

GUARD



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DETAIL

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ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Dixie Thunder rolls



WARFIGHTERS:
112th MP BN names best warrior



THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
Maj. Gen. Augustus L. Collins

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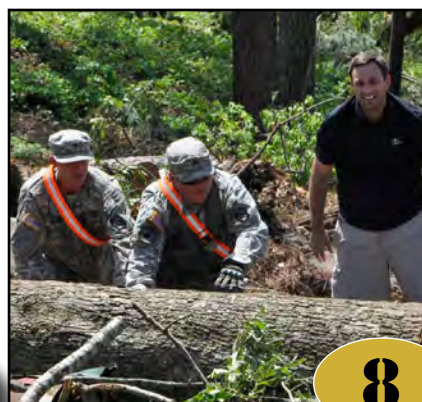


FRONT COVER: Lightning strikes as a 1st Battalion, 155th Combined Arms Battalion M1A2 Abrams SEPv2 tank waits to advance on the Multi Purpose Range at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center during the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team Annual Training in July. (Article begins on page 12). Photo by Staff Sgt. William Hill, 155th ABCT Public Affairs.

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From the Editor

By Lt. Col. (Retired) Timothy J. Powell
Director, Public Affairs Office

REMEMBERING SANDY ATEs



When Sandy Ates retired from the JFH Public Affairs Office in May, 2014, an era was brought to a close—an era that lasted for 28 years.

She began her public affairs work in the Mississippi National Guard in 1986, left for a while in the late 80s, and returned in 1993.

Sandy was a mainstay as a writer, photographer, graphics layout expert, and just plain hard worker.

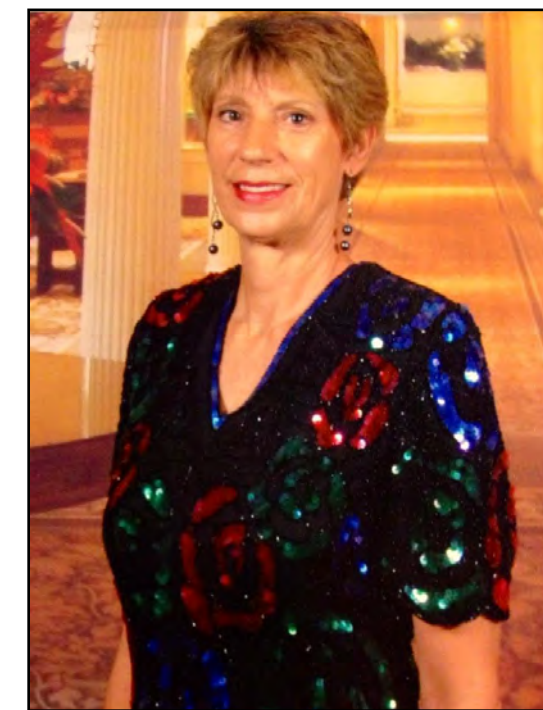
Over the years, thousands of programs, invitations, and photos made their way to armories, auditoriums and other venues where folks were being honored, promoted or retired. Her stories about Soldiers and Airmen of the Mississippi National Guard regularly adorned the pages of the Guard Detail Magazine as well as other publications in and around Mississippi.

Always up to the task, she never shied away from hard work, always answering the call from units, friends and associates.

She loved her family, friends, pets Joey and Chester, NASCAR, the NCO Association, her flowers, her pool, and most of all, God and Country.

Sandy passed away on August 2, 2014, at the young age of 61. Rest in peace Sandy, we miss you!

Until next time.....



EMERALD WARRIOR

185TH AVN BDE ASSISTS IN JOINT EXERCISE



■ Story by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes
102nd MPAD

GULFPORT, Miss. – Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers of the 185th Aviation Brigade honed skills unique to the military April 25 to May 9 at the Combat Readiness Training Center while participating in a multi-state Special Forces training exercises during Operation Emerald Warrior.

Emerald Warrior simulated special operations in urban and irregular warfare settings in a joint environment featuring the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, Mississippi National Guard and Israeli Defense Forces, among others. It leveraged lessons learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and other historical events.

The 1st Battalion, 185th Aviation Regiment flew in support of overall operations, conducting three air assault, four helocast, five fast rope infiltration/exfiltration, one medevac, four paradrop and five sling load missions. Helocast and paradrop missions are unique Special Forces infiltration techniques involving dropping from a helicopter into water and jumping with a parachute, respectively.

“It was a great opportunity,” said Lt. Col. James Haynie, 1-185th commander. “The Soldiers were highly proficient and motivated. We gave them some opportunities they weren’t normally going to get.”

The regiment trains on these tasks continuously, he said, but they are not typically able to actually train with others. Therefore, Emerald Warrior allowed them to actually create a collective training environment with all the components in an actual mission.

