-potable water at multiple locations within Jackson.



Bradley Master Gunners



From left, Sgt. Andrew I. Peterson, Staff Sgt. Brent A. Pursell, and Sgt. Aaron A. Shivers, all infantrymen assigned to 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, pose for a photo after graduating from Master Gunner School at Fort Benning, Ga., April 19, 2021.



In the U.S. Army, a Master Gunner, or "Mike Golf," is the technical and tactical expert of their weapon's platform. Master Gunners advise the commander on everything related to the vehicle platform and weapon system.

Master Gunners are responsible for all direct fire weapons training from the individual level all the way up to crew and collective gunnery. They also develop training materials to conduct gunnery and live-fire exercises.

In the Armored Brigade Combat Team, a Master Gunner is the keystone of tough, realistic, and safe



#EndofMission

Sgt. Scott Tynes flew his last Public Affairs mission less than one week before his retirement ceremony after 23 years of service in the United States Marine Corps and the Mississippi Army National Guard. Tynes worked in the Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs Office for just under a decade. He was a familiar face around the MSNG as a member of the state public affairs office and the 102d Mobile Public Affairs Detachment. His legacy will live on in the current generation of public affairs Soldiers, who he mentored and molded to his likeness.

Final Formation



The Mississippi Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion hosted their quarterly event "Final Formation" on April 10, 2021 in the Regional Training Institute auditorium at Camp Shelby, near Hattiesburg, Miss.

"Final Formation is an event designed to honor our Soldiers that are retiring or have completed their current term of service and wish not to continue serving," said Lt. Col. Adam Harris, commander of the Recruiting and Retention Battalion.



"The event is important because it is a dedicated time set aside to inform these Soldiers that are either retiring or just coming up on the end of their service about the benefits they earned through their service to our state and nation," said Harris.

"All-in-all, this program is designed to show our National Guardsmen that we care about them, we want them to have success when they leave, and we truly appreciate the service they have done," said Harris.



SHARP SAVVY

Story by Ms. A. Danielle Thomas
CRTC Public Affairs

The Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) program is helping victim advocates expand their knowledge on how to best help those they serve. SHARP held the Mississippi Sexual Assault Prevention and Response refresher course at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi in March. The four day training seminar provided an opportunity for victim advocates to gain continuing education credits while taking a course they need in order to stay credentialed.

“Everything is evolving and every day there is something new that is being put out from the National Guard Bureau,” said Master Sgt. Latasha Williams, 185th Aviation Brigade Sexual Assault Response Coordinator. “It’s our job as leaders from the top to relay that information to the victim advocates at the lowest level.”

Some of the discussion topics included investigation and prosecution of sexual assault, family advocacy, and ethics. Mississippi Joint Force Headquarters Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Maj. Tiffany Crawford, says the advocates work-

ing within the units oftentimes find out about possible sexual assaults before command leaders do.

“Sometimes you may feel more comfortable going to your peers and talking to your peers about a situation that you’re having instead of going directly to leaders,” said Crawford. “So that’s why you’ve got those victim advocates there [who are] trained. They know what to do. They know how to take a case. They know once they get this information then they can advocate for those victims throughout the reporting process.”

Participants were treated to a spoken word performance by United States Army veteran and artist Edward Wilson whose stage name is Obbie West. West is a sexual assault prevention advocate and social activist. He’s committed to motivating awareness, education and training through his poetry. His signature poem “The Perpetrator’s Perspective” has been incorporated into sexual assault training throughout the military.

“It’s an absolute honor to be given the opportunity to address such a relevant issue, especially through poetry,” West said. “Poetry is an art form that historically has been limited to entertainment venues. Having the opportunity to use it for education, particularly awareness of a subject like abuse reduction, is the absolute pinnacle for me. Doing this for the military, an organization who has been in the forefront of getting after this issue, is extremely fulfilling.”



From Left, Maj. Tiffany L. Crawford, Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Master Sgt. Stephanie Kennett, Victim Advocate Coordinator, Obbie West, a guest speaker, and Tara Rivers, Victim Advocate, pose for a photo after recognizing Obbie West’s contributions to the Mississippi National Guard’s SHARP Program. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by A. Danielle Thomas)

BURNING QUESTIONS

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION & RESPONSE

Maj. Tiffany L. Crawford
MSARNG Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

What is the Army’s Definition of Sexual Assault?

Sexual Assault is a crime defined as intentional sexual contact characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, or abuse of authority or when the victim does not or cannot consent. The term includes a broad category of specific UCMJ offenses: rape, sexual assault, aggravated sexual contact, abusive sexual contact, forcible sodomy, or attempts to commit these acts. Sexual assault is not provoked. Any act of non-consensual sexual activity is a violent crime that stems from a person’s determination to exercise power and control over another.

What is a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC)?

The SARC is the single point of contact within an organization or installation who oversees sexual assault awareness, prevention, and response training; coordinates medical treatment, including emergency care, for victims of sexual assault; and tracks the services provided to a victim of sexual assault from the initial report through final disposition and resolution. The SARC is responsible for ensuring the victims of sexual assault receive appropriate and responsive care.

Upon notification of a sexual assault and after receiving consent from the victim, the SARC will assign a Victim Advocate (VA) to assist the victim. SARCs supervise VAs, but are authorized to perform VA duties if required.

What services do we offer?

We have victim advocates and offer referral and information for victims/survivors. We walk them through what they can expect to happen in the event they decide to come forward with a report. There are two reporting options a victim can make, “restricted” or “unrestricted”. The restricted report is made confidentially to a healthcare provider, chaplain, or a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC). It is made when the victim wants to receive medical treatment and counseling, but does not want to notify other people or pursue prosecution. A restricted report can be turned into an unrestricted report, if the victim tells anyone other than the specified persons above.

An unrestricted report is made when the victim reports to his or her Chain of Command, military investigators, the police, a friend, or if the victim desires a restricted report can be reclassified as unrestricted. Unrestricted reports are the only assaults that can be investigated and for which the offender may be criminally charged.



Is there any advice or comforting words you would give to Soldiers or Airmen to encourage them when taking the difficult step of coming forward?

It’s hard to come forward. The best advice I can give is to seek help. The MSNG Sexual Assault Prevention and Response team is here to help.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Maj. Tiffany L. Crawford

MSNG SARC (Office)
601.313.6356

MSNG 24/7 SARC (Cell)
601.850.6872

24/7 DoD SAFE HELPLINE:
877.955.5247

Email: www.safehelpline.org

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Mississippi National Guard
P.O. Box 5027
Jackson, MS 39296-5027



Sgt. Mark Ray, an AH-64 armament/electrical/avionic systems repairer with the 1108th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group performs routine maintenance on an AH-64 Apache helicopter in Gulfport, Miss., April 8, 2021 (U.S. Air National Guard photo by A. Danielle Thomas)