“We stay proficient with the tasks, but we enjoyed having that user community with us to incorporate into a scenario,”

Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 185th Aviation Regiment, and 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne), conduct fast rope insertion training as part of Operation Emerald Warrior April 30, at the Combat Readiness Training Center. (U.S. Army National Guard photos by Staff Sgt. Shane Hamann, 102nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Haynie said. “It added that higher level of realism to the training.”

The pace of operations also enhanced the level of realism, he said. Missions often came in with little advance notice and the regiment had to plan and execute multiple roles and mission sets quickly.

“It was at a good pace,” Haynie said. “It kept us active, but not so active that we couldn’t deliver a good product. We had to be proficient at shifting timelines and assigning or shifting different platforms (types of aircraft). There wasn’t always a clear path. It was really mission specific.”

In addition to the demands of Emerald Warrior, when a severe weather front struck north Mississippi, the 1-185th was tasked to assist state emergency services in their response.

Severe weather spawned numerous tornadoes and dumped nearly 20 inches of rainfall throughout the Southeast April 28-29, resulting in at least 35 civilian deaths and massive damage in six states. In Mississippi, at least 13 civilians were killed April 28 and a state of emergency was declared in seven counties.

The regiment dispatched UH-60 Black Hawks training at the CRTC to damaged areas to assist in search and rescue operations, damage assessment and other emergency relief efforts.

““We provided incident awareness for the commanders

on the ground and for the emergency crews,” said Col. Craig Ziemba, Emerald Warrior’s Magnolia Task Force commander. “We flexed CH-47s to cover for the Black Hawks on the training missions and were able to simultaneously support both missions.”

Haynie said the regiment was prepared for the mission when it was assigned.

“That did add another component to it,” he said. “I was proud of the battalion to be able to handle a disaster response mission simultaneously with a real-time training scenario.”

The Mississippi National Guard-led Magnolia Task Force and CRTC hosted approximately one-third of Emerald Warrior’s assets, which also included

the Mississippi Army National Guard’s 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne); Mississippi Air National Guard’s KC-135 Stratotanker and RC-26B intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft, air traffic controllers, and support personnel from the 186th Air Refueling Wing; and U.S. Marines from the 4th Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company and 3rd Force Recon. Other Emerald Warrior assets included U.S. Air Force and Israeli Air Force and Defense Forces commandoes.

Mississippi’s Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center near Hattiesburg, Camp McCain in Grenada and the John C. Stennis Airport in Hancock County also participated in the exercise.

“It added that higher level of realism to the training.”
- Lt. Col. James Haynie

SOG gets wet with insertion

■ Story and photos by Spc. Jovi Prevot
102nd MPAD

GULFPORT COMBAT READINESS TRAINING CENTER, Miss. – Members of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment and 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) conducted helocast water insertion training here April 30.

The training was part of an exercise known as Operation Emerald Warrior and the event is Special Operations Command-sponsored to assess and train in core operational tasks.

One of these core tasks is helocasting, a Special Forces water insertion method that bolsters maneuverability in operations.

“It is great to use because if the helicopter can’t land all we need is a little water and we can get to objectives hard to reach otherwise,” said a Soldier with 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne). Many Special Forces operators do not like to be identified because of the nature of their jobs.

Although helocasting is used in many combat missions, it also has its function in a humanitarian aid capacity.

“You can use helocasting if you didn’t have anywhere to land and you needed to drop off food or water,” said WO Christopher White, a pilot with 1-111th AV Regt. “The supplies will float so you could drop in the water and it will wash on to shore so people in need could be fed and hydrated.”

By supporting the Special Forces Group in this mission, pilot training is also facilitated.

“It gives us a finesse, a chance to work with things closer to the ground and trying to figure out how to get into tight spots,” said White.



A Mississippi Army National Guard Soldier jumps into the water from a CH-47 Chinook for a helocasting exercise April 30 at the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center during Emerald Warrior. Helocasting is a specific type of a water insertion from a low flying helicopter. Below, Staff Sgt. John Rogers, a flight engineer with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment, signals passengers to begin boarding.



U.S. Marines board a 1st Battalion, 185th Aviation Regiment, UH-60 Black Hawk to perform a parachuting exercise as part of Operation Emerald Warrior on May 7 at Stennis International Airport in Kiln. Operation Emerald Warrior is a multinational, joint force training exercise sponsored by Special Operations Command (SOCOM).

Marines conduct airborne operations

■ Story and photos by Spc. Jovi Prevot
102nd MPAD

STENNIS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, Miss. – Marines from throughout the United States came to the Mississippi Gulf Coast to conduct various airborne training exercises with the 185th Aviation Regiment, based in Meridian, as part of Operation Emerald Warrior at Stennis International Airport, in Kiln, May 7.

Operation Emerald Warrior is a Special Operations Command (SOCOM) sponsored event structured to assess and train in core operational tasks.

“Today, we are doing airborne operations as part of Emerald Warrior. It’s the biggest SOCOM exercise in the continental United States, approximately 1,300 people participate in this annually,” said U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Todd Peery, the inspector/instructor for 4th Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO) and the officer in charge of the Marine Airborne Detachment for Emerald Warrior.

The Marines are concentrated on one

aspect of the operation.

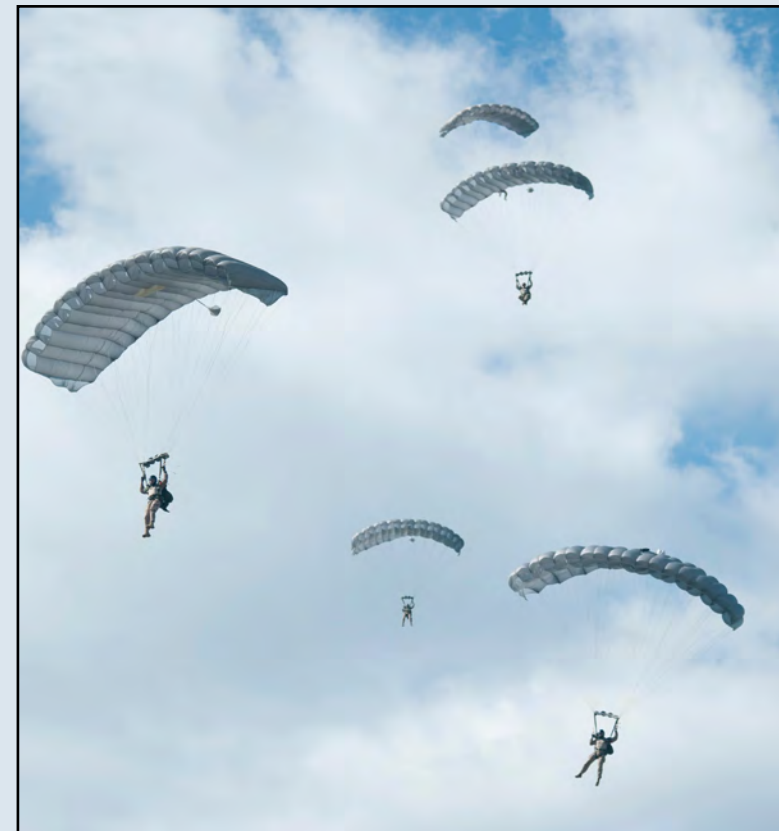
“One piece of the training is to do airborne operations out of multiple aircraft during the week. We have approximately 40 Marines that are based out of Gulfport, operating here at Stennis each day in those flight operations,” he said.

This specific task employed multinational and joint force assets from throughout the airborne community.

“It’s very rare that we can get everyone in the airborne community together to work on their techniques, tactics and procedures,” said Peery. “It’s important just to get together whenever we can to work these things out internally.”

Airborne operations are an asset on the battlefield, he said.

“We are out here practicing to become proficient in our exiting and landing, because in combat you jump at a low altitude and land pretty fast,” said U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Jonathan Orejuela, a field radio operator with 3rd Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company.



U.S. Marines descend during a high-altitude parachuting exercise as part of Operation Emerald Warrior on May 6.

Magnolia Guardsmen assist in tornado recovery efforts

■ Story by Lt. Col. Christian Patterson
JFH-MS Public Affairs

Mississippi National Guardsmen responded to the aftermath of numerous deadly tornados striking central and northeast Mississippi cities on April 28.

The 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team and 185th Theater Aviation Brigade led Tupelo and Louisville-area activities to help civilian authorities restore order following the severe weather. Nine tornados touched down in Mississippi on April 28, killing 12 people.

Soldiers from the "Dixie Thunder" headquarters company responded to the Tupelo EF 2 tornado. Fellow 155th ABCT troops assigned to Louisville's 2nd Battalion, 114th Field Artillery Battalion assisted with the powerful EF4 tornado ripping through Winston County. Other Guard participation included support from Meridian's 238th Air Support Operations Squadron. The Airmen provided full motion video assistance during the crisis. In addition, troops from the 185th Theater Aviation Brigade provided rotary air support for "Operation Thunder Strike."

"We provided approximately 50 Soldiers in Tupelo and 50 Guardsmen in Winston County, primarily Louisville," said Col. Lee Smithson, director of Military Support, Mississippi National Guard. "Our team assisted in search and rescue and debris removal operations in support of civilian authorities. The Mississippi National Guard did an excellent job paving the way for first responders to also conduct search and rescue missions."

Background, Soldiers from 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team and the 185th Theater Aviation Brigade conduct traffic control operations at the entrance of the Sharon Hills subdivision in Tupelo on April 29. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Jessi McCormick, 102nd MPAD)

Below, A Mississippi Army National Guard Soldier surveys damage caused by a tornado that struck on April 28 between Tupelo's Green and North Gloster streets. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Jessi McCormick, 102nd MPAD)



Left, Spc. Charlton Wilkinson (left) and Staff Sgt. Roy Roy Hudson help residents move a tree from their drive in the Sharon Hills subdivision in Tupelo on April 29. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Jessi McCormick, 102nd MPAD)

Above, Col. David O. Smith, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Mississippi Army National Guard, addresses the media in regards to the MSNG involvement in the severe weather recovery in Tupelo on April 29. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Jessi McCormick, 102nd MPAD)



Staff Sgt. Jessi A. McCormick surveys the tornado damage to a service station on North Gloster Street in Tupelo on April 29. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Veronica McNabb, 184th ESC) Left, Tornado damage in Louisville. (Army National Guard photo by Maj. Andy Thaggard, 184th ESC)

Aerial assessment: 185th assists in tornado relief

■ Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes
JFH-MS Public Affairs

GULFPORT, Miss. - Mississippi National Guard units participating in Emerald Warrior, sponsored by U.S. Special Operations Command, continued to train while assisting with emergency relief efforts April 28-29.

Severe weather spawned numerous tornadoes and dumped nearly 20 inches of rainfall throughout the Southeast April 28-29, resulting in at least 35 deaths and massive damage in six states. In Mississippi, 13 civilians were killed April 28 and a state of emergency was declared in seven counties.

The 185th Aviation Regiment, participating in Operation Emerald Warrior, dispatched four UH-60 Black Hawks from the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport to the damaged areas to assist in search and rescue operations, damage assessment and other emergency relief efforts.

"We provided incident awareness for the commanders on the ground and for the emergency crews," said Col. Craig Ziembra, Magnolia Task Force commander. "We flexed CH-47s to cover for the Black Hawks on the training missions and were able to simultaneously

support both missions."

The Magnolia Task Force continued to display flexibility April 29 when the storms moved east to cause extensive damage in Florida and force the shutdown of operational headquarters at Hurlburt Air Force Base.

The Mississippi task force took temporary control of the exercise to allow Emerald Warrior to move forward with only minor disruptions in

the training schedule.

Ziembra said accounting for weather while planning an exercise is routine, but the severity of the April storms was unexpected.

"That was a once-in-40-years storm. We didn't plan for that one," he said. "We didn't plan for it, but we were prepared for it."

The CRTC and Mississippi National Guard-led Magnolia Task Force hosted approximately one-third of the exercise's assets, which included the Mississippi Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and crews of CH-47 Chinook and UH-60 Black Hawks and support from the 185th Mississippi Air National Guard's KC-135 Stratotanker and RC-26B intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft, air traffic controllers, and support personnel from the 186th Air Refueling Wing; and U.S. Marines from the 4th Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company and 3rd Force Recon.

Three UH-60 Black Hawks of 1st Battalion, 185th Aviation Regiment, depart the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport, Miss., for Hawkins Field in Jackson April 28.

Disaster relief drives tempo of operations

■ Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Shane Hamann
102nd MPAD

GULFPORT, Miss. - The Mississippi Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 185th Aviation Regiment has traditionally been called on for state emergencies and federal deployments. Being ready means that their aircraft have to be continually maintained.

As tornadoes struck the northern part of the state April 28-29 the 1-185th was conducting Annual Training along with the Mississippi Air National Guard, U.S. Air Force and allied nations at the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport when they were tasked to assist with relief efforts.

The Soldiers that maintain the helicopters, called "birds" in military jargon, had to simultaneously respond to the state of emergency and maintain operations to support the exercise. This created an opportunity for the aircraft mechanics to operate under conditions they might encounter overseas such as the pace of operations and changing missions.

The situation showed the new Soldiers that have never deployed what the tempo is like overseas, said Sgt. Michael B. Gange, an engine shop chief with Company D, 1-185th, a native of Brandon.

"They are going to need aircraft for mission and we can't drop missions," said Gange. "We need to maintain them as they come in."

"To come to an AT and have an experience like this is a



Pfc. Daniel C. Stadalis, an aircraft mechanic from Brandon, serving with Company D, 1st Battalion, 185th Aviation Regiment, cleans bearings May 6.



Staff Sgt. Sean P. Draughn, an aircraft mechanic with Company F, 1st Battalion, 171st Aviation Regiment, cleans dust from the rotor assembly of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter May 6 at the Combat Readiness Training Center in Gulfport.

real eye opener," said Warrant Officer Jason D. Ferguson, a maintenance officer from Little Rock, Miss., with Company D, 1-185th. "This experience is invaluable for training the newer guys."

"This is exactly what we do during a deployment. It's a 12-hour a day, 7 days a week kind of job," said Ferguson. "When they're not flying that's when we're working."

The Soldiers considered the multiple operations good training but the missions were real which helps to instill a sense of pride.

"It was really cool," said Pfc. Daniel C. Stadalis, a mechanic from Brandon, serving with Company D. "These birds we were keeping going went out and flew and did real missions. Rescue missions. Brought people food and water. We don't get to see all that. It was pretty cool that we were the ones keeping those flying."

"Those birds they are seeing on the news are the ones that they are working on," said Ferguson. "Who knows, they might have helped save a life. It maybe got water to someone who needed it. That's what we do. Hands down. We work on the helicopter to make sure those guys flying can get home safe and do their job."

The unit believes that training hard, conducting state missions that show their capabilities and having the right noncommissioned officers, or NCOs, in key positions will make them successful no matter what they are called to do.

"We have good NCOs here to keep us up to speed and teach us stuff that we don't always do on drill weekends," said Stadalis.

"There are crucial positions and we have great NCOs in those positions," said Ferguson. "Good NCOs will always ensure that the Soldiers get the proper training and get things done properly and there is no doubt in my mind they can handle whatever is thrown at them."

Dixie Thunder rolls through annual training

A 1st Battalion, 155th Combined Arms Battalion, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, M1A2 Abrams SEPv2 tank fires during a Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center on July 23. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Michael P. Needham, 102nd MPAD)

Pfc. Joshua Smith of Tylertown fires an AT-4 Anti-Tank Missile Launcher during the Detachment 1, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment two-week Annual Training on July 31. The detachment is based in Tylertown. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes, 102nd MPAD)

Dust and debris fly as an M109A6 Paladin from 2nd Battalion, 114th Field Artillery Battalion, based in Starkville fires a 155mm round on July 26. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. William Hill, 155th ABCT)

Pfc. Jeremy Betts of Pontotoc fires a 9mm pistol during weapons qualification on July 24. Betts is a medic assigned to 1-98 CAV. (Army National Guard Photo by Staff Sgt. William Hill 155th ABCT)

Staff Sgt. Hugh Jordan of Macon and Sgt. Richard Mitchell of Booneville with the 2-114 Field Artillery Battalion spot incoming artillery rounds and adjust fire on July 22. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes, 102nd MPAD)

Pfc. Peyton Ferris of Pontotoc ducks as a 120mm high explosive mortar round fires from an M113 Armored Personnel Carrier on July 28. Ferris is a mortarman from Alpha Troop, 1st Squadron, 98th Cavalry Regiment. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. William Hill, 155th ABCT)

Soldiers of Charlie Company, 155th Brigade Special Troops Battalion attach simulated explosives to a bridge on July 28. (Army National Guard photos by Maj. Brooks Little, 102nd MPAD)

Soldiers of Bravo Battery, 2-114 Field Artillery Battalion conduct a fire mission on July 28. (Army National Guard photo by Maj. Brooks Little, 102nd MPAD)

WARFIGHTER:

155th ABCT Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise makes state history

■ Story by Staff Sgt. Shane Hamann
102nd MPAD

CAMP SHELBY, Miss. – The Mississippi Army National Guard's 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team conducted a combined arms live-fire exercise, or CALFEX, July 23, 2014, here.

The live-fire event partnered M1A2 SEPv2 tanks, M2A3 and M3A3 Bradley/Cavalry fighting vehicles, M109A6 Paladin 155mm artillery, RQ-7 Shadow and RQ-11 Raven unmanned aerial vehicles and AH-64 Apache attack helicopters – all firing and maneuvering on the same range. The CALFEX was the featured event during the brigade's Warfighter exercise at Camp Shelby.

The July 23 exercise marks the first time in 16 years that the combined weapons have been used together by the "Dixie Thunder" brigade and also the first time the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center has hosted such an event, said Col. Jeff Van, the 155th ABCT commander.

"The CALFEX was the first opportunity to execute all of these combat powers on one range," said Col. John M.

Rhodes, former commander of the 155th and currently assigned to the Joint Force Headquarters, Mississippi National Guard. "It lets us use all of the enablers and combat power that we would use on the battlefield."

The event also allowed the Tupelo based unit to demonstrate their knowledge of the vehicles and equipment they use that are among the newest models in the Army National Guard component and the U.S. Army.

"The 155th ABCT is the most lethal, digital BCT in the Army National Guard. We have the newest equipment," said Van. "We got fielded brand new tanks and brand new Bradleys."

The 155th began training on their new vehicles in 2011 and the CALFEX was the culmination of all the hard training, said Rhodes.

The brigade received the opportunity to display their training for approximately 20 distinguished visitors including Paul D. Patrick, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Reserve Affairs (Readiness, Training and Mobilization). The others were also from within the Department of Defense.

The Pentagon and National Guard Bureau personnel were present to observe the exercise for an important reason.

"The 155th is possibly being divested due to force structure cuts through the Army and through overall sequestration," said Van.

"There's a ranking and an evaluation criteria for that, but we would like to have those people who are making those decisions know firsthand what this "Dixie Thunder" patch can do."

If the brigade were cut, not only would it be a loss to the Army, but also for the state of Mississippi.



An Armored Breaching Vehicle mine plow from Charlie Company, 155th Brigade Support Battalion clears a tank ditch for other vehicles to pass through on July 25 at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center. The "ABV" has a plow that clears a path through a minefield enabling other vehicles to safely pass through. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. William Hill, 155th ABCT) Inset, An AH-64 Apache of the 149th Aviation Battalion, based in Tupelo, makes a low pass over an M1A2 SEP v2 from the 155th ABCT during a Combined Arms Live-Fire Exercise on July 23. (Army National Guard photos by Staff Sgt. William Hill, 155th ABCT Public Affairs)



Maj. Gen. Augustus L. Collins, The Adjutant General of Mississippi, briefs visitors from the Department of Defense, Pentagon and National Guard Bureau on the various capabilities of the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team on July 23. (Air National Guard photo by Airman First Class Jessica Fielder, 172nd Air Wing Public Affairs)

The 155th makes up nearly half of the Mississippi Army National Guard's strength and are the presence and the security that the state depends on to assist civil authorities during a disaster, said Van.

"Because we are a Guard unit we also have a state mission which is civil support to the local government," said Van.

The brigade also has military police, engineers, transportation units and infantry that patrol affected areas and set up and secure emergency supply distribution sites.

Not having the brigade in the state could impact Mississippi's emergency preparedness, said Van.



Lt. Col. Walt Vinzant, 1st Battalion, 98th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron commander, briefs key leaders July 23 prior to the start of the combined arms live-fire exercise on the observation deck at the Multipurpose Range Complex at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center. The exercise is the highlight of the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team's 2014 Annual Training session. (Army National Guard photo by Maj. Robert Edwards, 155th ABCT Public Affairs)

The brigade hoped to make an impact with the visitors during the CALFEX and wanted them to know that the 155th ABCT is one of the most modernized and experienced National Guard brigade combat teams in the country.

"I hope that what they take back is the lethality of the brigade," said Van. "The digitalization and the training readiness, at which the 155th is currently at, can't be replaced."





EYES IN THE SKY

■ *Story by Spc. Brittany Anderson
155th Armored Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs*

CAMP SHELBY, Miss. - Soldiers of the 155th Special Troops Battalion raise their eyes to the sky with a knowing smile as they hear the low thrum reminiscent of a noisy lawnmower descend on Champion Airstrip at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center on July 25.

Although the sound may fool some, it doesn't confuse the STB Soldiers. They recognize it as an RQ-7B Shadow, an unmanned aerial vehicle. The Soldiers have been running continuous launch and recovery operations all day as they train on the aircraft.

The RQ-7B resembles a large remote controlled airplane. It provides troops on the ground with real-time surveillance and target acquisition.

The shadow has multiple uses. A number of sophisticated cameras allow for intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance for the commanders to maintain over watch of their units. They can also be used as a laser designator and as communication relay packages, serving as a relay for radios out of range and transmitting to desired receivers.

It takes two main job qualifications, an unmanned aerial vehicle operator and an unmanned aircrafts vehicle repairer, to successfully operate this equipment, said Sgt. Kevin Luhmann, from Virginia Beach, Va., with the 155 STB.

The STB currently flies three RQ7B Shadows. The platforms can reach speeds from 65 to 110 knots, and can fly for up to of six hours.

"Before they launch and load the have to do a pre-flight inspection," said Sgt. Cody Odom from Lucedale, with the STB. This is when the operators in the Ground Control Station run through a systems check while the repairers are outside letting them know if what they see on the monitors is reflected on the aircraft.

The operators have to get it to full throttle next, said Luhmann. Then the repairers, also known as the crew chief, hit the switch to launch the aircraft. After it is launched and reaches around 500 feet, the operators have full control. They not only control the direction of the flight, but also the cameras located on the shadow.

It usually takes them around 30 minutes to launch, and even though the crew chief was in training, they managed to complete the mission in under an hour, said Luhmann.

When they go to land it, the operators move it towards the runway, and after it descends to 500 feet again the "TALS" or a tactical automated landing system takes control and brings it down safely, said Odom.

"It's good training, and it's very useful in combat," said Odom.

The Soldiers must work as a unit to make the process run smoothly and correctly to successfully complete the mission.



Sgt. Brandon Coursey, of Brandon, and Spc. James Woullard, of Hattisburg, with the 155th Brigade Special Troops Battalion prepare to launch an RQ-7B Shadow unmanned aerial vehicle at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center on July 25. (Army National Guard photo by Spc. Brittany Anderson, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs) Below, Sgt. Kevin Luhmann, of Hattiesburg, and Sgt. Cody Odom, of Lucedale, with the 155th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, operate an RQ-7B from the Ground Control Station during Annual Training July 25 at the CSJFTC. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Tynes, 102nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



FIRE AND MANEUVER

■ *Story by Spc. Brittany Anderson
155th Armored Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs*

CAMP SHELBY, Miss. – The heat of the summer sun beams down on the Soldiers of Company C, 155th Special Troops Battalion as they walk towards their target ready to shoot at a moment's notice while training at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center on July 25.

The Soldiers were completing a four-day course on advanced marksmanship training with their M-4 rifles.

The instructors, who are all former special forces, taught them how to use a variety of equipment and tactics, including their thermal weapon sight, close combat optics and enhanced night vision to help improve their skills.

Their targets ranged from 25 to 300 meters, and they shot between 200 to 1000 rounds a day. The goal is to not only teach them how to use it, but to also build confidence in their weapons, said Spc. Benjamin S. Erickson of the STB.

"It helps us to understand and learn how to use equipment that we've had that's never been touched," said Erickson. "I went from shooting a 29 to a 33. I've even shot the 300 meter target four times in a row."

At the end of the training they were able to show off their new skills in an urban environment exercise with training ammunition.

Even though only a select few got to take the course, they can pass the information on to others and share their knowledge and experience.



Left, Sgt. Charles Gamache and Sgt. Michael Schmidt, both of Ponotoc, with Company C, 155th Special Troops Battalion fire at their targets at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center on July 25. Above, Spc. Benjamin S. Erickson of Flowood, with Company C, 155th Special Troops Battalion shoots at his target while participating in an advanced marksmanship course. (Army National Guard photos by Spc. Brittany Anderson, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs) Background, Soldiers advance on their targets while firing under the watchful eye of an instructor. (Army National Guard photo by Maj. Brooks Little, 102nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Finance Company meets Team USA U17 in Qatar

■ Story by 210th Finance Company

Mississippi natives headed down two completely different roads unite in Doha, Qatar, at a basketball scrimmage. The 210th Finance Company deployed to Kuwait in February in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Unit members were on a routine battlefield circulation in Qatar when they decided to take in a basketball game. Callaway High School's Malik Newman was on his way to the FIBA U17 World Championship when his team stopped in Qatar for a warm-up game against Team (Qatar).

Maj. James Triplett immediately recognized Newman as he has followed him since his sophomore year at Callaway. He informed the other Mississippians present, 1st Sgt. Samuel Cobbins and Staff Sgt. Torrence Smith, who Malik was. After watching the teams perform, the Soldiers introduced themselves to Malik and you could tell he was surprised to see people from Mississippi all the way in Qatar. After a brief chat session, Malik posed for a picture with the Soldiers from Mississippi.



This was one of those experiences that you cannot make up as two different missions headed down totally different paths unite in a foreign country. The one thing that the two different groups had in common was that they were both representing our country. The Soldiers representing the U.S. Army and Malik representing Team U.S.A. What an awesome display of patriotism.

Team USA U17 went on to win the World Championship and Malik was named the tournament MVP averaging 15 points, 5 rebounds and 3 assists a game.



858th Engineers returns to state

Soldiers and families of the 858th Engineer Company, Mississippi Army National Guard, are reunited in Tupelo in the early morning hours of July 3 following the unit's return from Afghanistan. (Army National Guard photo by Maj. Andy Thaggard, 184th Sustainment Command)

McDew visits state air bases

Gen. Darren W. McDew, commander of the U.S. Air Force's Air Mobility Command, visited the Mississippi National Guard at Flowood's 172nd Airlift Wing and Meridian's 186th Air Refueling Wing in August. (Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Connie Reed, 172nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs)



Kennedy claims Mississippi first

■ Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Ed Staton
172nd AW

The Air National Guard's top crew chief for 2013 is a member of the 172d Airlift Wing's Maintenance Group. Master Sgt. Brian Kennedy has been named as the 2013 CMSAF Thomas N. Barnes Crew Chief of the Year Award winner.

"The award is given annually to Airmen that the Air Force Association recognizes as making the most significant contribution to the Air Force mission," said 172d AW Maintenance Group Commander, Col. James Conway. "To win this award, Master Sgt. Kennedy demonstrated sustained job performance, job efficiency and knowledge."

Kennedy was praised for his actions while deployed to India and assisting their Air Force with their C-17 conversion. His role as the lead technician during the 172d Maintenance Group's first changing of a main landing gear and his providing effective mentorship were also mentioned as reasons for winning the award.

While making the announcement of the award to members of the wing's maintenance group, 172d Vice Wing Commander, Col. Tommy Tillman read a letter from the Director of the Air National Guard, Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke. The congratulatory letter was written to Mississippi's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Augustus L. Collins.

"That's the visibility that this award has received and is an indication of how big this is," said Tillman. "This is the first time that anyone from the 172d has won this award and also the first time that anyone from Missis-



172d Airlift Wing Maintenance Group member, Master Sgt. Brian Kennedy (left) is congratulated by Wing Commander Col. Tommy Tillman after being named the Air National Guard's 2013 CMSAF Thomas N. Barnes Crew Chief of the Year Award winner. The announcement marks the first time that a Mississippi National Guardsman has won the award.

sippi has won it."

Kennedy's award winning efforts may achieve higher levels. The USAF Crew Chief of the Year winner will be announced at the annual Air Force Association Convention in September.

The CMSAF Thomas N. Barnes Crew Chief of the Year Award is named on behalf of the first African-American in that position.. He was a mechanic and flight engineer. He had an extraordinary career and served an unprecedented four years at CMSAF.

State Minuteman newscast makes debut

The Mississippi National Guard released its first video newscast to the public in June. The newscast featured the Guard's highlighted activity from the previous three months. The video was designed to target social media outlets, keeping the public and Servicemembers informed on newsworthy events happening in the MSNG.

Roughly ten-minutes in length, the newscast showcases current training, achievements, and events of Soldiers, Airmen, and Guard-related events. The show was hosted by Sgt. 1st Class Sarah Stuart, and produced by the Joint Force Headquarters - Miss. Public Affairs Office in Jackson.



The video was the first in its series, with a new video scheduled to be released in September. The next newscast, scheduled for release on Sept. 16, will feature action-packed video from the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team's annual training at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center and "Kids Annual Training" that took place for Guard member's children, among other

stories. The previous newscast can be found on the Mississippi National Guard's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MYMSNG or viewed directly at <http://www.dvidshub.net/video/346525/mississippi-minuteman-june-27#U-4I-TNOnIU>.

WARFIGHTERS: 112th MP BN names best warrior



■ **Story by Staff Sgt. Veronica McNabb**
184th Expeditionary Sustainment Command Public Affairs

What defines a Soldier? Is it the ability to never quit, never leave a fallen comrade, or maybe it's because they always place the mission first. During the 112th Military Police Battalion Warfighter Competition July 23-24 at Camp McCain Training Center, 12 Soldiers were put to the test.

The competition was a two-day event that involved Soldiers from the Headquarters Detachment, 112th Military

Above, Sgt. Ryan Griffin fires the Beretta pistol in the stress shoot event during the 112th Military Police Battalion Warfighter competition. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Jessi Ann McCormick, 102nd MPAD) Below, Soldiers compete in the six-mile march with 40 lb. ruck sacks. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Veronica McNabb, 184th ESC) Right, Pfc. Cody Barber competes in the ruck march event. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Jessi Ann McCormick, 102nd MPAD)

Police Battalion, 113th Military Police Company and 114th MP CO. The top Soldier of the competition advanced to compete in next year's Best Warrior State Competition. The competition traditionally consists of enlisted Soldiers. However, officers were allowed to compete for the first time this year to help bring unity among the ranks.

The event was scored with points awarded for each event. The overall winner was Spc. Charles Alexander, 113th MP CO. He will advance to the next competition level. Top noncommissioned and officer top scorers were Sgt. James Miller, 113 MP CO, and 2nd Lt. John O'Connor, 112th MP BN.

The event consists of several tasks that Soldiers must successfully complete to qualify for the overall competition. Soldiers were tested on their physical fitness, board inter-



views, land navigation, common Soldier knowledge, assemble and disassemble of the various weaponry that the modern military uses, such as the MK19 grenade launcher, .50 caliber machine gun and the M249 light machinegun; evaluate a casualty, call to fire, hand-to-hand combatives, confidence course, a stress test on the M9 pistol, and a six-mile road march with a 40 lb. ruck sack.

Each Soldier was being evaluated constantly during the event and they were vigilant and ready to react to any situation that was thrown at them. The competitors were sleep-deprived, worn out, and stressed out, but they were expected to be able to react intelligently and professionally at all times. In this case, all Soldiers showed what defines the ethos of a warrior.

The event concluded with an

Above, Sgt. James Miller competes in the obstacle course event during the 112th Military Police Battalion Warfighter competition. Miller won the NCO of the Year title. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Jessi Ann McCormick, 102nd MPAD) Inset above, 2nd Lt. John O'Connor competes in the ruck march event. O'Connor won the Officer of the Year title. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Jessi Ann McCormick, 102nd MPAD) Right, A look of determination crosses the face of Spec. Edward Lampley as he crosses the rope bridge on the obstacle course. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Veronica McNabb, 184th ESC)





Second Lt. Candice Stuart of Brandon's 113th Military Police Company uses motivation and determination to pull herself across the rope bridge during the Military Police Warfighter competition at the Camp McCain Training Center on July 23. (Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Veronica McNabb, 184th ESC Public Affairs)